



An Institution of  
the Society for the Higher Education  
of Women in India

Sophia College for Women  
Empowered Autonomous

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## Counselling Policy

Administrative Policy Number (APN): SCWAPN/10	<b>Functional Area:</b> The functional area of the Counselling Policy includes providing comprehensive mental health and wellness support to students through professional counselling services and programs.
Brief Description of the Policy:	<b>Purpose:</b> to ensure students have access to the necessary resources and guidance to manage personal, academic, and emotional challenges effectively. <b>Audience:</b> Staff and Students
Policy Applies to:	Staff and Students
Effective from the Date:	26 <sup>th</sup> November, 2018
Approved by:	College Development Committee (CDC)
Responsible Authority	IQAC
Superseding Authority	Principal
Last Reviewed. / Updated:	New Policy
Reason for the policy	This policy is implemented to promote the overall well-being and mental health of students, thereby enhancing their academic performance and personal growth.
References for the policy	UGC/ University of Mumbai

## **Introduction**

The Student Counseling Policy outlines the principles and procedures governing the operation of the J.N Heredia Counseling Center at Sophia College for Women. The J.N Heredia Counseling Center at Sophia College for Women was founded in 1968. It aims to provide guidance for counsellors and students alike, ensuring a safe, confidential, and supportive environment for all individuals seeking counselling services.

## **Mission Statement**

The J.N Counseling Center at Sophia College for Women provides free counselling services to all students of Sophia College to promote the holistic well-being of our students by providing confidential, accessible, and culturally sensitive counselling services. Our mission is to support students in overcoming personal, academic, and psychological challenges, empowering them to thrive academically and personally.

## **Scope of Services**

The Counseling Center offers a range of services to address the diverse needs of our student population, including but not limited to:

### ***a. Individual counselling***

Individual counselling offers personalised support and guidance to students facing personal, academic, or emotional challenges in a confidential and nonjudgmental setting.

### ***b. Group counselling***

Group counselling provides a supportive environment where students can share experiences, gain insights, and receive guidance from peers and trained facilitators in addressing common concerns and building coping skills. Group sessions and



workshops on relevant topics are arranged regularly for the benefit of students. Group sessions, talks and workshops are also delivered at the request of staff members.

***c. Parental counselling***

Parental counselling is offered to the parents or guardians of the current student's at the college. A collaborative space is offered to the guardians to better navigate the mental health challenges of their ward and complexities of college life. Counsellors work closely with parents to address concerns, provide guidance, and offer strategies for fostering a supportive environment that promotes their ward's well-being and success throughout their college journey

***d. Crisis intervention***

Crisis intervention offers immediate support and intervention to students experiencing acute distress or facing urgent mental health concerns, aiming to stabilize the situation and connect them with appropriate resources.

***e. Referral services to external resources***

Referral services connect students with external resources such as mental health professionals, community organizations, or specialized services to address their specific needs beyond the scope of the counselling center.

***f. Vigilance committee***

Vigilance committees address copying cases during exams and other misconduct. Counsellors are part of this committee to counsel the students and provide them with the appropriate help required.

**Entitlement to Counselling**

The counselling center's services are available to all current students enrolled in junior and senior college during term time. Students seeking counselling services during vacation periods, evenings, or college holidays are referred to external counselling services.

## **Confidentiality**

Confidentiality is paramount in fostering trust between counsellors and students. All information shared during counselling sessions is strictly confidential and will not be disclosed to anyone without the student's explicit consent.

### ***Crisis intervention***

In exceptional circumstances or crisis situation the counsellor may choose to take the decision to breach confidentiality, with or without the student's consent, if: a. there is a risk of suicidality

b. there is a risk or active self-harm noticed or reported

c. there is a risk to another person

Individuals seeking therapy are informed that counselling services from the college counselling center are contingent on agreement to breach confidentiality in these cases. If confidentiality is breached, the counsellor will contact the guardian of the concerned individual and provide a letter informing them of the situation and suggesting accessing external resources promptly.

## **Counselling Process**

The counselling process follows the following process:

### ***1. Accessing Counselling Services:***

Students can schedule counselling appointments by emailing [sophiacounselingcenter@gmail.com](mailto:sophiacounselingcenter@gmail.com) or visiting the counselling centre during regular working hours.

