

Community Expert Lori E.'s Artist Statement

I have experience with mental health issues, both personally and through my family and some friends. And one of the defaults for treatment that I've noticed is medication. And I've been on medications – psychiatric medications – and they always seem to make my life a little bit more challenging, without really addressing what I felt are maybe the root causes.

So, over the past 20 years, I've been on a quest to understand this illness – or condition, or however you want to label it – better. And in a more holistic way. So I think that's what comes out at the end of the film, is that sort of holistic approach to episodes, or – it's really a different paradigm that I'm seeking to explore.

Not the paradigm of, "this is a mentally ill person that needs to be medicated for life." More of a paradigm of, "we're humans that get into stressful situations, and some people are more sensitive than others. And they need more support, whether that's through fortifying their social relationships, getting better nutrition and exercise, and having a well-balanced life that has great self-care."

And I think that's a really key issue for people that struggle with mental health. Really good self-care is pretty essential, I think.

I like to kind of leave the interpretation of my puppet show up to the audience. Although I would hope that people feel, maybe, a little bit more empowered to seek out different options if they're not happy with medication and the psychiatric system. And just to explore, and to have hope that there is potential for help in other places.