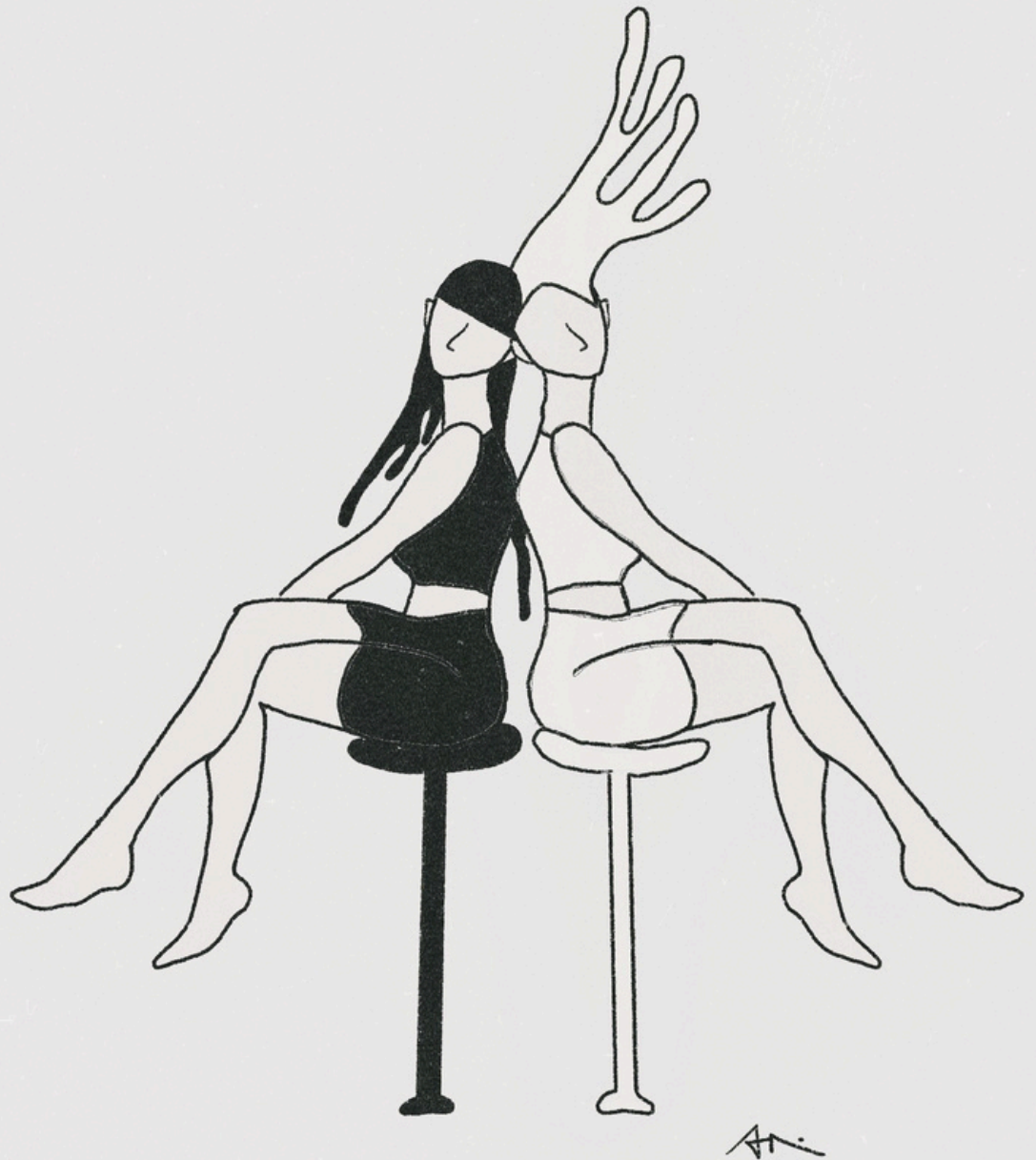


ANJoy.

1(4) . JUNE 2024

mental wellness



About



Welcome to **ANJoy**, a wellness zine and art project by **Altered Native**.

It is a way to process, reimagine and present boring topics about wellness in a more colorful and fun fashion.

Our works are mostly inspired by Surrealist and Cubist styles, as well as typographies of vintage Japanese and American advertisements. We would like to credit these artistries and their introductions of us into a comfortable space.

We hope you will enjoy the present!

EVERY ONE CAN ANJOY.



We may not be professional writers nor artists, but ANJoy is the freedom to explore creatively, to present logic in illogical ways, to make sense with one's own senses.

