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NATIONAL BOOK TRUST, INDIA
Ministry of Education, Government of India



Foreword



It gives me immense pleasure to introduce this booklet, "Nurturing Minds: Fostering Mental Health Awareness in Schools," being released on the sidelines of the National Progressive Schools' Conference (NPSC), as the Director of National Book Trust, India. This compilation is a testament to the commitment and dedication of educators towards addressing the critical issue of mental health in our schools.



In recent years, there has been a growing recognition of the importance of mental health awareness and well-being in educational institutions. Schools play a pivotal role in shaping young minds, not just academically but also emotionally and psychologically. It is here that the foundation for mental health is laid, influencing the overall development and future of our children.



The papers, articles, and poems presented in this booklet offer valuable insights, perspectives, and experiences from teachers who are at the forefront of this crucial dialogue. They delve into various aspects of mental health, including the challenges faced by students, strategies for creating a supportive environment, and the role of teachers in promoting mental well-being.



One of the key themes that emerge from these writings is the need for a holistic approach to mental health in schools. This includes not just addressing mental health issues as they arise but also creating a positive and nurturing environment that promotes mental well-being from the outset. It requires a shift in mindset, where mental health is seen as integral to overall health and not as a separate or secondary concern.

Another important aspect highlighted in this booklet is the role of teachers as caregivers and mentors. Teachers are often the first point of contact for students facing mental health issues, and their understanding and support can make a significant difference. It is heartening to see the innovative approaches and initiatives being undertaken by teachers to address mental health in their classrooms and schools.

I would like to commend the NPSC for providing a platform for teachers to share their insights and experiences on this critical issue. By fostering dialogue and collaboration, we can work towards creating a more supportive and inclusive educational environment that nurtures the mental health of all students.

I hope that this booklet serves as a valuable resource for educators, policymakers, and parents alike, and inspires further action towards fostering mental health awareness in our schools. Together, we can create a brighter and healthier future for our children.

Thank you.


(Yuvraj Malik)

Preface

The journey of the National Progressive Schools has been of transformative ecologies. Our organization has always been at the forefront of progressive learning systems.

I would like to congratulate Mrs. Asha Prabhakar, Chairperson NPSC and Principal Bal Bharati Public School, Noida on her vision for creating spaces in the area of health and wellbeing, an important sustainable development goal.

The idea of opening out this theme to educators across schools has helped in understanding the importance and creating an awareness around mental health.

The response has been extremely enthusiastic and the content within the prose and poetry is deeply meaningful. Filled with sensitivity and a collective consciousness of the needs of children, every article tells a story.

Each piece of writing resonates through myriad experiences that are sometimes, joyous and painful, restrictive and spontaneous, clear and confusing, unknowing and wise; in fact, an ebony and ivory of the life of a child.

It's amazing how educators have understood the nuances of conflict resolution, alienation, peer support, skills and sensibilities, anxiety, aggression and envy coupled with tenderness and trust.

This publication is a testimony that exhibits teaching as not just a set of skills for imparting knowledge to students, but for caring for children in a complex society.

The collaborative venture of National Progressive Schools' Conference with National Book Trust under the leadership of Mrs. Asha Prabhakar will create a tool, which will help in sorting out dilemmas in a world of ambiguous interpretations and incomplete awareness of our mental models.

All this will be achieved through reflection and analysis not only of practices in our classrooms but also of the children who inhabit them.

NPSC has created a shared vision, which connects a collective learning consciousness.

Keep the faith !!!

Dr. Ameeta Mulla Wattal

Chairperson and Executive Director,
Education, Innovations and Training
DLF Schools and Scholarship Programmes.

Foreword

It is with great pleasure that I present the NPSC publication titled, "Nurturing Minds: Fostering Mental Health and Well-being". This collaborative effort between NPSC and NBT stands as a testament to our collective commitment to address one of the most neglected yet crucial areas in our country, Mental Health. In today's dynamic and demanding world, the importance of mental health in schools cannot be overstated. Our schools serve as more than just centers for academic learning; they are also nurturing grounds for the holistic development of our students. Recognizing this, NPSC has embarked on a mission to prioritize mental health and well-being within our educational institutions.

This compendium is a testament to our commitment to this cause. Through a diverse collection of essays, poems, and research papers, we explore the multifaceted aspects of mental health and the strategies to foster well-being among students. From understanding the importance of emotional intelligence to promoting self-care practices, each contribution offers valuable insights that resonate with our collective mission.

In India, the World Health Organization has labelled our nation as one of the most depressed countries, with mental health issues ranking as the second leading cause of death among children. The proliferation of social media, societal pressures, and familial conflicts has exacerbated these challenges, impacting the learning and growth of our youth.

As educators and stakeholders in the upbringing of children, it is our responsibility to create an environment that not only promotes academic achievement but also supports the emotional and psychological growth of our students. By integrating mental health education into our curriculum and providing resources for support, we can empower our students to navigate life's challenges with resilience and confidence.

Just as we prioritize physical health with dedicated periods for exercise and wellness, we must also prioritize mental health in our educational institutions. By fostering environments that openly discuss and address mental health, schools can pave the way for brighter, happier, and more successful futures for our children, families, and communities.

Together, let us embark on this journey towards nurturing resilient minds and fostering a culture of mental health and well-being in our schools and beyond.

I extend my heartfelt gratitude to all the teachers and fellow principals for their invaluable contributions to this compendium. May it serve as a guiding light for educators, parents, and policymakers alike in our shared endeavour to nurture the minds and foster the mental health and well-being of our future generations.

Mrs. Asha Prabhakar
Chairperson, NPSC



Fostering Mental Health in Schools

“During my adolescence and college years, I was quite an introvert, did not have much confidence to talk to people, had low confidence, self-esteem, juggling with the changes inside related to emotional and physical aspects, initiating and handling relationships and many more. The only positive thing that gave me confidence was the faith of my classmates in me, they found me trustworthy with whom they could share feelings and were sure that I would listen to them. But I would always be looking for someone who could listen to me, give me proper guidance that would help me in understanding my problems and help me to develop coping skills to deal with the challenges of life. Time kept on moving, during this phase of turmoil, my mother always stood by me and somehow helped me in dealing with the problems but apart from that a guide or mentor was lacking.”

“I keep moving ahead, as always, knowing deep down inside that I am a good person and that I am worthy of a good life.” – Jonathan Harnisch

Yes, this was me 25 years back. And what kept me going was the above quote of Jonathan. Today, I am working as a Counselling Psychologist in a school, catering to the developmental needs of different age groups and trust me, it gives me immense pleasure, when I am able to bring a smile to someone’s face, when I can help someone trust oneself, when I try and explain to the parents or teachers to understand the changes their children are going through, and help someone to be confident about self. The understanding that my empathy has the power to mend broken hearts and restore hope in someone is great.

I am sure many of us would have got the same story but still trying from my side to make you realize that though we adults have visited school often but we are unable to listen to the silence amidst constant conversations and chattering of the present generation of schoolgoers. Have we recognized the silent battle going on amongst our students? Are we able to see through the eyes of small kids, a battle inside them; sometimes related to the pressures of the pursuit of grades and involvement in extracurricular activities and sometimes their own peer pressure?

Are you able to reflect that it’s all about the mental wellbeing of our students? A topic that has long been a topic surrounded by stigma and misconceptions. Many view it as a sign of weakness and simply dismiss it as teenage issues. Despite all that, we are all heading towards the future with the growing need to address this.

Communication and co-relation are the basic needs in today’s world. Recent studies and surveys actually correlate and reinforce the need to talk about these issues. A significant portion of students face health challenges, whether its anxiety, depression, stress or severe conditions, the numbers are deeply concerning. As per WHO, at any given time, about 1 person in every 10 worldwide is suffering from a mental disorder, and about 1 in 4 families has a member with a mental disorder. Over 800 000 people die due to suicide every year, and it is the second most common cause of death among 15–29-year olds. About three quarters of all suicides occur in low- and middle-income countries.

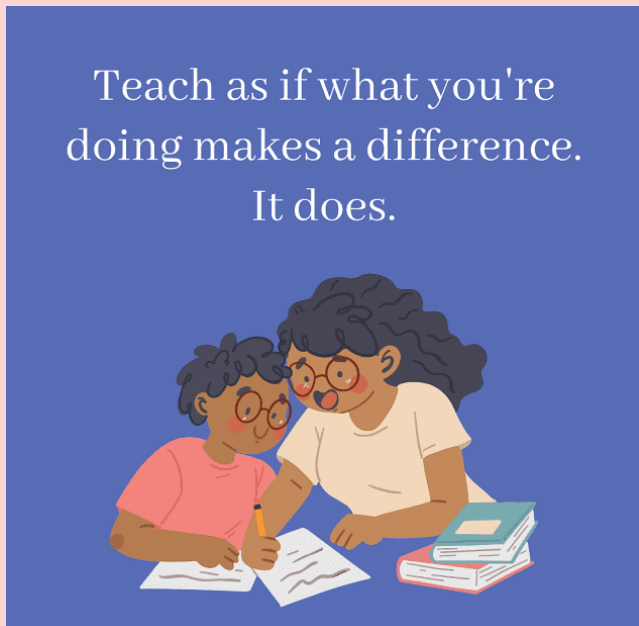
Mental and neurological disorders affect people of all ages. Around 20% of the world’s children and adolescents have mental disorders or problems, and roughly half of all mental disorders begin before the age of 14. and if we talk about India, according to a report by the World Health Organization (WHO) it is stated that 25% of children aged 13–15 in India might be experiencing depression. This statistics is more than a mere number; it represents the wellbeing of our children and our future.

Let’s underline in our own books of lives that it’s absolutely necessary to nurture resilience, positivity, and a strong mental well-being in our kids to lead happy and healthy lives. We also need to relearn that emotional well-being is not only integral to personal happiness but also influences the fabric of society.

Parents and families are the first source of support for their children, often being the first to help their children develop skills to recognize and manage emotions, establish and maintain

positive relationships, and make responsible decisions. Parents have to understand that starting a conversation about mental health is an ongoing process. They really need to be patient, be open, and let their child know that they are always there to support and listen to them. Children learn what they see, thus, parents have to surely model positive coping skills to identify and manage stressful situations.

Mental health and well-being includes working on varied skills that empower individuals to overcome life's challenges, cultivate resilience, and nurture their overall emotional well-being. These essential skills provide the building blocks for managing emotions, fostering positive relationships, and promoting self-care. By developing and honing these skills, we can equip our children and ourselves with the tools necessary to thrive in an ever-changing world. WHO names these skills as Life skills.



School plays an integral role. Teachers here, have to relate to the thought of understanding why students are suffering and how they can bring change and help their students. This is going to make them feel more satisfying and gratifying. As teachers are at the forefront and interact with students on a daily basis, thus they have unique insights into their well-being. By creating a supportive classroom environment, teachers can definitely foster a sense of belonging, emotional safety, and trust among students. They can provide guidance, offer a listening ear, and help students brave the obstacles of mind.

They can identify and address mental health concerns by being attentive to changes in students' behaviour, mood, or academic performance. Educators can intervene early and provide the necessary support. Having engaging, open and non-judgmental conversations, encourage students to express their concerns and seek help. Through their unbiased observations and interactions, teachers can help connect students to appropriate resources and mental health professionals when needed.

As a teacher, along with being a counsellor, I can say that teachers are often the ones who will determine whether students go to the counsellor's office. And, if teachers misinterpret those signs, students may wind up in the School Principal's office—or getting no care at all. School has a significant role in detecting the mental health problems of children, in providing mental health services and in shaping an environment that will support emotional well-being.

When we talk of shared responsibility, we need to bridge the gaps between home and school environments and support our children's wellbeing. Prevention of mental health issues in our students is directly linked to the development of psychological resilience, which is associated with children's capacity to adapt to their environment despite the adverse conditions.

With reference to Friedmen and Chase Lansdale it is said that the development of psychological resilience is a gradual process where individual factors, such as adaptation skills and external factors, such as the supportive environment, can be cultivated particularly during the first years of life, with the aim of minimizing the impact of negative events in life.

The protective factors that are associated with the development of psychological resilience are:

- Formation of an emotionally safe and supportive relationship with family and peers

- The development of the sense of belonging
- Good communication skills
- Problem-solving skills
- Social skills, and
- The ability of self-regulation of behavior and emotion.
- Positive school climate
- Warmth
- Security






By creating opportunities for participation, teachers can detect the children who are exposed to risk factors and enhance protective factors for all children with the aim of cultivating psychological resilience and well-being. The empowerment of skills associated with psychological resilience can reduce the risk of developing a mental disorder. One important dimension of the resilience of children is the implementation of socio-emotional learning interventions in school context (Kay-Lambkin, Kemp, Stafford, & Hationz, 2007).

“I try my best to make a difference in someone’s life. I feel that everyone has the power and its possible for everyone to make a direct positive impact on someone’s life but it all depends on one’s perspective. In my opinion, the best I can give back to this world is by making someone happy, by helping other person to smile, by his loneliness, by making them realize that they are important, to accept them unconditionally and lastly, to help them in bringing positive changes in themselves to lead a happy life.

The girl whom I left ten years back, still comes to my dreams but this time with a smile! And I would like to conclude with the famous lines by Robert Frost –

*“The wood are lovely, dark, and deep,
But I have promises to keep,
and miles to go before I sleep,
and miles to go before I sleep..”*

5 T's for Mental Health Education in Schools

<p>1 TALKING about mental health</p>  <p>Students need open and ongoing conversations to help decrease the stigma surrounding mental health. The earlier these conversations start the better, since around 50% of all mental health illness begins before the age of 14, and many cases go undetected and untreated. School-wide strategies to increase awareness, such as providing mental health and well-being tips in the morning announcements or assemblies, can go a long way in promoting productive conversations.</p>	<p>2 TRAINING for teachers and staff</p>  <p>Educators need training to appropriately identify and respond to signs of mental health issues. Teachers are often the first adults that students turn to in times of distress or crisis, but many report feeling unprepared to support students directly or refer out for additional services. Schools need resources to provide in-depth training and on-site mental health support services to comprehensively and effectively address student needs.</p>	<p>3 Incorporating mental health into TEACHING</p>  <p>Mental health education can be integrated into academics and classwork in a way that doesn't overly burden teachers. For example, a Social Studies lesson may identify and discuss mental health topics (e.g., trauma, stigma) in books that students are reading. Younger students may learn about how to identify, describe, and manage emotions, while older students may learn about and discuss social implications of different mental health issues.</p>	<p>4 Providing helpful TOOLS for students</p>  <p>School counselors play a central role in providing direct services to students in need. However, the average student-to-school-counselor ratio is 482:1, nearly double the 250:1 ratio recommended by the American School Counselor Association. Without easy access to a counselor, educators might consider other mental health building tools that can be incorporated into the school day, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mindfulness • Relaxation techniques • Physical exercise • Art (visual arts, theater, music) • "Break" or "Time Out" space 	<p>5 TAKING CARE of teachers</p>  <p>In addition to addressing students' mental health needs, schools also need to make sure to support educators' mental health needs. Teachers experience high levels of daily stress, which also has a negative impact on students' social adjustment and academic performance. Various organizational and/or individual-level programs, including workplace wellness programs, teacher mentoring, and practices like mindfulness can help.</p>
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Upholding Mental Health and Wellbeing

A School Based Study

Abstract : Introduction: Students' mental health and wellbeing serve as the cornerstone for imparting holistic development and nurturing in them the qualities and life skills that help them grow, maintain themselves, and develop sustainably. This research paper explores practical strategies that improve students' mental health and well-being within a school's educational framework and gains insight into how students and teachers perceive these strategies.

Methods: This mixed methods research study was conducted in Salwan Public School, Gurugram. We studied the overall impact of counselling sessions, stress management techniques, peer education programs and educators' Continuous Development Programs (CPDs) for mental health related issues among students. Additionally, perceptions regarding initiatives towards educators' mental health, like weekly meditations and team building exercises, were also assessed. For the quantitative assessment, 150 students from 8th to 12th grade and 35 teachers were distributed pre-defined structured questionnaires. For the qualitative assessment, In Depth Interviews (IDIs) were conducted on ten students and five teachers.

Results: Findings from the quantitative surveys revealed the responses of both students and teachers regarding the effectiveness of mental health initiatives. According to the survey findings, most of the students felt that they feel comfortable discussing their mental health with teachers and counsellors and the school provides a supportive environment for addressing their emotional wellbeing challenges. The students felt that the school communicates information about mental health initiatives through different channels and they have attended many such sessions. Most of the teachers found that the mental health initiatives were effective in promoting the well-being of students and personally participated in the various programmes. The in-depth interviews highlighted the programs which have been majorly successful in promoting mental health. The interviews also helped in identifying the areas where the school initiatives for mental health could be improved and significant stressors affecting emotional wellbeing could be taken care of.

Conclusion: Based on the findings, it is recommended to implement a structured mental health education program that is integrated within the school curriculum. It will be useful to expand and promote peer support programs which foster a sense of belongingness and provide students with a confidante. Conducting regular awareness campaigns on reducing stigma and seeking help, promoting work life balance for teachers and students are other identified areas of focus.

Key Words: Awareness, Mental Health initiatives and Professional Development

Introduction : According to the National Education Policy (NEP), 2020, the purpose of education will not only be cognitive development, but also building of character and creating holistic and all rounded individuals equipped with the 21st century skills, such as communication, cooperation, teamwork, and resilience. Students' mental health and wellbeing serve as the cornerstone for imparting holistic development and nurturing in

them the qualities and life skills that help them grow, maintain themselves, and develop sustainably. All facets of health, including physical, social, and emotional wellbeing, are interconnected, and any compromise in one inevitably affects the others. Adolescence is a critical time for forming social and emotional habits that are necessary for mental health. It is crucial to create safe and encouraging conditions at home, school, and in the larger community. (Reference- Mental Health and Well-being of School Students – A Survey, 2022 – https://ncert.nic.in/pdf/Mental_Health_WSS_A_Survey_new.pdf)

While teachers play a vital role in shaping the future of the next generation, they often experience high levels of stress and burnout due to long working hours, large class sizes, and high expectations from students, parents, and administrators. Therefore, it is essential that mental health is given more importance and attention in the teaching profession as well. Continuous Professional Development Programmes and importance of regular activities such as weekly meditations and practices such as celebrating birthdays and festivals for educators' have shown promising results in overall mental well-being.

Within the educational landscape, Salwan Public School, Gurugram, stands as a notable institution dedicated to providing a nurturing environment for its diverse student body. Recognizing the profound influence of mental health on students' academic achievements and personal growth, the school has made substantial efforts to implement a range of mental health initiatives and support programs. While the school's commitment to fostering mental well-being is evident, there exists a critical need to assess the perceptions of students and teachers for these initiatives. This research endeavours to delve deep into the strategies employed by the School, understanding how they are perceived by the students and teachers. For teachers particular interest is the Continuous Development Program, as it equips educators with updated knowledge and skills necessary to support students effectively. This study seeks to achieve a multifaceted understanding of mental health initiatives within the School. The findings of this research hold the promise of not only informing Salwan Public School's future strategies but also offering valuable insights to educators and institutions worldwide. By evaluating the effectiveness of these initiatives, we aspire to contribute to the ongoing dialogue surrounding the pivotal role of mental health in education. Ultimately, it aims to shed light on the critical theme of upholding mental health and well-being in the school context, with Salwan Public School, Gurugram, serving as a compelling case study.

Study Design : The research study employed a mixed methods research design to explore the theme of upholding mental health and well-being in schools at Salwan Public School, Gurugram. This design helped us to gain a comprehensive understanding of the topic.

Study Participants : Research participants consisted of 150 students from classes VIII to XII and 35 teachers for the quantitative survey, coupled with 10 students and 5 teachers for qualitative interviews.

Data Collection Methods : Quantitative data was collected through an online survey distributed to students and teachers. The survey encompassed various aspects of mental health in school, including awareness of mental health initiatives, details of participation in the different programmes, and perceptions of teacher accessibility. Qualitative interviews, conducted with 10 students and 5 teachers, aimed to provide in-depth insights into the subject. The interviews explored participant experiences, perspectives, and narratives related to mental health initiatives in the school. These interviews were designed to complement the quantitative survey and offer a deeper understanding.

Data Analysis: Percentages (%) were calculated for categorical responses in the quantitative survey. Data from qualitative interviews was recorded and transcribed. Codes and themes were generated to extract key themes and narratives.

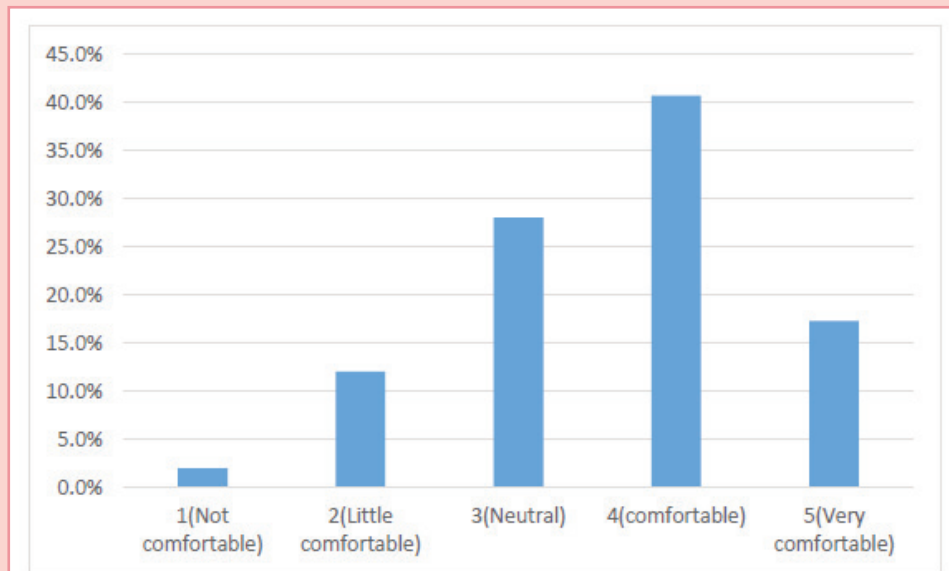
Ethical Considerations: The research adhered to strict ethical guidelines. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, and their confidentiality was maintained throughout the study.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Quantitative Data Analysis (Students): Key Findings

1. Comfort discussing mental health with teachers or Counsellors

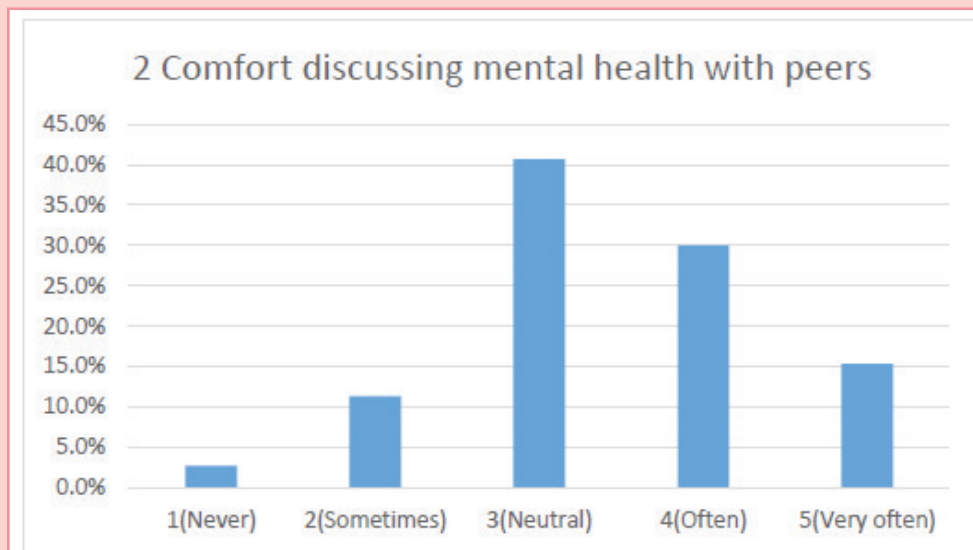
The analysis reveals that when it comes to discussing their mental health with teachers or counsellors, 40.7% of students are at ease. Specifically, 17% express being highly comfortable, while 28% maintain a neutral stance on the matter.



(Figure 1): Students comfort level discussing mental health with teachers or counsellors

2. Comfort discussing mental health with peers

The data illustrates that a considerable portion (40.7%) of students hold a neutral stance regarding their peers feeling comfortable discussing mental health issues among themselves. On the other hand, 30% are often comfortable discussing mental health with their peers, while 15% express being very comfortable doing so.

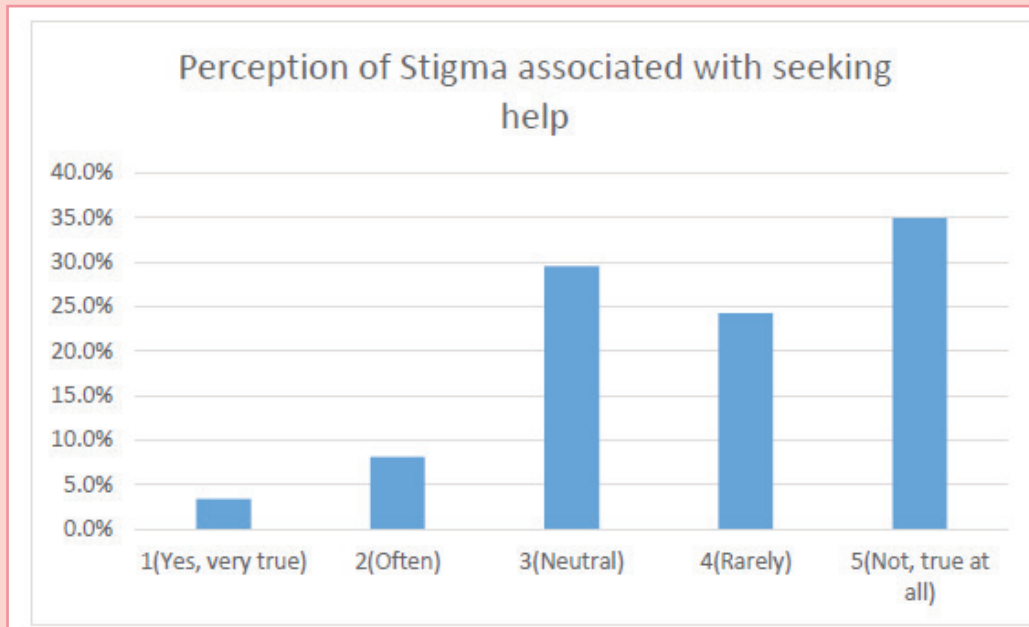


(Figure 2): Students comfort level discussing mental health with peers

3. Perception of Stigma associated with seeking help

The data highlights that a significant portion (34.9%) of students believe there is no stigma associated with seeking help for mental health issues at school. Additionally, 24.2% perceive that stigma rarely exists, while 29.5% maintain a neutral stance on this matter.

Perception of Stigma associated with seeking

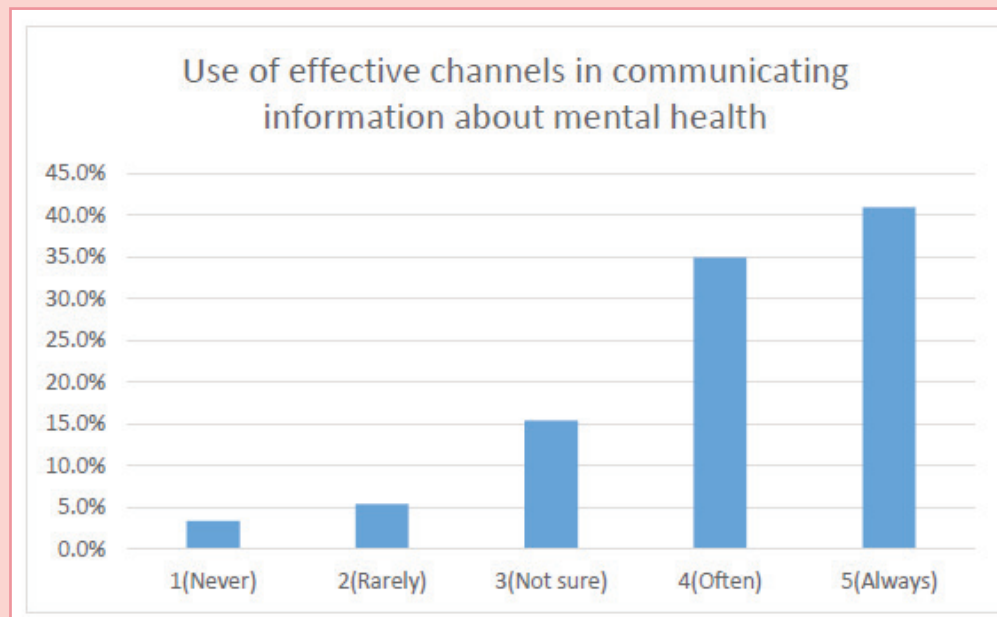


(Figure 3): Students perception of stigma associated with seeking help

4. Use of effective channels in communicating information about mental health

The data reveals that 40.9% of students believe the school effectively communicates mental health initiatives through various platforms such as WhatsApp, school websites, and Facebook. Additionally, 34.9% often perceive effective communication in this regard, while 15.4% maintain a neutral stance on the effectiveness of communication.

Use of effective channels in communicating information about mental health

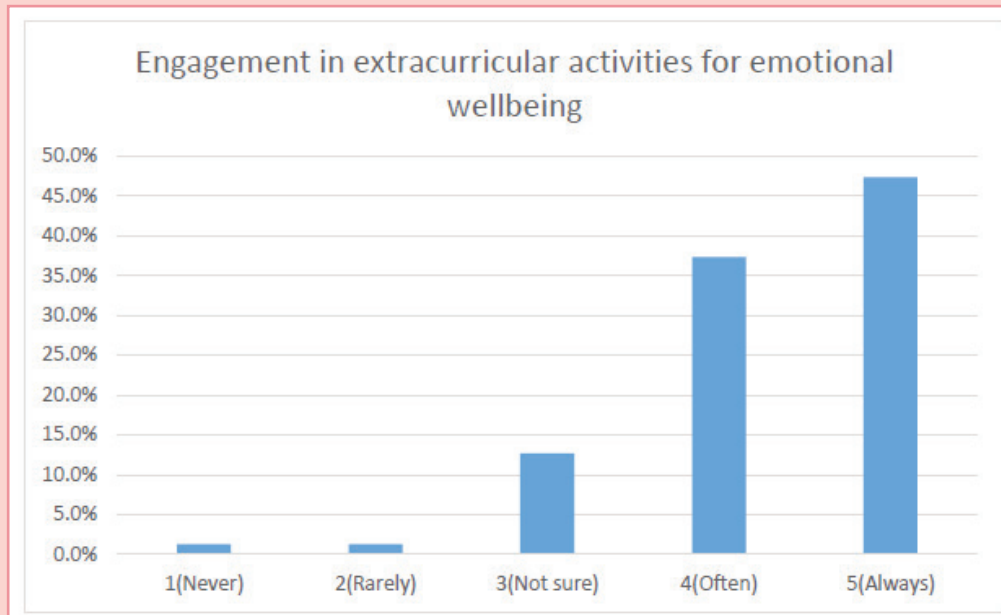


(Figure 4): Students perception of using effective channels in communicating about mental health

5. Engagement in extracurricular activities for emotional wellbeing

The data highlights that a significant majority, comprising 47.3% of students, engage in extracurricular activities or hobbies. Additionally, 37.3% often partake in extracurricular activities, while 12.7% maintain a neutral stance on this engagement.

Engagement in extracurricular activities for emotional wellbeing

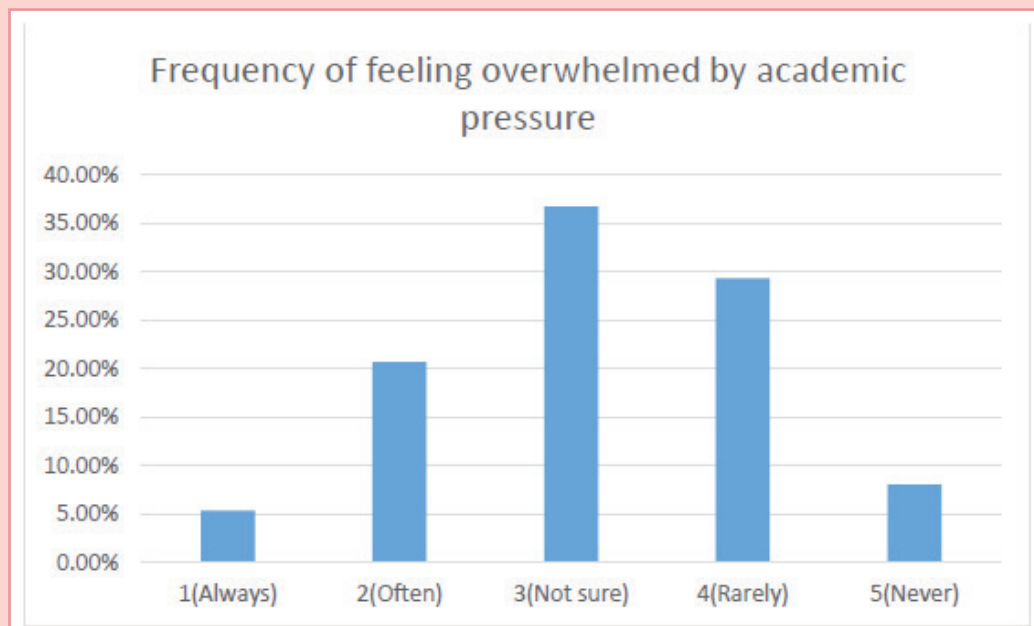


(Figure 5): Students engagement in extracurricular activities for emotional well-being

6. Frequency of feeling overwhelmed by academic pressure

The data highlights that a notable percentage of students (36.7%) are uncertain about their feelings regarding academic pressure. Additionally, 29.3% of students believe they are not overwhelmed by academic pressure, indicating a positive perception.

