

FIND FREEDOM WITHIN YOURSELF AND CELEBRATE YOUR DIFFERENCES

SEROTONIN SAYS MONTHLY:
JULY EDITION

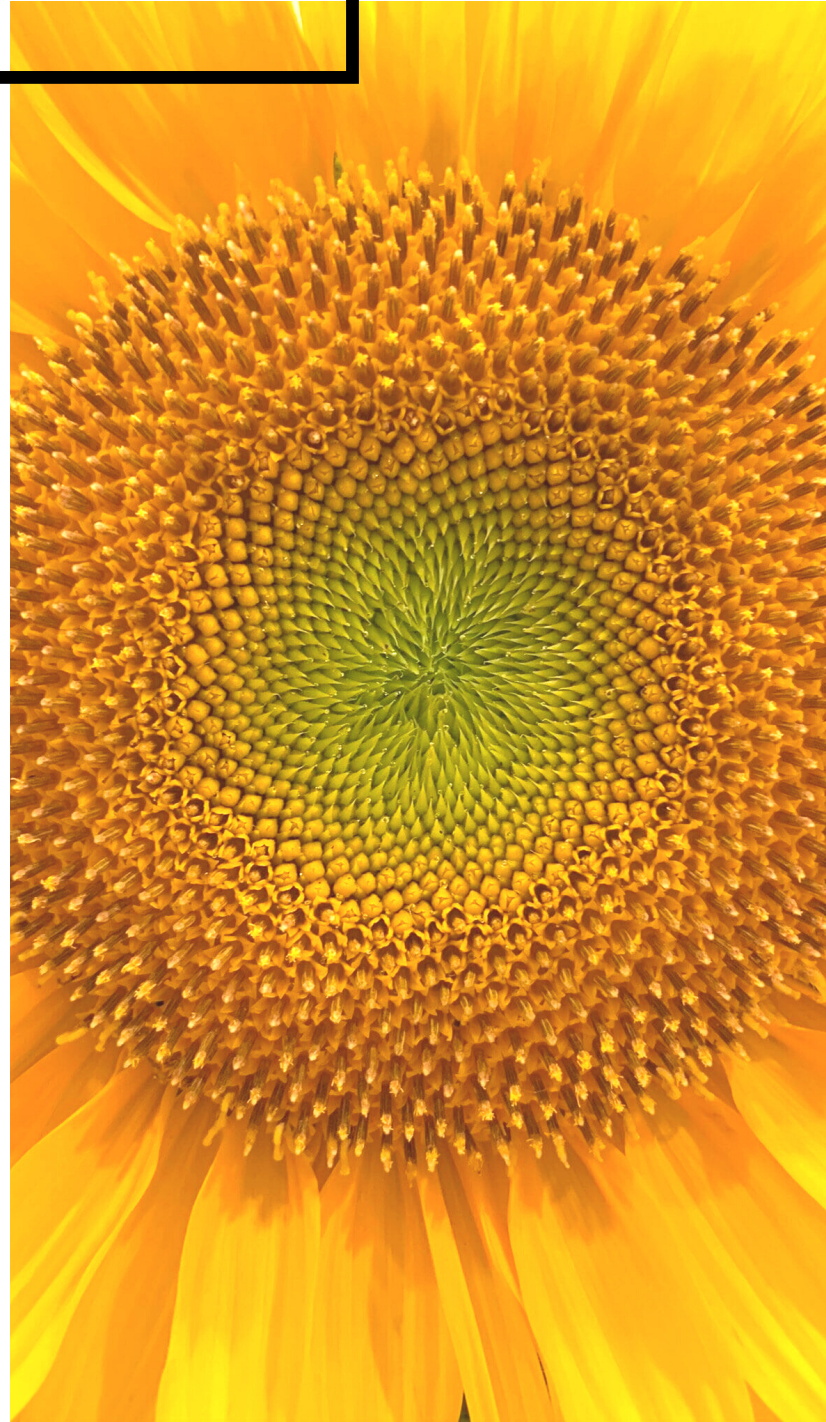
JULY BIOGRAPHY: THE UNIQUE YOU

BY
ETHAN
BULL

Usually in this section, there will be a biography about a specific person that embodies the theme of the newspaper for that month. The reason I say that is for this month, even though it is the first issue of this newspaper, it's going to deviate from the typical. One major part of this month's theme is to celebrate your differences. To be proud of being unique and different rather than being insecure or fearful about it. How could I write a biography about one person when this month, we are making a point to embrace what makes us different.

