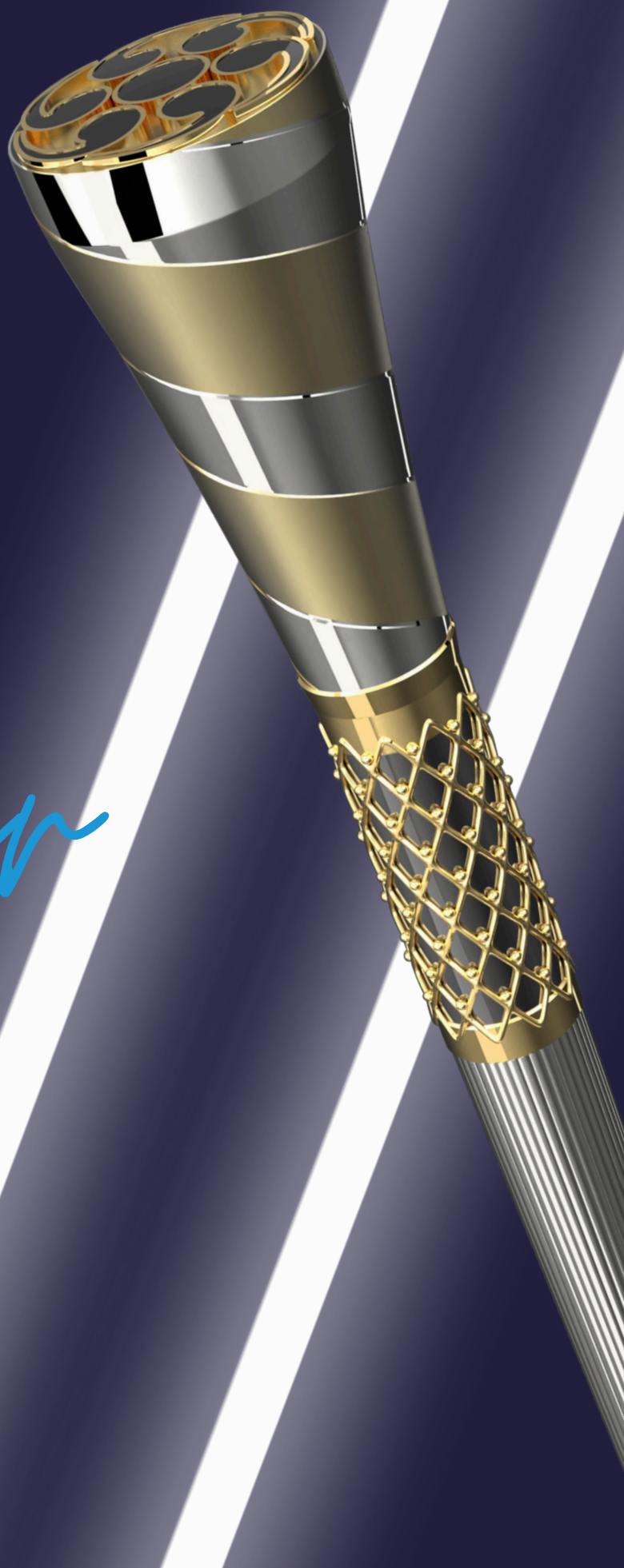
THE BATON OF **HOPE**

GUIDE

MYTH *Buster*



WE ALL NEED TO MAKE *suicide prevention* OUR BUSINESS

Suicidal thoughts can affect anyone. It could be family, friends, colleagues or complete strangers, and we can't know exactly when they might need our help.

One of the best ways to prevent suicide is being able to talk about it. And that's something we can all become better at. This Myth Busting guide offers a start on being better educated and better prepared. It looks at the biggest myths and the facts behind them.

"Evidence shows asking someone if they're suicidal can protect them. They feel listened to and hopefully less trapped. Their feelings are validated, and they know that somebody cares about them. Reaching out can save a life."

Professor Rory O'Connor
Professor of Health Psychology at Glasgow University

We hope this guide will help everyone feel more comfortable talking about suicide and more confident to reach and help someone in need.

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If you are having life threatening thoughts, please call 999. If you are struggling to cope, please call 111 and chose the mental health option.



