



Mental Health Is Health



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The Flashlight

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Preface

The flashlight is a short story that contains two chapters, intended solely for the purpose of spreading awareness about mental health. The story focuses on the neglect of parental duties regarding children's mental health. Most of the event in the story has been based on true events.

Chapter - 1

Content Warning: This story explores aspects of mental health and contains mature language and depictions of suicide.

Sitting in a chair while her head rested on the table, Eleanor was outlining a circle on paper. As each second passed by in a blink of an eye, she pressed the pen harder on the paper which ultimately led the paper to split apart. She sighs with a hint of disappointment on her face. She glances outside the window. She observes how everyone was outside but her, playing with such enthusiasm. The feeling of great enthusiasm and eagerness had come from the idea of freedom for the young people. But Eleanor had the same freedom, so why couldn't she do the same?

“Eleanor?”

Turning around after hearing her name being called out, she finds her class teacher in front of her.

“What are you doing here alone? , the teacher asks slightly narrowing her eyebrows, “Shouldn’t you be outside playing with your friends?”

Because if I go outside, I would get bullied. She thought.

“Oh, I assume you want to be alone. I shall give you some space then, ” says the teacher after observing the silence.

After the teacher leaves, Eleanor sits down and wonders if her silence always indicates the need to be alone. Did she really need the space that she had just now been granted without her asking for it? If not, Why couldn’t she ask people to stay with her? She becomes infuriated at herself But then again, Nobody would get her. She takes a look at the clock which was about to strike its hour hand at 3. It meant the end of school today. She did not like home. It never felt like one ever since her mom left. The moment she would put her foot inside the house, she ’d be consumed by

the darkness and hollowness. She felt no emotions but emptiness. She was left in the darkness, in a room of four walls where she couldn't see hope. She wanted to stay in the light, which she never was able to ever since the tragic incident took place. It took all of her strength to live through each day. Never wanting to move or get out of bed, she was left miserable with no one to understand her.

Her heart dropped when the bell rang. But left with no choice, she carried her bag and proceeded towards the area where her school bus was parked.

Hustle and bustle of the pupils crossed Eleanor's ears when she stood in a queue, waiting for her turn to get on the bus. "Hey, loser." One of her classmates grabs a portion of her hair from behind.

"Aahh." Elle moans from pain and turns around.

"Stop being so boring and join us sometimes, alright?," her classmate suggests, "Being a loner won't get you anywhere. We can have so much fun together." Finishing the statement with a smirk, the girl and the other students laugh.

Eleanor does not respond and gets on the bus. Stuffing AirPods into her ear, she drifts away in her fantasy. A fantasy where her mom was still alive. Tears slowly fall down her cheeks. It hurt her. She was hurt by the fact she would go back home now and be flooded with millions of thoughts. It hurt her to survive every day. She did not know what the feeling was. To her understanding, it was an intense feeling of despondency which she herself couldn't get rid of. She would simply sleep it away.

However sleep, too, did not come easily to her. She took antidepressant pills to stop the pain and sleeping pills for her eyes to shut down. Her eye bags were getting puffier and darker each day, her clothes were left unwashed, her bedroom messy and her appetite had gone for good. She had no interest in grooming herself.

“I am home,” Eleanor announces. This was something she was used to doing every day when her mother was still around. But now that she's no longer here, this has just become a habit that she could not put an end to. She enters her bedroom, where everything was a mess. She lies down on the bed and stares at the ceiling and realizes how almost all of the things at her home are almost the same but the aroma. She slightly turns her head to the left side of the bed and grabs her pills. She swallows two pills at once and slowly falls asleep.

“Elle, Wake the fuck up.” Eleanor opens her eyes instantly when she hears a loud yell from a man. She rubs her eyes trying to see clearly. As she looks at the clock, she realizes she had taken a nap of five hours. In front of her, she sees her father standing.

“What?” She questions.

“Are you fucking trying to kill yourself with these pills?”

There was no decency shown by her father which made Eleanor fill with hatred and anger for her father.

“I am trying to survive, dad!, ” she shouts at her father, with tears forming in her eyes, “I am fucking depressed. I am dying inside every day. What do you know!”

The old man’ s temper sparked.

“I have told you a million times and I will tell you again, It is all in your head!, “ her father shouts pointing his finger at her, “Your cousin recently got into a car accident, and Oh my, the poor kid tells his parents he is completely fine when we know he is not. He is severely injured.”

“Why do you think only the physical injury hurts the victim more?
That’ s so stupid.”

“So tell me what your depression does to you, dammit. Tell me where it hurts. Does it hurt your head? No? Does it hurt your leg? No. So, what’ s the problem?! , ” Eleanor's father raised his voice, “And I am not somebody you can shout at. I am your father.”

“Father? Who? You? Have you ever been a father to me? I don’t think so.” She quivers with rage.

Hearing her statement, the old man's resentment festered in him.

“You are just like your mother. Do you want to end up like her?”
Eleanor’ s father yells at her so loud it makes her flinch.

“At least I am not a cold-blooded person like you who doesn’t know how to treat his own daughter.” She cries.

“Watch your mouth, Elle.” Her father crashes the flower vase on the floor which makes Eleanor flinch.

“You should have been the one to die, not my mother.” Tears streamed down her face as she struggled to speak and coughed between words.

Her father freezes at her words because from his perspective of him, he was just trying to be a good father to Eleanor, which he did not realize were the actions of a bad father. “You like the idea of depression. You only want to fit in. I have provided you with everything; education, your needs, your wants, and yet, you say you are depressed, ” her father claimed, now in a much calm manner, “I am and will always be a good father, but you will never be a good daughter, Elle.”

Shortly after the fight between the father and daughter. Eleanor’ s father knocks at the door. When he gets no response after knocking three times, he slowly opens the door. He notices the lights were closed. He turns on the light to see better. “Elle!” he panics when he doesn’t see Eleanor anywhere.

She did not care for any moment she would run out of breath or pass out. She only cared about running away as far as she could. To the end of the world, or to her end. She wanted to cut off ties with everything and everyone. She wanted to keep running towards whatever she would be led to. As she sprints, She keeps weeping. Her head starts to ache from the fact her mother was no longer with her; it hit her again. She cries out loud remembering what she had just seen; a father taking her daughter’ s depression as a joke. She stops for a moment and tries to catch her breath.

While doing so, Her eyes fall onto a bridge. This should be the end, should it not? End of the torture. End of pain. End of the emptiness. End of everything.

Chapter - 2

With tears in her eyes, Eleanor had both of her feet on the edge of the bridge. She closes her eyes and starts to reminisce about the good times. She had none. She then lets out all the exasperation, anger, and resentment she had for her father. She yelps all the pain away. She was convinced she had no role to play in this world and that she had no reason to stay. She thought she was just adding a burden on top of her head by making an attempt to survive every single day. Her depression was killing her already. She was fed up with her life. She was exhausted. The time had come.

She had her eyes closed. The wind was blowing through her. She had gripped onto the rails to support herself, but it was time to let it go. The moment she would let the rails go, it would evince the state of letting her grip off from what she had been holding onto her entire life, hoping to find hope. It would mean letting go of the pain that devastated her. For the last time, she recalls her time with her mother. The good times. Times when she was genuinely

happy. Times she did not need to have those pills. Times where everything was near to perfect or just perfect. Just when she was about to let her body fall freely, she hears her name.

“Eleanor!” Her father cries.

She recognizes her father’s voice but does not turn around. She had already made up her mind to end her. She did not want to change her mind.

“Eleanor, Please don’t do this. I am so sorry.

She lets her head drop. Tears kept welling up in her eyes as she kept wiping them off.

“You don’t get it, dad. It’s too hard. I can’t. Please let me go.”
She stumbles and snuffles between her words.

“Eleanor...,” Tears roll down his cheeks. Looking at his own daughter in this state, he resented himself. He realized how worse his parenting had gotten; to the point, that his daughter did not want to live anymore, “When your mother left, I promised her I would never let you miss her presence, that I would always take

care of you and be a mother figure to you. I messed up, Elle. I know I did. But please, give me a chance to better myself, Elle. I promise I'll take better care of you. I have no one, Elle. I only have you. You are the reason I get up every day. You are the reason I go to work. You motivate me, Elle.”

“Dad..” Her walls were slowly breaking down. She grasped the fact that although she had no motivation, she was her dad’ s motivation. She was the reason somebody worked hard every day. She was the reason for someone ’ s well-being.

“If not for me, for your mother.” Her father says as he weeps.

She realized how her mother would want her to live longer and have a bright future ahead. She was, indeed, ending her pain but she forgot she was passing it to another. She finally turns around and faces her father.

Her father runs to her and helps her get off the edge of the bridge. When he finally caught her, He embraces her tightly. At that very moment, She felt like a precious gift to him. A gift that he had won. He was grateful and happy. Happy tears formed in his eyes. He was relieved to have his daughter back.

“Thank you, Elle. Thank you for not giving up.”

AFTER A MONTH

Eleanor had started going to the therapist. Her father had actively started caring for her mental health. He spent more time with her. He started doing everything Eleanor used to do with her mother.

Eleanor’s mental health was getting better and she felt less empty.

“Elle, I have something for you I think you’ll like.” Eleanor’s father says while he hands her a letter.

“What’s this, dad?” Eleanor questions observing the letter strangely.

“A letter from your mother. You were hurting inside when she passed away. I thought the letter would bring you more pain. But I think it’s the right time now.” Her father smiles. Her heartbeat paced as she opened the letter.

To my beautiful, lovely, and strongest daughter.

Dear Eleanor,

I have a feeling as you are reading this, you are going through a hard time. A mother's heart knows everything. I miss you, my sweetheart. No words could ever express how much I miss you. But you have to understand the different circumstances we often have to deal with. Life has never been easy for anyone, dear. The older you get, the harder life becomes. I am sorry that you have to go through this at such a young age. I am sorry I was not courageous enough to survive. And If your upbringing was ever adequate, I know you will stand up for yourself every day. No matter how many times you fall, I know you will get up every day. I am sure you will live. For me and for yourself. You will live and make up for the time I had lost. You will find the motivation. You just need to accept that it happens. Let it happen. You will get past it. Take time. Allow yourself to get better.

Don't let my disappearance affect you much because I am you. I thrive inside of you. Wherever you go, I am always watching you. I will always protect you. I will never let you be on the ground forever. You will rise again. I will help you. Never ever give up.

I love you, Eleanor. Do what is right. I will be by your side forever.

-Mom

NOTE FROM THE AUTHOR :

According to numerous studies, It was found that the family structure mostly affects the mental health of children. I have seen so many parents neglecting the mental health issues of their children and that should have never been the case in the first place when the literacy rate is more than 60% in Nepal. This shows how less aware people are regarding mental health, most parents believe depression and other mental issues are just a phase. We need to talk about mental health issues more openly, enlighten people on the issue, be kind, help the people suffering mentally even if they don't ask for your help, and treat mental health the way we treat physical health.

MENTAL HEALTH IS HEALTH.



Why you should cry: The importance of letting go

Utsah Sunar

On the 22nd of March, it was official that my brother was going to the airport with a couple of necessity-filled bags and would most likely come back after many years from a land far away from ours. My mom, being the so-called ‘emotional’ person she is, surprisingly kept it together throughout the whole day. And finally the time came when we were doing our religious rituals like us Nepalis do when our falano kta kti go abroad, and then my mom broke down into tears. The type of tears I hadn’t seen in a long time. It was a heavy and impactful sight to see, the type that would make an uncomfortable lump form in your throat as you tried to stop yourself from crying. My mom, just like most other moms, mamus and mummys, seeing her child about to leave for his own future’s better. Just as my brother was comforting my mom, as he himself sobbed, the words “kina roko kamla? Na ru” came out of my aunt’s mouth, as instinctively as possible. Being as stunned as I was, I was taken aback to hear someone questioning my mom’s tears of sorrow when it was clear how she and the rest of us were feeling that day. Not to my surprise, I had to hear these same words from

her mouth throughout the whole car ride and at the airport too, as I, contradictorily tried to validate my mom's emotions as much as I could. If this seems like the normal or right way to comfort someone who is expressing their emotions, to you, I wouldn't be surprised.

