

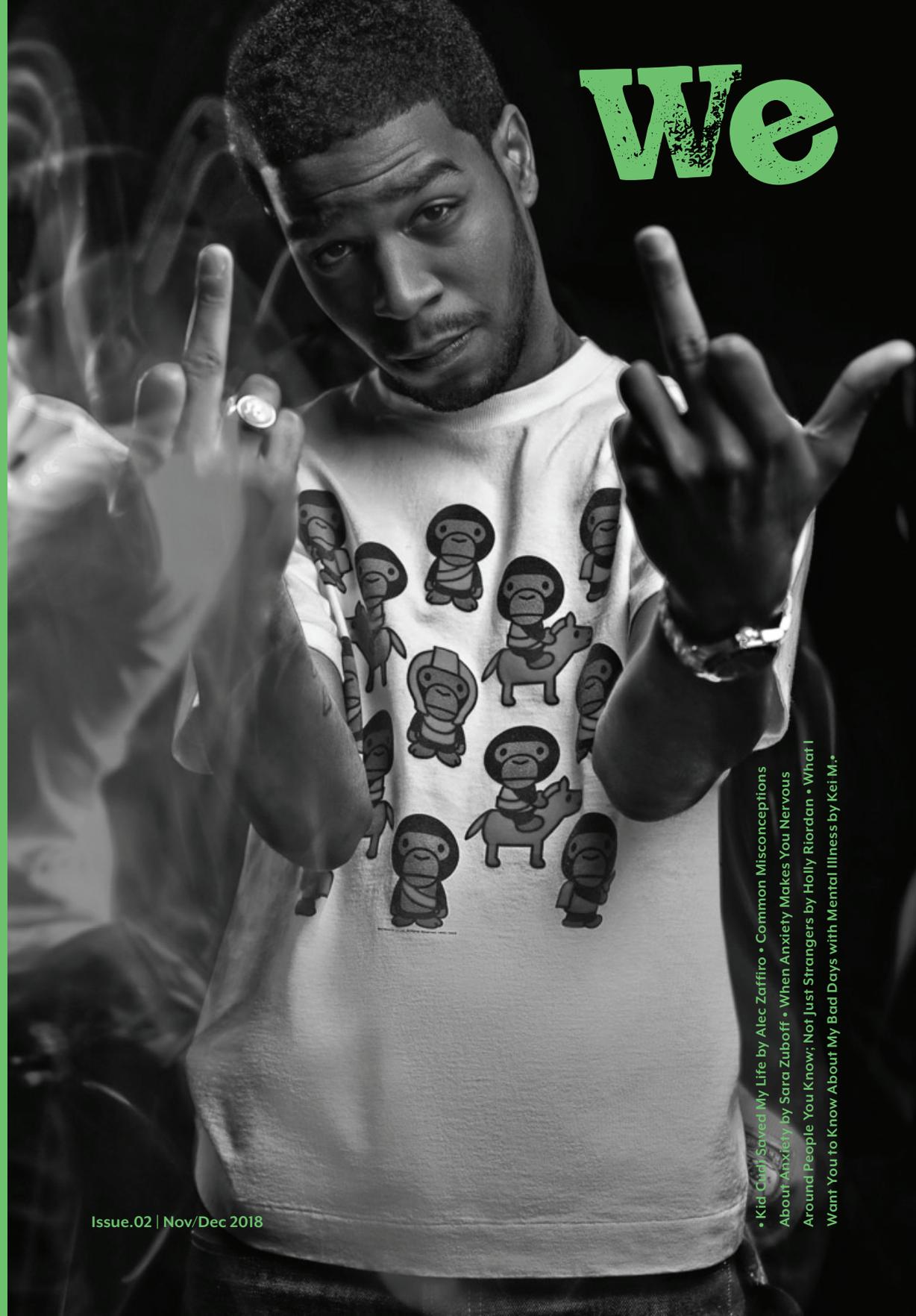


We magazine is a product of MYND, a non-profit organization dedicated to the improvement of teenage mental health in the United States. Visit MYND.org for more information.

We magazine

Issue.02 | Nov./Dec. 2018

We



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• Kid, Cool? Saved My Life by Alec Zaffiro • Common Misconceptions About Anxiety by Sara Zuboff • When Anxiety Makes You Nervous Around People You Know; Not Just Strangers by Holly Riordan • What I Want You to Know About My Bad Days with Mental Illness by Kei M.

