

The Only Thing More
Exhausting Than Having A
Mental Illness

Is Pretending That You Don't

WHY THE HECK AM I HERE?

- 17 years living with depression
- Let's add in anxiety and PTSD
- Counseling and medication-How's that working?
- Raising a child with depression and anxiety-Oh, boy...

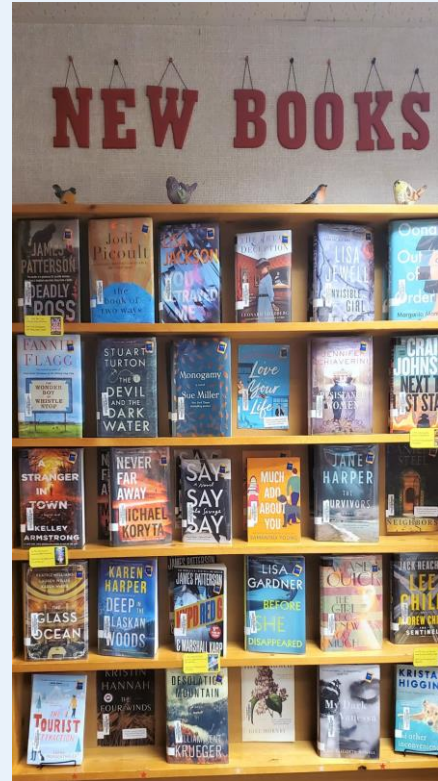
I refuse to live my life with shame or stigma
(finally)

OK, WHAT AM I GONNA DO FOR YOU?

- Share my "origin story"-How did I get here?
- What do you say to others in the workplace about your mental health
- Go a little "spin city" on you
- Libraries are a prime place to face your issues-Inclusion is for you too



HERE IS SOME OF OUR INTERIOR



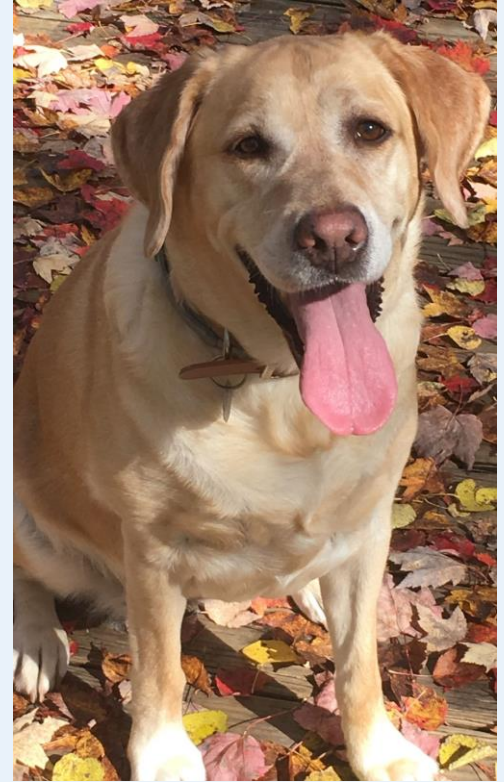
...A LITTLE BIT MORE...



