



ALTERNATIVES TO SUICIDE
PROGRAM 2018

Expressions of Interest Invited 3-Day Facilitator Training

Perth, 20-22 March 2018

WA Steering Committee

	 Consumers of Mental Health WA (Inc)	 Mental Health Services & Carer Support
 helping support groups & individuals	 Suicide Prevention Australia	 Centre for Aboriginal Medical & Dental Health

Margaret Doust, Ella Macnish and Kai Schweizer (individual members)

Dear Colleague,

It is a pleasure to inform you about the opportunity to attend an **Alternatives to Suicide Facilitator Training** on **20 - 22 March 2018**, facilitated by Caroline Mazel-Carlton and Sera Davidow from the **Western Mass Recovery Learning Community (WMRLC)**, Boston, USA.

Background

The Alternatives to Suicide approach was developed by WMRLC in 2009 as one of the only peer to peer support groups that truly focuses on the topic of suicide. Rather than assessment of risk, these groups are based on creating a non-judgmental space in which to discuss suicide and other difficult and confronting topics.

“Before [these groups], there was a big part of myself that I couldn’t show anybody. I was told I could only talk about my sadness in this sanctioned little box (my therapist’s office). But I couldn’t even talk about suicide there, because they would make me go into the hospital.” Group Participant

Currently, there are a handful of Alternatives to Suicide peer to peer support groups in the USA. However, with interest growing in the training and philosophy that makes up the foundation of this approach, more groups are emerging further afield.

The approach has gained international interest, including in Australia. In February 2017, the Western Mass trainers were brought to Perth to run four days of engagement activities. You can see an outline of their approach which they presented at a forum in Perth on 20 February 2017 at:

<https://www.mercycare.com.au/alternativesforum/>

You can also go to www.westernmassrlc.org/alternatives-to-suicide to find out more about WMRLC and their approach to Alternatives to Suicide training.

A **Steering Committee** was established shortly after the February 2017 event to implement the Alternatives to Suicide approach in Western Australia (WA). The Steering Committee now invites persons who are interested in becoming facilitators to apply to attend this three-day Facilitator Training.

Important Dates & Times

Event	Date & Time
Expressions of Interest Open	Wednesday, 24 January 2018
Expressions of Interest Close	Friday, 23 February 2018, 5.00 pm Perth time
Acceptance to the Training	Wednesday, 28 February 2018, 5.00 pm Perth time
Facilitator Training Course	Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday 20, 21 and 22 March 2018; 9.30 am – 4.30 pm each day

Attendance on all days and time is required to complete the training

Reading homework may be assigned ahead of time and/or during the training sessions

Application Process

Anyone interested in attending the training must complete the **Expression of Interest Application Form** at the end of this document. We will accept applications until Friday, 23 February 2018, 5.00 pm Perth time.

Acceptance to the Training

The **Steering Committee** will review all applications received and notify people who have been accepted to the training by Wednesday, 28 February 2018, 5.00 pm Perth time.

If you would like to request early acceptance to the training (because you are coming from far away or have other extenuating circumstances that would require early notification of acceptance), please describe your circumstance on your application.

Please Note: We *always* notify people whether they have been accepted. If you do not hear back, it may be that we did not receive your application, so please check with us.

Who Can Attend

This training is for people who intend to facilitate an Alternatives to Suicide peer support group, or who otherwise intend to use learnings from the training to support community members at risk or affected by suicide. It is open to people who identify as suicide attempt survivors, people who have struggled with suicidal thoughts, allies, friends and family, clinicians, peer workers and more.

However, only people who have been through personal struggles with thoughts of suicide, or are a suicide attempt survivor will actually facilitate Alternatives to Suicide groups.

Additional requirements of Alternatives to Suicide Groups that make them unique are:

- They are peer-led support groups offered in everyday locations (such as libraries, churches, community halls and peer to peer spaces); and
- Group members are not subject to suicide risk assessment or management processes; participants are merely assisted to access or locate additional help with their thoughts of suicide if they choose and request this support.

This training is primarily intended for people who have some basic facilitation skills and/or training, although this is not absolutely required so long as you understand that the training is not designed to provide these basic skills.

You should have an active interest in establishing and facilitating an Alternatives to Suicide group!

Cost

We are requesting a \$450.00 fee per participant.

This fee is to support our own limited budget and resources, but is negotiable if you are coming as an individual not sponsored by an organisation, or if it is somehow otherwise cost prohibitive. **We do not want this fee to stop someone from being able to participate.**

All participants are responsible for their own travel expenses and accommodation, as applicable.

Other Important Information

If the training is over-subscribed, the Steering committee will **prioritise applicants who:**

- Are able and willing to attend all 3 training days
- Have some prior peer support and facilitation experience
- Identify as a suicide attempt survivor and/or have struggled with suicidal thoughts
- Are invested in starting an Alternatives to Suicide support group within WA (or facilitate an existing group)
- If not able to start an Alternatives to Suicide support group, are able to clearly articulate how they will use what they learn to support community members at risk or affected by suicide

If you attend the training, you should expect that the group will include a mixture of people in varied roles.

