The Advisor-Advisee Relationship

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OFFICE OF STUDENT AFFAIRS

4 R's

- Reassurance
- Role expectations
- Reminders
- Referral considerations
I. Reassurance

- Many of you are experienced teachers/mentors
- Most students are well-adjusted & high functioning
- Occasionally, some may face personal challenges that disrupt their psychosocial functioning
- You are not alone, back-up systems are in place

Challenges Our Students Face

Developmental Tasks
- adjust to multiple changes
- seek self-affirmation
- manage relationships
- cope with studies & career planning
  - normal, temporary

Crisis/Trauma
- bereavement, accident, illness, legal problem, family crisis
  - unexpected, overwhelming, temporary

Psychopathology/Mental Illness
- depression, anxiety, psychosis, personality problem
  - abnormal, chronic or acute

The nature and intensity of intervention vary accordingly
II. Role Expectations

A-A Relationship (Encounter)

- Attend to individual student
- Develop rapport
- Validate student’s experiences
- Identify areas for concern
- Support active self-coping
- Offer useful information & help
- Refer for appropriate services

Offering Help

- **External help**: understanding, emotional support, reassurance, practical assistance, coaching, crisis intervention, referral.

  *Realistic expectations & limitations*

- **Self-help**: ultimately, it is the student’s own responsibility, motivation & resilience that will enable him/her to overcome life’s challenges
III. Reminders

Effective Communication

- Be friendly & approachable
- Be attentive
- Be sensitive & considerate
- Stay calm
- Listen, listen, listen
- Express empathic understanding
- Be open-minded
- Focus on relevant issues & concerns
- Be positive & reassuring
- Discuss options & solutions
- Form partnership

Resistance & Denial

- Resistance: acknowledging problem
  - active coping
  - seeking help

  **Subconscious** – lack of insight, as defense mechanism
  **Conscious** – avoidance, deny personal responsibility, as means of manipulation
  **Mental disturbance**

- Major obstacle to effective helping & problem resolution
Coping with Resistance

- Build trust & partnership through positive communication
- Explore & address source(s) of resistance
- Utilize established support systems prudently
- Help student
  - feel secure & open in acknowledging & discussing problems
  - recognize the gravity of the situation
  - assume personal responsibility
  - explore coping strategies & solutions
  - seek appropriate help & support

Your Worst Fears

- Emotional outbursts
- Aggressiveness & violence
- Suicidal risks
- Psychiatric illness

Mental Health First Aid

Standard Courses
- Regularly organized by the Personnel Office, conducted by the Student Counselling & Development Service, OSA
- Certificates issued by the Mental Health Association of Hong Kong & acknowledged by the ORYGEN Research Center of the Department of Psychiatry, University of Melbourne
- Not professional training
IV. Referral and Consultation

When

- Problem is beyond your expertise or responsibility
- Your relationship may be compromised
- Student is reluctant to confide in you
- Your help has not been effective
- You feel overwhelmed or overly responsible
- You have personality differences or conflicts

Important to safeguard student’s privacy in consultation, information exchange & referral

Operational Guidelines

- Problem has pervasive impact on student
- Cross-unit collaboration & coordination is required

- Handling Problematic & Critical Cases
- Handling Suicidal Risks
- Referral to the Student Counselling & Development Service
  - http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/osa/scds (full)
  - http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/osa/link.htm (concise)
- Handling Emergency Situations for Non-local/Exchange Students
  - http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/osa/link.htm
Your Questions

- What are the common problems
- What are the signs & symptoms of distress
- Who should do what & when
- How can I make a referral
- Is a case conference necessary
- How do I respond to suicidal risk
- What support services are available
- How should I exchange confidential information
- And Many More.....

Offer guiding principles & general procedures

Training and Sharing

- Case consultation
- Orientation Talk for Resident Tutors
- Mental Health First Aid Courses
- Workshops
  - ‘Problem Detection & Initial Helping’
- Other training courses by the Personnel Office
Thank You