





COLLEGE GUYS & DEPRESSION 🔍

It's time to mend





Depression ranks among the top five health concerns that impede college students' academic performance. This booklet is based on young men's experiences with depression. The quotes are taken directly from what college men said about their depression. Knowing that you are not alone can help you take the first step toward getting help. By clicking on or touching these icons   , pages in this booklet link to corresponding videos, podcasts and websites.

Citation:

Oliffe, J.L., Bottorff, J.L., Ogrodniczuk, J.S., McLaren, C., & Han, C.S. (2013). College guys & Depression: It's time to menD. Men's Health Research, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada.

This publication is also available for download at:

www.mensdepressionhelpyourself.ubc.ca and www.menshealthresearch.ubc.ca.

Acknowledgements:


The study from which this resource is based was made possible by the BC Mental Health and Addictions Research Network (BCMARN) [Grant: R:92369]. Sincere thanks to all the men who participated in that research. Thanks to Graham McLean, Val Neduha, Michael Halpin and Melanie Phillips for their assistance with data collection in the college men's depression study. This booklet was made possible through subsequent funding from the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) [Grant: R:67284].


ISBN: Print Version 978-0-88865-071-9; Electronic Version 978-0-88865-072-6







Publications:

Oliffe, J.L., Galdas, P., Han, C., & Kelly, M.T. (2013). Faux masculinities among college men who experience depression. *Health: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, 17(1), 75-92. [\[Abstract\]](#) 

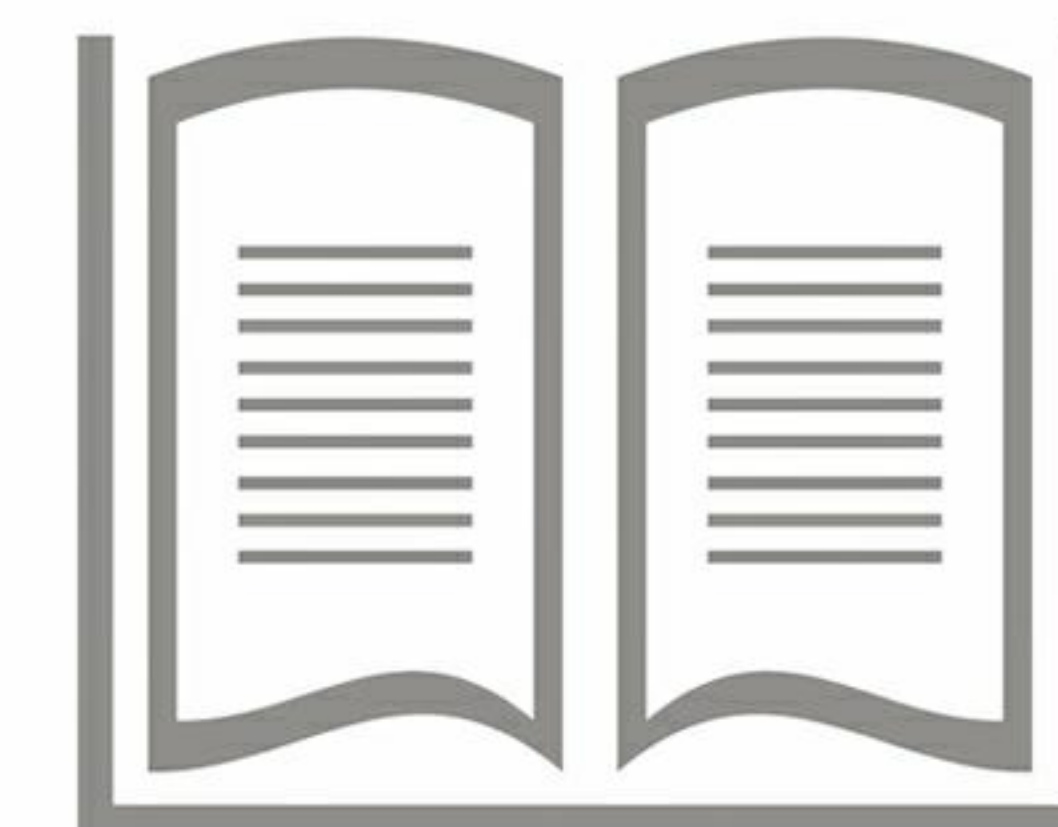
Oliffe, J.L., Kelly, M.T., Johnson, J.L., Bottorff, J.L., Gray, R.E., Ogrodniczuk, J.S., & Galdas, P.M. (2010). Masculinities and college men's depression: Recursive relationships. *Health Sociology Review*, 16(4), 465-477. [\[Abstract\]](#) 

