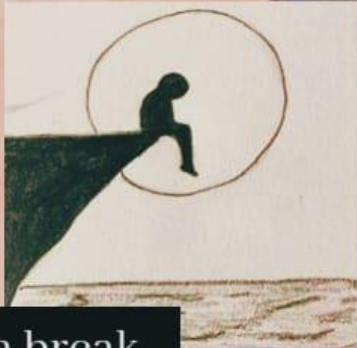


Untangle



happy
MENTAL
HEALTH DAY



It's okay to take a break.



APPERCEPTION
2022



your anxiety is lying to you

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LOVED



keep
going



WORLD MENTAL HEALTH DAY 2022

MAKE MENTAL HEALTH AND
WELL-BEING FOR ALL A
GLOBAL PRIORITY

Curated by
Department of Psychology
Gokhale Memorial Girls' College
Kolkata

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INTRODUCTORY NOTE

World Mental Health Day

Dr. Moon Moon Dutta

World Mental Health Day is celebrated annually on the 10th day of October. It is a day celebrated for holistic mental health education; awareness and understanding mental health issues and to promote de-stigmatization. The theme of 2022's World Mental Health Day, set by the World Federation for Mental Health, is **'Make mental health and wellbeing for all a global priority'**.

The vision of 2022's World Mental Health Day is not just to provide treatment for mental illness but to focus on enhancing the general well-being of every individual irrespective of his/her mental state. With the COVID-19 pandemic the psychological well-being of individuals got adversely affected globally. Adolescents have gone through acute and chronic stress because of disruption of daily routines, increased family violence and home confinement with little or no access to peers, or physical activity.

So now it is time to realise one's own abilities, work productively and to make a contribution to one's own community.

Indian epidemiological studies reported low prevalence rates of mental disorders compared to studies done in the western world (Math and Srinivasaraju, 2010). This may be due to not being able to adequately measure mental disorders or Indians may have high resilience because of genetic reasons, good family support system, cultural factors, lifestyle and better coping skills. The main hurdles in combating the problem of mental health in India are stigma related to mental disorders, marginalisation, discrimination, lack of awareness and education, delayed treatment seeking behaviour, lack of low-cost diagnostic test and shortage of mental health professionals.

To reduce the burden of mental disorders in India, India needs to aim at improving early childhood interventions; psychoeducation; skill-based programme for children and youth; socio-economic empowerment for women; strengthening social support for elderly people; and to strengthen the treatment of mental disorders at the level of primary health care (Venkata Shiva Reddy et al. 2013).

Thus, the Day provides an opportunity of raising awareness of mental health issues around the world and to think on what more needs to be done to make mental health care a reality for people worldwide.

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ARTICLES

GROWING NEED TO PROMOTE THE STUDY OF PSYCHOLOGY AT BASIC LEVEL AND DISCUSSING MATTERS REGARDING MENTAL HEALTH AND THE STIGMA SURROUNDING IT

Rajoshree Sinha
Semester 1

You might have found yourself thinking often times, “no one understands me”, “I wish someone would tell me what’s wrong with me”, “I wish I could understand why I feel this way”. You might have found yourself in pain, but with no explanation to justify it, no information on how to deal with those negative feelings. You might have found yourself thinking thoughts considered unacceptable by society’s standards, and being confused as to why they even crossed your mind in the first place. Have you ever held a knife in your hand and suddenly thought of cutting off your finger before shrugging that thought off with a disapproving nod? Has it made you feel weird or even dangerous towards others? Has it made you wonder if it defines you as a person? If it reflects your true ideals? You would have probably dealt with these insecurities. You would’ve probably beaten yourself up over it. Now, if someone were to tell you that these thoughts are actually pretty common and that they’re actually a thing called intrusive thoughts, would that help in easing your insecurities about yourself to some extent? If you were told that these thoughts do not actually define your ideals as a person and that they are not the standards for behaviour that you are likely to indulge in or even condone, wouldn’t that make you feel much better about yourself? Wouldn’t it be relieving? Wouldn’t it be powerful to possess that knowledge about what happens in your mind and why? If it is normal, if it is okay. These are questions we often find ourselves stuck on.

“Are my experiences valid?”, “Does feeling this way make me a bad person?”, “Does my inability to understand somehow define my worth as a person?” What a lot of people struggle with the most in their lives are feelings of alienation, loneliness and the feeling of being misunderstood. Where do these feelings come from? Why can we go to a doctor for a scraped knee and be considered “normal”, but if we want to consult a therapist for anxiety, that’s frowned upon? What can be done to combat this stigma surrounding mental health and psychiatric help that have been prevalent in our society and are rampant even today?

Knowledge and education are powerful tools. They’re mediums. The only way to combat the stigma surrounding mental health is to educate and spread awareness amongst people of all age groups, especially the youth. Introducing subjects related to mental health in schools from a very elementary level would be ideal. We learn about how to treat wounds and how to eat healthy and take care of our bodies from a very young age, why not include the knowledge on how to care for our emotional needs as well?

The infrastructure for mental health is not well developed all around the world, rather, it is much worse than the standard that would be ideal or even practical for society to function while fulfilling its

needs for mental and emotional support. In India, a mere 0.06 percent of the budget is allocated to mental health which is reflective of the world's standards (less than 2 per cent). In a country with a population of over a billion people, the number of psychiatrists amounts to a mere 9000, with less than 2000 clinical psychologists (Times of India, 2022). The people who require psychological assistance but are not able to receive it stands at an astonishing 70 to 92 per cent. While these figures are indeed disheartening, they also serve to ignite an urge, a wish to see people receiving the help they need, the help they deserve.

Promoting the study of psychology from a basic level will not only help children grow up aware of their own thoughts and feelings, it will also inculcate in them an innate understanding of people, which will further result in stronger interpersonal relationships and an ability to communicate and understand their own needs to other. Understanding is empowering. It is a great strength and a necessary virtue to have. Learning about psychological issues and disorders from a young age would also make people more confident in themselves as they would then know how to deal with unfamiliar situations and emotions. Being able to say, "I feel so burnt out today", "I don't have the emotional space for this right now", "I need help" without feeling ashamed would be a big step in normalising discussions regarding mental health. If people can come to view mental health the same way they view physical health, it would allow so many to receive the help they deserve, that would have been previously impossible.

With the covid 19 pandemic, feelings of alienation, depression and anxiety are at an all-time high. We are experiencing a mental health pandemic as much as we are experiencing a viral pandemic, but although talks about mental health have increased a lot in these last few years due to the rise of social media influence to an all-time high, it is not nearly enough. This is a step that requires community action just as much as it requires individual effort.

Educating people about mental illnesses outside of textbook explanations are important. Content creators also play a huge role in destigmatizing mental health related discussions. Many people taking to online spaces to share their experiences with mental health and build communities with people who have similar experiences have given people from across the world a safe space to discuss their problems and be reminded that it's valid and they're not alone. After all, the thing that matters the most while dealing with pain, whether emotional or physical, is to know that you're not alone, even if you have to deal with it on your own. Just knowing that your experiences are valid, is a great help, one that so many people are yet to receive. And it is for this very reason that mental health needs to be discussed more and more until it is normalised and the stigma dealt with.

~

OVERCOME OWN MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES AND LIVE YOUR BEST LIFE

Sunidhi Sinha

Semester 1

“Mental Health problems don’t define who you are. They are something you experience. You walk in the rain and you feel the rain, but you are not the rain.”-Matt Haig

World Mental Health Day is an international day for mental awareness since 10 October 1992. It was first celebrated at the initiative of the World Federation for Mental Health, a global mental health organization with members and contacts in more than 150 countries. We celebrate World Mental Health Day each and every year so that it can be made a global priority. The purpose of this day is to raise awareness about the mental health issues that are happening in each and every corner of the world and to prepare people to come up and cope up with their mental health issues.

