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## Trauma and Recovery in Preeti Shenoy's *Wake Up, Life is Calling*

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### Abstract

Trauma is the psychological, emotional, or physical response to a highly distressing or troubling event, often leading to enduring effects on a person's mental health and general well-being. In many cases, traumatic experiences may be repressed, only to resurface later under emotional or situational triggers, disrupting an individual's stability and sense of control. These resurfacing memories illustrate the lasting effects of unresolved trauma, showing how past experiences continue to affect current emotions and behaviours. The novel "Wake up, Life is calling" by Preeti Shenoy deals with the traumatic experiences of the protagonist, Ankita Sharma, who confronts the emotional weight of her past. This study examines the effects of mental trauma on Ankita's life and asserts that recovery from trauma and emotional healing are achievable through sustained therapeutic intervention and a supportive social environment.

**Keywords:** Psychological Trauma, repressed memories, internal conflicts.

### Definition of Psychological trauma:

Esther Giller asserts that psychological trauma, as conceptualized by Pearlman and Saakvitne (1995, p. 60), refers to the subjective and individualized experience of an event or prolonged condition that overwhelms an individual's capacity to assimilate emotional experiences or poses a perceived threat to one's life, bodily integrity, or psychological well-being. Trauma is understood to occur when an individual's internal resources for coping are

insufficient to manage the emotional impact of the event, resulting in profound fear, disempowerment, or a sense of impending disintegration, mutilation, or psychosis. The phenomenology of trauma is often characterized by emotional, cognitive, and somatic distress, typically emerging within contexts marked by the abuse of power, betrayal of trust, entrapment, helplessness, pain, confusion, and significant loss. (2021)

### Research methodology:

This study follows a qualitative descriptive methodology, using textual analysis to examine psychological trauma in *Wake Up, Life is Calling* by Preeti Shenoy. Through close reading of the novel and review of related articles, the study explores the protagonist's emotional struggles and recovery. This approach highlights how literature reflects psychological experiences and mental health challenges.

### Discussion

The novel *Wake Up, Life is Calling* begins with Ankita Sharma enrolling in a Creative Writing course in Bombay, where she experiences a newfound sense of freedom away from the constraints of her parents. She enjoys her classroom interactions and builds close friendships with two of her classmates, Parul and Janki. However, this emerging emotional stability is soon challenged by an unanticipated encounter with Vaibhav, who she finds seated in her living room. His presence reignites dormant memories, disrupting the fragile psychological equilibrium she has been striving to maintain. Letting Vaibhav back into her life is one such decision. Ankita's parents believe it might help, unaware that his presence makes her uncomfortable. As her mental health declines, Ankita's parents try to support her by making protective choices, but they fail to understand what she truly needs. While Ankita is trying to leave the past behind and start fresh, seeing Vaibhav again only slows down her healing. Although Ankita is determined to embrace a new beginning, the thought of Vaibhav's return intensifies her anxiety, as she fears it will revive the trauma she wishes to leave behind. The resurfacing of these painful memories highlights the difficulty individuals face when trying to move beyond trauma, as even minor reminders can provoke significant distress. Reflecting on this, she confesses,

"As far as I was concerned, I was done with my old life, and perhaps the people in it too" (Shenoy, 17).

This assertion reflects the emotional turmoil that compels her to sever ties with a past that has caused her deep pain. However, the emotional burden doesn't vanish easily. The internal struggle resurfaces in moments of solitude, where memories threaten to overpower her sense of stability. Her academic program becomes not only a symbol of renewal but also a therapeutic tool through which she seeks emotional regulation. This coping strategy is further reflected in her internal monologue, where she consciously distances herself from painful memories and reinforces a sense of progress and gratitude. As she narrates:

"Whenever a memory from my old life came back to me, I would push it away, suppress it, till it receded. I would remind myself how fortunate I was to have this course, how good I was at all the assignments, and how lucky I was to have found new friends" (Shenoy, 24).

This self-narrative reveals her commitment to cognitive reframing and her reliance on her inner strength and present stability to counteract past traumas.

