

# The Listeners Program

## Mt Gambier Prison

The Listeners Program is a 'Prisoner Peer Support Counselling Program'. It aims to preventing suicide and self-harm among prisoners in Mt Gambier Prison. There are 22 prisoners who have been trained as Listeners and 6 of the Listeners are Aboriginal. Prisoners can talked to the Listeners if the need to any time of the day.

If a prisoner is feeling really down, they're more likely to talk to a fellow prisoner than anyone else. The Listeners also support all new arrivals during their few days in prison.

The main focus is suicide prevention, but the listeners learn how to talk with people about their grief and loss.

The program aims to educate the prisoners to *'let go of their anger, blame and shame'* by encouraging them *'to be a better version..- for themselves, for their fellow prisoners and for society as a whole.'*

Prisoners train for 10 weeks to be a Listener. The course is intensive and teaches using the narrative approach. No prison officers are present during the training as personal experiences, past traumas and emotional disclosures are sensitive areas for people being trained. There is a long waiting list for the training.



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