

between the lines

edition two
april 2011



CSS gets to work on The Shed Online

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number crunch

Calls received since
January 1, 2011:

MensLine Australia	7445
Suicide Services (SCBS and SLV)	3004
<i>beyondblue</i> info line	9017
Veterans Line and ASL ..	1245

CSS is helping to deliver The Shed Online, an online social community for men, founded by *beyondblue*, The Movember Foundation and the Australian Men's Shed Association.

The Shed Online is a place for men to socialise, network, make friends and share skills.

CSS Program Leader for *beyondblue*, Carla Neale, described it as an exciting new initiative allowing men who could otherwise be quite socially isolated to connect in an online space.

"We've gained a wealth of experience in effectively working with men through MensLine Australia. This guides the work we now do online, with men who may otherwise be isolated from support," she said.

After its public launch in December 2010, there was a strong response with more

than 960 members joining The Shed Online to date.

"The best thing is that it actually works. Men do use it, they do support each other and they are making friends in a safe, online environment," Carla added.

CSS is responsible for moderating the user generated content on the site which includes posts by members to discussion forums, member profile information, as well as responding to any enquiries from the website. Another key role is to ensure a duty of care for members, particularly around health and wellbeing discussions.

Some parts of the site are pre-moderated and require approval before they go live.



The Shed Online site

This is predominantly the case where a discussion is related to mental health. In these cases CSS staff attempt to approve content within 15 minutes. Other content is known as post-moderated. It appears on the site automatically but needs to have been reviewed by a counsellor within an hour.

All CSS staff receive professional training to manage the unique challenges that exist in moderating online discussions in an effective, efficient manner while making every effort to ensure the safety of users.

CSS is proud to assist with the Shed Online. It is moderated by CSS' qualified, professional staff 24 hours a day.

Visit: www.theshedonline.org.au



Nadine Stephenson and Carla Neale

CEO's column

Welcome to our second edition of Between the Lines. As expected, life at CSS has continued to be fast paced and jam-packed with new challenges and achievements.

In this edition we reveal some of our online projects including: the *beyondblue* Shed Online; the success of LIFE communications; the launch of our Suicide Call Back Service e-therapy tools and the MensLine Australia online counselling program. This work is an important step towards achieving our strategic goal of "delivering excellence and setting the benchmark for quality telephone and online counselling services".

We also introduce you to our Human Resources team who are working to improve corporate processes and support the development of our professional team. I would like to recognise their contribution towards the EBA process, and commitment to achieving better outcomes for all counsellors.

As the end of financial year approaches, we are entrenched in evaluating and reshaping our core services. We have a few difficult weeks ahead as we negotiate their future with our funders. While maintaining services is of utmost importance, great efforts are being invested into new business opportunities, with our business development and training teams working hard to develop tenders

and proposals for potential government and corporate partners.

With all this happening, I can proudly say attention to our core business is unwavering, as we continue to hit our call answer rates, ensuring we are there for the community when they need us.

At the first Board meeting of the year, our Directors expressed they felt encouraged and heartened by the hard work of our team, acknowledging the challenging but productive start to the year. We sadly farewell Paul Geyer from the Board, after more than two years of committed service. Our sincere thanks go to Paul for his invaluable contribution.



Alyson Miller



Alyson Miller
CEO



a word from our callers

"I always give out MensLine's number to the dads I visit in my role as a maternal and child health care nurse. The feedback I get from dads is that MensLine is a fantastic service. They are really pleased that there is a service for fathers like them to access. Keep up the great work."

Maternal and Child Health Nurse

"I've been battling with generalised anxiety disorder for many years and I found the resource Taking Care Of Yourself And Your Family very helpful. The info line is a fantastic service, and receiving this resource for free made me feel very special. I believe *beyondblue* has saved many people, and I wanted to thank you all for this."

