

7TH DIGITAL ISSUE, OCT 2021

# THE FEEEL MAGAZINE

1ST DIGITAL MAGAZINE FOR EMOTIONAL PREVENTIVE CARE



Commemorating World Mental Health Day, 2021

# CHILD PSYCHOLOGY

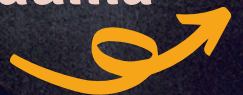
Read about early  
childhood  
development,  
screen addiction  
& more inside!

Sohail  
Bawani

Lydia  
Giblin



See Special Expert Features  
inside on Childhood Trauma  
& Play Therapy



The FEEEL<sup>®</sup>  
MAGAZINE  
Emotional Well-Being Matters



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# THE FEEEL MAGAZINE

PAKISTAN'S FIRST DIGITAL MAGAZINE ON EMOTIONAL  
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## DIGITAL ISSUE OCT, 2021

### Patron-in-Chief

Dr. Faryal Razzaq

### Editor

Amna Siddiqui

### Sub-editor

Samia Maqsood

### Content & Creatives

Samia Maqsood

Amna Siddiqui

Qaiser Ali

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OCT 2021

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# MESSAGE FROM CEO



On this #WorldMentalHealthDay, what an honour it is to celebrate The FEEEL Magazine - 1st Digital Magazine on Emotional Preventive Care in Pakistan. We launched the 1st issue on last year's WMHD. The FEEEL (Framework for Emotions, Ethics, Empowerment & Life Skills) is working on creating awareness for emotional issues. We are very excited to announce that our work is being noticed - we are being sponsored by OGDCL, - a company that really cares for the mental health of its employees.

Delighted to announce the winners of the reader contest with a bumper prize for 5,000/-PKR & other gift hampers selected on our last anniversary issue. The love & response for art submissions in various categories is overwhelming. This caring & engaging community gives us hope that our mission of spreading awareness for "Emotional Wellbeing Matters" is reaching far & wide.

This issue's theme is dedicated to Childhood Psychology & Trauma whether it be verbal, emotional or physical. We have tied in the launch specially to the 'World Mental Health Day'. The thought behind celebrating these days is to encourage discourse about solving the problems faced by people still suffering from childhood traumas, as well as creating awareness on how our seemingly mindless acts & words affect the delicate psyche of the child. We are thankful to Lydia Giblin (UK) & Sohail Bawani (PK) for giving their valuable time to talk about such an important topic. The COVID-19 pandemic sadly escalated the frequency & magnitude of domestic violence & other mental health issues specially for children. This issue will help parents, teachers, caregivers as well people suffering from childhood traumas.

The FEEEL Magazine is an effort to reach high & low & to help those who missed our free live sessions for our various educational series like #Listen2Experts, #MindHack101 etc. We are trying to normalize & break the taboos around seeking help & talking about emotional issues, as we believe that, "Emotional Wellbeing Matters".

I am very proud of the team behind the magazine. We are in this fight together & look forward to your support & feedback as emotions matters, you matter & community matters!



*Dr. Faryal Razaq*

**Founder + CEO, The FEEEL**





# EDITOR'S NOTE

Greetings!

October 10th is **World Mental Health Day**, & the theme for 2021 is '*Mental Health in an Unequal World*'. The FEEEL Magazine's mission upfront has always been to provide accessible emotional preventive care through our various recurring series. Be it an expert's opinion & insight into the theme we are focusing on (**#Listen2Experts**), a deep-dive into the science behind a mental health topic (**#MindHack101**), or a guide to make your everyday emotional health better (**#EmotionalWellBeingMatters**) - we are determined to bring you information that was previously kept behind either stigma-laden curtains or avoided because of cultural norms. Pakistan's youth is a vulnerable segment of the society when it comes to availability of mental healthcare. We rarely talk, & when we do, we don't come to a productive conclusion. This is why reliable, relatable & legitimate dispersal of information is a key factor in bridging the gap between thoughts & actions.

The theme for our current issue is Child Psychology and I am delighted to bring you two expert features. Sohail Bawani had a conversation with Dr. Faryal Razzaq on his own journey with childhood trauma and how he has used several healing modalities including the completion process to heal. I, myself, had a very fascinating conversation with Lydia Giblin, who talked about the benefits of using play as a means of trauma therapy in children affected with PTSD.

As always, we received a number of stellar entries for our Art Submission Contest. Congratulations to all the winners! Towards the end we also have the announcements for the winner and runner-ups of the Reader Contest that was held in Aug, 2021. We will be sending out the prizes soon!

Immensely proud of the team for pulling together yet another issue. Looking back at last year's WMHD, when we launched our 1st issue - I did not anticipate how long this will last. Grateful to say that not only have we had amazing milestones in terms of readership, reach and now even a multiple-issue sponsorship from a major organization, but that we are only just getting started!

Thank you for coming along for the journey, and see you in another two months!

*Amna Siddiqui*

Editor, The FEEEL Magazine



SPECIAL  
**thanks**  
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## **OIL & GAS DEVELOPMENT COMPANY LIMITED**



According to the World Health Organization, the overall objective of the World Mental Health Day (10th October) is to raise awareness of mental health issues around the world and to mobilize efforts in support of mental health. The Day provides an opportunity for all stakeholders working on mental health issues to talk about their work, and what more needs to be done to make mental healthcare a reality for people worldwide. The FEEEL (PVT) Ltd. is doing a tremendous job in this regard.

Young people and their mental health in a changing world is a huge challenge for all the mental health awareness advocates. Psychological first aid in the form of counselling is key to avoid major problems in this regard. Pakistan is considered the 5th largest young country in the world. Such a large young population has its unique mental health challenges. Starting from basic education at a standardized school, to fulfilling their dreams of gaining a job after higher education in order to make themselves financially independent; the entire process causes immense stress & anxiety in young people due to the continuous competition among masses and lack of available opportunities in a developing nation.

The current need of the time is that each Pakistani, irrespective of age, should focus on their mental health. It does not have to be a taboo and it certainly should not contribute to mental burnout because you get so focused on what it means to be mentally healthy that you lose sight of what it actually means to work on a healthy emotional lifestyle. There is always a path undiscovered waiting to be discovered and you'll find it without having to resort to a tug-of-war to the end of life.

Remember, sometimes we are just the collateral damage in someone else's war against themselves. Help others and stay strong. We need to stop worrying and start working to make it through anything! There is no harm in using the "Block", "Delete", "Un-follow", "Un-friend", "Mute", "Don't Bother" buttons, if it is costing you your mental health, peace & stability.

Good luck to The FEEEL Magazine team in making strides in this regard!

*Sumbal Wahab*

**SENIOR CSR OFFICER, OGDCL**  
**sumbal.wahab@ogdcl.com**



**#MINDHACK101**

**Early Childhood  
Development  
from a  
Neurobiological  
Perspective**

**Original Article by  
Amna Siddiqui**

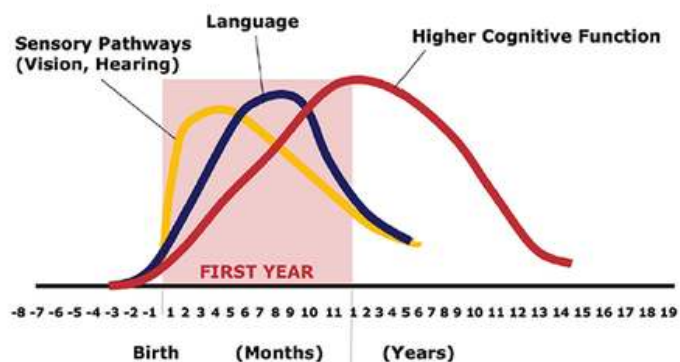
# A neurobiological perspective on early childhood development

Neuroscientific & behavioural research has outlined some basic concepts with regards to early childhood development that can inform decisions that lead to a happier, sustainable & flourishing society in the long run.

