

DMM ep4.1

Mina: in this episode, we talk about suicide. If you feel this may be triggering for you or troubling in any way, please skip this episode.

If you were feeling suicidal

or struggling with depression or any issues raised here, you can call the national suicide prevention lifeline on 1-800-273-TALK, which is 8 2 5, 5.

Or please text NAMI to the number 7 4 1 7 4 1. Or reach out to someone you can talk.

Mariel: And my oldest daughter is doing really well. She's in Europe right now. She's an actress and you know, she's on, on that rollercoaster as you well know. Um, but she's really well. Yeah. I know you chose that. Okay, good.

Madchen: I know we keep, we keep trying to discourage our, our next generation from following in our gypsy artists lives do it, but it's also, but

Mariel: it's in, it's in the blood really?

You're sensitive. So go choose something where they're going to reject you a lot.

Madchen: I know.

Mariel: Uh,

Mina: Hello, and welcome to Don't Mine Me, a podcast designed to open up the conversation around mental health and help erase the stigma around mental illness. I'm Muna Tobias. I'm joined as always with my mother Madchen Amick, the wonderful, beautiful actress writer director who has. Five days left in her feature, film, directorial debut.

So thank you for being here

Madchen: and being awake really alive. I don't know how I'm

Mina: to, if we hear you just go radio silent, you're just taking.

Madchen: And just little now you just carry on without me.

Mina: Uh, we are joined today by the lovely Mariel Hemingway, who is just, I mean, I don't even know where to begin. I'll let my mom do the proper intro because you guys were cast together

Madchen: on the show and that's where it all started.

Just gets our listeners caught up on our friendship. And when we met, we met in 1995. Um, did we actually shoot a pilot for central park west or did we just go straight?

Mariel: I think we went straight in. I think they just. We went straight in and straight downhill. No, I'm just kidding.

Madchen: Straight in and out. We got, Hey, we got a season out of it.

Not many people

Mariel: get a season best time making that show. I, it was,

Madchen: it was New York city. It was a little challenging for me because Mina and her brother were very young and I was very resistant to like, we were living in Santa Barbara at the time and it was very resistant to do an hour. Television show because of the, I knew the hours that it takes to do that kind of show.

And they were really little, they were still in diapers, like their little itty bitty kids. And I was like, I just don't want to be like an absent mom and not around. And, but I ended up doing it anyway, but it was in, in Manhattan, which was so amazing to film in that was a great experience. It was. And, um, and you know, The fate brought you and I together who would have known I know 1995, that we would be in 2021 and both mental health advocates.

And working side by side to try to change the narrative out there and make change in, in the mental health world in general. So, you know, Hey, that's, I guess that's fate, right? It puts us, puts us in places, I guess we're supposed to be.

Mariel: Yeah, absolutely. I know. I was saying to your daughter, I remembered her.

Which is frightening. Hey know, everybody hates when you say that, but it's like, wow, I had,

Mina: I had attitude even, even

Mariel: back then, from what I, you're still a baby, you'll always be a baby to us.

Madchen: That's what happens with moms and their children. You will be babies forever. I

Mina: don't mind it. I wanted to, just before we get deeper into our conversation, some of the stuff we're going to talk about can be pretty sensitive.

And so I just want to give a quick little. A trigger warning if you will, to our audience. So we are going to be discussing all kinds of stuff about mental health and depression and suicide. So just before warned and I would love to hand it over to mom too, because you both have actually, before this have worked on a documentary pilot, that mommy we're shooting about mental health.

So if you want to talk a little bit about that,

Madchen: it's been 10 years now, since my sons of Esther's been diagnosed with bipolar disorder and. We've sort of chatted about this in the documentary. You and I had come back across each other many years later. And I believe it was in the San Francisco airport and we exchanged numbers.

And I remember you had like a nutritional book coming out and, you know, these different things. And then just a few years after that, you know, everything started with my son and, and we had just watched your documentary running from crazy, which was so good. I just thought like, first of all, I was. Proud of you in general for coming out with your story and your family's story.

And, um, I just found it. You were just so brave and open talking about your family's experience. And so it really just touched me in that way, but I didn't know that that was then going to be a tool for how I was going to deal with my son's diagnosis and how our family was going to navigate. Mental illness hitting our family.

So right. And I'm going to really try to make sure to not to cry in this episode, it's

Mina: not going to happen.

Mariel: She said in every episode,

Mina: even when we're not talking about anything, that deep, she's just like

Madchen: a safe place to

Mina: cry. So if that's what you're feeling is a safe place,

Madchen: it is welcome. And for all the listeners in your car, driving to work, you can cry to cry along with us.

