

COUNSELLING AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES BULLETIN

Issue 6

MESSAGE FROM THE HEAD OF DEPARTMENT

We understand that pursuing higher education can be demanding, and it is common for students to experience psychological stress and academic pressure in university. High achievers often face unique psychological challenges due to their drive for success and ambitious standards. Some of these challenges include perfectionism, fear of failure, social isolation, and difficulty in seeking help. Your drive, determination, and pursuit of excellence set you apart, but it is equally essential to prioritise your mental health.

Your potential for greatness extends far beyond the classroom, and I believe that a balanced approach to your studies, coupled with sound mental health, will pave the way for your continued success. I wish to emphasise our commitment to assisting you in managing this equilibrium effectively. Balancing the pursuit of high academic standards with the maintenance of mental well-being is paramount in this context.

The Counselling and Psychological Services (CAPS) team is here to support you at every step of the way to help you achieve your goals. Embrace your high-achiever qualities, but also treasure your well-being. Together, we can help you achieve your educational goals while maintaining your mental health. Remember, your well-being is a priority for us. If you ever feel academic stress is affecting your mental health, please reach out. We are here to support you in any way we can. We, at CAPS invite you to reach out to us by dropping us an email on student.counselling@lums.edu.pk.

“What mental health needs is more sunlight, more candor, and more unashamed conversation.”

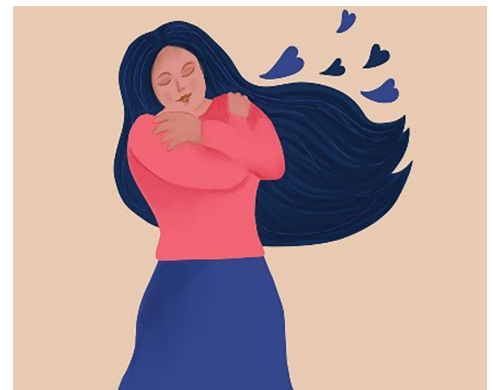
Glenn Close

Best Wishes,
Dr. Tahira Haider

BUILDING SELF-COMPASSION

SABEEN KHAN

The art of being kind to yourself implies that you treat yourself with the equivalent compassion that you treat others. Self-compassion is tied in with being tolerating, and having comprehension of yourself without judgment or analysis, and being capable to perceive your worth as an individual. While having a troublesome time, a self-caring individual would recognise their problem and ask themselves how they could get relief and really focus on themselves, instead of being hard on themselves. Human suffering is inescapable and having compassion for yourself eventually implies accepting that you are human.



Self-compassion scientist Dr. Kristin Neff recommends that self-compassion is comprised of three components which communicate to frame a self-compassion mindset:

1. Self-kindness as opposed to self-criticism

Self-kindness or Self-generosity indicates to acting in kind and understanding ways towards ourselves. This is particularly significant when we feel insufficient. Rather than disregarding our distress or being self-critical, our internal voice is delicate, strong, and warm. In the event that we are self-critical or deny our sentiments when confronted with hardships, this will in general bring about pressure and dissatisfaction. Instead, recognising and accepting these with thoughtfulness assists us with adjusting our feelings.

2. Sense of common humanity as opposed to self as isolated

Disappointment at not having things accurately as we want is at times associated with an irrational but persistent sense of isolation – as if “I” were the only person suffering or making mistakes. All humans suffer from distress and disappointments, however. The very definition of being “human” means that one is mortal, vulnerable and imperfect. In this way, self-compassion includes perceiving that worrying, disappointments and individual deficiency is essential for the common human experience - something that we as a whole go through as opposed to being something that happens to “me” alone.

3. Mindfulness as opposed to over-identifying

Self-compassion likewise requires adopting a fair strategy to our gloomy feelings, so sentiments are neither suppressed nor exaggerated. This balanced opinion comes from the method involved with relating individual experiences to those of other people who are likewise in distress and hopeless, hence placing what is happening into a bigger point of view. It

additionally comes from the readiness to notice our pessimistic thoughts and feelings with openness and clarity so they are held in careful mindfulness. Mindfulness is a non-critical, open brain state in which one notices thoughts and sentiments as they are, without attempting to suppress or deny them. We can't overlook our suffering and feel compassion for it simultaneously.

MAGNIFYING HAPPINESS

HAREEM JAMIL

Happiness is a very personalised and subjective concept. It is about a long-term sense of satisfaction and serenity with one's life, experiences, and decisions, and not merely the absence of stress. The majority of people have an innate 'set point' for happiness that influences how they respond to various circumstances.

Consider all the times you have been anxious about something that has not yet happened. The butterflies in the stomach, the head spinning and the restless nights before a big day. It turns out that all of your concern and contemplation was for nothing because you did fine. Your mind distorted your thoughts and provided you with unjustified grounds for concern.

