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## A Day in a Life of a Mental Illness Caregiver.

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## A Day in a Life of a Mental Illness Caregiver.

### Cover Page Footnote

Thank you for reading this collection. Thank you for opening this creative space for surviving stories

## A Day in a life of a Mental Illness Caregiver.

As a caregiver of mental illness children, I feel unseen and unheard. Caregiving for children with visible disabilities is already challenging. Caregiving for adult children with invisible disabilities is overwhelming, as others hardly recognize the disability. This set of vignettes/poems describes a relationship between my son, who lives with schizoaffective, and myself. Schizoaffective disorder is a combination of symptoms of schizophrenia and mood disorder. Such mood disorders could be depression or bipolar disorder. Sometimes, symptoms may occur simultaneously and sometimes separately. My son is brilliant but needs special help due to low functionality and emotional disturbances. The disorder is a lifetime, and medication is a constant force for survival. This is our journey of surviving and healing continuum.

I am you!

I hear a child howl  
I wonder what torments his brain  
I hear his mother's appeasement  
I do not have to look at them  
I recognize the pain in the mom's voice  
I recognize the sufferance in the child's howl  
For the mom is me.  
And the child is mine.

Kill them all

Does anyone care?  
Is anyone hearing me?  
Why keep the fight?  
Make them stop.  
They keep leaving  
They keep leaving mine.  
Nobody understands me.  
I do not belong here.  
I do not belong with them.  
I work hard to fit their world.  
Why can't they try to fit my world?  
They need to fit my world too.  
I want to kill them all.  
Thank you for your fight, again, today my love!

I can't do this anymore.

Why won't you release me?  
Oh no, it is happening again.  
Time to freak out!  
Why won't you let me go?  
Never, you were torn from my womb.  
Quick! Find the crisis management sheet.

[Type the company name]

Why do you love me?

Always, you are my angel.

Time to calm down

Why won't you help me kill myself?

I appreciate all the time you still give us

Yep! Time to revisit the hospital.

I am sorry mom for making your life hard.

I love you, mom!

I love you my angel son!

Weaponize my love, won't you?

I need food.

I need cleaning.

I need to be driven.

I need care.

I need attention.

I need touch.

I need money.

I need love.

I need, I need, I need

Won't you tell me you love me mama?

Her name is Alexa

He comes and sits in front of me.

Who is this person with blank empty eyes seated in front of me? I wonder.

His vocabulary contains few words. Good, please; go; bathroom; bye...

His communication is primarily non-verbal.

His smile does not leave his face.

He is unseen by the rest of the coffee shoppers, busy chatting a storm.

I leave my table to go to and sit in a vacant table.

I start grading student speeches that have been waiting patiently for my attention.

The voice of a slender woman is loud and compassionate, "Serge, you cannot just sit if someone is already sitting there."

She encourages him to go and order a coffee and follows through.

She explains to another how he can use his credit card.

The other masters a more extensive set of vocabulary.

She is fantastic with the two low functionality people.

She does not cease to repeat a "good job" to both.

An overwhelming emotion took over me.

I had to thank her for working with these invisible people

I tell her, I am a mother of a child with a different brain.

She smiles a genuine smile I have not seen for a while.

My eyes filled with tears, she recognized my pain

"I love this job," she simply proclaims.

I shall not fear that my adult son will be left behind.

He, too, can have a person such as her, ensuring a moment of joy for him in a coffee shop.

[Type the company name]

She touches my shoulder and says goodbye with her beautiful smile.

She insists, as she walks away, I will meet you again.

The man who sat in front of me with the empty look turned around and said goodbye.

He was finally able to see me.

And, I was able to see him beyond his blank empty look.

Until we meet again, I bid you goodbye, Alexa, with a genuine smile.

Surrounded by ghosts.

What attracted you to my dating profile today?

Your smile!

Fifty something, you say. Hmm

You got both the body and the brain.

You look so young.

My bones feel my fainting age!

I will drive to you.

My child lives with me.

Your child is twenty and still lives with you?

Invisible disability ravages him.

I see.

Are you still there?

Silence.

What attracted you to my dating profile today?

Repeat.

"I am sorry."

Why do these two words bug me so?

They are meant to ask for forgiveness.

Does it really matter after they hurt you?

Their forgiveness means nothing.

Don't push me, and kiss me goodnight.

Don't squeeze me and say you love me.

They are used to make a self feel guiltless

I do hate these two little words so

They are used to make you feel guilt or sorrow.

How old is your child? 20, you say.

"I am sorry," they say.

And Just like that, these two little words erase it all.

They cease to see the intelligence I see.

They fail to feel the passion he has.

They decline to taste the thrives he desires.

They stop to sense the future he wishes.

Stop condemning my son as untouchable, unlovable, and invisible.

Give her time to cool off!

I was pushed.

I was lamented.

[Type the company name]

I was pinched.

I was squeezed.

I was hugged harshly.

All in the name of mental illness impulses.

What does his father say about it all?

Give your mama time to cool off!

I am tired of cooling off.

I am tired of calming down.

You will survive!

The endless sleepless nights will cease.

The knot in your throat will expire.

The pain in your heart will find peace.

For the child long separated from your womb will go on.

Don't you fear; he will survive.

Don't you worry; you will thrive.

Who can hear us?

I have screams entrenched so deep inside.

I can no longer hear them.

Who can stop the impulses?

Who can stop his paranoia?

Who can stop his anxiety?

Who can stop his irrationality?

Who can stop his psychosis?

Who can stop his depression?

Who can stop my son's fuzzy feelings?

Have some pills, you say.

He does.

Meditate, you say.

I do.

Pray, you say.

We do.

Still, the screams are there.

Ready to leave the caves of our throats.

But no way to go!

Healing is yours!

In the silence of the night, he sang his sorrows.

His clunky motions made a constant melody.

The clumsy sounds of reptiles moving in their cages keep him company.

The clacking of his words penetrates the screen transforming his ability.

In the solitude of the night's hours, his words become vivid in making a story.

The story had now found itself part of a published book.

Do not fear my child for you are not alone healing and success will soon be yours!