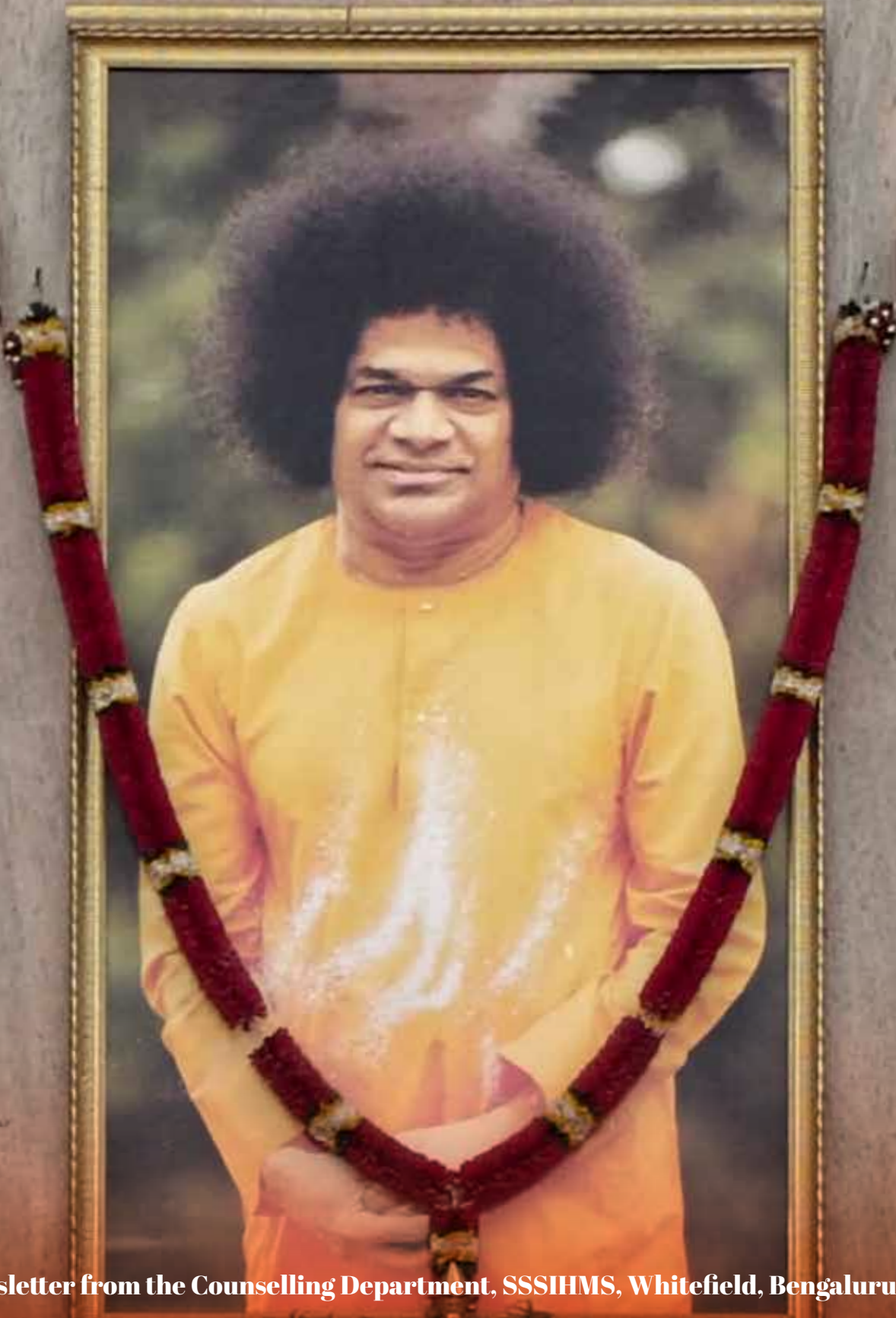


AntharDhwani

Vol-XVI, July 2026 | Guru Purnima Edition



CONTENT

- 1 Swami's Divine Message
- 2 Director's Message for AntharDhwani XVI
- 3 *A renowned doctor's viewpoint on "Who should be a Doctor?"*
- 4 • *Perfect Despite Imperfections - 'A Reflection on the Healing Spirit of Person-Centered Counselling'*
- 5 • *Self-regulation and Family Harmony*
- 6 • *Divine Faith*
- 6 • *Offer a Little Love to God and Receive Infinite Grace*
- 7 • *Acceptance and Emotional Healing Through Counselling*
- 8 • *Agony - And a Way Forward with Swamy's Grace*
- 9 • *The Healing Touch of Sai's Compassion*
- 10 • *A Ray of Hope in their Moment of Grief*
- 11 • *Faith, Hope, Prayer and Healing – A Journey of a Child with Heart Disease*
- 12 • *Knitted Emotions*
- 13 • *Life is a Game, Play it*
- 14 • *Self-confidence and Surrender Removes Fear and Anxiety*
- 15 • *Strength in Service, Peace in Surrender*
- 16 • *Transformation*

EDITORIAL

In this edition of AntharDhwani we narrate fourteen patient stories based on their hospital experience at our hospital. No photos, no names - only the uplifted emotions and feelings of the patients as well as care givers through their journey in our hospital. Most patients, who come to our hospital, experience a wide mix of emotions like fear and anxiety while simultaneously dealing with the bodily health issues. The counsellors then empathically and lovingly guide them to unburden and encourage them to exhibit courage and faith in their God and thus cope with their fear, anxiety, sadness, anger and grief. They are taught the BRMC Therapy to give relief.

"Man should develop firm faith in God. Faith should be like your life-breath, which goes on inhaling and exhaling at all times without respite. Respiration goes on, whatever work you may be doing and whatever be the state of your mind. Likewise, in all situations and at all times, your faith in God should never leave you. It should not change according to whether your desires are fulfilled or not. Like your lifebreath, your faith should remain steady, through joy and sorrow, loss and gain, pain and pleasure. Treat whatever happens as good for you. Have that sense of fortitude".
– Sri Sathya Sai Baba.

Our SAI Counsellors continue to do yeoman service and as one of our Sai Counsellor put it, "we are Swamy's foot soldiers and Seva is a gift for us from God".

Jai Sai Ram.....

The Editorial Team

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



Anthar Dhwani

Swami's Guru Purnima Message

This day, Guru Purnima, is celebrated by people as Thanksgiving Day for their spiritual preceptors, those who initiated them into spiritual disciplines, mantras recitals, meditation, japa and the study of sacred texts. We have a popular saying, "Without a preceptor, all learning is blind." But this refers to authentic Gurus, those who have the double qualification of gu and ru: gu meaning, devoid of gunas and ru meaning, devoid of ruupa - that is to say, those who have transcended Form and Flavour, those who have merged in God, or the Atma Itself. It is only these who can help you to attain.

The Vedas declare that the Mother, the Father, the Acharya (Preceptor) have to be treated as God. The Mother brings forth and trains the emotions and intelligence, and fosters and feeds the body during the critical first few years of life. The father protects and guides, and supports till the child is able to fend for itself. The Acharya opens the inner eye; he shows the way, for joy and happiness, here and hereafter. So, the responsibility of the Guru is overwhelming.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba's Discourse at Prashanthigram, on July 29, 1969.