MYTH

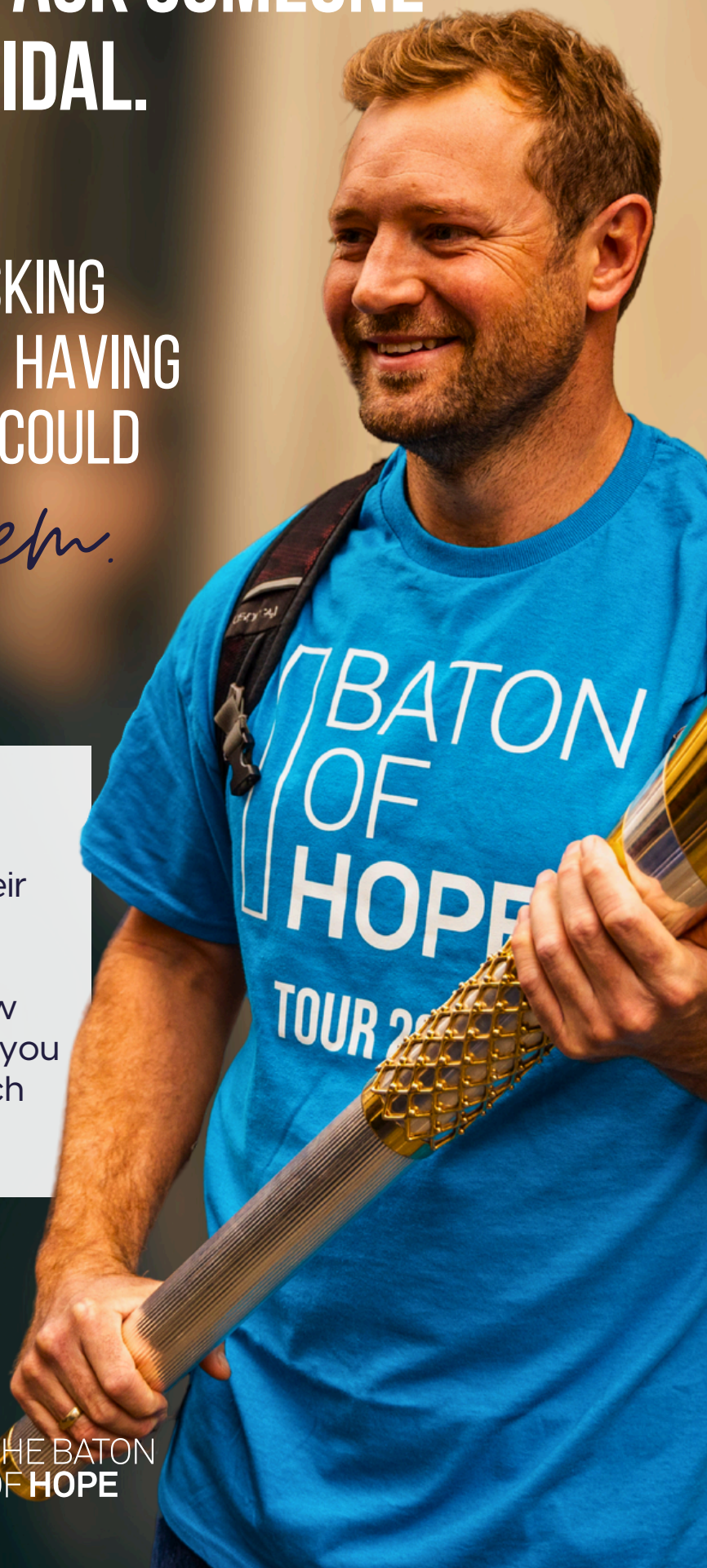
YOU SHOULDN'T ASK SOMEONE IF THEY'RE SUICIDAL.

FACT

EVIDENCE SHOWS ASKING SOMEONE IF THEY'RE HAVING SUICIDAL THOUGHTS COULD *protect them.*

WHY?

Being able to talk openly about suicide can help someone work through their thoughts. It can give them permission to tell you how they feel and let them know they are not a burden and you are a person they can reach out to for support.



MYTH

TALKING ABOUT SUICIDE IS A BAD IDEA. IT MAY GIVE SOMEONE THE IDEA TO TRY IT.

FACT

SUICIDE CAN BE A *taboo topic.*

OFTEN, PEOPLE WHO ARE FEELING SUICIDAL DON'T WANT TO WORRY OR BURDEN ANYONE ELSE WITH HOW THEY FEEL, SO THEY DON'T DISCUSS IT.



WHY?

But, by asking someone directly about suicide, you give them permission to tell you how they feel. People who are struggling or have felt suicidal will often say what a huge relief it was to be able to talk about what they were experiencing. Once someone starts talking, they've got a better chance of discovering options that aren't suicide.

