

depression



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VISHWASA

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I'M NOT OKAY.

BY SOUJANYA AND NEEHARIKA

DEAR FRIEND,

It's been a long time. I can't believe that the last time I talked to you was in March! Or was it February? I don't really remember much these days. Anyways, how are you doing? I hope you are settling well into your new job! I wish you were here though. Everything has been difficult for me recently, especially getting out of bed. Are you still baking? We had so much fun doing that together. I bet you're training for a marathon already. As for me....I don't feel very well and I rarely do anything during the day anymore. I don't know how time passes so quickly yet so slowly. I'm thinking of quitting my job, I honestly don't think I can go on anymore. Do you think that would be a good idea? Actually, no - don't answer that.

Have you ever wandered around meaninglessly? I did today. I went for a walk. It was the first time I've seen sunlight in a very long time. It wasn't as refreshing as I thought it would be, it was rather annoying actually. I saw a dead bird on the street. I don't know why but I started crying, after weeks and months of feeling absolutely nothing - I simply cried.

For a while, I couldn't stop, but I think I'm okay now. I tried falling asleep to ease the headache I'd gotten from crying, which obviously didn't work. I can barely fall asleep during the night, let alone the day. The doctor suggested warm milk, which only makes me nauseous, to be honest. I used to love milk. I don't know what happened. A lot of things have changed. My mother subscribed me to a daily meal plan, never thought I'd see the day when my mum would force me to eat more. I throw the meals out as soon as they come, but my mother doesn't need to know that. I bought a few books recently, but can't get myself to read those either. I'm in a bad place, dear friend. I don't know myself anymore. I need your help.





DEPRESSION

BY ARSHIA AND DIA

Depression, also known as major depressive disorder, is classified as a mood disorder that makes you feel a constant sadness or lack of interest in life. It is one of the leading worldwide illnesses and affects a person's day to day life. According to WHO, the top five countries with the highest rates of depression are: China, India, the U.S, Brazil, and Bangladesh.

After the pandemic hit, "GOQii" did a study on how people have been coping with the 'new normal', they surveyed 10,000 people. According to the study, 26% of the people who did the survey were suffering from mild depression, 11% were moderately depressed, while 6% of the people were facing severe depression. On average, 43% of the Indians suffer from depression. There are three types of depression:

Clinical/major depression is the most common severe form of depression. Clinical depression is marked by a feeling of sadness most of the day, severe loss of interest in activities they often enjoy. Most common symptoms include- feeling fatigue, feeling worthless or guilty, indecisiveness, Insomnia or hypersomnia, loss of interest in most activities, anxiety or restlessness, suicidal thoughts, or significant weight loss or gain. Only if these symptoms recur for over two weeks, a person can be diagnosed with clinical depression.

Persistent depressive disorder (dysthymia) is a chronic form of depression. Symptoms can last for years and can severely affect someone's daily life and relationships. Symptoms include- loss of interest in daily activities, feeling of emptiness, tiredness or lack of energy, low self-esteem, irritability or excessive anger, insomnia or hypersomnia, decreased level of productivity, avoidance of social activities, and poor appetite or overeating.

Bipolar disorder is marked as an extreme shift in mood. These shifts in moods can cause depressive episodes and affect everyday activities. Symptoms include mania, hypomania and depression. While experiencing mania you may have an abnormally elevated mood, persistently irritable mood, or unusually energetic mood. Hypomania is similar to mania but generally less severe. If you face any of these symptoms or they seem familiar because you might know someone who faces them. Approach a loved one, someone you can talk to, maybe consult a doctor or a counselor. Living with depression can be difficult and people often don't treat it.

According to a study done by WHO, less than 50% of the people with depression seek treatment. There are hotline numbers that you can call if you are afraid of talking to someone you know.

Some helpline numbers in India:

1800 233 3330 (Jeevan Aastha helpline, available 24/7)

09820466726 (AASRA)

0832-2252525 (COOJ mental health foundation, GOA, 1 pm-7 pm only)

Depression is not something you can just overcome by yourself. It requires serious treatment like antidepressants, psychotherapy, etc. Untreated depression can stay for weeks, months, even years. There is strong evidence proving that depression can affect physical health. Untreated depression in teenagers especially can lead to suicide, Drug and/or alcohol addiction, self-injury (inflicting pain upon themselves), reckless behavior, poor school performance, ruining relationships, trouble competing in sports, struggling in social situations and being violent towards others.

