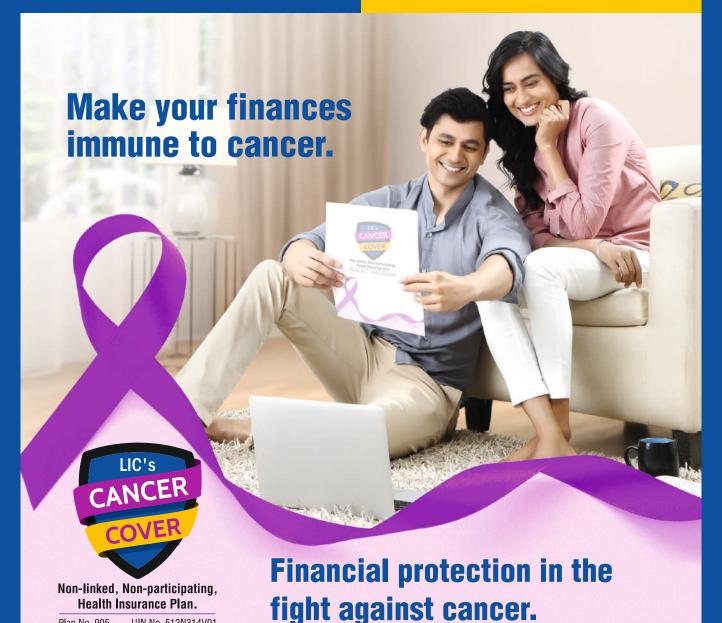




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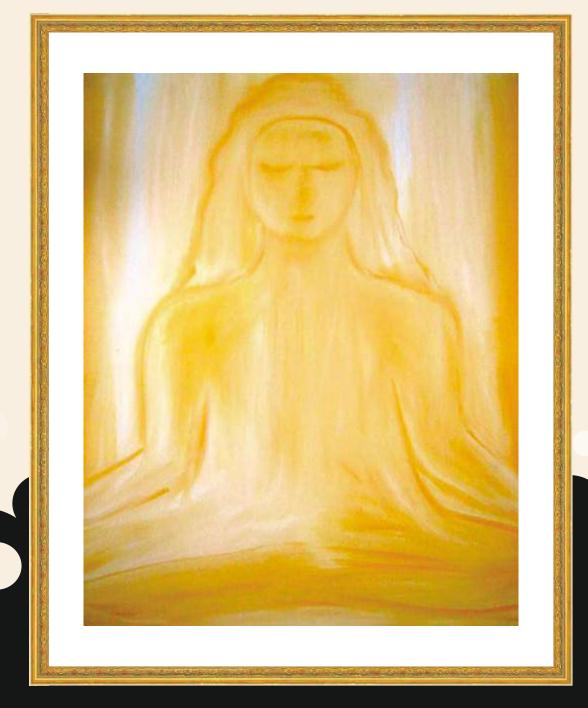












The expansion of consciousness makes the Being one with HIM and a state of SAMADHI is experienced

Oil on Canvas by Ruby Ahluwalia





When Cancer happens, it opens whole lot of new fronts for the patient as well as the family. Which hospital to go to? Who is the best doctor to treat my cancer? How will I meet the costs? How long the treatment will take? Will I ever be well again? Once the treatment starts then, Am I on best protocol? How to deal with the side effects of the agressive treatment? What to eat and what not? How to deal with my fear and negative thoughts? What is better- to exercise or not to? How to keep myself positive despite my life crumbling? How to deal with the response of people around me? How to deal with the social stigma? How to feel just normal with this catastrophe in my life?

I felt that there is no one person who can answer all these questions. There is a huge gap in terms of right resources, from where a cancer patient and their families can get all the information. And thus this 'Course in Oncology care' called 'CANSARTHI' evolved with content on medical aspects of cancer, psychological aspects, nutrition, physiotherapy, communication and spiritual aspects of cancer with 120 hrs of theory and 240 hrs of practical.

The idea is to create that pool of trained personnel who have the right knowledge to close all the above mentioned fronts. The concept of training cancer survivors to become CANSARTHIs rests on the belief that the wisdom gained from their own experience of cancer, brings in the right dimension of empathy, making them the best in this field.

Thus raising the bar of cancer care along with creating employment opportunities for cancer survivors remains the backbone of this training program.

The results of this program have been very encouraging-the response of the medical fraternity, the patients and their families continues to inspire us to create the best CANSARTHIs and bring hope in the world of cancer care.

Ruby Ahluwalia

Founder and Managing Trustee Sanjeevani ... Life Beyond Cancer





WHAT DEFINES US IS HOW WELL WE RISE AFTER FALLING

For a homemaker whose life revolves around her family, withdrawal of support at the most crucial and difficult moments in life can be very hurtful. This is exactly what happened to Anita Kamble, a 48-year-old homemaker from Virar. A very loved child, she was born and brought up in Mumbai but after her wedding had to move to her husband's home in Gujarat. For 15 years, she had a loving marriage with her husband but things changed thereafter. In 2014 while doing some household

chores, she slipped and hurt herself against a pillar. She visited a doctor for what she assumed was a trivial matter but in spite of undergoing treatment for over three months the swelling in her right breast didn't subside. This was when she underwent some tests at a hospital and the doctor diagnosed her with breast cancer. This news shocked her husband and her in-laws and their attitude towards her changed to the extent that they no more wanted to be responsible for her treatment or her well-being for that matter. They then called her parents to take her with them and thereafter broke all ties with her.

After coming to Mumbai, she started her treatment at the Tata Memorial Hospital. Her mother initially refused to accept that her daughter has an illness like cancer and her father was deeply troubled and

pained. The situation in her home was tensed and grievous. As for Anita, the shock of having a disease that is so widely feared, along with her disownment from her husband and the guilt of causing trouble to her parents made her feel like a burden and she lost hope in life which lead her to developing suicidal tendencies. She even attempted to end her life twice. Although her own family supported her during the treatment, she still experienced alienation from them as the fear of cancer is so grave that it creates myths among people. Her beddings, plates, cups and other items of daily use were kept separate as she rightly says "insaan pyaara hota hai par insaan ki bimari kisi ko pyaari nahi hoti hai" (Everyone is fond of the person but nobody is fond of that person's illness). Thus, along with physical pain, she mentally was traumatised, too.

During one of the visits to the hospital for treatment, she met Archana, a member of Sanjeevani who works at the Tata Memorial Hospital. Archana recommended that she enrol for the wellness course. After joining the course Anita says that the warmth and support that she received here really changed her life in many ways. She tells that interacting with other cancer patients here made her realise how trivial her own problem is as many didn't have even the support of their own family that she had. After completing the Wellness Course, she enrolled herself for the Oncological Caregiving Course by Sanjeevani at TISS. That course she says really changed her life in more ways than one. It broke various myths about cancer for her while increasing her knowledge about the disease. Because of her diagnosis she only knew about breast cancer but during the course she got an understanding about the different kinds of cancer. Moreover, the people she met in the course became her close friends and they all bonded like a family.