Maurice
beyondblue info line caller

"I'm calling back to say thank you to the counsellor I spoke to earlier this week. I was probably difficult to work with but I am now doing much better. I feel I am getting back on track so please pass on my thanks."

SuicideLine caller



online support for people affected by suicide

A series of online self help tools were launched in late 2010 by the Suicide Call Back Service to support people bereaved by suicide, as well as those concerned for someone.

The new suite of tools includes an online moderated support forum for carers, and a comprehensive e-therapy program, focused on offering support for those suffering the grief and loss of losing someone to suicide.

CSS Program Leader for the Suicide Call Back Service, Lynda Oates, said these new online tools were an innovative and welcome addition to the service.

"These new online services offer carers and people bereaved by suicide a whole new way to work through the difficulties they are facing.

"For most people, the suicide or risk of a loved one is a very private matter. These tools offer users scope to openly explore their feelings and work through their challenges in a very private, yet effective way, under professional guidance," Lynda said.

The grief and loss support program consists of seven e-therapy modules including:

- **Module 1:** Coping with grief and loss
- **Module 2:** Communicating effectively with others
- **Module 3:** Connecting with others
- **Module 4:** Your mental health
- **Module 5:** Your physical health
- **Module 6:** Life skills for optimal health and wellbeing
- **Module 7:** Key points from the program



Suicide Call Back Service e-therapy program

To access the program visit www.suicidecallbackservice.org.au/Grief-and-loss-support-program.html

The carer's support forum is a moderated peer support forum for carers or people bereaved. Developed in partnership with Swinburne University of Technology's National eTherapy Centre (NeTC), the forum has already attracted more than 650 users and can be found at <http://forum.suicidecallbackservice.org.au>.

online counselling goes live

On Wednesday March 2, MensLine Australia launched a pilot for a new online counselling service aimed at helping young men aged 15-24. Program Leader for MensLine Australia, Randal Newton-John said online services are the way of the future and CSS has an important role to play in the online community.

"All men can access this service, although there is evidence suggesting that the younger demographic will be more inclined to seek support in this form," Randal said.

Online counselling brings

with it many opportunities and challenges such as learning how to communicate effectively through text without verbal cues.

A MLA online counselling session lasts a maximum of 50 minutes and callers are eligible for two sessions.

"At this stage a limited evening service is currently available between 4.30pm and 11.00pm every Monday until the end of June 2011. The pilot will end at the end of this financial year and CSS hopes to secure more funding to vastly expand on the service," Randal said.



CSS Counsellor Kerry Arrow with Team Leader, Gerald Moloney

Since the launch of the pilot, the online counselling webpage has received more than 100 page views with several bookings being made. These numbers should continue to grow over the coming months.

This pilot had been made possible by the hard work of many CSS staff members,

especially Pierz Newton-John, Shaun Walsh, Kerry Arrow and Randal Newton-John.

This project is funded in part by Telematics Course Development Fund and Helen Macpherson Smith Trust. You can read more on this funding on page 6 .

spotlight on Human Resources and Administration

Since joining CSS as General Manager of Human Resources and Administration in September 2010, Jade Macleod has lead her team in beginning the huge task of reviewing and improving all policies, procedures and processes within the department.

Everything from recruitment and selection processes, performance management and staff entitlements to maintenance procedures are being reviewed and documented by the team. Michelle Verspaget – Human Resources Administration Coordinator – plays a large role in the process of keeping all of this information up-to-date and easily accessible.

“Once we have all this running smoothly, our

team can focus more on the strategic components of HR such as measuring and improving staff culture and introducing health and wellbeing initiatives.

“As a team, one of our biggest achievements has been working with the EBA Committee to get the EBA to where it is today. It has been a lengthy process, with the old agreement having ended in 2009, but negotiations in the last six months have been very productive. As in all negotiations, it has not been without its challenges, however after much hard work by all those involved we hope the agreement is one that CSS will be proud of,” Jade said.

