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PAKISTAN INSTITUTE OF MENTAL HEALTH, RAWALPINDI

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DR. USAMA BIN ZUBAIR

CEO & Consultant Psychiatrist



DR. SYED AZHAR ALI

Consultant Psychiatrist & Addiction Treatment Expert



DR. Hirra Hussain

Consultant Psychiatrist



MISS ANJUM AFSHAN

Clinical Psychologist & Autism Specialist



MAJ. ZUBAIR HUSSAIN

Managing Director



DR. HAMZA BIN ZUBAIR

Senior Medical Officer



MISS JAVARIA ZUBAIR

Audience Engagement Head

THE CEO'S VISION DR. USAMA BIN ZUBAIR | CEO & Consultant Psychiatrist

At the Pakistan Institute of Mental Health, we believe that the first step toward true healing is the courage to be seen without the fear of being shamed.For too long, the weight of judgment—both from society and from within—has acted as a barrier to mental well-being. Our mission is to dismantle those barriers. We advocate for a non-judgmental approach where every individual's journey is met with radical empathy and professional grace. Your struggles do not define your worth; they are simply chapters in a much larger, more vibrant story. To embrace life is not to live without pain, but to live with the realization that your mental health is a priority, not a secondary thought. It is about finding the strength to seek help and the resilience to celebrate every small victory. Let us move forward together, replacing stigma with understanding and isolation with community. Life is waiting for you to engage with it fully—we are here to ensure you have the support to do just that.

WHY CHOOSE PIMH?



Choosing PIMH means choosing a path towards healing and recovery. Our commitment to compassionate care, evidence-based practices and continuous innovation sets us apart. We understand the profound impact that mental health has on every aspect of life. Also, we are dedicated to provide high-quality services that meets the unique needs of each individual.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

At Pakistan Institute of Mental Health (PIMH), we recognize that mental health is not just an individual concern; it's a community responsibility. Our commitment to community engagement is rooted in the belief that collective efforts can create lasting change in mental health awareness, support and advocacy. By fostering connections within our community, we aim to break the stigma associated with mental health issues and empower individuals to seek help and support.

PIMH is dedicated to create an inclusive environment where everyone feels valued and understood.

Our community engagement initiatives focus on:

Raising Awareness: Educating public about various mental health issues, treatment options and the importance of seeking help.

Building Support Networks: Connecting individuals with resources and support systems within our communities.

Promoting Collaboration: Working alongside local organizations, schools and government bodies to enhance mental health services and awareness.

We organize workshops and seminars in schools, colleges and community centers to discuss various mental health topics. These sessions provide valuable information on recognizing mental health symptoms, coping strategies and the importance of mental well-being.

Message from

Professor Dr. Imtiaz Ahmad Dogar



Beyond Treatment: Prevention as the Key to Mental Well-being

Mental health has emerged as one of the most pressing public health challenges of the twenty-first century. In an increasingly complex world characterized by economic uncertainty, technological overexposure, social fragmentation, and growing psychosocial stressors, emotional and psychological well-being stands under unprecedented pressure. Yet, despite its profound effect on individuals, families, productivity, and societal stability, mental health remains among the most neglected domains of healthcare, particularly in low- and middle-income countries.

Today, the global population exceeds 8 billion, while nearly one in every eight individuals worldwide lives with a mental disorder, affecting almost one billion people globally (World Health Organization, 2022). Conditions such as depression, anxiety, substance use disorders, and stress-related illnesses continue to contribute significantly to disability, impaired functioning, and reduced quality of life across nations.