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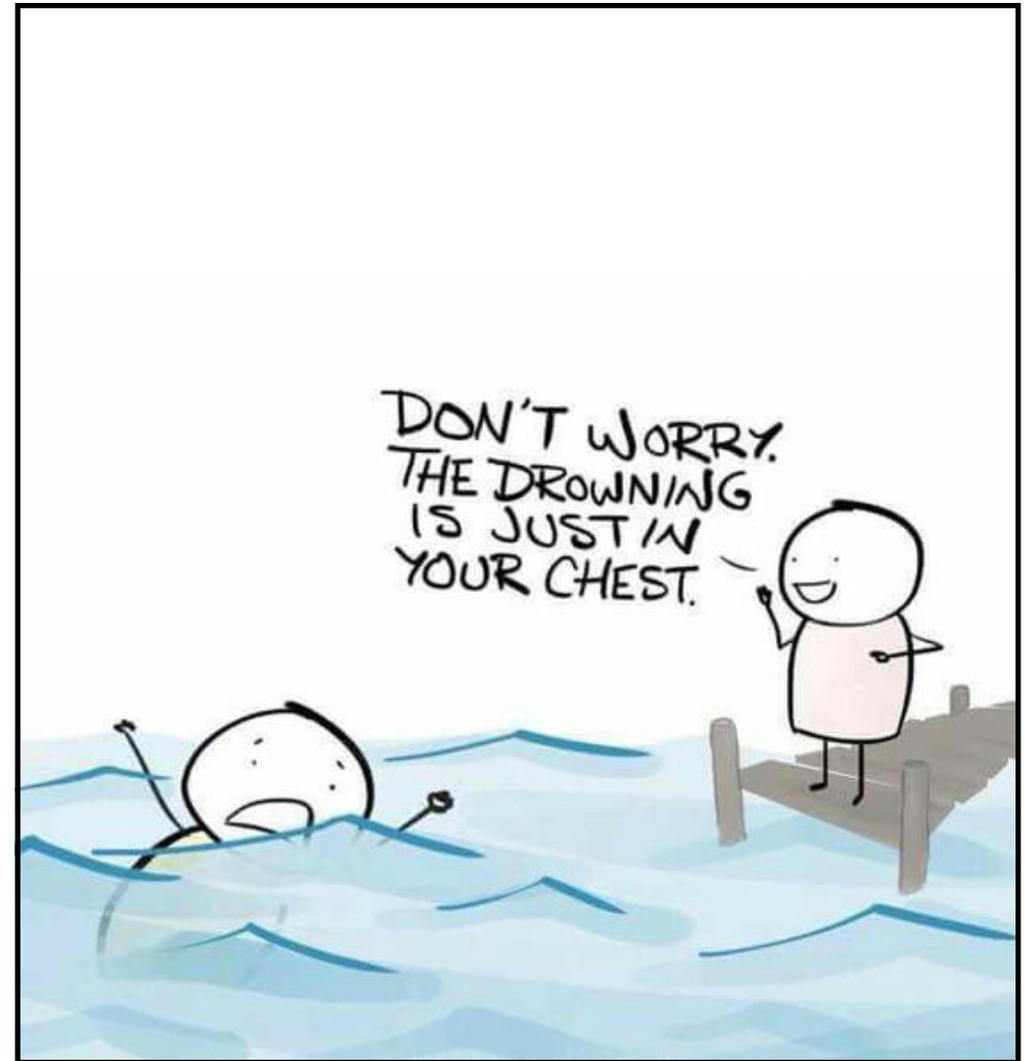
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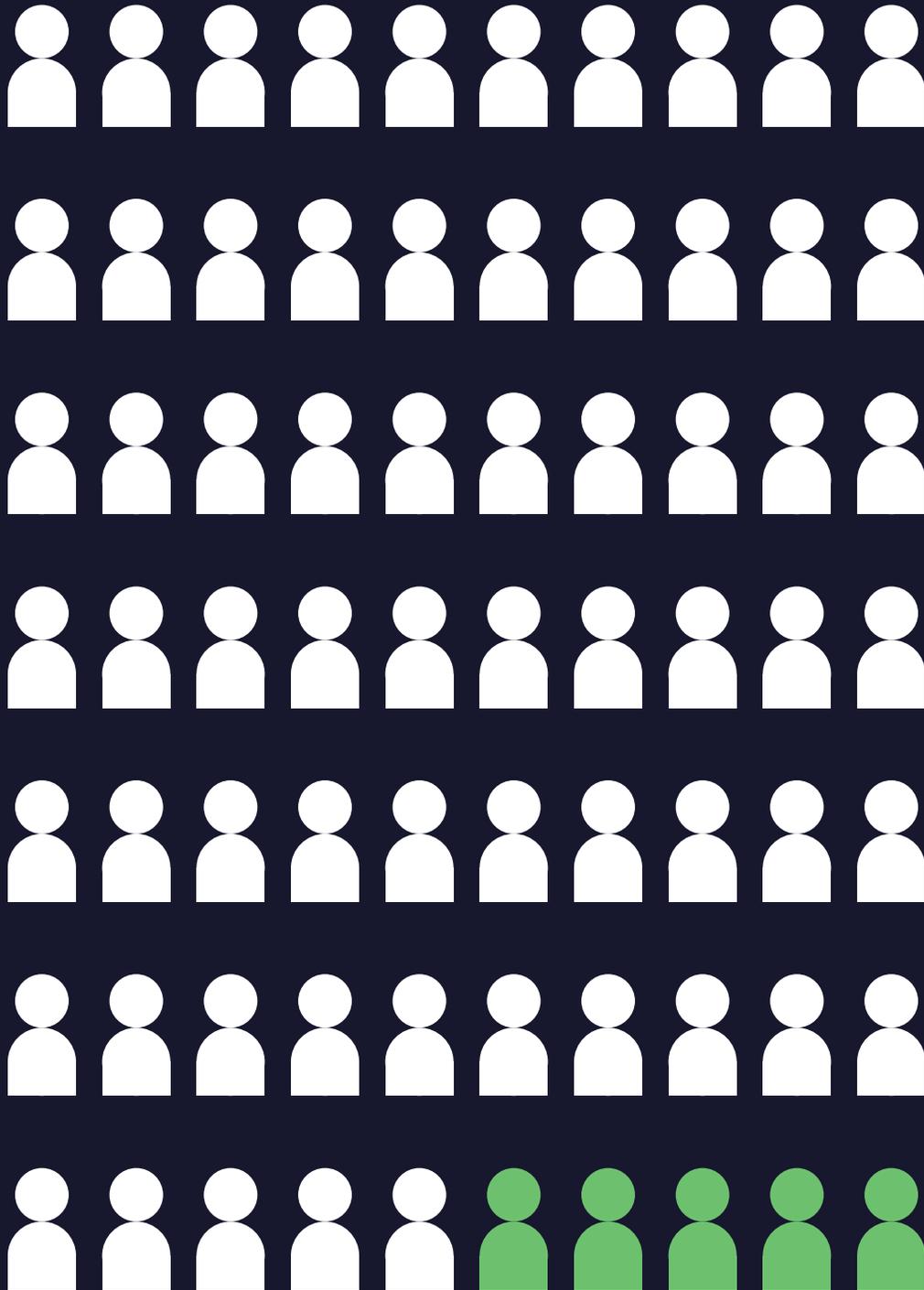
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Nobody would tell you to snap out of a broken arm, because "snapping out of it" isn't a thing. So, don't beat yourself up when try, but can't.



