

Self-Development Centre

Teacher In- charge: Mrs. Sudarshana Saikia

The Self-Development Centre was established at R.A. Podar College of Commerce & Economics (Autonomous) in 2001 and has successfully completed 25 years. The center functions fully to provide support and assistance to students, parents, teachers and any other stakeholders to ensure that Podarites get in-house encouragement and facilitation to develop their personality, emotional and professional well-being in a robust manner. The center like all the years earlier has been making meaningful and impactful offerings across the year. The Self Development Cell commenced its counseling sessions from May 2025 and sessions were conducted two times a week in a hybrid format. The designated days being conducted on Thursdays (in-person) and Tuesdays (online) from 10.30 am to 2.30 pm.

The Self Development Centre was involved in conducting multiple programmes and activities along with the bi-weekly student support sessions through the year. Some of the highlights of the various programmes conducted are as follows:

STUDENT AWARENESS & ORIENTATION INDUCTION PROGRAMME: were consistently provided to students of First Year – Junior college in July & August 2026 to recreate awareness and the divergent access spaces of the Self Development Cell. The purpose of the orientation programme was to help raise awareness and induction into the in-house availability and functions undertaken by the self-development cell for students and parents. Students were made aware about the diverse range of issues that can be undertaken within sessions.

Some of the points discussed were as follows:

Self-awareness, ‘development of ‘self’ and ‘self-concept’

Understanding and building self-insight, self-confidence and self-esteem as boosters to healthy

Personality Development

Study Skills Planning and Note making sessions

Effective Concentration enhancement skills

Career Counseling and Vocational Guidance sessions

Career Exploration & Planning skills

Time planning and management skills

Developing self-insight, emotional literacy and self-awareness

Emotional Intelligence and Regulation sessions

Healthy self-expression and effective Communication Skills

Importance of Social relationships and integration healthy social skills

Handling peers, peer pressure and age-relevant habits

Identifying & Developing Life skills

Handling Gadgets, practicing gadget and screen-time hygiene in a changing world.

Duration of sessions per classroom: 20 – 25 mins.

Methodology used: Discussions, interactive puzzles and quizzes, written activities, brainstorming sessions and group discussions.

Aim of the Classroom Induction Sessions were:

Understanding and exploration of the ‘the self’, robust self-esteem and its importance while handling the various emotional, psychological, social, physiological and environmental concerns that are faced by today’s youth in these challenging yet stimulating years of young adulthood. Raising understanding the importance of effective non-verbal and verbal communication skills, essentials of self-awareness and handling social relationships while navigating the world of work.

Handling Relationships in the time of transitions and preservation of ‘self-identity within friendships and interpersonal connect Understanding the mind-body connect and awareness of ‘self-concept’, self-care, understanding the link between ‘thoughts-emotions-behaviours’, developing Emotional Intelligence strategies. Team building skills, and supportive social skills, and interpersonal efficacy, in a cross-cultural and multi-dimensional changing times in the world of work.

Lastly, understanding today’s transitioning times and integrating self-compassion into their mind-frames to create an all-round personality development and growth. Similarly, the students were informed and discussion was generated about the availability, accessibility and the reach of the Self-Development Centre. They were further informed that the services can be availed at no extra costs and utilizing them will help them build a solid ground-base towards self-empowerment and all-round development in these crucial years.

Individual Career Sessions:

The Self-Development Centre conducted a total of 100 -120 career counselling sessions between the academic year June 2025 till January 2026. Individual career counselling sessions were held for students from all streams in Junior and Degree College. Due to the advent of Artificial Intelligence and ChatGPT certain career choices made by students evidently exhibited dissatisfaction and so many students came for sessions who had dropped out of academic courses. The trend suggested more orientation and re-thinking of earlier career plans and hence guidance and counseling was conducted accordingly. Due to the on-going industry and student motivational changes; significant hands-on support was given and students were consistently encouraged to conduct a thorough market research and observational approach while planning future prospects.

Most of the student queries revealed a trend of confusion and ambiguity towards the career mapping. Hence, the building blocks of career planning and decision making were worked in majority of the sessions. Information was counselled given about general options after HSC, B.Com, and Graduation.

Information was also given regarding requirements for Postgraduate options after completing Commerce stream and other related careers, professional courses (BAF, BFM, BBI & so on), Chartered Accountancy, Liberal Arts, Psychology & Mental Health professions, Teaching, Social Work and Welfare, Finance related fields, Computer related fields, Civil Services, Hotel Management, Hospitality & Tourism, Designing related courses, Business, Law, Economics, Foreign Languages, Defence Services, Mass Media, Banking, Life Coaching, and so on. Various queries from students were answered about vision campus-corporate diversity, work-role mapping, courses, their eligibility, financial planning, entrance exams and top-ranking institutes.

MICRO-PEER SUPPORT GROUP:

With the required intimation and consent from students a small support group was formed of some grades of students who were willing to participate in peer sessions with a common agenda and predecided session goals constructed within individual sessions. Four such meetings conducted and the semblance of the group flow was also parallel to Group Therapy sessions yet with a difference of peer support. The feedback received was encouraging and the peer groups reported 20 – 30 per cent reduction in common reported symptoms experienced due to the Support group sessions.

Individual Therapy Sessions:

A total of approximately 480-500 counselling sessions were conducted within Individual Personal counselling via online as well as offline modes for students from all streams in Junior-Degree College & Postgraduate levels.

