



YOU ARE NOT ALONE
Students Counselling Cell, Surendranath College

Background for the creation of the Counselling Cell:

Counselling is a process that aims to facilitate personal well-being of the students through adequate support, guidance for a healthy body and mind. The Counseling cell encourages the students to understand themselves, their environments both at home and outside of home. The Counseling cell encourages the students to understand themselves and the issues that trouble them and assists them to resolve those issues.

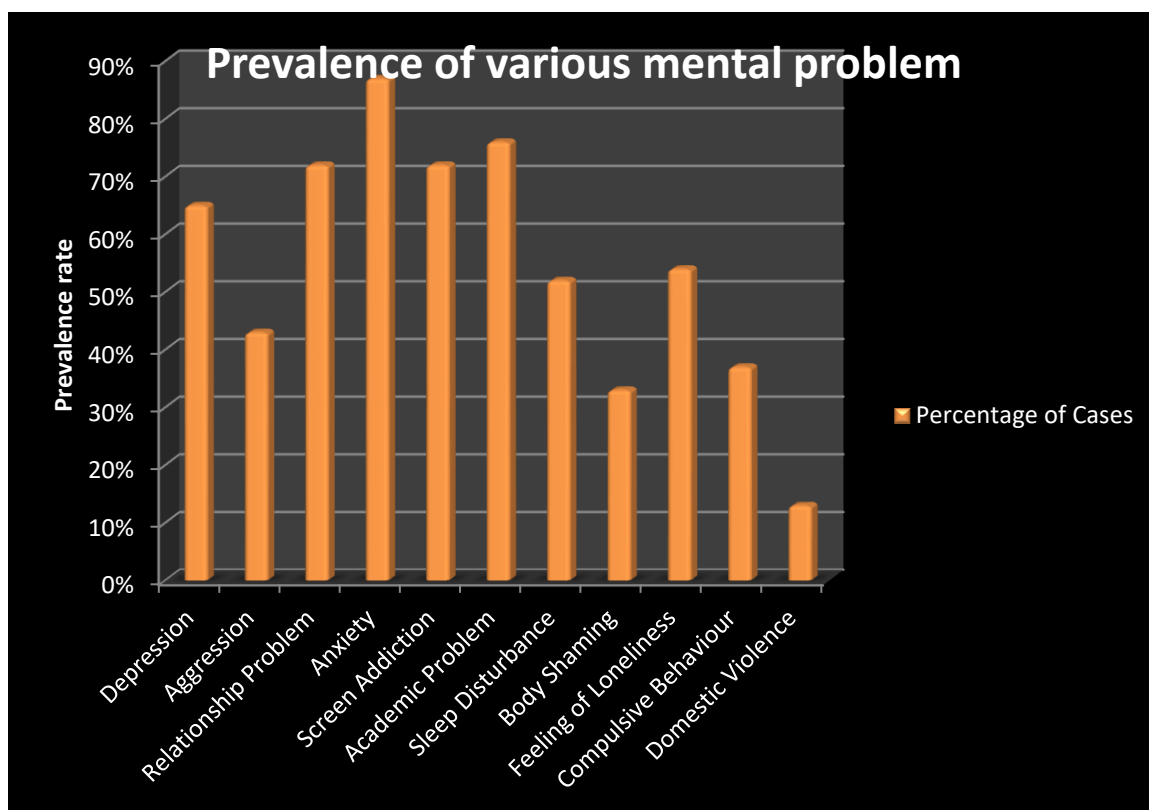
Department of psychology has played a crucial role during the lockdown and post lockdown phase of COVID-19 handling various issues related to mental health of the students. In this constantly changing scenario, the counselling cell plays a vital role in an educational institution to facilitate an overall development of students.

Purpose of the Counselling Cell:

Student counselling cell aims to help students to build a sense of self-efficacy, self-confidence and self-reliance during such a critical time. One of the major purposes of this cell is to provide assistance so that students can deal effectively with their anxiety, stress and also to guide them in selecting appropriate coping strategies to handle these issues. The Cell also aims to help them to explore their inner potentials, interests and motivate them to fulfill their aspirations and goals.

Teachers of the psychology department, Surendranath College, extend their cooperation during such a critical time. Teachers' primary concern is to maintain and enhance mental health of students as they are suffering from not only severe stress, loneliness but also to provide them with a patient listening, creating a favourable emotional environment to express their fear and unexpressed tension.

Nature of Problems Encountered by the Counselling Cell During Lockdown and Post-lockdown Phase

