

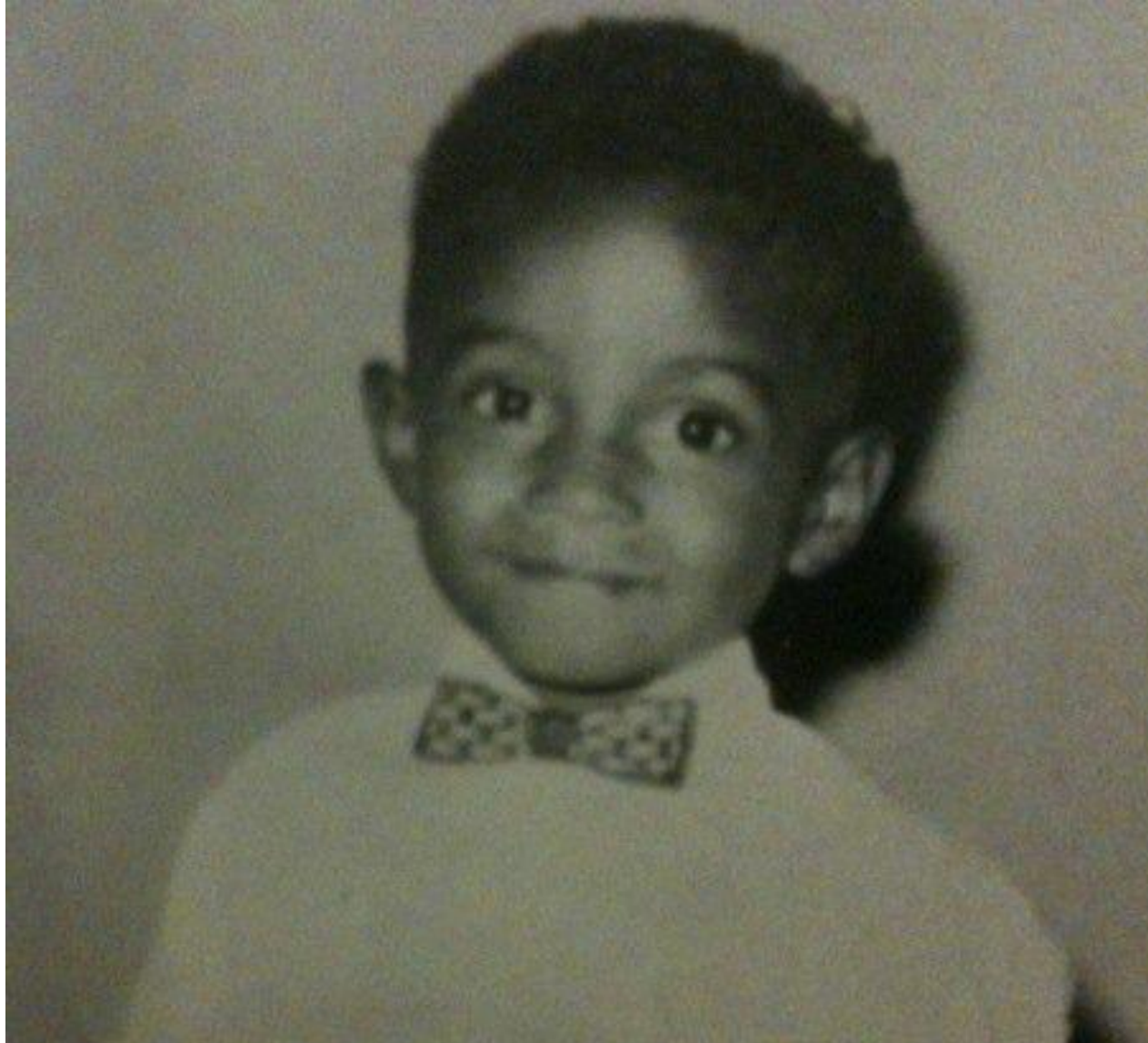
An illustration of a man with a beard, wearing a blue shirt with orange and yellow stripes on the sleeves, comforting a young boy with a large afro. The boy is wearing an orange jacket over a blue and white striped shirt and is crying, with his hand on his forehead. They are in a room with a large yellow armchair, a Newton's cradle, and several framed pictures of African people on the wall. The background is a mix of green and blue textures.

