



THE JANKI FOUNDATION
FOR GLOBAL HEALTHCARE

NEWSLETTER

JUNE 2007



SPREADING OUR WINGS

Welcome to the twelfth issue of Janki Foundation news, containing updates on enlightening events held recently, as well as on how Values in Healthcare: a spiritual approach (VIHASA) is making some headway into healthcare systems internationally and nationally. If this is the first time you are browsing through this newsletter, you may like to visit www.jankifoundation.org for further information on who we are and what we do including events we have held in the past.

Over the last six months, in addition to the inspirational seminar on 'Near Death Experience', our focus has been on progressing VIHASA, a modular training programme developed by a team of professionals to support the personal well-being of healthcare workers.

Rather than focus on improving clinical skills, VIHASA offers participants the opportunity to explore ideas about their own values and spirituality and how they might interrelate some of these views into their work. The core team is often invited to train facilitators world-wide, in the use of the programme, so it can be introduced to healthcare and training organisations by local people. You can view and read about the trainings that took place in India, Thailand and the Philippines in February 2007.

Thanks to the munificent and considerate hosts in each country, who made the trainings possible. Feedback from the participants can be found dispersed throughout this issue. Finally thanks to Margaret Aberdeen, a participant from the last UK training in Oxford, who helped edit this issue and to everyone who contributed to the production of this newsletter. Happy reading!
Dr Kala Mistry

"It is very practical and participatory, and it touched the heart, as well as creating a new style for the context in which I work The facilitators listened more than they spoke, never imposed their own views and instead enabled us to access our own thoughts and ideas."

FACILITATORS SOW 'VIHASA' SEEDS

On February 24th – 28th, sixty five participants from eight countries and throughout India gathered near Delhi for a 5-day programme on the Values in Healthcare facilitators' training. Leading the programme was an international team of eleven facilitators from the UK, India, Iceland and South Africa.

'Physician, heal thyself' An early highlight of the training was the Valuing Yourself module. Many resonated with the phrase 'physician, heal thyself' and realised increased attention on self-care was paramount in order to continue to serve others. Another highlight was the 'seven spiritual tools' (reflection, visualisation, meditation, appreciation, listening, creativity and play) – an integral part of the pack. These were presented in a novel way enabling participants to understand how important creativity and play are to learning. As part of their learning, participants dressed up, used props, acted, sang and danced their way to deliver a one-minute advert promoting Values in Healthcare: a spiritual approach (VIHASA) to the whole group. This activity filled the room with joy and laughter.

One day was devoted to participants themselves taking the lead as group facilitators. All agreed that they learnt an enormous amount from this experience, particularly as each trainee facilitator had ten minutes to share what they had personally learnt as well as gain constructive feedback from both the group facilitator and members of the group.

Open Space

On the final day participants took part in an exercise known as 'Open Space Technology', a very dynamic form of group work where all participants actively take responsibility for creating and sharing their own learning. The remainder of the last day was dedicated to

Thai participants take turns facilitating groups



Philippines have an art-to-art on the floor

action planning. Groups divided into countries to work out a structured plan of how they might implement VIHASA in their own part of the world.

Reflections

Many participants expressed appreciation and enthusiasm for what they had learnt. Others commented that they had come not really knowing what VIHASA was all about and yet were leaving full of new ideas about learning and facilitation.

CONTENTS

- Spreading our Wings
- Facilitators Sow 'VIHASA' seeds
- Into the Light
- It's Heating Up in the Tropics
- Academic News
- Letter Tray
- Other News

"This is actually very scientific and easy to learn."

What is a 'near-death experience' (NDE)?

A near-death experience (NDE) is "the perception reported by a person who nearly died or who was clinically dead and revived. NDE usually includes physiological, psychological and transcendental factors such as subjective impressions of being outside the physical body, visions of deceased relatives and religious figures, and a sense of going beyond the boundaries of time, space and ego." (van Lommel et al, 2001).

Dr Pim van Lommel spoke on the near-death experience (NDE) in London on the 28th January. Van Lommel, a Dutch cardiologist was later joined by Sister Jayanti and psychiatrist Dr Sarah Egger in a conversation that spanned science, medicine, spirituality, philosophy and ethics.

Dr van Lommel began by raising questions about consciousness during different states, such as sleep, coma, brain death, the dying process and cardiac arrest - his own field. He went on to share findings from recent studies of cardiac arrest patients in Holland, USA and UK.

