

# MENTAL HEALTH matters

Interviews from 6  
psychologists on today's  
changing mental health  
field

Understanding  
the changing  
mentalverse

navigating a  
newly digital  
age

More than  
Just Trends



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# Amberveen Pradhan



**Q1: What is your definition of mental health?**

Mental health is a state of mind. It helps you function, it helps you execute your daily tasks with efficiency. Your coping in resilience makes you feel comfortable in your decision making, your problem solving capabilities, and your ability to deal with stress and challenges. You're able to see a problem, understand a problem, resolve a problem and simultaneously able to handle stress. You are able to handle challenges of everyday life with ease that is a 'healthy mental state'. But if you're not able to deliver any of these functions it impacts your overall wellbeing and it is at that point that one says your 'mental health is declining'.

**Q2: What do you think is the biggest challenge teenagers face today in the context of mental health?**

Lack of awareness, lack of understanding. They are not able to differentiate between impulsivity and mental health. They are not able to differentiate between what they can and can't do, and then everything is put under the umbrella of mental health rather than actually understood because of this prevalent lack of awareness. If one has the clarity that their issue is being caused by impulsiveness and not say a chemical imbalance they are given clarity regarding why they behave in the manner in which they do. This makes it easier to differentiate between mental health issues and behavioural issues.

There is also an abnormal time being spent online. Teenagers are spending nine or ten hours online and as the nature of 'abnormal' activities this is bound to have a negative effect on the teenagers mental health. Instant gratification is another, loss of thinking, comprehension and understanding. Not utilizing critical thinking and evaluative skills. A lot coming from an unhealthy boundary and an unclear place.

**Q3. What are some strategies teenagers can use to mitigate these challenges?**

Strategies will not be applicable to everyone. It depends on how the individual wants to change their lifestyle and change their routine. If a teenager is committed to their cause, or to a purpose the issues with social media usage and lack of awareness/understanding will simply not exist. The issue lies in those who are not sure of their purpose and what they would like to do.

**Q4: What are some trends you've noticed about mental health?**

Now there is a lot more awareness and acceptance. Mental health is a lot less stigmatized. There are more people actively seeking help and better resources. We have reached the first step where people accept help and are given good help as well. Secondly, people are able to understand the concept of mental health and what comes under that umbrella with the help of digital platforms.

# Palak Mehta

## TAKES THE LEAD

Q1: What is your definition of mental health?

Mental health is something that should be taken care of and is very important. Mental health focuses on feelings and behavior, thinking patterns and correlations between these patterns and behaviour.

Q2: What do you think is the biggest challenge teenagers face in the context of mental health today?

A lot of stigma surrounding certain disorders and symptoms. Also, due to social media and social pressure teenagers have a lot of pressure to act and live in a certain manner. Their expectations from life arise from essentially 'highlight reels', and people tend to live for the camera rather than realistically which leads to greater unhappiness and lower satisfaction in all areas.

Q4: What are some trends you've noticed about mental health?

1. Before COVID mental health was a very taboo subject, and people often hid their struggles from their loved ones preferring to suffer through it rather than going to professionals. After COVID and during the pandemic there was a lot more interaction, and so people witnessed firsthand the effects of mental illness- and its grave impacts. As a result people went out and sought more help, and thus there has been a significant reduction in the stigma surrounding mental health.

Q3: What are some strategies one can use to mitigate these challenges?

1. Spreading awareness that teenagers can relate to. Awareness workshops, but in an accessible manner- in an environment that isn't preachy but interactive and relatable so that they feel safe to share their issues. Techniques to be more present in the moment are also keystones to increase productivity and satisfaction.





# AAYUSHI SONDAGAR

A clinical psychologist, Aayushi has been working with children who have ADHD, dyslexia, dysgraphia and other learning disabilities. She prides herself on her approach to building trust, and prioritises creating a safe space for her clients.

Q1: What is your definition of mental health?

Mental health has a vast range of definition and perspectives. As a psychologist it refers to your daily doings, your interactions and communication with people, and how you express your emotions. In combination it refers to how you live and navigate life and its obstacles.

Q2: What do you think is the biggest challenge teenagers face in the context of mental health today?

In today's day there are multiple aspects that threaten teenage mental health. Social media and its digital aspects do play a huge role. We see a lot of teenagers coming in with ideas of comparison, ideas of being left out and not being good enough. A lot of dissatisfaction with what they have and what they miss out on. The need for instant gratification stems from social media, but it leads to struggles with hard work and a lot of anxiety, self-doubt, and loneliness- in spite of us being more connected than ever.

Q3: What are some strategies one can use to mitigate these challenges?

As a psychologist the first step is validating the feelings of the person who is going through something. They don't feel seen, heard, or understood. So creating a safe space where they can open up is the first step. Through my experience every individual is different, and so a tailored approach is necessary as everyone deals with things differently.

Q4: What are some trends you've noticed about mental health?

3. In comparison, there is a lot of increased awareness in the mental health space now. People are aware that it is as important as physical health. But there is a lot of increased misqualification. Pseudoscientists, misinformation, and unqualified people trying to help which has a vast negative impact.



# Priti Umesh Shobha Shetty



**Q1: What is your definition of mental health?**

Just like physical health, you should take care of your mental health too.

**Q2: What do you think is the biggest challenge teenagers face today in the context of mental health?**

The inter generation gap definitely acts as a barrier. Issues with friendships and relationships, stress with career and the future, dealing with feelings of being overwhelmed- all of them describe a lot of the issues plaguing today's teenagers.

**Q3: What are some strategies teenagers can use to mitigate these challenges?**

Grounding techniques, I find are very effective. One of my favourite techniques is remembering and using the here and now technique- reminding them where they are and that they have time to achieve what they want- that their timeline is theirs alone.

