

MOTHERS & DAUGHTERS

THE BOND THAT SHAPES US

TEA & CHAT • 29 APRIL 2026



Ethnicity of Participants – 55 Attendees

Pakistani 72%



Indian 25%



White British 3%



Afro Caribbean 2%



Middle Eastern 3%



Led by Urfana Ayub

Location: Kunafa & Tea Restaurant

Time: 6:00pm – 8:30pm

Attendance: 55 women

About the Speaker

Urfana Ayub is a qualified social worker, BACP-registered counsellor and clinical supervisor, with over twenty-five years of experience across a range of settings. She works closely with grief, loss and bereavement, drawing on both her professional expertise and her own personal experience, and describes her guiding belief simply as: All we need is sakoon.

Originally from Karachi, Pakistan, Urfana is the mother of four children. She lost her eldest son, Adam, at the age of eighteen, an experience that led her to begin writing. She is the author of *After You Were Gone*, *My Letters to You* and *Sentiments*, all three also published in Urdu, and all proceeds from her books go toward charitable causes as an ongoing sadaqah jariyah for her son. Free copies are made available to anyone who has lost a loved one and cannot afford to buy them. More information is available at www.adamayub.co.uk.

Alongside her writing, Urfana works as a speaker, teacher, trainer, and qualified legal and health interpreter and translator. She is particularly interested in early attachment and the dynamics it creates in later relationships, and in the importance of self-awareness, self-care and connection to faith in supporting good mental health.

Session Overview

A Session Rooted in Personal Experience

Delivered in both English and Urdu, this session grew out of a pattern Urfana has observed throughout her career: an unusually high number of women seeking therapy for difficulties in their relationship with their mother. She shared that some of the clearest answers to these questions often only surface after loss. She spoke of losing her son Adam at eighteen, and her own mother more recently, and how it was only after her mother's death that she felt the full weight of what that relationship had given her.

Passed Down Through Generations

Urfana explored how patterns move through generations, from grandmother to mother to daughter, often without either party fully realising it. She described this as a kind of silent learning: the small habits, ways of managing a household, or approaches to relationships, that we absorb long before we consciously decide whether to keep them. Recognising this transmission, she said, is the first step to choosing what to carry forward and what to leave behind.

The Attachment Bond

Drawing on attachment theory, Urfana explained that the early bond between mother and child lays the foundation for later relationships. A child who feels approved of, validated, guided and loved carries that security into adulthood; a child whose need for that approval goes unmet can carry the effects into other relationships in ways that are not always obvious at the time.

Why Conflict Is So Common

Urfana said that conflict between mothers and daughters is far more common than many people assume, and is often behind the difficulties young women bring to therapy, particularly when they feel unable to speak openly with their own mother. She traced much of this conflict to unmet or unrealistic expectations on both sides, since both mother and daughter are, in the end, human beings with needs of their own.

Mothers as Role Models

A mother, Urfana said, is inevitably a role model, whether that influence is positive or negative, and much of what we come to value and believe is shaped by her, whether we recognise it, welcome it or push against it. She acknowledged that not every mother has had a good role model to draw from, but said some of the strongest mothers are exactly those who had none, and who had to write their own script instead. Starting from scratch is difficult, she said, but never impossible.

Mirroring and Individuality

Urfana described a recurring dynamic she called the mirror effect, where a mother wants a daughter to resemble her, and the friction that can follow when the two are, in fact, very similar. She encouraged the women present to accept their mothers and daughters as they are, rather than as they wish them to be, and cautioned against measuring daughters against inherited expectations, such as assuming a daughter must be an excellent cook or academically gifted simply because of who her mother is.

Guidance, Not Control

Urfana framed the relationship in Islamic terms as well: children, she said, are a gift entrusted to us by Allah, not a possession, and mothers are expected to guide, teach boundaries and model respect, rather than control. Parents can make decisions on a child's behalf, she said, but that is different from controlling who they become.

Letting Go of Resentment

Urfana closed by speaking about the cost of unresolved bitterness in these relationships. She encouraged the women present to forgive shortcomings on both sides, warning that holding on to pain and resentment causes harm to the person carrying it as much as anyone else. She urged mothers to respect their daughters so that resentment does not take root, noting that many young people are now in counselling as a direct result of relationship breakdowns with their mothers, and that where a mother does not provide validation, a daughter will look for it elsewhere.

The session ended with a shared recognition that the mother-daughter bond, however complicated, remains one of the most formative relationships in a woman's life, and one worth the effort of understanding and repairing.

**Report created by the Tea & Chat participants
supported by the MWC Team**

