

# CAPTAIN EMPATH

Against Mental  
Illness



# CAPTAIN EMPATH



"Heroes aren't just born  
—they are made through support,  
courage, and community.  
Follow this new series and learn  
how to strengthen your  
mental health!"

## Cultural Connect: Inland Intercultural Youth Wellness Initiative

This project was created by youth, for youth, to spark conversations about mental health, resilience, and community support. Every story, character, and message reflects real experiences and the power of seeking help.

### Why We're Doing This:

Elevate Youth Voices – Mental health matters, and young people are leading the way.

Build Resilience – Small steps create big change.

Create Community – No one should struggle alone.

Youth-Led & Designed: From scripting to storytelling, this comic was shaped entirely by young leaders determined to break the stigma and inspire action.

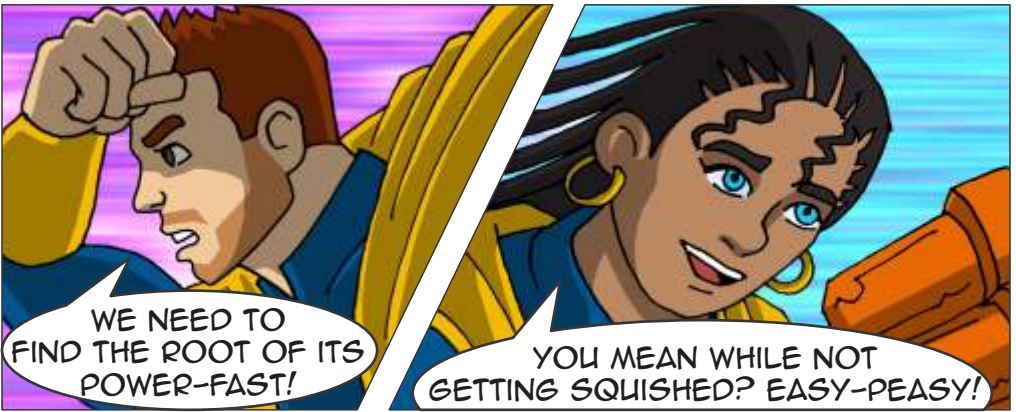
**Help us with feedback once you finish the book, it'll help us grow, learn and adapt to our community's needs!**

Comic Book feedback  
Survey: Captain Empath  
Against Mental Illness

For more information,  
contact EL SOL Staff  
or visit us on our  
social networks.



CAPTAIN EMPATH AND ASSISTANT ALLY FIGHT OVERWHELM, A MONSTER THAT WREAKS HAVOC ON THE CITY





WAIT...  
I FEEL  
IT.

OVERWHELM ISN'T JUST  
ATTACKING. IT'S FEEDING  
OFF FEAR AND DOUBT! WE  
NEED TO TURN THE TABLES.



THIS COMPASS -  
IT HELPS ME FIND MY WAY  
THROUGH THE STORM OF  
EMOTIONS.

OVERWHELM THRIVES  
ON CONFUSION AND FEAR.



AND THESE GAUNTLETS? THEY  
AREN'T JUST FOR HITTING  
THINGS. THEY REMIND ME I HAVE  
THE STRENGTH TO BREAK  
THROUGH WHAT FEELS  
IMPOSSIBLE.

EVERY TIME I USE THEM,  
I REMIND MYSELF - I AM  
STRONGER THAN MY DOUBTS.



AND I  
CAN NAVIGATE  
THROUGH IT.

I JUST  
HAVE TO  
FOCUS.

THE COMPASS  
GLOWS AS HE STEADIES  
HIS BREATHING, VISUALIZING  
A CLEAR PATH FORWARD.



OVERWHELM MAKES EVERYTHING FEEL TOO BIG, TOO IMPOSSIBLE.

BUT IF WE BREAK IT DOWN, STEP BY STEP, WE CAN TAKE IT APART!



ONE HIT AT A TIME!  
ONE POSITIVE THOUGHT AT A TIME!

ONE DIRECTION AT A TIME!



YOU READ THE EMOTIONS; I'LL CLEAR THE PATH.

LET'S SHOW THIS THING IT'S NO MATCH FOR TEAMWORK!



