



PROJECT MIND MATTERS

May 2025

NEWSLETTER

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Miss minds

Articles

Movie Review





MISS MINDS

**May You Find Joy in the Little
Things
(pun intended)**

Dear Readers,

As we step into May, a month globally recognized as Mental Health Awareness Month, I invite you to join me in a collective pause—a moment to reflect, connect, and prioritize our mental well-being.

Mental health is an integral part of our overall health. Yet, conversations around it often remain shrouded in silence and stigma. This month serves as a vital reminder that it's okay to talk about our struggles, to seek help, and to support one another.

Content: Garima Singh
Design: Sree Vanshika Behara



In India, initiatives like the Live Love Laugh Foundation, founded by Deepika Padukone, have been instrumental in breaking the silence surrounding mental health issues. Such efforts highlight the importance of open dialogue and the need to create safe spaces where individuals feel seen, heard, and supported. Similar to our team's efforts at Project Mind Matters, where we delve into various socioeconomic segments of society to break the stigma around mental health and bridge the awareness gap.

Small acts of kindness can have profound impacts. Whether it's checking in on a friend, offering a listening ear, or simply sharing your own experiences, these gestures can foster connection and healing.

Let's use this month as an opportunity to educate ourselves, challenge misconceptions, and advocate for mental health resources in our communities. Remember, seeking help is a sign of strength, not weakness.

Together, we can build a world where mental health is prioritized, and everyone feels empowered to speak their truth.

With compassion and solidarity,

Miss Minds



MOVIE OF THE MONTH



PRIMAL FEAR (1996)

A courtroom thriller that splits you in two

“What if the truth is more dangerous than the lie?”

That’s the lingering question at the core of *Primal Fear*, a movie that doesn’t just tell a story — it unravels one as it goes. Starring Richard Gere and introducing Edward Norton in a performance that could chill your bones, this isn’t just your average legal thriller.

It’s a psychological pressure cooker, where mental illness, morality, and manipulation collide.



The psychology behind the “Persona(s)”:

Dissociative Identity Disorder (DID)

Once called multiple personality disorder, DID involves the presence of two or more distinct identity states within the same person. It often develops as a response to severe trauma, that typically is experienced in early childhood. These identity states can differ in their behaviour, voice, posture, even handedness — and the person may not even recall what the other “personality” did.



In *Primal Fear*, when the sweet, stuttering altar boy Aaron Stampler (Norton) starts showing signs of another identity-violent, angry, and completely different-we are pulled into a chilling debate: Is this genuine mental illness? Or is it a performance to escape punishment?

The Insanity Defense, or M'Naghten rule:

It's difficult to prove insanity in real-world courts. The movie explains how someone who was mentally unable of distinguishing between good and wrong at the time of the crime could be ruled not guilty by reason of insanity. *Vail* (Gere) employs this legal idea in court, but there are times when psychology and law don't agree.

Manipulation & Psychopathy:

Roy (Aaron's other identity) is aggressive and self-assured, whereas Aaron seems weak. The last turn of events creates a fresh possibility: what if it's psychopathy rather than DID? A psychopath can fabricate symptoms to impress the public and the courtroom because they are charming, crafty, and utterly unremorseful.



Gaslighting the audience:

The movie deceives not only its characters but also us. As viewers, we are led to empathize with Aaron on an emotional level before coming to doubt our own beliefs. That's the genius of a psychological thriller: it doesn't tell you what to think. It makes you think.



The viewer's psychological journey throughout the movie:

From the moment Aaron appears on screen, bloodstained and visibly shaken, we — like Martin Vail (Gere) — are hooked by his innocence. Our first impression, like Vail is “How could someone like him commit a murder so brutal?” Because we see trauma. We see fear. We feel sorry for him.

As the case builds, details also emerge. Conflicting accounts surface. Aaron's story starts to... shift. That's suspicious. “Wait... is he hiding something?”

When Aaron “switches”, there is a moment of pure psychological horror. We're no longer watching a legal case — we're witnessing the shattering of identity--“Is this DID? Is this real? Is he even aware this is happening?”

