

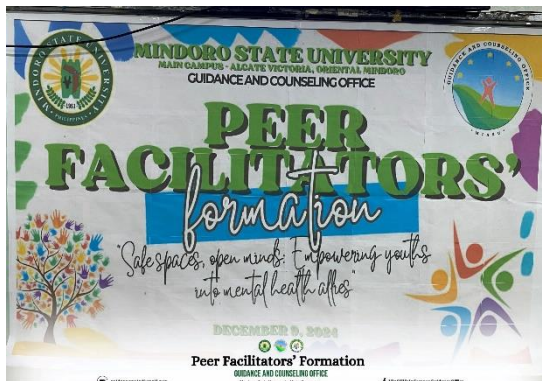


“Safe Spaces, Open Minds – Empowering Youths into Mental Health Allies”

Peer Facilitators’ Formation Narrative Report

Along with the celebration of Mental Health Awareness of the Guidance and Counseling Office, are the implementation of Peer Facilitators’ Formation with the theme of “**Safe Spaces, Open Minds – Empowering Youths into Mental Health Allies**” which aims to enhance student engagement and support by creating a network of trained peers who can assist their fellow students in directing academic and social challenges. This program involves trainings regarding self-awareness, effective communication, facilitating skills, conflict resolutions, leadership and problem solving skills that are essential to develop and foster within each student to perform effectively as peer facilitators. Moreover, this initiative does not only foster a sense of community but also help students to develop essential abilities and skills that could enhance their individuality for further commitment and willingness to help others.

Peer Facilitators’ Formation was a one-day program held on December 9, 2024 at CAAFF 3rd floor conference room. It commenced at eight (8) o’clock in the morning until four (4) o’clock in the afternoon and began through attendance registration, followed by distribution of name tags for better recognition and distinction of the participants, and started the program with a prayer led by Ms. Mae Angela Bejer, Administrative Aide of Guidance and Counseling office.





As indicated from the program flow, the Peer Facilitators' Formation was constructed of five (5) sessions; self-awareness, effective communication, facilitating skills, conflict resolutions, and leadership and problem solving skills. The **first session** was facilitated by Ms. Kyla Danica Mapuyao, Psychometrician, she energized the session one (1) through human bingo game for socialization and build rapport furthermore, for participants to have enough time to gradually learn more about the personalities of other partakers. Each winner who completed the human bingo shared their discoveries from the personalities of other participants. Moreover, to distinguished and intensely understand each individual self, the 5-minute personality test activity was administered afterwards to discuss the importance of having self-awareness and understanding it's purpose as peer facilitators. Each volunteer allotted of time to discussed the activity and explore the interpretation of the results. Additionally, the activity helped the participants to quickly understand their own personality traits, strengths, and potential areas for growth. This awareness improved their interactions and communication within the group where peers can better appreciate diverse perspectives and approaches, leading to a more inclusive and collaborative environment.





The topic effective communication for **session two (2)** was discussed and facilitated by Ms. Heidelita Bumohya, Guidance Counselor, together with Psychometrician. The participants engaged in different activities including spot the initiator activity, message relay and body language activity which demonstrate and effectively interpret the intend learnings. In the activity Spot the Initiator, one from the students is the guesser who identified among the people from the circle is the initiator of the movements displayed by the whole participants, this game was played in two rounds. None of the guessers was able to identify correctly the initiator leading for the initiator to win the game. The next activity was the message relay wherein the participants are divided into two (2) groups, each group formed a line and have to relay the chosen word to the person behind them through whisper until it reached the last person on the line who will write down his/her received word. The group 2 ace the game who got a higher score of 4 points from the group one with 3 points. On the other hand, the body language activity was the last activity for session 3, wherein the same groups will choose one actor to act the picked word and each members of the group needed to guess correctly to win the game. Group 2 finished the game earlier than the opponent and won the game. The activities provided a sense of trust and connection between the peers, creating a safe and supportive environment for collaboration and learning. Practice active listening, clear instructions, and encouraging dialogue that enables the group to work collaboratively in identifying solutions and making informed decisions and strategies. Furthermore, the participants comprehend more accurately with the discussions and identified the importance of either verbal and non-verbal manner of communication. Understand that nonverbal communication conveys information including emotions, attitudes and intensions which essentials when different barriers are present between message sender and receiver. It is significant that peer facilitators know how to effectively communicate through different methods to convey and comprehend important information and messages and knowledge to properly respond towards others.



