

AntharDhwani

Gurupurnima Special Edition | Vol-IV, July 2020



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EDITORIAL

The year 2020 will go down in history as a year of reckoning for all of mankind the world over. A disease caused by a seemingly innocuous but deadly virus has paralyzed life, and has in no uncertain terms proven the veracity of the saying, disease has no barriers.

In an era where medical technology reigns supreme and virtually invincible, the current world scenario has exposed the fundamental weakness of medicine that it cannot deliver fast enough solutions when confronted with a formidable adversary. Man today has to realise that in this drama of life, God's Grace is of paramount importance for the survival of humanity.

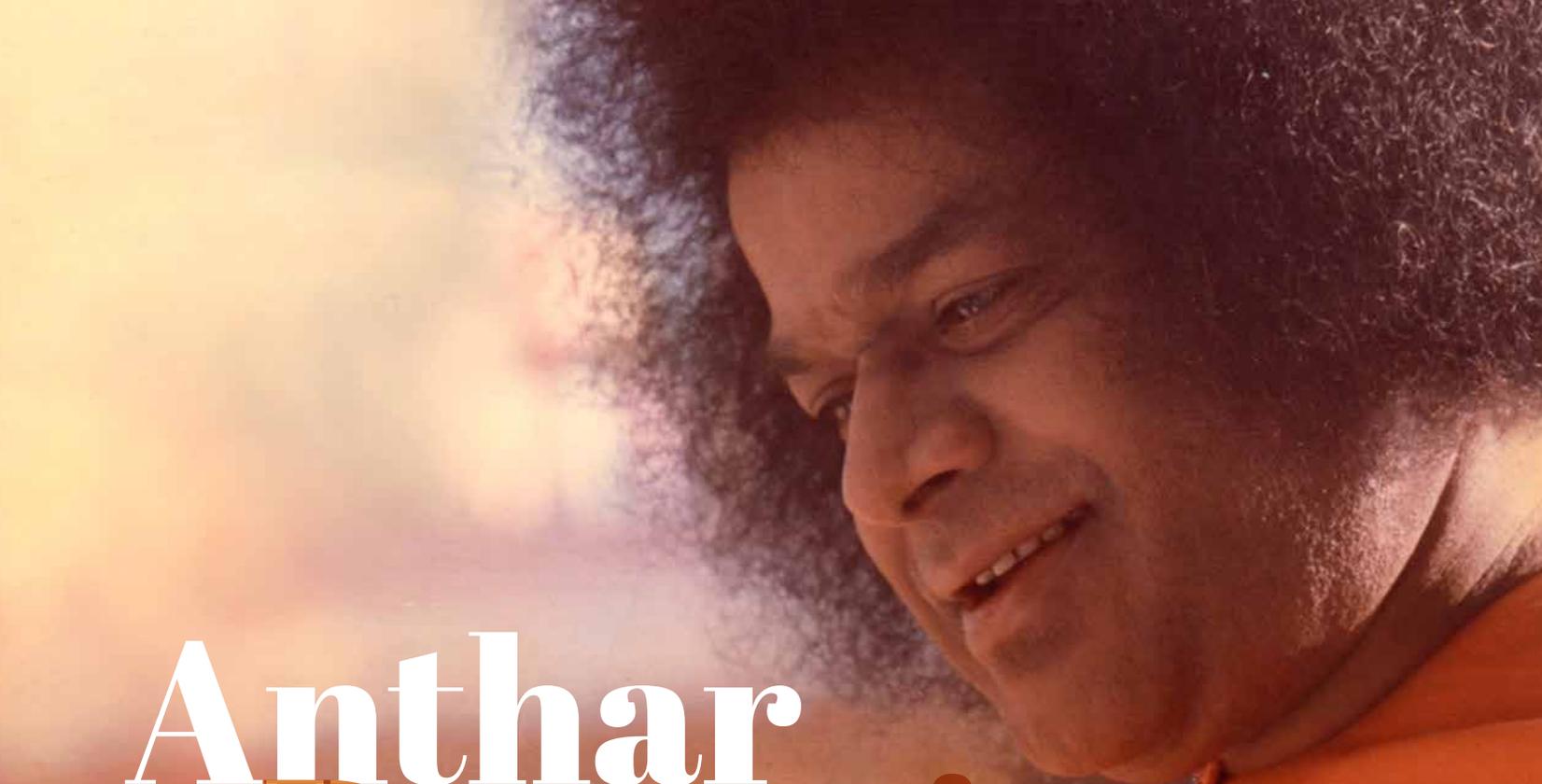
However, in this bleak scenario the knights in the shining armours, the heroes being acknowledged worldwide are the doctors and supporting medical staff, who have been providing yeoman services, tirelessly slogging on a 24/7 basis, and bringing succour to the thousands of afflicted patients in every nook and corner of the globe with scant regard for their own personal well-being. What greater service can there be than Service to Mankind under such challenging circumstances? May Swami continue showering His Grace and Blessings on them.

Coincidentally in this issue of AntharDhwani the title of Swami's Gurupurnima Message is '**Be Grateful to the Doctors**' excerpted from His Discourse in Mysore in 1961. When destiny strikes, it can be overcome by our Loving God, His Grace and our prayers. This has been the experience of the SAI Counsellors who are transforming themselves into SAI Tele-Counsellors as described in the article 'COVID19 Pandemic Impact on the SAI Counselling Department - New Paths Emerge for SAI Counsellors.'

Included also are two articles, '**Fear and Anxiety Management**', very topical and '**Psychological Contact - Building a Bridge of Trust**' with accompanying Case Studies. 'GOD'S GRACE' is an inspiring and heart warming story of SAICARE at SSSIHMS, Whitefield, provided to 13 year-old neuro patient Brishti for her prolonged stay of over a year.

Swami's Sankalpa will prevail. Each SAI Counsellor prays to continue being part of this **SAICARE SEVA**

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Anthar Dhwani

Be Grateful To The Doctors

Swami's Guru Purnima Discourse at Mysore in 1961.

The world is a huge hospital, and humanity is bedridden. Some are writhing in the pain of envy, some are bloated with pride, some are losing sleep through hate, some have become blind through miserliness, some are struck down by selfishness. Everyone has some illness or other. On this Guru Purnima Day, you have to render gratitude to the doctors who diagnose your diseases and prescribe remedies and to the nurses who tend you back to health. Resolve today to follow the treatment recommended and the regimen ordered; your illness can be cured only by your taking the drug and obeying the restrictions on food and drink and on your habits.

Know that waking from sleep is but birth and going into sleep is death. On waking, pray every morning of your life, "Oh Lord, I am born now from the womb of sleep. I am determined to carry out all tasks this day as offerings to Thee, with Thee ever present before my mind's eye. Make my words, thoughts, and deeds sacred and pure. Let me not inflict pain on anyone; let no one inflict pain on me. Direct me, guide me, this day." And when you enter the portals of sleep at night, pray, "Oh Lord! the tasks of this day, whose burden I placed on you this morning, are over. It was You who made me walk and talk and think and act. I, therefore, place at Thy Feet all my words, thoughts, and deeds. My task is done. Receive me, I am coming back to you." Adopt these as your daily prayers.

The best thing is to have your own Self as the source of Light, as the guru. The Inner Intelligence, the Inner Guru will reveal the Truth. This prayerful attitude will so educate your impulses that the Inner Intelligence will be fully revealed. Do everything with a spirit of dedication. Begin with the cultivation of Love (Prema).

If you win the Grace of the Lord, even the decrees of destiny can be overcome. Certain drugs come in bottles on which the manufacturer has given an ultimate date beyond which the drug loses its efficacy. Of course, the drug will be in the bottle but would no longer be effective. Similarly, the Lord's Grace can make decrees of destiny inoperative. The guru is one who shows you the path for getting that Grace, and to such a guru this day is dedicated.

"Prayer is a very forceful weapon —much more effective than any bomb. The word is an effective instrument: it can move mountains. In these critical times, every one of you should pray deeply and sincerely for the peace and prosperity of Mother India (Bharatha Matha)"

- Sathya Sai Baba. - Guru Purnima, Mysore, 27-07-1961.



