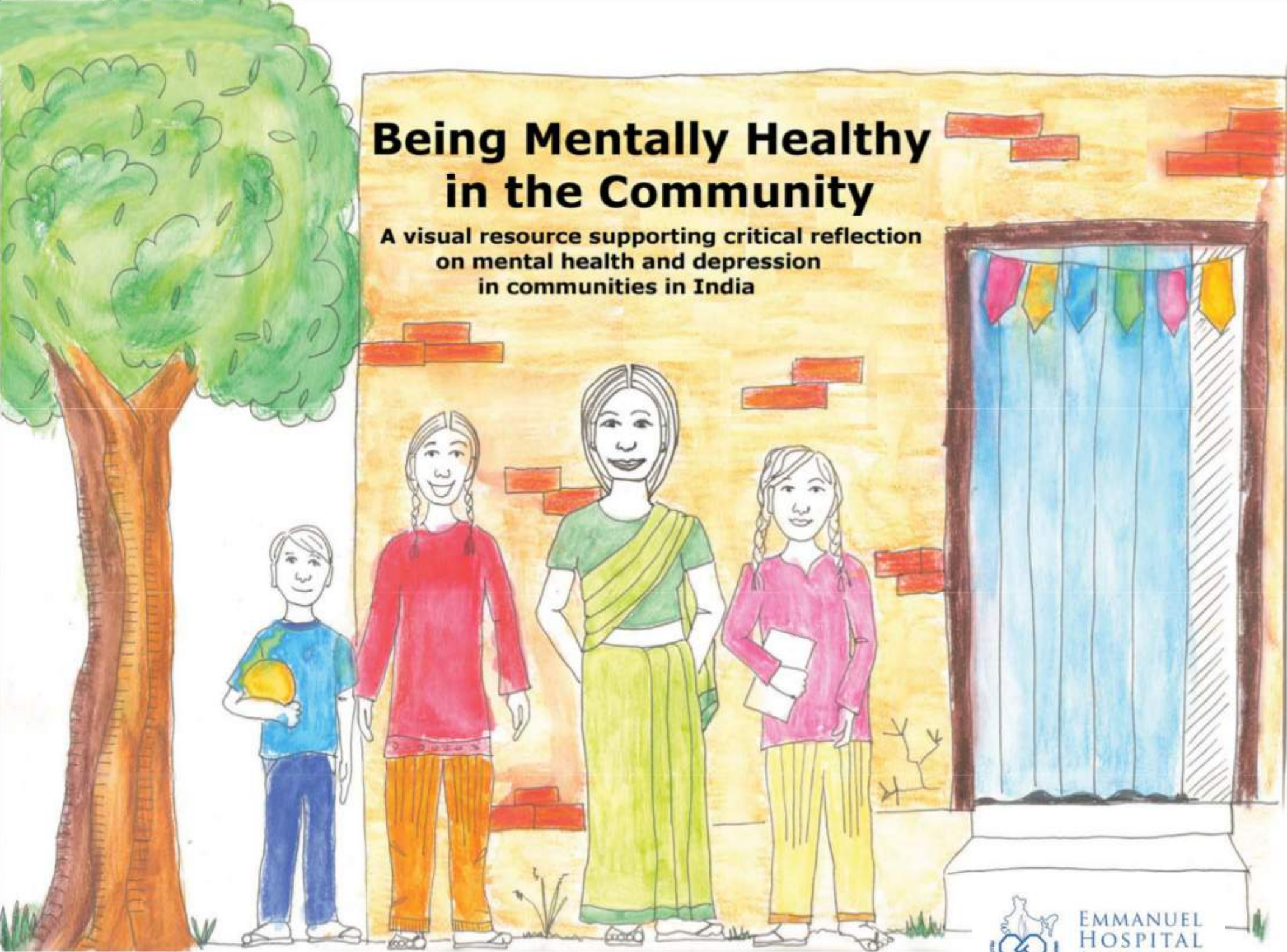


# Being Mentally Healthy in the Community

A visual resource supporting critical reflection  
on mental health and depression  
in communities in India



EMMANUEL  
HOSPITAL  
ASSOCIATION

# Being mentally healthy in the community

A visual resource supporting critical reflection on mental health and depression in communities in India

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[www.aha-health.org](http://www.aha-health.org)



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## How to use this flipchart resource

This flipchart resource is best used with small groups in the community. Ideally a community based worker will meet with the same group for four sessions, each lasting approximately 30 – 45 minutes to work through this resource.

### Suggested outline for sessions

Session One – Introduction: what is mental health, the story of Aruna and spheres of health (Charts 1-3)

Session Two – Spheres of control, and more of the story of Aruna (Charts 4-6)

Session Three – Tension, resilience and sleep(Charts 7 – 9)

Session Four - 5 Kadam and positive thinking (Charts 10,11)

Session Five – Thinking in a new way about the past – forgiveness and benefit finding (Chart 12)

Session Six - Taking action for my own mental health (Charts 13)

Session Seven – Taking action for mental health in my community (Chart 14)

Session Eight - Depression - what is it and what contributes (Charts 15, 16)

Session Nine - Depression - how can someone recover from depression (Charts 17,18)

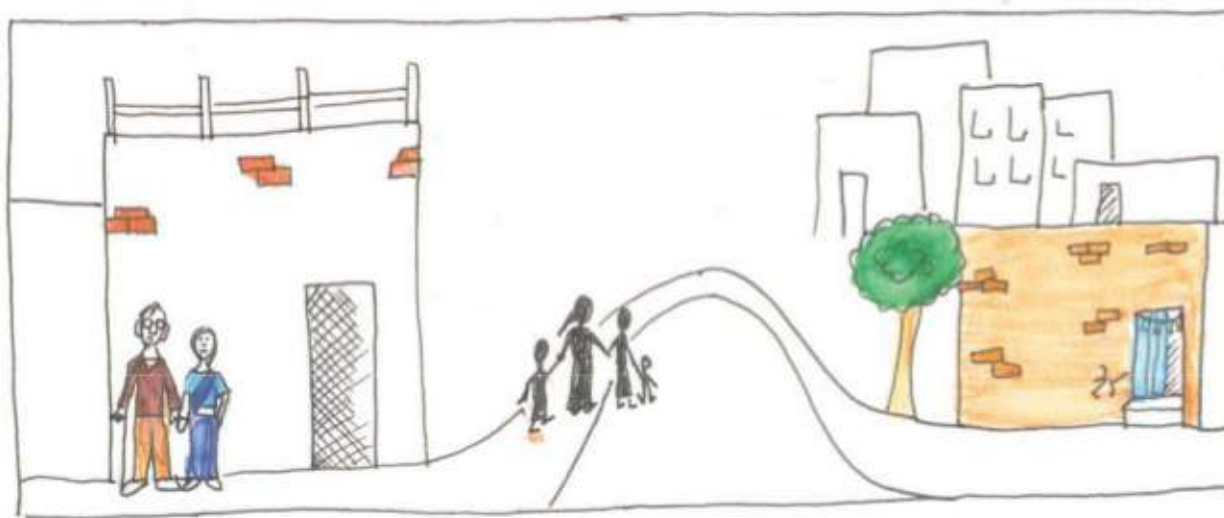


## Introduction to Aruna and the group – estimated 15 minutes

- Start the group by introducing yourself and others. Talk about the purpose of this group and flip chart. Throw a small ball or pen to the next person. Ask them "Introduce yourself – tell us your name, and 2 interesting facts about yourself and your family". We are following a story of Aruna, and together we will learn from her story and seek to relate it to our lives. Read the story aloud.
- ➔ Check all in the group are comfortable with the story, then go on to ask as we think about her story, what do we think are things in her life story that would impact her mental health. Give the group prompts to think about her physical health, mind health, social health and spiritual health.

*Aruna's Story - Aruna was 19 years old when she was married to Akshay. After marriage she moved into to live with Akshay's parents. Akshay used to have a small shop where he fixed cell phones and after five years they had three children, two daughters and one son. Three years ago Akshay was killed in a bus accident. It was the most sad and terrible thing for Aruna and for Akshay's parents. Six months after his death, Akshay's parents told Aruna she must move out from their home. She returned with the three children to her maternal home 50 km away. Now Aruna lives in a one room quarter in the same town as her mother who is a widow, and does domestic work in three different households. Her eldest daughter, Reeta is 14 years old, the second daughter Priyanka, is 12 years old and the youngest is 9 year old Siddarth. They are all studying in the government school.*

# Chart 1



## Introducing Aruna

## The Four dimensions of health - discussion and group work – estimated time – 10-12 minutes

- Look at the picture with Aruna and four logos symbolizing four dimensions of mental health.
- When we think of our own mental health, most of the time we only think about the absence of pain, sickness or diseases but there is much more to our mental health than this! What else is part of health? Through these sessions we are going to try and understand our mental health in four dimensions:
- Physical,
- Mind health,
- Social,
- Spiritual and cultural identity.