OVERWHELM,  
YOU ARE  
DEFEATED

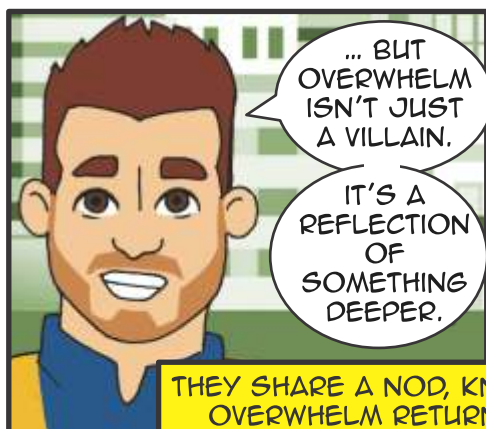


I... WILL RETURN SOON...



WE DID IT!

BECAUSE WE HAD  
THE RIGHT TOOLS... AND WE  
TRUSTED OURSELVES...



... BUT  
OVERWHELM  
ISN'T JUST  
A VILLAIN.

IT'S A  
REFLECTION  
OF  
SOMETHING  
DEEPER.



YEAH.  
IT'S LIKE...  
IT REMINDS ME OF  
WHAT I USED TO  
FEEL, BACK  
BEFORE...

THEY SHARE A NOD, KNOWING THAT EVEN WHEN  
OVERWHELM RETURNS, THEY'LL BE READY

JORDAN'S STORY: STRUGGLING WITH ANXIETY





WHAT IS IT?  
A FLYER FOR A SCHOOL  
MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT  
GROUP?



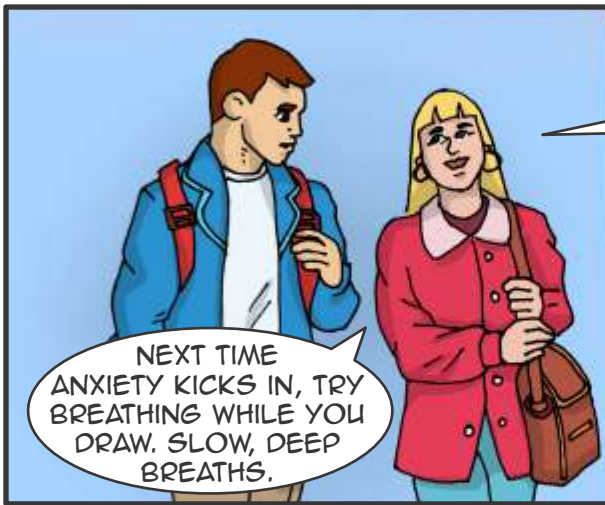
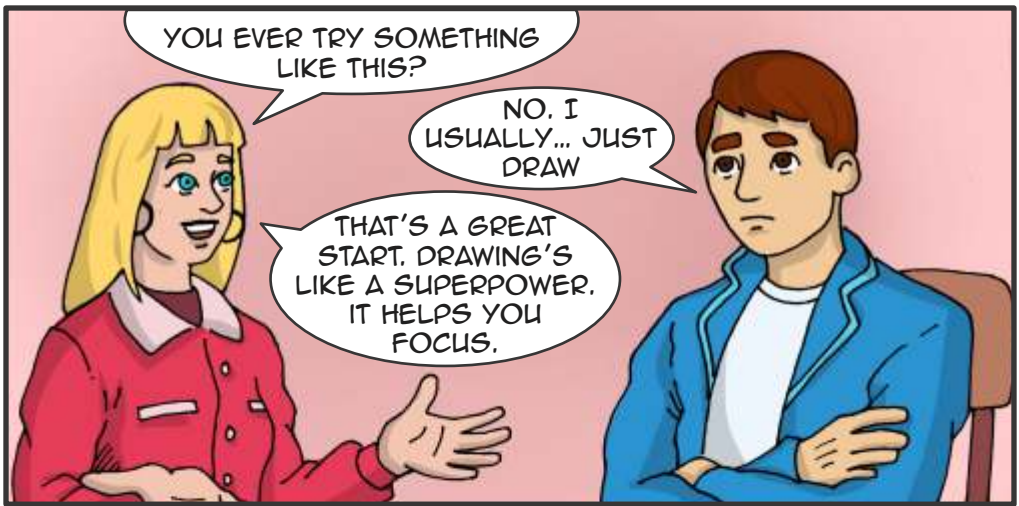
HEY, YOU'RE JORDAN, RIGHT?  
WELCOME. HERE, WE TALK ABOUT  
WHAT'S WEIGHING US DOWN  
AND FIGURE OUT HOW  
TO HANDLE IT

