



COUNSELLING AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES BULLETIN

September | Issue 12

MESSAGE FROM THE HEAD OF DEPARTMENT

As we approach the start of a new semester, it is a great time to reflect, reset, and recharge. Each new semester brings fresh opportunities, unique challenges, and the chance to grow both academically and personally. Wherever you find yourself on this journey, I want to remind you that it is okay to ask for support, celebrate small wins, and prioritise your well-being.

At the Counselling and Psychological Services Department, our mission is to create a supportive environment where you can thrive not just in your studies but in your mental and emotional health as well. This bulletin is a part of that effort, comprising of engaging articles and fun activities to empower your mental health journey.

As you step into the new semester, remember that taking care of your mental health is a sign of strength, not weakness. Whether you take a moment to pause and reflect, connect with others, or explore the elements of this bulletin, I encourage you to make yourself a priority this semester.

As always, our doors are open, and we are here to support you every step of the way. Wishing you all the best for the journey ahead!

Warm regards,
Dr. Tahira Haider

DOOMSCROLLING ON MENTAL HEALTH

SABEEN KHAN

Doomscrolling is endlessly scrolling through negative content, even when it causes anxiety or sadness. In fact, doomscrolling on mental health is basically like leaving the stove on 24/7. Eventually, something burns out.



Here's how it plays out:

Digital Numbness

You keep scrolling, not because you're interested but because it's become autopilot. It feels like something but it's not rest. It's not connection. It's a soft, buzzing numbness that leaves you feeling hollow afterwards.

Emotional Fatigue

When every video hits a different emotional nerve, baby giggles, war footage, Gen Z comedy, another headline about the planet, you burn out. You're not supposed to feel everything all the time. But the algorithm doesn't care. It just wants you to feel enough to stay glued.

Decision Paralysis

You open your phone to reply to one email. Forty-five minutes later, you're trying to decide if you should delete all your social media, change careers, or move to Bali. It's a lot. And when your nervous system is fried, even choosing between lunch options feels overwhelming.

Back in 2020, doomscrolling felt like a coping mechanism. Now it's sharper, faster, and more overwhelming. The news hits harder, the cycle moves quicker, and overstimulation leaves your brain too fried to filter the noise.

How to Stop the Scroll Before It Spirals

Here's what works:

- Name it. "I'm doomscrolling right now." Calling it out gives you control.
- Set a timer. Give yourself 5 minutes to scroll guilt-free. Then stop.
- Use Freedom's pre-scheduled sessions to auto-block social apps before your brain melts into mush.
- Replace the scroll. Try reading one longform article. Watch one full documentary. Do one thing fully.

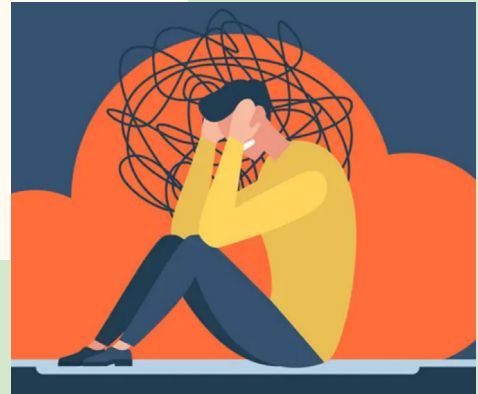
EXAM ANXIETY TURNING FEAR INTO FOCUS

HANIA BATOOL

What is it?

A feeling of intense stress or fear before or during exams that affects performance. Common symptoms are:

- Racing thoughts or blanking out
- Headaches, nausea, or rapid heartbeat
- Trouble concentrating
- Negative self-talk or catastrophising



Why Does It Happen?

- Fear of failure
- Perfectionism
- Lack of preparation
- Past negative experiences

Shift: Fear to Focus

Breathe deeply

Ground yourself with a few slow breaths

Reframe your thoughts

"I'm prepared and doing my best" > "I'll fail"

Break it down

Study in chunks; avoid all-nighters

Practice under pressure

Simulate test conditions during study

Self-care matters

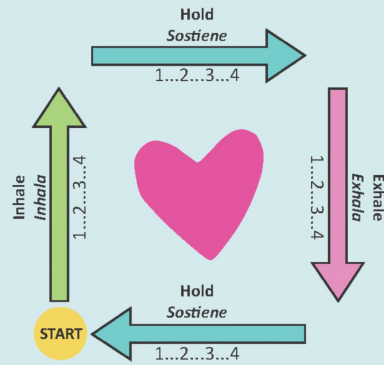
Sleep well, eat right, and move your body

Mini Focus Practice

Box Breathing

- Inhale 4 secs
- Hold 4 secs
- Exhale 4 secs
- Hold 4 secs

Repeat x4



Need Support?

CAPS is here for you.

 Drop by or book a session

 Talk to a counselor

 Get tools for academic stress

You don't have to go it alone.

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF SMILING

ZAINAB MUAZZAM

THE IMPACT OF SMILING ON MENTAL HEALTH



1 Triggers Feel-Good Neurotransmitters

Smiling releases dopamine, serotonin, and endorphins, which reduce stress and increase feelings of happiness.



