

AntharDhwani



**E-Newsletter from the Counselling Department, SSSIHMS, Whitefield, India
Vol-1, January 2019**

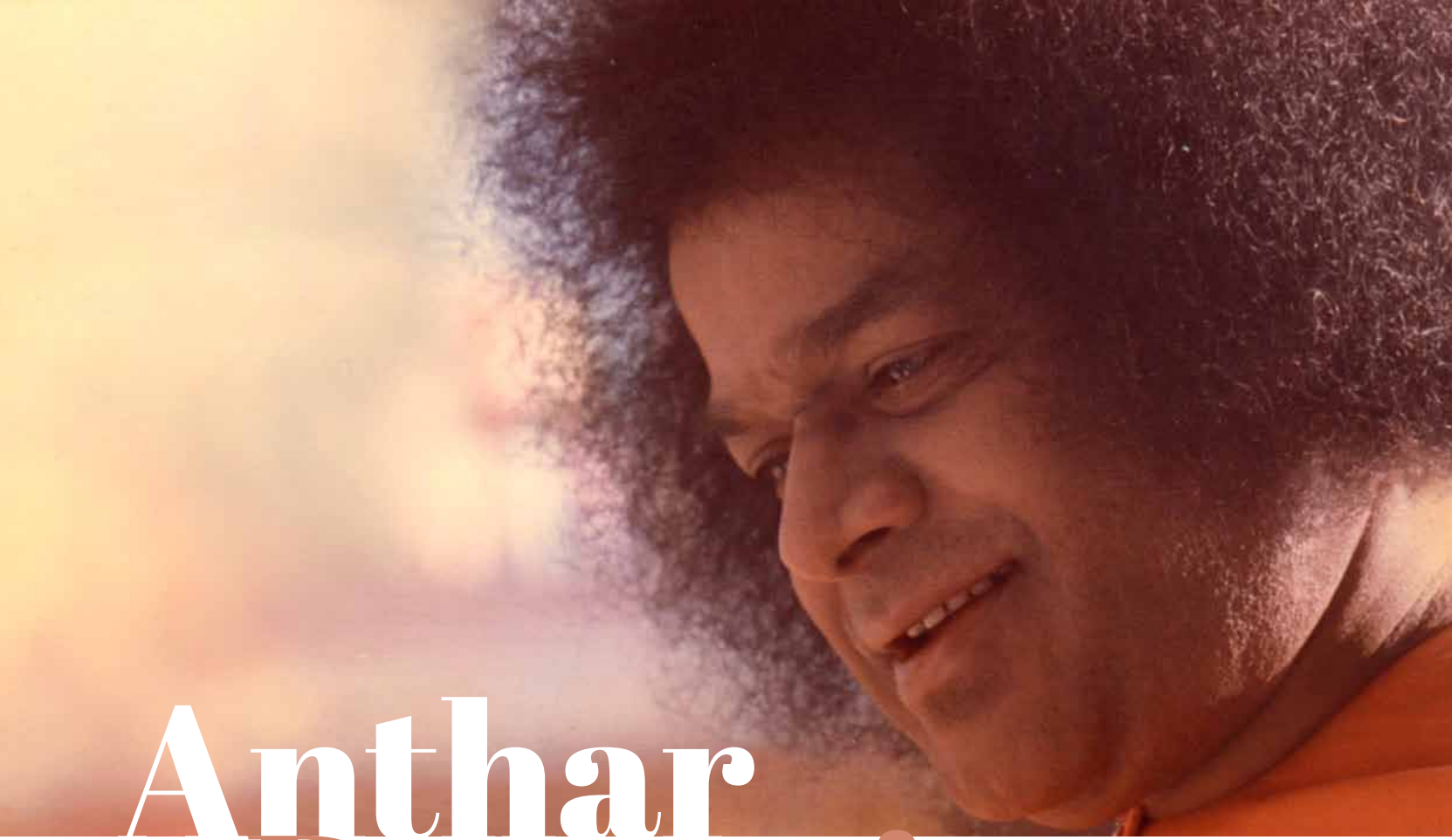
Group photos of counsellors with Directors- past and present



The Real Beneficiaries The Counsellors

"There can be no quality nobler than
service to humanity"
Sathya Sai Baba

" One whose heart is filled with compassion, whose words spell truth and who works for the welfare of others will never suffer from difficulties or diseases even in the Kali Age." - Sathya Sai Baba.
(Discourse at the International Cardiac specialists symposium, Prashanthi Nilayam, 6-2-1993.)



Anthar Dhwani

An offering with love and dedication to our beloved

BHAGAWAN SRI SATHYA SAI BABA

On this auspicious occasion of launching Anthar Dhwani, we humbly submit to our loving and compassionate Lord, Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, our most sincere and heartfelt gratitude for having blessed us with this rare seva opportunity as counsellors at this "Temple of Healing", inspiring us, nurturing us and blessing us over these years. You have made us what we are today. We are Your instruments in this unique mission and fervently pray that we continue this seva as SAI counsellors.

The Divine Counsellor



Acknowledgments

On this memorable occasion we gratefully acknowledge the unstinted support and encouragement extended to the Counselling Department, over the years from hospital inception in 2001 to date, by all the Directors past and present. They have and are rendering impeccable selfless service with a rare spirit of dedication at this venerable institution.

Directors



Dr. A.N. Safaya

The Sathya Sai Central Trust has always been extremely helpful and supportive of the Counselling Department. Our special thanks to Sri. Prasad Raogaru of the Central Trust who had addressed the counsellors giving them valuable guidelines at an interactive session in Puttaparthi a few years back.

The SAI Counselling program at SSSIHMS, Wfd, as part of its counsellor training, ensures that all SAI counsellors have a basic understanding of the various cardiac and neuro illnesses for which patients are admitted and treated at the hospital. For this purpose, the Counselling Department has sought the assistance of the medical staff, who have provided unstinting support by way of lectures and presentations over the past several years.

We take this opportunity to express our sincere thanks to the following individuals who have helped us along this journey over the past eighteen years.

- Sri. G.S.R.C.V. Prasad Rao, IAS(Retd)- Member, Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust
- Dr. A.S. Hegde- former Director, SSSIHMS, Whitefield
- Dr. Swarna Bharadwaj- former Director, SSSIHMS, Whitefield
- Dr. Krishna Manohar- former HOD of Cardiac Surgery, SSSIHMS, Whitefield
- Dr. Prayag Kini- Senior cardiologist
- Dr. Reeta Varyani- Senior cardiologist
- Dr. E.V. Joshy- former HOD, Department of Neurology, SSSIHMS, Whitefield
- Smt. Sharavati- HOD, Dietary Department
- Sri. D.V. Chandrashekar- Senior Manager, Radiology Department



Dr. A.S. Hegde

Message from Dr. D C Sundaresh, Director, SSSIHMS, Whitefield

Aum Sri Sairam

I am grateful to Bhagwan Sri Sathya Sai Baba for giving me an opportunity to serve at this "Temple of Healing" established in 2001 to provide tertiary care with Love & Compassion. He equipped the hospital with the best equipment to treat patients suffering from Cardiac & Neuro illnesses, and appointed highly qualified doctors and support staff. To this bouquet of facilities Swami added a voluntary counseling team, His instruments Sri.Umesh Rao & Smt.Gita Umesh. This service has turned out to be a gem in the bouquet of services. Thus, the World Health Organization definition of health which includes "spiritual well-being" was implemented at SSSIHMS, Whitefield.

The Counselling department started with four dedicated volunteers serving the cause of Swami's health care mission; today there are over thirty volunteers, from all walks of society with some not having even seen Swami. They come by turn six days a week without any expectations from the hospital. This is counseling with a difference which is worth emulating in all health care delivery institutions in the interest of the patient. It also adds value to the quality of care given in the institution.