Om Sri Sai Ram
SAI COUNSELLING

DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE - Dr D C Sundaresh

ECHOES OF HEALING: NURTURING THE MIND, BODY, AND SPIRIT

It gives me immense pleasure and a deep sense of gratitude to present the latest edition of Anthardhwani, the biannual newsletter published by the Counselling Department of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Medical Sciences, Whitefield.

The word Anthardhwani translates to "the inner voice." In the bustling corridors of a tertiary healthcare institute where clinical precision and advanced medical technology save lives every day, it is easy for the quiet, inner voices of distress, anxiety, and fear to be drowned out. It is precisely in this space that our Counselling Department acts as a bridge—listening to those subtle inner echoes and offering comfort, hope, and emotional sanctuary to our patients and their families.

At SSSIHMS, our guiding philosophy, inspired by Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, has always been centered on Love in Action. True healing transcends physical treatment; it encompasses emotional resilience, mental well-being, and spiritual solace. Medical science can repair the body, but it is empathy, understanding, and active listening that heal the soul.

Anthardhwani serves as a vibrant canvas reflecting this holistic vision. Through its pages, the newsletter captures:

Inspiring Stories: Real journeys of hope, transformation, and emotional recovery.

Psychological Insights: Practical tools and perspectives to foster mental wellness and coping mechanisms.

Compassionate Care: The selfless efforts of our counsellors who stand as pillars of strength for patients during their most vulnerable moments.

I extend my heartfelt appreciation to the editorial team, counsellors, contributors, and healthcare professionals who have poured their dedication into bringing this publication to life. Your commitment to fostering mental and emotional well-being within our hospital ecosystem is truly commendable.

May the thoughts and reflections shared in this edition of Anthardhwani inspire us all to listen more deeply—to ourselves, to our patients, and to the world around us—with love and compassion.

Jai Sai Ram.....

With warm regards and best wishes,

Dr D.C. Sundaresh,

Director, Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Medical Sciences, Whitefield.



A renowned doctor's viewpoint on “Who should be a Doctor?”

“People who enter the healing profession should have a sense of vocation and compassion; it cannot be seen just as a career or business unlike as in other fields. It is also very important that medical schools should incorporate spirituality in their curriculum so that when medical students graduate they are equipped to address this dimension also to promote complete healing of the patient. In conclusion we need to realise: There is a power that will light up your way to health, happiness, peace and success, but you can achieve all these only if you turn towards this light”.

Dr. A.S.Hegde, Former Director, and Chairman, Department of Neurosciences, SSSIHMS, Whitefield.

PERFECT DESPITE IMPERFECTIONS - 'A REFLECTION ON THE HEALING SPIRIT OF PERSON-CENTERED COUNSELLING'

A withered leaf may appear fragile and imperfect to the eye, yet it still carries the beauty of its journey, the memory of life, and the silent grace of nature. In the same way, every human being, despite emotional wounds, physical limitations, or personal struggles, carries within them an untouched Divine essence.

This case study reflects a profound spiritual truth: **Perfection belongs to the Soul.**

A flower does not become less beautiful because one petal is bent. Likewise, a person's suffering, illness or challenges do not diminish the Divine spark within them. Often, it is through the acceptance of one's imperfections that the doorway to inner transformation gently opens.

During a counselling session, I met a young teenager who had been brought up in a deeply traditional and conservative environment. She was living with a chronic illness for which there was no cure, and the emotional burden of this reality had deeply affected her self-worth. Due to her condition and the circumstances surrounding her life, she believed she had lost her womanhood and her place in society. Watching her friends settle into married life and motherhood intensified her feelings of rejection, vulnerability, anger, and helplessness. As the session unfolded in the non-judgmental and compassionate spirit of Person-Centered SAI Counselling, a gradual shift began to emerge. Instead of focusing on her perceived losses, the counselling process gently helped her reconnect with her inner strengths.

What stood out most was her unwavering faith in God and the solace she found in daily prayers. Beneath her pain was a deeply spiritual soul seeking meaning, dignity, and self-worth. As she explored her strengths further, she began to recognize that life could still hold purpose and fulfillment despite her illness. She reflected upon her deep knowledge of scriptures and expressed a desire to teach spiritual values and devotional literature to young children at a spiritual center. For the first time during the session, hope replaced despair.

Towards the end of the interaction, she shared a thought that beautifully captured the essence of her transformation: **"We may be imperfect in form, yet we are perfect in the Love and Divinity that reside within us."**

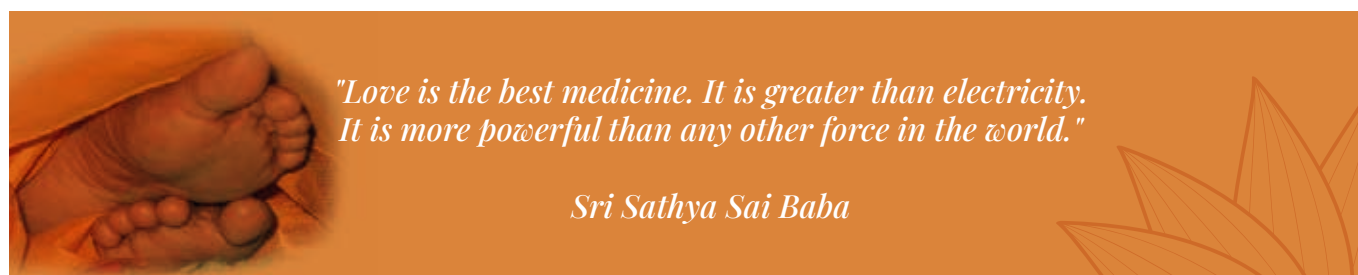
That moment became a powerful reminder that healing does not always mean curing an illness or changing external circumstances. Sometimes, true healing begins when a person rediscovers the light already present within themselves and learns to live meaningfully with acceptance, courage, and faith.

This experience reaffirmed for me the importance of unconditional acceptance, empathy, and faith-centered listening in counselling. When individuals are seen beyond their pain and limitations, they often discover strengths they themselves had forgotten.

The withered leaf chosen for this article symbolizes not decay, but resilience, acceptance, surrender, and inner beauty. Even in imperfection, there is grace. Even in suffering, there can be awakening and within every wounded heart resides an undiminished spark of the Divine.

Jai Sai Ram.....

Contributor - SAI Counsellor Gita Umesh, HOD, Department of Counselling SSSIHMS, Whitefield.



SELF-REGULATION AND FAMILY HARMONY

Just as birds fly together in harmony by adjusting smoothly to one another, family members can create a supportive and loving home atmosphere by adjusting their own needs and feelings with those of others. When such self-regulation is guided by Sathya, Dharma (righteous conduct), Shanthi, Prema, and Ahimsa, families not only become places of trust, growth, healing, but also for praying together.

A 54-year-old housewife accompanied by her husband as caregiver was admitted in SSSIHMS due to a Cardiac ailment. During her treatment, the Counsellor taught the couple the Body Relaxation and Mind Conditioning (BRMC) Therapy after which her husband repeatedly expressed his gratitude to the hospital staff.

Although the patient was discharged in a stable condition, on reaching home she appeared sad and withdrawn. She was reluctant to talk to others or participate in family discussions. The family members reported this change to the Counsellor and added that they had not altered their behaviour towards her whatsoever.

