

Understanding & Building Resilience in the South West



Marina Johns
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The Injury Control Council of WA is the peak non-government not-for-profit organisation involved in injury prevention and community safety promotion in WA

What is Resilience?

Resilience refers to a person’s “ability to bounce back or recover after adversity or hard times and to be capable of building positively on these adversities”. [1]

A community is resilient when it can “respond to crises in ways that strengthen community bonds, resources, and the community’s capacity to cope”. [2]

[1] Mission Australia Research and Social Policy. (2005). *Developing resilience at every stage of a young person’s life: Snapshot 2005*.

[2] Chenoweth & Stehlik cited in Healy, K., Hampshire, A. & Ayres, L. (2003). *Engaging communities for sustainable change: Promoting resilience*.

Project Background

- Community concern & commitment
- South West Forum ➡ Taskforce in 2003
- Decided to focus on resilience and community factors for suicide prevention
- Application for National Suicide Prevention Strategy grant Dept. Health & Ageing
- ICCWA's role – managing & coordinating Project, with support from South West Reference Group, WACHS-SW & SW Aboriginal Medical Service

Stage 1 – Action Research

February 2005 – May 2006



Produced an **evidence-based** and **community-endorsed** report providing recommendations on how to **build resilience and reduce risk factors for suicide** in the South West

How we collected the information



- Selected six communities – Bunbury, Busselton, Margaret River, Collie, Bridgetown-Greenbushes & Manjimup
- Selected using suicide & self inflicted injury stats, location, socio-economic indicators, unemployment, population size, industry types

How we collected the information

- Interviews with almost 300 support service providers community members (recorded and transcribed)
- SW Aboriginal Medical Service interviewed Aboriginal people in Collie, Bunbury & Manjimup
- Six Community Road Maps
- One South West report

What we focussed on when collecting the information...

- Individual resilience & mental well being
- Risk & protective factors for suicide
- Community membership, social participation, belonging, connectedness, social exclusion
- Help seeking, availability of support networks

What we focussed on when collecting the information...

- Awareness/ availability of services & resources
- Decision-making
- Levels of trust & safety
- Where to from here – how to get a project off the ground

Recommendations

[Full Report available www.iccwa.org.au]

1. Form local working groups
2. Strategies to assist people to connect with community
3. Suicide prevention education (community service providers & GPs)
4. Increase awareness of referral and support services
5. Early intervention and education programs (varied)
6. Address service gaps & improve access

The Project Now (Stage 2)

