



EKALAVYA

NEWSLETTER

SCHIZOPHRENIA AWARENESS ASSOCIATION (SAA), PUNE

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Oct. 03-Mar 04
Volume 2
Issue 6 & 7

Editorial

When Myths Exploded

SAA in the past had a couple of informal get-together of its own members, before whom shubharthis had sung songs, recited poems and narrated jokes or humorous incidents. They had also helped in preparation and disbursement of light refreshments on those occasions. Encouragement and a little persuasion helped create for them a sense of achievement and joy.

Twentyninth February 2004 evening, however, was simply an outpouring of immense talent, unleashed by the unassuming coordinator, Mr. Vidyadhar Bapat, a SAA volunteer. The programme, aptly named 'antarnad' and varied in its fare, was more than entertaining. The caregivers too, contrary to normal assumption, encouraged their shubharthis to take part in the entire process. Besides, they too presented a few interesting items to the delight of spectators.

The programme made the audience question its own beliefs whether the talented performers were the same nervous persons who generally preferred to keep themselves aloof. What made them now to shed fright and hesitation? Did they really turn up consistently and punctually for the practice and rehearsals? Do shubharthis, like others, have an urge to please and give joy to others? To participate in such group activity and perform also proved that team spirit was not, after all, alien to them.

They are in fact as versatile and gifted as anyone of us. They sing, act, dance, play musical instruments, compose and recite poems, compere events and also are spontaneous in encouraging and applauding co-performers. What a talent! What an attitude!

Do such events merely entertain or do they also not explode myths and biases about caregivers and, especially about shubharthis? Pause and ponder, shall we?

Empathy Prevents Indignity

Quite often when some caregivers meet others for the first time they mindlessly narrate in detail the shortcomings of their shubharthis right in front of them. Mostly the complaining strain runs thus: 'He is at home and does nothing at all. Earlier he was brilliant and very popular. We have taken him to many doctors, sadhus and even astrologer but without any change. He refuses to take medicine, saying there is nothing wrong with him. Most family members have deserted us and we don't know what fate awaits us all in future.' The puzzled shubharthi goes through this indignity quietly as if the person discussed is an absentee individual. A caregiver's such remarks may be unintentional and may be flowing out of frustration. But imagine what thoughts and feelings must be boiling deep inside the shubharthi who, in fact, craves for empathy and support. Consequently, do we not find a moist-eyed caregiver in support group meetings, off and on, mention that his shubharthi has branded him, 'Enemy No. 1?'

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Don't measure good mental health by how you feel. It is how you function.

Humane Dynamo Brightens Pune !

People come into our lives for a special reason, with a specific message. It our task to understand why they have touched our lives and what we can learn from them.

Jim Crowe, President of World Fellowship for Schizophrenia & Allied Disorders (WFSAD) visited SAA in Pune between 2nd - 5th Nov 2003. WFSAD is a family organization founded by families for families and this is a binding cord between this organization & SAA. We share the same goals, same ideals and values. Here are the highlights of Jim's visit, which held great learning opportunities for us at SAA.

We had several events over the three days that he was here. On the 2nd November evening we had a meeting jointly with psychiatrists and psychologists of Pune. This was the first ever large meeting held with professionals and SAA. It was a good starting point which helped us build rapport with them. It will go a long way in getting the support of local professionals for our goals.

The next morning, Jim Crowe met SAA's managing committee members over breakfast to get to know them and their work, answer their questions etc. Jim shared with us how things work in his organization way back in New Zealand. He gave us ideas on what more activities we can carry out. This informal chat was very beneficial for us, since it gave us a lot of new areas to think about.

That afternoon an interview of Jim Crowe was recorded for broadcast on All India Radio the next morning. Due to this interview SAA and WFSAD got regional exposure to their respective work.