Three to four years back people didn’t want to come up and speak bravely with their issues as they were bound by the stigmas about mental problems completely. After 2019, our lives changed completely due to COVID-19 pandemic which helped people to understand that it is very important to deal with these issues. Many people lost their family members, faced economic crises and other problems due to the pandemic and came up with many psychological problems like depression, anxiety etc. Those who couldn’t face these problems died by suicide. That is why mental health awareness is spreading rapidly through different platforms, news channels, graphics, workshops, posters, through famous organizations like WHO, podcasts so that people can understand the importance of mental health and start coping with these issues on their own. The government is also giving much importance nowadays to mental health issues.

Mental Health must be a priority for everyone and not a taboo. It is the key point of our wellbeing. If we are physically stable but mentally unstable, we can’t live in this beautiful world properly and it will take away the best version of us from ourselves. All kinds of mental problems have their treatment. People facing mental issues should consult a doctor, do exercise, meditation, spend time with family, indulge themselves in various activities which will help them to minimize the intensity or frequency of these issues.

A mental health problem cannot be a man’s destination. S/He should deal with it courageously, the family from which that person is belonging should be cooperative enough and give her/him enough support to overcome the problem. People should start removing the shackles of stigma from their homes and if they start doing so mental health will eventually turn into a ‘global priority’. Till then we should carry the slogan forward that; make mental health and wellbeing for all a global priority; for the ones who are still bounded by the social stigma and are not ready to get rid of their mental issues and think of new ways to keep our mental health totally fit and live this beautiful world feeling content.

~

IN HER STEPPING STONES

Urmī Laha
Semester 1

Among the “world’s most chased interviews”, Martin Bashir’s BBC News interview of “People’s Princess” was the most explosive one indeed, but National Geographic Channel’s documentary based on the interview of Andrew Morton that is ‘Diana: In Her Own Words’ of 2017 has been followed by a spate of spine-chilling reactions. Being the “Fairytale Princess”, never did Princess Diana forget her sense of duty to be a “humanitarian figure” and not a political one but in her struggle to do so, the 19-year-old Lady had confronted many “grown up” situations which affected her mental wellbeing severely. This is of utmost importance to remember that it was for her that expressing self did not scare the common of the singe of what others would think.

Born in Althorp at her mother’s, Diana had an “unhappy childhood” where she witnessed her father slapping her mother across the face which triggered her first chagrin vivid memory which caused instability in her life. ‘Broken Homes’ having multiple parental figures who only dominate the child causes unstable family situations like child tension and aggressiveness which later reflects on Diana’s detached self from others. It was revealed in the interview that Diana hated children’s parties and “wasn’t interested in having a full diary”. Although being a convivial figure interested in studies and sports, she always felt left out maybe because of the lack of support that her family provided. Later she found solace by being a part time preschool teacher who genuinely cared for the children. “Every time a child was in distress, she was the one who comforted them, ” claimed her co-worker in the interview. She knew she was going somewhere different and “found an inner determination to survive”

Diana’s state of mind at one of the lowest points of the marriage represented one side of the story. Divulging her secrets to Morton, she expressed her views regarding “people in western countries say we marry for love but in royalty the question never seems to enter”. Suspicion about Prince of Wales’s relation with her close Camilla Parker Bowles caused loss of self-esteem in Diana where she found “relief” in voluntarily making herself sick after the week they got engaged by binge eating accompanied by inappropriate compensation methods to prevent weight gain commonly known as ‘Bulimia Nervosa’, an eating disorder. A 19 year old could not have possibly taken the enormous attention of the press and the tension hovering around her where she had expressed herself as “desperately tried to be mature but did not have the foundation for it. I couldn’t talk to anybody about it” This preponderant turn of events was mainly caused by her husband’s comment on her figure which later added to her low self-confidence of being a “fat, podgy, non-makeup, unsmart lady” as she had expressed herself previously.

When her son, Prince William was born, the Bulimia was appalling. “Time, patience and adapting all were needed” but nobody paid any heed to her demand. She couldn’t sleep, eat and felt like the whole

world was collapsing. “All the analysts, psychiatrists ever dream of coming plodding in. Tried sorting me out. Put me on high doses of valium. It was me telling them what I needed. They kept telling me pills' '. Post pregnancy depression associated with tears and panic had made Diana deathly quiet. “He (Prince of Wales) couldn't see the panic; I would just sit there quietly. It was too much for one person at that time” reported Diana. Her only coping mechanism was Bulimia and repression at that time that is why “between the birth of William and Harry it was total darkness. It was absolute pain, so I blotted it out”.

Lastly when the media was roaring about the separation of Diana and Prince Charles, Diana sought help from a shrink known as Dr. Lipsedge who was the only person to instill some hope in Diana by saying “There's nothing wrong with you” and used to sit down talking to Diana every day an hour each. This is how she ended Bulimia two years before their separation. The most common methods are self-induced vomiting after intake of food, purging with laxatives, fasting for a day or more, taking medicines to avoid weight gain, etc. Usually, psychological therapies like behaviour therapy and cognitive behaviour therapy are employed to treat the disorder.

Diana, was a sole fighter and was successful in overcoming her dark phase with the right support and help she had been seeking for so long. Though the royals alluded Diana's ill health as the reason which caused the rift in their marriage, never did once Diana apprehensive to talk about it and when she did she did not fear being judged as she was in desperate need of help. This is the kind of courage that people need to forestate standing in the 21st century to make mental health and well-being a global priority so that the common mass can be more open minded and expressive.

~

MENTAL HEALTH AS A GLOBAL PRIORITY

Susnata Ganguly

Semester 1

The later half of this century has, along with many other concerning global crises, like global warming, declining quality of life and the environment, seen another major issue. Although not acknowledged by many because of social stigma, lack of awareness and resources to do the needful, it has become a matter of immense importance and severe consequences, if ignored or dealt with irresponsibly. The issue being discussed here is, the deteriorating mental health of people all around the world, leading to serious disorders, dysfunctions and maladaptive ways of functioning in everyday life.

According to present stats, about one in every ten people has experienced or is likely to experience Generalised Anxiety disorder, PTSD, OCD or specific phobias at least once in their lifetimes. However, less than half of these people would have the actual privilege of getting mental health care and the support they'd require. The other, larger section of people would most likely never be diagnosed. In bad case scenarios, they'd struggle significantly to cope and carry out normal life activities and maintain interpersonal relationships. In the worst case scenario, they'd inevitably become self-destructive, be vulnerable to other more serious mental disorders, find themselves engaged in substance abuse, and ultimately isolate themselves from the comfort of friends and family, such isolation, often leading to unfortunate instances of suicide.

Life in present times is challenging to say the least. While people are struggling enough already to make a living in this economy, they're becoming more vulnerable to depression, which in turn, is reducing work productivity and life satisfaction. Hence, people are finding themselves trapped in this cycle of hopelessness with seemingly no way out.

The rates of suicides nowadays are higher than ever. The young generation, in particular, are having to live with deteriorated mental health because of childhood trauma they could never voice because they never had anyone to speak to. Having their emotional needs unmet, they're developing attachment styles that are more insecure than secure, they're developing habits that are more maladaptive than adaptive. This is true especially for children whose parents are either too controlling or too absent or in households where domestic violence makes them vulnerable to emotional abuse. The elders in the family often use them as their emotional support system or a way to vent their own unresolved trauma. And hence, this chain of generational trauma affects the child adversely. This can be easily linked to declining performance in schools, increased absenteeism, inability to focus and complete tasks on time.

