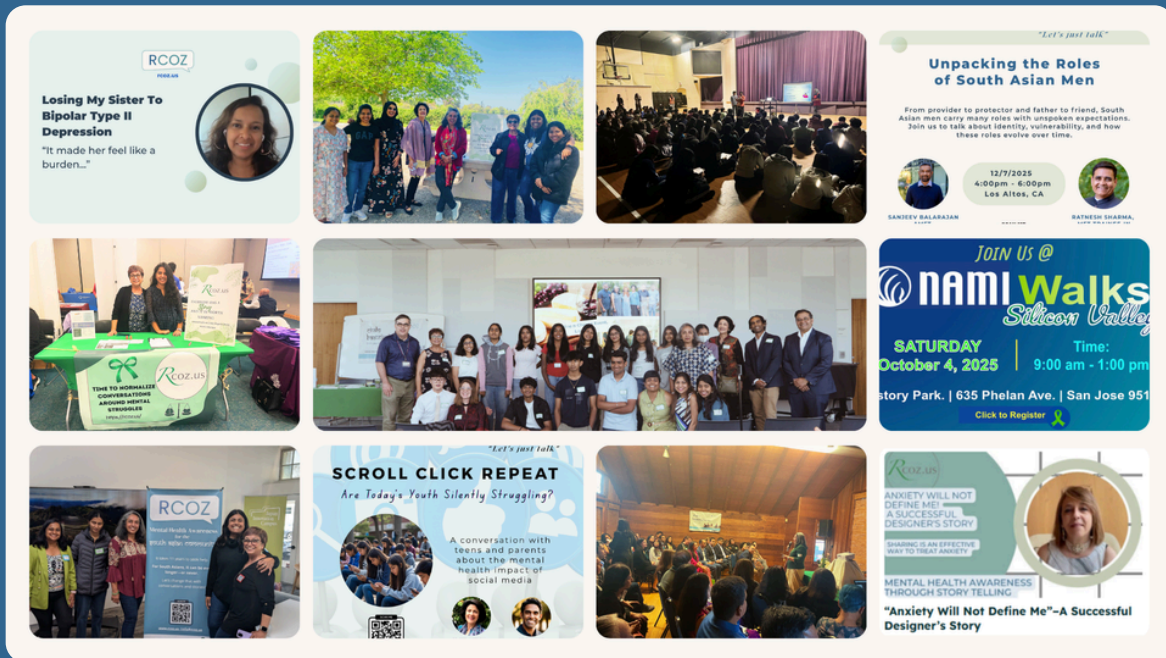


# RCOZ



# IMPACT REPORT

# FOUNDER'S MESSAGE

*"I've realized how many people in our community are quietly waiting to hear someone say, 'I've felt this too.' That simple moment creates an instant sense of connection and reminds people they're not alone, and that it's okay to reach out for help."*  
—Roopali Rajvanshy, Rcoz Founder



Last year was an important year for Rcoz . Across the Bay Area, we saw how our community is slowly becoming more willing to talk honestly about mental health.

Through youth programs, Chalo Baatein Karen sessions, workshops, support groups, and relatable stories, we had conversations around guilt, emotional pressure, cultural identity, caregiving burnout, relationships, addiction, grief, and the complicated experience of navigating mental health in South Asian communities.

I also saw courage and strength from individuals who shared deeply personal stories about bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, addiction, grief, and suicide. Stories can give people words for feelings they may have carried silently for years and make someone feel seen in a way advice or information sometimes cannot. At times during these recording sessions, I was that person myself.

One of the most meaningful milestones for us this year was launching our first women's wellness support group. What began with hesitation slowly turned into honest conversations many had carried quietly for years.

But we are also dealing with a heavy reality. Since December 2025, our community has witnessed multiple heartbreaking South Asian youth suicides across the Bay Area. These losses reinforce why mental health conversations cannot wait until someone reaches a crisis point, especially in communities where "log kya kahenge" (what will people say?) and shame still silence so many families.

Thank you to every storyteller, volunteer, student, parent, speaker, supporter, and community member who allowed us to be part of these conversations this year.