However, this psychological effort is persistently challenged, particularly in situations. Nevertheless, the process of sustaining this mental resilience proves to be an ongoing challenge, especially when she is confronted with emotionally complex situations that test her coping mechanisms. This internal conflict is further amplified in the following moments, as Ankita struggles to balance her emotional needs with the expectations of those around her and she must navigate conflicting emotional demands. The psychological tension increases when Vaibhav notices her discomfort and asks if his conversation with her father upset her. He even offers to withdraw from their recreational activities. Ankita, recognizing the joy her father derives from the renewed

companionship, suppresses her discomfort and assures Vaibhav that nothing is amiss. This moment underscores the emotional dissonance between her outward composure and inner turmoil, particularly as she continues to contend with the challenges of bipolar disorder, an aspect of her experience that remains concealed from Vaibhav.

Despite these efforts to maintain stability, Ankita's emotional balance remains fragile. Life appears to be progressing well for Ankita until she comes across a suicide manual in her college library. Out of curiosity, she decides to read it. However, the content of the manual deeply unsettles her, triggering a resurgence of painful memories and past trauma. This episode disrupts her emotional equilibrium and reawakens the suicidal thoughts she had once worked so hard to overcome.

This incident illustrates the enduring nature of psychological trauma, which refers to the emotional and psychological damage caused by distressing or life altering events. As Tahan et al. (2021) explain, trauma can result from a single incident or accumulate over time through repeated exposure to adverse experiences, often overwhelming an individual's ability to cope, regulate emotions, or process thoughts effectively. This is evident in Ankita's case, where traumatic experiences from her earlier life, though seemingly resolved, are reactivated by an unexpected trigger, highlighting how past psychological wounds can resurface and challenge even the most resilient individuals.

Consequently, Ankita channels her psychological distress into creative writing, particularly poetry, as a private outlet for emotional expression. She intentionally hides both her literary work and emotional struggles from her parents, maintaining an outward appearance of normalcy within the household. However, this delicate emotional balance is soon disrupted when Vaibhav, encouraged by her parents, arranges a social meeting. Despite her initial hesitation, Ankita agrees to the

encounter. During their interaction, Vaibhav's compassionate demeanour momentarily eases her distress and prompts her to disclose a traumatic event from her past, which is the suicide of Abhishek after she rejected his proposal. Rather than receiving the understanding she hopes for, Ankita is met with a complicated and unsupportive reaction, which evokes profound feelings of disappointment and betrayal. This interaction marks a pivotal moment in Ankita's emotional development, heightening her dependence on Vaibhav and intensifying her longing for his approval and support.

This growing emotional turmoil coincides with the commencement of the college cultural festival, which happens in her new challenges. Ankita actively participates in events such as Public Speaking and Dumb Charades, successfully reaching the finals. Yet, her composure is abruptly shattered when she unexpectedly sees Joseph in the audience. The sudden encounter triggers a surge of traumatic memories, overwhelming her to the extent that she becomes physically ill and vomits on stage. This incident highlights the persistent impact of unresolved trauma, demonstrating how intrusive memories can disrupt present functioning despite conscious efforts to move forward. This persistent emotional turmoil aligns with the long-term psychological consequences of unresolved trauma. As Orji et al. (2023) explain, traumatic experiences often provoke immediate responses such as shock, denial, or grief. Over time, these initial reactions may evolve into more enduring psychological disturbances, including emotional imbalance, intrusive memories, impulsivity, and difficulties in forming or maintaining healthy relationships. Trauma may also manifest through physical symptoms like chronic fatigue, nausea, or headaches. In more severe cases, individuals become psychologically stuck, unable to progress, and may develop conditions such as Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Ankita's ongoing emotional instability and her

inability to disengage from past experiences exemplify these effects, demonstrating how unprocessed trauma can disrupt both mental health and daily functioning.

Though deeply embarrassed by the episode, Ankita returns later to the festival and takes part in Dumb Charades alongside her friends, signalling a determined effort to continue despite her distress. Nonetheless, the accumulation of emotional triggers exacerbates her psychological strain, resulting in insomnia. She conceals her suffering from her parents, even resorting to makeup to hide the dark circles beneath her eyes. Eventually, she agrees to meet Joseph and shares her experiences with him. Initially, she finds solace in what seems to be his empathetic response. However, her fragile trust is shattered when Joseph reveals her mental health history at a social gathering. Feeling betrayed and exposed, Ankita's emotional pain deepens, and thoughts of suicide resurface with renewed intensity. Such a response can be better understood through psychological research, which emphasizes the ongoing influence of past experiences on present behavior. This episode clearly illustrates how emotional experiences that remain unprocessed can return unexpectedly and with significant impact. According to Magisha Varthini and Niranjani (2023), past experiences are not merely stored memories but are active forces that influence how individuals feel, think, and behave. Whether positive or negative, such experiences play a key role in shaping how people interpret current events and engage with others. Personal qualities like empathy, trust, and love as well as emotional fragility are deeply rooted in one's past and often influence present responses without full awareness. Ankita's overwhelming reaction on stage demonstrates how unresolved trauma continues to affect her emotional wellbeing, revealing the lasting power of past psychological experiences.

