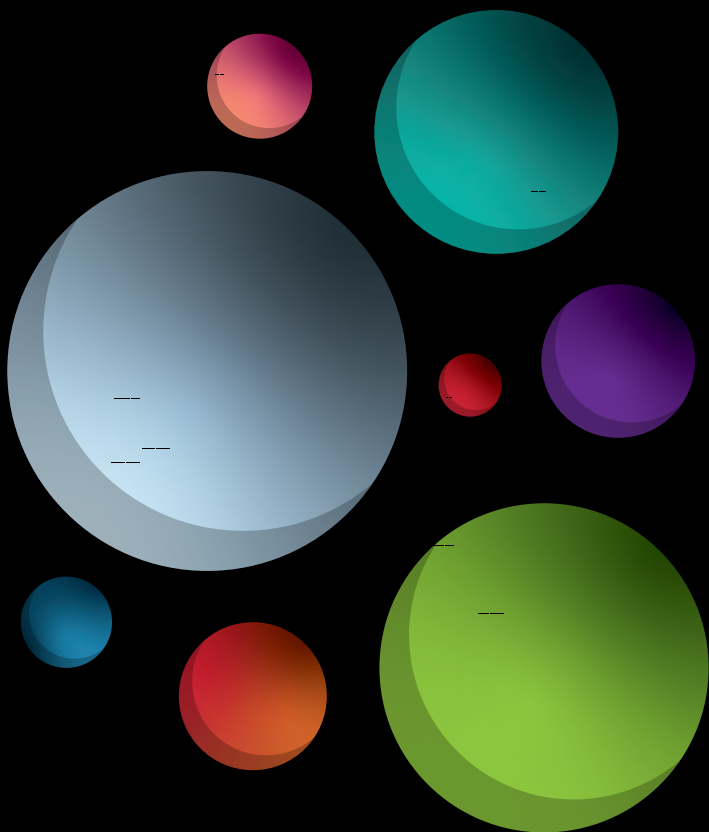


That's Alright

Making Sense of What You Feel



Chris Dixon

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That's Alright

Making Sense of What You Feel

I have suffered from long-lasting chronic depression and was fortunate enough to access therapy. Through this process, I realised that I didn't fully understand what I was feeling or why.

As a result, I noticed that many people, including myself, had difficulties discussing emotions. This could be due either to a lack of education on emotional awareness or to fear and shame stemming from societal stigmatisation.

This is why I wanted to create resources to help us understand emotions that are commonly perceived as 'negative'. My aim is to assist people in tackling chronic depression by encouraging them to feel comfortable being open and discussing how they feel.

In this book, there are 18 illustrated emotions, including anger, grief, and guilt. Each emotion comes with explanations about how they might manifest physically and what the possible triggers could be. Accompanied by statistics, these examples highlight that, no matter how alone you may feel, many others are going through similar experiences.

Together, we can dispel the stigma around these emotions and work towards a society where we feel comfortable supporting one another through difficult times.

Important - Please read:

This book has been created to help you understand and identify your emotions. It does not provide methods for controlling or managing feelings. As the aim is to help people eliminate the shame and stigma of perceived negative feelings, this is not a medical guide.

If you feel any emotions are having an impact on your health, life or loved ones, please seek medical advice from a qualified expert such as your local General Practitioner (GP) or through therapy.

I do hope that this book can help some people identify that they may need to seek support with their mental health or it may help you encourage others to seek help. Please don't rely on this as a diagnostic tool.



Anger

Anger can be a reaction to conflict or mistreatment. We experience it occasionally in our lives. However, sometimes we can feel anger more often than we'd like, which can interfere with relationships and careers.

Here are some possible indicators of anger:

- Feeling reluctant to speak
- Sensing that your jaw is clenched
- Feeling hot or tension in the muscles
- Being unable to think clearly or make decisions
- Shouting or swearing at someone or something



You're not alone with this!

Around 1 in 4 people in the UK (28%) reported in a survey that they feel worried about the level of anger they experience (Boiling Point, Mental Health Foundation, 2008).



Anger potential triggers:

- Things not working as expected
- Failure to achieve desired goals
- Unfair mistreatment by someone
- Arguments with friends or family
- Acute or chronic pain from injury or illness
- A demanding lifestyle with many pressures
- Reminders or recollections of past traumas

Anxiety

Anxiety often stems from stress but can include additional emotional and physical symptoms. It can affect daily life even in non-stressful situations. Chronic anxiety can significantly hinder one's ability to enjoy life.

