It's Real x Solace and Solidarity

A Convo About ASAM Mental Health

Webinar on Asian American Mental Health & Wellness in Quarantine

with Madiha Ashraf, Yena Hu, and Arianna Tong

Schedule

- Panel overview, moderator intros
- Speakers intros
  - Yena Hu & questions
  - Madiha Ashraf & questions
  - Arianna Tong & questions
- General questions and discussion
- Closing remarks

Introduction

Yena Hu

Certified Trauma Recovery Coach

My STORY:

- Started my career in management consulting
- Quit my job after a panic attack as a result of severe anxiety & burnout
- Realized my childhood traumas at age 27
- Educate and spread awareness about CPTSD

YENA HU

Complex PTSD Explained

WHAT IS COMPLEX PTSD?

Complex PTSD (CPTSD) develops in response to prolonged, repeated exposure to trauma, usually over the course of months or years.

TYPES OF TRAUMATIC EVENTS THAT CAN CAUSE CPTSD:

- Childhood abuse or trauma
- Emotional neglect or abandonment
- Witnessing domestic violence
- Severe bullying

Impacts of Complex PTSD

COGNITIVE

- Hypervigilance
- Dissociation
- Difficulty with emotional regulation (emotional flashbacks)
- Toxic shame & severe inner critic
- Depression, Anxiety

SOMATIC

- Chronic pain
- Chronic fatigue
- Muscle stiffness
- Numbness in the body
- Digestive issues
- Sleep issues
- Inflammation

RELATIONAL

- Explosive anger, control
- Workaholism, busyness
- Social anxiety & isolation
- Fear of trust & intimacy
- Codependency
- Poor boundaries
- Difficulty expressing own needs

Informational use only; not for diagnostic purposes

YENA HU

Contact Information

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YENA HU

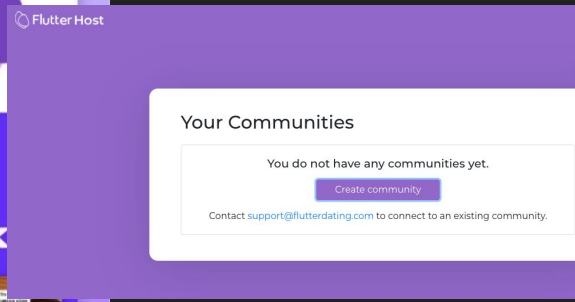
About Arianna Tong

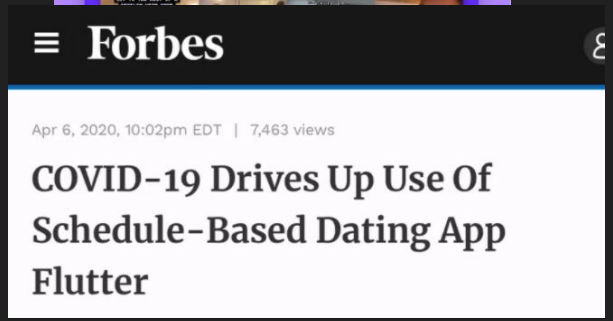
- Graduated from University of California, Santa Barbara.
  - B.A. in Economics & Accounting, and Philosophy.
  - Minor in Communication.
- Based in San Francisco, CA.
- Community leadership:
  - Former Board member at the Asian Strength Community, an international organization focused on uniting the global asian fitness community.
- Fun facts: I used to be half deaf!

