

Chali Kahaniyan is a safe space for women to share experiences, make connections and provide support to each other.

A project initiated by Aatma Prakash with the aim to create a support group for women to share, listen and contribute to their emotional and psychological wellbeing

Project Chali Kahaaniya, Year 4

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## About Aatma Prakash

**Our Philosophy:** Understanding self to cope better, together

**Our Vision:** A society which is accepting and empathetic towards the needs of people with mental health concerns.

**Our Mission:** To reduce needless adversity by providing timely care and support to people with common mental health concerns.

### **Objectives:**

- Through community outreach raise awareness in the field of mental health
- Through circles of trust raise inner awareness in emotional health
- Through training program provide support to psychology students and enthusiast to apply their knowledge within communities
- Through developing psychological skills provide timely intervention to schools
- Through individual counselling and therapy provide emotional support to individuals with emotional distress.

### **How do we work?**

We work with a major focus on raising inner-awareness through the tools of experiential learning. Various activities for awareness, training and intervention are designed by a team of psychologists to meet the purpose of the organization. Our current activities include School Wellness Program, Individual Counselling and Therapy, Training Workshops, Storytelling Circles (Chali Kaahaniya), Community Outreach (Aatma Work), Internships and Volunteering Programs.



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## **Chali Kahaaniya: An initiative by Aatma Prakash**

The topics for the coming year have been thought of with Self Care as the parent theme, and Acknowledgement, Acceptance and Appreciation as the integral components.

### **Index**

- Month 1. Introductory Session
- Month 2. Listen, via the tune of Silence.
- Month 3. Look within, with us.
- Month 4. Saadgi se sweekaren swayam ko / Simply Sweekar Self / Simply, Accept Yourself
- Month 5. Prakriya positive self-talk ki / Practice positive self-talk
- Month 6. Appreciate and Applaud - The 'Awww' moment
- Month 7. E for Externalization / Bheetar se bahar karen
- Month 8. Think - Thick, Not thin
- Month 9. Courage - to Create, to Climb, to Care
- Month 10. Bend, Don't Break - Resilience
- Month 11. Beehive Boundaries
- Month 12. Co-operate with Curiosity and Conclusion



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## **Outline and Structure of Storytelling**

### **Introduction and Fact Sheet:**

We carry multiple stories with us at once, such as stories about our relationships, our professional lives, our weaknesses, our strengths, our goals and more. Narrative therapy emphasizes the exploration of these stories, as they can have a significant influence on our decision-making and behavior.

Narrative therapy suggests that we create stories throughout our lives as a way to make sense of our experiences and we can carry many stories with us at one time. Although some stories can be positive and others negative, all stories impact our lives in the past, the present, and in the future.

Aatma Prakash strongly believes that everybody has a story to share and everybody is a storyteller. But often we keep our stories to ourselves for various reasons. However, when we share our stories, we open ourselves to the healing properties of stories and immerse ourselves in a network of people who either have gone through the same things as us or simply has an ear to listen. At “Chali Kahaaniya” we do not directly implement techniques of counselling, but rather allow healing to take place within the circle, which is a safe space, through the stories the participants share.

### **Principles of Narrative Therapy**

- Reality is socially constructed. The way we interact with others impacts how we experience reality. These experiences with others become our known reality.
- Reality is influenced by (and communicated through) language. People interpret experiences through language and people can have different interpretations of the same event or interaction.
- Having a narrative can help us maintain and organize our reality. The development of a narrative or story can help us to make sense of our experiences.
- There is no "objective reality." People can have different realities of the same experience. What might be true for us may not be true for someone else.

Support and self-help groups involve regular meetings where people experiencing similar problems or life transitions come together to offer each other support and encouragement. Members of a support group usually share their personal experiences and offer one another emotional comfort and moral support. They may also offer practical advice and tips to help you cope with your situation.

Being a member of a support group is about connecting with others and sharing sensitive topics. It is okay to take things slowly at first and focus on becoming comfortable. Confidentiality is extremely important and should be respected at all times. Knowing that we are not alone in our struggles can have a positive effect on our well-being and mental health.



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## Objective of Storytelling

### **Purpose:**

To provide a safe space for experiencing the healing powers of sharing one's stories

### **Objective -**

- Self-Sustainability
- Increase inclination towards optimism
- Reinforce four pillars – Connect, Listen, Share, Communicate
- Cyclic approach
- Movement from thin conclusions to thick descriptions
- Externalization of problem
- Promote facilitative emotions

## About importance and benefit of Storytelling Circles

The story circle may be used to build community within a group, to examine differences across lines of race or class, to explore social challenges that people are facing in their own lives, or for some other purpose.

