



Established by the Act of Legislative Assembly of National Capital Territory of Delhi

An overview of
BEST PRACTICES
during the YEAR 2020-21

Best Practice – 1

ONLINE PSYCHOTHERAPY AND COUNSELLING SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS, FACULTY AND STAFF OF AUD

Objectives of the Practice

To maintain mental health facilities, particularly counselling, crisis intervention and both short and long term therapy for students and other members of AUD community during the extended time periods when the University campus had to be closed due to the Covid pandemic.

The Context

Ehsaas clinic at AUD has been recognized as a one of a kind initiative to provide free to low fee psychotherapy for both the members of AUD and the city of Delhi as a whole. This was made possible due to the combined efforts of the trained team of 5 Psychotherapists, trained faculty at SHS and the approximately 15 trainee psychotherapists who are enrolled in the MPhil in Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy. Through the last decade, Ehsaas work has been held in person in the clinics at Ehsaas. However this context changed overnight with the arrival of Covid 19. Since March 2020 University campuses have been working in a largely online mode with several interruptions during the first and second waves of the Pandemic. We innovated to provide crisis intervention through a helpline. We also provided both short term and long term therapy under supervision to our students. The shift to online work was a new direction in the life of Ehsaas. It must be noted that the average age of the students in a university is between 20 and 22 years. This is a stage when anxieties about the future and the world of relationships is at its peak. Students experience a certain degree of comfort by spending time with the peer group and in discussions in class rooms. The repeated requirement to close Universities created a great absence of such spaces. Further the second wave of the Covid pandemic took a heavy toll on campus life with many students and faculty developing symptoms of the disease . Students and staff alike experienced losses which were extremely traumatic. The need for psychological support was at its peak at a time when Ehsaas too could not be kept open.

The Practice

The practice of online work at Ehsaas was a new transition. We ran the helpline. We continued to provide therapy but we made a distinction between very short term work for 4-5 sessions to gauge the intensity of the problem. At times we could provide some understanding to the client . However many cases were more serious. To our students we provided long term therapy. To those from outside we gave referrals after at least an hour or two of communication. Ehsaas team has deployed all their contacts, whether our own ex-students or others we have known to provide low fees and pro bono assistance. We maintained supervision of all our trainees despite severe illness in our own families. Our students also participated in community work particularly Mission Ekjut.

Evidence of Success

Unfortunately Ehsaas trained therapists had gone down from 5-3 during this period. We had to limit the numbers we could address in such a circumstance. A notice was put out on the website that Ehsaas will only be available to members of AUD. Despite this we received 225 applications. Another sign of our success is the recent acknowledgement by our BOM that has sanctioned 6 regular positions of Psychotherapists. This was recently announced by the HVC in the Convocation address.

Problems encountered and resources required

Firstly, an acute shortage of trained therapists; secondly, poor internet connectivity and inadequate support to therapists and trainees in internet resources; and thirdly, trainees working from home spaces would not always have enough space.

Best Practice – 2

SUCCESSFUL TRANSITION TO ONLINE PEDAGOGY

Objectives

1. Transitioning to online pedagogy
2. Understand it from the perspective of the students to address infrastructural and other kinds of issues that emerged due to the online teaching mode.
3. The objective is to understand the individual, familial and social context of the students through a survey conducted in order to address the specific pedagogic requirements as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Context

In March 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic was announced and universities worldwide had to transition to online teaching and learning from in-person modes of learning/ teaching and administration. As a consequence, it produced challenges of infrastructure, pedagogic practices and in-class content for humanities and arts practice programmes.

The Practice

The practice was to use Google-based platforms for online teaching: G-meet, Google classrooms and other such platforms such as Zoom to teach online during the pandemic. Apart from this, there were changes made to assessment methods, pedagogic content and materials shared with the students to produce a conducive environment for learning during the pandemic.

Evidence of Success

It was possible to conduct most of the classes via the online mode and this transition happened fairly quickly without much time lost in transition. Thus in spite of the disruption of the lock-down, the academic calendar was largely on track. Secondly, teaching-learning and assessments of all courses could happen as planned, albeit with the adaptations required due to the transition to the online pedagogy. Thirdly, new ways of classroom engagement, practical training, student performance and extended practice emerged through the online pedagogic practice.

Best Practice – 3

STUDENT CENTERED PEDAGOGY

Objectives

The program follows student focused pedagogy with objective to encourage students to experience autonomy by taking charge of their learning process. This pedagogy also aims to bring in more space for curiosity, creativity and innovation in the process of learning. This style of learning inherently builds the attributes of self-reflection, critical thinking and confidence to engage with real life problem.

The Context

Conventional way of teaching which happens to be teacher centered or purpose centered, brings in the power dynamics between the students and teacher, where student is seen as an empty vessel. In other words, the student is seen as a passive recipient. This makes learning not only boring, marks oriented but also frustrating both for the students and faculty, especially in higher education. This historically has been found to be not very conducive to learning process. In addition, the conventional style of learning will not be in line with the philosophy of the program on psychosocial clinical studies, expect and train students to be reflective, compassionate and socially well informed.

The Practice

The way the program and learning process is conceptualized is that the teacher takes on the role of a facilitator. Students can choose from elective courses. Within few courses, students can collectively decide what modules they wish to specifically focus more on(?). Students also choose to creatively and innovatively do their assignments, without necessarily following any standard format. There are a variety of ways through which learning happens like using experiential workshops, case studies/analysis, movie discussions, literary analysis, group projects, local field trips, clinical community trips to other parts of India, internships at various government and non-government institutes, reading historical narratives of marginalized population like Dalits and Adivasis. The learning process assumes students to be active learners, making sense of what they experience through the program. The school also follows continuous system of evaluation through the semester on multiple parameters spanning over academics(knowledge of core concepts, frameworks, research), personal (reflectivity, self-awareness, personal growth) and social (sociocultural sensibilities) competencies rather one end term exam. The program also has mentorship as an integral part of learning where one faculty has 5-7 mentees, where students can bring their personal concerns - academic or personal. Students are also encouraged to maintain their personal diaries for self-reflections.

