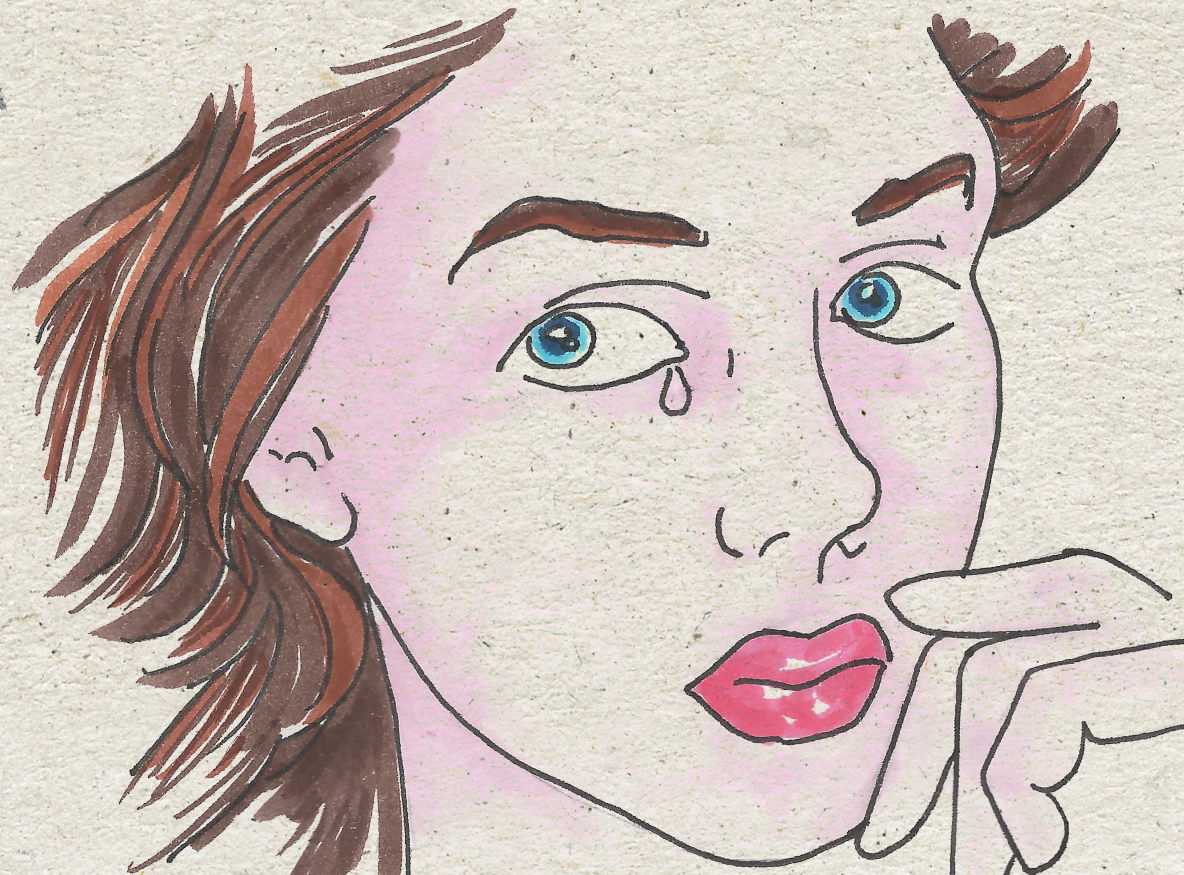


**Not Just Talk**

# WHAT IS DEPRESSION?

AN EASY TO READ GUIDE



New Brunswick  
Association For  
Community Living

Association du  
Nouveau-Brunswick  
pour l'intégration  
communautaire

# Acknowledgements

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Illustrations by Heather Hamilton



## How to Use This Guide

**What is Depression? An Easy Read Guide** has been made to help people understand what is called “depression” and what you can do to make yourself feel better.

It can be used with or without the help of someone like a friend or family member.

At the end of the guide you can read Jerrod’s Story, which will help you to understand depression.

