

A man with a beard, wearing a dark t-shirt, is shown in a circular frame. He has his right hand covering his face, suggesting distress or despair. The background is a dark, textured blue. The text is overlaid on the left side of the image.

Have
you
lost
someone
to
suicide?

**You are not alone.
Help is available.**

Acknowledgements

The Ballarat Suicide Prevention Place-Based Trial, Western Victoria Primary Health Network (WVPHN), and Ballarat Community Health would like to acknowledge all community members who have lost a loved one to suicide.

We particularly want to pay our respects to the Traditional Owners, past and present, of the land that this community resource is tasked to support, the Wadawurrung and Dja Dja Wurrung people. We acknowledge the trauma that suicide and its aftermath bring to individuals, families and communities, and recognise the power of culture in the prevention and healing processes.

This community resource was developed by Ballarat Community Health as part of the Suicide Postvention Response Project (2021), funded by WVPHN and the Ballarat Suicide Prevention Place-Based Trial. To the best of our knowledge, the service provider details contained within it were current as of May 2021.

If you would like to order copies of this booklet, please contact postvention@bchc.org.au



BALLARAT
**Suicide Prevention
Place Based Trial**



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Have you lost someone to suicide?

We would like to express our sympathy. We also want to acknowledge that the experience following a suicide can be intense, confusing, and often overwhelming. There may be a wide range of feelings and thoughts that are difficult to understand and to manage. You might feel isolated, as if there is no one to talk to who would understand what you are experiencing.

You are not alone. Help is available.

This community guide was developed to help all people in community who have been impacted by a suicide. It provides a list of resources to help you in the weeks, months,

and years ahead. We have broken the guide into sections – support available for adults, followed by teens and children, and then supports that cater to our diverse community.

Another thing for you to remember is that the service, StandBy – Support After Suicide (0422 366 262) is also there to help you, no matter how long it has been since losing someone or how close you were to them.

People who have been bereaved recommend that anyone who has lost someone to suicide needs to take steps to take care of themselves. Hang onto this guide for when you are ready to connect to the support that suits your need. We hope it offers you support and reassurance so that you feel you are not alone.

Support for adults

Coping with Bereavement and Loss

There are some excellent online resources that can help you understand grief and trauma, particularly the complicated grief a person can experience after a suicide loss, and how it is different for everyone.

Lost someone to suicide

suicidecallbackservice.org.au/resources/lost-someone-suicide

Help is at hand (note that services listed in this booklet are in the UK)

nhs.uk/Livewell/Suicide/Documents/Help%20is%20at%20Hand.pdf

StandBy Support After Suicide

0422 366 262

standbysupport.com.au

StandBy offers a free, confidential support service to anyone who has been bereaved or impacted by suicide at any stage in their life. The service is accessible 24/7 in western Victoria. StandBy also offers an extensive list of downloadable resources for families and workplaces impacted by suicide. They can even help you with the practical stuff.

GriefLine

1300 845 745 6AM – midnight AEST

griefline.org.au/forums

A national helpline offering confidential telephone counselling 7 days a week, 365 days a year.

Support After Suicide (Jesuit Social Services)

03 9421 7640

supportaftersuicide.org.au

Support After Suicide assists children, young people and adults bereaved by suicide. The program provides counselling, support groups

and online resources to those bereaved by suicide, including books, fact sheets, and a secure and private online community for people who are bereaved by suicide.

Note: Support After Suicide does not offer 24-hour crisis support.

The Australian Centre for Grief and Bereavement

03 9265 2100

grief.org.au/ACGB/Bereavement_Support/Counselling_1/Counselling.aspx

Based in Melbourne, ACGB is a statewide specialist bereavement counselling service that is provided online or via the phone for individuals, children and families who need (non-crisis) assistance following the death of someone close to them.

The Compassionate Friends Victoria

03 9888 4944

Online bereavement support at:
compassionatefriendsvictoria.org.au

The Compassionate Friends Victoria supports grieving parents, siblings, and grandparents in the event of the death of a child – of any age or from any cause.

