

**change your
narrative**

**SOMETIMES I STRUGGLE
WITH SELF-HARM
WHAT SHOULD I DO?**

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www.ChangeYourNarrative.org

Several statistics included were taken from:

National Institute of Mental Health
Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance
Center for Disease Control
Anxiety and Depression Association of America

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SHIFTING INCOMPLETE

STORIES OF SELF-HARM

TOWARDS TRUTH

How To Use This Book

Depending on what you are looking for, you can use this book in a variety of ways. Feel free to skim, read every line, or just check out our videos.

We believe important topics call for important conversations which is why some of our material is presented via videos. In order to access the videos, you will need to click the link if you are reading via a digital device such as Kindle. If you have a physical copy of the book, you can access the links via QR codes.

A QR Code looks like this and can be scanned using your device's camera:



On an iOS device, simply open the camera app and point your camera over the code. A notification will pop up, asking if you would like to head to YouTube.

On an Android device, you will need to download a QR code app. Our team recommends several options, all of which are free as of this printing:

- QR & Barcode Scanner
- QR Code Reader
- Free QR Scanner by Avira
- QR DROID PRIVATE
- Kaspersky QR Scanner

I Am Glad You Are Here...

It takes courage to begin a journey to seek wholeness. Though many of us will face individual struggles in our own life—there are some struggle which feel as if they have the power to take the pen and write our future.

But you are the author—not any pain, brokenness, or hurt of your past and present.

The goal of this book is to create an environment of support along with hosting resource and tools which guide you towards wholeness.

One question constantly pushes me towards the future.

I would ask you the same question:

WHAT IF YOU ONLY KNEW
the first half of your story?

As you go through the next few pages, know I believe in your future and hope you find all of the tools you need to help you take action and fight back against self-harm calling the shots in your life.

Because your story—is far from over.

Let's Admit, This Is Hard

I want to acknowledge its hard to know *how* to find ways to take action. Then, once you do find a path, it is difficult to walk it through to wholeness. Healing is not a one time event. It is a process. Throughout that process, there will be numerous obstacles. This side of the journey must be acknowledged. Yet, even with the challenge, I believe you have what it takes to make it through.

We are rooting for you, not only once you complete your journey, but every step through it.

If you or someone you care for is in danger of harm, please contact one of the numbers below or turn to the resource section at the back of this book.

For Immediate Help:

Covenant House- 1800-999-9999

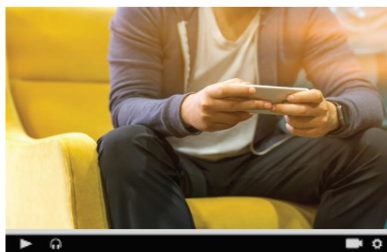
National Suicide Prevention Lifeline - 1-800-273-8255

Youth Crisis Line – 1800 Hit Home

Hopeline 1800-442-5673

<http://www.crisischat.org/chat>

Video: What Is Is Like To Call A Hotline?



<https://youtu.be/6IRGmusmp1M>

SHIFTING THE NARRATIVE
of lost hope

What Is Self-Harm?

Nonsuicidal self-injury (NSSI) involves socially unacceptable, self-inflicted harm to one's body without intent to die.¹ [Healthypurpose.com](https://www.healthypurpose.com) reports the most common forms of NSSI include:

- Cutting
- Burning
- Interfering with wound healing (picking or re-opening wounds)
- Punching or hitting oneself or other objects
- Inserting objects into the skin
- Purposely bruising or breaking one's bones
- Certain forms of hair pulling²

Although, NSSI is not utilized as a means of ending a life, there is a correlation between the two. In a large study, 70% of adolescents who engaged in NSSI had made at least 1 suicide attempt and 55% made multiple suicide attempts.¹

What Is Self-Harm? - Video Discussion



<https://youtu.be/yBlmaGtto9U>

How Many Individuals Struggle?

Each year, 1 in 5 females and 1 in 7 males engage in self-injury.⁵

90 percent of people who engage in self-harm begin during their teen or pre-adolescent years.⁵

12-15 year olds are most susceptible to begin self-harming.⁶

Adolescents have the highest rate of self-injurious behaviors, with about 17% admitting to self-injury at least once in their life.⁷

College Students. Studies find that about 15% of college students report engaging in self-harm.⁷

Aside from very young children, adults are the least likely group of people to follow through with self-injury. Only about 5% of adults have self-injured in their lifetime.⁷

Nearly 50 percent of those who engage in self-injury activities have been sexually abused.⁵

Females comprise 60 percent of those who engage in self-injurious behavior.⁵

Approximately two million cases are reported annually in the U.S.⁵

Why Would Someone Choose To Harm Themselves?

