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EDU 5028

EVAN'S STORY

UNDERSTANDING
ADOLESCENT
DEPRESSION

MANY PEOPLE EXPERIENCE DEPRESSION DURING THEIR TEENAGE YEARS, BUT THEY DON'T ALWAYS RECOGNIZE THE SYMPTOMS OR HOW TO GET HELP.

THIS IS THE STORY OF EVAN, A 16-YEAR-OLD HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT, AND HIS EXPERIENCE OF DEPRESSION.

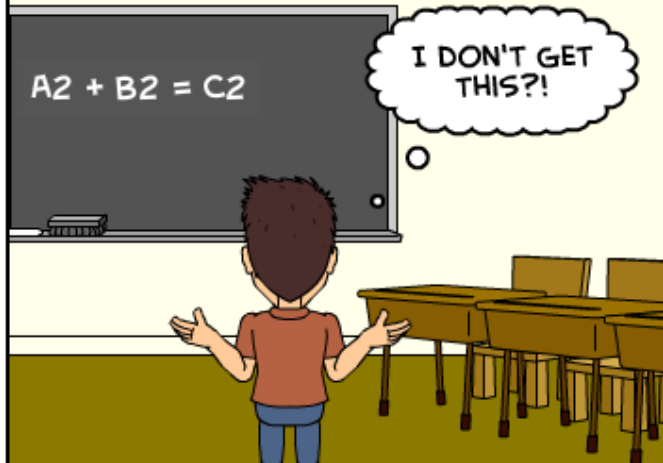
EVAN IS A JUNIOR AT WILLIAMS HIGH SCHOOL.



ABOUT A MONTH AGO, EVAN STARTED TO FEEL DIFFERENT.



IT WAS MORE THAN JUST FEELING SAD; HE COULDN'T CONCENTRATE IN CLASS...



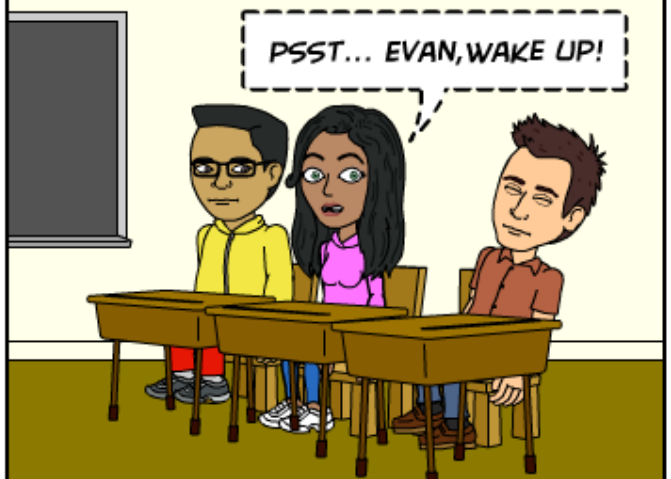
...AND IT WAS ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE TO FINISH HIS HOMEWORK.



EVAN COULD NOT FALL ASLEEP EASILY AT NIGHT...



...AND HE FELT EXHAUSTED DURING THE DAY.



THINGS THAT USED TO MAKE EVAN HAPPY...



