

# NEWSLETTER



## From a house to a healing space

What was once a quiet old home is now brimming with hope and intention. Earlier this year, we found the perfect space - serene, welcoming, and full of potential. After much love and planning, it transformed into The Orange Room, a safe space dedicated to listening, learning, and living fully. In March, we successfully solicited CSR funds to support the renovation and programming needs of the center. By April, we had secured the space and paid the rent for The Orange Room, officially opening the door to community gatherings, peer support groups, and creative workshops. Now, each week, The Orange Room welcomes people from all walks of life to share stories, grow together, and build a stronger, kinder community.

## The Inauguration

On June 2, 2025, The Orange Room project by Let's Live NGO was inaugurated in Trivandrum, creating a safe space for open conversations about mental health. This initiative aims to foster understanding and support among young people, marking a significant step towards community well-being. We were grateful to have had the presence of Shri Rishiraj Singh IPS (Retd), Dr Ciza Thomas (Vice Chancellor, DUK), Shri Alfred O.V (Sub Collector Tvm), Archana Gopinath ( Founder, The Reading Room), and Subramanyam Mahadevan (CSR Partner Speridian)



## Voices Unheard: Pride, Fatherhood & Mental Wellness

June 15: Hosted the weekly session titled “VOICES UNHEARD”, combining themes of Father's Day, Pride Month, and Men's Mental Health Month. It was an inspiring and heartfelt session that brought together diverse voices despite the rain. The presence of participants made the space warmer and more meaningful. We were privileged to have Dr. Thomas Mathai, who traveled from Kochi to lead a deeply grounding conversation on mental health, and Shakhiya who shared a powerful personal journey and offered eye-opening insights on queer mental health and allyship. Together, we explored the challenges men face in discussing mental health, the added struggles experienced by the queer community, the burden of societal expectations, and the profound impact of non-judgmental listening. It was a raw, real, and engaging dialogue - a reminder that listening and open conversations can change lives.



## Music Heals: An Evening of Healing & Connection

On June 20th, We held MUSIC HEALS at The Orange Room - an evening that truly touched hearts. We extend our deepest thanks to Sajna Sudheer for holding space with such honesty, soul, and song. Her music resonated deeply, reminding us of the power of melody to heal and unite. Participants shared their emotions, their favourite songs, and the personal stories behind them, opening up their hearts with vulnerability in the safety of the Orange Room. Special thanks to our Youth mental health counselor Augustine Abraham, for introducing us to music therapy, and to Bharath, whose spontaneous jamming filled the room with joy. It was an evening of laughter, reflection, and connection-where music didn't just entertain us, but brought us together in shared understanding.

## Soothe the Storm Within: Yoga for Mind-Body Harmony

On June 21, International Yoga Day, we hosted SOOTHE THE STORM WITHIN - a morning dedicated to yoga and mental health. Our sincere gratitude to Asha Anandan, yoga trainer, and Reshma Raj, wellness expert and dietician, for guiding us through an enriching session. We explored simple asanas, calming breathing techniques, and guided meditation that helped us reconnect with our minds and bodies. The insightful discussion on mindful eating and the link between food and mood added depth to the session. Thanks to everyone who joined and helped create a morning that nourished both body and mind.



## Official Launch: #Unfiltered - Amplifying Voices, Breaking Stigmas

Kicking off July, we hit the ground running - meeting with the district administration, visiting colleges, and coordinating campus partnerships to roll out our mental health awareness series, *#Unfiltered*. After plenty of prep, planning, and a few hiccups along the way, our pilot session finally happened at Govt. Engineering College Barton Hill.

*#Unfiltered* is designed as a four-part series - three sessions for students and one just for teachers - and although our first session (S1E1) unfolded at Govt. Engineering College Barton Hill (GECBH), the big launch moment took place at LBS Institute of Technology for Women, with the District Collector inaugurating the series. Sub Collector Alfred sir kicked things off with a greeting that created just the right energy for the event. Later, District Collector Anu Mam followed by living up to our title - speaking candidly about her personal mental health journey.

Between both colleges, we connected with over 350 students - heard raw stories from many of them - and were blown away by the interest in our Mental Health Champions program. We even started receiving enquiries about listening sessions in our Orange Room! We're excited and grateful for how *#Unfiltered* is unfolding.



## Art for the Heart – an expressive self care session



On July 26, we hosted a Self-Care session –“Art for the Heart.” In the midst of all the daily hustle, we often forget to care for ourselves- this session was a wake-up call. Through expressive art therapy, participants were encouraged to pause, reflect, and gently let go of worries. It became a calming space to reconnect with oneself and embrace self-nurturance. Many shared how surprising and freeing it felt to be without pressure.

