

SAFE HANDS, SAFE PLANS WORKSHOP

Managing suicide risk and mental health crisis in rural New Zealand

Under our Rural Mental Health Initiative contract with the Ministry of Health, the Rural Health Alliance Aotearoa NZ (RHĀNZ) will provide twenty *Safe Hands Safe Plans* workshops in rural communities over the next year. They are offered free of charge to all participants.

We will work with RHĀNZ Clinical Champions and local health or social service providers to offer the workshops according to the needs of each community.

Who might participate in a *Safe Hands, Safe Plans* workshop?

The workshop is suitable for health and social service professionals who might come in contact with people experiencing mental distress or crisis, and may be at risk of suicide. This may include General Practice doctors, nurses; midwives; LMCs; Plunket nurses; Pharmacists, community based mental health and addiction clinicians and support workers; St John; NZ Police; clergy; allied health, teachers and counsellors.

What is the aim of the workshop?

Participants will build on local relationships, tools and resources to more confidently identify and manage acute or crisis presentations of mental distress or risk of suicide in their communities.

What will participants learn in the workshop?

Participants will have the opportunity to:

1. Understand mental health problems often associated with suicide, particularly depression and alcohol abuse.
2. Apply evidence-based depression and suicide risk screening & assessment tools, including the PHQ9 as our teaching tool, and suicide risk inquiry tools.
3. Develop and use individual safety plans appropriate to local pathways of care.
4. Be more confident in counselling patients / clients about access to lethal means of suicide.
5. Understand best practices for crisis intervention, and develop office protocols for management of crises involving suicidal patients.

How long are the workshops?

Ideally, about five hours including a refreshment break. This allows time for practice with the tools, and some group discussions.

Longer workshops that link to community needs or other initiatives can be arranged by discussing this with us.

Who facilitates the workshop?

Dr Annette Beautrais, Adjunct Professor at the University of Canterbury, Christchurch, and Suicide Prevention Co-ordinator at the South Canterbury DHB.



Annette has worked in suicide research and prevention for the last 25 years, in New Zealand and internationally. Over the past two years she has led and facilitated RHĀNZ's programmes of over 60 workshops on suicide prevention in rural NZ. She has led the development of *Safe Hands, Safe Plans* workshop working with a wide range of experts and advisors along the way.

Who does what?

First steps:

Contact our Programme Manager, Marie Daly, to discuss holding a workshop in your area. Her contact details are at the top of this page.

At least two months before the workshop:

Marie will work with a key local contact, the RHĀNZ Clinical Champion in the local area, and Annette to decide the workshop date, timing, venue and catering. Either Marie, or the key local contact will make these arrangements.

We will send the key local person and other stakeholders a flyer for the workshop that includes a link to electronic registration. The flyer is sent via email to local networks and colleagues promoting the workshop.

For the workshop:

The list of workshop participants is sent to the local key contact and Annette to print and have participants sign on their arrival at the workshop. This gives us the information for participants to receive Certificates of Participation. Continuing Education Credits apply for GPs and Nurses.

As Annette travels on her own to most workshops, the local leaders are asked to help her get the venue set up, collect catering and organise the refreshment break.

After the workshop:

Participants receive a Certificate of Participation through email addresses provided at registration. They also receive an invitation to complete an electronic evaluation of the workshop.

Invoices for catering and venues are sent to Marie, and paid by RHĀNZ.