



Spiritual Care and Dementia

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Case Study of a Success Story



Saivite Spiritual Support Worker Program

One among many objectives:

- To identify gaps in healthcare services for Tamils and take remedial steps as best as possible.
- Gap identified: Lack of Spiritual Support to Tamil Saivites in hospitals and Long-term care homes.

Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka



Sri Lanka – The Country

- Majority Sinhalese Minorities Tamils, Muslims and Burghers
- Social Democratic Republic
- By religion:
 - Sinhalese Buddhists, Tamil Hindus (Saivites), Christians and Muslims.
- Sri Lanka has:
 - free health service including medication
 - free education including university
- Sri Lanka produced the world's first woman executive head of state (Prime Minister)
- Mostly Tamil Hindus (Saivites) came to Canada as refugees because of the war.
- Presently, around 250,000 Tamils live in GTA.

The Saivite Religion

- Ancient ritualistic religion
- Temple is the centre
- Use of pictures of deities and symbols
- Belief in karma
- God fearing community

Spiritual Conversation

- Spiritual conversation is the language of the hearts.
- Religious rituals and prayers may be meaningless when coming from one who does not really believe in it.
- Spiritual Care of the sick is by offering special prayers in temple.
- We have trained believers in the faith to give the spiritual care at the bedside.

Spiritual Support Workers

- Visit 3 hospitals in Scarborough
- Visit 3 long term care homes in Scarborough
 - Spiritual Support in LTC's
 - Placed shrines in 2 LTC's
 - Bedside visit by spiritual support workers – sing religious songs and offer Holy Ash.
 - Celebrate religious festivals in LTC's
 - Involve the community in celebrations and friendly visits.

Sustainability

- Canada Saivite Council for Spiritual Support in Healthcare formed by the Tamil Caregiver Project.
- Registered as a charity
- Entrusted with the task of sustaining and further developing this service.



Reaching Multiple Religions/Cultures





You are NOT alone...

The Alzheimer Society can help



Support, Education & Information

Available to:

- **Persons with Dementia**
 - **Family Members**
 - **Health Care Professionals**
 - **General Public**
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Ongoing Support

Offered throughout the full course of the dementia journey

- **Counselling**

Phone, Office, Email and outreach

- **Satellite offices**

- **Support Groups**

Frontal temporal lobe, Lewy body, Vascular and Early Onset Dementia



Education & Information

- **Educational Workshops**

Series: “Where to Begin”, “Caregiver Stress” , “Heads up for Healthier Brains” etc.

- **Social Programs - Dine and Dance**

- **Resource Centre**

- **Materials available in over 30 languages**

- **Diversity Program**

First Link

- A referral program to help support individuals with dementia and their families from the point of diagnosis throughout the course of disease.