I was just incredibly thankful to have been able to have just. Called you up and told you about what was happening and you had such great kind words that were also very like. It w it was a great guidance for me, because it just gave me some, some tools and knowledge, like immediately of just about this journey we were about to go on.

So, you know, I'm just so incredibly grateful for you for that. And then we've now banded together, time to time speaking at events and joining forces like we are right now and just getting the word out there about mental health awareness. And, and I think just recently, you and I talked about that, it's great to be a voice.

To erase the stigma and share our stories, but that we're both at this point where we want to do more than that. We want to actually create change in our country and in our mental health care system and how we're both, you know, starting foundations and wanting to do things. Um, open up treatment for people that wouldn't otherwise be able to have access to in our, and I think we're so much like-minded as well as like, we don't want to go out there and compete with other foundations or compete with other, um, institutions.

We want to join forces and do this together. So I'd love to jump into that and what, like where you're at with that, not only mental health advocacy, but also, you know,

Mariel: making change. Yes, we are totally on the same page because. First of all, you know, this whole idea of like stop the stigma and, and bring awareness to mental.

We all know that mental health problems exist. Nobody's under any illusion that they don't exist anymore. We it's. In, in proportion, you know, people are suffering and people have been suffering for a very, very long time. Mental health and mental illness has been an issue for centuries. And it's the one thing that people don't like to talk about.

It's the one thing that we're, we have so much shame and embarrassment around and the truth is the more that we embrace it, you just have to embrace the story because we all have. We all come from something. I mean, you guys deal with a very severe and real problem that you can now define. But when I was growing up in my sister was schizophrenia or my other sister was bipolar and we had no idea.

You know, there's manic episodes. We just thought whatever. I know, I know my parents thought that they just were, you know, what did we do wrong? How are we not parenting well, or it's the seventies. She did too many drugs. You know? Like there was just all kinds of excuses as to why. And the truth of the matter is that this problem exists.

So that's where our foundations and we've now named it. Oh, you're going to like, this is embarrassing. Okay. I can't wait, what is it? It's the Mariel Hemingway foundation. I

Madchen: love it. You know why? Because, uh,

Mariel: You know, but you go in there and try to do a name. Now it's like, oh, 17 people and you have to put a loan on the house anyway.

So I just thought, well, nobody

Madchen: can mess with them. It's really important that you actually use. Use your user last name. Cause that's it's you know that, I mean, you, you have to do that. It brings immediate recognition. Yeah. You've

Mariel: got to use the power that you have of the, the resources and the people and the acknowledgement of where you've been.

And that's all that means. And again, it is about. Joining forces because we're not going to treat people necessarily, but we're going to guide you towards your solution because I do believe there's a solution for everyone. It may not be easy. It may not, you know, the road is rough and the road is strange and it's new and it's scary, but solutions do exist and they may not.

Like you think they're going to look, you know, and it's a combination of everything. And that's why, you know, when I first spoke to you about it, when it was all very new to you, and it was scary to me to speak to somebody who who's a friend who also, I know it's like, it's your. No, I'll cry. Don't do that.

Um, yeah,

Madchen: please go first. Please start first. I can blame it on you. You can

Mariel: do that. I felt, I felt such a responsibility. To you as a friend, as a mother. And, and just to know that, you know, it was everything you do. It's the food he's eating. It's, it's the choices he's making every single day, but it's very hard because as people get older and they get set in their ways and their, how their brain feels, they want to do things that make their brain feel better that make their life seem better.

But it may not be the solution for them. That's why it takes a community because it's about finding your way in and your road towards recovery.

Madchen: Yeah. And I mean, so many of. Things that you've already brought up. I wanted to hit on. And I love that you always have these natural ways of going about your mental health.

So I think that it's such an important conversation to the piece because yes, I think my son will always be on some form of medication. He has a severe case of bipolar disorder. And what my doctor said was, you know, there's sort of been a wave of recognizing bipolar disorder, but. Such a varying degree and that a lot of places can say, yeah, we do.

We deal with bipolar disorder. But he said for a very severe case of bipolar disorder, bipolar one, it just, it just takes someone to be a primary mental health care treatment center. And there's bipolar one bipolar two, which has a little more depressive features. And then there's now there's a three, I don't know how long the three has been around and what exactly goes with the three.