Here are some possible indicators of anxiety:

- Increased heart rate or palpitations
- Feeling uneasy, restless or 'on edge'
- An upset stomach or stomach discomfort
- A strong urge to escape or avoid a situation
- Dry mouth, leading to an increased desire to drink water



You're not alone with this!

Approximately 1 in 6 people in England report experiencing a common mental health problem, including anxiety, each week (Mind, 2020).



Anxiety potential triggers:

- Financial pressures
- High or constant levels of stress
- Disagreements with other people
- Certain medications and treatments
- Experiencing or witnessing a trauma
- Big crowds of people you haven't met
- Caffeine from tea, coffee or energy drinks

Boredom

Boredom usually comes from either a lack of stimulation or a lack of purpose. It can sometimes be difficult to complete school or work projects if we don't find them exciting or challenging.

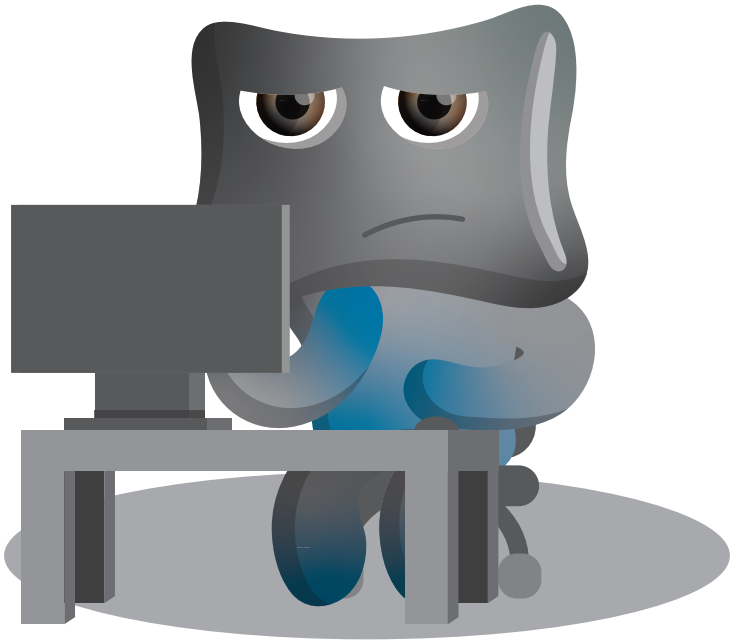
Here are some possible indicators of boredom:

- Feeling restless and fidgety
- Frequent or constant daydreaming
- Finding it hard to concentrate on a task
- A desire to do something impulsive or risky
- Experiencing a lack of fulfilment or motivation



You're not alone with this!

A survey of 2,000 people showed that 23% of respondents feel bored at work, with a third likely to feel bored at home (British Heart Foundation, 2018).



Boredom potential triggers:

- Bland or clinical environments
- Physical isolation from other people
- Feeling like you don't have a purpose
- Spending too much time in one place
- Feeling trapped in a repetitive routine
- Not being challenged at school or work
- Feeling like you lack control over choices

Depression

Depression is a persistent feeling of sadness, despair or displeasure with life. Chronic depression requires treatment as it can prevent us from enjoying life. It can also make many things seem like a struggle

