

Concept Note

Introduction

Disability has always been bracketed as an exception, rather an unfortunate exception. Consequently, as is the case with all exceptions, disability as an issue is often overlooked and not engaged with. Since this exception bears an added burden of being unfortunate, it's all the more distanced and marginalized. Seldom, do we realize that we all experience some or the other kind of disability at different points in our lives. So, what is the mechanism that is setting in here? Why such rejection of exception from the so-called "normal"? The answer to these questions could stir our own deep-seated fears and anxieties as most stigmas do and this is precisely what we intend to gain at this Mental Health Day. What does seeing a person with chronic mental illness who has no sense of restrictions do to us? Is it the person we feel sorry for or ourselves? Is the disgust or shame arising from that person, an outside source, or from the underlying feelings that that person stirred? Why can't we acknowledge sexual feelings in a person with physical disability? Why is it a taboo? What are we so horrified of? It is not that we don't know the answers to these questions. This state of ignorance arising from our own protective measures, from our own fear of the unknown, where we like the state of not knowing.

We might try to distance disability with both our arms out-stretched, but seldom do we realize that we might be just a slip away from it. Our seemingly invincible abilities, our defenses could be shattered in just another moment. Its time to realize what disability really means. Disability has always been seen as a sorry state. However, equally true is the fact that disability inspires unmatched strength, spirit, and resilience. There are numerous examples of such inspiring stories; some told and others untold. Majority of proclaimed artists, writers, and many others produced their magnificent work during the height of their disability. There is more to disability that meets the eye because the eye can see only what we would like it to see. It matters the lens through which we perceive things.

Its time to break the expression of remorse, and break into a smile of hope in CELEBRATION of disability. Some may ask why celebrate? Because celebration is synonymous with “liberation”, it's a freedom from shackles of our own selves and one imposed by the society. Together lets annihilate the constrained notion of disability, and take the responsibility of being the agent of change. Let's come together on this mental health day to 'own', 'learn' and 'celebrate' the lived experiences of disability!

Centre for Psychotherapy & Clinical Research (CPCR) presents to you Awaaz 2017: Celebrating Disability through Narratives of Hope & Despair on 9th October (at AUD, Karampura campus) and 10th October (AUD, Kashmere Gate campus).

Events

9th October 2017, Karampura Campus

10am – 11 am: Inauguration of Awaaz & Ehsaas clinic, Venue Ehsaas clinic: We have a clinic for psychotherapy (Ehsaas) dedicated to address the psychological issues brought up by our students, staff, and the community at large. The clinic will be formally inaugurated in the presence of the Honourable VC, Director CPCR, other senior faculty members, and our dear students. The event will also mark the opening of our Mental Health Day celebrations. We will be having a kite –writing activity, wherein everyone can leave their heartfelt messages related to psychological wellbeing. These messaged kites will henceforth adorn the 'tree of wellbeing' at the Karampura Campus and be symbolic of mental health.

11am- 1:00 pm: Panel Discussion, Venue G-11: We have three panelists Prof. Anita Ghai (AUD), Dr. Achal Bhagat, and Renu Addlakha. The discussion will be moderated by Prof Honey Oberoi Vahali (Director CPCR). Firstly, the discussants will be welcomed for the event. Then each speaker will be given the stage for 20 minutes in which will try to bring out the unseen /untold challenges that disability brings along in the everyday lives ; at the same time they will try to highlight how disability is not a shackle of constraint, but can instill in one an unparalleled strength and vision. This will be followed by open discussion with the students wherein they will be encouraged to ask questions and contribute through their own experiences as well.

2:00 pm-5:00 pm: Activities, Venue Karampura Campus Ground

Lyrical Painting & Wall Painting

This activity has been designed with an intention to facilitate our participants to pour out their thoughts and emotions on the canvas in response to some heart-touching songs centered on the theme of disability. The participants will be listening to some selected songs, and will be alongside painting their reflections of it. They will be provided with chart papers, paints and other necessary stationeries required for painting.

Sports activities

These are fun activities and a humble attempt to make our participants realize the hardships that people with any kind of physical or psychological issues might go through. Some of the activities included are three leg race, blind fold race, wash and run, calculate while I disturb, and many more.

At the end of these activities, the art work of the students will be displayed and a discussion will be held with them to sensitize them to the issues raised through these activities.

5:00 pm-7:00 pm: Musical Evening, Venue Karampura Campus Ground

Towards the end of the day we plan to have a light musical evening. A band called *Basti*, which is an initiative of people from margins, has been invited to perform. Some of our talented students would also be participating. We invite all to enjoy and encourage the performances.

10th October 2017, Kashmere Gate Campus

2:00 pm - 4:00 pm: Movie Screening & Discussion: The movie body and soul will be screened which revolves around the theme of disability. This will be followed by a discussion with the students.

4:00 – 6:00 pm, Meri Awaaz Suno, Venue CR area: This will be an open interactive session with people with different forms of physical / mental/chronic disabilities. We have invited 6-8 speakers who will be sharing their life stories; their strengths, and challenges. The session is intended with the vision to sensitize, and encourage people to look beyond the superficial labels that come attached with different forms of physical and mental health issues. To understand the lived experiences of people, and to establish a connect with them.

6:00pm - 8:00 pm, Cultural Evening, Venue CR area: The students are invited to share their creative pursuits around the theme of our mental health day. Songs, poems, drama, paintings, and other expressions are encouraged. This will mark the closure of our two day event, with a hope of leaving a message to remember.