


UGC to launch student mental health services in November

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The University Grants Commission will provide mental health services to university students from November.

UGC member Professor Mohammad Anwar Hossain confirmed that the service would be provided in phases to 10,000 students across 22 universities.

‘The module on student mental health protection has already been finalised,’ he said while speaking as the chief guest at a workshop on ‘Training material and manual development framework’ held on Friday.

The two-day workshop, jointly organised by UGC and UNESCO, aimed to assess the social and mental needs of university students.

UGC director of international collaboration department Jasmine Parveen chaired the session, while UGC member Professor Masuma Habib attended as the special guest.

Professor Anwar Hossain said a special module is being prepared to address the mental health needs of students in both public and private universities.

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He added that improving student mental health should be integrated into the institutional structure of universities. ‘Candidates trained in mental health care could be given priority in recruitment of new teachers.’

Professor Masuma Habib described the initiative as timely and praised UNESCO’s support. She said the program would help students build mental resilience, improve teacher-student relationships, and promote compassion and positive behaviour.

She also called for the appointment of psychiatrists at every university and the establishment of mental health clubs.

‘University teachers need training on student mental health protection, and parents should also participate in promoting mental wellbeing,’ she added.

UGC director Jasmine Parveen said university officials, employees, and students will be trained on mental and social health protection.

UNESCO representative Raju Das noted that the module will foster students’ emotional intelligence, social skills, and life skills, encouraging conscious participation and pro-social behaviour.

Associate Professor Syed Tanvir Rahman of Dhaka University's psychology department and Assistant Professor Md Rafiuzzaman of humanities department at Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology also spoke at the event.

Student advisers, counsellors, mental health experts, and representatives from 22 universities attended the workshop.

The UGC and UNESCO have prepared a training manual under the Social and Mental Health Protection Project, designed to assess the social and mental needs of students, keeping in mind the experiences of July-August 2024.