It is meant to be free enjoyment, and we hope it does similar things for the reader.

vibe with us?

We are happy to support and feature aspiring artists. Please contact us.

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IN THIS ISSUE

1.



BIPOLAR DISORDER
P. 05 - 09

2.



DEPRESSION
P. 10 - 14

3.



ANXIETY
P. 15 - 18

4.



TREATMENT
P. 19 - 21

5.



ALT TREATMENTS
P. 22 - 30

6.



**COVER INFO
REFERENCES**

MENTAL WELLNESS

Mentally well people are **positive, self-assured and happy**. They are in control of their thoughts, emotions and behavior.

Yet, not all humans are privileged with this state of being.

Resident physician mental wellness has been increasingly studied within the healthcare field, mainly due to the **massive personal cost of burnout, fatigue and declining mental health**.

Increasing awareness and education on mental wellness lead to greater wellbeing and resilience within humans.

MENTAL WELLNESS

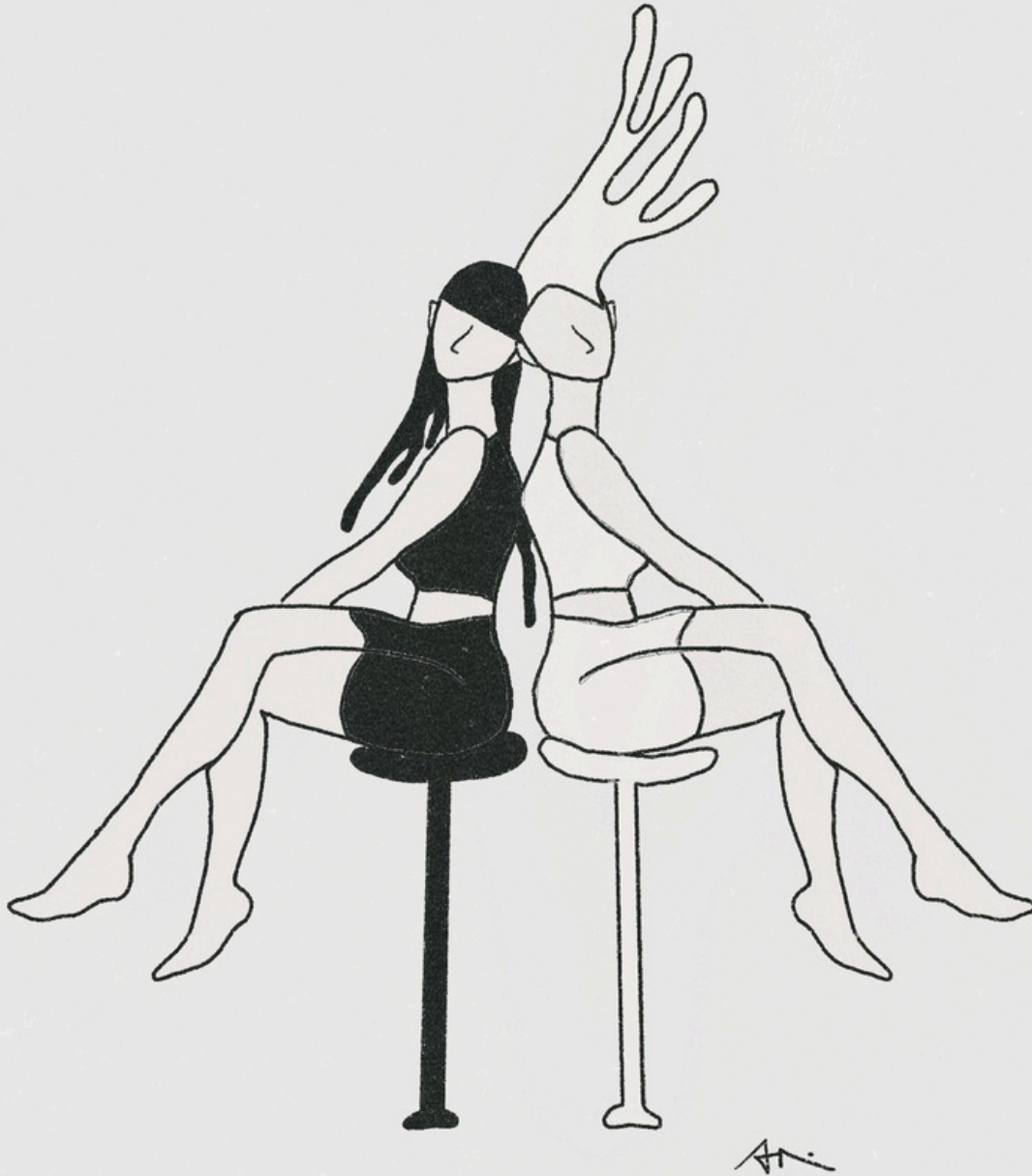
Wellness is defined as a conscious and deliberate process to be mindful of choices that lead to a more satisfying lifestyle.