Dear Black Boy: It's Ok to Cry **ACRC KEYNOTE PRESENTATION**

Presented by Ebony Lewis
Author, Mental Health Advocate & Youth Warrior

The Story of Superman

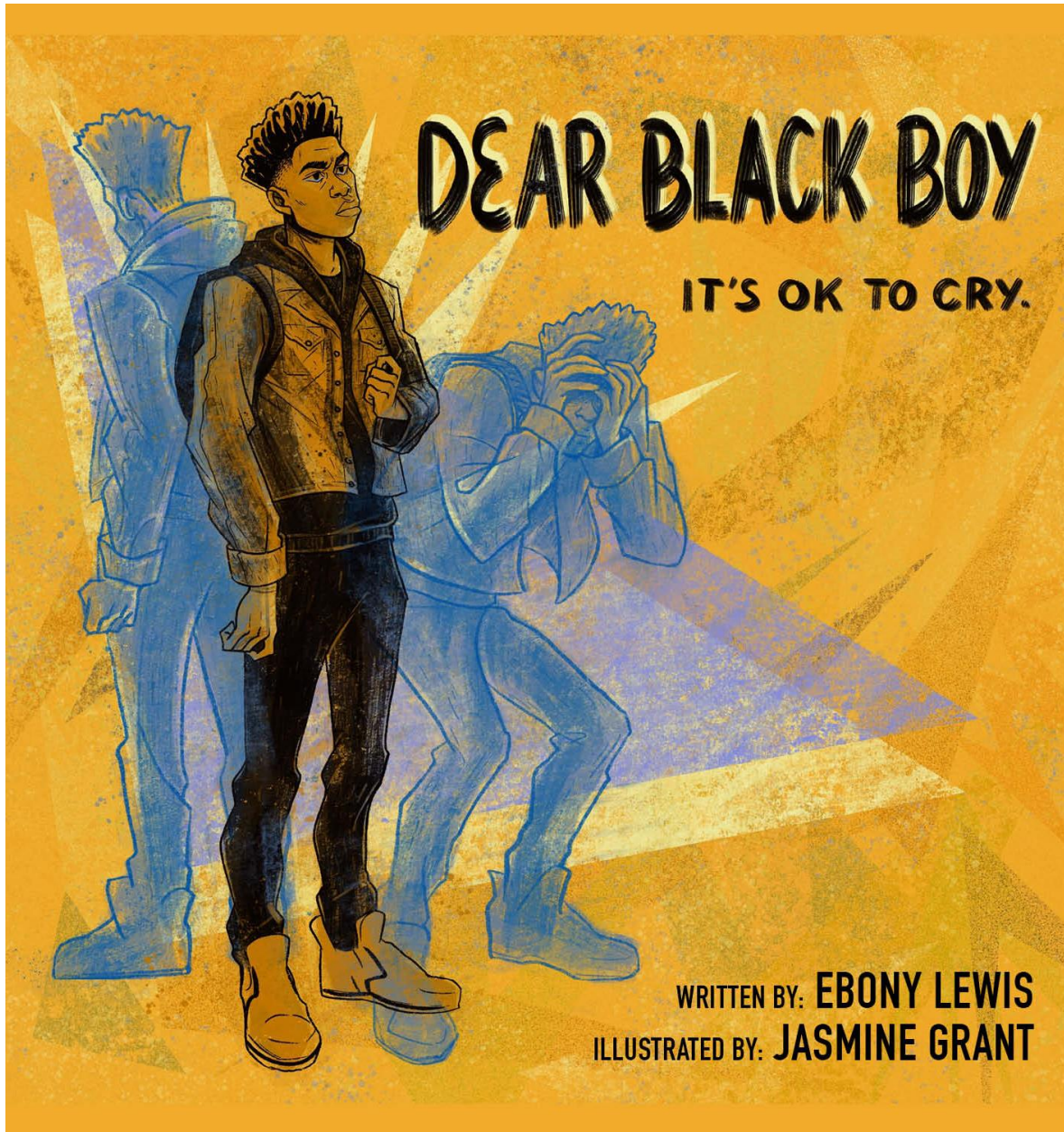
What could have been...



