

White Wreath Association Ltd
 Newsletter 39th Edition
 February 2010



White Wreath
 Association Ltd®

"Action Against Suicide"

www.whitewreath.com

WHITE WREATH ASSOCIATION Ltd® Action Against Suicide
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- ❁ Director's Report
- ❁ Thank you
- ❁ The Paradox of our Time
- ❁ Desertlands Aboriginal Ministries (Pt 1 of 3)
- ❁ Solving Our Human Problems Bouncing back with changes
- ❁ My Ongoing Battle (cont.)
- ❁ Supporters letter to Federal MP
- ❁ Belinda's Journal (cont.)
- ❁ Cameron's Diary (cont.)
- ❁ Coming Events
- ❁ Silence on Suicide
- ❁ American News
- ❁ Subscription Renewals, Wish List & Donations
- ❁ A Mother's Story
- ❁ Correspondence
- ❁ Peter Neame, Research Officer
- ❁ Why Put Your Link on our Site

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

How many more inquiries must there be before Action Against Suicide is implemented?

Our findings, whether directly from people who have been affected by suicide or mental illness and have either telephoned, emailed or written to us, clearly indicate the lack of services, lack of treatment and the consistency of not involving family and carers in treatment by using their knowledge of their loved ones who are suffering mental illness and are suicidal.

Instead the medical profession treat the family and carers as though they are paranoid or schizophrenic rather than drawing on their knowledge and respecting their opinions in determining the health and happiness of their loved ones. Hiding behind the "Confidentiality Law" and denying sufferers appropriate treatment by not working with family/carers obviously is not working as suicide statistics are increasing.

There is no other life threatening illness in society when the medical profession do not work with the family. Being in denial and not accepting the seriousness of suicide and mental illness is working against us all. We must work as a team to help combat this epidemic that is in plague proportions. Real team work is fundamental, including proper inter-agency cooperation, effective liaisons and not hiding behind confidentiality. Involving and listening to all members of the clinical team and, essentially to listen to carers and relatives as well as the service users so that the working alliance with the professional team is truly one.

cont...

To improve the accuracy of risk assessments practitioners must address the issue of involving relatives and carers in understanding a person's mental illness. It is time to look again at any tendency to hide behind misguided belief in confidentiality. A person discharged from a psychiatric hospital had not wanted his/her family views sought by the clinical team. So on the grounds that he/she was an adult and therefore had the right to withhold consent, his/her parents were not consulted and confidentiality was considered to be one of the factors that adversely influenced professional practice. The issue of consent and confidentiality needs to be addressed in order to make progress with these particular elements of risk assessment.

Inquiries often draw attention to the value, which would have been gained in risk assessment from careful attention of the experience and understanding of relatives. Feelings and views of relatives are not seen to carry the same value or objectivity as those of clinicians. It is most important to understand the patient's view of the world, but also, professionals need to be trained to trust the experienced judgment of close family, rather than rely on their own impressions made at one isolated assessment.

Effective risk management requires needs and rights of relatives to be involved in care and treatment plans. The issue of underestimating the risk by not listening to relatives and carers is such a strong feature of all inquiry reports that examples are almost too numerous to mention. Neither information from research nor institution can be of value in the absence of an accurate and comprehensive history, drawing on all sources of available information and evaluated by experienced professionals. The key principle of risk assessment is to use all available sources of information - a proper assessment cannot be made in the absence of information about a patient's background, present mental state and social functioning, and also his or her past behaviour, carers, friends, the police, probation officers, housing departments and social workers, and also local press reports and concerns expressed by neighbours.

Fanita Clark
CEO

THANK YOU

Jupiters Casino Community Benefit Fund for the grant we received enabling us to purchase much needed office equipment.

Kennard's Hire-Wayne McJarrow, Clayton UTZFoundation and Clayton UTZ Lawyers, 4BH in conjunction with Colonial First State Bank.

