



University of Dundee

Healthcare Comics

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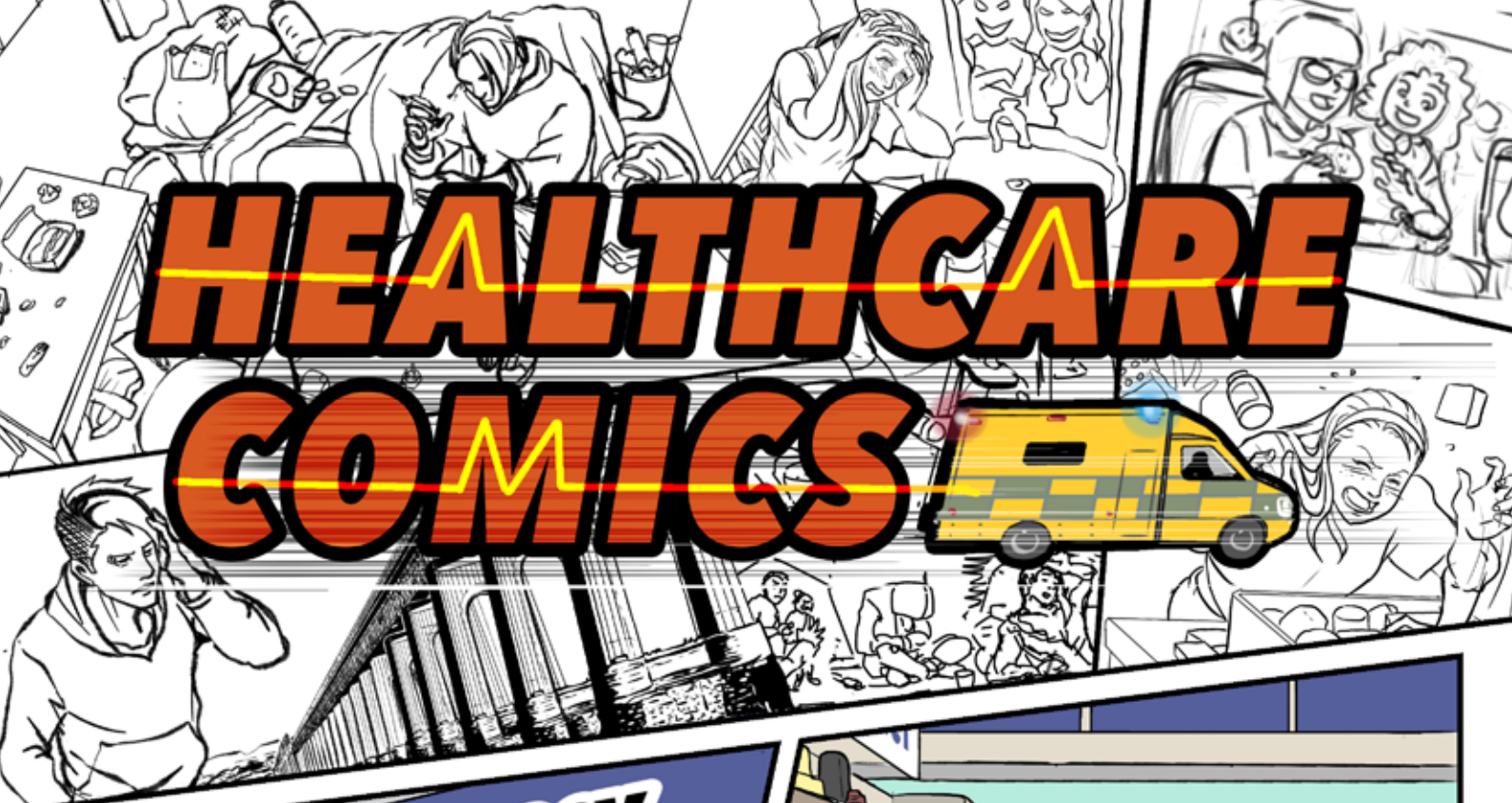
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HEALTHCARE COMICS



Healthcare Comics

This comic, and the series of workshops that produced it, emerged from a partnership between the Comics Studies team in the School of Humanities, Social Sciences and Law, and the School of Dentistry, both at the University of Dundee in Scotland. In recent years we have produced many comics about oral health and homelessness, oral health and public engagement, and several other themes. This led to a series of workshops as part of the postgraduate student-learning Forum for Public Engagement, Inclusion, and Impact. This forum aims to raise awareness of health/oral health inequalities in culturally diverse groups. Over the course of three intensive workshops, ten students who were undertaking Masters programmes in Dental Public Health (MDPH) and Public Health (MPH) worked together to produce three stories, which are presented here. In each case, the aim was to think about ways to use

comics to communicate an important health message, but also to show the impact health professionals can make on the experience of patients and the public more generally.

Working in Dundee Comics Creative Space, and with help from Dr Damon Herd and Thushani Indumani Devi Wijesiri, the students worked in groups to produce scripts and sketches, which comics artist Clio Ding, who joined the workshops online from Singapore, then used to produce the final comics. The students did a fantastic job and responded with huge enthusiasm and creativity, and we are all very grateful to Clio for bringing these stories to life!

