

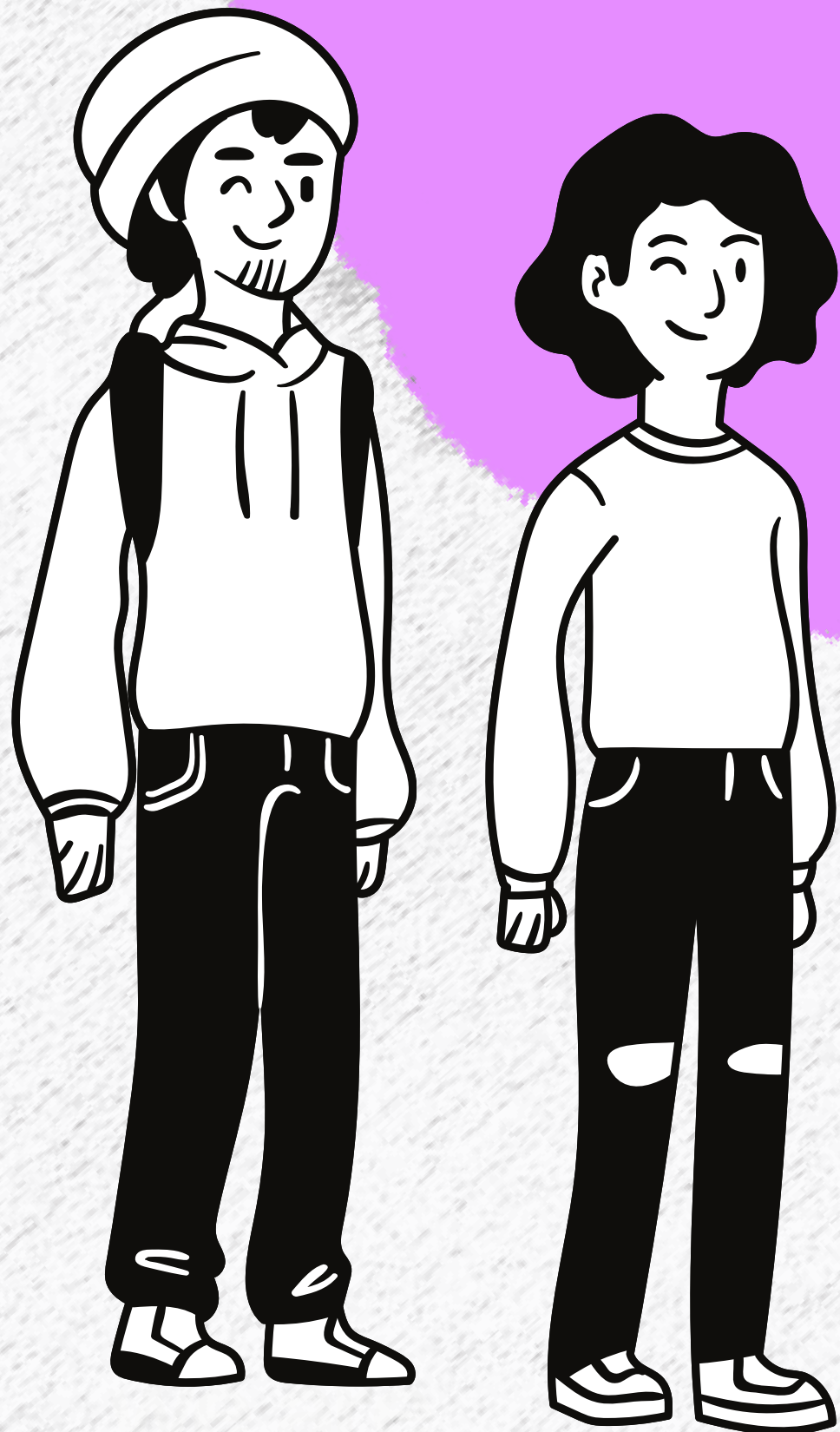
AM I AT RISK?

