



RULES & REGULATIONS

WELLNESS CENTER- OFFICE OF STUDENT AFFAIRS

Student Mental Health Support Policy & Procedure

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1. PURPOSE

Mental health is a state of well-being in which an individual realizes their own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively, and is able to contribute to their community (World Health Organization, 2004). For students, mental health is essential for effective learning, academic engagement, and personal development, enabling them to manage the challenges of higher education while maintaining overall well-being.

This policy is intended to ensure equitable and timely access to care, uphold the highest standards of confidentiality, ethical practice, and professional conduct, and provide guidance on referral pathways for students requiring specialized or external clinical services. In addition, it seeks to promote mental health awareness, reduce stigma associated with help-seeking behavior, and foster an institutional environment in which student well-being is recognized as a shared responsibility and a core priority.

2. INTRODUCTION

The Institute of Business Administration (IBA) Karachi recognizes that mental health is a fundamental component of a student's overall well-being and academic success. Students pursuing higher education often encounter significant psychological pressures, emotional challenges, and personal difficulties that, if left unaddressed, can adversely impact their academic performance, social relationships, and quality of life.

In response to this, IBA has established the Wellness Center under the Office of Student Affairs to provide professional, confidential, and accessible mental health support to its student community. The Wellness Center operates with a commitment to reducing stigma around mental health, fostering a culture of openness, and ensuring that every student has access to the care and support they need regardless of the nature or severity of their concern.

This policy serves as the governing framework for all mental health services delivered by the Wellness Center. It outlines the principles, operational procedures, responsibilities, and standards that guide the provision of psychological services on campus, including intake, assessment, therapy, documentation, crisis intervention, and referral to specialized or external care when required. By formalizing these standards, IBA affirms that student well-being is a shared institutional responsibility and a central priority in creating a safe, supportive, and academically enabling campus environment.

3. POLICY STATEMENT

The IBA Wellness Center is committed to promoting psychological well-being and providing accessible mental health support. All services are delivered with strict confidentiality, professionalism, and sensitivity to students' individual needs.

3.1 Commitment to Student Well-Being

IBA recognizes that mental health concerns are as significant as physical health concerns. Every student deserves a safe, non-judgmental, and professionally supported environment in which to address their emotional and psychological needs, free from stigma or discrimination.

3.2 Equitable Access

All students, regardless of academic standing, background, or the nature of their mental health concern, shall have equal and unhindered access to Wellness Center services. No student shall face bias or disadvantage in seeking support.

3.3 Confidentiality

Confidentiality is the cornerstone of all mental health services at the IBA Wellness Center. All information shared by students during sessions is strictly confidential. No information will be disclosed to any individual or party without the student's informed consent, including:

- Peers and fellow students
- Faculty members and academic departments
- Administrative offices and institutional leadership
- Family members or guardians
- Any other internal or external party

Exceptions to confidentiality apply only when:

- There is an imminent risk of harm to the student or to others.
- The case has been formally referred to by the Disciplinary Committee, where disclosure is ethically and legally warranted. When students are referred by the University Disciplinary Committee, only attendance and compliance information will be shared.

In all exceptional cases, the student will be informed of the necessity of disclosure to the extent that is safe and appropriate.

3.4 Professionalism and Ethical Standards

All clinical services will be delivered by qualified and experienced mental health professionals adhering to the ethical guidelines of the American Psychological Association (APA) and relevant local regulatory authorities in Pakistan.

3.5 Regulatory Compliance

This policy is consistent with HEC Pakistan's standards and initiatives related to student mental health and well-being

3.6 Core Ethical Principles

All clinical staff adhere to the following ethical principles:

- **Beneficence and Nonmaleficence:** Clinicians strive to benefit students and do no harm. This includes providing competent care within the boundaries of professional expertise, avoiding

dual relationships, and safeguarding student welfare above all other interests.

- **Respect for Autonomy and Dignity:** Students have the right to make informed decisions about their care. Clinicians will obtain informed consent before initiating services, respect student's right to refuse or discontinue treatment, at any stage after seeking counseling and involve students as active partners in treatment planning.
- **Justice and Fairness:** All students receive equitable access to quality mental health services. Services are provided based on clinical need and not on any discriminatory factors. The Wellness Center actively works to eliminate barriers to access for underserved populations.
- **Fidelity and Responsibility:** Clinicians always maintain professional boundaries, manage conflicts of interest transparently, and take responsibility for their professional decisions and actions.

3.7 Boundary Maintenance

- Clinicians do not engage in dual relationships that could impair objectivity or harm students (e.g., social, financial, or business relationships).
- No romantic relationships with current or former clients under any circumstances.
- Faculty or staff clinicians do not provide therapy to students they teach, supervise, or evaluate.

