

South Asian

WOMAN

VOL. 5 ISSUE 19 FALL EDITION 2013

DIWALI:
REMINDING US
OF TRIUMPH OF
GOOD OVER EVIL

**LOVE HAS
TURBULENCE:**
put the seat belts on

EXQUISITE
OUTFITS TO
CELEBRATE DIWALI

**POOR SEX LIFE
THE LEADING CAUSE OF**
infidelity

40+
**FALL BEAUTY
CREATIONS**

**MAKEUP DIVA
GRACE LEE**
Shares Insider's
Scoop on Latest
Fall Trends:
PERFECT SMOKY EYES,
LUSCIOUS LIPS & FUN NAILS

**Hit Stress Right
in the Face:**
10 pieces of advice

BIOSENSORS
HEALTH AND TECHNOLOGY
AT THEIR BEST



LIGHTING THE LIVES OF MANY

DR. SHIMI KANG

\$2.95

33

30058138077



Lighting
People's Lives
Today and Always

DR. SHIMI KANG

By Char Nair

Today, there is a name that is reckoned with so much honour — Dr. Shimi Kang, a Harvard-trained psychiatrist, Clinical Associate Professor at the University of British Columbia, one of Canada's few physicians trained in motivational interviewing, founder of the Provincial Youth Concurrent Disorders Program at BC Children's Hospital, co-founder of the Youth, Culture and Mental Health Fund for the BC Mental Health Foundation, and recipient of the Queens Diamond Jubilee Medal for community service.

Dr. Shimi Kang has lit the lives of many people suffering from mental disorders. She has published articles, editorials, blogs, manuals and monographs in the area of addictions, youth and women's mental health, motivation, and cross-cultural issues in healthcare. She is often called up on by the media such as CBC National, CTV National, and Global News to give her expert opinion on issues of health and wellness. She has put her time into numerous volunteering activities, and has spent much of her time bringing awareness, and reducing the stigma of mental health and addictive disorders by doing public forums and media events. As a result of her endeavours, Dr. Kang has received five national awards in the field of addictions and mental health including the American Academy of Addiction Psychiatry Research Award and an American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM) Award. Currently, she is working on her first book, *The Dolphin Parent: How to Raise Healthy, Happy, and Successful Children Without Turning Into a Tiger*, which will be launched in April 2014 by Penguin-Randomhouse.

Here is what Dr. Kang has to say about her life.

What made you want to get into this field of work? What about it interests you?

When I went to medical school, I thought I would become an eye surgeon! But I became fascinated by the human brain — where complex processes like mood, sleep, fear, happiness, and creativity came from. I wanted to study and treat the whole person within the context of their place in the world and thus psychiatry appealed to me.

You wear so many hats! So tell us, what do you enjoy the most about being a clinical associate professor at the University of British Columbia?

I enjoy teaching the medical students and residents about the importance of the doctor-patient relationship. One can know all the facts in the world, but if you cannot communicate or connect with your patient, you are missing a powerful opportunity to improve health and vitality. Plus, I love academic environments of learning and questioning — working with students keeps me on my toes!

As the Medical Director of Child and Youth Mental Health for Vancouver

Coastal Health, can you explain a little what this position involves?

I oversee all of the child and youth mental health clinics in Vancouver. This includes reviewing policy, managing waitlists, recruiting psychiatrists, and working with important stakeholders, such as the city, schools and police. We all work hard to try and make the city's mental health programs more open and friendly for youth and their families.

You are also the consulting psychiatrist to the Provincial Women's Reproductive Mental Health Program. Can you explain about this program and do you have any advice to give to women currently dealing with this situation?

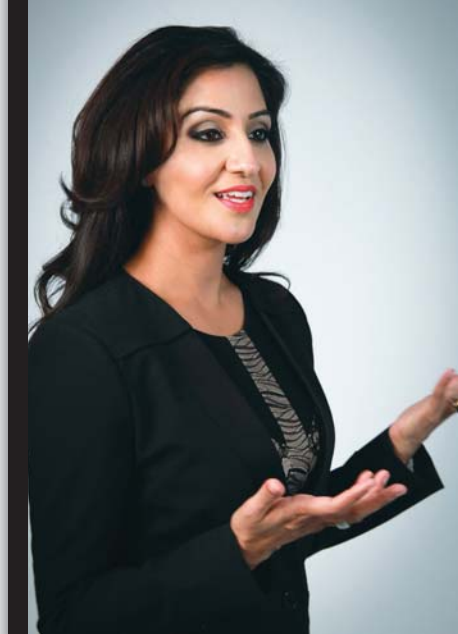
For over 10 years, I have seen women in pregnancy and postpartum who are experiencing things like depression, marital issues, and eating disorders. There are so many changes in that timeframe for women including hormones, physical health, sleep, and the role within the family and workplace. My advice is to never try to transition to motherhood alone. Build a community of support around yourself and your child. It really does take a village to raise a child and care for a new mother.