All too often young people feel exploitation isn't going to happen to them

There are a number of factors that can both 'push' or 'pull' vulnerable young people into being exploited

Push factors are the vulnerabilities or issues that might 'push' you towards the perpetrator

Pull factors are the grooming techniques used to gain your attention, admiration or affection. They often tap into your insecurities or desires for acceptance or status

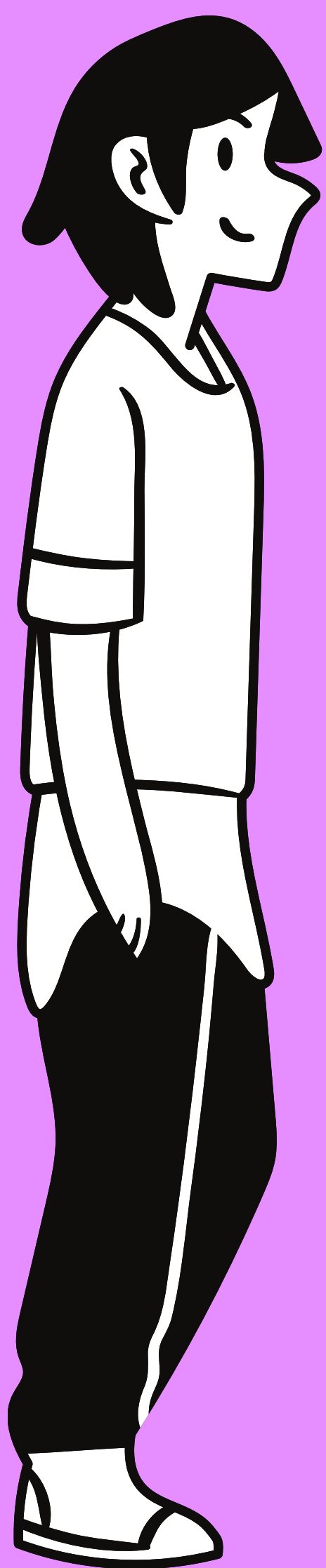


PUSH FACTORS

#ExploitationWeek

These are things already going on in your life that might push you out into the community

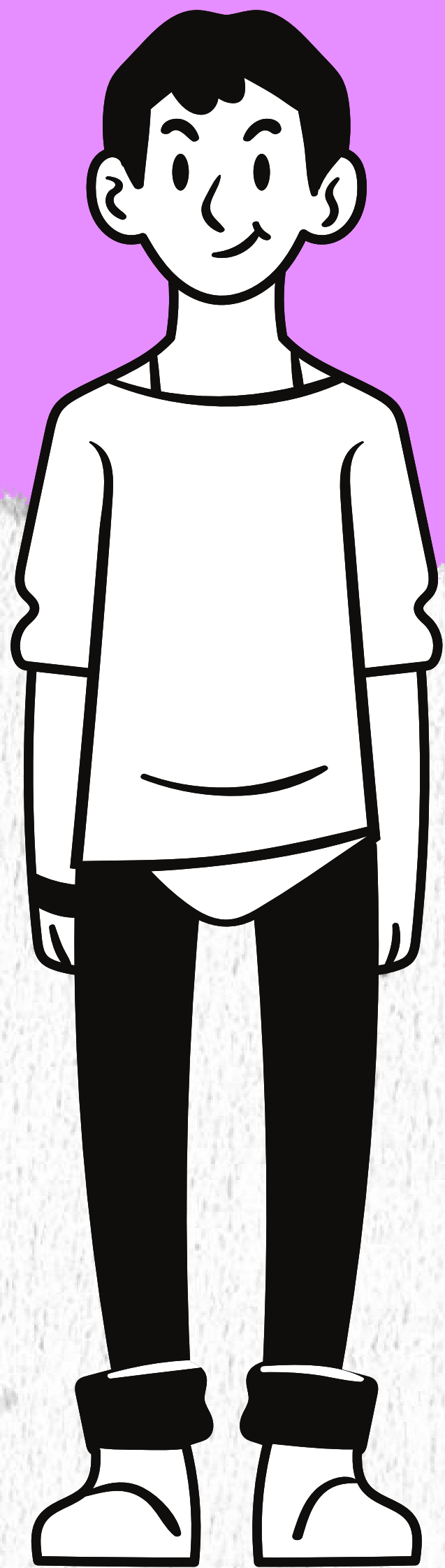
- Arguments or fights at home
- Feeling your family don't care about you or can't meet your needs
- Having no role models to look up to or support you
- Struggling with anxiety, depression or having suicidal thoughts
- Running away
- Your family have alcohol, drug or mental health problems
- Living in care
- Issues at school, exclusions or bunking off
- Learning difficulties or conditions such as Autism or ADHD
- Getting in trouble with the police
- Feeling isolated, struggling to fit in or make friends
- Feeling dissatisfied & not being able to picture what you might do when you grow up



