



**Children's Hospital**  
London Health Sciences Centre



# Paediatrics

My Story  
By Katie North

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# How it started...

- In grade eight, I found myself starting to deal seriously with depression and other issues.
- I wasn't able to function in everyday life anymore.
- Then one night, when things got really serious, I was rushed to the hospital.

# New Beginning....

- I awoke the next morning to a whole new world with people who wanted to help me and give me a support system.
- I was immediately assigned a team of doctors, nurses child and youth counselors and a social worker, all of which assured me that things could only go up.

# Bringing “Me” Back To “Me”

- All of a sudden I was learning how to have daily rituals again and how to manage my stress.
- There were group activities, daily schedules, exercise, meditation, and self-expression through art and music.

# How I Got Through It...

- Waking up everyday and knowing I would be given more ways to deal with life was great.
- What was really important was the exercise, getting out into the air, being able to do yoga, meditation, and participate in relaxation.
- These activities made it easier to be away from home.

# The Food...

- I really appreciated having a nutritionist on hand who could help me out with a meal plan that would allow me to stay at my normal weight.
- Although the food could have been better, the options were always helpful.

# School Days...

- During my stays at the hospital, I was surprised at how easy it was to stay on track at school.
- I was in the gifted program and had a very heavy workload.
- All my homework was sent to the teacher at the hospital who went through everything with me and gave me all the assistance I could ask for.
- Going to 'school' everyday at the hospital helped me believe that soon enough I would be able to get up everyday and do it on my own.
- Doing homework every night made it feel like I had something meaningful to do.

# Discharge...

- Getting discharged from the hospital was always difficult but what got me through was the wonderful support team that guided me.
- I still see the same social worker I was paired with back in grade eight and my doctor at the time now has his own private practice where I occasionally attend sessions.

# Without The Hospital...

- I wouldn't have been able to make it through the past couple years.
- I would not have been introduced to my wonderful support team or the group I'm part of – the CYAC which allows me to help work to improve the hospital in my community.

# The Only Problem...

- The roommates that I dealt with during my hospital stays is one of the negative issues I faced at the hospital.
- On the mental health unit, it was normal for kids to talk to each other about stuff they had all gone through, but I found it was also common for kids to learn different (and sometimes unsafe) ideas from each other.

# Unsafe Conversations...

- I think having roommates is an unfortunate part of being hospitalized because it allows others to sink back into their depression and find out new and harmful ways to deal with life.
- If you are sharing a room with someone who doesn't want to get better, they can greatly influence you and all of a sudden getting better doesn't seem to be in the future.

# Solutions...

- My *first* solution would be to have way more supervision of our free time so the patients wouldn't have the opportunity to share harmful stories.
- My *second* solution would be to create as many single rooms as possible
  - I experienced having a dangerous roommate to share stories with all through the night, and it turned out to be extremely unhealthy
  - This is the time that patients should be concentrating on getting better and having positive influences

# If I Had the Power...

- If I had the power to transform paedcs,

I would create more mental health awareness so that no child has to be embarrassed again