

Navigating Your Campus Journey: Connection, Care, & Support

Welcome to the IIT Kharagpur family! Starting your B.Tech, M.Tech, or PhD is an incredible milestone, but we also know it is a major life transition. Higher education campuses bring together emerging adults who are experiencing important psychosocial stress and developing resilience within dynamic academic and social environments. Sometimes, the pressure can feel overwhelming, and it is completely normal to need a helping hand.

This brochure outlines our commitment to your well-being and explains our proactive, health-centred approach to mental health and substance use.

The Reality of Campus Life: You Are Not Alone

We understand that navigating university life comes with factors that can accelerate vulnerability to substance use. These common challenges include:

- **New Independence:** Navigating personal autonomy away from familial structure and parental oversight.
- **Academic Stress:** Rigorous workloads, competitive evaluation systems, and persistent fear of failure.
- **Peer Influence:** Communal living in hostels and exposure to new social networks that normalise experimentation.
- **Curiosity & Access:** Increased physical availability of substances combined with unmonitored time.
- **Mental Health Transitions:** Undetected or emerging psychiatric vulnerabilities surfacing during the university years.

The Vicious Cycle: Mental Health & Substance Use

It is important to recognise that substance use and mental health problems maintain a reciprocal, mutually reinforcing dynamic.

- **Seeking Relief:** Students frequently turn to alcohol or other drugs to self-medicate or cope with underlying anxiety, depressive states, or emotional distress.
- **Worsening Symptoms:** Ongoing substance consumption destabilises neurotransmitter systems, exacerbating anxiety, severe mood disruptions, and psychotic episodes.

Because of this bidirectional relationship, our campus screening procedures systematically assess substance use and mental health symptoms concurrently.

Understanding the Spectrum

Substance use is dynamic and exists along an evolving spectrum. Because substance use evolves along this identifiable continuum rather than emerging abruptly, early detection presents the single most effective window for meaningful intervention.

- **Experimentation:** Motivated by curiosity, social novelty, and initial peer exposure.

- **Occasional Use:** Irregular, situational use without clear patterns of functional disruption.
- **Risky Use:** Hazardous patterns resulting in discernible academic, social, or physiological consequences.
- **Dependence (SUD):** Severe loss of behavioural control, tolerance, neuroadaptation, and persistent use despite clear harm.

Early identification is easiest and most impactful before severe dependence becomes entrenched.

Our Non-Punitive Pathway to Support

If you or a friend is struggling, we want you to reach out. By fostering empathy, strict confidentiality, and non-punitive support, we are shifting from reactive discipline to proactive, health-centred recovery.

Our campus follows a continuous, systematic care pathway:

NOTICE (Warning Signs) → SCREEN (Brief Questionnaire) → ASSESS (Severity & Mental Health) → INTERVENE (Brief Intervention) → REFER (Specialist Care)

Early Warning Signs

- **Academic disruption:** Precipitous drop in academic engagement and grades alongside frequent, unexcused absences from required lectures, labs, or duties.
- **Physical and biological shifts:** Marked disturbances in sleep or appetite patterns paired with visible signs of intoxication, hangovers, or persistent physical sluggishness.
- **Psychosocial withdrawal and volatility:** Abrupt mood swings, severe irritability, and social withdrawal or sudden detachment from long-standing peer groups.
- **Financial instability and conduct issues:** Unexplained financial distress, erratic spending or borrowing, and uncharacteristic risk-taking that leads to campus disciplinary infractions.

Your Privacy Matters

Screening is conducted routinely, not merely as a punitive reaction to disciplinary breaches. Furthermore, urine drug testing serves strictly as an objective adjunct and is never a substitute for clinical assessment.

Step Forward for Support

A supportive campus culture dismantling punitive stigma is the cornerstone of early help-seeking. You are here to build your future, and we are here to ensure you are emotionally and physically secure enough to achieve it. Do not wait for a crisis to seek help.

“A healthy campus is not one where no student struggles—it is one where struggling students can seek help early and safely.”

Reach out to the IIT-KGP Wellbeing Team today.