Let's Talk About Mental Health

Before we do talk about mental illnesses, I would like to say that I am not a professional. I am just stating my thoughts and opinions from the perspective of someone who has had mental health issues. Even if you haven't had issues yourself, hopefully these words will still be useful to you. I pray that everyone may find contentment with whatever problems they have.

Why is this whole mental illness thing a problem in the first place? Are people overthinking things? And how do you get better?

Before answering those questions, here are some reasons that you should care about mental illnesses. I found these statistics online on *Beyond Blue* which is a credible mental health organisation. I want you to think about the people in your life, whether it's friends from CYC, people from church, or your family. One in 16 Australians are experiencing depression and 1 in 7 are experiencing extreme levels of anxiety. To make it even worse 1 in 6 are experiencing both. That includes your family, the people in your church, and your friends from CYC. These are people in our community who are suffering. And if you aren't aware of them yourself, then take it from me, I can name countless people young and old who, after I have shared with them about my mental health issues, have told me about theirs. If you still don't think it's a "big deal" then I'll tell you some stats about the untreated effect of mental illness. Self-harm and suicide are some of them. More than 3000 people die by suicide each year in Australia. Not all suicides are caused by depression or anxiety alone. It is a multitude of factors - financial, relational, social and even biological factors play a role - but according to *Beyond Blue*, depression was associated with 37.9% of all suicides and anxiety was associated with 14.9% of all suicides. So, it's clear that there is such a problem. In fact, it is rated no. 3 by the World Health Organisation's list of causes of suffering.

Seek help

So that's why you should care. Now what can you do if you feel you might have a mental illness. In short, seek help. The first and hardest step is to say that you're struggling but trust me when I say the more you bottle your emotions the worse it gets. The a good place to start is a parent or family member so they can help you to organise an appointment to see a GP or a specialist. It is extremely important for you! Even if you suspect you have a problem, you need to see a GP and then perhaps a specialist on referral. They will help you to get through what you are going through and if they aren't helping don't be afraid to change specialists to someone else after you give them a good go. For those that are already seeing a specialist or GP and are still feeling the effects of mental illness, that's not unusual - it is not an easy or quick journey to recovery. There are countless ups and downs throughout your journey and sometimes it may feel like all you are doing is going down but eventually it will steadily go back up. But don't let me mislead you, that doesn't mean there won't be bumps along the road. Imagine your emotions are waves; they go up and down and up and down. But if you look at the waves over time you will notice that the waves have been going up. You might not even realise that you're getting better until you are better. One last thing, if you have thoughts or plans to

commit suicide, call 000 right now. This might seem like it's not that important but if you do have these thoughts it is critical that you seek help immediately.

How can I help?

So how do you help someone who is struggling? You can start by talking to them. Let them know that you are always there to help them if they need it. Ultimately it has to be their choice whether they talk to you about their issues or not. You can't force them to and trying to force them will only make them not talk to you about it at all. If you stay a good and close friend I am sure they will tell you eventually and if they don't then that's ok too!

And to finish this off I thought I'd end it with a bible quote. Matthew 11:28 'Come unto me all you who are weary and burdened and I will give you rest.'

Something else to end with?

And of course, don't forget to pray for help and turn to God and His Son for relief from your distress.

(Name withheld)

Statistics in this paper have been quoted from: https://www.beyondblue.org.au/media/statistics

Adelphicare.org works with the Australia-wide Christadelphian Help-line. Please dial this at any time if you need help.

AUSTRALIA-WIDE HELP-LINE:
08 8270 4115
Provided by the Christadelphian Support Service South Australia.
Free call within Australia.