

Be the Best Nepalese Women's Wellbeing Program



Be the Best - Nepalese women's wellbeing program: an initiative of Didibahini Samaj Victoria (DBSV)

Program organiser: Didi Bahini Samaj Victoria (DBSV)

Funded by: Moreland City council- community grant program

Supported by: Uniting Church Glenroy

Program Coordinator: Jamuna Parajuli

Didibahini Samaj Victoria (DBSV) is Nepalese women's organisation based in Victoria. DBSV is thriving to bring positive life influences in Nepalese women, and empower Nepalese

women to take responsibility for their own health, wellbeing and lifestyles changes. We believe, innovative programs and participation in those programs are the keys to facilitate those changes.

Background of the programs

Nepalese community is one of the emerging communities in Victoria. There is a huge proportion of Nepalese living in the City of Moreland. Amongst these people some are more established than others. Some are still struggling to settle. Due to the straining pressure with settlement issues, job, education and other cultural issues, Nepalese women were finding hard to maintain their health and wellbeing to the required level.

They found to be still quite behind, isolated not fully empowered to make their own health decisions. No peers support and lively neighborhood were available to help them when needed. On the other hand there was no confidence amongst women to seek help and use of services which are readily available in the community where they are living. Lack of social networking and support groups were some of the area identified to be improved. Hence; Be the Best women's wellbeing Program was designed to address some of these social and wellbeing needs of Nepalese women living in Victoria, specifically in Moreland.

The main aim of **Be the Best** program was

- *to bring all women together to promote their mental, physical, emotional and spiritual health and wellbeing and to develop their confidence through activities, information and networking.*

The specific objective of the program were

- to form a women's support group
- to provide women a platform to come and share their burning issues, their knowledge, skills and experience
- To initiate some new skills on yoga, dance and meditation for women to maintain their health and wellbeing.
- To organize information and awareness session to bring positive impacts on women's health and wellbeing issues.
- To do some innovative and creative program to manage common day to day stresses in women's life.
- Establish a system of helping needy women through collaborative support actions
- Explore opportunities for participation of women through linking with other organizations for up-skilling, confidence and capacity building.

Be the Best women program was implemented by using various social elements mainly consist of yoga, dance, meditation, activism against family violence through workshop and

Seminar, talk on mental and spiritual health, followed by excursion tour to hot spring spa including various one to one and group interactions and information sessions. All activities were designed to be simple, inviting, visual, interactive, supportive, and fun to improve women's overall health and wellbeing. The Program also offered women, one to one mentoring, consultation and coaching, and social networking with other women targeting positive lifestyle behaviors change to enrich their overall health and wellbeing aiming **at best the best they can be.**

Each component of the programs was evaluated after its completion and we always received very positive feedback and comments during and at the completion of the program. We have very strong evidences that the overall program was very beneficial to promote mental, physical and emotional health and wellbeing of Nepalese women. This program really broke the chain of social isolation by connecting people, developing network, building skills on yoga, dance, and meditation and creating a common forum for women to come and talk their burning issues in the group and forming a support group. Women started to demonstrate their confidence to show their learnings and skills to other social context.

The Program included

There were mainly four components of the program

The components of Be the Best program were very creative, innovative that included various social elements to promote mental, emotional, physical and spiritual health and wellbeing of Nepalese women. The overall outcome of the program was very impressive as reflected by the participants of the program. Program was able to reach to the target population in different forms.

The combination of the Be the Best Program was unique, vibrant, visual, attractive, interactive and supportive to improve women's health and wellbeing. The each component of the programs was designed on the basis of needs, and the burning issues that were very vigilant in Nepalese community. The brief description of the program is as bellow

1. Yoga, Dance and Meditation:
Our very motivated yoga instructor and dance instructor delivered session on a weekly basis. Yoga session ran for 42 weeks and Dance program was ran for 20 weeks with three performance shows. The program was funded to run for 6 weeks and rest of the time our instructors have contributed voluntarily. There were total 37 participants to attend this program in a regular basis.
2. Activism against family Violence through workshop, seminar to Nepalese Community Leaders:

Sharing information, raising awareness, igniting discussion in the area and issue of family violence was another focus of Be the Best Program. The interactive workshop with involvement of community Leaders and experts in the area has brought up many issues in the discussion that to be continued. We were able to form the Family violence advisory group to follow up on the issues further in the community. There were about 80 participants this program. The program was highly praised by the participants and community members. Program was by Mayor of MCC.

