
DE-STIGMATIZING MENTAL ILLNESS IN THE SOUTH ASIAN COMMUNITY

RECLAIM YOUR POWER!



National Alliance on Mental Illness

nami

Mercer

Serving the New Jersey Capital Area



Author's Note

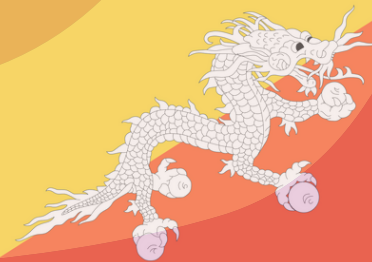


HELLO! MY NAME IS EMILY AND I AM A SENIOR PUBLIC HEALTH MAJOR AT THE COLLEGE OF NEW JERSEY. I HAVE CREATED A TOOLKIT FOR THE DIFFERENT WAYS TO DE-STIGMATIZE MENTAL ILLNESS IN THE U.S. SOUTH ASIAN COMMUNITY AND HOW TO PRIORITIZE YOUR MENTAL HEALTH. I THOUGHT THAT THIS COULD OPEN SOME EYES FOR SOUTH ASIANS WHO ARE DEALING WITH THIS ISSUE OR ARE STRUGGLING TO REACH OUT TO THEIR LOVED ONES ABOUT THEIR MENTAL ILLNESS. I RESONATE WITH THIS ISSUE BECAUSE AS A FIRST-GENERATION SOUTH INDIAN WOMAN, I HAVE STRUGGLED WITH MY MENTAL HEALTH THROUGHOUT THE YEARS WHILE I WAS IN COLLEGE AND WAS SCARED TO ASK FOR HELP DUE TO THE STIGMA ATTACHED TO IT. WITH THAT BEING SAID, WE NEED TO NORMALIZE AND PRIORITIZE GETTING HELP FOR MENTAL ILLNESS, ESPECIALLY IN THE SOUTH ASIAN COMMUNITY WHICH THIS TOOLKIT TOUCHES UPON.

YOU ARE NOT ALONE!



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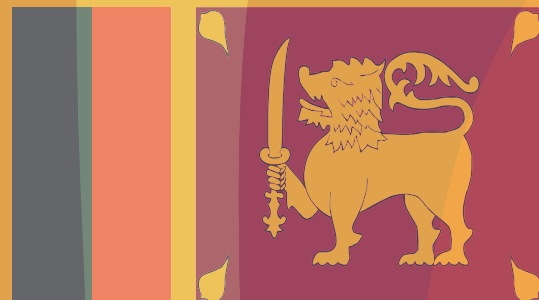
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WHY IS THERE A STIGMA?



MANY SOUTH ASIAN AMERICANS BELIEVE THAT MENTAL ILLNESS IS A SIGN OF WEAKNESS

IT IS THOUGHT THAT THE PERSON IS OVERREACTING AND IS NOT ACTUALLY SICK

IT CAN BRING SHAME ONTO THE FAMILY IF OTHER PEOPLE KNEW

IT IS BELIEVED THAT PROFESSIONAL MENTAL ILLNESS TREATMENT IS NOT NECESSARY AND SHOULD BE DONE BY TRADITIONAL SPIRITUAL HEALERS



SOUTH ASIAN MENTAL ILLNESS STATISTICS

1 IN 5 SOUTH ASIANS IN THE U.S. REPORT EXPERIENCING A MOOD OR ANXIETY DISORDER IN THEIR LIFETIME (FIRST LIGHT RECOVERY, 2024).



U.S. SOUTH ASIANS OFTEN EXPRESS GREATER STIGMA TOWARD MENTAL ILLNESS THAN OTHER GROUPS (SAPHA, 2024).

34.1% OF SOUTH ASIAN AMERICANS SEEK CLINICAL TREATMENT IN COMPARISON TO 41.1% OF THE GENERAL POPULATION (FIRST LIGHT RECOVERY, 2024).

THERE ARE NO PUBLISHED DATA ON SCHIZOPHRENIA AND BIPOLAR DISORDERS AMONG U.S. SOUTH ASIANS (SAPHA, 2024).

