

ANNUAL REPORT 2020-21

Ensuring continuity of care
during the global pandemic

PSYCHO-SOCIAL REHABILITATION

SENIOR THERAPY

SUICIDE PREVENTION

COMMUNITY OUTREACH



COOJ MENTAL HEALTH FOUNDATION

WE STRIVE TO PROMOTE OVERALL MENTAL WELL-BEING AND RECOVERY BY CREATING AN ENVIRONMENT THAT PROVIDES HIGH QUALITY SERVICES TO ALL IRRESPECTIVE OF THEIR CLASS, RELIGION OR CULTURAL DIFFERENCES

We are a registered Charitable Trust that works towards promoting mental health in Goa. We operate under 4 major mental health needs: PSYCHOSOCIAL REHABILITATION, SUICIDE PREVENTION, ELDERCARE AND COMMUNITY OUTREACH. To achieve them, we run MENTAL HEALTH CLINICS, DAY CARE CENTRES, SUPPORT GROUPS, conduct CAMPS, WORKSHOPS, AWARENESS PROGRAMMES, THE SUICIDE PREVENTION HELPLINE and ADVOCATING the RIGHTS of persons with mental illness.



2020-21 ENSURING CONTUNITY OF CARE DURING THE GLOBAL PANDEMIC

The Covid-19 pandemic had significant impacts on every aspect of the daily lives of people all over Goa, many of which are continuing to be felt into 2021 and beyond. According to a new WHO survey, the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted or halted critical mental health services in 93% of countries worldwide, while demand for better mental health is increasing. The survey of 130 countries provided the first global data showing the devastating impact of COVID-19 on access to mental health services. Over 67% saw disruptions to counseling and psychotherapy, many of which have adopted teletherapy to overcome disruptions to in-person services.

Despite the many disruptions that Covid-19 caused, COOJ was able to provide a wide range of support to many in the community that helped clients, as well as caregivers, sustain their mental health & wellbeing through these unprecedented troubled times.



note from the director

Dr. Peter J. Castelino
Director & Managing Trustee, COOJ

With us proudly completing two decades of establishing an organization synonymous with being ethical, secular, unbiased and inclusive, I gaze backwards with resplendence of us bridging at least in part the gaps in mental health care prevalent in our state of Goa. I think of every person our work has had an influence on and feel humbled by the vision of our founders to create opportunities for better psychological health care.

For me personally, our growth has been both interesting and slowly evolving from the infancy of a community mental health clinic in Saligao, a village in North Goa and an unstructured centre for women with psychological needs due to various sorts of distress to a more well-thought-out and coordinated non-residential rehabilitation center for adults with psychological disabilities. With us building programs, subsequently, for caregivers, education as well as employment, the centre, which we fondly call Sahodaya, is been a space for empowering individuals with disabilities and their families. What followed through the years was a gust of programs revolving around suicide and its prevention, adolescent and geriatric mental health, which got us recognised locally and internationally. What remained constant was an unceasing essential to focus on awareness and stigma reduction. Although 20 years have passed & even though we can definitely see a change in attitudes, the light to shine over ignorance will take more time.

A whole lot of events and programs lined-up to celebrate our 20 years had to take a back seat with the emergence of the pandemic. This threw us off-balance and all standard practices needed adjustments to sustain our work and our commitment to care. We let go much of our earlier processes, projects and learned new systems, which paved the way for novel means of reaching out wider. By no means was this transition easy, but we did it – work from home, scheduling, supervision, online therapeutic sessions for challenged adults, staff engagement and care, volunteer management, financial solidity, collaborations. We now feel accomplished and better equipped. With the surfacing of Tele-therapy as the way forward, it was mandatory to focus on digital literacy especially for the vulnerable population like elders who were cooped up in their homes due to both fear as well as legal restrictions on their movements.

We are aware that the pandemic has caused much chaos and globally people struggle to cope with mental health issues like depression, anxiety, substance use, etc. Suicide rates went up as on one hand the pressures increased due to job losses, migration, domestic violence, child abuse, sudden changes in the educational systems with its corresponding unpredictability and on the other, normal avenues of stress relief were compromised. COOJ contributed respite, by keeping the suicide helpline (both telephone and email) operational, supporting front line workers emotionally, collaborating with the online platform COVIDAV to provide free psychiatric and psychological consultations.

With much of our regular income sources being blocked or reduced due to the pandemic, we are ever so grateful to everyone who stepped in to keep our services going especially our partner, Delta in Switzerland for providing us with a timely rescue fund. As well as to every other donor, volunteer and advisor because of whom we achieved our goals.

note from our partner



delta – develop life through action

is a leading association in Switzerland that is involved in the field of "Global Mental Health". Delta enables professional treatment & care for people with mental illnesses in resource-limited countries. Their voluntary, unbureaucratic work is characterized by a high level of professionalism, sustainability and transparency.

The COVID-19 pandemic has called us to reflect upon interpersonal contacts and social support like no other event in the past years. Up until the begin of the pandemic we took direct social contacts for granted. However, within short time real face to face contacts have been pushed into the virtual space as a result of containment measures to fight the pandemic. Residents were asked to stay at home and advised to respect social distancing measures restricting social interaction to a minimum. Travel for leisure reasons including visiting family and friends came to a virtual standstill. The majority of institutions that structure our social lives were closed. This all lead to an increase in loneliness, indicating relevant alterations in social support. It is known since the seminal work "Suicide" published in 1897 by the French sociologist Emile Durkheim that social isolation is deleterious to health in general and mental health in particular. Suddenly, the healing power of personal relationship becomes evident. This insight, that took place on a global scale in all societies is used as therapeutic mean by mental health care professionals since ages. Scientific evidence show that the therapeutic relationship as containing, professional interpersonal connection is the most important factor for successful psychotherapeutic work.

