

# Turning into a Phoenix....

(Eklavya group gave me a new insight)

On entering 'the' renowned and recognized 'B.J. Medical College, Pune', I was cocooning beautiful dreams of my life. But, as misfortune strikes you, I was struck by mental illness in middle of my college days. Mental illness is that paralysing and emotionally draining malady that God should forbid anyone to face. Because of that, I faced a roller-coaster derailment in life, that till today, I repented, remorseful and reteriated to not have experienced it. I took help of medicines, but it brought me no joy, no happiness and basically no cure. I was disturbed even when I cleared my exams. There was a certain amount of restlessness underlying the calmness I showed on my face.

After suffering through such entanglements of life, I was introduced to Eklavya group by my friend psychologist. It's a group based in Pune, working for people with mental illness and their families.

In reality, to expose yourself as a mentally ill patient, is regarded as a sort of taboo in our society. Not everyone welcomes honesty and that too... if you are mentally not ok, it gives a smirk on people's face. In spite of that, I decided and joined their meeting. But, to my surprise, the first meeting itself was a path-breaking experience for me. Though I was not scared to join it, I was sort of apprehensive about its outcome. How do they work, would anyone support my genuine feelings or would I feel intimidated or inferior to them?... such thoughts lingered in my mind for sometime.

But, it turned out to be a blessing in disguise for me. In the start, I was hesitating and fumbling to speak my heart out. But, from the encouragement I received from the members of the group, I could vest interest and faith in them and I felt free to communicate. It shedded my negativity completely. Sulochana, Smita, Manjiri, Chinmay, Deepak, Anil. Everyone gave a

free ear to me and listened to what I was holding back to say since years. Here, there is free exchange of thoughts and ideas. The senior members give you best opinions that you have never heard of from even your near ones. There is no array of advices given to you and no enactment of superiority.

This group uses the technique of Dr Abraham Low- The Recovery Method. It's a very simple method and in 5 steps, you are relieved of your anxiety and restlessness. Every apparent smaller and bigger problem seem nothing more than dust and pebbles to you. It gives you an unique solution and is a safer and trustworthy method.

Every Saturday we have our group meetings. It has given me immense peace, balance, enthusiasm, self-motivation, determination, confidence and satisfaction. It gave me a new life, exactly like how a transformation of ashes to Phoenix can be like. It has brought me self-reliance, self-respect and mental independence. I feel that Eklavya group can bring out the best in every suffering individual. People with mental illness should take advantage of it. On Mental Health Day, I appeal to all such people to come forward and take help for their deteriorating emotional turmoil. We don't come across such genuine helpful groups very often in life. It's just one phone call away. I bet you, you won't regret it.

## **Dr. Pallavi Gambhir**

(The author of this article is an active volunteer of Eklavya Foundation for Mental Health. This article has appeared in brief version in Marathi Newspaper... Daily Maharashtra Times, Pune Plus on 6th October 2021)