



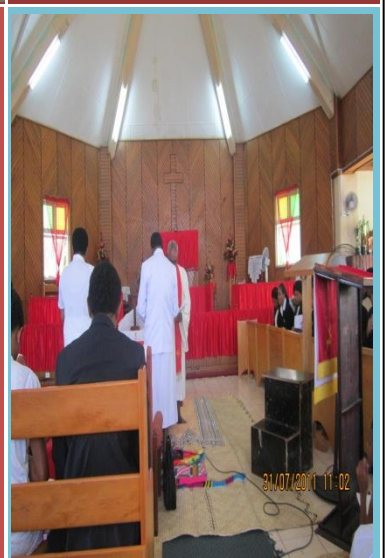
LIFE WORTH LIVING

A CHRISTIAN RESPONSE TO SUICIDE PREVENTION

A HANDBOOK FOR FACILITATORS IN THEOLOGICAL COLLEGES IN THE PACIFIC



2012



WEAVERS, SOUTH PACIFIC ASSOCIATION OF THEOLOGICAL SCHOOLS

LIFE WORTH LIVING

A Christian Education response to suicide prevention

Researcher & Writer: Akanisi Tarabe

This curriculum is a project by Weavers, South Pacific Association of Theological Schools.

DEDICATION

This curriculum is dedicated to all suicide survivors and those who work to prevent suicide.

It is also dedicated to the memory of the following church ministers who gave their time and effort to either facilitate the research in their schools or were part of the team who gave advice and edited the curriculum. These dedicated servants of God passed away before the curriculum was printed.

Rev Eliki Tuikorocau, Chaplain of Lelean Memorial School, Fiji

Rev Muaror – Registrar, Davuilevu Theological College, Fiji

Rev Viliami – Head Tutor, Siatoutai Theological College

May their souls rest in God's peace.

PREFACE

This curriculum is based on a qualitative research carried out in 5 theological schools and 1 church community in different countries in the South Pacific between May and August 2011. The schools were Siatoutai Theological College in Tonga, Piula Theological College in Samoa, Tanginitebu KPC School in Kiribati, Davuilevu Theological College in Fiji, Talua Theological School in Vanuatu and the Church of Christ community in Pohnpei. The aim of the study was to seek the views of theological students and faculty members on their knowledge, understanding and perception of suicide. Key members of society whose work had relevance to suicide prevention and people who had been affected by completed suicides in their family or community were also interviewed. Other sources of information were from books or reports and information gleaned from informal conversations with people. The result of this study is *Life Worth Living*.

This curriculum has its context in the Pacific churches. It is a tool for practitioners in a theological school setting to equip them with knowledge and skills to help those who have been affected by suicide. The manual serves as a guide to foster a deep understanding of church ministers' (CM) calling in relation to suicide prevention. *Life worth Living* spotlights the increasing incidence of suicide in the Pacific and how the church may respond to the challenges imposed by culture and church traditions in the prevention of suicide.

The curriculum design can be easily followed and is intended to maximise the practitioner's opportunity to teach the lessons. Pacific communities treasure their culture and their faith and they look towards the church as the vessel that provides the answers when problems arise. To this effect, the solutions to their problems must be presented in a package that is both relevant and meaningful to Pacific people. Thus, *Life worth Living* embraces culture and the Christian faith in its approach to the prevention of suicide.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This book is the result of the work of many people who have the passion to support life and living it in its fullness according to the will of God. The field work and the writing of the curriculum were made possible by the combined efforts of many people whose names should be acknowledged.

No task this important could ever be accomplished without adequate funding. WEAVERS is grateful to the **Missio Gachen, Germany** for funding this project.

SCHOOLS

This handbook is also indebted to the following people and organisations for their time, knowledge and hospitality:

The Principal, Staff and students of Siatoutai Theological College in Tonga,

The Principal, Staff and students of Piula Theological College in Samoa,

The Principal, Staff and students of Tanginitebu KPC School in Kiribati,

The Principal, Staff and students of Davuilevu Theological College in Fiji,

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The General Secretary and Church of Christ in Pohnpei

The General Secretary of the South Pacific Association of Theological Schools, Rev. Rusiate Tuidrakulu,

The Coordinator of WEAVERS, Mrs. Titilia Vakadewavosa,

THE REVIEWERS

Mr Viliame Rabici (independent reviewer) - University of the South Pacific

Rev Taniela Baleinakorodawa (independent reviewer) – Davuilevu Theological College

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ABOUT THE HANDBOOK

There are four units in this Handbook which are targeted at assisting Church leaders to combat the increase in the rate of suicide in the Pacific.

Ideally, each lesson should run for one period (approximately 45 minutes) but this will depend solely on the facilitator's discretion.

Each unit is accompanied by a Module which contains activities and assessments for students that should help them further understand the subject of suicide in their own cultural context.

A set of symbols is used throughout the units to facilitate the identification of each step of learning.

Unit name



Unit Outcome



Lessons



Content Learning outcome



Achievement indicators



Key Concept



Key Terms



Background information



Questions students may ask



Task



Journal Reflection



OVERVIEW OF THE HANDBOOK

A THE STRUCTURE OF THE HANDBOOK

UNIT ONE	UNIT TWO	UNIT THREE	UNIT FOUR
UNDERSTANDING SUICIDE	KNOWING YOUR CALLING	THE HEDGE OF PROTECTION	THE CHRISTIAN RESPONSE

1 Defining Suicide	1 Knowing Yourself	1 Communication	1 Transforming Tradition and Culture
2 Recognising the signs	2 Knowing your Calling	2 Counselling	2 Parenting
3 Culture and Faith Attitude			3 The church's Response

B INTRODUCTION

This section briefly introduces the Units and the lessons in each unit. It gives an overview of what to expect in the contents.

C OUTCOME An outcome statement is the learning objective achieved. It captures specifically what knowledge, skills, attitudes learners should be able to show following instructions. The following outcomes are used in the handbook.

- **SUBJECT OUTCOME:** This will appear only once at the beginning of Unit 1 and it explains the overall learning objectives of the subject: SUICIDE PREVENTION.
- **UNIT OUTCOME:** This will address the outcome of the Unit being studied.
- **CONTENT OUTCOME:** This will address the outcome of the particular lesson being studied.

D ACHIEVEMENT INDICATORS: The Indicators are points that will tell us whether the outcomes of the lessons have been met.

G KEY CONCEPTS: These are the key ideas reflected in the units and lessons.

H CASE STUDIES: Case Studies are stories collected during the research that portray the experiences of different people in regard to suicide.

I **JOURNAL REFLECTIONS:** They are reflective moments where students are able to think deeply about their own understanding of the lesson being learnt. It challenges the participant to critically think and analyse the issues of suicide from their own point of view.

Curriculum overview

Target audience

The target groups are theological students in the Pacific.

Methods

The **Life Worth Living** curriculum is an interactive curriculum designed to engage students in a fun and effective way. Students are challenged to work in groups, in pairs and as a class to analyse theological concepts, cultural bias and explore their feelings about life in general.

Time Frame

Each lesson is designed for a 45-50 minute period.

Content

There are four units in the facilitator's handbook:

Unit 1: Understanding suicide

Unit 2: Knowing your calling

Unit 3: The hedge of protection

Unit 4: The church's response

Activities and assessments

The activities and assessments are written in modules in a special book. This allows the students to work on their own and reflect on what they have learnt in the lessons.

ACRONYMS

CE	-	Christian Education
CM	-	Church Ministers
MOH	-	Ministry of Health
NGO	-	Non Government Organisations
NIV	-	New International Version
NT	-	New Testament
OT	-	Old Testament
PM	-	Pastoral Ministry
WHO`	-	World Health Organisation
SPATS	-	South Pacific Association of Theological Schools

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INTRODUCTION

Suicide is preventable death.

However, the Pacific region has one of the highest youth suicide rates in the world (Booth 1997; Hezel 1984). For some Pacific Islands, suicide is the leading cause of death in youth, and rates have reached epidemic proportions. Studies show that the cause of many suicide deaths in the Pacific is interpersonal in nature triggered by some conflict between the victim and parents or between victim and spouse or girlfriend and boyfriend. In some cases, it has been disagreement on very trivial cases such as parents' refusal to buy a new shirt for their son (see Hezel 1979). In these cases the dominant emotion is anger that stems out from the inability to communicate the feeling of jealousy and so forth.

The economics of suicide is high because suicide affects everyone, family, friends, church members, work mates, the government, in fact, everyone in the society in different ways. The financial burden, the emotional impact, the shame or stigma attached, the rituals that surround a suicide death, indicate that the cost of suicide is not only financial, but social, psychological and spiritual as well. How does a society that places high value on life through the church and its culture be wrought with high incidence of suicide? How can the church deal with suicide and prevent it from happening?

Life Worth Living is a Christian education response to suicide prevention designed for students in Theological schools. The important role that the church plays in the lives of people in the Pacific, place church ministers at the frontline of 'first assistance' given when people are in crisis. This makes church ministers key players of intervention in suicidal situations. However, people cannot always tell when someone is going to commit suicide but the note of regret after a suicide has taken place makes learning about the prevention of suicide a necessary element in pastoral care. This curriculum is intended for such a purpose.

SUBJECT SUICIDE PREVENTION



INTRODUCTION

This handbook is about Suicide Prevention. It is written to assist trainers and practitioners in their fight against suicide. The subject has 4 units and each unit has a specific number of lessons. For example:

- Unit 1 - 3 lessons
- Unit 2 - 2 lesson
- Unit 3 - 2 lessons
- Unit 4 - 3 lessons.

There are altogether 10 lessons to cover.

The subject outcomes are listed below:

SUBJECT OUTCOMES

When the curriculum is completed, students will:

- Demonstrate pastoral knowledge and skills to the community in order to illustrate the value of life.
- Design strategies to illustrate God's Grace and God's plan in the totality of life.
- Acknowledge and recognise the nature, influence and effects of suicide so that the students are adequately equipped to prevent and assist in its aftermath.
- Demonstrate an in depth knowledge of themselves and their calling in order to apply the attributes of a good shepherd to protect the flock from self destruction.
- Design strategies to assist parents in their parenting roles.

FROM DARKNESS TO LIGHT

I was in the deepest darkness, and encompassed by its pain
My problems, fears, and anger ruled my heart, they ruled my brain.
Hurts, doubts, and disappointments slapped daily at my face,
The hopelessness and depression, I wanted only to erase.

Like waves erode a beach line, my surface too, was wearing thin,
The constant waves of my problems came rushing, crashing in.
And fiercely pounding at my heart, fiercely pounding at my head,
They finally had convinced me, it'd be better if I were dead.

Carrying me even further out than I had already been,
Now I felt even more alone, without comfort, without friend.
There seemed no one for miles and miles, in this vast expansive sea,
No one to reach my hand, no one to hear my plea.

The coldness of the water chilled me to the very bone,
My body numb to any feeling, my heart had turned to stone.
I tried to pick myself up from the bottom of the sea,
But the waves, extremely forceful, had now overtaken me.

Fighting hard to reach the surface, I used all my energy.
Now I was truly, truly drowning, no one would rescue me.
I was feeling so all alone, and feeling so ignored,
I felt I could end this pain by going home with my Lord.

But the way out of this darkness, and into the marvellous light,
Was to truly rest in Jesus, and let Him fight my fight.
And there was always someone listening who understood everything.
He wanted very much to help me, and safely to the shore to bring

And I always had a rescuer, and I always had a friend,
Who wanted to reach out to me and all my needs attend.
But He kept me in the darkness, He kept me in the pain,
'Til the pain so overwhelmed me, I would look to Him again

And of my thoughts and wrong emotions, He wanted me to let go.
This is what He has taught me, because He loves me so.
Though He didn't change my circumstances, I won't let them intrude.
And even in the midst of them, I can change how they are viewed.

I don't have to respond to them, in such a negative way,
And they have moulded me and shaped me into who I am today.
So I am no longer drowning in my problems like before,
My head can stay above the water, where He'll keep it ever more.
I only have to trust Him and let Him lead my way,
And He'll enable me and help me, He'll help me face each day.
So I am so ever thankful, my Lord will choose the time,
When He takes me home with Him, to peace and love sublime

Anonymous

UNIT ONE

UNDERSTANDING SUICIDE



UNIT ONE UNDERSTANDING SUICIDE

INTRODUCTION

This unit is an introduction to what suicide is. It explores how and why people commit suicide, what could be the cause and offers advice on how to assist people who are suicidal and the relatives of those that have completed suicide in its aftermath. Suicide is a choice that an individual makes and like other choices that we make it has certain consequences and some far reaching costs.

The unit has an outcome which outlines what is hoped to be achieved in Unit One – (Understanding Suicide).

It also has a Content Outcome which is based on the content of the lesson to be studied.



UNIT OUTCOME

At the end of Unit One, students will be able to:

- Acknowledge that every decision we make has consequences.
- Acknowledge that suicide is a decision that has far reaching costs.
- Define suicide, recognise its warning signs and identify perceptions of suicide distinctive to their culture.

UNIT STRUCTURE

UNIT ONE	UNDERSTANDING SUICIDE
LESSON ONE	DEFINING SUICIDE
LESSON TWO	RECOGNISING THE SIGN
LESSON THREE	CULTURE AND FAITH ATTITUDE



LESSON ONE DEFINING SUICIDE



INTRODUCTION

Lesson One seeks to define and explain why people commit suicide. It includes the WHO definition and will involve the participants in finding their own definitions and clarifying their cultural attitudes towards suicide.



CONTENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

At the end of the lesson, students will be able to:

- Acquire critical thinking and problem solving skills.
- Define suicide
- Illustrate that suicide can be prevented
- Appraise that suicide is a moral issue and would require spiritual intervention.
- Clarify the cultural perspectives of suicide



ACHIEVEMENT INDICATORS

Students will be achieving these outcomes when they for example:

- Analyse situations that could trigger suicide attempts.
- Interpret their own cultural perception of suicides through discussions and written activities.
- Discuss the belief that God is the source of strength during stressful times.
- Discuss the concept that suicide intervenes with God's plan for fullness of life.
-



KEY CONCEPTS

- Suicide is preventable and we can talk about it.
- Misinformation and misunderstanding perpetuates the fear of suicide.
- Every society has its own cultural perception of suicide.
- Suicide is a moral issue and divine intervention is required.



