



(CN: mental illness, eating disorders, suicide, hospitals)

Due to the nature of my talk, I've decided not to put up the slides unedited. Firstly they don't make sense taken out of context of what I said. Secondly there is some material that is potentially triggering to other people. I realise that once these slides go online, it's out of my control what happens with them.

Hence I've decided to put up an edited version of the slides, with comments explaining what was said alongside them.



There are a few of reasons why I'm giving this talk. Firstly, everyone has periods of low mental health, and many people suffer from mental illness. I want to do my bit to remove some of the stigma and make this a community where people feel they can be open about it. Secondly there are many people listening to this talk that I would like to publicly thank for how they've helped me. This is ultimately a positive story.

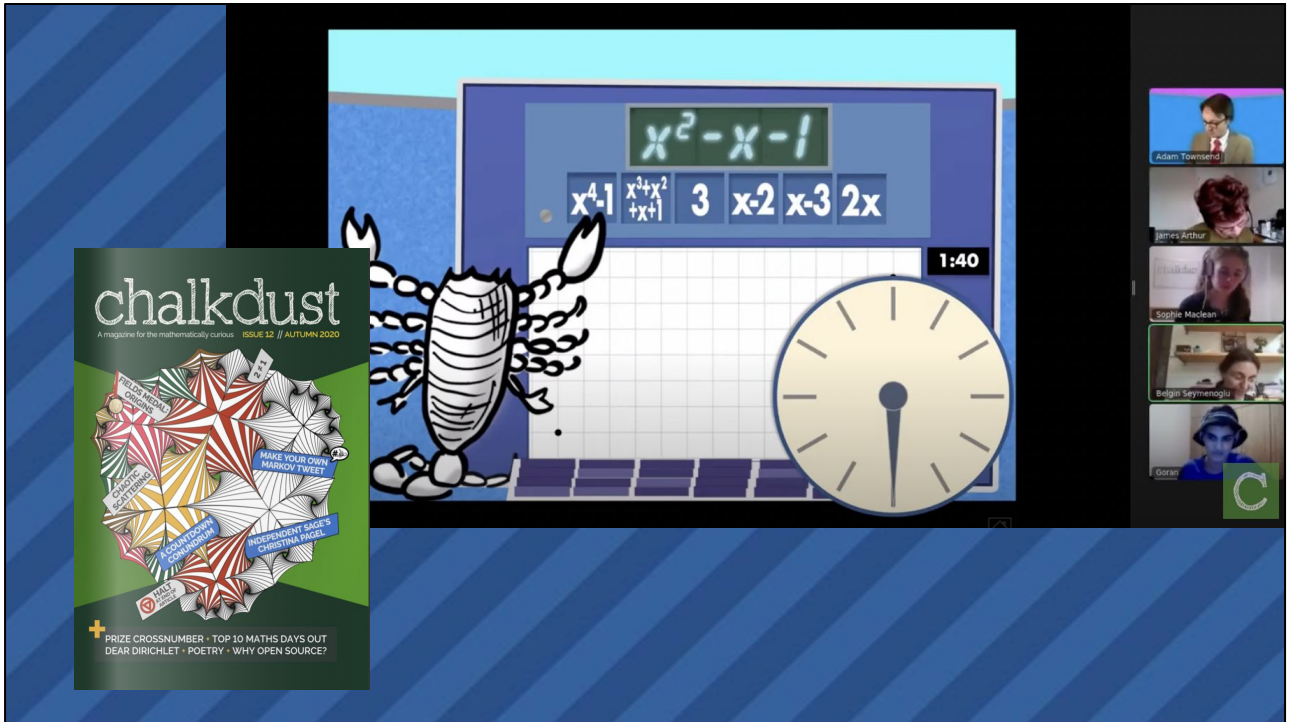


I'll start in October 2020. I heard about the 24 hour maths magic show and signed up to get involved. But there was a problem. I was very ill at the time. I'd had several diagnoses suggested of anxiety, depression, a personality disorder. I was suicidal. The most relevant thing though, is that I was suffering from anorexia nervosa. In between signing up to the 24 hour maths magic show, and it taking place, I was admitted to an inpatient eating disorder ward in a psychiatric hospital.

So I emailed Katie Steckles to explain the situation and asked if I could still take part. She said yes and made it work. I checked with my doctors and they gave me the okay too. And it was brilliant. It gave me a distraction and something to look forward to. It allowed me a connection to the outside world. And it was the most "me" I'd felt in a long time.

This photo is the sign I stuck on my door. I worked behind the scenes from about 3am-5am, and presented for an hour and a half too.

Another benefit was that it allowed my family and friends to see that I was okay. Due to covid, I wasn't allowed visitors on the ward and only had limited time off the ward, so it was great that people could see me.



And people got used to seeing me as we also did a live broadcast for Chalkdust magazine. The chalkdust team were great. They made me feel normal. We'd joke about how bad the NHS wifi was, and they were just great friends.

And in a jarring change of tone that will give you whiplash, please write for Chalkdust issue 15.



Another thank you must go to Dr Tom Crawford. Some of you may know that Tom was helping me produce a podcast which I had to abandon when I went into hospital. I have 11 episodes recorded but only one has been edited. I haven't been able to pick it up editing again because hearing the recordings of my voice takes me back to how unwell I was. Tom was really understanding and supportive.

MADISON

Breakfast	8am to 8.30am
Post meal support	8:30am to 9am
Snack	10.10am to 10.30am
Lunch	12.15pm to 1.00pm
Post meal support	1.00pm to 1.30pm
Snack	3.10pm to 3.30pm
Dinner	5.45pm to 6.30pm
Post meal support	6.30pm to 7pm
Snack	9.30pm to 10pm

Saturday	Sunday
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 12:30 Lunch • 14:00 - 14:40 Session 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ 14:40 - 15:10 Break <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 15:10 - 15:30 Actual Break • 15:30 - 16:10 Session 2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ 16:10 - 16:40 Break <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 16:40 - 16:50 Actual Break • 16:50 - 17:40 Session 3 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ 17:40 - 18:10 Break • 18:30 Dinner 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 09:30 - 10:10 Session 4 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ 10:10 - 10:40 Break <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Actual Break 10:40 - 11:05 • 11:05 - 11:45 Session 5 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ 11:45 - 12:15 Break • 12:30 Lunch

The final thank you must go to Colin. I really wanted to get involved in MathsJam 2020, but was worried I'd miss a lot due to my hospital timetable. So Colin rearranged the MathsJam timetable to fit. My hospital timetable is on the left, and MathsJam is on the right. It's not a coincidence that the 15.10 break coincides with my 3.10pm snack



All in all, this is a positive story. In December 2020 I was discharged from hospital and haven't been back since. I'm doing so much better. I still have some bad days, but the difference is that now the good days far outnumber the bad days, and I know how to deal with the bad days better.

I want to say a huge thank you to Katie Steckles and the 24 Hour Maths Magic Show team, to Colin Wright, to Tom Crawford. And a huge thank you to the Chalkdust team for being great friends (I think Scroggs and Adam Townsend are here today), and for continuing to support me and give me something to work on even after I left hospital.