After taking the patient through a counselling session, it became clear that her sinking mood was due to her fear about the future. Her major concern was whether she would be able to continue supporting her family as before or whether she would become a burden to her loved ones. Being a simple lady from a humble background, she found it difficult to understand that her illness had been successfully treated. The Counsellor listened carefully, understood her concerns, and reflected on the emotions expressed by the patient.

Since the patient's husband and family members had not realised that emotional healing was still necessary, the Counsellor gently conveyed that just as a heart needs good blood circulation, it also needs hope, purpose, and meaningful relationships just as much. She further counselled the family members that they should improve their ability to recognise her emotions and respond accordingly with patience and love. Her recovery and complete healing would require their affection, encouragement and attention more than ever before. She added that healing is promoted when a person feels valued, heard, understood, and cared for and most importantly to help replace fear with confidence and hope.

Having said that, the Counsellor suggested that the family pray together, spend time in meaningful conversations, appreciate one another regularly, avoid criticism and blame, thus supporting one another with kindness and understanding. Family harmony which is essential for health and well-being must be nurtured through the daily practice of Sathya (Truth), Dharma (Righteous Conduct), Shanthi (Peace), Prema (Love), and Ahimsa (Non-violence).

These values apply equally to counsellors and patients. In Person-Centred Counselling, Carl Rogers described similar principles using different terminology:

Sathya: Congruence, Genuineness.

Dharma: Congruence, Genuineness.

Shanthi: Empathy.

Prema: Unconditional Positive Regard (UPR)/Acceptance, Empathy.

Ahimsa: Unconditional Positive Regard (UPR)/Acceptance.

This case illustrates how emotional healing after physical recovery depends greatly on family understanding, empathy, and support. When family members practise self-regulation guided by love and values, they create an environment that promotes both physical and psychological well-being.

Jai Sai Ram.....

Contributor - SAI Counsellor Manimeghalai, Department of Counselling SSSIHMS, Whitefield.



*"You are not one person, but three: the one you think you are,
the one others think you are, and the one you really are."*

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

DIVINE FAITH

Every patient and every caregiver who comes to our hospital for treatment carries emotions of fear, anxiety and worry. When they experience loving care, worry transforms to faith, knowing that Swami is guiding and taking care of them.

The daughter, Shilpa (name changed), caregiver of the patient (her mother), having heard praises about the wonderful Divine space and quality treatment provided at SSSIHMS by an uncle, was assured that her mother would get the best care here. The patient had undergone a cardiac surgery in Swami's hospital a few years back. Now when Shilpa brought her mother for a check-up, the doctor advised another surgery. The patient went back to her home town, worried and scared thinking about the surgery but at the same time being a devotee of Swamy and having firm faith in Sri Krishna believed that Divine Grace would always protect her.

On the day of discharge, the Counsellor met the patient as well as the caregiver. She noticed a certain calmness in them and their total surrender to Swamy was predominant. On probing the caregiver empathetically, the Counsellor understood that their father had passed away and the mother being alone was obviously anxious and worried about the surgery. She was happy and grateful to Swami for having been given the best treatment possible and being taken care of. She felt secure and cared for by the doctors and staff too for their patience and guidance.

The Counsellor guided them through a Body Relaxation and Mind Cleansing (BRMC) Therapy, which helped them to focus on their inner strengths and offer their gratitude with faith to Swami. Their anxiety, fear and insecurity were transformed to Hope, Courage and Clarity. The patient's motivation to cope with life is not only her faith in Lord Krishna and Swamy but also the love and support provided to her by her two daughters.

Jai Sai Ram.....

Contributor - SAI Counsellor Subha Srinivasan, Department of Counselling SSSIHMS, Whitefield.



OFFER A LITTLE LOVE TO GOD AND RECEIVE INFINITE GRACE

"We think we listen, but very rarely do we listen with real understanding, and true empathy. Yet listening of this very special kind, is one of the most potent forces for change. As persons are empathetically heard, it becomes more possible for them to listen more accurately to the flow of inner experiencings". - Carl R. Rogers, "A Way of Being".

The patient, a young woman, was admitted to our hospital as a neurological patient and referred to the Counselling Department. She was brought up in a deeply religious and a large joint family which was rooted in culture and traditions. She unburdened to the Counsellor that since a very young age of five, she had been witness to the untimely demise of her father and uncles. As a child she could neither understand what was happening nor express her thoughts or emotions with anyone. This gradually affected her health, nervous system and put her in depression. Meanwhile she completed her education and took up a job in a nearby city. Since the job demanded her to stay away from her family, she opted to stay in a shared accommodation in the city. Unfortunately, due to her childhood trauma, during the absence of her roommate, while alone, she would be in a state of extreme fear of death that would lead to suicidal thoughts. She consulted a psychiatrist who counselled and prescribed some medication to her.

During the counselling session she was taught the Body Relaxation and Mind Cleansing (BRMC) Therapy. It helped her feel extremely calm and relaxed. The session helped her to understand the importance of being mindful and to live in the present moment. The Counsellor found that her hobbies were offering prayers to her favourite God, family time, participation in social service activities and music. The Counsellor then advised her to keep a soft pillow by her side while sleeping and take time to sing her heart out to her Kula Devatha Lord Venkateshwara on a daily basis.

After a short period of time, the Counsellor received a lovely message from her which said that she had noticed a lot of improvement after implementing the suggestions of the Counsellor and that she presently was out of any kind of depression bouts. She expressed her gratitude to her God saying that a few minutes a day that we offer our love to the Lord and the Lord bestows us with unlimited grace and blessings. The tough times in one's life pave the path to move closer to God. A call from the depths of the heart is enough for Him to lift and carry the individual who has surrendered everything to God.

"Cultivate nearness with Me in the heart, and it will be rewarded" - Sathya Sai Baba.

Jai Sai Ram.....

Contributor - SAI Counsellor Ashalata, Department of Counselling SSSIHMS, Whitefield.

ACCEPTANCE AND EMOTIONAL HEALING THROUGH COUNSELLING



The Serenity Prayer
**God grant me the serenity
to accept the things I cannot change;
courage to change the things I can;
and wisdom to know the difference.**



In SAI Counselling, Acceptance refers to a person's willingness to acknowledge the reality of a situation; it is a conscious and courageous act of facing life as it unfolds.

An elderly woman was scheduled to undergo a cardiac procedure in our hospital. Just one day before the procedure, she unexpectedly lost her otherwise healthy husband. The suddenness of the loss left her emotionally shattered and deeply shocked. She entered the counselling session carrying immense grief, confusion, fear, and emotional distress. Her husband had not merely been a life partner but also her closest companion, guide, and emotional support system.

Emotional Expression During Counselling

As the counselling session progressed, she slowly began to unburden herself. With tears and pauses, she started sharing memories of their life together after retirement. She spoke about how both of them, after years of demanding professional lives, had finally found joy in simple companionship.

They would go on motorbike rides together, visit parks, spend time amidst nature, and cherish peaceful moments with each other. While narrating these experiences, she gradually began reconnecting with those joyful memories rather than remaining consumed solely by the pain of loss.

She expressed with deep emotion: "My friend, partner, lover, guide, and husband has left me."

