



EDITORIAL

NOVEMBER 2008

Welcome to news from The Janki Foundation for Global Health Care (JF) once again.

This year the annual lecture was combined with the launch of *Lifting your Spirits*, a self-help guide to support people coping with prolonged illness or medical treatment. Jan Alcoe, the author, and cardiologist Dr Harvey Zarren, each spoke about the importance of taking part in one's own healing process,

from personal and scientific viewpoints, as reported below. This new product is generating interest from patient groups.

The AGM was held in August and following this Dadi Janki, the Foundation's president, took an insightful yet down-to-earth approach in her talk on Healing Hearts and Minds, also reported in this issue. Training facilitators in *Values in Healthcare: a*

*spiritual approach* (VIHASA), a programme for health professionals, continues internationally (see report on South Africa) and this summer, JF volunteers facilitated a trial series of open workshops in central London; the greatest uptake was for Understanding Spirituality in Healthcare. A summary of news is included in this issue. We hope you enjoy reading it.

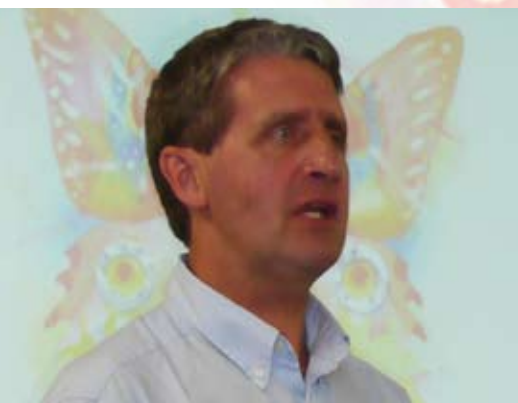
Editor: Dr Kala Mistry



Jan Alcoe, author of *Lifting Your Spirits*, speaking at the launch, July 2008, King's College, London.



Dr Harvey Zarren, guest speaker at the launch of LYS.



Dr Craig Brown chairing the proceedings, LYS launch.

## Lifting Your Spirits launched



*Lifting Your Spirits: seven tools for coping with illness*, the Janki Foundation's latest publication, was launched on 10th July, 2008 at Kings College, London.

Written by Jan Alcoe, *Lifting Your Spirits (LYS)* is a timely and essential guide for anyone coping with serious illness and came about after Jan utilised the seven 'spiritual tools' of the VIHASA programme to help her cope with her own illness.

'From the time of seeing my GP to having a diagnosis and treatment, all I seemed to be doing was waiting' said Jan, in her talk on her own experience with cancer.

### Being Part of the Healing

Although all went well in terms of the medical treatment, Jan felt emotionally abandoned after being diagnosed. She started to notice that the 'care' was often de-personalised and at times 'military' language was used to discuss how treatment would proceed. This jarred with her wish to be treated holistically, and if this were to happen, she realised she had to teach herself to be part of her own healing.

She began experimenting with the tools used in *Values in Healthcare* – meditation, visualisation, listening, creativity, play, appreciation and reflection - and found she felt safer, more in control and 'lighter' despite the challenging treatments. At home, she found herself in a new, unfamiliar role; with the changes it was bringing, Jan started to reflect on her priorities, making time for walks, creative pursuits such as painting, and spiritual practice.

She developed her own visualisations, reflections and activities to boost her resilience and later, called on friends and colleagues who helped her compile them into two CDs. These meditations, reflections and visualisations are a mainstay of the

new publication. As Jan gained strength, she was inspired to share her methods of coping by writing the booklet LYS, which accompanies the CDs, to support others struggling with serious illness.

### Who Deals with the Fallout?

Guest speaker Dr Harvey Zarren, USA cardiologist, founder and medical director of the Healing Your Heart and Healing with Hope support programmes for cardiac and cancer patients respectively, shared some thoughts around illness, stress and physiology. Medical care focuses on physical aspects of disease, but who, Dr Zarren asked, deals with the emotional fallout-- the cognitive, spiritual, and social consequences of illness? Recovery requires a team effort from both doctors and patients in order for true healing to occur.

