

There is no shame in taking care of your mental health

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When we hear the term madman, we think of a bald man with dirty green clothes chained with irons, from the Kilpauk Hospital. **We see the mental illness in terms of distance, ignorance, guilt, fear, anger. But this isn't the mental illness.**

The author says **"Mental illness includes our emotional, psychological and social well-being"**. Personally, people find a profound sense of shame in dealing with mental illness. **We are neither processing the problem nor expressing them. We deal with the problem, like a business case issue.**

A common Indian man feels **suffocation in this rigid architecture of society and its practices. He feels the weight of stigma and is silenced in solitude.** In such a case, when we ask him to take advice from a mental health professor, one, he can violently shake his head to protest, or, can think of us being a mental!

The author adds, "The general causes of mental illness can be death/loss of loved ones, war, a serious failure or an anxiety attack. Sometimes, **our ignorance of mental illness can eviscerate all empathy**, and we do fear of being the madman."

In India, WHO estimates that the burden of mental health problems is of the tune of 2,443 DALYs* per 100,000 population, and the age-adjusted suicide rate per 100,000 population is 21.1. It is estimated that the mental health workforce in India (per 100,000 population) includes psychiatrists (0.3), nurses (0.12), psychologists (0.07) and social workers (0.07).

To conclude, the author adds, **“Our trauma won’t taint our strength. Stop suffering in silence.”** He asks us to learn to see mental illness as same as physical illness. When we go to our mom with tuberculosis or chickenpox, she would run to the nearby physician. But when it comes to mental illness, why can’t we open our disturbance?

The society needs to stop stigmatizing the disease, and traumatizing the diseased. The author further asks us to be vulnerable and embrace our disease, to get over it. **Being honest with our emotions does not makes us weak. It just makes us more human.**

To end with the start, the author asks us to think of him, instead of a typical madman when we hear out “madman”.

*The disability-adjusted life year (DALY) is a measure of overall disease burden, expressed as the number of years lost due to ill-health