You are one of Canada's few physicians trained in motivational interviewing. Any motivational tips for our readers?

Yes! Motivation is not a fixed trait that someone has or does not have. It is fluctuating and dynamic and can depend on many things, including the company you keep. One tip is to surround yourself with positive individuals who lift you up and inspire you. We are also motivated by a greater purpose in life. If you feel unmotivated, consider some form of contribution to others or your community. If you want to motivate someone else, don't lecture or push, try standing shoulder to shoulder with them in encouragement. In general, we are motivated to do things we feel are important and capable of.

We see that you are the co-founder of the Youth, Culture and Mental Health Fund for the BC Mental Health Foundation. Tell us how this came about and what inspired you to become the co-founder?

That's easy — stigma. One in four people are affected by mental health issues yet it is still so misunderstood. I've worked with many youth from a variety of



cultures who experience serious issues, including trauma, psychosis, and suicide. Cultural barriers and biases would often complicate their ability to get help and I wanted to change that. We organized several outreach events right into diverse communities to talk boldly and openly about mental health. The response was overwhelming — I really think that we changed lives.

We have learned that you are very much involved in the media. What media have you worked with and what role did you play?

I have worked with almost all types of media — print, radio, online and TV and that includes CTV National, Global TV, CBC National, Omni, RJ1200, RedFM, CKNW, *The Vancouver Sun*, *The Globe and Mail*, and *National Post*. I try to shed light on controversial and sensitive topics such as youth addiction and mandatory treatment; child homicide and violence; the stigma of overdose; how to talk with

Photography: Sohrab, Style Films, Makeup & Hair: Mindy Bansal, Ina Mander - Girlfriendz Studio7



Photography: Sohrab, Style Films, Makeup & Hair: Mindy Bansal, Ina Mander - Girlfriends Studio7

your children about suicide. I am pleased to see that mainstream and South Asian media are discussing these topics more and more.

As a working woman, wife and mother, how do you balance your time?

It is a constant juggling act and I drop a ball or two almost every day! However, I don't compromise on things like sleep or exercise because they are what keep me well. I am lucky in that I have flexible work hours and can sometimes work from home doing research or writing. Most of all, I have a supportive husband, family and especially, a great mother-in-law!

What are some of your hobbies?

I LOVE yoga and feel that it has added

to my life immensely. Life is so busy that it gives me a chance to slow down and connect with myself, particularly through meditation. I also love any time I can spend with my three kids, especially just playing at home or going outside. Being in nature and enjoying some fresh air — rain or shine is a daily hobby.

How was the experience of joining the David Suzuki foundation for you?

Being part of the Council on Climate Change opened my eyes about where we have come and the future of our planet in a powerful way. I am truly worried about what my grandchildren and their children will have to endure because of our decisions today. I want to do more.

What type of volunteer work have you

done? What have you gained from it?

Service to my community was ingrained in me by my parents from a young age. As a child, I did *seva* (service) and have made contribution a fundamental part of my life ever since. Of course, I get far more from doing service than what I give. The human brain is an amazing thing and it releases powerful neurochemicals when we share, care, and help other. We are hardwired to contribute to our world in a meaningful way and that is why it feels so great when we do! I will never give up my volunteer work, no matter how busy I get — it makes me complete.

What do you most enjoy about your profession?

The person to person connection, especially with young people. I feel privileged that I am allowed to enter into the very personal lives of others. Being able to impact a child or adolescent in a positive way is a very special feeling. Psychiatry is also never boring. You never know what will come through your door and I love that!

Do you have any piece of advice for South Asian women?

Women's lives are a juggle, but they should not be a struggle. Unfortunately, that is what our lives can become when we don't take care of ourselves. My advice is to be compassionate with yourself and mindful of your own health. Don't compromise the basics — sleep, a good diet, regular exercise, positive social bonding and fresh air for anything. They all work like antidepressants do! We are also in this journey called life together. No one does it alone. Reach out, connect, and share with each other — it is so much better that way.

Anything else you would like to add upon?

I am thrilled to be releasing a book on parenting. It has been a massive project with years of research and soul searching. The Dolphin parent is an instinctive model of guiding children towards internal drive and a balanced way of life. It has worked for all of human history and it will continue to work so long as we make nature our ally and follow our parental instincts. Parenting in the 21st Century is more complex, confusing, and harder than ever! I am hoping that my book will make it just a little simpler and easier.