- Discuss with the group what are some of the things we need for mental health in each of these dimensions. Give an example of each of these for people in this community. Ask the group to form pairs with their neighbor and then to take 5 minutes each to sit together and talk with their neighbor asking each pair to think of an example in each dimension.
- Use your marker to draw pictures or write words representing the different ideas group members have had. Make sure you give group members positive feedback for their contributions!
- The next page then shows some examples of the four different dimensions. Turn the page now and discuss these together.



Physical



Social



Mind



Spiritual

**4 Dimensions of mental health**

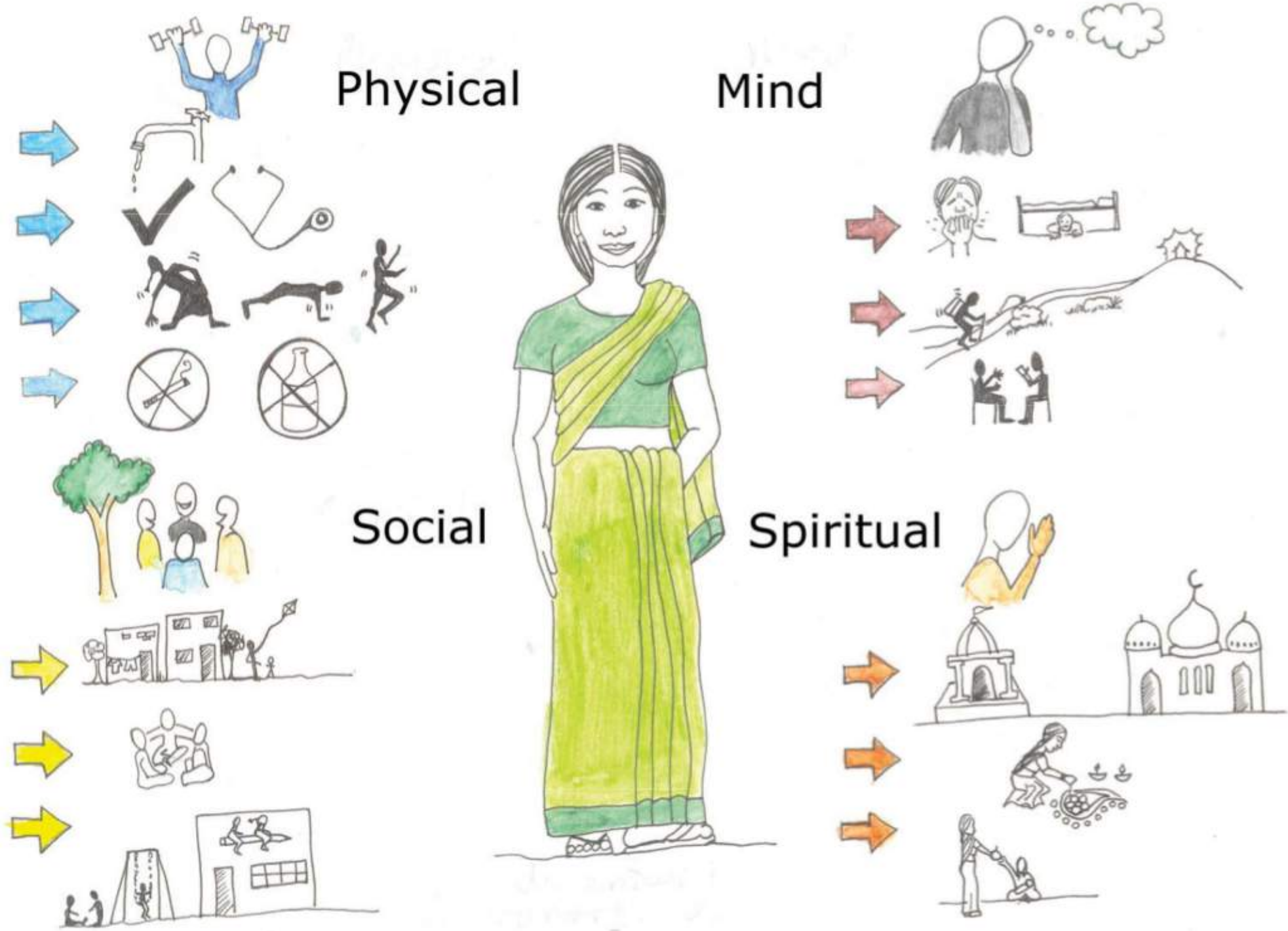
## Using the four spheres to think about my own life – 15 minutes

Using the pictures illustrated – discuss the meaning of the different pictures that are shown for physical, mind, social and spiritual health. Take time to talk through the different pictures and what they might mean. Then encourage the group members to think which sphere in their own lives is most healthy and to lay a small stone in that sphere e.g. they may have a good physical health and a good house and home so they choose that. Then ask group members to take turns to lay a small stone in the area where they are weakest. E.g. someone may say they have lots of tension – so they would mind health as their least healthy area.

<p><b>Mind</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Having autonomy and being able to make choices about our own lives</li> <li>• Being able to cope with the normal tensions of life</li> <li>• Maintaining healthy relationships being able to face and solve problems in life</li> <li>• Realizing our own abilities and working on being our best</li> <li>• Living with emotions and thoughts that keep us well</li> <li>• The absence of mental illness such as Depression, Anxiety or Schizophrenia</li> <li>• Access to mental health care including good primary health care, healing care, support groups, psychiatrists and counsellors.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Physical</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access to good primary health care that gives support and ideas that are not only drugs</li> <li>• Access to nutritious food with good variety and lots of fresh fruit and vegetables</li> <li>• Clean food/water &amp; food/water security</li> <li>• Clean air</li> <li>• Physical activity most days</li> <li>• Staying away from harmful substances- smoking, drinking, drugs</li> <li>• Genetics/family history of illness</li> <li>• Gender equality</li> </ul>
<p><b>Spiritual/Cultural/Creative</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Connecting to a religion and cultural group</li> <li>• Knowing a place where we can connect to God and being free to go there/ worship</li> <li>• Practicing forgiveness and compassion towards others</li> <li>• Using creativity – singing, drawing, weaving to connect to our inner learning and thoughts</li> <li>• Practising your cultural customs and traditions</li> <li>• Expressing gratefulness</li> </ul>	<p><b>Social</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Being free to participate in society and our community</li> <li>• Feeling that we belong in our place and among our people</li> <li>• Living with support and kindness from our family</li> <li>• Having friends we can talk with on feelings / thoughts</li> <li>• Being able to celebrate with others</li> <li>• Contributing and caring for those more needy</li> <li>• Living in a safe community</li> <li>• Access to local resources – eg police, NGOs, schools, municipal bodies</li> <li>• Working in a safe and healthy place</li> <li>• Having opportunity to study and learn</li> <li>• Living free from violence (e.g. in our home or bullying in our schools)</li> </ul>



Chart 3



**4 Dimensions of mental health**

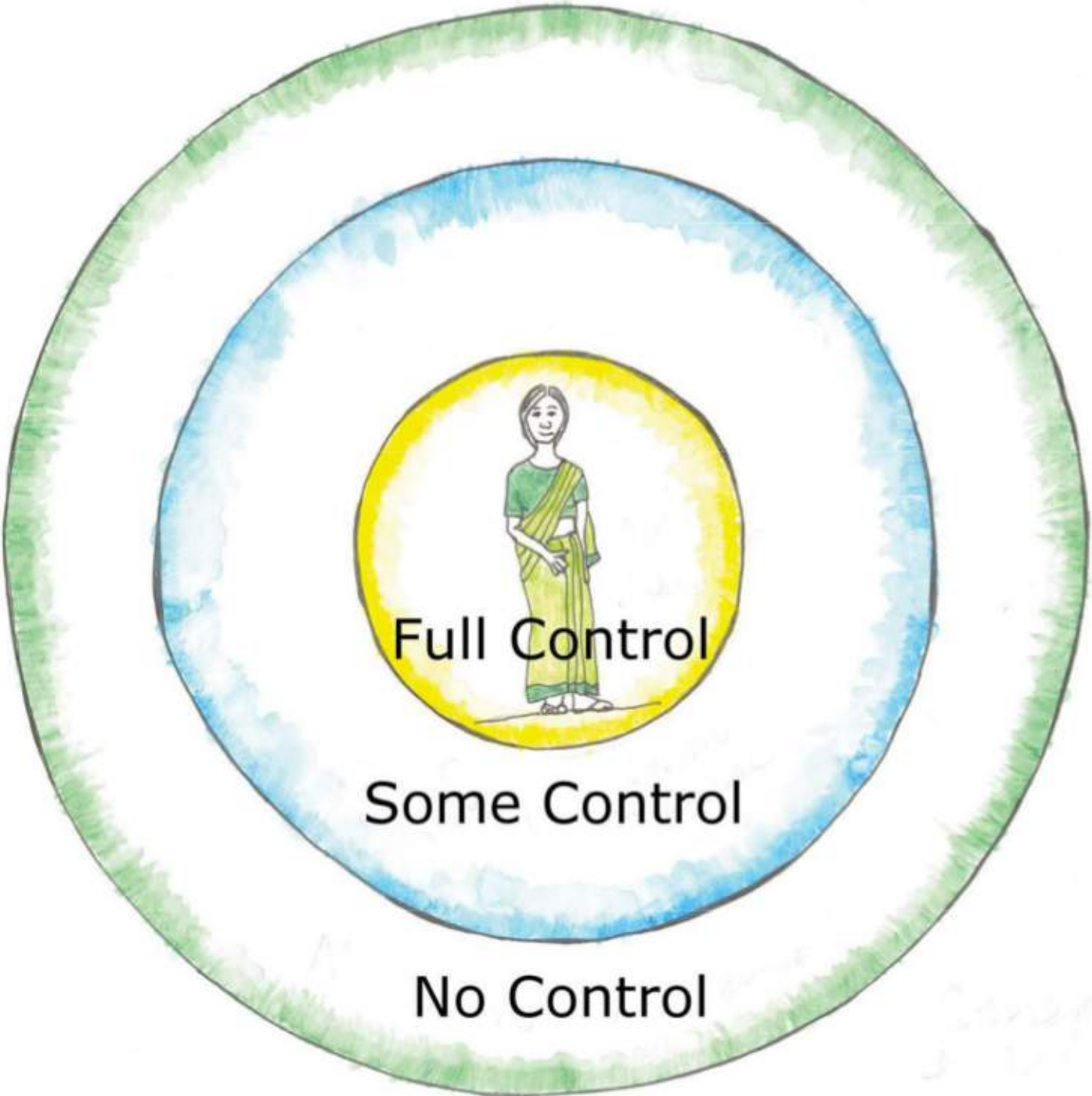
## Introducing the Sphere of Influence and Control – 10 minutes

