

COGNISANCE

DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY NEWSLETTER | SNTD
UNIVERSITY, CHURCHGATE



PC: Pierre Schmidt

Editorial

By Kanika Shah & Rashna Elavia

Dear Readers,

We are immensely happy to bring to you the very first issue of *Cognisance*, the newly founded newsletter for the Department of Psychology, SNTD Churchgate. The name '*Cognisance*' signifies knowledge or awareness and this newsletter intends to be a vessel of propagation of the same.

Our vision for this newsletter was to bring together the knowledge of psychological theory and a direct practical-oriented approach to the field. We sought to introduce a student-driven project within the department that would allow for the creation of a sustained dialogue among the students and faculty outside of the classroom setup. This newsletter provides students a medium of expression and also provides a cohesive account of department activities. Readers, we also hope that *Cognisance* serves the larger purpose of dealing with mental health related stigma by creating awareness.

On behalf of team Cognisance, we would like to thank all the professors of the Psychology Department, SNTD Churchgate for their cooperation and support. We would also like to thank our team of editors and student contributors who helped us bring this edition together amidst the busy schedules and deadlines. Happy reading!

From the HOD's Desk

I am delighted that the MA psychology batch of 2017-19 at SNTD Churchgate has decided to bring out an online newsletter.

"If speaking makes us human, writing makes us civilized" wrote John Algea, an English language scholar and Emeritus professor. And there is enough research evidence to show that expressive writing is one of the many pathways to happiness!

I look forward to the first issue, and I am sure many of the students in the current batch have come forward and contributed pieces to it.

Consider me biased (of course I am) but I find absolutely everything associated with psychology and human and animal behaviour hugely interesting. Mumbai is the place to be for enthusiasts like us, since there is so much happening all around. In the past few months we have shared thoughts with local experts and International delegates, discussed fields as far ranging as Neuropsychology and Positive psychology, understood how to conduct elegant research and flawless experiments, develop tests and administer them.

Our Department has helped create and launch an online gamified tool in the Recruitment space of the corporate world, helped out persons facing distress and trauma, helped to contest stigma of mental illness, and partnered with Mumbai High Court to conduct pre-litigation counselling for clients on the Mumbai High Court premises. I look forward to more in the new academic year.

Meanwhile, all the very best to our newsletter *Cognisance* and for the forthcoming examinations!

Dr. Anuradha Sovani
Professor and Head
Department of Psychology,
SNTD WU, New Marine Lines



PC: iconicbestiary / Freepik

TEAM

EDITORS-IN-CHIEF

Rashna Elavia

Kanika Shah

EDITORS

Kruttika Agasty

Rhea Bajaj

Sailee Biwalkar

Jemima Jacob

Shruti Nair

Contributions By

Haveesha Buddhdev

Kalyani Deshmukh

Sneha D'silva

Abisha Fernandes

Maherra Khambaty

Ketaki Mhatre

Satori Pansare

Sucheta Ravichandran

Sneha Sebastian

Heena Sinha

Layouts

Jemima Jacob

Dr. Mrinalini Purandare: The Wind in our Sails

By Kruttika Agasty

When *Cognisance* was merely a nascent idea, our enthused team sought guidance in order to materialize this idea into a concrete project. We found guidance and support in Dr. Mrinalini Purandare, Professor in the Psychology Department, who has since retired. She helped us successfully shape this abstraction into a reality.

To honour Dr. Purandare's immense contribution to the SNDT Psychology Department and the field of Psychology in general, the team has put together a few choice anecdotes detailing the positive impact she has had on her students and colleagues.

I'd like to grab this opportunity to share my personal experience of interacting with Dr. Purandare. To start with an honest confession, my choice of enrolling into this Masters' Programme of Psychology was almost like prepping to be the Dexter and Detective Holmes of the real world, making a mark in a new city and dissolving into this new environment of SNDT Churchgate. With influenced dreams, confused thoughts and stumbling steps, I arrived at the department staff room and was greeted with Dr. Purandare's comforting presence.

As students, we seek connection with enthusiastic, friendly and funny professors. With Purandare ma'am, magic enters the classroom with a smile. Not only did she empathise with us, but also made our transition from sheepish number-fearing students (statistics class!) to students who can not only understand but also retain what we've been taught. Purandare Ma'am's candid conversations with the class ranging from the decorum of "appropriate dress codes" to her reminders of "mark your attendance", will always be treasured. Thank you, ma'am for always being there for us. We wish you all the best.

Moitry Saikia, a student from MA-I shares her fondness for Dr. Purandare, stating that the professor has always been a constant source of light during stressful times in the academic year. Moitry also reminisces by stating that "we all will remember your selfless efforts to guide us throughout our semester. You will be deeply missed during the classroom lectures. Have a happy farewell and we look forward to staying in contact with you."