In this issue, we study three common mental illnesses that disrupt wellness, namely:

- BIPOLAR DISORDER
- DEPRESSION
- ANXIETY

We hope this helps strugglers understand themselves better, along with “normal” humans to understand what these people experience.

1) BIPOLAR DISORDER



BIPOLAR DISORDER

Classified as a mood disorder, BPD is a **common, recurrent and severe psychiatric illness** that affects cognition, behavior, and is often complicated by psychotic symptoms such as delusions and disorganized thinking.

The disorder is characterized by **recurrent episodes of elevated mood and depression**, along with changes in activity levels. While patients travel between extremes, **depression is usually the more common and longer lasting - over elevated moods.**

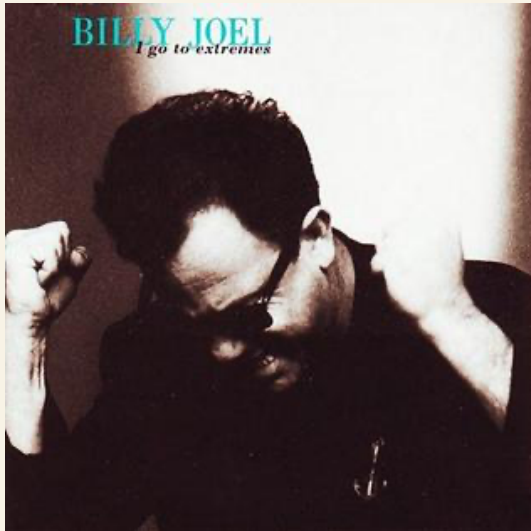
BIPOLAR DISORDER

The disorder is **chronic and recurrent**, and affects **>1% of the global population**. Due to its cognitive and functional impairment, and increased mortality, it is the **leading cause of disability in young people**.

The disorder holds a nature of **recurrent episodes** of elevated mood and depression, along with changes in activity levels.

At least 25% of patients attempt suicide, while the rest remain at risk of contemplation of suicide.

BIPOLAR DISORDER



Billy Joel - I go to extremes

There are many musicians expressing BPD, and the song “I go to extremes” by Billy Joel is probably one of the best in describing the disorder.

Did You Know?

Bipolar disorder was the sixth leading cause of disability worldwide in 1990.

BIPOLAR DISORDER

How did we get here?

Bipolar Disorder may develop from traumatic events, usually from childhood.

However, BPD has been studied to be **one of the most heritable disorder**. Concordance rates for BPD among identical twins are approx. 65 to 70%, and approx. 14% for fraternal twins.

2) DEPRESSION



DEPRESSION

Depression, or Major depressive disorder (MPD) is recognized as **one of the most pressing mental illnesses**. Just over the past 30 years, the global number of depression cases has **increased almost 50%, with more than 264 million people suffering from the illness**.

Yet, the pain of depression is divided among those who contract it. Some suffer lifetime recurrences, while half or more will never experience it again.

The World Health Organization has recognised depression to be the **leading cause of global mental illness**, with the global “burden” of disease costing the United States alone **over \$325 billion per year** - an increase of 48% in just the past ten years.

DEPRESSION

How did we get here?

The strongest predictors of depression onset have been studied to stem from **highly threatening or severe life events**, such as job loss, divorce, romantic affairs and so on - things that cause high levels of stress.

Unfortunately, 60% of people who incur a first lifetime depressive episode will develop a second one, 70% of those with a second will suffer a third, and 90% of those with three or more will experience additional, often many more, recurrences

DEPRESSION

Does gender matter?

Research has shown that **lifetime prevalence of depression in women is almost twice that of men**, with the greatest risk of onset during child-bearing years, endocrine control of the reproductive system and also the changes occurring from menstrual cycles, specifically during premenstrual and menopause period. Biological processes such as hormonal fluctuations and **an undue sensitivity to these fluctuations in the brain systems mediate and place women at much greater risks of developing these illnesses.**

DEPRESSION

Obesity

Psychological issues related to self-consciousness about appearance usually trace back to **history of childhood**. The diet-induced changes from these experiences hold **gastrointestinal microbiome with effects of the brain** - leading these individuals to be more vulnerable to developing depression.