Jim Crowe also had a meeting with shubharthis in our office the same evening. There was interaction between him and the shubharthis. Many shubharthis asked Jim questions. They sang songs for Jim. It was a very warm and beneficial interaction. The main point Jim expressed was how we need to look at and take care of a patient as a "person" first and the illness as just a part of the story. He laid great stress when he asked us not to use the word 'schizophrenic', but to refer as a person afflicted with schizophrenia. Another point Jim made was the word **SCHIZOPHRENIA** holds within itself the word HOPE and that's what all the shubharthis should

remember.

Another major highlight of Jim's visit was visits to the caregiver families. It was a very genuine, personal and heartfelt gesture by Jim. It made each one of them feel special, showed them better ways to motivate and communicate with the shubharthis. And, most importantly, it made shubharthis feel understood. When Jim sat there in their homes and compassionately discussed their personal problems, for the first time they felt being genuinely cared for.

Jim's family visits and interaction with shubharthis were proof that he was care, compassion and humility personified.

Another important event held during this visit was the public meeting of 5th November evening. Jim spoke about how stigma needs to be battled and overcome in order for people to get the help they require. He spoke about how good the chances of improvement in schizophrenia are. He specially screened those advertisements shown in NZ to emphasise how to break stigma and mentally ill people can fight for their rights. The best part was when a shubharthi and her father came on stage and openly declared they were an affected family and it was nothing to be ashamed of. This really had powerful impact on the audience and drove the message across effectively.

In conclusion, for SAA and its entire team Jim's visit was a memorable, intensive and hands-on workshop in mental health care !

- Nishreen Poonawala



Editorial - Contd.

It is indeed a good practice to meet a caregiver and shubharthi separately, besides jointly. A trained and sensitised caregiver will hardly do public dressing-down of his shubharthi. Rather he will look for every chance to use encouraging words and gestures to nurture shubharthi's frequently-sagging morale.

Isn't there an urgent need for attitudinal healing? SAA and it's team are in the process of holistically evolving course content for caregivers' training. They are confident of significant value addition to this process of empowering caregivers by such a training, offered by SAA in the coming weeks. Hopefully, the new label of a caregiver, if at all needed, will be 'Friend No.1.'



Temper is our worst enemy, humor our best friend.

Pathway To Recovery

Here are a few more real instances of members of Ekalavya self-help support group sharing their experiences. The structured format is the one known as Recovery method designed by Dr. Abraham Low and practised around the world in over 700 such support groups. Internal peace is the reward for the Recovery practitioner.

(A)

Step 1 :

Briefly describe the event coped with ?

That day I started to hear whispering voices continuously, strongly. So that was the disturbing event.

What were the physical and mental symptoms ?

That time I realised I was getting bad tension.

Step 2 :

Which tool of Dr. Low did you use ?

Maintaining my inner peace is my supreme goal.

Step 3 :

Compare the event before and after using Recovery method.

If I had not used the Recovery tool, my bad tension would have increased.

- Rajesh

(B)

Step 1 :

My letter, written about our support group and the Recovery method, appeared in a prominent newspaper of Pune. From morning itself I started receiving phone calls inquiring more about Recovery method and suggestions for their problems. I felt nice and proud about myself in the beginning.

Step 2 :

As more calls started pouring in I became increasingly irritated. When people made detailed inquiries I realized that I was becoming short-tempered. I was getting angry and was breathing fast. My ears were getting hot. I was showing bad temper with my family members also.

Step 3 :

Then I realized that my internal peace was my supreme goal. My internal peace was more important than everything, including giving information about the Recovery method. When people made minute inquiries, I said to myself "Excuse rather than accuse." I realized that I should do the things in part acts. I requested my wife to attend some of the calls. Further I diverted some calls to my colleagues.

Step 4 :

Before Recovery training I might have got too angry, might have shouted at some people and at my wife and daughter. I would have thought that it was my personal responsibility to answer all the calls. I also would have repented later that I could not talk properly with others. But, because of Recovery training, I became quiet gradually. I realized that I was an average person. Any one else in such a situation would also get irritated. There is no necessity for me to answer the calls all alone. I could do the things in part acts.

