



When you just need a little Time Out - a grassroots initiative

The Youth Suicide Action Group (YSAG) formed in Launceston in 1999, is an incorporated, community based organisation, which has initiated the Time Out Project, as a refuge for at risk young people who may be recovering from attempted suicide or self harm or who are at risk of attempting suicide.

The Time Out House provides secure accommodation to young people from the age of 14 to 28 years of age, some whom may have been discharged from hospital with no place to stay and at times, others who need to be supported to provide a safe haven from a less than desirable environment.

From a referral process, clients are supported by a team of trained befrienders in a weekend stay at the House. This consists of up to 60 hours from Friday evening, a roster of two Befrienders volunteers per shift covering the weekend till Sunday night and if possible Monday morning.

Clients come from all around the state, we have had clients travel by bus to Launceston from Hobart and Burnie. Our aim is to have Time Out houses in each area of the Tasmania.

Time Out Befrienders, trained by our volunteers and external agencies, operate on an entirely volunteer basis. These trained supporters provide care and support the young person during the weekend, under the leadership of a weekend Coordinator. Volunteers give up around 30 hours to complete the training, and then given up valuable family time in order to assist young people at risk.

When assistance is requested for our clients, the Coordinator will help young people contact other community services to assist in returning them to a safe environment.

The Committee of YSAG consist of a small team, about half of these also being trained Befrienders, to provide the strategy and governance, as well as supporting fund raising to ensure the smooth operation of the organization. The Committee members are all volunteers; several are parents or friends, who have had a personal experience with suicide of a loved one.

The operation of YSAG currently costs around \$50,000 per annum to maintain the house and fully support the clients and volunteers each weekend. Currently YSAG does not receive any Government funding and relies on other service groups and volunteers to assist with running cost for the house.

We believe the organisation is successful as we have supported about 150 young people from 14 to 28 years of age, who generally are able to participate when returned back to the community. Some of our clients have later joined our volunteer support team as Befrienders.

We currently have 12 people on our committee and a pool of volunteers (roughly 40 people) who assist in the running of this vital service for young people at risk.

Some key factors for the success include:

- Commitment and dedication of a large group of volunteers who sometimes give up 14 hours of their time over a weekend to support at risk young people.
- Teamwork – the Committee, Coordinators and Befrienders are all volunteers who give freely of their time to assist with the running of Time Out and support young, sometimes desperate people, from a wide range of backgrounds. There is an overlap of Befrienders, Coordinators and the Committee providing support to clients and assisting with the smooth running of the organisation and to date the raising of funds.
- Successful outcomes for the clients, many of whom in appreciation of Time Out support, provide feedback and testimonials to the dedicated Befriender team.

The Time Out Project's values include:

- Setting standards of honesty and trust in all our communications and support of our clients and volunteers
- A genuine commitment to assisting others gain a feeling of self worth, by providing a listening, caring, supportive environment for at risk youth.
- To be fair in all our dealings with others, as we offer support at risk youth.
- To create an environment for young at risk members of the community where a feeling of love, trust and hope for the future can be nurtured.
- To work as part of a volunteer team that values each individual and the contribution they make to the Time Out Project.

Our vision is to provide a safe haven for young people at risk of suicide.