At the same time, she shared her spiritual beliefs. She said she believed in the Universal Energy, Shivji and also drew strength from Swamy's love and service toward humanity. Her faith became an important emotional anchor during her moment of despair.

Therapeutic Process

The counselling session focused primarily on active and silent listening. Rather than interrupting or directing her emotions, the therapeutic space allowed her to express grief freely and safely. She gradually became more aware of her own emotional state. As she verbalized her memories, pain, love, and fears, she also began witnessing her experience with greater clarity.

The process of unburdening empowered her internally. Instead of suppressing her grief, she allowed herself to feel it fully. This acceptance of reality — painful yet truthful — helped reduce her emotional resistance and inner turmoil. The Counsellor taught her the Body Relaxation and Mind Cleansing (BRMC) Therapy which gave her peace of mind.

Outcome

With emotional support, compassionate listening, and spiritual reassurance, she slowly regained inner strength, coping capacity, and optimism. Acceptance did not erase her grief, but it helped her face reality with courage and emotional balance.

The counselling session became a turning point that enabled her to emotionally stabilize herself enough to proceed with her cardiac procedure successfully.

Conclusion

This case illustrates how Acceptance, Empathy, and Compassionate counselling can help individuals navigate profound personal loss. When people are given a safe and non-judgmental space to express their emotions, healing begins naturally.

Acceptance is not about forgetting pain or "moving on" quickly. It is about acknowledging reality, honouring emotions, and finding the strength to continue living meaningfully despite loss.

Jai Sai Ram.....

Contributor - SAI Counsellor Mala Somasekar, Department of Counselling SSSIHMS, Whitefield.

AGONY - AND A WAY FORWARD WITH SWAMY'S GRACE

This is a story of a patient who went through endless calamities in her life and how Swamy showered His Grace and showed her how His unseen hand was helping her at every step.

The Counsellor met the patient, a married woman in the Shrine of the Counselling department at our hospital. She appeared very disturbed. As the Counsellor lovingly calmed her down and enquired what the matter was the patient started unburdening in her mother tongue without a pause, as though she had been waiting for someone to listen to her since a long time.

Apparently, since the last ten years, her problems had started piling up one after another. Though she had total support from her husband, the situations they faced were extremely difficult.

Firstly, she had to undergo an open-heart surgery. Soon after that, her husband met with an accident wherein he injured his leg. While they were still struggling to cope with this, their son developed a skin infection. Just when they somehow managed to adjust to these difficulties, another major setback was when her in-laws made them vacate their home. They shifted to a small single room and managed to survive there. Then came another blow when her husband lost his job. Despite everything, their prayers to Anjaneya, their family deity, and Swamy continued, as praying was the only option they had. The room they lived in had a tin roof, and during summer it felt like an oven. Yet, with prayers on their lips and with whatever little savings they had, they somehow continued managing their lives.

In desperation, the patient visited an astrologer who suggested that she perform certain pujas and prepare prasad to offer in the river. She followed the instructions sincerely, but while offering the prasad in the river, she slipped, fell, and injured her back. She was admitted to SSSIHMS. After some treatment, the neuro doctor referred her to a cardiac doctor, who confirmed that she had no heart-related issue.

After recovering slightly, she decided to start a small tea shop near her house so that she could financially support her family. Parallely, another person opened a tea shop next to hers and wooed all her customers. At this point, she had no other choice but to close her tea shop. She completely lost hope and faith in God. She became depressed and lethargic. During all of this, not only the children but the whole family suffered emotionally and mentally. "How can I have faith in God? Please tell me," She asked the Counsellor. Helplessly she conveyed that God too was against her and had abandoned her.

Throughout the conversation, she kept crying uncontrollably. The Counsellor who listened intently up until now, was in a dilemma. She silently prayed to Swamy and asked Him for guidance, after which she gently led the patient through the Body Relaxation and Mind Conditioning (BRMC) Therapy which calmed the patient's mind which was in turmoil.

The Counsellor then gently spoke to the patient, "If you feel I am like a mother to you, may I speak openly with you?" The patient agreed. The Counsellor explained in the patient's mother tongue that in every negative situation, there was always something positive hidden within it and that we just have to search for it, even though it may be difficult. She reminded her that God is always with us in every situation, whether good or bad and continued to say that "You are Swamy's child, and you believe in Him. Swamy has said many times that even if a devotee leaves Him, HE never leaves them." The patient agreed.

The Counsellor then pointed out the positives in her life: Her open-heart surgery was successfully done free of cost at SSSIHMS. Her husband had always stood by her, and his leg surgery at Swamy's hospital was also successful. Her son's treatment was completed, and all of them had recovered physically. Although her in-laws abandoned them, her mother supported her. She reminded the patient that Swamy had once come in her dream, given her an injection, and blessed her. Her children had remained loving and supportive throughout all the hardships and even though she was emotionally shattered, she was physically fit.

The Counsellor continued, "Bad times do not last forever. The sky is darkest before sunrise. Swamy has always been with you. You are a very strong woman to have come through all these troubles, and I am proud of you." The patient was deeply touched by these words. She got up, hugged the Counsellor, and said, "Now I have two mothers. You have brought me back to my senses. I know Swamy is always there for me." She again started crying, but this time she smiled and said, "These are tears of relief and happiness Maa."

Finally, she said that she was a good cook and that she would go home, make payasam, first offer it to Swamy, and then feed her family.

Jai Sai Ram.....

Contributor - SAI Counsellor Aparna Hoskote, Department of Counselling SSSIHMS, Whitefield.

THE HEALING TOUCH OF SAI'S COMPASSION

Our Swami, Sri Sathya Sai Baba is the Embodiment of Love and Compassion. Compassion is the deep understanding of the suffering of another person, coupled with a deep desire to alleviate that suffering and turn it into a supportive, active response to help the person heal or find comfort.

One such person was a farmer who along with his family experienced love and compassion at SSSIHMS. Before finding this institution, he desperately sought help across the country travelling to many hospitals, using whatever limited resources he could muster to save his three children. It was his brother's friend who recommended Sai Baba's hospital, SSSIHMS, Whitefield.

The farmer earned his livelihood by growing and selling vegetables. He is humbly convinced that had it not been for Sri Sathya Sai Baba's Specialty hospital, his family would not be together today.

Upon their arrival to SSSIHMS, the doctors suggested screening the three children. When all the siblings were diagnosed with a hole in their hearts, the parents were tested as well, leading to the diagnosis of his wife with the same condition. The children's surgery as well as the surgery of his wife was carried out successfully at SSSIHMS. Before finding this institution, he had desperately sought help across India. As a man of modest financial means, he reflects that there are countless impoverished people like him who cannot afford even a single medical procedure. It's because of Sai Baba he says he was able to get four complex surgeries done all of which were provided entirely free of charge.

The father unburdened to the Counsellor that the family's journey was preceded by immense hardship. In 2019, he lost his mother, and the following year, his mother-in-law also passed away. While returning home after completing the final rites, his eldest son was accidentally electrocuted and fell unconscious. It was during the subsequent hospitalization for this accident that his children's heart condition was first diagnosed. While the family was still grieving the loss of both grandmothers, they had otherwise been completely unaware of the children's underlying heart issues. Paradoxically, he believes the electrocution was a blessing from Sai Baba, as it ultimately led them to discover Swamy's hospital and thus save his family.