Frequency of feeling overwhelmed by academic pressure

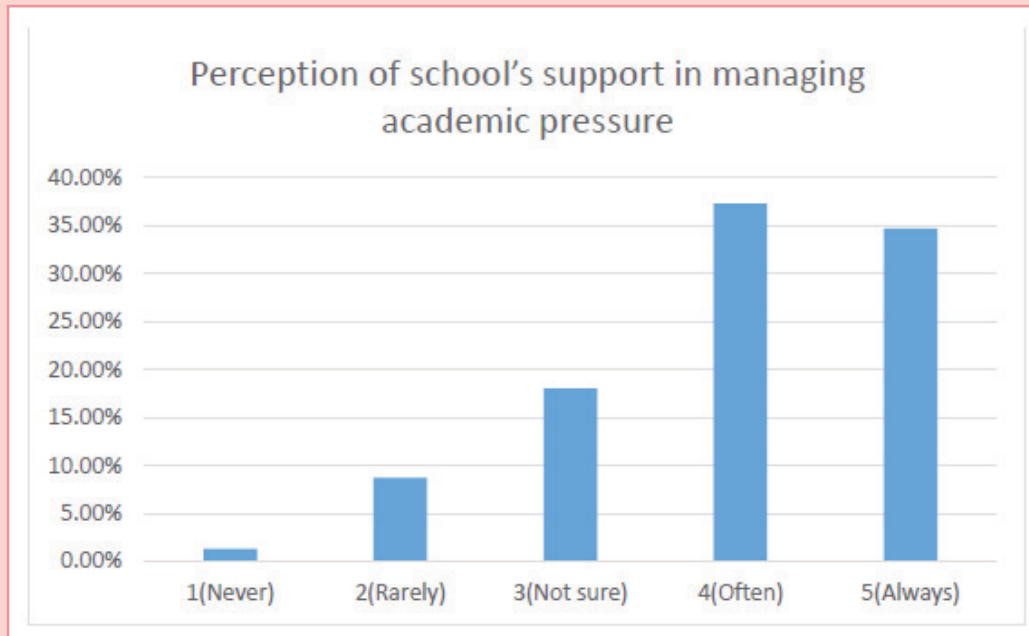


(Figure 6): Students perception of feeling overwhelmed by academic pressure

7. Perception of school's support in managing academic pressure

The data indicates that 37.3% of students generally perceive that the school often supports students in managing the stress related to academic pressure. Moreover, 34.7% believe that the school always offers this support, while 18% hold a neutral stance on the matter.

Perception of school's support in managing academic pressure

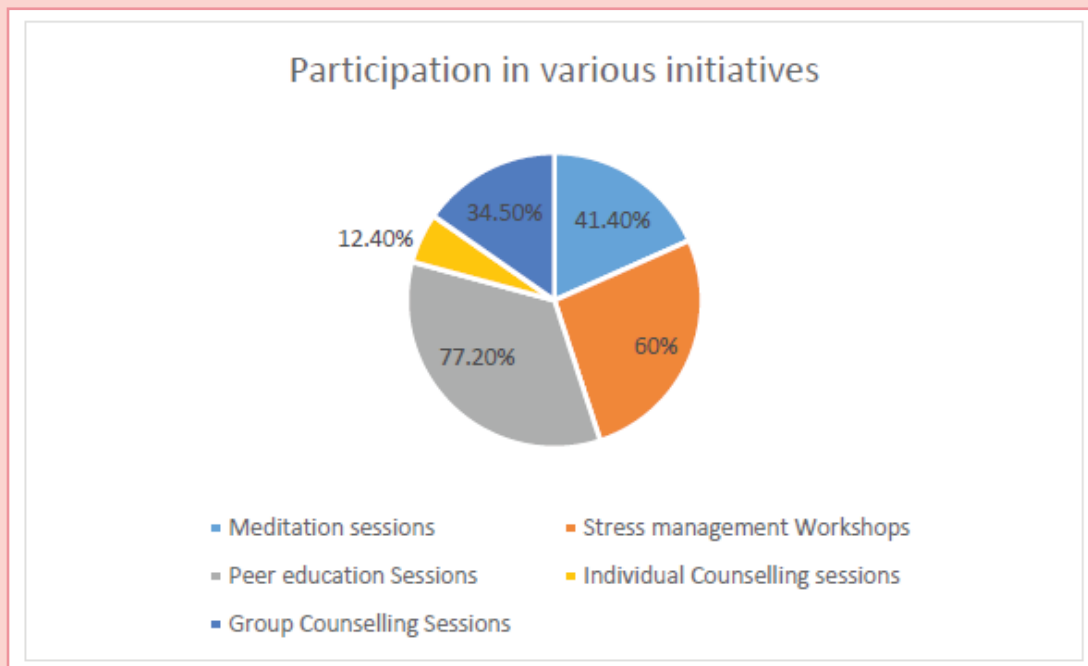


1 (Figure 7): Students perception of school's support in managing academic pressure

8. **Participation in various initiatives regarding mental health and wellbeing**

The data reveals a positive trend with a majority of students participating in mental health and wellbeing initiatives. Particularly, 77.2% engaging in peer education sessions, 60% in stress management workshops, 41.1% in meditation sessions, and 34.5% in group counselling sessions.

Participation in various initiatives

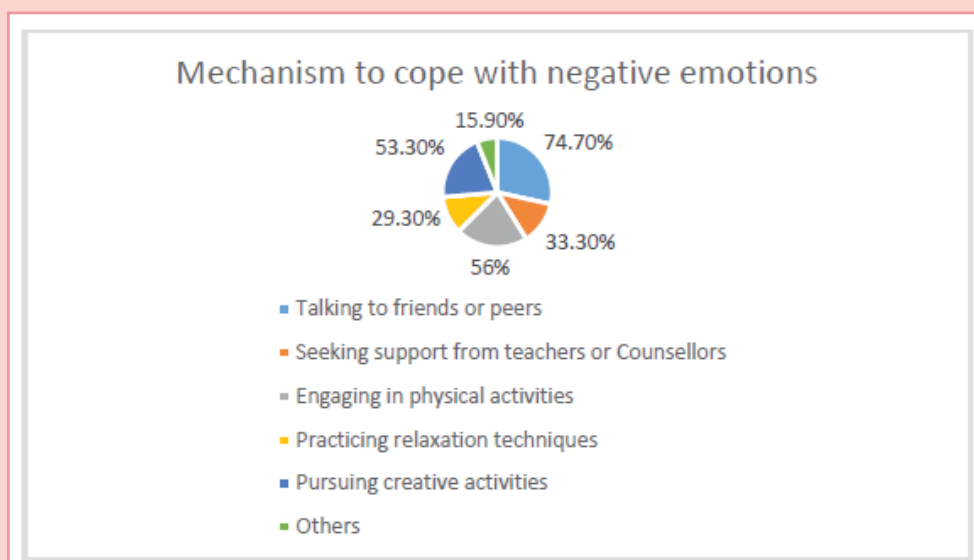


(Figure 8): Students participation in various initiatives

9. **Mechanism used to cope with negative emotions**

The data underscores that a considerable portion of students employ various coping mechanisms for dealing with negative emotions. Specifically, 74.70% choose to confide in friends, 56% opt for physical activities, 53.30% engage in creative pursuits, 33.3% seek support from teachers and counsellors, and 29.30% practice relaxation techniques to manage their negative emotions.

Mechanism to cope with negative emotions



Talking to friends or peers Seeking support from teachers or Counsellors Engaging in physical activities
Practicing relaxation techniques Pursuing creative activities Others

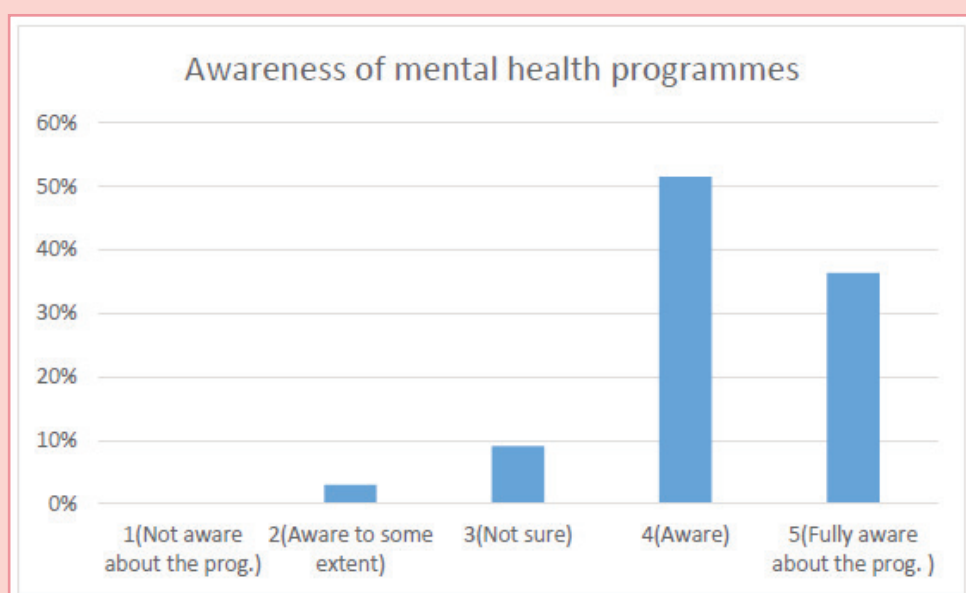
(Figure 9): Students mechanism to cope with negative emotions

Quantitative Data Analysis (Educators)- Key findings

10. Awareness of mental health programmes

51% of the teachers reported being aware of the various mental health initiatives and programs offered by the school, with 36.4% stating they were fully informed about these initiatives.

Awareness of mental health programmes

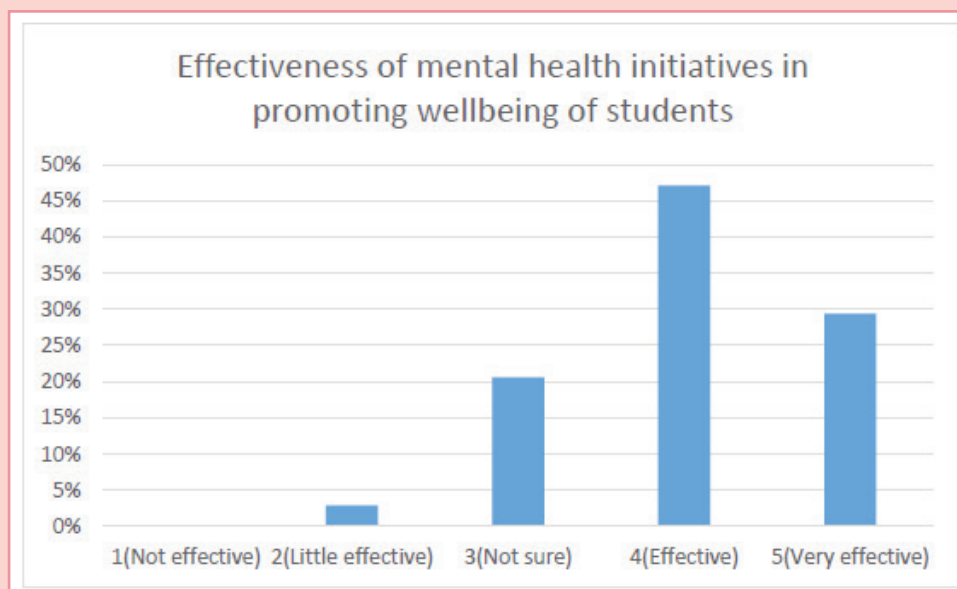


(Figure 10): Teachers' awareness level of various mental health programmes

11. Effectiveness of mental health initiatives in promoting wellbeing of students

The data indicates that 47.1% of teachers perceive the current mental health initiatives and programs to be effective in promoting the well-being of students, while 29.4% perceive them to be very effective. Additionally, 20.6% hold a neutral stance regarding the effectiveness of these initiatives.

Effectiveness of mental health initiatives in promoting wellbeing of students



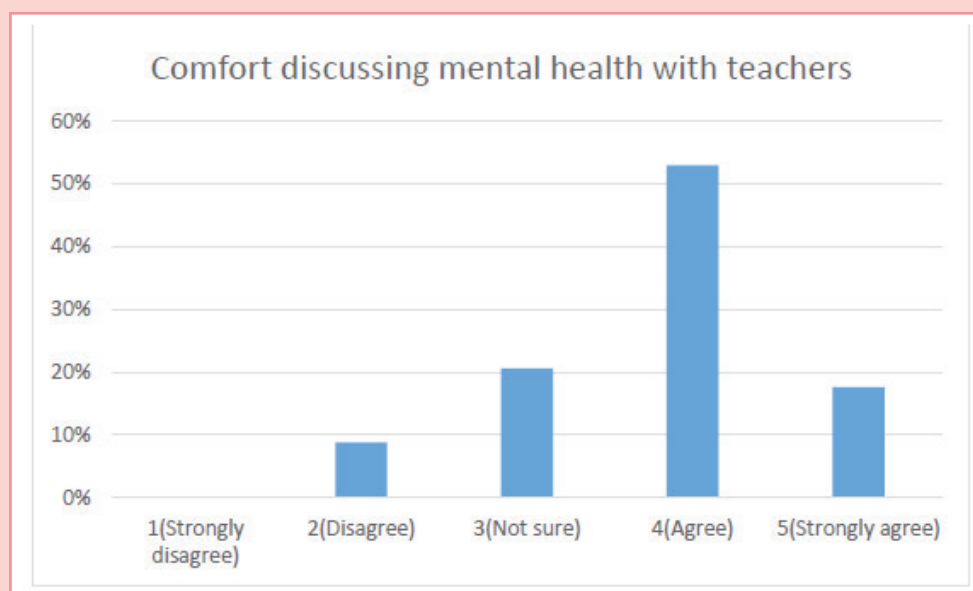
1 (Not effective) 2 (Little effective) 3 (Not sure) 4 (Effective) 5 (Very effective)

(Figure 11): Teachers' perception of effectiveness of initiatives in wellbeing of students

12. Comfort discussing mental health with teachers

The data indicates that 52% of teachers perceive that students at Salwan Public School feel comfortable discussing their mental health concerns with them or other school staff. Additionally, 17.6% strongly agree with this perception, and 20.6% hold a neutral stance.

Comfort discussing mental health with teachers



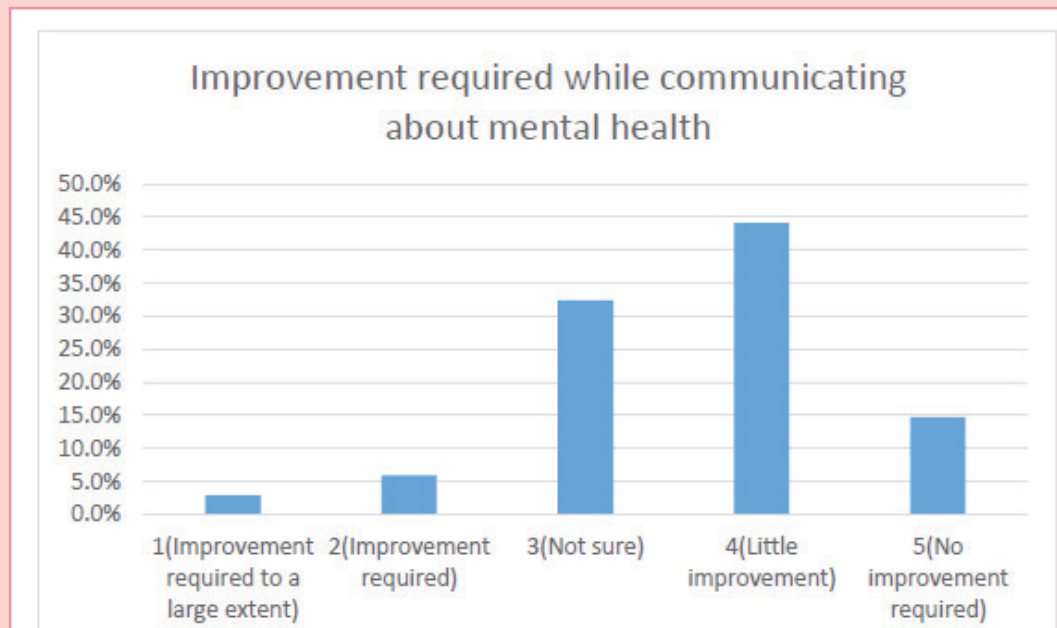
1 (Strongly disagree) 2 (Disagree) 3 (Not sure) 4 (Agree) 5 (Strongly agree)

(Figure 12): Teachers' perception of students' discussing comfortably with teachers

13. Improvement required while communicating about mental health

The data suggests that 41.1% of teachers feel that very little improvement is required in the way mental health initiatives are communicated to students and teachers within the school. Additionally, 14.7% perceived that no improvement is required, and 32.4% hold a neutral stance on this matter.

Improvement required while communicating about mental health



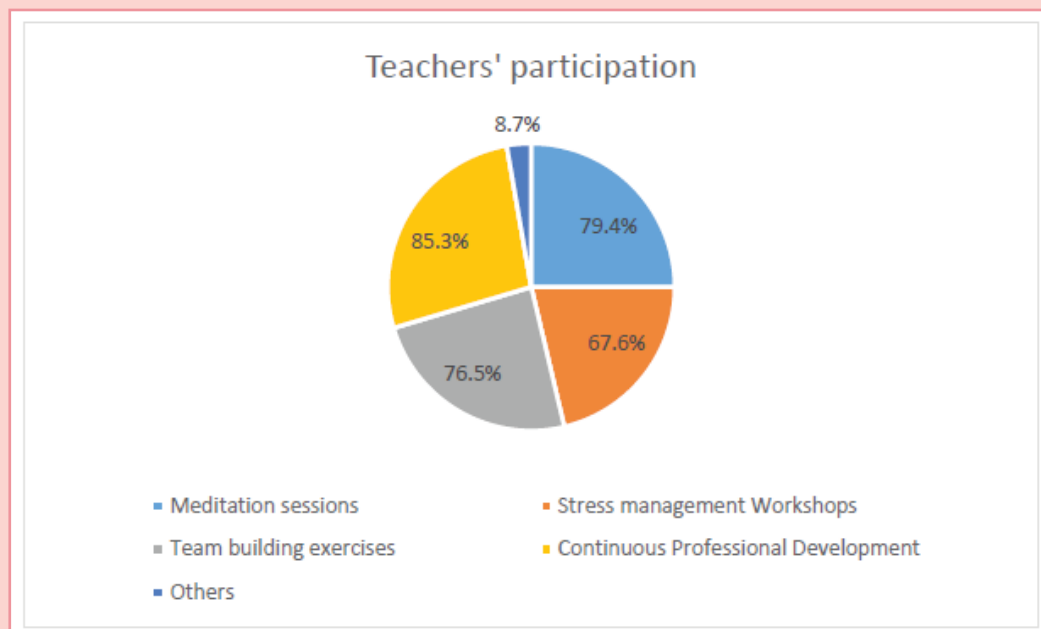
(Figure 13): Teachers' perception of improvement required in

14. Participation in different mental health initiatives communication about mental health

14. Teachers Participation in different initiatives

The data underscores a high level of engagement by educators in various initiatives: 85.3% in continuous professional development sessions, 79.4% in meditation sessions, 76.5% in team building exercises, and 67.6% in stress management workshops.

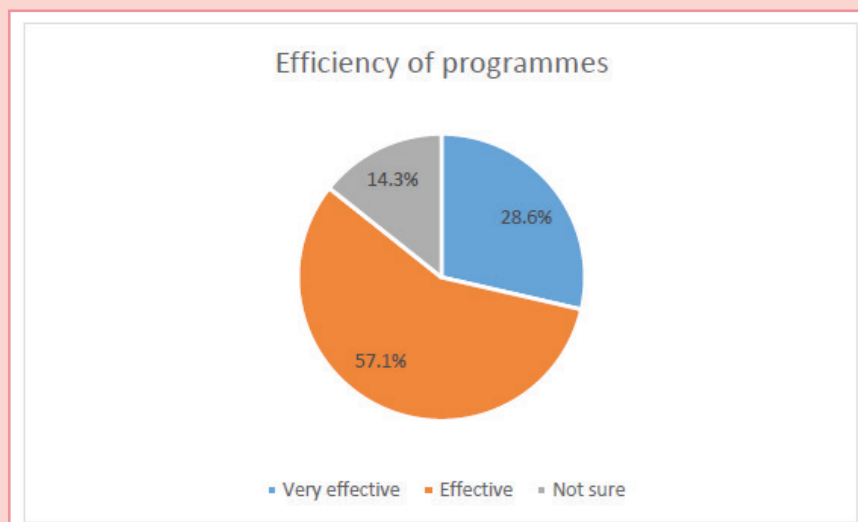
Teachers' participation



(Figure 14): Teachers' awareness level of various mental health programmes

Meditation sessions Stress management Workshops Team building exercises Continuous Professional Development Others

15. Efficiency of Continuous Development programmes Efficiency of programmes



(Figure 15): Teachers' perception of efficiency of programmes

Qualitative Data Analysis Insights From Interviews

All In Depth Interviews (IDIs) were audio recorded (with prior consent) and fully transcribed and translated. We first familiarized ourselves with the data through reading and organizing, followed by coding and creating categories. By analysing the categories, we divided the data into broader thematic levels, developing additional matrices and conceptual models to describe key findings.

Improvements or additional initiatives related to mental health

Respondents expressed a desire for more mental health workshops focusing on coping skills and resilience-building. Students also suggested increased bonding between teachers and students and more group counselling /Life skills sessions to be initiated. Teachers highlighted shyness and social stigma as major barriers which inhibit students discussing mental health.

Nearly all teachers and students from Salwan School opined that schools should have a role in addressing students' mental health. Many teachers described their responsibility for the overall wellbeing and development of students beyond their academics. One teacher remarked, "Teachers play an important role in mental health of children, as children are not same. We need to cater to the different needs of students (male teacher)

All research participants suggested teachers need to have a positive relationship and good communication with their students.

Enhancing Communication of Mental Health Resources:

Participants indicated that Tuesday school assemblies can be utilised to inform the stakeholders informing about available mental health resources. Others felt that the school uses effective channels to communicate information about mental health initiatives to students.

"One student remarked that the peer educators start making announcements on the PA system week before the events. We get timely information".

"The school should inform by putting information on the display boards" (student) **Addressing Emotional Well-being Challenges:**

Respondents mentioned academic pressure, lack of motivation, anger issues and peer pressure as significant stressors affecting emotional wellbeing.

"Students feel shy to speak their problems with teachers. Openness is created by the good teacher. The good teacher will always encourage the students to speak in ease they are going through stress and trauma". (Male teacher)

"So many times, we are unable to regulate our emotions, it becomes a stress and affects our mental health" (student)

Successful Mental Health Initiatives

Peer Education workshops emerged as the most effective initiative, establishing a safe platform for open communication about mental health. Concurrently, teachers highlighted meditation and stress management sessions as highly beneficial initiatives. Given the observed success, expanding and promoting Peer Education programs, as well as enhancing the accessibility of meditation and stress management sessions, stands out as a highly impactful strategy.

“I feel that if a child gets learning from a peer student, without pushing, the child feels no body is forcing him. When students are guided by peers, they understand faster and puts things into practice.” (teacher)

“I benefit a lot from the weekly meditations, it relaxes me and I am able concentrate on the things. I look forward for the meditation sessions” (Female teacher).

Discussion: The study emphasises on the effectiveness of mental health initiatives within Salwan Public School. Initiatives like peer education programs, stress management workshops, and continuous professional development for educators have demonstrated positive outcomes. Students and teachers reported improved well-being and better stress management, emphasizing the importance of such initiatives. Understanding the perceptions of students and teachers is crucial. The study reveals a generally positive perception regarding mental health initiatives. This alignment in perception can contribute to a conducive environment where both students and educators are on the same page regarding the significance of mental health support. Addressing barriers like stigma associated with seeking help is pivotal. While a significant portion of students felt there was no stigma, it's essential to address the rest to ensure all students can comfortably access mental health support. The study identifies these barriers, highlighting the need for targeted interventions. Prior studies suggest that a prevalent obstacle to the successful implementation of evidence-based mental health interventions is the presence of “competing priorities within schools,” such as academic instruction or testing (Eiraldi et al., 2015). A school based mental health intervention study in Kenya found, for example, that teachers prioritised exam preparation over other non-academic activities. This prioritisation acted as a barrier to intervention attendance (Meza et al., 2020).

Active engagement in extracurricular activities for emotional well-being signifies a holistic approach. The study reveals a substantial majority, of students, engage in extracurricular activities or hobbies for emotional well-being. This is a positive indication, suggesting that a significant portion of students recognize the importance of such activities in managing their emotions and maintaining mental well-being. Prior studies found out that academic grades were highest in adolescents involved in structured extra-curricular activities. (Pol, S. D., & Prakash, A. (2023), Engagement of structured extra-curricular activities: A preventive measure for technology addiction in adolescents)

Educators play a vital role in promoting mental health. The study shows that continuous development programs and team building activities significantly equip educators to provide effective support. Investing in these programs can have a lasting impact on students' well-being and academic success. Continuing teacher education programmes to promote a broader vision of education and underline the value, benefits and meaningfulness of mental health and wellbeing for young people, underlining both academic, and social and emotional benefits (Cefai & Cavioni, 2014; Diamond, 2010).

The study provides valuable suggestions for improvement, such as enhancing communication about mental health initiatives. Implementing these suggestions can bridge any existing gaps and create a more inclusive and accessible support system. Integrating mental health programs into the school curriculum can ensure a consistent and structured approach. It offers a proactive way to instil awareness and understanding of mental health from an early age, promoting a long-term positive impact. Tailoring support mechanisms to address academic stress and fostering a culture of open dialogue about social emotional learning may mitigate emotional challenges. Social and emotional learning promotion provides a foundation for effective learning and academic success (Adelman & Taylor, 2009). It facilitates the acquisition of valuable skills such as regulating emotions, managing emotional distress, coping with classroom demands and frustration, improving problem-solving abilities, developing healthy relationships, and promoting collaborative

teamwork. In a meta-analysis encompassing over 200 studies, Durlak et al. (2011) reported that students participating in universal social and emotional learning programs scored significantly higher on standardized achievement tests compared to peers who did not participate in such programs. Comparing the findings with existing research showcases the uniqueness and effectiveness of the initiatives at Salwan Public School. It's essential to understand how these initiatives stand out and what lessons can be shared with the broader academic community. The study's findings highlight the transformative impact mental health initiatives have within Salwan Public School. By fostering a culture of well-being and support, the school sets an example for others to follow, ultimately contributing to a healthier and more productive educational environment. Continued dedication to mental health initiatives is essential for the holistic growth of students and educators alike.

Conclusion : The research highlights the significance of mental health initiatives with the school. The positive impact observed emphasises the need for sustained efforts, fostering a culture of well-being and support in educational institutions. The study advocates for ongoing evaluation, integration of initiatives into the curriculum, and targeted improvements to create an inclusive and nurturing environment, ultimately ensuring the holistic growth and success of students. Based on the findings, it is recommended to implement a structured mental health education program that is integrated within the school curriculum. It will be useful to expand and promote peer support programs which foster a sense of belongingness and provide students with a confidante. Conducting regular awareness campaigns on reducing stigma and seeking help, promoting work life balance for teachers and students are other identified areas of focus.

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Nullifying the Negatives A Proven Coping Mechanism

Mrs Sampa makes it a point to sit down with her daughter every evening for some time and play the game of "Nullifying the Negatives..." a game which she has curated over time to use as a tool for grooming her daughter's mental and emotional health. This has been working wonderfully well in the family for quite some time now. As part of the game, both of them would share some incident from the happening of the day that brought some kind of negative vibe to them. The incident might have happened with either of them or with someone whom they know. It could even be a piece of news that affected them negatively. The discussion would start with the characters involved- would move on to the story or the gist of the incident and would end with the impact left on them. Thereafter, Mrs Sampa, a professional counsellor working in a school, would discuss the incident with different perspectives and would finally teach her daughter how to handle the stress coming out from the situation. She would finally give her some life lessons about 'nullifying such negatives' in every possible walk of her life.

One such example was of a girl called Sohini, in Kota who is preparing for her IIT JEE Entrance and lives with her parents there. Being in the web of coaching crusaders, she often hears about unfortunate 'ends'

that some desperate and students, in despair choose, which of course touched her mind and heart but she knows that she has a 'venting point' at the day end when she would sit down with her mother to play the miracle game of 'nullifying the negatives' when she would discuss this piece of disturbing news with her mother and would finally go to sleep stress-free as always.

This is not just a mere example. It is happening even today somewhere in an apartment in Kota when I write these lines. When I met the family recently and came to know about the tremendous positivity the family lives with, I was extremely impressed. Coping with the stress of competition and the unknown outcome thereafter is a major challenge before our youngsters these days. To understand this in slightly more detail, we need to dig deeper into the root of this 'stress'.

Paradoxically, whether a student is of so-called A-Grade or of B-Grade, the amount of stress or its exterminating nature doesn't change. If one is ambitious and capable of faring well in exams, studies, competitions and similar other academic initiatives, one subtly gets into the pang of the stress of 'anticipated loss of position'. Once there, one doesn't want to come down and this keeps one forever under duress resulting in a surly stress. Contrary to this, if one is ambitious but is not capable of doing what he aspires to, certainly, one is in an immediately notice-worthy state. Then there is this ever-mounting impact of social media influence and digital media blizzard on the forever-occupied brains of the youngsters – none is left out from its vile virus.

Well, the question is, what can we do to make the 'educational tutorials' of our education system 'hang-free'?

How can we make our student-force capable enough to cope with the dreadful stress they are always in?

I would like to discuss here some of the possible solutions that I keep sharing with parents and students during my sessions on 'Stress-free Student-life' and 'Championing Parenting' -

Instead of focussing too much on 'what I am not able to', shift to 'what I have been, so far, able to'. This immediately brings in a positive wave and a fabulous energy to the mind which acts as the launch-pad for your next leap. As teachers, we



must always mentor our students with this kind of a perspective. It's better always to realise 'what I have' than 'what I might lose'.

Celebrating the microcosms of success one should give a fair dose of flirt at every small success, victory, completion -howsoever tiny or insignificant it might appear to be. Life itself is a celebration. Every small completion must get due recognition in your life. So, the next completion of the assignment on time, understand a gnawing concept of calculus well, you get a consolation prize in a debate ... Celebrate! Celebrate! Celebrate! These small pebbles are bridging the pool to success- do not ignore them.

The Ledgers of Emotions make people feel worried, afraid, happy, confused, confident, strong, weak, included, abandoned, defeated, victorious, laid back, hyper-kinetic – all these are precious sets of your mind. These are the small cells of mind that make one 'human'. These ledger accounts certainly provide for excellent fodder for the brain's reflective introspection at a later stage somewhere sometime when one feels low and needs to cope with this emotional ebb. To fight this ebb one needs to embrace 'Love Laughter & Music' as it is an effortful exercise but humour is a way of life. By asking - "Why can't I be a little not-so-serious about things that bring worries to me"? Worrying too much doesn't take us anywhere. We simply sink into the quicksand of fallacy. We must preach to our students to find a reason to laugh. We must teach them the power of humour and ease of life. We must put them in the habit of listening to music if not actively taking up one as a hobby. This certainly removes our students' stickiness to books, coaching, tests, assessments, comparisons, charts going up and ranks falling down etc. They tend to realise that life is not worth losing on the trifles of some boring ranks and marks.

Adopting Realistic goals & problem-solving attitude, one should take up 'IDEAL' is a proven and popular practice which means Identify – Define – Explore – Act – Look back. This invariably teaches us to identify the problems first in smaller parts and connect them with our potential and resources available.

Ascribing aspirations or antithesis to children by over-apprehensive parents is a bigger issue than

students not being able to cope with falls and failures. It is the stigma that is attached to a growing child in a family, a student in the class, a youth of this progressive nation that hinders his/her pace to thrive. We must very effectively discontinue this practice of attaching quality to our children's free-fly or free-fall. They must be given ample space and opportunity to flourish the way they desire to.

The process of evaluation should not be limited only to adding up marks and ascertaining ranks and positions. The New Education Policy very aggressively advocates holistic growth of children at schools. The schools, since the early childhood care level, should very carefully curate such an evaluation system that maps the child's growth not only on academic parameters but also on his/her overall personality development. The education systems of developed countries focus not only on producing scholars but better and able individuals.

Curriculum of schools should be so developed as not to measure but to major. Meaning, equal emphasis needs to be given to all facets of development, viz., cognitive, sensorial, operational, reasoning and behavioural. A perfect balance among these acts like a balanced diet for the child's mental and physical growth to become resilient, confident, strong, vivid and sensible. The mindset of the youth needs to go out from the barriers of 'comparatives', every comparison will bring one party below the other. Is that the goal of our education system? This, certainly, is one of the biggest reasons for hundreds of young aspirants embracing untimely and fateful destiny for themselves!

If, from the very beginning of a student's journey, a family – a school – a society is thoughtful about building up such a societal eco-system that no one is put to judgements or labels of highs or lows, probably a much healthier education system and knowledge bonhomie will prevail. There will be no rat run for even more holes reaching nowhere. Much of this envisioned practice has to begin from our homes. A creed of mindset and community influence do influence a system's policy making postulates. Good times will prevail. The plethora of tutorials will certainly come out of its vices and for that sake, the 'Kotas' in our minds and in our children's dreams will soon get demolished by the 21st century civilisation by its determined efforts.

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Socio-Emotional Learning in Schools: A Practitioner's Perspective

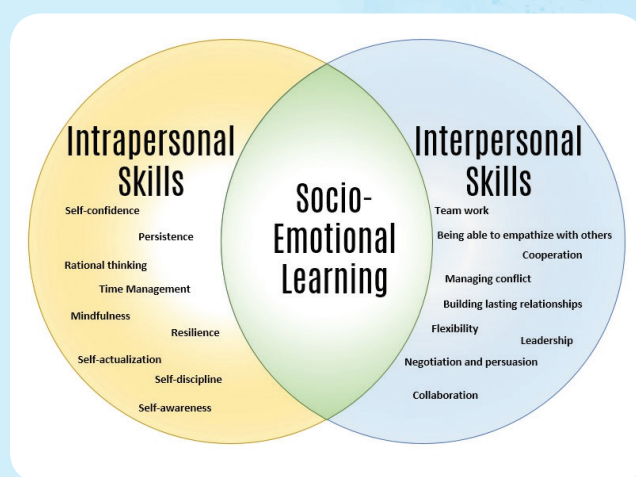
Aristotle's ageless wisdom, "Educating the mind without educating the heart is no education at all," exemplifies the perennial relevance of socio-emotional learning (SEL) in schools. Undoubtedly, SEL has been a fundamental and elemental aspect of education and human development for centuries, and almost all would agree that the post-COVID era and the increasing use of digital devices have amplified the need and importance of SEL in schools. Educators all over feel the relevance of SEL in educational institutions is more than ever before. In this age of information technology, teacher training in socio-emotional learning has become pivotal for fostering the holistic development of students. While students can get all the information at the click of a mouse, the school ecosystem provides the right setting and requisite circumstances for SEL among students. The co-scholastic domains of education and the active learning strategies in scholastic domains facilitate SEL among students to a large extent.

According to NEP (5.14), "Teachers will be given more autonomy in choosing aspects of pedagogy, so that they may teach in the manner they find most effective for the students in their classrooms. Teachers will also focus on socio-emotional learning - a critical aspect of any student's holistic development. Teachers will be recognized for novel approaches to teaching that will improve learning outcomes in their classrooms."

Socio-emotional learning includes the intricate and synergistic relationship between the intrapersonal and interpersonal skills of students and their coupled impact on student's social interactions, emotional intelligence, and overall well-being. Schools should take up SEL as a comprehensive approach that involves the integration of cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains in pedagogy, aiming to help students achieve enhanced learning outcomes. Intrapersonal skills are vital as they are the building blocks of self-awareness and personal growth of the student. Students with strong intrapersonal skills exhibit greater self-confidence, unrelenting persistence, and forthrightness to be rational thinkers who adapt well to changes and new ideas. Students with good interpersonal skills possess the ability to overcome distractions and possess greater resilience and self-discipline. They succeed because of the inherent ability of effective time management. These skills empower students

to navigate their own emotions and make informed decisions, ultimately leading to personal growth and self-actualization.

