

## Persona #1: Aisha, age 16



Aisha is from a culturally diverse background. She struggles with conflicting social, family and cultural values, resulting in often feeling anxious and misunderstood by her family.

She loves literature and wants to study investigative journalism so that she can travel around the world, but her parents are pushing her to work towards getting into medicine school.

With Year 11 & 12 coming up, Aisha and her parents are struggling to get along due to conflicting ideas and expectations regarding her future.

Aisha has days where she can't deal with the tension at home anymore. She doesn't have extended family so the only way she can remove herself from the situation is to stay at her neighbour's house until things settle down.

**Feeling**

**Thinking**

**Saying**

**Doing**

# Completed Example for Persona #1: Aisha



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## Feeling

- Vulnerable
- Distrustful of adults and authority
- Increased self-doubt
- Not feeling good enough
- Feeling alone
- Anxious about the future

## Thinking

- I can't live like this, but I also don't know where else to go
- No-one will understand this situation, so I have to go through this on my own

## Saying

- "Nothing's wrong" - doesn't think anyone will understand where she is coming from

## Doing

- Doesn't fit in and is more antisocial
- Doesn't attend extra-curricular activities like 'the book club' as she used to, grades have significantly gone down
- Doesn't enjoy her passion (literature) anymore because it's the reason she's had to remove herself from home
- Seems disinterested at school in general

## Persona #2: Kaylah, age 15

Kaylah identifies as Aboriginal. She's a proud Kamilaroi woman, however, is struggling with conflicting social, family, cultural values and her family's unwavering expectations.

Kaylah has seen the injustice faced by other First Nations people across Australia and wants to study law to become a human rights lawyer, but her parents are discouraging, having never considered a path like that for her. Even Kaylah's school teachers seem unsupportive and have low expectations of her.



With Year 11 & 12 coming up, Kaylah's teachers are advising her to consider taking a VET course in business administration and not worry about getting an ATAR.

Kaylah feels isolated and alone; as though no-one cares about her future. She leaves home because she feels like her parents don't care about her or her future. With a lot of family scattered across suburbs near her home, Kaylah has many places she can couch surf. When she's in need, she usually relies on her cousin Sharee who works in the youth justice system.

**Feeling**

**Thinking**

**Saying**

**Doing**

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### Feeling

- Increasing self-doubt
- Distrustful of adults and their interests in her
- Feeling alone
- Not feeling good enough
- Anxious about the future

### Thinking

- I can't live like this if I want to have the future I want, and meet the aspirations I have for myself.
- I have a lot of places I can go, but they are all quite chaotic with lots of people hanging around.
- No-one will understand this situation, so I have to go through this on my own.

### Saying

- "Nothing's wrong" - doesn't think anyone will understand where she is coming from

### Doing

- Stops hanging out with her old group of friends outside of school
- Is more antisocial and doesn't attend extra-curricular activities like her touch football club as she used to.
- She seems disinterested at school in general and starts hanging out with a new crowd.

## Persona #3: Matt, age 15

When Matt arrives home from school, there's usually no one home to greet him. Most nights he has to make his own dinner using limited ingredients because his mum doesn't keep the pantry stocked. Last time Matt asked his mum for grocery money, she lost her temper and sent him to his room. To avoid further arguments, Matt often goes to bed hungry.



Matt's home life changed significantly when his parents separated. When his dad moved interstate, he was given no choice but to move in with his mum and her new boyfriend Dereck. Dereck has an alcohol addiction which alters his mood and the way he speaks to Matt and his mum. Sometimes when Dereck drinks too much, things get out of hand. Matt is taller and more solid than Dereck, but he still fears for his own safety.

Matt tries to speak to his mum about Dereck's drinking, but she refuses to talk about it. Matt doesn't get along with Dereck and finds it frustrating that his mum always takes Dereck's side during an argument.

**Feeling**

**Thinking**

**Saying**

**Doing**

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### Feeling

- Not worthy of love
- Desperate for connection
- Feels like a burden to the family

### Thinking

- Why do I always say the wrong thing?
- Why is this happening to me?
- Why doesn't my family care about me?

### Saying

- Lies to seek attention and approval
- Seeks to make people laugh to deflect and hide the truth

### Doing

- Forms emotionally dependent relationships
- Actions to make people laughTries to impress people around him to feel accepted outside home
- Spends as much time at school to avoid home and takes up as many extra curricular activities as he can
- May start consuming alcohol himself

## Persona #4: Kyle, age 17

Kyle is a victim of family violence. They have verbally abusive parents and their older step-siblings are also abusive and singling them out for being different.

Most days Kyle dreads returning home from school. Unlike a lot of students Kyle knows, school is Kyle's happy place. At school, Kyle doesn't feel as on edge. They can read books without being mocked and they don't have to watch out for items being thrown at their head.



