



EKALAVYA

NEWSLETTER

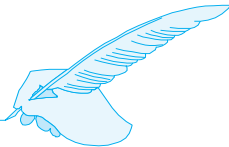
Jan. - Mar. 2003

Volume 1
Issue 3

SCHIZOPHRENIA AWARENESS ASSOCIATION (SAA), PUNE, INDIA

Office : 1827, Sadashiv Peth, Deshmukh Wadi, Pune 411 030. Ph.: (O) (020) 443 4180

Editorial



Let us take any sphere of human endeavour. You will notice the moment individuals come together and co-operate for a common cause, their efforts produce rewarding outcome. Such synergy invariably makes persons in authority sit up, do serious self-evaluation and, wherever necessary, take corrective action. They may choose to ignore such collective strength only at the risk of inciting those who have joined hands for a common purpose.

Groups of family members, women, children, students, senior citizens, consumers, employees, environmentalists, taxpayers, voters, professionals etc. have all tasted fruits of fraternal strength. There is no reason why cause of the mentally ill and their care-givers should not be served better by their coming together. Their concerns are best served when their associations further confederate at the national and international levels. Collective assertiveness makes that huge difference of being noticed and served.

The idea of forming an all India body of mental health care-givers' organisation was mooted in 1998 during the International Workshop on Treatment of Schizophrenia, held at NIMHANS, Bangalore. Though these efforts continued the major thrust was given at the National Conference of Care-givers of Major Mental Illness, hosted at Chennai by WFSAD in May 2001. Five months later groundwork was further done at the all India general meeting of the then National Federation for Mentally Disabled at New Delhi.

Ultimately, with a modified set of MOA draft and bye-laws, about eighty representatives of mental health care-givers' organisations from all over the country witnessed formation of India's apex body of association of care-givers. Thus National Federation for Mentally Ill

was born. History was created for the Indian mental health care at Chennai on 30-1-2003, in the distinguished presence of Dr. Jim Crowe, President- WFSAD and Dr. Radha Shankar, Board Member - WFSAD.

The gist of inspiring message from Dr. Jim Crowe and Dr. Radha Shankar was :

'There are no problems. There are only challenges. Once you have this change of attitude, nothing can stop you from achieving what you want.' In this very spirit, we appeal to the entire Indian fraternity of mental health care-givers' organisations to get actively involved in this important national movement. Letter of Mr. S. D. Raheja, President - NFMI, New Delhi, is reproduced elsewhere in this issue for your sincere and swift response.

Come, let's beautify more minds because together we can!



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- ❖ Turning Point for SAA
- ❖ Family Environment and Self-Esteem
- ❖ NFMI President's Letter
- ❖ Care-givers' Essential Assets
- ❖ Where There Is Will ...
- ❖ Why Wait Till Society Changes?
- ❖ SAA's Activities In Brief
- ❖ What Is Meant By...

REQUEST

Members who have not yet paid their annual subscription for the financial year 2003-2004, are requested to pay at their earliest to the Treasurer or at the SAA Office.

Set-back is part of life. I am an average person

TURNING POINT FOR SAA

Beginning of 2003 was indeed a major turning point. Canada-based Maharashtra Seva Samiti Organisation (MSSO) and the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) committed to SAA financial aid, spread over three years, for expansion of it's services in mental health care. K. S. Wani Memorial Trust, Dhule, is the senior partner in this noble cause. SAA is very grateful to it's founder President, Dr. Jagannath Wani, for his initiative and intense efforts in this matter.

In it's widened horizon, SAA's services and activities will include :

- Consolidation and creation of self-help support groups within and outside Pune.
- Creating awareness amongst different segments of the community about schizophrenia and it's management, bringing out printed literature and audio-video material in English and Marathi for educating and removal of misconceptions about schizophrenia, generating a team of volunteers and empowered care-givers through training and
- Establishing a daycare-cum-rehab centre for shubharthis.

Thus we are reaching out more afflicted persons who deserve quality time and support from all of us.