MYTH

PEOPLE WHO TALK ABOUT SUICIDE AREN'T SERIOUS, ARE JUST ATTENTION SEEKING & WON'T GO THROUGH WITH IT.

FACT

PEOPLE WHO SAY THEY WANT TO END THEIR LIVES SHOULD ALWAYS BE *taken seriously.*

WHY?

Statements like "You'll be sorry when I'm gone" or "I can't see any way out" – no matter how casually or jokingly said –may indicate serious suicidal feelings. People who die by suicide have often told someone that they do not feel life is worth living or that they have no future. Some may have actually said they want to die. Helping them get support may save their life.

The majority of people who feel suicidal do not actually want to d they just want the situation they're in or the way they're feeling to stop. It's possible that someone might talk about suicide as a way of calling out for help.



MYTH

YOU CAN ALWAYS TELL WHEN SOMEONE IS FEELING SUICIDAL.

FACT

SUICIDE IS COMPLEX & HOW PEOPLE ACT WHEN THEY'RE STRUGGLING TO COPE IS DIFFERENT *for everyone.*

WHY?

Sometimes there are signs someone might be going through a difficult time or having difficult thoughts. For some people, several signs might apply - for others just one or two, or none. For some people there are no warning signs. It is always best to ask directly.

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MYTH

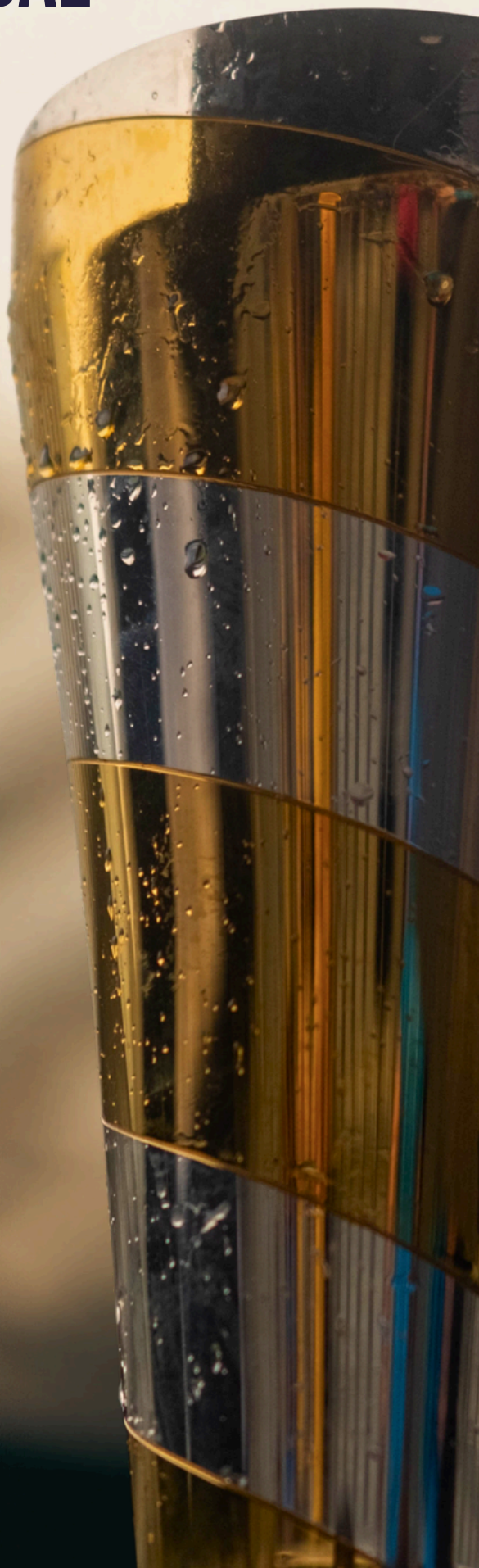
PEOPLE WHO ARE SUICIDAL WANT TO DIE.

