

# ... Let's talk about Mental Health ✕

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## Understanding Mental Health



The World Health Organization (WHO) defines mental health as “a state of well-being in which the individual realizes their own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community”.

### WHAT EXACTLY IS IT?

Mental health must be viewed as an integral part of holistic health and should not be given any less importance than our physical health. To understand this better, think about how you visit the general physician when you catch a cold or are shivering with a fever due to bad weather, allergies, wrong choice of food, etc.

Similarly, your mental health, too, can get affected by internal and external factors that may not be in your control, leading to your experiencing mental distress.

This distress, if not paid attention to or treated for a long time, can interfere with your daily functioning and negatively impact your overall well-being - similar to a physical condition.

**Everyone has mental health but not everyone has mental health issues**

**REMEMBER!**

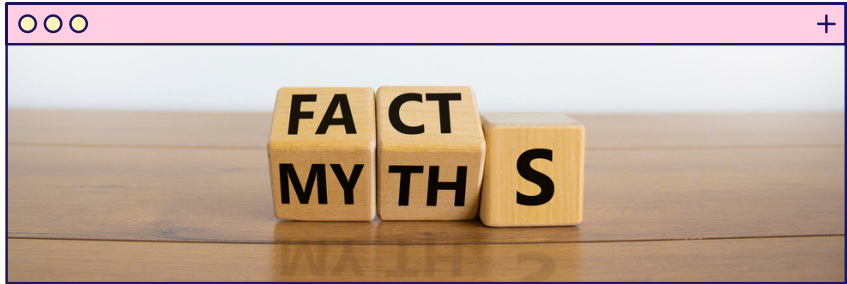
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**Busted!**

**DEBUNKING COMMON MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH**



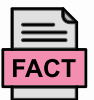
Mental Health issues are not real



Mental health issues are real as physical health issues

Mental health issues are rare and won't affect me

According to research, 1 in every 4 Indians face mental health issues once in their lifetime and anyone can face them, irrespective of their age, gender, social status, race, ethnic background, culture, etc.



Children do not experience mental health issues



Even very young children may experience mental health problems, mainly due to the immense pressure from family, school, and peers in addition to other internal and external factors.

Research estimates that over 50% of all mental health disorders are discernable before the age of 14, meaning a child could be diagnosed well before puberty

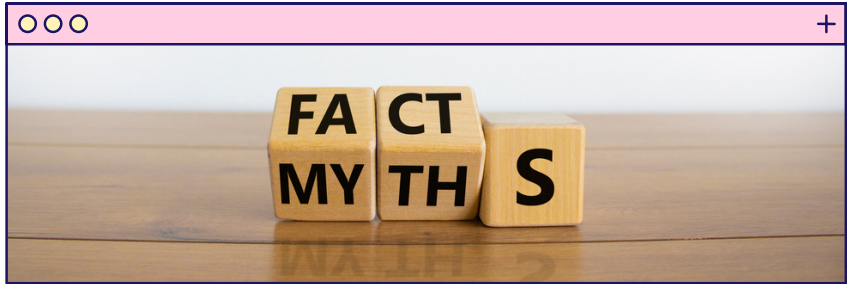
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**DEBUNKING COMMON MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH**



People with a mental health condition are violent and dangerous  
Individuals with mental health conditions are no more likely to be violent than anyone else. In fact, they're far more likely to be the victim than the perpetrator of violent crimes

Overcoming mental conditions is just a matter of willpower  
Uncontrollable factors like trauma, genetics, injury, and brain chemistry are greater contributors to mental health issues than mindset. Therapy, medication, and other psychological interventions are more effective than suppressing emotions through willpower



## WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO BUST THE MYTHS?

***"Dispelling myths associated with mental health can help break the existing stigma and create a culture that encourages people of any age to seek support when they need it."***  
**-UNICEF**

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## Time to engage

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# MENTAL HEALTH BINGO!

Take up the challenge of covering all the squares by the end of the month and reward yourself with something that you love the most on crossing all the boxes!

TAKE A 30 MIN WALK OUTDOORS	PERFORM A RANDOM ACT OF KINDNESS	LIST 10 THINGS YOU ARE GRATEFUL FOR
WRITE A KIND LETTER TO YOUR YOUNGER SELF	GO JUNK-FREE THREE DAYS IN A ROW	JOURNAL AT LEAST FOR A WEEK
MAKE A MOOD BOOSTING SONG PLAYLIST	READ A MENTAL HEALTH BLOG	TICK OFF AT LEAST 2 PERSONAL DEADLINES

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What are your strengths as an individual?

What is one unhealthy habit you can realistically quit for better mental health?

What is one healthy habit you can develop to improve your mental health?

How can you contribute towards making your community mental health friendly?

What is something you would like to let go of?

## Food for thought

**WHAT IS SELF-REFLECTION?**

Self-reflection is the process of getting to know yourself internally. It means getting comfortable with understanding the workings of your thoughts, wants, desires, and mind overall.

