



# इरिजान

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ARYABHATTA COLLEGE  
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Volume III

# **Aryabhatta College**

**Benito Juarez Marg**  
**University of Delhi**



## **SRIJAN**

**Annual Magazine**  
**Department of Psychology**



**Volume III**

## **From The Principal's Desk**



The Department of Psychology is breaking new grounds by including scholarly articles penned by teachers and students in this magazine. The teachers of the Department have exhibited a rare streak of maturity by introducing research projects for the third-year students under their guidance. The natural result of the same is evident in the chromatic and creative endeavour of the Department to adopt and adapt novel strategies to showcase their myriad achievements. I appreciate the tireless efforts of the teachers and students for setting new standards of excellence. I sincerely hope that the Department may perpetually move from strength to strength.

**Dr. Manoj Sinha**  
**Principal**  
**Aryabhata College**

## From The Teacher In-Charge



This magazine is the cumulative result of the mega-endeavour of the teachers and the students of the department. There are many firsts in this issue of the annual magazine. It has a bunch of scholarly articles contributed by the students and teachers, a catalogue of talks and lectures delivered by eminent scholars and glimpses of seminars held to celebrate Mental Health Week. This magazine published by the Department is in the third year of its existence. Naturally, one may perceive the colourful, optimistic vision emerging out of collective effort of the Department. I firmly believe this is only a beginning and the best is yet to come.

**Dr. R. K. Dwivedi**  
**Teacher In-Charge**  
**Department of Psychology**  
**Aryabhata College**



## From The Editorial Team



We, the editorial team, take immense pleasure in releasing the departmental magazine for the year 2019-20. We would like to express our gratitude to our teachers for their constant guidance and support, without whom it would have been impossible to reach where we are today. We went through various trials and tribulations to get the magazine to the position it has reached today and have hope that it will continue to grow through the substantial efforts of the department. It is a moment of pride for us and we have faith that the future editorial team will continue to take the magazine to greater heights.

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## **UNIFYING EMOTIONS**

### **Reflecting on how we assess our feelings**

**“Let tears flow of their own accord: their flowing is not inconsistent with inward peace and harmony”**

**– Seneca, Circa 5 BC – 65 AD**

**(Roman dramatist, philosopher & politician)**

What do you do when you have had a long day and dealt with a million chores all day long only to come back expecting a nice bath and rest, to find another list of to-dos? What would be your reaction?

#### **Dismissing Feelings**

Maybe you get angry and frustrated and question your lifestyle; maybe you comfort yourself saying that this has to be done; maybe you dismiss the feelings inside and get to it. What have you learned about such feelings? – Feelings like jealousy, fear, anger, hurt, or sorrow?

People around the globe have similar outlook: these feelings are "negative." Such feelings are even "bad." We find them uncomfortable, overwhelming, frightening, and uncontrolled (and we have "bad feelings" over our "bad feelings" now). So, what is the response that is natural, reasonable, and bad? Control it! Check it! Just drive it away! Cover it over! Suppress it! Or hide it, at least. Perhaps "manage" it after some therapy.

#### **What about embracing it?**

We are increasingly happy to do that with "positive" emotions— it looks like we are perhaps mean (because "happiness" is seen as ideal), if we do not flood family, schools, and offices with happiness. But even this attitude is full of judgment; we restrict to a select few, the motivating power of feelings. We decide that there are some good emotions... that some emotions are bad.

Robert Plutchik (2001) investigated the way in which animals experience, express and react to feelings. In the tradition of Darwin, he saw that the purpose of emotion is adapted. Feelings help animals to survive through warning them of threats and opportunities and providing a universal communication mechanism for cross-species. You will understand this viscerally, if you have ever heard a cat's angry snarl or enchanted by a puppy's playful grin.

Emotional intelligence (EI) skills are developed from the competence to understand one's own emotions and behavior patterns (self-knowledge), to effectively manage negative or destructive emotions (self-management), and to share positive relationships and

experiences with others in a way that improves learning and life satisfaction (relationship management). Research suggests that life satisfaction stems from the development of 'Prosocial Behavior', the precursor of Empathy (Caprara et al., 2000; Malecki & Elliott, 2002).

The first step in the Emotional Quotient(EQ) process is to become aware of and naming our emotions. Research suggests that naming our emotions allows us to "slow down" and consider them before acting, which links the prefrontal cortex's emotional and cognitive processing (Barbey, 2012). The amygdala is a sort of reaction centre and often causes us to overreact or select an action that does not help to solve the problem we face. The emotional brain must be able to practice empathy and understanding skills, receive feedback from the surrounding environment and evaluate the correctness of emotional input judgments.

Research shows that just naming feelings begins to calm the amygdala and reduce our emotional reactivity (Lieberman et al, 2007). Discussion of feelings and understanding from different perspectives enables children to promote communication between the emotional brain and the rational brain. The "Six Seconds Pause" serves this purpose, while calming the emotional brain, allowing an individual to engage the cognitive brain in a quest for six ideas. After the pause, you can take a deep breath and take into account the message of the emotions you feel, navigate your emotions and choose the best course of action.

### **Emotions: Understanding their message**

Eight basic emotions are described in Robert Plutchik's emotional research (2001). This model is represented in the figure below. The vertical dimension of the cone represents intensity, and the circle shows degrees of emotional similarity. The eight sectors are designed to show that the theory defines eight primary emotional dimensions, arranged as four pairs of opposites. Emotions in the blank spaces are the primary dyads in the exploded model -emotions that mix two of the primary emotions.

Each emotion has varying intensity and can create other feelings together with another emotion. Helping kids understand that emotions are important helps them to focus on their own feelings and those of others in a situation. Plutchik points out that an emotion is not just a state of feeling: Emotion is a complex chain of loosely related events; the chain begins with a stimulus and includes feelings, psychological changes, action impulses and specific goal-oriented behaviour. In other words, feelings do not occur alone. They are answers to important situations in an individual's life and often motivate actions.

Moreover, teaching children that more than one emotion can be felt at a time is very important. No wonder what we feel is sometimes hard to understand! We need to teach children about emotional messages and facilitate their use in decision-making.

The Eight Basic Emotions

Each of the eight basic emotions has a message that can help people make good choices. Pausing to take into account our feelings can help to clarify this message.

**Fear:** The message maybe is that there is something to change.

**Anger:** The message maybe is to combat problems.

**Joy:** The message maybe is to remind us of what matters.

**Sadness:** The messagemaybe is to connect us to the people we love.

**Acceptance:** The message maybe is to open our hearts.

**Disgust:** The message maybe is to reject unhealthy things.

**Anticipation:** The message maybe is to look ahead and plan.

**Surprise:** The message maybe is to concentrate on new conditions/situations.

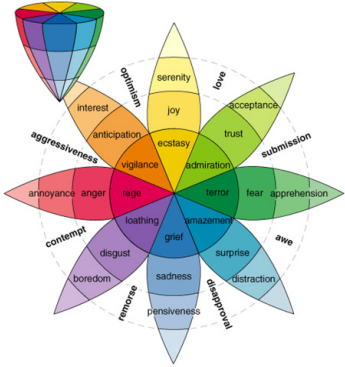


Fig: The nature of emotions.

Emotions Are Signals

For instance, anger is a signal that our path is blocked. We want to be promoted; we see someone interfering; we're angry with the person. The anger focuses our attention on the threat and motivates a response to the obstacle. This is a chart of the eight basic emotions and a probable description of the focus and motivation:

Basic Emotion	Focus	Motivation
Fear	Threat	Protect
Anger	Problem	Fight or Push through
Joy	Opportunity	Do more of this
Sadness	Loss	Stop and Clarify
Acceptance	Safety	Connect with others
Disgust	Problem	Reject
Anticipation	Opportunity	Move toward
Surprise	Uncertainty	Stop and look

We can "decode" our emotional experiences using this table. It shows us that emotions serve a purpose, that all feelings are worthwhile. But it's still easy to say that some are "negative" because of problems or threats.

Another approach is to describe them as "contracting" versus "expanding." Feelings related to problems narrow our attention and cause problems to zero in, slow us down, and limit our risks. Some feelings at the other end stimulate us to look outward, become more open and take risks.

There is a notion of "non-duality" in Buddhism and many other religious traditions. Instead of good and bad as opposites, they can be seen as one, a whole with balancing sides. In the yin-yang symbol, this is visually represented. The universe (a circle) is half and half in this graphic, but not really divided. The black and white are locked together—they're a circle with two aspects.

### **Emotions: A Non-dualistic view?**

Is there any way to view these feelings as a connected whole, not to characterize them as opposites (good / bad, pleasant / unpleasant, contracting / expanding)? In my experience, people often describe feelings in one continuum—a spectrum that takes an emotion from one extreme to the other. We start to link them together as part of the whole, but they are still dualist: the numerical line contains positive and negative entities.

Let us look at definitions of anger: you feel angry when you want to go somewhere, but your path is blocked. This sense of an obstacle gives rise to wrath. So what can we call this "wanting to go somewhere?" Perhaps anticipation! Or is commitment perhaps a more powerful way to put it? Then we could say that there is no anger without commitment: you're not angry if you don't want to go anywhere! In other words, they're not two things: wrath can be found only in contrast, in equilibrium, in the context of commitment.

How about fear? Fear is a message of potential threat—it's a signal that something that concerns you or you care about is at risk. 'If you don't care, you won't fear'. Fear and love (aka caring) is also a non-duality.

If you lose someone or something important, say a meaningful relationship or a significant other, it leads to sorrow. However, we may also experience it as joy when we feel another sense of meaning and significance of the same. For instance, when a relationship ends, one party or both may move on to a better relationship than what was.

Disgust, finally, is a message of violation. This means that rules are broken, contracts are at risk, relationship systems and structures are at risk. However, we'd not care if we didn't trust these very things if they didn't show a sense of security and balance.

### **Emotions: Are they really opposed to each other?**

I'm quite happy at this point with the hypothesis – emotions not as opposites, but as wholes. It is like the light and darkness of the candle, but something still is missing.

It is, I believe, about first identifying, and then actually dealing with emotions; a challenge in its entirety. It is a complex dance of negotiation. It's really tough. I propose that you not only notice emotions, but go deeper and ask the question; "What drives these emotions?" .

Since there are a relatively small number of basic needs, handling this set may be easier. If these basic needs can be met, we may truly understand the nature of emotions, their cause and effects.

When talking about basic needs, the premise is usually that a whole range of emotions will surface in response to a need that is met or not met.

Anger - Commitment is linked to the need to move. It is quite easy to see that this pair of emotions arises in conjunction with a basic need that can be called achievement.

Although the dynamic of Fear - Love can be linked to an inanimate object (fear of losing a home), I suspect it is deeply rooted in the desire to nurture others, to be in balance or harmony. To be logged in. The need for belonging could be called that.

Once again, the dynamic of Sorrow-Joy appears to arise in a variety of situations. If we consider the biology of joy, it is produced by opiates that are absorbed in many parts of the brain, but particularly in the frontal cortex, the evaluation seat. This is an intriguing pairing because it means that if we really understand, we'll get the reward for inner bliss somehow. We could call this pursuit of meaning, the need for purpose.

### **Emotion: What to take home?**

There are probably more basic needs in our daily lives than these, and certainly many, many "wants." Needs and wants are linked to a wide range of feelings. But maybe if we can distil this down to a simple level, it is easier to understand and manage the complexity of our feelings.



While I'm not sure if these labels are fully adequate, I hope you'll take away three key messages:

1. Emotions are basic signals that serve a specific function. Neither should they be blindly obeyed, nor should they be ignored.
2. Needs and emotions have a strong underlying connection. It is important to keep in mind while considering and trying to make sense of our and other's emotions, that these emotions might be signals about a core need.
3. When feelings become overwhelming, they are uncomfortable and we fall prey to judging ourselves and others for having them. We need to resist that urge. Instead, take a step back and consider this: Feelings are a part of a larger story, a story of what is truly most important. And we need to look at the larger picture instead of focussing on just one part.

**- Dr. Halley Thokchom**  
**Assistant Professor**  
**Department of Psychology**  
**Aryabhata College**

## **IMPORTANCE OF SELF AWARENESS** **FOR COUNSELLORS**

Self-awareness is the conscious knowledge of one's own feelings, thoughts and behaviour. It leads to introspection and having a clear perception of one's personality and attitudes. Being self-aware is the ability to see our true selves without blinders. This is the first step in being true to one's self. It requires empathy, patience, strength, humility, and love.

