

Jaz transcript

warning message: [\(00:00\)](#)

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Jaz: [\(00:19\)](#)

Yeah, I think, look, if I hadn't made the decision to transition, I absolutely don't believe that I would be here today.

Beverley: [\(00:26\)](#)

Welcome to Lifeline' Holding on to Hope, a podcast in which people who've suffered dark times share their stories. With his dark ponytail, neat mustache and aquiline nose, Jaz O'Moore, looks like a trendy inner city Barista. He's actually pretty happy with that, as three years ago, he was a very unhappy woman. Jaz, his mum Sheree and girlfriend, Kristina explained.

Sheree: [\(00:51\)](#)

When she was growing up at a young age she did say that she liked to look like that or be like that boy. But of course back in that day I wasn't really hugely aware of these problems that she was having. It was only as she grew older that, um, she said it more and then I started to listen more and understand that, you know, this wasn't a happy place for her to be in that position of being a girl.

Jaz: [\(01:17\)](#)

So yeah, when I was 10, I lost an aunt. So that was my first experience of death. Um, I didn't ever see her body, so I sort of knew she had died, but I'd never actually seen it. So I went to the funeral and it was this very odd to see a casket and be like, when she gonna turn up. About six months later, I lost a friend who was about four years older than me, but he lived across the road and he was like my brother. And that was really hard for me to deal with. And about six months after that, I lost my grandmother. Yeah. Which was the worst day of my life actually. Yeah. And I think, you know, when you're younger, you get all these stories about heaven or whatever and you get to see people who die when you die. And so I had that in my mind as a little kid. So when my grandmother died, I was almost like, well, I'm not afraid to die and maybe I want to die. And so I guess I had those thoughts from her death and it didn't seem that scary. I think that I've, you know, I started thinking about suicide around 13, uh, for many factors. I think obviously losing my grandmother. Um, I moved away from my friends that I'd grown up with, that was massive. My body was changing to something I never wanted. Um, and also I, just, after my

grandmother died, actually about six months after that, um, I got diagnosed with Osgood Schlatter disease, uh, which is in my knees. And that, uh, meant that I wasn't allowed to play sports for two years. Um, I think it's all different now. I think you're allowed to and they got everything wrong back then. But obviously having sport is a massive part of my life and obviously helped me deal with losing people as well. It's something to focus on. So during all that time I wasn't allowed to play sport, my body changed, mourning the loss of my grandmother, and also it was coming up to the same age as when my friend died. And that really played a big part on me. I'm not entirely sure the psychology behind all that, but that was really affected me around that age, knowing that he died at that age. And I don't know, it was, there was a lot going on in my head. It wasn't a good time in my family life, in my head, yeah, it was pretty chaotic. And I think, like I said, I was never afraid of death. And it kind of was a very comforting feeling to know that if I died, I got to see my grandmother again, my friend again. So it was a toss up. Do I want to stay here? Do I want to die? It just didn't seem like a bad choice to end it. And I guess by the time I hit puberty, that's when obviously my body started changing. I started getting curves. I think my breasts grew overnight. They were massive which was really horrible for me. My whole life has sport. That's all they cared about. That's all I wanted to do my whole life. And these extra lumps made it a little more difficult. Um, and also I used to just play with guys all the time and we used to, you know, I play all my sport with them and compete against them and you could back then. Um, and then obviously once I started getting curvy and breasts that dynamic changed. And that was quite horrific for me because I didn't want any of that.