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## FAQs

**IF YOU'VE BEEN WONDERING ABOUT THESE, YOU'RE NOT THE ONLY ONE**

**What are some of the signs/indicators of mental distress? How does one know that they are experiencing mental distress?**

In basic layman's language, whenever you see yourself or someone struggling to manage their daily functioning and has a shift in behavior (increased or decreased), it might be a sign to reach out for help.

(It is important to note the intensity and frequency of the distress)

**Whom should I first reach out to if I feel I'm mentally and/or emotionally distressed?**

To begin with, you can start talking to anyone who is your trusted adult and can listen to you without any judgement. For seeking professional help, it is important to have a thorough understanding of your therapist's educational qualifications and do a background check while choosing one.

**What is the average cost of therapy in India?**

It varies from person to person, location of practice, etc. It may also vary when the therapist provides a **sliding scale**.

Usually, it costs between Rs. 500 to 3,000.

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## FAQs

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### **Are psychiatric medications addictive in nature?**

Medications have different purposes and prescription is given under the Psychiatrist's guidance and supervision. Each medication has its own course and is given for specific concerns, hence, it is important for us to openly speak to our Psychiatrist about the same.

### **Does mental health treatment only include taking medications?**

No, therapy and other psychological interventions such as support groups, expressive art work, etc. are also involved - depending on the nature of the mental health problem and individual preferences. In some cases, a combination of both does wonders for people.

### **When is the best time to see a therapist?**

There is no right or wrong time to reach out for professional help. However, any time is a good time. It would be great to visit a therapist for half-yearly/annual check-ups, similar to your physical check-ups



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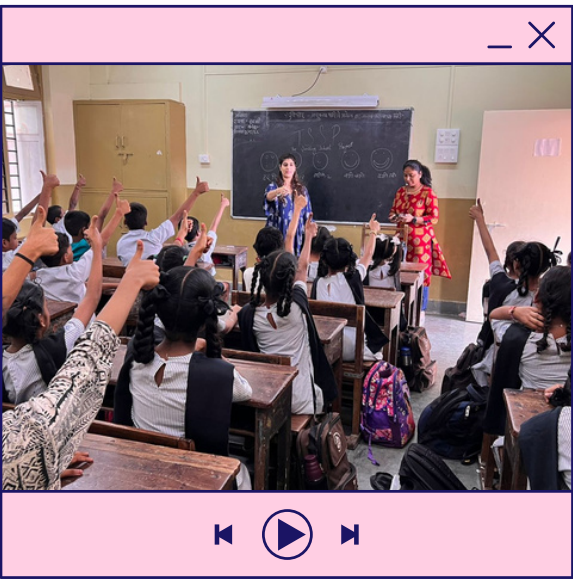
## Our contribution

### MENTAL HEALTH INITIATIVES AT PROJECT MUMBAI

The mental health team believes that working towards the betterment of a child's emotional well-being is an elementary way to enhance their physical and mental health, relationships, decision-making, academics, and life satisfaction. School is often viewed as their second home and for many children, it may be their first. Keeping this in mind, we have developed an extensive mental health initiative called The Smiling Schools Project (TSSP) with the aim of making every adolescent emotionally stronger.



**THE SMILING SCHOOLS PROJECT (TSSP)**



This Project runs across 150 out of 1200 municipal schools of MCGM, Mumbai, and all 125 schools under TMC, Thane. Given the crucial planning and large-scale implementation, we have collaborated with a number of experienced mental health professionals turned facilitators specialized in various areas of counseling and recognized organizations such as Artscape and the Institute for Exceptional Children (IEC) to meet the shared vision.



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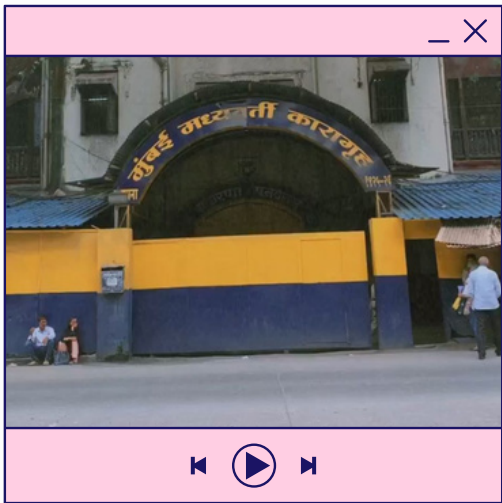
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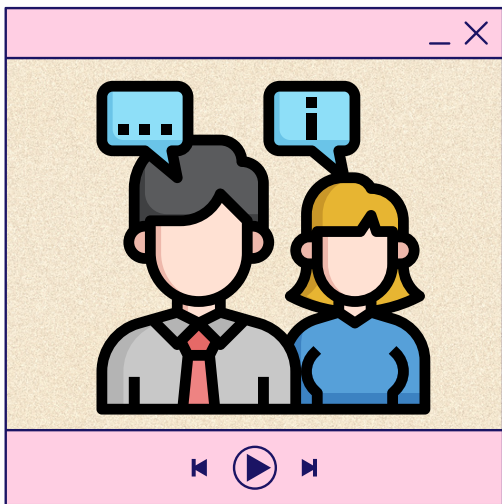
## Our contribution