The usefulness of this, seen as a response of the patient undergoing high risk surgeries at the SSSIHMS, Whitefield, is well documented in video interviews of patients. I would not hesitate to say that the low rates of mortality & morbidity of patients treated at our hospital are due to the addition of this factor of the 5th dimension of Health - "Spiritual Well-Being". It empowers the patient to cope with the procedure, manifesting as an increased immune response to disease & treatment.



Dr. Swarna Bharadwaj



Dr. D.C. Sundaresh



The foyer of the “**TEMPLE OF HEALING**” SSSIHMS, Whitefield

"I had heard that there is a place called Heaven but never imagined it would be in Whitefield, (Bangalore). I was an ATHEIST, but on entering the Hospital and standing inside this TEMPLE my whole body trembled in awe...." - Patient (male) Age 48yrs. Discharged on 24-1-06.after CABG surgery.

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"Such buildings can often touch the hearts of even the most hard headed adult. How do these spaces speak to the different moods and conditions of the myriad people who pass through them? What of the person aching to open her heart to another human being? What of the person profoundly moved by the building, but wishing to treasure and ponder things in his or her own mind and soul? Each of these will pass into the warm heart of these buildings and somehow must be given the freedom to respond, and to be responded to, as their desires take them." - Spirituality and counselling, Judy Moore and Campbell Purton.

Anthar Dhvani- The Inner Voice

A biannual E- Newsletter of the Counselling Department, SSSIHMS, Whitefield

Inner transformation, listening to the Inner Voice– the God within, is the key to human well-being. This is the fundamental tenet of the SAI Counselling program as administered by the Counselling Department at the Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Medical Sciences (SSSIHMS), Whitefield, Bangalore. Modern medicine recognizes and acknowledges the body– mind connection in health, but integrative, holistic care is a far cry, except at SSSIHMS, Bangalore. A senior cardiologist at SSSIHMS recollecting Swami's words to them, said at a recent event,

“Swami told us that the physical cure medicine does is at body level, but we are not one, we are three – body, mind and spirit. If care has to transit to healing, it has to touch at all three levels to be holistic.”

When this super-specialty hospital was founded in 2001, Swami, Sri Sathya Sai Baba- in His Divine Wisdom, had ordained that a counselling department be set up to address the emotional and spiritual needs of the patients. He foresaw in His Vision an ideal healthcare facility that would provide totally free holistic healthcare. He set the Mission rolling by handpicking four senior devotees as counsellors, and to be His instruments in carrying out this monumental task, a task to format a world–class complementary therapy acceptable to the medical world.

Eighteen years have gone by; what has happened in the interim? Today there are thirty-one trained volunteer counsellors conducting about a thousand patient counselling sessions on a monthly average.

Dr. Quy Huy of the world renowned management school, INSEAD (Singapore), who has undertaken a research project about the uniqueness of this Sai Healthcare institution, during his visit in July 2018 to SSSIHMS said the following.

“The SAI Counselling program has been an impressive innovation in SSSIHMS. The process through which it gains legitimacy in the larger organization sets a remarkable example on how an innovative practice gradually emerges, grows, and spreads inside an organization.”



A new frontier for SAI Counselling



Stress has become an integral part of our lives with no boundaries; 'tension' has morphed into a generic word in all languages across India. The outcome is an alarming increase in stress related cardiovascular diseases, diabetes and psychosomatic illnesses. In this scenario a quiet revolution has been going on over the past nine years pioneered by Dr. Joshy, in the treatment of psychosomatic and other types of neurological illnesses by using SAI Counselling as a complementary therapy.

Message from Dr. E.V. Joshy

Honorary Consultant & Former Chief of Neurology, SSSIHMS, Whitefield.

SAI Counselling for Neurology outpatients started after I joined in 2009. Working closely with the counsellors, I have learned to identify neurology patients who may benefit from SAI Counselling. We see a large spectrum of neurological disorders – epilepsy, headache, movement disorders, chronic neuro-infection, multiple sclerosis and other auto-immune cases, failed-back syndrome, somatic symptom disorder, conversion and more. Typically, long –standing and complicated cases come to us after unsuccessful visits to several hospitals– such cases are a frustrating experience for patients and neurologists.

In my ten years of experience, most of the cases that I refer for SAI Counselling report transformative experience and miracles. Benefits of healing sessions are esoteric, experiential in nature and difficult to depict in scientific terms. However, some of the dramatic improvement of the neurologic condition has been documented in pre and post counselling video clips.

After retirement from SSSIHMS, I continue to use SAI Counselling services and I feel that spirituality-based counselling should be an indispensable part of any multi-speciality healthcare institutions including corporate hospitals.

Happenings in the year gone by- 2018

This first volume of Anthar Dhvani reflects on the genesis of the Counselling Department at SSSIHMS, Wfd, an unfolding of Sai Sankalpa, with a focus on looking back at 2018 – you learn from the past to move forward. The year gone by, has been an exciting year with various happenings in the Counselling department as can be seen from the content below

- An interesting meeting with the INSEAD (Singapore) team was held in July. Read the special report.
- The Hospital Anniversary Day, January 19th, is a very special event celebrated both at the hospital and in Puttaparthi. Read about the Counselling Department's contribution and the special mentions made.
- Second Sunday of every month is a red letter day for the counsellors. They meet to bond, to learn new things, to share experiences – it's the only day when all thirty-one counsellors get together. Read more of the happenings at the Second Sunday meetings in 2018.
- Data is vital for planning in any organisation. How many patients are counselled, how many categories, how many languages, etc.? Read Counselling Department Facts and Figures to learn more about this mundane yet fascinating aspect of this department.
- Most importantly in the Sai Healthcare Mission the patient is always at the centre of the drama. How does SAI Counselling deliver emotional and spiritual support? What is Body Relaxation & Mind Cleansing (BRMC)? Read SAI Counselling and Patient experiences - their journey from illness to wellness.
- A new initiative of the Counselling Department - to format a Qualitative Assessment process to help the Nursing College select appropriate candidates as advocated by Swami back in 1993.
- The Nursing College students in their final semester have a course on Spirituality in Nursing Care including clinical training in the Counselling Department– unique to SSSIHMS. Read their feedbacks.

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An interactive meeting with INSEAD (Singapore) team

The Counselling Department had an engaging interactive session on July 8th 2018 with Dr. Quy Huy, the Solvay Chaired Professor of Technological Innovation and Professor of Strategic Management, INSEAD, Singapore, and his team of four researchers - Dr. Guo Yiddi (Tsinghua University, Beijing), Enlan Claire (USC, USA), Ravi Shankar Pandey (IIMB) and Ankur Jain (IIMB).

Dr. Huy spoke about INSEAD. A globally renowned institution it is one of the world's leading and largest graduate business schools. The Financial Times has ranked INSEAD as the #1 MBA programme in the world for two years in a row (2016 & 2017). Dr. Huy is internationally known for pioneering research on the social psychological aspects of managing strategic change, organizational innovation and strategy execution. His research has won multiple international awards.

The INSEAD team is conducting a research study about the uniqueness of SAI Healthcare as being practiced at the hospital. Apart from the totally free care being provided for all patients, they were intrigued by the unique SAI Counselling service, which they have not seen in any other healthcare institution, and were keen to learn more about it.