65%

of all mental health conditions
manifest before the age of 20



50% before the age of 14.

KID CUDI

SAVED MY LIFE

by Alec Zaffiro





Kid Cudi live in 2015.

If you've followed, or listened to, rap music in the past decade, you understand the transcendence of Kid Cudi and his music. Unlike his contemporaries, Cudi's popularity isn't an offshoot of "hard raps," fashion statements, or mainstream dominance. Rather, he's made waves through sentiment, ethics, intuitions of originality. Without question Cudi is one of the most influential artists to the 21st century.

From 2008-2010, Scott Mescudi (Kid Cudi) attained chart success and subtly pioneered his way to prominence. Amid a culture shift musically, in terms of style and lyrical content, Cudi paved way for mental health's inclusion in rap culture.

On his first album, *Man on the Moon: The End of Day*, Cudi delivered a dreamy, space-like persona that was introspective, honest, and somewhat revolutionary for the genre. Thanks to tracks like "Day n Nite," "Pursuit of Happiness," and "Soundtrack 2 My Life," Cudi rendered a composite of artless feeling among listeners world wide.

Success continued for Mescudi on his bitter-sweet sophomore album, *Man on the Moon II: The Legend of Mr. Rager*. This project

significantly shifted to a darker, more vulnerable tone due to tribulations of an intense drug addiction-the man had fallen into a black hole. The album acted as his psychedelic synopsis of deeply personal misfortune, sorrow, and rage.

Mescudi grew up an artsy, uncoordinated child in Cleveland, Ohio. On multiple occasions, he's expressed moments in grade-school where he felt awkward and out of place. At times, Scott was bullied for being an outcast and, worst of all, his father died of cancer when Scott was only 11 years old. His troubled disposition lead him to expulsion from high school for threatening to punch his principal in the face. Childhood was not one of ease for the young artist.

Majority of Cudi's impact stems from his willingness to express the pain and emotion he's felt in his life; it's been a cornerstone of his sound since the beginning.

Contrary to mainstream rap's narrative of "money, cars, and hoes," Mescudi changed the game by filling a void in virtue. Through his authenticity and readiness to reveal himself, he's manifested a sense of connection and understanding with fans. He's always felt his purpose had meaning beyond just making good music.

It was an open confession to suicidal thoughts and depression.

Kid Cudi live in 2017.



Since success, he's recognized his responsibility to help others cope with mental illness. By transmitting his own struggles through music, he's able to commiserate with listeners from all age groups and backgrounds. He's changed the way people address disorder of the mind.