NO PRESSURE.  
JUST TAKE YOUR  
TIME

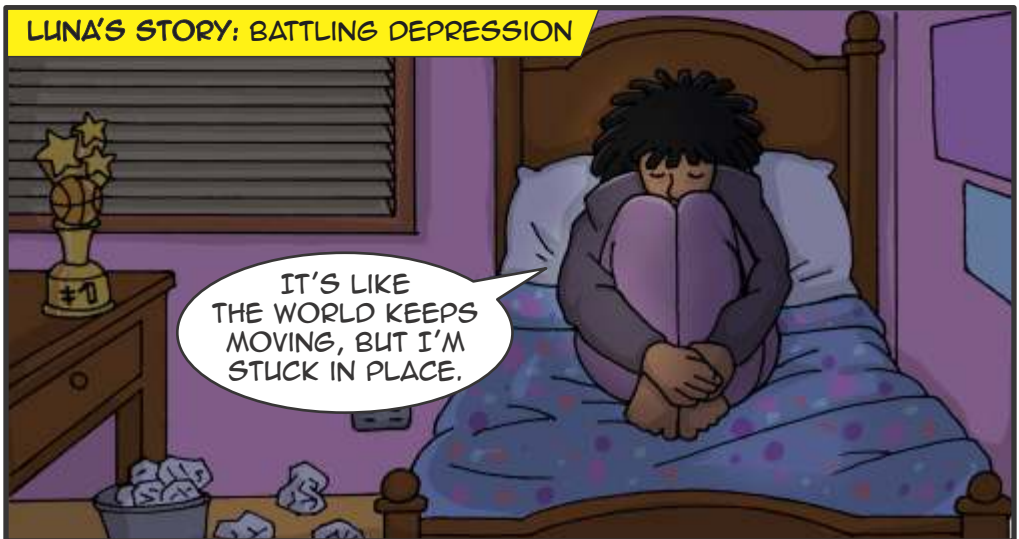


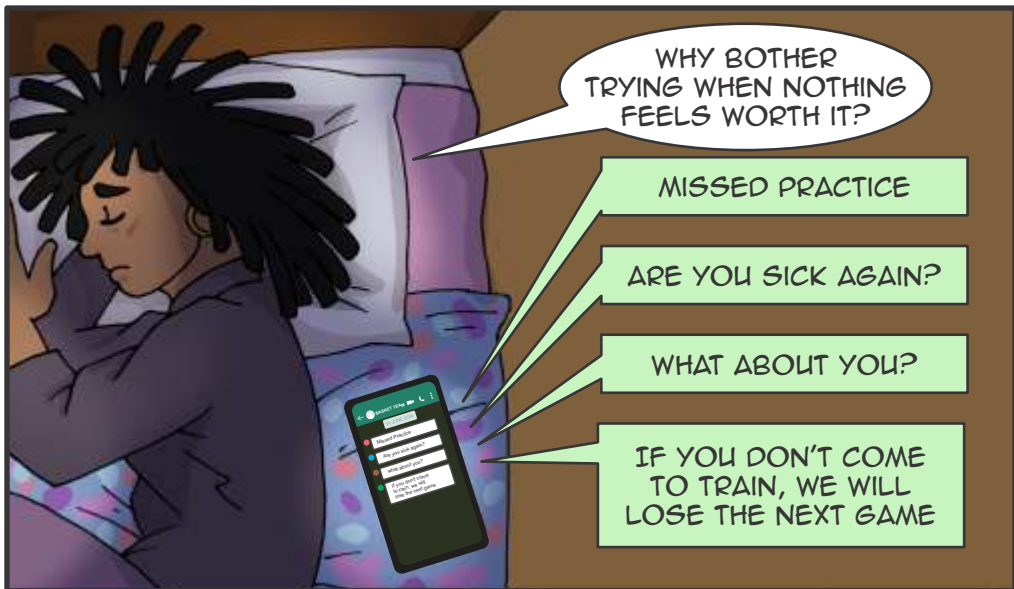
ANXIETY TRIES  
TO TAKE CONTROL,  
BUT YOU CAN TAKE  
IT BACK.

IT'S LIKE  
TEACHING YOUR  
BRAIN TO SLOW  
DOWN.