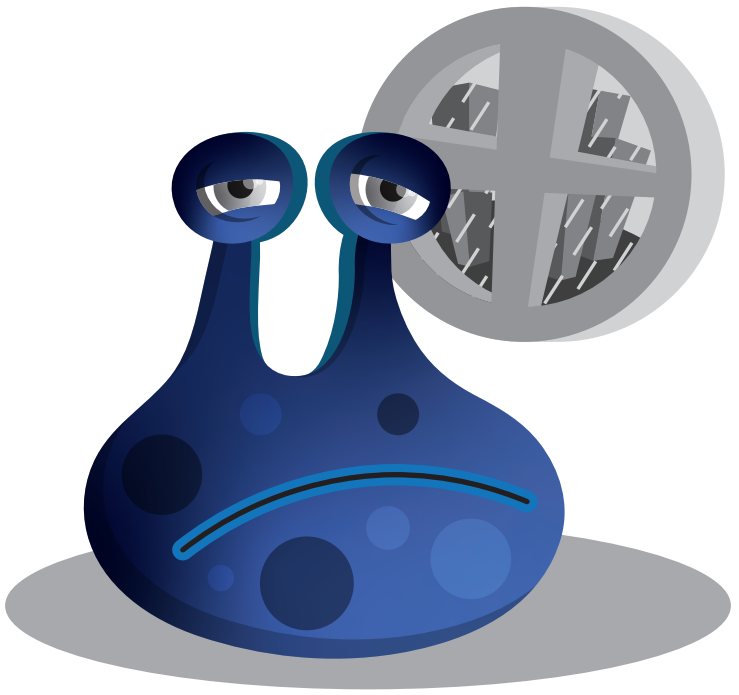
Here are some possible indicators of depression:

- Changes in your appetite
- Experiencing a mental fog
- Feeling constantly fatigued
- Difficulties with sleeping and waking
- Unexplained aches, pains and digestive problems



You're not alone with this!

Depression is more common in younger adults and women. Around 1 in 3 women between the ages of 16 and 29 experience intense depressive symptoms. Meanwhile, 1 in 5 men of the same age group report experiencing these symptoms (Office of National Statistics, 2021).



Depression potential triggers:

- Persistent stress
- Changes in hormone levels
- Social isolation or confinement
- Loss of a friend or family member
- Chronic mental and physical illness
- Previous or current traumatic experiences
- Certain medications or medical treatments

Despair

With despair, we can feel a loss of faith and hope. It may also feel like we have no options in life and our freedom is limited. A chronic sense of despair can prevent us from engaging in activities we would normally enjoy.

Here are some possible indicators of despair:

- A loss of enjoyment in hobbies
- Feeling a sense of helplessness
- Experiencing fatigue and lethargy
- A lack of motivation for work or school
- Maintaining a consistently negative outlook on life



You're not alone with this!

A study found that feelings of despair tended to be more frequently experienced by people from areas with economic hardships such as high unemployment rates and low household incomes (Journal of Health Economics, 2017).



Despair potential triggers:

- Isolation from others
- Chronic illness or pain
- Experience of ongoing trauma
- Challenging financial pressures
- Global issues like climate change
- Loss of a friend or family member
- Sudden end of a close relationship

Discomfort

Discomfort isn't necessarily a negative feeling. Sometimes we experience discomfort in challenging scenarios from which we learn things. However, discomfort can also arise due to an unclean environment or if someone is acting strangely.

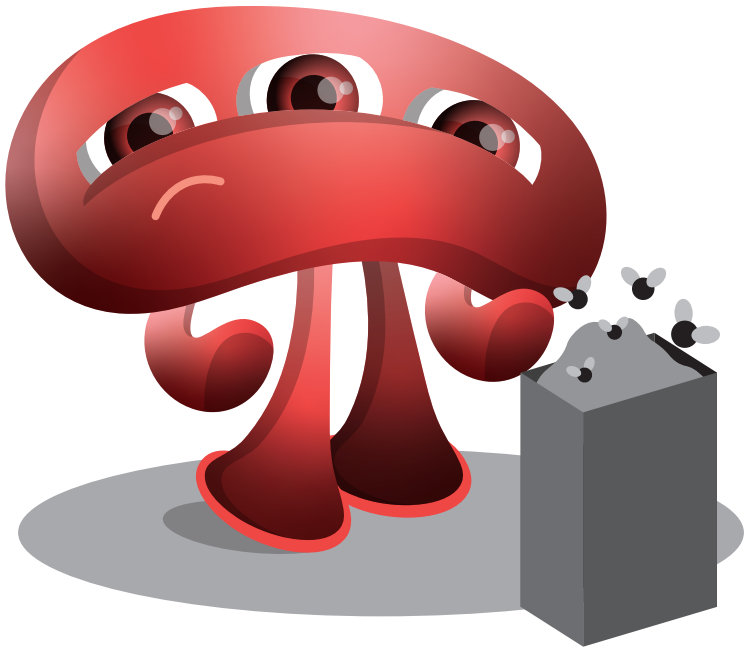
Here are some possible indicators of discomfort:

- Feeling out of place
- Finding it difficult to concentrate
- Heightened sensitivity to the environment
- A need for a solution to alleviate the discomfort
- Wanting to escape the situation or environment



You're not alone with this!