Having differences shouldn't be shameful, alienating or isolating. It is my firm belief that being different is something each and every one of us should take pride in and respect others for. Regardless of your race, ethnicity, nationality, sexual orientation, gender, financial background, background growing up, beliefs or body type. Whether you have a mental health condition or physical condition whether numerous or none.

You are gifted to be different. Don't let anyone make you believe otherwise. Don't wish to fit in more because you feel excluded. Don't suppress or hide what makes you different out of shame or embarrassment. Embrace your differences to thrive in the unique landscape of your life. If we all looked and acted exactly the same, life would be boring. No new ideas would ever arise and we would still be back in the Stone Age. Enjoy the rest of the month, stay different, and keep the celebration going past that.



QUIET VIOLENCE

By Waverly Nakashima

Rooms
Kept well
In quiet
A blessed country
Full of gold treasure
My father longs to earn
Their new world is my same old
A long to be one and fit in
Pressure grows higher than the mountains
Music, sports, grades, chores, and Sunday school
Everyone says "be better like her"
Always compared to other girls
A not passionate winner
Suffering in silence
Less light inside me
Quiet Violence
Longing for
The same
Life

Quote of the Month

**"IT IS NOT OUR
DIFFERENCES THAT
DIVIDE US. IT IS OUR
INABILITY TO
RECOGNIZE, ACCEPT,
AND CELEBRATE
THOSE DIFFERENCES."
- AUDRE LORDE**

BOOK REVIEW: (DON'T) CALL ME CRAZY

By Aylin Aarhus

There are few things more interesting than a well written memoir. Thirty-three works including stellar memoirs, comics, poems, and even stage directions, centered around destigmatizing mental health? What more could we want?

(Don't) Call Me Crazy is a collection of perspectives on mental health, edited by Kelly Jensen. The book covers a range of topics, from better known conditions like depression and OCD to lesser known ones like misophonia and trichotillomania.

The authors discuss how their relationship with mental health has affected their relationships with others and themselves, their experiences and insecurities, the ways in which they've healed, and how far they have left to go. Shaun Davud Hutchinson relates how everyone from his boss to his ex-boyfriend defined him by his depression, rather than viewing him as having a multitude of traits, depression being only one of them. Mike Jung discusses society's obsession with "curing" autistic people and "fixing" their neurodivergent traits, rather than accepting them as whole, complex human beings who have a right to exist as they are. S. Jae-Jones talks about a friend who told her she didn't seem "real" and the realization that "girls like me didn't exist, because we so rarely get help." Each story is a unique, intriguing take, offering ideas and validation for anyone willing to read them.

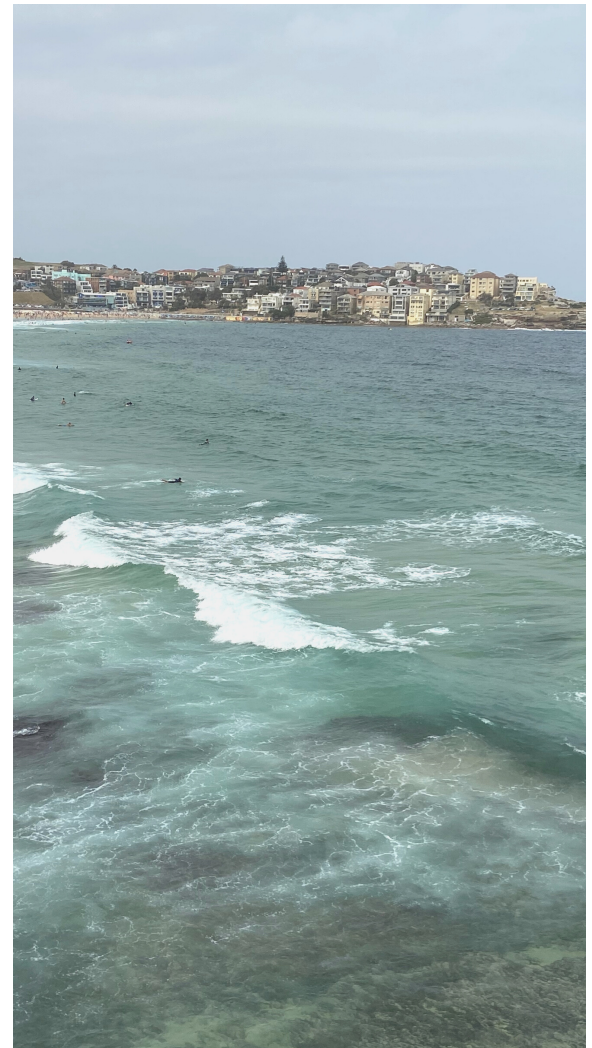
(Don't) Call Me Crazy is more than just neurodiverse; diversity is a theme throughout. The book features authors from a rainbow of racial and cultural backgrounds, as well as queer, trans, and disabled authors. Meredith Russo discusses the discrimination she faces as a transgender woman, even from medical professionals during her time of need. Dior Vargas, a self identified Latina Feminist Mental Health Activist, highlights the lack of representation for mentally ill people of color and her subsequent creation of the People of Color and Mental Illness Photo Project. Monique Bedard (Aura) provides a much needed perspective on the erasure of mental illness within Indigenous communities.

