

# Talk! Talk! Talk!

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There are some moments in the span of our life that require courage to do something extremely basic like taking help or talking our heart out. The moment I thought of taking external help for my mental health; I had a number of scattered images and words which ran across my mind. “Shrink”, “ Am I mad?” , “pills”, a psychologist’s den, “privacy” ,” ex GCU student head” etc. Yet the problem at hand (my mental health) was bigger than all the other jostling thoughts.



I needed help partly due to the roadblocks in my research and mostly due to the pandemic fatigue. Being a social butterfly, it was difficult to come to terms with my ailing mental health. I kept delaying it for quite some time( sometimes you need time to accept the fact that something is essentially wrong with your system) and finally I took the call. This delay was primarily due to the stigma around mental health and the overarching self-sufficiency that refuses help even at the cost of self-destruction. One fine Monday, working ( read:sobbing) from home I filled the Google form and scheduled my upcoming video session with the counsellor, Mrs. Bhooma Krishnan at home. Indian homes are known for their stigma around mental health. One cannot possibly provide any rationale for their behaviour. They suggest a range of solutions to all mental health problems: “ Stay away from your phone” ( universal solution), “say a prayer”, “stop talking to your 'friends”, don’t think too much ( when the only kind of thinking available is “overthinking”). Sometimes, it is necessary to disobey such universal advice and take more well-informed steps.

It might sound like an overstatement but the counsellor opened a rusted door to my mind. The first sessions were basic exercises that she asked me to do like journaling, meditation, physical exercise etc. The mind works in strange ways. We think we are always in control, always battle ready but sometimes it can go wayward. And that is when you need external help ( well, sometimes your best friend can't do it) to bring you back from the never- ending loop of vicious thoughts.



Counselling requires patience and sometimes you must listen even when the person at the other end is explaining layman stuff. The knowledge and experience of a counsellor is much more scientific and informed than your best friend giving you Sandeep Maheshwari like pep talks. One realises that after the first few sessions when gradually acceptance of the problem is processed followed by baby steps towards the solution.

If you wake up in the morning with an increased heart beat or you feel consistently low, demotivated for more than a week or you lack purpose in your life, go let your heart out to a

counsellor. Talk, talk and talk some more. There is no problem in the world that hasn't been solved with communication. I believe, we as a generation should make a difference in acknowledging the elephant in the room, not shoving it under the carpet.