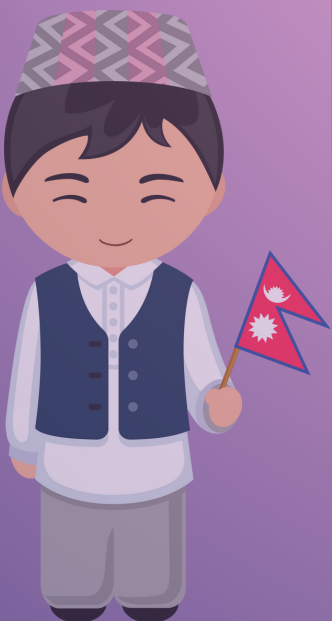


WAYS TO DE-STIGMATIZE MENTAL ILLNESS

**Take your
power back**

- TALK OPENLY ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH
- EDUCATE YOURSELF AND OTHERS
- NORMALIZE RECEIVING TREATMENT FOR MENTAL ILLNESS LIKE ANY OTHER HEALTH CARE TREATMENT
- SHOW EMPOWERMENT INSTEAD OF SHAME

- BE CONSCIOUS OF LANGUAGE
- ENCOURAGE EQUITY BETWEEN PHYSICAL AND MENTAL ILLNESS
- SHOW COMPASSION
- LET THE MEDIA KNOW AND HEAR REAL-LIFE STORIES OF STRUGGLES AND PERSEVERANCE TO GET HELP



IMPORTANCE OF PRIORITIZING MENTAL HEALTH

IMPROVED
QUALITY OF
LIFE!

BETTER
PHYSICAL
HEALTH!

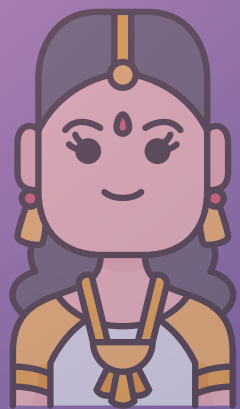
REDUCED RISK OF
MENTAL ILLNESS!

INCREASED
PRODUCTIVITY!

IMPROVED
RELATIONSHIPS!



(NAMI, 2023)



TIPS AND TRICKS ON BEING SUPPORTIVE



- REACH OUT TO CHECK IN
- LISTEN WITHOUT JUDGMENT
- BE EMPATHETIC
- NETWORK WITH OTHERS WHO CAN HELP

- CELEBRATE THE SMALL WINS
- TRY TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THEIR STRUGGLE
- HELP THEM TO JOIN A SUPPORTIVE COMMUNITY
- BE AN EFFECTIVE ADVOCATE



LEARN MORE THROUGH MEDIA

ON PURPOSE WITH JAY SHETTY (2019)- MENTAL HEALTH PODCAST

[HTTPS://WWW.YOUTUBE.COM/@JAYSHETTYPODCAST.](https://www.youtube.com/@JAYSHETTYPODCAST)



SHETTY HAS A MENTAL HEALTH PODCAST WITH CELEBRITY GUESTS TO TALK ABOUT THEIR MENTAL HEALTH/ILLNESS AND WHETHER THEY HAVE STRUGGLED WITH IT IN THE PAST OR IN THE PRESENT.

NEVER HAVE I EVER (2020)- NETFLIX TV SHOW

THE MAIN CHARACTER, DEVI, DEALS WITH HER MENTAL ILLNESS BEING AT THE TOP OF HER CLASS IN HIGH SCHOOL AND DEALING WITH HER FATHER'S DEATH. DEVI HAS A THERAPIST WHO WORKS WITH HER THROUGHOUT THE SHOW. BY THE END, SHE HAD WORKED THROUGH A LOT OF HER ISSUES AND BECAME HAPPIER BEFORE GOING OFF TO COLLEGE.

DEAR ZINDAGI (2016)- NETFLIX BOLLYWOOD MOVIE

THIS IS THE STORY OF AN URBAN MIDDLE-CLASS FEMALE, KAIRA, SUFFERING FROM DEPRESSION THROUGHOUT HER LIFE. THIS MOVIE ALSO SHOWS THE THERAPEUTIC AND HEALTHY RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN A MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONAL AND A PATIENT.

SAAYA UNVEILED: SOUTH ASIAN MENTAL HEALTH SPOTLIGHTED (2021)- BOOK

[HTTPS://WWW.AMAZON.COM/SAAYA-UNVEILED-MENTAL-HEALTH-SPOTLIGHTED-EBOOK/DP/B092Y9132V](https://www.amazon.com/saaya-unveiled-mental-health-spotlighted-ebook/dp/B092Y9132V)



THIS BOOK IS ABOUT 11 REAL-LIFE STORIES OF SOUTH ASIAN IMMIGRANTS AND HOW THEY NAVIGATED THEIR MENTAL HEALTH BEING CITIZENS IN A NEW COUNTRY. THE BOOK STARTS WITH EACH OF THEIR ORIGIN STORIES AND GOES INTO HOW THEY GOT TO WHERE THEY ARE TODAY.