He notes that in spite of the treatment being completely free, the facilities are unparalleled. Doctors and every staff member work with a profound sense of responsibility and dedication to Sai Baba, treating patients with immense kindness and a noble mindset. For him and his family this place was more than a hospital, it was nothing less than a temple, filled with peace. Since the time they first began coming here for treatment of his oldest child, the family has felt HIS presence and has also continuously experienced Blessings in abundance.

The counselling sessions helped him regain a sense of calm, allowing him to overcome depression and loneliness. By visiting the shrine area of the counselling department daily, practicing Body Relaxation and Mind Conditioning (BRMC) Therapy and listening to the Counsellor's guidance both in person or on the phone, he found the inner strength to confront, understand, and navigate his personal hardships. He is convinced that Sai will also provide the path to overcome problems through total surrender.

Jai Sai Ram.....

Contributor - SAI Counsellor Radhika, Department of Counselling SSSIHMS, Whitefield.



*"Where there is faith, there is love; where there is love,
there is peace; where there is peace, there is God; and
where there is God, there is no disease."*

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

A RAY OF HOPE IN THEIR MOMENT OF GRIEF

Family support plays a vital role when there is a loss of a loved one in the family. Three touching patient and caregiver stories on how they overcame the life challenges in their hour of Grief and Loss, through strong family support.

The first story is of a father, a single parent, who had come for treating his 8-year-old son's congenital heart condition. During the counselling session, the caregiver-father, while unburdening, shared that he is a Para-Military Service Personnel. Tragedy struck their family when, during Covid, his wife passed away. The patient was then a 10-month-old baby. During this hour of grief, the whole family came together to support the child (Pt). The child's father, paternal grandparents and uncle nurtured the child and showered unconditional love on him. He meant the world to them. Utmost care was taken about his health. Time passed by and the patient's father returned to service. Whenever the father came home during holidays, he would spend quality time with the child (Pt). and they would travel together and have lots of joyous time. Treatment at the hospital was successful. It was a great sigh of relief and joy for the family. It was after eight long years of struggle and anticipation the child is back to normalcy and is leading a normal life. The family have inculcated in him values and discipline. The father shared that his child was full of joy and happiness and is very obedient. He loves to play outdoor games, sketch and paint, sing and play the guitar. The caregiver father is grateful and thanks the hospital from the bottom of his heart. He offers his Koti Pranams to his Ishta Devatha Bholenath and Sai Baba.

The second story is of a caregiver and his 12-year-old daughter who is the patient. They came here to get her heart condition treated. During the counselling session, the caregiver-father unburdened and shared a tragic moment in his life. They were here for a month and when the date of admission was confirmed, they received sad news that his aged father had passed away. The caregiver-father said, he was grief stricken, as he could not be with his father during his last days and it was very difficult to return home immediately. The caregiver-father with tears in his eyes, shared, how his mother, taking a lot of courage, even in her moment of grief, maintained her composure, and advised him not to postpone the treatment, and that he should return only after getting her grand-daughter treated fully. She said that the child's life and good health was very precious for them. The treatment was successful and the caregiver father was relieved and thanked the doctors, nurses and staff of the Hospital. He offered his Koti Pranams to his Ishta Devatha Maa Kali and Sairam.

The third story is of the patient in her mid 50's, admitted for treatment of her heart condition. She was accompanied by her caregiver-husband. During the DOA session, the patient unburdened and shared her grief. She was heartbroken when all of a sudden, her younger son who was healthy and very active, passed away 2 months back after Ramzan. The whole family was in shock and could not come to terms. She was also sad when her daughter-in-law left for her parent's house soon after her husband's demise with their child and said she would not be returning. The grandparents and family were missing the grandchild. But reflecting on what she is blessed with, she said that her family's strong bond and especially her brother's love and presence was really a great moral support for them. She has great faith in Allah. Her caregiver-husband also felt relaxed after the BRMC Therapy. She shared that she experienced a lot of peace and solace from within during the counselling session.

In all the three case stories, the counselling sessions were in line with the BRMC Therapy, and Dr Carl Rogers' Person Centered Approach where in not only active listening and silence by the Counsellors, but also giving space for the caregivers and patients to share their stories, their grief, fear and concerns helped them to pray to their God of choice and reach within. They all found solace and a "Ray of Hope" in their moment of grief.

Jai Sai Ram.....

Contributor - SAI Counsellor Sharada Gopinath, Department of Counselling SSSIHMS, Whitefield.



*"Never give up hope. Wherever you lose, know that it is a lesson.
Victory is yours if you persevere." - Sri Sathya Sai Baba*

FAITH, HOPE, PRAYER AND HEALING – A JOURNEY OF A CHILD WITH HEART DISEASE

A young couple from a humble family background waited for several years to be blessed with a child. When their only child was born, they considered the baby a divine gift received through prayer and grace. The mother was deeply devoted, and her life revolved around faith and prayer.

However, the joy of parenthood slowly turned into anxiety when the child began suffering from repeated illness, weakness, fever, and breathing difficulty. At first, the parents believed these were ordinary childhood problems, but medical investigations later revealed that the child had a Congenital Heart condition requiring continuous treatment and eventual surgery.

The diagnosis shattered the parents emotionally. The father feared the risks of surgery, while the mother struggled with helplessness and unanswered questions. She often wondered why such suffering had come to their innocent child despite years of devotion and prayer.

During this difficult period, the family received emotional support and counselling through Spiritually oriented counsellors and the Hospital staff. The Counsellor first listened patiently to the mother's fears and pain. Gradually, the family was encouraged to draw strength from faith, inner courage, and prayers to Madduramma, their family deity. "Why fear when I am here?" This Divine assurance gave the mother emotional strength whenever fear overwhelmed her heart. She slowly realised that surrender does not mean weakness; it means trusting the Divine during uncertainty.

One incident particularly transformed the mother spiritually. A close friend advised her to place a flower before their family deity, Madduramma, and pray sincerely for guidance. She was told that if the flower fell after prayer, it could be accepted as a Divine blessing. The mother prayed with tears and complete surrender. After some time, the flower fell from the idol. On the very same day, the father—who had strongly opposed surgery—unexpectedly agreed to proceed with the hospital admission and treatment. The mother felt this moment was a divine intervention and believed that grace had entered their lives when human strength had failed.

Another turning point was experienced in the hospital itself. The mother witnessed another child returning safely after an emergency heart surgery and watched the child recovering which filled her with new hope. She later shared that she realised God often works through doctors, nurses, and compassionate counsellors. "Hands that serve are holier than lips that pray." The kindness of the staff members at our SSSIHMS became a living example of this teaching.

Every evening the parents prayed together inside the hospital premises. Prayer became more than a ritual - it became a source of mental peace and emotional healing. The child too displayed extraordinary innocence and courage, repeatedly telling the parents, "I will become alright."

The greatest transformation occurred not only in the child's health but in the mother's inner life. She moved from fear to faith, from anxiety to surrender, and from helplessness to spiritual resilience. She later began comforting other anxious parents in the hospital, sharing hope from her own experiences. The family realised that true healing is not only physical but it also involves emotional reassurance, compassionate care, spiritual faith, and human connection. Their experience became a testimony that when medicine, prayer, and kindness work together, healing becomes holistic and transformative.