I could handle the event satisfactorily. So, I endorsed myself and felt happy.

- Anil

(C)

Step 1 :

I had come back with my family from a town. And, because of the water which we drank on way back, I had a stomach upset and was feeling exhausted. My mother said it may be due to dehydration. I expected my parents to give me attention (medical). But they didn't.

Step 2 :

I felt hurt, that they did not call up the doctor and did not live upto my expectation. I started getting angry and I started crying.

Step 3 :

1. I should lower my expectation.
2. Maintaining my inner peace is my supreme goal.
3. Strive for peace, order and balance.
4. Every act of self control leads to self respect.
5. Excuse rather than accuse and
6. You can break old habit patterns.

Be group-minded.

Step 4 :

Had I not used the Recovery method, I would have got agitated because my parents didn't give me the attention I expected. And I would have thrown an attention seeking tantrum as I used to do a few years' back. As a result of using the Recovery method my peace of mind and the peace in the family were maintained. I endorsed myself for my effort.

- Saroj

(D)

Step 1 :

I was informed that the venue of our support group meetings had shifted to a new address in Sadashiv Peth. I live in camp area, and the new address given to me sounded very complicated and difficult to locate. I dread entering city areas where there are several congested one-way streets and by-lanes. A person who is not accustomed to this area easily finds himself lost in these 'peths'.

Step 2 :

I felt very agitated that the meeting location had shifted to another unfamiliar area. I felt worried if I would find it, if I would get stuck in the wrong streets and thus get lost. I feared that I would enter the wrong street, wrong one-way, get caught by the police and so on. I felt nervous and restless, and was very tempted to skip the Saturday meeting.

Step 3 :

I started by telling myself that 'feelings are not facts'. Just because I feel the address is complicated it doesn't mean it is so. There's no way to find out unless I really go there and see. I recalled the tool 'do the things you fear the most.' Although I was afraid to try I pushed myself to come. I also remembered 'fearful anticipation is worse than the realization.' I very often find doing a job is easier than what I thought it would be. And so I 'commanded my muscles' to try and come for the meeting and face the situation. Despite all my hesitations I set out with, found the address easily and on my way met another group member who knew the address.

Step 4 :

In all likelihood I would not have come for the meeting in the first place. Even if I would have come, the process of getting here would have made me nervous

and tense. With help of Recovery I bore discomfort to make the attempt to find the place. I have been enjoying coming here every week since then.

I wholeheartedly endorsed myself after reaching the new venue and it strengthened my belief in the wonderful tool - feelings are not facts. After we bear some discomfort of trying we are able to benefit from it.

- Nishreen

(E)

Step 1 :

Last evening I was keeping aside a ball-point pen whose body broke when I accidentally dropped it. I thought some good parts of that pen could still be reused. However, my wife objected to it and said I should rather buy a new pen and discard the broken one immediately.

Step 2 :

I realized I was allowing myself to get worked up especially when she further showed me about half a dozen such old pens I had collected without ever using any good parts out of them. My throat and lips dried up, I felt palpitation and found my breathing becoming faster.

Step 3 :

Suddenly I realised I had unnecessarily allowed myself to get upset over a trivial matter of daily life. Being an average person it was okay for me to have forgotten about all those old pens. How true was Dr. Low when he said that not spotting sentimentalism and emotionalism was sabotage ! What my wife said may have irritated me but to irritate me wasn't her intention. So, I rather excused her. I said to myself I should look neither regretfully into the past nor fearfully into the future.

Step 4 :

Before I knew the Recovery tools, I would have shouted at my wife not to breath down my neck and spy. I would have carried a feeling of humiliation and guilt for days together, disturbing our family peace. Now I felt life was much under control, protecting my internal peace.

