



STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

STUDENT WELLNESS CENTRE, IIT BOMBAY



**Indian Institute of Technology Bombay
Powai, Mumbai, India
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This set of standard protocols ¹ have been

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¹This SoP will be reviewed every two years with flexibility in the process at exceptional cases and as per the decision of competent authority.

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1 | Introduction

This set of standard protocols will:

- act as a guiding instruction in all situations.
- ensure that there is uniformity in the services/code of conduct of all the counsellors and other stakeholders.
- ensure an evaluation criterion to assess if a situation was handled in the best possible way and if not, what changes can be made.

This standard operating procedure (SOP) ² applies to all IIT Bombay students, faculty, and staff and is aligned with “*UGC Guidelines for Student Support and Counselling Services and Mental Healthcare Act, 2017.*”

The student wellness centre (SWC) aims to cultivate a campus community where mental health, emotional well-being and personal development are integral to the student experience. We adopt a holistic and student-centred approach to wellness. Thus, creating an institute environment where mental health is prioritized, stigma is reduced and every student feels supported, empowered and equipped to thrive emotionally, socially and academically. SWC is under the purview of the Dean of Student Affairs at IIT Bombay. The centre comprises Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, In-charge, counsellors, and administrative staff.

Terms used in the document

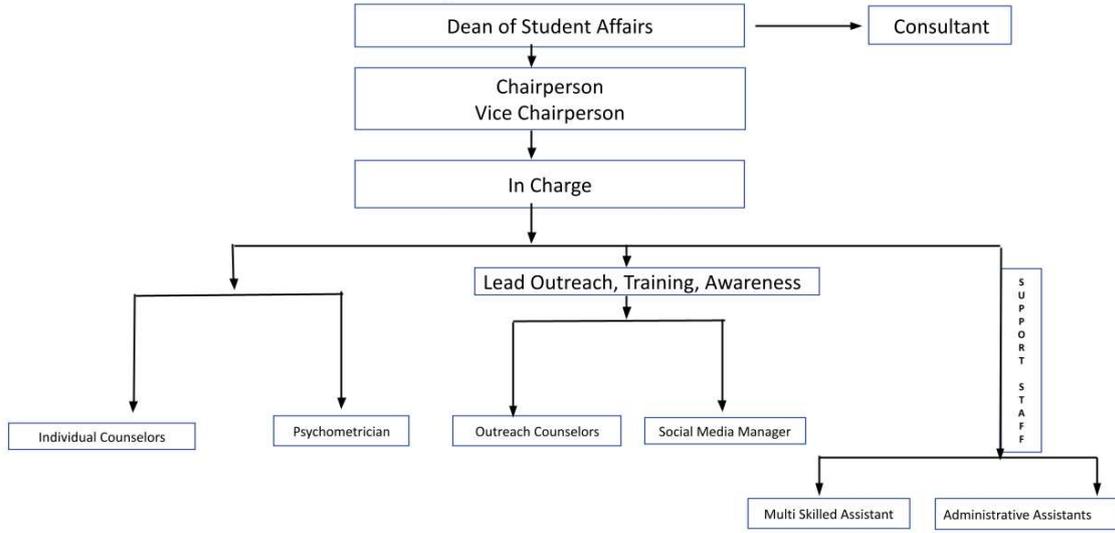
Given below are definitions of terms used in this document.

- SWC: Student Wellness Centre, IIT Bombay.
- Counsellor : Trained Mental Health Professional with Master’s degree in Psychology.
- Stakeholders: Stakeholders include all individuals that interact with the students and thus can contribute to or support student mental wellbeing. These include but are not limited to faculty, staff, and parents.
- Crisis : A state of acute psychological distress or functional impairment which may or may not require immediate medical attention.
- Hospital: IIT Bombay Hospital.
- Dean SA: Dean of Student Affairs, IIT Bombay.

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SWC Organizational Chart





2 | Services

The following are the services offered by the SWC.

1. Individual Counselling

One-to-one counselling with a team of counsellors having expertise in varied therapy modalities is available both at SWC office and designated hostel counselling rooms for easy on-campus access. These counselling sessions can be accessed through self-referral (website/QR code), walk-ins, or stakeholder referrals. The individual counselling caters to various psychological and daily living concerns like stress, anxiety, depression, adjustment issues and academic pressure. Dedicated counsellors available on campus, round the clock for any crisis or emergencies. Offers complete confidentiality coupled with a robust and well-established referral system for crisis cases.