Professor Anita Sanu from the Psychology Department, who has known Dr. Purandare for about 20 years, described their relationship as being a great learning experience. She describes Dr. Purandare as someone who is approachable and capable of explaining things very clearly. She has known Dr. Purandare to be fair and assertive in dealing with people. And like all of us, she



misses her friend and colleague and hopes that she visits the department as often as possible.

Lastly, a touching memoir from a friend and colleague, (who chooses to be anonymous).

The years were 1982 to 1984. We were unbelievably young, all of 21 years of age, immensely excited to be on the University campus for a Masters' program. The students I am writing this piece for are that age now, and I can see the same excitement reflected in their eyes as well. The difference is, we teachers try to do absolutely everything we can today to make the two year academic program super exciting for the youngsters. But those were relaxed times. Academics had not reached this competitive fever pitch of multiple campuses teaching the same courses, competing for good students, this race among academicians for promotions and accolades. The University campus was a sleepy place where the batch of students I belonged to were looked upon with curiosity and considered hyperactive by many, because we were excited about everything from making the most of hospital placements and using a projector style tachistoscope for internal assessment assignments, to designing Skinner box experiments on learning in white mice.

The faculty rooms used to be kind of sleepy too. There were brilliant minds occupying them, no doubt, but they came and went and we had to lie in wait to ensure that we met our professors when we wanted to, and often even had to remind them who we were. Libraries were actually book and journal collections, and not online resources, and believe me, there was much dust!

Amidst this languid chaos was this young lady who was fresh from Rajasthan and new to Mumbai, wore lovely tiny paisley printed silk sarees from that part of India, and had a wonderful grasp on experimental concepts. She was assisting some Departmental research and as typically happens in any work settings, where those who do the most work and do it well, get even more work to do, she was soon teaching our batch experimental practicals. Hers were among the few lectures that happened as per time table, and she used to have a pile of a hundred odd journals in her room to correct. (She still does).

We may be young, but we were quite a granny cloud, though not in the sense of SOLE exactly. We knew she was newly married and we saw she was going to have a baby and we constantly worried about how she would travel all the way to the University, more so since she was not used to Mumbai traffic.

Years flitted by and I was now on the faculty of the University and she was on the faculty of another University and we re-connected in one of those courses that teachers have to undergo regularly. They are supposed to keep one updated and refresh one, but in reality many are more of social meeting spots, and a time slot to catch up on pending work while “in class”.

I will never forget the wisdom she imparted to me in one of those sessions. I used to be continually heartbroken over some senior faculty members who would pick on the most promising students in class, merely because I used to see their spark and would try to go the extra mile to ensure they had more academic opportunities to appease their hunger for psychological knowledge and skills. She told me candidly to stop sharing my insights with others and to stop identifying these “bright sparks” for them. She asked me if others would be able to identify them on their own, if there was enough interaction happening in others’ classes for them to know which ones were these ‘Oliver Twist’s, shockingly and wordlessly ‘asking for more’. Lesson learned; heartbreak time over.

Cut to the present and we still work together. Which University one works for hardly matters as long as you have a bright and enthusiastic batch of young minds to interact with. Retirement is only a calendar notation and not a state of mind. It helps that her dad knew my grandparents way, way back pre- Independence...that and many other bonds we share and will continue to share over the years to come. She is a lady with great depth and immense resilience, a storehouse of knowledge and a friend for life. I wish her the best.



Do People Mind Their Minds?

A Mental Health Awareness Survey

By Sailee Biwalkar & Sucheta Ravichandran

Mental health has recently become an increasingly active point of discussion in mainstream media and on social media platforms. With the decreasing stigma around mental health, and increasing accessibility of such media, are we really looking at the true picture? Have the awareness levels of concepts such as mental disorders, therapy and mental health truly increased as much as the media makes us think? To find answers to these questions and to get a clearer picture of the ground reality, the current survey was conducted on the residents (aged 10-60 yrs.) of Mumbai city and its suburbs. The survey specifically tapped on the areas of mental health awareness, as well as the change observed in these awareness levels over the past few years.

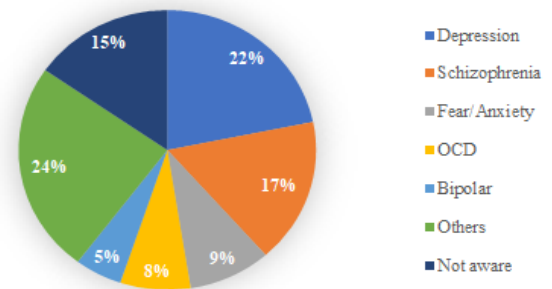


PC: Artist Daehyun Kim

Myth-busting can be seen as one of the first indicators of increasing awareness; we tapped into some popular myths about psychologists. Surprisingly, more than one third of the respondents still believed in the myth that “psychologists are able to read minds”, while another 40% remained unsure. Also, most of the older respondents were of the belief that the psychologist helps the client feel better mostly by talking to them, or listening to their problems and giving them a space to vent.

