



BACHELOR THESIS

The depiction of mental illnesses in series: Representation of Bipolar Disorder in the web show “Skam France”

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Abstract

INTRODUCTION In this paper, the audience's response to the representation of bipolar disorder (BD) in a TV/ web show is researched. Mental illnesses are a very important societal issue and therefore education and conversation about the topic are essential. One way of doing this is by means of TV and streaming series. Generally, mental illnesses and bipolar disorder, in particular, can be viewed from different perspectives like the clinical one, a discursive one or the one depicted in shows. To explore the until now underexposed perspective of the audience, the depiction of BD in the TV and web show "Skam France" will be evaluated by analysing viewer posts on the social media platform Tumblr. **METHODS** The corpus was selected by searching on Tumblr for the name of the character having bipolar disorder, "eliott demaury" and then manually searching for terms related to bipolar disorder, which resulted in 246 Tumblr posts. Consequently, a selection was made of posts in response to three most commented episodes/scenes. These 100 posts were analysed with a critical discourse analysis featuring eight codes divided in three cluster ("awareness of BD", "perception of BD" and "ways of representation"). **RESULTS** In terms of "awareness of BD", an important aspect regarding the representation of mental illnesses is a multi-faceted portrayal which also addresses difficulties and is realistic and accurate in terms of the experiences and identification of viewers and persons concerned. Focusing on "perception of BD", dealing with the acceptance of mental illnesses and achieving education and conversation about the issue are regarded as important by Tumblr users and the audience of "Skam France". Furthermore, resulting from the "ways of representation", the writing style was emotional, indicating a close relationship with the characters and strong investment in the series. **DISCUSSION** The findings led to the recommendation to produce more shows like "Skam" with a multifaceted portrayal of mental illnesses that include difficulties and downsides. This would contribute to portraying them realistically according to people who experience mental illnesses. Furthermore, it became clear that interventions to further educate our society on mental illnesses are strongly required in order to increase the acceptance of MI. Lastly, the strong investment in the series was demonstrated by extensive discussions about it, showing that viewers critically evaluate media content and call for increased quality.

Introduction

In times of Netflix and Amazon Prime, a life without series is impossible to imagine, especially for young people. Therefore, it can be a useful medium for education and the representation of relevant social topics. Correspondingly, Smith-Frigerio (2018) argues that it is important to educate and spread awareness about mental illness (MI) since it is a crucial social issue of our society. Therefore, the representation of mental illnesses in a TV show, in this case, bipolar disorder in “Skam France”, will be examined in this paper.

The term for the use of media for educational purposes is Entertainment-Education and can function in different ways. On the one hand, individuals learn by observing other individuals in social settings (social cognitive theory of Bandura). On the other hand, attitudes can be changed either by easily processing information, which is less intrinsic or by processing them more thoroughly (elaboration likelihood model of Petty). In this way, television can educate people about relevant topics (Slater and Rouner, 2002). Therefore, it is not only important that there is a representation of a topic, but also how it is represented.

The well-received Norwegian TV and web series “Skam” about teenage everyday life represented mental illness by introducing the character Even. He is a youngster in his last year of high school having bipolar disorder (BD) (McCulloch & Proctor, n.d.). However, his story does not only focus on his illness, since he is also involved in a love story at the same time. Therefore, his bipolar experience is not only depicted by episodes of illness and symptoms. Instead, it shows that he is a youngster with teenage problems, a human individual who is more than his illness.

The series received international acclaim for its realistic representation of topics such as bullying, sexual harassment, racism, homosexuality and mental illnesses like eating disorder and bipolar disorder (Lai, 2018). Moreover, currently, seven remakes are being produced in different countries of the world, which are following the same conflicts of the main characters, but with changed plots and adaptations according to cultural aspects. Another characteristic of the series is that each episode is divided into several short clips, which air on the website of the show throughout a week. At the end of each week, the whole episode is broadcasted on TV (Pearce, 2017). Complementary, chats and Instagram posts of the characters are published online. This provides additional knowledge about the characters and generates social media attention (Lai, 2018; Pearce, 2017).

Since the series is spread throughout social media, the audience is invited to participate as well. They can comment on the posts and furthermore, share a lot of fan art, participate in

discussions, and give their impressions on different social media channels, for example, Instagram, Twitter, and Tumblr (McCulloch & Proctor; Lai, 2018). Thereby, the feeling of forming and belonging to the community and affection for the series can be shown.

Representation of Bipolar Disorder

Bipolar disorder, like any other mental illness, is a very complex illness and can be described from different perspectives. None of these is fully neutral, exclusive or superior since all have different viewpoints. Only together, they can draw a comprehensive picture, which will be created in the following paragraphs. First, the MI is examined from a psychological perspective, which is strongly influenced by the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM), published by the American Psychological Association (APA). Next to this is a discursive perspective which further includes the experiences of the individuals having bipolar disorder. Lastly, based on different disciplines, such as sociology, communication or media sciences, it is reviewed which perspectives on MI are depicted on TV.

Psychological View of the DSM

When applying the psychological view of the DSM, bipolar disorder is understood as a condition where individuals suffer from a cycle of manic, hypomanic and major depressive episodes. According to the DSM-V (APA, 2013), during a manic episode, one has an “abnormally and persistently elevated, expansive, or irritable mood” as well as “abnormally and persistently increased goal-directed activity or energy” which is “lasting at least 1 week and present most of the day, nearly every day” (p.124). The hypomanic episode is explained in the same way but is “lasting at least 4 consecutive days and present most of the day, nearly every day” (p.124).

For a major depressive episode, at least five of several symptoms have to be present for two weeks. These include for example depressed mood, diminished interest or pleasure, insomnia or hypersomnia, fatigue or loss of energy and suicidal thoughts. Either a depressed mood or diminished interest or pleasure needs to be present (APA, 2013). This shows that bipolar disorder is a mood disorder, which means that it interferes with people’s affect, but not with their cognitive abilities. The treatment for bipolar disorder includes medication as well as psychotherapy in order to diminish the symptoms and stabilise phases without episodes (Geddes & Miklowitz, 2013). The criteria of the DSM-V show that the perspective strictly evaluates the presence or absence of symptoms without looking at additional aspects.

Discursive view on Self-Management of Bipolar Disorder

Arising from the DSM perspective, a discursive view on self-management of bipolar disorder evaluates this clinical perspective critically and further addresses the individual experiences of people having bipolar disorder. Therefore, the aspects of terminology, self-management, psychoeducation, medication, struggles, and alternative tactics will be discussed. To begin with the terminology, it is argued that there is a difference between being bipolar and having bipolar (disorder), which are very contrary views. 'Being bipolar' means not seeing the individual as a human, but only seeing him or her as defined by the disorder. 'Having bipolar', on the other hand, sees individuals as humans who are defined by themselves and the disorder only as part of them (Weiner, 2011).

The second aspect under critical scrutiny is self-management, which is a common treatment for bipolar disorder. The idea of self-management is for the individual to learn to distinguish and differentiate between the disorder and the self and to act as a rational self, resisting the disorder (Wilson, Crowe, Scott, & Lacey, 2018b). Accordingly, the self is seen as continuous and coherent over time, while the disease is thought to be calculable and predictable (Weiner, 2011). Ideally, the client is able to notice signs of relapse and can act accordingly (Wilson, Crowe, Scott, & Lacey, 2018a). But for bipolar disorder, this distinction is difficult, because it entails contradictions when the mind is seen as not reliable and is still used as a tool to detect its own unreliability (Wilson, Crowe, Scott, & Lacey, 2018b).

Self-management is an important aspect of psychoeducation, which aims to teach clients about their disorder in order to empower them and achieve their active participation in treatment. This includes lifestyle adjustments and the skills to manage the disorder. The client is believed to have the capacity of self-moderation and to be able to act against the disorder, to reflect on themselves and change (Wilson, Crowe, Scott, & Lacey, 2018a). Although bipolar disorder is a chronic illness that cannot be cured, it can be managed. However, it is argued that self-management can be limited, for example when a person cuts oneself to indicate the need to be hospitalised when they are not able to admit themselves to the hospital anymore. Therefore, the practice of self-management may illustrate even more the inability to manage the self for people having bipolar disorder (Weiner, 2011).

Furthermore, it is criticised that the concept of self-management is strongly defined by the medical model and clinicians, which is why they are presented as the ones who know what is best for the client. This entails that they, instead of the client, decide which relationship the client should have towards him-/ herself (Wilson, Crowe, Scott, & Lacey, 2018a, b). Even

though the idea is to empower people, they have to act according to the given model and do not have their own voice, when they are the ones who are experts of their own experiences. There is no room for ambivalence and contradiction, which are major aspects of bipolar disorder. Instead, the clients are believed to need saving from the distress of their disorder. This creates strong power relations which are in contrast to empowerment (Wilson, Crowe, Scott, & Lacey, 2018a).

Besides self-management, medication plays an important role in the treatment of bipolar disorder. For some clients, this brings stability in their life, when they find it difficult to create stability through habits, or a way of taking control and living one's life. For others, medication is a weakness, because they cannot handle their illness without medicine (Weiner, 2011; Wilson, Crowe, Scott, & Lacey, 2018b). Furthermore, on the one hand, it can help with the symptoms and bring major change to them, but at the same time, there are strong side effects or damaging effects, for example neurologically. To counter these, additional medication is given. Consequently, from a discursive perspective, medication is complicated and can change often, seemingly arbitrarily, until it works. But then, it might also not work anymore at some time, which brings worries to the clients (Weiner, 2011).

Beyond that, people having bipolar disorder experience a lot of struggles, since being rational in bipolar self-management means to state that one is not rational. Therefore, they constantly have to be critical, suspicious and interrogate their thoughts and emotions on whether they are rational or becoming irrational. Consequently, unordinary thoughts can strongly intervene in self-management and make the clients insecure. This scepticism creates a lot of uncertainty, unreliability and diminished trust towards oneself. Besides, the resulting extreme self-awareness leads to fear and lack of control. As a consequence, clients do not make plans for the future because they cannot know what will happen or rely on their plans (Weiner, 2011).

In addition, it can be difficult for them to communicate how they feel, because feelings are unstable and changing a lot and are not always clear to the clients themselves. Therefore, an important tool in self-management of bipolar disorder is mood charting, which enables the client to detect minor changes in their mood and thereby isolate the bipolar experience. But knowing about the nature and characteristics of the disorder also makes them anxious, because they know that their experience can change anytime, but never know when it will happen (Weiner, 2011).

Overall, self-management is strongly focused on the individual, but the discursive view suggests that it can also be shifted to the relationships with others as a central aspect of life. Thereby, responsibility should be collective instead of individual, which becomes apparent in

social rituals as a means to deal with the downsides of the disorder (Wilson, Crowe, Scott, & Lacey, 2018b). Furthermore, an alternate practice for clients is to wait and rely on the relief that the disorder will bring change at some time when they cannot influence their experience themselves. Moreover, in the practice of ‘faking it’, clients execute self-control to avoid becoming manic or depressive. This is done by pretending to be alright in order to keep control and maintain a stable mood. However, consequences like breakdowns may be a result since it might only delay the beginning of an episode (Weiner, 2011).

Another tactic mentioned by clients is to retain some degree of expert self-knowledge and rationality within a situation of irrationality to provide stability, for example being sure not to commit suicide when not being sure of anything else. Furthermore, clients can receive help from other people, for example when others can detect one’s mood better than oneself or by telling them when to intervene and in which way when oneself cannot do it (Weiner, 2011). Concluding, self-management is an important practice in the treatment of bipolar disorder, but the discursive view criticises that it is still strongly influenced by clinicians and often does not sufficiently take into account the experiences and struggles of clients or give room for alternative management.

Perspectives on Mental Illnesses Represented in TV shows

Next to the clinical and discursive view on bipolar disorder, the perspectives on mental illnesses which are portrayed in television can be reviewed critically. Representation in TV shows is considered important because there are not many main characters with mental illness portrayed in television shows and if there is a character with MI present, there is a lot of criticism on the depiction because it is often negatively stereotypical, only used as a plot device or oversimplified (Smith-Frigerio, 2018). Instead, the representation of mental illnesses in television is supposed to correspond with the perception and experience of society, particularly the ones dealing with it. This is important because it can be argued that people who do not have direct contact with mental illnesses receive their knowledge from the media. But if the portrayal is negative and stereotyped, it may result in discrimination towards mentally ill individuals. Additionally, people suffering from mental illnesses might refuse to get diagnosed and receive treatment, since they are afraid of discrimination due to stereotypical and negative perceptions of the public (Parrott & Parrott, 2015; Smith-Frigerio, 2018).

Furthermore, it is criticised that a commonly portrayed stereotype about MI is generalised lower social standing which only shows one side, namely that stigmatisation of mental illness can indeed lead to social isolation, job loss and poverty. However, this does not

have to apply to all individuals diagnosed with an MI (Parrott & Parrott, 2015). Additionally, stereotypical depiction can be seen when individuals with MI in US crime dramas were more likely to be a victim of or exercise violence, to be perpetrators of crime and to be unemployed (Parrott & Parrott, 2015). Another form of stereotype can be that the gender of the individual is relevant for the disorder they have or how they handle the disorder. Nevertheless, it is argued that the genre of the film or TV show may also influence the representation of mental illness, for example in a crime show violence might be more likely depicted as in more uplifting genres (Harper, 2008).

Apart from stereotypes, medication and treatment are addressed in TV shows as well. Arguably, this can result in stigmatisation when taking medication or getting treatment is shown as it would take away the special ability or high skills of the character - as can be seen in “Homeland”. This gives the implication that suffering from the disorder would be a choice of the client. On the one hand, they can decide for the “ability to function at a high professional level” (Beirne, 2019), including all consequences of the mental disorder. On the other hand, there is the possibility of taking medication and receiving treatment, which may help to deal with the disorder, but inhibits the special abilities. Consequently, the individuals would be responsible for their own suffering from the symptoms. Additionally, this representation assumes a connection between special abilities and mental illness, which is not proven to be the case (Beirne, 2019).

In contrast to that, some positively evaluated examples can be mentioned as well. In “Monk”, viewers can build a relationship with the main character, who has obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD), which is argued to positively influence their attitudes. In addition, one main character in “Empire” having bipolar disorder is depicted multifaceted and successful in his job (Smith-Frigerio, 2018). Also, a counter-stereotypical portrayal can be seen in “Perception”, where the main character is well-educated, successful and respected (Parrott & Parrott, 2015).

Moreover, in US crime dramas, characters with MI are found to be not distinct in their physical appearance and behaviour, they have a comparable social environment and the portrayal is non-gendered (Parrott & Parrott, 2015). Additionally, it can be argued that much criticism on the representation of mental distress in film and media led to representations becoming more positive and less stereotypical and being more regularly discussed. For example, various British soap operas represent mental distress realistically from a knowledgeable perspective (Harper, 2008). Overall, the TV representation of MI is seen to

become less stereotypical and more realistically and multi-faceted, but there are still points of criticism.

Shifting the perspective to a different view, Parrott and Parrott (2015) argue that viewership responses were not assessed and the influence of the representation of characters with a mental disorder on the audience is assumed. In line with this, Smith-Frigerio (2018) suggests further research on the perspective of fans on the representation of characters with mental disorders to research how viewers are actually influenced by these portrayals. This will be the rationale of this paper, with a focus on how the audience responds to the portrayal of mental illnesses.

Problem statement & Research question

This illustrates that bipolar disorder can be described from different perspectives. Firstly, there is the DSM perspective which strictly evaluates the presence and absence of symptoms. Next, there is the discursive perspective which criticises the DSM standpoint and instead highlights the experiences of individuals. Lastly, the reality of living with an MI is currently not entirely represented in television, because stereotypes are still portrayed in the media. Since the perspective of viewers is unknown, it is of interest how the audience perceives the representation of mental illness on TV and if their perspectives are in line with the previously mentioned ones. This is important because shows can be an effective medium for education on societal issues like mental illnesses. Therefore, viewers' reaction to the depiction of bipolar disorder in the French edition of the show "Skam" will be evaluated, which leads to the following research question:

How does the audience evaluate the representation of bipolar disorder in the TV show "Skam France"?