To all those that involved their workplaces etc in our Sock It To Suicide Campaign. This is our major fundraising event and we truly appreciate your support of our aims, goals and endeavours.

THE PARADOX OF OUR TIME

The paradox of our time in history is that we have taller buildings, but shorter tempers, wider freeways, but narrower viewpoints, we spend more, but have less, we buy more, but enjoy less. We have bigger houses and smaller families, more conveniences, but less time, we have more degrees, but less sense, more choices, but less judgement, more experts, but more problems, more medicine, but less wellness.

We drink too much, smoke too much, spend too recklessly, laugh too little, drive too fast, get angry too quickly, stay up too late, get up too tired, read too seldom, and watch too much TV. We have multiplied our possessions, but reduced our values. We talk too much, love too seldom, and hate

too often. We've learned how to make a living, but not a life. We've added years to life, but not life to years. We've been all the way to the moon and back, but have trouble crossing the street to meet the new neighbour. We've conquered outer space, but not inner space. We've done larger things, but not better things. We've cleaned up the air, but polluted the soul. We've split the atom, but not our prejudice. We write more, but learn less. We plan more but accomplish less.

We've learned to rush, but not to wait. We have higher incomes, but lower morals. We have more food, but less appeasement. We build more computers to hold more information to produce more copies than ever, but have less communication. We've become long on quantity, but short on quality. These are the times of fast foods and slow digestion, steep profits and shallow relationships. These are the times of more leisure, but less fun, more kinds of food, but less nutrition. These are the days of two incomes, but more divorce, of fancier houses, but broken homes. These are the days of quick trips, disposable nappies, throw away morality, one-night stands, overweight bodies, and pills that can do everything from cheer to quiet, to kill.

It is a time when there is so much in the show window but nothing in the storeroom, a time when technology can bring this letter to you, and a time when you can choose to either make a difference or not.

DESERTLANDS ABORIGINAL MINISTRIES

PASTOR BETTY MILLS

PART ONE OF THREE

Jeremiah 29:11 says; "For I know what I have for you, says the Lord, plans for good and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope". God has good plans for us and our future and not of evil!

So let's recognise that this is a social problem, spiritual, emotional and mental issue that can affect anyone at any time! And we need to be aware of people who are crying out for help by inflicting pain and self-condemnation upon themselves, by indulging themselves with mind changing drugs etc.

A few months ago I was watching the Oprah Show, her guest speakers were cocaine addicts, and alcoholics and told how they kicked the habit in their lives. The cocaine addicts found it very difficult to stay off it and went back occasionally when they got the craving. Oprah asked a question, can you give drugs up for good? The drug addicts said no, they don't have a choice! Oprah says; "Everyone in life has a choice, you have a choice to drug up or give it up, that's your choice!" And that's a very true statement, everyone does have a choice in life, it's up to you to make the right one!

There are two definite concepts in life's issues that is the ultimate choice, of life or of death! Not many people do not like to talk about death, it's morbid and for some, it's hurtful, full of deep grief and very tragic experience because we have lost a loved one sometime in life! But death is a part and parcel of life it's self, we cannot avoid it, and we all must someday come face to face with death! As I have written in my book "My encounters with the Lord" I share my story about my experience of Life after death, and we as Christians have hope, but what of those unbelievers? People who die without hope and belief in an unseen God? Having had an experience of dying, I can honestly say to those who still grieve for a loved one who have died an unbeliever, let me give you hope to know that at the very moment they die, Jesus, the Saviour of all mankind meets them and gives them a second chance of making a final decision of eternal life or eternal death, I know because I been there and I encourage you with these words today because Jesus has that final say!