Warmly,

*Roopali Rajvanshy*

# WHAT IS RCOZ



Rcoz is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit working to make mental health conversations feel more relatable and culturally familiar for South Asian communities through storytelling, workshops, youth engagement, support groups, and conversations with culturally attuned experts.

Many mental health systems are built for people who already know how to ask for help. But in South Asian communities, emotional struggles are often minimized, hidden, or carried silently for years because of stigma, shame, or simply not having the words to talk about them openly. Rcoz helps these conversations begin earlier through lived experience stories, community dialogue, and mental health education that feels familiar and approachable.

## OUR MISSION

To raise awareness and build acceptance of mental health issues among South Asians through lived experience stories and community dialogues with experts, so people seek help before it's too late.

# HOW RCOZ WORKS

## COMMON BARRIERS



## OUR APPROACH



*\*What will people say?*

# IMPACT TO DATE



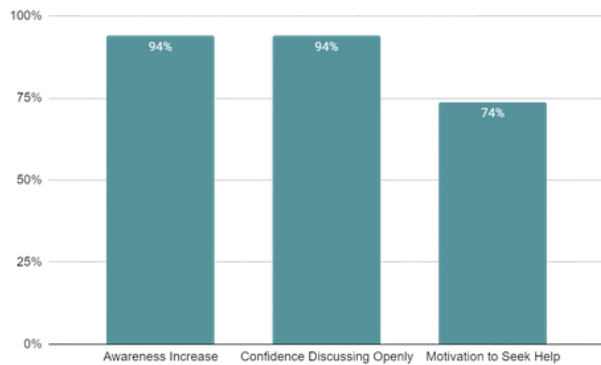
- **70+** expert led workshops, dialogues and community events
- **5,000+** people reached in-person
- **50,000+** engaged through digital content
- **150+** lived-experience stories and expert-informed pieces published (blogs and videos)
- **25+** community and institutional partners
- **80+** volunteers and youth leaders engaged

- **70%** of lived-experience storytellers felt a burden lifted after sharing
- **80%** of attendees felt more confident discussing mental health
- **86%** of attendees reported increased mental health awareness
- **75%** of attendees were more likely to seek help

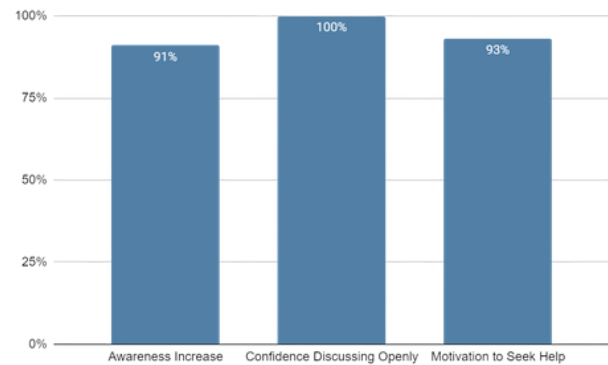
# 2025 AT A GLANCE

Events	Target	Actual	Status
Youth	4	8	<b><u>200%</u> of target</b>
Adult	6	7	<b><u>117%</u> of target</b>
Outreach	10	18	<b><u>180%</u> of target</b>

2025 Adult Participant Outcomes



2025 Youth Participant Outcomes



Participants	Target	Actual	Status
Youth	100	250+	<b><u>250%</u> of target</b>
Adult	50	200+	<b><u>400%</u> of target</b>
Outreach	150	300+	<b><u>200%</u> of target</b>



# RCOZ YOUTH PROGRAMS

# HIGH SCHOOL CHANGEMAKER PROGRAM (HSCM)

A 4-week immersive program where South Asian high school students work alongside culturally attuned experts to build mental health awareness, leadership and marketing skills.