Pakistan presents an even more concerning reality. With a population exceeding 250 million people, Pakistan is currently the fifth most populous country in the world (Worldometer, 2025). It is estimated that nearly 24 million Pakistanis require mental health support, yet access to psychiatric care remains critically limited (Pakistan Association for Mental Health / WHO estimates). Despite the growing burden, mental health receives only a minimal proportion of healthcare funding and unfortunately continues to remain outside the sphere of national priorities. The shortage of trained professionals further intensifies the challenge. Pakistan has approximately 0.19 psychiatrists per 100,000 population, translating into only a few hundred psychiatrists for a quarter of a billion people—among the lowest psychiatrist-to-population ratios globally (WHO Eastern Mediterranean Region data). Under such circumstances, depending solely upon specialist-driven treatment is neither realistic nor sustainable.

Compounding this burden are inflation, rising fuel and electricity costs,shortage of basic necessaties of life, unemployment, social injustice, widening inequalities, and uncertainty regarding the future. Families experience financial strain, young individuals struggle with academic and professional pressures, and communities increasingly face emotional exhaustion. Such circumstances collectively create fertile ground for anxiety, depression, substance misuse, aggression, and psychological distress.

In view of these realities, we must recognize an undeniable truth: our ultimate escape lies in prevention. Given the immense burden of psychiatric illness, limited healthcare resources, and shortage of specialists, preventive psychiatry is no longer an option—it is a necessity.

Prevention Strategies for Mental Health: The

challenge of mental illness can be addressed more effectively through preventive measures spanning primary, secondary, and tertiary prevention, emphasizing awareness, early intervention, and rehabilitation.

1. Reduction of Genetic Loading Through Responsible Family Counseling

Where there is a strong family history of severe psychiatric illness, informed counseling and discouraging close consanguineous (cousin) marriages may help reduce inherited psychiatric vulnerability.

2. Control of Substance Use Disorders (SUDs)

Reducing substance misuse through awareness, regulation, and rehabilitation can significantly decrease psychiatric illness, violence, family disruption, and social dysfunction.

3. Judicious Use of Social Media

Responsible digital engagement should be encouraged to reduce anxiety, misinformation, cyberbullying, sleep disturbance, and emotional instability, especially among youth.

4. Stress Management Training in Schools, Colleges, and Universities

Teaching emotional resilience, coping strategies, and mindfulness can help young people better navigate academic and social pressures.

5. Training of Primary Care Doctors in Mental Health

Given the shortage of psychiatrists, primary care physicians should be trained to identify, manage, and appropriately refer common psychiatric disorders at an early stage.

6. Teaching Behavioral Sciences Across Educational Disciplines

Behavioral sciences should be incorporated into medicine, education, law, and social sciences to foster empathy, communication skills, and emotional intelligence.

7. Promotion of Exercise and Healthy Lifestyle

Regular physical activity, balanced nutrition, adequate sleep, and structured routines serve as scientifically proven protective factors for mental well-being.

8. Judicious Use of Available Mental Health Services

Available psychiatric services should be utilized rationally through timely referrals, continuity of care, and community-based support.

9. Avoidance of Mental Health-Related Quackery

Unscientific treatments (spiritual and faith healers) and delayed professional consultation often worsen illness; therefore, evidence-based psychiatric care should be encouraged.

10. Early Consultation and Mental Health Screening

Routine screening and timely psychiatric consultation can facilitate early diagnosis and prevent progression to severe disability.

11. Training and Engagement of NGOs and Community Workers

NGOs, teachers, religious leaders, and social workers should receive mental health training to strengthen awareness, reduce stigma, and improve community support systems.

12. Strengthening Family and Social Support Systems

Healthy family environments, supportive relationships, and strong community connections act as protective buffers against psychological distress.

Mental healthcare cannot remain confined to hospitals and specialists alone.

Mental health is not solely the responsibility of psychiatrists; it is a shared responsibility of policymakers, educators, healthcare professionals, families, communities, and society as a whole. The time has come to shift our focus from illness-centered care toward prevention-centered well-being. If we aspire to build a healthier nation, prevention must become our foremost priority and strongest collective commitment.

> **"An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure."**
>
> — Benjamin Franklin

Reflecting on a Quarter of Impact & Growth at PIMH, Rawalpindi!

