

THE LIMINAL MIND

VOL. 1, NO.1

WORLD MENTAL HEALTH DAY

10 OCTOBER 2025

MENTAL HEALTH IN FOCUS: A CASE OF COURAGE AND RECOVERY

In recognition of World Mental Health Day, we had the opportunity to interview our Head of the Department, Dr. Mohandas, consultant psychologist at Krishna Hospital, who shared valuable insights on the importance of mental well-being in today's fast-paced world by sharing a case he is handling.

Interviewer: Sir, can you tell us about a case you handled recently?

Sir : Yes sure. Last week, I conducted an online counseling session for a 24-year-old woman working in London. Her parents contacted me, concerned about some difficulties she had been facing. On one particular day, she left her office unexpectedly and wandered the streets. She was brought home safely with the help of others.

Interviewer : What were her symptoms?

Sir: In London accessing a psychiatrist is very challenging. They went to the emergency department, where she exhibited symptoms of hallucinations, delusions, and disorganized speech, behavior, and thinking. The doctors prescribed antipsychotic medication to manage the hallucinations and delusions and recommended Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT). That's when her case came under my care. We began online counseling sessions. Over time, her hallucinations and delusions subsided, she is responding well to the prescribed medications and therapies.

Interviewer: What was the diagnosis given to this person?

Sir : According to the latest DSM criteria, her diagnosis is Brief Psychotic Disorder. If treated properly, the symptoms of this disorder usually last for only about a month or less. She is now back to normal, and I have suggested that she can gradually return to work, making sure to follow the doctor's advice.

Interviewer : what kind of treatment method is she undergoing?

Sir : The treatment involves Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT), homework assignments and cardio exercises which will help release happy hormones and provided guidance on precautions to prevent any future episodes. With timely treatment, therapy, and family support, recovery is possible. Early help and following professional guidance are key to maintaining mental health.



MENTAL HEALTH OUTCOMES AFTER NATURAL DISASTERS: A STUDY ON PTSD, ANXIETY, AND DEPRESSION IN KERALA

Natural disasters frequently cause severe psychological suffering among affected communities. Mathew et al. (2024) investigated the prevalence of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and related factors among flood victims in Kerala, India, three months after the floods. Over half of the participants tested positive for PTSD, indicating a substantial psychological burden. PTSD prevalence was higher in Pathanamthitta district compared to Alleppey and Kottayam, likely due to differences in preparedness and prior exposure to mild flooding.

Symptoms were more common among younger and older adults, likely due to physical, cognitive, or coping limitations. Women were found to be more vulnerable to PTSD than men, reflecting gender differences in stress processing and emotional expression (Mathew et al., 2024). Interestingly, higher socioeconomic groups reported higher stress, possibly because metropolitan populations were less familiar with such disasters, and residents of joint families experienced more stress from managing dependents during displacement. Key risk factors for PTSD included prior unpreparedness, financial hardship, and personal loss. The study emphasized the importance of community-based counselling, psychiatric screening, and inclusion of mental health specialists in disaster relief teams for early detection and intervention.

However, its cross-sectional design and reliance on self-reported financial data limited causal conclusions. Mathew et al. (2024) suggested longitudinal research to understand long-term psychological consequences better. Asim et al. (2022) examined the long-term psychological impact of the 2018 Kerala floods, focusing on PTSD, anxiety, and depression among adult survivors.

Flood exposure was more strongly linked to PTSD than to anxiety or depression, with PTSD frequently co-occurring with these conditions ($r = 0.339$ with anxiety, $r = 0.262$ with depression). Women reported higher symptom levels, though age appeared to moderate trauma responses.

Community-based initiatives, such as training ASHA workers in psychological first aid, psychosocial support to over 2 lakh individuals, and pharmacological therapy for survivors, significantly contributed to recovery. These efforts reflect Kerala's strong commitment to integrating mental health into disaster management. Limitations included the cross-sectional design, small sample size, and reliance on self-reported measures (Asim et al., 2022). Overall, these studies show that Kerala floods have profound and lasting mental health effects, particularly among vulnerable populations including women, the elderly, youth, and those experiencing significant financial or personal loss (Mathew et al., 2024; Asim et al., 2022).

PTSD symptoms often coexist with anxiety and depression, highlighting the interconnected nature of disaster-related mental health outcomes. The findings underline the critical need for early intervention, ongoing monitoring, accessible mental health care, and community resilience programs. Integrating psychological support into disaster preparedness and relief, as Kerala demonstrates, is essential for mitigating long-term psychological morbidity and promoting recovery.

