



South Western Sydney PHN
Suicide Prevention Co-Design

Summary Report

November 2023

phn
SOUTH WESTERN
SYDNEY

An Australian Government Initiative

SWSPHN SUICIDE PREVENTION CO-DESIGN SUMMARY REPORT 2023

Introduction

This co-design served to guide South Western Sydney Primary Health Network (SWSPHN) commissioning and coordination of a systems-based approach to suicide prevention in South Western Sydney.

Aims and Objectives

This co-design aimed to improve data quality, enhance access to services, strengthen community response, and raise awareness to address suicidal behaviours effectively, inform regional planning and develop targeted initiatives and to ensure gatekeepers are provided adequate support to deliver care.

The co-design objectives were to better understand the barriers to accessing suicide prevention and aftercare services as well as gaps within these services for people at risk of suicide, lived experience of suicide and/or suicidal bereavement, as well as identifying opportunities to improve suicide prevention, postvention and aftercare services.

Data Gathering

Between June and August of 2023, a review of the current literature and community consultations were carried out to guide this report.

- **Focus Groups** 112 participants (27 male, 83 female), this included a Vietnamese session and two Arabic sessions.
- **Online Surveys** Completed by 11 General Practitioners
- **Structured Interviews** 13 Accredited mental health professionals

Consultation Findings

Consultation responses were grouped into the follow themes, barriers, enablers, challenges to care provision and opportunity and priority areas. The top three under each category is outlined below.

Focus Group Findings

Barriers	Enablers	Opportunity /priority areas
Lack of awareness of services (31%)	Access to clinical support (28%)	Improve public awareness of services (26%)
Logistical/financial factors (27%)	Helpline and crisis services (17%)	Enhance access to services (20%)
Stigma/discrimination (17%)	Culturally appropriate care (13%)	Improve service coordination (16%)

Mental Health Professional Consultation Findings

Barriers	Challenges to care provision	Opportunity /priority areas
Lack of awareness of services (28%)	Inappropriate availability of services (39%)	Improve awareness of services (32%)
Individual's mental health factors (22%)	Lack of awareness of services (18%)	Improve service coordination (22%)
Logistical/financial barriers (17%)	Lack of funding for services (15%)	Provide training and education for healthcare professionals (19%)

Identified Areas of Need

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The Suicide Prevention Co-Design Project identified several common priority areas to reduce the risk of suicide.

- **Training, education, and awareness** - Improve awareness and education in identifying and responding to suicide risk, and the available suicide prevention and aftercare services.
- **Access to services** - Address cost barriers, extending service hours, reducing waitlists, and providing psychological support to help patients overcome barriers to accessing care.
- **Coordination and postvention protocols** - Support healthcare professionals and community to ensure patients/families/friends and community are connected to the right supports.
- **Service delivery and design** - Tailor services to meet individual needs, ensuring more effective and person-centered care.
- **Improved data and research** - Improve data available about priority populations and their risk of suicide within South Western Sydney.

Recommendations and Key Actions

Recommendation 1: Enhance awareness of suicide and local prevention and aftercare services.

- Support GPs to identify suicidality, best practice clinical care and the services they can refer patients.
- Develop resources for community about suicide prevention and aftercare services.
- Provide culturally safe patient information.

Recommendation 2: Improve access to suicide aftercare services.

- Improve access to online and telehealth services.
- Promote Online Self-Help Resources (apps, websites).

Recommendation 3: Enhance care coordination, including community postvention protocols.

- Facilitate cross-referrals.
- Commission activities that support individuals, families, and communities after the loss of a loved one to suicide.

Recommendation 4: Tailor services to meet the level of patients' mental health needs.

- Provide responsive suicide aftercare support programs.
- Provide non-clinical peer-led and mentoring services to promote social connectedness.
- Incentivise service strategies which accommodate people at a low to moderate risk of suicide (afterhours care, follow up care and case coordination).

Recommendation 5: Improve suicide specific data on priority populations through additional consultations.

- Engage community stakeholders: Involve representatives from these priority populations when designing, delivering, and commissioning services as well as in the development of resources.
- Invest in more research about suicide in SWS related to priority populations.