Have you ever wondered why people are so quick to shut down crying? We are terrified of our own emotions as a society, so when someone's crying, our first and very automatic response usually is: "don't cry". Many times, our motive when saying this is to comfort the person, hoping that they'll stop the tears and feel better, regardless of how they feel and what happens to them when we do so. Through this piece of writing, I only hope to get one thing done. To make sure you cry and let others cry from now onwards, with no harm, of course. I will also be providing the links to the studies that I've referenced in this article.

As a phenomenon that is unique and exclusive to humans, crying is a natural response to a wide range of emotions, from deep sadness and grief to extreme happiness and joy.

But, what might be unexpected and surprising to most of us is that crying does more than just good for us. There even happen to be different types of tears depending on their purpose.

According to scientists, reflex tears and continuous tears perform the important function of removing debris such as smoke and dust from our eyes and lubricating our eyes to help protect them from infection. It's the third category, emotional tears, that potentially offer the most benefits, but are also unfortunately surrounded by unnecessary stigma and negative notions. With numerous studies (1), it has been proved that the release of emotional tears has a self-soothing effect on our minds, and shockingly enough, on our bodies too. Crying activates the parasympathetic system of our nervous systems, which helps to put our body in a rest and digest state. A study published in the journal 'Emotion' found that crying facilitates coping and recovery skills during times of stress. This means that the less you hold back tears, the better you're going to feel physically and emotionally.

Moreover, researchers from the National Institutes of Health have established that (2) crying releases oxytocin and

endogenous opioids, also known as endorphins. These feel-good chemicals help ease both physical and emotional pain. A 2012 study (3) showed strong emotions, like crying, can be a result of excessive emotional energy, which tears help release.

They found that crying can diminish tension and negative feelings, regardless if the source of stress was removed. It has been found that (4) emotional tears contain cortisol, the stress hormone, and other toxins. Researchers have theorized that crying flushes these things out of your system, though more research is needed in this area. Additionally, an astonishing fact about the power of tears is that it demands us a sense of community in our moments of vulnerability. Emotional tears have higher protein concentration than irritant tears, which makes them fall down your cheeks more slowly—increasing the chance that they'll be seen and it'll rally support. As a 2016 study (5) explains, crying is primarily an attachment behavior, as it rallies support from the people around us. This is known as an interpersonal or social benefit. Furthermore, tears have been found to benefit our eyes too. Crying helps rehydrate our eyes, which improves our overall vision. Plus, tears have the power to kill bacteria. (6) Tears are cleansing and help remove the

potentially damaging irritants that your eyes are exposed to daily. Tears are 98 percent water, but also contain salt, fatty oils, and 1,500 different proteins, as well as an antibacterial chemical known as lysozyme that helps fight off infections. Basal tears, which are released every time a person blinks, help to keep the eyes moist and prevent mucous membranes from drying out. As the National Eye Institute Trusted Source (7) explains, the lubricating effect of basal tears helps people to see more clearly. When the membranes dry out, vision can become blurry.

In extreme contrast, it has been found that repression or suppression of emotions can be bad for our health and overall well-being. Crying is an important safety valve, largely because keeping difficult feelings inside — what psychologists call repressive coping — can be bad for our health. Studies (8) have also linked repressive coping with a less resilient immune system, cardiovascular disease, and hypertension, as well as with mental health conditions (9), including stress, anxiety, and depression. Additionally, unresolved anger can have some significant health consequences, too. If you struggle with

expressing anger in productive ways, you may face a higher risk of developing high blood pressure, digestive problems and cardiovascular disease.

All that's been said, and after having all this scientific based evidence on the obvious benefits of crying, why is still our first response 'don't cry' to someone who's letting go of something that's been holding them captive in sorrow, overwhelm or even happiness? We say this to children. To adults. To anyone who's crying because most of us have been raised in homes without emotional awareness. We struggle to understand our emotions — or to hold space for other people who experience intense emotions. We tell people to stop crying because it's habit + because we are uncomfortable. With many different connotations surrounding crying, most people tend to associate it with negative thoughts and feelings. Unfortunately, the notion that men and boys should be tough and not 'emotional' has been rooted in our minds for a long time. Growing up, we have always been taught to not cry. We were taught to be strong and not let falls and challenges faze us. For men and boys, having been told how crying is not manly meant that they are even

more prone to the desire to look tough. As we grow up, these words are etched in our minds, we build walls and hide our tears behind a smile. It takes a lot of unlearning to understand that being strong, independent and resilient can co-exist with the shedding of tears. It is okay to let our tears flow. In fact, it requires a lot of courage to be vulnerable and to acknowledge and experience our feelings.

As written as eloquently as possible, the blog on crying in Harvard and health's website explained : ““I know a man ain't supposed to cry,” goes the lyric of a popular song, “but these tears I can't hold inside.” These words succinctly summarize many a man's dilemma about emotional expression. From early on, boys are told that real men do not cry. When these boys grow up, they may stuff their feelings deep inside and withdraw emotionally from their loved ones, or self-medicate with alcohol or drugs, or even become suicidal. Many men therefore need to learn the skills of how to reconnect with their emotions. Back in the 1990s, the poet Robert Bly led men's seminars at which he taught the participants how to get in touch with their long-buried feelings of sadness and loss, and to weep openly if

they needed to. Ideally, however, such education should begin early on, at home or at school, with adults making it safe for boys to talk about difficult feelings.” Adding to the list of beautiful things said and done, it is refreshing to know that “crying clubs” (涙活read: rui-katsu) in Japan, are places where people gather to watch a sappy movie and cry together. They do this to create a safe space for each other to express their emotions openly. Crying is a social cue that signals to others that you need support. While we often think that crying should be a private affair, crying in front of people you trust can be a very liberating experience. However, it does require an extra step of courage to share your story and ask for the support you need.

Yolanda Renteria, a psychotherapist and expert on the subject of processing emotions and trauma in general, shared the following words in Instagram. “As a therapist, I’d love if all people knew: The human body is designed to express emotions and emotionally discharge. The body is not designed to suppress (conscious) and repress (subconscious) emotions, which is something humans usually do. Please know that being ‘cold’, ‘tough’ or ‘unemotional’ aren’t personality traits.

Human are meant to experience soft emotions; we are wired to be sensitive. Humans are actually designed to care a lot about others. That's what's keeps us connected and alive. Humans process and soothe emotions by releasing their energies in safe spaces.”

As pointed out by Yolanda, our bodies have nervous systems that are wired in a way that allows us to experience complex emotions that make us the humans we are. And I'm here to tell you that yes, feeling emotions can be physically painful. They are even more painful when we learned that having certain emotions were unacceptable. Not only is our body trying to process our pain, but we are also physically trying to shut it down and in many instances, judging them and our 'personality' - which only causes more pain. Somehow, we learned that not having emotions meant being strong. That's a lie. I just want you to know that having emotions, feeling them, and discharging the energy from them is a completely natural body function. Just like eating, sleeping, or going to the bathroom. Additionally and unfortunately, at some point strength was linked to survival for our ancestors - suppressing emotions was actually the best way for people to survive their dangerous environments. And it might be just what you did to survive yours. Many children were and are told that

crying is weak and that they need to be strong. This was and is a message passed on by their caregivers who were told the same. Sadly, many children had to learn to shut down tears in order to survive in their home environment. Many still do.

So, what steps, tiny or big, can we take to feel comfortable and let others feel the same to be the humans we are wired to be? After years and years of conditioning and cultural cues that tell us crying is not okay, it sure will be difficult to be expressive of our emotions. One of the most important pieces of work we can do is identifying emotions, noticing them in our body, and validating them. Emotions are automatic and unconscious, we have no control over them. What we do have some control over is what we do after, and that's where the work is. Normalizing crying is so important. Allowing people to cry is a true gift. We just have to learn to be comfortable in sitting with someone's tears. As I've found in Dr. Nicole LePera, a holistic psychologist's Instagram, she provided insight on how to be there for someone who's letting go of boiling emotions;

1. Breathe. If you didn't grow up in a home with emotional awareness, you might automatically say "don't cry" or "it's ok." Pause before you speak it. Just stay conscious + present.

2. As they're crying, you can ask "is there any way i can support you right now?" They might not answer or may not know. That's ok, too. They may just want to vent or talk, so listen.

3. If you are in a safe relationship + know this persons likes physical touch, offer that. Silence and the human touch is a healer.

4. Be open: stay conscious to what's happening within you. Are you uncomfortable or anxious? This will give you a lot of awareness for how your own emotions were dealt with growing up.

Lastly, I would like to thank the reader for taking their dear time to read this article. I hope I've convinced you to know that crying is beyond okay and that we tend to see them as overwhelming and scary and confusing, when they're really beautiful, soothing and reassuring. They're not to be seen as some screeching alarm bell that something is wrong but rather a natural functionality of our amazing bodies that is best when its embraced.



Don't make me answer my phone

Rashi Maharjan

Monologue: Memoir of November 2020

Oita Japan

My phone rings, while I am having a very busy week in college, my assignments as a fourth-year student seem to be piling like the Everest itself, and I feel like I should just call my sister later. I am so grateful right now, because even amidst the chaos that COVID-19 has stirred. Luckily, I am in Japan, and I don't have to quarantine as there is no such law that enforces its citizen to follow strict draconian lockdowns like in Nepal. However, something is off with the number of times, my sister is calling me today. Usually, it is just a call and I call back shortly, if I am not working, but today the phone is buzzing. "Ma has been hospitalized due to corona."

I don't think it must be that grave though, at least in the hospital she will be taken care of properly and the people who are succumbing to the virus are probably not getting the right treatment, so in a hospital, she will be okay in no time. Time is passing by real fast; I need to work on that Human Rights assignment.

Days pass by and now weeks, Ma is not recovering. A thick cloud of tension started covering the atmosphere back home, though I have been told not to worry, I start to see the implicit feelings that my family members weren't speaking. As a doctor and a very honest person my sister is, I ask her bluntly and she replied, "Her CT value is very low." I am processing this news and my roommates ask me whether I want to go out for dinner. I am finding this shift very unusual, after I cut my phone call, I am starting to feel very detached with reality. On one hand, life is the same in Japan, and on the other, I know it's a different situation back home. Should I feel guilty that my life here is not unmoved by the news and that I have so many ways to divert my mind while my sister is having to deal with everyone and handle them?

Another day, another phone call. The festival is nearing, and the virus seems to be staying.

My mother, who always greets me with a smile that could ease me from all my worries, now only talks to me when forced by my sister. My mom and my aunt have become hysterical, they never stop crying and this makes me feel completely useless. What else can I do? Thousand miles away connected digitally, what more can I really do? I end the phone call feeling anxious and for the

very first time in my life, I felt something heavy on my chest, I was in no physical pain, but I start to feel out of breath. My throat was filled with pain and for once, I let it all out. It has been so long that I last cried like this, I don't even recognize where the agony is coming from, but I just can't take it inside my chest any longer. Tears and more tears, I cry letting my guard off, without even worrying about my neighbors who probably are on the verge of calling the police to complain about the noise that I am creating. My two roommates enter my room in despair, but I just want to cry unnoticed. Suddenly, I feel very nauseated, and I rush to the washroom in hopes of getting my stomach cleared, but all that comes is a very long cough.