What effect does it have on the patient?

As a result of a NDE, many patients experience major changes in their life and attitude to it. For example, they may no longer fear death and may believe in an afterlife; they may have greater intuitive powers and enjoy a new sense of love, compassion, acceptance and a general appreciation of life. However, such experiences can also be extremely challenging for the patient. Many report feelings of disappointment and of feeling trapped when they return to their normal consciousness and former existence.

Out of the 344 cardiac arrest patients Dr van Lommel interviewed in a recent study, 62 (18%) reported a NDE. The figure may be higher, as some do not talk about their experience, often for fear of disbelief or ridicule from doctors, nurses, family and friends.

What light does it shed on the nature of consciousness?

"Why is there such strong resistance to the idea of NDE within the medical community?" Current scientific thinking, Dr van Lommel explained, assumes that consciousness and memory are located in the brain. Yet people are having these experiences of enhanced consciousness during cardiac arrest, when they are clinically 'brain-dead'. So it does require a shift in our thinking (and a certain humility) to accept this evidence. He proposed that we should consider the brain as a receiver and transmitter - but not an originator - of consciousness, like a radio or mobile phone. He talked of a 'continuity of consciousness' beyond the physical, and so beyond death, stating that, "Death is only the end of our physical aspect."

Some common features of the NDE include:

- the awareness of being dead
- positive emotions
- meeting deceased relatives
- an out-of-body experience
- a celestial landscape
- moving through a tunnel
- communication with 'light'
- life replay and preview

Out of the audience of 250 at the presentation, 30 indicated they had had a NDE and around 100 knew of someone who had. Members of the audience raised questions about the implications of this 'new' understanding of consciousness with regard to the 'partial death' of epilepsy, suicide, and the Indian philosophy of 'karma'.

Dr Pim van Lommel MD has written over 20 articles on his research over 20 years, including 'Near-death experience in survivors of cardiac arrest: a prospective study in the Netherlands' (Lancet, 2001), one book and chapters on NDE, consciousness and its relationship with the brain.

'Nursing' facilitators' talents in Oxford, UK



... and in Thailand



Dr Sarah Egger (left), Dr Pim van Lommel (centre) and Sister Jayanti (right) in conversation on NDE on 28th January 2007

Interestingly, both Dr Egger and Sister Jayanti saw strong parallels between their own experiences during meditation and a NDE. Sister Jayanti described how, in meditation, if we 'detach' ourselves from our physical body, consciousness is enhanced and we feel a sense of connectedness to other 'souls' and to the Supreme. Such experiences, she said, lead to changes in the way we live our lives, moving from a material to a more subtle, spiritual life, with a strong sense of a higher purpose.

Asked to explain why the NDE was so life-changing, Dr van Lommel emphasised how hard it was for patients to share and assimilate such a powerful experience. For some, the change is so radical that relationships fail - the divorce rate in people with NDE is over 50%.

Fear... Worry... Hopelessness?

No longer control my mind since my NDE in 1994.
A smile graces my face after being diagnosed with three types of cancer,
It is my body that suffered, not my mind...
With peace and love, I began to attain the sense of my spirit within me,
By listening, learning, understanding, knowing and loving myself.
I now value life with a much wider perspective,
Life is for living, to instill hope and courage in others,
Each day with temporary trials and tribulations
To make me better, not bitter.

Margaret V Aberdeen, free-lance writer, poet and facilitator, sees it as her mission in life to serve others through her work and personal experiences.

“ Very informative regarding personal values.
It has improved my ability to explore my potential.
I am sure I can now provide an extra 'something' to my patients, apart from medicine. ”



Two substantial trainings, earlier in February in the Far East, followed a similar format to that in India. A team of UK facilitators, including Bhavna Patani and Maryam Taheri, who liaised with the kind hosts, collaborated with local facilitators to deliver the training to two very different groups. Masana De Souza shares her experiences of training facilitators in the Philippines and Thailand:



Producing a 'hot' one-minute advert in the Philippines

"It was a privilege being part of an international team of VIHASA facilitators, who travelled in order to share Values in Healthcare: A spiritual Approach with senior health professionals in the Far East. Let me paint you a picture of what it was like...:

"Imagine a tropical, mountain retreat by a river in Thailand, full of peace, positive intentions and hospitality. Then, become aware of two teams of facilitators who have never before met and who, supported by the atmosphere and our hosts, must co-create a four-day programme for 45 senior health professionals.