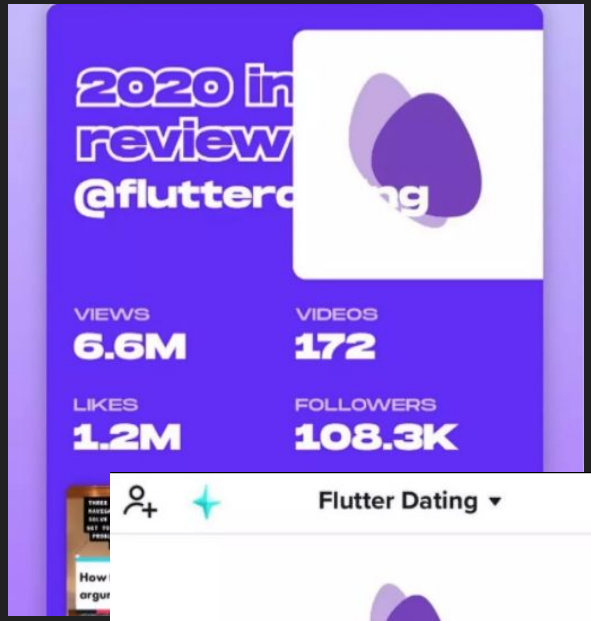
Work

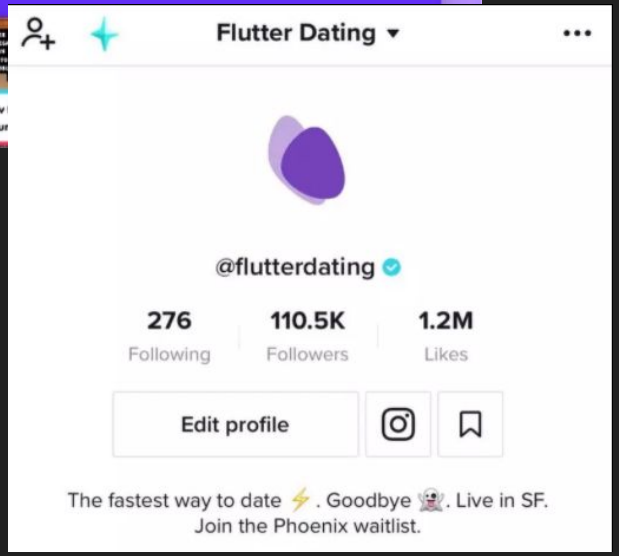
- Head of Marketing at Flutter Dating
  - Created initiatives to help promote content on mental health, neurodiversity, social issues, etc. on the Flutter Platform
  - Focused on ethical marketing
- Head of Marketing at Zira
  - Brought in to launch the Zira brand
  - Focused on helping working class vs. business owners

Flutter









Dating App Tactics, Relationship Check Ins & Romanticizing False Realities

In this episode, I sit down with Arianna Tong to discuss the trouble with dating apps, taking ownership and responsibility for your own feelings, and the importance of relationship check ins. Ari was once the spokesperson for Flutter Dating, a new kind of dating app that's main goal is to provide community style dating and be inclusive of the LGBTQ+ community, specific religions, and other groups that are typically underrepresented. Ari grew a huge community through sharing her research, advice, and relatability in her dating tip TikTok videos for the company. We both share how we've come to realize the importance of relationships outside of our romantic ones, as well as how to ensure we don't fall into traps of romanticizing sometimes impossible realities. Ari shares the scientific research behind why we have so many matches but never as many dates, as well as how to stop the toxic cycle that stems from dating apps as a whole. She also gives us proven methods on how to deal with conflicts with your significant other and so much more.

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Madiha Ashraf
M.S, NCC, LPC-Associate, Ph.D Student

Supervised by:
Abida Minhas, M.A., LPC-Supervisor

About Me!

My name is Madiha Ashraf and I am a Licensed Professional Counseling Associate in Plano, Texas. I am currently working towards my Ph.D in Counselor Education specializing in Marital and Family Counseling at Texas A&M Commerce. I am a first-generation Dallas native. My personal struggles led me to choosing counseling as a profession. As a Pakistani Muslim American woman, I understand first hand the struggles of juggling all of the various identities and being able to feel comfortable within your own skin. I believe that in order for a person to reach their full potential, they must first understand themselves fully, which can lead to amazing outcomes.