Some slight improvements in her health and I can see everyone getting happy. I thank God for the return of normalcy and watch as everyone is busy with Mha puja. Laughter, jokes, and hope fills the air.

It is a normal Sunday here in Japan and I hurriedly rush to 7/11 to get myself some breakfast and rush to work. Teaching the kids have never felt like work to me, in fact I very much look forward to dancing to 'Baby Shark' and embarrass myself in front of their parents. I always take the 10:15 AM train so to reach earlier than

the students. On my way, I can see bright sunny clouds and happy mountains, it surely is a wonderful day. I reach the station and get to the preparations, one by one, the kids start to join the classes and I was done with my first shift. I glance at my watch and think it must be 10:00 AM in Nepal and wonder what my family is doing back home. Just like that I was done with both of my shifts, but as soon as the class finished, I got a call.

My heart began to beat fast, I think of not picking up the call out of fear. But I also realize that it would be more painful later if I call and nobody picks, so I pick up my phone unwillingly. My sister was crying, and she gave me the news that I had been dreading all this while. Tears started rolling down from my eyes because I had big hopes inside of me, and I cried more because all the hopes were crushed. After ending the phone call, I wanted to sit there and cry for a good hour, but I had to finish my work. I started wiping the blackboard and putting the tables back crying while suddenly, my students enter the room saying that their parents are late. I try to wipe my tears immediately, but the children are smart. They understood, that is why they gave me their handkerchief and went to the other room. I was very thankful for this sweet gesture, but I was silent.

I boarded the same train, only now, my world had changed. The bright sunny clouds now seemed to be heavenly, maybe because I imagine Ma on it. I stare at the blue sky and felt ferocious, for not letting me bid one final goodbye. But again, who gets to do a proper final goodbye ever?

I close my eyes and think, I the past month, I have endured nothing but pain and agony. It has now come to an end. Ma took it with her, she freed me from my constant state of anxiety and gave me a warm sunny day where I could feel the rays as if it was her warm hands touching my soul saying, ‘We will meet sometime soon.’”

Present day

I still feel anxious when I receive phone calls from my family members. Although, I have managed to trace back where my anxiety laid, I am aware of the fact that many people do not get the support that they deserve and find it extremely difficult to move along with time. Here are some of the things that I did to make my grief bearable

1. Writing down my thoughts- Although this mostly consisted of

me missing my grandmom, it felt good to not speak with anybody and write down whatever I was thinking at that point. Nobody could, even if they said, understand the grief I was going through, so I would treat solitude as a friend rather than my enemy. Sometimes, I read the letters and get tears down my cheeks because it has so much of my raw emotion. I also wrote songs and recorded sunsets.

2. Cherishing beautiful memories and self-affirming- Not all memories have to be hurtful and bring you back to reality. Once you wrap your head around the fact that your loved one will always be with you in the form of this universe, you will get the strength to remember them without feeling a heavy lump on your throat

3. Talking with my family- You need to be with people who understand the loss just as equal as you. This wasn't possible for me since I was out of the country, but technology has made this easier.

4. Celebrating anniversaries- It is a good way to keep them present throughout your lifetime

No matter how hard we try, answering that phone call can never be easy. But, we can surely manage ourselves properly so we don't lose ourselves. There is no shame in admitting missing a

loved one dearly after their demise, neither it is wrong to seek for help. As individuals, we need to be always weary of validating other's thoughts and feelings toward a particular notion, because mental health is health afterall.

Anxiety is often triggered by grief, and it is very common to experience when you are dealing with the loss of someone you hold dear. While death is a part of life, we are nowhere prepared to deal with it. There is a misconception that it is normal to be depressed or anxious for a long time after suffering from grief, while it is true that everyone takes their own time, we never know when one develops chronic mental illness where it becomes difficult to bring them back. Therefore, we need to be aware of the kinds of symptoms one exhibits after dealing with loss and we need to provide as much as emotional support as we can provide because sooner or later, we will have to answer that phone call.

Happy Girl on Instagram

Shristika Thapa

And suddenly nothing felt right Felt like something is holding me tight Difficult to breathe, having no zeal, want to shout, But still got up, got dressed, and went out. Mental health is rather unseen, no one knows through what I have been Emotions and criticism dragging me down But this side of me will never be found Because it hurts and I don't want to feel clowned The happy girl on Instagram Oh! Look at her content Damn! Living the life many people dream But only I know how much pain I have and want to scream Asking for help, a shoulder to cry on Despite the friends and followers, I feel there are none. One thing leads to another Comparing myself to every other A skipped meal to make sure I don't gain My mind shouted - "YOU ARE WORTHLESS" while I tried hard to keep my image maintained. This is not done, this is not me I may struggle but I will never fall I will come out of this darkness, standing tall A letter to myself - You are beautiful, you are strong, and if no one does-love yourself.

The Light Ahead

Sannidhya Chitrakar

I shut the door
As I was out of breath
For my bare hands
Had brutalized his death

Mother I'm sorry
For I betrayed your trust
For the sins he's done
Punished be must

Blooded my hands
With shivers down my spine
Yes, murder's a crime
But my act was divine

I'm heading my own way
Oh mother, don't cry
Wherever I'll be
Your words, I'll forever live by

Each stab through his heart
Poured liberty onto me
I rose from his clutch
But insanity's all you see

Tragedy and horror
Everything's now gone
Mother, I'm sorry
That I killed your only son

Dead or Alive

Prajal Deoju

Squeezed amid the death and life
Troublesome and weary though in search of a better delight
Occurred from the sky or coast nearby
But here it is.....Dead or Alive

An attempt to try, with every failing witty mind.
Enraged though fragile the innermost of life.
Tell somebody on this verge of life
Is it really Dead or Alive?

Overshadowed with every augmenting dimes
To be paid crucifying the dreams, the elixirs, the very life
Is life really meant to live, or just to survive
Again, the inquire, Is it dead or alive?

Is it unfair, the want to leave in silence
To stop every rumbling, seeking peace surpassing every understanding
But, the bits of flashes, the warmth of compassion that of love
Not to deteriorate them, though the torment lingers without an end

Surely, triumph awaits...
Dawn of the beam abides
Behold, don't let the thief steal the patience in which it resides
Dead or alive?

Ask them, in anticipation of a miracle
Behind treasured one grappling with an armored nightmare,
eradicating the puffs that remain
To them, what was life?
Wasn't it more than being corporeally well?

Is it really okay, to not be okay?

Bishesta Subedi

‘I am okay,’ a perfect shield to cover one’s heart palpitation, weak knees and that lingering, formless feeling of dread. The pressure an individual feels to display a flawless public facade, with zero regard for his/her inside turmoil and private despair is got to be one of the saddest and most miserable truths of mankind.

Ever since I have remembered, society has put this huge burden on each and every one of us to stay strong no matter what. A person crying in a room full of people is still considered weak. Showing your true form of emotion and sharing your insecurities is still taboo. Everyone is scared of being judged and seen as feeble or made fun of. Irony at its best, isn’t it? for a generation that quotes ‘It is okay not to be okay.’

When someone breaks a bone we take them to a hospital and get a cast on it. We never ask that person to stay put and say it will heal on its own. Likewise, when a person is feeling mentally unstable or is struggling mentally, why don’t we take them to the doctor rather than brushing off their feelings? We have been

talking about the importance of mental health for quite some time now but why is it still such a big stigma? When will society understand mental health illnesses like depression and anxiety need as much medical assistance as a broken bone?

'You are doing great because some people have it worse, I often hear this statement when people are trying to console others. Do struggles and emotions come with indicators on how much is more and how much is less? For some failing a simple class test might be quite insignificant whereas for some it might be a cause for attempting suicide. A lot of people have different takes on similar circumstances. Not everyone is capable of brushing things off easily. Some people are extremely sensitive. So, to say someone has it worse is invalidating their feelings and pushing them to the edge more.

I recently came across a post that said we are a sad generation with happy pictures, and I couldn't agree more. Don't you think we are a bunch of hypocrites who are on one hand shouting slogans about being your unique self and on the other trying to fit into a box that society has created? If only we are to be genuinely compassionate and empathetic towards each other, without comparing the glam and glitters of what we see on social media.

If only we could create an environment where a person's weird
quirky side is accepted as much as their perfect social media
avatar then maybe we will live in a much more peaceful mental
state as a society.

Mental Health Is Health

Anwesha Khadka

You don't know how much the heart cries
Upon its fate
Down the history being blamed
For all impulsive actions made

You don't know how much the ear suffers
From the strange whispers
Of not the wind chimes but
Words from or for anonymous left unsaid

You don't know how much the eyes feel tired
Trying to derail oneself
From the visions
That've been set

You don't know how much the mouth wishes
To rip itself apart
Hoping to get unconsidered actions undone
If only they could just fade away

You don't know how much the hands have gone through
Maybe at the reflexes
That have turned to regrets
Or ones that never raised in defense

You don't know how much the legs go numb
After running away
When one shouldn't have
Perhaps after now not running away when should

You don't know how much the entire body's been through
How many stories unheard
Untold and you wouldn't even guess
As they may never unfold

You don't know how much the brain is exhausted
Trying to explain mental health is health
Every parts pain and emotions it hid in disguise; scared
From the scorns of the world; still wanting to be portrayed

The Demons...

Anshu Pandeya

She stood on the bridge In silence and fear, For the demons of darkness Had driven her here. They cut her heart Right out of her chest, Making her believe That the demons knew best. They were always there, Sometimes just out of sight, Waiting in the background Till the time was right. These demons were destructive, Knocking down the life she knew, Hating everything about her; She hated herself, too. These demons can't be seen, But they're far from fairy tales. They live inside her mind; Their evilness prevails. So on the bridge she stood, About to end the fight. Then she stopped and thought I'll fight them one more night.

A Helping Hand

Shantanu Sharma

Suicide prevention day was yesterday
But the threat is present everyday
It is a subject full of enigma
And we must work together to stop this stigma
That talking about suicide is a taboo
Which starts with changing our mentality too
Because if we just shun those people like that
How do you expect them to come back?
Please reach out to me with a beacon of hope
Whenever it seems impossible to cope
Because I have gone through these thoughts everyday
So that is why I am telling you today
As a survivor from suicide attempt
Please don't internalize this contempt.

Hope

Pratikshya Dahal

Life has been just like a firefly in my room flying all over with dilute brightness in the pitch dark night. Yeah, brightness is always the sign of hope and darkness is what life is. Hope is just like a firefly roaming around and certainly resting in a position. Whenever I feel like a hope is being stable, it flies away. I just hope I have'nt left my windows open! Just like hope, I assume that another brightness in life is happiness. There is roomful of darkness but just a single firefly with its mildness. In the vast array of darkness, I still feel that light it shades upon me keeping life bearable.

No Wonder...

Marina Pandey

No wonder, how easily every attempt fails
To look forward to something bright
But the dreadful leaves its trails
And despair stands upright.

No wonder, you hesitate to give a hand
I'm aware you aren't unknown
But I do understand
You've got stories of your own.

No wonder, you call it 'forced melancholy'
Could've chosen anything to stand out, I swear
I call it something—everything gave me
And it's more than enough to bear.

No wonder, how uneasy is the heft
Of everything happening in this head
But the thought of giving up still gets me afraid
I mean it when I say, a pinch of hope is still left.

Mental Health Is Health

Priyanka Bajracharya

Mental health includes our emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It affects how we think, feel, and act. It also helps determine how we handle stress, relate to others, and make healthy choices. Mental health is important at every stage of life, from childhood and adolescence through adulthood. Everyone feels worried or anxious or down from time to time. But relatively few people develop a mental illness. Mental illness is a mental health condition that gets in the way of thinking, relating to others, and day-to-day functions. Dozens of mental illnesses have been identified and defined. They include depression, generalized anxiety disorder, bipolar disorder, obsessive-compulsive disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder, schizophrenia, and many more.