In the past month Jack and I and all our families have been through the spiritual, emotional and physical warfare, in losing both our nephew and our son to suicide. One after waiting for the release of his body from the Coroner for three weeks and on the day of my nephews funeral and receiving the message that our own son took his life that same day. It was devastating throughout these two untimely deaths. There was an inner peace within my soul that told me that God was still in control and on the throne of grace, on behalf of my two sons. 1 Timothy 1:5 says, "For there is one God and

one mediator between God and men. The Man Christ Jesus". But the grief didn't stop there. After arriving back home to Aramac, my darling husband had more bad news that we lost our sister-in-law Shirl. I couldn't cry anymore. There were no more tears that I could shed. But again I felt inner peace and joy whelming up in my spirit that I couldn't comprehend or even try to understand..

Losing someone is beyond anyone's understanding or even to grasp that our loved one has died in tragic circumstances of life! But let me share with you, that there comes a crucial point in our life when we are stretched to the limit of a breaking point that determines the outcome! I cannot speak on behalf of drug addicts or alcoholics experiences, we can only assume, if we ourselves haven't gone through those experiences and if you walked the walk, you can certainly talk the talk.

I really didn't want to talk about my sad experiences because it brings you back to your past life that you don't want to remember! But I believe by talking about it to others can Help you face your demons of your past and bring healing and restoration for your soul.

Before I met Jack I was in a relationship with my children's father who has since passes away. We had three beautiful children, but he was insanely jealous and use to bash and abuse me for nothing when he got drunk.

To be continued....

SOLVING OUR HUMAN PROBLEMS

Bouncing Back with Changes

By Psychologist, Tony Vickers-Willis

Our world appears clueless in fighting the plague of our time - depression. Increasing levels of depression and anxiety are literally killing our community - I know, I lost a partner to suicide. Still struggling to come to terms with this tragedy, I've invested 7 years researching how such tragedies could be avoided. What I've found is our society does not know how to solve our human problems. Not unlike the mid 1900's when polio panicked the world. There was no cure, and the authorities sprayed deadly DDT in the "hope" it would kill the virus. Of course, the SALK vaccine was later discovered and polio is nearly eradicated from the globe. We need to find a vaccine for depression, which is a major cause of health problems, and a key contributor to suicide ideation. Alarmingly, the World Health Organisation estimates depression will be THE world's major health problem by 2020, and is already estimated to affect 20% of Australians.

My research has highlighted that whilst 'anti' depressant drugs may provide some important temporary relief, the cure will not be found in a medicine bottle. Psychological health, not biological treatments, can eradicate this virus. I've summarised my findings in a book titled Bouncing Back with Changes. It passes on an inspiring Australian story plus one hundred years of research that together offer a precious life wisdom; how to turn one's life around after personal set backs. A book of hope and ideas to encourage survivors. The sort of information I wish had been provided to my partner.

"Bouncing Back with Changes" will be available to the public from January 1st, 2010 in bookstores and amazon.com. Advanced copies can be purchased at reduced prices on line at www.bouncingbackwithchanges.com.

Tony Vickers-Willis

Footnote:- White Wreath Assoc Ltd has not/will not receive payment/commission on sale of book.

MY ONGOING BATTLE

Continued...

I have lost so much from my mental illness. Family, friends and most importantly my career. I have a Bachelor of Education in Early Childhood but I am not allowed to teach. When they told me this, it made my illness worse. I was put on the dole after spending 4 years at university and completing a degree. I had nothing. No future as far as I was concerned. I now have to rely on the pension and live in a housing commission unit. I see all my friends from university with nice cars, homes and possessions. I have nothing. It made me try to take my life numerous times and to continually harm myself. I went from childhood and at university harming where no one could see to my arms and legs. It is hard some days it feels like I am useless and have nothing to live for.

Things will be getting harder for me over the Christmas break. Mental health shut down over Christmas and there is no chance of getting in hospital because so many people get so unwell without support. It is horrible over Christmas you feel alone and your head is full of confusion and been taken over by your mental illness. It is supposed to be like (in mental health's eyes) as a happy time of year and no one has any mental health problems. When there is evidence that more people take their lives over this period. We need places like White Wreath are trying to build because this time of year there is such a lack of support. Mental illness does not know it is Christmas and does not go on holidays like the mental health staff.

