With Love,

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Cotton candy skies, the scent of a candle that reminds you of the fresh ocean breeze, a mixed tape made specially for you and the sound of birds at 5 am reminding us of the beautiful world that’s out there waiting for us with open arms.

Did that make you feel all warm and tingly? We hope so, because happiness should be felt as easily and often as that. It, however, isn’t always that simple though, is it? Some of us don’t have it that easy and that’s alright. That’s what we’re here to remind you, that it’s alright for things to not be perfect. It’s alright to not always feel a 100%. Honestly, it’d be a little strange if someone was always feeling amazing.

Being upset, crying, laughing, smiling- they’re all part of being human. Sometimes we forget that even the not so positive things are normal. That’s probably because we’ve always been told to ‘wipe our tears’ or ‘calm down’ when we do allow ourselves to experience less positive emotions. We’ve been taught to lock them in a little safe that can only be opened when we’re alone, keeping them all hidden from the rest of the world.

That isn’t what we’re here to tell you to do. In fact, we aren’t here to tell you to do anything. What we’re here to do is discuss all things deemed abnormal or private. We’re here to provide you with a place where you can read about things you may be experiencing or to even talk about those things, but only if you want to. No matter how difficult it may be, talking always helps.

Sometimes we forget that, or can’t because we feel as though nobody would understand. There’s always going to be someone who’ll understand, you just have to find them. And until you do, we’re here. You’ll not alone, and we won’t ever let you be. It’s hard to be at war with your mind and it’s even more difficult to accept that you are. It takes time. If you’ve done tha today, or any other day, we’re proud of you and you should be too. The stigma towards mental health often makes us feel isolated, ashamed or discriminated against. You feel as though you’re a victim, even when you aren’t. We’re here to help you forget about the criticisms and judgement. To help you and those around you understand that this part of you isn’t all there is to you, only a little part of your beautiful self.

There’s so much more to you than just your mental state. The human brain is a wonder. Through folds of tissues and pulses of electricity, it lets us perceive, attempt to understand and shape the world around us. The brain is key to human health, and because of that it and its malfunctions should be a priority, separated from stigma and treated at par with any physical problems we may face. And that’s what we want to do. Why shouldn’t we? Why prioritise your body over mind when the latter matter equally?

The answer, in part, can be a lack of understanding and sometimes fear. Both are reflected in the way we routinely belittle mental health. You don’t think so? Think about how many times you’ve heard “I literally had a panic attack,” “she’s so bipolar,” or “he’s a little OCD.” It’s a lot, right? Most people don’t give these phrases a second thought, but for those struggling, it does mean a lot. There’s no compassion related to their problems. They get the message that they have to fight their battle in silence because nobody understands. This happens, and more so for those who are our age - teens and tweens- who are often dealing with emerging mental health issues.

What mental health needs is more sunlight, more candour, more unashamed and non-judgemental conversations. That’s what we want to do here in our department. Provide that safe space for anyone and everyone who needs it, so that we can all work together to be healthy. Work together to get rid of this terrible stigma for something so important. Work together to make sure that we’re all there for each other, regardless of our state of mind. We hope our efforts bear some fruit and that you, after reading this, feel that you’re more at home (even if it is just a little bit). We aren’t here to preach. We’re here to become your voice; that is, if you let us.