[MentalHealth.Net](https://www.mentalhealth.net) cites the top reasons behind Self-Injury include the ability to:

1. Distract themselves, alter the focus of their attention, or regain control over their minds when experiencing pressing, unavoidable and overwhelming feelings or thoughts.
2. Release tension associated with strong emotions or overwhelming thoughts.
3. Feel something physical when they are otherwise dissociated and numb.
4. Express themselves or communicate and/or document strong emotions they are feeling and cannot otherwise articulate.
5. Punish themselves.
6. Experience a temporary but intense feeling of euphoria that occurs in the immediate aftermath of self-harm.⁴

Why Would Someone Self-Harm? - Video Discussion



<https://youtu.be/yBlmaGtto9U>

Myths About Self-Harm

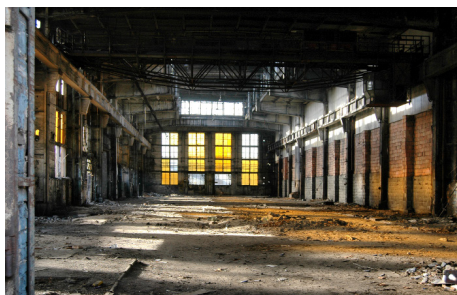
Several myths are obstacles for those seeking support for the thoughts and feelings which push them to turn towards self-harm as a coping mechanism. These myths include:

1. Self-harm is for attention.
2. Self-harm is only serious in cases of deep wounds.
3. Self-harming is about suicide.

If these myths are a barrier to you receiving the help or support you need for the thoughts and feelings which lie beneath the coping mechanism of self-harm, I encourage you to talk with someone who is skilled. They know the myths are incorrect and want to know the thoughts and feelings which matter most to you.

For a deeper discussion on these myths, please turn to the video below. And for a list of skilled individuals you can talk to, turn to the back of this booklet in the “Communities Which Offer Support” section.

Myths About Self-Harm - Video Discussion



<https://youtu.be/T7HaC0BON4M>

The Trap of Self-Harm

Several components within self-injury make it possible to get caught in the trap of self-harm. An addictive cycle lies behind a challenging issue. Yet, looking at those factors gives us the opportunity to learn how to put pauses in the cycle and find ways to break it.

1. The Action

The action of non-suicidal self-injury offers several short-term “positives.” These can range from feeling a sense of control, the ability to feel after prolonged numbness, an external validation of internal pain, a signal for others to invest, and/or a release of endorphins.

2. The “Reward”

Because a short-term “positive” surfaces—and it is immediate—a learned behavior develops. This “reward” suggests a tool for coping has been found.

3. Guilt & Shame

Often, minutes after an act of self-injury, the “reward” passes—leaving a sense of deeply rooted guilt or shame. This compounds the problem which drove one to choose self-injury as a means of coping.

4. Intensification

Most addictive behaviors require intensification of the behavior in order to reach the same sense of reward. In the case of non-suicidal self-injury—this can prove to be

extremely dangerous. Yet, a sense of shame often makes it extremely difficult. Isolation and withdrawal become a typical coping style—distancing one from wholeness.

Breaking The Cycle

If you are somewhere in the cycle—I want you to know I do not view you through the lens of shame. I believe there are legitimate, valid reasons why you chose to act in a behavior which was not healthy. I believe there is a story behind those reasons—and it is important.

If you were sitting with me at the Starbucks™ table I am at right now as I write this—I would tell you I do not look at you any different because of the scars you carry which are external and internal. Neither one removes your right to belong. And I accept you as you are.

On the next page, we will explore guilt and shame—and discover how freedom is possible.

The Trap Self-Harm - Video Discussion



<https://youtu.be/KBLs1wmE78>

Guilt Versus Shame

Guilt is the aftermath of an action. It can be healthy—as it lets you know *what you did* was wrong. Shame, on the other hand, is the cruel rebranding of your identity. It suggests that because of your action—you are somehow a different person. It seeks to stake a claim on *who you are*.