Professor Christopher Murray,
School of Humanities, Social Sciences and Law
Dr Andrea Rodriguez,
School of Dentistry

November 2023

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Edited by Andrea Rodriguez and Chris Murray
Artwork and production by Clio Ding



University
of Dundee



I'D NEVER GIVEN MUCH THOUGHT TO FOOD ALLERGIES. AS FAR AS I KNEW I WASN'T ALLERGIC TO ANYTHING...

HEY, TRY MY BURGER, YOURS HAS NO SEEDS.

THANKS! I'VE NEVER TRIED ONE WITH SESAME SEEDS BEFORE!

MUM!! THERE IS SOMETHING ON MY FACE!

ANAPHYLAXIS!

Script by: Amaze Bassey, Midhila Reddy Bade, Mayuri Soora, Sneha Ann Varghese, and Chris Murray.
Art by: Clio Ding

WHEN I HAD THE ALLERGIC REACTION MY MUM AND I DIDN'T KNOW WHAT IT WAS, SO SHE TRIED TO TREAT IT WITH ANTISEPTIC SKIN CREAM.

DO YOU THINK THIS WILL WORK, MUM?

I HOPE SO.

BUT WHEN I STARTED TO HAVE TROUBLE BREATHING, WE KNEW IT WAS MORE SERIOUS THAN JUST A RASH ON MY FACE.

THE ALLERGIC REACTION BECAME SEVERE, I WAS TERRIFIED, MY MUM TOOK ME TO THE HOSPITAL. SHE WAS PANICKING.



ANITA WAS FINE WHEN SHE LEFT FOR SCHOOL AND RETURNED WITH A RASH ALL OVER HER FACE.

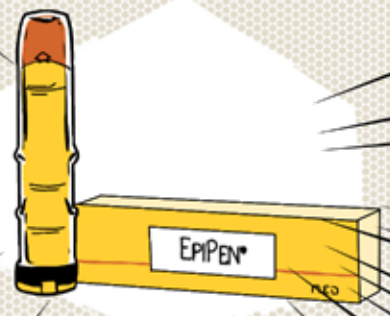
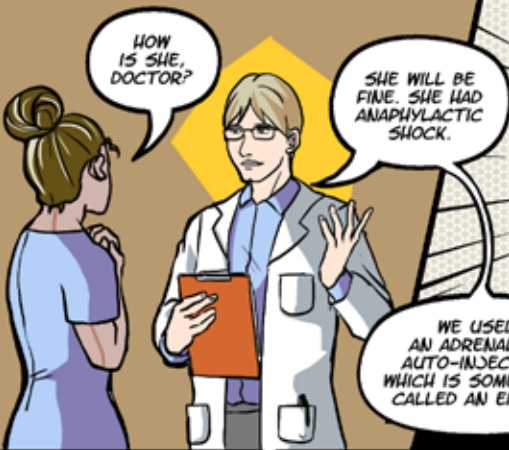
NOW SHE CAN BARELY BREATHE. WHAT IS HAPPENING?

IT'S GOING TO BE OKAY KAREN, DID SHE EAT SOMETHING UNUSUAL?

I DIDN'T EVEN ASK...

MUM! ANITA TRIED MY BURGER -

THE DOCTOR IS COMING, I'LL RING YOU BACK...



HOW IS SHE, DOCTOR?

SHE WILL BE FINE. SHE HAD ANAPHYLACTIC SHOCK.

WE USED AN ADRENALINE AUTO-INJECTOR, WHICH IS SOMETIMES CALLED AN EPIPEN.

ANAPHYLACTIC SHOCK? WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?

IT'S A NASTY ALLERGIC REACTION. PEOPLE CAN BE ALLERGIC TO ALL KINDS OF THINGS.

IT'S IMPORTANT TO TRY TO FIGURE OUT THE CAUSE. DID SHE EAT SOMETHING?

AN ALLERGIC REACTION? BUT SHE'S NEVER BEEN ALLERGIC TO ANYTHING...

SHE CAN'T POSSIBLY BE ALLERGIC TO A BURGER...

MY MUM AND I HAD NO IDEA WHAT HAD HAPPENED TO ME. IT WAS SUCH A RELIEF THAT THE DOCTOR HAD THE ANSWER, AND EXPLAINED EVERYTHING IN A CALM, STRAIGHTFORWARD MANNER.

ANITA, WERE THERE SESAME SEEDS ON THE BURGER BUN?

YES, I'D NEVER TRIED THEM BEFORE...

IT SOUNDS LIKE THAT MIGHT BE THE CULPRIT!

THE BEST THING WAS HOW UNDERSTANDING AND HELPFUL THE DOCTOR AND NURSES WAS. MY MUM HAD BEEN SO ANXIOUS AND EMBARRASSED ABOUT NOT RECOGNISING THE SYMPTOMS OF ANAPHYLACTIC SHOCK BUT THE DOCTOR MADE US BOTH FEEL AT EASE AND PROVIDED LOTS OF INFORMATION.

I KNOW THIS IS ALL NEW TO YOU, ANAPHYLACTIC SHOCK CAUSES BLOOD PRESSURE TO DROP AND NARROWS YOUR AIRWAY, MAKING BREATHING DIFFICULT.

ANITA'S ALLERGIC REACTION RESULTED FROM A FOOD ALLERGY BUT THERE ARE OTHER ALLERGIES SUCH AS TREE AND GRASS POLLENS, DUST MITES AND EVEN ANIMAL FUR.