As I had coped with a likely provocative situation I endorsed myself for the efforts. I felt even better after sharing my experience in the support group.

- Gurudatt



Setback is part of life. I am an average person.

NFMI Inauguration

Inaugural conference of NFMI (National Federation for Mentally Ill) was held on 13th Feb 2004 at Dr RML Hospital, New Delhi. Smt. Sushma Swaraj, Hon'ble Minister of Health & Family Welfare & Parliamentary Affairs, was the chief guest and the Minister released the souvenir of the NFMI.

Nine out of 14 member organizations were present. Each representative introduced one's organization, its aims and objectives, inception, activities etc. Mr. Gurudatt spoke about SAA.

SAA is not only a member organization but its Secretary Mr. Anil Vartak is also a member of NFMI Executive Committee.

On 12th Feb. 2004, the Executive Committee meeting took place at Dr. RML Hospital. The President of NFMI, Mr. S. D. Raheja chaired the meeting. He stressed the need for enrolling more members, collecting funds for NFMI to hire an office, furniture, staff etc. and appealed all to help strengthen the new organization.

On the 13th it was a full day program 9.30 a.m. to 6.30 p.m. The initial crowd of about hundred swelled to 225 when the Minister formalised the inauguration in the evening.

The following organizations participated in the conference: 1. SAA, Pune 2. Rashmi, New Delhi 3. Aasha, Chennai 4. Navjeevan, Chennai 5. Ashdeep, Guwahati 6. Turning Point, Kolkatta, 7. Kiran, Mumbai 8. Roshni, Ludhiana and 9. Athma Shakti Vidyalaya, Chandigadh.

Dr. Shekhar Saxena, Indian representative of WHO, proved to be an important participant as he presented NFMI's demands on behalf of caregivers of mentally ill persons before the Minister and the Minister in turn, promised to do whatever was possible.

Dr. Radha Shankar, WFSAD Board Member, said she truly represented caregivers' organizations though she was professionally a psychiatrist.

NFMI President Mr. S D Raheja, in his speech, mentioned Prime Minister Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee's observation, "Freedom is incomplete without social

justice" and requested the Hon'ble Health Minister to ensure that proper representation was given to the caregivers' associations for taking care of the mentally ill and their caregivers.

Mr. Raheja also mentioned that outstanding work of some member organizations had been recognized and appreciated in India and abroad. Mrs. Ishita Sanyal of 'Turning Point', Kolkata has been awarded the prestigious David Feinsilver Award and Dr. Nirmala Shrinivasan, founder President of AMEND, Bangalore has been awarded the Ashoka Award for innovative techniques. Mr. Raheja as NFMI President was also invited by WHO's Global Council for Mental Health to attend preparatory session of the working group for families of service users of mental health at Geneva in Oct. 2003.

In the post-lunch session Dr. R. C. Jiloha, Dr. Rajesh Nagpal and Ms. Laila Olapalli spoke about Indian Laws Concerning mentally ill and their inadequacies. Mr. R. K. Bhatia, Secretary, NFMI and Col. Mehendiratta of 'Community of Communities', Chandigadh talked about 'Miseries of mentally ill through the eyes of caregivers' Dr. D. J. Singh, President of 'Roshni' told about the stress and strain the people in police department are facing.

Dr. Shekhar Saxena of WHO and Ms. Laila Olapalli, practising lawyer, pleaded the side of mentally ill. They said, 'Mental health services are much less compared to physical health services all over the world and especially in India. Only professionals and bureaucrats should not have a say in framing of laws pertaining to the mentally ill but the affected groups should also be a part of decision making. The Minister agreed to include President of NFMI in committees relating to this aspect.

The whole day's programme was well organised and compered efficiently by Dr. Smita N. Deshpande, HOD, Psychiatry, Dr. RML Hospital, Delhi. This historic event was a success in many ways, both from the organisers' and from participants' point of view as mental health caregivers' concerns did have an impact on decision-making authorities.

