

Safe Space: Consultation and Student Concern Management System for St. Clare College of Caloocan

Erron B. Alcantara, Abigail Joy D.C. Barnachea, Eliza Jan Lois De Guzman, Mico O. Dichoso, Raymark V. Dirain, Trisha Mae B. Econar, Maria Mariel B. Villareal, Cristine Joy Ubalde

St. Clare College of Caloocan City, Caloocan City, Philippines

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.51584/IJRIAS.2026.11060077>

Received: 28 May 2026; Accepted: 03 June 2026; Published: 23 June 2026

ABSTRACT

The study entitled “Safe Space: Consultation and Student Concern Management System for St. Clare College of Caloocan” was developed to provide students with a secure, accessible, and confidential platform where they can express personal, academic, and school-related concerns without fear of judgment. The study aimed to address the challenges faced by the institution in managing student concerns through traditional and unstructured processes, which often result in delayed responses, poor communication, and lack of proper monitoring.

The researchers designed and developed a web-based system that allows students to submit concerns, request consultations, and monitor the status of their concerns in real time. The system also enables administrators and consultants to manage cases efficiently through organized records, notifications, reporting tools, and monitoring features. The proposed system promotes confidentiality, accessibility, accountability, and improved communication between students and school personnel.

This study used the descriptive and developmental research design with the Agile Software Development Life Cycle (SDLC) as the development approach. Data were gathered through surveys, interviews, and questionnaires conducted among students and school personnel of St. Clare College of Caloocan. The collected data were analyzed to determine the effectiveness and acceptability of the proposed system.

The findings of the study revealed that the Safe Space system improved the efficiency of concern management, enhanced communication between students and administrators, and encouraged students to seek guidance and support more comfortably. The system also provided a more organized process for monitoring and responding to student concerns. Therefore, the researchers concluded that the proposed system is an effective tool in promoting student well-being and strengthening support services within the institution.

Keywords: Student Concern Management, Mental Health Support, Guidance Counseling, Student Support Services, Confidential Communication, Computer Science

INTRODUCTION AND LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This chapter presents the relevant literature and studies that the researcher considered in strengthening the importance of the present study. It also presents the synthesis of the art to fully understand the research for better comprehension of the study.

Literature Review

This study focuses on the importance of having a safe space, brave space and a facilitated space in student-staff partnerships. The importance of having a facilitated space of drop-ins and workshops supporting students

pastorally was investigated as part of an initiative called the Inclusive Practice Partnerships (IPP) Scheme, drawing on compassionate pedagogies. Healey et al.'s partnership framework is used as a conceptual lens to inform analysis. Semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted with students and staff to investigate their experiences of attending facilitated drop-in and workshop sessions and how this enhanced their overall experience of partnership.

Thematic cross-sectional content analysis of the interview data was conducted adopting pre and open coding. Findings highlight the importance of wellbeing support, sharing experiences, building resilience and providing personal development opportunities. Discussion and recommendations from the findings are shared to inform practitioners seeking to develop support for students working in partnership in colleges and universities in national and international contexts.

Safe space, used in educational settings as a metaphor, stresses the importance of the classroom being a learning environment characterized by respect and safety. Based on examples from Swedish and Norwegian classroom research, this article problematizes and discusses the complexity in the discourse on safe space by asking the critical questions: Being safe from what? – and safe for whom? Related to the concept of safe space are questions about what possibly can make the classroom an unsafe place. In addition to various types of intimidation, harassment and attacks, discussions about certain issues and topics can, for various reasons, be perceived as threatening.

The school is part of society, and in an increasingly polarized climate, controversial issues in contemporary society will often be perceived as controversial in classroom practice. In this sense, instead of giving students false promises of being safe in the Religious Education (RE) classroom, the concept 'classroom of disagreement' may be a useful metaphor, since it makes it explicitly clear that disagreements exist and are part of life.

The objective of this research is to explore the management of guidance and counseling as a scientific approach to enhancing students' mental health. The method employed in this study is qualitative research, specifically using a case study design. The choice of a case study is justified as it allows the researcher to gain in-depth insights into the context, processes, and complexities of the phenomenon under investigation. The findings of this research illustrate that the role of guidance and counseling (BK) teachers in state high schools in West Kalimantan, Indonesia, in safeguarding students' mental health is not merely reactive but also proactive.