Gita Umesh, HOD Counselling Department, made a very forceful and compelling presentation on the genesis of the Counselling Department starting from the founder Sri Sathya Sai Baba's Vision for a healthcare system that addressed the body, mind and spirit. The presentation was crisp and informative, covering all aspects of the SAI Counselling program, tracing its history, highlighting milestone events including conducting an international conference on Spirituality in Healthcare in 2009 at the hospital, presentations at international conferences at Norwich, UK and at Mayo Clinic, USA in 2008 and 2010, and contributing a chapter on "Counselling the SAI Way" in an international handbook on Applications of the Person Centred Approach published by Springer in 2013.

Dr. Huy's post-meeting note-

"The SAI Counselling program has been an impressive innovation in SSSIHMS. The process through which it gains legitimacy in the larger organization sets a remarkable example on how an innovative practice gradually emerges, grows, and spreads inside an organization.

The program was inspired from the Founder Sri Sathya Sai Baba's creative idea, seeking to meet an unfulfilled need of the patients. It searched for its scientific foundation in established psychological theories after starting its practices in the organization. Boundaries of the program were gradually set through reflections in the interactions with established medical departments. Gaining support from influential insiders (e.g. Dr. Joshy) and foreign scholars (e.g. Prof. Mia) promoted the legitimization of this program. Getting involved in other established departments' work (e.g. the Nursing College) further consolidated the position of the program in the organization."

Counselling Department participates in the 2018 annual day celebrations of the hospital in Whitefield and Parthi



The Counselling Department was functioning when the SSSIHMS was inaugurated by the then former Prime Minister, (late) Shri Atal B Vajpayee, in the presence of Bhagavan on January 19th 2001. The following year when Swami visited the hospital He came to the Counselling Department to shower His Blessings – the sanctified place is currently the Healing Space area.

For the 2018 Annual Day celebration of the Hospital, the Counselling Department was invited to make a presentation. The Counselling team with its wealth of musical talent, several being trained musicians, unanimously agreed to make a musical presentation. The challenge was to include all thirty-one counsellors, of varying ages, speaking different languages and with different music skills - a mini India integrated with one purpose- Love All - Serve All.

Finally, it was decided to present a medley of songs- songs that resonated with core beliefs of Spirituality awareness and unconditional acceptance. To add a professional touch to the musical presentation, the renowned musician Sangeet Ratna Shri Prabir Bhattacharya spontaneously helped the team to weave the songs together with appropriate instrumental interludes. Regular practice sessions for over a month, culminated in the team being ready for the 19th January 2018 event.

A spin-off from this exercise - The Counselling team bonded over music like never before!

The Annual Day Celebrations at Whitefield on January 19th 2018

On the beautiful sunny morning of January 19th 2018 the Annual Day celebrations commenced with the arrival of the chief guest, Shri Ashwini Choubey- Minister of State for Health, members of the Central Trust, Invitees and the hospital staff. The program began with Veda chanting by the hospital staff. During the lighting of the lamp, dressed in the new orange uniform saree- the members of the counselling department gracefully entered and made a flawless presentation of the musical medley.

During the introduction of the department the compere mentioned that the department was a representation of unity and love given the multi lingual capabilities of its members. Undoubtedly the music was well received as parts of it was repeatedly played during the course of the celebrations. The Director of the hospital, Dr. D.C. Sundaresh in his speech made a special mention of the unique voluntary services rendered by the Counselling Department and their role in healing patients. The body is cured, but for complete healing the mind and soul needs to be cured too - that's where the counselor steps in, he said. He mentioned the efficacy of the BRMC practice, developed in-house by the Counselling Department, in helping patients deal with stress and paving the way for internal transformation.

The Annual Day Celebrations at Puttaparthi on January 21st 2018

Sai Kulwant Hall reverberated with the Veda chanting by the SSSIHMS, Whitefield staff to mark the beginning of the Annual Day celebrations. The Director Dr. Sundaresh while presenting the annual report of the hospital to the august audience mentioned about the unique, voluntary and complementary care services rendered by the Counselling Department and their role in healing patients by creating awareness of the mind and soul in stress reduction.

The hospital staff presented the play "Tyaganaike Amrutwamanasuhu" (Sacrifice is the Hallmark of a True Doctor) in Sai Kulwant Hall. During the course of this play, Dr. Prayag Kini, as lead actor, spoke very eloquently about the role of the Counselling Department in the hospital. Elaborating on this he said "Swami's advice to doctors was that medicine produces physical cure at the body level. But we are comprised of not just one but three levels – body, mind and spirit; if cure has to transit to healing it has to touch at all three levels to be holistic.

To help us out the hospital has a wonderful Department of Counselling, which has amalgamated Swami's teachings with a well established counselling program and relaxation techniques integrating body, mind and spirit to transform healthcare to a new dimension – human-care!

Patients come here from all over, from all walks of life and speak different languages. Not only do our counsellors speak all their languages, but more importantly they speak Swami's language – the language of the heart with love which connects."

This was followed by a video clip on the main giant screen showing Swami, the Divine Counsellor, with patients, followed by photos of counsellors with patients – a very moving visual accompanied by a very special musical rendering of the soul stirring bhajan "humko tumse pyar kithna – We love you Oh Lord" with stanzas in all the different languages commonly spoken by our patients. The song was composed and sung by the counselling team as a special offering at His Lotus Feet on this auspicious special occassionevent.

The 2018 Annual Day celebrations of the Hospital was indeed a very memorable day for the entire Counselling team.



Highlights of Monthly Sunday meetings– Happenings and Learnings

The Counseling Department at SSSIHMS WFD, with its thirty one counsellors trained in Counselling the SAI Way, is unique. Every counsellor speaks at least three languages; four counsellors work daily connecting to about forty patients, Pan-India and some from abroad, in nine different languages. The counselors, the oldest is seventy-nine and the youngest thirty-five, have varied educational and occupational backgrounds.

These singular features melt away at the monthly second Sunday meetings when this medley of volunteers come together for a continuing education session - to share experiences, learn, clarify doubts on illnesses, treatments, effective handling of patients and other related departmental activities.

A salient feature of the monthly meetings is Mrs. Gita Umesh's presentations, ranging from Gendlin on Focusing, Ho'oponopono (the Hawaiian practice of forgiveness) to David Hawkins's Quantification of emotions. Accompanying Case Studies demonstrate their application in SAI Counselling. The hospital experience of Jashoda Rani bears poignant testimony to the efficacy of SAI Counselling. Read more on: <https://sssihms.org/story-of-divine-protection/>.

"Mind and its Mysteries", a compilation by Sri. N.Kasturi of the nine discourses of Swami during the divine Navarathri festival in 1976, is a prescribed textbook for SAI counsellors. The topics covered by Swami are closely connected to the core concepts of SAI Counseling. As part of the continuing education for the team of counsellors, Mr. Umesh Rao conducted a refresher course pertaining to this book, covering one chapter at each Sunday meet. A group discussion would follow on how the simple concepts and analogies provided, so characteristic of Swami, could be beneficial both to the counsellors and the increasing variety of patient categories being seen.



The year of 2018 had an interesting mix of internal and external speakers. In the July monthly meeting, there was a special interactive session with Dr. Quy Huy, The Solvay Chaired Professor of Technological Innovation, Professor of Strategic Management, INSEAD, Singapore, and his team of four researchers. INSEAD is a globally renowned institution on par with Harvard Business School, etc. Details of this session are shared in a separate report in this Newsletter.

From June 2018 onwards, a new opportunity was provided to each day's counselling team to make a presentation, by rotation, at the Sunday meetings on a relevant topic of their choice. Topics relevant to the department, such as Code Blue, Patient Profile filling, BRMC, effective use of affirmations were covered. Some teams displayed their creative side by including skit and group song in their presentations. The learnings from these sessions are being applied and the results are very encouraging.