The Story of Superman

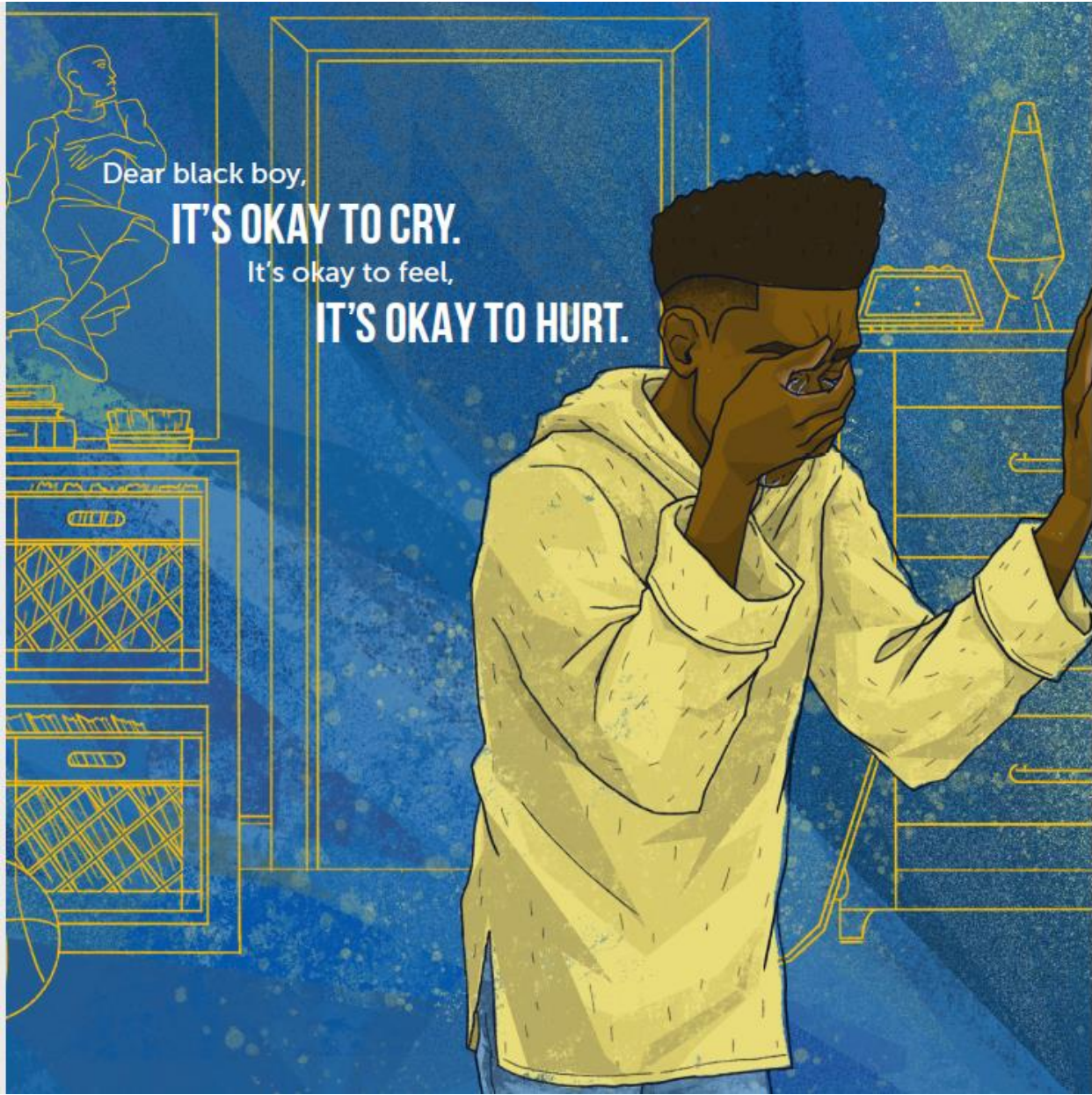
What is...





Why Dear Black Boy?

