

Committee Secretary  
Senate Community Affairs References Committee  
PO Box 6100  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600

### **The use of “NO HARM” contracts, with individuals who are Suicidal.**

Although currently retired, I have worked in Mental Health related areas for over 40 years; initially as a psychiatric nurse, then later in the roles of counselor, family therapist and psychotherapist. I also have had extensive experience in training other health professionals in counselling and in therapeutic intervention techniques. Over the years I have received training in a wide range of therapeutic models. I recognize the value of health professionals having broad training in diverse models so that they have facility with a multitude of therapeutic tools. Therapeutic models do however seem to move in and out of fashion. Tools that were found to be particularly useful that were drawn from a particular model may be forgotten as new therapy models become the current fashion.

One therapeutic model I received extensive training in is ‘*Transactional Analysis*’. This model was ‘in fashion’ in the seventies in Australia but my experience is that few health professionals today in Australia have more than a very superficial understanding of this theory, and in particular in the context of this letter, in regard to therapeutic intervention with individuals who are suicidal.

Transactional Analysis therapists employ and advocate the use of “NO HARM “ contracts with people at risk of :

- Self Harm and or Suicide
- Going Crazy (becoming Psychotic)
- Harming and or Killing others

I believe all health professionals should be trained in the use of “NO HARM” contracts. For detailed information on ‘NO HARM’ contracts I refer you to two books by : IAN STEWART

1. “*Transactional Analysis Counselling in Action*” Sage 1989 ISBN 0 8039-8190-2
2. “*Developing Transactional Analysis Counselling*” Sage 1996 ISBN 0 8039 7901 0

Studies, by Drye, Goulding and Goulding 1973 testify to the effectiveness of 'NO HARM' contracts in reducing the likelihood of tragic outcomes. Refer Chapter 7 in the first book listed above.

My own work experience and the experience of many of my past colleagues trained in the use of 'NO HARM' contracts strongly support the use of this therapeutic tool.

Please pass this information on to whomsoever will read the above texts, have the wisdom to appreciate the value of the "NO HARM" tool and the power and influence to have the information widely disseminated.

To the extent you are able will you please keep my identity confidential.

Yours Sincerely