THE CATALYST

I choose to nurture my mental health

Pandemic isolation was harsh, but it opened honest conversations about mental health and expanded access to online therapy.

By: Riya Mitra | Posted: September 8, 2022

The pandemic has been a stressful event for most of us. Being locked away at home, away from the hustle and bustle, triggered a few emotions for me. Adjusting to the “new normal” has not been easy, it has been a strenuous process. However, I decided what I would prefer to learn from the entire experience is that the pandemic prompted deeper conversations about mental health. It highlighted the importance of mental health issues and coping strategies. I believe it encouraged people to come forward, providing them with a safe space, and allowed them to address their unsettling experiences and feelings of despair.

Two years of isolation not only highlighted the importance of preserving one’s mental health but led to mental health care services becoming available to a wider population. Online therapy and counselling are now a cost-efficient method of delivering interventions remotely. Online psychotherapy is a relatively new realm with benefits and drawbacks. However, I think it is the first step towards a more affordable and accessible mental healthcare.

I have always been intimidated by the idea of getting into a therapeutic relationship. It is not my lack of faith in professional assistance, but rather a fear of dealing with emotions that follow, my incapacity to control my thoughts or even work through the process of healing. Despite being a student in this field, acknowledging my struggle with maintaining my mental health has not been easy.

At the end of last year, I decided to start with therapy. It occurred to me that the first step of healing is to accept that you are experiencing a range of emotions with which you are not entirely comfortable. Next is to know that help is available, and lastly, it is to encourage oneself to depend on mental healthcare as long as it is needed.

Being attentive to our mental health is just as important as ensuring our physical wellness. As someone new to therapy I would say, it is necessary to value and embrace the emotions brewing within us, whether they are perceived as good or bad. Relying on assistance is not a sign of weakness but of strength. It is important that we treat ourselves with the warmth we deserve.

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A recent clinical psychology postgraduate student. She loves to research the realms of mood disorders, learning disabilities, trauma and grief, and the socio-cognitive approach in psychology. She is passionate about mental health advancement and inspiring a change in how we perceive mental illness and psychological intervention. In her spare time, Riya can be found writing, reading the works of female poets, or watching cinema.

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