This training is designed to challenge and encourage creative thought about different belief systems, so openness and genuine curiosity is a must!

It is not a 'train the trainer' model.

Submitting your Expression of Interest

The Expression of Interest application is available in several formats to meet the accessibility needs of applicants. You can:

1. **Email** your completed form by 23 February 2018 to:
alternativesforum@mercycare.com.au with **Facilitator Training** (in subject header)
2. Or **Post** your completed form to arrive by 23 February 2018 to:
Facilitator Training
Attention: Nicole Smith
MercyCare Community Services
P.O. Box 202,
Wembley, WA 6913
3. Or **complete your form verbally** by phone. Contact Joe Calleja on 0433 821 214, or via email joe@callejaconsulting.com.au to organise a suitable time well before the closing date of 23 February 2018.

Trainers



Sera Davidow

Sera received her first psychiatric diagnosis as a teenager, accumulating a handful more by her early twenties. That, along with a lengthy history of self-injury and emotional distress, led to her first hospitalization against her will at the age of 22, and an array of prescriptions for psychotropic drugs. However, it was her 'non-compliant' and rebellious nature that paved her way down another path.

Sera's journey first brought her to a position in a traditional role in the mental health system, but she soon found her way to peer-to-peer support communities, advocacy and social justice efforts. At present, Sera works as the Director of the Western Massachusetts Recovery Learning Community (RLC) where she focuses much of her time on grant writing, oversight and project development. Through this work, she has gained a range of experiences including starting up a peer respite, opening resource centres, and producing educational materials (including co-authoring handbooks on peer respites and developing peer roles). She has also found a passion for filmmaking, beginning with 'Beyond the Medical Model' in 2013. In addition to the RLC, Sera is a founding member of the Hearing Voices USA Board of Directors, and a regular blogger at Mad in America (www.madinamerica.com/author/sdavidow).

More about Sera's story and work can be found in a full-length interview featured in Sun Magazine's April, 2017 issue:

<https://www.thesunmagazine.org/issues/496/an-open-mind>



Caroline Mazel-Carlton

Caroline first interfaced with psychiatry at the age of eight, and years later was able to find a path out of a world defined by diagnoses and medications through roller derby and social activism. Since moving out of a staffed group home eight years ago, she has worked tirelessly to create change in the mental health system, developing and re-defining peer roles and values in various organizations in North Carolina and Massachusetts.

Caroline currently serves as Director of Training for the Western Mass Recovery Learning Community, promoting an ethos of self-determination and mutual support in a number of settings across the globe. She has been privileged to be a facilitator/trainer for the "Alternatives to Suicide" approach for over five years, promoting conversation and connection over the current paradigm of "risk assessment". Caroline also works towards developing regional networks of support for voice-hearers in her role as Training Coordinator for the national Hearing Voices Research and Development Project.

Perth Events

Myths of Suicide is part of a series of events being organised in Perth for March 2018.

Event	Date
Myths of Suicide Presentation	13 Mar
Conversations on Suicide Workshop	14-15 Mar
Myths of Suicide Presentation	16 Mar
Youth Forum	19 Mar
Facilitator Training Course	20-22 Mar

For more information, **Joe Calleja** via email joe@callejaconsulting.com.au or phone 0433 821 214.

Sydney and Melbourne Events

Events are being held in Sydney and Melbourne in the week beginning 5 March 2018.

Sydney	Enquiries to Kath Thorburn, inside out & associates Australia (0435 348 168 or kath@insideoutconversations.com.au) regarding an open forum on the Alternative to Suicide approach with presenters from WMRLC
Melbourne	Enquiries to Flick Grey and the team at Alternatives Melbourne (alternativesmelb@gmail.com) regarding 3-day Facilitator Training and an open community event

*EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST APPLICATION FORM FOR THE FACILITATOR TRAINING
BEGINS ON THE NEXT PAGE*

EOI Application – Facilitator Training – 20-22 March 2018

YOUR ANSWERS TO THESE QUESTIONS WILL FORM YOUR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST APPLICATION.

ALL QUESTIONS ARE IMPORTANT AND REQUIRED.

PLEASE NOTE: APPLICATIONS CLOSE ON 23 FEBRUARY 2018 AT 5:00 PM

1. Please enter your contact details

First Name	
Family Name/Last Name	
Where do you live? (suburb/town)	
Postcode	
State or Territory	
Email (required for communication)	
Best daytime phone number (either landline or mobile, or both)	
Other daytime phone number (if none, write NIL)	

2. Agency or Organisation where you work (paid or unpaid/volunteer)

Agency/Organisation Name	
I am not currently working	<input type="checkbox"/>

3. Select the option that best reflects the type of organisation where you work (paid or unpaid/volunteer) – if applicable

<input type="checkbox"/>	Government (Federal, State or Local)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Not-for-Profit
<input type="checkbox"/>	Peer Support
<input type="checkbox"/>	Primary Health Network
<input type="checkbox"/>	Hospital
<input type="checkbox"/>	Local Suicide Prevention Action Network
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other, please describe:

FORM CONTINUES ON NEXT PAGE

4. Please indicate which of the following applies to you (mark as many boxes that apply)

<input type="checkbox"/>	I am a suicide attempt survivor and/or have struggled substantially with suicidal thoughts.
<input type="checkbox"/>	I work in a peer role in a mental health setting and would like to start a group. <i>Please provide a letter of support from the CEO or other senior executive that confirms their interest in setting up a group at the organisation and details of the nature of that support.</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	I work in a traditional role in a mental health setting and would like to start a group there. <i>Please provide a letter of support from the CEO or other senior executive that confirms their interest in setting up a group at the organisation and details of the nature of that support.</i>
I identify as:	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Aboriginal/Torres Strait Islander
<input type="checkbox"/>	Culturally and Linguistically Diverse
<input type="checkbox"/>	LGBTIQIA+
<input type="checkbox"/>	Intersex
<input type="checkbox"/>	Trans or gender diverse
<input type="checkbox"/>	Person living with a disability
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other, please describe:

5. Which age range are you in?

<input type="checkbox"/>	18-24 years	<input type="checkbox"/>	25-30 years	<input type="checkbox"/>	30-54 years	<input type="checkbox"/>	55 years and over
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6. Are you willing and able to attend the entire duration of the training?

i.e., Tuesday 20, Wednesday 21 and Thursday 22 March 2018, 9.30 am – 4.30 pm

(Venue will be MercyCare Office, 4 Brewer Place, Mirrabooka WA 6061. Parking and public transport is available.)

<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes
<input type="checkbox"/>	No

FORM CONTINUES ON NEXT PAGE

7. Please indicate that you have read and understand each statement.

If you have any questions, please contact Joe Calleja on (0433) 821 214 or email joe@callejaconsulting.com.au for clarification.

<input type="checkbox"/>	I understand that I need to <i>attend all three days</i> to successfully complete the training.
<input type="checkbox"/>	I understand that this is intended to train a person to facilitate an Alternatives to Suicide group (or an alternate format). The training <i>does not</i> prepare a participant to train other people to be a facilitator. <i>This is not a 'train the trainer' workshop.</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	I understand that this training <i>does not guarantee me a job as a facilitator</i> , and that it will be up to me and/or my own group or organisation to find financial and/or any other support needed to start a group.
<input type="checkbox"/>	I understand that the training group will likely <i>include a mixture of people</i> who have experience with suicidal thoughts, allies, people working in peer roles and people in clinical roles.
<input type="checkbox"/>	I understand that this training is <i>not</i> intended to provide basic facilitation skills, rather, it focuses on facilitation skills and perspectives <i>directly pertaining to the Alternatives to Suicide approach.</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	I understand that Alternatives to Suicide <i>support groups must be facilitated by people who themselves have considered or attempted suicide, and will be held in non-clinical settings.</i> An alternative format (that incorporates many of the principles of the Alternatives to Suicide approach) will be offered during training to people who plan to hold groups in clinical settings.
<input type="checkbox"/>	I understand that Alternatives to Suicide <i>support groups are peer led support groups</i> offered in everyday locations (such as church halls, community halls and peer to peer spaces) and that <i>group members are not subject to suicide risk assessment or management processes.</i> Participants are merely assisted to access local additional help with their thoughts of suicide if they choose and request this support.
<input type="checkbox"/>	I understand that if I write illegibly, or if my answers are only a couple of words or a short sentence, my application may not receive a high rating. Essays are not required, but <i>we do need at least a few sentences to understand your situation and views.</i>

FORM CONTINUES ON NEXT PAGE

8. If you are someone who plans on starting a support group, where and how do you see yourself starting an Alternatives to Suicide support group (e.g. in non-clinical spaces like a library, church, community hall, peer-to-peer spaces, etc.), or will you be seeking to set up a different kind of support group in a clinical setting? **If you do not plan to start a group, skip to question 8.**

8. If you are someone who does not plan on starting a support group, how do you see yourself using what you learn at this training? If you plan to start a group, return to question 7.

9. In your own words, explain what you think makes Alternatives to Suicide support groups different from clinical support groups.

FORM CONTINUES ON NEXT PAGE

13. Are you requesting early notification of acceptance? (i.e., do you need to know if you have been accepted to the training before Wednesday, 28 February 2018 when all others will be notified).

I require early notification	<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No
If <u>Yes</u> , please explain why and when you need to be notified				

14. Are you able to cover the cost of the training?

I can cover the cost of the training	<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No
If <u>No</u> , please explain why				

15. Please provide credit card details.

These will only be used if your application is accepted and you are covering the cost of the training.

Credit Card Details	<input type="checkbox"/>	Visa	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mastercard	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other
Name on Card						
Credit Card Number						
Expiry Date (Month/Year)						

16. Please provide any dietary requirements for catering purposes.

Dietary Requirements (if any)	
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17. Do you have any special access needs?

I have special access needs	<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No
If <u>Yes</u> , please explain what your needs are				

END OF APPLICATION FORM