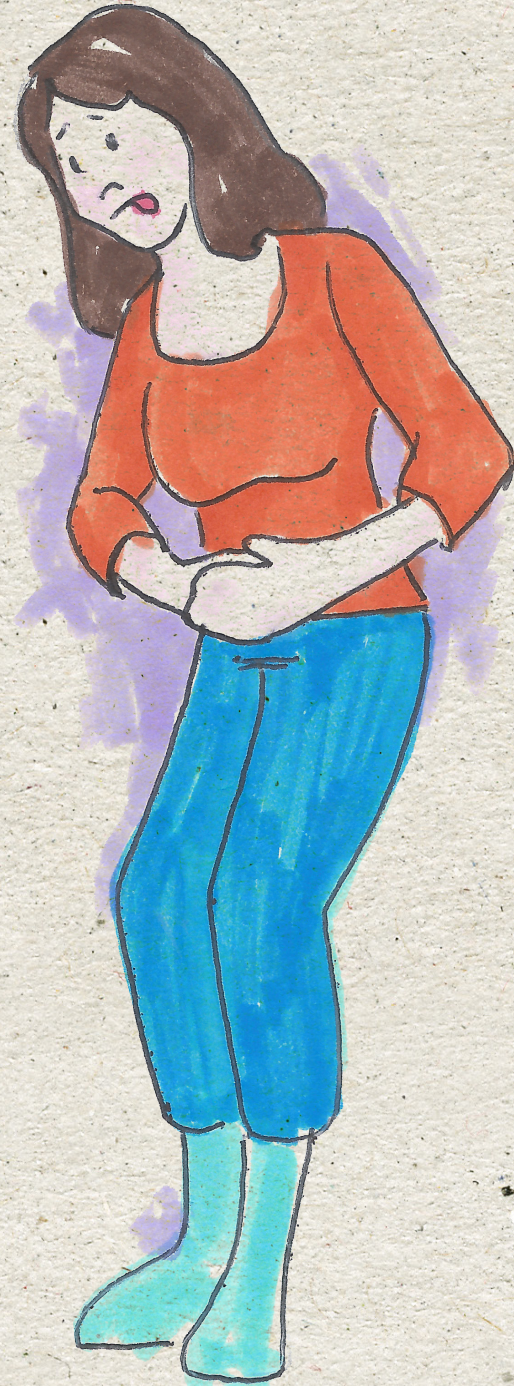
## Feeling Sad is Normal

We all feel sad from time to time. Sadness is an important feeling.

There are many times when we might feel sad.

For example:

*When we are in pain.*



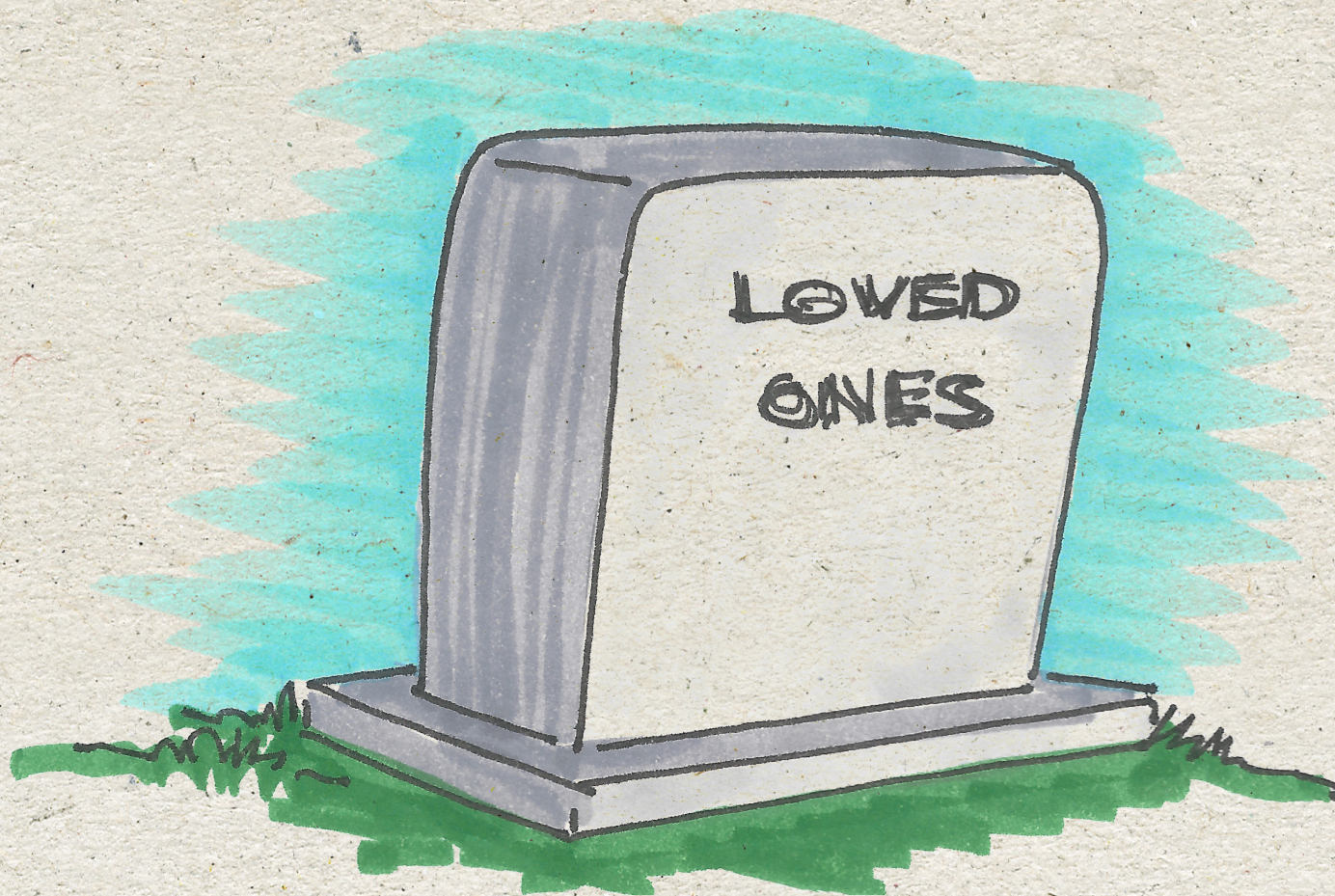


*It is OK to feel sad...*

*When we argue with a friend.*

*It is OK to feel sad...*

*When someone we love dies.*



*It is OK to feel sad*

*When we are being teased.*



These are all common reasons to  
feel sad or unhappy.

