

AntharDhwani

Vol-V, January 2021



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A special article on HOPE, a very topical subject, by a team of SAI Counsellors. Quoting the early 18th century English poet, Alexander Pope, - "Hope springs eternal in the human breast; Man never Is, but always To be blest", this article brings together different perspectives of Hope, learnings from Swami and patient stories.

»» Read here full article with associated patient stories.

EDITORIAL

Our previous issue, AntharDhwani Vol IV, was a harbinger of Sai Tele-Counselling happenings. It carried a report of the Sunday E-Meeting in May 2020. Swami had not only opened a new door for the counsellors, but also guided them how it should be done and gave a target date to start this new Seva. As documented in AntharDhwani Vol IV, 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'.

'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.

That this actually happened is described in our article **'SAI Counselling switches to SAI Tele-Counselling'** featured in this issue.

Another topic featured in this issue is an overview of 'Counselling the SAI Way' program and process as practiced at SSSIHMS, Whitefield. This is a landmark program wherein Spirituality Awareness Integration is part of the counselling process for every patient. Acceptance by patients has been excellent, the process respecting their individual faiths and beliefs. Patients are encouraged to pray to the God of their choice. Healing happens through God's Grace is central to SAI Counselling. Happy reading.

The Editorial Team

(Contact person: Umesh Rao <counsellingblr@sssihms.org.in>)





Anthar Dhwani

God is Love, Live in Love

Swami's Message delivered thirty five years ago, on this very auspicious day.

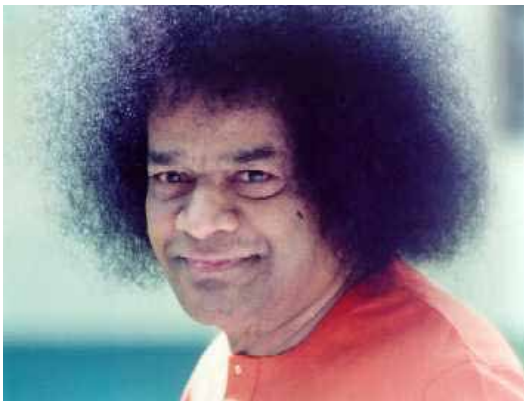
During these troubled times, unprecedented in its nature, and impacting all of humanity the world over, this Divine Message of Swami stating **God is Love, Live in Love**, is so relevant and meaningful.

“Without firm faith in the omnipresence of the Divine, devotion has no meaning. By developing faith, devotion is nourished and devotion enables one to face all the vicissitudes of life with fortitude and serenity, regarding them as dispensations of Providence. Finally, one-pointed devotion for God leads to union with the Divine. Self-realisation is the goal. Love is the means. It is through the cultivation of Love that life can find fulfillment. Everyone must strive to achieve this fulfillment by filling this human adventure with the sweetness of love and transforming it into an expression of Divinity. This is My benediction for all of you.”

- Divine Discourse, Jan 19, 1986.

“Even those who deny God will tread the pilgrim road, melting their hearts out in tears of travail”

- Baba. - Sai Inspires, 20 Dec, 2020.



Faith is the basis for all creation. Where there is faith and love, everything else will be added unto such a person. Faith devoid of love has no use. Love and faith must be together like mutually attractive magnetic poles.

- Sathya Sai Baba, 26 December 2007



DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE FOR ANTHARDHWANI

Telecounselling in testing times

Loving and grateful pranams to Bhagawan!

The occurrence of any ill health in a person is a stressful time for the individual and their families. There are so many sources of anxiety, uncertainty, fears and loss of confidence. The situation created by the pandemic has added to the difficulties by complicating treatment, restricting access, augmenting expenses and impacting recovery

This has created a situation where less help is available at a time of greater need for guidance, compassionate care and mental solace.

Dr. Shekhar Rao

It is by the inspiration and Grace of Bhagawan that our counselling team has created a system of tele-counselling, whereby patients and families are enabled to reach out to the trained counsellors, get their concerns addressed and discover methods to cope with the stresses and see the difficult period through.

The team has to be greatly commended for having discovered a method to continue their invaluable services to patients and their families in these testing times. Their thoughts and efforts in this domain make for insightful reading and a source to strengthen our own spiritual sadhana and sense of gratitude for the Grace and opportunities given to us by Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba

Bhagawan has once said **“illness is caused more by the malnutrition of the mind than of the body”**. So while the medical services of the hospital render their best efforts to correct the physical component of the illness, the mental aspect as well as the deepest unsaid concerns of patients and their families are addressed by our counsellors with love, sympathy and patience permeated by the spiritual teachings and inspiration given by Bhagawan. The readers will have a chance to understand and share this experience in going through this issue.





