Beat: Lifestyle

UFC Champion Soa Paelei and Carmelo Pizzino Share Tears

2016 Men In Black Ball a Huge Success

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USPA NEWS - The room went silent ,Soa Palelei "The Hulk" is late on stage , Palelei is an Australian retired mixed martial artist. He has competed in the Heavyweight division of the Ultimate Fighting Championship. He is the 'Best of the Best' . He finally arrives, tears in his eyes, yet composed, then speaks.

Soa Palelei would be the last person anyone would think would stand alone texting his last words to his children whilst contemplating suicide but his emotional speech about the ever growing issues surrounding depression bought tears to many at the 2016 Australian Trade Access Men in Black Ball held in Perth this weekend. He shared his story of overcoming depression and a lifetime of mental and physical abuse as he was growing up. As testimonial speaker everyone was touched by his emotional life and battle with the ever elusive 'Black Dog' . "People with depression need to talk to someone, don't keep it to yourself ," said Palelei who went on to say " I didn't grow up wanting to be a fighter , I just wanted to survive". ,Palelei will launch his book "Face Your Fears" available worldwide in July.
The annual Men in Black Ball is hosted by Momentum Forum Events at the Pan Pacific Hotel Perth.
Celebrating its ninth anniversary this year the Men in Black Ball is a black tie event raising awareness and funds in support of men´s mental health and the fight against depression through the Momentum For Australia charity.
Momentum Forum founder, Barbara McNaught, says “regardless of gender, profession or age, depression can affect anyone“.
“Sadly depression is prevalent throughout the community and awareness must continue to be raised through events such as the Men in Black Ball“

Media personality and celebrity dancer Carmelo Pizzino, from Dancing With The Stars, for the first time shared his experience and journey in winning his battle against depression in support of men´s mental health.
Pizzino who danced as the opening act on the night said," this cause is very close to my heart and for the very first time I will share my experience in battling the fight against depression. It is crucial for people to know that sharing your story can save someone´s life. Being constantly in the spotlight can create additional pressure for any public figure to disclose how they really feel."
Carmelo´s most recent career highlights include:
“¢ Becoming an Australia Day Ambassador, travelling to regional Australia celebrating the naming of various Australians of the Year.
“¢ Being selected as the only member of the Australian cast to be part of the Dancing With The Stars online game produced by the BBC.
He joined stars from the US and UK series in this world first for Dancing With The Stars.
Carmelo shot to fame in 2006 making his Dancing With The Stars debut with actress Noeline Brown, and performing with many high profile celebrities including Arrianne Caolili, Kylie Gilles, Kerri-Anne Kennerly, Sally Obermeader, and Olympian Libby Tricket.

Traditionally the Men in Black Ball has a testimonial speaker who shares his experience with mental health issues and the road to recovery. Speakers up to date include Heath Black, Tim Marney, Eric Ripper, John Rankin and Glenn Mitchell. This year also you everyone's surprise Director of Australian Trade Access Andrew Donnelly shares his story of life in business struggling with depression and suicidal thoughts.
The annual event attracts over 500 guests each year from the political, sports, business, social and arts world in aid of this worthy cause. This year we were also honored to hear kind words from HON Andrea Mitchell BPE DipEd MLA ,Minister for Mental Health; Child Protection.
According to 'Suicide Prevention Consultant' Susan Beaton ,close to 80 per cent of all suicides in Australia are men (1,816 of 2,361 in 2010) and it is the cause of death with the highest gender disparity (333 male deaths for every 100 female deaths according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2012). Suicide is the number one killer of men under 44 years.

Elizabeth Wurtzel once said, "That's the thing about depression: A human being can survive almost anything, as long as she sees the end in sight. But depression is so insidious, and it compounds daily, that it's impossible to ever see the end. The fog is like a cage without a key.".. As a photographer and journalist fighting my own demons ,I would recommend to anyone who has suicidal thoughts or depression to simply "Talk to someone and let them know your thoughts"...Namaste

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