KEY TERMS

Suicide

Suicidal tendencies

Cultural perception

Life skills

Divine intervention

Moral issue

Biological

Cultural

Trigger



BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Pacific region has one of the highest youth suicide rates in the world (Booth 1997; Hezel 1984). For example, young male suicide in the Federated States of Micronesia, Palau, Samoa, Marshall Islands, Guam and among Fiji Indians are among those rated the highest anywhere in the world. Booth reports that this is also true for young females between the ages of 15-24 years in Samoa and among Fiji Indians (Booth 1997). Hezel's study of suicide in 1976 first brought to attention the high incidence of suicide in Micronesia, in particular, on the island of Truk (see Hezel 1984). *The British Medical Journal* also notes that in Micronesia, males aged between 18 -25 kill themselves at a rate of 200 for every 100 000 which is 20 times the comparable US rate (see *The British Medical Journal* 1995). Hezel explains that in Western Samoa the rate of suicide is about 30 for every 100 000 (Hezel 1984).

Fiji Police statistics show that of those that completed suicide in Fiji in 2011, 60% were Fiji Indians in comparison to 38% of indigenous Fijians. 92% of these deaths occurred by hanging (see Fiji Police Statistical Unit Report 2011). In Western Samoa 80% of death by suicide are caused by drinking paraquat, the weed killer that is readily available in most Pacific supermarkets and stores (cf. Booth 1997). In all the countries mentioned above, suicide is the highest cause of death. For example, in Fiji, suicide causes more deaths annually than road accidents (Booth 1997; Ministry of Health Fiji 2002). It is speculated in the area of suicide prevention in Fiji, that some fatal road accidents are actually suicide deaths and some drowning incidents maybe suicide deaths especially if the victim is a known competent swimmer, but without evidence, we can only speculate. What is more alarming is the devastating effect suicide leaves behind on relatives and friends.

The economics of suicide is high because suicide affects everyone, family, friends, church members, work mates, the government, in fact, everyone in the society in different ways. The financial burden, the emotional impact, the shame or stigma attached, the rituals that surround a suicide death, indicate that the cost of suicide is not only financial, but social, psychological and spiritual as well. An informant describes how he faced the suicide death of his relative and says that 'he left a financial and

emotional burden to me' (Tevita pers.comm. 2011). How does a society that places high value on life through the church and its culture be wrought with high incidence of suicide? How can the church deal with suicide and prevent it from happening?

In the Pacific, the break in traditional societies has been attributed to the rise in suicide rates through the rapid shift from communal societies to cash based societies (Ernst 2006; Norton, Macpherson and Macpherson 1988). This rapid shift in societies leads to changes in traditional roles for both young men and women. In a study of suicide in Tonga between 1982 -1997, Vivili and co authors found that the suicide rate in Tonga was increasing but there was little information available (Vivili et al., n.d). Current works by Tonga Lifeline suggest the growing concern with suicide in Tonga.

Many social factors have been put forward as the causes of suicide in the Pacific. Related to these are social changes due to economic factors, urbanization and other reasons linked to globalization as mentioned before. This means that the traditional structures that provide basic security for everyone has shifted and new ones have replaced them and these do not fit into the lives of Pacific people.

Other possible causes of suicides come from the attitudes and beliefs Pacific people have towards suicide. Hezel's study of Micronesia offers us a glimpse into the attitudes and beliefs of people that may contribute to the high rate suicide in the Pacific. He notes that Trukese, like other Pacific Islanders, feel that 'people have always committed suicide so that there was no reason to become alarmed at what was simply an old cultural trait' (Hezel 1984: 193). Is the act of killing oneself normal? Why is it normal for some people yet for others it is the most painful personal crisis? For others still, suicide is linked to witchcraft. Witchcraft and sorcery are issues that Pacific people talk about as causes of suicide but others often brush these reasons aside because they do not have a scientific basis. However, witchcraft remains very real in the lives of Pacific people who believe in them and these are issues that need to be addressed by the church.

Suicide is a subject that is not discussed freely in our society as many people are ashamed of the stigma associated with it. Many Pacific island people do not talk about it because they feel that talking about it is **calling down suicide**. This means that they believe that the more they talk about suicide, the more chances it may happen to them or to their relatives.

Our goal is to create awareness of the devastating effect that is left in the wake of a suicide and it is imperative for us to break through the wall of protectiveness erected around it.

We have to rise above the culture of silence that is often the barrier towards recognising that Suicide can be prevented.

As long as we live in this world, we cannot escape some degree of unhappiness. However, the feelings of despair and helplessness are sometimes too great to overcome and may reach

the point where we may feel hopeless and guilty. Some people cannot share their feelings at such times and maybe feel ashamed to have such thoughts of suicide. This would be the onset of suicidal feelings and unless it is nipped in the bud, it would have a disastrous result.

The feelings of despair and despondency were not unknown to the great figures of the Bible, such as Job and Elijah in the Old Testament. In the New Testament Paul had suicidal thoughts because of the suffering he went through but he was focused on the mission of the church that he wanted to accomplish and this saved him from ruining himself and his mission. These great biblical prophets went through the same challenges that contemporary Christians face. We sometimes feel much anxiety and anguish because we think that God does not care about our suffering.

We must guide people to appreciate that they have inner strengths, God-given abilities that will allow them to cope with sudden misfortunes. Difficult times may not be enjoyable times, and they certainly are not comfortable times, but they are potent with opportunities for great awakening. These times force us to pay attention to our lives, to our relationships, to our families and to ourselves.

Suicidal people are often inward looking and preoccupied with their problems thus are unable to realise and utilize their coping skills. This is the biggest challenge they face during stressful times. However, this negative situation can be used to tap into reserves of courage, hope and love, and coping skills they were not aware they possess. Tapping into these reserves, allows them to analyse situations better, think critically and find constructive solutions.

Generally, the pain that comes with difficult times should help us to unfold ourselves to discover the hidden treasures of spiritual wealth we did not know existed within us. In difficult moments like this, we should know that no matter how impossible a situation is, there is always a solution. We should have the courage to be honest before God whatever our wounds are and however deep and painful they maybe. God's gentle care for us will carry us through every step of our journey of suffering, discovery and renewal.

Certainly we need to remember that God gives strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow. God's love is great and his compassion never fails and they are new every morning.

PRAYER

Lord, help us to come to you with our most dreadful feelings, Especially, when they seem to overwhelm us. Help us to endure the trials in the midst of life, and keep us in your loving care when we are tempted by death. Listen to our prayer O Lord, and hear our cry for help!



QUESTIONS STUDENTS MAY ASK.

QUESTION 1 – Why do people commit suicide?

ANSWER People who commit suicide are suffering from extreme psychological pain and are at the point of time unable to find any options beside suicide.

QUESTION 2 - Is suicide the result of witchcraft?

ANSWER: It may be possible, what is important is to seek help and find a supportive prayer group to support you in your time of needs.

QUESTION 3 - Is it true that people attempt suicide as a cry for help?

ANSWER A suicide attempt is either a conscious or unconscious way of communicating to others the feelings of helplessness and hopelessness being experienced.

Question 4 Is depression a case of suicide?

ANSWER Suicidal feelings often develop in a person who is deeply depressed, but this does not necessarily mean that he will commit suicide.

Importance of Decision making.

Every decision we make results in an outcome that will serve as the foundation for future decisions. Poor decisions may create situations that are increasingly difficult or may complicate the ability to make proper choices in the future. They can have consequences that stay with us the rest of our lives. However while it may be too late to change the consequences, we always have a choice about how we respond to them. We can allow them to ruin our lives or we can learn from our mistakes, take responsibility for the outcome and become a better person as a result.

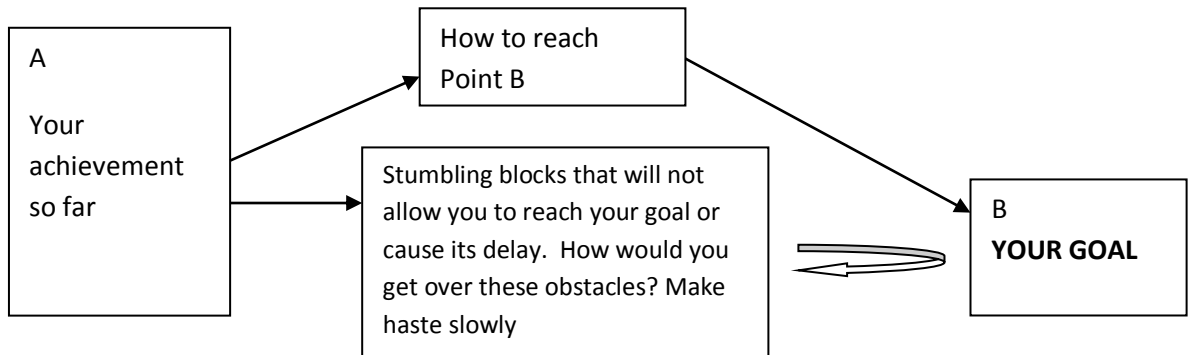
Pre-knowledge Activity.

There are 3 sheets of newsprint on the board. Divide yourself into 3 or 4 groups, depending on the, number in the class. You also have some yellow stickers to write your thoughts on.

The first newsprint is where you paste your stickers on which you have written down where you are at present in your life. You can put down some major decisions you made that brought you to wherever you are now. In the third newsprint paste what your goal is for the future. For the second paper, you will divide it in half. On the first half, you will paste how you will

reach your goal.

On the second half, you will identify some deterrents that can prevent or delay you from reaching your goal. Also write down how you will surmount your obstacles.



Points for discussions.

Reflect upon a time when you encountered a stumbling block in your life journey:

- What was the problem?
- How did you realise that you had a problem?
- How did you respond to the problem?

What did you learn from this?

KEY INFORMATION.

Definition of suicide.

If we wish to have a strong and useful definition we need to identify the following characteristics of suicide

- The biological, cultural, social, spiritual, relational, conscious and unconscious aspects of suicide.
- The tragedy which unfolds in the mind of the person.
- It is often seen as the best solution to a perceived problem.
- It is often independent on the historic, social, moral, religious and legal context in which the suicidal act has been attempted.
- It is often committed by a highly troubled person.

SUICIDE according to the **WHO Endorsed Definition** is an act with a fatal outcome which the deceased, knowing or expecting a potentially fatal outcome, had initiated and carried out with a purpose of bringing about wanted changes.

CASE STUDY 1

.I think suicide is a sin because only one person causes it. Sometimes you do something that is not good and after that you feel hurt and go and kill yourself. You have not reconciled with the people that hurt you or ask for God's forgiveness.

A few years back, when my eldest son was still a baby and my husband went for his pastoral training; my grandmother did not look after me properly, so I decided to kill myself. I had found out, I was having another baby and my husband was away studying to be a pastor. It was too much for me, I decided to kill myself.

With God's help I did not commit suicide.

I think suicide is not the best solution.

I think we should ask God to help with our problems....because he said to give all our worries to him because he cares for us. So I just thank God that I have learnt more things when I came with my husband to be the Pastor in this place. I now know the things that I did not know before. (Marie)

GUEST SPEAKER

Invite either a doctor who is familiar with suicide.

Students need to:

1. prepare questions to ask the speaker
2. discuss the speaker's talk in their groups.



LESSON SUMMARY

Committing suicide is a personal choice. The choices we make can have serious consequences in our lives. It is important that we acquire life skills that can help us cope with certain problems we may come across in life.

Suicide wastes the hope of many to have a useful and a fruitful life. God has come that we may have life and life in its totality. Suicide is a sin because it denies God's will for our lives.

The goal of this lesson is to equip and encourage the students to identify the characteristics and the nature of suicide. By having this knowledge they will be creating an awareness and help facilitate the dissemination of this knowledge to their families and friends.

The class was stimulated by a classroom activity which required concentration on their part. The activity was to promote critical thinking skills and allow the students to be more analytical in their approach to problem solving.



KEY CONCEPTS

- The decisions that we make have consequences.
- Some people do not talk about suicide because they believe it will happen if they talk about it.
- Suicide is preventable and we can talk about it.
- Every society has its own perception of suicide.
- We should always seek God in prayer during difficult times.

LESSON TWO RECOGNISING THE SIGNS



INTRODUCTION

This lesson will assist students to recognise the signs of suicide. The knowledge gained will help them to help others prevent suicide from happening. Students will be challenged to examine their traditional perception and attitudes and identify myths and misunderstandings regarding suicide.



CONTENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

At the end of the lesson students will:

- Identify the warning signs of people with suicide intention and clarify the risk factors involved
- Demonstrate proactive approach in the prevention of suicide and its intervention
- Examine traditional perceptions and attitudes towards suicide in order to dispel myths and misunderstandings.



ACHIEVEMENT INDICATORS

Students will be achieving outcomes when they for example:

- Translate into actionable knowledge the warning signs of suicide.
- Identify and discuss the risk factors in groups.
- Differentiate the myths and misunderstandings about suicide.
- Adopt and adapt a prayerful life.



KEY CONCEPTS

- Warning signs and risk factors are clues of intended suicidal acts.
- Warning signs indicate a person's attempts to communicate that he/she is not coping.
- Eight out of ten people who contemplate suicide give signs that they need help.
- Warning signs and risk factors include situational, behavioural, depression, physical, thoughts and emotional changes.

- Gentle service can do a lot to waylay suicidal attempts and provide soothing effects.



KEY TERMS

- Risk factors
- Warning signs
- Self esteem
- Suicidal behaviour
- Suicidal risk
- Lethargy
- Apathy



BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Warning signs and risk factors are clues that alert us that a person maybe contemplating suicide. Most suicidal people try to communicate that they are not coping and they are in severe emotional pain. They give warning signs to indicate that they need help.