But we, you talking about. All of the natural ways that you go about it. I love that because it will, it can be incorporated into people's lives. Brand could get to a point where you've balanced your sleep, your nutrition, your exercise. Other different kinds of meditations or different practices, the biofeedback that you were talking about a while ago, which I really want to get into, and then maybe, you know, you then reduce down your medication to the lowest level that you need because you've supported exactly your life in a

Maribel: holistic way.

And that's what it's about. I'm not saying that nobody should be on medication. Everybody's solution looks different also, you know, what's, what's challenging is some of these places and you've had better, more experience with this than me. You know, they say they can do something. And then when it comes right down to it and bipolar can be very severe, a manic episode.

Incredibly difficult, but for a treatment center to not be able to handle, uh, an episode is crazy and that's tough and that is, and it's wrong for, for them. I don't know. I get very frustrated and I think that's why we both. We've got to start a foundation even to direct people towards things that we know work or combine some of these things.

Cause I think there's a lot of different places that have lots of different solutions that you can put together. Yeah. You know, like. Create something together. They, it breaks my heart. When I know that you have struggled with the place being accepting of him, that's all. Yeah,

Madchen: it's been, it's been hard to find places just as sort of recap for, you know, our first four episodes that we've recorded already has kind of been a real time of what we've been going through as a family, getting to know our story and just really the waves of getting into it and sharing it.

As we were going through it. Um, so we did end up finding a place for Sylvester. That seems to be doing what we were hoping we would find, which is really understanding the mental health component. Primarily he did go back into the hospitals since our last episode, he needed to stabilize more cause his mania was still spiking, but they really handled it well.

So at the moment, Things things are going good, but you know, it's like you have to take things. And this is really important for everyone out there that has a

loved one that might be struggling or just looking for help, but there will be waves that are really challenging. And it also, you have to take things in steps.

You know, I think right now, Sylvester needs to get stable for a long period of time. He needs to get stable on the medication and start making good lifestyle choices to support him. And then I really want him to start looking into these alternative. Ideas that might help the different things that you have.

Talk to me about, I was wanting you to just talk about the alternative ways to approach mental health, because I just think you're so tapped in to different things. I'm a

Marriel: big believer that lifestyle can help the body and the brain. To correct. What's wrong because I think that we do generally, as human beings want to be healthier, you just have to be given the right information and the body and the brain has to understand what's going on.

I believe that food is incredibly important, but it's. A one-size fits all, you know, not everybody should be vegan, not everybody should be whatever, you know, paleo this, that, and the other thing. But it's about finding that thing. You know, what is it about me that feels better eating a certain way? So there's, there's food, there's supplements, not crazy amount of supplements, but there are supplements that help the brain there's meditation.

And I say that as. Prayer or silence any kind of time where you can get quiet and still and slow your life down. Breathe breathing is a hugely important thing. I don't know if you've read James Nestor's book, uh, breath. It's extraordinary, but really our, how we breathe. Can really help your brain, you know, I mean, it's, it's extraordinary.

So I've started now.

Madchen: I actually just recently went to kind of a, I don't use acupuncture and does massage work and energy work. And I went in, I was saying, you know, my shoulders, my shoulders are always like stressed and tight and it locks up my neck and he just looked at me and said, you're not breathing.

I'm like, well, I'm obviously breathing, I'm alive. And he said, but you're not breathing. Deep, all of your breaths are super shallow. And so you're, you're

holding all of your tension, you know, up here. So ever since then, I've been like, Okay, nice and

Maribel: deep. Right? Well, now that's interesting. I want you to read James Nestor's book because it's actually not about deep breath.

It's about nasal breathing. Nasal breathing is what's really important and it's about breathing into a Sur. We think of it as deep, but it's breathing into the belly. I just think that all these different things are things that we need. Look into how can learning to breathe better, be bad for you in any way.

Right? So nasal breathing is super, super powerful. I really want you to read that book and I want you to call me afterwards, but it's so profound. The simple things that we can do every single day there's breath, there's food. There's exercise. And not a lot of, you know, it's not crazy. I mean, your husband, trains people.

I mean, you get it, you get the importance of physically letting energy out. That's why the mental health conversation is much more, more complex. Then people want to realize we're not just a head and a body separate. We, they work together. So you have to make those connections. You know,

Madchen: and that's so profound too, because I think one of the disconnects, like literally disconnects is.

We really are treating the body separately than the mind. And it goes both ways. Absolutely. We really put a lot of importance on medical conditions in the body. You know, when you have heart disease or when you have diabetes, when you have cancer, like all these different things that are they're happening in the body.