Dr Craig Brown hosted the event and set the scene for the ethos and vision of LYS. Lou Beckerman, nurse, singer and healer, interspersed the afternoon with beautiful songs; two of these are recorded on the CDs. Lou's butterfly designs provide the cover and other illustrations within the booklet and 2 CDs.

Finally Sister Jayanti, European Director of the Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual University, shared a visionary message from Dadi Janki, JF's President, and herself, before guiding everyone on a riveting visualisation to lift them into their own healing spirit.

For further information and an order form, visit us on-line or email: [lys@jankifoundation.org](mailto:lys@jankifoundation.org)

## Healing Today in Morocco

About 50 health professionals took part in a conversation on Healing Today, in Agadir on the west coast of Morocco. Guest speakers were Arnold Desser, senior lecturer at the School of Integrated Health, University of Westminster and Dr Sarah Egger, consultant psychiatrist for the elderly in London.

Chaired by Dr Lhcen Azaou, the conversation spanned a wide range of topics including

the importance of the doctor/ patient relationship in effecting healing, the impact of thoughts and lifestyle on the body, communication skills and listening and how patient outlook affects outcomes. Studies show that patients holding a positive and confident vision of the future show improved results whereas emotions such as guilt, or feelings of low self-esteem, appear to be obstacles to healing.

They emphasised that some things, such as finding ways to sustain oneself, developing a benevolent attitude, learning to create a still and peaceful mind and being a

reflective practitioner are not taught by medical schools, but are essential to medical practice.

Patients may benefit from being asked questions such as 'if I were to awaken with no pain or sickness tomorrow morning, what would my life be like? What is giving sense to my life? What supports it? What would make me happy?'

Many in the audience showed an interest in continuing these seminars and learning more about helping patients in depression and pain.



Above and centre: Arnold Desser and Dr Sarah Egger above, seen here with meeting organiser Laura Agroum, addressed medical delegates at the special Healing Today event held in Agadir, Morocco in May 2008.

Above: Dr Lhcen Azaou, prominent Agadir physician, chaired the meeting.

## An experience of the VIHASA summer series seminars

A series of workshops on the seven modules of VIHASA were held in central London, over summer 2008, to promote deeper awareness and understanding of values in the healthcare setting. Samixa Shah, pharmacist and NLP practitioner, who attended one module and facilitated another, reveals here how this series touched her.

### Compassion:

I found this a very interesting day for me as compassion is a difficult value to understand and operate with in the healthcare arena. I am a pharmacist who has worked directly with patients for over 18 years; having participated in this seminar, I realize that first I have to have compassion towards myself, which means looking after myself in

Below: Summer workshops participants reflect on the value of co-operation.



a loving and nurturing way. This is a difficult concept to hang on to in healthcare as all of our training gears us to look after others. This workshop helped me to understand myself better and taught me how to look after both myself and my clients. One of the biggest learning points for me is how to deal with mistakes and how to learn from them.

### Co-operation:

I was a co-facilitator of the seminar on co-operation and I found this to be a tremendously enjoyable day, which took me forward in leaps and bounds. I was fascinated with the ideas that people came up with especially during the creation of a collage. We had two groups and I watched with amazement the way ideas flowed as the two teams worked with each other. What this brought home to me is that it always pays to work as an assembly rather than as an individual. This also reinforces the importance of team working in a healthcare environment.

### Learning:

I feel that the VIHASA series of seminars are a very useful tool to help everyone learn more about themselves and also to value themselves for all that they do for their

patients/clients. Almost every individual who enters a healthcare profession does so because he or she wants to help others get better. Unfortunately, with the strains and stresses of our working lives it is very easy to lose sight of our initial motivation. The VIHASA series of seminars helps us revisit our initial motives and also brings out the enthusiasm and zest for life that we may have lost along the way.



