

Holly: I'm trying...what I'm also trying to do is I'm trying to trap her into doing a cold open, which means before all the music, there's just this like really awkward cold bit.

Kate: Well, this is what's happening right now. We'll probably use you laughing, and I'm saying it's a wanky opening that we had to do. It's fine. Are we going to use that properly or just going to keep that-

Intro Music: Turn out the light, open the curtains, go and do useful things you win. I said it, you win.

Kate: [Laughs] Outtakes!

Holly: This is such a wanky opening but we've got to do it.

Kate: We've got to do it.

Sam: Okay.

Holly and Kate: Hello!

Holly: Hi, I'm Holly.

Kate: And I'm Kate.

Holly: And this is Diversify. Welcome back to another episode. Whoop!

Kate: And before we introduce our guest, we are sitting in my kitchen today, aren't we, Holly?

Holly: Yes, and I am playing sound woman today for the first time, so I'm a bit nervous, and desperately checking the microphone so that it doesn't turn itself off.

Kate: So nervous, that earlier Holly asked me if I wouldn't mind recording the entire thing on my phone as well-

Holly: ... which is a completely innocent thing to say, if your friend and esteemed cohost hadn't just told you about an hour before that they'd have their phone stolen. So, she immediately went, "Fuck off." And I was like, "A bit extreme."

Kate: Yeah. My phone got stolen on our street, and it was by one of those guys on the moped, and I sort of froze. He kind of came up behind me on the pavement and grabbed the thing out of my hand, and I think freezing was probably the safest thing to do. But then I kind of regained my mobility about two seconds later, went into the middle of the street, and yelled, "You're go to hell!" with my fists in the air. And my brother was asking me like ... I was texting him, obviously, 'cause I couldn't call.

Holly: Well, you weren't texting him, were you?

Kate: No, I was typing on my laptop to my brother. He was like, "Are you okay?" And he was going, "But how did you do it?" The only way I could describe it was it was sort of as if it had happened to Hugh Grant.

Holly: Kate is the female millennial version of Hugh Grant.

Sam: I can see that actually.

Kate: Really?

Sam: Yeah.

Kate: Just floppily awkward, just an awkward-

Sam: Oopsy daisy.

Sam: Falling in love with women or men on park benches.

Kate: ... and just saying things like, I, I, I, uh, um ... Yeah, that is me actually.

Sam: Yeah.

Kate: Oh, dear.

Holly: We're both a bit like that to be honest.

Kate: I think I'm worse than you are. Anyway, today I am very, very excited to introduce you to our guest. Now, her name is Sam Elson, but she's better known online as blossomandbuttercups. Is that correct, Sam?

Sam: That's correct.

Kate: She is a vintage pinup model, a social-media influencer and also a mental health ... You're not a blogger. You're a ... What are you? A mental health ...

Sam: Raise awareness person.

Kate: Raise awareness person.

Holly: A mental health raise awareness person, you heard it here first.

Kate: So, Sam, the first thing that I want to ask you is...your journey into that particular area, it was quite organic, wasn't it? But it wasn't what you originally wanted to do. So can you tell us a little bit about how you ended up doing what you do so well?

Sam: Okay! I moved to London originally to be in a theatre company where I met you.

Kate: Yes, she did.

Sam: We lived together. And during my time with that theatre company, I basically ended up having a second major mental breakdown. The first one I had was when I was 16. The second one, when I was 22, I think, possibly, came as a bit of a shock, but it was because of the way that we were being treated by the director, and the fact that I wasn't getting the therapeutic help that I needed at the time.

Kate: And just for our listeners who might not be aware of the things that you talk about on your Instagram, can you kind of explain what you have been diagnosed with in the past?

Sam: Yeah, I have Borderline Personality Disorder, anxiety and Depressive Personality Disorder.

Holly: Most people understand anxiety and depression as concepts, but I feel personally, Borderline Personality Disorder is not talked about enough. The only example I can think of-

Kate: Girl Interrupted.

Sam: That's a shite movie-

Kate: It's terrible-

Sam: ... but a good book. It's a shite movie. It's a terrible portrayal of BPD-

Holly: But Angelina Jolie is hot in it.

Sam: She is.

