



## THE EDGE CLINIC - PASTORAL CARE POLICY

### Pastoral care definition:

*For the "Regulae liber pastoralis" of Gregory I,*

**Pastoral care** is an ancient model of emotional and spiritual support that can be found in many cultures and traditions. It has been described in our modern context as individual and corporate patience in which trained pastoral carers support people in their pain, loss and anxiety, and their triumphs, joys and victories.

It historically is the ministry of care and counseling provided by pastor, Chaplin's and other religious leaders to members of their church or congregations, or to anyone within institutional settings. This can range anywhere from home visitation to formal counseling provided by pastors who are licensed to offer counseling services. On the other hand, pastoral practice refers to how an idea is applied or used when giving guidance.

Pastoral care is also where people offer help and caring to others in their church or wider community. **Pastoral care in this sense can be applied to listening, supporting, encouraging and befriending.**

Pastoral care can also be the practice of looking after the personal and social wellbeing of children or students under the care of a teacher/trainer/tutor. It can encompass a wide variety of issues including health, social and education, behavior management and emotional support.

### Student support and Pastoral care

THE EDGE CLINIC's values, principles and expectations will shape student care and pastoral support.

Pastoral support will be provided to each and every student to support their growth, development and success not only in THE EDGE CLINIC but in the world outside.

Students will have their own personal development plan which will include goals for learning, attendance and behavior.

Regular and high-quality feedback and assessment will help structure support for students. The pupil voice will be listened to and acted upon.

Students will be encouraged to take an active part in the key decisions in the training environment and ultimately in the development of THE EDGE CLINIC.

THE EDGE CLINIC has a pastoral system that provides effective support and high quality guidance and advice.

Respect for all and consideration for others will be promoted and expected at all times. Students at THE EDGE CLINIC will feel safe from bullying, racism and any other form of discrimination.

An open and honest culture with a meaningful pastoral system will create a safe and positive environment to learn and work.



Students will be encouraged to analyse, question and assess the impact of their lifestyles as part of our commitment to improving the health, improvement and well being of our learners.

### **Why is “diversity best practice” important in our pastoral care?**

Students will benefit from an approach to pastoral care that recognises their individual circumstances and can meet their individual needs.

Factors such as caring responsibilities, disability, gender reassignment and family relationships have the potential to seriously impact upon a student’s academic achievement and general wellbeing.

Many students develop their political, cultural, social, sexual and spiritual identities while in higher education - and the journey will not always be an easy one.

THE EDGE CLINIC’s reaction to the issues that students present and our ability to understand their experiences are crucial in enabling them to work through their problems effectively.

We understand that we have a responsibility to ensure that students are protected from discrimination and harassment and that reasonable adjustments are made to give disabled students equality of access in all aspects of their training programme.

### **Develop active listening skills**

Some students may be reluctant to talk about personal issues, to acknowledge that they have problems, or need help to focus on what their issue may be and you will use our skills to draw them out so that they can begin to move forward.

### **Improving our understanding of diversity**

The broader our knowledge of the issues that might affect the students, the more chance that they will feel comfortable talking to us and confident that we understand what they are saying.

This can be important if they are feeling isolated, which could be more likely among international students working abroad, students dealing with mental ill health, or students who feel outside the majority culture at the institution. Our ability to connect with them, rather than being seen as someone else who does not understand, may be critical to their ability to make progress.



### **Be aware of stereotypes**

An understanding of the issues that affect particular groups of students can be useful in helping us to provide appropriate support, but it is important not to assume that every individual in that group will have the same experience.

### **Cultivate emotional detachment**

While it is important to build rapport with our students we also need to avoid becoming too closely involved with their problems to the point where the student passes responsibility for resolving the issue over to us. This can be particularly difficult when the empathy between ourselves is strong (perhaps their experience is similar to one you had, or, conversely, is completely outside your experience and so we have invested significant energy in putting ourselves in their shoes).

### **Know your student support services**

THE EDGE CLINIC will have a number of services to support students, such as a disability support team, student finance and welfare advisers. We will inform the students about the full range of support available and how to access it so that we can point students in the right direction. It will also be useful to learn about student networks and groups.

### **Consider being a role model**

At THE EDGE CLINIC we are comfortable sharing our experiences and like to consider ourselves becoming a role model for the trainees. The visible presence of people in smaller groups who have succeeded within the training programme can encourage and provide reassurance for students who are feeling marginalised or isolated.

PASTORAL CARER: KAREN THOMPSON