Bhagawan Baba, Divine Discourse, March 05, 1968

“Constant recollection of the glory and majesty of God, who is the Indweller, through the instrumentality of the Name, helps to purify the heart. That is the B12 vitamin that promotes spiritual health. There is no need for any other tablet. Life is a pilgrimage where one drags the feet along the rough and thorny road. With the name of God on the lips, one will have no thirst; with the Form of God in the heart, one will feel no exhaustion. The company of the holy will inspire one to travel in hope and faith. The assurance of God is within all, that He is ever near, will lend strength to the limbs and courage to the eye. Remember that with every step, you are nearing God; and God too takes ten steps towards you. There is no stopping place in this pilgrimage; it is one continuous journey, through day and night, through valley and desert, through tears and smiles, through death and birth, and through tomb and womb.”

SAI COUNSELLING SWITCHES TO SAI TELE-COUNSELLING



The past year 2020 witnessed an unprecedented life-changing phenomenon across all countries globally. COVID-19, the disease caused by the Coronavirus has been prevalent actively in India since March 2019 causing widespread misery, fear psychosis and a drastic change of lifestyle in all walks of life, socially or professionally.

Like all other healthcare facilities, our hospital, Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Medical Sciences, Whitefield, Bangalore, also curtailed its services drastically. Consequently, the Department of Counselling had to stop the counselling services in the hospital. The counsellors, all of whom live off-campus, commuting to the hospital daily, became homebound because of the lock-down.

The SAI Counsellors felt a sudden void in their lives without the hospital counselling seva for the patients, which had not only become a part of their lives but also lent meaning to it. Their intense faith in Swami gave them the confidence that His Sankalpa would prevail. Lo and behold the miracle happened heralding the beginning of SAI Tele-Counselling!

Swami's Grace and Sankalpa empowered His instrument, Gita Umesh, HOD of the Counselling Department to take up this new challenge. With her usual zeal and missionary spirit and backed by Swami's Grace, Gita trained nineteen SAI Counsellors during May and June, 2020.

The counsellors were excited but curious to know what the training program would involve. What new skills were to be learnt? It was apparent that the mobile phones would provide an implementable solution given the variety of challenges that had to be addressed. The training program presented to the SAI Counsellors for Tele-Counselling focussed on honing the voice communication skills of every counsellor individually. The counsellors were apprehensive about their capability to adapt to this new form of counselling. Their implicit trust in Swami enabled the leap of faith.

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 SAI TeleCounsellors were ready to get started by July, Guru Purnima being the target date. However the number of inpatients in the hospital was not sufficient to be shared amongst all the counsellors; the language spread was also missing. While the counsellors were ready there were not enough patients. Gita was handling the small number of inpatients and evolving the interface with the doctors and nurses to optimize the time slot for counselling.

However Swami had already arranged work for the counsellors. Back in 2018, by Swami's prompting the Counselling Department had wanted to reconnect with discharged RHD (Rheumatic Heart Disease) patients to check on their well-being after returning to their homes. A refresher course on tele-counselling of RHD patients was conducted and the data of RHD patients, especially their contact numbers, counselled during 2019 was collected. Tele-Counselling for these patients was planned to start in early 2020, but got delayed due the coronavirus.

In July 2020 by Swami's Grace, Tele-Counselling for both the RHD patients discharged in 2019, and for the inpatients in the hospital commenced in earnest. From July to December of 2020 a total of 720 patients have been counselled by the newly trained team of SAI Tele-Counsellors. Details are provided alongside.

Tele-Counselling has revealed some very positive features:

- The same counsellor stays connected with the patient/caregiver through all stages in the hospital and also after the patient is discharged.
- Bonding is far superior and the patients happy. Very often the patients reach out voluntarily to the counsellors.
- Feedback from doctors and nurses has been positive. A big step towards greater team spirit, and towards SAICARE for the patients.
- Counsellors are very much more relaxed not having to fight Bangalore's notorious traffic jams, wasting at least a couple of hours to and fro from their homes to the hospital.
- Communication technology is on the upswing, worldwide and in India. This augurs well for enhancing the quality of SAI Tele-Counselling.

Swami's Sankalpa and Grace has enabled this new Seva activity for the Counselling Department and we can rest assured He has more for this Seva, so dear to His Heart. SAI Tele-Counselling is here to stay.

Thank You Swami.



The SAI Tele-Counselling Team

Locations (●) show where SAI Tele-Counsellors have reached out for connecting with patients and their families. 720 patients up to end December 2020 have benefited from SAI Tele-Counselling.