The counsellor addressed, identified and handled various issues this year as well. The concerns addressed ranged from mental-emotional, ethical, philosophical, psycho-medical, and psychological in nature. To name a few, the addressed concerns ranged from handling personal emotional concerns, career confusion, grief & bereavement, peer relationship conflicts and influences, handling anxiety and panic attack support, relationship difficulties and pre-marital exploration, rehabilitation counseling for students defaulters of copying and cheating concerns during exams family conflicts and difficulties of responsibilities faced in young adulthood, health – related behavioural counseling, exam anxiety during assessments and so on. Many other issues were reported for help in sessions like handling bullying via social media, suicidal ideations, anxiety and stress-related concerns, psychosomatic issues, personality development, study planning difficulties, exam stress, time management difficulties and study related issues, need for exploration of sexual identities, fears and phobias, peer pressure and so on. Family-centered and support interventions were also provided for students and parents in dysfunctional family systems.

Some salient points are as follows:

Brief summary of Counseling & Guidance sessions conducted:

Duration of session: minimum 30 mins - maximum of 1.15 minutes per student Counseling Themes: Psychotherapeutic interventions & Counseling Psychotherapy as well as Career Guidance was conducted depending on the reported concerns.

No. of sessions: 480-500 - Total no. of sessions were conducted from May 2025 to January 2026 by Ms. Sukhada Kelkar at the Self-Development Center The students connected with the psychologist via multiple mediums viz. walk in inquiries, via the college information portal, references by faculty and parents, and so on. A dedicated email id has also been generated for students to contact the Self—Development Center regarding information and appointments. Accordingly, the students were allocated a session slot on the Tuesdays and Thursdays between 10.30 am to 2.30 pm.

Individual Counseling and one-on-one psychotherapy were provided within sessions. In some sensitive and cases needing attention - Telephonic mentoring and supervision was also provided viz. in cases of possible suicidal ideations and accordingly appropriate referrals were made.

Parental Reach sessions, Family Therapy & Joint Therapy sessions were engaged between students and their family members depending on the nature of the concerns identified.

Some group sessions were also conducted to address certain reported incidents of Social Media bullying amongst students.

One on one parent engagement and counseling sessions were conducted with 15-16 families as they were motivated to address the underlying concerns impacting their parenting styles after the series of workshops conducted.

Two brief intervention sessions were also conducted for some members of the non-teaching staff for stress management and managing work-life balance.

The psychotherapy and guidance sessions were directed at handling various issues like detailed below:

Bereavement strategies and palliative practices, Grief Counseling for students & family members affected by loss of academic grades, academic failures, entrance-exam post-stress, relationship break-ups, terminal illness impact and related losses.

Suicidal intervention & crisis management sessions for students reported by teachers and sometimes parents.

Family based interventions, family group sessions and addressing parenting styles for effective parent-child interactions.

Handling Exam anxiety, study skills and career decision making.

Crisis Intervention & Management sessions were conducted and appropriate referrals were given for a suicidal prevention as well as deeper psychiatric concerns observed in student cases.

Self-confidence, Self-Worth issues, Communication Skills training, Goal-Setting, Time Management.

Difficulties in concentration and improving attention span, and effective study management.

Study skills, memory enhancement strategies, developing long-term and short-term goals

Sleep Hygiene & Relaxation strategies.

Dietary management intervention and Lifestyle management practices

Realistic goal setting, motivational difficulties.

Handling student's mental - emotional concerns & lifestyle rehabilitation in the ever-evolving academic and vocational front.

Identifying and dealing with self-harm episodes and creating support network for the same. Raising family support systems to ensure student safety and long-term support.

Handling health related anxiety, panic attacks, and depressive symptoms presentations due to the stressors of the post-pandemic times.

Relationship management, couples therapy social media pressure & handling peer pressure.

Handling Social Media pressure and bullying.

Addressing and making appropriate referrals/ interventions for cases of addictions

Handling difficulties faced by students related to adapting to future career planning, handling current responsibilities, and managing family/ peer expectations.

Effective Self - Regulation skills and balanced lifestyle management.

Supportive therapy for students with obsessive-compulsive disorders, body dysmorphia disorder, eating disorders, gadget addiction, gender-identity confusion and post-traumatic stress induced anxiety and behavioural concerns.

Handling parental, peer, personal belief systems and expectations to help manage self in context of social media.

Career uncertainty causing emotional and familial distress.

Handling family conflicts and dealing with parental pressure/ responsibilities.

Career Awareness, Career Exploration & Career Information exploration were conducted during some of the students' counselling sessions. Parents were also involved in some cases for a deeper intervention and long-term impact.

Some of the intervention strategies used within counseling sessions were as follows:

- The students were taught effective study skills techniques, emotions-focussed approach, venting

exercises, concentration techniques, time management skills, motivation, goal setting, acceptance of self-relaxation techniques and strategies to handle emotional stress.

- REBT, CBT, cognitive therapy, Behavioural Modification therapy, Gestalt therapeutic interventions, Reference-Point therapy exercises, Inner Child interventions, motivational counselling, vocational guidance and coaching, Family therapy, Couples therapy, Grief Counseling, Crisis Intervention, Palliative Therapy Approach of counselling, Narrative-based therapeutic approaches, Music-based relaxation and NLP exercises in combination and Art-Based Modality were some of the approaches used to help clients to address the issues.

Future Plans & Programmes:

To organise STUDENT TRAINING PROGRAMME for students to develop Mental Health awareness at a Community level will be aimed to be conducted in the Mental Health Awareness week in October 2026.

To conduct Mental health Awareness Poster Competition