



TTZine  
Stigma

**DHF**

Cover art by  
Emma C.

# Welcome

## to the first edition of T1Zine!

Diabetes is a full-time job and it never stops. It is invisible yet visible. Part of the struggle is all the education we have to do because there are a lot of misconceptions and not everyone is as informed as we want them to be.

In case you do not know, type one diabetes (T1D) is a chronic, autoimmune disease where the pancreas does not produce insulin. Insulin is a very important hormone, which helps the body control the level of glucose in the body.

And no, we do not know why we got it.

This zine is a collection of our shared and individual experiences with the stigma associated with T1D. This stigma consists of negative attitudes, judgment, discrimination, or bias against somebody since they have diabetes.

Language is important.

Body language is important.

Messaging is important.

This zine is meant to be educational and a reminder that you are not alone if you struggle with diabetes and how it is perceived. Thank you to all the diabuddies who helped put this together! I appreciate you, your honesty, your gifts, and your stories.

Diabetes is chronic but you all are iconic.



Sincerely, Rav  
(diagnosed at age 2)



# THANK YOU

to our amazing contributors!

Aastha Relan

Abbi Cloth

Amal Bashir

Emma Cloutier

Heather J. Cadigan

Matt Pacchione

Maya Farres

Rav Samra

Tasfia Rayhan

Vivian Bruce

Zainab Zakaria















PLAYLIST

# Think Before You Speak

Playlist Owner · 3 likes · 12 songs, 45 minutes

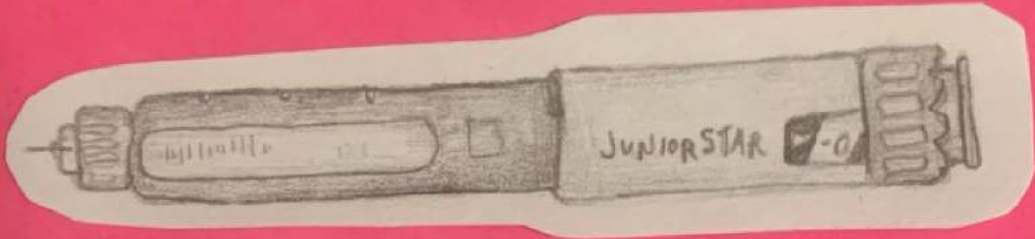


#	TITLE	ALBUM	🕒
1	 <b>You Can Eat That?</b> Strangers	Unnecessary Questions	2 : 46
2	 <b>You Don't Look Sick</b> Strangers	Unnecessary Comments	3 : 05
3	 <b>Being Bigger</b> The Uninformed	You Don't Take Care of Yourself	2 : 57
4	 <b>You Use Your Health As An Excuse</b> My Ex	What???	3 : 19
5	 <b>Does He Know About Your Problem?</b> Aunt	Which One?	2 : 35
6	 <b>Cinnamon, Prayers &amp; Pickle Juice</b> Cures That Don't Work	You CAN Reverse IT	3 : 40
7	 <b>it's not that bad</b> a one-sided crush	say something	3 : 09
8	 <b>that sucks (haha)</b> a one-sided crush	say something	3 : 19
9	 <b>You Can Reverse It</b> Random People	I Didn't Ask	3 : 23
10	 <b>Avoid Sugar (Even in Songs)</b> Spiritual Vampires	Anti-Everything	3 : 31
11	 <b>Don't Let Anyone See or Know</b> Concerned Parents	Fear	3 : 42
12	 <b>It's Not That Bad (Remix)</b> Everyone	Misconception of the Canadian Healthcare System	3 : 52

12  **It's Not That Bad (Remix)**  
Everyone

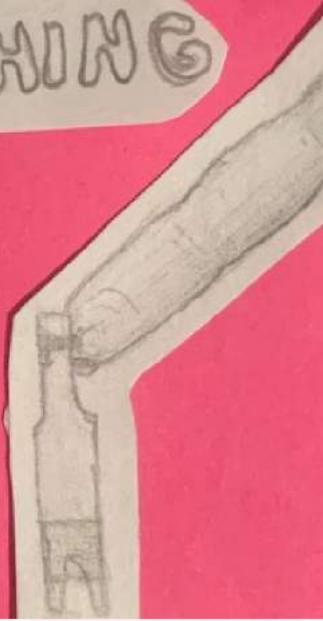
Misconception of the  
Canadian Healthcare  
System

Rav S.



