

Rotary

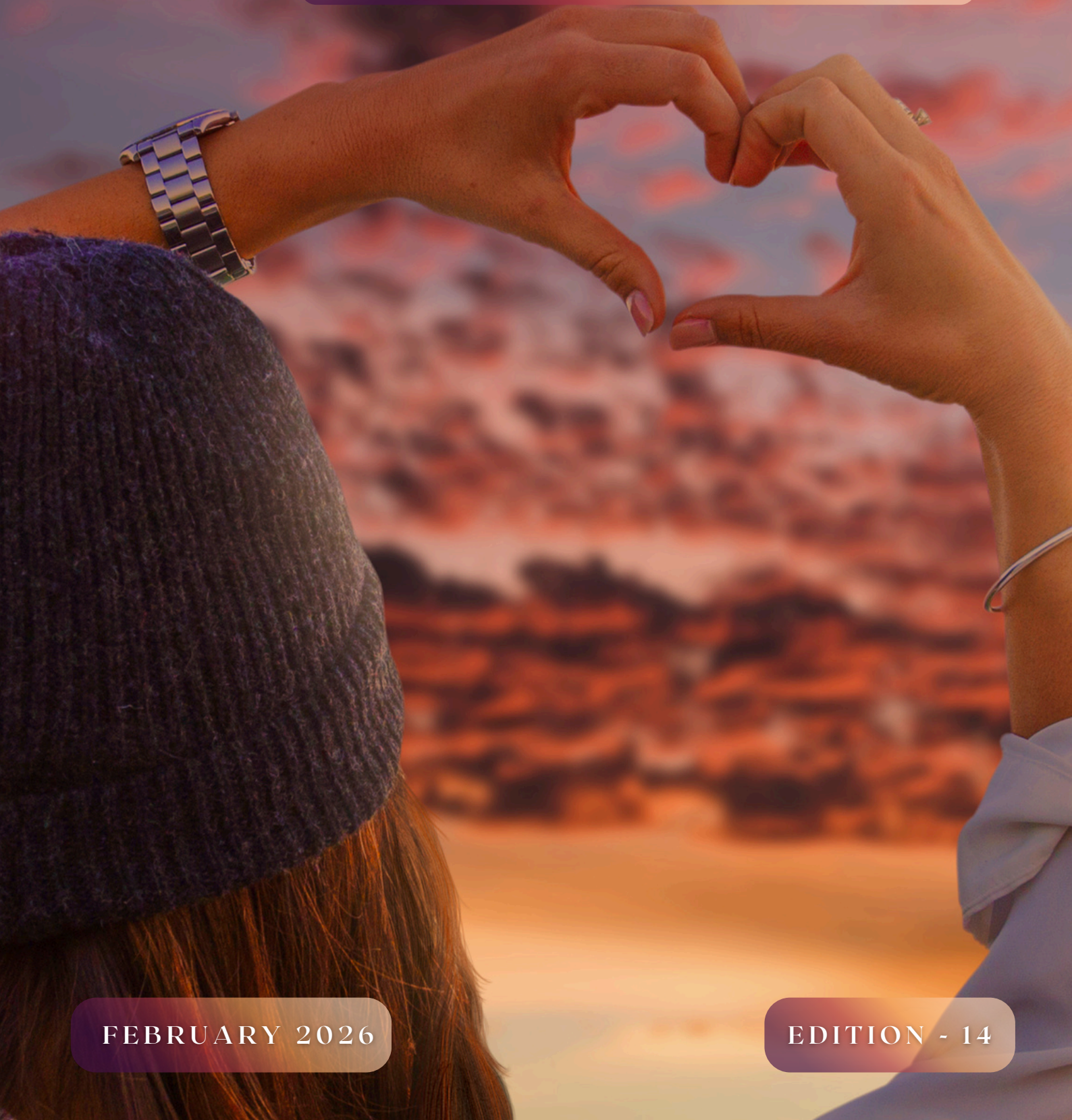


Mental Health
Initiatives
Rotary Action Group

METAMORPHOSIS

BI-MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

ROTARY ACTION GROUP ON MENTAL HEALTH INITIATIVES



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EDITORIAL

February is often celebrated as the Month of **Love**. Across the world, hearts are exchanged, roses are gifted, and affection is **expressed** in visible ways. Yet, at **RAGMHI**, we invite you to look at **love** beyond romance - as a profound **emotional** force that **heals, connects, and transforms**.

Love is not merely a **feeling**; it is an **energy**. It is present in **compassion** offered to a **distressed patient**, in the attentive listening of a **healthcare provider**, in the reassurance of a **caregiver**, and in the quiet support of a **colleague**. In **mental health care**, **love** manifests as **empathy**. In **community work**, it becomes **service**. In **education**, it becomes **guidance**.

Research consistently reminds us that **love** - **expressed** through **connection, belonging, and emotional safety** - improves **resilience, strengthens immunity, reduces stress, and fosters hope**. In a world where **loneliness** and **emotional disconnection** are rising **concerns, love** becomes not a **luxury**, but a **necessity**.

At **RAGMHI**, we witness every day how **human connection** becomes a **catalyst for healing**. Whether through **mental health education, emotional literacy sessions, or community outreach initiatives**, we see that when people feel **heard and valued, transformation begins**. **Love**, in its **purest** form, creates **psychological safety** - the foundation for **well-being**.

This **February**, let us expand our understanding of **love**:

- Love as **kindness** in **conversation**
- Love as **patience** in **caregiving**
- Love as **respect** in **disagreement**
- Love as **self-compassion** in moments of **struggle**

Let us also remember that **self-love** is not **selfish**; it is **essential**. Emotional well-being begins when we treat ourselves with the same **gentleness** we offer others.