For availing of our services and also lending voluntary support please contact us at :

Schizophrenia Awareness Association (SAA)

C/o Shobhana Foundation
Deshmukhwadi, Near Pune Vidyarthi Griha,
1827 Sadashiv Peth, Pune 411 030
Tel. : 443 4180 (Mon to Sat. 2.00 - 6.00 pm)
E-mail : saa2003@vsnl.net

SAA Ekalavya SHSG is glad to share with our readers fact that the American Psychiatric Association has once again recognised the exemplary services rendered by Recovery Inc. by awarding it the Arnold L. van Ameringen Award in Psychiatric Rehabilitation. Another prestigious commendation deservedly earned by Recovery Inc. is that of the prestigious American Association of Social-workers.

SAA's Ekalavya SHSG has been using the Recovery method devised and developed by Dr. Abraham Low, the well-known neuro-psychiatrist of USA. Many shubharthis continue to benefit by practising this method.

FAMILY ENVIRONMENT & SELF-ESTEEM

The family environment is a background against which people try and understand an individual as he stands today. On the other hand the moment a child is born, he starts developing a self-concept, part of which is self-esteem, the positive or negative evaluation of oneself or one's worth.

We researchers, were interested in investigating how exactly the family environment affects development of self-esteem in a child. One hundred twenty college students were selected, and tested for their level of self-esteem and the nature of their family environment. Four dimensions of the family environment like conflict, cohesion, independence and expressiveness were measured.

After the data was collected statistical analysis was carried out. The results indicated that higher the cohesion in a family higher was the self-esteem in the child. Thus higher the amount of help, support and commitment family members showed towards one another, higher was the child's positive evaluation of the self.

These results can go a long way in helping counsellors to make an intervention at family level and help make the home environment more conducive to healthy development of the child. Also if parents are aware of this they would understand the importance of not expressing negative things in front of their children and being low in conflict and very high in their support and love for each other.

The main goal of this study will be served if we all understand the importance of the environment we create in our homes and how it can affect our children and also take required steps to help develop positive, healthy and responsible future citizens of our country.

Nishreen Poonawala and Megha Deuskar



APPEAL

To embark on our plans of a daycare-cum-rehab centre, we appeal for a suitable plot of land, in or around Pune, as donation. Alternatively, a built up structure of approx. 5,000 sq.ft. on concessional long lease could also serve the purpose. If your helping hand is stretching out for the mentally ill persons, rightaway please contact SAA's Vice President,

Mr. Y. N. Oak on Pune **Tel. : 437 8482**

or on E-mail : ynoak@pn3.vsnl.net.in

Thank you.

We can break old habit patterns

NATIONAL FEDERATION FOR MENTALLY ILL

APPEAL FOR MEMBERSHIP

Dear Sirs,

The National Federation of Mentally Ill is an apex body of associations of care-givers and specialists from all parts of India. The Federation has been formed to co-ordinate and channelise the efforts of all care-giver organisations in India working for the cause of the mentally ill persons. For purposes of achieving better efficiency the efforts of such organisations particularly for effective lobbying with Government and Society in general for the benefit of the mentally ill persons, all organisations must come together and work co-operatively.

Membership of the Federation is open to non-profit making Associations / Organisations of professionals and any other service group registered under the relevant Central / State Government Laws rendering service to persons with mental illness. No individual can become a member of the Federation. We appeal to all the associations / organisations, who are rendering service to mentally ill patients and/or their care-givers, to enrol themselves as our members to strengthen the hands of the Federation for taking up with Government such vital issues as discrimination vis-a-vis other disabled persons in matters like tax concessions, Trust fund, etc. There are also certain cases being heard in various High Courts / Supreme Court where we need to project our viewpoint. We also ought to keep the media fully alive to our burning problems and with its full support and co-operation try to remove the stigma attached to mental illness.

For voicing our concerns on these and other allied matters it is necessary that we not only stand together but also show our strength by becoming members of NFMI.

We also request you to help us in getting donations.

Assistance in the matter of establishing contacts with Supreme Court advocates and media is most welcome.

We are enclosing a list of Founding Members as on 30-01-2003.

Thanking you and seeking your co-operation and assistance.

