

APRIL 2025



# CROSS CULTURAL EXPRESSIONS NEWSLETTER

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APRIL IS

*Sexual Assault Awareness  
Month*

**WHAT'S GOING ON AT CCE?**



## TRAPPED.:A Powerful New Film Exploring Ancestral Trauma and Mental Health in Immigrant Families

Cross Cultural Expressions, in partnership with the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health, proudly presents TRAPPED. an evocative feature film written and directed by Mastaneh Moghadam, LCSW and starring Navah Rahbar. This psychological drama delves into the complexities of ancestral trauma, shedding light on the often-unspoken mental health struggles within immigrant families.

TRAPPED. follows Daria, a young woman caught in the intricate web of cultural heritage and personal healing. As she navigates the expectations of her immigrant upbringing, she is confronted with the lasting echoes of her family's past—an emotional weight that threatens to define her future. With a gripping narrative and deeply human performances, the film explores the silent burdens that immigrant children carry and the difficult path toward breaking free.

A poignant and timely exploration of generational trauma, TRAPPED. aims to spark conversations around mental health, family dynamics, and healing. The film is set to premiere at the Harmony Gold Theater in Hollywood, CA, followed by two community screenings at Laemmle Town Center 5 Theater in Encino, CA on May 29, 2025 and June 5, 2025.

## "Our Immigrant Stories: A Collection of Essays From the Iranian Diaspora." and "Our Immigrant Stories: A Collection of Essays from the Eastern European Diaspora"

Cross Cultural Expressions in partnership with the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health has brought together members of the Iranian and Eastern European communities of Los Angeles county to share their unique stories around the immigrant experience through a series of essays. These stories, along with each contributing writer's original artwork have been compiled in two beautiful books titled "Our Immigrant Stories: A Collection of Essays From the Iranian Diaspora." and "Our Immigrant Stories: A Collection of Essays from the Eastern European Diaspora". Both books (which includes English translations of all the shared stories) also include mental health articles and mental health resource lists. If you are interested in receiving a copy of one or both of these books, please use these links available on our website [Cross Cultural Expressions](https://www.cceccc.org)

[THE IRANIAN DIASPORA](https://www.cceccc.org) and [THE EASTERN EUROPEAN DIASPORA](https://www.cceccc.org)



# “BREAKING THE SILENCE, ONE STORY AT A TIME” (IN HONOR OF SEXUAL ASSAULT AWARENESS MONTH)

Sexual assault is often treated as something too uncomfortable to talk about. We are taught to avoid, whisper about, or deny altogether. In recent years, especially with the rise of the #MeToo movement, this painful reality has finally been brought into the light. Still, despite the progress, sexual assault remains alarmingly common. According to RAINN (Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network), an American is sexually assaulted every 68 seconds.

This is not just a statistic. It is personal. This month, I want to recommend three books that explore this topic in deeply personal and powerful ways. This allows us to engage with it in a more approachable, but no less meaningful, manner. The first is “Milk and Honey” by Rupi Kaur, a collection of poetry that captures the pain, resilience, and quiet strength that follow trauma. Her short, powerful verses gave voice to feelings that can be so hard to name. Kaur’s work beautifully explores how sexual assault, culture, and family intertwine, offering readers a space to reflect and heal. The second is “In the Time of Our History” by Susanne Pari, a novel that explores the experience of a Persian family grappling with generational trauma, culture, and the often-silenced realities of sexual violence. Beyond its important themes, it offers a vivid window into both ancient and modern Persian culture and politics. My last recommendation is “Know My Name” by Chanel Miller. A memoir that stayed with me long after I finished it. I read it while I was still at UCLA, and it hit close to home. Reading the story of a young woman from Palo Alto, assaulted by a Stanford student, made everything feel that much more real. If you’re feeling hesitant to engage with these stories, remember: if others have lived through these experiences, the least we can do is read, listen, and educate ourselves. Through reading, we honor survivors’ voices, deepen our understanding, and help build a world where no one’s story is ignored.

By: Ester Fridman  
CCE Volunteer

## MOVIE OF THE MONTH



The Movie TRAPPED. Tells the story of a young girl named Daria who learns to break free from the “tower” she is being kept in. This film teaches about the importance of living your life for yourself and not dwelling in the fears of others. It also takes a magnifying glass to the restraints and difficulties of generational trauma. Through the film Daria learns to enjoy her passions and her joys for her. A lesson that is taught to her character through new friendships and perspective changing experiences.



# MENTAL HEALTH HERO OF THE MONTH: CARRIE FISHER

Carrie Fisher, best known for her role as Princess Leia in Star Wars, was far more than a Hollywood legend. She was a fearless advocate for mental health. Diagnosed with bipolar disorder at 24, Fisher spent much of her life publicly sharing her struggles with mental illness, addiction, and recovery. At a time when these topics were often stigmatized, Fisher used her platform to speak openly and with humor, helping to normalize the conversation around mental health.

Through her books, *Wishful Drinking* and *Postcards from the Edge*, Fisher offered deeply personal insights into her experiences, resonating with millions facing similar battles. Her wit and honesty turned vulnerability into strength, making her a role model for those navigating mental illness and other hardships.

Fisher refused to let her diagnosis define her, choosing instead to educate, advocate, and empower others. She once said, "I am mentally ill. I can say that. I am not ashamed of that. I survived that, I'm still surviving it." Her legacy endures not only in film, but in the lives of those she inspired to seek help and speak up. Carrie Fisher remains a true mental health hero.

"Bipolar disorder can be a great teacher. It's a challenge, but it can set you up to be able to do almost anything else in your life."

CARRIE FISHER



## YARAN IRANIAN PEER COUNSELING HELPLINE

*A program of Cross Cultural Expressions*

Our trained volunteer peer counselors provide free and confidential supportive and referral services for Persian (Farsi) speaking community

Contact us if you're in need of:

*Information/Referral Services*

*Support with Family Issues*

*Support with Mental and Emotional Health*

Speak with one of our peer counselors via our telephone helpline:

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