If the signs are not hidden we can assume there is a part of the suicidal person desiring positive intervention. We cannot predict anyone wanting to commit suicide except for these two factors:

- a feeling of hopelessness
- a history of previous suicide attempt.

Warning signs and risk factors are often divided into six groups, situational, behavioural, depression, physical, and thoughts and emotions. While not all warning signs are indicators of potential suicide, especially when looked at as an isolated event in someone's life, they represent changes in behaviour or behaviours which can act as a signal to all of us (Suicide Awareness Training Manual – MOH Fiji 2002). When we read the story of Elijah in the Bible, we can also pick out warning signs and risk factors associated with suicide.

Elijah was disappointed and dejected after the great exploit on Mount Carmel when he had showed God's power to the people – and yet still they had not turned from their evil ways. He lost confidence and cried out to God, "I have had enough, take my life." In his disappointment he wanted to run away from his responsibilities as a prophet and just be alone. In his despair he lost his appetite and his sleep patterns were disrupted. This happens frequently to those who suffer from depression, making the sufferer even more weary and fatigued, exacerbating the problem. At such a time, leaving home and going out to meet people can seem like an impossible task. Those who suffer from depression will recognise only too well such feeling of melancholy. It is impossible to cheer the depressed person and

equally impossible to snap them out of it. Sometimes what is needed is neither profound thought nor 'useful' counselling but simply a good meal and a good rest.

A gentle, loving human presence alongside the sufferer and providing for their basic needs maybe the best way that a friend or carer can express his or her concern.

So we see the divine care for Elijah. After leaving him to lie down and fall asleep in his depressive grumbling, God rouses him with a gentle touch, providing him with a cake of bread and a jar of water so that he may regain his strength. God is a gentle and wonderful carer.

Suicide Risk Factors and Warning Signs

The best way to prevent suicide, according to Suicide Prevention Resources, is to make sure you know the following risk factors and warning signs of suicide.

Suicide Risk Factors

Certain conditions/situations are associated with an increased risk of suicide:

- death or terminal illness of a relative or friend
- divorce, separation or the breakup of a relationship
- loss of health (real or imaginary)
- loss of job, home, money, status, self-esteem or personal security
- alcohol or drug abuse
- depression
- Unwanted pregnancies
- Failing exams.
- Tarnished public image.

In addition, there are certain times when people may be more prone to suicidal feelings, such as:

- holidays and anniversaries
- the first week after discharge from a hospital
- when treatment with an antidepressant first begins
- just before and after diagnosis of a major illness
- just before and during disciplinary proceedings
- 'lunar movements

Emotional and Behavioural Changes Associated With Suicide

Emotionally, the suicidal person may be feeling:

- overwhelming pain
- hopelessness
- powerlessness
- worthlessness, shame, guilt or self-hatred
- fear of losing control and harming themselves or others
- Behaviourally, the person may:
 - appear sad, withdrawn, tired, apathetic, anxious, irritable, or prone to angry outbursts
 - not be performing well in school, work, or other activities
 - become socially isolated or fall in with the wrong crowd
 - have declining interest in sex, friends, or activities previously enjoyed
 - neglect personal welfare or let their appearance go
 - experience a change in eating or sleeping habits
- Depression
- Recurring death themes in stories and poetry
- Isolation
- Gathering together lethal objects
- Aggression
- Suicide Warning Signs
 - Suicide warning signs which you should be aware of include:
 - depression
 - previous suicide attempts
 - preoccupation with death
 - statements like, "you would be better off without me" or "I wish I were dead"
 - talking openly about wanting to kill oneself
 - development of a suicide plan, acquiring the means to carry it out, "rehearsal" behaviour, setting a time for the attempt
 - self-inflicted injuries, such as cuts, burns, or head banging
 - engaging in risky behaviour such as driving recklessly, using drugs or having unprotected sex
 - making out a will or giving away favourite possessions
 - inappropriately saying goodbye
 - making ambiguous statements like, "you won't have to worry about me anymore", "I wish I could go to sleep and never wake up" or "I just can't take it anymore"
 - suddenly switching from being very depressed to being very happy or calm for no apparent reason
- If You See Any of These Warning Signs:
 - If you observe any of these warning signs in your loved one, encourage them to seek help from a mental health professional. If they refuse, be persistent. If they appear to be in immediate danger of hurting themselves, do not leave them alone. Remove any possible means that they can use to hurt themselves, and get them to an emergency room as soon as possible.

A Warning About Warning Signs

While most people who attempt suicide do show some sort of warning signs, there are also those people who, because of social stigma or a desire to not appear weak, will successfully hide what they are feeling. If you fail to recognize that your loved one is considering suicide, **do not blame yourself**. You did the best you could with the information you had.

Knowing the signs is everyone's business.

PRAYER

Lord, reach out your gentle hand to those who are suffering, and show me how to extend a hand of gentle service to those who need to know your love in practical ways

QUESTIONS FREQUENTLY ASKED

QUESTION 1 – What are the most common warning signs?

ANSWER

Some estimate as many as 80% of those thinking about suicide want others to be aware of their emotional pain and stop them from dying. A warning sign does not automatically mean a person is going to attempt suicide, but it should be taken seriously. The warning signs that we pay particular attention to are: a prior suicide attempt, talking about suicide and making a plan, giving away prized possessions, preoccupation with death, signs of depression, hopelessness and anxiety, increased drug and alcohol use.

QUESTION 2 - How many people know about the warning signs and how to detect if someone is going to commit suicide?

ANSWER

Not enough, but more are learning every day. We believe that people can and should learn the warning signs and intervention strategies to help their friends and relatives. We don't expect

them to conduct a professional assessment but we want them to befriend a person in despair and offer support and reassurance and referral to help

QUESTION 3 - If someone suspects that a friend or family member is considering suicide, what should he or she do?

ANSWER

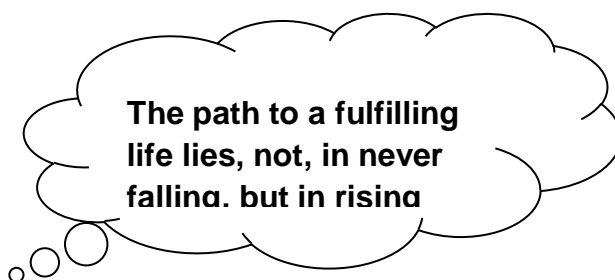
There are three very important things to do if you notice the warning signs for suicide or the person tells you directly that they are thinking about suicide. The first thing is to always show the person that you are concerned about them – listen without judgment, ask about their feelings and avoid trying to come up with a solution to their problem. Next ask directly about suicide – be direct without being confrontational; say “are you feeling so bad that you are thinking about suicide?” Finally, if the answer to your question is “yes” or you think it is yes, go get help – call a crisis line, visit the school counsellor, tell a parent or refer the person to someone with professional skills to provide help. Never keep a talk of suicide a secret!

QUESTION 4 - What is a family's reaction when a family member completes suicide?

ANSWER

Most feel a combination of emotions: anger, sadness, guilt, shame and fear. They wonder what they could have done and why they didn't do more. Suicide is different from other kinds of sudden death because the reason for the death is difficult to understand. With a car accident there is an external explanation or cause – poor road conditions, loss of vehicle control, etc. With a homicide, the grief-stricken can point to a perpetrator. With suicide, we don't have an external cause, and so we ask ourselves over and over: 'why?'

QUOTABLE QUOTES





TASK TWO

TASK (10 minutes Role Play) Job 3: 11 – 26

Role play a scenario from the bible reading above showing Job in his agony between choosing life and being tempted by death. At such a time we can only call on God to rescue us.

Include symptoms highlighted to portray a real situation.

Perhaps in low times such as this Satan seizes the opportunity at the very moment to tempt to do things that we would never have considered in ordinary times.

CASE STUDY: 2

1 King 19:2 – 13

So Jezebel sent this message to Elijah "May the gods strike me and even kill me if by this time tomorrow I have not killed you just as you killed them." Elijah was afraid and fled for his life. He went to Beersheba, a town in Judah and he left his servant there. Then he went on alone into the wilderness travelling all day. He sat down under a solitary broom tree and prayed that he might die."I have had enough Lord" he said. Take my life, for I am no better than my ancestors who have already died" Then he lay down and slept under the broom tree. But as he was sleeping an angel touched him and told him "Get up and eat!" So, he got up and ate and drank and the food gave him strength to travel forty days and forty nights to Mount Sinai, the mountain of God. But the Lord said, "What are you doing here Elijah?" Elijah replied I have zealously served the Lord God almighty. But the people of Israel have broken their covenant with you, torn down your altars, and killed every one of your prophets. I am the only one left, and now they are trying to kill me too... Then the Lord said to him "Go back the same way you came, and travel to the wilderness of Damascus. When you arrive there, anoint Hazael to be King of Aram. Then anoint Jehu son of Nimshi to be King Israel, and anoint Elisha son of Shaphat from the town of Abelmeholah to replace you as my prophet. Anyone who escapes from Hazael will be killed by Jehu, and those who escape Jehu will be killed by Elisha. Yet I will preserve 7,000 others in Israel who have never bowed down to Baal or kissed him.



LESSON SUMMARY

The best way to prevent suicide, according to Suicide Prevention Resources, is to make sure you know the risk factors and warning signs of suicide.

- Warning signs and risk factors are clues of intended suicidal acts and are also attempts to communicate that a person is not coping.
- Eight out of ten people who contemplate suicide give signs that they need help.
- Warning signs and risk factors are often divided into six groups, situational, behavioural, depression, physical, and thoughts and emotions.
- While not all warning signs are indicators of potential suicide, especially when looked at as an isolated event in someone's life, they represent changes in behaviour or behaviours which can act as a signal to all of us (Suicide Awareness Training Manual – MOH Fiji).
- When problems seem to be overwhelming, it may help to distance ourselves from the immediate pressures and breakdown what seems overwhelming into manageable bite sizes.
- Seek God's guidance when you are faced with overwhelming moments,

Knowing the warning signs and the risk factors of suicide is everyone's business.



KEY CONCEPTS.

- Warning signs and risk factors are clues of intended suicidal acts.
- Warning signs indicate a person's attempts to communicate that he/she is not coping.
- Eight out of ten people who contemplate suicide give signs that they need help.
- Warning signs and risk factors include situational, behavioural, depression, physical, thoughts and emotional changes.
- Gentle service can do a lot to waylay suicidal attempts and provide soothing effects.

LESSON THREE CULTURE AND FAITH ATTITUDE



INTRODUCTION

This lesson aims to help the students to develop the right attitude towards dealing with suicidal people. In the process, students will learn and recognise that attitude towards suicide is culturally determined.



CONTENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

At the end of this lesson students

- Acquire new knowledge of their own attitudes towards suicide.
- Develop the right attitude in dealing with suicidal people.
- Clarify cultural perspectives of suicide
- Recognise how attitude towards suicide is culturally determined.



ACHIEVEMENT INDICATORS

Students will be achieving these outcomes when they for example:

- Individuals are aware of their attitudes towards suicide and are more tolerant towards suicidal people when they participate in discussions.
- Describe suicide and the different perspectives of suicide in their own culture.



KEY CONCEPTS.

- Talking about death is difficult for most people and talking about suicide is even harder.
- It is important to develop the right attitude when dealing with suicidal people.
- There are varied attitudes towards suicide.
- Our attitudes are created from our cultural and religious beliefs.



KEY TERMS.

- Suicidal people
- Suicidal tendencies

Attitude

Attitude to me is more important than the past,
than education,
than money,
than circumstances,
than failures,
than success,
than what other people think, or say, or do.

It is more important than appearance,
giftedness, or skill.
It will make or break an organization,
a school, a home.

The remarkable thing is we have a choice everyday
regarding the attitude we will embrace for that day.

We cannot change our past..
We cannot change the fact that people will
act in a certain way.
We cannot change the inevitable.
The only thing we can do
is play on the one string we have,
and that is our attitude....

I am convinced
that life is 10% what happens to me
and 90% how I react to it.
And so it is with you.....

by Charles Swindoll



BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Most people develop their early attitudes by absorbing the values and beliefs of the most influential adults in their life. These can come directly from parents, who in turn can derive their attitudes from their own parents, from religious institutions and priests, through changes they have made in their own lives and from their social standing and social pressures (i.e. pressure to be like adults in their surroundings). Faith attitude towards suicide is also derived from parents and, from religious institutions and through culture.

A common question that is normally asked within the church is, “What happens to the soul or spirit of a person who has died by suicide.” Traditionally, many religions have considered suicide a sin from which there is no time or opportunity to repent or ask God’s forgiveness. So the assumption was that a person who has died miserably also spends the next life, or eternity, apart from God—in hell. Some traditions reflected that “apartness” by not allowing persons who died by suicide to have a church funeral or to be buried in the regular cemetery.

In some Pacific Islands there is a strong belief that suicide is caused by witchcraft where people can inflict harm through sorcery by making the person commit suicide. They believe in transmitting curses and the strength of omens. There is also a strong belief in attaching spirits in certain sicknesses. Their cultural belief is such that there is a spirit of suicide and once a suicidal attempt is made, it will eventuate at some point in time and that there is no escape from it.

Suicide, according to some cultures is a result of a generational curse because of cultural taboos that have been broken. One way or another suicide is going to be fulfilled and it leaves a constant fear that someone will eventually commit suicide in the family.

According to some people, they adamantly say “because we did not create life we should not take it away” and the idea that they would end up in hell if they kill themselves has served as a deterrent for many persons.

Suicide is an act which we do not want to condone or encourage because it leaves the surviving relatives with much more than they can bear.

In certain cases when suicide happens, it becomes a double or triple grief for religious families to cope with. In addition to normal grieving, there is shame, stigma, silence—and extreme sorrow regarding the future of the loved one’s spirit.

In the Pacific, culture also plays a big role in the attitude of its people. For the purposes of this subject, *culture* is defined as the shared learned behaviour and belief systems and value orientations that influence customs, norms, practices, and social institutions of a group of people. Culture is reflected in the artifacts, roles, language, consciousness, and attitudes of a group of people. The culture of silence which is very prominent in the Pacific disallows open discussion on Suicide.

