

**change your
narrative**

SOMETIMES I STRUGGLE

WITH DEPRESSION
WHAT SHOULD I DO?

- Student Edition -

Change Your Narrative: Sometimes I Struggle With Depression, What Should I Do? Student Edition. Copyright © 2019; Cassandra Smith. Printed and bound in the United States of America. All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or by an information retrieval system—except by a reviewer who may quote brief passages in a review to be printed in a magazine, newspaper, or on the Web--without permission from the Publisher. For information, please contact publisher via:

www.ChangeYourNarrative.org

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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PRESS

SHIFTING INCOMPLETE
STORIES OF DEPRESSION
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 depression 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

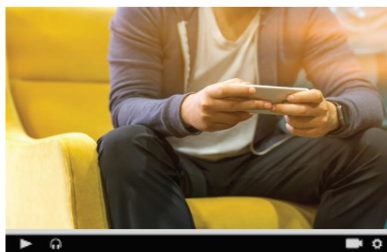
National Suicide Prevention Lifeline - 1-800-273-8255

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

Becoming The Hero Of Your Own Story

Let's face it. Being a student is hard. This isn't about school or grades alone, its about everything else that comes with it. Finding a place to belong. Social pressures. Dating. Finding the right job or college. Home life. Social media. Discovering identity.

For many young people, the pressures build and can create inner anxieties or raise issues relating to mental health. If that is you, I want you to know:

This is okay. And it will not be like this forever.

This guide is centered around the belief that you have the ability to shift the story of depression. This does not mean you will not struggle. It simply means there are resources, tools, and support inside the struggle which can help you fight back.

To hear a story of one young person who learned how to fight back, check it out here:



Hunter Kent: I Became My Own Hero

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rv9SwZWVkOs>

When You Are Feeling Inside Out

Are our emotions something we should listen to or not?

This questions is something that the team at Mind Set decided to answer. To do so, they looked at the movie "Inside Out."

In their discussion, they determined that a core source of anxiety and depression can be suppressed emotions.

While I believe this is only a starting point in the discussion, it is a great video to open up the topic of emotions.

You can check it out here:

When You Are Feeling Inside Out

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tNsTy-j_sQs



What Is Depression?

Depression is characterized by feeling immense sadness, a lack of energy or interest in previously enjoyed pursuits, and a loss of appetite.

There are several forms of depression which can stem from life changes or biology. It is common for many of us to feel sad or hopeless about a specific situation or experience. This feeling will come and go throughout our life. But when it lasts, it is important to pay attention to those thoughts and feelings and start trying to find out what's going on.

If you or someone you know is depressed—there are numerous ways to take action and fight against the narrative of depression. But, how do we know if we need to take action? The first key is to recognize where you or someone you care about are at.

Check out the video below for more insight:

What Is Depression? - Video Discussion



<https://youtu.be/nUxwrKoSmx8>

How Many Young People Struggle?

1.9 million children, 3 – 17, have diagnosed depression.

- Centers for Disease Control
“Data and Statistics on Children’s Mental Health”, 2018

13.3% of adolescents aged 12 to 17 had “at least one major depressive episode” in 2017, which equates to 3.2 million American teens.

- National Institute of Mental Health

60.1% of depressed adolescents received no treatment; 19.6% received treatment from a health professional; 2.4% were treated with medication alone; 17.6% received treatment from both a health professional and medication,

- National Institute of Mental Health

7.4 percent of youth in grades 9-12 reported that they had made at least one suicide attempt in the past 12 months.

- 2017 Youth Risk Behavior Summary

WHEN YOU
FEEL LIKE
GIVING UP
REMEMBER THE
WHY YOU
HELD ON FOR SO
LONG. -UNKNOWN
AUTHOR

Is It Okay To Talk About Depression?

Yes. It is absolutely okay to talk about depression. There is no reason let a sense of shame or guilt silence you.

The reasons why young people face depression range from short-term incidents to life altering events. Some of these are internal. Others are external.