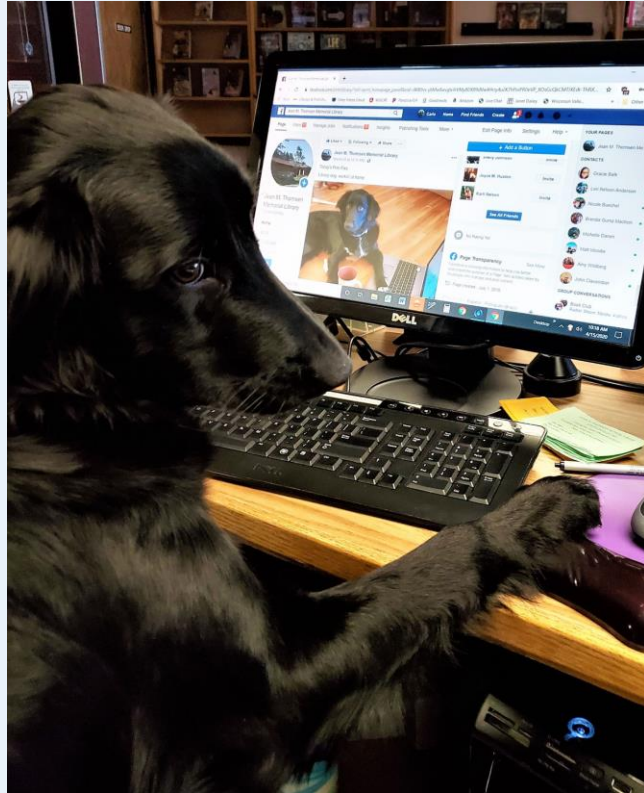
EVERY LIBRARY NEEDS A MASCOT



LAYLA
OUR FIRST LIBRARY
MASCOT & GREETER
BRINGER OF
COMFORT & JOY



AND THEY COME IN ANY SIZE OR COLOR



SPOILED STAFF MEMBER AND OUR FACEBOOK STAR!



FINN-
AKA MY
UNOFFICIAL
MENTAL
HEALTH
THERAPY DOG



"How are you?"

Confused; Betrayed
Useless
Broken

Never good Enough

Fragile; Anxious
I'm falling apart and
you don't notice it

Pathetic; Annoying
Rejected
Lonely
Defeated

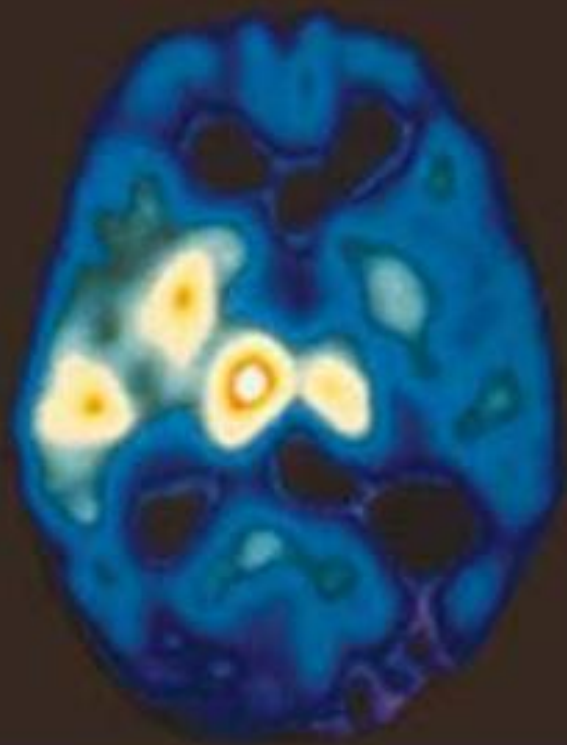
FIRST, SOME STATISTICS

- 1 in 5 people suffer from mental health issues
- Depression is 2X as likely to affect women than men
- Different contributing factors
- Biology and hormones
- Life circumstances and cultural stressors
- Psychological causes
- Frequently leads to other issues

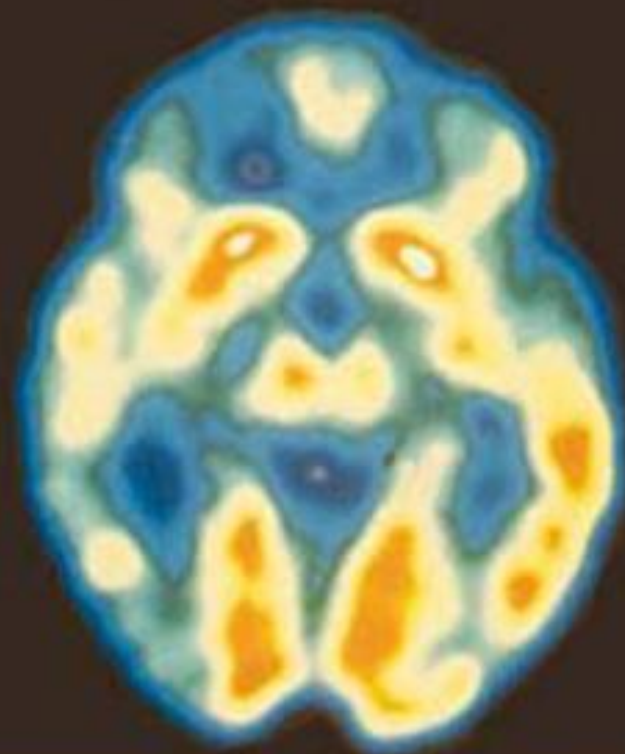
BUT WHAT ABOUT MEN?