- **Group Therapy:** Group therapy sessions for stress and anxiety management, interpersonal difficulties, emotional regulation, and life skill building are also available for students.

2. Online Counselling

Online counselling is accessible round-the-clock from the comfort of one's own space, on or off campus. The service is available through our external partner, completely free of cost, 24×7 via IITB LDAP login. A dedicated team of trained counsellors providing video as well as audio sessions, which cater to various psychological and daily living concerns. The external partner offers complete confidentiality coupled with a robust and well-established referral system for crisis cases.

3. Helpline

A 24×7 helpline through our external partner offering immediate telephonic assistance for emotional distress and concerns is made available to all our registered students.

4. External Counselling

In-person counselling in experiential off-campus centres for students who prefer sessions with professionals outside the Institute is done through the external counselling route. The expenses incurred shall be covered by the institute via a reimbursement mechanism. More details on the scheme are available on the SWC website. The external partners offer complete confidentiality coupled with a robust and well-established referral system for crisis cases.

5. Group Interventions

Awareness programs with structured interventions designed to measurably enhance the community's knowledge, perception, or understanding of mental wellness. Systematic and organized mental health campaigns using various media, including online, print, and broadcast, to educate the public, reduce stigma, foster mental health literacy (knowledge and skills for well-being), and encourage help-seeking behaviours. Structured, interactive, short-term workshops that teach practical skills and/or deepen understanding in areas of mental health, personal growth and/or relationships.



6. Preventive Activities (*Outreach Initiatives*)

- **Harmony Hangout:** A weekly vibrant and inclusive social hour meticulously crafted to foster open dialogues and connections among students, centred around the crucial theme of mental health.
- **Vartalap and Through The Lens:** A twice-a-month mental health talk and panel discussion series that aims to promote awareness, reduce stigma, and offer holistic perspectives on wellness through open and meaningful conversations.
- **Support Groups (Peer Connect) -** A supportive listening circle, conducted fortnightly, for the PhD community that provides a safe space for sharing, connecting, and building a stronger sense of belonging.
- **Administration of Wellbeing Questionnaire (WBQ):** The WBQ is designed to screen all IITB students for early indicators of mental health concerns, enabling timely support and intervention. The tool assesses:
 - Self Assurance (esteem, perception, and confidence in abilities) Emotional Balance (ability to handle anxiety, mood fluctuations, and adjustment) Ability to Withstand Pressure
 - The SOP ensures that results are acted upon promptly, consistently, and with full confidentiality.
- **Celebration of various national and international days of significance related to the theme of mental well-being.**



3 | Support Model

1. All students have direct access to one-on-one counselling through requesting an initial session.
 - These sessions can be taken in person within campus, online from their comfortable space or in-person outside campus (with empanelled centres).
 - Urgent or intense cases may be self-referred or referred by other stakeholders for immediate intervention.
 - Students can walk in during weekdays (Mon – Fri) between working hours (9.30 am - 5.30 pm) and weekends 10:00 am - 4:00 pm for an in-person session with on-campus counsellors.
2. For Freshies (first year UG, PG and PhD students), SWC follows a 3-step intervention model to monitor their progress through their campus stay.
 - [a] *Initial assessment:* It is done by ISMP/ ISCP mentors who have been given the requisite gatekeeper training. Following this exercise, mentors shall prepare and share a filtered list of the overall adjustment of their mentees with SWC. Mentees identified as requiring additional emotional support are directed to attend group psycho-education and skill-building workshops/events for common adjustment concerns, conducted by the outreach team.
 - [b] *Second Assessment:* Post the mid-semester exam of the first semester, SWC administers a robust internal questionnaire (WBQ) for early identification of possible moderate to severe concerns. These students who are identified with moderate to severe concerns will be contacted for an initial session by the one-on-one counselling team. Students who require follow-up sessions or further referral will be directed accordingly. The mentors shall continue to monitor the wellbeing of mentees through the second semester and report the same regularly to SWC.
 - [c] All first-year UG students shall be strongly encouraged to access the self-help website (IITB Bandhu and SWC Youtube Channel) for general adjustment concerns.



4 | Counselling Protocols

4.1 | Access:

For on-campus in-person counselling, students may walk in to the office, send an email or use the online appointment system, or through stakeholder referral. Appointments can be obtained as follows:

- **Walk-in** For immediate help, the student can directly contact the SWC office by phone or **walk-in** during working hours. Depending on the distress, the student is immediately attended (brief crisis intervention session.)