## Brains develop from the bottom up, over time

Brain development is an ongoing process that begins before birth & progresses well into adulthood. In the 1st year, sensory pathways like vision & hearing are rapidly 'proliferated' followed by language & cognitive functioning. In the later years, the brain 'prunes' off connections & builds more complex neural circuitry on top of the basic structure.

**Human Brain Development**  
Neural Connections for Different Functions Develop Sequentially



Source: C.A. Nelson (2000). Credit: Center on the Developing Child

## Interactions of genes & experiences shape the developing brain

Scientists call it the 'serve & return' exchange. The more interactive, vocalized & gestured your back & forth with your child is, the more expressive they become. In the absence of this, development can be stunted, with difficulties in learning & behaviour.





## Brain plasticity decreases with age

To accommodate the wide array of experiences & interactions in the early years, the child's brain remains flexible or 'plastic'. However, as they age, in order to cope with complex functioning the brain specializes & loses ability to change overtime. Thus, the 'windows' for learning begin to close up over time. Rewiring the brain circuitry (in response to a trauma, for example) is hence easier to do in the early years as compared to adolescence.



## Emotional, social-connectedness & cognitive capacities are key factors throughout life

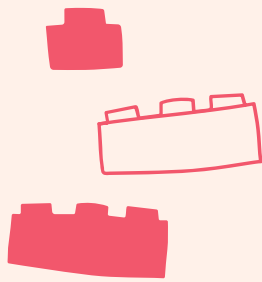
A child's emotional wellbeing & social interactions form a solid base to developing cognitive functioning. All functions in the brain are inter-related & the importance of emotional & physical wellbeing, social competence & cognitive-linguistic capacities in the early childhood development ensure better performance overall in the long run.



## Toxic stress is debilitating in the developing brain structure

If a child is exposed to a toxic & chronic stress environment in the early years (extreme poverty, recurring abuse, or severe maternal depression), their brain architecture is permanently damaged & affects their physical & emotional wellbeing, as well as leading to learning, behavioural & physical issues.

Source: Center on the Developing Child (2007). The Science of Early Childhood Development (InBrief). Retrieved from [www.developingchild.harvard.edu](http://www.developingchild.harvard.edu).



# building blocks to optimizing brain development

According to Dr. Kristy Goodwin, a children's learning and development researcher, there are 7 essential elements to ensuring brain development in a child is streamlined<sup>1</sup>.

## 1 Attachment & Relationships

Loving, empathetic & reliable relationships = secure, unstressed & safe children.

## Language 2

Babies & children need abundant use of language (hearing & using) in a 'serve & return' interactive manner.

## 3 Sleep

Good sleep is essential for a child's mental, physical & emotional development.

## Play 4

Exploratory, experimental nature of play = skill & cognitive development, creativity and emotional regulation in children.

## 5 Physical Movement

Progressing from simple to complex motor skills = developing more higher-order & sophisticated thinking capabilities.

## Nutrition 6

Quality nutrition is essential. Children need foods containing essential fatty acids for good brain development.

## 7 Executive Functioning Skills

Higher-order thinking skills like impulse control & working memory need to be acquired.

<sup>1</sup> "Demystifying the Female Brain" (Book), Dr. Sarah McKay



#

ISTEN2EXPERTS



**CHILDHOOD TRAUMA**  
WITH  
**SOHAIL BAWANI**



**CHILD DEVELOPMENT  
& PLAY**  
WITH  
**LYDIA GIBLIN**

# SOHAIL BAWANI

Sohail Bawani is a specialist in Trauma, a completion process practitioner & a master trainer. He's also an Emotional Intuitive coach. He has done his MPhil in Sociology, from University of Karachi. Most notably, he has been working with Teal Swan. She's one of the most phenomenal mind sciences coach. Mr. Sohail has been trained by her. He has a certification in trauma healing. He works with local and global clients to help them recover from their past traumatic experiences and internal conflicts that hamper their day-to-day life. Moreover, he has a vast experience of over 10 years in academia with renowned institutions. For more information and getting in touch, visit <https://sohailbawani.com/>





# Q&A

**Live Interview with Dr. Faryal Razzaq.  
Transcript by Samia Maqsood**

**Dr. Faryal Razzaq:** Welcome to the session, Sir. There is so much going on in Mind Sciences, that it is hard to keep in touch with it. So first I'll ask you to help us catch up with everything in this field. Let's start from the completion process, what it is and how it works?

**Sohail Bawani:** Before I do that, Dr. Faryal, Thank you so much for having me on this platform. The completion process is basically a healing modality. There are different healing modalities like the stroke therapy, drug therapy etc. But this healing modality is about the psychosomatic system of a person. It's got 18 steps. It begins with any emotional trigger you have which then takes you to the particular source of trauma. It comes in the form of an image or a memory, So, you repair the memory and take those 18 steps as the outcome of this process. In one session, you go through that emotional trigger and arrive at peace. So it's a healing technique of trauma, especially PTSD and complex PTSD.

**FR:** How is emotional intuitive healing different from the completion process? Tell us the difference and what a person should be expecting when they're talking to a coach about it.

**SB:** The word 'emotional intuitive' comes from my own background because the kind of trauma I went through was all about co-dependency and enmeshment. Those who go through this, they are very well known for their sensitive nature. So I had this natural gift of assessing people's emotions by feeling and what is going on with them. But I didn't realize that it can be turned into a profession and something that I would love to do. Since I can relate with people's subconscious minds, it helps me understand people's patterns very easily. And the word healer is basically a very general term in the self-help psychology field. I also use the term coach because I call myself a teacher of spirituality and a personal coach. I know how to coach people in terms of how they resolve their internal conflict, which manifests itself into any sort of physical condition or mental health conditions.

**FR:** I would like you to tell our audience that healing from a past trauma is like a journey rather than a one-session process. People usually think that something that happened in the past has already passed. Do you think people can ever grow out of their trauma?

**SB:** I am glad you asked this question. Believe me, those traumas don't go anywhere. It's like they are frozen children within us. That's the kind of metaphor I would like to associa-



-te with past traumas. Not everyone has the same emotional triggers. For example, I can have this particular moment where I feel powerless or start to panic, when the internet is not working. There is something wrong with the internet and I get triggered into this panic mode. This is where this frozen child of the past takes over me. I'd still be there, in the same moment of past trauma. So now, what I do as a healing coach, I unfreeze that part of people's past and integrate it with their conscious mind. Everyone is traumatized, either to a lesser or a greater extent. Trauma is a spectrum. The highest end of the spectrum are things like genocide, sexual abuse or any sort of abuse. At the lesser extent, you have emotional abandonment. Sometimes people have the trauma of rejection. It is so prevalent in our part of the world. And unfortunately, we don't even call it trauma. We need to broaden this definition of Trauma. So that a person going through rejection can seek treatment for their psyche that needs to be unfreezed and integrated.

