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Eliza Graham Moore: “Therapy Saves Lives”

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Therapy Saves Lives

by Eliza Graham Moore

I believe in therapy. Despite being a young 19-year-old woman, I have found myself a victim to many things in my short life experience, from minor inconveniences all the way to abuse. I grew up like everyone else, or so I thought for many years, despite the obvious signs I was too afraid to confront. I found myself in high school hiding how my mother treated me from my closest of friends in fear that they would make me an outcast or tell me the truth of my situation that I wasn't ready to hear. I felt trapped in my own head and nothing I did could escape it.

The only time I could get a break from my thoughts was when I was asleep. So, I slept, and kept sleeping to the point that I was rushing home from school, getting my homework done, and rushing off to the bliss my bed brought me. I was sleeping as much as 15 hours a night on average and on the weekends, I was sleeping even more. Despite all of this, I still could barely keep my eyes open the few hours a day I was awake. I had tried everything from exercise, to showers, to energy drinks and coffee, but nothing worked for more than a few hours. Then when I finally thought nothing could make this worse, my mother unraveled completely.

Dark thoughts I had previously only thought in passing now felt like the only way out. The pain I felt inside became too much to suppress from those closest to me. I found myself having a few depressive episodes at school when some teachers and friends took notice and offered support. I was hesitant to accept the help, but I needed it more than ever. I found myself slowly opening up about the abuse I was experiencing.

Friends I had previously only talked to in and about class were checking in on me emotionally and trying their best to be there for me when I needed someone. Teachers that I confided in lent me their time and understanding and even suggested a therapist. I suggested the idea cautiously to my parents and somehow, they agreed after a very emotional confession of my dark thoughts. I had to admit to them how close I really was to dark thoughts becoming a tragic reality. Despite fighting this war against my brain for so long on my own, I knew I would eventually lose if I continued down the path I was on. Looking back I genuinely wonder if my mother would have agreed to my therapy if she knew I was going because of her as she still believes she never did anything wrong.

To say that therapy helped is an understatement. Finally, I could fully flesh out the feelings I had been trying to suppress for so long. I wasn't judged, but instead given validation that these experiences weren't normal and not in any form okay. I was given names to express the lasting effects of the trauma and given spaces to truly feel safe. Now, years later, I have cut off my abusive mother that made my life unlivable and educated my father and family on what she had been doing to me mentally.

I still have hard days like anyone else, but I have cut my previous symptoms by half at least. I still keep in contact with most of the teachers and friends that helped me get through the hardest years of my life. The biggest achievement of all is that I am truly happy. After so many years of fighting to keep my fake smile from slipping I finally have a genuine smile that rarely isn't plastered to my face. Mental health is difficult and awkward to talk about especially with younger people, but I believe it is the most important thing to teach. Mental health help, like therapy, saves lives. It saved mine.

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(Read all the pieces in [This I Believe](#); featured image by Pexels user [Polina Zimmerman](#))

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