

loving person and what I do and hope to do in my life is to relieve this terrible depth of hurt, and not add to it as I had been doing unconsciously.

Then I prayed, hoped and believed that this should only serve as a lesson, not just to myself, family and friends but also to those who I came into contact with. A lesson of love starts with self love, and it is from this that we can feel for each other and not be ashamed of the bad in our life but to use it to help others from our own learning, understanding and experience.

I still cry at times, but that is what helps, and also the thought that at least I am here.

I hurt myself by drinking too much. I wanted to go to sleep by being drunk a lot and not wake up. I wanted to try to forget about what happened to me in the past... when I was sexually abused. I would feel shame, and want to drink alcohol.

One of the Police Liaison Officers said what happened to me was wrong and against the law, and that I need to be strong for my family.

He was right – I went back to playing football. It was good to play football with my brothers and cousins because I was fit from not drinking so much. The bad thoughts are in the past and I try not to worry so much now.

## Two Yarrabah Stories

Out of the loss of suicide, I realise how precious life is and how final death is. From this, I value not just my life but the life of every person on this earth as it is truly a gift.

The depth of sorrow and grief, confusion, pain and disbelief, brought me to my core and made me disregard the value of this precious gift which is our life and the life of others.

Although I had not considered suicide, or thought of self harm, I took risks that were over and beyond understanding without any consideration for my own wellbeing, let alone the wellbeing of my loved ones. I didn't talk to anyone, because I felt they couldn't share with me in my own pain.

I wasn't aware that this was self harm as I didn't deliberately set out to take my own life, but I took risks that would do that for me if that was the case.

Looking back at the sorrow that I created with these actions, not only in my life but more so in the life of my loved ones, I could see my own pain magnify and multiply unfairly in my family and friends. I knew I couldn't do this to my mob, although this pain was dumped on me.

It was then that I became strong enough to say to myself – I am a good person. I am a

**REMEMBER: Suicide is not a confidential matter. Everyone has a duty of care.**

## Contact numbers

- Yarrabah Anglican Churches..... 4056 9443
- Yarrabah Police..... 4056 9140
- Life Promotion Officer (counselling/support)..... 4056 9528
- Community Mental Health Service ..... 4050 3100
- Cairns Base Hospital ..... 4050 6333
- Crisis Assessment Treatment Team (CATT) Weekdays 8am–4.30pm ..... 4050 3100 After hours, Cairns Base Hospital ..... 4050 6333
- Yarrabah Health Service..... 4056 9139
- Lifeline Crisis Counselling ..... 131 114
- Yeti (Youth Empowered Towards Independence) (Youth Program 12–25 years)..... 4051 4927
- Centacare Cairns..... 4044 0130
- Gurriny Health Service (weekdays 8am–5pm)..... 4056 9388
- Yarrabah State School Health Nurse..... 40569199
- Yarrabah State School Guidance Officer ..... 40569110

*Brochure developed by David Patterson – Men's Health Coordinator, Vincent Sands – Life Promotion Officer, Yarrabah Council; Thelma Richards – Gindaja Substance Misuse Abor Corp; Mercy Baird, Anthony Weller and Nicola Roberts of Qld Health; Dulcie Bird – Dr Edward Koch Foundation.*

*Illustrations by Julie Haysom. Produced with assistance from Dr Edward Koch Foundation and Pippin Graphics.*



Brochure courtesy of Auseinet

# HEALING OUR WAY SELF HARM

Guyula is the Yarrabah sea-hawk who watches over our community. Guyula's outstretched wings reach out to people who are looking for support and comfort after the loss of a loved one.



## Risk factors



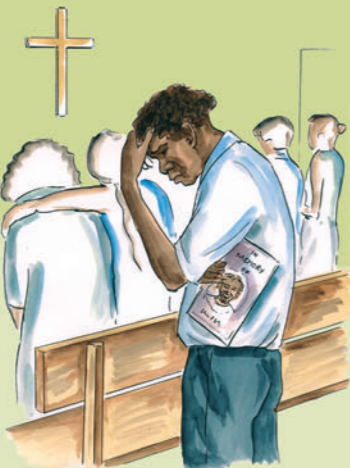
Break-up in relationship/  
Things going wrong/changes  
Violence in the community



Alcohol and  
drug abuse



Worry about money  
Loss of job/self esteem



Death of a friend/relation

If someone says  
they're okay, still  
watch out for them.  
It could be that they  
have finally made up  
their mind.



Loss of health  
Poor living conditions



Imprisonment



A previous attempt  
at suicide

I CAN'T TAKE IT ANY MORE



The last straw - small  
things can seem bigger

**HELP IS ALWAYS AROUND.**

## Warning signs



- Talking about no reason to live
- Suicide of family member or friend



- Showing anger
- Reckless behaviour
- Sudden unexplained  
change in mood



Wanting to be alone/silent  
treatment/holding back



- Don't care about self/not  
eating or sleeping well
- Thoughts of hurting yourself



- Feeling down/feeling  
hopeless or helpless
- Don't feel like doing  
things you normally do



Having someone to talk to  
Safe communities



Staying with someone

## Protective factors



Seeking support



Involve self in community  
/keep busy



Look after yourself



- Spiritual/cultural support
- Connecting with culture/  
traditional beliefs