In the duration of the course her favourite sessions were when they learnt about cancer in detail. Her favourite teachers were Jessica Ma'am, who used to guide them through the practical in Kharghar and Nasreen Ma'am from whom she learnt the importance of punctuality and discipline. She also quickly adds about how they all relived their school days during the course. Bunking classes, pulling

each other's legs and laughing while the other is being scolded at are some of the memories she made in the classroom. One of her most memorable memory during the course was when they used to visit the Borges Memorial Home in Bandra East and she got close to an eight year old boy who was terminally ill. Another strong memory she has is with a 21 year old boy in the same place who in spite of knowing that it's an end for him anytime soon lived without worries and kept telling her how we all must just live in the present without dwelling on the past or the future. This, she states, filled her with inspiration.

Anita states that the course gave her confidence and a positive approach that gave her a renewed hope to live for herself and explore her opportunities. She now lives by herself in a flat at Virar which was given to her by her father's friend. Her relations with her parents have become stronger as she regularly visits her parents and shares her thoughts and opinions with them. The friends she met during the course, she says, are so protective and caring that one missed call to somebody leads to them and other people calling back to know about her. She says she now doesn't entertain negative thoughts and leads a more peaceful life. The course she said gave her an identity. After struggling for a long period of time because of various personal issues her self-esteem was completely lowered but now she feels this course has given her the knowledge and empowerment to be independent.

She is of the opinion that the doctors look after the medical treatment for any illness and it is easily available but for quicker and truer healing, the pain and hurt inside that person has to be dealt with. This is what she aims to do in her future. Now that she has passed out of the course, she plans to use the learnings and skills she learnt to be supportive to others in ways that will remove their pain and fill them with happiness instead. "Those especially who have undergone a similar fate like mine and are upset like me, I especially want to make them happy", she says.

(Anita Kamble had her own beauty parlour and tutored children before but is now looking for opportunities in oncological caregiving.)





MAKING KINDNESS A LIFE MOTTO

Being diagnosed with cancer comes as a rude shock to a lot of people as cancer is perceived to be a scary and dangerous illness. Something similar was the situation of Anuragini Menon who is now 27 years old and lives at Vile Parle. In February 2015, when she was pregnant, one day she started bleeding heavily and had to thus, terminate it as the doctors detected a cancerous lump is her uterus which was in its first stage. However, the fact that she had cancer made her feel extremely stressed as like many others, she thought, cancer

brings death along with it. She was absolutely clueless as well as worried. Her treatment started in March 2015 and ended in the same year in July. Throughout the treatment, the only person that supported her was her husband as neither her parents nor her in-laws cared to pay attention to her health or her treatment for once. In spite of this, she stayed strong and emerged victorious. During one of the visits to the hospital, one of the gynaecologists recommended that she associate herself with Sanjeevani so she can use her skills in a more fruitful manner and benefit in many ways. So, she did. She first joined the Wellness Course at the Sanjeevani Centre wherein she benefitted from the different sessions on nutrition, yoga, counselling, dance therapy, reflexology, pain management, etc. There she learnt to address her grief and pain and have a more positive approach towards life. Later, she joined Sanjeevani's course on Oncological Caregiving in collaboration with TISS which really increased her medical knowledge related to the human body, on cancer and its different infections. The course was about learning everything in detail in theory and then putting it in practise she says.

All the teachers that taught them were extremely patient and understanding and explained to them in details. The batch of 18 people studying together became like a family to her. A lot of people were cancer patients themselves because of which they had to undergo treatment. So, when they fell ill during the course and couldn't attend sessions, they all used to reach out to them in support. Thus, the bond between them kept getting stronger and better.

The lectures were extremely fun-filled and enjoyable, she says, as they all took a trip down memory lane back to their childhood and during the period of two months they did everything that reminded them about their school and college days. She talks about how in spite of the class being an amalgamation of people belonging to different age groups and backgrounds, they all used to study together, have fun together and also get scolded at together while learning about this illness in a way that can help them use their experiences to draw others from their misery.

Anuragini now is volunteer at Sanjeevani wherein she counsels the patients, guides them while also doing the administrative work. Interacting with the patients on a daily basis has helped her broaden her horizons while being more compassionate towards them. The course helped her to help others in a more empathetic and fruitful

manner in ways that makes communication easier from both sides as a lot of patients confide in her about their personal and family issues. This helps Anuragini to perceive the mental framework that the patients are in and counsel them accordingly. This has only been possible after being part of Sanjeevani which made her realise her capabilities and also of the others.

She encourages others to do the same course especially those that are financially backward as it will help them with employment while doing a job that gives them inner satisfaction and peace. She says that there are a lot of myths about cancer, even in the minds of educated people and this is the main reason she wants to spread knowledge and awareness as much as she can. Taking an example from her own life, she says, "A lot of people disown their own family members who become a victim of cancer. In such painful times, being alone without any kind of support can push the patients into anxiety and worries. So, it is extremely important to educate such people and spread awareness.

As for Anuragini, she wants to continue working in Sanjeevani where she finds an opportunity to educate, spread awareness, hold their hand through their sorrow and help them in every way she can.





Sanjeevani...Life Beyond Cancer, an award winning registered Public Trust, is a non-profit organization, set up for prevention and early detection of cancer and providing care, counseling and rehabilitation to persons fighting cancer.

Sanjeevani ... Life Beyond Cancer was founded in 2012 by Ruby Ahluwalia, a Cancer Survivor herself.

Sanjeevani, endeavors to motivate and encourage patients to keep a positive outlook towards treatment and life and enrich the lives of cancer survivors in a way that the patient feels more complete after the whole cancer experience and looks at this experience as an opportunity to blossom up in life and not as a catastrophe.

Main projects run by Sanjeevani are

- > Counselling and Hand Holding to Cancer Patients and Care Givers in Regional Cancer Centres.
- > Rehabilitation programs for survivors:
 - 1. **Certificate Course on Onco Care Giving**, in collaboration with TISS & TMH, leading to employment
 - 2. **Sanjeevani Wellness Centres**, with intervention like Yoga, Counseling, Nutritional Guidance, Art Music-Dance therapies, leading to a better quality of life post-treatment and hopefully reduced chances of remission
- Awareness Activities to help create awareness for prevention and need for early detection:
- Advocacy with Policy makers / Philanthropic Organizations / Donor Groups.

Helpline : +91 8691000800

Email : admn@sanjeevani-lifebeyondcancer.comWebsite : www.sanjeevani-lifebeyondcancer.com

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HOLDING HANDS TO HELP OTHERS WALK

The general notion of a homemaker is one whose knowledge and worldview is confined to the four walls of the house but that is generally not true. Daksha Solanki, a 39 year old homemaker from Khar is one such example of it. She enjoys cooking, listening to music, dancing and helping others and this urge of helping others led her to take action about a whatsapp message that a friend received and forwarded to Daksha about the course on Oncological Caregiving by Sanjeevani at TISS. Her grandmother had expired due to oral cancer because of which she had always been very curious

to know more about the illness. Her husband too encouraged her to do the course. Moreover, she wanted to help other cancer patients because of which she thought she could give this a try.

