

**A message from Corey Taylor,
Deep Dive Artistic Director :**

I am so proud to be a part of such an amazing project. I have a passion for youth representation in the bigger world. We are the future and I believe our voices aren't heard enough.

I chose an underwater theme for this project for many reasons. I suffer from mental health issues and I have always found water calming. The sounds of the ocean and the river. Feeling the cold movement of the water over your feet can be one of the most grounding things.

I also chose water because I've found that many people compare the feelings and issues of mental health to drowning.

I want this to represent the positives we can find in the negatives and the ups and downs that come with mental health.

There is beauty in everything, we must just look hard enough.



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What is Deep Dive ?

The aim of this project is to hear the voices of young people in the Wodonga community and their experiences of mental health.

The resilience and determination of the many young people who contributed to this newspaper and the obstacles they have faced and continue to overcome in has touched everyone associated with this project.

Thank you to:

- Ovens Murray Regional Partnership for funding this engagement project
- Junction Support Services and staff for their time and effort, especially from the Continued Care team's Residential Carers, to support young people to be involved and contribute their stories and art
- City of Wodonga for advocating for and supporting the project
- Department of Health and Human Services for supporting the project
- headspace and Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) for their input

Special thanks to:

- This newspaper's young Artistic Director Corey Taylor for her creativity, hard work and enthusiasm
- All the young people who contributed their stories, thoughts, feelings and artwork
- Young people, past and present, in Out of Home Care with Junction Support Services who took part



The power of a diagnosis

“I was told it was behavioural but it wasn't... it was mental health”

Mental health has been a huge thing for me, but it wasn't talked about widely then like it is now. About four years ago, when I was living in residential care, I was diagnosed with bi polar and borderline personality disorder. I don't remember why or how I was placed in care.

I was bullied at school and got involved with the wrong people. I suffered from severe depression. I had a very low weight because I didn't eat and I just wanted to sleep all the time. Then I would be manic and I'd go out doing drugs. I'd smoke weed, nothing else, and get involved in the wrong things and hanging around with the wrong people.

Mum took me to hospital a lot of times and they'd take bloods but couldn't find anything wrong. So I'd be sent home. It was really hard.

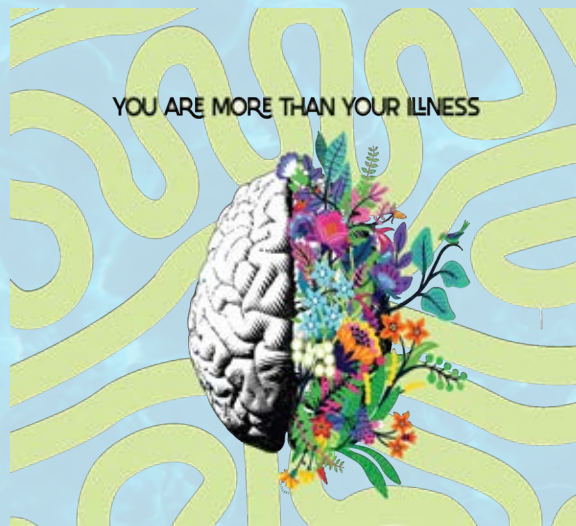
Then I was sent to live in resi in Shepparton. I was a very scared girl who didn't know where I was going. It was horrible. It wasn't welcoming. It was like 'I am going to put you here in this room... Here's a towel and a toothbrush'. I didn't have clothes so I went and stole my own. I was angry, so I trashed the house and left.

I spent a couple of weeks in juvie (juvenile detention). I went to secure a lot too. (Secure is a safe place for young people who are at risk.) It was like being treated like an animal.

Then I ended up in one of the other houses run by Junction. At first it was really hard, but being in that house changed my life. I was an unwell girl and scared of going somewhere new. There was a smell in the bedroom from the kid who was in there before me and had just left. But the resi carers there changed my life. These two (Janine and Craig) were there for me through everything.

I kept being told it was behavioural but it wasn't - it was mental health. I was manic when I was in that house. I cooked so much that I used up everything in the pantry. That was a turning point. The patient transport arrived at the house to take me to hospital.

Nearly 1 in 3 (32%) young Australians (12 to 25 year olds) report high levels of psychological distress.
- headspace



I sat on the front door step and I was all packed. They refused to take me. And I refused to not go. I was so determined to get well and get healthy. You have to want to help yourself. I thought about what type of person I wanted to be. Not who I was but who I wanted to be.

A diagnosis, the correct medication, therapy and a fantastic counsellor helped. I learnt how to see the signs and how to deal with stuff and I see a psychologist now.

I'm working. It's part time but that's all the doctors will let me do. I'll still have ups and downs and I have to realise that. Living in this world with mental health is hard.

I had my 21st birthday a little while ago and five of the carers came to celebrate with me. It was great having us all together again. We haven't been together like that since I was 17. I have kept in touch with them because I love them.

Message for young people in care...

Just allow yourself to trust a little bit. You don't have to take a huge leap, choose someone, like a resi carer, that you have a connection with and talk to them. And if you don't have anyone like that then try to find someone that you can connect with.

Message to the people who make the decisions...

When someone asks for help you have to give it to them. Don't make them wait so long because it just gets worse.

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