



WORKSHOP

How can a Mental Health Service help community agencies in regional and rural Victoria who work with young people who self harm?

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Ballarat Health Services
Putting your health first

Who am I and where do I come from?

Ballarat Health Services – Mental Health Service is one of Victoria's public area mental health services.

We are a regional and remote service with the largest geographical region in Victoria with the lowest population.

In 2011 we established a Youth Mental Health Service to provide accessible, evidence based, youth friendly and family inclusive mental health assessment and treatment to young people aged 15-25 years.

I am the Clinical Manager of the Youth Mental Health Service and I'm an Occupational Therapist with 15 years experience in public mental health.



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Our Region



- Spans 48,000 sq km
- Eleven local government areas
- Population of approximately 216,626 residents
- The region has approximately 62,935 children & young people aged 0-24 years



Who are the workshop participants?



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What is this 90 minute workshop about?

Why do young people self harm?

&

How do we help them?

This workshop will discuss three key ways a Mental Health Service can assist community agencies (schools, residential services, child & family services, community health, police etc.) to understand and assist young people who self harm:

- Education
- Secondary Consultation
- Risk Management Planning



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What is self harm?

- Self harm is a coping mechanism, a behaviour, not an illness or diagnosis
- It is a symptom of psychological distress
- Self harm can include:
 - Cutting, scratching or burning
 - Banging or punching objects or oneself
 - Intentional overdose of drugs, medications
 - Self-poisoning
 - Risk taking with the intention of injury



Why do young people self harm?

- Self harm can be with or without intent to die
- Reasons given for self harm can vary
- May include:
 - Manage distress
 - Involve others
 - Seek care
 - Feel release or relief
- People do it because it works!



Understanding distressed young people

- To understand why a young person might behave the way they do and what we can do about it we need to have a look at:
 - Attachment
 - Emotional Regulation
 - Problem Solving





ACTIVITY

What is the connection between attachment and self harm?



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Secure Attachment

- A secure attachment enables an infant/child/young person to:
 - feel loved, safe and comforted (consistent emotional connection)
 - enables them to explore their world (freedom to develop skills and independence)
 - have their successes are celebrated
 - know they can return to be comforted
 - know there are boundaries to keep the child safe



Insecure Attachment

- A child/young person with an insecure attachment may:
 - Believe the world is not a safe place and not be willing to go out or try things
 - Not trust that another person will treat them with respect and kindness
 - Be unwilling to seek help because they have had to rely on themselves
 - Seek more and more attention because they want someone to care
 - Can become angry if they perceive they are being abandoned



Emotional Regulation

- Young people who are emotionally competent:
 - Use emotional awareness to solve problems
 - Keep strong emotions from overwhelming the ability to think
 - Manage frustration much better
 - Are able to wait to get what they want –therefore better able to compromise
 - Control how and when they express feelings
 - Use emotions in social situations so have better relationships with family and friends
 - Do better academically
 - Have better physical health
 - Are less likely to have behaviour problems



Problem Solving

- The ability to problem solve is a skill
- Like all skills people need to learn how to solve problems
- Problem solving is the ability to:
 - Determine what the problem is
 - Identify a number of potential solutions
 - Weigh up the pros and cons
 - Choose the best solution
 - Implement the solution and review how it went



What can we do to help?

- Patterns developed over a lifetime cannot be changed quickly or easily
- Young people who have difficulty managing their emotions, behaviour and relationships need trusted adults in their environment to:
 - Be calm, clear, caring and consistent
 - Emotion coach (to help build emotional regulation skills)
 - Assist with problem solving (until the young person learns to problem solve themselves)



Emotion Coaching

To emotion coach a young person:

1. Be aware of the emotion, especially when it is at a lower intensity (e.g. Disappointment, frustration)
2. View the emotion as an opportunity for intimacy and teaching
3. Communicate your understanding and acceptance of the emotion
4. Help them use words to describe what they feel
5. If necessary, help them to solve problems. You may also communicate that all wishes and feelings are acceptable, but some behaviours are not.



Teaching Problem Solving Skills

- Young people need to be taught to problem solve
- Writing down the steps or using a problem solving sheet can be helpful
 - Determine what the problem is
 - Identify a number of potential solutions
 - Weigh up the pros and cons
 - Choose the best solution
 - Implement the solution and review how it went
- Repeated practice is needed to become skilful



Education

Ararat Youth Forum was attended by the community and included young people, families and professionals in the region.

I was one of the presenters and spoke about young people and self harm with a focus on ways to help young people.



24 JUNE, 6.30^{PM} YOUTH FORUM

Start Talkin' Youth Mental Health Forum

The forum will address the challenges facing young people growing up today, and provided help and information.

