A Two-day Workshop
on
Barefoot Counselling

(5th and 6th May, 2025)



NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY WARANGAL

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ON
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(5th and 6th May 2025)

REPORT

Message



Prof. Bidyadhar Subudhi
Director

Students join institutions like NITs after rigorous preparation, carrying high hopes—both their own and their families'. While many adjust well, others struggle with academic and social pressures, often in silence. These challenges can lead to poor performance, isolation, and mental health concerns.

Recognizing this, the Institute has conducted the Barefoot Counselling workshop to train faculty to act as mentors and emotional support anchors for students. Faculty members are often the first point of contact, and their role in fostering a caring academic environment is vital.

The Director expressed concern over the growing mental health issues in CFTIs, including student suicides, and emphasized the urgency of proactive support systems. He affirmed that the insights from this workshop would be compiled into recommendations and shared with the Ministry of Education to encourage similar initiatives across all NITs.

Resource Persons

1	Dr. Jitendra Nagpal, M.D., D.N.B Senior Consultant Psychiatrist & Head, Moolchand Medicity. Program Director, Expressions India, New Delhi
2	Dr. Geeta Mehrotra Consultant Psychologist, Expressions India New Delhi
3	Dr. Aditya Arya, IPS, Rtd DGP
4	Dr. Anantha Madhava Mohan, MD (General Medicine)
5	Prof. Amba Prasada Rao, Department of Mechanical Engineering NIT Warangal
6	Prof. Kamalini Devi
7	Kanha Shanti Vanam Team





Inaugural Ceremony

Date: May 5-6, 2025
Venue: ALC, National Institute of Technology Warangal

Executive Summary

The two-day workshop titled *Barefoot Counselling* was conducted at NIT Warangal with the primary objective of raising awareness about mental health challenges in academic settings and equipping educators with practical tools to support students' emotional and psychological well being. The workshop featured expert-led sessions on global mental health trends, psychosocial stressors, mindfulness practices, drug abuse awareness, and the pivotal role of teachers as mentors and counsellors. Through a blend of interactive lectures, experiential activities, group presentations, and meditation practices, the workshop fostered an engaging learning environment. Participants demonstrated high levels of involvement and expressed a strong commitment to integrating mental health support strategies into their professional roles. This report provides a detailed account of the workshop proceedings, key insights, participant feedback, and recommendations for future initiatives.

Introduction

Mental health issues among students, particularly in higher education, are increasingly recognized as critical challenges that affect academic performance and overall well-being. Educators are often the first line of support for students facing emotional and psychological difficulties but may lack adequate training and resources to address these effectively. The *Barefoot Counselling* workshop was designed to bridge this gap by sensitizing faculty members to mental health challenges and equipping them with accessible, practical counselling and stress management techniques.

Background

The workshop was organized in response to the growing need for mental health awareness and support mechanisms within academic institutions. Recognizing the unique pressures faced by students-ranging from academic stress to substance abuse-the program aimed to empower educators to become proactive mentors and counsellors. The sessions incorporated evidence based methodologies and culturally relevant practices to ensure applicability within the academic context of NIT Warangal and similar institutions.

Methodology

The workshop employed a mixed-methods approach combining interactive lectures, experiential learning activities, case study analyses, group discussions, and meditation exercises. Experts from diverse backgrounds facilitated sessions, encouraging participant engagement through reflective exercises, role plays, debates, and creative presentations. This participatory format enabled knowledge sharing, skill development, and peer learning.

Workshop Proceedings and Findings

Day 1: May 5, 2025

Session 1:
Importance of Counselling and Integrated Approach for Promoting Mental Health, Resilience & Wellbeing

Facilitator: Dr. Jitendra Nagpal

Dr. Jitendra Nagpal opened the workshop with a comprehensive session on the significance of counselling in academic spaces. He discussed the global mental health scenario, emerging psychosocial stressors, and the "5 D's of Depression." The session included case studies and reflective activities to deepen understanding of mental health issues among students.

Global Mental Health Scenario and Emerging Psychosocial Stressors Dr. Nagpal commenced the workshop with a comprehensive overview of the global mental health landscape, focusing on the psychosocial stressors prevalent among students, especially those pursuing doctoral studies. He elaborated on anxiety, depression, and burnout, introducing the "five D's of depression" and key warning signs for early detection. Case studies provided practical insights into recognizing and addressing depression within academic environments. A reflective exercise on influential relationships deepened participants' emotional awareness.
Key Insights:

- Mental health challenges are pervasive and particularly acute in academic settings.
- Early identification of depression and learning disorders is crucial for timely intervention.
- Personal reflection enhances empathy and understanding of mental health dynamics.