Kate: Yeah. It's very visually exciting.

Holly: You find that problematic?

Sam: Yes. Very.

Holly: Why?

Sam: It made me so angry. I wrote a blog post on the film because it didn't give a true portrayal of the illness, and I thought it was very unfair. Considering how much budget the movie had and the potential to educate people, it was just bollocks.

- Kate: So, BPD is a mental health illness that's quite serious and it kind of centres around the inability to regulate emotions.
- Sam: It is a combination of a chemical imbalance in the brain and trauma that usually happens in childhood or adolescence. So some people with BPD will need medication, to up the serotonin levels in their brain that aren't being produced naturally, but then it's also very important for people with BPD to go to a talking therapy in order to get to the root of the problem and to be able to learn how to deal with the symptoms moving forward, because it is an illness that will be with them for the rest of their lives.
- Holly: And so you're saying that although there are various things that most people will need, like whether that's medication or therapy, it's not the same for everybody, and everybody's journey is different?
- Sam: Absolutely. You'll meet one person with BPD and they'll be completely different to another person with BPD because particular symptoms are more prevalent in some people than others.
- Holly: ... and funnily enough, we're all individuals.
- Sam: There are nine main symptoms for people with BPD, which I'm going to list so that people can know. The first one is fear of abandonment. People with BPD are terrified of being abandoned, whether that's a realistic threat or imagined. People with BPD tend to have very unstable relationships, because it's usually caused by trauma in childhood and adolescence, so that carries itself into relationships in the present day. They have an unclear and unstable self-image, which is pretty relevant to me because of my social media and the way that I try to help other people, but at the same time have to be hyper-aware of the symptoms that I have that goes alongside that. People with BPD tend to be very impulsive, and have self-destructive behaviors. They self-harm a lot, like one in five attempt suicide at least once.
- Sam: And I think the best way for me to describe BPD is something that one of my therapists once told me, which was if you have a scale of one to 10 and the normal functioning brain reacts to something at say a five. And let's say the emotion is anger, and then the exact same situation happens to somebody with BPD, they will react on that scale at a 10 for the same thing that the normal functioning brain would react at a five. And that's with every emotion and every situation. So people with BPD, their moods can change up to 100 times every day, and because they're constantly triggered by whatever it is their triggers are, the emotional response is always extreme.
- Sam: So dealing with it, it's basically about trying to rationalise and realise that your emotional response is usually not proportionate to whatever is happening around you. And, there are various coping mechanisms that I've developed to

try to deal with that, and to try not to completely dissociate or have a major panic attack in public, or break down every time anything happens.

Kate: Would you say that these particular coping methods that work for you can work for other people experiencing symptoms, but not necessarily being diagnosed with something definitive as BPD?

Sam: Definitely. Definitely.

Kate: So what are those coping methods?

Sam: You really need to find things that you have realised comfort you. So for me, it's Disney films. I go to Disney films because it's a complete distraction from reality, and I have a really happy association with those films. So, I can just break away from whatever's happening, and see something lighthearted and then all of my emotions settle down a little better, and I can deal with whatever is happening in a more or rational way.

Holly: Incredibly important question.

Holly and Kate: What's your favourite Disney film?

Kate: That wasn't rehearsed by the way.

Sam: I have three, actually. My favorite Disney films are Little Mermaid, Beauty and the Beast, and Pocahontas.

Holly: Ah, shit.

Kate: You better say Pocahontas, or something like that. We need a Disney classic.

Holly: My favourite ... Oh God ... My current favourite's probably Frozen.

Sam: Still?

Kate: It's so 2000 and-

Sam: Yeah!

Holly: Your favourite's The friggin' Little Mermaid! Incidentally, so The Little Mermaid, is about someone who wants to be a human so she can get a man, get a boyfriend. Beauty and the Beast is about Stockholm syndrome and abusive relationships. And Pocahontas is about cultural appropriation, and doesn't end happily even though it does in there.

Sam: So I think it's quite relevant to BPD, though, all of those things. Bad self-image, abusive relationships.

Holly: Whereas Frozen, Elsa is definitely gay and is also voiced by Idina Menzel, who was a gay icon and one of my heroes. So that is very relevant to my life as a gay girl.

