

This story was printed with permission from Melina Acosta.

"I was 10 the first time I heard that he had depression. I didn't really know what it meant at the time. All I knew was that he was sad all the time, so my sister and I put together a PowerPoint of all the reasons he should get better, why he should be happy, and why we loved him. With time he seemed to get better, and I didn't really hear about it again until I was 18. This time it wasn't as easy as talking to him or making him a PowerPoint. At one point he mentioned to me that he was thinking about suicide. I was completely taken off guard because I didn't expect him to say something like that. He could probably see the shock on my face, so he reassured me that he would not do it, that it was just a thought... Several days later, I got a call from my mom and when she told me what happened, I immediately burst into tears. My dad committed suicide."

"If you could say anything to your dad now, what would you say?"

- Humans of UTSA

"One of the last conversations we had, I remember him pleading 'Help me, help me, there must be something you learn in school that will help me.' At the time I didn't know how to help, but I told him that I would do the best that I could.

Since losing my dad, I founded an Active Minds chapter here at UTSA in order to dispel the stigma behind mental illness and to make mental health less of a taboo subject. The Active Minds website verbalized everything that I should have known and I should have said a year ago, so now I want to pass on the knowledge to other people.

I guess the one thing I would want him to know is that 'Maybe I couldn't help you, dad, but I am trying my best to help other people.' I want to make sure that others don't have to feel this way or see flags like these or have to lose someone they love so dearly. I'd want him to know I love him and miss him so much.

I'd also want to tell him that the relationship between the U.S. & Cuba is finally being rekindled. He always wanted to go back to see his family. I think that'd make him so happy."

