



CROSS CULTURAL EXPRESSIONS NEWSLETTER

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SEPTEMBER IS

National Suicide
Prevention Month

WHAT'S GOING ON AT CCE?



TRAPPED.:A Powerful New Film Exploring Ancestral Trauma and Mental Health in Immigrant Families

We are so excited to announce that our feature film TRAPPED. has received multiple nominations at the Seattle Film Festival, including: Best Actress in a Feature Film - Navah Rahabr, Best Supporting Actor in a Feature Film - Brian Felker, Best Ensemble Cast Feature Film, Best Original Song in a Feature Film - I'll Set Myself Free and Best Achievement in Filmmaking, Feature Film (Indie Feature). TRAPPED. is also the recipient of Best Feature Film at the New York Film & Cinematography Awards, as well as the Platinum Award for Best Song, "I'll Set Myself Free," at the International Film Awards.

Congratulations to all our cast and crew for this incredible accomplishment! You can currently watch TRAPPED. on our YouTube channel @CCEProductions. And make sure to download our award winning song, I'll Set Myself Free available on Spotify and Apple Music.

"Our Immigrant Stories: A Collection of Essays From the Iranian Diaspora." and "Our Immigrant Stories: A Collection of Essays from the Eastern European Diaspora"

Cross Cultural Expressions in partnership with the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health has brought together members of the Iranian and Eastern European communities of Los Angeles county to share their unique stories around the immigrant experience through a series of essays. These stories, along with each contributing writer's original artwork have been compiled in two beautiful books titled

"Our Immigrant Stories: A Collection of Essays From the Iranian Diaspora." and "Our Immigrant Stories: A Collection of Essays from the Eastern European Diaspora". Both books (which includes English translations of all the shared stories) also include mental health articles and mental health resource lists. If you are interested in receiving a copy of one or both of these books, please use these links available on our website [Cross Cultural Expressions](https://www.cceccc.org)

[THE IRANIAN DIASPORA](https://www.cceccc.org) and [THE EASTERN EUROPEAN DIASPORA](https://www.cceccc.org)

“HOW SHARING OUR STRUGGLES BUILDS STRENGTH AND COMMUNITY”

Have you ever noticed how a burden feels lighter when it's shared with someone who understands? For a long time, mental health was treated as something to hide. People often assumed it meant there was something wrong with us, that we were lazy, broken, or filled with flaws. Thankfully, in the last decade, the conversation has begun to shift. Social media has given many the courage to share their stories, breaking through the stigma.

It often takes just one brave person to speak up. Their honesty creates a sense of safety, allowing others to feel seen and understood. When we share our burdens, we don't just lighten our own load, we create space for others to step forward too. Vulnerability inspires courage, and courage builds community. That's the beauty of mental health awareness. It transforms isolation into connection.

So if you're struggling right now, take a deep breath and remember, you are not alone. There is nothing “wrong” with you for having these battles– they are a natural part of being human. You are stronger than you realize, and every challenge is just one step along your journey. Keep moving forward, and know that a supportive community is always within reach.

By: Yoss Ahmadizadeh
CCE Volunteer

MOVIE OF THE MONTH



Toy Story 3 highlights mental health through themes of depression, identity struggles, and the fear of change. This is especially evident in

Buzz Lightyear's journey, as he confronts the realization that he is not a space ranger but a toy, which briefly leaves him in a state of lethargy and despair. The film also reflects universal human experiences—saying goodbye to the past, facing uncertainty, and discovering new purpose—all of which serve as metaphors for navigating mental health challenges and adapting to life's transitions.

MENTAL HEALTH HERO OF THE MONTH: PRINCESS DIANA

When most people think of Princess Diana, they think of her kindness, her work with charities, or the way she always seemed to connect with people. But what makes her really stand out is how open she was about her own struggles. Back in the 90s, when talking about mental health wasn't common at all, Princess Diana admitted to dealing with bulimia and depression. That honesty was shocking for the time, but it was also powerful, because it showed the world that even someone who looked perfect on the outside could be hurting inside.

Her willingness to share made a huge difference. She helped people feel less ashamed about their own struggles and showed that it's okay to say you're not okay. For so many, she turned what felt like a private battle into something that could be spoken about without fear.

That's why we're honoring Princess Diana as this month's Mental Health Hero. She used her platform to break the silence and start conversations that still matter today. Her legacy is a reminder to be open, compassionate, and not afraid to talk about the hard stuff.

"Perhaps we need to look more closely at the cause of the illness rather than attempt to suppress it."

PRINCESS DIANA



YARAN IRANIAN PEER COUNSELING HELPLINE

A program of Cross Cultural Expressions

In Times of Global Conflict, We Stand With You

At Cross Cultural Expressions, we understand that war—anywhere in the world—brings deep emotional and mental stress. The impact is felt not only by those directly affected in war-torn regions, but by communities, families, and individuals everywhere.

We want you to know: you are not alone.

Whether you're grieving, anxious, or simply overwhelmed, your feelings are valid.

We are here to listen, support, and uplift.

We stand for peace, love, and freedom—for everyone, across all cultures and borders.

If you or someone you know is struggling, please reach out. Together, we can hold space for healing, connection, and hope.

Speak with one of our Yaran Iranian peer counselors via our telephone helpline:

(818) 332-7999