MY LIFE AS A MEDICAL STUDENT WITH AN EATING DISORDER

By Dr Pashmina Bhutto

WHO AM I?

- Junior doctor working in Ipswich Hospital, Suffolk
- A mother
- A wife
- A person, like many, with a story to share..

IT ALL STARTED BEFORE UNI

- Picture this:
  - Out of control family issues
  - Out of control expectations
  - Out of control grades
  - What was in my control? My body

STARTING AT CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY

- Picture this:
  - Out of control family issues (still)
  - (Insanely) Out of control expectations

  - What was in my control? My body

MY ROUTINE WAS FIXED.. CONTROLLED..

(5am: rowing)

6- 8:45am: Exercise, get ready, eat, study

8:45: pedal furiously to lectures

9am-12pm: lectures

12-12:30pm: pedal furiously home

12:30 - 13:30 pm: eat, study

13:30 pm: pedal furiously (you get the idea) to lectures

5pm: finish day of lectures

6pm: eat and study

7-10pm: study

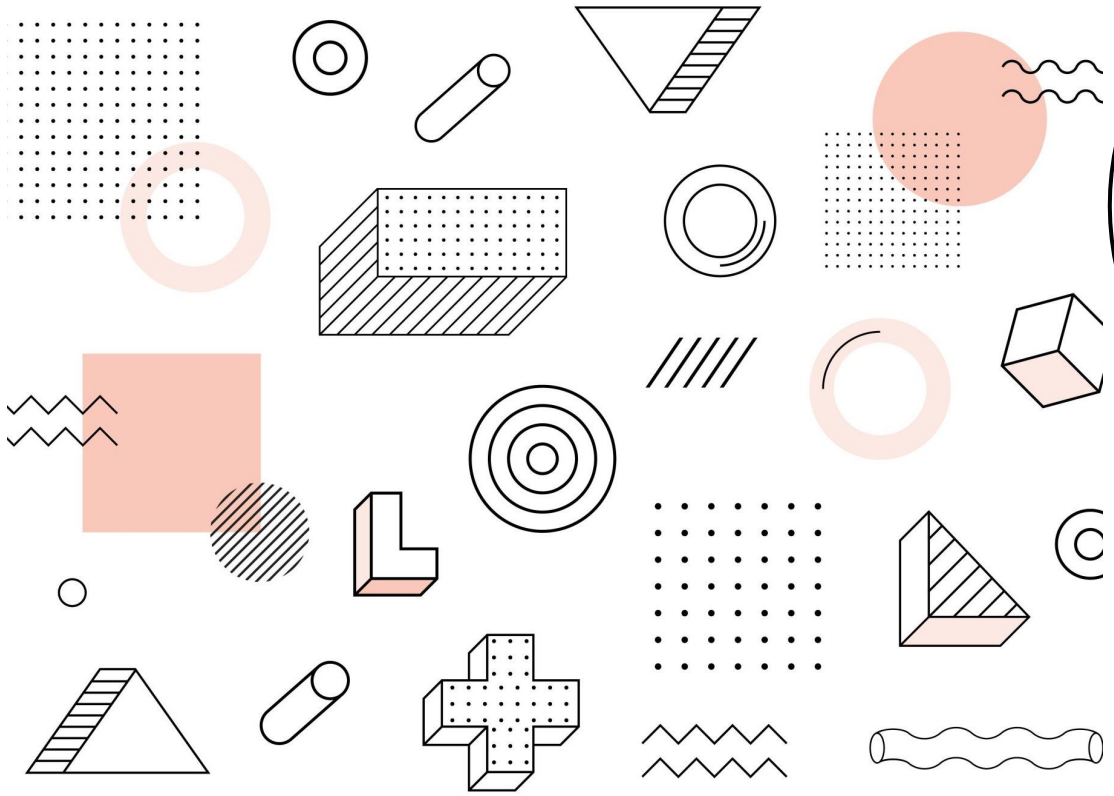
ENVIRONMENTS (FROM MY PERSPECTIVE)

UNI

- Everyone stressed
- I'm so behind, I don't have time
- Run faster, burn more, eat less, you'll feel better, *it will be under your control*

Home

- Everyone stressed
- I deserve a break, but I don't have time
- No one understands my struggles
- *Proceeds to seek comfort in restricting food and exercise*



"PASHMINA, WE'RE WORRIED ABOUT YOU"

"You cannot continue the course without seeing a doctor"

"YOU HAVE ANOREXIA NERVOSA"

"PASHMINA, JUST GET UP AND GET A CHOCOLATE BAR FROM THE VENDING MACHINE!"

"YOU'RE EXTREMELY UNWELL, YOU WILL DIE IF YOU CONTINUE"

"YOU WON'T BE ALLOWED TO PRACTICE IF YOU CAN'T HELP YOURSELF"

"..20% MORTALITY.."

"you're a skeleton, how will you have kids?"

"you are surprisingly strong"

"you're not eating my food"

"you're lucky to get help"

"let's start a business"

"LET'S GET YOU OUT OF HERE"

FEEL INSTANT RELIEF... FOLLOWED BY REGRET

"please help us"

"I need to get out of here"

"you're losing weight"

"join a rock band!"

