

SAI DHARMAM

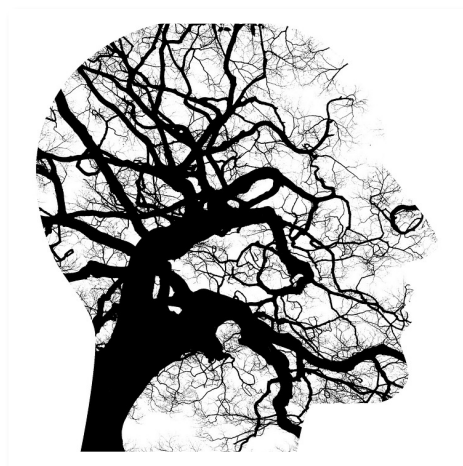
Sri Sathya Sai Baba Centre of Cooksville



Mental Health

Mental health is a word used to explain a person's emotional, psychological and social well-being. It affects how a person thinks, feels, and acts. It also helps determine how he/she handles stress, relates to others, and makes decisions. Having problems with mental health can affect your thinking, mood, and behavior. Biological factors such as genes or brain chemistry, traumatic life experiences or family history are all factors that contribute to one's mental health. It can range from mild cases like Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) and Social Phobia to very serious cases like Schizophrenia and Eating Disorders. Many people who live with mental health issues are often surrounded by a stigma and discrimination towards the issue. The media plays a key role in this stigma as a majority of the time the media portrays

people with these conditions as very violent, dangerous and unpredictable. There are significant consequences to the public misperceptions and fears. Stereotypes about mental health conditions have been used to justify bullying. Many people have found that they lose their self-esteem and have difficulty making friends. Sometimes, the stigma attached to mental health conditions is so pervasive that people who suspect that they might have a mental health condition are unwilling to seek help out of fear of what others may think. This stigma around mental illness needs to stop and in order to do so, people need to become more open minded and supportive of one another. As Michelle Obama says "Whether an illness affects your heart, your leg, or your brain, it's still an illness. There should be no distinction".



"To be healthy as a whole, mental wellness plays a role."

Mental Health and Spiritual Practice

A holistic approach to healthcare encompasses treatment of the body, mind and spirit. Over the last century, healthcare and its accompanying industries and practices have placed a great focus on the physical aspect of health. For instance, the values and importance of nutrition and physical activity are instilled in children through the educational curriculum. Although great strides in physical healthcare have been made to date, society may have overlooked a key piece to the larger scale healthcare puzzle.

Our dear Swami says eloquently, “man suffers from two types of ills, physical and mental. Physical health is a prerequisite for mental health, and mental health ensures physical health.” If mental and physical health are co-dependent, should there not be an equal focus placed on mental health? In Canada, every year, 1 in 5 people will experience first-hand a mental health problem or illness.

Spiritual practice is a potent and steadfast tool in cultivating and nurturing mental health. This practice could be anything done regularly that allows one to look and connect within. No two people will have the same spiritual practice. One’s practice is personal, private, and catered to their individual interests, beliefs and nature. (continued on page 4)



“If you were born with the weakness to fall you were born with the strength to rise” - Rupri Kaur



“Never give up on someone with a mental illness . When ‘I’ is replaced in by ‘We’, illness becomes wellness.” - Shannon L. Alder

Devotee Speaks

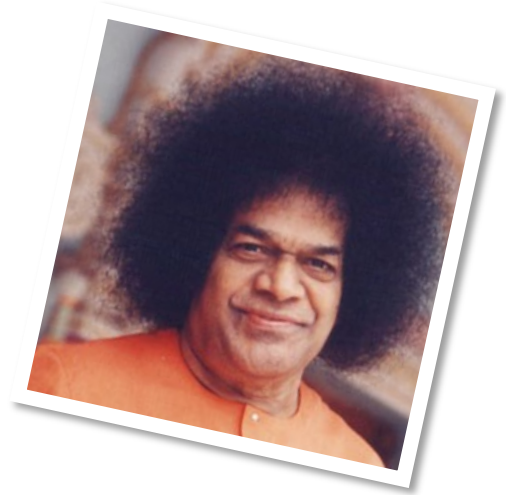
The psychological wellbeing of our community is vastly important and as important as its psychical wellbeing. We live in a constant state of worry a never-ending saga gravely impacting our physical and psychological wellness. Daily we have inner conflict between our mental expectations and the actual happenings, a constant paradox between spoken word and actions. This contradiction often leads to many negative qualities that Bhagawan's teachings steer us away from. Worry, is one of the root causes for individuals experiencing mild to moderate mental health concerns.

