

International Mental Health Day Webinar

Theme: Mental Health for all | Greater Investment – Greater Access Everyone Everywhere

Date: 10/10/2020

Time: 16:00 – 17:00 IST

Guest Speakers: Mrs. Aman Preet Passy (IRS, Pad-woman of India)

Dr. Vishal Chhabra (Vice President, Delhi Psychiatric Society)

Dr. Sangeeta Trehan (Educational Administrator, Management Expert and Spiritualist)

Mr. Gaurav Bhatara (Educator & Spiritualist)

On the occasion of
International Mental Health Day

**Mental Health for all:
Greater Investment-Greater Access**

A Panel Discussion with Eminent Speakers
10th Oct, 2020 | 4:00 pm-5:00 pm
Open Entry to All

Moderators:

Mr. Sandeep Bhargava
CEO and Founder Leap Edtech,
Member SheSpeaks Advisory
Board

Ms. Vinita Bakshi
Author & Founder SheSpeaks,
Aambra Foundation

Dr. Vishal Chhabra
Vice President, Delhi
Psychiatric Society

Mrs. Aman Preet Passy
IRS, Padwoman of India

Mr. Gaurav Bhatara
Educator & Spiritualist

Dr. Sangeeta Trehan
Educational Administrator, Man-
agement Expert and Spiritualist

SheSpeaks Sashakta Tollfree Counselling Helpline
1-800-833-2300

www.aambrafoundation.org | www.shespeaks.co.in | shespeaks.af@gmail.com

The webinar was targeted at those involved in advocating for mental health and wellbeing. SheSpeaks believes in making mental health support easily accessible to women across all platforms who are in need of it. By recognizing the compelling need to give voice to those otherwise repressed and forced behind the wall of silence, SheSpeaks a flagship project by Aambra Foundation has launched **a tollfree helpline number (1-800-833-2300)** in an attempt to facilitate empowerment of adolescent girls, women in general, geriatric women as well as girls and women with special needs.

While there are several existing policies and regulations that do allow access to mental health support, the prevalence of treatment gap is still high. This webinar, hence, was an initiative aimed at discussing the domain of mental health in India with a specific focus on women as well as how to further facilitate the access to mental health for all.

Ms. Vinita Bakshi, Author & Founder of SheSpeaks Platform by Aambra Foundation started the webinar with a short video clip and laid the foundation for the conversation.

जो बीत गई सो बात गई
जीवन में एक सितारा था
माना वह बेहद प्यारा था
वह डूब गया तो डूब गया
अम्बर के आनन को देखो
कितने इसके तारे टूटे
कितने इसके प्यारे छूटे
जो छूट गए फिर कहाँ मिले
पर बोलो टूटे तारों पर
कब अम्बर शोक मनाता है
जो बीत गई सो बात गई

But can we say this for Pandemic? Ms. Bakshi stated how we as homosapiens are an extremely resilient species but yet isolation, fear and anxiety about the future, has created a catastrophic pandemic of mental health issues all categories of people. The most neglected being females. Their issues have been ignored, stigmatised and pushed in the shadows forever.

As it is Women face a number of traumas in their lives.

Traumas of male dominance or patriarchy

Traumas caused by vulgarity, abuse, exploitation, hedonism, control – physical, emotional, financial soon and so forth.

A female yet is the pivotal point or fulcrum of a household. She is a mother, teacher, mentor, friend and guide. If females do not contribute or manage kya hoga is desh ka, duniya ka aur samaj ka?

What is pandemic doing to them. By looking at the reports coming from different parts of the world, our part of the world, India, our city, neighbourhood, family, friends ..

Stress will comes and goes but traumas last forever. In this sense there is no post COVID era. Child abuse, domestic violence, child neglect, broken families leave people with deep lasting trauma. 99% people live/ cope with it even without being aware of it and fail to bloom to their complete potential.

We need to invest in the mental health of adolescent girls and women. Can this world be a happy planet with unhealthy female population?

