

## General awareness, gatekeeper, and intervention training: A multi-level organisational mental health and suicide prevention intervention.

### Research Project Information Sheet

Ethics approval number: S191275

#### Investigators

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- Ms Elise Jione (Manager, Programs (Suicide Prevention), SCMN-TI, USC)
- Ms Emma Jensen (Research Assistant (Suicide Prevention), SCMN-TI, USC)
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#### 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 Alliance for Suicide Prevention – Sunshine Coast. 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 it 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 Alliance for Suicide Prevention – Sunshine Coast 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, and colleagues. 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. Recently, a small number of research based training initiatives have targeted industry, with positive results. However, to date there is limited research observing the impact of an organisation wide multi-level mental health and suicide prevention strategy.

## **Aim**

The aim of this study is to evaluate the effectiveness of an organisation wide, multi-level, suicide prevention strategy. This study will 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, and how these factors are maintained over time. Outcomes will inform organisational policy and procedure helping to optimise the primary goal of suicide prevention.

## **Participation**

Your organisation has been invited to participate in this project because you have chosen to undertake a mental health or suicide prevention training program. During the provision of this program we will gather participant data via surveys. The surveys will take place during the scheduled training session(s), and should add no more than 10 minutes to the total training time and should not affect the training experience.

Before the training begins, participants will be asked to complete 40 questions, including basic demographic questions, and questions about 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, participants will be invited to complete a 17-item post-training evaluation survey, which will assess any changes the training may have had in 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 participants 6 and 12 months after their training session.

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

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

## **Voluntary Participation**

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

## **Consent**

Written consent will be collected prior to the commencement of the pre-training questionnaire. Consent is for the use of non-identifiable data in this research project and the use of participants 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.

### **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 by participants however, before providing 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 participants feel the need to talk to someone about these feelings, they will be encouraged to talk to their doctor, a mental health professional, or phone a mental health helpline.

Although your organization nor the participants 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.

### **Results**

Unfortunately, participants will not be able to request information about individual data but are welcome to request a summary of the collective research findings on completion of the study by contacting the research team. Non-identifiable results may be presented at external or internal conferences or meetings, or by publication. Results will be compiled and analyses and a de-identified report will be provided to the organisation.

### **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 participant names 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.

### **Complaints**

If you have any complaints about the way this research project is being conducted you can raise them with the Chief Investigator (Dr Amanda Clacy) or, if you 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**

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*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*