

The Story of Unplugged 2024: *Ab Chup Nahin*

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Figure 1: The student musicians opened the performance with a powerful rendition of *Hum Dekhenge*

Unplugged: *Ab Chup Nahin* is more than just an annual concert series—it is a vision brought to life by three 16-year-old founders of the Youth Circle of Synapse (YCS), determined to break the silence surrounding mental health conversations in Pakistan. Their mission was to empower young people with a voice - a platform to sing, speak, and advocate for mental health through the transformative power of music.

Building on last year's success, this year's event was held at the IBA City Campus and brought together an audience of over 400 people. The stage featured 8 talented musicians from partner schools across Karachi, creating an inclusive atmosphere of shared experiences. Designed to resonate with people of all ages, the performances spanned decades of music from the 1960s to the 2010s, blending nostalgia and joy with a strong message of advocacy. Through inspiring speeches and the *Ab Chup Nahin* campaign, the concert became more than entertainment—it became a call to action for youth mental health. By reaching over 100k+ individuals through various media platforms, the event succeeded in its mission of extending the conversation of youth mental health. At its core, Unplugged used music as a universal language to connect people, inspire dialogue, and spark meaningful conversations about mental health.

400 + 

Attendees'

5+ 

Major media outlets engaged

100k+ 

People reached through media

10+ 

Corporate and Individual Sponsors

Event Background



Figure 2: Standees showcasing the Unplugged and Ab Chup Nahin messages

About the Youth Circle of Synapse

The Youth Circle of Synapse (YCS) was established in 2021 with the goal of providing a safe space for the youth of Pakistan to discuss their mental health challenges and promote awareness. It is the youth-led arm of Synapse - Pakistan Neuroscience institute which is a renowned mental health organization in Pakistan.

Synapse's foundational commitment is to drive the mental health dialogue forward in order to transform how mental wellness is perceived and approached

Why Mental Health

With 64% of Pakistan's population under the age of 30 and 75% of mental health conditions emerging before the age of 24, the time to act on youth mental health is now. Despite the passing of a National Mental Health Policy and Mental Health Ordinance in 2001, inconsistent implementation has left massive gaps in service delivery and policy enforcement. Meanwhile, the allocation for mental health—a mere 0.4% of an already insufficient health budget that comprises just 1% of the GDP— speaks volumes about the systemic neglect of this critical issue. This neglect is not just a statistic; it's a crisis.

Ab Chup Nahin!

With this dire situation in mind, Synapse created the campaign Ab Chup Nahin, which YCS took forward and spread the message to speak up for mental health. Individuals pledged to do at least one thing for the improvement of their or others' mental health. This campaign aimed to confront the silence and stigma around mental health head- on, unapologetically calling to prioritize mental health. It's not just about starting conversations; it's about owning them— boldly, openly, and without shame. Mental health is as real as physical health, and silence is no longer an option.

Coupled with this campaign, the mission of Unplugged this year was clear: to shatter the culture of hushed tones and hidden struggles, replacing it with fearless, accepting, and action- driven dialogue. Because staying silent is no longer just harmful - it's destructive

2024 Highlights



Figure 3: The audience enjoying the performances at Unplugged

The Key Achievements

The Youth Circle of Synapse (YCS) concert, Unplugged 2024: *Ab Chup Nahin*, held at the IBA City Campus, was a resounding success. It brought together a diverse audience of students from schools, colleges, and universities alongside adults from across Karachi. This turnout highlighted the growing recognition of youth mental health as an urgent issue that needs to be addressed. The *Ab Chup Nahin* campaign extended energy and impact created by Unplugged. Through this campaign, Synapse moved the needle toward real change. With over 100 pledges, the call to action is set to grow with more people joining in to create a culture of acceptance.

Partnerships with educational institutions like Nixor College, IVS, IBA, Habib University, The Learning Tree, and TCF played a key role in expanding our message and ensuring the cause reached youth across Karachi, encouraging conversations where they mattered most. Alongside that, media coverage by Geo News, Aaj TV, and The Express News took the campaign beyond the event, helping us bring youth mental health into the national conversation. Securing sponsorships from major organizations like Bank Alfalah, HBL, Precision, Hilton Pharma, National Foods, Pakistan Intermodal Ltd. Sana Safinaz, Medora of London and our esteemed individual sponsors further showed that corporate Pakistan is beginning to stand behind mental health advocacy in a way that wasn't seen before.

With Unplugged 2024 and *Ab Chup Nahin*, we are working toward normalizing conversations about youth mental health, building momentum, and fostering change - because staying silent is not an option.

Next Steps

Considering the growing interest in Unplugged as an event, we are planning on expanding its reach by taking it to other cities like Lahore, transforming it into a national platform for youth mental health advocacy. Alongside that, we aim to spearhead a sustained, year-long campaign that continues the conversation around youth mental health by leveraging social media for advocacy efforts and awareness initiatives.