

WHAT SHUBHANKARS SAY...

RA

My daughter has been mentally ill for the past 20 years. She has had treatment from various doctors, but initially we, as parents, remained on the periphery with inadequate knowledge about the illness. After joining Ekalavya SHSG. I really started understanding the full impact of the illness; the patients' problems, our own shubhankars' responsibilities and ways of managing the patient at home. After participating in the discussions at the Ekalavya group and listening to the lectures from experts from time to time, I have gained in the following ways:

- We have been more sensitized to her suffering, thus helping us to take care of my daughter better.
- Through an exchange of information with other shubhankars and shubharthis, I learnt about the various options, medications, psychotherapy etc. available to shubharthis and also about the limitations of these therapies.
 - I have realized that I am not alone in facing such a problem.
 - There are others who are facing similar or worse problems.
 - I can reduce my own stress by talking things over to other understanding members.
 - I have found a forum where I can exchange information about issues such as legal aspects, patient's rights, concessions in personal taxation etc.
 - Being of support to others goes a long way in boosting one's self-esteem.
 - This group has thrown open opportunities for joint action for securing patients rightful place in the society and all the material benefits that are due to them.
 - I have noticed considerable improvement in my daughter's ability to manage her moods with responsibility.
 - Last, but not the least, the Ekalavya group has helped us to develop self-respect and confidence.

TP

In the Times of India newspaper, I came across an article on schizophrenia. Since the last 4 years my son has been suffering from this. So I was interested to know about this illness. In November 03 Dr. Jim Crowe, President of WFSAD was addressing the Pune public about this. That is how we came to know about SM. They had organized it beautifully. The committee members and volunteers work hard. They conduct shubharthis' meetings every week and parents' meetings on alternate Saturdays. Most important thing I like about SM is, the volunteers give answers very humanely, to the best of their ability rather than give simple information about this sickness, mechanically.

After attending this support group, my son is interested to know more and understand about this illness. He reads whatever information he gets and spends about 1/2 an hour every day to discuss this information. Thus he has changed a lot. As I see it, this organization requires financial help to hire a bigger place and for other facilities. If they get help from our government

and others, it can encourage and enable SM people to give better service. I wish them all success.

A shubhankar

I came to know about SAA in 2006 from a newspaper article and also from a book published by SAA. After talking to SAA officials on phone, and visiting their Centres at KNH and the newly opened one at Dhyari, I was convinced that my daughter had the best chance of recovery at SAA. Accordingly I shifted to Pune in April 2007 and my daughter started going to Dhayari Centre which is a nice welcoming place. When she started attending the Centre in mid 2007, her symptoms were quite severe. I must say the Centre Staff took good care and managed her well despite problems. One of us always remained at the Centre, to be around in case of exigency.

For the first few months she had to be persuaded and coaxed to go to the Centre. The medicines were also not suiting her. Gradually the things started improving in the second year and were much better in the 3rd year. The change in the medicines and the rehab Centre activities brought a positive change we never thought would happen. Now the severity of the symptoms has gone down. Whenever she is unwell, she is aware of the problem and there is no aggravation. This was achieved because we ensured at all costs that she regularly participated in all the activities at the Centre, including the weekly self help group meetings where Recovery method is practised. At the Centre, she is able to interact with others having similar problems. It is a good required change for her. She is not confined to home all the time which happened when she was not going to SAA. I strongly believe that along with medicines such day time activities, as provided at the rehab Centre of SAA are most beneficial for those having mental health issues. Our family is grateful to SAA for making our lives liveable. It would be our endeavour to do something in return for the fellow shubhankars and also for shubharthis.

SS

SAA have been making maximum effort to bringing out the talent of our son. He likes stitching and yoga activity more than others though he participates in a variety of them.

I think he should be encouraged to play chess as this game gives good exercise to the brain. It does not matter if the shubharthis misplace some chess pieces. They should be disciplined to gather all the pieces before closing the game. The Centre has provided my son many opportunities of taking up part or full time jobs of temporary nature. That helped him gain experience, more socialisation and earn some pocket money too.

Periodic meetings and contact by the Centre with the caregivers keeps them aware of the

details of shubharthis' progress. So also shubharthi's performance at home is known to the clinical psychologist and the training volunteers.

Posthumous care-cum-residential facility is a must and SAA should initiate coordination in the matter and keep the shubhankars informed by a monthly report.

SG

For almost one year our daughter has been coming to your rehab centre and we have observed improvement in her behaviour. Her irritability is reduced and gradually she has started understanding others. Increase in self-confidence is evident and also in her ability to shoulder responsibility. Socialisation is improving but she needs help to learn taking her own decisions.

With improved attendance and participation in the rehab activities, she should be able to make even greater progress. We very much appreciate you for taking care of her and persons like her, thus giving us lot of relief.

BK

Since joining your Centre there has been a lot of all-round progress in my daughter. Earlier she was required to be given medicines but now she takes them on her own. In the past we had to ask her to do domestic chores but now she not only completes what is to be done and also asks if there is any more to be done. That is a big change in her attitude which is very heartening.

There was time she used to almost faint in a crowded place or a bus. But now she travels by the PMT bus all by herself without any hesitation.

Warli painting on bed-spreads, table cloths, hankies, greeting cards and hand embroidered articles with skills acquired at your Centre has helped our daughter to earn some money and self-esteem.

From all the above counts one can make out that she is a person changed for the better because of support, guidance and encouragement from SAA.

Mrs. K

My brilliant son had to abandon studies after the 12th standard owing to diagnosis of mental illness in 1989. We learnt about SAA's activities only in 2004 but since then we have been participating in almost all the events. My son has benefited by the weekly self-help group meetings and I too have been taking part in the shubhankars' meetings.

Since attending your vocational training centre my son's life is more systematic, more meaningful. With regained confidence and discipline he helps me in most of the jobs like paying electricity bill, bank work, fetching grocery etc. He enjoys attending all family functions. Part of the credit for this also goes to prayers, meditation, writing personal diary, etc. done at home.