

Weekender

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Because every week deserves a happy ending



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Healing Minds

Mariam Alammadi has been working in the mental health sector for the last ten years. She is a licensed psychologist and has experience in working for an NGO, counselor, youth leader and creating workshops. She is the founder of the Child Foundation Center (CFC) a psychological center that provides specialized care in counseling and milestone development.

On the occasion of World Mental Health Day, Weekender was in conversation with Mariam Alammadi, to talk about access to mental health care in Bahrain, and how and if society's reception of it has seen some change.

W. Has there been a quantifiable improvement in the field of mental health awareness and help, in terms of accessibility for the affected people?

M. Yes, there has been a definite quantifiable improvement in the field of mental health awareness and help. From working in the Kingdom of Bahrain I really feel there has been a significant increase in the individuals seeking psychological help. We also have an increase in the number of mental health therapists working in Bahrain which makes mental health services much more accessible and helps the community see mental health services as mainstream. The more we push mental health into the media and open the conversation, the more we are seeing better acceptance. The media, in particular, has been great about spreading the message of the importance of well-being and mental health.

W. In your personal and professional experience, how far along do you think the local resident community's mindset has changed or developed, regarding the stigma surrounding mental health?

M. When I first opened my clinic in Bahrain in 2011, I was often told I would never have patients, nobody in Bahrain would visit a psychologist. However, that really wasn't the case. Nearly nine years later, I

am still providing psychological services. Patients come and get the help that they realize they need and deserve. It is a brave thing to wake up in the morning and admit you are overwhelmed and cannot overcome some of your difficulties. That bravery needs to be celebrated and I can see that shift in mindset.

W. What would you categorize as your biggest achievement to date?

M. My biggest achievement to date in my field was winning the Smart Health Award last year in the UAE. I was the only psychologist to make the list and I feel like that sent a poignant message. Psychology and traditional medicine exist side by side. The best methodology for breaking the stigma of mental health is to encourage equality between physical and mental illness.



Mariam Alammadi

When society understands that mental illness is also a disease it creates better understanding and acceptance. I am also really proud of some of the incentives we have undertaken in my center, The Child Foundation Center (CFC Psychology) – such as our "End Cyber Bullying Campaign", our "Mental Wealth Bahrain" which is a subsidized rate for students in Bahrain, and our free online chat portal which is open from 9 am to 4 pm, on Sunday to Thursday, where anyone can go to our website and chat with our psychologists. It was important to me that my center is not only a place of business but is an opportunity to help the community.

W. What is the one thing you'd like to crack, in this field?

M. The one thing I would love to crack in this field

is the mindset that the younger generation has it easier. I dislike comparing generational gaps especially as the dynamics in life have changed completely. I often hear people say "in my day we had hardships, and we just got over it". Yet their lives very often show the opposite that actually those hardships impacted them very negatively and led them to seek unhealthy outlets or unhealthy coping mechanisms. The younger generations have access to better mental health services so they should be encouraged not discouraged. By seeking help earlier in life, you have a better foundation to build upon and are better equipped to deal with any negative experiences that come your way. The research has proved again and again that emotional intelligence (EQ) is a greater predictor of success in life. When you have better emotional intelligence you tend to have better relationships, more networking opportunities, better empathy and the ability to deal with stress effectively. Why would we deny the younger generation the ability to seek and learn these skills?

W. Are diagnoses being made and help being sought earlier now, than it was, maybe a decade ago?

M. There is definitely more valuable information out there and good therapists ensuring the population are getting diagnosis quicker and are receiving therapy much quicker. We are seeing this particularly in children with early intervention services which are wonderful in Bahrain. There are still children falling between the cracks though, so it is so important to visit a psychologist even if it is just to check a few symptoms – think of it as a physical check-up. Doing a milestone evaluation is always a great idea because you can see where your child is progressing well or if they need some help in certain areas of their development.

W. What is the ultimate goal that you'd like to see fulfilled in Bahrain?

M. The ultimate goal I would like to see in Bahrain is to have multi-disciplinary teams working together, particularly more psychiatrists and psychologists, working together. Ensuring that medication is not the only option and educating patients about the benefits of therapy. I would also love a better referral system with hospitals and private clinics to ensure patients that need our help can reach us easily.



