

CHAPTER 4: RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

4.1 Working with consultants

Consistent with the findings of scans and consultations, **Everymind** engaged with two Aboriginal consultants who had experience in developing suicide prevention resources for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The consultants provided expert advice on culturally respectful practices and processes to follow as well as assisting with the drafting and review of content of the resource.

4.2 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Resource Development and

Review Group

Also in line with the recommendations from scans and consultations, the Project Working Group determined that it would be appropriate to form an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Resource Development and Review Group to guide and oversee the development of the content for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander resource.

Everymind contacted the national and state peak community controlled organisations to seek their interest in being involved on the Resource Development and Review Group for this project. Subsequently, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Resource Development and Review Group was formed, composing of representatives from:

- v Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Healing Foundation;
- v Aboriginal Health Council of South Australia;
- v Aboriginal Health Council of Western Australia;
- v Aboriginal Health and Medical Research Council of New South Wales;
- v Aboriginal Medical Services Alliance of Northern Territory;
- v Danila Dilba Health Services (Darwin);
- v Queensland Aboriginal and Islander Health Council;
- v Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre;
- v Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation.

As stated in the Terms of Reference, this group:

- v Discussed key issues relevant to the production of a resource for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who have attempted suicide and their family and friends;
- v Advised both **Everymind** and *beyondblue* staff about culturally respectful and appropriate processes for the development of the resource;
- v Provided expert advice about the content and design of the resources and reviewed drafts.

As a result of the first group discussion with the Resource Development and Review Group the following was agreed.

- The resource would be developed with a shortened version at the front followed by a longer and more detailed explanation of the same or additional relevant content.
- In the first instance, one resource should be drafted that could be provided to either or both individuals who had attempted suicide and their family members.
- Graphics and illustrations would be an important element. However, care would need to be taken in identifying images suitable for a national resource (i.e. not specific to one region).
- Institute staff would work with Aboriginal consultants to draft content that would be provided to the Review Group for feedback.

4.3 Content drafting and review

Between February and May 2014, drafts of the resource content were prepared and circulated for feedback. Feedback from the Resource Development and Review Group was provided by teleconferences or through individual contact (via email or telephone). Some members of the Review Group also circulated drafts of the resource to social and emotional wellbeing staff in their member organisations and consulted with relevant community members or groups within their networks.

In addition, **Everymind** circulated drafts to individuals and organisations engaged in suicide prevention in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. This included community controlled organisations as well as people who had experience working directly in some communities.

Feedback consisted of recommendations for re-wording of paragraphs to clarify cultural references or ensure cultural relevance, rearranging of the order of information and simplifying language and tone. Feedback from individuals and organisations providing support to remote and isolated communities noted that the resource was likely to have limited use for people whose first language was not English and suggested complementary video and audio resources would be of interest.

CHAPTER 5: FINAL CONTENT FOR RESOURCE

The final content was delivered to *beyondblue* in May 2014. It was 20 pages in length and included the following sections.

1. **About this resource** - a description of how the information might help and the organisations involved in its development
2. **Snapshot: Information and support after a suicide attempt** – a brief summary of reactions and things a person (or support person) can do after a suicide attempt.
3. **About suicide attempts in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities** – information about why Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are at risk of suicide, why people attempt suicide and common reactions to a suicide attempt.
4. **Getting support** – information on the support provided at a hospital or local medical clinic and linking with community services.
5. **I have attempted suicide. What do I need to know?** – information on getting through the first few days, staying safe, talking about what has happened, connecting to community and culture and the future.
6. **A family member or friend has attempted suicide. What do I need to know?** – information on working through reactions, talking about what has happened, the support role at the hospital or health service, supporting a person after a suicide attempt, what to do if worried a person may be thinking of suicide again, self-care and the future.
7. **Services and other information** – provides a list of crisis and longer term support services and sources of further information.

Layout, design, production and dissemination of the final resource will be managed by *beyondblue*.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Conclusions

Suicide and suicide attempts in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities are a major public health priority, yet there is very limited evidence evaluating the effectiveness of interventions, including the provision of written information resources. This limited evidence, coupled with the need to develop the resource within a short timeframe, posed some challenges. Added to this was the challenge of developing a resource suitable for national distribution when the intended audience are characterised by enormous diversity in beliefs, understandings, customs, circumstances and languages.

Despite these challenges, the project team and partner organisations have completed and reviewed content to form the basis of a new resource - *Finding our way back: A resource for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples following a suicide attempt*. Collaboration was crucial to ensuring the resource was relevant and useful to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities across Australia.

A number of key conclusions can be drawn from the work completed to develop this resource, as outlined below.

- Developing written resources for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples following a suicide attempt involves working in partnership with community members and stakeholders to identify culturally appropriate and relevant principles and content.
- It is important to acknowledge the generations of loss and grief that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have experienced since colonisation but also acknowledge the resilience that communities have shown.
- A holistic understanding of wellbeing and the interconnections between individuals and their family and community should inform any resources of this nature.
- It is important to acknowledge the enormous diversity within and between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, meaning national resources should only include information of a general nature.
- To increase the likelihood of the target audience engaging with the resource, particular attention should be paid to using plain English and keeping overall length to a minimum.

6.2 Recommendations

Everymind made the following recommendations. They relate to further development, evaluation and dissemination of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander resource.

Layout and design

It is recommended that *beyondblue* continue to work in close collaboration with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander graphic artists to prepare the layout and artwork for the *Finding our way back* resource.

It is recommended that prior to publication of the resource, *beyondblue* consult with community controlled organisations in each state to ensure that the design and layout is culturally inclusive of the diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities across Australia.

Evaluation

It is recommended that *beyondblue* conduct a pilot dissemination and evaluation of the resource in a range of relevant hospital and community based services in different metropolitan, regional and remote locations across Australia. The pilot should seek to measure both:

- a) The acceptability/usefulness of the resource for recipients;
- b) The suitability of the resource for distribution in different organisational settings.

Dissemination

It is recommended that *beyondblue* work in close collaboration with national and state peak community controlled organisations to devise dissemination strategies.

Complementary adaptable electronic version

It is recommended that *beyondblue* consider producing an electronic version of the resource with individual sections that can be copied or adapted by workers into a localised version. Workers could then integrate in local community words, meanings and customs as well as provide a more detailed description of local services and support.

Complementary audio/video resources

It is recommended that *beyondblue* pursue plans for the development of complementary audio and video resources in consultation with community controlled organisations, especially those working with communities who speak a language other than English.

CHAPTER 7: REFERENCES

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