I am dedicated to providing my clients a safe, empathetic, warm, judgement-free zone for them to address and navigate their emotions and turmoil. I am passionate about fighting the stigma that comes with mental health, particularly in minority communities, and raising awareness for more mental health services. I work with all age groups from young children to adolescents and adults.

Appointments can be made via email. If you would like to make an appointment, please email me at mashraf@theimapctcounselors.com. Reach out and let's begin the journey towards healing, recovery, and growth

Contact Information

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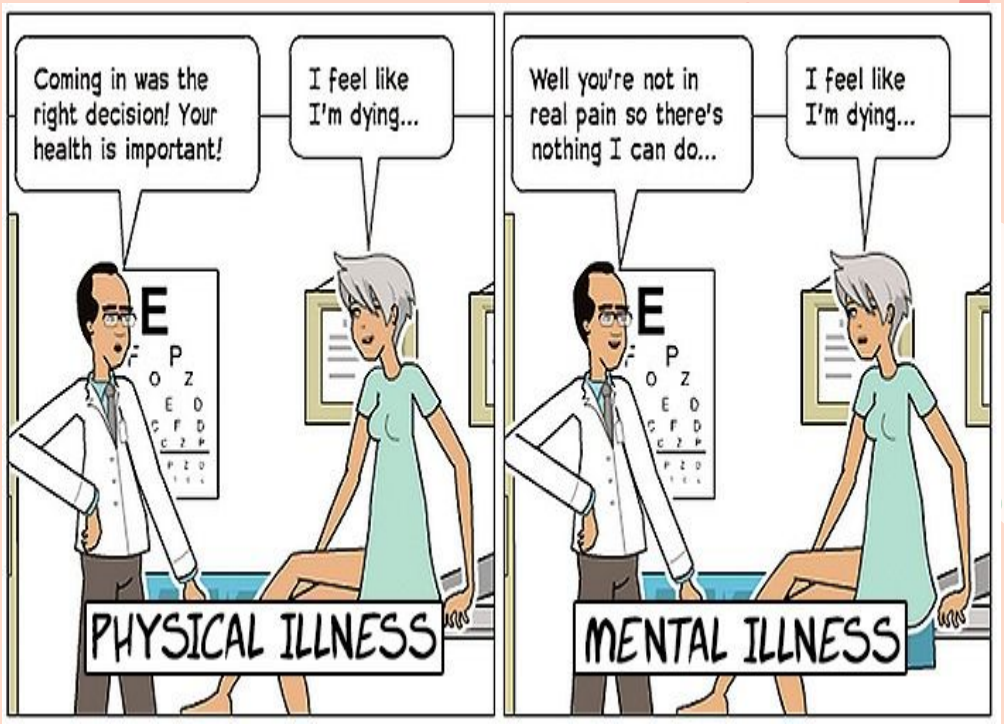
Let's Talk Mental Health