Over the past three months, the Pakistan Institute of Mental Health has been on the ground and in the clinic—from serving remote communities in Layyah and Shiger to collaborating with the Fauji Foundation and shaping future professionals through our upcoming specialized Diploma tracks.

Thank you to our incredible team, led by CEO Dr. Usama Bin Zubair, and our community partners for making mental healthcare accessible, evidence-based, and stigma-free. Let's keep moving forward!

Dr. Qalb e Haider



Role of Parental Wisdom in the Emotional Development of Children

Children do not learn emotions only through words; they learn them through the daily behavior, guidance, and wisdom of their parents. From infancy to adolescence, parents play a crucial role in shaping how children understand feelings, manage stress, and interact with others. Parental wisdom is not simply about knowledge or strict discipline; it involves patience, empathy, good judgment, and the ability to guide children in a balanced way. Wise parenting helps children develop emotional stability, confidence, and resilience, which are essential for healthy psychological growth.

Understanding Parental Wisdom

Parental wisdom refers to the ability of parents to make thoughtful and balanced decisions regarding their children's upbringing. It includes emotional maturity, understanding of a child's needs, and the capacity to respond appropriately in different situations. Wise parents do not react impulsively; instead, they try to understand the child's feelings and behavior before responding.

Wisdom in parenting also means recognizing that every child is unique. Children differ in temperament, interests, and emotional sensitivity. A wise parent observes these differences and adapts their parenting style accordingly. This thoughtful approach helps build trust and emotional security within the family.

Emotional Development in Children

Emotional development is the process through which children learn to recognize, express, and manage their emotions. During early childhood, children begin to understand basic feelings such as happiness, sadness, anger, and fear. As they grow older, they learn more complex emotional skills such as empathy, patience, self-control, and problem solving.

Healthy emotional development helps children form positive relationships, handle challenges, and maintain mental well-being. If children receive supportive and wise guidance from parents, they are more likely to develop strong emotional intelligence and psychological resilience.

The Role of Parents as Emotional Guides

Parents are often the first teachers of emotional behavior. Children closely observe how their parents react to situations, manage conflicts, and express emotions. For example, when parents handle stress calmly and respectfully, children learn to adopt similar coping strategies.

Wise parents guide their children in understanding their emotions rather than suppressing them. When a child is upset or angry, a supportive parent listens patiently and helps the child express feelings in a healthy way. This approach teaches children that emotions are natural and manageable.

In contrast, harsh criticism or constant punishment may cause children to hide their emotions or develop anxiety and low self-esteem. Therefore, parental wisdom lies in balancing discipline with understanding and compassion.

Communication and Emotional Connection

Effective communication is one of the most powerful tools of wise parenting. Open conversations between parents and children help build trust and emotional closeness. When children feel safe discussing their thoughts and feelings, they develop stronger emotional confidence.

Parents who practice active listening encourage children to express themselves freely. Simple actions such as maintaining eye contact, acknowledging feelings, and providing reassurance can greatly influence a child's emotional development. Wise parents avoid dismissing or ignoring a child's emotions, as this may create feelings of rejection or insecurity.

Teaching Emotional Regulation

Another important aspect of parental wisdom is teaching children how to regulate their emotions. Emotional regulation means managing feelings in a constructive way rather than reacting impulsively. Children who learn this skill are better able to cope with frustration, disappointment, and social conflicts.

Parents can teach emotional regulation by modeling calm behavior and guiding children through difficult situations. For example, when a child becomes angry or frustrated, parents can help them identify the emotion and suggest healthier ways to respond, such as deep breathing, talking about the problem, or taking a short break.

Over time, these lessons help children develop self-control and emotional maturity, which are essential for success in school, relationships, and later life.

Encouraging Empathy and Social Skills

Wise parenting also plays an important role in developing empathy and social understanding. Empathy is the ability to recognize and respect the feelings of others. Children who grow up in supportive family environments often develop stronger compassion and cooperation.