Guilt can be healthy. We need to understand the fact our words, actions, and behaviors have consequences. Guilt helps us to recognize those moments so we can take ownership of them, learn from them, and grow. Are there still consequences even after apologizing or seeking to make a situation right? Many times—the answer is yes. But there is a sense of rightness in it. Shame, however, doesn't offer a solution. It just grips your thoughts and emotions in a vice.

How do we escape the trap of shame? Because it is such a personal journey, I want to continue the conversation in the video below.

Guilt Versus Shame - Video Discussion



<https://youtu.be/sRzXXuxH-XE>

***YOUR PRESENT
CIRCUMSTANCES DON'T
DETERMINE WHERE
YOU CAN GO; THEY
MERELY DETERMINE
WHERE YOU START.
NIDO QUBEIN***

Is It Okay To Talk About Self-Harm?

The short answer, “Yes.” It is absolutely okay to talk about any struggle you are going through with stable loved ones and trained support staff. There is no reason let a sense of shame or guilt silence you.

With that being said, it is also important to be wise about who we tell. Our own struggle with self-harm can be triggering to individuals who may be vulnerable.

We must find the right people to share that story with in order to receive the best support for ourselves while also looking out for our peers. The right people are often going to be individuals who are older and whose lives have a sense of stability. We can champion for one another when we seek to protect anyone in our life who we think could be vulnerable. This does not mean your story is not valid. It simply means your story has a chance to be heard in a way in which support can be offered when you connect with the right people.

Knowing it is okay to talk about it and knowing who to share with is the first step. Next comes finding a way to do that in a way which can be heard. We are going to spend time talking through those elements of sharing your story as we continue in this journey together.

For the time being, just know—your story is valid and sharing in the right spaces it is most definitely okay.

Now, let’s continue learning how to do that well.

When, Where, & How To Talk About Self-Harm

Opening up about your struggle with self-harm is a big step. The best way to move through what it means to share your story is with a skilled professional. I cannot take their place, and do not seek to, yet—I have learned a few personal steps which helped me in moments when I needed to share something I felt shaky about.

When thinking about talking about your struggle, it is important to consider the when, what, and how of sharing. When is the right time to open up? Consider a few checkpoints first. The video explains what each of these bullet points mean. So check it out.

When It Is Good To Share:

- After you have told yourself the story first.
- In a distraction-free moment.
- When you are ready.
- When it is critical.

When To Share? - Video Discussion



https://youtu.be/yTyZS_ORsJo

What To Share About Self-Harm

Just like the question, “When is it good to share?” Many might wonder exactly *what* to share. When there is a lot going on inside of the head and heart, it can feel overwhelming to quiet those enough to decide what to talk about.

Just as in the “When To Share” video, I have a full conversation which discusses “What to share?” below.

But for starters, let’s consider a few key points.

It is good to share:

- What you think and feel right now.
- What you have thought and felt recently.
- What the source might be.
- What you would like to do next.

What To Share? - Video Discussion



<https://youtu.be/H3Hrz6oZu-c>

4 Ways To Talk About Self-Harm

If you are not in immediate danger or harm, and you would like to take it a bit slower before opening up, consider these steps to begin walking towards reaching out to a loved one or professional support individual:

4 ways to practice taking about self-harm:

- Practice telling yourself the story.
- Practice telling an anonymous advocate.
- Practice telling someone who cares about you.
- Practice telling someone who can be with you when you take action or consult a professional.

Each step comes with opportunities for courage.

And yes, each step could face obstacles. So, let's explore those in more detail next.

How To Share? - Video Discussion



Watch video

<https://youtu.be/23ju0VXirqk>

Practice Telling Yourself The Story

Why this is good:

You are 100% in control of telling yourself the story, giving it room to surface however you want, with whatever words you want. No one's reactions are part of your story coming to the surface.

Why this might be hard:

- You may not know where to start.
- You might feel lonely afterwards.

For a more in-depth discussion about these points, check out the video below.

Practice Telling Yourself The Story - Video Discussion



<https://youtu.be/TbqAFnPpk6E>

Practice Telling An Anonymous Advocate

Why this is good:

You are building your courage to let your story be heard by someone else. This can give you confidence to know your story is not invalidated. Through this experience, you are learning how to share your story.