Methods

The focus of this paper lies on the French version “Skam France”, in which Elliot is suffering from bipolar disorder (BD) in the third season. Since this season aired in spring 2019, the fan responses are more recent than the ones for the original. This makes the findings more representative of the current situation. Again, the representation was praised very much on social media, even more than in the original, since it was rated more expressive, sensitive and elaborate. The importance of an experientially rich and nuanced portrayal can be seen in the construction of bipolarity from different perspectives in the review above.

The data is collected on Tumblr. Tumblr is a popular social networking site that is strongly used by a community of fans of a particular show, movie or book, a so-called fandom. Members of such fandoms produce various content about their respective topic of interest. This may include analyses and discussions of episodes and specific scenes, fanfictions about the characters or fanart (Hillman, Procyk, & Neustaedter, 2014). Participants in this study (Hillman, Procyk, & Neustaedter, 2014) stated that they were “more themselves on Tumblr than ‘real life’ [...], feeling like they were part of something bigger than themselves, sharing a common sense of motivation and purpose for participating in the community” (p.775). This means they were also discussing social issues and how they were represented in TV shows (Hillman, Procyk, & Neustaedter, 2014).

The part of the audience that uses Tumblr or other social media is called the online fandom. Since posts on Tumblr are used for the analysis, the audience is restricted to active Tumblr users. In contrast, passive Tumblr users are the ones who read the posts but do not react or post anything. This is possible without a user account, while one is needed to post or comment on Tumblr.

Procedure of Data collection

Ethical approval was granted by the BMS Ethics Committee of the University of Twente under request number 191192. To establish a corpus of data which is analysed later on, the search term “eliott demaury” (the name of the character having bipolar disorder in “Skam France”) was used. The search term “skam france” was too broad and resulted in too many posts, because this included posts of four seasons so that one barely found posts about representation in season 3 while scrolling for about 10-15 minutes. Filtering for only text posts additionally resulted in too little and irrelevant posts, because posts were often not created as

text posts and rather discussed the future of the series or the actors. The search term “skam france elriott” led to too little and irrelevant posts as well, because within about 10-15 minutes one could scroll through all posts and there were mostly posts about fan art, theories, scene excerpts or the actors. Using the terms “skam france elriott season 3”, “skam france elriott representation” and “skam france elriott bipolar” resulted in even fewer posts. The search term “elriott demaury” resulted in many posts, but it was not as broad as for “skam france” and relevant posts on representation in season 3, which were missing with the other options, were included. When sorting the results by time, the oldest post was from January 3rd, 2019. It took about an hour to scroll through all posts. All posts until April 5th, 2019 were selected, because more recent ones mostly showed fan art or future visions, since the season ended on March 29th, 2019. All results of this time frame were screenshotted manually, resulting in 1420 images with approximately 5 posts per image.

Corpus selection

From these ca. 7100 posts, the relevant ones were selected manually in one go according to three criteria. First, they predominantly contain text content in the English language. Therefore, posts with GIFs, scene excerpts, pictures and fan art are excluded, as well as posts in French, for example. Second, they contain at least, but not limited to, one of the following expressions indicative of bipolar disorder:

- mental illness(es), mental health, condition, mental state, illness(es), MI, mentally ill, mental disorder, disorder, disease(s)
- bipolar disorder, episode(s), bipolar, bipolarity, BD
- depressed, depressive episode, depression, major depressive episode, major depressive disorder, depressive, low mood swings, bipolar depression
- manic, mania, manic episode, mania episodes
- crazy, freak out, suicide, suicidal

These terms either highlight or imply the context of bipolar disorder. In case of ambiguous terms standing alone, the context was taken into account. Third, they are not fanfictions (stories about the characters/ the show written by fans). This selection process resulted in 246 posts from previously ca. 7100 within the relevant time frame. For each post, the username, the post itself, the date, the hashtags and the number of notes (reactions) were selected. When the date was vague (e.g. 6 months ago), the time frame between the previous and next exact date was

chosen, since the posts were in a timely order. Some hashtags were missing because they were only shown in the search results but not on the screenshot or the post itself.

Data Analysis

In order to analyse fan responses on social media, critical discourse analysis is a useful method and goes beyond the mere content of the data. This means that it also considers social practices, individuals and institutions and how they can influence certain phenomena (Hodges, Kuper, and Reeves, 2008). In the context of Social Media Research, this means for example that it is also taken into account, how text is written, which words, emoticons or other accentuations are used and which effects they have. Additionally, it includes the reflection of the researcher on his own perspective on the topic of analysis (Hodges, Kuper, & Reeves, 2008). Furthermore, it is advised to consider social media users and the medium itself in the analysis, since this can have a relevant impact on the topic as well. Generally, the theme is not only influenced by its wider social setting (for example institutions), but also shapes them in return (Unger, Wodak, & KhosraviNik, 2016).

For the analysis, the dataset was analysed with IBM SPSS for descriptive statistics, including the (1) number of users, (2) the number of posts per user, (3) a timeline for the number of posts, (4) the posts with most reactions (called notes), (5) an overview of hashtags, how many and how often they occurred and (6) the length of posts. Additionally, the posts were coded with Atlas.ti according to eight codes which were grouped in three clusters:

- Awareness of BD: (1) educational representation, (2) experiencing bipolar, (3) identification
- Perception of BD: (4) acceptance, (5) worry/ empathy, (6) criticism
- Ways of representation: (7) symbolism/ storytelling, (8) screenplay

For clarification, the cluster will be underlined and the codes will be underlined and written in italics. They were developed in an inductive (bottom-up) manner by reading all the posts first, selecting suitable codes that came up while reading, applying them to the posts and thereby refining the labels for each code. The unit of coding could be a complete post as well as sections of a post and could be coded with multiple codes for the same part.

If multiple codes were possible, but one was stronger addressed than the other, only the stronger one was used. For example, “*experiencing bipolar*” referred more to personal experiences (“*maybe some people with mental illness want to be left alone but we also don’t want to be treated like youre walking on eggshells. we feel everything deeply and a lot of times*”).

it's a struggle to manage but that doesn't mean we should be isolated or treated differently" post 179), while "identification" referred more to what was shown in the series (*"I showed my brother the clip from the morning and he told me that Elliott looked and acted like I do when I have a depressive episode"* post 197). In this case, post 179 does not refer to the series but only talks about own experiences, while post 197 specifically refers personal experiences to the series. Sometimes, both were addressed equally, when on the one hand personal experiences are shared, but on the other hand, these are also placed in the context of the series. Then, two codes were used:

Sometimes with mania, we (people with bipolar disorder, I mean) have moments of clarity. We recognise that we're manic and we're scared and it's like coming out of a fog. If Elliott is like me, he'll ignore that niggling voice in the back of his head telling him he's not well because it's much better to be feeling manic than depressed. However, with bipolar disorder there's such a thing as a mixed episode. With these, your emotions are everywhere and you really do feel like you're going crazy (at least in my own experience). It's a very serious state to be in because you're flipping from one extreme to the other and you just want it to stop. Elliott could be going between the two, or he might just be coming down from his episode and is gaining clarity of his actions, which might have caused him to flip further. (post 131)

Subsequently, the focus of the analysis was restricted to seven clips of the show. They were chosen because on the days of these clips the most posts relating to BD were published. Therefore, all posts that referred to these scenes were chosen. This resulted in 100 posts from previously 246 for the whole season, which could be distributed to three topics: the moment when the character came out as having BD, two educational speeches on dealing with BD and the experience of living with BD. These posts were analysed on content according to the codes as well as on the way of writing.

Results

The results will be presented as follows. First, the initial corpus will be described further, including a timeline, and then the codes will be explained. Afterwards, the results of each scene will be presented, followed by the results which were common across all scenes. In the end, the results on the way of writing will be described.

Description of the corpus and the codes

To begin with, the data set will be described further. The 246 posts were written by 124 different users. Most frequent was “enochiass” with 19 posts, the second was “impatient14” with 15 posts and the third was “fat-amiee” with 9 posts. “Enochiass” and “impatient14” both stated in their posts that they have bipolar disorder (BD) and “fat-amiee” has experienced depression. Other users also told about their experiences with mental illnesses (MIs) either from personal experience or from experience with their loved ones and family.

The posts varied in length from 12 to 702 words ($M=135,28$ $SD=115,79$). Most reactions were given to the following post (22) with 946 notes:

also can we talk about how lucille revealing eliott failed his bac was such a perfect example of the vicious circle of shame and self-hate that people with mental illness face after they drop out of school/have horrible results/fail classes/have to repeat a year? it's clear that this topic is a sore point for eliott and lucille must know that but still she tells these relative strangers about eliott's biggest 'failure' out of sheer spite. and eliott does defend himself by alluding to the fact that he failed by default, failed by not showing up rather than what chloé must have assumed (that he tried but failed his bac). no wonder eliott just wants to get out of that situation, wants to talk about anything but that, to the point where he just leaves so he can avoid being cross-examined by the others. the effects of mental illness on school results and productivity are not talked about enough but that scene showed perfectly the panic and humiliation that people with mental illness feel when they are in situations where they need to justify their academic shortcomings. subtle but perfect.

Second-most notes with 838 reactions received post 244 (see appendix A), which argues for an Elliott season, and third was post 233 (see appendix A) with 694 notes, praising that Elliott could speak for himself about his MI.

All posts together had 1114 hashtag entries with 237 different hashtags, where some differed only in additional space signs. The most common hashtag was “Skam France” in

different writing versions, e.g. capital or lowercase, short or long-form, with 299 counts. The second-most was “Eliott Demaury” in different writing versions with 206 counts. Other common hashtags were “Elu” (nickname for the pairing) with 99 counts and “Lucas Lallement” (Eliott’s partner) with 126 counts, both in different writing versions. “Mental health” was used only twice, “mental illness(es)” three times and versions of “bipolar” or “bipolar disorder” occurred 9 times in total.

The timeline of posts can be closely related to different clips in the series as can be seen in the table below. Only dates with more than 6 posts or situations explicitly mentioned in the posts are included in Table 1. Scenes in brackets are not explicitly mentioned in the posts. Most posts were posted on the 25th of March when Eliott’s depression is shown and he talks about his MI. Second-most reactions were on the 15th and 16th of March, following the revelation that Eliott has BD. The third was the number of replies on the dates of Basile’s and Lucille’s educational speeches about BD. Therefore, these three topics, portrayed in 7 clips, were chosen for further analysis.

Table 1: *Timeline of scenes and the amount of posts*

Date	Posts	Scene (as mentioned in the posts)	Episode
13.02.	8x	Eliott stood Lucas up for painting the mural	3x04 Clip 6
15.02.		Lucille telling about Eliott’s bac	3x04 Clip 8
		Polaris, first kiss, tunnel	3x04 Clip 9
18.02.	7x	Eliott ghosting Lucas	3x05 Clip 3
19.02.	11x	Freaking out in class	3x05 Clip 4
20.02.	11x	“I don’t need crazy people in my life”	3x05 Clip 5
26.02.	9x	Sometimes you have to choose	3x06 Clip 3
06.03.	8x	(Talk to Chloe)	3x07 Clip 5
12.03.	7x	(Le gang meets Eliott)	3x08 Clip 3
15.03.	19x	Boat scene	3x08 Clip 5&6
16.03.	10x	(no clip)	
17.03.	7x	(Lucas refusing Eliott’s texts)	3x09 Clip 2
		(Vodka)	3x09 Clip 4
18.03.	13x	Basile’s speech	3x09 Clip 5

23.03.	15x	Lucille's speech	3x10 Clip 1
25.03.	30x	Elliott's depression (Monday morning)	3x10 Clip 2
		Lucas should live his life	3x10 Clip 3
		Elliott speaking about his MI (Monday afternoon)	3x10 Clip 4

For the analysis, the relevant posts were categorised by eight codes, which were divided into three bigger clusters. “Awareness of BD” focuses on the illness itself, “perception of BD” has a more distant perspective on the illness and how it is seen or dealt with and “way of representation” includes how both the illness and the handling with it is portrayed. Table 2 shows the explanation of each code as well as the occurrence of each code in the initial corpus of 246 posts and the amount of each code for the respective scenes, which will be further discussed in the following. However, the codes and cluster did not show any connection to the different scenes and only served as tools to group the posts and to simplify the summary of the results. Therefore, they will not further be addressed.

Table 2: *Code explanation and occurrence in total and per scene*

Code	Explanation	Total amount*	Amount per Scene**
Awareness of BD			
Educational representation	Providing information on MIs and BD, demanding or commenting on the education of MIs, representation of MIs and features of good or bad representation, e.g. acting skills or emotionality of characters	108	(1) 26
			(2) 5
			(3) 11
			(4) 27
Experiencing bipolar	What it means to have BD, e.g. telling about personal experiences or how it is shown to be experienced in the series	43	(1) 3
			(2) 2
			(3) 2
			(4) 4
Identification		28	(1) 8

	Identification of viewers with the depiction of MI in the series		(2) 0 (3) 3 (4) 7
Perception of BD			
Acceptance	Acceptance of MIs in general, of individuals who have MIs and their experiences	48	(1) 9 (2) 6 (3) 5 (4) 5
Worry/ empathy	Expression of worry or empathy towards the characters of the series	39	(1) 6 (2) 1 (3) 1 (4) 0
Criticism	Any kind of criticism, e.g. on the representation, the opinion of other users or attitudes towards MIs	22	(1) 3 (2) 1 (3) 2 (4) 0
Ways of representation			
Symbolism/ Storytelling	Specific ways and tools of telling the story in the series	50	(1) 7 (2) 6 (3) 1 (4) 14
Screenplay	General explanations, interpretations and opinions of the series and scenes without mentioning any particular themes	95	not taken into account in the analysis

* of the initial corpus ** (1) Boat Scene (2) Speech Basile (3) Speech Lucille (4) Elliott's experience

In the following paragraphs, the findings per scene will be presented, starting with a description of the scene and then going through the codes, starting with the cluster “awareness of BD”, followed by “perception of BD” and ending with “ways of representation”. Afterwards, the findings which occurred across all scenes will be elaborated. Lastly, the way of writing will be addressed.

Boat Scene - Elliott’s manic episode ([Clip 5 E8](#) & [Clip 6 E8](#))

During the boat scene, which takes place at the end of the eighth episode, Elliott surprises his partner with a romantic evening. During their date, Elliott’s behaviour becomes irritating until he runs out in the night naked. His partner is confused and worried sick and calls Elliott’s ex-partner, who tells him that Elliott has a manic episode and thereby reveals his mental illness. 37 posts (124 - 161) can be connected to that scene.

Awareness of BD: The first code “educational representation” addresses how the portrayal of ‘wrong’ behaviour and prejudices/ stigma as expressed by Elliott’s ex-partner educates about these stereotypes. In addition, it also highlights the reality of many people having MIs to be treated in such a way as well as raises awareness on these attitudes (posts 125, 134, 138, 143, 154, 157): “*Lucille is unfortunately the voice of many people. I can love despite my mental disorder and I’m tired of feeling like shit for those who say otherwise. You really make us think that everything, including love, is only in our head*” (post 138). However, this may also show the struggles of the loved ones (post 136). In contrast, Elliott’s partner wanted to check on Elliott even though he just found out about his BD, which represents positive attitudes towards MIs (posts 124, 135). To continue, good representation is about giving people with MI a voice and telling their own story and not only being a plot device (posts 145, 146, 149, 154, 158) and that they are more than their MI (post 146, 147, 149, 158): “*Just because you have a MI, doesn’t mean you are your mental illness or everything ties back to being MI. Elliott is his own person, who has a heart, head, and soul that is completely his own. He also has a voice that can speak out and tell his own story*” (post 146).