Against this background it became once more clear, how central the position of COOJ as our local Indian partner is. It is the personnel of COOJ, that cares for the complex needs of our patients living with mental illness in India. It is also the personnel of COOJ, that assures a successful and sustainable implementation of our jointly developed projects. And it is the personnel of COOJ, that maintained their work on the ground during this long-lasting pandemic adapting to ever changing regulations of the government. It is therefore an ethical imperative to care for this fruitful relationship between delta and COOJ. We are glad to continuously reach out to our vulnerable patients and their families through COOJ. Thank you COOJ for all your excellent work – we are looking forward to a next year of innovative collaboration. With or without COVID-19.

Monika Müller, MD PhD

Consultant psychiatrist and president of Delta, Switzerland



REHABILITATION PROGRAM 2020-21

WE STRIVE TO HELP EVERY INDIVIDUAL ACHIEVE
THEIR FULL POTENTIAL, DESPITE THEIR LEVEL OF
MENTAL ABILITY.

The Covid-19 pandemic had significant impacts on many aspects of our program functioning. However, despite the many disruptions that it caused, we were able to take timely steps to provide a wide range of support to our clients and their caregivers by maintaining connect and continuity of services through the digital medium. By introducing Teletherapy programme, we helped them to adapt and cope with this sudden forced lifestyle, which had lead them to be confined to their homes.

Total 32 clients availed our online services over this period of time. The program was re-structured and re-designed to suit the needs of our clients with different functional abilities. The daily activities and group sessions were formulated as per the theme decided for the month, e.g. Activity of Daily Living (ADL), My Country, Environment and so on. The individual sessions like Cognitive remediation and Counselling were tailored as per the need. These sessions, of one hour duration, were carried out on Whats App video call and Zoom, which is still carried out.

Daily Activities: These activities were theme-based and shared on dedicated Whats App groups wherein the clients would do their assigned work.

Individual Therapy: Goal-oriented & customised for the each client, these were conducted once a week, to help them cope with the obstacles to their well-being during the Pandemic time. Comprising of Cognitive remediation and direct counselling sessions, these therapeutic interventions focused on helping the clients become even more self-aware and empowered.

Family intervention: Carried out regularly, these were focused to help caregivers improve their communication, understanding, handling behavioral patterns, for overall better functioning and supportive home environment.

Group Sessions: Each comprising of 4 clients, based on their abilities and compatibility, these sessions were of an hour duration. Conducted thrice a week, these comprised of exercises, daily project and thereafter recreational activity. e.g. Cooking, Quiz, Memory game, Dance Movement Therapy etc

Various Expressive Therapies were also introduced every month in the online sessions; for e.g. Biblio-therapy, Art, Music, Vocational and Alternate therapy. These help with mood elevation, confidence, an alternate form of expression, while tapping on the clients' creativity and interest.

REHABILITATION PROGRAM 2020-21

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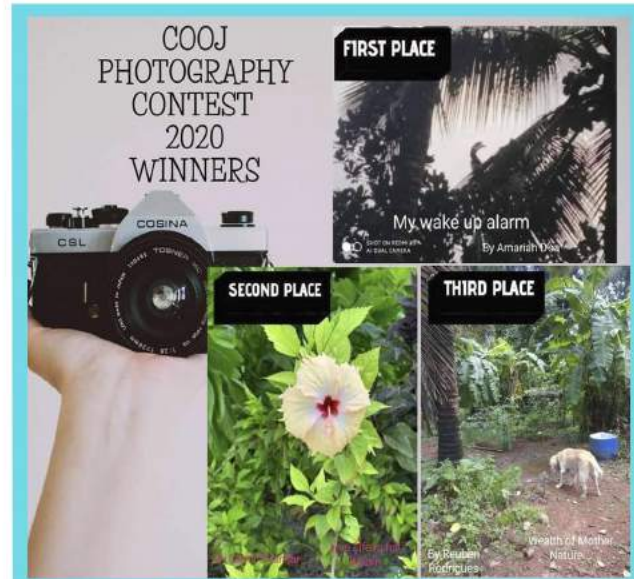
Therapeutic Photography: Photography is an accessible means of communications, for people to share their thoughts, viewpoints, frustrations and joys. This session involved learning how to take, analyzing and using photos for the purpose of personal healing, growth, or understanding, whether done consciously or unconsciously. The clients were given an orientation on what is photography, types of photography, how to take photos and different apps (Snapseed) were used in editing the photos taken by them.

REHABILITATION PROGRAM 2020-21

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Wealth out of waste sessions : These helped our clients focus on their strengths and improve their weaknesses in an artistic way. This helped them develop fine motor skills, planning, designing, reasoning, etc. Used materials like old cardboard boxes, plastic containers, toilet rolls, used gift wrappers, paints, old greeting cards, etc to make desk organizers, pen stands, etc.




Health and Hygiene sessions : These were conducted with flash cards and demos, to help clients learn self-care and deepen their knowledge of General Hygiene & Oral Hygiene. They were guided through development of good hygiene and safety practices, especially cleanliness and sanitation, which prevent infection, disease and lead to overall good health.