### MENTAL HEALTH INITIATIVES AT PROJECT MUMBAI

Nayi Disha is our prison counselling initiative in partnership with District Central Prison, Mumbai to provide psychological support to prison inmates and staff of the facility. This is a one-of-a-kind initiative that extends emotional care to people in prison facilities. The purpose of this project is to provide emotionally safe places to the inmates that might help them reflect and process their thoughts and emotions. We take a two-pronged approach where we dedicate simultaneous efforts to create awareness and provide support through individual and group counseling sessions.



**NAYI DISHA:  
PRISON COUNSELLING**



**SAMVAAD:  
MENTAL HEALTH HELPLINE**

Our toll-free mental health helpline number aims to provide emotional support to the people of Maharashtra. This helpline is active for twelve hours a day i.e. 8 am to 8 pm seven days a week and is handled by professional and trained counselors.

Our Mental Health Toll Free Helpline:  
**1800-102-4040**

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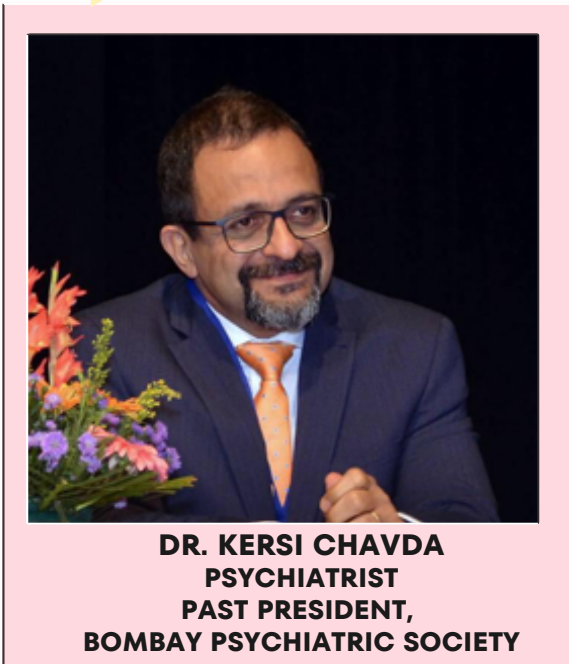
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## Expert's dialogue

*"Whether we like it or not, there is a huge population that needs help for mental illness. There is an equally huge lacunae in terms of those who ask for help. Starting from childhood, and all the way up to geriatrics, there is an increasing awareness of psychiatric illness that are being reported .. and that need treatment. There is still a stigmatization that is seen relating to mental health.. and a feeling of "weakness" or "bringing it into oneself"... though there is certainly a change that is being seen here.*

*What should the Mumbaikar do?*

*They need to be aware of signs and symptoms associated with mental illness. They need to be aware that the earlier one seeks help, the more likely it is to be treated effectively and completely. They need to meet a mental health professional, preferably a psychiatrist.. for a proper evaluation, and follow whatever has been advised, for as long as it is recommended. Only then will there be actual good overall health in the person... and only then can India be the superpower that it aspires to be!"*



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## Meet our team

Neha is a counselling psychologist and a dance movement therapy practitioner. She has been working in the field of Mental health as a practitioner for the last 8 years. Her aim is to make and create a mental health friendly space where everyone can share their unique and remarkable stories which have shaped their behaviors and experiences. She works from a humanistic approach and believe that each one has the potential to grow and empower. She strives to make a positive change in people's life by empowering them at a young age itself to make a healthy and happy world both mentally and physically.



**NEHA KATHURIA**  
**PROJECT HEAD (MENTAL HEALTH)**



**ANKITA GUPTA**  
**PROJECT OFFICER (MENTAL HEALTH)**

Ankita is a postgraduate with a specialization in Clinical Psychology. She is also a Certified Youth Mental Health First Aid Provider as well as a Child Abuse Primary Respondent. Being an active contributor to the field of mental health since 2018, building and utilizing her skills to advocate the importance of mental health and its aspects among the younger and older generations is what she staunchly believes in. She strives to free the existing beliefs and ideas of mental health from the prevailing myths and stigmas.

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## We are here for you

If you or someone you know is experiencing any mental or emotional distress, kindly call on our toll-free mental health helpline number:

**SAMVAAD**  
**1800-102-4040**

*This helpline is active from 8 am to 8 pm, seven days a week) and is handled by professional and trained counsellors.*

In case of any mental health related concerns, please feel free to reach us on [mentalhealth@projectmumbai.org](mailto:mentalhealth@projectmumbai.org)

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