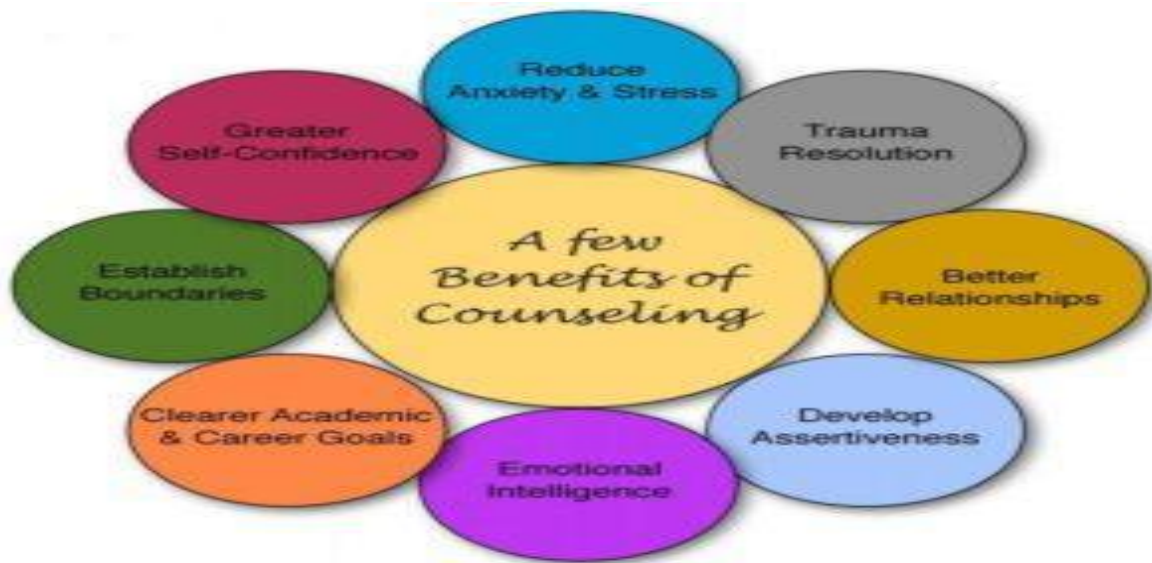


Functions of the Counselling Cell:

- **Identification of problems/issues which trouble students:** this provides a favourable emotional environment and assures confidentiality so that students can feel comfortable to come out with any personal problem without hesitation.
- **Provide help to express their tensions and anxieties:** Stress of prolonged uncertainty caused by home confinement has been reported to affect mental well-being. Stress and anxiety were significantly increased among students.
- **Promote well-being and empowerment of students:** Counselling cell contributes to promote well-being of the students and help empowers them with life skills needed to face the challenges of this dynamic world. Counselling cell has also taught them to take things lightly and helped them to see the situation from a different perspective. Most importantly, the counseling cell has tried to change the mental state of the students, so that they get prepared to take everything in a balanced and realistic ways.
- **Identify students who require service on a priority basis especially during the lockdown phase:** Social distancing and quarantine during the Covid -19 pandemic have negatively influenced mental health, triggering symptoms such as anxiety, anger,

fear, stress and depression. Therefore, the primary focus of this cell is to identify those students who are depressed and have withdrawal symptoms or suffering from inability to control their behaviour.

- **Anger- Aggression Management:** The strict measures of lockdown have resulted in augmented aggressive behaviour involving negative emotions such as anger, hostility, restlessness, impulsiveness and depression. These negative emotions may have driven the students towards expressing aggression in both physical and verbal modes. Anger management helps them to become self-aware and accept that there are certain situations which they cannot change, or have little control over.
- **Dealing with domestic violence:** In the course of the Covid-19 outbreak, a significant rise in domestic violence against adolescents has been reported worldwide. The Counseling cell also encountered a few cases of domestic violence. The aftereffects of domestic violence include anxiety, depression, low self-esteem, disobedience, physical-mental health deterioration and poor academic adjustment. Counselling cell has provided help to create awareness against domestic violence, to raise voice against any atrocity, and has arranged discussion with parents if and when necessary.
- **Provide Non-directional help:** Counselor functions as a catalyst to find resolution of their problems through a non-directive approach. Counselor avoids being judgmental towards the information put forth by the students and avoids offering advices or directions while using this technique. It helps the students to take personal responsibility for decisions by providing them an empathic and non-judgmental environment to think through the issues being talked about.
- **Provide Directional Guidance:** The cell provides direction and guidance when the students are unable to make decisions due to severe distress during Covid-19 lockdown and post-lockdown phase. While using this technique, attention is focused upon a particular problem and its possible solution.
- Counselors direct the thinking of the students by informing, explaining and sometimes advising by providing possible solutions of the problems of the students. Here, counselors help in decision making to solve immediate problems as counselee is unable to take his/her own decision due to severe distress or anxiety.
- **Building Self-efficacy and removing barriers:** The cell helps them to build self-efficacy by removing barriers that hinder their growing potentials and makes them feel more resourceful to deal with stresses of life.



Process of Counselling:

Step I: Awareness of the need for help: This stage starts with the awareness of the need for help for the students. Students can select any one of the counselors from the college website and call for an appointment. Convenient date and time then will be set by consultation between both the counselor and the counselee. Students need to provide their name, roll number and name of the department while taking appointments. In this stage, students will be assured by the counselors about the confidentiality of the information given by them.

Step II: Development of counselor-counselee relationship- This can be viewed as a bridge connecting the counselee's personality with that of the counselor's, penetrating through the outer defenses. The development of a warm and understanding relationship is the first step in counselling relationships. It is characterized by mutual liking, trust and respect.

Step III: Aiding the expression of feelings and clarification of problems- Counselling cell helps students to come out with their inner feelings and clarify their problems. In this stage, previously tied up emotions are released and can be used constructively. The expression of feelings not only helps them in the release of emotional tensions but also helps them to clearly state their problems.

Step IV: Exploration of deeper emotions: Counselor should not be content with the superficial view of the feelings and problems as stated by the students, rather, the counselor must try to explore the deeper feelings and conflicting situations which have not only to be brought onto the surface but must also be satisfactorily resolved without damaging the individual's personality.

Step V: Integration process- A proper appreciation of the feeling can help the client see each feeling in its proper perspective without unduly exhibiting fear or withdrawal. This stage

consists of working in close harmony with the client with all the understanding, regard and empathy for the students' innermost feelings.

Step VI: Developing awareness and insight of the students- Counselling cell has tried to develop insight and awareness among the students themselves as well as insight about the world around them. In other words, the counselling cell has provided help to students to develop insight into one's conflicts, inhibitions and pain. Once the students are able to see these problems and emotions in their true perspective these cease to remain painful.

Step VII: Follow up – In this stage, students are encouraged to make use of the counselling benefits that they may have gained to adjust with the world of realities. Therefore, in this stage, counselors can determine the success of counselling. If the students are able to adapt themselves to their surroundings, then it can be inferred that the counselling has been successful.

