

THE COLORS AND VOICES INSIDE OF ME

The colors are my emotions that don't seem to want to come out except for anger. The voices are my anxiety and the whispers that tell me I'm better off dead. Sometimes I wonder that if I give in to them they'll just disappear, and the world will be quiet, and I'll be numb. I don't want the only color to escape me to be red.

I write instead of punching, but sometimes what I write doesn't help me. Sometimes I need something else to escape this world of horror that consumes around me. I stay awake and lay in bed all day, rotting. People call me lazy, but if they heard the conversations that were happening in my head deciding on whether or not to go that night they would think I'm crazy. People think you're crazy anyway if you even hint that you're struggling with mental health.

I hate these colors and voices inside of me, they're like natural sodium and water, making an explosion when they meet together. When that explosion happens you never know if it's sadness, or rage, or both.

There's no stopping it when it comes. You either have to mask it and pretend that everything's okay or let it explode no matter where you are. I choose to mask it every time, but then it just explodes at night ending in me crying silently in pain. I wonder what it would be like to be "normal". I wonder if there really is a heaven or hell, and what one would I go to? People say that if you commit suicide you go to hell, why? I wonder if there's people that are almost exactly like me. I know everyone has struggles with their own mental health but sometimes feel like mine is worse.

No, I don't talk about it, how are you supposed to open up to a friend or teacher and say, "Yea, my mom's a drug addict and she hates my dad, so I didn't get to meet him until she wanted me to meet him." When I do feel like opening up to someone, they share what they're going through and it feels like they have it worse. So the colors and voices inside me never get to be let out, I feel like I'm holding my breath underwater not drowning, but just waiting too long. Sometimes the voices like to get louder than usual, then suddenly everyone is asking you if you're okay. When I answer for the ten billionth time, the color red comes out of my mouth but I sometimes want the color blue. I feel like going into a corner alone just to cry, I bet I could fill the whole room. I wish I could control these colors and voices that have appeared since sixth grade. When I say I'm struggling with mental health, I feel like I'm saying something along the lines of "I just committed murder" on national television except they take me away in a room with just rubber.

I keep trying to get rid of one of the voices that's always there: my anxiety. The 5,4,3,2,1 method never helps. When people try to help me all that comes out are the colors. The other voice who tells me I'm better off dead, and that everyone hates me. Sometimes I think it's true and I give in, but other times I just turn up my music and act like everything's okay when it clearly isn't. I avoid wearing t-shirts because my story of mental health is just only a week old.

I'm scared of dying. I find this weird, considering that it's always on my mind just on the back burner on simmer. Most of the time, I blame myself for my mental health problems; I'm still grieving even though it's been six years. I'm still waiting for the one phone call saying that she died of an overdose.

I'd like to personally thank Ashley, my birth mother, who I think is the main root of my insufficient mental health. It turns out, that making promises to your so-called daughter and not following through hurts her in the long run. Leaving after a month of communication, and not talking for a year or two probably wasn't great for me either.

You took so much from me, but you gave me the gift of writing. I've heard that if you have mother issues, then you're a good writer, and if you have father issues you're a good artist. I used to be a fantastic artist up until seventh grade when dad finally came into the picture. People say I'm a fantastic writer and, well, we can tell you're not a good mother. When I think of you or talk about you the color red always comes out. I don't always mean it, but something gets triggered inside of me.

People say I should put some little optimism in here. To this, I partially disagree. Mental health shouldn't be covered up by people who are scared to talk about it, especially if their own daughter, son, friends, or any other family member is struggling with it. I do believe that some people, while on their own journey, will overcome the colors and voices inside of them, and make themselves great.

I'm just not at that part of my journey yet, but I know that I will be soon. I plan to be better than my mom and beat those colors and voices inside of me. I won't take the route that makes other people anguished or sorrowful. I will, however, continue to overcome. In the future, I hope to look upon this and give hope to struggling teens and adults just like me.

AIMEE

(she/her/hers)

I wanted to share my experience with my battle of mental health, while also trying to shed light onto teens' mental health.

The colors and voices are my emotions and thoughts I hear in my head. I find writing helps me let go of some of those colors and voices, so when I heard I can enter an essay on mental health I felt it was my little escape.