Sam: Psychoanalytic in itself.

Kate: So what we've learned is people's favourite films or stories say something about them.

Holly: Revolutionary. What's yours?

Kate: I'm nervous now. Beauty and the Beast, but I have very sentimental attachment to Beauty and the Beast, because it reminds me of watching it with my dad when I was baby.

Holly: I think this should be a staple of Diversify. What does your favorite Disney film say about you?

Kate: Okay. I also like Mulan, because I remember watching it when I was in my very early 20s-

Sam: I love Mulan!

Kate: ... when I was living with you and two of my best-

Holly: Also a lesbian.

Kate: Mulan is not a lesbian.

Sam: She likes ... What's his name?

Kate: In Once Upon a Time, she is.

Holly: Mate, we all liked boys once upon a time.

Sam: [Laughs]

Holly: That had so many layers!

Kate: Also, Robin Hood, the baddie in Robin Hood is one of the best Disney baddies ever. He's just so wonderfully pathetic.

Holly: So after that vital interlude ...

Sam: Coping mechanisms. Yeah. Disney films is one of mine. I used to self-harm quite regularly because I didn't know how else to deal with what I was going through, and over the past couple of years that has reduced significantly. And so now I

still, I still obviously get extreme emotional responses, but instead of doing something to myself, I have developed the habit of putting music on and stomping down the road until I get all of my anger or frustration or upset out. And I'll often go to the park because I love doggies. So if I can stomp around and then see doggies, it makes me feel better.

Holly: Vital questions number two and three. Two, what is your favourite stomping around music, and three, what's your favourite type of doggy?

Sam: Two, at the moment, I'm addicted to the Hamilton soundtrack. It's fucking brilliant.

Holly: Favourite Hamilton song?

Sam: Oh, God. Yorktown.

Holly: Oh!

Kate: I like the guy that goes "to remind you of my love"

Sam: The king.

Participants: (singing) "da da da da da!"

Holly: Played by the wonderful Mike Gibson.

Kate: Minimum effort, maximum output. Fantastic role.

Holly: Tell you what though-

Sam: Brilliant show.

Holly: ... my fave is (singing) "Wait for it - I am the one thing in life I can control. I am inimitable, I am an original".

Kate: is that the same one where he goes, "Not throwin' away my shot"?

Holly: Nope, it's the complete antithesis of that, because Hamilton is not throwing away his shot, whereas Burr is waiting for it.

Sam: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Kate: Can I just tell one tiny tangential story about this? A good friend of mine and Samantha's is playing the alternate Hamilton every Monday night, and there's this thing that actors sometimes have when they are going on stage and they have this moment just before where they go, "Oh, my God, I can't remember my first line." I think he was having this problem. His first line is-

Holly and Kate: "Alexander Hamilton"!

Sam: Don't say that. That's so mean. You can't put-

Kate: ... but he's so good that he won't mind me saying that because it's just so funny.

Holly: Well, needless to say, he didn't forget it because the line before his line is, "What's your name, man?"

Sam: [laughs]

Holly: Which, let's be honest, is the best cue line ever.

Kate: And we will hopefully be getting that lovely, talented, fabulous human being on the show. So please, please, if you're listening, don't be angry.

Holly: So, we've had Hamilton soundtrack has some good stumpy stompy songs in there. What about your favourite doggo?

Sam: I can't. I can't choose. I love all dogs. Any dog ... Going down the road, I will stop and squeal like a toddler on Christmas Day, every time, every single time that I see a dog. It really doesn't matter.

Holly: What if I told you that right now, me and my girlfriend are looking after a cockapoo.

Sam: Oh, I love love bulldogs, actually.

Holly: Me too!

Sam: I fucking love bulldogs, and I love scruffy-haired dachshunds-

Holly: Golden retrievers?

Sam: Well, I was kind of like molested by a golden retriever-

Holly: Oh!

Sam: ... when I was young, which was a little bit traumatic, to be honest. But now. You know, I've forgiven it. I've gotten over that trauma

Holly: As somebody who had a golden retriever when growing up and was similarly treated to many of those episodes, it does get better-

Sam: It does, yeah.

Holly: ... and they do get over it.

Sam: Yeah, yeah, yeah. It's all right. It's all right.