Interpersonal skills are a keynote of socio-emotional learning, as they dictate how students interact with others and navigate the complexities of human relationships with ease. Participation in projects that involve teamwork, responsibility, flexibility, and dependability foster interpersonal skills among students. STEAM projects with a diverse group of students enable them to develop healthy, supportive connections with their peers and facilitate an inclusive and collaborative learning environment.



It is for 21st-century educators to know that the unique interplay between intrapersonal and interpersonal skills forms the core of socio-emotional learning in schools. When students attain maturity in both sets of skills, they become adept at understanding their own emotions, empathizing with others, and effectively managing their interactions in the community. This equips them with the emotions necessary to thrive in school, college and in life beyond the walls of the classroom. The soft skills that students develop in school metamorphose them into successful individuals in the workplace and life in the future.

As educators, we must realize the influence of emotions on the learning process. Positive emotions in the classroom play a pivotal role in enhancing students' learning experiences. They not only motivate students but also improve collaboration among peers. Furthermore, they are vital for helping students tackle complex and challenging concepts, as some level of stress can be considered necessary for meaningful learning experiences.



The young generation needs to understand the key components of the SEL which lays emphasis on 'self reflection' to develop interpersonal skills. This will help the children handle emotions in harmony with others. There are times when one looks at unexpected behaviour as the tip of an iceberg. Understanding that unexpected or challenging behaviour may be a manifestation of deeper emotional or personal issues. This evaluation can help educators address the root causes of any problem and provide appropriate support.

Faster responding rather than reacting: Teaching students the importance of responding thoughtfully to situations rather than reacting impulsively can enhance their emotional intelligence and decision-making skills.

Resilience is a crucial intrapersonal skill that enables students to bounce back from adversity. Schools should incorporate activities and strategies that help students build resilience and cope with challenges effectively. This can be done by designing impactful learning experiences. Creating engaging and

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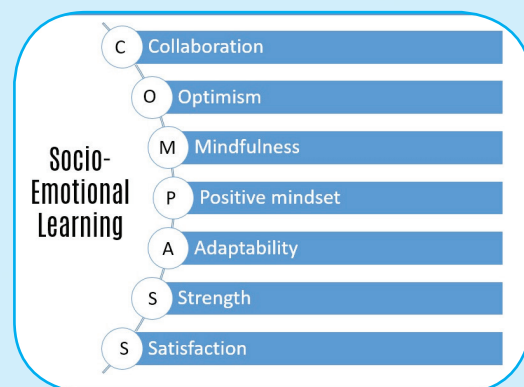
meaningful learning experiences tailored to the emotional needs and developmental stages of students can thus enhance emotional intelligence.

Collaborative projects involving diverse groups of students to work on real-world scenarios foster a sense of inclusivity and compassion among students.

Another important fact is recognizing students' behaviour as a form of communication allows educators to better understand their needs and emotions, leading to more effective support and guidance.

Making students empathetic can help each other connect on a deeper level, resolve conflicts more effectively, and contribute positively to their communities.

In conclusion it may be said that presenting the acronym COMPASS as a memorable guide for educators must be followed in school. The acronym COMPASS stands for emphasizing the importance of Collaboration, Optimism, Mindfulness, Positive Mindset, Adaptability, Strength, and Satisfaction and hopes that educators will keep this in mind while imparting SEL to students.



The interplay between intrapersonal and interpersonal skills serves as the foundation upon which socio-emotional learning is built. The overarching goal of socio-emotional learning is to ensure high-quality and equitable education for all students. The readers would agree that socio-emotional learning is a dynamic and vital aspect of education and holds the potential to shape students into well-rounded individuals who are emotionally intelligent, socially adept, and empathetic global citizens. An honest commitment to fostering SEL skills can create an environment where the heart and mind is equally nourished, ensuring that students are not only academically successful but also emotionally and socially empowered to face the challenges of the modern world.

Transformative Self-Care: Dive into Learning Experience

Navigating the labyrinth of academic demands, assignments, and social pressures can turn a student's journey through the educational system into a whirlwind. In this fast-paced environment, the importance of self-care cannot be overstated. Recognizing this, consistently embracing of self-care as a crucial aspect, actively fosters an environment that encourages holistic well-being among students. Self-care, encompassing physical, mental and emotional well-being, goes beyond occasional breaks or weekend getaways.

Meditation serves as a holistic process, not only amplifying focus and concentration but, more significantly, enhancing self-awareness regarding one's physiological activity. This facilitates the regulation of one's body and emotions, especially during emotional states like aggression and frustration. Meditation practices make it effortless for individuals to maintain calmness during heightened emotional states.

The educators have wholeheartedly adopted these practices, extending them beyond students to include teachers. Incorporating meditation into the routine not merely as a practice but as an integral part of a regular lifestyle for both students and educators alike is the need of the hour.

Yoga is also yet another repose through which mental health can be nurtured. Fostering a harmonious balance between mind and body often benefits beyond physical fitness. This practice enhances flexibility, strength and balance. Crucially, yoga serves as a powerful tool to manage stress and anxiety, prevalent challenges in the academic environment. Expanding the scope of yoga as a subject in higher senior secondary classes, empower students with the autonomy to progress in their careers while embracing mental health fitness as an integral part of their lifestyles.

This academic approach to yoga not only acknowledges its importance but also cultivates qualities like discipline, self-control, and concentration, contributing not only to academic success but also to lifelong skills for personal growth and resilience.

To furnish teachers with the tools and skills required to evolve into 'Heartful educators', integrating empathetic practices that facilitate personal connections with students and make a positive impact on their lives is created. The practice to involve heartful educators equips meaningful impacts in the lives of the students. Students benefit from having well-adjusted role models to look up to, fostering a smoother flow of conversation and problem-solving among them.



Life skills classes are a dedicated effort to authentically instill essential skills in students. Within these sessions, student emotions are explored, and open discussions unfold regarding the potential causes behind these emotions. The inclusion of activities and role-playing serves as an experiential reflection, allowing them to gain empathy and a greater understanding of their emotions and those of others by stepping into various roles and scenarios. Through these discussions, students gain insight into the range of human emotions and learn how to regulate and express their feelings constructively.

The life skills curriculum covers various crucial areas, including personal boundaries, bullying awareness, digital literacy, and understanding one's body. The incorporation of experiential elements such as role play fosters empathy and understanding, reinforcing interpersonal relationships among students. Additionally, students develop a deeper connection with themselves, as these sessions encourage self-reflection and self-awareness. This holistic approach ensures that students not only excel academically but also develop resilience, empathy, and the ability to make informed choices in various aspects of their lives.

The creation of a supportive space for open communication ensures that students feel heard and understood, promoting a sense of belonging within the school community. This educational component equips students with the tools to build resilience, develop coping strategies, and gain profound insights into their own behavioral patterns. Complementing individual sessions, group counseling fosters a sense

of community, providing students with shared experiences and collective support.

In parallel, special educators play a vital role in ensuring that every student receives personalized attention and tailored learning strategies to navigate academic difficulties effectively. The special educator works closely with students facing challenges, providing targeted interventions that cater to their unique learning needs. Through individualized support, these professionals create a supportive and inclusive learning environment. They employ diverse teaching methods, adapting to different learning styles and pace, fostering an atmosphere where every student can thrive academically and holistically.

Instilling suitable life skills such as teamwork and leadership, fosters resilience and a sense of camaraderie. Through these initiatives, one aims to cultivate academic excellence and empower students with lifelong habits that contribute to their overall health and success.

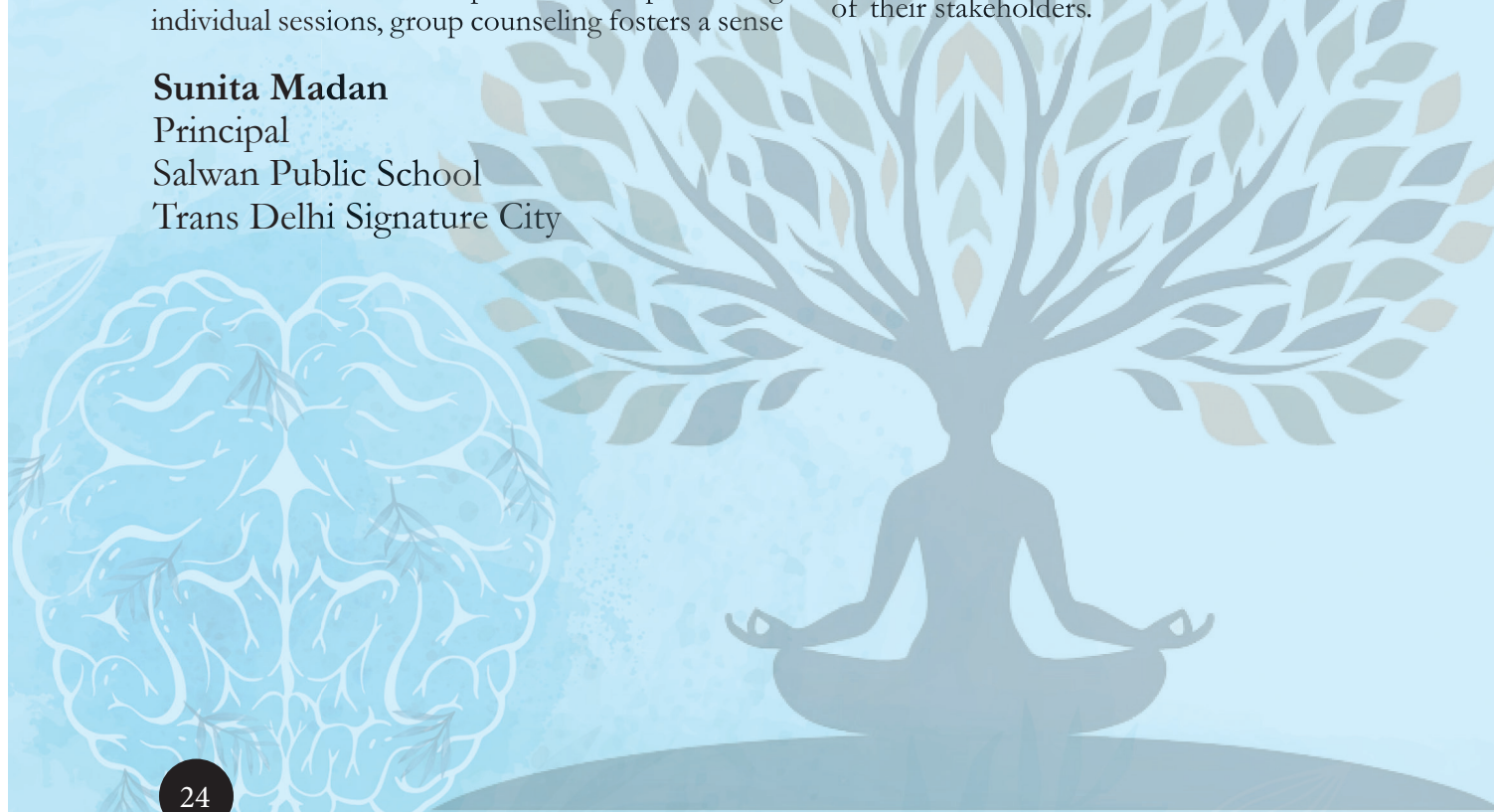
The commitment to self-care initiatives demonstrates a holistic approach to education that goes beyond academic excellence. By prioritizing the well-being of students and educators across various dimensions, the trust contributes to the development of resilient, emotionally intelligent, and well-rounded individuals prepared for the challenges and opportunities that life may present. This proactive stance on self-care sets a commendable standard for educational institutions striving to create environments that prioritize the mental, emotional, and physical health of their stakeholders.

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It's True that Physical Health Impacts the Mental Health

In the fast-paced world of academia and ambiguity, the symbiotic relationship between physical and mental health is undeniable. For both students and teachers, maintaining a sound physical well-being is not just about physical fitness—it a key player in the realm of mental wellness.

When students engage in regular physical activities and sports/meditation, they are not just sculpting their bodies but they are also crafting resilient minds. Exercise stimulates the release of endorphins, those delightful neurotransmitters that act as natural mood lifters. In the midst of demanding exams and deadlines, a brisk walk or a quick workout session can be a game-changer. Enhancing focus and reducing stress ultimately leads them to mindfulness.

Teachers, often carrying the weight of multiple responsibilities, are no strangers to stress. Regular exercise becomes a lifeline schedule, helping them manage the pressures of lesson planning, grading, and classroom dynamics. The physiological benefits of exercise can contribute to increased energy levels, making it easier for educators to navigate the demanding academic landscape. Sedentary lifestyles, prevalent in the academic setting, are main culprits for conditions like anxiety and depression. Students glued to desks for prolonged periods and teachers spending extended hours in classrooms without movement may unknowingly be compromising their mental well-being.

The importance of nutrition in this equation cannot be overlooked. For students, the link between a balanced diet and cognitive function is profound. Essential nutrients fuel the brain, influencing memory, concentration, and overall cognitive abilities. Similarly, teachers benefit from maintaining a nutritious diet to sustain their mental acuity throughout the school day.

Moreover quality sleep is a linchpin for memory consolidation, emotional regulation, and stress management. In the interconnected ecosystem of a school, fostering physical health is solitary endeavour. School policies, infrastructure, and

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support systems must align to create an environment conducive to well-being. Physical education programs, recreational spaces, and initiatives promoting healthy habits can make a substantial difference in the lives of students and teachers alike. It is important to understand the significance of the formative years in a child & life and the essential nutritional requirements during this crucial period. Prioritizing a holistic approach to education, incorporating dedicated time for focussed activities, such as open and indoor games, aerobics, zumba, karate, yoga and various other activities need to be imbibed in the curriculum today.

To emphasize the emotional health of students, a well curated syllabus known as 'Chetna' will define a better understanding. This program addresses the various changes, both physical and emotional, that young learners must know about the concept of safe and unsafe touch, creating a safe environment for their development.

To address the challenges, personalized one-to-one interaction and group sessions facilitated by trained counsellors and pastoral guides is a step that nurtures mental well being and thus aims in supporting students to overcome difficulties. The Parent Orientation Program at the beginning of each session and scheduling regular meetings throughout the year, with parents to freely discuss any concern regarding their children is a helping tool in enhancing mental well-being.

Emotionally, a secure and safe environment fosters a sense of trust and confidence, allowing the child to explore and develop a positive self-image.

In conclusion, the nexus between physical and mental health is a dynamic force shaping the educational landscape. Recognizing the profound impact of physical well-being on mental resilience is essential for creating a thriving academic community. From the classroom to the staff room, prioritizing health lays the foundation for a vibrant, resilient, and harmonious educational environment.

Sculpting the Mind Through Stillness: Mastering Meditation

Mindfulness, beyond being a therapeutic practice, can be viewed as an art form in itself. Just as an artist meticulously crafts a masterpiece, individuals engaging in mindfulness sculpt the canvas of their mind with intention and attention. The artistry lies in the deliberate cognizance, where each breath, thought and sensation becomes a brushstroke on the canvas of consciousness. The mindful practitioner learns to observe without judgment, embracing the transience of thoughts and emotions. This unique artistry involves creating a balance, where the cacophony of anxieties metamorphoses into an aesthetic creation of peace and harmony. It is the delicate interplay of focus, patience and self-love that elevates mindfulness to the highest art form, inviting individuals to paint the landscape of their inner self with self-actualization.

Mindfulness, a cognitive mettle, involves the art of maintaining a meta-awareness of the present existence within one's mind. This skill is harvested through practices such as meditation, focused breathing, and yoga. Positioned as a nuanced strategy, mindfulness emerges as a counterpoint to

both avoidance of emotions and the perilous path of emotional over-engagement.

In essence, it serves as a transformative tool, providing a means to foster self-awareness regarding our thoughts and emotions. Rather than succumbing to overwhelming emotions arising out of our existing conditions, mindfulness empowers individuals with the capacity to effectively manage and manoeuvre the intricacies of their mental domain.

Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) emerges as a refined and standardized conduct, reconciling the art of meditation to alleviate burdens of stress in the lives of otherwise physically healthy individuals. Beyond its initial purpose, the merit of MBSR has been discovered to encompass various depressive disorders, particularly in the student demographic. Its utility extends to mitigating specific sleep disturbances, especially during the demanding days of exams. In the expanse of drug addiction treatment among adolescents, mindfulness proves to be a complimentary tool. This practice has the potential to redefine one's encounter with desirable or undesirable experiences. Being mindful of one's reality serves as a preventive strategy to interrupt the progression of mental health issues.

Mindfulness, seamlessly stitched into the mantle of psychological therapies and stress reduction programs, is an exquisite fusion of meditative practices, rhythmic breathing exercises and gentle stretches. Enriched further by the incorporation of elements from

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, this potent alchemy serves as a zephyr, gently unraveling the intricate overlay of negative thought patterns inherent in recurrent depression.

Within the edifice of school education, the attainment of mindfulness is accomplished as a gradual journey, coherently interwoven into the curriculum. Techniques like Vipassana, conscious breathing, imagery exercises and meditation should become a part of pedagogy.

The beauty of this integration lies in its versatility, allowing mindfulness to be practiced effortlessly, anytime and anywhere, often without the awareness of the external stimuli. Empowering indeed is the



realization that one can assert control over reactions and emotions in any given situation, all the while maintaining an enigmatic appearance. Beyond breath awareness, practices such as body scanning, mindful walking, conscious eating and attentive listening offer additional avenues for embracing mindfulness. Establishing a consistent routine of mindfulness meditation can yield more profound effects. Neuroimaging studies reveal that engaging in regular meditation over an eight-week period brings about discernible alterations in the brain.

Schools have the opportunity to embrace mindfulness-based programs to tackle a spectrum of challenges, encompassing lifestyle diseases, obesity, diabetes, hypertension, academic and athletic performance, examination and assessment pressures, peer dynamics, adolescent issues, substance abuse, children with special needs and the ubiquitous overuse of technology.

Extending the scope of mindfulness programs, there's a valuable opportunity to implement them for the mental well-being of teachers, vital stakeholders in the education system. These can serve as a potent intervention in navigating challenges.

Delving deeper into mindfulness, its therapeutic benefits extend palpably to psychiatric disorders, offering a measured alleviation for individuals contending with psychosis. Acknowledging the pivotal role of rumination and worry in

contributing to various mental health challenges, the impact of mindfulness-based interventions must be acknowledged in fostering mental well-being among both students and teachers.

Moreover, the influence of mindfulness meditation on physical health becomes evident. The psychological inclination to repetitively dwell on stressful thoughts intensifies the physiological effects of stressors, perpetuating the activation of the sympathetic nervous system and the hypothalamus-pituitary-adrenal axis.

This chronic activation holds the potential to manifest in physical health-related clinical conditions. Meditation has the potential to alter these biological pathways, offering improved physical health.

The implications suggest that mindfulness practices may offer a promising gateway to enhanced physical well-being. In conclusion, the wisdom distilled from the journey of mindful living echoes the ultimate truth: to live life well. In the mastery of meditation, individuals discover the joy of living their lives with intention, awareness and resilience. It serves as a compass guiding through the ebb and flow of experiences, nurturing an understanding of self and the world.

The chorus of testimonials attests to the positive influence of mindfulness. It not only elevates emotional insight but also hones a tangible enhancement in cognitive functions.

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Embracing Mental Well-being in Educational Settings

Mental health is not just a buzzword; it is a fundamental aspect of who we are. It influences our thoughts, feelings, and how we navigate the world. Unfortunately, there is still a lot of confusion and stigma surrounding mental health that makes open conversations challenging. In this article, let's break down some myths, emphasize why mental health is crucial, and dive into the strategies that schools are using to create a positive and supportive mental health vibe.

Let's get real about mental health. It is not just about what is going on in our heads; it is about our emotions, thoughts, and how we connect with others. Addressing mental health is like tearing down walls of stereotypes and building a more inclusive and understanding community. After all, mental health is the key to leading fulfilling lives.

School is the place where minds are moulded. Educational institutions play a massive role in shaping the mental health landscape for students and staff alike. Imagine workshops, seminars, and campaigns spreading mental health awareness like wildfire. These initiatives provide information, resources, and a support network for everyone involved.

One thing we can't ignore is the need for safe spaces. Imagine the places where everyone feels comfortable discussing mental health without judgment. These spots encourage open dialogue, acceptance, and understanding. It is about breaking down barriers and making sure students and staff feel supported and heard.

Schools can be stressful sometimes. From exams to homework, it is undoubtedly a lot. So, we need to equip students, teachers, and parents with stress-busting skills. Deep breathing exercises, time management, and setting realistic goals are like mental health superheroes. By incorporating these strategies into the school curriculum, we can build resilience and coping mechanisms from day one. In addition to these, mindfulness and meditation serve as the superheroes of mental well-being. They help reduce stress, boost focus, and bring emotions under control. Simple mindfulness tricks, like quick meditation exercises and mindfulness breaks can be woven into our busy schedules, making it a part of our everyday lives.

Who knew that hitting the gym or grabbing a healthy snack could do wonders for our mental health? Exercise, good nutrition, and enough sleep are the unsung heroes of mental well-being. Schools can champion physical activity through sports programs, toss in some nutritional education, and remind everyone about the importance of a solid sleep routine.

We all love our screens, but let's admit it – too much screen time, especially on social media can get overwhelming. Schools can be the guides here—teaching students the importance of balance and providing guidelines for a healthy relationship with digital pals.

There is no denying the fact that life is full of challenges; Resilience is the superforce to face them head-on. Schools can weave resilience building strategies into the curriculum, empowering students and educators alike embrace a growth mindset, hone problem-solving skills, and learn from every stumble – that is the recipe for resilience.

Understanding and managing emotions is a big deal. Schools can integrate in the curriculum emotional intelligence education, helping everyone recognize and regulate their emotions. This little skill upgrade can enhance interpersonal relationships, making social situations a breeze.

Stress will always be a part of life, but we all have tricks up our sleeves to manage it. Think of journaling, diving into hobbies, and leaning on friends, family, or mental health professionals.

Who doesn't love a good self-care routine? Schools can shout from the rooftops about the importance of self-care. Whether it's catching enough Z's, munching on healthy treats, or sweating it out at the gym, self-care is the secret sauce to a happier school community.

When times get tough, it is relieving to know there is a helping hand. Schools can offer counselling services and mental health support systems, creating a heaven for those dealing with mental health challenges. Teaming up with external pros only makes the support system stronger.

Expressing ourselves creatively is like therapy for the soul. Schools can sprinkle creative activities

into the curriculum, letting students explore and communicate their emotions in non-verbal ways. Art, music, and writing become tools for a holistic mental health approach.

Parents are stake holders in their own right. Schools can loop them into the mental health mission, sharing information on recognizing signs of mental health issues and offering strategies to support their kids at home. It is a family affair for mental well-being!

Let's celebrate our differences! Schools can create an inclusive environment that respects diverse backgrounds. Understanding and respecting various cultures in mental health education ensures that everyone feels understood and supported.

Some students have unique challenges, and schools can be their champions. By tailoring strategies to

their needs, providing extra resources, and fostering a supportive environment, schools can address both learning and mental health concerns.

Imagine having a mentor or role model who embodies resilience, empathy, and healthy coping mechanisms. Schools can shine the spotlight on these positive role models, showing everyone that they are not alone on their mental health journey.

To conclude, nurturing mental health in schools is like tending to a beautiful garden. It takes a mix of strategies, a community effort, and a lot of heart. Let's keep the conversation going and make mental well-being a priority in our schools. After all, it is not just about grades and exams – it is about creating a community that values and prioritizes mental health for everyone.

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Principal

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Healing Hearts, Healing Minds: The Interconnectedness of Emotional Well-being

“Everything negative – pressure, challenges - is all an opportunity for me to rise” Kobe Bryant

Mental well being of children is the need of the hour. The world is changing at a fast pace and one needs to cope up with the changes and the challenges that come hand in hand with the advancement in society. It would not be wrong if we say that mental health of children is a newly developed concept which was perhaps overlooked a few decades back or maybe it was not really required. While many of you may disagree with me that mental well being of students was not really a major issue of concern as much as it is now, in this era of advancement of science and technology with a seasoning of AI in our day to day action. Childhood, a synonym for innocence and carefree life is no longer the same. Compared our childhood to the present day's child, actually, we were connected to the world in a different way sans social networking and media. The awareness quotient of the modern child vs the children of 60's, 70's... is miles apart. It may not sound appropriate but the over exposure due to advancement in technology has triggered the concern about mental well being of students, which is actually a harsh truth.

Earlier the social connections were limited to his relatives, school and colony friends or maybe some pen friends abroad compare this with today's child who is connected digitally to the world through social networking and overexposure. It would not be an overstatement that we are dealing with Gen Z or Netflix products, who have reached the levels of addiction to uncontrollable screen time, it is an alarming reality. The striking effects of technology on the minds of children that take their knowledge and intelligence to a much higher level can't be underestimated. But the other side of the picture is that it unknowingly leads to a matter of serious concern that puts a question mark on the Mental Health of the students. This eventually leads to uninvited stress where the child is unable to cope up with the unlimited commitments related to studies, games while taking out time to remain updated in peer family and online developed social connections. This matter can certainly not be ignored or undermined.

Here is where the **ROLE OF SCHOOL** becomes significantly important, as it initiates understanding and remediation through school based initiatives.

The foremost and most important role of school begins here, where the teacher plays a pivotal role. For resolving any issue a deep understanding of the root cause of any issue plays a major role. The teacher needs to be equipped with the necessary details of his/her students, their background, their strengths and weaknesses to actually enter the personal space of students and adopt an approach with keen empathy in order to reach out to them. Here, it becomes imperative to point out the strength/ number of students to be handled by a teacher should be small. The smaller the number, personalized will be the approach.

However, we cannot overlook the fact that this is a very far fetched statement that is not possible at a practical level. So what is the solution? One needs to emerge out of the constraints and limitations of curriculum and syllabus completion. Infact, the curriculum needs to be redefined so as to fit in activities that cover both syllabus completion and focusing on individual's growth and mental fitness.

The day to day activities should be designed in a manner that promote leadership and team building qualities. The inclusion of interdisciplinary tasks while integrating art and culture into the day to day activities not just keep the students involved but also enhance their awareness about their own self and the world around.

This, of course, requires constant in service training of teachers to update them with the latest techniques and strategies to deal with the modern day students.

One very convenient set up in the school where the teacher can establish a long lasting relationship with a personal touch is - the conventional procedure of creating Tutorial groups where small groups of students are assigned to teachers, where they adopt those students, meet them on a regular basis, and establish a real life connection. Here the students share their problems, open their heart to the teacher and vent out their hidden anxieties that remain within them which can be suffocating at times. What remains within and cannot find expression disturbs the mental health of students at later stages.

“There's nothing in a caterpillar that tells you it's going to be a butterfly.”- Buckminster Fuller

It is an unsaid fact that parents are the closest to our students but unfortunately they live in denial most of the time and are not ready to accept the weaknesses of their wards. The school counsellor can promote the involvement of parents in fostering mental health awareness and techniques to support their child's mental well being with the acceptance of facts related to their wards.

The role of school counsellor is very important in this present scenario. Both the parents and students need that aid from a well qualified counsellor. A caring, flexible, adaptable & patient counsellor plays a vital role in supporting students' academic career and personal development.

An individualized guidance to help navigate suitable career options & address their personal challenges becomes the effective role of a school counsellor.

Shabnam Ajmani

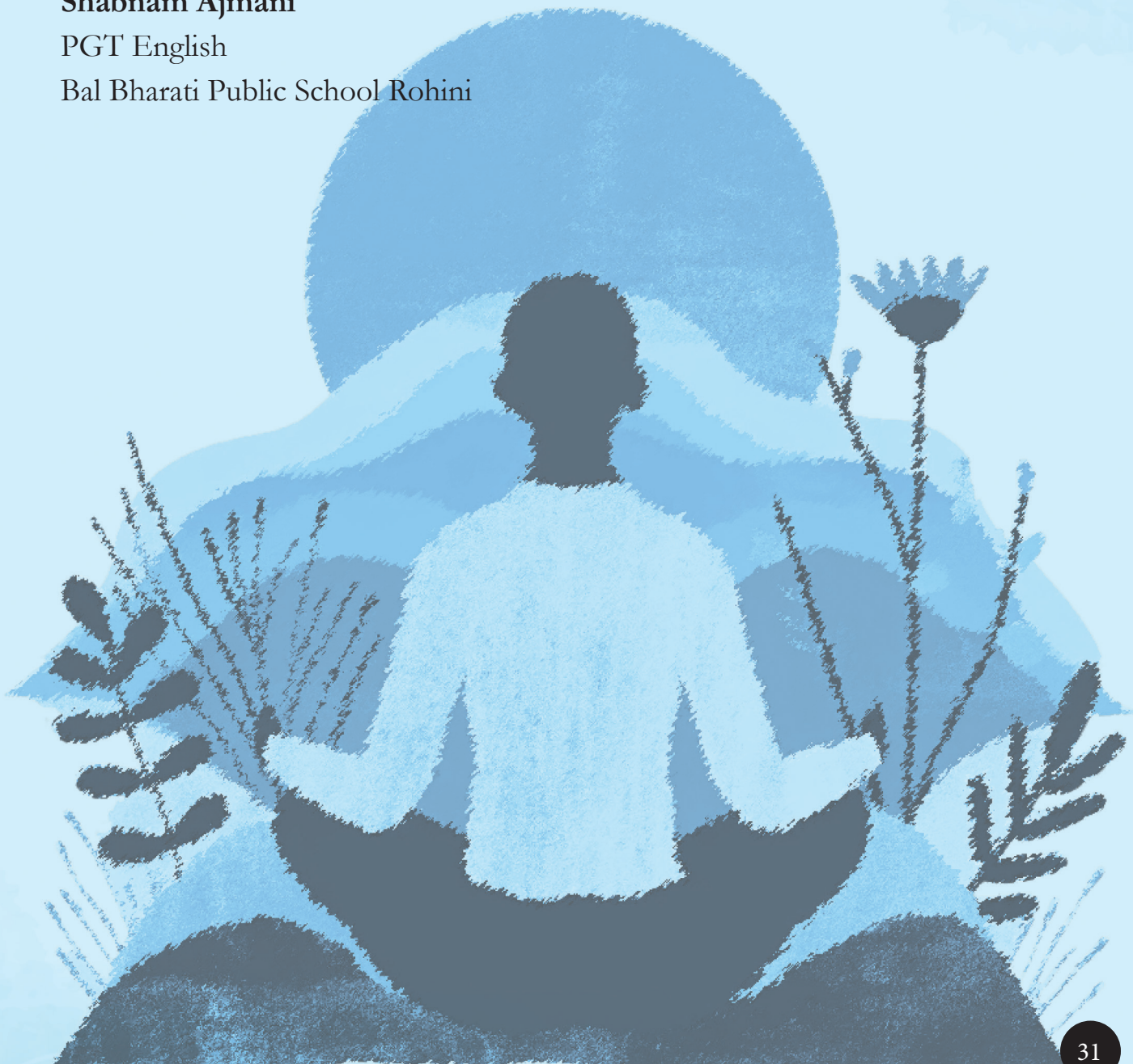
PGT English

Bal Bharati Public School Rohini

However, it is easier to pen down strategies that focus on nurturing minds and fostering mental health awareness in school but when it comes to applying the same, we need to look into many other aspects owing to the various backgrounds from where the students hail from and our own limitations and restrictions.

Summing up the strategies of fostering mental health in school in a limited number of words is of course not possible but a collective approach where school authorities, teachers, counsellors and parents work hand in hand will definitely lead to a healthy society with a bright future ahead and thus believe in the famous quote

"Only in the darkness can you see the stars "
– Martin Luther king.



Striking the Digital Balance

Technology, once a novelty, has become an omnipresent force in our lives, especially for children. It has woven itself into the fabric of our lives, offering convenience, connection, and a wealth of information at our fingertips. For children, the allure of the digital world is undeniable, with its interactive games, educational apps, and endless social media streams. However, as with most things, excessive technology use can have detrimental effects on their mental health and well-being. Finding the right balance, where technology empowers rather than consumes, becomes crucial for their well-being. We need to make them realise that excessive screen time can contribute to obesity, eye strain, and sedentary lifestyles. Social media platforms can be breeding grounds for cyberbullying and negative self-comparison, impacting self-esteem and mental health. The constant dopamine rush from notifications and games can trigger addictive behaviours, leading to anxiety and withdrawal symptoms when disconnected with the use of the Mobiles and their laptops.

As a School, and parents we all have to make a joint effort to build a healthy digital diet to nurture their mental well-being so that we can help children navigate the digital world responsibly, some of the strategies which can be adopted by the children are:

- Set screen time limits: Establish clear boundaries around screen time, including designated technology-free zones and times.
- Prioritize real-world interactions: Encourage outdoor activities, face-to-face playdates, and family time to foster social skills and emotional connection.
- Promote mindful technology use: Guide children to be selective about the content they consume and encourage critical thinking about online information.
- Be mindful of your own technology use and create a tech-free space during meals & family time. Parents need to interact more and there should be healthy conversation with the student.
- Encourage hobbies and interests that don't involve screens, like reading, music, sports, or creative pursuits.

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Principal
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- Maintain open communication with your child about their online experiences and address any concerns they might have.
- Several apps and tools can help manage screen time and promote healthy technology use like-Screen time tracking apps, Content filtering software and many more available on line.
- Encourage the use of educational apps and games that promote learning and creativity while limiting screen time

Remember, technology is a tool, not a master and a balanced approach is the key. By fostering mindful and balanced use, we can empower children to harness its benefits while safeguarding their mental health and well-being. Let's turn the tech tide from a potential threat to a force for good, nurturing a generation that thrives both online and offline. By setting boundaries, promoting healthy habits, and fostering open communication, we can help children navigate the digital world safely and responsibly, protecting their mental health and well-being in the process.

The internet, for all its wonders, can also be a place of danger and misinformation. With the increase use of mobile and internet, Cyber bullying is very common amongst the children now a days. . Equipping children with the knowledge to protect themselves empowers them to explore, learn, and connect responsibly. Just like learning how to cross the street safely, understanding cyber safety is an essential skill for kids navigating the digital world. A cyberbully targets a child online, leaving them feeling isolated and distressed.

A child falls victim to an online scam, compromising their personal information, Lacking awareness of online threats leaves them vulnerable. We need to guide our children how to navigate the web safely, identify suspicious websites, protect their personal information, to avoid online scams. They should be made aware whom to trust and where to turn for help if they encounter cyberbullying, inappropriate content, or other online threats.

Let's work together to create a healthy digital environment for our children, where technology empowers, rather than consumes, their precious minds. We can empower children to become responsible digital citizens, reaping the benefits of technology while safeguarding their mental and emotional well-being. Let's strive for a world where technology enhances our lives, not dominates them, and where children can thrive both online and offline.