Additionally, still in line with the cluster “awareness of BD” and the code “educational representation” there were several posts in which people offer to answer questions, educate about BD (posts 128, 129, 136) and explain how the portrayal of Elliott’s manic episode can be understood (post 131). When talking about “experiencing bipolar”, personal experiences of mania and BD are shared (post 131, 136) as well as experiences of how people react to and

think about people with BD, as portrayed by the ex-partner's behaviour, and that this is not right because the feelings of people with BD are valid (post 138). Furthermore, there is "identification" with Elliott's behaviour in his manic episode (post 126, 131, 133), with his struggles and triumphs (post 147) and with his situation of repeating a year in school (post 158). But also struggles of the partners are addressed and how they can identify with Elliott's ex-partner and current partner (post 136). Additionally, receiving the reaction of Elliott's ex-partner and identifying with this situation was mentioned (post 144), which shows that this was valued by the online community.

Perception of BD: Regarding "acceptance", Elliott's ex-partner says that he is not actually in love with his new partner, but it is only a result of his MI, which invalidates and does not accept Elliott's feelings (posts 134, 135, 139, 150): "*thinking that since Elliott is bipolar, he needs someone "sane" to treat him like he was a child being taken care of*" (post 152). However, BD does not make feelings invalid but instead heightens them even more (post 144). In contrast, there is also acceptance and understanding for the ex-partner's reaction because she has gone through a lot with Elliott and probably reacted out of anger (post 148). "Worry/empathy" are expressed because Elliott does not have a proper support system, while his partner has (post 137) and that he might be suicidal (post 159). But there is also empathy towards Elliott's ex-partner since she went through a lot with him, too (post 148). Nevertheless, "criticism" is expressed about how Elliott's ex-partner treated him (post 152) and the perspective on using weed when having BD is questioned, because of opposite experiences in this regard (post 160).

Ways of representation: In terms of "storytelling/ symbolism", the reaction of the ex-partner and her expression of prejudices and stigma created a lot of resonance since it was a provocative portrayal (post 125, 139, 140, 143): "*Stop pretending to know what mentally ill people feel [...] looking at you Lucille*" (post 125).

Across all codes, the main topic was the reaction of Elliott's ex-partner, who expressed common stigma about BD, e.g. that he cannot be taken seriously because of his illness.

Educational speeches ([Clip 4 E9](#) & [Clip 1 E10](#))

By Basile. In episode 9, Elliott's partner Lucas talks with his friends about Elliott's MI. One of his friends, Basile, tells them that his mother has also BD and that it can be difficult, but most of the time it is fine. He explains that Lucas should talk to Elliott as soon as his episode is

over, that Elliott's feelings are real and valid despite his MI and that Lucas should accept Elliott as he is. 12 posts (168 - 179) discuss this scene.

Awareness of BD: In terms of "*educational representation*", this scene educated Elliott's partner about BD (post 174, 176, 179). Addressing "*experiencing bipolar*", as it was explained in the scene as well, people with BD should not be treated differently or "*like youre walking on eggshells*", even if they are struggling (post 179). And since it is not shown in the show, Elliott is possibly dealing with his BD and its consequences by feeling guilty or not worthy of love (post 178).

Perception of BD: Meanwhile, Elliott's partner did not show "*acceptance*" towards the MI (post 170), wherefore this conversation was important for him because it helped him to change his attitude (post 178). At the same time, the loved ones need validation, too, because, as Basile said, it can be difficult at times (post 177).

Ways of representation: Regarding "*storytelling/ symbolism*", it was a rather "stupid" character delivering such important messages (post 173) and he reasoned in a very relaxed and casual way with Elliott's partner to make him change his attitude (post 174, 176, 179): "*i actually loved how nonchalant it was because these types of conversations should be normalized so stigmas around being bipolar/ other mental illness can be eliminated*" (post 179). Thereby including possible downsides but also telling that it is possible to deal with it (post 177).

By Lucille. In the first clip of episode 10, Elliott's partner meets up with Elliott's ex-partner Lucille who gives him tips about how to be there for Elliott and help him. During her speech as voiceover, Elliott's depression is shown. She explains that Lucas should try to understand BD, that he should not rush Elliott and respect his wishes, that sometimes he cannot do anything, that he should be there for Elliott when he needs it, that Elliott will come to him when he is ready and that he should enjoy the good moments because they will make up for the rest. 16 posts (184 - 199) refer to this scene.

Awareness of BD: The posts about "*educational representation*" in this scene acknowledge that the importance and perspective of loved ones are shown very emotionally and that it is hard for them, too (post 190, 192, 193). For example, difficult aspects, like cheating of people with BD, were addressed and explanations on this issue are given (post 198, 199). Moreover, MI representation from the perspective of the person with MI can give hope to other people with MI (post 196) and the "Skam" community helps to educate about BD and share experiences (post 195). But most importantly:

However, what Skam France did affected me so much more, because it showed us what minute-by-minute really means. As someone with mental illness, pretty words are sometimes just that. Words. Not always meaningless, but sometimes, yeah, words are meaningless. The actions of our loved ones is what matters, and in this scene, we were given a brief glimpse of what it will be like for Lucas to be there for Eliott during a depressive episode. We saw him ignore Lucas. We saw him refuse to eat. We saw him sleep. We saw him show little to no appreciation for Lucas' presence until the very end. And that's real. It doesn't mean Eliott doesn't appreciate Lucas, it just means he isn't capable of showing anything at the moment. Seeing Lucas accept that and embrace Eliott when Eliott's ready? That's what I need to see. (Post 191)

Regarding “experiencing bipolar”, as already addressed in the previous code, the aspect of cheating and hypersexuality in manic episodes is discussed, since it was mentioned by Lucille. It is explained that this can be part of BD, but can also be managed (post 198, 199). When talking about “identification”, worries about causing someone the struggles that Lucille is talking about are voiced (post 185), as well as identification with Eliott's depression (post 197) and with the perspective of a loved one (post 193).

Perception of BD: In terms of “acceptance”, watching “Skam” brought people together who are asking, sharing and supporting each other which expresses a lot of acceptance (post 195): “*I feel like it's brought people together and created a little community and support network*”.

Both speeches focused on how to deal with BD, especially as a loved one. However, the cluster ‘awareness of BD’ was most prevalent, since it was not from a distant perspective, but really focused on the illness.

Eliott's experience of Bipolar Disorder (E10: [Clip 2](#), [Clip 3](#) & [Clip 4](#))

During episode 10, several clips focus on Eliott's depression and his experience of BD. The second clip of the episode sees Eliott snap at his partner. In the third clip, Eliott's partner checks on him by calling his flatmate who is looking after Eliott. Afterwards, he talks to his friends and Basile explains to him that he cannot and should not worry about Eliott all the time, but that he should live his life and that Eliott will manage, too. In the afternoon, Eliott talks about his BD and explains that he will snap at Lucas, lie about medication, sleep for a week and make Lucas' life hell sometimes and that he does not want Lucas to suffer because of him. Lucas replies that he will be difficult at times, too, and that he rather is upset because of Eliott

than not be with him at all. He then suggests to just focus on the next minute and to live minute by minute. These scenes are discussed in 34 posts (200 - 233).

Awareness of BD: Regarding “*educational representation*”, there is not much representation of anger and hate in depression to find in media which makes the representation rich in facets (post 211, 212, 225): “*I’m glad they showed the anger that comes with depression. It’s a common misconception that depressed people are just sad and mope around all day when it’s actually so much more*” (post 212). Additionally, showing that Elliott’s partner needs to live his life the best he can is important (post 214, 218) as well as Elliott speaking for himself (post 221, 227, 233) and him talking about medication and its difficulties (e.g. not taking them when he feels good) (post 225, 229, 233). In terms of “*experiencing bipolar*”, personal experiences of depression (post 211, 212, 225) and with taking medication (post 225, 229) are shared. Therefore, there is plenty of “*identification*” with the depiction of Elliott’s depression, including his hate and anger (post 208, 211, 212, 219), with Elliott telling his partner to live his life and not only focusing on him (post 214) and with him describing how he deals with medication (post 226, 229): “*Elliott talking about his struggle with medication is so painfully familiar to anyone with a MI like that (or at least it is for me!)*” (post 226).

Ways of representation: Discussing “*storytelling/ symbolism*”, it is appreciated that irritability in depression was shown next to the “being sad” aspect (post 206, 207, 208, 219, 223, 225) and how mood can change from one day to the next with depression (post 207). Additional positive aspects are that Elliott’s partner does not push him when he feels bad (post 201), that he has to live his life despite Elliott’s MI (post 218, 231) and that the clips show again what “living minute for minute” really means (post 206, 218, 223): “*They’re really showing the minute by minute true meaning and I will never be grateful enough for that*” (post 223). Moreover, showing character growth (post 221), addressing medication (post 225) and the timing of storytelling were rated well (post 227).

Since these scenes address Elliott’s perspective and him talking for himself, the cluster of ‘awareness for BD’ is used most. Yet, in these scenes, the cluster ‘way of representation’ was also really important, because it was not only relevant to let Elliott speak for himself, but also what he had to say.

Findings common in all scenes

A number of aspects were mentioned across all scenes and can, therefore, be seen as most relevant. They referred to the codes “educational representation”, “acceptance”, “worry/empathy”, “criticism” and “storytelling/symbolism”.

Awareness of BD: Regarding “educational representation”, the good, accurate and realistic representation and portrayal were highlighted (posts 132, 147, 155, 176, 179, 197, 203, 209, 211, 212, 224, 228), especially for Elliott’s manic episode (126, 127, 131, 133, 156): “*That was so accurate. That’s the most accurate depiction of mania I’ve ever seen*” (post 127). This was rated in terms of the users’ own experiences and identification with the portrayal, of being rich in facets and addressing many different aspects. It was further supported by the amazing acting of the actors and their understanding of their characters (post 141, 175, 187) because otherwise, people would not feel represented. Moreover, regarding Elliott’s episodes, it was highlighted that there was no romanticising (post 142, 205, 213, 215, 216, 223, 233). This means that love does not solve all problems or heal MI.

In addition to the cluster “awareness of BD” and the code “educational representation”, addressing downsides e.g. when Elliott has his manic and depressive episodes (post 136, 188, 190, 202, 204, 205, 208, 210, 211, 212, 213, 215, 219, 223, 225, 227, 233) and in the conversation with Basile (post 177) was valued: “*Can I just say that I’m also really happy Basile was honest about how, yeah, sometimes being close to someone with bipolar sucks and is really annoying, but that it shouldn’t stop you from being close to them*”. Thereby, many facets were shown and it was more comprehensive (post 136, 206). Furthermore, the importance of addressing MI and BD and educating about it was voiced many times, because it is still a taboo and there is a lot of misinformation about it (post 128, 129, 132, 136, 147, 155, 179, 190, 203, 209, 211, 212, 224, 228, 230, 232):

Skam normalises bipolar disorder, and this is important because it reduces the stigma. Skam is educating and it doesn’t sugarcoat anything, which is also important because the last thing anyone with bipolar disorder needs is to see it being portrayed as something insignificant or small. Skam gives me and my feelings and experiences a sense of validation. I feel respected. I feel like I’m no longer quite as alone. (Post 147)

Perception of BD: When focusing on “acceptance”, with all scenes acceptance for the MI is addressed in some way. For the boat scene, it is pointed out that even though the main character made a comment about “not needing crazy people in his life” in episode 5 and just

found out that his partner has bipolar disorder, he was willing to go to his partner to see if he is okay (posts 124, 130, 135, 139). In the conversation with Basile, he expressed that people are more than their MI and that you have to “accept people as they are” (post 177). It was also praised a lot that this conversation was chill and super casual (post 172, 174, 176) and that also negative and difficult aspects were mentioned (post 177), which conveyed a lot of acceptance.

Continuing with the cluster “perception of BD” and the code “acceptance”, during Elliott’s depressive episode, it is emphasised that acceptance towards his decisions is shown when Lucille accepts their break-up (post 186) and when Lucas does not push him and accepts that he needs time and how he felt like, e.g. not talking or eating (post 191, 201, 202) and what he has to say about his MI (post 231). In particular, Lucille’s speech taught to be acceptant of the situation, as the person with MI as well as the loved ones and that it is worth it (post 190, 193). It is also stated that acceptance is more important and helps much more than love (post 203), which refers to romanticising and that love does not solve every problem. All this is summed up in post 221: *“But this clip as a whole sends such an amazing message: whatever the situation you’re going through, take it minute by minute, whatever the struggle. And also, we all have our flaws and our bad moments, but we should accept people as a whole, both when they’re at their best and when they’re at their worst. □□□”*

Still in line with the cluster “perception of BD”, in relation to the boat scene and the two speeches, “worry/empathy” for Elliott and Lucas was expressed, wondering how they will cope after Elliott’s manic episode (post 136, 137, 140, 178) and how difficult the situation can be for both of them (post 189) since the viewers feel strongly with them (post 136, 140, 141). “Criticism” was voiced during the first three scenes about the general lack of MI representation (post 169, 194), specifically representation from the viewpoint of a person with MI (post 196), not giving the mentally ill characters a voice to tell their story themselves (in general), and how important that would be (post 145, 169): *“but how often does the person that is actually suffering the lows of a mental illness get a voice for going through it? like how often do they get a voice to tell their story their own way and how they see it, and it’s so simple, it’s giving them just a moment to actually say the things that mi represents to them. [...] I wish one would do better for the mentally ill, we’re not only accessories and shock to storytelling only, we can carry the entire damn thing too”* (post 145).

Ways of representation: Regarding “storytelling/ symbolism”, there were also several commonalities across the scenes. The writing of Elliott’s manic and depressive episodes and the speeches were praised a lot (post 133, 140, 141, 173, 188, 221, 225, 227, 231), which was reinforced by the great acting of emotions (post 219, 220, 225, 227). Additionally, the show

managed well to address mistakes of characters later on in conversations about it (post 168) and the storytelling is not romanticised (post 142). Lastly, “*this show [...] hits so close to the heart*” (post 222).

Observations on the Way of Writing

Across all scenes, the posts show amazement and admiration for the show and also passion and investment in the storyline and the characters. The viewers have strong emotions about “Skam” and it has a strong meaning for them. Therefore, the posts are also emotional, some more intense than others. While in the beginning there is more suffering (with the characters), towards the end the emotions become more positive. Furthermore, with the boat scene and later with Lucille’s speech, there is a lot of excitement, which develops to gratefulness in the last sequence. Apart from Basile’s speech, there are also several posts which are written very personally, because people tell about their own experiences. Additionally, with the first three scenes, anger and frustration are expressed over bad representation of MI (e.g. post 145, 169), which changes to praise for Elliott speaking for himself in the end. Lastly, in the boat scene, several posts are aggressive and insulting towards Lucille’s behaviour and with Basile’s speech, some are mad because of Lucas’ unacceptance in the beginning.

Conclusions

The audience of the TV show “Skam France” evaluated the portrayal of bipolar disorder (BD) in the third season of the show extensively on Tumblr, which enables the researcher to answer the research question. Therefore, the relevant results will be summarised in the following. The first topic results from the cluster “awareness of BD”. Since the portrayal was in accordance with the viewers’ own experiences, they could identify with the depiction, which was rich in facets and addressed many different aspects of BD. Hence, they rated the representation as realistic and accurate. The different aspects included feeling anger and hate during the depression, taking medication, not being able to help the person with BD as a loved one, repeating a year in school and the small things in between like gradual changes of mood, among others. Thereby, many downsides and difficulties of BD were addressed.

The next point refers to the cluster “perception of BD”. Here, acceptance for mental illnesses (MI) was a major topic, since people are more than their MI, their feelings are as valid as anyone else’s and one should accept people as they are. This also includes acceptance of the situation and uncertainty which can be done by living in the moment - minute by minute - and trying not to worry too much about the future.