Below: Ruth Sewell, Dr Andrew Powell and Dr Sarah Egger dialoguing at a 'Lifting the Spirit' weekend in Oxford, April 2008. Below far left and above right: The seven learning tools, especially creativity, movement and play, featured strongly in the workshops.

Below: Lou Beckerman, nurse, healer and artist sings one of the songs she recorded for the LYS CD at King's College, London, July 2008.



## Additional news

**Jan Alcoe** was interviewed about *Lifting Your Spirits (LYS)* on BBC Southern Counties Radio on Tues 5th August at 10.40 am, following interest from listeners who had tuned into a programme with the Chronic Fatigue Society ReMEMber. Since then, she has given several talks to organisations and run two half-day workshops on *Lifting Your Spirits* for 30 complementary therapists in Chichester and for ReMEMber.

Since the launch, over 1000 copies of *Lifting Your Spirits* have been distributed within two months. Jan plans to run LYS courses for patients, carers and healthcare practitioners; for more information, email [j.alcoe@ntlworld.com](mailto:j.alcoe@ntlworld.com).

With funds from a charitable trust, and from generous persons, Margaret McCathie, a Scottish laughter therapist who contributed to LYS, has purchased and given out *Lifting Your Spirits* packs freely to many organisations, including mental health groups, pain groups, some hospices and individuals suffering from cancer. She is applying for more funding for the future.

**Dr Craig Brown** offered a half-day facilitation on *Looking After Yourself* for GP registrars at the Queen Elizabeth Postgraduate Centre, Greenwich earlier this year at the invitation of the GP course organiser, Dr David Wheeler. More formal integration into post-graduate and under-graduate curricula would allow wider access.

Dr Brown also offered a day's training in July 2008 on self-care at St Wilfred's Hospice, Chichester, following a similar session last November. Nine nurses from local hospices and one GP attended, making up an experienced, attentive, well-motivated group. They appreciated

the silence and stretch breaks as well as individual reflection and group sharing.

Following a VIHASA session with retired dental surgeon John Fleet, a nurse manager in a North Wales hospital was moved to introduce the idea of a one-minute silence before every nursing handover - a change that other wards are reported to be catching on to.

**Dr Elizabeth Archer** ran a full series of workshops on Values in healthcare at Brighton and Sussex University Hospitals NHS Trust from March - July 2008. Following a successful pilot in 2006, these seven, full-day workshops, with a learning style of personal reflection and facilitated group work, have been approved for continuing education purposes within BSUH. Dr Archer, trained facilitator in *Values in Healthcare*, reports that the response of those who attended is consistently positive.

**Dr Erna Haraldsdottir**, head of education at Strathcarron Hospice, Stirlingshire, organised a two-day multi-professional learning conference on *Reviving the Spirit* within Palliative Care Practice over 29-30 October. Details can be found on the hospice website: [www.strathcarronhospice.org](http://www.strathcarronhospice.org). A report will follow.

**Ranjan Amin**, student of ayurveda, submitted an abstract of a paper on VIHASA to the annual Ayurvedic Research Conference. A member of the JF Values team gave the presentation on the learning style, contents and ethos of this programme to the conference on 26 July at City of London Academy, Southwark, UK.

**Argentina:** The *Values in Healthcare* group now has a core group of seven; two members have run a facilitator training day for 15 new interested professionals, Dr Christian

Plebst has given a presentation at La Plata University School of Medicine and others have presented to the 12 directors of a major private company called Swiss Medical and to a group of sports professionals. An open workshop is held monthly and the program is being implemented at the Ramos Mejía Hospital for volunteers who work with homeless adults. More news to follow.