Oliffe, J.L., Robertson, S., Kelly, M.T., Roy, P., & Ogrodniczuk, J.S. (2010). Connecting masculinity and depression among international male university students. *Qualitative Health Research*, 20, 987-998. [\[Abstract\]](#) 

Oliffe, J.L., & Phillips, M. (2008). Depression, men and masculinities: A review and recommendations. *Journal of Men's Health*, 5(3), 194-202. [\[Abstract\]](#) 



COLLEGE is a stage of life full of freedom, potential and growth. It means taking your first steps into the world as a man... moving out, taking control of your life.



Then again there can be a lot of pressure to succeed....

COLLEGE can also mean isolation from family and friends, financial strain, and work and study pressures, all of which can fuel negative thoughts and feelings of 'being out of control'. 🌀

COLLEGE MEN

are often reluctant to talk about their emotions and express concerns about their mental health.



"Most guys don't like to talk... I know I didn't either... it's just not the natural thing to do."



"So I would definitely say that talking about depression would be difficult for most guys... it's kind of engrained in you by society not to."



"You know if you have a problem you're supposed to just shut up and deal with it... and just be tough that way and endure."

WHAT DOES COLLEGE MEN'S DEPRESSION FEEL LIKE?

"I feel **useless**."

"I feel so **disappointed** in myself."

"I feel **afraid**."

"I feel **numb**."

"I feel really, really **guilty**."

"**Nobody** can help me."


"I feel like it's the **end** of the world...I'm a **failure**."

"I feel **weak**..."

"I feel really **down** and really **hopeless**."

"I feel **insecure**."