2 Reduces Stress & Improves Mood

Smiling can lower heart rate and blood pressure during stressful tasks, helping calm the nervous system.

Smiling (especially genuine smiles) can boost your mood and help reduce feelings of depression or anxiety.



3 Encourages Social Connection

Smiling makes individuals more approachable and likable, strengthening social bonds and reducing loneliness.

4 Increases Psychological Resilience

Smiling can help people regulate emotions, boost self-esteem, and bounce back more easily from adversity.



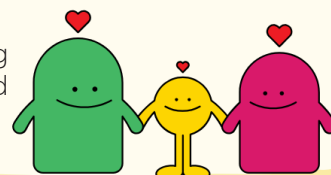
5 Boosts Immune Function

Positive emotions linked to smiling may enhance immune response and overall resilience.



6 Supports Mindfulness and Present-Moment Awareness

Smiling while meditating or practicing gratitude can enhance mindfulness and reduce rumination.



LET'S TALK ABOUT IMPOSTER SYNDROME

AIZA IMTIAZ

What is it?

Imposter syndrome is when you are sceptical of your own abilities and accomplishments. You believe you are not as talented or deserving as others believe, and you are afraid that one day people may discover it.



Common Beliefs:

- "How am I going to keep up with my friends?"
- "It was just an easy task, anyone could have done that"
- "I just got lucky"
- "I'm not as smart as everyone else"

Reasons why it happens:

- Setting almost perfect standards for yourself.
- When you grow up with pressure to excel in life and perform better than your friends.

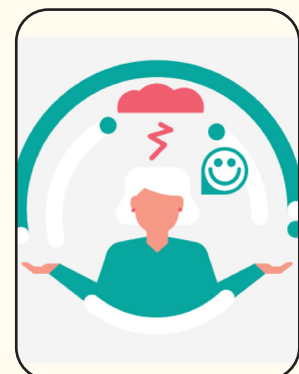


Signs You Might Be Experiencing It:

- Working super hard to prove yourself.
- Fearing even the thought that you might fail.
- Accomplishments do not feel special or earned right.
- Thinking things are not functioning like before and feeling burnout.

Some Tips to Manage it :

- Label when its happening to you as it helps when we recognise what we are experiencing.
- Talk about the particular feeling with a friend or your support system. It may surprise you how much of a similar experience somebody else has.
- We can also track the accomplishment and wins by keeping a "Small Wins" journal.
- This may be hard, but accept when given compliments. Believe them.
- Remind yourself that effort plus learning equals growth.
- Understand that mistakes are also part of learning.



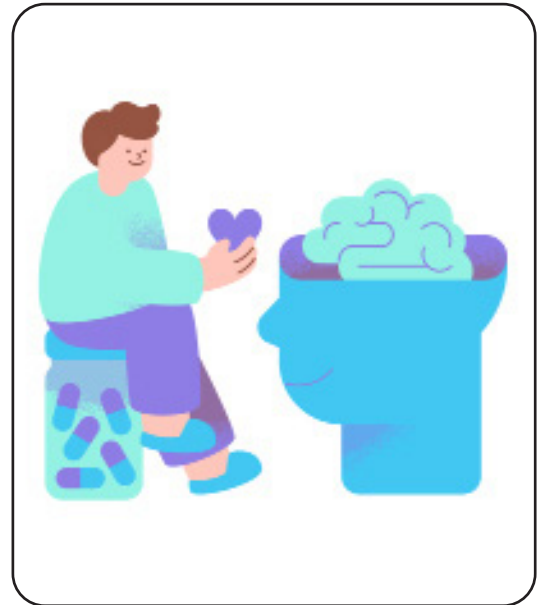
You earned your place. You belong here. Your voice matters.

ARE WE WATERING DOWN SERIOUS ISSUES BY MAKING MENTAL HEALTH A TREND?

QURAT UL AIN

In our increasingly open conversations about mental health, have we perhaps gone too far? The widespread embrace of mental health awareness is undoubtedly a positive development, fostering open dialogue and reducing stigma. However, this has also led to the casual integration of complex psychological terms into everyday language. But are we diluting the impact of these powerful concepts by applying them so casually and in contexts far removed from their clinical definitions? This trend raises important questions about the balance between awareness and accuracy, and the potential consequences of oversimplifying serious psychological concepts for the sake of relatability or trendiness. It is a delicate balance, and we must consider the impact of our words.

This casual usage of mental health terminology can trivialise genuine experiences and potentially lead to misunderstandings, and even hinder those who genuinely need help. Applying terms like “trauma dumping” to a friend venting about a bad day, or labeling a mood swing as “bipolar” without understanding the nuances of this experience, not only spreads misinformation but also risks creating a culture where serious psychological struggles are minimised. Over time, this pattern fosters insensitivity, blurs the line between normal emotional reactions and diagnosable conditions, and weakens the impact of advocacy efforts. To foster a healthier culture, we must encourage thoughtful use of mental health language, one that empowers, educates, and respects the lived realities of those who truly carry these burdens.



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