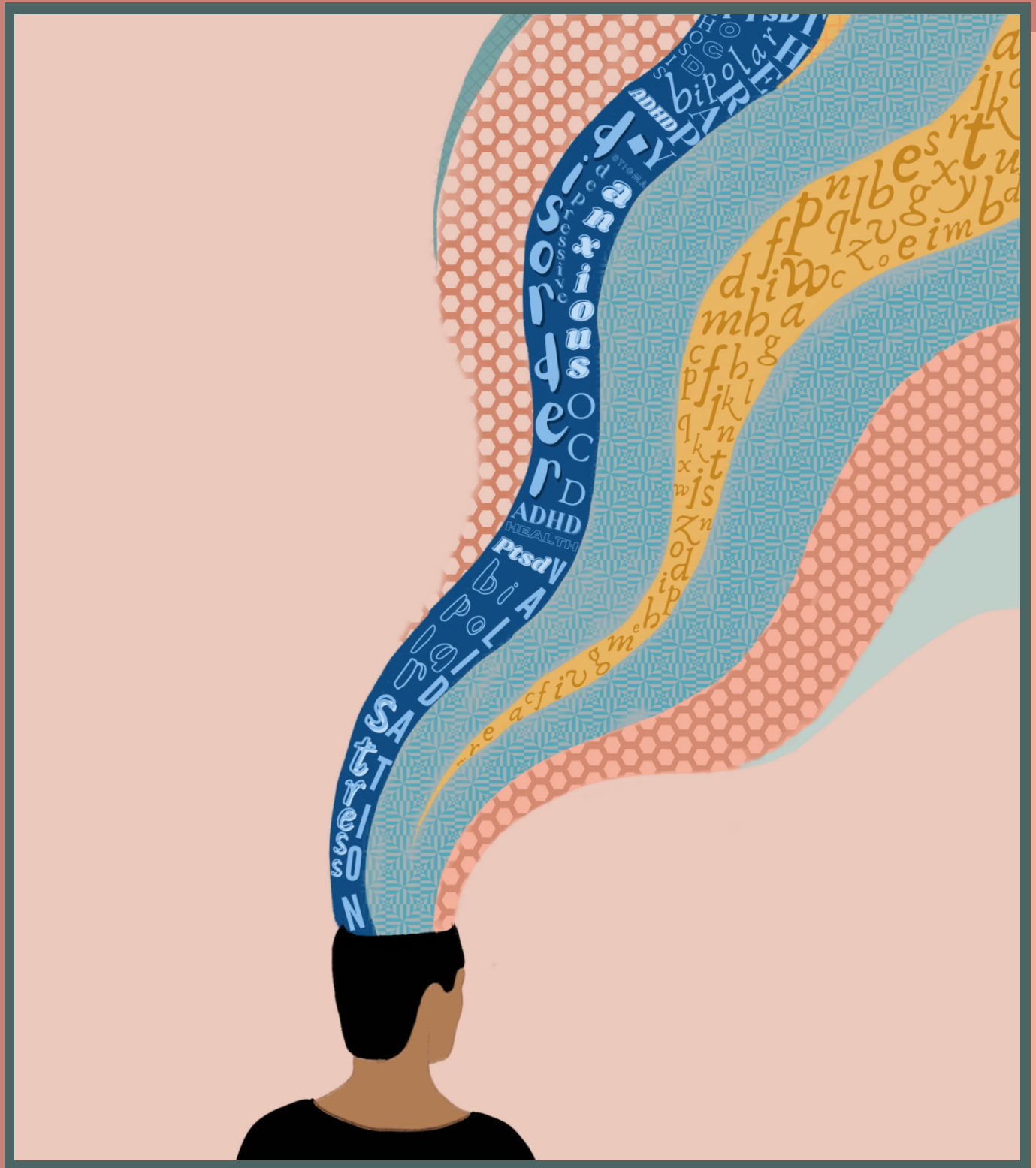


Mental Health Directory



VISHWASA

OCTOBER 2021

05

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Hyderabad, India

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*Please read the
DISCLAIMER!*

IMPORTANT

TW: Mentions and descriptions of depression, anxiety, personality, psychotic and mood disorders, forms of self harm and suicide, and abuse.

