

## WORKSHOP REPORT

### Experience from a Medical Student Counseling Workshop

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#### Context

Counseling skills were realized as important elements in our school's curriculum. Relevant inputs were imparted to students at various places in the time table. The Student Personal and Professional Development Programme was formed to facilitate and coordinate training programmes in such areas in the undergraduate. We describe in this article a counseling skills development programme known as the 'Medical Students Counseling Workshop' in our medical school.

#### Reason for the idea

The importance of promoting and nurturing positive personal qualities and professional development among future doctors are becoming more apparent within healthcare. Many evidences showed that it has effects on the quality of care provided. This workshop was developed to enhance students' self-awareness of counseling skills importance and to assist them in developing self-improvement strategies to develop their counseling skills. It offers a unique opportunity to develop students' skills in such areas.

#### Methods

The workshop was run over one half-day. It was limited to 20 participants per workshop. The same workshop will be conducted for several times to cater for different groups of medical students.

The workshop was run by academic staff from the Medical Education Department. The objectives of this workshop were to enable students to explore the concept of counseling, to understand the importance of counseling skills and to develop self-improvement strategies in improving their counseling skills for becoming better medical students as well as future doctors. They were given some input regarding the concept of counseling and the importance of counseling skills related to medical study as well as in the medical career. Role-play and

discussion sessions were held to explore the practical component of counseling. After they went through the practical sessions, students should be able to recognize their own strengths and weaknesses, and develop their own self-improvement strategies to strengthen their counseling skills development in the future.

#### Evaluation

A total of 20 medical students participated in the workshop. At the end of the workshop, evaluation questionnaires were distributed to participants. Apart from basic biographic data, the questionnaire solicited participants' ratings regarding, the usefulness of input given, facilitators and the discussion sessions. Participants were also asked to rate the success of the workshop in achieving the objectives and its overall usefulness. In an open-ended section participants were asked to describe the most important thing they have learnt from the workshop as well as the most important thing that can be improved. Data analysis was done using SPSS version 12. The evaluation showed that the participants rated the overall workshop as highly useful (90.7%) and as having achieved the objectives (85%). All sessions were rated as highly useful. Among the comments written in the open-ended section regarding the most important thing participants have learnt from the workshop, 50% wrote comments related to improved self-awareness. The importance of counseling skills was commented by 34.6% of them. Another 15.4% appreciated the usefulness of increased knowledge such as counseling skills.

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