

JANINA SCARLET

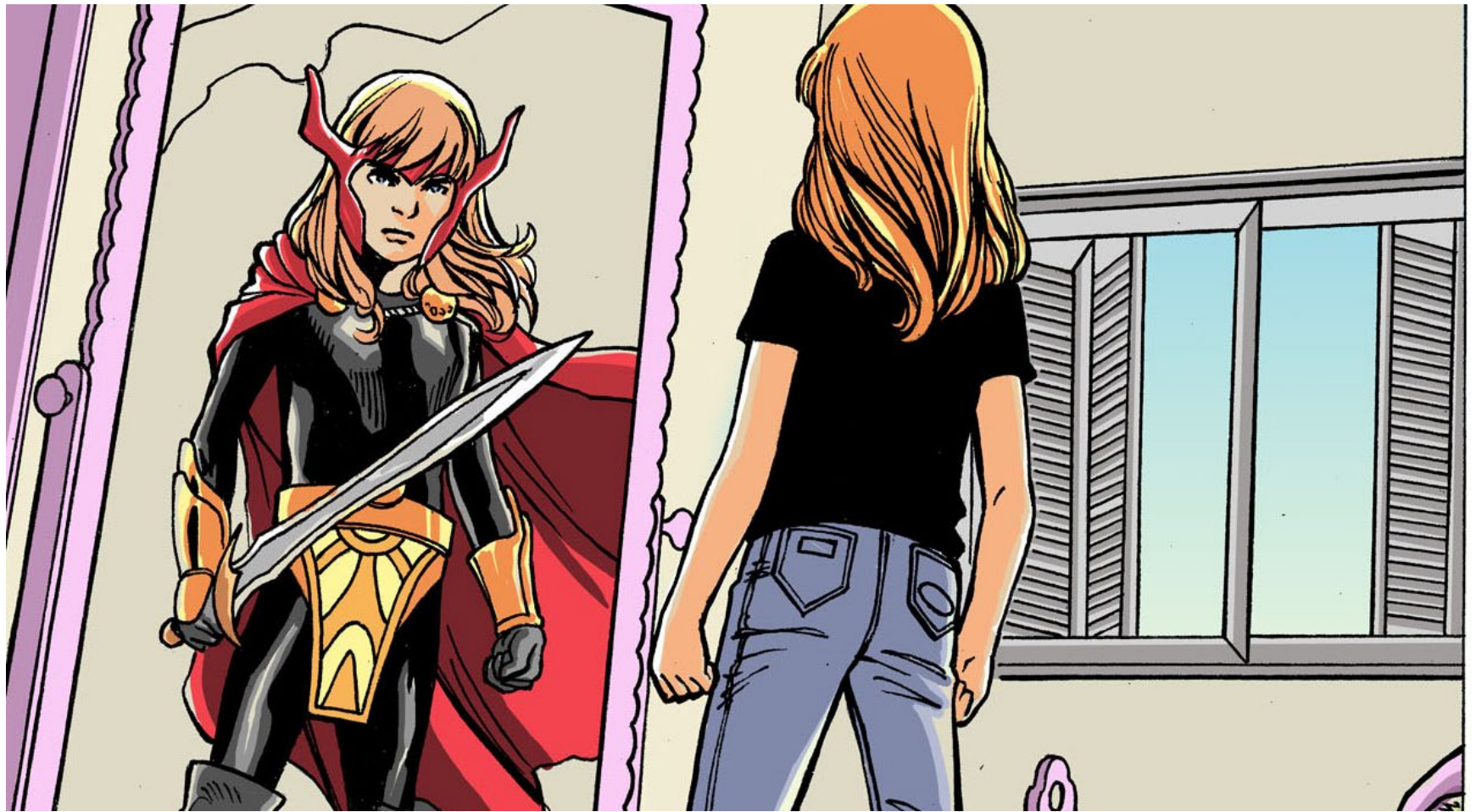
SUPERHERO THERAPY

A HERO'S JOURNEY THROUGH
ACCEPTANCE AND COMMITMENT THERAPY

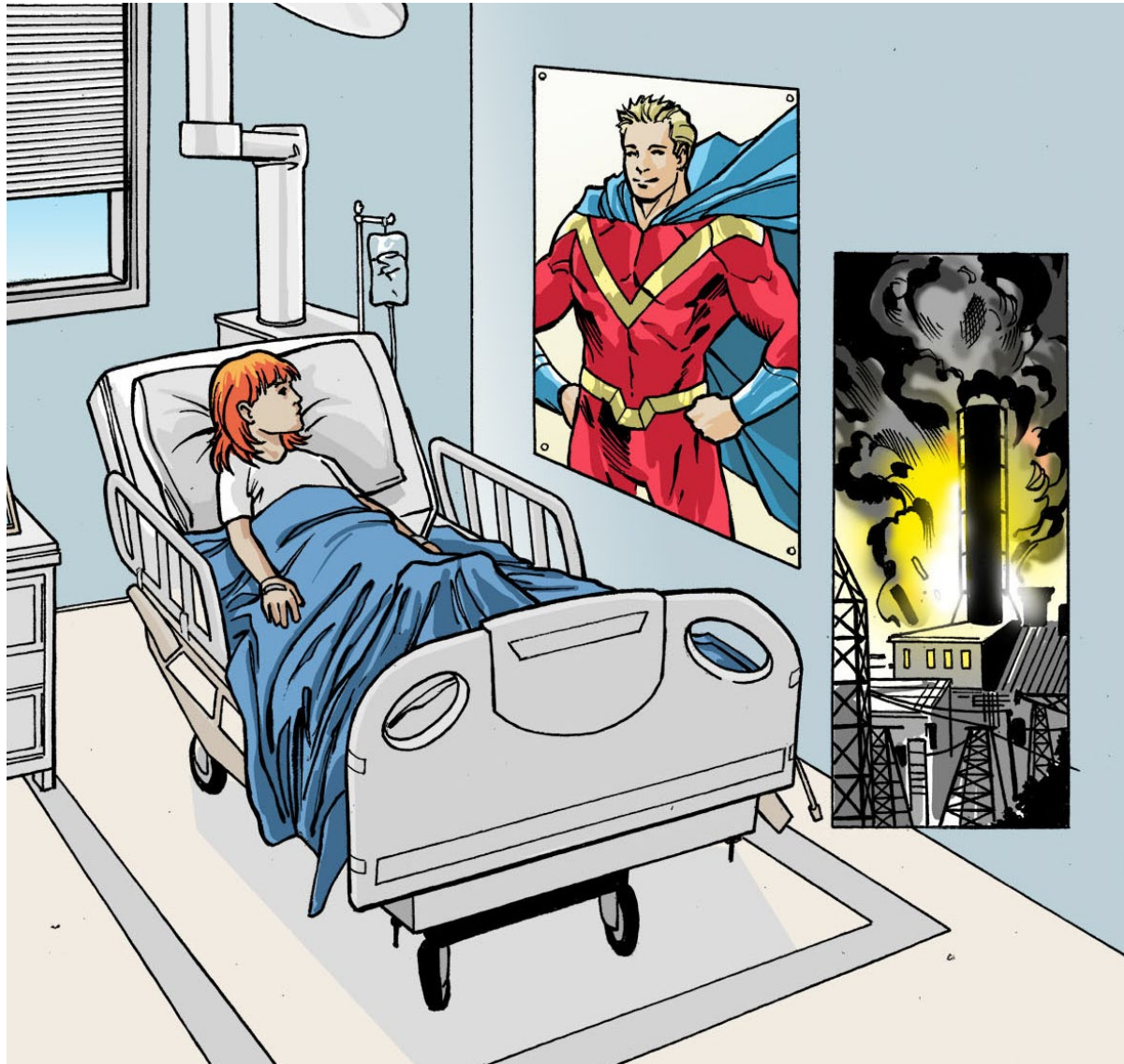