The data team meticulously collects patient data (numbers of PR, PAC, Cardiac and Neuro Admissions and Discharges counselled) on a daily basis and converts it to monthly, quarterly and annual statistics presented as pie/bar charts. The monthly statistics are presented at each Sunday meeting to understand patient flow patterns, and the quarterly and annual statistics are uploaded on the hospital website. Over 12000 patient counselling sessions happened in 2017, average of 1000 monthly sessions! For details visit: <http://cdn.ssihms.org/ssihsms/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/Department-of-Counselling-Graphs-2017-9.1.18.pdf>. In 2018 the total number of patient counselling sessions increased to 13,290.

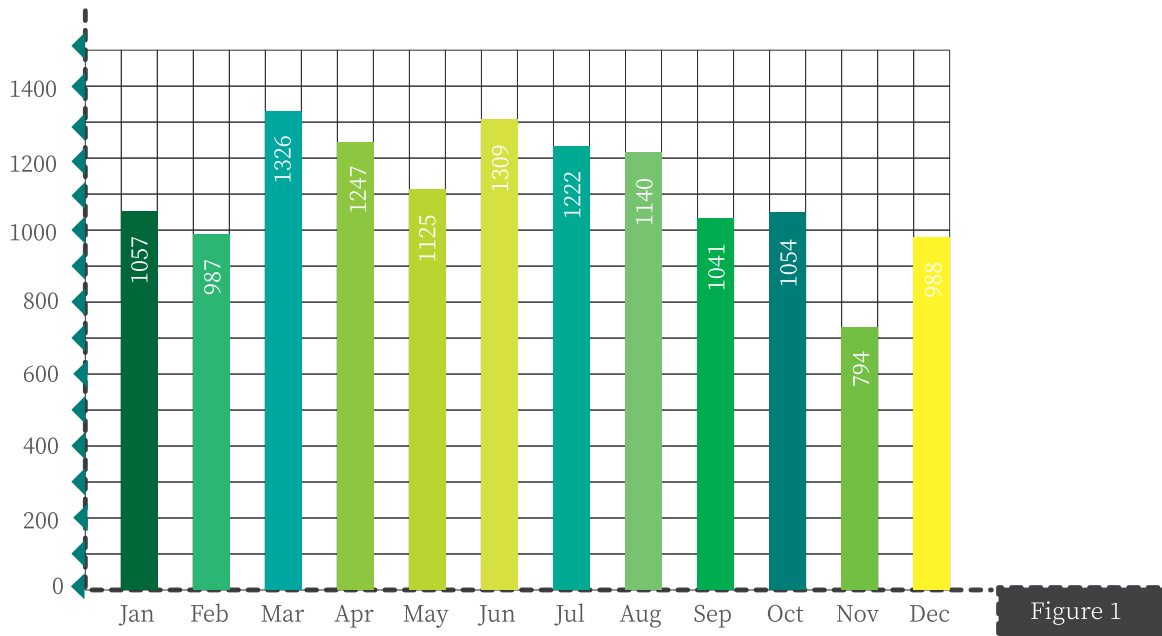
Every meeting starts with thirty minutes of bhajans led by the bhajan group and ends with a sumptuous lunch hosted in rotation by the day teams. No wonder the team regards these monthly sessions as Satsangs – an opportunity to bond with the complete counselling team and to participate in Swami's sankalpa of creating a sustainable family of SAI counsellors bonded together by Love.

The Department Of Counselling, SSSIHMS, Wfd

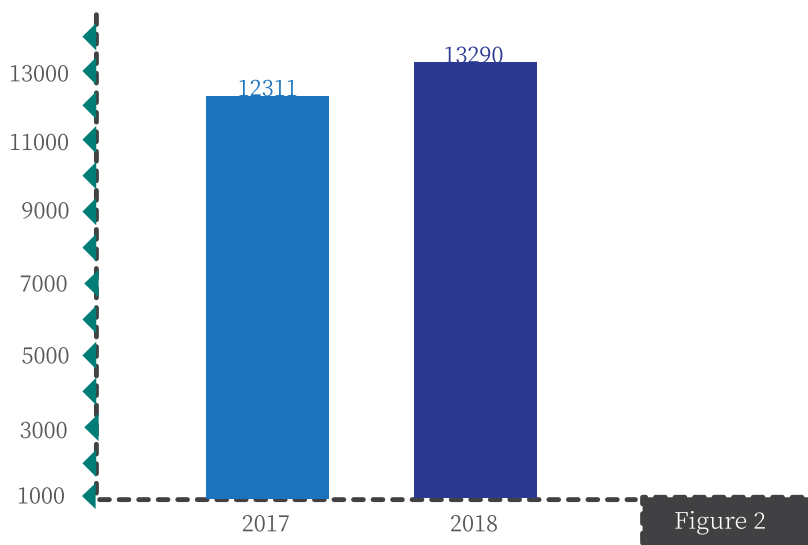
Facts and Figures - 2018

The Counselling department is the only department in the hospital providing clinical services for all admitted patients purely on a voluntary basis. Currently there are thirty one trained voluntary counselors with nine language skills, staying off-campus with commute time of one to three hours! Five counselors with the nine language skills work daily, Monday through Saturday.

"Service- to- Man is Service- to- God" their motto.

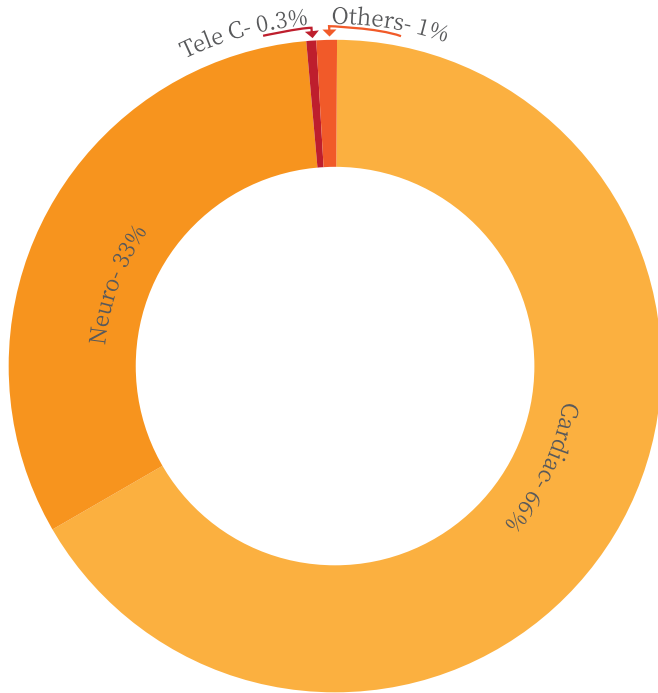


Counselling Sessions

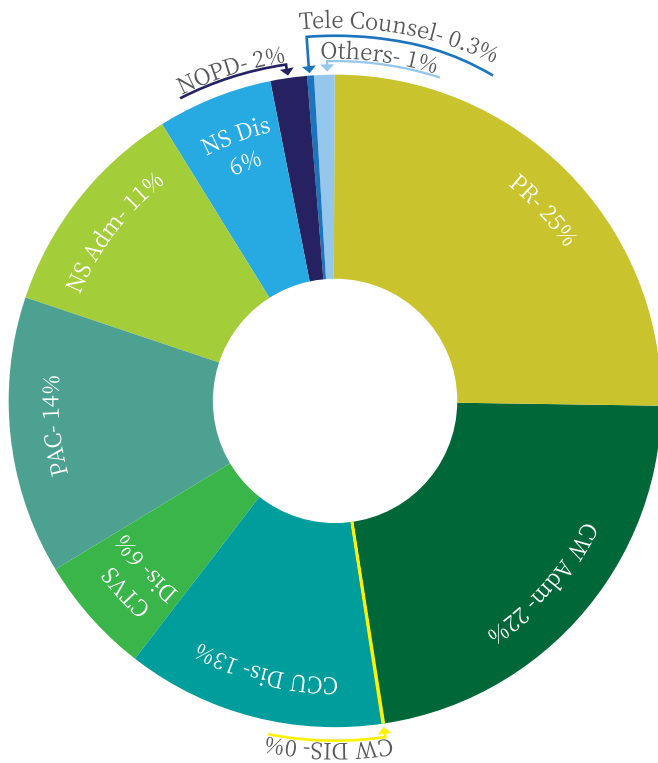


The Counselling department has completed 13,290 counselling sessions during the calendar year 2018. Figure 1 gives a month wise breakup of the number of sessions with an average of 1107 sessions per month. Figure 2 shows a 13% increase in the number of sessions from year 2017 to 2018. To address this growth, the number of counselors have been increased from 25 to 31.