Thus, the survey reveals that psychoanalysis, as popularized by media, still continues to have a strong hold over people's beliefs regarding therapy. It seems as if awareness programs also need to be focused upon such aspects of therapy along with mental hygiene.

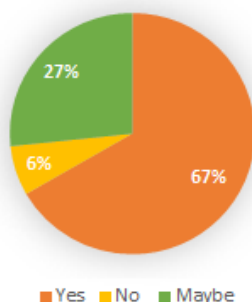
AWARENESS LEVELS OF MENTAL DISORDERS



It was seen that almost 90% of the respondents believed that there is a difference between ‘not being sad’ and ‘being happy’; a happy statistic pointing at the increasing awareness levels. However, when it comes to being sensitive to the symptoms of mental distress and awareness levels of mental disorders, the numbers dip lower. While some of the younger respondents were aware of disorders like amnesia; depression, anxiety and schizophrenia were common answers among the older respondents. These responses throw light on the increasing awareness levels among the urban masses, a view shared by many of the respondents. Astonishingly however, in a society focused on personality and personality development, awareness of the flip side, i.e. relating to personality disorders, eluded almost all of the respondents.

While there was no consensus among the respondents on the onset of this increase in the awareness levels of mental health, many viewed mainstream media and social media as primary contributors in bringing about this change. 70% of the respondents could observe an increase in the references to mental disorders in the movies. Thus highlighting how media is indeed a powerful tool that can be used in forthcoming awareness programs to promote mental health. Interestingly, though a good 80% of the respondents could observe a recent increase in the NGOs and helplines catering to mental health, and counselling centres, only about 25% of the population could name at least one. Although there is an increase in not only the number but also the visibility of various NGOs and help centres, these figures also throw light on how severely the memorability of the existing centres and helplines need to be increased. After all, of what use is a service if one doesn't remember it during times of need?

RECOMMENDING THERAPY TO A FRIEND/ RELATIVE IF NEED BE

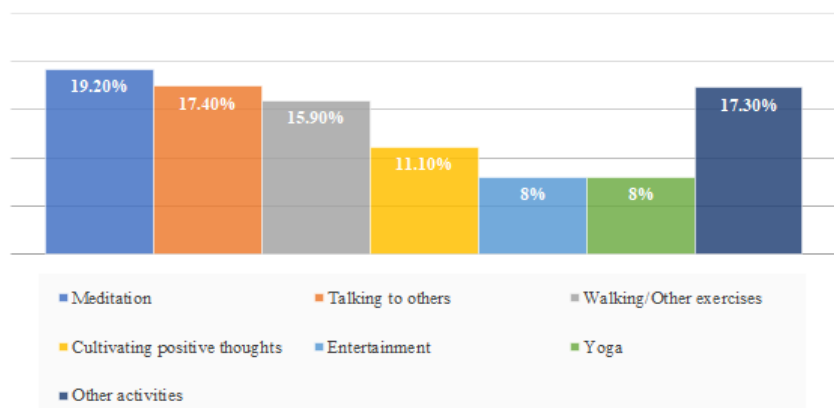


Thankfully, along with helping one be in touch with one's own mental health, these increasing levels of awareness have also successfully resulted in the formation of the concept of nurturing one's mental health. Nonetheless, the need to increase awareness on these grounds is irrefutable.

With the increasing awareness of general mental health, we wanted to check if it had any impact on people's sensitivity to their personal mental hygiene. Amazingly, three fourth of the respondents showed high levels of emotional awareness. Most of our respondents made active efforts to nurture their self by practicing yoga and meditation, while some indulged in physical exercise. Being forthcoming about their stresses was also an option resorted to by a few of the respondents. Not only that, more than 50% of respondents spoke about reaching out to their near and dear ones regarding their emotional problems. To take this further, a good 70% of the respondents were open to recommending seeking help of a counsellor/psychiatrist to their near and dear ones if the need arose, also reflecting on their own willingness to seek help.

...along with helping one be in touch with one's own mental health, these increasing levels of awareness have also successfully resulted in the formation of the concept of nurturing one's mental health.

ACTIVITIES ENGAGED IN TO STAY MENTALLY HEALTHY



A holistic presentation of the survey helped gather data on the current awareness levels of mental health in our society, on a general as well as personal level. We can note that there has been a significant increase in mental health awareness levels courtesy of increasing references to mental health and disorders in mainstream media and social media.

