

SPEAKUP STORIES

THE COMMUNITY SPEAKS UP

ELIZABETH COOK SPEAKS UP



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COOK

Admitting we need help is one of the hardest things to do. Usually, it is one of the best things we can do for ourselves. For as long as I can remember, I was never truly happy. I couldn't wrap my mind around the concept of being joyful. I just felt like I was drowning. Drowning in my own mind. Depression pulled me down while waves of anxiety crashed around me. I needed a life preserver but I couldn't get to one on my own. I screamed silently as I drowned. I thought no one was watching as I slipped under the waves. My mom spoke up for me before it was too late. She pulled me up when I thought I was gone. She took me to see a doctor who sent me to inpatient treatment, where I was diagnosed with

depression and anxiety. The decision to seek treatment, admitting that I needed help, was the hardest thing I have ever done. But it saved my life. I learned various coping methods to change my thought and behavior patterns to channel my depression and anxiety into something positive. I am stronger because of it. I wouldn't be here today if my mom hadn't spoken up for me. She taught me to speak up for myself. In learning to speak up for myself, I learned to speak up for others. I learned to be the life preserver for others that my mom was for me. The best thing for someone with depression and anxiety to know is that someone cares for them and loves them. A meaningful hug or a sincere invitation to talk means more to us than one can imagine. Because when we know someone cares, we start to believe we are worth it. In the words of the Lorax "unless someone like you cares, a whole awful lot, it's not going to get better. It's not." Care. Love. Speak Up. It just might save a beautiful life.



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