**Suicide Prevention response to Covid19**

The current Coronavirus (Covid19) outbreak will undoubtedly impact on the emotional wellbeing and mental health of the population, potentially resulting in an increased number of suicides. One particular area of concern is the rise in demand against the ability of organisations to provide key support services linked to the Suicide Prevention agenda due to Covid19 challenges. As part of Coronavirus (Covid19) resilience planning we are developing short term, medium term and longer term actions to mitigate potential of increased suicide rates.

To inform this work, we need to build a picture of the current situation by gathering information from frontline services who continue to provide support during the current outbreak. Please take some time to review this information and provide thoughts/ideas/comments to the questions set out below.

**Potential factors contributing to increased suicides**

Listed below are potential reasons for an increase in suicides as a result of the Coronavirus (Covid19) outbreak. All could be immediate pressures but equally the impact could have longer term implications.

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| **From your experience of continuing to provide support at this time, what are the most frequently raised issues which are causing distress? Order your response from 1-10 (1 being the most frequently raised issue, 10 being the least frequently raised issue).** | |
| Financial pressures |  |
| Job losses/business closed down |  |
| Relationship problems/strain experienced during lockdown |  |
| Domestic/child abuse experienced during lockdown |  |
| Isolation/cut off from family and friends |  |
| Increased anxiety and depression amongst the general population: fear of 'going back to normal' and feeling vulnerable during and following lockdown |  |
| Grief: losing a loved one directly as a result of Covid19, unable to be there at the point they died, constraints on funeral arragements and not having the usual support from family members due to social isolation |  |
| Grief: losing a loved one through natural causes during this time but being unable to go through traditional grieving processes due to the constraints on funerals or not having usual support from family members due to social isolation |  |
| Emotional wellbeing and mental health of front line staff/other key workers continuing to work during the outbreak |  |
| Other: please provide details: |  |

**What are we currently doing?**

There are some initial short term actions which we are currently undertaking:

* Monthly Suicide Prevention Email Network Newsletter to provide regular updates for practitioners and support workers to help keep them up to date with the changing circumstances in the response to the Coronavirus outbreak
* Regular social media posts signposting to information and support for those in crisis which is available online/by telephone and can be accessed from home

There are some further short/medium term plans currently in development:

* Identified an online training course which is specific to managing anxiety around Coronavirus and are exploring how this could potentially be used by practitioners and support staff
* The Keeping Connected Leaflet is in the final stages of being updated and are planning how we can utlise this resource as part of the response to the current situation
* Considering the specific support needs for families bereaved as a result of Covid19
* Recently launched <https://coronavirus.nhsfife.org/> exploring the possibility to add a page signposting to available Coronavirus and mental health online support and information
* Reviewing suicide prevention apps for promotion across Fife
* Promoting mental and emotional wellbeing messages connected to Coronavirus during mental health awareness week in May
* Considering development of template processes/procedures for organisations who don’t have ‘escalation policies’ in place for addressing concerns around suicidal intent
* Developing resource packs for the 12 anchor sites across Fife and electronic resource packs for other front line support services who are working remotely

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| **From your experience of continuing to provide support at this time, is there anything you can identify in addition to the actions listed above which would assist you and your organisation to respond to people in distress and crisis in the short/medium/long term?** |
| Short term  Medium term  Long term |

**What challenges do we need to consider?**

The current unprecedented situation provides a number of challenges. To assist us and to support you please answer the following questions:

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| **Considering the potential reasons for increased suicide outlined above, who are the key partners we should be working with and supporting at this time?** |
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| **Many organisations and workplaces are currently working at reduced capacity or closed. In relation to suicide prevention, what support is needed in the short term and how can we plan support for the longer term when normal working practices resume?** |
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| **What are the best channels to communicate suicide prevention information to partners/stakeholders?** |
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| **We are currently collating a list of key partners social media channels as this will be a key communication channel to promote suicide prevention messages and the available support to the general public.**    **Does your organisation have a social media platform? If so can you provide details below.**  **Can you suggest alternative communication channels for people who do not have access to social media?** |
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| **Are there any other challenge in relation to suicide prevention which we need to be aware of at the current time?** |
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