Changing the Statistics, One Intervention at a Time

By Maherra Khambaty & Abisha Fernandes

Maherra Khambaty and Abisha Fernandes report on the work of MA Psychology students who actively worked to spread awareness on suicide prevention on the SNDT campus.

With the world acknowledging September 10th as Suicide Prevention Day, the M.A. Psychology students, with the help of the Department of Psychology, took it upon themselves to translate their knowledge into action. They conducted a large scale sensitization program on the SNDT, Churchgate campus in September 2016 to identify students across various faculties who may be at an increased risk of contemplating suicide.

According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), over 800,000 people die every year due to suicide - making it the 3rd leading cause of death in the world for those aged 15-44 years. Additionally, research has consistently shown a strong link between suicide and depression - about 25% of the people who commit suicide have a mental illness of some kind.

By the end of September, the students had conducted the intervention with the Junior College students and across all the Senior College Commerce and Arts students with participation of over 400 students. In a country where someone who commits suicide is viewed as selfish and as an inconvenience, the primary aim of the intervention was to sensitise and decrease the stigma surrounding suicide. The Head of the Department of Psychology at SNDT WU Churchgate, Dr. Anuradha Sovani puts it best when she says “however empathetic one is, it is close to impossible to completely comprehend how a person must be feeling at the point where they make a final choice, that dying is actually better than living.”

A typical conduction began with an introduction to the risk factors, warning signs and the worrying global statistics about the disease. The MA students then continued to the crux of the intervention i.e. the administration of Beck's Depression Inventory, a psychometric tool for measuring the severity of depressive thoughts and feelings. The ninth question on the inventory, which deals with suicidal ideation, is one the MA students paid close attention to.

Conducting the intervention had hardly been easy with coordinating of schedules with necessary department staff and putting together a team of 35 students proficient in Hindi, Marathi and English. It was however, a rewarding those who participated. Vrinda, a first year MA Psychology student, had an interesting



PC: Artist Jean Jullien

experience which involved her clarifying details of the forms to students with hearing disabilities. She says that while explaining the questionnaire to them was challenging, it was immensely satisfying and made her more sensitive to the needs of those with hearing impairments.

Data from the first phase of the intervention showed reason to be concerned. 25.25% of students (102) were experiencing depressive symptoms and in addition to these students who may be at increased risk.

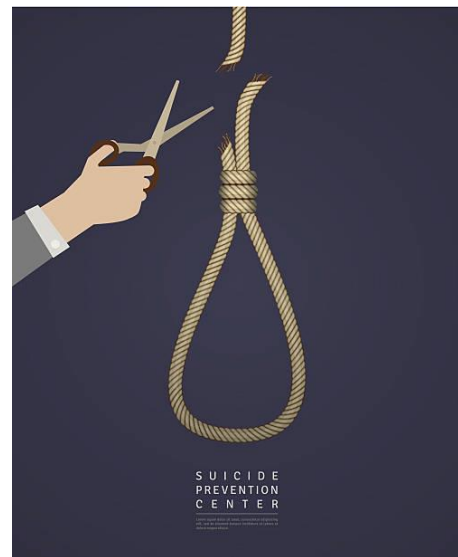
Another 13.37% (i.e. 54) students reported having suicidal thoughts. Through their efforts, it is clear to see that the MA students have been striving to create a culture of awareness and openness about mental health. As Dr. Mrinalini Purandare, President of Bombay Psychological Society and Professor of Psychology at SNDT WU Churchgate says, “Psycho-education projects go a long way in fostering an understanding of psychology as applied to real life situations and persons”.

Once the intervention was completed across all classes, the department conducted a group therapy session for those who were identified as at risk for suicide or depression. This was followed by a one to one session with those who requested for the same. Therapy was provided in the month of December. In this way, they completed a whole 360 degree process - from awareness, to identification, to providing therapy and help to enable them to bounce back.

While this is only a small step in raising awareness about mental health and suicide, it's important to begin somewhere. If you or anyone you know is struggling with some emotional concerns, don't hesitate to reach out.

Contact helplines Aasra on 02227546669 or Samaritans Mumbai on +91226464 3267/65653267/65653247.

*The Psychology department would like to thank the Vice Chancellor of the University, the Principal - Dr. B.B. Pradhan, Dr. Ashok Jain and Prof. Sushma from Commerce faculty and Dr. Nilima & Prof. Ashok from Junior College for their support.



PC: Getty Images

Early Detection and Mental Health Care in Schools

By Sneha D'silva



PC: Beatrice Cerocchi

The American Psychological Association describes mental health for children as having a complex interactive relationship with their physical health and ability to succeed in school. Children, like adults are susceptible to a range of mental disorders- depression, anxiety disorders and pervasive developmental disorders, to name a few.

