

# Bulletin No 1 November 2018

**The Situational Approach** - A new approach to suicide prevention: This approach acknowledges the predominant association of situational distress, rather than mental illness, with suicide (though in some cases the two are linked), and is principally informed by and responds to risk factors of a broad spectrum of difficult human experiences across the life span. This approach is also mindful of and wherever possible seeks to address: contextual, systemic, and socio-cultural risk and protective factors and determinants: the real world of individuals' lived experience.

The approach is being promoted by Mengage at MHIRC (WSU) which launched its own interest at a Situational Approach Symposium in March 2018 (see Page 3)

A Situational Approach Bulletin will be published each month from November 2018 on Mengage.

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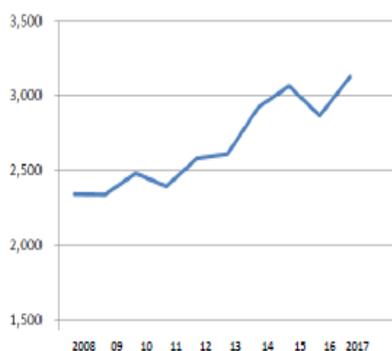
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## Further increase in suicide deaths

There has been yet a further increase in suicide deaths in 2017 to a total of 3,128 people. This amounts to an increase in suicide deaths in Australia of 34 % since 2008. This is despite huge increases of funding into the suicide prevention / mental health sector

*It is time for us to re-think our fundamental approach to the tragedy of suicide, and to pursue a bold and determined new course of action. The **situational suicide prevention approach** ... is exactly that.<sup>1</sup>*

ABS - Deaths Intentional Self-harm deaths 2008 - 2015



Causes of Death Australia, 2017... found 3128 people died by suicide in 2017

2348 males and 780 females

That's about 8.6 suicides a day and 9.1% more than 2016, when here was a total of 2866 deaths by suicide.

<http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/DetailsPage/3303.02017?OpenDocument>

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,341</b>	<b>2,337</b>	<b>2,480</b>	<b>2,393</b>	<b>2,580</b>	<b>2,610</b>	<b>2,922</b>	<b>3,065</b>	<b>2,866</b>	<b>3,128</b>

1. Ashfield, J., Macdonald, J. and Smith, A. "A 'Situational Approach' To Suicide Prevention". (2017): n. pag. Web. 31 May 2017. <https://doi.org/10.25155/2017/150417>

## New Entity

Work towards a proposed new entity for the Situational Approach is in place. Working Group will meet on November 8 to workshop aspects of the formalisation process to establish a new body. KPMG Sydney will host the workshop. Part of the outcomes is to present a proposal to KPMG for support to develop a formal Business Case for the new entity.

## Growing Support for the Situational Approach

There have been a number of expressions of interest from different groups and different sectors to support suicide prevention activity under the Situational Approach. These include:

### Per Capita

<https://percapita.org.au/>

*Per Capita is an independent, progressive think tank, dedicated to fighting inequality in Australia.*

*We work to build a new vision for Australia based on fairness, shared prosperity, community, and social justice.*

Senior Per Capita staff members have indicated that they are interested to support this work – particularly to help address the issue of the connection between unemployment and suicide deaths.

The Victorian Premier has announced that if he wins government next month, he will initiate a Royal Commission into 'mental health'. There may be the possibility of doing a joint submission to the Royal Commission should that proceed.

Per Capita have offered to facilitate introductions with philanthropic bodies.

Through Per Capita there has also been contact made with other people / organisations outside the standard 'mental health' sector who have shown initial interest in our work including leaders in the union movement

### The Centre for Rural & Remote Mental Health

<https://www.crrmh.com.au/>

- provides leadership in rural and remote mental health research, working closely with rural communities and our valued partners to provide evidence-based service design, delivery and education in NSW.

There has been discussion about a potential collaboration with CRRMH for some months. The interest to pursue a partnership has been re-affirmed this week; they have received some federal funds, although we may need a little more for the project ideas we have been discussing. Senior staff members at CRRMH are familiar with AIMHS and John Ashfield's work and have been involved in purchasing and distributing Supporting Men in Distress books throughout rural NSW.

While details of the project partnership are still to be negotiated, this represents an enormous opportunity – should this proceed, the project will be on a large scale that will boost the profile of our work and provide opportunity for further partnership / branding – logos on resources etc.

