VOICES OF HOPE

School Talks
Voices of Hope aims to create and implement change for mental health while spreading hope through the voices of those with lived experience. We aim to provide a safe place for people facing mental health challenges, so they can feel inspired, supported and empowered.
At Voices of Hope, we believe in the power of sharing your lived experience to create positive change. Our storytelling platform exists to bring better understanding of mental health challenges, promote help-seeking behaviours and useful resources, and ultimately spread hope. Voices of Hope (VoH), a mental health charity, was founded in 2017 by Genevieve Mora and Jazz Thornton, individuals who have personally battled mental illness. Using their past experiences and their passion for content creation, they built a new narrative around mental health. Over the years, VoH has grown into a community of people around Aotearoa and the world, who contribute to the ever-evolving mental health conversation. Our aim is to inspire and educate others, fostering empathy and understanding around mental health.
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 author of ‘Bite Back – a compassionate guide to navigating Eating Disorders’ and is the co-creator of Love your Kite, a global eating disorder resource app. Alongside Jazz she was named in 2023 Forbes 30 under 30 Asia and uses the power of social media to advocate and meet people where they are.

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 Leaane 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, was the winner of 2022 Dancing with the Stars and alongside Genevieve, she was named in 2023 Forbes 30 under 30 Asia.
Our Voices of Hope speakers share personal stories of their experiences with mental health challenges, seeking help, and the tools and strategies they used throughout their journey. Our talks focus on three primary areas:

Anti-Bullying: We are committed to promoting a community of kindness and respect, and our talks address the impact of bullying on mental health.

General Mental Health: Our speakers share their own personal lived experiences with mental health challenges, emphasising the importance of seeking help and the tools and strategies they used along their mental health journey.

Encouraging Help-Seeking Behaviours: We aim to normalise help-seeking behaviours and reduce the stigma surrounding mental health issues, encouraging students to reach out for support when needed.

Our talks typically last between 20 to 40 minutes and are tailored to different age groups, ranging from years 7 to 13. While we enjoy speaking to full schools, we can also accommodate targeted year groups based on your preferences and needs.

It’s important to note that Voices of Hope Talks are free of charge, but a koha for Voices of Hope is appreciated. In some cases, we may require the school to cover costs such as travel expenses, however, this will be discussed when planning.

Our speakers have extensive experience in delivering talks and exercise discretion when discussing sensitive topics. We prioritise maintaining a respectful and safe level of detail, ensuring that our presentations are both impactful and appropriate for the audience.

We’ve had the privilege of having local suicide prevention coordinators attend our talks in the past, providing an additional layer of support and reassurance to both students and staff.
Promote Help-Seeking Behaviour:
Encourage students to seek help when they or someone they know is struggling with mental health challenges.

Reach Under served Areas:
Ensure that school talks reach and impact students in rural areas.

Empower Youth:
Empower rangatahi to become mental health advocates and provide them with tools to support their peers.

Connect Students to Resources:
Connect students with local and national mental health resources, support services, helplines and support services within the school.

Collaborate with Schools:
Build strong partnerships with schools to ensure the sustainability of the program beyond the initial talks.

Contribute to Suicide Prevention:
Contribute to the reduction of suicide rates, particularly in rural communities, by promoting early intervention.

Raise Awareness:
Increase awareness of mental health issues and the importance of seeking help among students, teachers, and the wider school community.

Reduce Stigma:
Reduce stigma surrounding mental health and mental illness by promoting open conversations and understanding.

Request a School Talk HERE
Testimonials

“Personally, I loved the story telling and the age appropriate delivery of difficult topics. I really liked how different all the presenters stories were and seeing different students relating to at least one speaker.”
— KERIKERI HIGH SCHOOL

“The image of the scenes of life that Jazz talked about was really powerful. It has made me think more about the scenes of my life and I’ll always think of that from now on. I loved the message Tai gave about telling your friends you love them. I’m trying to do that more since his kōrero. I think the speakers related really well to the kids and I loved that the messages were short and engaging.”
— BAY OF ISLANDS COLLEGE

