

Helping people to stay alive

Suicide is tragically the main cause of premature death among Australians living with a mental illness. Many more people will make an attempt, often more than once a year.

To help people who at times feel suicidal, SANE Australia has released *The SANE Guide to Staying Alive* – a practical, clear and concise resource to help manage and prevent these feelings.

'*The SANE Guide to Staying Alive* is a positive, early-intervention tool which aims to give people the understanding and skills to stay safe, especially when they feel desperate and without hope,' explains SANE Australia's Executive Director, Barbara Hocking. 'We have drawn on the experiences of people who have "been there", so the Guide gives credible and practical advice people can apply to their own situation.'

Importantly, the fully-revised Guide includes information on 'making a crisis plan', so people can prepare for what to do and who they can call if they feel suicidal in the future. The aim is to plan ahead so they can stay safe and get the help and support they need as early as possible.

The Guide focuses on how people can:

- Identify their own warning signs
- Find out what support is available to them
- Take action to help themselves
- Get their life back on track
- Deal with bereavement.

'There are certainly things that people can do for themselves to maintain good mental health, which supports the psychological treatments and medications that may be prescribed by their doctor,' Ms Hocking explains.

'This is a much-needed and welcome practical resource which can help the individual as well as health workers, family and friends who care for them,' says Professor Ian Webster, Emeritus Professor of Public Health and Community Medicine, University of New South Wales.

'As US physician Dr Gordon Livingstone has said, "Someone to love; something to do; something to look forward to". This excellent personal plan tells us how to do this when we are troubled, distressed and most vulnerable,' adds Professor Webster, who chairs the Australian Suicide Prevention Advisory Council.

Professor Webster says people in other high-risk groups such as those with alcohol and drug problems will also find the guide helpful.

The SANE Guide to Staying Alive is available from the online bookshop at www.sane.org or by calling the SANE Helpline 1800 18 SANE (7263). Cost \$15 + P & H; review copies are available for media.

Note to editors

- Barbara Hocking is available for interview
- Media reporting guidelines on suicide are available from [Mindframe](#)
- Media factsheets about suicide are available from the [SANE Media Centre](#)
- The SANE Helpline – 1800 18 SANE (7263) – helps over 10,000 callers every year concerned about mental illness and suicide

SANE Australia

A national charity working for a better life for people affected by mental illness.

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SANE Helpline

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