## Western Sydney University / MHIRC

Mt Druitt Shed

Academic Paper – The Situational Approach

Symposium – Situational Approach

### Mt Druitt Shed

There is growing interest in the Mt Druitt Shed as an example of suicide prevention, both within NSW and in the UK where there is consideration to incorporate principles of the Mt Druitt Shed into a model of a community hub approach to 'mental health'.

<http://www.mengage.org.au/Communities/Mens-Sheds-Research/MHIRC--The-Shed-At-Mount-Druitt>

Note: It is important to understand the Mt Druitt Shed does not operate like the common 'men's shed'. An important function of The Mt Druitt Shed is that it operates as a formalised service that provides support for people in need.

*The Shed has achieved and maintains the provision of a welcoming, open door reception to all men & often women from the broader community, who seek help & support in managing their life problems.*

### Academic Paper

#### – The Situational Approach

Western Sydney University / MHIRC has committed to writing a formal Paper on the Situational Approach for peer-reviewed publication

### Symposium – Situational Approach

Western Sydney University / MHIRC hosted the successful Situational Approach Symposium earlier this year. The Symposium was opened by the NSW Minister for Health. A Report on the Symposium can be downloaded from

<http://malesuicidepreventionaustralia.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/SITUATIONAL-APPROACH-TO-SUICIDE-PREVENTION-SYMPOSIUM-FORMAL-REPORT-Sept-12.pdf>

### The Mt Druitt Shed – Activities:

#### ACTIVITY 1

To provide a community service to address issues of serious distress of the people coming to the Shed - Predominantly reducing the risk of suicide of the people attending the shed and supporting the aboriginal cultural needs of the region

#### ACTIVITY 2

To identify the appropriate services (sometimes several) for the needs of these clients and to support and assist them in having urgent contact with them - The staff and resources at the shed will advocate on the behalf of the clients in supporting their social and emotional needs.

#### ACTIVITY 3

Develop a comprehensive network to support the clients at the Shed by collaborating with service partners/ networks to address the needs of the client coming to the shed.

## Other

### Health Practitioner training - UK

Dr John Ashfield is currently employed on contract in the health system in UK. Part of his work includes staff training for doctors, nurses and allied health staff – John is using the **Situational Approach** as a key part of this work.

## Recent Media / Research etc

### Australian suicide rates increased in 2017

<https://www.suicidepreventionaust.org/news/australian-suicide-rates-increased-2017>

*Causes of Death Australia, 2017 reports on the causes of 160,909 deaths registered in 2017. Preliminary data contained in the report found 3128 people died by suicide in 2017, 2348 males and 780 females. That's about 8.6 suicides a day and 9.1% more than 2016*

### The Global 'Mental Health' Movement – Cause For Concern

<https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0/#inbox/FMfcgxvzLDvQMVLswbMftcpVmfvbRPMt>

*This week the Mad in America newsletter...we interview Dr. Melissa Raven, who is a psychiatric epidemiologist, policy analyst and postdoctoral research fellow in the Critical and Ethical Mental Health research group at the University of Adelaide, South Australia.*

*...Her current mental health research and advocacy is informed by a strong social determinants perspective and a strong critical orientation, which she applies to a range of topics, including suicide prevention, workplace mental health, (over)diagnosis, (inappropriate) prescribing, and conflicts of interest in mental health and the broader health/welfare arena*

### Is my child depressed? Being moody isn't a mental illness

<http://www.essentialkids.com.au/education/school/high-school/is-my-child-depressed-being-moody-isnt-a-mental-illness-2018>

### Results of World's Largest Antidepressant Study Look Dismal

<https://www.madinamerica.com/2018/10/results-world-largest-antidepressant-study-look-dismal/>

By [Joanna Moncrieff, MD](#) October 12, 2018

*What in the world were the main findings of the world's largest ever antidepressant trial doing being presented now in a little known journal? The answer may lie in the fact that they show how miserably poor the results of standard medical treatment for depression really are!*

### Nearly one in 10 Australians take antidepressants. Are there other solutions?

<https://www.smh.com.au/lifestyle/nearly-one-in-10-australians-take-antidepressants-are-there-other-solutions-20180116-h0jaxx.html#>

*Popping pills has become a panacea for depression across the Western world, in few countries more so than Australia. But what if the causes are societal rather than in our heads?*

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