The early trauma also holds strong links to **resetting of one's metabolism, independent of changes in eating habits related to emotional disturbances**. Stress in adulthood may also cause changes in eating habits, leading to increased obesity, all of which can exacerbate depression.

3) ANXIETY



ANXIETY

Modern society has been coined as the “age of anxiety”- due to an increasingly competitive postmodern technological society.

Anxiety is one of the most pervasive and ubiquitous of human emotions across all cultures, and is generally referred to as feelings of uneasiness and distress caused by an external threat that is usually unspecified, uncertain, and often provoked by a formless form of threat or danger.

Anxiety is also often future-centered - the individual uncontrollably anticipates negative events such as losing a job, relationship and so on.

ANXIETY

Levels of state of anxiety often depend on personality, specifically **trait anxiety**. Highly trait-anxious individuals experience stronger states of anxiety while a more resilient individual with lower state anxiety would likely only experience a moderate amount of tension.

Anxiety is often experienced in the following ways:

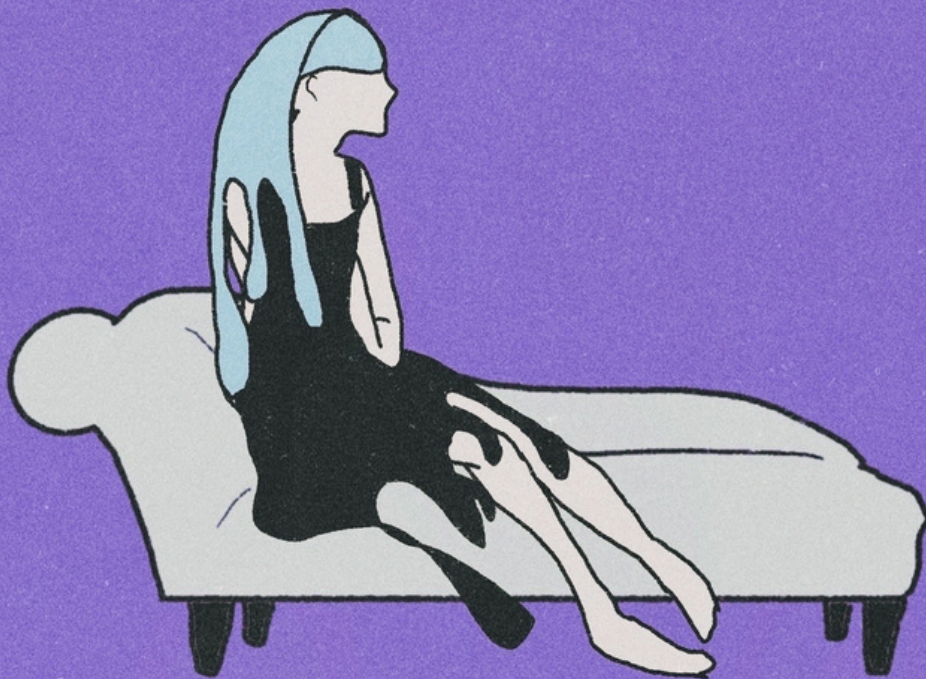
- **Cognition** (Disturbances of thinking) - eg. Hyperfocus on perceived threat or problem.
- **Affect** (Negative emotion) - eg, Tension, Jittering, Nervousness.
- **Somatic** (Bodily) - eg. Racing hearts, Fight or flight responses, Gastric disturbances.

ANXIETY

People suffering from anxiety also often experience bodily symptoms such as sweaty palms, fidgeting and jittering. Often as well, the emotion **feels out of control** for these patients, while a “normal” person would find it manageable. It is also strongly linked to **social elements** such as how society views them.

There is a strong distinction between **fear and anxiety** - the latter refers to **uncontrollable** feelings of uneasiness and distress from an **unspecified or uncertain source**. On the other hand, fear is just an emotion arising from a **specific and identifiable event**.

TREATMENT



AN

TREATMENT

Seek help- this has been the most effective method for me.

It is extremely difficult to overcome a mental illness on your own.

Speak to someone you trust, and you can see a psychiatrist to receive the right medications.

Mental illnesses are lifelong fights, but one can always find a way out - be it through speaking out or seeking professional help.

I've never found my shrink or therapist useful, but I have confided in some of my family members, which had been tremendously helpful because it provides you a **support network** which you need, to help others understand you, and whatever trauma you've been through may just slowly start vanishing.