- There are some areas in all of our lives in which we have more or less control over.
- The smallest yellow circle in the center represents what we have complete control over.

- We get to make all of the decisions here and we can determine the outcomes of those decisions. This is the smallest area of our lives. This includes areas like what clothes we decide to wear one day, or whether we will go to the bazaar by bus or by foot.
- The middle green circle represents things that we have some sort of influence over. Here we can't make the final decisions on our own, but what we say and do can help determine the outcome.

- This includes ideas like where we send our children to school (because of the cost we can't maybe send them to a very expensive school and sometimes we decide the government school is fine and that then we can pay for tuition), and where we will go for health care
- Finally we have the largest blue circle which represents issues we have no control or influence over. This includes factors like whether we are eligible for an entitlement (eg. We can't change it if we're BPL or SC) or whether the Government
- No matter what we do or say it we can't change these even though sometimes these things impact our lives a lot. Seeing this, can you think of a time when you had a problem which you had no control or influence over?
- If we try and focus our time and energy on the problems in our lives which we do have control over we can create positive change in our lives and try and increase our satisfaction and happiness in life.

Chart 4



**Sphere of control**

## Using Sphere of Influence with examples from Aruna's story – 20-30 minutes

← Read aloud - using what we have just learned lets look back at the factors affecting Aruna and her family's health.

*Aruna finishes washing the dishes at the house of the Shoe Shop owner and stops at the vegetable shop in the bazaar. She buys onions, harimirch and loki to cook for dinner. She also stops to do puja at the mandir which is on her walk back to her home. At home, Siddarth is playing outside with marbles and his two sisters are inside watching TV. Aruna decides to sit and talk with her next door neighbor Fatima, before starting on cooking dinner. Her landlord has just told her yesterday that the rent will be going up another Rs300 per month after Diwali. With hot adrak chai she sits on the steps and talks with Fatima asking her opinion on whether she could ask her in-laws to help her with paying for the school uniform and exercise books for her children. She is still paying the money lender Rs5 per Rs100 each month for the Rs5000 she borrowed in March for uniforms and books. She feels like many things she cares a lot about, she can do nothing to change which increases her tension. Fatima tells her about a group that she knows of where eight women have joined together to make an SHG (Self Help Group). Every month each member gives Rs60 into the group and they keep the money saved in a shared bank account. Each month a new person can take a larger sum of money to pay for an unexpected or high cost. This way none of them has to pay interest to a money lender and then learn to work together and trust each other.*

← Discuss the spheres of control again with the group and give the following examples with a short explanation if not mentioned, linking again to situations that are relevant to the group and to where you are:

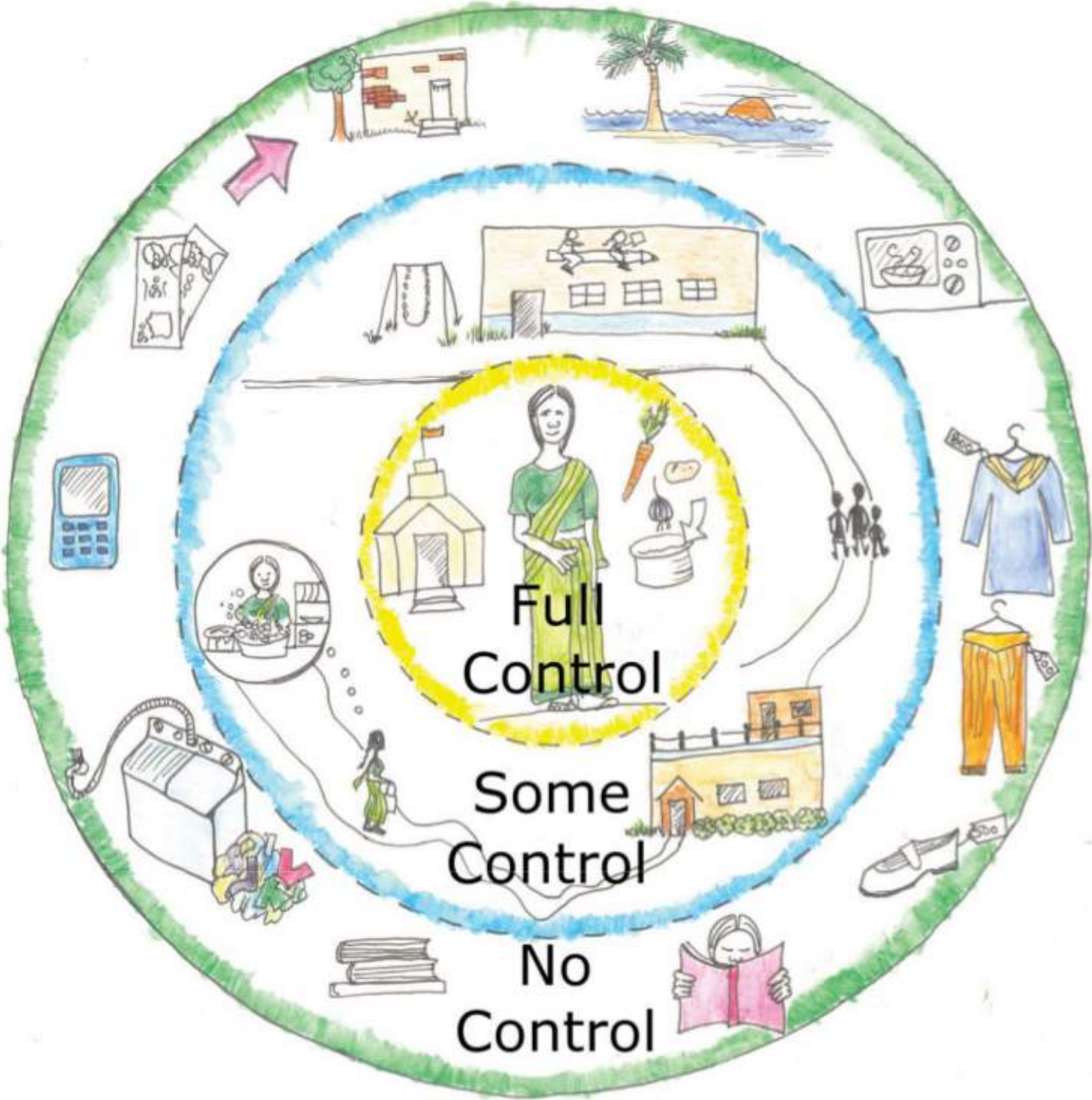
- Complete control - If we think about Aruna, what are the areas of her life that she has complete control over? This might include something like what subzi she cooks for dinner, when she will get to the mandir etc. There are also other areas like doing physical activity, staying away from harmful substances, choosing to show forgiveness and compassion towards others, practicing cultural customs and traditions, feeling content with her life.
- Ask each group member to discuss 2-3 areas in their lives they have full control over?