It is also said that people cannot be held responsible for their action when they are so depressed and mentally ill that they reach the point of taking their life, .Our relationship with

God is not based on whether we confess and repent from each individual sin we commit but is rather based on the way that we've lived our life in terms of a faith relationship with God

Because of the fear and misunderstandings surrounding suicide, it is important that people are trained to notice the signs of suicidal tendencies and break the taboo and the culture of silence to reach out and help people to prevent suicide.



TASK 1

FACILITATOR'S NOTES

Students to answer Pre-test questions in Module A3. Form groups of 4 to discuss their perception of Suicide which is distinct to their Culture and their Faith. Students to write on newsprint and present to the class.

Class discussion.

Beginning the lesson

In the last lesson, we talked about the risk factors and the signs of suicides. For this lesson we recap by doing a pre test on previous knowledge.

We will now discuss the importance of Faith and Culture in relations to suicide.

Faith and Culture.

Each island in the South Pacific has its own unique way of expressing their culture and their faith. These are the main two factors which determine the people's attitude towards suicide.

In the Fijian Culture before Christianity surviving spouses were encouraged to choose suicide to be with their spouses in the afterlife.

CASE STUDY 3

...only his father came to the funeral and he said something about the visa or they were shy or ashamed. His father came and we buried him on Monday morning because the doctor said we had to bury him quickly. Because he just hung himself and the police came after 5 o'clock in the afternoon Nobody had to touch him and the police took him to the mortuary and the doctor did not allow the relatives to put him on the freezer just go straight to the grave. And also because my father is the head of the extended family. My father made the decision we had to bury him on Monday and we buried around 12 or 1 in the afternoon but that's what the decision because we take him where we buried and that is 1 o'clock. Yeah we did the right way of burial but that thing I was not happy about was it was because we were ashamed and that's why he was quickly buried but now just sitting here and thinking back again I know that it was not the decision from the doctor but the decision from my father because we are ashamed of what he did. For our culture and our faith, we believe suicide is a sin and for

people who commit suicide we do not regard them much and we do not respect what they did and will go straight to hell. (Tomasi).



JOURNAL REFLECTIONS

- 1 In some Church traditions, people who commit suicide do not allow a priest to officiate in the funeral. What are your views on this?

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LESSON SUMMARY

Most people develop their early attitudes by absorbing the values and beliefs of the most influential adults in their life. These can come directly from parents, who in turn can derive their attitudes from their own parents, from religious institutions and priests, through changes they have made in their own lives and from their social standing and social pressures (i.e., A common question that is normally asked within the church is, “What happens to the soul or spirit of a person who has died by suicide.” Traditionally, many religions have considered suicide a sin from which there is no time or opportunity to repent or ask God’s forgiveness pressure to be like adults in their surroundings).

Faith attitude towards suicide is also derived from parents and, from religious institutions and through culture.

The goal of this lesson is to help the participants know that how they feel and react to a suicide case is based on their attitude which is derived from their parents, their culture and their faith.

The class was stimulated by a classroom activity which required concentration on their part. The activity was to promote critical thinking skills and allow the students to be more analytical in their approach to problem solving.



KEY CONCEPTS

- Talking about death is difficult for most people and talking about suicide is even harder.
- It is important to develop the right attitude when dealing with suicidal people.
- There are varied attitudes towards suicide..
- Culture and faith shape your attitude.

UNIT TWO

KNOWING YOUR CALLING

UNIT TWO KNOWING YOUR CALLING



INTRODUCTION

This unit discusses the importance of knowing yourself. It explores students' strengths and weaknesses to be able to assist other people who are experiencing stressful times.

Unit Two has two lessons:

- Lesson 1 Knowing Yourself
- Lesson 2 Knowing your calling.



UNIT OUTCOME

At the end of Unit 2, students will be able to:

- Affirm their calling as Church Ministers (CM) through discussions and self appraisal
- Interpret the Good News to prevent suicide.
- Demonstrate God's values in the context they live in.
- Apply the attributes of the Good Shepherd to protect the flock from self destruction.
- Clarify their roles as church ministers and counsellors
- Appreciate the boundaries of confidentiality and accountability

UNIT TWO STRUCTURE

LESSON ONE

KNOWING YOUR YOURSELF

LESSON TWO

KNOWING YOUR CALLING

LESSON ONE: KNOWING YOURSELF



CONTENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

At the end of the lesson, students will be able to:

- Identify the key elements that form their attitude towards suicide by listing what they believe in.
- Assess their strengths and weaknesses in pastoral ministry in order to improve their services. .
- Acknowledge the importance of their kinship relationships and utilise these relationships in preventing suicides.
- Acknowledge the church as an extended support system.



ACHIEVEMENT INDICATORS

Students will be achieving these outcomes when they :

- Introduce themselves by talking about their faith and cultural identities.
- List and prioritise the issues they believe in.
- Discuss the protective factors of their Pastoral Ministry (PM)



KEY CONCEPTS.

- Culture either facilitates or inhibits self-development.
- Attitudes are formed by what we believe in.
- Knowing oneself is an essential component for self-development.
- Kinship network is a cultural supportive system in the Pacific.



KEY TERMS

Attitude

Kinship

Support system

Essential component

Self development



BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In counselling, to know yourself is your first priority.

How can you set goals, go about life, and have relationships if you don't know who you are or what you want? You really can't. Not to know yourself leads to confusion and was much time in hit and miss situations.

We tend to underestimate the importance of knowing ourselves. Many of us go through each day reacting to events and just getting by rather than making conscious choices based on who we are and what we want. When we don't know where we are headed it's hard to set goals, get motivated and determine the best course of action.

The fear of the unknown makes one use culture to build a protective wall around oneself. This is often known as the comfort zone. Someone in a comfort zone cannot easily make changes to allow a paradigm shift in his/her thinking. This results in aggressiveness to hide the insecurities that comes from the fear of the unknown. . Listed below are pointers that can help you in knowing yourself better.

- Be aware of your strengths, weaknesses, likes and dislikes
- Observe and be aware of your moods, reactions and responses to what is you
- Become aware of how these moods and emotions affect your state of mind
- Examine how you interact with others
- Observe how your environment affects you.

Knowing and understanding yourself better, in turn, leads to better decision making, setting and reaching appropriate goals and altogether living more productively.

In the Pacific, knowing yourself is about knowing your culture, traditions, your faith your relatives, and your community, your village and so forth. **To know yourself is your first priority.** In the Pacific-the self is explained in terms of a relational self. We are never on our own. We are connected to our tribes, families, extended families, culture and God. With our spiritual nature, connection to God and our ancestors are very important to our identity.

Suicide is not personal but it affects an extensive spectrum of the community. When there is suicide it is the death of the tribe/village and it takes a while to relearn how to live again.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS.

QUESTION 1 How do you know when someone thinks you are special?

ANSWER.

You will know when someone thinks you are special when he treats you with respect, listens to you. Hershel is happy to stay with you, cherishes your friendship and puts your wishes above his own.

QUESTION 2 What is a relational self?

ANSWER.

A relational self is always connected to other people in the context. It is more than the individual self, and it cannot be separated from other people it connects to.



TASK-

FACILITATOR'S NOTE

Facilitator introduces himself...students to follow.

My name is.....

I come from.....

Village/District/province

My traditional title is.....

My traditional role is that of a.....

My totem.....

My village/family is noted for.....

Family make up includes.....parents/siblings/extended families etc

I am a member of thechurch I hold..... a..... [status in the church].

“I AM” POEM

I am (2 special characteristics you have)
I wonder(something you are curious about)
I hear (an imaginary sound)
I see (an imaginary sight)
I want (an actual desire)
I am (the first line of the poem repeated)

I pretend(something you actually pretend to do)
I feel (a feeling about something imaginary)
I touch(an imaginary heart)
I worry(something that really bothers you)
I cry (something that makes you very sad)
I am (the first line of the poem repeated)

I understand (something you know is true)
I say(something you believe in)
I dream (something you actually dream about)
I try(something you really make an effort to do)
I hope(something you actually hope for)
I am (the first line of the poem repeated)

[Adapted from Life at the Crossroads]

Note to facilitator

Complete this poem before the class begins .

The following questions will help the students in guiding them further to think more deeply about themselves.

How well do you really know yourself?

What unique gifts, talents and skills do you bring to this world?

What specific issues represent your life challenges?

How much of your life is controlled by your personality? Inspired by your soul?

What underlying motives run your life?

What gives you meaning and purpose?

Explore yourself in depth...

Become aware of your subconscious limitations, your character strengths, weaknesses and potentials, your life challenges, gifts, talents, and your deepest desires and aspirations.

Get excited about who you are, what you are, what you have, and what can still be for you.

CASE STUDY 4

On that particular day he was very depressed not only because of the drugs because his girlfriend was about to end their relationship. He did not want his parents to know that the girl was too young back then and the girl was only 17 or 18. And yeah he had a lot of things on his mind even in school and he committed suicide that day. He said to me “I can’t handle this now” and he was almost crying that day. I was resting in my room when my brother came yelling at me as he ran to my cousin where he had hung himself in the garage. It was hard to take it in as I could not think that it would happen on that particular day. And I got to him; I brought his body and put him down. He was lying there while I was calling him to wake up. I shook his body trying to wake him up. I was yelling and screaming in the garage I couldn’t think straight because this is why he was depressed that day. I was screaming because I should have helped him and encourage him and really listened to him. I couldn’t handle it myself so I slapped my head so I screamed it out crying out for help. I was hopeless and then his little brother called the ambulance and the ambulance came. His mum was still at work but his dad was in the house still angry. From the hospital I called home and I told them the news. They all came and started crying and we all came to see my cousin who was in the mortuary and he was really dead. The police was there. All of us were crying that day. I remembered what he told me...that he could not handle it anymore. I wish if I had done something before that happened. It was so depressing but I didn’t know that it could lead to suicide. Depression, stress, feeling alone can all lead to suicide.

The burial was the next day and it was 4 months for our wake. I wish if I could help him. I was crying more when I remembered his smile. I think suicide is a sin. The way I see it is we were born to do something here, God brought us here for a reason, to do something. That is why we came here and not to commit murder. And it also says in the 10 Commandments. I think that is why I am here and I plan to further my study to help those people wanting to commit suicide.

(Jason)



LESSON SUMMARY

When you know yourself you become aware of your subconscious limitations, your character strengths, weaknesses and potentials, your life challenges, gifts, talents, and your deepest desires and aspirations.



KEY CONCEPTS

- Culture either facilitates or inhibits self-development.
- Attitudes are formed by what we believe in.
- Knowing yourself is an essential component for self-development.
- Kinship network is a cultural supportive system in the Pacific.

LESSON TWO KNOWING YOUR CALLING



INTRODUCTION

Lesson Two is about your calling in relation to suicide prevention. To know your calling and who has called you is important in assisting the hopeless and helpless victims of suicide

LESSON OUTCOMES:

At the end of this lesson students should be able to:

- Affirm their calling as Church Ministers (CM) through discussions and self appraisal
- Interpret the good news to support their calling
- Acknowledging their gifts from God as equipping of the Saints
- Demonstrate God's values in the context they live in.



ACHIEVEMENT INDICATORS

Students will have achieved these outcomes when they:

- Discuss and employ self appraisal test provided in the modules 1.and 2
- Visit families and communities who are in need
- Write own testimonies on how they were called in their journal reflections.



KEY CONCEPTS

- Church Ministers are called and equipped to the Ministry.
- God's love is demonstrated by visiting those who are in need.
- Gauging your strengths and weaknesses is an important part of self-development.



KEY TERMS

Callings

Ministries

Divine plan

Divine intervention

Meditate

Gauge

Self-development

Assess



BACKGROUND INFORMATION

KNOW YOUR CALLING

When you follow your calling you live a life with purpose, you enjoy your life, you achieve greater success and you want to wake up in the mornings because you're excited. But most people don't live this way. Instead, most people don't follow their calling and don't enjoy life.

How do I find my calling? This question has been asked by many people who desire to know their place in the ministry asking the same question over and over again, "How do I know my calling? Which purpose am I to fulfil in this ministry?"

All these are fundamental questions that need answers by anyone who really wants to make a mark in life.

So how do you know that you have been called?

1. Direct voice of God.

You can know that you were called by hearing an audible and direct voice of God. See how God called Moses in Exodus 3:1-4 "Now Moses kept the flock of Jethro his father in law, the priest of Midian: and held the flock to the backside of the desert. . . And the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of the bush. . . Moses said, I will now turn aside and see this great sight. . . God, called unto Him out of the midst of the bush and said, Moses, Moses. And he said, Here am I.

2 Praying to God.

If you are interested in knowing your calling, be ready to call upon God with all sincerity of heart. Tell him to show you your place in his kingdom. Tell him to tell you your calling and where you belong. Call unto him like Jabez did in 1Chronicle 4:10 “And Jabez called on the God of Israel saying Oh that thou wouldst bless me indeed, and enlarge my coast, and that thine hand might be with God granted him that which he requested.

No matter what God has called you to do in life, your calling or ‘job description’ can be found enveloped within one or more of these sight operations of God. And if you are born again you are called to fill that operation by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Because God calls you to his Ministry, you are accountable to him and to the Body of Christ. You are responsible to the whole community and the families that you serve.

God’s blessings are realized in our lives when we fulfil His calling on our lives. It is therefore imperative for each one of us to identify our calling and fulfil it.

God’s desire is for us to fulfil the call that we have received of Him. It is our duty to give diligence to our ministry (calling) and to our relationship with God. “Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you; for as long as you practice these things, you will never stumble”. 2 Peter 1:10.

God’s will is for us to be diligent about our calling and our election (relationship with God). Then His blessings would flow: He has promised that we will never fall. When God calls us, he will give us the provision, anointing and talent to fulfil his call. “Whoever speaks, let him speak, as it were, the utterances of God; whoever serves, let him do so as by the strength which God supplies; so that in all things God may be glorified forever and ever”. 1 Peter 4:11.

