

Zoe, 26

Freelance journalist & mental health advocate who embraces tele-tech to support her psychological wellbeing, MELBOURNE

Freelance journalist and copywriter, Zoe, 26, Melbourne, enjoys writing, gaming, and creating music.

Having lived with anxiety for most of her life, Zoe understands the importance of securing access to professional mental health services and support.

Given she is also battling chronic pain, Zoe prefers to utilise tele-tech mental health services from the convenience and comfort of her own home, to ensure her psychological wellbeing.

Had she been denied access to psychological support over the years, Zoe maintains she may not be here today.



Photo credit: Emma Veness Photography

Zoe is therefore, a strong advocate for community awareness of, and equity of access to, mental health services. She believes ‘tele-tech’ services, such as My Mirror – an Australian, digital mental health clinic that strives to normalise the process of talking to a mental healthcare professional – can offer timely, convenient and accessible support to every person in need.

This is Zoe’s story.

Zoe paid her first visit to a psychologist at 15 years of age, when bullying and various other issues began to compromise her mental health and wellbeing. However, gaining access to a psychologist in her small hometown of Batemans Bay, proved challenging at the time.

“There was, and still is, very little mental health support available in Batemans Bay. You had to wait months to see someone.

“This was really problematic because, when I needed help, I needed it straight away,” said Zoe.

“Waiting for more than a week to get support was really detrimental to my mental health.”

During her teens and early adulthood, Zoe struggled with self-loathing, and resorted to self-harm to cope. She mistakenly thought she was not worthy of obtaining help, and was afraid of the stigma, of people simply not understanding, and using it as more ammunition against her.

"I tended to under-estimate my own issues, and began to believe some really horrible things about myself. I was struggling so much, but I didn't want anyone to think I was attention-seeking. I thought no-one would understand what I was going through," Zoe said.

Have attended many in-clinic psychology sessions over the years, Zoe has, more recently, also turned to tele-tech services for mental health support.

"Tele-tech makes mental healthcare so much more accessible. It can also save time and money, and grant people access to professional care that would otherwise be out of reach, particularly those living in rural and remote communities.

"While I still attend in-person sessions regularly, it's really nice to have the option of tele-health appointments, especially when I'm in pain and struggle to physically attend an appointment. It's a convenient option, and a much more efficient way to access professional care from the comfort of my own home," said Zoe.

In December 2019, Zoe's mental wellbeing was once again challenged when the NSW south coast was hit by terrifying bushfires, colloquially coined the 'Black Summer' bushfires. Having returned to Batemans Bay to celebrate New Year's Eve with her mum, both were subsequently evacuated when the bushfire came within kilometres of their home.

"I still experience post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) symptoms to this day. I'm triggered by various sounds and colours that remind me of the traumatic events of that summer, which I've had to work through with my psychologist.

"I'm currently writing a book about the Black Summer bushfires, and interviewing many people from the south coast who were also affected," Zoe said.

"So many people were impacted psychologically by the bushfires – not just those who lost their homes."

Zoe maintains anyone, regardless of if they're living with a mental illness, can benefit from seeing a psychologist.

"A psychologist can provide strategies to help you deal with what's on your mind. Speaking to someone who is impartial to your situation can also help to ease the burden on your personal support network.

"Professional guidance can often be a practical solution to improving your mental wellbeing," said Zoe.

"Thankfully, tele-tech services are improving our entire population's access to professional mental health services across the board."

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MEDIA INTERVIEWS & ENQUIRIES: **Kirsten Bruce & Amanda Galati, VIVA! Communications**
M 0401 717 566 | 0424 649 021
E kirstenbruce@vivacommunications.com.au |
amanda@vivacommunications.com.au