Voicing our Feelings and Our Prayer to Our Beloved Swami

During this pandemic in this Sai family Counselling team, each one is feeling very bad that they are not able to come and offer their counselling seva at the hospital Swami. We pray to Swami to guide us forward as to when we will be able to return to the counselling department and resume our seva. At the back of our minds, we are missing the seva, a very dear seva because every counsellor has now understood the meaning of expansion.

Swami has said, “My life is my message, expansion is my life.”

Through this seva we have been able to experience that expansion by interacting with the patients who are total strangers and just giving them this energy of Love and understanding. We have grown, we have grown in the path of expansion, the vibratory field of expanding with love. This seva has truly been meaningful to each one of us. We are sure Swami will create the path for us.



**“Tvameva mata cha Pita tvameva, Tvameva bandush cha saka tvameva,
Tvameva vidya dravinam tvameva, Tvameva sarvam mama deva deva,
Tvameva sarvam mama Sai deva.”**

“You are the father, mother, friend and relative.
You are knowledge and wealth. You are everything My Lord.
You are everything my Sai Deva.”

• **Gita Umesh, (HOD, Department of Counselling, SSSIHMS, Whitefield)**

This pandemic has brought to light what the universe needed in many ways- **To Pause**. We at the counselling department represent a kind of cushion and comfort to the patients. Unable to facilitate the strength and empathy that the patients need is a kind of unfulfillment experienced presently. Physically not being able to visit the hospital for seva has brought to reality the power of seva and benefits of reaching out to the patients so much more. We feel so much more connected to this calling and the meaning we are beginning to see is the blessings of Swami in Seva.

• **Saroo Annaiah, (Counsellor, Department of Counselling, SSSIHMS, Whitefield)**

Purpose of You

A river finds its way through mountains and plains
It doesn't stop till it soaks the parched lands.
Universal love finds its way beyond family and friends
It mustn't stop till it touches the barren hearts.

Think not twice, when you cross an unknown thirsty being
Do not hold back, simply pour out your love
It is not by chance, but by careful design
He channels His Grace through another soul.

And when the thirst is quenched,
The barren land blooms, the stranger's eyes smile
Your purpose unveils, revealing Universe's secret
Like water love must flow on, carrying His blessing.

• **Jaya Tadimetri, (Counsellor, Department of Counselling, SSSIHMS, Whitefield)**





Everyone entering the portals of this **TEMPLE OF HEALING** is made aware of the importance of caring for the human body by this message from Swami.

‘The Human Body: A Temple of God’

“This human body has been described as **Mandiram** or temple because it is the house of God. This is the most sacred and Divine residence of the Lord. It is not proper to abuse or misuse this temple of God. The body has to be utilised in a proper or sacred way for performing good acts, good deeds, and good conduct. This body is given to us to conduct ourselves on the path of righteousness and for performing righteous deeds; you should maintain this physical body in a proper way. The body is like an instrument, and when this body is fit, it can be used properly. Therefore you should have the right knowledge and discrimination power to use this body in a proper way.”

Sathya Sai Baba (My Dear Students! Vol:4, Chapter10)



DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE FOR ANTHARDHWANI

Dimensions of Healing

Loving and grateful pranams to Bhagawan!

One of mankind's eternal quests will always be the search for the true or ultimate cause of any disease. Most of the time, we come to discover an immediate cause that serves us well to decide and deliver many types of treatment for the cure or relief from a particular condition. But as one probes deeper and deeper as to why a particular person was afflicted with one of innumerable conditions at a particular point in time, one is unable to give a satisfactory answer. Our philosophy and scriptures give us some guidance about different dimensions of cause and effect that have a bearing on this matter. But very

often, in the thick of battle, we are unable to answer all our queries and find it hard to bear the burden of suffering all on our own.

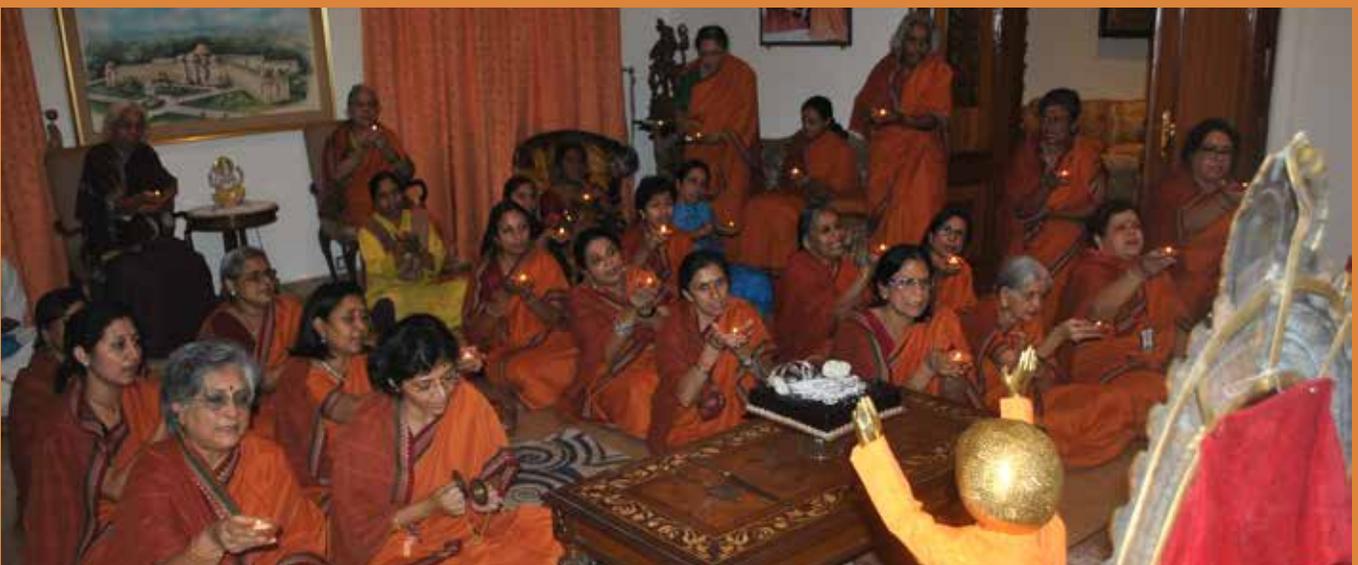
It is here that the Grace of Guru or God becomes our all paramount source of succour and helps us to cross the difficult obstacles that invariably come our way in life.

On the auspicious occasion of Gurupoornima, we remember with gratitude the Grace and love extended to all of us by Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba whom we could always turn to at times of need.

While dealing with patients and at times of our own ill health we long for the comfort of someone who will address the other dimensions of healing namely, help to ease anxiety, worry, uncertainties and the subconscious thoughts that have a profound bearing on the perception of suffering as well as on the ease and completeness of recovery. The routine medical investigations and treatments will take care of the physical component of the disease to the extent possible and up to the limit of medical knowledge alluded to at the start of this article. However, the other dimensions often are not addressed adequately owing to constraints of awareness, time, human resources or empathy, and love.

By the blessings of Bhagawan, our hospital has been endowed with a motivated team of counselors who with great devotion and love and inspired by Bhagawan, care for our patients fulfilling this very deeper dimension. Many are the instances where the treatment of the patient has been made complete and the application of technology been made worthwhile because of the loving attention and professional excellence that has addressed these very concerns of the patients.

Hence, it is a great privilege for me to have this opportunity to express my sincere appreciation to our counseling team for bringing in this wholistic dimension to medical care in our hospital and making both patients and doctors understand and enjoy the true meaning of the healing profession.





There are many hospitals that provide the most modern medical treatments and they provide people with facilities that are essential in today's world. However, the entire process of seeking and obtaining relief for many is fraught with stress and financial burden. Hence, when we experience the process of how some patients obtained relief from difficult medical conditions at SSSIHMS, completely free of this kind of stress, we realize that this is nothing but a manifestation of the Grace of Bhagawan and like stories from the Bhagawatham, it gives us a sense of peace, joy, and blessedness to hear of them and even more so to have a chance to participate in these events.

Here, we will recount two such real-life episodes where what should normally have been a very difficult period in the lives of some families, was made easy and blissful by Swami's Grace

The first is a story of a silk weaver hailing from Salem, from some years ago. His son was born with a blue baby condition, Tetralogy of Fallot, that permitted him to grow up till 5 years of age albeit with a lot of limitations. The child was becoming increasingly blue and breathless and it became obvious that he would not survive without surgery. He could not think of getting the child operated as he was of extremely modest financial means and came to our hospital seeking help. After due investigations, the child underwent total correction by open heart surgery and then made a good recovery to the delight of the family.