OR

referred to the appropriate support structure (IITB Hospital)

OR

provided an appointment at the earliest available slot after a short session.

- **Appointment:** Submit appointment requests directly by going to the SWC **website** and clicking the appointment tab through the link <https://swc.iitb.ac.in/in-person> by scanning the QR code available at various places on campus.

OR

Send an appointment request by **e-mail** to wellness@iitb.ac.in when the website is inaccessible.

- **Online Counselling:** If student wishes to take help from an outside agency for online counselling, they can do so by following the procedure outlined in the SWC website <https://swc.iitb.ac.in/online>
- **Outside Campus Counsellors** The student can also reach out to the empanelled external agency for an in-person out-of-campus counselling. The procedure for seeking an appointment is available at <https://swc.iitb.ac.in/external-counselling>



4.2 | Intake and Assessment Forms

- Once an in-person appointment is given at SWC, the student fills out the Intake Form (Section A.1) either physically upon arrival at SWC or online before meeting with the counsellor. The Intake Form includes a section for obtaining the student's consent. This form needs to be filled out only on the first visit.
- Initial risk screening is done in addition to the detailed case history taken by the counsellor. A decision about further specialised assessment is taken in subsequent sessions.
- If a psychometric assessment is required, the counsellor, after discussion with In-Charge (SWC), schedules the student for appropriate tests.
- A copy of the report is sent to the psychiatrist at IIT Hospital, in case the student is consulting them. A summary of the report if requested, is shared with students. The counsellor will discuss the assessment results with the students.

The report can be shared with external psychologists/therapists upon official written request, post discussion with the In-Charge, SWC.

4.3 | Intervention:

- After the intake session, the counsellor continues regular sessions with the student. Depending on the severity and duration of counselling, weekly, fortnightly or monthly follow-up sessions will be scheduled.
- As the students start to heal, regular counselling is tapered off and quarterly or half-yearly booster sessions will be offered, if needed.
- As per their assessment, counsellors refer students to the IITB hospital for psychiatric evaluation. With this written referral (Section A.2) from SWC, the student can obtain a direct appointment with the psychiatrist from the IITB hospital. A copy of the referral form will be retained with the counsellor for SWC records.
- If SWC evaluates that parental support is required, the In-Charge SWC/Dean of Student Affairs/relevant counsellor will contact the parents.

4.4 | Follow-up, Closure

- If a student misses a session, a follow-up email is sent to them (refer Section A.3) offering another slot. If the student misses the first follow-up email, an attempt is made to reach the student via a phone call. If the student misses two consecutive appointments without intimation, despite reminder mails/phone calls, the student is considered non-compliant, and a temporary closure mail is sent to the student (A.4) with a copy to the In-Charge, SWC.
- Counsellors will use their judgment to temporarily close counselling in cases involving non compliance and cases outside counselling jurisdiction. The counsellor will inform appropriate stakeholders, Dean of Student Affairs/ In-Charge (SWC) / HoD/ hospital/ parents/ spouse/ guardian or wardens (whoever applicable) in writing as



per the requirement. A temporary closure email (Section [A.4](#)) will be sent to the student with a copy to the In-Charge, SWC.

- In case the student/guardian/parent decides to discontinue counselling with SWC against counsellor advice or the counsellor observes possible non-compliance from either of the above-mentioned parties, the counsellor will take an acknowledgement (Section [A.5](#)) indicating psycho-education provided, suggestions recommended and exemption of responsibility. The acknowledgement may be acquired in writing, physically or electronically.
- QR codes for counselling feedback will be shared with the student during case closures.



5 | Confidentiality Policy

- All data is confidential. The counsellor keeps secure and confidential records of all session notes and any psychiatric assessments either electronically or physically for one year after graduation.
- Digital access to these confidential records are available only to the assigned counsellors. Restricted view access is available to In-charge SWC for use in case of crisis.
- As a matter of policy, these records will not be shared with anyone (within or outside the Institute). If required, the counsellor will make a separate report based on these notes, which can be shared with relevant stakeholders at appropriate times.
- SWC follows the principle of shared confidentiality. Disclosure of restricted relevant information is contingent on either explicit written/verbal consent from the student or situations of self-harm, other harm or abuse.
- A copy of the reports for any psychometric assessment conducted at SWC is sent to the psychiatrist if the student is taking medication from IIT Hospital.
- A summary report will be shared with the students on request. The counsellor will discuss the assessment results with the students. The reports may be shared with external psychologists/therapists upon official written request, post discussion with the In-Charge, SWC.
- All communication, whether for continuity, referral, or information-sharing with other stakeholders, including parents, shall be documented on paper or electronically, and the records shall be maintained.