The exact cause of mental disorders in children is not known. Research suggests that a combination of factors including heredity, biology, environmental stress and psychological trauma might be involved.

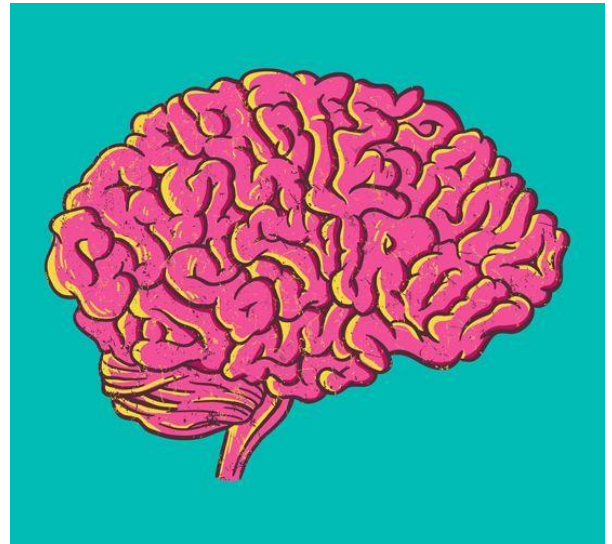
Evidence has shown that many adults who have mental disorders have shown early symptoms in childhood and youth. The earlier the treatment is provided, the more effective it can be in curbing more severe and long lasting problems as a child grows up. Early detection involves looking out for certain warning signs, making parents and teachers aware of what these signs are and to provide professional help. The National Institute of Mental Health (USA) has enlisted certain warning signs which include frequent tantrums and irritability and feeling anxious or worried. It is also equally important to teach children the importance of communication and sharing their feelings to parents, teachers or to someone whom they trust.

Schools can play a very important role in early detection and providing mental health care. School counselling in India is relatively a new profession with several developments still taking place. A review of literature was conducted by Kodad and Kazi (2014) on the *Emerging area of Counselling in Schools in India*. As stated in the paper, i) as per an article in TOI, Hyderabad, 'The secondary education department is expected to issue a government order making counselling centres manned by clinical psychologists mandatory in government and private schools.' ii) As per the article published by Gauree Malkarnekar published in The TOI, Goa, 'the career counselling needs of students will now be taken care of in their schools itself and training will be provided to one teacher each in all the government and government aided schools by the Goa education development corporation (GEDC).'

As per an article by Preetu Venugopalan Nair in TOI / Education, Kochi edition: 'As per a decision taken by the 'Board of Governors' of 'Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan', the secondary and senior secondary classes of all the Central Schools shall be equipped with an education counsellor. The counsellors will have the responsibility of dealing with low achieving, underachieving and high achieving students apart from counselling students to face examinations without fear and help to instill in the students skills related to study habits, time management, communication skills and stress management.

As per a principal of a Kendriya Vidyalaya, "Conducting class surveys to know the career choice of students and providing career guidance to students based on the results of an aptitude test and interest inventory is another major work that has been assigned to the counsellor." It shall also be the responsibility of the counsellors to organise career related conferences and exhibitions, programmes entitled "meet the professional" and to set up "career guidance corners" in schools. Group guidance activities shall be carried out at least once a week. As per the circular, individual counselling too may be taken up by the teachers as far as possible.

Schools in New Delhi are also taking an initiative to combat mental health disorders with the help of a happiness curriculum as announced by deputy chief minister and education minister Manish Sisodia on 8th February, 2018 (reported in the Hindu). He further added that the classes would be activity based in which student's progress will be assessed periodically using a happiness index and that there would be no formal tests.