A year or so later, the father himself was diagnosed with ischaemic heart disease and needed coronary bypass surgery and could not attend to his work. He too came to Swami's hospital and after full diagnosis by means of angiography, he underwent successful coronary bypass surgery and made a good recovery.

The entire family was grateful to Swami for having been helped through such a difficult and unaffordable treatment given completely free of cost and in a completely loving and stress-free atmosphere.

Some months later, We were so delighted to see both father and son fully recovered and doing Seva Dal duties in our canteen with a broad smile on their faces.

This was a wonderful example of how Swami's Grace helped the whole family not only to get the right treatment but to experience His love and develop a frame of mind whereby they too felt motivated to come and render loving service to others.

The second incident concerns a senior citizen who developed episodes of sudden unpredictable chest pain and came to SSSIHMS for investigation. He was admitted for further tests and ultimately had coronary angiography was done which demonstrated significant blockages in all the arteries of his heart, needing coronary artery surgery. As his medical condition was delicate and surgery would be higher risk in his case, there was some debate about whether to offer him surgery or not. This gentleman, who was a voracious reader, liked the very homely atmosphere of the hospital and the conversations he had with the doctors. So, whenever we did rounds and spoke to him, he would enlighten us with whatever he had read that day and give us some valuable lessons. In addition, he used to reassure, saying - "Doctor, you know what is best. If you think an operation is good for me, go ahead and do it. Otherwise, give me medicine and I will be equally happy." So saying, he put us at ease in our decision-making process. Ultimately, it was decided to do the surgery and he went through with ease and recovered within no time. When we complimented him on his excellent recovery, he said - "Doctor, Swami's presence and the atmosphere of the hospital put me at ease completely. You people were anxious, I was not. In fact, I enjoyed my illness as it gave me an opportunity to be here and experience His Grace"

These true-life lessons teach us that no matter how serious and complicated the problem and the necessary treatment is given with love and invoking the Grace of Bhagawan, not only will it be successful but it will also remove or reduce the process of suffering and distress that is experienced at the time of illness and hospitalization.

Many patients have reported a transformation in their lives and thinking for the better after such periods.

We are grateful to our Counselling department that they do their very best to ensure that every patient who comes to the hospital has the benefit of a loving resource that helps not only to reduce the burden but also to understand and awaken to greater insight and a feeling of peace and assurance. They are instruments of Swami to convey the miracle of Grace.

- Dr. Shekhar Rao, Director, SSSIHMS, Whitefield

COVID 19 PANDEMIC IMPACT ON THE SAI COUNSELLING DEPARTMENT

NEW PATHS EMERGE FOR SAI COUNSELLORS

When one door closes the Lord opens several others if we stop looking at the closed door regretfully - so the saying goes. The close-knit family of thirty-three SAI counsellors, who were so accustomed over the past several years, and looked forward to attending a day of Seva once a week in the counselling department, felt a sudden void when confronted with an unprecedented event. For the first time since the inauguration of the hospital in 2001, there was a need to virtually shut down the hospital as per Government directives due to the coronavirus pandemic. Naturally, the Counselling Department had to follow suit and shut down indefinitely, which could probably last for several months from the nature of the pandemic.

The SAI counsellors who through this unique Seva had surrendered to Swami and developed complete faith in Him were confident that their prayers for filling this vacuum in their lives would be fulfilled. Lo and behold the answers to their prayers started falling in place very quickly.

One important monthly activity of the Counselling department, which the counsellors looked forward to was the second Sunday monthly meeting that brought all the counsellors together. Since only four counsellors are required for Seva daily all the counsellors meeting together happened only at this second Sunday meeting. The happenings have been regularly reported in the previous issues of AntharDhwani. An important part for all the counsellors was the half-hour bhajan session at the beginning of every meeting. By Swami's Grace there are several very good trained bhajan singers and leaders with the rest following enthusiastically - a good and auspicious start for the meetings.

Ruminating on this, the counsellors inspired by Swami, came up with a two-pronged approach to restore the second Sunday meetings. When the idea was mooted of conducting online meetings, using the popular Zoom platform the tech-savvy amongst the counsellors confirmed it was doable. It would be a virtual audience, all the participants could be seen on the screen by each counsellor locked down in their homes. Counsellors started immediately planning for the forthcoming April second Sunday meeting, which would be the first online meeting and would also maintain the continuity of the meetings.

The second stream of thought through deeper introspection emanated. A deep desire grew amongst the bhajan followers to learn bhajan singing formally from the few trained singers in the group. This would be a more demanding and rigorous program, requiring more time and effort; but where there is a will there is a way. This was purely Swami's Sankalpa. Trained teachers and taught-teams were formed from within the counselling group without having to seek any outside help. With expert guidance by the trained singers, the gurus, all the counsellors began to put in heart and soul in training themselves to sing melodious bhajans. The pandemic enforced lockdown gave them ample time to dedicate themselves to doing something they truly enjoyed. Swami always puts to rest uncertainties and answers our questions in His own way. Seek and ye shall find. He instilled in us a thirst for learning and what can be better than music and singing bhajans as a therapy for the soul.

They were not aware in the initial stages Swami was preparing them for a bigger Seva to follow.

The Online Second Sunday Monthly Meetings

The inaugural April E-Meet using Zoom Platform was held on the 12th April 2020, with twenty-six counsellors participating, all having been previously briefed on the procedural intricacies by counsellors Vimala, Lalitha, Haritha, Jaya and Manisha. The meeting proceeded amazingly well with very few glitches and was a resounding success.

The meeting started with the customary Bhajan session by the Bhajan team with thirty minutes of soulful singing as usual, which set the tone for the E-meet.

The presentation for this meeting was by the Wednesday team of four counsellors - Jaya, Mallika, Sumana and Subha. Their topic was: PSYCHOLOGICAL CONTACT, which according to Carl Rogers is the first of the six core conditions of person-centred counselling.

Mallika in her introduction started with what is psychological contact, moving on to conditions for psychological contact to happen, then outlining the important role of psychological contact. She further emphasized that a firm relationship of mutual trust has to be established as quickly as possible for a successful counselling session.

She recalled an experience of how psychological contact once established can be sustained over a long time even without any interaction between the counsellor and the patient. This had happened a couple of years back. A patient who was earlier counselled by Gita came to the dept for a second stage counselling. She wanted to connect with Gita and Mallika connected the patient with Gita and put her phone in speaker mode. The moment Gita addressed the patient as beta, she broke down and started crying. No talking, no counselling - just the word and tone!! This was clearly a classic case of psychological contact renewed the Sai Way.

Mallika concluded by quoting Swami,

“The lotus on the lake is far, far away from the Sun; but distance is no bar for the dawn of love; the lotus blooms as soon as the Sun peeps over the horizon”.
- Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol 7 (1967), Discourse 42, Prashaanthi Nilayam, 23-11-1967

Mallika was followed by Jaya who presented a very poignant case study presentation of a young man who was diagnosed with Lumbar NeuroFibroma, a spinal tumour which was successfully treated in our hospital. The curing had happened and the healing was done by the counsellor, which was enabled by the counsellor making an effective and lasting **“psychological contact”** with the patient.

Counsellor Sumana’s presentation came next wherein she elaborated on how the holistic approach of addressing the body-mind-spirit connect facilitates the psychological contact to happen.

Counsellor Subha made the concluding presentation highlighting the interconnection between the core concepts of Carl Rogers person centred counselling and the five innate human values of sathya, dharma, shanthi, prema and ahimsa. She stressed on how Love is the key element in facilitating psychological contact and how love encompasses all the human values as expressed in Swami’s well-known quote:

*“Love in speech is Truth;
 Love in action is Righteousness;
 Love in feeling is Peace;
 Love in Understanding is Non-violence”*



The second online Zoom meeting, the May E-Meet, was held on the 10th May 2020. The well planned and coordinated Bhajans and Prayers which were offered to Swami marked the commencement of the meeting

The topic for Presentation: **FEAR MANAGEMENT** elaborating on Fear and Anxiety, was made by the Thursday team of counsellors, Saroo, Sadhana, Jayashree, Anuradha and Mala.

