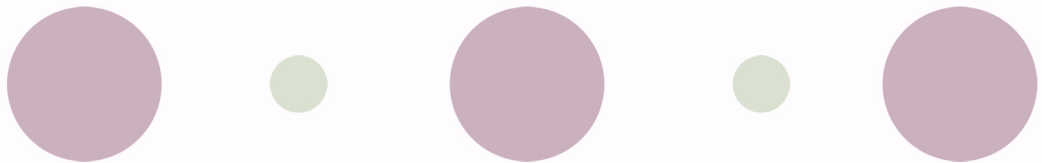


I Think I Have a *Mental Illness*

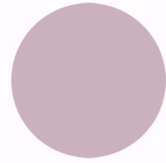
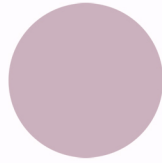


A short, no-nonsense guide to educate you on mental illnesses with resources to get help

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If you are feeling suicidal or having violent thoughts toward others, please call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (US) 1-800-273-8255

The Child-Help USA crisis line helps children and adults suffering sexual abuse 1-800-422-4453
To connect with your local mental health crisis services and find immediate help, where available, call 211



In early 2013, I started mentoring women who suffer with mental illnesses or who are struggling with the challenges of life. My in-box was flooded with mail. As I went through all the emails, I noticed a theme. Many of the women wrote, "I think I might have depression." Or anxiety or some other mental illness. "What do I do?"

I felt their pain, their confusion and their longing for help through the screen. I decided to make this guide you are reading right now. This is just a small guide filled with a few ideas on how to educate yourself about mental health and what to do if you think you need help. This guide is your first stepping stone on your journey to recovery.

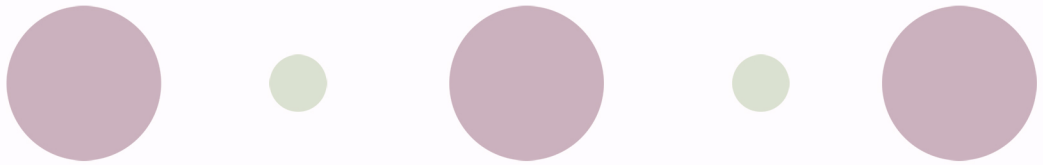
In this day and age, the stigma of mental illnesses is waning but it is still prevalent and many are afraid to seek help from a doctor or scared to be judged by anyone. It can be hard to admit to yourself that you may need help.

Let me tell you something:

You should not feel ashamed.

You are not crazy, you do not need to be locked away or shamed. The sooner you realize those things, the faster you can start on your path to recovery. I hope you find this short guide useful in educating yourself.

Good luck on your path for mental health wellness.



What is a mental illness?

According to the website, HealthyPlace a mental illness is: *"A disease that causes mild to severe disturbances in thinking, perception and behavior."*

The most common mental illnesses women talk to me about are depression and anxiety but there are many kinds of mental illnesses and while there are commonalities to each disorder, no two people are alike in anything, least of all how they feel and react to their mental illnesses.

WebMD lists the most common mental illnesses as: anxiety disorders, mood disorders (depression, bipolar etc), psychotic disorders (schizophrenia), eating disorders, impulse control and addiction disorders, and personality disorders. (Read a full list [here](#)).

Official diagnoses can only be given by an educated doctor or psychiatrist. Most disorders have a criteria for the length of time you are suffering before you can be diagnosed as well. For depression, you must feel sad and have a lack general interest for at least 2 weeks. For anxiety, you must often feel worried ffor irrational or even no reason at all for at least 6 months.

Personally, I feel that if your thoughts, behavior or reations are determental to your everyday life, even if it's only been 1 week, it's something you need to address. It might be time to seek out a doctor, or perhaps you just need for focus on more "self care". If you are having a hard time functioning, it is important to do something to feel healthy again.

*Please note: If you are feeling suicidal or having violent thoughts toward others please call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (US) 1-800-273-8255



How do I know if I have a mental illness?

The only way to be sure if you have a mental illness is by going to see a psychiatrist who has adequate schooling and the skills to diagnose you. If you are here reading this, you may not be ready to take that step or you might not know the resources available to find a doctor. So please keep reading.

There are a few warning signs and symptoms that can help you figure out if you have a mental illness and if you should seek medical help. (I'm going to skip the medical jargon here, if you want that, it's easily found via Google).

- You might feel like stuffing your face with any and every food that has ever comforted you, other times you might be getting ready for bed and realize you haven't eaten all day (and you don't really care).

