

SATURDAY 3 OCTOBER 2026

Malarvattam: Making Space to Share



Took part **2**
Where aikyam space, Fort Kochi

Facilitators **3**
Run by Olimalar Foundation

Input

What went in Community survey responses, invitation poster, session slides, facilitator scripts, chai and biscuits.
Outside help Partners and community contacts helped circulate the invitation.
Time 2 hours
Cost ₹85

Activity

We surveyed nearly 100 people in Fort Kochi and Mattancherry to understand what support the community wanted. Their responses highlighted a need for parents and caregivers to share experiences, feel heard and support one another. This led us to create and name Malarvattam ("flower circle"), a monthly parents and caregivers' circle.

For the first gathering, we chose a get-to-know-you conversation. The facilitators reviewed the survey together, developed discussion prompts and prepared slides. Their role was to make space for everyone to contribute, listen and summarise what participants shared, rather than give expert parenting advice. We designed a poster and shared it widely through partners and community contacts.

On Saturday, the facilitators held a mock circle, working through the slides and practising how they would introduce questions and guide the discussion. They also prepared their own scripts for Sunday's session.

Two participants joined the first circle. Together, we explored memories of childhood, children's lives today and experiences of parenting and caregiving.

Output

- 1 Invitation poster designed and shared
- 1 Parent and caregiver circle held

Outcome

Connection Sharing experiences Peer support

Participants shared caregiving experiences and concerns. One said she enjoyed the interaction and wanted opportunities for her own personal growth, helping us understand what future circles could offer.

(We observed it)

Learnings

Broad questions helped open the conversation. We learned to include different caregivers and make space for their own interests and wellbeing. Personal sharing also highlighted the importance of confidentiality and clear boundaries around the facilitators' role.

Only two attended despite the widely shared invitation. One participant identified afternoon family responsibilities as a timing barrier. Next time, we will ask about suitable times, advertise a specific topic and follow up personally. We still need to understand why others did not attend.

For focused topics, we will explore inviting a suitable expert to support practical discussion. Future circles should help caregivers understand their own responses and children's experiences, while keeping space to share and learn from one another.

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