"you have osteopoenia"

	A	AQ	AR	AS	AT	AU	AV	AW	AX	AY	AZ	BA	B
1		uorn	Pasta	Other	Coconut Mi	Coconut po	Dessicated coconut	Butter	Cheese	Yoghurt	Potato	Honey/ sug	Milk
3	Tuna Brocolli Pasta Bake							80g spread					
3	Morrocan Chicken Couscous Pie							3 tbsp					
8	Zuchinni Gratin							6 tbsp	¾ cup guyere				
8	Mango and Noodle Salad				1/3 mug			2 tbsp peanut					
4	Warm spiced mushroom salad							1 tsp		2 tbsp			
5	Simply spiced spinach							1 tsp					
10	Beetroot and courgette burgers							3 tbsp peanut butter					
17	Vegetable Casserole with Crunchy Bread Topping							1 tsp					1/2 cup
33	Chickpea, Chilli and Coriander Soup							50g					
41	Mushroom Millet Soup with cheesy garlic bread							low fat spread	sprinkle				
47	Cream of Carrot Soup							2 tbsp margarine			1		1/2 cup s
48	Frittata with Tuna							1 tbsp					1/4 cup
51	Black Eyed P							1 tsp					
52	Dhal Cur							2 tbsp			2		
60	Brocoll						1/2 cup	4 tbsp					
80	Brown							1 tbsp	1 cup				
33	lentil							45g low fat spread					2 tbsp
35	Chick							15g					
38	Asian-S							45g					
39	Tuna Ri							1 tsp margarine	slices				3/4 cups
00	Sweet Potat							1 tbsp peanut					
33	Chicken and Lemon							25g					150ml
45	Carrot Pineapple Bran Mu							2 tbsp margarine				1/4 cup sugar	3/4 cup

I GOT MY KICK UP THE BACKSIDE

MY FRUGAL DAD GAVE ME A BUDGET OF £100!

(Very entertaining to look back on!)

	Asian Shop		Fruit and Veg Shop		Market 1		Market 2		Market 3				Morrisons		Lidl			
	Price	Quantity	Price	Quantity	Price	Quantity	Price	Quantity	Price	Quantity	Price	Quantity	Price	Quantity	Price	Quantity		
Vegetable																		
Radish																		
Bunched beetroot						3 pack bunch												
Spring Onic						bunch												
Celery						pack												
Mushroc						box	1.00	bowl										
Chestnu																		
Mixed						b	1.00	4										
Aubergi						2	1.00	2										
Sweet po						lb												
Red onion						lb kg												
Shallots																		
Carrots					1.20	bunch												
Tomato					0.75	lb												
Spinach			1.50	bag											0.69	250g		
Primo Cabbage			1.15	1	1.00	1									0.89			
White cabbage			0.90/0.41	kg/lb														
Red cabbage			0.90/0.41	kg/lb														
Cauliflower	0.99	1			1.00	1	0.80	1							0.89			
Butternut squash			1.70	kg											1.00			
leek			2.80/1.75	kg/lb														
Sugar snap/ fine beans			0.99	bag (100g)	1.50	lb												
Turnips			2.80/ 1.27	kg/lb														
Parsnip			2.20/ 1.00	kg/lb	1.80	2 lb												
Swede			1.50/ 0.68	kg/lb														
Olives	1.99	400g							2.00	jar								
Okra	3.99	kg																
Ginger																		
Avocado			1.20	1	1.00	3	1.00	5										
Courgette							1.00	4										
Coriander/ Spinach/ Methi	3 for 1.00																	
Watercress			0.39	tray														
Kale																		
Fruit																		
Grapefruit			0.69	1														
Orange			2.70/ 1.23	kg/lb														
Apple			2.20	kg														
Dried Apricot	0.99	pack																
Mango Slices	1.99																	
Mangoes	10.00	7 mangoes																
Dates	2.99	500g			1.00	400g												

Time In London

- INDEPENDENT, BUT LONELY
- TRIED DESSERT FOR THE FIRST TIME
- FOUND MY GYM COMMUNITY.. BECAME ADDICTED
- STARTING PUTTING LESS EFFORT INTO WORK
- FAMILY + RELATIONSHIP ISSUES
- I CAN'T USE MY ARMS OR VOICE

My 2nd (version of) mid-life crisis

LET'S TRAVEL AND ATTEMPT MED SCHOOL AGAIN!