Scott Mescudi is not the "one-and-only" ambassador for concern of loneliness, self-destruction, and internal confusion. Since the beginning of hip-hop, emcees such as 2Pac, Notorious B.I.G., and Nas have all expressed sentiments of suicide and depression. However, none have matched the grandeur of Kid Cudi's impact.

On the cusp of internet and hip-hop prominence, Cudi's message had a never-before-seen cascade effect. By the grace of timing and technology, Mescudi resonated with millions of adolescents and young adults around the globe. For many, it was the first time hearing subject matter of it's kind—for all, it was the first time hearing it expressed so vividly and honestly.

Inevitably, Cudi has influenced musicians superseding him, too. It's worth mentioning Cudi's correlation to luminaries in hip-hop culture, Kanye West and Drake. 2008 was a special year—it permanently changed the soundscape for hip-hop and rap.

The mixtape debut, *A Kid Named Cudi*, dropped in mid-2008 which caught the interest of none other than Kanye West, who flew young Cudi out to Hawaii to work with him. The two collaborated on Ye's latest album; one that would incorporate more melody and melancholy, something Mescudi owned at the time. *808s & Heartbreak* released later in 2008—in hindsight, a prominent influence for a new wave of thematic content.

Drake followed this mixture of singing and introspective rap on his break out tape *So Far Gone*, which released in early 2009. Without the previous upsurge of "new-found style" from Cudi and Ye, it's hard to say Drakes would have made a project so on par with that vibe. Smash hits such as "Best I Ever Had" and "Successful" arose from such sound and launched Drake into the musical stratosphere where he moves today.

Cudi, Kanye, and Drake—a brain trust of sonic influencers—forever changed the course of hip-hop. They opened so many avenues for artists to rightfully express themselves and their state of mind.

" All I wanted to do
was **HELP** kids
not feel **ALONE**
& **STOP** kids from
committing
SUICIDE. "
—**SCOTT MESCUDI**

SOUNDTRACK 2 MY LIFE [LYRICS]

[verse 1]

I got 99 problems and they all bitches
 Wish I was Jigga man, carefree livin'
 But I'm not Shawn, or Martin Louis
 I'm that Cleveland nigga rollin' with them Brooklyn boys
 You knowin' how it be when you start living large
 I control my own life, Charles was never in charge
 No sitcom could teach Scott about the dram
 Or even explain the troubles that haunted my mom
 On Christmas time, my mom Christmas grind
 Got me most of what I wanted, how'd you do it mom, huh?
 She copped the toys I would play with in my room by myself
 "Why he by himself?"
 He got two older brothers, one hood, one good
 An independent older sister kept me fly when she could
 But they all didn't see
 The little bit of sadness in me
 Scotty

[hook]

I've got some issues that nobody can see
 And all of these emotions are pouring out of me
 I bring them to the light for you, it's only right
 This is the soundtrack to my life,
 the soundtrack to my life

[verse 2]