When there is a difference between someone's beliefs and actions, it can result in 'cognitive dissonance.' This is a form of psychological discomfort (Stanford University Press, 1957).



Discomfort potential triggers:

- Being in an unclean environment
- Having a disagreement with someone
- Starting at a new school or workplace
- Experiencing reminders of past trauma
- Suppressing emotions in certain situations
- Encountering someone acting suspiciously
- Dealing with chronic mental or physical pain or illness

Embarrassment

We tend to experience embarrassment in front of others. This feeling can arise as a result of making a mistake. It can make us feel self-conscious and awkward.

Here are some possible indicators of embarrassment:

- Feeling unable to speak
- A sudden need to hide or escape
- Feeling a decrease in your self-esteem
- Using humour as a defence-mechanism
- Blushing, sweating and feeling uncomfortable



You're not alone with this!

A UK survey highlighted that 37% of teenagers felt upset about their body image, and 35% of adults in the survey felt depressed because of their body image (YouGov, Mental Health Foundation, 2019).



Embarrassment potential triggers:

- Saying something out of context
- Being teased, mocked or insulted
- Making a mistake, especially in public
- Someone praising or commending you
- People sharing your personal information
- Following an outburst of anger or sadness
- Suddenly becoming the centre of attention

Fear

Fear is a response to threats and can be helpful in keeping us safe. However, we may also feel fear as a result of encountering something that isn't necessarily dangerous.

Here are some possible indicators of fear:

- An increased heart rate
- Sweating and trembling
- Feeling a sense of dread
- Becoming alert to what is around you
- An intense need to want to escape a situation



You're not alone with this!

Fears and anxieties are common in children and are often a normal part of their development. For example, up to 1 in 30 children may develop a specific phobia (Today's Parent, 2022).



Fear potential triggers:

- Unexpected changes in your life
- Phobias such as a fear of heights
- An unsafe or dangerous environment
- Someone acting in a threatening way
- Revisiting something that was unpleasant
- Feeling unprepared for an upcoming event
- Feeling like you are going to fail something

Frustration

Frustration can be felt if we're being blocked from completing or achieving something. The block can come from an external source or be due to a lack of skills, practice or confidence. This feeling can be experienced often but can sometimes lead to anger.

Here are some possible indicators of frustration:

- Feeling mentally exhausted
- Overthinking the source of frustration
- Feeling that your efforts will be unsuccessful
- Lacking tolerance and becoming easily irritated
- Physical symptoms such as headaches and tension



You're not alone with this!

Frustration has been found to be a major reason for students dropping out, including from online learning courses (International Review of Research in Open and Distributed Learning, 2016).



Frustration potential triggers:

- Finding goals difficult to achieve
- Having disagreements with others
- Feeling like your time is being wasted
- Facing unexpected financial pressures
- People arriving later than agreed upon
- Technology not functioning as expected
- Feeling like you're being treated unfairly

Grief

Grief is a unique feeling that manifests when experiencing the loss of a loved one. It can be complex, with a mixture of different, intense emotions. It is incredibly difficult to focus on other things in life whilst grieving.

Here are some possible indicators of grief:

- Intense sadness or anger
- Regret over past interactions
- Feeling shocked or in disbelief
- If there was suffering, relief may be felt
- Physical symptoms such as fatigue or weight gain



You're not alone with this!

Around 46,000 children experience the loss of a parent each year (Childhood Bereavement Network, 2022).



Grief potential triggers:

- Losing an item you cherished
- Family members leaving home
- The end of a close relationship
- Being diagnosed with an illness
- Loss of a pet, friend or family member
- Moving away from home to a new place
- Being fired or made redundant from a job

Guilt

We can feel guilt as a result of doing something that is perceived as wrong by either our own or other people's standards. Guilt can assist us in decision-making, preventing us from doing things that we may later regret—since the mere thought of certain actions can induce feelings of guilt.

Here are some possible indicators of guilt:

- Feeling a knot in the stomach
- Overthinking the event or action
- Avoiding certain people or places
- Becoming defensive over a position
- A need to make amends for the action



You're not alone with this!