Kyle often wonders what they did to deserve such unfair treatment. Kyle never felt accepted by their family, but things got significantly worse when they announced their pronouns as they/them, rather than he/him. Kyle's father called them a bunch of horrible names. Some of which the step-siblings continue to use during arguments.

Although Kyle enjoys school, they keep to themselves and don't really interact with other students unless instructed by the teacher. Kyle's never considered reaching out to talk to anyone about home life, instead suffering in silence.

**Feeling**

**Thinking**

**Saying**

**Doing**

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### Feeling

- Isolated and alone
- Scared, anxious and stressed
- Abandoned and shuts everyone out
- Feeling depressed
- Relies on survival instincts daily

### Thinking

- Why does everyone hate me?
- Why is my life so awful?
- I don't want to go home again tonight but don't know where I'm going to sleep
- Over time starts thinking I'm destined to be alone

### Saying

- Lies to others about themselves and the situation to avoid people knowing
- Stays silent and keeps to themselves most of the time

### Doing

- Tries to stay invisible
- Doing the bare minimum at school
- Potential for self-harm and other unhealthy coping mechanisms
- Fidgety and shows signs of restlessness
- Seeks to escape life by listening to music since they don't feel connected or connect well with others
- Over time starts to become rebellious

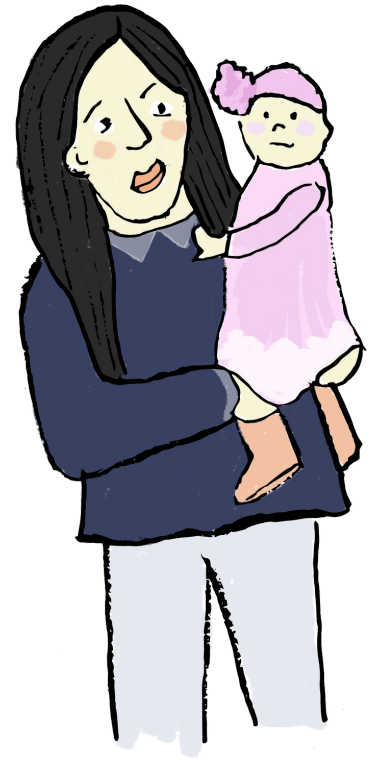


## Persona #5: Hannah, age 13

Hanna is from a low socio-economic background. She finds herself having to look after and distract her little sister Aidan as her mum and dad both work long hours over multiple part time and casual jobs. With her parents frequently out of work, the whole family is at risk of experiencing homelessness.

Most nights Hanna stays up late thinking of ways she could help her family. She is not old enough to work legally which means she can only help care for her brother and do the house chores. One day she was feeling so hopeless, she stole the lunch money from another student's school bag.

Hanna is so busy doing chores at home, she doesn't have time to pursue any hobbies. At school she likes to draw and her art teacher reckons she's pretty good. However, Hanna has drawn some pictures of her home life that the teachers say are "concerning".



**Feeling**

**Thinking**

**Saying**

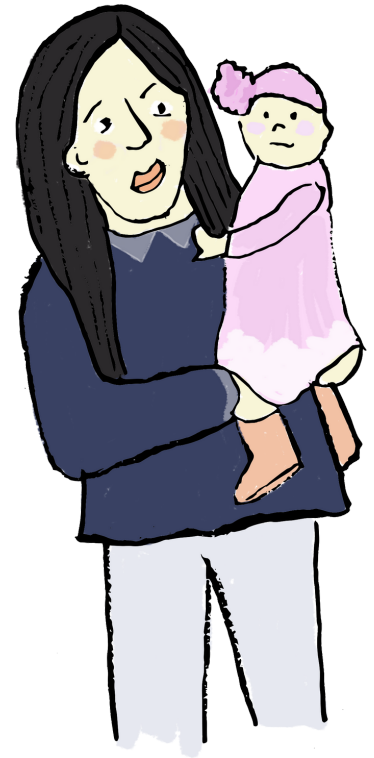
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## Feeling

- Embarrassed and feels like a loser
- Anger and frustration
- Guilty for not being able to help her mum more
- Self reliant but overwhelmed by all their responsibilities
- Anxious and on edge about the unknown of each day
- Targeted by peers

## Thinking

- Does anyone care?
- Life is shit, why am I trying?
- There's nowhere to go and no-one to go to for help
- No one has any idea what I'm going through
- I hope there's a place for me to sleep tonight
- I'm so embarrassed

## Saying

- Everything's fine
- May deflect to avoid being asked questions
- Stays silent, usually with headphones in listening to music and trying to escape from talking to people

## Doing

- Avoid confrontation, coming to school with all their stuff (heavier bags)
- Arriving at school with dirty or the same clothes, most likely struggling to come to school or finish school work
- Hiding that they don't have the proper supplies for school by skipping classes
- Hiding self-harm through covered clothing

## Persona #6: Lucas, age 16



Lucas is devoted to his faith whilst also identifying as part of the LGBTIQ+ community. He shared this information with a friend who attends the same church and now they go out of their way to avoid him.

