

KUNDALINI RISING

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Hanging on in quiet desperation?

Many Bangladeshis experience depression and anxiety, but the general mass lack awareness on the causes, the symptoms or treatment of mental illnesses. Often people are even oblivious to fact that they suffer from mild to severe forms of depression.

A study conducted in 2007 revealed an unexpectedly high level of unrecognised depressive symptoms among the rural population of Bangladesh. This data suggested that depressive symptoms are common in our culture, especially in women. It is particularly common among those suffering with diabetes.

The National Mental Health Survey of 2003-2005 showed that approximately 16.05 percent of the total adult population of Bangladesh is suffering from one or another form of mental disorder. Only a small segment of these patients do seek medical help. However, no mental disorder is covered in social insurance schemes, and no human rights review body exists in the country to inspect mental health facilities.

To create greater awareness on depression, the World Health Organisation, produced an insightful animated video called 'I had a black dog, his name was depression' that captures the essence of how it feels to be depressed.

Depression creeps into the mind slowly. The symptoms may vary from person to person and may include lethargy, apathy, obsessive negative thoughts, hunched back posture and generally finding it difficult to smile. Some even experience suicidal thoughts. Depression is intertwined with low self-esteem and self-destructive behaviours.

Post-partum depression affects 1 in 5 women. At this time, women experience lack of sleep and the unexpected challenge of breast feeding, healing from post-partum delivery (like C-section) takes a toll on the health of the new mother. At times, due to the overwhelming joy of having a new member in the house, a mother's post partum depression often gets neglected.

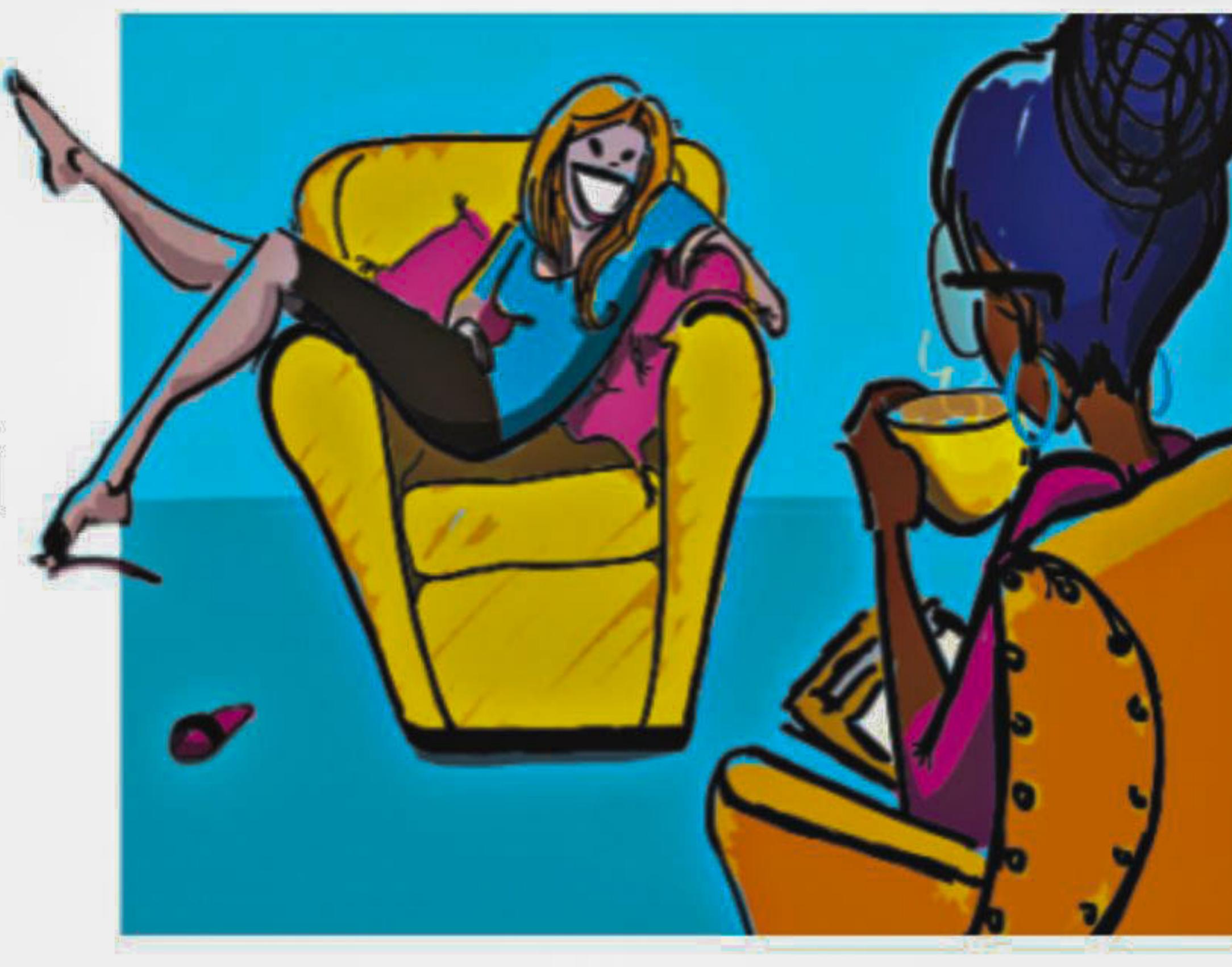
To heal from depression, a holistic approach is necessary.