Parents can nurture empathy by encouraging children to consider how others feel and by modeling kindness in daily interactions. Teaching children to share, apologize when necessary, and respect differences contributes to their social and emotional development.

Such skills are particularly important during adolescence, when peer relationships and social challenges become more complex.

Balancing Discipline and Support

Discipline is an important part of parenting, but it must be applied wisely. Excessive strictness can create fear and emotional distance, while a complete lack of boundaries may lead to behavioral problems. Wise parents establish clear rules while maintaining warmth and understanding.

Constructive discipline focuses on teaching rather than punishing. Instead of harsh criticism, parents explain why certain behaviors are inappropriate and guide children toward better choices. This balanced approach helps children learn responsibility without damaging their emotional well-being.

Challenges in Modern Parenting

In today's rapidly changing world, parenting has become more challenging. Technology, social media, academic pressure, and changing social values can influence children's emotional health. Parents must navigate these challenges carefully while maintaining strong family connections.

Parental wisdom becomes even more important in this context. By staying informed, maintaining open communication, and providing emotional support, parents can help children cope with modern pressures and uncertainties.

Conclusion

The emotional development of children is deeply influenced by the wisdom and guidance of their parents. Through empathy, effective communication, balanced discipline, and emotional support, parents create an environment where children feel safe, valued, and understood. Wise parenting not only shapes a child's emotional intelligence but also prepares them to face life's challenges with confidence and resilience.

Ultimately, parental wisdom is not about perfection; it is about continuous learning, patience, and love. When parents approach their role with understanding and thoughtful guidance, they contribute significantly to raising emotionally healthy and compassionate individuals who can positively impact society.

Psychiatrist working in Periphery



Dr. Waris Khan Niazi

Post Graduate Trainee Psychiatry
Department of Psychiatry, CJIP,
LUMHS, Hyderabad

Dr. Waris Khan Niazi is a young, energetic, and enthusiastic psychiatrist providing mental health services in the Mianwali district. He did his diploma in Psychiatry from FMU under the supervision of Prof. Imtiaz Dogar and currently working in DHQ Mianwali.





Psych Resident



Dr. Mirza Fahad Khurshid Baig

Department of Psychiatry, LUMHS, CJIP, Hyderabad

The Grammar of Nervous System

In many hospitals across Pakistan, doctors witness a familiar scene: a young woman arrives in the ER unable to move her legs, a student suddenly loses his voice before his viva examinations, or a patient collapse with seizures that leave no positive finding on neurological tests. Doctors run all kind of available investigations and they return normal. The brain scans are clean, the nerves intact. Yet the suffering is real. This is conversion disorder, now called Functional Neurological Symptom Disorder, where psychological conflict finds expression through the body.

At first glance, this condition seems kind of mysterious, sometimes even deceptive. The families of patient often say, "Nothing is wrong with her, she is just doing drama." Even doctors may feel frustrated when laboratory investigations cannot find a lesion or biochemical explanation. But here, the truth is more complex and "more human." Perhaps conversion disorder is not a lie but a translation. The mind converts the unbearable emotional turmoil into physical symptoms. "Lab agar nahi

hiltay, haath jaag uthtay hein."

In the social fabric of Pakistan, where emotional expression is often restrained and discouraged, (especially for women and young people) this translation becomes tragically common. A daughter who finds her in a situation where she cannot argue with her parents may lose the ability to walk. A student burdened by expectations may lose his voice before speaking. A body falls where words were never allowed to stand.

Metaphorically, it reminds us that the boundary between mind and body is blur. The body is not merely a machine of muscles and nerves, but it is also a storyteller. When language doesn't find words, physiology becomes poetry. Paralysis becomes the only way to protest. Blindness becomes the escape. These symptoms are not meaningless; they are messages written in the grammar of the nervous system.

In the field of mental health, treating conversion disorder requires more than just prescribing medication. It requires active listening with patience about the life behind the symptom. And when the patient feels heard, when patient feels understood, when hidden conflicts are named, the body often begins to release its burden.