Yours faithfully,
(S. D. Raheja)
President

LIST OF FOUNDING MEMBERS AS ON 30TH JANUARY 2003

S.No.	Name and Address of the Member Organisation
1.	Rashmi 8/276, Sunder Vihar, New Delhi- 110 087.
2.	National Federation For Mentally Disabled 25, 3rd SBI Colony, Nanganallur, Chennai 600 061.
3.	Aasha 2, Works Road, New Colony, Chrompet, Chennai 600 044.
4.	Ashadeep Islampur Road, Gandhi Basti, Guwahati 781 003.
5.	Kiran 10/1, Green Field, Ghatala Village Road, Chembur, Mumbai 400 071.
6.	Schizophrenia Awareness Association (SAA) A/14, Siddhant Apartments, 312, Shaniwar Peth, Pune 411 030. Tel. : 448 3650 and 443 4180
7.	Association for Mentally Disabled (Amend) C-358, Jalvayu Vihar, Kalyan Nagar, Bangalore 560 043.
8.	The President, "Paripuranaata" 5-B, Maharani Swarna Mayee Road, Kolkata 700 009.
9.	Convenor - "Adhar" C/o, Mr. Pandarinath Shirodkar, Opp. I.T.I., Peedem - Mapusa, Goa. Tel. : 0832-256652, 263106
10.	President "Subitcham" Plot No. 643, K. K. Nagar, Madurai 625 020. Tel. : 654 116, 586 448
11.	The Secretary "Navajeev Project", YWCA Complex, 1086, Poonamallee High Road, Chennai 600 084.
12.	The Director SCARF (INDIA) R/7A, North Main Road, Anna Nagar West Extension, Chennai 600 101. Tel. : 626 3971



Endorse for the effort, not just for the outcome

CARE-GIVERS' ESSENTIAL ASSETS

1. **Caring Attitude** : This is a very valuable asset. But, remember, patronising attitude builds barriers between individuals. Caring attitude, on the other hand, promotes improved communication & relationships.
2. **Genuine Hope** : Care-giver promotes hope in the mentally ill person (MIP)'s mind. Hope motivates. But, above all, be realistic. Do encourage practical goals but one step at a time.
3. **Inner Strength** : Tap and trust the tremendous source of inner strength. Mental and physical fatigue affect your performance as a care-giver.
4. **Empathy** : Being empathetic with the suffering MIP helps to build rapport. No, please don't have sympathy because it only hurts the MIP as he finds nothing wrong with him and hence feels it is misplaced.
5. **Patience** : Care-giver either has or develops patience in super-human measure. Progress and stagnation, ups and downs, hope and despair come in waves and tend to overwhelm. Encourage every little progress and withhold temptation to criticise.
6. **Detachment** : Being objective, unbiased is difficult but possible. Why can't we be like a letterbox that is unmoved by contents of the letters deposited in it! Decisions taken with detachment are more useful.
7. **Sense of Humour** : You will find numerous laughable oddities when you look around. Be in the company of cheerful persons as laughter is infectious. This tonic will boost your coping strength while simultaneously providing relief to others in your life. But be cautious not to hurt an MIP even unintentionally.
8. **Vigilance** : Being cautious and vigilant is inevitable. But don't try to be a detective or a policeman. This asset helps avoid valuable time and avoid superstitions, loss of valuable time and minimise/avoid emergencies.
9. **Crisis Management Skill** : A care-giver, like a fire-fighter, is required to swing into action in an emergency. He readily has plan of action and resource for such times. Thus suffering for all concerned is minimized.
10. **Nurturing Self-reliance** : Care-giver has to specially learn the skill of nurturing self-reliance in an MIP. But please encourage an MIP to

progress according to his own pace and capacity. It doesn't pay to push hard. To a care-giver what could be a more satisfying reward than his MIP becoming more self-reliant?

11. **Self-renewal** : Re-charging oneself, ensuring self-renewal is most essential for a care-giver. So delegate and share responsibilities with other family members. Find time and space for meditation, hobbies, long walks, light exercises, reading, entertainment, workshops and lectures to upgrade knowledge and skills, vacation etc. These will keep the care-giver cheerful, healthy and fit to be even a role model for others.
12. **Faith** : Having unshakeable faith in God the Almighty, Nature, the Higher Power that binds the entire creation with universal love, is a great source of strength. Hang on to it, come what may!