She was a part of the second batch of the course which was in 2016. Initially she was apprehensive thinking if she could cope up with the studies and structure of the course because apart from taking care of her daughter, she was nervous as she had left her studies after 12th and later got married and became a homemaker. It had, thus, been a long time since she was a part of an academic structure and she wasn't sure if she would fit in such a structure after all this while at this age. However, if one never tries, they would never know so she thought it was worth a shot and after all the deliberations to enrol for the course.

In sessions where they learnt about physiotherapy, yoga and the basics of cancer, she says, it was a great learning experience as the teachers were very friendly and went out of their way to ensure that everybody understood the concepts. Sessions like yoga and learning about the human body gave an insight on the importance of helping others in aspects wherein she could help them improve their physical health while learning to guide them to take care of oneself from within. The classroom time was a sweet, memorable time for all as they not only studied together but made merry, sang and danced together. One of her memorable moments with her batch mates was when they all went to Kharghar where they played and enjoyed together. She also dares going out of the house a lot more than before. "First I only stayed at home because of which I had limited knowledge but now I know and I even teach my daughter the things that I learnt during the course. So she tells me how I have become 'like a doctor' now", says Daksha.

Initially in the course, she used to be very nervous and hesitant to speak even with her classmates because of which her classmates used to make fun of her. But now she feels more confident wherever she goes. It was also difficult for her to cope with the studies as it felt like a novel experience after all these years but she coped up and drove herself to give her best. When she passed out of the course, she was extremely happy and proud of herself that she could go back to studying and this boosted her

confidence. It also gave her a lesson to learn from that if there's a will and desire to accomplish something, no matter how tough, one should not lose hope but rather believe in themselves. Even if it doesn't work in your favour, there's nothing to be discouraged about. One can always start all over again.

The course broke various myths involving cancer for her. "I have always thought the beginning of cancer means end of life but because of this course I possess the knowledge and skills that make me capable enough to inform others and calm their fears", says Daksha.

Her learning from the course has been to never lose hope and focus on the positive aspects of life. Her advice to everyone who knows a patient around them or closely is to not neglect them, as anybody could be a victim of any illness. So it is very important that we always be good to others. Daksha is currently in search of good opportunities in the field of caregiving and wishes to continue in it for as long as she can.





HELPING OTHERS TO HELP THEMSELVES

The famous saying goes like "Jack of all trades, master of none" which basically means that people who juggle between different kinds of work don't necessarily excel at one particular job but Mansi Rane from Mira Road is an exception to this idiom.

Mansi is a handwriting expert and had been a teacher until her mother-in-law had a paralytic attack and was bed ridden because of which she had to quit teaching so to be able to take care of her mother-in-law. Although the doctor said that she would hardly live for 10 days, because of the way

Mansi served her, she lived for close to 10 months. Bhakti Vedanta, an organisation that is into palliative care services and primarily took care of her mother-in-law's medical needs, saw her consistent good efforts to take care of her motherin-law and were so impressed by it that they awarded a certificate in caregiving to her. From there on she volunteered to care for patients with different kinds of illnesses except cancer which was one of the reasons that motivated her to pursue the course in oncological caregiving by Sanjeevani at TISS as she was eager to help cancer patients along with all other patients that she previously took care of. She informs that most of the females from her maternal side -grandma, aunts, etc. have battled cancer and survived because of their willpower in spite of doctors saying that they'll expire. This made

Mansi think about the illness and there was a thirst for knowledge in her about it. She was already volunteering as a caregiver when she came across a message on one of her Whatsapp groups. So, she decided to enrol for this course and after being selected as one of the students had to juggle between teaching, counselling, taking care of her kids and studying for the course.

The experiences that she had through this course was very instrumental in changing her perspective on a lot of issues. Since she can read fingerprints and handwriting, it helps her understand the patients in a clearer way but the course helped her comprehending the problems involved during the period of their illness. During the practical in Tata hospital once, she took care of a man during his treatment as his daughter was very tired. He gave her best wishes and blessings to her which was very heart-warming and touching to her. Moreover, the experiences in the classroom made for a great learning lesson too. During one of the sessions when everybody was opening up to talk about their life stories, she was filled with inspiration and gratefulness for her own life. Even the faculty that taught them was so good, she says, that she forgot she was a mother of two and rather felt like she was back in school wherein everything is explained in detail.

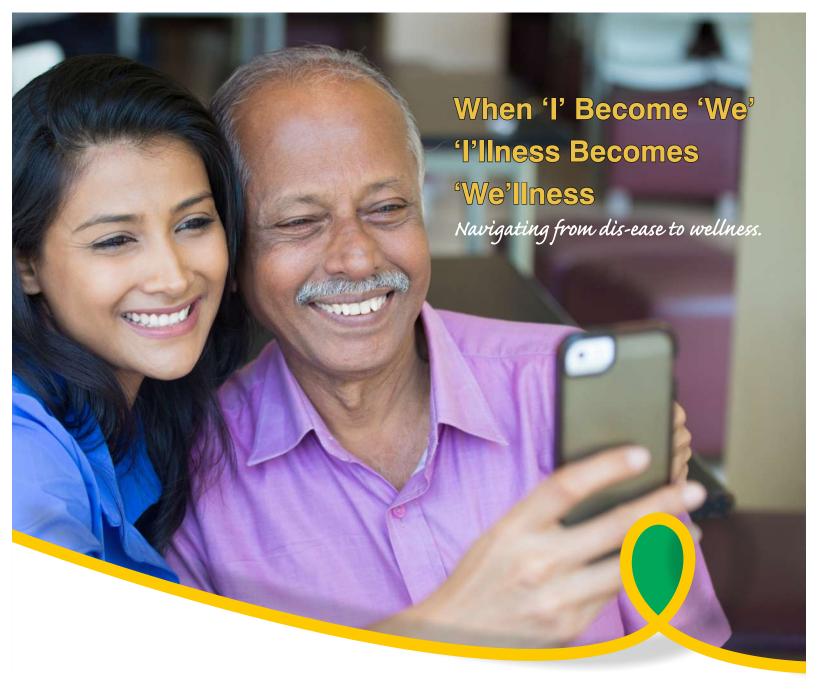
Her main concern regarding the field of care giving is that there is no knowledge and awareness about it. There is importance given to doctors, nurses, physiotherapists but not to caregivers. The general perception of caregivers is that they are "maids" and not thought of those who provide psychosocial support. Thus, the mentality towards caregivers need to change as a profession like this requires courage and patience. Only when one is strong enough can they take care of others.

Moreover, a course like this should be more popularised as along with awareness about caregivers, it can also benefits survivors, gives them renewed hope and an assistance to their financial needs which in her opinion is a rare and noble cause. This would boost their self-esteem and confidence, especially since they have undergone a state of despair and are in broken situation. There are a lot of organisations that provide financial help, she says, but hardly any that provide psychosocial and logistical support the way Sanjeevani does.