- 10%-17% of men develop depression
- Combination of genes, hormones and environmental stress
- Men 4X more likely to commit suicide
- Precursor for other illnesses
- Stealth symptoms

Depressed



Not depressed



SO, WHAT'S MY PROBLEM?

- 50%-75% of women experience baby blues
- 15% develop postpartum depression (PPD)
- If not treated, PPD can last months or longer
- May become a chronic depressive disorder.
- Even with treatment, PPD can make you more likely to have episodes of depression in the future.

6 SYMPTOMS OF DEPRESSION

If you experience five or more in a two week period you could have Major Depressive Disorder (MDD).

YOU FEEL DOWN MOST OF THE TIME

If you've officially turned into Eeyore and struggle to find positivity.

NOTHING FEELS FUN ANY MORE

The things that used to give you joy no longer do, and you've lost interest.

YOUR WEIGHT IS UP (OR WAY DOWN)

Depression can mess with your hunger signals so you eat more or a lot less.

YOU'RE ABSOLUTELY EXHAUSTED

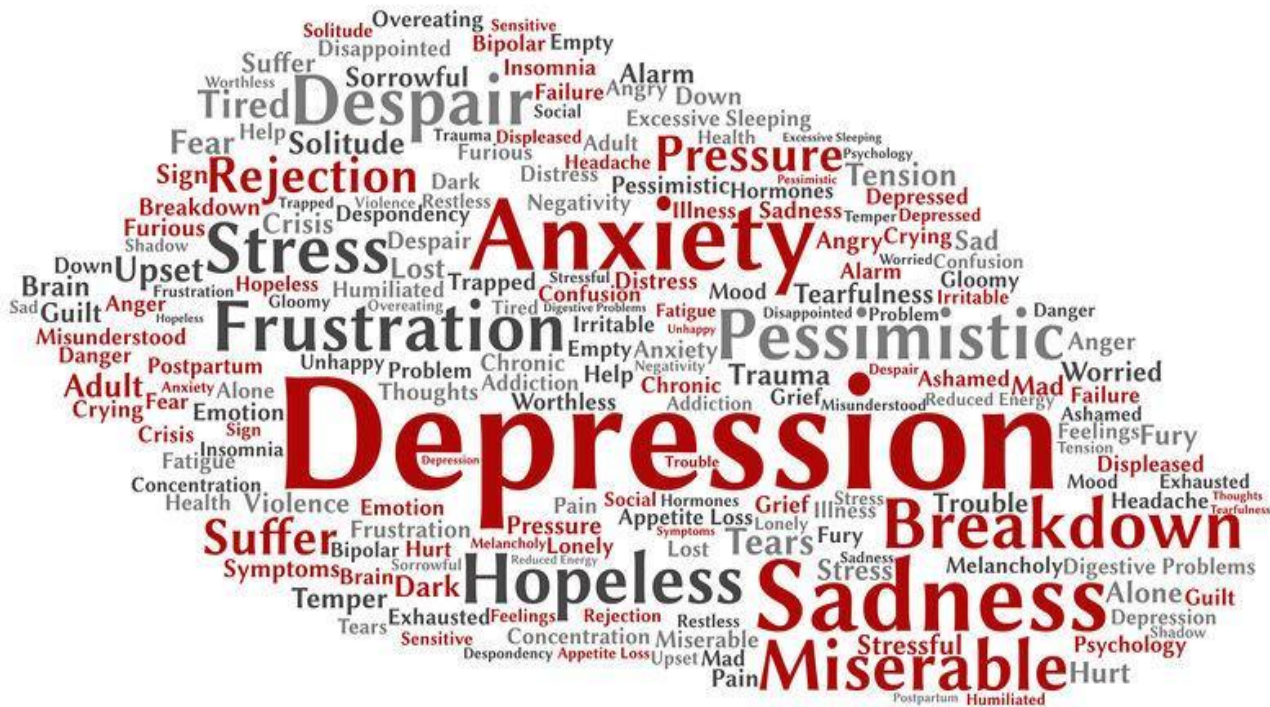
You feel tired all the time, but your brain won't stop, so you can't sleep.

CURRENT STATUS: COUCH POTATO

You've had a major slowdown in thoughts and simply lay around.