Although the terms are often used interchangeably, poor mental health and mental illness are not the same. A person can experience poor mental health and not be diagnosed with mental illness. Mental and physical health are equally important components of overall health. For example, depression increases the risk of many types of physical health problems, particularly long-lasting conditions like diabetes, heart disease, and stroke.

Similarly, the presence of chronic conditions can increase the risk of mental illness. The cause of many mental illnesses is unknown, but current theories suggest that some illnesses are related to the chemistry of the brain. Many things may play a role in causing or triggering a mental illness. For example, genetic factors, such as having a parent or close relative with a serious mental illness, may increase a person's likelihood of developing a mental illness. Stress may act as a trigger for a mental disorder or may make it worse.

Mental Health Problems are struggles and difficulties that affect everyone from time to time. Everyone experiences mental health problems at some time, and these problems can affect their ability to handle day-to-day situations and enjoy life. These types of problems do not always require medical treatment. Some people recover from their mental health problems with self-help and support from others; others require professional help. These few tips for good mental health:

- **Build Confidence** - Identify your abilities and weaknesses together, and accept them, these people may not be there to share life's joys and sorrows if taken for granted - A balanced diet, exercise, and rest can help you to reduce stress and enjoy life.

- Make Time for Family and Friends - Important relationships need to be nurtured. These people may not be there to share life's joys and sorrows if taken for granted.
- Give and Accept Support – Positive friends and healthy family relationships show their strength during difficult times.
- Create a Meaningful Budget - Financial problems cause stress. Over-spending on our "wants" instead of our "needs" is often the culprit.
- Manage Stress - We all have stress in our lives but learning how to deal with it when it threatens to overwhelm us helps to maintain our mental health.
- Find Strength in Numbers - Sharing a problem with others who have had similar experiences may help you find a solution and will make you feel less isolated.
- Identify and Deal with Moods - We all need to find safe and constructive ways to express our feelings of anger, sadness, joy, and fear.
- Learn to Be at Peace with Yourself - Get to know who you are, and what makes you happy, and learn to balance what you can and cannot change about yourself.

How I Came To Terms With My Mental Health

Neha Khanal

I never really understood what anxiety and depression were until I experienced them myself. I've always been a pretty anxious person. I was the kid who never wanted to go to a friend's sleepovers or birthday parties because I was afraid of being in a room full of people, away from family. Even as I got older, it became more challenging for me to make friends and be in a social setting. Moreover, after high school, I joined a course that just took a toll on my mental health. My motivation to study died. I didn't want to go to college or attend classes. I simply had nothing to give to my studies. No energy, no effort, no time, nothing.

Now when I look back, I can see that I was depressed but did not know how to ask for help. My friend from the course (who is now my friend for life) knew that I wasn't happy. But she had no idea I was that miserable. My cousins with whom I spend so much time were equally clueless. I never let anybody know because I thought nobody would understand what I was going through. And truth be told, I felt that admitting that I needed help meant admitting that I was weak and that I couldn't handle my own life. Also, I felt like I could not burden anyone with my problems and

I did not want to be a burden to anyone. Fortunately, I quit the course, and today, I am happy and content. But most importantly, I am aware of my mental health.

With the stress of the pandemic and all that's going on in the world, it's more important than ever to take care of our mental health. It's been tough and we're all feeling the stress. Also, in this age of 'hustle culture', our career has become the most important aspect of our life. We are working ourselves to the bone without taking a break. We tell ourselves that we'll rest when we're finished with this project or that task, but before we know it, we're working around the clock. We are expected to be productive citizens, employees, and students. We are bombarded with constant stimuli from social media, television, and our devices. It's no wonder that so many of us are struggling to cope with the pressures of everyday life.

Mental health awareness has grown significantly over the past few years, with more people than ever before seeking help for conditions such as anxiety, depression, and stress. This is a positive development, as mental health is just as important as physical health. Unfortunately, mental health disorders are still stigmatized in many parts of the country. It's time for our society

to start having honest conversations about mental health and to break down the barriers that prevent people from seeking help. When more people are open about their experiences with mental illness, it helps to normalize the topic. This can be a difficult conversation to have, as I have myself suffered, but I think it's important to remember that you're not alone.

In my own experience, I found that the hardest part of dealing with my mental health was the feeling that nobody would get me. I felt like I was the only one who was struggling and that no one could understand what I was going through. This feeling of isolation only made my mental health worse. While every person experiences mental health issues in their own way, it's important to reach out for support and help, personal and/or professional. I understand this too, that it can be challenging to reach out for help when you're struggling. It can be difficult to know where to start. You may find comfort in talking to others who have experienced the same thing, or you may benefit more from professional help. It's a continuous battle: one day you're ready to share your problems with the world, and the next day you'd rather lock yourself up in your room and not meet anybody's eyes.

Either way, suffering in silence is never the solution.

A Suicide

Prajwal Dhungana

(The poem depicts the struggle of a fictional character going through a phase of mental health issue.)

The tears in your eyes,
Water what they call
Weak, you are, they claim
Stand again, you can't they curse
Plots they make, to harm you
To shake your roots and throw it away
Erase everything even your existence

Dear friend,
Mere Drops of water, these are not
Streams of fire out of a volcano latent for years and years has
erupted.

Neither I am weak, for fire can never be feeble
To let you know, I am fighting with a devil
A devil residing inside me
Haunting me again and again
Hallucinating me every moment

With ropes round my neck
Blood all over my corpse
Pulling me towards the roof and forcing to jump
Yeah!
An utter communist it has been
Imposing a new purpose on me and guess what, it is a suicide.

Dear friend,
Mere Drops of water, these are not
Streams of fire out of a volcano latent for years and years has
erupted.

Neither I am weak, for fire can never be feeble.
Rather I am careful not to destroy you with this evil.

So, if you can, help me out.
If not please, get lost from my way!

A Poem

Anjali Sharma

तिमीलाई वर्णन कसरी गरु यो मुटुफु ट्नेगरी धड्कन्छ
लाग्छाकी धेरैभएसी यो मुटुप्रेसर कु क्कर जसरी पड्कन्छ
तनदरी कहा आउँछ र जब सपना जजउँदैमानुणपरेको छ
आशाको तकरर् कहाँदेख्छुर जब सबैकु रामा आफू लेहानुणपरेको छ
धेरैजसो डर सबैदेखि लाग्छ मलाई
भगवान्लेमेरो भाग्य कोरेको पानामा कोररददएको छ सलाई
तनदरी कहा आउँछ र जब सपना जजउँदैमानुणपरेको छ
आशाको तकरर् कहाँदेख्छुर जब सबैकु रामा आफू लेहानुणपरेको छ
यी सपना पूरा गनेहि जोडलेकाप्र थाल्छन
लेनिचातहनेकु रा सोचेर भाको हो भनी अरूलेआगोमा घिउ हाल्छन
तनदरी कहा आउँछ र जब सपना जजउँदैमानुणपरेको छ
आशाको तकरर् कहाँदेख्छुर जब सबैकु रामा आफू लेहानुणपरेको छ
आशुररत्तिसकेथाहा छैन तकन यस्माँ भाको छ
मेरो बेथा त्योटाउको राख्नेससरानीलेपि लाको छ
तनदरी कहा आउँछ र जब सपना जजउँदैमानुणपरेको छ
आशाको तकरर् कहाँदेख्छुर जब सबैकु रामा आफू लेहानुणपरेको छ

तकन यी कानलेनचातहनेकु रा सुन्छ

Anxiey,panic attack केहो भन्नेत्यो भोग्नेलाई मात्र महसुस हुन्छ

तनदरी कहा आउँछ र जब सपना जजउँदैमानुणपरेको छ

आशाको तकरर् कहाँदेख्छुर जब सबैकु रामा आफू लेहानुणपरेको छ

अधेरीपसछ हरेक ददन मि झलतकन्छ

आत्मबल बढाउ थाहा छ तहलोमा कमल फु ल्छ

तनदरी कहा आउँछ र जब सपना जजउँदैमानुणपरेको छ

आशाको तकरर् कहाँदेख्छुर जब सबैकु रामा आफू लेहानुणपरेको छ

Is this really a story of Priya?

Pradipta Oli

It was 4 am. But this was not like any other day's 4 am; at least not to two families. The cell phone rang with this devastating news and no time to comprehend the situation at all. All of a sudden there was a loud banging and knocking on Priya's door. Priya had stayed up late working on her assignments and fell asleep just around 3 am but the knocking sounded so eerie that she knew something was wrong. Did she know something was so wrong to that extent? Probably not. She asked her frantic father, "Baba, what's wrong?" Her father was sobbing; this was the first time she had seen her father cry in pain. He gathered his courage and responded "Thulobaba has poisoned himself. We need to take him to the hospital immediately." Priya couldn't feel a thing; she didn't cry, she didn't say a word. She ran after her father to her thulobaba's house which was only a few blocks away.

Little did she know the image that she witnessed that day of her thulobaba would remain in her memory lane forever. He was

taking his final breaths with poison oozing out of his mouth in the form of bubbles, he had struggled a lot so much so that he had urinated, the room was filled with this strong smell of poison and now Priya could hear the heart wrenching cries and screams of thulomamu. The ambulance arrived at the scene. The few breaths that were left was like a sign of hope that some miracle would happen and this would all be a bad dream. Could that happen?

Maybe but it didn't happen that way in this case. The full bottle of rat poison and numerous pills of sleeping tablets had damaged critical organs of the body and there was no recovering back from it. Priya was still numb. While family members gathered together to talk about the incident, cried together, shared memories of him; she was still in her head space. She was even commented as having a strong heart by how quietly she took things that were happening. Was that really the case? Was she a strong hearted person? What was she thinking all along?

Once all rituals were performed and Priya was finally in her room locked and all alone. She started to feel every emotion possible of sadness and disparity. She rewinded her thoughts back to the night this had all started. Was she really doing her assignments staying up all night? No, she was debating on her life whether to

end it or live one more day. She chose to live one more day. She chose to keep aside all the sleeping pills she had been collecting from her parents secretly to be enough to end her life. She chose life. When she heard of her thulobaba, she imagined herself in it. Her parents finding her dead body in the same condition, the cries and screams so painful that she could still hear them, the hope of life and miracle of God everyone was lingering onto, the immense hurt and pain everyone had to endure after her death. She didn't want to end her life anymore after what she saw and experienced. She wanted to live if not for her, for her loved ones. She even questioned, would thulobaba have stopped that night if he knew the pain and hurt that he would create for his loved ones? Would he have stopped had he known the consequences of his actions? Would he have stopped if he knew that all he had to do was share his thoughts and he would receive help in many forms? Would this be prevented if people treated mental health like a health problem and not a disease?

My question to you is: Is this really a story of Priya? Am I hiding behind the fictional character of Priya and instead telling you, my story? Or is Priya any one of you? Could Priya be one of your friends, relatives, cousins? Look around and you will find many Priya's who are in desperate need of your help.

Dear Self,

Mila Bajracharya

Dear self,

I know that life hasn't been as smooth as you expected. You see, life is full of uncertainty, obstacles, and challenges. Not only that, you have to suffer in almost every step you take, every day. But what exactly is suffering? Stepping into this world itself is the beginning of suffering. When you had to struggle while stepping into this world itself, how could you expect life to pass with ease?

The only difference is, some struggle a little more, while some a little less. But a reminder: everyone has a problem in their own way. Its just that ones problem seems to be bigger than the other because you are the one living the problem/ suffering, not them. You always think that you're the only one who is suffering the most. But darling, you need to also remind yourself that everyone pretends to be living a happy life but cries within. Why? Its simply because society makes fun of people who cry. In addition to that, they depict that crying is a symbol of weakness and everyone wants to be acknowledged

as being strong and confident. But I've got a question to ask all such people: Who cares about the headache behind the scene? Crying isn't a weakness at all!

