

CPAA Psycho-Oncology Support Sessions – Impact Report

Program Overview

The Rising India Research Foundation, through its Centre for Psycho-Oncology, conducted a structured series of psycho-oncology support sessions in collaboration with the Cancer Patients Aid Association (CPAA) between September 2025 and March 2026. The initiative aimed to address the psychological, emotional, and social challenges experienced by cancer patients and their caregivers, with a particular focus on parents of pediatric patients.

A total of 12 sessions were conducted across pediatric and adult groups, integrating psychoeducation, therapeutic activities, group engagement, and reflective sharing. The program was designed not only to provide immediate emotional support but also to build long-term coping capacities, resilience, and a sense of community among participants.

Approach and Delivery

The sessions followed an experiential and group-based therapeutic model, combining structured activities with guided discussions and emotional processing. Techniques such as expressive drawing, interactive games, storytelling, metaphor-based exercises, and open sharing rounds were used to facilitate engagement.

A progressive shift was observed across the sessions—from initial hesitation and surface-level participation to deeper emotional expression, peer support, and reflective insight. The intervention allowed participants to move from passive recipients of support to active contributors within a shared healing space.

Session-wise Impact Narrative

The initial session conducted on 30th September 2025 focused on emotional management for parents and pediatric cancer patients. This session laid the foundation by introducing participants to the concept of emotional awareness and regulation within the context of cancer care. At this stage, engagement was relatively cautious, with participants beginning to identify and acknowledge their emotional states. However, it established a safe space and initiated the process of emotional recognition.



The second session on 16th October 2025 celebrated diwali with activity-based approach, particularly focusing on engaging children alongside their parents. Three structured activities were conducted, which encouraged participation, interaction, and expression. This session marked an early shift toward behavioral engagement, where children demonstrated active involvement despite their medical circumstances, and parents observed moments of normalcy and resilience in their children.



On 29th October 2025, the session was conducted with the parents of pediatric patients, addressing emotional reactions following a cancer diagnosis. The session explored common psychological responses such as fear, denial, anxiety, and uncertainty, while also introducing coping strategies. Participants began sharing personal experiences, indicating a gradual increase in openness and normalization of emotional distress.



The Children's Day session on 12th November 2025 emphasized positivity, celebration, and emotional relief. Through activity-based engagement, the session provided a temporary emotional reprieve from the stress of illness. Both children and parents experienced moments of joy and connection, reinforcing the importance of incorporating positive emotional experiences within the treatment journey.



The session on 21st November 2025 focused specifically on parents of pediatric cancer patients, addressing the emotional burden of caregiving. Participants engaged in group discussions around challenges, stress, and uncertainties associated with their roles. This session marked a noticeable increase in emotional sharing, with parents expressing feelings of exhaustion, concern, and responsibility, while also benefiting from mutual validation.



The Christmas celebration session on 8th December 2025 further strengthened group bonding and emotional upliftment. Through festive activities and shared experiences, participants experienced a sense of community and belonging. The session contributed to emotional relief and reinforced the importance of collective support systems during prolonged treatment periods.



A significant shift in depth and engagement was observed from the session conducted on 18th December 2025, which involved parents of children aged 2 to 10 years. With 18 participants actively involved, the session focused on caregiving challenges specific to younger children. Participants demonstrated increased comfort in sharing personal experiences, reflecting the development of trust and psychological safety within the group.



The session on 12th January 2026 introduced experiential activities aimed at enhancing communication and resilience. In a paired drawing exercise, participants sat back-to-back, where one gave instructions and the other drew accordingly. This activity highlighted the inherent difficulties in communication and understanding, helping parents relate this to their interactions with their children. A subsequent activity involving passing a coin while maintaining connection symbolized the challenges faced during treatment and the importance of restarting despite setbacks. Participants reported gaining meaningful insights into both communication and resilience.



On 29th January 2026, the session focused on fostering positivity through engagement. Beginning with introductions and discussions around personal experiences with cancer,

participants were gradually drawn into interactive activities such as games and creative exercises. The atmosphere became increasingly light and participatory, with laughter and spontaneous involvement. The concluding reflection revealed a critical insight—participants recognized that despite the presence of illness, they could still create positive emotional environments within their families.



The session on 17th February 2026 represented a deeper level of emotional processing. Focused on handling emotions, participants engaged in an activity where they identified and reconstructed images representing different emotions. They were then encouraged to reflect on their own experiences of these emotions. This led to intense sharing, with many participants expressing feelings of helplessness and emotional distress, often accompanied by tears. Importantly, the group dynamic facilitated peer support, where individuals who had navigated similar challenges shared coping strategies and hopeful outcomes. The session concluded on a note of validation and emotional release.

On 26th February 2026, the focus shifted toward mindset and goal orientation. Participants engaged in drawing activities under time constraints and structured goals, allowing them to reflect on their approach to challenges. The discussion highlighted that while individual paths and goals may differ, a positive and determined mindset plays a crucial role in overcoming adversity. Participants demonstrated increased cognitive reframing and a more constructive outlook toward their situations.

The final session on 10th March 2026 consolidated the learning from previous sessions by addressing fears associated with cancer across its trajectory—from diagnosis to treatment. Participants openly discussed their fears, followed by a drawing activity where identical instructions resulted in varied outcomes. This reinforced the understanding that each individual's journey with cancer is unique. A subsequent hand-manipulation activity illustrated how difficult situations can feel overwhelming, while also emphasizing that individuals have the capacity to regain control. The session was well received and reflected a mature level of emotional insight and resilience among participants.



Overall Impact Assessment

Across the 12 sessions, a clear and measurable progression was observed in participant engagement, emotional openness, and coping capacity. Early sessions were characterized by cautious participation and limited sharing, whereas later sessions demonstrated active involvement, emotional expression, and peer-supported coping.

Participants reported reduced feelings of isolation, increased emotional awareness, improved understanding of their children's experiences, and enhanced ability to manage stress and uncertainty. The development of a supportive peer environment was a key outcome, where participants not only received support but also contributed meaningfully to others' healing processes.

Conclusion

The psycho-oncology support sessions conducted at CPAA by the Rising India Research Foundation highlight the critical importance of integrating psychosocial care within cancer treatment. The program successfully facilitated emotional processing, strengthened coping mechanisms, and fostered a sense of community among patients and caregivers.

The observed transformation in participant engagement and resilience underscores the need for continued, structured psycho-oncology interventions within cancer care ecosystems, with potential for scalability and broader implementation.