Proposal Sketch

A child wakes up one morning and walks into the bathroom. He/she steps up onto a stool in order to reach for a toothbrush and begin brushing. The child accidentally slips off the stool and scrapes their leg. After crying for a moment, he/she gets back up, opens the cabinet, and grips a band aid in order to cover the cut.

People are taught right from the beginning how to take care of themselves. Each individual learns how to walk, talk, act in class, make friends, go to the bathroom, etc. The human race seems fairly fond of taking care of each other physically, but can we do this emotionally? Do we learn how to deal with common mental issues like failure, rejection, and loneliness? Guy Winch, a psychologist for over 20 years notices that “We sustain psychological injuries even more often than we do physical ones.” (). In his TED talk last year he highlighted the fact that a child may know how to cure a cut and brush their teeth twice a day, but not how to deal with emotional injuries like rejection and failure. Physical problems can seem obvious and imminent, while mental and emotional issues appear to be pushed away or even ignored. According to Psych Central the number one myth about mental health is that mental health problems are uncommon (). This is far from the truth when “In fact, nearly 1 out of every 5 Americans have a diagnosable mental disorder within their lifetimes” (). One cannot just tell an individual that suffers from depression that “Oh you’re feeling depressed? Just shake it off, it’s all in your head”, imagine saying that to someone with a broken leg “Oh just walk it off, it’s all in your leg” (). “There is heavy evidence that America or even the world itself needs to start honing in on mental disorders. America has experienced far too many school shootings, 356,000 inmates have severe mental disorders compared to only 35,000 patients in “state psychiatric hospitals” (). We are plagued with episodes of depression, eating disorders, anxiety, and various other issues.

Mental health issues aren’t always easily discussed and/or fixed. It’s time that we begin practicing emotional hygiene just as we do our physical hygiene. Guy Winch mentions in his TED talk that “chronic loneliness increases your chance of an early death by 14%”. Mental health is the kryptonite of today’s well-being.

Although America may be suffering a mental health crisis, there are some actions we can take that would most likely help. In the same way that we teach kids about math, science, art, and many other skills – we can teach them how to handle their mental health. Mental hygiene isn’t something that only a few should practice, its hygiene, everybody should be doing it. Just as one may go to a doctor to check up on their blood pressure, one can assess themselves in order to treat their issue quickly and effectively and only then get help if external assistance is required. Anxiety, depression, loneliness, and fear are all far to common to have to see a specialist every time they come up. Instead our education system can be teaching the public how to manage themselves emotionally and giving them a mental first aid kit.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rni41c9iq54>

A child may know how to cure a cut and brush teeth, but not how to deal emotional injuries like rejection and failure. “We sustain psychological injuries even more often than we do physical ones”, “Oh you’re feeling depressed just shake it off it’s all in your head” vs “Oh just walk it off, it’s all in your leg” “chronic loneliness increases your chance of an early death by 14%” We must practice emotional hygiene.

<http://www.huffingtonpost.com/dan-rather/greyhound-therapy-mental-health_b_5275916.html>

<http://growingleaders.com/blog/six-steps-help-students-practice-better-emotional-hygiene/>

<http://psychcentral.com/archives/top_myths.htm>