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PULL FACTORS

These are things you might feel are lacking from your life & the person exploiting you might offer



- **Someone showing an interest in you**
- **Being given presents or drugs**
- **A sense of belonging**
- **Status in a group**
- **A new group taking you in as their friend**
- **Someone offering you a place to go or something fun to do**
- **Being offered help or protection to get away from police/social workers**
- **Being told you will be safe & looked after**
- **No conflict or rules like at home & school**
- **Excitement – your life feels meaningful now**
- **Feeling you are learning skills to make your own money & giving you hope for the future**

THE REALITY

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Exploiters use the fact you might have issues in your life to draw you in - brainwashing you into thinking selling drugs will give you a decent life & future

But it is not the answer & will make your life much worse - the impact of the abuse can last a long time so it's important to look at the reality of what happens

It might seem like selling a bit of weed isn't going to do any harm to you or anyone else - you might even enjoy it - but things can quickly spiral out of control & before you know it you're in too deep & can't see a way out

Being exploited isn't a choice or your fault - but arming yourself with knowledge about the risks can give you a headstart & help you keep safe & in control



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HOW THINGS CAN SPIRAL OUT OF CONTROL



Become mates
with older
person

Play video games
at their house

Smoke a bit of
free weed

Now in debt -
need to work to
pay it back

Drop off a few
packages

Given a phone
that never
stops ringing

Sneak out at
night to deliver

Not getting any
sleep

Pressure is
getting to you

Mum's
worried

Feel
depressed &
scared

Using more
drugs to cope

Get excluded from
school

Miss your mates
& being a normal
teenager

Caught with
drugs by police

Get beat up &
threatend
with a gun

Feel you can never get
out now as you owe
even more

Social worker
asking questions

See a dog get killed
as punishment

IMPACT OF EXPLOITATION

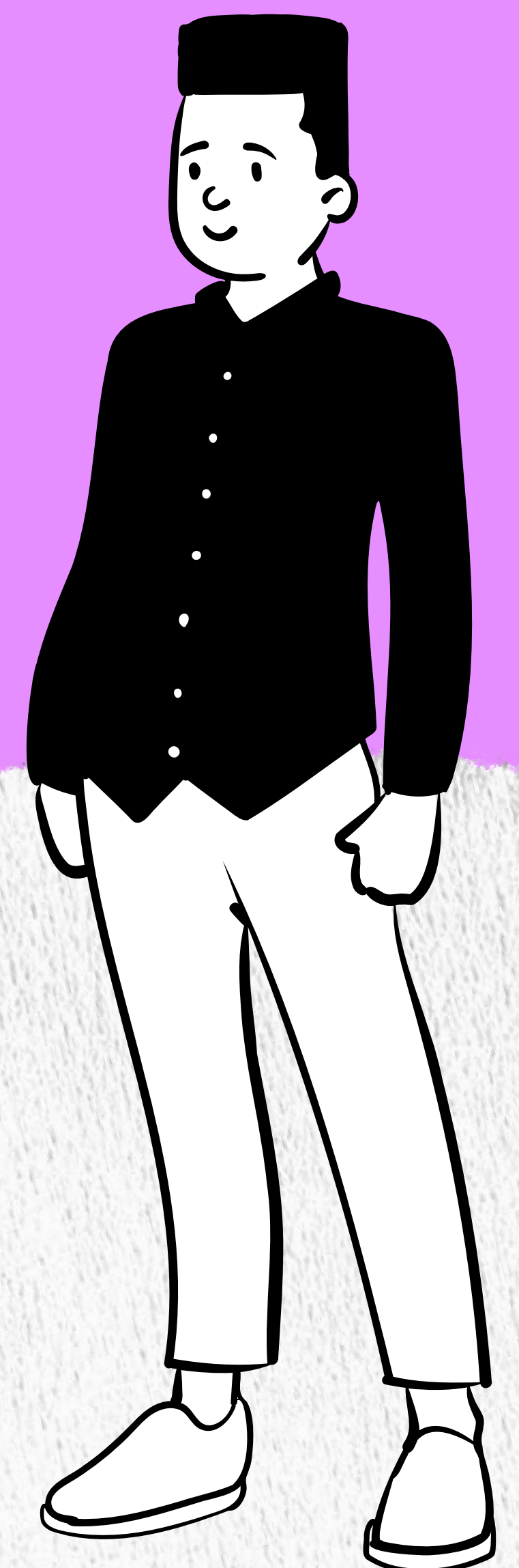
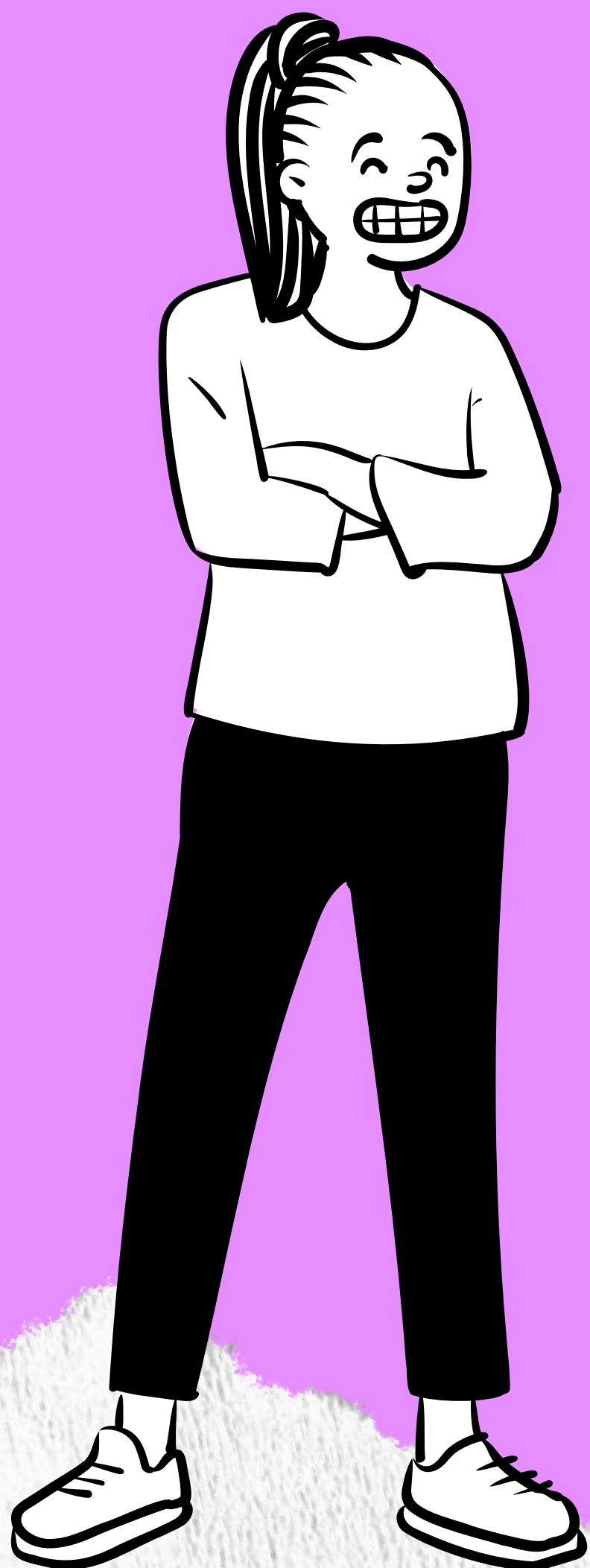
#ExploitationWeek