After the reveal, your trust is tested. The lines between empathy and suspicion blur. You're left questioning your own instincts... “Did I fall for it? Or was I right to believe him?”

Content: Anupama Menon

Design: Sree Vanshika Behara



Applauding the performances...

Edward Norton (Aaron Stampler):

This debut is more than just impressive, so let's speak about it. It is a surgical procedure. Norton's transitions between meek and monstrous are so seamless that they nearly seem like two distinct characters. Each twitch, stammer, and cold gaze is precisely timed. You're studying him, not merely observing him.



Richard Gere (Martin Veil):

Gere is a perfect fit for this role. For the publicity, he initially takes Aaron's case as the slick-talking hotshot lawyer. However, his moral compass also deteriorates as the case progresses. The weight of a man torn between justice, ego, and the dreadful gray space in between is conveyed by his portrayal.



What most people miss...

is how the lighting subtly shifts around Aaron during each major transformation — it's not just visual flair. It's cinematic psychology. Bright when he's "innocent," colder and shadowed when Roy emerges. The environment literally changes with the identity. It's a tiny but powerful trick that makes you feel the switch, even before the character speaks.

And here's another one: Notice how Aaron never slips up — unless he wants to. Even during the stammering, fearful scenes, there's a rhythm to his words.

Is it trauma... or rehearsed control?

The ending that refuses to let go from our minds...

Without spoilers — let's just say *Primal Fear* doesn't tie things up in a neat little bow like other psychological thrillers. It leaves you with unease, not resolution.



Questions echo as the screen fades:

- Can you ever really know another person?
- Can a performance be so good that it rewrites reality?
- What happens when the truth is weaponized?

You'll want to rewatch it. Not because you missed something... but because you want to see what you believed the first time.
And the final verdict is...

Primal Fear is not just a movie — it's a psychological chess match.

It dares you to pick a side and then punishes you for being wrong. It teaches you that in the courtroom of the mind, the truth is rarely objective, and sometimes... it's just the best-told lie.

So go ahead, watch it--then watch it again. And this time, pay attention to what you missed.



MORE THAN “BABY BLUES” – WHY WORLD MATERNAL MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS DAY MATTERS



Every year, on the 1st Wednesday of May, World Maternal Mental Health Awareness Day (WMMHAD) comes around—and honestly, most people don't even know it exists. It doesn't trend like World Mental Health Day, and it rarely makes the news. But if there's any awareness day that deserves more spotlight, especially in 2025, it's this one right here.

Maternal mental health isn't just about the “baby blues.” It's a complex, often hidden reality that affects millions of women globally. And it's not just the moms who suffer—the ripple effect hits families, communities, and future generations. As a psychology student, I've come across the stats in textbooks. But beyond the numbers, maternal mental health is deeply human. It's about emotional survival during what's supposed to be “the happiest time” of a person's life.

So, let's talk about it—what maternal mental health actually means, why WMMHAD matters, and how we can shift from silence to support.



What Is Maternal Mental Health?

Maternal mental health refers to a mother's psychological and emotional well-being during pregnancy and up to a year (or more) after birth. It includes everything from mild mood shifts to serious mental illnesses like postpartum depression, postpartum anxiety, and postpartum psychosis.

A lot of people still think of post-birth mental health in terms of those “baby blues,” which about 80% of new moms experience. That's real—hormonal fluctuations, sleep deprivation, and stress can cause weepiness, irritability, and emotional overwhelm. But here's the problem: society tends to lump everything under that label, when in fact 1 in 7 women develop clinical postpartum depression. That's not just hormonal tears. That's real, diagnosable depression that can interfere with a mother's ability to function and bond with her baby.

Postpartum anxiety is also super common but talked about way less. Think racing thoughts, constant worry that something terrible will happen to the baby, panic attacks. Postpartum OCD? It exists. Postpartum PTSD, often linked to traumatic births? That too. Maternal mental health isn't one-size-fits-all—it's a spectrum.

And here's the part that sticks with me: untreated maternal mental health conditions are the leading cause of maternal death in many developed countries, due to suicide and overdose. Let that sink in.