This emotional ambiguity reaches a new height when Vaibhav unexpectedly invites her

on a formal outing. Despite her initial hesitation, Ankita consents after learning that he had already sought and received her parents' approval. Her acceptance is less an expression of desire and more a reflection of familial obligation and a reluctance to disappoint those around her. This instance illustrates the ongoing tension between her personal autonomy and external expectations.

This internal conflict is further intensified during the subsequent outing, where the carefully curated setting and emotional cues orchestrated by Vaibhav add layers of complexity to Ankita's psychological state. Vaibhav organizes a luxurious car to escort her, selects a specific music playlist, and creates an atmosphere filled with thoughtful nostalgia. When a familiar song from her adolescent years begins to play, Ankita is briefly transported back in time. However, the emotional impact of the music brings forth a rush of memories, combining moments that are pleasant with others that are intensely painful.

This moment encapsulates the complex interplay between sensory memory and trauma recovery. As Tahan et al. explain, individuals with a history of trauma often experience involuntary recollections of distressing events, which manifest as intrusive thoughts, flashbacks, or nightmares. These individuals may also develop avoidance behaviours, emotional numbness, and heightened physiological arousal (2023). In Ankita's case, music becomes a potent sensory cue that reactivates deeply embedded traumatic memories. This response illustrates how seemingly neutral stimuli can evoke intense emotional distress, thereby hinder psychological healing and highlight the fragile balance between memory, emotion, and recovery.

This intricate connection between external triggers and internal emotional vulnerability paves the way for understanding how music gradually transforms from a source



of joy into a powerful force that influences, and at times destabilizes, Ankita's emotional and psychological development. Building upon this, music occupies a profound role in Ankita's emotional development. Initially, it symbolizes romantic fulfilment and emotional intimacy, particularly during her eighteenth birthday, when Vaibhav proposed to her while music played in the background. Over time, however, this positive association deteriorates as the same melodies become inseparable from emotional suffering and depressive episodes linked to her bipolar disorder. Despite her conscious efforts to suppress these associations, certain songs continue to function as powerful triggers, involuntarily bringing traumatic memories to the surface. Her visceral reaction, expressed through a desperate plea to stop the music, exemplifies her struggle to shield herself from resurfacing pain. The following lines express overwhelming pain and helplessness of Ankita:

"It was pounding on that locked trunk of bad memories, trying to force it open.

The songs were painful. Each lyric pierced my eardrum. It hurt so much! I remembered the time when I was helpless, struggling to read. I remembered every single excruciating detail of my early days at the hospital. I remembered how abandoned I felt, how frightened, how helpless. A tsunami of thoughts rose inside my head. I was struggling to breathe, struggling to stay afloat. I was being swept away by the intensity of the pain. I couldn't listen to this anymore. I wanted to stop." (Shenoy 69-70)

This internal conflict intensifies when Vaibhav organizes a carefully planned day that includes thoughtful gestures and ends with a surprise visit to a rooftop restaurant. The effort he puts into the day briefly lifts Ankita's spirits, offering her a momentary escape from the emotional burden she carries. In moments of emotional vulnerability, the presence of a caring

and empathetic individual can offer a sense of security, encouraging a person to share deeply personal experiences. However, expressing suppressed emotions comes with its own psychological risks. Many individuals avoid confronting such emotions due to the uncertainty surrounding how to process them appropriately. While avoidance may bring short-term relief, it often delays necessary emotional reckoning. Over time, these unresolved feelings can lead to psychological disturbances such as anxiety, panic attacks, or depressive episodes.