YOU MUST HAVE  
DONE SOMETHING

YOU CANT  
JUST GET  
DIABETES...



JUST GET  
DIABETES...



Aa



Search

17 May 2024 at 10:03 PM

## Exhaustion

I feel the exhaustion in my bones.

The slight shaking in my fingers gives away that something is out of place.

It wouldn't be enough to indicate, But the slight droop of my eyelids; The way my arms drag across the laptop base, The table as I type, The way my range is out of focus, The way my typing and gaze are both at half pace.

Without enough energy to turn my head and say I don't care;

I realize, I'm exhausted. Not my mind, but my bones and muscles and push and pull.

The way I don't open my eyes after a second of closing them.

The way it's comfortable, lulling into a haze, keeping my eyes at rest...

Not able to give priority to anything but stealing moments of rest.

Frequently doubting another low, only to check and find out it's not

But low enough to check again and again.

Deadlines pulls me from my half delirious reverie; lucid reverie, depleted, and queasy after a bottle of juice from another low. oops.

The way there is no clear way to end this thought, so a comma, an ellipse...these are what I use...

Until next time, when exhaustion no longer breathes in me, or a time when I am strong enough to defend and overcome it's multiple attacks.



*Hey there!*

**do not**

*touch my  
device!*



## Cyborg Responsibilities

“Oh, well,” you say to your friend, “she’s...” you trail off and glance at me, unsure. “Diabetic” I finish, my back straightening. “I’m not embarrassed about it”.

You don’t know what to say.

I thank God for my insurance as I tap my card for \$57 at the pharmacy instead of \$300. I thank God through gritted teeth as the sensor THUNKS into my arm because the pain of living without it scoffs at the idea of being forgotten. I thank God as I sit on the floor pushing the set into my stomach a little deeper because I know people who would kill for a pump like mine.

“Is that a pager?”

“Ha, no, that’s my insulin pump!”

“Oh I’m sorry.”

“No worries, I’m happy to tell you about it.”

I smile and leave the rest dead and heavy on my tongue: because if I don’t, no one will. I have had this same conversation in different fonts too many times for it to be funny anymore.

Cyborg is a cool word so I made it mine. Science fiction and cyberpunk and disabled people. Disabled could be a pretty word too if we let it, if lips compressed with pity didn’t always follow like a fourth unspoken syllable.

I try to tear a few glimmering seconds of representation from the sharp screen, it draws more blood from my clawing fingers than any pricking lancet. A background character, although a cause for celebration, is too little and not sweet enough to bother bolusing.

“My daughter recently got diagnosed with diabetes”

“Really? I thought your family ate healthy?”

I know I am one of the lucky ones.

“There is nothing you can’t do!” The doctor told me when I was first diagnosed.

“Well, except for being a deep sea welder”.



So, do I not have everything to prove? Do I not have the responsibility to be a smiling example and shatter the media's unbothered silence? Do I not have the duty to carve a path of understanding through the casual cruelty? I am equipped in a way many of my people cannot be, too distracted trying to afford being alive. My ears ring with the building pressure like my pump when I'm going low.

I have everything to prove so I'm sorry Mr. Gym Teacher that I'm "high maintenance". I'm sorry that my lungs don't work right and I need to take my inhaler. I'm sorry my blood sugar is plummeting. I don't want to sit out either, trust me. I wither at the thought of my name and weak in the same breath. I'm sorry that I'm failing everyone by sitting on the treadmill with my juicebox, failing to prove that there is nothing diabetics can't do, failing to prove that women are equally capable, failing the only other girl in the class by leaving her alone. I don't want to be the girl who can't keep up in a class full of boys. I want to scream "I'm not sitting out because I can't do it, it's a medical thing!" But I don't. I owe them nothing and I would be flattering myself to think they would actually care.

Sometimes insulin burns as it goes into my stomach, but it is hardly a spark compared to the burning deeper in my gut when I hear: "Just looking at that cake will give me diabetes."

I am slapping you across the face. I am grabbing you by the shoulders and shaking you. I am screaming, spittle flying: "don't you know it's hard enough?!"