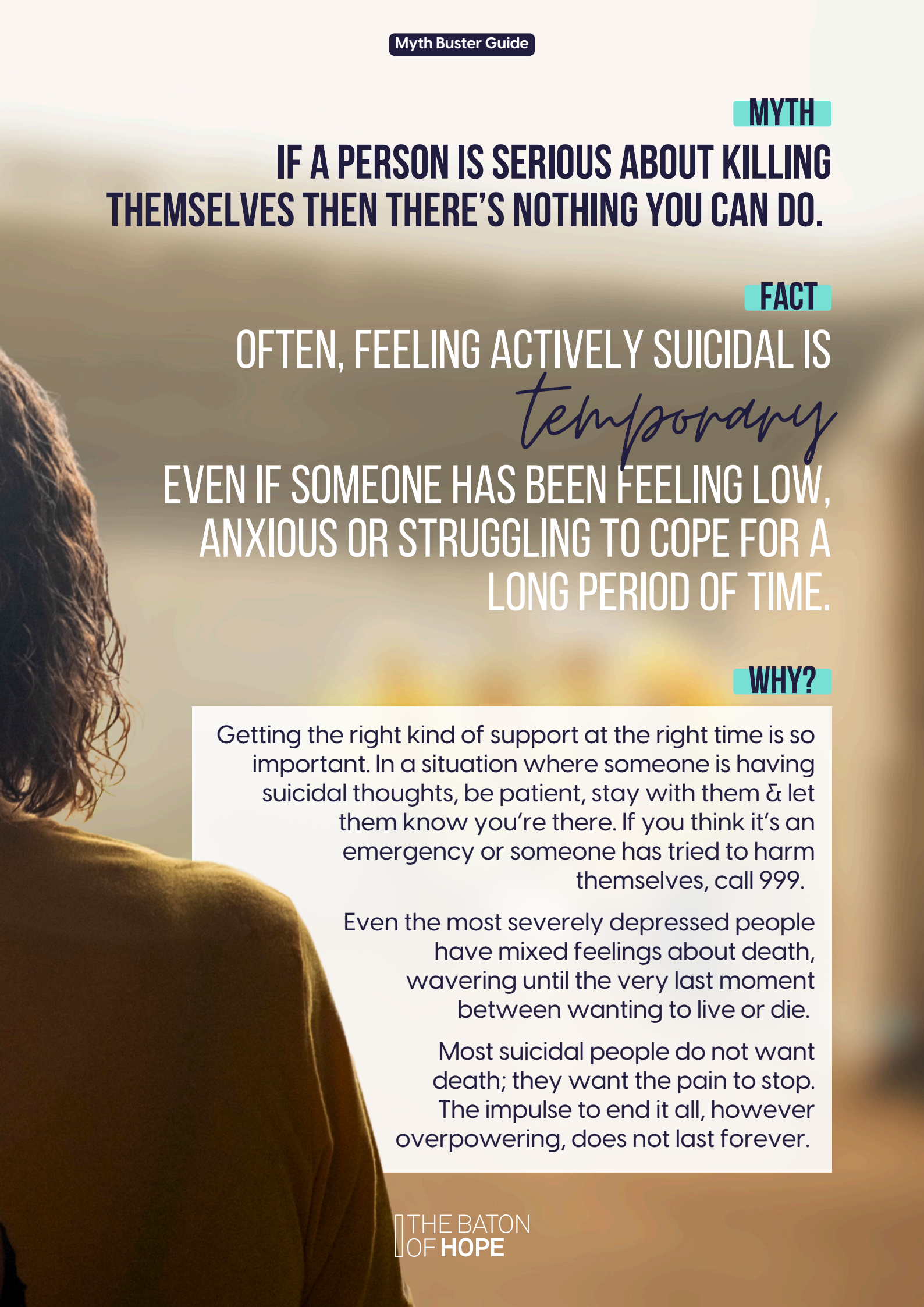
FACT

the majority OF PEOPLE WHO FEEL SUICIDAL DON'T ACTUALLY WANT TO DIE.

WHY?

They just want the situation they're in or the way they're feeling to stop. The distinction may seem small, but it is very important. It's why talking through other options at the right time is so vital. Studies of suicide victims have shown that more than half had sought medical help in the six months prior to their deaths.





MYTH

IF A PERSON IS SERIOUS ABOUT KILLING THEMSELVES THEN THERE'S NOTHING YOU CAN DO.

FACT

OFTEN, FEELING ACTIVELY SUICIDAL IS *temporary*

EVEN IF SOMEONE HAS BEEN FEELING LOW, ANXIOUS OR STRUGGLING TO COPE FOR A LONG PERIOD OF TIME.

WHY?

Getting the right kind of support at the right time is so important. In a situation where someone is having suicidal thoughts, be patient, stay with them & let them know you're there. If you think it's an emergency or someone has tried to harm themselves, call 999.

Even the most severely depressed people have mixed feelings about death, wavering until the very last moment between wanting to live or die.

Most suicidal people do not want death; they want the pain to stop. The impulse to end it all, however overpowering, does not last forever.