Lucas is terrified his family might find out about his sexuality, as they have expressed disapproval of homosexual relationships in the past. He believes this information would tip them over the edge, placing him at risk of experiencing homelessness.

The possibility of homelessness worries Lucas so much, he finds it hard to concentrate on his studies. He's even decreased the amount of sport he plays due to stress. He's aware that his mental health is declining, but doesn't know who he can turn to or who to trust.

**Feeling**

**Thinking**

**Saying**

**Doing**

## Completed Example for Persona #6: Lucas



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### Feeling

- Persecuted
- Doesn't feel normal
- Self-hatred and loathing
- Overwhelmed by his emotions and also trying to remain 'normal' at school
- Shame

### Thinking

- Why is this happening to me?
- I wish there was someone I could talk to about this Is there something wrong with me?
- What I am isn't normal. Why don't my parents and family love me?
- Will I lose my friends?

### Saying

- Says things that they know contradict what they actually feel
- Lies about their sexual orientation or values to fit in and avoid bullying

### Doing

- Unhealthy eating/diet e.g. too much junk food or not enough food in general
- Overachieving in class
- Won't engage in non heteronormative curricular activities, e.g. drama
- AOD use as a coping mechanism
- Private research on what groups they would actually like to be a part of e.g. Minus 18, Switchboard, The Australian LQBTQI+ Multicultural Council (AGMC).

## Persona #7: Eli, age 15

Eli has an intellectual disability which makes her dependent on others. However, she often finds herself alone with no one to support her. At school, Eli's teachers do their best to cater to her needs, but they don't seem to consider her home life when setting homework. She regularly finds herself unable to complete the work and ends up in tears.

Eli's mum took off when she was young, leaving Eli to be raised by her father. Sometimes Eli's dad alludes that she was the reason her mother left. Eli feels sick whenever she thinks she might be to blame for her mother leaving. She hates feeling like a burden and worries that one day her father will leave too.

When the school bell rings, Eli watches the other students get picked up by their parents. Her dad refuses to pick her up, even when it's her birthday. Eli likes to imagine what her birthday would be like if she was born into a different family. She pictures herself surrounded by friends and family, all singing Happy Birthday while she blows out a bunch of colourful candles. Eli often uses her imagination to escape reality.



**Feeling**

**Thinking**

**Saying**

**Doing**

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### Feeling

- Angry
- Overwhelmed by the pressure of responsibilities
- That her life is already over
- That she won't get to have a life of their own
- Annoyed at other kids not having to worry about what she feels or is going through.

### Thinking

- Escaping to fantasy, daydreams of a better life without responsibilities often.
- Why is no-one asking me what's wrong? I'm not always like this, I'm just frustrated.
- I just wish I had an actual support structure rather than having all the responsibilities fall onto me.
- Why does no-one understand me?
- Why do I always say the wrong things?

### Saying

- Use of obscene language
- Tries to avoid being around adults
- Doesn't have respect for authority.

### Doing

- Probably bullies others due to frustration and anger of their own situation
- Lashes out at teachers and other peers
- Struggles or often makes excuses for not doing homework
- Doesn't have enough time or support to deal with homework.

## Persona #8: Tristan, age 16

Trisan despises being called “privileged” by the public school kids on the train. It infuriates him because he feels they couldn’t be more wrong. He would trade anything in the world to feel loved by his parents and safe at home.

Trisan’s mother has mental health issues which often cause her to lash out the moment he arrives home from school. Her mood swings are so drastic, one minute they could be hugging, and the next she’s pushing him up against a wall. One day she pushed Tristan so hard he fell over and broke his wrist. He had to make up a story to tell everyone at school the next day.

The only time Trisan feels in control is with his friends. They all share a dislike for their home life and try to stay out as late as possible. To pass the time, they egg each other on to commit petty crime. Trisan knows it’s not the right thing to do, but doesn’t want to lose the friendships that help him get through the day.



**Feeling**

**Thinking**

**Saying**

**Doing**

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### Feeling

- Scared
- Anxious
- Quilty
- Small
- Alone/ unsupported
- Angry
- Gets a ‘thrill’ from doing illegal activity
- Peer-pressured
- Depressed.

### Thinking

- This doesn’t happen to people like me, so no-one will believe me or worse even blame me or think I’m being ungrateful.

### Saying

- No-one will believe me
- Am I worrying too much?
- Nothing’s wrong, but desperate to tell someone
- Jokes around a lot.

### Doing

- Getting into trouble and illegal activity with school mates (potentially to gain attention from family)
- Started break and entering as well as smoking/doing drugs because all his mates are
- Becoming violent because of anger
- Doing the minimum of classwork or avoiding getting extra help.