

KOSHISH Women's Transit Care Centre – case studies

HEALING WOUNDS OF THE HEART

November 2020

Maili Tamang (35) was brought to the KOSHISH Transit Care Centre during the COVID-19 lockdown. She is a survivor of domestic violence, whose husband used to get drunk and torture her, both physically and mentally.

Maili became unable to cope with the emotional and physical abuse and left her home, leaving her two daughters behind. She was five months pregnant at the time. She started living on the street, and was unable to eat properly; one day she had a fall on the road which affected her pregnancy.



She was brought for treatment at Dhulikhel Hospital with the assistance of social workers from Manthali, but unfortunately it was too late to save the child. The continuous torture and abuse in the early days of her marriage combined with the loss of her unborn child and seriously affected her mental health.

Maili needed immediate treatment, and was referred by the hospital to the KOSHISH Transit Care Centre. Thanks to the psychiatric consultation and psychosocial support she receives in the transit home, her mental health condition is improving. She likes to get engaged in therapeutic activities and even helps the staff in the kitchen.

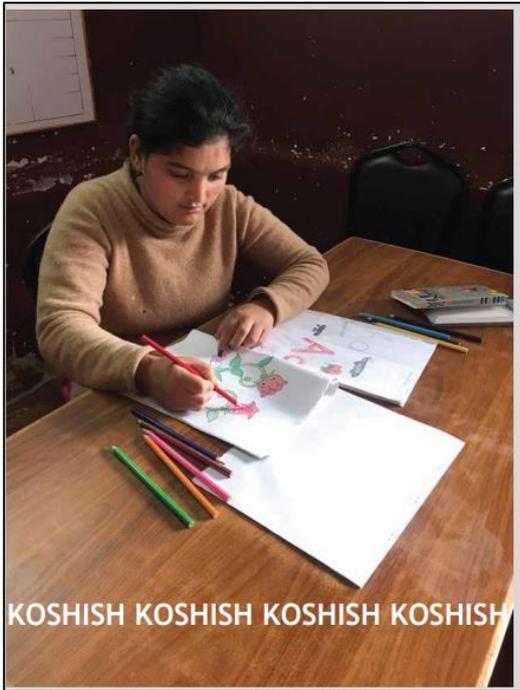
Maili often thinks about her two daughters. She says: “My heart is getting stronger each day. and I will work hard for the sake of my children’s future.”

FINDING THE WAY HOME

November 2020

One year ago, 24-year-old Radha (not her real name) was rescued from the street by the KOSHISH team and provided with short-term residential mental health and psychosocial support at the KOSHISH transit home. Following improvements in her mental health condition, she was reintegrated into her family. During this process, the rest of the family and other members of her community also received counselling and psychoeducation.

When the outreach team telephoned as part of their follow-up, however, they discovered that the family had sent her off to stay with another organization. She stayed there for a while, but had problems adjusting, and without any emotional support from her family her mental health deteriorated. She ran away, and was found roaming the streets in a confused state.



The outreach team again found Radha on the street in Lalitpur, and brought her back to the Transit Care Centre. Here, in the transit home, her mental health condition is gradually improving with proper care and support.

With time, Radha will recover, but the main challenge is what happens to her then. Her family is reluctant to have her back. People with mental health issues are treated as burdens, and inferior human beings. Even after recovering, some people have difficulty settling back into the community due to stigma and discrimination, even among members of their own family.

Now, the KOSHISH Social Worker is coordinating with Radha's family and her local Ward representatives over her sustainable reintegration. We hope to ensure that she will be accepted by her family and community, and able to live with dignity.

SUPPORT SYSTEM SUPPORTS RECOVERY

July 2020



When 27-year-old Sarita (pseudonym) started exhibiting unusual behaviour, her family's reaction was anything but understanding. In fact, she felt hated, disowned and cast out, and although she did still have a family, Sarita started living as a homeless orphan.

One of her relatives was a teacher at a nearby school. He was aware of Sarita's situation, and welcomed her into his home, where she found love and support.

He knew she needed treatment for her condition, and after many attempts to find support, he finally managed to put Sarita in touch with KOSHISH.

Following initial assessment, Sarita was brought in by the outreach team for short-term residential and psychosocial support. Continuous support, psychiatric consultations and therapeutic services brought noticeable improvements in her mental health, but it proved very difficult to reintegrate her even after recovery as her family was unwilling to take her back. The outreach team kept providing psychoeducation to her family members but they showed no interest in accepting her.

So Sarita's relative once again stepped up to take responsibility, and she has been reintegrated to his home. For now, she is staying with this family, but the outreach team continues to work with her own family members. If they are not willing to take her back, then KOSHISH will search for an

organization where she can receive long-term support. During a recent follow-up visit, Sarita was found to be in sound health, and she is getting involved in household activities.

Sarita says: “My relatives love and support me, but my own family members have abandoned me because of my mental health problem.”

RAMILA

The COVID-19 pandemic has had an adverse effect on the mental health of people around the world. Nepal locked down and closed its borders as the virus spread rapidly, and the rise in infections was accompanied by over 1,200 cases of suicide.



21-year-old Ramila (not her real name) was rescued and brought to the WTCC after trying to take her own life during lockdown. She had experienced mental health problems for a long time, and attempted suicide before, but before the pandemic her condition was improving thanks to medication and counselling. Ramila was happy with her office job, but the COVID crisis changed everything. Lockdown brought loneliness and confinement to a rented room in Kathmandu. Her condition worsened and Ramila again tried to take her life. After 48 hours in hospital, she was brought to the KOSHISH transit home for short-term psychosocial support and care.

Initially Ramila was quiet and detached, but with care and support she began to open up, engage in therapeutic activities, and her condition is improving. She is just one of many people experiencing mental health problems during this crisis, but it remains the most neglected area in the health sector.