SYMPTOMS CAN INCLUDE SNEEZING, RUNNY NOSE, RED, WATERING EYES, VOMITING, DIARRHOEA, RASHES, AND ITCHING. WITHOUT IMMEDIATE TREATMENT, IT CAN BE LIFE THREATENING.



THIS PAMPHLET SHOWS YOU THE LIST OF FOOD ALLERGENS, SYMPTOMS AND WHAT TO DO. AND CHECKOUT THE NHS WEBSITE FOR MORE INFORMATION.

WE NEED TO DO MORE;

I CAN SPEAK TO THE MANAGEMENT TO SEE IF A PARENT/TEACHER'S HEALTH AWARENESS WEEK (BI-ANNUALLY) IN SCHOOLS CAN BE CREATED -

WHERE THE PARENTS CAN GET CLARITY ON HEALTH CONCERNS OR TOPICS THEY ARE NOT AWARE OF.

WOW. THAT'S SO THOUGHTFUL. THANK YOU DOCTOR.



I WILL MAKE COPIES OF THIS PAMPHLET AND ENSURE YOUR SCHOOL EDUCATES THE STUDENTS AND TEACHERS ON THIS.

I'M SO SORRY I DIDN'T KNOW WHAT TO DO WHEN YOU NEEDED HELP.

IT'S OKAY MUM, I AM GLAD THE DOCTOR WAS ABLE TO SAVE ME.

AND NOW I KNOW TO AVOID SESAME SEEDS!

I CARRY AN EPIPEN NOW AND KNOW A LOT MORE ABOUT ALLERGIC REACTIONS.



YOU CAN FIND OUT MORE AT WWW.NHS.UK/CONDITIONS/ALLERGIES/

CLARA'S STORY

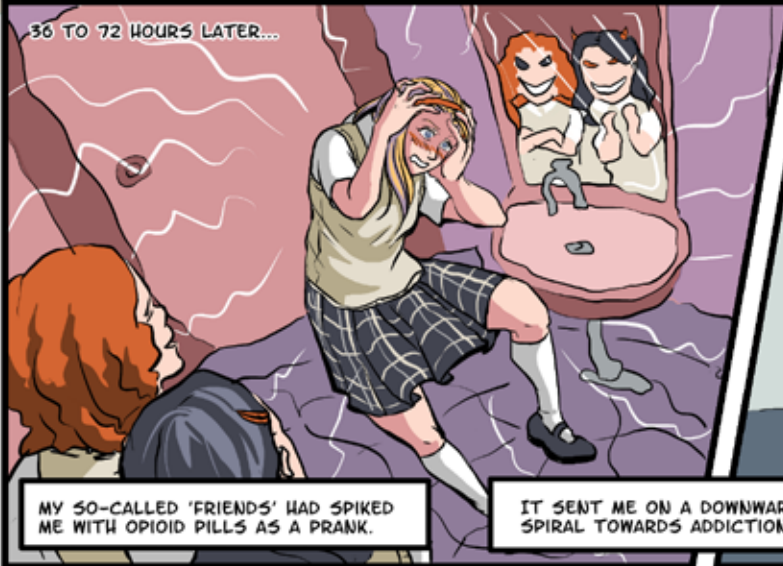
SCRIPT BY LAURETTA JOHNSON, RAASIRI SVENAR, CLAIRE ROBERTSON, AND CHRIS MURRAY. ART BY CLIO DING.

MY NAME IS CLARA. I AM ABOUT HALFWAY THROUGH MY DEGREE AT UNIVERSITY.



FIVE YEARS BACK I WAS A HAPPY AND CAREFREE TEENAGE GIRL. I ENJOYED PARTYING WITH MY FRIENDS AT THE WEEKEND. AT ONE SUCH PARTY, I THOUGHT I WAS JUST DRINKING FIZZY JUICE...

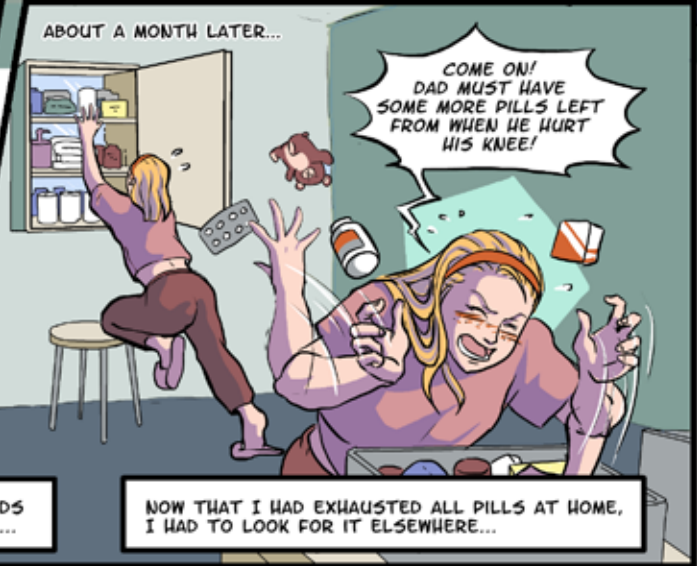
36 TO 72 HOURS LATER...



MY SO-CALLED 'FRIENDS' HAD SPIKED ME WITH OPIOID PILLS AS A PRANK.