Pomegranate Community Mental Health

03 5320 2260

sjog.org.au/our-services/community-and-youth-services/community-mental-health-services

Offers psychotherapy to adults, adolescents, families and children from low income and disadvantaged households in the Grampians region. Some fees pay apply and a referral from a GP is required.

Ballarat Community Health

03 5338 4500

bchc.org.au/service/general-counselling

Offers mental health and family violence counselling services for adults.

Head to Help

1800 595 212

headtohelp.org.au

Open to Victorians of any age who may be experiencing distress or mental ill health. This includes people who have never accessed mental health services before and their family and friends.

Two Head to Help hubs exist in Western Victoria, located in Ballarat and Geelong, but free counselling services can be accessed via phone no matter where you are.

Relationships Victoria

1300 364 277

relationships victoria.com.au/services/counselling

Offers counselling for individuals, couples, families, and children, either face to face or via online chat, including for grief and loss.

Wellways Helpline

1300 111 500

wellways.org/our-services/helpline-1300-111-500

Available Monday to Friday, from 9am to 9pm, Helpline is for people experiencing issues with their mental health and wellbeing. It provides support to individuals, families, friends and carers, as well as professionals and the community. Helpline volunteers are 'peers', people who have a lived experience of mental health issues.



Mental Health Apps

Fundamentally, a big part of taking care of yourself is understanding how to maintain mental health wellbeing, how to recognise and get support for mental health problems (both for yourself and others) and how to facilitate your mind to thrive. There might just be a mental health app out there to help you do this. Search for the right mental health app for you at one these sites:

- **Beacon, a portal to online applications for mental and physical disorders** (Australian National University) beacon.anu.edu.au
- **Self-help Tools and Apps** (Black Dog Institute) blackdoginstitute.org.au/getting-help/self-help-tools-apps
- **Head to Health Australia, Digital Mental Health Resources** (Australian Government) headtohealth.gov.au/search-resources

Help for kids and young people

When someone dies by suicide

kidshelpline.com.au/kids/issues/when-someone-dies-suicide

Kids Helpline has produced an online narrative for children about the feelings they may experience after the loss of someone.

Mental health apps suitable for youth

au.reachout.com/tools-and-apps

A book just for me

standbysupport.com.au/resources

StandBy's grief journal for children under 12. Activities include colouring in and ways to help children identify their feelings.

For grieving teens

standbysupport.com.au/resources

A grief journal for teens, produced by StandBy. Activities include what they would say to the deceased, making a playlist of music to express their feelings and ways to accept that they may never know why it happened.

Kids Helpline

1 800 551 800

kidshelpline.com.au/get-help/webchat-counselling

A 24-hour telephone service that is available for young people (aged between 5 to 25) who need advice, counselling or just need to talk.

Headspace

03 5304 4777

headspace.org.au/headspace-centres/ballarat

Headspace supports young people aged 12 to 25 with mental health, physical health, drug and alcohol support, and educational and vocational support. Young people can self-refer or be referred by a professional.

Child and Family Services (Cafs)

03 5337 3333

cafs.org.au/our-programs-and-services

Cafs have a range of programs and services for children, young people and families who are vulnerable or in need of support.

Suicide in Schools: Information for Parents

headspace.org.au/assets/Uploads/Corporate/Suicide-in-schools-Information-for-parents-web.pdf

When a suicide occurs within a school community, it can have a profound emotional effect not only on family and friends, but on students, school staff, parents, and the whole community. This downloadable resource explains some of the possible reactions your young person might have following the death of a student, teacher or parent.



Help for veterans and their families

Defence All-Hours Support Line

1800 628 036

www1.defence.gov.au/adf-members-families/health-well-being/services-support-fighting-fit/need-help-now/all-hours-support-line

The ASL is a confidential telephone service for ADF members and their families to help them access the support they are entitled to receive from the ADF, as well as identify what services are available in the general community to help solve the problem.

