

URL: <https://stvp.stanford.edu/clips/how-to-disclose-mental-health-issues>

Andy Dunn, author and co-founder of Bonobos, shares practical advice for disclosing mental health issues, comparing the experience to a founder experimenting with a minimum viable prototype. He encourages everyone to combine disclosure and therapy.

The 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline is a hotline for individuals in crisis or for those looking to help someone else. To speak with a trained listener, call 988. Visit 988lifeline.org for crisis chat services or for more information. The Crisis Text Line is a texting service for emotional crisis support. To text with a trained helper, text SAVE to 741741. It is free, available 24/7, and confidential.



Transcript

- I'm just of the opinion 00:00:05,040 that we don't have to go all the way with disclosure.. We can start the way that we would with a minimum viable prototype in an entrepreneurial endeavor, with an experiment.. And an experiment might be disclosing to your Uber or your Lyft driver, or the person that cuts your hair or the stranger at a bar.. And then the next step is disclosing to maybe it's a close friend, maybe it's not a close friend.. And you try it on for size.. And sometimes we have to work backwards to our closest loved ones.. Sometimes we have to work backwards to our best friends.. Sometimes we have to work backwards to our colleagues.. If you do disclose in the workplace, maybe you start with, you know, someone who, you know, almost certainly you start with someone who isn't your boss or the head of HR.. And it's a muscle, right? Disclosure is a muscle that we have to build..

And I think it's a muscle that is best accompanied by therapy.. Because therapy is the weekly, ideally, the weekly practice of sitting with someone who is helping you increase your self-understanding.. And, by the way, they're mental health professionals.. Like, this is what they do.. And I've had some funny moments with my psychiatrist where I think, "Gosh, can I tell him this? "Can I tell him that I have this thought, right? "Can I tell him that when my infant child was born, "I was worried would I ever hurt him, "'cause I had hurt my now wife." That was a hard thing to say I was worried about, but it might've consumed me if I hadn't shared it.. And so this is so critical to recognize the opportunity that therapy has to help us on this journey towards disclosure, to help us manage our mental health.. And I recommend to anyone, if you have the good fortune to be able to access and pay for therapy, which I think is something that we have to continually bring the cost down of and increase access to.. Really excited to be a part of something called the Founder Mental Health Pledge, where venture capitalists will now be putting in term sheets, 167 have signed on to this, that they support founders taking care of their mental health, including expensing out-of-pocket, non-reimbursable stuff from health insurance.. And I think for anyone, the cleanest bill of mental health that you might imagine, being in therapy for six months every two to three years is just game changer for your development as a person and your performance as a leader.. And then on that journey, you know, we get to milestones where the disclosure might be more meaningful..

It doesn't have to start with the fireside chat to the auditorium...