- Neelima Bapat



People do things that irritate us, not to irritate us.

Take It From Me

Keeping oneself occupied

It becomes very difficult to work with concentration and consistency for a person suffering from mental illness because of symptoms like confusion, delusion and paranoia. Such a person finds it difficult to maintain a job or studies. This period of disruption can be a few weeks or several months depending on the severity of the symptoms.

Medication and other treatment can control the symptoms. Thus, the recovering person rightly develops a desire to work outside his house and contribute to the family income. Search for job goes on but the person soon discovers that he is not able to find either a job or a job according to his educational qualification or experience. For example, a person qualified as an engineer is offered job as a computer operator or an M.Sc. is considered for job of a salesman. As the person is not ready to accept this kind of lowered status the search for a suitable job goes on, leading to loss of important years of one's life. For want of any occupation the person spends time unproductively and the recovering mind does not get support of self-respect, otherwise derived from outside work.

In order to avoid getting trapped in such a cobweb, it is necessary for us to understand and accept the reality. There can be several reasons why we cannot get a suitable job. One reason can be some years have passed since one has completed one's education. To make things more difficult in the meantime substantial changes might have taken place in one's field of study. Similarly, we may be short of experience which an employer keenly seeks. Moreover, the tricky question, 'Where were you in the meantime?' also has to be faced. Sometimes we may get a job offer but salary is so meager that we feel ashamed and rather prefer not to work.

Like for employers, problems exist on our side also. The person who has spent good amount of time at home faces several difficulties. He is not able to work with full concentration consistently. He is not used to talk and work with others. If any skill, like maintaining of social relations, is not used it gets deteriorated. In this situation even if a person gets a suitable job he finds it difficult to

retain it. In case of some persons who are uncomfortable in their job, frustration substantially affects their mental stability.

In this situation whatever the job - even if it is low paid, not consistent with one's qualifications or part time - one should readily accept it. If we accept whatever work opportunity comes to us, then the difficulty of how to spend time is automatically solved. Vicious cycle of frustration is checked and we are compelled to have some physical movement, which otherwise does not take place. Whatever income we have, big or small, it leads to enhancing our self-respect. If we do our work wholeheartedly, then we will develop a habit of working with concentration and also will receive praise from others. In brief, whatever may be the nature of work, we benefit in a variety of ways.

It may also happen in case of many that they do not get a job for long or for a very short period. In this situation the person should not hesitate to do household work : maybe gardening, washing and cleaning or helping in the kitchen. We should willingly do these household chores. Proper planning will help us to spend even a few hours in these activities. There is nothing like status of high or low in the matter of keeping oneself engaged. Even any simple household work gives us tremendous benefits like self-esteem and self-confidence, necessary for future progress.

Summing up, if we decide to do wholeheartedly whatever comes to us at that point of time, then we cross an important step in our development. Doing work consistently and maintaining good relations with people around us will make it possible for us to work for longer hours and do the work requiring more responsibility. This is the way one can climb up the first step of development, then second, then third and so on. Rather than jumping over some steps at one time, if one gives time to adjust at each one of the steps, then the instability that one has experienced will gradually reduce. It may so happen in the future that a person is able to find and do work according to his caliber, with salary as per his qualification. To live happily even after having mental illness is an art which can be cultivated with patience and faith. If so, why wait for situation to change? Let us adjust ourselves with whatever be the present employment situation.

- Anil Vartak



Every act of self-control leads to self-respect.

Where There Is Will

Here is an inspirational experience of a caregiver couple about their son who had to be moved from M.P. to Kerala to Maharashtra, shuttling between home and hospital for over thirteen years.

"Our son, Rajesh, showed symptoms of strange behaviour in 1990 when we were at Bhopal. Later on we decided to treat him at our native Kerala. Despite medical care of about six years there, Rajesh's progress was not satisfactory. After consultation with doctors and our family members we opted for his hospitalization, off and on, for the next five years. His stable condition later helped us to decide to bring him home.

