

The Department of Counselling at SSSIHMS, Whitefield, started in the year 2001 with the Blessings and Divine Grace of Bhagwan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, is now seventeen years old, and continues its tradition of providing this unique service of SAI Counselling through a dedicated team of thirty-three volunteers.

Patients are counselled at multiple sessions – pre-admission, admission, in the wards, discharge, tele-counselling, multiple OPD visits, etc. – hence we record number of patient-sessions instead of patients counselled since a patient is generally counselled more than once.

The year 2017 witnessed several significant happenings as highlighted below.

**1. Counselling department statistics.**

During this past year, 2017, the Counselling Department counselled a total of 12311 patient-sessions, an increase of 32% over the previous year, comprising of Cardiac 8111, Neuro 4101, Others 58 and Telecounselling 41.

The Others category of 58 patient-sessions comprise referrals from doctors in Neuro OPD, Cardiac OPD, GH, inpatients in the wards and ICUs which include Nursing students, Hospital staff/families (from both Whitefield and Prashanthigram), Ortho and Gynec referrals from GH and Cardiac OPD referrals.

Tele-counselling patient-sessions is a new service provided at the time of discharge to patients who seek counselling support through their cell phones after they leave the hospital and return home.

Details are in Annexure I.

**2. Streamlining of daily activities.**

Our drive for a sustainable model initiated in 2016 continues. Grooming and planning, for future leadership of the Department for this unique seva sustained purely by volunteers, are not only prime requisites but can also be very challenging.

This past year 2017 witnessed the first elected group of leaders for carrying out the administration of routine day-to-day functioning of the Department. Mrs.Shumal Maskey and Mrs.Radhika Yadalam have been elected as Joint Admin Heads and Mrs.Aparna Hoskote and Mrs. Sadhana Rao as Admin Deputy Heads. All four have over eleven years of experience.

**3. Training in Counselling.**

Six new counsellors have been inducted after due diligence and are undergoing training. The total number of counsellors in the Department now stands at thirty-three.

#### 4. **Monthly meetings.**

The Counselling Department meets on the second Sunday of every month for multiple purposes. It is primarily an opportunity for all the Counsellors to meet and bond, since only five come together on their counselling day at the hospital. Interesting case histories are narrated and discussed, as also problems encountered.

We invite senior doctors/staff from our hospital to talk to the Counselling group during the Sunday meets about the various illnesses that are treated in our hospital, and including their aftercare post discharge. This past year we had very interesting interactive presentations made by Dr.E.V.Joshy, HOD, Departmentt of Neurology, Dr.Krishna Manohar, HOD, Cardiac Surgery, Dr.Pranav Kini and Dr.Rita, both Senior Cardiologists in the Cardiology Department and Smt.Sharavathy, HOD, Dietary Department.

We also conducted an in-house **Workshop on Empathy** during one of the Sunday meetings. The subject matter being topical, addressing a felt need in today's healthcare scenario, the workshop was very fruitful and thought provoking. It was felt that the Counselling Department should conduct a similar workshop to a wider audience to create greater awareness of the Empathy dimension in healthcare.

#### 5. **The Healing Space room enhancement.**

New wall-papering and a long felt need for our own TV monitor to facilitate presentations during the Sunday meetings were added by Swami's Grace through contributions from the Counsellors.



**6. Expansion of Counselling area for Cardiac patients.**

The Director, Dr.Sundaresh, was gracious enough to grant us additional space by the staircase in front of Cardiac OPD, which was hitherto unused, to expand our Counselling services to cardiac patients upon admission and at pre-admission stage.

The space provided was completely refurbished and enhanced by the Counselling Department to the desired level on similar lines as the main Counselling department. The photos below show the new area.

The services provided here include complete patient profiling and counselling patients who have been cleared for admission and those who have to undergo evaluation before being admitted. This is done in the outer area; a separate meditation/prayer room is provided for teaching the body relaxation, mind cleansing and to facilitate introspection with prayer to the God of their choice.



**7. Tele-counselling support service.**

Patients have expressed a desire for continuing counselling support after they are discharged and return home. In keeping with Swami's vision of "Care for Life" for patients treated in our hospital and with the easy availability of cell phones with patients, the Counselling Department has started this service on a trial basis.

**8. Conferences attended.**

Mrs.Gita Umesh attended the 34<sup>th</sup> National Conference on Mind-Body Medicine, from 1 – 4 September, 2017 at Gyan Sarovar in Mt.Abu, Rajasthan, organised by the Medical Wing of the Rajyoga Education and Research Foundation in association with the Brahma Kumaris' Global Hospital and Research Centre Trust.

She also visited the J.Watumull Global Hospital and Research Centre in Mt.Abu which is a multi-speciality hospital where holistic care is provided.

We take this opportunity to express our sincere thanks to the Director, Dr.Sundaresh, for all his unstinted support and encouragement, and to the HODs, doctors and staff of the various Departments.

Jai Sai Ram

For the Counselling Department

Gita Umesh and Umesh Rao.