



FROM THE PRESIDENT

## Comments and suggestions from members solicited

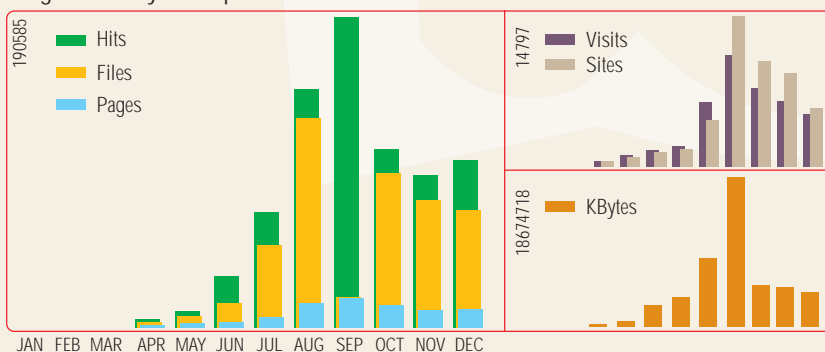
2009 promises to be an important year in the development of the International Association for Suicide Prevention. We will be holding our 25th World Congress in Montevideo, Uruguay on the 27-31 October (and it is time that you begin to make plans and submit proposals for this exciting meeting).

We are also looking forward to many new developments. However, we are at a point where we can greatly benefit from input from IASP members before we proceed.

First, in the coming weeks, members will be sent an important document, a proposed "Strategic Overview 2009-2013" of IASP goals and priorities. This document was developed following a review of IASP's previous 5 year strategic operational plan and will be sent to all members in the coming weeks for comments and suggestions. Based upon the priorities and strategic outcomes that are outlined in this document, the IASP Board is in the process of developing a strategic work plan to achieve these outcomes. However, before finalizing any plans, input from all IASP members is being solicited concerning our visions for activities in the coming years. I will be sending a letter with the strategic overview document to all IASP individual and organizational members for comments before the end of January.

Second, if you have visited the IASP web site since last May ([www.iasp.info](http://www.iasp.info)), you will have noticed that there is a change in format and the material on the site is expanding each month. After many years of having the IASP site graciously hosted in Norway by Lars Mehlum at the University of Oslo, IASP is now operating its own site, with the help of a brilliant site developer, Kenneth Hemmerick. We are looking at expanding the restricted "members only" section and we are seeking ways to highlight IASP activities and ensure that IASP is identified easily by various search engines. At this time I would like to invite all IASP members to visit the site and make suggestions about how to improve the site and increase its usefulness for IASP members, as well as the general public. As you can see from the graph on usage of the site, there was a major peak of activity in September around World Suicide Prevention Day. We are looking at ways to capitalize upon the increased visits around this annual event in order to recruit new IASP members and incite visitors to return to the site throughout the year.

Usage summary for [iasp.info](http://iasp.info)



One of the challenges in developing the web site is the fact that the content of the site is entirely developed on a voluntary basis by IASP members. At the present time, Annette Beautrais ([annette.beautrais@yale.edu](mailto:annette.beautrais@yale.edu)), the IASP General Secretary, is responsible for screening content to be put on the site. We would like to have the IASP site become an important resource for suicide prevention around the world. We would also like to have as much of the site as possible available in several other languages. Again, we have relied thus far on volunteers to translate the site in other languages. Your suggestions concerning the web site would be greatly appreciated.

Wishing you good health, joy and great accomplishments in the New Year.

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## New IASP Task Force: Best Practice Standards in Suicide Prevention for Helplines

Helplines worldwide are front line services receiving many thousand of phone calls annually from people at risk of suicide. While individual countries or services may have developed suicide prevention or intervention standards for their services there is no general agreement internationally as to what constitutes best practice in response to a suicidal caller. Over recent years researchers have taken an increased interest in the work of Helplines and a body of research is available to inform practice. Given our increasingly global world and the increased body of knowledge about suicide prevention it is timely for a new IASP Task Force to be created to develop evidence based best practice standards for helpline providers.



Dawn O'Neil  
Chair of the IASP Taskforce

For this reason IASP has convened a new Task Force on Best Practice Standards for Helplines and Crisis Lines.

The Task Force will be chaired by Dawn O'Neil, CEO of Lifeline Australia, and will include delegates from the newly formed Emotional Services Alliance which currently consists of Lifeline International, Samaritans UK, Befrienders Worldwide and IFOTES. We are calling for expressions of interest from the IASP membership to develop the Best Practice Standard for Helplines. The goals of the Task Force will be to:

- To develop systematic reviews of research about suicide prevention via a helpline service
- To identify gaps in knowledge, to develop a research agenda to address these gaps and to encourage relevant research
- To identify, collect and collate existing guidelines and policies for suicide prevention and intervention for Helplines which have been developed in various countries and examine and report on their content, development and implementation.
- To draw on the available scientific evidence and knowledge and experience of practitioners working in Crisis / Help lines to develop evidence based standards and practice guidelines to support service providers.
- To work collaboratively with helpline and crisis line providers to develop and promote evidence based practice
- To improve linkages between helpline and crisis line service providers and researchers with an interest in this area.
- To assemble a body of knowledge which can provide authoritative comment on issues relate to suicide reduction and prevention

People who are interested in joining the Task Force can contact [dawn.oneil@lifeline.org.au](mailto:dawn.oneil@lifeline.org.au) - You need to be a IASP member to be a member of the Task Force. If you are not yet a IASP member you are invited to join using the online submission form at [www.iasp.info](http://www.iasp.info).

Notification on meeting times and dates will be advised in further bulletins.

**IASP newsbulletin**  
Please forward, distribute or disseminate this newsletter to others to whom it would be of interest