Sphere of influence - For Aruna this might include areas like where her children go to school, which houses she works at etc. Other areas she has some control over might be speaking up with others in her community when there is a problem, maintaining healthy relationships, being able to face and solve problems in life, being able to give and take support from Family and Friends. Ask the group to discuss in their own lives what are areas we have influence over? What are areas we'd like to have more control over?

Sphere of no control –For Aruna this might include the amount of rent she is charged, whether her in-laws help with her children's school or clothing costs. However even in these areas where we feel we have no control, we can make a difference. E.g negotiate with our landlord about rent increase and taking time to build a good relationship with her in-laws. Other areas that we feel no control over exist, but there are ways we can try to influence these. For example - educational opportunities for children – she can apply for scholarships and ask NGOs for their advice on how to give her children more, finding out about entitlements eg school bags and books in some states for BPL families, acting to get her entitlements eg. Apply for Widows pension, health services - Taking time to find out what health services are available and where people are cared for and not charged for unneeded tests and too many medicines. What areas in our lives do we feel we have no control over? Are there any ways we could change this situation so that they are areas where we can have some influence?



Chart 5



## What do we have control over in our community – 20 minutes

10 minutes - Talk about the chart on 5A with lots of pictures in a circle. Go through and circle them with green, yellow or blue to show areas of control to areas of influence. Then give the example also of community monitoring of health services.

*In Aruna's village there was an anganwadi where the teacher and helper only came when it suited them, once a week or less. A friend of Aruna, named Fatima met together with other mothers of anganwadi children to discuss this situation. Together they decided to take action. Each day one mother kept register on the attendance of the anganwadi worker. After one month a group of mother's went to meet with the CDPO and presented the register. She took action and the AWW now comes every day.*

*Are there areas like this a group here can take action? Take a further 10 minutes or longer to talk about actions we can take to have more control over our own lives: What are areas in our own lives that we could try to bring more control? Are there areas we could work together on collectively? Discuss the example of self-help groups.*



## Dealing with tension – 15 minutes

Read aloud the next update on Aruna's story:

Story – Since the news about her rent going up, Aruna has been having trouble with sleeping, lying awake a long time after going to bed. She finds herself going over and over different thoughts about what she can do. These thoughts follow her all day. Can she move to another room, or can she find some more work or will they have nowhere to live. She worries over and over about how they will manage. She thinks about some families she knows where the children are skinny and hungry and she feels worried they won't even have enough to buy non-veg once a month. She also has noticed she is getting many body pains, in her stomach particularly at different times of day – and a headache that comes and goes. She wonders if she should go to the doctor and then also worries if she might have a serious health problem and all the costs that will come with that.

- Everyone has tension in their lives but the way we respond to tension is different. Some people decide to face a difficult situation as a way to show that they are strong, and resourceful and want to do their best to make things go well. Others feel things are very unfair and feel unsure what to do and how to cope in this situation. Tension can affect our physical, mental, social and spiritual health.
- ***What do we feel and do we when we are experiencing tension in our lives? Discuss the impact on our physical health, social health, spiritual health and mind health?*** **← Write answers in the space provided on the front page.**
  - There is a strong relationship between tension in someone's life and their mental health. This means that when tension becomes too much in life, some people fall ill with a mental disorder such as depression, anxiety, harmful behaviour such as smoking, drinking or addiction.
  - When tension become too much in life individuals respond differently. Some may work through the tension quite easily, some may start drinking alcohol or smoking more cigarettes, and some may develop a mental disorder.
- Tension is how the body responds to hard or emotional situations. Many different things can cause tension for different people.
- Small amounts of tension in life are normal. When tension starts affecting a persons life in a negative way it can affect our health.





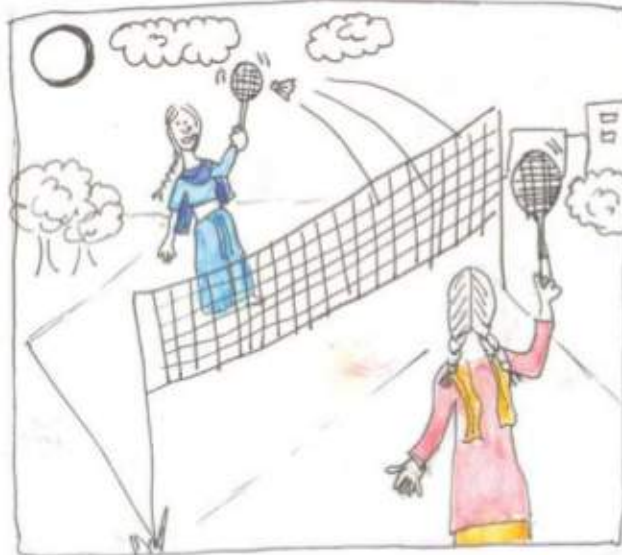
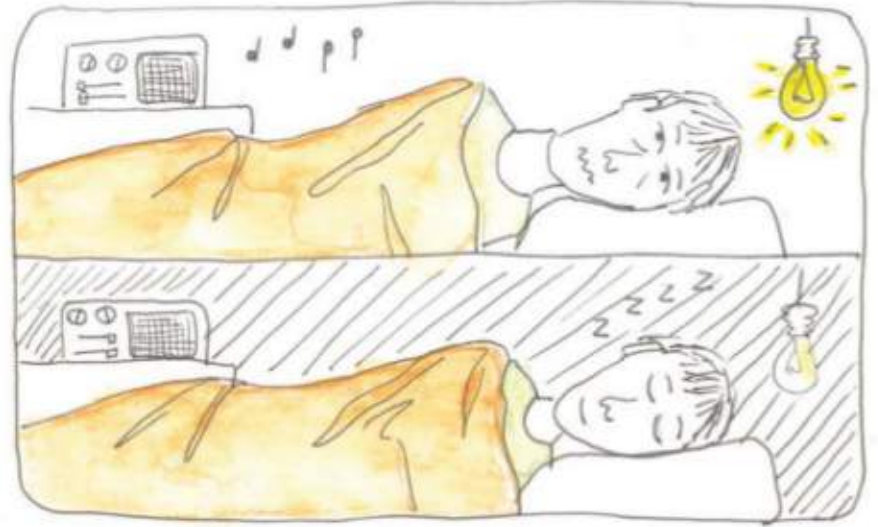
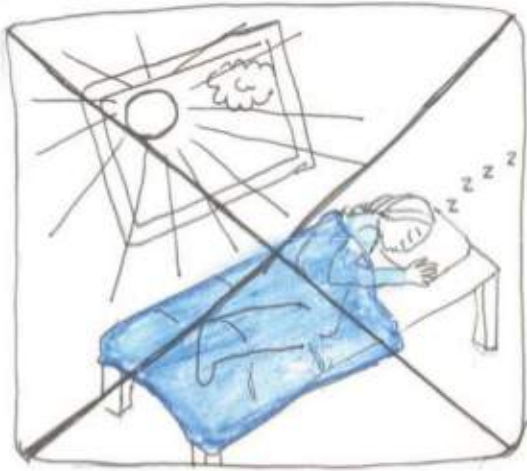
**Dealing with tension**

### ← Sleep skills – 20 minutes

- When people are feeling tension or distress, many people lose sleep and find themselves tired throughout the day. This tiredness can not only cause more tension but hinder you from reducing that same tension. Ask the group to share ideas they have to help someone with sleeping problems- they may take ideas from the pictures shown. Once their ideas are exhausted, go through the following suggestions one by one. The following are some simple skills that can help one sleep better
- Keeping a regular sleep schedule. Go to bed and wake up at the same time each day.
- Try and have a rhythm of activities you follow to relax before going to bed. We will talk about relaxation next.
- Avoid taking naps during the day.
- Avoid using computer, or talking on cell phone or watching TV just before sleep – it can make the mind more active and less ready to sleep.

- Make sure you have taken exercise in the day, but not just before sleeping
  - Try and make yourself comfortable while you sleep by reducing noise and lights around you.
  - Avoid caffeine like chai, coffee or cold drink before evening time. Also avoid smoking and drinking before bed.
- Ask group members to talk to the person next to them about what they find helpful when they are having trouble sleeping. Do any of these ideas helpful? Ask group members to share with the group what they have found helpful for sleeping difficulties.

# Chart 8



## 7 Tips for sleeping well

## Resiliency = responding well to tension and hardship – 15 minutes

Read aloud the following update on Aruna's daughter, Reeta:

*Aruna's eldest daughter Reeta is a great help to her. She listens well to her mother's worries and asks her questions about how she is feeling but also encourages her that their family has always got through difficulties before and that she knows her mother is a strong person who refuses to let difficult times get her down. Reeta often talks about good things that have happened. She comments on how great it is that their mausi fills all their buckets when the water comes each morning, while they are all out, "How lovely that we have November weather now – it is not hot or cold and we can sleep at night now without the fan!" Reeta has also started running a tuition class for some rag picker children who don't go to school. They come on Monday and Thursday evenings. On those days Reeta rises early to knead the roti attha and cooks the evening subzi so that she has time to teach them. She doesn't get any money from this but she often savs its her favourite time in the week.*

- We describe those people who can handle tension very well, as resilient people. Resilience is a person's ability to bounce back and thrive even with difficulties in life. It's a little like a badminton net – with many strands that are woven together, it can even hold the weight of a man falling into it – and then bounce back to its original shape.