The Global Picture

World Maternal Mental Health Awareness Day was first launched in 2016 by a group of advocates and professionals who saw how maternal mental health was being sidelined worldwide. Since then, it's grown into a movement involving over 30 countries.

But awareness is still painfully low, especially in places where maternal care isn't prioritized to begin with. In low- and middle-income countries, up to 1 in 3 women suffer from perinatal mental health disorders. And the mental health support? Often non-existent. Cultural stigma, lack of education, and inadequate healthcare infrastructure leave millions without help.

Even in wealthier nations, access isn't equal. Black, Indigenous, and other women of colour are more likely to experience complications during childbirth—and less likely to receive proper mental health care afterward. Maternal mental health isn't just a women's issue—it's also a racial and social justice issue.



Content: Anupama Menon
Design: Mandisha Mandal



The Pressure to be Perfect

There's this unspoken (and sometimes very spoken) expectation that new moms are supposed to be glowing, grateful, and totally in love with their baby from day one. Instagram is full of clean, cozy nurseries and women in cute robes holding newborns like they're holding the key to enlightenment.

Well, the reality? It's not all that aesthetic.

Real moms are bleeding, leaking, sleep-deprived, emotionally disoriented, and often totally freaked out. And when they don't feel "blessed," they feel ashamed. That shame is powerful—and dangerous. It keeps people from speaking up. From getting help. From healing.

The myth of maternal instinct being automatic and magical contributes to the silence. The truth is, for some people, that connection takes time. For others, intrusive thoughts make even holding their baby terrifying. These aren't signs of a bad mom. They're signs of moms struggling, silently.

Studying psychology means looking at mental health through a lot of lenses: biological, cognitive, behavioural, cultural. When it comes to maternal mental health, all of that matter.



Biologically, pregnancy and birth involve massive hormonal shifts—oestrogen and progesterone drop dramatically postpartum. Sleep disruption and physical pain don't help. Cognitively, moms are dealing with identity shifts, perfectionism, maybe even past trauma triggered by childbirth. Behaviourally, social support—or the lack of it—can make or break a mom's recovery. And culturally, the pressure to conform to “good mom” standards adds a whole other layer of stress.

There's no single cause of maternal mental illness. It's a complex mix. But the good news is support works. Therapy works. Medication helps. Connection heals.

And that's what WMMHAD is about—breaking isolation.

On this day we get to know the stories that broke the stigma.

One of the most powerful things about awareness days is the chance to hear real stories. On WMMHAD, social media fills (a bit) with moms and families sharing their journeys. Stories of terrifying anxiety. Of rage that made them feel like monsters. Of not feeling a bond with their baby. And then—of getting help. Of feeling like themselves again. Of healing.

These stories fight stigma in a way that statistics can't. They humanize the experience. They show that maternal mental illness isn't weakness or failure—it's common. And it's treatable.

We need to make it normal to talk about the hard parts of new motherhood. Because pretending it's all perfect just keeps people silent. Let us try to talk about the issues that mothers face, not just on WMMHAD, but everyday because mothers exist every day, pregnant women exist every day, problems exist every day and so does the stigma.



What needs to change in the society?

Awareness is great—but what does real change look like?

1. Every pregnant and postpartum woman should be screened regularly for mental health symptoms—not just once, but throughout the process.
2. Therapy, medication, support groups—these should be made affordable, available and accessible especially to marginalized communities.

3. Parental leaves should be made mandatory. Give families time to adjust and bond. The U.S. is still lagging behind most developed countries in paid parental leave.

4. Education is the most crucial part. Doctors, midwives, nurses, partners—everyone should understand the signs of maternal mental illness.

5. Dads and partners also bear the brunt in their own ways. They experience perinatal mental health issues too. Let's not forget them.





How can we help?

You don't have to be a licensed therapist to make a difference. As students, we can:

- Start conversations around the topic. Break the silence. Post about WMMHAD. Share resources.
- Volunteer or intern at maternal health organizations or crisis lines.
- Advocate for better campus mental health services for student parents.
- Educate ourselves. Read up on postpartum disorders, especially those that don't get much attention.