Exploitation can have short & long term consequences

It can also have an effect on the people around you - your family, friends & the community where you live

Because those exploiting you can manipulate your thoughts you might not think about the impact drugs can have on the lives of people you are being made to sell them to

Let's have a look of some of the consequences in more detail...



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PHYSICAL IMPACT

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You might have trouble sleeping or not have time to rest at all - especially if you're having to do things during the night

If you're being forced to stay in a trap house the living conditions might be unhygienic or dangerous & it might be hard to take care of your basic needs such as washing & eating

You might get forced to carry out or be subjected to violent acts - you might get injuries from being beaten up, stabbed or even killed

Often young people become dependent on using drugs or alcohol themselves which can take it's toll on your physical health

Plugging or concealing drugs in your cheeks runs the risk of serious injury or even death if the wraps burst inside you or you swallow a large amount of drugs

Sexual exploitation is common among those being criminally exploited. You may be the victim of sexual assaults or rape - there's also risks of sexually transmitted infections & pregnancy



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MENTAL IMPACT

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You might struggle to cope with the pressure & stress - becoming withdrawn, anxious or depressed

You might self-harm or use more drugs or alcohol to try to cope with how you're feeling

You may even have suicidal thoughts as you struggle to see a way out & deal with your feelings

Exploited young people can feel constantly 'on edge' as they get stuck in fight or flight mode not knowing what is coming next

You might feel guilt or shame about what you have been doing & the impact it has on those around you



Some young people develop post-traumatic stress disorder from seeing, experiencing or being forced to do horrible things

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SOCIAL IMPACT

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At school you might have trouble concentrating & find it hard to keep up with work - the pressure might get to you & cause you to act angrily - you might have fights or get excluded

You might have trouble with your relationships or arguments with you family because they're worried about you. You might lose touch with your mates & feel even more isolated

You could end up in trouble with the police, get a criminal record or even end up in jail - having an impact on your future opportunities & job prospects

Threats can be made to your family if you try to leave or if you don't do as you're told. You might even be forced to recruit your friends to help pay off debts

Embarrassing, indecent or incriminating images of you might be shared as part of the initiation into gangs or as revenge or punishment

Some young people end up homeless. Drugs being found in a property may breach a tenancy agreement if rented - meaning whole families can face eviction

There's also a big cost to society & your community with police resources being directed towards tackling drug distribution & other crimes associated with it. Some areas may become dangerous or no go zones. It's also important to remember the negative impact on the vulnerable people the drugs are being sold to



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EXPLOITATION & CANNABIS

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Young people rarely start off by selling crack or heroin

Gangs start to groom you with cannabis as this is the most commonly used drug among young people - giving you & your mates free weed to give the impression they're your friend

But the situation quickly turns with the person exploiting you using violence or pushing you into debt to force you to sell class A drugs for them

But then you need to pay for what you've smoked - nothing is free. They tell you to start selling a bit of weed - the stakes aren't so high if you get caught & you might even enjoy the money & respect you get for doing it - you think things are under control

Perpetrators will often tell you bad things about heroin & crack users to make them seem less human - they manipulate your views & morals so you don't see supplying class A drugs as a bad thing



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