As you turn these pages of **Metamorphosis**, may you reflect on how love - in its many forms - shapes your personal and professional journey. May we continue building a **community** where **care** is **intentional, empathy** is **practiced**, and **love** is **lived** as a **daily commitment**.

Because in the end, love is not just celebrated in **February** - it is cultivated **every day**.

Fourish Choudhary.



Prevention is better than cure



RITA AGGARWAL

All would agree that prevention is better than getting affected and going for treatment. There is increasing evidence that promotion of positive mental health and hence preventing mental illness can be cost-effective.

If we follow the Bio-Psycho-Social model of mental illness, it would help us if we can identify the social, cultural and individual determinants of mental health in the community. It would be imperative to focus on the primary stages of human development, such as the period of infancy, childhood and adolescence.

We all know that adverse childhood experiences increase the risk of mental health. As such, these are ages of vulnerability and hence opportunities as well for positive interventions.

The home environment, the learning environment can be of utmost importance in creating protective factors for mental health.

Parenting, nurturing, caregiving, school-based learning, play a role in promoting mental health. Interventions can be designed to reduce risk factors, improve the quality of environments and build resilience for individuals, specific groups or the entire community.

School-based programs, college-based programs for the youth, are gaining acceptance and proving to be of tremendous value. Peer support services in schools and colleges help them share their experiences and help each other by providing emotional support, bonding, practical help or engaging in awareness generation and advocacy.

It is heartening to see Rotary Clubs around the world engage in such meaningful and impactful projects!

Join the movement on promoting mental health !

WHEN LOVE BECOMES A SAFE SPACE

SHIVANGI GARG, DIRECTOR, RAGMHI

“Love recognizes no barriers. It jumps hurdles, leaps fences, penetrates walls to arrive at its destination full of hope.” — Maya Angelou

Ira met Vivaan when her mind felt louder than the world around her. Thoughts overlapped, sleep felt shallow and smiles practiced. She had mastered the art of appearing fine while quietly falling apart inside.

Vivaan never arrived with solutions. He arrived with presence.

He noticed when she went silent. He waited when she struggled to explain. He asked, “What’s really bothering you?” and then allowed the answer to come slowly, without interruption. Around him, Ira did not feel the need to edit her feelings. For the first time in a long time, she felt emotionally safe.

They shared - long walks, pauses, conversations that wandered from childhood memories to present fears. He would say, “You don’t have to carry everything alone.” And somehow, she began to believe it.

Her anxiety softened. Her breathing deepened. She started to sleep through the night. She laughed more freely. Not because life had changed, but because she felt supported within it.

Love, she realized, was quietly improving her mental health.

But their paths were never meant to merge. Circumstances, responsibilities, and timing stood between them like gentle but firm walls. There was no dramatic goodbye. Only a lingering look that said, we mattered.

When they stopped meeting, Ira expected the familiar heaviness to return.

But strangely, it didn’t.

Because Vivaan had left something behind in her mind—a kinder inner voice. On difficult days, she still heard him say, “Be gentle with yourself.” When overthinking returned, she remembered how calmly he would sit beside her until her thoughts slowed down.

She noticed something beautiful: she wanted him to be happy. Not with her. Just happy.

There was no craving to hold, no urge to chase. Only a quiet gratitude that he had once walked beside her when she needed it most.

They did not become a couple.

Yet, love stayed.

Not in photographs. Not in messages.

But in the way she now treated her own mind.

And sometimes, late at night, she wondered—

What if the purest form of love is not the one we keep...

but the one that gently teaches us how to keep ourselves?

Larry Kubiak



Licensed psychologist

ASK THE EXPERT

Why do panic attacks often appear out of the blue even when the person feels fine?

At its core procrastination is a problem with emotional regulation. As a result, we are not avoiding a task per se but trying to avoid the negative emotions associated with this task as it is usually something we don't want to do. At its core it's important to understand this and find ways to manage those emotions first and foremost. One way to do so is simply to forgive themselves. Research indicates that self compassion is a powerful tool for regulating negative emotions. It's basically a matter of telling yourself that you are struggling with the task but recognizing that's okay and other people have struggled with this as well. There's nothing special about my struggle I just need to work through it rather than getting hard on myself and beating myself up on it and making it worse.

What immediate grounding techniques can help during a panic attack?

The gold standard treatment for panic disorder is cognitive behavioral therapy which is often used in conjunction with medication particularly SSRIs. The research indicates that medications work faster than CBT at reducing panic attacks although CBT is more effective over time.

The emphasis in CBT is replacing the learned fear with new information and recognizing that this is an emotional regulation issue they can be addressed and overcome. The person recognizes they are willing to experience the symptoms and then handle the symptoms as opposed to avoiding them. We want to improve their resilience and belief in being able to cope so that they move from fear and avoidance to confidence that they can confront those symptoms without calamitous consequences. In CBT one identifies the irrational thinking that contributes to the panic attack and replaces that with more rational thinking. We change the way we feel by first of all changing the way we think about such events.

COPING WITH PANIC ATTACKS



- 1. Practice 4-7-8 Breathing**
 - Inhale for 4 seconds.
 - Hold for 7 seconds,
 - Exhale for 8 seconds.
 - Repeat 4-5 times.

Breathe in... Hold...
Slowly breathe out...
- 2. Try the 5-4-3-2-1 Technique**

Ground Yourself in the Present

 - 5 Things you can see 
 - 4 Things you can touch 
 - 3 Things you can hear 
 - 2 Things you can smell 
 - 1 Thing you can taste 