World Schizophrenia Awareness Week (18th May to 24th May 2020):
7:24 Challenge was designed keeping in mind "24" based on the date of World Schizophrenia day and "Purple" the colour associated with Schizophrenia awareness, e.g. The Blah Blah, Do Re Me, Captain Planet, Taste buds, Doodle, Photography and Got Talent. They were asked to participate and post their challenges in Facebook and Instagram. We got fabulous response from social media followers.

REHABILITATION PROGRAM 2020-21
 WE STRIVE TO HELP EVERY INDIVIDUAL ACHIEVE THEIR FULL POTENTIAL, DESPITE THEIR LEVEL OF MENTAL ABILITY.

finding yourself through a series of expressive workshops



6 Oct



8 Oct



9 Oct

60- 90 minute free workshops starting at 6:30pm via zoom. Limited seats. WhatsApp 9822562522 for registration/ link
 observing WORLD MENTAL HEALTH WEEK 2020

COOJ MENTAL HEALTH FOUNDATION

#I TOO CAN BREAK STIGMA CAMPAIGN

7:24 Challenge: Supporting inclusiveness with people living with schizophrenia 18th - 22nd May 2020

MAKE A VIDEO ON #I TOO CAN BREAK STIGMA
 Theme: Living with Schizophrenia
 Last Date of entry: 22nd May 2020
 Prizes: Winner will be selected by a panel of mental health professionals and will receive a certificate and a free internship program at COOJ.

DISCUSSION ALL ZOOM
 90 minutes interaction on #I TOO CAN BREAK STIGMA
 24th May 2020 @ 5:00pm

Tag us on
 Facebook: @COOJMENTALHEALTH FOUNDATION
 Instagram: @COOJMENTALHEALTH FOUNDATION
 For further details/Zoom Link contact: Nehru: 9822562522 / Email: 9888273261

World Schizophrenia Awareness Week
 18th to 24th May 2020

1st Place
 By: Jaita Butaney
 College: St Xavier's College
 Stream: MA-Part I

2nd Place
 By: Priya Fernandes
 college: Nirmala Institute of Education
 Stream: MA-Wellness Counselling.

3rd Place
 By: Annora Tavares
 college: Our Lady of Rosary,
 stream: 11th

THE WINNERS OF THE POSTER COMPETITION ON THE EVENT OF MENTAL HEALTH WEEK 2020

silent lose some weight a social life overcomer identity dadi

Mental Health through REEL

PANELISTS 10th October 2020 6:30pm

World Mental Health Day 2020

Dr Peter Castellino - Director, COOJ
 Sonali Patankar - Responsible Netism
 Archana Jhangiani - Creative Director
 Dr Anil Rane - Consultant, IPH

ZOOM LINK: <https://torrentpharma.zoom.us/j/92400509962>
 Password - feliz Meeting ID 92400509962 WhatsApp 9822562522 for details

COOJ MENTAL HEALTH FOUNDATION

Poster Competition: Students from the various colleges from other states participated in this competition and these posters were used in our awareness programs. The winner were awarded free internship program at COOJ.

