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‘We reached out to each other’

MINU BUDHIA TRAINED HERSELF TO HELP NOT ONLY HER DAUGHTER, BUT COUNTLESS OTHER KIDS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

Parents usually drive their children to realize unfulfilled dreams. But for Minu Budhia, it was a role reversal. The childhood dream of becoming a doctor was realized when Prachi, her very special younger daughter — who was diagnosed with ADHD, low IQ and bipolar disorder — encouraged her to take up courses in mental therapy.

“It was in the late 1990s, when my daughter was going to pre-school, that I began receiving a lot of complaints,” Minu says.

“Since she never sat still, the teacher labelled her ‘naughty’. A mother’s instinct told me something was wrong. But there were no proper facilities available in Kolkata then. Awareness on such issues was very little. So, I travelled abroad and got her diagnosed. After a bout of depression that followed when I struggled to accept that she was a special child, things began to fall into place. I travelled again; this time not in search of a cure but to train myself to manage her. I underwent formal training in child brain development in Philadelphia, US, followed by a cognitive behaviour therapy course

from London,” Minu recounts.

After qualifying as a psychotherapist, she became a student counsellor at JD Birla and St Xavier’s and also practised at Belle Vue.

“It was around then that I realized there was no such holistic centre which could address all issues related to the mind. I wanted to apply the expertise I gained while training my daughter. This passion and dream gave birth to Caring Minds, a psychological and cognitive wellness centre that is now my third child.”

Learning from her personal experience, the first thing she advocates in child-related disorders is counselling parents. “Until I accepted my daughter as she was, I was in a constant battle with myself. I was unhappy and so was she. As soon as acceptance came, we reached out to each other. In fact, now the entire family dotes on her.

Prachi is my darling. While my elder daughter Preeyam is my weakness, Prachi is my strength and inspiration. She helped me rediscover myself and appreciate life like never before,” Minu adds.

