


Rural Alive & Well (Inc.)

Practice Based Suicide Prevention What has worked

Liz Little – CEO May 2019





The slide features a background with a map of Tasmania in shades of orange and white. The title and subtitle are centered in bold black text. The speaker's name and date are positioned on the left and right respectively. A logo for RAW TAS is located at the bottom center.

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Rural Alive and Well (RAW)

RAW is a state-wide provider of mental health, well-being, and suicide prevention services to rural Tasmania.

It is highly respected in the communities it services and makes a significant contribution to the sustainability and quality of life of rural communities across the state.



The slide has an orange header with the title. Below the text is a photograph of a woman in a blue jacket and a man in a red jacket and hat talking. A RAW TAS logo is in the bottom right corner.

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Who we are and how to we work

- RAW was established by local farmers in 2008 as a response to 2 of their mates committing suicide after a significant drought.
- We are a mobile service that has 8.6 FTE Outreach Workers across rural Tasmania (inc. Bass Strait Islands) plus 1.8 FTE capacity building and training staff.



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Tasmanian Suicide Rates

- In 2017 Tasmania had the fourth highest rate of suicide in Australia with 15.6 deaths/100,000 (age standardized) (ABS – Causes of Death).
- 80 people died of suicide in Tasmania in 2017 (60 males and 20 females).
- In 2017 Tasmania was the **only Australian state or territory with a lower rural vs metropolitan suicide rate**, with the rural/regional rate being 14.4/100,000 cf. the Greater Hobart rate being 16.9/100,000.



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Our Way of Working

RAW supports individuals, families and communities in Tasmania with the consequences of personal problems and the trauma caused by natural and economic pressures and disasters.

We operate in a mainstream policy and service framework that is 'clinically' driven and lacks an understanding of 'culturally safe' practice and access issues in rural communities.

RAW practices the motto on our vehicles 'Talk to a Mate' by being accessible with a 'feet on the ground' approach to providing support wherever and whatever the issue.

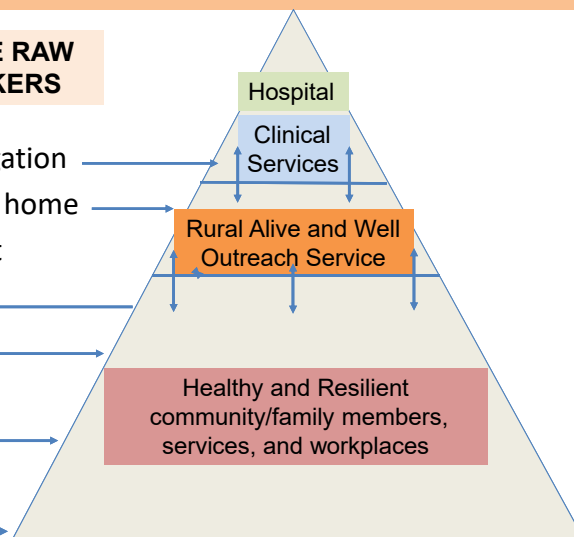


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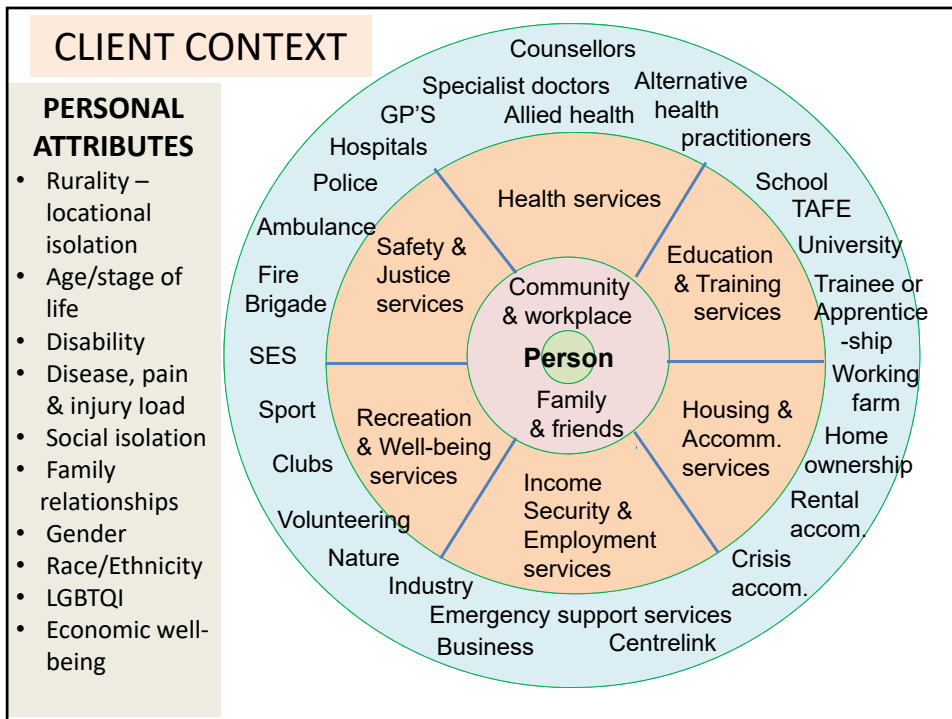
RAW Step-Up Step-Down Model

ROLE OF THE RAW FIELD WORKERS

- Systems Navigation
- Community & home based support
- Crisis referral
- Community reintegration
- Capacity building
- Support to family, community members & workplaces



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RAW Programs - The Outreach Program

The Outreach program involves an 'assertive' approach including 'cold calling' with regular farm and house visits to contact those who traditionally have been isolated, overlooked, or are simply 'doing it tough'. In 2016-17 the Outreach program:

- received 496 new referrals and worked with 881 clients;
- 27% of our clients were self-referrals with a further 11.5% of referrals coming from family members;
- delivered face-to-face counselling to 74% of our clients and phone support to a further 27.4%;
- identified 119 (13.5%) of our clients as 'at risk' of suicide;
- received 503 calls to its 24/7 HelpMate crisis line;
- males made up approx. 58.6% of our clients.