The following charts show the various categories of patients counseled in the year 2018



Category wise breakup for 2018



Category wise Patients counseled in 2018

Neuro patients: 4309 patients

Pre-Anaesthesia Check-up (PAC) : 1844 patients

Admission (NS Admin) : 1459 patients

Discharge (NS Disch) : 774 patients

Neurology Out Patient Dept (NOPD) : 232 patients

Cardiac Patients: 8805 patients

Pre-Admission Protocol (PR) : 3367 patients

Cardiac Ward Admission (CW Admin) : 2947 patients

Cardiac Ward Discharge (CW Disch) : 11 patients

Critical Cardiac Unit Discharge (CCU Disch): 1719 patients

Cardiac Thoracic Vascular Surgery (CTVS Disch): 761 patients

Tele Counselling: 41 patients

Others: 135 patients

Patient experiences show how SAI Counselling empowers stressed patients to relax through BRMC (Body-Relaxation and Mind-Cleansing)

Patients seeking bodily cure invariably come to hospitals with stressed minds, not only theirs but also of their accompanying caregivers – minds fervently praying to their Gods seeking spiritual solace.

'Silence is the speech of the spiritual seeker.' – Sathya Sai Baba
(Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol XV)

Anthar-Dhwani

SAI Counselling motivates patients to withdraw their attention from outer space, and instead direct it towards inner space – to focus within themselves. Thus they listen to their Inner Voice (Anthar-Dhwani) – the Divinity within, their God residing in their hearts. This process is facilitated by the counsellors through the practice of BRMC.

What is BRMC?

Body relaxation (BR) is connected to breath and the way we breathe. Deep abdominal diaphragmatic breathing is natural, reflecting a relaxed body, and quietens the mind. Stress and anxiety in the mind change the breathing pattern to a shallow upper chest breathing.

The breathing pattern of the patient and the care giver reveals their state of mind. Correct breathing helps them focus and reconnect with that which is whole and positive within. Silent contemplation, in a silent conducive environment as provided in the Counselling department, helps in bringing about a shift in perception and the beginning of inner transformation. Patients/ caregivers unburden their concerns to the God of their Choice and experience peace and stillness of mind. A sense of well-being follows.



Swami's Healing- Space Room in the Counselling Department for BRMC

Transformation in patients is perceived soon after therapy. They become aware of their strengths, are less anxious and more confident. Hope replaces hopelessness as they learn to move beyond emotions and feelings, and anchor themselves in the quiet space of silence present within. Clearing their inner space is often the catalyst that provides clarity and helps them discriminate. The therapy helps them to cope and face challenges with renewed strength in a positive frame of mind. The experience of the efficacy of this therapy motivates them to integrate it in their daily routine.

Regular practice of BRMC has been effective in providing a sense of well-being of body, mind and spirit. It provides a way to transform intense emotional reactions into newly discovered and developed positive meanings. Patients express greater confidence in their ability to experience difficult emotions and work through them.

Who are the beneficiaries?

Patients and caregivers who suffer from negative emotions belonging to the following categories.

- Individuals who are confronted with life threatening or chronic illnesses.
- Vulnerable, stressed and anxious individuals overburdened with responsibilities.
- Insecure individuals with low self-esteem, who lack motivation and hope.
- Individuals suffering from emotional pain and hurt due to isolation, loss, grief, disharmony in a relationship.
- Perfectionists who lack flexibility and fail to accept mistakes committed by them or others. Rigid personalities who fail to empathise or let go.
- Childhood trauma or abuse.
- Those who constantly compromise and feel cornered, helpless and stifled under authority.

Crucial to the process of facilitating a BRMC session the SAI counsellor establishes psychological contact and builds rapport and a good channel of communication with the patient/ caregiver through prior active listening, empathy, unconditional love radiating an aura of peace and calm.



Building rapport for an effective counselling relationship

The counsellor's experiences, personality, beliefs, attitudes and behaviours play a major role in influencing the relationship between a patient and counsellor.

A four year old patient was counselled and prepared for cardiac treatment before admission by the counsellor. The concerns, anxiety and worry in the parents are discernable; but how does the counsellor read the mind of a four year old, brought into a new strange environment.

How does the counsellor empathise?

"Treat them as your own kith and kin"- Sri Sathya Sai Baba.

A mother can read her own child's mind is a well known fact. To truly empathise the SAI counsellor treats the little child who has come as a patient as if it were her own- her own kith and kin. The relationship between patient and counsellor was thus well established at first stage counselling and the spontaneous bonding is reflected on the day of discharge by the courageous child and love expressed by the counsellor as the patient's mother fondly witnesses the relationship between counsellor and her four year old child.



Patients' story and experience # 1

A case of trigeminal neuralgia and more

Trigeminal neuralgia is a chronic pain condition that affects the trigeminal nerve, which carries sensation from the face to the brain. Even a mild stimulation of a patient suffering from Trigeminal Neuralgia— such as brushing the teeth— may trigger a jolt of excruciating pain. Doctors usually can effectively manage trigeminal neuralgia with medications or surgery.

A middle aged lady accompanied by her son and sister in law arrived at SSSIHMS with a history of severe, shooting and jabbing pain on her face which felt like an electric shock. She was counselled from the Neuro Surgery- PAC stream of patients.



Observing her sad countenance, the empathic counsellor sensed there was more than just the bodily pain, there was need to explore her emotional and psychological well-being. Her story revealed her personal loss and grief surpassed her physical pain.

Patient's husband was a simple fisherman. They led a contended life on the Coromandel coast, till tragedy struck them on December 26th 2004. Her family and friends lost their hearth and home in the devastating Tsunami. They were traumatised, unable to believe and accept that the sea that was the source of their sustenance and had nurtured them all their lives could overnight deprive them of their livelihood, home and hearth. They prayed fervently for help and were grateful when a team of volunteers from SSSSO (Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organization) came to their rescue and offered food and temporary shelter. With family help they gradually rebuilt their life and the children settled down in life. Grandchildren filled their home with love and laughter.

The year 2015 remains etched in her memory, when she lost her eldest son in a road accident. Talking about her personal loss and grief to the counsellor made her revisit the site of deep pain which she had suppressed over the years.

"Every bad feeling is potential energy toward a more right way of being if you give it space to move toward its rightness."- Eugene Gendlin.