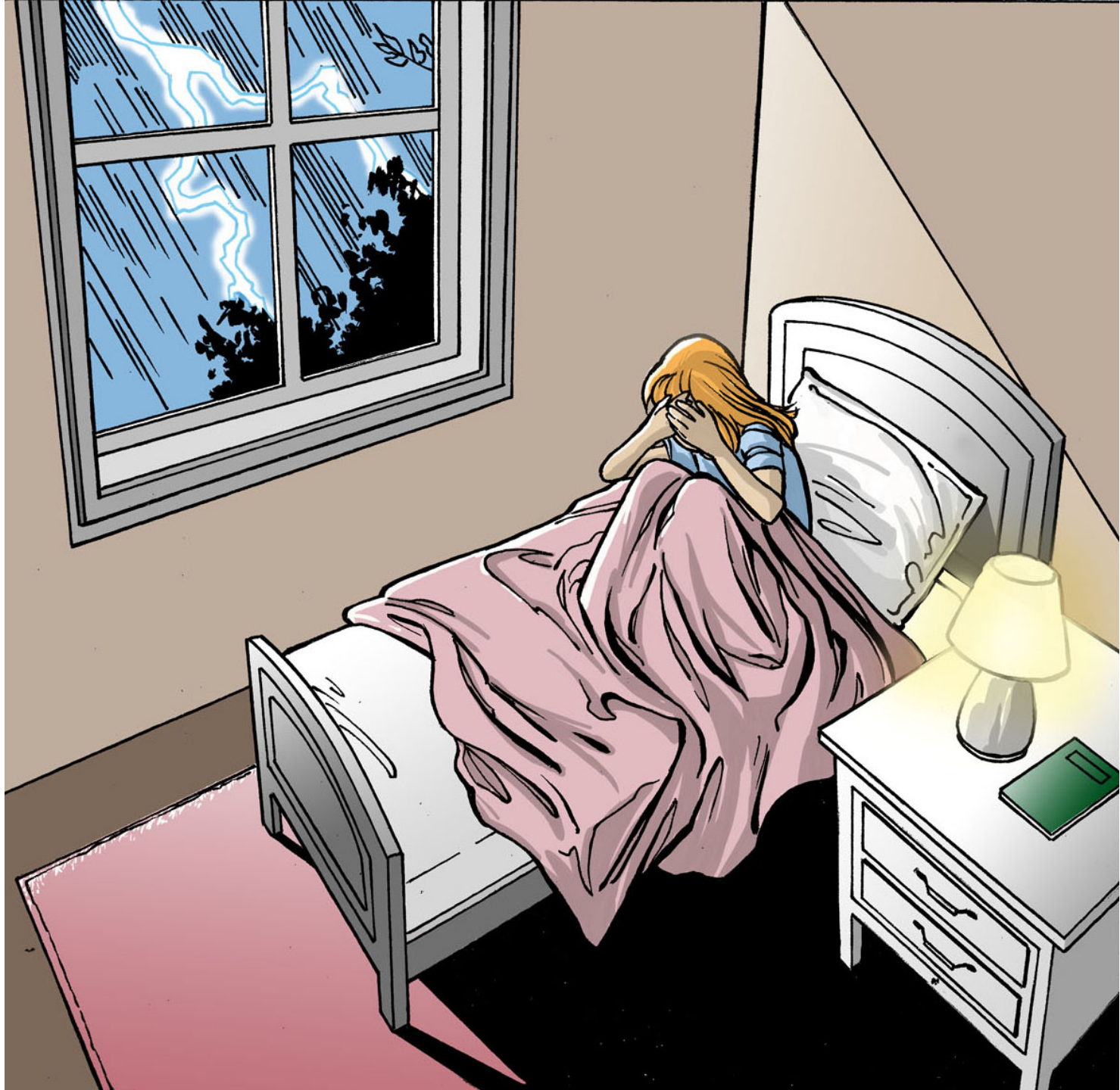
ILLUSTRATED BY WELLINGTON ALVES

Did you ever want to be a hero?



Did you ever want to be a hero?









X-MEN

- “What I wouldn’t give to be normal” Mystique and Beast (First Class)



Posttraumatic growth



Superman: clinical application

- “I wanted to be Superman... I failed”