3. Mental and emotional wellbeing sessions along with IWD program and celebration:
This was another interactive program in the big group of people specially women aiming to promote mental, emotional and spiritual health and wellbeing. Talk on yoga, meditation, and self-care, the key note speech on path to mental and spiritual health with practice on meditation and yoga really hit the day with very healthy food and music. There were about 120 participants for this program. This program was also addressed by Mayor of Moreland

4. Women’s only hot Spring spa excursion tour (focussed on mental , emotional and spiritual health)
This was very exciting, interactive, heart touching program for everyone who participated. Being together in one bus, 41 women started to share their feelings through singing in the bus to the way to spa. Then indulging in natural spring hot spa with the group of like-minded women was such an amazing observation that anyone could do. Being Relaxed in the natural warmth of hot spring spa; with posing for photos, sharing stories, life events, inspiring each other, stepping from one spa to another with laughter and giggles sparked the women’s day. They said, that was must amazing opportunity to be along with one to one, being attached and feeling closure than ever before. They had such a unique experience that something women never experienced before. Sharing lunch and reflecting the goodness of the unique experience that they felt at the end of the day really made everyone connected not only for the day but for long run. Everyone felt awesome and amazing.

5. Talk on self esteem and confidence building activities and other life style changes talk including stress management, diet and nutrition in group meetings and gathering and one to one coaching and linking to other networks. These informal activities found to be very powerful to bring the desired changes in women’s life.

The programs and total number of participants participated in the program

Programs	Total number of participants	Remarks
Yoga/ Meditation	37	Average 11 for 42 weeks

Dance	37	Average 18 for 20 weeks
Family Violence workshop	80	
BetheBest women only excursion tour	41	
spiritual wellbeing session along with IWD celebration	150	
Total	345	



Total volunteering time spent

Programs	program coordinator	Yoga instructor	Dance instructor	Other team members
Yoga and Meditation	130 hours	104 hours		10 hours
Dance	40 hours		25 hours	10 hours
Family Violence workshop	40 hours			40 hours
Be the Best women only excursion tour	40 hours			30 hours
IWD and spiritual wellbeing session	40 hours			40 hours
Talk on self esteem and confidence building activities and other life style changes group meetings	15hours			15hours
Total hour: 579	305	104	25	145

Be the best Nepalese women wellbeing project 2016/ 2017

Income and expenditure

<i>Items</i>	<i>MCC Community Grant \$</i>	<i>Expenditure \$</i>
Activities	\$5000.00	
1. Mental and spiritual health promotion workshops/Seminar/ interaction.		\$800.00
2. Talk on self esteem and confidence building activities and other life style changes talk including stress management, diet and nutrition in group meetings.		0.00
3. Family violence workshop for Nepalese community leaders		\$ 700.00
4. Information and practical session: Yoga/ /Meditation		\$ 600.00
5. Dance lessons		\$1353.00
6. Mental, emotional and spiritual health promotion through women only excursion Tour to peninsula hot spa.		\$ 1947.00
Total Cash	\$5,000.00	\$54,00.00

Evaluation of the programs in July 2017

We received very valuable comments and reflections of the program. Few highlights of the reflection is as bellow and also stated in the video which is attached

'I feel we have come far up in terms of building confidence, building broader networks, confidently talking about our own issues, sharing ideas, and dealing any issues with confidence in the a team.'

We are planning to expand and the same model of the program in other women's group in Geelong, eastern and western part of Melbourne.

As a program coordinator:

I like the combination of Be the Best wellbeing program with all very inviting social elements; such as yoga, dance, meditation, talk on family violence, talk on mental and spiritual health followed by excursion tour to hot spring spa including various interactions and information.

Being engaged in a group, I feel we have come up far in terms of improving our health and wellbeing, building confidence, building broader networks, talking confidently about our own issues, sharing ideas, and dealing any issues with confidence in our life.

*Learning new skills of yoga, dance and meditation added more rainbow effect in women's life. **The Dance performance from Be the best Women's group at the IWD event was like a modelling ourselves as a change agent to encourage other women to learn to dance.***

Activism against family violence through workshop and seminar to community leaders was another new initiation within this program. This program ignited discussion in this sensitive issues in our community. We learnt more that we never learnt before. But we know we need to do more in this area.

Going to the hot spring spa in a group of 41 women was another glorious moment for all of us. It was a unique opportunity for all of us to relax, to enjoy and to have much happy moment in our life. I think we forgot the whole world at that time. It was such an amazing interaction in a serene environment. It definitely added more value in our life for ourselves by knowing about our own spiritual wellbeing.

These all components of Be the Best women's program have made us more empowered to come in fore, to come in the front and to stand with graceful confidence in any situation.

