

OCTOBER 2024



# CROSS CULTURAL EXPRESSIONS NEWSLETTER

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## OCTOBER IS

ADHD Awareness Month



## WHAT'S GOING ON AT CCE?

"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, reach out to us at [connectwithcce@gmail.com](mailto:connectwithcce@gmail.com)

### Wake Up Sleeping Beauty

"Wake Up Sleeping Beauty," a CCE original directed by Shila Vosough-Ommi & written by Mastaneh Moghadam, LCSW, was filmed & released during the pandemic in 2020 in partnership with the LA County Department of Mental Health. CCE Productions now offers the film in both Farsi & Russian on YouTube. Search "CCE Productions Wake Up Sleeping Beauty" on YouTube to watch.

### Djinn in the Pen

"The Djinn In The Pen," produced by LACDMH with CCE, is written and directed by Mastaneh Moghadam, LCSW, & stars Sahel Amani-Ghoreyshi and Matthew Nouriel. This fictional film follows Nadia, an immigrant woman who, after multiple losses including her father's death, manifests a Djinn to help her face her unresolved grief & move forward. The movie, adapted with Russian and Persian subtitles, is available on CCE Productions' YouTube page.

### "Access for All" Podcast and YouTube Series

CCE is excited to announce "Access for All," a podcast and YouTube series created in collaboration with the LA County Department of Mental Health, focusing on the experiences of individuals with disabilities and their mental health journeys. Watch our videos on CCE Productions' YouTube page or tune into the podcast on Spotify, Amazon Music, and more. For updates, visit [cceccc.org](http://cceccc.org) and follow us on Facebook and Instagram.



# "BEYOND THE STEREOTYPES: UNDERSTANDING ADHD AND MY BROTHER'S JOURNEY"

Growing up, my brother's report cards were a constant source of frustration in our family. He was bright—one of the smartest people I know—but his grades told a different story. Late assignments piled up, he failed exams, and no matter how hard he seemed to try, he couldn't stay organized. My parents were at a loss. They knew he had the potential to excel, but nothing seemed to work. He was constantly grounded, with stricter routines, and countless conversations about "just paying more attention." But nothing changed.

The frustration wasn't just a burden for him, it affected all of us. I remember the helplessness my parents felt, not understanding why someone so intelligent couldn't thrive in school. He was labeled as lazy or someone who didn't care, but that couldn't have been further from the truth. He cared deeply. But that seemed not to have been reflected in his 'success' in school. We didn't know then what we later learned: he had ADHD (Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder). All those years of struggle could have been addressed if only we had understood sooner. ADHD is often a mental health condition that is deeply misunderstood. It is often reduced to a stereotype: hyperactive children bouncing off the walls, or students who simply need to "focus more." But ADHD is far more complex. It affects attention, impulse control, and executive functioning—the very skills my brother needed to organize his thoughts and stay on track in school. It doesn't always look the same for everyone. We know there is a large gap in research and public knowledge about how this mental health condition looks in women and different groups of people. One of the most damaging misconceptions is that ADHD is just an excuse for bad behavior or a lack of discipline. My brother's teachers thought that if he would just "try harder" or "listen better," he would improve. But ADHD isn't a choice or a lack of willpower. It's a neurological condition that affects how the brain processes information. For people like my brother, everyday tasks like finishing homework or remembering deadlines can feel like monumental challenges, even though they have the intelligence and capability to succeed.

Another common stereotype is that ADHD only affects children and that people simply "grow out of it." The truth is that ADHD persists into adulthood for many, continuing to impact work, relationships, and self-esteem. My brother wasn't diagnosed and medicated until later in life, and by then, the years of struggle had already taken a toll. Like so many others, his potential had been overshadowed by a condition that no one recognized.

This ADHD Awareness Month, we need to challenge these misconceptions. At Cross Cultural Expressions, we are committed to raising awareness and fostering understanding about mental health conditions like ADHD. Although this condition might not directly impact the mood of an individual it can, as I witnessed in my family, trigger overall mental health stressors. This month let's commit to creating a culture that supports everyone, from students to adults, who are navigating life with ADHD.

By: Ester Fridman  
CCE Volunteer

## MOVIE OF THE MONTH



The Disney Pixar film "Finding Dory" written by Andrew Stanton and Victoria Strouse follows the journey of Dory, a forgetful blue fish who embarks on an adventure to find her long-lost parents. Along the way, she faces challenges that stem from her short-term memory loss, showcasing her struggles to remember directions, names, and important events. The film can be related to ADHD (Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder) in several ways. Dory's impulsiveness, distractibility, and difficulty with focus mirror common traits of ADHD. Her determination to overcome obstacles despite her challenges highlights resilience and the importance of support from friends, paralleling how individuals with ADHD often navigate their own journeys with the help of loved ones. Ultimately, "Finding Dory" serves as a heartfelt reminder of the value of acceptance, understanding, and the unique strengths that come from



# MENTAL HEALTH HERO OF THE MONTH: CHAPPELL ROAN

Chappell Roan has become a mega pop-star recently with the release of catchy hits like "Good Luck Babe", however she's also become known for her candor regarding her mental health struggles. Diagnosed with Bipolar 2 at the age of 22, Roan openly shares how she goes to therapy twice a week in order to manage the difficulties and stressors of going on tour. In an interview with USC's Daily Trojan, Roan shared how her healing journey required a shift in mindset, "Being bipolar, I was so depressed as a little kid and so angry. You just think you're such a bad person, and don't realize that you're really sick and need help, and our parents don't know how to deal with it. I think it's like rewiring my brain to be like, 'Actually, you're a good person, and you're creating a safe space and music for people to dance to.'"

Roan openly speaks about her experience navigating her sexuality as an adolescent growing up in a conservative Christian community in the Midwest. Mental health was not an encouraged topic to discuss, resulting in Roan feeling isolated and lonely growing up. Roan moved to Los Angeles in 2018, where she found a community where she felt accepted and supported to explore her queer identity. Music became a way for her to honour and connect with her inner child, allowing the question of "What would be the funnest to perform live?" direct her creative process. Chappell Roan continues to grapple with the highs and lows of mental health in the spotlight with honesty and strong boundaries, serving as a model for honoring one's authenticity, earning her the spot of CCE's Mental Health Hero of the Month.

Laila Touran, MFT Trainee

"Actually, you're a good person, and you're creating a safe space and music for people to dance to."

CHAPPELL ROAN



## YARAN IRANIAN PEER COUNSELING HELPLINE

*A program of Cross Cultural Expressions*

Our trained volunteer peer counselors provide free and confidential supportive and referral services for Persian (Farsi) speaking community

Contact us if you're in need of:

*Information/Referral Services*

*Support with Family Issues*

*Support with Mental and Emotional Health*

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

**(818) 332-7999**