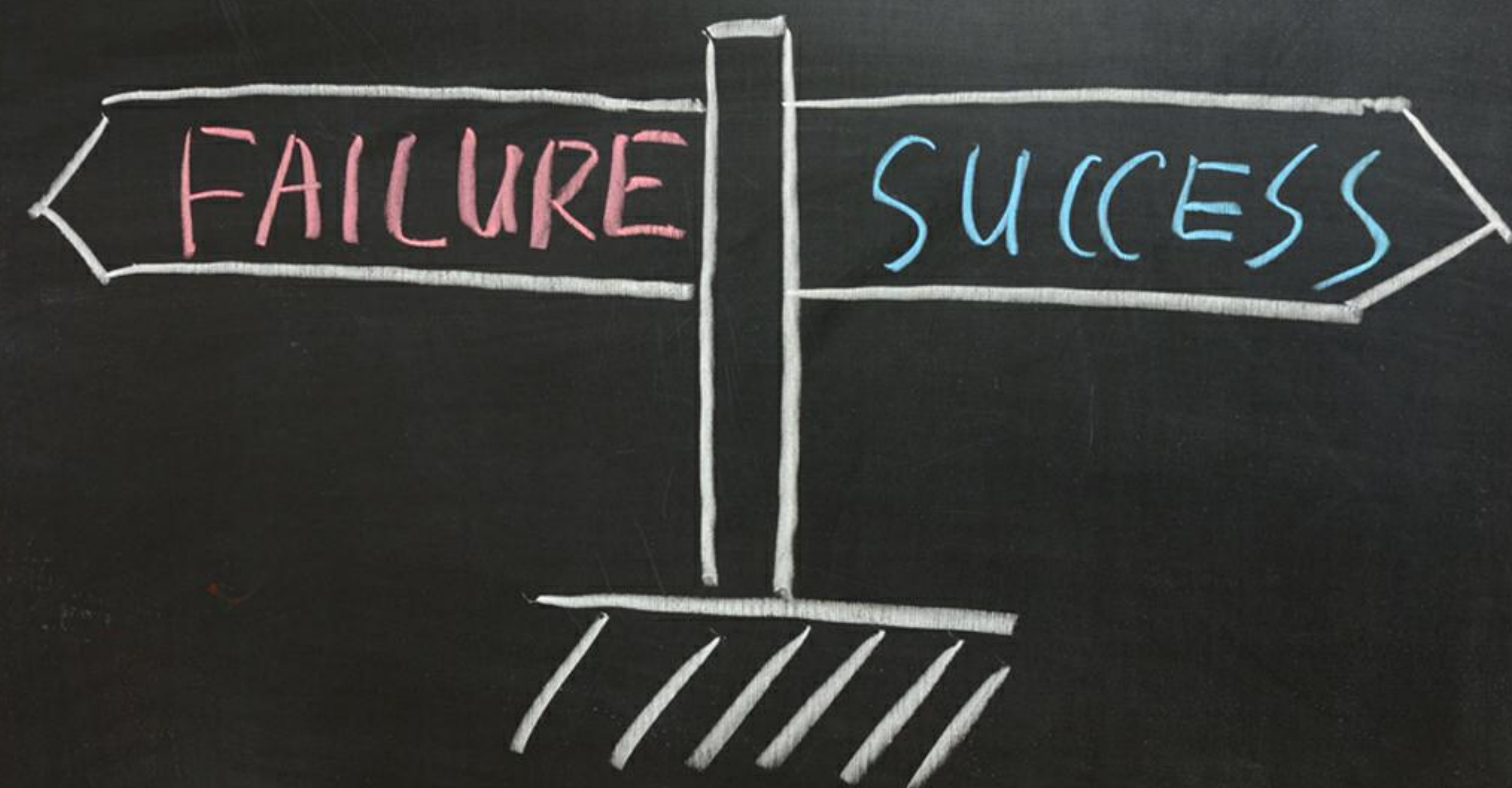



PRESSURE POINT 🎯

TRIGGERS FOR DEPRESSION IN COLLEGE MEN:

1. Poor grades
2. Growing debt and financial strain
3. Poor career prospects and pressure to fulfill career aspirations
4. Stresses around body image and gender identity
5. Not measuring up to other men
6. Not being able to attract a partner
7. Loneliness and isolation

MIND MATTERS



"I went through all these emotions and I've come out at 28 years old and I don't have a car and I don't have a house yet and you miss those normal progressions if you go through a serious depression." 



LETHARGIC DISCONTENT

"Unhappiness is you go to work and complain all day but you still go ... depression is you lay in your bed and you just can't eat, sleep, cry ... you're just empty ... it just **eats you alive**. I was scared to step out of my room because **I thought people could tell** I was depressed and it was just horrible, the worst feeling I've ever been through in my life."

"I just kind of sank down, I didn't feel like doing anything anymore, I didn't want to be around people."