In relation to the cluster “ways of representation”, not romanticising MI is important because sometimes loved ones cannot do anything else but be there for the people with MI, which is essential. But at the same time, their feelings have to be acknowledged, as is explained in Lucille’s speech about being there for someone with BD. Throughout the posts, people talked about their own experiences and how they identified with the representation, especially of the manic and depressive episodes. Thereby, they also felt strongly with the characters, which was underpinned by the good acting, writing and timing of the story.

In general, it was particularly highlighted how important it is to address and educate about MI because it is still a taboo and there is a lot of misinformation about it. This was especially addressed by portraying ‘wrong’ behaviour and prejudices/stigma as expressed by Elliott’s ex-partner, who did not accept his BD and that he is still a self-sufficient person. By showing these misconceptions, education takes place, the reality of many people having MIs is represented and it raises awareness on these attitudes. Additionally, there is not much representation of MI and characters with MI often cannot tell their experiences themselves, but it is only told by other characters. Therefore, according to the viewers, MI should be normalised by casually talking about it, as done in the conversation with Basile about accepting Elliott’s disorder.

Discussion

The findings illuminate a strong need for education and representation, not only by people having MIs but by others, as well. This aims to achieve more acceptance in our society, to normalise mental illnesses, and not seeing them as taboo anymore. Accordingly, there is a strong demand for shows like “Skam” to do this and for the development of representation and education in series the following recommendations can be given. It is especially advised to address many different aspects, including difficulties and downsides, and to portray them realistically according to people who experience these MIs.

Additionally, it emerged that “Skam” is really important for many viewers and they showed a lot of emotions for the show. This is since people want to be represented well in series and movies, not only in terms of mental illnesses, but there are currently not many shows that do it as successfully as “Skam”. Particularly, because they often do not see themselves in TV or streaming media, representation means for them being recognised and accepted as part of our society. Thus, more shows like “Skam” should be produced for representation and education and should show aspects which were acknowledged and valued in “Skam”.

Discussion of Representing BD

First, the findings indicate that many Tumblr users process the information actively and thoroughly by discussing the representation, which increases the educational effect of the show. In contrast, other viewers might process the content in a simple way or by social observation. This can be referred to entertainment-education, which is the use of media for educational purposes and can be effective through different ways of processing information - either simple processing or more thoroughly (Slater and Rouner, 2002). Consequently, for the viewers who do not extensively discuss the content, as done on Tumblr, it might be useful to make messages of the show and behaviour of role models more explicit and potentially verbal to achieve an educational effect. This illustrates that different user groups need to be addressed in different ways.

Considering the different perspectives on BD, during the discussions on Tumblr, the DSM view is used as a starting point to explain BD and give a general picture and an idea of the disorder. From there, the conversations go into detail and discuss individual differences and experiences. This is in line with the criticism of the discursive view arguing that this diversity between people with BD is often not taken into account in the DSM perspective and self-

management sufficiently, as explained by clients having BD (Wilson, Crowe, Scott, & Lacey, 2018a, b). However, these articles focus on the theoretical concept of the disorder. Hence, the question arises in how far practitioners take this diversity into account in their daily work. Additionally, if clients are not satisfied with the extent to which practitioners take this into account, it should be researched, how to improve this practice.

Another aspect seen in the representation in “Skam France” is Elliott being newly in love when he started to become manic. This made it more difficult to see warning signs of mania and differentiate them from being in love since both are expressed in a heightened mood. This relates to self-management by constantly being suspicious about one’s own thoughts and feelings and to evaluate whether changes are signs of the MI or something else (Weiner, 2011). Also, the show addressed the idea of living “minute by minute” which can be related to the fear and lack of control that are related to being suspicious about one’s own mind (Weiner, 2011). Since this concept (minute by minute) was considered helpful in many posts, not only in relation to BD, its use in practice should be further evaluated.

Furthermore, having one’s own voice was strongly addressed in regards to representation of MI due to the fact that Elliott’s ex-partner spoke for him and ‘knew’ better what is good for him. This was also criticised in terms of self-management and empowerment since clients barely have the chance to state their own voices about their experiences (Wilson, Crowe, Scott, & Lacey, 2018a). Moreover, social isolation was discussed in the representation and the posts regarding Elliott’s change of schools, which depicts social isolation from his former social environment. Furthermore, this was also addressed in the context of self-management when members of a support group consider each other as the only friends they have (Weiner, 2011) The same applies to the difficulties with medication as explained by Elliott and in the posts and mentioned in the article (Weiner, 2011). These aspects exemplify the need for normalising MIs not only in representation but even more in our daily life, which was strongly demanded in the posts as well. Therefore, interventions to increase education on MIs for our entire society. This could for example be done by addressing issues like this in school classes and interoffice on-the-job trainings, potentially even governmentally mandated every few years.

Continuing with the perspective on representation in TV, the lack of positive and realistic representation was mentioned both in the posts and literature. Accordingly, in the posts widely spread misinformation about MIs and the behaviour of the ex-partner was mentioned and can be related to negative and stereotyped representation leading to discrimination (Parrott & Parrott, 2015; Smith-Frigerio, 2018). Regarding positive examples, the way viewers feel

connected to Elliott is similar to the relationship that viewers have with the character of “Monk” (Smith-Frigerio, 2018). Additionally, the multifaceted, layered depiction of BD was generally demanded in the posts and particularly recognised in “Skam France” and was also praised in “Empire” (Smith-Frigerio, 2018). Consequently, when producing series and movies, the aspects of realistic, non-stereotyped, multifaceted and layered portrayal and having a connection to the character need to be addressed and implemented much more strongly in order to show tolerance and reach minorities.

Observations/”Skam” in the societal context

Putting this research in a wider context, there are several issues that should be addressed. First, the way of writing, as well as the content of the posts, indicate a strong emotional relationship of the audience with the characters which might be a result of the real-life timing and use of social media, which blend the boundaries between reality and fiction and bring the characters closer to the audience (Pearce, 2017). This emotional relationship seems to play an important role in the representation, making it even more personal. Therefore, this series concept might be a useful tool for producers to further support the representation of important societal issues.

Additionally, the use of online platforms as part of the series increases the blending of real-life and online life even more and therefore suggests research on the online community of “Skam” viewers. This is further supported by the concept of netnography which is the method of ethnographic research on the internet, as explained by Kozinet. Since the internet plays a central role in our society and a part of our culture shows in our online behaviour, considering this medium in research is found to be of great value (Bowler Jr, 2010). As a result, conducting research grounded on an online platform can be considered as a strength of this research.

Another relevant aspect is the code “*symbolism/ storytelling*” which showed that viewers were indeed aware of tools and techniques used to tell a particular story, create certain impressions and emotions as well as connect with the audience. This awareness of storytelling can be connected to the idea of “narrative savviness”, which is “the ability to critically assess narratives as constructed representations of reality, rather than reality itself, and to be aware of their implied yet often hidden values” (LACE Winter School: Narrative Values, the Value of Narratives, 2018). It shows that viewers are aware by which means BD is depicted and which aspects can create a good and realistic representation, instead of thoughtlessly consuming media input.

Consequently, this narrative savviness can further be seen in the context of media literacy, which is the ability to consciously and critically use media and reflect on its content and impact (Koltay, 2011). This applies in two ways to the research conducted for this paper. On the one hand, the medium of television or streaming is used to transmit information in a series for entertainment as well as educational purposes. On the other hand, the medium of Tumblr is used to communicate the critical evaluation of the presented information. Therefore, media content such as series needs to become of increasing quality, comparable to “*Empire*” or “*Skam*” in order to fulfil its intended purposes as well as to withstand the critical evaluation of consumers.

Moreover, this research is exploratory in nature and exemplary for the different “*Skam*” editions. Even though it was restricted to only one remake and several scenes within this remake, the responses of the audience represent their expectations to series in general. Therefore, this is not considered to be problematic for the validity of this research and can be seen as representative for other series as well.

Reflecting on the use of Tumblr in this research, Tumblr users were found to often be members of marginalised subcultures, have a progressive and liberal mindset and consist mostly of the age group of youths. Generally, there is a strong community feeling among Tumblr users resulting from shared interests and being like-minded which further contributes to discussing social issues on the platform, e.g. racism, feminism, LGBTQI+ issues, MI, social justice and the representation of minorities. Thus, Tumblr users may have a stronger awareness for these issues and might deal more actively with them. This can be seen for example by the creation of new, often more people-oriented viewed labels like neurodivergent and the spectrum of gender and identity (McCracken, 2017). Consequently, the question arises whether regular viewers would evaluate the representation in a similar way as the current population. However, Tumblr users can also be seen as precursors for societal developments, which may take longer to be established within a whole society but arise in this community at early stages.

Furthermore, the use of Tumblr posts in this research to represent the viewer’s opinion and feelings can be considered as a non-intrusive way of research and prevents from any researcher effect, since participants do not feel like they have to fulfil a certain role or any expectations. Additionally, Hillman, Procyk, & Neustaedter (2014) found that resulting from the anonymity, users of Tumblr often consider themselves as more authentic in the online world than in real life and therefore as being more honest in their opinions than in other situations. For this reason, the use of Tumblr posts can be viewed as another strength of this research.

Nevertheless, it should be kept in mind that many viewers of the show are not native speakers in French and used subtitles which were provided by other viewers voluntarily. This may have influenced their understanding and interpretation of the show since they might have missed nuances which are only noticeable for native speakers. Moreover, the discussions on Tumblr were in English which may also have an impact on understanding and expressing impressions and experiences.

Besides, searching for and filtering of Tumblr posts is not sufficiently supported by the platform and an elaborate and time-consuming process which may cause uncleanliness due to performing it manually. Therefore, tools to facilitate the research on Tumblr and similar platforms would provide enormous help to the researchers and strengthen the results of such research.

Lastly, in critical discourse analysis, it is advised to reflect on the perspective of the researcher on the topic. In this case, the researcher is a Bachelor student in Psychology and an enthusiastic viewer of “Skam”. When the topic of mental illness came up in the show, the researcher was critical on the depiction, because of her psychological background. However, the researcher was also critical of the discipline of Psychology, because she perceived an overgeneralization of MI and missing consideration for the role that circumstances of the individual play for the diagnosis. Since the representation was praised strongly, especially for the perspective of the individual, the researcher became interested in focusing on the individual in psychology and including it more in practice. Therefore, the motivation of this paper was to bring the two perspectives into dialogue, which resulted in the outcome that they are strongly complementary and can give added value to each other when taken into account together.

In conclusion of the observations made in this research and placement of “Skam” in the societal context, this research addresses a number of future-oriented and progressive aspects which constitute its major strengths and scientific value and can also be of strong relevance for future research.

Overall, the audience of “Skam” that is active on Tumblr considers representation and education of mental illnesses as very important in order to spread awareness and acceptance on this topic. Furthermore, they express that “Skam” and possibly similar series can have a strong impact on this issue. Therefore, following the aspects that were praised by the audience, recommendations can be given on how to address this issue in the future.

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Appendix A: Posts mentioned in the text

Post no. 244:

skam france could maybe have the opportunity to make a whole season about a pansexual bipolar teen living in a healthy queer relationship. if eliott had his own season they could go so much more into how his mental illness really affects his life. we would get to see it from his point of view not just from lucas'. tell me: have you ever really seen a story like that for teens/young adults on tv?

there is so much more to be told about eliott. I want to see how he deals with school and his mental illness, I want to see what his art means, I want to see how it affected his relationship with his parents. he's got so much more to tell if they just let him.

this character has already helped so many people, me included, who identify and see themselves in him. I'm bi and I have depression and seeing more of eliott on screen would mean the absolute world to me.

what pisses me off is that some people think we just want an eliott season because we want more elu. first of all that is absolutely 100% not true, second of all what's wrong with showing more of a healthy lgbt couple on screen? tv shows have the tendency to either make an lgbt couple go through hell, not show much of it at all or kill one of the characters off. it's so important to show healthy lgbt relationships on screen that are not getting treated differently than a straight couple would be treated, which is what skam france has been doing in s3 already anyway.

also have you seen how devoted maxence is to this character? do you know how much it would mean to him? he would absolutely kill it in his own season and you know it.

in conclusion: I need an eliott season and I will not rest until we fucking get it. thanks for coming to my ted talk.

Post no. 233:

good morning gaydies and gentlemecs, who else is still reeling from the fact that skam france (a tv show for teenagers) actually went and gave eliott, a mentally ill main character, the chance to have his own monologue about his disorder? mood swings, medication, and the trouble of navigating relationships when dealing with those things? and he got to say those things himself, even though his voice cracked and he got a bit teary? it wasn't romanticized, just a clear statement of painful truths from someone barely out of a depressive episode?? iconic

Appendix B: Posts used for further analysis

Number	Post
124	What really gets me is that Lucas was willing to go with her, he didn't care about Elliott's MI and that he originally wanted to stay away from ""sick"" people. He only cares about him because he's so in love with this beautiful, precious boy that everything else he ever said or thought is so irrelevant in that moment. The only thing that matters is knowing if his loved one is alright!!!
125	Stop pretending to know what mentally ill people feel challenge 2k19 looking at you Lucille
126	Skam France did it. They broke my heart. I love everything about it. Elliott's episode was so realistic, it's exactly the way I talk during my manic episodes. Sometimes people think I'm drunk or high so I felt that. I have so many thoughts but I am not sure if I can but them to words, because I am also going through a manic phase right now and let me tell you guys, watching skam France today is a roller coaster for me. Also, protect my mecs, Lucas and Elliott 2KForever.
127	That was so accurate. That's the most accurate depiction of mania I've ever seen.
128	Honestly, if I can help people with understanding bipolar disorder a little better, or just help people with dealing with it, then I want to do that because I've had it for 6 years and for so long I was alone in it. I never want others to feel that way. I want to help. Reach out to me whenever you want. Seriously. If it means sharing my own story, I'm happy to do that too. Whatever helps.
129	I'm going to make a vlog explaining bipolar disorder better for Skam fans who want a better understanding, but here's a non-exclusive list of symptoms of mania and hypomania so that you have an idea of what Elliott was experiencing.(Hypomania is generally seen as a milder version of mania and is found in Bipolar II Disorder)Mania:Uncontrollable excitementRacing and jumbled thoughtsFeelings of being invincibleLoss of insightVery easily distractedDelusions or paranoiaHallucinationsHypomania:EuphoricLots of energySociableRacing thoughtsCreative and full of ideasIncreased self-confidenceImpatient or irritableFeel more flirtatious and sexualHeightened senses
130	the fact that he didn't even ask if he could see him, he just had set his mind to that he was, he was going to go with her, he didn't care about the fact that eliott was mentally ill although he had told himself to stand back because he just needed to see him and make sure that he was okay.
131	"Anonymous: hi! i have a question about eliott's manic episode. at the end there he clearly lost some steam, so to speak, and said something pretty dark, and then afterwards he was looking at lucas with this almost melancholic expression. he wasn't up and about and constantly moving around like even was. and i get everyone's manic episode can manifest differently, but was this eliott sort of coming down from his episode, especially after he realized what he has said hurt lucas?"Sometimes with mania, we (people with bipolar disorder, I mean) have moments of clarity. We recognise that we're manic and we're scared and it's like coming out of a fog. If Eliott is like me, he'll ignore that niggling voice in the back of his head telling him he's not well because it's much better to be feeling

manic than depressed. However, with bipolar disorder there's such a thing as a mixed episode. With these, your emotions are everywhere and you really do feel like you're going crazy (at least in my own experience). It's a very serious state to be in because you're flipping from one extreme to the other and you just want it to stop. Elliott could be going between the two, or he might just be coming down from his episode and is gaining clarity of his actions, which might have caused him to flip further. The scariest thing about coming out of an episode is that you see what you've done, what you've said, who you've hurt, and you feel guilty because even though you couldn't help it, it was still you. It's also scary to know that you're out of control and unwell, that you can't trust yourself or your own mind. Sometimes, I personally try to prolong my manic episodes because they feel good, but you can't keep doing that forever, and the depression always comes. Elliott could have been doing the same and was finally burning out of energy, so the end may have been him coming down yes. Remember, with bipolar disorder, there's such a fine line between mania and depression. While we might seem like we're doing really well, the depression is usually always waiting. Without medication to stabilise it, we can flip so quickly. It's impossible to anticipate and it is very complex. Elliott may have been acting so manic because he was fighting those dark thoughts, but at the end they might have been becoming overwhelming. I hope this makes sense!