For example, when Aruna's husband died she suffered very badly. The tension of life became too much for her and she could not take care of her children or the house, she stayed in bed all of the time and lost hope about the future. She wasn't able to easily bounce back and be resilient. On the other hand, Reeta started taking care of her younger siblings and the house when Aruna couldn't. She took on the responsibility of the home and continued going to school. Aruna's daughter Reeta has qualities of a resilient person! Do you know a person like Aruna's daughter? What qualities do you think makes that person resilient? Ask all in the group to give one example of qualities that make someone resilient. Write or draw them on the flip chart in – between the arrows shown with Reeta.

➡ Give the following examples with a short explanation if not mentioned:

- Positive thinking- which we will talk about shortly
- Benefit finding- which we will also talk about shortly
- Persistence- keeping
- Looking on the bright side of things (Optimism)
- Liking yourself and feeling like you are important (Self-esteem)
- Understanding ones emotions
- Self- efficacy/ motivation
- Planning skills
- Gratefulness





# Resiliency-responding well to tension

## Using the 5 Kadam to build our resilience –

20 minutes

- Give the following examples with a short explanation if not mentioned:

Discuss each of these and use the pictures on the hand to help group members understand the idea.

- Give – make a beautiful rangoli pattern in front of your house, take time to light diya's for Diwali around the house, make kheer for your neighbours for Eid or give money to an organization that helps the poorest people. Being grateful and saying thank you for the good things in our lives. Share what you have with others even if its something small. Ask a group member for an example of giving
- Be active – This might include doing stretches and yoga, or gardening, for men this might mean to play a game of cricket on Sunday's with some other community friends – or women might like to go for an early morning walk in the park. Ask a group member for an example of what they could do themselves to be more active

- Keep learning – There are many opportunities around us to try and learn new things – eg learn to use your son's mobile phone or to cook a new food, or taking the opportunity to learn to make something with your hands, or to learn to ride a bicycle or use an ATM machine. Ask two people in the group to give an example of something they would like to learn this year.
- Take notice – Meditating, watching sun rise, breathing exercises in the early morning and observing festivals and religion, sitting and watching birds or children playing. Finding benefits and positive thinking are two areas here we will discuss more. Ask two group members what they do to take notice and slow down from their busy lives.
- Connect – eating together with people we like, singing bhajans with our friends, talking through our problems with someone – like sitting with a neighbor and friend and talking about what is going well in life – and what is difficult. Ask three group members to give an example of ways that they connect and build relationships around them.