## What is Depression?

Depression is different than being sad for a short time.

Depression is when you feel sad all the time.

When you feel sad all of the time, you might have **depression**.





**Depression can change  
the way you act.**

*You may have depression if you:*

*Feel sad most days.*



*You may have depression if you...*

*Eat more or less than usual.*



*You may have depression if you*

*Not be able to sleep OR sleep too much.*



***You may have depression if you***

*Think that the bad things that are  
happening will never get better again.*



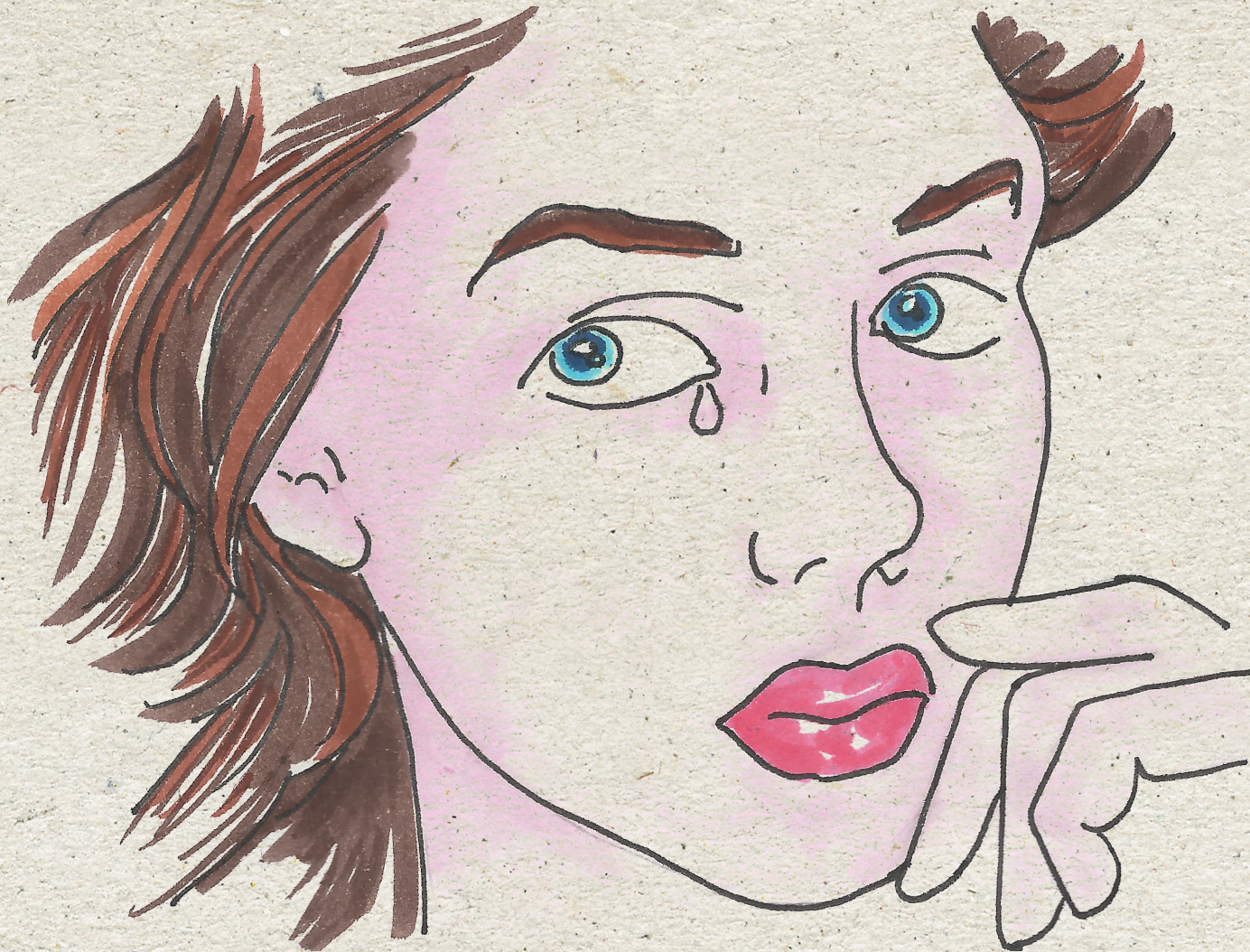
***You may have depression if you***

*Feel angry or act in an angry way  
(yelling at people or breaking things).*



*You may have depression if you...*

*Cry a lot OR cry easily.*



*You may have depression if you...*

*Are in pain or have headaches.*

*Feel sick to your stomach.*



*You may have depression if you...*

*Lose interest in doing things you usually enjoy.*





*You may have depression if you...*

*Do not want to talk to other people.*



**Sometimes, but not always, depression might make you want to hurt yourself.**

Sometimes you might feel so sad that you think that you do not want to live anymore.

You might think about how to end your life. This is called **suicide**.



If you think about hurting yourself, or about suicide, it is important to tell someone you trust.

