

Counseling Service at Residential Semester of BRACU

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Physical fitness gets plenty of attention, and for good reasons. Mental fitness is just as important as physical health and should not be neglected in any situation. Mental fitness is exactly what it sounds like - keeping our body and emotional health in a harmonious balance. However, we observe that in the rapidly changing modern world, it has become really difficult to obtain a sound mental health. There are a number of reasons behind this. For instance, different types of existing unrest in the society, lack of proper knowledge to safeguard our physical and mental well-being, stress at workplace and in the family, and so on.

All these create a huge problem for our children, the future generation. If we fail to keep them away from all sorts of undue stress and anxiety then they will not be able to get a sound mental health, and ultimately it will cost us the happiness and healthy integration of our families and society as a whole. Therefore, we need to find out a place where we can share our problems, where we can seek for emotional assistance to come out from the difficult issues that are really hindering our way of life. Moreover, we also break the existing stigma of the society that those

people, who seek help from psychologists, are mad. At first, we need to start it at home, with our families and if need be, we need to bring our children to the counsellors.

Counseling service can play a vital role to keep our mind fit and if we face any sort of anxiety or emotional problems, counsellors can be really handy to assist us. As I work in the residential campus of BRAC University, I get a unique chance to work with the students more closely, and based on my nine years of experience at the residential campus, I can say that our children go through numerous psychological issues like depression, anxiety, lack of confidence, relationship issues, trauma and so on, for which counseling is absolutely required. Keeping this in mind, BRAC University has taken the appropriate initiative to set up an efficient and effective counseling unit which has been playing a very effective role both in Mohakhali campus and the residential campus to address the psychosocial problems of the students, teachers and staff.

Indeed, psychosocial service is significant for the residential campus of BRAC University. Here, more than 450 students from different social backgrounds stay in a larger community, where they acquire different social skills like how to lead their lives in different conditions apart from their family members. To insert the social skills among the students is one of the major goals of Residential Semester so that our students can handle all sorts of challenges in future. As they stay away from their families, at the initial stage, they face the problem to adjust themselves with new friends; new people in an unknown place where they need to share the general facilities including room, washrooms, dining and so many things. Our counsellors are playing vital role to make the students adjusting themselves within the diversified residential community. If they did not play the role then a good number of students might not be able to complete the semester only because of the adjustment issue.

I have seen that with the help of the counselors, many students get the chance to explore their problems that were deep down in them from the childhood. Over the years, they did not get the opportunity to share these uncomfortable issues with anyone. As a result, they behaved differently with others and failed to have a smooth life. However, after the sharing and getting the assistance from the counselors, I found that dramatic changes took place in terms of their behavior, approach, thinking pattern. And eventually it has also helped the management to operate the semester smoothly.

Here, I would like to bring an example of back in 2011. One of the male students was going through schizophrenia and we were quite doubtful whether the student would be able to complete the semester and to some extent, his graduation from the university. Our counselors started working with the boy and through their great work, they boy could finish the semester, and finally, he finished his graduation from BRAC University. Now, he is working in a private company and he has been doing well. If he did not get the necessary support from our counsellors then it would have been really tough for him to carry out his education.

In our Savar Campus, the counsellors also conduct workshops on different psychosocial issues on regular basis. Need basis group sessions are also conducted. Moreover, starting from 2013, the Counselling Unit has been facilitating a seminar on “Awareness on Drug Dependency” for the students to educate youth about the negative consequences of abusing drugs.

Finally, I would like to convey that this is the time to break the stigma regarding the counseling service, and we must ensure a beautiful, peaceful and comfortable atmosphere for our beloved children.