Defence Family Helpline

1800 624 608

www1.defence.gov.au/adf-members-families/health-well-being/services-support-fighting-fit/need-help-now/family-helpline

Provides a range of practical and emotional support programs for families facing emergency or crisis, including assistance in times of illness, injury, domestic crisis or bereavement. The Helpline operates 24/7 and is staffed by qualified human services professionals, including social workers and psychologists, who can provide an assessment, assistance or referral.

Opens Arms

1800 011 046

openarms.gov.au/get-support/counselling

Open Arms offers free telephone and online counselling to all ADF personnel and veterans, their partners and children, including suicide prevention and intervention.

Also run 'Operation Life', a mobile safety plan app designed to help people deal with suicidal thoughts; recommended to be used with the support of a clinician.

Support for the LGBTIQ+ community

Thorne Harbour Health

03 9865 6700 or 1800 134 840

Confidential, non-judgmental, counselling for members of the LGBTIQ+ community, including grief and loss.

Switchboard Victoria

1800 184 527

switchboard.org.au

Telephone and web counselling, information, and referral service for LGBTIQ+ people.

QLife

1800 184 527

between 3pm – midnight everyday

qlife.org.au

Offers trained peer support workers from the LGBTIQ+ community who can assist with suicidal thoughts, loss through suicide, or advice on how to help someone if there is concern that they need support, through phone support or online chat.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Postvention Resources

Thirrili National Indigenous Postvention Service (NIPS)

1800 805 801
thirrili.com.au

NIPS advocates provide emotional and practical support to families impacted by a loss from suicide.

Grieving Aboriginal Way

dhhs.tas.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0015/213801/Grieving_the_Aboriginal_Way.pdf

This booklet raises awareness about grief for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Koorie Family Services

03 5331 5344
badac.net.au/services

Aboriginal Housing Victoria

03 5331 6518
ahvic.org.au

Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service Co-operative

03 5331 3211
vals.org.au

Aboriginal Fathers Stayin' on Track

stayinontrack.com

Ballarat and District Aboriginal Cooperative (BADAC)

03 53315344
badac.net.au/services

BADAC supports the health and wellbeing of the Ballarat and District Aboriginal community with a range of holistic services, including Social and Emotional Wellbeing.

Be You has produced a series of **Fact Sheets** to support staff working with Aboriginal and Islander children and young people and their families after a suicide. These include:

Grief: How Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people might respond to suicide

headspace.org.au/assets/School-Support/Grief-How-Aboriginal-and-Torres-Strait-Islander-young-people-might-respond-to-suicide-web.pdf

Suicide in schools: Information for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families

headspace.org.au/assets/School-Support/Suicide-in-schools-Information-for-Aboriginal-and-Torres-Strait-Islander-families-web.pdf

Victorian Aboriginal Community Services Association

03 4308 0781
vacsal.org.au

When drug & alcohol use or gambling is a concern

Direct Line

1800 888 236
directline.org.au

Confidential alcohol & drug counselling and referral to support and treatment services in Victoria. Register on the website to access free services, including:

- Chat Counselling
- Email Support
- Self-Assessments

Gamblers Help

(03) 5337 3333 or
1800 858 858 (after hours)
gamblershelpwestvic.org.au

Offers support to anyone affected by gambling, not just gamblers. You can get help for yourself and your family over the phone.

Where to seek help for family violence

The Orange Door Ballarat (weekdays)	1800 737 732	orangedoor.vic.gov.au
Safe Steps (24-hr national hotline)	1800 015 188	safesteps.org.au
1800 RESPECT (24-hr national hotline)	1800 219 819	1800RESPECT.org.au

How to support someone who has been bereaved and affected by suicide

Being bereaved by suicide is one of the loneliest experiences anyone can have. People bereaved by suicide have significantly less chance of receiving support from friends and family. We want to help but worry about saying the wrong thing and often put off making contact. Sometimes we leave it too long and before long it seems too late to say anything at all.

Written by the Support After Suicide Partnership this booklet is designed to help anyone feel comfortable about reaching out to someone who has been affected by the suicide of someone close.