You do not have to deal with these thoughts on your own.

You can try to help yourself.



## What to do if you think you have depression:

If you keep feeling sad, tell someone you trust like a family member, a friend, or talk to a doctor.

It is important to ask for help.

You don't have to try to deal with it alone.



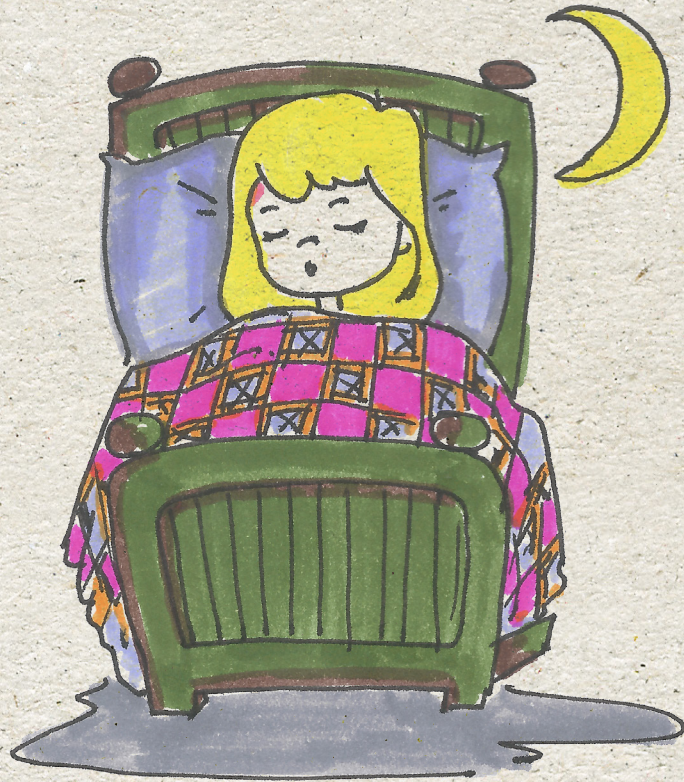
## There are things that you can do to help you get better when you have depression:

*You can talk to someone you trust like a family member or a friend. Talk about how you feel.*

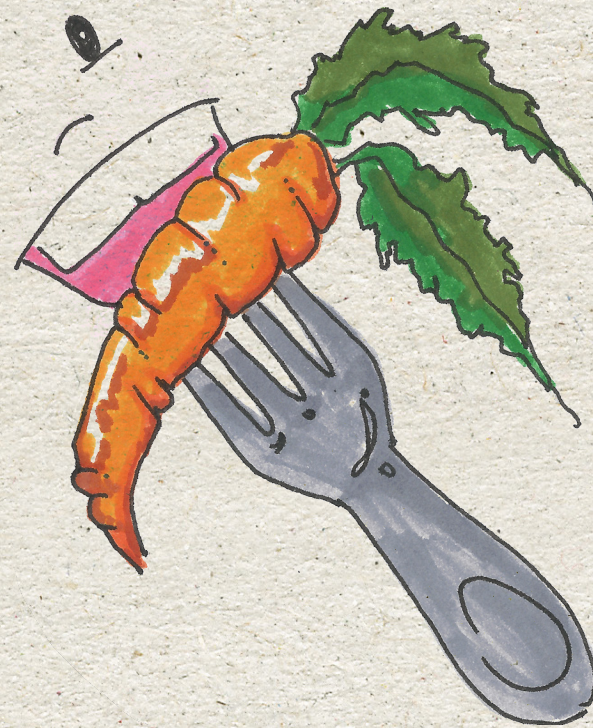


*There are things that you can do to help you get better when you have depression...*

You can get lots of sleep.



You can make sure you eat healthy food and drink plenty of water.

