

2023

**Media Kit**

**VOICES**  
*of hope*



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# Overview

At Voices of Hope we believe in the power of sharing your story and changing how we talk about mental health in Aotearoa and beyond.

Voices of Hope (VoH), a mental health charity, was established in 2017 by Genevieve Mora and Jazz Thornton, individuals who have personally battled mental illness. Motivated by their own struggles, they recognised the importance of leveraging their past experiences and their passion for content creation to ignite change.

Voices of Hope serves as a platform for lived experience storytelling. The organisation shares narratives of individuals who have confronted mental health challenges, emphasising the skills and tools they utilised during their journeys. Through the voices of those who have experienced mental health issues firsthand, Voices of Hope provides authentic, unfiltered, and vulnerable content.

Both founders actively engage in public speaking engagements at schools, corporations, and conferences, where they openly share their own lived experiences. Their aim is to inspire and educate others, fostering empathy and understanding around mental health.

Since the launch of Voices of Hope, their content has received both national and international recognition and has caught the attention of people and organisations wanting to support their vision.

Jazz & Gen have received the Queen's Commonwealth Points of Light Award for their work and Jazz has spoken at the UN General Assembly with world leaders. After signing a publishing deal with Penguin NZ, they created *My Journey Starts Here*, a guided journal which is filled with the tools Jazz and Gen used in their journeys as a resource people from all different backgrounds can use.

# Our Mission

Voices Of Hope aims to create and implement change for mental health, whilst providing hope through the voices of those with lived experience. Through advocacy, campaigning and story-telling, Voices Of Hope produces strategy and content with intent to influence global, communal and individual change.

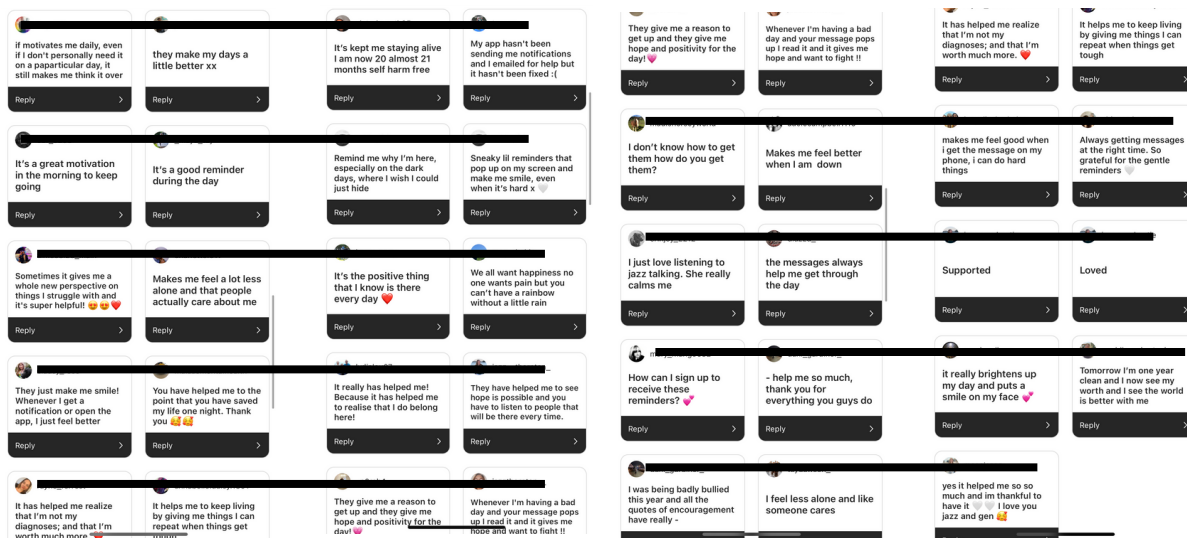
# Case Support

Voices of Hope is a registered charity that focuses on addressing the high prevalence of mental health challenges. As a result, any donations we receive go directly towards supporting our work within the community and beyond.

The statistics surrounding mental health are disheartening, underscoring the urgency for action. With your help, we can continue to make a difference in the mental health space by advocating for change and sharing stories of lived experiences from individuals of diverse backgrounds. Your financial contribution, regardless of the amount, plays a vital role in our ability to produce impactful work that reminds people they are not alone on their journey. We are immensely grateful for your support.