The purpose of this Zine is to educate, raise awareness and discuss mental disorders and illnesses in the media. A few points to be noted:

1. The letters, poems, short stories and comic strip are works of fiction.
2. Certain words used are to educate people about what not to say. These words can be hurtful and insensitive and should not be used.

If you have any further queries, please reach out to us at
vishwasa.hyd@gmail.com

Letters



to



Dear Diary,

I have anxiety, but people just think I'm seeking attention. "Big deal" is what people say while I'm having an anxiety attack. Just "brave it" and "believe in yourself". "Chill, calm down, concentrate".

Unfortunately, it just isn't that easy, and I wish they'd be more accepting, more believing, more caring. I feel all alone by myself, getting more and more depressed, disturbed, and emotionally unstable. Is a little embrace, a little empathy too much to ask?



A Sequence of Haikus

Lack of emotion
They tell me it's depression
Losing self-esteem

Sinking through quicksand
I can't make myself calm down
Why am I anxious

I'm crying, flustered
They promise that it will help
I will try it out

Eyes closed, holding hands
Group therapy is helping
I've found my balance

I will make it through
I embrace what's happening
The future seems bright

Letters



to





MENTAL HEALTH: THE IMPORTANCE OF VALIDATION

BY MONISHA AND AARYA

It has not been discussed yet how lack of mental health awareness over the years has affected how we respond to mental illnesses. The internet has had a significant surge in the amount of 'mental health' content it promotes. But let's talk about how people who don't have a mental illness can respond to it. We have yet to discuss that, but it is important that we do because we're almost always wrong with the way we respond.

Mental illnesses are just like any other medical illnesses. Those who have a mental illness are sick. This view of mental illness is important because it helps society accept the mentally ill without making them feel alienated. Furthermore, there is improved treatment for the mentally ill when there is increased knowledge in the neurobiology of mental disorders.

Don't respond to someone's mental illness by giving suggestions or dismissing their pain by comparing your struggle with theirs; it is not a contest to see who's suffering more and is a way to bring them down and make them more upset. Do not dismiss someone's concerns about their mental health by telling them it's all in their head or that they 'think' they have it because they know more about mental illnesses in general.

When someone shares anything about their mental health, it is important to not minimize their pain. Acknowledging what they have been going through and supporting them is the best that you can do. Do not say things like ‘most teenagers are depressed’ or that ‘it’s common now to have a mental illness.’ Don’t tell them to go on a walk or to just drink chamomile tea. They would’ve already done that if it worked. It’s important to not minimize their struggles as what you say can affect them and question if what they’re feeling is even real.

Someone sharing things about their mental health puts them in an incredibly vulnerable place. If someone shares something with you, it is not a time to be stereotypical, to tell them to be positive or to tell them to forget about it. Mental health is a serious topic and it is painful to those who have a bad mental health. It is crucial to be supportive and to let the other person talk.





"IT'S JUST A PHASE!"

A STORY BY SHREYA DHANANIA AND VARISHA KHAN

Rohan, a 16 year old teenager studying at the Sweet River High School, usually seemed to go unnoticed by the class, just as though an **invisible kid**. Be that as it may, Rohan wasn't bothered by it, rather surprisingly enough, was quite content with it. It wasn't very long after though, when along came a day Rohan couldn't have imagined of. Rohan, the invisible soul, no longer remained behind the shadows and had become the school's new hot gossip. The disclosure of Rohan identifying from the *queer community* spread like a wildfire.

Be it conversing during the breaks or exchanging chits during the lectures or publicly passing *quips*, teens went around blethering quite a lot.

"It's **just a phase**. Soon you would *snap* out of it."

"He's being so *psychotic* and *r*tarded!*"

"Quit being an *attention seeker*, you *f*ggot!*"

Amongst all this, there remained just one other student who stuck by Rohan's side and didn't believe identifying from the queer community was disgusting or **shameful** for that matter.





"I am *proud* of Rohan for being themselves!"