It's not your fault dear. It's our society who's at fault. Most people carry a sad face behind a happy face. The real mood of an individual can only be determined when he/ she is in the room alone. But who really cares? You, yourself have to take care of yourself, dear.

I know that you've been feeling low and depressed lately. No one knows what you might be going through. Thanks to our already judgmental society, who doesn't even think once before passing a harsh comment or making fun! But, trust me! You are stronger than you think you are!

There are almost 8 billion people in the world, each having their own personal problems. Haven't you seen people who are suffering more than you could ever imagine and not giving up? If yes, I'm sure you've been motivated not to give up as well. But if not, there are plenty of examples that you should know of! From differently-abled people to the ones who have lost all of their loved ones and have nothing left in life! Just think of how they're

fighting against all those and still choosing to live?

Remember, you are not only the one who's suffering. You aren't alone! Having suicidal thoughts and wanting to give up in the middle of the way is absolutely normal! But the majority of people do have the capacity to handle any pressure and you're one of them too! Besides, giving up will neither help you overcome the situation nor will make your loved ones happy. Think of your loved one before you get that thought again! Giving up isn't the solution at all dear!

Don't you know that hard and off roads often lead to the most beautiful destinations? Similarly, all the hardships and obstacles placed in your way are only making you stronger and wiser. So, don't stop believing in yourself, don't give up, and even take a break if you need to. I know it's easier said than done but do you know what? You simply matter! Your existence matters! You may not realize the impact you're creating on someone else's life!

You may not realize the importance of yourself sometimes and it's absolutely alright too! You have to believe in yourself because if you don't, who will? Be grateful for the life you have because there is someone out there who's praying to have even

1% of that!

Your sufferings have taught you the most valuable life lessons that even your course books and teachers couldn't teach you. Life is indeed your greatest teacher and you ought to learn something new every day! You ought to keep negativity and harsh feelings aside and let in the light of positivity and love! Life is a precious gift, embrace it fully and live life graciously. You have your own goals and dreams which you always wanted to accomplish. But you want to give up on your life and dreams because of a few problems? You shouldn't jump, not at all. It's always one step at a time! You're more than those problems! You can overcome anything that comes as an obstacle to your life and dreams.

Lastly, focus on your good karma rather than worrying about the results. Break the stereotypes of society and go accomplish your goals! Come on, if not you, then who? If not now, then when?

Love,
Self

Make It Your Priority

Iva Hamal

Mental health is one of the important part of our life and most essential for leading a happy life. We should be mentally and physically health. If your mental health is good you are going to be the most happiest person and luckiest person in the world. In our country Nepal people usually don't take mental health state seriously In comparison to their physical health. Yeah mental health experiences are valid. Mental health can range form feeling good and thriving to unhealthy situation or conditions that can negativity impact our quality of life and overall wellness is left unaddressed. We are not going to have positive feelings and negative feelings is going to interfere in our life like anxiety, anger, frustration and sadness. Mental health can affect daily living, relationships, and physical health. Looking after mental health can preserve a person's ability to enjoy life. Doing this involves balancing life activities, responsibilities, and efforts to achieve psychological resilience. Stress, depression, and anxiety, can all affect mental health and disrupt a person's routine.

Have you ever been to the place where your mental health is not good ?

Yeah obviously we all sometimes in our life suffer from bad mental State. Some people share it immediately some don't like to share it and keep those problems with themselves which causes even small things to become big problems and disorders. Even I have suffered from many mental health problems Depression, anxiety and OCD (Obsessive–compulsive disorder) OCD features a pattern of unwanted thoughts and fears (obsessions) that lead you to do repetitive behaviors (compulsions). These obsessions and compulsions interfere with daily activities and cause significant distress. During my suffering period I felt like this is going to be the end of my life I felt every day like I was living in hell.

It was really frustrating have repetitive obsession and compulsion. Mental health problems are really hard to understand. Only few people will understand your problem. I must say it was the bad and unhappiest part of my life. I lost many friends due to this problems. Now, comparing to that time

ocd is becoming mild from moderate I am trying my best to get totally out of this.

Take care of your mental health yourself!

Self care is most important. Nobody is going to take care of your mental health except you. Just like our physical health, there are actions we can take to feel our best, deal with challenges that you face tackle them properly, believe in yourself it really depends upon you that you are going to tackle it or not. Tackle every problems to make your mental state good and have a positive life.

Talking and sharing your feelings with your close one is the best therapy. Simply sharing your feelings can reduce 50% stress. If some people are sharing their problems with you please support them and help them to get of it. Proper sleep, proper nutrition, exercise, journaling and coping strategies can be done to divert your mind. Mindfulness practices such as yoga, breathing exercises can help you but drug addiction, alcohol abuse and self injury Is going to make your mental state even worst. Love yourself. Think you are the best.

If you feel like not sharing your problems with anyone and your condition is becoming even worse, visit mental health professionals like a psychologist and counselor. Early treatment is most important to reduce future disorders. I request you all take it normally and don't feel bad about your condition. Just think about yourself and your mental health.

Make your mental health your priority.

Cruel society gave Cruel stains of anxiety

Akriti Wagle

She whispered, "it's over, I am dying."

"What happened? Liza Is everything all right? Are you fine?"

"Where are you?", I asked her furiously

"At home...but not for long"

I panicked, I was scared that my little sister is acting weird, weird because 30 minutes earlier when I was with her she was exactly fine but her voice, I got goosebumps and felt sorrow in her voice as if she is right, as if she has no energy to face whatever she was going through

I took my keys and reached at the door of my car, I reached home banging the door of my room. I shouted, "Liza, it's me, Elsa, your elder sister."

"Leave me alone Elsa!", she said in a weeping voice. "What happened Liza? You know you can talk to me, right?", I said.

...

Please Liza,I only have you mom and dad left us early i can't bear to lose you.I was furiously slamming her door and weeping

After a while she opened her phone and handed me her phone.

What happened liza? I don't need your phone .

Watch it she said and broke her tears.

I was stunned,Speechless,scared. I saw a video which had my sister undressing and taking a bath.

Liza, don't be scared. I am here.

Who did this ? When ? liza ,liza you are not alone i am with you.

She hugged me tight and for minutes she didn't let go.

I wiped her tears and tried to relax her.

Do you know who clicked this?

No, she replied.

I dared to see that video again and I found something familiar, the tiles of the washroom were the same as of our washroom, in fact that was our washroom where it was filmed.

But who did it?

Who filmed the video when me and my sisters live alone?

Few days back we had guests visiting us. Was it one among them?

I asked Liza “Was this video of when guests were here?”

She replied, “No”

“It might be of then when John had visited us, John our cousin”, she replied

“Why? Why do you think it was him?”

“Because..... he tries to ...he tries to... come close... to me in an unhealthy way.”, she replied

“What ? Liza from when ? Why didn't you tell me? “; I asked her shockingly.

“I, I was scared”, she replied.

Scared? why? for what? You could have talked to me.

What more did he do?

“He warned me and harassed me. Now my video will leak. I Will be destroyed Elsa”;she replied in a breaking voice.

Thankfully my friend Jack,who was a cyber security officer, searched if it was him who did send the video and it was him. I calmed my sister and made sure that she had me by her side but she started to have a panic attack.

“Liza,nothing will happen to you, my friend Jack and our uncle Mark (who is a police officer) can help, **YOU ARE NOT ALONE** Liza . Everything that happened with you was a nightmare but we will fix it dont worry Liza”,I consoled her with a calm voice.

I called my uncle Mark and Jack home and we went to my room leaving my sister with our grandma . Uncle Mark investigated and he was arrested and taken to the court and given punishment.

Although everything was controlled even a year after my sister used to get Post Traumatic Stress Disorder when she used to see any kind of video and used to get panic attacks.

Mental health is as important as Physical health. We mustn't take it as light as it seems it can lead to many problems and lead the person to even suicide. Almost 19 people succided everyday in nepal during lockdown some might be for handling house, tension and stress. Mental health is important.

“Love yourself a little more”

Renu Pancha

Hello everyone! I am a 26 years old girl living with my family in the cultural town of Bhaktapur. Like everyone out there in the world, I have had a fair share of highs and lows in life, however, simply speaking, I am enjoying my life at the moment. Now, as an opportunity to write on mental health, I want to use this platform to share my story.

Let me walk you through my story of mental health with this beautiful quote from Selena.

‘If you are broken, you do not have to stay broken.’

-Selena Gomez

Selena Gomez is a woman I personally admire, not just because she is an excellent singer and talented actress in the field of entertainment but because of her beautiful soul and humility. I mentioned her quote above because I want to tell everyone that ‘you are not alone, just like I am not alone.’

Well, I have not been diagnosed with any mental health-related issues nor ever sought guidance but that does not mean that I do not know about anxiety or depressive disorders. I have been dealing with anxiety disorders for quite some time now. I have always been a cheerful and bright person who loves to laugh and spread the love around the people I stay with. But it happens that life has the tendency of not always showering you with the good moments and you are supposed to endure the hardships it throws. It all started when I was 21 years old, which I vividly remember, I just joined an academic internship at a renowned company in Kathmandu. Coming from Bhaktapur- a small town, it was a golden opportunity for me to be able to join such a company. The environment was obviously new and unfamiliar and it made me feel both exciting as well as nervous. I was able to extend a good relationship with my work colleagues as well. But the real effect on my

mental health started when I started comparing myself with my colleagues. On a positive note, I admired how creative, talented, and effective communicators they were. But on the bad side, I felt that I was never enough to be like them and I had no obvious skills and talents to be able to be like them. It made my self-confidence and self-esteem down and instead of learning new things and utilizing the opportunity I had, I was trapped in the everyday circle of comparison and self-doubt. Another instance during my early 20s was when I got injured in an accident and broke my hand right before my board exam of the final semester. When I was admitted to the hospital to get the surgery done, real anxiety kicked in. So many thoughts of whys and hows ran wild in my brain when I was lying on the bed with the saline water pinched in my hand. My heart raced, my blood pressure spiked and I felt suffocated as if I was dying out of breath.

Many similar incidents, both in my professional and personal life, provoked the discomforts over all these years. I felt I was unheard, my opinions didn't matter, and I didn't know how to communicate my ideas in front of people. The anxiety grew inside me and it was eating me alive. I started overthinking

things that did not happen and was exhausted the entire day although I did not do anything. At times, I felt angry and annoyed at my friends and family over trivial matters. I developed unhealthy habits of drinking and depending on junk foods massively. What if what I was doing was wrong? What if people laugh at my mistakes? What if I fail? The too many what-ifs began to ruin my confidence and I ended up wasting my energies.

The impact was severe I would say. From being a loud upfront extrovert person, I became an introvert, afraid of getting judged, and unknown about myself type of person. Although I knew that what was happening was not right and I have to stay back from such negative thoughts, I just could not. I was no longer the person I used to be and this definitely made me question my self-worth and existence. I was getting farther away from myself, the struggle within was depreciating and I could see it but feel helpless.

You may be wondering how I turned out to be and living my life now as it has been almost 5 years?.... Well, I believe everything

happens for a reason. The good and bad teach us lessons in life to prepare for the next. Yes, it was hard for me to come out of the turbulence and I would rather say I am still stuck. The overthinking, anxiousness, stress, and panic attacks I get when things or situations are against me have become a part of me.