Mansi talks about how because of gaining medical knowledge on cancer, she is much more confident to deal with the issue and can provide specialised treatment for cancer patients. It has been nothing less than a spiritual experience for her as she has had better awareness of herself and those around her. She is much more at peace now and feels an inner happiness. The complaints that she had from life are all gone now and she lives contented with what she is and has.

As a caregiver, teacher and counsellor, the only piece of advice she wishes that everybody understands is to accept your present as it is, understand your illness and try to focus on solution in ways that will help you ensure a better future. If one is happy and can accept their present, they can face and bear your pain. Others around also need to accept their closed ones as they are and support them through their troubles which is why she feels that counselling of relatives is very crucial. Mansi is currently involved in counselling as she visits hospitals and homes for the same. She intends to join an NGO in a few years.





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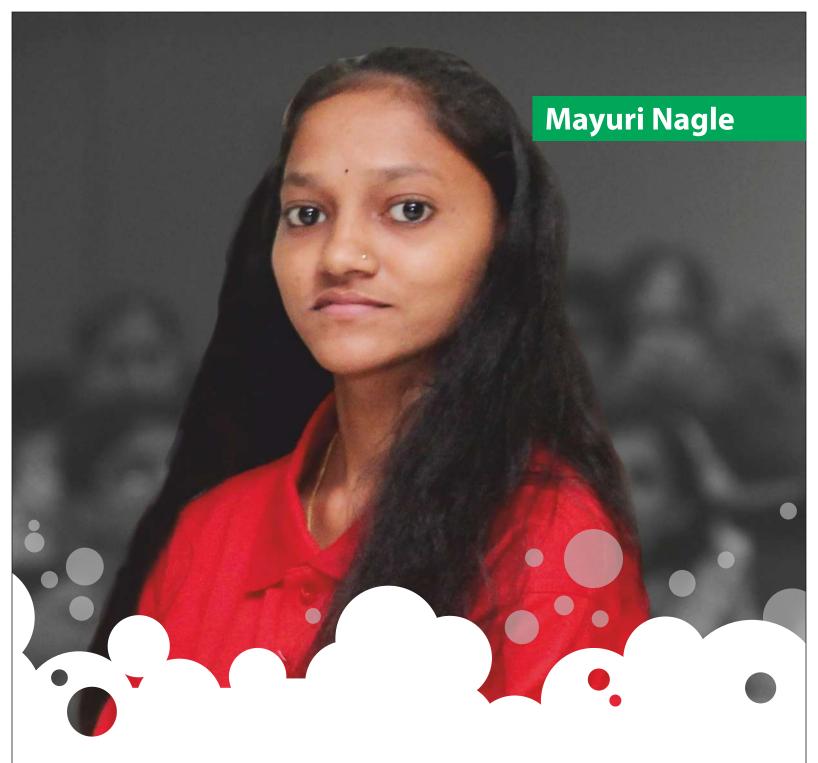


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GIVING HOPE TO THOSE IN DESPAIR

Mayuri Nagle is just 18 years old and one of the youngest students of Sanjeevani's course in Oncological caregiving at TISS. She lives with her family at Mankhurd and is an obedient child as she herself states. She has always been a very active child and involved herself in many programmes at school and also won a lot of awards for them. It was a friend's mother that recommended this course to her as she had always had a strong will to help everybody. So she decided to enrol herself into it so as to gain knowledge while doing something different and also be able to help others in need.

Her family supported her and encouraged her to study in the course.

Each session was like an intense learning experience, she says. The yoga sessions that were held were a very different from the normal lectures that one attends in schools and colleges she says. Moreover the different postures and breathing patterns that they learnt proved to very helpful. Gaining information on cancer were other sessions that she really enjoyed as it dismantled many myths and notions that she previously had. Every day was like a memory, she says, with something new and different to learn every day. During the practical when was assigned to the paediatrician ward where children with cancer were treated, it was a very moving and overwhelming experience for her but her interaction with them made her feel

more grateful about what she has while being more sensitised towards the suffering of others.

It was very difficult for her to cope up initially. In the beginning the scenarios in the hospital were too overwhelming and sometimes harrowing for her to the extent that she couldn't eat properly. But as time passed by and she could empathise more with the patients and their pain, she learnt a lot and could do better at her work. She used to help patients with exercises and basic movements to help them relax their muscles while also giving them tips on nutrition. The course helped her change personally as well. She used to be a nervous, introverted girl who had stage fright and was hesitant to make conversations with new people but due to the sessions on personality development and the practical where she had to interact with a lot of patients on a daily basis, she has become more confident and vocal now.

Mayuri also talks about how she didn't miss a single lecture in the entire course only because she had set her heart on the course and gave her best that she could. She speaks about being capable of handling any cancer patient with ease now. "I have never known anybody close to me who has

battled cancer but because of this course, I feel confident enough to take care of cancer patients on my own", she says. Having studied in this course she states that it is very important to be sensitive with our words so as to not hurt anybody. Moreover, harbouring myths and superstitions about an illness like this only leads to causing further grief to the patients further. Instead one must rather focus on helping them, motivating them and building a close relationship with them.

Mayuri is currently looking out for better opportunities for her but she wants to be a social worker in this field of oncological care giving.







IT IS IN GIVING THAT WE DO RECEIVE

Ordinary is the last word one would use to describe Priya Barbhaya, a young, pretty brown-eyed girl who is now an oncological caregiver. She is a B.Com graduate who loves painting, spending time with her family, travelling and is also a collage artist. She also successfully completed the course in Oncological Caregiving at TISS in collaboration with Sanjeevani. The main focus of the course is to motivate cancer survivors to be an inspiration to other victims while being self-reliant themselves but Priya is neither a survivor nor a fighter. In fact she is privileged enough that none of her family members, relatives or friends have ever known

cancer yet she chose to enrol herself in this course. She talks about how we have always been hearing about cancer and have various ideas about it, mainly involving fear, which is what made her curious.

Priya says that she has always liked helping others which is a value she's learnt from her family especially her father. In her hometown, Jamshedpur, her father worked and helped at an orphanage for the mentally challenged and during one of the visit on Christmas, took Priya with him. That's when she first had a desire to do something for the betterment of others. When she came to Mumbai to visit her siblings, she decided to stay and work here. It was then that one of her friends mentioned about the TISS course to her which piqued her interest. After going through the course

design, she decided to enrol herself into the course which was from July to November. Though Priya's father supported her decision of leaving the job and pursuing the course, her mother initially disapproved her idea of leaving her job to pursue the course.