- 132 "Anonymous: I've had depression so I can really relate to the depression part of Elliott's bipolar disorder but it's really interesting to learn more about the mania part, thank you so much for taking the time to explain it! I don't know if you've seen Skam Italia too but which performance out of OG Skam, Skam France and Skam Italia did you think was the best/most accurate?" You're so welcome! To begin with I was diagnosed with depression because no one picked up on my manic periods, mostly because not many people know the signs for it. I want to help people understand mania because it is a major part of the illness and for some it can be devastating. I haven't seen Skam Italia, but between Even and Elliott, I'd say that they're both equally as accurate, even though I personally resonate more with Elliott. The thing is, bipolar disorder is very complex and everyone has different experiences with it. Some people get very severe mania, some very severe depression, some both. The periods of time that the episodes last can vary and the symptoms also vary. Both are very good portrayals though and I cannot commend Skam highly enough for the story they are telling because they show the ups and downs, they show the in between, they show the gradual descent into an episode. They also show the fear that Even and Elliott go through, the insecurities and the yearning for someone to accept and understand them. It's very realistic without being too pessimistic. They don't turn it into a drama. They focus on being truthful, and that means so much to me as someone who feels like they've been misrepresented in media and television as either someone crazy or someone with just a couple of mild mood swings.
- 133 I've only seen the first clip, but I have to say...Maxence and David and the rest of the crew responsible for that monologue deserve a lot of praise. The way his voice echoes around the room, symbolizing that feeling of being alone with your thoughts as you descend into madness, it's really poetic but it's also terribly tragic. They did such a good job, my skin was crawling. Let me tell you, as someone who rapid cycles and then has long periods of stability, in these moments when you start to realize your mind is fracturing, all you want to do is

push. Push through it, pretend it's not happening, and maybe this time it won't be so bad. But when the truth comes, it's too late. You've already fucked up. Then, when the depression sets in, it's unlike a regular depressive episode. It's a crash and burn, fade to ash kind of pain. Without a strong support system, a lot of people don't make it back to stability. Honestly, I'm not sure I can watch the second clip. If it does what OG did, I'm just not sure I can handle it. Lucas is so much more emotional than Isak...and watching someone breakdown over the weight of their loved one's manic episode isn't something I'm sure I can deal with so quickly after this scene.

- 134 what makes me the most mad about every Sonja (other than her invalidating every Even's feelings) is the fact that she thinks she's different. like she tells the Isaks that the Evens can't love him and that it's just his MI but even if that were true, why does she think it's any different for her? why does she think "well he definitely loves me, but if he ever loves anyone else it's obviously not real" like???? that makes no sense
it's literally her way of manipulating the Evens so that he can never break up with her. it's vindictive and she's the worst
- 135 The fact that Lucas WANTED to go and see Eliott even though he knew about his mental illness is so ☹️☹️☹️ HE LOVES ELIOTT SO MUCH THAT HE DIDN'T CARE ABOUT HIS ILNESS☹️ But the fact that Lucille said that Eliott CAN'T love Lucas is making me so mad. BITCH, WHAT THE FUCK DO YOU KNOW ABOUT ELIOTT'S FEELINGS?!
- 136 My heart aches for Lucas and Eliott...Lucas is feeling lost, confused, and absolutely gutted. Heartbroken on a level he probably didn't even realize himself capable. I just hope his friends will remind him that Eliott hasn't been manic for all these weeks, and he really does love Lucas. Lucille is just being petty and terribly insensitive. My partner sometimes struggles with understanding my emotions when I'm cycling, and the burden of MI on the people who love us is really something we need to talk about. It's okay for them to feel things while we cycle, they don't stop being people just because we require special care. Eliott is at rock bottom, cloaked in shame and darkness. He is likely feeling some extremely scary emotions right now, things that were only alluded to in OG. I think Skam France might actually go there when it comes to suicide idelation. It's a terribly triggering topic, but so important. If Lucille manages to convince Lucas that Eliott never loved him, I can only imagine she'll convince Eliott that Lucas can't handle him or won't want him after this. That's just going to add even more to his heartache. This week is going to be terrible, but I'm here if people need to talk. I'm bipolar. I go through rapid cycles, and then long periods of mental stability. Those cycles can really fuck with my life and my family, so if anyone needs to talk or has questions, I'm here.
- 137 It's like I'm worried for Lucas but I'm terrified for Eliott. We spent all last week establishing the support network Lucas has. He is suffering but he has amazing friends ready to ease or distract him from his pain. Eliott has NO ONE. He clearly didn't want to spend time with his parents this weekend so they don't seem close and Lucille is an ex-girlfriend who mothers him and tried to break him and Lucas up earlier this week. He's probably at the police station, naked, slowly realizing what he's done. His parents and Lucille are going to come pick him up and the first thing he'll notice is that Lucas isn't there. The sentence "I don't want crazy

people in my life” is going to be on loop in his mind. He will feel heartbroken, humiliated, exhausted, defeated and perhaps even suicidal. (I think they added the dialogue about killing themselves in the scene because it’s probably something he’s contemplated before.) His parents and Lucille are going to smother him and make him feel like a child who doesn’t understand his emotions. They’re going to want to make decisions for him like: it’s best that we take you home with us, it’s best that he leave Lucas alone or its best that we make sure Lucas can’t contact him, it’s best that he drop out of school. Lucille probably told his parents that Lucas was the bad influence that made him smoke weed and drink. Eliott is going to come home surrounded by people who he doesn’t want to see, obsessively worrying about what Lucas is thinking. Will Lucas ever forgive him? Will Lucas accept him now that the secret is out? Will Lucas laugh at him and call him crazy to his friends? Does Lucas still love him? In conclusion, both of them are going to be in a tsunami of pain this weekend, the difference will be that Lucas will have a rope to hang onto but Eliott won’t.

- 138 Lucille is unfortunately the voice of many people. I can love despite my mental disorder and I’m tired of feeling like shit for those who say otherwise. You really make us think that everything, including love, is only in our head.
- 139 I THINK WHAT SLAPS ME IN THE FACE MORE THAN THE OG IS THAT SONJA YELLED AT ISAK AND DIDN’T GIVE HIM MUCH TIME TO DO OR SAY ANYTHING, LUCAS AND LUCILLE WENT BACK AND FORTH AND BUT WITH THIS ONE LUCAS LITERALLY SAID “I’M GOING WITH YOU” EVEN AFTER LUCILLE SAID ELIOTT’S BIPOLAR, WHICH MEANS LUCAS DIDN’T EVEN CARE HE JUST WANTED TO MAKE SURE ELIOTT WAS OKAY AND LUCILLE TOLD HIM TO FUCK OFF AND TOLD HIM ELIOTT DIDN’T LOVE HIM WHICH MAKES IT CLEAR THAT LUCAS THINKS ELIOTT NEVER LOVED HIM AND SO I HATE HER. I FUCKING HATE HER AND I HATE MY LIFE RN I’M SO SAD
- 140 what really made it hurt was the realness of it all. the emotions were too real. it was so heart-wrenching to see the panic in lucas, knowing something is wrong but not knowing what it is exactly nor what to do about it. it felt so distressing to see his terror that eliott was in harm’s way yet having no clue where to find him. as if lucas wasn’t feeling helpless enough, lucille’s words were so brutal that they definitely hit his deeply rooted abandonment issues and insecurities. and what’s even more painful was the low that came for eliott, the huge possibility that he’s still in a depressive state right now. it hurts how familiar these feelings are. the numbness, the hopelessness, the shame, the guilt, the self-loathing, the dreadful feeling of his fears coming true. that he won’t be accepted. that he scared away the boy he loves more than anything. he just wanted to show lucas how much he meant to him. he was willing to risk it all for lucas. the night that was supposed to be special left them both thinking that they lost each other, each having a different reason to believe so. people with MI are very much capable of love. eliott is very much capable of love, so much that he’d risk his own mental health for it. that boy has too much love in his system. and lucas, who said that he’s better off without mentally ill people in his life, wanted to be there for him right away. lucas, who used to run away from conflict, wanted to stay. lucas is willing to follow him anywhere, because eliott matters so much. it wasn’t eliott’s first episode and probably won’t be his last either. it’s an illness that he can’t control and shouldn’t be judged for. but lucas will show him that he’s not alone, that he’s not afraid.

he's still a little misguided, but he'll soon learn and grow. he'll realise the wrongness of his throwaway comments and apologise at some point. the next time something like that happens he will be there to help. no more confusion, no more doubts. just acceptance, understanding, and love. lucas n°1 loves eliott n°1 as much as eliott n°1 loves lucas n°1. in this universe, they are fated to be together. whatever life throws at them, they will face it together. and they will be okay. soon.

- 141 Few thoughts after Vendredi. Maxence and Axel were absolutely terrific in this episode. They actually made me feel every ounce of emotion that their characters were feeling. The way Maxence delivered his lines and the way his facial expressions fully conveyed Eliott's manic episode and both the highs as well as lows of his episode.,,,, wOw. His performance was so surreal that I felt truly scared and anxious about Eliott. And we are so lucky to have Axel as our Lucas. The confusion, the fear, the despair! Hearing his desperate screams for Eliott and looking at how he was shaking, trying to hold back another breakdown just literally knocked the air out of me. That's all for now. See ya when I've fully recovered from this episode. p/S: I don't have a clue why but I'm kind of waiting for my boy Eliott to post something on his Instagram and destroy me even more jhskgljhskkl
- 142 I love how they didn't romanticize it (personally I think the Italian one is the best one so far 'cause they showed it in such a raw way, just like it is in real life). Nowadays is common to see in movie/tv shows romanticized mental illness, giving you this idea of a romantic love that's gonna fix the person who's struggling with it. The truth is, people, we don't need to be fixed because we are not broken. We need to be cured because mental illness are diseases, simply. What you can do is be there, be patient because I know it can be hard to deal with us, hold our hand while we heal.
- 143 Every time a new Sonja blows up at Isak, I always wonder if she really believes that Even will come back to her when the manic episode ends. Like has she somehow convinced herself that all of their problems are just the result of his bipolar? That their fighting wasn't real, it was just his brain playing tricks on him? Like I can see her being protective and lashing out but she always says "he doesn't love you" with such confidence that the underlying message is "he still loves me." Like she dated him for this long and has somehow forgotten how he works as a person outside of his disorder. I can only assume that it takes him coming down from his high point and still turning away from her for her to finally realize the breakup was real
- 144 As a person who has bipolar disorder what Lucille said really bothers me, I think because sadly a lot of people think this way. People think that when you are BP and manic that you aren't aware of what is happening and that your feelings aren't real when it is actually the opposite. BP makes all your feelings and emotions to become heightened, but they are still your true feelings. What helped me a lot was my therapist telling me that I just needed to learn to own everything that happened when I was manic. I needed to own all the feelings because they were mine whether they were good or bad they were my truth. I learned to keep a journal so that when I did have an episode and I would come out of the depressive stage I could look back and see that ok these feelings and things were real. So to assume

that some with BP doesn't know what they are feeling and that those feeling as negated because of BP is wrong and saddening.

145 ABOUT ELIOTT

Two things a goddamn SKAM remake needs to make and right now I'm looking at SKAMFR, but expecting nothing, and the first is to let Elliott have a goddamn say in his mental illness, too often, too damn often a mentally ill person exists as an extension of someone else's story, they are shock value, they are scary, etc, we know this.

And it is understandable at least in SKAM, because it's about unlearning prejudices, about being empathetic to the other, and that's cool, that's really good but how often does the person that is actually suffering the lows of a mental illness get a voice for going through it? like how often do they get a voice to tell their story their own way and how they see it, and it's so simple, it's giving them just a moment to actually say the things that mi represents to them.

I feel like that was lacking in OG, I certainly feel like it's gonna lack in SKAMFR, after all the words Lucille chose to dehumanize Elliott, to rob him of autonomy of thought, and the way she wanted to clearly hurt Lucas... it won't fly with me if Elliott doesn't get to feel sth about the things done to him, and how he has been belittled, stranded from his own goddamn autonomy.

Like... I love this remake but honestly, I wish one would do better for the mentally ill, we're not only accessories and shock to storytelling only, we can carry the entire damn thing too.

146 I do wonder whose going to call Lucas on believing that Elliott's feelings for him were because of his MI. OG Skam is was Magnus who told Isak to ask Even what Even feels and thinks instead of just listening to someone else. Skam Italia it was the boys squad and the school shrink I think. I wonder who will get through to Lucas about Elliott? Just because you have a MI, doesn't mean you are your mental illness or everything ties back to being MI. Elliott is his own person, who has a heart, head, and soul that is completely his own. He also has a voice that can speak out and tell his own story.

147 Do you know why Even and Elliott's characters are so important? As someone with bipolar disorder, I feel like I have been misrepresented in television for a long time. Whenever I have seen characters with bipolar disorder, they're one of two extremes: either they're psychotic and dangerous or they have a few slight mood swings. What Skam does is provide a realistic representation, whilst remaining fairly optimistic. It shows the people around Even and Elliott as trying to understand what they're going through and being supportive of them. It also shows, however, how difficult it is for others to deal with and come to terms with the illness. Skam doesn't suggest that bipolar disorder is something that can be cured with medication or that it's something to be taken lightly. It shows that it's an ongoing battle, but one that can be managed. Even and Elliott's characters are strong, but vulnerable, and it's important that they're shown in this way. Those of us with bipolar disorder are more than capable of being our own person, we're capable of making decisions and we're able to cope most of the time with our symptoms, but sometimes we do break down and we can't win and we do need others to help us. The reason I love Even and Elliott so much is that I can see myself in them, I can see my struggles, I can see my thoughts and actions, but I can also see my triumphs. We are capable of finding happiness, even if we do slip sometimes, and I'm glad that the characters are allowed to find their own

happiness in Skam and are able to reach out to the other characters when they need to. Skam normalises bipolar disorder, and this is important because it reduces the stigma. Skam is educating and it doesn't sugarcoat anything, which is also important because the last thing anyone with bipolar disorder needs is to see it being portrayed as something insignificant or small. Skam gives me and my feelings and experiences a sense of validation. I feel respected. I feel like I'm no longer quite as alone.