And yet we seem to be really. Pushing aside, anything about the mind? Cause it's just mysterious, but we have to physically think about the brain and its health. Absolutely. And it's just as important if not the most important organ in your body. Right. So I think that's part of the disconnect of the stigma attached to mental illness.

The blaming of like, oh, you're making bad choices in your life or attaching some kind of personality problem to the choices that are just chemically happening in your brain. And I think people don't understand it, that that person that seems so moody or that person that has anger problems or whatever, you

just not understanding that they're actually very well could be a chemical imbalance that you're not understanding.

Absolutely. And, um, and then vice versa, like you're saying you don't just treat the mind. You have to look at the entire body and the health of entire body and how it co-exists with the mind and how they each need to flow into each other for each other's health.

Maribel: Even the conversation about the microbiome, you know, this, this being your, your second.

They actually think it might be the first brain. I don't know. My stomach doesn't seem like it's that smart, but there is something to be said for the, the microbiome being a healthy, if there's healthy bacteria in there. It affects the brain and hormone levels. I mean, when you think about having your children and after you have a child, then all of a sudden everything's thrown off.

So it's really everything you do, it's everything. And then it's about once you've figured out sort of the physicality of your life, you know, whether you move and what kind of movement works for you? This. You need to eat that works for you and then finding that all out. And then it's about how can you become focused in, on how you're thinking and stop those thoughts?

Cause we have repetitive thoughts that are constantly challenging. I was speaking to somebody the other day who really has been suffering really deep depression. And the end he said to me, you know, like there's no reason I was looking at my kids. My kids are great. And here I am at summer and I felt so bad.

Well, during a time, I should feel really good. And I said, look, you need to be conscious of your thoughts because when those negative thoughts and those negative thoughts, I'm I know for a fact that they're not you, that's in trained behavior, that those negative dark thoughts that criticize you and find fault with you.

That's not you, that's a learned behavior. That's, you know, the environment that's society. That's this, that, and the other thing. So if we can stop those thoughts and say, cancel, cancel, cancel, and replace it with something kind and loving towards yourself. I know that sounds. Mundane and crazy, but those kinds of habits that you get into, then you become part of your own solution.

And it doesn't mean that some people don't, like you said, need to be on medication. My sister needs to be on medication, but to be a part of that solution is so much better because then you do get to cut back. Like, maybe you don't need as much medication because the lifestyle starts to support the system.

That's trying to get

Madchen: better. Yeah. It's interesting. What you're bringing up too about like the, the thought process and the things that you do in your everyday life. On the one hand. Yes. There may be a chemical imbalance that you're dealing with. That's causing these things in these thoughts, but at the same time, you can create good chemicals.

With making the right lifestyle choices and, and thought process and surrounding yourself with good positive people and, you know, feeling that love. I mean, when we did the documentary and we sat down and talked with the doctor, um, yeah, he brought up those chemicals that are released when you just have connection with a human.

Yeah. How important that is. I think we have

Mina: a clip of Dr. Mark. Goulston a prominent psychiatrist and

suicide prevention

specialist here.

Mark: You feel like you're a burden to everyone or a worry, and they shame you and they blame you. I dropped out of medical school twice and I didn't drop out to see the world.

I think I had untreated depression that was at a low point. And so I meet with the Dean of the school and he says, you didn't screw up. But you are screwed up and you're going to let me help you. And I think it was a miracle because it just flipped something. It flipped a switch in me. I'd like to remove the fear of mental illness, because as long as there's fear of mental illness, there will always be stigma.

Stigma is always fueled by three things. Whoever we stigmatize, we're afraid of. We're afraid they'll overwhelm us. We're afraid. We're just afraid. And so we, and we don't like being afraid. And so we find some way to blame them for

something we find some way to make it their fault. We find some way to, to say it's there they're bad.

And then that, then the third thing is it justifies us, ignoring them.

Madchen: What happened. In the brain scientifically, especially when it goes into suicide thinking,

there's

Mark: lots of

chemicals, but I want to first start with something called cortisol and something called oxytocin. We have three kinds of brains because we have a thinking human brain.

We have an emotional mammalian brain and we have a reptilian brain, but in the middle of the brain, the mammalian brain, they have this thing called the amygdala when you're stressed out and you're depressed and you can't take it anymore, cortisol goes up and your amygdala hijacks you away from thinking about.

So all you're thinking about is fight or flight or freeze. But what a lot of people don't know is the antidote for high cortisol is oxytocin. And when your oxytocin goes up, you calm down, which means you feel less alone and you come up with solutions for yourself.

