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/* ----- The CSS rules offered here are just an example, you may use them as a base.
Shape your 'expand/collapse' cont so that it meets the style of your site. ----- */ #cont {
width:100%; margin:0 auto; padding-bottom:20px; overflow:hidden } .demo {
/*margin:0; padding:1.5em 1.5em 0.75em; border:1px solid #ccc; position:relative*/ }
.collapse p {padding:0 10px 1em} .top{font-size:.9em; text-align:right} #switch, .switch
{margin-bottom:5px; text-align:right} /* --- Headings --- */ .expand{padding-bottom:.75em}
/* --- Links --- */ a:link, a:visited { border:1px dotted #ccc; border-width:0 0 1px;
text-decoration:none; } a:hover, a:active, a:focus { border-style:solid; outline:0 none }
/*a:active, a:focus { color:red; }*/ .expand a { display:block; padding:8px 8px } .expand
a:link, .expand a:visited { border-width:1px;
background-image:url(images/img/arrow-down.gif); background-repeat:no-repeat;
background-position:98% 50%; } .expand a:hover, .expand a:active, .expand a:focus {
text-decoration:underline } .expand a.open:link, .expand a.open:visited { border-style:solid;
background:#eee url(images/img/arrow-up.gif) no-repeat 98% 50%; }
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**Wh
at is a support group? What is the meaning of 'support' in this context?**

Members of a support group are those who have common problem or issue. In our context, it is a mental health challenge arising from a family member. It can be a self-help group in true sense of the term when it is a group of the persons, for the persons and by the persons with an identified common problem. Through sharing information and experiences shubhankars lend moral support to each other. Being interactive yet non-judgmental, these groups help members to overcome feelings of blame and shame, isolation and the pain of stigma. Apart from moral support, members could also render material support to each other, especially in times of distress or emergencies. Even a word of solace or encouragement means a lot at such times. Mostly, a caring response is spontaneous for needy persons.

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What is the significance of the phrase 'self-help?' In a support group do we not help each other?

Then, why is it called 'self-help?'

Generally, persons who face challenges in life muster strength and courage to fight back. The trauma saps the will and energy of a person to such an extent that he may expect help from others without himself putting any effort. What is more, he may succumb to self-pity. Every individual has a right to assistance in times of need. But he also has the first and foremost duty of self-help, helping himself through his own effort. Then only can he expect to rise above the challenge encountered by him.

Self-help is most relevant in the case of shubhankar as the challenge he faces is of long

duration. This means, unless and until he takes care of his own mental and physical well-being, obviously through his own initiatives/self-help, he will not be able to help another needy family member, i.e. the shubharthi. Those who take initiatives in meeting their challenges mostly attract attention and assistance from those around them.

When a person who helps himself and is stronger always has an inner urge to help others who face challenges similar to his own. So, mutual help is an offshoot of self-help.

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How can one find out if there is any such group in one's own town or city?, If there is none, what does one do?

The best way is to contact any mental health professional known to you or in your town as he should be aware of any such support group activity . Alternatively, you could check with a known support group of neighbouring city who may be networking with a support group of your town.

SHGs which operate in cities/towns may have their own websites or may have visited other mental health websites. If you post a query on any of them they should be able to direct you to the SHG nearest to your location. One of the most active and resourceful sites worth visiting is www.karmayog.org either for posting your query or locating a support group convenient for you.

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