PASTORAL CARE

Playbook

Temasek
POLYTECHNIC

CREATING TOMORROW

Contents

Director's Message

Dear colleagues,

We live in unprecedented times where we are constantly bombarded by challenges on many fronts.

Families and individuals are undergoing much stress. Our students in Temasek Polytechnic (TP) are not spared. The social and psychological consequences of these events have yet to be fully felt and understood.

This Pastoral Care Playbook aims to provide a better understanding of what we can do to support our students better and how we could do so. In the pages that follow, we trust you will find the information useful and practical and be inspired to provide excellent pastoral care to the students under your charge.

I would like to thank my colleagues from the Student Care division of Student Support & Career Services (SSCS) department for putting this together.

Best,

Samuel Wee
Director
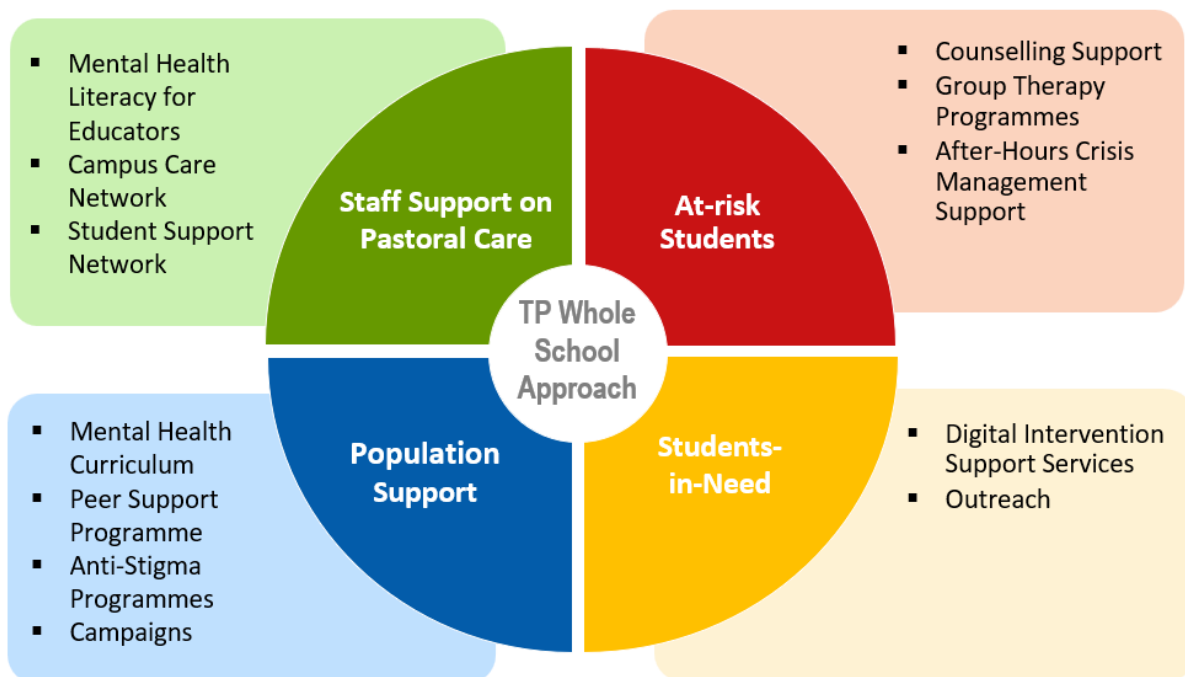Student Support & Career Services

May 2025

Pastoral Care in TP

1.   A Whole TP Approach in Providing Pastoral Care

Pastoral care is the active commitment to support the growth and well-being of students. It recognises that nurturing students' physical, intellectual, emotional, and social (PIES) development is crucial for their success. In TP, the focus is on creating a healthy environment and culture that fosters these aspects of student development.