"A tall order?... and yet through the magic of generosity of spirit, listening to each other with empathy, humour, co-operation, speaking respectfully and honestly, the place was transformed into a vista of colour and salutation within a few short hours, in preparation for our participants, most of whom only speak Thai.

"One of the most moving experiences for me was staying up till nearly midnight with 15 others to complete the almost never-ending list of 'last-minute things to do', yet the atmosphere was light and joyful and everyone completed their tasks singing!

"Another touching experience, this time in the Philippines, is when all the expectant participants, bubbling with anticipation, eagerly transformed a simple warm-up exercise into a transformative process of hope, possibilities, creativity and spirituality."

The difference that makes a difference

Has this anything to do with the culture or is it part of the extraordinary atmosphere co-created when a 'Learning Community' really gets underway?

David Goodman observed: "What actually struck me was that the material of VIHASA really works - even across diverse cultural settings. I recall the first evening in the Philippines, when we explored what they as a group wanted out of the training - and their aims matched almost identically our intentions, despite the potential cultural, religious and professional differences. It still stands out in my mind... that spiritual values are deeper than cultural or even intra-professional values.

"For me, an essential part of 'what worked' in our learning community is the aspect of spiritual facilitation, which requires us to 'dig deep' into our own understanding and practice...but also requires a sensitivity that goes beyond learning professional techniques and skills. In VIHASA, we introduce seven spiritual tools to encapsulate this; I discovered really that my own spirituality is the unseen factor that really works! It seems therefore to me that the exercises and spiritual tools, coupled with the spiritual modelling recommended in the training, really does do what it is designed to do."

Academic news

Warwick: 16th April 2007 Members of the Values in Healthcare team attended a meeting of medical and nursing educators at Warwick University, and led seminars on how values and spirituality can be integrated into medical curricula in the UK.

Oxford: 9-12th November 2006 At the facilitators' training in Oxford, about one third of approximately 60 participants were academic staff from universities in Leeds, Manchester, Iceland, London and Glamorgan. Seven lecturers came from the School of Integrated Health, Westminster, and have incorporated VIHASA into the curriculum for second year students.

Nirmala Ragbir-Day updated participants on her research and set up a VIHASA Research Group to liaise with other academics and evaluate the VIHASA programme.

Scotland: Dr Astrid Bendomir, an occupational health physician and Stephanie Morrison, lecturer at Robert Gordon University in Aberdeen, are currently finalising an MSc module on VIHASA. Following positive feedback from fourth year students, values workshops for students are now taking place in the second year.



Reflection and writing - keeping a personal log

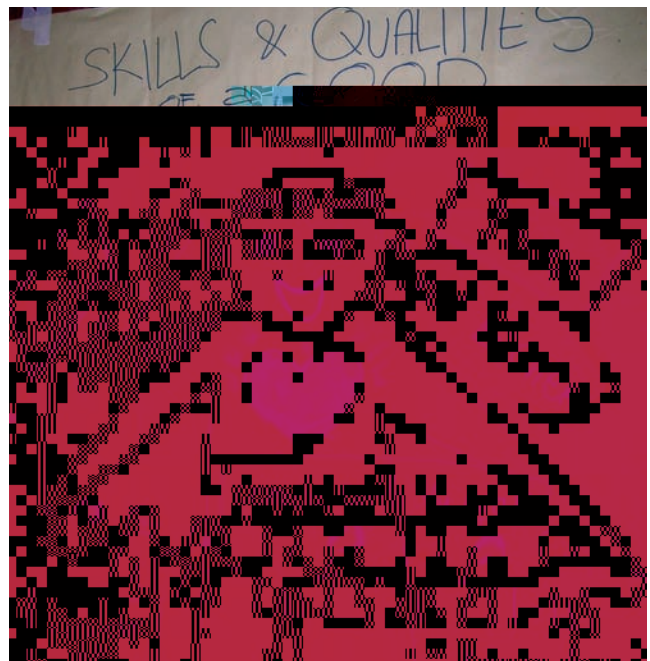
Rediscovery

"The experience answered a personal need. The connectedness to self and outside of self was 'rediscovered' and strengthened beautifully, quite thoroughly by the contextual and text material provided."

