



Counselling students in Colleges: A need

Roopa S Shetty

Sr. Lecturer, Agnel Polytechnic, Vashi, Navi Mumbai, Maharashtra, India

Abstract

In the highly competitive world of today there is tremendous pressure on the student population. Pressured by high expectations, grappling with academic competition and social anxiety, today's college students are seeking counseling in greater numbers than they did in previous generations. In a phase where they are neither children nor adults, the challenges they face everyday make them prone to stress, depression and other mental illnesses. Such symptoms generally go unnoticed, until they reach greater proportions. Adolescents do not confide in their parents, nor are they comfortable revealing their problems to their subject teacher. Though they do confide with their peers, they may not get proper guidance. Hence, there is a great need, not only to have counseling services setup in every college, but also for the faculty to be involved in counseling and assist needy students to use these services. This paper aims to throw light on the counseling need the students in colleges have, and how the faculty by working along with the counselors can alleviate psychological problems in students.

Keywords: pressure, stress, anxiety, depression, counseling, alleviate

Introduction

The college students are the future of our society, they represent the society's investment for future, thus their mental health is an important factor not only for them but also for the society. Many students face psychological problems in college. Stress, depression and anxiety among college students are increasing every year. There are many reasons for such psychological problems,. Most common causes are greater academic demands, changes in family and social life, new and different environment, time pressure, tough competitions etc. Students must be guided and counseled properly to cope up with their emotional problems and measures have to be taken to form student counseling centers in the campus. It is also important that the teachers must be enlightened about these services, so as to encourage students in need of counseling to benefit from these services. Along with this the mentors and mentee program must also be made compulsory in all colleges.

What is meant by counselling?

Counseling is the means by which one person (the counselor) helps another (the client) through purposeful conversation. The process of counseling leads to action on the part of the client. The counseling process creates a mutual trust through an empathetic relationship between the counselor and the counseled (client). The counselor encourages the client to feel free to express his problems and always has unconditional positive regard to the client. In counseling, the emphasis is on making the clients take their own decision, based on their assessment of the problem.

Importance of Counseling

Counseling is an effective intervention, clinically and economically. The communication that takes place within

counseling is conducted within a very special kind of relationship. Practitioners are trained to be able to offer this special kind of relationship using appropriate techniques. Human beings are social creatures who need at least some connections with others. Counseling shares a commitment to apply insights and understandings about the importance of these connections to offer therapeutically effective relationships.

What are psychological problems?

According to health websites and health professionals, psychological problems like stress, depression and anxiety are disorders in mood that make us sad and hopeless for periods of time. These kind of psychological problems have impact for short time and long time. Risks are associated with long term psychological problems which sometimes turn into physical illness.

Causes of psychological problems in students

- Fear of academic excellence.
- Living away from the family.
- Feeling of isolation and loneliness.
- Conflicting relationships.
- Financial conditions.
- Substance abuse.
- Experience of trauma.

Issues faced by students

- **Homesickness:** Transition from home environment to college for some students poses problems. It emerges as homesickness where there is a preoccupation with home focused thoughts. Those who experience homesickness might notice an increase in depressed feelings and minor physical ailments.

- **Difficulty sleeping:** Difficulties due to sleep pose one of the biggest challenges in living for many students. This may be caused due to many disturbances.
- **Anxiety:** Anxiety is a natural consequence of everyday stressful events. To some extent anxiety is good but if it becomes severe, it becomes counter-productive.
- **Social anxiety:** the social scene at college can be anxiety provoking at times while some students are naturally outgoing, most have to work to make social connections. fear of embarrassment, being judged, or fear of rejection
- **Depression:** some students may be suffering from depression, which is when they experience sad, pessimistic feelings of hopelessness for a prolonged period.
- **Trauma:** trauma can happen when a stressful event causes significant distress. When psychological trauma persists and is experienced by the victim through flashbacks, nightmares, and the person might experience post traumatic stress disorder.

Preventive measures to be taken by Colleges

- Workshops and seminars should be conducted to identify the students having problems
- Institutions should mandatorily have counseling centers to keep track of thought process of the students.
- A survey or poll to be conducted to get an insight of the psychological problems among the students.
- Once the students with such psychological problems are identified, counseling has to be they should be counseled.

Role of teachers in decreasing stress in students

Skilled educators know the value of having good relationships with students. Establishing goodwill can help minimize classroom disruptions, improve student engagement, and reduce stress for everyone. Here are some approaches to win student support.