Jayashree, Anuradha and Mala made very forceful presentations highlighting the difference between fear and anxiety, their symptoms and coping mechanism. Mala presented a very apt acronym for chronic fear that lurks in people's mind - **F** (false), **E** (evidence), **A** (appearing), **R** (real).

Jayashree pointed out how Swami would repeatedly advocate **"Love of God, Fear of Sin"** - perhaps the only fear which is good for man to have. Anuradha stressed on how Swami would ask us to develop equanimity of mind under all circumstances and to cultivate detachment from worldly objects to overcome fear and anxiety.

Sadhana presented a very unique case study of a healthy school-going teenager who had been suffering from recurring headaches persistently in the past couple of years. She along with her parents were desperately looking for a permanent solution consulting various doctors, but all in vain.

Finally, the patient landed at the Neuro OPD in our hospital, where after examining her and conducting all tests, they found nothing wrong physically or mentally and referred her for SAI Counselling. It got addressed by SAI Counselling as a psychosomatic illness traced to fear and anxiety arising from a change in her school environment, which responded positively to the counsellor's love and empathy and finding the BRMC practice very healing. Subsequent follow up with the patient has confirmed that the patient is back to normal, her headaches have disappeared.

Saroo presented the second case study of a young man who was suffering from CHD and had to undergo an AVR open-heart surgery. While the operation itself was routine and successful, healing happened only through SAI Counselling when the huge fear and anxiety-ridden emotional burden, borne by the patient and the family over almost a decade came to light. The patient had first come to our hospital almost ten years back as a small child of nine and had an AVBD procedure to be followed by the surgery later.

Immense learning took place in both the April and May meetings. All Counsellors were at ease and in fact much more emotive and interactive during both the E meetings.

The stage seemed to be set for the counsellors, who were hungering for connecting with patients, which was so rewarding for each one of them and helping them in their spiritual growth. Each one of them had been praying to Swami to restore this Seva opportunity to them. The loving Lord responded.

Inspired by Swami and with His Grace and Blessings, at the May E meeting after the presentations were done, Gita Umesh, HOD of the Counselling Department, announced the commencement of the Tele-Counselling training program daily for each team of counsellors on their respective days of counselling at the hospital.

It was explained to the counsellors that tele-counselling with a cell phone was most practical, flexible and provided wide coverage. However, since it would only be an audio medium each counsellor would have to hone their voice communication skills requiring disciplined training and practice.

Swami having initiated the bhajan training program made so much sense now, the counsellors appreciating the importance of 'bhava' in bhajans and its relevance to empathic and loving voice modulation required in tele-counselling.

Swami has said

"Service does not mean helping with hands alone. Talk softly and sweetly. Speak good words. That is also a form of service". - SSS 33.19: November 20, 2000.

The counsellors are enthralled and are meticulously learning from their tele-counselling training, getting ready to connect and interact with patients over the phone. The program is expected to commence after Guru Purnima and is being planned initially for the RHD patients who have undergone treatment in our hospital.

Well like they say, necessity is the mother of invention and the bond built with our dear Swami came to the forefront as usual. There was a purpose and we collectively needed to remain as a group, keeping ourselves abreast of happenings at the same time not losing sight of Swami's mission and purpose for us. We pray to Swami to guide and Bless us and to give us the strength to continue serving Him through this new tele- counselling program

Jai Sai Ram.....

(Contributors: Counsellors Lalitha Anil and Haritha Rao, Department of Counselling, SSSIHMS, Whitefield)

FEAR AND ANXIETY - THE MIND HOLDS THE KEY

“Fear is a reaction to specific observable danger, anxiety is diffused unfocused objectless future-oriented fear”. - D.Barlow 2002.

Fear at the basic level is an innate human reaction to a specific observable real danger or threat invoking the fight or flight response, which induces stress-causing temporary physiological changes that return to normal when the danger or threat is withdrawn. The danger may be real, it may be life-threatening or may affect our physical, emotional, or psychological well-being. As fear heightens our senses and awareness, it keeps us alert; it prepares us to face danger and is a survival mechanism for self-preservation.

Fear is perceived by the senses, the mind is the receptor conveying the information to the body to act appropriately. Fear can often act as a catalyst to trigger positive responses like courage or bravery to fight the threat or danger. At a different level, Swami often says “Love of God, Fear of Sin” is the way for human well-being.

Some common fears expressed are – the fear of losing our loved ones, fear of physical abuse or injury, fear of failure, fear of rejection, fear of change, fear of illness, etc. Some uncommon fears can be - fear of heights, claustrophobia, drowning, fire, flying etc. These fears merge with anxieties being based on uncertainty but originate from experience.

Anxiety is diffused unfocused objectless future-oriented fear. It does not require a triggering stimulus. It is the anticipation of the threat that is feared may happen anytime. It is possible to be anxious about things that will almost certainly never happen.

The fear-anxiety combination when stored in the mind can lead to chronic stress and seriously impact the well-being of the person.

Triggers of Fear and Anxiety-

- A health diagnosis that is upsetting or difficult to accept.
- Financial problems.
- Family relationship problems.
- The stress from job-toxic work atmospheres.
- Peer pressure and unhealthy competitiveness in schools.
- Urban issues like traffic jams, pollution, poor infrastructure.
- Lack of access to critical healthcare facilities for the rural and marginalised sections of society.
- The neural connections in our body keep us lively and young. Pleasant activities like meditating, holidaying, spending time with friends, or participating in teamwork give us joy. The neural connections are more fluid when we feel happy. But when we feel fear, it is an emotion that is capable of slowing down and blocking electrical impulses between neurons.

The extent and range of Fear vary from person to person but the emotion is the same. One person’s reaction upon seeing a snake could be similar to another person’s reaction to seeing a lizard. Likewise, there is a fear of heights in contrast to fear of confined space. The body is programmed to react distinctly once the stimulus is recognized. How each person reacts to a situation or an object is different from another person and is dependent on several factors such as past experiences.

Symptoms of Fear and Anxiety

A person in Fear breathes hurriedly; heart rate is high and erratic. It does not pump blood efficiently and the muscle loses strength. A person breaks into cold sweat. Secretions are increased in the alimentary system and kidneys, which are involuntarily emptied. That person experiences tightening in the pit of the stomach. This impacts thinking and decision making in negative ways leaving the person susceptible to intense emotions and impulsive reactions.

Consequences of Fear and Anxiety.

“The body and the mind are closely interrelated. Physical health is a prerequisite for mental health and mental health ensures physical health”. - Sathya Sai Baba, September 1959.

Chronic fear or anxiety is bad for our health. It manifests itself in the form of anger and can lead to coronary diseases. It can cause many illnesses like anxiety, arthritis, various addictions, hypertension, digestive disorders, and migraines. Fear weakens our immune system and causes cardiovascular damage, gastrointestinal problems such as ulcers and decreased fertility. It can lead to accelerated aging and even premature death. Experience of Fear can be traumatic and can be a cause for broken heart syndrome.

Coping mechanisms against fear and anxiety

- Introspect on what Swami, our ancient scriptures and all religions propound- Love of God, Faith in God, and Surrender to God's Will. These can help you face any adversity in life.

“Have faith in Him(God) and be free from fear, anxiety, and agitation. Surrender to Him. His grace can save you, His wisdom can enlighten you, His power can overcome all your obstacles. Faith and surrender are the manifestations of bhakthi (devotion). They can ensure peace and joy for you.”

– Sathya Sai Baba, 03 Oct. 1981, Prasanthi Nilayam

- Fear and anxiety are products of the mind and as Swami often says

“MIND ALONE IS THE CAUSE FOR EITHER BONDAGE OR LIBERATION.” “Don't be a slave to your mind, be a master and become a mastermind”. Realise this truth.