**Dr David Goodman**, retired dentist and trustee of JF, led a packed workshop entitled: *Lifting Your Spirits - Self Care* at the first National Conference on Bereavement in a Healthcare Setting, in Dundee. The event organiser, John Birrell, Bereavement Services Coordinator for Tayside, being familiar with VIHASA, had invited the Janki Foundation to run the workshop concurrently with others. Thirty people attended and many stated that they appreciated the topic and the time to reflect on it. Dr Goodman commented, 'I never cease to be amazed how simple, experiential exercises can have such a deep impact on people in such a short space of time'.

**India:** Two hundred nursing professionals from 12 states in India (chief nurses, matrons, nursing tutors, lecturers, principals of schools of nursing, supervisors, departmental managers and staff nurses) attended an introduction to VIHASA and training to be facilitators over 8-12 August 2008. The workshops were offered during a national holistic health conference entitled *Caring, Sharing and Inspiring Core Values for Better Nursing Care* at Gyan Sarovar Academy for a Better World, Mt Abu. Training in VIHASA for staff at the Global Hospital and Research Centre (GHRC) in Mt Abu has continued since 2006.



*Dadi Janki speaks on healing hearts and minds and Sister Jayanti translates.*



# South Africa run on VIHASA facilitator training



Values in Healthcare market-place: delegates purchase packs and discuss future training plans.



New facilitator hugs Dr Balbadhur (on right), Values in Healthcare co-ordinator for South Africa.



Healthcare workers came from all over South Africa to take part in the training.

**The 9th international training of facilitators in the ethos of VIHASA took place in collaboration with the Values in Healthcare Association of South Africa, in May 2008, in the picturesque mountainous region of Drakensberg, a three-hour drive from Durban.**

*Bhavna Patani and Dr R Balbadhur reports:*

The participants came from towns and cities across South Africa (SA): Polokwane, Limpopo, Pretoria, Johannesburg, Durban, Scottsburg, Umkomaas, Port Shepstone, Qwa Qwa, Emmaus in the Drakensberg, Ladysmith, East London, Umtata, Cape Town etc and the response to the proposal was overwhelming and awe-inspiring. In the end the training was extended to 76 participants and five groups were trained, each with two facilitators instead of the original plan of four.

The aim was to train health workers so that they can support themselves and their colleagues in coping with burnout, low morale and the stress of being healthcare staff in a country with one of the highest rates of HIV, social deprivation, moral denial, rape, motor vehicle accidents and crime in the world.

About half of the participants had experienced the programme before but many

were new. The participants included nurse managers, doctors, radiographers, social workers, occupational therapists, trainers, nurse tutors, many nurses from universities, HIV coordinators, a psychologist from Red Cross and the CEO of a private hospital group in Johannesburg.

The facilitators met a few times to get to know each other, consider the issues and needs of the SA healthcare system and agree the aims and objectives of the training. The participants were enthusiastic and keen, most arriving early, eager to learn about the programme.

The sharing and learning that took place over five days, in small groups and as a whole, was very enriching, heart warming and enlightening. Some carers were touched by their experiences and struggled to find words to express their feelings. It was as though after caring for others over many years, it was the first time they had occasion to feel their own beauty and power.

Many participants also enjoyed the physical exercises and the meditation sessions that were offered each morning before breakfast. Each evening ended with storytelling or self-created entertainment. Dr Raksha Balbadhur, co-ordinator for VIHASA in SA, confirmed "It feels like a dream come true... the success of the training is beyond our expectations."

Due to high demand, the VIHASA packs were printed in SA and we received them just in time: 71 packs were sold, the highest ever at any training in any country! Participants left with many plans to take this programme to carers all over SA.

There was also interest in how SA could use the Lifting your Spirits CDs and guidebook as a tool with AIDS patients.

Everyone was very appreciative of our genial hosts who served selflessly with meals, refreshments, smiles and inspiring conversations.

*Early morning run*



*Resort in Drakensberg*



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For information on the activities of Global Hospital & Research Centre, Rajasthan, India, which the Janki Foundation supports, visit [www.ghrc-abu.com](http://www.ghrc-abu.com)