"The seminar training was a facilitator's dream come true - participative, values-based, up-to-date, holistic and fun - plus there is a meditative atmosphere interfacing the whole activity."

"The appreciative inquiry technique helped so much to see always the positive."

Images bring facilitation skills to life ... well almost





Dear Janki Foundation

Thank you for inviting me to attend the VIHASA facilitators' training at Oxford in November 2006.

It was wonderful to meet with people from such a variety of sectors in health care without feeling intimidated. I feel this was due to the spiritual atmosphere ...of togetherness, trust, generosity, love, support, respect, openheartedness and acceptance that was struck up so quickly. I also felt we had a shared goal, of bringing spirituality into our work.

It was an extremely positive experience for me and my learning occurred on a very individual and deep level.... I was able to look at people a little more deeply and listen more carefully and learnt a great deal more from them than normally.....!

What contributed to my learning of VIHASA was, I think, the teaching style... the use of visualisation, music, group work, participation and artwork. This helped to awaken and enhance different aspects of myself, thereby making me receptive to learning new ways in caring, facilitating and supporting others.



VIHASA facilitators push themselves to the limit!

I would like to extend my gratitude to everyone involved in the creation and sharing of VIHASA and those at the Global Retreat Centre for making this possible.

Best wishes *Amanda Massyn*

If you would like to share with us your thoughts or experiences of any Janki Foundation event, please write to us at The Janki Foundation for Global Health Care, 449/451 High Road, London NW10 2JJ.
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OTHER NEWS

North Wales The local branch of Mind, the mental health charity, have booked a day for staff, volunteers and clients with John Fleet, retired surgeon, who continues to run day workshops at his own retreat centre, in rural Wales, for social worker groups and care worker teams. John has also run modules with student nurses, the psychology service and a large hospice, where he has been requested to facilitate all the modules of VIHASA, as staff training, over the next couple of years.

'Mother of Love'

Singer Robin Gibb, formerly of the BeeGees, is generously supporting the Janki Foundation with royalties from a new song released this year, called 'Mother of Love'. He writes: "A melody inspired by my brother Maurice, it was written for Dadi Janki, a spiritual world mother who, at the age of ninety, travels the globe to bring about world peace and harmony and for my own mother, Barbara Gibb, and for all mothers of the world who are out there caring for, and nurturing others physically and spiritually, sometimes at great sacrifice to themselves. *My personal royalties for this song will go to the Janki Foundation for Global Health Care, an organization that provides strength and encouragement to healthcare workers everywhere in the world, through a unique programme aimed at putting heart into healing.*"

Suriname

VIHASA is an official part of the Diakonessen Hospital's training programme for 2007, with workshops already underway with the first staff group. Participation is on a voluntary basis, and the course is open to all personnel. Dr Bommel writes: "The first group has completed all four modules. It is touching to walk on the ward and see their posters hanging on the walls. The evaluation immediately after the last module was very positive. We are planning to evaluate again after three months. With the directors and management team, we will do our first annual evaluation and another module at their request!"

Brazil

Teams of health professionals, headed by Dario Lacerda, MD, have been sharing Values in Healthcare throughout Brazil over the last year. They have also translated VIHASA into Portuguese. Team members include doctors, nurses, dentists, psychologists as well as paramedical staff and other healthcare workers. Events included two-day retreats, introduction days and presentations to public, military and private healthcare workers. Substantial programs have been run in Brasilia, Fortaleza, Salvador and Camaçari (Bahia), Porto Alegre, Gramado and Nova Hamburgo (Rio Grande do Sul), Curitiba and Iguacu Falls (Paraná) and Joinville (Santa Catarina).



Facilitator team walk their talk in chilly Oxford



Sitting inside and outside the goldfish bowl, facilitators discuss how it went

"I never thought that service in healthcare could be done in such simple ways. It's enriching for the self as well as the participants."

"A wonderful self-development programme that will prevent stress and burnout."

"This kind of co-operative education makes learning easy."



Group engaging in VIHASA, at Fortaleza, Brazil

COMING EVENT

The Janki Foundation Lecture for 2007, entitled 'The Science of Well-Being', takes place on Tuesday 3rd July at 7.30pm in London. For more details, please visit www.jankifoundation.org