Eating out

WHAT: OUR BIG FAT BRUNCHIE MUNCHIE

WHEN: FRIDAY, OCTOBER 11

WHERE: LNT, ADLIYA

Brunch and Munchie like there's no tomorrow this Friday with the LNT Big Fat Brunchie Munchie. Unlimited selected drinks till 5 pm. Live Music and DJ mixes from Ollie Martin.



WHAT: JAPANESE THEMED BRUNCH

WHEN: SATURDAY, OCTOBER 12

WHERE: FOUR SEASONS

The fun-loving chefs at re/ Asian Cuisine will be turning their hands to sushi, rolls and all things Japanese during this hugely popular Saturday brunch. Spice up your Saturday with wasabi and live jazz from 12:30 pm till 3:30 pm.



WHAT: THINK PINK BRUNCH

WHEN: FRIDAY, OCTOBER 11

WHERE: CROWNE PLAZA, INTERCONTINENTAL REGENCY

Be a part of the Think Pink Brunch at either the InterContinental Regency Bahrain or the Crowne Plaza Bahrain. BD1 per person will go towards Think Pink Bahrain.



Nightlife & Music

WHAT: BAHRAIN COMEDY CLUB WITH KEVIN GILDEA

WHEN: FRIDAY, OCTOBER 11

WHERE: DILMUN CLUB

Unfortunately, Ivo Graham has had to cancel. Fortunately, Kevin Gildea has stepped in who will still provide an evening full of hysterical laughter! The Bahrain Comedy Club! The Dilmun Club's renowned comedy night.

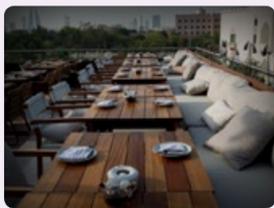


WHAT: DEBORAH JONES LIVE

WHEN: SUNDAY, OCTOBER 13

WHERE: ATTIC, ADLIYA

Kick start the week with the beautiful voice of Deborah Jones. Joined by Adel Fairouz every Sunday from 20:30, you won't want to miss an evening at Attic.



WHAT: PUNK ROCK DISCO

When: FRIDAY, OCTOBER 11

Where: BRAZIL LOUNGE

You have missed this, but they've been fighting demons and monsters for weeks on end and have come out of the other end of the tunnel victorious. And aren't they ready to celebrate!!



Missing Pets Have You Seen These Beloved Pets?



BE SURE to microchip your pets and have them wear collars with ID tags ...

The incidents of pets going missing/stolen is very prevalent in Bahrain, especially pedigrees. Hundreds have gone missing - never to be found. Some people let their pets free-roam, but there are just too many hazards. If you have a secured pet (*one that does not free-roam*) that has gone missing and you would like to be included in the Programme, please check **Lost, stolen and found pets in Bahrain** Facebook for the information needed. **Contact Peg Altemueller directly** via private message or email ampmpa2@yahoo.com.



BLUEY

Male long haired domestic, 14 mos, small cat, neutered, not wearing collar or ID tag, child accidentally left door open, Saar (near Spartan Gym), went missing 27/9/19. **Tel: 38731571**



MOONI

Female Pomeranian/Chihuahua, 6 yrs, spayed, microchipped at ACC, golden beige fur, long hair/larger than Chi, orange collar - no ID, escaped open garage door, likely picked up, A'ali, BD50 REWARD, went missing 27/9/19. **Tel: 39422254**



JOOLEE

Female Tibetan Spaniel, 3.5 yrs, microchipped (Charis), white collar - no ID tag, door left open, last seen near Muharraq Pharmacy (Gudaibiya) - lady took her in white car, lost from Hooraa (City Mart/Golden Sands), REWARD for safe return, went missing 8/7/19. **REWARD for safe return Tel: 36656026**



THUMBALINA

Female Miniature Pinscher, 4.5 yrs, chocolate/tan, small size, microchipped/registered (Kennel Club of Bahrain), wearing collar - no ID tag, escaped from home, Barbar/Diraz area, went missing 19/09/19, REWARD for safe return, **Tel: 33517709**