MENTEL WELLNESS POLICY

Date Created	03 August 2020	**Approved By**	Academic Council
Last Reviewed	19 September 2026	**Next Review Due**	September 2029
Version	1.0	**Owner**	Office of the Registrar / IQAC
Counselling Unit	Student Mitra Counselling Centre	**Administered By**	Office of Student Affairs

1. Preamble

P. P. Savani University recognises that mental health and emotional wellbeing are as important to student and employee success as physical health and academic achievement. This policy establishes a structured, confidential and stigma-sensitive framework for prevention, early identification, counselling, referral, crisis response and wellbeing promotion across the University community.

2. Objectives

- To provide accessible and confidential counselling and psychological support to students and employees.
- To reduce the stigma associated with seeking psychological help.
- To enable early identification, appropriate referral and timely support for persons in distress.
- To sensitise faculty, wardens, mentors and staff to distress indicators and referral pathways.
- To promote preventive awareness and a campus environment that supports emotional wellbeing.

3. Scope & Applicability

This policy applies to all registered students (UG, PG and doctoral) and to all full-time and part-time faculty and non-teaching staff across all schools and campuses of the University, subject to applicable University rules and procedures.

4. Definitions

Office of Student Affairs: The University office responsible for the overall welfare, discipline and support of students, under which the mental wellness framework of this policy is administered.

Student Mitra Counselling Centre: The University's counselling unit, staffed by qualified counsellors and functioning under the Registrar office, responsible for psychological support, counselling, psychological first-aid and clinical referral.

Distress Indicator: Any observed or reported change academic decline, withdrawal, marked behavioural change, expressed hopelessness, self-harm concerns or substance-related concerns suggesting that a person may need support.

Referral Partner: An external hospital, psychiatrist or licensed mental health professional empanelled by the University for cases requiring intervention beyond the Centre's scope.

SAARTHI: The University's mental wellness club a trained student peer-volunteer network led and supervised by the Student Mitra Counselling Centre, working on the principle of "Notice. Connect. Refer."

5. Guiding Principles

- Confidentiality, privacy and respect for individual dignity and autonomy.
- Non-discrimination and a stigma-sensitive, help-seeking culture.
- Support delivered only within the professional competence of qualified personnel.
- Need-based referral and continuity of support.
- Safety as the overriding priority where risk is significant or imminent.
- Avoidance of conflict of interest a counsellor shall not handle a case involving a person with whom they have a close personal, familial or supervisory relationship.

6. Policy Statement

6.1 Institutional Structure

The Office of Student Affairs coordinate the University's mental wellness framework, including resourcing, inter-departmental coordination, hostel coordination, emergency escalation and institutional reporting. The Student Mitra Counselling Centre shall function as the professional counselling unit, staffed by qualified counsellors and responsible for counselling, psychological first-aid, psychological assessment within professional scope and external referral. The Centre shall operate on working days, with emergency contact available outside working hours through the hostel warden or the Proctorial Board.

6.2 Access and Appointments

- Students and staff may self-refer through walk-in, telephone or online appointment, or be referred by authorised University personnel.
- No permission from a faculty member, warden or supervisor is required to seek counselling.
- Appointments shall be scheduled according to urgency and available professional capacity, with urgent safety concerns.

6.3 Confidentiality and Records

Counselling information shall be treated as confidential and accessed only by authorised personnel for legitimate professional or safety purposes. It shall not be shared with faculty, parents, peers or administration without the individual's consent, except where disclosure is necessary to address a serious and imminent risk to life or is required under applicable law. Records shall be stored securely by Student Mitra, retained as per the University's records-retention schedule, and processed consistently with the Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023. Institutional reporting shall use anonymised or aggregated information only, and case details shall never be circulated through departmental or informal channels.

6.4 Referral Pathway

A concern identified by a student, peer, faculty member, mentor or warden is referred to Student Mitra, where a qualified counsellor carries out an initial assessment within professional scope. Counselling is provided where appropriate; needs beyond the Centre's scope are referred to an empanelled external professional, hospital or psychiatrist, with follow-up coordinated subject to consent and confidentiality.

