



Bhavana Chiranjay: Post Trauma Care for (Child) Survivors of Violence



Bhavana is an Ex-Indian Army Officer from the Corps of Engineers (Madras Sappers). She retired in 2009 after 9 years of service with the Indian Army. Bhavana has been a volunteer from 2010, with Prajwala Hyderabad, an NGO that has been working in the field of Anti Human Trafficking for the last 2 decades plus, and Swakshatra attempts to use this learning in its anti-trafficking initiatives in the future. In this talk she shares the experience of two case studies of children rescued from violence and the complexities involved in recognizing individuals' needs.

TOP EMBODIMENT TIP: When working with child abuse, connect to the cause at an embodied level. Transitioning the organisation to the whole community living and shared space is crucial to embodiment.

Case studies: Durga and Shakti

- Bhavana describes the stories of two children who were traumatized as a result of violence.
- (Please note that these stories may be triggering. Both relate to child sexual abuse)
- Bhavana emphasises that it is not what happens to each child that determines what post care they need, but how each individual child responds.
- Needs are not always clear - Shakti was a very communicative, social, bubbly warm child despite her immense abuse and hardship and it was decided that one of Shakti's needs was access to schooling, however when she was supported by the organisation to access schooling she hardly made any progress. It was then discovered she had severe issues with memory as a result of her trauma, this was her way of coping and so her educational needs are not just access related - she also needs learning disability support and psychiatric support for her trauma-induced memory issues.

Therapeutic Communities:

- Children need help until they are able to find their strength and stand on their own feet. If they finally began to feel safe and secure within 6-12 months, then asking them to pack up and leave after 12 months would feel like a betrayal and add its own layer of trauma.
- A therapeutic community is a whole living space for abused children, based on safety, containment, participating decision making, empowerment, agency and belonging based on principles of community.
- Durga is now a key player in the therapeutic community.

Resources

- ❖ **Website:** wakshatra.in



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