Art : A Universal Language for Well-Being

In the canvas of childhood, where imagination knows no bounds, there exists a world of vibrant hues and unspoken emotions—a realm where every brushstroke is a whispered secret, and every splash of colour is a step on the path of self-discovery. Art is the magical key that opens the gateway to the labyrinth of a child’s mind in addition to offering amazing therapeutic effects in nurturing the mental well-being of children.

Art serves as a profound channel for emotional expression. By engaging in artistic activities, children can visually articulate complex emotions, offering a non-verbal outlet for feelings that they may find challenging to express verbally. Through painting, drawing, or sculpting, they externalise thoughts and emotions, fostering self-awareness and emotional intelligence. Not only this, but art also serves as a release for pent-up emotions. Through creative expression, one can process and regulate one’s emotions, finding solace in the act of creation.

The tactile engagement in different forms of art-making such as painting and clay modelling provide a therapeutic outlet for emotional release. Furthermore, artistic endeavours have the power to create a calming and meditative atmosphere. The rhythmic and repetitive motions involved in making a piece of art can reduce stress levels, providing one with a calming escape from the pressures of everyday life. Studies show that engaging in artistic activities hone skills such as problem-solving, critical thinking, and spatial awareness. Art is a workout for the brain; the skills developed through art contribute to an overall enhancement of cognitive abilities.

In addition to this, artistic expression provides a sense of accomplishment. The act of creating something unique, fosters a positive self-image and boosts self-esteem, thus, enhancing a child’s confidence. Also, art often involves a process that requires time and dedication. Whether mastering a new technique or bringing a complex project to fruition, children learn the values of patience and persistence through artistic endeavours. These qualities not only contribute to artistic growth but

also become life skills applicable in various aspects of their development.

Art can also be used as a platform for collaborative endeavours, fostering teamwork and communication. Group art projects encourage children to share ideas, negotiate creative choices, and appreciate the diverse perspectives of their peers, thus, enhancing their social skills.

In the cinematic masterpiece “**Taare Zameen Par**,” the transformative power of art is vividly portrayed through the character of Ishaan, a young boy grappling with dyslexia. The art classes become a sanctuary for Ishaan, allowing him to transcend the limitations imposed by his learning difficulties; a space where he can unleash his imagination without the constraints of conventional academic expectations. Art becomes a powerful tool for emotional release, discovering his identity, building self-esteem, and finding joy.

The last scene of the movie, set in the art exhibition organized by the art teacher, is a poignant testament to the inclusive nature of art. Regardless of artistic proficiency, every participant, from the seasoned art teacher to the students grappling with rudimentary sketches, revels in the joy of creative expression. The teachers, often portrayed as figures of authority, shed their inhibitions, and join their students in exploring the world of art. In this shared space, the hierarchical barriers dissolve, giving way to a collective celebration of creativity. The scene echoes the sentiment that art is a medium through which individuals can communicate, connect, and celebrate the richness of their unique perspectives.

By integrating art and creative expression into school curriculums, may enable the unlocking of the artistic prowess of students but also promote a holistic approach to mental well-being. The benefits of art for children’s mental well-being are manifold, extending to the very core of their identity, shaping individuals who are emotionally intelligent, socially adept, and creatively confident. So, let’s persist in cultivating environments where children can freely explore, experiment, and articulate themselves through the universal language of art.

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Bolstering Mental Health, Breaking Barriers

In the realm of education, the focus is on expanding beyond academic achievements to encompass the holistic well-being of students. Recognizing the crucial link between mental health and academic success, schools are increasingly adopting initiatives to nurture young minds and promote mental health awareness. This shift signifies a growing understanding that a healthy mind is the foundation for effective learning and personal development.

Modern educational environments face numerous challenges that can impact students' mental health. Academic pressures, social dynamics, and the overall transition to adulthood can contribute to stress and anxiety. Acknowledging these challenges is the first step towards creating an environment where mental health is prioritized.

Schools play a pivotal role in shaping a supportive culture that fosters mental health awareness. Open conversations about mental health should be encouraged, reducing stigma and creating an atmosphere where students feel comfortable seeking help. Implementing anti-bullying programs, organizing stress management workshops, and providing counselling services are proactive measures that schools can adopt.

A holistic educational approach transcends conventional subjects, emphasizing the integration of mental health into the curriculum. Beyond traditional academics, students benefit from lessons on emotional intelligence, coping mechanisms, and resilience. This comprehensive education equips them with essential life skills, fostering a robust mental foundation. By addressing the intricacies of emotional well-being alongside conventional learning, schools empower students to navigate life's challenges with confidence and adaptability. This commitment to nurturing mental health not only enhances academic performance but also cultivates resilient individuals capable of thriving in an ever-evolving world.

Educators are key players in nurturing students' minds and fostering mental health. Providing teachers with adequate training in recognizing signs of distress and offering support is crucial. Schools should encourage teachers to be approachable mentors who understand the diverse needs of their students. In this mentorship role, educators not only impart academic knowledge but also offer crucial emotional support. By fostering a connection that goes beyond the classroom, teachers become instrumental in creating a nurturing environment

where students feel understood, valued, and supported, thereby contributing significantly to their overall mental health and academic success.

Incorporating mindfulness practices into the daily routine can significantly contribute to mental well-being. Simple activities like meditation, deep breathing exercises, or short breaks for reflection can help students manage stress. These practices extend beyond stress management; they become pathways to heightened focus and concentration, fostering an environment conducive to learning. Importantly, regular engagement with mindfulness cultivates self-awareness, enabling students to better understand and regulate their emotions. By incorporating these simple yet profound techniques, schools not only equip students with coping mechanisms for immediate challenges but instil lifelong skills that promote resilience, emotional intelligence, and an enduring sense of well-being in the face of life's complexities.

Creating a comprehensive support system involves engaging parents and the wider community. Schools can organize awareness programs, workshops, and seminars for parents to understand the challenges their children may face. This bridge of communication ensures that parents are well-equipped to support their children's mental health effectively. Collaborations with mental health professionals and community organizations add depth to this support network. By forging partnerships, schools gain access to valuable expertise, resources, and services that enhance their ability to address mental health concerns. This collective effort creates a holistic environment where the community at large is informed, engaged, and committed to fostering the well-being of students. Such collaboration not only strengthens the support system within schools but also reinforces the notion that nurturing mental health is a shared responsibility, benefiting the entire community.

In the digital era, technology becomes a potent tool for bolstering mental health support in schools. Online platforms offer a dynamic avenue to disseminate crucial mental health resources, including informative content, virtual counselling sessions, and self-help materials. Responsibly leveraging technology enhances mental health

awareness and accessibility, breaking down barriers to support.

Virtual counselling sessions, facilitated through video conferencing or chat platforms, break down geographical barriers, ensuring that the students have immediate access to professional support. Additionally, online resources provide a repository of information, empowering students to engage in self-help practices. However, responsible utilization is paramount, with schools emphasizing digital well-being and privacy. By leveraging technology judiciously, schools not only enhance mental health awareness but also cultivate a tech-savvy generation equipped with valuable resources to navigate the complexities of their emotional well-being in the modern, digitalized educational landscape.

Ensuring the success of mental health initiatives in schools requires a strategic approach involving measurable metrics and continuous evaluation. Schools must establish clear metrics to assess the impact of mental health programs, ensuring they align with predefined goals. Regular assessments, both quantitative and qualitative, provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of interventions. Feedback sessions, involving students, educators, and parents, contribute to a holistic understanding of the initiative's impact and identify areas for improvement. Collaborating with mental health experts enhances the assessment process, bringing specialized insights and best practices. This collaborative approach ensures that mental health initiatives evolve dynamically, adapting to the changing needs of the school community. Through a systematic feedback loop and collaboration, schools create an environment of continuous improvement, fostering not only academic success but also the sustained well-being of students in a mentally healthy and supportive educational ecosystem.

Nurturing minds and fostering mental health awareness in schools is not just an educational trend but a fundamental necessity. Schools that prioritize mental health contribute not only to academic success but also to the development of resilient, empathetic individuals equipped to face the challenges of the modern world. By embracing a holistic approach, education becomes a transformative force that shapes not only what students know but also who they are.

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Stress Management in Schools

In a country like India where the entire upbringing of a child is centered around academic achievements, what we fail to realize is that one needs to give chances to the children to nurture their passion and give wings to their dreams. Such thwarting of dreams leads to stress and thus failure.

A few case studies reveal the validity of the above concept. So, here we state that, Aniket was a good sports person. He could not balance academics and sports. He was a low achiever and had to endure his teachers and classmates scoffing at him. He went into depression and thereafter could never live the life of his dreams.

When one analyses the story of Rajan of class VIII, Mathematics was an impossible subject for him. He could not learn the subject and also could not bear the parental and peer pressure. He quits life.

In yet another instance Shruti, a theatre enthusiast, could not pursue her passion as her parents wanted her to be inclined towards academics. There was constant pressure from her parents. She could not take it any longer and she ended her life. Such examples prove that the younger generation is very impulsive and quick to react to circumstances.

(The names are fictitious, and have no relevance to reality)

What went wrong?

Case Study 1 – The child experienced a sense of defeat. The teacher was unable to appreciate his talent and flair for sports.

Case Study 2 – The parents/teachers were unable to accept the child for what he is.

Case Study 3 – This is a case of a lack of support and acceptance to think out of the box.

Well, there can be many more such cases. What do schools need to do now?

In the light of the cases mentioned above, the foremost objective of the education system should be to empower learners to face challenges with poise. Education should enable the learner to become holistic individuals. It calls for innovative teaching paradigms and flexible systems.

Education is primarily perceived by a majority of people in our country as a means to prepare children for jobs. There is mostly an economic motive that

most parents have towards education. Education is hardly seen as a holistic process of man making. The FOMO effect, anxiety of intense competitions, uncertain future, expectations of parents and society have all added to the stress profile of the students.

It is imperative for us to provide stress free education today. The best way is to increase the competency and skills of students to manage stress. Managing stress in a school environment requires a comprehensive strategy that involves students, teachers and the broader educational community. Schools can foster a supportive atmosphere by encouraging open communication and empathy by implementing programmes that teach stress management skills like mindfulness and relaxation techniques that can be highly beneficial. Schools should facilitate quiet, comfortable spaces for students to unwind. Regular physical activities and sports can significantly aid in managing stress.

Physical exercises stimulate the production of feel good neurotransmitters called endorphins. Additionally, schools can offer professional counselling services and provide students and staff with a confidential platform to discuss their concerns. This helps in better self-understanding and enhances self-esteem. Ensuring a balanced academic workload and avoiding excessive pressure on students is critical. Schools should also host workshops for teachers and help them learn new skills and adopt new teaching paradigms. Celebrating achievements, fostering a sense of community and encouraging creative expression through arts and clubs can also contribute to a stress free school environment. This holistic approach can create a nurturing and productive conducive environment to learning, physical and emotional wellbeing.

Students should be guided to manage stress by developing organizational skills and adopting healthy habits. Time Management is crucial in creating a study schedule that includes breaks and leisure time that can prevent burnout. Breaking tasks into smaller achievable goals can make workloads more manageable. It's important for students to maintain a balance between academic responsibilities and personal interests. Regular physical activity, such as sports or exercise routines can contribute significantly to reducing stress. Adequate sleep is also vital for cognitive function and emotional regulation. A nutritious diet fuels the

body and mind which aids concentration and stamina. Students should also explore relaxation techniques like deep breathing, meditation or yoga which can be easily integrated into daily routines. Cultivating hobbies and spending time with friends can provide necessary breaks from academic pressures. It's important for students to communicate openly with teachers, counsellors or family members when they feel overwhelmed. Establishing a support network among peers can also provide emotional comfort and practical advice. Learning to recognize signs of excessive stress and seeking help early is crucial. Students should be encouraged to maintain a healthy perspective on academic achievements, understanding that it's just one aspect of their overall growth and development.

Teachers can manage stress by maintaining a healthy balance between their professional and personal lives. Effective time management is a key to prioritizing tasks and setting realistic goals for each day which can help reduce feelings of being overwhelmed. It's important for teachers to delegate responsibilities when possible and collaborate with colleagues to share best practices and resources, thereby creating a positive democratic classroom

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environment that encourages student participation. Teachers should strive to establish clear boundaries between work and home life so that they have time to relax and engage in personal interest. Participating in professional development workshops focus on stress management that can provide valuable strategies and support. Teachers should find joy in encouraging students to celebrate small victories and focus on the positive impact that they have on their students. This can provide a strong sense of fulfillment and reduce stress.

Parents can effectively manage stress by creating a stable and supportive home environment. Open communication is vital - parents should encourage their children to share experiences and feelings about school and other activities. Engaging in family activities and spending quality time together helps to strengthen relationships and reduces stress. Parents should also be mindful of their wellbeing, taking time for self-care and relaxation.

Thus, an overall wellbeing can only be nurtured when we practice and truly believe an age old saying 'A healthy mind rests in a healthy body.' With conscious efforts and an awakened self, we will surely tide over such troubled times.

Art and Creative Expressions: a therapy

In recent years, the importance of mental well-being has gained prominence in discussions surrounding education. Recognizing the crucial role of schools in shaping not just academic but holistic development, we educators are exploring innovative ways to foster mental well-being among students. Delving into the integration of art and creative expressions into the school curriculum helps us in developing powerful tool to promote mental well being.

The link between Art and Mental Well-being fosters understanding the need of happy living. Art has been recognized as a therapeutic medium for centuries. Whether through painting, drawing or other forms of creative expression, individuals can find solace, self-reflection and emotional release. Schools can harness the therapeutic value of art to provide students with a creative outlet for navigating the complexities of adolescence. By integrating art in the school curriculum students can express and regulate emotionally. Through various art forms, students can explore and regulate their emotions, fostering emotional intelligence and resilience. For example: Project work, Gallery walk etc.

Engaging in creative activities has been linked to reduced stress levels. Integrating art into the curriculum provides students with a break from traditional academic pressures, promoting relaxation & overall well-being. For example: energizers, clapping games, outdoor games, one minute games, statue games etc are other ways to fight mental issues.

Artistic endeavours encourage students to think outside the box, fostering creativity and critical thinking skills. These attributes are not only valuable in artistic pursuits but also in problem-solving across various disciplines. For example: Entrepreneurship, Puzzles, Monopoly etc. Through dedicated art classes with specific time, students explore various mediums and techniques under the guidance of trained art educators. For example: Gond painting, finger painting, bubble painting, thread painting, cutlery painting etc.

Cross-disciplinary integration incorporates Art into other subjects. For example, History and Science lessons could involve art projects that depict historical events, fostering a deeper understanding of the subject. Students need to be encouraged into collaborative art projects that promote teamwork and communication. This not only enhances

artistic skills but also social skills that are crucial for overall well being. But, challenges loom large due to limited resources. Some schools may face resource constraints for implementing comprehensive art programs. Solutions may include seeking community partnerships, utilizing online resources, or integrating low-cost art supplies into the curriculum.

It may be said that traditional assessment methods may not effectively capture the diverse skills developed through artistic expression. Implementing alternative assessment approaches, such as Holistic Progress Card, Portfolios or presentations, can better reflect students' artistic growth and thus enhance mental well being. It is time we harness art and creativity and develop sound mental well being. It may be suggested that, in language classes, literature came alive as students engaged in dramatic readings and theatrical interpretations of classic texts. Analyzing characters through the lens of performance not only improved comprehension but also ignited a passion for storytelling. Mathematics and Rhythm is synonymous. The typically abstract world of mathematics found a new ally in music. Students explored mathematical concepts through rhythm and beats, creating musical compositions that translated algebraic equations into harmonious melodies. This innovative approach not only enhanced mathematical understanding but also elevated the appreciation for the interconnectedness of disciplines. This approach helped students to gain confidence and thus be happy.

Science classes embraced the symphony of experimentation and musical exploration. Students composed songs to explain scientific principles, turning complex concepts into catchy tunes. This approach not only improved retention but also encouraged students to view science as a creative endeavour and develop a scientific symphony that enriches mental happiness. Evolving educational practices, the harmonious integration of arts and music stands as a beacon, inspiring both educators and students to explore the boundless possibilities of interdisciplinary learning.

In conclusion, the integration of art and creative expressions into school curriculum is a transformative approach to enhance students' mental well-being. By providing a platform for emotional expression, stress reduction, and the development of crucial skills, schools can play a pivotal role in shaping well-rounded individuals equipped to navigate the complexities of life. As educators continue to prioritize holistic development, the integration of art stands as a beacon of creativity and mental well-being within the realm of education.

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Creating Safe Spaces

A child's mental health is the cornerstone of their future. Young minds that are mentally robust and resilient are better able to manage stress, form wholesome relationships, and confidently take on life's obstacles. Academic difficulties, social isolation, and even the emergence of mental diseases might result from neglecting one's mental health. Academic achievement is directly impacted by mental health. By giving mental health care first priority, we not only solve current issues but also support a productive learning atmosphere that encourages originality and critical thinking in students.

Promoting mental health awareness in schools is crucial in the ever-changing field of education. A culture of comprehension, acceptance, and support permeates safe spaces in educational institutions, which go far beyond their physical limits. Emotional intelligence, self-acceptance, and resilience are the seeds that are sown in this environment. Safe places must be established in order to lay the groundwork for students' mental health in an age when they must negotiate challenging social and academic environments. These settings are characterised by open communication, acceptance, and understanding. The ability to express oneself honestly without worrying about criticism is given to kids in a safe environment, which promotes a feeling of belongingness and emotional resilience.

Promoting open communication between parents and children as well as teachers and students is essential to building safe and secure environments in schools. Students require forums where they may freely express their ideas, feelings, and worries without worrying about being judged. By cultivating an atmosphere that prioritises candid communication, we, as a school, enable students to express their emotions, look for assistance, and develop essential coping skills. Safe environments are built on the foundation of open communication. Educators are detrimental in creating an environment where students are at ease sharing their ideas and feelings, which opens the door to deep relationships and a caring community.

Acceptance of oneself and others is fostered in safe settings. Schools should be safe havens where kids learn to value their individuality in a culture that frequently places unattainable norms on them. By developing a good self-image and mental resilience, we provide students with a strong defence against

the detrimental effects of society expectations by instilling in them a sense of self-acceptance.

Cultivating a knowledge of mental health is crucial to genuinely nurturing young minds. Programmes have been put in place at our school to inform teachers, parents, and students about the different aspects of mental health. By busting stereotypes and lowering the stigma typically attached to asking for help, workshops and seminars help to establish a common vocabulary around mental health. Students who strive for academic success frequently experience stress, especially during exam periods. Stress management classes designed to address these issues demonstrate our dedication to mental health. Pupils are prepared to handle academic challenges with fortitude and poise by learning useful skills like time management and mindfulness.

The creation of safe spaces goes beyond school boundaries. By holding workshops and seminars that equip parents to assist the mental health of their children, parents can actively participate in the programs. In a child's journey toward mental wellness, parents are crucial. In order to offer advice and direction on establishing a nurturing home environment, the schools can host parenting classes. These sessions focus on the value of understanding, communication, and emotional support in building a solid foundation for a child's mental health.

Encouraging a culture of compassion is essential to stop bullying, which has detrimental effects on mental health. Schools should actively engage in anti-bullying sessions which inspire students to develop empathy and oppose bullying in order to provide a welcoming and secure learning environment for all. Since bullying has a negative impact on mental health, we have started anti-bullying efforts that encourages respect, kindness, and understanding. Eradicating bullying practices and establish a safe environment for everyone through awareness campaigns, workshops, and continuing conversations is the need of the hour.

The curriculum in schools should be inclusive and represents a range of experiences and viewpoints. Furthermore, extracurricular activities are thoughtfully chosen to give students the chance to pursue their hobbies and interests, developing a feeling of purpose and community. Identifying and assisting pupils with special needs is a critical role played by our educators. To improve their capacity,

to identify indicators of mental health issues or learning disabilities, teachers receive specialized training. Every student will receive the assistance they need to succeed academically and emotionally, thanks to our proactive approach.

The foundation of mental health is self-care. Using a variety of programs to highlight the value of self-love and self-awareness is of prime importance. In order to promote resilience, mental health, and overall well being, students are urged to prioritize self-care activities.

In order to augment the life skills of our students, our school has incorporated a personalized film

pedagogy into the curriculum. This creative method improves students' critical thinking, empathy, and decision-making abilities by using movies to teach real-life events. By doing this, we hope to give pupils useful skills that will enable them to face obstacles in life, head-on.

In conclusion, cultivating mental health awareness and developing healthy minds in schools is a continuous effort that calls for a multifaceted strategy. Schools must be committed to rendering children the skills they need to negotiate the complexities of life while cultivating a culture of understanding, resilience, and well-being.

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The Window of Tolerance as Vocabulary and a Guide to Self-Regulation

A commonly held misconception of many students and the adults in their lives is that good mental health just means being happy. If you think about it, this is quite a debilitating idea. A child going through the regular storm and stress of life may feel quite troubled by their very natural sadness at the loss of a friendship or their frustration at being misunderstood by a teacher.

We cannot constantly be happy. In fact, pursuing or valuing happiness over all else only seems to make us more unhappy. A more realistic way of looking at good mental health can be ‘Fusar-Poli’ and his colleagues’ definition as a “a state of well-being that allows individuals to cope with the normal stresses of life and function productively.”

In our school, for World Mental Health Day on October 10th, we decided to build awareness around a psychological concept called Window of Tolerance that supports this perspective. First proposed by Daniel Siegel, a psychiatrist, the Window of Tolerance is that mental range or psychological space wherein a person is functioning with ease – they can feel, process and cope with their emotions comfortably. The ability to stay in or keep returning quickly to our Window of Tolerance as we live our lives may be indicative of good mental health. This range is different for everyone depending on our biological dispositions and lived experience. For instance, someone with a difficult childhood could have a smaller Window because of their past experience or traumas.

When we are pushed out of this comfort zone, our survival response takes over, rationality reduces and our body moves into either fight or flight mode (Hyperarousal) or it starts shutting down (Hypoarousal). To be more specific, Hyperarousal can look like anger and rage, emotional overwhelm, anxiety, panic, fear and worry, feeling like your body is very tense and that you may explode. Hypoarousal is when we feel numb, frozen, unable to talk to others, low on energy, very tired and empty.

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Both Hyperarousal and Hypoarousal are uncomfortable states and we can only shift out of them with some conscious effort. When we are out of our Window of Tolerance, we tend to not see the world objectively as we are no longer driven by our rational brain for problem solving and decision making. This is completely normal. We cannot hope to never leave our Window, but the goal is to find a way back to it quickly and over time make it bigger.

This ability to bring ourselves back to our Window of Tolerance should be a part of essential self-regulation training for students. There are two main ways to work on this:

The first being teaching students that taking good care of their bodies by eating nutrient-dense foods, reducing screen time, maintaining a healthy sleep cycle and a moderate amount of regular exercise is essential for their mental health, and helping them achieve this in coordination with their parents.

The second is to directly teach students ways to recognise their Window of Tolerance and bring awareness to what happens in their body and mind as it seems to shift from and comes back to this comfort zone. We would also train them in strategies to bring themselves back from Hyper and Hypoarousal such as using Breathwork, Somatic and Grounding exercises, and even Yoga and Meditation.

This new vocabulary and skills will help students understand the change in their emotional and physical states, in crises without the burden of shame and guilt associated with not being their best selves. It would also equip them to practice emotional first aid on themselves, move towards self-regulation and eventually good mental health. This concept’s viability is higher also because it is based in the body and it can be taught in age-appropriate ways progressively across the school years in alignment with the interdisciplinary nature of the New Education Policy.

Navigating a Safe Haven

From the bedrock of Maslow's pyramid to the nurturing concept of Winnicott's 'Holding Environment,' the essence of safety weaves into the very fabric of a child's psychological well being. Far surpassing the realm of mere physical security, safety takes root in the intricate culture and environment of a school. Can we not concur that schools serve as sanctuaries where tender hearts navigate the vast terrain of profound emotions? At every twist and turn, children grapple with a spectrum of feelings, and it is within the confines of schools that they seek refuge—a cocoon where metamorphosis unfolds.

Allow a moment for this stark reality to sink in: with a simple Google search, you shall discover that, every hour, a child succumbs to the tragic choice of suicide in our nation. To jolt you even further, every fifteen minutes, a child becomes a victim of sexual abuse. As you read these lines, the statistics may already have changed to something even more alarming.

As many as forty two percent of students of class 4 to 8 and thirty six percent of class 9 to 12 say that they are subjected to harassment by their own peers, as per Times of India report in 2017. Bullying isn't just confined to the physical spaces of the school, but as a distinct hazard in cyber space as well.

The famous McAfee report titled 'Cyberbullying in Plain Sight' stated that the number of Indian children cyberbullied is twice the international average. Confronted with these harsh realities, the imperative becomes clear—the first step towards addressing this problem is by building emotionally safe spaces for children. What better place to start than our own schools, the sacred space where children spend the majority of their waking hours.

Safe space is literally any physical space in the school where the child feels comfortable in expressing her/his emotions. When it comes to a school, the adage by Aristotle holds true- 'The whole is greater than the sum of its parts.' A school is not just its classrooms, but it goes far beyond; right from the first step the child takes and sits in the school bus to every inch of the corridor, including the playground and the washrooms- everything is the school space. The scope of safe space is vast as one cannot miss the existence and importance of cyber space.

In my experience as a school counsellor, I've seen students identify different spaces as their 'safe spaces'.

Sometimes, it's found in a cathartic conversation in a silent room or during walks around the school grounds on a warm winter afternoon. I've come to understand that a safe space is not merely confined to a physical location but a **mental landscape** that helps a student feel comfortable with his or her own skin in addition to navigating and accepting the emotions he or she is grappling with.

Safety (or lack of it) is also a perceived concept. It takes me back to an incident in school when a five-year-old reportedly felt 'unsafe' in presence of a guard with a thick moustache. While the guard was known for his friendly nature, he was shifted to another block, understanding the needs of the child, thus ensuring a physically and psychologically safe space for the child.

Building such safe spaces provides an opportunity for students to learn from one another's experiences, fostering empathy and understanding. By creating an environment where students feel comfortable discussing their mental health, we can help reduce the isolation and shame often associated with these struggles.

The role of a School Counsellor is crucial in establishing a safe space for students and empowering teachers to raise awareness about mental health. To create this environment, schools need to prioritize mental health education through workshops, presentations, and discussions that enhance awareness of various mental health conditions and their impacts.

Equipping students with this knowledge not only helps them understand their own mental health better but also fosters a more empathetic and supportive community. Schools should also focus on **creating clear communication channels** for students to identify their genuine needs, recognizing diversity in backgrounds, experiences, intellectual capacities, and age-related challenges. This engagement enables counsellors to provide valuable insights into the specific needs of the student population. Initiating a positive connect with parents too would ensure that the needs of the students are not just conveyed to the school but also understood well and redressed accordingly.

Establishing Supportive Policies and urging schools to implement mental health advocacy measures is crucial for cultivating an overall supportive

environment, a cornerstone towards creating a safe space. This involves developing clear guidelines on how mental health issues will be addressed, ensuring confidentiality, and facilitating access to appropriate resources. Furthermore, schools can take a proactive approach by establishing mental health advocacy clubs or peer support groups, fostering connections among students who may be encountering similar challenges. Schools also have to acknowledge that the Young communicate differently not just in terms of language but the spaces that they use.

To educate students on digital safety and netiquettes is therefore an urgent need of the hour. This would also lead to using the same cyberspace as a tool for healing rather than a weapon in the hands of the reckless.

Peer Support plays a pivotal role in fostering a safe space for mental health discussions. Schools can champion peer-led initiatives like buddy systems or mentorship programmes, where older students extend support to younger ones in navigating mental health and cyber safety challenges. This not only nurtures a sense of community but also works towards normalizing conversations around mental health.

All school personnel, including teachers, staff members, nannies, guards, and all support staff members play a vital role in creating a secure environment for students. Providing training

on mental health awareness and intervention strategies equips them with the knowledge and skills necessary to support students effectively. Equipping the support staff (guards and nannies) for safety on campus is a part of the whole school approach. By fostering a culture of understanding and empathy, staff members contribute to making students feel secure and supported in their journey towards mental well-being. While it's imperative that all schools must have counsellors, often the situation demands that the teacher or parent take on this role. Hence, the stakeholders must be trained in basic counselling skills such as rapport building, unconditional positive regard, empathetic listening, trustworthiness, to name a few.

Every school should endeavour to craft a nurturing ecosystem for our children- a collective effort to construct an experience where one feels not only safe to express emotions but also secure and confident enough to take risks, forging a sense of being challenged and excited to try something new.

The creation of safe spaces is an ongoing process that hinges on the well-defined role of a school counsellor as a frontline advocate for mental health concerns. By prioritizing mental health support, establishing a proactive peer support system, and providing training to staff members on mental health matters, schools can significantly contribute to the overall well being and the happiness of their students. In doing so, they carve out a safe haven where children not only survive but thrive and grow.

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Blooming Mental Health

'Nurturing Mental Well-being & Resilience in Students'

The pursuit of education signifies a transformative journey that not only shapes students' intellectual capacities but also influences their mental well-being. Balancing academic pressures, social expectations, and personal development can significantly impact their mental health. In this article, I delve into the challenges faced by students and explore strategies to foster a supportive environment prioritizing their well-being. The mental health of students is an often overlooked problem. Despite being openly discussed, it tends to remain confined to conversation rather than prompting necessary actions.

Mental health is an important component of overall well-being; it shapes how individuals think, feel, and act. Recently, there has been a growing recognition of its importance, encouraging a shift in societal attitudes toward a more holistic approach. As I explore various aspects of students' mental health, addressing the challenges they may face becomes paramount.

Students grapple with multifaceted challenges that significantly impact their mental health. The pursuit of academic excellence, marked by exam pressures, assignments, and fierce competition, places an immense burden on their shoulders, leading to stress and burnouts. Beyond academics, the complex social landscape adds to their problems, with desires for acceptance, peer relationships, societal expectations, and issues of identity and fear of judgment contributing to heightened stress factors.

Whether in school life or personal relationships, every aspect of a student's life contributes to their mental health. Nowadays, students often succumb to the pressure of outperforming themselves academically and in their personal lives and amongst their peers. Moreover, life transitions, like moving away from home or transitioning between educational levels, introduce unique challenges. Adapting to new environments and increased responsibilities can take a toll on students' mental well-being. The current societal rat race leads them



to forget their true source of happiness, while they focus on fitting in; the same often breaks them emotionally.

In a student's life, a number of factors impact their mental well-being, and these factors are often under the influence of various controllers, such as parents, teachers, friends, and mentors. The role played by these influencers can either shape or potentially break a student's overall well-being. Given the age of students, it is crucial to recognize that their ability to distinguish right from wrong may not be fully developed, leading them to engage in behaviors aimed at garnering approval from parents, mentors, or peers. Therefore, it becomes paramount for teachers, mentors, and parents to adopt an accepting, supportive, yet guiding role in the lives of these students. The collective effort of these influential figures is pivotal in nurturing a positive and constructive environment for the students' overall development.

To address these concerns, the implementation of comprehensive mental health strategies has become imperative. This includes education on stress management, ensuring accessible support services, and fostering a supportive community that recognizes and alleviates daily pressures faced by students. Schools should encourage a balance between academic life and self-care, recognizing that mental well-being is crucial to academic success. Institutions should implement policies supporting this balance, reinforcing the understanding that student welfare extends beyond grades. The introduction of peer support programs or mentorship initiatives creates a sense of community and belongingness, allowing students to connect, share experiences, and seek advice.

Meditation workshops, engaging activities, self-reliance strategy workshops, counseling, and similar initiatives should also be implemented by schools to genuinely enhance students' overall well-being and academic performance. These steps not only contribute to a positive and nurturing school environment but also empower students with essential skills for managing stress, building

resilience, and fostering a healthy school-life balance. By providing a holistic support system that includes both mental and emotional well-being components, schools can significantly contribute to the students' personal growth as well as academic success. For educational institutions establishing an environment that fosters the mental well-being of students should become a top priority.

Neglecting a student's mental health can profoundly reshape their personality. It's crucial to handle a student's mental well-being with care. However, we must acknowledge the reality that parents, teachers, and mentors may not always be available to guide, protect, or understand a student. Students will inevitably face life's challenges independently in the future.

This indicates the very importance for these influential figures to not only prioritize a student's mental health but also actively foster the development of their mental strength. Recognizing that a child's early experiences significantly influence their future personality, educators and guardians carry the responsibility of ensuring the cultivation of mental resilience in students. This proactive approach aims to prepare the child for the uncertainties and trials that life may present. By emphasizing mental strength, we equip them with the essential skills to confront and navigate life's obstacles all by themselves; by this, we nurture their ability to cope with adversity and contribute positively to both personal and professional growth.

Today, I also emphasize the fact that while external factors do affect mental health, it's within the students' hands to endure or, at the very least, fight against it. During times of mental trauma or ill mental health, it is primarily the individual who can help themselves. Loved ones can offer support, but they are not the cure sought. It is the sufferer who must discover the inner strength to rebuild themselves. This is a crucial lesson we need to impart to the students of today, who are the future leaders of tomorrow. Empowering them with the understanding that resilience lies within, we equip them to face life's challenges with fortitude and emerge stronger from the problems they encounter.

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A Trend Setter Influencing Tender Heart

In the ever-evolving terrain of education, the impact wielded by positive role models, mentors, and educators assumes a pivotal role in shaping the mental health practices of students. Transcending the mere dissemination of knowledge, these entities function as discernible sources of inspiration, cultivating an environment conducive to the development of positive mental health practices. In an endeavour to delve into the profound influence exerted by positive role models on students, underscoring the pivotal role played by mentors and educators in the cultivation of resilience and mental well-being among individuals, one needs to evaluate the importance of nurturing a sound mind, a happy self and a content life.

Positive role models are like inspirations that make students dream big and set big goals. Whether it's a teacher who installs love for learning or a mentor who exemplifies strength in tough times, these role models are real-life examples of success and perseverance. When students have positive role models, they tend to develop a positive mindset. Instead of seeing challenges as big problems, they see them as chances to learn and grow.

Having discussed the impactful role of positive role models in fostering a positive mindset among students, I am compelled to share a personal experience that underscores the transformative power of such influences. Reflecting on the profound impact of positive mentors, I am reminded of a teacher who played a pivotal role in shaping my journey. This teacher not only instilled a love for learning but also imbued me with a positive mindset that has significantly contributed to my current role as an educator. In the eleventh grade, a transformative encounter occurred when I crossed paths with a teacher who unequivocally altered the trajectory of my academic journey. Despite being a proficient student, financial constraints prevented me from attending tuition classes, leading to a pessimistic outlook on my academic prospects. My primary subject, Informative Practices (IP), demanded a depth of understanding beyond what was covered during regular school hours, resulting in a discernible decline in my academic performance.