STALLED INTIMACY

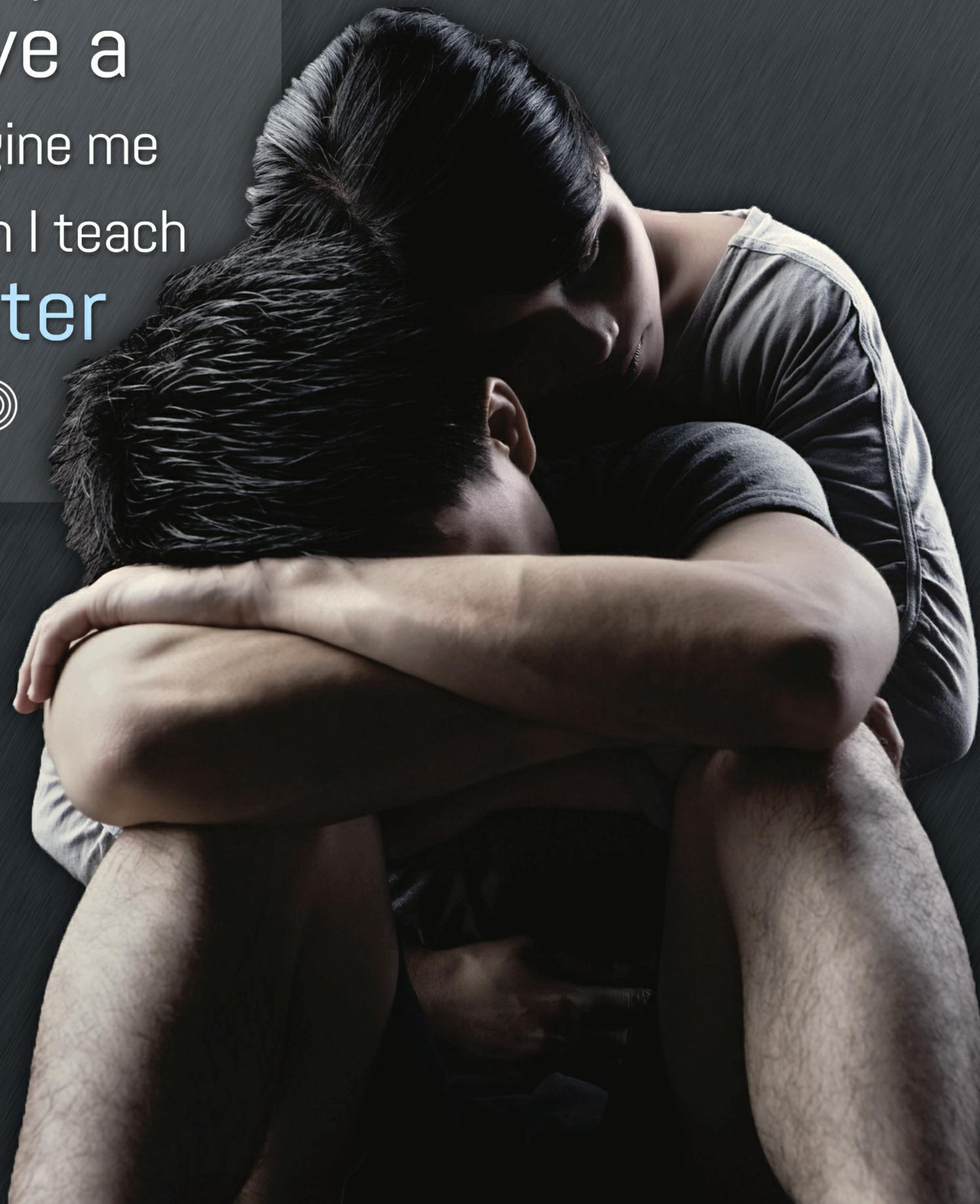
"One of the reasons that we ultimately broke up was that I wasn't feeling anything for her. But it was more – I felt nothing towards anyone."

"I mean I still liked girls and stuff and I still try but I have no sex drive."

"I felt alone even when I was with her... I didn't have confidence in myself."



"If things are going to stay like this I **will not have a family** because imagine me as a dad, right? How can I teach my **son or daughter** when I am like this?" 🔊



ANGER: The aftermath often worsens the feelings and gives rise to guilt, sadness and deep remorse about 'losing control' which in turn heightens depressive symptoms. 🔊

"I get more aggressive when I'm under a lot of stress and depressed, instead of just kind of letting it go. I just kind of try to pick a fight."

"I became really unstable. Sometimes I would become really angry over the small stuff."

THE SOLITARY MAN

"Men are supposed to be hard wall."

"If you are going to start breaking, you might as well not make it public... You do not want to show anyone that you're fragile." 🕸



RISKY BEHAVIORS

In an attempt to fit in, assert their manliness, self-medicate and/or distract themselves from their symptoms some men took up high risk activities including alcohol and other drug overuse, unsafe sex and fighting.

"I don't drink a little... I drink a fair amount... and so I mean it's a sort of self-medication... it chills me out."

"I started playing poker to distract myself even though I didn't really have the money."

"I had impulses to be violent."

"I was abusing substances all throughout first term as well, and I even wrote my exams high."



DID YOU KNOW

Men suicide nearly **four times more often** than women.

"I was thinking if I die, I die. Just go for it."

"I had the razor blade sitting at my desk."

"I was hurting myself."

"I would think 'oh I can just jump in front of this bus'."





“I thought that I could
fight it myself.”



THINKING ABOUT GETTING HELP?

"One of my biggest worries that made me depressed, was like, 'Am I losing my mind?' 'What's happening?' 'Why can't I stop this?'"

"I realized then that I needed help."



AFTER GETTING HELP

"Depression is a disease and you can fight it, in that sense. It's not the end of the world."

"The fear is **gone** now."

"Knowing that I was actually doing something about **treating** my depression was good in itself."

"I've come to the realization that my mental health **takes priority** over pretty much anything going on."