Initially when the course began, she was apprehensive about how it will turn out to be for her as she was unsure of what is expected of her but she happily states how the three months in the course were filled with enjoyment and learning. One of the modules, Effective Caregiving and Recovering Lost Ground, taught by Dr. Sharmistha Majumdar was one of her favourite sessions as she got a comprehensive understanding of the illness. But the practical sessions after the theory understanding was what really changed her. For a person who hardly has been to a hospital in her life and who hardly knew about cancer, working closely with these patients in Kharghar and in Tata Memorial Hospital lead to a monumental change in outlook. She talks about how initially after attending the practical sessions she couldn't eat. Then later when it was time for each one to be posted in a certain ward at the hospital, she was chosen to work in the palliative department wherein patients in their last stages and who are terminally ill are shifted. She says this experience was similar to a kind where before learning to walk, one is pressured to take a big leap. She witnessed three deaths in one day which made her terribly upset but it was her willpower and learning attitude that encouraged her to face it.

During one of these sessions, she met a lady whose husband was suffering from a brain tumour and Priya made a small conversation with her asking her situation. Two days later while walking down the aisle, that lady recognised her and asked Priya about her health, etc. After that while working in the hospital, Priya visited her every day in the morning and evening to know about her for 4 days.

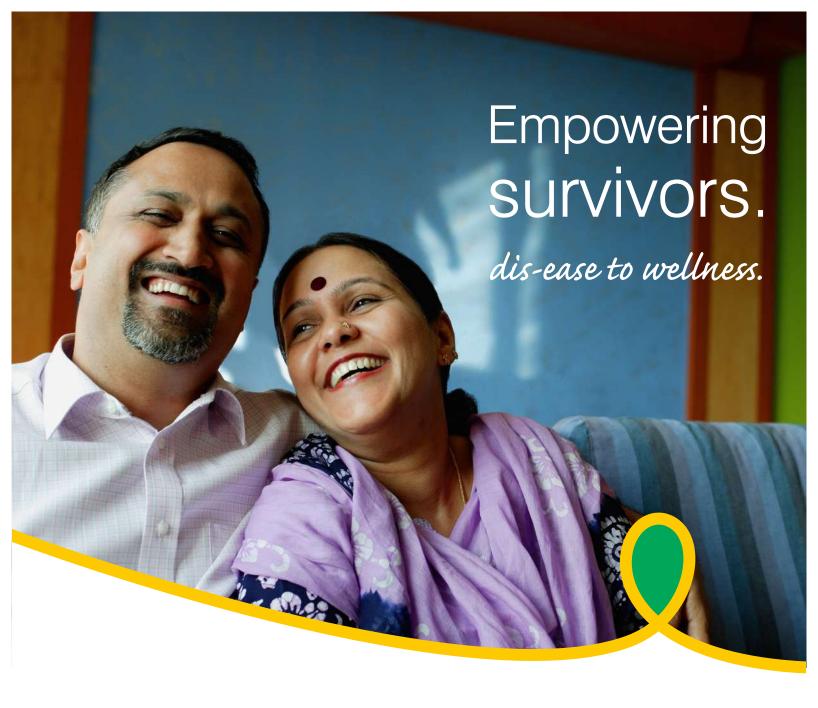
The next day the husband passed away and when the woman spotted Priya, she caught her hand and wept uncontrollably. This incident made a strong impression on Priya's mind and made her realise the importance of simple words of care. "During an illness, everyone stresses on the medical treatment but nobody cares much about the moral and emotional support that one needs during such crisis when it is equally important."

Being a student of this course has drastically changed her attitude towards an illness like cancer and her perspective about others and towards her own life as well. She talks about how when she used to come home from her practical sessions, she would narrate the incidents of the day to them and that became a routine for her family wherein they used to eagerly wait for her to come home as they wanted know about the day's experiences. Her family is very proud of her and the work she has been doing, especially her mother, who didn't approve of her taking up the course. Her close friends and family have changed for the better which she says is exactly what she wanted – that she changed herself and those around her.

Her simple rule towards life is never losing hope. "Always smile through your troubles and they will seem small. I know it is easier said than done but that's what life is about. You have to help yourself. Even your family and friends after a point would want to live their own life which is why you have to learn to be there for yourself."

As a person who's greatly interested in painting, she draws a reflective analogy from her hobby to talk about what exactly she has experienced, "I like to play with colours but so far I only knew a few colours but here it is like I have seen all the colours of life."





Sanjeevani Wellness Center (SWC) is a non-profit facility for patients to develop life skills which help them win their battle against cancer. Operational in Mumbai since one and half years SWC has touched the lives of over 1400 cancer survivors.



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BEING THE LIGHT WHERE THERE'S DARKNESS

They say that if you want to understand the pain of others, you need to walk a mile in their shoes. Reshma Chikankar, a brave 26 year old woman has done more than walking just a mile. In 1992, when Reshma was just two years old, she developed cancer in her right eye for which she was being treated till 1994. Although her treatment was successful, her cancer eventually led to her losing her eye. When she was in school, she was bullied and teased by other children in the class and being

a young naïve child, she didn't understand the reason for it. She realised that she was "different" from the others but didn't know in which way and whenever she asked her parents about it, they would brush it off and instead tell her to be brave and ignore the taunts.

So Reshma grew up with the constant reminder of making herself strong and independent. Till the age of ten or eleven, she had no inkling of what she went through. It was when she went for regular follow-up sessions and received counselling, did she slowly comprehend her situation. Whenever she visited the hospital she used to wonder about the suffering and problems of the patients there which made her keen on devoting herself towards social work. She's associated with Ugam, a group for cancer survivors that works with patients at the

Tata Memorial Hospital. During one of the meetings at the hospital, they were informed about the course in Oncological Caregiving at TISS in collaboration with Sanjeevani which made her curious. She says that she only knew about the problem she went through and not others. Being interested in learning and knowing about the other forms of cancer, gaining medical knowledge about the illness and ways in which these patients can be guided and supported was the reason she decided to enrol for the three month course in July.

When the course had just begun, she didn't know what to expect and how things would pan out but she was very excited from the beginning. Gradually into the course, she learnt because of the medical knowledge she began understanding the pain of others. She says joining the course generated empathy within her because of which she can counsel and talk to the patients in a more considerate manner. She talks about the classes were not just about studies and learning but also having fun and reliving their school and college days.

Her most memorable experience during the course was when during her practical at Tata she had an encounter with a girl who was in the same bed as Reshma was when she was younger and diagnosed with her illness. The girl had her leg operated and was so saddened about it that she refused to walk out of the bed, talk to anybody or even eat her meals properly. So Reshma shared her experience with the girl that she used to be in the same bed as her but was determined to live a great life ahead which is why she should not lose hope too. This encouraged the girl and she was discharged from the hospital, she came back to Reshma to thank her for her motivating words.

Talking about how the course helped her personally, Reshma says she had always been introverted and hesitant to make conversations with anybody but now, she says she is not the same after the course. She always facilitates conversations with everybody and her mother now tells her that she talks a lot. She has been working with St. Jude's Childcare Centre that works with children who are below 15 and are victims of

cancer. She loves her job especially because it involves children, so whenever she takes a holiday, the children call her to talk to her. She also thinks that the course has helped her imparting better care especially in terms of providing counselling and emotional support to the patients that she interacts with. Moreover, she also says that it has enhanced her communication skills and has helped in her personality development.