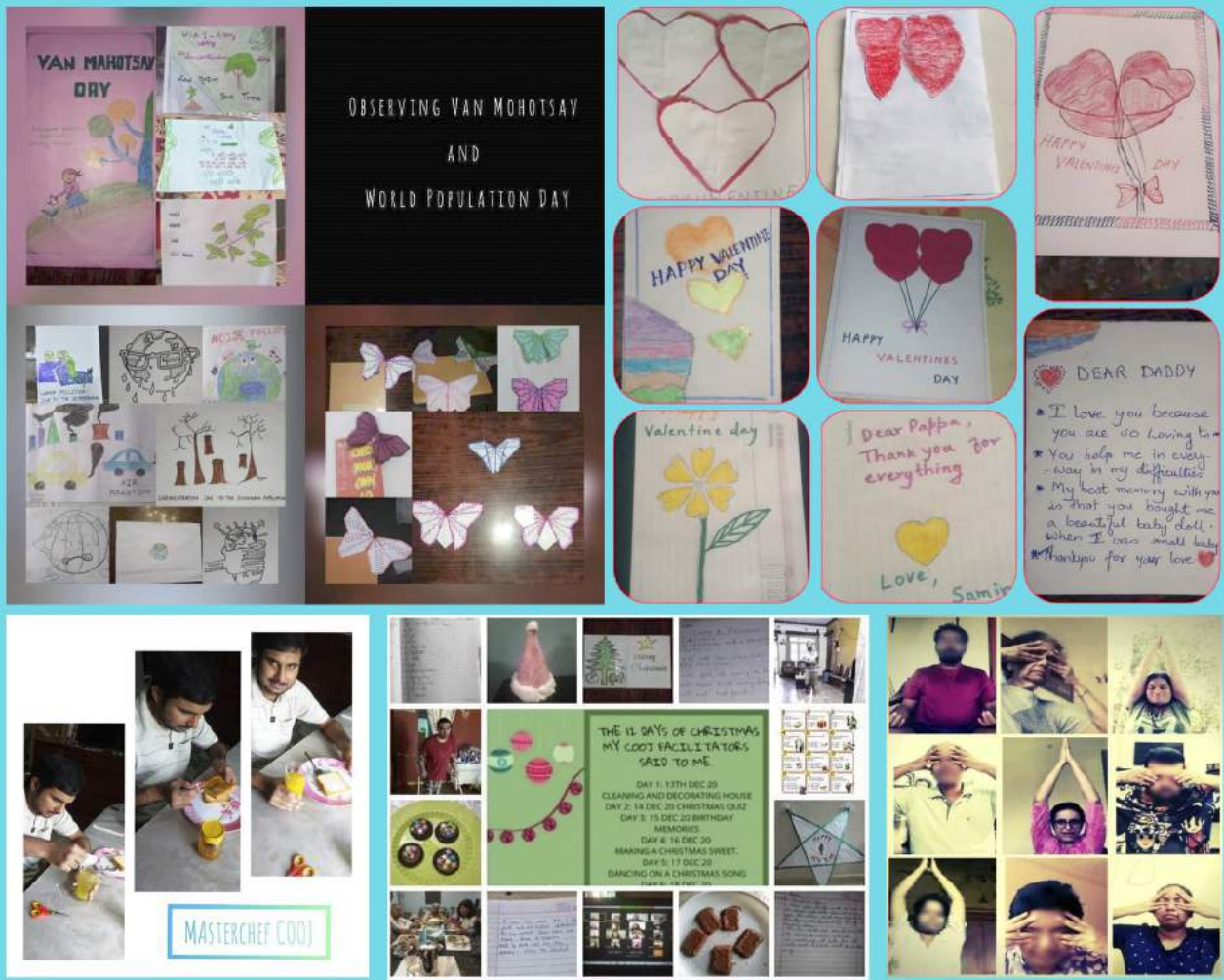


COOJ MENTAL HEALTH FOUNDATION
 Promoting Mental Health Since 2000

'Bounce back Mindfully': Being challenged by tough circumstances, especially during the pandemic, is part of our very existence regardless of age, education or financial status. A Mindfulness session was conducted by Dr. Rajendra Barve, Consultant Psychiatrist, Mindfulness Teacher (Sugat Acharya) took us through a journey of rediscovering the potential within us to bounce back, positively, from the perils of life. We had a good response from our participants.

REHABILITATION PROGRAM 2020-21

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Internship Program: This year 21 students from various Indian cities did the online Internship program with us, 7 continued to volunteer.



I did my internship in the pandemic, and it was a different challenge for me. Still, COOJ helped me to get the best of experience that I could in an online mode which helped me gain insight on how therapy works in an actual setting, my strengths, weaknesses, my likes and dislikes.

- Athul Raj, Intern

I began with my internship and then chose to continue volunteering. After completing my MSc, taking a break from psychology left a void and working with Cooj filled that gap. Apart from theoretical knowledge, the exposure of working hands-on with the clients was a great advantage for me personally because I gained insight on what I'd like to specialize in my career post my volunteership. The schedule designed ensures that a volunteer/ intern gets to experience and observe the various sessions and be an active part of the activities along with the clients. With the pandemic, I got a chance to work with the clients online and that in itself was a different experience.

- Ambreen Sheikh, Volunteer

My Child has gained tremendously from COOJ. She has developed her mental abilities, is able to reason out, think and also developed Creative abilities and talents. The online sessions have been a blessing. The cognitive sessions and the alternative therapies have been very beneficial for my child. COOJ is a place with a vision for the future for those people with special needs. I appreciate and thank the COOJ team.

- Carer

Cooj has a family atmosphere and there is unity among us. Online and offline sessions are held with various activities. Lots of Intens come to COOJ.

- Client

**REHABILITATION
PROGRAM 2020-21**

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SENIOR THERAPY PROGRAM 2020-21

WE STRIVE TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF LIFE
OF SENIOR CITIZENS BY PROMOTING OVERALL
HEALTH, WELL-BEING AND INDEPENDENCE

With a surge in the number of Covid cases in the state, our elder care program operations had to be forced augmented to meet the needs of as many clients as possible. While we faced many challenges, we were able to successfully expand our services digitally. This new Pandemic lifestyle and circumstances led to an exponential demand for adopting digital skills among the elderly people and we guided them through this digital transformation.

Geriatric Teletherapy programme

From the month of April itself, due to the pandemic lockdown, we designed a 'Geriatric Teletherapy programme' for our elderly clients. We identified best ways to connect and conducted different types of sessions for training and skill development and to ensure continuity of our services. Those who had Whatsapp were trained to use the video call option and the others who were at the aged homes or did not have a smart phone were given audio sessions through phone calls. The time of sessions were reduced to an hour, which overall comprised of exercises, thereafter engagement activities. These were usually conducted in a group format but, if required, customised to individual needs and abilities.

THE CORE AREAS OF FOCUS through these sessions were ...

- **Cognitive Development:** Different activities like boggle, memory for objects, word games were used to retrain and build cognitive skills.
- **Social interaction:** Conversations, sharing their own experiences with a group through pictures, taking turns during a session, reduced isolation and brought the seniors closer.
- **Physical fitness:** Basic exercises to stay fit were conducted for each part of the body right from head to toe and using assistance of the furniture at home for standing exercises.
- **Digital literacy:** Use of gadgets and various features of pre-existing apps and learning new ones also added to the knowledge of seniors.

SENIOR THERAPY PROGRAM 2020-21

WE STRIVE TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF LIFE OF SENIOR CITIZENS BY PROMOTING OVERALL HEALTH, WELL-BEING AND INDEPENDENCE



PROGRAM OCCUPANCY 2020-21

This year, we had 23 seniors who availed our services, of which, 8 suffer from various mental illnesses. Through the online program, we reached out to seniors all across the state as well as outside that is 4 clients from out of Goa, one who lives in Bangalore, two in Mumbai and one in the UK Each client was offered 12 sessions per month.