**FR: Please share the experience of your clients and the kind of relief one can expect from the completion process?**

**SB:** There are several examples. For instance, one client of mine from the UK - he was into trading and worked with the trading community. His trauma was related to working with money. He sort of gets anxious and does things that make him lose money in the end. So, he came to me and we realized that he got this trait from his father. It's like he had internalized his father within himself. He didn't know about this inner self. He was trying to blame others as well as himself for his loss. Now, 'internalizing your father', in this instance means that the person let beliefs and parental messages of the past carry with them into their present. I call myself a consciousness shifter. Within three sessions, his consciousness shifted. He told me in a testimonial that his anxiety went from 80% to 20%. Another example can be taken from a session I had with a woman who complained of having an unknown fear. She had quit her job and was in a new situation, So, I transported her to her fear. Metaphorically speaking, we travel in a way. We gave this unconditional loving presence to her fear and it revealed that the fear was developing from her past experience with her parents' house. We found that her inner child was like a crippled person and we rescued it. We took it to safe space and in an hour or so, she was almost out of fear. She was felt relieved of that fear.

In most therapies, we focus on the center and try to eliminate the symptom - it then goes away and people are happy. Once people become aware of the real reason behind their psychological problems, it becomes a liberating experience for them. They now know what to do about it. The completion process in a way is a very empowering process, which gives power to the client, not to the expert. I don't call myself an expert, but a guide. We do the midwifery work and give birth to relief.

**"I don't call myself an expert, but a guide."**





**FR: How is the completion process different from Reiki or hypnotherapy, or other healing modalities?**

**SB:** Reiki and Hypnotherapy are two different ideas. Reiki is all about energy. The person becomes the medium, then the medium works with the people. For example, I work with a person with a headache, channeling energy into the head and trying to reduce or manage the pain. Hypnotherapy is an entirely different process where the expert has the power to hypnotize someone and change their beliefs or access the subconscious. On the other hand, the completion process comes from the work that is known in psychology as inner child or like Carl Jung said shadow work/self. Within this process, the medium or expert is the client and the practitioner like me becomes the guide. Your body wants to heal. For instance, if I have a cut on my hand, it will heal itself. People have the power to heal themselves. What stops the healing process is the fear. People are afraid of feelings, they

are afraid of confronting their emotions. 'If I go into it, I won't be able to come back' - these are the beliefs people have. So, in the completion process, the guide sort of holds their hands and takes them through that difficult situation. We encourage them that once you cross that dark tunnel, there is a way of life, a ray of hope out there.

**FR: Misconceptions come from cultural conditioning. Like men cannot be emotional, they cannot be sensitive to certain feelings, the strongest women are those who suffer in silence etc. I mean, this is the epitome of being the righteous woman in our society - you just keep on taking the abuse and utter no word. These kinds of societal pressures, which are absolutely absurd and have no roots - How do they affect children in later life?**

**SB:** I think there are many in which trauma manifests itself. For example, it can manifest itself in the form of a bodily illness, which maybe cancer. Studies are showing that emotional neglect

is highly associated with cancer. Researchers are tracing cancer to the traumatic experience that people had. It's no longer a linear medical issue. If you analyze this subject, people who have post traumatic experiences are prone to have cancers. On the other hand, people have mental conditions due to trauma. I don't like to call it a disorder. My teacher says, it's just adaptation of the environment which we call a disorder or mental health issue. We tend to adapt to our beliefs and social norms because we don't see any way out. That's how you develop these disorders - emotional conditions, anxiety, depression, psychosis etc. It's all about adapting to an environment which is not conducive to human beings.

**FR: If you have some past experiences, you have to consciously work on it to resolve the childhood traumas. How would you guide people; what is the start and how to begin working on that?**

**SB:** I think, point number one is to recognize what's happening. If you don't recognize where you are right now, you cannot go where you want to be. An example would be that if I don't realize that I have personal boundaries that I need to have in place. Or I cannot make myself set boundaries because I feel that others will disconnect with me on an emotional or relational level. Setting boundaries means you learn to express yourself honestly. So, awareness of your own patterns and triggers will be the first step towards healing and integration. The second thing is, once you know your pattern, then you can decide whether or not to change it. This

## **RESEARCHERS ARE TRACING CANCER TO THE TRAUMATIC EXPERIENCE THAT PEOPLE HAD.**

is very important, the decision of working with a pattern must be a conscious one. Ask yourself, 'Am I willing to change this belief, or myself? What am I trying to change?' Third step - What will be the most helpful thing that will support me? What type of healing modality I would like to engage with? Some people will go with counseling, others might like therapy or psychologists who go deeper into the psychic realms of people and dealing with emotions.

**FR:** It could be very hard for the person who's just realized that the relationship they have been seeking is reflective of their own traumatic experiences. Research shows that we subconsciously tend to seek the perpetrator, especially when looking for a partner. Negativity begets negativity. If you'd been in a toxic relationship with your parents, caregivers, or friends - you tend to look for toxic relationships in your older years as well. When you carry such a load for so long, it changes your personality, perceptions and interactions with people. Give us some good techniques to snap out of those events that may be serious for us, but which may actually not be very serious.



**SB:** I think the first thing I would say is be aware of your emotions. It is the key for healing - your guiding system - because your physical and mental body knows stuff. It alerts you about everything. If a threat is near to you, the body gets into the flight or fight response. Therefore, the first thing is becoming aware of your emotional body. Emotions are physiological experiences that occur in your body. To do that, we need to see what kind of sensations we experience. For example, people put their alarm on and when it goes off, they can remind themselves that I need to connect to my body to know what kind of sensations are present. Sensations are very different from emotions. They are basically like tingling or buzzing. Sensations are tangible. So, you do this exercise for one week. After every hour or whatever time you have, check in what sort of sensations are present. And then after a week, label the sensation with a list of emotions. If I'm feeling tingling, is it anxiety or fear? Google the list of emotions and see which correlates or associates best with the sensations. So, after two weeks, you are more aware of your body. We tend to live in our heads, our education system encourages and celebrates thought as well. It doesn't educate us how to be with yourself, how to be in the negative. So, once you become aware of your emotions, they will tell you what they want because we know what we want. It's our conditioning that disconnects us from the source of our being. Every human being is a unique expression of divinity or God. It depends on your emotional body.

**FR:** Basically you're encouraging people to keep a journal of sensations and then connect it to the emotions to see what kind of emotions are hidden in their past. But how do we trust our emotions?

**SB:** The question in itself has the answer. We don't trust ourselves. So, this question can come from a person who doesn't trust themselves. The reason we experience distrust in our external world is because we have distrust in our internal world. We don't know whether we will be taken care of by our own emotions. We tend to bulldoze emotions, which tend to suppress, deny, reject or dismiss our true selves, because we have learned to do that. If my father said that, you shouldn't be showing anger. I'll suppress my anger, then how can trust be established within your own self?

*Every human being is a unique expression of divinity!*





**FR: Anger can be good actually. We have tabooed this emotion. No emotion is bad per se. The way you execute it matters. The emotions are not good and bad, it's our reactions that are good or bad. I think the trusting part would come from giving yourself time to understand and not judging what's going on. We are very quick to judge.**

**1**

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**SB:** One thing you can do is, once the emotion is there, don't dismiss it, don't push that emotion away. Instead, recognize it. You are there. you can sense it.

