My name is Jules; I’m 50, married with 3 children, 2 grandsons and 3 ridiculous dogs. We live in a lovely house with a beautiful garden in which we potter around hoping to keep more alive than we kill, we walk, play squash, eat, drink and entertain. I am a really really normal man.

For most of my adult life I have had a very successful career, I’ve studied, lived and worked abroad, I’m reliable and sometimes sensible. I sing, I tell jokes, I do impressions and I act. While most people might describe me as gregarious and energetic I am, in reality a middle aged person with depression. I choose my words carefully here, I don’t “suffer” or “struggle” with depression, I ***have*** depression and I am, therefore depressed. Not all of the time of course and most of the time for no particular reason.

This was one of the best things I learnt from counselling; my most depressed times are usually when I have no reason to be. Life can be great, all is fine and then it creeps up on me almost as though depression is the price to pay for happiness and stability.

About 10 years ago we were living the dream on a summer cruise in the Mediterranean, the sun shone, the wine flowed and life was incredible. One evening as I walked the deck I felt so horrendous, for no apparent reason that I simply wanted to climb the short barrier and end the feelings which had been creeping so dramatically into my mind.

It was this cruise which ultimately encouraged me to look for help, real and genuine professional help.

As a pretty normal man I know it is difficult to open up, and I mean really open up and tell someone how you feel. I think it's because everyone assumes we will be and must be strong and supportive of others. But, honestly, if you are struggling, the strongest and bravest thing you will ever do is ask for help. To tell those closest to you, when they ask, that you aren’t “ok”. The chances are that your family, your friends and your work colleagues will be desperate to do anything they can to support you and will probably kick themselves if they didn’t “realise earlier”.

Thankfully our society is more aware of Mental Health than ever before, people are finding it a little easier to speak about the #elephantInTheRoom.

So, please if you are reading these words and you are in any similar situation, talk … get help and talk. You don’t need to pretend you are ok if you are not, it's ok to let go of that part of you which generates incredible pain. Most importantly even though you think you are, you are not alone.