



EDUCATE EMPOWER EMBRACE

NOVEMBER

2020



Imagining a Future where Youth Mental Health Matters

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Simply existing in today's world isn't easy, this is particularly true for young people. The pressures of climate change, widespread economic downturn, the current COVID-19 pandemic and the pressures of social media are all the more compounded during adolescence, when children and youth are also grappling with the trials and tribulations of growing up.

Even as an adult in my early 20s, I find these things hard to cope with.

Adolescence is a formative period in life. Prolonged stress and anguish can have negative repercussions on mental health during this transition into adulthood. Many mental health issues are identified during this period and left unaddressed can continue and worsen as the mind continues to develop.

Mental health issues can affect anyone at any point in life. However, the occurrence of mental health issues among young people is especially common. In September 2020, the World Health Organisation reported that an estimated 10-20% of adolescents globally experience mental health conditions but that most of these cases go unreported and untreated. Depression and anxiety are at the top of the list of mental illnesses affecting this age group. According to the same article, suicide is one of the leading causes of death amongst 15-19 year olds across the globe.

It's not hard to see why young people are so affected when considering the bullying, isolation, discrimination, xenophobia, and alienation that children and adolescents are exposed to in their daily lives online or in real life. For adolescents who are made to feel different, it can be even more overwhelming.

In addition to these external factors that impact young people's mental health, youth of today hold a heavy, personal responsibility to fix the current state of the world. Great youth activists have emerged to speak out about injustices but the onus should not be on them to fix the problems inherited from previous generations who have failed to protect the planet and its people.

There are a number of potential causes for the rising number of mental health problems and suicides among young people. Stigma, lack of awareness, and a lack of mental health support and resources are among them



Article 24 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) addresses a child's right to access to healthcare for the treatment of illness and rehabilitation of health. This refers to both physical and mental health care.

Accessing support proves even more difficult because of the stigma that exists around mental health conditions and the cost involved in doing so. Combatting this stigma is the first task that needs to be addressed on the journey to create a better future for adolescent mental health.

Providing mental health support to all who need them is easier said than done. Ensuring mental health support does not completely resolve the issue of the poor mental health that adolescents are experiencing in the modern world. Social inequalities prevent people from accessing the health care and support that they need. The absence or lack of mental health care in some areas of the world is a barrier for ensuring the provisions of Article 24. of the CRC.

A future where mental health is not stigmatised and that speaking about such issues won't be taboo is what we should all envision. Promotion of healthy mental wellbeing and awareness-raising of the different mental health issues that affect adolescents in today's world is essential to ensure a better future for everyone's wellbeing.

Every child has the right to survive and thrive, and, in an ideal world, mental health issues would not be stigmatised and mental health supports and provisions would be unlimited.

There are no quick fixes for these issues and the road to ensuring promotion and protection of mental health for every child will be a long and difficult one but it is vital to do to ensure a better future for every child.

BUILDING BETTER MENTAL HEALTH

What is Mental Health?

According to World Health Organization, Mental health is defined as a state of well-being in which every individual realizes his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community. However, do you genuinely know what mental health means? Mental health means having good ways to handle your emotions, feelings, and life. If you find yourself difficult to handle or deal with your emotions, feelings, and life, it could be a sign of having Mental Health Issues. Mental health should be taken seriously because it can affect and control what you think, feel, and act. Want to know more about how to handle your Mental health? We are here for you!



Ask for help

Asking for help is needed if you get overwhelmed. Family, friends, or someone who's good at Mental health may be able to help you. No need to worry, it's all okay to ask their help. Your mental health is one of your priority! Good mental health will bring good life!

Keep yourself positive Physically & Mentally

Get enough sleep, eat healthy and nutritious foods, go for a walk, try meditating, relaxation exercise could improve your mood. Do things that makes you happy or something you're good at! Treat yourself better!

