

Virtual dilemma

Facebook can worsen or improve mental health

FACEBOOK CAN EITHER help people recover from mental health problems or make their symptoms worse, a new research shows, adding that the key is to use the social networking tool cautiously and strategically.

While some participants in the study found that having a Facebook profile played a part in rebuilding their identities after a mental health crisis, others said it had worsened their condition.

"We found their paranoid, manic and depressive symptoms could worsen as well as improve while being on Facebook," lead researcher Keelin Howard told the gathering at the British Sociological Association's annual conference in Glasgow.

Howard from the Buckinghamshire New University carried out research with 20 people aged 23-68 who had experienced conditions such as schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, depression and anxiety.

She found that social media like Facebook could provide a source of social support and connection that were important for recovery. "Many



participants spoke of the way Facebook could enhance their mood through keeping up with their friends, and through receiving positive self-affirmation when other people liked or left comments on their posts," she noted.

But some participants also said it had worsened their condition. "All participants who experienced psychosis and dealt with paranoia had found Facebook particularly problematic when

unwell. It often exacerbated or triggered feelings of paranoia, leading to an increase in delusions or psychotic thinking," Howard said.

Some became distressed that others' posts were aimed at them while others became paranoid about how others would react to their posts. All participants with diagnoses of schizophrenia felt that Facebook was harmful when they were unwell.

However, over time, many learnt how to use Facebook wisely. All participants used Facebook strategically having learnt over time and through experience to protect and enhance their mental health and well-being as well as of others. "They had developed a variety of protective strategies such as only "friending" close and trusted friends and taking Facebook breaks," she concluded. IANS

Be cool

Pick summer clothes smartly

SUMMER IS THE time when you can flaunt your assets and complement them with eye-catching prints and solids, says designer Divvya Bhatnagar.

Here's how:

- Denim shorts might be considered as summer staple by many, but after a few hours they can start to feel heavy. Stick to cotton shorts to avoid becoming a sticky and sweaty mess.
- Maxi dresses become the obvious choice for weekend brunches and evenings but the long length can trap, making

you uncomfortable. Choose a higher slit to facilitate easy movement. And look for one with a button-up detail in case you need to loosen a few for some much-needed fresh air. * Opt for a wide and breezy top which allows free circulation of air.

- Try to find flowy wide-leg pants to allow for air circulation and free movement. For professional meetings and work, stick to a neutral palette, a clean, streamlined silhouette, and classic tops like a button-down shirt. IANS

ALIGN YOUR LIFE

Jade Tree and Fish

Statues of jade money tree and carp fish studied with precious stones are considered very auspicious in Chinese culture. Many houses that I have visited in South East Asia have such items scattered all over the house. There are shops in Hong Kong and other parts of China that specialise in selling these items made with gold and diamonds. Somewhere along the line, these have become part of Feng Shui and now people associate jade trees and gold fish with generating wealth. Some believe that by placing expensive statues made of gold and diamond in the wealth area of their home, things would improve financially. As much as I would like to believe this, let me inform you that it's just a myth.

In Chinese culture, jade symbolises nobility, perfection, constancy, and immortality. The Chinese believe that jade carries the essence of heaven and earth. Therefore jade is used as a wedding gift for couples or given to newborn babies. On the other hand tree symbolises growth and expansion. By creating a jade tree, Chinese believe that their wealth is going to expand and grow like a tree trunk. This belief stems from cultural significance rather than actual Feng Shui use. Using an item like this has a deep meaning for a Chinese but for other nationalities it is a simple piece of decoration. That is one of the reasons why a jade tree is not a Feng Shui item.

On the other hand in Chinese culture the symbol of fish is associated with two qualities - abundance and fidelity. It is mainly about getting wealth or finding a loving partner. When you see a Chinese Feng Shui image with two fish swimming, it represents everlasting love. Now the question is how can fish be used for Feng Shui? Live fish aquariums are used to activate wealth energy in Feng Shui. Actual water and real fish create a movement in your environment thereby stimulating the energy in that area. However as opposed to that a fish statue is static and cant help much in creating the necessary energy. It can have a psychological effect on you more than actual Feng Shui effect.

It is always advisable to activate the water energy or the prosperous energy through actual movement rather than displaying static objects that have cultural significance but no actual Feng Shui use.

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