The memoir which the book is named for, "Call Me Crazy," is featured last in the collection. While I enjoyed each of the thirty-three perspectives, this was undoubtedly my favorite. s.e. smith* discusses the Mad Pride movement, and suggests that being "crazy" might not be a bad thing. I would absolutely encourage getting this book just to read their perspective (though I'd suggest reading the others while you're at it.)

(Don't) Call Me Crazy is both an invaluable resource and an interesting read, and I genuinely believe everyone would be better off having read this book. Although everyone's experience with mental health is different, if someone close to you has a mental illness, this can act as a window into their struggles with both the illness itself and how others treat them because of it. If you have a mental health condition, this book can provide the validation that comes from knowing that others have tread the same path as you, and have not only survived, but come to thrive.

*s.e. smith prefers their name to be spelt in lowercase letters.

Please note that this book contains strong language and potentially triggering topics, including self harm, suicidal ideation, addiction, trauma, and death. Please be aware of your mental state while reading.



Unique is beautiful

Mental health is a subject that has become more prevalent in recent years, with more and more people coming forward and speaking out. Even with these improvements, there is still a lot of stigma surrounding it. Stereotypes, cultural norms, and social pressure still affects people all over the world, especially those of minorities. There are many more day-to-day issues that minorities have to deal with, and these experiences deeply affect a person's perception of their identity.

To help spread awareness about similar situations, Minority Mental Health Month was created. Every year in July, people are encouraged to speak out about their personal challenges and stories, as well as learn about others. It is important that everyone knows that others can face challenging mental health conditions, no matter what their background is, and Minority Mental Health Month is just one way to accomplish this.

BY SOPHIA WONG

If you would like to learn more about Minority Mental Health Awareness Month, please take a look at some of these websites:

<https://www.minorityhealth.hhs.gov/nmhm/index.html>

<https://www.nami.org/get-involved/awareness-events/minority-mental-health-awareness-month>



THE WAR FOR UNDERSTANDING

BY ETHAN BULL
EDITED BY JACQUELINE GOLD

In America the month of July is one of celebration
One that can fill us with pride and determination
The month we gained our freedom and ended our oppression
But some are still fighting a battle everyday against their depression
Sometimes for working lack of distraction is key
That becomes slightly more difficult when you have ADHD
Then there are the turning gears in motion forming a society
But some have difficulty being in it due to there anxiety
Many others struggle with different things throughout the day
So what is it I am doing delivering a message here today
A war being fought on the inside but one externally too
For the aid and support they need to achieve what they must do
We're not aiming for assimilation or elimination of differences
But to win a war of understanding as we're sat behind our defenses
Not to try to change, control or make people more like us
But rather to celebrate differences and not cause a massive fuss
To bring awareness to the masses
With peace and not violent form of action
'Cause just like COVID-19 mental illness is a real pandemic
You can perceive this even if your not an academic
Just like the patriots in the past who gained our independence
Are we going to stand there or act as their descendants
To fight for what we see wrong in society will you join the cause
In the war for understanding to embrace each other's flaws

Be brave. B E

Be kind. Y

Be unique. O U

CHECK BACK IN NEXT MONTH

**SEROTONIN SAYS MENTAL
HEALTH CHALLENGE OF
THE MONTH: SEND
SOMEONE YOU LOVE A
HANDWRITTEN NOTE IN
THE MAIL. DM PICTURES TO
OUR INSTAGRAM ACCOUNT
@SEROTONINSAYS!**

**FOR MORE
MENTAL
HEALTH
CONTENT**

