Mental Clairvoyance

By Maya Sriram

Yesterday, a notification went off on my phone. It read "Check on B." B is one of my closest friends, and they've been suffering from depression for a while now. I set myself a reminder to check in with them every week to make sure that they are on track with their mission to recover. Thankfully, when I sent them a message, B told me they were doing better. It truly does seem that B's story is going to have a happy ending.

However, celebrating B's victory completely trivializes the stories of the 700,000 people who commit suicide every year. In fact, that's one person every 40 seconds.[1] Who checks in on *them?* For most of them, mental health is shunned or not seen as a serious issue in their society - and some don't even have the money to learn about their condition.

I think it's about time we start paying attention.

Generally, the key issues that contribute to mental illness are: loneliness, fear, uncertainty, poverty, stress, isolation, and lack of mental stimulation.[2] Clearly, COVID-19 has not helped matters. The number of adults reporting anxiety or depression has increased from 1 in 10 before the pandemic to 4 in 10 now.[3]

But COVID-19 is far from the cause of all our mental problems - this has been happening for all of human existence, as one of the pitfalls of being an intelligent species. Thankfully, in

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[1] "Suicide Facts." *save.org,* https://save.org/about-suicide/suicide-facts/

[2] "Mental health problems - an introduction." *mind.org.uk,* https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/types-of-mental-health-problems/mental-health-problems-introduction/causes/

[3] Panchal, Nirmita, Rabah Kamal, Cynthia Cox, Rachel Garfield. "The Implications of COVID-19 for Mental Health and Substance Use." KFF, 10 Feb. 2021, https://www.kff.org/coronavirus-covid-19/issue-brief/the-implications-of-covid-19-for-mental-health-and-substance-use/l

recent years, people have started to acknowledge mental issues as important. Even so, the awareness uptick isn't enough.

People also tend to overlook the impact that hate crimes have on mental health - African-American and AAPI individuals who have experienced discrimination report higher levels of anxiety and depression, and victimized youths are more likely to develop a chronic mental health disorder.[4]

This needs to stop - NOW. We need to take action.

But how can we help such a diverse and far-reaching group of people? We cannot possibly locate everyone who is struggling - but there is another way.

Mentally ill people find the solace they so often need in support groups and companions. "By sharing [their] experiences in a safe and confidential setting, [they] gain hope and develop supportive relationships." [5]

Individuals all over the world are ready to help, but no one knows how to connect with mentally ill people. Meanwhile, those people are desperately looking for aid in the wrong places and finding none.

That is why I developed the idea of Mental Clairvoyance, a simple browser/mobile app. It is, in essence, a conglomerate of all mental health help services in society - a safe place for connection and to house the path to recovery.

The shining star of this app is the forum page. This page is the section of the app where users will have the opportunity to connect to others, whether they be fellow users, family and friends, mentors, therapists, etc. Some options that will be available in the forum are: find a

[4] Reja, Mishal. "Rise in anti-Asian American hate crimes may lead to mental health crisis." ABC News, 7 Mar. 2021,
https://abcnews.go.com/Health/rise-anti-asian-american-hate-crimes-lead-mental/story?id=76211964
[5] Smith, Kathleen. "What You Need To Know About Mental Health Support Groups." *psycom.net*, 21 Feb. 2020, https://www.psycom.net/mental-health-support-groups

friend; talk to a parental figure, people struggling with similar issues, and/or a therapist; ask mental-health-pertaining questions; send an SOS message in case of an emergency; etc. There will also be mental health courses on the app - they will help people learn more about mental illness and how to improve their mental wellbeing.

Mental Clairvoyance will have a newspage to discuss the most recent breakthroughs and societal changes in the mental health field. All the information will be checked for accuracy and purged of common triggers. The newspage will have a subpage titled "Positivity," which will have news on recent miracle recoveries, motivation in the form of daily quotes and affirmations, and a relaxation page, with mind-numbing math, click games and music.

This app will also have a section called "Personal Pages," similar to Instagram's feed. Users can post mental health updates and share them with their well-wishers. Anyone who sees a post on their feed will automatically send a smile to the original poster, in order to encourage recovery for everyone.

These features all work together to make Mental Clairvoyance a safe place for mentally ill people to connect. I truly hope that, when this app is implemented, societal mental health will take a leap like never before.

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