

# Beating cancerism



Co-founder of H.O.P.E. clinic, Dr Amish Vora (right), with stand-up comedian Papa CJ

Once you discover cancer's existence in your body, the perception of the world around you completely changes. People act as if you're incapable of anything without their support. When someone gets diagnosed with this disease, his condition gets aggravated by the way people interact with him," claims Avani Vora of H.O.P.E Oncology Care Clinic in Hauz Khas, Delhi.

H.O.P.E., or Holistic Oncology Patient Empathy, is an organisation trying to tackle the stigma attached to cancer in our society. Doctors at H.O.P.E say that people commonly display manufactured

sympathy towards cancer patients and alienate them by viewing them as helpless and needy. In many cases, the behaviour witnessed is even worse—some family members refuse to let them out of the house; others refuse to let their loved ones, especially children, around them. Hence, to prohibit cancer from crippling patients' lives and to bring them closer to their family, each Sunday at H.O.P.E. is celebrated as 'Happiness Sunday.' The clinic holds stand-up comedy shows and laughter yoga sessions by renowned stand-up comedian, Papa CJ, along with organising open discussions for cancer warriors and their families.

Talking about the initiative, Dr

Amish Vora, co-founder of H.O.P.E., said, "We believe that without cancerism, patients will be able to combat cancer fully and have a better chance of recovering from it. We hope that our initiative will go a long way in promoting a judgement-free attitude towards cancer patients and help them get a chance to laugh and enjoy with their families."

Rakhi (name changed), a patient with Hodgkin's Lymphoma at H.O.P.E, talks about her experience at the first Happiness Sunday: "I was diagnosed with cancer at the age of 23. And though I am doing well now, I find that people around me, look at me with extra sympathy, saying that I should not go out too much and stay indoors. While looking for suitors for marriage, I meet men who have a deeply pitiful attitude towards cancer patients. The Sunday sessions gave me a safe space to share my feelings, and the laughter session filled me with positivity."

The clinic also offers services like chemotherapy, counselling, makeup services, yoga, and a scalp cooling device that decreases hair loss. Dr Vora believes in providing a more humane and happy environment to cancer patients while they are undergoing treatment. He is indeed an inspiration to one and all.