

### **We Need To Be More Acknowledged**

Two out of the six components of a human's health are mental and physical health. In this essay, I am going to be explaining the difference between physical and mental health, share some mental illnesses, coping mechanisms, my own personal experiences with my mental health struggles, how corrupt people have treated those with mental illness, and the woman who was the biggest advocate for mental health.

Mental illnesses are sicknesses that occur in the brain and mind; depression, anxiety, bipolar disorder, etc... Sometimes they can be visually seen as an injury. "Mental illnesses are health conditions involving changes in emotion, thinking or behavior (or a combination of these)" ([Psychiatry.org](http://Psychiatry.org)). They can be noticed based on a person's behavior and temporary personality changes. These illnesses can be "associated with distress and/or problems functioning in social, work or family activities" ([Psychiatry.org](http://Psychiatry.org)). Although physical illnesses may force people to stop doing their hobbies, mental illnesses may make them lose their motivations, interests, and purpose in doing their hobbies or passions.

There are many different types of mental illnesses. Some known ones include depression, anxiety, borderline personality disorder, narcissistic personality disorder, schizophrenia, etc. Depression is "a mood disorder that causes a persistent feeling of sadness and loss of interest. It affects how you feel, think and behave and can lead to a variety of emotional and physical problems" ([Sunny Brockport](http://SunnyBrockport.com)). Depression makes you lose motivation and purpose to do anything. Anxiety is an extreme feeling of nervousness, but when you have the disorder yourself, it is pretty constant if untreated. Borderline Personality Disorder is "A mental disorder characterized by unstable moods, behavior, and relationships" ([Mayo Clinic](http://MayoClinic.com)). It contains episodes of prolonged mania and major depression." Narcissistic personality disorder is described as "a mental condition in which people have an inflated sense of their own importance, a deep need for excessive attention and admiration, troubled relationships, and a lack of empathy for others" ([Mayo Clinic](http://MayoClinic.com)). In this disorder, people are more full of themselves, and have less compassion towards others." Schizophrenia is a serious mental disorder in which people interpret reality abnormally. Schizophrenia may result in some combination of hallucinations, delusions, and extremely disordered thinking and behavior that impairs daily functioning, and can be disabling" ([Mayo Clinic](http://MayoClinic.com)). Those who have schizophrenia either see or hear things that are not there. They may even have speech problems and other physical problems as a result of the illness.

I personally am diagnosed with mental illnesses including clinical depression and anxiety disorder. My anxiety can get quite bad at times, although the medication I am on has helped significantly with my depression. I have weekly therapy, school counseling, and some coping mechanisms I use to make myself feel better. Those include grounding myself and doing guided meditations. If you are interested, some other coping mechanisms are drawing, coloring, painting, calming down by taking deep breaths, journaling your feelings in a notebook, writing positive affirmations that have occurred or that you would like to manifest, and trying your best to figure out a good solution to your problem. If you ever need to, you can always go to your school counselor for sessions to talk to someone, and if possible, ask your parents to get you a therapist. Our mental health system today is not perfect, but it improved. But still needs to be easy to talk about with people, without having to fear being judged or assumed crazy. Oddly, mental and physical illnesses intertwine at times but are also very different from each other.

Physical injuries are known worldwide, and many people have automatic sympathy for those who have them. However, that is not always the case with people who have mental illnesses. In some cases, their illnesses are looked down upon more so than physical injuries. They are more well hidden because they are in your mind, so if you talk to a closed-minded person about your mental issues, there is a chance they will invalidate you. Everyone needs to realize that people are not automatically insane because of their mental health. They need to be more heard, and Nellie Bly figured this out over one hundred and thirty years ago.

In the past, a journalist and one of the biggest mental health activists went by her pen name Nellie Bly and helped change the treatment of mentally ill patients all around the world. She was a reporter for Joseph Pulitzer, and agreed to a job of going undercover in “Blackwell’s Lunatic Asylum” in New York City, to expose them for the way they supposedly treated their patients. “After pretending to have amnesia, Bly was committed to the asylum. Inside the asylum, she found other patients who had been committed when they were also healthy” ([National Park Service](#)). The workers allowed mentally stable people to be kept as prisoners in the asylum. They were called patients but were not treated as such. The “doctors and nurses had barely any training, and in many cases had no empathy for their patients.” For the patients, the staff “ordered harsh and brutal treatments that did little to heal, and much to harm” ([Biography](#)). They were treated so horribly by the workers who were supposed to be caring for and healing them of their illnesses, like how a doctor would at a regular hospital.

When Nellie Bly initially got to the asylum she made a few friends who explained to her the horrors of Blackwell. “Patients were forced to take ice-cold baths and remain

in wet clothes for hours, leading to frequent illnesses. They were forced to sit still on benches, without speaking or moving, for stints lasting 12 hours or more. Some patients were tethered together with ropes and forced to pull carts around like mules” ([Biography](#)). These friends told her all about the horrid physical, sexual, and emotional abuse that took place at Blackwell's. “Food and sanitary conditions were horrific, with rotten meat, moldy, stale bread, and frequently contaminated water dished out. Those who complained or resisted were beaten, and” were threatened with “sexual violence by vicious, tyrannical staffers” ([Biography](#)). These patients dealt with so much abuse that if they were sane before, they probably were not now. They suffered from so much trauma at Blackwell's and did not deserve it. These corrupt doctors and nurses viewed every patient as if they were criminals because they seemed to enjoy torturing them far more than being good people and doing their job properly.

After Nellie Bly got out of there she exposed the Asylum and got it shut down, fixing the treatment of the mentally ill for the better. We have come a long way since then, but it is still not perfect. Not all therapists or workers, mental health-related are good, but many are. Which is a big improvement from centuries ago, when it was the opposite. Although there are still many people still not being understanding or empathetic about mental health, the younger generations can try to teach them to be, and grow from all of their experiences. People’s mental health is just as important as their physical well-being because, with bad mental health, they would not be taking care of themselves properly; lack of motivation to do so. Perhaps the United States should state having a class that kids take from an early age about mental health, that is mandatory for two-three years. Everyone is worthy of care, and self-love. People are not any less of a person because of their mental health issues.

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I tried to shorten this and did but did not want to get rid of some of the information that is currently in this essay. I view it all as very important and did not want to leave anything out. By the way, my name is pronounced Mad-A-Lane. - Madelaine