Out of the number of reasons why people fail to get support for their mental well-being, the most significant one would be social stigma. The people who suffer, suffer in silence because of society. Oftentimes, they have no one to open up to. Even in today's society, seeking help for mental health

problems isn't normalised. Although this varies from place to place. The Western society has been able to progress a little in this regard. However, the more conservative Asian countries still view mental disorders stereotypically. In some countries, there's little to no resources. Even in societies where it is normalised, people don't receive the aid for financial reasons or lack of awareness.

However, to bring a change in the way we view mental health is immensely important. The ones that suffer need to be treated with empathy and understanding. Their struggles need to be acknowledged and their feelings validated. Children need to be comforted and people, in general, need to be educated about mental well-being, for, it is as important as a person's physical health, if not more.

The first step to this would be spreading awareness, letting people know that they're not alone in this. Media representations of mental disorders should be in a responsible way that speaks for the people. Institutions that are responsible for providing healthcare should include mental health aid too. Resources should be made adequately available in places that lack them. Therapy should be made affordable for the poorer sections of the society.

Such small changes have the power to transform the world as a whole and also the lives of millions and millions of people whose struggles are unheard and unknown to many. Because, people deserve to know that they never walk alone.

~

MENTAL HEALTH: MOST IMPORTANT YET THE LEAST FOCUSED ASPECT OF LIFE

Ankita Brahma

Semester 1

“Mental illness occurs when our mental health is compromised or neglected for so long that it affects our ability to function in daily life” (Kati Morton ,2018).

Surprisingly, there has not been much commitment to addressing these problems which play an intrinsic role in our lives. We all have an added stigma around it, so talking about it ourselves is a struggle. Society's stigma and self-stigma are the two most important barriers surrounding mental health. Mental health includes emotional , psychological and social well-being. Our body, mind and spirit depend on our mental stability. If not taken proper care of, it affects our career and physical health. ‘The youth today who will be leaders tomorrow’ (Nelson Mandela) should be well taken care of. Life is stressful and it is normal to feel tired, stressed, rushed, irritable, anxious, or even depressed. Consistent experiences are definitely not the norm and should be addressed as mental health needs.

This then becomes a problem when that all adds up and our overall mental health begins to decline. It generally starts as something small such as feeling tired or overwhelmed, and then continues to build and grow, changing from occasional feelings of being overwhelmed to occasional feelings of sadness or anxiety, to frequent tearfulness, to lashing out in anger, to frequent depression, and more. The more it grows, the more out of control it becomes and the healthy foundation that we may have previously, begins to crumble. Eventually, if it is not addressed, it affects our social, personal and occupational lives. The unprecedented phase of the coronavirus pandemic has made us realise how important it is to take cognizance of our day-to-day mental issues.

Our perception of rampant mental health issues entailing depression and anxiety has been transformed. Enhancing mental health is crucial because a depressed and anxious mind can cause hindrances to taking out the best version of ourselves. Anything holding the capability to disturb an individual's routine and potential to achieve things in life should be put into consideration. An emotionally fit and stable person always feels vibrant and truly alive and can easily manage emotionally difficult situations. To be emotionally strong, one has to be physically fit too. Thus, putting our mental health first should be our top priority to ensure a healthy life. It needs attention and care just like our physical health.

“Well Being can be understood as how people feel and how they function both on a personal and social level and how they evaluate their lives as a whole” (Seligman,2002).

Recognizing and identifying what our mental health or current state of mind is and what has started to become a problem. Scientific study of human wellness may be seen as a fanciful frosting on a cake.

Paradoxically one of the most important reasons to study is to identify what is missing in people's life. People who are not troubled by psychological dysfunction, but who, nonetheless, lack many of the psychological goods in life. This starts with a daily inventory of our mental state. Wellbeing is a positive outcome that is meaningful and indicates both mental and physical health, resulting in a healthy life. Some ways to improve one's mental health are:

Regular exercise.

Prioritising sleep and rest.

Talking and sharing problems with family and friends.

Maintaining a positive approach towards life.

Psychotherapy.

Proper nutritional diet.

In 2019, WHO launched a special initiative to ensure affordable care in 12 countries for more than 100 million people. According to WHO, almost 1 in 7 adolescents aged between 10 to 19 live with some form of mental health condition. Suicide is the 5th most prevalent cause of death. According to WHO, "we must deepen the value and commitment we give to mental health individuals, communities and match that value with more commitment, engagement and investment by all stakeholders, across all sectors". MiNDbank, an online platform under WHO, brings together international mental health resources and promotes reform in these areas. Over the course of the past decade, mental health has been getting recognised as an essential part of well-being and this year, on 10th October, World Mental Health Day, let's take a vow together to make it more acceptable and a valuable element to live.

~

FILLING IN THE GAPS IN MENTAL HEALTH EDUCATION

Srinjani Karmakar

Semester 3

Health, according to the WHO, is “a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity”. Therefore, it can be said that mental health is an essential component of an individual’s health and should be given equal importance as physical health. Misinformation and stigma still surrounds mental health, which cannot be eliminated without conscious efforts from every individual.

Mental health is beginning to find its space in different areas and education should be an important area of concern. This brings me to the importance of including mental health education in the curriculum.

Why make it a part of the curriculum?

Including mental health education in the curriculum will,

- eliminate the stigma and misconceptions about mental health
- sensitise students towards people in distress
- increase knowledge and understanding of mental health concerns
- help students identify symptoms and ask for help when needed
- help create an atmosphere of positivity, empathy and acceptance

How to include it in?

- By creating a safe, non-judgemental space, where every student is seen, heard, embraced and respected for who they are
- By educating and training the staff properly, so that they are able to impart correct and appropriate knowledge to the students. They’ll be aware of the symptoms and can intervene in case of an emergency
- Mental health can also be made a part of the academics, in a way that won’t be burdening for both the students and the educators. It shouldn’t be treated as an additional subject but something they’ll look forward to.
- Having open conversations about mental health will encourage students and educators to open up about their struggles and ask for help without hesitation.
- Organising activities/workshops/lessons/mental health clubs within the institution, will help raise awareness and will give students a chance to showcase their ideas.

Role of educators:

Educators play a crucial role in the academic journey and in the life of an individual, both positively and negatively.

Speaking from personal experience, some educators encourage students to excel at what they do, while there are some who can make one feel worse about themselves and their decisions. Educators should

make the environment of the institution student-friendly and not otherwise. Here are a few things I wanted to mention;

- No one should be demeaned/demotivated/made to doubt themselves.
- Age/seniority does not mean one is entitled to respect. Respect comes both ways. Just as a student is 'supposed' to respect an educator, a student also deserves the same amount of respect from an educator.
- There is a difference between being strict and being disrespectful.
- One's status or how influential someone is, doesn't give them a chance to look down upon others.
- The idea of 'always being productive' should not be encouraged. At the end of the day, students are humans who need to rest and learn at their own pace.
- Educators definitely have more experience and knowledge about their field but students should not be expected to know everything beforehand. Learning is a process that takes time and isn't a race.
- The same teaching styles don't work for everyone and that doesn't make someone less capable.
- Invalidating a student's struggles or illnesses is not the way to go.
- Telling students to endure all their struggles in the institution because it will ultimately make them 'stronger', is nothing but glorifying suffering and misbehaviour.