The BRMC therapy helped her get in touch with her feelings. She focussed on "her healthy core" her tears cleansing her of her pain, acceptance of her loss, paving the way to anchor herself with clarity on the inner space of potential growth. In total silence she connected and prayed to her God. The counselling session helped her grieve and acknowledge and accept her loss as a reality by reconnecting with her own self and being lovingly present from deep within in her experience of her loss. She learnt to let go of the profound pain explore and identify the positive things present in her life. She realized she was holding on to the memory of the loss of her son and needed to accept a life focusing on the many blessings present in her life. Her widowed daughter- in- laws loving presence and care in her present life was a great blessing. Her grandson a spitting image of his deceased father was a bundle of joy. Living conditions had improved for her family with her younger son taking up his fathers profession as a fisherman. She counted her many blessings in life.



There was a very perceivable transformation in her whole countenance after the session and the BRMC therapy. The therapy opened a floodgate of positive emotions and she reminisced over the good experiences from her childhood. Her childhood was filled with simple pleasures, spent in the midst of nature, friends and laughter. Her favourite hobbies as a child was music and dance.

Her family members who accompanied her and were present during the session were delighted and astonished to see a remarkable transformation in her eagerness to perform a folk dance out of sheer relief after the therapy of BRMC. The healing energy from within her was perceived.

Though her date of admission was yet to be decided the healed patient and family who benefitted through SAI counselling left the hospital in a happy frame of mind, feeling nurtured with fresh hope.

"Positive psychology is not about "denying" your problems. The power comes from coping well with your painful experiences; by parking them, or working through them or shifting attention to the "good" things in your life." Mia Leijssen

Patients' story and experience # 2

Fight or Flight response overcome with BRMC

The patient a thirty-one years old male had been admitted for a PDA procedure for his congenital heart disease. Residing in a village he led a simple life working in a provision store and lived in a joint family with his parents, wife and child and brother's family. He had good family support since the family was aware of his birth defect and it's concomitant limitations. He knew he needed an operation but circumstances did not permit, leaving him to live with the nagging fear of the illness and the solution.

On 21/12/2009 the patient came in for routine counselling as a PR patient. He expressed a feeling of fear since it was the first visit to a new city and that too for a heart operation. The empathic SAI counsellor helped the patient overcome his anxiety by reassuring him with compassion.

However a week elapsed before he was admitted for the procedure. This rekindled his apprehensions, anxiety and fear for the operation as he termed it. While preparing for the procedure, even the simple act of putting on the hospital gown really filled him with intense fear. He panicked, his mind went berserk and as narrated by his caregiver he literally ran out of the ward. He was discharged from the pre-op ward without the procedure. The counsellor empathized with his situation, as he came in for discharge counselling; the patient who calmed down when he met the counsellor felt sorry for having missed the procedure.

The counsellor during this session made him go through the BRMC procedure, emphasising on mind cleansing to unburden his toxic emotions and imbibing of positive thoughts, courage and confidence while speaking in a soothing tone. Knowing of his faith in his God-(Ma Kali) the counsellor reassured him that Ma Kali was always with him and that he should surrender to Her praying for Grace at this juncture in his life. The patient was advised to come back after a month after gaining confidence to undergo the procedure.

The patient was successfully operated and discharged from CCU on 8/2/2010. It was heartening to hear from the patient during the discharge counselling session that he had practiced BRMC daily after returning home the first failed episode. The words of courage during the sessions resounded within, empowering him with self confidence. The patient left very joyful and optimistic.

Patients' story and experience # 3

Pseudo seizure (conversion disorder)

This is a functional neurologic disorder with symptoms that are real and cause significant distress or problems functioning. It can't be explained as a neurological disease or other medical condition.

"This disorder is related to how the brain functions, rather than damage to the brains structure (such as from a stroke, multiple sclerosis, infection or injury.) Early diagnosis and treatment, especially education about the condition, can help with recovery." - Courtesy Mayo Clinic



A bright eyed boy of ten, accompanied by his parents was referred to SAI counselling from Neuro OPD by Dr. E.V. Joshy. The patient and parents were requested to wait for fifteen minutes since the previous session was in progress. When it was his turn to be counselled the boy had a sullen and disinterested look on his face. He was bored of waiting and the first challenge faced by the counsellor was to capture his attention and connect to him.

The doctor's words resonated in the counsellor **"You cannot heal anyone but in the space of Love you create, the healee (patient) feels so comfortable with the freedom to choose to heal themselves."**

The genuineness and love of the SAI counsellor helped build a good rapport between the counsellor, patient and parents. The carefully selected questions and active listening skills of the counsellor helped the boy narrate challenges and suppressed feelings from the past which surprised the parents who were hearing it for the first time.

Listening to his unburdening helped the parents develop better understanding of their child's sensitive mind. They recalled the challenges and personal loss faced by the family and how, inadvertently they had neglected the need of their young son. They connected the consequential pseudo seizure episodes of their son with the various events that led to it.

The mother reminisced about their stress and tension while seeking a cure for their child's condition and the futility of

visiting highly reputed hospitals. They finally arrived at SSSIHMS, Wfd, and were relieved when his condition was diagnosed by the neurologist.

Two years ago the boy had witnessed his elder sister being hit by a truck on their way to school. He froze in a state of shock. His sister was sprawled on the road covered in blood. Passers-by rushed to the scene but unfortunately he was ignored in the furore of shifting his sister to the nearest hospital. The lack of immediate support during trauma triggered a sense of fear and anxiety in him. The scene kept haunting him and his parents were too busy attending to the needs of his sister that he felt totally neglected and lost. He stifled his pain and feelings and felt the need for someone to be there for him. Fortunately his grandmother arrived to help the family. Her **reassuring and loving presence** was a great source of strength to him and the entire family.

His sister recuperated within a month and it was time for his grandmother (his source of strength) to return home. A month later the family received news of the sudden demise of the grandmother. The tragic news of loss triggered the first seizure episode in the helpless ten-year-old. He fell down in a stupor overcome with grief and emotional pain. This unfortunately developed into a habitual pattern and he experienced more such episodes especially when stressed.



A unique BRMC session using a singing bowl

"Our body is surrounded by divine vibrations. When these vibrations of light from one person, meet another, several good things happen." Sathya Sai Baba. - Cardiac Speciality Symposium on February 7, 1993

Praying to Swami, the counsellor introduced **THE BRMC** Therapy in a unique way to the bright ten-year-old patient. The musical note and vibration emanating from the singing bowl held by the counsellor, captured his attention. BRMC therapy was then administered guiding him to synchronise his breathing with the sound - inhaling as the sound amplified and exhaling as it quietened. The bowl was shifted to his palm and he felt the vibrations resonating. The process of rhythmic diaphragmatic abdominal breathing helped him relax. Synchronising sound, vibration, breath, positive suggestions and affirmations brought about a positive shift and transformation in the patient.

He realized the love he had received from his grandmother was eternal and if nurtured had the power to heal him. He expressed he was cured and healed completely by the doctor's treatment and the counselling session.

The parents who were present during the session were relieved, delighted and grateful to have been introduced to the BRMC and to witness the impact it had on their child. They were keen to introduce it as a daily practice for their entire family. The boy was eager to share his experience with his sister back home. They left the hospital in a happy frame of mind.

Patients' story and experience # 4

Mysterious are the Lord's ways- A Patient promotes BRMC

A CCU discharge patient Mr. Ram (name changed) came for counseling in the month of August 2018. His heart ailment was diagnosed as RHD. There were two other RHD discharged patients in the group along with him. At the end of the counseling session when the importance of BRMC was being told to the patients and their care givers, Mr. Ram was keen to share his experience, which the counsellor smilingly allowed not knowing what was to follow.

He mentioned that he had undergone a bypass surgery in 2002 at SSSIHMS, Wfd. In 2017 he developed some symptoms of coronary distress and came back to SSSIHMS for a checkup and was advised that he needed a MVR. But he had some urgent work back home and hence returned home without treatment.