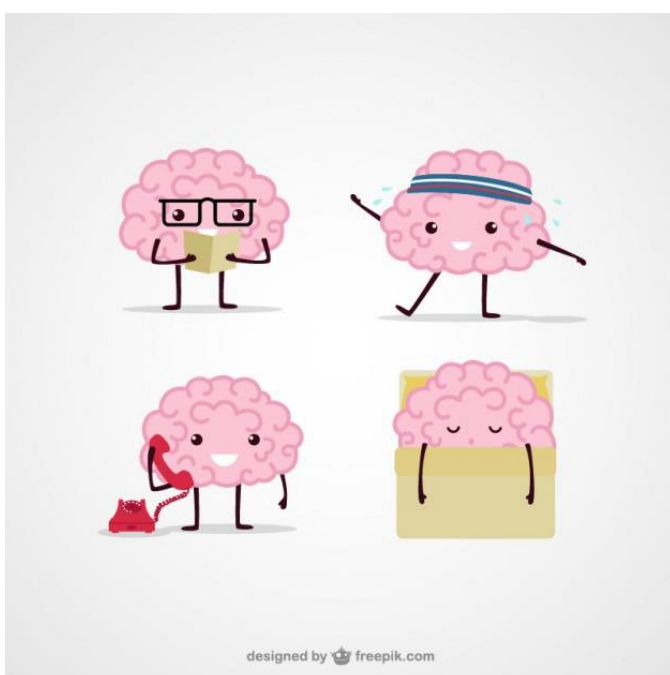


FAMILY INTERVENTIONS FOR BRAIN INJURY

By Ketaki Mhatre

Sir H.N. Reliance Hospital and Research centre organized a workshop for psychologists, therapists and rehab professionals on standardized family intervention for traumatic brain injury (TBI) survivors. This intervention has originally been developed by Dr. Juan Carlos Arango – Lasprilla and his colleagues for Spanish speaking Latin-American families. In the workshop, Dr. Arango – Lasprilla introduced the intervention which consists of 8 weekly, 90-minute sessions; he then proceeded elaborate on the topics covered in each of the sessions and the different techniques to be used by the counselor.

This first of its kind intervention has been designed for the TBI patients as well as their family members and caregivers. The sessions of the workshop over the two days then highlighted the program and its several techniques in order to improve individual and family functioning, interpersonal communication, family adaptability and cohesion, relationship stability and satisfaction, and interpersonal boundaries, as well as reduce the depression, anxiety, burden, conflict in the family and the primary caregivers. The workshop also consisted of few short sessions taken by resident doctors and therapists who provide an insight into the Indian and culture specific context of neuropsychological rehabilitation and the role of family involved. In conclusion, the workshop presented several insights into the rehabilitation process of TBI patients are also several culture and context specific factors that can be adapted or retailored in order to use the introduced intervention strategy in the Indian context.



Department Activities

Fieldwork

The seniors tell it like it is

Industrial Psychology

By Kalyani Deshmukh

Hello! Since the past few years, we've been studying about psychology and its various disciplines. The experience of field work however, is a new world of its own. As industrial psychology students, we not only get to learn about behaviour but also about business. It's important to know the organisation, its functioning, structure, values, visions and missions and its current position in the market. We would have never gauged that our knowledge of the revenue of a corporate organisation would in turn determine our ability to work in it.

This experience can be seen as a major and difficult shift from what we've known. Internships in the field of I/O psychology are offered with various Human Resources departments. A complex interplay of the knowledge of psychology and management shall aid in the process of skill-building and working your way up in the organisational setup.

Counselling Psychology

By Haveesha Buddhdev

"Those who know, do. Those that understand, teach."
— Aristotle

This is the exact difference I have experienced between a theory class and application of the same at the field. Though our job is not to teach, the process of counselling is surely an educational one. The field experience is all about learning how to transform theory into practicality, only to realize that not everything we read can be practiced effortlessly.

A classroom setting provides a sense of structure that can be followed very closely to gain an outcome. In the field however, there would not be a structure. The application of the learned structure from classroom has to be done mostly on the basis of your instinct at the field. This instinct is usually developed by observation of the environment around you at the field, the needs of your population and the demands from your supervisor. Of course, it takes time to build such skills!

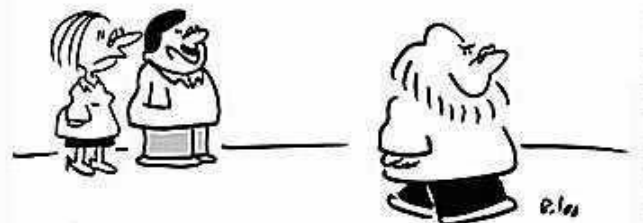
The experience of fieldwork can be likened to psychology's famous *nature versus nurture* debate. In our case, *nature* makes up the theoretical knowledge we imbibe while *nurture* can be seen as the learning from our environment. The theoretical knowledge serves as a strong predisposing factor to help one plan their work; but it is the environment (*nurture*) that is going to shape your practice.

All in all, one can only expect surprises from the internship setup.

Clinical Psychology

By Maherra Khambaty

When it comes to field work, you can never be fully prepared as you can never anticipate what might come next. I would suggest you to polish your soft skills as they will always help you on field. The coming year will teach you as well as test you so the best thing would be to keep a plain slate and take one day at a time, go with the flow. Working on knowing the basics of the regional languages will also help you as it will form an easy connect with your client as communication will be your key skill. The theories are also intriguing and will increase your curiosity about the subject more. It will be slightly overwhelming but a beautiful journey if you are truly excited about learning Psychology.



"He claims to be a Freudian,
but he's Jung at heart."

