

# **S A A N J J H I**

## **“SHARING THE POT OF LIFE SKILLS TOGETHER”**

SAANJJHI is a supported accommodation provider for Asian Women with mental health problems, commissioned by Supporting People since March 2003.

The house is for 6 people, with short-term stays up to 2 years, based at Oxhill Road in the Handsworth area. The house is for women experiencing mental and emotional crisis or of similar nature. It is an alternative to hospital admission and for preparing the person to live independently in the community. The house is catering for women of all age groups in Birmingham. The employed staff are *culturally competent* and sensitive to the needs of our clients. They are fluent with 5 major languages so to help aid effective communication.

SAANJJHI accepts women with a wide range of problems. We will only have people at risk of suicide, self harm and experiencing psychosis if the Mental Health Teams and ourselves believe that the person to be safe for herself and others who are staying in the house because at times, there may be only one member of staff on duty.

SANNJJHI provides a 24-hour service with sleep-in staff, 7 days a week. The staff in the house have had crisis at some point in their lives and therefore have personal *experiences of recovery* from emotional or mental distress. There are five Support Recovery Guides employed in the house 7 days a week.

Saanjjhi has created an aftercare network as a service. This was specifically set up for clients so that they can continue to build *confidence and motivation* on their road of recovery. These groups meet up once a week.

### **OUR AIM AND SERVICES**

Our aim is to provide assistance, emotional, physical, spiritual support and understanding for Asian Women who are concerned and confused with their existing social environment.

“Humanity as a whole deserve the best. Our aim is to bring the best to people, who deserve the best. If our smiles can bring comfort to strangers, imagine a world in which we can laugh with them”

Balbir Kaur Nazran

Creativity is a highly valued part of the house ethos, with involvement of group activities. It plays a key role in the way the house works towards the recovery of the people staying here, working alongside and in agreement with the Care Co-ordinator.

We have a firm belief that attending to the mind-body combination plays an important role within the recovery of our clients. Coupled with a safe, creative and encouraging environment, all is possible within the road of recovery. We ensure that staffs who are employed with us are sensitive and culturally aware of their role. We provide one hot meal every day. The “Guest”, Client, participates in cooking with assistance of the staff. We ensure a friendly environment is provided to individuals, building trusting relationship whereby it becomes easier for the women to open up and discuss their feelings or thoughts. We explore individually with their own life experiences, to bring

about a positive attitude for the recovery. We help and encourage these women to develop and participate in extra circular activities and interests, such as those offered by BTCV as part of the Environments for All project.

## **HOW WE MANAGE SAANJJHI**

The service we provide is a vital interface between the client “Guest” and the community. Therefore, we constantly monitor their behaviour patterns, providing explanations of their thought patterns. By exploring issues that have been routed in these women’s minds over the years helps demonstrate the ability to understand and constantly learn the in-depth feelings of those individuals and thus enable this learning to be applied to their future development. This information is put into a meaningful context, which is acceptable both in the client group as well as the outside.

We expect “Guests” to take their own responsibility of their own recovery through our assistance. We believe things should be done “with” the person and not “for” to facilitate self-development and confidence, with the exception being in an emergency i.e. to give minimal help in relation to practical tasks e.g. domestic tasks such as going to the shop, cooking etc.

We look upon “Guest’s” needs and problems that they may need to share with us, focusing on the recovery of the person. By providing help, support and understanding for someone who is concerned and confused. We realise that it is important to listen to what the “Guest” is saying, as they are unique people who have their own individuality to explore their feelings and life. Helping the “Guest” to gain a clear insight into herself and her situation enable her to help herself and draw upon her own resources. However, she will have to want to change and be prepared to work for these changes, with our support. We strongly believe that it is important to make “Guests” feel accepted so that they will be able to talk freely about themselves and their feelings (building trusting relationships), which would make them feel respected. We are confident that with love, hope and perseverance, personal growth can be sustainable.