Christmas can be a hard time of year when families don't want you at their place on Christmas day or families begin to fight. I find it a very lonely time and hard to deal and cope with. Mental health problems including suicide can be there 24 hours a day 7 days a week. It is a full time job that follows you home, haunts you in your sleep and has no breaks or holidays. I also live in a regional area so Christmas day and Boxing Day the town becomes a ghost town with everyone on holidays or celebrating with family. No shops or entertainment facilities are closed.

To try to escape the lack of support and loneliness I take extra medication to sleep through the period. I can't get an admission to hospital if I am unwell and if I self harm there is skeleton staff at the hospital on so there is no support, help and if you do self harm the doctors get angry because it is Christmas and they say they hate people who do things to themselves. My reply is you don't say that to a drunk driver who comes in to emergency because he has smashed up his car and injured himself. That would be seen as inappropriate, but not for mental health patients.

I have just got the internet and I am surprised by how many sites there is that promote things like self harm, anorexic and give you tips on how to take your own life. The Internet can be a very dangerous place for those with mental health problems. The Internet providers should take action on these sites as they make the temptations of mental health problems, easier and even have people who encourage you to do this.

I am only a little speck in the sand we need more people to speak out and support us. We need White Wreath Association to be there for us and family members and friends left behind because of suicide. We need places where we can go when we are unwell and can get support and help!

To be continued.....

SUPPORTERS LETTER TO HIS FEDERAL MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT WITH HIS PERMISSION LETTER AS FOLLOWS

Dear Mr. Emerson

I have received the Christmas Greeting outlining the good work by the government. In your letter you point out I will be in Rankin at the next election. I have been in Rankin before. You should know my wife Mrs. WJ, now deceased, also Fanita Clark. On the 25th November I had a very pleasant phone conversation with your staff member that is the reason I am writing. Fanita Clark is

President for the white Wreath Association - Action Against suicide! Mrs. Clark has been working ten long years for this cause. My wife was as well as mentioned but she passed away long before her time.

You should recall when you was speaking outside the Brisbane City Hall with over 5,000 wreaths, photos of persons the youngest 13 years old. She jumped from a six story building. Photos of soldiers in uniform also among these photos and my own son David. He was 19 years old only a few months from completing his apprentice as a welder.

The White Wreath Assoc has been forgotten even by you. I can only believe so after no action from you. I was in the front row when you were making your speech. We are not attempting to make this a political football as we already hurt badly from the loss of loved one sometime it hurts 8-10 persons the person past away have peace for family and friends it is with us every day until we get peace.

I know you are a Minister for Small business and you may not have the time to help could you please pass on this matter to the Minister for compassion. As I told your staff member I am not running to newspapers to shame any. I write to the person I believe have in some way been involved in this matter. My father told me never go behind the back of any person if you have any matters you want to solve go to the person so he or she can defend themselves. It is my hope you will do the same to me be honest and open.

On the 25 November almost 10 minute of Parliament time was given the Ribbon Day. Why is the white Wreath so hard to mention and help? If you look up how many people take their life it is almost as bad as cancer. I could go on I believe you will be kind to look into the reason the white Wreath are been treated as second class persons. We are many as mention above family and friends. Is it because we lost our loved one in different circumstances to auto accident, cancer? And so on.

Yours sincerely

KJ

BELINDA'S JOURNAL

Continued.....

10/09/98

Well "thought voices" have returned. Last night I was kept busy "talking" to them for about an hour or so. It began when I started having a few bad memories of my colourful past. They were coming thick and fast after a while so I tried a technique Jenny taught me which after a while began to work. I tried to visualise in my mind, closing a door to the "voices" because while they seemed to be positive to begin with they soon got negative. At one stage I was told that I was fucking with the devil. For some reason I'm not that scared of the devil. It can't do anything to me that it hasn't already done before. When I shut the door to these demons/angels or whatever the fuck they were I soon fall asleep, but by this time it was about 1am. I slept in this morning to make up for it.