The ability of being self-aware is not easy and is acquired through practice. Therapy and counselling play an important role in helping others in becoming self-aware by employing techniques like mindfulness. This brings into light the importance of self-knowledge as a quality of mental health professionals. It is pertinent that a psychotherapist is cognizant with his/her own thoughts and life experiences and be able to self-reflect to be successful. Because of the intimate and private nature of the counselling work that counsellors and psychotherapists do with clients, it is vitally important that a counselling professional is fully self-aware. This is because being able to self-reflect enables a counsellor to identify and develop personal awareness, and to remain emotionally detached from the relationship he/she is developing with a client.

Without at least a minimal sense of self-awareness, it is easy for counsellors to identify with the clients problems and imagine that they are similar or even the same as their own. The reverse of this situation is also possible. The counsellor's own problems may be projected onto the client. Being self-aware can enable the counsellor to mark their boundaries and successfully discriminate between what experiences belong to them and what experiences belong to their clients. Being able to self-reflect enables a counsellor to identify and develop personal awareness, and to remain emotionally detached from the relationship he/she is developing with a client. Also, self-awareness enables the counsellor to feel empowered in delivering therapeutic interventions needed by the client. This helps not just build a strong therapeutic relationship, but also helps the client make more informed decisions, and contributes to overall wellbeing.

Throughout a counsellor's training they will be exposed to a series of opportunities that will allow them to question their own beliefs, awareness and values, and how these impact on their personal lives, work and others. It is this self-awareness and self-knowledge that forms the foundation of their counselling career.

Counsellors will naturally draw their own conclusions about self-awareness. Their work with clients may present many personal challenges, but also an on-going opportunity to assess personal strengths, feelings, thoughts and limitations, as they relate to other

people. Understandably a counsellor may also experience a sense of personal familiarity, whilst counselling clients, but must remain emotionally detached at all times.

Relating to clients, in a positive, open manner, encourages the client to disclose in a comfortable, confidential environment and provides the counsellor with the ideal setting in which to communicate in a supportive way. Using their own life experiences, a counsellor can demonstrate empathy, compassion and understanding without becoming personally involved in the counselling process.

A person's growth and understanding can only be assessed through self-awareness, and it is no different for those working in a therapeutic profession. Being continually open to personal, and career, development will help a counsellor fully understand their values and self.

According to studies by Brown and Lent, counsellor's self-awareness, which encapsulates self-knowledge and self-insight, has long been recognized as being a critical component of a successful therapeutic process. It has even been hailed necessary for ethical practice. The counselling profession is quite unique. It is a profession that requires practitioners to employ interventions beyond learned knowledge or acquired skills. Counsellors are also required to incorporate self into their counselling practice, a task not easily accomplished. Self-awareness is an important quality for therapists and counsellors because it makes them identify their own biases, stereotypical beliefs and assumptions in order to appropriately help culturally diverse clients. Self-awareness as a skill is also extremely important for multicultural competence in mental health professionals as it helps them deal with people from varied cultures, religions, languages and value systems. It allows counsellors to understand the differences between their own life experiences and their client's lived experiences and be more objective and gain a better understanding of their clients. This makes the therapy sessions more effective and facilitates positive communication and respecting individuality. A person's growth and understanding can only be assessed through self-awareness, and it is no different for those working in a therapeutic profession. Being continually open to personal, and career, development will help a counsellor fully understand their values and self.

Self-awareness is something that grows over a period of time and with exploration. Techniques, to access information about oneself, can be learned, and personal experiences can affect feelings and behaviour. A counsellor will experience all of these issues and concerns, and must use the knowledge gained to help their clients overcome their own personal issues.

## Strategies

According to a study conducted by Wei et al (2017), many therapists adopt strategies to avoid their self-awareness from hindering the therapy sessions and include remembering to focus on the client, their needs, and the goals of the counselling session. They try using self-awareness as a way to better understand the client, rather than only being self-aware of one's thoughts and appearing distracted.

A study conducted by Oden et al (2009) indicated that attending at least ten counselling sessions helps in raising self-awareness in counselling students and help them understand the role of a counsellor better. It also indicates that empathy is an important part of self-awareness, and can lead to an increased understanding of one's role.

According to the Kelm (2014) findings, practicing aspects of self-awareness such as self-reflection and insight are actually themselves ways to increase self-awareness. A study by Maxwell et al (2016) showed that using The Birkman Method, which is a form of psychological self-assessment increased level of self-awareness in pharmaceutical students.

## Downsides of Self-Awareness

While self-awareness is a crucial part of counselling, it is important to remember that it can have certain disadvantages. According to Williams and Fauth (2005), "momentary" states of self-awareness in which therapists suddenly become more self-aware can actually be distracting to counselling patients and harmful to the session. That is if a counsellor is not self-aware for most of the session but suddenly acquires self-knowledge, this can hinder the therapy session. We should know the difference between self-awareness and self-focused attention. Self-awareness consists of being mindful of our identities and lived experiences (and how they relate to those of other people), while self-focused attention consists of simply thinking about ourselves. In a counselling setting, self-focused counsellors might consider how anxious they are about the therapy-session which might lead to the client thinking that they are not being paid enough attention. On the other hand, self-aware counsellors realize the fact that they are anxious about the session indicates that the client is anxious about the session and use this information to help the client's anxiety as well as their own.

Thus, self-awareness can be used as a tool to decrease the negative impact of hindering self-focused attention and increase the efficacy of counselling sessions. This suggests that it is crucial for mental health professionals to be well aware about all aspects of one's thought process rather than simply being aware of the current emotion.

- Muskan Datta (II<sup>nd</sup> Year)

## CUDDLE THERAPY

How does it feel when you hug when you meet someone? Does it feel like the beginning of a positive new relationship? Have you ever tried hugging someone who really needs it, who is stressed, emotional or frustrated? Have you hugged someone and then instantly felt better?

### **Professional cuddling**

Cuddling is a new trending job position or business model where people market themselves as professional cuddlers and make money for providing cuddling services. Professional cuddling involves cuddling with a random stranger to bring love and joy into that person's life. It is a caring exchange of holding hands, spooning and light massage between a client and a cuddler in a non-sexual way.

Most employees ("cuddlers", as they are called) of a company are required to read up on a 'Cuddle Sutra', which has all the information about different cuddling positions which would make the client feel at Cuddling Con, the first of its kind in the world, was a cuddling convention held on Valentine's Day in 2015. This was an event involving all professional Cuddlers, therapists, and psychologists who came together to shed light on the what snuggling is and effective non-sexual touch is. The organizer, Samantha Hess, has been the most active promoter of this new form of therapy that has proven to be beneficial for many countless numbers of people. She has identified 65 cuddling positions and was also the organizer of the first-ever cuddling convention (CuddleCon 2015). She organized the convention to assemble the scheduled speakers on touch, communication and other forms of therapy. Her business, *cuddle up to Me* (2013), gained national attention when she appeared on America's Got Talent in 2015.

Cuddling is considered to be a form of therapy. Not only does it help in lowering depressive tendencies, but also helps in releasing oxytocin in our bodies. This is a chemical which increases positivity, enhances the immune system and thus improves one's mental stability. When two people cuddle or hug, it makes them feel good about their own selves as well each other.

Currently, in other parts of the world where professional snugglers are working, there is no training that is required only one possesses the requisite skills. One phone call set up between a company and the potential employee for the purpose of debriefing on what to expect and what is expected of them. But with the advent of such companies, each has their own rules, expectations, and training that a person wanting to become a cuddler must undergo.

According to a statistical survey, most of these professional snugglers, at least 99% of them are females since most of the clients are middle-aged men. The basic idea behind this might be that females being the more caring and nurturing of the two sexes are employed most than others.

Only because the service is mainly about cuddling, does not mean that the client and snuggler have to necessarily snuggle. Spending time with the cuddler or just talking to them is approved. As long as the relationship remains non-sexual and platonic.

Professional cuddlers or cuddle therapists, offer platonic touch with a more personalized experience, that is, depending on what the client wants. Here platonic means free of any sexual intentions or actions. Cuddle therapist works according to what the clients want; cuddling for friendship, relaxation or for therapeutic techniques. Many cuddlers work for different reasons, the main being that they believe that many people do not get the optimum amount of human touch they need to feel loved, cherished and relaxed. These people get paid to platonically snuggle with clients.

There are various professional cuddling companies like Snuggle Buddies and Cuddle Comfort that connect clients and cuddlers. A client usually books a cuddling session with a cuddler. There are plenty of people who pay for professional cuddlers. A cuddler has the freedom to choose who, when and how they work. Anyone, from age 18 and above, can train to be a cuddle therapist and can serve clients of any age. In some companies offering this service, they also offer outside companionship service for people who need a partner to just go outside and have some fun but do not wish to do so alone. Cuddling can take place either at cuddle parties or inviting cuddlers to your house or there are cuddling cafes (unfortunately, not in India as of now).

A cuddling session can be gradual or even just holding hands and sharing hugs while discussing issues in the client's life. Cuddlers do not get carried away with the therapy and continue to maintain their boundaries because they are more attuned to their emotions. According to a professional cuddler, Rebekka Mikkola, from the Touch Research Institute, a cuddler has to be "interested in introspection and self-actualization".

To keep the emotions in check, every therapist is recommended to have their own therapist to let things out. A therapist has the responsibility to make their clients feel safe and understood as well as non-judged on.

## Cuddle Parties

The origin of cuddle parties came from the massage profession and the original cuddle parties were all in pyjamas. They were started in New York by a sex educator, Reid Mihalko for massage therapists who wanted to receive massage themselves. Some friends who were not massagers were interested to attend too, but were intimidated so he told them to attend this as a ‘cuddle party’ instead. This trend, then extended to the West coast as Mihalko relocated to the Bay Area, and now exists in 17 countries. Mihalko’s cuddle party is not only about cuddles but helping clients getting comfortable with what they wished to experience in his workshops. Therefore, he introduced the concept of “Speedy Flirting” wherein clients are just explained what flirting is and how to be good at it.

One of the clients who attended this party explained that at the start of the cuddle party did not immediately involve touching. There were rules for this cuddle party, like every other, and only with explicit permission can one person touch the other. This also helped many clients practice saying “no” which they usually couldn’t. This was all kept in view of the comfort level of the client.

An Irish life coach, Grainne Carr, runs cuddle parties. Her monthly three-hour event, “*Hugs for Health and Happiness*”, starts with a workshop on consent and boundaries. By establishing from the outset that cuddling (in this instance) is not a prelude to sexual activity, individuals can relax and enjoy the pleasure of tactility.

## Cuddle party rules

Generally, a cuddle party has eleven rules. Every party starts with a workshop running through these eleven rules, the foremost being the ability to say no. Then the session moves into consensual touching. A cuddle party session can on an average last for three and a half hours.

## Why is this trend of cuddling becoming popular?

People feel increasingly isolated in this fast-paced, competitive world when no one seems to have time for anyone. Everyone is busy rushing to get things done. There seems to be no time for emotions, sensitivity, and togetherness. Especially the elderly population and young children, who feel left out.

In the words of one of the biggest names in ‘touch research’ in America, Dr, Tiffany Field, “With more touch in the world there would be fewer diseases and fewer wars”. According to her research, touch calms the nervous system, lowers blood pressure as well as the stress hormones.



## **Benefits of Cuddling**

According to some, a cuddle party has a much livelier atmosphere due to the involvement of many people, in comparison to a one-on-one session. Connecting with different people allows for many more learning opportunities. For a few, this is also a way to help themselves relieve from the trauma of a non-consensual contact. Through the sessions, it allows them to develop trust in physical contact over a period of time.

A research conducted by Raalte Van J. Lisa (2017) has shown that when affection is given and received then one's health significantly improves and cuddling is one form of physical affection that may improve health benefits. Cuddling is not necessarily a sexual activity but includes an intimate and physical contact. This research was conducted to examine the effect of cuddling on relationship between spouses living with each other. A four-week experiment was conducted where 80 adults were randomly assigned to the following three conditions: (1) a treatment condition- increase cuddling with their spouses, (2) a comparison condition- individuals instructed to increase meal time with their spouses, (3) a control condition- not to change their behaviour under any circumstance. On the basis of this, the following predicaments were made- 1) participants in the first condition were expected to show an increase in their relational health to a greater level than in the comparison and control condition. The results seemed to replicate this prediction. This research thus proves the hypothesis true, that is, cuddling as a form of affection truly benefits of both parties involved.

## **Cuddles as Stress-busters**

When we're stressed out, our cortisol spikes—which can weaken our immune system and increase blood pressure. When humans hug, cuddle, or touch, however, our brains release the neuropeptide and hormone oxytocin, which has been shown to inhibit cortisol. The more oxytocin we release, the less stressed we are. Cuddles tend to act as instant mood boosters- A simple act of hugging or cuddling releases hormone dopamine, serotonin and oxytocin in our brain, which is known to decrease depression. Cuddles reduce fear and anxiety - According to a study, participants felt less anxious about death after a simple touch on the shoulder compared to participants who weren't touched.

