

The Advisor-Advisee Relationship



LIZ LAU

STUDENT COUNSELLING & DEVELOPMENT SERVICE

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

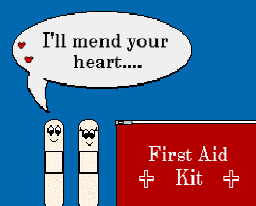
Your Worst Fears

- 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

How do I respond to suicidal risk

Who should do what & when

What are the signs & symptoms of distress

What support services are available

How can I make a referral

How should I exchange confidential information

Is a case conference necessary

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