February 2007 – May 2009

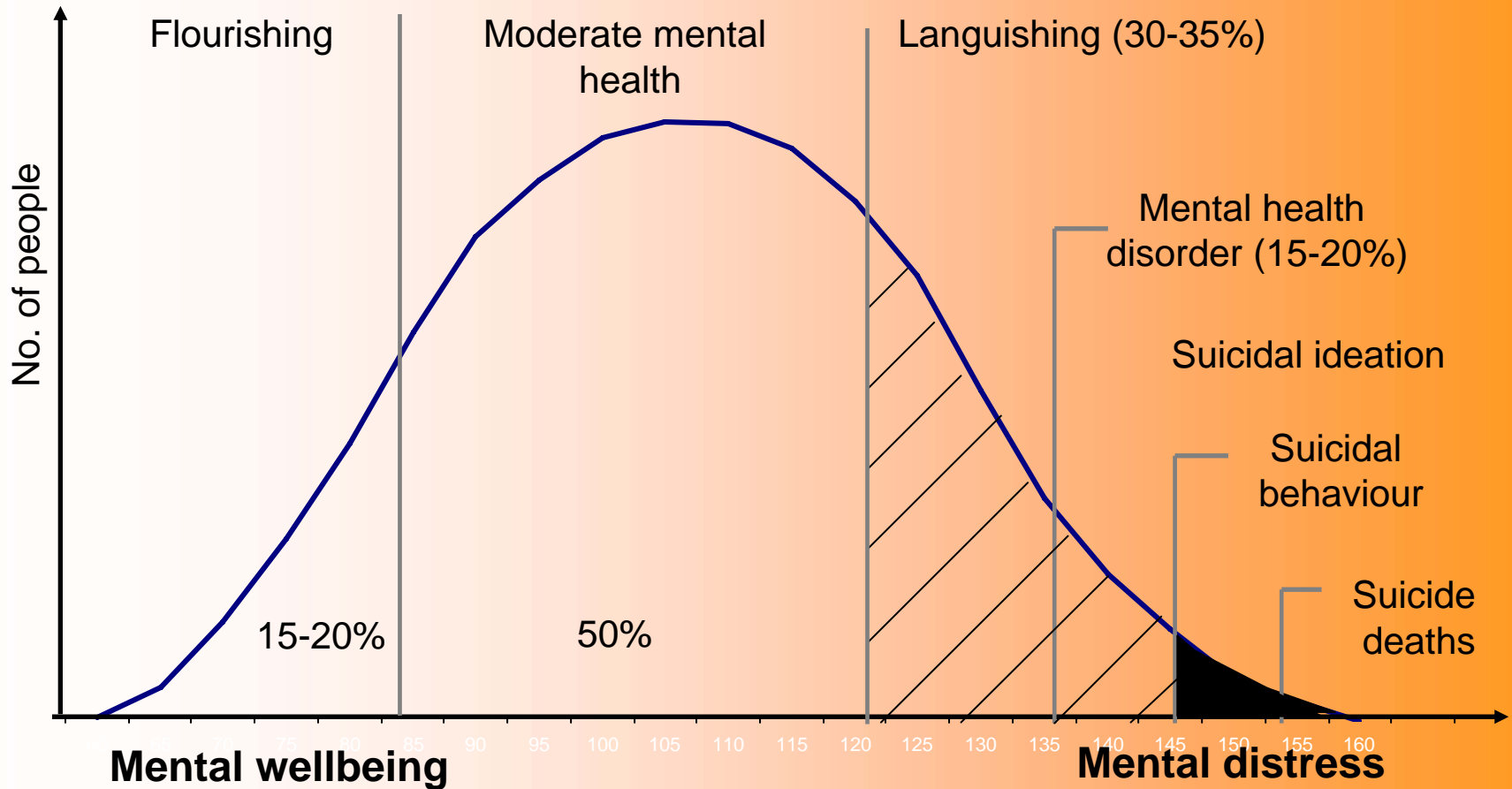


- ICCWA granted further NSPS funding - \$850,000 to May 2009 to implement recommendations
- ICCWA Coordinator and 2 part time project officers
- Formed local working groups
- Developed local action plans

Guide for Action Plans

- Community 'Road Maps'
- Project objectives (based on the recommendations)
- Current evidence about suicide prevention & resilience building programs
- Local knowledge, experience & expertise
- Outside knowledge & expertise

Targeting the full mental health spectrum



Courtesy Professor Sven Silburn, Ministerial Council for Suicide Prevention

Community Action Plans

Objective 1: Service Gaps & Access Issues

- Increase in counselling services
- Emergency accommodation
- Alcohol & other drugs – early intervention and prevention/ education
- Transport
- Services for separating/ divorcing families
- Face-to-face crisis care
- Family/ parent education & support service

Objective 2: Connecting to Community

- Shire Welcome Packs
- Community events – Act Belong Commit messages
- Community education (de-mystifying disabilities; ARAFMI; cross-cultural education; Rotary Club forums)
- Keep cost of participation low

Objective 3: Suicide Prevention Training

- Gatekeeper Workshops
- Open Closets Training
- Community and work sites
- Encourage Mindmatters in high school curriculum

Objective 4: Awareness & Knowledge of Referral & Support Services

- Business & Community Directory
- Youth Link web site
- Networking between services

Factors Needed for a Resilient Community



- Enough robust people (community; service providers)
- Optimism, energy, belief you can make difference
- Willingness to act
- The time – in order to make some level of commitment
- Services that ask, listen, consult

Factors Needed for a Resilient Community



- People building understanding of each other by doing things together— networking; working on common issues; socialising; playing sport; community events; family events
- Resources: on-going funds for capacity building; information; people employed to drive stuff; time to do it; etc.
- Facilities – places for people to get together and do stuff (meet, play sport, socialise, do training, etc.)

Factors Needed for a Resilient Community



➤ Other factors?

Community Resilience quote

“There are things people – the community – can do, and that’s spend a minute listening to somebody else. You know – the simple ideas. Sometimes – and most of the time – the best possible activities are not documented, are not time-lined... they just happen because a group of people care enough to do something about it... What we tend to do is professionalise resilience... The reality is that truly welcoming and resilient sort of areas are where people still care, still put out, still attempt to do something and don’t worry if we fail.” (BUSKSH#8, lines 617 – 627)

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Emergency Contacts

Lifeline 13 11 14

Psychiatric Emergency Team

1300 555 788

Kids Help Line

1800 55 1800

South West 24

1800 555 336

Media Reporting Guide – DO NO HARM

<http://www.mindframe-media.info>