Looking forward, one of the bigger projects for HR and



Lisa-Rose Ciantar, Christina Rainbow, Michelle Verspaget and Jade Macleod.

Admin is improving workforce planning to continually ensure CSS has staff rostered on when needed most, around the clock. Christina Rainbow, Workforce Planning Manager, juggles the rostering for the organisation across the week and is instrumental to this project.

Rounding up the HR and Admin team is Lisa-Rose Ciantar who keeps everything running smoothly through a multitude of administrative duties. Lisa is the CSS Office Administrator with responsibility for managing reception and supporting external communication.

CSS, the EBA Committee and the Australian Services Union are delighted to have ratified the collective agreement for the organisation. The final version of the Agreement is now being put to the vote and staff covered by the Agreement will have the opportunity to participate.

General Manager of Human Resources and Administration, Jade McLeod, was pleased with how negotiations have progressed.

“We’ve received good feedback on the collective agreement, as it provides improved conditions for staff.

“As a document, it’s more comprehensive, resulting in a significant increase in wages across the next three years and more generous sick leave provisions,” Jade said.

MensLine meets the Mallee



MensLine speaks to the men of Swan Hill

Suggesting a country male should see a local counsellor or psychologist is sometimes met with mixed feelings. Even for the many rural men that are seeking support through difficult times, there is often the worry that they know the local professionals or have to travel long distances to access services.

So you can imagine the warm reception received by MensLine Australia’s Community Liaison Officer, John Evans, when he visited Swan Hill in February this year.

“The need for professional, anonymous counselling in Swan Hill convinced me that our lines are really needed and appreciated in rural and regional communities,” John said.

John joined cricketing great, Merv Hughes and local GP Donatella Spatari, to speak to locals about men’s health at a local football club. An impressive 170 men attended the ‘Blokes Night’ and 80 women turned up for the ‘Ladies Breakfast’.

At the invitation of the Mallee ▶

LIFE Communications update – LIFE goes on

LIFE
resources



Since winning the tender for LIFE Communications in 2007, CSS has had the great pleasure of working closely with the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing to increase cross-sector collaboration and raise awareness of the National Suicide Prevention Strategy and its funded programs.

During this time the LIFE Communications Team have been responsible for developing and maintaining a world-class online resource (www.livingisforeverone.com.au) featuring the LIFE framework and resources, live chats, LIFE news and a professional development network. They have also disseminated 8300 LIFE frameworks, published 14 editions of LIFE News and attended 66 conferences and

events around the country.

CSS CEO Alyson Miller said that while she was extremely proud of all CSS had achieved with this project, CSS had made the difficult decision to opt out of the tender process for the next phase of the LIFE Communications Project.

“CSS has thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity to work closely with the Department of Health and Ageing on the LIFE Communications initiative, and have been honoured to witness the impact the project has had upon the sector, and the vital work we all do to support people affected by suicide throughout Australia,” she said.

LIFE Communications has been successful in raising awareness of the

National Suicide Prevention Strategy with thousands of professionals through its online resources, workshops and industry events.

Alyson reinforced that CSS remains dedicated to the National Suicide Prevention Strategy, and is passionate about the need for a strategic communication and engagement initiative like LIFE Communications, to ensure it is embraced by the sector.

“We look forward to supporting this project well into the future, in a new capacity,” said Alyson.

Living Is For Everyone (LIFE) is an initiative funded by the Department of Health and Ageing under the National Suicide Prevention Strategy (NSPS). It provides information and resources on suicide and suicide prevention, primarily for professionals, including the LIFE Framework which guides national and local suicide prevention activities.

What’s new at LIFE Communications:

1. Check out our new resource – *Suicide: worried about someone?* We’ve distributed more than 14,000 copies since February 2011
2. New look project profiles and improved navigation and search functions to www.livingisforeverone.com have resulted in a 89% increase in visitors
3. Have you read the latest edition of LIFE News? Focused on Bereavement and Suicide Prevention, it profiles some innovative projects working to support those bereaved by suicide. You can find it at www.livingisforeverone.com.au/LIFE-News.html.