Ankita experiences the consequences of revealing her vulnerability when she chooses to confide in Vaibhav about her traumatic past, a personal history she has kept concealed from almost everyone. Instead of offering the understanding she hopes for, Vaibhav responds with harsh judgment, leaving her both shocked and deeply hurt. As she reflects:

"You cheated on me.

'What?' I asked in shock. Of all the things I told Vaibhav, this was what he picked up on? How was it cheating? I never slept with Abhi. It was Abhi who had kept chasing me. But Vaibhav was furious. He did not want to listen to my explanations or anything I said. He had made up his mind." (Shenoy 82)

Despite her attempt to clarify the situation by emphasizing that Abhishek had been the one persistently pursuing her, Vaibhav refuses to listen. His unwillingness to engage with her explanation leaves Ankita feeling dismissed and vulnerable. Almost immediately, she regrets disclosing such an intimate part of her past, sensing that her openness may have irreparably damaged their relationship. As they return home, she is filled with uncertainty, unable to discern Vaibhav's thoughts and struggling to close the emotional gap that has emerged between them.

This emotional tension deepens when Vaibhav abruptly ceases all communication,

leaving Ankita in a state of emotional disarray. Although she had initially made an effort to keep her distance, his sudden silence creates a void that she finds increasingly difficult to endure. His absence destabilizes her emotional equilibrium and initiates a spiral of self-recrimination. In the days that follow, she becomes consumed by thoughts of guilt and worthlessness, as reflected in her internal monologue, which reveals her deteriorating self-esteem and psychological state.

"You always hurt those who love you.  
That's all you are capable of.  
You killed a good friendship.  
You killed Abhi.  
You hurt people.  
You disappoint your parents.  
You are worthless." (Shenoy 86)

This emotional breakdown is further intensified by Vaibhav's continued absence, which begins to take a noticeable toll on Ankita's daily functioning. Although she manages to maintain an appearance of composure in front of others, inwardly she struggles with constant anxiety, persistent memories, and an overwhelming sense of abandonment. The disappearance of someone who had once been a regular part of her everyday life disrupts her routines and disturbs her ability to concentrate. As the silence lingers, her emotional turmoil becomes more difficult to suppress.

This growing distress soon becomes visible in her behavior. One such example is her compulsive tendency to rush to the door each time the bell rings, clinging to the hope that it might be Vaibhav returning. Although she faces repeated disappointment, a brief sense of relief emerges when she discovers that he has informed her father of his temporary absence. This act suggests to her that their relationship may not have ended entirely and provides a slender thread of hope amid her emotional uncertainty.

While this hope provides some comfort, it does not offer enough stability to calm Ankita's emotional unrest. The absence of communication from Vaibhav leaves her in a state of uncertainty, caught between her fear of being abandoned and her hope for reconciliation. This emotional confusion prevents her from finding peace and adds to the psychological stress she is already facing.

As her emotional struggles continue, Ankita also begins to experience a return of traumatic memories. Although she remains deeply affected by Vaibhav's silence, she chooses to stay involved in her college's cultural events. She is selected to participate in both Public Speaking and Dumb Charades, and she prepares for them with focus and determination. The team-based nature of the Dumb Charades competition brings her a sense of connection, while the encouraging feedback during the preliminary rounds of Public Speaking increases her confidence and gives her a brief sense of progress.

This short period of emotional balance is interrupted when she unexpectedly sees Joseph in the audience during her speech. Joseph is strongly linked to a painful period in Ankita's past, and his sudden appearance causes a wave of distress. Memories that Ankita has tried to suppress begin to surface, and she becomes emotionally overwhelmed. According to Magisha Varthini and Ramya Niranjani, even a single unexpected reminder can reactivate trauma, especially when individuals are still healing from emotional wounds. In Ankita's case, the sight of Joseph disrupts her focus and makes it difficult for her to stay composed on stage. As her mind fills with distressing memories, she recalls a specific moment when she mistakenly kissed Joseph, confusing him for Abhishek. This experience had left her embarrassed and confused. Later, when Joseph confessed his feelings for her, she pretended to return his affection, largely because of Abhishek's grandfather's advice not to ignore love. These unresolved experiences return with

full emotional intensity as she stands on stage. The psychological pressure becomes too much, and she begins to feel physically ill.