Traumas are deep and can bring change in neurological behaviour.

Pandemic will aggravate the inner demons. We may reach a point of no return if we are not careful enough.

We have to control PTSD , post - traumatic stress disorder.

If we have to remain a society with values we must care more for our teachers and mothers. They are our first gurus and counsellors. We have to acknowledge their contribution.

On this mental health day we resolve to work in this direction and will soon come out with mental health care and wellness guidelines.

She further sheds light on how health and hygiene go hand in hand and invited Mrs. Aman Preet Passy to share her thoughts on the same.



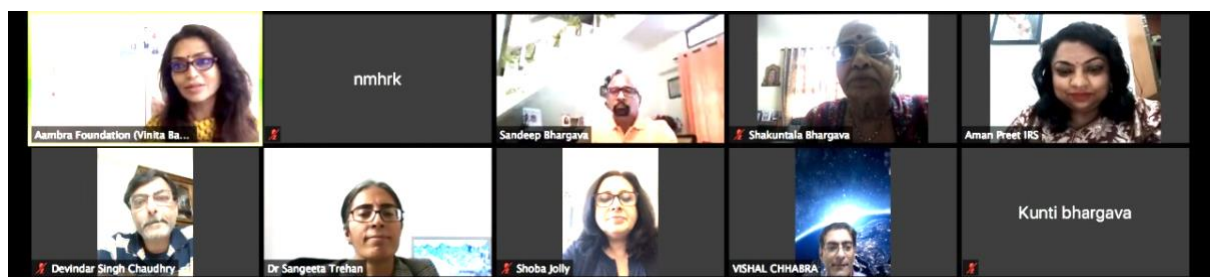
Mrs. Aman Preet Passy, 2010 Batch IRS Officer posted as Joint Commissioner Income Tax , New Delhi. She has served in various important charges in Income Tax Department and has also served Election Commission of India as Expenditure Observer during Legislative Assembly Elections. During COVID she has been engaged with various NGO's in providing relief to the vulnerable sections of society. With the help of her batchmates and friends and several NGO's and good Samaritans , she has been able to distribute around 12 lakh sanitary napkins Pan India including the remotest and farthest districts of our country. She says

Personal hygiene includes menstrual hygiene for women and so she has distributed self-hygiene kits across Delhi slums and also to the patients of World's largest COVID care centre AY Radha Soami Satsang Beas in Chattarpur.

She says ,”Taking care of personal and menstrual hygiene is a basic thing to fight with COVID .” Also she has been an integral part of the COVID Response Team constituted by the Income tax officers to help the needy personnel of Dept and persons related to them in case of medical and other emergencies. The group has successfully coordinated and find out possible solutions for immediate intervention to the SOS calls received by various officers . And lot many recovery cases has been reported by the Dept. Collecting revenue for the nation and helping people fight COVID is what she is doing these days.

She further described how girls face trauma due to the humiliation they face when having periods. A case study is discussed, where she describes how once the girls in a girl's college were forced to put off their undergarments. She also highlighted that due to COVID-19, menstrual hygiene is disturbed which has a direct effect on women's mental health and stresses on how we should talk more about social taboos and stigma.

Subsequently, Mrs. Passy concludes her talk by stating “*Baat karne se baat banti hain*”!





Next speaker is Dr. Vishal Chhabra, a graduate and postgraduate from Kasturba Medical College, Manipal.

He has 18 yrs of experience in clinical practice after completing his post-graduation while working in various esteemed institutions like IHBAS, GTB Hospital, VIMHANS and Metro Group of Hospitals.

He is currently the Senior Consultant at Fortis Healthcare visiting three of their hospitals in Shalimar Bagh, Okhla and Vasant Kunj besides running his pvt. clinic in Rohini.