Session by Dr. Jitendra Nagpal

Session 2:

Student and Faculty - Promotion of Community Mental Health in Indian

Institutions *Facilitator: Dr. Geeta Mehrotra*

Dr. Geeta Mehrotra emphasized the role of both students and faculty in fostering a supportive community. Through interactive activities, she illustrated how empathy, emotional awareness, and positive peer connections contribute to well-being.

This session was designed as an experiential workshop to foster emotional resilience and peer support. Participants engaged in activities such as emoji-based grouping, the spaghetti challenge, handshake exercises, and positive affirmation reflections. The heart exercise metaphorically illustrated the lasting impact of negative comments despite positive reinforcement, highlighting the importance of emotional validation.

Key Insights:

- Emotional connection and empathy-building exercises promote group cohesion. • Non-verbal and playful activities serve as powerful tools for self-awareness and emotional healing.
- Peer support can counteract internalized negativity and foster a supportive environment.





Session by Dr. Geeta Mehrotra

Session 3:

Students Centric Life Skills & Wellbeing Leadership Sessions – Peer to Peer (P2P) Programs

Facilitator: Dr. Geeta Mehrotra

Dr. Geeta Mehrotra conducted a practical session on life skills and peer leadership, encouraging participants to design and implement peer-to-peer mental health programs.

Group Presentations and Creative Learning

Participants were divided into groups and tasked with presenting on themes related to mental

health awareness, technology's impact on education, and depression signs. Presentation formats included charts, debates, role plays, music parodies, and a street play (nukkad naatak). The session concluded with an interactive audio quiz reinforcing life skills and mental well being concepts.

Key Insights:

- Creative and varied presentation styles enhance comprehension and engagement.
- Collaborative learning fosters deeper understanding and peer-to-peer knowledge transfer.
- Balanced use of technology in education requires ongoing dialogue and awareness.





Session 3 activities

Day 2: May 6, 2025

Session 1:

Understanding Drug Abuse and Intervention Strategies
Facilitator: Dr. Aditya Arya (Retired IPS Officer)



Dr. Aditya Arya delivered an informative session on drug abuse, its types, and the distinction between use and abuse. He shared real-life cases and highlighted the importance of early, empowerment-based interventions. He provided an in-depth exploration of drug abuse, clarifying definitions, types of substances, and the distinction between use and abuse. Drawing from case studies and the empowerment-based intervention techniques outlined in *Yes, You Can Do It*, he emphasized the critical importance of early detection and intervention to prevent addiction and its consequences.

Key Insights:

- Awareness of drug abuse signs is essential for prevention and early action.
- Empowerment-focused interventions can effectively support recovery and rehabilitation.

Session 2:

Personality Grooming

Facilitator: Dr. Anantha Madhava Mohan & Kanha Shanti Vanam Team

Dr. Anantha Madhava Mohan discussed the significance of personality development in building resilience and self-esteem among students.

Meditation, Mudras, and Stress Management

This session introduced participants to body-centric stress management techniques including mudras (symbolic hand gestures) and polarity exercises, complemented by guided meditation.

These practices aimed to regulate emotional balance and reconnect participants with inner calm and focus.

Key Insights:

- Simple physical techniques like mudras have significant positive effects on mental well-being.
- Meditation is a vital practice for managing stress and enhancing concentration.





Session by Dr. Anantha Madhava Mohan

Session 3:

Dealing with Poor Performing Students

Facilitator: Prof. Amba Prasada Rao

Prof. G. Amba Prasad Rao provided insights into supporting underperforming students through mentorship and the Mentors model, emphasizing the teacher's role as a "Barefoot Counsellor."



Dr. Rao highlighted the transformative role of teachers as "barefoot counsellors" who provide emotional and psychological support beyond academic instruction. Using the MENTORS model, he shared inspiring examples from NIT Warangal where faculty interventions successfully aided students through crises, underscoring the power of timely and compassionate mentorship.

Student Performance and Teachers as Mentors and Counsellors

Key Insights:

- Teachers are uniquely positioned to influence students' mental health positively.
- Even small, empathetic interventions can prevent serious academic and emotional setbacks.

Session 4:

Mastering the Thoughts through Elevated Affirmations

Facilitator: Prof. Kamalini Devi (Assistant Professor, Civil Engineering, NIT Warangal)

Prof. Kamalini Devi led a session on positive affirmations, meditation, and stress relief techniques, equipping participants with practical tools for daily well-being.