## **Cuddle's Professional International**

Opened in the UK by holistic Therapist, Kitty Mansfield, 'Cuddle's Professional International' are the first cuddle therapy training, certification and membership body. This institution provides a comprehensive training course to ensure a responsible and ethical practice. Safe, warm and non-judgemental are the characteristics of a CPI certified cuddle therapist. The vision of this institution is to remove the stigma surrounding this profession of platonic touch.

Being hugged regularly boosts self-esteem, as evidenced by a study from the University of North Carolina. There, researchers found that couples who hugged each other for prolonged periods had higher levels of hormones that ease depression, reduce cravings, and increase immunity. Touch triggers a cascade of healing chemical responses, including a decrease in stress hormones and an increase in oxytocin, serotonin and dopamine levels. Additionally, touch has been shown to increase the immune system's cytotoxic capacity, thereby helping our body maintain its defences and decreasing anxiety, depression, hyperactivity, inattention, stress hormones, and cortisol levels. One of the wonderful things about oxytocin is that most of us can get our fix anywhere and at any time.

In a study conducted by Hidenobu Sumioka there were two groups- the hug group and the control group. In the control group, the participants talked to a stranger while hugging a human-shaped cushion called hugvie, functioning as a mobile phone. The control group did the same, with the only difference of holding an actual phone instead of a hugvie. Cortisol levels were measured before and after the conversation session. It was predicted that the participant in the group would have lower cortisol level at a greater rate than the control group. The results revealed the same.

### **Paid Cuddling**

The idea of 'paid cuddling' is not seen as a "real business". This is because most people do not see cuddling as a healing process, but something with more sexual intent. Time and again this fact had proven to be true when certain companies advertising their cuddling services clearly carried on various other activities behind closed doors. People's willingness to pay a high amount for the genuine cuddling services due to lack of intimacy in personal relations shows that there an increasing emotional distance between people.

According to psychologist Robert Sommer, there is a phenomenon in the modern society known as "dehumanization" which happens when people are forced to be close in a physically crowded space. So naturally people feel that their personal space is being violated and they feel uncomfortable. To ease this resulting discomfort, people start treating each other as inanimate. This paid cuddling is not just an American phenomenon, but is also established in Japan in the form of 'cuddle cafes' named "soineya" which translates to "sleep together shop".

Even with the presence of other therapy forms like psychotherapy or massage therapy, cuddling is much more popular, the reason being that most people view psychotherapy as very intense and distant and massage therapy is too physical with no focus on emotional satisfaction. But cuddling is both physical and emotional. It solely caters to the clients need to feel cared for, to feel intimate without the need for sex.

## **Other Therapists**

Many other therapists have recently started to turn to cuddle as a side gig, the reason being that many psychotherapists during their session have the urge to physically comfort a client with a hug especially after a grueling session. At other times, the clients themselves ask for physical comfort. But as therapists, they have to keep the distance. To accommodate this issue, many have begun to practice cuddle therapy. Psychotherapists have also to keep in mind not to keep their therapy and cuddling work separate, in order to avoid ethical and legal controversies.

## **Not an Alternative for Other Types of Treatment**

There are experts which state that although professional cuddling has therapeutic and healing benefits and can also be used as a type of treatment for depression but in no way, it is a replacement for therapy and medication even though cuddling has various health benefits.

People interested in experiencing this service must be aware of the fact that the effects of cuddle therapy are temporary and sustained in a created environment. Despite his drawback, people are still paying a high price to receive affection and has helped them boost their quality of life.

## **Addressing the Client's Arousal During Cuddle Therapy**

It is bound to happen that a physical touch can get the client's aroused, in that case, most therapists tend to ignore it. If the client wants to have sex, they shift the conversation elsewhere. Even for cuddlers, there is always fear or anxiety when they visit clients for the first time in their houses. They do not know what to expect, therefore, safety tools like a mace or calling their closest contacts within half an hour of the session ending or else their contact will call the police, are some of the safety measures that are taken. Also, there is a location tracker in every cuddler's phone.

A former cuddler from the snuggle buddies who found this behaviour from the clients very risky left for more mainstream work. Often cuddlers do notice when a client gets physically aroused. This usually occurs during the "spoon cuddle" (Spoonings is when two people lie on one side; the taller person usually lies behind the shorter individual with their arm around the person in front of them). The cuddler may discuss this with the client and opts for a change in the cuddling positions. Professional cuddlers often explain to their clients that getting aroused is nothing to be apologetic for as it is a normal reaction. What really matters is what the cuddler and client decide to do after that.

## **Touch Deprivation**

Many are touch deprived, leading to a rise in aggression, depression, pain and health problems. An example of this can be seen in orphanages where children who receive less physical affection fail to thrive and are developmentally delayed. Director of the Touch Research Institute at the University of Miami School of Medicine conducted studies to show that touch can reduce aggression, decrease prenatal depression and lower pain in people with arthritis, fibromyalgia, back pain, and headaches. It also leads to an increase in the neurotransmitter dopamine, which can explain why there is less aggression in cultures that are more physically affectionate, such as France, compared with the US.

Adults threaten to sue, following even an accidental touch which has resulted in people being afraid to touch each other, thinking the other will take it in the wrong way. The aging population is especially touching deprived as well, many after losing their spouses.

Professor Francis McGlone, a cognitive neuroscientist at Liverpool John Moore University, has researched our response to touch. Nerve fibers which respond to touch are spread under the skin like upside-down tree roots. Linking these neurons with feelings of pleasure clarifies the importance of touch. “Skin is a social organ,” he says. “A growing number of studies show that the sensation of touch, particularly early in life, profoundly sculpts the brain. Young animals deprived of touch grow up with severe behavioural abnormalities. Babies fare better when they are held and touched frequently, and touch sensation can be altered in certain disorders. People with autism, for instance, often dislike caresses.”

In another research done by Cohen Sheldon and colleagues (2014), an experiment was conducted to know whether perceived social support and hugging can protect against rise in infection risk. The participants were subsequently exposed to a virus that causes common cold and monitored in a quarantine to look for an illness sign. Hugging was used as a stress-buffering effect and shown that the more frequent the hugs the lesser the illness signs.

## **Establishment in India**

Unfortunately, this trend of professional cuddling is yet to catch on in India, unlike in Western and other Asian countries. Being a country with a majorly conservative mindset, it may take time for us Indians to accept this kind of therapy.

Like diet and exercise, everyone needs a daily dose of touch. If you don't have someone to touch or to touch you, and cannot afford a massage session, be sure to brush yourself in the shower and carry a massage ball around to rub your limbs.

- Suyashvi Singha (III<sup>rd</sup> Year)

## **THE BLUE WHALE CHALLENGE**

### **A Psychological Analysis**

The goal of this article is to psychologically analyse the Blue Whale Challenge from 3 different perspectives – the game, the players, and the social environment it is based in. I would first be looking into the three different aspects separately, and then piece it all together to form a bigger picture. I would also be drawing on McClelland's Theory of Needs in an attempt to understand the psyche of the emotionally bankrupt players.

#### **The Mastermind**

Philipp Budeikin, a 21 year old former Psychology student from St. Petersburg is believed to have created the infamous Blue Whale Challenge. The motive behind the creation of this game, as he put it, was to “cleanse the society of the biological waste”. The biological waste he refers to is the population the game targeted- the suicidal teens. He launched the game as the Blue Whale Challenge on vk.com (Vkontakte – the Russian facebook) in 2013 where he created the F57 community – the first community which played the game.

Budeikin had a troubled childhood growing up – he was being raised by a single mother who barely had the time to interact with her son, he didn't do well in academics, and he was alienated by his peers. As a consequence, he spent all his hours online and formed connections with those in the virtual world. As Anton Breido said, Philipp also felt that he was in charge of other people's wills and lives, what he believes is the direct consequence of the isolated upbringing.

#### **The Game Mechanics**

The challenge consist of 50 levels , each more gruesome than the one before. The game is moderated by the administrators in the closed off online groups where they exercise absolute power. The levels are so constructed to keep the ones who play it in a constant state of incoherence. The players are often commanded to wake up at 4:20am and watch horror movies throughout the day, in addition to self mutilatory challenges. The sleep deprivation from the untimely tasks adversely affects their cognition – most significantly their ability to evaluate risks and make decisions. Further, the game maintains a closed off community of the players where they constantly interact and discuss the game. This indirectly breeds normalcy for the game in the minds of the sleep deprived teenagers. However, it is important to note that the peculiarities of the game alone aren't the only roots of the problem and it is also important to seek answers to the following question – “Why do the teenagers even attempt challenges like this?”



### Psyche Of The Players

In this section, I aim to analyse the possible reasons to the question posed above, in hopes of bringing us closer to the answer. The tasks themselves aren't entirely responsible for the depleted cognition – the ones who have been affected the most by this phenomenon, are the adolescents and teenagers, eleven through twenty years of age – and this is of great psychological significance. One plausible factor which might also contribute to their lack of judgement is their underdeveloped Prefrontal Cortex, which is the rational part of the brain and develops completely by the age of 25. It plays a huge role in decision making, risk assessment and other cognitive activities.

The players' choice to partake in this challenge voluntarily, points to the fact that they were intrinsically motivated to play the game. McClelland (1973) talked about the 3 basic psychological needs – Need for Affiliation (nAff), Need for Power (nPow), and Need for Achievement (nAch) and how they influence human motivation. These three basic psychological needs drive us to behave in certain ways in order to gratify them. The young minds of the modernistic culture we live in, have seemingly strayed away from the familial and societal bonds they once had. These emotionally bankrupt teens have instead turned to social media and the cyber world to fulfil their basic needs. The most important of these three, which plays a significant role in motivating them to play such games, is the Need for Affiliation (nAff) – their need to feel related to those who have invited them to play the game (most commonly those that have formed some interpersonal bonds with them over the internet) – motivates them to accept the invitation and start off on their own self harm journey, alongside their affiliates.

### Socio-Cultural Trends

As an acquaintance of mine pointed out, the game, or rather the global phenomenon of internet suicides resembles a fashion. A '*fashion*', in the sociological sense of the word.

Here, I would like to take up the analogy of a fire. A fire requires 3 critical conditions to be met, for it to dominate - an ignition temperature, a fuel, and most importantly, an environment of oxygen. Similarly, for a fashion to perpetuate, it too needs those 3 essential elements. We have already, unknowingly, covered two of these three prerequisites - the *critical temperature* (the game) and the *fuel* (the players). The third and perhaps the most crucial factor which contributes to the persistence and infectivity of a fashion,

its “*oxygen*” - is the environment it rests in.

Why I believe that the environment plays a greater role in this phenomenon than the first two elements, is because it has lead me to believe that the social environment the people are immersed in, predisposes them to such games. Looking back at all the global deaths that have been associated with this game so far – it is evident that the children came from similar social environments – ones that were either individualistic, or gradually morphing into individualistic societies. From the instances that have occurred, it is also clear that the children had been living a detached life from the real world around them and have immersed themselves in the realm of cyberspace.

### **Piecing It All Together**

The socio-cultural aspects, the child’s psyche and the game mechanics – all work in tandem to result in the synchronised series of events that take place, from the time the child even contemplates playing the Blue Whale Challenge to the completion of level 50 which ultimately leads to his demise.

The ones who decide to play the Blue Whale Challenge, often come from poor social environments where they’re being neglected by the societies they live in. They have the need to feel related to someone and thus, they end up on the internet in search of interpersonal relationships. On the internet, they connect with other people coming from similar social environments, motivated by the same nAff. They end up forming associations online and are surrounded by a constant milieu of expressed sadness towards their societal placement. Once an affiliate of theirs shares this game with them, they feel the need to complete the “challenge” and satiate their nAch and nPow – being perceived as more accomplished, in the eyes of their affiliates, and as a consequence rise in the hierarchy of power. With the underdeveloped judgement skills, they decide to participate in the challenge and ignore any warnings.

Once they are accepted into the game community, they are threatened to obey the administrators, who are seen as gods in their respective groups. They are given pain-taking tasks which range from waking up every morning at 4:20am to self mutilation. Throughout the course of the game, the concept of death and self harm are normalized into the cognitive framework of the players through interactions with the community members. The players immerse themselves in the game communities to such an extent that they lose touch with their sense of morality and the external reality. With the encouraging words of their fellow players, they start justifying the game. The constant atmosphere of constructive comments for their accomplishments in the challenge, directly feeds their nAff.



