



Press Release

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For Immediate Release

A former mental health patient has urged people to talk about suicide in a bid to end the stigma ahead of Suicide Prevention Day and has praised Cygnet Health Care for turning her life around.

This Saturday, 10 September, is World Suicide Prevention Day which occurs every year and was created to raise awareness of how organisations and communities can come together to create a world where fewer people die by taking their own lives.

Cygnet Health Care, a leading provider of services for individuals with mental health needs, learning disabilities and autism has produced a seven-step Suicide Prevention Guide in the hope of arming loved ones with tools to support those struggling with their mental health.

Skye Macdonald, 29, who lives in Northampton, has encouraged others to read it in the hope lives will be saved.

"The smallest of steps can have the biggest impact. People need to educate themselves about the prevalence of suicide and how they can support someone hitting rock bottom," explained Skye.

Skye was a patient at Cygnet Acer Clinic, on Worksop Road in Chesterfield, which provides rehabilitation for women with personality disorder and acute mental health needs. She said the team at the hospital helped her turn her life around after many years of unsuccessful admissions to a succession of adolescent, acute and rehabilitation services.

She is now hoping to go to College to complete an access to nursing course and hopes to volunteer at her local mental health hospital as a way of giving back.

Explaining her journey, Skye said: *"I didn't have the best beginning, I went into foster care aged 4 and was in the care system where I was moved from place to place as I was just too hard to look after, until I eventually moved out at 16.*

"I got transferred to an acute adults service at 18 and then went to my first longer stay rehabilitation service. I then got transferred to another service where I spent nearly 5 years. When I finally left there and went back into the community I was back in and out of acute services for three years.

"In 2018 it was decided that I go back to a long term rehab and I was then transferred to another unit where I spent a year there. My risks just kept increasing until it got to a point where I was too high a risk to be there. That's when I came to Cygnet Acer Clinic.

"I walked through those doors on the 19 May 2021 not wanting to trust anyone. Or even want to try working on myself as I had just been let down so many times, I had incident after incident. I thought they would just move me again but surprisingly they didn't, they stuck by me. Which to me was a massive shock.

"I was in a really dark place, and didn't see a way out. The staff at Cygnet Acer slowly knocked my walls down and I started to build relationships. I realised these staff were all in it for the long run no matter how hard it got.

"I'll never forget what one member of staff said to me "we will catch you every time you fall" which of course I did not believe. But in fact they did.

"It took time but I slowly started to want my life back. And all of the Acer staff were willing to do whatever it took to get me there."

Skye said the biggest tool for preventing suicide is to learn how to communicate about it.

"My biggest advice for loved ones to support someone is to talk to them. Communication is key. When I was at my lowest I would cry all day, contemplating all the negatives in my life. Waking up in the morning, you don't want to go through it all again. It was exhausting getting through each day.

"But help is out there, you can guide your loved one towards it. Find out what support they need. Avoid words like selfish, that's the worst thing you can do. Someone contemplating suicide has reached their rock bottom and they see no other way out of their pain or sadness. That's far from selfish.

"I still worry when I hear people comment that someone talking about suicide has no intention of doing it. They get labelled attention seekers. That is such a dangerous assumption and it simply isn't true. It leads to people keeping it hidden and not talking about it. Which can have awful consequences."

Cygnet Health Care's Suicide Prevention Lead, Dumindu Witharana, has produced a Suicide Prevention Guide for loved ones, including how to spot the warning signs that someone is feeling suicidal and how best to encourage them to seek help.

He explained: *"The effects of suicide reach into every community across the UK and can have a devastating impact on families, friends, neighbours, colleagues and others. Each death by suicide is a tragedy.*

"Suicide prevention remains a national priority. Yet loved ones of those struggling with their mental health, have an important role to play. Preventing suicide is a jigsaw, which requires many pieces to come together. Suicide is preventable and we can all work together, armed with key tools, to ensure every person we know is protected from the risk of suicide and its damaging impact on so many lives."

Cygnet Health Care's Suicide Prevention Guide can be accessed [here](#)

Skye added: *"This guide could easily help save a life. The smallest of steps can have the biggest, positive impact.*

"I cannot thank Acer staff enough for all of the support and care they gave me. They made me realise I had a life out there. They made me realise I was good enough, and that hospital life is not for me anymore. They saved me – if it wasn't for them I would not be here now. To all the team at Cygnet Acer Clinic, thank you for giving me my life back."

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Notes to Editors:

For more information, please contact Gemma Attew, External Communications Manager, on gemmaattew@cygnethealth.co.uk or 07718 244811.

About Cygnet Health Care

Cygnet Health Care has been providing a national network of high-quality, specialised mental health services for the NHS and local authorities for the past 30 years.

Cygnet Health Care's pioneering services support people with complex and acute mental health needs across the UK.

As one of the best quality providers in mental health services in the country, Cygnet Health Care's focus is always on the best outcomes for those who use or commission its services. 85% of Cygnet's facilities are rated as good or outstanding, which is above the national average.

www.cygnethealth.co.uk