**Q4: What are some trends you've noticed about mental health?**

As I'm sure you have also noticed, a lot of unqualified help is now being given. Becoming a psychologist is the 'in' thing now- and everyone has something to say. While this open discussion has greatly reduced stigma it has created a new problem: unqualified help which does more harm than good.



# REEMA KADAM



Q1: What is your definition of mental health?

My definition of mental health is focusing on yourself, to love yourself and be yourself.

Q2: What do you think is the biggest challenge teenagers face in the context of mental health today?

I think nowadays, social pressure, and social media pressure is the root cause of all issues. It leads to constant comparison and anxiety and feeling like you are not good enough, because everyone keeps comparing themselves to the perfect version of who they see on social media- which leads to anxiety and constantly feeling inadequate.

Q3: What are some strategies one can use to mitigate these challenges?

Since the main issue come from social media one should focus on your immediate surroundings and what you can do to be the best version of yourself and have the best social impact in your capacity. Use grounding techniques and breathing techniques and meditation to help deal with anxiety. Have a good, healthy routine and ensure you have good sleep schedule.

Q4: What are some trends you've noticed about mental health?

I can see that there are now more 'life coaches' and people giving help without any degrees- they are giving unqualified help and opinions. .

Different specializations from people who have no background in this field- I've seen someone become a breakup coach! And their background is in technology it makes no sense and leads to constant misunderstanding as there is lack of basic understanding of psychology. And so this offering of help that is actually unhelpful in the long run

# Siddhi kalbhor

## Q1: What is your definition of mental health?

Mental health is very important. Just how you take care of your physical health, you should take care of your mental health. They are both interconnected, and psycho-educating society is the need of the hour. In reality there is a lot of mind body connection.

## Q2: What do you think is the biggest challenge teenagers face in the context of mental health today?

People are misusing mental health and misunderstanding mental health. People need to develop a deeper understanding of the same. Teenagers need to be more patient, develop better organizing skills.

## Q3: What are some strategies one can use to mitigate these challenges?

Teenagers are getting a lot more exposure, so they are able to resolve their issues, and speak more openly about their problems.

## Q4: What are some trends you've noticed about mental health?

Seek professional help. Surround yourselves with understanding people, not those who speak just to speak. Be mindful of your resources.





# COMMON TRENDS

*through*

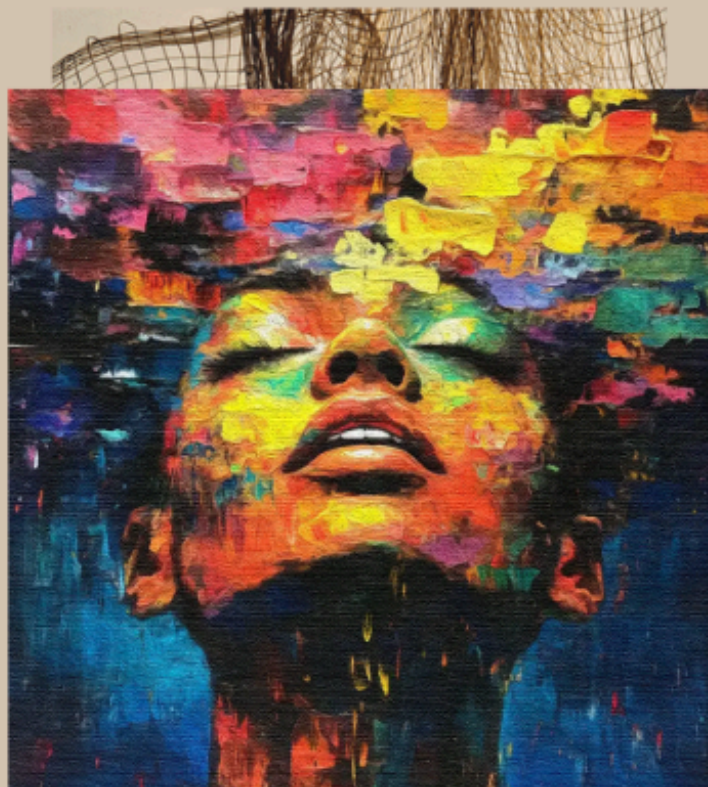
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## WHAT IS MENTAL HEALTH?

Mental health becomes an amalgamation of things that directly impact your daily life. Your behaviour, your mood, your regulation- it all is a part of mental health. Just as we prioritise our physical health- seek help when we see symptoms- we should do the same for our mental health.



## WHAT IS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE TEENAGERS FACE



Social media has become the unanimous answer to this question. Comparison has become part of everyone's daily routine- the feeling of not being good enough- of having fallen far, far behind has long since overtaken the loneliness social media was supposed to bridge. These thoughts manifest as anxiety, constantly trying to be somebody else- and as a result illusion has become the new normal. Differentiating between what is real and what is manufactured simply is not happening, and as a result everyone feels woefully inadequate.

# COMMON TRENDS

*through  
the interviews*

Grounding has emerged as the easiest and most wildly applicable strategy- something that will act as a bandage and slow the bleeding. While professional help is advised, remembering to focus on the present and establish a firm presence in the *present* and not the fantasy of what could or should be.

## STRATEGIES



## TRENDS



The digital platform truly embodied itself as two wildly different sides of the same coin. On the one hand stigma has greatly reduced- and while some mental illnesses are still taboo- for the most part people have become more open to seeking help. However, due to its easy accessibility *everyone* tries to give advice- which may come with the best intentions but is ultimately unqualified advice- and thus often does more harm than good.