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Chowgule College

PSYCHO SCOOP

Be Your Best

GLIMPSE OF PSYCHOSYNERGY 2.0

A step towards fostering mental health awareness, aligned with the vision of the Uniform Mental Health Policy, this event addressed the evolving mental health needs of individuals from recognising signs of self-harm to managing stress, anxiety, and anger. Each session is designed to equip participants with practical tools for everyday well-being. Adding experiential approaches such as dance therapy and assertiveness training brings healing and self-expression to the forefront. Led by experienced psychiatrists and psychologists from diverse organizations, the sessions catered not only to students but also to staff and parents — reinforcing the idea that mental health is a shared responsibility.

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Editorial

What is success?

It's a question I find myself returning to at different stages of life. My own answer has changed over the years. As a young, aspiring student, success meant high scores. Even when one's own parents do not overtly express their academic expectations from children, we learn to value academic achievement because of the reinforcement it brings. Today too, as a teacher by profession, the excitement about high scores does not get concealed. It is still as much a matter of pride to me when my own students (studying psychology) top the merit list. In the recently held Annual Prize Distribution Ceremony of the College, it was indeed heartening to felicitate the toppers of the department. Fortunately, the discipline keeps us grounded. We know for a fact that scores are but a reflection of one's academic achievement and as such do not necessarily translate into a successful life ahead. So that brings us back to the question, what is success? Is it about having a fulfilling career? Is it about having a leisurely life? Is it about having meaningful and loving relationships? Or is it something else?

At different stages, our understanding of success continues to evolve. On the brink of the final year of the undergraduate program, students are now interning to get a taste of the world of work. This is a much-needed experience that enables them to make a more informed choice of career. It is one step closer to discovering what success means to them.

It is encouraging to witness students enrolling for higher education, or seeking a job, in an attempt to explore success through their emerging professional identities. It is equally interesting to see our alumni defining it in more personal ways. Many are embracing milestones in their personal lives, as they step into committed relationships, or expanding their families. I have come to realize that we interpret success differently across the many spheres of our life. As in-charge of the department, it gives me great relief that the department has successfully navigated a rather challenging semester. Perhaps success lies not in a single outcome, but in these shared journeys, evolving aspirations, and meaningful connections we build along the way.

FIELD VISIT to OLD AGE HOME

Third Year students of the Department of Psychology visited organizations working with older adults. A group of 31 students, accompanied by Dr. Sobita Kirtani, left the college at 9:00 a.m. and returned by 7:00 p.m. The visit aimed to build awareness about the facilities available for older persons and to better understand their mental and emotional needs.

The interaction also allowed students to observe the environment of care more closely, including the routines followed and the support systems in place for residents. It provided a clearer picture of how such centres operate while maintaining the well-being of older persons.

Sanjeevan, a recovery centre dedicated to the care and well-being of older persons. It offers short-term support, focusing on both physical health and emotional comfort. Functioning as a charitable trust, the centre provides affordable services with the support of donations from individuals and organizations.

Students received an orientation from the founder, Dr. Asha Sanvordekar, followed by a guided tour conducted by Dr. Aarti Kakodkar. The session provided insight into the facilities available to residents, along with an understanding of the challenges involved in managing such a centre.

The next visit was to **Sneha Mandir**, an old age home managed by the Goa Hindu Sabha. This well-organized charitable institution houses over 90 elderly residents and provides facilities tailored to individual needs and preferences. Students were introduced to the functioning of the home by the manager, Mrs. Suman Samant, and later attended a brief address by Mr. Rajendra Talak, the Joint Honorary Secretary of the managing committee. The visit highlighted the structured environment of the home and the efforts taken to ensure comfort and care for its residents.