Jaz: [\(04:25\)](#)

I didn't, not breast, I didn't want my period and obviously guys noticed that, but I just wanted to play sport. But then I was like, Oh, I can play sport, I can get with guys. And then there's that popularity thing as well. And then obviously that adds to the fact like, oh, my body has to stay like this. I can't put on any weight, sort of thing. And that added to eating disorders as well and just other issues around my body. But yeah, I had absolutely no respect for my body. I didn't really care. I just did things because I thought you had to. And so I'd wear short skirts because that's what you do. Um, but yeah, I mean I was playing, like I said, I was playing sports a lot, so I used to make out with the guys and then I started dressing like them and we all got very confused. So I think for me I was like, oh, that's just what you do as a teenager. You get their attention, you end up with them. But I just wanted to be them. I just wanted to wear their clothes and every guy I was attracted to, I just started wearing the same sort of clothes he did, start doing the same things. Um, and not understanding what that meant

Sheree: [\(05:27\)](#)

Well yeah, she really, really wanted them to be removed from being an adolescent when they grew. She had big breasts as well, which really didn't help her. And um, yeah, she really, really wanted them gone. And of course at a young age, it's not something that you would do or let her do for a long time to make sure that that's what she really wanted to do.

Jaz: (05:50)

My buddy was always the enemy and I hated it. I wanted to destroy it as much as I could. I remember being younger, just dreaming of cutting my breasts off and I'd stand in front of the mirror with my hands down my side so I could just look like I'm straight up and down. And once I took my arms away you could see the curves, the hips, these hips, they were horrible. Uh, so yeah, I decided I needed to destroy it as best I could. And also in doing that as well, I tattooed most of it and I never understood that because I'm not, I am shy and I don't like attention being put on me, but I would get comments of people saying, Oh, well, you know, you've got all these tattoos that brings attention to you. And I never understood that. I'm like, I know where they're coming from, but it's not that at all. It's, I want to cover what I have, and destroy it and those were the best ways to do it.

Jaz: (06:38)

When I moved to Sydney, the first day I got here, actually someone gave me a speed. The first day I moved here, 18 someone gave me speed and I didn't sleep or eat. And I'm like, what? I've been doing it wrong all this time. So that was a massive thing for me. And I always went back to that, not because of the drug, but because I didn't eat and because I was going to solariums and being tan, everyone just thought I was, you know, losing weight and being healthy when obviously I absolutely wasn't. Um, and then, you know, once you start taking, using you know, frequently it becomes then a physical thing. You need to have it to actually get through the day. So you don't, can't even stop it if you, if you want to without going through hell for at least seven to eight days of cold Turkey and that's not fun. Then it becomes a mental thing. And that's when your thoughts of, I can't get off this. I do just want to die. This is my life now. I can't go on like this the only way out is, death and then that's what I focus on. All right, but I do this now. I just want to be dead, so let's just do as much as I can. Hopefully this will kill me. Or if not it would give me something to end it.

Jaz: (07:44)

And then, you know, I got off it. I still don't know how I did that. Um, it wasn't fun. I remember just been locked in my room for about a week. I'm still hiding it from people. I don't know how it's just, I mean, you just act like you're too busy.

Jaz: (08:03)

The thing, what I guess I've done is the people closest to me, you sort of push away and you're like, I'm too busy to see you. And then, you know, you get everyone's involved in their own life and so they sort of think that you're okay. Um, and yeah, so anyway, I got through that and then a few years after that, during those few years before I was 30, I was quite depressed. Um, I didn't really know that that was it. Um, it was quite debilitating at times, but I had no idea that I was depressed, I just thought I was having bad days and this and that. And then, yeah, the thoughts of suicide never stopped. Um, it just became a really comforting thought for me. Anyway, during that time was pretty horrible. And then when I was around 30, I went through a breakup. Um, not that, that really pushed me down into a deep depression, but I think when you're not focused on relationship and it's just you then all those horrible thoughts of depression, everything that you haven't worked on, all those issues that you've been running away from forever, they just show themselves, I think when you're by yourself. Um, and so I started using ice again, um, purely because I thought I needed to lose weight because I've got to go back out there into the world, lose weight, um, hating my body and knowing that when I do lose weight, the curves go and I can be more androgynous. And that's what I wanted because, and it worked, it worked really, really well. But this time it just got, it went into a really bad place. And because I understood how, which, uh, like the timeline of, okay, now it's a physical thing, now it's a mental thing. I understood the timeline, understood all the thoughts and I understood the process of being a drug addict now, because of last time. So I was like, ah, I know how to go even harder this time. And the thing that I always thought, that would make, would push me over the edge as if I destroyed myself financially. Cause I'm like, if you destroy yourself financially, you can't ever come back from that. Let's do that. Let's waste all of my money. Let's just spend all my savings and do and just wipe myself out. Which I did, do a really good job of it. Um, and yes, I just went to a really hardcore two and a half year ice addiction every single day. Spent all my savings, um, and successfully pushed away everyone that I loved so much, including my mother, who is my best friend. We speak every day. And she couldn't contact me and she couldn't find me for two and a half years. We'd have texting here and there just so she knew I was alive, but I was so ashamed that I, and I just couldn't have anyone I cared about, involved in me destroying my life cause it was I wanted. And also in my mind I thought if I push everyone away, they'll hate me enough, which will make it easier for me to die. And it'll make it easier for them to deal with as well. Obviously that's not how life works. But in my mind I believed that.

