



Mahalakshmi Rajagopal : Emotional upliftment, holistically

Holistic care for mental health

A room full of young women sat listening to Dr Mahalakshmi Rajagopal as the latter held a sensitisation workshop on mental health and youth empowerment. Quite a regular scene in metropolitan cities these days, with many a youngster succumbing to some form of emotional or mental malaise. But what is unique about Dr Rajagopal's workshops is her integrative approach to treating mental health problems. Her sessions on behavioural therapies beautifully segue into holistic intervention. She says, "I aim for emotional upliftment as an answer to various life challenges."

Dr Rajagopal is a mental health professional with many years of experience in family therapy and school and youth counselling. Currently serving as the Director of the Delhi-based SAHAYAM Intervention Centre and SAHAYAM Charitable Trust, she quit her job in 2014 to start her long-held dream of combining energy healing with mainstream mental health therapies. "Holistic intervention, especially in 'special needs' cases like ASD (autism spectrum disorder), is like 'prasad' that many people are unaware of," she says.

A certified pranic healer, Dr Rajagopal integrates pranic healing, EFT, and crystal healing with behav-

oural therapies as and when needed. "Though energy healing has been around for quite some time, there are miles to cover, in terms of its usage in treating mental health problems. As it is, our society looks askance at mental health problems, dismissing the symptoms as mere false notions or illusions," she laments.

She handles marital and family discord issues, depression, ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder) and ASD while empowering patients with energy healing tools that will remain with them forever. Sharing the case of an eight-year-old ASD child, Dr Rajagopal explains her methodology. She first conducted a psychological assessment of the child and started behavioural therapy sessions with both the parents and the child, and later introduced them to chakra healing, pranic energy and EFT.

"I ask parents to learn upto level three pranic healing to calm down 'special' children because they usually get easily agitated. I also inform them about specific chakras that they need to focus on in their child. For instance, in ADHD, it is generally the solar plexus and the root chakra which need balancing. For children who are highly distracted, ajana chakra needs balancing. I also sug-

gest using crystals for engendering greater family harmony. Healing 'special needs' cases is usually a long-drawn process, taking upto 12-18 months, making it difficult for the clients to come regularly for treatment for such an extended time. Therefore, I equip the parents with the needed tools and techniques so that they don't become dependent on the counsellor forever," she says.

However, Dr Rajagopal maintains that tools and techniques are not enough to drive away the blues; people need to work upon themselves. "One needs to acknowledge his or her limitations in order to reach his or her higher self," she says.

Ask her what urgent steps are needed to secure the future for integrated holistic wellness in the sphere of mental health, and she replies instantaneously, "Active sensitisation!", adding, "People are ready to donate for education, school and infrastructure, but think twice when it comes to mental health, and step back when alternative intervention gets into the picture. We really need to change this attitude and SAHAYAM is a step in that direction," she says.

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