IT SENT ME ON A DOWNWARDS SPIRAL TOWARDS ADDICTION...

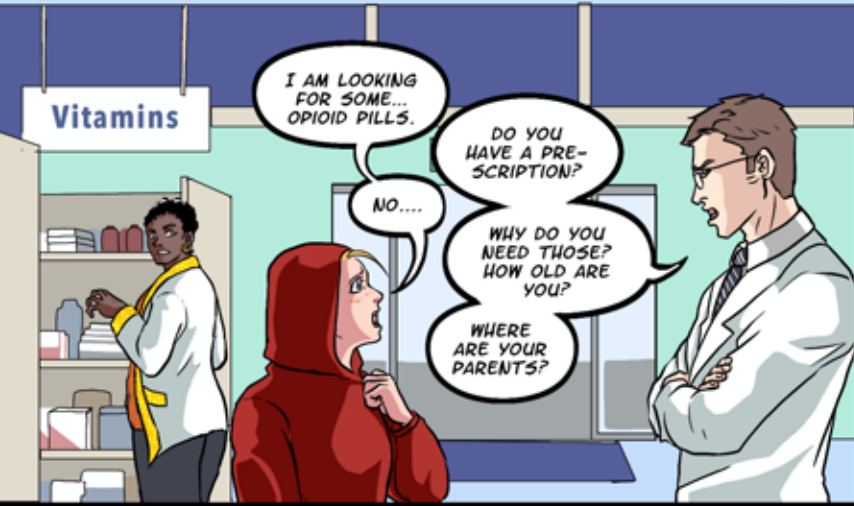
ABOUT A MONTH LATER...



NOW THAT I HAD EXHAUSTED ALL PILLS AT HOME, I HAD TO LOOK FOR IT ELSEWHERE...

I ENDED UP WANDERING AROUND VARIOUS PHARMACIES LOOKING FOR PILLS.





I AM LOOKING FOR SOME... OPIOID PILLS.

NO....

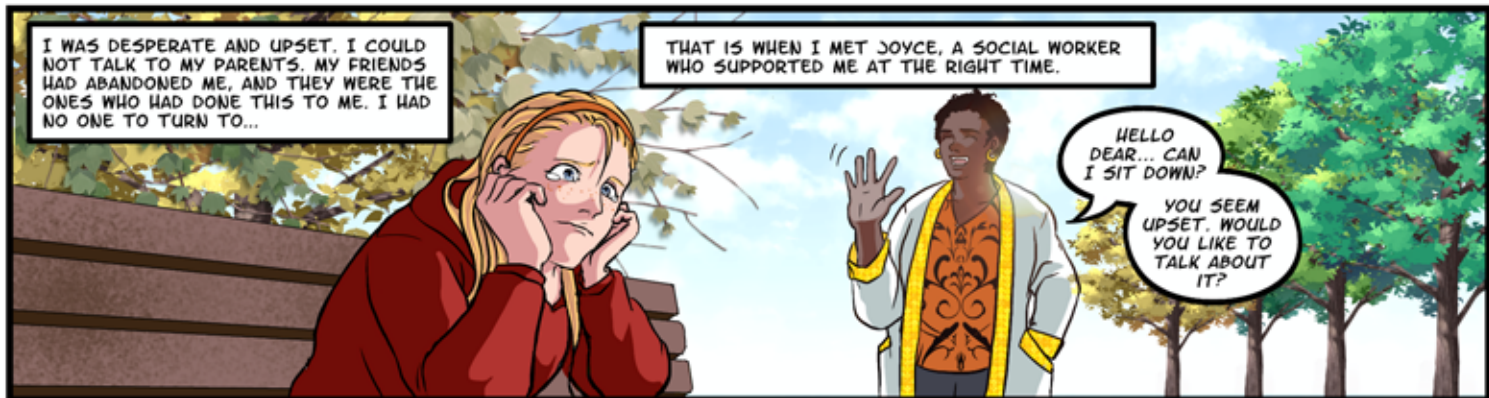
DO YOU HAVE A PRESCRIPTION?

WHY DO YOU NEED THOSE? HOW OLD ARE YOU?

WHERE ARE YOUR PARENTS?



