

SELF DEVELOPMENT CELL



Teacher In-charge: Mrs. Kavita Jajoo

The COVID-19 pandemic scenario across the country started transitioning and the R.A.Podar College of Commerce & Economics (Autonomous) started resuming in person schedule with happiness and zest. The students and faculty members both welcomed the change and similarly counselling sessions were also being offered as per a hybrid model. The Self Development Cell started functioning from July 2022 and bi-weekly sessions were conducted in-person on Thursdays and online on Tuesdays between 10.30 am to 2.30 pm.

The Self Development Cell was involved in conducting certain activities along with the bi-weekly student support sessions through the year. Some of the salient features are as follows:

- **Student Induction Programme – Stage 3:** Under the guidance of respected Ms. Kavita Jajoo; the counsellor conducted a workshop online for students of the T.Y. B Com, TY BMS & TY Actuarial Studies batch on the 15th July 2022 from 5 pm to 6.30 pm. The workshop was conducted via the Zoom portal and an entire committee of student volunteers and teachers helped Ms. Sukhada with the logistics and planning. The aim of the workshop was to generate a dialogue about the varied issues faced by today's youth. The concepts covered were raising self-awareness, understanding the importance of social skills and interpersonal efficacy, emotional intelligence, and effective self-help strategies to manage challenging areas. Lastly, understanding today's world of work and how the youth can bridge and get ready in a wholesome

manner. Open-ended questions, group discussions, self-reflection exercises and so on were used along with case studies to help the students relate to the different constructs in the workshop. Reading literature was provided for the students as well. They filled up a questionnaire to post the workshop. This was aimed to ensure student participation, connectivity and internalisation of the themes with the workshop conducted.

●State level workshop for Teachers across Maharashtra conducted at R.A.Podar College: Empowering Young Minds – A workshop on Basic Counseling Skills for Teachers:

A state-level workshop was organised by the R. A. Podar College of Commerce & Economics under the efficient leadership of Ms. Jajoo. The college counsellors, Ms. Shital Ravi & Ms. Sukhada Kelkar, were the facilitators from Disha Counseling Center for the event. The target group was teachers from Junior & degree colleges across the state of Maharashtra and the event was organised on the 23rd November 2022 from 9.00 am to 5.00 pm. The workshop was a day-long interactive session designed to address the college teachers across the state of Maharashtra. The aim of the workshop was to help teachers understand the role alignment of being a teacher equipped with basic counselling skills, basic hands-on tools and techniques essential between a student-teacher relationship, and brief crisis intervention strategies in the post-Covid classroom scenarios. Lastly, the aim was to equip teachers to also refer students to appropriate professionals in face of deeper underlying psychological and academic issues.

Individual Career Sessions:

The Self-Development Cell conducted a total of 85 career counselling sessions between the academic year July 2022 till December 2022. Individual career counselling sessions were held for 22 students from all streams in Junior and Degree College. Due to the post-pandemic scenario students also reported higher levels of anxiety and confusion in career decision making. Many students have been observed to have changed career paths and drop out from ongoing courses. A large shift in interests and career aspirations has been noticed in the post-pandemic times; hence significant hands-on support was given and students were consistently encouraged, supported, and guided to develop a thorough market research and observational approach while planning future prospects.

Various queries from students were answered about courses, their eligibility, entrance exams and top-ranking institutes. Information was also given about general options after HSC, B.Com, and Graduation. Information was also given regarding requirements for Postgraduate options after completing Commerce stream and other related careers, Banking exam, Chartered Accountancy, Liberal Arts, Social Work and Welfare, Finance related fields, Computer related fields, Mass Media, Civil Services, Hotel Management, travel & tourism, Designing related programmes, Business, Law, Economics, Foreign Languages, Defence and so on.

Individual Personal Sessions:

A total of approximately 525-530 counselling sessions were conducted within Individual Personal counselling via online as well as offline modes for students from all streams in Junior and Degree College.