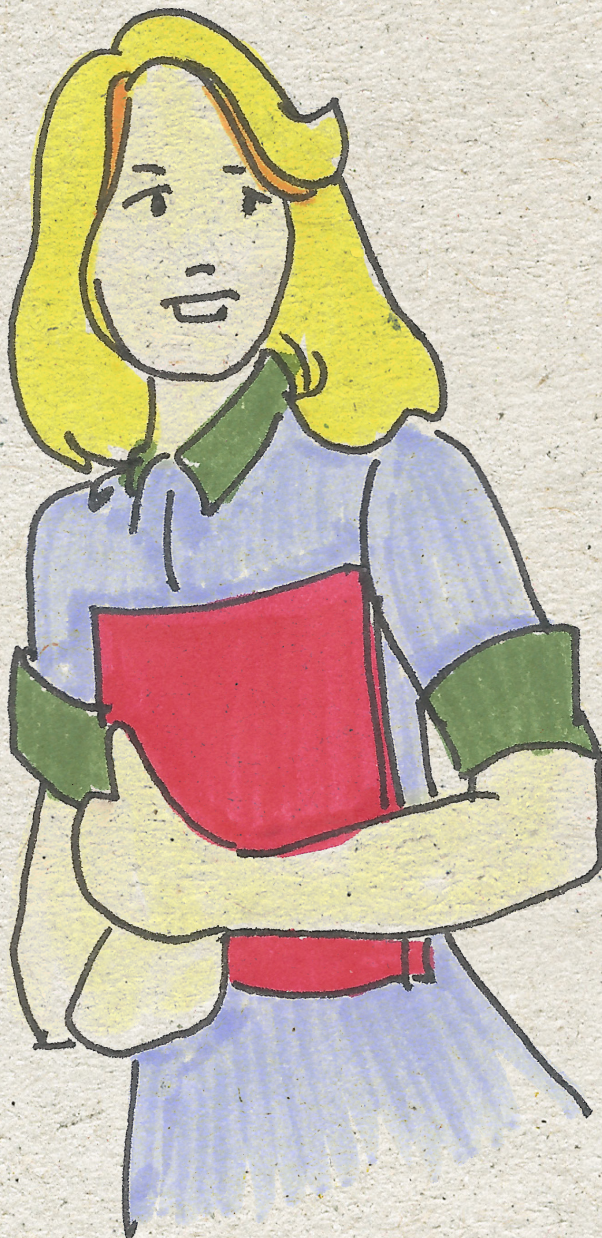


*There are things that you can do to help you get better when you have depression...*

You can exercise.

Going for a walk, bike ride or to the gym can help.





*There are things that you can do to help you get better when you have depression...*

You can let people that you like and trust help you understand how you are feeling.



*There are things that you can do to help you  
get better when you have depression...*

You can try to do  
something that you love  
every day.



*There are things that you can do  
to help you get better when you  
have depression...*

You can write down or draw how  
you are feeling.



*There are things that you can do to help you  
get better when you have depression...*

You can go outside to get some sunlight.



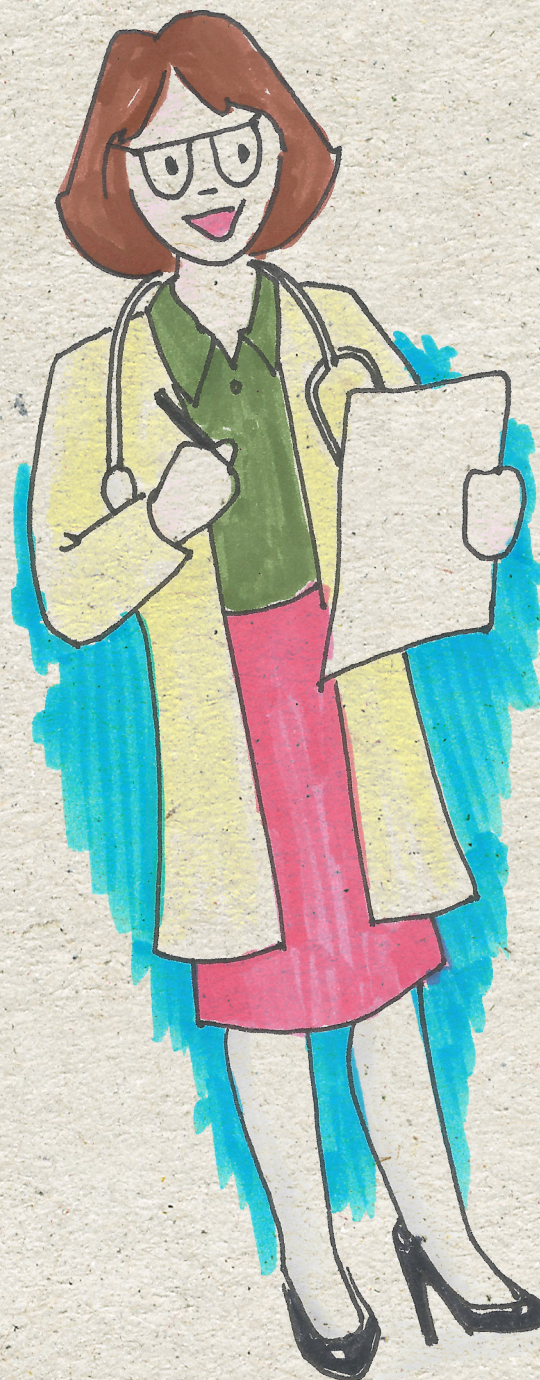
**If you think you  
have depression,  
you can go see  
your doctor:**

*You can take a family member,  
friend, or someone else with  
you to help you talk about  
your feelings.*