BK teachers apply a scientific approach involving observation and interviews to understand the holistic needs and challenges faced by students. Additionally, they utilize a variety of counseling techniques, including individual counseling, group counseling, cognitive-behavioral approaches, and art and play therapy, to provide tailored support based on individual student needs.

Examined the predictors of mental health help seeking among university students in South Africa and found that many students hesitate to seek professional support due to stigma, fear of judgment, and limited access to counseling services. The study highlights that students are more likely to seek help when they perceive the environment as safe, supportive, and confidential.

However, various psychological and structural barriers continue to prevent them from accessing mental health resources. These findings strongly support the need for accessible and stigma-free platforms such as the proposed Safe Space: Counseling and Case Management System, which aims to provide a secure and confidential digital environment where students can seek guidance, receive support, and have their concerns documented and managed efficiently.

It is often asserted that to facilitate student engagement, encourage participation and create optimal learning environments, the classroom should be a safe space. In this paper, we explore the idea that 'safety' is at odds with the very nature of academic enquiry. Using data from a qualitative study with staff at a UK University, we illustrate how the expectation of safety is troublesome and works to inhibit learning, particularly in the social sciences which explore difficult and sensitive subject matter.

The responsibility for creation and maintenance of safe classrooms is often presumed to lie with teaching staff, and the impact of this is under researched. We consider alternative constructions of the classroom space and ways forward which can potentially support tutors with the challenges of teaching difficult topics. We ultimately advocate for approaches that position students as partners and the creation of learning spaces where differences can co-exist.

Guidance is a process of helping, assisting and classifying with the major emphasis on the development of an individual as a happy citizen who is secure enough so that he can work towards helping others to achieve a similar security. Although they could employ different methods to accomplish their goals, this is the fundamental goal shared by counsellors and teachers alike. In particular, the goal of guiding in the educational process is to pinpoint and remove the reasons behind failure, poor adjustments, sporadic attendance, and other issues impeding the student's development.

In a basic one-on-one social setting, counselling is a learning process where a counsellor helps a client gain a better understanding of and acceptance of who they are. The counsellor also teaches the client how to apply this newfound understanding to more clearly defined and achievable goals, ultimately enabling the client to become a happier and more productive member of society. Counselling is a dynamic and intentional connection between two people. The process varies depending on the needs of the clients, but both the counsellor and the student are constantly involved, with the clients' self-categorization and self-determination being the focus. Today, school counsellors must evolve from their current helper-responder positions to proactive leaders who champion the academic achievement of all children.

They are expected to be responsible from personal guidance, social guidance, vocational guidance, health guidance, educational guidance & counseling in new school based social skills programs; expected to be a responsible partner in school crises involving threat, potential harm, schools' guns, death, suicide, violence and assaults; understand and managing online data and privacy of children; consider multiculturalism and mental health needs and assist driving talented children.

First published in 1979, Group Counseling has consistently been a widely used and praised text, providing both novice and experienced counselors with a framework from which to expand group counseling skills and knowledge. This revised seventh edition offers a reader-friendly and engaging journey through the group process that is congruent with CACREP standards and the 2021 Association for Specialists in Group Work (ASGW) practice standards and grounded in the most cutting-edge research and theory.

The authors present a thorough discussion of the rationale for using group counseling with an emphasis on the group's role as a preventive environment and as a setting for self-discovery. The book examines the group facilitator's internal frame of reference and ways to overcome initial anxiety about leading groups, and explores typical problems in the development, facilitation, and termination of the group process and provides suggested solutions. Individual chapters are included to explore the application of group counseling with children and adolescents.

New additions include a thoroughly revised chapter on diversity competencies and the importance of social justice, along with expanded sections on group assessment and co-leadership, as well as increased use of sample group dialogue to highlight content and process dynamics. Educators and students of graduate group courses in counseling, social work, and psychology will find this new edition seamlessly blends new research and theory with the best elements from past editions.