Suicide is the second leading cause of death for people between the ages of 15-34. More than 40,000 people die by suicide and almost 1 million commit suicide. According to the centers for disease control and prevention, men are nearly 4 times more likely to die by suicide. So if you have even a single suicidal thought, use these helpline numbers, if not, reach out to your loved ones. Depression isn't a sign of weakness.

Some changes that you can make in your life that may make a difference-

1. Get into a routine
2. Set goals- even small ones are good, like, cleaning the dishes, making the bed, etc.
3. Exercise
4. Eat healthily and hydrate enough
5. Sleep well
6. Do something new
7. Try to have fun
8. Spend time with the people you feel most comfortable with.

Medications and psychotherapies are most effective for depression, so if required definitely consult a psychologist. Understand your depression, seek treatment, and find the right one for you, get social support, don't rely on just medication, be patient because it takes time.





MERCILESS

BY NEEHARIKA AND SOUJANYA



"Depression is your biggest enemy,
That destroys both heart and soul,
It tortures without mercy,
And consumes its victim as a
whole

It torments endlessly,
Ensuring that numbness prevails,
But deep within, a fire does
flicker,
Growing stronger with every
exhale."



BREATHE, FIGHT, REPEAT.

A SHORT STORY ABOUT COMBATING DEPRESSION DURING TRYING TIMES.

BY SHIKHA GUDURU

I had just woken up yesterday morning, ready to hit the books and prepare for my next final when I realized that in just 3 months I would've spent a whole year of my life inside my house. I hadn't met any of my friends in a very long time and calling and texting them every day is just not the same as talking to them face to face. Just the thought of getting up and facing another day of online classes, studying for online tests, and talking to my friends through my laptop screen made me want to scream and bury my head under my pillow for as long as possible.

Most of my friends did just that, while I had my mom to get me out of my bed; she would walk into my room and tell me to get up, get my books, and study so that I would be successful during my exams. This did not help me at all since I no longer have any motivation to prepare for my exams; the day my previous exams ended I had let out a sigh of relief and crawled under my covers hoping that I wouldn't have to come out again.

I had no idea what I was feeling; I wanted to yell and cry all at the same time which made me lose my inspiration to get any productive work done. I had spent the whole day from morning way into the night just sitting and staring at my laptop screen, watching Netflix and hoping that it would give me an incentive to get up and start studying again. However, the sadness of not being able to go out or express my feelings or have a heart-to-heart conversation with someone made sure that nothing I did inspire me to do any productive work.

This was the reason why I got up today morning, took a shower, and got an early start to my day. I had decided that in order for me to not worry about the depressing things in my life, I should get up and try to do something about them. I focused my anger on the world because of the pandemic and no proper socialization into the schoolwork I had piled up and focused my energy helped me do excellent work which will help me do better in school. After I finished my school work, I finally opened my books to start studying for my next final. I started taking notes and I didn't look around me till I had finished a considerable amount of studying in order to make me confident enough to ace my finals.

I finally realised that I could deal with my anger and depression by looking at every single day as a fresh start: throwing out the old and bringing in the new. I couldn't believe how effective focusing my anger and letting out my sadness was, in getting me back on track to deal with my schoolwork and prepare for my finals. I now comprehend that accepting my depression was my first step towards reforming myself and it has helped me cope with my sadness and anger in the best possible ways. I will get up tomorrow morning and with a new approach and slowly I will get back onto the path leading to a focused future.

