Events

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Dhriti: Kerala's first mental health festival in Fort Kochi

Kerala's first mental health festival comes to Fort Kochi on Feb. 14, 2026. Expect over 30 workshops, games, and activities, with free entry.

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Dates **14 February 2026**

Where

Fort Kochi
Not recorded yet

An abundance of technology has created a scarcity of meaningful interactions.

A couple of years ago, when ChatGPT had just launched, a friend who runs a mental health support organization called me up. "We don't have enough mental health professionals in India," he said. "What if we create an AI chatbot that gives people mental health support 24/7?"

It sounded like the future. Until another friend, a mental health researcher, said this: "The fundamental problem in mental health is the lack of human interaction. By using AI chatbots to replace that at scale, we're going to make the problem worse." This had a profound effect on how I thought about the intersection of AI and society to this day.

Imagine that your 13-year-old child's best friend is an AI mental health chatbot that is controlled by big tech companies. Let that sit with us for a moment.

On Feb. 14, Fort Kochi is doing something about it. Not with more screens. With more humans. By creating an abundance of human interactions.

What is Dhriti?

Dhriti is Kerala's first mental health festival. It is happening on Saturday, Feb. 14, 2026, at Pallathu Raman Memorial Park in Fort Kochi, starting at 9:30 a.m.

The founder, Maya, attended Manotsava, India's National Mental Health Festival, in 2025. It brought together researchers, artists, and community advocates through workshops, conversations, and hands-on sessions. That experience changed Maya's perspective on a different way to talk about mental health. A public festival, open, warm, and celebratory, could reach people who would never walk into a clinic. On her trip back, she started putting together Dhriti, Kochi's own version of Manotsava.

What is happening at the festival

It is a full-day festival packed with 30+ activities. There are three tracks running through the day.

Workshops (timed sessions)

The day starts with Sound Healing at 10:30 a.m., followed by Laughter Yoga and Art of Pranayam at 11 a.m. There is a Sign Language session at 11:30 a.m., Self Defense at 12:30 p.m., and a Drug Abuse Theatre Workshop at noon. After lunch, there is Art Therapy, Comic Making, and a session called Unlearning Survival Mode. The afternoon continues with Bracelet Making, Clay Modelling, and Voice Your Worries.

The evening is where it gets fun. A Theatre Workshop runs at 4 p.m. Standup Comedy is at 5 p.m. Dance Therapy follows at 5:30 p.m. The day closes with a Percussion Tribe Hands-On session from 6:30 p.m. onwards.

All-day workshops (until 6:30 p.m.)

These run throughout the day: Mala Making, Clay and Puppet Making, Box Building, Coconut Leaf Toy Making, and Mandala Making.

Interactive games

This is perhaps the most creative part. Games include Stickman to the Rescue, To Roll or Not to Roll, Choose Your Cruise, Myth Busters, Kindness Bingo, Mood Pebble, Jigsaw Puzzle on Mental Health, Managing Stress Bingo, and an Empathy Walk. There is even one called Make a Wish to the Universe.

Venue

Pallathu Raman Memorial Park is in the Veli area of Fort Kochi, very close to the heritage zone. It is close to the Santa Cruz Cathedral Basilica. If you take the Kochi Water Metro, get off at the Fort Kochi terminal and it is a short auto ride away.

And if you are already in Fort Kochi for the Biennale, this is a perfect way to spend your weekend with some self care. Drop by the festival in the morning. Then wander off to see the things to do in Fort Kochi guide. Grab a quiet coffee somewhere, take a walk along the beach, and head home.

Event details

Dhriti takes place on Saturday, Feb. 14, 2026, from 9:30 a.m. at Pallathu Raman Memorial Park, Veli, Fort Kochi. Entry is free, but registration is required. Complete the registration form. The event is presented by Mind Empowered.

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