6 | Crisis Management Protocol

- SWC follows a well-established, coordinated, and structured protocol for managing emergencies and crises.
- The protocol prioritises student safety, wellbeing, and continuity of care, while ensuring institutional accountability.
- 24 × 7 on-call, on-campus counselling is available for suicide prevention, emotional breakdown or any other emergency referrals. Walk-in Counsellors are available during weekdays (Mon - Fri) from 9.30 a.m. to 5.30 p.m. and weekends (10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.)
- Residential counsellors provide support for crises during off-duty hours, weekends, and holidays.
- The following Crisis Management Protocol is followed by counsellors in case of emergencies:
 - Immediate MSE or basic risk assessment.
 - Do not leave the student alone.
 - Follow the Crisis Management Flow Chart given in Figure 6.1.
 - All crisis cases attended in session or off duty are duly documented.
 - For off-duty crisis, a brief WhatsApp/text message with the following details must be shared with the In-charge immediately after the incident.
 - A detailed incident report, including but not limited to the following information, should be mailed to the In-charge within 24 hrs of the crisis.
 - a) Date
 - b) Time
 - c) Referral By
 - d) Participants (Student/Specific Stakeholders Etc)
 - e) Presenting Situation
 - f) Action Taken
 - g) Recommendations/Decisions
 - h) Provide follow-up support (if required/applicable)

