



## LET'S LIVE

“If you cannot do great things,  
Do small things in a great way”

– Napoleon Hill

The second half of 2019 has been an eventful period for us since the inception of Let's Live. We started out with renting a small space for 6 months starting 6<sup>th</sup> of June. It was called *The Orange Room* because of the colour and vibes. Entire June was spent on raising the funds, prepping the place, charting out the plan for 6 months, planning the inauguration and setting up the space.

**July 1, 2019: Unveiling The Orange Room, Trivandrum**



The Orange Room: a space for non-judgemental listening - started functioning in Trivandrum city inside Weavers Village in Rosscote Lane, Vazhuthacaud. This project of Let's Live was officially inaugurated by Biju Prabhakar IAS on 01. July 2019 at 4 pm. The inauguration ceremony saw supporters and officials from all walks of life. Dr. Mridul Eapen - Planning board member spoke about suicide in the Kerala context. Dr. Anju Mathew- Associate Professor, Dept. of Psychiatry, Govt. Medical College, Trivandrum who was heading the Suicide

prevention clinic for over 10 years there spoke about significance of mental health in young generation. Sabriye Tenberken and Paul Kronenberg, co-founders of Kanthari talked about the journey and transformation of Let's Live from a seed to a sapling over past two years. Archana Gopinath - Founder, The Reading Room, Trivandrum spoke about significance of a safe space for open discussions. The occasion saw many eminent guests and enthusiastic youth who were interested in mental health. Sherin Noordheen, Founder-Director of Let's Live spoke about the vision of Let's Live and the concept of The Orange Room. Thomas Mohan, board member concluded the ceremony with vote of thanks.



### **Hiring the Interns**

The advertisement posted in Facebook for hiring volunteers saw positive responses.

*We are looking for enthusiastic youngsters who could help us with administrative activities at The Orange Room. This is a non-conventional space for mental health support and services.*

*Project: The Orange Room*

*Owner: Let's Live*

*Contract duration: 6 months*

*Type of Contract: Internship/ Volunteering*

After a couple of round of interviews & discussions, we took 2 interns - Arjun Maroli and Aish Z who started helping out with The Orange Room activities since end of July.

Click [here](#) to read more about Arjun & Aish.

### **Services offered by The Orange Room**

1. Individual appointments for non-judgemental listening
2. Groups Sessions for peer support and discussions ( Depression in men, Men & Mental Health, Women & Mental Health)
3. Public awareness events focussed on open conversations about mental health

**Public event: July 21 - Mental Health in Popular Culture - Reviewing Kumbalanghi Nights**

Every third Sunday, at The Orange Room, we examine Mental Health in Pop culture. Examples of pop cultural items include film, television programs and commercials, video games, Internet memes, brand names and symbols, sports, slang words and catch-phrases, clothing fads and even food. We begin the Mental Health in Popular Culture series with Kumbalangi Nights - a popular culture Malayalam movie which is full of so-called psycho characters.

What happens when a bunch of script writers and movie makers come up with such a movie full of common “uncommon” characters? Are they doing justice to those who actually suffer from various mental health issues? Does the movie spread a positive mental health image? Movies such as this one - does it spread mental health awareness and help reduce the stigma associated with it? Or does it spread misconceptions and add on to the stigma?

Click [here](#) to read more about this event.

### **Public event: August 25 - Mental Health in Popular Culture - Reviewing Athiran**

In August we explored the Malayalam movie *Athiran* and the following aspects depicted in the movie.

- What is the projected image of a person in the Autism Spectrum?
- What is the real image of a person in the Autism Spectrum?
- What is the projected image of a person suffering from schizophrenia with delusions?
- What is the real image of a person suffering from schizophrenia with delusions?

Athiran movie review saw an expert panel comprising of Dr . Dinesh - Psychiatrist, Mental health centre, Trivandrum, Annie Charles - Autism Expert @ CADDRE and Nisanth Sasi - Film maker explaining different perspectives from their own point of view. The event saw a healthy mix of youth from all walks of life comprising of students, psychologists, education experts, occupational therapists, and techies etc. who were curious about mental health depicted in movies.



### **Public event: August 18 - Friendship -n- Mental Health**

This August we celebrated genuine Friendships. A true Friend is the best counselor you could ever have. We facilitated an evening where the youth could share their stories and experiences about how good friends have improved their mental health and supported them through hard times.

There are friends whom you can call at 2 am, whom you trust with your life that they are going to pick your call anytime anywhere no matter how busy their lives are. It's called Prioritization- another word for friendship.

This session was an occasion to express gratitude to all the nice Friendship we share/shared and the friends we have/had in our life. But then you can't always entrust them with the responsibility of your life. Sometimes they have their own life and priorities...what if you need support during one such moment where your best friend is unavailable?

We talked about how positive people come handy on such occasions. Know a few of them and keep them close , so you can get your positivity shot anytime anywhere in case your friend is unavailable. And if none of it works out, you're always welcome at The Orange Room...we have surplus of energy and positivity to share.



### **Public event: September 22- Mental Health in Popular Culture - Role of Self-Help Books**

The session on Books and Mental Health held at the Orange Room saw 15 participants with varied interests...all connected by a common thread - Books! After the first set of introduction, we formed groups - those who grew up with books as best friends, those who picked up books to find answers to their life issues, those who just had a happy childhood and grew up reading balarama and books of that sort. And we shared stories of depression and the books that were useful during those phases. For some it was Secret, for someone else it was Man's search for Meaning...the list goes on.

Our guest speaker - Archana - Founder, The Reading Room, Trivandrum concluded the session stating - we all need validation and positive affirmations... For some it's people and for some it's books!





**Public event: September 10 - Working Together to prevent suicides**

World Suicide Prevention Day is an awareness day observed on 10 September every year, in order to provide worldwide commitment and action to prevent suicides. The theme this year is Working Together To Prevent Suicides. During this event, we discussed about how we can reach out to our friends and family if we feel suicidal and also what we need to do if someone close to us reaches out to us. The session saw about 10 people from various walks of life sharing their experiences with suicidal ideation and attempts and what saved them and how significant it is to ask someone “are you okay”.

**Public event: September 29 - Mental Health in Deaf Community**

September 20-29, 2019 was the Deaf Awareness Week. Let's Live was proud to announce its first ever initiative for the Deaf Community - Exploring mental health in the Deaf Community. This experimental initiative of Let's Live was aimed to extend the mental health awareness to Deaf community. The event saw a couple of deaf youth and ISL interpreters sharing their experience about mental health and learning a few techniques to understand one-self better.





## Concluding Soon: The Orange Room @ Trivandrum

Our first project for Non-judgemental listening - The Orange Room will come to its completion on 6<sup>th</sup> of December at Rosscote Lane, Vazhuthacaud, Trivandrum. Once we do an Evaluation of this project, we may consider re-opening such spaces across Kerala. Or we might even come back with better ways to address the Mental Health issues. Until then, let's help ourselves as well as those around us. Hug your family and friends, Ask "Are you okay", Listen to understand without judgements and Spread the light.

Thanks for all your support.

Let's Live!

**Sherin Noordheen**

Founder-Director

19 October 2019

Trivandrum, Kerala