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The Peer Counseling Centre of the Department of Early Childhood Education at the University of Athens: An overview of 16 years of experience.

The Peer Counselling Centre at the University of Athens started operating in 1995. Since then, it operates on a voluntary basis, staffed by juniors, seniors and graduates of the department who have attended counselling psychology courses. The main principle on which the Peer Counseling Centre at the University of Athens is based is that young people have something distinctive to offer their peers in distress: instead of passively standing by and watching, they can reach out to offer understanding, friendship and time to listen. Its main purpose is to meet the needs of the student community over various issues, such as to increase their self-knowledge and self-esteem; to offer emotional support; to facilitate their adjustment to the university and to student life; to provide information and orientation services; to help in the selection of courses as well as of post-graduate programs in Greece and abroad. The Peer Counselling Centre communicates broadly with the student community through a series of informative events, such as: welcoming of first-year students, designing brochures, organising informative conferences targeted to the student community, organising small group seminars aiming at the achievement of knowledge and the development of skills. Experiences from the Peer Counseling Centre are discussed and new activities are presented.