



One of the goals of HFA's youth program is to connect young people with bleeding disorders, so that they can have a support network of people who understand what it is like to live with a bleeding disorder, and may be able to offer support. As part of our personal stories for Factored In, we interviewed some of our young people to find out how they benefited from the youth programs:

Hamish, 24

Hamish spoke about what it was like hanging out with other young people with a bleeding disorder on camps.

'I feel like family camps are really important just to build up connections, so parents will build connections, kids will build connections. We could be a whole group of different ages, so the older kids will mentor the younger kids and give them some pointers... you know we hang out, follow each other on Facebook and just chat and keep up with each other.'

'We enjoy meeting up with other young bleeders of different ages, you know 'cause we all come bringing our different experiences and we share them and... we all just discuss how to help the community and support everybody else.'

Sam, 23

Sam told us why it was important to him to meet other young people and why he joined the Youth Lead Connect Program.

'It's very important to meet other people with bleeding disorders. It's really easy to internalise the problems we have and make them about us, so it's important to externalize and meet other people going through the same thing, to understand who you are and your spot in the community.'

'I got involved in the leadership and mentoring program because I saw a Sam-sized hole in the program and I thought I'd fit right in. But it's mostly because I care greatly about our community and where it goes and I wanted to have my chance to help it get where I think it should go and give my opinions as much as I can. If this is going to be a part of me I'm going to be a part of it'

Dale, 29

Dale let us know why being a part of the HFA youth program was important to him.

'I think it's great to meet other people with bleeding disorders. They all have different experiences, and we all come across the same experiences too. I think it's just a way for us to come together and help each other out.'

'I got to about the age of 16 and decided that I wanted to branch out to other youth nationally, so yeah, I thought it was a good way to travel around Australia and meet other people you know, 'cause I'd never really left WA. It's opened my eyes to a lot of different things'

Ben, 23

Ben shared the benefits he received from being involved in the Youth Lead Connect program.

'I got involved in the HFA leadership and mentoring programs because I'd been doing a fair bit of similar stuff with the Haemophilia Foundation Victoria and I guess that puts a bit of a spotlight on me. I got asked by HFA to attend a training weekend and I went and I met all of these other people in similar situations all around the country. I loved it, we had so much fun and I'm still friends with most of the people that went.'

'Just having a community of people around you who understand the things you're going through and support you through that, it makes a world of a difference.'