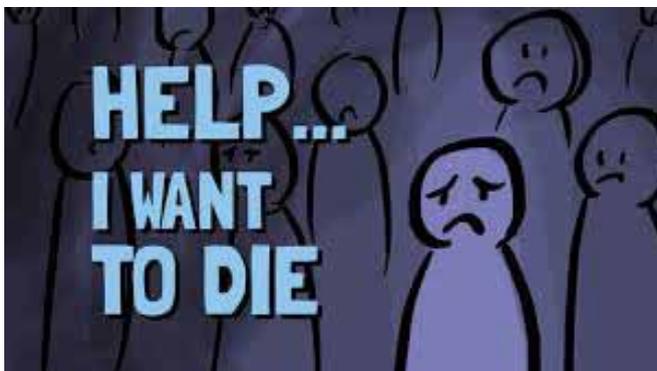


Everybody Hurts ...

According to the Canadian Mental Health Association, 1 in 5 Canadians experience a mental health or addiction problem. But only 1 in 3 people who experience these problems will seek help or treatment. I am one of those people who have had mental health issues, I have been diagnosed with depression, but thankfully, I am also one of those who have asked for help. As a man, this was incredibly difficult for me to do. I have always just buried my feelings, because “real men don’t cry or ask for help”. I suffered silently for almost a year before a breakdown forced me to seek help. Before asking for help, I was angry most of the time, I felt incredibly sad and alone. I didn’t want to go to work, the closer I got to work the more I wanted to go back home and hide. The worst part was the voice in my head I was hearing that kept suggesting ways to kill myself.

People would ask if I was ok, and I wanted to talk about my problems, I wanted to scream, I wanted to cry, but all I could do was say “I’m Fine.” Until the day someone said to me “you look like you are living under a black cloud.” That is exactly how I felt and the realization that people could see the way I felt was an eye opener. The first step for me was being honest with myself and the people who asked if I was OK, instead of saying “I’m fine” or “I’m OK”, I had to force myself to say “No, I’m not OK”. Talking to someone you trust, opening up to them is the first step in the recovery process. I have been to therapy and am now taking medication, which is helping. I know this is going to be a long and difficult road to walk, but now I know I will be here to walk it and I don’t have to walk it alone.



Depression symptoms can include:

- Feelings of sadness, emptiness or hopelessness
- Angry outbursts, irritability or frustration
- Loss of interest in most or all normal activities
- Sleep disturbances
- Tiredness and lack of energy, so even small tasks take extra effort

- Reduced appetite and weight loss, or increased cravings and weight gain
- Anxiety, agitation or restlessness
- Slowed thinking, speaking-or body movements
- Feelings of worthlessness or guilt
- Trouble thinking, concentrating, making decisions and remembering things
- Frequent or recurrent thoughts of death, suicidal thoughts, or suicide attempts
- Unexplained physical problems, such as back pain or headaches

My hope in writing this is to help everyone understand what people with depression are going through, that depression is real, it’s not just a feeling, it is a real illness that can be treated. And if you suffer from depression or think you might, I hope this article lets you know you are not alone and you can get help. While you do not choose to be depressed, you can choose to deal with it and manage it. But it’s up to you to tell someone you need help.

I think Sigmund Freud summed it up best when he said: *“Unexpressed emotions will never die. They are buried alive and will come forth later in uglier ways.”*

Michael W. Post, Apsley

Thanks Mike for writing about this important topic.



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