He is Life Fellow of Indian Psychiatric Society, Indian Association of Biological Psychiatry, Indian Association of Social Psychiatry and Indian Association of Private Psychiatry

He is the recipient of Ravi Pandey Memorial Award (2006), WPA Fellowship in Child Psychiatry (2008) and Asian Federation Fellowship (2012).

He has 12 published articles in Indexed Journals and 2 Chapters in a Psychiatry Textbook, besides also on the editorial board of the Delhi Psychiatry Journal.

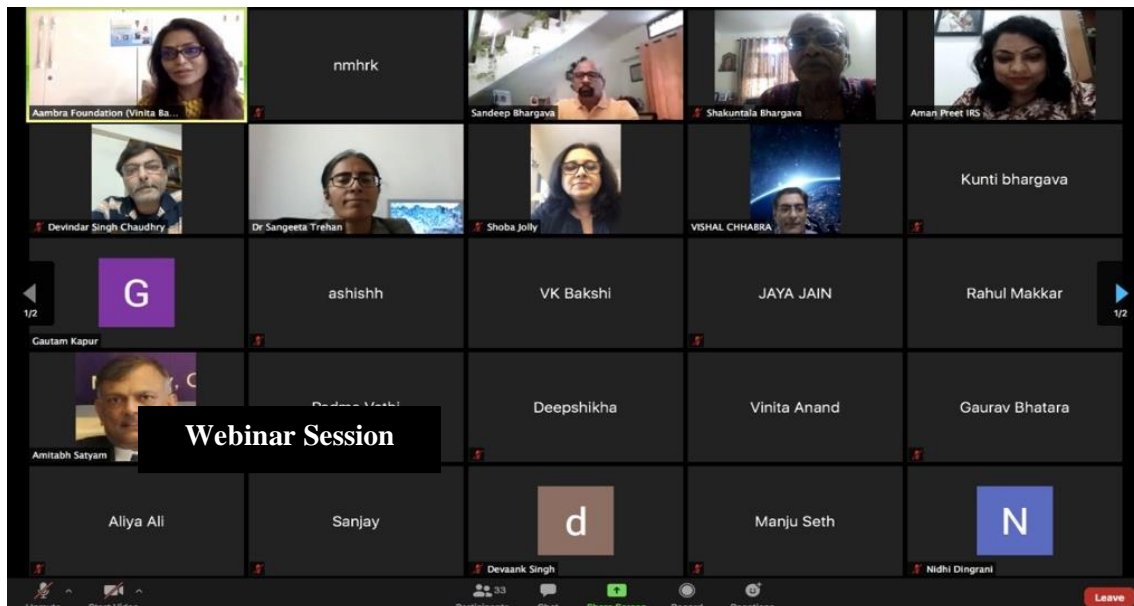
He is currently the Vice President of Delhi Psychiatric Society,

Areas of Academic Interest: Phenomenology, Mood Disorders, Anxiety Disorders, Psychopharmacology and Neurobiology.

Dr. Chhabra starts by congratulating all platforms that actively engage in creating awareness for mental health programs among the general population.

He speaks from his own experience about how a doctor in general spends years of study in medicine and physiology yet spends relatively less time learning about the mind. He further advocates that there is an urgent need of more investment in the mental health sector, especially considering the current times as we go through this unprecedented crisis like COVID-19.

Then he highlights about how we can create more awareness among people and ourselves through the help of social media. Dr. Chhabra also additionally shares more about his own endeavors with his fellow doctors who come together to create a group working towards engaging the general population with more handy information on mental health and the type of disorders.





The conversation is then led by the 3rd speaker, Dr. Sangeeta Trehan.

Dr. Sangeeta Trehan is an educational administrator, a management expert and a Spiritualist. She has around 20 years of experience of teaching and educational programme administration at Indiana University, USA and various Management/ Engineering Institutes and Universities in India. Advocacy for women, children and young adolescents, especially Special Needs ones, is close to her heart and she has been associated with several such initiatives in the past. Currently, she is serving as Dean of Satyug Darshan Institute of Engineering & Technology (SDIET), Faridabad and Management Institute, affiliated to JC Bose University of Sc & Tech YMCA, Faridabad.