Superman: clinical application

- “I wanted to be Superman, I failed”
- Invincible



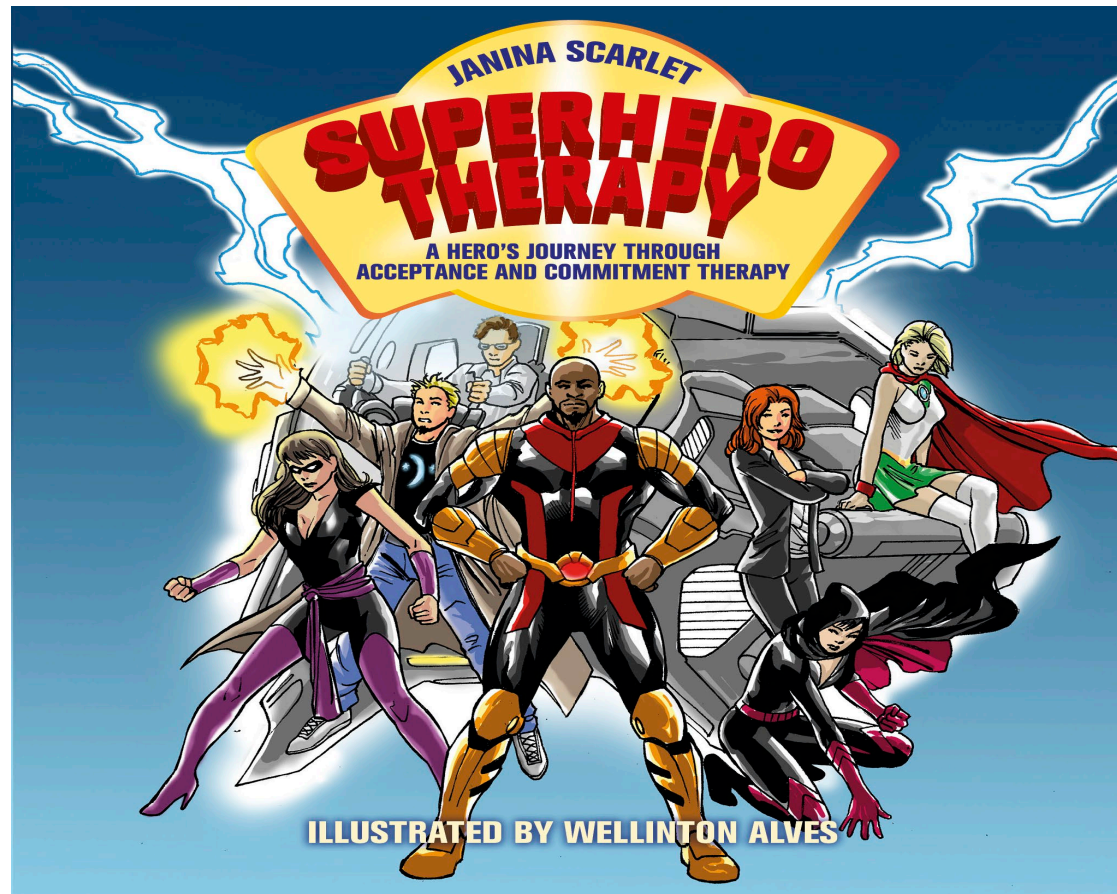
Superman: clinical application

- “I wanted to be Superman, I failed”
- Invincible
- Kryptonite



What is Superhero Therapy?

Using popular culture (books, TV shows, movies, and video games examples in research-supported therapies)



Why Superhero Therapy?

- During most difficult time, people feel alone
- Shame



Shame: I am bad.

Guilt: I did something bad.

Brené Brown's Research

- “We deny our loneliness. We feel shame around being lonely even when it’s caused by grief, loss, or heartbreak”
– Brené Brown
- We all have shame
- We’re afraid to talk about shame
- The less we talk about it, the more we have it

What people shame themselves about

What people shame themselves about

- Appearance/body image

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- Money

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- Appearance/body image
- Money
- Mental health

What people shame themselves about

- Appearance/body image
- Money
- Mental health
- Physical health

What people shame themselves about

- Appearance/body image
- Money
- Mental health
- Physical health
- Addiction

What people shame themselves about

- Appearance/body image
- Money
- Mental health
- Physical health
- Addiction
- Sex

What people shame themselves about

- Appearance/body image
- Money
- Mental health
- Physical health
- Addiction
- Sex
- Religion

What people shame themselves about

- Appearance/body image
- Money
- Mental health
- Physical health
- Addiction
- Sex
- Religion
- Surviving/experiencing trauma

What people shame themselves about

- Appearance/body image
- Money
- Mental health
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- Addiction
- Sex
- Aging
- Religion
- Surviving/experiencing trauma
- Accidents

What people shame themselves about

- Appearance/body image
- Money
- Mental health
- Physical health
- Addiction
- Sex
- Religion
- Surviving/experiencing trauma
- Accidents
- Being hungry/angry/overwhelmed/tired

