

1. Title of the Practice: Seeding Hope Counselling Centre

2. Objectives of the Practice

- Provide Counseling to sustain Student Retention and Success
- Develop Innovative Programs to Support Student the overall development of the students, which will improve their quality of life
- Encourage Psychological Development through Outreach Programs and Prevention
- Provide Training, and Supervision in Counselling skills to Social Work and Psychology Students
- Extend Research Knowledge

3. The Context

As the students of Sacred Heart College are from the rural areas, the need for counselling is quite high. The students who get in the college are mostly first generation learners; also most of them are of low socio economic profile, below poverty lines. They may have unhealthy parenting styles, alcoholic or abusive parents, disturbed study environment, dysfunctional family setup. Coming from such a background, a student will be in need for guidance in emotional, mental and psychological areas for which the counselling services are beneficial. Students those who face age related issues, family issues, peer group issues will find it difficult to concentrate in academics; such students with the guidance of counsellor will be able to cope better in academics and personal life.

The advancement of technology has started to creep in rural areas too, where the students tend to lose their concentration and deviate from the academics because of the usage of cell phones, internet etc. Social media is literally influencing and deviating the students from the right track to which counselling acts as an aid by empowering the student with the ability to think rationally and clearly, have appropriate behaviour and deal with their emotions in a healthy way. A student's success lies in the health status of his/her emotional, psychological, mental well-being, which is taken care through the process of counselling. Hence the need for counselling became a crucial part in Sacred Heart College.

4. The Practice

The Seeding Hope Counselling Center at Sacred Heart College gives individual counselling to both genders equally. First year UG students are given individual orientation about counselling in the beginning of the semester, which creates awareness and rapport with the counsellor. Students those who have arrear papers are given special counselling. Family members of the students also utilize the counselling center of Sacred Heart College. Outreach programmes to students addressing psychological issues are conducted. Awareness programme for schools and colleges in and around Tirupattur are conducted through the counselling center. Past pupils are given the privilege to use the services. Phone counselling is offered to students who feel uneasy to reveal their identity.

The obstacles that the counselling center faced and the strategies adopted to overcome are as follows:

As it's already mentioned that the students are majority from the rural background, they had no awareness about the concept of counselling. It was thought that counselling is just getting advice and people with problems only go to counsellor. Visiting the counsellor was seen as a stigma and students who went were identified as people with severe problems. In order to overcome this issue, since 2014 it was made compulsory that all the first year students In the beginning of the session, meet the counsellor individually. The individual sessions with the students, were targeted to spread awareness on the real concept and essence of counselling. Awareness programs given by the counselling centre also spoke about the importance of counselling.

It was found that lot of students who came for counselling had no motivation to study their subjects and from assessments it was found that the subject which they opted to study was not out of their passion rather it was forced by the parents or due to less mark they were given the other subject. This issue was also addressed during the initial counselling sessions with the first years. Students were motivated to study and accept the subject what they have chosen. 1st year students with arrears are also counseled when the necessity arises.

Students who for reasons like fear of English, inferiority complex, poor body image, low self-esteem etc. often had problems with sustaining in college. These students either perform poor in their subjects, or are most of the time absent or in worst situation want to discontinue their

studies. Students with such issues are identified through SHAPE (Shared Heart Accompaniment Programme of Education) or when they meet the principal for TC are immediately sent to the counsellor. This approach has helped so many students to cope up with their studies and reduced the rate of drop out.

5. Evidence of Success

Scientific research was undertaken to study the effectiveness of the counselling as one of the best practices of Sacred Heart College. The study was extended to students who have visited the Counselling Centre on more than one occasion. The random sampling technique was adopted and one-third of the total population was taken for the study which constituted of 101 respondents. A tool was developed and tested using an online platform to facilitate students to provide their feedback. Two instruments were used to facilitate data, one using a 'Likert' five point rating scale and another a three point rating scale. The reliability of the instrument was tested and found to be. Cronbach's Alpha.