Gita Umesh
HOD/Mentor/Trainer



Sadhana Rao



Manisha Bardoloi



Radhika
Yadalam



Saroo Annaiah



Nirmala
Murthy



Lalitha Anil



Anuradha
Chandramouli



Harita Rao



Ashalatha
Chandrashekar



Sukanya
Chattopadhyay



Sharada
Gopinath



Vimala Oak



Mala
Somashekar



Meenakshi
Uchil



Jayashree
Ravindran



Parvathy
Narayanan



Jaya Tadimeti



Subha
Srinivasan



Mallika C.R

COUNSELLING THE SAI WAY PROGRAM AT SSSIHMS, WHITEFIELD



The Divine Counsellor - Healing With Love

Counsellors reach out to the patients to help them reach within to draw upon their inner strength

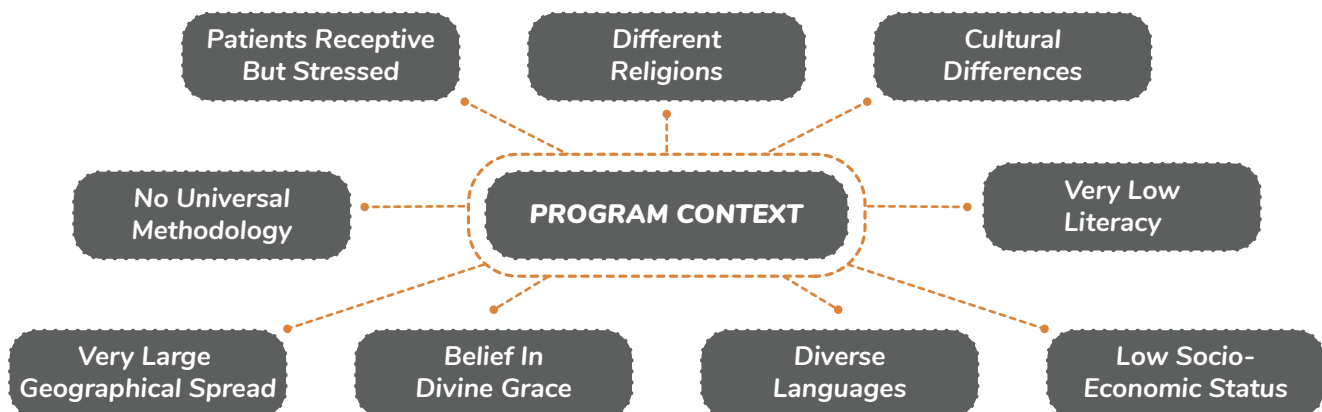
Counselling addresses the emotional needs and fosters the inherent spirituality of the patient thereby complementing primary medical roles - of the doctors, nurses, dieticians, physiotherapists and other medical staff in treating the patient's illness. Patients are told to pray to the God of their choice for Healing happens only by God's Grace.



PROGRAM CHALLENGES

Patients after counselling realise that '*mind is the key to perception of illness*'.

'Mind alone is the cause of either bondage or liberation' - Sathya Sai Baba



Counsellor Training- EMPHASIS ON EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

"Practical knowledge is more important than theoretical knowledge." -Sathya Sai Baba.

"Congruence, Acceptance, Empathy which apply especially to the therapist, are qualities of experience, not intellectual information. If they are to be acquired, they must, in my opinion, be acquired through an experiential training."

Carl R. Rogers

Humility and dedication – HALLMARKS OF A COUNSELLOR

“Service in the hospital has to be done with humility and dedication. Dedication is different from service, which has an element of Ego”. – Baba.

Undesirable Manifestations of the EGO in counselling.

- Being judgmental or patronizing.
- Intellectual arrogance.
- Societal – Class superiority.
- Insensitiveness due to your own good health.
- Spiritual superiority – tendency to impose values.
- Body language – overbearing or aloof attitudes.



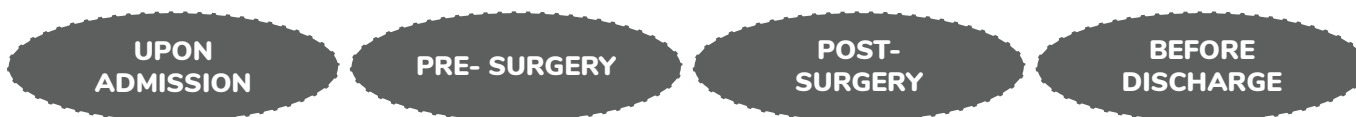
Values - THE BEDROCK OF SAI COUNSELLING

SATHYA - TRUTH	Genuine interest in knowing the patient behind the illness.
DHARMA - RIGHT CONDUCT	Maintaining confidentiality, distance and boundaries with patient and family.
SHANTHI - PEACE	Creating an awareness in the patient of the inner space within to contemplate and realize the innate strength and peace within.
PREMA - LOVE	Active listening with empathy and unconditional love which help the patient in sharing and unburdening deep seated anxieties and fears.
AHIMSA - NON-VIOLENCE	Caring by being sensitive to the patient's needs and sentiments thereby paving the way towards building a trusting bond.