Why this might be hard:

- You wish the connection could last.
- You wish they had given you more.
- Someone may not have been “in the game.”

For a more in-depth discussion about these points, check out the video below.

Practice Telling An Advocate - Video Discussion



<https://youtu.be/cciiuRCg2RI>

Practice Telling Someone Who Cares About You

Why this is good:

Sharing your story with someone who knows you and cares about you allows you to have a conversation with someone who understands your history. This can help you feel the most amount of support and validation.

Why this might be hard:

Sometimes, those who care about us listen and hear us—while they are thinking about how it impacts them. The combination of their own thoughts and feelings might mean they do not react well, even though its important.

For more, check out the video below.

Practice Telling Someone Who Cares - Video Discussion



<https://youtu.be/t6mVirQhbh0>

Practice Telling Someone Who Helps You Take Action

Why this is good:

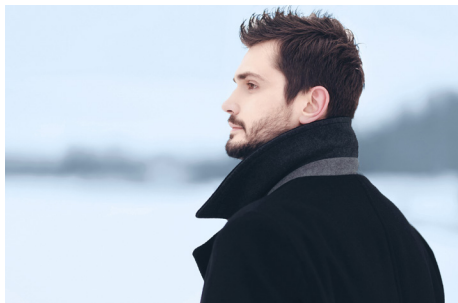
You might know it is time to take action and get a professional involved. This might mean a doctor, therapist, coach, pastor, or another trained, skilled individual. But, you may not want to do that alone. Involving someone who can be with you might help you to be able to move forward.

Why this might be hard:

At times, it might feel as if they are pushing you past your comfort zone. Feel free to have a conversation with them letting them know how you feel.

For more, check out the video below.

Practice Telling And Taking Action - Video Discussion



<https://youtu.be/shUSo1U1A2c>

How To Tell Your Parents Or Trusted Adult About Self-Harm

If you are young, the first people you are likely to confide in about self-harm are your peers. While this can be helpful to have the support of friends, it is your parents or guardians who have the ability to find the best help for you. With that being said, I know there are some family dynamics in which family will not lean in and provide guidance or support. In those situations, I would encourage you to tell a trusted adult. A teacher, mentor, coach, family member, youth pastor, professor, or community leader. You are worth receiving the help and guidance you need to overcome self-harm.

With all of that being said, talking about your struggle, is likely to be difficult. As best as I can, I would like to guide you towards how to have a tough conversation.

I found one young woman's story about how she told her parents. You can watch her video by searching:

"Telling Your Parents You Self-Harm"

By just_that_teen__

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3BGOjkeA0NQ>

She makes several good points. I appreciate the fact she took the time to write a letter to her mom. When we write something down, it helps us to organize our thoughts and know exactly what we want a loved one to know.

Just as I mentioned in the earlier pages about practicing telling yourself the story, telling an anonymous advocate

the story, telling a loved one the story, and telling someone who can help you take an action step the story, it is a progression to be able to work up to telling your parents. If you are considering telling your family, and you are not in threat of immediate harm or danger, I would highly recommend you working through those steps. I also know it can be tough to just say it.

For that reason, I have a video which breaks the news.

My sole purpose in the video is to offer a means of communication for those who are frozen in silence, unable to take action. I 100% believe it is better for you to share your story in your words, but understand you may not have words. I do not want you to suffer in silence, and am willing to be a pathway for your family to walk towards tools and resources together.

If you believe the video captures what you would like to say to your family, then feel free to send the link along with anything else you would like to share. I am rooting for your family to find a path to wholeness together.

Your Young Person Wants To Share - Video Discussion



<https://youtu.be/DLTYLN0CN3I>

CREATE A

TRAINING PLACE

AND STRATEGY SPACE

What Kind Of Help Exists?

Due to the intensive nature of self-harm and the fact it speaks to deep internal struggles, finding help for self-harm usually begins by sharing your story with a skilled professional. This often happens after telling a trusted individual in your life who can help you connect with that skilled professional.

That might sound scary. But, it is worth building your courage to focus on finding support for yourself. You are valuable. The pain which is locked inside of your thoughts and feelings deserves a place to be processed in a safe environment which can give you actionable guidance and tools.

