

The Storyteller Award

Winner

Joe Bellman



This category recognises an inspiring storyteller who, through sharing their experiences, has created positive change within their workplace, industry, or community

Following the passing of Joe's mother when he was 19, he decided to create the podcast Living with Loss, a platform tailored for young people who are experiencing bereavement. Joe uses his pain for a purpose as he guides others along their loss journey. Joe is also a spoken word poet, finding rhymes in places you'd least expect. He writes to inspire others, and shares his words with brands and schools alike. Joe's words and storytelling have allowed others to tap into their own vulnerability and pain.

Joe works for StoriBoard, a tech start-up that runs an app where people can connect and share their stories on topics ranging from work to parenting to grief.

Over the years Joe's own story has been heard by thousands of podcast listeners. He has slowly built up a relationship with BBC Radio London, where his poetry is regularly aired, he has shared his work with FTSE 100 companies charities and schools, and he's a proud ambassador for Grief Encounter, the national helpline supporting bereaved children and young people.

Ever since Joe lost his mother, it has been his mission to champion and change perspectives when it comes to young bereavement and mental health.

His Living with Loss podcast aims to get people to share their vulnerabilities and discuss the emotions that make us most



human. The podcast has allowed him to challenge grief and shine a light on all human experiences.

Joe has worked with both corporate brands and charities in order to bring mental health and grief conversations to the forefront of people's everyday lives.

His suicide awareness piece for Lloyds Banking Group delves deep into the mental health difficulties workers face in an ever-competitive office environment, and he invited guests to take a stand against mental health stigma in hospitality in his performance piece at the Burnt Chef Project gala dinner. Both of these pieces are highly emotive and got employees thinking about how to address mental health in the workplace.





Joe uses poetry to show the power of opening up and connect with audiences from secondary school pupils to corporate employees to charity workers

Joe is also providing the employees of tomorrow with real-life mental wellbeing and grief support, as he goes into secondary schools and universities and shares his story with students up and down the country. The sessions are both creative and informative, as he uses poetry to show the power of opening up. During the sessions, he gets students to write down their emotions in a poetic format and share them with the class, introducing them to the idea of journalling and the importance of human connection.

Achievements

Living with Loss has reached people in 80 countries and amassed an audience of over 70,000 people in its duration. Judges praised the way Joe was able to reach many different audiences with his unique and expressive storytelling.

Joe's poetry pieces *Cancer Diaries*, *Grief Waits for No One*, and *Broken Piano* have all been featured on BBC Radio London. He even had the opportunity to perform some of his pieces at Downing Street, with the intention of inspiring wellbeing change at a political level.

This journey all started with the passing of Joe's mum, and through his response and passion for helping others, he has shown you can turn a negative experience into something that provides value and inspiration to those who need it. Joe's efforts are moving people across all age demographics as he brings the conversation about loss into the digital age. ■



✦ A podcast is accessible to anyone, anywhere. He was going into schools and allowing pupils to tell their stories through poetry. He is a storyteller but also allows people to tell their own story

✦ He's a true storyteller. What he's doing is making a real impact

✦ Reaching many different audiences with a unique, creative and impressive way to open up the conversation about grief and mental health

✦ Compelling story and utilising his skill with words to help others is selfless

Highly Commended

- Minal Mahtani, OCD & Anxiety Support HK
- Dr Samantha Hiew, ADHD Girls
- Anna May, The Student Grief Network
- Nicola Jones, dunnhumby

Shortlisted

- Atif Choudhury, Diversity and Ability
- Eva Echo
- Maya Raichoor, Remap