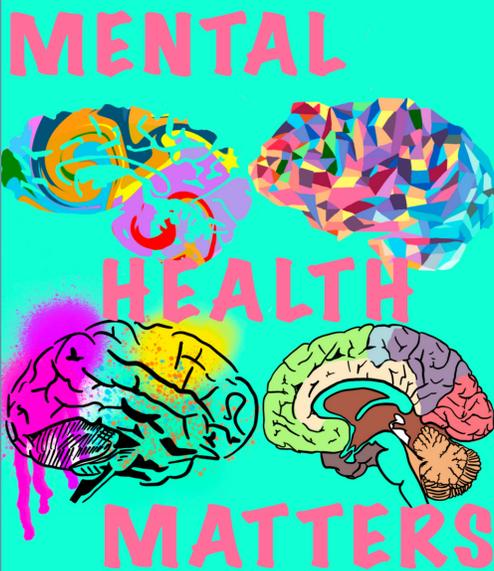
Know your problem

You need to know what causes your mental health. You can talk with your family, friends, or someone who knows more about mental health.

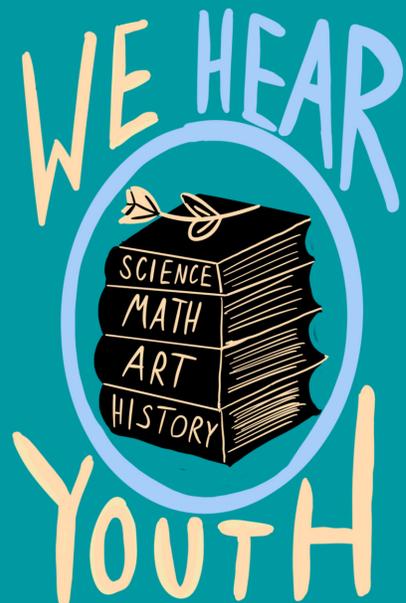
Give yourself time to accept who you truly are. Taking a break of what you're doing now will also help you! Take a deep breath, clear your mind, listen to your body, and relax.

Things you can do to have good Mental Health

mental health matters Mental health matters Mental health matters



GRAPHICS BY JAX RICHARDS





PHOTOS BY JOY XING



INTERVIEWS BY ANNA-MARIA GORANOVA



QUESTION 1 : DO YOU FEEL COMFORTABLE TALKING ABOUT YOUR MENTAL HEALTH WITH YOUR CLOSE ONES?

"**MOST** OF THE TIME I WISH I COULD TALK FREELY AND OPENLY ABOUT MY MENTAL HEALTH BUT ACTUALLY I CANNOT FIND THE RIGHT WORDS TO EXPRESS WHAT I AM FEELING. HOWEVER, IF I FIND THE COURAGE TO SAY HOW I FEEL, I END UP BEING MISUNDERSTOOD."

"NOT REALLY. IM A PRETTY RESERVED PERSON AND QUITE SELF-CONSCIENTIOUS. THEREFORE I FIND IT DIFFICULT TO TALK FREELY ABOUT PERSONAL TOPICS. I'M TRYING TO WORK ON THAT BECAUSE I FIND IT AS AN ISSUE WHICH MAKES ME ANXIOUS BUT I STILL CAN'T FIND A WAY HOW."

"YES! I CONSIDER IT AS A MAJOR TOPIC WHICH SHOULD BE MORE OFTEN SPOKEN ABOUT! EVERYBODY SHOULD BE AWARE OF IT'S IMPORTANCE, GET INFORMED, LOOK FOR HELP IF SO IS NEEDED, LOOK FOR WAYS TO IMPROVE IT OR JUST DISCUSS IT WITH YOUR PEERS, BUT NEVER UNDERESTIMATE!"

"SOMETIMES IT IS EASIER TO DISCUSS IT WITH A PARENT AND SOMETIMES A TALK WITH YOUR BEST FRIEND IS WHAT YOU NEED. IN BOTH SITUATIONS I THINK IT IS IMPORTANT TO SHARE IN ORDER TO LIFT OFF THE WEIGHT FROM YOUR CHEST."



QUESTION 2 : DO YOU THINK THAT TEENAGERS' MENTAL HEALTH IS BEING NEGLECTED BY OLDER PEOPLE?

"YES,

TEENAGERS' MENTAL HEALTH IS BEING NEGLECTED BY MOST OF THE ELDER PEOPLE. I SUPPOSE IT IS BECAUSE THEY WERE RAISED IN TIMES WHERE THERE WERE NO SOCIAL MEDIAS, THE HATE WAS LESS AND THE VALUES WERE DIFFERENT. I THINK THEY LAY ASIDE MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES BECAUSE MOST OF THEM NEVER HAD ONE AND DO NOT

UNDERSTAND THE STRUGGLE."