The increasing prevalence of mental health concerns among students has underscored the critical role of school counseling and mental health literacy in promoting overall well-being. Research indicates that effective school counseling programs not only provide academic guidance but also foster emotional, social, and psychological support for students (Firmante, 2025; Banggawan et al., 2024). Mental health literacy, defined as the knowledge and beliefs about mental health that aid recognition, management, and prevention of mental disorders, has been shown to positively influence students' help-seeking behaviors, reduce stigma, and improve coping strategies (Amado-Rodríguez et al., 2022; Mansfield et al., 2020).

In the Philippine context, studies reveal systemic challenges, including counselor shortages, inadequate training, and limited integration of mental health programs in schools, which hinder the effectiveness of guidance services (Pantaleon, 2025; Villanueva III, 2025). International reviews further suggest that school-based mental health interventions and literacy programs can improve students' knowledge, attitudes, and resilience, highlighting the need for evidence-based strategies tailored to local contexts (García-Carrión et al., 2019; Amado-Rodríguez et al., 2022). Collectively, these findings emphasize that strengthening school counseling services and enhancing mental health literacy are essential for nurturing students' holistic development and promoting a supportive educational environment.

Numerous systematic reviews underscore the effectiveness of structured mental health literacy curricula in educational settings, particularly among youth. One such review by Nazari, Garmaroudi, and Rabiei (2024) examined the impact of The Guide, a modular mental health education program for students aged 10–25, across multiple countries. Their analysis of ten reports from five primary studies revealed that The Guide consistently enhanced students' mental health knowledge.

However, the authors also noted that changes in help-seeking attitudes and stigma were more variable, suggesting that the program's benefits depend significantly on contextual and implementation factors (e.g., mode of delivery, teacher or facilitator training, and the characteristics of the student population). These findings highlight the importance of not only adopting evidence-based mental health literacy programs in schools but also adapting them to local cultural and institutional contexts to maximize sustainability and impact.

To address the needs of students at risk for significant behavior problems, educators need efficient, effective, and feasible preventive classroom interventions that increase students' ability to regulate their own behavior. Tools for Getting Along is a universally delivered cognitive behavioral curriculum designed to address early emotional and behavioral risk among fourth and fifth grade students within the general classroom setting. We used latent growth model statistical methodology to investigate the effects of Tools for Getting Along 2 years following treatment cessation on students who evidenced baseline risk relative to peers.

We followed an average of 455 students across measure-specific baseline risk groups at pretest, posttest, 1-year post-treatment, and 2-years post-treatment. Growth models fit data for four (behavior regulation, metacognition, aggression, and behavioral adjustment) of the eight factors used to assess emotional and behavioral outcomes. Findings indicated a long-term positive treatment effect for students at baseline risk on behavior regulation and general behavioral adjustment. We discuss how findings related to long term treatment benefits add to prior research on Tools for Getting Along and to the evaluation of preventive treatment effects on emotional and behavioral risk over time.

METHODOLOGY

The research methodology employed in the study "Safe Space: Consultation and Student Concern Management System for St. Clare College" is The Agile Software Development Life Cycle (SDLC) is an iterative and incremental software development methodology that prioritizes flexibility, collaboration, and customer feedback. Agile allows the researchers to develop the system in brief, manageable cycles while routinely gathering feedback from potential users, including students and guidance staff.

Phase1. Requirement Gathering:

In requirement Gathering collaboration takes place with stakeholders to understand and prioritize needs for the project, that focus on delivering value. In this step techniques like user stories and workshops for effective communication.

Phase 2. Design the Requirements:

In design the requirement step that gathered requirements is translated into actionable tasks, breaking them down into smaller, manageable chunks. In this step developers develop visual representations of the solution, such as wireframes or prototypes, to get early feedback and ensure alignment with stakeholder expectations.

Phase 3. Coding:

During the coding step, the development team implements the software in short, iterative cycles known as sprints. Each sprint focuses on delivering small, functional increments of the product. Developers write code, continuously integrate it into the main codebase, and regularly commit changes to detect and address issues early.

