



Speaker Series – Mental Health from Prevention to Wellness

February 27th, 2021

Education Committee Report

The guest speaker representing Education was Kendra Fisher. Kendra very boldly told her life story of dealing with crippling mental health, including severe anxiety and depression.

Kendra Fisher, a native of Kincardine Ontario was living the life of dreams. As a star goalie, she was recruited by the Canadian National team. With the support of her family and community she was set to fly off to Calgary to live out her dream and life ambitions. She was aware that something was not right as she had been struggling with anxiety for the past year. Upon accepting the position she was overcome with crippling anxiety and did not know if she was capable of attending the training programs. Her father sensing her anxiety, flew to Calgary ahead of her to help her transition into the training. Upon arriving in Calgary she was overcome with severe anxiety, and decided to withdraw. The Canadian National Team stood behind her and offered to get her the best treatment they could provide.

Upon arriving back home she lived with severe anxiety and depression. She became a prisoner in her home and started to fade away. Seeing a psychologist and with the help of her family, she attended an exclusive girls school in Toronto, trying to refocus on her life and find her identity. Kendra acknowledged going to that school was the worst thing that happened to her.

She spent 5 years of her life, trying to cope everyday. Upon hitting rock bottom, she decided to become her own advocate and use the knowledge and the resources that were offered her. She could not exist on ice cream forever and mental health was not going to be her life sentence. Kendra decided to learn how to live with mental illness.

Once she was on the road to recovery and dealing with her mental illness as part of her life, a friend's son's suicide motivated her to become an advocate for mental health. She decided to use her experience and life skills to reach out to others dealing with mental health. She encouraged us to look in on people and if we noticed anything odd, we should speak up and offer our help. This pandemic had impacted people like never before. We need to take care of each other.

Kendra has started a business Mentallyfit. She loves to speak to school groups and other organizations to remove the stigma of mental health. She is also a firefighter and still plays hockey.

Kendra's journey and the loss of her life for 5 years was very difficult to listen to. She has taken a dark difficult time in her life and changed it into a life journey to help anyone who is struggling with mental illness. Kendra emphasized that mental health is not a life sentence.

Respectfully submitted,

Wendy Taylor, CFUW OC Education Committee Chair