



## Jonny Benjamin

**AUTHOR · INFLUENCER · MENTAL HEALTH ADVOCATE**

Mental health sits at the top of every wellbeing strategy and somewhere near the bottom of most line managers' confidence list. Policies exist, EAP usage is reported, and yet the conversations that actually prevent harm rarely happen on the floor. The gap is not awareness. It is the willingness to speak first, and the skill to respond when someone else does.

Jonny Benjamin MBE is a mental health campaigner, author and founder of the youth charity Beyond who helps organisations turn wellbeing policy into the kind of conversation managers and colleagues will actually have.

### Jonny Benjamin's 2026 Biography

#### AVAILABLE FOR

- Speaking

#### JONNY'S SPEAKING THEMES

- Corporate Culture
- Employee Wellbeing
- Inclusive Leadership
- Mental Health in the Workplace
- Resilience & Stress Management
- Storytelling & Business Communication

#### LANGUAGES: English

### Why organisations work with Jonny Benjamin

- He brings a globally tracked story (the Find Mike campaign reached more than 319 million people) into a corporate room without it becoming a tribute act. The point is what changed in the bystander, not the bridge.
- He has built two of the institutions he speaks about. Beyond, the youth mental health charity, and This Can Happen, the workplace conference, are not anecdotes; they are operating organisations he co-founded.
- He pairs lived clinical experience of schizoaffective disorder with a public campaigning record recognised by Rethink Mental Illness (first Janey Antoniou Award) and an MBE for suicide prevention. That combination changes how senior audiences listen.
- His material works as a managerial primer, not a memoir reading. Audiences leave with a clearer sense of what to say in the first ninety seconds when a colleague signals they are not okay.

### Biography highlights

- Awarded an MBE in 2017 for services to mental health and suicide prevention.
- Founder of Beyond, a youth mental health charity established in 2018 funding interventions in UK schools and colleges.
- Co-founder of This Can Happen, the workplace mental health conference launched in 2017.
- First recipient of the Janey Antoniou Award from Rethink Mental Illness (2013) for campaigning on severe mental illness.
- Co-author with Britt Pfluger of "The Stranger on the Bridge" (Pan Macmillan, 2018, foreword by HRH The Duke of Cambridge) and "The Book of Hope: 101 Voices on Overcoming Adversity" (Pan Macmillan, 2021).

- Subject of the Channel 4 documentary “The Stranger on the Bridge” (2015), which charted his successful search for Neil Laybourn, the stranger who intervened on Waterloo Bridge in 2008.

## **Biography**

Most workplace mental health programmes are well written and quietly underused. The policy is in the handbook, the EAP is on the intranet, and the manager who notices a struggling colleague still hesitates to say the first sentence. Jonny Benjamin’s work sits in that hesitation.

His own story explains the angle. Diagnosed with schizoaffective disorder in his early twenties, he wrote “The Stranger on the Bridge” with Britt Pfluger to chart how he came to be on Waterloo Bridge in 2008 and what the stranger, later identified as Neil Laybourn, actually did in those minutes. The 2014 Find Mike campaign that reunited them reached more than 319 million people and became a Channel 4 documentary the following year.

What followed is what makes him useful to serious organisations. He co-founded This Can Happen in 2017, the workplace mental health conference now used by HR and wellbeing leads to benchmark practice, and founded the youth charity Beyond in 2018 to fund early intervention in UK schools. Rethink Mental Illness gave him the first Janey Antoniou Award in 2013; the MBE followed in 2017.

In a corporate room he resists the inspirational frame. The talk is closer to a briefing for managers and colleagues on the specific moves that make a workplace one where people speak up early, and the specific failures that keep them quiet.

## **Key speaking topics**

- Workplace mental health and psychological safety
- Suicide prevention and early intervention
- Severe mental illness and stigma in the workplace
- Wellbeing strategy and line-manager capability
- Youth mental health and the school-to-work transition
- Storytelling as a tool for cultural change

## **Ideal for**

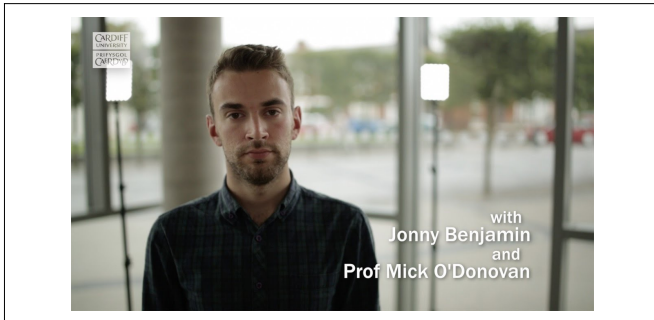
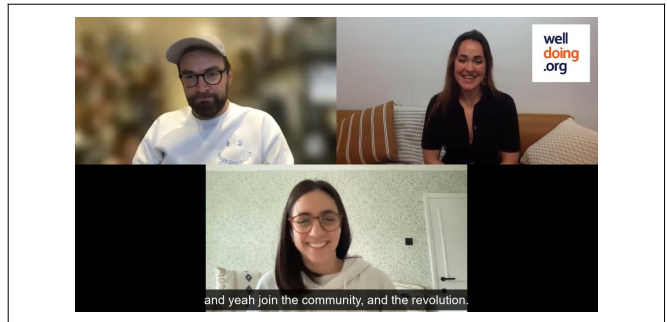
- CHROs, wellbeing leads and DEI directors building the next iteration of a mental health strategy.
- Line manager and senior leadership development programmes where the brief is on confidence in difficult conversations.
- All-staff conferences where the organisation wants a mental health session that engages the room without slipping into platitude.
- Education sector audiences (schools, universities, sector bodies) addressing youth mental health and pastoral practice.

## **Audience outcomes**

- A direct account of what helped and what did not, from someone with diagnosed severe mental illness rather than a generalist commentator.
- A clearer sense of the small interventions that change outcomes, drawn from the bystander side of his own story.
- Practical language for managers and colleagues to use in the first conversation, not the third meeting.

- A sharper read on why workplace wellbeing programmes underperform and what closes the gap between policy and behaviour.
- An informed view of youth mental health drawn from Beyond's grant-making and school work in the UK.

## Jonny Benjamin's Videos



## What Jonny Benjamin's clients say

Please pass on our thanks to Jonny – his talk was great and extremely well received. I have done a post event survey and responses so far have been fantastic

**Olivia**  
University of Huddersfield

I think the session was excellent. I have had a couple of notes with really positive feedback. Neil and Jonny are a joy to work with, and their story speaks for itself.

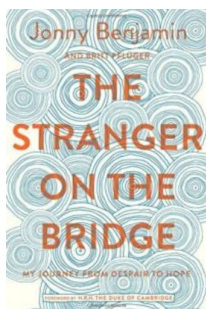
*HSBC*

Just a quick note to say a huge thank you for sharing your story with our Bank of Ireland team this morning – the feedback has been amazing! While that’s lovely in itself, even more importantly is that you will have made a difference to some of our people who didn’t know how they could find the “person on the bridge” that they might be needing to talk to. A huge thank you, really well done and my very best wishes to you both.

**Ian McLoughlin**

*Chief Executive Officer, Bank of Ireland UK*

## **JONNY'S LATEST BOOKS**



**he Stranger on the Bridge: My Journey from Despair to Hope**