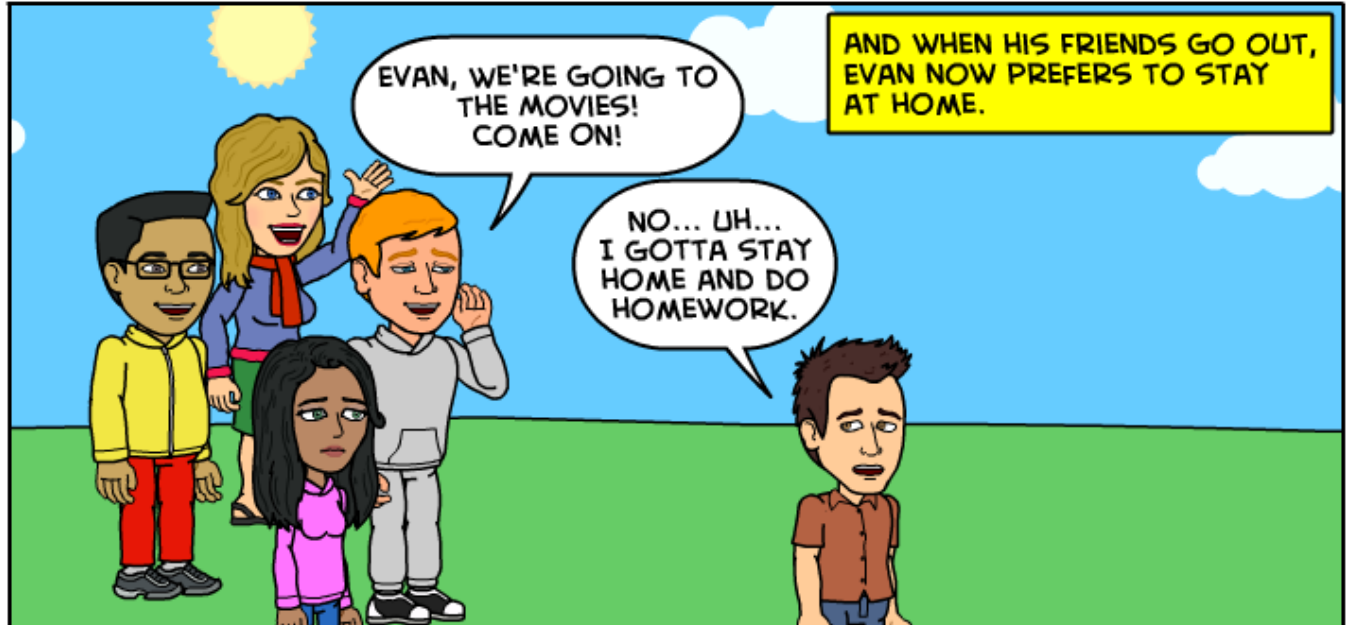
... NO LONGER INTEREST HIM.



EVAN, WE'RE GOING TO THE MOVIES! COME ON!

NO... UH... I GOTTA STAY HOME AND DO HOMEWORK.

AND WHEN HIS FRIENDS GO OUT, EVAN NOW PREFERRED TO STAY AT HOME.



EVAN HAS LOST HIS APPETITE...



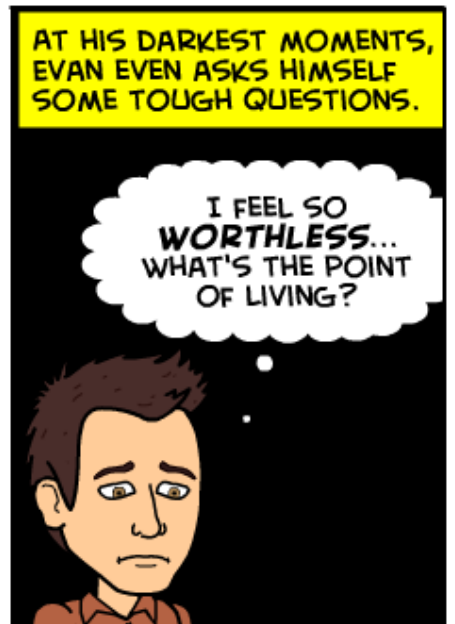
... AND SOMETIMES HE CAN BE VERY IRRITABLE.

MOM, LEAVE ME ALONE! I'LL DO MY CHORES LATER.



AT HIS DARKEST MOMENTS, EVAN EVEN ASKS HIMSELF SOME TOUGH QUESTIONS.

I FEEL SO WORTHLESS... WHAT'S THE POINT OF LIVING?



