



## Caregiver counselling programme with new partner Gharkul

In June 2017, Adveka Foundation began collaborating with a new partner organization, Gharkul, an organization school that works with children with special needs, for the caregiver counselling programme. For the next few months, Adveka will work with the parents, teachers, and the school principal of the school children over themes such as self care, assertiveness training, emotional management parts, dealing with lack of motivation and enthusiasm, and dealing with grief. Before the start of the curriculum, the participants were graded for baseline scores on four parameters: caregiver stress, resilience, coping, and caregiver burden. The first group session has also been held. At the end of the curriculum, they will be assessed again for endline scores on the same parameters to determine how the group sessions have helped them.



**Self-care and emotional management workshop with Muskan Foundation:** Adveka conducted a workshop in June 2017 on self care strategies and emotional management techniques with Muskan Foundation, an organization that works with special needs children. Around 30 parents and teachers of the children participated in the half-day workshop, which comprised interactive sessions, group discussions, and other activities (*Photo credit: Adveka Foundation*)

## Ongoing work at Adveka:

The last couple of months have seen an increase in Adveka's individual counselling bandwidths. Going from two to three consults a month when we first started, Adveka Foundation now averages around two consults per week, with at least 11 clients. Our clients range from as young as 12 years old to as old as 75 years old. With increasing referrals, our reach is expanding as well.

In June 2017, Adveka Foundation conducted refresher sessions of our caregiver counselling programme with our first partner Cuddles Foundation, an organization that works with children suffering from cancer. We worked with the same dieticians who attended the pilot programme sessions, taking them over aspects of emotional management and self care again, so that they can continue to cope better with the stress resulting from their work.

## Let's talk about mental health

You'd never say, "It's just cancer, get over it." But replace the term "cancer" with "depression", "anxiety" or any other mental health condition, and a response along those lines is heard far more often. There is an overwhelming propensity to recommend visiting a doctor the moment there is a sneeze or a headache in the vicinity. But the issue of mental well being is dealt with the same way we in India deal with things we are not comfortable with: we refuse to acknowledge its existence and simply don't talk about it.

World Mental Health Day is observed on October 10 every year, and is an opportunity to highlight the wide range of mental health issues that affect so many people in India. Mental illnesses cover a gamut of disorders, ranging from depression, anxiety, and phobias to schizophrenia, eating disorders, obsessive compulsive disorder, to dementia and Alzheimer's.

According to the World Health Organization, India accounts for 25% of the world's total suicides. Reports say 90% of these stem from depression, the most common mental health disorder. India has 0.6 mental health workers for every 100,000 people, and 43 mental hospitals, says the WHO's Mental Health Atlas 2014. In short, we are massively under-equipped to deal with what clearly is a mental health crisis.

Given the marked absence of conversation on mental well being beyond the circle of experts and healthcare workers, we asked some people from outside the field what they thought about mental health.

(To read the full article, please visit [advekafoundation.com/blog](http://advekafoundation.com/blog))