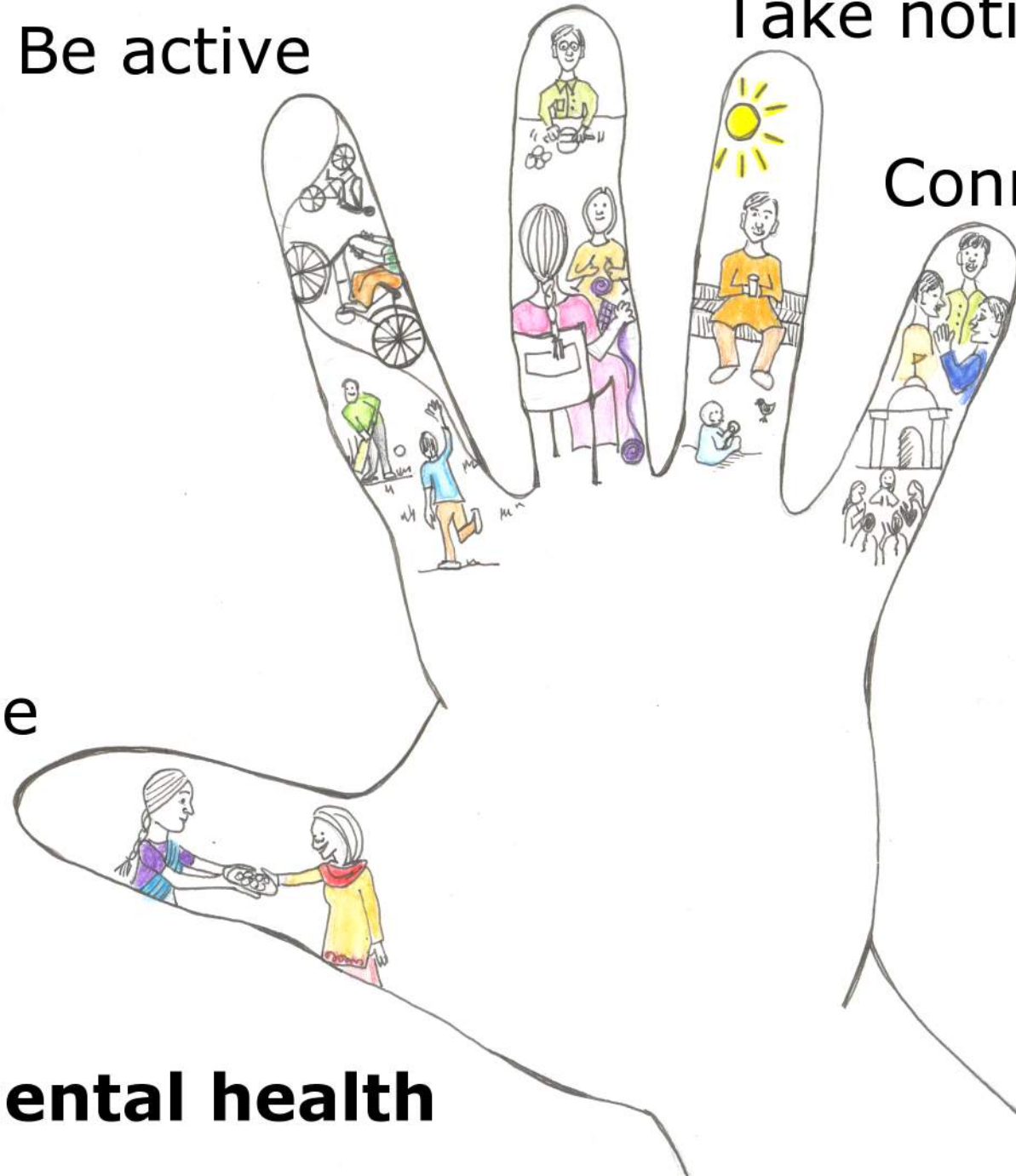
# Keep Learning

Be active

Take notice

Connect

Give



## 5 steps for mental health

▪ Positive thinking – 15 minutes

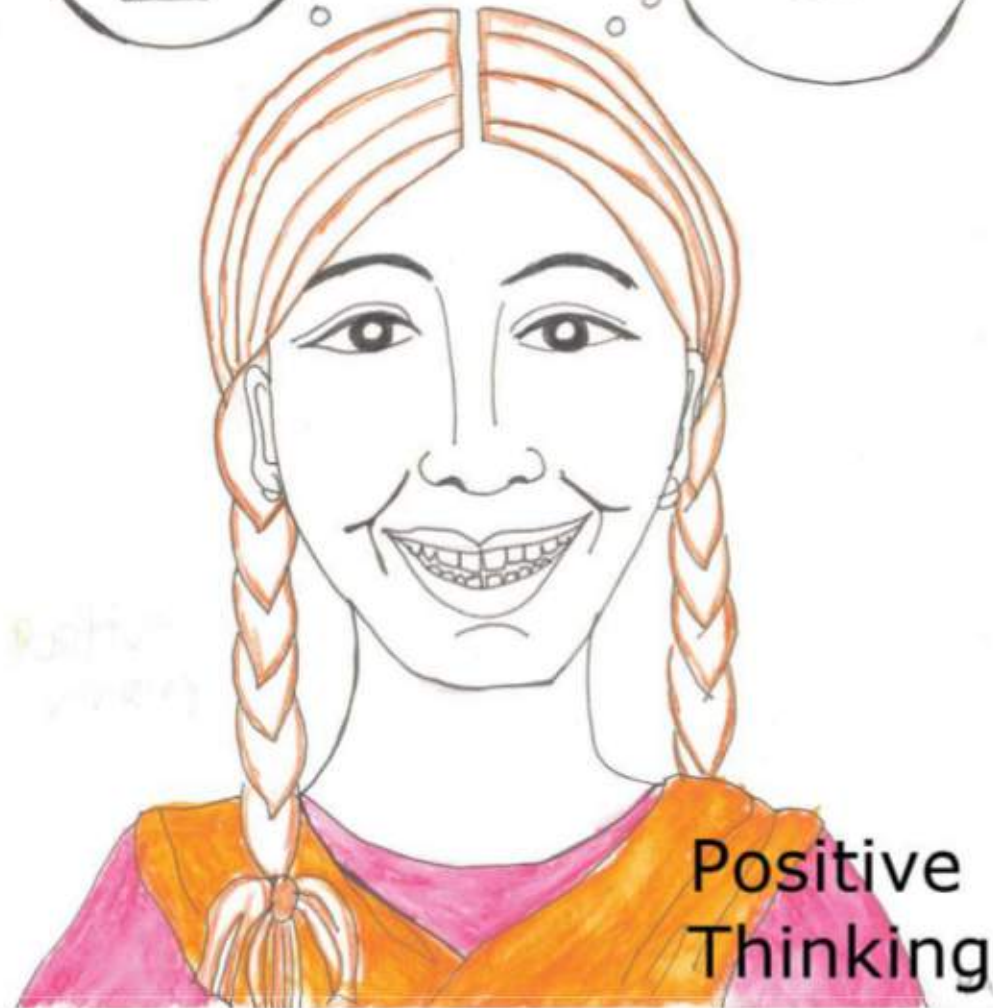
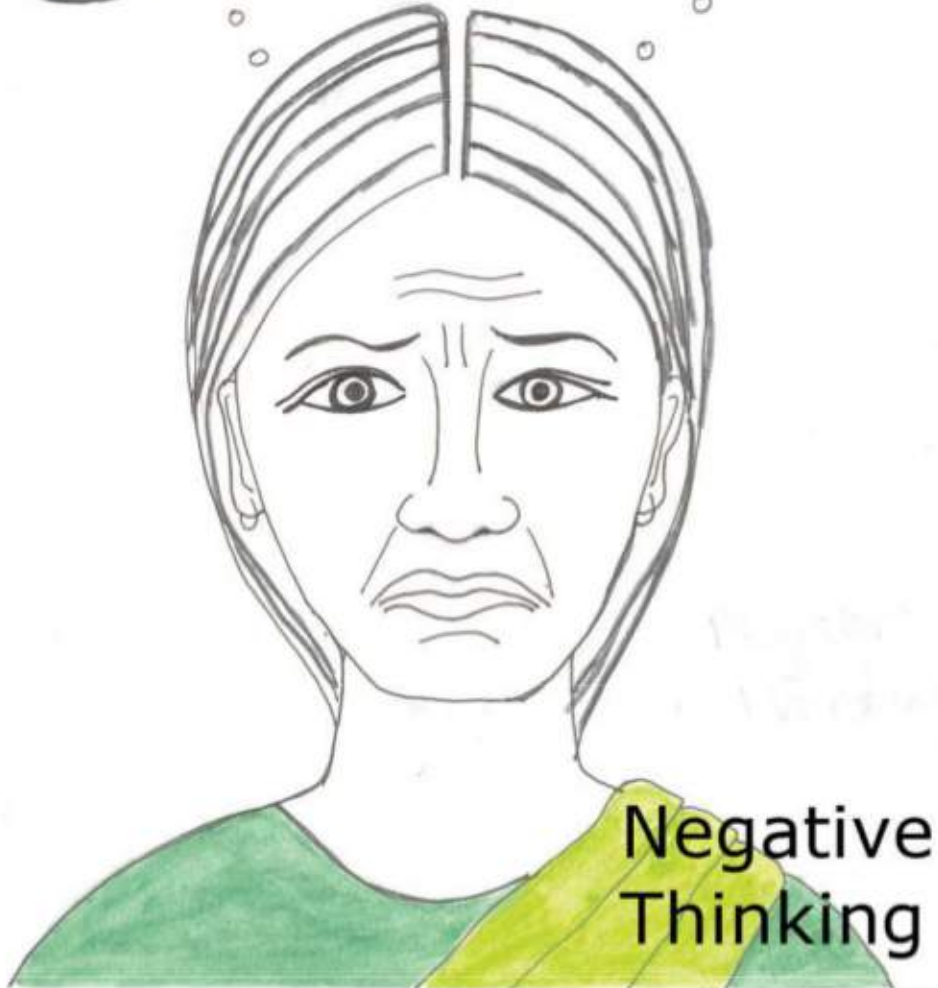
Reeta is a quite cheerful 14 year old girl. Every morning when she wakes up and before she gets out of bed she tries to think of three things that she is thankful for. At school, she finds that she gets quite low marks in Hindi and in English. Writing things is difficult even though she has such great ideas in her head and this made her feel annoyed with herself. She talked about this with her two best friends at school, Anjali and Ankit. Ankit suggested that she goes to talk to her teacher and ask for their ideas. So the next day after school Reeta went to talk to her English teacher, Mr Yusuf. She asked if he could give suggestions and he was quite kind and gave her a worksheet with ideas for how to get better at spelling. She also decided that she would read one newspaper article each day as she could get the newspaper from her neighbor. Taking some action on her problem made her feel better and she talked about how helpful Mr Yusuf had been to her mother that evening.

● **(Discuss positive thinking and ask for examples from the group, asking them to tell of people they know who are good at focusing on the positive things in a situation.)** One way to help us become more resilient and cope with tension is by trying to practice positive thinking. Positive thinking isn't ignoring the negative things that happens in life and being happy no matter what. Rather, its about taking on life's challenges with a positive attitude/outlook. Many times people think of positive thinkers as being optimistic. Positive thinking includes

- being hopeful and optimistic, finding benefits in negative events, and looking towards yourself and your abilities in a positive way. Our thoughts are something that we have control over, and developing the skill of controlling our negative thoughts and changing them to positive takes time and practice.
- ➔ **Tips for becoming a positive thinker**
- Regulate your self talk, don't talk to your self negatively.
- Being grateful for what you have and referring to the good things in your life when feeling down.
- Try to not only blame yourself for negative situations. Taking responsibility where we can but also realize that there are external factors contributing to every situation
- At the end of each day, think about or talk to someone about the best thing that happened and what you found to be hard that day and how that affected your day.
- If you're finding it hard to think positive thoughts don't get angry with yourself, just try again the next day and later in this group we also discuss when people have high levels of distress or depression, sometimes we need to look further for help.



Chart 11



# Thinking in new ways about the past – 20 minutes Read aloud the next developments in Aruna's story.

Aruna has been thinking about all that has happened since her husband died. At the time it seemed like his death was the worst possible thing that could have happened to her. It was almost as painful to have had her in-laws ask her to move out and to have to set up house in a new place. She felt so angry with them at the time. However, as Aruna thinks about all the sadness and pain around her husband's death, and even now things are difficult, she realizes that there have been some good things that have happened because of his death that surprised her. She thought about how his death meant that she had to become more independent and to care for her children financially. She feels quite proud of the fact that she went alone to the bank and was able to start her own bank account. She is happy that she found out what was needed and then applied successfully for the widow's pension. She also thought about how all three of her children have shown maturity and been helpful to her, especially her eldest daughter Reeta who is able to cook most of the meals at home as well as doing her school work. It hasn't been easy but they have managed to do well and they have found they are stronger and more resourceful than she could have guessed before.

She also remembers that she felt so angry with her mother-in-law when told her that she needed to move out of their home. At that time she felt she could never even talk to them. Once she had moved into her own house she made a point to never answer any phone call from her mother-in-law and refused to visit them. After this went on for six months she had talked about this with her friend Nilofar. Nilofar had suggested she was hurting herself also by continuing to be angry and uncommunicative with her in-laws. She tried to imagine how her in-laws themselves were feeling. She realised that they also must be sad and suffering financially with the loss of their son and realized that she needed to forgive them. At that time Aruna rang her mother-in-law and herself said, "Sorry" for not answering phone calls all this time. Aruna's mother-in-law cried also on the phone and asked forgiveness also. Once Aruna had forgiven her mother and father in law they have a much better relationship and they take time to talk together. Aruna is happy to have them come to visit their grandchildren and they usually bring some barfi to share with them all. She remembers how she was surprised and happy that her in-law's said they would pay for school uniforms and stationery at school when they visited some months ago.

Two important skills we can learn in life are forgiveness and benefit finding. Forgiveness is an action we take to let go of negative feelings toward someone who has hurt us whether they deserve to be forgiven or not. It does not say we forget that we were hurt and forgiving someone doesn't mean we the action that happened to us. Forgiveness is a way to get peace of mind and to allow ourselves to move on with our lives without needing to hold on tightly to the bad thing that was done to us. Forgiveness is something we can learn to do – it is a choice we can make which allows us to find healing and gives us long term wellness.

Can you think of a time that you were very hurt by someone and you decided to forgive them. Take 5 minutes to talk to your neighbor in the group about a time when you were able to forgive someone. Discuss with them what was difficult about giving forgiveness and also what positive things you have experienced because of giving forgiveness.