A note for you:

It is essential to let students know that mental health and physical health go hand in hand. They should be reminded that they aren't at fault or the 'odd one out' for struggling mentally. Please be kind because we don't know what someone might be dealing with. Bullying, body-image issues, friendships, study pressure, can be effectively dealt with, when proper knowledge is imparted and a safe space is created for all.

~

PRIORITISE WELL-BEING: DEALING WITH STRESS EFFECTIVELY

Rajsree Sarkar,
Semester 3

Well-being is not merely the absence of disease. Nor is it limited to the state of being happy all the time. Individuals can be said to possess a state of well-being when they have the psychological, social, and physical resources they need to meet a particular psychological, social and/or physical challenge (Dodge, Daly, Huyton, Sanders 2012). Individuals tend to associate well-being with a sense of fulfilment and positive emotions. Hindrance to one's well-being may be caused by one of the most common experiences that all individuals go through at some time in their lives—stress.

Stress refers to the physical, emotional, cognitive, and behavioural responses to events that are appraised as threatening or challenging. Stress may be manifested physically (as nausea, changes in sleeping or eating patterns, extreme levels of fatigue, pacing, reverting to addictive substances), emotionally (often becoming angry, irritable, anxious), or mentally (loss in concentration, difficulty in decision making).

Stress may be of various types. Distress is the negative emotional reaction to stressful factors, whereas eustress is the optimal level of stress required for the optimum functioning of an individual. Apart from these two types, there are other types of stress like chronic stress which persists over a long period of time, and neutress which is perceived as inconsequential (like news of an earthquake in Japan).

The factors that cause stress are known as stressors. Environmental stressors include events like huge catastrophes such as a natural disaster resulting in the loss of one's home and livelihood which create tremendous amounts of stress and the feeling of threat. It also includes major life changes like moving to a new country, getting married, loss of a job, which require individuals to make major adjustments in their lives. Minor hassles of everyday life like traffic jams, disagreements among peers are sources of lesser levels of stress. Social stressors involve stress related to economic status, job, career, or academic stress, which may result in a person feeling pressured when not being able to meet expectations, or the person feeling frustrated when unable to reach the desired goal.

A certain level of stress is beneficial for optimum performance. The Yerkes-Dodson Law can be graphically represented as an inverted U-shaped curve, with performance on the y-axis and arousal levels on the x-axis. It depicts the relationship between stress and performance. With an increase in arousal, performance levels increase but only to a certain point, after which the resources of the body are unable to keep up with the corresponding increases in levels of arousal. The ultimate result could be burnout which may get manifested in physical symptoms like severe headaches, gastrointestinal problems, behavioural changes coupled with feelings of worthlessness, and self-doubt.

Strategies can be implemented in order to manage the demands of a stressful situation. Such strategies are known as coping strategies. Individuals may directly attempt to solve a problem through cognitive and behavioural efforts, like trying to think of action steps to solve the problem, the like of which is known as problem-focused coping.

Coping may be emotion-focused, where people try to deal with their own fears, anger, guilt and try to reduce the distress associated with the stressful situation. People may revert to seeking social support—confiding in close members of the family, talking to a significant other, or seeking solace from close friends. Apart from these strategies, guided meditation, breathing techniques, progressive muscle relaxation, practising yoga, and adopting an optimistic approach to life may also serve as useful tools to effectively deal with stress.

How we adopt such strategies effectively, ultimately determines our well-being.

~

EFFECTS OF EXTANT MATERIAL CONDITIONS ON THE ARENA OF MENTAL HEALTH

Urvi Uchat

Semester 5

The World Health Organisation states that “the overall objective of World Mental Health Day is to raise awareness of mental health issues around the world and to mobilise efforts in support of mental health”, and has, for the year of 2022, launched a campaign around the theme of Making Mental Health & Well-Being for All a Global Priority. The concepts of mental health and wellbeing require little introduction, and have become commonplace in recent times, particularly after the coronavirus pandemic.

Observations of such events in educational institutions, workplaces, advocacy groups tend to follow a quintessential pattern of presentations on mental illnesses, infographics and cheery little messages that say, “it is okay to ask for help”. These are significant for de-stigmatizing mental illness and increasing awareness while also combating misinformation. However, from a public health perspective, one cannot help but wonder if this “acceptance-awareness” campaign is sufficient.

It is the tail-end of this year’s theme that invites the question of sufficiency. The phrases; “...for All” and “Global Priority” not only bring forth logistical challenges but also question the efficacy of the current approaches to tackling what has been popularly dubbed as the “mental illness epidemic”.

To begin with, there are glaring deficits in accessibility of mental health facilities, from a shortage of healthcare workers to the services being unaffordable for a major chunk of the population. A lack of awareness is merely the tip of the iceberg, and efforts to correct that are futile if not coupled with concrete reform.

In order to get to another aspect that needs to be considered for putting the purposes of mental health promotion into effect, it seems pertinent to broach the topic of “normalcy” as seen within the prevailing image of social reality. Normalcy has largely been conceived along the objectives that define success and happiness, that is, an unwavering association with material wealth and prestige. The current political, economic and social arrangements emphasise the extension of competitive markets into all areas of life. Thus mental health and wellbeing—the tools of achieving this success—become consumer goods.

The expansion of the diagnostic criteria of psychiatric illness in the revision of the DSM-5 in 2022 (such as the addition of prolonged grief disorder), has come under fire for excessive medicalization of human life. That, coupled with the conflicting financial interests of the DSM-5 workgroup participants leads to the criticism that “the classification of mental disorders is a process that, far from purely scientific, is shaped by political and/or profit-driven objectives associated with the increased corporatization of medicine, including the mental health field.” [3]

It is now relevant to quote Mark Fisher from his book, *Capitalist Realism* (2009): “Many of the teenagers I worked with had mental health problems or learning difficulties. Depression is endemic....It is not an exaggeration to say that being a teenager in late capitalist Britain is now close to being reclassified as a sickness. This pathologization already forecloses any possibility of politicisation. By privatising these problems - treating them as if they were caused only by chemical imbalances in the individual's neurology and/or by their family background - any question of social systemic causation is ruled out.”

This is not intended to disregard the role of biology in mental illnesses, but is to point out the established logic that “downplays the social realm, treats individuals as self-contained agents, and pathologizes thoughts and behaviours that deviate from what the market defines as functional, productive, or desirable.” [3] It is this logic that is essential for the mental health field to be viably driven by consumerism.

These expository paragraphs were written with the purpose of highlighting how, in the words of Richard U'ren (1997), “capitalism and psychiatry place high value on work and productivity. Capitalism ascribes good character to the individual who works conscientiously and promotes hard work as the route to individual success. Psychiatry reinforces this by maintaining that the ability and desire to work (and consume) is a sign of mental health.”

At a glance, one might find nothing wrong with this logic. If one looks closely, however, it becomes evident that the predominant approaches to treating mental illness—psychotropic medication as well as psychotherapy—trivialise social causations and material conditions by emphasising on atomistic individualism. The society has the attributes of racism, patriarchy, anti-queerness, casteism, class hierarchies—and the traditional mental health system pathologizes one for experiencing distress due to said attributes.