He was asked to come again in August 2018 for the MVR surgery and he complied. But to his utter amazement the doctor informed him that the valve which was leaking and required the MVR surgery had healed and there was absolutely no need for surgery. The patient informed that he was strictly following the BRMC on a regular basis and had made some changes to his lifestyle. He strongly believed that the BRMC he practiced with conviction, sincerity and total faith in His God was responsible for the miracle and told the group very confidently that BRMC definitely works. He pledged that he would continue to practice BRMC always.

Not only were the patients happy but it made the counsellor also equally happy- silently thanking Swami in her heart for having made SAI counseling and BRMC in particular bring about such a memorable impact on the patient's health.

Patients' story and experience # 5

"If you are experiencing chronic pain, you might not be able to do certain tasks or fulfil certain roles that were once common, and that can feel disempowering." -The Emotional Impact of the Pain Experience. Maris Pasquale.



L4-5 Prolapsed Intervertebral Disc

Most herniated disks occur in the lower back (lumbar spine). A herniated disk irritates nearby nerves resulting in pain, numbness or weakness in an arm or leg. Sometimes called a slipped disk or a ruptured disk, a herniated disk occurs when some of the softer "jelly" pushes out through a tear in the tougher exterior. Neurosurgery provides relief in such cases.

"Physical health is a prerequisite for mental health and mental health ensures physical health"
- Sathya Sai Baba. 1959 Sri Sathya Sai Ideal healthcare.

A 46-year-old patient, suffering from intense pain which was written all over his face was wheeled into the Counselling department by his wife and nephew. He was being screened for admission for neurosurgery. Due to the intensity of pain and discomfort, he opted to lie on the floor during the counselling session. The empathic counsellor recognised the need to empower the patient before he proceeded for surgery. The mind and body work together inseparably; the way your mind controls thoughts and attitudes affects the way the bodily pain is perceived. SAI Counselling recognises the importance of connecting to Your God especially in times of distress

"Different religions are established with the sole purpose of regulating the human mind and directing man towards Divinity."
- Sathya Sai Baba, Navarathri 1976

The patient a staunch Christian connected to the counsellor and was attentive when a copy of The Holy Bible was placed in his hands. There was a sea change in him and his focus shifted from the outer world of pain and suffering, into his inner world of faith and the healing power of his scripture. The counsellor requested the patient to seek guidance from the scripture by opening the book at random to receive a message that would empower him. Section of John Chapter 17 was the page revealed with the guidance of Jesus' prayer for those closest to him, the disciples.

The sacred words helped him focus and introspect on the strength and courage present within. He raised himself from the supine position and consented to do the BRMC and practice abdominal breathing. The therapy coupled with his faith helped him relax and gain clarity of the need to let go of fear and anxiety about the future and to focus on the present moment. The wife also benefitted through BRMC- She felt relieved to see her husband's confidence and peaceful state of mind. Towards the end of the session he sang a beautiful hymn in praise of his Jesus his Saviour.

"The mind alone is the cause for either bondage or liberation."
- Sathya Sai Baba.



Both patient and wife were filled with a deep sense of gratitude for the excellent care received at SSSIHMS. They were discharged in time to celebrate Christmas at home with their family and acknowledged the timely help received from the counselling department at a time of need.

Patients' story and experience # 6

Language of the heart helps patient overcome the NOCEBO effect- A patient in her mid-thirties with a forlorn and worried look on her face hailing from a remote village in Maharashtra looked at the counsellor approaching towards her in the Neuro surgery pre-op ward She was admitted at the hospital the day before and was being prepared for surgery. The hospital protocol required her to remove her ornaments and leave it with her husband.

The counselors loving and endearing manner and ability to address her in her mother tongue Marathi broke the ice between patient and counsellor. Listening to the counselors soothing voice a feeling of relief surged through the patient and her face lit up with a smile. The language of the heart and the linguistic connect created an instant bond between them- psychological contact had been established which is the first condition to successful counselling

The rapport between counsellor and patient helped them explore the immediate concerns and cause of negative emotions in the patient. Her fear stemmed from her strong belief of negative consequences befalling her husband if she were to remove her ornaments which was expected as part of the routine protocol while preparing patients for surgery. She did not want to comply with this rule and was willing to forego her surgery rather than risk removing her green glass bangles, her necklace of black beads strung together with the gold mangalsutra and silver toe rings, all symbolic of longevity of her husband's life. She was haunted by the foreboding thought of a premature and untimely death of her husband if she were to follow the pre surgery protocol and remove her ornaments.

She was torn between her belief system and the pre surgery protocol expected by the hospital. The nocebo effect snowballed in this naïve and simple lady from an orthodox and traditional family. Mental states such as beliefs and expectations can strongly influence the person and induce measurable changes in the body through the placebo/nocebo effect. The nocebo effect stokes the fire of negative expectancies. The patient wanted to forego the surgery for fear of negative effects on her husband if she were to remove her ornaments.

"Sublimate your intellect and develop the power of discrimination."

- Sathya Sai Baba. Navarathri discourse 1976, Mind and its Mysteries

She was tormented by her mind holding her in bondage. SAI counseling created an awareness in the patient to be practical. The BRMC therapy brought better clarity and understanding. Being a pious lady connecting to her God made a significant change in her perception. By offering her negative thoughts and surrendering to her God she experienced a great sense of relief. Peace replaced guilt, fear and anxiety. She was grateful for the counsellor's timely presence.

Patient felt reassured and with a clear mind and conscience she took the decision to sign the form of consent as she removed her ornaments before surgery confident that her husband would respect and value her decision.

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Communication

Empathy is one of the main pillars on which SAI counseling is built. Empathy experienced by the Counselor, without communicating it to the client, is of little or no use. Empathy and its communication is an active affair. **"The therapist is experiencing an empathic understanding of the client's "internal frame of reference" and endeavors to communicate this to the client."** Carl Rogers 1950 regarding Empathy.

Good communication involves a certain depth of empathy which helps build a good counselling relationship which is experienced by the patients. They feel valued and understood as a person with their own perceptions and experiences. The term **internal frame of reference** means a person's private world of perceptions, experiences and meanings. According to Rogers **"It can never be known to another except through empathic inference."**

The counsellors bond together under the Sai Philosophy of **"LOVE ALL SERVE ALL"** and find the very service of counseling the SAI Way a great blessing which is meaningful in bringing about inner transformation in their own personal life and spiritual journey.



Counselling Department collaborates with Nursing College

to provide holistic qualitative assessment of Nursing College applicants for admission year 2018

"The stress should be on quality and not quantity in the sphere of medical studies. Only those students who have the talent and aptitude for medical studies should be admitted. Such students will immensely benefit from medical education and will be of use to society." – Sri Sathya Sai Baba

(at the International Symposium on Cardio-Vascular Diseases, Prashanthi Nilayam, 7th February 1993.)

This powerful message resonated globally creating an increasing awareness in nursing colleges all over the world of the holistic nature of nursing care, and that mere reliance on grade point averages and test scores for admission to nursing colleges is not adequate.

According to Dr. Deborah Trautman, PhD, RN, CEO of the American Association of Colleges of Nursing "Scoring high on tests alone doesn't always mean nurses will interact well with patients, families and colleagues or be able to put ideas into action. I think the future will be that both, strength in academics and personal attributes, will be required."

The Nursing college at SSSIHMS is a unique institution which offers a four year B.Sc (Nursing) course to young people with high aspirations. It is perhaps the only college in the world, where not only is the four year nursing course Free of Cost, but has also embedded in the curriculum a course in Human Values, as also on "**Spirituality in Nursing Care**" including clinical training in the Counselling department, which incidentally has formatted and teaches the course.