“Thank you to all the group who came to share with our students some journeys of your lives with strong messages of student well being and how to look after themselves and each other. I could see that our students were all engaged with the kōrero, listening intently and interacting when asked to. If the messages touch one student then I am pleased, however I could see that the messages were getting through to the vast majority of them. The next day I could hear conversations going on about your presentation and how they enjoyed it. I must say that Tai was a hit with them again.”
— BAY OF ISLANDS COLLEGE

“I was seated among my year 11 science students and the comments from them were very positive. I had a student next to me who was a big fan already and he was so moved by what was presented. I also had students make very positive comments in the seats behind me. I myself felt very moved as I had my own struggles with mental health as a teenager. As well as my daughter who suffered from anxiety and depression. The presenters were very relatable at both age levels.”
— RODNEY COLLEGE

“We’re deeply grateful for Gen and the Voices of Hope team to speak to the student body during our special wellbeing week at King’s College. Gen’s positive messages around taking care of your own personal wellbeing will help our students as they face a busy year at the College. Her powerful words such as her motto „it’s not weak to speak”, will encourage students to prioritise their mental health and seek support when needed. An incredible organisation and team, we’re truly grateful.”
— KINGS COLLEGE

“Having Jazz Thornton from Voices of Hope speak at Saint Kentigern College was an incredibly impactful experience for our senior students. Jazz’s engaging and heartfelt presentation on mental health and the importance of speaking up resonated deeply with students. Her ability to connect through personal stories and advocate for mental health awareness has empowered our students to be more open and supportive of one another. We are grateful for her visit and wholeheartedly recommend Voices of Hope for any school seeking to inspire and educate their students on these critical issues.”
— SAINT KENTIGERN

“What an honour it was to meet Jazz, Gen and the Voices of Hope crew, and to host them at our kura. Their moving stories of lived experience with mental health, and proof of what you can overcome and rise above is such a powerful and special message for Aotearoa youth and adults alike. Their visit uplifted and inspired so many, we are so grateful to you Voices of Hope!”
— WAIKATO DIOCESAN SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

“It was great! We really appreciated you coming to our school, as we are often forgotten. The kids absolutely loved it and were buzzing afterwards.”
— EAST OTAGO HIGH SCHOOL
REQUEST FORM:
To streamline the process, we have prepared a request form that interested schools need to fill out. The form includes important information necessary for us to assess and confirm our availability for the speaking event.

LOGISTICS AND EXPENSES:
Please note the following logistical considerations:

1. Travel Expenses: In some circumstances, we may require reimbursement for travel expenses. We will discuss this further before the event is confirmed.

2. Talk Fees: The school talk itself is free of charge. However, any donations towards Voices of Hope are greatly appreciated.

SAFETY AND ASSURANCE:
We prioritise the safety and well-being of students during our talks. Therefore, we ensure that appropriate measures are taken:

1. Pathways to Help: Prior to our visit we will ask you about your pathways to help so that we can direct students to your services during our talk.

2. Previous Experience: Both Jazz and Gen have extensive experience in delivering school talks and are mindful of discussing sensitive topics responsibly.

3. Local Support: Local suicide prevention coordinators have attended our talks in the past, providing an additional layer of assurance. Before all talks, we notify relevant organisations about our presence and the nature of our talk at the schools.

FILMING AND PHOTOGRAPHING:
We like to document and share the impact of our talks, and in some cases, we may want to film or photograph the event. This allows us to further our mission, reach more people, and provide evidence to those who have funded these talks.

1. Permissions: We require permission from the school to film and photograph the event.

2. Usage of Media: The recorded footage and photographs may be used for promotional purposes, including but not limited to our website, social media channels, and future presentations.

3. Opt-Out Option: Any student or staff member who does not wish to be photographed or filmed will be given the option to opt out. Please inform us of any such requests beforehand.

EXITING THE BUILDING:
To avoid crowds, we request to exit the building before the students are dismissed. Any assistance from the school staff to facilitate this process would be greatly appreciated.

CONFIRMATION:
It’s important to note that we may not have the capacity to accept every school speaking request due to our commitments and limited availability. We will review your request form and assess our availability accordingly.
To make a donation, please find our account details below. Please use the appropriate references. We are also able to provide you with a donation receipt if needed.

The Voices of Hope Trust
Bank: ANZ
Account Number: 01-0129-0469993-46