Gurudatt Kundapurkar



WHERE THERE IS WILL ...

Having mentally ill person in a family tends to overwhelm it's members. The routine gets totally disturbed. Though management of such crisis is responsibility of the family as a whole, generally it devolves on only one or two members. Thus, there is the risk of those persons experiencing great physical and mental fatigue. Which means, self-renewal should also be high on the priority list of the care-giver. How can an aggrieved care-giver be able to lend effective support to another needy family member without first taking care of her/himself?

Vaishali Somani's real life story could inspire many a care-giver. Though fortunately she had the support of her in-laws and other family members, she realized ultimately it was her primary duty to look after her two sons and her husband afflicted with schizophrenia. Initially she had withdrawn herself from most of the outside world. She even feared the worst when her husband's symptoms showed dangerous trend more than once. His hyper talkativeness and activities had made her feel so miserable that she asked herself, "Why all this is happening to me?" A typical thought that an average care-giver suffers from.

"The turning point of sorts came for my husband, Vijay, when he was put under the genuinely caring attitude of the rehab centre led by Dr. Nitin Dalaya", says Vaishali. This respite gave her to do some quiet

Fear feeds the symptoms and the symptoms feed the fear

introspection and review her family life. Encouraged by her mother, brothers, sisters-in-law and goaded by her close friend Roopa, Vaishali decided to enroll herself for a holistic course on empowering life leadership. This decision of self-renewal proved to be transformative indeed for her and her entire family.

Realisation dawned on Vaishali after the training and she told her husband, Vijay, "I accept you the way you are and I promise to do whatever is needed of me to make this marriage a strong bond." Did you notice the confidence and commitment behind those words, brought upon by self-renewal efforts? Vijay's reaction too was quite heartening as he said, "It is like talking to a new Vaishali."

Vijay is back home. He meticulously takes medicines. He willingly lends a helping hand in bringing up their sons, taking some responsibility in the family's new business, doing some domestic chores etc. Vaishali at this stage of her renewed life vows to help others and for doing this she undergoes volunteer's course.

Moral of this real life story : Care-giver better takes care of her/himself first through self-renewal so as to stay fit and be able to reach out other needier persons. Self-renewal extends one's gaze beyond one's own little world.

What all activities can contribute to self renewal will be discussed in our next issue of Ekalavya.

Gurudatt Kundapurkar


"WHY WAIT TILL SOCIETY CHANGES?"

Recently, I got a chance to visit my teacher Dr. B. G. Bapat. He had undergone heart surgery. His chest and hands wore marks of operation. But he was in high spirits. He did not show any signs of depression which come naturally as aftermath of surgery. I was stunned to see him so cheerful. It would have been inappropriate to show my sympathy because he bore the marks on his body like a brave warrior.

Many mentally ill persons can come out of their illness in a short period of time. But the very painful experience of mental illness stays in mind for long. Ups and downs of the illness, side effects of medicines, shock treatment, hospitalization etc. are the experiences which constantly arise and disturb.

What's the reason behind it? Why does it happen? This is because there are still misconceptions in the society about persons who have experienced mental illness. They are still stigmatized, thus leading them to feel guilty.

Rohan, a shubharthi in our SHSG was suffering

from mental illness for about 5-6 years. He was saying, "When I recovered, in the beginning I was very much pressurized with the bad memories of my illness. I never wanted to expose my experiences. When, by chance, someone referred to my illness, I became very much uncomfortable, sometimes I even sweated. At such times I became inefficient in my work". Don't you think Rohan will be better if the pressure of stigma is removed? Patients like Rohan will be able to face negative expressions easily.

Though society should change its attitude towards mental illness, why wait till society changes? You can go ahead because mainly it is concerned with you. You can join SHSG, widen your horizon, read books about your illness, share with others and make yourself empowered. It will help you and others like you.

Anil Vartak


SAA'S ACTIVITIES

- Prof. Anil Vartak was elected as member, Executive Committee of the care-givers' apex body, NFMI on 30-1-2003.
- Prof. Anil Vartak, Mrs. Sulochana Harshe and Mr. Gurudatt Kundapurkar represented SAA at the all India care-givers' meet hosted by WFSAD at Chennai on 31-1-2003 and 1-2-2003.

