

CENTRE FOR COUNSELLING AND SUPPORT

Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore

A Pilot Project on Peer counseling from the Centre for Counseling and Support in coordination with Student Council and Student Support Network.

Peer Counseling:

Objective:

- To create a support group among the students enrolled for various programs of IISc to create awareness on the need to seek help for Emotional distress and mental well being to enjoy productive Research Career and Academic Excellence
- To identify the students in distress and to help them through the Peer Support group
- To create awareness among the students to understand the need for sharing any kind of distress be it Academic, career, Personal or relationship, just at the onset through Peer Counseling and if need be to seek professional help
- To create a social site where in the students can share their knowledge on Mental Health issues (articles, write ups) their distress and experiences of distress and/or the coping strategies and techniques under moderation by the Counselor at the Centre for Counseling and Support, IISc.

On Peer Counseling:

Peer counseling is a support group that will be created in each of the department of IISc from the students who have enrolled for PhD programs. They are expected to play the supportive role of a counselor in identifying the students with emotional distress and offer initial psychological help to cope with/address the issue. The Peer Support group will be trained in the Basic Counseling Skills, by professionals from the Centre for Counseling and support, the Health Centre and NIMHANS.

This is basically aimed at helping the most vulnerable, who for some reason hesitate to approach the professional Counselor at the centre or feel hesitant to speak on the issues faced with any. Emotional problems and psychological distress is faced by most of the students pursuing their higher studies and it is found to be one of the main reasons for poor performance in academics which eventually leads to dropping out of academics in some cases. These students with bottled up emotions at some point in time end up with acute emotional adjustment issues and fall a prey to high stressful situations. High stress levels are counterproductive to professional enhancement as well as personal development. So it is believed that the Peer Support group will help to bridge the gap between the students who are shy to take help in times of distress. They will be trained to provide emotional, social and psychological help to the needy. They will be expected to refer the sensitive issues and any mental imbalances to the professional at the Health centre and/or at the Centre for Counseling and Support. If the need is felt the supervisor will be informed by the professional.

External referrals to mental Health Professionals or other Psychologists will be suggested, if the need is felt, with due consideration to the procedural expectations of the institute.

Another role that Peer support group will be involved in is to assist the Counselor at the institute while conducting orientation programs for the freshers and the feedback session for the seniors at the beginning and end of each academic year. This will help the freshers to identify the persons to look for help to understand the physical as well as academic environment of the institute as they join. This will address the ambiguity and the initial adjustment issues that the students face within the campus initially

Functional Aspect:

One scholar from the 2nd and 3rd year of PhD program from both the genders in each department will be identified for undergoing the training in Basic Counseling Skills and coping strategies. The due permission will be taken from the concerned supervisor and the chairman of the departments for allowing the students to undergo the training.

Training Hours:

- 50 Hours of practical training and theoretical inputs.
- The sessions of training will be with duration of minimum 2 to 3 hours maximum
- The number of sessions may be one or two per week.
- Probable period of starting the Program: 2nd Week of JUNE.

Topics for Training:

1. Understanding what Counseling is all about, the Ethics of Counseling and training for Basic Counseling Skills for Active listening, identifying the distress clues, approach, mode of communication etc
2. Understanding Self, Environment
3. Understanding Personality
4. Understanding Mental Health and Hygiene for Emotional Well being
5. Understanding Interpersonal and Intra personal make up, developing effective communication skills
6. Understanding academic stress and pressure in the right perspective
7. Overcoming Negative Emotions
8. Understanding Relationships in the correct perspective
9. Coping skills and supportive therapies and strategies for addressing the emotional distress
10. Crisis Intervention and Supervisory Sessions.

Certification:

At the end of the mandatory training hours the students will be given a certificate for having undergone the training with due signatures of the Director, the chairman of CCS and the Resource Persons.

In addition to this CCS would like to set up a Help line Box in each Department for students to post their queries. The queries will be answered through the CCS BLOG. This will be maintained with the help of SSN and the PEER SUPPORT GROUP that will be developed.

Prof.Nalini Dwarakanath, PhD
Counseling Psychologist,
Centre for Counseling and Support,
Indian Institute of Science,
Bangalore