Just had a session with Jenny where I began discussing my autobiography. Still no tear yet, buried pretty deep I think.

15/9/98 Monday

Went home for the w/end again and stayed clean. Yeah! Went out to the Empire on Friday night with Claire. Was good to catch up with her again but it was weird to be among a whole lot of drug-fucked people and not being in my own private haze. We stayed for about 1 hours and played some pool but soon got bored so I went home and watched a video. On Saturday I washed my car which I haven't done for about 6 months. I then went to visit Dave to drop off some blankets of his that I had, speeding off his head like usual. He looked rather ill too, very sad to see. Hope that when I am strong enough I can give him some support to follow my lead. Went over to Steve's and we went to see a movie "There's Something About Mary". Very funny. Any other time it would have been full of messages especially with the name of "Mary" in the title. But this time I watched the whole movie

without any messages to distract me from the plot. Went and got some Thai food from takeaway place near the Night Owl in Brunswick St across the road from where Dave used to live in New Farm. We were going to eat in the part but the seat was wet so we ate on the steps of the library- very romantic. I then dragged Steve along to his first N/A meeting at New Farm. I was asked to "share" again and so talked about the 3rd step. A girl came up to me when I went outside for a ciggie and told me she really enjoyed my share and could relate to a lot of what I said. At the meeting I saw some of the PBC crowd. Damian and Carl were the only 2 who hadn't busted. It was quite sad that Marike, Janelle and Jeff had all done the deed and were (apparently) planning to get on again after the meeting. I felt kind of betrayed by the things they had been saying for so long and then it only takes one night out for them to bust. Very disappointing, but good to see that Damian and Carl are still clean and doing well.

CAMERON'S DIARY

Friday June 16

Saw Bernie and did some bible study. Looking forward to seeing Mitchell! Did some shopping for Mitchell's diet!

Saturday June 17

Pick up Mitchell from Frosty Mango at 3.30pm. Picked Mitchell up. He was pretty tired. Gave Jaki \$10 for fuel. Got some DVDs. Mum made casserole for tea. Had a fairly early night! It was good having Mitchell with us! Some of the DVDs did not work. We watched one tonight!

Sunday June 18

Time with Mitchell! Got up, me and Mitchell walked to the newsagent and got the paper. We started to watch a DVD but it stopped about way thru. Me and Mitchell went to Bro Kelly's and got the 4 wheeler. Went to the creek up from Bro Kelly's then all the way to Taylor's Beach! After we went home we went into town to sort the DVDs out. They said they were OK. Came home and watched one side of South Park! (Uncut). The other DVD wouldn't work! We went for a walk on the beach. I cooked fish for tea. Fell asleep in front of the TV!

Monday June 19

Take Mitchell back to Frosty Mango at 6.30am. Solicitor today 2pm. Take all relevant info from Centrelink and hospital records! Find out about hospital records. Woke up at 1.15am. Got Mitchell up so he could watch the soccer! Australia V Brazil. I fell asleep! Got up at 5.30am got Mitchell organized. Met Jaki at Frosty Mango. She got the shits about me having Adri. Me and mum had a coffee then went to hall for bible study! Went home for sleep then went back into to see lawyer!! He reckons I may go to jail! I hope not!

Tuesday June 20

Centrelink form and probation officer at Court House. Went to Centrelink, put form in. Went to Court House and waited till 9.30am. Kerry didn't turn up. They rang Townsville and said come back Thursday. Watched TV till 3pm and then went to Bro Kelly's for the night to watch the dog! Going to Townsville tomorrow early to clean Robina's daughter's house and to do driving lesson at 12.30pm!