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The discerning Mr. Shailender, our IP teacher, astutely observed my deteriorating subject scores which resulted in severe mental stress and anxiety. He proactively summoned me for a discussion. In an environment of understanding and sagacity, he delved into the challenges I faced and sought to unravel the underlying causes of my diminishing academic achievements. His omniscient demeanour was evident as he meticulously discerned the intricacies of my predicament. Recognizing the detrimental impact of my financial constraints on my education, Mr. Shailender Sir displayed an exceptional act of altruism. Without hesitation, he extended an offer to provide me with supplementary classes. His selfless commitment aimed solely at facilitating my academic growth. In an exemplary demonstration of his belief in the transformative power of education, Mr. Shailender contacted my mother, elucidating his intention to nurture my academic abilities. This altruistic gesture not only reversed the negative trajectory of my academic performance but also served as a testament to the profound influence that a dedicated educator can wield in a student's life.

Under his guidance, my IP scores ascended, culminating in an outstanding achievement of 98 marks in the subject. Consequently, my overall percentage in the twelfth grade reached an impressive 92%, paving the way for admission to my dream college. The impact of this benevolent act became a revelation, crystallizing my decision to embark on the path of education. It was not merely a desire to become an educator that crystallized in that moment; rather, a solemn commitment to emulate the positive influence he had on my life. I resolved to prove myself worthy of the position, vowing to extend my efforts beyond the confines of textbooks and prescribed curriculum.

This profound experience ignited a passion within me to pursue a career in education. I aspired not only to disseminate knowledge but to foster positive mindsets, echoing the transformative impact that Mr. Shailender had on my life. I pledged to emulate his exemplary model, inspiring future generations with the belief that a small effort by an educator can yield monumental changes in a student's life.

Nurturing Young Minds : Empathy & Life

Mental health as a term has impacted the upcoming society and is something that has been fairly neglected in the past. Before we go any further, we first need to understand what “Mental Health” is and what its significance is in the current generation, for parents and children alike. Mental health refers to the inner psyche, emotional and social well being of the person. It is not just the absence of disorders but the presence of overall well being, enabling the person to harness their actual full potential.

In the psychological arena, the “Inner child” work is given a lot of importance. Inner Child here refers to the child in us with their hopes and expectations that they wanted out of their childhood, which would have helped them become the person they wanted to be. The hopes and expectations of a secure attachment with the caregivers and future partnerships, their self esteem and worth, their emotional world and its regulation etc are all part of mental health in childhood. All these factors, if paid attention to before, would make the future adult a lot more prepared and resilient to challenges. Early experiences formed in a child’s life are extremely crucial for their mental health as it shapes their way of adapting to various life situations.

In the recent Covid times, children’s mental health issues have skyrocketed due to the lack of social engagement with other children, excessive screen time and possible neglect or over attachment towards parents as they were the only point of contact for one or two years of their formative childhood. The neglect is possible if the parents have not been able to maintain a work life balance, especially when it comes to ‘Work From Home’ set up, leaving the child resorting to entertainment on electronic devices, and then forming their early attachment observing things that they see on the screen. Apart from Covid induced issues, based on their age, genetic composition and other factors, children are prone to a multitude of concerns such as learning disorders, conduct disorders, anxiety disorders, depression, eating disorders etc. Parents’ role becomes crucial in this scenario as they are the ones who can help in early detection and interventions. Early detection of a disorder is paramount for the child as it becomes the stepping stone towards a more managed and regulated life. If the intervention is early, then the child becomes more equipped with the coping skill set that has to be used and becomes more automatic

for them. This also leads to reduced stigma about the concern and more open dialogue around mental health can be done with them and the parents. Positive appraisal of pivotal life experiences related to academia, social relationships and overall quality of life - is also seen among kids who have had progressive parental figures.

The more the parent is present and involved in the child’s life, the greater is their emotional flexibility and regulation. Open communication about emotions, boundaries and treating the child as an equal with your own regulated self with assertiveness, rather than a disciplinarian take on their behaviour , leads to the child having a secure attachment. Secure attachment is defined by the needs of the child (both emotional and physical) being consistently met by the parents, which promotes healthy development of the child in a holistic manner. Secure attachment enables the child to trust the parents and believing that their parents will be available when they feel unsafe. As the trust is formed, the child is able to explore their environment more comfortably, rather than be anxious about novel situations. Even if the novel situation doesn’t turn out the way a child expects, the emotional regulation from the parents side trickles down to the child and learns how to appraise the situation effectively. All these events lead to the child becoming a confident individual who is ready to take on the world.

Openness and empathy should not be mistaken with complete leniency. When we were children, there were certain points where we needed guidance and steering us to the right path, sometimes a bit harshly. While the way of guidance is debated by many parents, a balance between being progressive and discipline has to be maintained. This helps the child to take accountability and responsibility for their actions and reflect on how it might affect the people around them. Parents’ approach towards mental health, sets the tone for the people outside the family as well. The outlook of the family forms the foundation for the child’s life trajectory and also becomes a beacon of hope for peers who do need similar help. To summarise, parents play a huge role in the child’s holistic development and it is imperative for every caregiver to be on the side of the Mental health campaign and promote the same, rather than deem it as an excuse which can be done away with.

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The Role of Community : Building a Supportive Environment for Mental Health

There is a beautiful word in Hindi—Udgam—which means source or origin. I believe that for a child, school is a source of many events, big and small, which holds the power to shape their life. It could be from simple yet beautiful feelings such as friendships, first crush, first trophy, a dance performance or simply being the class monitor, which can surely give the feeling of being the king of the world, even if it is for just a period, or it could also be the source of strong, anti-positive feelings or emotions which stem from bullying, unhealthy competition and comparison, or feeling left out.

In my opinion, the first step towards fostering mental health is mere acceptance. A child needs to understand that mental health, just like physical health, is an important aspect of not only a child's development but also his/her behaviour towards others and themselves. Dealing with children, explaining to them tough concepts of mental health in a way in which their still developing mind can comprehend can be difficult, and yet is extremely important. To do that, I believe that teachers need to first sit children down to explain what mental health means, why it is important, and then hand hold them through understanding its various aspects such as loneliness, depression, and peer pressure, among others. It is significant for teachers to begin the session by highlighting that no question is a silly question and that this space is not to fixate on right and wrong.

A fine way for schools to promote mental health and raise awareness about it is by introducing the concept of support groups. Many times in school, students as well as teachers find themselves overwhelmed and alone, and find no way other than continuing to deal with it alone. At times like these, a support group where people can speak their minds, find comfort and feel as a part of a cohort can be extremely beneficial.

Another way, which I feel should be made mandatory in all schools, is the presence of counsellors. The concept of an infirmary is not alien to us, it has been part of a school's ecosystem since time immemorial

– a place where one can go to put bandages on wounds and find medicines for nasty stomach aches. When physical discomfort can be solved by going to a nurse, why is the concept of going to someone for helping your mind so alien to us?

As a fitness enthusiast, I believe that physical health and fitness plays a significant role in aiding one's mental health. Schools should make daily physical exercise, yoga and meditation an everyday part of the school routine – both for staff and students. Fresh air, adrenaline, and some peace for the mind to reflect and introspect can, in my opinion, be a game changer to navigate the sometimes stressful and overwhelming school environment.

The engulfing usage of devices and the internet is gradually stealing peace and is thus becoming a big reason for creating a feeling of self-doubt and loneliness in a child. Hence, it is imperative for schools to press on the less screen time policy, and to make students aware that it is the offline life which brings real happiness and not the ones behind a small screen.

Another very important aspect that students find difficult to work around is expression, and the lack of an opportunity to express can really hinder a child's self-confidence. Where on one hand schools should strive to become a place for students to be unapologetically themselves, they end up becoming a place where a child might think a hundred times before expressing his/herself in the fear of 'what will she think of me' or 'what if he makes fun of me.'

To conclude, as an educator I think that we, as people, are yet to fully fathom the nuances of mind and mental health, and by the time we start to become aware about it, it is usually too late, when the damage is done. To stop or control the damage, it is of great importance to start at the 'Udgam'—schools, because, it is here that the most important lessons are learnt, most strong bonds are built, most silly fights are fought, and most cherished memories are made.

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PRT English

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Mind Matters : Navigating the Landscape of Mental Health

In the bustling halls of education, a quiet revolution is taking place—one that transcends textbooks and tests. It's a movement towards nurturing young minds, fostering mental awareness, and creating an environment where emotional well-being is as essential as academic achievement.

In today's fast-paced world, the pressure on students is immense. School life is no longer confined to the pursuit of grades; it encompasses the holistic development of each child. Recognizing the profound impact that mental health has on overall well-being, schools are increasingly embracing initiatives to promote mindfulness, empathy, and emotional resilience.

Imagine a classroom where not only algebraic equations are solved but also emotional equations are acknowledged. Picture a scenario where teachers are not just mentors of subjects but also guides through the labyrinth of emotions that adolescence brings. It is within this framework that the seeds of mental awareness are sown.

One key element in this nurturing process is education about mental health. Just as we teach children about physical health and hygiene, incorporating lessons on mental well-being becomes imperative. Simple yet impactful lessons on stress management, coping mechanisms, and the importance of seeking help when needed can empower students with tools for a lifetime.

Beyond the curriculum, the atmosphere within schools plays a pivotal role. Establishing safe spaces where students feel comfortable expressing their emotions without judgment fosters a culture of openness. Teachers, often the unsung heroes, become pillars of support, not only academically but emotionally.

Integrating mindfulness practices into the daily routine is another effective way to promote mental well-being. Short sessions of meditation or mindful breathing exercises can help students center themselves, enhance focus, and alleviate the anxieties that may accompany academic challenges.

Suchetana Paul

PRT

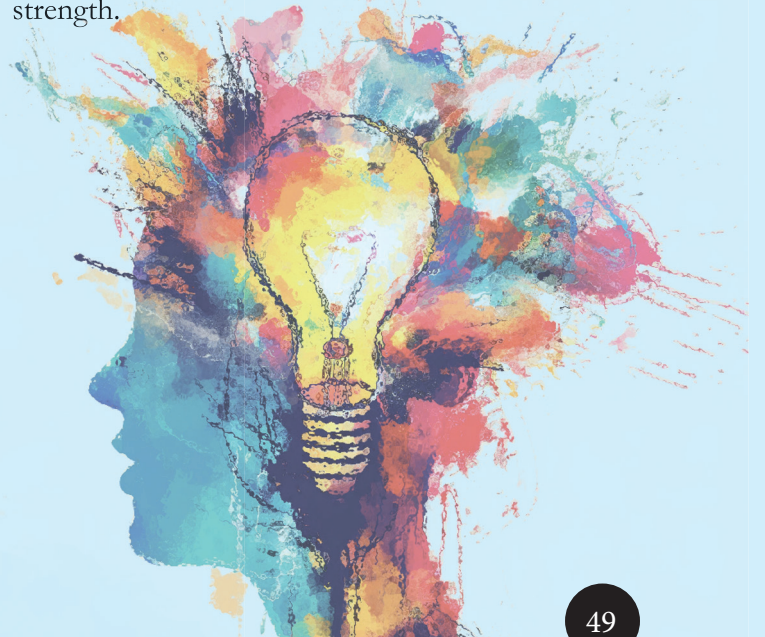
Cambridge School, Indirapuram

Furthermore, extracurricular activities that emphasize teamwork, collaboration, and emotional intelligence contribute significantly to a child's social and emotional development. Sports, Arts, and community service projects become avenues for self-discovery, building resilience, and understanding the value of collective well-being.

In this journey towards mental awareness, parents play an integral role. Collaboration between schools and families creates a support system that envelops children with care. Workshops and seminars for parents on recognizing signs of distress, effective communication, and creating a healthy home environment contributes to a comprehensive approach.

As we tread this path, of being aware it's essential to dispel the stigma surrounding mental health. Normalizing conversations about emotions, struggles, and seeking help eradicates the notion that vulnerability is a weakness. By doing so, we equip our students with the courage to confront challenges head-on and the wisdom to understand that seeking help is an act of strength.

In conclusion, nurturing minds and fostering mental awareness in schools is not just a trend; it is a fundamental shift in our approach to education. It's about recognizing that education goes beyond textbooks and exams, encompassing the delicate landscape of emotions. As we collectively invest in the mental well-being of our students, we sow the seeds of a compassionate, resilient, and empathetic generation ready to face the challenges of the future with not just intelligence but also emotional strength.



“Nurturing Hearts : A Symphony of Emotional Resilience in the Educational Landscape”

In the tender cradle of education, where the vibrant mosaic of young minds unfurls, the timeless wisdom of Maya Angelou wafts through the air like a comforting breeze: “We may encounter many defeats, but we must not be defeated.” This poignant sentiment encapsulates the evolving role of schools, which are gradually transforming into havens that extend beyond the realm of textbooks. In their embrace, they delicately nurture not only intellectual growth but also emotional resilience and heartfelt connections.

Imagine the sunrise of a school day—the hushed rustle of backpacks, the shimmering anticipation in eager eyes, and the unspoken promise of discovery. In this realm of boundless potential, educators transcend their conventional roles. They become conductors of a symphony where the harmonies of emotional well-being seamlessly intertwine with the crescendos of intellectual growth, creating an atmosphere that resonates with empathy, understanding, and compassion.

Amidst the rhythmic hum of academic pursuits, schools are now weaving mindfulness practices into the daily fabric. These practices are not just tools for academic success; they are essential threads in the melodic tapestry of emotional resilience. Physical well-being is not merely a note in the score but a melodic thread, with daily physical education and wellness weeks becoming indispensable compositions for nurturing both minds and bodies.

In the age of screens, schools face the formidable challenge of guiding balanced technology usage. Digital literacy programs transcend cautionary tales, casting technology as a gentle guide for learning and communication rather than a stress-inducing spectre. The aim is not to shield students from the digital world but to equip them, fostering responsible behaviour and a healthy relationship with technology. Resilience, often the unsung hero of the academic narrative, takes centre stage in these evolving sanctuaries. Schools are now laboratories where setbacks are not perceived as stumbling blocks but as transformative stepping stones.

Emotional intelligence assumes the role of a soft glow, illuminating the winding corridors of school life. It is not merely a theoretical concept;

it is a guiding light that helps students navigate the nuanced terrain of empathy and self-awareness. This illumination enriches the mosaic of their connections with genuine warmth, fostering deeper and more meaningful relationships. The creation of safe spaces within educational realms is a testament to the unwavering commitment to inclusivity. This goes beyond rhetoric; it is a well-lived experience within these nurturing environments. In these spaces, every student feels not just heard but profoundly valued and seen, akin to a cherished melody in the heart. Inclusivity becomes an integral part of the symphony, weaving a tapestry that celebrates diversity and promotes a sense of belongingness.

As the symphony of the school experience reaches its poignant zenith, counselling services and parental engagement emerge as tender notes. Seeking help is not a sign of weakness; it is a beacon of courage lighting the path to overall well-being. Parents, as co-nurturers, extend the dialogue beyond the school gates, weaving an intricate and seamless mosaic of support within the cherished confines of home. Cultural sensitivity and diversity are not abstract notions but living, breathing principles, acknowledging that mental well-being is a diverse fusion of experiences. Each note contributes to a magnificent collective narrative that resonates with the deeply personal stories of every student. By celebrating cultural diversity, schools are fostering an environment where every individual's unique experiences are not only acknowledged but embraced.

In conclusion, the symphony of nurturing minds and fostering mental health awareness within schools is not just a melody but a poignant and heartfelt composition. The evolving role of schools transcends textbooks, becoming sanctuaries where children don't just gain knowledge but tenderly navigate the intricate landscape of emotions, build fortitude, and forge connections that echo with heartfelt sincerity. As each school day concludes, let the echoes of understanding, support, and resilience reverberate, affirming the profound impact of schools and the dedicated educators and mentors who sculpt resilient, well-balanced individuals destined to shape a future imbued with compassion.

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Boosting Well-Being with Art and Creative Expressions

Amid massive increase in the number of cases of stress, anxiety and panic in mankind, there has been a huge shift in people's mindset and approach towards mental health. With the advancement of Science and technology and the mad rush of urban lives, the impact of 'Digital Dependency' and 'Poor Time Management' can be evidently seen among children of all age groups. Here comes the significant role of schools and teachers. The challenges are magnified by the limited attention span of children, making the task even more complex. In times past, students easily approached teachers and shared their concerns, but today, innovative methodologies are imperative to foster an environment where students willingly express themselves and attain a state of contentment and joy.

Creative Arts and Expression, serves as the embodiment and manifestation of human creativity and imagination. Whether conveyed through poetry, doodles, or music, art in its diverse forms encapsulates ideas, conveys profound emotions, and unravels experiences, unveiling perspectives that mirror individual and collective circumstances. What adds a captivating allure to creative arts is its inherent accessibility. It serves as an inclusive platform where anyone can craft something meaningful. With numerous outlets for expression, Creative Arts become a potent vehicle that not only unites us but also provides a shared sense of reality. This shared reality, intricately woven with artistic endeavors, helps us feel interconnected, offering a means to make sense of the complexities of the world around us.

Arts wields a transformative influence, captivating not only our hearts but also our minds and souls. With its universal appeal, it possess the extraordinary ability to elevate empathy, compassion, and connection on an individual level. On a broader societal scale, art emerges as a unifying force capable of dismantling social barriers and fortifying interpersonal bonds. Beyond the realm of emotions, creative expression holds the power to enhance overall well-being. It serves as a tool for self-discovery, enabling us to understand ourselves better and encouraging shifts in perspectives that reinforce positive behaviors. Moreover, the physiological impact of artistic engagement is profound, with the act of creating

art shown to reduce blood pressure, bolster the immune system, enhance brain cognition, and combat inflammation. Arts, therefore, is not merely a form of expression; they are a holistic catalyst for personal and societal flourishing.

Indeed, there is a discernible surge in the popularity of engaging in the arts as a means to enhance well-being. The transformative power of Arts is increasingly recognized for its efficacy in aiding individuals dealing with various mental health conditions and addressing psychological distress, particularly among students.

One of the most remarkable aspects of this trend is the capacity of artistic endeavors to foster mental health improvement through creativity. For many students, the process of making art serves as a profound outlet, allowing them to express themselves without the necessity of verbal communication. This non-verbal form of expression becomes a powerful tool, enabling individuals to navigate and articulate their emotions, contributing significantly to their mental and emotional well-being. Art and creative expressions serve as catalysts for students to achieve optimal performance levels while deriving immense satisfaction from their creative pursuits. This engagement not only enhances mindfulness but also fosters a sense of calmness in children, promoting a state of emotional balance.

At its core, creative expression is a process that encourages students to be aware of their emotions and empowers them to manifest those feelings in tangible forms. Whether through drawing, writing, dancing, acting, or other creative outlets, students find a medium to externalize and explore their emotions. This process not only facilitates self-discovery but also contributes to a greater sense of self-acceptance, nurturing a positive and affirming relationship with themselves.

In conclusion, translating experiences and emotions into words, music, movement, or images offers students a healthy and safe avenue for processing their thoughts and feelings. Creative expression becomes a therapeutic outlet, allowing them to navigate the complexities of their inner world in a constructive manner.

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PGT

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A Note from The Counsellor's Diary

In my room, flipping through old files, I sense someone looking at me through the window. I check but don't see anyone. I hear a faint whisper and see a pale, fragile girl at my gate scolding her friend. I ask if she's here to meet me. With an awkward smile, she walks in and sits. A silence fills the room, and I wait for her to talk.

She isn't unfamiliar; I've seen her around, a typical teen student. Today, something's different, bothering her. She looks at me and says, "Ma'am, I need help." My first day as a School Counsellor unfolds.

Years in the Psychology lab prepared me for this. I listen as she unravels her problems at school and home. She's like a bursting volcano, sharing every disturbing aspect of her life.

Years into the field of Psychology, I have encountered numerous cases of varying degrees, a domain of utmost importance in the present scenario.

It's surprising when even sixth-graders discuss family issues, friendship problems, understanding emotions, stress, and competition. Our society emphasizes academic brilliance but neglects mental health. The COVID pandemic highlighted this, revealing socially anxious students, those from broken homes, and dependence on gadgets.

During counseling sessions, I often hear statements like "Ma'am, please don't call me from class; everyone will know I come to you" or "Ma'am, kindly keep this information confidential." It's disconcerting that even in the "Gen Z" era, there's a profound fear of judgment for seeking counseling, echoing concerns from previous generations.

They recognize the need for help but remain inhibited by societal perceptions. Breaking this stigma remains crucial for fostering a more open dialogue about mental health.

Stigma surrounding mental health issues often leads to suffering in secret. UNICEF's survey shows alarming rates of poor mental health among young people in India. Schools took on the task of reteaching students post-pandemic.

Efforts are made to mainstream mental health, breaking the stigma. The counseling cell's main focus is to create a warm, non-judgmental environment. Integrating mental health education into the curriculum reduces stigma. Embracing mental health as a way of life involves fostering a culture of well-being in schools. This includes mindfulness practices, coping mechanisms, and resources for emotional expression. In the present times schools, the second home for a child, fosters inclusivity and developing absolute harmony and well being.

Schools have become a safe space for students, with efforts to make mental health a priority. From dancing and singing to art, students are encouraged to be themselves without fear of judgment. The focus is on overall development, ensuring a nurturing environment where everyone can unwind and express themselves freely.

Harnessing hands where counseling interactions and peer mentorship sessions are done has unfolded the truth that there is everyone to help, but only when one breaks the barrier and speaks uninhibitedly. Encouraging self-reflection emphasizes mental health's importance in overall well-being. The school stands as a major pillar in mental health, aiding students in accessing the benefits of counsellors, peer educators, mentors, and buddies, which might otherwise be challenging for them.

Supporting students' mental health is crucial for success in all areas of life. Emotional well-being makes learning easier and helps handle stress. Schools, by ensuring that the students feel mentally secure, must contribute to their overall development as resilient individuals.

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Harnessing Creative Expression for Mental Well-being

The quest for mental well-being has become a priority for many. In a world that often values academic prowess over holistic development, the significance of creative expression as a catalyst for mental well-being cannot be overstated. Art, music, writing, and other creative outlets have unparalleled therapeutic effects that extend far beyond mere hobbies—they serve as powerful tools in nurturing emotional resilience and promoting mental health. Integrating these forms of creative expression into the school curriculum can profoundly benefit students by fostering self-discovery, emotional regulation, and overall well-being. After all, creativity is the 21st-century skill that is the most sought-after to thrive. Creativity is an essential skill of the future.

Art is a form of expression that goes beyond spoken communication. It enables people to express complicated emotions, thoughts, and experiences that would be difficult to express vocally. The creative process engages the mind in a way that encourages self-discovery and self-expression, both of which are important components of mental health.

One of the most important ways art helps toward mental well-being is by offering a therapeutic outlet for stress and anxiety. Participating in creative pursuits has been demonstrated to lower cortisol levels, the stress hormone. Furthermore, the act of producing art encourages mindfulness, which is a condition of concentrated attention on the here and now. This practice of mindfulness can provide a break from the never-ending flow of ideas and anxieties that frequently fuel mental health issues. Children's self-esteem can be raised and their sense of accomplishment can grow when they create art. Children can feel more confident about their abilities and themselves when they see something worthwhile that they have created. This can be especially beneficial for kids who are having issues with confidence or low self-esteem.

Artistic expression, whether through visual arts, painting, or sculpting, provides a safe space for individuals to explore and process complex emotions. When words fall short, art becomes the language through which inner thoughts and feelings



find expression. Through strokes of a brush or the moulding of clay, students can externalize their inner worlds, gaining insights into their emotions and experiences. Creativity can ignite those hard-to-reach students. When academically challenged students are allowed to express their creativity or investigate a personal passion, the results can be astounding. “Put that canvas in front of them or give them tools to experiment, their creativity just oozes out of them.” This act of creation acts as a form of catharsis, relieving stress and anxiety while encouraging a deeper understanding of oneself.

Similarly, the melodic harmony of music possesses a remarkable ability to soothe the mind and heal the soul. Engaging in musical activities, be it singing, playing instruments, or composing, activates multiple regions of the brain associated with emotions and cognition. The rhythmic patterns and harmonies synchronize with emotional states, offering an avenue for emotional release and regulation. Moreover, music fosters a sense of togetherness when practiced collaboratively, promoting social connections and a supportive environment—a crucial aspect of mental well-being.

Art can also help people make social relationships, which are essential for mental health. Individuals can share their creative journeys in group art activities such as community art projects or art therapy workshops. This promotes a sense of community, which reduces feelings of isolation and loneliness, which are common concerns for those struggling with mental health issues.

Writing, in its various forms such as journaling, poetry, or storytelling, empowers individuals to externalize their thoughts and feelings in a structured manner. Through writing, students can articulate their innermost thoughts, fears, and aspirations, gaining clarity and a sense of control over their emotions. The process of putting

thoughts into words offers a sense of validation and relief, reducing stress and promoting mental clarity.

These creative outlets serve as forms of expression and cultivate crucial life skills. Tasks involving creativity enhance higher-order cognitive skills — They encourage problem-solving, critical thinking, making connections, and innovation, fostering a mindset that transcends conventional boundaries. In an era where adaptability and resilience are paramount, these skills are invaluable in navigating life’s challenges.

Moreover, educators trained in both the subject matter and therapeutic aspects of these creative outlets can guide students in their exploration. Creating a supportive environment that encourages risk-taking and self-expression is crucial in harnessing the full therapeutic potential of these mediums.

Furthermore, schools should advocate for the inclusion of creative art therapies in mental health support services. Art therapy, music therapy, and other forms of creative therapies have shown immense success in treating various mental health conditions. Integrating these therapies within school counseling services can offer students alternative avenues for managing stress, anxiety, and emotional challenges.

By embracing creative expression within the educational framework, schools can empower students to become resilient, self-aware individuals equipped with invaluable tools for navigating the complexities of life. It’s time to recognize the profound impact of art, music, writing, and creative outlets in nurturing mental well-being and ensure that they are not just extracurricular but integral components of our educational systems. The fusion of creativity and education holds the key to cultivating emotionally intelligent, well-rounded individuals who are equipped to thrive in an ever-evolving world.

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Unravelling Positive Parenting : A Blueprint for Children's Mental Wellbeing

When it comes to the arduous epoch that is a child's growth, the intricately woven threads of mental health demand meticulous attention. It is becoming undeniably clear that the influence parents and guardians wield over the mental well-being of their children is an indispensable facet of robust development. This realization stems from the expanding comprehension of psychological well-being. The paramount importance of parental involvement in fostering awareness of mental health and implementing tangible solutions for the well-being of both children and adolescents is of utmost relevance.

It is imperative for parents to actively engage in their children's lives, ensuring the cultivation of a sound mental state. Numerous studies affirm that children benefit from parental involvement, showcasing enhanced emotional regulation and diminished instances of anxiety and sadness. A publication in the "Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry" asserts that consistent parental engagement from an early age correlates with substantial advancements in children's academic prowess and social adeptness. The provision of a secure environment, characterized by supportive parenting, not only fosters self-expression but also equips children with coping mechanisms to navigate diverse stress factors.

Establishing an atmosphere of candid dialogue, wherein sentiments are not only recognized but also affirmed, constitutes a pivotal stride in any communicative endeavour. Instilling in children the assurance to articulate their emotions devoid of apprehension about evaluation is imperative. Maintaining a well-informed stance on mental health issues and disseminating this knowledge to children in a developmentally suitable manner enables them to independently comprehend and articulate their emotions. Organizing family discussions on topics like stress management or the significance of mental health demystifies intricate concepts, rendering them more accessible to youngsters. UNICEF often conducts research on child development, including emotional intelligence. The recent study regarding "Building the Brain's 'Air Traffic Control' System: How Early Experiences Shape the Development of Executive Function", delves into the impact of early experiences on the overall mental health. Thus, nurturing children's emotional intelligence is

integral to fostering awareness of mental health, a facet intrinsic to emotional intelligence. Effective parental guidance and modelling stand out as pre-eminent methods for instructing children on the recognition and judicious regulation of their sentiments.

Wielding proactive empathy, elucidating diverse scenarios and articulating potential emotional responses is advantageous. Collaborative engagement in mindfulness techniques, encompassing exercises like deep breathing, serves as a collective approach to stress management. Vigilance regarding alterations in behaviour becomes crucial, as indicators of potential mental health challenges may manifest in activities withdrawal, shifts in eating or sleeping patterns, or mood fluctuations. Should assistance be required, there must be no hesitation in seeking it. The significance of early intervention in addressing mental health concerns is paramount and cannot be overstressed.

Communicating the dynamics as a gateway to children's parents possess the capability to aid their children when signs of anxiety surface before examinations, engaging them in meaningful conversations, offering reassurance, and, if necessary, seeking counsel from a school professional. Resilience, defined as the rapid recovery from adversity, stands as a pivotal skill in the realm of mental well-being. Encouraging problem-solving skills is integral to fostering resilience, urging children to set achievable objectives and celebrate even their minutest accomplishments. Longitudinal studies, exemplified by research from the American Psychological Association (APA) and the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), delve into the correlation between youth resilience and its enduring impact on later mental health. Notably, these studies reveal that individuals who acquire the ability to rebound from adversity during their formative years are better equipped to navigate challenges in adulthood.

We may also say that the nexus of inclusive parenting and mental wellness is the precedence of the approaches of positive parenting, which include loving, guiding, and respect, cannot be understated and have a substantial impact on the mental health of a child. The parent should encourage appropriate behaviour by employing the use of positive reinforcement. Regulatory frameworks must be

unequivocal, unwavering, and elucidated with rationale. Engaging children in communal activities, such as shared hobbies or familial excursions, fosters familial bonds. Establishing an inclusive familial milieu that celebrates diversity and accommodates individual needs is of unparalleled significance. This approach serves to instil a profound sense of acceptance and belonging, both imperative for the preservation of mental health.

This inclusiveness will undoubtedly foster community connect where parents will become the architect of mental health awareness. Regarding the communal sphere, parental engagement transcends domestic confines. Actively participating with educators, counsellors, and fellow parents culminates in the establishment of a supportive network. This collaborative effort not only fortifies the educational ecosystem but also serves as a bastion for fostering awareness and understanding of mental health issues within the community. The influential study by Henderson, A. T., & Mapp, K. L. (2002), “A New Wave of Evidence: The Impact of School, Family, and Community Connections on Student Achievement”, explored the correlation

between parental involvement in school activities and student achievement. It emphasized the interconnectedness of the school, family, and community in fostering academic success. Such involvement aligns with the broader objective of creating an informed, compassionate environment that contributes to the holistic well-being of both students and their families.

Thus, in a succinct summation it may be said that the pivotal role of parents and guardians in mitigating the stigma surrounding mental health and nurturing the holistic well-being of their progeny cannot be overstated. Through fostering open communication, cultivating emotional intelligence, instilling resilience, practicing positive parenting, and community involvement, parents wield the power to lay a robust foundation for their children’s mental health. This proactive stance not only benefits the individual child but also contributes to the cultivation of a societal ethos characterized by health and compassion. In essence, the parental role becomes an instrumental force in shaping a collective environment conducive to mental well-being and societal flourishing.

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Cultural Sensitivity and Diversity

A quote by the award-winning author of children's books, Stephen Cosgrove goes well for every educator, "Never judge someone by the way he looks or a book by the way it's covered; For inside those tattered pages, there's a lot to be discovered". Students may belong to diverse cultural backgrounds but they may grow up one day like APJ Abdul Kalam from Tamil Nadu or Leena Nair from Maharashtra.

Including sundry perspectives in Literature, studying the global history of assorted communities, performing multicultural arts, enjoying linguistic diversity, and incorporating examples and case studies from different cultures in science and technology together as a curriculum makes it relevant and responsive to the needs of a diverse student population. Creating such a curriculum is an ongoing process and it needs to be taught with flexibility and a commitment to continuous improvement.

Sensitivity and acceptance towards socially diverse groups like different socio-cultural identities, geographical identities, gender identities, individuals in compromised socio-economic conditions, and children in vulnerable situations need to be included to achieve economic and social mobility, inclusion, and equality. Certain initiatives ensure that all students from such groups, despite inherent obstacles, are provided with various targeted opportunities to enter and excel in the educational system. For example, teachers and parents can teach students how to synthesize cultural differences into their knowledge base. Learning with diverse cultures will promote creativity, and acceptance and strengthen social skills. This helps the learners to grow mentally healthy, develop harmoniously, and benefit as per their capabilities. No advantages or disadvantages should be forced on students only because of their sociocultural backgrounds.

To achieve Goal 4 (SDG-4) of the 2030 Global Agenda for Sustainable Development the new education policy has also suggested many fundamental principles that will guide the education system at large. This goal was adopted by India in 2015 to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all

by 2030. This is also one of the fundamental needs of learners today, as it develops respect for diversity, an amalgamation of each group, and thus promotes mental health for society.

Acknowledging cultural differences and respecting diversity includes recognizing, identifying, and fostering the unique capabilities of each student, sensitizing teachers as well as parents to promote students' holistic development, including the local context in all curriculum, pedagogy, and policy, always keeping in mind that education is a concurrent subject, and full equity to ensure that all students can thrive in the education system.

Identifying differences, highlighting diversity, and prioritizing one group over another brings psychological pressure and disassociation that results in a poor education system and adversely impacts the growth of the nation. U-DISE 2016-17 data is alarming when it states that about 19.6% of students belong to Scheduled Castes at the primary level, which falls to 17.3% at the higher secondary level. These enrolment drop-offs are more severe for Scheduled Tribes students (10.6% to 6.8%). According to the Census of India 2011, the Muslim population is 17.22 crore (14.23%), Christians 2.78 crore (2.30%), Sikh 2.08 crore (1.72%), Buddhist 84.43 lakh (0.70%) and Jain 44.51 lakh (0.37%). This shows wide cultural diversity and the interest of each community is the responsibility of everyone residing here. The root of this realization lies in the inclusive education system.

NEP 2020 has also emphasized inculcating an inclusive educational structure and inclusive educational culture in the education system by making corresponding changes in curriculum incorporating materials on human values such as respect for all persons, empathy, tolerance, human rights, gender equality, non-violence, global citizenship, inclusion, and equity. Hence, it becomes the responsibility of all the stakeholders to overcome the barriers and remove biases and stereotypes through sensitization programs. Promoting inclusion, bringing out equity, and developing respect for diversity through developing an understanding of various cultures, religions, languages, gender identities, etc. among children, teachers, and other school functionaries.

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Navigating through a Roller-Coaster Ride : A Celestial Trapeze Act

My thousand pranaams to the Gurus of my past lives, present, and for lives to come!

Writing about mental health, one automatically comes to a pause! Are you mental? As my daughter chips in, “Yes everyone is!” Agreed. We are all born with our pre-dispositions, strengths, and weaknesses. Psychology as a field of experimental study began in 1854 in Leipzig, Germany. What is to be done about an area the West started working on in the 18th century? It is not a disparagement of Western science but training our lenses to connect all that study with our ancient science. If we delve into our own Vedic Knowledge Systems, it is recorded sometime after 600 [C.E.], Brihat Parashara Hora Shastra was written. Our sages had meditated upon all the aspects of human and celestial existence since the dawn of civilization. In this write-up, I would like to focus on Jyotish Shastra popularly known as Vedic astrology which can be referred to as the ‘Code of Cosmos’ and its inevitable unfolding of karmas. The time, place, and date (Kaal, Samay, Desh) of our birth hold the key to how our life will unfold, it sets the stage for how we deal with the world and the first impression that the people have of us. I would make a case for Vedic astrology as it provides the true knowledge of our true self and our soul’s purpose. Understanding the serpentine coil of desires through Rahu and Ketu liberates us, and sets us on a path of self-realization.