### ***2. Workshops and Group Sessions:***

Students can sign up for workshops and group sessions either online or by visiting the counselling centre.

### ***3. Session Duration:***



All counselling sessions are typically 45-60 minutes long.

**4. Session Format:**

Sessions are offered either online via Google Meet or in-person according to the counselling center's schedule during working hours.

**5. Appointment Scheduling:**

Sessions are scheduled based on the availability of students and appointments at the counselling center.

**6. Confidentiality Explanation and Consent:**

During the first session, the confidentiality clause is explained to the individual, and a signed consent form is acquired. Access to college counselling center services is contingent upon agreeing to the terms of the consent form.

**7. Attendance Compensation:**

Students may receive attendance for missed lectures if they are attending counselling sessions during scheduled lecture times.

**8. Communication Channels:**

Communication with students is maintained within working hours. Outside of working hours, during vacations, and holidays, access to college counselling services will not be available.

**9. Confidentiality of Counselling Team's Details:**

Students and guardians will not have access to the personal contact details of the counsellors and the counselling team. All communication will be through the official channel only.

**10. Access to External Mental Health Services:**

If individuals require further support beyond what the counselling centre can provide, they will need to access external mental health services. The counselling center is not obligated to provide a list of external personnel.

## **Referring into the services**

1. Students can avail the counselling services of their own accord.
2. Staff members and student bodies can refer students to avail counselling services but it is not mandatory for students to avail the services.
3. Students may be referred by various disciplinary committees.

## **Record-keeping**

At the college counselling centre, meticulous record-keeping practices are upheld to ensure the confidentiality and accuracy of student information. Records of the appointment log, consent forms, guardian intimation letters, relevant activity sheets, monthly and yearly reports of the activities conducted at the counselling centre are maintained at the counselling centre. These records are securely stored in compliance with ethical standards, accessible only to authorised counselling centre personnel. Access to counselling records is strictly controlled to safeguard the privacy of student data.

## **Marketing Strategy**

The counselling services provided by the counselling centre are promoted in the following ways:

### ***1. New Student Orientation:***

Orientation sessions for new students are conducted via college meet-ups and classroom visits at the start of each academic year to introduce counselling services and emphasize the importance of mental health.

### ***2. Notice Board Posters:***

Informative posters are displayed on college notice boards to promote upcoming events, workshops, and counselling sessions at the counselling center, ensuring visibility and awareness among students.



### ***3. CUC Communication:***

The College Union Committee (CUC) is consulted to better understand the needs of the students. CUC helps disseminate regular updates about individual sessions, group sessions, and workshops, fostering engagement and participation among students.

### ***4. Engagement with College Clubs:***

The counselling center collaborates with college clubs to develop programs and events that raise awareness about mental health and promote interaction between students and the counselling team, enhancing visibility and accessibility of counselling services.

### ***5. Surveys to Understand Student Needs:***

Regular surveys are conducted to gain insights into the needs and challenges of the student population, enabling the counselling centre to tailor events and activities to better meet the diverse needs of students.

### ***6. Feedback Collection from Students:***

Feedback is acquired from students regarding their participation in counselling services and events to continually improve and enhance the quality of services provided by the counselling centre, ensuring student satisfaction and engagement.

### ***7. Peer Support Programs:***

Peer support plans are implemented to establish peer support networks where trained student volunteers offer informal support and guidance to their peers, fostering a sense of community and support among students.

## **8. Collaboration with Staff Members:**

Collaboration with staff members to better support the needs of students by incorporating mental health education into academic curriculum, providing training for staff to identify and support students in distress, and enhancing the overall campus environment to promote mental well-being.

### **Counselling Team**

The counselling team consists of the following members:

Sr. no	Position
1	Vice Principal- Arts, senior college
2	Vice Principal- Science, senior college
3	Vice Principal- Junior college
4	Coordinator/ Faculty Incharge
5	College Counsellor

### **Revision of Policy**

This policy will be reviewed periodically to ensure its effectiveness and relevance. Any revisions or updates will be communicated to counsellors and students in a timely manner.

*A.P. Pabli*

**IQAC Coordinator**

**Coordinator  
IQAC  
Sophia College**



*Sharda Pabli*

**Principal**

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