"I

THINK THAT IT IS OFTEN NEGLECTED BY THEM, BECAUSE THEY ARE NOT IN YOUR SHOES, THEY BELIEVE THAT AS YOU ARE YOUNGER, YOUR PROBLEMS ARE NOT OF A GREAT IMPORTANCE AND SOMETIMES TEND TO MAKE YOU FEEL LIKE YOU ARE EXAGGERATING.I'VE BEEN IN SUCH SITUATIONS BUT I THINK THAT THE BEST THING TO DO THEN IS TO FIND THE RIGHT PERSON WHO YOU ARE SURE THAT WILL BE A GOOD LISTENER AND WILL PROVIDE YOU WITH AN ADEQUATE ADVICE."

"YES, I DO. ONLY A SMALL PART OF THE PARENTS THINK ABOUT THEIR CHILDREN'S MENTAL-HEALTH. I BELIEVE THAT IS BECAUSE CHILDREN ARE AFRAID TO TALK ABOUT THEIR INNER PROBLEMS - PROBLEMS REFLECTING THEIR EMOTIONS IN THE FEAR OF BEING CALLED CRAZY OR BEING TAKEN TO A SPECIALIST BY THEIR PARENTS."



QUESTION 3 : ON THE DAILY BASIS, WHAT IS IT THAT YOU THINK IT AFFECTS YOUR MENTAL HEALTH THE MOST?

"I

THINK MENTAL HEALTH IS MOSTLY AFFECTED BY WHAT OTHERS SAY, WHAT WE SEE ON THE MAGAZINES AND SOCIAL MEDIA AND HOW WE PERCEIVE IT. IT IS AFFECTED BY HOW WE SEE OURSELVES AND IF WE ARE BEING GOOD TO OURSELVES OR WE TREAT OURSELVES HARSHLY."

"THE

PEOPLE WHO SURROUND ME! IF A TOXIC BEHAVIOR IS HAVING A BAD INFLUENCE ON YOU, RUINING YOUR DAY, MAKING YOU ANXIOUS, GIVING YOU DOUBTS ABOUT YOURSELF, CUT IT OFF!!! SET BOUNDARIES, DON'T LET OTHERS POP YOUR HAPPY BUBBLE, MAKE YOURSELF A

PRIORITY, ALWAYS!"

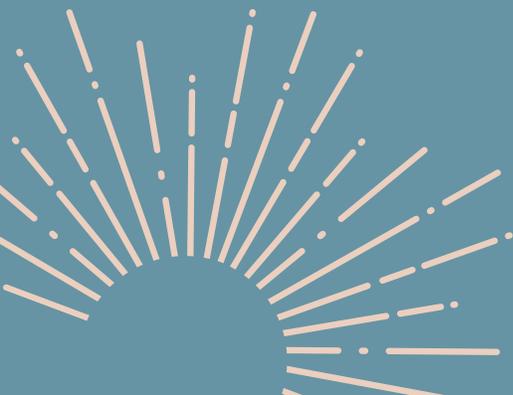
"ON

DAILY BASIS THE THINGS THAT AFFECT MY MENTAL HEALTH THE MOST ARE SURELY SOCIAL MEDIA AND CLOSE MINDED PEOPLE'S OPINION. SOCIAL MEDIA IS FULL OF PICTURES THAT "MESS" WITH PEOPLE'S MINDS AND SET UP SOME KIND OF STANDARTS THAT AFFECT EVERYBODY'S OPINION AND THEY SET HIGHER EXPECTATIONS FOR THEMSELVES AND THE ONES AROUND THEM."

"EVERYONE

IS STRESSED ABOUT THE VIRUSES AND EVERYONE IS TALKING

ONLY FOR THIS AND HOW DANGEROUS IT IS. THE PRESSURE ABOUT BEING PROTECTIVE IS ENORMOUS. MY PARENTS BEING OVER-PROTECTIVE SOMETIMES MAKES ME FEEL LIKE I AM STILL A CHILD THAT CAN'T DO ANYTHING ALONE."





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