Adya M Sidharth, 1 Msc Psychology

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EDITORIAL



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MENTAL HEALTH & INNER STRENGTH: PRACTICAL APPROACHES FOR WELL-BEING, STRESS RESILIENCE & COMMUNITY CARE

In today's fast-moving and demanding world, mental health has become just as vital as physical well-being. The World Health Organization (WHO) defines health as "a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity." This makes it clear that being healthy goes beyond the absence of illness—it also includes emotional balance and social connectedness.

Health can broadly be understood in two domains: physical health and mental health. Physical health refers to the proper functioning of the body, free from disease or injury. It also means having enough strength, flexibility, and energy to perform daily activities effectively.

Mental health involves emotional and psychological stability, influencing how we think, feel, behave, manage stress, and build relationships. Good mental health enables individuals to adapt to challenges, work productively, and contribute positively to society.

In contrast, mental illness refers to conditions such as depression, anxiety, or schizophrenia, which disrupt mood, thinking, or behaviour and often impair daily functioning.

Inner strength complements mental health. It is the ability to remain resilient during adversity, guided by self-awareness, emotional regulation, values, supportive relationships, and a sense of purpose. While mental health lays the foundation for well-being, inner strength acts as the fuel that helps individuals recover and thrive despite difficulties.

Traits of a Mentally Healthy Individual

A person with good mental health usually:

- Has self-awareness regarding strengths, weaknesses, and motives.
- Maintains self-confidence and emotional maturity, expressing feelings in appropriate ways.
- Builds healthy social relationships and adapts well to different situations.
- Demonstrates independent thinking, sound decision-making, and courage in facing setbacks.
- Finds satisfaction in work and life balance, while also caring for physical well-being through good nutrition, sleep, hygiene, and exercise.
- Stays optimistic, responsible, and socially engaged, while handling challenges with resilience rather than fear.

Understanding Stress Resilience

Stress resilience is the ability to adapt to and recover from stressful experiences without being overwhelmed. It does not mean avoiding stress entirely, but rather developing the capacity to bounce back from difficulties.

Resilient people usually demonstrate:

- Emotional stability under pressure.
- Flexibility in adapting to change.
- Effective problem-solving and coping strategies.
- Awareness of personal limits and willingness to seek support when needed.

Resilience is not innate—it can be built through positive self-talk, strong relationships, mindfulness practices, healthy routines, and learning from past challenges. Developing resilience not only reduces the risk of anxiety, depression, and burnout but also improves performance, physical health, and life satisfaction.

Mental well-being and resilience can be strengthened through simple, evidence-based strategies that fit into daily life. Developing healthy habits—such as getting adequate sleep, eating a balanced diet, exercising regularly, and limiting alcohol, caffeine, or screen time—provides a strong foundation for both body and mind. Mindfulness practices like meditation, deep breathing, and relaxation techniques further help in calming the mind and reducing stress.

Building supportive relationships is equally important, as staying connected with family, friends, or community groups and expressing emotions openly prevents isolation. Setting realistic goals, breaking tasks into manageable steps, and following consistent routines can reduce feelings of overwhelm. Engaging in meaningful activities—whether hobbies, volunteering, or learning new skills—nurtures a sense of purpose and motivation.

Challenging negative thinking patterns also plays a key role: techniques such as gratitude journaling, positive affirmations, and reframing pessimistic thoughts encourage optimism and balance. When necessary, seeking professional help from counsellors, therapists, or doctors ensures timely guidance and care, with medication considered under expert supervision.



ULTIMATELY, TRUE WELL-BEING IS NOT JUST THE ABSENCE OF ILLNESS—IT IS THE PRESENCE OF RESILIENCE, PURPOSE, AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT IN EVERYDAY LIFE.



Finally, spending time in nature—through walks, gardening, or simply being outdoors—has been shown to reduce stress and restore mental calmness.

Community-based care emphasizes providing support close to people's homes, families, and social networks, rather than relying solely on hospitals or institutions. Its key principles include accessibility, holistic treatment, stigma reduction, and active participation of patients and families.

This approach ensures:

- Early detection and continuous care.
- Reduced stigma by normalizing mental health services.
- Greater cost-effectiveness compared to long-term hospitalization.
- Enhanced social reintegration and empowerment.

Kerala has built a strong model of community-based mental health care by combining government programs, NGO initiatives, and tele-health services. Through district-level programmes, mobile units, outreach clinics, and digital counselling platforms, the state ensures accessibility even in remote areas. Rehabilitation centres and grassroots initiatives further provide therapy, vocational training, and social reintegration, reducing stigma and empowering individuals. Kerala's approach shows how community participation and innovative services can make mental health care more inclusive and sustainable.

Mental health and inner strength are inseparable components of a fulfilling life. By cultivating resilience, individuals can better manage stress, recover from setbacks, and live with greater stability. Daily practices such as mindfulness, meaningful activities, and supportive relationships are essential for well-being. At the community level, Kerala serves as a strong model of mental health care, demonstrating how outreach programs, rehabilitation centres, and tele-health services can make support more inclusive and accessible. These efforts not only improve treatment but also foster dignity, reduce stigma, and strengthen social reintegration.

