

Workshop Report

Title: Foundations of Counselling: Essential Skills and Principles

Date & Time: 18th September 2025, 11:00 AM to 1:30 PM

Venue: Computer Block, Seminar Hall

Organized by: Department of Psychology, Auxilium College (Autonomous), Vellore

The Department of Psychology organized a workshop titled “*Foundations of Counselling: Essential Skills and Principles*” on 18th September 2025. The workshop aimed to introduce students to the core principles of counselling and equip them with practical skills in observation, listening, and responding.

The resource person for the day was **Mrs. Sopnakumari Giftus Joshua**, College Counsellor, Auxilium College, Vellore. With her extensive experience in counselling practice, she provided valuable insights and facilitated the sessions with clarity and interactive engagement.

The workshop was divided into **four key segments**, each designed to gradually build students’ understanding of counselling foundations and enhance their confidence in applying these skills.

1. Introduction to Counselling: Understanding the Basics

The workshop began with an overview of counselling as a helping profession. Mrs. Sopnakumari explained how counselling differs from giving advice, stressing the importance of building trust, confidentiality, and maintaining an empathetic, non-judgmental stance.

This session laid the foundation for participants to appreciate counselling not just as a technique, but as a professional relationship rooted in respect and care.

2. Observation Skills: Seeing Beyond Words

The second segment focused on **observation skills**, which form the basis of understanding clients beyond what they verbally express. Students were guided to pay attention to **non-verbal cues** such as body language, facial expressions, tone of voice, and posture.

The resource person emphasized that counsellors must remain attentive and perceptive, as these subtle signs often reveal underlying emotions or concerns. Through examples and demonstrations, participants learned how observation helps in forming accurate impressions and tailoring responses effectively.

3. Listening Skills: The Heart of Counselling

The third part of the workshop was dedicated to **listening skills**, described as the heart of effective counselling. Students were introduced to the concept of **active listening**, which involves giving full attention to the speaker, avoiding interruptions, and providing verbal and non-verbal encouragement.

Mrs. Sopnakumari highlighted the difference between **hearing and truly listening**, urging students to develop patience, empathy, and openness while engaging with peers or clients.

4. Responding Skills: Choosing the Right Approach

The final segment dealt with **responding skills**—how counsellors communicate and support after listening. Students learned about the **different kinds of responses**, such as evaluative responses, interpretative responses, supportive responses, and open-ended questioning.

The resource person demonstrated how an effective response can validate the client's feelings, encourage further sharing, and guide them toward self-reflection. Emphasis was placed on using language that is empathetic, non-directive, and empowering.

Outcome of the Workshop

The workshop succeeded in providing participants with a strong foundation in the principles and skills of counselling. Students not only gained theoretical knowledge but also had opportunities for practical engagement.

Participants expressed that the sessions enhanced their awareness of the **importance of observation, listening, and responding**, and strengthened their confidence in applying these skills in both personal interactions and future professional contexts.

The workshop was well-received for its **interactive approach, clarity, and practical relevance**, leaving students motivated to continue developing their counselling competencies.



