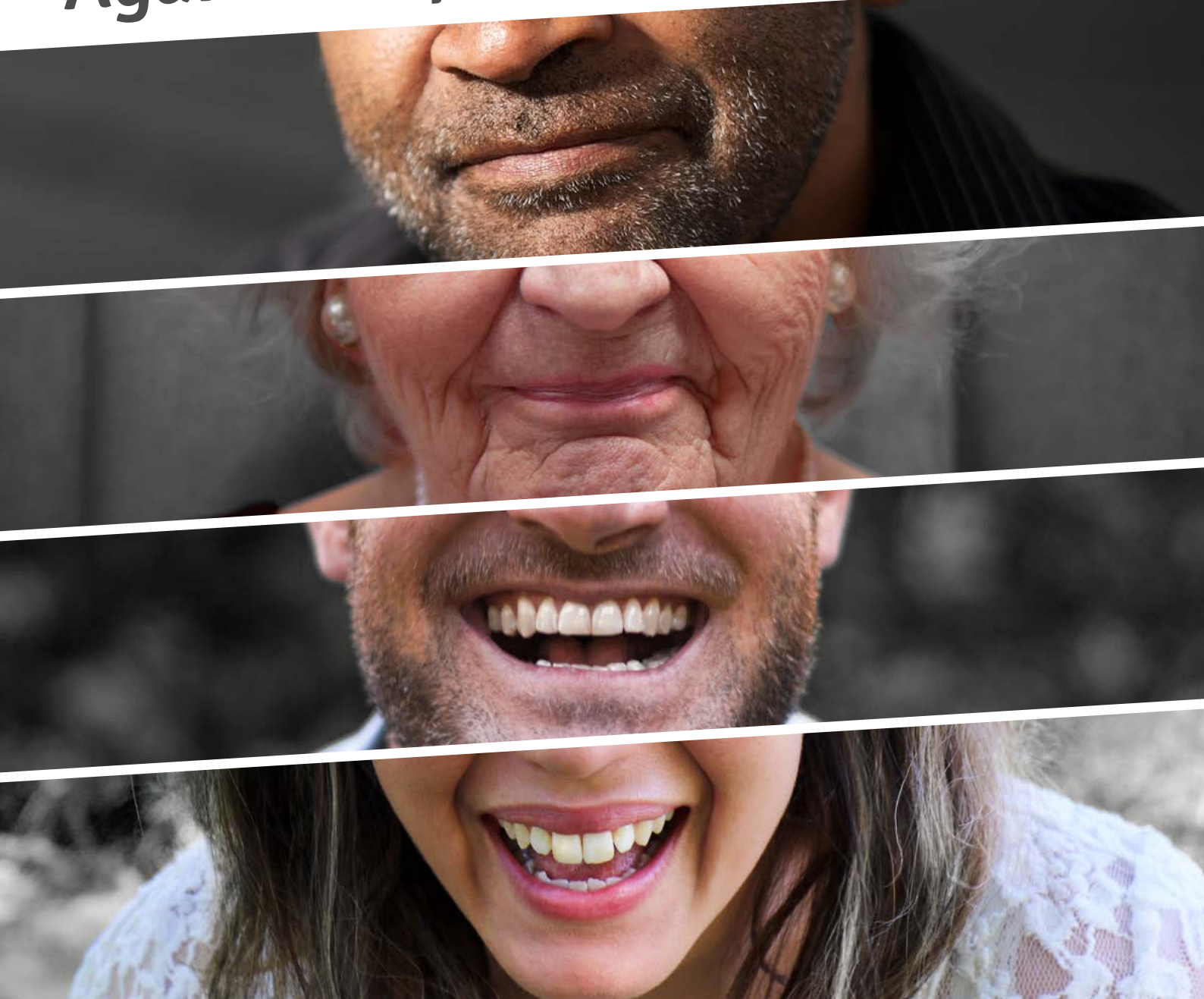




**WAPHA**  
WA Primary Health Alliance

# Mental Health is Everyone's Business

## The Alliance Against Depression



Depression is a high prevalence, at times severe and often life threatening mental health disorder. It is a major risk factor to suicide, being the second leading cause of deaths amongst adolescents.

WA Primary Health Alliance (WAPHA) is committed to providing leadership for the ongoing dialogue and action around the treatment of depression and anxiety and the prevention of suicide.

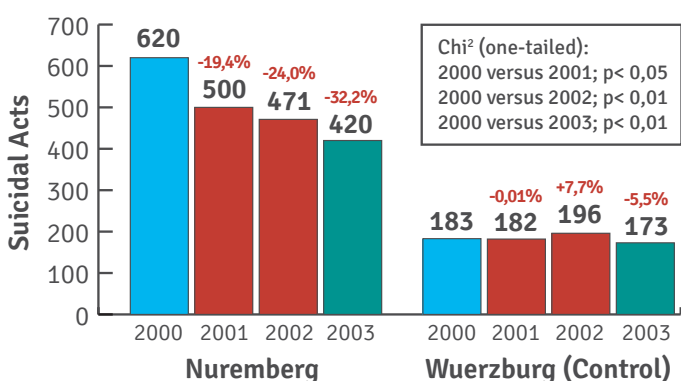
As the Australian National Chapter of The Alliance Against Depression, we promote an integrated community-based approach to tackling depression and suicide.