"If you can't be *supportive* and *non-judgmental*, don't be so **homophobic** either."

"Identifying from the queer community doesn't make one any less human than all of us, *respect* Rohan."

During all this, Rohan expected that they would find something new to gossip about soon and hence didn't quarrel with anyone about the same, quarreling that anyways seemed unnecessary to the school staff, peers and parents too. Nevertheless, a couple months later with no sign of them to stop, things not being great at home and often facing **observer bias** at school, Rohan developed **Reactive Attachment Disorder** and performance anxiety around the same time.

During the school's graduation ceremony when Rohan overheard someone say, "...haha I bet he was just pretending to be queer to gain attention and indeed he did!", Rohan just couldn't take it any longer and broke down and had an outburst in front of the entire school staff, peers and several parents including Rohan's.





“Ugh! Will everyone just shut up! It’s a lot to take in when nobody around me understands me. Even my parents think it’s just a phase. Identifying from the LGBTQ+ community isn’t a phase or a choice, it’s the way we are since birth. It would mean a lot to me even if you just tried to understand me and be a little open-minded. But *no*, you refused to do that itself. I am tired of being eyed out, looked down at and getting the biased treatment from everyone just for being myself. Can’t you see how much it affects me? I can’t be confident anymore because I have begun to doubt myself, despite knowing that I am capable of doing all those things my classmates are doing. I have developed **social anxiety**. Being by myself all the time and not being able to talk and share my feelings is *suffocating* me. I don’t understand. Why are all of you so against it?

Moreover, now the government has made it legal too. Such an environment spreads so much *negativity* towards our community that it feels like every element in it wants us to crawl out of our “gayness” and be “straight”. Due to the same, people attempt **suicide**. I feel puffed. I am so done with these people judging me. I have remained silent for months but now the water is above the level. I hope that things aren’t the same when I return home from university. Otherwise, unfortunately, the other Rohans who currently remain behind the bars of fear, will never be able to come out, freely be themselves and persist there forever and suffer with *pain and trauma*.”



Letter from Saanvi to Hayley

Dear Hayley,

Hope you've been doing well, or at least better than I've been. Lets just say that my mental health hasn't been in the best place these last couple of days. I've been going through quite a lot and, well, since you know how much of an introvert I am, I usually tend to go to my family to help me solve my worries.

I usually get the usual advice such as "go on a walk" or "it's all in your head" and other things like that. But sometimes I'm worried that I'm not heading in the right direction or getting the right advice whatsoever. Don't get me wrong, I love my family and all, but I want advice that I actually want to hear, advice that makes me more confident in myself. When my family usually says "go on a walk", they are trying to tell me that I'll be fine if I do.

But the truth is no matter how many walks I take, the truth behind mental illness is that it is an illness, meaning it should be treated as one, not forgotten.

Letter from Saanvi to Hayley

I want to try and overcome my problem, not get rid of it, and that's one thing even my own family can't understand. They say "it's all in your head" - my mental illnesses are by no means imaginary, which is why this comment is so hurtful.

Not only does this attitude trivialize the emotional symptoms of a mental illness, it ignores the physical symptoms as well. I do genuinely feel thankful for the people in my life who at least have the decency to be there for me, but at the same time that's not exactly the advice I like to hear. There are certain things that people say that can either improve your mental health or damage it.

My family isn't necessarily damaging it, just not improving it completely. Hopefully maybe you can understand what I'm going through and try to help me overcome my problem because there's no one I trust more than you.

Thanks,
Saanvi

Letters



to





A STUDY:


The stigma associated with mental illness is a significant barrier to young people seeking care for mental health issues.

In England, 14-year-old school pupils were studied to see how they refer to people with mental illnesses.

The young people filled out baseline surveys at the outset of the course, where they were asked a series of questions. 'What sorts of words or phrases might you use to describe someone who experiences mental health problems?'

These labels reflect the largely negative connotations that young people associate with people who suffer from mental illnesses.

The findings show that help-seeking by mentally ill young people can be improved by interventions that address both people's lack of factual understanding about mental disease as well as their significant negative emotional reactions toward people with mental illness.



