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Sadness to rage

Felix Chaudhary

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FIJI'S already high suicide rates could be increasing even further.

A study conducted by the National Committee On the Prevention of Suicide (NCOPS) has revealed that there were 48 completed suicides in the country last year. This figure has increased significantly with 59 recorded in the first half of 2012.

Leading national counsellors Empower Pacific is looking at a new strategy to help reduce this alarming statistic.

"Asking the simple question 'are you OK?' can sometimes mean the difference between life and death for someone who is on the edge of ending his or her own life. Sometimes it is the one person, even a stranger, who shows that they care who can make the difference for a person who is struggling with suicidal thoughts," said Rhianon Vichta, chief executive officer of the Lautoka-based non-government organisation. "People who attempt suicide most often do so because they are feeling strong emotions. They might be feeling strong distress, anxiety, depression, anger, frustration or hopelessness. Empower Pacific is committed to providing services which treats people who attempt suicide, and prevents suicide by addressing the range of social issues that are associated with suicide."

Ms Vichta said Empower Pacific's research and work in the area had just been published in the international journal *Suicidology*.

Empower Pacific's research revealed that in Fiji the most common suicide warning signs before a suicide attempt were hopelessness (44 per cent), feeling trapped (52 per cent); dramatic mood changes (29 per cent); anxiety (30 per cent); rage (34 per cent); agitation (35 per cent); lacking a sense of purpose in life (49 per cent) and social withdrawal (20 per cent).

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