COMMUNITY PROGRAMME

SOCIAL EVENTS | 'Golden Stage series': In February 2021, we had our 7th annual community senior citizens Golden Stage event (the first was held in 2015). The theme this year was 'Senior Masquerade carnival'—where we reached out to seniors within the confines of their homes and community. We organised a 1 hour programme simultaneously in 6 homes and 1 community hall. There were 30 volunteers who helped out at the venues, transportation and overall support. Thoroughly enjoyed by the seniors year after year, this event provides a great opportunity for us to reach out to the community and build a network of supporters.



AWARENESS PROGRAMME

World Alzheimer's Awareness Week – A week of social media awareness through write ups, testimonials and videos on our platforms like facebook and Instagram about Alzheimer's disease. On Sept 21, along with Delta from Switzerland, we organized an online discussion event on Dementia: Psychosocial Management. A success with many interactions and enquiries after the programme, we had 100 participants, 130 people registrations.

We had 16 interns this year and 5 committed volunteers who help us out with the Geriatric Teletherapy programme.

SENIOR THERAPY PROGRAM 2020-21

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As COOJ is hop, skip and a jump from my home I thought of trying my luck just to get some nasty cobwebs out of my mind. When I entered COOJ, Wow! I was received by my senior brothers and sisters with lovely smiles and handshakes without hesitation I said to myself that I would join. It's been 4 years ever since and this place is filled with love, peace and joy. I've learnt to cooperate, share our hurts and feelings, to be patient, kind and loving to each other. We have various activities for an hour to make us feel lighter and active. I enjoy the other activities like singing, dancing, indoor games, puzzles that sharpen our minds and many more. Our volunteers at COOJ are a great source of strength and help to us especially when we at times feel low due to some stress and anxieties. Their patience and their attitude towards us bring comfort. All this has brought a change to us especially to me and had made me a better person. I love COOJ and I pray many seniors from all around our village and neighbouring village join us in the near future. "More the merrier". Viva! COOJ because of you, we the seniors under your spell are healthy-cheerful wise and strong.

- Ms. Aura Athaide, Service

In COOJ, I have learnt how to keep seniors active. Some activities carried out at COOJ like exercising, painting, drawing, and gardening, playing different games etc helps to reduce anxiety and stress and to gain self confidence. This exhibits their focus on their work. I also learnt how to deal with clients in different situations, that is, when they are scared, depressed, etc... We also had opportunities to deliver health talks on personal hygiene. I understood that use of pictures, flash cards and posters is very beneficial to communicate with elders. They would respond more easily and freely through use of aids. COOJ provided us lot of information on suicide prevention, which was very helpful to our learnings. I would like to thank the COOJ Team for offering us opportunitie to learn and be part of the COOJ family.

- Ms. Valanka Fernandes, St. Bridget Institute

**SENIOR THERAPY
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It was around 2017-18, a good friend mentioned COOJ. I volunteer 3 times a week, Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 9.30 am to 12.30 pm. The programme which conducted online sessions during the pandemic and now is back with physical presence currently is what draws me to reach out and just be there. It is really such a family spirit that simply brings out the best...The morning begins with a prayer, followed by exercises, then an exchange of news, views and deep gratitude expressed by our seniors (the oldest being in the region from 86 to 91 years, prior to the lockdown) over a cuppa tea and biscuits. They feel so comfortable and are able to share their smallest anxieties, which speaks volumes. We then move on to doing puzzles or mind games on the board or individually on printed sheets. Music sing alongs to the keyboard and some of them ready to shake a leg. It does not end here, often there are talks by psychologists and psychiatrists, wanting to share their expertise with the seniors. Oftentimes, there are online programs conducted through Music, Art and even Dance. I can only end by saying I have throughout my life received so much love without charge that I could never have done better than to give without counting the cost.

- Zelig Jeanne de Souza, Volunteer

In 2020, my mother who is 85 years old, could not attend COOJ, as the elderly had to be very careful to avoid contracting Covid-19. So, in spite of the family taking good care of her physical needs, she was very despondent, as she missed the weekly interactions with her peers and the volunteers at COOJ. At COOJ, she loves the fellowship, doing the art and craft, the exercises and the mental games. She is thrilled when she manages to follow the instructions and play the games. And later at home, a tell-all session when she loves to tell whoever is willing to listen, all the day's happenings at COOJ. We are grateful to COOJ, for keeping my Mom happy, healthy and smiling.

- Jose Noronha, Caregiver



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HEALTH, WELL-BEING AND INDEPENDENCE



SUICIDE PREVENTION PROGRAM 2020-21

WE STRIVE TO REDUCE THE RATE OF SUICIDE IN GOA THROUGH WIDE REACH, AWARENESS, TRAINING, EFFECTIVE INTERVENTIONS AND STRONG NETWORKING WITH STAKEHOLDERS

2020 will be etched in our memories as a time when humanity had to grapple under the weight of a virus that instilled fear & suffering. From the stress of trying to protect loved ones, to dealing with the grief of losing them, panic and anxiety triggered the mental health well-being of people the world over. People worked online from home with lesser privacy to express along with social isolation.

The COOJ team volunteers realised that they had their work defined for them and they took on their duties on a committed footing, be it calls or emails. The helpline volunteers even assisted in coordinating calls with the police, which came from stressful migrant workers who were most affected in the state of Goa during the month of May.

In November we organised our 1st online training for new helpline volunteers' batch of 8. This helped reach other states and opened up the volunteering from all India.

