

## Gatekeeper training in community-driven suicide prevention: Assessing confidence, competence, and engagement across industries.

### Research Project Information Sheet

Ethics approval number: S181250

#### Investigators

- Dr Amanda Clacy (Chief Investigator, Sunshine Coast Mind and Neuroscience – Thompson Institute [SCMN-TI], University of the Sunshine Coast [USC])
- Mr Glenn Holmes (PhD Candidate, SCMN-TI, USC)
- Ms Elise Jione (Manager, Programs (Suicide Prevention, SCMN-TI, USC)
- Ms Tegan Scheffe (Coordinator, Indigenous Engagement, SCMN-TI, USC)
- Ms Emma Jensen (Research Assistant (Suicide Prevention), SCMN-TI, USC)

#### Project Description (what is the research project about?)

This research project is being conducted by the Sunshine Coast Mind and Neuroscience – Thompson Institute, to help inform the development of the Sunshine Coast Alliance Against Depression and Suicide. The Alliance strives to create a connected community on the Sunshine Coast to improve mental health and resiliency to suicidality and its precursors. For more information about the Alliance, please visit [www.thealliance.org.au](http://www.thealliance.org.au)

Suicide is recognised as a public health crisis both in Australia and around the world, however is also considered one of the most preventable means of death (WHO, 2018). Given the complex nature of suicide, it is important to ensure that suicide prevention strategies are multifaceted. For example, the Sunshine Coast Alliance for Suicide Prevention calls for a focus on improving general public knowledge about depression and suicide, improving gatekeeper training, education and training for general practitioners, and providing support for high risk groups.

The availability of information and help is a fundamental to any effective community-based suicide intervention strategy. While most communities have both professional and informal mental health services, evidence has shown that a concerning majority of people who experience depression and/or suicidality are not in contact with any of these services. Instead, people are more likely to seek help from their friends, family, colleagues, and other people close to them. It is the people who are around us most often who are best placed to identify changes in mood, behavior, or language that may be indicative of an underlying mental health concern, such as depression. These people can be seen as gatekeepers; everyday members of the community who, with training, have the capacity to identify a mental health risk early and respond appropriately.

Although there is a number of gatekeeper training programs currently provided in Australia, not all of them have been properly evaluated to ensure they are providing the best possible outcomes for gatekeepers and people at risk of suicide. Furthermore, minimal attention has been given to evaluating the long-term impact of gatekeeper training and whether regular training is required to maintain gatekeepers' skills and preparedness.

## **Aim**

The aim of this study is to evaluate the effectiveness of community gatekeeper training in improving gatekeeper preparedness, knowledge, efficacy, and reluctance in regards to identifying and responding to suicidal thoughts and behaviours. Additionally, this study aims to assess how these factors are maintained over time.

## **Participation**

You have been invited to participate in this project because you have chosen to undertake a suicide prevention gatekeeper training program. The survey will take place during your scheduled training session, and should add no more than 20 minutes to your total training time and should not affect your training experience.

Before the training begins, you will be asked to complete 40 questions, including basic demographic questions, and questions about your pre-training preparedness, knowledge, efficacy, and reluctance in regards to identifying and responding to suicidal thoughts and behaviours. At the conclusion of the training program, you will be invited to complete a 17-item post-training evaluation survey, which will assess any changes the training may have had in your knowledge and preparedness towards being a suicide prevention gatekeeper. To assess how these changes are maintained over time, two brief follow-up surveys will be emailed to you 6 and 12 months after your training session.

Once all of your responses have been collected, they will be deidentified to protect your identity. None of the information collected as part of this study will be used to assess your individual performance.

Please note, you may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty or consequence. It will not affect your gatekeeper training program at all. If you have a negative experience with the content of the survey or training, please contact your doctor, a mental health professional, or phone a mental health helpline.

## **Risks and benefits of participating**

There are minimal risks associated with participation in this project. Research has demonstrated discussing suicide does not increase the risk of suicide. There may be some risks involved in taking part in this study that should be considered however, before signing the informed consent.

The survey may raise some sensitive questions and/or distressing feelings surrounding suicide and mental health due to the nature of the subject matter. The survey has been designed in a way to mitigate this risk, however, if you feel the need to talk to someone about these feelings, you will be encouraged to talk to your doctor, a mental health professional, or phone a mental health helpline.

Although you will not receive any money or rewards for participating in this study, the information provided will help to ensure that suicide prevention training on the Sunshine Coast is as effective as possible.

## **Voluntary Participation**

Your participation in this project is completely voluntary. There will be no consequences of any level of withdrawal. Your decision to participate (or not), will in no way impact your current or future relationship with the University of the Sunshine Coast or the Sunshine Coast Mind and Neuroscience – Thompson Institute or your training provider.

## **Consent**

Written consent will be collected prior to the commencement of the questionnaire. Please make sure you have read this information sheet prior to consenting. Consent is for the use of non-identifiable data in this research project and the use of your data in unspecified future projects that may be undertaken by the investigators as well as other researchers who may apply to use non-identifiable data from this research.

## **Privacy and Confidentiality**

All data collected as a part of this project will be de-identifiable once responses have been matched and stored securely as per USC's Research Data Management policy.

Participants will not be named in any reports or publications resulting from the research project, and no document containing your name will leave the research site. The information given will be held in a secure location for 7 years after publications, after which time any identifying information will be destroyed.

### **Results**

Unfortunately, you will not be able to request information about your individual data but are welcome to request a summary of the collective research findings on completion of the study by contacting the research team.

If you would like a summary of findings of this research project, please contact the Chief Investigator (listed below). Non-identifiable results may be presented at external or internal conferences or meetings, or by publication.

### **Complaints**

If participants have any complaints about the way this research project is being conducted they can raise them with the Chief Investigator (Dr Amanda Clacy) or, if they prefer an independent person, contact details will be provided for the Chairperson of the Human Research Ethics Committee at the University of the Sunshine Coast: (c/- the Research Ethics Officer, Office of Research, University of the Sunshine Coast, Maroochydore DC 4558; telephone (07) 5459 4574; email [humanethics@usc.edu.au](mailto:humanethics@usc.edu.au)).

### **Contacts**

Dr Amanda Clacy

Email: [aclacy@usc.edu.au](mailto:aclacy@usc.edu.au)

Telephone: (07) 5436 3895

*The Researchers and the University of the Sunshine Coast would like to thank you for your interest in this project and appreciate the effort involved.*