- Recognizing my families story/trauma
- Breaking stigmas
- Promoting healing



A Growing Crisis

According to Ring the Alarm: The Crisis of Black Youth Suicide in America

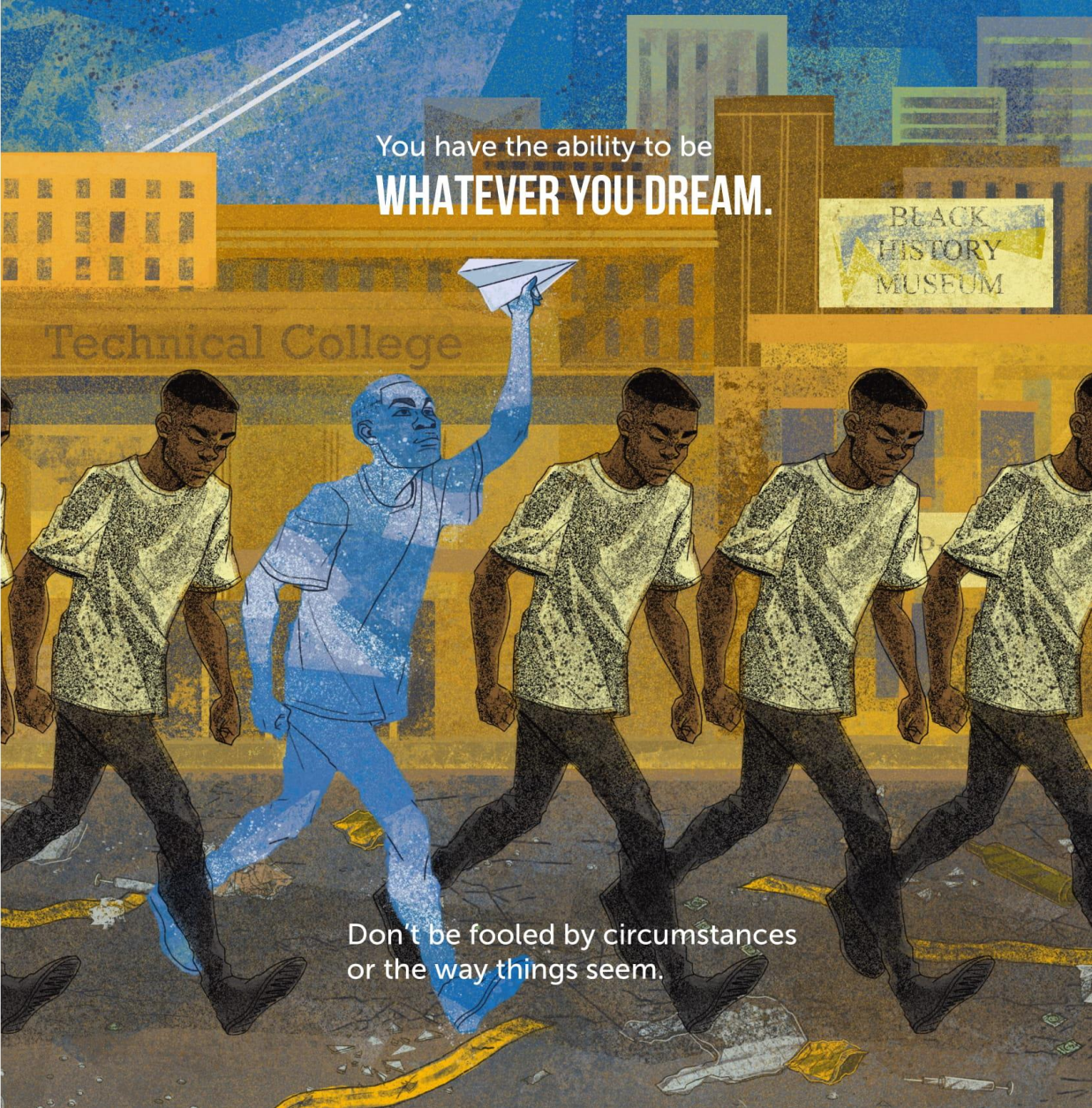
A report to congress from the congressional black caucus, Emergency Taskforce on Black Youth Suicide and Mental Health.

- **In youth ages 10 to 19, suicide is the second leading cause of death, and in 2017, over 3,000 youth died by suicide in this age group.**
- **Black youth under 13 years are twice as likely to die by suicide and when comparing by sex, black males, 5 to 11 years, are more likely to die by suicide compared to their white counterparts.**
- **Suicide death rate among Black youth has been found to be increasing faster than any other racial/ethnic group.**



Dear young man, it's cool to be confident
in who you are and what you know.

It's cool to **LEARN**, and it's cool to **TRY**.
It's the only way your mind will **GROW**.



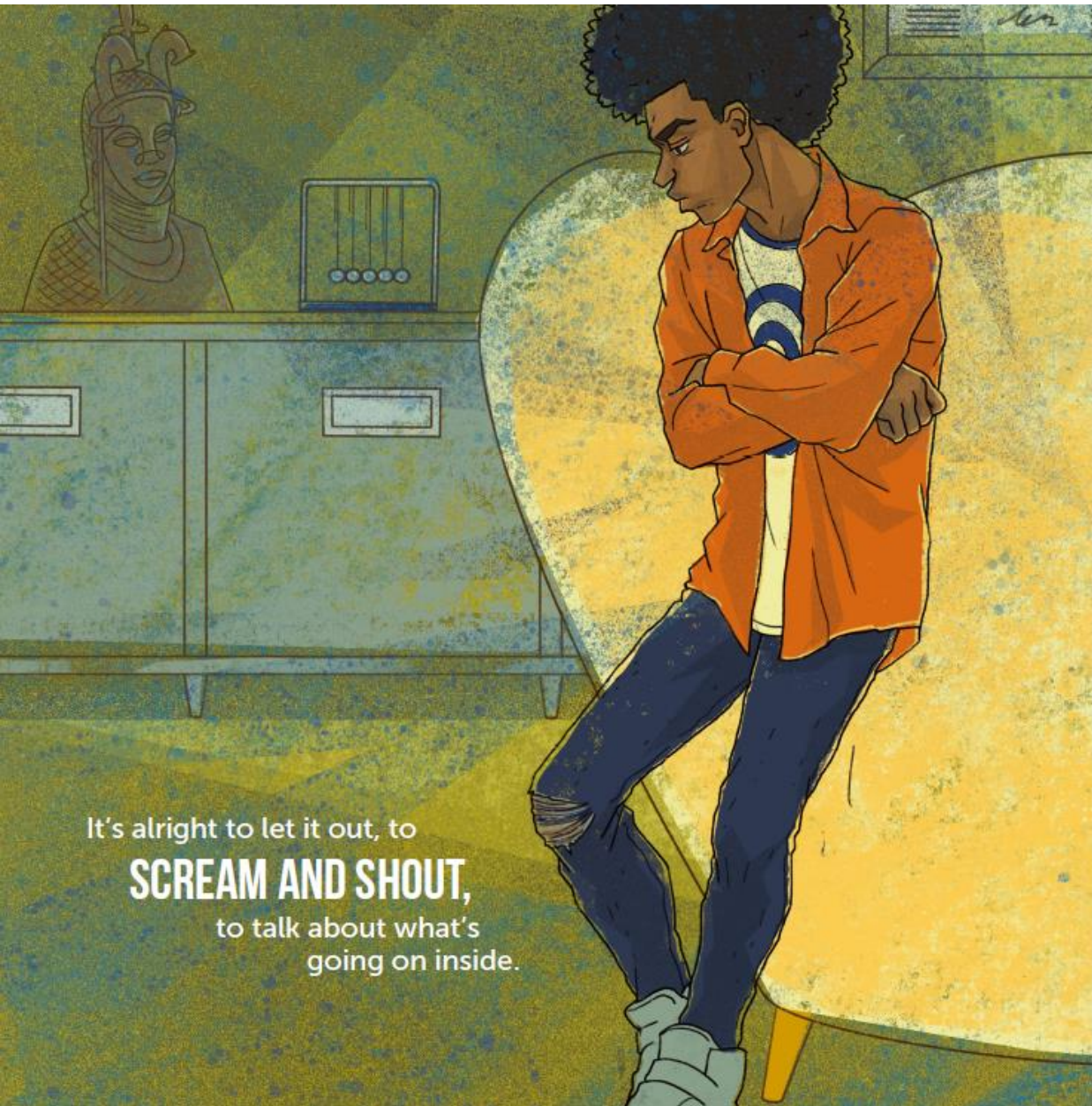
You have the ability to be
WHATEVER YOU DREAM.

