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I Don't Want To Be Crazy



Synopsis

A harrowing, remarkable poetry memoir about one girl's struggle with anxiety disorder. This is a true story of growing up, breaking down, and coming to grips with a psychological disorder. When Samantha Schutz first left home for college, she was excited by the possibilities -- freedom from parents, freedom from a boyfriend who was reckless with her affections, freedom from the person she was supposed to be. At first, she revelled in the independence ... but as pressures increased, she began to suffer anxiety attacks that would leave her mentally shaken and physically incapacitated. Thus began a hard road of discovery and coping, powerfully rendered in this poetry memoir.

Book Information

Hardcover: 288 pages

Publisher: Push; 1st Edition edition (July 1, 2006)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 043980518X

ISBN-13: 978-0439805186

Product Dimensions: 7.3 x 5.4 x 1 inches

Shipping Weight: 12 ounces

Average Customer Review: 4.3 out of 5 stars 32 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #494,923 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #26 in Books > Teens > Social Issues > Special Needs #43 in Books > Teens > Personal Health > Depression & Mental Health #67 in Books > Teens > Social Issues > Being a Teen

Age Range: 12 and up

Grade Level: 7 and up

Customer Reviews

Grade 9 Up
• In this "memoir in verse," Schutz comes to terms with an anxiety disorder that surfaced and plagued her throughout and after her college years. Readers accompany the author from the summer after high school, through college, on a semester abroad in Paris, and into her first job after graduation. Typical early-adulthood issues such as boyfriends, sex, drinking, grades, and family are woven throughout her struggle with physically and mentally debilitating panic attacks. The author had the courage and wisdom to seek professional help and embarked on a long and often bumpy road to treating her disorder. The decision to write in verse proves fitting; in the scenes in which a panic attack is approaching, for example, the short lines of text echo the breathless terror

described within. Though the book begins to feel repetitive toward its conclusion, the repetition simultaneously reflects the cyclical nature of Schutz's disorder and one's college years. Aptly, the book ends without absolute closure, and while luckily not all teens will find themselves in identical situations, many young people transitioning to adulthood will find a part of themselves in this overwhelming, and seemingly never-ending, search for self-identity.~•~ Jill Heritage Maza, Greenwich High School, CT Copyright ~ © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

Praise for *I Don't Want to Be Crazy* "Versifying a novel takes craft and dedication. Versifying a memoir takes courage. Samantha Schutz must be commended for allowing readers such a personal glimpse of this frightening piece of her life experience." ~•~ Ellen Hopkins, author of *Crank and Tricks* "Once readers pick up this insightful debut, they will not be able to put it down." ~•~ Voice of Youth Advocates "Intense, intimate and heartbreaking. I had to remind myself to breathe." ~•~ Deb Caletti, author of *The Queen of Everything* --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Before I jump into it, I have to say that Schutz did a great and brave thing by publishing this book--without a pen name, no less. I can guess that the actual act of her writing down her life's struggle with Generalized Anxiety Disorder was a very therapeutic act in and of itself. It probably benefitted her, and definitely benefitted other teens struggling with this, and other mental disorders by giving them a real story they can relate to. The ending might not have been the fairytale we're all used to, but it was real. The prose in more popular books like *Crank* and *Impulse* are relatable to teenagers with mental health problems, but in the end the stories are just made up. This book is different because it remains relatable and inspiring despite the ending being ragged around the edges because it is the author's real story of her real life's struggle with a very real sickness. Schutz, while not in the visually based poem format Hopkins books are, still incorporates some beautiful language in her story that really helps the reader say, "yes, I know exactly what you're talking about, and I've been there, too." One of my favorite examples of this is when she states "I build myself safety nets but they bind me in a web" (1637). When I read this, I thought of all the times in my life when I had tried so desperately to avoid failing but in my efforts, had doomed myself to do so. I have certainly not heard this described with a better analogy than the one Schultz used, and I don't think one could exist. The style in the book, while not comparable to the eloquence and artistry that Hopkins demonstrated time and time again, is still noticeable, and enhances the interest

greatly. She uses short sentences and also sentences that take up entire pages; her style matches the mood of the story being told at that point. This is something I enjoyed about the book. She uses cognitive questioning, asking herself things like, "when I try to save other people am I trying to save myself?"(564). Questions open the reader's mind and make them think about their own life. Maybe they are a saver too; maybe they try to save everyone around them. Are they trying to save themselves? Why do they do that? Questions like these also help the reader be interested in the story. Overall, the plot is not anything groundbreaking, and the struggles of adolescence are nothing new, but the style and the fact that it is an autobiography make this book worth reading.

This is a memoir written in verse form. Go back to your teen and college years, to that time when you were out on your own, exploring the world and entering new relationships. Everything is scary and exciting as one breaks ties with family. But during the author's attempt to blend into the real world, she continuously walked into a wall of panic. Anxiety attacks, fainting spells, and moments of doubt and insecurity plagued Schutz during her young adult years. This true life book about mental illness was intense. I'll most likely read it again.

I read this book all at once. My daughter, 15 also suffers daily with a panic disorder, as well as depression. I am very close to my daughter, and go through every attack with her. I really thought I understood how she felt, and what she was going through. However, reading this book REALLY helped me realize that I don't always understand. I almost felt like I could put myself in her head. The feelings and descriptions that Samantha shares are EXACTLY what my daughter has been feeling and goes through every day. It helped me even more support and help me to continue the journey with my daughter, with empathy and patience. If anyone you love is dealing with anxiety disorder, I STRONGLY recommend reading this book. I have read many books written by professionals on panic disorder and followed many blogs. This is the first book I have read that was written by a person suffering. I stumbled upon it and am very glad I did.

Big pitfall with anxiety is the underlying certainty that no one can truly empathize with the state of your mind or that it is all merely pitiable. But hey, it's real and a heckuva lot of people deal with it. Nice to share in another's person's perspective for a bit and see how they've gone through a similar mental gauntlet. Reads like a well-put-together diary. As Samantha details her downs, up, and downs you see that you are not alone at all; just as there is hope for her (and you want there to be hope) so for your, as well.

When Samantha Schutz first left home for college, she was excited by the possibilities-freedom from parents, freedom from a boyfriend, freedom from the person she was supposed to be. At first, she reveled in the independence-but as the pressures increased, she began to suffer anxiety attacks that would leave her mentally shaken and incapacitated. This is a very honest portrayal of someone suffering from an anxiety disorder. This story brought back memories of my own attacks when I went away to college. And just like the author shows, each episode is scary and you do start questioning your own sanity. The free verse style of writing makes the story even more real. The reader can't help but feel for Samantha as she goes through an episode, her experiences with meds, therapists, and how she comes to grips with not only her illness but her own sanity. I highly recommend this book.

I first read this book in my eleventh grade year of high school, when I borrowed from the school library. I returned it and constantly kept thinking about the book, and how it totally spoke for me and what I was and still am going through. How I feel, and see things from my point of view. Couldn't remember name of book sooo.....I searched Google "book about girl in college with anxiety attacks" and there it was "I Don't Want To Be Crazy" By Samantha Schutz. Was so happy I found it Finally! (took forever). recently just got out of high school and I am so happy to have found this book. Thank You So Much!!

I too have had anxiety without any explanation and reading someone's struggles sometimes makes it easier to deal with your own. This was well written.

Book looked old and used. Money paid for it was way over what it was worth.

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