Kate: So, Sam, some great coping methods here, but can we broaden it out a little bit. For someone that might be suffering from a maybe small-scale, maybe a little bit more dangerous level of mental health issues, whatever that might be, whether it's BPD-related or something else, what would you recommend the first steps? If you really feel like you're in trouble, or you want to develop better methods, how would you recommend going about it?

Sam: I think the first really important part of that statement is acknowledging the fact that you have a problem or that you're having a difficult time. That in itself is such a strong and such a brave thing to do that a lot of people try to avoid or distract themselves from, and if you can sit down and say, "No, I'm really struggling," then that's brilliant, as hard as it is. From my experiences and from people that I know who have mental health issues, anything from mild anxiety right through to quite extreme schizophrenia, asking for help is vital, because if other people are aware that you're struggling, then they will want to help. Your family are going to want to help, if they can. Your friends are going to want to help if they can. So, feeling like you don't want to burden them or you don't want to put anything on their plate is a useless feeling-

Kate: And that comes from, I guess, low self-esteem, and insecurity-

Sam: And society. We're supposed to have this perfect life and be happy all the time. And if you can ask for help, then that's a major step forward. Whether that's just having someone listen to you, just being honest about what's going on, and sitting down and figuring out what the real issue is, because a lot of the time when you realise that you have some sort of struggle, it's because you're reacting to everything in your present-day life, but usually those reactions are secondary to what you're actually feeling and what the problem actually is. So you need to sit down and go, "Okay, what is it that I'm dealing with right now that feels so overwhelming and so difficult?"

Holly: I personally think CBT, which is cognitive behavioural therapy, and it's basically acknowledging the thoughts that you have in a non-judgmental way and then rationalising them, then hopefully that helps your behaviour, I think that should be taught in schools. Everybody should learn it hands down. It was one of the most useful things that I ever got to experience. But there's this whole thing in society, "Oh, it's not depression. You're just sad. Well, if something bad's happened, obviously you feel sad. That's not depression" or "Pull yourself together, pull yourself up."

Kate: I think our generation is probably the first where we've really started talking about this, and CBT, someone who's also experienced that just so that our listeners are aware, you can actually get a six-week course in various different formats free with, I think, it's with the ... Is it with the NHS, Sam? Yeah.

Kate: And while we're talking about that, it's interesting to note that Sam is someone who has used her platform in the media as being a vintage pinup model, which you do so well, to talk about these things. And we can't talk about that without referring to Heads Together, which is the charity set up by the now Duke of Sussex, previously known as Prince Harry-

Holly: Oh, God, is he the Duke of Sussex?

Kate: Yep.

Holly: Jesus.

Kate: You didn't know that?

Holly: Why would I know that?

Kate: So the Duke of Sussex, Prince Harry and Will and Kate. Yes. The three famous royals. What do we talk about that? How do we refer to them?

Holly: What about poor Meghan?

Kate: Poor Meghan? She wasn't there at that time, at that point.

Holly: Okay.

Kate: But Prince Harry, Prince William and Kate Middleton have all set up the charity where they are trying to get people involved and talk about mental health and keep the conversation going and make it more of a normal thing to be able to discuss these things. And that's something that you do, Sam, on your Instagram. How did that happen? In what order did that happen?

Sam: I started using Instagram just as a way of sharing my love for a certain time period, and to try and find like-minded people around the world so that I felt less alone in how I was feeling.

Kate: And what was that time period?

Sam: The early 20th century. So anything from like the 1920s up to the late 1950s, I absolutely love. And I'd just come out of a relationship that was very toxic and very tumultuous. So, I went to Instagram to share my love for vintage fashion and hairstyles and music and literature and everything. And it kind of turned ... I got more and more support from people who also liked that time period. And then I started realising that I could use it as a platform to talk about things that people don't normally talk about. I think it's really, really important for someone involved in social media to break down the kind of facade that everything is perfect, and this person's life is flawless and they don't have any problems.

Sam: I didn't want to be that image. And so when I posted certain photographs, I would say, "Look, today I've struggled. I've really struggled and this is why. This is what's happened, and this is how I have or haven't dealt with it." Some days I'd be able to do healthy things to make myself feel better, and other times I would just have to go to sleep. I would not be able to handle it. So I would just go to sleep and hope that it would feel better the next day.