Don't be fooled by circumstances
or the way things seem.

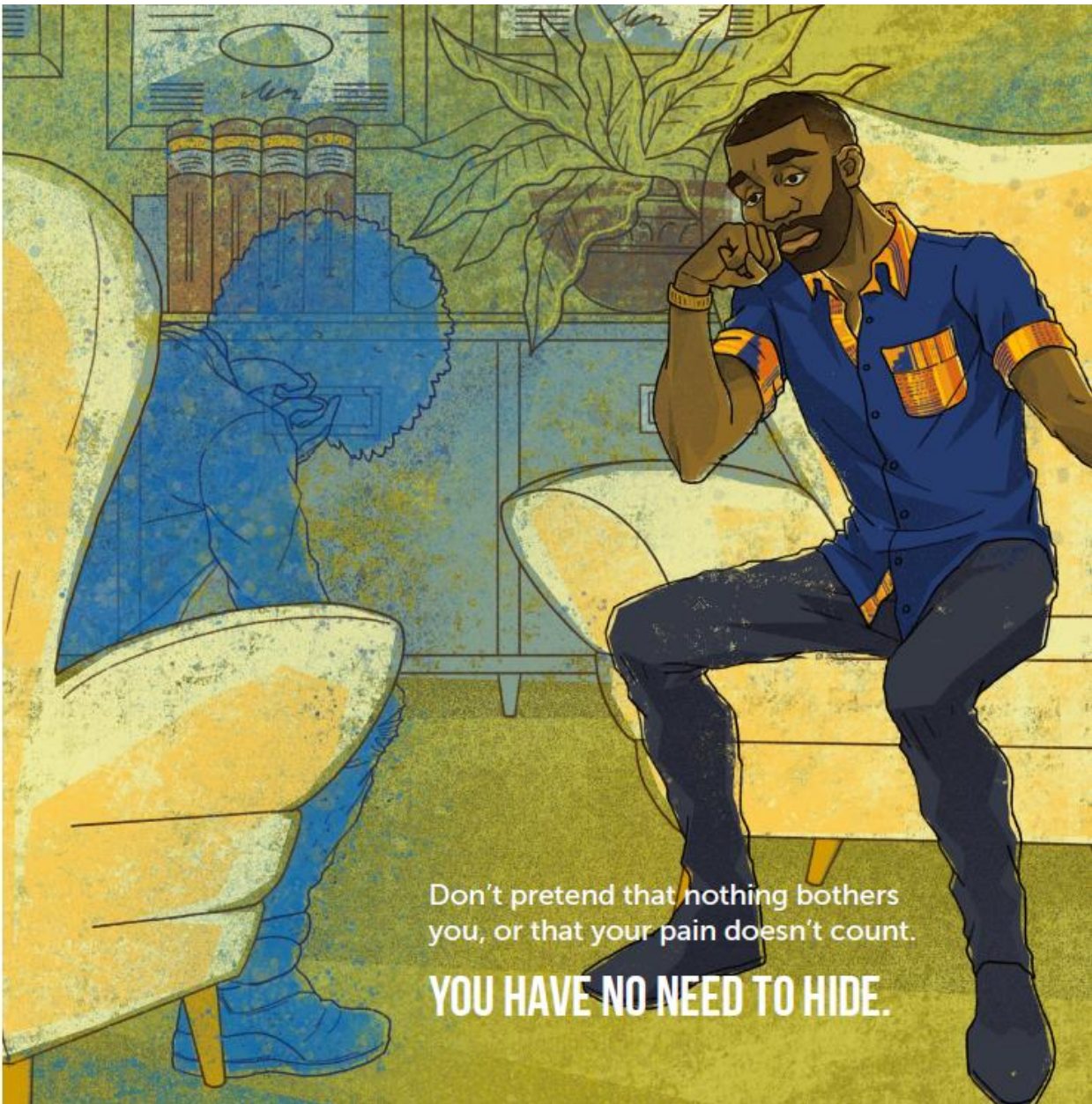
TRAUMA

“Trauma compromises our ability to engage with others by replacing patterns of connection with patterns of protection.” –Stephen Porges

According to the National Alliance on Mental Illness, African Americans are more likely to experience socioeconomic disparities such as exclusion from health, educational, social and economic resources. These disparities may contribute to worse mental health outcomes.



It's alright to let it out, to
SCREAM AND SHOUT,
to talk about what's
going on inside.



Don't pretend that nothing bothers
