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Lost Yet Found

Mental health is one of the most significant setbacks a human can experience. When you can't identify what is wrong with you, you find yourself in an endless and suffocating loop of confusion. Constantly questioning your worth or whether it is expected to feel like this. I was affected by mental health at a young age. Depression is a chemical imbalance in your brain, not an emotion or feeling that comes and goes, an actual medical illness. In reality, depression has always been there... just waiting for whether to come out or not.

People who suffer from depression don't notice that it's always been there in your life because you have never unlocked it. You don't need to suffer from childhood trauma or drug and alcohol addiction to experience such a thing, and you don't need to cry your eyes out until they turn bloodshot to show that you're experiencing such a thing. Sooner rather than later, your teachers begin to recognize the lack of motivation in your school work. Your parents realize you aren't showing up to eat dinner at the table. Your friends acknowledge you would rather sleep at home than go out and live your teenage years.

You begin to realize you're falling apart.

Everyone has had their share of struggles that your depression would make it hard to allow you to speak up about. For example, I tend to worry about what others may think of me. I'm worried about how you, the person reading this, may think about me as I type this out. Although it was never something I was severely afraid of, it was something my body physically could not handle; I think of it as an allergy.

Although, growing up, my biggest fear was death. Suppose that was regarding the ones I loved or even myself. Depression and anxiety can lead to far worse if not treated in time. Suicidal thoughts would race my mind 24/7, and nobody knew. On the outside, I was the girl with this big, proud smile, but on the inside, I was the girl completely in shambles. I was so mentally tired of everything. I was tired of the feelings, the worries, the trauma; it all built up inside.

As things got progressively worse, I turned to self-harm as a coping skill. I constantly felt like a disappointment and a failure to the people around me because I couldn't connect with them anymore on an emotional level. I tend to put others' feelings before myself. I was the friend who would ask how someone's day was or the friend who would be there for you if you needed to vent. I didn't understand that it was slowly draining me simultaneously. I tried so desperately to fix others while my own hands were shaking. My care for people slowly drained, so I didn't know what to do when it came to me. My social battery would quickly shut down the minute I stepped foot anywhere other than my room. My friends didn't seem to enjoy being around me due to acting so differently. I was losing everyone around me as I was losing myself.

I felt that feeling of being lost crucially on November 15, 2023. I was returning home as I pulled my car onto a side street. I felt an anxiety attack waiting to happen, and my therapists have always told me to make a move before the tears flow out. I sat in my car with my phone in one hand and my medication bottle in the other. I texted ten people; "I just wanted to tell you that no matter what happens to me, I'll always love you, and I couldn't thank you enough for being a part of my life. I'm sorry for everything." In my head, this was it; they would finally recognize how much pain I was indeed in. I would eventually stop feeling the guilt of being a bad friend or daughter.

I didn't pick up a single call or respond to a single text message until my mother called. My mother followed me back home, where friends rushed in behind me. They held me as I collapsed in tears. I was later seen by a crisis worker that night, and there's one thing I remember her asking, "When did you calm down?" my response was, "When my friends and family rushed in, held me, and never let go." At that moment, I realized that I had people to live for.

I am proud to be given the opportunity to write this about how far I have come, considering that I once felt the importance of my existence didn't matter anymore. I will hold the memories of the times when I thought there was no way I could ever escape the pit of despair. But I will never forget that I have people who love me, even when it doesn't feel like it. I have a reason.