

DARKEST NIGHTS & LIVING LIGHTS:

My story of hope in depression, anxiety, & suicide

Mark Stromenberg | mark@strombomb.com | www.strombomb.com

Mental Illness

Mental illness refers to a wide range of mental health conditions — disorders that affect your mood, thinking and behaviour.

Depression

- Situational, seasonal, chronic
- **Depression speaks:** “You don’t have value, nothing will ever work out, and you’re a burden to those around you.”

Anxiety

- Panic attacks, running thoughts, social anxiety, irrational fears
- **Anxiety cripples:** breathing, action, social behaviour, eating, and sleep

How To Help Others:

- Seek to understand
- Normalize, encourage, & give grace
- Find what works for her/him
- Get support for them and you
- Guard appropriate confidentiality

Suicide Warning Signs

- Preoccupation with death, absence, or meaninglessness
- Facing significant loss or pain
- Reckless behaviours including unsafe sex
- Self-harm may or may not be a suicidal behaviour

Suicide: What Do I Do?

DARE

Dare to ask specifically about suicide.
Dare to ask if they think about it a lot or have a plan.
Talking about suicide does not cause suicide!

CARE

Ask why they want to die.
Listen, don’t judge. Seek to *understand*, not to fix.
Encourage, and remind them that you care.

SHARE

What’s the risk?
Connect them to a safe adult and a crisis line.
If you don’t think they are safe, do not leave them alone.

Remember, it’s better to damage a friendship for safety, than to feel guilty when someone suicides. Don’t be afraid to call 911 or your mental health line.

Protecting My Own Mental Health

Body	Mind	Soul
Eat healthy	Healthy media choices	Meditation/silence
Regular sleep schedule	Workshops (anger)	Journal your feelings
Get exercise	Counselling	Serve/volunteer
Talk to your doctor	Time with healthy friends	Church & Bible
Get outside	Remember good times	Do the things you enjoy

Resources:

- Websites:
 - **24/7 Online Counselling:** www.kidshelpphone.ca
 - **Suicide & Mental Health Support** www.howtokillyourself.org
 - **Suicide Prevention Canada:** www.suicideprevention.ca
 - **Hashtag Hope:** www.hashtaghope.ca
 - Suicide.Org: www.suicide.org
 - YFC Lifeteams (help-sheets & videos): www.lifeteams.ca/online
 - Canadian Mental Health: www.cmha.ca
 - Suicide Intervention Training: www.livingworks.net
 - 24/7 Online Counselling: www.yourlifecounts.org
 - 24/7 Online Christian Counselling: www.thehopeline.com
 - Alternatives for Youth (Hamilton): www.ay.on.ca
- Phone numbers:
 - **Kids Help Phone (24/7 counselling):** **1-800-668-6868**
 - Hamilton ROCK (Reach Out Centre for Kids): 905-878-9785
 - Waterloo (Cambridge) Region Crisis Line: 1-844-437-3247
 - Canadian National Suicide Hotline: 1-833-456-4566
- Community:
 - Family doctor, psychiatrist
 - Counsellor, therapist, psychologist
 - Youth pastor/worker/mentor
 - Coaches, teachers, guidance counsellors
 - Canadian Mental Health Association
 - Your supports (trustworthy family & friends)
 - YFC/Youth Unlimited in Cambridge or Waterdown
 -
- Walk-in Counselling
 - Front Door (1770 King St., Kitchener): Wednesdays, 12 pm – 7:30 pm
 - Langs (1145 Concession Rd., Cambridge): Thursdays, 10 am – 5:30 pm
 - Alternatives for Youth (AY) 905-527-4469 – Mon-Fri, 9-5
- Apps:
 - MindShift
 - Mood Tool
- **If someone is in the process of suicide, call 911 immediately.**
- **If someone has shown a clear desire to die, and cannot or will not get immediate professional help, call 911 immediately.**
- **If you do not know what to do about a friend, and it is not an emergency, call your local crisis line and explain the situation.**
- **If you are thinking about suicide, please tell someone or email me.**