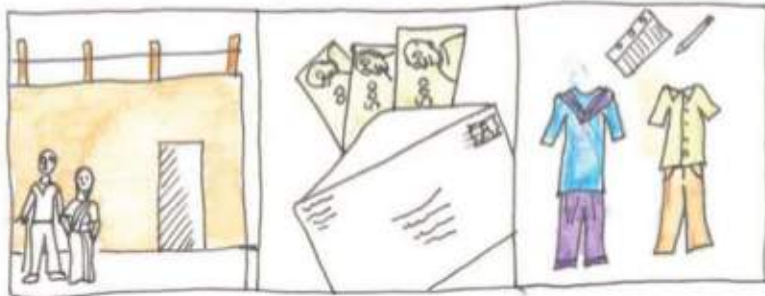
Benefit finding is a skill that is also important for mental health. It is the idea of acknowledging that although it did not work out as planned, we can look for and find benefits that came out of it. However it does not mean that when a bad thing happens we have to accept it and say 'it is for the best'.

We will think of one event in our lives that didn't go as we could have hoped for but even so we can find positive things that happened. Can you think of an example in your own life when something bad happened but still you found good things came from that bad event. In Aruna's story what is an example where she demonstrates benefit finding?

← Often a group takes time to understand this so please share two to three examples of a time in your life where you found some benefit to a situation that didn't go as you wanted. If anyone else wants to share please encourage them to help all to understand this idea.

● Being someone who can find benefits out of a bad situation is a great skill for reducing tension and being resilient. **(Take time to make sure everyone in the group understands what benefit finding means and ask for examples from several people to make sure they get it)**

Chart 12



**Forgiving others and  
benefit finding**



## Taking action for my own mental health – 35 minutes

*Aruna has recently decided that she needs to take actions to be mentally stronger and healthier. She is focusing now on three things that she finds helpful. One is that when she rises in the morning she take 15 minutes to sit still with her eyes closed and to practice deep, slow breathing, noticing all the smallest details of sounds around her. Another thing she has started doing is that each evening when she gets home from her work as a domestic maid, she makes a cup of tea and sits on her step. Some days she will sit and talk with her neighbors or with her friend Fatima. Other days she takes time to notice the children playing. She has also decided to make a point of talking with Reeta, Sidarthaa and Priyanka as they eat their evening meal about what they have each felt thankful for in the day just gone. Sometimes Aruna will talk about a beautiful bird which flew in front of her, or of the surprise she found when Priyanka had washed all the clothes as a surprise. Each person in the family likes this time to talk about good things they have noticed or that happened during the day. All these practices are helpful to Aruna as she seeks to become less troubled and more mentally healthy. BOX*

*Discuss with the whole group – 15 minutes*

Open the discussion by giving an example of an action that you yourself have started doing to be more mentally healthy . Ask the

group - what actions can we take for mental health for ourselves personally? Ask group members to talk to a person sitting next to them about what actions they would like to take for their own personal mental health? Talk about what they will have to do to make these actions part of their own lives? Suggest that each person in the group chooses 2 things they would like to try to do differently. IN pairs invite them to discuss possible barriers? What do they have to do to work around them?

Look at the picture with 6 different ideas on how to relax and reduce tension. Ask group members to identify what are the actions in each picture and then to discuss with a neighbor for 5 minutes which of these they personally find most useful.

After some time, ask the group to come together and talk about what actions they currently take to relax – and to each tell the group 2 actions they plan to take up in the next week to get better at reducing their own tension and relaxing.

*Then after sharing and time of feedback , ask the group to talk together in groups of three about what they could do in their own households or families to increase mental health. 15 minutes.*

What actions can we take for mental health for our household or family? What are ways we do things that could be changed to be more mentally healthy? Ask each person to talk in a group of three about things they might like to do in their households using ideas from these discussion pictures and times. After 10 minutes give time for people to share their thoughts and ideas with the larger group.

*Remind the group of the five steps to wellness and ideas of resilience, benefit finding etc Go back to those charts if they need reminders about these.*



Chart 13



**Taking actions for my own mental health**

## Taking action for mental health in our community – 35 minutes

could be taken – if they need suggestions or input talk about the following areas:

So that people are more accepting and have less negative judgment of people with mental disorders

To increase people's knowledge about mental health

To help ensure people with mental disorders get better access to treatment

To encourage government workers and services to give better support to families and people with mental disorders

To encourage all people in the community to get better at areas like positive thinking, benefit findings, and the 5 Kadam

Call all the group together and ask each pair to report back three actions that could be taken in this community. Write them down on the flipchart

Ask group members to select the one or two actions that would be most likely to work well. Ask group members if they themselves as a group are interested to take action on these suggestions. If they are enthusiastic support the group to identify one or two actions they might want to take for mental health. Talk about how this could be carried out together and support them to make an action plan and assign responsibilities etc. Explain that the next two sessions are focusing on depression but that there is continued possibility to keep meeting and taking actions. During each of the next sessions make sure you give time to talk about what actions have been taken on their collective action for community mental health.

*Aruna has recently made friends with another widow in her community. Shadma has recently been troubled by feeling very anxious and has been complaining that her heart is racing so fast and that she is sweating and trembling with so much fear that she doesn't want to go out of her house or even to go to buy food in the bazaar. Aruna calls together some other women in her community and they discuss what they can do to help. They decide that one thing they could all do is once or twice a week take time to visit Shadma and help her talk through her problems. They try to listen and not offer advice. Sometimes they can help practically also, for example, Shadma feels better to go out to the bazaar if she can walk with someone.*

*Aruna knows that Shadma is not well mentally and Shadma asks her to help by taking her to see a doctor for the mind. Aruna visits the doctors at the local PHC and CHC who tell her that treatment for any mental illness is not available there. The ASHA worker tells her the nearest government mental hospital is two hours travel by bus. Aruna and her other friends decide they must take action so that friends of theirs like Shadma can get treatment and support without having to travel so far. They find the CHC doctors are not listening to them so they take action together to protest outside the office of the CMO to call for the government to take action to provide support and services for people with mental distress.*

In this picture there are actions that people are taking to increase mental health in their communities. What are some of the things that would make this community here more mentally healthy? Ask group members to sit in pairs and to each take 10 minutes discuss action that



**Taking actions together for mental health**



## Aruna is depressed – 15 – 20 minutes

Read aloud the next section of the story:

*When Aruna's husband died she was very sad and for some weeks she found it hard to do ordinary jobs like housework because of her sadness. She cried every day but after some months slowly she found moments of happiness and although everything was different she wasn't sad all the time. This is normal way to respond after losing someone very close and loved.*

*However now, several years later, things seem worse. Aruna has been feeling that nothing seems to make her feel happy. She finds it hard to bother with doing any of her usual jobs. She finds she has headaches often and different pains in her body. She has also been waking up very early in the morning, around 3am and lies awake unable to sleep. Last Sunday she stayed in bed all day because she was so tired from not being able to sleep at night. Aruna has felt so sad about her life that she has even a few times thought about whether it is worth living at all and she wondered about suicide, but she has never attempted it. Can anyone describe what may be going on with Aruna?*

- Aruna has depression. There are times of sadness we all have in our lives, but when these feelings start to impact our life negatively and for more than 2 or 3 weeks we call it depression. Depression looks and feels different for different people. It can cause us physical problems with our bodies and also many emotional problems.
  - ◀ The following are some symptoms of depression:
    - Aches and pains all over the body
    - Headaches that come and go
    - Feeling extremely tired or lack of energy
    - Feeling very bad about oneself
    - Feeling hopeless or helpless
    - Not sleeping well, or getting too much sleep
    - Having trouble concentrating and making decisions
    - Poor appetite
    - Feeling sad all of the time
    - Losing interest in life or things that use to make you happy
    - Feeling hopeless or helpless
    - Not feeling any emotions at all
    - Suicidal thoughts



