

Mind over Matter

"The unwelcome arrival of Covid-19 forced us to confront ourselves in many ways..."



Dr. Samke J. Ngcobo

We live in a society which looks down on struggle and seeks to divorce itself from the reality of pain. Social media, magazines and billboards deceive us into believing that everyone is cruising through life, leaving us confused, despondent and feeling alien for experiencing what is different to this illusion.

Mental health issues are on the rise and the wonderful thing is that a spotlight is shining bright on mental health in recent years.

The effect of Covid-19 on our Mental Health

The unwelcome arrival of Covid-19 forced us to confront ourselves in many ways. Many of the devices used to distract us were systematically and abruptly confiscated by the lockdown. We were left to examine ourselves and face our loved ones in a completely new way. Our homes became 24/7 offices and schools; leaving extraordinarily little room for personal space to breath and regroup. These blurred boundaries between our worlds tested us immensely. The fear of the unknown and the new normal has left many of us anxious and afraid of what lies ahead for us as individuals, families, communities and society at large.

During this time, many people developed mental illnesses such as depression and anxiety, while others found a worsening of their pre-existing mental illnesses.

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Self-care and Self Preservation

Going for therapy is a form of self-care and self-preservation. It is a worthwhile investment, like going to gym. I look forward to the day when we take pride in seeing our therapists much like we do in going to the gym. Taking charge of our mental wellbeing is something that needs to be applauded and embraced.

Sharing my own story to encourage others

In sharing my story about my mental illness openly, I hope to inspire more people to speak freely about their mental health struggles and I also seek to put a face behind mental illnesses as they are often hidden in the shadows of stigma, shame and judgment.

Depression is not a sign of failure and it is not cured by simply faking optimism and positivity. Depression is an illness which is highly debilitating. It robs a person of their hope, motivation, energy and optimal functioning. At worst, it leads to

suicidal thoughts and attempts. It is not attention seeking but is a desperate cry for help. One can live a picture- perfect life but still feel empty and hopeless.

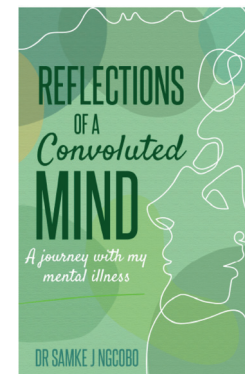
Anxiety is not a self-inflicted condition that is brought on by pessimism and negativity. It is a condition which is stressful and distressing to individuals who suffer from it.

Empathy and compassion are critical in supporting individuals who have mental illnesses.

Struggle is part of the human experience and normalising it, is what will dispel stigma and encourage us to face life more realistically.

Mental wellbeing is not a privilege for a select few but it is for all people to enjoy.

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