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Along with the **session three (3)** is the topic regarding facilitating skills, which discussed by the Guidance Counselor while the group activity was facilitated by the Administrative Aide. The team shape charades activity aims to help participants develop the practical skills needed to facilitate group discussions, activities, and problem-solving processes. The participants are divided into two groups with facilitators to lead the members and each group was provided five (5) minutes to guess the word based on the related shape displayed by the facilitator. The Adobo group who got the highest score ace the activity and received the prizes. Afterwards, the discussion indicates that along with the activity stated that part of being a peer facilitator was the idea to lead, assist



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and support, evoking the purpose to encourage people to explore ideas and feelings, guide others towards making responsible decisions and offer emotional support.



The Psychometrician discussed and facilitated the **session 4: Conflict Resolution** with the activity entitled human knot. The participants are given five (5) minutes to resolved and unknot their hands with each other. At first, students experienced difficulty in identifying strategies to unknot their twisted hands however, Carl one of the participants formed a great idea to resolved their problem to win the game. He demonstrated and explained his strategies to other members and they started rotating and visible recognized that the game had domino effect. Once techniques are identified, their hands unknot orderly. The peers accomplished the game exactly at 3 minutes and 55 seconds. The session followed up by the discussion related from the activity wherein tackled the importance of techniques and strategies when resolving challenges and conflicts. As peer facilitators, resolving conflicts is a top tier responsibility especially on how to react and address different situational challenges of other students.



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The **last session** was discussed by the Guidance Counselor with a topic about leadership and problem solving skills. Before the lecture, an activity named SOS Game was conducted wherein the participants formed two (2) groups; Jollibee and McDonalds to compete with each other. On the first round, each groups assigned a leader to facilitate the position of the members to occupy the grid. The goal of the game was to create a straight sequence of members among connected squares and players can create sequences diagonally, horizontally, or vertically continue to take turns until they created a "S-O-S" through members. On the second round, the members had their freedom to lead themselves and choose their desired position from the squares of the grid to win the game. Team Jollibee won the game as they accomplished to form horizontal SOS within the two (2) rounds. After the interactive activity, discussed the importance of leadership towards peer facilitators. Leadership plays an essential role in fostering an environment of support, collaboration, and personal growth, furthermore, create a safe and inclusive space where peers feel comfortable sharing their thoughts and challenges. Additionally, peer facilitators as a leaders tend to serve, guide, and empower peers to achieve their goals while creating a supportive and inclusive environment. It amplifies the impact of peer-led initiatives and fosters meaningful growth for all involved. Afterwards, the Psychometrician discussed the problem solving skills topic to impart the essential role of problem solving skills as peer facilitators. This skill help navigates challenges, foster effective communication, and guide peers toward constructive outcomes. Moreover, with strong problem solving skills a peer can approach conflicts objectively and guide the group toward a mutually acceptable resolution.



After completing the sessions, Ms. Mae Bejer synthesized the topics and evaluated the learnings of the participants. Volunteer students shared their learnings and experiences from the event, expound the meaningful takeaway from the discussions and interpret the highlights and purpose of the program.





At the end of the program, every student participated on the discussions and winners of each activity was recognized and reinforced through rewards of packed gift prizes. The guidance and counseling office ensure that the participants' efforts are rewarded and their participations are appreciated.



The Guidance and Counseling Office also acknowledged the presence of the participants through distributing Certificate of Completion for successfully completing the Peer Facilitator's Formation. Over all, the GCO accumulated seventeen (17) new members and ten (10) official



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members with the total of twenty-seven (27) peer facilitators. The event successfully completed at exactly four (4) o'clock in the afternoon.





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KAPEHAN SA GUIDANCE, FORDA HEALTHY MIND: ANG ATAKE NG MGA FERSION...EYY!