The emotional strain Ankita feels is further emphasized through the reactions of her friends. After she vomits on stage, Parul and Maya help her leave the venue and offer words of reassurance, telling her that such accidents can happen to anyone. Mrs. Hayden also attempts to comfort her and boost her morale. Although Ankita is surrounded by kindness and support, she remains filled with shame and wishes only to return home. Her continued emotional discomfort, despite the reassurance of others, underscores the deep impact of her internal struggle.

In the days that follow, Ankita continues to be haunted by memories involving Joseph and begins to internalize guilt for what transpired. She believes that Joseph's proposal was influenced by the emotional closeness they developed, which she attributes to her own inability to regulate her actions during what she now understands as a manic episode associated with her bipolar disorder. Although medical professionals have told her that she is not to blame, Ankita finds it difficult to accept their assurances. She remains emotionally unsettled and unable to fully free herself from these painful thoughts, which hinders her ability to recover.

This fragile psychological state becomes more evident through her worsening symptoms, such as severe sleep deprivation and recurrent nightmares. One night, she awakens screaming, prompting her parents to rush to her aid. When she recounts the nightmare, her father urges her to calm down and prepare for lunch. Their concern stems not only from the intensity of her dream but also from her recent breakdown on stage, which they attribute to anxiety. At lunch, her father cautiously mentions that they have spoken with Dr. Madhusudan from NMHI, who advised Ankita to continue her prescribed medication. He

reminds her that abruptly discontinuing treatment for a long-term psychological condition is dangerous. Although Ankita quietly complies at first by taking her medication outside the institute, she is emotionally unsettled, especially when she sees Joseph in the audience, and she cannot bring herself to explain this to her parents because of feelings of shame about her past actions during a manic episode.

This emotional disturbance intensifies when Joseph unexpectedly reappears in her life at a college cultural festival. He is revealed to be the cousin of Freddy, Parul's boyfriend. Just as Ankita begins to believe she has left her past with Joseph behind, Parul informs her that Joseph is eager to meet her. Unwilling to disclose her past to Parul, Ankita agrees to the meeting. Despite believing that she had learned from past mistakes, she repeats the same error by engaging with Joseph again. Their renewed connection occurs during a period when her bipolar symptoms are especially severe. During this vulnerable time, she accepts his romantic proposal and even shares a kiss with him. However, once her treatment progresses, she recognizes the inappropriateness of the relationship and decides to end all contact.

Their final meeting takes place at a café, where Ankita feels compelled to reveal the truth about her life. She opens up about her mental health struggles, including her diagnosis of bipolar disorder, her past suicide attempts, her treatment history, and her complicated relationship with Abhishek. For Ankita, this act of honesty is not a plea for sympathy. Rather, it is a final effort to bring closure and help Joseph understand the emotional distance she had maintained. However, Joseph misreads her as a renewed sense of emotional intimacy. Moved by her openness, he begins to hope for reconciliation. Realizing this shift, Ankita becomes uncomfortable and feels the need to reassert her boundaries. To make her stance unmistakably clear, she fabricates a story, telling

Joseph that she is in a new relationship and does not wish to see him again.

Although this interaction gives her a sense of resolution, it also leaves her emotionally drained. Psychological illnesses, particularly bipolar disorder, often return when underlying emotional distress remains unresolved. For Ankita, the weight of this emotional confrontation, combined with the pressure to maintain a façade of stability, quietly triggers the reemergence of her symptoms during the course break. Yet instead of acknowledging these early signs, she chooses to stay silent. She fears that revealing the truth to her parents would lead them to send her back to a psychiatrist, and this is a possibility she is desperate to avoid.

In an effort to protect herself, Ankita pretends to be fine while spending the holidays with her family. Outwardly, she appears calm and cheerful, but inwardly, her condition continues to deteriorate. She starts to suffer from severe insomnia, spending night after night lying awake, her mind racing with thoughts she can no longer control. Eventually, exhausted by the futile struggle to sleep, she turns to reading in search of distraction and understanding. One night, she picks up a book on sleep disorders, hoping it might offer her some insight. As she flips through its pages, she is struck by the number of harmful effects it outlines – many of which she recognizes in herself.

At that moment, Ankita is forced to confront a painful truth. The symptoms she has been trying so hard to ignore are not fleeting or harmless. Instead, they are clear signs that her illness is beginning to return. This realization fills her with an unsettling fear, as she becomes aware that she might once again be entering the same painful cycle she had worked so hard to escape in the past.

