

An evaluation of CHIERS : a consumer focused and social network response to deliberate self harm

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Knowledge Production and Transfer' (Webber et al, submission no. 2099)Background: A conceptual issue identified in suicide prevention is that distinctions are made between reducing risk factors and increasing protective factors. It has been argued this distinction alone is meaningless. A preferred model acknowledges an additional mediating factor as being involved i.e. the causal relationship between the two factors under study. The assertion of the eco-systems perspective is that only by addressing an entire community's interactions and evaluating the needs of a system, can a complex behavioural issue such as suicide and self-harm be reduced. This presentation will report on the SPED study which evaluated a social work intervention to reduce suicidal ideation and deliberate self-harm. The aim of the research was to evaluate the efficacy of a single session and phone based assertive linkage service model to support consumers for up to six weeks post presentation to emergency. The intervention is structured around the completion of a baseline ecosystemic map (CHIERS), brief solution focused counseling and identification of consumer problem definition and referral priorities.Method: A randomized controlled trial methodology was implemented comparing the outcomes for the randomly selected intervention group with the control group (service as usual) recruited from Sunshine Hospital emergency mental health service.Results: The intervention made a statistically significant difference on re-presentation rates for both individual re-presenters and overall re-presentation numbers. There was a significant reduction in re-presentations for those in the intervention group at the 6, 12 and 24 -month time points. For example there was a 13.5% re-presentation rate for the intervention sample compared to a 25 representation rate for the control group at the 12 month time point. The results suggest the importance of integrating community networks in assessment, intervention and as an outcome measure in responding to the complex psychosocial issues experienced by consumers presenting with deliberate self-harm.