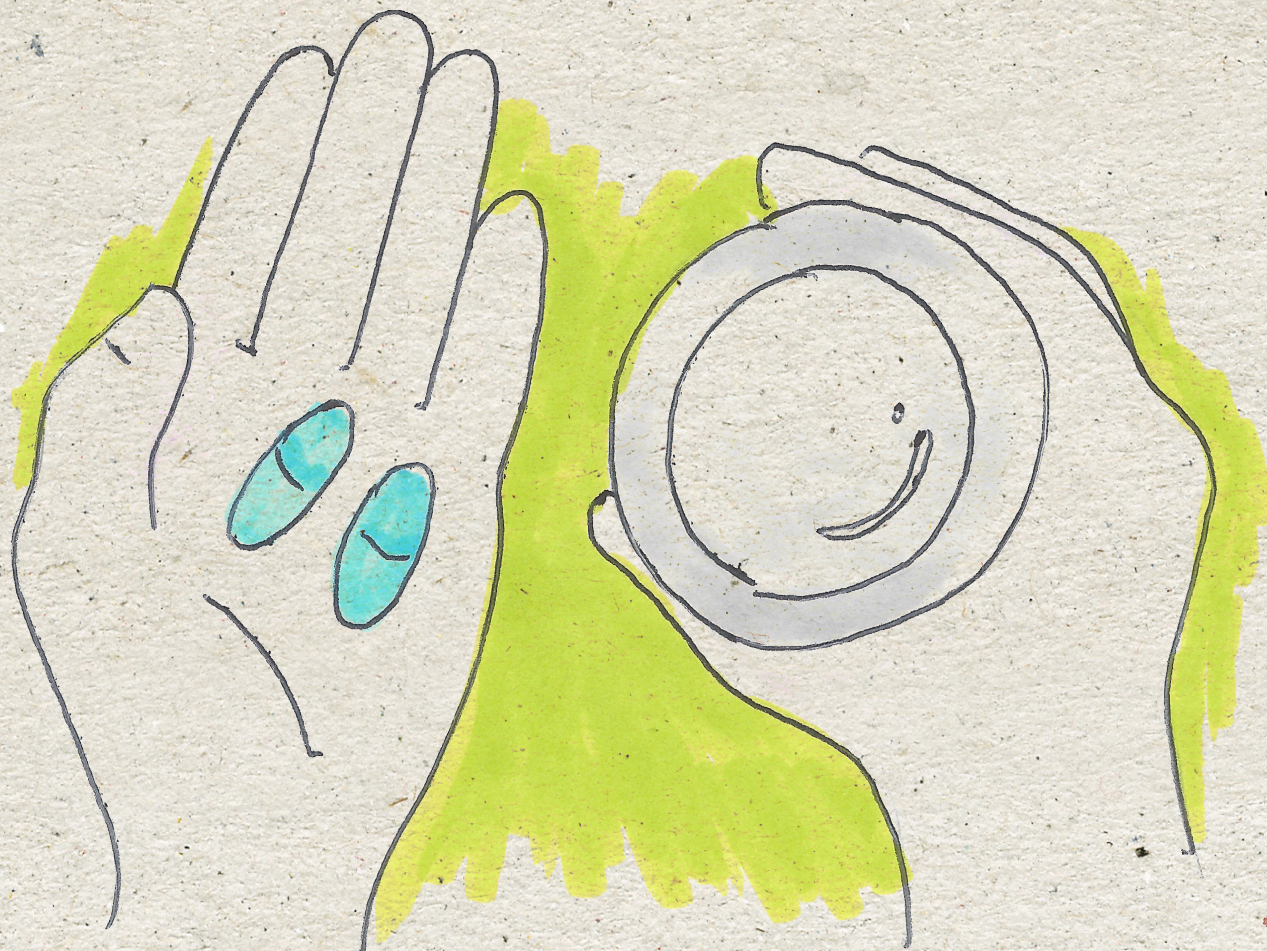
*If you think you have depression, you can go see your doctor...*

*The doctor will ask you questions about your feelings. Tell your doctor how you feel.*



*The doctor may ask you to come back again.*

*If you think you have depression,  
you can go see your doctor...*



*The doctor may ask  
you to take medicine.*

*If you think you have depression, you can go see your doctor...*

*The doctor may ask you to go see a psychologist, psychiatrist or counsellor.*



**Psychologists:** Psychologists are people you may be sent to when you are feeling unhappy or upset.

They can help you to understand your feelings or why you feel depressed.

They can talk to you about your feelings.

Psychologists do not give out medicine.





