

Guidelines  
For  
Competency Based Training Programme  
in  
**Psycho-Oncology**



**SRI AUROBINDO UNIVERSITY**

SAIMS HOSPITAL CAMPUS, Indore Ujjain, State Highway, Bhawrasla, Indore, Madhya Pradesh 453555

## **Course details**

### **Goals:**

To develop advanced clinical competencies in psychological assessment, intervention, and interdisciplinary collaboration within oncology and palliative care settings.

The fellowship aims to:

- Equip clinical psychologists with specialized skills to support patients and families affected by cancer.
- Foster reflective, compassionate, and culturally sensitive psychological care across the cancer continuum.
- Promote research, ethical practice, and leadership in psycho-oncology field.

### **Duration of the Course**

11 months, full-time This includes academic sessions, clinical postings, supervision, Plus 1 month of research work.

### **Course Content (Curriculum):**

#### Foundations of Psycho-oncology

- Introduction to oncology and cancer biology for psychologists
- Introduction to concepts of Palliative Care
- Psychological impact of cancer diagnosis and treatment
- Multidisciplinary roles and team dynamics
- Understanding Depression, Anxiety and Coping s

#### Assessment in Psycho-oncology

- Clinical interview skills in oncology settings
- Psychological screening tools (e.g., Distress Thermometer, HADS)
- Cognitive and functional assessments in cancer patients
- Ethics of assessment in terminal illness

#### Psychotherapeutic Interventions

- CBT, meaning-centered therapy in cancer care
- Narrative and dignity therapy
- Family-focused therapy and systemic approaches
- Counselling for decision-making and advance care planning

#### Palliative and End-of-Life Psychological Care

- Grief, anticipatory grief, and bereavement

- Existential distress, death anxiety, spiritual distress
- Supporting dignity, meaning, and life review
- Working with caregivers and families

### Psycho-oncology Across the Cancer Trajectory

- Survivorship, remission, recurrence, and terminal stages
- Pediatric psycho-oncology
- Psycho-social care in haematological vs solid cancers
- Sexuality, body image, and fertility issues

### Cultural & Ethical Issues in Psycho-oncology

- Cultural perspectives on cancer, suffering, and death
- Ethical dilemmas in truth-telling and disclosure
- Informed consent, capacity, and decision-making
- Confidentiality and boundaries in emotionally intense contexts

### Communication Skills & Interdisciplinary Practice

- Delivering bad news: SPIKES protocol
- Supporting oncologists in communication challenges
- Managing conflict and emotions in clinical settings
- Working in multidisciplinary teams

### Self-care and Professional Resilience

- Burnout, compassion fatigue, vicarious trauma
- Mindfulness and resilience for clinicians
- Supervision and reflective practice
- Establishing personal and professional boundaries

### Postings

- Palliative Medicine (IP and OP)
- Oncology (Medical, Radiation, Surgical, Pediatric)
- Clinical Psychology Unit
- Hospice (outside- 10 days)
- Psychiatry
- Pain Clinic

### Activities:

- Observation + supervised clinical work
- Psychological assessment and therapy sessions
- Case presentations and team meetings

### Supervision & Case Discussion

- Weekly 1-hour group or individual supervision
- Case formulation, ethical discussions, counter transference

- Review of intervention techniques and reflective practice

## Research

- Attending Research workshop
- Poster/paper presentation at academic conferences (Mandatory)
- 1 publication in Indexed journal (Mandatory)

## Attendance and Leave Rules

- Minimum attendance: 90% in both academic sessions and clinical postings.
- As per University norms applicable to postgraduate training programs. All leaves (including medical or personal) must be pre-approved by the course coordinator, and extended absences may affect eligibility for course completion.

## Duties and Responsibilities of Fellows

### Clinical Responsibilities

- Conduct psychological assessments and provide evidence-based interventions for patients with cancer across all stages.
- Participate in interdisciplinary ward rounds, case discussions, and family meetings.
- Provide support for grief, bereavement, existential distress, and quality of life issues.
- Maintain accurate clinical records and documentation.

### Teaching Responsibilities

- Conduct teaching sessions or case discussions for junior trainees, interns, or multidisciplinary teams as assigned.
- Participate in journal clubs, seminars, and case presentations.
- Engage in community awareness or psychoeducation initiatives if planned.

Additional responsibilities may include research project participation, developing training materials, or contributing to psycho-oncology service development under faculty guidance.

## Assessments

- OSCE/Clinical viva + Practical exam + logbook evaluation
- Evaluation by internal and external examiners

## Recommended Reading

1. Psycho-Oncology – Holland, Breitbart et al.
2. Oxford Textbook of Palliative Medicine – Hanks, Cherny et al.
3. Meaning-Centered Psychotherapy in the Cancer Setting – William Breitbart
4. Handbook of Psychooncology – Holland & Rowland
5. Psychiatry in Palliative Medicine: Harvey Chochinov, William Breitbart
6. Clinical Psycho Oncology: Indian Perspectives and Research by Dr. Santosh Chaturvedi