6.5 Crisis and Emergency Response

In situations involving expressed suicidal ideation, self-harm risk, a suicide attempt or acute psychiatric crisis, the University's documented emergency-response procedure shall apply, led by the Office of Student Affairs with psychological input from Student Mitra. Immediate safety, timely access to emergency medical or psychiatric care, and coordination with the Proctorial Board shall take priority. A person at immediate risk shall not be left alone, parent or guardian communication shall be handled according to risk, consent and applicable law; and a confidential incident record with a follow-up plan shall be maintained.

Internal emergency contacts:

Student Section 9601827788

Student Mitra Counselling Centre 9512023331

National helplines available 24×7 include

Tele-MANAS (14416 / 1-800-891-4416) and KIRAN (1800-599-0019)

6.6 SAARTHI Peer Support Network

SAARTHI is the University's mental wellness club, led, trained and supervised entirely by the Student Mitra Counselling Centre. Its volunteers promote a supportive peer environment, recognise possible distress indicators, encourage help-seeking and connect peers to professional support. Volunteers shall not diagnose, provide therapy, manage emergencies independently or maintain clinical records.



6.7 Departmental and Hostel Support

Each academic department shall designate a faculty representative to coordinate with the Office of Student Affairs on wellbeing awareness and referral. Hostel wardens and student-support personnel shall be sensitised to recognise distress indicators, facilitate hostel-based outreach, and escalate emergency concerns immediately.

6.8 Sensitisation and Training

The Office of Student Affairs shall arrange periodic orientation for faculty, hostel wardens, mentors and relevant staff delivered by Student Mitra on mental-health awareness, distress indicators, supportive communication, confidentiality and emergency escalation. Designated personnel shall refer observed concerns through Clause 6.4 rather than independently assessing or managing them.

6.9 Awareness and Prevention

Regular campus-wide awareness and preventive wellbeing programmes shall be organised Student Mitra Counselling Centre, covering examination stress, emotional regulation, social media wellbeing, healthy relationships, substance-related concerns, suicide prevention and help-seeking.

6.10 Academic Support and Accommodation

Students with documented support needs may apply, through Student Mitra and the Dean of Student Affairs, for reasonable academic accommodation in accordance with university academic regulations and the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, where applicable, without being required to disclose clinical details to teaching departments.

6.11 Employee Wellbeing

Faculty and staff may access confidential counselling support on the same basis as students. Human Resources shall maintain an employee assistance referral list for work-related stress, burnout or personal difficulties, in accordance with applicable employee policies.

7. Roles & Responsibilities

Role	Responsibility
Office of Student Affairs	Overall leadership of the mental wellness framework — oversight, resourcing, inter-departmental and hostel coordination, emergency escalation and institutional reporting.
Student Mitra Counselling Centre	Counselling, psychological first-aid, clinical assessment within professional scope, external referral, confidential record-keeping, and leadership of the SAARTHI mental wellness club.
Academic Departments	Designated wellbeing representative for awareness and referral coordination, while maintaining confidentiality.

Role	Responsibility
Hostel Wardens	Observation, supportive response and timely referral or escalation of concerns.
SAARTHI Volunteers	Peer support, awareness and connection to professional help under Student Mitra; no diagnosis or therapy.
Human Resources	Employee wellbeing and referral coordination as per applicable HR processes.
Proctorial Board	Coordination during emergencies and liaison with empanelled hospitals.

8. Implementation Measures

- Mandatory wellness orientation during student induction week.
- Empanelment of at least one external psychiatric referral partner within reasonable distance of campus.
- Wellness helpline and emergency contacts displayed in hostels, classrooms and on the student portal.
- Annual training refresher for SAARTHI volunteers by Student Mitra, and for wardens, mentors and departmental representatives.

9. Monitoring and Review

Student Mitra shall submit an anonymised annual report to the office of registrar indicating service utilisation, broad concern categories, programme reach and recommendations, without identifying individuals. The Office if registrar shall place this report before the competent authority. The policy shall be reviewed every three years by the Academic Council, or earlier if warranted by a critical incident review or identified implementation needs.

10. Grievance Redressal

Concerns regarding the quality of counselling support, professional conduct or breaches of confidentiality may be raised with the Dean of Student Affairs, who shall ensure that the matter is acknowledged and reviewed independently of the personnel concerned.

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The Registrar
P P Savani University, Surat.

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