Chart 15



**Aruna is depressed**

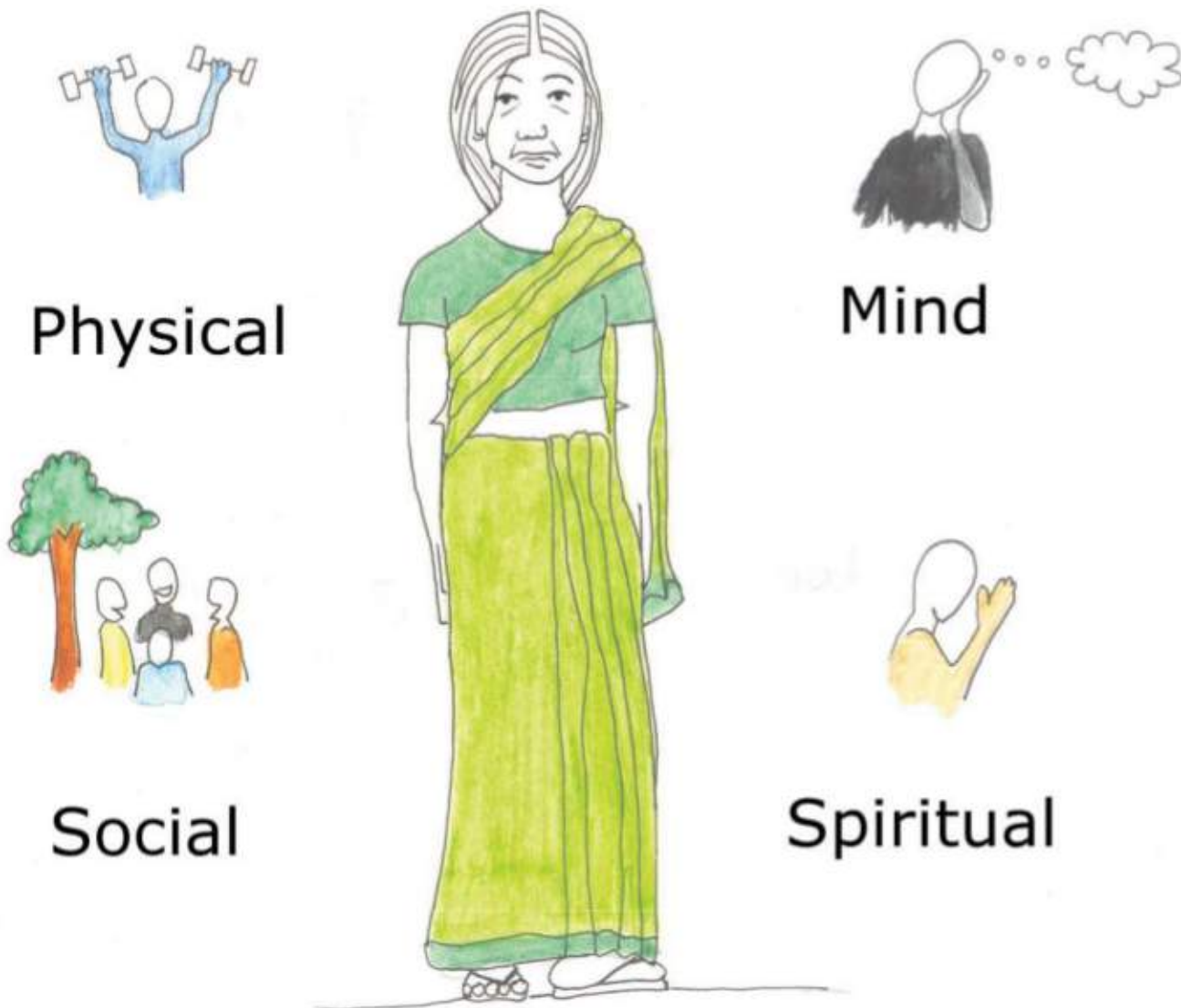
## What contributes to depression? 10 minutes

Some people become depressed without an obvious cause – this is quite common and can be due to chemical imbalance in their minds. Other people are at increased risk of depression due to experiences in their lives. What factors in someone's life may increase chance that someone becomes depressed. Let's start with Aruna, what do you think contributed to Aruna to become depressed? Use 4 spheres – and then ask for other ideas from the group about what contributes to depression.

➔ Give the following examples if not mentioned about Aruna:

- Social
  - Debt
  - Unemployment or overwork
  - Loss of a loved one or a parent
  - Financial tension
  - Big life transitions- Children moving away, marriage, having a child (many women become depressed after childbirth)
- Mind
  - Extreme tension which makes her keep thinking over and over about difficult things
  - Addiction- personal addiction or having a family members addiction affect your life.

- Physical
  - Emotions that are not in control – getting irritable very easily or crying without reason and not able to slow things down.
  - Experiencing abuse or violence- in childhood or from a spouse
  - Tension in relationships- between family, spouse, or close friends
  - Changes in the brain- for some people depression can be caused by changes in the brain.
- Spiritual
  - Suffering from long term illness
  - Having a serious accident or disability
  - Caring for someone who is very unwell or needs a lot of care
- Depression is NOT usually caused by the following things:
  - Change or loss of usual spiritual or religious rituals e.g. pastor moves away or family pujari expired
  - Personal weakness
  - Laziness
  - Spirit possession or bad karma/ black magic



**What contributes to depression?**

## What can we do for depression? 10 minutes

Discuss the following with the group. There are three main ways we can treat depression. Number 1 is helpful for all people who feel depression, Number 2 is helpful for most people and Number 3 is needed for some people.

- 1. building our own skills for mental health
- 2. talking treatment
- 3. medication treatment

### 1. Building our own mental health skills

The most important think for people who are depressed is to understand this is an illness that affects many people at different times and to look for help. Using the skills we have spoken about before help we both protect ourselves from depression and also to move away from depression. Ask the group what skills we can use for wellness? Flip back if needed to the 5 Steps picture.

← Benefit finding, positive thinking, tension management, sleep and relaxation skills, sitting in the sunshine is also good for mental health

- **2. Talking treatment** While nearly everyone who is depressed can get help by talking to friends or neighbours, there are people especially trained as counsellors who can particularly help a depressed person find a pathway to wellness. There are some particular kinds of treatment such as CBT and IPT and group therapy that are very useful. For many people talking to a counsellor can help them. If

finding a counsellor is difficult than other good forms of talking treatment include connecting to and belonging to a Self Help group

- **3. Medication treatment** There are times when taking a medicine for depression is needed. Anti-depressant medicines can help set our brains to their right chemical balance. These need to be prescribed by a doctor or by a mental health professional. Most of these medications can also help people sleep better and manage tension and irritability also. Medications are usually safe and effective. Anti-depression medicines may need 3-4 weeks to make a difference. Sometimes one medicine works less well with some people and a different medicine should be tried. Once medicines are started, they are usually needed to be taken daily for 3 to 6 months. They can help someone get to a place where they can then successfully begin the talking treatment. / building personal skills also. These skills are most important in the long run to become and stay mentally healthy

- Where are local health services or mental health providers? Discuss with the group where they would go and if needed share information about nearby services, timings etc. where they can get help for mental distress.



Chart 17

1



2



3



**Personal skills**



**Talking therapy**



**Personal skills**



**Medicine**



**Talking therapy**



**Personal skills**

## Support people who are depressed - 15

minutes

- How many people know someone who they think may be depressed? *Ask for a show of hands.*

Looking at this example – what are the order of things

➔ *Give the following examples if not mentioned:*

Sit and listen to them, be a non-judgmental person who wants to help them.

- Ask appropriate questions when listening to them to find out more about their problems.

- Ask questions that can not be answered with a “yes” or a “no” to try and get them talking more.

- Pay attention to non-verbal ques. See when they are not wanting to speak more about a subject or when they want you to keep asking questions to make them comfortable.

- Give them full support, do not speak down to them and encourage their families to do the same.

Building personal skills with people

- Go over the 5 steps for mental well-being discussed above.

Support them to get treatment

- Try to explained to them what depression is, that it is a medical condition and that it is treatable

- Encourage the person to get help from a doctor or health worker

- Close this last session by discussing with group

members about how they have found these sessions – what they have learned and what they will be doing differently. Ask if they would like to continue to meet by themselves and if so, help them to work out when, where and how the group can continue.

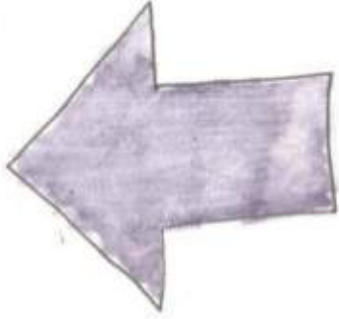
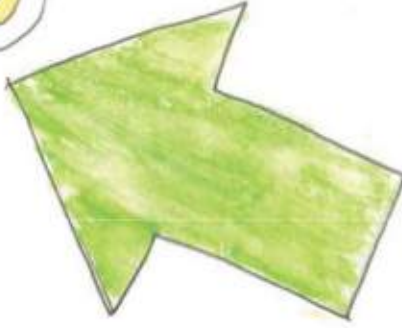
Consider how to link them to an SHG or other groups.



**Chart 18**



**Encourage positive thinking**



**Support personal skills in mental health  
5 kadam to well-being**



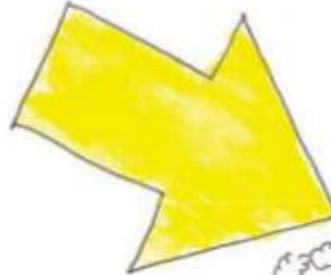
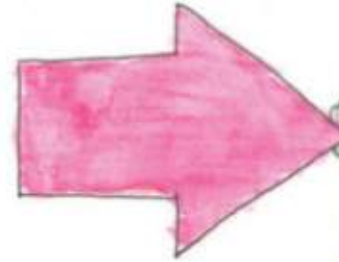
**Listen well**



**Encourage help from an expert**



**Support + 4 spheres of health**



**Help someone get to treatment**



**How to support people who are depressed**





# EMMANUEL HOSPITAL ASSOCIATION

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