# Testimonials

"Recently we had Voices of Hope come into our school and speak to our students about what they do and their experiences. We have been lucky enough to have Jazz Thornton visit our school for two years now and every time she comes, she leaves our young people and staff feeling inspired. She has a way of communicating her story that resonates well with any age and leaves the room in silence as they hang on the words of her journey. Jazz is a strong advocate for mental health and her past experiences are often all too real for young people, so by hearing her story young people can see a glimpse of what a few years down the track looks like and that tough times happen, but it is okay to not be okay and to seek help when needed. Genevieve Mora also came and spoke to our Senior school about her experiences battling mental illness and her recovery, which allows young people to understand that there is hope and there is no shame in mental illness. The impact from these talks has been beneficial in allowing young people to see that 'it is not weak to speak' and we have had several young people reach out to our student service team as a result. There is a lot of stigmas around mental illness and how it is communicated, but Jazz and Genevieve provide real talk that connects to young people and even staff in a way that promotes no shame and encourages young people to speak up when help is needed." – School Testimonial



[Link to video Testimonials](#)

# Campaign Testimonials

"Great work VOH team. I follow a few sportspeople and a few have started sharing their challenges and stories and it is so so crucial and important. Yes they have the highest of expectations put on them (plus what they put on themselves which is probably even higher) but they are still human, Thanks for making this series and bringing this topic to life."

"This is an outstanding way to bring mental health issues to life. Love what you're doing @voicesofhope."

"This is everything! You don't realise how many people this will touch and reach. Your voice matters! We love you"

"The most amazing role model. Thank you for sharing"

"Thank you for your truth @izzy\_dagg, this will be one of your greatest moments in time when you realise how many people you have helped by speaking it. I wish you buckets in your bright future"

"Absolute legend. So inspiring to see more convos like this from incredible people like you"

"I actually can't find the right words to say so I'll just stick with these: sharing your journey will help so many people feel less alone and that is something to be so proud of"

"Way to go Ari! It takes a lot to face your truths on a public forum but to normalise talking about it and fostering support across the board is genuinely commendable. Keep it up"

"Go you bloody good thing you go...you'll never know just how many people you've helped by putting this out there @izzy\_dagg - that's great leadership right there, brother"

"Thank you for sharing your struggles. It has really helped my teen boy to know it is OK to feel those overwhelming emotions"

# Founders

## Jazz Thornton

Having overcome childhood adversity and multiple suicide attempts, Jazz Thornton has now dedicated her life to speaking hope and creating change in the area of mental health. Jazz co-founded Voices of Hope and her unique experience and practical message has gained worldwide recognition, being shared through media, international speaking engagements and through documentary feature film, The Girl on the Bridge (directed by Leane Pooley). Jazz is also the award-winning director of Jessica's Tree and author of Stop Surviving Start Fighting, My Journey Starts Here and Letters to You. She also won the 2021 Young New Zealander of the Year award.

## Genevieve Mora

Genevieve Mora spent most of her teenage years battling Mental Illness. As part of her recovery she has made it her mission to offer hope to those fighting mental illness. Genevieve co-founded Voices of Hope and through this uses her lived experience to show people that recovery is possible and that there is no shame in having a mental illness. Genevieve is the co-creator of Love your Kite, a global eating disorder resource app and speaks about her journey regularly on her TikTok page. She is the author of My Journey Starts Here and Bite Back Gen was also named as a Westfield Local Hero and a finalist for the Impact Awards.





# Board Members



## Kirsten (Kp) Patterson

Kirsten (known as KP) is the Chief Executive of the Institute of Directors. She is a lawyer and a Distinguished Fellow of Human Resources. KP is actively involved in supporting not-for-profit governance and is a Board Member of the New Zealand Rugby Foundation and Wellington Homeless Women's Trust. KP is a mother of two and is passionate about teen mental health. She is committed to helping Voices of Hope provide love and hope to young people across New Zealand and the world



## Chris Tan

Chris Tan is a lawyer with extensive experience practising in both private and public sector organisations and in governance roles for not for profit entities in New Zealand. He is committed to seeing Voices of Hope develop and grow its reach to make a genuine difference to people of all backgrounds by spreading a message of hope and advocating for change.