◀ Health Care Network, John spoke on maintaining happy, healthy relationships and the notion that ‘tough times won’t last but tough people do’.

“I was inspired by the resilience in folks. In spite of the tough times they are facing, with flooding on the back of years of drought, they’ve remained optimistic for the future,” John said.

John also shared his insights with the social work students at a local TAFE. John said this experience showed him that MensLine has a lot to

offer rural communities in desperate need of support services.

“The students were so keen, they lapped it up. They say no-one comes through Swan Hill so they were thrilled with the opportunity and now they are speaking to us about organising a field trip to attend CSS’ suicide risk assessment training,” he said.

John’s visit to Swan Hill highlights CSS’ ongoing commitment to supporting rural and regional Australia in times of need.



MensLine’s John Evans, local doctor Donatella Spatari, and Merv Hughes. Photo courtesy of The Guardian.

counselling corner

filling the gaps in service delivery



Christopher Groot
General Manager – Clinical Services

Greetings from 40,000 feet above the Great Australian Bight! I'm writing to you on the last of six flights I have taken this week in the name of Crisis Support Services. I've been travelling around the country, talking to the Australian Government and rural health practitioners about why we are such a critical support to the Australian mental health system. It wasn't until I was waist deep in research for this crusade that I began to see the landscape of the Australian mental health service in a new way – in terms of where it isn't, rather than where it is. For me, this only further affirmed the very vital role of CSS, in the way we overcome the gaps in the system to support those who have nowhere else to turn.

Arguably, the greatest need is in rural and remote Australia, where a range of unique risk factors and barriers need to be considered.

Rural and remote people experience more difficulties in accessing specialist mental health support, such as isolation, confidentiality concerns of living in small towns, limited access to specialist mental health services, and long waiting lists. They also experience the stressors associated with farming and drought, and increased access to means of suicide, and higher rates of suicide.

Rural and remote health practitioners experience greater challenges in providing best practice - skills shortages, lack of professional support and clinical supervision and an inability to provide afterhours support to prematurely discharged patients or those on waiting lists.

CSS makes an immeasurable impact by simply being present where and when mental health practitioners are not, especially in relation to suicide. By providing

specialist, accessible services via telephone and internet, CSS offers rural and remote Australia a unique opportunity. We are able to reach anyone, anywhere, and at anytime, filling critical gaps in the mental health system. Our service can transcend geographical distance to provide specialist, suicide specific support for community members and the professionals working to help them. This ability clearly illustrates the unique value of services like Suicide Call Back Service and the ATAPs After Hours Support Service, and the need expand them to support more people.

Have no doubt, every CSS counsellor, on every CSS line, is helping fill critical gaps in service delivery for the Australian mental health system. If we weren't, the phone wouldn't be ringing.

Christopher Groot
General Manager – Clinical Services

our supporters



Telematics Course Development Fund and Helen Macpherson Smith Trust have kindly continued

their ongoing support of CSS by co-funding MensLine Australia's online counselling and training pilot. In line with our strategic direction, this pilot will support CSS to expand online counselling throughout our services. Most importantly, this pilot will maximise service options available for people seeking help. For more on this project please see page 3.



The Rotary Club of Footscray recently presented CSS with a generous grant of \$8000. This provided funding for two new data projectors for the training team, a digital camera for the marketing and communications team and

a security firewall appliance for IT. The security appliance will protect confidential client information and support a flexible working environment allowing secure remote access for staff. CSS was grateful to receive funds from the Rotary Club of Footscray alongside nine other community and health organisations.

five minutes with Rujuta Gohil

Rujuta joined CSS in May 2010 and is the Reporting and Statistics Coordinator.

What is your earliest memory?

When my younger brother was born and we went to visit him in the hospital. He was the cutest baby I had ever seen.