How shame shows up in mental health



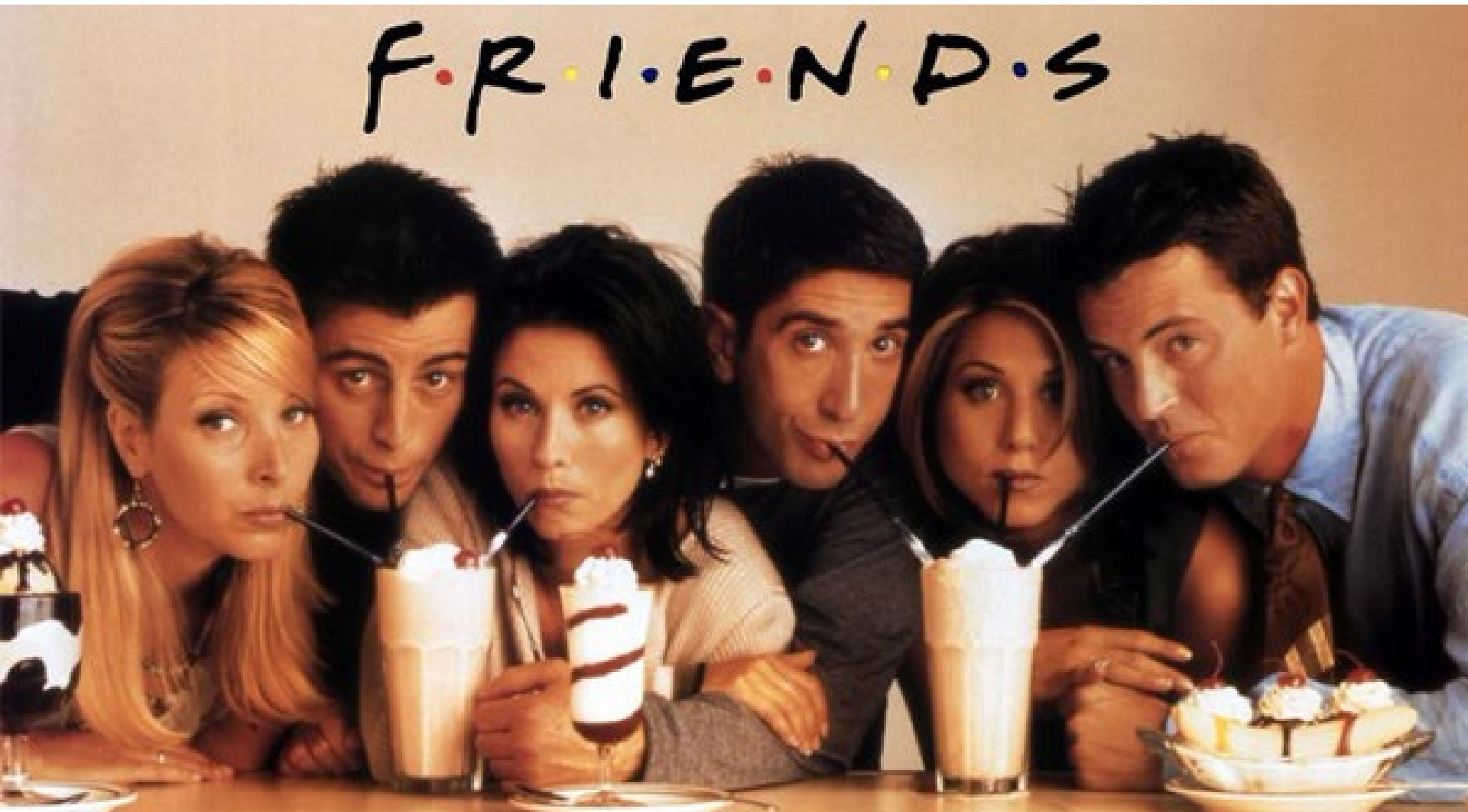
Social Connection

- Getting connected with people and meaningful activities helps restore functioning
- “It’s not that misery loves company, it’s that company is the antidote to misery”

- Kristin Neff



Friendships & Fandoms



Healthier food choices



- Wansink et al. (2012) from Cornell University
- Children were asked to pick between apples and French fries
- Only 9% chose apples
- When primed with admirable heroes, like Batman, nearly 50% chose apples
- Wearing Batman suit keep attention longer

Sexual assault awareness for children

- Marvel and National Committee for Prevention of Child Abuse (NCPCA)(1984 and 1985)
- Spider-Man discovers that a little boy was sexually abused by his babysitter
- Spider-Man shares with him his own story of being sexually abused by a young man
- Boy is later able to report the incident to his parents with Spider-Man's help



Example

- “Tina” – 34 year old widow
- Lost her husband to gang related violence
- Struggles with grief and helping her son to grieve

Black Panther



Veronica Mars EXAMPLE



What would Veronica do?



