
MEDIA RELEASE

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Trauma therapist leads Lifeline's suicide loss support group

As a post-grad student she wrote her thesis on trauma and group work. Now, Lifeline psychotherapist Ceiny Maybury uses her expertise to help people through one of the worst of all traumas - the loss of a loved one to suicide.

"The grief felt after a loved one suicides is more protracted and at a deeper level than any other," said Ceiny, who facilitates the Suicide Bereavement Support Group at Lifeline Harbour to Hawkesbury in Gordon.

Explaining why group work can be so beneficial for people who have suffered that loss, Ceiny says participants feel safe among others who know the trauma of suicide.

"Because they've found they can't talk about suicide with people 'out there' who don't really get it," she said. Some feel the topic is even off limits at home.

"We've had men who felt they had to be strong, who feared that if they openly grieved and fell apart in front of everyone, they'd be letting their families down. So they come to Lifeline and fall apart here. And that's fine. We never tell them they have to stop crying."

Lifeline Harbour to Hawkesbury's next eight-week, guided suicide bereavement support group will begin on Thursday March 9 at Gordon.

Applicants will be interviewed first to make sure they are ready for the program. Everyone is asked to commit to the full eight weeks before signing up.

"That's because group members form very close bonds and if somebody suddenly says 'sorry, I can't come because I'm going away for three weeks' it really leaves the group like a pie with a slice missing. It changes the dynamic and it can be quite distressing for the others."

She says it's always scary for every participant the first time they are in a room with people who are profoundly affected by suicide, but everyone is there for the same reason.

Ceiny Maybury also facilitates an ongoing suicide bereavement support group which some people have been attending for years.

"It doesn't mean they're not getting on with their lives," she said. "In group, no one will ever say it's time they moved on. One fellow once said, 'I'd like to know where we're meant to move on to, there's no place to get away from all this'. He's quite right. You never get over suicide, you learn to live with it. And people do learn to live with it."

In spite of her extensive academic training, Ceiny says most of what she knows comes not from books but from group members. "They're the experts," she said.

For more information or to join the suicide bereavement group, call Megan or Helen at Lifeline Harbour to Hawkesbury on 02 9498 8805 or contact appointments@lifelineh2h.org.au.

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