## **GOALS**

**“To see someone get up and feel it is worth living in this Universe is wonderful and it is our life’s ambition.”**

**Balbir Kaur Nazran**

Our goal is to see and feel the improvements that each individual has changed and moved forward in their life and that recovery has taken place.

We would also like to see developments in women, showing that they have become focused in their life, motivated and whilst being able to explore the depth of their feelings and desires; therefore reaching for their goals and aspiration in life.

## **TRIPS AND ACTIVITIES PROVIDED AND SUPPORTED BY BTCV**

Saanjjhi has been working with BTCV through their Environments for All programme. They have provided us with a range of activities including:

### *Trip to Wedgewood factory*

- Explored the factory floor,
- Looked at artists performed their work
- Spokes to various people asking questions of interest
- Explored the shops; admiring items on display
- Enjoyed good meal provided outside the open space at the restaurant
- Transport to the “Wedgewood” with BTCV staff and transport provided

### *Allotment Project*

- Worked on mosaic style allotment table
- Working on designs and playing with colours
- Planting seeds, picking herbs
- Visiting allotment regularly watching the growing of the plants
- We now have an allotment of our own nearby

### *Canal boat trip*

- Chance to explore the canal
- Chance to be in the boat for most first time experienced being in the boat
- Walked by the canal and city centre
- Walked by the shops
- Meals by the canal all provided food and transport

### *Botanical Garden Trip*

- Explored various tropical plants, flowers, trees and fruits
- Explored the shop and enjoyed shopping
- Taking photographs
- Exploring designs and colours
- Meals, coffee and tea at the restaurant

### *Trip to the Organic Farm*

- Explored the various ways of planting seeds, trees, vegetables
- Explored various ways of disposing waste for making compost
- Explored trees, fruit trees and shrubs
- Explored the museum – healthy eating
- Transport provided with meals

### *Residential countryside trip*

- Transport provided with meals and accommodation for 3days
- Explored the country side
- Shopping at the local places where client experienced traditional countryside breakfast
- Trip to “Ironbridge”, explored the museum
- Attended pottery workshop and looked around the Pottery Shop

- Various activities in the cottage where stayed like:
- Playing games (with winning prizes for clients), music, dancing making
- Sandwiches and snacks
- Countryside walks

## **OUR CLIENTS' THOUGHTS AND FEELINGS**

### *Note*

Due to ethical practices of SAANJJHI we have not used the real names of our Asian clients.

### **Trips to the countryside / residential trip**

#### Mary

“No one told me India was also here. I felt lost and confused and could not understand for a while as I stood admiring the countryside. I asked several times whether I was in India. I love the countryside I took me back; my memories of India, my childhood playing in the field, the horses, the barn, hays in that moment I was lost, at the same time I could not stop laughing to myself. I just could not believe that I was actually seeing this. Every morning I stood outside admiring the surroundings. I did not know there was countryside in this country. I felt like we had all the area to ourselves - the lake, field, horses, cows and no other people about. I often heard people talked about holidays I did not know what holidays meant. I would like to go again.”

#### Jane

“It was so lovely in the cottage where we stayed it was so nice to be in a different place with my friends and staff with me. At first, I was so scared the thought of going away into a different place, the thought of travelling a long distance, all thoughts appeared in my mind, whether I would come back, what would happen if I got lost, it went on and on but at the same time I was excited too, hearing the word holiday. I often thought what holiday was. At times my mind says yes I want to go at other time my mind says no. I have never been so happy, I never been on holidays before in this country or in India except for a short trip/outing.

I enjoyed the games we played different games every night it was fun. We shared and talked together a lot. I tried to speak in English language because I was on holiday although the staff would speak in Punjabi. It was so funny. I enjoyed eating out at different places, and I did not have to pay at all. Holidays I have never had or seen. The place was so different and beautiful I like the lake. I enjoyed the games we played every night was different, lots of gifts. I enjoyed playing bingo it was fun. We sang and dance and I laughed so much. I was very happy.”