- CHRONIC PAIN
- WORRIED ABOUT MEDICAL SCHOOL
- HIGH EXPECTATIONS
- A DIFFERENT PERSON
- KEEN TO FIND A COMMUNITY...
- STILL ADDICTED TO EXERCISE

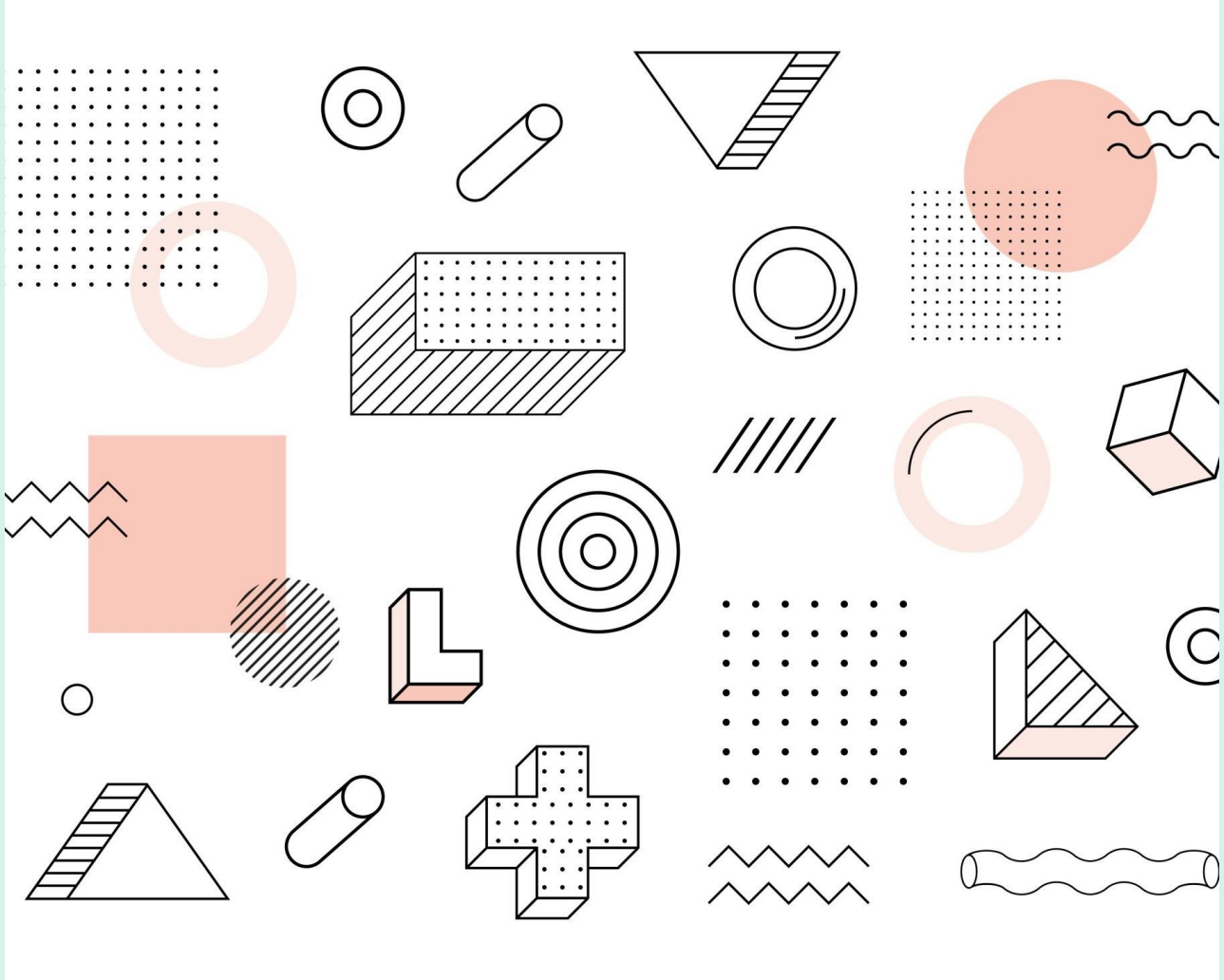
Where was I at this point?

TEA AND EMPATHY

HELPING OTHERS DIRECTLY

TIME TO TALK

PAEDIATRICS SEMINARS



"I'm in a lot of pain"

"Dad, I've failed the term"

"You can't practice medicine if you can't write!"

BUT I WAS STILL NOT OKAY...

"I can't even turn a handle!"

"Maybe you should take a break"

"Why not become a professional dancer?!"

"My friends and family have abandoned me"

"I want to continue; I can't give up"

BUT I SURVIVED, AND I CONTINUE TO SURVIVE

MARRIED DURING COVID

REDUNDANCY

MISCARRIAGE

INTENSE PRESSURE WITH JOB

HOSPITALISED BABY

CHRONIC PAIN

DON'T RECOGNISE MY BODY

Will I relapse?

I NEVER LOST THE CONTROL! IT TAKES A DIFFERENT FORM. I HAVE FAITH AND SUPPORT..

- UNIVERSITY IS A HUGE TRANSITION POINT, A TRIGGER
- THE PRESSURES IN THIS SOCIETY ARE EVER INCREASING, OUR STRENGTH SHOULD TOO
- OUR CAPACITY TO HELP AFTER NEEDING HELP IS FASCINATING
- MAKING THESE SLIDES WAS THERAPY!

However, I will say this:

We can't possibly end without a poem
from my teenage/ early adulthood brain..

"From the darkest depths of evil,
Comes a light to outshine all,
A hand reaches out from nowhere,
To give love above and all.

See the path rolling out in front of me,
How many steps till I break free?
What's behind me still keeps chasing,
But doesn't compare to what could be"

THANK YOU FOR LISTENING

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