you, or that your pain doesn't count.
YOU HAVE NO NEED TO HIDE.

He/She's faking it because they want attention

What happens in this house stays in this house

Just pray about it

Mental illness is caused by personal weakness

Toughen up, be a MAN

STIGMA

Mental illness means you're damaged

“What mental health needs is more sunlight, more candor, more unashamed conversation about illnesses that affect not only individuals, but their families as well.” – Glenn Close

Crying/Expressing emotions make you weak

You're just sad, not depressed

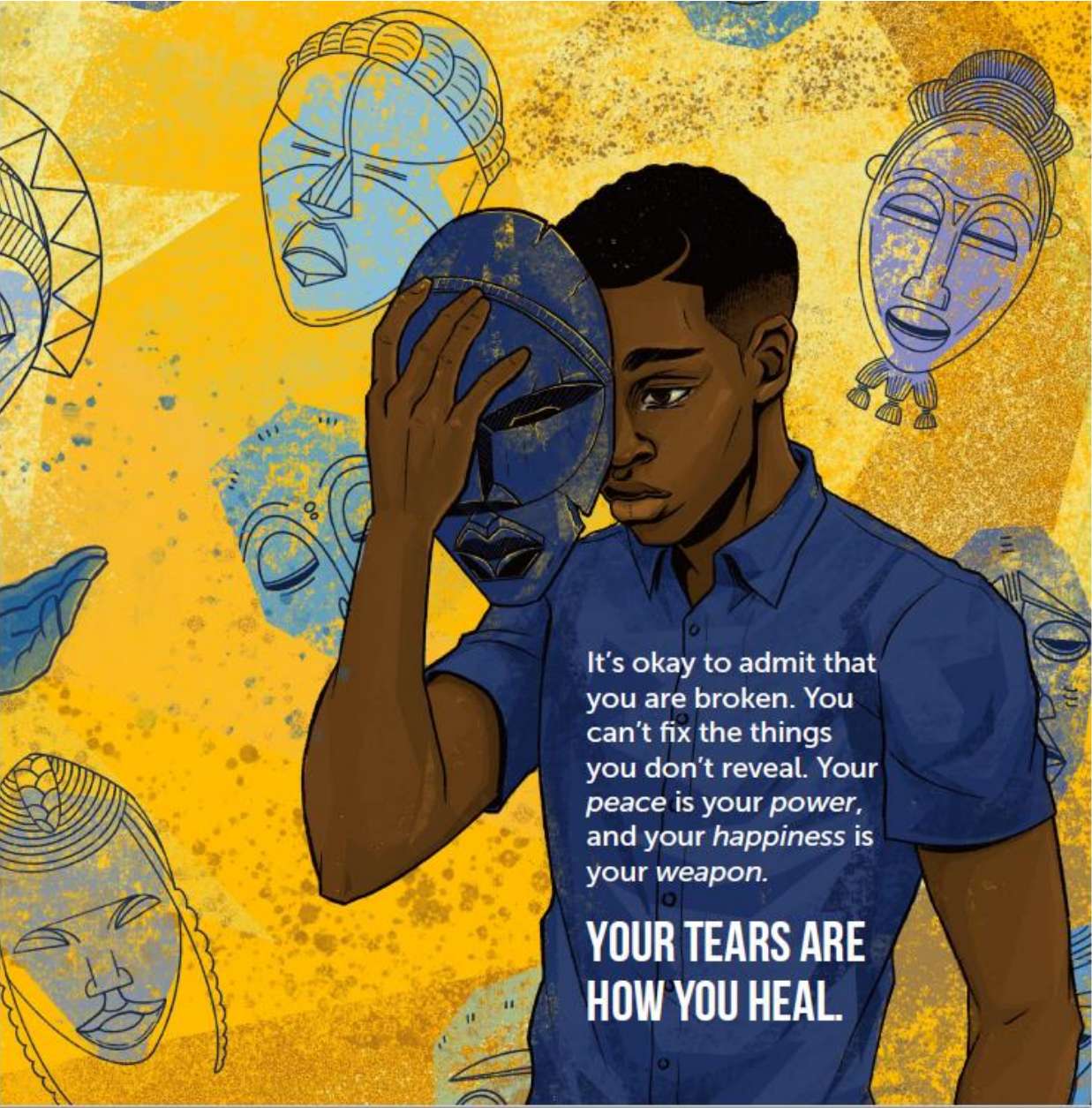
You don't need therapy. Just take a pill