Their presentations on the need of care-givers' and professionals' co-operation in care-givers' training and overcoming social stigma, were much appreciated by over 80 participants. Dr. Jim Crowe, President and Dr. Radha Shankar, Board Director of WFSAD had also addressed at the convention.

- Prof. Anil Vartak and Mr. Gurudatt were invited by the Psychology Department of S. P. College of Arts and Science, Pune, to address their students on the role of self-help support group for mentally ill persons in fighting stigmatization on 8-2-2003. Over 75 students and staff evinced keen interest by their active participation.
- Aid to SAA from Canada-based MSSO and CIDA is about to give boost to its services in the area of mental health care. To formally launch renewed activities SAA organised at the National Film Archives, Pune, screening of the Academy Award winning movie "A Beautiful Mind". Special invitees included Dr. Anil Awachat, Dr. Mohan Agashe, Dr. Meera Sadagopal, Ms Deepa Shriram and discussion panelists led by Dr. Ulhas Luktuke,

Recovery methods are simple but not easy

Dr. Shirisha Sathe and Ms Deepa Shriram. Speakers from SAA consisted of Mr. Yashwantrao Oak, Mrs. Neelima Bapat and Mr. Gurudatt Kundapurkar. A question and answer session on the illness and the movie was announced for the first week of April, 2003.

- E. Ekalavya SHSG meetings on Saturday evenings are conducted, as usual at the Apte Prashala. Six shubharthis on an average and about ten caregivers have been participating in these meetings and deriving benefit in terms of companionship and moral support.
- F. Through the columns of the Marathi daily Sakal and Loksatta and English daily Pune Times of India and Express Newline, SAA has been able to reach out many needy persons. This is evident from the phone call enquiries and letters by way of postal mail and e-mail.

WHAT IS MEANT BY...

“Command your Muscles” This is a master piece of Dr. Abraham Low’s spots. It means try to control your muscles, try to get control over all your physical movements. Like all our sensory organs our brain experiences many things through our muscular movements. From these movements the brain learns how to react in a given situation. In short, we say, brain is our ‘Cerebral Manager’. He gives commands to our muscles.

We suffer from mental illness or feel insecure when working of the brain becomes disorganised. The muscles of our body receive wrong messages. To change this situation, it is necessary that the brain should get a signal of no danger, from the muscles. There is only one way out, that is, face the situation or the person which you think causes discomfort, fear or uneasiness. Then automatically all these negative feelings will disappear. For example, when you don’t feel like going out, go and have a walk. When you fear somebody, meet him and have a talk with him.

By doing this you will feel your uneasiness, fear or discomfort is slowly diminishing. The brain, thus, is trained by the muscles and it learns to do such things.

There is one more reason why we should control muscles. When there is any disturbing situation your body reacts wrongly if you are mentally imbalanced. If you are angry you feel like throwing things and / or talking in a very high pitch. That means muscles of your hands and legs and speech muscles react in an improper way. This in turn increases complications and creates an emotional disturbance. This is known as ‘working up’ in the Recovery method.

If a person is able to control his physical reactions it will help control his mental reactions. Recognizing this aspect Dr. Low has given importance to use of spottings.

Anil Vartak



Published for SAA by Prof. Anil Vartak,
A-14, Siddhant Apts. 312, Shaniwar Peth, Pune 411 030, MS, India.

The publisher does not necessarily subscribe
to the personal views expressed by the authors.

Printed for SAA by Shree J Printers
1416 Sadashiv Peth, Pune 411 030, Tel. : 447 4762

The Editorial Board

Editor : Mr. Gurudatt Kundapurkar
Members : Mr. Yashwantrao Oak
Mr. Raghunath Acharya
Mrs. Neelima Bapat

Book-post

To, _____

From

Eklavya Newsletter
C/o Prof. Anil Vartak
312, A-14 Siddhant Apts.,
Shaniwar Peth, Pune 411 030
Tel. : (O) 443 4180, (R) 448 3650