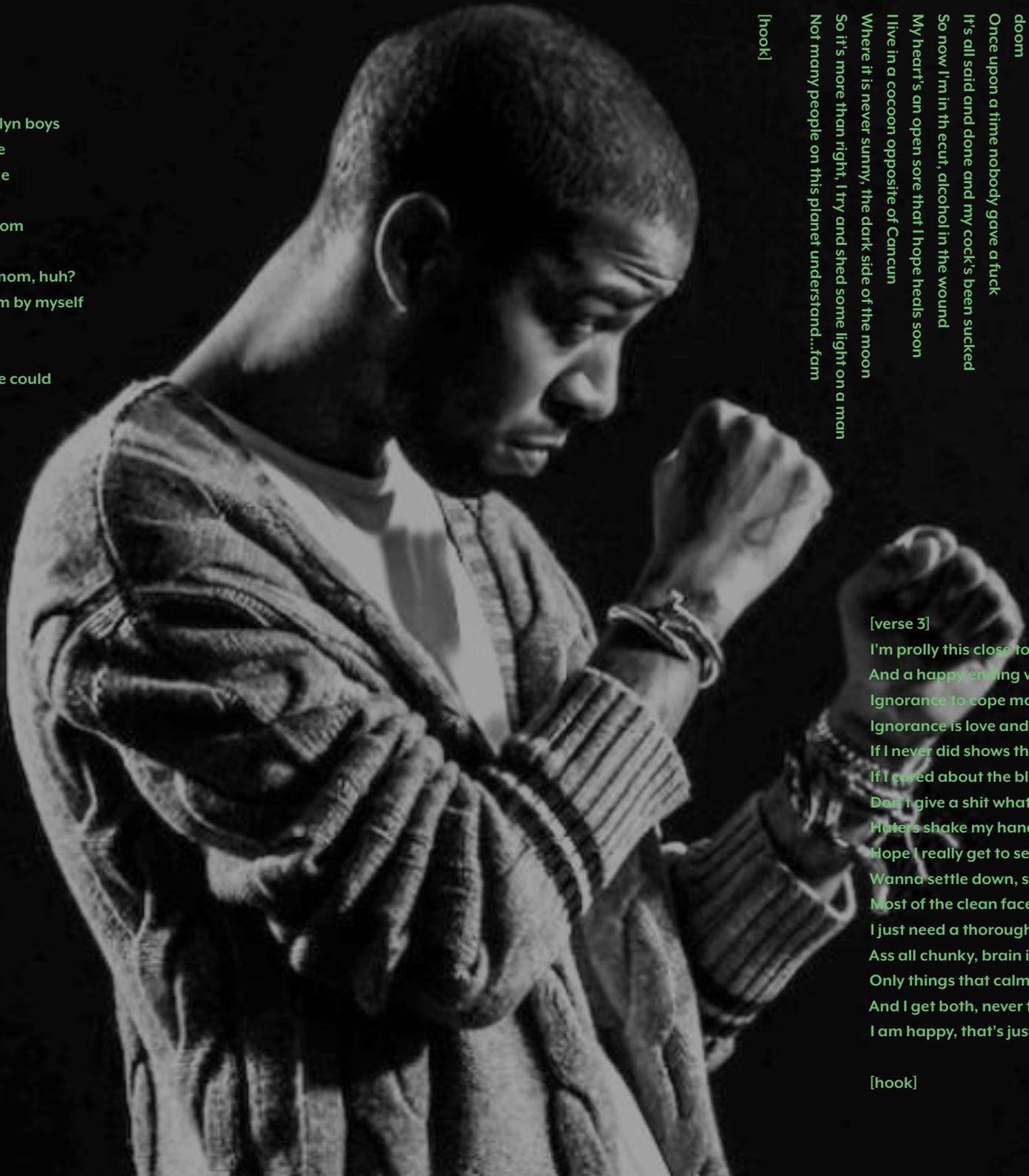
I'm super paranoid, like a sixth sense
 Since my father died, I ain't been right since
 And I tried to piece the puzzle of the universe
 Split an eighth of shrooms just so I could see the universe
 I try and think about myself as a sacrifice
 Just to show the kids they ain't the only ones who up at night
 The moon will illuminate my room and soon I'm consumed by my
 doom
 Once upon a time nobody gave a fuck
 It's all said and done and my cock's been sucked
 So now I'm in the ecut, alcohol in the wound
 My heart's an open sore that I hope heals soon
 I live in a cocoon opposite of Cancun
 Where it is never sunny, the dark side of the moon
 So it's more than right, I try and shed some light on a man
 Not many people on this planet understand...fam

[hook]

[verse 3]

I'm prolly this close to go and trying some coke
 And a happy ending would be slittin' my throat
 Ignorance to cope man, ignorance is bliss
 Ignorance is love and I need that shit
 If I never did shows than I'd prolly be a myth
 If I cared about the blogs than I'd prolly be a jackass
 Don't give a shit what people talkin' 'bout, fam
 Hate's shake my hand but I keep the sanitizer on deck
 Hope I really get to see 30
 Wanna settle down, stop being so flirty
 Most of the clean faces be the most dirty
 I just need a thoroughbred, cook when I'm hungry
 Ass all chunky, brain is insanity
 Only things that calm be down: pussy and some Cali tree
 And I get both, never truly satisfied
 I am happy, that's just the saddest lie

[hook]



Above all, Kid Cudi empowered and emboldened young minds to conquer intense mental convictions, not run from them.

Kid Cudi live in 2014.



Today's "new age" rappers have built off of similar undertones in their music as well. Rap culture is affluent with hints and references to psychological disarray. Artists like Vic Mensa and XXXTentacion have openly expressed suicidal urges. It's now commonplace to incorporate notions of adness and despair. The doors have opened for performers to let their emotions ring true.

Moreover, plenty of people in and around hip-hop has expressed their respect for Kid Cudi's contributions. Successful musical artists in their own right, such as Travis Scott, as well as Pete Davidson, a comedian on staff at Saturday Night Live, have stated on camera: "Kid Cudi saved my life."

What makes an artist like Kid Cudi so special is not simply the fact he's open about his woes. The real reason he's revealed and regarded as a hero is because he makes all the struggle and emotion come full-circle. Kid Cudi is a beacon of hope.

Majority of the current artists rapping about poor mental health conditions do not come with the same level of gratitude as Cudi. It's difficult to distinguish who's truly battling

a mental disorder and who's putting on an act. Much of the newer artists appear to shout precarious claims for the sake of sounding precarious. "Edgy" is very popular at the moment.

But, Mescudi handled it differently. He carried his troubles authentically and rewarded kids who listened. Kid Cudi didn't just deliver dead-end motifs; he came with justification, which is largely why he's different.

He delivered his distress and emotion with an aim for higher ground. Although hurt, as a listener, you felt a sense of redemption through his music; like there was a light at the end of the tunnel. Even though tracks like "Heart of a Lion" and "Mr. Rager" revolve around internal strife, they give the impression contentment will return, despite how much fight it might take to get there.