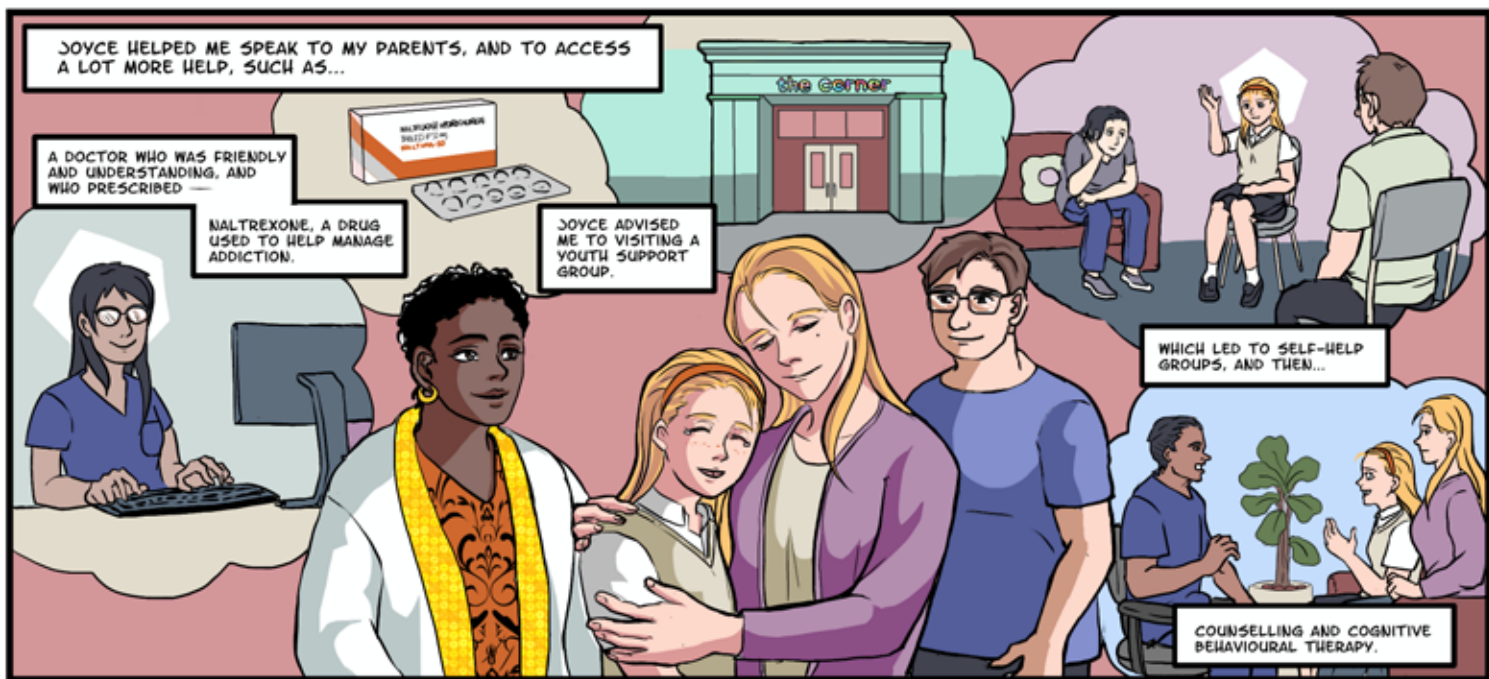
ins



I WAS DESPERATE AND UPSET. I COULD NOT TALK TO MY PARENTS. MY FRIENDS HAD ABANDONED ME, AND THEY WERE THE ONES WHO HAD DONE THIS TO ME. I HAD NO ONE TO TURN TO...

THAT IS WHEN I MET JOYCE, A SOCIAL WORKER WHO SUPPORTED ME AT THE RIGHT TIME.

HELLO DEAR... CAN I SIT DOWN?
YOU SEEM UPSET. WOULD YOU LIKE TO TALK ABOUT IT?



JOYCE HELPED ME SPEAK TO MY PARENTS, AND TO ACCESS A LOT MORE HELP, SUCH AS...

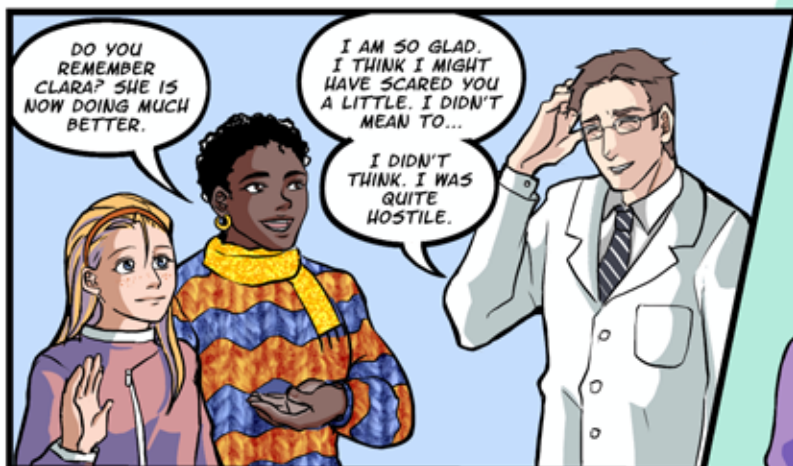
A DOCTOR WHO WAS FRIENDLY AND UNDERSTANDING, AND WHO PRESCRIBED...

NALTREXONE, A DRUG USED TO HELP MANAGE ADDICTION.

JOYCE ADVISED ME TO VISITING A YOUTH SUPPORT GROUP.

WHICH LED TO SELF-HELP GROUPS, AND THEN...

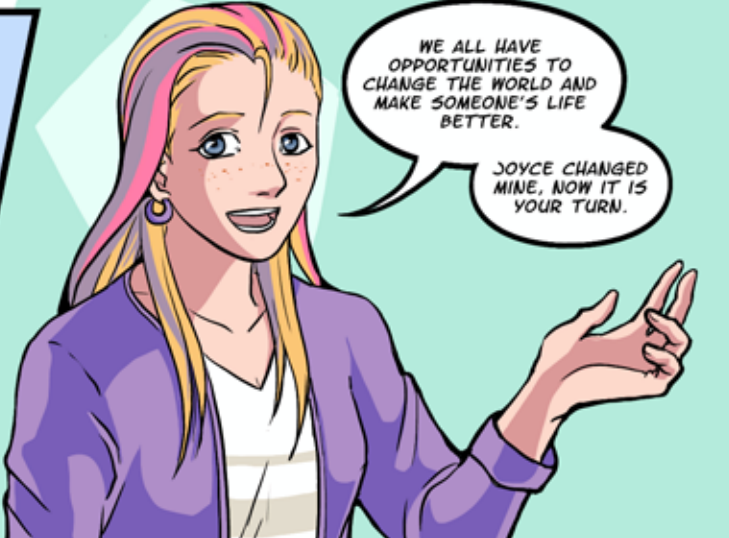
COUNSELLING AND COGNITIVE BEHAVIOURAL THERAPY.



