Questions from the NAMI – Make It Ok Presentation, Tues. July 28, 2020 My responses are in blue

1. Would you be able to come to the afterschool programs?

Maybe, several factors will determine whether I could do an in-person presentation at a site. It may depend on pandemic i.e., whether it would be in person or virtually. Also, if there is another Make It Ok ambassador in close proximity, I’d recommend a local speaker who could to save time for driving and mileage cost, etc.

1. Would you be able to share a list of current ambassadors to see whom is available in our areas?

I’d recommend asking the Iowa Make It Ok director, Jamie Harbel thru the website. She has access to those names

1. Can something trigger mental illness or is it something that had always been there?

Yes, to both environmental triggers and something that may have been there. For example, persons who develop PTSD in a war zone have been shown to be predisposed and/or exacerbating an underlying condition.

1. There is so much we still do not understand about the brain, that i find people turn to self-medication and quitting the drugs given by doctors. Any feedback for situations like this?

My comments are that we are still learning about brain disorders. Yes, there is a lot we don’t know about brain disorders. Unfortunately, some people do self-medicate with bad outcomes (addiction and dangerous behaviors). Many times, they are fearful of prescribed medicines unnecessarily which means education is vital. We share information and education about the importance of seeing a doctor to prescribe the right medicine is so necessary, especially early on in the illness. Imagine waiting 10 years with heart disease before getting treatment!

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1. Can mental illness go into remission like a cancer or is it a lifetime illness? Yes and no-, there are many types of brain disorders that go into remission (certain types of depression). There are others that are a lifetime disorder (ie., bipolar disorder or schizophrenia).
2. What if someone doesn’t seek help? They just completely give up on life- for years and years. No job, no interaction with family or friends. They literally completely give up. Is it a choice at that point? Even if they have a lot of love and support, meds, etc. That is a tough question with no easy answer. It is so dangerous to your brain to not get treatment and choose to ignore the recommendations of family. Imagine not getting diabetes treated and under control? If the person is in imminent danger, then they may need to be court ordered into treatment. That would be a last resort. Maybe there is a minister or other trusted adult who could engage in the conversations about getting treatment. Maybe you or another trustworthy friend could volunteer to go their appointment. Sorry that I could not be more helpful.
3. Because of COVID 19 and everyone being isolated, do you believe there will be an increase of mental illnesses when our students return to school? Absolutely agree and we are seeing it now across the lifespan.
4. I would love resources on how to handle the students returning and their issues I shared resources, toolkits, and posters with Crystal. I believe she has shared them with you all. Also, go to Make It Ok website, www.Makeitok.org/IOWA.
5. It was mentioned we could become ambassadors. How does that happen? Please, we need ambassadors throughout the state. Please sign-up on the website, www.Makeitok.org/IOWA.