There are some ministries that are mentioned in the Word of God. For example Paul says that:

“And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ”. Ephesians 4:11 – 12.NIV

“And since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let each exercise that accordingly; if prophesy, according to the proportion of this faith; if service, in his serving; or he who teaches, in his teaching; or he who exhorts, in his exhortation; he who gives, with liberality, he who leads with diligence; he who shows mercy with cheerfulness”. Romans 12:6-8.NIV

God has a divine plan for us. He knew us even before we were in our mother’s womb. No one is an accident. When a child is born, there are two courses his life could take: God’s

course or the devils. Do you know that not only has God set a course or plan for our lives, but the devil also has a plan? But God desires for us to walk in His plan, because His blessings and favour would follow us all our lives. When we walk in His will, He will prosper us: there is joy, peace, prosperity. God will make sure that our needs are met (cf. Rick Warren 2010).

It's time to walk in our calling. God has birthed something in each of you. You can start with what you have available to you. You don't need to know or have everything right now to be effective or valid. God doesn't call the equipped, He equips the called. Seek His face and ask Him for His timetable, His plan. Write the vision down. Meditate on it. Pray on it. Sanctify yourself for the work of the Lord



QUESTIONS STUDENTS MAY ASK

QUESTION 1 How do you hear God's call in your life?

ANSWER

: I hear God' call in my life in a number of ways.

- Audible voice
- Through prayers
- In dreams
- Through a prayer believer.

QUESTION 2 How do you understand what you hear?

ANSWER I understand what I hear when I read the Bible and I share with a fellow believer.

QUESTION 3 How do you confirm that God is really calling you?

ANSWER For example, we can confirm his calling by:

- Waiting patiently for him to confirm his calling and this maybe through prayers,
- Confirmation from other believers.
- Dreams,
- Words in the Bible.

PRAAYER

Lord give us the wisdom to recognise your voice when you call us. Give us new visions to take advantage of new possibilities to go out and reach new people. May your Holy Spirit empower us to do this work.

Write your title and a short description of your role.eg. Pastor

This is individual work.

Purpose of your calling.

God has called me to be a pastor etc.

Write down the callings on a piece of paper. On 1 side, write down preaching, pastoral care, leadership and administration. Identify the roles that match the positions.

FACILITATOR: Comment on their findings.

The purpose of the exercise is to help students think about their individual roles.

DISCUSSION POINTS

Consider the story of the call of Samuel (1 Samuel 3:1-10). Samuel was a young boy serving in the temple when he heard a voice calling his name. He assumed this voice was that of the priest, Eli. Eventually, Eli realized that Samuel was hearing God's voice calling to him and instructed him to respond, "Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening." Samuel needed Eli to tell him that the voice he heard was God's. He didn't recognize God's voice on his own.

While discernment has many parts, I would like to suggest four basic steps in discovering one's vocation. The first is a call to **become aware**. You **are called to listen to God, to yourselves, and to those around you**.

Discuss in groups (3 groups or 4). Samuel needed Eli to tell him that the voice he heard was God's.



What does this tell you about your not hearing the call yourself?

- What ways does God call you to his ministries?
- How do you affirm the call?
- Once you receive and affirm God's calling, who will you be accountable to?
- What is the role of prayer in your calling?

TASK

CASE STUDY 5

I go back to my testimony of how we got here. It was after my dad's death in April 2009. In May I went to my office early one morning .I turned my computer on and I saw the word 'Piula'. I thought that there was nothing on the computer and it was just my mind playing up. But I just saw the word Piula. I said..No! no! This is wrong. There must be something wrong and that it's only a thought. I sat down to work and the word 'Piula' came back again on the screen .

In the evening, I slept but I couldn't sleep well. I just woke up and this is what I said to God: " God, I know this experience is so strange to me but let's make a deal, if this works, cause there's only one place called Piula, if it's your revelation for me to go there then it is ,okay by me. I will go and take a shower. After I take a shower and this thing goes away then I know that you want me to go there but if it doesn't go away, then it is just a headache or some migraine. I just couldn't believe it that when I turned on the water, it just went away as if there was nothing. And then I cried and I was convinced that God was calling me to his ministry.

Mata's story(wife)

On our way home, he said, I have a different feeling.

I said, do you want to go to Piula? He goes, What? He almost stepped on the clutch. I said If God spoke to you to go to Piula, I want you to know that He told the same thing to me on my way.

We knew we had things that would stop us from coming here but that didn't stop us from coming here and how much God is using us here. We came here and looked at the environment. It was a totally different situation than what we had expected. We expected people to be different, but they are just like us.

(Mata and Pene)



LESSON SUMMARY

This is the first of the ten lessons on Suicide you will be taking to help create awareness that Suicide can be prevented and treated.

Committing suicide is a personal choice. The choices we make can have serious consequences in our lives. It is important that we acquire life skills that can help us cope with certain problems we may come across in life.

Suicide wastes the hope of many to have a useful and a fruitful life. **God has come that we may have life and life in its totality.** Suicide is a sin because it denies God's wishes for our lives.

The goal of this lesson is to equip and encourage the students to identify the characteristics and the nature of suicide. By having this knowledge they will be creating an awareness and help facilitate the dissemination of this knowledge to their families and friends.

The class was stimulated by a classroom activity which required concentration on their part. The activity was to promote critical thinking skills and allow the students to be more analytical in their approach to problem solving.



KEY CONCEPTS

- Church Ministers are called and equipped to the Ministry.
- God's love is demonstrated by visiting those who are in need.
- Gauging your strengths and weaknesses is an important part of self-development.

UNIT THREE

THE HEDGE OF PROTECTION

PSALM 91 THE HEDGE OF PROTECTION.

- 1 Those who live in the shelter of the Most High will find rest in the shadow of the Almighty.
- 2 This, I declare about the Lord: He alone is my refuge, my place of safety: He is my God and I trust him.
- 3 For he will rescue you from every trap and protect you from deadly disease.
- 4 He will cover you with his feathers. He will shelter you with his wings. His faithful promises are your armour and protection.
- 5 Do not be afraid of the terrors of the night, nor the arrows that flies during the day.
- 6 Do not dread the disease that stalks in darkness, nor the disasters that strikes at midday.
- 7 Though a thousand fall at your side, though ten thousand are dying around you, these evils will not touch you.
- 8 Just open your eyes, and see how the wicked are punished.
- 9 If you make the Lord your refuge, if you make the Most High your shelter.
- 10 No evil will conquer you; no plague will come near your home.
- 11 For he will order his angels to protect you wherever you go.
- 12 They will hold you up with their hands so you won't even hurt your foot on a stone.
- 13 You will trample upon the lions and the cobras, you will crush fierce lions and serpents under your feet.
- 14 The Lord says "I will rescue those who love me. I will protect those who trust in my names.
- 15 When they call on me, I will answer. I will be with them in trouble. I will rescue and honour them.
- 16 I will reward them with long life and give them my salvation.

The Psalmist



UNIT THREE THE HEDGE OF PROTECTION

INTRODUCTION

The Unit seeks to find ways of preventing suicide and assist students to acquire suicide intervention skills through practical counselling and communication activities. The unit is titled The Hedge of Protection because the contents of the unit are (Counselling and Communication) intended to be protective measures against suicide.

UNIT OUTCOMES

At the end of the lessons, students should be able to:-

- Acquire suicide intervention skills through practical counselling and communication activities.
- Identify problems and how to resolve them through Case Study analysis.
- Use Faith tools e.g. Prayers, Deliverance, Inner Healing Memory Healing and Bible studies
- Acquire and enhance the skills to deal with intervention strategies

UNIT STRUCTURE

UNIT THREE	-	THE HEDGE OF PROTECTION
LESSON ONE-		COMMUNICATION
LESSON TWO	-	COUNSELING

TALK AWHILE

**Hello God, I called tonight to talk a little while.
I need a friend who'll listen
to my anxiety and trial.**

**You see, I can't quite make it
through the day just on my own.
I need your love to guide me so I never will feel alone.**

I ask you please to keep my family safe and sound

**Come and fill their lives with confidence
For whatever fate they're bound.**

**Give me faith, dear God,
to face each hour throughout the day
and not to worry over things
that I cannot change in anyway.**

**Thank you God for being home
and listening to my call.
whenever I stumble and fall.**

**Your number God is the only one
that answers every time.
I never get a busy signal
Never had to pay a dime.**

**So thank you God for listening
to my troubles and my sorrow
Good night God, I love you too
and I will call again tomorrow.**

Anonymous



LESSON ONE: COMMUNICATION



INTRODUCTION

The importance of good communication cannot be over-emphasised as it is a very important tool that all counsellors should possess. Lesson one of Unit 3 emphasises the point that suicide can be prevented through communication.



CONTENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

At the end of the lesson, students will be able to

- Acquire effective communication skills
- Realize that suicide can be prevented through Communication
- Appreciate the art of listening and interpreting responsibly.
- Value and respect confidential information.



ACHIEVEMENT INDICATORS

Students will be achieving these outcomes when they for example:

- Openly talk about suicide.
- Participate in communication activities. Keep confidential information.
- Participate in a debate that there is God who is the source of Wisdom and a great Counsellor.



KEY CONCEPTS.

- Suicide can be prevented through counselling.
- Appreciate and keep confidential information.
- Be an effective listener.
- Accurate reporting encourages good relationships.



KEY TERMS.

Counselling

Effective listening skills

Accurate reporting

Empathy and sympathy

Non judgemental

Body language

Effective listening skills

Accurate reporting

Empathy and sympathy

Non judgemental

Body language

Traditional means of communication

Modern means of communication.



BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Communication skills are a set of skills that enables a person to convey information so that it is received and understood. These skills include lip reading, finger-spelling, sign language; for interpersonal skills, interpersonal relations. The skills refer to the range of behaviours that serve to convey information for the individual. **The ability to communicate is the primary factor that distinguishes human beings from animals.**

Every individual needs to be well equipped with the tools to communicate effectively, whether it is on the personal front, or at work. In fact, according to the management gurus, being a good communicator is half the battle won. After all, if one speaks and listens well, then there is little or no scope for misunderstanding. Thus, keeping this fact in mind, the primary reasons for misunderstanding is due to inability to speak well, or listen effectively.

The fact, is that apart from the basic necessities, one needs to be equipped with habits for good communication skills, as this is what will make them a happy and successful social being.

In order to develop these habits, one needs to first acknowledge the fact that one needs to improve communication skills from time to time. People need to take stock of the way they interact and the direction in which their work and personal relations are going.

The commonly known types of communications are :

Intra-personal communication skills : This implies individual reflection,

contemplation and meditation. According to the experts this type of communication encompasses communicating with God through prayers and rites and rituals.

Interpersonal communication skills : This is direct, face-to-face communication that occurs between two persons. It is essentially a dialogue or a conversation between two or more people.

It is personal, direct, as well as intimate and permits maximum interaction through words and gestures.

Some types of Interpersonal communications are:

Focused Interactions : This primarily results from an actual encounter between two persons. This implies that the two persons involved are completely aware of the communication happening between them.

Unfocused interactions : This occurs when one simply observes or listens to persons with whom one is not conversing. This usually occurs at stations and bus stops, as well as on the street, at restaurants, etc.

Non verbal communication skills : This includes aspects such as body language, gestures, facial expressions, eye contact, etc., which also become a part of the communicating process; as well as the written and typed modes of communications. Identification is one of the key ingredients of effective communication. Unless your listeners can identify with what you are saying and with the way you are saying it, they are not likely to receive and understand your message.

When people talk, listen completely. Most people don't listen.

The problem with communication is the illusion that communication has been accomplished.

The right to be heard does not automatically include the right to be taken seriously.

Argument is the worst sort of communication.

In the Pacific there are traditional roles in relaying important messages. There are talking chiefs or chief's heralds that play this role. In this case, the message is always in the messenger and the message is accepted when it is delivered by the proper messenger. These traditional roles can be utilised by CM to assist them to effectively communicate the message of suicide prevention.

Talking to a friend or family member about their suicidal thoughts and feelings can be extremely difficult for anyone. This is exacerbated in the Pacific because of our culture of silence and if you are unsure whether someone is suicidal, the best way to

find out is to ask. You can't make a person suicidal by showing that you care. In fact, giving a suicidal person the opportunity to express his or her feelings can provide relief from loneliness and pent-up negative feelings, which will enhance the person's chance of avoiding suicide..

TASK

FACILITATOR'S NOTES

In Unit Two, we learnt how to recognise the signs of suicide acquire new knowledge and be able to read the signs and the risk factors of suicide.

In this unit we will learn ways of preventing suicide, through proper communication and counselling.

Below is an activity that involves communication.

Crazy Comic

Creating a good concept can take a really long time, and lots of thought must be put into it. When there is a large group of people working on the idea, the task may suddenly become easier because there is more brainpower working on the project. However, if people can't communicate their ideas with each other and make group decisions, many problems may arise. This activity is a simple task, but a great deal of communication is needed if a group is to be successful when attempting to work together to create an original idea.

Objective

To communicate ideas with others and make group decisions based upon discussion.

Participants

People who need to work on communicating ideas with other people and who need to learn how to make a group decision by compromising on the ideas given.

Group Size

3 or more

Description

Divide the group into smaller groups of three to six members each. Supply each person in each group with a piece of paper and writing utensil. Instruct the groups that they are to create an original comic strip and each person in the group must draw one frame of the strip (if there are four people in a group, the comic strip will contain four frames). The group must decide what to draw, the story line and who will

draw what (there is a lot of communication involved in this one)!

Once the discussion has taken place about the comic strip and the decisions have been made, each person draws the frame s/he is responsible for on his/her own piece of paper. Everyone should be drawing at the same time and not taking turns with their group members. If you want to make it really challenging, don't allow group members to see each others' papers when they are drawing.

After the comic strips are completed, allow time for sharing and give each group a chance to show their comic strip to the other groups.

Discussion Prompts

1. What different communication skills were needed for this activity?
2. How important was communication during this activity?
3. What was the most difficult part of this activity for you?
4. Did your comic strip flow? Why or why not?
5. When involved in part of a group process, do you want things to always go your way or do you allow others to contribute ideas?
6. Why is it important to be able to make decisions with other people?
7. What things do you need to do when making decisions with others?
8. In your life, when is it important to be able to communicate clearly with others?