Sheree: (10:59)

Well I, she would ring and she'd be very depressed and quite down and, and, um, choose to just be quite upset and quite suicidal. And I tried to tell her that,

don't do anything crazy. You know, things can change. Very, very hard thing to hear your child like that and feel like you were hopeless to help.

Jaz: ([11:23](#))

I felt that my body was way too feminine. I felt that I've got, you know, child bearing hips, massive breasts, thighs, like, my body is the most female body you could ever have. It's so curvy. Um, and for me, everyone that at that time, I had a handful of friends that had transitioned but they were quite androgynous to start off with and they, they didn't have the curves like I did. So I couldn't find anyone. I looked everywhere. I couldn't find anyone with my body type to know that if I get rid of these breasts is it going, like, am I going to be able to shape my body? Am I going to be able to be ever comfortable in my body? Because I don't know if it's going to go how I want it to go. So I need to be prepared that it won't. And am I strong enough for that? And so there's that. And then, you know, also, unfortunately there's a lot of judgment, especially back then when I wanted to is a lot of people, I'm not wanting you to say it was a fad, but a lot of people thought that it was a bit of a fad and I never wanted to be included in that. And for people to be judging me on that. Cause I definitely at that stage in my life wasn't strong enough to deal with that at all because I was also, you know, still deciding am I? Or am I not? Or why am I thinking this and am I just part of the fad. Like, do you want, I mean, you really do sort of judge yourself as well. And so anyway, I just knew that I wasn't strong enough to get through the criticism or anything that I had to face at that time if I was going to have to face it. Yeah, I truly believed that I didn't think my body, I could transform my body the way that I wanted to, to be ever be comfortable in it. You know, the thought of suicide was so comforting to me that it was always my place to go to. And I actually had the thought of, you know, rather than having to make even some other decisions in my life as well, I always thought it would just be easier to die. .

Sheree: ([13:15](#))

People get stuck in this space and they don't see that there is a way out. You know, they just want to stop feeling the pain right now. And it's not that they want to die, it's really that they want to just stop the pain. To stop feeling like that every single day. And it's very, very sad thing. And I tried to tell her that, just hang in there because things will change when she starts taking these steps to change things. It will change, you know, and that I was there to support her no matter what she chose to do. And you know, that has stayed that way

Beverley: ([13:52](#))

For two and a half years. Jaz was on a downward spiral. She had planned her funeral, given away all her things and put everything in place to end her life. She tried hard to push everyone away, but when her friends stuck by her, she

decided to get off the ice and see a drug and alcohol counselor.

Jaz: ([14:11](#))

