


RESEARCH ARTICLE

Local Men Local Communities: A rural placed-based approach to increase men's engagement with mental health training and events

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Abstract

Issue Addressed: Suicide is the leading cause of death for Australians aged 15–49 (Department of Health and Aged Care Suicide in Australia, <https://www.health.gov.au/health-topics/mental-health-and-suicide-prevention/suicide-in-australia>, 2021). With the loss of one community member impacting the individual's family, friends, and wider community. The aim of the article is to showcase a process evaluation of a place-based approach to suicide prevention, exploring the elements of mental health training and events that can be tailored to increase engagement with the men living in a rural Local Government Area in Gippsland, Victoria, Australia.

Methods: Participation records and promotional material for the Local Men Local Communities project was utilised to explore similarities and differences between the training and events offered.

Results: Results indicated that men living in rural areas engaged best with events that included a social element such as food or an activity, highlighting that men may find it easier to talk and connect when they have something to do.

Conclusion: Mental health training and events need to be tailored to meet the needs of the target population. Key details to consider include location, time, promotional material, content, and inclusion of a social element.

So What? When rural men were provided ownership of their conversations, they were more likely to have them. This challenges the stereotype that men do not talk and creates the opportunity for social connection within the community.

KEYWORDS

community participation, men's health, mental health, rural and regional areas, suicide

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