I shall do so with the help of a case study: a brilliant student of mine often looked lonely and refused to engage in any group activity. That was the time I had started studying astrology after having scoffed at it all my young years. While putting my observations in her file, I was startled to find her birth details. when I started checking, she was going through Ketu dasha, (For the uninitiated reader, Ketu is all

about dealing with past life issues, kind of being in a headless state, isolation, and for some moving towards spiritual knowledge). When I saw that all of her weird behaviour started making sense. This incident is one of the many that has convinced me that we Bhartiyas have lost an integral way to understand and navigate our lives for the better. When we feel trapped by anxiety, depression, and mental health issues, all of it can be healed through understanding our planetary positions. If young people start with the basic study of Vedic Astrology, it would help to understand that no phase would stay forever and life is all about evolving and finding our true nature.

Once we start on that path, we know that our navigation of life must balance the roadblocks, the sunny days, and the days when we feel lost, the days when the cosmic energy is perfect for us. It would be nice to have answers and not go into guilt-tripping. If I were to make it interdisciplinary, combining astrology and psychology, through both these fields we come to understand ourselves. From there we can take up the path of remedies related to our horoscope or go for Expressive Art Therapy. At times, people who go only for clinical counselling, feel it to be incomplete. Maslow’s hierarchy of needs also talks about the top requirement of a person and that is the spiritual need of a person. Once the basics have been met, going on a path of self-actualization. Trans-personal therapy helps us to become more spiritual. After all, life is all about karma and the resultant situation where we find ourselves in. That is the ultimate dream and desire – to remove ignorance, understand our true self, and find the elixir of life, peace forever.

ॐ असतो मा सद्गमय । तमसो मा ज्योतर्गमय ।
मृत्योर्माग अमृतं मय । ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः ॥

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“Raising Voices, Breaking Chains : Advocating for Mental Health Equality”

“A society that values mental health opens doors to hope, healing and unfiltered conversations.” - Anonymous

Drawing inference from the aforesaid quote, it becomes apparent that mental health requires elevated levels of hope, healing and unfiltered conversations.

Prioritizing mental health in schools creates an environment where hope is the essence. Acknowledging and empathising with mental health challenges helps in ensuring every affected student perceives a glimmer of hope and believes in the possibility of recovery and progress towards normalcy.

Healing is a multifaceted approach that addresses the emotional well-being of students. We, as academicians, need to ensure we ignite the desire to strengthen and conquer their fears.

The term “unfiltered conversations” stresses the importance of open and honest dialogue about mental health within a school setting. In a school that values mental health, students feel more at ease sharing their experiences without fear of judgment or stigma. This openness encourages genuine discussions, breaking down the barriers that often surround mental health topics and breeds a non-prohibitive and fearless environment.

As academicians, addressing challenges starts by identifying issues and understanding how they affect each student differently. Therefore, it's crucial to establish personalized support systems with a defined goal-oriented approach towards improving their overall well-being and bolstering their self-worth.

In essence, while schools prioritize mental health, they need to create an environment where hope can thrive, the healing process is facilitated and conversations about mental health are sincere and uninhibited. This cultural shift fosters a more compassionate and understanding school community, ultimately contributing to the well-being of its students.

Creating Mental Fitness Ambassadors in schools has demonstrated a consistent record of enhancing mental well-being within peer groups. MFAs are compassionate students chosen voluntarily or via nomination, followed by training sessions on mental health awareness, active listening and peer

support. The success of MFAs is attributed to students' inclination to confiding more in their friends, fostering candid and open conversations about mental health. It is important for students to have candid conversations with peers, which this is a two-prong approach as it inculcates empathy and leadership skills in MFAs and leads to unfiltered conversations within peers without having a fear of being judged.

Fostering intellectual well-being extends beyond mere academic success, encompassing the development of critical thinking, creativity and a lasting passion for learning. Schools serve as fertile grounds for intellectual growth, with the creation of an environment that fosters curiosity and exploration being supreme. When students engage intellectually, there is a higher likelihood of developing a positive attitude towards learning, ultimately enhancing cognitive skills and problem-solving abilities.

Acknowledging that mental health is integral to overall well-being, schools must go beyond conventional academic concerns and prioritize the emotional and psychological welfare of students. Actively promoting mental health awareness establishes a supportive atmosphere where students feel comfortable discussing their emotions and seeking assistance when needed. This proactive approach significantly contributes to dismantling the stigma associated with mental health issues.

Cultivating hope in students involves creating a supportive and positive environment that fosters optimism, resilience and a confidence in positive outcomes. Guiding students to set attainable goals, teaching coping strategies, recognising big and small achievements, ensuring support services, exemplifying hopeful behaviour, promoting self-reflection and creating a safe school environment can be extremely beneficial in fostering hope among students.

Technology has offered solutions, but has questions too. We, as academicians, and parents have experienced gaming accessibility, age-inappropriate content, screen time and the pressure to maintain a curated online presence (FOMO). As few identified pros and cons of technologies to balance the access we need to set access boundaries (Parental control, tech free zone and screen time management, digital

detox periods, more Face-to-Face Interactions and leading by example)

While encountering academic challenges is inherent in the educational journey, excessive stress can have harmful effects on students' mental health. Schools should adopt strategies to manage academic stress, such as discarding rigid evaluation methods, providing counselling services and fostering a culture that values importance of effort. Recognizing the pressures students face, allows schools to play a pivotal role in mitigating the negative effect on mental health.

Mindfulness practices for improving the efficiency of stress management and nurturing mental well-being should be included into the school curriculum. Integrating practices like meditation and breathing exercises empowers students with valuable coping mechanisms to confront challenges. These practices not only enhance concentration and focus, but also, cultivates emotional resilience, equipping students with valuable life skills.

Inclusivity, a non-negotiable moral imperative is integrated into our schools' growth. Empowering differently-abled individuals in decisions related to their mental health is of great importance. Recognizing their autonomy and involving them in developing personalized strategies for coping and well-being is a must now.

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Educators serve as mentors and guides in students' lives, emphasizing the importance of equipping them with knowledge and skills to support mental health. Professional development programs that focus on understanding mental health issues, identifying warning signs and implementing effective intervention strategies empower educators to create a safe and nurturing learning environment. Fostering open communication between students and teachers enhances the overall well-being of the educational community.

In order to build a supportive community schools should actively strive to foster a sense of belonging and community among students. Peer support programs, mentoring initiatives and collaborative projects cultivate positive relationships and provide students with a robust support system. When students feel connected to their peers and educators, they are more likely to share concerns and seek assistance when facing challenges, contributing to a healthier overall learning environment.

Making mental health a priority and nurturing intellectual well-being in educational institutions is not just a responsibility; it is essential for developing well-rounded individuals. A holistic approach that values the overall growth of students helps create a generation that excels not only academically but also in emotional resilience.

Exploring Human Experience : Cultivating Mental Well-being

Embarking on the journey from a vulnerable student to a dedicated psychotherapist, my story unfolds within the nurturing embrace of Uttam School for Girls. Growing up in a joint family, I grappled with agency and expression. It was in this backdrop that the school became my safe space, shaping my personality and laying the foundation for the therapist I am today. Studying Psychology became my anchor, exploring human experiences, emotions, and behavior. Despite the stigma around mental health, I found solace in themes like the self, trauma, and gender identities.

As I transitioned from a student to an educator, my work with children unveiled the profound impact of unconditional support, advocacy and expression through art therapy. In group sessions, I witnessed resistance evolving into trust, creating emotionally safe spaces for students to open up and express themselves. Integrating art into my lessons, I intentionally fostered a compassionate and **mindful** community within the school.

Guided by the teachings of Dr. Shelja Sen, I recognized the power of language in shaping narratives. Reframing my vocabulary, I aimed to empower my students, celebrating their uniqueness and cultivating positive self-perceptions. Recognizing the importance of fostering resilience and emotional well-being, I initiated practices that became pillars of support, helping students navigate complexities and emerge stronger.

The W.O.W. Approach, Fostering Brilliance through Language and Inclusivity empowers the students and enriches their narratives highlighting the three powers of 'Worthy', 'Original', and 'Welcome.' Each child is inherently **Worthy**—a vital ingredient for their growth. **Originality**, the celebration of uniqueness, guides them towards their individual brilliance. **Welcome** ensures that every child feels accepted, creating an environment where authenticity is valued over conformity.

Empowering Narratives: Language Reframing and Personal Empowerment

As a school counsellor, my reflections often center on the crucial role of creating safe spaces that shape a child's learning journey. Recalling those special school moments when real learning blossomed—a

space free from fear. I think about key questions like empowering narratives flavoured with personal anecdotes where one may question, Is my class a safe place for my students? Can they make mistakes without feeling embarrassed? Have we built an environment that encourages them to take risks? Is there a culture of mutual respect, where children support each other's learning journey?

Delving into the wisdom of **Brene Brown's "Rising Strong,"** we recognize the power of reckoning, rumbling, and revolution in breaking the cycle of limiting stories. While reckoning with our emotions towards the child, whether irritating or annoying, we then rumble through damaging narratives, discarding insufficiency stories. The revolution unfolds as *we replace them with narratives that celebrate each child's uniqueness and potential.* At Uttam School for Girls, our commitment to connection is not just an ideology but a living reality, a journey where every child's story is nurtured, and their brilliance is celebrated.

The heartbeat of kindness echoes through our hallways, resonating with UNESCO's call for fostering inclusivity. Kindness isn't a buzzword; it's a daily practice. Purposefully painted floors and kindness corners exemplify this commitment. The transformative power of this practice, where a struggling student found solace, turning the kindness corner into acceptance.

In the hustle of the day, schools embrace mindful time, being present in the here and now, offering an "I see you, I hear you" to every child.

Mindful walks, nature rangolis, mindful poses and breathing, integrated into classes through these programs, serve as tools that help students navigate challenges with resilience and composure. This shift is not just witnessed in students' transformations from tense shoulders to relaxed postures and anxious minds to composed spirits.

Embarking on a storytelling adventure, tales unfolding through art becomes a visual narrative. The heartbeat of every narrative resonates in the **listening circle**—a space where students express themselves openly and authentically. It celebrates the bonds of empathy and understanding within the school community. The energy of events is more

than a performance; it's a declaration of narrative commitment to nurturing a culture of emotional well-being. Each narrative shouts out our dedication to **inclusivity, diversity, and the creation of an environment where every student can shine, thrive, and truly belong.**

In a mission to foster connection and advocacy, the **Manodarpan** initiative by the Ministry of Education acts as a spark that ignites student engagement and peer mentorship. This initiative weaves threads of support, ensuring each student is not just heard but genuinely valued in our close-knit community.

The *morning assembly* routine has evolved into a mindful exercise, ensuring that everyone is not merely physically present but fully engaged in the moment. The holistic report card is more than an evaluation tool; it reflects self-awareness and constructive peer engagement. These practices seamlessly integrate into the school climate, reinforcing our commitment to mental well-being.

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In tune with the commitment of an inclusive society students can freely express themselves, doodle on the walls, reflect, and engage in feeling checks with peers. This initiative fosters an environment where individual expression is valued, creating visual reminders of the dedication to set mental health and well-being. These changes underscore the school's role in making every space safe, encouraging students to internalize these practices for their holistic development.

Being a witness to the journey of nurturing minds and fostering well-being is incredible. It's not just about lessons; it's about unlocking growth through unique practices that make every student's heart beat a little brighter. Such initiatives help witness the growth of not just individuals but a thriving community of mental health advocates. The messages of gratitude from these students, now equipped to navigate life's challenges with resilience, amplify the voices and shape the futures of the entire school community. This is the essence of empowerment—a rewarding cycle where every heart, once nurtured, becomes a beacon of strength for others.

The Impact of Screen Time on Mental Health

In an era dominated by technology, where screens are an integral part of our daily lives, concerns about the effects of excessive screen time on mental health have become increasingly prevalent. As we immerse ourselves in the digital world, it is crucial to strike a balance between harnessing the benefits of technology and mitigating its potential negative impact on our mental well-being. Delving into the research on the relationship between screen time and mental health, offering insights into the consequences of excessive usage and practical suggestions are highlighted to enhance a balanced approach.

A growing body of research suggests a correlation between excessive screen time and various mental health issues. Prolonged exposure to screens, especially on devices such as smartphones, tablets, and computers, has been associated with disrupted sleep patterns, increased feelings of anxiety and depression, and a decline in overall psychological well-being. Numerous studies highlight the negative impact of screen time on sleep quality. The blue light emitted by screens suppresses melatonin production, a hormone that regulates sleep. Excessive screen time, particularly before bedtime, can lead to difficulty in falling asleep, disrupted sleep cycles, and overall sleep deprivation, Thus contributing to mental fatigue and heightened stress levels.

Research indicates a link between heavy screen use and increased levels of anxiety and depression, particularly among adolescents and young adults. Social media in particular, has been identified as a potential catalyst for these mental health issues, fostering unrealistic standards, social comparison, and cyberbullying. Sedentary behavior associated with prolonged screen time can lead to physical health issues, such as obesity and cardiovascular problems. The interconnection between physical and mental health underscores the need for a holistic approach to well-being.

Recognizing the potential challenges posed by excessive screen time, it is essential to adopt proactive strategies to ensure a balanced relationship with technology. Here are some practical suggestions based on research findings:

Set realistic and enforceable limits on daily screen time, especially for children and adolescents. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends age-appropriate time restrictions to mitigate the adverse effects of excessive screen exposure. Encourage regular breaks from screens to allow for mental rejuvenation. Implementing “digital detox” days or weekends can significantly contribute to improved mental well-being. Engaging in offline activities fosters face-to-face interactions, reducing the negative impact of virtual socialization.

Emphasize the importance of consuming high-quality, educational, and positive content. Actively curate the digital environment to minimize exposure to harmful or distressing material. This is particularly relevant for social media, where users often encounter unrealistic portrayals and negative narratives. Promote physical activities and outdoor experiences to counterbalance sedentary screen time. Engaging in sports, recreational activities, or simply spending time in with nature has been shown to have positive effects on mental health, reducing stress and anxiety.

Implement a screen curfew at least an hour before bedtime to mitigate the impact of blue light on sleep quality. Encourage the creation of a conducive sleep environment by minimizing screen use in the bedroom and prioritizing relaxation techniques. Introduce mindfulness activities to enhance self-awareness and reduce the negative impact of screen-induced stress. Practices such as meditation, deep breathing exercises, and yoga can contribute to a more balanced and resilient mental state.

Balanced technology usage is the key to mitigating the potential adverse effects of excessive screen time on mental health. As we navigate the digital landscape, it is crucial to remain vigilant and proactive in adopting strategies that promote a healthy relationship with technology. By incorporating evidence-based recommendations, such as setting screen time limits, promoting digital detox, prioritizing quality content, and encouraging outdoor activities, individuals can strive to maintain a harmonious balance between the benefits of technology and the preservation of mental well-being.

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Narrative Healing : The Cathartic Power of Literature

The art of storytelling and writing has a cathartic power that extends its transformative touch to both collective traumas and personal suffering. Through the medium of narrative expression, individuals and communities can navigate the depths of their experiences, giving voice to emotions that may otherwise remain unarticulated. Storytelling becomes a healing process, allowing for the release of pent-up emotions, in the desire of being accepted by others and even imparting a sense of empowerment. Whether grappling with the scars of collective historical events or the nuances of personal struggles, the act of weaving words offers a therapeutic journey, fostering resilience and contributing to personal growth.

The echoes of human suffering rooted in the aftermath of two World Wars, reverberate through the narratives of our past, intertwining with India's colonial history and resonating in the tumultuous unrest of the contemporary world. India and other nations, bearing witness to colonial subjugation, contribute their threads to the book of world history, leaving imprints of struggle and resilience. As the pages turn, the recent unrest across the globe serves as a poignant reminder that the turbulence of human conflict transcends temporal and geographical boundaries, uniting humanity through the common threads of pain, survival and the pursuit of collective well-being.

Creative expression can transform pain through the act of retelling. The human experience of pain compels the emergence of testimonials, with art and literature serving as cherished conduits for expressing and delving into the causes and repercussions of traumatic events. Within this realm, the truth of one's experience finds validation through personal, subjective narratives. The victim, bearing the weight of suffering, stands as the rightful authority to articulate their anguish without requiring further legitimization beyond the sheer experience of agony. While many shy away from the public investment of their experience, a select few accept the mantle to pen it down. The written word becomes more than a record; it evolves into an active agent in the promotion of a semblance of normal life.

Literature, in this context, emerges not only as a critical interrogator of history, cultures, societies and politics but also as a spectator to the 'spectacle'

of human suffering. It provides a gateway to narratives that may be historically or culturally concealed, offering access to otherwise unavailable perspectives. To validate my claim, I will delve into Sylvia Plath's poem, "Daddy," wherein she lays bare the entire history of mass suffering. Plath's recollection of a tormented childhood memory, haunted by the persecution of her community, manifests in her poetic expression. Through her writings, Plath invokes a visceral memory of trauma, establishing her narrative as a potent means of both personal catharsis and communal resurrection.

Etched in the annals of history, truth transcends individual experiences and to effectively disseminate these truths, literature must intricately weave personal accounts of victimization into a broader cultural and historical context.

The haunting memories of distressful ordeals defy confinement to a specific space-time continuum. Events written in the past take on formidable dimensions, acquiring a palpable intensity even in their absence. While detached from the immediacy of the present, these create a vast space of intricate and diverse ramifications. Within this expansive realm, individuals who share a traumatic memory find a profound connection, irrespective of variations in the intensity or conditions of their suffering.

This shared experience, while potentially isolating one from their immediate surroundings, paradoxically draws individuals closer through the common memory of having endured together. The lived reality of one person may seem different from another, yet the shared sense of suffering forges a unique bond. When situated within shared historical spaces, this duality extends beyond individuals to encompass entire cultures and societies. Those who have been jolted by historical events find avenues, both conscious and unconscious, to relate to others who have navigated similar traumas. In this intricate rendezvous with history, survivors and victims create a tapestry that connects them on profound levels, transcending individual barriers.

The primal cry of pain predates language, yet literature, wielding the power of words, has the capacity to make a cry heard—whether passive in suffering or resounding with painful resistance. In its narration of trauma, literature serves as a

haunting echo, an enduring ghost of the event itself, ensuring that the pain is not consigned to oblivion. Events in History, etched with tales of atrocious victimization, are not merely remembered but are relieved with each recounting, becoming an indelible part of our collective consciousness.

Beyond the traumatic memory and the visceral pain, it is the persistent fear of a recurrence that permeates our psyche. Modern existence in the state is not merely overshadowed by pain but haunted by the ghost of potential repetition. Literature becomes a tool to confront and mitigate this fear, turning it into a catalyst for empowerment and mental resilience. It is the fear, not just the pain, that casts a profound shadow over our lives, underscoring the inextricable link between literature, memory, and the persistent anxieties that shape our contemporary existence.

In this context, the role of educators becomes paramount in navigating their students' healing journeys, recognizing the transformative potential of words to articulate pain and metamorphose it into a wellspring of strength. By acknowledging this profound influence, educators empower students to harness the therapeutic power of writing. It is imperative to encourage writing as a crucial outlet for children to delve into and identify the sources of their suffering. Integrating dynamic creative writing exercises into the curriculum becomes a cornerstone, prompting students to eloquently express their feelings, thoughts and experiences—a constructive avenue for emotional release. Establishing a supportive environment where students feel secure in sharing their narratives not only fosters a sense of community but also deepens mutual understanding and trust. Authors who have explored themes of resilience and overcoming adversity in their works further inspire students, encouraging them to view writing as a profound means of healing and growth.

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A Guiding light that Illumines many

The positive influence of individuals plays a transformative role in shaping our lives. Whether through familial bonds, friendships, or mentorships, the impact of people on us is profound, contributing to our emotional well-being, personal development, and overall sense of happiness. The presence of positive role models can serve as guiding lights, illuminating the path to personal and professional success. They are the figures whom we admire from a distance. They play a vital role in shaping our values, aspirations, and character. The impact of positive role models resonates across various facets of our lives, fostering resilience, instilling values, and catalyzing personal growth.

One of the profound effects of positive role models is their ability to shape our values and morality. Positive role models embody qualities such as integrity, empathy, and kindness, serving as beacons of ethical conduct. Observing these traits in action, whether in the family, community, or society at large, inspires individuals to embrace a moral compass that guides their decisions and actions. At the core of positive influence is the power of connection. Human beings are inherently social creatures, and the relationships we cultivate significantly impact our mental and emotional states. This emotional safety net, in turn, provides a foundation for personal growth and resilience.

During challenging times, having someone to lean on can make all the difference. Whether it's a friend offering a listening ear, a family member providing unconditional love, or a mentor offering guidance, the emotional support of individuals helps us navigate life's complexities with greater ease. This sense of connection not only alleviates stress but also contributes to improved mental health.

In the developmental stages of childhood and adolescence, the impact of positive role models is particularly potent. Children often mirror the behaviors of their parents, teachers, or admired figures. When exposed to positive role models, they are more likely to internalize virtues such as honesty, responsibility, and compassion, forming a foundation for ethical decision-making throughout their lives.

Peer education serves as a dynamic learning model, with students teaching and learning from their peers. It creates a relatable and engaging educational environment, fostering a sense of camaraderie among students. Students often feel more comfortable seeking help or clarification from their peers, leading to increased academic confidence. Peer education also cultivates a collaborative spirit, promoting teamwork and a sense of shared responsibility for academic success. The exchange of ideas among peers enhances critical thinking skills and deepens understanding of academic concepts. Peer education builds a sense of community within educational institutions, creating a positive and supportive learning environment. Through peer mentoring, students gain valuable insights not only academically but also in personal



development and life skills. Overall, peer education leaves a lasting positive impact on students' lives by promoting a culture of shared knowledge, support, and continuous learning.

Counseling promotes mental well-being, providing students with tools to manage stress, anxiety, and other emotional concerns, contributing to a healthier overall mindset. It plays a pivotal role in enhancing students' self-awareness, helping them explore their strengths, weaknesses, and personal goals for academic and personal success. Through counseling, students often experience increased confidence, resilience, and a sense of empowerment, contributing to their holistic development and readiness for future challenges.

A collaborative approach to problem-solving enhances our ability to overcome challenges and achieve our goals. It reinforces the idea that we are not alone in our journey and that there is strength in unity. Whether it's a historical figure who triumphed over adversity, a mentor who faced professional setbacks, or a family member who navigated personal challenges, positive role models provide a roadmap for overcoming obstacles. Their stories become narratives of triumph that inspire others to confront difficulties with resilience, learning from setbacks rather than succumbing to them.

It is essential to recognize the reciprocal nature of positive influence. Just as others impact us positively, our actions and attitudes also have the potential to uplift those around us. Creating a positive ripple effect within our social circles contributes to a collective environment of support, encouragement, and growth. Life is replete with challenges, and navigating its tumultuous waters requires resilience and determination. Positive role models serve as living examples of perseverance, demonstrating that setbacks are not roadblocks but opportunities for growth. Witnessing individuals who have overcome adversity with grace and resilience can instill a sense of optimism and grit in those who look up to them. As we navigate the complex landscape of human existence, the presence of positive role models becomes a beacon of hope, guiding us toward a future defined

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by growth, purpose, and success. Embracing the lessons imparted by these influential figures, we not only enrich our own lives but contribute to the creation of a more compassionate and resilient society. From emotional support and inspiration to tangible assistance and constructive feedback, the relationships we cultivate significantly shape our lives. Let us cherish the positive influences that contribute to our well-being, personal development, and overall happiness. In doing so, we not only enhance our individual journeys but also contribute to the creation of a more compassionate and supportive community.

The impact of positive role models extends beyond shaping values and encouraging resilience; it also plays a pivotal role in fostering personal growth and development. As individuals aspire to reach their full potential, positive role models serve as guiding stars, illuminating the possibilities that exist beyond current limitations.

These positive role models often possess qualities such as ambition, self-discipline, and a commitment to continuous learning. Their influence motivates others to set ambitious goals, work diligently toward their aspirations, and embrace a growth mindset. Whether it's a mentor who encourages professional development, a friend who champions personal growth, or an admired figure who exemplifies excellence, these role models inspire individuals to strive for their best selves.

In the realms of education and career, positive role models can have a transformative impact on the choices individuals make. A teacher who ignites a passion for learning, a successful professional who mentors aspiring colleagues, or an entrepreneur who embodies innovation and tenacity can profoundly influence the trajectories of those who admire them.

Positive role models provide a tangible connection between aspirations and achievements. Their stories serve as living proof that dreams are attainable through hard work, dedication, and a commitment to one's craft. As individuals contemplate their educational and career paths, they offer insights, guidance, and inspiration, empowering them to pursue meaningful and fulfilling journeys.



Weaving an Inclusive Culture

In the intricate mosaic of human existence, there lies a profound truth often overlooked—the undeniable relationship between mental health and the flourishing of young minds. While achieving great things externally is admirable, if we don't look after our inner world—the mind—it becomes challenging to create a healthier and vibrant society. Hence, it becomes imperative to lay stress on the importance of mental wellbeing in shaping the destinies of our future generations.

Just like good soil is essential for a healthy garden, taking care of our minds forms the basis for strong, emotionally intelligent individuals. On the other hand, a society that overlooks inner well-being and important values might face more mental health issues, less ability to cope with challenges, and difficulties in progressing and innovating. So, paying attention to mental health isn't just something individuals should do—it's a responsibility we all share in building a dynamic community.

Mental health is not a distant or abstract concept but an integral aspect of a child's development, influencing their cognitive, emotional, and social growth. There was a time when mental health issues were stigmatized, leading to a culture of silence and shame surrounding mental health conditions. Individuals experiencing mental health challenges were often misunderstood, marginalized, and faced with discrimination, hindering their ability to seek help or discuss their struggles openly.

Over the last few years, there has been a significant shift in societal attitudes toward mental health. Efforts to raise awareness, reduce stigma, and promote open dialogue have contributed to a more inclusive understanding of mental health.

The meaning of mental health has evolved to encompass a broader spectrum of experiences, recognizing that anyone can face mental health challenges at various points in their lives. Mental health is seen as a holistic and dynamic concept now.

The changing narrative has led to increased advocacy and improved access to mental health services. As a result, society is gradually moving away from the historical taboo associated with it, fostering a culture that encourages empathy, understanding, and proactive support for mental well-being.

As educators and stakeholders, we still need to understand that it is crucial to shift our focus beyond the narrow confines of academic excellence and grades, recognizing that success in life extends far beyond securing certain jobs. While grades are often emphasized as a gateway to specific careers, we must not lose sight of the fact that life's fulfillment and satisfaction go beyond professional achievements. Many professionals today excel in their careers but find themselves devoid of true contentment and happiness. Over time, they express regrets about not aligning their work with their passions. This realization highlights the importance of guiding our youth not just toward lucrative careers but also toward understanding and pursuing their passions. True happiness and peace do not solely originate from high-paying jobs; they result from a meaningful alignment between one's profession and personal passions.

By nurturing the youth's minds to prioritize their passions over societal expectations, we can liberate them from the undue stress imposed by societal norms. As parents, educators, and facilitators, our victories lie in fostering an environment that encourages self-discovery, passion pursuit, and, ultimately, a fulfilling and contented life for the generations to come.

As an early childhood educator, I consider myself profoundly blessed to be working for our future generations who are being sculpted into the architects of tomorrow. It feels like a privilege and a calling to see these young minds blossoming into full-fledged trees. I see myself as a chosen one with a purpose that extends beyond merely shaping their academic lives, but also nurturing and tending to the very soil from which their minds grow.

In the realm of mental health awareness and education, it's our responsibility as an educator to sow the seeds of resilience, empathy, and emotional intelligence in them. Our focus should not just be restricted to imparting knowledge, but also instilling a sense of self-worth in them.

In my journey as an educator, while guiding these young minds, I am acutely aware of the responsibility bestowed upon me—the responsibility to shape not only their lives but also the very essence of their minds, contributing to a future generation that is

not only academically proficient but emotionally equipped to make a positive impact on the world.

In our institution, we are fortunate to cultivate a culture that gives prime importance to freedom of expression, from the youngest children to the adults. In our nurturing environment, we not only teach children about various emotions right from their toddler years but also guide them that emotions are not inherently negative; they are a natural part of the human experience. By openly acknowledging and discussing the spectrum of emotions, we empower children to embrace their feelings, fostering resilience and emotional intelligence.

Simple yet effective practices such as meditation, breathing exercises, daily gratitude, mindfulness, and celebrating small victories, are an integral part of my teaching and learning journey. For instance, the “I need a hug” corner in my class serves as a special place where children can seek comfort and connection when needed. When children are encouraged to voice their opinions, pursue their

interests, and openly share concerns if something doesn't align with their well-being, we can empower them to be active participants in their growth and development.

A completely inclusive and supportive culture, fostered by society and school management, can go a long way in reinforcing the foundation of mental well-being in our youth. By placing mental health at the forefront, we can not only nurture the well-being of students with learning disabilities but also foster a culture of understanding, empathy, and collaboration. We need to understand that every child, regardless of their unique learning profile, must be allowed to flourish within a community that values their strengths and contributions.

We must not forget that as elders, we play a crucial role in shaping the mental health narrative for the younger generation. By embracing open conversations, fostering empathy, and prioritizing our well-being, we become living examples for children to emulate.

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The Silent Killer

A shocking statistic that I came across was that between the year 2019 and 2021, a staggering 35,950 students took their own lives. Surely many of you recall the chilling scene from the movie '3 Idiots' where a young soul hangs himself.

We watch these movies all the time, but do we truly grasp the reality? There are numerous 'Joy Lobos' out there, brilliant minds shattered by the relentless pressure of the society.

Imagine a 17-year-old, brimming with potential, and parents eagerly awaiting exam results. Yet, the messenger is silent, the child long gone. Killed by the weight of the expectations of himself and the ones around him. Who do the parents blame? The school? The education system? The child? Themselves?

Mental health, overlooked by most, is side-lined and ignored. Those who muster the courage to speak are met with crushing comments like 'get over it' or 'it's all in your head.' The fragile human mind,

comparable to a delicate sheet of paper, is easily affected by the smallest marks and comments, tearing apart under the weight of expectations.

In the ruthless landscape of the Indian Education System, it's more of a survival test than a nurturing ground for knowledge. Succeed in counting numbers and acing a single exam, and you earn the label 'successful.' Fall short by the smallest margin, and you're abandoned to rot for life in guilt and regret, being referred to as a 'failure' for the few days you can survive.

Who do we have other than ourselves to help the ones in need. So go ahead, talk to that new kid eating by himself, because you never know how much a simple "hello" can change. Compassion, love and sympathy are human's strongest traits. Nurturing these traits will surely harness a healthy relationship with all. Talking to each other, making friends and reciprocating will thus harbor a mentally fit individual and thereby a society which is free of all stigmas and sadness.

Heena Yadav

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Rethink

Rethink

Weaving a Sturdy Mind

In the vibrant tapestry of our school community, fostering mental health awareness is not merely an aspiration but a shared commitment. As a school counsellor, my journey involves weaving together various elements that contribute to the holistic well-being of our students, teachers, and parents.

Understanding mental health is the foundational thread upon which our collective well-being rests. Together, we unravel myths and embrace the significance of mental health in shaping the narrative of our school community. In dispelling misconceptions, we empower students, teachers, and parents with the knowledge to foster an environment where mental health is not a taboo but a topic for open dialogue and understanding.

Resilience is the sturdy fabric that weaves through the challenges encountered in a school environment. By fostering resilience, we equip our students and educators with the tools to navigate the inevitable ups and downs of academic and personal life. Through collective strategies and a culture of support, our community becomes adept at turning challenges into opportunities for growth. Resilience is not just an individual quality but a communal strength that binds us together in facing the complexities of the educational journey.

Creating safe spaces is the artistry that transforms our school into more than just a place of learning. Inclusive environments, where open dialogues are encouraged, lay the foundation for understanding and acceptance of mental health issues. These safe spaces become the canvases where students paint their emotions and express their vulnerabilities without fear of judgment. The colors of empathy and acceptance merge to create a mural that signifies our commitment to nurturing the emotional well-being of every member of our school community.

As we navigate through the digital landscape, the balanced usage of technology emerges as a pivotal theme. Excessive screen time has ripple effects on mental health, impacting students, teachers, and parents alike. By advocating for digital well-being, we encourage mindful engagement with technology. It's not about shunning screens but about fostering a healthy relationship with the digital world, allowing

it to enhance rather than detract from our mental well-being. The symbiotic connection between physical health and mental well-being forms another crucial strand in our narrative. Through exercise, proper nutrition, and adequate sleep, we sculpt the foundation for a healthy mind within a healthy body. In acknowledging this connection, we promote habits that contribute not only to academic success but also to the overall vitality of our school community.

Understanding and managing emotions are not just individual skills but collective strengths that shape positive social interactions. Through intentional efforts, we create an environment where emotional intelligence becomes an integral part of the educational journey, enriching both personal and interpersonal dimensions. The therapeutic effects of creative expression are woven into our curriculum, emphasizing the transformative power of art, music, and writing. These creative outlets become outlets for emotional release and self-discovery. By integrating such avenues into our academic pursuits, we not only nurture the artistic talents within our community but also provide a means for individuals to explore and express their emotions.

Counselling and support services emerge as a cornerstone, breaking down the stigma associated with seeking help. By normalizing the availability and benefits of mental health support systems, we ensure that every member of our school community has access to the resources needed for their emotional well-being. Counseling becomes a proactive tool, empowering individuals to address mental health concerns early on.

In conclusion, our journey towards fostering mental health awareness in our school community is a dynamic and interconnected tapestry. By understanding mental health, building resilience, creating safe spaces, advocating for balanced technology usage, acknowledging the link between physical and mental health, promoting emotional intelligence, integrating creative expression, and providing accessible counselling services, we weave a narrative of well-being, that echoes through every classroom, corridor, and conversation within our educational haven.

Ayushi Chaddha

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Fostering Inclusivity : Navigating Relationship in Educational Settings

Every child is unique and so its journey of education, and it is decisive for schools to recognize and accommodate myriad pathways in which children learn and grow. This becomes even more imperative when we delve into the realm of learning disabilities and neurodiversity, where a holistic understanding of the intersection between cognitive differences and mental health is essential.

There is no specific “decent” way of thinking, behaving, learning, even rejecting the view of differences as a whole. Neurodiversity, often discussed in the context of conditions like ASD (Autism Spectrum Disorder), embraces the diversity of all individuals, challenging the notion of a standard way of being. Furthermore, Learning disabilities incorporate a range of neurological conditions affecting information processing. Examples include dyslexia, dysphasia, dyscalculia, dyspraxia, dysgraphia, and ADHD, impacting concentration, reading, writing, and arithmetic.