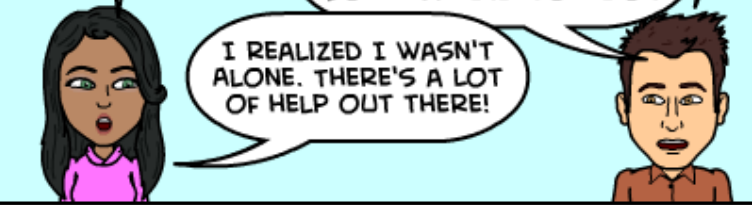
KATE, ONE OF EVAN'S BEST FRIENDS, HAS NOTICED THAT EVAN HASN'T BEEN HIMSELF LATELY.

EVAN, WHAT'S GOING ON?
UH, NOTHING.
COME ON, WHAT'S WRONG?
I DON'T WANT TO TALK ABOUT IT.



AT FIRST EVAN DOESN'T FEEL LIKE TALKING, SO KATE SHARES HER STORY.

YOU KNOW, THERE WAS A TIME WHEN I WAS FEELING PRETTY DOWN.
YEAH, I WAS SO STRESSED OUT. I COULDN'T SLEEP AND NEVER WANTED TO LEAVE MY ROOM.
WOW! I NEVER KNEW. SO WHAT DID YOU DO?
I REALIZED I WASN'T ALONE. THERE'S A LOT OF HELP OUT THERE!



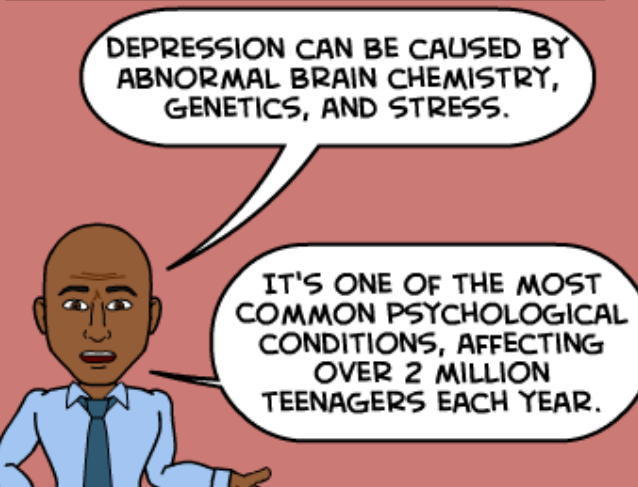
EVAN FINALLY FEELS LIKE HE ISN'T ALL ALONE.



KATE GOES WITH EVAN TO THE SCHOOL COUNSELOR'S OFFICE SO EVAN CAN MAKE AN APPOINTMENT.



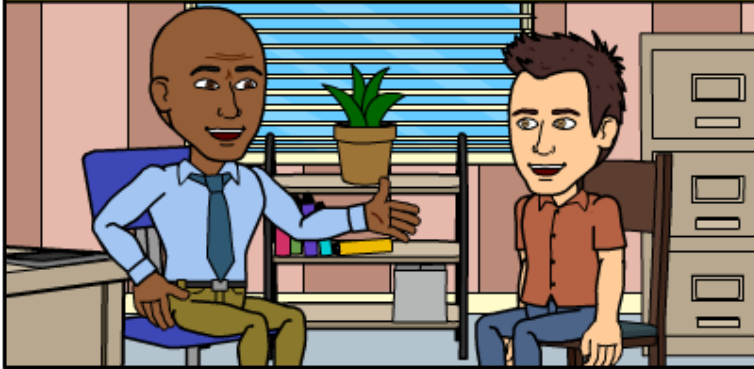
AFTER TALKING WITH MR. MILLER, EVAN REALIZES THAT HE HAS SYMPTOMS OF DEPRESSION.