The expert speakers will guide a challenging, highly relevant, and informative discussion designed to help us all improve the well-being of the young in our community.



Teens, parents,
teachers and
friends all
welcome.

FREE ENTRY

Learn about cyber
safety, online
bullying, the
warning signs of
mental illness and
where to get help
if you need it.

Monday 24, June
2013 @ 6.30pm

Ararat College,
Middle Year
Centre; Barkly
Street, Ararat.

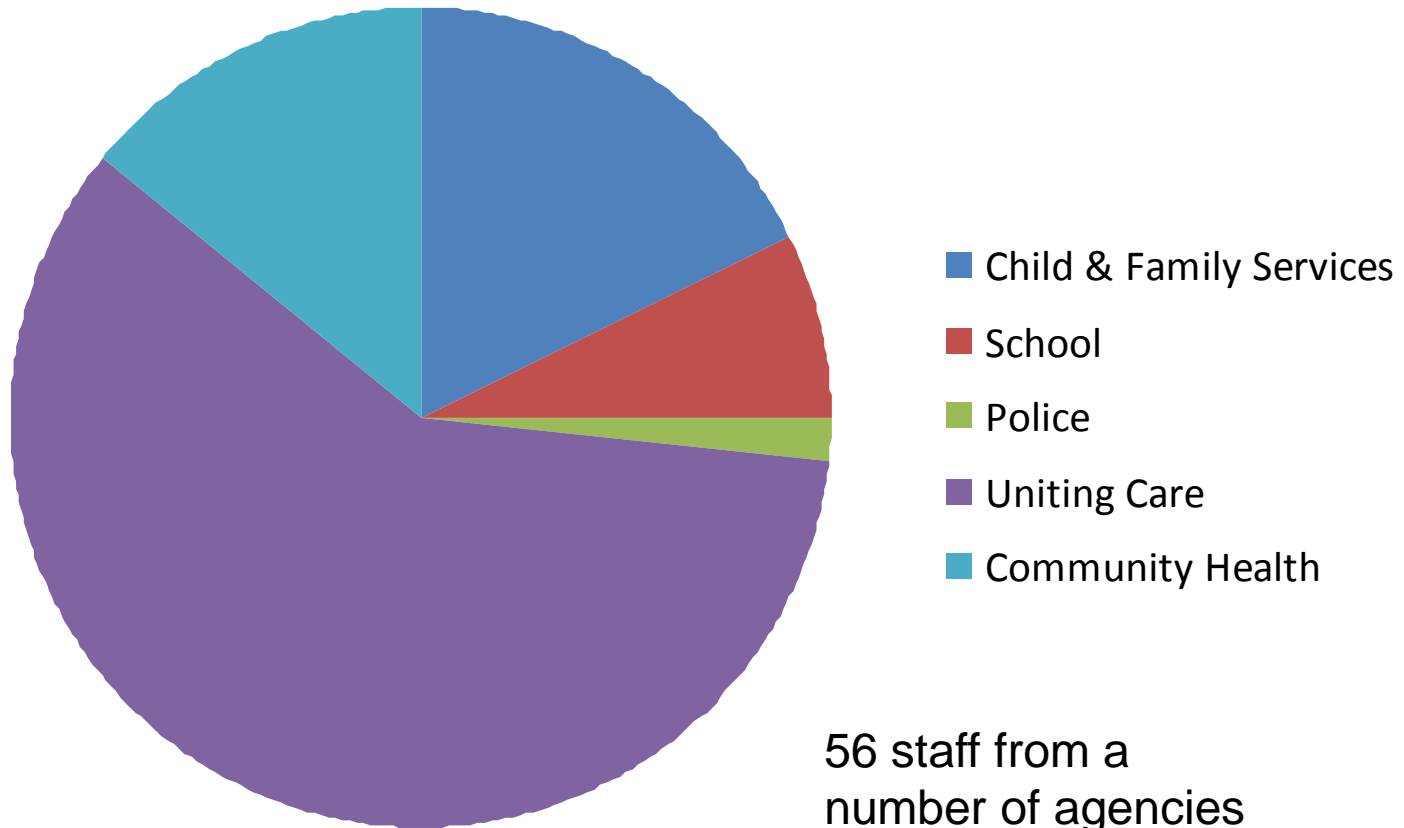
For more information
or to register your
attendance contact:

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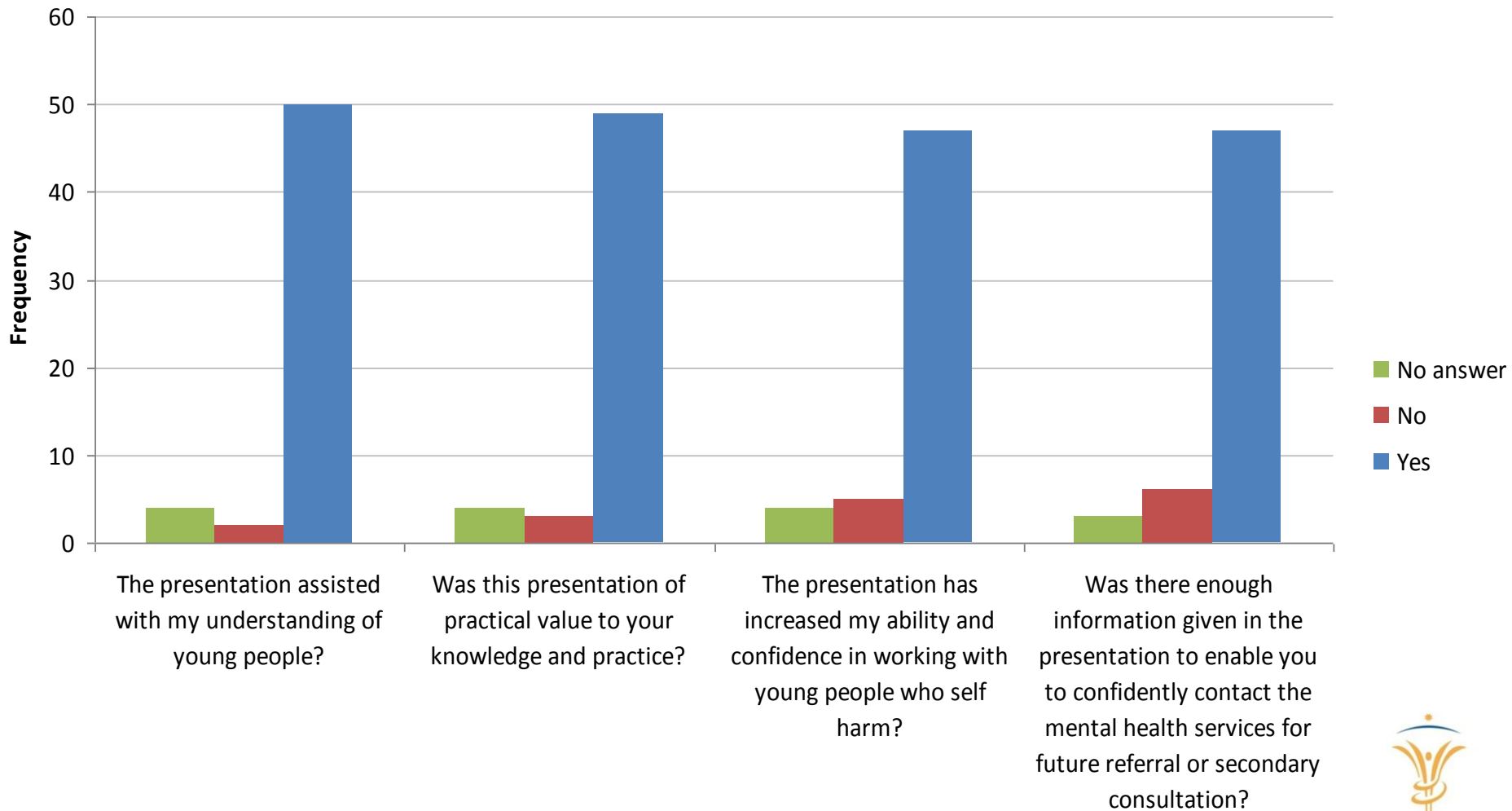
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Young People & Self Harm In-service