Awareness isn't passive. It's action.

World Maternal Mental Health Awareness Day isn't just a day to post a pastel graphic and move on. It's a call to recognize the hidden battles millions of mothers face—and to do better as a society.

As a psych student, I see maternal mental health as one of the most overlooked but critical areas in the mental health field. And as a human, I think no one should feel ashamed for struggling—especially not at a time when they're already doing one of the hardest things imaginable.

Let's ditch the filters. Let's listen to moms. And let's make maternal mental health something we talk about—not just one day a year, but every day.



National Prevention Week

National prevention week is an awareness program organised by **Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration**, aimed at prevention of substance misuse and mental health promotion. This weeklong annual health observance brings together communities, organisations and individuals to take action through education, outreach programmes and prevention strategies.

Content: Gurunandan
Design: Shrey Gupta



The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) is a U.S federal, it was established in 1992 with the mission of lessening the effects of substance abuse and mental illness by funding prevention programs, promoting evidence-based treatments, and supporting recovery services. The agency plays a pivotal role in initiatives like



National Prevention Week (NPW), providing resources, grants, and public awareness campaigns to help communities tackle addiction, mental health crises, and suicide prevention.



The National Prevention Week is held in the month of May every year since 2011. This year it is being held on **11th May to 17th May**, though the theme is yet to be revealed. However, the theme for the year 2024 was “Celebrating Possibilities” highlighting the power of prevention in creating brighter futures. It emphasizes hope, resilience, and the belief that positive change is achievable through collective effort.

While SAMHSA will announce the official daily themes closer to the event, past themes have included:

- **Monday:** Preventing Prescription and Opioid Misuse
- **Tuesday:** Preventing Underage Drinking and Alcohol Misuse
- **Wednesday:** Preventing Illicit Drug Use and Youth Marijuana Use
- **Thursday:** Preventing Suicide and Promoting Mental Health
- **Friday:** Preventing Youth Tobacco Use (E-Cigarettes and Vaping)

These themes encourage discussions, workshops, and community events that address critical public health issues.





During the week **SAMHSA** urges communities and organizations to host community events that help create awareness about substance abuse and mental health importance. The campaign focuses on **community-based intervention** to help educate the people on the effects of substance abuse.

SAMHSA provides resource like planning and promotional tool kits and mental health-related activities such as prevention bingo, prevention Ad Libs and so forth to supplement the campaign.

They encourage individuals and organizations to share their story using the “**#MyPreventionStory**” on social media—whether it’s telling how they are helping to prevent substance use or sharing the ways they’re promoting mental health. “**#MyPreventionStory**” is a way for acknowledging our mental health and substance misuse prevention experiences.



Prevention is a **proactive strategy** for lowering the risks associated with substance abuse, underage drinking and mental health disorders. By prioritizing early intervention communities can reduce substance abuse even before it begins, encourage mental health through awareness and support, strengthen community resilience by fostering healthy behaviours, save lives by preventing overdose and suicide.



National Prevention Week is more than just an awareness campaign—it's a movement towards healthier and safer communities. NPW is a public education platform showcasing the work of communities and organizations across the country that are preventing substance use and promoting positive mental health. By investing in prevention today, we can save lives, save healthcare costs, and build a brighter future for generations to come.



International Day Of Women's Health



More Than Skin Deep: Women's Mental Health & The Power Of Being Heard

In honor of International Day of Women's Health

When we speak of women's health, we often picture annual checkups, reproductive care, or fitness routines. But beneath the surface of physical wellness lies a landscape just as vital—yet often overlooked—mental health.

On **May 28th**, the world observes International Day of Women's Health, a day meant to highlight the health challenges women face—but how often do we pause to ask: **How is her heart? Her mind? Her sense of peace?**

The truth is, millions of women silently carry the weight of the world on their shoulders, even as they nurture families, fuel industries, and hold communities together. Behind strong smiles, there can be anxiety. Beneath multitasking, there may be burnout. In the silence of sleepless nights, depression can grow unchecked.

