Singer Shawn Mendes on Coping With Anxiety

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The March 2018 release of the song “In My Blood” marked the first time Shawn Mendes explicitly addressed his struggle with anxiety in his music.

With the following lyrics from the lead single off his self-titled third album, Mendes shed some light on the nature of his anguish:

"Help me, it’s like the walls are caving in
Sometimes I feel like giving up
No medicine is strong enough
Someone help me
I’m crawling in my skin
Sometimes I feel like giving up
But I just can’t
It isn’t in my blood"

The song finds Mendes asking for help in the midst of a panic attack. Instead of bottling up his anxiety, he shares it with anyone who’s listening—including his fans—as a way of alleviating some of his pain.

Although the subject matter represents a departure from his past songs about love, the risk seems to have resonated with listeners because the song landed on the Billboard Hot 100 chart.

In a recent interview with Wonderland, Mendes talked about how therapy is not the only way to cope with anxiety. Talking with family and friends can also be helpful as it leads to acceptance of mental illness, he told the magazine—not to mention that sharing your pain lets others know you need help. “The hardest thing to do is accept what’s going on and the human mind has this funny thing where if you acknowledge that something is wrong, sometimes it works towards helping you instead of going against you,” he admitted.

Such honesty also helps those among his loyal fans who may be battling mental illness by letting them know anxiety or depression or other similar conditions are nothing to be ashamed of. However, although opening up to his family and the public worked for Mendes, it’s not the solution for everyone—and that’s why therapy is another important form of support to consider.

Although Mendes is only 19 years old, he has been dealing with anxiety for most of his teenage years. And if the popularity of this song is any indication, it’s an issue his fans can relate to and one they’d like to hear more about in future releases.

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