Jai Sai Ram.....

Contributor - SAI Counsellor Meenakshi Uchil, Department of Counselling SSSIHMS, Whitefield.



*"Faith can move mountains. Have faith in yourself and faith in God.
That faith will give you hope and strength." - Sri Sathya Sai Baba*

KNITTED EMOTIONS

As the Counsellor sat intently leafing through the pages of her counselling diary, she noticed that the emotions of all patients and caregivers were similarly knitted in their respective categories. The negative emotions like grief, anxiety, sorrow and the like were stitches picked up with a holistic approach and knitted with positive emotions like coping skills, hope, surrender, and so on. The unconditional love of the Counsellor is the yarn pulled through to create a mindset based on Faith, Empathy and Compassion, which otherwise would have dwarfed the everyday activities of the patient.

This is a case study where, due to ill health, the elderly patient's initial positive thoughts and confidence gradually started sinking low, giving way to negative emotions.

When the Counsellor connected with the patient over the telephone, the uncertainty and helplessness regarding his health came through in his words and unsteady voice. Beseeching to Swamy for Blessings, the Counsellor took him through the Body Relaxation and Mind Conditioning (BRMC) Therapy. The reassuring words were instrumental in creating a positive environment to calm the mind and ease the suffering of the patient who was caught up in a knot of uncertainty.

He fondly recalled having the first Darshan of Swamy when he was a young boy and since then has been praying wholeheartedly to Swamy. Not only was he attracted to Swamy's teachings but also mulled over them often. His dream was to offer Seva to Swamy someday. Nevertheless, there was an underlying uncertainty that came across in his voice.

Eventually, when he fell ill, he was sure that he wanted to be treated at SSSIHMS. He surrendered to his Kula Devatha Lord Venkateshwara and Swamy without an iota of fear and was filled with hope, courage and confidence that Swamy would take over the reins as a doctor. In due course of time, the doctors had to send him back without treatment after analysing his health condition. This totally shattered him, and he felt dejected. He questioned his own faith towards Swamy not knowing where he had faltered. Parallely, his enthusiasm for offering seva had diminished. The Counsellor instinctively connected with him and soon realized by his feeble voice that the initial faith which was so staunch was slipping and she helped him pick up his confidence and recollect Swamy's grace which had blessed him for more than five decades of his life journey. He slowly pepped up being backed with unconditional love and started recollecting his attraction and devotion towards Swamy. He said that having retired from his job, he was moving back with his family to the very town where he initially had Swamy's Darshan. He paused and was prompted to believe that his life had come a full circle. This was proof enough that Swamy would not let go of him whatever the situation. Just by the patient's long pauses, it was obvious that he was re-living the five decades of Swamy's guiding force and Hope crept back to him. Then and there the transformation was visible when he eagerly asked for information about how to get himself to enroll in a Samithi for seva and his gratitude to Swamy rekindled once again.

Swamy guides His devotees and is present in front of them, behind them, above them and below them thus holding them close to Him and walking them through every phase of their life journey. One has to believe that Blessings of the Lord will last a lifetime if one surrenders to the Lord with Hope and Faith.

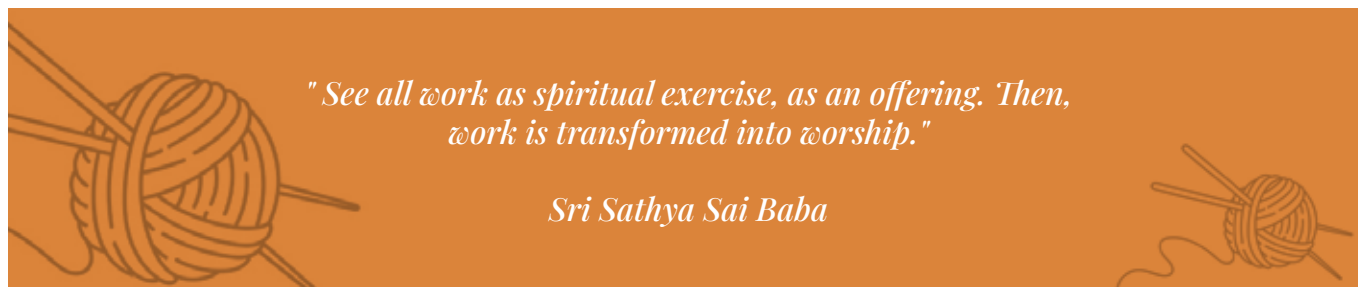
Jai Sai Ram.....

Contributor - SAI Counsellor Saroo Annaiah, Department of Counselling SSSIHMS, Whitefield.



*"See all work as spiritual exercise, as an offering. Then,
work is transformed into worship."*

Sri Sathya Sai Baba



LIFE IS A GAME, PLAY IT

Joy Thomas, in her first book, says, ***“Life is a game, play it”***.

We start our Game of Life with great enthusiasm. Whether rich or poor, one has to wade through life's journey to realise our dreams and come face to face with challenges. When challenges are sometimes as big as mountains, the journey becomes a saga.

A young couple with two children, one brilliant and the other ailing not only with a cardiac issue but also with 'Down's Syndrome' and an immunity problem, were the caregivers who worked in a savoury shop. They had a lot of debts to clear as they journeyed through getting medical help for their three-year-old son. The father now had to work hard as his wife, facing the challenges of life, was running on and on from medical centers to hospitals, completely involved in getting solutions for their child's physical problem.

During the counselling session, the father started unburdening and could not stop. He poured out his bottled-up sadness, guilt, helplessness, and pain in his heart and mind for one full hour. He complained that his wife was being extremely assertive, pushy, and strong in handling issues, especially of their son. As he went on, he apologized for talking too much. The Counsellor told him to continue as it was okay for her to listen and give him mental and emotional relief through counselling. After all, we are humans and sharing and caring were the right thing to do at that juncture. As he spoke, it appeared that the caregiver was not really aware of the Counsellor's presence and was just concentrating on his Ishta Devatha- Maruthi to lighten the load from his mind. On the other hand, his health too had taken a toll, and he had to travel to get his kidney issues addressed. The Body Relaxation and Mind Conditioning (BRMC) Therapy was needed to calm his stressed mind.

He continued saying that after coming to Swamy's hospital, he saw a light at the end of the tunnel and felt very happy. It was unbelievable to be in a place which looked like Heaven but was a Healing center. Everything was free in Swamy's Hospital. He ran from door to door, department to department, to find a donation box (hundi) so that he could offer his gratitude to Sai by putting some offering in the donation box. Alas, no box was found. He was exhausted but absorbed the joy of love and Grace from Swamy.

The other caregiver, the mother, is totally into the BRMC Therapy. There was a big shift in her outlook. It's like her mind had become almost new. Her assertiveness now came through as Strength and Confidence. She knew that she could take the challenge that life has given her through Prayers and Spirituality. Swamy not only had come into their lives like a blessing but also had guided the Counsellor to be with the caregivers and give them the Strength and Courage to travel the Path of Life. There is a lot to learn from this story. The mental shift was big. The Counsellor promised to keep in touch with them; after all, we are 'foot soldiers' for Swamy's mission. Seva is the gift from God.

Jai Sai Ram.....

Contributor - SAI Counsellor Nirmala Murthy, Department of Counselling SSSIHMS, Whitefield.