- 148 Rant with full of grammatic mistakes, sorry:) What Lucille said was horrible. But I tried to imagine what she lived through with Eliott. She got together with him, fell in love, they were happy. Then Eliott started to show signs of MI, he was diagnosed, Lucille stuck with him. She lived through his manic and his depressed phases, tried to care for him, warning him when he did something bad for his health (weed, alcohol). She was scared for him, she was hurt a lot, but she stayed. Possibly Eliott left her a few times, broke her heart, then went back to her and maybe he blamed his mania for the things he did. Then there comes another affair, she thinks she knows how it's all going to play out, like it happened in the past. She is left again, her heart is broken again, but Eliott comes back to her AGAIN. Then he goes back to Lucas, she feels that this is the pattern she knows, and when shit hits the fan, she's been through so much pain and she is so upset, that she talks from anger and hurts Lucas in every possibly way she can. Was it nice? No. All the characters in this story made these kind of mistakes, but they managed or will manage to understand what they did was wrong. Once Lucille realises that this time Eliott is really in love, I think she will see what she has done wrong, and will apologise to Lucas. I wonder a lot: when it comes to Lucas, will he be the one to warn Eliott that he shouldn't smoke? If yes, he will be in Lucille's shoes, he will be the "controlling" one. Will Eliott understand, or will he be upset about it? Should Lucas never warn Eliott, that something is bad for him? What is the right path to take?
- 149 i really hope they give eliott a chance to tell his own story. i really don't want to hear anymore from other people what he's feeling or how he should feel. i want to hear it straight from him. he isn't his MI, he's so much more than that. his thoughts are valid. his feelings are valid. eliott deserves to be heard.
- 150 Okay, so, listen. I understand Lucille being angry and worried sick for Eliott but I hate how she was yelling at Lucas like somehow he was to blame. Lucas had no idea of what was happening and her saying "do you get that?" All the time to him pissed me off. If Lucas had known about Eliott being bipolar and the fact that he should not smoke, no way in hell would he have let Eliott smoke. He was just confused and scared and worried. Another thing, her saying "he can't love you" like?? Are you kidding me?? Him being bipolar doesn't mean he cannot fall in love. In a nutshell, I am pissed off at Lucille and wanna fight her then go hug Eliott and Lucas.
- 151 Friendly reminder that Lucas is on his couch/bed thinking that Eliott never loved him again, meanwhile Eliott probably is on his couch/bed thinking that Lucas never wants to see him again because of his mental illness. Happy Samedi, mecs!
- 152 Okay but Lucille thinking Eliott is straight and his attraction to men is just part of him being manic... You can just imagine how she has treated Eliott being pansexual as just him making it up and like that isn't her understanding his mental illness at all. That is just her thinking his sexuality isn't real and basically thinking

- that since Eliott is bipolar, he needs someone “sane” to treat him like he was a child being taken care of. But sure not liking her is just not giving her the right credit.
- 153 With all the Even/Niccolo/Eliott, they were roughly diagnose and aware of their MI for six months to a year before meeting Isak/Marti/Lucas respectfully?
- 154 I was thinking about Lucille, I wonder do they show her saying all those horrible vile things as if she speaks for Eliott.
To show that this isn't ok, so they can show her apologize for her behavior later on?
People with MI have their own minds, feelings, experiences, ideas, loves, thoughts, hearts, souls, voices, they can speak and act for themselves. They don't need anyone else to be the mouthpiece for them. And Skam overall wanted to show that, that kind of behavior isn't ok or right. But to show that people all mess up at times, especially when they are heighten emotions because they're human. The important thing to do is learn and grow from this, to become better.
- 155 okay but
imagine a whole season centered around eliott and his past? his struggle with MI?? his relationships with the people in his life??
i'd sell my goddamn soul to see that and i wouldn't regret it for a second
- 156 "Anonymous said: i could help you answer that anon who asked about realism i think?"Personally, I thought the depiction was top notch.. When Eliotts voice began to go weird and up and down when he started talking about marriage? Holy crap. I know someone whose voice sounds really weird in his mania episodes... so that was fucking brilliant. And that shot of Eliott sitting and looking extremely tired when Lucas asked do u ever sleep? I got fucking chills. It was like Eliott knew everything was going to go downhill
- 157 So I just had to think about the parallels between the scene where Eliott tells Lucas that he told Lucille about them and the scene in the kitchen in morning after they did it in the school. In the first scene Eliott is all happy and wants them to be together but 1. Lucas pulls away from the kiss (which we know is based on the fact that he wasn't out yet) and 2. Tells him that he doesn't want people with mental illnesses in his life. Elliott is hurt and also very unsure of Lucas and their relationship which leads him back to Lucille. Then they reconcile during the paint scene and afterwards in the kitchen Eliott tells him that he didn't think Lucas wanted something serious. I think he is very clearly talking about his mental illness here. That he didn't want to open himself up to a new person (Lucas) if they are already so prejudiced against people with mental illnesses but rather go back to “safe people” like Lucille who already know. So I think Eliott was ready to tell him as soon as the kitchen scene but was too scared because of his earlier comment.
Idk the writing of Skam France is honestly on another level and there are so many layers behind every scene and word and gesture. I really really hope there's a clip coming today!!!
- 158 Personally,, like, I love Skam so much because of Even's character and his storyline. I loved and related to him in 2016 because I was just newly diagnosed and I was just coming into treatment, and seeing a character function and be loved was so special because at that moment I didn't believe I was capable of being

loved. And watching Skam France in 2019 now has meant so much more. Because I'm in the same position as Eliott. I had to repeat my final school year again because I was so unwell I could not complete all of my subjects. I've been hospitalised three times since 2016, I have not been well. And repeating a year made me feel like such a failure. I cried for so long when school told me realistically I would not be able to finish. And there isn't really any representation of characters like me, who have their schooling interrupted because they're too sick. No one really wants to acknowledge kids like me. So seeing Eliott go through the same thing that I'm going through this year has made Skam and the character of Even/Nico/Eliott so much more important to me. To see boys who are like me be loved by so many people. Who have their illnesses but who's essence and personality contains so much more, who are capable of brilliance.

- 159 Correct me if I'm wrong.. but I can't even tell you how much it worries me that Eliott has been the only Even to directly mention suicide twice so far (in Samedi 9h17 and Vendredi 19h25) and then today we got that clip where they showed Lucas reading the article right at the part where it mentions that those who are bipolar are at frequent risk of suicide (foreshadow?)... Along with the fact that Eliott now believes Lucas wants nothing to do with him because of his MI. I'm really worried for Eliott.

Although, it is extremely important to understand that suicide and thoughts of suicide are a big risk factor for those suffering and so if they do choose to portray that this Friday, I hope they do it realistically and do it justice. No glorifying please.

- 160 I don't know why they act like smoking weed is such a bad thing for a bipolar person. I grew up with a bipolar stepfather which believe me was no picnic. I love him but it was a struggle. If anything smoking thc and cbd together has helped him. It relaxes his mind so he's not racing all the time. I remember when I was younger he would call my mom 30 times in 10 minutes if she didn't answer right away. He always has good intentions though. As long as he stays on his meds he's okay.

- 161 ELIOTT PROBABLY THINKS LUCAS MEANS HE CAN'T MANAGE ELIOTT BEING BIPOLAR BECAUSE HAS NO IDEA WHAT LUCILLE TOLD LUCAS I CAN'T TAKE THIS

- 168 I think Skam France has done a great job at addressing things characters have said and done in the past and making it a topic of conversation between the characters involved instead of just forgetting about it; like Lucas confronting Eliott about Lucille (more than once), and Yann talking about his past comments about calling Lucas gay. So I hope that the reason they changed Yann's reaction to Lucas coming out (and putting us through so much heartache) in this version is so that Lucas will realize that he'd done the same thing to Eliott with the 'crazy people' comment and that's why Eliott reacted the way he did before and why he didn't tell him about his mental illness.

- 169 MYSTERYGIRL125-BLOG replied to your post "I'm starting to think the crass ableist language of this week isn't..."

I agree...but I want to point out that the OG never gave a voice to Even when it came to his MI either.

ugh i know, don't remind me, it's just... so fucking annoying, like I love the idea, but the execution always falls flat, like yeah it's a groundbreaking storyline, but

also... it still uses ableist tropes, in terms of autonomy and who gets to tell the story. And it irks me to no end, but I am divided because in the end, better rep of mental illness? Does not really exist.

- 170 Don't get me wrong, I loved the ending of Episode 7 with a tearful and lost Lucas but honestly, Skam France better pull through on their reunion because Lucas stating in the last clip "I don't have a guy, my guy is bipolar" sounds an awful lot like unacceptance and lack of understanding about Elliott's condition to me. Time to fix this shit y'all.
- 171 What I'd like to see discuss in the next eps:
Why is Elliott off his meds? Was he ever on meds?
Lucas supporting him in his therapy.
Elliott telling Lucas why he didn't tell him about his MI.
Lucas realising how his "crazy" comments affected Elliott in a way him not telling about it.
- 172 It's so refreshing to see basile be mature and understanding about Elliott's bipolar, I feel like if he was this way with daphne he would actually have a chance with her and be much more likeable. I hope they continue his character arc this way as it's the only way I could believe him and our sweet princess daphne end up together
- 173 Les gens, il faut les prendre comme ils sont.
So, in OG my all time favorite line is "She's not crazy. She's bipolar."
So guess which line is my all time favorite in Skam France?
And to think both of them were delivered by "stupid" characters.
- 174 There is hope and Lucas' expression after his conversation with Basille, which we really didn't see with Isak. For Isak, after talking to Magnus, he was starting to realize that maybe he didn't have things right, but he still backpedaled when talking to his dad, before finally confirming his relationship with Even. I feel like there's pain and sadness from Isak, but I think confusion was his driving emotion. His thoughts and feelings about what happened and his relationship with Even were all scattered. He was just so lost. But with Lucas, it feels like he is more ready to commit and be there for Elliott, but he was holding back because of what Lucille said on the boat. Basille's speech about bipolar helped snap Lucas out of the pity spiral he was going down. Lucas is also confused, but I think he's most driven by the pain he feels from his separation from Elliott. Since it's only Monday, it will be really interesting to see how social media will play out this week. Every time I try to make a prediction about what will happen, I am usually about half right. So, take this with a grain of salt, but I think we will get another clip of Lucas going to visit his mom and talking to her about Elliott. This is when we will get the text that Isak got about his mother accepting and loving him no matter what, but it will be in person for Lucas. Because Skam France is all about coming for our tear soaked wigs. I think that might happen on Wednesday. Then we've got Tuesday and Thursday for social media updates that should hopefully make us feel like Lucas is reaching out to Elliott, and Elliott is in a depressive episode. Then on Friday Elliott will send a reply message to Lucas and they will reunite. But you know, the show likes to mess with us so...

- 175 I want to hug Maxence and just say, “thank you for understanding us so well, thank you for representing us, thank you for being Eliott” because I’ve never seen an actor play a character with bipolar disorder so well before
- 176 God, seriously, I love how they’ve handled the subject so far. Lucas’ panic and ignorance (which match the 90 % of population. Ok, maybe the percentage is a little bit too high? But still) about the MI topic explain perfectly his behaviour. On the other hand, Basile is super chill about it because he knows what he’s talking about, he has the information. Also, there was no drama, the whole conversation was super chill, like it should be. David, you have my heart sir.
- 177 Can I just say that I’m also really happy Basile was honest about how, yeah, sometimes being close to someone with bipolar sucks and is really annoying, but that it shouldn’t stop you from being close to them. I felt that hard. This site is so busy making sure everyone feels validated for every little choice they make, or make them feel warm and cuddled even if they fuck up, that people just disregard how hard it is for the people close to those with MI. Does it make people with MI feel bad to hear that? Yeah, but too bad. Our loved ones deserve validation too, and their feelings aren’t less important than ours because we have MI. It does suck sometimes to be close to people with MI, and it is annoying from time to time too. But is it worth it? I hope so! I’m more than my illness. Eliott is more than his illness. Basile did a good job of explaining this to Lucas. You have to accept people as they are, and if you really care for them, the MI is just one piece of a really wonderful puzzle.
- 178 how lucas handled eliott’s MI was upsetting, but understandable because he only had negative experiences with MI growing up. his absent dickhead of a father takes a huge part of the blame for that. besides, the panic and terror on friday was still fresh in his mind, and lucille’s words got so deep in his head that he ended up breaking down. despite his hurt and confusion, he still yearns for eliott. but he thought he was doing him a favor by keeping a distance because he’s afraid to make eliott’s situation worse. not telling his dad that the text was just a joke and still referring to eliott as his boyfriend showed that he still chose to believe in what they have. what lucas needed was someone to point him to the right direction and i’m glad that basile did that with his speech. now that he’s enlightened, he can let go of his misconceptions and be on his way to becoming a reliable support system to eliott and even his mom. he still has a lot to learn and realise for himself but the important thing is his eyes are finally opened to a healthier approach, contrary to what he grew up seeing. he’s learning that mentally ill people can only speak for themselves and their feelings are valid. i’d love to see him have a good conversation with his mom because that will help him understand a lot more things. realising how much he hurt eliott with his “crazy” comments might weigh heavily on him, but it’s necessary for his growth. and i’m convinced that he’ll apologise too, just like yann did. it’s reassuring that he doesn’t bottle it up his emotions anymore like used to, plus he’s got big bro mika and big sis manon as well as the boy and girl squads as his support system. i’m extra worried about eliott who’s in a dark place right now. it kills me to not know how he’s doing or how he’s coping. he probably has his parents looking after him but an eliott pov switch this week would be nice, just to see his perspective even for a brief moment. despite the shame and guilt, he was still brave enough to reach out to lucas, because he doesn’t want to lose him. he doesn’t want a repeat of what happened last time. i’m so proud of him for trying. he was beaming with happiness

to see lucas so happy on that boat and he wanted nothing more but to have that moment last for eternity. lucas means the world to him and losing him has been his greatest fear all this time. after lucas pulled away, he must be filled with dread, thinking that his fear already came true. the thought that he's probably hating himself for something that is by no means his fault makes my heart ache. i can't wait for lucas to finally come through and show eliott how worthy he is of love.istg the stress from this show has already taken 35 years from my lifespan but i trust the OHN scene to add 50 more years to it. GO GET YOUR MEC LUCAS.

- 179 okay yann cazas lookin so cute and excited thinking lucas felt like shit bc he was up spending time with eliott. then of all people i'm really glad it was basile to talk a little sense into lucas about this situation. it was very unconventional, unexpected, lighthearted, yet still super meaningful. it was a casual conversation but it was important. i actually loved how nonchalant it was because these types of conversations should be normalized so stigmas around being bipolar/ other mental illness can be eliminated. the more we talk about it, the less people would have to feel alienated or alone because we'll see that many go through it and it doesnt make them any less human than the other. lucas wanted to stay away from eliott bc he feared it would make it worse but baz proved that it would be the opposite. seeing lucas would make eliott feel way better if anything bc right now he is scared he lost the one person he truly loves due to his manic episode. maybe some people with mental illness want to be left alone but we also don't want to be treated like youre walking on eggshells. we feel everything deeply and a lot of times it's a struggle to manage but that doesn't mean we should be isolated or treated differently. this was a great clip. lucas is learning & he has his boys by his side & he's found hope once again
- 184 Can you imagine thought that the last clip of episode 10 is Lucas taking Eliott to meet his mom. In the OG, there were still loose ends that needed to be tied up in that scene: the Sana-weed thing, his convo with Eva etc, but Skamfr has addressed all those things. He got the weed back and his relationship with Eva and the rest of the girl squad has been a vital part of this season already. So bringing Eliott to meet his mom (presumably after they'd had the 'crazy people' talk already) shows that he can and does have a loving relationship with her and that he can have one with Eliott as well. And it can show Lucas that despite her mental illness, his mom never once stopped loving him with all her heart. And that just because a person has a mental illness, it doesn't mean they don't know how to love.
- 185 This is too real, I can't handle it. Of course I deserve love, we all do but as I mentally ill person, I fear the pain I might put someone through..
- 186 I always imagine how would Lucile set things between her and Lucas post the MI episode. I always thought Lucile is a gentle person. Her love for Eliott, even if it's a little unhealthy but we all knew that she loves Eliott and would do anything for him. It's hard enough to be with a bipolar person for such a long time without getting overprotected and going insane at some point. So when she realized that Lucas can do better than her and has proven that he actually can, Lucile has decided to let the man go and be supportive for Eliott's sake. Above all, she knew Eliott better than anyone before Lucas. She managed to keep up with the MI for years that she's getting insane out of jealousy. But after all this time, what matter

is Elliott's well being. And she finally realized that Lucas among all in the universe for once can do better. So... give her an applause for her anti-heroic kindness.

187 I know Maxence had some doubts and anxiety about his performance as a bipolar character, but as a bipolar person, I really wish I could thank him and tell him that he's fucking amazing.