CASE STUDY 6

A lot of new challenges in a way that we cannot sort out there. I think there is so much we cannot comprehend or we cannot cope with or understand. For me because of information technology like internet, mobile phones iPod whatever all those things they access ... I only refer to parents, educators, teachers, ministers, elders so the gap is widen because of the information technology there is so much out there. Even my stays overseas, for education I just cannot catch up with some of the things these young people are doing. For example my niece keeps texting , all the time and I don't know who she is texting to or who she is communicating with. They can be good people who want to help her out. It can be friends texting about news or it can be the people who are feeding them with unexpected information. I try to ask but I don't feel like asking for I maybe intruding into her private life. For me there is a big gap, it is a generation gap that needs to be bridged and it is getting wider and wider. That means that it is a lack of communication, lack of conversation between the elders and the young people and it is a worry for me. I want to know what's on her mind because these days there is so much talk about young people's life .The changes, the new things coming we as parents are out and we are not part of it because we don't understand ...

(Joana)



LESSON SUMMARY

Good communication is a very effective tool in suicide Prevention.

Talking to a friend or family member about their suicidal thoughts and feelings can be extremely difficult for anyone and it is especially so in the Pacific as their culture does not entertain open discussion on suicide. If you're unsure whether someone is suicidal, the best way to find out is to ask. You can't make a person suicidal by showing that you care. In fact, giving a suicidal person the opportunity to express his or her feelings can provide relief from loneliness and pent-up negative feelings, and may prevent a suicide attempt.



KEY CONCEPTS

- Sometimes a depressed person just needs a listening ear and a caring attitude.
- Good communication is an important tool in suicide prevention.
- Be an effective listener.
- Accurate reporting encourages good relationships.
- We should always seek God's help in prayer.
- There are different types of communication.

LESSON TWO COUNSELLING



INTRODUCTION

Lesson Two involves counselling and acquiring some basic counselling skills

This is an important strategy because it involves assisting someone through active listening. It must be remembered that some people in suicidal situations find it difficult to share their stories. The skills acquired will encourage them to talk. Prayer is a form of counselling because of its therapeutic nature (intrapersonal communication) in talking to God.



CONTENT OUTCOMES

At the end of the lesson, students will be able to:

- Acquire some basic counselling skills
- Distinguish the different types of counselling/
- Recognise that counselling enhances pastoral care
- Apply confidentiality.



ACHIEVEMENT INDICATORS

Students will be achieving these outcomes when they:

- Participate in role plays
- Participate in group discussions
- Analyse role plays
- Participate in exercise on basic counselling skills.



KEY CONCEPTS

- Counselling is part of pastoral care.
- Confidentiality is an essential part of counselling
- Counselling has many meanings in the church.
- The primary task of the CM is to make disciples of Christ.



KEY TERMS

Counselling

Basic counselling skills

Confidentiality

Accountability

Inner healing

Deliverance prayer

Therapeutic



BACK GROUND INFORMATION

Many practitioners agree that counselling is a purposeful structured process that involves the skills of a counsellor to assist a person going through a crisis. The word counselling has many meanings in the church. For example we counsel someone to make a decision for Christ which means the person is being assisted to confirm her faith in Christ. Counselling may also mean being given advice by the CM on the present situation they are facing. Two people who are planning to get married may receive counsel from the minister. In all these, counselling maybe informal or formal. It may take place inside an office or during a conversation after church or in a group discussion or in someone's home. The church has also developed healing ministries that involve prayer counselling, such as deliverance, inner healing and healing of memories.

Sometimes it is problematic to differentiate between counselling and pastoral care because their basic principles overlap. In fact, many people in the church community talk more about counselling than pastoral care when someone is being assisted through a life crisis. Counselling within the church is an extension or division of pastoral care.

The role of the church minister is to use his\her counselling skills in the performance of the minister's primary task of making disciples. The same skills maybe used in a counselling therapeutic relationship. Many church leaders have fallen because of the lack of boundary in counsellor and client relationship that leads to sexual offences such as rape and adultery. .



TASK

COUNSELLING ACTIVITIES

ACTIVE LISTENING

The following are easy methods to assist in teaching the use of open-ended questions and paraphrasing.

1. Open-ended questions

Open-ended questions are used to assist the client in being more expressive and at the same time provide the pastor/counsellor with clearer information. Closed questions seek only a yes or no answer. Open-ended questions bring more insight.

Example of a closed question: “Did you sleep well last night?”

The response to this question is “yes” or “no”. The counsellor has gained little information and has nothing on which to build a follow-up for further discussion.

Example of an open-ended question: “Will you tell me how well you were able to sleep last night?” Or, “Please share with me how well you slept last night.” The client is given the opportunity to share about his/her sleep in more depth. The client may give a quick, sharp answer such as, “well” or “not well”. This, however, allows the pastor/counsellor to hear more feeling than a quick yes or no response from a closed question.

2. Asking open-ended questions

Have the participants gather in a circle. Starting with one participant, have him/her ask an open-ended question of the person on the right. The second participant must respond. If he/she responds with yes or no, the first person must try again. If the second person responds in an open manner, he/she continues the exercise by asking an open-ended question of the next person.

3. Paraphrasing

Paraphrasing is a tool that assists the pastor/counsellor in three ways. First, it helps the pastor/counsellor know if he/she has heard or understood the client clearly. Secondly, the pastor/counsellor can use the paraphrase to put a name on what has been said. Thirdly, it lets the client know the pastor/counsellor is interested in what is being said.

Examples

Client: When the people at church found out I had AIDS, they quit talking to me so I quit going to church.

Pastor: You quit going to church because the people no longer speak to you.

The pastor above has used a simple paraphrase. In the example below, the pastor uses a paraphrase that puts a name on what the client has said.

Client: When the people at church found out I had AIDS, they quit talking to me so I quit going to church.

Pastor: You quit going to church because the people are hypocritical.

After either paraphrase the client is free to expand, change or clarify his/her statement. The client is also free to correct the pastor.

Paraphrasing

Participants should remain in a circle. Ask one person to share with the person on the left what he/she thinks of the workshop so far. The second person must respond in a paraphrase that the first person believes to be an accurate understanding of his/her statement. If the paraphrase is not accurate, the second person must try again. When an accurate paraphrase has been made the second person continues the exercise.

4. Role play in a fishbowl

Role-plays are an excellent method of sharpening counselling skills in a controlled environment. Having those not acting in the role-play sit in a circle around those who are participating creates a fishbowl.

Two chairs (or the number needed for the particular role-play) are placed in the middle of the circle, for the participants in the role-play. Those seated on the outside will observe the proceedings.

Ask for volunteers to be the pastor and the client. They are given pieces of paper marked pastor and client respectively. Allow time for the two participants to read the information given and to get into their roles. When the workshop leader is clear the participants understand their roles, the role-play begins. In this role-play, the pastor is seated as the client knocks at the door of the office.

Pastor: You are the pastor in a rural community or village. A young man of about 20, whom you do not know, knocks at your door seeking assistance.

Client: You are a young man of about 20. Several days ago you got drunk at a local bar and were raped. You feel very ashamed and scared. You went to your family but your father was angry and threw you out. You went to the police but they laughed at you. Now, out of despair, you seek help from a pastor you do not know.

When the role-play has ended, the participants remain seated. Ask the pastor how he/she feels about the experience. Then the client is asked the same and whether he/she thought the pastor assisted him/her well.



SUMMARY

Counselling is a purposeful structured process that involves the skills of a counsellor. It may take place inside an office or during a conversation after church or in a group discussion or in someone's home. The church has also developed healing ministries that involve prayer counselling, such as deliverance, inner healing and healing of memories.



KEY CONCEPTS

- Counselling is part of pastoral care.
- Confidentiality is an essential part of counselling
- Counselling has many meanings in the church.
- The primary task of the CM is to make disciples of Christ.

UNIT 4 THE CHRISTIAN RESPONSE



INTRODUCTION

The Christian Response is the cutting edge of this Suicide Prevention curriculum. Based on biblical principles, the unit offers tools that will assist CMs and practitioners to deal with culture, church traditions and changes that will promote God's will in the totality of life.



UNIT OUTCOMES

At the end of the unit students will be able to:

- Acknowledge that God has called them to help prevent suicide in the Pacific.
- Demonstrate God's love in their work and relationship with the people in the community.
- Realise their roles as church ministers include being Counsellors.
- Acknowledge that God has called them to facilitate changes so that healing takes place in people affected by suicide.
- Recognise that culture and tradition can inhibit the fulfilment of God's work in peoples' lives

UNIT STRUCTURE

UNIT 4 THE CHRISTIAN RESPONSE

**LESSON ONE TRANSFORMING TRADITIONS
AND CULTURE THROUGH THE GOSPEL**

LESSON TWO PARENTS' ROLES IN SUICIDE PREVENTION

Jesus – Agent of Change

O God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob,
Everyone knows that without traditions
life would be as shaky as a fiddler on the roof.
I don't know if you noticed
But your own son was more than the Word made flesh,
he was an earthquake in the flesh.
Why did you let him do that?
Things were going along just fine. But no.
He showed respect to a woman
to a Samaritan, polluted by idolatrous theologies...
to a person blatantly living in sin.
How can a person trust a guy who's that liberal,
who follows his own heart and mind
instead of what councils and assemblies and his church's confessions
say he's supposed to believe?
Some things should never change, or so I'm told.
Yet I'm drawn to Jesus.
He found me dipping water from the well of Jacob's tradition.
(Was there something wrong with that water?)
We've been living with it all our lives
and it kept us alive. What's the problem?
Jesus said he had a different kind of water – living water.
Living water is water that is constantly moving,
like in a river or stream. Constantly changing.
Never staying in one place.

People like to stay in one place.
Change is difficult.
Yet the only things that don't ever change
are dead or without life.
Does that mean a church that doesn't change
is dead?
I'm just amazed that anyone in her community
listened to the woman at the well.
Thank you any time you open the ears of people to the Message
and take their eyes off the messenger.
If you have any of that living water left,
I'd appreciate some for myself.

Anonymous

LESSON ONE **TRANSFORMING TRADITIONS AND CULTURE THROUGH THE GOSPEL**



INTRODUCTION

This lesson is intended to explore traditions and cultures of Pacific people in relation to suicide prevention. It challenges the participants to critically examine their own situations in light of the Gospel in order to transform their society



CONTENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

At the end of the lesson students will:

- Acknowledge the need to transform traditions and culture for successful suicide prevention to take place
- Demonstrate the transformative power of the gospel through pastoral service in the church and the community.
- Acknowledge their role as important agents of change in the disseminating of the Gospel to the communities



ACHIEVEMENT INDICATORS

Students will have achieved these outcomes when they for example:

- Participate in class discussions showing their understanding of the need to transform traditions and culture.
- Prepare and deliver Bible studies and sermons on the power of the gospel
- Role play and make analysis on the limitations and effective delivery of sermons



KEY CONCEPTS.

- Culture can be restrictive and the Gospel is the agent of liberation.
- There is conflict of ideas through the generation gap.
- This life belongs to God and it needs to be told from the pulpit.
- Old people maintain the culture status quo



KEY TERMS.

Status quo

Generation gap

Restrictive culture

Proclaiming the gospel

Transformative power

Disseminating the gospel



BACKGROUND INFORMATION

“The church is a godly institution and it is called to proclaim the gospel of Grace and, it embodies that gospel when it is particularly solicitous of those within its member who are most troubled, and when it reaches beyond its own membership to such people who stand alone.” (Dr. Philip Wogaman, professor of Christian Social Ethics, Wesley Theological Seminary).

The CM is called to proclaim the message of the gospel. Paul writes to the Ephesians and says that the role of a church minister is ‘to prepare God’s people for works of service so that the body of Christ may be built up’ (Ephesians 4:12 NIV). To do this, many church ministers identify their role as falling into 3 areas:

- Preaching/teaching
- Pastoral care/chaplaincy
- Leadership/administration

There are four key ingredients required of Christian leaders: prayer, humility, unity, and knowledge of God's ways. In light of this, the CM is often challenged by situations that may require changes in the culture of the people.

Culture is not static, it changes but we often build protective walls around ourselves at the expense of culture and refuse to let go of certain things because of their familiarity with us. In fact, such ‘clinging on’ is based on a deep fear of the unknown to let go of the known. Many people in the Pacific maintain the culture status quo and cling on to it as a safety net in the world of development today. New ideas have been brought by the young generation through education and technology and there arises conflicting ideas through the generation gap.

Influence in culture is only possible when those who want to exert influence have a message and a life others see and desire. Culture can only be transformed by the power of the life giving message of the gospel. When we make culture and traditions the controlling factors of our lives, the gospel is limited from doing its transformative work. Church traditions are equally restrictive and as a result, the gospel is often watered down to accommodate these traditions. The image of a transformed culture through the gospel is best expressed in the work of Jesus in the Jewish culture. Jesus found tradition a nullifying factor to the Word of God and his reference to the Jewish Law and the Jewish culture at that time can easily be paralleled to our Pacific church traditions today. Jesus says,

...You have a fine way of setting aside the commands of God in order to observe your own traditions. For Moses said, 'Honour your father and your mother', and 'Anyone who curses his mother or father must be put to death'. But you say that if a man says to his father or mother: 'Whatever help you might otherwise have received from me is Corban' (that is, a gift devoted to God), then you no longer let anything do for his father or mother. Thus you nullify the word of God by your tradition that you have handed down. And you do many things like that (Mark 7: 9-13 NIV).

Throughout the Bible, God moves in different situations to transform and to create. In the OT, the story of creation in Genesis brings into focus the work of the Triune God when the world was created. This concept resonates into the NT in John's gospel when he says:

'In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God. The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only who came from the Father full of grace and truth (John 1: 1 & 14 NIV).

The 'Word became flesh' was the embodiment of the Word into a particular culture and in Jesus' case, it was the Jewish culture. He was brought up in this particular culture, where the 'Word became flesh' did the transformative work. This is evident in the way women were acknowledged as important and their status elevated, when he touched the rejected lepers and healed them and supped with those deemed to be sinners.