"Life is a journey from 'I' to 'We'; every step should be taken with love, courage, and selfless service"

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

SELF-CONFIDENCE AND SURRENDER REMOVES FEAR AND ANXIETY

Fear is a natural response by one's brain to danger (Fight or Flight response). Anxiety, on the other hand, causes worry and is an emotion caused due to a longer period of stress in a situation.

The undermentioned case study highlights how speaking about one's fear and not letting it enter the mind is a solution to ward off anxiety or uncertainty. After the initial jolt, the patient and his father overcame their anxiety and fear by not entertaining those dark thoughts in their mind but by indulging in prayers and surrendering themselves to their Ishta Devatha, Bajrangbali.

A very tense patient and his father had come to SSSIHMS for cardiac treatment, which he had suffered since birth. When the doctors advised him to undergo a cardiac surgery, he felt insecure thinking about his young family who were dependent on him. Fear crept in, thinking about the major surgery looming over him. The father too was extremely anxious, wondering about the result.

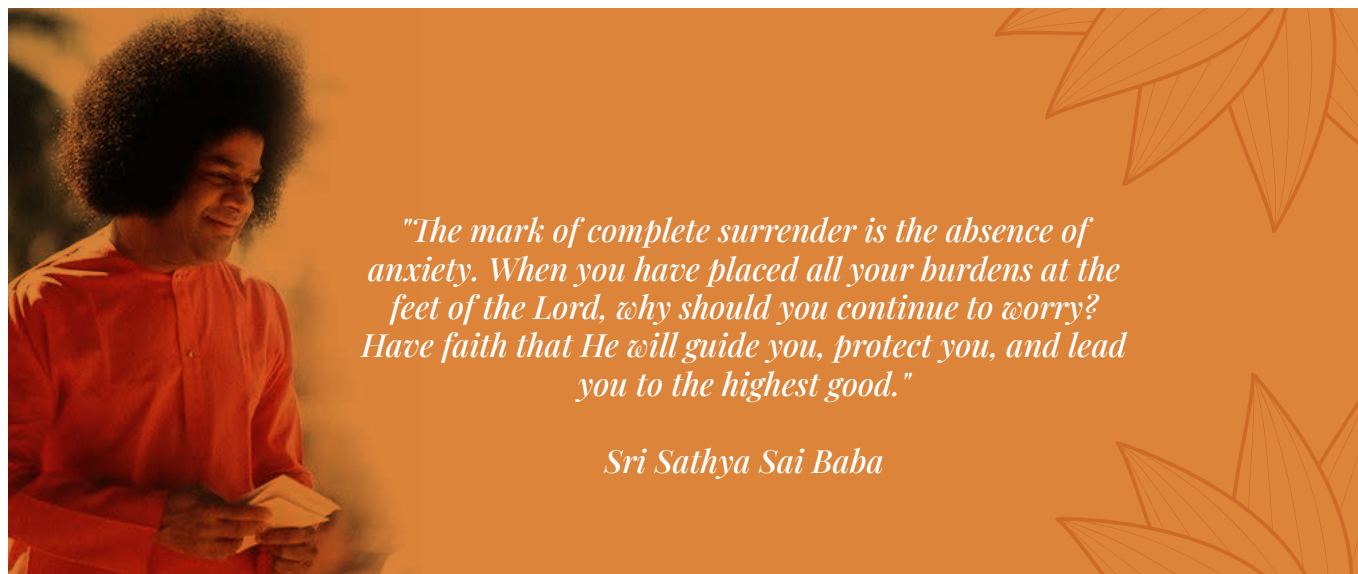
After a calming conversation initiated by the Counsellor, the patient and the father unburdened their emotional feelings in response to the Counsellor's open-ended questions. This was followed by a Body Relaxation and Mind Conditioning (BRMC) Therapy where both of them experienced Divine energy and thus felt reassured that they were in safe hands at the Hospital.

After the cardiac surgery, the patient lost his voice, which again caused Fear and Anxiety in him. He continued connecting to the Counsellor and was reassured that he was in the caring presence of the doctors and nurses in the hospital. He gradually overcame his anxiety. Regular Body Relaxation and Mind Conditioning (BRMC) Therapy helped the patient remain calm and poised.

After discharge, the patient and his family continue to keep in touch with the Counsellor and convey their gratefulness profusely for all her support. They later conveyed that his young daughter too was diagnosed with a cardiac ailment and was getting treated at a Sathya Sai Hospital near his hometown. This time round, there was no fear and anxiety in their voice but in its place was absolute Faith, Self-confidence and Surrender in their speech. While in Swami's Hospital premises, the patient and his father felt the impact of the Supreme power that would guide them at each step and drive away any doubts that would come in their way during this emotional journey. They are assured of Swami's grace and Blessings on the daughter who too is recovering well. Praying to Swami to always shower His Blessings on this patient and his family.

Jai Sai Ram.....

Contributor - SAI Counsellor Sadhana Rao, Department of Counselling SSSIHMS, Whitefield.



"The mark of complete surrender is the absence of anxiety. When you have placed all your burdens at the feet of the Lord, why should you continue to worry? Have faith that He will guide you, protect you, and lead you to the highest good."

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

STRENGTH IN SERVICE, PEACE IN SURRENDER

As a Counsellor, I often encounter caregivers whose resilience and quiet strength leave a lasting impression. One such interaction was with the wife of a cardiac patient during their first visit to our hospital.

From the outset, she appeared remarkably composed and optimistic about her husband's health condition. As we spoke, it became evident that her confidence was rooted in a deep faith in Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, complemented by immense trust in the doctors and the hospital who were caring for her husband.

She fondly recalled having darshan of Swami during her childhood when He visited Bengaluru. Those early experiences left an indelible impression on her young mind. As she grew older, her faith deepened and became an important source of strength in her life. Following her marriage into a family of Sai devotees, this faith was further nurtured and enriched through shared spiritual values and practices.

Her husband, despite facing his own health challenges, had spent many years serving as a Seva dal volunteer, offering selfless service in the Sai Organisation. Service and spirituality had become an integral part of their family life. Therefore, when her husband required cardiac treatment, being able to bring him to Swami's hospital gave her immense reassurance and comfort. She felt that he was receiving not only expert medical care but also the blessings and protection of Swami.