And instead of falling victim to these, now, I try to handle them with ease and calmness. In any of those situations, I try to calm down my nerves through a deep breathing technique, breathing in and out at a count of 4 each. It helps me relax and allows me to visualize the situation in a cool manner. If ever you get nervous when sitting for an exam or anxious because you may not catch up on the bus and get home late, try it yourself. Deep breaths are scientifically and spiritually proven and are vastly used in yoga and meditation and it does wonders, trust me. And here comes the most crucial part- whenever you feel like that anxiety is crippling your mind and heart, talk about it with your close ones. As Lisa Olivera, the famous therapist and writer stated- “Just because no one else can heal or do your inner work for you doesn’t mean you can, should, or need to do it alone.” There is no shame in reaching out to others if you need help.

Your best friend or mother or partner, whoever understands you and has been there for you. Putting your feelings out in the open might make you feel vulnerable and weak. But it is always not the case. You need not stay broken or alone. When you share things freely with your loved ones, you feel a sense of relief, as if a heavy object has been lifted from your heart.

Additionally, I would like to share a few tips on how I try to maintain my mental well-being and it could be of help to you too:

- Waking up with a smile on my face or a positive thought/quote and planning what to do to make my day productive
- Meditating for at least 5 minutes a day
- Walking down the street for 20-30 minutes
- Doing basic stretches/exercise
- Reading books on self-care and growth or of any genres you prefer
- Sharing your feelings through productive interactions with your loved ones
- Listening to music that uplifts your mood or watching movies to spend time with yourself

These daily practices have definitely made me have a stronger mindset and positive outlook on life. I am laid back and feel chill now. I try to cut off the outside noise of public opinions and face the things that I fear head on. I do not feel scared to speak my mind or try new things, what is there to lose after all? At times of difficulty, I handle my stress with more patience. I do not hate my past self but have grown to appreciate things the way they have unfolded. Being true to myself, I try to live in the moment and find happiness in every little thing. Life is to be lived and I am grateful for the things I have been blessed with.

This is my story, dear audience. Thank you for allowing me to share something that has been a part of me. Be kind, be happy, and love yourself today a bit more than yesterday.

मानसिक स्वास्थ्य

Dilip Adhikari

तल्ला घरकी लाटी बैनी चिच्याउँछिन खाली
लाको कपडा च्यात्छीन फाल्छीन किन यस पाली ।
लक्का जवान छोरो भयो होटल, भट्टी धाउँछ
रक्सी, चुरोट, गाँजा पिइ राती घर आउँछ ॥

बेहोसमा छिन् ठूली भाउजु अति दुःखी बन्धिन्
होसमा आए मेरो बाबु ,मेरो नानी भन्धिन् ।
खानु खट्नु छैन कठै लडीरहन्धिन् खाटमा
आमा हुन् ती सुत्केरी बच्चा छैन काखमा ॥

दाइभाइको बिहे भयो भनी माइलो टोलाउँछ
निन्द्रा छैन रातभरी खै को गर्लफेन्ड बोलाउँछ ।
किशोरी भइन बैनी पनि रिसाउँछिन त्यसै
झर्किरहन्धिन्, काम गर्ने केही पाउँदिन्न मेसै ॥

सिरानघरको कान्छो रमाई विदेश तिर गयो
झोक्राउँदै र टोलाउँदै आयो खै के भयो भयो ।
भेना पनि फर्किएन्न गाका अरे लाओर
बलात्कृत भईन दिदी पनि केही लागेन पावर ।

बाहवटा सारी बेरी उनी बजार डुल्छीन
उ आयो ,आयो ,उ उ गर्यो के भन्छिन भन्छिन ॥

भतिज पनि एक्सिडेन्ट भो बाइकबाट हेर
धेरै चोट भो टाउकोमा रगत गयो खेर ।
हस्पिटल बसाइ, खर्च धेरै डिप्रेसनमा पर्यो
ढलानबाट खसिदियो आत्महत्या गर्यो ॥
त्यस्तै हुन्छन् बुढाबुढी नी पुग्न लाए असी
शौचालय पर्देश भयो भन्छन् बिस्तारामा बसी ॥

यस्तै व्यवहार, यस्तै लक्षण, रोग हुन मानसिक
यसको पहिचान र उपचार गरे हुदैं जान्छ ठीक ।
हल्का हुन्छ अरुलाई पोखे आफ्नो मनको व्यथा
नभनेत थाहा हुन्न को पिडित छ केथा?

मानसिक रोगीलाई तिरस्कृत गर्नु हुन्न है कत्ति
पागल भनी घरेमै थुने बिग्रन्छ झन् मति ।
समुहमा बसाल्नु पर्छ मनको तनाब मेट्न
हस्पिटलनी लानुपर्छ, मनोचिकित्सकलाई भेट्न ॥

कमजोर भन्छन्, बेइज्जत हुन्छ भनी, हुन्न रोग लुकाउन

उपचार पछि राम्रो हुन्छ पछ मन फुकाउन ।
माईली, साँइली, ठूले, साने सबै ठिक भए
सबैका लागि डाक्टरहरू भगवान बनी आए ॥

डाक्टरहरूको सल्ला, सुझाव लिउँ निरन्तर
मानसिक रोगलाई बोझ ठानी नमानौ है डर ।
भोक, प्यास निद्रा आफ्नो भन्नु छैन व्यथा
कसले सुनिदिने यहां स्वास्थ्यकर्मीका कथा ॥

घरपरिवार, इस्टमित्र, साथी छलफल गरौं बसी
मानसिक रोग निको हुन्छ सबै मिले पछि ।
सन्तुलित, भोजन, तनाब नलिनु रमाउनु राम्रो
ब्यायाम, आराम गरेपछि बद्लीनछ जीवन हाम्रो ।

Dear Thoughts...

Marina Pandey

The heedful lures you, so does the heedless.
Menacingly pulsating, the almighty omnipresent.

Most enigmatic within the enigmas, others all mundane.
Most stigmatic within the stigma, everything else in vain.

Morally immoral, hideous, so deceitful to the heart
My dear you were so different at the start.

Handful of exhaust, a few pinches of tyranny from you,
perfectly clears out my bowl of hope, not even leaving a few.

There's no me without you, the amnesty would be lethal.
The echoes of your murmurs are in no way escapable.

A little demerol of mine in exchange of all your grants,
enough of the minuses, show me the pluses if you can.

Give Her Back

Alka Syangtan

She was a girl full of life,
Mischievous, compassion and wise
But she is lost in this world now
The girl wrapped in black with the most colorful mind
Now has closets filled with color yet her heart is dark

Can you find her for me?

She used to look out of the window everynight and tell her
stories to the stars and moon

Now she sits alone in a room and the sky is lonely without her
chats and giggles.

The pink flush on her face when she was excited and her high
tone voice has now

Turned into a low hum, cautious and frail.

Bring her back to her old self,

To the one who could dream with her eyes open

Now she cannot even sleep without a pill

The teen who used to have a crush on everyother guy

Has now lost faith in even good men.

The one who wrote songs and hummed the tunes,
Is now lonely and alone in her room
Writing this piece while reminiscing the past
Hoping to find herself back and for her youth to last

Please help me find that bright girl
If you do ever find her,
could you please give her back to me?
For I loved her then ad I love her still.

Anxiety

Swastika Gyawali

You scared of every walk
Always tried to be too perfect
Afraid to have a small talk
You can't get the moment you expect.

Some morning you've overslept
And you spend many night awake
Watching in the ceiling trying to reflect
More than deed, you count your mistake.

Many breakdown in your life
When you're deep down sad inside
How people in their life can smile
Knowing problems have solution inside

I decided not to stop crawl miles to mile
It's okay not to be okay that's fine
You look pretty on your own style
Enjoy yourself don't forget life have deadline

Play your part before you depart
I know anxiety ruin you long
If you create this life is beautiful art
Move ahead come what may for life run.

There is no health without mental health. Anxiety is how you imagine the problem. If you dare to fight and face it is simple. If you run away it will be more hard to face later.

I Will Surely Free Myself

Nitesh Kumar Shah

I will surely free myself from the pain
That's filled in my heart
That's causing me heartache
I will surely free myself from the stress
That's causing me to feel upset
That is holding me back
I will let go of the past
I look into the future
I will heal all the open wounds
As I will free myself from the thoughts
Which caused me depression?

I will surely free myself from the dark hole
Which I was locked in
Which had me scared?
I will surely free myself from the violence
I break the silence
I won't be quiet no more
I will surely free myself from the cold wars

I will embrace love
I will embrace peace
As I will move on to new beginnings
I will surely free myself from negativity
Which has always discouraged me?

I will surely free myself from these curses
That is blocking my blessings
I won't lose no more
I will surely free myself from my worries
I won't be upset no more
I will surely free myself from my sorrows
I won't cry no more
To my problems
I offer solutions
I will surely free myself from these obstacles
I will let go of my suffering
I will let go of my troubles
Destiny will handle the rest.

Take Care of You Body

Kajol Shah

Take care of your body. It's the only place you have to live. So said Jim Rohn. It goes beyond doubt that the advancement in today's world has various positive and negative aspects in human life teeming from one's own health to social approaches and lifestyles. In this world of runaway activities we indeed forget to focus on one of the crucial depiction of life "That's our Health". So many people spend their health gaining wealth, and then have to spend their wealth to regain their health.

A state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity is health. The extent of an individual's continuing physical, emotional, mental, and social ability to cope with his or her environment is the thing that should be given utmost priority. None of the parts of health are comparable with each other as each one has a vital role. Health is never valued till sickness comes. We being the most conscious creature should value our health as it is basis of our existence.

Talking about mental health is one of the important aspect in today's world. Mental health encompasses emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It influences cognition, perception, and behavior. It also determines how an individual handles stress, interpersonal relationships, and decision-making. Evidence shows that good mental health supports good physical health, better immune function, healthier relationships, and overall life satisfaction.

There is no health without mental health. According to The World Health Organization (WHO) “Mental health is a state of mental well-being that enables people to cope with the stresses of life, realize their abilities, learn well and work well, and contribute to their community.” The WHO states that mental health is “more than just the absence of mental disorders or disabilities.” Peak mental health is not only about managing active conditions but also looking after ongoing wellness and happiness. Everyone is at some risk of developing a mental health disorder, regardless of age, sex, income, or ethnicity. Mental Health Problems do not define who you are, they are something we experience. Mental Health Problem is nothing to be ashamed of, but stigma and bias shame us all. It’s something we have to broaden our mindset and focus to eliminate the irrational beliefs.

Mental Health is diagnosable disease of the brain .There are various modifiable and non-modifiable factors for mental health disorders. The researchers found that being female increased the risk of low mental health status by nearly 4 times. The Classification of mental disorders include:

-Anxiety Disorders (Panic Disorders, Phobias, Generalized Anxiety, OCD-obsessive compulsive disorder)

-Psychotic disorders

-Schizophrenia

-Bipolar Disorders

-Mood Disorders or Depression

-Substance Use disorder

Several studies support that adverse childhood experiences such as child abuse, parental loss, parental separation, and parental illness significantly affect a growing child's mental and physical health. There are also associations between childhood abuse and other adverse events with various psychotic disorders. These experiences also make people vulnerable to post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Continuous stress, economic pressure, lifestyle, occupation, genetic are factors contributing to initiate mental illness.

Anxiety disorders

Anxiety disorders are the most common mental illness. The American Psychological Association (APA) defines anxiety as “an emotion characterized by feelings of tension, worried thoughts and physical changes like increased pressure.

“Knowing the difference between normal feelings of anxiety and an anxiety disorder requiring medical attention can help a person identify and treat the condition. The danger causes a rush of adrenalin, a hormone and chemical messenger in the brain, which in turn triggers these anxious reactions in a process called the “fight-or-flight” response. This prepares humans to physically confront or flee any potential threats to safety. The APA describes a person with anxiety disorder as “having recurring intrusive thoughts or concerns.” Once anxiety reaches the stage of a disorder, it can interfere with daily function.