PC:www.CartoonStock.com

Campus to Career

By Jemima Jacob



Initiated by Dr. Anuradha Sovani, Head of the Psychology Department at SNTD WU Churchgate, the 'Campus to Career' is an annual feature of the Department of Psychology. It is a highly anticipated event, as it acquaints the final year students with all the opportunities available in the field. A few first year students who attended the event described the event as being versatile and introducing them to the real world. Among some of the speakers for the event were Dr. Dhaval Mody and Ms. Shraddha Kinger.

According to Ms. Neha Gupta, a first year student, the event was an important source of information for her as she felt she received clarity regarding the career she intends to pursue. Another student who was in attendance, Ms. Janvi Thakkar said the talks made her realise the importance of an interdisciplinary team in making an impact on a person's life.

LOVE AWAY

- Satori Pansare

*To empty arms
And half goodbye's
To nothing across
That meets the eyes
To unfulfilled dreams
And lost hopes
To the emptiness
Inside the soul
To all the promises
That were broken
To all the tears
That were shed unspoken*

*The sun will rise again tomorrow
It's not always going to be sorrow
There is a turn coming your way
You have you to love away*



PC: Dylan Glynn



There's a spark of greatness in you just waiting to be ignited...

The above picture was composed and shot by Sneha Sebastian of the Psychology MA-I class.

Book Review

By Rhea Bajaj

NORWEGIAN WOOD by HARUKI MURAKAMI

“No truth can cure the sorrow we feel from losing a loved one. No truth, no sincerity, no strength, no kindness can cure that sorrow. All we can do is see it through to the end and learn something from it, but what we learn will be no help in facing the next sorrow that comes to us without warning.”-Haruki Murakami

Norwegian Wood is a book written in 1987 by the Japanese author Haruki Murakami. The book begins when the protagonist Toru Watanabe hears the song Norwegian Wood by the Beatles thus taking him back to his college days, which were marked by the death of his best friend Kizuki as well as his subsequent romantic relationship with Naoko, a quiet, introspective and emotionally unstable girl who used to be Kizuki's girlfriend. It also follows Toru's relationship with two other women, Reiko and Midori as he navigates the beginning of adult life. The book is set in Japan between 1968 to 1970 and deals with the transition into adulthood and the stresses that come with it. It leaves a vivid picture in the reader's mind of the casualties of the system and the number of young adults committing suicide.

“On the other side of 20, you emerge from university (if you've been lucky enough to go there) and dive straight into full-time employment, maturity, responsibility, expectations and adulthood. Suddenly, things are all a lot more serious, more permanent, less experimental, or this is how it seems.” - Murakami

Norwegian Wood leaves you at a standstill in a way. Murakami paints a picture of society where either you have managed to navigate life into the normality of adulthood or you have failed to do so and are left in the abyss. Toru Watanabe falls somewhere in the middle of these two, almost as if his relationships with both the women Naoko and Midori are leading in opposite directions.

The overwhelming feel of reading “Norwegian Wood” is that of being in a dream-like world. Almost as if the characters exist in a moment suspended in time and will disappear any moment.

The book deals with love, depression, hopelessness, sexuality and an unshakable feeling of happiness being

something rare. Murakami combines all these topics in an unforgettable novel that is an absolute must read.

What if I've forgotten the most important thing? What if somewhere inside me there is a dark limbo where all the truly important memories are heaped and slowly turning into mud...the thought fills me with an almost unbearable sorrow.”- Murakami



PC: Danielle Gundry Monji

Music Recommendations

By Rhea Bajaj

Everyone has bad days, some people more often than others. College hours could be tiring you out or you have a test you are not prepared for; maybe you had a fight at home or with your best friend. Or maybe everything is going great but the Mumbai heat is making you irritable and the train or bus ride home seems too long to bear. What do you do? How do you relax and get pumped up for the next day that might be a repeat of exactly how stressful today was?

The answer is MUSIC!!! It can't solve your problems but it can definitely provide you with the support you need, while you figure life out.

So here is your playlist of feel good songs for any mood, any day and any weather. Happy listening!

- Tum Jab Paas by Prateek Kuhad
- Budapest by George Ezra
- Maahi Ve by A.R. Rahman
- I love you baby, I love you doll by Parekh and Singh
- Rubberband by Ikon
- Indian Summer by Jai Wolf
- Let it go by Idina Menzel (from Frozen)
- Dil Kyu Ye Mera Shor Kare (from Kite)
- Dimple by BTS
- Hero by Family of the Year
- Raat Raazi by Prateek Kuhad
- On Top of the World by Imagine Dragons
- Kabira (from Yeh Jawani Hai Deewani)
- Stay by Blackpink
- Fireflies by Owlcity
- Superheroes by The Script

Uncommon Interventions: Dialectic Behaviour Therapy

By Shruti Nair

When one ponders about Therapy or Interventional Strategies in the psychological field today, Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT), Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy (REBT), Systematic Desensitization etc. are some of the most prominent therapies and therapeutic techniques that spring to mind. This does not come as a surprise, as these therapies have proven to be effective and form the foundation of the psychotherapeutic interventions in the field. However, to not be confined to this framework, we shall discuss, a relatively unique therapeutic intervention - Dialectic Behavior Therapy (DBT)- which is not as commonly used but equally applicable .