Marriel: Absolutely. And that's the other thing.

I mean, we also live in this society here. We are on, you know, some crazy internet, you know, and people aren't making real connections. That's really hard. That's making it very challenging for people to get the right kind of help because sometimes that physical connection that you make with somebody is going to be the difference between.

Making a good choice and making a bad choice, just having that physicality, just that, that knowing that, you know, our bodies we're animals at the end of the day, and we long for connection. Yeah. We're community-based animals. That's what was hard about the pandemic, you know, all of a sudden we're isolated and

we're not allowed and we're not even allowed to hug one another, you know, we can't touch anymore.

These are things that affect. The brain because we physically need that. I, again, it just comes down to it's so many things, there's so many different things to juggle and look at, and it's fun to it. To me. I think this is kind of cool. Like I'm we get to be. Our own like scientists, we get to figure this stuff out by, by going, you know?

Okay. That didn't work so well, but there's

Madchen: no one right way. No.

Mariel: And, and we're not, you know, we're not cookie cutter people. We're not, you know, what's going to work for me is not going to work for you and your son's going to be, have all a plethora of things that are just specifically for him. And it's going to be a journey to really figure out what that is.

And that's okay. You just say, okay, I can take this off. Yeah. It's better than not being a part of it, but

Mina: I think you both have in common is that your journeys into mental health are from experiences within the family. And that's a lot of people's introduction into mental health. It's, it's kind of a weird system where unlike other things in health it's oh, I had a friend or a parent or a sibling, and then people start learning about mental health.

Mariel: Look at you guys now,

Mina: and I'm super curious, especially Mariel and mom to the Mary. All the work that you do is really heavy. And just like how you were kind of like our spiritual guru, um, through our journey, you are constantly helping and connecting with a lot of people who are going through really traumatic times.

And I'm curious, how does

Madchen: that weigh on you and how

Mina: do you. Take care of your own mental health through

Marriel: the heaviness of your work, I guess, because I've never had a different family. My family's always been a bit of a challenge and you're right. It takes the awful experience or the tragic experiences for you to go, oh my gosh, now I'm going to pay attention to this, but I've never had a different families.

So for me, it's not heavy because I also think if you approach it as though, oh gosh, I'm so sorry. This is so heavy. I'm so sorry. You're awful life. You know what I mean? Then it feels like, oh shit, I'll never get out of this. Right. I don't see it that way. These are blips in the road and we need to figure out how to get past them so that we can move forward with a different attitude and okay, this work, this work and this work and this didn't.

Okay, no problem. And not judging the process. So I never see myself. I mean, my own mental health is super important to me. And it's why I know about certain things. Cause I have suffered depression. You know, I've been in, in, in dark places that are not easy. Now I look back, I kind of laugh because I really have found my solution, but it still took the time it took for me to figure it out.

I see my life and my figuring out how my brain works as this great adventure, because I think we've been blessed with brains and bodies. So let's figure out how ours works best.

Madchen: So I think. What's interesting and just beautiful about the Hemingway name is that we all know your grandfather, Ernest Hemingway, and then there's also a long with the fame of that name and the celebration of him as an artist.

Then there's always the tr the tragedy that goes along with the name, you know, and including your sister Margo, but in even beyond that what's so mind-blowing, I think to people that they don't even understand is how many members of your family. Have died by suicide, which was, I forget the number I remember in.

In your documentary, you talked about all of them, but can you go through them

Marriel: again? Yes. So obviously my grandfather earnest took his life. His father took his life. Uh, my grandmother Hadley, who was married to, it was a first wife of earnest. Her father took his life and then I had a great uncle, a great aunt, and then my own.

So it's either six or seven, but it's a lot, you know, it's a lot. And then what that does is make you feel like that's a curse, you know, like they used to call it the Hemingway curse. And I used to think of. Crap. That's awful. When is, is it catchable, which is

Madchen: a terrible thing to have to grow up with, right?

Yeah, exactly. And that isn't a discussion on genetics, right? So mental illness runs in families. It's in all of our families. And I think whenever we open up and we talk about this and you sort of open the conversation to people. Everyone has someone, if it's it right now, the statistic is one in four.

People will deal with some form of mental illness or mood disorder in their lifetime. I'm sure that's changing. There's probably more awareness and more treatment happening, but I mean, that's, that's somebody in your group of friends at somebody at work that somebody in your family. Yeah. So I think moving.