#### Lucy

“I lived in this country for approximately 22 years. I have never been on holiday before. I have been on a day trip but nothing like this. In this country I lived a lonely life, so isolated.

Every day was a wonderful and beautiful experience for me. During the time of our journey, I felt lonely and was afraid to go, as I have not been to a strange place and I was frightened what to expect.

In a cottage of our own in the country side it felt like home, I saw horse in the field I took me back so many years ago in Pakistan where we lived playing in the field. It seemed so different. Although

I was tired and at times I was not well, I still wanted to carry on as I did not want to miss out and wanted to explore more.

I enjoyed going out, seeing different places. I like the big tall building where we ate sandwiches that we made ourselves our own choices. There was a lot to see, I felt tired but I still felt like carrying on walking. I lost my fear everything was good.”

#### Janet

“I was so scared and did not like to go and spend a night outside this place even though we talked about it; how safe it would be and as I also went to see the place I still was frightened, frightened to get lost and what would happen to me. The thought of dogs attacking me getting into the house was frightening to me. I have never been on holidays before except in India where I was bitten by a dog when I was young also staying in a strange house where I have not stayed before and the thought of sleeping in a strange bed was also frightening. I was wrong, I saw a dog but the dog did not come near me, the place was beautiful, the countryside was beautiful. Once I was there I was happy and safe. Everybody was good and we had lots of fun. We shared our bedrooms with the girls and we were so happy. All the meals were done for us; we did not have to do anything at all, everybody took care of us. I was also worried about my medications, I was getting lots of stories in my mind but everything was O.K.

I enjoyed playing passing the parcel the best it was fun we received so much presents. I enjoyed the food but at times I did not like it I enjoyed eating out it was fun. I enjoyed the trip to Ironbridge Museum - lots to see. We made lots of sandwiches of our own choices and enjoyed the journey.”

#### Pat

“I was worried when the decision made that all of us were going on holiday in the country side. I thought I would be allowed to because of my disabilities. I did not find it hard but it was painful when I got in and out of the transport. I walked to slow in walking but still I wanted to carry on. I have never been on holiday before. Everybody was so helpful. I sat in the wheelchair during the Museum tour which I enjoyed so much to see. The country side was so beautiful.

I was so scared to go to a strange place was difficult to imagine. I did not want to go at first as we spoke about it almost everyday, I felt little bit scared. It was true I felt good once I was there after a while everything was easy.

My friends and family had not seen country side holidays and I could not wait to share my experience of the place. Everything was good.”

### **WEDGEWOOD TRIP**

“The trip to the Wedgewood factory was good where cups, saucers plates were made. I have not seen such factory before; big machines, it is like cooking baking cakes in the oven. Everything seems huge and only machineries working few people working in the place, it was fascinating to see such things.”

“Hundreds of places and saucers were painted by free hands, those people must be special people with so much talent.”

“At first I thought it would be boring to see plates and so on being made, I was not interested but wanted to go for the sake of going out. I was worried I do not know why? I am now glad that I went, I really enjoyed myself that day. It was fascinating to see how everything worked; big machines. It was a lot of walking and followed everyone I was frightened that I might get lose but

got so much interested and started reading the history; how it come from stone and so on. I saw how in India how potteries were made by hand sold or exchange with grains or items. I started observing and questioning.”

“It was so good to see how potteries; vases and bowls were made and pass through hot machine. I liked the potteries past through being sprayed one by one through the spraying machine.”

“The food was good enjoyed it so much, we ate outside like the other people did. Everybody was friendly and happy. I bought gifts to take home for my family and friends. I was surprised and was confused for a while wondered whether we were in England, because there were no Asian people about. I have to ask the staff where we were. It was so different from Birmingham, even the roads and houses were different.”

“We had so much fun in the mini bus, we laughed and jokes and sing songs happily that I forgot my fears and anxieties, everybody was happy and I was not bothered what to expect. I am glad now I went.”