4. WELLNESS CENTER SERVICES AND FACILITIES

The IBA Wellness Center provides a range of professional mental health services to enrolled students. These include:

4.1 Counseling and Therapy Services/ Psychiatric consultations

- Individual counseling/ therapy sessions (45-50 minutes per session)
- Initial intake assessments (45-60 minutes)
- Group therapy sessions (90 minutes)
- Psychiatric medication consultations, Initial (60 minutes) and follow-up (25–30 minutes; up to 45 minutes if clinically indicated)
- Sessions may be delivered in-person or in exceptional cases via a secure and confidential online platform, as determined by clinician.

4.2 Accessing Services

Students may access Wellness Center services through multiple pathways including the online portal, walk-in consultations, email, phone, and referrals from faculty or staff. For full details on the access process, please refer to **Section 6.1**.

4.3 Appointment Scheduling and Wait Times

- Routine appointments: Can be booked through wellness center website portal
- Urgent concerns: Scheduled within 1–2 business days.
- Crisis situations: Same day support provided through walk-in hours or emergency protocols.
- Students experiencing suicidal ideation, severe anxiety, or distress receive priority scheduling.
- Appointments may be cancelled or rescheduled through the online portal, by email, or by phone with at least 24 hours' notice when possible.

4.4 Session Limits and Referrals

The Wellness Center typically provides up to 12-16 sessions per academic year. Extensions may be granted based on clinical need and capacity. Students requiring services beyond the Wellness Center's scope will receive appropriate referrals to external providers. For full details on the referral process, please refer to **Section 6.5**.

5. EMERGENCY AND CRISIS PROCEDURES

A mental health crisis is defined as a situation where a student poses an imminent risk of harm to self or others, is experiencing acute psychotic symptoms, is severely disoriented or unable to care for basic needs or has been recently victimized by violence or trauma.

5.1 Crisis Response

- **Walk-In Crisis Support:** Students may walk into the Wellness Center during business hours for immediate crisis consultation. The Wellness Center will serve as the primary focal point and activate the Crisis Management Team (CMT) where necessary.
- **Direct Contact:** Students may contact the Wellness Center via email at **wellness@iba.edu.pk** or through the designated contact number. All crisis-related communications will be reviewed promptly, and appropriate CMT members will be engaged based on the level of risk.
- **Activation of Crisis Management Team (CMT):** In situations involving moderate to high-risk mental health concerns (e.g., suicidal ideation, self-harm, acute psychological distress), the Wellness Center will activate the CMT team to take immediate action.
- In cases of serious safety risk, family members or emergency contacts may be notified. Clinicians will attempt to discuss family notification with the student when clinically feasible. Information shared with families is limited to what is strictly necessary for student safety. All emergency interventions are documented in the clinical record.
- **Emergency Medical Services:** In case of an immediate crisis requiring urgent intervention, please contact Tel: (021) 111-422-422 Ext: 2031, 2062, 3050, 2453, 2072.

6. PROCEDURAL GUIDELINES

6.1 Accessing Services

IBA is committed to making the process of accessing mental health support as straightforward and barrier-free as possible.

1. Students may reach out through the official IBA Wellness Center website, where they can view all available services. The website will provide:
 - Profiles of psychologists and psychiatrists, including areas of expertise and clinical experience
 - Appointments, availability dates and available time slots
 - Emergency mental health support information and crisis contact details
2. Students will complete an online intake information form prior to booking a slot. This form helps the Wellness Center allocate the most appropriate clinician and level of care.

6.2 Selecting a Clinician

3. Students may select a preferred psychologist or psychiatrist based on their availability and presenting concern, promoting a sense of agency and comfort in the therapeutic relationship.

4. Where clinically indicated, the Wellness Center will refer a student to an external clinician or inpatient setting, depending on the severity and nature of the case. Such referrals will be handled with sensitivity, and full guidance will be provided to the student.

6.3 Appointment Scheduling

5. Appointment slots will be displayed on the Wellness Center's online platform, enabling students to view and select suitable timings.
6. A confirmation will only be issued following review and approval by the relevant psychologist or psychiatrist, ensuring appropriate clinician allocation and suitability.
7. Once confirmed, an automated confirmation email will be sent to the student containing all relevant appointment details date, time, session format, and assigned clinician.

6.4 Sessions and Clinical Documentation

- **Session Format:** Sessions will be delivered in person at the Wellness Center or online via a secure platform(conditionally), as clinically appropriate with mutual decision of clinician and student preference.
- **Session Duration:** Each individual counselling or therapy session will typically be 45 to 50 minutes in duration, in line with internationally recognized clinical standards.
- **Session Frequency:** Session frequency will be determined by clinical need, generally ranging from once weekly to once every two weeks. Higher-frequency sessions may be recommended during periods of acute distress.
- **Clinical Documentation:** All clinical records, session notes, and case files will be maintained securely and confidentially. Access to clinical documentation will not be permitted to any internal department, faculty, administrative office, or external party, except as required by law or ethical obligation.

6.5 Referral Protocol

The Wellness Center recognises that some students may present with needs that exceed the scope of on-campus services. External referrals will be initiated for:

- Severe psychiatric concerns require medication management or specialized clinical intervention
- Need for inpatient psychiatric care or residential treatment
- Suicidal ideation or significant self-harm risk requiring a higher level of monitoring and care
- Mental health crises requiring emergency intervention and immediate specialist response
- Provision of specialized psychodiagnostics assessments, including those related to disability evaluation or ODAI-related accommodations.