The focus of narrative therapy is around stories that we develop within ourselves and carry through our lives. We give meaning to our personal experiences and these meanings that we come up with, or that have been placed on us by others, influence how we see ourselves and the world around us. Our stories influence our thoughts and, in turn, our decision-making and behaviors. It takes courage to open up and share when we feel vulnerable, but the benefits are numerous.

### **Benefits of participating in story circles may include:**

- Storytelling is engaging and interesting; thus, participants are more likely to go through the entire procedure willingly
- It is a safe space that is free from the stigmas of typical counselling spaces
- Provides an opportunity to the participants to build connections possibilities
- Feeling less lonely, isolated or judged
- Gaining a sense of empowerment and control
- Improving your coping skills and sense of adjustment
- Talking openly and honestly about your feelings
- Reducing distress, depression, anxiety or fatigue



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- Developing a clearer understanding of what to expect with your situation
- Getting practical advice or information about treatment options
- Comparing notes about resources, such as doctors and alternative options

### **Outcome:**

- Enhancing connections, openness and providing an opportunity to bond among the participants through sharing
- Enhancing skills of listening, and public speaking
- Improving interpersonal relationship by understanding and respecting others' perspectives
- Boosting confidence
- Provide a sense of being supported, accepted, and valued
- Creation of Safe Space that might have therapeutic outcomes
- Emergence of new patterns of interaction
- Enhancement of community strength
- Creation of creative facilitators at the end of cycle
- Promotion of age-old culture of story-telling

### **What differentiates Chali Khanaiyan from previous year to this year?**

- Cyclic approach
- Transition from Chali Kahaniya to 'ChaliKahaniya - Care aur Courage ki'
- Self-Sustainability
- Construct of Curiosity
- Measurable outcome
- More Emphasis on Reinforcement of four pillars

### **Flow of the training session**

- Ice Breaker (10-15 minutes)
- Check-in (10 minutes)
- Introduce the concept of storytelling, its benefits and outcomes (10 Minutes)
- Take the participants through the procedure of conducting a storytelling session at Aatma Prakash (10 minutes)
- Check-out (10 minutes)



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## Handout

### *Flow of a Storytelling Session @ Aatma Prakash Mental Health Foundation*

**Introduction.** The facilitator introduces Aatma Prakash; the concept of storytelling and the theme for the day to set the backdrop. This provides information to the participants and helps them not feel stranger.

- ∑ It is worthy to note that not all members came on time however it is important to respect the time of those who did come on time, so we irrespective of any relevant or non-relevant reason start on time; however if some people are insistent about coming and attending the whole event the facilitator ask every member and takes the majority opinion and act accordingly (Please remember that facilitator is no leader and thus only supports the need of other members and makes sure no decision is authoritative)

**Check In.** After Introduction we ask each member to in a word and/or sentence describe their thoughts/emotions once they are present here (In the Now, in this moment)

- ∑ Some facilitators patiently wait until some member from the group picks up and initiates the conversation; a few use some open-ended question like “so now that we are here, any sharing for today”, or a few consider themselves as another member and let the event unfold while there are some who start their story first to help the other members open up in the process of sharing.

**Body.** Once everybody has checked in, the facilitator initiates the sharing session among the participants.

- ∑ This can be done through any of the three ways:
  - Every member voluntarily shares their stories
  - Each member who shares gets to chose the next person who shall share
  - Spinning a bottle to select who shall share
- ∑ Nobody shall be forced to share; members can share at their own pace or remain silent



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observers through the entire session.

**Check Out.** When the time is about to close the facilitators reminds the members of time “what a lovely sharing just wish to let us know its 20 mins more for instant” then when last 10 mins are left we invite all to close by checking out (hereby the members are asked to in a word and/or sentence describe their thoughts/emotions about the storytelling, finally members are asked if they will like to come back for the storytelling again we suggest a date and time and ask the majority to respond and accordingly decide the next session)

### Suggestions

- ∑ Please read on *Narrative therapy* (form of treatment therapy in the field of Psychology)
- ∑ A good facilitator speaks only when required, does not feel uncomfortable in silence (understands when silence needs to be broken).
- ∑ It is not necessary to follow the outline word by word, this is to help better understand the techniques and bring in *your personality* to let the session emerge
- ∑ Have a *phone conversation* one day before with the supervisor to feel more comfortable and address all the queries, thus helping in a helpful, interesting opening conversation towards the storytelling.

*Please note* that storytelling at *Aatma Prakash* is a technique wherein, we aspire to create a space of comfort for the participants. This space is the one where the facilitator is herself/himself comfortable. A *sense of love for self, comfort within silence and trust that something beautiful will emerge* from each group every time since it's neither the responsibility of the facilitator nor the participant. It is the nature of the space wherein people hope to come back and support the survival and existence of this mutually created space.