## **EXPERIENCES OF OUR MEMBERS OF STAFF**

“The ladies was worried, had a mixture of problems. At first some were not bothered or interested just want to go out and eat; some terrified to go out in a strange place, some refuse to go would rather stay home and sleep. For others it was very difficult to get themselves to get ready; fear of going out being attached.”

“Over all, all enjoyed themselves, they were so happy, fascinated by the way the factory floor works with large, massive machineries; does its job. Artist painting with dexterity and skills made us more fascinated and interested. It was so good that most of the ladies asked questions and some tried to read what was written on the boards about the process of work.”

“It is the understanding and knowledge that the ladies gain. It was a successful day. The BTCV staffs organised this trip were very helpful and friendly it made everything so easy for everybody.”

“The holiday cottage” as they call it was brilliant and very successful, it ended with enjoyable and memorable experiences for most of the ladies.”

“Some or most of the ladies had not experience the meaning of holidays in a strange environment in this country for where they came from India or Pakistan they have seen and reminded their experiences of the country side that they could not believe that there were such places in this country.”

“It was very funny what struck us all was when we were driving towards the cottage entered a gate into the field, when a massive herds of cows were blocking the pathway and refused to move for time and stood as if starring at us. It took a long time before the cows decided to move away it was very muddy too. The scene was beautiful and had a close-up views, everybody was so happy and intrigue to see the scene. That was the beginning of our journey.”

“This journey was the life time experience for some, as no one has given to them till now. Their eyes bright with fascinations; they observe the beauty of the country side, they stood in amazement. The fear and anxiety had disappeared; they were all very happy like one big family; the care and

support was there; they now know that it is possible to go anywhere and be together to explore and share ideas.”

“This gift of a chance to explore the country side, a holiday as they call it, made so much different in their life. To breathe the air; explore the beauty of the nature and its surroundings was a lot to take for some; they looked with wonders, they shared their excitement with their families and friends. The smile in their eyes was enough to understand their feelings. Once again, thank you so much for the emotional and financial support that BTCV have provided us.

### **THE MEANING AND IMPACT OF THE DIFFERENT ACTIVITIES**

- Increase in self-confidence
- Increase in ability to be in the outside world
- Provision of enjoyment and outing
- Provision of an opportunity to learn about the world from which they have isolated from in institutions
- Increased in motivation
- Increased their awareness
- Sense of belongings
- Gain knowledge and understanding
- Provision of fun and enjoyment
- Receiving sense of value and love
- Able to share and express their thoughts and feelings to other
- Something to focus and talk about
- Something to look forward for
- Chance to share their story/past history
- Able to build story to share to others
- Overcome fear and anxiety
- Builds confidence leading to empowerment
- Chance or sense of freedom
- Chance of excitement
- Chance of building hopes
- Freedom from their thoughts and feelings

### **LOOKING FOR THE FUTURE**

Sannjjhi feels that it wants to continue to look for a better future for its clients with BTCV. Our ‘ladies’ stay at SAANJJH range from 4 weeks to 2 years, depending on their circumstances and the character of their illness. We would like to bring about sparks and confidence in their lives. We need to bring about hope and interest. We need to explore various areas of interest where they would be able to see, feel, touch nature and be part of the world outside away from their world of their own minds. Exploration, excitement and motivation have to be a vital part of their recovery.

A lot of what our ‘ladies’ need have been achievable through working with BTCV. We would like to work with BTCV again with a range of similar trips, perhaps widened to include or combine:

- Same trips as listed, because of stay at SAANJJH from 4 weeks to 2 years depending on their circumstances and illness client come and go.
- Regular support
- Inner exploration and learning

- Change with abilities to explore different views
- Experiences with nature and walking
- Activities to built confidence with other societies
- To explore British culture and traditions,
- Visits to museums and Art Galleries
- Train journey (as a lot of these women had not experienced being in the train)
- Visit the sea world
- Fun fares
- Trip to cinema
- Trip to by the Sea side
- Exploring different sceneries and country sides
- Relaxation and alternative healing therapies