So I moved in with my girlfriend and I promised myself that I can't drag her through this because it's impossible to be living with someone and do what I'm doing. So I stopped that day and she was away during that time. So I had that couple of weeks to just detox. Which is not fun. It's, it's hell. It's not good. So that happens except I was still so depressed and as soon as I stopped, I went straight to a doctor and straight to a counselor and said, I've been doing this for two and a half years, every day. Um, I'm going to come off it and it's not going to be good and I don't know what to do because what do you do after two and a half years of using every day? So I saw a doctor, she sent me to her drugs and alcohol counselor, I would go see them regularly but obviously the depression just, you know, it just hit hard. The anxiety, I couldn't, I didn't work. I couldn't work for about a year, which has never happened. I've never not worked. Through that whole time, you know, my partner didn't realize how bad I was and didn't even realize that I had had a drug addiction. She still didn't know and she just said I was really depressed and you know, had many issues, which was true as well. And then finally I sort of, you know, started getting some clarity and I started opening up to my partner and just said, look, you know, I've actually had a full on drug addiction. This is my life. I've ruined myself financially. I, I really need to stop my life again. In the back of my mind I was still planning my funeral, I was still like, Nah, I still think I can't do this. And then I just got to the stage where I was like, all right, am I going to stick around or not? If I am, um, I have to face what I've been running away from for so long and that me, and that's facing the fact that I am transgender. And if I'm going to stick around, then I need to transition. It's the only way. Otherwise there's no point. It's, it is. It is literally life and death now. Like if I'm staying, I need to do that. If I'm not, then I'm going, I don't, I just don't want to be here. This is not who I am. I can't be going through life exactly how I've been going.

Lifeline: ([16:22](#))

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Sheree: ([16:34](#))

Relief. Because I thought being happy is the hardest thing in this world. And if you can take steps to do that, that's excellent. You know, I was so happy that she had was like a weight off my shoulders too because there was so worried and I think you know, taking those steps that she's a different person now or he is, got to get used to saying that, he's a different person now because he has gone towards what he really needed to do, you know, to be himself. So I'm quite proud of him. It's not easy to make that transition. You're living out

there in the world with a lot of people who have prejudices because they're ignorant and don't understand, you know. And um, he's hanging in there and fighting it all. I think it's great.

Jaz: ([17:17](#))

I think I said, oh yeah I think I probably would have called her, I went yeah I've made the decision I'm going to do this. She's like, oh so you're going to be a Bloke then. I was like, I don't think I will be a bloke, but sure we'll go with a bloke, but I don't think I'm ever really going to be blokey. Which is kind of cute cause I'm like, I'm probably going to be quite feminine still. Cause that was a, another major thing for me to deal with as well, where I didn't think I'm ever going to be blokey or very masculine and realizing I didn't have to be, cause that was another big thing that did hold me back where I just didn't think I'm ever going to be that masculine and, and am I going to be man enough. So coming to the decision that I'm like, no, I'm not. I'm going to be probably a feminine guy and I'm very comfortable with that. That's who I am. And I think that is also been, I think that may be a thing that's my family and friends of maybe the hardest thing for them to deal with as well, where it's, Oh, maybe not my friends, but I think my family, cause I just automatically were like, yeah, you're gonna be a bloke, you're going to be this manly man. But I'm not, and I think that's probably a bit odd for them as well. Um, but yeah, I think that was sort of her reaction and then she just went into, well I love you, you know, I'm here for you to support you. And just the same sort of thing that she always has said to me, no matter what I've done in my life. She's, um, yeah, obviously my biggest supporter always has been. I'm really fortunate.

Sheree: ([18:37](#))

You've got to give up what your dreams were for your children that you thought that they should have all live like. I think that's the big thing I've found is that I thought certain things, for when, Jay was getting older that I would like to have seen, and that was probably my biggest thing was, oh, I have to stop thinking that way because that's not the way it is anymore. But now it's just different. You know, I can't live Jay's life. And knowing that he's taken these steps to be happy as the biggest thing for me. And I just think every parent needs to understand that it is their life. And if you can support them. It's just such a wonderful feeling to see them blossom into who they're supposed to be.

Jaz: ([19:31](#))

I sort of knew the steps to take because I've been looking to do it for so long. Um, so finding a therapist that you had to go to talk to and for them to sign off on it. So yeah, just going to see a therapist was a big help as well and then also coming out to people and pretty much most of them weren't surprised in any way. Cause I talked about it for years to people. So no one was really that

surprised.