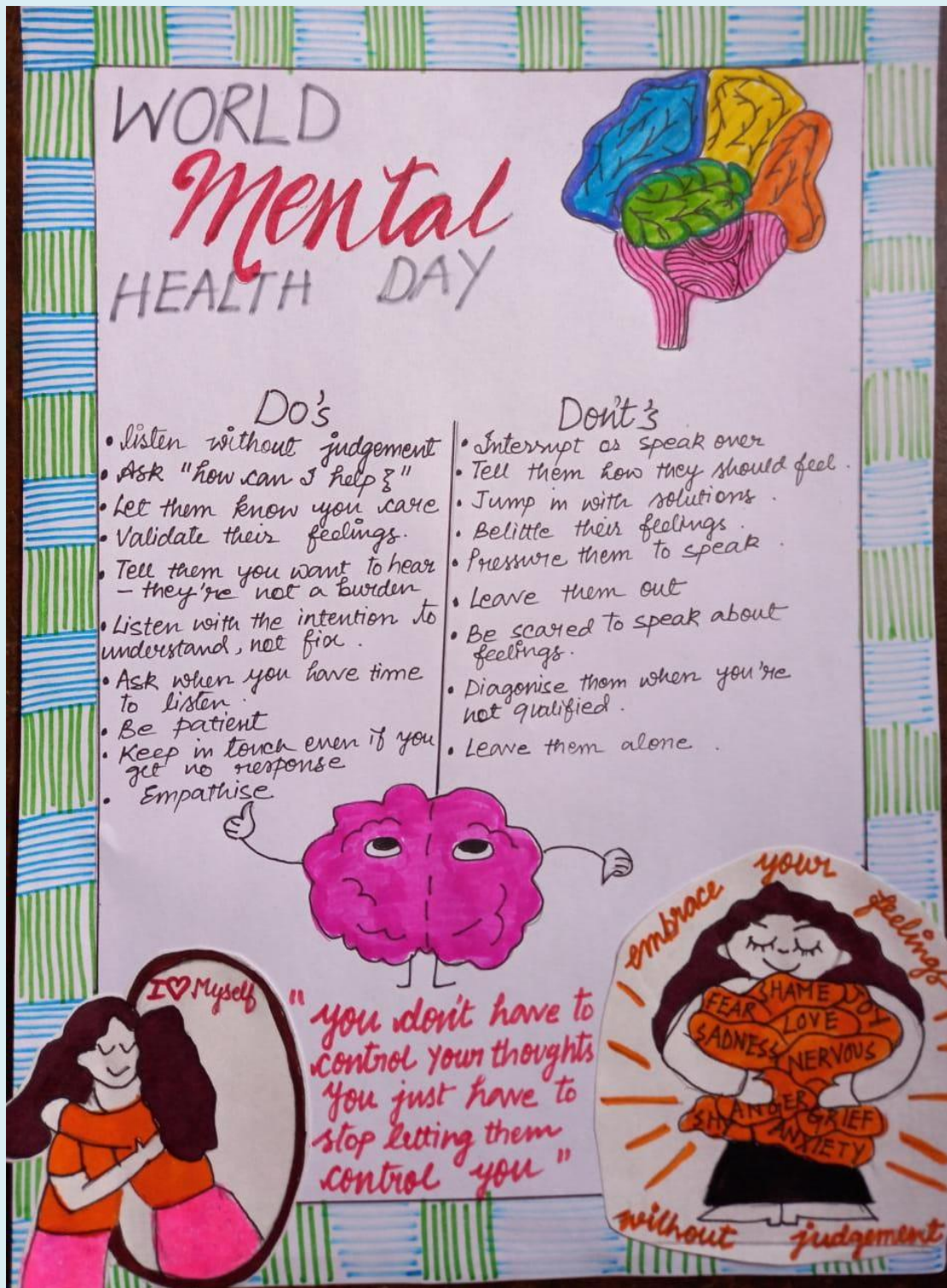
How, then, can one truly make mental health a global priority by making the individual the centre of attention and largely ignoring the society in which they live? How can the objectives of better mental wellbeing for everyone, globally, be achieved without addressing the systemic failures of not just mental health care but also of the dominant ideology governing all aspects of human life?

References:

1. World Health Organisation (2022) World Mental Health Day (<https://www.who.int/campaigns/world-mental-health-day>)
2. Fisher, Mark (2009) *Capitalist Realism: Is There No Alternative?* (Zero Books)
3. Eposito, Luigi, and Perez, Fernando M. (2014): Neoliberalism and Commodification of Mental Health. *Humanity & Society* 2014, Vol. 38(4); 414-442