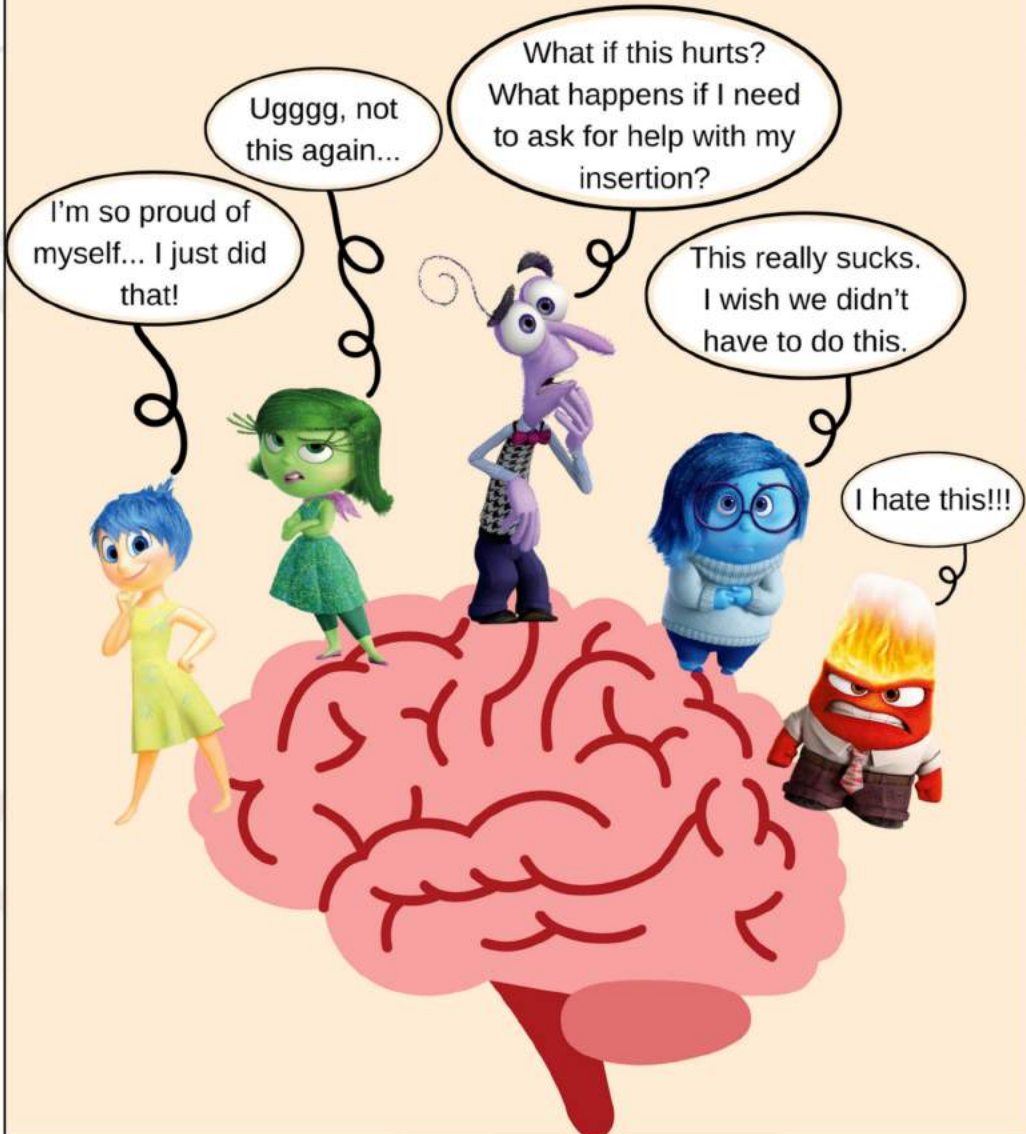
No. I am actually laughing awkwardly and walking away. Wouldn't want to be a hysterical woman who can't take a joke AND a diabetic now would I?

I am cursing myself for being a coward. I am promising myself I'll be better. I'll call you out next time.

Because I know there will be a next time.

What if this hurts?

# The Emotions of a Tech Insertion:



**\*\*counting carbs\*\***

i make 180+ health related decisions a day???

BEEEEEEEEEP.

what's my A1C?

how many times i check my time in range a day...

always bracing myself for  
telling someone i have diabetes  
or educating them

do i bring my family shame for  
having diabetes/wanting to be  
more open about it?

why is insulin the 6th most  
expensive liquid in the world?

battling internal blame and shame

BEEEEEEEEEP.

