MENTAL HEALTH MATTERS

Mental health. A topic I'm sure you've had shoved down your throats by now, and to be honest I don't want to do the whole generic 'Mental Health Matters!' rant because we've heard it all a million times before. So I've decided to talk about mental health because, and I know I said I wouldn't, but mental health does matter.

We need to have a conversation about mental health and mental illness because it effects each and every one of us. We need to give each other the chance to talk and to listen. The statistics are shocking and things need to change which starts with everyone. However, once I knew I wanted to speak on mental health I did come to a problem.

How can I talk about a topic I can't even navigate myself?

But that's the point. I struggle. I have my bad days and sometimes it feels like every day is a bad day. But I know for a fact that I am not the only 16 year old girl to feel that way. I'm not alone, and neither are you. Mental health is still a taboo topic but the numbers speak for themselves, there's still so much room for improvement. Mental health affects everybody. But I would like to talk about young people in particular.

Statistics released by MHFA England show that in an average classroom, ten children will have witnessed their parents separate, eight will have experienced severe physical violence, sexual abuse or neglect, one will have experienced the death of a parent and seven will have been bullied. The people who surround you, the people you sit next to in lessons, the people you walk past in the corridors, even the teachers all have a life which you know nothing about. You cannot see mental health or how someone is feeling that day. You may not know the impact of your word and actions, so I feel the need to stress it to you. I've been at this school for 6 years now and I've seen it far too much. I have both witnessed and been the victim of bullying, and nobody deserves to feel like that. **Nobody should have to fear coming into school. Think about who you want to be.**

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Do you want to be the reason somebody is suffering?

We've all heard the saying 'If you have nothing nice to say, don't say anything at all' and its true, there is no excuse for poor treatment toward your peers we're all humans with thoughts, feelings and emotions. Consider that before deciding to put people down. Simple things like a smile or a 'Good Morning' can make the biggest difference to somebody's day, especially if all they are struggling. You may think small actions go unseen, but they don't, it's appreciated more than you know. But this is only the start, we need to educate ourselves as learning will make us feel more confident in talking about mental health but also in listening to others.

What I want you to take away from this is that we need to be there for one another and help in any way that we can. Because even if it's not now one day you will be the one struggling, and you will need that help. But also if you are struggling, you are not alone. Speak to somebody. **You are loved and you will be heard.**

Speak to a loved one, friend, teacher…. or if you prefer I have linked some sites below, to educate yourself but also to receive help if you need it.

- **Samaritans - Available 24 hours a day to provide confidential emotional support for people who are experiencing feelings of distress, despair or suicidal thoughts.**

- www.samaritans.org
- **116 123 (free to call, 24 hours a day)**
- **Email: jo@samaritans.org**
- **Campaign Against Living Miserably (CALM)**
- **A helpline for people in the UK who are down or have hit a wall for any reason, who need to talk or find information and support.**
- **Campaign Against Living Miserably (CALM)**
- **A helpline for people in the UK who are down or have hit a wall for any reason, who need to talk or find information and support. 5pm to midnight, every day of the year.**
- **www.thecalmzone.net**
- **Helpline: 0800 58 58 58**
- **Webchat: www.thecalmzone.net/help/webchat/**
- **Sane**
- **SANE services provide practical help, emotional support and specialist information to individuals affected by mental health problems, their family, friends and carers.**
- **Support Forum: www.sane.org.uk**
- **Call 07984 967 708 and leave a message, giving your first name and a contact number, and someone will call you back ASAP.**
- **Saneline: 0300 304 7000 (currently unavailable)**
- **Textcare: http://www.sane.org.uk/what_we_do/support/textcare/**
- **To educate – mentalhealth.gov**