## Stephanie Taylor

Stephanie is a General Practitioner who has worked in primary care for over 15 years. Stephanie is passionate about shaping the future of mental health care in New Zealand and has both the enthusiasm and experience to ensure that the Voices of Hope can continue to give hope to those that are struggling. Stephanie is also a mother of three, a director of Procure Network Limited (New Zealand's largest Primary Health Organisation) and is a member of the New Zealand Medical Association General Practice Council.



## Wayne Huirua

Wayne is an international multi-award winning music producer, director of an Auckland performing Arts School, and an ordained pastor who has been caring for people of all ages for over 30 years. He is passionate about the mission of Voices of Hope, about mental health and seeing this generation of NZers rise to an unprecedented level of hope, life and wellness.

# Media Coverage

For a comprehensive compilation of our notable media coverage, including links, quotes, and excerpts from news articles, interviews, and features, please visit our website – Media.

# Contact Information

For general inquiries, requests, funding, speaking events, or campaign-related matters, please reach out to us at:

Email: [contact@thevoicesofhope.org](mailto:contact@thevoicesofhope.org)

For shop inquiries:

Email: [shop@thevoicesofhope.org](mailto:shop@thevoicesofhope.org)

For blogger inquiries:

Email: [writer@thevoicesofhope.org](mailto:writer@thevoicesofhope.org)

Please feel free to contact us through the respective email addresses above, and we will respond to your queries as soon as possible.

# Social Media Links

- [TikTok](#)
- [Facebook](#)
- [Instagram](#)
- [Twitter](#)
- [Youtube](#)
- [Voices of Hope](#)

# FAQS

## Where do my donations go?

**Your donations play a crucial role in supporting the life-saving work & initiatives of Voices of Hope. Here's how your contributions make a difference:**

Sharing Lived Experience Stories: Donations help us produce and share powerful stories of lived experiences related to mental health challenges. These stories create awareness, reduce stigma, and provide hope and inspiration to individuals facing similar struggles.

Funding Media Projects: We use donations to fund media projects, including video productions, podcast episodes, and written content. These projects allow us to reach a wider audience and provide valuable resources and support to those in need.

Administrative Support: A portion of donations goes towards essential administrative functions, such as managing our website, organising events, coordinating campaigns, and ensuring smooth operations. These administrative efforts are vital in enabling us to continue our work effectively.

Community Support: Your donations contribute to initiatives that support the mental health community. This may include funding workshops, support groups, educational events, and resources for individuals seeking help and guidance.

Growth and Expansion: Donations help us expand our reach & impact. They support efforts to improve our online presence, develop new programs, and collaborate with other organisations, all aimed at providing hope and support to more people struggling with mental health challenges

At Voices of Hope, we are committed to transparency & accountability. We ensure that your donations are utilised responsibly and efficiently to further our mission of promoting mental well-being, empowerment, and recovery.

We are incredibly grateful for your support, as it enables us to continue our life-saving work and create a positive change in the lives of individuals battling mental health issues.

# How can I support Voices of Hope?

**There are several ways you can contribute to and support Voices of Hope**

Share Our Content: By sharing our content on social media platforms, you can help spread our message of hope and raise awareness about mental health challenges. Sharing our posts, videos, and articles allows more people to access the valuable resources and insights we provide.

Engage With Our Content: Interacting with our content by liking, commenting, and subscribing to our channels helps boost visibility and reach. Your engagement signals to others that our content is valuable and worth exploring, encouraging them to join the conversation.

Refer Others To Voices Of Hope: If you know someone who could benefit from our resources, direct them to our website or social media platforms. Encourage them to explore the content and find support through our community.

Donate Financial: contributions plays a vital role in enabling us to continue our work and expand our reach. Consider making a donation to support our media projects, events, and initiatives aimed at fostering hope and empowerment.

To find out more about how you can get involved and support Voices of Hope, please visit Get Involved. There, you'll find detailed information about various opportunities, including volunteering, fundraising, and collaborating with us to make a positive impact in the mental health community.

Your support and involvement help us create a greater impact and inspire positive change. Together, we can make a difference in the lives of those struggling with mental health challenges.