***This article is based on review of various literature on mental health.*

**-Dr.Mohandas M
HoD, Department of Psychology**

HOW NATURAL DISASTERS AFFECT MENTAL HEALTH IN INDIA

India is a country that faces natural disasters such as floods, earthquakes, cyclones, and droughts almost annually. In recent times, due to climate change, these disasters have become more frequent and severe. The impact of such disasters destroys homes, roads, and livelihoods. While relief efforts help in the process of rebuilding physical damage, providing food and finding and giving shelter, one of the biggest consequences of such disasters goes undetected and untreated: the effect of these disasters on people's minds.

This year's theme for World Mental Health Day is the effect of such natural calamities on the mind and human psyche, and as a result, it is important to understand how such disasters affect one's mental health in India and why psychological and emotional help is as important as physical recovery.

Feelings of sadness, helplessness, and anxiety are common among people who face natural disasters. It is normal to feel overwhelmed after losing your home, your belongings, or even your family members or those close to your heart. There are multiple incidents in India to corroborate this. There were instances of children experiencing nightmares and developing a fear of the sea after the 2004 tsunami in Tamil Nadu.

The impact is more severe among women, children, the elderly, and those from poorer or marginalized groups. These feelings can persist and even affect the day-to-day routine of individuals if they go untreated. In India, psychologists and mental health professionals play a crucial role in disaster response by offering Psychological First Aid (PFA) to create a calm, supportive environment that helps survivors reconnect with loved ones and resources.

They provide emotional support, normalize distress, and use methods like play and storytelling to reduce children's stress. Psychologists also train local volunteers to assist in rural areas lacking professionals and support frontline workers coping with trauma. Additionally, they guide families in recovery planning and long-term adjustment.

The Indian Psychiatric Society emphasizes phase-based mental health care from preparedness to long-term recovery to ensure lasting emotional healing. If mental health in India is ignored during disaster relief, serious issues that last much longer than the disaster itself could be faced. Long-term issues like PTSD, Depression, or drug/alcohol abuse might develop in people who survive disasters but do not get help. These issues can lower productivity, create tension in families, and keep people stuck in poverty.

Children who experience disasters like floods or destruction may carry lasting trauma that affects their education, work, and relationships. Untreated trauma can even pass to future generations, as traumatized parents may unintentionally transfer emotional distress to their children.

Neglecting mental health worsens the struggles of already vulnerable communities. Displaced tribal groups and drought-affected farmers face loss, stigma, and rising suicide risks. Front-line workers like firefighters, soldiers, doctors, and NGO staff also face burnout and secondary trauma if their emotional needs go unmet, reducing their ability to respond to future crises.

Ultimately, ignoring mental health delays recovery, weakens communities, and hinders national well-being and growth. India's high exposure to disasters makes it vital to include mental health in disaster planning, especially as climate change worsens crises.

Agencies should integrate psychological support into response plans, train workers in Psychological First Aid, and strengthen community-based emotional support. Care must evolve from immediate crisis help to long-term therapy, while awareness campaigns reduce stigma around distress. Finally, research on disaster-related mental health is needed to create culturally appropriate and effective interventions.

- Lehana Biju and Kottala Ananya Iyer, II BSc Psychology

“If someone shares their struggles, listen without judgment.
Sometimes, simply being there is the best support.”



- Liya P.J, I M.Sc Psychology



BLEEDING WITHIN

This intense artwork vividly captures the invisible emotional aftermath of natural calamities and disasters, serving as a powerful call to action for this year's World Mental Health Day. The bold, streaming red is not just blood, but a representation of the overwhelming internal trauma, the anxiety, grief, and PTSD, that floods a survivor's life long after the physical storm has passed. The cracks near the temple symbolize a fractured mind, while the closed, empty eyes portray the agony of re-experiencing the event, emphasizing that the most significant wounds from a disaster are often the ones you cannot see. The artwork challenges us to recognize that the trauma does not end when the emergency broadcast stops; it begins then. It is a striking visual reminder that we must look beyond the physical ruins, acknowledge the deep, ongoing emotional scars left by nature's violence, and actively support the mental resilience of those who have endured the devastation.

- Archana. T. M, II B.sc Psychology

UNMUTE YOUR MIND, DON'T QUIT

The ones who seem strong can also be struggling mentally. Not everyone voices their struggles. They might be trying to keep up themselves and not let others worry or even know about their hardships. But the truth is rather than losing a friend or a family member, the people around you would rather have you open up and talk about yourself.