“Firstly, a lot more awareness of mental health but mostly I was able to get social media experience in making videos and shorts. I don't have much experience in editing or making videos, and often I'm camera-shy but Rcoz helped me step out of my comfort zone for that and it was fun. I feel more comfortable now making videos. I also was glad I could find fundraising from Togo's and feel comfortable and not afraid of asking people and pitching.”—Sahasra

“I have learned how to communicate about my mental health much more effectively. I also learned ways to support others struggling with their mental health.”—  
Sanushya

“The Sam Taylor Foundation story really affected me a lot. The fundraising planning was difficult but fun.”—Pranil

# INSIDE HSCM

## AREAS COVERED

- Cultural identity and generational expectations
- Emotional literacy and peer support
- Academic pressure and perfectionism
- Suicide prevention awareness
- Substance use awareness
- Mental health resources and support awareness



## CREATIVE & LEADERSHIP SKILLS

- Share and pitch their own stories
- Create blogs, videos, and social media content
- Support peers and start conversations around mental health
- Organize and promote awareness initiatives
- Build outreach, communication, and leadership skills

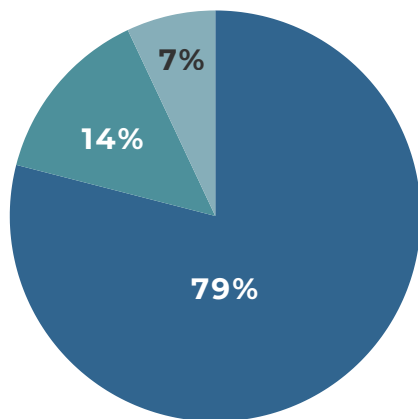
## EXPERT-LED SESSIONS

- Dr. Seema Sehgal, MD
- Dr. Apurva Bhatt, MD
- Dr. Hari Nair, MD
- Julie Taylor, The Sam Taylor Foundation
- April Rovero, NCPDA



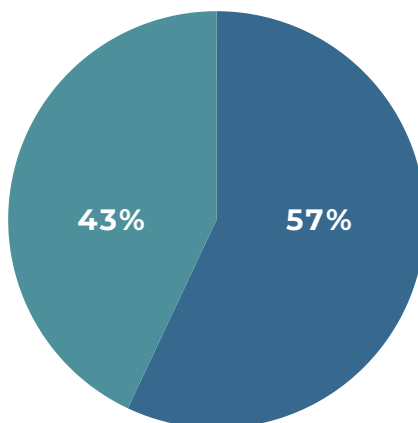
# HSCM IMPACT METRICS

■ Yes ■ Maybe ■ No



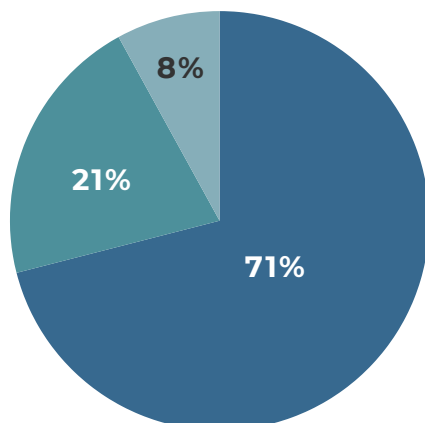
## 79% AWARENESS INCREASE

Students gained the vocabulary to better understand and recognize mental health struggles in themselves and others.



## 57% Confidence Discussing Openly

Students felt more comfortable reaching out for support as open conversations helped reduce shame and silence around mental health.



## 71% More Likely to Seek Help

Students reported feeling more open to seeking help, showing that awareness and peer connection helped make support feel more approachable.

# YOUTH WORKSHOPS

Expert-led, interactive youth workshops helping South Asian youth unpack cultural pressures, academic stress, emotional well-being, and peer relationships, while building tools around emotional distress, substance use, and suicide prevention awareness.