What was evident in Jesus' ministry was the fact that he did not at any time remove, degrade or renounce his culture which has its basis on the Law. He was the one who gave the Law to Moses. In fact, his words in Matthew 5: 17 says, 'Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfil them' (NIV). The Jewish culture was based on the Prophets and the Law of Moses and Jesus was the fulfilment of this. Jesus summed it up in Matthew 7:12 with the golden rule when he comments, 'So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets' (NIV).

In the same way, the 'Word became flesh' must be the embodiment of the Word into the different cultures in the Pacific. The gospel needs to penetrate culture and church traditions and liberate the areas that are still inhibiting the needed change. Only then can culture be transformed from within. If Jesus were to work in the Pacific today, he would be seen in the

house of families whose sons or daughters had just committed suicide or he would be walking alongside someone who has deep emotional pains that could lead to suicide.

Suicide is like a running tap that cannot be stopped because of its increasing rate in the Pacific. It is imperative that the faucet must be tightly closed now to stop any leakages. The gospel is the faucet that fixes the running tap because it has healing power to bring life to a death situation. The church ministers' important role is to proclaim the gospel and dispel fear and doubts surrounding suicide. This message has to come out strongly in their messages from the pulpit. CM needs to speak the liberating message of the cross that transforms culture and equip the church to address suicide.

Ephesians 2:10 says It is God himself who has made us what we are and given us new lives from Christ Jesus and long ages ago he planned that we should spend those lives in helping others. NIV

The verse above includes helping suicide victims, the people who are left behind in the wake of a suicide. It includes the most vulnerable and the marginalised in our society. Anytime you use your God given abilities to help others you are fulfilling your calling. You are called to serve others.

The reasons for suicide are many and are varied, some of which are

- Broken relationships between girlfriends and boyfriends
- anger to punish those that are around them.
- Unforgiveness
- children getting angry with their parents and hope to punish them by committing suicide
- hopelessness
- no way of going forward
- an escape from their pain.

The above causes should be addressed in the church and the onus is on CM who need to be empowered to address and redress the problems within their own congregations.



QUESTIONS STUDENTS MAY ASK

QUESTION 1 Identify some elements in your culture that inhibits the powerful dissemination of the gospel.

ANSWER

Lack of sermon preparation time which include time for fasting and praying, researching and studying, lack of knowledge and so forth

QUESTION 2 What would be some ways of identifying people that need assistance in the church today?

ANSWER

Through the existing structures of the church. For example:

- Cell groups,
- Class meetings
- Youth groups
- Family and community visitations etc

PRAYER

Lord make us instruments of thy peace. Where there is hatred let us sow love, where there is injury - pardon. Where there is despair- hope. In Jesus name we pray.



TASKS

BEGINNING THE LESSON

Today is the first of the 3 lessons we will have on a Christian response to suicide. You will also be using the Modules on Unit 4 to confirm your understanding of the topic.

Pre-knowledge activity.

This activity will form the basis of your lessons on the Church's response to suicide prevention.

Note down the peculiarities of the Culture and Tradition in your church that inhibits the light of the Gospel to transform lives

Breaking the habits of a lifetime is very difficult that is why we need the gospel to bring the light to break the yoke of bondage.

Points for discussions.

Christian perspective

- this life belongs to God and we have no right to take our own life .We were made for God's mission in the world where we live. You have a mission to accomplish. We have to ask God for which mission you were created for. Fulfilling your mission in the world is God's purpose for our life. So we have no right at all to take away our own life or that of others.
- This message needs to be told from the pulpit. Your preaching will be effective if you preach under the power of the Holy Spirit so preaching preparation needs to be prayed and fasted for.
- God's timing of death is God's only. No one knows when his life will end so it is not within our right to commit suicide. The life span belongs to God. We cannot say our time is up and must die.

Culture

Bring the word of God to transform culture

New ways of understanding things. Move

away from comfort zone thru the gospel.- new way of doing things.

- People's mentality and attitude to changes.
- How real is the gospel?
- How real is Jesus to transform context, culture. How is it meaningful and relevant?

Include new method of delivering the gospel with the use of technology. Such as multi-media, laptops, phones, web pages, social networks on the web.

Theological perspective

- understand the nature of one who is intending to commit suicide. from a theological perspective
- Christian principle that we come from God. This brings joy to someone when he finds that he comes from God. His life will take on a new and true meaning
- the church has the means to prevent suicide through evangelism, counselling etc.
- feminist theology has a part to play... there is a place for women in contributing to transforming culture through the gospel...

Value system about life...that we are created by God in his image. Non-Christians put less value on life and this contributes to the high rate of suicide to Hindus.

CASE STUDY 8

This is my view. The totality of life as said by Jesus in John 10:10, identifies suicide as aborting God's plan for the totality of life. In order to avoid that, you have to know your Bible. That's one part of it and there is your prayer life. So knowing the Bible is an important part of life so that a person is well prepared to know what he should do and what he should not do. This is about life, the subject we are talking about. Suicide is about life being aborted. Those that commit suicide don't have any means of survival, where they can be assisted. For them they go for suicide that is the only way. If they know their Bible well they won't do it.

Logos means Word in Greek but it also encompasses other things such as reason. *Logos* is meaningful in the work towards the totality of life. The bigger part of this is when you bring God into the journey of life. To me that is *logos*. When God establishes Himself in a person, the person is conscious of himself. He knows who he is-his being, his relationship to God and others. He or she knows a lot about himself or herself. The important thing is, God has to be there to participate in life with the person. When that happens and whatever can abort life and its totality can be stopped. His identity has been formed, to know oneself, only God can initiate this - to really know oneself. When one is in Christ, he or she can discover many other sources or resources available in life. If one particular resource is not available, he can see that there is another available. So all these things; suicide, divorce they come to the same thing-there is no other way- life ends, marriage life ends and so forth. The fullness of life is aborted. So God is not a personal God to them. To know God as personal you need to know your Bible and that's where *logos* comes in. You have to know the Word and the Word is Jesus.

In some cases there is culture versus democracy. Democracy is about a person's right. The Hindu culture as you ask, is very conservative. The clash of culture and democracy and the weakness in the religious background result in suicide. When I say the religion is weak, I mean that its teaching is not strong to support life, to give them the thought of life. So if this is not available, is there something else, another avenue? No, there is no hope.

The difference with Christianity is that there is hope in Christianity. There is a big space of hope in Christianity. Demonism or sorcery does not offer that hope. That is why there is a rise in suicide.

(Raratu)



LESSON SUMMARY

The church is a godly institution and it is called to proclaim the gospel of Grace and, it embodies that gospel when it is particularly solicitous of those within its member who are most troubled, and when it reaches beyond its own membership to such people who stand alone." (Dr. Philip Wogaman, professor of Christian Social Ethics, Wesley Theological Seminary).

Suicide is like a running tap that cannot be stopped because of its increasing rate in the Pacific. It is imperative that the faucet must be tightly closed now to stop any leakages. The gospel is the faucet that fixes the running tap because it has healing power to bring life to a death situation. The church ministers' important role is to proclaim the gospel and dispel fear and doubts surrounding suicide. This message has to come out strongly in their messages from the pulpit. CM need to speak the liberating message of the cross that transforms culture and equip the church to address suicide.



KEY CONCEPTS

- Culture can be an inhibiting factor for change and the Gospel is the agent of change.
- There is conflict of ideas through the generation gap.
- This life belongs to God and it needs to be told from the pulpit.
- Old people maintain the culture status quo

LESSON 2 – PARENTS ROLES IN SUICIDE PREVENTION



INTRODUCTION

This lesson is about parents and their roles in suicide prevention. Good parenting is vital which means that they should be good listeners, counsellors and communicators. The Bible says Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it (Proverbs 22: 6). Parents are role models and it is important to remember that parenting is a godly role.



CONTENT OUTCOMES

At the end of the lesson, students should be able to:

- Use their suicide prevention knowledge to assist parents and be able to talk to them
- Recognise the importance of parenting in order to assist parents in the emotional well being of their children.
- Examine the meaning of multi parenting in the Pacific and its impact on the lives of children.
- Use their knowledge of counselling and pastoral care to design strategies to help families affected by suicide.
- Demonstrate their understanding of family counselling by identifying the problems between parent and child and how to resolve them.



ACHIEVEMENT INDICATORS

Students will achieve these outcomes when for example:

- Participants are able to talk to parents about suicide and how to prevent it.
- Parents are able to organise family times where they can assist their children.
- Participants list the advantages and disadvantages of multi-parenting and discuss the impact on the children.
- Participant design strategies to help families affected by suicide.
- Participants identify the problems between parents and children.



KEY CONCEPTS

- Suicide prevention knowledge can assist parents.
- Good parenting enhances the emotional well being of the children.
- Multi parenting is common in the Pacific.
- Pastoral care and Counselling knowledge can assist in designing strategies for suicide prevention.



KEY TERMS

Some of the key terms are:

Parenting

Multi parenting

Emotional wellbeing

Designing strategies



BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Good parenting is an essential part of suicide prevention. Parenting is an important part of loving and caring for your child. Good parenting is about providing a warm, secure home life, helping your child to learn the rules of life (e.g. how to share, respecting others, etc.) and to develop good self-esteem. Stopping them from doing things they shouldn't be doing is just as important as encouraging those to do the things you want them to do. The beginning years are when the ground work is laid down for the rest of their lives. Good parenting will teach them to respond in a responsible way.

Seeking God's wisdom in parenting and in all other facets of life, means being humble, meek and lowly. Not beating yourself up when the Lord reveals it to you, but acknowledging your failing and moving on with the God-given portion of wisdom to correct and align to His will.

Get wisdom; get insight; do not forget, and do not turn away from the words of my mouth. Do not forsake her, and she will keep you; love her, and she will guard you. The beginning of wisdom is this: Get wisdom, and whatever you get, insight. Prize her highly, and she will exalt you; she will honour you if you embrace her. She will place on your head a graceful garland; she will bestow on you a beautiful crown (Proverbs 4:5-9 NIV).

Many Christian parenting books focus on helping parents figure out how to raise well-behaved and well-mannered children. And while that's an important element, not many focus on raising children to have hearts that seek after Christ. The goal of parenting, in the long run,

isn't for our children to be known for how well behaved they are, but for how well they know and respond to God.

Parenting in the Pacific means that not only the parents are responsible for the welfare of the children but the extended families are equally responsible as well. More often children are looked after by grandparents, aunts and uncles and often older siblings as well during their childhood years. Multi – parenting provides a supportive environment where children can feed, sleep and meet other basic needs or a home they can go to. It also allows the child or adolescent a space to be able to confide with someone when they find it hard to talk to their biological parents when they face problems. While this has some advantages, it also has some disadvantages.

The disadvantages are many. Multi parenting tend to let parents rely more and more on the parenting of the extended family and they fail to recognise the silent cry of help of their children. Sometimes, multi parenting gives out conflicting messages or discipline to the children that adds to confusion and frustration.

In many Pacific countries, it is an honour for the parents and the intended foster parents (relative) to have an understanding in the care transference of the child. When adoption is employed, children do not recognise their parents because they did not bring them up and there has never been any bonding with them. Some Pacific islanders have raised their concern over this matter as from experience the children are made to work like slaves and serve in their new homes.

In the church context, all members of the congregation that witnessed the baptism of a baby play the parenting role to the child as they have committed themselves to a vow that they will help the child to grow up in a loving environment and to know Jesus.

Parenting style in the Pacific, expect the child to do whatever they are told. Children are often told to shut up and sit down whenever they wanted to have a say. Punitive or retributive measures are used to discipline children. Modern parenting opens a two way communication where children are taught to be responsible for their own choices and voice their concerns. This type of parenting uses the principles of restorative justice to discipline the child. It would be ideal to get the best of the two practices.

Making the right choices in life is taught with godly wisdom. This is important when children face hard times and the decision to commit suicide to escape their pain is more than possible. This is only the tip of the ice berg when suicide factors lay beneath the surface or the visible. Too often parents have high expectations of their children, and their public image and the family's reputation are at stake when children fail to meet these standards. Suicide has been committed by children who did not pass their examinations because of the above reason. Life is more than failing exams, dropouts or unwanted pregnancies. Other factors include religious, cultural, social and political conflicts contribute to the cause of suicide.

Values that have been ingrained in children's lives from good parenting should put them in good stead. Families should be the safety net for the children and parents should be the sounding

board to give love and understanding. This means that parents should learn to read the signs and try to understand the discontentment in their children. They need to have the spirit of discernment to discern the problems their children are facing which result in their suffering in silence. Many suicides in the Pacific and the world over could have been avoided if parents were more aware of what their children were going through.



TASK

FACILITATOR'S NOTES

1. This lesson is the second of the three lessons in Unit 4.
2. Explain the details of the lesson.
 - Parents play a very important role in the transference of values whether it is faith, cultural or any other.
 - Purpose - reflect on the role of parents where suicide is concerned.
 - Content - details of parenting multi parenting in the Pacific changes in parenting style discipline.

PARENTING ACTIVITIES

Debating on Positive and negative sides of multi parenting in the Pacific.

3. Ice-breaker.
Adjective name game. Go around the circle and ask each person to state their first names (or the name they like to be called) plus a positive adjective which starts with the same sound or letter. E.g. "I'm marvellous Mary"

Example of retributive justice

When a child does something wrong and he/she is smacked for doing so.

A prisoner goes to prison for breaking the law. He is made to work hard because of the offence committed.

Restorative justice – looks for what has been lost when an offence is committed and this needs to be restored. For example if someone steals and is caught, we ask the question what has been lost and needs to be restored? 1. Article stolen, temper of the owner,

CASE STUDY 9

This is the first time I heard of them arguing. But it's just my mum; she always blames me all the time. She always blames me. She would always say, 'Do you know why I did this to our family? It's because of you. It is because of you'. Because she renders service to my family, she helps my family, she does everything. And she always says: 'Do you know why I do this? because of you...because of you. Do you know why I get blame from your dad's side, it is because of you. Do you know what I mean?' And I had heard that from her ever since I was young because she left her family and all that stuff and even her children, she brought all her children and lived with my dad and she said 'You know, me and my children, we all came here because of you. We served your dad's family' (as if I just fell off the sky)....

