

Workshop on storytelling therapy to be conducted in Chennai

TNN | Jul 7, 2017, 06.01 PM IST

CHENNAI: When we listen to stories, the ones that touch us and/or the characters that we relate to can tell a lot about our own life experiences. That's why storytelling is now being increasingly used by counsellors as a tool for therapy.

To introduce the concept and also to equip counsellors with more skills, the East West Center for Counselling and Training and the psychology department of Women's Christian College (WCC) will conduct a three-day workshop on storytelling therapy from July 10 to July 12.

"This is part of a series of workshops we are doing, including drama therapy, and psychodrama," says Magdalene Jeyarathnam, director, East West Center for Counselling and Training. The idea is to strengthen the skills of therapists and counsellors in the city and those who have recently passed out.

However, the workshop is also open to anyone who is interested in psychological counselling, both men and women, aged 18 and above. No previous training in counselling or storytelling or is required. "Sometimes, people come for the workshop and are inspired to make a career choice while those who are already skilled will get additional skills; tools they can use for children and adults," says Jeyarathnam.

Storytelling therapy is the latest expressive therapy, joining drama therapy, art therapy, music therapy, dance-movement therapy and others. Stories can serve as models of the past, and models for the future. Inspirational stories present courses of action to follow, while cautionary tales present courses of action to avoid.

"It is a very non-intrusive method. It is very easy for humans to parallel their situation with a story they know already," says Jeyarathnam. "We ask them to tell a story which has touched them deeply, and also what in story moved them or what character they felt connected to, and we can figure out their situation from their replies."

For instance, one of her clients narrated the story of Sita asking Mother Earth to take her back. "When I asked her how she felt about her own relationship, she realised that she felt quite abandoned by her husband and very lonely in her marriage," says Jeyarathnam, adding that the counsellor can also use other inspiring stories to heal.

At the workshop, types of stories they would be working with include personal-experience stories, dreams, historical stories, episodes of epics, animal fables, fairy tales and original creative stories.

The workshop would also address questions such as -- What is therapy? What is (emotional and psychological) healing? How can stories and storytelling be used in these processes>

The trainer is Dr Eric Miller, director, World Storytelling Institute.

The workshop will be held at Women's Christian College from July 10 to July 12, from 9:30am to 4pm.

For additional info, log on to www.storytellinginstitute.org, or call 98403 94282.