Content: Garima Singh
Design: Ananyah Shrivasthav



Why Women's Mental Health Deserves The Spotlight?

Women are twice as likely to experience depression and anxiety than men, according to the WHO. Hormonal fluctuations, societal expectations, and gender-based discrimination all contribute to this higher risk. From postpartum depression to perimenopausal mood shifts, mental health is deeply intertwined with a woman's biology and life stages.

But the stigma persists. In many homes, countries, and cultures, mental health is still a taboo—especially for women. We're taught to be selfless. To endure. Do not complain. And as a result, many women suffer in silence, pushing their own well-being to the very end of an endless list of responsibilities.



The Stories We Don't Tell (But Should)

Consider the young girl who hides her panic attacks, fearing she'll be labeled "too sensitive."

The new mother who cries in secret, ashamed she's not "glowing."

The corporate woman who appears unstoppable but collapses in exhaustion behind closed doors.

The widow navigating grief, the survivor rebuilding her life, the teen who's lost in a digital world of comparison...

Each story matters. Each voice deserves to be heard.

May We Break the Silence

This **May 28**, let us do more than observe a day. Let's start a conversation. Let's tell women it's okay to not be okay. Let's remind them that:

- Therapy is not a weakness.
- Asking for help is a strength.
- Rest is a right, not a luxury.
- You can care for others and yourself.

Let's build spaces—homes, clinics, schools, offices—where mental well-being is treated with the same urgency as physical health.



Action, Not Just Awareness

Mental health care for women must be accessible, affordable, and non-judgmental. Governments and organizations need to address this through policy and support services. But each of us, too, has a role to play.

Check in with the women in your life not just for updates, but for feelings. Educate yourself and others on how mental health affects women differently.

Share Your Own story. You never know who you'll inspire to seek help.

Support initiatives that provide mental health resources for underserved women.



May You Be Kind to Your Mind



This May, let's not just raise awareness. Let's raise compassion, connection, and courage.

To every woman reading this: your mind matters. Your struggles are valid. Your healing is possible. And your voice is powerful.

May you feel heard. May you feel seen. May you feel held.

From one heart to another.



Tardive Dyskinesia Awareness Week

Let's take a moment to explore a little-known condition that affects hundreds of thousands of people worldwide. Tardive dyskinesia or TD for short is a neurological condition that primarily affects movement which are characterized as involuntary and repetitive, particularly of the face, mouth and tongue, these can develop as a side effect taken by people who've needed antipsychotics or other prescription medications (especially first-generation medications like haloperidol or chlorpromazine) to manage some serious mental illness, bipolar disorder for example or schizophrenia. These movements can range from mild to severe and are typically irreversible. The symptoms usually consist of people smacking or puckering their lips, blinking excessively or facial grimacing/twitch.



The Impact on Mental Health and Well-being

The visible, uncontrollable movements can be embarrassing and social stigmatizing, leading to shame, anxiety, depression resulting in individuals to become socially withdrawn or experience a loss of self-esteem affecting the overall quality of life.

The fear or presence of TD may lead some patients to stop taking their medications, increasing the risk of relapse in their mental health condition.

Despite its potentially challenging impact, TD is not widely known. TD Awareness Week, which occurs in May each year, aims to increase understanding of TD to improve the lives of people with the condition. This TD Awareness Week, let's come together & make a difference!

Volunteering at a TD Awareness Event

Want to be part of something meaningful and energizing? Lend a hand at a local TD awareness event! It's a great way to connect with your community, meet passionate people, and help spread the word about a condition that deserves way more attention.



Learn About TD (It's More Common Than You Think!)

Knowledge is power and, in this case, it's also compassion. TD might not be a household name, but it's estimated that up to 1 in 3 people taking antipsychotic meds for conditions like schizophrenia may develop it. Learn the signs, get informed, and be an advocate for yourself, or for someone you care about.