Wednesday June 21

Payday. Pay mum money and send Adri (2nd July) \$100 for her birthday! And save money for mum's birthday on the 4th July. *Get on to Bro Kelly about references!* Book in for driving lesson 12.30pm. Green lancer \$55. ALFS Driving School Ph 47239952. Cleaning house today! Cleaned house. Went for driving lesson. Went OK. Need to concentrate on a few things. Saw the kids. Gave Adri birthday card and \$. And Mitchell \$ as well. Was nervous. But as day went on things got better.

To be continued.....

COMING EVENTS

NATIONAL WHITE WREATH DAY IN REMEMBRANCE OF ALL VICTIMS OF SUICIDE

29 May 2010

King George Square Brisbane (Main)

Display on view all day

Contact: Fanita T: 1300 766 177

M: 0410 526 562 E: white.wreath bigpond.com

Melbourne

LIVING FAITH CHURCH

2pm

37 Grimshaw Street

Greensborough Vic.

Contact: Sue M: 0458 939 474

E: susangail7 hotmail.com

Up to date information will be posted on our website www.whitewreath.com under "Coming Events" listing all other Commemoration/Remembrance Services held across Australia.

All are welcomed to attend and lay a Photograph, Flowers, Poem etc and be part of a commemoration service that for most is the first time that they are able to freely admit the loss of a loved one, friend, work colleague etc that have taken their lives by these tragic means. Suicide/ mental illness affects all walks of life, all cultures and all ages regardless of whether we are rich, famous or poor.

SILENCE ON SUICIDE

Throughout history there has always been places of safety for the mentally ill – from monastery to hospital. It is only in the last forty years that we have believed we can do away with places of safety or mental hospitals.

The reasons for mental hospitals were:

- * A place of safety or protection for the patient.
- * Peace and quiet or a reduction in sensory stimulus (stress) which tended to agitate the patient.
- * Return to a normal day/night, sleep/awake pattern (no sleep at all, sleep disturbance, or sleeping all day and up and agitated all night – "day/night reversal") – commonly occur in mental illness.
- * Return to a healthy diet:- not eating, over-eating or just very poor diet are common in serious mental illness.
- * Return to a normal daily work/rest pattern.
- * Basic level of physical health, diet, hygiene treatment of medical problems, all of which are neglected in mental illness.
- * Protect suicidal patients from themselves.
- * Protect society from dangerous patients.
- * Establishment of a therapeutic community (such as White Wreath Association's proposals).

Nightly we are treated to television advertisements of the dying moments of car accident victims to discourage people from driving whilst tired, drunk or speeding – nothing is said about privacy or confidentiality. Yet when a person attempts or talks of suicide in a treatment setting, his family are often not told.

We are treated to every aspect from conception to birth, to surgical separation of Siamese twins, yet nothing is said about privacy and confidentiality, but when a suicidal-mentally ill patient is discharged into his parents or family's care they are often told nothing – on the grounds that it would breach the patient's right to confidentiality.

When a suicidal patient is refused care and subsequently suicides it is seldom publicised, yet heart disease, Aids, cancer, epilepsy, everything but suicide/mental illness gets masses of publicity and funding/awareness campaigns.

The deliberate official and media blind-spot on suicide/mental illness must be the greatest public hypocrisy of the late 20th century and early 21st century. Heart attack, serious injury, respiratory arrest etc – all life threatening conditions, are immediately admitted to hospital – suicide/mental illness is the only life-threatening condition where people are routinely turned away and this is something that has only happened in the last forty years.

AMERICAN NEWS

Posted on Fri, Oct. 23, 2009

State Laws Prevent Mentally Ill From Getting Help

By Donna Wilson

last updated: October 23, 2009 01:23:59 AM

It greatly saddens me to read the account of the death of Craig Prescott. It takes me back to the grief that I and my family continue working through over the suicidal death of our 24-year-old son, who died during a depression and subsequent severe manic-depressive episode after being denied the hospitalization he needed.

