

A PARENT'S PRAYER FOR MENTAL ILLNESS

As I stumble from my bed this morning, help me to remember to be gentle and kind.

My child's mind is shredding into a million pieces. My child lives in a constant state of atrocious fear. I can see it in my child's eyes. Give my child peace.

Guide me as I hold my child in my arms. Help me to know what to say. What to do. Fill my heart with healing love, understanding, and empathy.

Give me the strength of a thousand angels to hold back my tears. My heart is broken, and a tidal wave of grief is overwhelming me with the need to cry. Give me the strength to bear it long enough to keep it from disturbing my child. Help me find someone I can safely bring it to.

Help me answer my family's questions with the same amount of compassion I would want for myself. Help me remember they are hurting too. This is an unwelcomed assault on an entire family. My heart is not the only heart that is broken. We all need time and each other to heal.

As my journey becomes more and more isolative and lonely, remind me that the lack of involvement on the part of family and friends is not always because of the stigma and the ignorance. For many, it is because they are hurting too. They have the privilege of turning to their own lives. This is my family's life now. I must deal with it whether I am hurting or not.

Send me your best physicians and healers. Give me presence of mind, as I walk through the exhaustion of my grief to not settle for just any one no matter how tiresome the journey becomes.

Help me adjust to the idea, that although it appears my child is gone, there will be no goodbye. And that he is still inside somewhere waiting for us to find him.

Infuse the creative part of my mind with solution-oriented thinking. Give me hope. Even if it is just a glimmer of hope. A parent can go for miles on just

one tiny glimmer. Let me see just a flicker of the sparkle of joy in his eyes.

Guide my hands, calm my mind, as I fill out the multitude of forms for services. Then help me do it again over and over.

Provide me with the knowledge. Lead me to the books I need to read, the organizations I need to connect with. As you work though the people in my life, help me to recognize those that are here to help. Help me trust the right ones. Shine a light upon the right path.

Give me the courage to speak my truth; to know my child's truth. And to speak for my child when my child is unable to do it for them self. Show me when to do for my child what my child is not capable of doing for himself. Help me to recognize the difference.

Help me to stand tall in the face of the stigma; to battle the discrimination with the mighty sword of a spiritual warrior. And to deflect the sting of blame and faultfinding from the ignorant and the cruel.

Preserve my love for my family. Shield my marriage with the wisdom of the love that brought us together.

Protect my child from homelessness, loneliness, victimization, poverty, hunger, hopelessness, relapse, drugs, alcohol, suicide, cruelty and obscurity.

Lead us to the miracles of better medications, better funding, better services, safe and plentiful housing, meaningful employment, communities who care, enlightenment. Help us to find some way to replace all the greed with humanitarian work and intrinsic reward again.

Most of all, give me the strength to deliver whatever I can to the work of unmasking the manmade ugliness of this disease and revealing the human and all of it's suffering beneath.

Finally, when it is my time to leave my child behind, send a thousand angels to take my place.

Amen