188 I'm sure they're going to give us the actual minutt for minutt's talk but I loved how they showed Elliott's MI. He just sleeping, not talking, walking almost like a zombie, ignoring Lucas (because I'm sure he did when Lucas went to him trying to make him eat something (kind of like Ian's 'leave me alone' to Mickey)). And I'm sure it hurt Lucas but now he knows what he has to deal with and he'll learn along the way, with Elliott.

189 My heart aches for both Lucas and Elliott, because I understand how hard it is. I know Lucas loves Elliott and wants to help him, he wants Elliott to let him in and open up. He wants to make him okay.
But god, I know what Elliott's pain is like right now. Sometimes, nothing fucking matters. Sometimes you hate yourself and the things that you've done, and/or you hate your mental illness so badly that it's hard to even imagine a light at the end of the tunnel. It makes you question people, loved ones, their motives. It makes you question YOU.

And I know logically there's no romanticizing mental illness. No person can "fix" you and love won't make it go away, but i just wanna scream right now, Elliott, baby, here is your light! Things are dark for now, and they may be again, but he loves you and he wants to guide you!

190 skamfr sure does keep the waterworks going. i'm glad that they didn't gloss over how the bad days are like because that side should be normalised too. lucille's speech is something i needed to hear, not only for myself but for the people around me as well. as someone struggling with depression, i'm aware that there are times when it's not easy to be around me so i often shut people out and isolate myself. that way there are less chances of me getting hurt and hurting others. even when i had thoughts about ending it all i still chose to not reach out for help. i've convinced myself that i'm not worth their time, that it's better to keep everything to myself than bother my loved ones with my problems. what sucks is sometimes i get annoyed when they try to help because my head is so deep in the darkness that all i want is to be left alone. because no one understands my pain anyway. but after that clip, i realised how badly i need people who are willing to sit with me through the bad days. i do need help even when i don't think i need it. after seeing it from a loved one's perspective, i realised that it's not easy for them too but they love me enough to keep trying. i appreciate that. i still wish lucille didn't say the words she said before but it was tough for her too and she apologised for her wrongness. i respect her strength and love for eliott. i hope she also finds the happiness she deserves one day. and i'm pretty sure we'll get the actual 'minutt for minutt' clip and hear eliott's voice soon. while it is important to see a loved one's perspective in caring for a person with mi, it is also very important to hear that person's voice because no one will ever be qualified to express their thoughts and feelings for them. attempting to speak for a mi person can be very damaging. "only you know what you feel." so i'm counting on it.

- 191 Anyone complaining about not getting a minute-by-minute speech from Lucille needs to hear two things: The episode isn't over. We may be getting the classic line from Lucas to Eliott, so just hold your damn horses. I love that line from OG, it's beautiful, and it implies beautiful things. However, what Skam France did affected me so much more, because it showed us what minute-by-minute really means. As someone with mental illness, pretty words are sometimes just that. Words. Not always meaningless, but sometimes, yeah, words are meaningless. The actions of our loved ones is what matters, and in this scene, we were given a brief glimpse of what it will be like for Lucas to be there for Eliott during a depressive episode. We saw him ignore Lucas. We saw him refuse to eat. We saw him sleep. We saw him show little to no appreciation for Lucas' presence until the very end. And that's real. It doesn't mean Eliott doesn't appreciate Lucas, it just means he isn't capable of showing anything at the moment. Seeing Lucas accept that and embrace Eliott when Eliott's ready? That's what I need to see. I think OG did everything right for their story and for Isak and Even, but Skam France also did everything right for the story they're trying to tell. Words can be beautiful, but that scene? Absolutely gorgeous.
- 192 Oh god, I have so many emotions about today's clip and I just -
Bravo Lucille. This clip made me sympathize with her character so much. At the beginning of the clip she's trying so hard to keep on that bitter, uncaring mask, and at first I really didn't know what to expect, but when she broke down I lost it a little. With Lucas on the barge after Eliott's episode, she handled absolutely everything wrong, but she did it because she was hurt and furious and heartbroken, and we learned today that she's had to deal with several of Eliott's "whims" in the past - not her first rodeo. It doesn't excuse her behavior, but today we saw a GLOW UP. She clearly loves Eliott so much, maybe believes that Eliott is the love of her life and she's lost him to someone else even, yet she met up with that someone else to explain what he needs to do, how he can take care of and be there for Eliott, and ugh, I just, that was so emotional and well-handled. She could have been bitter and lashed out again and cut all contact and left Lucas in the dark, but she didn't. The voiceover of her explaining that sometimes all Lucas would be able to do is look at Eliott, and feel powerless, but that Eliott would always, always, always come back, while Lucas goes to buy flowers and food and finally curls up in bed reading with Eliott - excuse me while I go cry for the rest of the day.
- 193 AS SOMEONE WHO IS IN A RELATIONSHIP WITH A PARTNER
SUFFERING FROM DEPRESSION, I WHOLEHEARTEDLY AGREE WITH
LUCILLE'S ADVICE. IT TAKES A LOT OF PATIENCE TO BE THERE FOR
THEM AND YOU PUT IN THE EFFORT BECAUSE THEY ARE WORTH IT.
LOVE WITH UNDERSTANDING IS ALL YOU WANT TO GIVE.
- 194 the fact that I'm probably never getting an 'even' character's season Breaks my
heart
I deserve a season with a main who struggles with mental illness and never getting
that would be such an injustice considering how little representation there is
(not to mention lowkey unrealistic considering the volume of teenagers who
struggle with MI everyday)
- 195 My favourite thing about the experience of watching Skam France is the amount
of people who have reached out to me about bipolar disorder, either wanting to

- learn about it or wanting to share their experience of it. I feel like it's brought people together and created a little community and support network
- 196 I'm just saying an Eliott season would mean so much to me as a queer person with a mental illness. I was forced to take a year off from uni after basically lying in bed for two months ignoring classes and other responsibilities, and I'm sick of only getting to see MIs like mine through another character's eyes. I want to see Eliott's life through his eyes, how he copes and doesn't cope, how he navigates a relationship, how he gets out of bed some mornings and some mornings he doesn't, how his daily life is impacted by his mental illness without being defined by it. There are almost no positive portrayals of characters with mental illness in the media, particularly a more "serious" one like bipolar disorder, and an Eliott season would do so much to destigmatize and humanize mental illness. Showing him living each day, having a healthy romantic relationship, seeing the ups and downs, watching him grow and learn about himself over a season, would be so powerful for me and so many others, offering hope and encouragement to people who often feel like there can't be a happy ending for them because of their MI.
- 197 I showed my brother the clip from the morning and he told me that Eliott looked and acted like I do when I have a depressive episode. So when I see anyone say Skam France isn't realistic I have to scoff and roll my damn eyes.
- 198 I see a lot of discussion about the idea that Eliott cheated on Lucille and people being mad at SkFr for implying something there about the dependency of bisexual/pansexual or bipolar persons. I'm not going to make excuses or defenses for that kind of behavior but I think it's important to remember that, while generalization and stereotyping aren't okay, many bipolar people are, in fact, promiscuous and prone to that type of behavior. Sometimes, manic episodes come in waves of doing things without thinking, and later you know that it was wrong and you hate yourself for things you do or say. No, it is NOT okay and I hope no one takes me saying that as trying to excuse it, and I hope that they do address it more in the show later on because cheating on someone is never acceptable, but it can be a real problem sometimes and I feel like they could use it as character growth if they needed to, since the implication is there already.
- 199 my thoughts on eliotts cheatingi am very aware of the negative stigma surrounding pan/bi sexuality and cheating and also MI especially bipolar.its a very real stereotype that bipolar WILL cheat and that bi/pan people WILL cheat and we all know that that is just not logically truehowever, eliotts MI does increase the likelihood of him cheating bc hypersexuality is a symptom of mania.this also distinguishes eliotts "cheating" from neurotypicals cheating. the hypersexuality brought on by the mania will cloud your judgement and its not about the person you are in relationship with but purely about the person with bipolar disorder. however, it is obviously managable in a relationship just like other aspects of MI and wont lead to cheatingi just imagine that a lot of these previous people lucille mentioned that eliott has potentially cheated on her with were bc of his undiagnosed and untreated MI when he was alone in his struggles and not knowing what was happening. even if he was diagnosed and this still happened (which i find unlikely due to the timeline etc) it still very much could be his potential hypersexuality and not great relationship with lucille making him seek out sex and love else where and the fact that she cant be available to him emotionally and physically 100 percent of the time. thats not fair to her but also

not an excuse to cheat i believe the cheating took place while he was undiagnosed and not handling his MI based on the timeline of eliott being recently diagnosed (due to the transfer im assuming this) i know personal stories of people with bipolar cheating before their diagnosis and never after bc once you know what is happening and you and your partner can handle it, just like any other relationship you communicate and work with it not against it. im not trying to say people with bipolar always cheat, or am i trying to justify the cheating, im simply trying to show the reality of the relationship eliott probably had with his MI and with lucille, and im also trying to distinguish the cheating eliott did from what we would normally consider cheating bc i dont believe they are equivalent. he always returned to lucille and she stood by him which means they had somewhat solid relationship and that they both loved each other and when his mania faded along with the supposed hypersexuality he returned to her like she said im not really going to discuss cheating in relation to bi/pan just bc thats a less relevant topic to this situation. but biphobia is essentially the root. and we are all smart enough to know people dont cheat bc of their orientation. am i angry they showed cheating in relation to bipolar and pansexuality? no bc its relevant to the story, if it was used for drama i would have been yes but everything has context.

- 200 I've just watched the last clips again and let me tell you something: the priest speech matched perfectly Lucas and Elliott's relationship's development. I can only imagine how terrified must have been Lucas. I mean, he got a message from Lucille saying Elliott is missing and, as I said before, I think Elliott is the darkest Even so far. He mentioned suicide two times already, the morning after their first kiss when Lucas was telling him about the parallel universes (he suggested him that one the many Lucas could be jumping from a skyscraper) and the night Lucas found out about his MI, when he said "We should die tonight then, when we're reaching the zenith". Also, the fact that he doesn't see himself as the number 1 Elliott make me think how many times he truly thought about ending it, how many times he reached the point where he felt like he couldn't take it anymore. And both times Lucas seemed worried and a little bit scared, and he asked him to not to talk about this stuff. So, when he ran looking for him, I'm sure his mind was full of horrible thoughts/imagines. He was running to save him, to find him before was too late. And the relief he felt when he found him, that was everything.
- 201 lucas doesn't push eliott to talk to reciprocate and that's important because lucas realizes that eliott's mental health takes time and he'll always be there no matter how long it takes :)
- 202 I know we expected or wished for a happy clip but depression doesn't go away within a couple of days. After a day where you felt better you might suddenly go back to not being able to get up. It is like that. It was hurtful to see him push Lucas away like that. But it was very realistic. Be patient.
- 203 Seeing today's clip makes me more convinced that we need Elliott season so much.
The way they are portraying depression is so accurate and real and we need to see more of it. I believe France (David and the boys) will do so much justice to this really important topic. There are so many people struggling with their MIs and it is so important to show them that they are not alone, they are not a burden to those who love them the way Lucas loves Elliott. That there are always people around them who are more than willing to stand by them.

- And we need Eliott season also because of those who don't know what MI actually means. They need to be educated on this. People should realize that everyone is equal regardless their gender, race, sexuality, MI etc. And that we should treat eachother with respect and love.
Yes, today's clip hurt. But it was so important to show this side of depression. Because this is real. This is how it actually happens in real life. And I'm so thankful to Skam France that it treats this issue with so much care and respect.
- 204 The reality hurts Lucas face falling, his first time properly trying to cope/ find ways to help Eliott, to still go through his normal routine, while still trying to be there for Eliott. The reality hurts Eliott still not doing good, his absence and feelings of being a burden, low moments still happening even in light of moments of improvement. The reality hurts but thank you Skam France for showing it. For showing the true aspects of a mental illness
- 205 I'm glad Skam France break the "romanticism" cycle of being with a MI person, like OG or Italia have done. I love OG and Italia and the direction they had take, I'm just glad (and hurt) to see the down and realistic side of it too.
Honestly I hope that we get to have more content of Eliott in the future (potential) S5&6 because they can't just leave Eliott story being told only in s.3.
- 206 This morning's clip is heavy yet so wonderful with its continuation of the Minutt For Minutt clip. We basically just saw the bit where Even/Nico feel like such a burden and can't handle the idea of their boyfriend seeing them in such a state. But with Eliott, we were able to see him pushing Lucas away not through further sadness but through irritability.
Of course it is horrible to see it hurt Lucas, but I am really grateful that Skam France has chosen to show so many elements of low mood swings. Not just because of the representation but because it (as weird as it may sound) makes me feel closer to Eliott. We're getting to see the whole Eliott now instead of the empty school corridors and ominous instagram posts. We get to see him at his 'worst' and how Lucas will navigate through it. It's an important step in their new secret-free relationship and I am grateful we get to join them on this journey too. I wanted to hide under my own blanket when I saw Lucas scrunch up the sweet note he had left for Eliott though. Was he worried it would piss Eliott off more and his own insecurities flared up too? This dynamic is very new to them and no doubt it will take time for both of them to trust they are loved unconditionally by each other.
It was probably a good move to remove the note though if Eliott was feeling so frustrated and ashamed of himself – it might have made him feel worse about himself for being so *insert every self loathing thought* while Lucas is being so sweet.
As tough as this part is to watch, it is obviously going to make Eliott's returning equilibrium feel more wonderful for us and Lucas to witness. It's going to be amazing when Eliott is feeling better and ready for his hugs again. Ah, the anticipation.
- 207 SKAM France keeps amazing me. This show is doing an amazing job representing depression and as much as Lundi 8h10 hurts, I felt like I was relating to both Lucas and Eliott. This is even more important after Lucille's speech. Lucas is now seeing how fast days can change and how frustrating and hurtful it is. And don't even get me started on Eliott, even though he loves Lucas more

- than anything, he can't help being irritable and snapping at him and right now he's feeling even worse when yesterday everything seemed better. I hope they have something similar to minutt for minutt this week, they (we) need it.
- 208 If they didn't talk about.. well.. everything , Eliott must feel so insecure right now If they didn't talk, he must be doubting everything. He must be so afraid of having pushed Lucas "I don't need crazy people in my life" away.
The rejection text from last Sunday is probably fresh on his mind too. We know how he lashes out when he is feeling too much hurt. We saw that with the « Mec » incident when he counterattacked with the infamous makeout session. Also when his jealousy got the best of him during the double date and he ended lashing out at Lucille after her remark on his failed exam.
So, he is scared right now, that Lucas' s not going to stay, that he will see how much of a burden he is (in his mind ofc), that he's doing this out of pity maybe. That's what I felt after my depressive episode a few months back. Maybe I'm just projecting here.
All this without forgetting the emotional turmoil he is in because of his MI (I hope I'm not offending anyone when I phrase it like that) and this other side of depression they are showing extremely well this clip.
He must hate himself so much right now, I can't wait to see him being reassured in the next clip.
- 209 So, after that clip, I believe that we need an Eliott season even more now. It would be such an important season and so far, skam France has been portraying and showing Eliott's mental health very realistically and it's refreshing to see a show doing that.
- 210 Thank you Skam France for showing reality in it's most painful form and not sugar-coating it.
Thank you for showing how mental illness effects individuals who have a mental illness, but also the effects it can have on those close to those who are a mental illness
The clip is so painful because it wasn't expected, but it was reality. As Lucille said there is no magic formula
- 211 im almost surprised i didnt cry at this clip maybe i will later, and while im not usually one to cry i have had an unusually emotional weekend including crying for the first time bc of skam france and then more bc of other stuff and last night i got hit my an intense wave of depression and its still lingering i almost didnt get out of bed this morningand then that clip cameand its so accurate. i know a lot of people are saying that elriott immediately regretted doing what he did and i agree to some extent i also recognise the pure hate and anger you can feel towards people you love when youre depressedits basically a mirror to my depression and the anger and irritation it brings and especially towards my mom and sometimes rest of my familyits a feeling of irritation and it burns hot and white and after you just feel numb you dont really care you hurt someone bc in your head they deserve it and they have angered you and instigated it even though you were the one to raise your voice etcand after sure you feel bad but youre also embarrassed and dont really wanna talk about it so you end up not really apologising right away not until you feel better and is in a place to more objectively look at your mental state and actionsi see myself in elriott and his bipolar depression is so much worse than i could ever imagine but i see my anger and frustration that i so rarely

see on tv etc and im a girl as well so its even less rare for me to see girls depression manifest in anger and irritation than sadness and its just as painful and its a lot more toxic bc you spread your hurt and pain to people around you my mother can vouch for that i want an eliott season bc while i dont have bipolar disorder i have mood swings and it will be nice to see a character that does deal with depression but not as a constant and still experience periods of happiness or excitement side note: eliott covering himself with the cover? yeah i felt that in my bones. it was like looking in mirror. the comfort of not being seen can give, hiding how you actually feel, cutting yourself off to not hurt people further? yeah i get that