This practical guide is available as a free download at:
supportaftersuicide.org.uk/resource/finding-the-words



Finding help for the practical stuff

Losing someone close to you without any warning can be a painful, confusing, and self-altering experience. It is hard to think clearly. One of the simplest things you can do is let other people help you. When you are open to it, you will realise just how many people will reach out and help in different ways.

There are also resources and services out there to guide you in decisions that must be made in the days and weeks following a death; some are listed below.

What to do when someone dies – practical steps to take

betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/servicesandsupport/what-to-do-after-someone-dies

servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/subjects/death-and-bereavement/what-do-when-someone-dies

Who to notify

servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/subjects/death-and-bereavement/who-tell-when-someone-dies

Arranging a funeral

betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/servicesandsupport/funerals

Taking compassionate leave

fairwork.gov.au/leave/compassionate-and-bereavement-leave

Probate and administration

supremecourt.vic.gov.au/wills-and-probate/grants-of-probate-and-administration-of-deceased-estates

If someone dies without a will

legaid.vic.gov.au/find-legal-answers/wills-and-estates/if-someone-dies-without-will



Connecting with Community Groups and Organisations

When you are ready, getting involved in a community group may provide a sense of belonging and social connectedness, and offer extra meaning and purpose to everyday life. Staying connected with others is important for our social and emotional wellbeing.

Ballarat South Community Hub, Sebastopol	03 5329 3273	bschub.com.au/wp
Ballarat North Neighbourhood House	03 5329 1101	salvationarmy.org.au/locations/victoria/salvoconnectwestern/ballarat/ballarat-north-neighbourhood-house
Ballarat East Community Men's Shed	03 5332 4400	becs.shed.org.au
Ballarat East Neighbourhood Centre	0422 612 052	ballarateastnh.org.au
Wendouree Neighbourhood Centre	03 5303 0507	wnc.org.au
Sebastopol Men's Shed	03 5379 9256	sebastopol.shed.org.au
U3A Ballarat	0431 859 315	u3aballarat.org.au
Be Kind Ballarat		bekindballarat.com.au
Food is Free		foodisfree.com.au
Gardens for Wildlife Ballarat		gardensforwildlifeballarat.org
Compassionate Ballarat		compassionateballarat.com.au
Volunteering Ballarat		ballaratfoundation.org/community-impact/volunteer

Financial Assistance 	Financial support after losing your partner.	moneysmart.gov.au/losing-your-partner https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/subjects/crisis-and-special-help
	VincentCare	vinnies.org.au/findhelp/view/220
	Uniting Ballarat	unitingvictas.org.au/services/money-matters-financial-counselling
	Cafs Financial Counselling & Gamblers Debt	1800 692 237 cafs.org.au/financial-counselling
Food Support 	St Vincent De Paul Society Emergency food relief	03 5334 2844
	Uniting Ballarat Breezeway Meals Program	Free take away meals for those in crisis situations, every day from 10.30am to 1pm at 105 Dana Street Ballarat Central
	Salvation Army Ballarat Emergency food relief	Monday to Friday 9.15am to 2pm 102 Eureka Street Ballarat
Housing & Accommodation Support	VincentCare	1800 825 955 vincentcare.org.au/our-services/housing-homelessness-resources
	Uniting Ballarat	unitingvictas.org.au/services/homelessness-housing
Legal Support	Ballarat & Grampians Community Legal Service	03 5331 5999 bgcls.org.au
	Victoria Legal Aid Ballarat	1300 792 387 legallaid.vic.gov.au
Migrant and Refugee Services 	Ballarat Community Health Refugee and Migrant Services	03 5338 4500 bchc.org.au/service/immigrant-and-refugee-settlement-services
	Centre for Multicultural Youth	03 5317 7172 cmy.net.au
	Ballarat Welcome Centre	03 5383 0613 brmc.org.au
	Ballarat South Community Hub Sebastopol	03 5329 3273 bschub.com.au/wp