Forward. It's just accepting, like, look, this is just something that is in our families and in our friends. And so let's just recognize what it is and then give a roadmap forward to understanding it. The more that we sweep it under the rug, put it away in a corner. It's not going to go away if you ignore it.

So. Talking about it and you coming out, I think, I don't know if there's anyone else in your family that has the same sort of attitude that you have and the courage that you've had to just go out, tackle it, be a part of suicide prevention and discussing openly about what's happened in your family and what, how to address it.

Is there anything that, you know, are there any like genetic scientific facts since. It has been prevalent within your family?

Marriel: Yeah, I think it is, it is passed down. I mean, obviously there's a lot of it in my family, genetics. It does exist in families. It is sometimes passed down, but again, just because it's in your family doesn't mean that that's definitively going to happen to you.

Number one, and number two, it's just another, another thing to be aware of. So, okay. I've got that in my family. Just like you go to the doctor and he says, is there any history of cancer in your family or heart disease? And so you look at

that and you say, okay, I'm going to prevent this from happening to me, knowledge is power.

Then we get to make different choices. But if you sit there going like this and I don't want to hear it, and I don't want to deal with this. Yeah. That's one problem. That's when it will come and it will just keep slapping you. It was like

Madchen: you pay generation after generation.

Mariel: You don't jump, jump ahead and say, okay, I'm going to take the, take this by the rains.

I'm I don't need to have this defined. The, so

Madchen: that's such a great way to talk about it, comparing it to heart disease and all of these other things. It's like my mom survived breast cancer. So I go to the extra trouble to make sure that I'm screening myself more diligently and. My father, um, you know, D died by a massive heart attack.

So we have to be careful as a family about heart health. So you're absolutely correct. And I think that's one of the things that my son sort of mentioned at one point, and I hope he still doesn't feel this way, but he's like, I don't know if I should ever have kids. I don't want to pass this down. And that's when I was like, oh honey, like, does that mean we shouldn't have kids because we have heart disease in our family, or if we have this in our family.

So. Normalizing it talking about it, addressing it, finding out all of the ways to treat it. Because we're just human and we're all, we're all complicated. And we all have a mixed bag of all kinds of stuff.

Mariel: You're not going to have the most amazing day every single day of your life. I mean, life just shifts, you know, things change all the time.

So I tend to look at things from a perspective of solution, solution, solution. We're good. We're human and we are designed to survive and thrive. And when you have that attitude, I believe that the solutions come to you. So you open yourself up to the right information coming to you, you know, for your son.

For me, personally, for anybody that I speak to that I'm. Or may not be helping, but I just asked to be given the right information because I think that we are

designed to help one another and to get that good information, but closing your eyes to it is never a good, it's never a solution. I think

Madchen: you're, you know, you you're so right.

Touching on. We're all going to have bad days. We're all going to have waves of things. I absolutely go through long waves of depression if I'm, you know, up in Vancouver working and it, you know, a lot of times there's no sun for a long period of time overworked missing my family and it, it will really catch on.

And I really start to feel like I feel chemically imbalanced. Like it's just beyond having a sad day, but knowing that there's going to be what you are human. We're all shades of gray all the time. Like we're all different varying degrees. So not having it be so daunting that, oh, do I have a chemical imbalance and do I need to go seek help for it?

But it's also when you get to that point, I'm starting to feel that this is unmanageable is when you need to reach out to find support, to find resources and figure out, okay. How, how can you work at getting yourself back in balance? Like just always trying to do

Mariel: that. Uh, and, and to your point, I know for myself, you know, darkness is not my friend.

Like I'm, we're moving to Idaho soon. And I, part of the reason we chose the house that we chose is because it gets so much. Because I'm terrified of that darkness, but of course I was speaking to a friend yesterday and she's like, you know, about those lights. It's kind of like a ring light, but it's not the happy lights.

Yeah. They work. Just give yourself as much advantage to be able to overcome the circumstances because you do. You know, you are on this incredibly popular and amazing show, but it does shoot in Vancouver and winter in Vancouver is rough. That's rough. It's like, I, you know, it's like Idaho, Idaho in the winter is dark for many, many months.

And you're like, you know, yeah.

Madchen: Well, I wanted to go in a little bit about. Just suicide in general, because you are working in this space. So obviously because you have this in your family, so I wanted to see what you could share about it, but I know that

they get so crippling for some people. I know a lot of people that will talk to me about like, you know, I had a friend that was sort of talking with some suicidal language.