The Mental Health Commission reports that 1 in 5 people in Canada will experience a mental health problem or illness in any given year, thus it impacts millions of Canadians. 60% of people with mental health prob-

lems will not seek help for fear of being labeled; a staggering number that demonstrates that stigma prevents people from being helped. Worrying about being labeled, misunderstood or judged should not be reasons to shy away from talking about your worries. Bhagawan says "Humanness consists in harmony of thought, word and deed", so how do we practice this as we reflect on stigma?

Bhagawan's message: "If you can't oblige, at least talk obligingly", struck a sensitive chord in my heart. I have worked in the mental health field for 17 years and have seen firsthand the effects of stigma on individuals who are dealing with mental health problems. The power of speech is endowed to us to be used to charge every patient with positive vibrations. I have witness where medicine has

failed; tender, loving, reassuring words can be so powerful. Once all actions are surrendered to Him, no judgements evolve, thus stigma diminishes.



"Small minds select narrow roads; expand your mental vision and take to the broad road of helpfulness, compassion and service." - Sai Baba

Vice-President's Message

The word Mahasamadhi means not only the conscious departure from the physical body of a realized soul but also the shrine where the physical body is buried. April 27 was the most sacred day when the Sai Kulwant hall was transformed into Maha Samadhi mandir of our dearest Bhagawan.

Our beloved Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, our dearest Swami, elected to leave his physical form in the morning hours, at 7.40 am, April 24, 2011. Our beloved Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba is not confined by the demise of the physical presence and identity that he assumed, nor is he constrained by time. He will be with us forever.

"Why fear when I am here?" declared our Beloved Swami. He has always

been and will continue to be present as the Divine In-dweller who resides in our spiritual hearts. Being "here" refers to His Spiritual Presence, not His Physical Presence. He will always be "here". This has not changed. "Here" is everywhere and forever. "Here" is accessible to each and every one of us in our own hearts. To be with Him "Here" and now, we must choose faith, not fear.

We can accomplish everything, the fulfillment of our spiritual destiny that He ordained, by devoting our lives to Him and to His Divine Message of selfless love and service. Now He lives only in our spiritual hearts, as the Lord of Lords. Now, we must turn inward to experience His Divine Presence and Love. Swami has come to demonstrate how we should live

these human lives. He has come for the awakening of conscience and selfless love in the minds and hearts of all people. To Love all, serve all. To Help ever, hurt never.

Sri Sathya Sai Organizations are based on these spiritual principles that He has provided. We will certainly persevere. We must listen to our hearts with spiritual self-confidence. His Lessons for mankind will not be forgotten or forsaken. Our spiritual lives, our noble actions, and our selfless love will become worthy testaments to His Divine Presence among us. Lord of Lords, Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, Divine Mother and Father, May we always love You unwaveringly, always follow You without faltering, and always find You in our heart of hearts.

"A man's well being depends upon his degree of contentment." - Sai Baba

Mental Health and Spiritual Practice

(Continued from page 2)

Swami has created a foundation for children, youth, and adults to establish a spiritual practice through an outlet of their choice; like art, music, reading, teaching, or serving, to name a few.

Like a physician recommending medication to his/her patient, Swami provides a prescription for his devotees. "Have a meal of good acts of service, divine thoughts, and drink the juice of Love (Prema rasa), so that they may be washed down, and digested well. Then, you can be shining in mental health, happiness and wholesomeness."



"I can and I will. Watch me." - Carrie Green



Bhajan

Don't worry, be happy for Baba loves us so
Illusions are many but underneath them all
There is one reality that You and I are one
That God is Love and Love is God and God
and man are one



"Real happiness lies within you." - Sai Baba