For the new admissions to the Nursing college for 2018, the Director, SSSIHMS and the Principal of the Nursing College decided to follow Swami's guidelines and introduce the "**Holistic Qualitative Assessment Approach**". They delegated this work to the Counselling Department knowing they would be best equipped for this.

This was a challenging assignment, being without precedent, but the Counselling department took it in their stride reposing their faith in Swami. Each candidate had to be profiled for her personality traits, personal values, strengths, weaknesses, her life experiences, aptitude and dreams.

The methodology adopted involved nine experienced counsellors who meticulously prepared a self-evaluation written test, on "PERSPECTIVE OF ONESELF" for the 93 candidates who appeared for a written assessment on the 3rd June 2018. (This was based on the model created by Dr. Mia Leijssen, Head, Department of Psychotherapy, University of Leuven, Belgium- a world renowned expert in Existential Wellbeing. She is more importantly a Swami devotee and a mentor for the Counselling department.)

Thereafter Team A comprising of six trained and qualified counsellors, Shumal, Ashalata, Vimala, Sukanya and Saroo along with Gita Umesh conducted a one-on-one interview to profile each applicant based on the previously mentioned criteria, with special emphasis on suitability for delivering holistic nursing care.

Finally, an overall qualitative graded assessment was made based on the written test and interview results by a second Team B counsellors - Lalitha, Jaya and Rama under the guidance of Gita Umesh. The two stage and inherent values based approach of the Counselling team ensured absolute transparency and fairness in assessing each candidate's performance from the results of the written test and interview results.

This report was further scrutinised and evaluated by three independent counsellors who had not been involved in the previous processes to give the final Sai-Quality stamp to ensure having done a thorough and fair evaluation process.



Conclusion

This is a very unique selection process inspired by Swami, an initiative of the Counselling Department in collaboration with the Nursing College, and is a first of its kind amongst Nursing colleges in India.

The Nursing College integrated this holistic qualitative assessment of each applicant into their screening process and found a significant difference in the screened results while selecting 36 candidates for admission from the 93 applicants.

Recalling Swami's guidelines as stated in the beginning and with a deep sense of gratitude and humility, the counselling team acknowledges that we are mere tools in this endeavour to fulfil His Divine Mission.



"Love in thought is Truth, Love in action is Right Conduct, Love in feeling is Peace, Love in understanding is Non-Violence"- Sathya Sai Baba



FEEDBACK FROM NURSING COLLEGE STUDENTS

2018 batch after completing their "Spirituality in Nursing Care" course and clinical training in the Counselling Department

- "The Counselling class has played a tremendous role in my character development. The value of counselling and their approach towards patients has taught me to respect each person's feelings."
- "At the Counselling department BRMC taught me to control my anger and cleanse my mind. I understood that with love we can be together."
- "Praying every day at the Counselling Department, taught me to be humble and calm. It gave me the strength to complete my Course successfully."
- "I felt I was in a different world where all the counsellors were calm, kind and good. I am motivated to be a Counsellor after interacting with them."
- "The best part of the four years was at the Counselling Department."
- "I have learnt to be calm and overcome difficult situations. The Counsellors have motivated me and I am trying to be like them."
- "Counselling Department is one of the most beautiful areas in the SSSIHMS. It's a place of happiness and peace. THANK-YOU is not enough to express my gratitude towards all of you. You have taught us the path of humanity."
- "I have learnt to practice active listening from the Counselling Department."
- "I learnt patience and active listening from the Counselling Department. They all work in unity and remain positive always."
- "I am filled with gratitude for learning so much from them. After I started going to the Counselling Department, I have started to smile and enjoy life again."
- "The Counselling Department opened my eyes from the cloud of ignorance. Transformation in my thoughts and action started from them. I learnt to provide unconditional love and care to each and every patient."
- "Interacting with the Counselling Department has taught me to expand my heart and love everyone equally."
- "I now see a change in me and feel like a good human being."
- "From correct breathing to Empathy, the negative thoughts that I had in me has now vanished and I wonder how these past years, I could not see the goodness in me."
- "Whenever I am stressed for any reason, BRMC helps me. I find myself praying for others. These transformations have come after my sessions with the Counselling Department."

"Live with love, Move with love, Speak with love, Think with love, Act with love. This is the most fruitful sadhana." - Sathya Sai Baba

SAI SANKALPA AND GRACE



"COUNSELLING THE SAI WAY"

Umesh Rao and Gita Umesh, SSSIHMS, Wfd.

2010 Mayo Spiritual Care Research Conference

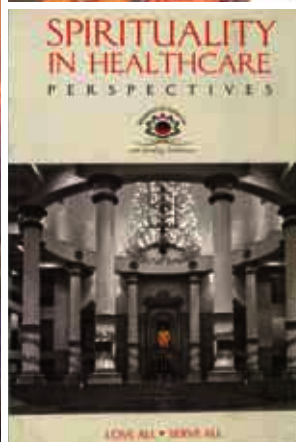
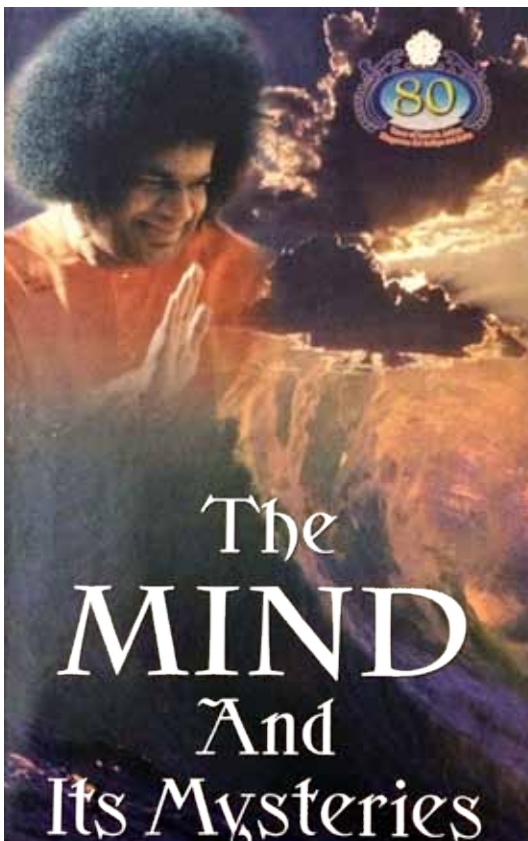
Spirituality and Health Across the Life Span: Investigation and Application

5 November 2010



2010 MAYO SPIRITUAL CARE RESEARCH CONFERENCE- Comments about the presentation from the session participants.

- Was very nice to have the depth of a different culture than we usually get and found their work very inspiring.
- Loved hearing about how spirituality is incorporated into patients' hospitalization.
- Extremely interesting. Truly, if the mind is at ease, the body can be.
- My favorite session. I also believe that the holistic approach to healing is far more effective than just the medical aspect. This seminar was especially helpful and enlightening.
- Good Material. It was interesting to learn about their SAI counseling.
- We can learn much from what they are doing at their hospital in India.
- Thank you! At last, the mind, body and spirit approach I believe in. I loved the comment they made, "Let's open our minds". PS I love Sai Baba!
- Very interesting philosophy, we need to do more health care like that!
- They were amazing, as is this facility and the teachings of Sai Baba.
- Great example of a refreshingly different model of spiritual care.



" There is only one religion, the religion of love.
There is only one caste, the caste of humanity.
There is only one language, the language of the heart.
There is only one God, and He is omnipresent."
- Sathya Sai Baba.

