

# Training programme for 2006

28th & 29th August - ASIST in Oban  
19th September - Dealing with Self-harm in Oban  
20th September - Dealing with Self-harm in Mull  
30th & 31st October - ASIST in Inveraray  
6th & 7th December - ASIST in Bute

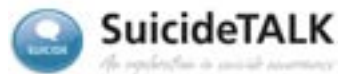


ASIST (Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training) is a two-day intensive course giving suicide first-aid skills to recognise when someone may have thoughts of suicide. The one day **Dealing with Self-harm** course is suitable for anyone working or living with someone who self-harms. Participants gain more understanding into the reasons for self-harm and some helping strategies. We are also running a shorter self-harm awareness raising session which lasts from one to three hours.

**Promoting Mental Health** is suitable for a wide range

of participants covering all aspects of mental health promotion. This can be adapted from a half day to a two day course.

Also from Livingworks are suicideTALK - a one-and-a-half to three hour



session on suicide prevention and safeTALK - to become a suicide alert helper - which can be done in two to three hours.



If you would like to book training or want us to come along to your group - please contact us - see below. Next year's training dates will be released soon.

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Working to reduce suicide and self-harm

# chooselife

in Argyll  
and Bute

## New beginnings

**P**EOPLE are probably aware that originally the Choose Life Project only had two years of funding and therefore should have been complete by now.

It was always clear that a project with such challenging and complex aims was never going to reach completion in that timescale and it is good to know that the funding will now run until the end of March 2008. The bad news is that



Banff adventure: p4-5

the money is slightly reduced and we have had to make some

changes in the way the project will be staffed and run during this timescale. As the money is a bit tighter, difficult decisions have had to be made regarding how much money we actually spend directly on employing staff to work in the project and how much money is left for issues such as training, development of services and support around Argyll and Bute.

The Steering Group, after a lot of thought and consultation has decided to reduce the amount of money we spend on staffing and therefore the



David Bertin

cont. on p2

Sleepwalk: p3



Self-Harm T4T: p6

Newsletter Summer/Autumn 2006

# Creating our suicide safer community

**I**N May I had the most wonderful opportunity to attend the Livingworks' ASIST Trainers annual convention in Banff, Alberta, Canada, writes Marie Park.

A collection of funding from the project, the Scottish Executive, grants and my own cash enabled this trip to take place. My main remit was to go and learn Livingworks' new short suicide programme safeTALK, which enables participants to become suicide alert.

It looks at the reasons why we might miss, dismiss or avoid talking about suicide with someone who is having thoughts of suicide. It then shows how to connect that person with

the appropriate resources in their community. That could be any of the services available including ASIST trained people.

In Argyll & Bute we now have around 200 ASIST trained helpers and hope that safeTALK will give them opportunities to use their skills.



I loved learning the safeTALK programme, it is so well designed and a real community resource and I look forward to the chance of bringing this to Argyll & Bute.

It was also amazing to have the chance to meet with ASIST trainers from

all over the world and share our training experiences. I think we Scots found a particular affinity with the Newfoundlanders (or Newfies). They have such an amazing sense of humour and really entertained us all for the duration of the trip.

They even joined us for a rendition of Auld Lang Syne, when we were asked to do "a turn" at our gathering on the Saturday night.

It was really great to spend time with so many people who don't find suicide a conversation stopping subject. We are all passionate about making the places we live in suicide-safer communities. Everyone has a story to tell about how their

life has been touched by suicide and it was a privilege to hear them all.

**A**LTHOUGH the jet-lag was terrible, I really did have a fantastic time. Our free time was very short, but still managed to squeeze in a shot in a canoe, walking on a glacier, driving through the Rockies and spotting a bear.

It really was the chance of a lifetime and I feel so fortunate. You can read all about my escapades on my Canada diary on the website - there's also a powerpoint of my photographs. Thanks to everyone who supported me.

Please get in touch if you are interested in safeTALK.