Nearly 90% of our worries are irrational fears that never happen. Our survival brain is programmed to alert us to any potential threats, yet this pessimistic outlook restricts our ability to enjoy life. Negative predictions also decrease the likelihood of experiencing favourable results.

How can we increase our degree of happiness and fulfilment in life, is the issue that arises.

- Understanding one's own thinking style is the most significant thing to do. Which errors in thinking need to be changed or eliminated? Questioning automatic negative thoughts (ANTs) that spring to mind right away in a certain situation is a simple practice. Do your best to rationally reason these ideas by collecting evidence for and against the thoughts. That will resist to allow the ANTs destroy your joy.
- Don't let things get to you personally. The majority of people's behaviour is a mirror of themselves more often than it is of you. If someone is short-tempered, it is one of their personality traits, that anger shouldn't make you feel unhappy. Instead, look at it as an opportunity to learn and strive to come up with solutions to deal with such behaviour.
- Living in the present should be the primary goal. Too much reflection on the past or the future could ruin the pleasure of today.



- Being appreciative for what you have right now and paying attention to it might make you feel content with life.
- Having a broader perspective and being receptive to future uncertainties will lessen stress and boost happiness. Believe in yourself and the next step. Before examining the alternatives in a situation, wait for the facts to unravel.
- Increasing productivity and engaging in meaningful work both improve life satisfaction. Finding meaning and purpose in one's life leads to fulfilment and improves happiness.
- One of the secrets of happiness is having challenging but reasonable expectations of ourselves and the world.
- Maintaining an active, healthy lifestyle is just as crucial as monitoring your mental health. Our eating habits and sleep schedules are frequently neglected. What we eat is what we become. The release of the "happy hormone" dopamine is also controlled by our sleep patterns. A person's level of happiness is influenced by both a balanced diet and regular sleeping patterns.

Consider the above-mentioned steps as building blocks towards happiness. Try to achieve one at a time and you will see a considerable rise in life's cheerfulness. There is just one life that we get. Making the most out of it and creating our mind a happy place for ourselves is the biggest win we can have.

APPROVAL EQUAL TO WORTH?

BUSHRA AKRAM

If one person disapproves of me, does it mean he completely rejects me? Whereas, if another person approves of me, does it mean he completely accepts me? The reality is having a compliment feels particularly good. At the same time if the person is completely dependent on the compliments of others, then that person is very much vulnerable to the opinions of others. Having the urge to be appreciated and stroked by others will involve the person in a constant struggle of thoughts of becoming a perfectionist to achieve the desired goal. Therefore, the person who fails to unravel their understanding of true self-worth gets snared in the addiction of achievement, approval, or love from others.

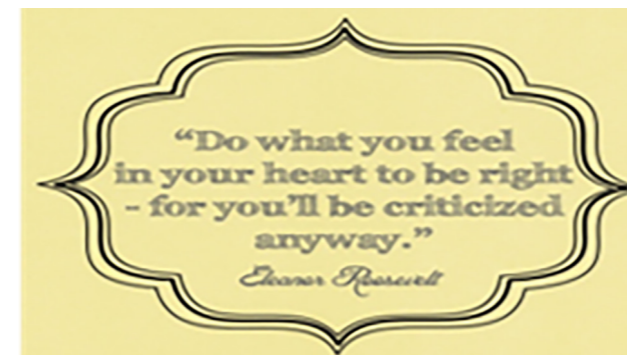
To understand the true meaning of what worth is, one's belief is important. This depends on the person and how much he/she wants to feed the idea of someone else incorporating in their mind. For example, if a person who is suffering from psychosis and is admitted to a psychiatric ward compliments you, are you going to believe it? Obviously not, because you would believe that its untrue. Simply that means if someone is commenting on you, it completely depends on you to consider it valid or not.



Moreover, if someone has a rough day and reacts rashly because of that, does it mean you are the reason for his/her behavior? Clearly no. Therefore, considering someone's words true and overthinking about it until your mind considers it to be true, does it make sense?



If someone is criticising you, it could be one of their behaviours. That does not make you a worthless person. No human in the world can do either wrong or right all the time as everyone is a mixture of good and bad. Therefore, the power lies in your thoughts and the remote is in your hand to control or change them.



GENDER ROLES AND PSYCHOLOGICAL WELLBEING

MAHA IFTIKHAR

Gender is an important social determinant of health. Gender-based analysis helps to improve women’s and men’s health. Interestingly, some health indicators have revealed differences between men and women. The research has told us that worldwide female life expectancy is greater than male life expectancy. Likewise, mental health discloses consistent differences between males and females. The research found that women have internalising disorders such as depression and psychological distress whereas men have externalising disorders with antisocial, and substance use disorders. If we look at the suicide rate worldwide, men’s suicide rates are higher than women.