# Interview Questions with Gen & Jazz

## How did you both meet and when did you create VoH?

Gen: Voices of Hope is a mental health charity that does everything off the lived experience. We work on storytelling, consulting, government change and really working to create change in this space. It was all about combining our own experiences and battles of mental illness to do good and give people hope – we're lucky to have had each other.

Jazz: We met through a mutual friend online and became friends on Facebook. I put up a status about a friend of mine that I had lost to suicide and Gen reached out to me and said 'we have to do something about this.' We were 18 and hadn't met in person yet.

## Jazz, how did you begin to advocate?

Jazz: The words that Esther said to me after I said I was tired of fighting changed everything. She said "Jazz, what do you think the definition of fighting is? Because I don't think that you're fighting, I think you're only surviving and it's only when you learn to fight, that's when the change you're longing to see is going to happen." It really changed my life, after I learnt how to fight I decided I wanted to start to fight for other people so I co-founded Voices of Hope and went into film directing to try and figure out how to tell stories that mattered, how I could tell stories that could create impact and make change. That's how my advocacy journey started, how I was able to work on Jessica's Tree, write Stop Surviving Start Fighting, feature-length documentary The Girl on The Bridge and co-write our journal My Journey Starts Here.

## If people want to advocate for change, how could they?

Jazz: Just start, you don't have to wait for a platform. Gen and I didn't start with a platform, at all. I think we probably both had like, I don't know, 200 followers on Instagram, and it was scary because it was just our friends and family but I think it's most important to advocate for those around you before going and advocating for everyone else, but I think it's most important to just start, you don't even have to do it on social media. It can be a form of method of doing so, but advocating is in your everyday life. Advocating is, you know, jumping into conversations if you hear something or someone saying, you know, oh that's attention seeking or any misconceptions about mental health. So I think starting in your everyday life is the most important thing, and then finding the avenues in which you want to advocate, it might be on social media, it might be in your community doing something.

## **What's your message to someone struggling?**

Gen: Know that you are not alone and that there are other people fighting really tough battles. It doesn't make you less of a person or weaker because of it, fighting mental illness actually makes you really, really strong. We believe in you and hope Voices of Hope reminds you life is worth living.

## **Gen, what would you say to those who ask if recovery is worth it?**

Gen: I can imagine and I know it is so hard to believe when you're in the middle of your battle – I had so many moments of being like 'I don't want to do this, I can't do this, is there any point, is recovered life even worth it' I went through it all. As someone who has been through it all and now is really well, I can promise you that recovery is so worth it. I have so much brain space, I can eat what I want, I can socialise, I can go to bed without anxiety, stress and worry – recovery is so worth it! I have freedom to live a life I want to live without the restriction of an eating disorder. I believe that's possible for everyone – please do not stop fighting for that, the recovery process is very hard, I'd be lying if I said it wasn't. Please believe me, it's the best thing you can do for yourself.

## **What advice would you give to someone who wants to have open conversations about mental health?**

Jazz: There is so much fear around it – fear of saying the wrong thing but the most important thing to remember is that if you ask someone if they are struggling, that does not make them struggle. You are simply opening the door for them to be able to have the conversation and that's all people who are struggling want – they want to be able to feel like they can reach out but often it is up to other people around them to be like 'hey are you ok' without the fear of planting an idea in their head.

Gen: For me I felt a lot of shame for fighting mental illness as there is such a stigma around it and what we do at Voices of Hope is storytell and share people's lived experiences and by doing that allows others to feel safe to do the same so it's a really powerful tool. People won't feel alone as they would fight by themselves.

## **Jazz, thinking back to your younger self, Jazz in the psych ward – What do you think she would think of all that you’ve accomplished, would she believe you?**

Jazz: Absolutely not – she’d laugh in your face. You know, we meet so many young people in psych wards all the time, and a lot of the time it’s like I’m looking at myself and you hear the way they talk – it’s exactly the way that I would talk. What we get to do is incredible and the opportunities are amazing, but the fact that we can wake up and I’m like, oh my gosh, I love my life, I’m happy, I’m excited for the day – that is more significant to me than anything else – and to be able to even say that to the person who’s sitting there. You know, that’s why I can so confidently be like no matter what you’re facing, hope is real. Because oh my goodness, if you asked the nurses that I was with – the dark, dark place of so much certainty that things would never change, I just stayed in that cycle. But yeah, I would have never believed it. More than my achievements or dancing or whatever it’s just the fact that I’m happy.