Gatekeeper conducted = 8

Helpline Stats = 1129 calls received [Male=606, Female=523]

Email stats = 613; Replied= 533

Helpline training conducted from Nov 23 to 27, 2020



As planned, in September, Cooj, in association with DJ Aneesh Gera, conceptualised a video on Mental Health Awareness called "It's okay to not be okay", featuring prominent personalities from Goa who voiced out their thoughts about the myths and stigma surrounding suicide and how together we can work towards its prevention.

workshop on
**BEREAVEMENT
in SUICIDE**

Dr. Sandy Andrade
Trustee, Connecting, Pune
Sandy is a mindfulness and presence-oriented psychotherapist. A trustee at Connecting where she established the suicide prevention distress helpline and designed and co-developed the Mindfulness Based Active Listening trainings. She is also the founder-director of Just Being Center for Mindfulness and Presence.

Dr. Peter Castelino
Director, COOJ, Goa
Peter is a consultant psychiatrist who co-founded COOJ Mental Health Foundation. He is the director and trainer for the suicide prevention distress helpline and conducts gatekeeper trainings. He is passionate about community psychiatry and works towards setting up sustainable programs in mental health.

9th September 2020, 6:30pm for 90 mins on Google Meet
to register **Whatsapp 9822562522**

Let the beauty of their lives never be defined by their death

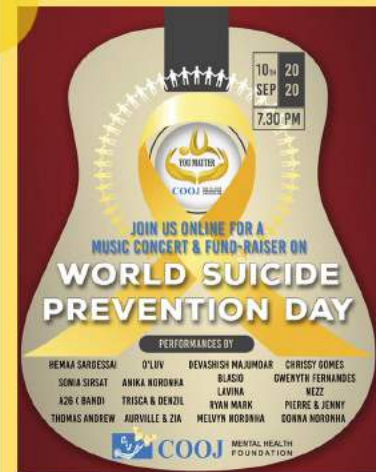
Personalities like Dr Vikram Patel professor from Harvard School London, Musician & Songwriter Remo Fernandes, Superintendent of police inspector Sammy Tavares, Dr. Nandita Desouza Director of Sethu, Gauri Dempo an entrepreneur, RJ host Ayesha Baretto, Actor Vaishnavi Pilankar, footballer Sahil Tavora, Mr. India /Mr. Super-national Prathamesh Maulingkar and many more, gave a positive message addressing the need to get help if one has suicidal ideation. This was promoted on Facebook and Instagram during the Suicide Prevention Week and received 6000+ likes.

On September 9, an online workshop session on Breavement in Suicide, was conducted online in association with 'Connecting Pune'. Main speakers for the session were Ms. Sandy Andrade, trustee of Connecting and Founder Director of 'Just Being', along with Dr. Peter Castelino, Managing Director of COOJ Mental Health Foundation had an interactive online session to discuss about bereavement during the pandemic. The workshop was attended by over 175 people and got a very positive feedback from everyone.

SUICIDE PREVENTION PROGRAM 2020-21

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September 10 saw a line up of events observing World Suicide Prevention Day, starting with a chat show on Radio Indigo with RJ Ayesha Barreto. It was an interactive slot where listeners wrote in to ask about various queries to clear their doubts about suicide being a preventable condition. At noon an online gatekeeper workshop was held for the general public via zoom. Attended by 178 people, it addressed Epidemiology, Myths, Warning signs, at Risk factors and intervention.



In the evening at 6.30 pm a musical fund raiser was organised & broadcasted on You-Tube. It ended with the lighting of the candle of hope where representatives of Befrienders India joined in to show their solidarity & support as well as people who lost loved ones to suicide. The program was hosted by our team staffer Chrissiedana Gomes. Various prominent musicians like Sonia Sirsat, Ryan Mark, A26, Hemma Sardesai, D&T, Nezz, Melvyn Noronha etc made original musical videos as well as did music covers highlighting the message of hope and faith especially if one was going through emotional distress. Sonia Sirsat's original cover Pick up that phone summed up very well the work of intervention that is called out by the helpline. Our gratitude goes out to her for conceptualising such a beautiful song & supporting this cause. Most of the artists promoted their songs on their own FB pages to spread awareness.



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In the evening RJ Bambino Dias from AIR Rainbow FM also interviewed Dr Peter Castelino about the awareness activities, work & challenges faced with regards to suicide prevention.



The training allow the participants to learn, comprehend and apply skills and techniques of suicide intervention through an interactive format. This training program not only informs participants about the need to intervene, but also prepares them to enable help to those who may need it in future. Thanks to this workshop/training program, there are numerous Gaurdian Angels who have been sensitized for Gatekeeping today. The fact that there have been dozens of participants each time indicates one thing, people want to help and that they must be shown how to. Thank you, COOJ, for showing us the way.

- Yoshita Pareek from Ubuntu Creations Mumbai

Things to remember when talking to a suicidal person

What to do

- Be compassionate when expressing love and care for the concerned person.
- Listen patiently to what the person has to say.
- Do not be judgmental. Instead, be calm and stay positive.
- Reassure him/her that life can be better and help is available.
- Take everything he/she says seriously as this can help win trust and get proper help.

What not to do

- Avoid statements like "your suicide will hurt your loved ones" or "you have so much to do in your life."
- Do not appear shocked or lecture him/her about the situation.
- Do not ask for an explanation for his/her suicidal thoughts.
- One should not blame himself/herself for the loved one's problems.

www.mentalhealthzen.com

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Just incase you feel uneasy to talk to your loved one ...
Encourage them to call a suicide prevention helpline

COOJ Distress Helpline 0832 2252 525
Operational from Monday to Friday, 1pm to 7pm

A free community service initiative, 'Covidav' was launched on April 07, 2020 wherein a curated team of mental health professionals from the Psychiatric Society of Goa, COOJ, Sangath and Antarman decided to set-up an online platform - www.covidav.com, to help individuals deal with loneliness, stress or any other mental health issues due to the lockdown.

