

Three Days National CRE Workshop on Essential Counselling Skills for Counsellors and Special Educators



Three Days National CRE Workshop on **Essential Counselling Skills for Counsellors and Special** **Educators**

Date: March 6-8, 2020

Venue: Seminar Hall, Maniben Nanavati Women's College, Vile
Parle, Mumbai

Organized by

Department of Psychology, Maniben Nanavati Women's
College, Vile Parle, Mumbai

CRE Status by RCI, New Delhi

The Department of Psychology, Maniben Nanavati Women's College, Mumbai and Indian Association of Health, Research and Welfare (IAHRW) conducted and organized the 3 Day National CRE Workshop on Essential Counselling Skills for Counsellors and Special Educators. The event was inaugurated by the Dr. Rajshree Trivedi, principal, Maniben Nanavati Women's College along with the faculty of the Psychology Department. Dr. Shoma Chakrawarty addressed the audience and explained the need for the workshop. The dignitaries, Dr Sunil Saini, Dr Rita Patil, Principal Dr Rajshree Trivedi and Co-ordinator of Psychology department Dr Anuja Deshpande were invited on the stage. The workshop commenced with melodious college song sung by MA I students of MNWC. The Principal gave an introductory speech regarding MNWC and the values embedded in the institution. Dr. Anuja Deshpande shed light on the department and its institutional value such as the research and extension in addition to teaching and evaluation. Ms.Neha Bhansali gave the vote of thanks to all the participants, speakers, faculty members and student volunteers of MNWC.



Pic 1: Inauguration of the workshop with theme song of the college

MODULE I

The first module was conducted by Ms. Kanchan Pansare Vishwakarma. She is a teacher, counsellor, and special educator and motivational speaker who has worked with children for more than 15 years. She is the co-founder of the NGO Adult and Child Welfare foundation. The session was based on basic counselling skill development. The speaker imparted knowledge regarding the essential counselling skills such as Patience, Good communication skills, Managerial ability, Attentive Listening Skills, Empathy, Concrete Analysis. The need for self-purification of thoughts and feelings were emphasized to have more effective counselling sessions with the client. The various perceptions among male and female clients were also shared. She conducted an activity regarding maintaining eye contact and expressing the feelings invoked when participants made eye contact with the person sitting next to each other. Interesting experiences were shared by the participants. The speaker also shared various counselling skills such as the importance of having a more genuine and unconditional positive regard while interacting with the client. To analyze and interpret information in a way that would facilitate growth and development rather than giving a direct solution or advice. The workshop ended with a remedial activity of associating the information with a visualized story rather than simply rote learning for children who have differential learning. It was an interactive workshop.



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MODULE II

The second module was based on RECBT in Counselling and Special Education by Dr Tanuja Prem. Dr Tanuja Prem is a Certified Rational Emotive, Cognitive and Behaviour-based Therapy. She is a psychotherapist, Life leadership trainer, an educationist, special educator and drama therapist. She is the founder of institutes such as Win therapies and Education Matter. She focused on the basic conception of RECBT and its applicability in daily living. She first discussed the origin of the therapy and emphasised on the aim that this therapy entails. She used real-life examples to simplify the concepts and encouraged a dialogue from the audience. She discussed the ABC(DE) Technique as well as the primary goals of RECBT. She then explained the cognitive triangle i.e. the interrelationship between thoughts, feelings and behaviour. The meaning of being rational was explained along with the 4 facets of irrationality. Some coping statements to deal with our irrational beliefs were discussed. She explained the correct questions to be asked in order to identify our irrationality. Some cases were discussed so as to have clarity on the above concepts. She also conducted an activity whereby the audience were asked to think of a personal situation and analyze it using the concepts of RECBT.



Some of these situations were collectively analyzed by the audience. She stressed that the ideology of RECBT can be incorporated into one's daily life. This can be done by unconditional self-acceptance and unconditional others acceptance. She told the importance of rating one's qualities and behaviour and to avoid labelling individuals. She also talked about the various benefits of RECBT such as it can be used as a self-help or self-management tool, it is user-friendly and helps one manage their thoughts, feelings as well as behaviour positively. It also encourages people to think about their life events and the meaning we associate with them. It helps us to take ownership of our thoughts, feelings and behaviour. She later addressed some questions from the audience and spoke a little on the limitations of the therapy. Overall, the module was very engaging and was taken up well with the audience.