LUNA'S STORY: BATTLING DEPRESSION





WHY BOTHER TRYING WHEN NOTHING FEELS WORTH IT?

MISSED PRACTICE

ARE YOU SICK AGAIN?

WHAT ABOUT YOU?

IF YOU DON'T COME TO TRAIN, WE WILL LOSE THE NEXT GAME



LUNA!



CAN WE TALK FOR A MINUTE? YOU'RE ONE OF THE MOST DEDICATED PLAYERS I'VE EVER SEEN,

BUT SOMETHING'S DIFFERENT LATELY. WHAT'S GOING ON?

IT'S... NOTHING. I'M JUST TIRED



LISTEN, I'VE BEEN THERE. SOMETIMES LIFE FEELS TOO HEAVY...



... LIKE YOU'RE CARRYING THIS INVISIBLE WEIGHT. BUT TALKING ABOUT IT? THAT'S THE FIRST STEP. LET'S FIGURE THIS OUT TOGETHER.



START SMALL. WRITE DOWN WHAT YOU'RE FEELING, LIKE YOU'RE TALKING TO A FRIEND.

AND WHEN IT FEELS LIKE TOO MUCH, REMEMBER:

YOU DON'T HAVE TO TAKE ON THE WHOLE MOUNTAIN. JUST FOCUS ON THE NEXT STEP.



LIKE... WHAT KIND OF STEPS?

THINK OF THE THINGS YOU USED TO ENJOY.

MAYBE IT'S COMING TO PRACTICE, OR TEXTING A TEAMMATE.

EVEN JUST SHOWING UP IS A WIN. EVERY SMALL ACTION CHIPS AWAY AT THE WEIGHT



Felt like skipping practice, but I went anyway

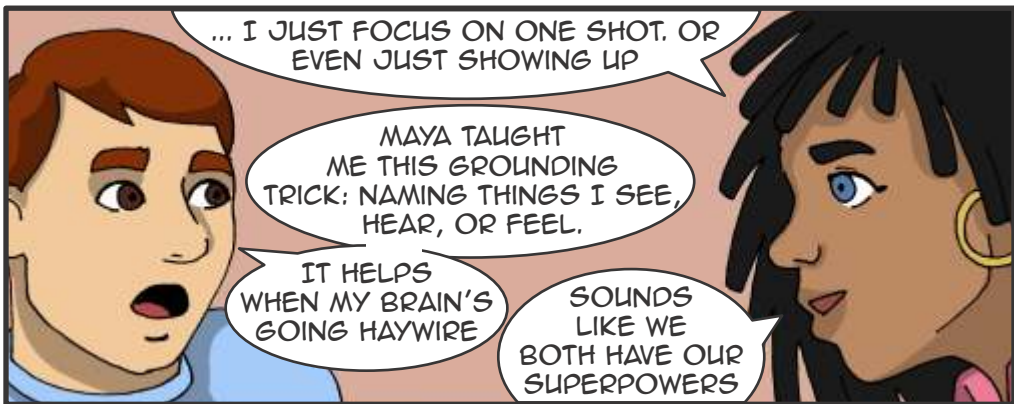
Texted Mia back. She said she missed me

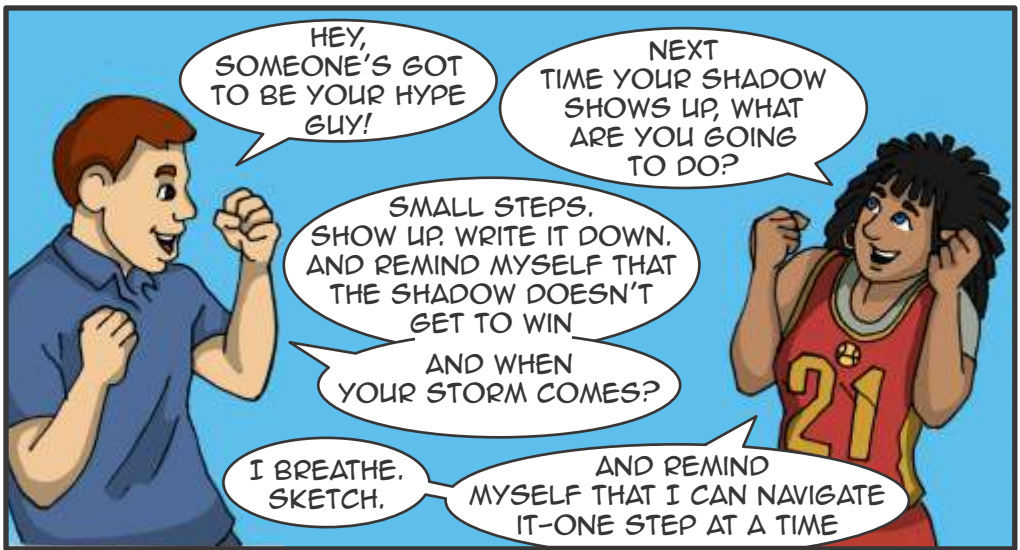
Scored during a scrimmage. It felt... good