A UK survey of 2,000 people found that on average they feel guilt 3 times a week, usually lasting for over 2 hours (Intrepid Travel, 2018).



Guilt potential triggers:

- Making a mistake at school or work
- Causing emotional or physical harm
- Accidentally breaking someone's trust
- Going against what you believe is right
- Accidentally breaking an expensive item
- Seeing or hearing about people struggling
- Feeling you are not meeting responsibilities

Invalidation

Invalidation stems from having our feelings or opinions dismissed and rejected. It can be damaging to our self-esteem over time if we continuously don't feel listened to. Many people invalidate others unintentionally, but this doesn't change how much it can hurt.

Here are some possible indicators of invalidation:

- Avoiding conflict and arguments
- Becoming defensive over your position
- Feeling anger, confusion or frustration
- Questioning your own views or emotions
- Feeling the need to suppress your emotions



You're not alone with this!

Emotional invalidation in romantic relationships can negatively impact relationship satisfaction (Journal of Family Psychology, 2010).



Invalidation potential triggers:

- Someone not believing you
- Someone trying to manipulate you
- Not feeling listened to when speaking
- Dismissal by a friend or family member
- Having your feelings compared to others
- Having your feelings belittled or mocked
- Being offered solutions instead of empathy

Isolation

Isolation can make us feel separated and distant from others. This can be either geographically or emotionally; despite being in the same room as someone else, you can feel isolated.

Here are some possible indicators of isolation:

- A low sense of self-worth
- Feeling bored and impatient
- Feeling left-out and lacking motivation
- Overthinking about what others are doing
- Experiencing a lack of connection with others



You're not alone with this!

Young adults aged 16 to 24 years reported feeling lonely more often than those in older age groups (Office of National Statistics, 2018).

Additionally, a million older people say they go for over a month without speaking to others (Age UK, 2022).



Isolation potential triggers:

- Mental health struggles
- Not being invited to a social event
- Economic or language differences
- An illness that may keep you inside
- Age difference between you and others
- Finding it difficult to interact with others
- Living far away from your family and friends

Jealousy

Jealousy can make us feel uneasy around others. It often arises when we feel that our self-worth is being threatened, such as when we see an ex-partner in a new romantic relationship.

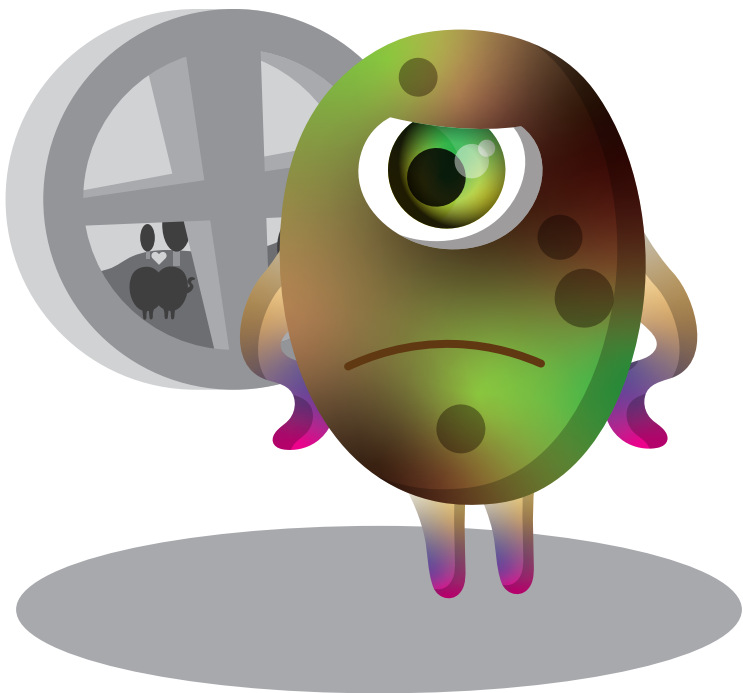
Here are some possible indicators of jealousy:

- Restlessness and overthinking
- Comparing ourselves with others
- Feelings of insecurity and low self-esteem
- Need for reassurance from family and friends
- Desire to confront the person we are jealous of



You're not alone with this!

Social media can contribute to jealousy in romantic relationships. Research indicates that Facebook usage is correlated with feelings and actions associated with jealousy (CyberPsychology & Behavior, 2009).



