

Hi, my name is Sinéad Ravenscroft and I have been diagnosed with depression and anxiety. I started going into a dark place at the end of middle school in 2021.

On March 13th I attempted suicide and was admitted to a facility for therapy. When I came home, I thought I would never feel anything again. One of my friends reached out, one who I had played lacrosse with since 3rd grade. She told her Dad, who contacted Adam Beasley, the Coffman highschool lacrosse coach. Coach Beasley got in contact with my Dad and invited me to be a part of the lacrosse team. He told me that his main objective was to welcome me and make me feel as safe as possible. His main priority was my mental health, not my physical lacrosse skills.

Just being a part of something again has brought me happiness again, and for the first time I felt like I belonged somewhere. Even just the fact Coaches were willing to accept me onto a team in the middle of a season was really meaningful to me. I wasn't pressured to be the best on the team, I was allowed to ease into it and the coaches were very understanding of where I was emotionally and physically. This acceptance and understanding however made me want to be my best. I went from not having the stamina to play for more than 5 minutes to being a starter.

The coaches' encouragement at every practice has made a big difference to my mental health. I want every school athlete to have access to coaches who understand all the needs of athletes today, not just the physical ones.

People tell me I'm brave to come here today, but if I had suffered a concussion, coaches would be trained and know exactly what to do. When we physically break something, it's much more acceptable to talk openly about it. When we suffer a mental health crisis, there's still a stigma attached. I am very nervous to do this, but I know that being a part of the group that is trying to get this bill passed will save lives.

Thank you for taking the time to listen to me.