



Suicide and Self-Harm Response Policy and Procedure

Scope

This policy applies to Brook RED Community Members, Nominated Support People, Board Members, employees, volunteers, and students on placement.

Purpose

Brook RED acknowledges that *suicidal ideation, suicide, and self-harm* are common experiences in our community. Many people experience an ongoing battle with suicidal ideation, suicide, and/or self-harm and this forms a part of their recovery journey. Brook RED is committed to supporting those who are affected by suicide and self-harm and aims to contribute to good practice in suicide and self-harm prevention/intervention.

Principles

When responding to suicidal and self-harming behaviour, the physical and emotional safety and wellbeing of Community Members, employees, volunteers and students is paramount. Brook RED ensures staff receive a level of training and supervision appropriate to their role in responding to those at risk of suicide and self-harm consistent with supporting recovery. We use a *harm minimisation* approach with regard to self-harm and suicide intervention techniques that aims to minimise disruption to the person at risk's life.

Policy

Brook RED is committed to creating a safe space for people to openly discuss suicidal ideation and/or self-harm. Responses to suicide and self-harm risk are undertaken by staff who are appropriately trained. All staff are supported to recognise the limits of their individual roles and competencies and actively facilitate links to further levels of care where necessary.

Procedure

When responding to suicidal ideation and self-harm, it is important that we first address the physical and emotional safety of the person at risk. We do this by exploring these issues with the person.

If there is an ongoing or serious risk of harm or injury, then we encourage the person to call emergency services on 000. Staff may be required to do this if the person is unable or unwilling to do so themselves. Brook RED understands that for many people the attendance of emergency services can be unwanted and traumatic. Brook RED aims to minimise this as is reasonably practicable, whilst prioritising the safety of the person and the Brook RED community at large.

Duty of Care

Community Members and staff are advised of the limits of confidentiality during intake and orientation. Specifically Brook RED will not use or disclose the information for any other purpose unless a Permitted General Situation exists. A Permitted General Situation is defined as lessening or preventing a serious threat to the life, health, or safety of any individual, or to public health or safety. Wherever possible and reasonable, Brook RED will seek to obtain agreement for information to be disclosed prior to doing so. The person accessing support at Brook RED

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may elect to nominate people with whom they would like Brook RED to share information with. Privacy legislation requirements are considered in the disclosure of confidential information. Please refer to the Brook RED Privacy and Confidentiality Policy (APP 6) for more information.

Safety Planning

Once immediate serious risk has been eliminated, Community Members are assisted to develop a 'Your Safety and Supports' plan which identifies how the person and Brook RED will work together to better understand and respond to suicidal ideation and self-harm. The plan may also include details support contacts such as Nominated Support People and service providers. Community Members are actively involved in decision making processes about how to promote their safety.

Referral

Brook RED maintains links with external services including:

- Hospitals and hospital emergency departments
- General practitioners
- Local police
- Counselling and support services
- Other community based services
- Organisations supporting specific diverse population groups
- Other relevant services and programs

Reporting to Management

If the incident is life threatening or requires first aid (for example, suicide, *suicide attempt*, or serious self-harm) or if emergency services have been called, then staff must verbally notify the General Manager immediately or as soon as is reasonably practicable. If the General Manager is uncontactable, please refer to the Brook RED Contact Hierarchy for Emergencies in the Responding to Incidents Policy and Procedure. The receiving staff will forward information as soon as possible to the attention of the General Manager.

Instances that are life threatening or require first aid or involve emergency services, must be recorded using the General Incident Report Form and these forms must be forwarded to the HR and Compliance Manager within two business days of the incident occurring. The HR and Compliance Manager will log these forms in the Incidents Register and these will be analysed every 6 months. Unidentified analysis reports will be reported to the Board annually.

If the incident is not life threatening and does not require first aid (for example, suicidal ideation or low severity self-harm) then staff must notify their Line Manager verbally within two business days.

Suicide Postvention

Brook RED recognises the significant and devastating effect that suicide has on our community. Postvention responses are implemented with the aim of supporting those bereaved by suicide and preventing further suicide events. Following the death of a Community Member from

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suicide, the organisation identifies other Community Members who may be at increased risk of suicide and/or self-harm and assists them to access appropriate support. Community Members, employees, students, and volunteers are provided with opportunities for individual debriefing and support as required. They are also provided with information and resources about suicide bereavement where appropriate.

Professional Development and Training

Employees at Brook RED undergo the Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST) at induction. Brook RED recognises that suicide interventions are core skills for staff, and that knowledge and practice needs to be reviewed and updated regularly.

Professional Supervision and Support

Brook RED recognises that supporting Community Members who are at risk of suicide and/or self-harm can be challenging and demanding. The organisation is committed to monitoring and attending to the impact of suicide and self-harm on employees, students, and volunteers.

Employees, students, and volunteers are provided with supervision and debriefing to address the emotional impacts that may arise from working with Community Members in distress. Employees, students, and volunteers are encouraged to remain aware of their own emotional reactions and seek support from their supervisor, colleagues, and other avenues as required. Employees may also access external professional supervision to review and address the emotional impact of working with Community Members in distress if required.

Media Response

Media enquiries relating to suicide and self-harm are dealt with by the General Manager. Any public or media discussion the organisation engages in aligns with the Brook RED Communication Policy media guidelines for discussing and reporting suicide and self-harm.

Definitions of Terms Used

Harm Minimisation

A strategy that aims to prevent and/or reduce the damage of injury associated with self-harming behaviour.

Postvention

Interventions to support and assist the bereaved after a suicide has occurred.

Self-harm

Deliberate damage to one's body without the intent to die (also referred to as self-injury).

Suicide Attempt

An attempt to purposely end one's life.

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Suicidal Ideation

Thoughts about attempting or completing suicide.

Suicide

The act of purposely ending one's life resulting in death.

References

Brook RED Incidents Register
 Brook RED Communications Policy
 Brook RED General Incident Report Form
 Brook RED Privacy and Confidentiality Policy
 Brook RED Responding to Incidents Policy and Procedure
 Brook RED Your Safety and Supports Form
 Living Works ASIST

Document Control and Record of Changes

Version	Effective Date	Approved by	Summary of Change	Date of Next Review
Version 01	November 2016	Eschleigh Balzamo	Introduction of new policy	-
Version 02	April 2017	Eschleigh Balzamo	Change of format	January 2018
Version 03	May 2017	Eschleigh Balzamo	Change to version control Addition of content	January 2018
Version 04	October 2017	Eschleigh Balzamo	Addition of content	January 2018
Version 05	December 2017	Eschleigh Balzamo	Change of content	January 2018
Version 06	September 2019	Eschleigh Balzamo	Review and update	January 2021
Version 07	June 2021	Eschleigh Balzamo	Review and Update	July 2023
Version 08	August 2023	Eschleigh Balzamo	Review and Update	August 2024

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The General Manager has overall responsibility for this policy. If there are any questions regarding this policy, please direct these to the Business Services Manager or General Manager.