B.M. Melwani's Senior Citizens Recreational Centre

The final visit was to B.M. Melwani's Senior Citizens Recreational Centre, a space dedicated to recreation and social engagement for older adults. The centre has an active membership, with individuals regularly participating in classes that promote skill development as well as cultural activities. During the visit, students organized a cultural programme and conducted a game for the members, who in turn also showcased their own talents. The interaction created a lively and engaging atmosphere, offering a glimpse into the importance of leisure and participation in later life.

The third institution visited was **Visava**, located in Ponda and run by IMA. Catering to a more premium segment, the facility offers a wide range of services aimed at ensuring comfort and quality of life. One of its key objectives is to generate funds for Dilasa, a palliative care unit managed by the same trust. Students were taken on a tour of the facility and later addressed by the Chairperson, Dr. Purnima Usgaonkar. The institution reflects a well-resourced and organized approach to elderly care.

MEDALS OF MERIT

Recognising Excellence

SGPA - 9.95

Awarded for highest SGPA in TY single major

Kate Noni Araujo Cruz

Single Major Psychology

Receiving the award made me feel acknowledged for all the hard work i put in academically and motivated me to give it my all for the final year ! This semester i've learned that alongside sticking to checklists and study plans, learning to find the perfect balance is essential to prevent burnout and ensure productivity!

Kaydence Savio Rodrigues

Double Major Psychology-Philosophy

I am academically driven with a strong interest in understanding people and ideas. Known for taking on leadership roles, I enjoy guiding others and contributing meaningfully to every space i am part of. Alongside my dedication to helping people, I maintain a vibrant social life and believe in living life to the fullest, balancing ambition with enthusiasm and fun.

SGPA - 9.75

Awarded for highest SGPA in TY double major

Suhani Dodhya

Single Major Psychology

I felt happy when I came to know that I was going to receive an award for annual day. My aim was not to score the highest, but to study to the best of my ability. I focused on being consistent and avoided last minute studying as much as possible. I also really enjoyed the CA structure where I could apply my learning in a practical way. I especially enjoyed the CAs of making a podcast and debate. While studying, I made sure to give time to my hobbies, especially playing the guitar, dancing and learning French side by side.

SGPA - 9.95

Awarded for highest SGPA in SY single major

SGPA - 9.90

Awarded for highest SGPA in FY first semester

Jiya Ninad Varadkar

Single Major Psychology

Receiving this award was truly one of the best moments of my first year. Diving into college life and being part of the Psychology department has been such an amazing experience! Seeing my results was the best surprise after a few late night and last minute study sessions fueled by pure determination (and a lot of panic!). I really loved the shift to practical learning here. I look forward to my next few years!

SECOND YEAR FIELD VISIT

The Second year students of Psychology department visited Mental Health Institutes to gain understanding and bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge of mental health with practical, real-world applications in rehabilitation and therapy.

KRIPA FOUNDATION, BASTORA

A de-addiction centre with a 3-month structured program, fixed schedule, therapy, and a holistic treatment approach. The visit helped students understand various interventions undertaken for individuals with substance use disorders, including detoxification, counselling, yoga therapy, group therapy, and relapse prevention strategies, along with the role of family involvement in recovery.

THE OWL HOUSE, ALDONA

A non-residential, flexible program for neurodivergent individuals aged 14 years and above, focusing on the transition after school. Participants attend based on their preferred schedules and engage in both group and individual sessions.

The program emphasizes skill-building through activities such as café work, handicrafts, gardening, photography, and other vocational tasks. Products created by participants are sold, providing real-world exposure and promoting independence.

SECOND YEAR FIELD VISIT CONTI..

COOJ MENTAL HEALTH FOUNDATION, BASTORA

During our visit, representatives provided a guided tour of their facilities. We had the chance to observe ongoing rehabilitation sessions and senior therapy programs. COOJ operates under three primary mental health domains:

Psychosocial Rehabilitation

This program focuses on individuals with psychological disabilities and aims to support their reintegration into society.

Suicide Prevention

COOJ runs initiatives to prevent suicide through awareness campaigns, counseling, and crisis intervention.

