

# Report for Counselling Services and Wellness Office: March 2022 – March 2023

## Mental Health Support Services

- **Counselling Support** - One to one counselling, both online and in person was provided to more than 350 students and PGME trainees for dealing with stress and other mental health issues. Sessions range from 1 to >20 according to each case. Group sessions were conducted in some cases to help students undergoing similar stresses.
- **Robust referral mechanism** to and from student health and student psychiatrist ensured holistic support for students needing medical care as well.
- **Academic Support:** Academically at-risk students referred by the registrar's office were provided support for developing better study strategies resulting in improved outcomes
- **Crisis intervention** was provided for severely disturbed cases identified by year chairs, peers, and hostel management through collaboration with department of psychiatry (for in-patient or emergency care) and student health.
- **Consultations** were provided to faculty and staff concerned about the mental wellbeing of a student or trainee for understanding and supporting them.

## *New initiatives in mental health care:*

- **Formal psychological assessments** were conducted to help PGME management understand and deal with difficult residents. Received excellent feedback by the referring departments.
- **Training for Enhanced mental health screening** – student health physicians and nurses were trained to use tools to assess mental health status and gather relevant information during pre-admission health assessment cycle. Resulted in identification of over 75 students with current or prior mental health issues resulting in proactive management through psychotherapy and psychiatric interventions.
- **Renovation of Counselling Offices** Purpose-built consultation rooms were designed to create a more conducive therapeutic environment. Received excellent feedback from the users.



## Psychoeducational Sessions and Workshops

- **Orientation Sessions** were conducted for incoming and returning students to promote mental health awareness, reduce stigma, and increase familiarity and accessibility of counselling services. Flyers of CSW office were created and disseminated during orientation 2023 (new initiative).
- **Personal Development Workshops** were conducted for all entities on a proactive and need-basis to promote personal wellness and academic success. Topics included:
  - Adjusting to University Life
  - Setting and Achieving Goals
  - Navigating Social Interactions
  - Time Management
  - Stress Management
  - Resilience
  - Communication Skills – Making an impact

### *Workshops for PGME Trainees:*

- Managing Work-Life Balance (year 1)
- Handling Stress and Difficult Emotions (year 2)
- Developing Resilience (year 3)
- Avoiding Burnout (year 4 & 5)



## Wellness Programs/Events

**Combating Loneliness** - event conducted at Stadium Road and IED campus in collaboration with student mental health group Aurora. Students shared their feelings anonymously through ballot boxes and shared messages of support for each other. (200+ participants)

**Arts and Poetry Competition** invited original creative pieces on the theme of mental health. (200 + entries).

**Pebble painting** – Art therapy to express emotions and internal state was conducted for four days consecutively. (500+ participants including students, faculty, and staff).

**Expression wall** – participants shared ideas about mental health and reasons for stigma around it. (80+ participants).

**Motivational Bookmarks** – positive quotes were designed as bookmarks and disseminated among students. (250+ participants).

**Yoga Session** – Students practiced stress reducing yoga exercises from a certified yoga instructor. (100+ participants).

**World Mental Health Day Celebrations** including walk-a-cause, poetry recitation, arts exhibition and panel discussion. (250+ participants).

**Happiness Gala** – International Happiness Day was celebrated with fun-filled games, a happiness photo booth, face painting, a gratitude and self-affirmation wall as well as lively dances on upbeat cultural music. (300+ participants).



## Faculty-Student Mentorship Programme: (New initiative)

The restructured mentorship programme for year 1 and 2 MBBS students was initiated in March 2022. Significant components included:

- Selection of Faculty Mentor Pool and formation of Mentor-mentee groups
- Introductory workshop for Mentors (for programme understanding and practicing supportive skills)
- Mentor-mentee breakfast (to promote familiarity within groups)
- Formation of mentor-mentee WhatsApp Groups
- One to one mentor mentee meetings
- Mentorship Teams Challenge (fun-filled games event to promote informal interaction and team spirit)
- Evaluation Survey (showed a moderately high level of satisfaction and positive impact of the programme)

The faculty mentor pool for the next academic year has been developed. The programme events would be initiated formally from May.



## Outreach and Knowledge Sharing as Invited Facilitator

### Core Curriculum sessions

- Counselling Skills for Health Professionals - year 5 MBBS students in family medicine rotation.
- Conflict Resolution – HPM year 2 students
- Handling Grief and Breaking Bad News - MScN year 2 students.

### Panelist

- BMI Webinar on “How Does Your Brain Deal with Stress” for an international audience.
- DED Education Grand Rounds for Health Professions on “Emotional Intelligence - A Skill That Matters”.

### Invited sessions

- “Counselling Skills for teachers” as part of AKU E<sup>3</sup> Series for IED
- “Counselling Students in Challenging Circumstances” as part of E3 series for FAS
- “Resilience – Riding the Waves” as part of Scholarship Challenge Programme.
- “Making Good Career Choices” session orphan children of SOS village arranged by Nixor College Students.

### Professional Consultations

- BMI for developing survey based on WHO-ICS modules.
- IED MPhil student for developing a survey tool for assessing academic anxiety and stress.
- Family Medicine Resident for conducting session on Counselling Skills with junior residents.

**MESS taskforce for Student Life and Services** – chaired committee meetings and submitted recommendations by offices of Student Experience, Student Health, Hostels and Counselling Services and Wellness to Associate Dean UGME.

### Peer Reviewed International Publication

- Haider SI, Ahmed F, Pasha H, Pasha H, Farheen N, Zahid MT. [Life satisfaction, resilience and coping mechanisms among medical students during COVID-19](#). PLoS One. 2022 Oct 5;17(10): e0275319. DOI: 10.1371/journal.pone.0275319. PMID: 36197934; PMCID: PMC9534406.

### Impact through Social Media:

- **Voice of America Urdu** – Part of expert panel in an educational video on post-partum depression and in an article on Adolescent delinquency. [Watch here!](#)
- **Dawn Articles** – Opinion as a mental health expert in articles published in Daily Dawn about topics pertinent to adolescents, such as the psychology of trolling and bullying in schools. [Read Here](#)