



Safety on the Shore —  
**ShoreSafe Newsletter #21**

October 2009



**SUICIDE in our community – we can all help prevent it.**

. More than 500 people die by their own hand each year. While the numbers have been steadily declining since 1997, this many deaths still has a devastating impact on families, friends and colleagues. The most common question after any suicide is 'why?' Generally suicide is the end result of a long period of extreme distress and difficulty without appropriate support. It is also said that suicide is a permanent solution to temporary problems. This clearly demonstrates that with the right support, problems can be solved and suicide can be prevented. Please read this with a view of gaining a better understanding of suicide and suicide prevention.

SPINZ (Suicide Prevention Information of New Zealand) provides quality information to support effective suicide prevention. We found this on their website.

**True or False?**

**People who talk about killing themselves rarely complete suicide.**

**False** - Anyone who talks about suicide needs to be taken seriously. Most people who complete suicide give clues or warning signs of their intent. These may be spoken or they may be actions.

**A suicidal person clearly wants to die.**

**False** - Many suicidal people don't want to die, they want to end the emotional and/or physical pain they are experiencing. Most people will be ambivalent - a part of them wanting to live and a part of them wanting to die.

**If you promise to keep someone's suicidal plan a secret you should always keep that promise.**

**False** - Suicide is not a secret you can keep. Best practice tells us that seeking help from a health professional is the safest response. It's better to have an angry friend/client than a dead one.

**Suicidal feelings are permanent**

**False** - Suicidal feelings are a temporary response to an overwhelming situation. They can be particularly transient for young people, they need to know suicidal feelings will pass and that help is available.

**Asking or talking about suicide with a suicidal person increases the risk of suicide.**

**False** - There are safe ways and unsafe ways to talk about suicide. Talking about suicide shows you are concerned about a person and willing to listen. Allowing a person to speak about suicide, in a safe environment, will be likely to reduce the risk of suicide rather than give them the idea to try it. It is unsafe to discuss suicide risk in large groups of people.

**Most suicidal people never seek or ask for help with their problems.**

**False** - There is evidence that people considering suicide often tell their friends and family about their thoughts and plans, and sometimes seek help from a GP.

**Sudden improvement following a suicidal crisis means the risk is over.**

**False** - Though the person may appear to be 'happier', the risk of suicide may actually be higher. The apparent lifting of feelings may mean the person has made a firm decision to suicide and feels better because of this.

**Most suicides occur with little or no warning.**

**False** - It is likely that some suicides are impulsive reactions to a loss or a humiliation. But even in these cases there has almost always been a long history of difficulties.

For more information about:

what to do if you think someone is at risk of suicide

The NZ Suicide Prevention Action Plan

Resources and information to support your work

Go to [www.spinz.org.nz](http://www.spinz.org.nz)

When the age range is widened and gender is taken into account, the picture only worsens. Young New Zealand men are killing themselves at an alarming rate.

**Events:**

- Thu 15th Oct. CIPPS Bi-Annual Burns W/shop—Central Fire Stn.**
- Fri 16th Preschool Child Restraint Project –199 Beachaven Rd. & 139 Queen St, Northcote**
- Wed 28th Oct. Older Adults Workshop, Takapuna (410 5240)**
- Fri 30th Oct-1 Nov Parent & Child Show, Green Lane**
- Sat 7th Nov. Older Women's' Day PAC Centre Takapuna**

Older Adults warming up for their Spring Walk at Beachaven last month



**Falls** - This is a word that most older adults would rather not have in their vocabulary but it is real and the number one injury in the home for these people. In short, they do occur with too much frequency and they cost the country a fortune but most are preventable.

In Linfen Community, China and Jinqiao, China, the communities have been busy installing support handles in the homes of the elderly and supplying non slip mats in areas like the bathrooms. This project was undertaken after research but post data on its success is not yet completed. Their early results indicate that this program is very effective and so they plan to spread this into other neighbourhoods.\*

Fall injuries are not just a NZ problem but occur all over the world but the causes are much the same wherever. Simple steps like the above are a great way to reduce the incident rate and promote safety in the home. In China the installing project took just 9 days in the Jinqiao Community and the government bore the major cost with the families of the elderly paying a little. A big difference can be made by something like a support handle or safety mat.

Here on the Shore, we have thousands of fall related injuries each year at a cost of over 15 million. It's just too high, it's unnecessary, and it is time to step up a gear and make a difference. I would welcome suggestions as to how we can do something more (like they are doing in China) and show the elderly that people on the Shore do care. Ph 489 4975 x 113. \* Reference: Report- Jinqiao Town International Safe Community Construction Office, China.



**Community Concerns on the Shore—** North Shore is a World Health Organisation Safe Community. That means that we have goals and initiatives in place to improve safety and reduce injury. Some things get in the way of achieving the targets quickly that warrant highlighting and raising awareness throughout our community. They are:

- ◆ Binge Drinking Who? - Stats dominated by 18 & 19 year olds
- ◆ House Burglaries Who? - Often those with drug connections—stolen to order. Dishonesty is the # 1 offence of recorded crime.
- ◆ Supplying Illicit Drugs and consumption Who? Criminal Underworld and young adults
- ◆ Road Safety involving excessive speed, intersection and night crashes Who? 15—24 year olds dominate statistics
- ◆ Falls top all statistics and most are preventable so we just have to do things better. A little help with the elderly goes a long way.

**Thailand Delegation visit to North Shore to study Community Safety and Violence.** Early September Safe Communities Foundation NZ and ShoreSafe hosted a delegation of Thai Government and University Officials and one representative from Tel Aviv University in Israel. They came to learn of the methods and gains we have made in NZ in this area. A visit to the North Shore Policing Centre was very enlightening as they learnt much



Picture shows Snr Sgt Rod Fraser hosting the group and Wayne Williams, Tania Peters & Dr Carolyn Coggan (SCFNZ) with delegation in Takapuna. The delegation from Thailand is working towards obtaining WHO Safe Community Status in their homeland.

**NZ Blood Service** requires 3000 donation's of blood throughout NZ to maintain requirements each and every week. Less than 4% of New Zealander's donate blood and less than 2% of North Shore residents donate. Auckland City Hospital uses 17.9 % of the blood collected - Middlemore 9.6 % - North Shore 7.4 % Blood only lasts for 35 days. Of the red blood cells collected 27% goes to cancer patients including children, 12% surgical treatments, and 8% to heart disease patients.

Donors can give up to 4 times per year and as each unit has the capacity to save up to 3 lives, one donor can save up to 12 lives each year. That's 12 lives for just 1 hour of their time, 4 times a year!

**NZ Blood Service** is continually challenged to find new donors, so please become a blood donor today.

How proud we would be if North Shore led the way in Blood Donation in New Zealand. Donating lifts your spirits and it's a walk in the park to do. Located in Takapuna, only two buildings from BMW on Lake Rd towards Devonport.

*Partnered by:*

Ministry of Health

ACC

North Shore City Council