## Background

WAPHA has adopted the framework of The European Alliance Against Depression, an international non-profit organisation delivering world's best practice in optimising the care of people with depression, anxiety and preventing suicidal behaviour through a community based four-level-intervention framework.

The European Alliance Against Depression is based on the successful experiences from the model region of Nuremberg (The Nuremberg Alliance Against Depression) which resulted in a reduction of suicidal acts (-24% in two years) by implementing the four-leveled approach.

*Suicidal acts in Nuremberg compared to Wuerzburg*



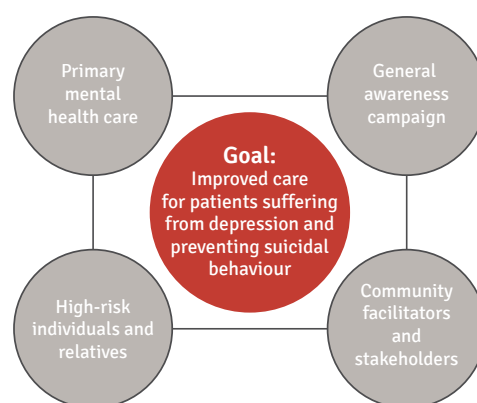
Hegerl et al. 2006, 2010

## The framework

The Alliance Against Depression framework comprises of four levels of integrated community-based activity including;

- increased access to and improved identification and treatment of depression from primary care general practitioners and specialised mental health professionals;
- destigmatising depression, anxiety and talking about the prevention of suicide through a public awareness campaign;
- alliance and co-operation with community facilitators and stakeholders; and
- support for high-risk patients and their relatives.

*The Alliance Against Depression framework*



These four levels must exist within 'a place' and be truly integrated to have real impact on reducing suicidality. Strong synergistic effects can be expected from a cooperative and comprehensive approach.

## Localising to Australia

The Alliance Against Depression provides a framework to work in partnership with communities to coordinate and integrate approaches to the prevention of suicide, the treatment of depression and improved mental wellbeing. The strength of this approach focuses on the collective intervention formed within community.

WAPHA will be trialing The Alliance Against Depression framework within three suicide prevention trial sites; Rockingham-Mandurah-Kwinana, The Mid-West and The Kimberley, as part of the Australian Government's investment into suicide prevention across Australia.

The Alliance Against Depression framework indicates the need for a contextualised response which may look different dependent on the community and place.

**WAPHA will continue to work with community to evaluate and adapt the framework as required for the Australian setting.**

## Intervention levels

While each level has inherent value, real impact on suicidality only comes through integration of all four components and adaptation based on local community needs.

### Primary care and mental health care

- Intervention activities must address the equity of access to primary mental health care.
- Increasing capacity of the primary care sector to better identify and treat depression, anxiety and other signs of suicidality.
- Providing suicide prevention workshops to encourage more GPs and mental health clinicians to address depression, social and emotional wellbeing, and to become Alliance partners contributing to a whole of community approach to reducing suicidality.
- Online training materials and developing better risk stratification tools for general practices to utilise.

### High risk individuals and relatives

- Increasing access to treatment including early intervention
- Identifying individuals most at risk, based upon the specific context of the community.
- Identifying community services and other opportunities where high risk individuals gather socially, to equip leaders and community members to better identify depression and assist to maintaining mentally well communities.
- Establishing peer-to-peer support and other alternative treatment and therapy options including online brief interventions.

- Commissioning mental health training to destigmatise depression, mental health and suicide, encouraging help seeking behaviour.
- Developing community postvention\* and prevention planning.

### Stakeholders and facilitators within community

- Increasing capacity amongst community based service providers to better identify, respond and treat depression, anxiety and suicidality.
- Providing mental health and suicide prevention train the trainer workshops, allowing the participants to provide training to their own communities.
- Community postvention and prevention planning.
- Better mental health awareness training for service providers and stakeholders within community (i.e. police, teachers, parents).

### General awareness campaign

- Raising awareness about destigmatising depression and anxiety.
- Providing public messages around access to primary care, better treatment for depression and mental health.
- Increasing public knowledge and awareness of preventing suicide.
- Providing opportunities for the media to partner with local alliances.

## What can you do?

WAPHA believes The Alliance Against Depression can assist our communities and that positive outcomes will be achieved through an integrated, community-based approach.

If you would like to know more about The Alliance Against Depression, find out how you can start your own Alliance or ask about contributing to established Alliances, contact WAPHA's coordination centre.


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 [www.wapha.org.au/alliance-against-depression/](http://www.wapha.org.au/alliance-against-depression/)



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