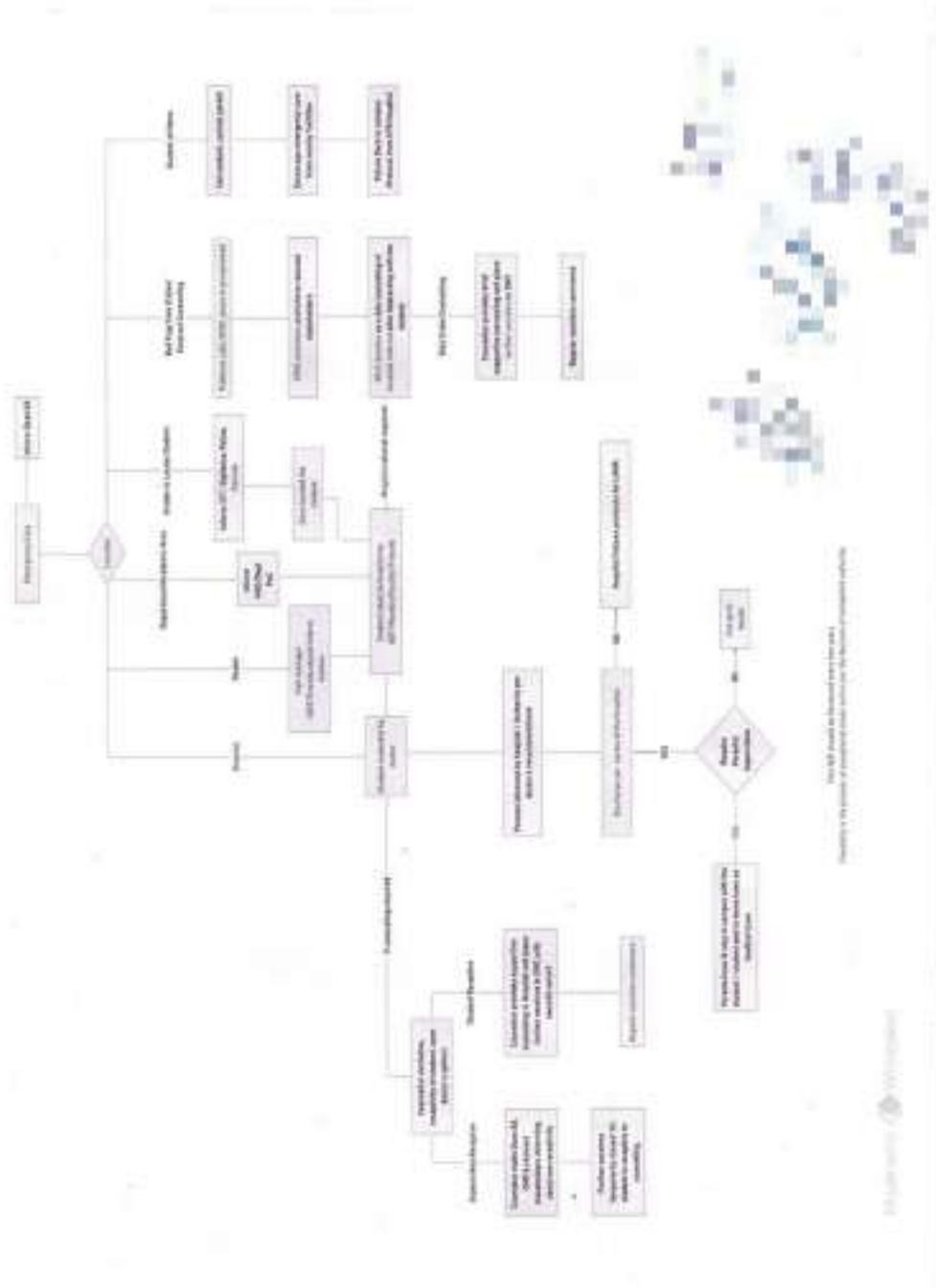


Figure 6.1: Crisis Protocol



7 | Referral Protocol

SWC works closely with IITB Hospital. It also has collaborations with mental health clinics and professionals specialised in specific therapeutic interventions. Students can be referred to SWC by different stakeholders (See Section IX D). Depending on the need, students are referred from SWC to various stakeholders for appropriate support.

a) Referral to SWC

■ *Referral from Faculty/DAC/Institute Bodies/Students*

- Email to be sent to incharge.swc@iitb.ac.in / chairperson.swc@iitb.ac.in / dean.sa@iitb.ac.in sharing the student's roll number, contact number (if available) and the concern raised.
- E-mail must include a consent from the referrer, so that the counsellor can share the referrer's information with the student if the student asks for the same. A format for the same is available in Section A.7.
- In case of emergency, QRT/Dean SA should be contacted and the Crisis Management Protocol (refer Section 6) should be followed.

■ *Referral from IIT Bombay Hospital*

- Email to be sent to incharge.swc@iitb.ac.in sharing the student's roll number, contact number (if available), concern raised and support required (counselling / assessment).
- In case of only assessment, the following information is to be shared with the In-charge (SWC) and the clinical psychologist
 - i. Name of student:
 - ii. Roll no:
 - iii. Date of birth:
 - iv. Department:
 - v. Program:
 - vi. email id:
 - vii. Contact number:
 - viii. Referred by:
 - ix. Tests to be done:
- In case of emergency, QRT/Dean SA should be contacted and the Crisis Management Protocol (refer Section 6) should be followed.

b) Referral from SWC

■ *Referral to Faculty/Institute Bodies*

- Students will be encouraged to seek relevant support themselves, as a first step.
- If required, with the student's consent, the counsellor will reach out to the concerned authority on call/e-mail requesting relevant support. Only information relevant to the support requested will be shared with the authority. If initial contact is on call, the conversation, and conclusions will be documented, and only relevant information will be shared with the concerned authorities via email.



■ *Referral to IITB Hospital*

- If a referral letter is issued by SWC for the candidate to consult a psychiatrist, then he/she need not go to a regular medical officer at the hospital. The referral letter shall be used by the staff at the registration counter to issue an appointment with the psychiatrist. Sealed envelope with case details (Note to the Psychiatrist, Section A.2) from SWC to psychiatrist will be provided to the students to be presented to the consultant psychiatrist at IITB Hospital. A copy of the note and referral form will be retained with the counsellor for SWC records.
- Hospital will
 - Provide a psychiatric consult as soon as possible, if the form is marked urgent.
 - Provide a psychiatric consult within the next 24 working hours, if a referral form is not marked urgent.



8 | Documentation and Records

Record	Retention
Intake forms	Till at least 1 year after the student has graduated.
Case notes	Secure digitally.
Referrals	Logged physically as well as digitally
Reports	Monthly as well as annual summary retained digitally



9 | Monitoring and Review

The following processes will be followed for monitoring and review of the counselling centre.

