

The Sophia-J. N Heredia Centre for Counselling: End of Year Report 2021-2022

Report by: Counsellor- Tanisha Bhan

Co-ordinator: Jennie Mendes

The academic year 2021- 2022 was smooth flowing with a few hurdles here and there. The system, introduced by the previous counselor, helped with making work easier and conduction of sessions online structured. The separate email ID and the pre- existing Google form (requesting details such as the student's email ID for communication, a trusted adult's contact number and email ID, and the student consenting to the idea that the adult may be contacted in case of any risk to life, or extreme emotion being experienced by the client), made communication between the students and counselor systematic. At the start of the semester, a message with the above mentioned link and the counselling centre's id was circulated among the students through Whatsapp with the help of the College Union Committee which informed the students about the services provided by the centre along and gave them the avenue to book sessions. Within a couple of hours of the form being released, the counselling centre received **24** requests for appointments, pointing to the dire need of counselling services.

Throughout the year, **557 appointments** were held, with an average of 3 appointments being held every day. About 40 students saw the counselor for regular appointments, organized once every 2 weeks. The students discussed concerns ranging from dealing with uninvolved parents, anxiety, loneliness, depression, burn out and instances of relationship issues. Multiple students brought in instances of lack of motivation, struggling to keep up with college work, concerns about what their future will look like and navigating unique stressors and challenges brought about by the uncertain situation around them.

In addition to sessions, the counselling centre played an important role in training students to help run a student organized **support group called Peer Plan**. The initiative was taken by the CUC and the counselor along with Ms Mendes trained the group in active listening, non judgemental approach and also introduced them to ways by which they could help support their fellow peers in times of distress. The students were also exposed to ways by which they could be there to emotionally support their peers from LGBTQ+ community and how they could help them feel included, especially in the online space. The centre, was also involved in training the group on how to handle issues like bullying and protocol to be followed when a student faces thoughts of suicide or self harm. Lastly, during the 3 sessions that were conducted with the students, Ms Mendes and the counselor helped them to understand ways in which the group could form rapport with their peers while drawing boundaries to protect their mental health as well as of those whom they were supporting.

The counselling centre also conducted a session with the TYBSc department to help the students cope with pressure of exams as well as their futures. The counselor shared various ways in which they could study well as well as opened up the space for them to share their grievances while being able to vent about their pent up frustrations. This session with TYBSc was helpful as many students felt comfortable to book a one on one session with the counselor post the group session to talk about their own personal struggles and issues.



Another major webinar that was conducted by the centre was in collaboration with a centre that helped expose students from all streams towards a future in marketing and design. This webinar was conducted by 5 guest lecturers and went on for 3 hours. 80 students had signed up for the same and those who joined the webinar found themselves feeling informed and reassured about their future career prospects. Few students, post the session, also shared how the session exposed them to a career sphere they were unaware of and were grateful for the same.

A change that was brought in was moving **career counseling** appointments from email back to a one on one session through Google Meet. These sessions lasted for 45 - 50 minutes, wherein the students discussed the apprehension as well as career prospects that were causing them confusion and making them feel overwhelmed. The counselor, along with the student worked on different areas that they could work on as per their level of interest. The counselor also helped the students shortlist courses and colleges that they could work towards post their graduation as well as helped them with understanding the subject choices that would eventually help them achieve their goals. Overall, 70 career counseling sessions were conducted throughout the academic year.

In addition to sessions, webinars, and the course, the college counselor also took on additional tasks such as **conducting orientation sessions** for the newly incorporated first year students, giving them insight into the functioning of the counseling center, need for therapy, and having a space to discuss and work through their concerns. The counselor also addressed and heard the grievances that the students had with the college and directed them to the right resources to have an open discussion and sort the issues out. This ensured communication between the students and the teachers, or other staff members and ensured a smooth way for the issues to be resolved. The counselor also attempted to provide some insight into how the pandemic was affecting student involvement in college activities and suggestions on how this challenge could be worked through. **Regular meetings** were held with Ms. Jennie Mendes with ideas and discussions, and with her approval and involvement, all of the above-mentioned things were executed. The counselor was also responsible in reaching out to parents of students who shared that they were experiencing suicidal thoughts or difficulties at a personal level, and it was felt that a higher level of care would be needed. Lastly, regular reports and session recordings were maintained. Any additional email that was received was also guided to the right source or given an adequate response by the counselor.

On the whole, the year was less challenging as compared to 2020 due to the presence of a structured way of functioning. The students, who continued to remain very open and motivated to work on their burnout and concerns, made the counseling sessions a warm and safe space for them as well as for the counselor. They showed up for repeated appointments, showing grit, determination, and resilience in the face of challenges. The counseling centre only acted as a medium to help the students cope with any setback, hardship and exhaustion.

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| SUMMARY: |
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Work done by Ms Tanisha Bhan, College Counselor,
Sophia JNHeredia Counseling Center in 2021-2022,

| Month | Appointments | Webinars | Meetings | Leave | Career Sessions |
|--------------|--------------|-----------|-----------|----------|-----------------|
| June | 38 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 10 |
| July | 66 | 5 | 0 | 0 | - |
| August | 56 | 0 | 3 | 2 | 9 |
| September | 62 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 6 |
| October | 53 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 11 |
| November | 23 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 1 |
| December | 36 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 12 |
| January | 43 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| February | 59 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 3 |
| March | 69 | 0 | 2* | 0 | 10 |
| April | 52 | 0 | | 0 | 5 |
| TOTAL | 557 | 10 | 19 | 2 | 70 |

Appointments are actual personal counselling sessions for students

Meetings with Jennie Mendes, Coordinator Sophia-J.N.Heredia Counselling Centre

Leave due to a medical emergency at home

Career sessions were actual career counseling sessions with students

J. Mendes