

*SHAKESPEAREAN
SUPPORT GROUP*

To be or not to be...

Is THAT really the question?

- Is our humanity really that confusing?
 - For centuries, people from different backgrounds and cultures and lifestyles and upbringings have pondered the same questions.
 - Why are we here?
 - What is the point of ethical living?
 - What is the point of existence?
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LIFE IS HARD

In my personal life, I have always struggled with my mental health

Things started getting really bad around my junior year of college

THERAPY!!!!

WOOOO

Life is difficult.

Now what?

*Thank God for
Mike Schur and
The Good Place*



Why did the Good Place Affect me so much?

- The Good Place
 - Insane and Definable Characters
 - Riveting
 - Hilarious
 - Very Heartfelt
 - Non-threatening

This got me thinking...



How could I perhaps do the same thing?

SHAKESPEARE

- No one ever questions the drama in Shakespeare's shows, but if you take second to analyze what actually happens...
 - ITS NOT PRETTY!
 - Think about all the characters AFTER the play ends.
 - What happens to them? The ones leftover. The ones who survive?
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How could I perhaps do the same thing?

Shakespeare stories are FILLED WITH

DRAMA AND TRAUMA

Thus the Play was born!

How to Start?

- The Good place rooted everything in Philosophy, so I decided to go back to the beginning and really see how much philosophy could help.
 - Maybe Philosophy is the secret to understanding humanity
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- *Plato*
 - *Aristotle*
 - *Anselm*
 - *Aquinas*
 - *Descartes*
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- *Hobbes*
- *Locke*
- *Hume*
- *Kant*
- *Mill*

- *Nietzsche*
 - *Wittgenstein*
 - *Sartre*
 - *Dewey*
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See how confusing things get?

- It seems as though in a desire to make life more understandable. Simple. Direct—
 - It made life more difficult and confusing in relationship to what is going on inside our minds.
 - None of these philosophers studied mental health. It is its own beast
 - So I decided to go to the people...
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Began with conducting Personal Interviews

- First I sent out a post on social media
- Gathered willing participants
- Sent them a questionnaire and sign up sheet

The Questionnaire included

- What is your relationship with “Mental Health?”
- What is your relationship with “therapy?”
- Do you think Therapy was/is helpful? Do you still go?
- Have you ever gone to group therapy?
- What is something/ a topic you wished was talked about more often/something that deserves more exposure?
- What was a true moment of breakthrough for you? A sort of “staple mantra” if you will.
- Have you ever experienced extreme/mild trauma? Do you think that trauma would be linked to the “mental health experiences” you’ve had? If you are comfortable, please share.
- Anything else you would like to share :)

What I learned...

- No one had the same journey, yet all came to similar conclusions
- Everyone either had pre-existing signs or conditions that indicated a need for extra help in their mental health journey
- Though a lot of people initially never thought they needed help.
- At some point, their mental health starting affecting their day to day lives
- Their willingness and desire to get better- that is when real change started.
- Almost everyone in retrospect said that they were thankful for the things that happened to them the way they did, because those painful experiences were the necessary breaking points that brought them to where they were now.

COOL RIGHT?



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- Although these personal stories have been fantastic to hear, they are still so personal. I needed more objective facts about Mental health...
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Professional Interviews!

- I reached out to the counseling center and before I knew it, I had interviews on interviews lined up!
- All the people I talked to were credited psychologists and therapists with proper education and degrees of specialties.

What I learned...

- There is no right answer
 - Therapy is a safe space to explore and discover
 - Helps when the person is credited, unbiased, and focused on the same goal as you- to help you feel better
 - You have to want to get better. You have to want to go to therapy
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Fun Facts I learned

Genetics do play a role. But not in the way you think

There are a lot of coincidences. But that doesn't mean that their bodies are failing them.

Learned the difference between **Disorders and Tendencies**

A **Diagnosis** is mainly for you

Medication is great

Trauma— A real thing to deal with

But two people could live the exact same life with the exact same experiences, and circumstances, and objectively, they should have the same personal life, but that is not the case.

Our bodies are adaptive by nature- so when traumatic things happen, our bodies will adjust to it. Sometimes we are aware of it and can trace it but other times, it could be happening without us even realizing it.

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The human condition is so varied and so unpredictable. Its important to find a therapist you like and get along well with.

Medication is great

You need to decide what is the best form of addressing your goals.

Trauma— A real thing to deal with

Our bodys are adaptive by nature- so when traumatic things happen, our bodies will adjust to it. Sometimes we are aware of it and can trace it but other times, it could be happening without us even realizing it.

Back to the Books! Shakespeare Baby!

- So with all this new knowledge in mind, I set out to re-read the Shakespeare shows and track each character that I was planning on using in my show and sleuth out their individual experiences.
 - Who we have in the story-
 - Benvolio-Romeo and Juliet
 - Horatio- Hamlet
 - Miranda- The Tempest
 - Rosalind- As you Like It
 - Helena- A Midsummer Night's Dream
 - Fleance- Macbeth
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The fun part begins...

- Took some brainstorming and a lot of trial and error, but a Show was made!
 - The basic Plot
 - We have all these characters come together and join a support group for people who have gone through Shakespearean Traumas
 - As this play progresses, we have flashbacks of each character in their individual therapy sessions from the past, discussing specific moments in their lives.
 - Incorporating concepts from a Mike Schur Comedy, there is laughter, whacky interactions, every specific archetypes explored, and then to contrast that, very real and serious moments.
 - and of course, there are dramatic plot points because they are Shakespeare characters. They are made for Drama.
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What I learned

- Life is really complicated.
 - It's a never ending journey of learning. As Dewey taught us, the joy of being alive is in learning. But learning is not restricted to just the academic pursuits.
 - I believe the answer to humanity's existence is that there is no one way to live life. There is no singular answer. If we had all the answers, we wouldn't be here.
 - Maybe you believe in a God, or you believe there is no deeper meaning to life, but the more you learn and the more you live, the richer your life gets.
 - The biggest thing we can do is honor our personal and intellectual inclinations to somehow create something that matters.
 - During this hard time, things seem even bleaker than normal, I have learned
 - To keep living and keep existing, what you do with the in between is up to you.
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