



## **Institute of Sathya Sai Education Australia**

### **National Education Conference 2011**

#### **SSEHV in the Community: Individual Transformation for Health Professionals**

The aged care facility had a change in the management structure in early 2008. Over the past years staff at this institution have been through traumatic experiences which involved autocratic leadership. Staff had been through numerous interviews, submitted many written statements and were involved in various investigations. This resulted in nursing staff experiencing increased levels of stress, anxiety, psycho somatic illnesses together with decreased levels of job satisfaction, self confidence and personal value. The staff opinion survey further indicated the dissatisfaction of staff with management.

The situation in the wards amongst staff was tense and there was some anxiety when staff had to come in contact with senior management. Although the affected staff had been referred to counseling and the employee assistance program there was no improvement in the situation.

The Director of Nursing and myself as part of the new management structure discussed the current situation at the facility. We were faced with a consistent increase in sick leave, lost time staff injuries, workers compensation claims and stress related psychological illness. This greatly impacted on the remaining staff on the wards and the quality of resident care.

I suggested an educational program with a holistic approach which would address the mind, body and spirit of the individual. There was certainly an urgency to support the staff using a nurturing holistic approach with the vision of a gradual positive culture change in the facility. Permission was granted to develop a learning package based on the practice of Human Values and called "Individual Transformation- Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow".

Simultaneously an additional section was added to the present education needs analysis requesting staff to state whether they would be interested in a Individual Transformation Workshop. 85% of the staff indicated that it was 'most important' and 10% indicated that it was 'important'. Thus the justification for a workshop of this nature.

The aim of the two 2 day individual workshop was for participants to become more than what they are at present. The objectives were for participants to identify the need for individual transformation in themselves; to develop self awareness in thought, word and deed; to experience and practice the universal human values and to implement strategies aiding relaxation of the mind and body.

Mixed modes of delivery were undertaken as this was a 2 day workshop which included both theory and practical sessions. The content of the presentations and learning package were tailored to meet the common intellectual level of all participants. The participants comprised mainly of nursing staff, senior management, activity officers and a administration officers. The workshop consisted of brain storming, mind mapping, interactive group discussions, slide shows, quiz, laminated cards and group activities using butcher paper.

The key concepts of the workshop on day 1 were the principles of transformation, the practice of human values, levels of personality, identifying inner and outer worlds, harmony of head, heart and hands and the mind and the senses. Day two topics were personal power, humility, assertiveness, responsibility, time management, unity/harmony/ similarities in different faiths and communication. The practical sessions included Silent Sitting, Breath Control, Guided Light meditation, Yoga and Affirmations. Senior staff at the aged care facility who had received their Certificate IV in Workplace Training and Assessment were given resource material for the topics and delivered the same. The presentations were enhanced by relevant slide shows and power point presentations. Questions from the learning package were answered both individually and in small groups. Yoga sessions were conducted by a qualified Yoga teacher.

Each participant was given a vinyl bag with a note book and pen, a stress ball, laminated affirmations, a Guided Light Meditation CD and a laminated poster with pictures and an explanations of the 12 step sequence for the “Yoga Sun Salutation”. At the end of the workshop each participant was issued with a certificate of attendance signed by the Director of Nursing and myself.

4 workshops were held over the years resulting in 50% of staff having attended these workshops. Participants completed evaluation forms after the workshop and the most common comments were the following:-

*Quite an awakening to a healthy life*  
*Able to understand difference between religion & spirituality*  
*I am responsible for my own mental & physical health*  
*We have a choice to live in Love rather than Hate*  
*Acknowledge that transformation is a gradual process*

Three months after the workshop a questionnaire was sent out to all participants. 44 % of participants indicated that they practice human values at work ‘very often’ and 50% said ‘often’. 25% indicated that they practice at least one of the relaxation techniques ‘very often’ and 44% stated often.

The general opinion from the staff was that the Individual Transformation workshop has been beneficial to their personal, family, community and professional growth. Therefore the importance of a healthy mind and a healthy body was reinforced. The importance of discipline with the relaxation practices was emphasised so that the new knowledge and skills are immediately put into practice to be maintained long term.

The outcome of this learning package is related to the theme of the conference in the following manner. The introduction of the Learning package has the following statement based on the principle of Atmic oneness “The spiritual teaching that *we are all One* is rapidly manifesting itself, as the reality of our interdependence and interconnectedness reveals itself”. The practical aspects of the ‘Role of Spirituality’ have been met in that staff have indirectly incorporated spiritual practices into their lives daily by the way of silent sitting, meditation, yoga practices and the use of affirmations. . The questions and group discussions in the learning package addressed emotional self management and self regulation of the participants.

The aged care quality assessors on behalf of the Accreditation Agency visited the facility earlier this year and was impressed with the self help education provided for the staff by the facility. The Occupational Health and Safety Numerical Profilers visited the facility a few weeks ago and also stated to the Senior management that addressing the psychological aspect of staff was just as important as providing the staff with technical skills.

Staff who had attended the Individual Transformation workshops suggested to the “Advanced Care Planning” team to include Silent Sitting/Meditation from the Individual Transformation learning package in their program this year. The “Inner Journey” consisting of a short theory component and a longer practical session at the end of these workshops on three occasions was conducted. Advance care planning is a process enabling a patient to express wishes about his or her future health care in consultation with their health care providers, family members and other important people in their lives. This learning package has also been used in South Africa and Fiji as resource material in the community

The Individual Transformation workshop has become part of the annual needs analysis with the continuing of Individual Transformation workshops in the future.

Selvanie Naidoo  
August 2011  
ISSE Australia