The tasks are designed in such a way as to progress gradually, starting from the bare minimum and going up to the most extreme task – suicide. With such subtle increments in the severity of the tasks, the player habituates himself with the tasks on each step, and has very little problems adjusting to the ones that follow. Further, their online community instigates them to partake in the higher levels – setting benchmarks for their nPow to push for, and at the same time providing a false sense of affiliation for their nAff to gravitate towards. The players' sleep deprivation and underdeveloped frontal lobes also play a huge role in their lack of risk aversion and poor judgment skills. And so, begins a downward spiral, that ultimately leads these players to a fork in the road where they must decide what they value more – their life or the achievement. Unfortunately, the fashion trends depict an image of these players often choosing the latter, over the first.

### **Concluding Thoughts**

The easiest way to stall this fashion is to block access to a number of suspicious sites on the internet. This is being done by different governments across the world, however, it is not a solution; it simply slows the rate at which the suicides happen.

Blue Whale is not the first, nor will it be the last of its kind. Similar games and challenges will spring up in the future, in alignment with the fashion being talked about. The suicides and self harm will continue unabated (since blocking a website still fails to address the real problems). Therefore, it is futile to focus on the small picture i.e. this particular game; we must rather recognize the bigger picture i.e. the phenomenon of internet suicides. The need of the hour is to address this problem at the emotional and socio-cultural level, despite dealing with it only at the superficial one.

On a closing note, I would like to emphasize on the need to recognize, rehabilitate, and accept these children and work towards not only extinguishing the fire, but also the predisposing social factors that lead these children to seek emotional affiliation and recognition on online forums – where they place their own health and lives in jeopardy. For this, it is important to bring them out of the trenches of emotional bankruptcy, pull them out of the vicious webs of internet communities, and with the help of psychological interventions reintegrate them into the society they were once a part of.

**- Vidushee Srivastava (III<sup>rd</sup> Year)**

## PET THERAPY

You are feeling low, sad, and just not motivated enough to stand up and then your nose and face is tickled up with fur, you feel like sneezing and suddenly an unknown warmth just melts away that paralysis of yours. Sounds interesting?

That is exactly what is the experience of ‘Pet Therapy’ or on more exclusive terms ‘Animal assisted therapy’ (AAT) – a novel initiative by the contemporary mental health professionals that uses animals to aid better and more effective coping with mental health problems amongst people. It is a ‘rising star’, proven significantly efficacious where these ‘furry doctors’ are taking over the role of a conventional therapist.

In this growing field of therapeutic intervention, depending on the needs of the patient, different animals can be used including horses, dogs, rabbits and even dolphins and accordingly innovative therapeutic goals, strategies and outcome measures are charted out. The experience of the therapy is kept simple with the walking, brushing and petting the animal forming its rudimentary layout.

Edward O Wilson in his book *Biophilia* (1984) popularized and described the title as the “the urge to affiliate with other forms of life”. The biophilia hypothesis was subsequently developed where Wilson proposed that humans have an innate tendency to seek connections with nature and other forms of life. The premise of AAT is based on the same principle which suggests that seeing animals at rest or in a peaceful state, often signals to us safety, security and feelings of well-being which in turn may trigger a state where personal change and healing are possible.

This genre of therapy has established a strong foothold with a long list of mutual perks and benefits. They go beyond the portals of traditional interventions, and allow therapists to use one treatment tool, an animal to achieve therapeutic goals, which has ensured balance between managed care and cost reduction.

The companionship of the animals has manifold benefits on the patients, as the American Veterinary Medical Association proposes, the incorporation of animals in therapy provides opportunities for motivation, education and recreation that heightens the self-esteem and stress reduction, often channelizing the correction of cognitive or perceptual deficits prevalent amongst the patients.

### **Dog assisted Therapy**

Researches over the years confirm that amongst these furry therapists, dogs have gained a huge band of followers having established themselves as the best consultant when faced with distressing sentiments. What more, these charming canines have been able to prove their worth with different age groups over a spectrum of abnormalities. Findings of The Conversation – an independent Australian based media outlet which reported that therapy dogs reduced stress in the students and brought considerable improvement in their attendance.

Dogs are also widely accepted pets known to reduce anxiety and depression. A study undertaken by Beetz ( 2012 ) et al. showed that dogs reduced stress, anxiety and depression, eased loneliness and encouraged exercise. People with dogs had lower blood pressure and were less likely to develop heart disease—just playing with dogs elevated their oxytocin and dopamine levels , creating positive feelings and bonding for both the person and their pet.

A research conducted by Olga Solomon-‘What a Dog Can Do: Children with Autism and Therapy Dogs in Social Interaction’ published in The Journal of the Society for Psychological Anthropology, (2010) brings forward evidence that dogs have been successfully able to mediate the social engagement of children with autism in relationships, experience of emotional connection and participation in everyday life.

Another research undertaken by Berry and colleagues (2013) supported the benefits of using dogs in therapy for Autism Spectrum Disorder where it was observed that the contribution of these animals extended beyond children’s physical safety to therapeutic and communicative domains. Moreover, the integration of assistance dogs resulted in beneficial effects on children’s behavior with decreased anxiety and anger, increased calmness, reduction in the number of emotional outbursts and more manageable bedtime routines.

A recent study undertaken Purdue University (2015), Florida has gathered empirical evidence pointing out that service and therapy dogs 'lower depression and social isolation scores, leading to greater levels of satisfaction and higher psychological well being' amongst the victims of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).



### **Equine Assisted Therapy**

Since time immemorial animals have remained an integral part of human existence and therefore it comes forth as a pleasant surprise that Ancient Greeks were the first to use animals to lift the spirits of the severely ill. Though it seems the limelight is on the charming canines today, the agile equines (horses) have still retained their place in this modern therapeutic arrangement. Humans and horses have similar social and responsive behaviors which made it easier for the patients to connect with them.

A research paper ‘Effectiveness of Equine Assisted experiential therapy’ published by Bivens, Leinhart and Klontz (2007) presented the treatment outcome of equine therapy in 31 participants and confirmed enhancement in self efficiency, social skills, and reduction in psychological distress amongst the participants and were found to be stable in a 6 month follow up.

A research undertaken by Benda, McGibbon and Grant (2004) to evaluate the effect of hippo therapy (physical therapy utilizing the movement of a horse) on muscle activity in children with spastic cerebral palsy (A congenital disorder of movement, muscle tone or posture), where significant improvement in symmetry of muscle activity was noted in those muscle groups displaying the highest asymmetry prior to hippotherapy.

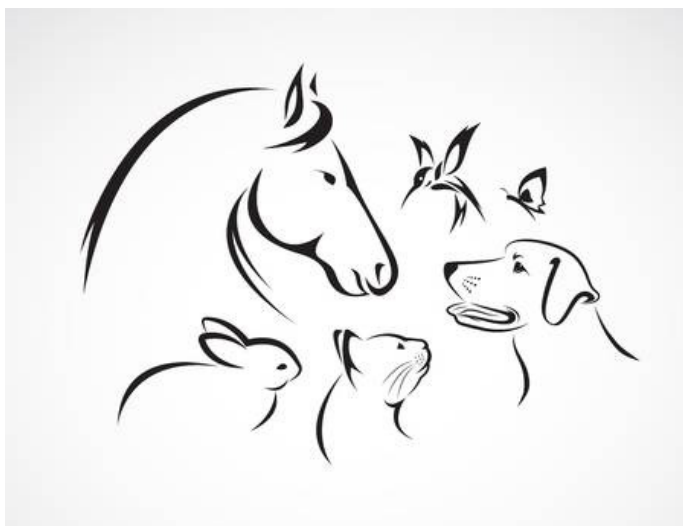
Another research supporting the positive reach of Equine assistance was undertaken by Camilla and colleagues (2014) which showed the influence of this therapy in treating female Eating Disorders (ED). In this research a sample of 72 women with ED inpatients between ages 18 and 49, diagnosed with anorexia and bulimia nervosa were taken and it was found out that as these women engaged in Equine assisted therapy, meaningful reductions were found in six ED symptoms.

### **Rabbit Assisted therapy**

Animal assisted therapy takes the aid of many other fellow living beings, and rabbits are now also being certified as effective counselors. In many parts of the western world ‘therapy bunnies’ are gaining momentum in helping the geriatric patients with Alzheimer’s or dementia.

Cassie Tuttle, an award-winning bunny breeder quotes that “in many ways handling a rabbit is easier for seniors than petting a dog”. “They’re light and huggable like a teddy bear, so you can hold them on your lap or cuddle them up high and bury your face in their fur. Bunnies don’t jump around and they really don’t drool, which some dogs do. They also really feel good to everybody.”

AAT has undoubtedly become the light for many lives in the western world, however for it to gain the same widespread acceptance in India, that would take time. The good news is that, though for long ‘a mirage in a desert’, AAT is making its way to the hearts of many in this country, in the recent decade. In our country, the furry canines are a champion for the kids and as mentioned in the Times of India a couple of years ago, children are treating dogs as great confidante in moments of catharsis.



Animal Assisted therapy is a revolutionary idea in today's world for it not only relieves the humans of their existing deficits and distress but also induces in them a sense of gratitude and compassion for these fellow living beings, who in spite of not being as evolved as us humans physically, are definitely a flourishing cure for our mental health.

**- Oindrila Das (I<sup>st</sup> Year)**

## **ACKNOWLEDGE YOUR PRIVILEGE**

Read the trending stories on Google, Open up Twitter, or just open the newspaper. You are bound to come across instances of oppression and discrimination against some sections of the society. This oppression may be in form of getting shot by a police man, a politician tearing down a gender or a religion or another air- strike in a war-torn country. These heart wrenching events bring into mind the importance of life and the role of privilege. The increasing number of hate crimes and racial disturbances has led to the questioning of white privilege. This leads to the realisation that it is important that we recognize and acknowledge the privileges that we have been born into.

### **But what does privilege mean?**

Privilege refers to “a right or benefit that is given to some people and not to others.” These rights or benefits are not necessarily given out, but they exist as a result of conditions one is born into. It can be defined as a special right, advantage, or immunity granted or available only to a particular person or group of people. It includes the benefit of access to resources and social rewards and the power to shape the norms and values of society that some people receive, unconsciously or consciously, by virtue of their caste, class, religion, sexuality or even skin colour. Privilege, in a sociological context, describes the unearned benefit a person enjoys because of how the society in which they live is constructed and the biases that overall construction reflects.

Thus, a lack of privilege often leads to insurmountable mountains of closed doors and denied opportunities which can be exceedingly difficult to combat. While it is true that everyone has to overcome certain challenges in life, but their privilege determines the amount and quality of resources available. We are often convinced that anyone can attain success by working hard towards their goals but what we need to focus on is that some people in the society have certain advantages over others and some have certain disadvantages that they have to fight off. Resources may be available to some and not to some. This may happen just because some have been born into more favourable circumstances than others. Much of the privileges we carry are so embedded in our identities that we rarely consider the power structures that operate in order to carry this privilege. Reflecting on the benefits that come with our social status and the advantages that may not even have been asked for, can facilitate a better understanding of the world.

As an upper-middle class, upper-caste, and a fair skinned woman, it is important that I recognize and acknowledge the privileges I am born with at a fundamental level. Among the privileges I hold are-

### **Caste privilege**

My family's caste privilege has allowed me easy access to education. I have never been made to feel that I don't belong, looked down upon for my caste, or been stigmatized to a point of self-harm. I will never have my admission and progress in university doubted or dismissed because of reservation policies.

### **Class privilege**

I have the luxury of never going hungry and being able to take education for granted. I have the luxury of not immediately getting a job after graduation – I can take as much time as I need to “figure it out” or study further. I can walk freely into malls without the fear of being treated with suspicion and disrespect.

### **Religion privilege**

Since I identify as a Hindu, I am not treated as an outsider on the basis of my name or religious practices I will never be discriminated against in the search of houses or jobs that are frequently denied to Muslims on the basis of their religion.

### **Ability privilege**

As a mentally and physically able-bodied person, I do not face the oppression that comes with being disabled. Everyday objects and buildings are designed for me to use. My choice of university or workplace is not limited to those that offer wheelchair accessibility. I do not have to look for subtitles every time I want to watch a movie.

### **Cis-gender privilege**

This means I identify with the body I am born in. I never had to face the struggles faced by a transsexual person or answer any trans phobic questions. Cis-privilege means that I am not painfully reminded of society's exclusion of me every time I fill a document asking to check boxes marked M or F. I can rely on police protection instead of being systematically harassed because of my gender identity.

### **Heterosexuality privilege**

As a heterosexual woman, do not have to live on the shadows of acceptance or hide my choice of partner from my family or friends due to the fear of ostracism.. I will never have to face the anxiety of coming out to my parents or friends, and often put those relationships at stake in the process, or worse, experience corrective therapy.