Phase 4. Testing

Testing is an integral part of each iteration, ensuring the quality and functionality of the software. Unit tests are written to verify individual components, while integration tests check that different parts of the system work together as intended. User Acceptance Testing (UAT) involves end-users testing the software in real-world scenarios to ensure it meets their needs.

Phase 5. Deployment:

Deployment involves releasing the software increments to production frequently and reliably. Automated deployment tools make the process, allowing for quick and consistent releases. Monitoring the deployment process and system performance helps identify and resolve any issues promptly.

Phase 6. Feedback:

Feedback is crucial for continuous improvement in Agile. Stakeholders and end-users provide feedback through surveys, direct communication, and usage analytics. This feedback is used to refine requirements, prioritize changes, and identify areas for improvement.

Data Gathering

The collection of data will take place at St. Clare College of Caloocan City, with 50 respondents of all programs in St. Clare College of Caloocan City students. Respondents should be complete three parts online survey questionnaire, the part 1 Demographics and part 2 Problem Encountered last, Part 3 System Features Evaluation.

Phase 1. Approval Survey Questionnaire

First, we need permission to our head department to conduct online surveys questions and validated our survey questionnaire. Our survey questionnaire is focused on user feedback, what they problem encountered and what they want features system component.

Phase 2. Identification of the Research Settings and Respondents

The survey questionnaire will be only conduct in St. Clare College of Caloocan. We only have 50 respondents in different department, and the respondents will be a college student.

Phase 3. Data Collection

The process of collecting data, we spread our google form link and send it to our Group Chat (School).

Distribution Phase

The initial step will be distributed the fifty-survey questionnaire using Google Forms first before the respondents responds.

Survey Phase

We will ask their permission to answer our survey questionnaire in our Google Forms. We provide instructions to avoid misinformation and easy to understand. They answer will be collected using Google Forms.

The following statistical procedure were used to interpret the data gathered from the respondents of the study.

1. Simple Percentage

The demographic profile variables of the respondents were analyzed using the simple percentage with the following formula:

$$P = \frac{F}{N} (100)$$

Where:

P = Percentage

F = Frequency

N = Total of number of respondents

100 = Constant multiplier

Weighted Mean

This statistical tool was used to compute for the weight of the responses in the questionnaire assigned by the respondents during the actual gathering procedure. The formula for the weighted mean is:

$$\text{Weighted Mean} = \frac{\text{Sum of (f x Weight)}}{\text{Total of respondents}}$$

A popular assessment instrument in Quantitative research for evaluating respondents' attitudes, perceptions, and views is the 5-Point Likert Scale. Using a predetermined set of response alternatives, it enables participants to express how much they agree or disagree with a certain assertion. Because it is simple to administer, easy to comprehend, and efficient at gathering quantifiable data, this scale is frequently used in surveys.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Safe Space: Consultation and Student Concern Management System for St. Clare College of Caloocan was developed to address the growing need for a secure, accessible, and organized platform where students can communicate their concerns and request consultations conveniently. The study focused on improving the existing process of handling student concerns, which was observed to be time-consuming, unorganized, and limited in accessibility. Through the gathered data, system testing, and respondent evaluation, the proponents were able to determine the effectiveness and acceptability of the proposed system.

Based on the interviews and survey questionnaires conducted among selected college students and school personnel, the proponents identified several problems in the current consultation and concern management process. Many students experienced hesitation in expressing their concerns because they feared being judged or misunderstood. Some students also stated that they were uncomfortable approaching school personnel personally, especially when discussing sensitive academic, emotional, or personal issues. In addition, the traditional process of handling concerns relied heavily on manual communication and record keeping, which often resulted in delayed responses, misplaced records, and lack of proper monitoring.

The findings revealed that students preferred a system that would allow them to communicate privately and conveniently. Respondents emphasized the importance of confidentiality, accessibility, and responsiveness in a student support platform. Because of these findings, the proponents designed a web-based system that provides

students with a safe and confidential environment where they can submit concerns, schedule consultations, and monitor the status of their requests online.