Yoga can be very helpful as it increases blood circulation, dopamine (the 'feel good' neurotransmitter) and fitness while removing toxins and stress. Inverted positions such as headstands are known to be very effective in changing moods from negative to positive.

Meditation and relaxation techniques such as deep breathing can help. Eating healthy food, getting enough sleep, staying physically and socially active is also helpful. Positive habits must be nurtured to fend off depression.

Studies have shown that Buddhist monks have the most active 'happy region' in their brains and this is the same region stimulated by acts of compassion. If you want to feel good, make someone else feel good!

Depression can often feel like drowning, some consider it akin to suffocation. Sometimes medication is necessary to come in aide of a helpless person, to 'breathe!' Psychiatric intervention may be necessary in addition to making lifestyle changes.



Dr Ashique Selim, a psychiatrist, pointed towards the National Institute for Health Care and Excellence (NICE)'s clinical guideline 90 – for recognition and management of depression in adults. This guideline offers great advice for those who are interested in learning more about depression.

Two key questions to ask in identifying depression, as suggested by this guideline, are - During the last month, have you often been bothered by feeling down, depressed or hopeless? And, during the last month, have you often been bothered by having little interest or pleasure in doing things?

If you feel you have been experiencing a bout of depression, please reach out. Reach out to friends, family, counsellors, and doctors. Join a support group. Seek therapy. If you think you will not be able to shrug off the uneasiness of speaking to a real doctor, you can initially consult Maya – a local website and mobile app with counsellors and doctors available to answer your anonymous questions real-time.

Hiding from your depression can lead to more damage as the sufferer becomes increasingly isolated. It's time we break the taboo and talk about depression.

Illustration by Lara Salam – from Intentional Smile: A Girl's Guide to Positive Living.

Shazia Omar is a writer, activist and yogi. Her last book, *Intentional Smile: A Girl's Guide to Positive Living*, offers tools to cope with depression and chronic pain.

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'I had a black dog, his name was depression' is available at: [youtube.com/watch?v=XiCrniLQGYc](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XiCrniLQGYc)

National Institute for Health Care and Excellence (NICE)'s clinical guideline 90 is available at nice.org.uk/guidance/cg90; Log on to maya.com.bd

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limited in number. They swell up when we gain weight and shrinks when we lose. The goal of ULTRACONTOUR is to reduce the number of fat cells without surgery or pain with better shape than Liposuction or other surgical option and makes it easy for you to maintain the curves with even weight gain. You may have tried diet or exercise which may help you to burn calories and lose overall body weight but most women have fitness goals beyond just slimming down. Since a slimmer waist is key to having captivating curves, you may find ULTRACONTOUR worth doing.



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