

Observational Report; Psychosocial Support Group Sessions with Christian Community Jaranwala



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Location: Jaranwala, Pakistan

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Facilitator 2: Ms. Sarah Counselor, Jaranwala

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Introduction:

On 16th August 2023, an angry crowd driven by false accusations of blasphemy, stormed and fueled Christian homes and churches in Jaranwala, wrecking and harming nearly 60 Christian homes as well as more than 24 church buildings. After this hostile incident happened in Jaranwala, the Christian community was adversely affected. As they experienced negative outcomes in terms of lack of financial and economical resources with no food and shelter of those serious affected and were physically and psychologically harmed. Meanwhile, the Technical Services Association (TSA) has specially offered psychological and financial assistance for vocational training to the community for their uplifting, also provided Psychological First AID and Problem Management Plus and offered psychological counselling services. Recently, a workshop was conducted

and Christian community in Jaranwala participated in the sessions for three distinct groups; parents, teenagers and children, as psychological support. The purpose of the sessions was to provide different age groups in the community emotional and psychological support. Each session broadly focused on strengthening resilience, coping methods, and fostering healthy emotional growth through faith-based guidance and practical resources.

Session 1: Psychosocial Support Session with Parents

Objective: To help parents understand the importance of improving parenting skills through promoting self-reflection, spiritual guidance, patience and the practice of mindfulness for better parenting of their children.

The session was started with a comprehensive discussion around experiences of their childhood. Parents were asked to reflect on the way they were raised, identifying any problems or difficulties they might have had during their childhood. After that, the facilitator led a discussion about how parents might enhance their present parenting techniques to give their children a more loving, caring and supportive environment. Among the primary key themes were the value of spiritual endurance, walking in faith, compassion, affection, understanding, persistent patience and devotion in parenting. Parents were reminded of the importance of their involvement in helping their children to develop emotional stability and insight. Practical helpful management techniques for handling difficult parenting situations and strengthening their deeper emotional connection with their children were covered in the session's conclusion.

Session 2: Psychosocial Support Session with Teenagers Group

Objective: To support teenagers in understanding the value of holding onto a relationship with Lord and the significance of emotional resilience qualities.

In the session, teenagers' groups were introduced with the pre and post trauma scale with revised version in Urdu language to evaluate their emotional condition before and after the psychosocial support session. Before conduction, proper ethical steps were undertaken including signing informed consent sheets, debriefing the assessment tool purpose, chance to withdraw at any stage if found

unease at certain item on a questionnaire and if needed counselling facility will be offered. According to the findings, a significant proportion of teenagers were experiencing stress, confusion, loneliness and hopelessness. After the evaluation, the group had discussions on seeking God's guidance during difficult challenges and moments. The facilitator underlined that developing a close relationship with God during adolescence is crucial because it helps support and direction in hardship times. The adolescents were encouraged to maintain their religious commitment and withstand any temptations that could come up during any phase in their life. With an emphasis on laying a strong foundation for the future, it was emphasized how crucial it is to hold onto hope and have faith in God's plan for them and for fruitful future.

With the teenagers, habits of adopting healthy coping styles, productive routine, natural connectivity and healthy nutrition plan were discussed.

Session 3: Psychosocial Support Group with Children

Objective: To encourage healthy coping strategies and provide children a guidance on how to control their emotions, especially anger.

The goal of session was to foster appropriate behaviour and emotional control. Through this session children learned the significance of following instructions, obedience and the importance of sharing with and learning from a trustworthy and mature adult who ensures their emotional stability and when they feel upset or angry. With the goal to help them to manage their emotions, the facilitator encouraged to engage in constructive activities. The practical activities were guided to practice include deep breathing exercise and talking to a trustworthy family member for managing negative feelings and to practice being calm.

Conclusion:

The psychosocial support sessions promoted valuable insights and meaningful guidance for parents, teenagers, and children in the Jaranwala Christian community. Three different categorised groups learned essential skills for emotional management, stress resilience, and the importance of faith in overcoming life's challenges based on their age groups and experiences. The sessions successfully fostered an open environment for discussion and reflection, helping participants to better understand and manage their emotional health and psychological wellness. The integration of faith-based principles from the context

of “Spiritual oriented psychotherapy” alongside practical guidance and coping strategies made the sessions both relevant and effective.

Recommendations:

1. **Follow-up Sessions:** More psychosocial group sessions should be conducted for follow-up sessions, monitoring progress and to identify any emerging concern related to dealing with trauma and resilience.
2. **Workshops for Parents:** More comprehensive workshops should be conducted which emphasize on their effective relationship between parents and their children.
3. **Youth Activities:** Counselling sessions and regular youth-focused activities should be organized to help teenagers to strengthen their spiritual foundation and to stay emotionally resilient.
4. **Children’s Support Programs:** Develop a plan for child focused activities to give ongoing emotional support and techniques for coping.

The findings of this report would encourage more community-based support and highlight how successfully the sessions helped the participants to become more aware of their mental health and spiritual well-being, and ongoing development in this field.

Appendix

The first session was conducted with The second session was conducted with Teenagers by Dr. Matthew Jeong Teenagers by Dr. Matthew Jeong



The third session was conducted by Ms. Sarah Counselor working with Jaranwala Christian Community under supervision of Dr. Matthew Jeong