Various issues were handled by the counsellor this year as well. Their concerns ranged from conflicts within families due to Covid-19 post pandemic changes, transitions, losses and economic changes experienced through the choppy times. Many other issues were reported for help in sessions like queer preferences and need for exploration of sexual identities, fears and phobias, suicidal ideations and family intervention, peer pressure & handling bullying via social media, anxiety and stress-related concerns, psychosomatic issues, personality development, study planning difficulties, exam stress, time management difficulties and study related issues. Some salient points are as follows:

Brief summary of Counseling & Guidance sessions conducted:

1. **Duration of session:** minimum 30 mins upto maximum of 1.15 minutes per student
2. **Counselling Themes:** Counseling and Psychotherapy as well as Career Guidance was conducted depending on the presenting concerns.
3. **No. of sessions:** 525-530 - Total no. of sessions were conducted from July 2022 to January 2023 by Mrs. Sukhada.
 - During the post-pandemic scenario, the students were informed to seek a counselling appointment by writing an email inquiry via the counsellor's email id as well as walk-in slots were also available. Accordingly, the students were allocated a session slot on Tuesdays and Thursdays between 10.30 am to 2.30 pm.
 - Individual Counseling was provided within sessions.

- Parental Reach sessions, Family Therapy & Joint Therapy sessions were engaged between students and their family members depending on the nature of the concerns identified.
- Some group sessions were also conducted to address certain reported incidents of Social Media bullying amongst students.
- 6-7 counselling sessions were also conducted for some members of the non-teaching staff for stress management and personal difficulties

The psychotherapy and guidance sessions were directed at handling various issues like detailed below:

- Handling health related anxiety, panic attacks, depressive symptoms presentations due to the stressors of the pandemic times.
- Identifying and dealing with self-harm episodes and creating support networks during the same. Raising family support systems to ensure student safety.
- Suicidal intervention & crisis management sessions for students reported by teachers and sometimes parents.
- Handling student's mental - emotional concerns & lifestyle rehabilitation in the post-pandemic times.
- Grief Counseling for students & family members affected by pandemic and related losses.
- Supportive Therapy and counselling given for parents diagnosed with terminal illness viz. Breast carcinoma, lifestyle disorders in family members, psychological disturbances in family members impacting family members as students.
- Difficulties in concentration and improving attention span, and effective study management.
- Exam anxiety, study skills and career decision making.
- Realistic goal setting, motivational difficulties.
- Relationship management & Handling peer pressure.
- Self confidence, Self Worth issues, Communication Skills training, Time Management.
- Handling Social Media pressure and bullying during the pandemic times.
- Handling difficulties faced by students related to adapting to sanitisation, isolation and lockdown generated fears.
- Supportive therapy for students with obsessive-compulsive disorders, gender-confusion and students through phases of queer centred exploration of personal identity.

- Career uncertainty causing emotional and familial distress.
- Handling gadget addiction & self-management related to social media.
- Handling family conflicts and dealing with parental pressure.
- Effective Self - Regulation skills and balanced lifestyle management.
- Career awareness, Career Exploration & Career Information exploration were conducted during some of the students counselling sessions. Parents were also involved in some cases for a deeper intervention.
- Crisis management sessions were conducted, and appropriate referrals were given for a suicidal prevention case.

Some of the intervention strategies used within counseling sessions were as follows:

- The students were taught effective study skills techniques, concentration techniques, time management skills, motivation, goal setting, acceptance of self relaxation techniques and techniques to handle emotional stress.
- Behavioural Modification therapy, REBT, CBT, cognitive therapy, motivational counselling, vocational guidance and coaching, Family therapy, Grief Counseling, Crisis intervention, Palliative Therapy Approach of counselling, Narrative-based therapeutic approaches, and Art-Based Modality were some of the approaches used to help clients to address the issues.

Future Plans & Programmes:

A month long program which will be open for students will be conducted as a symposium addressing the different areas in Mental Health and student participation will be encouraged via poster competitions, mental health sensitive write ups and training workshops to be organised starting from the degree college students of first and second year.