- Know that within Hanuman is Rama the omnipotent. This knowledge of the self gives birth to Hanuman in each one of us making us fearless and saves us from all fears.
- When one has deep-rooted faith in God and becomes aware of His presence within, one is empowered with the potential to display rare acts of courage and bravery when confronted with fearful and perhaps life-threatening situations.
- The mind is prone to gather experiences, good or bad, as perceived by the senses and store them in memory for future reference. As a consequence of this, bad experiences of grief, fear, anxiety, and misery continue simmering in the mind to precipitate chronic stress.
- To overcome such situations one must remember that a swimmer in the river has to push aside the water in the front and kick the water backward to move forward, straight and fast. Forcing the waters back is the act that takes him forward. That is to say, not to give importance to water. Throwing it back leads to progress. Therefore, leaving the past behind can alone help in progress.

The practice of the Body Relaxation and Mind Cleansing (BRMC) therapy.

Chronic fear and anxiety can be overcome by the regular practice of the BRMC therapy as developed and taught at the SAI Counselling Department at SSSIHMS, Whitefield.

SAI Counselling - an effective therapy to help patients manage Fear and Anxiety.

- SAI Counsellors are trained in person centred counselling embedded within a framework of Swami's teachings. The goal is to empower the patient to heal from within by inner transformation. The power of Love is unfathomable and is a very potent weapon to overcome the vagaries of the mind, to quote Swami **“The easiest and best way to control the mind is through LOVE”** (The Mind and its Mysteries, Chapter 5, SSSBPT, August 2005).
- The emphasis is on the importance of routine prayer to the God of their choice coupled with practice in their daily lives of the five core human values, which in essence is the spiritual dimension. This helps even those who have no religious beliefs. The outcome is one can overcome fear, anxiety, and other negative thoughts that deny peace of mind.
- The efficacy of SAI Counselling is described in the two accompanying Case Studies, which are typical of the very many daily patient counselling sessions in the Counselling Department at SSSIHMS, Whitefield.

Jai Sai Ram.....

(Contributors: Counsellors Anuradha Chandramouli, Jayashree Ravindran, Mala Somashekar, Saroo Annaiah, and Sadhana Rao, Department of Counselling, SSSIHMS, Whitefield)

CASE STUDY 1: HOLISTIC SAICARE OF A TEENAGER CHD PATIENT AND HIS FAMILY

This is the story of Ravikiran (name changed), barely an adult who lived with fear and anxiety for almost a decade after being diagnosed with aortic stenosis, a congenital heart disease. To make matters worse he was an only child whose father was a terminally ill cancer patient with the mother having to bear the brunt of caring for two patients with no other familial support. One can imagine the plight and the anxiety of the parents, a father whose lofty dreams for his son crashed on learning about their child's serious heart ailment, and the tragedies for a mother and wife. Their strong protective instinct made them not to divulge the seriousness of the heart illness to the child or their relatives. But young Ravikiran could surmise that all was not right, his parents were hiding something which instilled in him a fear of the unknown and nagging anxiety about what the future held.

To add to their woes the father was diagnosed a few years later with lung cancer and a brain tumour, which necessitated treatment in Mumbai. The distraught father's only prayer was to see his son successfully treated for his heart problem before he passed on.

Read on to see how Swami took care of this hapless woe-ridden family in His **'Temple of Healing'**.

Born in 2002 Ravikiran had frequent bouts of cold, cough and breathlessness as a child. He was treated for asthma in his hometown, Bhubaneswar. Using the inhaler and medicines became a routine. As Ravikiran's palpitations and breathlessness increased, the doctor referred him to SSSIHMS in Bangalore.

Ravikiran and his parents undertook the journey in 2008. During the journey, a fellow passenger advised them to get off at Puttaparthi which also has a Super Speciality Hospital. On showing the reference letter, they were directed to go to Bangalore. Assuming that setting foot in Puttaparthi was destined, they spent a blissful day in Swami's abode before continuing their journey towards SSSIHMS, Bangalore.

At SSSIHMS, Bangalore, six-year-old Ravikiran was diagnosed with aortic stenosis, a congenital valvular heart disease which would eventually need an AVR surgery. Ravikiran being very young the doctors conducted an AVBD balloon dilation procedure and decided to watch his progress thereafter. He was discharged and told not to run and play vigorously. He felt better but faced some discomfort when he exerted himself. Much as he resented it he had no option but to refrain from strenuous games.

Ravikiran and his parents were asked to come for a follow up in 2009 when another battery of tests was done. Everything appeared well and he was asked to get regular check-ups done in his hometown and report back to SSSIHMS if there was a problem.

In 2014, Ravikiran's father underwent surgery and it was then revealed he was suffering from a brain tumour as well as cancer of the lungs. Seeing his father suffer caused Ravikiran more worries; he was suffering silently with his physical activity limitations and he had his medicines to alleviate his pain, but he could not bear to see his loving father suffering physically and his health deteriorating.

In 2019, when Ravikiran was 17 years old, he developed breathing difficulties and vomiting and was rushed to Swami's Super Speciality Hospital in Whitefield, Bangalore where he was advised to undergo open-heart surgery. The parents consented readily and the necessary tests and paperwork were started.

As per hospital protocol, Patient Ravikiran and his parents were sent to the counselling department on 21st Sep 2019 for their first Counselling session, during which the patient's emotional-spiritual profile was generated with the relevant details and he was taught the Body Relaxation and Mind Conditioning (BRMC) exercise.

This was followed by a second visit for counselling on 28th Sep 2019 prior to getting admitted for surgery. The counsellor showed empathy and love and understood their anxiety about the surgery. They were made to do the BRMC exercise to help them relax and they were asked to pray to their favourite God seeking His Blessings and Grace.

Patient Ravikiran came again to the Counselling Department on 3rd Oct 2019 as a discharge patient with his parents after undergoing successful surgery. Although the surgery was a success, the counsellor could sense that the patient seemed sad while the parents seemed relieved. The patient was reluctant to talk, spoke only in monosyllables, appeared unsure and looked to his father for approval as he spoke. The patient's father was replying to all queries as to how his son felt and how grateful he was to the doctors for the successful surgery. The patient was hardly responding. He was leaning back on his chair engulfed in sadness and grief. The counsellor strongly felt that something was amiss and healing was not happening.

After a silent prayer to Swamy, the counsellor turned to the patient, ignoring the parents and asked him directly to share with her his experience of this long drawn illness and the suffering undergone before culminating in this successful surgery. Instantly, the patient's body language changed, he sat forward in his chair and responded enthusiastically to all the queries. His eyes lit up and he spoke with a body language exuding self-confidence. A psychological connect had been made and a shift was perceived. The parents were silent and the counsellor observed discretely the father relaxing, leaning back in his chair, fatigued, sighing but with an expression of relief in his countenance. The patient's mother's body language had also changed. She now sat looking intently towards her son and took on the role of a responsible caregiver, which till now she had not done justice to, not displaying much love and concern, and now began listening attentively as the counsellor continued with the discharge advice.

The Body Relaxation and Mind Conditioning exercise was very well received by the patient and his parents. As the session came to a close and vibuthi was offered as prasada, the patient's father took a group photograph as a memento to remind them that in this part of India there is a free hospital run by Baba with compassionate and caring people/ volunteers who offer unconditional love as they do Seva.

The counsellor asked the smiling Ravikiran as to why he was aloof? Did the surgery being a success not make him happy? He replied that his parents had kept him in the dark regarding details of his father's illness as they didn't want him to worry. He knew that his father was suffering silently. He did not get any answers on enquiring. The helpless mother finally unable to see the son's anguish, confided that the father had to undergo chemotherapy every month and had missed out on it which was causing him a lot of pain. The helpless son Ravikiran confronted his father and urged him to go back to his hometown and schedule an appointment especially since his surgery date at Swami's hospital had not yet been allotted, but the father would not consider his son's suggestion.

The mother, who had the dual responsibility of being a caregiver for both her spouse and her only child, picked up from where the son had left off by stating that she gathered the courage to seek an interview with the Director of the hospital and unburden her problem regarding the crucial timing and concern regarding the health of both her spouse and her son. The empathic Director, Dr Shekar Rao, heeded her plea and advanced the date for the surgery. All the unburdening to the counsellor came as a big relief to the family - healing had started. The Patient and his mother lingered in the department, not wanting to leave while the father was already out of the door. His role of a caregiver seemed over, now his son was in good hands. Meanwhile, the mother and son apprised the counsellor of all the difficulties they had encountered.