She takes the discussion further by emphasizing on how the very essence of holistic wellbeing includes our mental health wellbeing. Moving onto examples, she recalls her own interactions with people she meets in her day to day life, who are mentally strong and are able to overcome physical ailments without much complications. She zeroes in on “resilience” as a factor that contributes towards overall wellbeing. Resilience is the key to cope up with several challenges that may often be otherwise overwhelming. She also talks how India in general as a society is very much resilient in many ways, as compared to western countries.

She further dwells on the internal factors that can help in strengthening the wellbeing infrastructure and asks the audience to consider for a minute the relatively milder conditions in the mental health paradigm like anxiety for example. She highlights that while we all may

experience feelings of being anxious at times and our focus should be on how we cope during these situations and what can we do to make things better in our day to day lives. Better selfcare, family care may be some of the aspects we all would need to consider.

Dr. Trehan, during her talk also mentions the book “Fortune at the bottom of the pyramid” by Prof. C.K. Prahlad and discusses on how we as an individual someone from the top half of the pyramid can partner with people from lower half and empower them as well as ourselves for betterment of our society. She finally adds on and finishes her talk by suggesting how we as Indians can come together and learn more from the countries that are ranked higher in the World Happiness Report.



Mr. Gaurav Bhatara, 4th speaker is Group CEO AB Education, Forbes 2020, Pride of Bharat 2020 and has won the Delhi Icon Award 2018. He is also a proud SDG Ambassador, and is actively involved in support and contributions to United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 4 (UNSDG4) to ‘ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all’ by 2030.

Mr. Bhatara forwards with the conversation by leading on with his observations based on the UNDP report on how the countries that are in the top 5 in the Happiness Report are also the top 5 countries in the as per the Rule of Law Index. He subsequently explains more about how the countries where the rule of law is highly effective are the same countries in which people are comparatively deemed as happier.

He also reflects more upon Dr. Trehan’s reference to the pyramid and emphasizes on how one person ahead of someone as an individual too can bring upon change and cause a chain reaction.

He next quotes *The Starfish Story* which sets as a perfect example in this context; the story begins as thousands of starfishes been washed ashore is being picked by a person and thrown back into the ocean one by one thus, illustrating how just by being able to make a difference in one life is itself a huge accomplishment because that one life interacts with thousand others in their journey of life.

Further highlighting how it is very essential for a person to be true to oneself, Mr. Bhatara goes on to state “*In order to be more successful as a nation, we must be true to ourselves as a*

nation and as people". Mr. Bhatara, then goes back to addressing the theme of the webinar, which was Mental Health for all, and contemplates on how the term health itself is again a very subjective matter.

He additionally also quotes The Preamble to the Constitution of UNESCO "*Wars begin in the minds of men and that is where peace must begin too*" and stresses on how the mind can sense and influence our overall wellbeing.

Finally, he concludes his discussion by asking the ultimate existential question, which is, what is the purpose of our life? To which he states that the purpose of life is to be happy and only we complicate it by not believing that is the case. Once a person is able to define as to what makes her/him happy at different stages/ages and is able to take action towards achieving that goal, the person will be able to find their purpose of life.

Towards the end, Mr. Sandeep Bhargava (SheSpeaks Advisory Board) thanked all of the guest speakers for their valuable time and dedication as he wrapped the final moments of the discussion by attending to the questions asked by the audience to the speakers on board. The questions ranged from topics like "how to ensure that people in rural and urban areas, including doctors can focus on and understand mental health issues without stigmatization" to "how the countries rating high on the happiness report should cope with the growing number of suicidal cases."

In closing, this webinar definitely succeeded in contributing towards creating more awareness about mental health, with a particular focus on women's mental health in India as well as around topics that are generally stigmatized or are considered as taboo.