## #Unfiltered S1E2 @ GECBH

Next up was S1E2 at GECBH. In this session , we dove into emotional awareness: exploring healthy vs unhealthy coping, decoding verbal and non-verbal cues, and practicing techniques like grounding exercises and box breathing. Everyone got actively involved-students showed energetic participation and stayed interactive the entire time. They're super excited for the next session and shared a wide range of topic ideas they're interested in learning more about.



## #Unfiltered SIE4 @ GECBH



We held the teacher-focused session on 1 August, amid busy schedules that kept overall attendance lower than expected. Still, those who joined brought genuine interest in mental health and in learning how to better support their students. We covered both teacher well-being (recognising stress, emotional self-care) and strategies to nurture student mental health in the classroom. The atmosphere was earnest and engaged—teachers actively reflected on how they can foster safer, more supportive environments. This session reaffirmed how critical it is to attend to educators' own mental health as part of building a healthier learning community.



## #Unfiltered SIE3 @ GECBH

We concluded our Phase 1 at GECBH on 7 August. Though attendance was lower compared to earlier sessions, the students who returned were deeply committed—those who showed up consistently across all three sessions really care about breaking stigma and creating safe, inclusive spaces. In this last gathering, we focused on mental health disorders, a topic students specifically requested. We explored how to seek help and how to support others, recognizing how essential this knowledge is in mental well-being. The energy in the room was powerful: participants unlearned harmful stigmas, courageously shared personal stories, and together we took a meaningful step toward a safer, more understanding campus culture.



## #Unfiltered SIE2 @LBS



Our latest session at LBS, on 8<sup>th</sup> August, was truly unfiltered-and deeply moving. We focused on emotions and feelings, inviting students into a space where they could speak their truth. Many opened up about their personal experiences, sharing concerns, hopes, and heartfelt stories. Their engagement was extraordinary, embodying both courage and trust. This openness mirrors the power of peer support, and this creates deep emotional resonance and aids mental well-being through empathy, connection, and shared understanding.

## #Unfiltered SIE4 @LBS

On August 21st, we conducted a session specifically designed for teachers, where we were honored to have Alfred O.V IAS, Sub Collector, Trivandrum join us to address the educators. The focus of the session was on how teachers can become stronger allies to their students by showing empathy towards their challenges and needs. The atmosphere was sincere and participative, with teachers thoughtfully considering ways to create safer and more nurturing spaces for their students. The session was highly interactive, allowing teachers to openly share their concerns about the well-being of the students.



## Peer Circle – Mental health Champions’ Meet



From every college we visit, we select 20 students to join our Mental Health Champion program. These champions actively promote mental well-being on campus by creating safe spaces for open conversations, supporting their peers through listening and guidance, and raising awareness. They will be trained at the Orange Room over one year. Our first Mental Health Champions Meet took place on 28<sup>th</sup> August, with students from LBS & Barton Hill colleges enthusiastically participating in an effort to promote mental wellness and compassionate understanding. The session was designed to be highly interactive, combining icebreaker exercises, role-playing activities, and engaging games that emphasized the importance of empathy and active listening as key life skills. By coming together, they created an open and safe environment for meaningful conversations, determined to break the silence around mental health, challenge existing stigmas, and return to their campuses ready to build more inclusive and supportive communities.

## Unparenting the Patterns

On August 30<sup>th</sup>, we held a session called "Unparenting the Patterns" for parents of teenagers, facilitated by Archana Gopinath from The Reading Room. The session aimed to help parents let go of old, rigid ways of parenting and instead embrace a more empathetic and understanding approach. We talked about the importance of being the safe space your teen can turn to, because when they feel heard, they feel at home. Parents got to explore different parenting styles and learn how to strike the right balance between being strict and giving freedom, all while building trust and respect. With practical tips and open discussions, the session helped parents see how they can break unhelpful patterns and create stronger, healthier connections with their teens.



## Onam Celebration



On September 2nd, Onam at The Orange Room was a day filled with celebration, happiness, and togetherness. We started the event by creating a vibrant Athapookalam, followed by the inauguration of the program by our Director, Sherin Noordheen. The day continued with Thiruvathira, fun-filled games, and lots of laughter. Everyone relished a traditional and sumptuous Onam Sadya, and we ended the celebration on a sweet note with a cake cutting for our teammates celebrating their September birthdays. It was a joyful and unforgettable experience for all.



We are planning more meaningful sessions designed to bring people together, encourage open conversations, and promote listening and supporting one another on their mental health journey.

We look forward to welcoming everyone, because together, we can break stigmas and create safe spaces-one conversation at a time.