Thinking about your readiness to safely attend the National Suicide Prevention Conference

Talking about suicide, sharing your insights, learning about research, policy and programs, and so on, can be an incredibly rewarding, healing and hopeful experience but it can also be emotionally and mentally draining and can have an impact on your physical and emotional wellbeing.

Suicide Prevention Australia (SPA) have developed a guide intended to help you assess your personal readiness to be involved in suicide prevention activities, such as attending the National Suicide Prevention Conference. It draws on the experiences of other individuals with lived experience of suicide as well as advice from professionals who work every day with people touched by suicide.

It is intended for anyone with a lived experience of suicide, defined by SPA as ‘having experienced suicidal thoughts, survived a suicide attempt, cared for someone who was suicidal, been bereaved by suicide, or having been touched by suicide in another way.’

Attending the National Suicide Prevention Conference will, by the nature of the conference, expose all attendees to a very wide range of discussions and sessions about suicide and this can be confronting, emotionally draining and for some, will cause distress.

Before submitting an application to attend the Conference please read:

- **Thinking about your personal readiness to be involved**
- **Guide to Self-Care**
- **Talking About Suicide: A Guide to Language**

and take time to reflect the potential impact on yourself and your own self-care.

Throughout the Conference there will be counsellors onsite to provide support as well.

The provision of bursaries is completely dependent on the Conference receiving bursary scholarship funding from state and territory governments and other sponsors. The Conference cannot guarantee the availability of bursary scholarships for the 2017 conference.

**Important Dates for all Applicants**

**Bursary application deadline:** All bursary applications must be received by SPA no later than 7.00pm AEST 2 March 2017.

**Notification of status of your application:** All applicants will receive communication of the outcome of their application and successful applicants will be notified by email or telephone by 7.00pm AEST 30 May 2017.

**Dates of Conference:** Applicants need to be able to attend all days of the conference, from Wednesday 26 July through Saturday 29 July 2017 in Brisbane, Queensland.
Why have bursaries?
The purpose of the National Suicide Prevention Conference Bursary fund is to enable individuals with a lived experience of suicide to attend the conference. For this purpose, Suicide Prevention Australia (SPA) defines a lived experience of suicide as:

*Having experienced suicidal thoughts, survived a suicide attempt, cared for someone who has attempted suicide, been bereaved by suicide, or have been touched by suicide in another way.*

We acknowledge that many but not all people with lived experience of suicide also identify as mental health consumers and/or carers.

There are numerous barriers that can make it difficult for individuals impacted by suicide to attend the conference. The availability of bursaries is intended to help overcome some of these barriers in order to ensure representation of those with lived experience in discussions and activities about suicide prevention.

What do the bursaries cover?
There are three parts of a bursary - travel to and from the conference (e.g. flights, taxis, public transport), accommodation and conference registration for conference dates of 26 – 29 July 2017 inclusive. Note that SPA may not be able to provide all applicants with a full bursary. You will be asked to indicate the part or parts you require at the end of the application process. Please consider if you are able to cover any of these costs as this enables SPA to extend a bursary to more individuals.

The bursaries do NOT cover expenses for food (beyond what is provided as part of the conference) or costs associated with dry cleaning, room service, pay TV, movie hire, mini-bar, tips, personal expenses, and so on.

How does SPA decide who receives a bursary?
As there will be a limited amount of bursary funds available SPA has set up a range of criteria to help us decide who will receive a bursary.

It is essential that all bursary applicants must:
- Have a lived experience of suicide (have experienced suicidal thoughts, survived a suicide attempt, cared for someone who has attempted suicide, been bereaved by suicide, or have been touched by suicide in another way)
- Demonstrate financial reasons why they would be unable to attend the conference without a bursary
- Be aged 18 years and older (unless accompanied by parent/guardian)

It is desirable that the bursary applicant:
- Identifies as a mental health consumer and/or carer
- Hopes to present at the conference (presentation or poster)/Will be submitting an abstract
- Is actively involved in consumer groups/organisations or consumer advocacy within the suicide prevention
- Did not receive a SPA Bursary for a previous National Suicide Prevention Conference
Other criteria which will be taken into account in the distribution of bursaries include:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status
- Residence in a rural or remote area of Australia
- English is the applicant’s second language
- Applicant is currently undertaking tertiary study in a relevant field

The more of these essential, desirable and other criteria that you meet, the more likely you are to receive a bursary. Submitting an application does not guarantee receipt of a bursary due to the anticipated high demand. This does mean that unfortunately there will be some applicants that will not receive a bursary.

SPA will also attempt to distribute the bursaries in a manner which supports national representation of those with a lived experience at the National Suicide Prevention Conference (i.e. representation across states/territories).

The decision on who is to receive the bursaries will be made by SPA, whose decision will be final and reasons confidential.

What is expected of the successful applicant?

Historically SPA receives far more applications than can be funded and a bursary recipient should not treat the process lightly.

Successful applicants are required to:

- Answer all questions in the application honestly
- Attend all days of the conference (26 – 29 July 2017) with a goal to interacting and engaging with other conference delegates to your best ability
- Where possible, arrive on Wednesday 26 July 2017 and depart after the final session on Saturday 29 July (depending on your destination this may require another overnight stay in Brisbane)
- Make every effort to attend the Conference as expenses are non-refundable and non-transferable
- Complete the survey at the conclusion of the conference
How do I apply for a bursary?
To apply for a bursary, you will need to complete the Bursary Application Form 2017. The questions in the application form will help SPA understand your personal situation and to assess how you meet the selection criteria. Please note that all information in your application form will be kept strictly private.

The application form is available in a number of formats to meet the accessibility needs of applicants. The form can be:

1. Complete the online application – CLICK HERE
2. Completed in Microsoft Word and emailed to SPA at livedexp@suicidepreventionaust.org
3. Printed, completed by hand then sent by post to SPA
4. Give us a call to complete your application verbally over the phone

If you are unable to print the application form or access the online survey, please call SPA on 02 9262 1130 and we will post a copy of the form to you.

Completed forms can be returned to SPA by email or post using the following contact details:
Email: livedexp@suicidepreventionaust.org
Mailing address: Suicide Prevention Australia – Bursaries, GPO Box 219, Sydney NSW 2001

When is my application due?
Bursary applications must be received by SPA no later than 7.00pm AEST 2 March 2017. This deadline will be strictly applied to all applications across all formats (i.e. online, email or post).

Confidentiality
In accordance with the guidelines established for the bursary, SPA must ask you questions of a personal nature. SPA is committed to protecting user privacy. We understand and appreciate that applicants may be concerned about their privacy and the confidentiality and security of any information that may be provided to us. The details you provide will only be used for the purpose of assessing your application.

When do I find out if my application is successful?
Successful applicants will be notified by email or telephone by 7.00pm (AEST) 30 May 2017.

If there are still bursary funds available after these arrangements have been made, SPA will make a second round of offers.

All other applicants will receive communication of the outcome of their application by email or telephone by 7.00pm (AEST) 1 June 2017.

If you have any questions or require further assistance, please call SPA on 02 9262 1130