Scares them and cripples them so much. They like, they don't want to say the wrong thing and they don't know how to address it, that they just avoid it. And I'm wondering if you have learned anything through your suicide prevention work of what you could give. Just some advice to people that either if you're feeling.

The wave of suicidal thinking, or maybe your loved one, anything that you can do to enlighten anyone out there that just feels sort of lost and what

Marriel: to do. There's no right thing to say. When it comes to people who have, first of all, most people don't tell you if they're really feeling suicidal. It's usually a big secret.

I just want to give people that have been the survivors left behind. Yeah. Just some words of encouragement. You didn't do anything wrong. It's not about, oh, I should have, or I didn't say I love them. You know, the last time I spoke to them or we got in a fight, whatever, because the person's pain become so great in a moment that they take their life and we don't know why that is.

And it's heartbreaking and it's awful, but it's not anyone's fault. You know, just being a. To people that are suffering that's for me, that's the biggest thing. Cause I think that most people just don't feel heard. So if, if you're around somebody who really is challenged and maybe having suicidal thoughts or whatever, just be a human who listens.

Because it's very hard for us as human beings to listen, you know? Cause we want, you know, we want to give a solution. We want

Madchen: to say, I think the instinct is always like, well, let me say this, that will fix you or let me guide you to something.

Marriel: Yeah. Yeah. And maybe they just need to be heard. And also it isn't about you.

I don't mean to sound callous, but at the end of the day, It's not about them. And at the same time when that person takes their life than it is about you, but it's not because you're a to blame. It's about you. He. You know, you dealing with the

devastation of Louis, losing somebody that you love. Um, but it's never that it's your fault ever.

And that is so hard for people. The people left behind her, they're devastated and asking themselves questions and, and ultimately it's just, those are questions that can't be answered because they, you weren't there, you weren't in the room, you weren't in the brain, you weren't wherever it was that that tragedy happened.

And it's not anybody's fault. You weren't there and it wasn't you,

Madchen: but you must have that. You must have been on some journey to get here though. Cause I'm sure when it first happened for you, you went through all kinds of thoughts and feelings and guilt and everything, and then you eventually had to get to this place, right?

Mariel: Absolutely. When you, you initially hear about somebody taking their life, it's that you. You have to ask yourself those questions they're normal, but I'm just here because of experience to say that it really isn't it's it's nobody's fault because sometimes it's somebody with a massive chemical imbalance.

Like my sister had, or it's 20 minutes of a bad day for a kid who doesn't realize that life changes. You know what I mean? So for a kid who's going to high school who had massive rejection or, or being bullied or whatever it is, and they take their life. The reason they did it is, is probably because they have no experience in the world that things change.

Yeah. You know, I have a lifetime of experience knowing that everything is in an ebb and flow. Everything changes, everything. It always shifts even, you know, manic behavior changes to depressive behavior or normal behavior. And then, you know, they're doing really well for a certain amount of time. It always changes.

But for some, some people that take their lives, especially young people, that's why I'm doing a docu series on, on kids. Uh, on the prevention of suicide for teenagers, because I think it's such a become epidemic proportions because kids really don't have an understanding that life changes and there's no, you know, experience to go, oh, I get it.

You know, I remember when that happened to me when I was whatever, but it shifted and I was okay. But when you've gone through those heavy feelings of

childhood and your hormones are crazy and life is just, you know, like whatever those emotions seemed so real and like they're never going to shit. Right.

So

Madchen: I don't know. It's important to keep talking about it and keep trying to spread the awareness and the education so that we can help the young, the young ones coming through, know that yeah, this may feel overwhelming and daunting and that it's never going to change and you can't survive, but you can, you will get through.

We, we all have really, really shitty moments in there in our lives, but it will change and it will move forward. And, um, we just have to keep trying to spread that word. Out there and, and in life does, I mean, that's the beauty of life, but then sometimes you're in a really great space and you're like, I don't want to this to go, but it, that will change as well, you know?

And you have to, you have to ride the wave of life. So how are your daughters just from mother to mother?

Mariel: They're doing really well. I, my youngest Langley, who's 31. Yeah, she's 31. She's an amazing artist. She's the one that I worried about. I think in the documentary, I kind of like, I worried about her and her being, you know, suffering a little depression, a little darkness, but she, she channels it into her art and it's quite extraordinary.

And my oldest daughter. Doing really well, she's in Europe right now. She's an actress and you know, she's on, on that coaster as you well know really well. Yeah, I know. No, I know you've chosen. Okay, good. I know

Madchen: we keep he trying to discourage our, our next generation from following in our gypsy artistic lives do it, but it's also,

Mariel: it's in, it's in the blood.