The patient's father was a High School teacher who took ill and collapsed in the washroom one day. He was rushed to a hospital and was diagnosed with a terminal illness, advanced stage of cancer of the lungs and also a brain tumour. The doctors stated that he may develop a stroke if the necessary treatment was not conducted.

The patient's mother was also extremely concerned for both her husband and son but had resigned herself to her fate. Her surrender to God and her faith in her Ishta Devatha helped her handle both her husband and son's illness bravely, she said that it definitely was Lord Jagannath who gave her inner confidence, and the courage to travel numerous times to Mumbai for her husband's treatment and surgery. As regards her son, she said that she always drew a blank not believing this could happen to her only child. Both mother and son felt very relieved after this unburdening to an empathic counsellor.

The father held the family together and despite his illness, his only concern was to see his son cured and be able to lead a normal life, so that he could complete his responsibilities as his time was running out. He was proud of his son's intelligence and encouraged him to attempt all competitive exams that were conducted in his hometown. The patient's father was extremely grateful to their family deity Jagannath for the surgery being a success and the son now self-reliant with renewed self-confidence.

The family left the hospital cured and healed in body, mind and spirit.

A few months later, the Counsellor called up Ravikiran to inquire about his health. He informed her that his father had succumbed to the illness, but his mother and he had accepted life and moved on. His mother now works in Infosys at Bhubaneswar and Ravikiran is pursuing his BSc degree and aims to eventually join the Orissa State Civil Services, which was his father's and his dream.

The counsellor was overwhelmed with the Grace and Blessings Swami had showered on this family and she was extremely grateful to Swami for having been His chosen instrument.

Jai Sai Ram.....

(Contributor: Saroo Anniah, Counsellor, Department of Counselling, SSSIHMS, Whitefield)

CASE STUDY 2: HEALING - THE ESSENCE OF HOLISTIC SAICARE

When medicine doesn't have the answers God's Love for a devotee and her family provides the solution. This has been the experience of a young girl Shilpashree, age 15 years, studying in class IX from Kolar. The patient looked smart, quiet and studious. She was accompanied by her mother who was familiar with our hospital having been treated previously for a cardiac ailment.

Shilpashree had been suffering from continuous headache at the back of her head for several months, which did not respond to any medication. Fear and anxiety started creeping into the minds of both Shilpashree and her parents, who doted on their daughter and could not bear seeing her suffer. Her mother being aware of our hospital and the facilities available brought Shilpashree to the Neurology Department where she was directed to the NOPD for investigation.

The neurologist did a thorough examination and conducted various diagnostic tests including a CT scan, but could not find anything that could be the cause of the headache. In Swami's 'Temple of Healing,' the NOPD and the SAI Counselling Department work closely together to address psychosomatic illnesses particularly. Shilpashree was accordingly referred by the neurologist for SAI Counselling.

Shilpashree and her mother thus landed on 9th August 2018 at the Counselling Department for a SAI Counselling session. Understandably both had fear and anxiety lurking in their minds not knowing what to expect. They were pleasantly surprised at the warm welcome accorded to them by the smiling SAI Counsellor. The counsellor noted a shift in their body language from being tense to beginning to relax, responding and reciprocating to the counsellor's love and empathy. A psychological contact was very quickly established between the counsellor and the patient. Active listening and an empathic approach by the counsellor helped the patient to unburden. Two years ago, when the family lived in Malur town, she was studying in the BGS school, highly reputed, disciplined and with good sports facility - her passion being badminton. Life was good for Shilpashree and her family.

When her father got transferred to Kolar, the family also shifted, and she had to change her school as well. Now she studies in Golden City High School and PU College. But she is not happy with her new school, as it has no facility and encouragement for sports. She doesn't like the other students as she compares everything with her previous school and feels sad, and incongruent with low self-esteem. Her main focus and ambition were to excel in academics and badminton, her dream being to represent India. She feels trapped in her new environment living with fear and anxiety about not being able to achieve her goal. Her parents are very supportive and caring; her brother plays badminton along with her. Parent's great attachment to their daughter could not bring her out of fear or anxiety. She started developing severe headache which has become persistent and seriously affecting not only her well-being but also that of the family. They prayed intensely to their family deity Venkatramana Swami surrendering to Him in total faith.

With a loving, non-judgmental and empathic approach, the counsellor explained to her the importance of being in the present rather than worrying about the future or dwelling in the past. The counsellor emphasised to the patient and mother on the enormous transformational power of Love. She should try to find what's good in her present friends, everyone cannot be perfect. This would help her adapt to any changes.



The counsellor then explained in detail the Body Relaxation and Mind Cleansing (BRMC) exercise; how regular practice of BRMC would act as a tonic for her troubled mind. The counsellor then guided them through the BRMC exercise and she could see a major shift in mother and patient's perception. It helped them to get rid of their toxic emotions, past attachments, and fear and anxiety of losing self-confidence in their present environment. It also empowered them to adapt to any circumstances or surroundings by being positive and bringing in acceptance.

They totally surrendered to their Ishta Devata Venkatramana Swami which boosted their self-morale. To make up for the inadequate sports facility in her present school she resolved to join the Kolar club and continue to play badminton and put efforts to excel in academics. at school.

By Swami's Grace, the session was a positive one that brought happiness and peace in both Shilpashree and her mother. The smile on both their faces told all. They expressed their gratitude to Swami as all her health reports and check-ups were normal here in this hospital. By Swami's Grace, both Shilpashree and her mother left the hospital healed in body, mind and spirit.

A couple of years have passed by, the counsellor seemed prompted to check up on Shilpashree. She called her, Shilpashree seemed very happy to hear the counsellor's voice. She is very satisfied with school academics now, plays badminton at Kolar club and represents the team at district and division level. She is keeping good health, has no medication, and most importantly she doesn't have any headaches. She and her mother are practising BRMC regularly and both are fine, the family is happy.

They thanked Swami for showering His blessings on their whole family and keeping them happy. The SAI counsellor felt fulfilment from this Seva and expressed her gratitude to Swami for making her His instrument in this drama.

Jai Sai Ram.....

(Contributors: Sadhana Rao, Counsellor, Department of Counselling, SSSIHMS, Whitefield)

The Divine Counsellor



PSYCHOLOGICAL CONTACT - CREATING A BRIDGE OF TRUST

Have you ever wondered why it is easy to open up to certain people though you have known them only for a short period of time? Have you observed, that of the dozens of good acquaintances, there are only a few with whom you can share your innermost feelings? What is it that creates this comfort level? While trust is the most obvious answer, there is something deeper which brings this sense of comfort.

When it comes to a counselling session, the client (who generally is in a state of incongruence), has to feel more than trust, to bare open his or her vulnerable side and start on a healing journey. This kind of a deep connection between the counsellor and client is called Psychological contact. In simple words, it means to be on the same page “psychologically”, when the client feels, “here is someone who cares for me and is willing to listen to me”.

Role of Psychological Contact in Counselling

Carl Rogers, the founder of Person-Centered therapy, believed that each person has the capacity and desire for personal growth and change. The client has the potential to discover solutions to his or her own problems. When the right environment is created in a Counselling session, the client’s innate desire for personal growth comes to the forefront prompting the client to make necessary changes in life. Carl Rogers identifies the conditions for such a growth stimulating environment, the primary condition being Psychological contact. In fact, the presence of psychological contact makes the other conditions namely, unconditional positive regard, empathy and congruence, more effective to bring about a positive change.

Conditions for creating a Psychological Contact

The term “relationship”, is defined as, “the way in which two or more people or things are connected”. Being social creatures, humans form relationships that vary from formal to informal spanning a wide range of connections; superficial to deep. The duration could be short or long based on the circumstances.

To be in psychological contact means to be in a deep relationship. The counsellor creates an environment of love, congruence, empathy and genuineness. The counsellor sets up a connection based on respect, understanding and willingness to listen to the client, his interests, needs and issues. Perceiving these, the client enters the space with feelings of mutual respect, trust and security. He experiences a shift and opens up with little or no persuasion and shares his inner thoughts, experiences and fears. He expresses himself freely without any fear of being judged. Conversation becomes effortless. The client sees the counsellor as his well-wisher.

A holistic perspective of Psychological Contact in SAI Counselling

The establishment of psychological contact happens at different levels: **body, mind and spirit**. Below is a brief description of how it is achieved in SAI counselling.