A team of nearly 100 counsellors, received calls from Kashmir, Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Karnataka Bihar and Tamil Nadu, apart from Goa.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH PROGRAM 2020-21

CREATE AWARENESS TO REDUCE STIGMA AND DISCRIMINATION BY SPREADING THE IMPORTANCE OF MENTAL HEALTH AS AN INTEGRAL PART OF OVERALL WELL-BEING



COVIDAV

BE GENTLE WITH YOURSELF. YOU ARE DOING THE BEST YOU CAN.

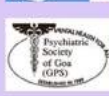
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Goan mental health helpline gets calls from Kashmir to Kanyakumari

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Panaji: The restive Union territory of Jammu and Kashmir has been on lockdown since August 5, and for residents, the sight of steel barricades, razor-wire and armed soldiers on the streets has been a part of parcel of life even before the 370 was abrogated. Several by 2,000 kms, the northern region of the country is common with the state for going

Covidav is a free initiative by a Goan startup Octo Internet and mental health professionals who decided to come together and offer online support for those struggling with their emotions during the pandemic. In the two weeks since the portal went live, 120 counselling sessions have been conducted, with each session lasting 30 minutes. Once someone seeks a session, the appointment is given in around two minutes



health professionals from the Psychiatric Society of Goa, Sangath, Antarman and COOJ decided to set up an online platform - Covidav.com - to help individu-

als deal with stress, loneliness or any other mental health issues due to the lockdown, the volunteers did not expect to get calls from all across the country.

"There is a general anxiety that the pandemic has caused. Many people are not doing well with isolation. There are times when individuals are in conflict with the people they are living with," said psychotherapist Preetha Mathews, who has helped two Kashmir residents during the lockdown.

Given the confidentiality and sensitive nature of the conversations Mathews does not divulge further information but says that the individuals sought help to deal with Covid-anxiety.

► Continued on P 3

New online platform for counselling

Goa-based tech company partners with prominent psychiatry organisations

BY SRASHRATI GUPTA RAY
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This technology, the company has partnered with Psychiatric Society of Goa, Sangath, Antarman and COOJ Foundation.

"For a free service we limited at the moment due to social distancing. People can get video consultation through this technology with more than 50 solutions that we have at the moment," Director of Addiction Research Unit, Sangath, Goa Dr. Ashish Nair said.

According to him, this is not a replacement but complement to existing services as these are limited and will get overwhelmed fast.

"Those who don't have online access can seek help through our counselling. People take from job site sector have volunteered. Other like like COOJ has volunteered volunteering time. The technology partner (Covidav) did this platform for free," Dr. Nair added.

EXPERTS SPEAK

The objective is to alleviate concerns about the pandemic, stress or depression as a result of the socio-economic conditions and to help in general mental health conditioning.

"There could be tough not only for the cases but their relatives, friends or just about anyone. Anxiety, depression, withdrawal symptoms - all of those can take a toll on you, but here by close therapy shall ensure you get the necessary therapy and counselling," Antarman said.

The system operations involve three main steps. First, go to covidav.com on your phone and book your appointment by entering all the relevant information. Your appointment shall be scheduled with a Mental Health Professional at the earliest keeping your appointment preference in mind.

Finally an online consulting link shall be mailed to you, clicking which will initiate the session with your assigned professional.

20 YEARS OF SERVICE
PSYCHIATRIC SOCIETY OF GOA
MENTAL HEALTH FOR ALL
PROTECTING MENTAL HEALTH SINCE 1989

CHALLENGES & LEARNINGS

- Concise structure: we forced program transition from offline to online
- Improvisation: we had to go with flow for example if an activity did not work with the client we had to plan accordingly, started planning sessions based on availability of materials.
- Dependency on caregivers: for eg. some clients needed assistance during their sessions
- Transparency in execution: we found it difficult to understand whether the clients did the assignment or the carers did it for them.
- Breach of privacy during the sessions: Total confidentiality could not be maintained as the caregivers would co-attend the online sessions
- Caregiver mental health/burnout: we could understand the family dynamics witnessed during the sessions
- Home Dynamics: Insight to clients' triggers at home as opposed to at COOJ where they come physically.
- Non verbal cues were also needed to be relied on during sessions.
- We needed to use slides for detailing our instructions.
- Skill development: we needed to teach client and caregiver, how to use the digital tools eg. apps / phone in a simplest way
- Substitution tools: we needed to find alternate ways to explain with a physical substitute for assistance at home. (eg. a chair to assist)
- Lack of transparency: we were unable to observe the entire process of completion of assignment.

FUTURE IMPLICATIONS

- Digital Literacy Initiative: To design, develop and implement 'COOJ Digital Literacy Program' for the clients and caregivers
- Training Modules: To conduct immersive training for the COOJ staff on ethics and best practices of conducting online sessions.
- Digital Tool development: To build and launch tools that will improve effectiveness of delivering service offerings online.

SUPPORT US

It has been a tough year for all of us but your dedication to making a difference in this world and specifically for your trust in us and in our mission has been indispensable to our cause. Every contribution will go a long way in rehabilitating a person living with a psychological disability or improving the quality of life of senior citizens living with or without dementia or in reducing the rate of suicide in our state. Over the years we have relied to a great extent on the large heartedness of the community to sustain our mission and we humbly hope that this generosity continues.