This possibility weighs heavily on her because psychological illnesses such as bipolar disorder often return if not carefully managed. When early signs appear, it is crucial to respond

to them with honesty rather than denial. However, Ankita begins to notice the recurrence of these symptoms during her course break. Instead of seeking help, she chooses to conceal her condition, largely because she fears her parents will insist on taking her to a psychiatrist if they find out.

Her fear of returning to psychiatric treatment stems from the difficult memories of her previous hospital stay. These memories continue to haunt her, making her reluctant to go through the experience again. In order to protect herself from that possibility, she puts on a brave face during her holidays with her parents. She pretends everything is normal, even though she is struggling internally. This emotional effort takes a toll on her, especially at night when she is unable to sleep.

As sleepless nights begin to pile up, Ankita finds herself worn down by exhaustion and anxiety. Rather than continue fighting a losing battle for rest, she decides to occupy her mind. She picks up a book on sleep disorders, hoping it will be a harmless distraction. However, as she turns the pages, she becomes increasingly unsettled by what she reads. The book lists several harmful consequences of sleep deprivation, each more alarming than the last.

One particular point captures her attention and refuses to let go. It explains that sleep deprivation can significantly increase the risk of relapse in individuals with mood disorders. This revelation strikes a chord with her, forcing her to consider the consequences of continuing to ignore her worsening condition.

When Parul invites Ankita to the party she's hosting for her boyfriend Freddy's birthday, Ankita doesn't consider the chance of Joseph being there. During the party, Joseph approaches her while drunk and tries to kiss her. Frightened, Ankita pushes him away, and he unexpectedly tumbles toward the balcony. Luckily, he manages to grab the railing just in time to save himself. Ankita feels anxious about her actions but is also somewhat relieved that he



wasn't harmed. However, the most humiliating moment for her occurs afterward when he exposes the incident to the crowd about her past. He said, "She is a psycho bitch! . . . She has a mental disorder" (Shenoy,154). She is too shocked to respond and can't believe what she just heard. Joseph discloses her secret to the crowd. Joseph exposes her to the crowd. "deepest, darkest secret" (Shenoy, 154). Everyone at the party abandons her, including Parul, leaving her feeling numb with pain. Eventually, she manages to get home, where she feels.

"The pain is debilitating. It sears through every cell, every pore in my body. I cannot bear this. It cuts deep. It cuts slow. It cuts thorough. My heart feels so heavy; it is like I am carrying a lead cannon inside my chest" (Shenoy,155).

Ankita feels, "I very badly want to sleep. To escape. I want a respite. Why don't you sleep forever? All of this will end then" (Shenoy,158).

Immediately, she takes the suicide manual and recalls the plastic cover method to commit suicide. In her frenzied state, she takes two pills and places the plastic cover on her head, but not tightly. She falls asleep and considers it a bliss that she finally stops her racing thoughts. This reaction aligns with findings by Magishavarthini and Ramya Niranjani, who argue that individuals exposed to traumatic events often exhibit symptoms of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), including persistent and intrusive memories. These experiences, they note, can drive individuals to adopt maladaptive coping mechanisms such as self-harm to manage emotional turmoil. Ankita's continued recollections of Abhishek, despite repeated suppression efforts, exemplify the uncontrollable nature of trauma-related memories and their profound psychological consequences. (2023). Ankita's parents are startled to find the plastic cover, a suicide

manual, and scattered pills around her. In a state of panic, they manage to wake her. Overwhelmed with guilt for causing them such distress, Ankita hears her father mention the need to consult Dr. Neeraj about the next course of action. This event signifies a pivotal moment in Ankita's ongoing struggle with her mental health

Bipolar disorder is often characterized by severe mood fluctuations, including episodes of intense anger or aggression that may appear without obvious triggers. Building on this emotional turning point, Ankita soon finds herself caught in another intense episode. During one such episode, she reacts violently when her father encourages her to continue her medication. She refuses, arguing that it numbs her emotions, and in a sudden burst of rage, she throws a paperweight at him. Such impulsive outbursts are consistent with symptoms observed during manic or mixed episodes in individuals with bipolar disorder. Moments later, she calms down and becomes acutely aware of the harm she has caused. This pattern of reactive aggression followed by deep remorse is not uncommon among people living with bipolar disorder, especially during periods when insight returns between episodes. Acknowledging the seriousness of her actions, Ankita voluntarily asks to be taken to the doctor, demonstrating a renewed willingness to seek help, which represents an essential step in the long-term management of the illness.