He continues to be under medication and has regular checkup at a private hospital in Pune. October 2003 proved to be a turning point for Rajesh and our family. Dr. Bharvgavi Davar of Bapu Trust happened to mention to us about SAA's Ekalavya self-help support group.

Since then Rajesh loves to attend the Saturday support group meetings. Both Rajesh's mother and I started participating in the caregivers' support group meetings on second and fourth Saturdays of the month. As caregivers we have gained very much by way of knowledge about schizophrenia, various issues concerning such families, their experiences and coping skills. We are also relieved of our anxiety and tension, besides developing confidence and fellowship with other caregivers and SAA volunteers.

Rajesh also has struck friendship with other shubharthis and volunteers. After a long time he showed interest and even participated in the variety entertainment programme by SAA's shubharthis and caregivers in Feb. 04. Commenting on the Recovery method used at the shubharthis' support group, Rajesh admits that one particular tool that helps him in any situation is : Maintaining my inner peace is my supreme goal.

Could we ever be more happy than Rajesh shaping so well now!"

- A. Sivaramakrishnan Iyer



'Antarnad'

'Antarnad', a variety entertainment was presented by SAA's shubharthis, caregivers and volunteers on Sunday, the 29th February 2004, at the Pune City Scout and Guide Hall.

Mr. Vidyadhar Bapat (brother of late Mr. Vineet Bapat, our shubharthi) came to SAA in January 2004 and expressed his desire to work as a volunteer. From the very next day he started volunteering. His initial suggestion about a variety entertainment programme started taking shape in early part of February. Shubharthis and caregivers enthusiastically came forward and expressed their wish to participate in the event. Then they exhibited their hidden talents. There was excitement and enjoyment!

Mr. Vidyadhar Bapat takes his hobbies of acting and playing musical instruments seriously. Therefore, he encouraged the boys and girls very much and instilled in them confidence. Though, most didn't have earlier experience, they performed well, without nervousness before an appreciative audience of about 100.

The programme started exactly at 4.45 p.m. After Mrs. Neelima Bapat, SAA's Jt. Secretary, extended a warm welcome, Mr. Raghunath Acharya felicitated Mr. Vidyadhar Bapat and two accompanying artistes, who played tabla.

Compering the entire programme was in the hands of Omkar and Reshma, our shubharthis, who did it well in Marathi and English, respectively. It was a variety entertainment which included Marathi, Hindi, English and Malyalam songs. Solo and in chorus, radio remix, portions of Marathi drama, playing flute, Casio organ and culminated in a special item of musical cricket.

All the participants were presented with a token of appreciation and good wishes by Mr. Anil Vartak, SAA's Secretary. The programme was concluded with a vote of thanks by him, followed by light refreshment. The pleased audience would have gone home with musical notes still lingering in their ears.

- Neelima Bapat



Excuse rather than accuse.

'Devarai' - SAA's New Venture

As a part of SAA's awareness programme a 120 minutes feature film entitled Devarai is being produced. The well-known Director-duo Ms. Sumitra Bhave and Shri Sunil Sukthankar, have undertaken this task.

The film brings out in clear perspective that schizophrenia is in fact a disorder of the brain, like other physical ailments such as diabetes or hypertension. Therefore there is no justification for any stigma being attached to schizophrenia. Through the film, an attempt has been made to portray the emotions and feelings of a person with mental illness and his supportive relatives.

The directors and their team of artistes have taken lot of pains to study and understand the subject. They had discussion with many psychiatrists such as Dr. Anand Nadkarni, Dr. Vidyadhar Watve and Dr. Anil Awachat. They also attended sessions of Ekalavya self-help support group of shubharthis and caregivers to personally observe and understand how they function, what their problems are etc.