It was my half brother, my mum's son who came into the room and calmed me down. He actually touched my heart when he said something about my mum. He told me to be patient and that I'm the only person my mum can blame because she has suffered a lot in my dad's family. That really calmed me down because I loved my mum. You know at that very moment, I didn't want them to argue because of me or something. That's a little story about me because I am voicing this out 'cos I wouldn't be here today if that thing happened. Maybe this little story can be seen from a different perspective because this is not the normal case and it is not very common especially in most cases it starts with relationships, broken relationships between a girl and a boy and other things between the parents.

Well actually I think I had already pulled out something because I smashed things and I think I didn't respect my parents at that moment and that's the way I see it today. I did it because I knew I was going to commit suicide. I didn't care anymore. I lost respect of them because I knew that this was it. This is my life and I had had enough.

(Tevita)



LESSON SUMMARY

Parents have a very important role to play in the well being of their children. Godly upbringing prepares a child to face difficult times in life. Faith and cultural values are also transmitted by the parents to their children and this also helps them to make wise choices in life.

Parenting in the South Pacific also includes the grandparents and other relatives who lend a hand in the upbringing of the children. Although this has advantages, it also has some disadvantages. The church requires everyone to assist in the parenting of other children as promised by them during the baptism.

Families are a safety net for children and parents are the sounding board for their problems. Retributive form of discipline is advisable to prevent suicide. There is more to life than failing exams, teenage pregnancies and children must be taught to value life over these suicide factors.



KEY CONCEPTS

- Suicide prevention knowledge can assist parents.
- Good parenting enhances the emotional well being of the children.
- Multi parenting is common in the Pacific.
- Pastoral care and Counselling knowledge can assist in the designing strategies of suicide prevention.

LESSON 3 THE CHURCH'S RESPONSE



INTRODUCTION

Lesson 3 looks at church history and how practices in the past have influenced the present practices and belief in the church concerning suicide. Understanding the history will enable us to reassess and evaluate the church's current stand in suicide. Only then can we successfully intervene in the prevention of suicide.



CONTENT OUTCOMES

At the end of the lesson students will be able to, for example:

- use an understanding of the history, current practices and the mission of the church to make effective professional decisions regarding suicide prevention
- create guidelines for the church in order for CM to help families and individuals affected by suicide
- Review the Pacific church's current stand on suicide and formulate a strategy to increase the Church's capacity to deal with those affected by a suicide



ACHIEVEMENT INDICATORS

Students will have achieved the outcomes when they:

- Participate in discussions that lead to changes in constitutions and consequently church attitude to suicide.
- Contribute to the writing of suicide prevention guidelines for CM
- Participate in discussions on the way forward for Pacific churches regarding suicide.



KEY CONCEPTS

- Church needs to form guidelines to prevent suicide.
- Use existing structures in the church to promote the total well being of the congregation.
- Use historic information to avoid misinformation.
- The church has a leading role in suicide prevention because it is the vessel of the light giving gospel.



KEY TERMS

Constitution
Pacific churches
Current practices
Spiritual well being
Retributive justice
Restorative justice
Punitive Justice



BACKGROUND INFORMATION

‘Under orders from the Pope to reduce the rising problem of suicide by martyrdom, Saint Augustine in the 15th Century denounced suicide as a sin. In the City of God, ca, 426AD he said “No one ends his own life out of a desire to attain a better life...after death because a better life after death is not for those who perish by their own hands.”’

These words were to become the basis of belief that people who die by suicide go to hell. In 563AD the 1st Canon of the council of Braga denied the person who died by suicide, a funeral service rites of the Eucharist and the singing of the Psalms. People who died by suicide were punished by exclusion from church practices.

Thomas Aquinos in the 13th century labelled suicide a mortal sin because no one could repent of it. His arguments stressed the sacredness of human life and absolute submission to God.

Laws were then enacted in England and the USA to discourage suicide. The custom arose of burying the body of a suicide victim at crossroads as a token of disgrace. Properties were confiscated and although it was harsh, suicide was reduced. Survivors instinctively felt stigmatised or shamed by the suicide death of their loved ones. This was due in part to the above cultural and religious attitude.

In 1824 burial in the highway was ended in England and directed that burial to be in church yard or other burial places but without religious ceremony and to be between 9 pm to midnight. In 1961 British parliament enacted a bill abolishing the criminality of suicide’ (Jason Inc. 2010).

Recognizing that the church's historical response to suicide includes punitive measures intended to prevent suicide and that there is no clear biblical stance on suicide, Pacific churches need to find urgent measures or guidelines to prevent suicide. Harsh punitive measures such as denial of funeral services or burial by CM imposed upon families should be reviewed. A more compassionate approach to the families of suicide victims is needed so that the grieving family can experience the loving grace of our Lord.

In its effort to prevent suicide, the church needs to recognize initiatives set up by other organizations so that there is sharing of resources according to the needs of victims. The church should participate in and urge others to participate in a full, community-based effort to address the needs of people at risk and their families. Each annual church conference needs to respond to issues of ministry related to suicide prevention and family-support services. It must be emphasized that suicide increases in an environment or society that does not demonstrate a caring attitude toward all persons. The church has a special role in changing societal attitudes and harmful social environment of individuals and families. Our response is to deliver a solution that has a Scriptural basis.

Being aware of the availability of technology such as mobile phones, on-line networks such as Face book and others and maximising their use is something the church can explore and put to good use.



TASK 1

FACILITATOR'S NOTES

Today is the last of the lessons on Suicide Prevention. It is titled “Transforming culture and tradition through the Gospel.”

Throughout this curriculum we have examined our calling and our role as shepherds in the church in relation to suicide and its prevention. We have also discussed the silent cry of people as they go through experiences that could lead them to attempt or complete suicide. The church in the past has had a punitive stand towards people who attempt or commit suicide. Present practices in the church today indicate that this attitude lingers on.

As CM some of us have witnessed some of our church members who have committed suicide or have attempted suicide.

We have to go back to the basic principles that founded the church, e.g. class meetings for Methodists, cell groups and so forth.

The transformative power of the Gospel has to be maximised in its dissemination through the use of Modern Technology Training of pastors in basic counselling and using gifts in prayer counselling, refer to lesson 3.2

Networking – in church community, national organisations, e.g. radio, police, doctors etc. Face book, Twitter, website, call centre life line.

Sometimes we are left wondering if there was something more we could have done to prevent suicide from happening. Our re-examination of suicide in the light of the gospel needs to take a more vigorous turn. The availability of modern technology

needs to be recognised as a way that can make the gospel touch the untouchable areas of our culture and our church traditions.

In all our Pacific churches there are small groups within the churches. With the increase in suicide, there is a need to review the basic purpose of these groups and adhere to its function. Some have lost sight of its original purpose of caring for one another and instead these very important small groups have been taken up by fundraising meetings and other issues removed from its original functions

Pre-knowledge Activity.

Points for discussions:

Let us re-examine the functions of cell groups and class meetings, what were their basic purposes?

What things can we do to revive our role in pastoral care?

How can the church maximise the use of technology in preventing suicide?

Divide the class into 5 groups to discuss and present to the class their findings. Use the following guidelines:

- What are some responses of the church that you could identify as adequate responses to suicide?
- Going back to the basic principles that founded the church. E.g. class meetings for Methodists, cell groups etc.
- Technology
- Training of pastors in basic counselling and using gifts in prayer counselling refer to lesson 3.2
- Networking – in church community, national organisations, e.g. radio, police, doctors etc. Face book, twitter, website, call centre life line.

MAJOR TASK: PROJECT PROPOSAL (30%)

FACILITATOR'S NOTES

This task is the major task of the curriculum on suicide prevention. It is worth 30% of the course work. It is important that the facilitator teaches the students on how to write a proper project proposal. The facilitator must be well informed with the writing of a project proposal in order to teach it. Different disciplines have different ways of writing project proposals. For our purpose, we suggest the following steps in writing this proposal. This is only a guideline and the facilitator should feel free to adjust and adapt according to his/her preference.

The plan of your proposal:

There are three questions you should consider:

- (i) *Who is my audience?*
You need to decide to whom you are writing the proposal. You need to make sure that you think about your audience and what they might already know or not know about your topic.
- (ii) *What do I want my audience to get from my proposal?*
The overall purpose of the proposal should be to get the readers' approval. Your main purpose should be clearly stated. The readers should not have to figure out what you are requesting in the proposal. The best advice is to state your purpose upfront then fill in the details later in the proposal.
- (iii) *How can I make sure my audience understands what I want them to know?*
You must put yourself in the shoes of your readers. Think about what they want to hear. Get someone else to read your proposal before you submit it. Make sure that his/her reaction is what you expected the readers' reaction to be.

1. Introduction

Your introduction should define the problem and state how you plan to solve it. It should assure your readers that you can solve the problem effectively. Make sure that you mention how you will structure your proposal.

2. Purpose

The most important goal of a proposal is to get your project or suggestion approved. The goal of your proposal is to get your suicide prevention project approved.

3 Literature review

Your proposal should be researched thoroughly. You should provide readers with examples and facts. These items usually make your proposal more meaningful and convincing. Opinions are not facts and most readers won't support them. The best advice is to research other articles and proposals on your topic. Include this information in your own proposal.

4 Solution that works

Make sure that your solution is possible. You should include an analysis of your plan and possible result of your solution. Try a pre-test of your solution if it works. You may need to revise your solution before submitting your proposal.

5 Budget

Your proposal should be financially feasible. Think about the finances of the church to whom you are writing the proposal. Make sure they can afford the solution you are proposing. Make sure to explain why your solution should be worth their time and money. .

6 Conclusion

Provides a summary of what was said in the introduction.

7 The finished proposal

The finished proposal should look attractive. It should be as perfect as you can get it. This includes the overall appearance of the proposal and the content inside the proposal.

8 References

Refers to the authors cited in the literature review using the preferred referencing method e.g. Harvard, MLA, APA etc.

9 Appendix

Provides the extra material used that supported the proposal in the process of being prepared.

- What are some guidelines that we can propose that Pacific churches can use to address suicide prevention?

CASE STUDY 10

A youth leader committed suicide last year and this was quite a surprise to the church. Maybe he was having family problems. When I heard, I was surprised as well because my understanding of him was that he was a very active member of the church. You know I thought that with his standing, he would easily find other ways of dealing with his problem in his capacity as a youth leader.

I was sharing with the elders there in that church something I learnt from this situation that every sermon we preach should have some aspect of counselling-that's the role of the sermon. Preaching in the church to educate people to cope with their problems. I don't think the church has other avenues that the church has to cater for such people apart from preaching-there's no counselling. I believe if we change our style and content of preaching to include Christian education and counselling as well- we can do that - preaching to accommodate the nature of all the people.



KEY CONCEPTS

- Church needs to form guidelines to prevent suicide.
- Use existing structures in the church to promote the total well being of the congregation.
- Use historic information to avoid misinformation.
- The church has a leading role in suicide prevention because it is the vessel of the light giving gospel.



LESSON SUMMARY

Thomas Aquinas in the 13th century labelled suicide a mortal sin because no one could repent of it. His arguments stressed the sacredness of human life and absolute submission to God.

Recognizing that the church's historical response to suicide includes punitive measures intended to prevent suicide and that there is no clear biblical stance on suicide, Pacific churches need to find urgent measures or guidelines to prevent suicide. Harsh punitive measures such as denial of funeral services or burial by CM imposed upon families should be reviewed. A more compassionate approach to the families of suicide victims is needed so that the grieving family can experience the loving grace of our Lord.

GLOSSARY

Paradigm shift		a shift in pattern, standard, or prototype
Culture		customs of society, way of life
Tradition		ritual, practice or belief
Unique		distinctive, exceptional
Calling		Vocation, ministry or mission
Diligence		industry, thoroughness
Ministry		Calling
Prophecy		foretell, predict, see the future
Testimony		indication, evidence, proof, authentic
Accountability	-	Responsibility
Accurate reporting	-	Precise and truthful reporting
Basic counselling skills	-	fundamental skills for counselling
Body language	-	silent communication portrayed by the body
Confidentiality	-	discretion, secrecy
Counselling	-	encouraging, advising
Deliverance prayer	-	prayer to free someone from bondage
Effective listening skills	-	successful listening skills
Empathy and sympathy	-	understanding and compassion
Inner healing	-	the healing of the inner self
Non judgmental	-	not critical and not condemnatory
Therapeutic	-	healing, beneficial
Traditional means of communication ways of communicating in the past.		
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Diligence	-	industry, thoroughness
Ministry	-	Calling
Prophecy	-	foretell, predict, see the future
Testimony	-	indication, evidence, proof, authentic
Suicide	-	killing oneself
Suicidal tendencies	-	inclination to commit suicide
Cultural perception	-	how things are seen in the context of one's culture
Life skills	-	skills that are needed for life
Divine intervention	-	when God intervenes
Moral issue	-	honest and ethical issues
Biological	-	organic, natural
Cultural	-	according to culture
Trigger	-	activates, generate or start
Kinship	-	relationship
Culture	-	way of life
Tradition	-	custom, practice
Facilitate	-	make possible
God's calling	-	vocation, mission
Pastoral Ministry (PM)	-	church ministry
Protection	-	shelter, safety, security
Attitude	-	approach, manner
Constitution	-	charter, statute
Pacific churches	-	the different churches in the Pacific
Current practices	-	present system or habit
Spiritual well being	-	spiritual good health

Retributive justice	-	punishment by revenge
Restorative justice relationship	-	reconciliation and reparation of damaged
Risk factors	-	factors that enhances danger
Warning signs	-	indicators that alerts someone to a danger
Self esteem	-	self worth, self respect
Suicidal behaviour	-	actions that can lead to suicide
Lethargy	-	exhaustion, tiredness
Apathy	-	indifference or lack of interest

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