NAVYA REDDY AND SPRUHA DEO

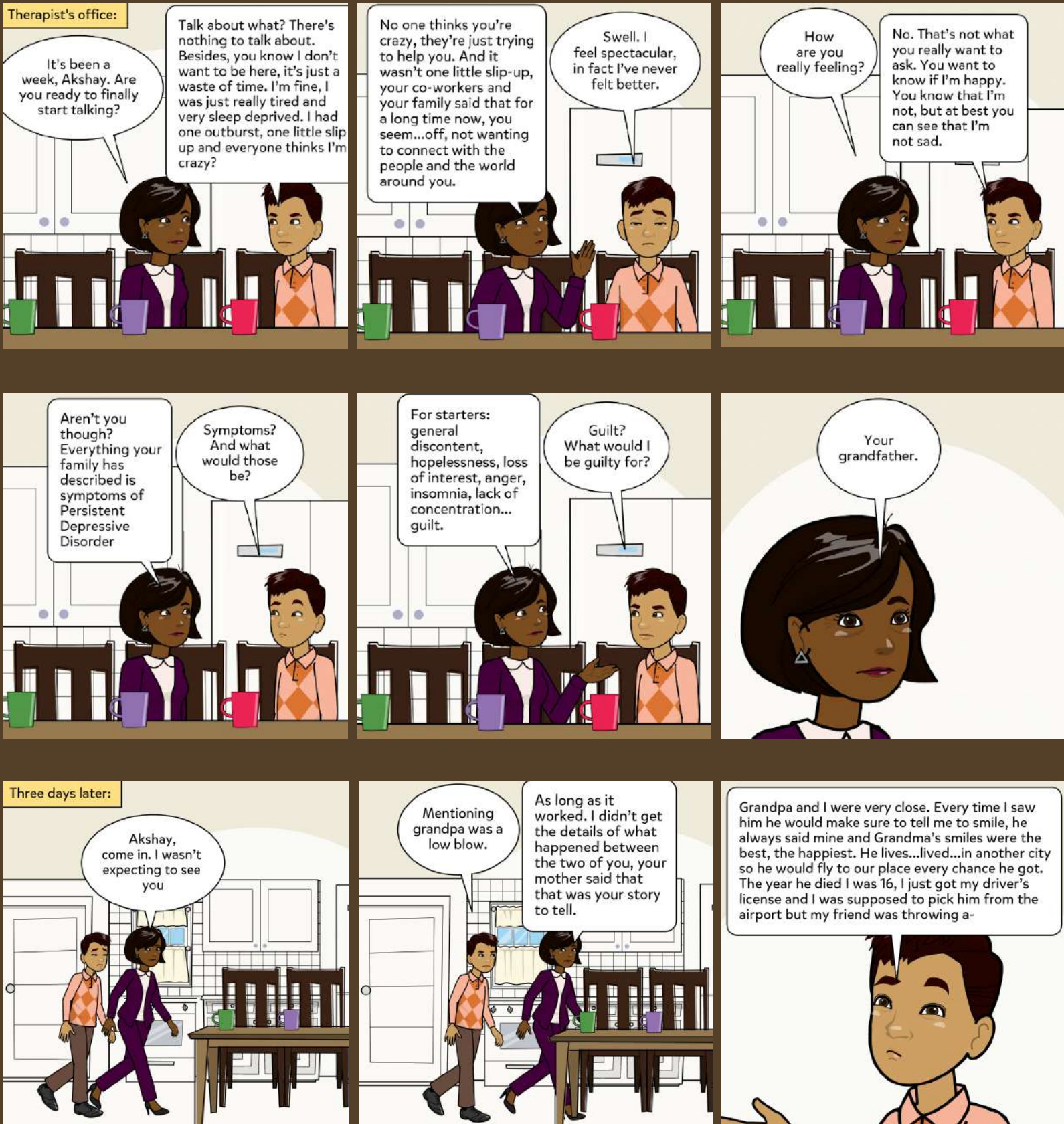


This collage shows a journey of what a lot of us may be going through. It's hard to be hopeful during these times but know that you're not alone. This collage serves as a reminder that your wounds will always heal, even if you're in one of the darkest places. The dark colors represent our demons but the lively green keeps the flicker of hope alive. Whichever color you end up finding yourself in, just know there's always light at the end of a tunnel.

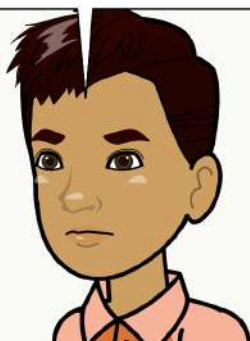
ESCAPING THE SHADOW

A COMIC BY DIA AND ARSHIA

TW: THIS COMIC DEALS WITH IDEAS RELATED TO DEPRESSION, SUICIDE AND SUICIDAL THOUGHTS.



-party the same night and I really wanted to go, more like I was supposed to go. I thought I had a reputation to uphold. So I ditched Grandpa and told him to get a taxi to get home instead. That was the last conversation I had.



