

Mental Health & Suicide Prevention Policy

Shri Shankarrao Bezalwar Arts and Commerce College, Aheri
(Dist. Gadchiroli)

Preamble

The institution recognizes its duty under **Article 21** of the Constitution of India to safeguard the right to life and dignity of its students. This policy aims to transition from a "merit-centric" culture to a "well-being-centric" environment, particularly addressing the unique socio-economic landscape of Aheri and Gadchiroli.

Phase 1: Institutional Infrastructure (The "Empower" Pillar)

1.1 Establishment of Student Wellness Team (SWT)

- The college shall constitute an SWT chaired by the Principal, including one senior faculty member, the appointed Counselor, and two student representatives (one male, one female).
- **Mandate:** To oversee mental health awareness, handle distress reports, and ensure no student is left behind during academic transitions.

1.2 Qualified Professional Support

- As per mandates for institutions with 100+ students, the college shall engage at least one **Qualified Counselor** (Psychologist or Social Worker) with specialized training in adolescent mental health.
- **Accessibility:** The counselor's office shall be in a private, non-intimidating area of the campus to ensure student confidentiality.

1.3 Physical Safety Standards

- Hostels and common areas must be equipped with **tamper-proof/anti-ligature ceiling fans**.
- Restricted access to rooftops, balconies, and other high-risk areas during late hours.

Phase 2: Prevention Identification (The "Understand & Motivate" Pillar)

2.1 Mandatory Gatekeeper Training

- **Bi-Annual Training:** All teaching and non-teaching staff must undergo training twice a year on **Psychological First Aid** and the "UMMEED" warning signs (withdrawal, change in appetite, sudden academic decline).

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- **Sensitization:** Specific training for staff to engage with students from marginalized backgrounds (ST/SC/OBC) and tribal communities in a non-discriminatory manner.

2.2 Peer Support "Sahyog" System

- Select students shall be trained as **Peer Mentors** to identify distress among classmates.
- **Confidentiality:** Mentors are trained to offer a "listening ear" and facilitate a warm hand-off to the professional counselor.

2.3 De-Stigmatization of Merit

- **Ban on Public Shaming:** The College strictly prohibits the public display of marks or "batch segregation" based on performance.
- **Confidentiality of Results:** Test marks and feedback shall be shared only with the individual student and their parents.

Phase 3: Crisis Management & Reporting (The "Manage" Pillar)

3.1 Written Referral Protocols

- A formal document must be kept on record outlining the immediate steps for a mental health emergency, including contact details for the **Aheri Civil Hospital** and local psychiatric services.
- **Toll-Free Helplines:** **Tele-MANAS (14416)** and national suicide helplines must be displayed in large, legible print in all classrooms, the canteen, and on the college website.

3.2 Annual Wellness Audit (Anupalan)

- The SWT must prepare an **Annual Wellness Report** (anonymized) summarizing:
 1. Number of awareness sessions conducted.
 2. Number of staff training hours.
 3. General statistics on counselor usage.
- This report serves as the basis for the **Anupalan Ahwal** (Compliance Report) required by the State Government and Gondwana University.

Phase 4: Parental & Community Engagement (The "Empathise" Pillar)

- **Parent Orientation:** Conduct regular sessions for parents to discourage "unrealistic academic pressure" and educate them on signs of psychological distress.
- **Inclusive Environment:** The College maintains a **Zero-Tolerance Policy** for bullying, ragging, and harassment based on gender, caste, or socio-economic status.

Coordinator

Dr. Ravindra D. Hajare

Mental Health Cell

Principal

Dr Vijay E. Somkuwar


PRINCIPAL
S.B.Arts & Commerce College
Aheri Dist.Gadchiroli