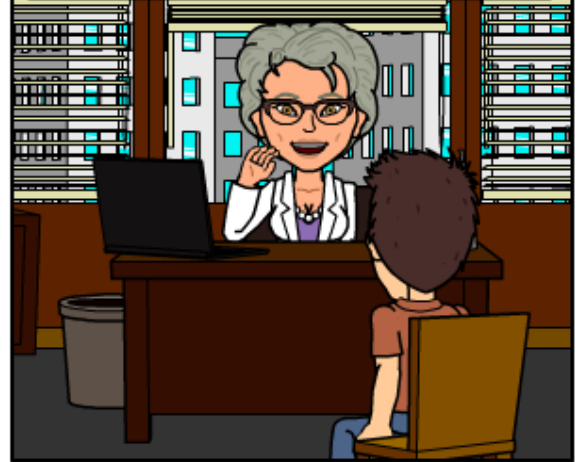
MR. MILLER TELLS EVAN THAT DEPRESSION IS TREATABLE AND NOTHING TO BE ASHAMED OF.



WITH EVAN'S PERMISSION, MR. MILLER SCHEDULES A CONFERENCE WITH EVAN AND HIS PARENTS. EVAN DECIDES TO MEET WITH MR. MILLER ONCE A WEEK FOR THE REST OF THE SEMESTER. DURING THESE SESSIONS, EVAN AND MR. MILLER TALK ABOUT POSSIBLE SOURCES OF EVAN'S DEPRESSION, AS WELL AS SOME STRATEGIES EVAN CAN USE TO START FEELING BETTER.



EVAN'S PARENTS ALSO SCHEDULE AN APPOINTMENT WITH A PSYCHIATRIST TO DETERMINE IF MEDICATION MIGHT BE HELPFUL.



EVAN STARTS TO FEEL A LOT BETTER AND MORE LIKE HIS OLD SELF. HE IS SLEEPING MORE REGULARLY...



... EATING AGAIN ...



... AND ENJOYS SPENDING TIME WITH HIS FRIENDS.



SOME DAYS ARE STILL TOUGH, BUT EVAN NOW FEELS MORE CONFIDENT IN HIMSELF, AND HE KNOWS THERE IS A BRIGHT FUTURE AHEAD OF HIM.



EVAN, DO YOU WANT TO GO TO THE MOVIES?

YEAH! LET'S GO!



THE END.

Questions for Discussion

1. What are some of the symptoms of depression that Evan experiences? Do any of these symptoms surprise you?
2. Why do you think Evan didn't want to talk to his friend about how he had been feeling? Do you think there is a mental health stigma in America?
3. What surprised you about the statistics about depression? Extra credit: Go online and try to find the prevalence rates for other psychological conditions that affect adolescents.
4. How has your understanding of depression changed after reading this graphic novel? What can you do to support friends, classmates, and family members that have depression?
5. In the story, Evan can visit Mr. Miller when he's not feeling well. Who can you talk to you in your life if you are feeling depressed, stressed out, or anxious?

Want to Learn More? Resources on Adolescent Mental Health

The National Institute on Mental Health.

<http://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/child-and-adolescent-mental-health/index.shtml>

Office of Adolescent Help.

<http://www.hhs.gov/ash/oah/adolescent-health-topics/mental-health/>

Teenager's Guide to Depression.

<http://www.helpguide.org/articles/depression/teenagers-guide-to-depression.htm>

**If you are suicidal or thinking about hurting yourself,
please call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline
1 (800) 273-8255
or go to the nearest emergency room.**

References

Jonas, B.S., Gu, Q., & Albertorio-Diaz, J.R. (2013). Psychotropic medication use among adolescents: United States, 2005-2010. *NCHS Data Brief, 135*. Retrieved from <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/databriefs/db135.pdf>

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (2013). *Results from the 2012 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: Mental Health Findings*. Retrieved from http://archive.samhsa.gov/data/NSDUH/2k12MH_FindingsandDetTables/2K12MHF/NSDUHmhfr2012.htm

Acknowledgments

This graphic novel was created using Bitstrips (<http://www.bitstrips.com>).