



February 2023

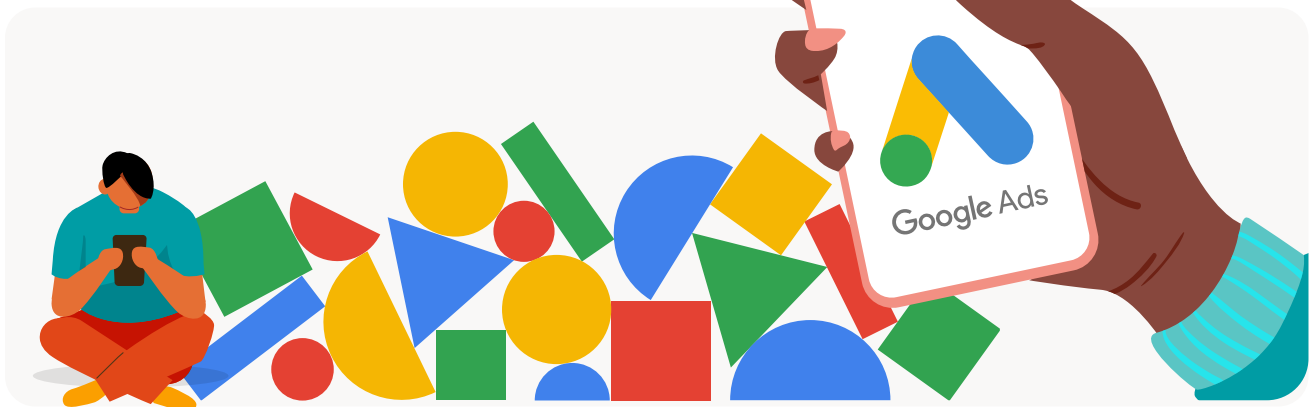
Lived Experience Hope Exchange

Funder: Suicide Prevention Australia, DFAT Australia–Indonesia Institute

CRESP stream: Means Reduction

Research aims

To investigate the engagement and reach of Google AdWords for individuals contemplating suicide.



Overview

Previous research shows that people across age groups, locations and selected means of suicide may conduct online searches using suicide-related terms prior to a suicide attempt. Google is one of the world's most used search engines, with more than 80% of global search market share and home to almost 95% of mobile traffic¹. As such, a large proportion of people who conduct online searches using suicide-specific terminology are likely do so via Google.

The Lived Experience Hope Exchange is a suicide prevention website that draws on the power of Google AdWords to identify people at risk of suicide. When a Google user searches using suicide-specific keywords, the action triggers an ad for the Hope Exchange. The website connects users with links to emergency help, as well as to video-based, community stories, calming resources and more.

Lived experience input

This project drew heavily on the expertise of 21 people with lived experience of suicide. These contributors informed everything from the Google keywords that would trigger the Hope Exchange ad to the content that now lives on the site.

Project timeline

1 Developing the Lived Experience Hope Exchange (2021)

2 Trialling the Hope Exchange (2022)

3 Iterating the Hope Exchange (2023 onwards)

1. [The Top 6 Search Engines, Ranked by Popularity](#). HubSpot, retrieved December 2022.



Research activity

Phase 1: Developing the Lived Experience Hope Exchange (2021)

The Hope Exchange was developed using a purpose-designed, multi-stage co-design process that drew heavily on the insights of people with lived experience of suicide. This process transformed the project from what the researchers had initially envisaged – a web page directing people to crisis support services – to the multi-faceted, resource-rich site it is today.

Phase 2: Trialling the Hope Exchange (2022)

The Hope Exchange was trialled in an online campaign among Australian internet users searching for suicide and distress-related terms. Researchers measured:

- how many times the ad appeared
- how many people clicked on the ad
- the resulting number of engagements (such as consuming content, clicking links or calling a helpline) that occurred on the Hope Exchange website
- an overall engagement rate for each campaign compared to the industry standard.

Of people whose search terms triggered the Hope Exchange ad, 50% received age-tailored content, while another 50% received a general advertisement.

In 19 days, the Hope Exchange ad:

There was no difference in engagement levels between people who received the general advertisement and those who received age-tailored content.

These findings have helped researchers to better understand how different age groups want to engage with suicide prevention support – young people tend to respond to gentle, non-direct approaches, while older people prefer direct engagement without the use of calming resources. These insights will assist the research team to continue developing and refining the advertisement and the Hope Exchange content to better meet the needs of target users.

Phase 3: Iterating the Hope Exchange (2023 onwards)

The research team has secured additional grant funding from Suicide Prevention Australia and the DFAT Australia-Indonesia Institute. This funding will enable a series of follow-up projects to develop new, targeted iterations of the Lived Experience Hope Exchange for use in the following contexts:

- In Indonesia (including resources in English, Indonesian, Javanese and sign language)
- Among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities
- Among Mandarin-speaking communities
- Among young Australians aged under 18





Impact

Results to date indicate that this project offers an engaging, far-reaching and cost-efficient way to reach significant numbers of people at risk of suicide. The customisable nature of the Hope Exchange content means this intervention can be tailored to support people from all walks of life almost anywhere in the world.

Research team



[Dr Sandersan Onie \(project lead\)](#)



[Associate Professor Fiona Shand](#)



[Dr Mark Larsen](#)



[Dr Michelle Tye](#)

cresp@blackdog.org.au

The Centre of Research Excellence in Suicide Prevention (CRESP) is a collaborative program led by Black Dog Institute that aims to reduce the suicide rate in Australia.