Sam: So I've incorporated those sorts of posts at least probably once a week into what I do, because some of my followers are there for the fashion, some are there for hairstyles and beauty, and some of them are that to actually relate to somebody who's being honest about their struggles. And with the number of people now that follow me, I'm really pleased to see that the response that I get is very positive. I get several emails and direct messages of gratitude. During Mental Health Awareness Week, I did an Instagram story every day answering someone's question about my mental health. And overall, I think that people appreciate the less two-dimensional image that I'm trying to break.

Kate: Amazing.

Holly: So, I think pretty much everybody knows what Instagram is, but as an influencer who uses it to get messages out and as part of your image and your lifestyle and your business and your brand, what would you say are the benefits and the shortfalls of using social media to get your message out?

Sam: The immediate shortfall that comes to mind is that it's easy to become addicted to the validation that comes with Instagram. I've been absolutely guilty of it. If I don't get a certain number of likes, then I suddenly feel bad about myself, which I have to keep in check massively, and I've been guilty of deleting images if it doesn't get the engagement that I'd hoped for. But, having used it now for maybe three years, I've definitely developed a sort of hard outer shell.

Sam: So with any brands, with any person that has any kind of influence, for whatever reason, you're going to get trolls and you're going to get really negative comments, but I feel extremely lucky that the majority of my followers are incredibly supportive of me. They are wonderful, wonderful human beings who take the time to thank me, who take the time to give me compliments and offer suggestions with mental health. I think that's a wonderful, wonderful thing to be able to communicate with people across the world from your phone, and you don't have to have these people as friends because you feel supported by strangers and that's a beautiful, beautiful thing.

Holly: Finding your tribe, almost.

Sam: Yeah, yeah, definitely.

Holly: So I work in social media, mainly on Twitter, and I feel like there's a lot of vitriol. The moment you're a woman with opinions on the internet, it's, "Get back in

the kitchen. How can I get you to shut up?" What would be your advice for dealing with trolls? Is it just ignore them? Do you ever engage-

Sam: No. I never engage. That's just my personal preference. I follow some incredibly beautiful and strong women who engage with trolls, and they do it in a fantastic way. They put them back in their place, or they just tell them quite frankly, to fuck off, which sometimes they need. I do not engage because I don't want to open up that Pandora's box of ...because a lot of the time the trolls, they want attention and so if you give them that attention, then they're just going to feed off that and it's going to be a back and forward row, basically, and I don't have the energy for that. I really don't.

Kate: And why should you give your energy to that as well?

Holly: And in my experience, you can very quickly tell somebody who actually is going to engage with you in a debate and somebody who actually just wants you to shout into the abyss, so they can say that they wasted an hour. I've had so many like straight white men asking me to define privilege and explain to them their privilege and then not understand that's ironic, and I've got to a point now where I'm like, "I'm just going to mute you."

Kate: Can you explain why that's ironic, though, please? Because it might be obvious to some people, but not everyone. Why is that ironic?

Holly: Okay. So I'd love to do an episode on privilege at some point, but privilege is the idea that a lot of the things that you take for granted, not everybody takes for granted. So, the idea that as a white person, I could walk down the street and I'm less likely to be stopped or searched, certainly not because of the colour of my skin. Because I'm straight-passing most of the time, I'm not going to get as much abuse on the street as somebody who's maybe a lot more butch as a lesbian, or a gay man who is very effeminate.

Holly: The epitome of privilege is a straight white male, because we live in a patriarchal society that loves masculinity. We worship the straightness in people, and we worship the whiteness in people. So the big irony of a straight white man asking me to explain to him his privilege is basically asking me as somebody less privileged to take the time out of my life, and expend energy educating him so that he stops oppressing me any further. And it's just a way of being like, "I can't be bothered to do my googling. I'm entitled to have you do my googling for me."

Kate: Marvellous tangents, but I feel like we needed to go on that tangent. Sam, how can we support our friends who are having mental health issues, but also support ourselves and not become negligent of our own needs? As in, if you give too much energy to looking after a person, sometimes you can forget that you need to look after yourself. It's like put your air-

Holly: Mask on.