Generalized anxiety disorder: This is a chronic disorder involving excessive, long-lasting anxiety and worries about nonspecific life events, objects, and situations. People with generalized anxiety disorder may have a history of significant life changes, traumatic or negative experiences during childhood, or a recent traumatic or negative event.

Panic disorder: Brief or sudden attacks of intense terror and apprehension characterize panic disorder. These attacks can lead to shaking, confusion, dizziness, nausea, and breathing difficulties. Panic attacks tend to occur and escalate rapidly, peaking after 10 minutes. However, a panic attack might last for hours.

Specific phobia: This is an irrational fear and avoidance of a particular object or situation. Phobias are not like other anxiety disorders, as they relate to a specific cause. A person with a phobia might acknowledge a fear as illogical or extreme but remain unable to control feelings anxiety around the trigger.

OCD:

People with obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD) have obsessions and compulsions. In other words, they experience constant, stressful thoughts and a powerful urge to perform repetitive acts, such as hand washing.

PTSD:

PTSD can occur after a person experiences or witnesses an intensely stressful or traumatic event. During this type of event, the person thinks that their life or other people's lives are in danger. They may feel afraid or that they have no control over what is happening. These sensations of trauma and fear may then contribute to PTSD.

Mood disorders

People may also refer to mood disorders as affective disorders or depressive disorders. People with these conditions have significant mood changes, generally involving either mania, a period of high energy and joy, or depression. Examples of mood disorders include:

- **Major depression:** An individual with major depression experiences a constant low mood and loses interest in activities and events that they previously enjoyed (anhedonia). They can feel prolonged periods of sadness or extreme sadness.
- **Bipolar disorder:** A person with bipolar disorder experience in their mood, energy levels, levels of activity, and ability to continue with daily life. Periods of high mood are known as manic phases, while depressive phases bring on low mood. Read more about the different types of bipolar [here](#).
- **Seasonal affective disorder (SAD):** Reduced daylight during the fall, winter, and early spring months triggers this. It is most common in countries far from the equator.

Schizophrenia disorders

The term schizophrenia often refers to a spectrum of disorders characterized by psychotic features and other severe symptoms. These are highly complex conditions. Schizophrenia may result in some combination of hallucinations, delusions, and extremely disordered thinking and behavior that impairs daily functioning, and can be disabling.

Substance Used Disorders

A substance use disorder (SUD) is a mental disorder that affects a person's brain and behavior, leading to a person's inability to control their use of substances such as legal or illegal drugs, alcohol, or medications. Symptoms can range from moderate to severe, with addiction being the most severe form of SUDs.

Let's Review the context of mental illness at national level. According to The National Mental Health Survey, Nepal which was done with collaboration of Ministry of Health and population (MoHP) and World Health Organization (WHO) revealed that Around 76% and 85% of people with severe mental disorders in low and middle-income countries receive no treatment for their mental health conditions. The magnitude, suffering, and burden regarding disability and costs for individuals, families, and societies due to mental disorders are staggering in Nepal.

Another Abstract, I would like to cast light upon is by the National Library of Medicine . standard situation analysis tool was developed by the Programme for Improving Mental health care (PRIME) consortium to systematically analyze and describe the current gaps in mental health care in Nepal, in order to inform the development of a district level mental health care plan (MHCP). It comprised six sections; general information (e.g. population, socio-economic conditions); mental health policies and plans; mental health treatment coverage; district health services; and community services. Data was obtained from secondary sources, including scientific publications, reports, project documents and hospital records. Mental health services are concentrated in the big cities, with 0.22 psychiatrists and 0.06 psychologists per 100,000 population. The key challenges experienced in developing a district level MHCP included, overburdened health workers, lack of psychotropic medicines in the PHC, lack of mental health supervision in the existing system, and lack of a coordinating body in the Ministry of Health and Population (MoHP).

According to the CDC, “More than 50% will be diagnosed with a mental illness or disorder at some point in their lifetime.” Mental health difficulties take on a variety of forms that can look like anxiety, depression, bipolar disorder or many other conditions.

In global context, 1 in every 8 people in the world live with a mental disorder. In 2019, 1 in every 8 people, or 970 million people around the world were living with a mental disorder, with anxiety and depressive disorders the most common one. In 2020, the number of people living with anxiety and depressive disorders rose significantly because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Nevertheless, at any one time, a diverse set of individual, family, community, and structural factors may combine to protect or undermine mental health. Although most people are resilient, people who are exposed to adverse circumstances – including poverty, violence, disability, and inequality are at higher risk. Protective and risk factors include individual psychological and biological factors, such as emotional skills as well as genetics. Many of the risk and protective factors are influenced through changes in brain structure and/or function. Besides various strategies are done to promote mental health. Boosting your mental health is in one's own hand. Exercise are the best as they can reduce feelings of stress and depression and improve your mood. Poor mental health makes us more vulnerable to certain physical health problems. You can prevent mental illness by taking care of yourself like calming your mind

by listening to soft music, being more social, setting realistic goals for yourself, and taking care of your body. Surround yourself with individuals who understand your circumstances and respect you as the unique individual that you are.

Summing up, there is a need for the people to understand that mental health illness is also reversible. It's not a severe condition unless and until u allow it to wrap up your mindset. Various awareness programmes are run at schools, district and rural areas, national levels with a motto to uplift the mental health status of individual. Let's change the insight in us with a positive attitude towards people with mental health issues and help them recover soon. There is always a hope even if your brain tells there's no hope. Your mental health is your priority So "Mental Health Does Matters."

What it feels like to rise from the ashes

Ruchi Dhital

Sometimes, I wish I could just hide myself, away from all the chaos, away from all the people, away from all the opinions that I didn't ask for. Can I not just disappear or at least be unknown to every single person that exists? I want no one to know me or maybe I don't want myself to know this version of me. Can you all please forget about my existence so that I could run away, very far to where I can build my own small cottage with just me, and my cat, and of course my loneliness which doesn't ever leave me even if I want it to. They say, being alive is being successful but how can I be successful when I am not happy with even a single breath I take. Every single breath I have to take to stay alive feels like a huge burden, a huge burden I have to handle every single second. My heart feels heavy and it feels like something is trying to grab my neck resisting me from taking the breath, but when I look around there exists nothing, except for the echo of the silence as usual.

If life was a gift, why does it feel like a curse? You know the feeling of not wanting to get out of bed? Even though you

sleep for 15 hours a day, your body always feels tired. Ever felt like the safest place in the entire universe is just your bathroom because that is the only place where no-one disturbs you. You can cry your heart out until your eyes are swollen and safely sneak in into your room as if nothing has happened and everything is normal as per the outside world. But isn't it strange that neither your favorite cheesecake nor your favorite show Friends can make you smile. Sometimes, when I decide to look at myself in the mirror I end up feeling pity on myself, the swollen eyes, shrunken face and a big beautiful smile. But why is the smile faded? Is it because the smile is forced and the original smile has been buried inside the face, maybe deep inside the soul for months now.

I braced myself and looked back in the mirror, trying to convince myself saying that I am not alone. I am important to someone. Maybe it's just that I need a warm hug sometimes, maybe I want someone to give me reassurance and tell me that it's not my fault. I told myself, "It's not your fault, darling. It's all the society's securing their codes." Every single time I talked to myself, I used to curse and mistreat myself for not

being like others, and hurt myself personally. Today one question struck in my mind, “ If I don’t love and respect myself, how can I ever expect others to do the same?” Today, I realized the voice in my head is not mine that tells me that I will never be good enough, the voice is of my parent’s, it’s my exes and it’s of everyone who has ever mistreated me. If I let these voices have control over me, I can not help myself. I should be proud of how I’ve handled these past few months. Despite all these setbacks, I still made it through. Not many people know how hard it is to get through those dark days when there’s no light to guide you. I remembered how my therapist has said, “ You don’t have to lose weight, earn more money, get higher grades, or get the dream job before you start loving yourself. You can start loving yourself right now.” She was right. That is when I decided to step out, wash my face and embrace this life, make it worth living.

The first thing I started with, as per my therapist’s suggestion, was to start writing down three things I was grateful for everyday. I started looking at the bright sides of life, even if it was difficult at the beginning, I didn’t give up. I took small

steps everyday, started writing my feelings down, talked positively to myself and started sharing things with people I was close to and most importantly reminded myself to smile everyday. Now, when I look back I am really proud of how far I have come. I remind myself everyday that there is nothing wrong with me. I have patterns to unlearn, new behaviors to embody and wounds to heal. I am unlearning generations of harm and remembering love. I hope the day will come when my coffee tastes like magic, songs make me dance and the night sky, stars and moon touch my soul. I am taking one step at a time and I hope there is finally a day when I fall in love with being alive again.

If I Died Yesterday

Anjal Amatya

If I died yesterday, I will have lived a life,
I would be someone with a name, a 'me' under nomenclature,
A bunch of letters to call me out? Maybe, I am a 'literature'.
Many dreams between the false and true,
Many different lives as I grew,
Many characters and characteristics,
Many personas and personalities,
A friend, a colleague, and close companies,
Singled and mingled and some fantasies,
A student, a teacher, a leader, and boss,
New skills consumed in passionate shots,
A workaholic geek with a curious mind,
Dancing a lot and on the move all the time,
A player, a musician, and a singer of sorts,
A writer so lost, resided ever in the maze of thoughts,
A passionate protagonist, like a lion to tame,
If you died yesterday, would you say the same?

If I died yesterday, I will have lived a life,
Did I have the time to do what I wanted to?
And the time to spend with the favorite people too?
I would say yes, for eternity wouldn't be enough,
'Cause hello and hi are easy, the goodbyes are tough,
Forever is too long and eternity a myth,
Lived in the moment, for only once that we live,
Who knows what awaits as the time for us ends,
The present is me myself, past and future are just friends,
Now is no time at all, it passes too quick,
but now is when I do it all before away it shall tick,
A little attention and the gifts of the moment,
Not wasted away struggling for a future that's potent,
Striving to leave a mark, forgetting today like it's past,
Living in the future, was never part of my task,
For I would care less if time did not remember my name,
If you died yesterday, would you say the same?

If I died yesterday, I will have lived a life,
For I did good, why would I deem myself any less,
For the joy achieved was in living and not in success,
Won a few medals, learned as much as I could,
Won a few hearts, lost some too, misunderstood,
Ran all the races, even the ones I didn't take part in,
'Cause not being a part of, is the part of the bargain,
The bargain to be here if I am not there,
To prioritize a moment, to show that I care,
To understand and be understood with lessons to adapt,
From the first of everything, I cherish each mishap,
The first fall, to getting up, the first kiss, to letting go,
The first hurdle to overcome, the first feeling to not show,
Every action was a lesson, the only choice is to learn,
Gave up at times and at times stood strong on my turn,
No one, neither I, could master this game,
If you died yesterday, would you say the same?

If I died yesterday, I will have lived a life,
Missed a few turns, maybe that's how I reached the destination,
Missed a few attractions, maybe not my kind of fascination,
Missed a few bumps, maybe deliberately avoided them,
But whatever I missed, looking back was a void, dead-end,
Missed calls, missed messages, missed notices, and signs,
Missed buses, missed classes, missed workdays and deadlines,
Missed events, missed gatherings, missed meetings and dates,
For every missed opportunity, I have only a palmful of regrets,
I miss her, I miss him, I miss how bonds are made and how they shift,
I miss every bark, meow, chirp, and squeak, nature as a gift,
I don't miss not seeing my fair self tall with eight packs for abs,
Neither do I miss my double chin and an overgrown belly on carbs,
All I miss is not about me, not physicality, or spirituality within,
Not about what I was or what could have been,
Missed by the people around, proud of the small circle of fame,
If you died yesterday, would you say the same?