This incident highlights the complex relationship between trauma and violence. As Orji et al. explain, violence and trauma have significant impacts not only on individuals but also on families and society at large. These elements often exist in a cause-and-effect dynamic, where violence can be both a cause and a consequence of trauma. This reciprocal relationship can affect both children and adults across different communities, leading to enduring psychological and emotional consequences (2023). Ankita's violent outburst, followed by emotional regret and the need for

medical intervention, exemplifies how psychological instability can contribute to harmful behaviour, and how such behaviour in turn reinforces personal and familial trauma.

Building on this emotional rupture, a moment of vulnerability prompts Ankita to finally confront what she has long kept hidden. She asks her parents to listen before they take her to the hospital, expressing a sincere need to share her inner turmoil. Though embarrassed, Ankita bravely opens up about kissing Joseph during a manic phase, an act she had carried as a burden of guilt. Her father's gentle reassurance that it was not her fault helps her begin to release the shame she has internalized. Encouraged by this response, she recounts the true reason she vomited on stage: the shock of seeing Joseph, not stage fright. She also reveals the traumatic events from the previous night's party, especially the pain of being abandoned by everyone, including Parul, after Joseph publicly humiliated her. Ankita's ongoing emotional instability and her inability to disengage from past experiences exemplify these effects, demonstrating how unprocessed trauma can disrupt both mental health and daily functioning. In this moment of truth-telling, Ankita is met not with judgment but with support from both her mother and father. Their understanding gives her a sense of validation and relief. For the first time, she begins to believe, "Perhaps it was not my fault" (Shenoy 169), as she starts to reclaim her narrative and separate her illness from her identity.

This newfound clarity leads Ankita to apologize to her parents and make a heartfelt promise that she will never attempt to take her own life again. This realization brings her a comforting sense of empowerment because she understands that she can only control her own actions and not those of others. She takes solace in this insight and recognizes that everyone makes mistakes, and it is through these mistakes that valuable lessons are learned. By facing challenges with this mindset, she is able to approach difficulties with greater confidence.

Whenever she experiences negativity, she practices positive affirmations to uplift and motivate herself. Ankita's profound personal growth exemplifies the transformative potential of trauma recovery, a process extensively supported by psychological research. Supporting this personal transformation, Liana Spytska restates the findings of M. Vagni and colleagues, explaining that experiencing psychotraumatic events often leads individuals to reassess their life decisions and future goals, which brings about a continuous transformation in their worldview. This process is increasingly acknowledged in psychological and therapeutic fields as highly significant. Through such reflection, individuals can cultivate a more positive outlook, even in difficult circumstances, by re-examining their fundamental values, redefining meaning, and seeking new opportunities. Ultimately, this process contributes to post-traumatic growth, which is characterized by stronger inner resilience, improved self-esteem, and greater psychological strength. Spytska's reaffirmation of Vagni and colleagues' research underscores the continuing importance of post-traumatic growth in contemporary psychological studies. This scholarly agreement not only validates the concept but also emphasizes its practical significance in therapy, demonstrating how individuals can positively transform after adversity.

### **Conclusion**

This study suggests that the recovery from psychological trauma is a multifaceted process that extends beyond individual coping mechanisms, emphasizing the critical role of external psychosocial factors and a strong support system. It argues that healing is most effectively supported through the convergence of empathetic caregiving, therapeutic engagement, structured psychiatric care, and emotionally validating environments. The narrative of Ankita Sharma, as explored in *Wake Up, Life is Calling*, illustrates how trauma, though deeply rooted and recurrent, can be

mitigated through a combination of personal resilience and sustained external support. The findings underscore the importance of early intervention, open communication, and the normalization of mental health treatment in preventing the reactivation of traumatic memories. Ultimately, the study recommends an approach grounded in an understanding of psychological trauma that emphasizes emotional security, stable interpersonal relationships, and consistent therapeutic support, as these elements are essential for fostering resilience and promoting recovery and growth following adverse experiences.

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