**Your mental
health is a priority**

RESOURCES

SCAN TO GO TO
EACH WEBSITE!

NAMI SOUTH ASIAN MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS IN JERSEY (NAMI SAMHAJ):
THIS SUB-ORGANIZATION OF NAMI FOCUSES ON RESOURCES FOR SOUTH ASIAN AMERICANS REGARDING MENTAL ILLNESS AND MENTAL HEALTH. THEY HAVE SUPPORT GROUPS, HELPLINES, AND EVENTS THAT ARE SPECIFICALLY FOR SOUTH ASIAN AMERICANS WHO STRUGGLE/SUPPORT OTHERS WITH MENTAL HEALTH OR MENTAL ILLNESS!



[HTTPS://NAMINJ.ORG/PROGRAMS /MULTICULTURAL/SAMHAJ/](https://naminj.org/programs/multicultural/samhaj/)



SOUTH ASIAN MENTAL HEALTH INITIATIVE & NETWORK (SAMHIN):
THIS ORGANIZATION FOCUSES ON MENTAL HEALTH AND MENTAL ILLNESS RESOURCES FOR SOUTH ASIAN AMERICANS. THE SAMHIN PROVIDER NETWORK INCLUDES MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONALS THAT SOUTH ASIANS COULD GO TO FOR HELP. THE ORGANIZATION ALSO HAS EVENTS LIKE HEALTH FAIRS AND WORKSHOPS THAT MEMBERS CAN GO TO WHICH DE-STIGMATIZES MENTAL ILLNESS!



[HTTPS://SAMHIN.ORG /RESOURCES/](https://samhin.org/resources/)



**Better days'
coming very
soon**



RESOURCES (CONT.)

SCAN TO GO TO
EACH WEBSITE!

MANNMUKTI: THIS ORGANIZATION FOCUSES ON SOUTH ASIAN MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES FOR ANYONE WHO NEEDS THEM. THERE IS A PODCAST THAT PEOPLE CAN LISTEN TO WHICH HELPS BREAK THE STIGMA ON DIFFERENT SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS. THEY ALSO HAVE REAL-LIFE STORIES/BLOG POSTS (“MANNMUKTI SPEAKS”) THAT PEOPLE CAN READ ON THE WEBSITE, SUPPORT GROUPS, HELPLINES, AND EVENTS THAT MEMBERS CAN GO TO!

[HTTPS://MANNMUKTI.ORG/](https://mannmukti.org/)



SOUTH ASIAN SEXUAL & MENTAL HEALTH ALLIANCE (SASMHA): THIS ORGANIZATION FOCUSES ON DE-STIGMATIZING SEXUALITY AND MENTAL HEALTH, ESPECIALLY FOR SOUTH ASIAN ADOLESCENTS. THEY PROVIDE RESOURCES LIKE COMMUNITY WORKSHOPS, A PODCAST, AND BLOG POSTS THAT SOUTH ASIAN AMERICANS CAN ACCESS!

[HTTPS://WWW.SASMHA.ORG/
MENTAL-HEALTH](https://www.sasmha.org/mental-health)



YOU ARE
NOT ALONE



HELPLINES AND HOTLINES



NAMI MERCER HELPLINE: **609-799-8994 X17**

NAMI MERCER HELPLINE EMAIL: **HELPLINE@NAMIMERCER.ORG**



SUICIDE AND CRISIS LIFELINE: **988 (CALL OR TEXT)**

SUICIDE AND CRISIS LIFELINE CHAT: **988LIFELINE.ORG**



MATERNAL MENTAL HEALTH HOTLINE: **1-833-9-HELP4MOMS**



SUBSTANCE ABUSE AND MENTAL HEALTH
SERVICES ADMINISTRATION (SAMHSA)

NATIONAL HELPLINE: **800-662-4357**



SCAN FOR OTHER AVAILABLE
HELPLINES AND HOTLINES!



[HTTPS://NAMINJ.ORG/WHERE
-TO-GET-HELP/HOTLINES/](https://naminj.org/where-to-get-help/hotlines/)