Too blessed to be stressed



Dear black boy,
**EMBRACE YOUR
EMOTIONS.**

Admit that you *hurt*,
that life isn't *fair*.



It's okay to admit that
you are broken. You
can't fix the things
you don't reveal. Your
peace is your *power*,
and your *happiness* is
your *weapon*.

**YOUR TEARS ARE
HOW YOU HEAL.**

HEALING

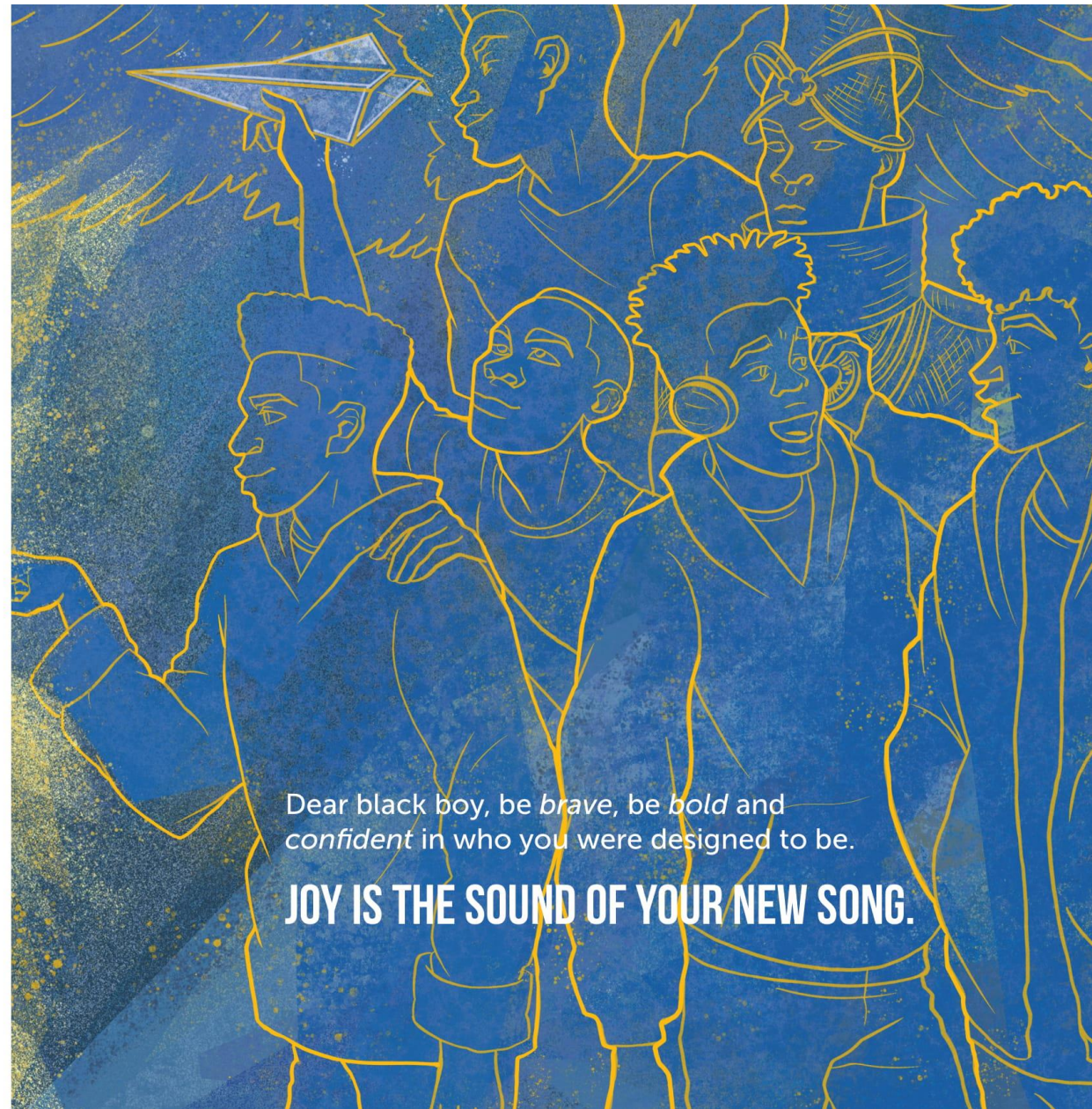
“Trauma creates change you don’t choose. Healing is about creating change you do choose.” –Michelle Rosenthal

And when the tears are gone,
remember to *always* **STAND STRONG.**



Dear black boy, be *brave*, be *bold* and
confident in who you were designed to be.