DO YOU REMEMBER CLARA? SHE IS NOW DOING MUCH BETTER.

I AM SO GLAD. I THINK I MIGHT HAVE SCARED YOU A LITTLE. I DIDN'T MEAN TO...

I DIDN'T THINK I WAS QUITE HOSTILE.



WE ALL HAVE OPPORTUNITIES TO CHANGE THE WORLD AND MAKE SOMEONE'S LIFE BETTER.

JOYCE CHANGED MINE, NOW IT IS YOUR TURN.

THERE WAS A TIME WHEN DRUGS CONSUMED MY LIFE. THEY NEARLY ENDED IT...

I WAS AN ADDICT, AND WITH THAT CAME DEPRESSION.

SUICIDAL THOUGHTS WERE NEVER FAR FROM MY MIND.

NOTHING SEEMS TO GO MY WAY... I DON'T WANT TO BE HERE.

I'M GOING TO THE BRIDGE...

ONE DAY I DECIDED TO DO IT.

THE WORLD IS BETTER WITHOUT YOU!

Help is Just Around

the corner

Written by Zunaïd Mansuri, Sami Khan, Sumit Sawhney, Victor Okolie, and Chris Murray, artwork by Clio Ding.

I DON'T KNOW WHAT I WAS LOOKING FOR... SOMEONE TO TALK TO, PERHAPS?

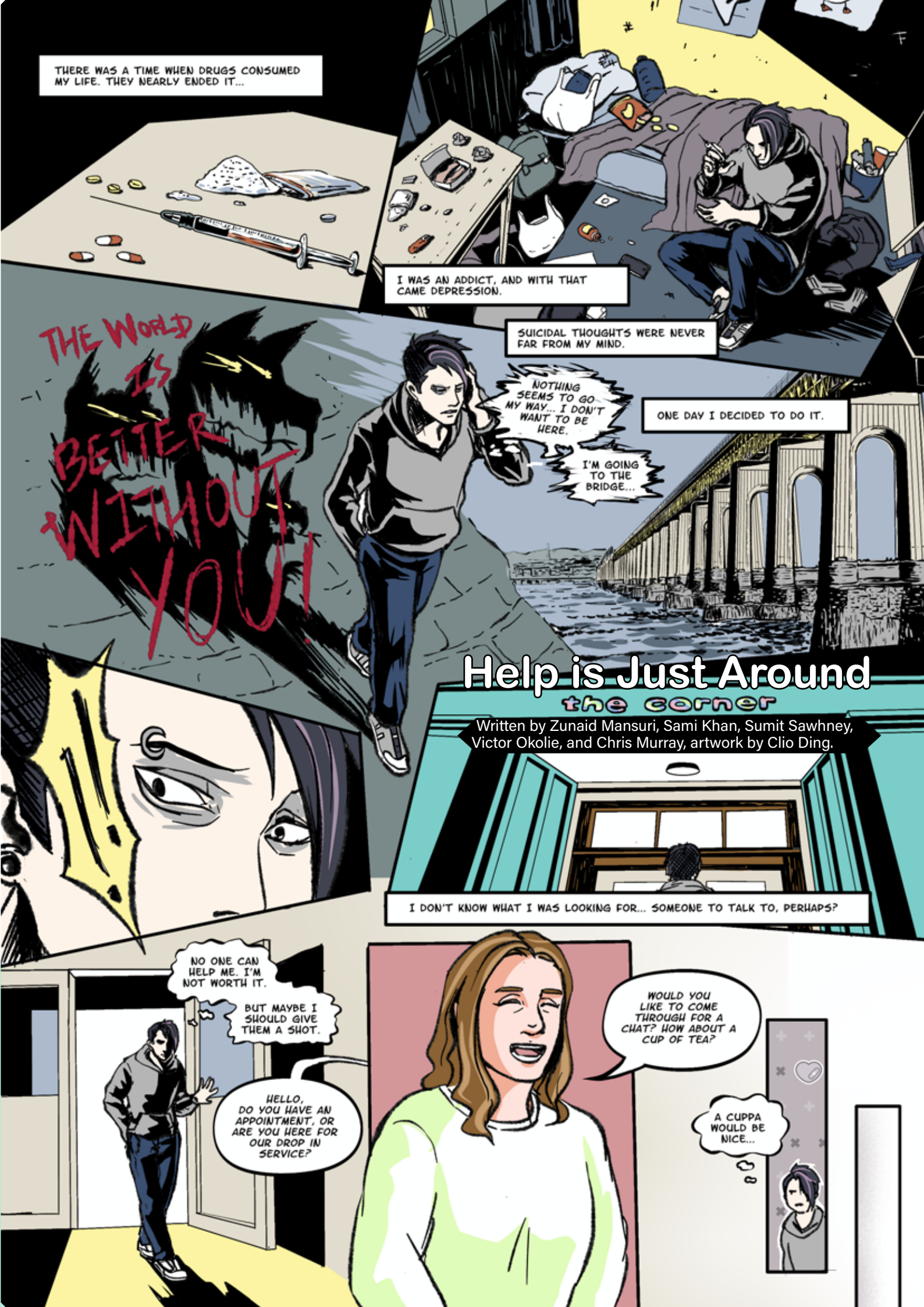
NO ONE CAN HELP ME. I'M NOT WORTH IT.