THE GUILT WON'T GO AWAY

Feeling worthless and/or guilty all the time is the new norm.



ANXIETY

A normal reaction to stress or difficult times..

Triggered by a specific stressor.

Has a start and ending point.

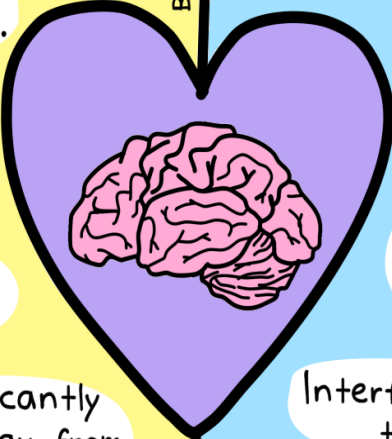
Can be helpful or motivational.

Lessens significantly or disappears away from stressful situations.

Relaxing often helps you feel better.

A response to toxic situations.

Blessing Manifesting



ANXIETY DISORDERS

Often comes out of nowhere.

Intense or disproportionate emotional response.

Ongoing and lasts weeks or months.

Interferes with day-to-day life.

Physical symptoms like sweating, trembling, lightheadedness, racing heart.

Feels impossible to control or manage.

ANXIETY & DEPRESSION ARE BEST FRIENDS

- Nervousness
- Sleep Disorders
- Irritability
- Problems with concentration
- No evidence of causation
- Clear evidence many suffer from both

OK, WHAT ELSE?

or

PRE-EXISTING DEPRESSION & DIVORCE

- DIVORCE - yep, then that happened
- SAHM to.....???
- Where did my kids go?
- Where did my self-esteem go?
- Constant voice in my head-YOU SUCK!

YEP, THAT'S ME

“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.”

Elizabeth Wurtzel, author

VERY FEW PEOPLE WILL EVER REALLY UNDERSTAND

When you suffer from depression and somebody tells you to just cheer up...