## **Do mental health illnesses have any signs? What are some ways to deal/combat this?**

Jazz: It’s really hard as everyone is so different, there are some key warning signs like starting to isolate or disassociate, enjoying things less or starting to turn up late as disorganisation is a big one but also you don’t want to take every signal to be like ‘oh my gosh this person is suicidal’ but I honestly think the biggest thing we can do is to make sure we’re having those conversations with our friends so if someone is starting to feel that way, they feel like they can have that conversation without feeling like they have to wait until they’re in crisis. There are signs and it’s so different for everyone, people often say ‘we never knew, they were the happiest person’ but I do wonder if we were having the conversations of ‘how are you really’....

Gen: We’re all guilty of ‘how are you? Good? Ok sweet bye’ but actually taking a moment to listen and dig a bit deeper – really how are you? It’s simple conversations like that that can open amazing things.

## **What are voices of hopes and goals? What's next on the agenda for voices of hope?**

Gen: Continuing to create policy change, making a difference to the lives of New Zealanders and afar that’s a big issue for us – it’s a worldwide issue, there are so many people struggling with mental health.

Jazz: I am taking what I have learnt over these last few years in New Zealand and I’ve really started to understand the global impact of what is going on so I’m now working on a new project on the global story of mental health alongside some incredible campaigners in 15 countries – looking at what ways we can learn off each other in regards to the way they’re doing it & a few other major projects.

## **What has the experience been like sharing your story and being a mental health advocate?**

Gen: I felt a lot of shame for what I went through, I really struggled to speak about what I'd been through when I was well again and I took that vulnerable step and opened up through Voices of Hope because I knew it would help other people. In a positive light it made me realise I wasn't alone, there were so many people fighting battles that we know nothing about, it also helped me find some closure for what I went through. I took back control instead of having control over me, the shame no longer had control as I said 'yes I've been through this and I'm proud to be a survivor of mental illness'. I get to meet incredible people and every single day we have people messaging saying thank you for sharing your story, it allowed me to feel safe to do the same.

## **Gen, you have mentioned how quotes have played a big part in your journey, why is that?**

Gen: When I was first admitted to hospital there was a quote that my mum stuck across the other side of my bed, it said 'a journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step' and that has always been an important part of my life. I love quotes but that one made me realise that recovery can seem very daunting, it seems like such a long road so breaking it up into small pieces and taking that next step is actually getting you closer to freedom. It was about taking small steady steps and asking myself what's the next thing I can do towards my goal of being free again. Quotes were a huge part of my recovery journey.

## **What are your thoughts on mental health in New Zealand and how it could be changed for the future?**

Gen: I think we've come a long way in the mental health space in New Zealand and we also have a heck of a long way to go. I think it's great that more people are talking about it but I think looking at the government, there needs to be more change – I get a bit frustrated at the lack of change and how long change takes to happen but I do have a lot of hope for the future of mental health in New Zealand. I believe the more people that open up, the stigma will become less – with the way it's going at the moment, there are more conversations and more people have either experienced it or know of someone who is experiencing it because we're talking about it more which is a really important step. I do think there needs to be more lived experience voices in policy and change making as lived experience individuals and advocates we know the system better than anyone else.



**Jazz, in 2022 you did Dancing With The Stars (and won), can you speak a bit about your experience on it?**

Jazz: It was insane, it is probably the most incredible experience of my life, but also the most challenging experience of my life. We were rehearsing like eight hours a day, and then during live show weeks, you are dancing every day and then Saturday, Sunday and Monday are like 12 to 14 hour days. I was so exhausted but it was so fun, I don't think I did quite literally anything except for Dance, Eat, Sleep, Repeat. I would try to go out after and literally couldn't function but it was such a whirlwind.

The reason why I wanted to do the show was because ever since we started Voices of Hope – I was in film school, I was kind of fresh out of everything. Every single project I've ever done since then has been really, really serious. And I love doing that, and I will always do that, but to have just one thing that wasn't super serious and I could just go and do something I haven't done before and have fun doing it... it was so good for my mental health to be able to do that