Kate: ... mask on, on the airplane before you help others. Because I don't know about you guys, but I've often really given my whole soul to looking after someone that I love, and then realizing later on that I am now in a place where I needed to be looked after, and I think there's a balance there, especially as we may have picked careers that are very testing, and we all do need to look after each other.

Holly: I think no matter your career, we all have different crosses to bear, Whether or not that's big traumas in our lives, whether or not that's things that make our privilege a little less, or whether or not that's just feeling a bit shit today. I think so many people say, "well, nothing bad has really happened to me and everyone I love is still alive, so I can't be that upset." But that doesn't mean that you don't have depression or anxiety or something.

Sam: I think that the foundation of supporting yourself and supporting somebody else when they're in need is communication. We have to be open and at the same time set boundaries. We have to acknowledge our own boundaries, recognise when we need time for ourselves, and then with that be able to support the people that we love.

Sam: So if someone is struggling, you can, even if you just send a text saying, "I'm thinking of you" that doesn't need a reply, then that will make a difference to somebody's day. The tiny little things. You don't have to go all out and take them on holiday or do those things that you would like to but realistically can't afford or can't do. Just let them know that they're being thought of and you can do more than that, obviously, when you feel prepared and when you feel able to do that, but with yourself, you have to say, "Okay, what energy can I afford to give, and am I being kind to myself, like I'm being kind to them?"

Kate: Great advice.

Holly: I think self-preservation of energy is really important as well and that actually goes back to the thing about trolls. I like engaging with people. I like trying to educate people, but sometimes I'm too tired, I'm too tired, I'm too emotionally raw. This is something that affects me, this is my life and you're looking at it as if it's something that's just an intellectualisation of ideals and sometimes I just have to be like, "I can't." So finally, final question.

Holly: We touched upon society stigmas on mental health issues, and I think there's a lot of shame about talking about your mental health issues. So, many people who know they need help and know they need to ask for it are just afraid to ask for it.

Holly: I know I was, and it took me longer than it should have done to finally talk to somebody. It still feels like a really big thing to admit and even the word

"admit," it's like I admit I'm going through a tough time or I admit that this is existing.

Holly: How do we change the narrative from, "I admit this thing is happening to me," or "I admit that I am seeking help," to, "It is what it is, and this is what I need" in the same way that, "Well, I have eczema, so I need to go to the doctors for that," or, "I have a headache so I need to figure out what my migraines are." Not that anyone has the answer.

Kate: And just to add to that, a lot of people will say, "I think everyone should have therapy the same way I go to a physiotherapist to look after my back," but there is still a stigma of, "No, no, I'm too strong. I don't need that." Or a lot of the time, a lot of people who will say that to me will acknowledge they need to go to a therapist, but then will not go, because it's just not a normal thing to do for them.

Holly: I've been that person.

Sam: I honestly can't give you a straight answer for that. It depends on the person as an individual. I think that as a society we are getting better at opening up about it and being quite strong about admitting mental health issues or admitting that we're struggling. And I think the more that everyone does that, the better, because the normalisation of it is so hugely important.

Sam: There are various mental health influencers that I follow on Instagram who really inspire me, who I respect to continue doing what I do and who do a fantastic job of normalising every aspect ... medication, therapy, suicidal thoughts, not being able to do anything in a certain day, talking to people, not having support, everything.

Sam: And with social media, if you just type in the hashtag, #mentalhealthawareness, you will come across people who are making an effort to change the way that we think about it. And we just need to keep plugging away, just in whatever way we can. Whether it's in a diary or whether it's publicly or whether it's just putting it into the conversation that you have with your friends. We have to just make it less of a strange or a damning or a stigmatized thing.

Kate: And I also think growing up in our particular generation, there was still the stigma that goes with bringing up your children, where if they're going through something, "Oh, it's fine. It's just a phase." There is a danger of jumping onto something when someone is a teenager and saying this is bigger than it is. Because sometimes when you're a teenager you go through things and that's fine. But as someone who experienced mental health issues, struggling with body image and that sort of thing when I was growing up, I never actually had the strength to speak to my parents about it. And I think that's also something that needs to be addressed. So as you say, perhaps bringing things like CBT,

talking about anxiety, talking about real adult mental health issues to teenagers might be quite useful.