In all referral cases, the student will be informed clearly and compassionately about the reason for referral, guided through the process, and connected with appropriate external mental health supports, with follow-up coordination provided by the Wellness Center where possible.

6.6 Emergency and Crisis Situations

All emergency and crisis procedures, including walk-in support, direct contact protocols, CMT activation, family notification, and engagement of emergency medical services, are governed by **Section 5** of this policy. Please refer to **Section 5** for full procedural guidance.

6.7 Ethical Conduct and Standards of Care

All clinicians within the IBA Wellness Center are required to adhere to the ethical guidelines,

professional standards, and boundary maintenance principles set out in **Section 3** of this policy, including **Sections 3.4, Section 3.6, and section 3.7.**

6.8 Student Responsibilities

Students availing the services of the IBA Wellness Center are expected to:

- Attend scheduled appointments on time or provide timely advance notice if rescheduling or cancellation is required.
- Provide accurate and honest information regarding their presenting concerns to enable appropriate clinical support.
- Engage constructively with recommended treatment plans, wellness activities, or external referrals as advised by their clinician.
- Respect the professional boundaries and conduct expected within a clinical support environment.

6.9 Wellness Center Responsibilities

The IBA Wellness Center undertakes the following institutional responsibilities:

- Provide timely, professional, and confidential mental health services to all eligible students.
- Ensure that all clinical psychologists and psychiatrists are appropriately qualified, and compliant with ethical standards of care.
- Maintain accurate and secure clinical records in accordance with professional and legal requirements.
- Design and deliver campus-wide mental health awareness workshops, seminars, and preventive wellness initiatives to foster a culture of psychological well-being.
- Periodically review and evaluate service delivery to ensure responsiveness to the evolving needs of the student population.

7. ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH MENTAL HEALTH CONDITIONS

IBA acknowledges that severe or acute mental health conditions may impair a student's cognitive functioning, emotional stability, and capacity to meet academic obligations. This section establishes a structured mechanism for students with documented mental health challenges to request reasonable academic accommodation, ensuring equitable access to learning and assessment without compromising academic integrity.

7.1 Scope and Principles

- Apply to all enrolled students across all degree programs experiencing severe mental health difficulties that demonstrably affect academic functioning.
- Accommodation is granted individually, considering the nature, severity, and academic impact of the condition.
- Decisions prioritize student health, dignity, and equitable treatment while upholding IBA's academic standards.
- Accommodation is subject to approval by the relevant faculty/teacher, Head of Department, Department Dean, Program Office, and the Office of Student Affairs.

7.2 Academic Accommodations

- Assignment Deadline Extensions: Faculty-approved extensions for assignments when mental health conditions impair timely completion, proportionate to the condition's severity.

- Attendance Relaxation: Adjustment of minimum attendance requirements if severe episodes prevent regular attendance, assessed in relation to overall academic engagement.
- Make-Up Examinations / Deferred Assessments: Arranged in coordination with faculty, Registrar, Program Office and OSA for students unable to attend or perform due to mental health conditions.

7.3 Documentation Requirements

- Requests must be supported by formal, verifiable documentation from a registered Psychiatrist or experienced Clinical Psychologist.
- Documentation from external institutions or hospitals will be assessed by the IBA Clinical Psychologist and/or Visiting Psychiatrist for validity and relevance.
- Reports must be on official letterheads, including professional credentials, registration/license number, and contact information.

7.4 Confidentiality and Information Sharing

All student health information is treated with strict confidentiality in accordance with **Section 3.3** of this policy. In the specific context of academic accommodation, the IBA Clinical Psychologist may, at the student's request, share only the limited information necessary to facilitate the accommodation excluding all private or confidential clinical details with relevant stakeholders (faculty, HOD, Dean, Program Office, and OSA) where necessary and appropriate.

7.5 Process and Responsibilities

- Students should initiate requests promptly, ideally before or during the affected academic activity.
- Students are responsible for submitting complete documentation and following institutional procedures.
- Faculty, Program Coordinator, Program director and Student Affairs Office review requests and recommend accommodation.

7.6 Institutional Commitment

IBA is committed to an inclusive, equitable, and mentally healthy academic environment. No student should have to choose between their health and academic progress. This policy ensures students facing mental health challenges receive fair, dignified, and meaningful support to achieve their academic potential.

8. POLICY REVIEW

This policy framework will be reviewed annually by the Office of Student Affairs in consultation with the Wellness Center team. Reviews will be incorporated:

- Feedback from students utilizing Wellness Center services.
- Input from clinical staff and administrative personnel.
- Developments in national and international best practices and standards in student mental health care.
- Any changes in HEC guidelines or relevant national regulatory frameworks.

Amendments to this policy will be subject to the approval of the Executive Director, Deans Council, with the Dean of Student Affairs serving as the primary institutional authority overseeing the Wellness Center's operations.