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NEWSLETTER · IN CONVERSATION WITH RYAN PARKE

# When reaching out isn't enough

Ryan Parke — men's mental-health coach — on the friend whose death upended everything he'd been told about men and suicide, and why 'just talk to someone' is only the start of the answer.

This piece discusses suicide and men's mental health. If that's difficult right now, it's completely fine to stop here — support resources are listed at the end.

This is a personal one for me: I've worked with Ryan Parke for more than a year, through one of the hardest periods of my life, so I'm not a neutral narrator. Ryan is a coach and a leading voice in men's mental health, and the author of *How to Help Him*. His work began in 2019, with the loss of a friend — and with a realisation that shook the standard advice we all repeat about men and mental health.



**The advice was always 'just reach out'. Brad did — and it still wasn't enough.**

— Ryan Parke, on Pharma Prescribed

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## The story that started it

Ryan tells it plainly. He bumped into the mother of a friend, Brad — by every outward measure a man who had it all — and learned that Brad had taken his own life. What unsettled Ryan wasn't only the loss. It was that Brad had been the most open, articulate man he knew, which cut straight against the tidy explanation that men die by suicide simply because they don't talk.

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## When help wasn't enough

Brad had reached out. He'd seen his doctor, been referred to talking therapy, taken the medication, and, in his final months, called his mum — herself a mental-health professional — every night. None of that is to say those things don't help; they do. But Ryan's point is that the standard script we hand men, 'just reach out', can't be the whole answer when a man who did everything right was still lost.

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## Building something better

That gap is what Ryan has spent years since trying to fill — an evidence-based framework and a coaching programme aimed specifically at how men actually change, considering the physiological as well as the emotional, and worked through with NHS trusts, schools and emergency services. He's a trained mental-health and suicide first-aider. I can only speak to the personal side: the guidance has mattered. The wider message matters more — caring about a man isn't the same as knowing how to help him, and that gap is worth closing.

### **If you need support**

If any of this is close to home, these are good places to start.

#### **Samaritans — for anyone struggling to cope**

Call 116 123 free, any time, day or night (UK & ROI), or email [jo@samaritans.org](mailto:jo@samaritans.org).

#### **CALM — the Campaign Against Living Miserably**

Support especially for men, at [thecalmzone.net](https://thecalmzone.net) (helpline 0800 58 58 58).

#### **In an emergency**

If someone's life is at immediate risk, call 999.



### **Listen to the full episode**

Ryan Parke on Pharma Prescribed — at [pharmaprescribed.com](https://pharmaprescribed.com) and wherever you get your podcasts.

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**Ryan Parke** is a men's mental-health coach, speaker and the author of *How to Help Him*.