Geriatric and Dementia Care

This program caters to elderly individuals, both with and without dementia, providing therapeutic support and engagement.

PSYCHOSYNERGY 2.0

The Department of Psychology, in collaboration with the Psychiatric Society of Goa, organized PsychoSynergy 2.0 – A Mental Health Festival on 13th and 14th March 2026 as a two-day offline event aimed at promoting mental health awareness and well-being. This initiative was undertaken in line with the Uniform Mental Health Policy. The event featured 14 sessions catering to the diverse needs of students, focusing on areas such as recognizing signs of self-harm, stress management, anxiety management, and anger management, along with dance therapy and assertive training for students.

These sessions were conducted by psychiatrists and psychologists from various organizations, with dedicated sessions for students, staff, and parents. These sessions focused on increasing awareness, providing practical coping strategies, and addressing diverse mental health challenges. The event witnessed the participation of over 500 individuals across the two days.

Anxiety Management

The Department of Psychology organised Psycho Synergy 2.0 on 13th and 14th March 2026. Day 1 began with a talk on anxiety management by Dr Kalpa Govekar, which was scheduled from 11:00 am to 12:00 pm. Although the session began about 20 minutes late, she addressed the crowd in an informative and understanding manner, setting a positive tone for the day.

Dr Govekar began by explaining what anxiety is, along with its symptoms and causes, especially among students. She then moved on to discuss various ways to deal with anxiety, ranging from simple to more complex techniques. These included staying away from technology, reducing screen time, going into nature such as grounding oneself by walking barefoot outside, as well as meditation, yoga, deep breathing techniques, the five senses technique, prioritising sleep, and the importance of eating a healthy diet. She also spoke about how, as a friend of someone who experiences anxiety, one can help them as well. She discussed more than 15 different techniques that students can use to manage anxiety.

The session lasted around 45 minutes and included interaction with the audience. She asked students if they experienced anxiety attacks and how they dealt with them, while also answering other questions that they had. At the end of the session, Assistant Professor Nidhi Mhambrey presented her with a memento. Overall, it was a very insightful session and quite helpful for students, especially due to the influx of CAs during the last month of college, particularly the final two weeks as well as the upcoming exam season.

Recognizing Signs of Self-Harm

On the first day of psychosynergy, a session on recognizing signs of self-harm was conducted by Tanushri Sharma, a senior Clinician at Sangath.

The session focused on the importance of recognizing signs of self-harm in those around us and how to help individuals dealing with the urge to self-harm. It was very well conducted and informative. Ma'am Tanushri described the various signs people who self-harm or may be considering it exhibit, and the need to approach the topic gently but offer support. She conveyed the gravity of the situation well and gave good advice.

The warning ma'am gave before the session, indicating that anyone who might be uncomfortable with the topics discussed could step out, was also very thoughtful.

Overall, it was a very well conducted session and the care of the speaker when broaching the subject matter was very evident as well as in the resources provided to anyone who may be struggling and therefore, the session ended with a group photograph of all the students and faculty displaying yellow wristbands in support of suicide prevention.

Life Skills Development

In an engaging and practical session on life skills, Dr. Arpita Sirsikar, a Senior Consultant Psychiatrist, utilized interactive activities, including a whiteboard session, to help participants navigate the complexities of stress and personal management. The session opened with a self-assessment of stress levels on a scale of 0–10, leading into a deep dive into the fundamental purposes of coping and how to identify physical, emotional, and cognitive signs that indicate a need for improved coping mechanisms. By distinguishing between adaptive strategies, such as problem-solving and cognitive reframing, and maladaptive behaviors like emotional suppression or avoidance, the session provided a clear roadmap for building mental resilience.

Beyond theory, Dr. Sirsikar introduced a variety of "under tension" relaxation techniques, including Box Breathing, the 5-4-3-2-1 Grounding method, and the Lemon Relaxation game. The discussion also extended to effective time management.