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Healthy and Resilient Communities (HaRC)

The HaRC program ran for 3 years until September 2018. Its goal was to enlist community participation in local suicide prevention and well-being initiatives.

RAW worked in 31 rural communities across Tasmania to:

- facilitate local partnerships designed to build local community well-being;
- build community capacity to identify key risk signs of suicide risk and mental health issues; and,
- equip community members with knowledge, and self-care, and prevention/early intervention skills.



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The Training Program

RAW delivers training and information programs to build the community's capacity to recognise and respond to mental health, well-being and suicide prevention issues. We deliver accredited programs such as Mental Health First Aid and Rural Minds to:

- empower local communities and industries to recognise the signs and indicators of suicide risk; and,
- give families, local people, or workmates the confidence and skills to help someone 'at risk' and refer them to appropriate services.

RAW has recently entered into a partnership with the Tasmanian Seafood Industry Council to deliver Outreach Services and capacity building to their industry worksites across the state.

RAW is currently developing industry based peer support programs and the capacity to work with and deliver services to the rural 65+ age group.



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Program Evaluation

In 2017 RAW, in partnership with the University of Tasmania evaluated both the Outreach and the HaRC programs. The Evaluation Reports on the Outreach program provided 43 recommendations, and for HaRC 13 recommendations – these can be found on the RAW website www.rawtas.com.au

The following is a summary of the strategic outcomes and directions for our programs:

- Direct services to individuals and families;
- Capacity building with communities and industry; and,
- Enhancing program and organisation robustness.



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Direct services to individuals and families

The role of the Outreach Worker is to:

- provide information;
- reduce isolation;
- deliver support/counselling, and task centred assistance;
- provide systems navigation and service advocacy.

Deliver 'client-centred' practice by:

- recognising the diversity of the people we work with including their different life pathways and contexts;
- acknowledging that they are the best people to identify what their 'problem' is and the 'situational stressors' in their life that are challenging their coping skills; and,
- recognising that they will recover better in their own home and community.



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Direct services to individuals and families

Client engagement and intervention involves the:

- Identification and management of risk and safety issues;
- Collaborative setting and review of intervention goals;
- Provision of support, coaching and motivation to encourage them to build skills, engage with family and community supports, and to stay alive;
- Strengthening of connections to informal and formal networks and services that supports their mental health, builds resilience, and promotes engagement for recovery;
- Provision of warm referrals to and support for engagement with other services that may include clinical care; safe and secure housing; financial or relationship counselling; getting back to study or work; and/or keeping in touch with family and friends.



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Capacity building with communities and industry

Understand the 'readiness' of a community to engage including the context and history of their motivation such as:

- current or recent suicide event or cluster;
- impact of natural disaster or economic restructuring;
- development of community champions;
- intervention by external agency such as government.

Take the time to identify a 'shared purpose' between local people and the capacity building service. Avoid goal displacement by imposing externally derived rather than local, organically developed process.

Create opportunities for communities to share, enrich, and record their 'narrative' or collective memory. Build relationships and shared community experiences.



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Capacity building with communities and industry

Identify and mobilise community leadership capacity recognising that different people may be involved at different phases of the program and that there are different sorts of membership (eg. lived experience, 'representational' membership such as services and institutions).

Plan and evaluate with the community by collaborative identification and ongoing review of both desired and outcome impacts – use 'praxis' to underpin continuous improvement. Collaborate with other services and networks to share information, knowledge and resources.

Develop broad community awareness of what you are doing - share information about your activities with the community.

Broker access to external resources.



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Enhancing program and organisation robustness

RAW program staff need:

- the capacity to engage socially isolated and withdrawn clients;
- the personal resilience and support to work in relative isolation, and the skills and judgement to keep themselves and their clients safe;
- ongoing access to training in relation to trauma informed practice, loss and grief, working with men, strengths based approaches to counselling etc. and information currency updates in relation to other services and benefits that are available.

Connect the Outreach and Community Capacity Building programs under a shared philosophy and service delivery continuum – build internal accountabilities.



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Enhancing program and organisation robustness

Build a 'community of interest' network by engaging with key community networks such as Men's Sheds, Rural Youth, Women in Agriculture, and relevant industry bodies etc.

Develop data sets across all programs for planning as well as reporting and compliance purposes.

Articulate the boundaries of RAW's service domain while maintaining sufficient flexibility to change with future developments of client needs and profiles, strategic opportunity, and funding or policy changes.



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For more information on RAW visit:

www.rawtas.com.au

Like us on Facebook:

www.facebook.com.au/raw.tas

Youtube:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCnFL2n3OoNwmM1OinqB4Bxg>



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