He made it okay to really *feel* those dark emotions deep down. He made it okay to *say* nightmarish thoughts out loud. He made it okay to *fight* for the will to live another day.

DISTORTED THINKING EXERCISE

Distorted thinking extremely common for those dealing with anxiety disorders, depression, OCD, and other mental illnesses. It is a fairly simple concept: our minds trick us into thinking things are more significant, and more negative, than they really are. Something like the class deadline for an essay assignment. The example to the right shows this case.

Step one is to identify this event and the distorted thought. The "voice" is the distorted thought that this exercise allows us to combat before it does too much damage.

Next we need to identify what kind of distorted thinking we are experiencing. In this case the distortion we experience is Pessimism & Presumed Inability. (See the list next to the example for other kinds of distortions.)

Once we know what the distorted thought is and how it is distorted, we can take a step back and combat it. We have to look at the reality of our situation (or event) and point out to ourselves, and our distortion, why that voice is wrong.

The last step of the exercise is to record the outcome. Keep in mind that this exercise gets easier and more effective the more you do it. It may not work the first few times, that's normal, don't let it worry you. Trying is all you can ask of yourself and creating habits around exercises like this one takes time.

EXAMPLE:

Event: Writing this paper is taking too long and it's due tomorrow.

Voice: You're fucked. There is no way you get this paper finished one time. This is what you get for procrastinating. You deserve to fail this assignment.

Distortion: Pessimism, Presumed Inability

Challenge: Just keep working. That's all you can do. You may have to pull an all-nighter but there is plenty of time to finish before class in the morning. Just keep working.

Outcome: Barely slept, but I got it done.

LIST OF DISTORTIONS

- Distorted Risk Assessment, "If it feels likely, it is likely. It feels dangerous, so it is dangerous."
- Inflated Sense of Guilt, "If something bad happens, it's my fault."
- Intolerance of Discomfort, "If I can just think this through, I won't feel this way."
- Intolerance of Uncertainty, "If I think about it enough, I'll be sure."
- Pessimism & Presumed Inability, "Bad things will happen, and I will not be able to handle it."
- Misconstrued Virtue, "Worrying about it shows how much I care."
- Over-valuation of the Thought Process, "Because I have a thought, it is important and I must give it my full attention."
- Implicit Beliefs about Worry, "Worry keeps bad things from happening, and I can't be surprised by anything."
- Worry about Worrying Too Much, "I'm out of control, making myself sick. I need to just stop worrying about things."

Common
misconceptions
about

ANXIETY

by Sara Zuboff



I almost
DIED today...

I almost died today...in my mind. It happens sometimes. It happens semi-regularly when I'm overscheduled and haven't slept enough, like I was today. I was having trouble breathing. I felt like I was on the verge of tears all day. The urge to flee was making my skin crawl. Yet, to the outside, I didn't LOOK like I was having an anxiety attack, even though my insides felt like they were at DEFCON 1. That's why I decided to write this: I want to do my part to help debunk some of the common myths about anxiety, a mental health condition that affects over 40 million people in the United States alone.

1. People with anxiety can't be successful.

This old myth couldn't be further from the truth. I can understand where this may have come from: people who struggle with anxiety do have a bigger hill to climb when it comes to these kinds of things. However, the truth is, in addition to the everyday people in the Anxiety Warrior Club, we also have recognizable folks like Ryan Reynolds as members.

2. People with anxiety need to avoid all stresses.

This goes along with the first myth, but while people with anxiety can be triggered by certain types of stress, the reality is we can also kick ass in a stressful situation. Let's face it: life is full of the unexpected and outside of living in a plastic bubble, it's impossible to live a completely stress-free life. For those of us with anxiety, we're responsible for finding coping mechanisms to help us not only survive stressors, but to thrive when fighting them.

...in my
MIND



3. People with anxiety don't have anything to be anxious about.

I hear this all the time. "You seem so together. You have a great life. What do you have to be anxious about?" I have a chemical glitch in my brain. Seriously, there is a genetic component to having anxiety and imbalances of our hormones and chemical messengers to the brain.

4. A healthy lifestyle will always cure anxiety.

I wish this was true, but it is certainly a myth. Eating a healthy diet, taking vitamins, exercising, these may improve your health and help reduce outside stress, but people who struggle with anxiety usually need some kind of direct support. It's not something that a healthy lifestyle can simply fix.

"It's not something that a healthy lifestyle can simply fix."

5. People with anxiety are fragile.

One thing that really annoys me is how, when some people find out I have anxiety, they treat me like I could break if they say or do the wrong thing. I know these people are well-meaning and are trying to be compassionate, but I don't view myself as fragile.

I can be in the midst of a "white noise buzzing in my ears, brain screaming at me to flee" episode, but still go to class, get my work done on time, and handle my other responsibilities. Living with anxiety has increased my resilience tenfold, not made a shrinking violet.