Our son had a documented mental health condition and had been diagnosed as bipolar at 16 years old. Although he had not had such a severe episode since, we knew what was happening to him in the 24 hours preceding his death in July 2007. Sadly, we were unable to get him the help he needed at the time. The laws Jeff Jardine discussed in his column ("System of little help to Prescott," Oct. 11, Page A-1) have also reduced the power of loved ones and friends who can help.

In our son's state of mind, he could be quite violent and threatening during such an episode, stopping short of hurting those of us around him – perhaps? He did not want to be in jail as was threatened, but in this emergency, he needed to be in a locked behavioural centre where he could get levelled out with psychiatric help and medications.

Unfortunately, the hospitalization and medications needed are expensive and, due to his "pre-existing condition" we had been unable to insure him and eventually, were unable to afford medications for him. Also unfortunate in his confused and angry state of mind was that he would not cooperate with us, his parents, in our insistence that he be hospitalized for his protection, ours and others. At the time, local medical and law enforcement seemed not to hear us or others' multiple pleas for help. Several agencies involved seemed not to talk with each other. Subsequently, after being poorly medicated, our son was released from a local hospital as they deemed him not to be a danger to himself, even though we did. And subsequently, we were directed by law enforcement that he was OK and to leave him alone for a couple of hours of rest. We did that, only to find that he had died a suicidal death.

It was a sad horror for us, his loved ones and friends. During a time of trauma and ultimate exhaustion for all of us, the system that we trusted to help our son could only treat him as if he were a criminal – and subsequently failed all of us. The depth of our anger and frustration has been more than ever before experienced.

There are helpful resources in our communities to help those grieving such loss, such as Dawn's Light Centre in Sonora (532-9001). Sierra Non-Profit Services, of which I am executive director, was instrumental in forming Dawn's Light into a viable non-profit organization. Now I am involved as a parent receiving grief services, and an advocate for this very needed organization in our community, a community that has a high suicidal death rate among young adults and older.

Our hearts go out to the Prescott family in their grief, and thanks to Jardine for an illuminating article on the difficult state of mental health care and the lack of power of family and friends during mental health crisis.

Wilson is a resident of Sonora.

IMPORTANT REMINDER

Please don't forget Membership Renewals are due on the 28 February 2010

WISH LIST

Stamps, Copy Paper, DL Envelopes, A4 Envelopes, Volunteers Aust/Wide

OR YOU MAY LIKE TO DONATE

DONATIONS ARE TAX DEDUCTIBLE

Via our credit card facility posted on our Website www.whitewreath.com then follow the instruction.

Directly/Direct Transfer into any Westpac Bank

Account Name White Wreath Association Ltd BSB No 034-109 Account No 210509

Cheque/Money Order to White Wreath Association Ltd PO Box 1078 Browns Plains Qld 4118

A MOTHER'S STORY

My 18 year old son on several occasions spoke to me of suicidal thoughts.

Because my son smoked marijuana and in the past had used intravenous drugs I thought that it might have been adolescent behaviour combined with drugs that may have distorted his thinking. Something I hoped he would overcome.

One Saturday morning I had to take my younger son to the doctor's and pick up a few groceries. My younger son, after the doctor's appointment went on to see a friend. I was gone no longer than 1 hour.

When I returned I went down stairs to the laundry. I found my son hanging. I was alone in the house and by myself, I had to cut him down. Crying and in complete disbelief I gave my son CPR, desperately trying to revive him. I did not want to stop the CPR but I had to ring 000. I was in total shock but managed to rush back up the stairs and ring the emergency number for help. They advised me not to hang up and continue the CPR until the ambulance arrived. I was out of breath and tired but continued CPR until they arrived. I was traumatised.

To find my child hanging and dead in my home was beyond comprehension. Something that you would never expect to see in your life. I repeatedly ask myself questions of why was I so naive not to believe my son when he spoke of suicide. I ask how would I have known if we as a society are not educated on suicide. Family and carers, in most cases think this is the behaviour of adolescents. We do not know how to differentiate between behavioural problems and serious problems. Psychiatrists, doctor's etc specialise for many years on this specific issue of suicide. We, the community care givers, are totally ignorant on this subject. We are left to find our own way.