As Yoga Instructor: *I thoroughly enjoyed instructing this vibrant group of women and some men. It gave me such a amazing feeling, thinking that I am contributing for the good cause; helping women to transform their health and wellbeing through the art of yoga and meditation.*

As an instructor, I could see their body was very rigid in the beginning, but as we keep practicing and they were also doing at home, I easily noticed the change in their body moment. I always felt happy when they say; "I felt different after completing Yoga and meditation".

I am a woman from the same community, and to be able to help, support and be with them at least once in week was such a amazing positive spirit i could feel in me, here being with the group. Thank you to the program coordinator Jamuna for asking me to do this.

As a Dance instructor : *I know it is hard for me to come from far away, but I feel, this group of women are mature aged and didn't know how to dance, but very keen to learn. So I felt i can help them to fulfil their dream to be able to dance.*

It was so nice to see them to be able to show their performance in the IWD and getting ready for other program to perform dance. This is what I really like, that i could help them.

Knowing to dance gives women a power of confidence that can be reflected to anywhere which i can see in this group being with them about 20 weeks.

Reflection from participants of Be the Best Nepalese women wellbeing program

I felt more confidence with my own body and mind.

Be the best program gave me a hope to grow and strength to keep going no matter what comes in my life.

This weekly program gave me a social space to go and meet other women

I came to know many other women and it was really good opportunity for me.

I look forward to meet this group and I can't wait long to come on Saturday

When I come here, nothing bothers me, just concentrating on me for myself and feeling good to be with group.

I think the program broke the social isolation, now I know many people and i didn't know where to go to meet other people, now I have many friends.

I learnt new skills to dance and practice yoga and meditation. I am strong now.

This program connected us which never can happen if it was not. Thank you to the organise.

Yoga practice and tips made me pain free. I am very inspired I do it every day.

I didn't know how to dance at all and now I can dance.

It has been a great life experience to be in the group. We are more bonded and supported. Now we have different social connection with different spirit. And like me all of us feeling strong.

I feel fresh and feel like i have more energy when i get involve with the program.

I am being an example for my daughter. I see the real value to be united in the group. Little things have great lateral impact.

We feel supported each other. I don't feel I am alone any more.

People are praising and saying, this program made me more confident, so as I feel

Now I have no hesitation to come forward and talk and show up.

This program becomes a way to look forward something important for myself.

It's a great program, we should keep doing it.

Introduction of yoga in me changed my life style. Practicing yoga becomes a habit now.

I tend to hide to avoid social dancing occasions, but now I am very proud and no hesitation to come on the fore to dance. No way, I will be hiding behind any more.

Being affiliated in this group dramatically reduced my life stresses. I thank you to the organiser.

Not only learning to dance, yoga and meditation, I feel strong and powerful being affiliated to this group

I like the combination of Be the best wellbeing program, such as yoga, dance, meditation talk on Family violence, mental and spiritual talk followed by excursion Tour to hot spring spa.

IWD program with spiritual wellbeing talk has introduced me being more powerful with loving and kind heart.

I was very impressed with speakers' personal stories in the program. The power of individual woman's story to empower other women was profound.

The provision of healthy lunch gave us a notion of to eat healthy. I was such an amazing food for lunch

Going to the hot spring spa in a group of 41 women was another glorious moments for all of us. It gave us opportunity to relax, to enjoy and to have much happy moment. I think we forgot the whole world at that time. It was such an amazing event. It added value in our life by knowing about our own spiritual wellbeing.

I taught me, how important to value myself and value of treating me as a person. I really enjoyed being with all other women, who I didn't know before.

The serene environment and spirit of togetherness and positiveness and power of unity could be easily felt when I was in the group.

Activism against family violence through workshop and seminar to community leaders was another new initiation; we learnt more which we were not aware off. It has turned on the discussion mode in and amongst community members, but we need to do more in this area.

There are so much and many more good things about this program which definitely impacted high in our lives.

I hope the advocacy group would well work in this issue

We all need to act together in our own level to the issue of family violence and my support is with you.

We need to start this discussion from kitchen table with our kids to be grown with concept of “family violence is not right” This will help to act on this issue for long run.

Further note from the mother of local participant: The program didn't just benefit members from the Nepalese community, but that a young woman with mental illness currently living in Glenroy attended the program with two friends, and found the program very supportive, helpful and enjoyable

Conclusion:

Overall the program was very impressive, participatory, new and innovative and was a very successful program to bring positive life style changes in women’s life.

Thanks to

Moreland City Council

Uniting Church

Victorian Police

NAV

Consulate General of Victoria

All guest speakers



family violence workshop flyer -final.pdf



Yoga_Dance session 2017 f.pdf



be your best flyer final.pdf



report FV workshop report.pdf

Video link

<https://www.dropbox.com/home?preview=be+the+best+video+3-8-17.mp4>

photo link

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