

# Ambedkar Univ's clinic making mental health help accessible

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A PUBLIC health clinic at Ambedkar University Delhi (AUD) is working towards making psychotherapy accessible to people from all walks of life in the capital, with data suggesting that around 50% of those availing counselling are from outside the campus.

Ehsaas, a psychotherapy and counselling clinic under AUD's Centre for Psychotherapy and Clinical Research, has provided its services to over 1,100 persons since 2013, with 220 people approaching it in the last year itself. As per Professor Honey Oberoi, 50% of those currently availing the service are from outside the university's community of students, faculty and non-teaching staff. The service is provided either free or at nominal costs.

"Mental health, like all health services, has become the purview of the rich. And psychoanalysis is a long, in-depth process which few can afford. We wanted to bring a political corrective to the whole experience of psychotherapy, as mental health services and psychotherapy should be available to whoever is in need. So we thought of a public clinic," said Oberoi.

The centre began working on requests to provide the service to those outside the university from 2011.

Oberoi admits while a majority of those approaching the clinic

are from middle and upper-middle class backgrounds, it has a special focus to provide services to those from lower social-economic classes and minority groups. The clinic operates out of four rooms, each set up with a couch for patients.

"We have people from all walks of life – housewives with crises in marriage, people feeling listlessness in life or depressed in relationships. We have a considerable male population going through familial crises back in the native family, with issues of discomfort with masculinity... Of course, crises within romantic and intimate relationships become a trigger for somebody to approach us. Young people grappling with sexual confusion and questions of sexual orientation, and with opening up within their families. We also have families, middle-aged people," she said.

"We also try to attend to people from the low social-economic strata – we've had guards, some domestic helps approaching us," Oberoi said.

Ehsaas functions both as a service and a training ground for the Centre's M.Phil students of Psychotherapy and Clinical Thinking.

Students are introduced to practising therapy with the clients in their second year – in the first year, the focus is more in theory and they themselves are required to undergo at least 15-20 psychotherapy sessions to "recognise that they are the same as their clients."



At least 50% of those availing counselling from the psychotherapy clinic are from outside the campus

