

Supporting International Students While Caring for Oneself: Wei Chen Explores the Power of Cross-Cultural Counseling

Campus focus

The Office of International and Cross-Strait Affairs held the workshop “Navigating Cross-Cultural Support: Caring for International Students, and for Yourself” at 1:30 p.m. on January 7 in the 10th-floor lobby of Ching-Sheng Building. The event invited Wei Chen, a licensed counseling psychologist and art therapist who previously served at the Counseling, Career Development and Learning Center, to share practical experience in supporting international students. The workshop also explored how frontline staff can care for their own physical and mental well-being while helping international students adapt to life and study in Taiwan.

Dean of International Affairs Chien-Mu Yeh noted that the importance of international students to the university is self-evident, and what most distinguishes them from local students is being “far from home.” This distance is not only geographical but also cultural, social, and psychological, making student support more complex and requiring close collaboration and mutual support across campus units.

Chen explained that international students often build connections simultaneously with the Office of International Affairs, the Counseling Center, department faculty, and peers. Effective support lies in identifying the person with whom a student has the strongest connection, as this is key to truly addressing their needs and challenges. Through real student cases, she illustrated how cultural backgrounds and language differences shape students’ behaviors, helping staff better understand the nuances and priorities of international student support.

Drawing on psychologist William Glasser’s theory of Reality Therapy, Chen emphasized that regardless of nationality, people share fundamental needs—survival, love and belonging, power, autonomy, and joy or inner peace—and that students’ behaviors are often culturally shaped strategies to meet these needs.

To help staff maintain balance under work-related stress, Chen shared emotion-regulation concepts and underscored the importance of self-care and clear boundaries between work and personal life. She then guided participants through a “stress self-check” using scenario questions and cookies to raise awareness of accumulated emotions and stress at work. Through simple practices such as mindful breathing, card-based reflection, and mandala creation, participants actively practiced self-care and strengthened their emotional regulation skills.

Hsiu-Feng Yen, a staff member from the International Exchange Section, shared that the workshop not only deepened her understanding of supporting international students but also taught her to care for herself more gently while caring for others.



跨文化不迷路： 陪境外生 也陪自己



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波江時報