“It's great how everyone was encouraged to talk and share their own thoughts rather than just having an informational session without any discussion.”—Pranil

“Absolutely amazing experience! Thank you for creating such a meaningful space.”—Identity not revealed

# YOUTH WORKSHOP

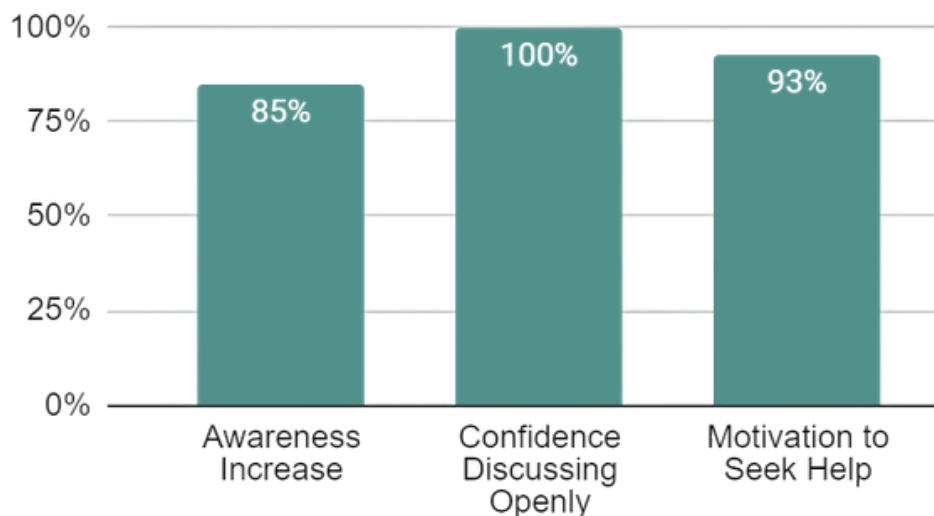
## IMPACT METRICS

Pre-session surveys highlighted significant gaps in mental health awareness and vocabulary among participating youth.

### BEFORE THE WORKSHOPS

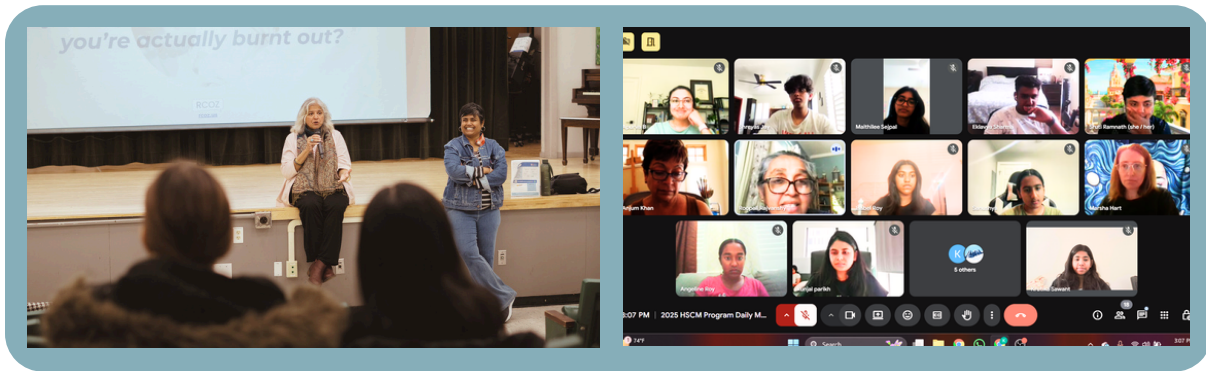
- Around 40% of participants reported being unfamiliar with key mental health concepts discussed during the sessions.
- Many students shared that this was their first time learning terms related to emotional distress and mental health support.
- A significant number of participants had limited familiarity with resources such as the 988 Crisis Line and suicide prevention tools.
- Students were more familiar with terms like “generation gap” and “code-switching” than formal mental health language.

### WORKSHOP OUTCOMES



# YOUTH UNWIND HOUR

An expert-guided peer discussion space where South Asian youth explore stress, emotional well-being, and real-life mental health situations through role-play and open dialogue.