Sam: There's this thing that I learned in therapy actually that is called opposite emotional response, and I think that that's really useful and relevant in what we're just saying right now. Because the scenario that my therapist gave me was if you feel shit about something, then normally your natural reaction is to kind of go in on yourself and go, "Fuck, fuck, fuck. I can't admit this to anybody. This is a terrible thing." For example, if you fail an exam and you're like, "Crap, shits, bollocks. Let's not talk about that. Let's not admit it to anyone." My therapist said, 'Well, instead of doing that, why don't you scream it out to the world? Why don't you tell your neighbour, "I failed my exam so terribly that it couldn't have been any worse."' So you're literally, you're taking your emotion and you're putting the opposite onto it, and so you're walking down the street and you're telling everybody that you failed this exam. And even people that don't want to know suddenly know that you failed this exam. And by doing that, you're taking away that pedestal that it's on. You're taking away that shame and that embarrassment.

Sam: And I think that if we can do that with the stigma of mental health and be like, "I was in such a mess, that I just had to stay in bed for about four months." And it's not a light subject, but if you can just do the opposite emotional response, it takes away the stigma and it educates people.

Holly: Totally. And it lightens it up as well.

Sam: Yeah.

Holly: The moment you're like, "I just failed an exam," to a stranger, it suddenly becomes a bit less serious. Suddenly, it becomes an anecdote.

Kate: I remember sitting in the kitchen when we were 21, and Sam walking into the kitchen and saying, "I just found out that I don't only have BPD, but I have six completely different mental health issues." It's kind of like the time that I went in for a dyspraxia test at drama school and came out dyslexic.

Sam: And, just to add onto the end of this, if you did want to have some sort of reference for people with BPD, Amy Winehouse had it. So if you watched the documentary on her, it does go into it a little bit. And after her death, Marilyn Monroe was diagnosed with BPD. And there are several books available that my parents especially have read and they are incredibly insightful and incredibly helpful to anybody who is dealing with someone else with BPD.

Kate: And what are those books?

Sam: I don't fucking know.

Kate: Well, we'll look them up later. We'll put them in the show notes. Just to finish. Sam, can you give us your social media handles so that people who want to follow you can look you up on Instagram?

Holly: Plugs, time, plugs, plugs, plugs, time.

Sam: I am @blossomandbuttercups, as in The Powerpuff Girls, on Instagram.

Holly: Oh! I had no idea.

Kate: We just got it.

Holly: I was like, "Oh, she's got a pretty-

Sam: Pretty, flower, no, no.

Holly: ... flowery name. No, badass bitches!

Sam: Yeah.

Kate: And go onto Sam's Instagram for some fantastically beautiful vintage pictures, and for all of that information and support. We will also put the books in the show notes and thank you very much for listening.

Holly: If you want to get in contact with us, we are on Twitter @diversifypod, and on Instagram @diversifypodcast. Kate is on Twitter-

Kate: ... and Instagram as KateLoisElliott, two Ls, two Ts.

Holly: I am on Twitter as ourteamq, our as in you and me, team is in, everyone should support Arsenal, and q as in WTF.

Kate: We are going to cut that, and replace Arsenal with Seagulls. Okay.

Holly: Fuck off.

Kate: Marvelous.

Holly: Thank you very much for coming.

Kate: Final question for you, Sam. When, if ever, do you turn off your activism?

Sam: Never.

Holly: Well, that was the most concise answer we had so far. Also, I want to add for those people feeling like they might need a little bit of help, but maybe they're not ready to seek therapy or go to a doctor, there's a great app called

Headspace, which I know a lot of people use, and it's kind of like an introduction to these ideas. I think it's a bit about CBT, meditation and it's a great way to dip your toe into that and see whether it might be for you. And for a lot of people that's all they need, but for some you might go, "Actually, I really like this, but I need more." If that is the case, go and speak to your doctor. Trust me, it's worth it. That's my little bit of sunshine. Thank you for listening.

Kate: Yay!

Outro Music: [Instrumental]

Kate: That's not going in the podcast-

Sam: [laughs] The look on your face!