

# ‘A Star Is Born’ For World Mental Health Day



By *Jamie Wells, M.D.* — October 10, 2018



By Ian Smith from London, England -  
Bradley Cooper, CC BY-SA 2.0,  
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The iconic movie remake of *A Star Is Born*, starring Bradley Cooper and Lady Gaga among other notables, strikes a chord as it genuinely and accurately captures the reverberating heartache associated with addiction, depression, anxiety and the many internal demons we all often battle to some degree or another. With today being *World Mental Health Day*, the film is an important reminder of the profound suffering of those challenged in this arena, and the struggles shared by their loved ones.

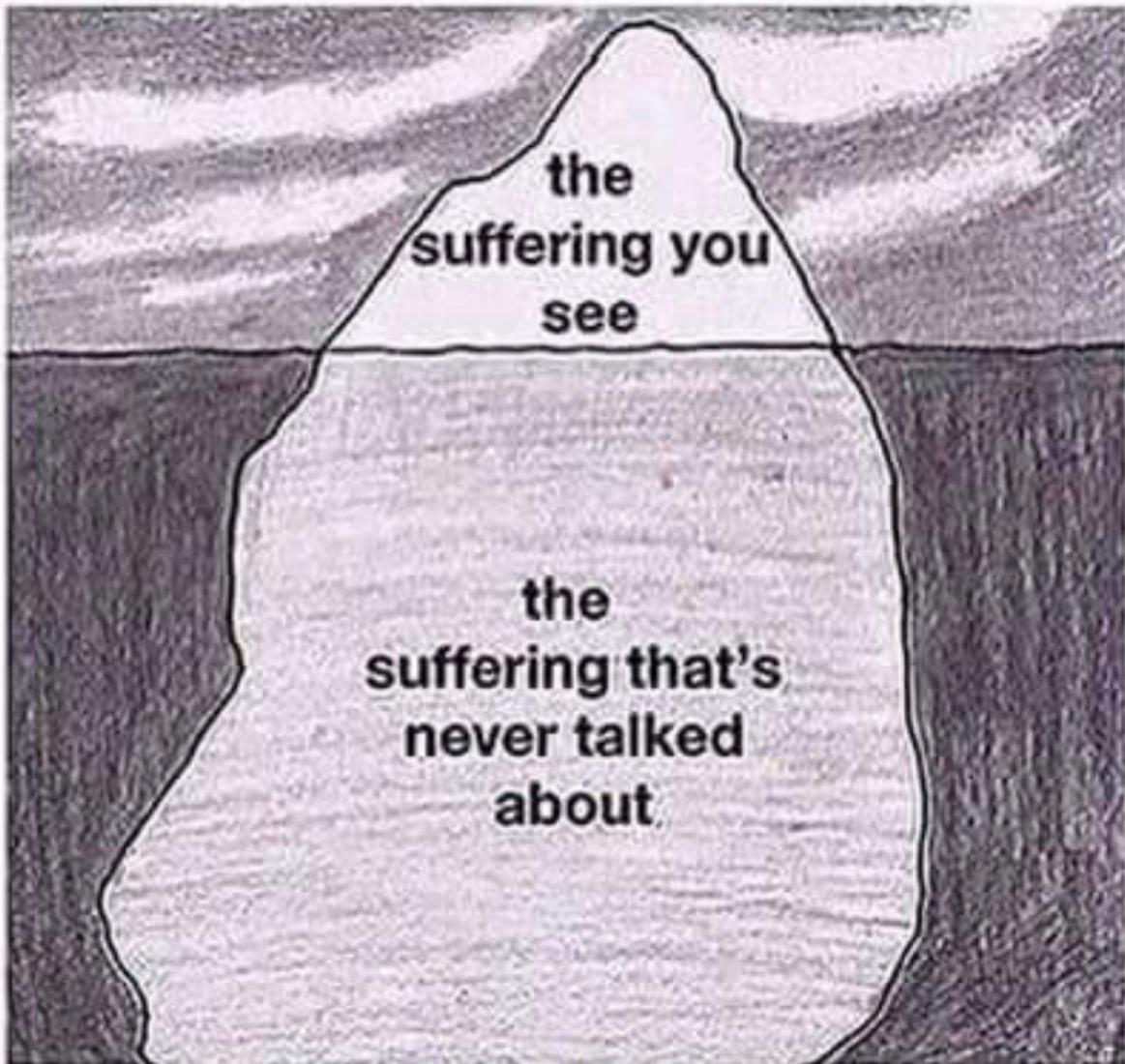
The good news is there is help. Though a long and windy road often without quick fixes, the journey to transitioning albeit out of the crisis of active addiction or depression or both to attaining a high quality of life is within your grasp especially when utilizing the right resources in a supportive loving family and community. The importance of support and its value can't be understated.