Beverley: ([19:56](#))

Initially. Jaz's girlfriend Kristina, admits she struggled with the idea of her girlfriend becoming her boyfriend. Now, however she's rejoicing in the return of the person she loves

Kristina: ([20:07](#))

The wonderful thing that is the most, the strongest sort of, I guess theme or reaction to the beginning, even the very early stages of having hormones has been Jaz's ability to be like the Jaz that I first met. So socializing, we used to go to lots of fun parties. I mean it does change decade to decade. What your energy levels is. But Jaz had become very withdrawn. So I felt that as Jaz was able to have the hormones as well as begin the process of seeing specialists. The Jaz that I knew and loved was coming back out and was reconnecting with friends, both one on one and feeling braver to go into social settings where it might be, you know, live theater or it might be something else, but you'd run into some people from your past as well. So I feel that the happiness and Jaz has become a whole person that is a more connected friend that isn't withdrawn, is incredible the difference from the lead up to making that decision.

Jaz: ([21:18](#))

The people who are in my life have been my life for most of my life. And so they know me as she, and I'm fortunate that I get to keep my name. I haven't changed my name. I'm really lucky in that way, mostly because I didn't want to have to think of a new one and remember it myself. And I'm just, I'm too old to have to deal with that. Uh, and with the pronouns, I just figured it's going to be a natural progression. You know, people will eventually, you just say, He, but obviously people know me as she, so it just naturally comes out. It's not that they're looking at me thinking I'm a female because I know that I don't look that any more. So it's not that at all. It's about the fact that like it's a habit. I mean, I still say it if I'm talking about myself and I talk about stories of me being a girl and I'm like, I've got to be careful who I say that around now because I may be around people who didn't know that I used to be. So yeah, look, it's a, everyone involved in my life, I know that they love and respect me and it's just a habit. And eventually they'll, they'll say the right pronouns, but I'm never going to pull anyone up on it. They all pulled themselves up on it and I feel really uncomfortable. Um, I don't want them to feel uncomfortable or bad in maybe misgendering me cause I know that it's an on purpose. Basically if someone's being a jerk, you can tell by the tone of the voice, it's not really what they're talking, what they're saying to you or what they calling you. And so it doesn't really worry me. And also I think age definitely has a lot to do with that, where I'm at that stage where I'm like, why don't you want, I

don't care, you know, do what you want.

Jaz: [\(22:44\)](#)

But yeah, I've definitely not sensitive when it comes to anything, um, about my transition at all to be honest. And I'm fine to be asked any questions. I encourage it. Um, yeah, there's, I absolutely have no hangups with anything and I think it's really important for people to ask questions and especially with family members who have absolutely no idea how any of this works. I want them to feel comfortable to come and ask me anything they want. I'm sure they can just Google it, but I think it's better for them to be able to come to me, um, and ask. And Yeah, my family is quite conservative. I just adore them. But my aunt, um, the cutest thing ever did come up to me and say she calls me her niecephew now, which I just thought it was adorable. Um, yeah,

Beverley: [\(23:27\)](#)

As someone who enjoys sport, Jaz's reveling in the strong arms and legs, testosterone is giving him,

Jaz: [\(23:34\)](#)

I want to be friends with my body. I want it, us to work together. And I know that sounds a bit lame, but it has to be that way. I can't destroy it anymore. Can't be the enemy. And what I'm really thankful for is I actually get full control of it now, and I'm going to the gym. I get to whatever the result is going to be. I know I can transfer my body to how I want it to be. I've seen it. I know it's doable, it's a lot of work, but I, so it's all up to me now. It's up to me. I need to, you know, dedicate myself, my diet, the gym. I need to be really focused on that and I get to have full control over what the end result will be. And that's pretty amazing because even, you know, years ago when I tried to be healthy and I was trying to, you know, be good to myself, um, the result was never going to be what I wanted. So it was always like, what is the point? Let's just destroy it and see if it will die off. Um, but now it's, I really want to work with it and I'm enjoying that process right now and it's really something fantastic to look forward to. And I'm already seeing quite a lot of changes, which I didn't think wherever possible. So it's amazing. Yeah.