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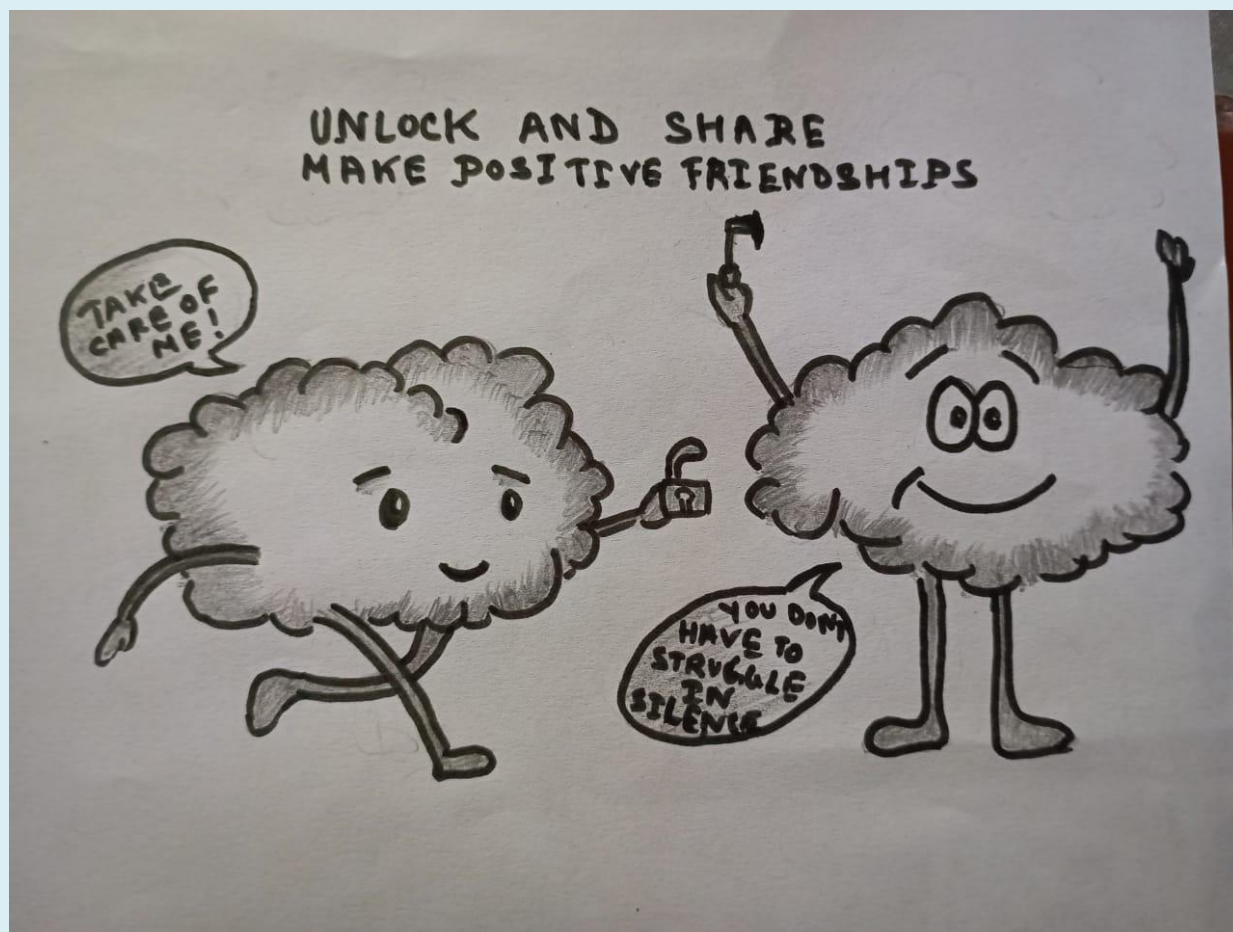
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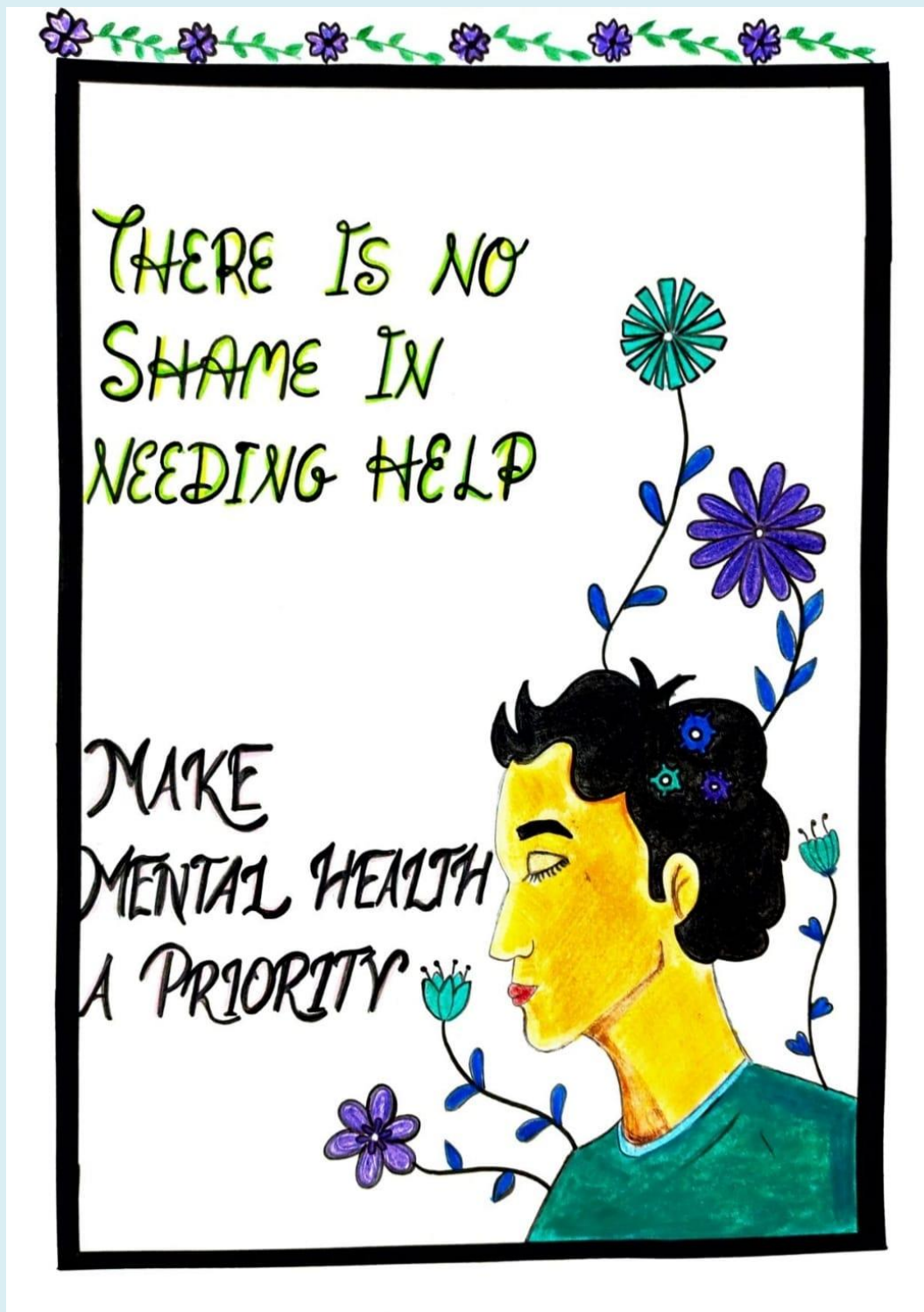
TORSHA DAS
SEMESTER 1



ANUSHKA SAHA
SEMESTER 1





SAMPRITI PARVIN
SEMESTER 1



ADRITA HALDER
SEMESTER 1



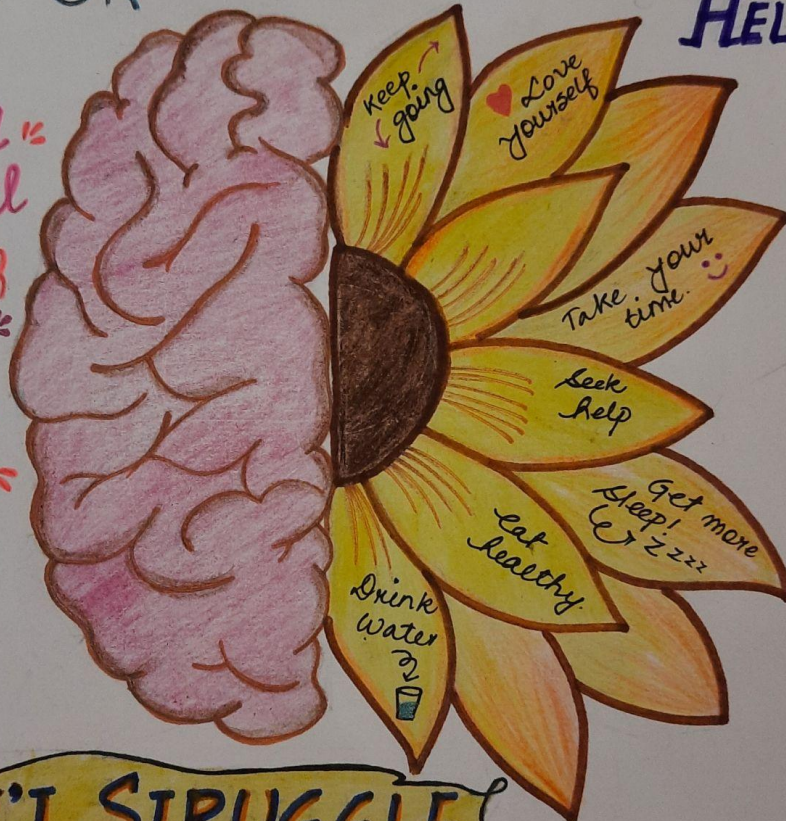
KOYEL MANDAL
SEMESTER 1

It's  OK,
to be
NOT  OK

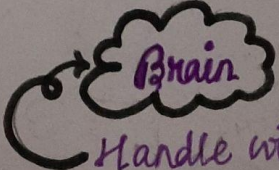


THERE IS NO
SHAME IN
ASKING FOR
HELP.

Your
mental
Health
is a
Priority



DON'T STRUGGLE
IN
SILENCE

 Brain
Handle with
care!

Semanti Singha, SEM1 BSC

SEMANTI SINGHA
SEMESTER 1

NAME - ROSHINI NAYAK

SEMESTER - 1

NOTE TO SELF

YOU ARE WORTHY
AND LOVABLE

YOUR FEELINGS
ARE VALID

IT'S OKAY TO START
OVER AND TRY AGAIN

YOU ARE CAPABLE
OF AMAZING THINGS

YOUR BOUNDARIES
ARE IMPORTANT

HOPE



STOP THE STIGMA
LET'S TALK ABOUT
MENTAL HEALTH.