You can support us by the following means:

1. Donations
2. Volunteering at the suicide helpline
3. Assisting in vocational training
4. Assisting in the Eldercare program
5. Marketing services
6. Fund raising
7. Graphic designing
8. IT support

You can also support Us by donating towards specific needs as detailed in the wishlist below:

OUR WISHLIST

GENERAL REQUIREMENT

Administrative furniture Rs. 2,50,000
Media development (Rs. 3,00,000)
Printing of Projects Boards and information Material Rs. 80,000
Extension of compound gate and building of a shed for the bus. Rs. 1,20,000
Public Relations development Rs 4,00,000

CAPACITY BUILDING FOR STAFF

Training workshops (2 workshops @ Rs. 20,000) Rs 40,000

COOJ REHABILITATION PROGRAM

Music Therapy (4 sessions per mth @ Rs 1000 per session for 12 mths = Rs.48, 000)
Vocational therapy (8 sessions per mth @Rs 1000 per session for 12 mths = Rs.96, 000)
Vocational Material (Rs. 50,000)
Sponsor a Client with psychological disability availed the rehabilitation program (Rs. 48,000 year ,Rs. 4000 /- a month)
Sponsor a stipend given to a client at the Sheltered workshop (Rs. 60,000 year ,Rs. 5000 month)
Psychological assessment tests (Rs.1,50,000)
Garden Therapy (Tools, Plants & Material). (Rs.1,50,000)

COOJ SUICIDE PREVENTION PROGRAM

4 DAYS Training for the helpline (material, honorarium of trainer, refreshments etc. Rs 5,000 per volunteer x 10 nos) (Rs.50,000)
Gatekeeper Training workshops (10 nos @ Rs 5,000 each) Rs. 50,000
Printing of awareness material (Posters, Pamphlet, banner etc.) (Rs.10,000)

COOJ ELDERCARE PROGRAM

Maruti Eeco 7 seater vehicle (AC)
(Including Zero Dep. InsuraFast-Tagd Tax, No. Plate, Auto Card & Fast Tag) Rs. 6,50,000
Neuropsychological assessment tests (Rs.80,000)
Printing of awareness material (posters, pamphlets, brochures, etc.) Rs. 10,000
Tablet for the seniors With Cover & tampered Glass (5no @ 28,000) Rs 1,40,000
Bluetooth Speaker (5nos @ Rs 3,000) Rs 15,000

COOJ COMMUNITY PROGRAM

Mental illness Detection camp (Rs.30,000/camp)
Awareness Programs on Mental Health (3 no @ Rs. 8000) Rs.24,000



OUR TEAM

Managing Trustee & Director:
Dr. Peter Castelino

Trustees:

Founding Trustee: Mrs. Theresa Trinidad, **Secretary:** Mrs Lakshmy Unny, **Treasurer:** Mr. Romualdo Fernandes, **Member Trustees:** Dr. Justiniano Pereira, Mrs Hema Unny

Administrator and Accountant:
Rashmi Palav

Programme Coordinators:

Rehabilitation Program: Neetha Mascharenhas, **Geriatric & Dementia Care Program:** Dayle Rodrigues, **Suicide Prevention Program:** Donella Noronha

Clinical staff:

Clinical Psychologist: Chrissie Gomes, **Counselling Psychologists:** Aldela Fernandes, Liza Barboza

Non- Clinical Staff:

Administrative Assistant & social Media coordinator: Karl Dias
Housekeeping: Lata Desai, Vijeta Kandolkar

COOJ INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

This year, we offered 37 interns a hands on exposure to the daily functioning of our Rehabilitation Centre, Training in assessments, Cognitive Remediation Techniques, Vocational Training, and Group Therapy in the Adult as well as the Senior Therapy Centre.

VOLUNTEERS

A total number of 12 volunteers assisted us in our work this year. Our sincere thanks to each of them who have devoted their time and efforts to the building of our cause.

WE EXTEND OUR SPECIAL GRATITUDE

The year marked a period rife with unique challenges and we would like to thank you for your support whether through the means of finance or by volunteering your time at the NGO and our outreach programs besides the innumerable times we had to knock on your doors seeking advice. We are grateful for your dedication to the cause of Mental Health and desire to make a difference in our communities.

We would like to extend our special gratitude to Delta - develop life through action, Bern, Switzerland for the rescue fund they extended us to support us financially when our regular sources of income had diminished due to the pandemic. Gratitude will always go to the Society for Community Counseling Services from whom we rent our premises in Bastora for their immense understanding and cooperation right from the start and even more so during this year. COOJ acknowledges everyone's contribution which has been indispensable to our objective of facilitating the spread of mental health care and widening our reach not only at the state but at the national level as well. Dev Borem Korunk.

We would like to acknowledge the following individuals and organisations who have been pivotal to the development of COOJ. We thank them for their unwavering support and commitment to our cause. We are grateful for the time, effort and the resources they have invested in us.

- **Home of Ara, Creative Studio** - *Designing and content editing our Annual Report*
- **Ricky Noronha and DevTeam** - *Website and social media support*
- **José L Noronha** - *Architectural Design Support*
- **Adv Zito Braganza and Adv William D'Costa** - *Legal Aid*
- **Nandan Sirsat** - *Chartered Accountant*

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Contact: 0832 2501684
Email: sahodayavasco@gmail.com

COOJ Website: www.cooj.co.in

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COOJ Eldercare Program: <https://www.facebook.com/coojeldercare/>
COOJ Suicide Prevention Program: <https://www.facebook.com/YouMatterByCooj/>

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