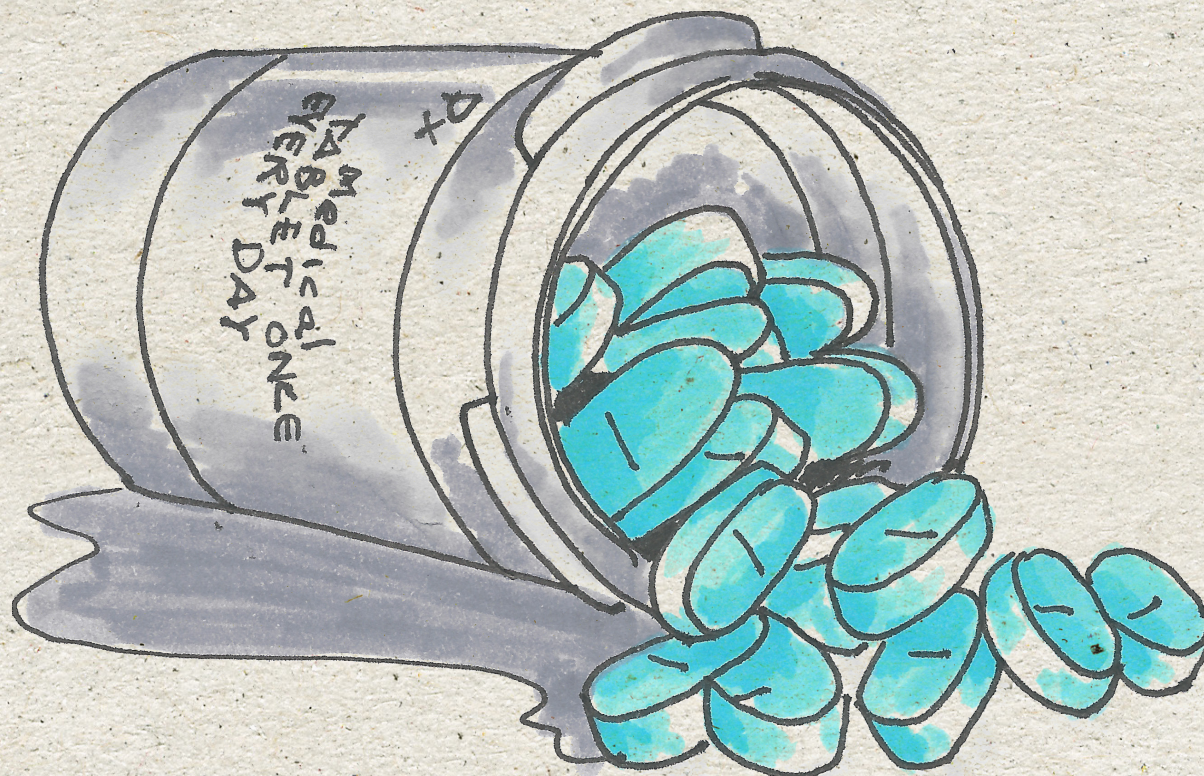


**Counsellors:** Counsellors are people who you talk to about what is upsetting you.

They will try to help you think about how to feel better.

**Psychiatrist:** Psychiatrists are doctors who help people with serious mental health issues.

They can give people medicines that can help them to feel better.



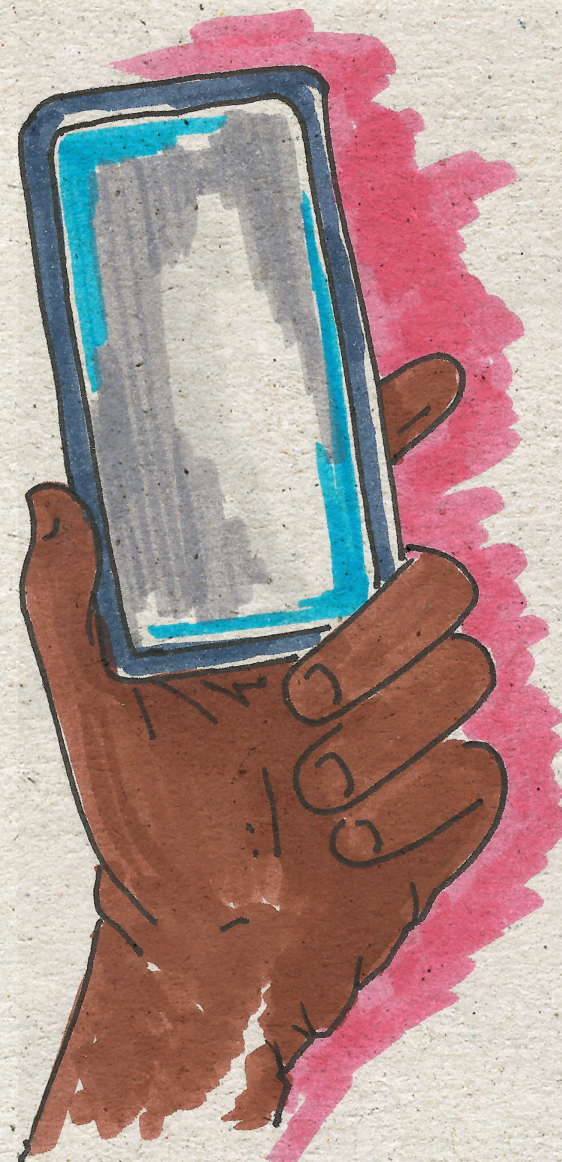
**If you think that you have depression speak to someone trust.**

If you feel like you want to hurt yourself, or even kill yourself, talk to someone you trust so they can help you feel better.

If you need to speak to someone now please call:

**CHIMO Helpline: 1-888-667-5005**

**Canadian Mental Health Association:  
(506) 455-5231**



## Jerrod's Story

**J**arrod is 25 years old and lives in an apartment with Grant. Grant helps him to keep track of his routine and drives him to his regular activities.

Every Wednesday, Jerrod attends karate at the local karate centre. His instructor Brian is kind and takes his time to explain things to Jerrod. The other people in Jerrod's karate class joke with him and help him to learn karate.

Jerrod really likes karate. He also likes going to the gym.

Jerrod goes to the gym Monday to Friday with help from his friend, Ryan. Jerrod wakes up bright and early at 8 am, eats breakfast, and gets ready to go to the gym at 9 am with Ryan.

Ryan and Jerrod lift weights, go swimming and walk on the treadmill. Jerrod would like to get in shape and have muscles like his friend Ryan. Ryan also helps Jerrod meet new people at the gym, and Jerrod looks forward to seeing other people at the gym each day.

Jerrod really looks up to Ryan. They spend a lot of time together. Jerrod feels that he can talk to Ryan about anything.

Most days after going to the gym, Jerrod and Ryan go to the coffee shop on the way back to Jerrod's apartment.