- Weekly team meetings for case supervision/support, sharing of information, observation of patterns, as well as planning for further outreach, training, and awareness activities.
- Fortnightly meeting with Institute Psychiatrist(s) to exchange notes and plan holistic treatment plans for relevant students.
- Monthly meetings with Chairperson(s) and Dean(SA) to provide updates, discuss concerns and share plans.
- Mid-tenure review for counsellors on contract to discuss past and future action and provide feedback.
- Publish annual report in the month of June, highlighting work done by SWC in the previous financial year.
- Regular student feedback on experience of interacting with SWC (counselling or outreach) through feedback forms.



10 | Roles and Responsibilities

A Roles and Responsibilities of Individual Counsellors

[a] CLINICAL RESPONSIBILITIES

- Provide individual counselling for various psychological concerns, including mild to moderate anxiety and depression, adjustment and developmental concerns, interpersonal concerns including friends, family, roommates and romantic partnerships, self-esteem concerns, college transition-related concerns, identity development related to various dimensions of sociocultural identity and concerns related to academic performance and motivation.
- Conduct / refer to a clinical psychologist for psychological assessment and screening.
- Identify students at risk of
 - Self-harm
 - Suicidal ideation
 - Severe emotional distress
- Offer early intervention and short-term therapy.
- Schedule appointments, referrals, and follow-ups.
- Communicate any rescheduling to the appropriate stakeholders.
- Adhere to the counselling process flow described in the SOP.
- Maintain professional standards of care.

[b] ETHICAL RESPONSIBILITIES

- Maintain confidentiality for all sessions, except in cases involving self-harm, harm to others, or abuse.
- Obtain informed consent.
- Maintain professional conduct by ensuring non-discrimination, respect for students' autonomy and maintaining professional boundaries.

[c] CRISIS MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITIES

- In case of a student arriving at the Student Wellness Centre with a psychiatric emergency/crisis:
 - Depending on the severity of the situation, the counsellor may ask the student to visit the IIT Hospital and go with the student/ask a friend or peer to accompany the student or request ambulance support with/without an attendant for transport to the Hospital.
 - Under no circumstances will a student be left alone.
 - The counsellor is responsible for referral of the case and shall ensure that the student reaches the IITB Hospital.
 - Admission/Discharge of the student will be decided by the competent Hospital authorities.
 - Hospital shall provide a psychiatric consultation as soon as possible.
 - Dean (SA) shall be notified by the duty doctor about admissions and/or by In-charge (SWC) when an emergency case is reported.



- In case of a student facing a psychiatric emergency in the hostel: The hostel manager/staff shall accompany the student to the hospital and inform the Warden and Dean of Student Affairs. As per the psychiatrist's assessment, the SWC may then be contacted by the hospital.
 - The counsellor shall provide
 - supportive counselling session in the hospital.
 - counselling once the student is discharged and feels ready to engage more actively in the therapeutic process.

[d] OTHER RESPONSIBILITIES

- Maintain physical and digital copies of intake forms, session notes, referral records, crisis incident reports and case closure summaries.
- Store records securely, both physical and electronic.
- Attend weekly meetings to discuss all significant cases where directions on closure, assessment, parental support, medical support, student support and faculty support are discussed in detail to take the counselling further or do a temporary closure.
- Create support network.
- Exchange information with treating psychiatrists over formalized systems of communication like emails and physical documents.
- Submit statistics to SWC In-charge without breaching confidentiality.

B Roles and Responsibilities of an Outreach Counsellor

- Plan and implement campus-wide mental health awareness initiatives- including workshops, campaigns, and theme-based events to promote emotional well-being and reduce stigma.
- Conceptualize and conduct skill-building sessions for students on resilience, stress management, effective communication, and healthy coping strategies.
- Conduct WBQ following the WBQ SOP (refer Section A.8).
- Work closely with campus stakeholders (student bodies, hostel councils, faculty, and administration) to assess needs and customize outreach activities for optimal engagement and impact.
- Create and curate outreach resources, including posters, newsletters, social media content, and informational handouts, to communicate mental health information in an accessible and engaging manner.
- Gather feedback and monitor participation to assess program effectiveness and recommend data-informed improvements for future initiatives.

C Roles and Responsibilities of Students

The centre will provide students with a space which is safe, non-judgmental, confidential and stigma-free.