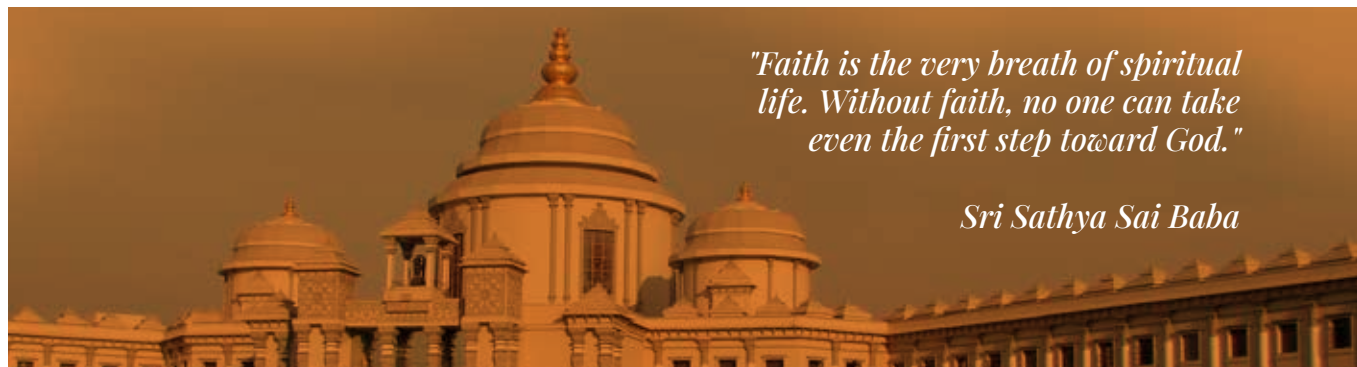
Yet, beneath her calm and courageous exterior lay a deep concern that weighed heavily on her heart. Her greatest worry was for her son, a young man in his mid-twenties who had been diagnosed with bipolar disorder and was currently unemployed. As a mother, she worried about his future, his wellbeing and the challenges he faced in becoming independent. While she faced her husband's illness with faith and confidence, the uncertainties surrounding her son's condition remained a source of emotional strain.

During our counselling session, we practised the Body Relaxation and Mind Conditioning (BRMC) Therapy to help ease stress and emotional tension. As the caregiver gradually relaxed, there was a noticeable shift in her demeanor. The simple act of slowing down, focusing on her breath, and releasing physical tension seemed to bring her a sense of calm and relief. By the end of the session, she expressed that she was feeling lighter and more peaceful.

This interaction served as a gentle reminder that caregivers often carry burdens that are not immediately visible. Their concerns frequently extend beyond the illness of the patient and encompass the wellbeing of the entire family. Creating a space where they feel heard, supported, and cared for can be profoundly therapeutic. Simple interventions such as relaxation therapy can help them reconnect with their inner strength and resilience. Reflecting on this encounter, I was reminded of Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba's reassuring words: "Why fear when I am here?" For this caregiver, Faith was not merely a belief; it was a living experience that had accompanied her from childhood, deepened through family life, and sustained her during a challenging period. Supported by that faith and by the compassionate care of the hospital, she found the strength to face her family's uncertainties with hope, courage, and peace.

Jai Sai Ram.....

Contributor - SAI Counsellor Mallika, Department of Counselling SSSIHMS, Whitefield.



TRANSFORMATION

Taking care of a tertiary care patient, who typically suffers from severe chronic or critical conditions, and navigating long hospital stays is highly demanding and often results in caregiver burnout. This causes psychological distress and financial strain especially when the patient is a close relative and who is also the sole breadwinner.

This is the case study of a patient whose financial condition was very bad. His wife was his sole caregiver and in addition to that she was also burdened with further stressors like necessity to work and earn when her husband, the patient was not able to work. She had her own health issues which had been ignored while taking care of her husband. She had to take major decisions all on her own to provide medical treatment when her husband suffered a major cardiac issue. Her neighbours had helped her during an emergency situation by taking him to the hospital. Her nephew also had been her constant support by accompanying her to various hospitals. She could not afford the cost of the treatments in other hospitals and her husband could not work for several months due to his cardiac condition. When she became aware of SSSIHMS she was penniless. She sold their only property, a home and with that money came here for his treatment.

By Swami's grace he was admitted immediately and his surgery was done and he was discharged in a week's time due to his quick recovery. When the care giver had come down to the counselling department on her husband's day of discharge, she was not happy even though the surgery was successful ,reason being she had just struggled for this as her single and most important point of focus. She was now assailed by many more worries.

This is so typical of the caregiver wife who faces delayed emotional distress followed by husband's successful surgery. Her relief about the successful completion of the surgery was quickly overshadowed by burnout and profound anxiety about their future. She had absorbed all the domestic and medical burdens while suppressing her own health issues to remain strong before his admission to the hospital. In the counselling department she sobbed uncontrollably thinking about their lack of security with no comfort of their home. Their future looked bleak and scary as she wondered if her husband would be fit enough to resume work.

The Counsellor's response here required addressing the dual burdens of medical anxiety and severe financial stress. Focus was on following the discharge summary and adherence to advised diet and importance of medicines in spite of highly limited resources which was crucial to prevent another cardiac event. BRMC Therapy helped her relax.

To address her socio-economic issues faith in God of her choice was emphasised. She was gently reminded about how her faith in God had got her here to one of the best hospitals that not only performs major surgeries but was also completely free. When she was completely helpless and cornered with no pathway God had opened a new path for her that they both never could have even imagined. When everything is in the most benevolent Lord's hands it is futile to worry but to stay very strong in faith. She listened attentively and looked relaxed after the session. Trusting in God's plan helped her in reducing her anxiety over unpredictable life situations.

Jai Sai Ram.....

Contributor - SAI Counsellor Anuradha, Department of Counselling SSSIHMS, Whitefield.



"The only true transformation is the transformation of the heart. When the heart is filled with love, life becomes divine."

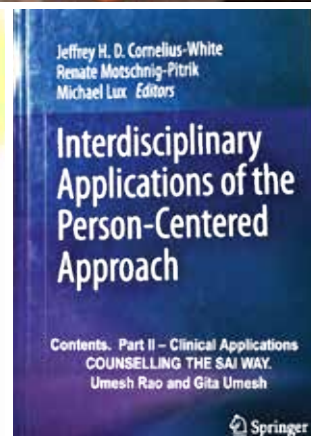
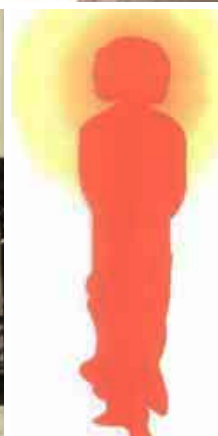
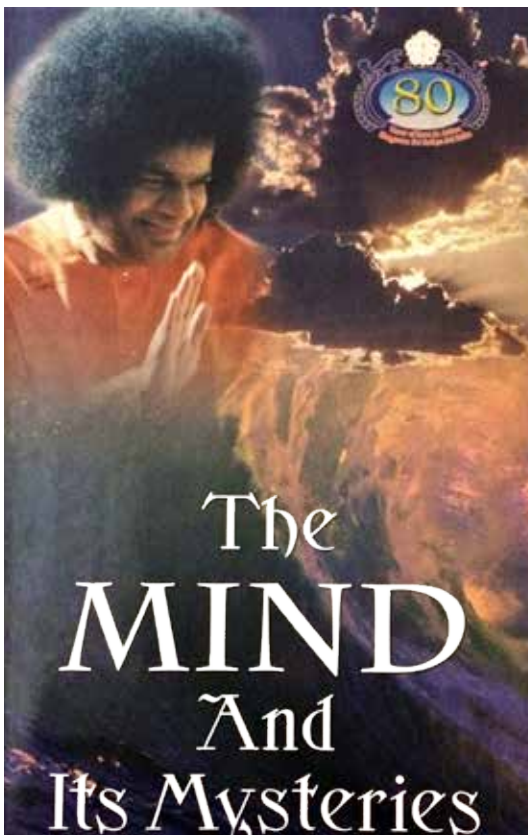
Sri Sathya Sai Baba

SAI SANKALPA AND GRACE



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.*