TREATMENT

Individuals with mental illnesses tend to self-medicate.

I admit my own addictions or vices, mainly because I don't feel that psychiatrists or therapists understand.

I end up self-medicating a lot - but what I realised is **having the self-will to let go of this immediate dopamine rush, is crucial to managing these mental disorders**. One has to be ready to accept how mercurial life is, and adopt healthier coping mechanisms..

And if you trust your psychiatrist, the amount you spend on his/her "right" medication is, or, actually most always cheaper than self-medicating.

ALTERNATIVE TREATMENTS



ALTERNATIVE TREATMENTS

There are two types of support network - natural (eg. family, friends, and formal (eg. psychiatrists, counsellors)). When the latter isn't working, one may try the former.

Three main means have been researched to assist disorders, with them being **exercising, nutrition, and quality sleep.**



ALTERNATIVE TREATMENTS

The main alternative treatment centers around **lifestyle**.

This includes **nutrition, productivity, exercise, sleep, and meaningful activity** such as socialization. Research has shown that to overcome illnesses, an individual has to **commit to overall wellness**, including social support, spiritual connections and care of one's physical health.

NUTRITION

Interestingly, much research has been conducted towards a **Mediterranean Diet (MD)** in managing **mental wellness**.

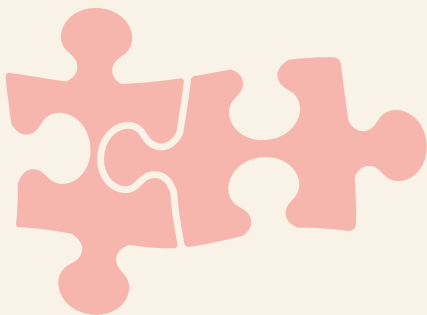
Adolescents who adopted MD have shown to hold a higher likelihood of physical benefits and report higher levels of quality of life - all linked to their mental well-being.

The dietary modification **not only prevents diseases, but has been researched to manage stress-related mental disorders** which include major depression and PTSD.

NUTRITION

Believe it or not, **diet has a direct effect on moods** - and the MD being rich in nuts, vegetables, fruit, unsaturated oils, along with low consumption of meat and red wine - **affects our brain function and psychiatric disorders.**

Fats are studied to interfere with the synthesis of serotonin, which is a key brain neurotransmitter implicated in the development of depression, whereas **protein plays the opposite effect.**



CONCLUSION

**Have less fat,
and more protein.**

NUTRITION

It has also been recently recognized that **gastrointestinal microbiome affects brain function**. Our gastrointestinal flora is composed of a range of bacterial species, all of which affect our digestion and bodily functions. **Stress and a high fat diet influence our brain function through molecules, and these interact with our neurotransmitters and neuropeptides**. These lead to changes in mood, stress reactivity and can lead to leakiness of the gut epithelium, releasing inflammatory factors and penetration of gut flora into the intestinal wall - **all of which increasing the risk of depression due to the alterations in signaling pathways to the brain**.

NUTRITION

Survey studies have proven patients consuming a diet similar to MD hold a reduced risk for developing depression. The diet has also been suggested to have a 43% higher likelihood of achieving improved sleep - a crucial element to treatment.

Participants in a study who held higher adherence to MD also showed to hold lower levels of both anxiety and depression. The study's strongest finding was the negative correlation between MD and levels of mental well-being, specifically anxiety and depression.

NUTRITION

Similar studies have also proven combining folate, Vitamin B12, along with antidepressants produce improved symptoms of depression. .

The point of all these information is to present that nutrition can provide therapeutic effects, simply by the communication between nutrients and our brains.



SLEEP

Poor sleep affects a significant amount of adults suffering from mental illnesses, and is a **robust risk factor for physical morbidity and premature mortality.**

A 14-week project involving 78 adults studied sleep quality, and has evidenced it as **a strong factor to promoting wellness and self-management.**

Preliminary data was that this self-management has assisted adults with chronic mental illnesses.



CONCLUSION

Mental illnesses are often a lifelong struggle, and while seeking professional help is narrated to be the most effective, it may not always be (no hate on psychiatrists, therapists etc!).

In this issue, we discover the most important factors to self-treatment include:

- Support Network
- Nutrition
- Exercise
- Quality sleep.



Black or White (2024)

Cover Info

The cover illustration represents the extremities people with BPD experience.

While there is still stigma surrounding mental illnesses, we wish to tell those suffering that you are not less of a human, and in fact; a stronger one for fighting it.

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