



## **Uniform Policy on Mental Health & Well-Being**

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### Introduction

DRIEMS University is committed to fostering a supportive, inclusive, and healthy environment that promotes the mental health and well-being of all students, faculty, and staff. Recognizing that mental health is integral to academic success, professional growth, and overall quality of life, the University aims to create a culture where individuals feel safe, respected, and empowered to seek help when needed.

This policy establishes a comprehensive framework to promote mental well-being, prevent mental health issues, and provide accessible support systems within the University community.

### Objectives

The key objectives of this policy are:

- To promote awareness and understanding of mental health and well-being.
- To reduce stigma associated with mental health issues.
- To provide accessible, confidential, and professional mental health support services.
- To create a safe and inclusive campus environment.
- To identify and support individuals at risk.
- To integrate well-being into academic and administrative practices.

### Scope

The provisions mentioned in the policy are applicable to students, faculty members, and non-teaching staff of the university. The policy emphasizes the integration of all domains—academic, administrative, residential, and extracurricular—ensuring that mental health is not confined to the Mental Health & Well-being Centre only, but becomes a shared responsibility of all stakeholders.

### Student Mental Health Counselling Services:

The University provides structured and professional counselling services to support the mental well-being of students, faculty, and staff.

- Prof. Lokanath Behera, Director(Student Relation) has been appointed as Nodal Officer in Compliance with directions of the Hon'ble Supreme court of India regarding National Task Force on students mental health vide letter no SDTE-THE-THE-IT-0033-2025/8012 DATED 08.12.2025
- Prof. Satish Rajamani, Professor, School of Nursing, has been appointed as the University Counsellor. He is a qualified mental health professional with experience in mental health counselling.

The counselling services offered by the University to Students, Teaching and Non-teaching Staff which includes:

- Personal counselling for academic stress, emotional concerns, anxiety, depression, interpersonal issues, trauma, medical conditions, and career-related guidance
- Periodic workshops on student mental health and well-being

Counselling Schedule and Access:

- All days: 10:00 am to 5:00 pm

Venue: Counselling Cell, Administrative Building Email: [counselor@driems.ac.in](mailto:counselor@driems.ac.in)

All counselling services are provided in a confidential, safe, and non-judgmental manner. Information about the counsellor, services, and schedule is shared with students and staff.

**Mentorship System:** The University follows a structured Mentor-Mentee (Proctor) System to support student academic progress, personal development, and overall well-being.

At the beginning of each academic year, each student is assigned a faculty mentor. A fixed number of students are allotted to every mentor to ensure effective interaction and support

Faculty mentors regularly monitor and guide students in the following areas:

- Attendance and academic performance
- Exam-related stress and academic difficulties
- Career guidance and higher education support
- Internship and project guidance
- Participation in co-curricular and extra-curricular activities
- Personal or emotional concerns
- Feedback collection and follow-up

Mentors conduct regular meetings with mentees and maintain communication to address academic or personal challenges. Parent-teacher meetings are conducted once per semester to support student progress. During special situations such as the pandemic, mentoring and counselling support was provided through both online and offline interactions.

Where required, faculty mentors may refer students to the University Counsellor for professional mental health support. Faculty members may also communicate with parents in appropriate cases, following University norms.

### **Redressal and Escalation Mechanism:**

- Students first approach their Class Mentor for guidance.
- If needed, the issue is escalated to the Head of the Department.
- Further escalation, where required, is referred to the Vice Chancellor for resolution.

### **Situations Requiring Immediate Referral:**

Immediate referral must be initiated in the following situations:

- Suicidal thoughts, suicide attempts, or verbal expressions of self-harm
- Severe anxiety, panic attacks, or emotional breakdown
- Signs of depression with risk-taking or self-harm behaviour
- Trauma, abuse, harassment, or violence-related distress
- Sudden withdrawal, extreme behavioural changes, or loss of emotional control
- Any situation assessed by faculty, staff, mentor, or counsellor as a mental health emergency

**Referral Protocol:** Students identified in mental health distress are immediately supported and not left alone if there is self-harm risk. They are referred to the University Counsellor without delay. In severe cases, referral is made to the Campus Medical Centre and nearest hospital through ambulance services. National suicide prevention helplines, including Tele-MANAS (Tele MANAS is a comprehensive mental health care service an initiative of Ministry of Health & Family Welfare Government of India) Toll Free Number-14416 / 1-800-891-4416, are used for immediate support. Parents or guardians are informed in serious cases as per institutional norms.

### **National Suicide Prevention Strategy:**

The **National Suicide Prevention Strategy (NSPS)** is a comprehensive public health framework designed to reduce suicide rates and promote mental well-being across a country. It recognizes suicide as a complex and preventable issue influenced by psychological, social, economic, and environmental factors. The strategy adopts a multi-sectoral approach, involving government agencies, healthcare systems, educational institutions, community organizations, and the media to work collaboratively toward prevention.

At its core, the NSPS focuses on creating awareness and reducing the stigma associated with mental health and suicide. It emphasizes the importance of open dialogue

so that individuals experiencing distress feel safe to seek help. Public education campaigns play a crucial role in improving mental health literacy, helping people recognize warning signs such as withdrawal, hopelessness, or sudden behavioural changes. Another key component of the strategy is early identification and timely intervention. The NSPS promotes training for teachers, healthcare providers, and community members to identify individuals at risk and provide appropriate support or referrals. Strengthening access to mental health services is also central to the strategy. This includes expanding counselling services, crisis helplines, and integrating mental health care into primary healthcare systems to ensure that help is accessible, affordable, and confidential.

The strategy also addresses underlying risk factors that may contribute to suicidal behaviour. These include substance abuse, financial stress, academic pressure, social isolation, and exposure to violence. In addition, measures are taken to restrict access to common means of suicide, which has been shown to significantly reduce suicide rates. Special attention is given to vulnerable and high-risk groups such as adolescents, students, farmers, marginalized communities, and individuals with pre-existing mental health conditions. Tailored interventions are designed to meet the specific needs of these groups, ensuring inclusivity and effectiveness. An important aspect of the NSPS is postvention, which involves providing support to families, friends, and communities affected by suicide. This helps in reducing trauma, preventing further mental health issues, and lowering the risk of suicide contagion. The strategy also emphasizes the importance of data collection, research, and monitoring. Reliable data helps in understanding trends, identifying high-risk areas, and evaluating the effectiveness of interventions. Continuous monitoring ensures that policies remain relevant and responsive to changing societal needs. In the Indian context, the National Suicide Prevention Strategy launched in 2022 aims to reduce suicide mortality by 10% by 2030. It focuses on establishing nationwide helplines, strengthening institutional capacity, and promoting community-based interventions.

Overall, the NSPS aims to create a supportive environment where mental health is prioritized, stigma is reduced, and individuals are empowered to seek help. By combining awareness, prevention, intervention, and support, the strategy works toward saving lives and fostering a mentally healthier society. The prevention/Counselling cells at each Schools along with Hostel of DRIEMS University are functioning continuously to address the issues and awareness among the students on mental health and wellbeing.