In the movie, the leading character portrayed by Cooper aptly depicts the all-encompassing, all-consuming often exhausting demands of addiction while his abundantly clear self-medicating to numb the pain from his childhood trauma and unimaginable losses further illustrates the tragic nature of the disease. His behavior reflects the reality that an alcoholic or drug addict can be kind, tender, funny, loving or well-intended and not always mean. The spectrum of the disease can happen to a person with wondrous character traits like the extreme talent of an incredibly affable rock star to whomever, as poor mental health does not discriminate no matter what the socioeconomic status, age, background or personality type.

And the anguish of his wife, Gaga's role, brother, father-in-law and friends is another authentic

consequence of addiction.

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With the continued recent and upsetting onslaught of high profile suicides we are seeing in the mainstream media these days, it is crucial to understand that such events are happening all of the time. Films like this and constant refrain on the airwaves or social media attempting to remove the stigma surrounding mental illness are worthy endeavors.

In so doing, those enduring a mental health event or sustained diagnosis or particularly devastating trial don't feel so alone and without social connection. Loneliness and lack of human connection compound the negative thoughts and sentiments of isolation which can facilitate a downward spiral.

*World Mental Health Day* is not simply to remind us about those with clinical disease, it is also a critical service to the world to take a personal inventory on whether you are heading toward an unfavorable trajectory or even simply finding joy in life. It is much easier to intervene early and

prevent progression than it is to treat a decline in mental health once it is more advanced - which doesn't mean that further down the line is without hope. When there is life, there is hope. So, no matter where you fall on the curve, help is abundant in our world. Start by reaching out to your doctor if you have concerns. By the same token, pay attention to behavioral changes in those you care about especially patterns of silence or distancing oneself. You have no idea how meaningful a text can be to a person in a bad frame of mind. Don't take personally when someone shifts his or her communication style, sometimes the act of reframing your thinking of "are they okay" makes all of the difference in the world.

These and others are proactive measures that build strong communities and serve everyone. After all, for optimal physical well-being, good mental health is essential.

With today's message in mind, we all can play a part in turning the tide of catastrophic outcomes that are plaguing our times. Kindness instead of being so quick-to-judge is a worthy practice. It doesn't cost much and you just never know what internal conflict another person is facing and how much that positive interaction can truly mean in their lives. Compassionate listening. Viewing through an empathetic lens.

A depth of understanding involves scratching the surface. In the movie, nothing underscores this more than the lyrics to the hit song "Shallow" (video [here](#) [2]).

*Tell me somethin', girl*

*Are you happy in this modern world?*

*Or do you need more?*

*Is there somethin' else you're searchin' for?*

*I'm falling*

*In all the good times I find myself*

*Longin' for change*

*And in the bad times I fear myself*

*Tell me something, boy*

*Aren't you tired tryin' to fill that void?*

*Or do you need more?*

*Ain't it hard keeping it so hardcore?*

Optimizing mental health in life is worthwhile for everyone. Finding peace within is universally relatable, however daunting. Just remember, when you think you are alone, reach out, ask for help. There are so many ways to nudge the tide in a better direction. The [National Suicide Prevention Lifeline](#)

[3] provides 24/7, free and confidential support for people in distress, prevention and crisis resources for you or your loved ones, and best practices for professionals: 1-800-273-8255

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**Links**

[1]

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Bradley\\_Cooper\\_\(3699322472\)\\_\(cropped\).jpg#/media/File:Bradley\\_Cooper\\_\(3699322472\)\\_\(cropped\).jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Bradley_Cooper_(3699322472)_(cropped).jpg#/media/File:Bradley_Cooper_(3699322472)_(cropped).jpg)

[2] [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bo\\_efYhYU2A](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bo_efYhYU2A)

[3] <https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/>