Counsellor – Client Connect: The counsellor takes the initiative to set up a warm environment. She ensures she is in a state of congruence. Her body language and tone bring out the empathy and unconditional positive regard for the client. This approach starts from the initial greeting and continues through the Counselling session. The client feels that he or she is heard and understood in a non-judgmental way. The Counsellor provides a space where the client feels accepted and understood. He can get in touch with his feelings safely and share them with the Counsellor as she is genuinely interested in his well-being. The important underlying factor that makes this connection, or, psychological contact is, the Energy of Love. Love flows automatically when one applies Swami’s guiding philosophy to the medical fraternity, “*Treat them as your own kith and kin*”.

Personal connect to the client: After the client warms up to the counselling area environment and to the counsellor, the next step is to understand the “**person**” inside the client. Through casual, open ended questions, the counsellor tries to understand the client’s inner world: his or her fears, burdens, attachments, sources of joy or anxiety, social support system, values, belief in God and in oneself. With this information the Counsellor can empower the client with forgiveness, gratitude, acceptance, courage and self-confidence – all positive attitudes to handle the situation. The Counsellor facilitates the client to get rid-off negative thoughts and achieve an emotional balance. In a way, the emotional cleansing is the first step towards healing.

Spiritual connect of the client: As the client opens up, an innate desire for personal growth is often observed. At a certain point, the client realizes he doesn’t have to suffer and can change his or her life. He has the freedom and capacity to make the right choices for his betterment.

The Counsellor offers support or guidance for the client to discover personalized solutions. To help the client to tap into his inner strength, the counsellor brings in the spiritual component of SAI Counselling: prayer to God of the client's choice. Many times, at this point, the client mends his relationship with God. A growing body of research shows a connection between one's beliefs and their sense of well-being. Positive beliefs, comfort, and strength gained from religion, spirituality, and prayer can contribute to the overall well-being. It even promotes healing.

The technique of BRMC (**Body Relaxation and Mind Cleansing**) which is an integral part of SAI Counselling, gives the client a first-hand experience of bodily relaxation, the importance of breath, chittashudhi or mind cleansing, leading to a state of calm and peace at body and mind level. As the spiritual connect with their God is reaffirmed, there is harmony in body, mind and spirit. The clients are motivated to integrate the BRMC into their daily routine. The regular practice of BRMC has shown to increase spiritual strength leading to a better sense of well-being.

The above three processes are not necessarily sequential in order but can happen in parallel with varying degrees of connect between the Counsellor and client. The SAI Counselling takes place beyond body and mind levels, tapping into the realm of the spirit which essentially brings them back to their innate connect with divinity.

Once established, a good psychological contact remains strong for a long time. It is for this reason many patients continue to stay in touch with the counsellor even after getting discharged and returning home. The patients and caregivers who have experienced an inner positive shift during their Counselling session feel a special connect with the SAI Counsellor. They send updates on their recovery, family photos, and important life events or sometimes call to consult on other issues bothering them. Receiving warm phone calls or simple text messages from old patients and their family members is not a new thing to our SAI counsellors.

The story of Vijaya, bears a testimony to the efficacy of Psychological Contact. The case study is presented under the title "SAICARE and Mother's love – A guiding light from beyond".

Jai Sai Ram.....

(Contributors: Counsellors Mallika C.R, Jaya Tadimeti, Sumana Yadalam, Subha Srinivasan, Department of Counselling, SSSIHMS, Whitefield)

CASE STUDY: SAICARE AND MOTHER'S LOVE– A GUIDING LIGHT FROM BEYOND

Vijaya Pallepalli, a 23-year-old lean and lanky young man came to SSSIHMS in November of 2019. He was accompanied by his cousin. When he was taken to the counselling session he looked unsure and tense. He sat on the chair leaning to one side. He was suffering from neurofibroma and was unable to walk for 2.5 years. The tumor caused severe back pain. The patient mentioned that even a sneeze triggered shooting pain from the back to the legs. The doctor recommended surgical removal of the tumor and he was scared of surgery. Observing a note of distress, the counsellor delved into his family details.

Vijaya comes from a village in Anantapur. At the age of 6, he lost his father and seven years later his mother passed away. He has four older sisters and one younger brother. At the time of his mother's death, only one sister was married. The rest of the siblings picked up odd jobs to keep the house running. Vijaya, who was then 13 years old, quit school and found a job in a dairy farm as a delivery boy. Under the guidance of an elderly aunt, two more sisters got married. The situation at home was just getting better when Vijaya's back pain started. A tumor was growing over his spine. His condition worsened within two and half years, forcing him to give up work. He consulted doctors in Anantapur, Tirupati, and NIMHANS who prescribed pain medication that gave him only temporary relief. He expressed his sadness, anger, and dejection, as he narrated his life experiences over the past few years. He believes in Lord Shiva but prayers had reduced now. His brother added that Vijaya was constantly brooding over his condition and lost a lot of weight during this time. The patient confessed that he frequently thought about why life was so unfair to him.

Sensing their overflowing emotions and distress, the counsellor gently guided them through BRMC (Body Relaxation and Mind Conditioning) technique. The counsellor asked him to pray to his favorite God Shiva and unburden his heavy emotions. She led him through prayer for courage and protection. After a long silence, he opened his eyes. The counsellor asked him about the important people in his life, to which he replied, "My sisters and brother". He spoke of them with love and affection as they deeply cared for each other. Thanks to their strong bond, they were able to overcome many hardships. Tears rolled down as he shared how his sister and younger brother pooled their resources for his treatment.



◀ *After Admission, prior to surgery*

His feelings of anger and sorrow were replaced with gratitude towards his family. The counsellor advised him to think of his blessings daily, especially when negative thoughts bothered him. As he got up from his chair, he was surprised that there was no pain in his left leg. Before leaving, Vijaya asked for a selfie with the counsellor. The counsellor was taken aback by the strange request. She politely refused and placed Swami's photo in his hand.

Three months later, on February 1st, 2020, Vijaya was admitted for surgery. On the night before the surgery, the counsellor spoke to Vijaya. He immediately recognized her voice and said he wanted to meet her. He had been practicing BRMC regularly over the last 3 months which helped him sleep better. His younger brother Kallesh, who is 18 years old, was the attendant. Both were confident and mentally prepared for the surgery, until the doctor's preoperative visit. The doctor informed them that if the first surgery did not fix the issue completely, another one will have to be performed. The news worried the brothers. They were barely coming to terms with the major surgery, and the possibility of another surgery made them nervous. Should Vijaya even go ahead with the first surgery?



◀ *Counsellor meets Vijaya in the ward, before discharge*

The counsellor listened to their fears and reminded them to think positively. The reassurance that they were in good hands calmed them down. Before ending the phone call, Vijaya wanted to explain why he wanted a selfie with the counsellor on the first meeting. He said that the counsellor reminded him of his mother. He said, "If my mother were alive today, she would have encouraged me to stay strong, just like you did."

The next morning, after Vijaya was wheeled away for surgery, Kallesh called the counsellor and broke down. He was the youngest of the six siblings. All these years, Vijaya being the older, took care of him. Now the roles were reversed and he was overwhelmed by the responsibility. He was worried about his ability to be a good caregiver as he had never been one. The counsellor reassured Kallesh that the hospital staff and nurses would help them through the post-surgery phase. Just his presence would be a great morale booster to Vijaya. The talk helped Kallesh relax and comforted him before the post-surgery phase.



◀ *Vijaya surprised to Counsellor*

By God's grace, the surgery was successful. Vijaya called the counsellor after being shifted from the ICU to the ward. He sounded tired, however he was relieved that another surgery was not needed. The brothers kept in touch with the counsellor giving daily updates.

On February 5th, three days after the surgery, with special permission, the counsellor entered the Neuro Ward to meet the patient. Vijaya, sitting on his bed, was engaged in a lively conversation with a patient next to him. He took a minute to recognize the counsellor and was overjoyed by the surprise visit. They were meeting after three months.

With child-like enthusiasm, he lifted his shirt, turned around, and showed the area of surgery. There was a bandage patch on the stitches which seemed to be healing well. Vijaya happily demonstrated his walk which did not have the limp anymore. He looked confident and optimistic, completely opposite to how he was before the surgery.