- You wake up and see that it's 2pm and realize you've been asleep for 16 hours, other days you'll be lying in bed at 4am when you have to get up for school, work, life in an hour and your eyes just won't close.

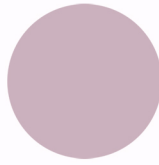
- You may suffer from frequent delusions or hallucinations.

- Sometimes, It might be too terrifying to leave your bedroom, or your house, or even turn on the computer because there are people there. Other times, you really don't care if you show up for school or work or if you fail or get fired.

- Maybe you notice you aren't moving as fast as you used to or you walk in an unusual manner.

- You might suffer from constant worry, a gnawing in your gut and a pounding in your chest. You might be avoiding people, places or situations that you know will trigger a panic attack.

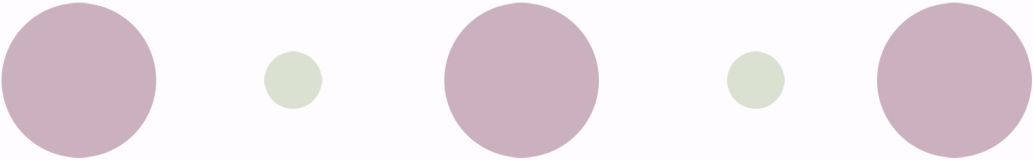
- You might look in the mirror and see someone who you think weighs 400+lbs but the scale reads 132lbs and you are convinced it's broken so you eat nothing but carrots and run for 15 miles every morning.



-You might want to curl up in bed and cry and so you do it or you might want to curl up in bed and feel nothing and so you do it.

Do one or several of these scenarios describe what you are going through or how you are feeling? Then you may have a mental illness.

These symptoms are not the only way you could feel when you have mental health problems. For example, an eating disorder will look different for you than for your best friend, no two people are alike. But the above list is a good starting point to determine if you might have a mental illness and if you need to seek help.



Why you shouldn't be afraid of labels

I understand. Getting "labeled" goes against everything we've learned growing up, right? Being labeled means getting put in a category and only being seen as that person with those skills or personality and nothing else. Right?

Wrong.

Having an official diagnosis for your mental illness is a blessing. Labels mean you can get the correct care from your doctor. Knowing the right kind of mental illness you are suffering with means you can research better coping mechanisms and self care practices. It means your therapist can utilize the proper talk therapy techniques. Knowing what mental illness you have means you can be prescribed the right type of drugs type and not have to experiment for a year before finding one that works.

Getting an official diagnosis doesn't mean you are put in one box and are stuck there. For your mental health wellness, it means better care and support. Don't let this frighten you out of seeing a doctor.



What do I do now?

The first step is admitting you need help, or that you at least need to focus more on yourself and your well-being for a while.

If you have a general practitioner doctor or even a gynecologist, reach out to them and ask for recommendations for a therapist. Seeing a therapist is a good starting point since they can start you on talk therapy while they recommend a psychiatrist for you to visit for an official diagnosis and perhaps medication.

There are a few different treatment options for various mental illnesses. Medication may be called for but it's not always needed and it's not always the answer either. Talk therapy comes in many forms and is very helpful.

Only you can really know if your symptoms are impacting your life. Not all problems require medication, but on a personal level I will tell you that I highly endorse therapy for absolutely everyone. Even if you don't have any kind of mental illness, sometimes it's just really helpful to talk to someone else without fear of judgment.

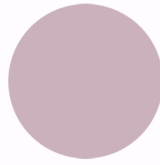
What can I do on my own?

If you are waiting for an appointment with your doctor or therapist, or if you just don't feel you need medical intervention at this time, here are some of my suggestions on how to improve your mental health wellness.

- First, I suggest getting a notebook or starting a word document and writing, often. Get out all of your negative thoughts and feelings. If you are suddenly anxious or depressed or angry, write it out. This is also helpful when you start talk therapy, as you already have talking points ready.

- If you are a more visual person, you can try art journaling or even painting. Art is very therapeutic. Want help getting started? Read [My 15 Tips on Becoming an Art Journaler](#) and [A Step-by-Step Journal Page](#)

- Creating a healthy diet and exercise program can be very beneficial to improve your wellness.



-Learn about yourself. Being in tune with your body and your symptoms can be immensely helpful. Keep a log of what triggers your symptoms, learn to recognize when you have reached your limits and even write down what situations help you feel your best.

-You can try guided meditations or yoga to help calm your thoughts and nerves.