Parenting Support 	Catholic Care Ballarat (formerly Centacare); parenting & family support,	03 5337 8999	centacareballarat.org.au
	Child and Family Services; family support, parent education, family services,	03 5337 3333	cafs.org.au
	Uniting Ballarat		unitingvictas.org.au/services/family-services
	Parent Place; support & information on City of Ballarat family services	03 5320 5720	ballarat.vic.gov.au/city/facilities-and-venues/parent-place
	Maternal & Child Health Line	13 22 29	
	City of Ballarat Family & Children's Services childcare, immunisations, etc.	03 5320 5500	ballarat.vic.gov.au/me/parents
	Parentline; support, strategies & referral advice	13 22 89	
	Family Relationships Centre; parenting, mediation & relationship support	1300 303 988	
	Relationships Australia; parenting advice & referrals	03 5337 9222	
Seniors	City of Ballarat Home Support Program	03 5320 5500	ballarat.vic.gov.au/me/seniors

Keep on keeping on

Whether you are grieving the loss of a spouse, parent, child, sibling, friend, or someone else close to you, please remember to take care of yourself. It is also important to acknowledge that grieving can be a long process, and there will likely be times where your mental health and wellbeing are really challenged. For example:

After the funeral

This might be the time that everyone else's lives seem to go back to normal, and you may be left wondering how you're going to cope. You may feel angry that everyone 'has moved on'. You might find it difficult to cope with managing day-to-day activities such as eating and sleeping. Things like going to work, or social events may seem very difficult and the things you once found important may seem irrelevant. Don't underestimate the impact of grief on you and your well-being. This is the time for you to take extra care of yourself and, most importantly, get support from family, friends, or professionals.

Special dates or anniversaries

The intense pain of losing someone to suicide can come rushing back when a special holiday, birthday, or anniversary nears. The best way to cope with those days is to prepare for them in advance, seek out your supports and read some good advice for coping that's published in lived experience resource, The Mighty at: themighty.com/2017/02/anniversary-effect-reaction-depression

"The reality is that you will grieve forever. You will not 'get over' the loss of a loved one; you will learn to live with it. You will heal and you will rebuild yourself around the loss you have suffered. **You will be whole again, but you will never be the same. Nor should you be the same nor would you want to.**"

Elizabeth Kübler-Ross
(1926-2004)

Suicide Prevention

If you think you know what will make a difference in preventing suicide, or would like to become involved as a suicide prevention advocate for or lived experience peer in your community, find out what is available to you by contacting one of the following organisations:

Orygen	orygen.org.au	Australian Suicide Prevention Foundation	aspf.com.au
REACH OUT Australia	reachout.com	Batyr	batyr.com.au
Red Dust Healing	thereddust.com	Behind the Scene	behindtheseen.com.au
Roses in the Ocean	rosesintheocean.com.au	Beyond Blue	beyondblue.org.au
RUOK?	ruok.org.au	Black Dog Institute	blackdoginstitute.org.au
SANE Australia	sane.org	CALM The voice of education in suicide	keepcalm.org.au
Second Steps	secondsteps.com.au	Keep Your Feet Foundation	keepyourfeet.org.au
The Lowitja Institute	lowitja.org.au	Lifeline Australia	lifeline.org.au
Wings of Hope	wingsofhope.org.au	Movember	au.movember.com
Youth Live4Life	live4life.org.au		
Aboriginal Fathers Stayin' on Track	stayinontrack.com		

Immediate support

If you are feeling suicidal, or know someone who might be, there are a number of helplines that operate 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to provide emergency support for people, carers and families going through a mental health crisis.

Emergency Services	000
(call if you are worried about your immediate safety or someone else's)	
Suicide Call Back Service	1300 659 467
Suicide Line	1300 651 251
Poison Information Centre	13 11 26
Lifeline	13 11 14
Beyond Blue Support Service	1300 224 636
Mental Health Psychiatric Emergencies (Ballarat Health)	
	1300 247 647
Kids Helpline	1800 551 800