MAYBE... MAYBE I DON'T HAVE TO DO THIS ALL AT ONCE. MAYBE SMALL STEPS ARE ENOUGH







HEY, SOMEONE'S GOT TO BE YOUR HYPE GUY!

NEXT TIME YOUR SHADOW SHOWS UP, WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO?

SMALL STEPS. SHOW UP. WRITE IT DOWN. AND REMIND MYSELF THAT THE SHADOW DOESN'T GET TO WIN

AND WHEN YOUR STORM COMES?

I BREATHE. SKETCH.

AND REMIND MYSELF THAT I CAN NAVIGATE IT-ONE STEP AT A TIME



THE BIRTH OF THE HEROES

YOU KNOW, I THINK WE MAKE A PRETTY GOOD TEAM

YEAH. MAYBE OUR HEROES AREN'T JUST FOR US.



MAYBE THEY CAN SHOW OTHER PEOPLE HOW TO FACE THEIR SHADOWS TOO

LIKE, SHOWING PEOPLE IT'S OKAY TO NEED HELP.



THAT YOU DON'T HAVE TO FIGHT ALONE



EXACTLY. EVERY HERO NEEDS AN ALLY.



HARD TO BELIEVE WE WERE JUST TWO KIDS TRYING TO FIGURE IT ALL OUT.

AND NOW WE GET TO HELP OTHERS DO THE SAME. GUESS EVERYHERO'S JOURNEY STARTS WITH FACING THEIR OWN SHADOWS.



WE ALL HAVE SHADOWS: ANXIETY, DEPRESSION, LONELINESS. BUT THEY DON'T HAVE TO WIN. EVERY SMALL STEP YOU TAKE MAKES YOU STRONGER.

YOUR STORY MATTERS, AND YOUR STRENGTH IS REAL. SO, WHAT'S YOUR NEXT STEP? WHO'S YOUR ALLY IN THIS FIGHT?

### Key Takeaways

Mental health challenges like anxiety, depression, and isolation are common among youth but can be overcome.

Supportive relationships and small victories build resilience and strength.

Every reader has the potential to be their own hero and an ally for others.

**Grounding Techniques:** Use the 5-4-3-2-1 technique to calm your mind: identify five things you see, four you can touch, three you hear, two you smell, and one you taste.

**Small Steps:** Break overwhelming tasks into smaller pieces. Celebrate small wins they're victories too.

**Journaling:** Write down your thoughts and feelings. Use metaphors, sketches, or simple words to express what you're going through.

**Support Matters:** Find a mentor, friend, or group who understands and supports your journey. You don't have to face challenges alone

# Our Interns & Authors of this Comic



**Yara Vera**



**Naomi Hernandez**



**Santiago Vizcaino**



**Giselle Gonzalez**

This comic book was entirely developed by our dedicated youth interns, who recognized the need for an engaging and relatable way to address mental health. Through brainstorming sessions, they identified key struggles—*anxiety, depression, and isolation*—that many young people face.

From there, they crafted a storyline that balances action and emotion, ensuring it resonates with youth while offering hope and support. Every script, character, and dialogue was carefully drafted, revised, and refined by the interns, keeping authenticity at the core.

To ensure maximum impact, they reviewed and approved the final versions, making sure the stories were not only engaging but also empowering. Their goal was clear: to create a resource that makes mental health conversations accessible, relatable, and transformative for all who read it.

## Join the Journey

You will gain access to:

- A mental health awareness comic book developed by youth.
- A podcast series featuring conversations about mental health with youth and professionals.
- Exclusive invitations to panel discussions and conferences with special guests and engaging activities.
- Paid internship and volunteer opportunities.
- Mental health awareness items and free stickers and materials to support your journey.

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