

Suicide Prevention for LGBTIQA+ Communities

CASE STUDY

Kara is 33 years old. She lives with her dogs Ralph and Sundance, and works in the aged care sector. Kara was in an intimate relationship with Jess until the relationship ended a year ago. Kara is trans.

In her late 20s Kara experienced some anxiety related to social situations, which led her to begin working with a psychologist to address her fears about social interactions. Through this work Kara came to realise that she was trans and started her journey to transition. However, when she shared this journey with her psychologist, she was told in no uncertain terms that she was just experiencing anxiety and that being trans was a smokescreen for other issues. Kara stopped seeing the psychologist.

By the time she turned 30 Kara decided that the time had come to tell her family that she was trans. Her sister Kate was very accepting and supported Kara exploring her womanhood. Kara's parents, however, refused to try and understand her needs and asked her not to tell her grandparents. Over an extended period of time this negative response worsened to the point that they asked Kara to no longer visit their home.

Kara felt that her life had turned a corner when she met Jess. Jess accepted Kara from their first date and welcomed her into her life. Jess' parents were completely accepting of Kara,

making her feel like she had a family again. During the first year of dating some alarm bells rang for Kara, particularly related to controlling behaviour by Jess. Jess increasingly tried to tell Kara how to be a woman, how to present herself, and when Kara was out of work for a period of time, Jess kept tight control of money. While Kara loved Jess, through conversations with her sister Kate, she came to see that the relationship was not good for her.

Leaving the relationship meant that Kara not only lost Jess, but also Jess' family. This compounded the loss that Kara already felt from losing her own family (other than her sister). While Kara was thankful for the company of her dogs, often she felt very lonely, with feelings of self-blame being a prominent issue.

Kara has recently started engaging in self-harming behaviours, including taking very hot showers, pulling out her hair, and scratching at her skin until it bleeds. Kara is worried as she has started entertaining thoughts about other forms of self-harm.