The reason, cause, or longevity behind each story affected by depression is valid—and we acknowledge depression can create major hurdles on the path to seeking wholeness. But that does not mean we do not fight—and fight well.

One of the ways we do that—is to talk about it.

Four Individuals Who Said Its Okay:

Michael Phelps Olympic Athlete - Video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iQGEc-JD3_g

Patti Murin, “Frozen’s Anna on Broadway” - Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nNKJhflvgc0>

Kristen Bell - Actress - Video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mYUQ_nIZgWE

Chris Evans – Actor - Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HqSoxMOrVeE>

When, Where, & How To Talk About Depression

Opening up about your struggle with depression 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 Depression

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.
- And what you would like to do next.

What To Share? - Video Discussion



Watch video

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

How To Talk About Depression

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 depression:

- 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



<https://youtu.be/8yYr55aO0Lg>

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:

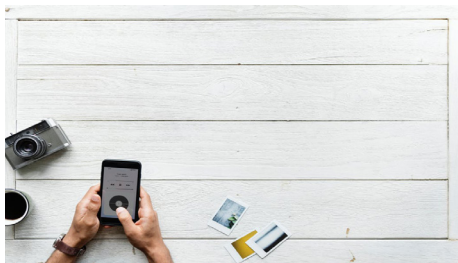
You are building your courage to let your story be heard by someone else. This can give you confidence to know your story is not invalidated. Through this experience, you are learning how to share your story.

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:

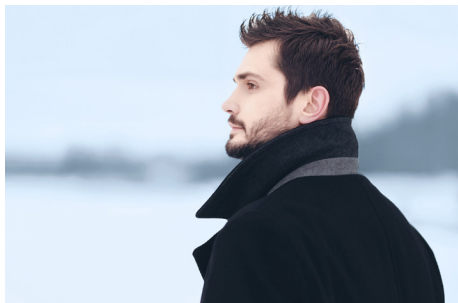
You might know it is time to take action and get a professional involved. This might mean a doctor, therapist, coach, pastor, or another trained, skilled individual. But, you may not want to do that alone. Involving someone who can be with you might help you to be able to move forward.

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>

CREATE A

TRAINING PLACE

AND STRATEGY SPACE

What Kind Of Help Exists?

The National Institute of Health reported up to 80% of individuals who were treated for depression began to show positive change within 4-6 weeks of treatment, which generally included medication, therapy, support groups or a combination of these treatments.

This leaves us to ask, “What kind of help exists?”

The resources available for mental health issues and depression range from self-care suggestions to inpatient treatment facilities. The only way to know exactly what type of action you should take, the first key is to talk with a support professional.

There are a host of tools which can help you know steps to taking action. These include:

- Apps Which Offer 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.



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.

**WHEN YOU FEEL
LIKE GIVING
UP, JUST**

**REMEMBER THE
REASON WHY
YOU**

**HELD ON FOR
SO LONG.**

-UNKNOWN AUTHOR

A Conversation On 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. We encourage you to continue your research as you get to know what types of help are available.

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 depression? 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 depression, you know it often fights back. Yet, we hope having a pathway to fight back helps you continue to live with 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 a safety plan are not intended to take the place of skilled, 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:
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/tA4fZltaFnw>

4 Check Ins To Gauge If Its Time To Move Towards A Safety Plan

Deciding if its an off moment or a battle of depression.

1. Check In With Yourself

Give yourself the space to see how you are *really* doing.

2. Check In With Rest And Play

Do something you love—just because you love it.

3. Check In With Support

If you have begun to notice signals that depression wants to claim your story—it's probably time to check in with individuals who care for you.

4. Check In With Resources

If depression is fighting hard, it might be time to fight back by adding additional resources to your tool kit.

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

Deeper Into A Safety Plan - Video Discussion



<https://youtu.be/7nxBCu8NXVs>

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

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change your narrative

The Place Where The Discussion Continues...

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



www.ImChangingIt.com