The Guidance and Counseling Office hosted a one-week event aimed at helping the students, teachers, and staff to take a breather and prioritize their mental well-being. The event also incorporated different ways of play therapy through board games (chess, scrabble) and guitar. Brochures about mental health awareness and bookmarks with inspirational messages were given out, one each for free, to raise awareness and promote positivity. This also aimed to foster a closer connection between the office and the student body. Additionally, to this, the event is also designed to shift the perception of the Guidance Office and Guidance Counsellor as the “Disciplinarian”, instead it is a safe space where individuals can seek support.

The event ran for a week, October 7 to 11, 2024, at the front of the Guidance and Counseling Office. It was also supported by the *Siningbalai: Harmonics*, contributing to the overall ambiance of the *Kapehan* by providing live performances throughout the week for one hour to two every morning and afternoon with free flow of coffee and snacks. This was organized with a rotation of singers, depending on which members were available during their free time, ensuring that the performance did not interfere with their classes.

Day 1 (October 7, 2024, Monday)

Kapehan sa Guidance, kicked off at 1 in the Afternoon, as the morning was used to prepare for the event. Ms Heidelita G. Bumohya, Guidance Counselor III, formally opened with a welcoming speech, emphasizing the importance of mental well-being and giving a brief explanation of the event’s purpose.

The first day attracted students from high school to college across different programs, as well as the faculty and staff. Board games and Tarot Card were a hit among the attendees, while the *Siningbalai: Harmonics* provided live music in the background. The photo frames became a hotspot for visitors. The “free your mind” wall was not as popular on the first day, while nearly a dozen wrote messages for their future selves putting them in a bowl.





Day 2 (October 8, 2024, Tuesday)

During the second day of the event, the Freedom Wall was more active as many students left their notes. After their training, some students went straight to the *Kapehan (free coffee)* to relax and recharge. While waiting for the live music performed by the *Harmonics*, the students borrowed the guitar from the GCO and began jamming together. In the afternoon, the messages students' wrote for their future selves were read aloud anonymously in front of the attendees.

As with the previous day, the board games, Tarot reading, and the photo frames were still a hit among the visitors, with live music from *Harmonics* in both the morning and afternoon.





Day 3 (October 9, 2024, Wednesday)

The highlights for Day 3 of the *KAPEHAN SA GUIDANCE* were the successful symposium held in the morning at the University Auditorium. It was made possible through the suspension of classes, allowing the students to attend. After the talk, the *Kapehan* (free coffee) was again promoted, inviting everyone to visit. Aside from the board games, and photo frames the students are having fun using, the Tarot card reading created quite a line of staff and a few of the faculty members and students. Due to the absence of the *Siningbalai: Harmonics*, the students enjoyed music jamming among themselves, contributing to the relaxing ambiance of the



place.



Day 4 (October 10, 2024, Thursday)

On the fourth day of the *Kapehan*, it was a rather quiet morning in the *Kapehan* due to the fast approaching Midterms examination. However, the absence of *Siningbalai: Harmonics* did not stop the students from enjoying live music, as they held their own music jamming session. Their music provided a lively atmosphere while the board games, Tarot card reading, and photo frame activities continued to be enjoyed by many.

Additionally, few students showed commendable courage by signing up on the “self-referral” slip for counseling, acknowledging the need to also prioritize mental well-being.





Day 5 (October 11, 2024, Friday)

On the final day of the *Kapehan*, the atmosphere remained as lively and engaging as ever. Although the *Kapehan* (*free coffee*) opened at 9, some students had already arrived as early as 8 in the morning. Some students mentioned that they were willing to wait for the coffee, while others simply wanted a place to study for their upcoming exams.

In the morning, there were still no performances from *Siningbalai: Harmonics*, the students once again took the initiative to borrow the guitar from the Guidance Office and fill the event with their music. Their spontaneous jamming session continued to create a warm and welcoming environment, attracting more students to join and relax. The board games and Tarot card reading remained popular throughout the day. By the afternoon, *Siningbalai Harmonics* finally performed, providing live music for the entire afternoon.