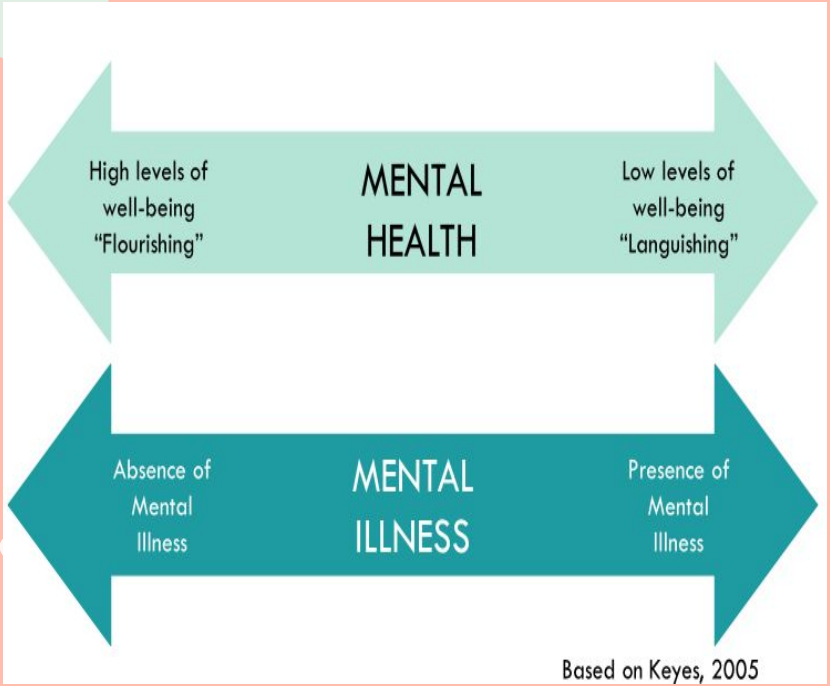
Madiha Ashraf M.S., NCC, LPC Associate

Mental Health Versus Mental Illness

What is the difference?



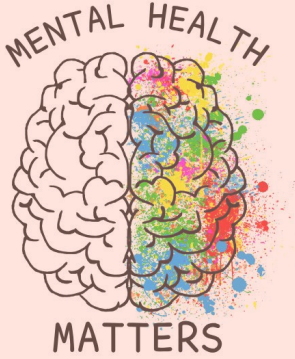
Mental Health Vs. Mental Illness



- **Mental health** refers to our emotional and psychological state, our social well–being and how we feel about ourselves and interact with others. Mental health is **not** the same as mental illness, although poor mental health can lead to mental and physical illnesses.

- **Mental illness** refers to a wide range of disorders that affect mood, thinking and behavior. Mental illness can affect anyone regardless of age, gender, social standing, religion or race/ethnicity. People with mental illness often experience distress and problems functioning at work, home and in social situations. Mental illness is not something the person can "overcome with willpower," and can be caused by biological factors such as genes or brain chemistry, trauma and abuse, and family history of mental illness.

How Do Mental Health and Mental Illness Intersect?



It's helpful to think of mental health and mental illness as separate entities working independently. You can have good mental health but be living with a diagnosed mental illness that is being treated successfully. Or you can have poor mental health but not have a mental illness.

What Does Good Mental Health Look Like?

Good mental health is about living life to your full potential. It's about being socially connected and having fulfilling social relationships. Feeling good about your life; setting goals and being able to make decisions. Here are some attributes that have been found to be associated with good mental health.

1. Resilience: Resilience is the ability to cope well with stress and bounce back. People lacking in resilience may ruminate on problems and not be able to put things behind them or move on. Although resilient people are still affected by setbacks, they handle the stress and disappointment and recover more quickly.

2. Social wellbeing: This is another important aspect of mental health. Healthy relationships support good mental health, but being socially isolated or not having supportive relationships can impact your mental health. Other characteristics that increase your chances of having good mental health are being optimistic and positive, having good self-esteem, feeling your life has meaning and that you accomplish things.

3. Looking after your mental health: Taking care of your psychological well being is just as important as taking care of your physical wellbeing. Developing self-care for your mind can help you avoid mental health issues in the first place and also give you strategies to cope with milder problems if they arise.

4. Don't self-medicate with alcohol or drugs: While alcohol can temporarily give you a lift and help you relax, the downside is that it interferes with sleep, can make you more anxious and increases feelings of stress in the long term. Illicit drugs are never a good idea - and can tip a vulnerable person into mental illness. For anyone with a mental illness, using drugs can just make symptoms worse. Learning coping skills and improving your resilience can also help you manage your feelings and weather life's ups and downs with more ease.

What Does Good Mental Health Look Like? Cont.

5. Mindfulness: Mindfulness is a technique used to anchor your thoughts in the present. Much of our anxiety is based on ruminating about the past or worrying about the future. So if we can bring our awareness to the present and observe our thoughts, rather than judge them, we can reduce stress and protect against anxiety. Mindfulness can be practised in small moments during the day or as meditation.