The participants explored the 2-Minute Rule, the Pomodoro Technique, and a "Prioritization Game" to categorize tasks by urgency. It was an empowering session that replaced overwhelm with a clear, actionable plan for both mental well-being and productivity.

Mental Health Act

On March 14, 2026, the Department of Psychology organized an insightful seminar regarding the Mental Health Act (MHA), 2017. Held at the Upper Auditorium, the session commenced at 10:00 AM with Raisa Dias from FYBA delivering the opening introduction for the resource person, Assistant Professor Aresh Naik. The seminar provided a comprehensive overview of the legalities governing mental healthcare in India, focusing on the shift toward a rights-based approach for patient care.

The session detailed how the MHA 2017 empowers patients, specifically outlining the fundamental rights bestowed upon individuals within healthcare facilities, and also focused on the protocols law enforcement officers must follow, ensuring that the dignity and safety of persons with mental illness are prioritized during official interventions. The session was notably interactive, with students frequently engaging by sharing personal reflections and experiences.

The seminar concluded with a Q&A round, allowing attendees to clarify the nuances of the Act that regulates the mental healthcare industry; followed by the vote of thanks. By the end of the program, students gained a profound understanding of how these regulations ensure that patients are treated with the utmost care, empathy, and ethical transparency. The report for the talk on Mental Health Act, 2017, was written by Raisa Dias from FYBA highlighting the key moments from the session.

Assertive Training Workshop

On the second day of Psychosynergy, an insightful seminar on Assertiveness training was conducted, with Miss Arnaaz Nasir Ali from FYBA delivering the opening Introduction for the resource person, Dr. Mavis Henriques, Asst. Professor and Consultant Psychologist.

The seminar provided a comprehensive overview of how assertive training is a psychological technique that helps individuals express their thoughts, feelings, and needs confidently and respectfully. It teaches people to stand up for themselves without being aggressive or passive. Assertive training highlights the importance of expressing one's thoughts, feelings, and needs in a clear, confident, and respectful manner. It emphasizes maintaining a balance between self-respect and respect for others, showing that being assertive is neither aggressive nor passive.

This approach helps individuals build self-esteem, communicate more effectively, and handle social situations with greater ease. It also encourages the setting of healthy boundaries and reduces anxiety in interpersonal interactions, leading to more positive and balanced relationships.

The session was notably interactive, with students frequently engaging by sharing personal reflections, taking part in multiple activities and building experiences. The seminar concluded with a Q&A round, allowing attendees to clarify any doubts, followed by the vote of thanks.
By the end of the program, students gained a profound understanding of how to express their needs, opinions and feelings clearly and confidently. It also helps us stand up for ourself while respecting others.

Dance Movement Therapy

The Dance Movement Therapy session, led by GEDC Counsellor Dashmi Phaldesai and introduced by Zoranne Quadros, offered students a creative outlet for self-expression. The workshop opened with expressive introductions rather than standard talk, creating an immediate sense of openness. Participants then interpreted their favorite flowers through unique movements, turning a simple concept into a personal physical performance.

The core of the session focused on free-flow dance, encouraging movement without the pressure of specific steps or rules. This allowed for a natural release of energy and a chance to express emotions physically. Following this, mirroring exercises were used to help participants connect, requiring them to tune into and reflect each other's movements to build rapport.

These collaborative activities emphasized the social and empathetic side of movement. By moving in sync, the group developed a shared rhythm, moving away from individual performance toward a more connected experience. This helped bridge the gap between individual expression and group interaction.

To finish, the workshop shifted toward relaxation, giving everyone time to unwind and decompress. This final transition ensured the session ended on a calm, grounded note. Ultimately, the program provided a practical and refreshing way for students to use dance therapy to manage stress and recharge.

DISCLAIMER!

The views in this newsletter are those of the contributors and the editor, and not of the Principal.

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