**"What no one talks about in Mental health"**

When people talk about mental health, all we can think of is depression. Depression is like the common cold of all mental disorders. Repeatedly, people get sucked in by the clutches of depression. It haunts the best of us for years, while only a few manage to win over it. Depression makes us think that we aren't good enough for the world.

But, no one talks about the plethora of other mental issues and disorders that we, be it as teens or adults, go through. This dismisses the other issues that we experience, neglecting the very fact that we might be facing issues to begin with. Certainly, there are mental issues that need medical intervention. But, there is another kind, the kind that no one talks about, the kind that gets swept under the rug.

These include issues that manifest themselves as a symptom of an underlying, much bigger issue. These are caused by some sort of trauma (rejection, loss of a loved one, childhood issues) or by negative beliefs about ourselves, etc.

Anxiety is one of the things we face on a daily basis. It manifests as being afraid of normal things or overthinking, or might show up when we eat in front of someone else. What if the other person sees me eat? What if they hear me chewing? What if they can hear the growl coming from the pits of my stomach? Or what if I spill something over myself, and they see that? Or, think about talking to a stranger: How do I talk to a stranger? Am I being too clingy? Creepy, maybe? What if they are in a hurry, and I’m just taking up their time? It, consequently, affects our ability to perform normal day-to-day tasks.

Or think about how we are influenced by the media and the culture of six pack abs and an hourglass figure. This affects how we view ourselves, disabling us from loving and accepting ourselves the way we are, with the numerous scars, stretch marks, blemishes that all of us fear to display. Skinny people always want to get fatter, while the chubbier ones starve and exercise beyond normal to get into the ‘perfect shape’. Some start finding relief in eating, out of boredom or for that little hit of dopamine. We start viewing a perfect body as the panacea for our life problems.

Unable to gain control of our deteriorating lives, we stop seeing ourselves in a positive way. This impedes our ongoing journey towards self-love and increasing self-esteem. Eventually, it feels like we lack the basic shelving for the trophies that we get in the form of appreciation, love and appraisal from others. Unable to grieve and vent ourselves out during downfalls, we build walls and deep scars mount upon our carcass. We lash out time and again emotionally, or stop trusting the human race altogether as a result.

This is where people can change. Certainly, the world isn't as harsh a place as we imagine it to be. Not everyone is out there to judge or humiliate us. Only by allowing ourselves to take the necessary risks like sharing, writing, etc., can we become better. Only by seeking help, can we come out of this dark place. You are not alone, and the issues you face mentally, psychologically, don't need to be kept under wraps.

***-Vignesh Iyer***