



The Indoni Wellness Program

The Indoni Wellness program grew out of a need to create an integrative program of learning, understanding emotional development and wellness for the Indoni students. It was realized that Indoni needed a structured, consistent mental health wellness program as a vital support to the students as part of their training.

The wellness program can form an important link with the mentorship program. We will be hosting a mentor workshop in 2019 to introduce the wellness initiative and explore how to integrate it into the mentoring relationship.

Aims and structure of Indoni's Wellness Program

The overall purpose of the wellness program is to provide a supportive environment where students can explore and think about their emotional and social well-being. The aim is to offer a therapeutic space for students to explore various themes. This means a space where students feel comfortable and safe to explore different aspects of themselves. The emphasis is psycho-educational. We are not aiming to provide group or individual therapy or counselling.



Facilitation

The program will be co-ordinated by Melanie Horwitz, a clinical social worker, psychotherapist, Astar art facilitator and community organisations' supervisor. Her role is to plan workshops according to themes and according to the needs of the students. She will also supervise the 4 facilitators who facilitate the same group of students every second week that they meet. The facilitators are Balu, Lesley Hathorn, Sandy Prosalendis and Langa

The facilitators are all experienced in group facilitation, life skills art process work and youth development.

Pilot Wellness Program

At present there are 4 groups of 5-7 members. For the pilot program there were 3 consistent facilitators while one group had 2 alternating facilitators. For next year we have another consistent facilitator on board instead of the 2 alternating ones.

The workshops are designed around a specific theme. They begin with either a visualisation or meditation that includes an inspiration or focus around the



theme. Students also have files and diaries to record their thoughts and their process.

Once the theme is 'felt' a discussion that has specific questions or a creative activity is implemented. A handout about the specific topic is given to each student to use as a reference point. The handout is also used by the facilitators to direct the group discussion.

The last part of the workshop is for reflection. Students are encouraged to reflect on their process. This is a vital part of the workshop as it can lead to a synthesis of learning and ideas, providing an opportunity for new learning or insight into oneself and others.

In terms of planning the workshops they were designed in this pilot program to build trust in the groups between students and between the students and their facilitators. Although the students 'knew' each other from being part of the Indoni community, it is different from sitting in a group together that is aiming for a non-judgemental and contained space.

Creative exercises in thinking and doing a creative process such as making a mandala are examples of methods used to engage students to think, focus and explore their unique self. These methods are engaging and involve the students in an active process of thinking and learning.

Students' journaling in their files and diaries, serve as another activity that provides an ongoing dialogue with the themes and thoughts that may be evoked.

The Pilot Workshop Program

1. Getting in touch with feelings

It is not easy for most people to express their feelings. Different cultures have a different ways of viewing emotions. For example, vulnerability is not valued. Difficult feelings about trauma, anger, jealousy and hatred are not easily acknowledged or spoken about.

The aim of this workshop was to offer an emotional language about feelings that felt congruent to the students, in such a way that they could feel more comfortable expressing both positive and negative feelings.

2. Self-expression

This workshop aimed at looking at breaking down barriers to self-expression. It also focussed on helping the students be aware of the difference between L and R side of the brain and that R side involves the realm of feelings and creativity, while the L side comprises the more rational functions. The focus was on R brain functioning, getting in touch with what is in one's heart, encouraging students to use their imagination and consider their hopes and dreams.

3. Listening, empathy and compassion

This workshop emphasised the difference between empathy and compassion. Students were given listening exercises to encourage them to listen with empathy and compassion. They were also encouraged to do an affirmative listening exercise to demonstrate the power of being heard and appreciated.

Another aim was to encourage self-compassion as students were made aware of their internal judgement of themselves or of others.

4. Nurturing relationships

This workshop aimed to help students become aware of nurturing a relationship with themselves, with significant others, as well as with the group and larger community. A mandala was done to represent the different types of relationships.

The underlying aim was for students to realise that the way they treat themselves reflects the way they treat others and visa versa.

5. Overall reflection

This workshop focussed on reflecting about the wellness program. Students were also encouraged to state suggestions and themes that they would like for future workshops

Feedback from students on Indoni's pilot Wellness Program

Darkness brings fear

Dreams and goals brings success

Trust, love and care is what we need

Fear was my name: the one lacking in trust and afraid of facing the world. Wellness sessions really helped me through my trust issues. Now its easy to share and talk with someone whom I trust about my life. In life you have to start in the darkness so that you can work towards your dreams and success

Wellness teaches me how to listen to another person's situation and not reply when they are still talking. Listen first... I leant about the most important things like trust, respect and not to judge others..... I would love to get more Wellness because there is a lot I still need to learn.