JOY IS THE SOUND OF YOUR NEW SONG.



Rewriting Superman's Story

What Now...

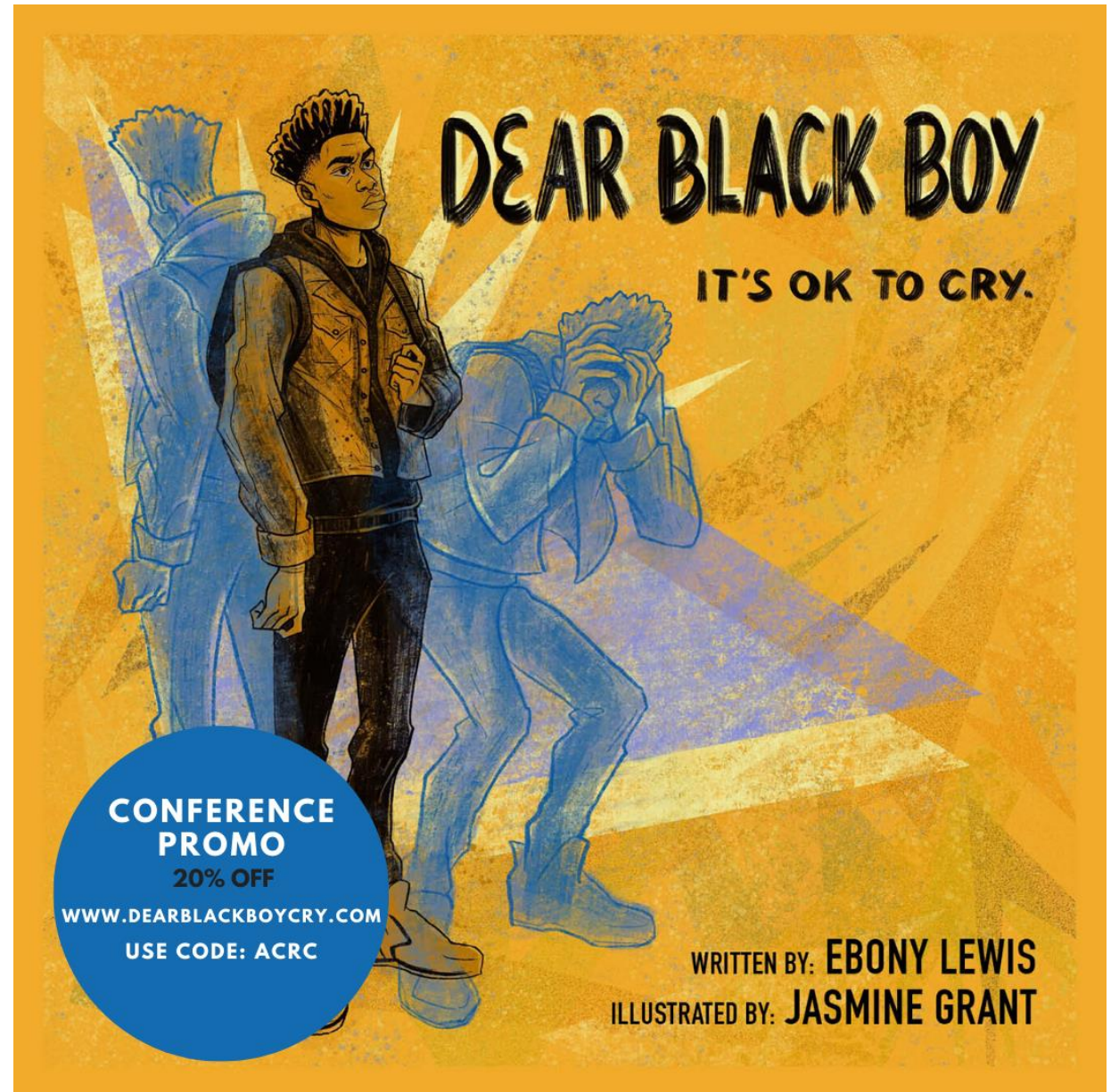


Call to Action

What can I do for me...

What can I do for you...

What can I do for us...





Questions?

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