

Submission
No 24

INQUIRY INTO PREVALENCE, CAUSES AND IMPACTS OF LONELINESS IN NEW SOUTH WALES

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Date Received: 29 October 2024

I am the Suicide Prevention Manager for Lifeline Mid Coast. I manage a team that supports people that have survived a suicide attempt, bereaved by losing a loved one to suicide, has self-harmed or has suicide ideation. Loneliness is a large risk factor to our participants mental health and suicide. There is still so much shame and stigma associated with suicide that participants isolate themselves & not reaching out or accepting support. Loneliness is killing many Australians as they are not receiving the support they need. When we ask our participants "what did they really need in their darkest hours, when suicide was the only option?" they reply with "I just wanted someone to listen. Not give advice, not take me to hospital, not judge me or fix - just listen to me at that time".

Mental Health and suicide often isolate people from their families, there has been a lot of breakdowns in family units and friendships. People are missing that day-to-day connection. Families move apart, society is fast paced and complex, so many high expectations - people are becoming lonelier. There is an overwhelming offering of choices of information, services, activities, jobs, relationships - that people cannot process or take it all in - they are amongst people - but lonelier than ever.

Loneliness is one of the main reasons people call Lifeline. Sometimes, calling Lifeline is the only person that person will make a meaningful connection with that day.

People grieving the loss of a loved one to suicide are incredibly lonely. Suicide Grief is so much more traumatic and complex than other grief. There is also shame and stigma associated with this grief. So, people feel very alone in their suicide grief. They do not feel it connects to others grief; they feel lonely in their own house as each family member grieves differently.