

City's Caring Minds now in Tinsukia

OUR SPECIAL
CORRESPONDENT

Calcutta: A city-based mental health facility is all set to start another unit in Tinsukia, Assam.

The unit, which will be inaugurated on Saturday, hopes

to cater to the entire North-east, with special focus on children and adolescents.

The pandemic has affected the mental health of people in an unprecedented manner. Assam alone recorded over 3,200 suicides in 2020, a jump of over 35 per cent from the 2019 count, according to the National Crime Records Bureau. Many of the victims were unemployed.

Rights activists have at-

tributed the rise in suicides to frustration and anxieties triggered by the pandemic.

"Mental healthcare has been long neglected, especially in tier two and tier three cities. Because of limited awareness about mental health, people are silently suffering. The spotlight fell on rising mental health issues, especially depression and anxiety, during Covid times," said Minu Budhia, the founder-director of

Caring Minds, which will start the facility in Tinsukia.

Budhia, who traces her roots to Tinsukia, launched Caring Minds in Calcutta in 2013.

Since then, the mental health care institute has catered to thousands of people. Her younger daughter spurred Budhia to start this venture.

"Prachi, my younger darling, is my strength and my in-

spiration. A special needs child with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, low IQ, and bipolar disorder — she is the WHY behind my social initiatives, all of which are a tribute to my journey with her," said Budhia.

In Tinsukia, Caring Minds will operate out of the RC Agarwal Multi Speciality Hospital on Makum Road.

In the run-up to the formal launch, the unit offered counselling sessions on Friday. The session will continue on Saturday, said an official. The helpline for booking a session is 7050096961.

"We got over 60 bookings in the first two days," said an official of the institute.

Imran Hussain, a resident of Tinsukia, had come with his eight-year-old son to the facility on Friday.

"My son suffers from a cognitive impairment. Till now, I had to take him to Guwahati (around 400km away) for therapy sessions. A mental health facility near my home is a god-send," said Hussain, an employee of an oil company.

The unit is collaborating with several educational insti-



Minu Budhia at the Tinsukia unit of Caring Minds

tutions in Assam.

"Children and adolescents are among the worst affected during the pandemic. The absence of social interactions has deeply impacted their mental health. Through the partnership with schools, we will lay special focus on the mental well-being of students," said Budhia.

"The unit will be a one-stop solution for all issues related to psychological health. Our team comprises psychiatrists, psychologists and all other resources," said the official.