Light Up Your Feed with Awareness

Your voice matters! especially online! Show your support by posting during TD Awareness Week. Grab eye-catching images and profile frames from the 'Movement Disorders Policy Coalition (MDPC)' and get posting with #TDAwarenessWeek and #Screen4TD.



Bring the Conversation to Your Circle

Spark meaningful chats during Awareness Week at work, school, your gym, or even your book club. Post flyers on local boards, add a blurb in your team's newsletter, or share a quick fact at your next meetup. You never know who might need to hear it.

Wear Your Support (Literally!)

Support the cause in style by grabbing a fundraising t-shirt from the 'Neurocrine-sponsored NOTD (Neurocrine's TD awareness initiative).' Whether you're running errands or joining an event, you'll be spreading awareness with every step of the way!

Final Thoughts

Tardive Dyskinesia may not be widely known, but your voice, presence, and support can help change that. Whether you're volunteering at a local event, learning more about the condition, or simply sharing a post online, every action brings us one step closer to better awareness and advocacy.

Together, we can create a community that not only understands TD but uplifts those living with it. So go on get involved, get loud, or be the reason someone feels seen and heard. It truly helps make a difference!

Content: Rhea Sandra
Design: Ashiqa perveen





National Children's mental health awareness day

NOT JUST A PHASE

Why Children's Mental Health Deserves a Mic

In a world increasingly attuned to the importance of mental well-being, it is vital that we do not overlook one of the most vulnerable group among us: children. National Children's Mental Health day, serves as a powerful reminder that mental health issues are not exclusive to adults. They can –and often do–begin far earlier than we expect.

According to NHS, approximately one in six children aged 5 to 16 are likely to have a diagnosable mental health condition. This statistic, though staggering, often fails to receive the attention it deserves. In a culture where adult stress and burnout dominate the narrative, the emotional lives of children are frequently dismissed as “phases” or “attention seeking”. But behind those tantrums, silences, or anxious twitches are small humans with very real, and very big feelings.



When I was 9, I used to fake stomach aches to avoid school(like every other kid)--not because I hated learning,but because I was anxious about being called on in class and getting the answers wrong. At the time,my teachers thought I disliked Maths (to be fair, I still do), but nobody thought to ask why I was so stressed before school every morning. It wasn't rebellion; it was fear. Of embarrassment. Of failure. Of not being good enough.

Children today are facing far more than dodgy timetables and boring assemblies. There's the pressure to perform, to fit in, to be liked-on playgrounds and online. They're growing up in a world of filtered photos, climate crises and post-pandemic social anxiety, all before they can even vote or ride the bus alone





You might be thinking, I've got exams, job applications, and a social life to juggle—why should I think about 10-year-olds and their meltdowns. Fair question. But here's the thing: childhood mental health is the foundation of adult wellbeing.

Many of us (fully grown or almost adults) are just starting to process emotional wounds from years ago, we barely have our own lives together. Some of us are still figuring how to fold fitted sheets or cook pasta without Googling it.

But if we can manage to care deeply about the mental health of fictional TV characters, surely we can care about real children, living real lives, just trying to figure it all out. And sometimes, helping a child feel heard doesn't take a therapist or a policy change—it also takes someone older who doesn't laugh when they say they're scared or sad or lonely. Someone who takes their feelings seriously.

If we can understand and support children now whether that's our younger siblings, students we mentor, or kids we encounter in everyday life, we can help break the cycle. Early Intervention matters, so does empathy.

Content: Lalitha anand
Design: Nivitha Mahendran;
Sree Vanshika Behara



WHAT CAN BE DONE?

Start with conversations, ask the kids in your life how they're feeling and actually listen. Challenge old narratives, "Boys don't cry" and "stop being dramatic" need to be retired, permanently. Support organisations like [CHILDLINE India foundation](#), [Sangath](#), [The MINDS foundation](#) that work tirelessly to provide early support. Mental health should not be luxury; it's a necessity, a requirement take small initiatives yourself to advocate for better resources in schools and other settings.

So next time your little cousin throws a tantrum over dropping their ice cream, maybe don't roll your eyes. Ask what's really wrong. You might be surprised at what they say.





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