"It helped me realize that everyone is in the same boat. No one is perfect."—  
Deetya

"I never realized how much pressure I was putting on myself until we started talking about it. It was the first time I felt like someone actually got it."—  
Isabelle

"Learning that it's okay to be both South Asian and American."—Ali

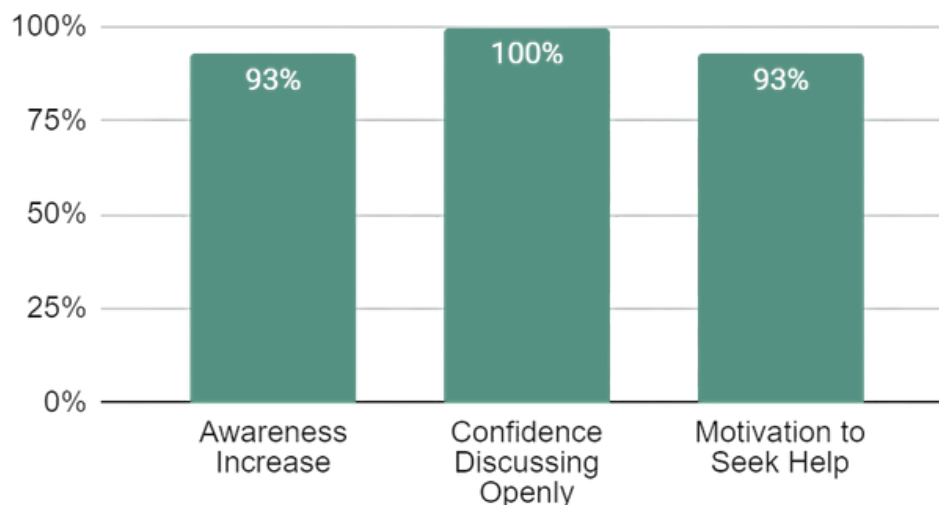
# YOUTH UNWIND HOUR IMPACT METRICS

Participant reflections highlighted the importance of open dialogue, relatable experiences, and peer connection in mental health conversations.

## COMMON THEMES FROM PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK

- Nearly two-thirds of participants reflected on feeling less alone after hearing peers share similar experiences.
- Conversations around cultural identity, perfectionism, and the “model minority” mindset strongly resonated with participants.
- Open dialogue and peer participation helped students feel more comfortable discussing mental health openly.
- Several youth highlighted learning practical tools for stress management and emotional well-being.

## YOUTH UNWIND HOUR OUTCOMES



# YOUTH AMBASSADOR

Launched in 2025, the Youth Ambassador Program is a youth-led initiative focused on expanding mental health awareness and youth engagement within South Asian communities through peer-led events, storytelling, and outreach.

## INSIDE THE YOUTH AMBASSADOR PROGRAM

- Connecting with students across schools interested in mental health awareness.
- Helping organize youth-led workshops, discussions, and community events.
- Encouraging students to contribute blogs, lived experience stories,.



**Shreyas Jay**  
**2025 Youth Ambassador**



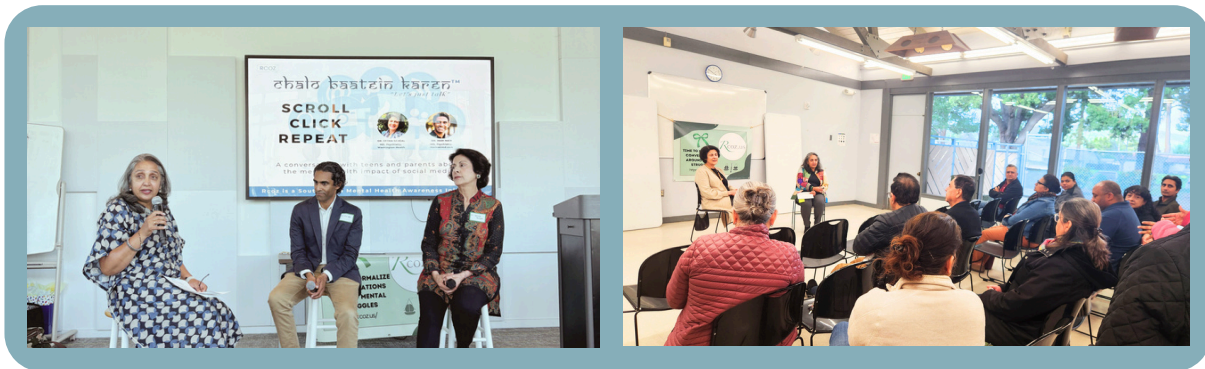
“Rcoz made me realize how important it is for young people to have places where they can be honest about mental health without feeling judged. Especially as high school students, there’s already so much pressure around academics, friendships, family expectations, and figuring out your future, and in our community that pressure can feel 10 times heavier because most people don’t really talk about it openly. A lot of us grow up thinking we’re the only ones feeling stressed or overwhelmed, so hearing other people talk honestly about what they’re going through makes a huge difference.”