Finding connection through Harry Potter



Depression



Patronus



Chocolate



Phobias



Phobias



Finds his courage when it really matters



Defining your Superhero origin story



Your own origin story



Your (super)hero

- Can be real life or fictional
- Someone who is a figure of great strength and wisdom
- What you admire about them

Your hero's message



Discussion

Gamify

- *“The opposite of play isn’t work. It’s depression.”*

-Psychologist Brian Sutton-Smith (1960s)

Gamify

- *“The opposite of play isn’t work. It’s depression.”*

-Psychologist Brian Sutton-Smith (1960s)



Are games a form of escapism?

- Most play to “escape”
- Find connection, build social skills, find friends
- Discover sense of purpose



Criticism

- Face criticism from family members, educators and therapists:
 - “Put down the game and do something real”
 - “Stop wasting so much time”



Sutton-Smith's research

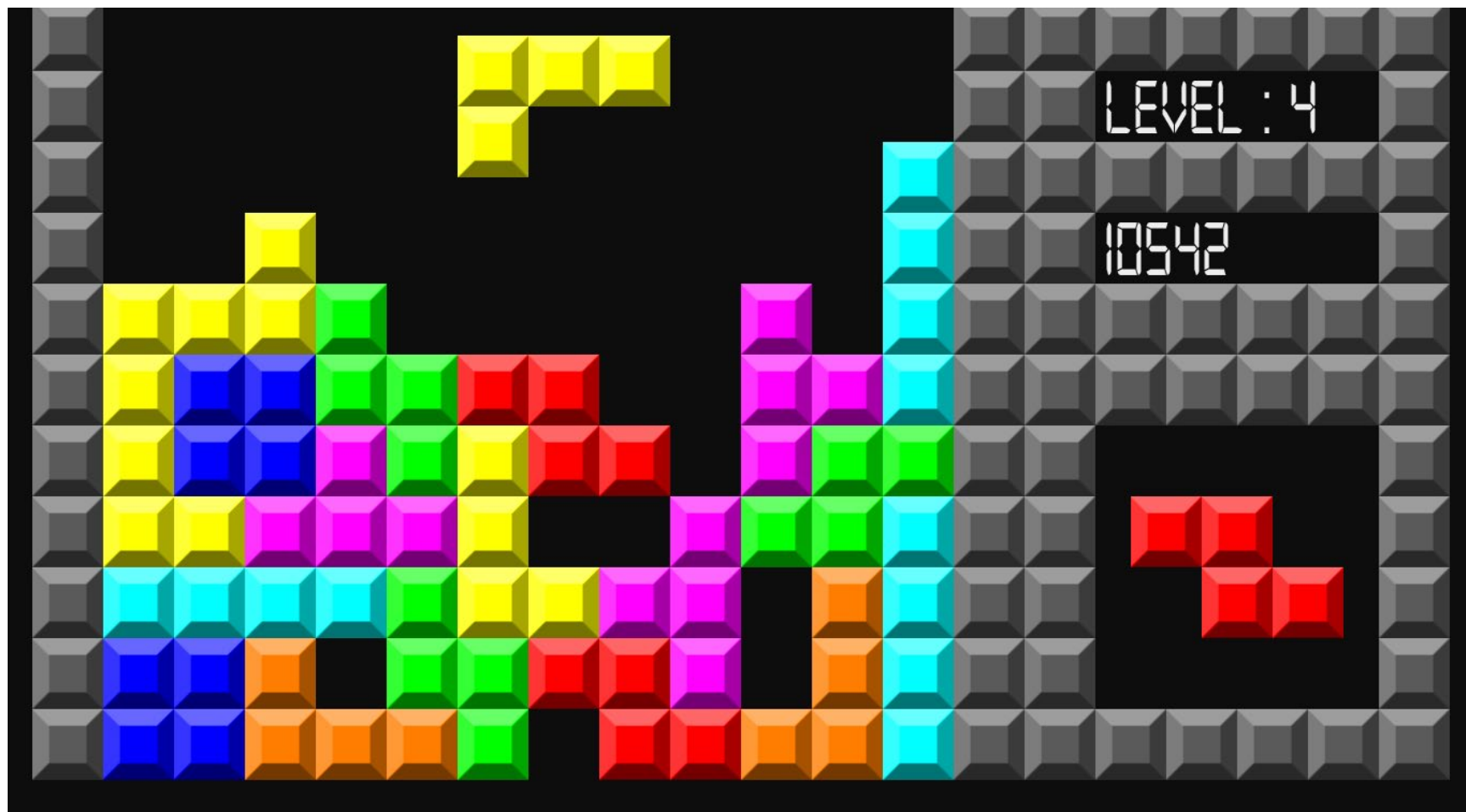
- Play Behavior
 - More self-confidence
 - More true to ourselves
 - Increased physical energy
 - More positive emotions (curiosity, optimism, excitement)