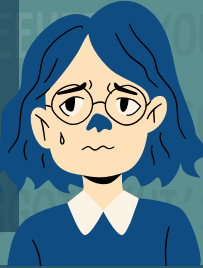
Hello, I am...

**ATTENTION
SEEKER**

'Shh here comes the attention seeker',

No, don't say that to her,

She is suffering from the inside cant you see;



'Stop worrying and just be',

No, don't laugh at her,

She's trying to find a way to breathe.



'Snap out of it',

No, it isn't her choice to feel this way,

She doesn't want to wake up and face a new day;



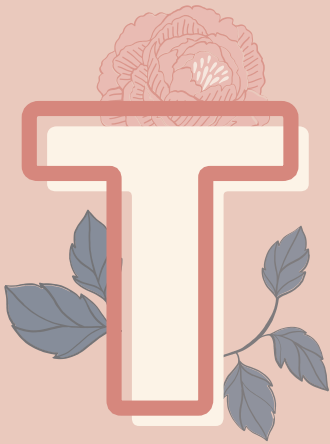
'Stop feeling sorry for yourself,

No, this just makes it worse for her,

She needs someone to hold on to,

Someone who will just listen and stay.

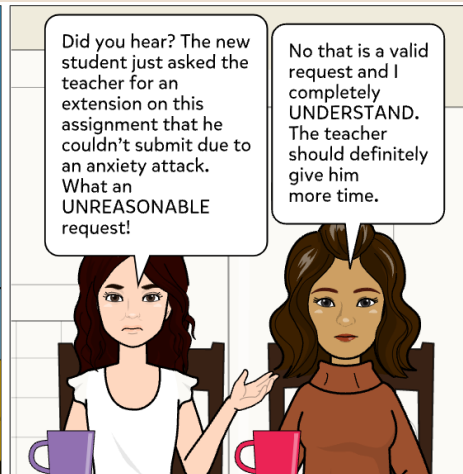
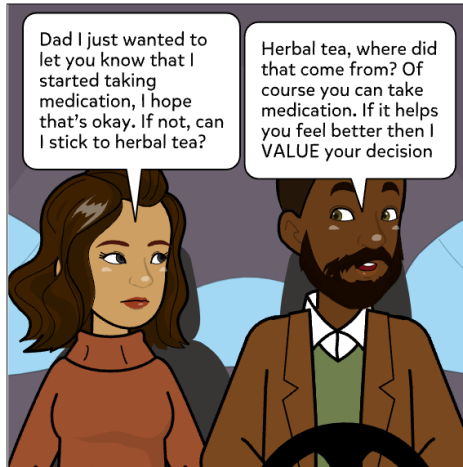
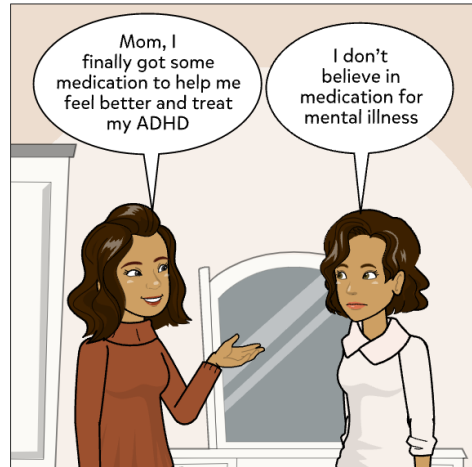
Letters



to



Comic Strip



Just because they look retarded or act differently, it gives no one any reason to call them terms that can be offensive.



'Psycho', 'schizo', and 'nutcase' are all words commonly used with people suffering from mental health disorders.



**Yes, I have OCD.
No, it isn't just about being a
'neat freak'.**



We all go a little mad sometimes

'Psycho' is such a strong word to use and people fail to understand the intensity and effect it has. They also use 'schizo' as if it isn't a condition people face and can be used lightly.



People think that anyone who wants neatness has OCD or they refer to themselves having OCD when that isn't the reality. They have unwanted thoughts and a need to act on them. They are not just being clean.



Thank you

for reading!

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VISHWASA. HYD

