

Sector briefing: Release of 'The Girl on the Bridge'

7 October 2020

The *Mindframe* team wish to advise the mental health and suicide prevention sector of the Australian release of the film 'The Girl on the Bridge' (12 October 2020). While *Mindframe* has had no involvement in the production of this film, the team acknowledge the voice of lived experience in suicide prevention.

The film follows Jazz Thornton as she creates a web series (Jessica's Tree) about the suicide death of her friend. As Jazz's presence in the sector as the co-founder of Voices of Hope and as a youth suicide prevention advocate increases, so do her interactions with media, social media commenters and people in distress. The film aims to increase understanding of suicide, promote help-seeking and empower people to help others and make change. The Australian Classification Board has rated the film 'M: suicide themes and coarse language'.

The *Mindframe* team has viewed the film and encourage organisations to be prepared to support those in their communities who are vulnerable to mental ill-health or suicide and who may be distressed by the film's content.

Organisations are encouraged to promote and reflect safe messaging during this time to increase help-seeking behaviour and reduce stigma, both within the media and online.

The *Mindframe* team is available to provide guidance to organisations and their spokespeople choosing to engage with media around this film.

The film is being distributed in Australia by Movies Change People, facilitating the film's online release (on-demand from 12 October 2020) and screenings in selected cinemas (from 14 October 2020). Audiences viewing the film online will be sent an email with help-seeking information. Help-seeking cards will also be made available to audiences attending cinema screenings.

If organisations are involved in events such as cinema screenings, we recommend the following:

- Consider local community needs and circumstances
- Arrange for supports (such as counsellors) to be available to audiences pre- and post-screening (and identifying these persons to the audience)
- Provide a pre-event briefing to the audience (e.g. giving Australian/local context, discussing options for intervention training, warning signs, risk factors, protective factors etc.)
- Provide 'take-home' resources so audience members have help-seeking or local support information at hand.

Themes included in film:

The film includes a focus on the following key themes:

- Portrayal of suicide, including detail of method of suicide and suicide attempts (e.g. items shown on screen, phone conversation with a person who is attempting suicide, discussion of use of method after seeing it in the media)
- Reading of suicide notes and other communication expressing suicidal ideation

- Footage of phone conversations with people in distress
- Discussion of child abuse and its relationship to suicide, including mention of death by suicide by a person accused of abuse
- Framing of suicide as a young person’s problem and indication of no action being undertaken to prevent it
- Multiple examples of system ‘failures’ (e.g. services not offering support when requested) that may discourage people from reaching out
- Stories of people with lived experience of suicide
- Stories of hope and recovery
- Suicide as a tragic and avoidable loss
- Negative impact of suicide on others
- Suicide intervention in action
- Sensational elements of media reporting and its potential impact on audiences.

If you wish to discuss any of the above information, please feel free to directly contact *Mindframe* on:

Telephone: (02) 4924 6900

Email: mindframe@health.nsw.gov.au

Twitter: @MindframeMedia

Support services

Adult

Lifeline: 13 11 14

lifeline.org.au

Suicide Call Back Service: 1300 659 467

suicidecallbackservice.org.au

Beyond Blue: 1300 224 636

beyondblue.org.au/forums

MensLine Australia: 1300 789 978

mensline.org.au

Youth

Kids Helpline: 1800 551 800

kidshelpline.com.au

headspace: 1800 650 890

headspace.org.au

ReachOut: ReachOut.com

Other resources

Head to Health: mental health portal

headtohealth.gov.au

Life in Mind: suicide prevention portal

lifeinmind.org.au

SANE: online forums saneforums.org

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander: healthinonet.ecu.edu.au

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, and/or intersex: 1800 184 527 qlife.org.au

Culturally and linguistically diverse: embracementalhealth.org.au



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