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**2**

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The second step is to take care of the emotion. Acknowledge that I am in pain from the situation or I'm in a stressful situation. Once you accept this, the quality of your being changes the very second.

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**3**

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Then the third thing, you can validate your emotion. For example, I see somebody's giving someone a nice suit - I get could get jealous of that. You can take care of that jealousy. Acknowledge that you're jealous. Then validate that it's okay to be jealous. Anyone in your position will be jealous. You feel jealous because somebody got something and you didn't. Once you do that, you are in a situation where you can strategize and think about ways to deal with it. So, don't deny it. What we do is, we immediately shove that emotion away. Know that emotions won't change. You need to be unconditionally present with that emotion.

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**FR: It's been such a wonderful talk. Thank you so much for your time. We've been bombarded with so many complex emotions, especially due to COVID. Since we never talk about emotions, we aren't prepared for what could befall upon us.**

**SB:** People don't know how to feel. It seems very mundane and ordinary, but that's what we need to learn because we live in an age of Emotional Darkness. Thank you for having me!

# LYDIA GIBLIN

**Integrative Child &  
Adolescent  
Psychotherapist**



Lydia holds a Masters in Integrative Child & Adolescent Psychotherapy, a Postgraduate Diploma in Child Psychotherapy Studies, in addition to the Postgraduate Advanced Diploma in Professional Development: The Therapeutic Application of the Arts. She currently works across both educational and specialist clinical settings - including working across a variety of clinical settings in Central London, offering one-to-one integrative psychotherapy for children, adolescents and families most affected by the Grenfell Tower tragedy, specialising in trauma and grief work. She talked with Amna about the benefits of play and arts in child development and recovery from trauma.

# CHILD DEVELOPMENT & PLAY

Live Interview with Amna Siddiqui.  
Transcript by Samia Maqsood



**Amna Siddiqui:** Let's break the ice by getting to know a bit about yourself. How did you get into this field and what was your motivation? Is there a specific reason to work with children who have been affected by trauma?

**Lydia Giblin:** So, strangely, I am adopted. So, that's where the beginning of my own story comes from! In my childhood, I lived in a household where there was complex trauma all around. There were children who were fostered, something I experienced from a very early age. We all have our stories, that's mine. Later on, I went to the Chelsea School of Art at the age of 16 - most people there were 18. I was always interested in the arts (oil paintings, pastels, etc.). This gave me a background in arts before I basically started anything career-wise.. Afterwards, I worked in London, trying Interior Design and stained glass. Eventually, my interest waned more and more from working in big houses and large-scale projects. I remember, I think it was a friend's mom - who was working in a school after the War in Bosnia - she complained to me saying that there's no point in trying to teach. The children just don't settle - they keep fighting. It's just really a difficult environment, so would you come and run some workshops with these children? At first I said absolutely not, but then eventually I did end up working with them. At that point I had no clinical training at all - I just wrote some communication projects through the arts. But I found at that time that this type of activity engenders quite





good communication. Like for example, just a portrait painting was able to get the children to focus. I played music - they painted to the music. This was all before art therapy became mainstream as well. That was my first kind of taste into this world of play/art therapy. Then I also worked on several art projects with children who had behavioral difficulties or felt excluded. Later I became an inclusion officer working with people that had no employment. Gradually, I became more & more interested in this space - you know, I could clearly see that it was all about their early childhood experiences. It was a package of ACEs (Adverse Childhood Experiences) that led them to be offenders, really just a lot of problems with (emotional) regulation. A lot of them were basically living in their primal defense systems. That's where I became really interested. I went to train as a family support worker in Camden, London. It's a very diverse, culturally rich, and highly populated area including children in great need. There, I worked with mothers and their children up to 5 years old, thinking 'Oh, I'll just get a certificate' - Well, that was not

the case. I don't know if you've heard of Dr. Margot Sunderland. She's a neuroscientist. She wrote an award-winning book called 'The Science of Parenting'. What you'll like about it is that it's accessible, not stigmatizing, easy to read and it's fun. She runs the Institute (Institute for Arts in Therapy and Education - IATE) where I trained. I only went to do a year's long family's support worker training, nothing to do with child psychotherapy, but I just became hooked. From the day I walked into that Institute, it was a multi arts setup including neuroscience, child development. It was an amazing training. Dr. Sunderland is the Director. I went there to do a diploma but ended up covering almost 5 years, doing my Masters in Integrative Child Psychotherapy. It specializes in using the multi arts like Theraplay, neurosequential model, polyvagal theory, drama, working with the body doing sensory work, art, painting. It just covers everything. It's a fantastic program.

**AS:** That's amazing, and maybe we can use that to segue into the next question - do you see some patterns in children or people who go through communal traumatic events? Is there a marked difference between children who have gone through trauma and those with behavioral issues on their own?

**LG:** Yes, it's all about the thresholds. You've got your child's mental health, that can be affected through multiple things like perinatal trauma, birth trauma, a mother who's become anxious in her last trimester of pregnancy, a mother affected by postpartum depression. I mean there are so many issues around child mental health. Then, there are traumatic incidents with children but it won't always affect them as seriously as others. It depends on the child's attachment as well. But you are also looking at other things like nature, nurture, family, community support etc. I used to work in a school where the community was mainly Bangladeshi. Some of the parents were very, very isolated. They were the first generation here in the UK. It was very difficult for the parents. Some mothers were depressed, which obviously affected their children's development, as the children experienced block care because of this. We had some very young brides and some rather old fathers. So, there are many different threads and thresholds. I work with children that have suffered selective mutism because they have anxiety disorders - maybe some mothers were very anxious. Trauma as in relation to, if we up the ante to a very large traumatic event like Grenfell - you are talking about a

traumatized community. That's slightly different because the people you would normally connect to for support, have also experienced the trauma, they are traumatized too.

**AS:** Do you think people who are surrounded by a traumatized community, all of them having gone through the same trauma, does it encourage mental health awareness or in some cases makes the recovery more difficult, especially in children?



**LG:** It's both. For example, say you've got schools where there are multiple people that are traumatized but people that know they are traumatized and recognize the issues they are having (like irritability, poor sleep, sometimes having some very persecutory thoughts - all part of the neurobiology of PTSD that affects your 10th cranial nerve) - so people who recognize that, can be fantastically supportive because it's a shared experience.

It's difficult because it is like a whirlpool of anxiety, or depression, or low mood, but again, people that come together for groups, the support can be incredibly empowering. I think people can be shaped and not left too scarred by their experiences. It's a bit like traumatic growth. Since I work with a traumatized community, I find a lot of emotional resilience. I have never seen such good psycho-education anywhere more than the Grenfell Tower Victims community. Children happily talk about the hippocampus, you know like, 'I am regulated now, I worked in a mum's group'. My passion is about making sure that they understand the common language - it is accessible. Clinicians tend to have their common language which can be a gatekeeper. I think it's crazy that we don't teach our children these things. I always talk about the hippocampus to the children by talking about going camping and hippos and reminding them about the animals, so that they are learning about their memory.

