

Thursday, 10 September, 2020

## People who lived through suicidal crisis share their stories on World Suicide Prevention Day 2020

Eight people who found a way through suicidal thoughts and feelings have shared their personal stories of hope with Beyond Blue to mark World Suicide Prevention Day 2020 and help bring suicide out of the shadows.

In a video launched today, **Ashley, Billy, Geoff, George, Jake, Leilani, Nat,** and **Rach** share their unique stories with a powerful message that suicidal thoughts can pass and seeking support is a crucial step towards recovery.

On average, eight people die by suicide in Australia every day. It is estimated that for every death, around 20 people will attempt suicide and many more will have thoughts of taking their life.

Research shows that those experiencing the highest levels of distress are least likely to seek support, often out of a fear of burdening others.

**Beyond Blue Chair The Hon Julia Gillard AC** said we needed to listen more to and learn from people who find a way through suicidal experiences.

“Beyond Blue is extremely humbled and grateful to have been entrusted with the responsibility of sharing these messages of hope and recovery,” Ms Gillard said.

“People who have found their way through suicidal thoughts and feelings have huge insight and can help us understand what people go through and how we can all play a role in suicide prevention.

“They have told us that being able to talk openly about their feelings helped them hold on through those painful moments and that it was a crucial step in their recovery.

“It is my hope these stories encourage more people experiencing suicidal feelings to reach out, and also increase people’s confidence in providing support to someone they are worried about.”

**Beyond Blue CEO Georgie Harman** said there are at least half a million Australians who have attempted suicide at some time in their life but are alive today. Their stories of recovery and hope need to be heard.

“These deeply personal stories come directly from the people who in many ways are the experts. They have been there and once felt they were a burden to others, but they found a way to get through the pain, often with the support of others,” Ms Harman said.

“Everyone should listen to these stories – from people experiencing suicidal thoughts to every single one of us who wants to understand more so we can play a role in preventing suicide.

“They are a powerful reminder that we must bring suicide out of the shadows; that we can talk safely and openly about suicide with someone you are worried about or who lets you in.”

Ms Harman said World Suicide Prevention Day was also a day to remember the people who have died by suicide, and their families and friends.

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“Today will be a tough time for many Australians. On behalf of Beyond Blue, I extend my deepest sympathies to everyone who has lost someone to suicide,” Ms Harman said.

For **Nat**, reaching out to someone about her feelings was hard, yet it was one of the most important steps in her journey.

“What's difficult about reaching out to other people is how hard it can be to say that you're having suicidal thoughts. Saying that out loud can feel quite terrifying, but actually there's a huge relief when you say those words,” Nat said.

“The most powerful thing for me was to say to someone ‘I am experiencing suicidal thoughts and I need your help’.

“My experience has really shown me that when we let other people in, they get to be part of the conversation. Depression is no longer the only voice that you hear and in letting others in, it starts to lose its power over you.”

**George** said seeing a mental health professional and being diagnosed with anxiety and depression helped him find a way through.

“What I'd say to people having suicidal thoughts is that it's okay to put your hand up because there is support available that can help you get through it,” George said.

“The reason I saw a psychiatrist is because my thoughts of suicide were very loud and they started to scare me. So it was important for me to go and get some help and I am forever grateful that I did.

“For those who are worried that someone close to them might be thinking about suicide, it is okay to ask them directly ‘are you thinking about suicide?’. And if they say yes, just be there for them. You don't have to be an expert.

“Listen to them without judgement, validate how they are feeling, reassure them that the pain can pass and connect them with support.”

For World Suicide Prevention Day 2020, Beyond Blue has developed a range of free resources including:

- The video featuring eight personal stories of people who found a way through suicidal thoughts and feelings.
- Information about The Way Back Support Service, which helps people get their life back on track after a suicide attempt. The service will expand to 33 sites across Australia next year, thanks to the support of Commonwealth, State and Territory governments and donations to Beyond Blue.
- Advice on things you can do if you're experiencing suicidal feelings, how to support someone you are worried about, and how to have the conversation.
- Links to the free Beyond Blue Support Service, Beyond Now safety planning app, and Beyond Blue's Online Forums which provide a safe place to engage with people who have lived through suicidal thoughts.

For more information and to see the video, visit [beyondblue.org.au/wspd](https://beyondblue.org.au/wspd)

*The Beyond Blue Support Service is available via phone 24/7 on 1300 22 4636 or via [beyondblue.org.au/get-support](https://beyondblue.org.au/get-support) for online chat (3PM – 12AM AEST or email responses within 24 hours).*

*The new Coronavirus Mental Wellbeing Service is available 24/7 at [coronavirus.beyondblue.org.au](https://coronavirus.beyondblue.org.au). Its dedicated phone line, staffed by mental health professionals briefed on the pandemic response, is now open on 1800 512 348.*

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