The increase in confidence too has really changed her attitude towards life and imbibed positivity within her. She talks about how she used to condemn her own situation and was weary of who she was. When her sister and cousins got married, she used to wonder about her own state and question herself. But after the course, she says she realised that she wants to stand on her own feet and be independent which is why she has held back the thoughts of marriage for now. She even turned down two proposals that came her way because they were not up to the standards that she set for herself and the man that she wishes to share her life with. "I want to live for myself and achieve something on my own and focus on myself for now", she states.

She also speaks about how her perspective towards cancer has changed tremendously now. From being a life threatening disease, she now thinks of it as an illness that can be completely cured. She also talks about her attempt of imparting the knowledge she gained to the people of the villages around her. Although they are not completely receptive to the information she imparts, she won't give up or stop trying. She believes that it is very important to listen to your doctor and follow the advice they impart. She warns against being careless or ignoring any illness or the symptoms that one experiences. The technology is greatly advanced now along with numerous NGOs that work in the health sector so it has become very easy to restore one's health.

She also talks about how we should not fear cancer but instead support those are battling with cancer and help in whichever possible so they don't sink in despair or grief.







BEING A CHANNEL OF KINDNESS

If one glances at Reshma Ramugade for a second, chances are they'll assume that Reshma may be still a student and living her carefree days blissfully. A nurse and a caregiver might probably not be the professions that one would immediately associate with her yet she are those. She is 23 years old and lives in Sion with her sister and mother. She enjoys playing sports like kabaddi, kho-kho and dancing, rangoli, mehndi design, enjoying with friends, etc. When she was in 10th, she completed a course on nursing through Sneha Sanstha and the organisation even conducts workshops on

teaching children about sexual health, rape, etc. Moreover, she completed her training in Rahul Nursing Home and worked in other nursing homes. Thus, from an early age she already aligned herself and her career towards the medical field and caring for others.

Reshma's mother's employer once told her about the course at TISS Oncological Caregiving in association with Sanjeevani since she knew that Reshma was already a nurse. When she understood the structure of the course, she was immediately interested because this meant helping others in a more tactful manner while acquiring in-depth knowledge about an illness like cancer. So she decided to enrol for the course.

The sessions on yoga really helped her improve her

knowledge on the subject as she still continues to follow what she learnt here as she says it relaxes her. Moreover the other sessions which gave her an understanding and in-depth study about the illness as she says she knew only about blood cancer and the knowledge she had about the disease was from TV. The course was not just about serious study but great fun as her batch mates ended up becoming her good friends and they used to play mischief in class and roam around which in a way is a reminiscent of school days.

Initially, when the course began, she was very nervous and was doubtful whether she could do it or not. Sometimes it got a little tough for her as she used to work during the course from 8 PM to 8 AM, so, juggling between the job and the course and studying for it made it tiring for her a few times. Also, during the practical, she witnessed scenarios involving pain, death, sometimes for small children. This scared her and sometimes filled her with her self-doubt. She says her perspective about cancer, death, etc. have changed drastically now as previously she left her exams in 12th to take care of her cousin who was in the coma for two years in addition to all the scenarios she witnessed as a nurse before joining the course. Now she is more capable of handling these and doesn't let it bog her down. Her friends ask her whether working with patients involving cancer scare her but she tries to break the myths they have and rather spreads information on it as a lot of people also view it as a punishment for "past sins".

The course was not just about knowledge gain for her but also personality development. She talks about how because of the course she has learnt about etiquettes, talking and counselling the patients with tact, importance of small details like maintaining eye contact, etc. She tells that she used to be hesitant to talk and feel easily nervous but now she is more open and confident. She thinks she is a better caregiver now as she can handle the patients with more confidence and ease. Her fears and inhibitions involving patients were also addressed during the course. She also talks about it has also helped her with the job, her employment opportunities as well as the financial situation. She now wants to pursue nursing in a more professional way.

As a person who has quite an experience in the field of caregiving and being involved with patients, the only advice she gives to others is to take care of yourself and never let fear grip you as it only impairs one further.









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Objective:

- 1. Raise the bar of Cancer-care in India
- Skill development of cancer victors resulting in rehabilitation
- 3. Produce a pool of professionally trained and certified care givers for cancer patients.

Eligibility:

- Good written and communication skills in Hindi
 & Basic English.
- Minimum educational qualification: 10th Pass
- Applications from cancer survivors will be preferred; however admission is open to care givers and general candidates as well.
- Ages between 21 and 45
- Strong commitment to serve

Course Structure:

Duration: 4 months (120 Hours for classroom session

and 240 Hours for field practical)

Intake : 20 Candidates

Class: Weekdays (Monday to Saturday)

Incentives:

3 scholarships to the first 3 best performing participants.

Fees:

Candidates taking admission will be required to remit a one-time admission fee of Rs. 3000/-.

Placement Assistance:

Programme Coordinator will assist and guide wherever possible for placement of trained onco care givers.

To Know More Contact:

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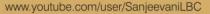


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AT THE END OF EVERY DARK TUNNEL THERE IS LIGHT

During her first pregnancy, the doctor informed Riya Jadhav that she may have to undergo an abortion because of complications arising due to a tumour in her womb. She was really heartbroken and reluctantly agreed to go for it after her parents, husband and in-laws said that is necessary for her health. She was treated at a private hospital and became alright. But things took another turn when she experienced symptoms of pregnancy and upon consulting the doctor she realised it was a

case of molar pregnancy – a condition wherein the tissue that normally becomes a foetus instead becomes an abnormal growth in the uterus. Then started a series of visits to a hospital at Bhandup to treat the tumour, the in-depth information of which was not at all given to Riya by the doctor. It was when a nurse that she became friendly at the hospital told her that the doctors treat her in consultation with surgeons at the Tata Memorial Hospital, did she realise that something is fishy.

Upon approaching and consulting doctors at the Tata Hospital did she come to know that her tumour was malignant and she had cancer. Her treatment was then started there in September 2014 and continued till February 2015 when she conquered cancer. Throughout this period, she recalls that it was only her parents and her husband

that constantly supported her. During one of the visits to the hospital, she met her old friend, Vishakha who works for Sanjeevani and it was she who recommended the course at the Wellness Centre to Riya. She decided to listen to her friend and enrolled herself for the course which she says gave her new knowledge in nutrition, exercise, yoga, dance and also a life-changing attitude.

Riya had always been a homemaker, so the members at Sanjeevani suggested that she opt for the TISS certificate course in Oncological Care Giving in collaboration with Sanjeevani, so that her experience and knowledge that she acquired during her battle against cancer may be beneficial to others who are facing a similar fate while also helping her shape an identity of her own. She decided to join the course and said that the entire period was a reminiscent of her school and college days. She says, "I have always been very carefree but cancer mentally burdened me. During this course, I had the same kind of fun that I used to have in my college days while also being dedicated to my studies because the faculty were so acclaimed and esteemed that we couldn't afford to disappoint them." Sharmishtha Ma'am, one of the lecturers, she says was her favourite teacher because of her soft spoken and patient nature.

