

# WHY WE DO WHAT WE DO

## THE IMPORTANCE OF PRIMARY PREVENTION

Iris Foundation is dedicated to enhancing each and every person's ability to survive and thrive. Our work is focused in the area of primary prevention of suicide, mitigating problems before they escalate.

We work to instill messages to build and hold hope for the future, to develop the skills and knowledge to face adversity, the resilience to overcome challenges and to build connections and a sense of belonging.

Whilst much has been achieved in suicide prevention over the past years, we are still experiencing an increase in mental ill-health and suicidal distress. Primary prevention of suicide needs to take priority in an effort to, not only alleviate the cost to our community of treatment of mental health disorders, but most importantly to give hope, strength and wellness to our young growing generation.

We must take a more proactive approach and develop skills ahead of time to prevent mental illness and suicidal thoughts before they ever occur.

### Suicide Statistics

- Suicide was the leading cause of death among people aged 15–44 in 2021 (ABS 2022).
- For each death by suicide, research studies estimate that up to 135 other persons are adversely affected through the grief, loss and trauma that these sudden and tragic deaths invoke (Cerel et al, 2019).
- 1 in 2 young people are impacted by suicide by the time they turn 25. The latest Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) data shows that around 9 lives are lost per day to suicide. (statistics are based on 2020 data which was released by the ABS on 29 September 2021).
- Approx 50 per cent of all serious mental health issues begin around the age of 14.
- Only 1 in 10 people have resilience that's strong enough to protect against mental illness (National Resilience Index 2022).
- Every year it is estimated that over 65,000 Australians make a suicide attempt – this translates to more than 180 every day. (Slade et al, 2009)
- Suicide is also an economic cost with estimates that suicide deaths and attempts account for between \$1.6 and \$6 billion per annum in direct and indirect costs.

*Every one of these numbers represents a person - a community member, a family member, a friend, a neighbour, a work colleague, and/or a loved one.*

The experience of suicide and its impacts are felt by many people in many ways and we acknowledge everyone who has been impacted by suicide.