

Choose Life Conference Report

Stonefield Castle Hotel

10/09/08

Choose Life is the Scottish Government's strategy to reduce suicide in Scotland by 20% by 2013. In 2004 there were 835 suicides in Scotland.

This conference was held on World Suicide Prevention Day and the dining room of the hotel was packed with a wide variety of professionals working in health, education, social work, police and the voluntary sector.

The morning consisted of a number of talks:

National overview of Choose Life

It was noted that Argyll and Bute had committed further funding to Choose Life which is not the case across all of Scotland.

Rural perspectives

The challenges of isolation were highlighted by Cameron Stark.

Breathing Space

Richard Leckerman talked about this organization provides a free confidential telephone listening service, offering advice, guidance and support, as well as signposting to other agencies. Available from 6pm – 2am daily and has its own website.

The local picture

Dave Bertin, Co-ordinator for Choose Life, gave a very informative talk re the progress made in the past few years. He focused on what makes us mentally flourish. A recent Government document sets out how we, as a society, need to develop opportunities for people to develop, expand and focus on the things that make us feel valued, loved and important. A workshop activity followed this where each individual produced a "leaf."

A further workshop grouped people together working in the same sphere and issues and challenged were shared and discussed.

The conference was well received by all those I spoke to and the Choose Life team of Dave Bertin, Marie Park and Tracey Preece all worked to ensure that the day was both informative and enjoyable. Lunch was delicious!

For further information see www.chooselifeinargyllandbute.org.uk

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