Additionally, there are a host of tools which can help you learn steps to taking action. These include:

- Apps Which Offer Mental Health Support
- Communities With Offer Support
- Finding A Professional

What Kind Of Help Exists? - Video Discussion



<https://youtu.be/A7CNzHsrg0M>



Apps Which Offer Support

TalkLife offers online support similar to group therapy. Share anonymously or with your name.

Moodpath offers 14 days of check ins, providing an overview of your emotional well-being. Plus 100+ exercises.

Happify includes games and activities which elevate mood and build resilience through CBT, mindfulness and positivity.

What's Up aids individuals in discovering the cause of feelings and thoughts through guided questioning.



Self-Help For Anxiety Management (SAM) offers an anxiety toolkit which tracks thoughts and behaviors, while also offering tools to combat negativity.

Panic Relief provides coping strategies, exercise, and breathing techniques to help move through a moment of panic.

PTSD Coach provides ways to understand PTSD along with how to find additional help.

BeyondBlue App provides tools to build and implement a safety plan.



Communities Which Offer Support

To Write Love On Her Arms -

<https://twloha.com/find-help/>

Offers a search for free or low cost therapy options to connect with a therapist.

7 Cups Of Tea -

<https://www.7cups.com/depression-help-online/>

Offers chat rooms to begin a conversation, plus educational videos and when to seek professional help.

Lifeline Crisis Chat -

<https://www.contact-usa.org/chat.html>

Offers free, online chatting with trained individuals.

Love Is Respect -

<https://www.loveisrespect.org>

Offers education, support and advocacy to those facing complicated dating issues, along with a live chat feature connecting you to trained advocates.

Remedy Live -

<https://www.remedylive.com/depression>

Offers a faith-based videos on mental health issues along with trained advocates who want to connect.

Anxiety And Depression Association Of America -

<https://adaa.org/supportgroups>

Provides a listing of support groups, including a search feature to find a group near you.

Heads Up Guys -

<https://headsupguys.org/take-action/>

Provides action points and support specifically for men from men.

OK2 Talk -

<https://ok2talk.org>

Offers online support, education, and relatable stories for teens and young adults who battle mental health.

A thousand disappointments
IN THE PAST CANNOT

equal the power of

ONE POSITIVE

action right

NOW. GO AHEAD

& go for it.

UNKNOWN AUTHOR

A Conversation On Depression Medication And Natural Remedy

When thinking about sharing your story with a support professional, you may believe the first thing they will do is prescribe talk therapy or medication.

This is likely to be true. If that concerns you, it might help to do a little bit of research in order to understand what it means to take medication, the side effects, and what you can expect when considering your options.

In the video below, we have links to articles and voices which are more qualified to share.

Please note: In the instance of self-harm, it is likely individuals will need more guidance and tools than depression or anxiety medication alone. This conversation is only offered as a means of alleviating the unknowns about medication and alternative options. Please consult with a medical doctor for all decisions regarding your health and mental well-being.

What Is The Right Type Of Help? - Video Discussion



<https://youtu.be/Vnch5AvmWAM>

Who Would Want To Help Me?

Why someone would want to help an individual struggling with self-harm? I believe it comes down to the fact we see something you can't—your future, your pathway, and your value.

Your Future

We have an intrinsic belief that as you walk a path of wholeness and healing—you have a future.

Your Pathway

Trained advocates have studied to figure out what a pathway to wholeness and healing looked like. They want to offer tangible guidance.

Your Value

They have a foundational belief—that you have value. When they speak with you—it is directly tied into a reason why they believe you matter, have importance, and that the outcome of your life is important to them.

Who Would Want To Help Me? - Video Discussion



<https://youtu.be/xZNbZzgLyk>

The Obstacles In Seeking Help

It is fair to talk about the obstacles along the path, so we are not surprised by them. If you have faced one or all of the following—know that I hear you and I see you. I acknowledge the fact these moments can create tremendous setback or make it difficult to want to continue to fight for your wholeness. I can only hope you know you are not alone in that battle—and it is worth it to continue to fight on.

- Help Seems Hopeless
- A Question Of Worth
- Lack Of Energy
- Disappointing Attempts

For a more in-depth discussion about these points, including guidance on how to overcome them, check out the video below.

The Obstacles In Seeking Help - Video Discussion



<https://youtu.be/P3DTsdnz8hA>

Building A Safety Plan

If you are taking a stand against self-harm, you know it often fights back. Taking action each time is a battle which is not easy. Yet, we hope that having a pathway to fight back can help you continue to seek wholeness.