**\*\*sensor updating\*\***

pcos, thyroid issues, mental health

wanting to see an honest portrayal of diabetes in the media

diabetes "jokes"

hiding used pens

educating myself on the  
different types of diabetes

fear of going to appointments  
because my diabetes is  
always a "problem"

battling external blame and  
shame

BEEEEEEEEEP.

am i oversharing?





1:17



4.1 → Low Glucose

now

Today 12:58 PM

For the people in the back

I wish you hadn't asked  
If I could eat this or that

Those diabetes jokes you cracked  
It hurt more than needles when  
you laughed

And I don't want to try those  
Ayurvedic hacks  
It wasn't my fault my beta cells  
snapped

When my glucose goes out of  
whack  
I'll need extra time to react

So I'll say it louder  
For the people in the back

Please cut T1Ds a bit of slack



iMessage



## Chronic Trap

Every Saturday, Jason walked a short, looped trail. There was a cliff halfway around that sported his favourite view of the city.

His mom used to drive a Tacoma like the one he parked next to today. She died eight years ago and a fresh snowfall marked the anniversary.

He lasted fifteen minutes trekking through deep snow alongside the trucker's bootprints. Sweat rolled down his back and thick floaters obscured his vision. He needed sugar. A quick dizzy spell passed. He unzipped his jacket with clammy hands and wished for a wind that never came.

Jason had forgotten his juicebox in the car. "The arrogance," his mom would have said. He checked his glucose; "LO," not enough to register a number. He risked fainting, seizing, and hypothermia. He needed to head back. He knew he'd make it — low sugar symptoms are all mental.

A strong gust roared and a nearby branch cracked. A woman in hunting gear emerged from the trunks, carrying a shotgun over her shoulder. She stopped ahead of him and aimed.

"The arrogance," she said.

There was nowhere to run but the cliff and nowhere to hide amongst the leafless birches.

He made for the cliff and heard a shot. Gunsmoke lingered in the air.

At the precipice, he cried.

"I'm sorry. I thought I could handle it."

She aimed. "You should know better."

He shut his eyes, but the shot never came. He was alone.

Jason walked back. Only his bootprints remained, only his sedan parked.

WHAT

perfume

ARE YOU WEARING?



# moments that live rent free in my head

“You’ve always been weird.” - My Old Diabetes Educators // Not wearing my CGM during my cousin’s wedding because I was afraid the alarms were going to scare everyone. // “Your diabetes has always been a problem for you.” // How many times someone unmatched with me as soon as I disclosed my diagnosis... // “That (song/show/movie/etc.) is so sweet. I’m going to get diabetes!” // “Does she still use needles?” - Random Uncle // “Don’t give her insulin.” // The fear of going low in public. // All the teenage angst I had. // Never felt safe in any space because I felt like an oddball and no one understood my diabetes. // Remembering when my ex-friend used to throw paper at me when I checked my BGL at school to distract me, and I would have to prick my finger again. // When my insurance ran out at the beginning of COVID-19. // Airport security. // The times I’ve frozen when someone asks me what my pump is.

i am more than my diabetes. because i had to be quiet about it growing up, i carried a lot of shame and it almost broke me. now, i take up space and i’m so vocal because i don’t want others to feel small. yes, i fear i talk about diabetes “too much” but i refuse to be anyone else but me. i love being a mentor.

i am grateful for my diabuddies.

despite going through a lot... i know i am doing my best and i am making younger me proud.

i take up space and that’s ok.



where  
you are  
is not  
who  
you are.  
- circumstances

A.B.



## **Beneath the Tides**

In hesitant steps, I tiptoe near,  
To waters deep, to paths  
unclear.

The water's surface, a mirror  
of doubt,  
Reflects my fears, casting  
shadows about

Beginning anew with type one  
Is something that cannot be  
easily done

The waves will flow and the  
waters will rise  
But I know the sand lays  
beneath the tides  
Staying grounded in the  
unknown

Is what has helped me feel  
confident in working alone

Carrying on with type one  
Is something that cannot  
easily be done

But what lies ahead is worth  
the wait  
Now that I feel the fire from  
my flame



# DHF DIABETES HOPE FOUNDATION

Transition Resources for Canadian Youth with T1D

[www.diabeteshopefoundation.com](http://www.diabeteshopefoundation.com)