You're sensitive. So go choose something where they're going to reject you a lot.

Madchen: I know, but you know, I think, I think hopefully there's some good change happening in now. I think there's been a really big wave just in general from when you did your documentary. To me doing my documentary. There's

been, there was a lot of resistance, like, Ooh, I don't know if we want to talk about that kind of subject.

It's kind of a downer and this and that to a real awareness that's happened recently. And I think the pandemic might've pushed it even farther. Um, cause we really got to sit with our feelings and our frustrations and I think that's amazing, but I also think as parents. Raising our kids in this isn't, this is new for David and I, because this sort of hit our family.

Once our kids were late teens going into the early twenties. And I sort of wish we had this knowledge and an openness even before, but it's just raising the next generation with openness to talk about our mental health and to make it be okay. And to. Maybe okay. To talk about that, you know, have our kids feel like it's okay to talk if you're struggling,

Mariel: but that starts with you.

You know, we have to, we have to be okay as parents, we have to be okay with ourselves and our ability to talk about it because it starts with you. So, you know, the, the whole parenting thing is, are you cool with your own darkness because we all have it. And when you can deal with your own stuff, then. I think we can be helpful to our kids or young adult people.

Madchen: As we, as

Mina: we wrap it up, I wanted to, um, kind of talk about where we're at now. And that's, as my mom was talking about, we're working on our own foundation. You are as well. And I think the common thing that you both have aside from mental health as a whole, is that, um, beyond talking about it and beyond racing stigma, you want to open up accessibility and I would love to.

And this conversation with any tools or resources that you know of and you trust that you could share that have helped you or the people that you've, um, that are in the community with you, uh, that people can reach out to if they're struggling or know somebody

Mariel: that's struggling as well. It's so hard.

Cause I don't think there's one specific, like, you know, there's different nominees in different communities that have been very helpful to people that I know. But some are a little weaker in certain areas, but, you know, I can say that

there are some really good NAMI is national association for mental illness and they're very effective, um, throughout the country.

And at least it's, uh, it is a good resource to least get directed towards something, but I always think. You know, whatever your community is, look into your community and look into your mental health professionals, but also start looking into your lifestyle. I would say, you know, read a book about breath, learn, learn a lot of different things about living life.

Well, you know what I mean? Those are the tools that I like to share with people because they're very doable. They don't. Prescription and they make you feel active in your own ability to figure things out. There are crisis hotlines, especially Los Angeles. There's some really wonderful crisis hotlines that have been very helpful.

I would like to see, uh, my foundation be kind of one of those voices where you can get somebody on the phone and, and we can either talk to you directly or direct you toward. That right thing. And I think that that's what you want to do with your foundation is like, let's just get people to where they need to be.

I don't care. With me, because I don't have the solution for everybody, but if we can just start guiding people towards, towards that right thing, because there's not one solution and there's not one group that's, you know, there's groups that are doing well. And then there's groups that aren't and you just gotta dig.

You gotta do a little research and it's, it's not easy, but it's also not impossible. My big hashtag. My life in my three followers, you have 3 million. I have three hashtag we got this because together we can, we can really change. We can change things and we can change the world and how we perceive mental.

Ah,

Madchen: what a perfect place to end. Well, thank you. This has been a beautiful conversation and I can't wait to continue to work with you to change this mental health space because it's so needed. Yep. So keep talking, everyone keep talking with one another and together we're going to figure it out. We got this.

Mina: Thanks for listening to Don't Mind Me I'm Mina Tobias. Don't Mind Me is produced by Aurra Studios, original music by Sly Alexis, and executive produced by Madchen Amick and Amanda Brown.

Sly: And if I could go back and seek help and accept the help that people were offering me, I would've saved myself a good amount of English.

So I would say definitely if you're going through something, reach out to a counselor. If you go to college there's counselors on campus. There's hotlines, there's websites, certain kinds of websites that you can reach out. And, uh, even friends, if you feel bold enough, but I would definitely get on top of it when you can.

Madchen: Thank you for listening to this episode of don't mind me, which is co-hosted by me, Madchen Amick, and my daughter, Mina Tobias. We are doing this podcast because we want to open up the conversation about dealing with serious mental health problems. If you a member of your family or a friend are struggling with any of the issues mentioned, please reach out for help.

If in the U S go to nami.org. N a M i.org or samhsa.gov, S a M H S a.gov for further information. And if you're elsewhere, please reach out to your local organization.