*I wish I could drastically change the way we think about mental health because people are suffering needlessly.*

I talk about how memory is fragmented in the amygdala, we break down the word for them. I make it playful for children to understand. So, in that way, collectively, I think people have become emotionally resilient. What I will say about the difference with patients who have PTSD (in relation to a traumatic event like Grenfell) is that the parents I work with, they don't lack good parenting skills. These are people who have lived through the most terrible catastrophic tragedy where they have had multiple deaths to deal with - they are dealing with traumatic grief. These are brilliant parents, they are just coping with something very hard. Not everyone gets past their PTSD. A lot of my clients in this area come from different countries,

nationalities & origins. It's a wonderful, rich tapestry of cultures and origins. We build their resilience by encouraging them to remember their past, their grandparents' heritage, the games they played with them, etc. It's kind of a part of strength for people. But the sad thing is that people still think of mental health from trauma as being a stigma. I've been trying to tell this to all parents who come to me. And these are great parents. I mean I am privileged to be working with the families, but the downside is this stigma around talking about mental health, when it is actually neurobiology. We are biological organisms, as you would know in detail being a neuroscientist. You know? We need our myelinated vagus, our social connectedness, and all these things that are affected by this big shake up of our autonomic nervous system. I wish I could drastically change the way we think about mental health because people are suffering needlessly.



**AS:** I think there's a lot more talk about awareness around mental health today than there was, say 5 or 10 years ago. Have you seen progress in your own practice? Do you think things are getting better to some extent? Or do you still see a lot of barriers?

**LG:** I do think there are still a lot of barriers. There definitely have been great gains. One of the problems I think is, as soon as people talk about mental health, immediately this person creeps up saying: Will you be employed? How are people gonna perceive you? You must be a bit bonkers. It just goes way out there. I think what would be helpful is thinking about it scientifically. The fact that children's brains are plastic, and if you get in there quickly (if there is trauma) you can expedite recovery. I think we just need to normalize talking about mental health.

**AS:** I agree. Like you said, children's brains are plastic. You can introduce science and more specifically brains to them in a very fun and interactive way. Like if you tell them about emotions in that way that's fun and gamified, so they can understand and learn to appreciate their own emotions more freely. I think the younger generation would at least have the vocabulary to explore the feelings and express them better. So, you do a lot of play therapy with kids. What's the most fun thing to do in those activities?

**LG:** If anyone saw me in my therapy room, it would be ridiculous. I play with puppets -



the children make me dance (please don't put this in print, I'm kidding). We make up songs, we make up stories, we act things out. I suppose we do a lot of acting and imagining it because it changes children's neural circuitry. I worked with a little boy who had a history of violence in the past (this is not a Grenfell related story, just to clarify). He was very dysregulated, quite violent and by dressing up and acting and pretending to be a king, he really got into this. He loved it. And I will pretend to be his servant. But because he was having to pretend to be quite regal, it changed his neural circuitry and regulated him. So, that's why it is so great for children to imagine. I mean, I am not a dramatic person at all or any good at acting, but in terms of children like that, it becomes really helpful. I spend a lot of time laughing in my therapy room.

Again, lots of oxytocin, the feel-good chemicals. It's a lot about relational work and empathic warmth. It's not really so much about what I like doing in the arts, it's what they like. Since, at the moment I am working with children with PTSD, the problem with PTSD is that the children are not operating from the prefrontal cortex. They are operating from their brainstem - so they are quite persecutory, quite reactive. My job is to get them to have a good laugh and socialize, so quite often they just think I am their friend when we go and play. But again, it's all trying to work with the betas and the GABAs - the feel good chemicals.



*In PTSD, if the family is part of the accident, you can actually re-traumatize the children (if parents are not counselled as well)*

**AS: What about the parents? Do you get to counsel them as well?**

**LG:** Very much part of the work. Absolutely, in any job I've worked in. Parents are the experts on their children. So, I have to work with them also, they are a part of the process. And I am there as an equal, not as someone to fix things. It's very important for parents to know that the therapy session is not separate from them. So, I meet with the parents about probably every four weeks if I can, but usually it's every six weeks, realistically speaking, because people have work. I am only with the children sometimes between 120 mins or 50 mins a week and will build the program around them. Some of the children I work with have lost their parents, so I work with their carers or if they are adopted and dealing with complex trauma - with their doctors. In PTSD, if the family is a part of the accident, you can actually re-traumatize the children because I've treated

them on my part but because I'm still waiting on the family, recovery is slow. People feel it is a stigma having poor mental health or poor well being but they don't want their children to go through it. But they are not realizing that if you have PTSD, I can treat the children but you need to be treated too. Because it's their own nervous system that's still dysregulated.

**AS: I think there are generational difficulties in parenting. There are a lot of mental health issues that are a result of things our parents weren't able to do well - not through their own faults but because of the prevailing circumstantial traditions and cultural norms. Do you think different types of parenting lead to different psychological issues in children?**

**LG:** Yes. It doesn't identify very much in Grenfell, I should say. Because so many of them are dealing with specific PTSD about the

event, you know multiple grief or losses. I mean it can be there because there are so many families but no. In all the other practices I've worked in before, yes. It is always there. For example, a mother that has been tortured or a child bride. Like I said before, I've worked with these types of communities. Again, you have to work being sensitive to the culture, and you have to understand the faith. For me, it was such a foreign experience seeing a child bride. It's so complex. You are working with these systems around the family, the belief systems, the difficulties the family have had. Things can mimic things. You can have problems in child development because the child is not being stimulated due to there being multi-generational post-natal depression. It can present itself as neurodiversity. I've worked with a girl who had speech and language difficulties. It was actually the Broca's area of the brain but they were trying to treat the speech and language area. Actually it was an area in the brain that has not been developed. It's so complex. That's why gathering information at the beginning with the family of a child is absolutely fundamental.

**AS: What basic piece of information or advice would you give to parents when their children are having some behavioral issues? What's the starting point to understand your child's emotions?**

**LG:** Play. It's play. This talk is really important because you are talking about culture in Pakistan and how this impacts in a multi-generational context. Obviously, speaking in terms of the socio-economic context, children in some families have to work. Or the

emphasis in education is so much on academics that the children are not being curious, and not trying to do things in different ways. This way they are becoming quite rigid and restricted. Their brains aren't developing so much in fun ways because creativity is the thing that stimulates the neural pathways too. It's a great way of learning. And of course all the feel-good chemicals that develop the frontal lobe are being inhibited. I think it's really important for parents to connect with their kids; cuddles, love, laughter. That's what it is: enjoy your children. The more you enjoy them, the more you love them. That might sound patronizing. I mean people do love their children and not necessarily have a good laugh with them. What I mean is, it's okay to show them and teach them to be vulnerable and to talk about their emotions.

**AS: Yes. In communities like ours, it's very important to show your own vulnerabilities, your own emotions and feelings. Learn to express them in front of your children so they know it's okay to do that.**

**LG:** That's exactly what I mean, modeling is so important. Knowing and showing how to feel is almost a skill. It's really important because it gives you emotional intelligence. It's fun to teach as well. I always have the toy brains in my therapy room so kids take those and learn. I think it's really important for them to learn through play.



