MENTAL HEALTH AND HORROR INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

\*Please feel free to delete any which do not resonate / apply.

Depictions of mental illness abound in horror. Do you actively seek out to read or write work on this theme? Explain how reading or writing about mental illness in horror influences or impacts you.

When considering mental health and horror, what does the term sensitivity mean to you?

What does a positive representation of mental illness in horror look like in your view? Are these the same?

Give an example (or several examples) of positive/ sensitive depictions of characters with mental illness in horror [this could be from a favourite book or story by another author, or characters from your own writing]

Why did the text resonate for you?

What themes or tropes were present in the work? In what ways did the author subvert these to avoid cliché and stereotype?

What techniques and tools did the author use which made the work resonate in a positive / sensitive way? [You might like to comment here on the author’s use of metaphor, symbolism, internal thought, dialogue, language or structure, backstory, research, lived experience, or other methods]

Discuss a poem or series of poems on the theme of mental illness.

Consider a book which has been adapted to film. Compare and contrast the two media. In what ways did the book/ film succeed in achieving a sensitive portrayal of mental health in horror?

What do you wish writers understood about incorporating mental illness in horror? What constructive suggestions can you offer to improve portrayals in a sensitive / positive way.

List some books or stories which in your view offer sensitive / positive depictions of mental illness in horror? Why have you included these titles on your list?

When resources have helped you when writing about mental illness in horror?

Any other comments.

*Notes for the HWA Holistic Horrors Column*

* Personal reflections on a writer’s lived experience are especially welcome. However, any discussion of therapies, except where that applies to the author’s experience, should be approached with caution, since recommending treatments is beyond the scope of our work.
* We usually arrange for one or two sensitivity readers to consider the work, and we systematically add a trigger warning and the HWA Mental Health logo to all texts.
* From September 2022, all articles published on our Holistic Horrors column will also appear on the Mental Health Initiative Blog the following month (to ensure the widest possible readership).
* Texts can be any length, but under 2000 words is our sweet spot. Please also include an author photo and your author bio.
* We regret we are unable to offer payment for this work. Given that the texts can sometimes be personal, you can request the work to be taken off the HWA blog at any time.
* While we will do our best to accommodate everyone, submission of an interview does not guarantee publication.
* Please send texts to leekiwi [a] gmail.com

Thank you for your support of this programme.