6. Meditation: This is a practised skill that can help you manage your mental health and also mental illnesses such as anxiety and depression.

7. Gratitude: Psychologists have found that people who practise gratitude by being thankful for the good things in their life feel more positive emotions and are happier.

8. Stress management: Managing stress is important for good mental health. Some recommendations include resolving personal conflict, spend time doing things you enjoy and get support from a friend, counsellor or doctor, if needed. Relax with whatever helps you unwind - yoga, stretching or a walk in the woods.

9. Cognitive defusion: This is a technique to detach ourselves from our thoughts and is helpful when repetitive, negative or unhelpful thoughts keep cropping up in our head. Negative thoughts are normal, but we don't have to believe them or engage with them.

Where To Get Help

Mental illnesses are common in America, and approximately one in five adults lives with a mental illness (43.8 million in 2015.)1 While depression and anxiety are two of the most common disorders, mental illness includes many different conditions that range from mild to moderate to severe. People who don't have a mental illness might still be impacted by the mental illness of a friend or family member.Signs and symptoms of mental illness vary, but may include changes in sleep, appetite, and energy level, severe mood swings, persistent thoughts or compulsions, hearing voices, social withdrawal, feeling sad, hopeless, or agitated, having trouble performing everyday tasks, or wanting to hurt oneself or others.With the right treatment, people can and do recover from mental illness. Friends and family members can be important influences to help someone get the treatment and services they need. Primary care physicians can refer individuals to psychiatrists and other professionals who specialize in mental health treatment. Treating a physical illness might require medications and physical therapy, and treating a mental illness might also require medications and different therapies. For many people, the first step is to recognize there is a problem and be willing to accept help.

For more information on mental health treatment resources, contact:

National Institute of Mental Health

https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/find-help/index.shtml

NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness)

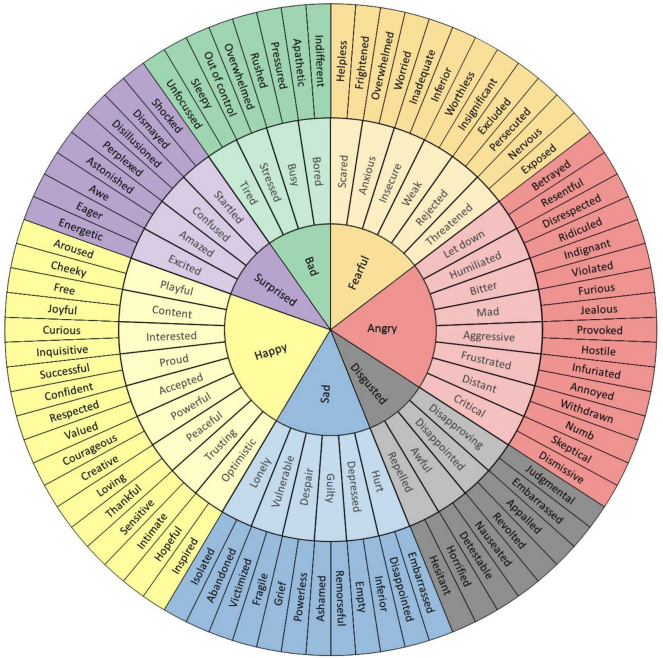
http://www.nami.org/

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) https://findtreatment.samhsa.gov/https://www.mentalhealth.gov/

Mental Health.gov

https://www.mentalhealth.gov/

Feelings Wheel



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If you have any questions, concerns, ideas, etc. regarding the initiative, please direct them to solaceandsolidarity@gmail.com. Our goal is to listen to the voices of our community, and we hope to facilitate conversations and feedback.

Follow us on Instagram: @solaceandsolidarity! Tune in for weekly features of our favorite stories/blog pieces & updates on our newest articles! DM us with questions about any posts.