Shri Atul Kulkarni, who plays the role of Shesh, the mentally afflicted person, had discussions with psychiatrists, studied and gathered information and insight into various facets of the mental disorder from literature and web sites.

The *muhurt* of the film was performed on 3rd February 2004 by Shri Y. N. Oak, then Vice President of SAA. Further some of the shooting was done at the Nityanand Mental Health Centre at Katraj and also at the CASP Bhavan on Baner Road. For this SAA is grateful to Nityanand's founder, Dr. Nitin Dalaya and Dr. Sharadchandra Gokhale, Director of CASP. After having shot some sequences in and around Pune, the remainder has been completed in the Konkan region. The movie, Devarai, is expected to be ready for release in a couple of months.

The title Devarai - sacred grove- is a metaphor of a thick jungle where flora and fauna grow, prosper and survive with each other's support. So is the case of human beings, wherein the mentally afflicted persons need the support and understanding of the rest of the society to mitigate their problems and help them move towards rehabilitation and recovery.

The main purpose of this film is to put before the public realistic and scientific information, coupled with the need of care and support of the professionals, support groups and the family. Considering that film is a powerful medium for such an important message, masters of this medium were chosen.

The project has been undertaken by SAA with financial assistance from MSSO-CIDA through its senior project partners, K.S.Wani Memorial Trust of Dhule.

- Raghunath Acharya



Power Of Feedback

Two-way communication keeps the human activities ticking. The entire world moves on. Can you imagine a life without any means of communication, verbal or non-verbal?

Individuals and institutions can, of course, work proactively. Yet ultimately what is going to make a difference is your response to their actions, your feedback.

For example, how would we know precisely what you liked or didn't in Ekalavya newsletter, unless you told us? Your feedback can help us review and revise its contents so that the magazine largely meets your expectations.

Yet again, it is your feedback alone that can ensure the magazine reaches you promptly if you inform us of any change in your mailing address.

Your views and suggestions could also guide or inspire contributors and other readers of this magazine. So go ahead, reach for your phone, pen or the PC and unleash the power of feedback.

- Editor

Do it in part-acts.

SAA Activities

October 2003 :

- Held awareness programme on schizophrenia and its management, including SHSG advantages on 6th at Dr. Jhalani's Hospital, Ahmednagar. Totally 45 persons consisting of shubharthis, caregivers and hospital staff participated in the discussions initiated by Mr. Y. N. Oak, Mr. Anil Vartak & Dr. Shirisha Sathe. Professionals from Pune included Drs. Devendra Shirole and Bhushan Shukla.
- Mrs. Neelima Bapat, assisted by Ms. Deepali Kulkarni - SAA volunteer, talked to about 70 Nos. SNTD candidates, attending a camp at Malavli, on mental health management on 9th.
- Third orientation on schizophrenia was conducted for GPs on behalf of SAA by Drs. Shilesh Chaugule and Nilesh Naphade, the local psychiatrists, while Mrs. Neelima Bapat and Mrs. Madhura Bhatwadekar spoke on SAA's aims and objectives, besides its wide range of activities, for reaching audiences even outside Maharashtra.

November 2003 :

- A detailed report on visit of Dr. Jim Crowe, President of WFSAD, to Pune between 2nd and 5th appears elsewhere in this issue.
- A followup session for the benefit of shubharthis and caregivers was held at Dr. Jhalani's Hospital, Ahmednagar, on 13th when some of them evinced interest to attend SAA's weekly meetings at Pune. Dr. Shirisha Sathe and Mrs. N. Bapat engaged the audience.

December 2003 :

- An interactive session for caregivers was conducted on 15th by Dr. Shirisha Sathe at Dr. Jhalani's Hospital, Ahmednagar. Fifteen caregivers admitted to have been benefited by our programmes in terms of their coping with day-to-day life.