The course has given her beautiful memories which she will never forget she says. She admits acting like a 17-year-old college student and indulging in mischief with her classmates. Clicking pictures with another, laughing at those being scolded at, having fun in the classroom with the teachers were some of the moments she warmly remembers. At the end of the course, she was placed at the Tata Memorial Hospital where she assists the patients and counsels them, especially those who feel a sense of loss and hopelessness. The satisfaction of helping these patients come out of their misery is immense for her.

Her life has taken a 360 degree turn because of her association with Sanjeevani.

She states, "After being a part of Sanjeevani, I am back to being what I was before - carefree and happy".

From her experience of being a victim of cancer to conquering it, she emphasises on the need for timely check-ups and diagnosis while also having sufficient and proper knowledge about the disease but in her opinion the best way to keep any sickness away is by encouraging positive thinking and being happy.

"Grab happiness from wherever you can" she says with a broad grin on her face.





TREATING OTHER'S PAIN AS YOUR OWN

Sarika Illey is like any other 24 year old who loves talking, dancing and listening to radio. But what sets her apart is the path in her profession that she has chosen. After passing her HSC exams, she worked in an LIC branch as an assistant and later completed a basic course in nursing for a period of four months. Her mother-in-law is involved in patient care and her employer read about the TISS course in Oncological Caregiving in association with Sanjeevani and that is when she advised Sarika to enrol herself into the course. Sarika barely had any information about cancer as there has

never been a history of cancer in her family. So initially she had apprehensions about joining the course as cancer meant death to her but as a person who likes helping others and who's interested in acquiring knowledge on different subjects, she thought it was worth giving a try. Moreover the death of her premature baby had saddened her to the extent that she wouldn't interact much with others. So as a distraction and a medium through which she can gain knowledge, she decided to enrol herself into the course.

The course, she says, was a good combination of theory knowledge and practical's. All the faculty that were involved gave them detailed knowledge while being willing to explain concepts over and over again for the benefit of all. They all also had fun and made new friends that they interacted with

and still do. Overall, it was a warm environment apart from gaining a lot of information on the illness, she says.

During the practicals, she was assigned to work in the paediatric ward of the Tata Hospital, so watching children suffer through cancer was a bit upsetting for her but it also gave her inspiration and a lot to learn from. "When I was in that ward, I learnt so much from them because I thought to myself that if some of these little children in their last stages of illness were smiling through their pain, then why should I cling on to the pain of losing a child?"

Sarika talks about how before the course she had various myths about cancer. She now has realised that cancer is not as huge and dangerous in the way people talk about it. It can be cured with timely diagnosis, good treatment and positive frame of mind. She also tells about how the course has helped her in understanding the patients in a way by which she can take better care of them and also feels confident to handle them by herself. "I know

that if somebody in my family would go through an illness like this, I would definitely take good care of them. This is exactly how I think of the patients I am supposed to care for", states Sarika. An incident she remembers was how a 17 years old had his leg amputated because he had retreated himself to a shell and wouldn't speak to anyone but Sarika with her tact, took good care of him and he opened up to her.

The course also changed her as a person as she says, she used to stress a lot because of which she had different fears and inhibitions which she has now learnt to deal.

She wants to continue working as a caregiver and explore the field of social work.





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TRUE FRIENDSHIP MANIFESTED IN TIMES OF TROUBLE

There is a well-known saying which states that a friend in need is a friend indeed and Sunita Ramani, a 56 year old lady living in Kharghar is a great example of that friend who has been there for a friend in need. A cheerful and jolly person, Sunita has tried her hands at different kinds of jobs like sales officer, marketing, teaching, in a company that provided internet services, a volunteer of

Sanjeevani and now with ACTREC as a caregiver. But throughout all these jobs the on job - or rather one can call it a service - which she has been doing consistently is that of caregiving. When her father passed away early, she had to step up and take charge and care for the family. Later in her marriage, she had to care for her first child who was prematurely born and then five years later, her second child who was a blue baby. Thus, she stayed strong through it all and devoted most of her life towards caring for others.

During one of the jobs, she met Raakhi Mirchandani with whom she formed a special bond of friendship and became a close confidante of. In 2015 once, she called Sunita complaining of excessive bleeding. Sunita accompanied her to the hospital to get a biopsy done after which she was

diagnosed with cancer. Raakhi's treatment lasted for about five months. Throughout it all, Sunita has been by her side more than her own family. Of the several visits that she had to make to the Tata Hospital for her friend's treatment, she came in contact with different social workers working there and that is how she got to know about Sanjeevani and the course at TISS on Oncological care giving by Sanjeevani. It piqued her interest since she has always been involved in caring for others along with the scenarios in the hospital that filled her with an urge to reach out to them.

Because she had to leave her studies midway because of different issues in the family, this course became a way through which she got an opportunity to learn again. The faculty she says were highly qualified and were like the colours in the rainbow. With each one teaching a different subject in their own unique way helped to bring out the best in all. Moreover, the course helped in her personality development, making her realise her hidden qualities while giving an opportunity to explore various choices and options. She talks about how when her friend was battling cancer, she took care of her as a friend but because of this course and the knowledge she gained here, she realise the correct way of caregiving, the qualities that she lacked, her shortcomings and thus, got a clearer and more professional way of providing care to patients.

All this has been really possible for her because of the support of her family. Her husband has been like a pillar and her backbone because in spite of being continuously abroad for work, he respected and supported her decisions and encouraged her to pursue the course. On the other hand her younger brother, who is a doctor himself, guided her in different ways through the course. Her elder sister who is a teacher, gave her inputs on memory techniques so to help her study better while her son, took care of her in the way she took care of him when he was a child. Thus, she says, she could give her 100% because of the strong family support she had.

The course she says made her realise the importance of emotional support needed during an illness. She has gained a lot more than she ever could manage to and received the love and support of her batch mates who became her friends and whom she considers as family now. She said she lost a daughter but in return now has gained three daughters in the form of her batch mates whom she got really close to. "Wherever there were comma's in life, Sanjeevani came into my life and has now put a full stop. Whatever I sacrificed and missed out in my earlier life has been fulfilled now at this age because studying in an institute like TISS and with the kind of faculty that we had really is like a dream come true", she says.

After the course, she got placed in ACTREC as a caregiver and working there, she says, has made her realise what she lacked professionally. She feels like she's truly living her life now in a more fruitful manner and the patients she interacts with have become like a family to her. She is of the opinion that a lot of women don't love themselves enough to treat themselves as priority but rather focus on their family and the needs of everybody. This is an amazing opportunity to do something for yourself she says.

The job she says has given her a platform to fulfil her wishes. She comes home from work as a happier and satisfied person. Undergoing all the situations regarding her children, her friends, etc. made her worrisome but she leads a more positive life now, one without any expectations. She just wants to continue doing what she does now and spread laughter and joy.