- [a]** Counselling of the student is contingent on the following and adhering to and following responsibilities. Student(s) shall



- Provide accurate and complete information about their health, history, and concerns.
 - Attend sessions regularly and proactively seek follow-up sessions.
 - Cooperate in assessment and intervention.
 - Respect appointment timings and use services responsibly.
 - Communicate any rescheduling requirements to the counsellor in advance.
 - Communicate any changes in symptoms, medications, or circumstances that may affect their care.
 - Follow safety instructions if risk is identified.
- [b] Students with substance abuse concerns, wherein counselling is contingent on complete substance de-addiction will be referred to de-addiction centres/agencies. It is the responsibility of the student to do the necessary follow-up/counselling.
- [c] Students whose needs require medical intervention (persistent, long-standing and/or significant concerns, history of multiple inpatient treatment, severe medical and/or psychiatric concerns) will adhere to regular medical supervision and compliance. Such a requirement shall be decided based on the assessment by the clinical psychologist and/or psychiatrist.
- [d] Ethical Conduct: Students shall
- Not misuse counselling services.
 - Not breach the privacy of other clients.
 - Maintain discipline in the counselling centre and hospital.
 - Avoid aggressive or inappropriate behaviour.
- [e] Compliance to the above is the responsibility of the student. In case a student fails to comply, the local guardian and/or parents shall be notified by the counsellor/psychiatrist/doctor/Dean(SA). This is done keeping in mind the wellbeing of the student. Students can go home with their parents/local guardian as per the standard protocol mechanism (including DAMA). Campus return protocol (Section A.9) will be invoked in such a case, and the student shall follow the same.

D Roles and Responsibilities of Stakeholders

(i) Dean of Student Affairs

- Approve policies and SOP from time to time.
- Shall inform other stakeholders and take relevant action as and when needed.
- In case of conflict, the decision of Dean (SA) shall be final and binding.

(ii) Chairperson/ Vice Chairperson

- Formulate policy and a broad service framework of SWC.
- Oversee overall administration and services of SWC.
- Liaison with faculty advisors, heads of academic units, as and when needed.

(iii) SWC In-charge

- Oversee daily functioning of SWC.
- Ensure compliance with UGC/NAAC norms.



- Supervise counsellors.
- Liaise with:
 - Institute Administration.
 - IITB Hospital.
 - Faculty, Departments and other stakeholders.
 - External agencies.
- Handle emergencies and critical cases.
- Prepare:
 - Budget and Annual report.
 - Audit documentation.

(iv) Faculty Members / Advisors

- Make referrals (Section A.7) when they identify any distressed student.
- Provide academic accommodations (when needed) as per rules.
- Encourage help-seeking behaviour.
- Transparent communication with and support for counsellors and other stakeholders.
- Facilitate course registration, subject to medical fitness from the IITB hospital for students who took a break on medical grounds.
- Familiarize themselves with the crisis protocol.

(v) Hostel Manager / Warden

- Refer students promptly to SWC/IITB hospital when a distress situation is brought to their notice.
- Handle emergencies in hostels by contacting QRT.
- Coordinate with and support SWC.
- Familiarize themselves with the crisis protocol.

(vi) IIT Bombay Hospital

- Responsible for psychiatric evaluations, prescribing medications, handling admissions and discharges, referrals, follow-ups, and medical leave recommendations.
- Provide essential support during emotional and mental health emergencies.
- Coordinate referrals to psychiatric services.
- Handle cases with medical complications. Notify parents and/or local guardian (if any) in consultation with the Dean (SA).
- Provide relevant documentation when required.
- Explain Return to Campus Protocol (refer Section A.9) to students availing/recommended medical break from hospital.
- Dean (SA) shall be notified by the duty doctor in case of emergency and/or student being referred to an outside hospital for further treatment.

(vii) Parents / Guardians (When Required)

- The Institute will contact parents when the student requires treatment under supervision.
- Be available for on-campus supervision as and when required.



- If parental supervision is required for more than 1–2 weeks, leave on medical grounds will be suggested.
- Be responsible for student safety and compliance with medical and counselling recommendations when staying on campus.

(viii) **Online and Empanelled Mental Health Professionals / Agencies**

- Provide specialized treatment.
- Report back (with consent).
- Follow the crisis escalation matrix.
- Maintain confidentiality.
- Provide monthly, quarterly and annual reports.
- Follow institutional protocols.

(ix) **Students' Mentors / Peer Volunteers/Student Representatives**

- Aid counsellors in supporting the student outside the counselling session.
- Promote awareness.
- Assist in outreach.
- Encourage peers to seek early support.
- Maintain confidentiality among students and peers.
- Refer peers appropriately and proactively.