Comprehending the complexities of learning disabilities and neurodiversity is the curtain raiser towards creating an inclusive educational environment. It includes observing and identifying the children with these issues which further require different teaching methods and support systems to prosper academically and emotionally. This procedure brings the teachers and parents to the crucial intersection between learning disabilities and mental health and propel them to have a different outlook towards life.

Mental health is a sensitive aspect of overall well-being and children need a loving, secure, and stimulating environment for their optimum growth and development and for this to happen, their physical, emotional and psychosocial needs must be met. Soundness of mind can be profoundly affected by the challenges faced by individuals with learning disabilities. It's a toll on the mental health of these children when they are not being able to grasp certain concepts as quickly as peers, feeling stressed out and having anxiety attacks related to academic tasks, and isolating themselves from society. Recognizing this correlation is essential for educators, parents, and policymakers alike.

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Educational institutes wield significant influence in supporting children with learning disabilities or neurodiversity by addressing their mental health concerns. Rather viewing these issues as obstacles, schools should embrace them as valuable variations in the matrix of human cognition for that it is essential to adopt a neurodiversity-informed approach. Instigating inclusive teaching methods, such as differentiated instruction, multisensory learning, and achieving minimum level of learning can create a supportive academic environment. Recognizing and accommodating diverse learning styles ensures that every child has the opportunity to excel in their own way. Educating both students and teachers about neurodiversity, eradicating stigma, and promoting empathy should be a regular practice in educational institutes. For that matter, encouraging a culture of acceptance and understanding within the school community is pivotal. When students feel understood and accepted, the emotional well-being of those with learning disabilities can significantly improve.

In addition to academic support, mental health resources within schools should be readily available and easily accessible. Trained Special Educators and Counsellors should be appointed who can provide valuable assistance and further guidance in understanding the specific challenges faced by neurodiverse students. Creating safe spaces for open communication, where students can express their feelings and concerns without judgment, is crucial for their mental well-being.

Furthermore, parental involvement is instrumental in creating a seamless bridge between the school environment and the home, promoting consistent support for the student's overall development. Ultimately, the emphasis on cultivating intellects and developing awareness of mental health in educational institutions serves as an urgent plea for a more comprehensive and empathetic academic environment. Recognizing and tackling the convergence of learning disabilities and mental health enables schools to establish atmospheres conducive to the flourishing of every student, irrespective of their neurodiversity. Through these endeavours and sound guidance, we can actively contribute to shaping our remarkable nation with a cadre of virtuous leaders and upright citizens.

Be a Gardener in Life

What I write today is on self-care, motivation and nurturing yourself and others around you. As years roll by and you grow in life, it is imperative that you take care of yourself. Remind yourself that this very moment is the only one you know you have for sure. It is only when you are in a healthy space—both physically and mentally, that you can take care of others around you. By others I mean all living beings along with the planet Earth, which we all are a part of. In life, we all have to be gardeners. ‘Self care is giving the world the best of you, instead of what is left of you. We need to create, nurture and nourish ourselves and everyone around us with care, kindness and compassion. ‘Tend yourself like a gardener tends to plants’. Adopt the pace of Nature: her secret is patience’. This patience leads to tranquillity and it is then one understands the importance of self care.

‘Self-care is the fuel that allows you to shine brightly’. We all need to be honest with ourselves. You can take care of yourself, if you are true to yourself. You need to have a good set of values and ethics embedded in yourself. Being honest allows you to be peaceful and have a good night’s sleep. This year take a decision for yourself: ‘Love the work in progress i.e. YOU’. You have to believe in yourself when no one else does, that makes you a winner right there. As Swami Vivekanand said, ‘Talk to yourself at least once a day otherwise you will miss meeting with an excellent person in the world’. Accept yourself and keep moving forward. Comparisons will only cultivate negativity. Remember that if you want to fly, you have to give up what weighs you down. No matter how busy you are in the 24 hour clock, you need to keep 1-2 hrs as ‘ME TIME’. You could walk, exercise, introspect, pray, manifest, meditate, indulge in hobbies: do tasks which give you peace and contentment. Many of us think that self care is all about doing things for yourself : what is good for you and your physical and mental well-being. It should not be confused with self-centredness. Do not be immersed in yourself only. Do not limit yourself. ‘Taking care does not

mean ME first’. It means taking care of everyone and everything around you. Try being a GIVER. I have seen most people walling themselves in and they are always in the talking mode. Try giving to others: it does not have to be in materialistic terms only. Supporting others in difficult times, lending a helping hand when you see someone burdened with work, just comforting someone when things are downhill: there are means and ways to give. In order to help others, you have to be in a happy and healthy state. If you are hale and hearty, then you have the power to heal others also. By healing others, you will become confident and courageous. Being human and serving humanity should be the essence of your life.

We need to understand that there is only one life and it is a blend of joy and sorrow. You must understand that happiness and sadness are ephemeral. Happy times are fleeting and when sorrow comes knocking at the door, you need to understand that it is not everlasting. Its intensity diminishes with the passage of time. You should not fly high in happy times nor be engulfed in the depths of despair when sickness or death comes knocking at the door. Maintain a balance. Surround yourself with positive people so that you feel encouraged and motivated. This is vital for physical and mental well-being.

It is a proven fact that today, we are living in a fast-paced world. Stress, fear, tension, worry all are bound to impact your mental and physical well-being. It is important that you don’t worry. ‘Worrying is carrying tomorrow’s load with today’s strength and carrying two days at once’. If you feel exhausted, then withdraw to energize yourself. When you replenish your spirit, it allows you to serve others from the overflow. ‘You cannot serve from an empty vessel’. Self care is nothing but following the right path in life. When you are convinced that what you are doing is right, then you are in a win-win situation in life. The happy and harmonious relationship with yourself, sets the tone for every other relationship you have.

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A Comprehensive Exploration

In the ever-evolving landscape of education, there is a growing recognition that a child's educational voyage is not merely encapsulated by academic success. A comprehensive approach to education must include the nurturing of mental health and well-being. This article endeavours to delve into the multifaceted aspects of mental health awareness in schools, establishing connections with various domains such as lifestyle, sports, performing arts, balanced technology usage, and more. The exploration seeks to emphasize the profound significance of mental health in these domains, weaving together a narrative that highlights the crucial role played by the schools in shaping not just informed minds, but resilient and emotionally intelligent individuals.

In an era dominated by technology, the impact of excessive screen time on mental health is apparent. The prevalence of electronic devices in students' lives has been associated with heightened stress levels, increased anxiety, and disruptions in sleep patterns. Recognizing this, educators find themselves at the forefront of advocating for balanced technology usage. It is imperative to go beyond the conventional role of imparting knowledge and investigate into guiding students on establishing a healthy relationship with technology. Teachers can play a pivotal role in this aspect by incorporating mindfulness practices into the classroom routine. Encouraging students to take digital detox breaks, engage in outdoor activities, nature walks, circle time and setting rational limits on screen time are essential strategies. By instilling these habits early on, educators contribute not only to academic success but also to the long-term mental well-being of their students.

Parents and guardians form an integral part of a child's support system, making their involvement vital in fostering mental health awareness. Recognizing the significance of this partnership, schools can take proactive steps to educate parents about the signs of mental health issues and effective communication strategies. Parents can support their child's mental well-being through open communication, setting realistic expectations and family wellness activities.

Workshops and seminars can be organized to facilitate an open dialogue between educators and parents, fostering a strong home-school partnership. Parents can be equipped with the tools needed to recognize signs of stress or anxiety in

their children and implement support strategies at home. By fostering a collaborative approach, schools and parents can work together to prioritize and promote the mental well-being of students. Positive role models, whether they take the form of teachers, mentors, or other educators, exert a deep influence on students' mental health. Their guidance and support can inspire students to adopt positive mental health practices such as self-care, help seeking behaviour, facing challenges with resilience etc. It will help in shaping their outlook on life.

Schools should actively promote mentorship programs that provide students with opportunities to interact with positive role models. These mentors can share personal experiences, instilling resilience, coping mechanisms, and a sense of purpose among students. By creating avenues for meaningful connections, schools contribute to the development of emotionally resilient individuals who can navigate the complexities of life with confidence.

Creating safe and inclusive spaces within schools is essential to fostering open dialogue, acceptance, and understanding of mental health issues. Initiatives such as peer support groups, anti-bullying campaigns, and mental health awareness sessions contribute to the creation of a nurturing environment. By actively working to eliminate stigma surrounding mental health, schools empower students to seek help without fear of judgment. This, in turn, fosters a culture of openness and empathy, where students feel comfortable discussing their mental health concerns.

Understanding and managing emotions are fundamental aspects of maintaining good mental health. Recognizing the significance of emotional intelligence, schools can integrate programs into their curriculum aimed at developing these crucial skills in students. In conclusion, nurturing minds and fostering mental health awareness in schools demands an inclusive and multi-layered approach. It is not solely the responsibility of educators but a collective effort that involves parents, positive role models, and the school environment. By addressing the impacts of balanced technology usage, promoting parental involvement, recognizing the influence of positive role models, creating safe spaces, and enhancing emotional intelligence within the school environment, there exists the potential to create a setting where students can blossom academically, emotionally, and socially.

Neha Rai

PRT

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Nurturing Bodies, Strengthening Minds : Harmony Within

A student's mental fortitude is intricately tied to their physical well-being, acting as a foundational cornerstone that shapes their ability to confront life's challenges with resilience and optimism. In the dynamic interplay between a student's body and mind, their connection is akin to the profound bond of best friends—what transpires within one domain resonates seamlessly with the other. Through a robust physical foundation, students gain not only strength and stamina but also the willpower needed to face adversities, fostering the growth of a positive mindset. Stress and anxiety, inherent aspects of the student experience, act as natural triggers for heightened awareness. However, when physical health falters, students may find it challenging to cope with stressors, and their ability to face challenges diminishes. Physical ailments, such as chronic pain or fatigue, can contribute to heightened anxiety, intensifying the student response to uncertainty. The lack of energy associated with poor physical health may impede coping mechanisms, exacerbating feelings of distress. Prioritizing physical health becomes indispensable, not just for bodily functions but as an intrinsic link to cultivating a resilient mental state.

Nurturing the body is comparable to mastering the art of riding a bike—a valuable vehicle on one's life's journey that demands meticulous care for success. Prioritizing the enhancement of body's immunity is crucial for students, given the indisputable link between a robust immune system and overall well-being. Dr. Richard Stanton, a senior lecturer in Microbiology at Cardiff University School of Medicine, highlights the precision with which a resilient immune system operates—effectively toggling on and off to combat pathogens and regulate chronic inflammation. Actively engaging in the care of bodies not only fortifies one's physical health but also paves the way for enhanced mental well-being.

Moreover, Dr. Sandeep Budhiraja, the director of internal medicine at Max Healthcare, emphasizes that one's lifestyle, rather than just their biological age, significantly influences the effectiveness of their immune system. Therefore, taking proactive steps to support one's immune health becomes an essential

part of nurturing the body. Just as maintaining a bike ensures a smooth ride, attending to the body's well-being not only guarantees a healthier and more resilient life journey for students but also contributes profoundly to their mental well-being. As educators and stakeholders, implementing these tips becomes instrumental in playing a significant role in nurturing students' immune systems, actively promoting both their physical and mental well-being.

Incorporating consistent physical activity into students' routine is crucial for their overall well-being. Exercise or yoga not only contributes to physical health but also holds mental health benefits. Our ancestors from the Indus Valley civilization, exemplified by practices like yoga, intuitively recognized the connection between physical activity and mental clarity. Encouraging students to stay active plays a pivotal role in their academic performance and social relationships. By promoting a holistic approach, educators and parents can integrate discussions about the mental benefits of physical health into the curriculum and daily student life.

Additionally, maintaining a well-balanced diet is crucial for students' immune systems. Encouraging and sensitizing students to choose fresh, home-cooked meals rich in nutrients from fruits, vegetables, nuts, and lean proteins will not only fuel their bodies but also support clear thinking and readiness for academic challenges. Promoting a positive mindset among students is equally crucial for them. Encouraging them to focus on daily sources of happiness, engaging in joyful activities, and practicing kindness towards others will not only uplift their spirits but also contribute to fostering a brighter perspective on school and life in general. Lastly, emphasizing the importance of quality sleep is vital for students. Establishing a solid sleep routine allows both the body and mind to rejuvenate, setting the stage for improved attention, learning, and mood regulation. Immune systems, actively promote both their physical and mental well-being. In this holistic approach, the connection between physical health and mental fortitude is acknowledged and embraced, fostering resilience, optimism, and a positive mindset among students.

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Emotional Intelligence

Understanding and managing emotions holds significant importance in personal and professional development. Emotional Intelligence (EI) encompasses the ability to recognize, understand, and regulate one's own emotions, as well as empathize with others. In a school setting, fostering emotional intelligence contributes to creating a supportive and positive environment for students, educators, and staff.

To begin with, the significance of emotional intelligence lies in its impact on individual well-being and interpersonal relationships. Those with high EI are better equipped to handle stress, navigate social situations, and make thoughtful decisions. In an educational context, students with developed emotional intelligence often exhibit improved academic performance, enhanced communication skills, and more effective conflict resolution.

One key aspect of understanding emotions is self-awareness. Students benefit from activities that encourage self-reflection and identification of their emotions. Implementing regular check-ins or journaling exercises can help them become more attuned to their feelings. Additionally, incorporating emotional literacy into the curriculum allows students to explore and express their emotions through various mediums, fostering a sense of self-understanding.

Furthermore, managing emotions is crucial for creating a positive and respectful school climate. Educators play a pivotal role in modeling emotional regulation for students. Strategies such as teaching mindfulness techniques, providing tools for stress management, and encouraging open communication contribute to a supportive learning environment. By addressing emotional challenges proactively, schools can reduce incidents of bullying, conflicts, and disciplinary issues.

Empathy, another component of emotional intelligence, is essential for building strong interpersonal connections. In school settings, promoting empathy involves incorporating perspectives from diverse cultures and backgrounds into the curriculum. Collaborative projects, group discussions, and community engagement activities enable students to develop a deeper understanding of others' emotions and experiences.

To enhance emotional intelligence, educators can also integrate social-emotional learning (SEL) programs into the school curriculum. These programs typically include activities and lessons that focus on self-awareness, self-regulation, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making. SEL programs have shown positive outcomes in improving students' emotional intelligence, reducing behavioral issues, and enhancing overall well-being.

Moreover, creating a culture of emotional support requires ongoing professional development for teachers and staff. Workshops, training sessions, and resources on emotional intelligence equip educators with the tools to effectively manage their own emotions and support their students in developing these skills. A school-wide commitment to emotional intelligence fosters a collaborative and compassionate community.

In conclusion, understanding and managing emotions are fundamental skills that contribute to personal and academic success. In school settings, emphasizing emotional intelligence benefits students, educators, and the overall school community. By integrating strategies for self-awareness, emotional regulation, and empathy into the curriculum, schools can create an environment that nurtures emotional intelligence and prepares students for a well-rounded future.

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Mind Over Matter

Mental health holds paramount importance in school awareness due to its profound impact on students' overall well-being and academic success. When schools prioritize mental health, they create an environment conducive to learning and personal growth. A focus on mental health fosters emotional resilience, enabling students to navigate challenges effectively. By integrating mental health awareness into the school curriculum, educators can address issues such as stress, anxiety, and peer pressure, providing students with essential coping mechanisms. This proactive approach not only enhances emotional intelligence but also contributes to a positive school culture, promoting empathy and understanding among students. Moreover, acknowledging and addressing mental health in schools reduces the stigma surrounding mental health issues. It encourages open conversations, making it more likely for students to seek help when needed. Schools become a support system, offering resources and counselling services that can positively influence a student's mental health journey. The foundation of a mentally healthy school begins with acknowledging the unique challenges that students face in the modern world. Pressures related to academic performance, peer relationships, and societal expectations can significantly impact a student's mental health. Therefore, schools must adopt a holistic approach that not only focuses on academic achievements but also prioritizes the emotional and psychological well-being of students.

In a school setting, integrating physical activities can significantly enhance mental health awareness by fostering a holistic approach to well-being. Regular exercise and yoga have been linked to improved cognitive function, reduced stress levels, and enhanced mood, which are crucial components of mental health. Physical activities provide students with an outlet for stress and anxiety, promoting emotional regulation and resilience. Additionally, group-based activities, such as team sports or fitness classes, facilitate social interaction, fostering a sense of belonging and support among peers. By incorporating physical activities into the school routine, educators can create an environment that prioritizes both physical and mental health, encouraging students to develop healthy habits that contribute to overall well-being and increased awareness of their mental health.

A child's emotional well-being is closely connected to his/her mental health. Positive emotional

experiences contribute to healthy mental development, while negative emotions can impact mental health negatively. Nurturing a supportive environment and teaching emotional regulation skills can promote both emotional and mental well-being in children. School activities and initiatives play a crucial role in promoting mental well-being among children by providing opportunities for emotional expression, social interaction, and skill development. Activities like art, music, and drama allow children to express themselves creatively, fostering emotional intelligence. Initiatives such as peer support programs and anti-bullying campaigns create a supportive social environment, reducing stress and anxiety. Additionally, mindfulness and relaxation techniques integrated into school routines help children develop coping mechanisms for managing emotions effectively. Overall, these efforts contribute to a positive and emotionally resilient school community. These practices not only benefit mental health but also enhance overall well-being.

Fostering a supportive environment within the school setting is fundamental. When students feel safe, understood, and accepted, their mental health flourishes. Creating a positive atmosphere encourages open communication and empathy. Making counselling services readily available and reducing the stigma associated with seeking help is crucial. Happy teachers can positively impact students by serving as role models for mental awareness in schools. When educators prioritize their well-being, it sets a powerful example, fostering a healthy and supportive learning environment. Offering professional support within the school ensures that students have a safe space to express their concerns. Workshops and webinars serve as crucial tools for promoting mental health awareness among children, parents, and school staff. Physical and virtual interactive sessions are the platforms to provide a space for open dialogue and education on the importance of mental well-being. Offering practical tools and knowledge, workshops, and webinars contribute to a holistic approach to building a mentally healthy school ecosystem, nurturing the well-being of both students and those responsible for their care and education. Incorporating parents into the mental health equation is vital as schools and parents can work together to create a unified front, ensuring a consistent and supportive environment for the child. In the context of fostering mental health

awareness for children, they should be made aware that adequate sleep, balanced nutrition, and judicious screen time management are interconnected pillars. Quality sleep is not merely a physical necessity but a building stone for cognitive development and emotional resilience. Simultaneously, a nutritious diet plays a pivotal role in providing essential nutrients vital for optimal brain function and emotional stability. Schools can take the initiative to guide the parents by organizing workshops and sharing videos to prepare and provide healthy and nutritious tiffin snacks. By weaving these elements together, parents and caregivers form a cohesive strategy to nurture a child's mental health.

Effectively managing screen time is another integral component that needs to be addressed effectively. Excessive exposure to screens can disrupt sleep patterns, potentially contributing to a range of mental health issues. Therefore, a mindful approach to screen time is crucial for maintaining a healthy balance. Also, educating children about the potential impact of social media on mental health is crucial in fostering a balanced and informed perspective. Teaching them to navigate social media responsibly, recognize harmful content, and understand the value of real-life connections can empower them to use these platforms positively. By instilling a sense of self-worth beyond virtual validation and emphasizing the importance of setting boundaries, every school along with parental support must equip children with tools to cultivate a healthy relationship with social media while safeguarding their mental well-being. This empowers them to navigate their leisure activities efficiently, reducing stress and fostering a sense of control.

Addressing learning disabilities with patience and tailored support is crucial for mental well-being. Recognizing unique challenges and providing necessary accommodations ensures that every child has an equal opportunity to thrive. Creating an inclusive environment for children with special needs in schools involves a multifaceted approach to mental health awareness. Firstly, educators should undergo training to understand diverse learning needs and implement differentiated teaching strategies. Collaboration with special education professionals, counsellors, and parents is crucial to developing individualized education plans

(IEPs) that address mental health considerations. Regular communication with parents, involving them in decision-making, and providing resources for coping strategies at home contribute to a holistic support system. Additionally, fostering a culture of empathy and understanding among students through awareness programs and inclusive curriculum helps break down stigmas, promoting a positive and supportive atmosphere for all learners.

The introduction of a Happiness Curriculum in schools is a commendable initiative that aims to foster mental health awareness among students. This curriculum goes beyond traditional academic subjects, prioritizing the holistic development of individuals by addressing their emotional well-being. By incorporating lessons on mindfulness, emotional intelligence, and interpersonal skills, students are equipped with valuable tools to navigate the challenges of life. This proactive approach not only enhances their mental resilience but also creates a positive and supportive learning environment. The curriculum's focus on promoting self-awareness and empathy contributes to a healthier school culture, reducing stigma around mental health issues. As students develop a better understanding of their emotions and learn coping mechanisms, the potential long-term benefits extend to improved academic performance, reduced stress levels, and a foundation for lifelong mental well-being. Overall, the Happiness Curriculum represents a crucial step in nurturing the mental health of the younger generation. A comprehensive approach to mental health in schools goes beyond textbooks and classrooms. By integrating these principles into the educational system, we empower our young minds with the tools they need to navigate the complexities of life, fostering a generation that is not only academically adept but emotionally resilient.

In conclusion, nurturing minds and fostering mental health awareness in schools is not just an option but a societal responsibility. Schools serve as the bedrock of our future, and by prioritizing mental health, we not only equip students with the tools for academic success but also prepare them for the challenges of life beyond the classroom. A mentally healthy school recognizes the interconnectedness of academic achievement and emotional well-being, laying the foundation for resilient, empowered, and flourishing individuals.

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Adaptability : A New Age Approach

In an age where mental health struggles are increasingly affecting young people, prioritizing mental well-being within the school environment is no longer an afterthought, but a fundamental necessity. The ambit of mental health must encompass the emotional, behavioural, and social wellbeing of a child. The most important feature of mental health is 'adaptability', the ability to cope with daily life challenges effectively.

It was a challenge of a different kind when one day before the Board Exam of Mathematics, one of my students whose parents were also my neighbours, declared that she would not appear for the exam. She was under tremendous parental pressure to score a perfect 100%. I had to marshal all my experience to counsel and motivate her. I told her all the stress we suffer originates only in one place, in our thoughts. If we wish to remain stress-free, we must always live in the present. She later agreed to take the exam. This incident and many such instances make me believe parents are integral partners in fostering student mental health. Schools should organize workshops for parents on recognizing signs of distress and communicating effectively with their children. Encouraging open communication between schools and families builds a united front to support students facing challenges.

The silent shadow of stigma surrounding mental health often prevents teenagers from reaching out for help. To combat this, open and honest dialogue is crucial.

In the last academic session, a student of mine, a talented Tabla player, she was not performing well. The parents were very upset and wanted her to stop participating in any activities. I explained to the parents that we need a society where a kid's worth is linked with talent or extra-curricular activities or hobbies they enjoy, not marks. I told her to always remember one shloka of Bhagwat Gita

काक चेष्टा बको ध्यानं, श्वान ननद्रा तथैव च ।
अल्पहारी गृह त्यागी, नवद्याथी पंच लक्षणं ॥

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It means that a student must make continuous efforts like a crow till success is achieved, having concentration like a crane, having a sleep like a dog, eating less, and being ready to sacrifice home to gain knowledge are the five virtues of a student. The coping mechanism worked wonderfully on her as she cleared her board exam with flying colours.

A school that prioritizes mental health thrives on a culture of empathy and support. Trained teachers can help to identify early signs of distress and create confidential avenues for students to seek help. We teachers play a crucial role, by openly discussing our mental health journeys, practicing self-care strategies, and prioritizing our well-being, can become powerful role models for students. Creating a school environment where it's okay to struggle, seek help, and prioritize emotional health sends a powerful message: every mind deserves to be nurtured, and every student deserves to blossom with the full potential of their mental, emotional, and academic capacity.

Nurturing minds and fostering mental health awareness in schools isn't a quick fix, but a continuous journey of learning, evolving, and adapting. It requires dedicated efforts, resource allocation, and a willingness to step outside the traditional boundaries of education. But the rewards are immeasurable: generations of young people equipped not just with knowledge, but with emotional intelligence, resiliency, and well-being; and all with a smiling face and happy heart.



Library : A Storehouse of Mental Wellbeing

“True education must correspond to the surrounding circumstances or it is not a healthy growth.”
- Maria Montessori

In the ever changing landscape of education, schools play a very crucial role when it comes to shaping a child’s development. This development is not just academic but also social and emotional. Ever since the concept of holistic well being has started gaining recognition, it has become more and more important to develop school libraries as safe spaces. This article sheds light into the pivotal role of creating supportive as well as inclusive environments within schools, particularly focusing on of **libraries as a space for fostering open dialogue, acceptance, and understanding of mental health issues.**

The Concept of Safe Spaces are defined as environments where individuals feel secure, valued, and respected, irrespective of their backgrounds or identities. In the context of schools, this concept extends beyond just physical safety and encompasses emotional and mental well-being as well. The school library, traditionally a hub of knowledge, is evolving into a space that not only nurtures intellectual growth but also provides a safe haven for students

dealing with the complexities of mental health. At the heart of any effective school library program lies the importance of **individual understanding of each child.** In recent years, due to more and more usage of technology and it being introduced much earlier in a child’s life, the boundaries between real and virtual lives have blurred, this causes a lot of mental stress and has resulted in a rise in children dealing with mental health issues. This alone offers reason enough to think about how our school libraries are meeting the need for a comfortable, welcoming, personalized learning environment by providing a non judgmental, distraction free atmosphere where students can be their true selves without having to prove themselves to anyone.

One of the primary challenges in addressing mental health issues is the pervasive stigma that surrounds them. By transforming school libraries into safe spaces, educators and administrators can actively contribute to destigmatizing mental health. **The library becomes a platform for resources that promote understanding, empathy, and awareness, fostering an atmosphere where students feel comfortable seeking help and discussing their struggles.**



Inclusive Literature is another key element in the transformation of school libraries into safe spaces is curating literature that reflects diverse perspectives on mental health. It has been an established fact that representation matters a lot and hence inclusive literature that includes narratives depicting characters dealing with various mental health challenges is vital for providing the students with relatable stories and role models. By incorporating such material into the library collection, schools send a powerful message of acceptance and acknowledgment of mental health as an integral aspect of the human experience.

Librarians, as information facilitators, play the central role when it comes to shaping the culture of the school library. Moreover, librarians can serve as allies in creating an atmosphere of trust, ensuring that students feel comfortable in approaching them for support.

In addition to housing relevant literature, school libraries can host open dialogue sessions and support groups focused on mental health. These forums provide students with the opportunity to share their experiences, learn from others, and engage in conversations that break down the barriers surrounding mental health all the while mentioning representative literature. Librarians and school counsellors can collaborate to facilitate these sessions, fostering a sense of community within the school.

Creating school libraries as safe spaces is an imperative step in creating inclusive and supportive environments within educational institutions. By actively addressing mental health through literature, professional guidance, open dialogue, educational programs, and innovative technologies, schools can contribute greatly to fighting misconceptions and breaking the stigma surrounding mental health issues. **The transformation of libraries into hubs of mental health and awareness regarding its issues reflects a commitment to the overall well-being of students, giving birth to a culture of acceptance, understanding, and empathy that extends beyond the classroom.** In doing so, schools become catalysts for positive change, shaping the future of education in a manner that prioritizes the holistic development of every student.

Akhila Arora

Librarian

Bal Bharati Public School, Rohini

Some of the suggested “feel good” books are:

1. **“The Happiness Project” by Gretchen Rubin**

Gretchen Rubin takes readers on a year-long journey to discover what makes us happy and provides actionable advice on how to incorporate positive habits into our lives.

2. **“Feeling Good: The New Mood Therapy” by David D. Burns**

Dr. Burns, a renowned psychiatrist, provides practical tools and techniques from cognitive-behavioral therapy to help individuals overcome depression and improve their mental well-being.

3. **“Mindset: The New Psychology of Success” by Carol S. Dweck**

Carol Dweck explores the concept of mindset and how one’s beliefs about their abilities can impact success, happiness, and overall well-being.

4. **“Man’s Search for Meaning” by Viktor E. Frankl**

Based on his experiences as a Holocaust survivor, Viktor Frankl explores the pursuit of meaning in life, emphasizing the importance of finding purpose in the face of adversity.

5. **“Atomic Habits: An Easy & Proven Way to Build Good Habits & Break Bad Ones” by James Clear**

James Clear provides a practical guide to understanding habits, making positive changes, and building a foundation for long-term well-being.

6. **“The Gifts of Imperfection: Let Go of Who You Think You’re Supposed to Be and Embrace Who You Are” by Brené Brown**

Brené Brown explores the power of vulnerability, shame resilience, and the importance of embracing imperfections for a more wholehearted life.

Nurturing Tender Minds...

The issue of “Nurturing Minds and Fostering Mental Health Awareness in Schools” is extremely important in the ever-changing field of education. First and foremost, it’s critical to present the idea of mental health, dispel myths, and emphasise how vital it is to overall well being. Schools are essential to this effort because they carry out a number of programmes and projects that support staff and student mental health. These school-based efforts cover a wide range of tactics, plans, and projects that help establish a nurturing atmosphere.

In the demanding setting of a school, stress management is especially important for promoting mental health. It becomes essential to investigate methods and strategies for efficient stress management, providing parents, instructors, and students with insightful advice. Furthermore, it becomes clear that mindfulness and meditation are effective methods for improving mental health. Fostering healthy minds requires teaching people the advantages of integrating mindfulness into daily activities and offering helpful advice.

It is impossible to overestimate how closely mental and physical health are related. Schools may support a comprehensive approach to mental health by clarifying the importance of proper diet, exercise, and sleep. In the current digital era, it is crucial to address the negative effects of excessive screen time and to encourage balanced technology use.

Building resilience, comprehending emotional intelligence, and establishing safe places in schools are essential elements that support the development of a mentally healthy environment. Deepening the discussion is achieved by talking about methods for encouraging emotional intelligence and building resilience in both students and teachers. Furthermore, it is crucial to foster inclusive and encouraging learning environments in schools that

promote candid communication, acceptance, and comprehension of mental health concerns.

For people dealing with mental health issues, counselling and support programmes are essential safety nets. Schools must draw attention to the advantages and accessibility of these programmes for both the school and the larger community. A comprehensive approach to mental health is also presented by acknowledging the therapeutic benefits of writing, music, painting, and other creative activities and incorporating them into school curricula.

It is imperative to acknowledge the role of parents in raising awareness about mental health issues. Strengthening the school-home collaboration is recognising the need of involving parents/guardians and giving them strategies to help their children’s mental health. In addition, it is imperative to embrace cultural sensitivity and diversity to ensure that mental health awareness is inclusive of a range of backgrounds and experiences.

The essay also explores the unique difficulties that kids with neurodiversity or learning disabilities have, highlighting the ways in which schools can offer focused support for their mental health issues. Finally, it acknowledges the significant influence that mentors, educators, and good role models have on encouraging kids to adopt healthy mental health behaviours.

To sum up, the various approaches to mental health awareness in schools that are listed in the sections that follow offer a thorough manual for teachers, students, and parents. By exploring these subjects, educational institutions can establish a supportive atmosphere that not only encourages student progress academically but also places a high priority on each member of the student body’s mental health.

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Building Resilience

I would like to start by asking some questions. As a child, how many of us have felt the pain of departing from a dear friend; losing our favourite book, pen or pencil; being scolded by the teacher badly in front of the whole class; losing a match in the sports field with your rival class team; being punished for not being able to complete your assignment in time or being bullied by a schoolmate?

All of us! Hardship doesn't discriminate. It is guaranteed. If you are alive, you are going to have to deal with some or the other problem. Children are the most sensitive and vulnerable to the adversities of life. The negativity in the environment can affect them and create severe emotional disturbance. The world is challenging and 21st-century kids have to experience a lot of stress in their day-to-day life. We need to strengthen resilience in them and make them powerful to cope with daily stressful situations.

As an educator, I come across a lot of emotionally vulnerable students. It takes time to gain their trust so they allow a teacher to touch those places that they are so guarded against. Seeing the flower of their soul open up is one of the biggest achievements for a teacher. In school, we can strengthen resilience in the children by developing social competence, creating bonds between students and caring teachers, maximising opportunities for students' academic and social performance, and giving them enough space to read and explore the world through the world of books.

Children should be taught to be resilient from the beginning of their life like they are taught Mathematics, English, Science, Hindi, Sports and Arts. We need to teach them resilience with that fervour that it comes naturally to them. It is the need of an hour and inevitable. According to a study done by the International Journal for Child and Youth, to prepare children for that special Life Skill, parents should be counseled and special workshops should be conducted by teachers in school to teach them to build strong relationships.

Educational institutions can profoundly affect the quality of relationships with children. Schools are the one place where we have access to kids most closely and on a regular basis. If you ask people who have greatly impacted your life positively or even

negatively, 90 percent of the people are going to talk about someone from their school life. Parents and the School system need to collaborate which will have an unexceptional positive impact on the children, it will help them to build a strong inner voice.

There are four essential messages that we can give to the children that can help them to stand up during difficult times. The first one is that adversity is not personal. Kids are egocentric and by that I mean they take everything personally and think that they did something that caused it. We need to tell them that struggling is a part of life and it is not because of the quality of person you are.

The second thing is forgiveness. It is cutting the core of the burden of anger, resentment, hatred, fear and self-loathing from our kids so that when it is time to be resilient they don't have a knapsack hanging on their back.

The third one is to assure them that 'I See You'. Not just physically but I see your characteristics, I see that you matter, I see what you love, I see how you are. Let kids know that you see them and when you see them, they are more likely to overcome adversity. The fourth and last one is that it is okay to need other people. Society defines strength in not needing people but as a literal antithesis of what we need to do to be resilient, we need to be okay with needing the support of the right kind of people in our life for holistic development. Role models play a significant part in the child's life. They may find their hero in their family or school or characters in the books they read or even in God. These heroes act like a moral compass for them which helps them to move in the right direction. As a teacher, I reinforce my children to look up to their hero for the times in need; the one who is going to accept them; who is going to forgive them, and make them believe that things might not be in their favour for the time being but they will be fine soon.

In the end, I would like to say that keeping the research and stats aside, all students have been through one or the other forms of stress, violence, or complex life situations. All they need is someone who cares and gives them support and power to overcome difficult situations. As an educator, we are the ones who can make a difference for students.

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A Holistic Approach to Mental Wellness : Body, Mind and Spirit

As a teacher, my mission extends beyond the textbooks and lesson plans. It's about nurturing young minds, fostering a sense of curiosity, and, most importantly, creating an environment that prioritizes mental well-being. In my classroom, the journey isn't just about academic excellence; it's a holistic approach that includes the emotional and mental aspects of each student.

