

## Spotlight: Asha's Story

It is only when they are absolutely exhausted and at their wits' end that most caregivers turn to professional counselling. It is seen, at best, as a last resort. Asha's case was typical.

Asha was living with her elderly mother (now deceased), who had been declining from dementia. Even with the assistance of a domestic helper, Asha could not cope with her caregiving role as she was grappling with poor health herself.

She has six siblings yet felt she had to be solely responsible for the care of their mother as she was the only unmarried child. Her stress level and anxiety escalated as her mother's health worsened.

When Asha finally came to Hua Mei Counselling for help, her 'presenting issues' were to do with caregiver stress, poor family relationships, communication issues and dealing with death and bereavement.

We worked with Asha on her perspective of caregiving for her mother, helping to define her concerns and the ways to meet her needs. Among these were re-connecting with her siblings and preparing her for their mother's death.

At the family conference that we facilitated, Asha found relief and comfort as she realised that her siblings did care for their mother in their own ways. As her mother's death was imminent, we also helped Asha to anticipate and deal with the imminent emotional loss and practical lifestyle adjustments to come.

While the life situations she had to encounter could not be changed, over the course of our work together, Asha's mental and emotional capacity to deal with them certainly improved.