

To the caring Individual

I am writing to you as a person who has struggled to overcome suicidal thoughts and actions. I thought it would be nice to give my experience to help you and your loved one overcome and endure their suicidal thoughts and attempts.

Sadly suicide is painful for everyone involved; the word suicide alone isn't a warm or comforting word. What suicide entails is heart-breaking. We all know how bad everything to do with suicide is. This letter isn't to explain why suicide's wrong and the effects of it, but to show some of my personal experiences of how there is hope for the future, additionally how to help someone overcome suicide to a content and full life.

When I felt at my lowest point in life, everyone involved knew I struggled and that I saw no light at the end of the grim tunnel. What really helped me to keep going was how everyone involved expressed and showed compassion for my struggles, also their wanting to patiently help me overcome that point in my life.

Everything to do with suicide, whether its suicide attempts or unwanted thoughts isn't fixed overnight but with hard work and patience. A lot of suicidal people don't just struggle with depression of some form, but can also battle with other mental health issues. I battle with hearing voices a form of psychosis, I hear the voice of my wife and at times saw her too but this wasn't as often.

I struggled with suicidal thoughts and heard my wife's voice which fuelled each other, it was a vicious cycle! I genuinely saw no future.

The people that were involved in my care (my actual Wife and Mental health team) through this period in my life didn't just point out why my life is worth living. But also showed me how to realise that for myself. The perfect example of this is tactful questions. Such as 'Would you worry if 'person x' struggled with the thoughts you have?' These kinds of questions really had a massive impact on me, as it got me thinking 'What if...?' This made me change my overwhelming thoughts over time.

Additionally my Wife and Mental health team helped me through this, was by using illustrations that I could relate to. For example, 'I know it'd upset me if someone I knew did this because...' This got me thinking

and questioning my unwanted thoughts and my wife's voice, but also gave me different perspectives that got me wondering 'What if I didn't commit suicide?' This led me to think of a future without suicide.

My loved ones and mental health team carers were patient and extremely caring, but didn't hide the fact that they disagreed with suicide. I struggle with psychosis and suicidal thoughts; but it was good for me to hear that they firmly viewed suicide as not a cure and not something that is right to do. The balance between compassion and the firm view of suicide really helped change my thoughts.

I have been in hospital either under section or A&E. I struggled with hospitals and different people being involved in my care. My Wife and mental health team understood this; all I knew was what I wanted to do and was told to do by my wife's voice but with everyone's help I got through this period. There are many more examples of people that can help a suicidal person but these are a few points that I thought was really good for me.

After this really low point in life my family, friends and mental health team helped me to see my triggers and life situations that I struggle with. They all helped me overcome my lowest period in life and showed me how to build myself up to tackle suicide.

Everyone involved in helping a suicidal person should remember that you can only help them to recovery, help them to see a future without suicide and that is the best thing for everyone. It is hard work on everyone's part and takes time. One of the key principles is to remember suicidal thoughts aren't fixed overnight and a lot of people can still have suicidal thoughts, but can adapt to those thoughts and live with them to not let your loved ones be absorbed by them again. Everyone needs to be patient with their struggling loved one to help them realise there is hope for the future.

With patience in mind you need to remember that to care for someone more fully you need to care for yourself first. Make sure you have your physical needs like rest and good food, but just as important time for yourself to recharge your batteries so to speak. Whether that is to read a

book, watch a film or walk the dog and so on. Give yourself the time to reflect on yourself and your needs too, then you can lead a content and full life and this will help you care for your loved one more fully.

I can now say confidently that I have overcome wanting to commit suicide. I still have the occasional unwanted thoughts and hear my wife's voice a lot, but I have been taught by my mental health team at the time, how to handle them and not let them consume me again. I may always have these unwanted thoughts at times but that doesn't mean I can't have a content and full life. I am grateful and admire everyone who helped me in my darkest days because of their hard work, and I'm thankful they had the patience they needed with me.

Warm regards

Joshua.