TP Whole School Approach

Staff Support on Pastoral Care
- Mental Health Literacy for Educators
- Campus Care Network
- Student Support Network

At-risk Students
- Counselling Support
- Group Therapy Programmes
- After-Hours Crisis Management Support

Population Support
- Mental Health Curriculum
- Peer Support Programme
- Anti-Stigma Programmes
- Campaigns

Students-in-Need
- Digital Intervention Support Services
- Outreach

TP Whole School Approach

2.   A Tiered System Support

TP adopts a structured, tiered system to student support. Tier 1 focuses on preventive practices, encouraging educators to adopt a proactive approach in fostering a positive and supportive classroom environment. For more information about preventive practices, refer to SSDF03 Effective Classroom Management with PBIS.
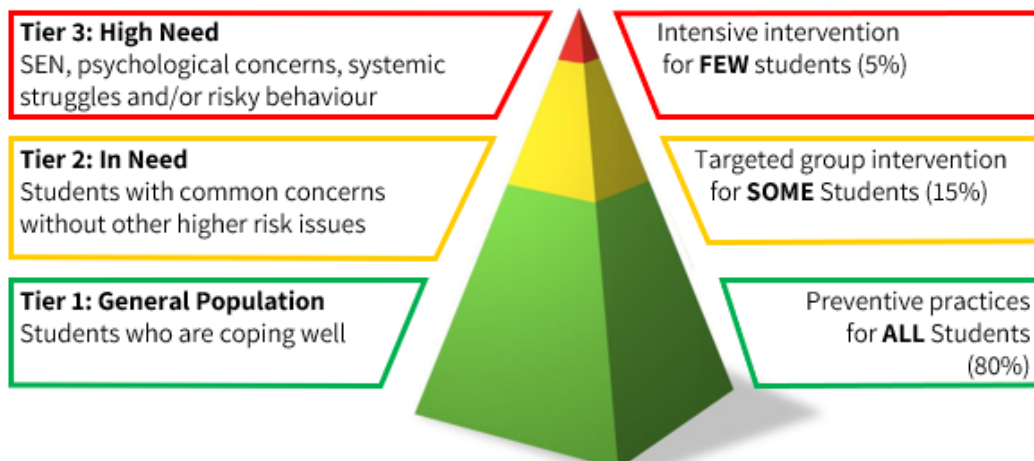
3.   Educator-Student Relationship (ESR)

Central to a positive learning environment is a healthy ESR. The ESR refers to the dynamic interaction between teachers and their students in the educational setting.

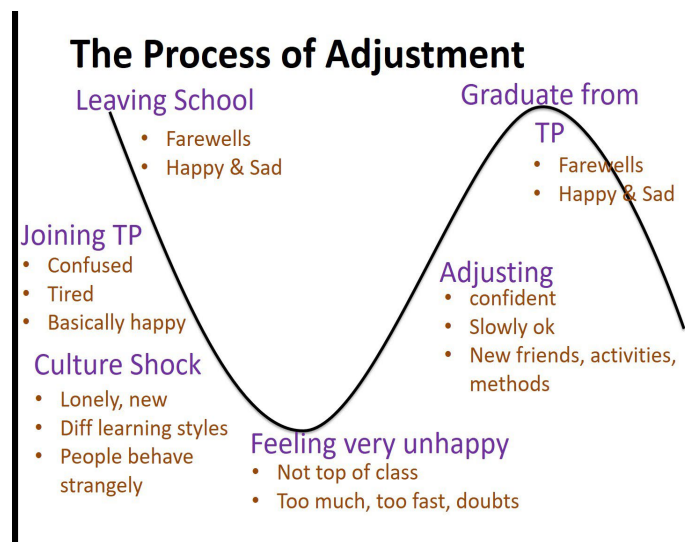**Mutual respect**   **Communication**   **Trust**   **Empathy**   **Support**

4.   Pastoral Care Hour (PCH)

The PCH demonstrates our commitment to student care. This protected time is intended to provide opportunities for Care Persons (CPs) and students to connect and build supportive relationships. SSCS has curated a portfolio of activities and resources for educators to enhance connections while addressing issues that students may encounter in their developmental journey.

5. Transitions and Adjustments

The transition to polytechnic is a significant milestone in young adulthood. Students need time and space to adjust and adapt. Educators can help remind students to continually evaluate their progress, stay flexible and adapt to their changing environment.