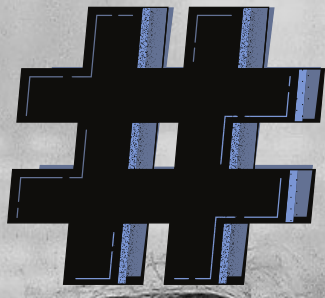
**AS: Do the children initiate? Do they really want to play and learn?**

**LG:** Yes. I think it's helpful because if you are getting in trouble at school and you don't know why your body is doing what it is doing. It is actually really nice to know that it is because I am not operating from the prefrontal lobe. So, I'll color that area green so it looks like poison the they know it's the cortisol the stress hormone. So, it's not your fault that you're struggling at the moment. We can talk to a teacher about it too. You know, all of the children have got their own brain, their own understanding of it. So its a really objective and fun way to learn!

**AS:** Thank you so much, Lydia for giving us your time and insightful knowledge about the world of child psychology and play therapy! I am really grateful to you for having this conversation.

**LG:** It's been so nice to talk to you about this. Normally people just glaze over the play aspect of it and just want to talk about the biology of it all - but this was a really great conversation!





# EMOTIONAL WELLBEING MATTERS



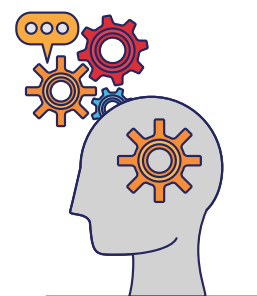




**LIVE TALK BY DR. FARYAL RAZZAQ. TRANSCRIPT BY SAMIA MAQSOOD**

Since COVID, we have seen that our dependency on screens has increased a lot more than usual. Everything we do is somehow related to the screen - even our studies now. Students, especially, have a lot of work to do online. They're supposed to be online for their studies, assignments, quizzes, and exams. In such circumstances, it has become essential to have a balance.

Our addiction to screens relates to the fact that mobiles nowadays are very handy. It is always in our access. Data packages are great, most of us have personal internet networks, and those who don't, Wi-Fi is accessible through public spaces. Therefore, it is important to understand the need to limit screen time.



**HOW MUCH TIME DO YOU SPEND ON A SCREEN DAILY?**



# Research:

## WHAT IS SCREEN ADDICTION DOING TO OUR MENTAL & EMOTIONAL WELLBEING?

Naturally, our brain generates some cues. The time that was supposed to be for our own self grooming, reflection, relationship building, and motivation, is now spent on screens. It is affecting our brain by draining us of our mental energy. When we are scrolling down, there is no cue to stop and when there is no cue, we are in a loop, we go on and on. This is called the **dopamine compulsion loop**. You watch a video, for a while you're completely engrossed into that. You are getting a little amount of dopamine with every piece of content on screen. Dopamine is the hormone that is generated when the brain rewards yourself and makes you feel good about it. So the dopamine compulsion loop keeps you busy.

Researchers present a very alarming situation. According to one study, 1/3 pictures on a phone of an average young adult around the age of 18-24 years old, are selfies. Scientists warn that these selfies are creating a spectrum of narcissistic personalities in the younger generation because you are too engrossed into yourself & taking so many selfies. In another study, participants were asked whether they would give up their phone or options like lose their finger. It was astounding that

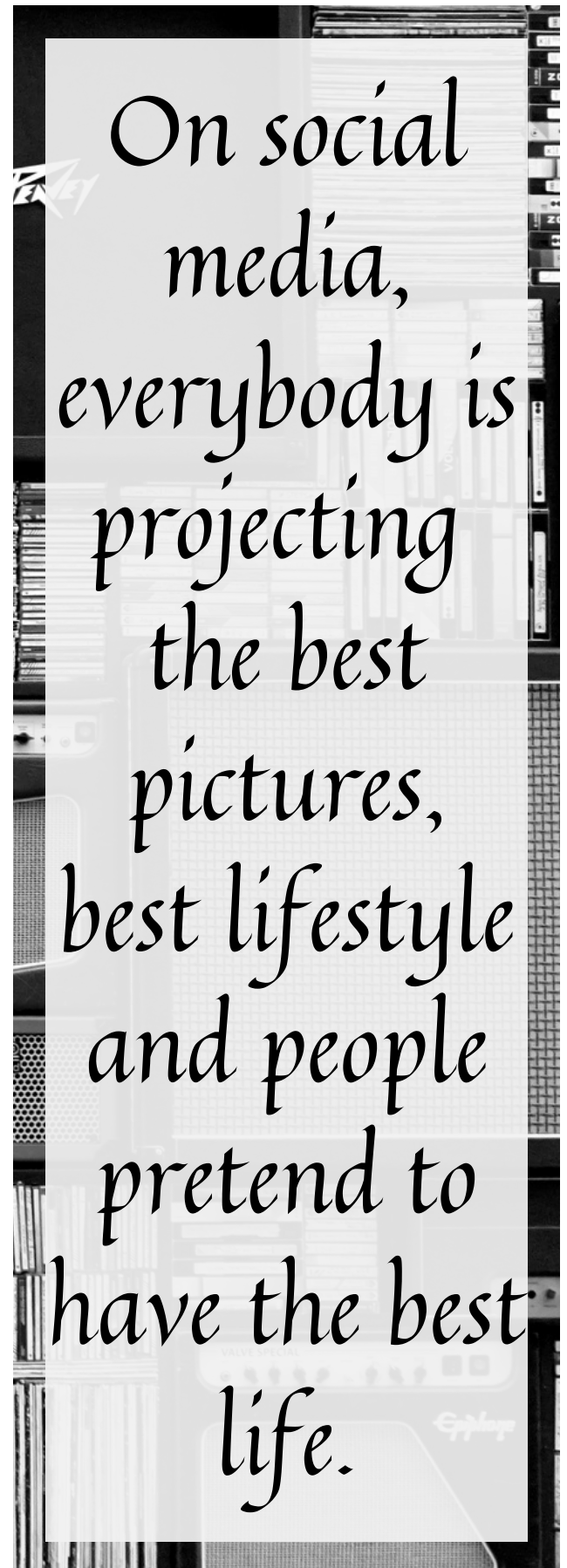
most teenagers said that they are up for losing a finger rather than losing their phone. This is how much their brain has told them the importance of cell phones in their life. Another statistics shows that 97% of the youth play video games. When you are playing a video game, you complete a task and you are again stuck in the dopamine loop. Research says that 1/4th of adults say that they are online constantly. This constant online presence is alone causing a lot of mental health issues.

There are certain social media sites that have proven to be adverse for your mental health. On social media, everybody is projecting the best pictures, the best lifestyle and people pretend to have the best life. It creates a lot of competition and conversely, in short, it adds to depression. So those teens and adults who are more active on Facebook are more depressed than those who spend time on YouTube. Because there are more educational videos on YouTube.

In the social media space, there are certain apps that could be very good for your well being, like meditation apps, or apps where you can find peace and strategies to cope. On average, if you have even downloaded those apps, the research says that you spend not more than 9 minutes on them, whereas if you have four different social media accounts like Instagram, LinkedIn, Facebook etc., an average person spends about more than 27 minutes on each account. It means the app that does nothing but eventually makes you feel bad, you tend to spend three times more on them. So, that's the kind of choices we make unconsciously, which is affecting our emotional health.