MYTH

YOU HAVE TO BE MENTALLY ILL TO THINK ABOUT SUICIDE.

FACT

Anyone

AT ANY TIME IN THEIR LIFE CAN EXPERIENCE THOUGHTS OF SUICIDE, REGARDLESS OF THEIR SITUATION.

WHY?

1 in 5 people have thought about suicide at some time in their life. A large proportion of people who die by suicide have no mental health problems at the time they die. Most suicidal people are not psychotic or insane, they are upset, grief-stricken, or despairing. Extreme distress and emotional pain are not necessarily signs of mental illness. However, some people who die by suicide have struggled with their mental health, typically to a serious degree. This may or may not be known before the person's death.



MYTH

PEOPLE BEREAVED BY SUICIDE DON'T WANT TO TALK ABOUT THEIR LOVED ONE.



FACT

MOST BEREAVED PEOPLE STILL WANT TO SHARE THEIR MEMORIES OF THE LOVED ONE THEY HAVE LOST, AND *celebrate their lives.*

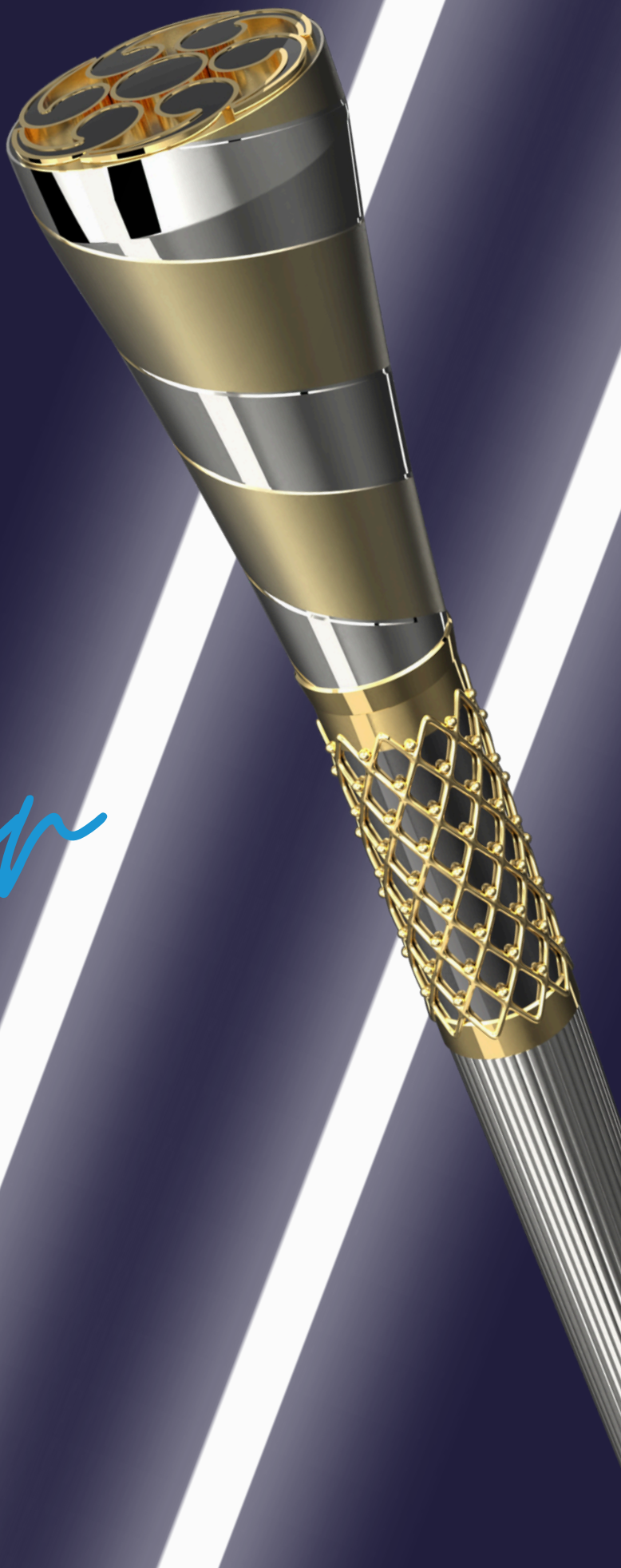
WHY?

Bereavement is very personal to each individual, the form it takes and the time they need to grieve are different for everyone and should always be respected. Anyone can be impacted by a suicide, no matter how close they were to the person who died. If they need support with their feelings, they are valid and are deserving of that care.

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SOURCES

The Samaritans: Myths about suicide