MENTAL HEALTH
IS ~~NOT~~ A BIG
DEAL



REMINDER

Don't be so hard
on yourself, you
are doing okay.
i got it!

BE KIND TO YOUR MIND

'You'
matter

it's okay to :



not be
okay



ask for
help



Take a
break



not know
what's next



Say
'no'

ROSHINI NAYAK
SEMESTER 1

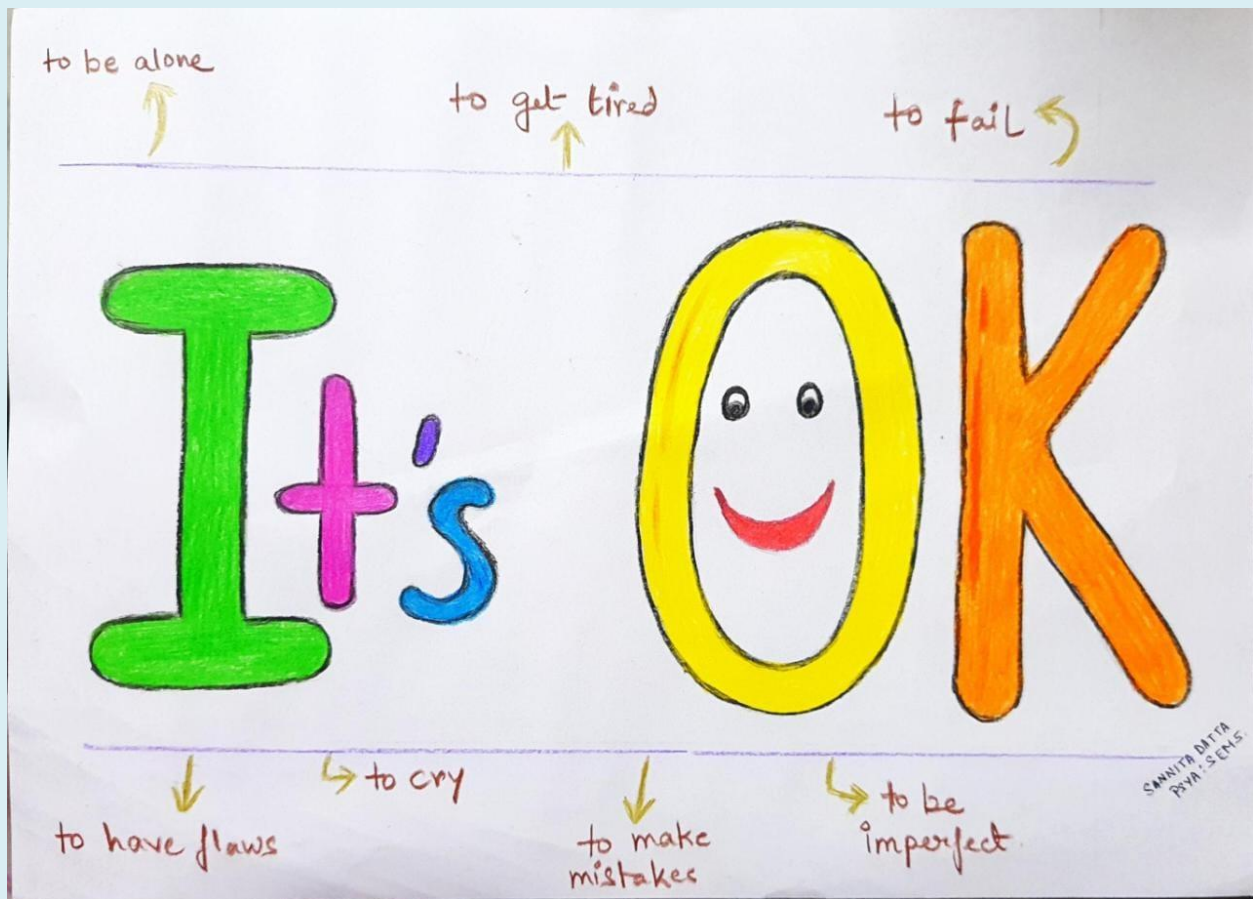
Mental health encompasses more than just disorders.
It also includes the overall spectrum of emotions that
we all experience during our daily routines.



HARIPRIYA CHOUDHARY
SEMESTER 3

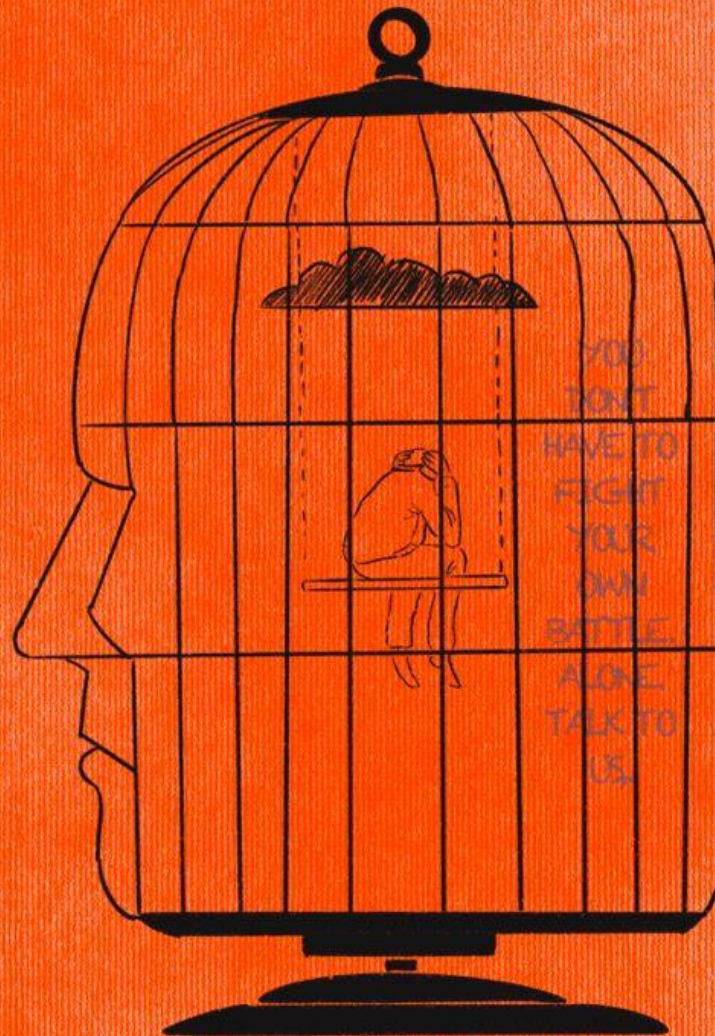


SHREYA DEBNATH
SEMESTER 5



SANNITA DATTA
SEMESTER 5

IT'S OKAY TO ASK FOR HELP



Why take care of your mind?

1. To help prevent mental illness
2. To build confidence
3. To live a positive and healthy life
4. To give us the fuel we need to live happy, healthy, and productive lives.

SUKANYA DEY
SEMESTER 5



NIHITA ROY
SEMESTER 5

MOVIE/WEB-SERIES REVIEWS

INSIDE OUT: MOVIE REVIEW

Bidisha Chatterjee

Semester 1

Inside out is an amazing animated movie released on 17th June, 2015 directed by Pete Docter. This movie revolves around a 11 years old girl named Riley Anderson who has moved to a new country with her parents and how much it has changed her life. The storyline is superbly interwoven between Riley and her parent's experiences of inside and outside their heads and how Riley overcomes her adjustment problems emotionally. This movie is utterly captivating and psychologically astute.