The Process of Adjustment

Leaving School
- Farewells
- Happy & Sad

Graduate from TP
- Farewells
- Happy & Sad

Joining TP
- Confused
- Tired
- Basically happy

Culture Shock
- Lonely, new
- Diff learning styles
- People behave strangely

Feeling very unhappy
- Not top of class
- Too much, too fast, doubts

Adjusting
- confident
- Slowly ok
- New friends, activities, methods

Adjustment cycle of a student joining polytechnic

Typical Student Experiences

1.   Pre-semester

Educators may want to review information from the Student Profile System to glean insights such as:
- Social and culture adjustments for students new to Singapore
- Financial assistance for students from low-income households
- Exemptions and/or access arrangements for students with health issues and/or Special Educational Needs (SEN)
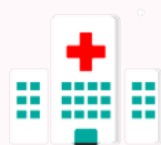
2.   E-learning
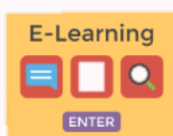
The key to successful e-learning is in keeping students' focus and motivation. Educators could:
- Create interactive and engaging content
- Foster a sense of online community
- Tailor materials for students with diverse learning needs

3.   Medical and Hospitalisation Leave

Ways to offer support:
- Stay in contact with parents/guardian; keep relevant personnel updated while ensuring privacy
- Refer to Student Insurance if the student would like to make an insurance claim
- Send or bring a fruit basket claimable from CCN Fund (currently capped at $70, including GST); refer to Care Person Claims
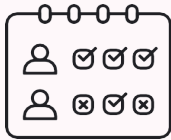- Assure student to focus on recovery

4.   Leave of Absence (LOA)

LOA guidelines allow for students to be absent for various reasons.
- Educators are encouraged to monitor reasons for LOA
- Early identification of stressors can help to pre-empt potential difficulties
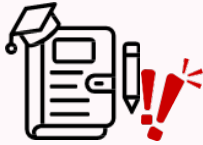
5. Absenteeism

Frequent absence from lessons may signal difficulties.
- Check in with absent students to let them know they are missed
- Engage student's family, if necessary, to offer support beyond sending attendance warning letters

6. Students with Academic Warning (AW) Status

Students with AW status may face reduced motivation and difficulties forming groups.
- Assign a buddy and facilitate group formation for repeating students
- Facilitate regular check-ins to help students stay on track and increase their chances of passing

7. Students on Suspension*

Students on suspension are likely to have been involved in disciplinary cases. Anger, guilt, shame and regret are common emotions. Educators can support them through:
- Offering access to counselling services
- Treating them with respect and maintaining confidentiality

8. Students on Deferment/Withdrawal from Course *

Students may wish to apply for deferment or withdrawal due to personal commitments and academic challenges.
- Ensure all stakeholders are consulted
- Offer options e.g., LOA, reduced modular load
- Encourage students to receive support through SSCS for financial assistance, ECG coaching and counselling

*refer to Exit Policy for more information.

9.   Student Overseas Trip (SOT)*

Students may participate in overseas trips like Overseas Student Internship Programme (OSIP), Overseas Immersion Programme (OIP), Overseas Special Programme (OSP), Overseas Community Project (OCP) or Global Studies Overseas Trip (GSOT).

Staff leading these trips can consider the following to ensure a safe and enriching experience:

Pre-trip
- Be informed about travel details
- Attend relevant training and briefing
- Touch base with shortlisted participants
- Enlist dependable participants to be additional "eyes and ears" on the ground

During the trip
- Keep an eye for signs that students may need extra support e.g., withdrawal and/or intense emotional reactions
- Speak privately with student to offer support
- Seek support from accompanying colleagues and supporting team in Singapore
- Refer to Crisis Management Guide on Overseas Trip and Management of Emergency Incidents During SOT

Post-trip
- Encourage students to reflect on their behaviours, thoughts, and emotions
- Be attentive to behaviours that may indicate discomfort or distress
- Offer referrals to counselling services if feelings of sadness or disturbance persist two weeks after returning

*Please refer to International Relations for more administrative information.

10. Student Internship Programme (SIP)

The Internship Resource Hub is a good place to familiarise yourself on helping students grow into their internship roles and to adjust to a new environment. Educators should:

- Be mindful of the mental and socio-emotional issues of students on internship
- Organise support systems for students facing difficulties in their internship
- Remind students that counselling and support resources are available during SIP

11. Options after Graduation

Graduating is a significant milestone and transitioning to National Service, work, or further studies can be challenging. Educators could:

- Visit the Education & Career Guidance (ECG) Resource Hub for global trends, labour market statistics and networking events
- Refer students to book a session with an ECG coach

Responding to Students

Educators are usually the first in line to notice signs of stress in students through their behaviours. Colleagues are encouraged to visit Counselling @ SSCS Resource Portal for a list of extensive resources in supporting students.