When I was younger I wanted to be...

A journalist (like my grandfather).

Who would you most like to sit next to at a dinner party (person dead or alive)?

Jamie Oliver (and it would be great if he is hosting that party).

What do you usually serve when you have friends for dinner?

Macaroni and tomato casserole for mains and fruit salad with ice cream for dessert.

What do you enjoy about working at CSS?

People, culture, and most of all, my work.

What has been your most fulfilling moment during your time at CSS?

Each day brings fulfilment while working at CSS as through our work, directly or

indirectly, we all help other members in society who are in crisis.

What's your favourite Melbourne place to visit?

The Royal Botanic Gardens.

What are three things you can't live without?

Apart from the basic necessities of life, in no particular order: my iphone, laptop, coffee.



Rujuta Gohil

five minutes with Ron Forsyth

Ron is a Director of CSS and joined the board in 2007.

What is your earliest memory?

My earliest memory is walking to and playing at kindergarten at the Presbyterian Church in Thornbury.

When I was younger I wanted to be...

A motor mechanic, as I was fascinated with all things mechanical and in particular motor cars. Maintaining and rebuilding push bikes was also an activity that I enjoyed.

Who would you most like to sit next to at a dinner party (person dead or alive)?

Ron Barrasi, a man of outstanding physical and mental capacity. He is also my hero for leading North Melbourne Football Club to two premierships flags.

What do you usually serve when you have friends for dinner?

As the kitchen hand, I support Di with the preparation of superb cuisine. Veal and seafood are favourites followed by sticky date pudding. When we are having friends the focus is on what we 'like' to eat, not what we 'should' eat.

What do you enjoy about being on the CSS board?

Following a successful business career I see my participation on the CSS Board as my opportunity to give back something to a community that has supported me over the years.

What has been your most fulfilling moment during your time on the CSS board?

It is difficult to identify one particular event. As I come to the board with a career history in finance, I enjoy bringing a commercial aspect to the team and interacting with some of our community leaders in the mental health sector.



Ron Forsyth

What's your favourite Melbourne place to visit?

Live theatre is always a favourite and we always support Jean Pratt's Production Company series each year.

What are three things you can't live without?

My wife and daughters who support me continuously

My car

Reducing my golf handicap.

what's on

The Staff Connect team put on a pizza night in February and a St Patrick's Day lunch in March.

event	what's happening?	when
Easter Eggstravaganza!	Hot cross buns, Easter eggs, and a giant Easter egg raffle!	11am Thursday 21 April
High Tea	Petite fours, fancy biscuits, scones, cucumber sandwiches, and tea!	2pm Wednesday 25 May



St Patricks Day at Maribyrnong Street



Michelle Verspaget's leprechaun cake



Gerald Moloney dresses for the occasion

welcome to the team

A warm welcome to the following staff who joined the organisation in February and March 2011.

Alicia Mitic
Counsellor

Suzanne Sibillin
Counsellor

Ignacio Jimenez Banez
Clinical Supervisor

Jaclyn Danaher
Counsellor

Abdelkerim-Abdelkerim
Counsellor

Alana Roy
Counsellor

Felicity Hammett
Counsellor

Sophie Owens
Counsellor

Kate McPhee
Counsellor

Tanja Vignjevic
Counsellor

Daniel Shaw
Counsellor

Noel Cabigting
Counsellor

Megan Robson
Counsellor

next edition

Please send ideas for the next edition (June) of **Between the Lines** to Courtney Collier (ccollier@crisissupport.org.au) or Ellise McLoughlan (emcloughlan@crisissupport.org.au) by Friday 20 May 2011.



Between the Lines editorial team: Ellise McLoughlan and Courtney Collier



PO Box 2335
Footscray
VIC 3011

P: (03) 8371 2800
F: (03) 8371 2888
E: enquiries@crisissupport.org.au
www.crisissupport.org.au