In the end, conversion disorder teaches us a profound lesson that sometimes the loudest cry for help is not spoken through words, but through the silence of a limb that refuses to move.

"The pendulum of the mind oscillates between sense and nonsense, not between right and wrong"

- Carl Jung

Medical Student Corner



Muhammad Kumail Danial

President
president@msapakistan.org
Medical Students' Association of Pakistan
MS5 Poonch Medical College Rawalkot

As the President of the Medical Students' Association of Pakistan , I am deeply traumatized and heartbroken by the ongoing wave of suicides among medical students across the country. This is not a series of isolated incidents; it reflects a systemic failure that urgently demands acknowledgment and reform.

Over the years, through direct engagement with students nationwide, several critical and recurring factors have emerged as potential contributors to this crisis:

1. Inconsistent academic policies and abrupt changes without adequate transition or consultation
2. An examination system driven solely by a numbers-based race rather than holistic learning
3. Emotional dissociation of faculty and institutions from students, with disproportionate focus on fee collection and rigid regulations
4. Harsh, intimidating, and at times humiliating behavior of academic staff toward students
5. Severe financial constraints faced by students and their families
6. Poorly structured, marks-oriented assessment systems coupled with life-altering academic decisions
7. Absence of co-curricular and recreational activities, along with lack of proper funding and supervision for student engagement
8. Excessive academic burden without regard for mental well-being
9. Insufficient vacations and recovery periods

In light of this alarming reality, I call upon academic leadership across Pakistan — Vice Chancellors, Deans, Rectors, Principals, and Heads of Departments of medical colleges and universities — to formally recognize student bodies as key stakeholders.

Students' concerns must be taken seriously and meaningfully incorporated into academic and administrative decision-making. It is imperative to move beyond token consultations and toward genuine collaboration.

Medical institutions must ensure the development of campuses that are mentally, physically, and emotionally safe, where students are supported, heard, and treated with dignity. The lives of our future doctors cannot be the cost of an inhumane system.

This is not merely an appeal — it is a moral and institutional responsibility.

Psychologist

ABDUL REHMAN

Trauma and Its Psychological Impact: A Pathway to Addiction



Trauma refers to deeply distressing experiences such as physical or emotional abuse, accidents, significant loss, neglect, or exposure to violence that overwhelm an individual's ability to cope effectively. Although some individuals recover through resilience and social support, others develop persistent psychological difficulties that interfere with emotional regulation, interpersonal relationships, and daily functioning.

Psychological trauma significantly affects brain systems involved in stress regulation, emotional processing, and decision-making. Individuals exposed to trauma may experience symptoms including anxiety, intrusive memories, emotional numbness, irritability, hypervigilance, sleep disturbances, and difficulty maintaining relationships. These symptoms often reflect alterations in neurobiological stress pathways and emotional processing systems.

In many cases, individuals attempt to cope with overwhelming emotional distress through substance use. This process is commonly referred to as self-medication, in which substances are used to temporarily reduce psychological pain, emotional discomfort, or traumatic memories. While substance use may provide short-term relief, it fails to resolve the underlying trauma and may gradually lead to dependence, misuse, and addiction. Consequently, a harmful cycle develops in which trauma contributes to addiction, and addiction further worsens psychological distress.

Clinical observations and research findings indicate that trauma-related substance use frequently co-occurs with mental health conditions such as depression, anxiety disorders, and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. Individuals may use alcohol or drugs to regulate emotions, avoid distressing thoughts, or suppress traumatic memories, thereby increasing the risk of long-term psychological and physical complications.