-It's important to be conscious of your self care. Now is a time to tell your family and friends you might need to back out of some commitments because you need to focus on you. Schedule weekly alone time, get your nails done or get a massage. Take the time to pamper yourself and know you are good enough and you deserve it.

-Educate yourself on mental health. Read internet articles, visit the library and check out some blogs. My suggestion is to educate yourself so you know what's going on in your body and so you understand that there are others in the world who feel like you, but be careful not to overwhelm yourself with information.

-Take control of your life. It can be hard to be an active participant in your lives when you are suffering but now is the time to do it. Make goals, give yourself rewards and incentives.

-Build up your support system. Talk to your friends and family and tell them you need some help right now. Get your girlfriends together for a slumber party or make sure you and your partner can go on weekly dates and have fun.



Online Resources

- Mental Health America is the USA's leading non-profit dedicated to helping all people live mentally healthier lives. Some great info about different disorders, medication and treatment methods. Use their affiliate search to find local groups for additional resources and help by clicking here.

-The Substance Abuse and Mental Health locator is great for finding resources in your area.

-The National Institute for Mental Health is another resource with articles on different illnesses and links to finding help.

-The National Alliance of Mental Illness is one of my favorite foundations. Again, this website has great articles to help educate you and they can also find you local NAMI chapters. They also host NAMI walks to help the discussion on mental healthcare and illnesses in the country.

- Healthy Place is my go-to website when I need quick information on a certain symptom or illness. They even have a number of blogs from people living with mental illnesses.

- If you are a teen, or have a teen you think has a mental illness, this website is a great resource to help educate you both.

-If you are ready to find a doctor, you can use the Psych Central page to locate a doctor in your area. I also recommend going through your private or state insurance to find a doctor covered by your insurance. Most insurance companies have a website you can search and a phone number you can call to find a doctor.

My Offerings

If you are suffering with normal life challenges or don't need medical intervention for your mental illness...

My *Fledgling Mentor Sessions* are just what you need!

We will be exchanging emails over the course of 4, 8 or 12 weeks and in that time I will:

- help you identify the core issues you should focus on
- offer advice and my own personal experiences and stories
- find you resources to help you
- collaborate with you on an action plan for you to move forward in your life and become a bird ready for flight on your own.

Book your session now for
as low as \$170

(a special discount just for readers of this guide)

*payment plans are available on a case by case basis

Email
me
today!

If you are looking for a chat with someone who has personal experience with mental health...

My *Fledgling Mentor Sessions* via text-based chat are perfect for you!

You can ask me about my own experience with seeing therapist and being on medication and I can help you find the resources you need in your area.

Book your session now for
as low as \$42

(a special discount just for readers of this guide)

*payment plans are available on a case by case basis

Email
me
today!

I'm Kendra, a first time *mama* and *artist* on my own road to self discovery.

I live with my family of 3 in the Chicago suburbs where we dream of traveling full time. I love coffee and nature (but hate bugs, they ruin it for me), I am zombie obsessed and love novels and poetry (but romance novels are forever my guilty pleasure). I am enthralled with gemstones and crystals and think birds are beautiful but terrifying.

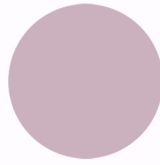
I have suffered from depression and anxiety for as long as I can remember. When I was 13, I was suicidal and scared and felt very alone. Thankfully, I had a wonderful mother who I felt loved me enough that I went to her and said, "I need help." But not everyone has that, as teenagers and even later in life, sometimes we feel too alone and not close enough to anyone to seek help. Since I was 13, I've been on and off medication, and I've been in therapy on a weekly basis before and other times it's been a year or more between seeing a therapist. I have educated myself on my own mental health issues as well as others.

While I believe mental illnesses aren't exactly curable, I do believe I can live a happy and healthy life without being affected on a daily basis. And guess what? *So can you!*



website : twitter : facebook : instagram : email

I'm here to be a friend, *resource and guide* for young, creative *women* who suffer with mental health issues. So let me help you embrace your *self discovery* journey and improve your *mental health wellness*, today!



Disclaimer

I want to take a moment to remind you:

I am not a therapist, psychiatrist or doctor. I am just a woman who has lived with depression and anxiety in many forms her whole life. I have been seeing doctors and therapists since I was 13, I've been on medications off and on since I was 13. I'm a knowledge-aholic and have thoroughly educated myself on my own mental illnesses and have done a lot of research for this guide and other offerings. Please do not take anything written in this e-book as law. If you need medical help, seek a doctor first.

***Please note: If you are feeling suicidal or having violent thoughts toward others please call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (US) 1-800-273-8255**