BUT MAYBE I SHOULD GIVE THEM A SHOT.

HELLO, DO YOU HAVE AN APPOINTMENT, OR ARE YOU HERE FOR OUR DROP IN SERVICE?

WOULD YOU LIKE TO COME THROUGH FOR A CHAT? HOW ABOUT A CUP OF TEA?

A CUPPA WOULD BE NICE...



HERE YOU GO...



I FIND IT HARD TO MAKE FRIENDS DUE TO THE DRUGS...

BUT I JUST CAN'T STOP. I'VE TRIED SO MANY TIMES.



THE ICEBREAKER

OLD FRIENDS FROM SCHOOL IGNORE ME WHEN THEY SEE ME ON THE STREET.

EVERYONE LOOKS AT ME WITH DISGUST.

I WAS SUCH A MESS. I DIDN'T GO TO THE DOCTOR OR THE DENTIST.

MY DENTAL HEALTH WAS A REAL ISSUE. I HAD AN UNTREATED BROKEN TOOTH FOR AGES. I WAS IN PAIN ALL THE TIME.

WE ARE HERE TO HELP, VICTOR. WE WILL HELP YOU AT EVERY STAGE.

I'M GOING TO PUT YOU IN TOUCH WITH OUR SUBSTANCE USE TEAM, WHO WILL BE ABLE TO OFFER FURTHER SUPPORT.

I'M GLAD YOU CAME IN, VICTOR.

ME TOO. IT'S GOOD TO BE ABLE TO TALK WITH SOMEONE. I JUST WANT TO LIVE A NORMAL LIFE.

HOPE

SHARING AND SUPPORT

ADDICTION BRINGS WITH IT LOTS OF OTHER CHALLENGES. FOR ME, IT WAS DEPRESSION, AND THE FEELING THAT THERE WAS NO WAY OUT.

BUT THERE IS ALWAYS LIGHT AT THE END OF THE TUNNEL.

REMEMBER, IT'S NEVER TOO LATE TO SEEK HELP. THE SUPPORT YOU NEED IS JUST AROUND THE CORNER.

FIND OUT MORE ABOUT ADDICTION AND DEPRESSION HERE:

WWW.THECORNER.CO.UK/
WWW.YOUNGMINDS.ORG.UK/YOUNG-PERSON/COPING-WITH-LIFE/DRUGS-AND-ALCOHOL/
WWW.KNOWTHESCORE.INFO/WORRIED-ABOUT-YOUR-DRUG-USE/

Contributors



Students from the Masters in Dental Public Health: **Mayuri Sooraj; Midhila Reddy Bade; Muhammad Sami Khan; Sneha Ann Varghese; Sumit Sawhney; and Zunaid Mansuri.**

Students from the Master of Public Health: **Raajasiri Iyengar; Amaze Basse; Victor Okolie and Lauretta Johnpaul.**

Christopher Murray – Professor in English Literature, School of Humanities, Social Sciences and Law

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Thushani Indumani Devi Wijesiri – Post Doctoral Research Fellow, School of Dentistry

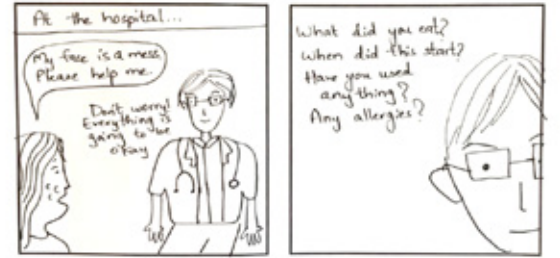
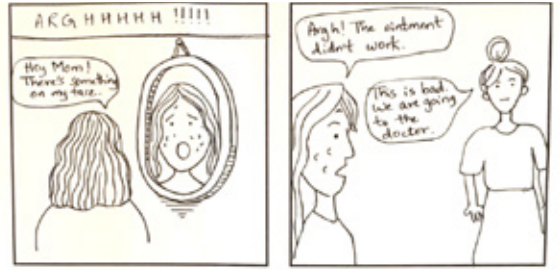
Claire Robertson – PhD student, School of Humanities, Social Sciences and Law

Gary Finlayson and Zara Cargil – The Corner

Clio Ding – Artist



Process



Clara's Story





Panel 1
Image description: Close up on Victor. He is in his mid-20s. He looks out at the reader (we learn later that he is addressing a large group).
Word balloon (Victor): There was a time when drugs consumed my life. They nearly ended it...
Caption (Victor): I was an addict, and with that came depression.