# RCOZ ADULT & FAMILY PROGRAMS

# CHALO BAATEIN KAREN

Translated as “Let’s just talk,” this is a community dialogue and workshop series led by Desi mental health experts that normalizes mental health conversations and equips families with practical tools.



“This event felt like the beginning of learning how to be kinder to myself. A lot of what Dr. Seema shared really stayed with me, especially around guilt and trying to manage relationships as a South Asian living far from family. One thing that really stuck was her suggestion to keep a childhood photo as your phone wallpaper. I changed mine that same day, and honestly, it’s changed the way I look at myself.”—Shashi

“It helped me open up and showed me that I can talk about it. Once I started talking, I realised how much it was actually getting to me, and that’s when I reached out for help. I stopped hiding my feelings. You’ve got a friend in me and a supporter for life.”—Sree

# CHALO BAATEIN KAREN

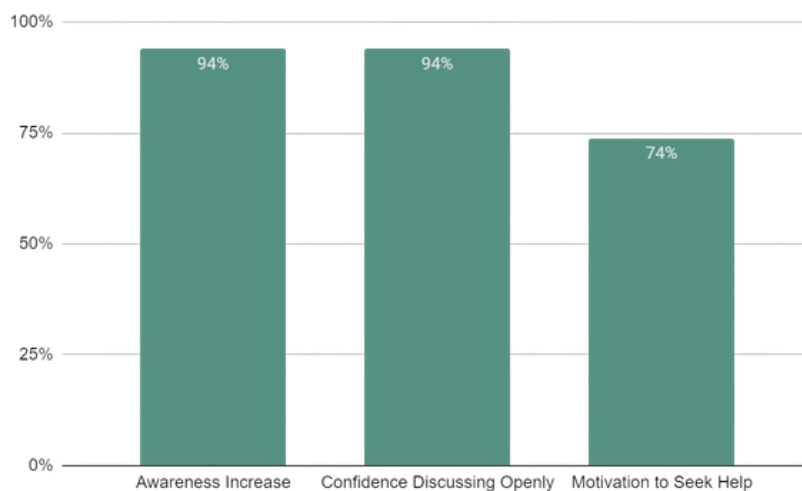
## IMPACT METRICS

Participant reflections highlighted the value of community dialogue with South Asian mental health experts and practical tools that attendees could apply in their everyday lives.

### INSIGHTS FROM CHALO BAATEIN KAREN SESSIONS

- **Men & Emotional Pressure:** More than 80% of men in the room identified with the pressure of always needing to be the provider, often at the cost of their emotional well-being.
- **Youth, Parenting & Social Media:** Students and parents reflected on how social media, academic pressure, and comparison culture are affecting youth mental health and discussed healthier boundaries in an always-online world.
- **Straddling Two Worlds:** Participants spoke openly about balancing cultural expectations with personal identity, relationships, caregiving, and burnout while navigating life between two cultures.

### CHALO BAATEIN KAREN OUTCOMES



# SUPPORT GROUPS

Launched in 2025, this initiative gives South Asians a culturally familiar space to connect, share experiences, receive emotional support, and talk openly about mental health.



