

MEDIA RELEASE

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'LIFELINE CONNECT' OFFERS IN-PERSON SUPPORT ACROSS NORTHERN SYDNEY LIBRARIES

- Face-to-face service available at Hornsby, Stanton and Chatswood Libraries.
- Common presenting issues are loneliness, mental health and relationships.
- Support services are available in Mandarin and Cantonese.
- 44% of people who seek help from Lifeline Connect were born outside of Australia.

Trained Lifeline Supporters are now providing a drop-in face-to-face service at three Northern Sydney libraries. 'Lifeline Connect' offers immediate, one-off support for people wanting someone to talk to, as well as referrals to local services or groups for ongoing assistance.

The service, run out of the Hornsby, Stanton and Chatswood Libraries, provides a safe non-judgmental space where people can connect with Lifeline, access local services and receive immediate support when needed. Referrals include those to health providers, social groups, volunteer organisations, exercise groups and clinical services to name a few.

Lifeline Harbour to Hawkesbury Sydney (H2HS) Community Engagement Manager, Rachel Krippner, said the average interaction ranges from 30 minutes to an hour, however there is no set time limit.

"We are giving space and time for people to really share what is going on with them. It's also delivered by people that live in the area, for community members, and that's a special connection to have."

Trained Lifeline Supporter, Rudi Selles, says Lifeline Connect has resonated with people experiencing loneliness and proved to be a useful source of relief and support.

"Loneliness, mental health and relationships are some of the main reasons people seek help with Lifeline Connect. Although they tend to not say 'I am lonely', they might say 'I don't like where I am living' or 'I don't get out much'."

"After exploring, they tend to find out that it's really loneliness and we can support them to find their own steps to connection."

“When people get more confident talking to you, feel more comfortable, that’s often when they open up and bring you into that. That’s the good part,” he said.

Working with local volunteers and community groups, Lifeline Connect hubs currently offer support services in Mandarin and Cantonese. A review found that 44% of people who seek help from Lifeline Connect were born outside of Australia.

Lifeline H2HS Community Engagement Coordinator, Sharon Richards, said the service has been particularly beneficial for people from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse backgrounds who may face challenges due to their English proficiency.

“It’s their journey, they are the experts in it. We’re just here to walk alongside them, offering support and guidance where needed,” Sharon said.

The service, run by Lifeline H2HS, operates at Hornsby Library every Thursday from 1pm-5.30pm, at Stanton Library every Tuesday from 3-7pm and at Chatswood Library every Monday from 12pm-4pm. Bookings can be made online, or people can choose to walk-in without an appointment.

To find out more visit [Lifeline Connect](#).

You can speak to a Lifeline Crisis Supporter over the phone on 13 11 14, via text on 0477 131 114, chat online at lifeline.org.au/crisis-chat or self-manage what you’re going through with our Support Toolkit at toolkit.lifeline.org.au. All services are available 24/7.

ABOUT LIFELINE

For over 60 years, Lifeline has been connecting with Australians, offering free and confidential one-to-one crisis support for people who are feeling overwhelmed or having difficulty coping. Lifeline Crisis Supporters listen without judgement 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

As well as operating the 13 11 14 telephone line within 43 Centres around the nation, the organisation also delivers 24/7 crisis text, webchat and a Support Toolkit. Lifeline expects to respond to over 1.4 million requests for support this year, creating an average of 120 safety plans a day to keep a person experiencing suicidal ideation safe.

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