Group pic 6th March

MODULE III

Day 2 of the three-day counselling workshop started with an important topic - Counseling skills for the Parents of children with special needs. Ms. Neha Bhansali introduced the speaker of this module, Dr Vaishali Kohle. Dr. Kohle is an associate professor and former chairperson of The Centre for Disability Studies and Action, School of Social work at Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai. The broad domains covered in the session were theories of family dynamics, intervention techniques with families of people with disability and what counselling means. In the first part relating to families, she explained some models like the Family-Centered Model and the General Systems Model which spoke about the dynamics of various sub-systems in a family, how relationships affect each other and how families should be included in the intervention process. She then gave the stages of the family life cycle and how homeostasis needs to be maintained at every stage of family life. Giving some examples she explained how these crises at different stages might be amplified in families with a person with disability. Keeping this in mind, she moved to the second part of interventions with families of people with disability. She focused on awareness and acceptance on personal, familial and community level. She explained the various layers of reactions families have when they know they have a person with a disability in their family. She told the correct ways of informing the family about a child with a disability. In the third part, she focused on the meaning of counselling, the role of counsellors, ways of communication in a counselling process. The most important domain of discussion here was the Egan's Model and its stages of the counselling process. Lastly, micro-skills required for counsellors were explained through a role-play activity. Volunteers from the audience depicted various micro-skills essential in a counselling setup. It was a very informative session and was received well by the audience.





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MODULE IV

In the afternoon, a workshop addressing relationship issues across ages was taken by Dr Anuja Deshpande and Dr Shoma Chrawarty. Dr. Anuja Deshpande is an assistant professor and P. G. Coordinator of Maniben Nanavati Women's College, Mumbai with an experience of 14 years on field and 12 years in teaching. Dr. Shoma Chakrawarty is also an assistant professor in the P.G. Department at the Maniben Nanavati Women's College. She is currently in training in an Advanced Diploma in Counseling at Prafula, Andheri. Ms Nyamat Chadha introduced the speakers. Dr Anuja Deshpande began the session by sharing a personal experience which was directed towards the importance of responsible counselling. With the help of a role-play activity the essence of the workshop's theme was explained. This activity made evident a few flaws that a counsellor might succumb to, in a practical sense. Thus, applying counselling skills and knowledge appropriately was emphasized. Dr Shoma Chakrawarty laid emphasis on the problems that an individual faces across various life stages namely parenting, young adulthood, couples and elderly. The audience was asked what kind of parenting they adopt to which varied answers were given like democratic, open and free parenting. Based on this, different types of parenting along with dynamics between children and parents were discussed. Later, the five steps of emotion coaching by Dr John Gottman were explained using real-life examples.



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Moving ahead to the next phase, the audience was asked what are the challenges in raising an adolescent to which many people raised concerns that adolescents face a lot of difficulties like body shaming, aggression in the classroom as well as romantic relationships, so it is important to build an open and trusting relationship with adolescents. Interventions were also sought to deal effectively with these problems if they arise. The needs of the adolescents were also discussed such as the need for space as well as the freedom to explore. Using the Genderbread Person, sensitization towards adolescents of different sexual orientation was also addressed. Dr. Anuja threw light on the role of social media in identity formation during this life stage. A strong base with theories was used to provide an effective and holistic view of an idea or concept. For the area of couple counselling, 3 pillars of relationship i.e. power dynamics, roles and communication were discussed. In the context of relationship conflicts, the four horsemen of the apocalypse that is criticism, defensiveness, stonewalling and contempt were discussed at length. Hesitation among counsellors while dealing with clients having sexual concerns was addressed. Emphasis was also laid on elderly care and the needs and problems faced by this demographic. The existence of elderly abuse was also explored along with the signs of the occurrence of such a situation. Finally, many useful tips for counsellors were suggested to effectively deal with clients of all ages. After the session, few questions were asked by the audience such as when the source of the individual's difficulty is not present, how must the session progress? If the clients stop coming to the sessions, what should a counsellor do? The speakers catered to all the questions of the audience.