There are a lot of misconceptions about people with anxiety. I share some in the hopes of not only dispelling them but also highlight how awesome some people with anxiety really are. I may sound selfish, but the more understanding we can create, the better your life can be if you struggle with anxiety, or the better your relationships with friends/family members who struggle with anxiety can be.

What misconceptions do you feel like others have about your mental health struggles? Why do think that is? Could it change somehow?

Writing, as well as drawing, has proved an incredibly useful tool in understanding our own mental health. This space is yours to write, draw, use as you wish to explore whatever thoughts or questions this prompt and the previous story bring to mind.



WHEN ANXIETY MAKES YOU NERVOUS AROUND PEOPLE YOU KNOW; NOT JUST STRANGERS

BY HOLLY RIORDAN

I wish more people understood the way anxiety works. It seems like everyone can understand why public speaking makes me sick to my stomach, although it's really just the idea that will make me sick. They can understand why I get clammy when my crush enters the room or when I have a one-on-one meeting with a professor or when I need to make an important phone call.

But nobody seems to understand how my anxiety haunts me; even when I'm around people I have known my entire life: friends, classmates, even my own family.

There are times when I grab lunch with a friend who am usually comfortable around, but for whatever reason, that day I feel like I am out of my comfort zone. My sentences are stunted. My words are shaky. I have no idea what to say to keep the conversation going. Even though I try my hardest to act "normal" everything comes out awkward. Everything feels forced.

During those moments, I feel like an outsider. Even though I know my friends love me, my paranoia convinces me that they are annoyed by how I'm acting. I assume they wish they would rather be somewhere else, with somebody else, because I am not the fun-loving person they thought.

The same thing happens during family parties. There are moments when it's obvious my laughs are forced and there are nerves behind my smile. I might disappear into the bathroom or hide in the corner and stare at my phone while everyone else jokes around, which gives them the impression I don't want to be involved, that I don't care about spending time with them. But that's not true. I do want to spend time with people, but sometimes my anxiety wins.

Sometimes my anxiety acts up when I'm around people that haven't made me feel that before. Sometimes my anxiety acts up when I am about to go somewhere I've been excited about for weeks. There won't be any logical reason, but that doesn't matter.

SOMETIMES MY ANXIETY...

The worst part is that I feel like I have to keep everything bottled up inside. There have been times when I have voiced my anxiety to loved ones and then gotten nothing but weird looks in return. Friends will ask what they've done wrong to make me so anxious, or ask if I still like them. They will wrongly assume my anxiety has something to do with them.

Sometimes my anxiety is random.
Sometimes it appears out of nowhere.
Sometimes I cannot pinpoint what caused it or what could calm it down.

I hate feeling anxious around strangers and anytime I enter a new social situation, but it's even worse being anxious around the people who love me most. The people I've known for years if not my whole life. The people I should feel completely comfortable around by now.

...IS RANDOM.

...APPEARS
OUT OF NOWHERE.

Have you ever found yourself struggling in a situation without understanding why? It's maybe the most common symptom of an anxiety disorder because that kind of anxiety is irrational. How do you typically try to handle it? Does that work? What else could you try?

Writing, as well as drawing, has proved an incredibly useful tool in understanding our own mental health. This space is yours to write, draw, use as you wish to explore whatever thoughts or questions this prompt and the previous story bring to mind.

I've been blessed with friends I can be honest with about my mental illness. They might not entirely know what to say to me when I'm having a bad day, but they're always there for me. I gave my friend Leah, a tour of what a bad day is like for me. This is what I wrote to her:

MY BAD
DAYS WITH
MENTAL
ILLNESS

by Kei M.

