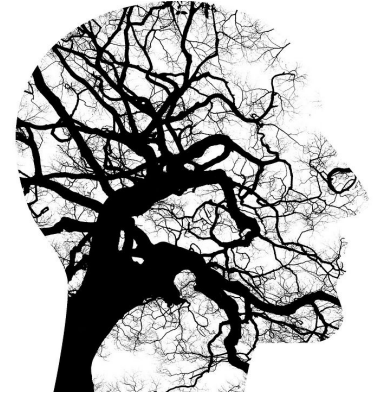




Mental Health Awareness



*Even when the dark comes crashing through
When you need a friend to carry you
And when you're broken on the ground
You will be found*

-You will be found, Original Broadway Cast of Dear Evan Hansen

Mental Health in popular culture and media

Mental Health Awareness has been on a rise for the last couple of years. This led to more portrayal of Mental Health issues across all forms of media.

In 2017, the song *1-800-273-8255* by the American rapper Logic, titled after the phone number of the American National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, climbed the charts and was nominated for multiple music awards. In the months after the song's release, the NSPL experienced an influx of calls and visits of their website.

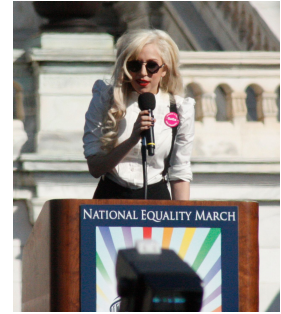
The music video centers around a man struggling with his sexuality.



The Broadway Musical *Dear Evan Hansen* also deals with suicide and mental illness, as the main character, Evan, struggles with severe social anxiety.

A lot of the songs center around suicide prevention and the feelings of everyone involved, with the clear message that *everyone matters*.

"There is a lot of shame attached to mental illness, but it's important that you know that there is hope and a chance for recovery." -Lady Gaga



"Anyone can be affected, despite their level of success or their place on the food chain."
-Kristen Bell

"It's very important we create conversations, we take away the stigma, and that we stand up for ourselves if we're dealing with the symptoms of a mental illness. It is possible to live well and thrive with a mental illness." -Demi Lovato



"We as a society get so caught up in our physical appearance and health, that we forget to work out our minds. It's just as important to work on your mental health as it is to go to the gym!" -Latrice Royale

"Writing about therapy shows people this is one possible way to take care of yourself in a world that is often trying to push us away or say we should not exist or thrive." -Janet Mock

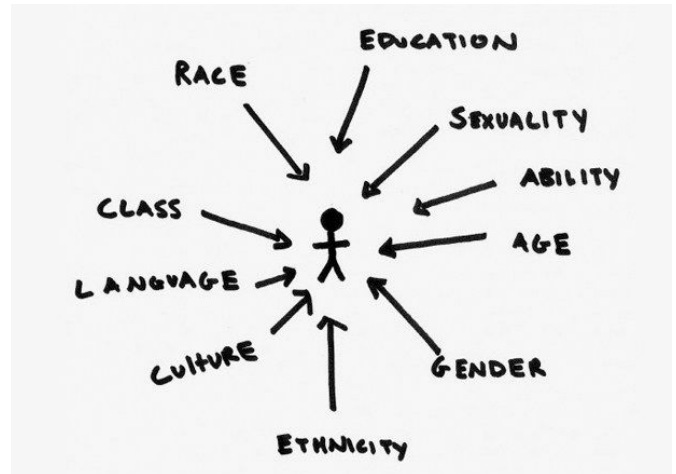


"I can say with complete confidence that no matter who you are or how you identify or who you love, there's a community of people out there who won't only tolerate you, but will celebrate you, and love you for who you are."
-Troye Sivan

Mental Health Across Identities / Intersectionality

“A gay man has to deal with homophobia. A black man has to deal with racism. But a black gay man will have to deal with homophobia *and* racism (often at the same time). It is often the case that he will face racism inside the LGBT community and homophobia in the black community.