### **What to do with the privilege?**

The first step is acknowledging privilege and the benefits that come with it. It gives you the opportunity to put yourself in someone else's shoes, and imagine what hurdles people have to jump to get at the place they want to be and to understand how it feels to be looked down on in society and be less highly valued as individuals, simply because of gender, skin colour or sexual orientation. We must adopt some practices that shed us of directly oppressive practices that we are complicit in, while belonging to the privileged lot. Acknowledging our privilege is definitely the first step, but it cannot be limited to that. Some identity politics theorists have criticised the 'acknowledgment of privilege' as being nothing more than a cathartic way for the privileged to get over the guilt associated with privilege.

The second step is to listen and speak. The more privileges we have, the more likely we are to be listened to and taken seriously, so we should fight for the rights of the more marginalized, less privileged people. Women aren't benefiting from feminism who choose to stay silent. Men should stand up to their male friends when they are making sexist jokes. The able-bodied should demand wheelchair accessibility in the buildings they frequent. Producers of media should strive to represent more marginalised categories in their TV/films/comics/novels to increase representation. We can't assume that someone else will come along and do the right thing when we've been given the platform to do so. To be a good ally, we must listen to the voices of the oppressed. There are constantly reports of all-male panels talking about feminism, and all-Savarna academics writing about Dalit movements. As a holder of privilege, one needs to take the back seat and make sure one listens to the lived experiences of the oppressed, as these are often never heard.

Having privilege comes with a responsibility to use it wisely and better those who do not have the same privilege as you. Choosing to not use your privilege to speak out for those who can't, is problematic. If we only accept and recognise our entitlements, will we be able to accept the world as it is. This will not only lead to a positive outlook toward life but also towards self-actualisation. In acknowledging the privilege many of us have had, we can move forward with a more honest, insightful, and impactful understanding of ourselves. The imbalance in power needs to be questioned and deserves to be countered. What we can do is educate others around us about how privilege is disadvantaging to people who don't have those. Acknowledging privilege and feeling grateful go hand in hand. Practicing gratitude helps in reflecting upon things and being thankful for the experience of positive emotions, being more compassionate and kind. Be grateful for your parents, your education, your family and your friends. And if nothing else be grateful for life for it is nothing short of privilege.

**- Muskan Datta (II<sup>nd</sup> Year)**

## STATE OF MENTAL HEALTH IN INDIA

Your eyes open and everything feels off. Its nothing new you been feeling the same way for days now, but don't know when it started. You have breakfast, the food is tasteless. You walk out and the sun rays feel like they are little pellets hitting you. You just want to hide. You feel like you are drowning but everyone around you is breathing. Life is joyless and you have no motivation left. This is how 322 million people feel everyday in the morning (WHO, 2017). Depressive disorders are characterised by sadness, loss of interest or pleasure, feelings of guilt, low self worth, disturbed sleep and appetite, feelings of tiredness, and poor concentration. Though not the only mental health disorder, depression is one of the most well known and for some Jhas becomes a poster child for mental health issues. People with depression are 1.52 times more likely to die than the average man due to their untreated mental or physical health problems. Analysing the situation with depression, it is clear what the general situation of mental health is present. Unlike other disorders that may or may not be preventable, Depression can happen to anyone and is easily treatable and preventable with simple interventions. But there is a huge gap in the diagnosis and treatment of depression. Several studies done in India have documented that 17- 46% of patients attending primary health care centres suffer from depression. Most people with depression are unaware that they are suffering from depression and that it is a treatable condition. Treatment gap of 90% for depression has been documented in the LMIC. Another factor responsible for this is the social stigma. In popular culture, mental health issues have been put up as a sign of weakness and people who suffer from mental illnesses are often shunned by the society lest their illness be contagious. Another big issue is the cost of treatment of mental health issues, and how the people who can't see the disorder don't believe it. And hence do not know or want to get treatment. A combination of the populous stigma and the inaccessible treatment poses a double whammy for the common person in India. Mental health care services seem inaccessible for both economic and social reasons. With the exponential development in technological sciences and humans leading more sedentary lives that are intellectually driven, it is inevitable that we are going to see a surge in the deterioration of the mental capacity. Compared to the early human, urban centres gave rise to major epidemic, what we are seeing is an epidemic of the rise of mental health disorders as human beings go from doing physical to mental work. People tend to forget that the brain is also an organ and overworking it can lead to its own set of problems. We need to de-stigmatise the whole system of mental health services in our society, treating these diseases as we do with physical ones. A universal ramp up of primary, secondary and tertiary health care services is required to help with mental health disorders, especially in India.

- Rithwik Narayanan (III<sup>rd</sup> Year)

## **BODY IMAGE**

### **More Than Just Being Fit for Others**

How many times did you look at yourself in the mirror before leaving the house today? How many times did you fix your hair, or change your outfit to look just right? How many times have you bailed out of plans because of a terrible zit?

“Body image” is how we perceive our bodies. It is our emotional attitudes, beliefs, and perceptions of our own body. It can either be positive or negative. A positive body image means being able to be happy and comfortable with your body. A negative body image involves having real or imagined flaws in the body which leads to distress and can also affect everyday functioning. “Body image” as an issue isn’t new, to researchers or even laymen. Many have fallen prey to having a negative body image and ample amount of research has been done to dig deeper into this subject.

With the clout that media has achieved today in various forms, the strive for a “perfect” body is increasing day by day. The “plastic Barbies” from Instagram have shook the self-esteem of millions of girls and the fact that they are a useful commodity in every industry tells these girls that without achieving a tiny waist and wide hips, they’ll never be adored or looked up to. Increasingly enough, even men are falling prey to such a negative body image and it has made them self-conscious. Men that are regularly exposed to unrealistic images in the media also experience a poor body image.

Right from the formative years, children are exposed to cartoons that seem puerile and seen as a good way of passing time, and it’s easy to forget the longterm impact they have on the cognitive and social development of these children. For example, from a tender age of playing with G.I. Joe figures, men may find their body image suffering; a G.I. Joe toy, if remodelled into human size, would be taller and have bigger biceps than any average man. This gives boys an unrealistic ideal to live up to. We have all watched He-Man and the Masters of the Universe which features Prince Adam who turns into a superhero saving the fictional planet Eternia from the evil forces of Skeletor. He charmed my tiny 10 year-old self with his sword and, lean body and muscles that seemed as if they were about to sunder from too much steroids. The fact this portrays to men is that women want men to have such a body. This starts the vicious, self-sustaining loop of low self-esteem and poor body image. It becomes easy for us to compare ourselves to someone who has the physical characteristics we want. Thus, it not only affects how we see ourselves, it also affects our social life and behaviour.

Women are seen as beautiful and happy when they have thin thighs and shiny hair, seen

very prominently in beauty models. As much as they seem to have a glorious life of travelling, and receiving branded freebies, they too succumb to insecurity. Not many talk about their life outside modelling, about who they are without wearing Victoria's Secret and dousing in Gucci eaux de cologne. Cameron Russell, a model, in her TED talk Looks aren't everything. Believe me, I'm a model. says, "We say, "it's really amazing to travel, it's amazing to get to work with creative, inspired, passionate people." And those things are true, but they're only one half of the story because the thing we never say on camera, that I have never said on camera, is, "I am insecure." And I'm insecure because I have to think about what I look like every day. And if you ever are wondering "If I have thinner thighs and shinier hair, will I be happier?" You just need to meet a group of models, because they have the thinnest thighs, the shiniest hair and the coolest clothes, and they're the most physically insecure women probably on the planet."

Much research has been done on adolescent and young adult population, but very few on midlife adults (30-60 years of age) regarding their perception of their body image. It is an age when certain biological, psychological, and social changes occur that can challenge body image. In a research done by Sarah McGuinness and Joanne E. Taylor, Understanding Body Image Dissatisfaction and Disordered Eating in Midlife Adults, published in New Zealand Journal of Psychology (2016), they found some degree of body image concern in the present sample, although greater for women than men. A small number of participants (16% of women and 6% of men) were found to have an EAT-26 score that was at or above 20, indicating potentially problematic eating disturbances. Thus, it's not just adolescents, but midlife adults too, who experience body insecurities and low self-esteem because of influence from cultural norms, preference for a specific body type, attitude towards weight gain, etc.

It is not unheard-of that body image concerns and eating disorders go hand in hand. It is the person's appearance that leads them to think that losing weight would enhance their appearance, and make them feel better about themselves and their bodies. Thus, restrictive eating and/or over-exercising, leads to disordered eating and weight obsession that can develop into bulimia, orthorexia, anorexia, binge eating disorder or compulsive overeating. Additionally, working out and toning bodies is not about feeling good or increasing stamina anymore, it has become more about showing people the flat stomach, or six-pack abs, or toned buttocks. So our motivation to change into fit individuals has become extrinsic, rather than intrinsic. Not being able to achieve the above mentioned characteristics can lead to eating disorders, depression, and anxiety.

So what can help? There are a few interesting practices that can be incorporated to alleviate the thoughts of a negative body image:

- **Seek a therapist** - Since the problem isn't going away by itself, a very critical step is

to seek a therapist. It's the primary and vital step to help oneself. If concerned about financial issues, there are thousands of private websites that offer free consultations. There are plenty of government hospitals and clinics set up too, the only thing you have to do is to look for one that's close by. If not, many organizations offer phone call and video call services for free or a nominal fee.

- **Ban fat talk** - The fact that parents burden their children from a young age to not eat as much as they want to or to eat only certain kinds of food otherwise they'll get a fat stomach or flabby arms and legs, has serious psychological consequences for them. This gets rolled over into adulthood when peers talk about having too much cellulite, or flabby skin that has affected their everyday functioning. So someone who did not give too much importance to noticing cellulite, or flabby skin starts noticing such details and realises they're not good for him/her.

- **Interventions** - A study conducted by Jennifer A. O'Dea and Suzanne Abraham (2000), examines the effect of an interactive, school based, self-esteem education program on the bodyimage and eating attitudes and behaviours of young male and female adolescents following the program and after 12 months. All 470 eligible students (63% female) aged 11–14 years volunteered to participate. The intervention group students participated in the program, whereas the control group students received their scheduled personaldevelopment and health class. The program significantly improved the body satisfactioof the intervention students and significantly changed aspects of their self-esteem; social acceptance, physical appearance, and athletic ability became less important for the intervention students and more important for control students. One year after theintervention, body image and attitude changes were still present. These students also had significantly lower drive for thinness and greater body satisfaction following the intervention and the decreased portance of physical appearance to their self-esteem was present at 12 months. The intervention program was effective, safe, having no effect on measures of students' anxiety or depression, and was rated highly by students. This is the first controlled educational intervention to successfully improve body image and to produce long-term changes in the attitudes and self-image of young adolescents. This new approach to prevent the development of eating disorders by improving self-esteem may be effective, particularly if reinforced by teachers and family.

Concluding the article, I would like to urge you to spend five minutes every morning thinking about your positive attributes, what makes people approach you, and how to improve yourself into becoming fit for life rather than fit for social media and/or others.

- Titiksha Singh (II<sup>nd</sup> Year)

## **PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS OF USING CELLPHONES**

Invention of the cell phone was a grand accomplishment in the field of telecommunications. These (then) pocket-sized devices opened door to affordable long-distance communication for all. It took a leap in the 1990s and early 2000s when “smart phones” was first introduced in the market. Possessing a plethora of functions, these devices are now equipped with doing so much more than mere communication added with harnessing the power of internet. This versatility has made these smart phones an indispensable part of everyone’s life. They have become a part of our identity, a digitized version of ourselves. Everyday new phones with new technologies are being launched, having been incorporated with features of a computer, television, radio, USB and what not. Nobody knew that these machines which were made to assist us would end up controlling us.

Several researches have been conducted to gauge the impact of smartphone technology on our society. Outcomes of researches done by Forbes have shown that using cell phone excessively has various psychological as well as physical effects.

To understand how cell phones, affect psychological functioning of an individual, one needs to understand the effect they have on different neurotransmitters. Dopamine and Oxytocin play a significant role in functioning of human beings---they make us feel good about ourselves while dopamine is related to ‘reward’ system, oxytocin is famously known as the ‘love hormone’. Spending too much time on the phone can lead to an increase in the production of these hormones. In other words, when we check a message/mail or simply scroll through our notifications, these “feel good” hormones encourage us to use the phone time and again to check what’s new or if we missed something.

Cyberpsychology and other new theories arise to address the new phenomena related to mobile phone usage. Concepts such as “FOMO” (Fear of Missing out) and “Need for touch” have been repeatedly found in psychological journals and books. FOMO is defined as the anxiety a person feels when they are away from an online community and fear they are missing out on something important happening within the community. The growing anxiousness to constantly peep into your phone just to make sure you don’t miss out on something has become so worrisome that people have actually started withdrawing from actual social contact. The consequences of this are anxiety and loneliness in public spaces and feeling low due to not having any real social contact, social relations and social life. When feeling this way, instead of making an effort to improve their conditions, the immediately turn to their mobile phones. Its become like an escape, just

as how an ostrich buries its head in the sand to avoid danger/ threat, similarly humans too bury themselves in their gadgets to escape from a social threat.

