

2nd International Suicide Postvention Seminar: Realities and Aspirations XXIV IASP Congress, Killarney Ireland 28th August 2007

One year ago, in September 2006, the 1st International Suicide Postvention Seminar concluded that the Postvention field should grow further, and should integrate research, practice and communication.

As such, the current 2nd International Suicide Postvention Seminar specifically aimed to facilitate communication between various stakeholders in suicide Postvention. The seminar offered a floor for survivors, caregivers, researchers and policymakers to meet people with similar interests, and to exchange expertise. Realities and aspirations of various aspects germane to Postvention were discussed in two plenary presentations (morning session) and four parallel workshops (afternoon session).

Questions raised included:

Where are we now?

What are the challenges and the pitfalls?

What are the aspirations, and how to achieve them?

What are the success factors?

The Convenor, K. Andriessen welcomed the approx 80 participants and speakers and opened the Seminar, followed by two plenary speakers.

J. Reed from SPANUSA presented an impressive example of community action in the USA on how to put Postvention on the policy agenda—and how to keep it there—

an issue that challenges the survivor movement in many countries.

In the second presentation, M. Griffin, E. Monaghan and U. Bates, from Petrus Consulting, presented the availability of suicide bereavement support in Ireland and how they assessed the range and the quality of the available support, and the subsequent conclusions for future developments.

Each workshop focused on a specific aspect: research questions and methodology (A. Beautrais), clinicians after suicide in the family or in the clinic (O. Grad and A. Zavasnik), supporting suicide bereaved children and adolescents (M. Linn-Gust), and Postvention actions in rural and remote areas by the Salvation Army (W. Gallet, P. Moulds and A. Staines).

The participants had the opportunity to fully engage in the discussions after the plenary presentations, dur-

ing the workshops, and at the final line up of the speakers.

The evaluation forms filled out by the participants clearly showed that the content, the speakers, and the discussions with the floor were highly appreciated.

As the Seminar aims to increase the awareness for Postvention, it was however a question how the content of the seminar could flow over to the wider Suicidology community, e.g. the participants of the regular IASP congresses.

It was subsequently decided not to organize a third separate seminar, but to opt for a Postvention stream in the regular congress programs. As such, the visibility and dissemination of the Postvention field should increase.

Karl Andriessen