Similarly, a disabled lesbian Muslim will have to deal with ableism, homophobia, Islamophobia, racism and sexism. She might find physical barriers to accessing LGBT venues, but even when she can get into the building she might still face racism and Islamophobia from the white LGBT community.” <https://www.equality-network.org/our-work/intersectional/>



These two examples highlight intersectionality and how it can affect an individual in daily life and in the very communities they are a part of. When we look at mental health, be it seeking or providing a service, or building a foundation for ourselves, it is important to consider the different identities we embody (our intersections) and what about our environment may bring up challenges based on these identities. Asking the “Why?” and “How?” questions can provide more insight and be incorporated into seeking mental health services and treating mental health across the multiple factors that make up one’s identity.

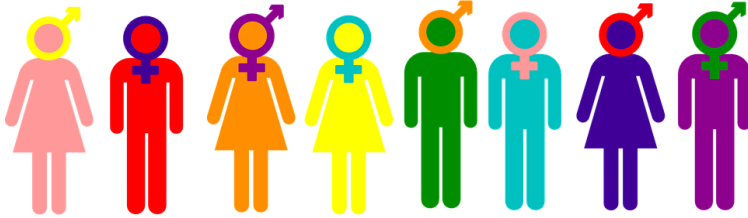
<http://writingtheother.com/intersectionality-and-characterization/>

Race & Culture

The conversations surrounding mental health can be awkward to have with society at large. Racial identities, and the cultures surrounding them, will navigate these conversations differently. Stigmas amongst cultures can determine whether one seeks out treatment or what treatment they seek out. For example, not supported in seeking mental health service among a religious community or being in a situation where one does not have the language skills to communicate symptoms or understand symptoms. This miscommunication can lead to disproportionate figures or inadequate treatment of mental health in communities.

<https://www.opendemocracy.net/5050/samir-jeraj/gender-mental-health-and-intersectionality>
<https://www.nami.org/Find-Support/Diverse-Communities/Latino-Mental-Health>

Gender



Navigating gender means that we may face challenges in regards to mental health, how we are treated, how we take care of ourselves, and what is expected from us. Gender plays into how express our mental health struggles, which at times can be harmful, but what happens

when one doesn't fit into the binary? Some trans identities are exposed to not fitting in the binary at all which comes with its own challenges that require a nuance that is still being addressed.

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/sex-sexuality-and-romance/201712/transgender-queer-and-mental-health>

Neurodivergence and Physical Ability

Neurodivergent and physically impaired individuals will also face challenges with mental health. Mental health challenges can arise due to physical impairments or neurodivergence that are not straightforward to treat. The social opportunities that can aid through mental health challenges are often not afforded or accessible to individuals. Sense, a UK disability charity conducted a survey which found that about a quarter of respondents “feel quite or very lonely on a typical day” and over fifty percent believe there are “more barriers to keeping and making friends”.



<https://www.1800wheelchair.com/news/physical-disability-mental-health/>

<https://www.sense.org.uk/umbraco/surface/download/download?filepath=/media/1591/campaign-loneliness-a-right-to-friendship.pdf>

<https://www.icrc.org/en/document/india-changing-perceptions-disabilities>



Taking Care of Yourself

Working through daily challenges can be difficult but there are many resources and ways to take care of oneself. A collaborative effort with a licensed mental health professional or counselor can be a fruitful experience. Self care is another component which can provide relief while not being expensive. Finding a routine, making time for appointments, journaling, blocking out time for no internet, engaging in your hobby are some ways to incorporate self-care.

Below are some more examples from public figures:

FIND YOUR BODY MASSAGE EQUIVALENT– KID FURY, VLOGGER, COMEDIAN, AND PODCAST COHOST

“If your thing is writing, reading, riding your bike, going to the dog park—whatever gives you your release—go for that in the moment when you’re losing it.”

OWN YOUR CALENDAR– PHILLIP PICARDI, TEEN VOGUE AND THEM CHIEF CONTENT OFFICER

“I structure my day so that I have the mornings open and to myself—mostly to read and listen to news.”

LISTEN TO YOUR BODY LANGUAGE– CRISSLE WEST, WRITER, COMEDIAN, AND PODCAST COHOST

“It’s very important to not just put the electronics away but to focus on how you feel, maybe journal about it, and then go do something else. That feeling of being frustrated and overwhelmed, that’s your body telling you, ‘Enough.’”

More can be found here:

<https://www.fastcompany.com/40581348/how-activists-like-emma-gonzalez-fight-burnout>

For mental health resources in Japan click down below:

<http://stonewalljapan.org/resources/mental-health/>