Dialectic Behavior Therapy or DBT was developed in the late 1980's by psychology researcher Dr. Marsha Linehan to exclusively deal with Borderline Personality Disorder and chronically suicidal individuals. The need to create this intervention stemmed from her study of CBT in the problems of adult women with histories of chronic suicide attempts, suicidal ideation, urges to self-harm, and self-mutilation.

Her findings suggested that clients receiving CBT found the unrelenting focus on 'change' inherent to CBT, invalidating. Clients responded by withdrawing from treatment, becoming angry, or by vacillating between the two; resulting thus in a high dropout rate. In response to these key problems with standard CBT, Linehan and her research team made significant modifications to standard CBT. They added in new acceptance-based interventions, frequently referred to as *validation strategies*. The goal of DBT was to encourage the client to live a life worth living (thriving not surviving).

The term "dialectical" implies an integration of opposites. The primary dialectic within DBT is between the seemingly opposite strategies of "acceptance" and "change". These communicated to the clients that their thoughts, feelings, and behaviours were "normal" and acceptable, but were maladaptive and hence they could alter them to improve quality of life.

Individual therapy, skills training in groups, telephone crisis coaching and therapist consultation groups typically make up the modules of DBT administration. In order to help the client achieve the goals established during therapy, the process involves coaching the client in skills of:

- **Mindfulness:** skills aimed at focusing the mind on the present moment rather than worrying about the future or ruminating about the past,
- **Emotion Regulation:** where the client is taught how to become more aware of and recognize their emotions,
- **Interpersonal effectiveness:** which typically helps the client take decisions that work in their favour,
- **Distress Tolerance:** to teach the client to manage crises in a more effective way

DBT has recently seen immense recognition in recent years for several disorders apart from Borderline Personality Disorder such as eating disorders depression, self-harm and suicidal attempts. One of the reasons DBT is a preferred form of therapy is because of its solution-focused nature. The clients thus leave the therapeutic setup with skills to help them cope effectively with emotional and behavioural problems in the long run.

Mental Floss

By Shruti Nair

William Sweetser was the first to initiate the term “*mental hygiene*” in the mid-19th century, thus paving the way for the promotion of positive mental health routines that are synonymous with contemporary approaches as we now know them. The concept further gained momentum in the 20th century owing to historic events plaguing the very soul of people across the globe (WW-I, WW-II to name a few), which plunged the world into despair and gave birth to a whole new gamut of human suffering. There was a need to resurrect people’s well-being and happiness not only physically but also emotionally and mentally.

So, what is *mental hygiene*? To put it simply, mental hygiene is the practice of maintaining optimal mental health, devoid of mental illnesses, to the best of one’s capabilities. It refers not to an absolute or ideal state but to the best possible state of well-being insofar as circumstances are alterable. An uneasy, tormented mental state inundated with anxious, disturbing thoughts has direct and adverse effects on our body and results in psychosomatic disorders. An anxious thought could result in a lack of appetite/sleep thereby contributing to poor physical health.



Cultivating good mental hygiene helps us make good life choices, have healthy, productive relationships and to discover and nurture our potential to the best of our capabilities.

Nine nuggets of knowledge:

1. EAT.SLEEP.REST. *No, really.* Adequate amounts of all 3 are a direct path to optimal mental health.
2. Exercise. Some amount of physical exercise for a dedicated hour helps release endorphins (happy hormones!) which leave you feeling relaxed and fresh.
3. Keep an hour or half in the span of a day to spend time with yourself doing something that you like - reading, painting, dancing etc. Think of it as a digital detox.
4. Be aware of your emotions. Acknowledge when you feel a negative emotion (sadness, anger, etc.). Understand and accept this emotion. Absorb the positive emotions that you feel.
5. Stop comparing yourself to others.
6. Acknowledge your flaws. Make them your own.
7. Smile. Laugh. The world will seem a little better.
8. Good vibes only! Give and you shall receive.
9. Communicate. Ruminating and suppressing things results in negative thoughts. Express yourself.

We'd like to hear from you! For any comments, queries or feedback, contact us:

psychsndtnewsletter@gmail.com