If I died yesterday, I will have lived a life,
Firstly I told you who I am, seconded by my time as me,
Followed by the things I did and what I missed to be,
Summing up everything as a long hike of life turn trek,
Ups and downs underestimated, but worthy of re-check,
Is it really worth resolving an already solved equation?
Living in the moment, a contradictory opinion to lamentation,
Lament while I want, not missing on what can be changed,
Tomorrow can take care of itself, planned out, but not arranged,
Priority to doing what I wish for, better late than never they say,
For time can end for just like me, when mine ended yesterday,
The light at the end of the tunnel, welcoming might it be,
Or will it be non-existent, for blinded eyes wouldn't see,
All I can offer myself is contentment, for no dark or light matters
Darkness is just the absence of light and light when darkness scatters,
Content over the living once experience without faults to blame,
If you died yesterday, would you say the same?

Under estimating, over thinking – A monologue

Niharika Singh

A pretty smile. A bravado. A room full of life. A room full of friends. A room with walls, windows and sparkling surfaces.

Words echo in the hollowness of my mind. Words of doubt. Words of disgust. Murky veins of poison griping and ripping through moments. Through time. Stuck. Frozen. A dozen questions. A million more thoughts. Galaxies of unknown panic. Suffocation.

It's going to be okay as long as the desperation for help doesn't slip. It's okay as long as your eyes sparkle with mirth. Your voice, sweet soft drops of sunshine.

Soft undulating chatter. Laughter. The smell of fresh coffee. Warmth of the baked goods. Talking about life and learned lessons.

Maybe they don't want me here. Maybe they're just being polite. Confusion. PAY ATTENTION. It's the nerves. There

isn't a change in their voice. No, they're not staring at you
weird. Fast breaths. Sweaty hands. Picked up heart rate.

It's going to go smooth as long as your hands don't shake. Your
spine doesn't curve. Head high. Sweet smile. Animated hands,
fast words. Enough distraction.

Clinking cutlery. Steaming milk. Whirring of the grinder.
Wailing of children. Giggles of joy.
Sharing moments and advices.

Does it ever go away? Does it ever stop? Do you wake up one
day, free? Free of the insanity. Free of the shackles of your past.
Free from the endless nagging. Free from the countless
thoughts. Questions. Multiplying. Developing.

It's going to be fine as long as the dread doesn't seep through.
Leaking out. Waves of uncertainty. Who's going to believe
you're struggling when you're carefree? Laughing and
going on.

Black ink on white. Rummaging for change. Abrupt endings.
Hopes of reconciliation.

Promises of tomorrow. Good-bye.

Will we meet again? Does this happen more than once? Hushed
whispers. Hurried hands. Packed bags. Clumsy steps. Hopeful
and wistful. Walking away from the conversation. Trapped
emotions. Quiet head.

It's going to be fine as long as you step away. Slow but sure.
Normal breathing. Calm heart.
Rushing pain. Clarity. Voice of reason.

One step. Two step. Three step. Four.

Does the world want me in it?
Lost concentration. Repeating cycle. Cumbersome thoughts.
Piling up. Broken minds.
Buffering steps.

Mental health: 0

Insanity: 1

Breathe. Deep and long. Stabilize.

Its okay to reach out.

Breathe.

Call a friend.

Breathe.

Cry. You're good enough.

Breathe.

Breath

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Anger: It's expression and the lack thereof

Utsah Sunar

“Anybody can become angry — that is easy, but to be angry with the right person and to the right degree and at the right time and for the right purpose, and in the right way — that is not within everybody's power and is not easy.”— Aristotle.

This timeworn quote vividly describes anger, the fiery emotion and how it burns differently in different contexts. As most of us read or hear the word ‘anger’, as familiar as the emotion is, we have complicated relationships with the emotion itself may come to our minds. Most of us may even think of it as something that should be strongly avoided or repressed while some of us may be leaning towards embracing this burning emotion. So, what is the real deal with this emotion?

Anger, as described by Google, is a strong feeling of annoyance, displeasure, or hostility. As described by the American Psychological Association, anger is an ‘emotion characterized by antagonism toward someone or something you feel has deliberately done you wrong.’ Basically, it is what we have all felt when our sibling does something that pisses us off

that gets us to do or say something out of anger. Or when you're standing in line and someone cuts you off and nonchalantly stands in front of you. Or if you're an emotionally dysregulated 4-year-old child, it's what you feel when your mom doesn't get you that one chocolate you're dying to have even though you've had enough to give yourself diabetes. By now, I hope my examples of infuriating situations have given a clear idea of what anger is and feels like.

So is this hot and red emotion useful in any sense or absolutely pointless and useless? This might surprise most of us, but, in the world of psychology, anger is considered a secondary emotion. This means that there is some other emotion behind the scenes evoking this fiery emotion. It is referred to as a secondary emotion because we tend to resort to anger in order to protect ourselves and cover up our primary emotions, which include a wide variety of emotions such as hurt, helplessness, grief, fear, shame, insecurity, etc.

The Emotions That Often Hide Behind Anger



The
MIGHTY

This means that anger is often easier to display and feel, as it is a more socially acceptable emotion. Considering how this powerful emotion can lead to acts of violence or abuse if not managed well, the question of whether it should be expressed or not or how it should be expressed comes into the conversation. First and foremost, it is crucial to know and understand that emotions are messengers. They guide us and let us know what we may need at the mood or where our boundaries lie. The same way the resentment we feel tells us about our violated boundaries, our anxiety reminds us of our unmet emotional needs, our fear tries to protect us from potential danger or threat, and our anger tells us of where we feel powerless. It identifies where our boundaries are and proves what and who we're passionate about. To give you an example, when someone does something they know we don't like or feel annoyed by, we get infuriated, which in this context, our anger reminds us of what and how we deserve to be treated.

Lyndsey Gallant wonderfully shared this message on her social platform: "I wanna share something my therapist said about anger that blew my mind: "Your anger is the part of you that knows your mistreatment and abuse are unacceptable. Your anger knows you deserve to be treated well, and with kindness. Your anger

is a part of you that loves you.” The positives include its alerting function. Anger tells others it is important to listen to us – that we feel agitated, and it is wise to be alert to our words and actions. It may also lead to compliance by others. Strongly asserting that we were first in line at a store counter may lead to better service. Often, we feel infuriated even when we are not at the receiving end of disrespectful or angering treatment. Anger can be an appropriate response to injustice. No doubt, anger played a useful part in revolutionary social movements for equality for blacks, the elderly, and women, among others. Civil resistance and civil disobedience are powerful ways for people to fight for their rights, freedom, and justice—without the use of violence. Malcolm X once proclaimed that “Usually when people are sad, they don't do anything. They just cry over their condition. But when they get angry, they bring about a change.” When people wage civil resistance, they use tactics such as strikes, boycotts, mass protests, and many other nonviolent actions to withdraw their cooperation from an oppressive system, and it's all for the rights they are rightfully entitled to.

With these facts in mind, the expression of authentic anger can be entirely appropriate for certain people in certain situations. The question is how you do that without letting it go too far. What is the right way to get mad? Many of us have been modeled unhealthy ways of dealing with our anger that includes : repressing it (denial) or reactive anger (externalizing anger in ways that are harmful or destructive). Some of us also use anger as a distraction or “cover emotion” from feelings of sadness, unworthiness, or fear. These feelings can be vulnerable and expressing anger feels better or safer. In this way, anger becomes a coping mechanism. Or, a way to protect us from deep pain. It’s also important to understand that if you’re feeling chronic anger this is usually an indicator that you need to pay more attention to your own needs that you may have not got as a child.

When we lash out, scream, hit walls, or break things, what we are actually doing is trying to avoid our anger. High reactivity comes from people who fear anger + don’t know how to cope and deal with it. Some ways we can better respond to anger as shared by @the.holistic.psychologist on Instagram are:

- Moving the body (helps to discharge emotional energy)
 - Journalling or free writing all your feelings
- Knowing when you need a time out + verbalize this: “ I need space or a break right now”
- Being compassionate to yourself and your inner child + speaking kindly to yourself
- Getting in your body: using breathwork, yoga, shaking, dancing

Do NOT make decisions. Anger takes us to a survival mode way of thinking. No decisions should be made in such a unclear state of mind.

We can express healthy anger by:

- Setting a boundary by saying “no” when needed
- Learning to feel the anger in your body through deep breathing
- Clearly communicating your needs and what you may be needing at the moment (space or a break)
- Learning to pause before expelling anger or externally projecting it

- Notice if your anger comes from a pattern or self betrayal

Safely release anger by yourself through primal screaming or pillow release

Hence, if managed well, expressed healthily and put to good use, anger can be a powerful and revolutionary move of force, both in our individual and collective lives. Having mentioned the importance of healthy expression of anger, in contrast, it makes sense to know and understand that repression (subconscious) and suppression (conscious) of any emotions do no good for any of our minds or bodies. What psychologists call repressive coping — has been found to be bad for our health. Studies have also linked repressive coping with a less resilient immune system, cardiovascular disease, and hypertension, as well as with mental health conditions, including stress, anxiety, and depression. Similarly, unresolved anger can have some significant health consequences, too. If you struggle with expressing anger in productive ways, you may face a higher risk of developing high blood pressure, digestive problems, and cardiovascular disease. Research has shown that suppressing anger creates a whole host of physiological issues that can be just as detrimental as erupting

with our anger. Anger has now been implicated in a whole array of illnesses that are casually dismissed as "women's illnesses." Higher rates of chronic pain, autoimmune disorders, disordered eating, mental distress, anxiety, self harm, depression. Anger affects our immune systems, our cardiovascular systems. Some studies even indicate that it affects mortality rates, particularly in black women with cancer.

Furthermore, anger is a human emotion, neither good nor bad. As mentioned before, it is actually a signal emotion. It warns us of indignity, threat, insult, and harm. And yet, throughout cultures, anger is reserved as the moral property of boys and men. Now, to be sure, there are differences. So, in the United States, for example, an angry black man is viewed as a criminal, but an angry white man has civic virtue. Regardless of where we are, however, the emotion is gendered. And so, we teach children to disdain anger in girls and women, and we grow up to be adults that penalize it.

So, what if we didn't do that? What if we didn't sever anger from femininity? Because severing anger from femininity means we

sever girls and women from the emotion that best protects us from injustice.

What if instead we thought about developing emotional competence for boys and girls? The fact is we still remarkably socialize children in very binary and oppositional ways. Boys are held to absurd, rigid norms of masculinity -- told to renounce the feminine emotionality of sadness or fear and to embrace aggression and anger as markers of real manhood. On the other hand, girls learn to be deferential, and anger is incompatible with deference. In the same way that we learned to cross our legs and tame our hair, we learned to bite our tongues and swallow our pride. What happens too often is that for all of us, indignity becomes imminent in our notions of femininity. Whether we're at home or in school or at work or in a political arena, anger confirms masculinity, and it confounds femininity. So, men are rewarded for displaying it, and women are penalized for doing the same. This puts us at an enormous disadvantage, particularly when we have to defend ourselves and our own interests. If we're faced with a threatening street harasser, predatory employer, or a sexist, racist classmate, our brains are screaming, "Are you

kidding me?" And our mouths say, "I'm sorry, what?"

Lastly, I would like to say that when more of us begin to see anger as an ally, and not as a foe, we open to the many gifts this emotion offers us when anger is our ally. We see this emotion as the flashing red warning light for the boundaries that we or others are trespassing. Anger urges us to come out of denial and see clearly. But we can't just stop there. Anger hangs around until we act on what we see. I would also like to thank the organizers of this anthology event for allowing young people to share their voices and views on such a needed topic like mental health.

