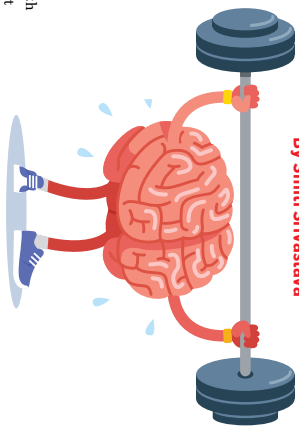


# Everyone has mental health, even without the illness

*Unlike physical health, mental health does not exist in a binary, it exists on a continuum. It's time to break the barrier in the conversation about the mind and the body*

By Smiti Srivastava



We often talk of the mind and body as separate entities, how to connect with the two, and the different relationships we have with them. While there is a plethora of exercises, meditations, and recommendations from various experts when it comes to taking care of your physical and mental wellbeing, the two are often seen as separate functions that make up a healthy person.

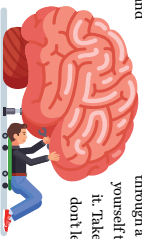
But, mental health and physical health are very much intertwined. They impact each other. Allow me to give you an example. Ms X goes for a walk regularly and one day, she injures her ankle. She needs bedrest for a week. Now, not only does she stop getting the exercise and the physical benefits of this routine, but she also has a psychological setback.

Her motivation is thrown off balance, and she is upset about missing her time. She binge-eats during this period, which only makes her blood sugar levels are higher than usual. She feels sluggish, and her body doesn't get the endorphins release that it's always very grateful for. What eventually happens is a domino effect, where one thing leads to another. This is an understanding of how physical and mental health shadow each other.

Often, mental health is thought of in a binary — either you're mentally ill, or you're not. Unlike physical health, mental health exists on a continuum. Where you belong on this continuum depends on your circumstances, and how much better or worse you feel.

For those of us who have grown up believing that showing your emotions and talking about your feelings makes you weak, reaching out can be quite a struggle. The concept of weakness and strength in that has been internalised leads to silencing yourself, your humanness, and your vulnerability.

46 NOVEMBER 2020 • MW



**Ask yourself how you're feeling, and be honest about it. Name some feelings, and validate them for yourself. This helps in making sense of your situation**

We often deflect our pain onto seemingly smaller problems, and feel confused and moody about it. There is absolutely no shame in being unable to accept and move on with your circumstances.

#### 4) Social media is not a replacement for therapy

A lot of therapists (myself included) use Instagram to educate, inform, and engage with their audience about mental health. While you may find this extremely helpful, please remember that it may not be enough, and it certainly doesn't act as a replacement for therapy. Your struggles often need an in-depth exploration of patterns and behaviours that will only be possible once you see a mental health professional.

Did you talk about how you're feeling psychologically as well? If not, here's how you can keep an eye on your mental health as much as your physical health.

#### 1) Check in with yourself

Ask yourself how you're feeling, and be honest about it. Name some feelings, and validate them for yourself. This helps in making sense of your situation.

#### 2) Google is not your best friend

Stop labelling and self-diagnosing. If you're worried you're not feeling your best, don't jump the gun with a diagnosis based on a Google search. This leads to amplifying or undermining your problems, and they're both unhelpful ways of addressing your mental health.

#### 3) Take yourself (and others) seriously

through a difficult time in your life, give yourself the space and time to cope with it. Take your feelings seriously, and don't let anyone tell you otherwise.

Smiti Srivastava is a psychotherapist based out of New Delhi. She offers insight-oriented therapy, and her areas of interest are online dating, romantic relationships, and the role of sex-tech technology in the same.

# Blind items – newsworthy or not?

*The blind item is finding itself to be at the centre of a debate, with many celebrities slamming it, and raising an important question: Do blind items deserve a slot in the news space?* By Rashma Shetty



Even though the origin of blind items wasn't on the most positive note, in genuine cases, it did help many journalists who had spent their time, energy, and resources finding a scoop, to at least tell their stories. The news industry — much like other businesses — works on rapport, and antagonising the industry bigwigs often weighed heavily on journalists, and even publications. From being blacklisted from interviews and public events to complaints against reporters, the risk was real, and when one wasn't willing to go against the public figures' PR, the easiest route was to not mention names.

Many feel that entertainment journalism is frivolous, and titts heavily towards gossip. But, is it just an entertainment journalism thing? I think not. Anything that impacts the social fabric needs to be handled responsibly, and therefore, even blind items need to be dealt with in the same way. Hard news too, has its share of demerit.

The basic rule of journalism includes logically evaluating the authenticity and intent of the source revealing the information. Apart from this, one of the most important questions that news writers cannot ignore, is whether the information is newsworthy. But first, let's define what newsworthy essentially means.

Take this example. Individual A is a narcissist, and enjoys watching himself on screen. That's not news. Now, imagine that Mr A is working alongside Mr B in an upcoming big budget movie. However, Mr A's self-obsession is affecting the movie, and he is

Many feel that entertainment journalism is frivolous, and titts heavily towards gossip. But is it just an entertainment journalism thing?

Much before I became an entertainment journalist, I remember reading this tiny yet colourfully placed column in magazines and tabloids that doled out juicy information, mostly about socialites, movie celebrities, cricketing stars, and sometimes even businessmen. It was a fun game, trying to guess the people that were being referred to in these texts. But as the novelty wore off, I noticed there was very little to guess in these blind items. I realised the popularity of the format when I entered the digital space, where one could gauge the performance of an article instantly. Clearly, the Blind Item column, with just a silhouette image and a catchy headline, was a hot seller as compared to the other stories.

Today, the blind item is finding itself to be at the centre of a debate, and raising an important question: Do blind items deserve a slot in the news space?



The author is a former narcissist, and enjoys watching himself on screen. That's not news. Now, imagine that Mr A is working alongside Mr B in an upcoming big budget movie. However, Mr A's self-obsession is affecting the movie, and he is

The author is a former entertainment journalist who has worked with some of the biggest media houses in India, and has had an inside view of the Hindi film industry for over a decade

NOVEMBER 2020 • MW 47