Counseling the SAI Way - THE PROCESS

“There is only one language. The language of the Heart.” – Sathya Sai Baba.



Counselors Communicate Through
Common Language
Empathy
Establishing rapport
Listening Sensitively



GUIDELINES FROM SATHYA SAI BABA- A spiritual practice exuding LOVE



“Live with love, Move with love, Speak with love, Think with love, Act with love. This is the most fruitful spiritual practice”. - Sathya Sai Baba.

- “Look upon them as your own kith and kin, as your special guests and as your closest friend.
 - Attend to them lovingly and with unflinching care. Your words should enthuse, encourage and inspire the patients.
 - You cannot always oblige, but you can always speak obligingly.
 - Your loving attitude towards the patients will bring in a sea change in them.”
- Sathya Sai Baba.

The BRMC (Body Relaxation and Mind Cleansing) Therapy



LOOKING FORWARD

- By Swami's Sankalpa and Grace, the year 2020 has heralded the beginning of a new chapter - SAI Tele-Counselling.
- **'Voice Communication the SAI Way'** training for the Tele-Counsellors.
- Counselling for all inpatients at Pre and Post-Surgery, and Discharge stages started in July 2020.
- Total number of patients tele-counselled - 720 till 31st December 2020.
- Counsellors work from home, travel time and stress avoided.
- Tele-Counselling extended to post-discharge after patients have returned home to ensure patients follow hospital discharge advice.
- Counsellors get to bond with the patient's family to foster their well-being.
- Patients grateful to have a caring SAI Counsellor connection at the hospital speaking their own language and always ready to HELP - 'SAI CARE'.



TELE-COUNSELLING HIGHLIGHTS

- Tele-Counselling for post-discharge RHD (Rheumatic Heart Disease) patients was taken up from July 2020 as a pilot project.
- All RHD patients treated, discharged and counselled in the hospital during 2019 and up to February 2020 (pre-COVID period) who could be traced from our records were contacted in their homes.
- Patients and families were happy that a counsellor from Sai Baba's hospital had called them in their language, about their well-being!
- The counsellors learnt more about their families, their lifestyles and the challenges they faced - things we at the hospital didn't know earlier.
- Swami's Vision of 'Care for Life' for His patients is emerging. He has made us take the first step. He will take ten! His goal 'SAICARE'

SAI SANKALPA AND GRACE



"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

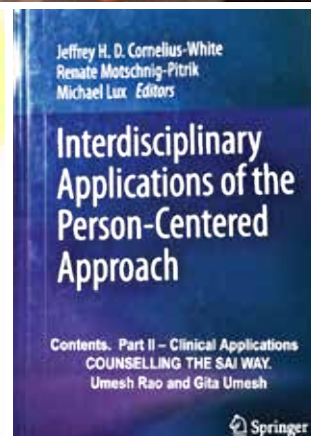
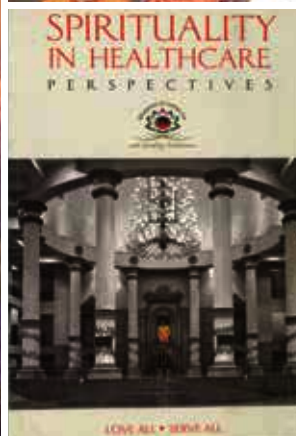
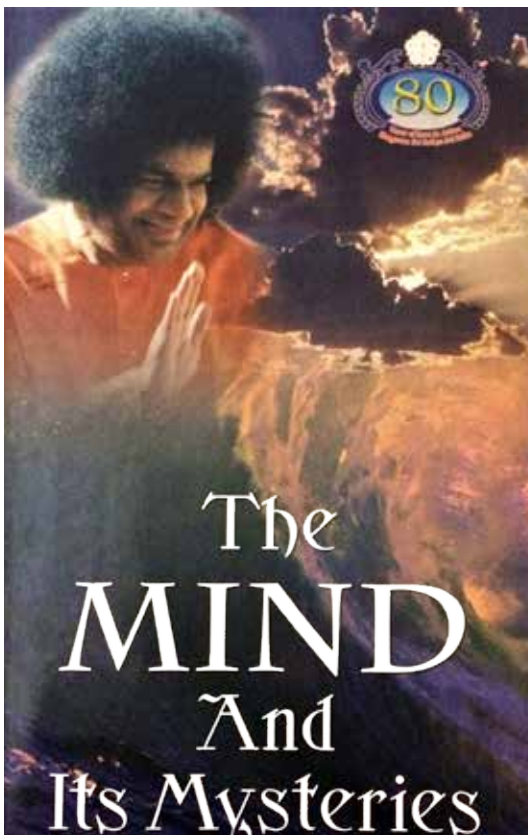


5 November 2010



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.



Layout design- Sailatha Bopanna Aiyappa

" 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.