As for the physical effects, staring at the blue screen for a long time can lead to bad eye-sight problems, sleep problems, confusion and dizziness. According to research, it is the youth which engages in phone usage in higher percentage. A study conducted by Acharya P Jayanti and colleagues (2013) focused on the health affects of cell phone usage among college students through self-administered questionnaire. The results showed that headache was the most common symptom for majority of the subjects who possessed a phone, followed by anger/irritability, lack of concentration, insomnia, anxiety, body aches and eye strain.

Researches conducted to study impact on human cognition and social interaction found that higher the cell phone usage, lower the memory recall capacity. For every romance enthusiast out there searching for their “Mr/Miss Right”, another interesting study has hypothesised that since cell phones are providing endless possibilities, it is making it harder for people to find love. These devices allow users to talk to anyone and disconnect at any time. Consequently, this selective picky nature may make them harder to get along with anyone even after a compromise.

The greatest amount of research has gone in exploring the impact of cell phones on human emotions and self-esteem. Countless studies have shown that cell phones lead to higher levels of anxiety and depression amongst people of all age group. It has also led to people perceiving their social support to be lower despite having many “online friends”. Also, the constant validation that people seek from social media can lead to low self-esteem as well as false perception of self. The inability to practice self-control with increasing phone usage has led to an increase in its addiction.

Another fascinating study has revealed that people who tend to use their phone for over 8 hours a day have a centralistic and non-argumentative personality. They are also seen as more open to new ideas, which at times might be seen as them being gullible. Impact of phone usage is not only seen in personality character and cognition but also language. The popularisation of certain phrases has been brought about by the social media apps on smart phones. Taking social media breaks every now and then could help. Some other ways to counter this problem includes, keeping hours fixed for usage, discontinuing use one hour before bed and reading a book instead. After all, the best things happen to you when you're offline!

**Content by - Vidushee Srivastava, Riva Dhingra, & Gauri Nagyal (III<sup>rd</sup> Year)**  
**Compiled by - Suyashvi Singha (III<sup>rd</sup> Year)**

## **THE STANFORD PRISON EXPERIMENT**

### **Movie Analysis**

The Stanford Prison Experiment is a movie that presents a stark picture of human psychology and the history of the field of research that seeks to understand it. The experiment starts in an attempt to understand prison as an institution that affects behaviour but it slowly morphs into a violent progression of events which presents several ethical dilemmas and questions what kind sacrifices we need to make for science and whether we can exploit someone for the sake of a greater purpose.

The movie begins with an advertisement being printed asking for male subjects for a prison study for two weeks who will be paid fifteen dollars a week. The volunteers are screened and then randomly separated into groups of prisoners and guards. They are informed they are given a position because of their 'exemplary characteristics'. The guards are told that they have power over the prisoners but they cannot physically hurt them. However, as the experiment progresses, the guards become verbally and mentally abusive towards the prisoners and start using violence as well while the prisoners begin to lose a sense of their identity.

The experiment is terminated at Day 6 because of how violent it had become. Philip Zimbardo and his fellow colleagues conclude that it's not the individual characteristics but the institutions which makes people violent. Zimbardo gives the term "Lucifer effect" which meant that even good people can do evil things because of the situational influences and power given from authority. However, this conclusion comes under scrutiny because of the flaws of the experiment.

This analysis attempts to understand the psychological principles at play as well as the ethical issues and the problems that invalidate the experiment.

#### **Depersonalisation of Candidates**

The researchers seemed to want to homogenise the different groups, and this began with their costumes. The guards were dressed in khaki clothes similar to actual prison guards and also given sunglasses to prevent eye contact. They were all to be referred to as 'Mr. Correctional Officer' to give the prisoners 'a sense of unified single authority'. The prisoners were put in uncomfortable smocks with stockings over their heads to feminise them and a steel chain around their ankles. This clothing doesn't exist in an actual prison that they were trying to stimulate, so it doesn't make sense to stray away from real conditions.



They were given numbers that they would be referred with and were instructed to refer to themselves with the number as well. When they first meet each other, they introduce themselves with their names but that changes gradually throughout the movie and they begin referring to each other with numbers. This is reinforced through numerous roll calls and it starts just within the first 10 hours, surprising the researchers as well.

According to researchers, there is clear Internalisation of the identity of prisoners which is why they beg to be paroled when they could easily leave and even agree to give up their earnings. Towards the end of the movie, one of them even says, 'I really felt that I was losing my identity'.

### **Authority and Dominance**

The conclusion of the study claims that the guards were provided with power and authority which made them act violently and dominate the prisoners. There were, however, several other factors like the priming by the researchers themselves. In the orientation, the guards were told that they were chosen based on the qualities they demonstrated in their interview. The statement implies they have certain qualities similar to those of prison guards. Society has a stereotypical view of prison guards; they are authoritative, strict, tough and perhaps even insensitive. These characteristics were perhaps one of the reasons everyone said that they didn't want to be the prison guards but they all looked pleased to learn that they were chosen, that they deserve this power because of their characteristics.

The researchers also informed them that they will be watching them and they are not allowed to hit or physically assault the prisoners under any circumstance. According to the *Hawthorne effect*, behaviour is affected by knowing they are being watched. The guards instead of being restrained by the fear of being under observation, acted more aggressively when the researchers were present. According to Peter Gray, the researchers had set up certain demand characteristics according to which the participants behaved the way they believed researchers wanted.

'John Wayne' - who was one of the more aggressive guards - was also encouraged. This encouragement is a clear motivating factor behind their behaviour. Hence, the violence could emerge from the fact that the guards were never stopped or reprimanded when they used violence. One of the guards recalled, "I made them ... clean out the toilets with their bare hands. I practically considered the prisoners cattle..." [Zimbardo et al, 1973, p. 42]

### **Predisposition of The Guards**

The advertisement calls for students for a prison study. The volunteers are clearly motivated by the monetary factors, however, in a Wesler Kentuck study, they tried to

understand if the presence of the word 'prison study' in the advertisement had an impact on the already small sample.

Two were advertisements looking for volunteers for a psychological study. One mentioned that it was a prison study while the other didn't. The volunteers who responded for these were tested and compared. It was found that those who responded to the prison study had higher traits of social dominance and aggressiveness. They also scored lower on empathy and altruism. Hence, the sample was perhaps primed to behave in a more aggressive manner and there was a Selection bias for the participants. The researchers of the experiment later noted that 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of the guards showed sadistic tendencies and they were sad the experiment had ended.

### **Submissiveness**

While the officers were encouraged to behave in a dominant manner, The prisoners were encouraged to behave submissively. They were punished for any rebellion and rewarded for their cooperation in the form of luxuries. These rewards act as positive reinforcement, supporting the idea that if they acted Submissively Their Lives Would Be Easier.

### **Group Solidarity**

The prisoners are prevented from banding together by limiting conversation, changing cells and trying to create dissatisfaction, however just by suffering together they create solidarity. For example, when the privileged cells are served luxury food, they refuse to eat it. When the new prisoner was put in solitary confinement, the prisoners were given a choice that they could give up their beds and the new guy would be let out and all except one agree to sacrifice comfort.

### **The Researchers**

The researchers themselves became a huge part of the experiment. They were active players in the stimulation - involved in creating certain outcomes, not participating as detached observers - which brings to question the objectivity of their analysis. Phillip Zimbardo became more and more paranoid as the movie progressed. When he heard a conversation between prisoners about how 8612 would return to free them all, he set up a chair outside and waited for him to show up to protect his prison. In real life, the prison was shifted to another floor.

He also doubted the priest called to counsel the prisoners assuming he would shut down the experiment. He lied and manipulated the parents of a prisoner who expressed concern. Zimbardo confessed in an interview that this was his biggest regret.

## Ethical Issues

### *1. Informed consent*

The prisoners were largely unaware of what they were getting into. They didn't know they would be arrested from their homes and strip-searched. They were informed that the prison guards couldn't hurt them physically but no one stepped in to protect them when there was violence.

The prisoners were told they couldn't quit unless it was a medical emergency or a psychological emergency. Perhaps it was this inability to quit which led up to them agreeing to forfeit their pay rather than the internalisation of the identity of a prisoner.

### *2. Origins of the study*

The study was originated from a two-day stimulation done by David Jaffe in his dorm and then, turned into a full-fledged experiment by Phillip Zimbardo after seeing the results. However, even Zimbardo admits that he didn't know much about prisons before the experiment began and had not even visited one. This puts the whole methodology to question.

A lack of information about the subject being researched can be detrimental to the study. The study was influenced by the subjective experiences of a consultant but even he questioned things.

The researchers claimed this was stimulation and not a proper laboratory experiment but even then, stimulation needs to correspond to reality to yield proper results.

## Later Findings

The real life 8612 'Douglas Korpus' expressed in an interview that he was faking all of it. He had assumed he could study while being in the research but when he realised he couldn't, he wanted to leave but the researchers wouldn't let him so he acted hysterically knowing they would have to let him leave.

This pivotal moment of an emotional breakdown was hence false. "John Wayne", the guard who is considered as the most violent, said that he was acting. He was a Drama student. Before he went in, he put on an accent and a personality of a character from a

movie. Towards the end of the movie, he said he was to conduct his own experiment to see how much verbal insult people would take before they start to stand up to him.

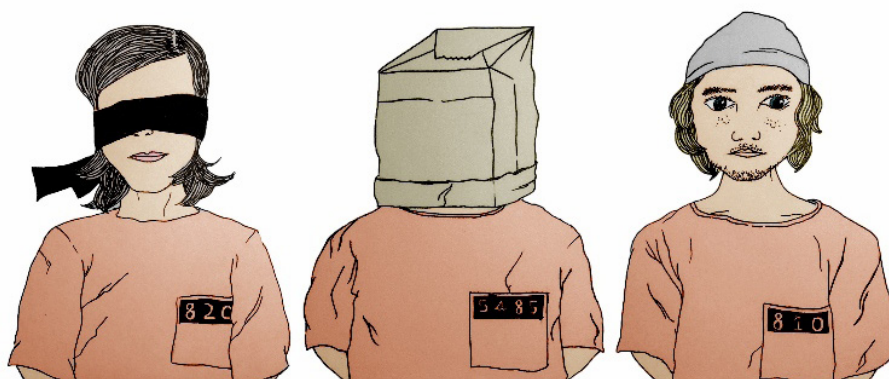
He was the first to start with punishment and then went on to influence other guards. This puts to question how much of this would have happened if he wasn't in this equation.

## Conclusion

The movie and the study both conclude on the idea of inherent evil and that power corrupts. But the experiment is unable to provide proper conclusions. Studies done after this were unable to replicate results and ethical considerations don't allow us to continue with these studies anyway.

The movie does a good job of adapting the real-life experiment and the situations' continuous evolution into worse conditions. It captures it in a passive frame, almost like a documentary and leaves the audience to decide what they believe and draw conclusions themselves. It presents a stark picture of the study and criticises the researchers for their treatment of their subjects. It, in totality, tells an important story about science and the cost of it.

- Vijayalaxmi Samal ( II<sup>nd</sup> Year )



## **INSIDE OUT**

### **Movie Analysis**

Pixar has a history of creating animated movies that are not just meant for children but provide a much deeper and layered story for the adults as well. Inside Out, the 2015 release is yet another example of the brilliance of Pixar studios. It brings life to emotions that exist within us all and tells a very personal story about the importance of each one of them.

It centers on Riley, a young girl who struggles with new changes in her life when she has to move away from her home and friends to a new place with her family. The movie also follows the 5 emotions inside of Riley's head: - anger, sadness, joy, disgust and anxiety. Joy is their leader and she wants to keep Riley a happy and cheerful girl. She understands the need and the importance of other emotions except sadness who only seems to ruin things and hence, she tries to keep sadness separate and away from Riley's control and memories.

Joy's actions reflect our own attempts to avoid sad and painful circumstances in our life but as she learns through the movie, it's important to acknowledge and deal with these negative emotions as well.

Inside Out is seemingly a lesson about Emotional intelligence and mental health. Emotional Intelligence is the ability to understand our own emotions and the emotions of others as well. It tells us that it's important to understand, acknowledge and deal with all the emotions we feel. When joy and sadness are stuck in Riley's long term memory leaving the control center for other emotions, Riley is essentially left without access to her own happiness to deal with her new stressful circumstances. She struggles to understand what she is going through and deal with moving which is one of the most stressful life events one can go through. She becomes frustrated, withdrawn and bitter.