Types of Games

- Tabletop
- LARP
- Computer/Video Games
- Mobile App

Games in Tx (Tetris for PTSD)



Pokémon Go – for depression and anxiety



Spider-Man – S.A.D.



Spider-Man – Superhero IRL



Pop Culture Hero Coalition



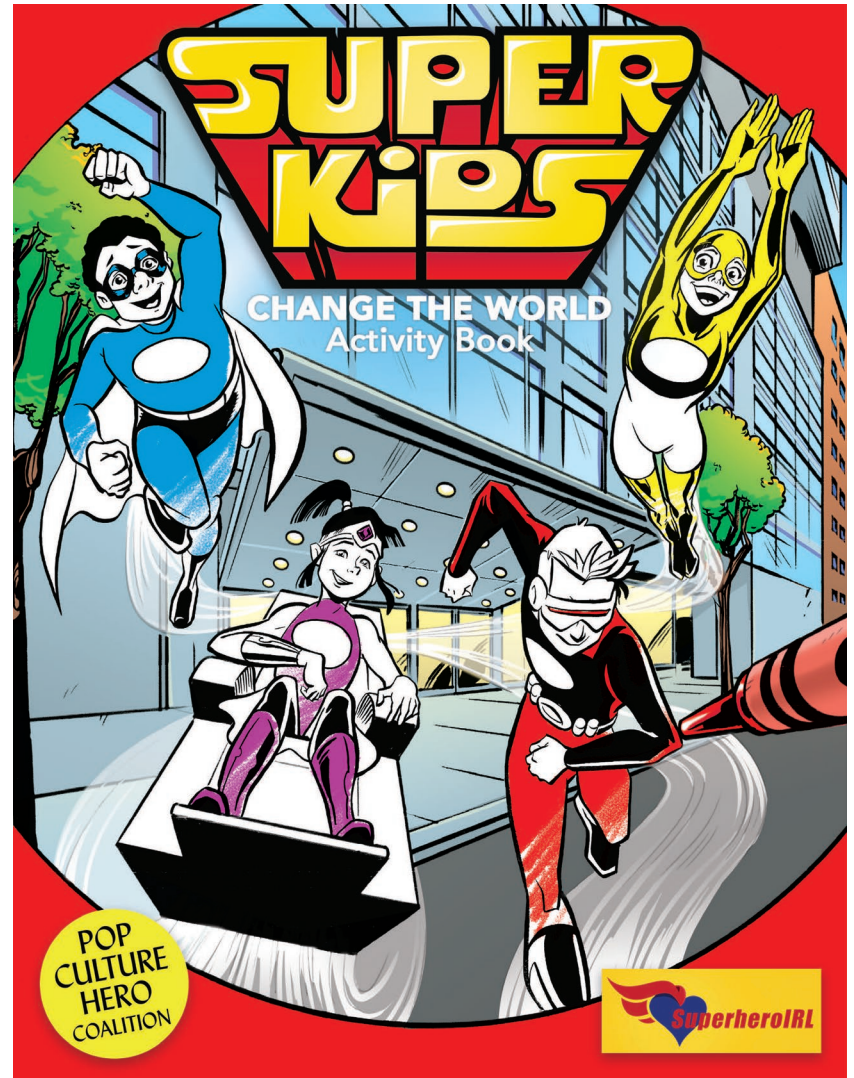
<http://www.popculturehero.org>

“We all love heroes, why not be one?”



PCHC Projects

- Curriculum
- Books
 - SuperKids



Contact

- Superhero-Therapy.com
 - [@ShadowQuill](https://twitter.com/ShadowQuill)
- <http://www.popculturehero.org>
 - [@SuperheroIRL](https://twitter.com/SuperheroIRL)

Let's be heroes

- YOU MATTER



Let's be heroes

- YOU MATTER
- Keep Superheroing and don't forget your cape