“For the first time, I didn’t feel alone. Sitting here with everyone, it felt like “apne log, apni baat\*”—Identity not revealed

“I look forward to the first Thursdays every month because these meetings have become very important to me, and over time they have made me realize that I can show so much kindness and understanding to somebody else going through a difficult time, but I never think to give that same kindness to myself.”—Mahalakshmi

*\*Our people, our stories*

# SUPPORT GROUPS

## IMPACT METRICS

The first support group launched in 2025 was the Women's Wellness Group, meeting monthly to give South Asian women a culturally familiar space to speak openly, feel heard, and realize they are not alone in what they are going through.

### INSIGHTS FROM WOMEN'S WELLNESS SUPPORT GROUP

- Participants spoke openly about grief, caregiving, divorce, difficult family dynamics, and the emotional pressure many South Asian women navigate within families and relationships.
- Conversations explored the reality of living with mental health conditions such as bipolar disorder and ADHD, along with chronic illness and autoimmune disorders that are often misunderstood or minimized within families and communities.
- Discussions around self-worth, boundaries, caregiving, and emotional responsibility highlighted how difficult it can be for many South Asian women to prioritize their own well-being.

### SUPPORT GROUP OUTCOMES

- **89%** reported increased confidence discussing mental health.
- **100%** reported increased willingness to seek help for themselves or someone close.
- **80%** of participants attended more than one session.

**What is the Real Truth Behind Mental Health Misconceptions?**  
**Perception vs. Reality**

Why is she always so silent? Is something wrong with her?  
Why does she always act like she's too good to talk to anyone?  
I'm afraid of being judged.

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**GROWING UP WITH MENTAL ILLNESS IN THE FAMILY**  
AN EXPERT'S VIEW ON THE TOPIC

**Alone in a Crowd**  
A Youth's Story of Isolation

# LIVED EXPERIENCE STORIES

# STORIES

Lived experience stories are at the heart of Rcoz's work. Through in-person, blogs, and videos shared publicly or anonymously, South Asians share real mental health journeys that help others feel seen, less alone, and better understand what they are going through. Alongside these stories, South Asian mental health experts share practical guidance and insights that make conversations around mental health feel more relatable and approachable.



“For the first time, I felt like a big burden had been lifted off my shoulders after sharing my story. I was honestly amazed by the empathy and understanding I received through the Rcoz platform, and it made me feel like opening up could actually help someone else too.”—Puja

“I heard the story about finding friends and immediately thought of my nephew because he has been finding it really hard to meet new people. I want to share it with him so he knows he’s not the only one struggling with social anxiety.”—Identity not revealed

# IMPACT METRICS FOR STORIES

Participant engagement highlighted the importance of digital storytelling in reaching individuals who may never attend in-person events but are more comfortable engaging privately with relatable mental health stories, videos, and educational content online.

## STORY INSIGHTS

- A common pattern across stories was the long delay in seeking support, often due to stigma, family expectations, or not having the language to describe emotional distress.
- Stories and expert-informed content around anxiety, academic pressure, acculturation, identity, caregiving, grief, relationships, and mood disorders consistently drove strong engagement across youth and adults.
- Community members shared that they forwarded stories or expert videos to friends or family members who were struggling, using stories as a softer and less intimidating way to start conversations around mental health.

## STORY OUTCOMES

- **150+** lived-experience stories and expert-informed pieces published.
- **50,000+** engaged through blogs, videos, and storytelling content.
- **89%** of storytellers in 2025 reported feeling a burden lifted after sharing their story.
- **43.1** hours of storytelling content watched in 2025.

# SOCIAL MEDIA

Rcoz uses social media to make mental health conversations more relatable, culturally familiar and accessible for the South Asian community. Along with promoting events and initiatives, our platforms share educational content, lived experiences, videos, and mental health awareness campaigns that encourage more open conversations around topics often left unspoken.



“Participating in the Unwind Hour was such a meaningful experience. So proud of these young people.”—Apurva

“Hima’s story shows why fundraising should go beyond sympathy and focus on solidarity. If donors only see the statistics, they’ll never see the stakes.”  
—Angela

# SOCIAL MEDIA IMPACT METRICS

Social media helped create repeated exposure to mental health conversations within the South Asian community through relatable storytelling, educational posts, youth-focused topics, and event promotion shared consistently across platforms.