56 staff from a number of agencies attended the 1.5-2 hour In-service

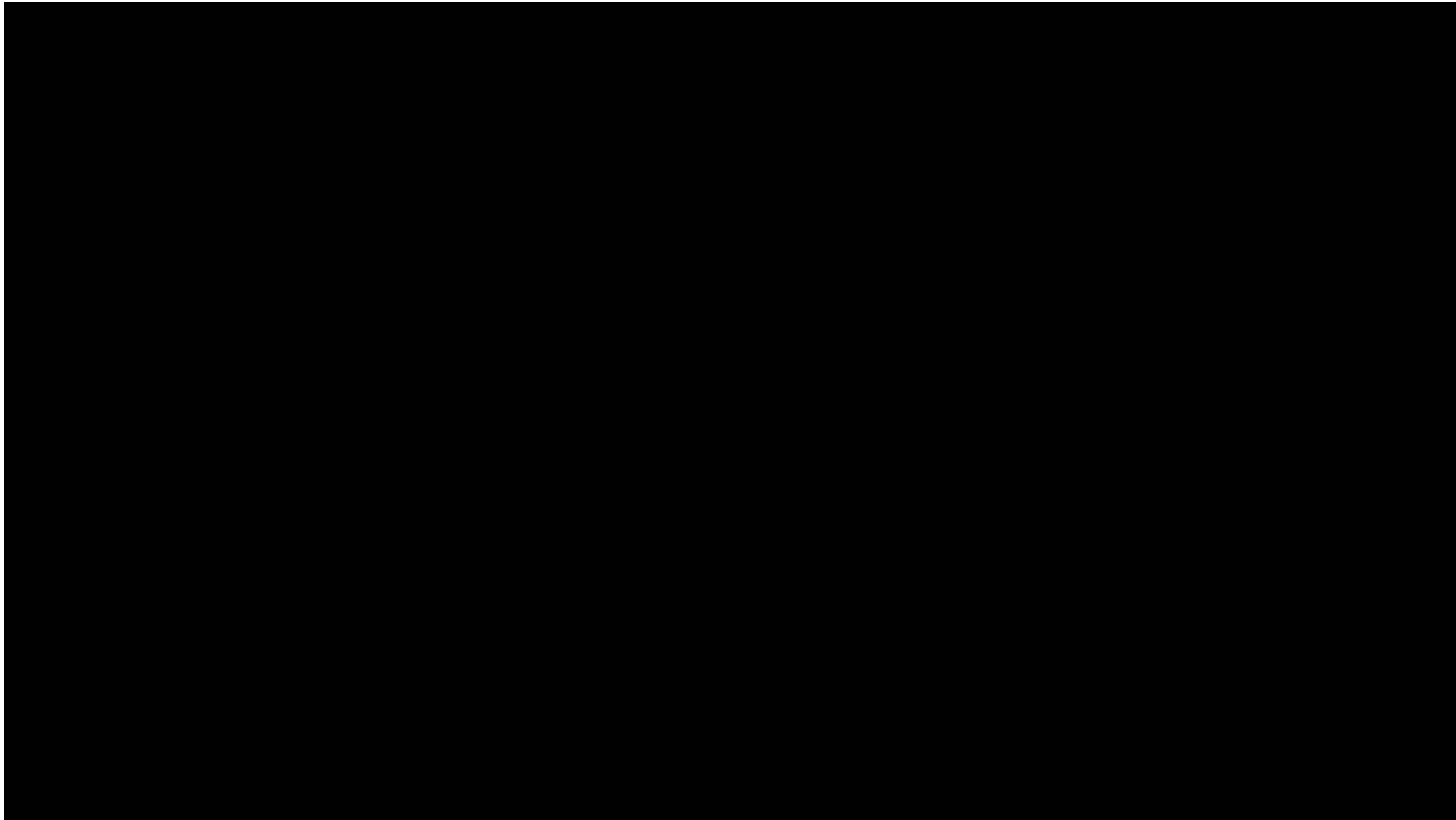
Young People & Self Harm In-service



Secondary Consultation

- Some times young people present with self harm but do not need or want to be seen by a public mental health service
- In these instances agencies can access timely, expert mental health advice via secondary consultation
- Secondary consult supports other agencies to continue to work with the young person
- We have a clear secondary consultation model which supports mental health clinicians to do this work

Video Clip – Benefits of Secondary Consultation



Risk Management

- Some young people require a mental health assessment by the mental health service
- In some cases they may need treatment by the mental health service
- Other times with an individualised risk management plan the young person can continue with their other community supports where that is appropriate



Risk Management Planning

- Prevention is always best
- Notice difficult emotions early
- Emotion coach & assist with problem solving
- If the situation has already escalated have a clear plan of how to manage the risks by:
 - Know what the risk is
 - What the triggers are
 - What to do to manage the risk – reduce means, increase support, distraction techniques
 - If the situation is becoming difficult to manage seek advice or support from your supervisor/manager or the local mental health service



What now?

Young people who self harm will benefit from all of us understanding their distress and helping them develop emotional regulation and problem solving skills to help them achieve their goals in life.

What will you take away from today that you could use in your community?





Questions?



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Contact Details & Acknowledgments

- Contact Details:
 - Dr Julie Rowse (03) 53204565 or JulieR@bhs.org.au
- Information in this presentation has been gathered from a variety of sources including:
 - CAST parenting program
 - Tuning into Kids www.tuningintokids.org.au
 - Circle of Security - Attachment theory circleofsecurity.net
 - Meriden Family Work www.meridenfamilyprogramme.com
 - Orygen Youth Health - HYPE Training www.oyh.org.au