

Being raised in a household conditioned by immigrant parents, born and raised in Iran, never unified well with any regards to mental health. For years, I found that anytime I attempted to open up to them regarding my mental health, I was either mocked, gaslighted, or had my vulnerability used against me to their convenience. Enduring all the hardships I had to face growing up in my household, influenced my interests, mindset, and perspective heavily. Being the only Middle Eastern, more specifically, Assyrian, in my area made it nearly impossible to find a community I could relate to and left me with limited options to safely reach out to for help and advice. I was severely abused growing up, but was brainwashed to believe that what was being done to me was completely normal. The older I got, the more I realized that the things I was experiencing as an adolescent in America were beyond unacceptable. My whole life, I had always been frightened to reach out for help or to even question the abuse I was experiencing. During my freshman year, the years of abuse I had been exposed to finally escalated to a level that my body and mind could no longer physically nor mentally endure. Child Protective Services had no choice but to intervene. Through this time, I found myself falling into the field of psychology as a way to help myself process what I was going through. I find it fascinating to think that by advocating for myself when I had no one else there for me, I was able to find a glimpse of light at the end of the tunnel from the years of hardships, trauma, and abuse I suffered from for so long. Through my self healing, I learned that when life throws an obstacle in front of you, you have the choice to either sit and feel sorry for yourself, or to take the hardships and make something of it. As unfortunate as my situation was, I know I would not be the person I am today if I hadn't gone through what I did. I believe that the key to change is not to hate or fight the other side, but to educate and understand them instead. With this being said, I had the option to either resent my parents for all the trauma they put me through or to try to understand why they did the things they did to me. Before I knew it, all of my free time was designated to researching all matters of psychology. I began to especially find interest in the development of individuals and how unhealed trauma in an individual can be present within their parenting

techniques. As uncomfortable and distressing as it was, choosing to take the path of empathy over hatred was a decision I knew was necessary in the process of my own mental recovery/growth. Attempting to understand why my parents put me through what they did helped me find some kind of closure in the pain they caused me for so long. Being a first generation American can feel like a burden but a privilege at the same time. I aspire to leverage my set of idiosyncratic experiences, skills, abilities, and knowledge to help create a world that consists of more resources, education, and opportunity for all, not just those with white skin. Understanding how the quality of my own life has been immensely enhanced by using methods of self-reflection to aid my own healing from the childhood trauma I endured, encourages me to be able to create this sort of change in other people's lives. I aspire to change the way mental health is perceived in our world, to break the stigmas and generational cycles against disorders, and to be the person in someone else's life that I wish I had when I was struggling. The main reason my grades in high school have shown inconsistency is because I was not diagnosed with my ADHD until February of my junior year. For a few years, I struggled tremendously, but never had the opportunity to advocate my feelings due to my relationship with my parents. Every assignment I had ever completed was always done with the most thorough effort, care, thought, and time. The lower grades I had received in high school were in no regards to my intelligence, but rather that I was suffering from a disorder I did not know I had and also knew nothing about. Receiving a proper diagnoses reassurance me that what I was going through was real. Even though I finally had reasoning attached to the struggles I was experiencing, nothing changed the fact that I could not go back in time and fix the damage that had already been done to my GPA. So instead, I decided to use this as an opportunity to start fresh. Instead of feeling pity for myself and my situation, I decided that I wanted to use my frustration as fuel to motivate myself through the end of my junior year and upcoming senior year. Right at this time, the world was unfortunately hit with an unpredictable pandemic. This made balancing school with a mental disorder more disabling than ever before. I did well my first quarter of senior year

as I ended with mostly all high B's, but things started to go downhill when quarter two began. During that time period, my school started going fully online a lot more frequently. Through this pandemic, there had been so many inconsistencies such as this one, that affected my learning process and routine. A huge roadblock that people with ADHD often encounter is finding and sticking to a consistent routine. Unwillingly having to go back and forth between online and in person learning was very difficult for me to constantly keep adjusting to. Because my diagnosis was just prior to the outbreak of the pandemic, I was not only forcing my body and mind to adjust to a new medication, but I also had to cope with a completely new way of learning and daily routine. Additionally, after getting diagnosed, I was not provided with a 504 plan until January of my senior year. As arduous of a journey this has been for me, I have accepted that the setbacks regarding my mental health have sculpted my mental stamina and capacity. My apprehension of time management, prioritization, and discipline has drastically improved throughout this past year. I am an optimistic person who chooses to learn from the past in order to keep improving and pushing forward. None of these strong qualities about myself had the chance to be shown through my grades. I sincerely believe there's so much depth to an individual and the qualities they possess, that could never be truly depicted by a letter grade. I am certain in the fact that the measure of my character, intelligence, attitude, and all other qualities I possess exceed the value and worth a letter could ever depict. For this reason, my transcript is not an accurate representation of who I am, what I am becoming, and what I am working on achieving. I strive to continue utilizing my past as a tool for success and growth as I embark in this new chapter of my life.