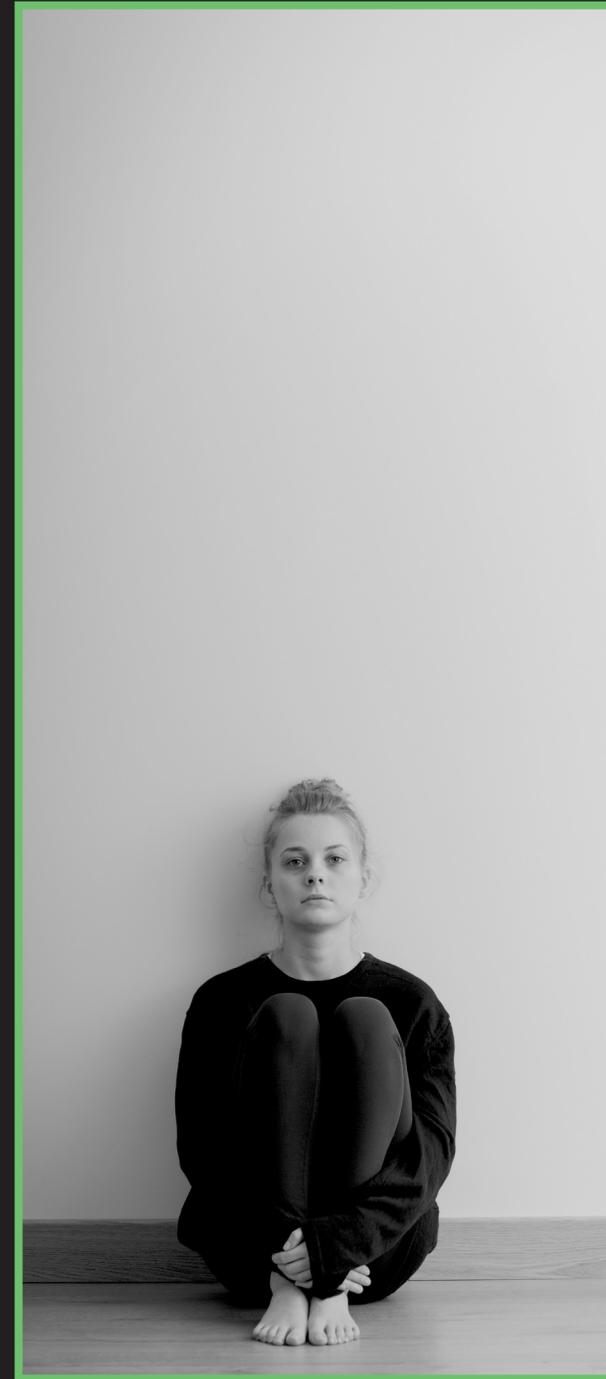
You've caught me having a bad day today. People have their own versions of a bad day. A bad day for me starts immediately when I wake up and I know I can't get out of house because I'm too scared to drive. I dwell over the thought of crashing the car into a brick wall or, worse, someone else's car. I know it's a bad day when I have to hold my hands together tightly or sit on them to prevent myself from digging my nails into my wrists, scarring them only because the pain from it will wake me up from the daze. It's a bad day when I know I'll forget things and won't be able to talk to people because I'll be too conscious of what they might be thinking. Whatever thoughts that come will twist into something grotesque, then play on repeat.

It's a bad day when I know I won't be able to face people because they'll make me cry and I won't be able to explain why I'm crying. Some moments I don't even know why I cry. I'll be a burden to others because I don't have the energy to do anything, and I can't tell them I can't do it because I don't see the point in doing something when it won't matter in the end.

It's a bad day when I know I can't function as everyone expects me to. I can't face you or anyone, because the person in front of you won't be the version you've come to know. The version you'll be talking to will be hollow, reckless with her words and cruel with her thinking. When I can drag it back to the place in my head where I keep it locked up, I'll be left to repair or clean the mess it left behind, facing the people it was cruel with, feeling apologetic and guilty.

That's why I can't get out of the house when I have a bad day.

— Kei



"I KNOW IT'S A BAD DAY WHEN
I HAVE TO HOLD MY HANDS
TOGETHER TIGHTLY OR SIT ON
THEM TO PREVENT MYSELF FROM
DIGGING MY NAILS INTO MY
WRISTS, SCARRING THEM ONLY
BECAUSE THE PAIN FROM IT WILL
WAKE ME UP FROM THE DAZE."

After she read this, Leah said my words were beautiful. I didn't realize it, but her presence and concern hit the fortress I built. She said that even if what I was telling her was too heavy, it was OK. I was honest with her, I let her in and she assured me that even when I thought I was unworthy of anything, she'd be there.

Bad days for someone with depression are downward spirals of trying to keep afloat when you're not a good swimmer. We get stuck in our heads, but there are people in our lives who will remind us of the world outside. They remind us of the good days, and this is sometimes the small step out of a very dark place.

What are your bad mental health days like?
Have you ever tried to explain that to someone?
Who? How did it go? If you haven't, who would
you? Why? Even if they don't know it, the people
closest to us are often the key to managing our
mental illnesses.

Writing, as well as drawing, has proved an incredibly useful tool in understanding our own mental health. This space is yours to write, draw, use as you wish to explore whatever thoughts or questions this prompt and the previous story bring to mind.

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www.psychiatry.org

ANXIETY & DEPRESSION ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

1-240-485-1001

www.adaa.org

DEPRESSION & BIPOLAR SUPPORT ALLIANCE (DBSA)

1-800-826-3632

www.dbsalliance.org

FREEDOM FROM FEAR (FFF)

1-718-351-1717

www.freedomefromfear.org

INTERNATIONAL FOUNDATION FOR RESEARCH AND EDUCATION ON DEPRESSION

www.ifred.org

JUVENILE BIPLAR RESEARCH FOUNDATION

1-914-468-1297

www.jbrf.org

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SOCIAL WORKERS

www.helpstartshere.org/find-a-social-worker

NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF MENTAL HEALTH

1-866-615-6464

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