The *Kapehan sa Guidance* successfully provided a comforting space for the students, staff, and faculty to pause from their busy schedules and focus on their mental health. The variety of activities, from board games and tarot card reading, to live performances, offered something for everyone who attended. The event's impact was further emphasized by the number of attendees daily with a total of 1,040, with some even having perfect attendance. The event not only achieved its goal of promoting mental well-being but also helped in building rapport between the Guidance and Counseling Office and the entire University community.

Feedback gathered from 151 attendees using a 5-point Likert scale further proved the success of this event. Attendees were asked if the event was beneficial to them, 125 rated “lubos na sumasang-ayon” (strongly agreed), 23 rated “sumasang-ayon” (agree), and 3 rated “nyutral” (neutral). In terms of whether the program's objectives were clearly communicated, 112 responded strongly agree, 33 agreed, and 6 answered neutral. For the event's facilitation, 111 respondents strongly agreed that it was effectively facilitated, 34 agreed, and 6 answered neutral. And also part of the feedback form, the attendees were asked about the appropriateness of the venue, 112 strongly agreed that it was appropriate, 30 agreed, 7 were neutral, and the remaining 2 disagreed leading to a suggestion of having proper ventilation and a much spacious venue for the next *Kapehan*. And out of all the respondents, 136 participants strongly agreed, 14 agreed, and 1 responded neutral and showing no disagreement with having *KAPEHAN SA GUIDANCE* again next year.

With the successful outcome of this event, the *Kapehan* stands as evidence of the importance of providing spaces where everyone can feel safe, heard, seen, and validated in their journey as they venture through their mental well-being. The event was a gentle reminder for everyone that mental health is as important as physical health.

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Guidance and Counseling Office: Advocate of Mental Health and Student Well-Being (Sustainable Development Goal No. 3)

The Mindoro State University Guidance and Counseling Services, as an integral part of the educational system, opens its avenues through various programs and interventions for individuals, families, or groups who are referred or voluntarily seek assistance. To function effectively within their environment, individuals must be capable of making sound decisions and adjusting to the diverse aspects of their personal, academic, and social lives.

Recognizing this need, the Guidance and Counseling Services of the University stands as one of the most vital sources of support and developmental opportunities. It upholds each individual's right to make independent and informed choices, free from undue influence. The office consistently adheres to its mission of assisting students in their decision-making processes, fostering the gradual development of their ability to make wise and responsible life choices.

Grounded in the principle of self-understanding, the program seeks to help students integrate their knowledge of themselves—their strengths, weaknesses, aptitudes, talents, interests, and potentials—toward achieving personal growth, well-being, and a balanced life.

Guidance and Counseling Services

The Guidance and Counseling Office provides a comprehensive set of services designed to promote mental health and support the holistic development of students. These include:

1. Guidance and Counseling Service – utilizes an integrated approach to the development of well-functioning individuals by helping them recognize and maximize their full potential. It also offers individual and group interventions aimed at facilitating positive behavioral change. Through counseling, students are guided to explore their feelings, values, perceptions, interpersonal relationships, fears, and life choices, enabling them to gain deeper self-understanding and become more self-directed individuals.
2. Information Service – provides accurate and relevant information to assist students in making informed academic, personal, and career decisions.
3. Individual Inventory Service – gathers and maintains personal, educational, and social information about students to better understand their needs and provide appropriate assistance.
4. Testing Service – administers standardized psychological and educational tests to assess students' aptitudes, interests, personalities, and other characteristics essential for personal and academic growth.
5. Referral Service – connects students to appropriate professionals or agencies for specialized assistance beyond the scope of the office.
6. Follow-up Service – ensures continuous support and monitoring of students who have received previous counseling or referrals, helping them sustain progress and well-being.

Through these services, the Guidance and Counseling Office fulfills its advocacy of promoting mental health, fostering emotional resilience, and nurturing responsible, self-aware, and well-adjusted individuals who contribute positively to the University community and society as a whole.

Quarterly consultative meetings among guidance counselors are conducted to promote accountability, participation, and teamwork in the delivery of guidance programs and services. These meetings provide an avenue to review progress, discuss challenges, and share best practices in program implementation. They also help ensure that all guidance activities remain aligned with the office's goals and responsive to students' needs. Through regular consultation, counselors strengthen collaboration and maintain a unified approach in promoting mental health and holistic student development.