1.   General Stress, Specific Distress and Needs

Anxiety	What is anxiety and how to deal with anxiety effectively?
Depression	Helping youth fight depression
General stress	A mental health guide for educators in institutes of higher learning
Meltdowns	De-escalation and managing meltdowns
Special Educational Needs	SEN@SSCS resource portal
Sexual harassment	Sexual misconduct support guide (for staff) Information about sexual assault and sexual harassment
Substance use	Vape-free resource kit Preventive drug education toolkit Preventive drug education info kit FAQ
Suicidal thoughts	Samaritans of Singapore

2.   Psychological First Aid (PFA)

PFA is a 5-element crisis response strategy in helping students manage and stabilise emotions and behaviours after a crisis. Educators are encouraged to attend this training to be better equipped in attending to students in need.
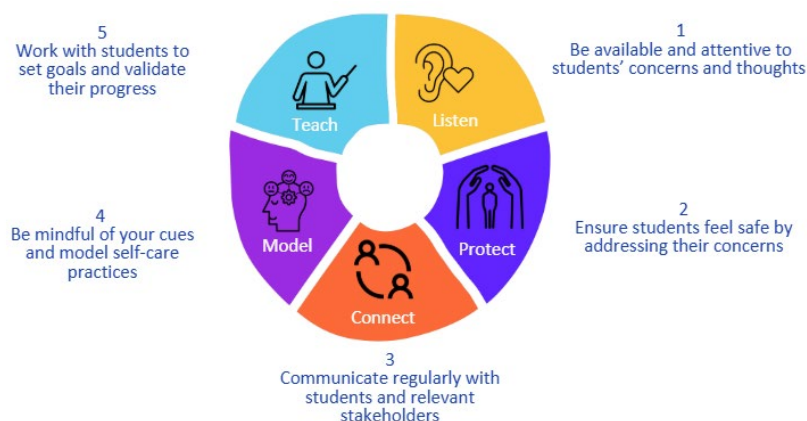
3.   Student Crisis Support Guide

The Student Crisis Support Guide outlines various levels of distress and dangers students may be in, and relevant responses to be taken by educators.

Useful Information

1.   Communication and Confidentiality

When providing pastoral care, educators may encounter sensitive student information. Do keep in mind the following:

- Obtain students' consent before sharing information, except in the cases of self-harm or suicidal intentions
- Protect and manage information under Personal Data Protection Act (PDPA)
- Involve another colleague in the care and conversations if possible
- Do not over-promise confidentiality as it may create unrealistic expectations and compromise safety concerns

2.   Self-care for Educators

Caring for our students is incredibly rewarding, yet it can also be quite exhausting.

- Colleagues who experience challenges may want to speak to someone who is neutral and professionally trained for psychological support; contact the WOG Counselling Hotline for Public Officers at Tel: 3138 3760 or visit Mindline at work

3.   Further Enquiries

For further enquiries on how Student Care / SSCS may support you in providing pastoral care, please contact:

Care@TP
Block 26B, South Wing, #01-49
Tel: 6780 5959
care@tp.edu.sg

4.   Links

Below is a summary of all the links that have been listed in this playbook:

1. A tiered system support: SSDF03 Effective classroom management with PBIS
2. Pastoral Care Hour resource hub: Activities and resources
3. Medical and hospitalisation leave: Student insurance
4. Medical and hospitalisation leave: Care person claims
5. Leave of absence: Guidelines
6. Students on suspension/deferment/withdrawal: Exit policy
7. Student overseas trip: Crisis management guide on overseas trip
8. Student overseas trip: Management of emergency incidents during SOT
9. Student overseas trip: International Relations
10. Student Internship Programme (SIP): Internship resource hub
11. Options after graduation: National Service
12. Options after graduation: Education & Career Guidance resource hub
13. Options after graduation: Appointment booking with ECG coach
14. Responding to students: Counselling @ SSCS resource portal
15. Anxiety: What is anxiety and how to deal with anxiety effectively?
16. Depression: Helping youth fight depression
17. General stress: A mental health guide for educators in Institutes of Higher Learning
18. Meltdowns: De-escalation and managing meltdowns
19. Special Educational Needs: SEN@SSCS resource portal
20. Sexual harassment: Sexual misconduct support guide (for staff)
21. Sexual harassment: Information about sexual assault and sexual harassment
22. Substance use: Vape-free resource kit
23. Substance use: Preventive drug education toolkit
24. Substance use: Preventive drug education info kit FAQ
25. Suicidal thoughts: Samaritans of Singapore
26. Student Crisis: Student crisis support guide
27. Communication and confidentiality: Personal Data Protection Act
28. Self-care for educators: Mindline at work