The developed system included several important features such as user authentication, concern submission, consultation scheduling, real-time notifications, concern status tracking, report generation, and activity monitoring. These features were carefully designed to improve communication between students and school personnel while maintaining the confidentiality of sensitive information. The system also allowed administrators and consultants to organize records systematically and respond to student concerns more efficiently.

During the testing phase, the respondents evaluated the system based on functionality, usability, reliability, efficiency, and security. The evaluation results showed that the majority of the respondents were satisfied with the overall performance of the system. Students found the system easy to use because of its simple and user-friendly interface. They were able to navigate the platform without difficulty, submit concerns successfully, and monitor updates regarding their consultation requests.

The confidentiality feature of the system also received positive feedback from respondents. Students stated that they felt more comfortable sharing their concerns through the online platform because their information was protected and only authorized personnel could access their records. This finding supports the primary objective of the study, which is to provide students with a safe space where they can freely express their concerns without fear of judgment or exposure.

The results also showed that the system improved communication between students and school personnel. Before the implementation of the system, students experienced delays in receiving updates regarding their concerns or consultation requests. Through the real-time notification and status tracking features, users were immediately informed whenever there were updates or responses regarding their submitted concerns. This feature helped improve responsiveness and reduced communication delays between students and administrators.

Another significant finding of the study was the improvement in record management and monitoring. The centralized database of the system allowed administrators and consultants to organize student records properly and monitor ongoing concerns more effectively. Instead of relying on paper-based files or scattered documents, school personnel could now access records digitally and retrieve necessary information quickly. This reduced the possibility of lost records and improved the overall efficiency of the consultation process.

The report generation feature of the system also provided benefits for school administrators. Through generated reports, administrators were able to identify common concerns encountered by students, monitor consultation activities, and evaluate the effectiveness of student support services. These reports may help the institution develop future programs, activities, and interventions that focus on improving student well-being and mental health support.

Furthermore, the study revealed that integrating technology into counseling and student support services can significantly improve accessibility and convenience for students. Since the system is web-based, students can access the platform anytime and anywhere with internet connectivity. This accessibility became an advantage for students who may not be comfortable with face-to-face consultations or those who require immediate communication with school personnel.

The proponents also observed that the system reduced the administrative workload of consultants and administrators. Manual processes such as organizing records, monitoring consultations, and updating student concerns became easier and faster through automation. The system streamlined the consultation process, allowing school personnel to focus more on assisting students rather than managing paperwork and manual documentation.

In relation to the Review of Related Literature and Studies, the findings of the study support previous research emphasizing the importance of technology-based counseling services and mental health support systems in

educational institutions. Related studies discussed how digital counseling platforms improve accessibility, confidentiality, and communication between students and counselors. Like those findings, the proposed Safe Space system successfully provided a more organized and accessible approach to handling student concerns and consultations.

The study also highlighted the importance of creating a supportive and student-friendly school environment. By providing students with a confidential communication platform, the system encouraged students to seek guidance and support more openly. This contributes to promoting student well-being, reducing communication barriers, and strengthening the relationship between students and school personnel.

Despite the positive findings, the proponents also recognized several limitations during the implementation of the study. The effectiveness of the system depends heavily on internet accessibility and availability of digital devices. Students with limited internet connection may have trouble accessing the platform. In addition, the system currently focuses only on consultation and concern management and does not provide professional psychological diagnosis or therapy services. The proponents also identified the absence of mobile application support and video consultation features as possible areas for future enhancement.

Overall, the findings of the study demonstrated that the Safe Space: Consultation and Student Concern Management System successfully addressed the identified problems related to confidentiality, accessibility, communication, and organization of student concerns. The respondents positively evaluated the system and recognized its usefulness in improving student support services within the institution.

Therefore, the proponents concluded that the proposed system is an effective and reliable tool for managing consultations and student concerns at St. Clare College of Caloocan. Through the integration of technology, the system contributed to creating a more organized, responsive, secure, and supportive environment for students and school personnel.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the study, the proponents concluded that the Safe Space: Consultation and Student Concern Management System for St. Clare College of Caloocan is an effective and reliable platform for improving the management of student concerns and consultation services within the institution. The study successfully identified the common problems experienced in the traditional process of handling student concerns, such as delayed communication, unorganized records, lack of accessibility, and limited confidentiality. These challenges affected the ability of students to comfortably express their concerns and seek proper guidance from school personnel.