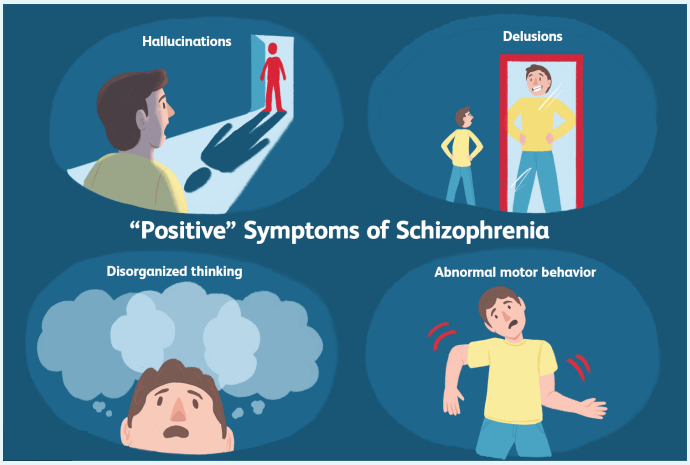
Effective management requires an integrated and trauma-informed treatment approach. Evidence-based psychotherapies, particularly Cognitive Behavioral Therapy and trauma-focused interventions, have shown significant effectiveness in addressing both trauma symptoms and substance use behaviors. In addition, psychological counseling, family and social support systems, psychoeducation, and pharmacological treatment when clinically indicated can substantially improve recovery outcomes.

Early identification and timely psychological intervention play a crucial role in preventing the progression from trauma-related distress to substance dependence. Increasing awareness among healthcare professionals, educational institutions, and the general public may help reduce stigma and encourage individuals to seek professional psychological support at an earlier stage.

Reclaiming Life After 25 Years: A Triumph Over Schizophrenia

A Journey of Recovery at PIMH

by Kashmaila Gulzar



For over two decades, the world was a terrifying place for a female patient who was diagnosed with schizophrenia in her early twenties, spending twenty-five years trapped in a relentless cycle of illness that standard medications failed to relieve. Her true turning point came with her arrival at the Pakistan Institute of Mental Health (PIMH) in Rawalpindi, where the clinical team initiated a highly specialized medical regimen featuring clozapine, managed with meticulous medical supervision and exceptional, round-the-clock clinical care by the hospital staff. This advanced pharmacological approach, combined with the unwavering devotion, daily efforts, and structured support of her family at home, allowed her mind to finally clear. Over the past two years, this effective treatment and holistic care plan have completely transformed her life; at forty-five years old, she is now entirely stable, highly functional, has successfully returned to her job, and is fully capable of raising her children, proving that with tailored clinical interventions and a dedicated family partnership, profound recovery is possible at any stage of life.

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Surrounded by Idiots by Thomas Ericson



Syed Azhar Ali Kazmi
Associate Professor Psychiatry

Surrounded by Idiots by Thomas Erikson is one of those books that feels instantly relatable. It speaks to a quiet frustration many of us carry: Why do some people feel so difficult to understand?

Instead of offering heavy theory, Erikson uses a simple four-color personality model—Red (dominant), Yellow (social), Green (calm), and Blue (analytical)—to explain how different communication styles shape our interactions.At its heart, the book delivers a comforting idea: most conflicts are not about bad intentions, but about mismatched ways of thinking and expressing. This perspective feels especially meaningful in everyday life—whether in families, workplaces, or friendships—where misunderstandings often escalate simply because people are "wired" differently.