Panel 2
Image description: Victor aged around 15 sitting on the floor in a squalid flat. It is run down and crumbling. Victor is clearly an addict. The drugs have a hole in him. We see the tell-tale signs of addiction in his face. There are track-marks in his arms. His clothes are old and stained. There are empty food cartons, cans and rubbish strewn around. On the wall we see words scrawled like graffiti, but they could also be manifestations of Victor's subconscious. The words are: DESPAIR, WHAT'S THE POINT?, DO IT, NO ONE CARES! YOU WON'T BE MISSED
Caption (Victor): I was an addict, and with that came depression.

Panel 3
Image description: A huge black monster, like a demon dog looms over Victor, accompanied by a dark cloud. The depression-monster's face is distorted and scrotchy.
Word balloon (Monster): The world would be better off without you.
Caption (Victor): Suicidal thoughts were never far from my mind.

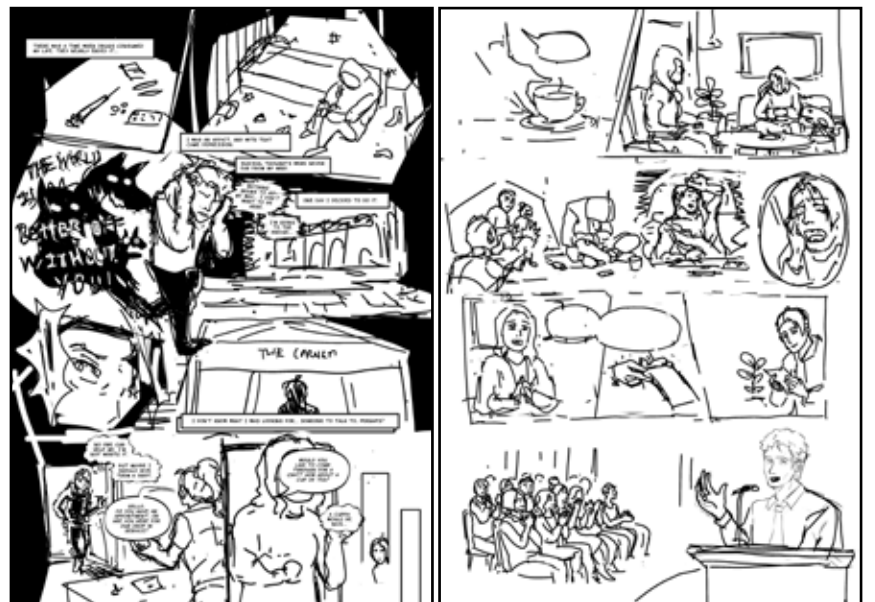
Panel 4
Image description: Victor walking towards the Tay Road Bridge. It is a bright, sunny day, around 10am. He is near to The Corner, walking past it on his way to the bridge. The sky bubble is like a storm cloud.
Caption: One day I decided to do it.
Thought Bubble (Victor): Nothing goes my way. I don't want to be here, I'm going to the bridge...

Panel 5
Image description: Victor sees The Corner, a health and well-being service. Something catches his attention. There are signs in the window that say 'Share your worries' and 'We are here to help'. No word balloons, thought bubbles or captions in this panel.

Panel 6
Image description: Interior. Victor entering The Corner. The thought bubble is still a storm cloud.
Caption: I don't know what I was looking for... someone to talk to, perhaps?
Thought balloon: No one can help me. I'm not worth it... but maybe I should give them a shot.

Panel 7
Image description: A receptionist welcomes Victor. Photo ref of Lesley. Receptionist hand tick sheet to Victor.
Receptionist: Hello, do you have an appointment, or are you here for our drop in service?

Panel 8
Practitioner comes out to meet Victor. She is a friendly looking middle-aged woman. The storm cloud evaporates from the thought bubble.
Hello. Would you like to come through for a chat? Would you like a cup of tea? A chat?



Panel 1
Image description: This is a large panel, probably taking up full width of the page, and perhaps half the depth. Large image of Clara at left side of the panel. Head and shoulders, allowing for focus on her expression. She is a 20-year old student. She looks reflective, as if she is reliving her memory of a house party. Behind her to the side we see her memory of her younger self at a house party. The younger Clara is 15-years old and looks quite innocent. The house party/memory should be shown inside a large thought bubble, almost as if the thought bubble is the panel/panel border.

In the thought bubble/memory there are several teenagers in the background dancing, chatting, having fun. They have mean expressions with a suggestion that they are laughing at Clara not with her. In the centre of the thought bubble is Clara and a group of friends. She is drinking from a large bottle of fizzy juice. In the foreground one of the teenagers is holding a large bottle of opioid pills and their back.
(Clara's friends): Hahahahaha
(Clara): My name is Clara. I am about halfway through my degree at university. Five years back I was a happy and carefree teenage girl. I enjoyed partying with my friends at the weekend. At one such party, I thought I was just drinking fizzy juice...

Caption (located between panels 1 and 2): 36 to 72 hours later...



HEALTHCARE COMICS

This comic, co-created with students undertaking Masters programmes in Dental Public Health (MDPH) and Public Health (MPH), explores the impact that healthcare professionals can make on the experience of a patient and the public. The stories were devised over the course of three intensive workshops run by the Scottish Centre for Comics Studies, and the final versions were drawn by comics artist Clio Ding. The stories deal with issues such as allergic reactions, drug abuse and depression, and in each case examine the role that healthcare professionals play and the impact that they make.