Evidence of Success

Higher education, across the world has a tendency to privilege book learning and an academic approach, thereby positing an artificial binary between learning and doing. The suggestion seems to be that the universities would produce the thinkers whereas the doers would come from elsewhere. In this context, the integration of the internship into the program structure as a compulsory component is very significant. In doing this, the Gender Studies Master's Program creates young people equipped with a sound understanding of gender theories and debates on the one hand, and on the other hand

due to their exposure to the field they are able to initiate, create and reinforce change in their workplaces that are just, humane and democratic. The students who graduate from the program are sought after for their sensitivity and courage to pursue the just cause. The student's ability to engage with the community, without being judgemental has helped the graduates connect with the people in meaningful ways and partner their struggles.

Best Practice – 4

PARTICIPATORY STUDENT FEEDBACK AND QUALITATIVE ASSESSMENT

Objectives

To improve course transaction and enhance the capacity of the School to achieve the projected programme outcomes

The Context

SLGC is premised on an interdisciplinary pedagogy and our aspiration is to create a new disciplinary field of Law and Social Sciences. Student feedback help us enormously in gauging both our pedagogical outcomes and work with an expansive and inventive sense in which a new field of study can be creatively constructed.

The Practice

Orientation sessions at the start of each semester to document the expectations of the students. Debriefing sessions with the students at the end of every semester to capture their experience comparing it to what they had expected at the start.

Making students articulate their aspirations for the course, for themselves and for them as a cohort through innovative ways such as having them write a letter to their future selves which they are made to read a semester later.

Both quantitative as well as qualitative feedback collected on the design of the courses as well as transaction and openly discussed in faculty meetings with action taken report submitted by faculty.

Problems encountered and resources required

We would like financial resources to be made available for students to undertake short fieldwork projects. This will give them training in enhancing their skill sets. As of now, the programme requires internship, in which students take the initiative. Funding allows students to bear the costs of conducting independent projects.

Best Practice – 5

ENRICHMENT APPROACH TO STUDENT LEARNING AND CAPACITY BUILDING

Objectives

The objectives of the practice are

- to enhance the employability of the students,
- to enhance their communication and presentation skills and
- to strengthen their industry readiness.

The Context

SVS as a vocational school, the programmes are meant to ensure that students are able to get job and employment after the completion of their Diploma, Advanced Diploma and Degree

The Practice

The practice included a multi-layered and multi-dimensional exposure and opportunities to students, both in terms of theory and of practice. The practice included online student seminars, mandatory internship with stipend opportunities, judicious mix both theory and practice, innovative curriculum, skill and GEC courses, collaboration with industry for curriculum design and transaction, 3rd party assessment of students after every job role, 10 points in admission criteria for those students who had vocational subjects in class 12th.

Evidence of Success:

The practice led to much better trained and equipped students who were able to take up industry roles with confidence and capability. An indicator of the success was the number of students getting opportunities with leading industries, such as Reliance Retail (7 students), Woodland (8 students) and Being Human (2 students) to name a few. A detailed list is given at the end.

Problems encountered and resources required

Due to Covid 19 restrictions online On-Job-Training was organised and the internet issues faced by the students during online OJT's.

Notes

BVoc ECCME Internship organisations and students benefitted

Semester-1	
Astha NGO	4
LECIN	3
Hope project	3
Semester-3	
Arth Astha	5
Vikramshila Organization	5
Centre for Teaching and Learning Mathematics	5
Brats N Cuties Preschool	5

Meraki foundation	2
Semester-4	
Space ECE	4
Alokit	1
CTLM Centre for Teaching and Learning Mathematics	4
Key Education Foundation	1
Summer camp	3
Mobile creches (NGO)	6
Happy door	1
Semester-5	
You Can Foundation	4
Anubhav Learning Centre	4
Super School India	1
Centre for Teaching and Learning Mathematics	2
Semester-6	
SOS Villages children organisation	4
Meraki foundation	2
Vikramshila Organization	5

PERFORMANCE IN AN AREA OF INSTITUTIONAL DISTINCTIVENESS

Equitable access to quality education is a high priority and thrust area in keeping with the University's vision and mission. The issue of access became unusually pronounced with the onset of the Covid pandemic and the lockdown. This resulted in the campuses closing down and students and faculty being confined to their homes. A large number of students went to their hometowns. As the University shifted to online classes, the issue of access was a primary challenge. It included not just the problem of students lacking good devices and internet access, but also other challenges like ensuring proper coordination across programmes and faculties, ensuring online supportive administrative processes, modifying assessment policy and practices and providing prompt and adequate support to all, without compromising on overall safety and Covid protocols. The University put in place a variety of teams and mechanisms for these purposes. All programmes adopted a flexible approach and modified pedagogy, assessment and communication to ensure effective online teaching-learning. Helplines for academic, administrative and personal-emotional issues were set up. Psychological counselling as well as medical help was made available from all the campuses. Funds for data packs and devices were given to needy students to prevent any loss of studies. During the peak lockdown phases, volunteer teams arranged food and provision supplies to people in need. In this way, an all-out concerted effort was made in these challenging circumstances to ensure that access to education was minimally disturbed especially for those who came from challenging backgrounds.



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