Sheree: [\(24:43\)](#)

And in the end, a lot of parents come around because in the end they are your children and they are the same people who they've always been. It's just obviously there'd be more free actually. So I think it's really important that, you know, everybody gets help if they need it, instead of just closing it all off, closing a door on it, because it's so important. You know, you really love them. They're your children.

Jaz: [\(25:13\)](#)

Look it. It's these times that we're in as well. There's a lot of information out there, so people who don't have anyone else in their life that's transitioning, you can see it turn on the TV and this story's out there now and they're not all negative, which is great cause they used to be. And I think that really, really helps in my situation as well. And I work in a quiet corporate place, um, and it's quite massive. And within my office, I am the only one. But everyone has been beyond supportive. I was on a panel about transitioning at work and everyone's just blown me away. Because you hear horror stories. Then you're like, well, maybe this is the time. This is what I'm going to get discriminated against. I don't know how I'm gonna deal with this, but let's go. Like, why would I be any different to anyone else, you know, in these situations. But I have, I just don't, I can't believe it blows my mind all the time, how supportive everyone is. It's fantastic. But I really believe it is the times that we're in. Because I think even if I did this, you know, five years ago, it wouldn't have been as easy and the anxiety around it would have just been so intense. But yeah, my friends, my family, work, I haven't had a bad experience at all and it's been fantastic. I'm very lucky. Yeah.

Kristina: ([26:31](#))

I'm looking forward to one day getting married in Las Vegas by Elvis. That's the plan to run away and elope, but with all of our friends and family there, I'm looking forward to more so I'm quite happy actually just being engaged. I have a nice ring that is Jaz's grandmother's ring, that means a lot. We're really looking forward to having a life that's balanced between hopefully having some creative work adventures and travel and to be able to be alongside each other on each other's team.

Jaz: ([27:08](#))

Well, I think obviously, you know, if you've got a support network around you, take advantage of that. You know, your friends and family, if you've got that, um, are your biggest allies are there for you and you just sort of need to speak up and you need to be able to put it out there and all the fears that you're having are absolutely, you know, there, there are the other people having the exact same fears and there's networks out there, there's groups, um, anywhere online you're going to be able to find other support networks and there's always going to be people who are, who are going through something really similar to you and you really need to put yourself out there, um, and get in touch with other likeminded people. I think that's really, really important. So you don't feel like you're the only one or that you're alone. Um, because, and especially for the younger ones, if you are sort of in a country town where a lot of people aren't talking about it, and you're probably hearing quite negative things about that sort of life. It's really hard and scary. But the good thing I guess in this day and age is that there's always someone out there online. There's so many groups out there. Even if you can find one other

person who, who's having a similar experience to you, that changes everything. It really does. Like even now, you know, with friends who are going through similar issues in life, it's so good to have a like minded person around that you can discuss them with as long as they're not going to help you go deeper into a bad place, you need to be able to help each other out and support each other, um, to get through those really dark times. Cause yeah, I mean, like I said, I've had many of them and I've come out of them, and I hopefully for good now

Sheree: ([28:45](#))

That's terrifying. The thought of your children's suiciding has got to be one of the worst things that you feel in the world. Definitely. So trying to reach them is really important. Like, I think if trying to sit down with them, even if you don't understand and try to understand, listen to them and see how it's affecting them to feel like they do, you know, society tries to put you in these little pigeon holes and they're your children. And I just believe if you feel that you're not coping with it, then seek help through counseling with somebody who is an expert in this field. And that way I think the parents and the children can feel that they're in a safe place to be able to express themselves. And they have a mediator there, helping each other understand.

Jaz: ([29:38](#))

From about 13, I wanted to die. So I honestly believed I would absolutely not be here now. So I hadn't really planned this far ahead in my life. Uh, so I'm really fortunate to think, you know, most days yeah, I wake up and I think it is a bonus. Everything I'm doing now is a bonus. I've had the most amazing life. I felt like I did have a fatal disease and somehow I was cured. And it's an amazing feeling because you just, you see everything different in life now and that's a really liberating feeling. Yeah.

Beverley: ([30:16](#))

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