How did he die?

A car accident. The taxi driver was drunk but I think Grandpa thought he was just chatty. Ever since then I feel this guilt. I should have been the one to drive him home right? He would still be here if I weren't so dense.



Have you told anyone about this?

No. I already feel pathetic. I don't need someone reassuring me. I get nightmares every time I try to sleep, every time I relive the night he died. Tonight was the worst. This time it hurt too much to try to ignore and I didn't know what to do so...here I am.



Firstly, I want to congratulate you for finding the courage and the strength to be able to come and talk to me. So how do you feel?

Do you know Kurt Cobain?



The singer in Nirvana right? I heard he committed suicide at the peak of his career.

I feel like him.

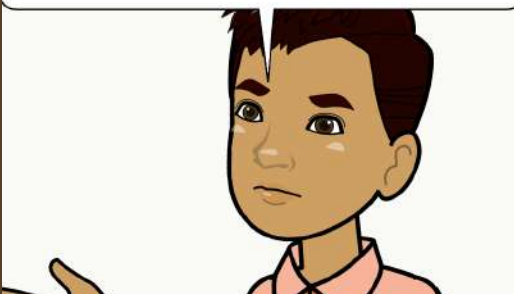


Suicidal?

Well, no. I always find myself reading his suicide note. I mean he had it so good so why would he take such a drastic step right?



But in his suicide note he says "I must be one of those narcissists who only appreciate things when they're gone. I'm too sensitive. I need to be slightly numb in order to regain the enthusiasm I once had as a child." And I relate to that. When I look at people all I see is sadness, I can't enjoy anything anymore and I don't know why. I mean if I feel love why can't I feel happiness?



Hmm, I think it is because you are so stuck in the past and your past self. The same Akshay who went to a party, instead. The same Akshay who would have made a hundred other mistakes. You are definitely not the same Akshay. Grief changes us in a big way, a way that is often missed. There are various phases of grief that we go through.



It begins with denial because the loss we face is unthinkable and we don't want to feel it. Every person leaves a little piece of them behind, memories, that remind us of them. That is when our mind realizes that we can't deny the loss anymore. We then get angry, angry at the person we lost, angry at the people who are alive and don't have to feel the loss of a loved one.



Once we are unable to maintain our anger, understand why it happened, we fall into depression. That is where we begin to feel the sadness, the guilt and even the self pity. This is the phase you are in.

But I don't want to be.

No one should ever have to be but yet, so many people end up being.

So now what? Is this how I am always going to feel?

No, not if you let me help you. I want you to go back home today and set a routine for yourself, come up with things that you will consistently do. Setting a routine for yourself will be helpful. At the beginning of every day, you will set goals for yourself.

Small ones, even the smallest ones, for example, making your bed, taking a walk, eating a nutritious meal, and whatever else you feel up to doing and-

How will that even help me?

Finishing each of these tasks is an accomplishment. Then, at the end of every day you will write down the things that make you happy. It could be because you watched something you enjoyed, smiled at someone else's foolishness, went out and spent time around people. It could be anything. You know, it is alright if at the end of the day when you begin writing you can't think of anything.

I just want you to acknowledge that and make sure you do something the next day.

Okay... I could try that.

Akshay, you are a wonderful person who has great potential and I promise you, if you try, you will get out of this. Just be patient. Don't give up. It is a slow process. And one day, you will stop feeling the guilt and you will smile when you think of your grandfather. Do this till the next time we meet, that is five days from now.

I should get going and allow you to get back to work.

No worries, it's what I'm here for.

Goodbye, Dr Gupta. Thank you.



Think Positive!

YOU GOT THIS.

NANDINI HARIA

A major part of being mentally stable can only be reached if you take care of your body physically. Eating healthy, making a logical checklist, and fixing your sleep cycle does make a difference. Yes, you've probably been told this many times, but that's for a reason. It really does help to motivate you and stop yourself from overthinking situations that are unnecessary.

Everybody's struggles are qualitatively different. You cannot quantitatively try to compare them. Like "Oh! They are going through 3 'things' and I'm going through 5. My life is much worse." It doesn't work like that. I know this is easy to say, but for real, never think that you aren't going through something 'bad' if someone is going through something 'worse'. People take things differently and that is okay!