Jealousy potential triggers:

- Comparing your lifestyle with others'
- Discovering a partner's unfaithfulness
- Low self esteem leading to overthinking
- Feeling as though you could be replaced
- The arrival of a new sibling in your family
- Someone close receiving special attention
- Someone possessing something you desire

Low Self-Esteem

Low self-esteem can make us feel like we are not enough. It can prevent you from completing a project because we feel we lack the skills. Or we may avoid social events as we think what we have to say is of no interest or others.

Here are some possible indicators of low self-esteem:

- Experiencing a fear of rejection
- Finding it easy to criticise yourself
- Difficulty with accepting compliments
- Becoming defensive when hearing criticism
- Feeling unloved or unwanted by friends or family



You're not alone with this!

A 2017 report indicated that over half of the youth population in the UK do not feel good about themselves (The Prince's Trust Youth Index, 2017).



Low self-esteem potential triggers:

- Relationship difficulties
- Low or no body-confidence
- Childhood or adulthood trauma
- Comparing your life with others
- Chronic illness, pain or disability
- Financial struggles and pressures
- Not passing an exam or not getting a job

Nervousness

Nervousness can occur when we feel uneasy about an upcoming event or project, whether it's related to work, school or social settings. It is more likely to manifest when we are unfamiliar with a situation or unprepared.

Here are some possible indicators of nervousness:

- Difficulty concentrating
- Sweaty palms and trembling
- A desire to avoid or escape the situation
- A dry mouth that makes you want to drink
- A sensation of 'butterflies' in your stomach



You're not alone with this!

A UK survey highlighted that 15% of people experience 'Glossophobia,' the fear of public speaking (Gov.uk, 2023).



Nervousness potential triggers:

- New social situations
- An upcoming exam or test
- Interviews for work or college
- Having to travel somewhere far
- Public speaking or performance
- Feeling like others are judging you
- Relationship issues and challenges

Sadness

If something is disappointing or if someone is being hurtful, we can experience sadness. It is a reaction we have frequently and often passes as we come to terms with the cause.

Here are some possible indicators of sadness:

- A need to cry
- Wanting to be alone
- Not feeling like you want to eat
- Feeling like you are weighted down
- Feeling like you have a lump in your throat



You're not alone with this!

A UK survey of 2,000 people found that one-third of individuals over the age of 16 experience low moods in the Autumn or Winter seasons (Micro Biz Mag, 2021).



Sadness potential triggers:

- Experiencing physical pain
- Feeling rejected by someone
- Failing to achieve your goals
- Losing someone close to you
- Seasonal changes, such as shorter days
- An emotional film, book, TV show or song
- The anniversary of a date linked to trauma

Stress

Stress, or worry, can occur when we dwell on future challenges or negative things that may not happen. Stress can prevent us from tackling a situation at work, school or socially.

Here are some possible indicators of stress:

- Overthinking or catastrophising
- Easily getting irritated or annoyed
- Finding it difficult to make decisions
- Feelings uneasy, restless or 'on the edge'
- Experiencing headaches or muscle tension



You're not alone with this!

In a survey, 7% of UK adults, which is approximately 1 in 14, reported feeling stressed on a daily basis. Additionally, 1 in 5 adults indicated that they feel more stressed than not over the course of an entire month (CIPHR, 2021).



Stress potential triggers:

- Meeting someone new
- Unpredictable situations
- Problems in relationships
- Expecting too much of yourself
- Financial pressures and insecurity
- Taking on too many responsibilities at once
- Big life changes such as a new job or school

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That's Alright

Making Sense of What You Feel

Do you struggle to recognise your own feelings?

Do you feel a need to keep your emotions hidden?

The demands of education, work, and financial responsibilities may compel us to suppress our emotions. Additionally, societal pressures or a lack of self-awareness can make us prioritise others' feelings over our own. In some instances, this suppression can result in chronic stress, depression, and emotional burnout.

This book aims to challenge society's negative perceptions of certain emotions, tackling the stifling stigma that often accompanies them.

Through engaging illustrations, insightful descriptions, and factual information, this book seeks to help readers recognise and understand their own emotions.

The book also aims to help people overcome the shame and fear associated with natural emotions so that they can engage in open and constructive conversations about their mental health.

Sometimes, we can't control how we feel, and that's perfectly alright.