Yes, I know that the thought of ending everything can come suddenly and feel very intense. It often builds up after days of suppressing your feelings, avoiding the problem, or completely surrendering to it. But what I want to say is that in those moments, even taking a breath feels heavy, and reaching out to someone you love, just to talk about anything can seem impossible. Yet, you can call anyone, anytime. No one who truly cares will complain about the timing, the effort, or anything else. They may not have the perfect solutions to your problems or comfort you exactly the way you need, but one thing is certain, they will remind you why you want to live. Taking that first step to open up is hard, but trust me, it's not as hard as deciding to end your life.

And to those who find themselves on the other side of the call, it could be anyone, any one of us. Remember this, we are not meant to judge or fix the problems of our loved ones when they choose to share their darkest moments with us. Just listen with an open heart and mind.

We can never truly know the state of mind they're in while talking to us. What we can do is remind them how important they are, how much we care about them, and how grateful we are that they're here with us on this journey.

And to those who stand outside this exchange, yes, it's easy to judge, assume, or pity. It's easy to moral police, to remind others of what's right or wrong. But none of this helps when someone is standing on the edge between life and death. Try to be understanding. People don't choose to end their lives because they see it as the only solution, but because the darker corners of their mind convince them it's the best way to escape their pain.

And sometimes, that pain includes your judgments and punishing stares. So please, be kind to your fellow human beings, and give them the space and compassion they need to live their lives.

Everyone who is reading this, be courageous once, to unmute your mind. Don't believe in quitting. We don't want to lose our friends. I hope something or someone gives you the grass of hope to continue living. With my aching heart, I pray, your mind won't be infected by the thought of quitting. You are not alone, and this is not a makeup phrase. It's true. Believe it. You have us.

Harisree, 1 MSc Psychology

THE GRAVEYARD

At first sight, you'll see
deserted lives
or that's what it seems
but that is a lie.

This city was crowded with towers
and the people stood tall.
Now the towers slouch
and the people crumble and fall.

Echoes filled these halls
now they're lonely.
Nobody talks but the walls
even they have become weary.

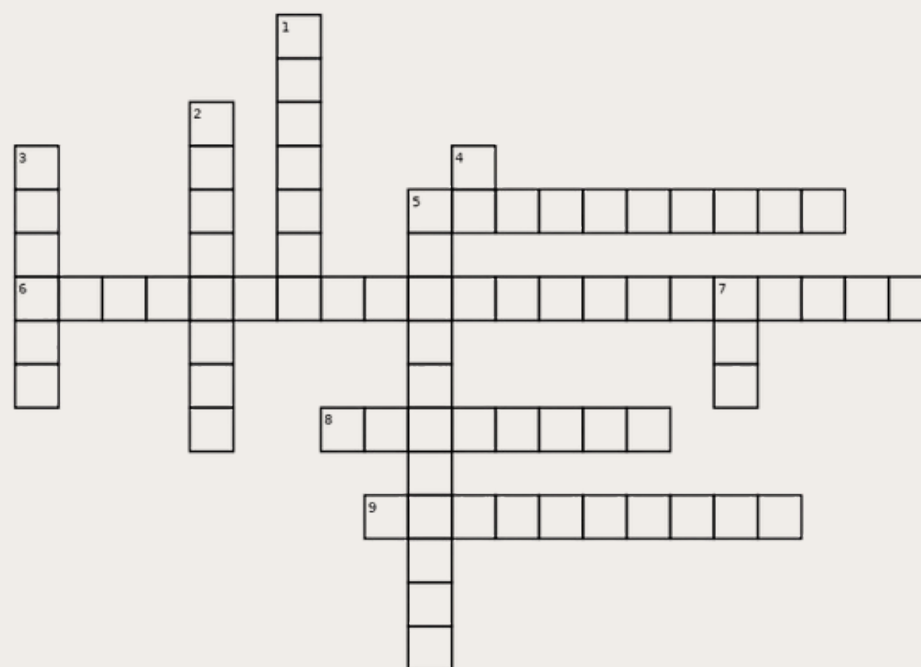
If you count the graves
you didn't count right
with every passing second
more dirt is dug aside.

Years ago, in the dead of night
you could catch a glimpse
of a forlorn yet propitious, dim light
that no one has seen since.

And if you count the flowers
you didn't count right
with every fresh pit of dirt
there is remembrance, a quiet fight.

Anagha Ramesh, 1 BSc Psychology

CROSSWORD



Down:

1. The famous bodo doll experiment guy
2. the voice in your head that says follow the norms
3. When you brain hits save button
4. The part of your personality that loves pizza and hates homework
5. The fear of open spaces
7. the stage of sleep when you dream

Across:

5. The fight or flight hormone that makes you superhero-fast for 5 seconds
6. learning by watching others
8. The feel good chemical in your brain
9. the fear of being without your phone



Scan this QR to know your emotional health