Rugged Rockies



Canoe capers



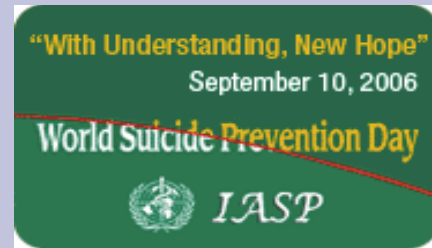
Auld Lang Syne



The Icefields

THE theme of the 4th annual WSPD on September 10, 2006 is: "With Understanding, New Hope." This emphasizes the importance of translating knowledge from suicide research into practice. Please tell us if you are interested in running an event during Suicide

Prevention Week. Check our website for local events and the national site for other events around Scotland on [www.chooselife.net](http://www.chooselife.net)



## They're ready for anything

**T**EN brave souls joined us in March to take part in Training for Trainers for our Dealing with Self-harm course.

We were very impressed by the commitment of everyone who came for the two-day course.



6

The candidates had the chance to learn and practice delivering the one day Self-harm course as well as honing their general training skills. Everyone participated fully, making the course very enjoyable for everyone.

Some of the comments included: "This is the best training I have ever been on" and "It's great to see real training strategies being used properly".

We are hoping to run another T4T at the beginning of next year, so please look out for details in the training section of our website.

# Sleepwalk to success

**A**LMOST 500 people have had the privilege of seeing Sleepwalk performed in the Helensburgh area. The idea to run this play about youth suicide was taken on board by Choose Life and Fusions with youth worker Claudie Restrict as producer for her youth drama group Acting Up.

This play was written by US playwright William Mastrosimone after he was moved by the emotional pain of young people. It has been performed in schools and communities across the US and came to the Edinburgh Festival last summer.

Acting Up joined with Helensburgh youth worker Jayne Middleton's hip-hop dance group to deliver a

unique version of Sleepwalk, starting the performance with a piece of contemporary dance.

Sleepwalk was performed at Kilcreggan and Rosneath Youth clubs, Victoria Halls, Lomond School and Hermitage Academy.

It has been a great success and it would be wonderful to see this done in other areas of Argyll & Bute.



The cast of Sleepwalk get prepared



The Helensburgh dance group



Lead Dylan with his rock hero

3

Please get in touch with Marie Park if you would like to contribute to this newsletter. Tell us what you are doing about suicide prevention. Visit our website for a full report on all our activities [www.chooselifeinargyllandbute.org.uk](http://www.chooselifeinargyllandbute.org.uk)

## Looking to the future

**Cont. from page one**  
structure of the Choose Life Team has changed. The Steering Group wants to take this opportunity to thank Charlotte Lee for the hard work and energy she has put into the project since its inception and we wish her well for the future.

The project will now be co-ordinated by David Bertin who is a senior manager within the mental health service. He has been involved in the Steering Group since the project started and will take on the co-ordination role, but will also continue to have responsibility for other management issues.

Working with David will be two project workers, both working 20 hours, one based in Helensburgh and one within the Mid-Argyll area. The Steering Group is delighted to announce that Marie Park will continue in the role of

2

project worker based within Helensburgh and we are actively recruiting for a new post within the Mid-Argyll locality. We hope to fill that post within the next few weeks.

The changes will mean that the emphasis of the project will be very much on practical training and service development and having two project workers based in different parts of Argyll will help in the delivery of this training and reduce some of the travelling issues.

We believe that this structure will help the project progress, but we have to remember that one of the aims of the Choose Life Project is to "main stream" the issues, training and service in to services that will remain after the project reaches completion.

**By David Bertin  
Choose Life Co-ordinator**

## Resource for everyone

WE were pleased to contribute to the launch of a new mental health directory in Helensburgh and Lomond.

Choose Life co-ordinator David Bertin was asked to speak at the launch of this valuable resource along with Helensburgh councillor Billy Petrie (pictured right).

Much hard work had gone into the development of this resource, co-ordinated by

Community Regeneration with involvement from many different organisations in the area.

It is a flexible folder which can be added to or changed making it a very practical document.



## Working together

CHOOSE Life teamed up with Breathing Space earlier this year to raise awareness of both organisations throughout Argyll & Bute. We held joint events in Oban and Mull as part of the Breathing Space remote and rural campaign. Terry Tuffs (left)



from mid-Argyll and Jean Johnston from Helensburgh were both invited to share their personal stories.

Tony McLaren, Breathing Space co-ordinator also spoke to the delegates along with Charlotte Lee. We were all delighted with the success of this joint venture.



7