

THE LOVYOUZINDAGI INITIATIVE BY CARING MINDS ENGAGES PRINCIPALS AND HEADS OF EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS FOR STRONGER PARTNERSHIP



Minu Budhia (standing) takes her audience through her presentation

LovvYouZindagi, a fest on mental health and happiness curated by Minu Budhia, psychotherapist, and founder of Caring Minds, is touching young minds like never before. Through the six competitions, it is aiding them in expressing themselves with sheer honesty. And ahead of the closing date of the contest, a host of principals and heads of educational institutions in Calcutta assembled at Caring Minds on Sarat Bose Road, to join in the journey to create awareness about mental health with Minu.

The invitees included prof. Suranjan Das, VC, Adamas University; Swati Sarawagi, director, Swarnim International School; Bratati Bhattacharyya, secretary general and CEO Shikshayatan Foundation; Meena Kak, director, Lakshmiapat Singhania Academy; Suman Sood, director, BDMI; Pratima Nayar, principal, Calcutta International School; Sangeeta Tandon, principal, Shri Shikshayatan School; Hira Prasad, principal, Birla High School, Mukundapur; Koeli Dey, principal, Sushila Birla Girls' School; Gargi Banerjee, principal, Sri Sri Academy, Alipore; Reshma Bhattacharya, principal, Indus Valley World School; Reeti Roy, student counsellor, Delhi Public School New Town; Paromita Guha Ray, principal, Apeejay School Park Street; K. Khullar, principal, Akshar School; Lovleen Saigal, principal, Birla High School; Indrani Sanyal, principal, Delhi Public School, Megacity; Rumjhum Biswas, principal, Swarnim International School, Jaya Misra, principal, Lakshmiapat Singhania Academy; Neville Holt, vice principal, St James School and Seema Sapru, principal, The Heritage School.

The session started off with the founder of Caring Minds sharing her journey so far, her struggles and achievements. "Things were so hush-hush even at my place. It is only when I became qualified that we started talking about it freely. I think God created me and Prachi (daughter) for a reason. And I decided to open a facility where everything will be under one roof. And that was the birth of Caring Minds," said Minu, inspiring the audience with her 10-year-long journey.

She also gave her audience a



Minu Budhia with heads of the educational institutions

LOVYOUZINDAGI

Who can participate?

Category 1: High school students (Class 9-12) (Age Group: 14 to 18 years)

Category 2: Young Professionals (Age Group: 18 to 30 years)

Categories:

Tagline contest; short essay on mental health; photography contest; mental health awareness poster; micro-documentary on mental health; radio jingle contest

● All participants should register on:

<https://caringminds.co.in/project-lovv-you-zindagi/>

● All entries should only be sent to: lovvyouzindagi@caringminds.co.in

Contest ends soon

glimpse of the facilities at her institutions — Caring Minds, I Can Fly, and Café I Can Fly — piquing the interest of her audience who expressed interest in joining her drive to make society more empathetic and informed. Through her presentation, she also talked about the strength of her clinical wing, the importance of occupational therapies or OT, after-school assistance programmes, Academia — the teaching wing, MoUs signed with Jadavpur University and more.

Bratati Bhattacharyya lauded Minu's efforts. She said, "Sometimes we lose heart and we stop but you have channelised it and you are getting so many people on board, that's really incredible." Indrani Sanyal underscored the need for counselling parents and Sangeeta Tandon expressed interest in having occupational therapies in her school. The



It reminded me of my college days when we had fests. LovvYouZindagi is reaching out to younger children and they understand what's going on if they have any issues it might come out in different forms — poster-making, essay writing, filmmaking. They know nobody is going to judge them, so they are being honest. We have been getting great response and we expect more to come — Sugandha Ramkumar, principal, ICanFly (left)

relevance of the OT was explained in detail by Sugandha Ramkumar, principal, ICanFly. Later during the open discussion, the school heads expressed interest in having a partnership with Caring Minds and getting trained professionals to address children in their schools. The proposal to open counselling to parents was also floored and appreciated.

"When one door closes another door opens and sometimes we don't see the other door. Minuji has seen the other door open and I congratulate her for the wonderful work. When I was at Calcutta University, I tied up with her for a course and then I signed up for a few more courses with her when I was in Jadavpur University and they have been extremely successful. She is also promoting



Commenting on the new project and associating with school children, Minu Bidhia said, "Schools are children's second homes, so we wanted to rope in all principals as our mental health partners in progress. Today's purpose is not only to communicate the 'why' behind LovvYouZindagi, but also to re-emphasise the importance of children's mental health, especially high-school students. The response to LovvYouZindagi overjoys me. As the entries are coming in, I'm being able to gauge what these young minds are feeling. Their creative output reflects what's on their mind. I am truly amazed by how talented, expressive, and brave these children are; they are opening up and sharing their deepest, unfiltered thoughts for the first time. This is also something I wanted to share with the educators present here. LovvYouZindagi has become more than a platform — I can see it growing into a way, a chance, a medium that is non-threatening, non-judgemental, and non-overwhelming. Our kids know it's okay not to be okay. Now they are learning it is okay to express that. It is okay to ask for help."

This is the need of the hour. If people are aware then things fall into place and that has been the objective of the campaign and it has been done very well. Mental health issues have not been understood well in our society. And this initiative will only help bridge that gap — Rumjhum Biswas, principal, Swarnim International School

LovvYouZindagi is a great initiative and it was a totally enticing experience being here and knowing about the work that Caring Minds and I Can Fly are doing. Mental health is of utmost importance in today's day and time and dialogue and awareness are a necessity — Meena Kak, director, Lakshmiapat Singhania Academy

research, which will be very helpful in future," said Prof. Suranjan Das. Seema Sapru added, "A dream

I think this event for us as principals have been an eye-opener. Hearing Minuji's story and seeing how she has implemented her vision is an eye-opener. It is through campaigns like this that we are going to spread awareness and sensitivity in the school community. The middle school is a crucial stage in a child's life and through LovvYouZindagi they will be freely able to express themselves — Pratima Nayar, principal, Calcutta International School

It's a lovely campaign as it's very important to know about mental health. It's extremely important for educators and parents to understand the red flags and how and when to have that early intervention as that is going to help a great deal. Schools should join as much as possible and hats off to Caring Minds for taking the lead — Suman Sood, director, BD Memorial

Now when both parents are working many a times it's difficult to realise that kids need help. Shri Shikshayatan School has become an inclusive school and for greater support, I do feel this kind of room called an OT should also be there in every school so that children can utilise as per their need. We also need some form of tie-up and more awareness needs to be created all over — Sangeeta Tandon, principal, Shri Shikshayatan School

People are seeing the butterfly, I have seen the caterpillar. I have seen her struggle. And as family and as educators when we see children with difficulties.... I think it is a great initiative. We are on the journey together and we are very happy that she has taken the lead — Swati Sarawagi, director, Swarnim International School

of Minu Budhia turning to reality, and how! She's the strongest person I've seen and admired for the longest time. Wishing her success in her mission to include all."

Farah Khatoun
Pictures: B Halder