Please note: Even with the best of plans, there are times in which a crisis is stronger than our plan. In those moments, seek immediate, professional help. The following ideas on how to fight back against self-harm is not intended to take the place of professional help.

One such resource which has a fantastic list of tools and resources for creating a safety plan is Challenge The Storm. You can check out their advice here: <http://challengethestorm.org/safety-plans-mental-health/>

They even have a sample plan that any of us are able to use to help us learn how to build our own plan. You can check that out here: <http://www.knowresolve.org/docs/safety-plan-web.pdf>

Building A Safety Plan - Video Discussion



<https://youtu.be/DKb5F6PJfA>

Safety Plan Resources

BeyondBlue App provides tools to build and implement a safety plan.

Suicide Prevention Lifeline – Safety Plan Template.

https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/Brown_St StanleySafetyPlanTemplate.pdf

1 page safety plan print off with space to write in warning signs, coping strategies, and more.

Get Self-Help

<https://www.getselfhelp.co.uk/docs/SafetyPlan.pdf>

Offers a second safety plan print off, with tools and resources from the UK.

Therapist Aid

<https://www.therapistaid.com/therapy-worksheets/suicide/none>

Offers free worksheets for building a self-harm safety plan, suicide assessment, and warning signs.

Nick's Experience With Using A Safety Plan

https://youtu.be/jW2Hvv_vN40

One young man's story of how he uses a safety plan in times which feel challenging.

The Goal Is Wholeness

Wholeness is about a state of contentment and peace in a life. It doesn't eliminate the past or any previous pain, instead it acknowledges how that pain has affected us—all while striving to form a new narrative.

Wholeness is about freedom—and I believe it is possible for each individual to discover for themselves.

Is it easy? Not at all. The pathway can be long and come with obstacles which may make us feel as if we may not make it.

But with the right support and tools—I intrinsically believe we can.

I welcome you to find it.

The Goal Is Wholeness - Video Discussion



<https://youtu.be/tG18UzeL26w>

Your Identity Goes Beyond The Struggle

In the core of who I am—I am convinced we are not defined by our struggles. Our identity goes far beyond what anyone stole from us, did to us, or how they disappointed us.

While it may be true you have faced a deep struggle or have been treated in ways you did not deserve, I believe this does not have to be the key identifier of what makes you—you.

Wholeness is still available. Though it requires a journey, it's a pathway to be free of pain's influences—as if it was the only thing to define your life. I believe you still have life in front of you and it is filled with the ability for hope, the ability to make a difference in other's lives, and the ability to go out there and have positive and meaningful impact.

Your Identity Goes Beyond The Struggle- Video



<https://youtu.be/CnMJlc8PIRE>

Your Invitation To Shift The Story

If you, or someone you care for, are looking for a way to walk a journey to shift an incomplete story towards truth, you are invited to change your narrative.

Come on a journey through twenty video-based pathway markers which offer guidance on how you or someone you care for can seek wholeness. Change Your Narrative believes everyone has the right to be able to take back the pen of your story.

Come On A Journey To Find Wholeness...



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ThTdleKhc-CY&t=6s>

Please Note:

All statements and views within this book, the **change your narrative** website, and the videos on our YouTube channel are strictly opinion based. They are not intended to be utilized as professional treatment or care. If you or someone you care for struggles with mental illness, depression, suicidal thought or destructive life choices, I highly recommend seeking out professional help.

If you are in immediate harm or danger call 911.

Additional Resources:

24/7/365 Crisis Call Center Hotline:
1 (1800) 273-8255

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline
1 (1800) 273-8255

Text "Answer" to 839863

Chat with a Soul Medic:
<http://remedylive.com/soulmedics/>



Apps Which Offer Support

TalkLife offers online support similar to group therapy. Share anonymously or with your name.

Moodpath offers 14 days of check ins, providing an overview of your emotional well-being. Plus 100+ exercises.

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Heads Up Guys -

<https://headsupguys.org/take-action/>

Provides action points and support specifically for men from men.

OK2 Talk -

<https://ok2talk.org>

Offers online support, education, and relatable stories for teens and young adults who battle mental health.

change your narrative

The Place Where The Discussion Continues...

THE SAFE PLACE TO TALK ABOUT THE **ISSUES THAT MATTER** TO YOU



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