The script of this production is super intriguing for both kids and adults to watch. The clever and witty comedic essence to the dramatic plots went hand in hand and balanced it out beautifully.

This movie is high quality, engaging and entertaining and it also contains a mental health message which unlike other movies can be 'dark' and not quite suitable for the child audience.

Great animation is one of the main components of a Pixar film and undoubtedly this movie too has spectacular animation with gorgeous vibrant colours, clever character designs and imaginative rendered settings. I absolutely loved the characters and how Riley's emotions were personified: joy, sadness, anger, fear, disgust, imaginary friends etc. Joy never failed to light up the screen and even sadness did not fail to bring a smile on our face even in her depressive state. Riley was very relatable and easy to connect with. The voice acting was fantastic too.

This movie is easily one of my personal favourites because of how beautifully they integrated the concept of mind, emotion and memory into it. Not only does this movie demonstrate the metaphors of thought and emotion, it also goes on to explore the interaction of emotions with each other and how important it is. Inside out gives us an insight into the workings of intrapersonal processes and illustrates this in a way which is relatable and identifiable. The most impressive aspect of this film is the emphasis on intrapersonal communication i.e how we interact with or relate to ourselves.

Most importantly Inside Out encourages us to embrace the wholeness of ourselves and give us permission to not be "okay" always. It reminds us to give people around us a chance to work through their emotional realisations. It also helps children to learn and understand more about themselves and the world around them.

~

EUPHORIA: WEB-SERIES REVIEW

Rupkatha Mondal

Semester 1

Mental health issues in teenagers are very profound. Since Teenagers go through stages of puberty, one may become emotionally confused about different events. Mental health issues amongst adolescents is an everyday issue. Within a society of rules and norms, mental health problems with teenagers result in different reactions. Also, there are other factors that affect mental health in a bad manner like substance abuse. Some of these issues are highlighted in a series called “Euphoria”.

From the name only it can be figured out that all the characters in this story are somehow trying to experience and hold that intense happiness and they are afraid to lose that feeling. “Euphoria” is an American teen drama series. Many critics feel that “Euphoria” is too raw, graphic and too provoking for the young audience. At the same time, the show is almost meant to be an honest, raw and thought provoking depiction of teens’ experiences today with drugs and alcohol, with mental health struggles, with the pressures of social media, with relationships and identity crises.

Rue Bennett, the main protagonist of “Euphoria”, in the ‘pilot’ episode, came fresh out of rehabilitation. Right away, we learn that she has struggled with mental illness throughout her childhood. It is alluded to that she suffers from bipolar disorder, anxiety as well as Obsessive compulsive disorder. As viewers, we hear Rue’s thoughts, we watch as she cannot fully escape them, and we enter a little inside as she uses drugs and continues to use them as an escape. For as long as Rue can remember, she has suffered from mental turmoil. When she was a young adolescent, her father contracted cancer and she began taking his opioid medication. The trauma of father passing, together with her already fragile mental state, created the perfect storm for her later drug abuse, addiction and overdose as a teen. What makes Rue relatable to the viewer are her constant failures and her depiction of the pain of someone going through these particular issues.

“Euphoria” dedicates each episode to a particular character, and season one explored these characters by depicting their personal stories, personalities and also giving a glimpse of their childhood lives. We have other characters like Maddy Perez, with a dark and dull childhood which has led her to get involved in toxic relationships. Jules, another character, creates a picturesque about what it is like to be a transgender person in an often intolerant and corrupt world, whilst Kat, indicates what it is like to be insecure about your body image. Cassie Howard has a long way to love herself and accept her flaws. Lexi Howard, another character, has tremendously observed everybody’s life around her and wrote a play about the incidents of the people she observed thus, unfolding her creative mind. Creating characters who represent real struggles that many teens and young adults go through has definitely made “Euphoria” a brilliantly ingenious and empathetic creation.

Earlier in season one, we saw Jules fantasising about ‘Tyler’, a random guy she met online. The character’s imaginations illustrate the longingness for human connections and the urge to explore love. In a world where people “keep in touch” virtually, “Euphoria” explores what it is like to feel alone and how it can lead to mental health issues. Moreover, the series also shows the danger of trusting strangers you meet online. “Euphoria” has continued to serve a story that interacts with the audience and allows the viewers to think about their own mental health.

Mental health awareness is such an important topic that needs to be shown on TV in the most accurate way. “Euphoria” has set a good example to other shows as one that is capable of emphatically showing mental health and substance abuse. The series’ attempt at tackling misconceptions related to mental health whilst portraying its real, often dark side definitely deserves whatever praise and accolades it receives.

~

15 PARK AVENUE: MOVIE REVIEW

Madhurima Dey

Semester 3

Year of release- 2006 (India)

Director – Aparna Sen

Language – English

Running time-116 minutes

Cast- Konkona Sen Sharma, Shabana Azmi, Rahul Bose, Waheeda Rehman

The movie 15 Park Avenue revolves around the life of a girl (Meethi) with Schizophrenia. Meethi or Meetali lives with her mother, Mrs Gupta and sister, Anu or Anjali who is a professor. Meethi is taken care of by her sister Anu. Meethi lives in her world of delusions and in her mind, she is married to her ex fiancé Joydeep with whom she has 5 children. Meethi, being a schizophrenic, hallucinates her house in “15 Park Avenue, Kolkata 19” where apparently her imaginary family resides.

The character Meethi or Meetali Gupta was played by Konkona Sen Sharma who did an outstanding job in portraying the character. She, with her detailed expressions and gestures made the audience feel the pain and angst within her character. Shabana Azmi played the character of Anjali Mathur who was exceptionally good and detailed with her work. Under Aparna Sen's direction the movie turned out to be an exceptional, heart warming and realistic piece. All the other actors including Rahul Bose and Waheeda Rehman were equally responsible for the success of this movie.

In the movie the audience will come across a dialogue by Anu, “What right do we have to take away the happiness Meethi gets from her imaginary world?” This shows that Aparna Sen's 15 Park Avenue is not like the other movies trying to portray items without having the required knowledge. The scene somehow blurs the thick line between what is considered “normal” and what is deemed “abnormal” in the society. Here arises the question that if hallucinations are just as convincing as real perception then do we have the right to invalidate what might be someone's experience just because it deviates from ours?

Myself being a viewer, I was mesmerised by the contrast between science and unscientific rituals like the scene in which the tantric was summoned and also the difference in being treated and cared for and the one left untreated and aloof. The mad woman on the streets was used as the metaphor in the movie. I feel through this movie the importance of empathy side by side with professional help has been portrayed well. The oblivious nature of humankind towards mental health through Charu (maid),

the street loafers and the understanding nature of humankind through Joydeep Roy(Rahul Bose) has also taken the limelight.

The filmmaker was successful in drawing attention of the audience while spreading mental health awareness. The viewer basically can live through the characters. It very appropriately has portrayed how we should make mental health and wellbeing a global priority. The movie is full of emotions and warmth. To live those moments and to find out what struggles Meethi had to face while she was looking for her house, her family and “did she find them at the end?”, one must watch the movie 15 Park Avenue.

~

SPECIAL THANKS TO

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Sannita Datta

Sridatri Kar

Sukanya Dey

Urvi Uchat

SEMESTER 5

DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY

THANK YOU