The term psychological well-being refers to living life in a complete and satisfying way and to the development and self-realisation of the individual. The likelihood of experiencing a high level of well-being is positively correlated with higher levels of education and occupational status. Some scholars propose that disparities in well-being across cultures primarily stem from variations in how individuals perceive themselves and the nature of interpersonal relationships within these distinct cultural contexts.

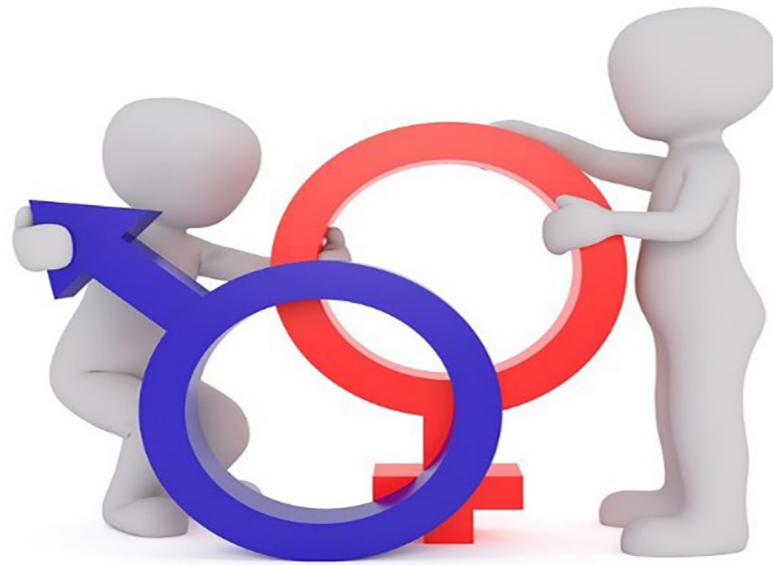
Collectivistic cultures feature an interdependent construal of the self, and place emphasis on

attention and adjustment to others, and harmonious interdependence with them; these are factors that they prioritise over their personal needs. Conversely, people in individualistic cultures strive to uphold their independence from others and aim to identify and articulate their distinctive qualities. As a result,

they often place a higher emphasis on pursuing their individual objectives rather than prioritising group goals.

Women and men are similar in most psychological traits, most societies consider they are essentially different and should occupy different roles. Customary theories approaching

differences in gender roles put forward that these differences were healthy and normal. Intriguingly, the studies on differences between men and women well-being have not yielded consistent outcomes. There are few gender differences in psychological well-being, although women reported having experienced positive and negative emotions with greater frequency and intensity than men. After looking at the research outcomes, it won’t be wrong if we would say that adherence to traditional gender roles and occupation are relevant to the well-being of women and men. Women and men whose self-concept includes both masculine and feminine-expressive characteristics have greater psychological well-being.



SELF-HELP PROGRAMMES AND RESOURCES REFERENCES



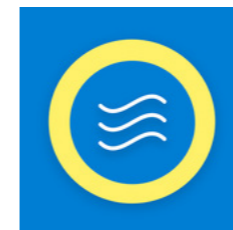
Ecouch is a free self-help interactive which provides evidence-based information to understand emotional problems better and learn strategies that may help improve your life. It draws from cognitive, behavioural, and interpersonal therapies, as well as relaxation and physical activity. There are modules for depression, generalised anxiety and worry, social anxiety, relationship breakdown, and loss and grief.



Smiling Mind is a free mindfulness meditation app developed by psychologists and educators to help people balance their lives by looking after their mental health, and manage the pressure, stress, and challenges of daily life.



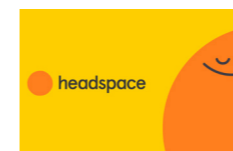
Mood Mission is a free app designed to empower you to overcome low moods and anxiety by discovering new and better ways of coping. When you tell MoodMission how you are feeling, it will give you a tailored list of 5 Missions (evidence-based activities and mental health strategies) that can help you feel better.



ReachOut Breathe is a free app that helps you reduce the physical symptoms of stress and anxiety by slowing down your heart rate.



ReachOut WorryTime is a free app that gives you a place to store your worries until later, so you don’t get caught up in them and can get on with your day. WorryTime will alert you when it’s time to think about them. Instead of listening to negative thoughts or pushing them away, research shows that postponing worries and only giving them attention at a set time helps you manage worry.



Headspace is a visually gorgeous, user-friendly app with a wealth of available resources to help you practice mindfulness. The Headspace library includes soothing, themed meditations, as well as focus activities, movement and dance classes, audio sleepscapes, and more.

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