Meditation and Stress Relief

The concluding session offered a calming, reflective meditation practice focused on stress reduction, mental clarity, gratitude, and intention-setting. Participants were encouraged to integrate meditation into their daily routines to sustain emotional well-being.





Session by Prof. Kamalini Devi

Key Insights:

- Regular meditation fosters long-term emotional relief and resilience.
- Stress management is an ongoing, integrative practice essential for personal and professional life.

Participant Feedback and Overall Outcomes

The workshop successfully achieved its objectives, as evidenced by enthusiastic participant engagement and positive feedback. Attendees appreciated the interactive and experiential learning methods, particularly the meditation and mindfulness practices, which many found immediately applicable for personal stress management. Numerous educators expressed a keen interest in further training on mental health support and Counselling techniques to better serve their students.

Conclusions

The *Barefoot Counselling* workshop was a highly effective and enriching program that underscored the critical importance of mental health awareness, emotional support, and proactive mentorship in academic institutions. It demonstrated that educators, equipped with appropriate knowledge and skills, can play a pivotal role in fostering students' psychological well-being and academic success. The combination of theoretical insights, practical tools, and reflective exercises created a comprehensive learning experience that participants found both meaningful and empowering.

Recommendations

- Institutionalize regular mental health training programs for faculty and staff to build sustained capacity in student support.
- Integrate mindfulness and stress management practices into academic schedules to promote holistic well-being.
- Develop peer support networks and mentorship frameworks based on the "barefoot counsellor" model to enhance emotional support systems.
- Encourage ongoing dialogue on the balanced use of technology in education to mitigate its adverse effects.
- Implement early intervention protocols for drug abuse and mental health issues within academic institutions.

No of Faculty attended the workshop: 150

This report serves as an official record of the *Barefoot Counselling* workshop and provides a foundation for future mental health initiatives within academic environments.

Organising Committee

Prof. A. Venu Vinod, Dean (FW)

Prof. D. Srinivasacharya, Dean (SW)

Prof. A. Sarath Babu, Dean (AC)

Prof. G. Amba Prasad Rao, ME

Prof. B. Ramya Devi, HS

Prof. Kamalini Devi, CE

National Institute of Technology Warangal

A TWO-DAY WORKSHOP

ON

BAREFOOT COUNSELLING

Programme- 5th and 6th May 2025

Venue: ALC

Lecture Schedule

Day 1: 5th May 2025

Session 1		
Time	**Topic Name**	**Resource Person**
10:00 – 11:30 am	**Importance of Counselling and Integrated Approach for Promoting Mental Health, Resilience & Wellbeing**	Dr. Jitendra Nagpal, M.D., D.N.B, Program Director, Expressions India, New Delhi
11:30 – 11:45 am	Break	
11:45 – 1:15 am	**Student and faculty - Promotion of Community Mental Health in Indian Institutions**	Dr. Geeta Mehrotra, Consultant Psychologist, Expressions India, New Delhi
1:15 – 1:45 pm	Lunch Break	
Session 2		
1:45 – 3:15 pm	**The Specific Emerging Challenges of Youth Wellbeing in India.**	Dr. Jitendra Nagpal, M.D., D.N.B, Program Director, Expressions India, New Delhi
3:15 – 4:30 pm	**Students Centric Life Skills & Wellbeing Leadership Sessions – Peer to Peer (P2P) Programs**	Dr. Geeta Mehrotra, Consultant Psychologist, Expressions India, New Delhi
	Beverage	

National Institute of Technology Warangal

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Day 2: 6th May 2025

Session 3		
Time (Hour)	**Topic Name**	**Resource Person**
9:30 – 11:00	**Drug Use, Abuse and Loss of Life**	Dr. Aditya Arya, IPS, Rtd. DGP, Hyderabad
11:00 – 11:15	Break	
11:15 – 1:00	**Personality Grooming**	Dr. Anantha Madhava Mohan, MD - General Medicine, HyderAbad
1:00 – 2:00	Lunch Break	
Session 4		
2:00-3:30	**Dealing with Poor Performing Students**	Prof. G. Amba Prasad Rao, ME
3:30-3:45	Break	
3:45-5.15	**Mastering the Thoughts through Elevated Affirmations**	Prof. Kamalini Devi, CE
5:15 – 5:20	Closing Remarks by Prof. A. Venu Vinod, Dean (FW)	
5:20 – 5:25	Vote of Thanks by Dr. B. Ramya Devi, HS	