The proposed system was developed to provide students with a secure, accessible, and user-friendly platform where they can communicate their academic, personal, emotional, and school-related concerns without fear of judgment. Through the implementation of features such as concern submission, consultation scheduling, notifications, concern status tracking, and report generation, the system improved communication and interaction between students and administrators or consultants. The confidentiality and accessibility of the system encouraged students to express themselves more openly and confidently.

The results of the evaluation showed that the respondents positively assessed the system in terms of functionality, usability, reliability, efficiency, and security. Students found the system easy to use and convenient because it allowed them to submit concerns and monitor updates online. Administrators and consultants also benefited from the system because it simplified the process of organizing records, monitoring consultations, and responding to student concerns. The automation of processes reduced manual workloads and improved the efficiency of student support services within the institution.

Furthermore, the study highlighted the importance of integrating technology into counseling and student support services. The web-based platform demonstrated how digital solutions can help educational institutions provide more accessible and organized services for students. The system also contributed to creating a more

supportive and student-friendly school environment by promoting confidentiality, communication, accountability, and proper concern management.

Although the study produced positive results, the proponents also recognized several limitations, including internet dependency and the absence of advanced features such as mobile application support and video consultations. Despite these limitations, the system still achieved its main objective of improving the consultation and concern management process at St. Clare College of Caloocan.

Therefore, the proponents concluded that the Safe Space: Consultation and Student Concern Management System is a valuable tool that can help strengthen student support services and promote student well-being within the institution. The proponents recommend continuous improvement and future enhancement of the system to further increase its effectiveness, accessibility, and overall quality of service for students and school personnel.

REFERENCES

1. Healey, M., Flint, A., & Harrington, K. (2024). Safe, brave and facilitated spaces: Student-staff partnerships in higher education <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/02643944.2024.2322534#abstract>
2. Flensner, K. K., & von der Lippe, M. (2019). Being safe from what and safe for whom? A critical discussion of the conceptual metaphor of 'safe space'. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/14675986.2019.154010>
3. Yuliani, R., & Sari, D. P. (2023). The management of guidance and counseling as a scientific approach to enhancing students' mental health: A case study in West Kalimantan, Indonesia. <http://jurnalalkhairat.org/ojs/index.php/jkpi/article/view/130>
4. Makwakwa, L., Jonker, C., & Daniels, W. M. (2024). Predictors of mental health help-seeking among university students in South Africa. <https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0321074>
5. Akdemir, A. (2023). School guidance & counseling in the 21st century: A focused review. *ISPEC International Journal of Social Sciences & Humanities* <https://ispecjournal.org/index.php/ispecijssh/article/view/366>
6. Beach, D., Black, P., & Allen-Collinson, J. (2023). Troubling the idea of the 'safe space' in higher education: Exploring staff perspectives on teaching difficult topics. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/13562517.2023.2201675?src=>
7. Corey, G., Corey, M. S., & Corey, C. (2021). *Group counseling: Strategies and skills*. <https://www.taylorfrancis.com/books/mono/10.4324/9781003394075/group-counseling-robert-berg-garry-landreth-kevin-fall>
8. Šouláková, B., Kasal, A., Butzer, B., & Winkler, P. (2019). Meta-review on the effectiveness of classroom-based psychological interventions aimed at improving student mental health and well-being and preventing mental illness. <https://kclpure.kcl.ac.uk/portal/en/publications/meta-review-on-the-effectiveness-of-classroom-based-psychological/>
9. Amado Rodríguez, I. D., Casañas, R., Mas Expósito, L., Castellví, P., Roldán Merino, J. F., Casas, I., Lalucat Jo, L., & Fernández San Martín, M. I. (2022). Effectiveness of mental health literacy programs in primary and secondary schools. <https://www.mdpi.com/2227-9067/9/4/480>
10. Nazari, A., Garmaroudi, G., & Rabiei, M. (2024). A systematic review: Increasing mental health literacy in students through "The Guide". <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s44202-024-00219-1?>