January 2004 :

- Fellowship was promoted during a day's outing at Gokhale Farm for shubharthis, their caregivers and volunteers through participation in games, mimicry, informal chats on varied subjects. Most of the arrangements were made by shubharthis themselves under guidance from Mrs. N. Bapat. This was on 3rd.
- From 6th to 8th, Dr. Jagannath Wani, Mr. Y. N. Oak and Mrs. Rajshree Dandawate (architect) visited day-care and activity centres at Bangalore for shubharthis so as to make SAA's forthcoming Pune center an excellent one.
- Dr. Chris Rybak, a visiting professor from the US, talked to caregivers and shubharthis on his concept of 'Wheel of Resilience,' to encourage among them holistic well-being of families. This was organised at SAA office on the 10th.
- 18th was a day of great satisfaction for Dr. Shirisha Sathe and Mrs. N. Bapat when they found that Nashik caregivers' group had started functioning well and very punctually. The caregivers facilitator Mr. Arvind Petkar mentioned that shubharthis' group is yet to start, whereas caregivers meet twice a month.
- Mr. and Mrs. Muzumdar and Mrs. N. Bapat attended 4 day workshop on SHSG formation organised by IPH, Thane, led by Drs. Anand Nadkarni, Shubha Thatte, Ms. A. Sowani and Mrs. Savita Apte. Keeping its core group and volunteers trained and updated is one of SAA's aims.

February 2004 :

- Muhurat shot of movie Devrai, co-produced by KSWani Memorial Trust, SAA and Vichitra Nirmitti, was done on the 3rd. While Mr. Y. N. Oak, then VP of SAA, symbolically broke a coconut Mr. Anil Vartak, Secretary of SAA, played the role of clapper boy. Detailed report on this is appearing elsewhere in this issue.
- Mr. Anil Vartak, Mrs. N. Bapat, and Mr. Gurudatt represented SAA at the all India meeting hosted by

Illness is fate-appointed, not self-appointed.

NFMI, apex body of Indian caregivers' associations, on 12th and 13th at New Delhi, where the chief guest was Mrs. Shushma Swaraj, the Central Minister of Health.

- 'Antarnad' a three-hour entertainment programme was held on the 29th, where caregivers, shubharthis and volunteers took active part to the delight of about 100 members of the audience.

March 2004 :

- About 40 SAA family members took part in a picnic cum get-together at Sambhaji Park on 27th. Antakshari game and bhel added enjoyment to free mixing and mingling on the occasion.

Ongoing Activities :

- Dr. Shirisha Sathe continued to engage the caregivers of Nashik on various topics relevant to their day-to-day life. Each time around thirty members who took advantage of her talks, found the session interesting and interactive. A structured training programme is being planned by Dr. Sathe along with Dr. Dhake. Mr. Sunil Wagh, a local trainer and social worker, spoke on relaxation techniques on one occasion.

Ekalavya SHSG of both shubharthis and caregivers has proved to be an activity that keeps their morale high and helps in coping with their stressful life. This is evident from their regular and swelling attendance.



Defying Diagnosis

Outright denial, the very first block
Simply cannot reverse the clock.
Stout rejection the commonest blunder
Only inflames schizophrenic tinder.
Health, laughter, career and cash
Turn, alas, into wasting ash.
So sooner I accept diagnosis and pill
Far better for my health and goodwill.
- Gurudatt Kundapurkar

Websites worth exploring

www.recovery-inc.com

www.nami.org

www.world-schizophrenia.org

If you know any other equally interesting ones, please share the website names. Thanks.

Published for SAA by Prof. Anil Vartak,
1827, Sadashiv Peth, Deshmukh Wadi, Near Pune Vidyarthi
Gruh, Pune - 411030. MS, India.
The publisher does not necessarily subscribe to the personal
views expressed by the authors.
Printed for SAA by Samarth Enterprises
7 Swapna Soc., L.I.C. Colony, Paud Road, Pune - 411038.
Tel. 25438628

Book-post

To, _____

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Schizophrenia Awareness Association
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