One day, after the gym, while they were at the coffee shop, Ryan told Jerrod that he had applied to college to become a social worker. Ryan said, "That means I won't be able to go to the gym with you because I will be in class. We will still be friends, though."

Ryan told Jerrod that it did not mean that he did not care about Jerrod; Ryan just wanted to go to school to learn more things.

Jerrod felt sad and confused. He was quiet during the ride back to his apartment. He did not feel like talking.

The next morning, Jerrod slept in past his alarm. He was tired and he did not feel like getting out of bed to go to the gym.

Grant came into his room awhile later and said, "Jerrod, are you going to the gym with Ryan today?"

"No! I don't want to go to the gym today!" Jerrod yelled.

Grant was surprised because Jerrod had never yelled at him before. "Is everything OK with you, Jerrod?" he asked.

"Yes, I'm just tired today, alright?" Jerrod answered.

Grant decided to leave Jerrod alone. It was clear that he was angry. He phoned Ryan to find out why Jerrod might be angry.

Ryan told Grant that he had talked to Jerrod the day before about going to college, and he felt that this was the reason Jerrod might be angry and not want to go to the gym.

Later that morning, Jerrod got out of bed. He told Grant that he was sick to his stomach and that he did not feel like having breakfast.

Grant said that he had to go to work but that he had his phone with him if Jerrod needed to talk. Grant reminded Jerrod that this was Wednesday and that he had karate class that night.

“Maybe you’ll feel better by then,” Grant said.

Jerrod was still feeling sick to his stomach so he decided to go back to bed. He could not stop thinking about Ryan not going to the gym with him anymore and he began to get angry.

Jerrod slept for the rest of the day until Grant came back to the apartment at supper time.

Grant reminded Jerrod about karate class that evening. Jerrod told Grant that he still wasn’t feeling well and that he wanted to sleep for the rest of the evening.

For the next couple of weeks, Jerrod felt tired. He was not interested in going to the gym or karate class.

Jerrod’s stomach was also sore every day. He also had a lot of headaches. Jerrod’s karate instructor, Brian, called the house to ask where Jerrod had been. He told Jerrod that Jerrod’s friends at karate missed him because he had not attended the past few sessions.

Jerrod told Brian that he had not been feeling well, but that he did miss going to karate.

After the phone call with Brian, Jerrod went to sit in the living room with Grant.

Grant knew that Jerrod was still very sad. For the past couple of weeks, Jerrod had tried to spend time outside, eat healthy, and do things that he enjoys every day. But he still felt very sad. Nothing seemed to make him feel better.

Grant said, “Hey, Jerrod have you thought about talking to Dr. Smith about how you are feeling?”

Jerrod did not want to go to see Dr. Smith, but he was also tired of feeling sad and sick. So he told Grant that he would like to talk to a doctor.

Jerrod, with Grant’s help, called Dr. Smith to set an appointment.

Five days later, Jerrod and Grant went to see Dr. Smith.

“Hello, Jerrod!” said Dr. Smith when Jerrod and Grant entered his office.



“Hi,” said Jerrod quietly.

“What can I help you with today?”

Jerrod shrugged his shoulders and looked at Grant.

Grant helped Jerrod to explain that he had felt sick to his stomach for most of the month, that he had stopped attending karate and that he had little interest in going to the gym.

The doctor listened and nodded. “Wow, Jerrod, it seems like you are dealing with a lot in your life. Is there anything else that is bothering you?”

Jerrod said, “I am sad because my friend Ryan left to go to college.” Jerrod got tears in his eyes when he talked about Ryan.

Dr. Smith said, “Oh Jerrod, that must have been hard for you.”

Jerrod found it difficult to talk, but he said, “It was hard.”

“Jerrod it sounds to me like you might be depressed. Do you know what that means?” asked Dr. Smith.

Jerrod had heard the word depression before but he did not know what it meant. He shook his head no.

“Well, Jerrod, sometimes when you have a loss or a hard time in life, it can make you sad. Being sad is totally normal, but when you are sad everyday for awhile it might be a bit more serious than regular sadness. We call sadness that lasts a long time depression. Does that make sense to you?”

“I think so,” Jerrod said.

“You also told me that you have been feeling sick to your stomach and that you are sleeping a lot. Those are two signs of depression. It also sounds like you have stopped being interested in doing things you enjoy, like karate class and the gym.”

Jerrod didn't know how to feel. It was a lot of information for him to take in.

“So can you make me feel better?” Jerrod asked.

“You can do things that will make you feel better and happier, which is the most important part. How would you like to start feeling better so you can get back to your activities and the things you love?” Dr. Smith asked.

“I would like that,” Jerrod said.

“Well let’s make a plan to help you feel better. I will give you some medicine that will help. I also want you to try and get back to the gym and karate. Eat well. Spend time outside. All of these things will help you feel better. Does that sound ok to you, Jerrod?”

“Yes.” Jerrod smiled.

“Great. I would like you to begin taking your medicine. I would like you to come back and see me in a month to see how you are feeling”

“Ok, Jerrod. Make sure to take your medicine every day. Grant can help you to remember.” Dr. Smith said.

“Thank you, Dr. Smith.” Jerrod said.

“I will see you in a month” Dr. Smith said.

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