- **Develop rapport with students:** Teachers should develop good relationships with their students by treating them the way they would like to be treated i.e. with respect. Offering positive reinforcement, being consistent, smiling and listening to their concerns all help to gain students' trust and friendship.
- **Get to know your students:** Teachers need to understand their students as individuals. As we talk to them and listen to what's on their minds, they will begin to see that we are not just another adult, but someone who is genuinely interested in them.
- **Protect the students self esteem:** As teachers we are dealing with fragile beings. Adolescence brings insecurities. Being accepted by their peers is the key to their self esteem. Hence, teachers should always take care while disciplining students, so as to not criticize them in front of their peers.
- **Build goodwill on good days:** Mostly teachers interact with students only when there is a disruption. When things are going fine, teachers silently accept the situation, but this is the time to build goodwill by commenting on how much you appreciate them.
- **Encouraging feedback:** students like to feel that they have some say or influence on what goes on in class. If the

teacher is open to receiving feedback, this can bring about a better level of mutual respect.

Need for counselling centers in Colleges

An increasing number of students are struggling with getting treatment for their mental health issues in college. Statistics say that about one-third of college students have difficulty functioning effectively in college. Other statistics are also alarming. More than 30 percent of students who seek counseling services reported that they have seriously considered suicide at some point in their lives. Those who have been working in counseling centers for the last decade have been consistently saying that things are getting worse with regard to college students mental health.

For students to be able to learn at their peak capacity, they need to be physically, emotionally, intellectually and spiritually fine. Students who struggle may eventually drop out of school. But by providing services for their anxiety, depression, and relationship issues, we can help them manage these issues and help them to focus on their academics. Investing in mental health services for college students can help them from dropping out. Every college cares a lot about its retention rate. It's one of the primary indicators of operating a successful institution that students want to stay and that students are succeeding there. Students who participate in counseling, report improvements and satisfaction with their quality of life. Counseling will help every student develop a positive lifestyle and social interest. Counselors should aim to establish positive self esteem and help students to understand the importance of valuing cooperation over competition.

Innovative treatment models

Colleges can overcome the inadequacy of trained counselors in the following ways:

- By developing quick screening tools and brief consultations to rapidly determine the needs of each new student who visits the counseling centre. A brief assessment with a trained counselor can replace a lengthy initial conversation, and then refer the student to the appropriate level of care. For some students a single session with a mental health professional is all they need, perhaps to help them problem solve a situation or talk about a concern. Other students who are in need of more extended care can thus get the care they need. This is a way of getting students to counselors quickly and giving them the treatment they require in a faster way.
- Online programs of treatment are another effective way of counseling. It has been found that the online clients' improvement in well being and anxiety symptoms was significantly better than those receiving face to face therapy. Online programs integrate into each student's life via smart phones. These online programs are very useful to tackle anxiety disorders as well as substance abuse and depression in students. Colleges should provide access to students to receive such online programs of treatment.
- Counseling centers should take outreach initiatives by training students, faculty and other staff in mental health issues and by offering suicide, sexual violence, drug and

alcohol prevention programs. Presentations should be delivered to faculty on ways to detect early signs of student distress, strategies to intervene and techniques for referring them to the appropriate mental health services. Faculty should be instructed to increase student motivation, by imbibing concepts from psychological literature on resilience, growth mindsets and grit.

- All students should be made aware of mental health. And effort should be made to remove the stigma around mental health issues. Colleges should recognize that creating a healthy climate and an open dialogue about mental health needs to be a priority. By such group therapy students can know that they are not the lone sufferers of mental illness. This helps students to interact with other too.
- On national events such as mental Health day and Depression awareness day informational fliers should be distributed and psycho-educational sessions should be conducted. Faculty should also have counseling center staff visit classes and give presentations on stress and anxiety. This kind of classroom sessions demystify what college counselors do but also get students more comfortable with the idea of coming to the counseling centre.

Conclusion

Psychological problems are quite wide spread among college students. The use of counseling as a way of responding to students in distress has grown rapidly in recent years. Counseling has an important preventative role in relation to mental illness. Counseling has the capacity to reduce demand on psychiatric services by preventing less serious problems from becoming more serious, and by helping students to maintain good mental health. Hence colleges must create more effective environment for its students to cope up with the educational pressures and adapt to the educational environment. For psychological well being of college students, counseling programs and mentoring assistance should be added to its curriculum. Counseling centers should also work with faculty to include wellness awareness in their interactions with students. Counseling Professionals should deliver presentations to faculty on ways to detect early signs of students' distress, strategies to intervene and techniques for referring them to the appropriate mental health services. Faculty should be instructed to increase the emotional quotient of students by consistent motivation and therapeutic concepts should be infused into the curriculum.

All educational institutions should champion the idea that student mental health and well being are central to the mission, purposes and outcomes of every college and that they need to be a priority. Mental well being of each student can't just be the responsibility of the counseling centre. But that this is relevant across the college and that everyone from

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