This also seems to imply that there is an 'all or none principle'. If we completely avoid or numb sadness, we lose joy as well. We cannot pick and choose not to deal with negative emotions. They are a normal part of life and need to be worked through. Riley also faces pressure from her mother to smile for her father, forcing her to hide her sadness and almost implying that it shouldn't be expressed or felt. She misses her old life and friends but the grief she feels has not been properly worked through to allow her to move on and she cannot deal with the stress of a new one and she ends up trying to runaway.

Emotional intelligence also teaches us to recognize other's emotions accurately and that's where we need sadness. When Bing-Bong is crying, Joy attempts to make the situation more cheerful by avoiding the negative emotions but it doesn't work. While, Sadness understands Bing-Bong's emotion and helps him deal with it by showing empathy and allowing him to express his feelings. The movie seems to tell us that our coping strategy cannot always be of avoidance with the matters of grief. Empathy allows us to understand what people are going through and to connect with them, to perhaps try to alleviate their pain or to support them and feel compassion for them.

Our brains are wired in a way that we respond to others emotions and feel them. Parts of the brain containing the mirror neurons get activated the same way when we watch or perform an action, eliciting the same feeling which explains why we feel sadness or respond with a frown when someone else is crying.

The movie shows us that sadness needs to be engaged with and integrated into life, learning to cope with it is an important aspect of emotional development that Riley gets through by the end of the movie and she begins to slowly adapt.

The movie gets various other psychological concepts like conversion to long-term memory, core memories, psychological changes of puberty, stress of moving etc right. This seems to owe to the fact that psychologists were consulted while making of the movie. In fact All 5 emotions used are 5 of the 6 scientifically validated universal emotions according to Psychologist, Paul Ekman who found that these emotions were present in every culture and were expressed through the same facial expressions around the world. [Ekman & Friesan, 1969] There were obviously cinematic liberties taken but Inside Out manages these complex ideas in a very simplistic manner that is easy to understand or convey to children. It creates these metaphors for emotions which starts a conversation about mental health among children by making these concepts easier to understand and allowing them to recognize emotions by giving names to them, to express themselves better.

It also understands complex emotions. By the end of the movie, Riley's control panel of emotions is expanded and we understand that complex emotions can exist. We can feel happy and sad at the time. In real life, we don't feel a singular emotion at a moment. We exist in a state of multiplicity with a dominant emotion we tend to recognize but other emotions exist under the surface and it's important to understand the subtleties as well. Inside Out is successful in creating an entertaining story and also delivering its complex ideas and themes in a simplistic, nuanced and entertaining manner.

**- Vijayalaxmi Samal (II<sup>nd</sup> Year)**

## **MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS WEEK (MHAW)**

**3<sup>rd</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> October, 2018**

The Mental Health Awareness Week from October 8 to 14 was welcomed with a variety of activities and events in most mental health institutions as well as in schools and colleges. The MHAW in Aryabhata College was organised by the members of the psychology department. It began on October 3 and ended on October 5, 2018.

The opening ceremony was graced by the presence of Dr. Uday Sinha and Dr. Ishita Bharadwaj. **Dr Uday Kumar Sinha**, additional professor at Institute of Human Behavior and Allied Sciences (IHBAS) discussed how the subject of psychology has evolved over time and the increasing traction that it is gaining amidst the youth. In accordance with the World Health Organisation's theme for 2018, 'YOUNG PEOPLE AND MENTAL HEALTH IN A CHANGING WORLD', Dr. Sinha talked about different methods that the young generation could employ to improve their mental health. He emphasised that mental health is much more than absence of mental illness; it involves working productively and fruitfully. He suggested the use of mindfulness, which is a state of being conscious or aware of the present moment, our thoughts and our feelings.

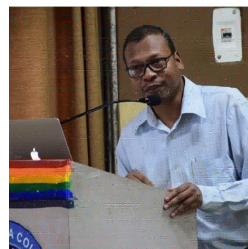


**Dr. Ishita Bharadwaj** (Faculty, Department of Psychology, North Campus, University of Delhi) shared her views about the struggles the youth must go through, on their path to finding their own identity and understanding themselves. She had the listeners deliberate upon a myriad of issues such as how to find empathy and help when faced with distressing situations, how to discern who is suffering and then convince them to seek help. She addressed many more concerns that hold significant importance in contemporary times. Both speakers concluded with an interactive Q and A session and helped students clarify and build upon their understanding.

An open mic session followed the opening ceremony. A welcome platform for students to freely express themselves, the open mic session served to astound the audience with the sheer eloquence of the speakers. Featuring touching and motivational poems in both Hindi and English, the session left a lasting impression on the full house present for this event.

The day concluded with a student panel discussion. The panel comprised of **Vidushee Srivastava, Akanksha Rajguru, Kanaka Shatadal, Rithwik Narayanan, Muskan Datta, Adya Jha, and Vijaylaxmi Samal**. The discussion was moderated by **Dr. Gari-ma Srivastava** and **Dr. R K Dwivedi**. In the panel discussion, students put forth their views on the topic 'Queer and Mental Health'. A variety of different perspectives were presented, enriching the listeners with exposure to a whole new dimension. The panelists discussed what the LGBT community is, the challenges it faces and has faced in the past. They ended the discussion by constructively pondering over ways to overcome those challenges and the means through which we can make an impact on a personal level.

The second day of the MHAW began with a lecture by **Dr. Eric Soreng** (Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology, University of Delhi). With a unique style of presentation, he discussed the archaic roots of mental health, especially its presence in mythology. He shed light on how various symbols popular in the medical community are derived from mythology, such as the Staff of Hermes and the Rod of Asclepius. He also talked about complexes and went on to contrast the Freudian and Jungian perspectives (see pg. 44 for complete article).



The intriguing talk was followed by an introduction to dance and movement therapy by **Dr. Tanvi Bajaj** (Laban Movement Analyst, Educator & dance therapy trainer). Beginning with a fascinating and enjoyable practical session, she went on to explain the basics of dance and movement therapy. A part of expressive arts therapy, it puts to use, the connection between mind and body to help people. This form of therapy probes to be useful for reducing stress and in addition, it has also proven effective in treating people with physical problems such as Parkinson's disease. (see pg. 46 for complete article).

Day 2 concluded with a screening of the movie 'Inside Out'. Relaying true messages far beyond what is generally associated with the idea of animated films, it showed how situations are not inherently positive or negative, but in fact are directly based on individuals and their way of perceiving what they see or experience. Most importantly, it stressed that happiness and sadness are interdependent. They are two sides of the same coin and sometimes it is completely alright to be sad as long as we know how to come out of the sad phase and get on with life.



The last day of the MHAW'18 began with a lecture by **Dr. Jitendra Nagpal** (Psychiatrist at Moolchand Hospital) in which he walked us through the education system and mental health. He discussed the various school boards and how the education system has evolved over time. He also talked about the importance of integrating mental health into the education system and spreading health awareness early in school life. He talked about the case of students committing suicide during examinations as well aggression, depression and hostility among the youth. The lecture included a dialogue on child rights and the legislative framework surrounding it.

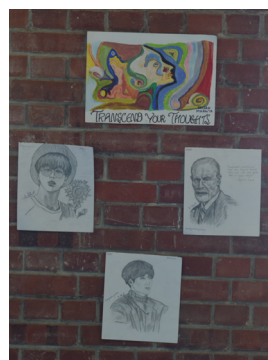


After this, **Dr. Neetu Sarin** (Assistant Professor



at Ambedkar University, Delhi) conducted an interactive workshop highlighting the role of listening in mental health as well as underlining the aspects that make one a good listener. She talked about implicit content of speech and internal objects. Her insights regarding people's manifestations of their innate desire to destroy were particularly enlightening (see pg. 50 for complete article).

In the closing ceremony, Dr. Dwivedi gave a speech summarising the events that were organised during Mental Health Awareness Week. The ceremony was graced by the Principal, Dr. Manoj Sinha, who imparted words of appreciation and encouragement to all those who worked towards making the entire event a success.

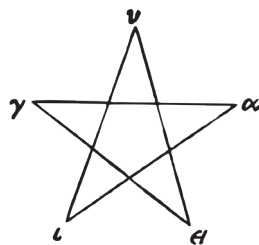


## CURA ANIMARUM

### Extension of the talk by Dr. Eric Soreng (MHAW '18)

The second day of the mental health awareness week began with Dr. Eric Soreng's illuminative talk on "Cura Animarum", translating to, 'Care and Welfare of souls'. An assistant in the department of Psychology in North Campus, he is one of the few practising analytic psychologist. He started by greeting his audience with a Greek word "Hugieia" (health) often used among the Pythagoreans. Hygieia, as he enlightened us, is the goddess of good health, hygiene and sanitation. Her Roman equivalents were goddess Valetudo and Goddess Salus.

He also talked about Greek god Asclepius, father of goddess Hygieia and God of medicine, healing and rejuvenation. The rod of Asclepius, a snake-entwined staff, remains a symbol of medicine today. This symbol is more than 400 b.c old. A number of organizations and services use the rod of Asclepius as their logo, or part of their logo, the most well-known being the "World Health Organisation".



He went on to say that farming and medicine are two fields that will still emerge after the world ends because these have relations to various deities and gods do not die, so why would they perish.

Another symbol he talked about was "Katushis" (two serpents). There are actually two versions of the symbol. The winged version is known as a caduceus, and the stick is actually a staff that was carried by the Olympian god Hermes. In Greek mythology, Hermes was a messenger between the gods and humans (which explains the wings) and a guide to the underworld (which explains the staff). Hermes was also the patron of travelers, which makes his connection to medicine appropriate because, in the olden days, doctors had to travel great distances by foot in order to visit their patients. In one version of Hermes' myth, he is given the staff by Apollo, the god of healing. In another version, he receives the staff from Zeus, the king of the gods, and it is entwined with two white ribbons. The ribbons were later replaced by serpents, as one story tells that Hermes used the stick to separate two fighting snakes, who then coiled around his staff and remained there in balanced harmony.

After delving into the world of ancient symbols, which was quite captivating, Dr. Soreng began to discuss about schools of Carl Jung. He particularly discussed the archetype of "Wounded Healer" created by Carl Jung, the idea behind it being an analyst is

compelled to treat patients because the analyst himself is "wounded". This term derives from the legend of Asclepius who in recognition of his own wounds established a sanctuary where others could be healed of their 'wounds'. Those seeking to be cured went through a process called incubation. First, they had a cleansing bath, thought to have a purifying effect on the soul as well as the body. Uncontaminated by the body, the soul was free to commune with the gods. The incumbents lay on a couch and went to sleep. If they were lucky, they had a healing dream.

According to Carl Jung, complexes which are psychic fragments that split off due to traumatic influences, are bipolar in nature. They interfere with our day to day functioning and cause disruptions in our memories. According to Dr. Soreng, the reason why Jung worked with dreams was because in them lay the roots of behavioural patterns and archetypes (according to Jung, a bringer of protection and salvation). Finally, Dr. Soreng ended his interesting lecture with a "Hurray", a cheerful expression with origins in Mongolia which Europeans believed to be a shout of encouragement.



He ended with a thought-provoking line that was widely represented by medicinal myths :-

**"Just like a snake shakes off skin and renews itself,  
same goes for us during sickness"**

**- Suyashvi Singha (III<sup>rd</sup> Year)**



## **MOVEMENT THERAPY**

### **Extension of the session by Dr. Tanvi Bajaj (MHAW '18)**

It is a well-known fact that walking, dancing, stretching, or any other kind of movement is good for the mind and the body. The body because, it transports oxygen and other nutrients to different parts, gives you muscle strength and endurance. The mind because, the same endorphins that make you feel better when moving, also help you concentrate and sleep better, and can help you become more amenable when faced with the mental or emotional challenges in life. We have all heard of or read about various conventional therapies like psychoanalytic therapy, behaviour therapy, humanistic therapy and cognitive-behaviour therapy. With psychology amalgamating with different fields and disciplines, it is no surprise that it will keep burgeoning new forms of therapies now and then. Some of the recent forms are Emotion-Focused Therapy (EFT), Play Therapy, Drama Therapy, Music Therapy and Dance/Movement Therapy (DMT). Although all forms are nonetheless important, we focus on Dance/Movement Therapy in this article.

On October 4th, 2018, the second day of the Mental Health Awareness Week hosted by the Psychology department of Aryabhatta College, Ms. Tanvi Bajaj, the founder-director of Rasikaa - a centre for movement analysis & dance therapy, conducted a remedying session on dance movement therapy. She is a Laban movement analyst and dance therapy practitioner from New Delhi, with 8 years of experience working with children and adults in schools, corporates and clinical settings. Apart from conducting the session, she concluded with a brief Q-and-A round which focused on questions like, do you need to be a dancer to practice DMT? What is the prevalence of DMT in India? or, Can it be used to treat every disorder?



