

DON'T BE SO DRAMATIC

What my mental health has taught me as a woman



MY EXPERIENCE

Getting out of bed doesn't come that easy to me. Sleepless nights, panic attacks, exhaustion, and so much more have been a daily struggle for me since sixth grade. Coaches, family, and friends told me I was being dramatic, that everyone has bad days, but this was something different.

For years I pushed my pain aside, hoping that suppressing my emotions would give me a break, but it was only temporary. I continued to tell myself that what I was feeling was normal, until the day that I feared for my life.

I will never forget the day that my brother picked me up from the dorms, scared that I was going to hurt myself. Freshman year was rough. I felt alone in a place that had people everywhere. I hadn't gotten out of bed all day, too depressed to move. I texted my mom telling her that I was having a rough day and less than a minute later she was on the phone with me. I was sobbing uncontrollably, struggling to understand what was wrong with me or why I was feeling this way. I told her I was exhausted, tired of fighting this thing that everyone said was "normal". She was scared, as was I.

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My brother went to school with me, so I just assumed he was coming to hang out with me when he showed up at my door. He told me to pack an overnight bag and come downstairs with him, and I did. He sat with me, laughed with me, cried with me, and made sure I was okay that night. He saved my life.

After a few weeks in therapy, I was diagnosed with depression and severe anxiety.

KEEP GOING, SIS!

Different things work for different people, but here is what helped me! Keep in mind that these are not solutions to mental illnesses.

1. Find something that makes you happy

One of my favorite things to do is watch TV with a big bowl of popcorn. As simple as it sounds, this would get me through my bad days! I love knowing that after the day is done, I can sit back, relax, and enjoy my show.

2. Therapy

Yes, I am one of those people that believes that everyone should go to therapy. Being able to talk to someone whose job it is to help you takes a weight off my shoulders. It feels amazing to just let everything out and not fear judgment.

3. Walks with friends

Walking with my friends is something that can get my mind off of everything that is going on. Whether it's half a mile or five miles, being in nature with the sun shining can help make my day just a little bit brighter

4. Journaling

A lot of times when someone asks me what is going on, I can never put it into words. Journaling allows me to take time to understand my feelings. When I can process my emotions, I can find more successful ways to cope.

5. Take care of your body

Eating cleaner and getting more sleep have helped me significantly. If my body feels good, it helps my mind feel better!





FACTS ON FACTS



Both adult and youth mental illness rates are increasing

- .5% increase of severe depression in youth
- 1.5 million more people have experienced a mental illness from 2018-19



Suicidal thoughts have increased in both adults and youth

- 37% of people have reported having thoughts of suicide more than half of the month/every other day in September 2020



Many youth and adults who suffer from mental illnesses are not receiving treatment

- 1/3 are going without mental health treatment

"THE STATE OF MENTAL HEALTH IN AMERICA." MENTAL HEALTH AMERICA, WWW.MHANATIONAL.ORG/ISSUES/STATE-MENTAL-HEALTH-AMERICA.

LEARNING TO LEAD

After ten years of struggling, I have learned a lot. Most importantly, I have realized that no one should deal with a mental illness alone. Leading looks different for everyone. In my case, it is through sharing my story and being there for others as much as possible.

I have sent daily quotes to friends to help brighten up their day and I have also talked friends out of suicide. After all of these experiences, I have learned that helping someone doesn't have to be so drastic, it can be big or small. Doing something at all goes a long way.