- Instagram drove 50.9% of total interactions, with youth-centered posts around academic pressure, identity, anxiety, and social connection generating the highest engagement and reposting across platforms.
- Video posts generated a 29.7% engagement share, while multi-photo educational posts accounted for 26.5% of engagement.
- Rcoz content reached 60%+ new audiences beyond existing followers, helping extend mental health conversations beyond the immediate community.

## SOCIAL MEDIA OUTCOMES

- **430,000+** total impressions across platforms
- **34,000+** people actively engaged with mental health content
- **11,600+** individuals reached through mental health resource campaigns
- **14.5%** engagement rate, **107.5%** higher than comparable organizations
- **52.6%** repost amplification rate through community sharing and reposting

# OUTREACH & COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Rcoz works alongside 25+ schools, libraries, hospitals, nonprofits, faith-based organizations, and community groups across the Bay Area to bring culturally relevant mental health conversations into trusted community spaces through 18 outreach events, workshops, and collaborative initiatives in 2025.



"I'll tell you why the library is happy to partner with Rcoz. In our work, we catch glimpses of the stress and anxiety among many students and their families in the Asian community, but we really haven't known how to address that in a culturally-sensitive way. That's what excites me about our partnership with Rcoz."—Joe

"I'm a part of health equity org and nobody talks about mental health in my community (Malaysian Indian). I broke the cycle with my children. What Rcoz is doing is going to help such a big community in the Bay area."—  
Identity not revealed

# LOOKING AHEAD



Rcoz plans to expand culturally familiar support groups, youth leadership programs, outreach initiatives, and early support systems that help South Asians seek support earlier, before reaching crisis.

- **EXPANDING SUPPORT GROUPS** - Launch support groups for South Asians navigating grief, mood disorders, and other lived experiences.
- **GROWING YOUTH LEADERSHIP** - Expanding the Youth Ambassador Program across more schools and communities in the Bay Area to help young people build mental health awareness and peer support networks across schools and communities.

- **EXPANDING COMMUNITY PROGRAMS** - Bringing awareness programs to more cities and counties across the Bay Area through schools, libraries, hospitals, and community partnerships.
- **CULTURALLY FAMILIAR WARM LINE** - Launching a confidential warm line to help navigate difficult moments before they become crises, with trained peer professionals at the center and technology supporting access.

# TEAM BEHIND RCOZ



Behind every workshop, story, support group, and event is a growing team made up largely of volunteers who deeply believe in the mission and contribute their time, skills, and lived experiences to help make mental health feel more understood within South Asian communities.



**ANJUM KHAN**  
CONTENT MANAGER



**MARSHA HART**  
EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT



**VINITA KULKARNI**  
DIGITAL MEDIA  
PRODUCER



**GITA BALIGA SAVEL**  
YOUTH PROGRAM  
EXPERT



**MYTRI GANDIKOTA**  
DATA ANALYST



**ARZOO SEHRAWAT**  
RELATIONSHIP  
MANAGER



**SNEHAL THORAT**  
VOLUNTEER



**SHARAYU JAGTAP**  
VOLUNTEER



**DIKI LHAMU SHERPA**  
VOLUNTEER

# RCOZ LEADERSHIP & GOVERNANCE



**ROOPALI RAJVANSHY**  
FOUNDER, CEO

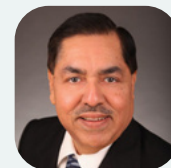
## EXECUTIVE TEAM



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# THANK YOU

Rcoz is deeply grateful to the individuals, volunteers, storytellers, mental health experts, donors, community members, and public supporters who continue to believe in the importance of culturally familiar mental health support within South Asian communities.



Special thanks to Alameda County District 1 Supervisor David Haubert, Alameda County District 2 Supervisor Elisa Márquez, Alameda County Behavioral Health, WITH Foundation, Fremont Bank Foundation, and Washington Health for supporting and believing in this work.

RCOZ

Stories & Conversations That Move South  
Asians to Seek Help Before It's Too Late.

Your **donation** helps create **mental health**  
**awareness** before **crisis** hits.



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