

A serene sunset scene over a pond. The sky is filled with warm, golden light, reflecting on the water's surface. In the background, a white house with a dark roof sits on a grassy hill. Several trees are scattered throughout the landscape, with their silhouettes and reflections visible in the water. The overall mood is peaceful and contemplative.

Life behind the lens

Nikko Calaycay

According to the Canadian Mental Health Association; people who identify as part of the LGBTQ community have higher rates of depression, anxiety, obsessive-compulsive and phobic disorders, suicidality, self-harm, and substance use. They also have double the risk for post-traumatic stress disorder compared to someone who is heterosexual. As for the youth, they face approximately 14 times the risk of suicide and substance abuse than their heterosexual peers.



Semicolon Project

Project Semicolon has built a community of fighters and survivors willing to listen and help those fighting through a similar crisis.

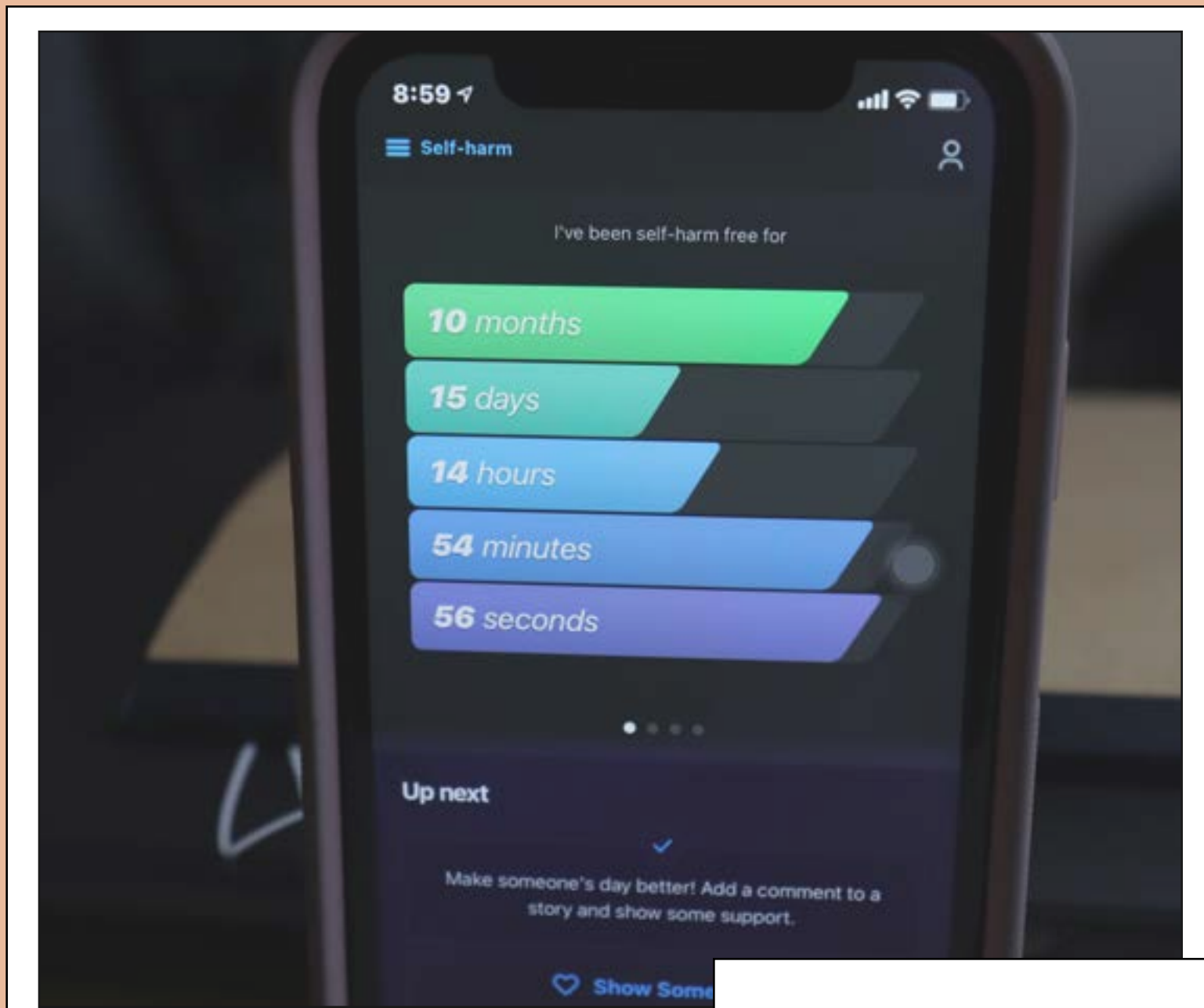
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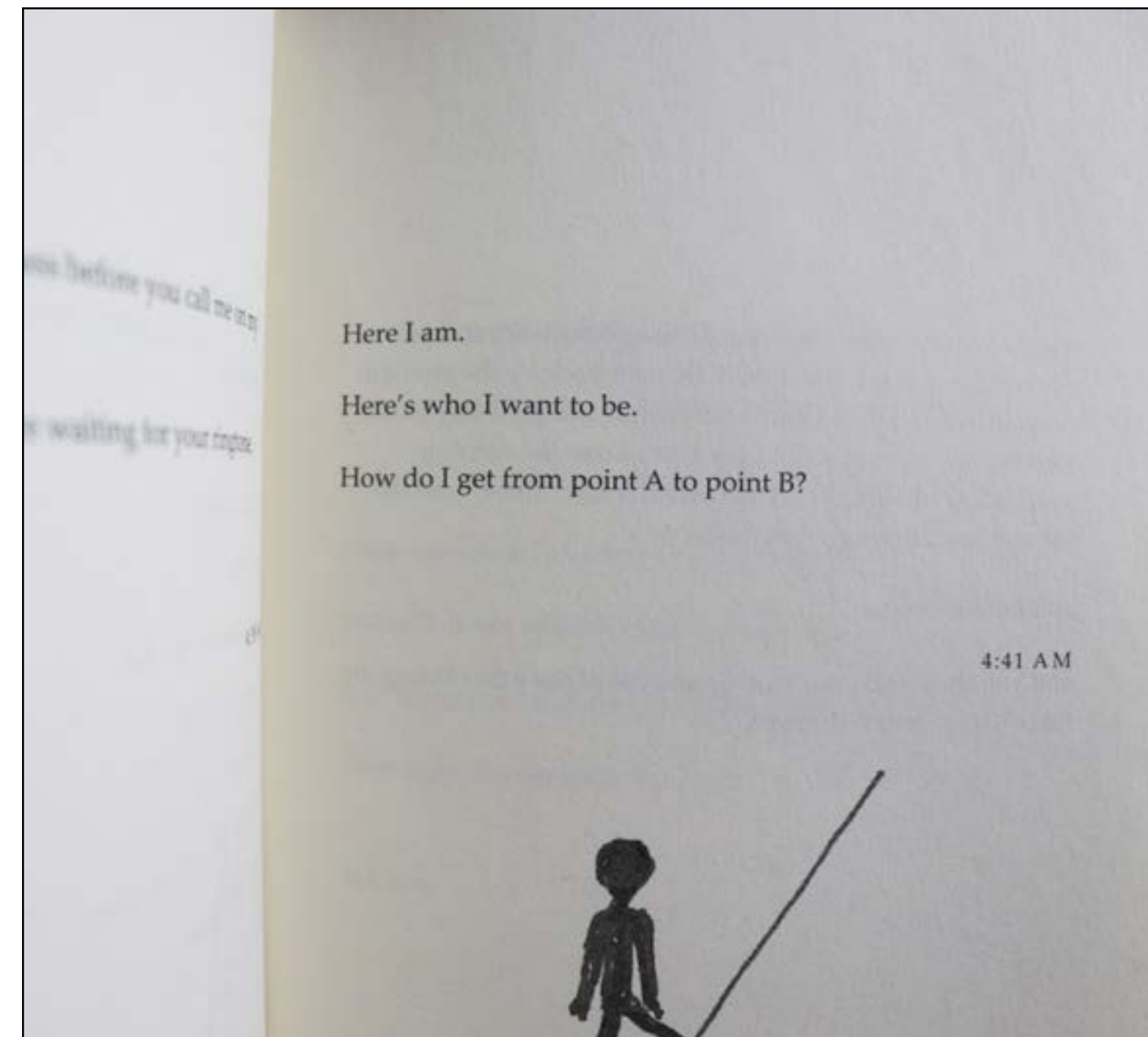
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In a study done by Carson Cook on LGBT representation on broadcast and streaming television, he found that there is a positive effect in representing the LGBT community on show media. This is especially important for adolescents; this gives them role models and a sense of community. A couple of years ago, same-sex marriage was illegal. The people who truly loved each other were not able to have the same rights as their heterosexual peers. Why? Because they did not fit into societies norm, they did not fit the status quo!