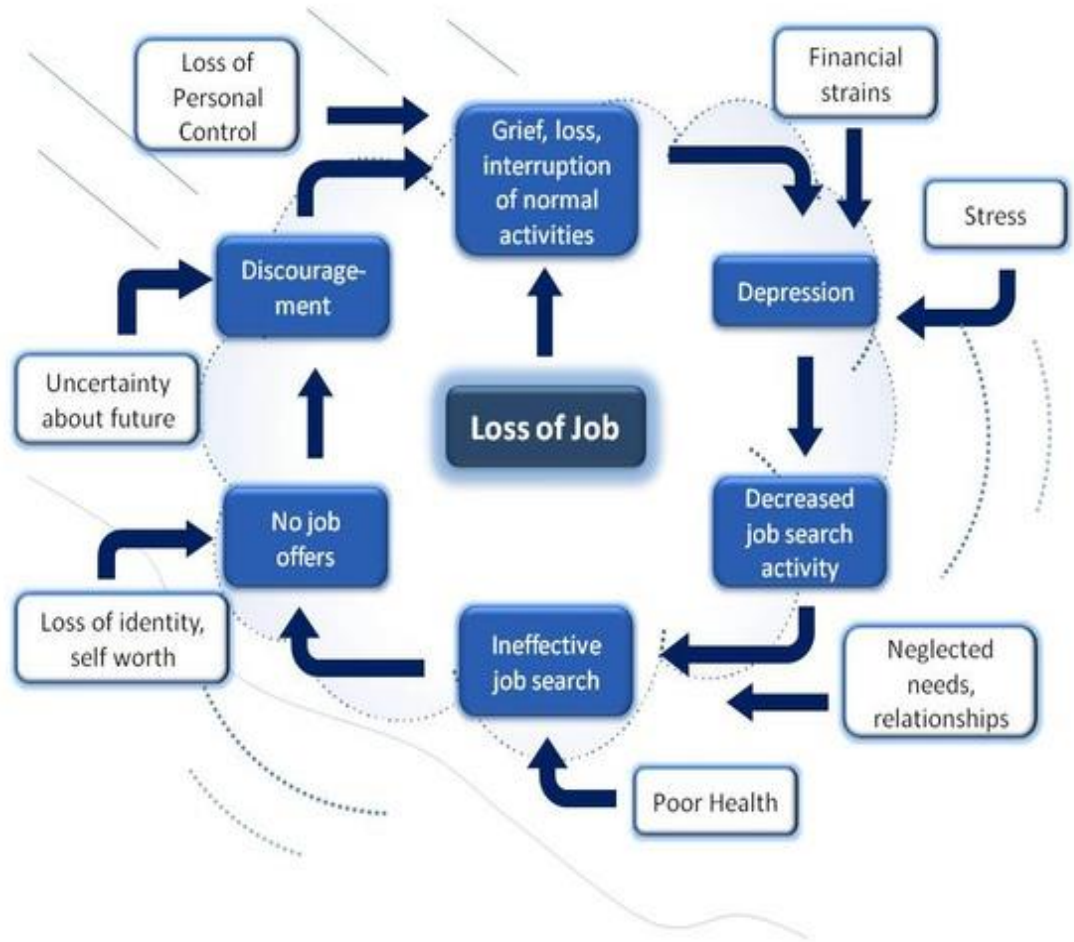


- Don't exhaust yourself trying to explain
- Details are for you to reveal, not for anybody else to demand
- Try to understand your needs; what is really possible in your current reality

THANK YOU AFFORDABLE CARE ACT

- 2013 61% of individual health plans covered mental illness
- Premiums could be increased and coverage could be denied
- 2014 ACA made mental health a required health benefit
- Differences based on employer provided, large vs. small group plans, Marketplace plans and state provided plans
- Please see a health insurance professional to be sure you are on the best plan available for mental health care

THE JOB
HUNT BEGINS:
AROUND
AND
AROUND
AND
AROUND
WE GO



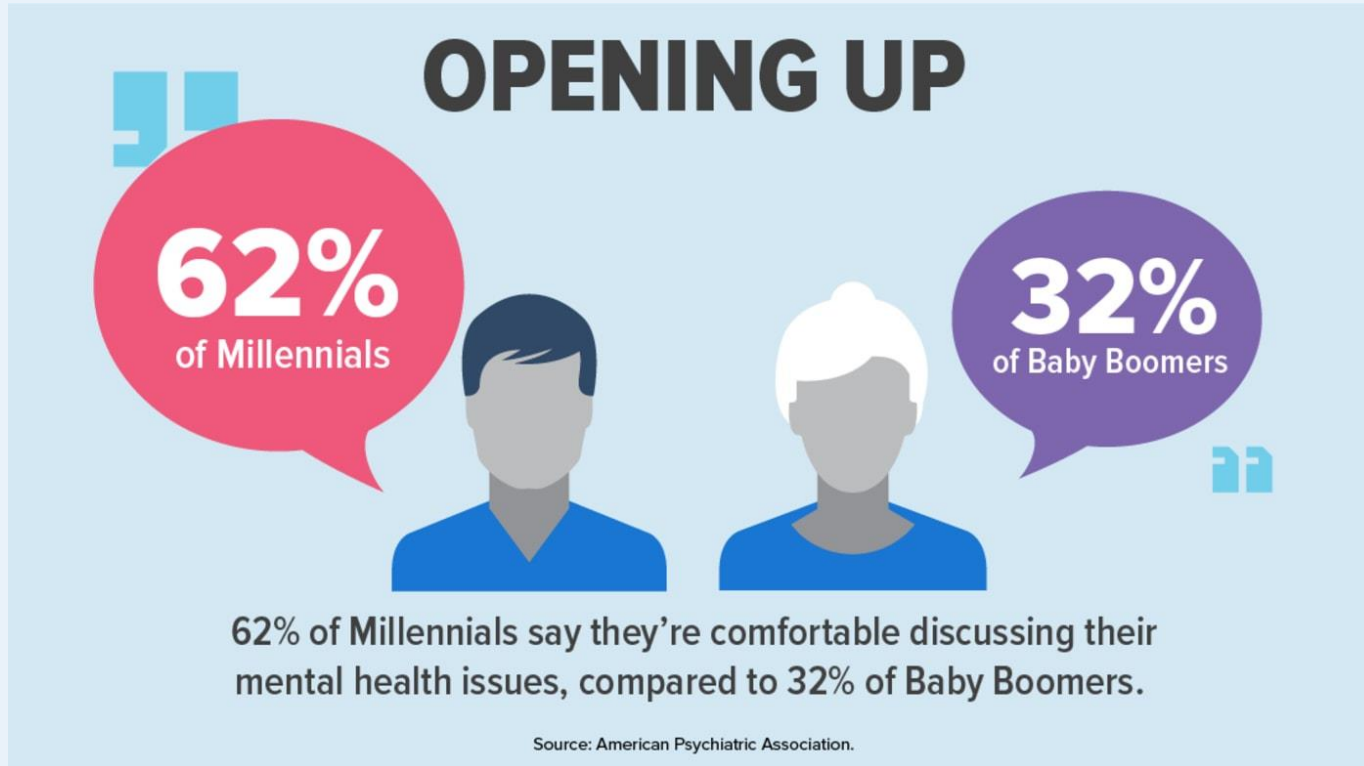
WHERE IT ENDS NOBODY KNOWS!