**Is it affecting our relationships?**

Currently, there is research that says, most young adults i.e. teenagers and people in the early twenties cannot form meaningful relationships because they do not know how to communicate. They stay online continuously, so they have been nurturing friendships and building relationships online. As a result, when they are given time to interact with each other physically, they don't know how to manage face to face relationships. Basically, the screen gives us a mask. Behind the screen you are another person. However, in real life you cannot hide a lot of things, like your body language, intentions and how to communicate.



## #EmotionalWellBeingMatters

Communication, I believe, is hard work. It's very easy to write down rather than to say it on face. It requires empathy, connection and a lot of other emotions. This is why most teens avoid personal interaction and meaningful relationships and opt to indulge on screen.

Here comes the role of the parents. They should limit the screen time of their young ones. But, at the same time, they have to understand that children's behavior is a reflection of the parents. If a parent is constantly on screen, you can not expect the child to go offline. It disturbs the sleep cycle by directly affecting the circadian rhythm due to the blue light of the screen. Sleep is important because it affects our mental as well as physical health. There are important bodily functions that happen during our sleep. The researchers suggest that you should not be watching any screen at least 4 hours before you go to bed. The blue light emitted from the screen gives your mind a message that it's still daylight and it's not time to go to bed. The blue light emitted from the screen gives your mind a message that it's still daylight and it's not time to go to bed. So your mind is perfectly awake, it is tired but it's getting the excuse that it's not time for bed yet. It disturbs your internal balance.

## OCTOBER 2021, ISSUE 07

And, we all know that whenever we mess with nature or the system that nature has made for us, it's going to have a backlash. Of course, we are going to suffer from it. Moreover, the light emitted from the screen not only disturbs your sleep, but also alters the Alpha state of mind. There are certain brain waves like Alpha, Beta & Gamma brain waves and they all have their functions. When we are very focused or doing something important like studying/working, then our brain is emitting the Beta waves, which means a highly focused state of mind.



*'Man is least himself  
when he talks in his own  
person. Give him a mask,  
and he will tell you the  
truth.'*

**Oscar Wilde**





**What impact does screen addiction have on your life?**

When you are in Beta mode, your brain is bound to get tired. Human body is just like a biological machine. It overheats and collapses. In reaction, the Alpha state of the brain is the state where your brain relaxes. This state of mind can be experienced before you go to sleep & right after you wake up. It happens when your brain is just blank and calm. Mind Sciences says that the internal dialogue, the connection between conscious and subconscious mind, relies on the messages that we send during the Alpha state. Due to screen addiction, we tend to think about a lot of negative things that we have seen on the screen right before we go to sleep. The negative input, whatever content you watch on your screens, goes right into your subconscious mind. As a result, the subconscious mind cannot distinguish between truth and lies. We have often heard this phrase, 'Think good and good things will start happening to you, think bad and bad things will start happening to you'.

It is exactly how the brain functions. There is the Law of Attraction that says, if you have positive energy, you will attract positive things, but if you have negative energy or negative thoughts, even the world conspires against you to have negative consequences. Alpha state of mind is very important for your own health. The time before you go to sleep is considered sacred in many religions. In Islam, we have been told by our beloved Prophet (PBUH) to recite certain Ayats before we go to bed. The kind of messages that we send to our brain at that time are very essential. If you use your phone right before sleeping, you are allowing the world to shape your subconscious mind.

There is no doubt that screens are an essential part of modern life and it has a lot of benefits as well. For example, screens allowed us to shift to online education during the pandemic. What's important is to limit and discipline yourself. All of us are aware that COVID is not going anywhere soon and our dependence on screens is going to increase in the future. Technology, online schooling, work from home is the new normal now. So, a lot of our work, studies and whatnot will be dependent on screens. You have to choose wisely now, what you watch and how you spend your time on screen.



Sleep is a holistic approach towards your wellbeing. Consequently, physical and mental wellbeing makes or breaks your immunity. It affects your overall health. There is such a connection between every disease and your emotions. Science explains that any disease you have in your body has some emotional connection to it. Emotional management is going to hamper your healing and immunity or it could expedite your healing and your immunity. So to become emotionally balanced and healthy, you need to have good food choices, great sleep patterns, healthy relationships and you need to be grounded in reality. It's important that you invest time in yourself and not on the screen. Be cognitive about where you spend your time. Maintain a diary because, initially it helps you to practice. It is not possible to leave the screen at once. Make a routine. Whatever time you spend on screen, be mindful about the content you are watching. It is going to have an impact on your personality without you even realizing.



**Sleep well**



**Maintain physical health**

**Eat healthy**



**Journal your progress**



**Ensure mental wellbeing**

# ART CORNER

**Congratulations to the winners of the art submission contest for October, 2021. We received a large number of entries, out of which we selected the best!**

**The theme of the art submissions was  
Childhood  
Trauma/Abuse**

**Here are the winning entries!**







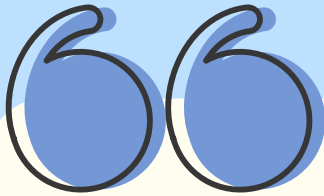
**ABOUT ARTIST**

**Name:** Siddiqa Bano

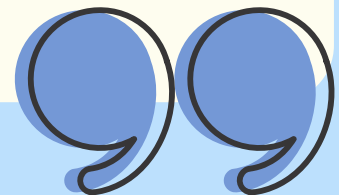
**Age:** 22

**Location:** Rawalpindi, Pakistan

**Instagram:** [@written\\_pieces](#)



**The constant emotional struggle of my childhood and my willingness to learn from those experiences has helped me realize the power of thinking beyond the problems in life and this has motivated me to write this piece in order to make the elders of my society understand the connection between psychological wellbeing of children and a healthy society. I write poems based on the themes of self-realization and self-improvement and take writing as a therapy.**