- 212 As much as it hurts seeing that clip, I'm glad they showed the anger that comes with depression. It's a common misconception that depressed people are just sad and mope around all day when it's actually so much more. On my most depressive days I get like that, you feel so much, your head is so loud that you lash out at anyone who dares to say anything. Just Saturday I did the same thing, lashing out at my mom because she kept telling that it will get better and that I have to fight to get out of it. When you're in that state of mind there are no words of love that can help, anything becomes a trigger. And when you're done saying whatever bad thing you just said to a loved one it's feels like absolute shit. You regret it instantly, you want to hide from the world because you feel guilty. For Eliott was covering his head, for me is to hang up the phone and cry. This clip and this season are so important because they don't shy away from showing how things truly are. And I can't even imagine how powerful an Eliott season would be!
- 213 Skam isn't romanticising bipolar disorder at all and that's so important. They're showing the reality, that perhaps we're nasty sometimes, that we push people away, that we get tired of being treated too gently
- 214 It's so important that Lucas continues his life and his responsibilities even through Elliott's depressive episodes. I mean, he needs to be there to make sure Elliott is okay when he's at his worst, but as someone with mental illness, I will tell you that I resent it so much when my partner sacrifices what I think is too much to help me. I don't want them to miss out on life because of my problems, and this is Elliott saying the same. It's embarrassing, and by telling them to go, to live your life and take care of your responsibilities, we're taking back some of the power we lose in our mental illness. There should always be a balance, and Elliott should accept Lucas' help and presence when he really needs it, but sometimes its really best to just leave us alone so we don't feel like so much of a burden. You may not see it that way, but it's what we need.
- 215 As difficult as it was to watch, I am so pleased they showed us more of what it will be like for Lucas. Mental illness doesn't just come and go when convenient, and Elliott is a person with his own journey. Lucas isn't going to cure Elliott, and it's important for the audience to know that. No matter how much Lucas loves him, Elliott will always be this way. This is exactly how you tell a story about mental illness, it doesn't end when the characters get together or even when the story ends. I'm so grateful to Skam France for showing such a realistic portrayal of mental illness.
- 216 "Anonymous asked: Thats exactly what i love from this clip. Bc of some movies i think people (i don't think they realize this tbh) have this misconception how love

can fix everything, cure everything, and it's not. I'll always be like this, for the rest of my life but having people that i love around me really make things a lot better."Exactly. I'm so glad this spoke to you too. It does nothing to help people with mental illness, or help the people who love people with mental illness, to think they will get better if you just love them enough. Or that there is ANYTHING you can do to cure them. As Mama Lallemant and Basille said, we have to accept people for who they are. This is Skam France accepting Eliott for who he is.

- 217 Basille said basically everything I did in my post so I'm not going to repeat myself, but we Stan a mental health positivity king.
- 218 "Anonymous asked: So far they handle this MI arc so great.. i did not expect it to be this good tbh, the way they showed us what minute-by-minute really means, how eliott is a grown ass boy who will come around when he's ready or need a help and how lucas need to live his own life bc eliott isnt his burden, hes not a burden. Some people get worn out bc they too invested (idk the right word) in relationship with an mi person that they forgot to live their own life. I hope we'll get eliott talking for himself soon"
Originally posted by ihiphop
Yes to all of this. Eliott is no one's burden, but he will feel like it from time to time and it's Lucas job to show Eliott that he is loved, but that Lucas life will not be negatively impacted by Eliott. Lucas needs to continue on as he always has, as much as he can, to show Eliott that he isn't a burden. Eliott has doesn't this before, he knows what's best for him in these moments. He will let Lucas know what he needs and when he need it, and then Lucas will be there for him. That's love, bitch. And it's freaking beautiful.
- 219 MerdeI am crying. Like really crying. My French is fucking rusty but I understood what Eliott was saying mainly due to the expressions and the look on his face.This clip is soooo good. The one from this morning was also so realistic. I am the same way. I snap at people, I am rude and angry and sometimes aggressive and I regret it instantly.I love how Skam France is handling the mi storyline. I love the OG with my whole being, but I never related to Even as much as I do with Eliott. Evens depression was not portrayed in a bad way, but to me it seemed that it was okay and better very soon after they reunited. I know Even could feel shitty and depressed and maybe hid it better, but with Eliott the emotions seem to be much more raw. I see myself in him. I am so grateful for this.
- 220 The fact that Lucas looks at Eliott like that not long at all after he's experienced some of what Eliott's depression entails for the first time is so pure
- 221 I'm so happy about this clip!!! It was everything I hoped for and more!!! Eliott could speak about it! Lucas was such comprehensive about it!
There hasbeen so much growth in his character. At first he freaked out when we found out Eliott was bipolar but now he had finally made peace with himself and he knows how to somehow deal with it. And he definitely listened to his friends, and took their advice.
But this clip as a whole sends such an amazing message: whatever the situation you're going through, take it minute by minute, whatever the struggle. And also, we all have our flaws and our bad moments, but we should accept people as a

whole, both when they're at their best and when they're at their worst.



222 Elu

So im not joking when i say this but this show has impacted me so much even though im not bipolar or a part od the LGBTQT community but it hits so close to the heart and shkws that love has a chance if you can fiht against all odds . And that to me is beyond beautiful.

I love everything abt this show and i cannot bear to imagine that it is getting over in just few days. I really need to find a way to get over this season

223 It's not always sunshine and rainbows, it's not a fairytale where love magically fix everything and it is important to show it. It's important to show the bad minutes too, literally. Because depression is that too: self hatred, pushing people you love away, bad replys, not giving a shit about other people feelings and hurting them. And then you have the shame and you don't want to be seen, the guilt, the feeling that you're not worthy of love, that you're a burden for the ones you love. They're really showing the minute by minute true meaning and I will never be grateful enough for that.

224 I don't have MI and don't know anybody who have it so i can't speak for those ppl but guys seriously Skam France really portraited MI at a serious point and i think that's important to talk about it, really

225 These lasts 6 clips really hit me hard and I have to share my feelings about it with my poor English, sorry about that.

I've been diagnosed 10 years ago. Until then I was apparently just a rebellious teenager. After they told me that I have bipolar disorder, it changed everything. I'm glad Eliott mentioned he has to take a medication, cause that's what I missed in the OG. Ofc I know people who don't take their meds but that's a different story. Without your medication it's quite impossible to survive. I mean it. They're not going to cure you, but they are yours invisible crutches.

I loved his line "Sometimes I won't be nice, like I was this morning", cause that was my exact thought after he shot Lucas down. I was like "Eliott was really nice, I hope he knows that", and obviously he did. Yeah, it might sounds pretty fucked up, but that's how are our brains working. We can't control it and we hurt the ones who love us the most. And the worst thing is we sometimes do it on purpose. That's how it is, that's how it goes. So being in a relationship is almost impossible for us. Well, I'm lucky enough to have a loving girlfriend, and yes, sometimes I wish she would leave me cause she definitely deserves someone better, someone without mental illnesses. And that's what was Eliott talking about. He didn't have the strength to let Lucas go so he tried to warn him and tell him he should stay away from him.

I'm absolutely speechless cause Skam France did EVERYTHING RIGHT. It's so realistic that I even hated Eliott during the first hell week, cause I saw myself in him and I didn't like it. And that's why we need his season cause this is the first time I don't feel misinterpreted in media. Bow down to the whole Grew and our amazing actors!

226 Eliott talking about his struggle with medication is so painfully familiar to anyone with a MI like that (or at least it is for me!). the feeling of when it's good, I don't want to take it, because I'm fine. then feeling guilty for not taking it because stuff inevitably gets bad again. hating the feeling of being monitored. people in your

life speculating, are you being the way you are because you're on/off medication?
god I want an Elliott season

- 227 "Anonymous: Your favourite thing/things about this clip? Do you think they went above and beyond what you expected? For me, this clip went way beyond my expectations and I feel like they captured everything so perfectly♥ I LOVED IT✦" My favorite thing about the clip is all of it lmaooo no I'm kidding that's such a cop out 😊👏 I really liked the kind of rant Elliott went on where he allowed Lucas to see how he feels about himself and his illness and how resentful he is towards it. Even though it wasn't pretty, it was raw, and authentic, and real. You could feel his frustration. I liked the consistent pattern with Elliott not being able to kiss Lucas when he thinks they're about to break up. I liked Lucas interrupting from time to time to reassure him even though Elliott dismisses it, I feel like later when he looks back at that, he'll appreciate it a lot! I liked that the minute by minute came from Lucas and no one else and I loved both of their faces after they kissed because they both basically looked like they were saying "finally, we made it" All the Oscars to these two boys. I loved both of Elliott's hands wrapped around Lucas's neck and laughing smiling into his shoulder. One of the things that stands out to me the most is Elliott's rant because I loved hearing him express himself, even if he was frustrated and upset about the situation. I loved that they gave a Elliott that moment and a voice to speak his thoughts and express his feelings about everything, for himself. So I just really loved Elliott being more vocal and open about himself. I also liked that they thought of that and included it, seeing as none of the other versions had that character really go in depth like that when talking about their illness. Having Lucas giving him all of his attention and listening, even if he disagreed with some of it, was also great! I just loved everything about that moment, period. And the next thing that stood out to me was how you could visibly tell the relief they felt after they kissed and how most of the stress and tension just melted away Yeah it went above and beyond my expectations too, babe. They captured everything perfectly and the fact that they timed it so perfectly, too! They didn't have this talk right away, but actually waited until Elliott felt a bit better and more talkative so that it wouldn't cause him any more stress or upset him even further. This is why we didn't get this scene the next day. This is why. Because Elliott needed some time before diving into a conversation like that. He wasn't in the best place, so how did they expect him to have a conversation like that when he was feeling like this. I'm so glad they did this. Timing is everything, and Skam Frances timing here was impeccable.
- 228 Honestly with all the clips and our Elliott day with the campaign @renewskamfrance and all the stories we received I am so dead rn. In a good way but also in a I took a moment to sob my heart out kind of way. He's such an amazing character and I want his season more than anything. But also, with all these stories, we can also clearly see that we have soooo far to go in terms of how mental health is represented in media and talked about in society. And how people are helped. I really feel like this is one of the biggest taboos in our society yet. The way ppl are clinging to him sometimes feels like Skam France is just a band aid on a gaping wound. There are so many people hurting out there. I hope though that Elliott is only one of the first of many and that the discussion is moving in the right direction. Also that collecting these stories and sending them to the crew can let them appreciate better what they've done for us.

- 229 Why would you stop taking your meds? You might wonder.
What did Elliott mean when he said, "That's what happens when I'm feeling good"?
Well, when I'm (and probably Elliott too) feeling really good, my mentally ill mind convinces me that I don't need medication anymore, because why take medication when I'm fine??
Of course, I'm not fine. I still have bipolar disorder. That will never go.
Mood stabilisers make you feel numb, or at least, less. Nothing feels as good as when you first come off your medication and start riding that wave of true emotion.
I don't really know how to explain it, but sometimes I just get fed up of taking my pills, I get fed up of not feeling things properly, and I get fed up of the fact I feel like shit even when I'm taking the medication. So, I stop.
I feel amazing to begin with, but as always, then comes the crash.
Everyone obviously discovers I've stopped taking my medication, I'm sent back to the doctors, and I'm put back on them.
Rinse and repeat.
- 230 as someone who grew up with a biological father and a stepfather both with bipolar disorder, i needed to have the conversation eliott had with lucas at a very young age, but i didn't. i was not told until i was about 7 years old about my biological father's MI and wasn't told about my stepfather's until he had been in my life for 2 and a half years and because of that, i spent years fearing both of them when they would crash from manic episodes. i'm not on speaking terms with either of them because i was never educated on their MIs.this conversation between eliott and lucas is so important. for years i hated myself because i would see the depressive sides, when they would yell at me and treat me poorly for what i thought at the time was no reason. eliott telling lucas how his MI makes him act shows that he wants to make things work between them, he wants lucas to know and be prepared for what might come. i never got that, so i wasn't prepared for what i witnessed from a very young age and had i been prepared, i may not be terrified to so much as make eye contact with these men that are supposed to be important figures in my life.bipolar disorder can be really scary to witness from an outside perspective, especially when you don't know why they're acting differently. however, just like basile explained to lucas, it doesn't mean it's impossible to have a relationship (romantic/platonic/familial) with them. this is something i needed to be taught as a child.
- 231 "Anonymous: Do you think that Elliott went into the conversation today with Lucas with breaking up in mind? Do you think that was something he felt like he would have to do? Or, was it that he wanted to lay out everything about his MI and what's it like, and give Lucas that option? I felt like it was the latter but I've seen some people feel like it was the former!"Hi babe!I definitely think that, yeah. First of all I saw it coming since we had that clip of him all grumpy in bed. So I was kind of prepared for it? Hahaha 😊It made sense to me seeing it from Elliott's pov because Elliott would never want to become a burden, or a bother, in Lucas's life. He'd rather leave. It's why he distanced himself after Lucas said that when they were outside of his class. Elliott just backed off immediately because he doesn't want to cause Lucas any hardship. And I knew that eventually, the same thing was going to go down once Lucas got home.As for your other question, I think in his mind it was kind of both, babe. He wanted to once and for all lay

everything out about his MI since there's no hiding it anymore, giving Lucas an option to opt out now that he knew an estimate of how bad it could get, and I feel like he was determined to kind of break things up right there. Because like I said, he doesn't want to become a burden to Lucas, which we know he's not and Lucas knows he's not, but since Eli's in a very delicate place right now, if he thinks that then that's kind of that. but Lucas was like hold up bitch, we been married, you didn't know?! But Lucas really came through and listened to him patiently, took everything he said into account, and just offered him reassurance and support. He reminded Eliott that he too was going to have to put up with Lucas when Lucas had bad days. That neither of them are perfect. But that he'd rather have bad days with Eliott then not be with Eliott at all.

- 232 "chocolateyalmonds: you know what, i was very frustrated seeing the comments where eliott's words were severely misjudged BUT at least it has sparked a conversation and the people who did not know much about MI or had a skewed idea of it have gained a new understanding, especially young people so that they don't spread misinformation and perhaps they can educate people around them who might be misinformed, ya know?"

This about the 16 year old anon I got, babe?

I agree, anyhow. At least it got a conversation started 💕

- 233 good morning gaydies and gentlemeccs, who else is still reeling from the fact that skam france (a tv show for teenagers) actually went and gave eliott, a mentally ill main character, the chance to have his own monologue about his disorder? mood swings, medication, and the trouble of navigating relationships when dealing with those things? and he got to say those things himself, even though his voice cracked and he got a bit teary? it wasn't romanticized, just a clear statement of painful truths from someone barely out of a depressive episode?? iconic