

“I WONDER IF  
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# TRIAGE

## TRIAGE - PSYCHOLOGICAL SUPPORT

In 2020, suicide accounted for 31% of deaths among people aged 15-17 years<sup>1</sup>.

The WentWest Triage team support various stakeholders, including GPs, Psychologists, Mental Health Teams, Inpatient Units, and School Counsellors, to triage and process mental health referrals from General Practice.

Naomi was just 15 years old and actively suicidal when the Triage team connected her to a psychologist. Her family was incredibly concerned about her wellbeing and her reluctance to seek help or engage with a psychologist.

With the psychologist's gentle prompting, encouragement, and demonstration of unconditional respect for Naomi and her experiences, Naomi slowly warmed to therapy. She became more honest about her suicidal thoughts and emotional difficulties.

As a result, Naomi and her psychologist were able to work together to ensure her safety and build her capacity to understand her mental health. Rapport was key to success with this client - the ability to have weekly sessions either face-to-face or via zoom was vital to build trust and implement effective treatment. Her psychologist also took the time to work with Naomi's family on the best ways to support Naomi and create an environment that would keep her safe.

By early 2021, Naomi indicated that her friendships were improving, and she was looking forward to school and felt motivated. She understood that her suicidal thoughts were not shameful and were a symptom of her anxiety and depression. Her relationship with her parents had improved, and the family had started playing golf together. Naomi also proudly reported that she had begun two casual jobs, an achievement that seemed impossible before she began therapy. The new jobs contributed to her feelings of success and independence. Happily, Naomi had started to smile regularly during sessions with her psychologist and reported no current suicidal plans or thoughts.

The timely collaboration and triage between GPs, WentWest, and psychologists ensure that clients, such as Naomi, receive the treatment that they might not otherwise have had access to and that the most vulnerable members of our community are protected.

*“I honestly wonder if Naomi would be with us today if she had not received timely and appropriate treatment – if she was not protected by not only myself but people she may never know, including WentWest staff.”*  
– Naomi's psychologist.

For more information about how WentWest supports Western Sydney, visit [www.wentwest.com.au](http://www.wentwest.com.au).

\*Name has been changed to protect the identity of this client.

1. Australian Bureau of Statistics (2020), *Causes of Death, Australia, 2020 - Preliminary data*