The media being so progressive can help give a perspective of what someone in the LGBTQ community endures on a daily basis. The hate, the slurs, the jokes and sadly getting beaten. It is a hard

topic but it is the reality they live in. In the media you don't see a heterosexual person come out as straight, but someone who is gay has this whole coming out moment. Most of those moments end with them getting kicked out which is what most people count as character development. You don't always get the happy coming out story. I decided to interview 7 people who did come out and asked them how it went. Four of them said it went well and their parents knew so it was not a complete shock to them. The three others said it was difficult and that their parents could not come to terms with that information. Most parents would say that it's just a phase and it will pass. That's where they are wrong because their child is still the same person regardless of their sexual orientation.



As I interview these seven individuals, I have asked them if they would consider social media their safe space. Interestingly enough they all agreed, social media has become a place for them to be who they authentically are, no hiding, no judgment, no masks.

“yes, people will write hate comments and it hurts but at least I love who I am, I have people who love me and support me, that’s all I will ever need.”
-Leila E.



Social media and media have been targeted as the cause of depression in most people but for the LGBTQ community it has been a place to connect, to inspire and to spread more positivity in a world that thinks love is love should only be between a man and woman. They are proving that statement wrong because no matter how many times they get knocked down, they come back even stronger!

A person wearing a dark jacket, a blue backpack, and large headphones is walking away from the camera down a city street. The street is lined with tall, multi-story buildings featuring arched windows and doorways. The scene is lit by warm, glowing streetlights, suggesting dusk or dawn. The sky is a pale, overcast blue. The overall mood is quiet and contemplative.

YOU
ARE
STRONGER
THAN
YOU
THINK!