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Group photo 7th March

MODULE V

Ms Pritha Saha conducted a session on the counselling skills for adolescents and family issues, extra-marital and the LGBTQ+ community. The speaker first explained the full-form of LGBTQIAPD; Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, Asexual and Demisexual. She further explained the difference between sexuality and gender as well as gender and sex. She explained the Genderbread Person in depth drawing examples from famous celebrities and tv shows. To present the normality, she described the historical as well as religious trends that we as an Indian culture used to believe and practice. She stressed on the fact that there are over 300 species of animals that show homosexual behaviour. The problems faced by the LGBTQ+ community in mainstream society were also discussed especially in India. The audience also raised issues/difficulties that the people from the community may face such as marginalization and social exclusion, family conflict and rejection, psychological distress and drug addiction. She ended this by a quote that read “Gay rights are human rights.” Next, the speaker laid emphasis on the transactional analysis by Eric Berne. This is the fundamental unit of social intercourse. In this, the components of communication, body language is of great importance. She discussed this theory and its significance in a therapeutic setup. She conducted an activity in the form of questionnaires. The first activity was based on the concepts of the functional ego states. The audience marked the statements that they thought would be the best fit for each state and the answers were later discussed collectively. In the second questionnaire, contained the stoking questionnaire. The audience were asked to answer a few statements by rating themselves on a continuum. On the back of the sheet, on the basis of the score obtained, they had to draw their personal stroke pattern. She emphasised that by being aware of any negative scenarios, we can use the concepts of RECBT to pave a way to a much happier and fulfilling life. The session proved to be a source of sensitising people of the difficulties that are faced by the LGBTQ+ community as well as gaining a theoretical base while understanding oneself and others.



MODULE VI

Zankhana Joshi conducted the workshop on Counselling Psychologist and Dance Movement. She is a Counseling Psychologist, a Dance Movement Therapy practitioner and a Bach Flower Remedies practitioner. She believes in holistic wellness and intuitive healing and combines her training to affect the journeys of personal transformations and inspired living. The workshop focused on movement-based activities to facilitate understanding of the mind-body connection that enabled a vision of the therapeutic use of expressive arts to transform chaos and crisis into creativity and connections through the experience of peace, joy, tolerance and faith. The workshop commenced by sitting down and forming a circle with a group of participants. The participants were given instruction of feeling within a safe space and modelling the moves done by the resource person. She started with Rhythmic Movement, it created a safe environment to express body-mind connection. The second part of the workshop focused on activity based on partner, where one partner directed the body movement of the second partner. The participant exchanged the role of leading and following. The rationale was to understand the role of a leader and a follower and to emotionally impact the individuals. To express free body movement thereby providing a safer environment, participant were instructed to take a role of any element of nature eg. Bee and Flower, while switching partners after every role-play movement was carried out. The final element of the activity focused on the individuals monitoring their feelings while moving different parts of their body.



The participants were then instructed to select a partner and stay in close proximity to provide each other support and express the feelings that they experienced while doing the task. The group as a whole became a larger support group, enabling the creation of positive space for support. The session ended with questions regarding the participants' experience while they were part of the group. One of the participants expressed that he felt a sense of oneness among the group and people were accepting of him. The usage of the dance form technique within special education and counselling sessions was discussed along with the benefit of body movement in expressing oneself. The workshop ended by expressing gratitude to the created safe space and participants.



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The last session of the day was taken by Ms. Neha Patel, ABT Expert, on usage of ABT in counselling session in various settings.



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CLOSING CEREMONY

The closing ceremony commenced with the introduction of the esteemed guests, Ms Neha Patel and Mr.Nabhiraj Mehta by Ms.Nymat Chadha. They are ABT (Arts-Based Therapy) practitioners and direct a course at MNWC. They were felicitated by Dr.Sunil Saini and Dr.Shoma Chakrawarty. Both Ms.Patel and Mr.Mehta addressed the gathering. They emphasized the importance of ABT and its widespread implications. They informed the audience that ABT has three main forms; visual aesthetics, rhythm and voice (music) and drama and movement. They imparted the benefits of ABT in the therapeutic setting as well in one's day to day life. The audience raised questions pertaining to the use of ABT in cases related to substance abuse. Mr Mehtra responded that the continuum would be broken and that one can find rhythm and movement soothing and this would be beneficial to individuals curbing their difficulties with substance abuse.



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The certificates to all the participants were distributed on stage alongside the distribution of the feedback forms. The vote of thanks was delivered by Ms.Shirin Plasterwala. Dr.Shoma Chakrawarty then thanked Ms.Shirin for the smooth conduction of the workshop and as a token of appreciation, she was given plant.