- Employment can have a positive effect
- You gotta just face the stigma in the workplace that is associated with mental illness
- Assumptions made about your ability to perform your job well
- Strategies to work around these barriers
- Honesty, honesty, honesty

DID I REALLY JUST GET CALLED FOR AN INTERVIEW?

- Know your strengths and talents. Seek jobs where you feel that you can excel and bring something to the table.
- Voluntary questions are just that -voluntary
- Tackle the process one step at a time

BUT TIMES, THEY ARE A-CHANGING



PROPS TO MILLENNIALS-MAKING IT BETTER FOR US ALL

Mental Health is a Diversity and Inclusion Issue

Millennial, Gen Z and LGBTQ respondents had higher rates of mental health symptoms, had symptoms for longer durations, were more open to mental health treatment and were more comfortable talking about mental health at work.

Black and Latino respondents experienced higher rates of every mental health symptom compared to all respondents.

Women were more likely to have gotten treatment for a mental health condition in the past.



THEN WHAT HAPPENED?

- Inexplicable fears: mail, phone calls, anything unexpected
- Hypnagogic and hypnopompic (parasomnia) hallucinations/dreams
- Even more severe anxiety
- Uncontrollable thoughts
- Panicking when thinking about the event
- Everyday tasks became impossible

PTSD Symptoms



Intrusive thoughts,
memories, flashbacks,
and dreams



Avoidance of
reminders of the
traumatic event(s)



Alterations in
cognition and mood



Alterations in arousal
and reactivity

Source: American Psychiatric Association Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5)

AND THEN THERE'S THIS



LIBRARIES AS MENTAL HEALTH HUBS

- Strive to offer visitors mental health support
- Librarians play so many roles, that there seems to be no support for ourselves
- For those with depression, anxiety, etc. we need more than ideas for "self-care"
- Meditation and bubble baths only go so far (although they are comforting)

BLACK HOLES ARE ALWAYS WAITING TO OPEN UP



- For me, I lost Layla-my support system
- Kids growing, fear of being alone
- Ageing parents, loss of family
- Upcoming life changes

ENTER....THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT

- The ADA defines disability as a physical or mental impairment that subsequently limits one or more major life activities
- Prohibits discrimination against mental health impairments
- Includes depression, bipolar disorder, anxiety disorders
- People have varied responses and different needs
- Try to find strategies that work for you

WHAT DO YOU NEED?

- Try to define what will help you perform your job
- What accommodations **must** be provided - based on size of your library
- Plan ahead...Do you need to request from the beginning, or see how it plays out
- Emphasize how your mindset creates a more compassionate attitude
- Make sure employees are on board and treated equally

THE WORKPLACE I CREATED

- Space for decompression
- Work at home when necessary
- Mental Health Days (make up hours at another time)
- Flexibility for last minute schedule changes
- Positive encouragement and support
- Board support for family and self health first
- Communication and caring

RESOURCES

- Family and Medical Leave Act
dol.gov/agencies/whd/fmla
- Americans with Disabilities Act
adata.org/factsheet/health
- U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission
eeoc.gov/laws/guidance/depression-ptsd-other-mental-health-conditions-workplace-your-legal-rights
- National Alliance on Mental Health
nami.org
- Marketplace Insurance
healthcare.gov

REPEAT AFTER ME:

“My mental health problems are real and they are valid. I will not judge myself for the bad days when I can barely get out of bed. I will not make myself feel worse because someone else appears to be handling their mental illness better than I am handling mine. Recovery is not a competition.”

Matt Joseph Diaz, Tumblr