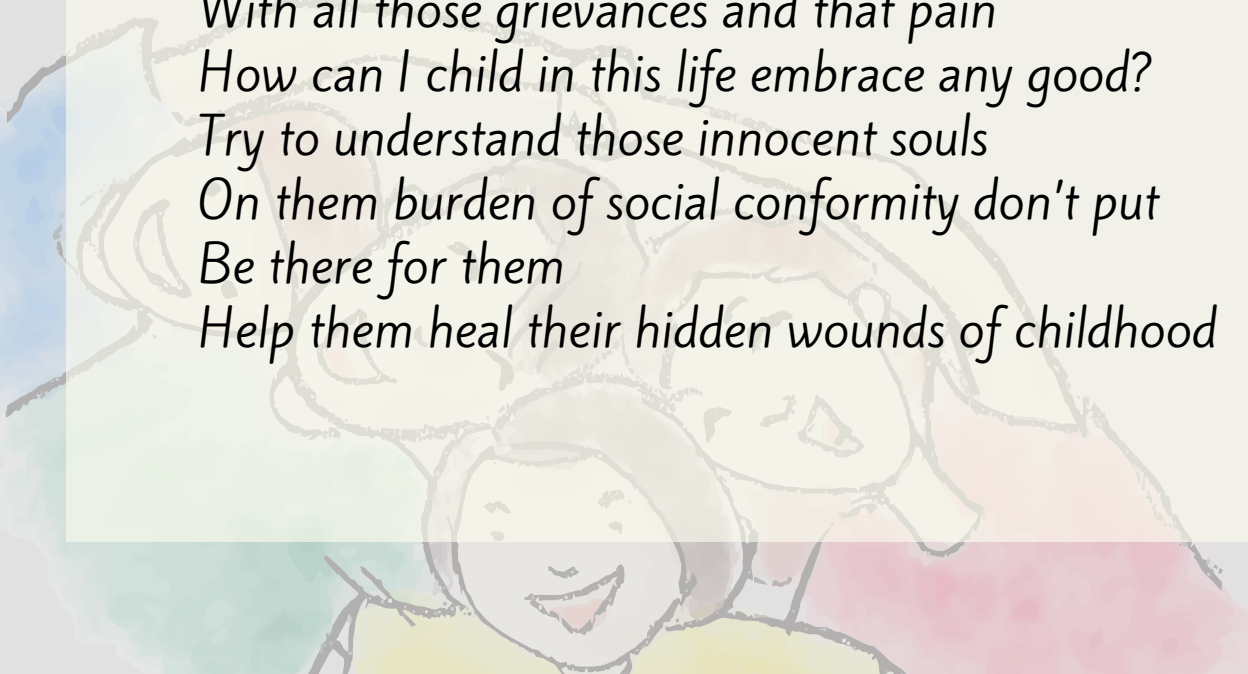
# ***Hidden Wounds of Childhood***

SIDDIQA BANO

Those days I don't want to remember  
But how can I forget  
Don't know whether I should accept  
Or should I regret  
On the way to school walking with fears  
Worries surrounding my brain  
And a constant fight with my tears  
Giving fake smiles, hiding inside my pain  
For me school was not less than a prison  
Chained my dreams, covered my vision  
With this introversion, everyday facing a crowd  
To be polite, to be silent wasn't much allowed  
Society endorsing screams and shout  
I had a constant struggle with self-doubt  
I was so shy to even shake hands  
So scared to even speak up, to stand  
Whenever I stood to read a page  
My trembling voice started to raise  
The natural stuttering I was unable to escape  
But there was no one to give me a little space  
For a second to lend, for a moment to wait  
Rather insult and discouragement I always faced  
I felt worthless, helpless in that painful state  
I felt for me on this world was no place



Ignored in the whole classroom, in all those days  
As if my presence, my silence was a disgrace  
My already wounded self-esteem began to fade  
Myself I began to blame, myself I began to hate  
To act like extroverts, I was only told  
To change myself to fit in, I was forced  
Honesty and sincerity felt like a load  
To my own realness I was unable to hold  
A long lasting impact those days have left  
All I needed was someone to hear, someone to help  
To give me some time to adjust in my own way  
Instead I was discouraged to an extreme level  
That I didn't even wanted to live, to stay  
That emotional pain is still residing in my heart  
Yes now I've taken a new start  
But still memories of my traumatic past  
How can I cover that grief with any mask?  
It's like running on pieces of broken glass  
It's a request to all parents, all teachers  
Take care of your responsibility with you should  
With all those grievances and that pain  
How can I child in this life embrace any good?  
Try to understand those innocent souls  
On them burden of social conformity don't put  
Be there for them  
Help them heal their hidden wounds of childhood







**ABOUT ARTIST**

**Name:** Zehra Fatima Tooba

**Age:** 30

**Location:** Karachi, Pakistan

**Instagram:** @zehraft.artist



**Title:** Acceptance  
**Medium:** Acrylic on  
Canvas  
**Size:** Variable

**Synopsis:**

Every child is unique & different from others, their mental illness or disability of any kind should be treated like it's just a new thing to explore with the child & accept as it is. Celebrate their uniqueness to make them feel special on this Earth.



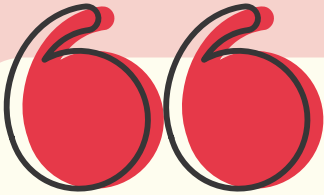
**Title:** Free souls

**Medium:** Mix

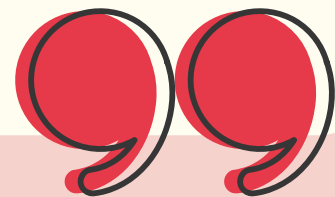
**Size:** Variable

**Synopsis:**

Children and their imagination are beyond this world . If they are in a happy environment they feel free to express their feelings and be creative. Let them be free from all the "No's" and fly like colorful souls in the sky!

**ABOUT ARTIST****Name:** Linda Crate**Age:** 35**Twitter:** [@thysilverdoe](https://twitter.com/thysilverdoe)**Instagram:**  
[@authorlindamcrate](https://www.instagram.com/authorlindamcrate)

**My inspiration for these poems was my childhood trauma. Writing about my trauma helps me process everything that happened, and it helps me know which parts of me still need healing and addressed. Because trauma doesn't just hurt your mental health, it is physically stored in your body, as well. So in addressing how I felt or how I feel today, I can take a step back and see how far I've come and how far I still have to go.**





# ***We have to save ourselves***

**LINDA M. CRATE**

I remember wondering why  
I was always the scapegoat,  
even when I was right  
I was always wrong;  
my sister was the golden child  
always perfect even  
when she made mistakes  
but mine were always  
rubbed into my nose  
like I was a puppy that  
wet the floor—  
no matter what i did  
I was never good enough,  
and so I had the worst  
self-worth and no ego to speak of,  
but I was difficult because I was  
defiant and lashed out  
because I knew I had worth and value  
even if they tried to wash it off me;  
they couldn't scrub away the thought  
I deserved better—  
always thought if I were a good enough  
girl that my father would come rescue me,  
but I soon learned there are no heroes  
and we have to save ourselves.

# *I'm ready to punch **back***

LINDA M. CRATE

Spent my life  
not thinking i was  
good enough

not only because  
of society,

but because of  
the man my mother  
chose;

he adopted me  
but i never have fully felt  
as if he loved me—

he made my insecurities deep,  
and shattered whatever was  
left of my ego when the kids at  
school were done using me  
as their punching bag;

so many years i turned the other cheek  
but now i'm ready to punch back.



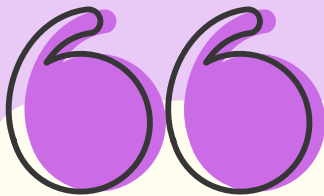


**ABOUT ARTIST**

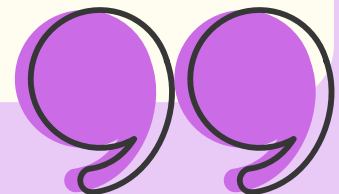
**Name:** Karen Boissonneault-Gauthier

**Location:** Stittsville, Canada

**Website:** [kcbgphoto.com/](http://kcbgphoto.com/)



**I love the challenge of creating pieces that will make the audience look twice. Often I layer the photos I shoot, to create one single unexpected visual art image. If I surprise myself with the end result, I then know I've artistically succeeded. I love to overlap images I shoot to create something new.**







**Backlit - Karen Boissonneault-Gauthier**  
**(Overlapped Image)**  
Magazine Cover Art

# Magazine Exclusive Reader Contest



*Congratulations to our winners!*



Muhammed Zahid



Bushra Zareen



Misbah Faisal



Nabia Tariq

**Check out our socials and the Friends of The FEEEL group to see the winner announcements and keep up to date with future contest updates!**





**The Digital Magazine team at The FEEEL is proud to present the seventh issue of the magazine. We would like to acknowledge the contributors who made this possible.**

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