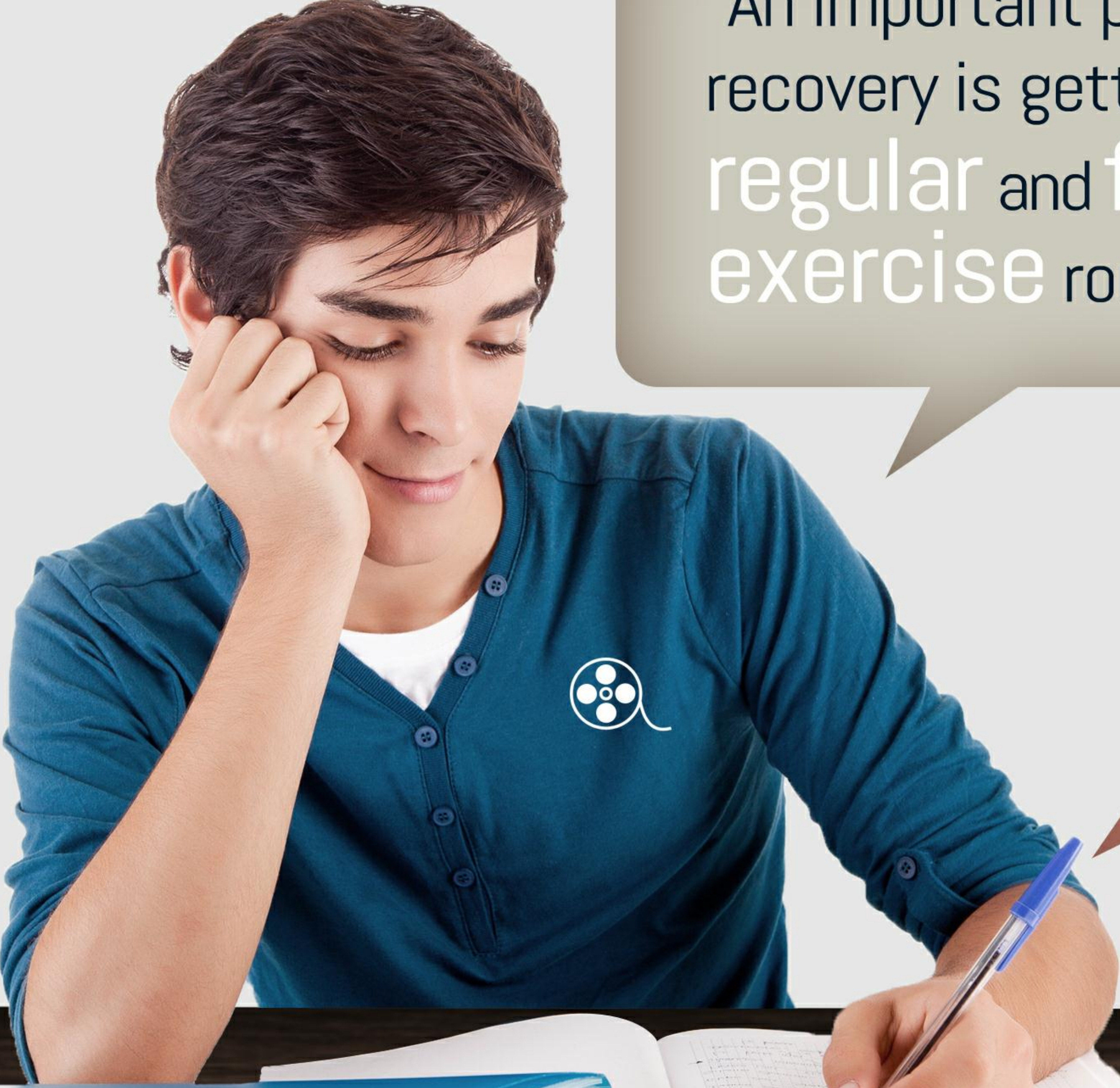


"My depression lifted
and then it would sort
of come in waves but
eventually I just sort of
got the hang of it."

"I knew that it would
happen sometimes and I
was able to deal with it."



WHAT COULD I DO TO HELP MY SELF?



"An important part of recovery is getting into a regular and frequent exercise routine."

"I stuck with the treatment and yeah it just slowly got better to the point where I feel like I used to before."

Further information:

Men's
Depression 
Help yourself

Help yourself

