

Laura's Story

Healing often begins with a conversation. There can be a feeling of hope when the silence is broken and stories are shared. When it comes to suicide, there are many stories. Some are of the tragedy of loss and grief, and others are inspirational and speak of resiliency for those who may be struggling with suicide.

Here is one such courageous story from Laura McCormack...

Having grown up in a home filled with rage, violence and terror as a result of parental addiction, I've struggled for decades with anxiety and depression. In my twenties, after a sexual assault, I began to feel the full effects of clinical depression and the building of my anxiety disorder.

I spoke to no one about my life struggles and as a result, began a quick and destructive decline into serious mental illness that resulted in a hospitalization for planning my suicide. Finally being in a position of receiving care, I realized that being hospitalized was the best thing that ever could have happened. I began seeing a psychiatrist, a psychologist and a social worker. I started receiving supports around my thoughts of suicide and my overwhelming anxiety. I started to share my story and eventually, started to live!

Today, I am a Program Facilitator for the Canadian Mental Health Association and run a program called "Beautiful Minds" which provides a four component mental health, mental illness and stigma reduction course to secondary school teachers to use with their students. Within the program, I also facilitate a presentation to each participating class which includes personal stories from volunteers with the community who have lived with the experience of having a serious mental health challenge, allowing students the opportunity to learn through others' personal experiences.

My message, and the reason I do what I do is always the same: talk about it. Reach out for support. We're not meant as humans to do it all by ourselves.

Laura's story was printed with permission from a publication created by the Waterloo Region Suicide Prevention Council entitled 'Stories of Living'. The full booklet can be accessed on their website www.wrspc.ca.

Of importance to note is that communities across Wellington County will be commemorating World Suicide Prevention Day on Saturday September 8th in Guelph, Elora, and Mount Forest, as well as on Monday September 10th in Erin. The Suicide Awareness Council of Wellington – Dufferin, in partnership with many community groups and individuals will be hosting an event to remember those who have died by suicide and to encourage hope for those who may be struggling. Please watch for information about specific locations and times, or go to the website www.suicideresourcegroup.wordpress.com for the event flyer details.

The "Open Mind" column is sponsored by individuals and organizations concerned with mental health issues in rural Wellington and Dufferin counties. Contact Canadian Mental Health Association at 519-766-4450 ext. 231 or parkinsons@cmhagrb.on.ca. For access to all Open Mind columns and local mental health resources/information, visit www.cmhagrb.on.ca or www.communitytorchlight.com