CORRESPONDENCE

Hi,

My name is BC I would like to volunteer to create awareness for suicide.

I am 17, I was diagnosed with depression a couple of months ago. Without the help of family and friends I would have most likely have committed suicide.

I would like to help people like me and make sure they are still here to see their future.

Sincerely

BC

Dear Fanita

"Thanks" for being there when I needed someone to talk to. The Story I wrote is a speech I gave at an Indigenous Women's Conference at Katherine N.T on the 26th – 30th Sept 09. I believe people need to know about suicide, as I said on the phone that the government are covering up when it happens on an Aboriginal Community. I know every nationality irrespective of race and colour have suffered through suicide and it isn't a respecter of peoples but I feel when it happens to my people my heart and my life as an Ordained Minister is for my people. Too long we have been in the background of society. We as indigenous people never had this problem in Aboriginal society before. It's not part of our culture but today we live in a very different world that dominates our existence.

I trust my Story will help someone.

Footnote:- With full permission from Pastor Betty Mills her story will be published in three parts commencing with this issue (Feb 2010)

My name is JM. On October 28 2008 my older brother MRM Jr. took his own life. He hung himself. We were very close! I miss him dearly. If I could do anything to bring him back to have him here with me I would. He was so amazing. Suicide is not the answer. We need every one of you! Even if you don't realise it. If you leave forever it will effect so many. JM

Hi

I'm hoping you may be able to provide some information that I can pass on to my father-in-law, G, regarding the impact of suicide on survivors.

G was this afternoon sectioned under the Mental Health Act and taken to hospital after admitting that he had attempted on both Thursday and Friday night last week to take his own life.

When my husband said to G (his Dad) 'please think of the impact this would have on M' (his eldest grandson who is 5 years old) G response was, 'he'd forget about it in a week'. M is the eldest of G's 3 grandchildren. M has twin brothers B and S. My mother-in-law picks M up from school every Friday afternoon and he spends the afternoon with his Nanny and Poppy before my husband picks him up after dinner and brings him home. M adores his Poppy and spends many hours helping him in the garden, shed etc and pouring over train books. M would be absolutely devastated to lose his Poppy.

One of M's brothers was diagnosed with autism at the beginning of this year and a great deal of our time and energy has been spent on dealing with this and taking S to and from therapy appointments etc. As parents we have tried very hard so that M does not feel he is a lower priority to the twins and now to the brother with special needs. The time M spends with his grandparents is very important and gives M the time and space to be treated as an individual and not just as a brother.

I was hoping that you could provide me with some information/case-studies etc that I might be able to give G to read (as he is quite deaf) that would explain the impact of suicide on a young child not to mention his wife and two adult children.

Many thanks

LM

PETER NEAME
WHITE WREATH ASSOC
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In our view and in the view of scientific research suicide is caused by neurological abnormalities. Mentally well people have an instinctive reflex to survive. A normal individual cannot turn off/ override this reflex or what the Greeks refer to as Eros-life force. In an individual with a neurological condition commonly referred to as a mental illness this life force can become death force or what the Greeks refer to as Thanatos. Survival instincts are located in the Limbic System of the brain. All current suicide prevention strategies fail because they do not acknowledge the neurological base of mental illness. Mental illness is a 1) Chronic, 2) Progressive, 3) Neurological Disorder affecting the, 4) Structure, 5) Function, 6) Chemistry, and 7) Electricity of the Brain. Electro-convulsive treatment (therapy) and Deep Brain Stimulation work on the electricity of the brain. Current drug treatment works on the chemistry or chemical neurotransmission across the gap or synapse from the axon of one nerve cell to the dendrite of the next nerve cell.

Assessment of mental illness should always cover these seven points, currently it does not.

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