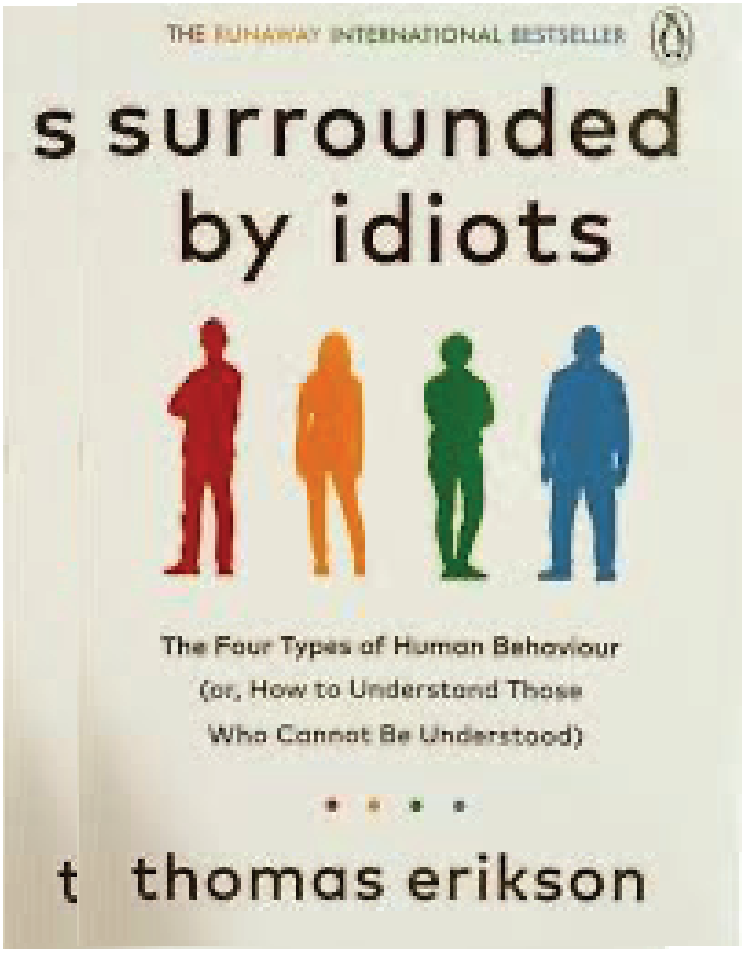
For mental health professionals, particularly in Pakistan, this simplicity can actually be very useful. In fast-paced clinical settings, where there's limited time for deep formulation, a framework like this gives clients something tangible to hold onto. It helps translate complex interpersonal dynamics into something they can easily recognize in their own lives.The concept can be used in patients and families for psycho educational purposes.

What makes Erikson's model even more interesting is how it echoes much older ways of understanding personality. The four colors closely resemble the classical Greek temperaments— Sanguine (lively), Choleric (driven), Phlegmatic (peaceful), and Melancholic (thoughtful) originally associated with thinkers like Hippocrates and Galen. These ancient frameworks also grouped human behavior into four broad patterns, suggesting that the desire to simplify personality into understandable categories is something deeply rooted in human history.

A similar idea can be seen in the teachings attributed to Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq, where human temperament is often discussed in relation to natural elements—fire, air, water, and earth—each reflecting different emotional and behavioral tendencies. While not identical to Erikson's model, these perspectives highlight a shared intuition across cultures: that human personalities can be understood through recurring patterns, and that balance among these traits is essential. For many people in our cultural context, this connection can make such models feel more familiar and meaningful, rather than foreign or purely "Western."

However, the book does have its limitations. Reducing personality to just four types can oversimplify the complexity of human behavior. There's a real risk of labelling people too quickly,ignoring the fact that personality is fluid and shaped by context, experiences, and mental health.

Modern psychology—especially trait-based approaches like the Five-Factor Model—offers a more evidence-based and nuanced understanding of personality. Still, the strength of Surrounded by Idiots lies in its practicality, not its scientific precision. It gives people a language—a starting point —to reflect on themselves and others. In therapy, it can be used as a gentle tool for building insight, improving communication, and fostering empathy, as long as it's not treated as a rigid or diagnostic system. In the end, this is not a book that aims to capture the full complexity of human personality. Instead, it offers something simpler, and perhaps just as valuable: a way to pause, understand differences, and respond with a little more patience.





Fatima Faheem

We are made of emotions we cannot translate . They overwhelm, they drown , they sit in places language can't reach.
As Kafka said "I am constantly trying to communicate something incommunicable, to explain something inexplicable, to tell about something I only feel in my bones and which can only be experienced in those bones."

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