FROM EXPERIENCE TO ACTION

Suvarna Panchal is one of the people that have emerged stronger from their pain and trouble. She is a 39 year old lady from Chembur and loves singing to retro songs and helping others. She worked at a travel agency until was diagnosed with cancer barely three months later after her wedding in 2011. She got very scared and lost all hope of living. Her mother had cancer so she did watch the effects of the illness closely but her husband and inlaws supported her throughout the period of her illness. Her treatment continued for around two

and half years and now she visits the hospital for follow ups.

Her friend informed her about Sanjeevani's course on Oncological Caregiving at TISS through which she got in touch with one of the volunteers of Sanjeevani. The course structure greatly interested her because of which she decided to join the course. Her family's support also encouraged her further to pursue it.

Although she was very excited to join the course, she was nervous and tensed about the studies and exams that were a part of it as it would be after a long break that she would go back to studying. Otherwise it really excited her that joining the course would mean going back to her college days and everybody having a good time together.

Every session and lecture during the course were of great help she says whether it was on yoga, nutrition, counselling and knowing about the illness. It was like gaining a wealth of knowledge and becoming a much resourceful person because of it. From knowing nothing about the illness to gaining knowledge and studying about it has been a great transformation for her. She also talks about making good friends here that she still is in touch with.

Suvarna also talks about her confidence in herself has greatly increased as also her will power to help others. "After joining the course, I never once felt like I am a cancer patient or ever was because I have imbibed positivity thinking in me. Even the patients that I interacted with don't believe when I tell them that once I was a cancer patient too", she says.

Because of the course, she says she is a mentally stronger person now and should any trouble befall her she is sure of overcoming it which is something she wants to advise others as well. One should not be bogged down due to the illness but rather adopt a positive approach and listen to your doctor as cancer doesn't mean an end to life but only an obstacle which we can very well overcome and move on. She talks about how Sanjeevani has been a good platform where she could realise her abilities and worth.

Suvarna is now looking out for a good opportunity in care giving so that she can teach others what she learn during the course and break myths about cancer.







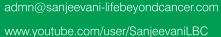
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empower cancer survivors into caregivers so they can share their experiences to ease the pain of others but there are many who pursued the course for sheer interest and thirst for knowledge. One of them is Swapnali Dhale who is just 21 year old and lives in Tilaknagar. She enjoys painting, dancing, making chocolates, etc. After completing her HSC, she completed a basic course in paramedical studies. Her mother is involved in patient care privately and her friend's mother-in-law informed

the course and after it ended when she was placed in Tata, they were extremely proud of her.

Swapnali talks about how she gained knowledge about cancer, the pain that people go through, how they have to suffer through it and how as caregivers, they can help them better with it. Along with learning, they had great fun during the lectures as well. All the teachers that came in were very patient and understanding towards them.

Along with the theory sessions, the practical was a great learning experience as well. She was assigned in the female ward and bonding with them was an eye-opening as well as heart-warming experience for her.

Swapnali has many lessons that she took away from the course. She talks about it was because of the course that she realised the importance of treating everyone with respect. She also learnt to use her time in a more productive manner. Her communication skills also greatly improved as she says it is more important to listen than speak while keeping yourself free from assumptions. "I have knowledge about cancer, communication skills and also the confidence that I can cheer anybody in a way that will gain their trust because of which I have become a better caregiver than I was", she says.

She says that there are a lot of myths involving cancer where a lot of people generally treat it as a "sin". So she spreads knowledge about the way one

becomes a victim of cancer and how can one prevent it. She says that she the scenarios in the hospital were initially gruesome to her but not anymore. Now the knowledge has helped her work closely with the patients.

Her life had changed greatly after the course. Apart from the fact that her parents are more proud of her, she has gained the respect of the people in her village. She says one needs to have sufficient information on the diseases of the present times and must take care. It is important to breathe fresh air and not be afraid of cancer. Neither should one be stigmatise the illness or anybody undergoing it.

She now wants to pursue a full time course in nursing and continue to guide people in despair.





LEADING THE PATH OF HOPE FOR OTHERS

If there's somebody we can learn a lesson or two from, it has to be Vikas Yadav, a 19 year old boy from Uttar Pradesh. From a young age, Vikas lived with his grandparents as his mother was a heart patient and used to stay in Delhi for treatment. He was a pampered child as his grandparents ensured that he didn't feel the lack of his parents' love and support any time. He always had been a very active child, leaning more towards notoriety and constantly took part in extracurricular activities like dancing in school.

In 2013, he experienced a blinding pain in his left

eye and head because of which he couldn't see properly. After several attempts at treating the issue, the doctors he was consulting in U.P gave up and advised him to go to Mumbai or Delhi. He went to Delhi to get himself treated and underwent two surgeries but they were in vain. The doctors had to remove his eye as it had a cancerous infection due to which he lost his vision and went back to his village in UP in despair. He started experiencing pain again and the doctors there totally lost hope in his case and stated that he won't live long. In desperation, the family hurried off to Mumbai to get his eye treated. Here they performed retina blastoma on him and his entire treatment started in around June 2014 and continued till May 2016. During this period, Vikas was drowning in grief and pain day by day. He wouldn't talk, eat, cry or even

get out of his room. He had locked himself physically, mentally and emotionally. Some of this friends also did call him out and tease him when he lost his hair because of the treatment. That only hurt further. It was during one of the visits to the Tata hospital when Anita Gupta, a doctor at the hospital recommended that he enrol himself for the course in Oncological care giving by Sanjeevani in collaboration with TISS and so he did.

He liked how the course was an amalgamation of different factors like knowledge about cancer, counselling, personality development, English speaking skills, etc. He was the only male in the entire batch because of which he was called "Kanhaiya". It was not just about learning but having a gala time too. "Since I missed out on my college days due to my illness, I realised how exactly they are through this course and enjoyed fully", he says. He was the notorious one among all and used to snatch the tiffin boxes of everybody as he himself states with a mischievous grin. The friends he made are like family to him and since he was the youngest there he was pardoned a lot of mischief. Mentioning one of his examples of notoriety was when the yoga teacher didn't come to class and so he and few others started singing and dancing in the class itself.

Being the mischievous guy that he was, he was also a dedicated student. Along with in-depth knowledge on cancer, he talks about how he learnt good etiquettes and the way one must speak to others, especially patients, while also learning how to react and be receptive to the information that they provide. He also learnt to face his fears. His friends used to stay away from him because of the fear of contracting it themselves as they thought cancer is an infectious disease which is something even Vikas thought was true when he was battling cancer. But because of this course, his knowledge on the subject has increased and he spreads awareness among his friends now.

Vikas is not the same person after passing out from the course. "I used to think I am not capable of doing anything. Battling an illness like cancer and losing an eye made me think I am worthless but now I know I can do anything I want to", he states. Having conquered cancer, he is of the opinion that cancer is not that big an illness as it is portrayed to be. All you have to do is listen to the doctor, follow the instructions and be strong.

The course has generated empathy in him in a way that makes him want to care for people and be of help to them in any way that he can. Currently he takes care of his siblings at home while his parents work and spends time indulging in his hobbies but he wants to go to Noida so that he can become a doctor and he says he will.







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