We performed a couple of exercises and tasks guided by Ms. Bajaj which were centred around the idea of movement. One of them, I recall, was how we had to walk around the room without stumbling into anyone else while a song played in the background. To maintain the sanctity of the space, we were advised not to talk for any of the activities. Then, as Ms. Bajaj would clap and the music shut down, we had to face the nearest person around us to partner up for a task. For the first few minutes, one person would lead and perform a movement which the other person has to copy. Then, the roles would switch but the idea would remain the same. This is called

mirroring. It can help establish rapport amongst people and empathy in an individual. As everyone sashayed around the room, there were smiles on everyone's faces and there was a tranquil vibe in the room that didn't go unnoticed. Personally, I had a good laugh making my partner, who loathes exercising, do a few stretches and jumps. '

Another activity worth mentioning was how we were asked to walk around the room and stop to do the same action that someone around us was performing. Anyone could start with a step and slowly and gradually, everyone in the room would be performing the same step as someone else. The idea behind this was to check how group conformity affects us. We are social beings and want to fit into groups so naturally, group conformity does take place, and it takes place very quickly. Within a mere minute, everyone in the room was doing a step that only one person started. This activity also boosts confidence levels. To start something that no one else is doing and to think everyone will be doing it after you do it, portrays the power for initiation.



Although it is a recent development in India, DMT has been used in various experiments around the globe for a long time. Gunning and Holmes (1973) developed a program of dance therapy for use in modifying a variety of irregular and disordered body-movement patterns common to psychotic children. They reported improvement in motor performance. Thus, DMT has been successful in itself quite tremendously. An additional interesting descriptive study endorsed DMT for abused children who misjudge their kinespheres, or personal space (Goodill, 1987). Goodill found that DMT can help these children “exercise control over that space, [and] regain a sense of control and ownership of their own bodies”.

But is DMT only for the psychologically ill? Unsurprisingly, DMT appears to have therapeutic value for the healthy person too. A number of quantitative studies have reported change in psychological variables such as body attitude, self acceptance, and integration of movement. Dosamantes-Alperton and Merrill (1980) examined growth effects promoted by experiential movement psychotherapy, a therapeutic approach integrating felt-movement, imagery, and thought through a single unified process. Also called “movement psychotherapy”, there is no single fixed type of movement style used within this therapeutic exposure. Programs range from traditional dances like ballroom to more subtle forms of movement like yoga and stretching to calm the body.

- Titiksha Singh (II<sup>nd</sup> Year)

## **DANCE AND MOVEMENT THERAPY**

### **From the Perspective of an Attendee**

Today, college was a bit different. Wait, I'll tell you how...

It was probably midday when I entered that hall, probably not in the best of my moods. That hall was crowded enough to seem irksome to me. There was a new lady. "Maybe to give a speech or something" I assumed of course. But that wasn't the case. Till this date I believe she was no less than a magician for us. I'll come to that right about now.

She began with telling us to follow her instructions and concentrate. I did not get how she was gonna make all these average witted humans to work together. Honestly was kinda fun though We did do a lot many exercises.

"Stay in the crowd. You gotta start moving when I say and stop when I clap". I had the whole room to myself. I could go wherever I wanted to. She would tell me when to start and stop like a remote control, even the speed of my steps was mentioned. It was like all of us were puppets with free minds. Honestly, I've never felt so included in such a huge group before. Everybody was noticing everybody. Some were following, others were leading. You know how you get that lil' happy devilish feeling in your gut when you get attention? I think we all felt that then.

Next, I'll come to my favorite part. The mirror phase!

"you're each gonna get a partner. I'll play a song. It'll happen chance by chance..."

After just five minutes of that me and this unknown person were dancing stupid. The loophole was, I was mirroring whatever she was doing and she followed me next. However the last part of this was most interesting. We were supposed to mirror each other just by looking in the eyes, not actions. It's so weird how you don't know a person's name but know what they are gonna do next just by their facial expressions. She knew it all too. We were dancing, laughing and I almost forgot about my dad being mad at me earlier that day.

But that's the problem of the problems. They come back to you whenever you're most carefree.

But let's not talk about my petty little problems, shall we?



I'll write this out for you but you'll have to feel this in order to get it, so good luck!



So this magician (of sorts) did the most exhilarating thing. Obviously, she saved the best for last.

I'll write this out for you but you'll have to feel this in order to get it, so good luck!

“You’re a seed, very little, embedded into the ground. You can’t even move right now. But soon enough, you get sunshine and water. Very slowly you start growing. Notice you have a little stem now and it’s trying to reach out. Very strongly, you push through the ground from in between the soil. You’ve other seeds around you, struggling. You’re not alone so don’t worry. Soon enough, you start to grow flowers and leaves. Absorb all the sunlight and water in the air...”

Believe me, she didn’t stop until she made us grow into trees. And yes, most of us felt in on a personal level.

Imagine, since childhood, you’ve faced so much. People have nurtured you into what you are today. Then how come we are all so afraid? Afraid to face these little issues? A fight with a friend, a quarrel in the family or maybe a professional dispute. Deep down, we all know that we will not grow or move ahead if we do not face them. We need courage, for that we just have to ask and will probably find a happy mirror willing to help us out.

It’s simple really. If we want our roots to grow we just have to push through the ground. Our leaves can only reach the sky once we are capable enough to do this.

**- Anushka Madaan (II<sup>nd</sup> Year)**

## ART OF LISTENING

**Extension of the talk by Dr. Neetu Sarin (MHAW '18)**

**"Half of what I say, you do not understand.  
But I say it so that the other half reaches you."  
- Kahlil Gibran**

Imagine yourself performing in a room full of an audience that's asleep. Or an audience that's so excited, they won't stay still and give you all their attention. How well and how long can you go on performing for this audience then?

But an audience comprises a mixed variety of people and you cannot possibly expect undivided attention and their guaranteed interest in your performance. Now imagine yourself performing something very dear to you, something you want to be heard and understood and so you choose an audience of one. You choose an audience of one and you do that with hope and anticipation and excitement. And then, imagine the same reaction from this audience of one.

Dr. Neetu Sarin, Assistant Professor of Psychology at Ambedkar University, Delhi talked about the art of listening and why each of us should develop this skill. We don't need it only to become effective therapists or good counsellors. Listening skills is what we should use each day of our lives, in every conversation we have.

Listening is an act of faith. When the other person starts talking, opening up to you, he 'believes' you will listen more than 'expecting' you to. Listening is NOT a passive process. It's not music that you play whilst you are solving your math problems. Listening is a commitment. You need to give your entire attention and time to the person. Listening is hard work. You have so much on your mind. How do you keep it all aside and focus?

When we are listening to others, we realise we have so much to say, too. And often we don't realise how frequently we interrupt the other person and breaking their flow of speech. You may have conflicting views. You might not agree with what the person is saying. You might have an entirely contradictory view regarding a subject. And with a contradictory view that you strongly believe in, comes the feeling of urgency, of arguing, interrupting and putting forth your point. Interruptions might sometimes be unintentional. For example, a ringing cellphone. But more often than we realize, interruptions are intentional, almost automatic. When we choose to check a text message or answer a call amidst a conversation, that's suggesting *sotto voce*, "You can wait. What you need me to listen can wait." In this way, you are



indirectly making your priorities very clear to the other person. You, with your constant interruptions are pushing the person to drift away and letting a simple short conversation grow longer because you won't let it complete.

The effect? Slowly, as you keep interrupting and going back to the conversation after each interruption, the other person might lose his patience or feel hurt. If the person has come to you with hope of being heard and understood but goes back feeling unsatisfied, that's not the best you could do, playing the role of a listener. When you are listening and the information is too much for you or when you feel like talking/ interrupting, release the urge through PARAPHRASING what the other person's saying. This solves 2 purposes- 1) you clarify what the person says and it helps you understand better. 2) the person knows that you are focusing and you're interested.



While listening, appropriate eye contact is very important. A constant eye contact isn't appropriate and nor is a constantly wandering eye. If eye contact is the model, the model needs a designer and a good photographer. This is where nodding and body language come into the picture.

. Mirroring the other person's body language, leaning in, using gestures and facial expressions in sync with the content of what you hear. Ask questions. Asking questions means you are listening intently and that you are interested in what the person is saying. A question allows the person to think what he has said unwittingly. It also helps you read between the lines.

While asking questions, make sure to INVITE instead of ATTACK. When you attack, you do it because you want to make the other person feel small and show that you were right. "See, I told you so/ exactly what I thought/ I knew this was it". For example- you said you'll call at 8 and you didn't. Why? -ATTACK. instead use this approach- "Is everything okay? You didn't call.. did you forget?"

Here, you're showing the person that you believe in him. You are sure something came up and asking the same question this way shows concern and suggests that you understand. You aren't here to blame and argue. You are here to COMMUNICATE. To listen. To understand.

All this said and done, we need to keep in mind that sometimes when a person comes to you wanting you to listen, it's just that- wanting to be listened. Most people don't listen with the intent to understand. They listen to reply. Remember, they don't always come to you to get their opinions validated. Perhaps, they just want you to focus on their feelings. So instead of waiting to reply or provide your concerned advice, skip it- that's the better option most times.

An interesting point brought up by Dr. Sarin was, if you feel you are one of the people who others DO NOT want to listen to, question yourself if there are blocks in YOU that don't allow/encourage the other person to listen. For example, fear of being misunderstood and stating that repeatedly while you talking, always having a pessimistic approach or complaining undertone to what you are saying, etc.

In the end, if you ever ask yourself WHY you should listen at all, forget every other reason and do it for yourself. Listening to others reminds us of our good experiences. We are so busy with negativity, with aggressing, thinking of all that's bad- we forget the good parts. When we're listening to others, we connect, we smile at many incidents that we share or many experiences which we relate to. So let's listen to listen and smile and make this a better, more positive place.

Listen, there is only one rule for being a good talker- **listen.**

- Adya Jha (II<sup>nd</sup> Year)

## PSYGALA 1<sup>st</sup> March 2019

On 1st March 2019, the department of psychology at Aryabhata college, University of Delhi, organized a talk on 'Preventing substance abuse' as a part of their third department fest- PsyGala 2019. **Dr. Atul Ambekar**, the man of honor who, in a comprehensive yet lucid manner enlightened the students on the subject matter. He quite deftly differentiated between different kinds of drugs, elaborating on their addictive properties and along the way asked the students for their opinions on why 'addiction' was not a thing for every drug user! He lauded the prior knowledge of the students and further shared the different acts of using drugs. Dr. Ambekar shared with the students some useful statistics on the efficacy of the different treatment- intervention techniques

focusing on every aspect or stage of a person's life from prenatal to adulthood. The multi-dimensional veteran very easily infused humor in his presentation which made this session all the more interesting.



The department also hosted an open mic competition themed 'addiction'. The rules were simple, no hoots, no claps, the only finger snapping for parts that the audience liked. The event saw participants from different colleges and courses coming together to express their views, either in a poetic, lyrical or narrative form. They presented their views on addiction to intoxicants, how it affects the person and even opened up about their own struggles with addiction. Some were beautiful, some were witty and almost all were heart touching. The audience's reaction proved how relatable these bilingual performances were. Varied views, brought together by young minds, created a subtle yet powerful blend of words that broke through all stereotypes and reservations that each one sitting in the audience had. The prize was won by **Miss Vasundhara** from Hindu College.





Poster-making, another event hosted by the department, had students from different colleges present the theme 'Break Free' in an imaginative yet ingenious manner. The prize was proudly won by a student from our department, **Miss Ritika Verma**.

The variety of game and activity stalls gave students from other colleges and departments an opportunity

to try their luck. While most students contended themselves with trying out the couple/friend game others indulged in handmade cupcakes. The teachers also amused themselves by playing the 'Lucky-7' but unfortunately won nothing. The testing stall generated quite some curiosity amongst passers-by who were keen on knowing themselves better or coming to terms with their stress levels and personality types. There were two sets of questionnaires: The Big Five Personality and The Stress questionnaire. Students from the psychology department did the scoring and interpretation of the participants' responses and gave them quick results and analyses. the psychology students were able to identify different types of personality traits among different people. They also checked their stress levels and suggested how to manage them. Overall the stall was a huge success. It was fun and knowledgeable.





# Department of Psychology 2018-19



# Faculty, Dept. of Psychology 2018-19





# Batch of 2016 - 2019





# Batch of 2017 - 2020





# Batch of 2018 - 2021



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