◀ Showing the tattoo to the counsellor, before bidding farewell

The brothers were eagerly waiting for his discharge and to return home. Vijaya spoke of going back to work soon and was planning his sister's wedding. He showed the counsellor a photo of his parents and talked about them. His mother was kind-hearted and he loved her very much. One day on the way back from school he got the word "Amma" tattooed on his hand. When he showed it to his mother, she said, "Keep Amma in your heart, not just on hand". A few months later his mother passed away. Vijaya narrated this incident with a sense of pride and sentiment as can be seen in the picture below. The tattoo story revealed the key to Vijaya's successful transformation from a state of despair to hope.

Conclusion: Vijaya's case unfolded gradually with each session. It was only in the last meeting, that the depth and intensity of love for his mother were uncovered. Looking back, it is clear that the love for his mother was his anchoring point through-out the ordeal. In the first counselling session, a psychological contact was established between the counsellor and Vijaya. The tiny spark lit by his mother's memory rekindled Vijaya's hope and courage. Had his mother been alive she would have guided him similarly during tough times. His inner strength awakened and he was able to pull himself out of self-pity. This was a major turning point in Vijaya's journey from despair to hope.

Carl Rogers the founder of Client-Centered therapy says, "it is the client who knows what hurts, what directions to go, what problems are crucial, what experiences have been deeply buried".



◀ Vijaya shared his mother's photo on Mother's day

After the first visit, Vijaya returned home with a renewed sense of purpose. He adopted a healthy lifestyle by regular practice of BRMC. The improvement in his eating and sleeping pattern bears testimony to the impact of a positive mind on the body. By the time he came to the hospital three months later, he had overcome the fear of surgery. Despite a brief period of panic when the doctor mentioned the possibility of a second surgery, he managed to remain mentally strong. Vijaya's calls to the counsellor during the preoperative and postoperative phase, demonstrate the positive emotion of hope, as he was reaching out for help. Earlier, he would brood over the unfavorable events in his life and would feel miserable. His optimistic attitude enabled him to recover quickly. The way he opened up to the counsellor about his dead parents and how he shared the happy memories without remorse, suggests that he had accepted the past. He was ready to move on and create a bright future. Though his mother is not with him in flesh, the love he has for her is alive and strong enough to support him through the battles ahead.



◀ Vijaya shared his selfie on Mother's Day

On May 10th, the counsellor received a pleasant surprise. Vijaya called to wish her for Mother's Day. He shared photos of his mother and his new self. With a calm countenance, he looks younger. Following discharge, he was taken to his elder sister's house in Anantapur. He is recuperating well under her care. He is following the exercises and diet as recommended by the hospital. Due to the COVID19 lockdown, Vijaya is unable to travel to his village. But, he is very clear on his future plans once he returns home and begins a new life.

Jai Sai Ram.....

(Contributors: Jaya Tadimetri, Counsellor, Department of Counselling, SSSIHMS, Whitefield)

GOD'S GRACE

Divine Grace is a theological term common to all religions. The opportunity to witness the Divine influence and presence of Grace is indeed a marvel to behold.

Young Brishti during her long stay as a patient at SSSIHMS was a source of inspiration to many of us. Her faith will power, hope, and trust in God leaves us in awe of the power of the soul to regenerate and impart strength to endure the trials and challenges in life. The power of Divine Grace is an experience that cannot be articulated in words but can be felt by the soul.

Surgeons, Nurses, and Paramedics who worked round the clock taking care of Brishti bonded together and celebrated her one year's stay at the hospital. She rejoiced when she joined the counsellors in prayers on her birthday. This positive and strong-willed child left a deep impression in the hearts of all those whose lives she touched. Her remarkable courage, faith, will power, resilience and patience were endearing. Her desire to return home to her family and friends was fulfilled on June 4th, 2020, when she flew home with her mother, healed and cured of her long illness. In return, she gifted us with the rich experience of the efficacy of prayers and the **supremacy of the Grace of God**, "Man proposes but God disposes"

"One forgets the fact that God is in perceptible form in all beings. Service rendered to any being is service offered to God. This has to be the chief goal of the educated. A human is God (nara is Narayana) every single act has to be elevated as an act of service to God." - BABA (Chapter 15, Vidya Vahini)

On the auspicious occasion of Guru Purnima we offer this learning from Brishti of the Omnipresent, Omnipotent, Omniscient attributes, and Spiritual Transcendence of our Beloved Swami.

"mukam karoti vachalam - pangum langhayate girim -yat-kripa tam aham vande paramanandam Madhavam" - Dhyana shloka, Bhagavad Gita.

"I offer my respectful obeisance unto my spiritual master, the deliverer of the fallen souls. His mercy turns the dumb into eloquent speakers and enables the lame to cross mountains."

SAICARE FOR 13 YEAR-OLD NEURO PATIENT BRISHTI, WHO STAYED FOR OVER A YEAR AT SSSIHMS, WHITEFIELD



▲ Brishti's caregivers from the hospital staff.

(From left- SAI Counsellor Sukhanya Chattopadhyay, Sister Vasanthi, HOD, Nursing, Gita Umesh, HOD, SAI Counselling, Sister Hema, Neuro Ward-in-charge, Counsellor Sharada Gopinath)



▲ Birthday party for Brishti by the SAI Counsellors.



▲ Mother and daughter arriving at the birthday party.



▲ A birthday greeting for Brishti.



▲ At the birthday party with the nurse from Neuro ICU tagging along.



▲ Mother and daughter ready to leave for home.



▲ A happy and healthy Brishti back in her home with parents, sister, and grandmother.

Jai Sai Ram.....

(Contributor: Gita Umesh, HOD, Department of Counselling, SSSIHMS, Whitefield)

SAI SANKALPA AND GRACE



MAYO CLINIC
 "COUNSELING THE SAI WAY"
 Umesh Rao and Gita Umesh, SSSIHMS, Wfd.

2010 Mayo Spiritual Care Research Conference

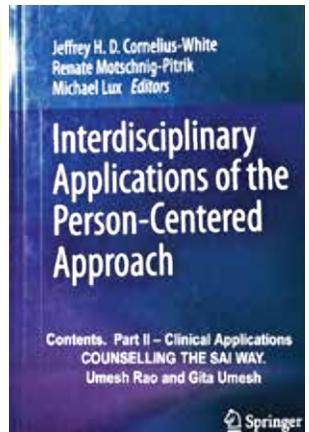
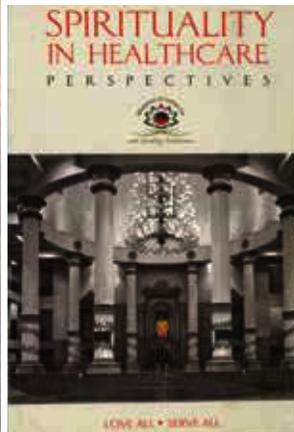
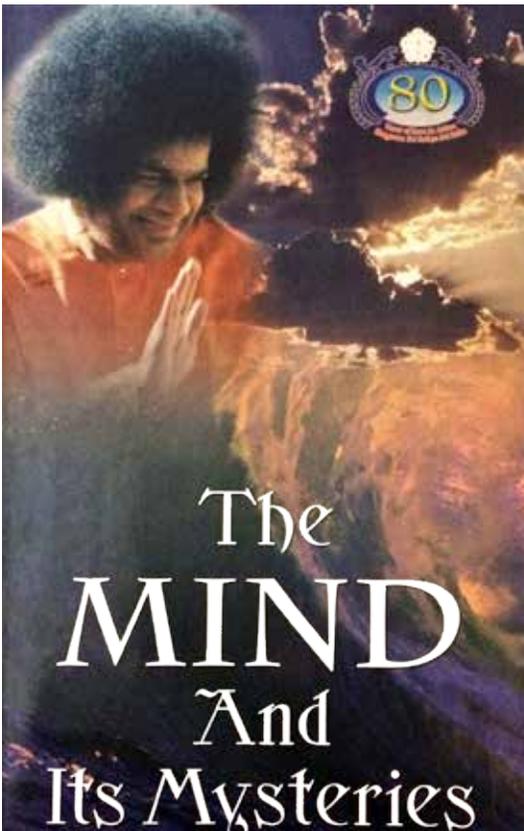
Spirituality and Health Across the Life Span: Investigation and Application

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.