One of the fundamental principles I adhere to is recognizing that every child is unique, with individual strengths and challenges. Understanding the diversity within my classroom is the first step towards creating an inclusive space. It's not just about teaching subjects; it's about connecting with each student on a personal level, acknowledging their struggles, and celebrating their victories, big or small. Incorporating mindfulness practices has been a game-changer in my teaching philosophy. Simple activities like brief moments of reflection or deep-breathing exercises at the start of the day set a positive tone. It's amazing to witness the transformative power of these practices, as they create a calm and focused atmosphere that paves the way for effective learning.

Beyond the traditional academic assessments, I've integrated opportunities for self-reflection into my teaching approach. Providing students with platforms to express their thoughts and feelings not only helps in identifying potential challenges but also fosters a sense of belonging. I've witnessed firsthand how a student's improved self-awareness positively impacts their academic performance and

overall well-being. Creating a supportive community within the classroom is crucial. Students need to feel safe and comfortable expressing themselves without fear of judgment. I encourage open communication, not only about academic concerns but also about emotions and mental struggles. It's a delicate balance of being an educator and a confidant, and this dual role allows me to guide students through both academic and personal challenges.

Emphasizing the importance of mental health is not a one-time conversation but an ongoing dialogue. I weave discussions about resilience, stress management, and the significance of seeking help into our daily interactions. Normalizing these conversations reduces the stigma associated with mental health and empowers students to take proactive steps in caring for their well-being. Collaborating with fellow educators, parents, and administrators, we've implemented programs that provide resources and support for both students and staff. This collective effort creates a school culture that values mental well-being as an integral part of the educational experience.

In conclusion, fostering mental awareness in schools is not just a responsibility; it's a calling for educators. It's about creating a space where students not only learn facts and figures but also develop the resilience and self-awareness needed to navigate life's challenges. My journey as a teacher is a testament to the transformative power of prioritizing mental health in education, making a lasting impact on the lives of the students I am privileged to teach.

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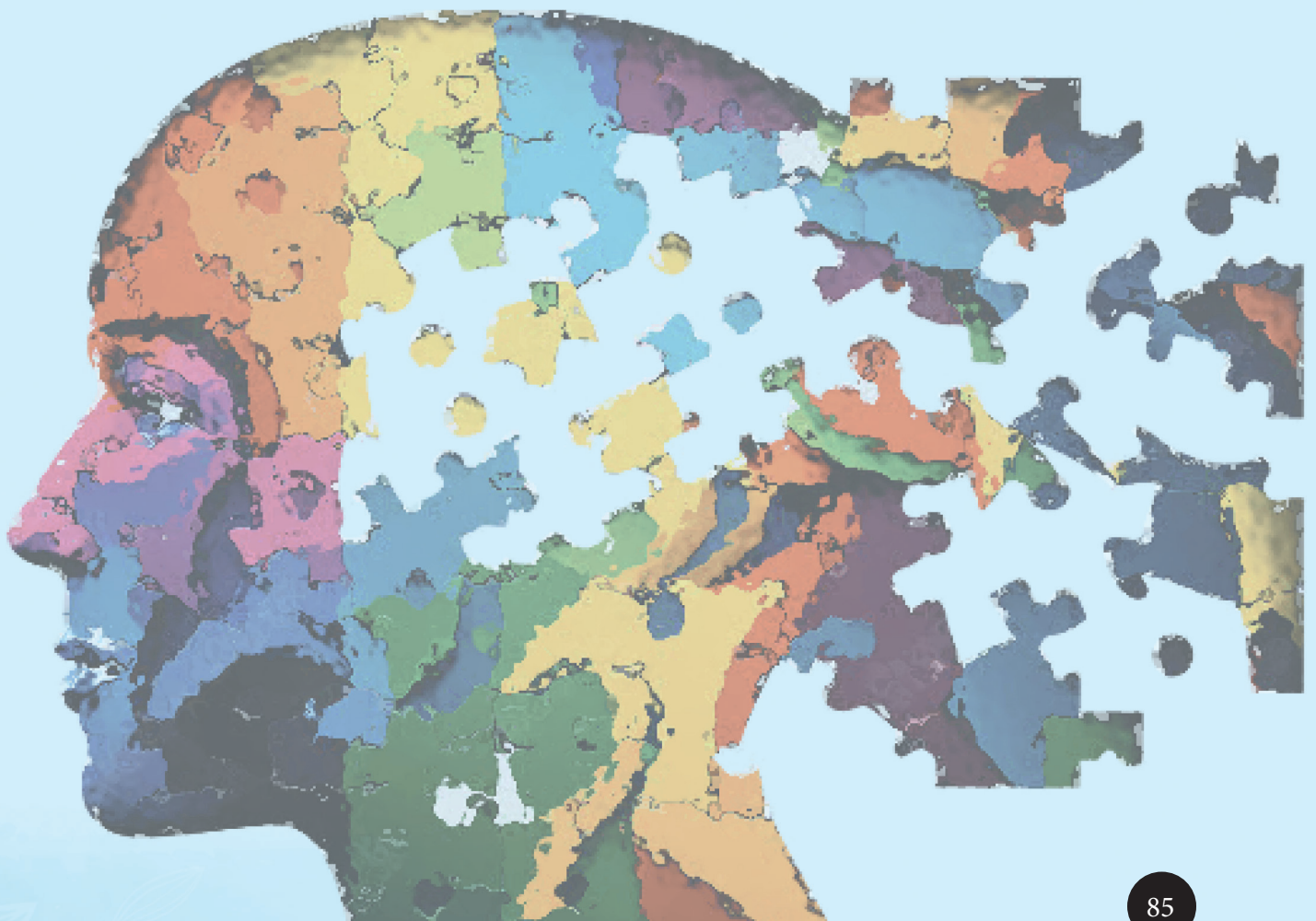
Cultivating Compassion : A Key to Mental Health Harmony

Life events such as health, relationships and career-related challenges can sometimes interrupt our self-connection. People these days are not realizing their complete happiness and lasting satisfaction. Conditioned by the environment, they are going on as robots and thus evading self-analysis. Mentally they have become mechanical products of their work areas while preoccupied with breakfast, lunch and dinner, working and sleeping and going here and there to be entertained. Knowing the value of mental health and attempting to maintain it, are crucial for leading a fulfilling and balanced life. A balanced mental health allows people to experience positive emotions, cope with life's challenges, and form healthy relationships in society. Undoubtedly, it contributes to a sense of contentment in life.

To quote the aforementioned theme, teachers and students these days are hyper-active, hyper-vigilant and restless with collective energy and muddled puzzles. Running after results or numbers can in reality take away the joy of teaching and learning with love, quality of connections, conversations and so on. Evidently, the academic environment is

demanding and competitive with high expectations, deadlines, and a fast-paced curriculum. By addressing the emotional well-being of both students and teachers, educational institutions can create a more positive and conducive learning environment. Prioritizing mental health, providing support systems, and promoting a balanced approach to education are essential steps in achieving this goal.

I believe that schools must give time and create an emotionally safe nest for the educators and pupils as well, which would hugely help them both personally and professionally. They should establish peer support networks within the school where teachers and students can share experiences, advice, and strategies (in non-judgemental space) for managing stress. Fostering a positive school culture where collaboration, communication, and mutual respect are emphasized, recognizing and appreciating the efforts regularly will lead to feeling valued and acknowledged for hard work and thus contributes to a positive work environment. There are certain specific areas in which if we effectively contribute, we can definitely achieve better results.



To begin with, as we are aware that these days technology is advantageous for enhancing learning experiences, accessing information, and skill development, it's also essential to strike a balance. By emphasizing a balanced approach to technology use, schools can contribute to the holistic development of students, addressing not only academic needs but also their physical, social, and emotional well-being. Students can learn better by hands-on activities, discussions, or visual aids. Excessive screen time, both in and out of the classroom, has been associated with various health concerns, including eye strain, sleep disturbances, and sedentary behavior. Activities that promote critical thinking, problem-solving, and creativity can be followed equally. Teachers should also work on using technology in a thoughtful and purposeful manner, while also providing opportunities for non-screen activities, this can create a well rounded and effective learning environment.

Furthermore, school counselling plays an important role that contributes to the overall well being and success of students. By addressing various aspects of students' lives, counsellors play a pivotal role in creating a positive and conducive learning environment. However, promotion of counselling services for teachers is not as prominent in some educational institutions due to budget constraint, lack of awareness, limited staff resources or to be stigmatised as weak employees. Schools should also invest in mental health support for educators. Recognizing and addressing the mental health needs of teachers is crucial for creating a healthy and supportive educational environment.

Sometimes, a pause is also required from all kinds of viruses. A pause to stillness and listen to the inner child in us. If we don't create a pro active structure for using our mind and time, it is so easy to get trapped in overthinking, anxiety and wasteful future-guessing. In fact, it is vital to engage meaningfully with ourselves and our families in these times of uncertainty. If we don't heal ourselves, we pass on the trauma to the next generation. It is imperative to create space for journaling and ask questions that would help to understand a day and the choices made. This emotional spiritual bath is essential in

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the daily life routine. True presence is a very special modality that is required in all of us. An unconscious sensitive soul would often be a muddled place of confusion, distraction and overwhelm. This leads to fragmentation and alienation.

Significantly, mindfulness (state of being conscious) can rejuvenate our mind and tremendously help in personal evolution. We all have the magical ability to go through our emotions and can effectively navigate through them. Implementing mindfulness practices in schools has become increasingly popular. It helps students develop body awareness and relaxation skills. Various activities can be incorporated such as breathing exercises, meditation, listening to nature sounds, mindfully eating, observing art and so on. This will create a focussed and calm learning environment, and manage stress and enhance overall well-being.

Similarly, by incorporating art and sports into the educational experience, schools can create a more well-rounded and emotionally supportive environment for students. Both art and sports provide unique avenues for self-expression, creativity, and physical activity, contributing to a holistic approach to education. Recognizing and incorporating a variety of interests accommodates diverse learning styles and preferences, ensuring that students find activities that resonate with them. Both can be the sources of joy and enjoyment, contributing to a positive and enriching school experience.

To conclude it may thus be said that school plays a crucial role for the holistic development and well-being of both students and teachers. Apart from all these discussed points, they must address bullying behaviours promptly, establish peer mentoring or support programs, improve inclusive teaching practices to accommodate diverse learning styles and abilities, engage parents and community members in school activities, and create a collaborative and supportive network. Most importantly, to regularly equip teachers with all these strategies, teachers must be included in on-going workshops for implementing the same for the desired results.

Harmony Amidst Chaos : Stress Management in the School

In the bustling world of academia, where students, teachers, and parents coexist in a delicate dance of learning and growth, stress can often become an unwelcome companion. The school environment, intended to foster education and personal development, sometimes inadvertently becomes a breeding ground for stress. However, understanding and implementing effective stress management techniques can transform this environment into a space where harmony prevails.

For students, the pressure to excel academically, navigate social dynamics, and plan for the future can be overwhelming. It's essential to acknowledge that stress is a natural part of the learning process, but when left unmanaged, it can hinder both academic performance and overall well-being.

'In the corridors of knowledge, where minds do roam,

*A student's heart beats, searching for a home.
Burdens of books, the weight of expectations,
In the quest for success, the soul's palpitations.'*

Teachers, the guiding lights in the educational journey, play a crucial role in shaping the school environment. Recognizing signs of stress in students and offering support and encouragement can create an atmosphere where learning is not just about grades but also about personal growth and resilience.

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*'In the classroom's embrace, where wisdom flows,
A teacher's heart blooms, compassion it sows.
Nurturing minds, inspiring dreams to soar,*

Guiding the way, stress they implore.'

Parents, too, play a significant part in the stress equation. The desire for their children's success, coupled with the challenges of juggling work and family life, can lead to heightened stress levels. It is crucial for parents to be actively involved in their child's education, providing a support system that fosters open communication.

*'In the hearth of the home, where love resides,
A parent's heart beats, in tandem it guides.
Understanding the trials, the children endure,
A source of strength, their love is pure.'*

In the complex tapestry of the school environment, stress is an inevitable thread. However, by fostering understanding, empathy, and proactive stress management techniques, schools can transform into havens of learning and personal growth. Students, teachers, and parents, united in their commitment to well-being, can create an environment where stress becomes a stepping stone rather than a stumbling block.



Healthy Inner Self : A Tribute to Life

Health of the inner self is the cornerstone of our overall well-being, and its significance cannot be overstated. It affects how we think, feel, and interact with the world. Just as we take measures to stay physically healthy, we must proactively care for our mental health. In today's fast-paced world, stress, anxiety, and depression have become all too common. But the good news is that mental health is not a static state; it can be improved and nurtured. It's about finding balance, setting boundaries, and seeking help when life's challenges become overwhelming.

Nurturing the sound health of our minds is not a luxury; it's a fundamental human right. It's the mainstay of our emotional, psychological, and social well-being. Just as we care for our physical health, we must prioritize our mental health. Mental health is important at every stage of life, from childhood and adolescence through adulthood.

Mental health problems can affect a student's energy level, concentration, dependability, mental ability, and optimism, hindering performance. The most common mental illnesses in adolescents are anxiety, mood, attention, and behavior disorders. Suicide is the second leading cause of death in young people aged 15–24 years.

It can also be cured with some extra attention on the students by making sure that they are eating healthy food, doing exercise, getting plenty of sleep, managing their time and most important, practicing mindfulness and doing meditation. Mindfulness requires us to be aware of what's around us and how our bodies feel. Meditation is a practice that reels in our thoughts to calm the mind. These two terms are similar because they both aim to help our well-being, but still are different as one encourages awareness, while the other works to create singular thoughts.

As much as we talk about mental health we should also be focusing on physical health as both physical and mental health are interlinked. Physical activity is a great way to keep you physically healthy as well as improving your mental wellbeing. Research shows

that doing exercise releases feel-good chemicals called endorphins in the brain. Even a short burst of 10 minutes brisk walking can improve your mental alertness, energy and mood. Exercise can improve your sense of control, coping ability and self-esteem. People who exercise regularly often report how good achieving a goal makes them feel. Exercise can distract you from negative thoughts and provide opportunities to try new experiences.

An emotionally fit and stable person always feels vibrant and truly alive and can easily manage emotionally difficult situations. To be emotionally strong, one has to be physically fit too. Although mental health is a personal issue, what affects one person may or may not affect another; yet, several key elements lead to mental health issues.

Mental fitness implies a state of psychological well-being. It denotes having a positive sense of how we feel, think, and act, which improves one's ability to enjoy life. It contributes to one's inner ability to be self-determined. It is a proactive, positive term and forsakes negative thoughts that may come to mind. The term mental fitness is increasingly being used by psychologists, mental health practitioners, schools, organisations, and the general population to denote logical thinking, clear comprehension, and reasoning ability.

At last I would just end by writing that the mind is one of the most powerful organs in the body, regulating the functioning of all other organs. When our minds are unstable, they affect the whole functioning of our bodies. Being both physically and emotionally fit is the key to success in all aspects of life. People should be aware of the consequences of mental illness and must give utmost importance to keeping the mind healthy like the way the physical body is kept healthy. Mental and physical health cannot be separated from each other. And only when both are balanced can we call a person perfectly healthy and well. So, it is crucial for everyone to work towards achieving a balance between mental and physical wellbeing and get the necessary help when either of them falters.

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Harnessing Interpersonal Relationship : A New Age Phenomenon

Education is not merely about imparting knowledge, it is also about nurturing young minds and fostering an environment that supports mental well-being. The importance of mental health in schools cannot be overstated, as it significantly influences a student's overall development. This essay explores the vital role of schools in nurturing minds and fostering mental health awareness.

At the outset it is agreed that schools play a vital role in shaping the minds of young children. They are in charge of helping kids develop their critical thinking, emotional intelligence, and resilience in addition to their academic skills. In order to nurture minds, educators must provide a welcoming and encouraging classroom where children may feel heard and understood. In their role as mentors, teachers must recognise and meet the various requirements of their pupils while encouraging a love of learning.

Schools also need to adopt a holistic approach to teaching, appreciating the value of extracurricular activities, artistic expression, and interpersonal relationships. These components provide a well-rounded and stimulating educational experience while also enhancing students' general well-being.

In today's scenario, fostering Mental Health Awareness is of prime importance. While academic success is certainly vital, mental wellness has to be prioritised just as much. Acknowledging and supporting students' emotional and psychological well-being is part of mental health awareness. Schools must de-stigmatize mental health concerns in order to foster an accepting environment where kids may talk openly about their difficulties without worrying about being judged. Putting in place mental health education initiatives is essential to raising awareness. Workshops, seminars, and curriculum activities aimed at teaching students about stress management, mental health, and coping strategies might be included in these programmes. School curricula that incorporates mental health education can help dismantle social barriers and foster a society that is more understanding and caring. Creating

strong support networks in schools is essential in developing students' brains and raising awareness of mental health issues. Psychologists, school counsellors, and qualified teachers must be ready to offer direction and assistance to pupils who are experiencing emotional difficulties. These experts are essential in spotting early indicators of mental health problems and taking proper action.

Establishing an environment of candid communication is also crucial. Students ought to feel at ease sharing their emotions with classmates, instructors, or counsellors. Peer support initiatives enable students to help one another, building a sense of belonging and lowering feelings of loneliness.

Collaboration with families and communities is yet another vital step where nurturing minds and fostering mental health awareness should be inculcated. It should not be confined to the school premises alone. Collaborative efforts involving families and communities are essential for creating a comprehensive support network. Schools should actively engage parents in understanding the importance of mental health and involve them in initiatives that promote well-being.

Furthermore, community partnerships can provide additional resources and expertise. Mental health professionals, community organizations, and local leaders can contribute to the school's efforts by offering workshops, counseling services, and raising awareness in the broader community.

In summary, the holistic development of kids in schools depends on developing brains and raising mental health awareness. Education is essential in fostering a culture that prioritises emotional health as much as intellectual achievement. Schools can help create a generation of students that are not just academically strong but also emotionally and socially aware by including mental health education, creating support networks, and working with families and communities. By doing this, we help our students and society at large and nurture a better and healthier future.

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Resilience Building

Human Beings and Nature are the two best creations of the world. And both humans and nature go through a rough phase. But the beauty of Nature is that it re-shapes and reforms after being destroyed or distorted and this is exactly what human beings have to imbibe from nature. Thus the quality of a person to emerge successfully from a difficult and challenging situation in life with sanity and without being broken down and maintaining emotional and mental stability just as Phoenix rises from its ashes is called resilience.

It is important to develop the virtue of resilience not only for humanity but for our own self. Being resilient helps us to win many battles. The first and foremost being developing good mental health. Good mental health is a key to success in every walk of life. A person with good mental health is likely to develop better relationships at home, with friends and families and also at work. He thinks positive and emerges victorious over problems. He is able to empathise and help others which enables him to foster better leadership qualities. Resilient person's ship will never sink, it will undoubtedly sail through the storm.

Resilience can't be acquired in a day or two. Some are born resilient while others inculcate through their experience. As life throws lemons people learn to squeeze and make a lemonade and enjoy it. Yes people become mature, patient and resilient. If not, survival and sustenance becomes difficult. While Salt pepper haired people get mentally strong by and by, elders need to guide and mentor youngsters and students through resilience.

Resilience enables students to cope with the challenges, obstacles and setbacks they are likely to experience on their learning journey and to graduate with the capabilities and mindset for success. When children and teenagers are more resilient, they become more curious, adaptable and capable. Furthermore, they become more able to handle failure, disappointment and cope with loss.

But they need a teacher and a mentor to hold their hand initially.

It is the teacher's responsibility to develop resilience in the classroom, and ensure that students enter adult life with more readiness to handle life's challenges. A proactive approach in developing student resilience is therefore important. We want our students to understand and demonstrate the behaviours, actions and mindsets that constitute resilience, and to be able to articulate this to potential employers. Some of the strategies that can help students in developing resilience include, promoting positive emotions, teaching the importance of health and well-being, encouraging goal-setting, developing problem solving skills, practicing gratitude, fostering a sense of competence, helping to build positive relationships and connectedness, and cultivating a growth mindset.

Well there are infinite ways to connect to the students and help them in being resilient. The key to success is connecting them and giving them unconditional support.

Teachers can help them to celebrate the small milestones along the way by communicating regularly with their parents to let them know of their child's progress, rather than waiting for report time.

A great way to build resilience in students is to help them feel a part of something bigger than themselves. When teens feel they can contribute on matters on a larger scale, they are more likely to push through setbacks and remain optimistic about the outcome. Encourage students to engage with the school and community beyond their social groups by volunteering at vents, mentoring younger students or participating in whole-school events. Being involved in what's happening with their peers and the faculty instils in them a belief that their involvement can and will have a positive effect on others as well as themselves.

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Stress Management : A New Strategy

Stress is simply the adaptation of our bodies and minds to change.” – Peter G. Hanson

Stress is an instinctive physical, mental and emotional response to a difficult event. It’s a common part of everyone’s life.

Myriad of sources such as work, relationships, competitions, peer pressure ,excelling in academics, sports or personal challenges can trigger stress in humans at any period of time. However, managing stress is mandatory for stabilizing mental as well as physical health. There are **‘Hands on strategies’** that can assist individuals cope with stress and lead a healthier life.

At school level, regular physical activity or exercise must be incorporated as it releases endorphins, which are natural mood enhancers. Whether it’s a brisk walk, a quick workout, or even some stretching, physical activity provides a natural outlet for deep rooted feelings and students would definitely be ready to accept new with smiling faces and optimism .

Another essential aspect of stress management is maintaining a balanced and lively lifestyle. Ensuring an adequate amount of sleep during exam time, eating a well-balanced diet, and staying hydrated are fundamental to promote wellbeing and for this parents need to take utmost care. These basic habits contribute to the body’s resilience against stressors. **Happy surroundings yield happy results.**

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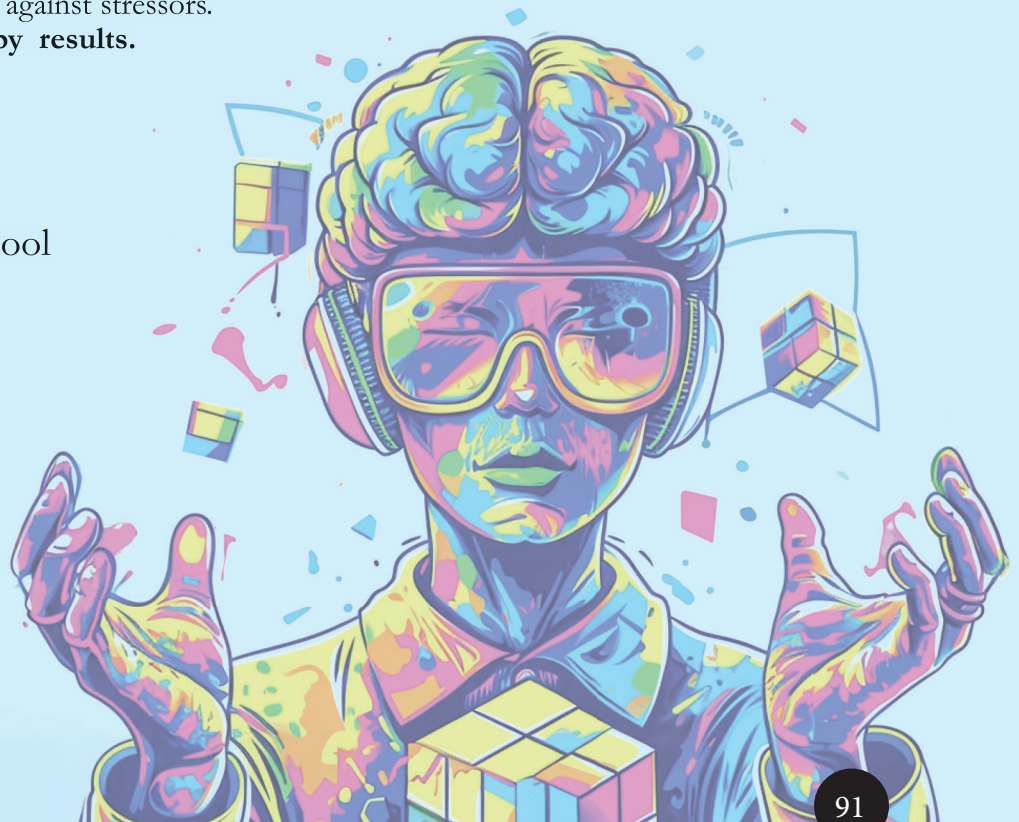
Moreover, adopting relaxation techniques can prove beneficial in alleviating stress. AT home, the family members can take up deep breathing exercises, meditation, or spend time in nature can help calm the mind and reduce tension. Taking short breaks during the day to engage in these practices can make a significant difference in stress levels. Family outings, festivities or religious functions play a vital role in stress management.

Effective time management is also crucial in preventing stress from overwhelming us. Parents and teachers often do feel stressed so they can better prioritize tasks, set realistic goals, and break them down into smaller, manageable steps . **“A stitch in time saves nine”** is an adage if put in use can help students with upcoming challenges or problems related to studies, peer pressure and extracurricular activities.

Especially Teachers should foster harmonious bonds and share feelings and concerns with friends, family, or colleagues that will certainly provide valuable perspectives as well as emotional support.

To sum up, managing stress is not a herculean task as it can be dealt with the application of a few tips by students, teachers and Parents alike.

As Hans Selye rightly quoted, “It’s not stress that kills us; it is our reaction to it.”



Five Petals

Down in the garden where the vibrant flowers grow
Lived five tiny caterpillars best friends through high and low.
Sage was a gentle misty green the wisest you could find.
Azul was the clearest blue so tranquil, free and kind.

Vermillion was a fiery red loving, strong and true.
Vivid purple, proud and brave Violet lived there too.
And last of all was Citrine a burst of yellow light.

And though quite small and sometimes scared, a soul that shone so bright.
Each day these friends would play and sing
their cheerful friendship song:

“Best friends are we
We lend a hand
We help when things go wrong.”

Our friends explored and how they loved this garden they called home.
They munched, they crunched, on leaves they lunched an oasis of their own.

But then, one day, our friends had grown the time had come so soon.
The time to build their chrysalis into butterflies they would bloom.
“I’m scared!” cried little Citrine “I need my friends each day.”
“If you don’t recognise me you might all fly away!”
Azul gave a gentle smile and snuggled up so near.

“Sage will know just what to do you do not need to fear.”
The friends went down to find wise Sage and told of all their worries.
“There’s time, my friends, to think this through we do not need to hurry.”
Sage spent that day and all night too thoughts floating all about.

And then the answer seemed so clear “I’ve got it!” Sage cried out.
“We’ll each collect a flower petal the colour of our name.”
“And give them to our friends to keep. In their memories we’ll remain.”
Next morning as the sun rose high five petals were collected.
Brightly coloured, like their names our friends now felt protected.

Then each caterpillar chose a leaf for their chrysalis creation.
“I’ll go first.” brave Violet said. and began the transformation.
Wiggling to and wiggling fro each caterpillar built their home.
And with the petals safe within they knew they weren’t alone.

They stayed inside the next two weeks and dreamt of wings that soar.
Then, at last, they all were ready to emerge and meet once more.
Next morning as the sun came up first Vermillion wriggled free.
Then lovingly watched and waited wings fluttering with glee.

Violet followed, then Azul and Sage Vermillion recognised them all.
For our friends had kept their colours but were more splendid than before.
Finally Citrine too emerged “It’s you!” they all declared.
With wings of golden brilliance there was no need to be scared.

As evening came, the stars they shone beneath the pale moonlight.
Our friends sang out their special song and flew into the night.

“Best friends are we
We lend a hand
We help when things go wrong.”
You have people too, you know you’ve had them all along.

Tania Sorbello

Principal

Fitzroy North Primary School, Australia

A Young Minds Dream

In the space of learning
Young minds unfold
But as the days pass by
and holistically they grew
more than knowledge must be told.

For, a sound mental health is vital
in school and in life
Ensuring every student
can thrive and strive.

You and me, all of us
with heart, ears and arms open
must listen to what they have to say
Explaining what, why and when.

Creating a safe space to address fears,
Encouraging self care and ask for help when needed,
Building resilience and strength with love conceded

Curriculum designed with balance and care,
fostering mindfulness to become aware,
Of thoughts and emotions that can arise
So that every student can realize

The importance of being emotionally well,
Not for tests and grades, but in every way
For a healthy mind leads to success and growth
In school, work and in every oath.

So, let us cultivate a culture of understanding with acceptance
and embracing of differences being the support for those in need
So every child can thrive and succeed.
For when mental health is nurtured & esteemed School becomes a place,
where dreams are redeemed.

Dr. Anupama Mishra
Principal, Sunbeam Varuna School & Hostel



Mind-Body Melody : The Dance of Vitality

In schools, where minds grow bright and strong,
We learn much more than just books along.
Not just facts, but something grander we seek,
To nurture hearts, and minds that peak.

In the maze of feelings, we guide and steer,
Care and kindness make worries disappear.
We talk about struggles, lend a hand,
In many minds, let compassion stand.

Teachers build spaces where students feel fine,
Each one finding their special shine.
Helping teachers know when students need aid,
So no one feels lost or afraid.

Lessons go beyond just books and math,
Teaching how to handle life's rough path.
Places where courage and hope take flight,
Guides in the dark, shining bright.

Bodies need care; it's an important part,
Exercise, food, and sleep play a smart
Role in keeping us strong, both body and mind,
Energy, food, and rest help us unwind.

Parents are partners in this noble quest,
Supporting kids to be their best.
Together, making sure all is fair,
Creating spaces where minds repair.

Communities together, strong and grand,
Spreading awareness, hand in hand.
From schools to streets, let voices sound,
Working united, forever unbound.

Measuring change, checking if it's right,
Using feedback, keeping goals in sight.
Adapting, growing, always aiming high,
Learning together, reaching for the sky.

In the world of learning, let it be known,
Nurturing minds, our journey's tone.
Caring for health, a duty we share,
For in the world of learning, we genuinely care.

Ms.Poonam Dua

Principal

Delhi Public School, NTPC Vidyutnagar (Dadri)

The Girl She Was....

The girl that'll do anything to make a kid smile because her childhood didn't last
The girl that will wait for you to tie your laces while everybody walks ahead
Because she was once the outcast
The girl that's alluring now wakes up every morning wishing it's her last

The girl once full of life is now broken by it
The sun in her is blindsided
The joviality in her is crying
The liveliness in her is dying

But nobody that saw her could've guessed what went through her brain
Because she never complained she always had a smile on her face
But in her heart she bore unbearable pain
And somewhere hidden in that pain all she ever wanted was pure love and an embrace

The girl finally found herself hollow and empty
One day she asked me why
I told her it was because she gave herself away to people who only came for goodbye
The girl that was full of love and full of life
Blamed herself for hate and death only to wind up dead herself

How many times did she pick up a pen just to drop that blade
For her beautiful mother, aging father and a golden sister she let her own smile fade
She lived like that for most of her life
Hanging by a thread and surviving on an edge until she didn't.

She was gone but not for good
Why is it that her presence mattered more in her absence only after the irreversible
The world seemed colourless
Songs seemed deafening
Kindness pierced my heart
Sunsets and pretty skies ripped me apart

She was the kind of pretty that didn't need alteration,
The kind of pretty you could admire for hour and hours
She tried to scream she tried to let you know
But If only the world was a little more nicer and little less cruel,
she would be here today smiling among the flowers

Dr Manisha

Principal

Venkateshwar International School, New Delhi

Schools : A Nurturing Ground

Laughter echoes in the corridors, worries begin to fade,
Emotions find expression, without fear or shame,
In the haven of learning, joy is laid.
Minds, like delicate gardens, find a tender touch,
Beyond textbooks and lessons,
In the tapestry of understanding, dreams begin to take shape .
Within the hallowed halls, nuanced thoughts takes flight,
Schools are the nurturing grounds for the young learners, ever so much
Where teachers stand as guides, with hearts compassionate and kind,
Beyond grades and assessments, a crucial part they play,
Unveiling the mysteries of the thoughtful, seeking mind.
Fostering resilience, guiding through the fray.
For mental well-being is not just a fleeting thought,
But an integral thread, in the fabric of lessons taught.
So, let schools be sanctuaries, where minds freely soar,
Where understanding thrives, and empathy's the core.
Through challenges faced, resilience is sown,
In the fertile grounds of learning, strength is grown.
A delicate balance, shaping the mental well-being of the students so bright.
In the journey of education, let hearts find reprieve,
Let schools become safe havens, where acceptance is the theme,
Teachers and peers, a supportive kin,
Building bridges of understanding from within.
Let schools be architects of resilience and grace,
Guiding students through life's intricate maze.
A place where coping mechanisms find their birth,
Fostering mental well-being, the greatest of worth.

Anupama Motwani

Vice Principal

Bal Bharati Public School, Noida

Disconnect To Connect

In a world entwined with wires and screens,
Where virtual landscapes blur real-life scenes,
A plea arises, a call to introspect,
To disconnect and truly connect.

In the glow of screens, where time is lost,
Let's rediscover what matters most.
Parents, be present, be fully aware,
For family bonds, handle with care.

In the hum of gadgets, let's find a pause,
Embrace the silence, discard the cause.
The touch of a hand, the warmth of a smile,
Technology's grip, let's reconcile.

Limit the hours in the digital haze,
Open your hearts, let love be ablaze.
For moments cherished, memories divine,
Require attention, undivided and fine.

Nishtha Kwatra
PGT Economics
St. Margaret Sr. Sec. School

Be wonderful parents, not just in name,
In the real world, it is not a virtual game.
Children need guidance, affection, and time,
To flourish and grow, like a rhythm, a rhyme.

Take walks in nature, breathe in the air,
Disconnect to connect, show them you care.
Unplug the devices, turn off the screens,
In the simplicity of life, find what it means.

Build forts of blankets, tell stories at night,
In the soft glow of candles, create your light.
Let laughter echo through the walls,
As a genuine connection, deeper, enthrals.

So, parents, be present, embrace the call,
To disconnect, connect, let love enthrall.
For the balance of tech and family,
Lies the true essence of harmony.

Symphony of Knowledge : A Melody

In halls of learning, where imagination takes flight,
Teachers nurture minds, a beacon of light.
A symphony of knowledge, a melody of care,
Fostering mental health, beyond compare.

In the classroom's embrace, curiosity blooms,
Seeds of wisdom sown in our vibrant classrooms.
With patience as a guide, and empathy profound,
Healing minds, creating solid and meaningful ground.

Through challenges faced, resilience gains might,
A sanctuary for minds, where dreams take flight.

Ms. Poonam Joshi
TGT English
Titiksha Public School, Rohini, Delhi

Magnanimity woven in lessons every day,
Building strength, sharpening intellect in an enlightening way.

Beyond textbooks and tests, understanding grows,
Creating a haven where every student glows.
Mental health, a priority, not left unseen,
In this scholastic journey, where dreams convene.

Let kindness be the curriculum, empathy the basic rule,
A nurturing environment, a compassionate school.
For in the fostering of minds, a legacy we find,
A future enriched, harmonious and kind.

Happy Minds

Hear not words that daunt thy soul,
Mind needs peace to frame a good goal.
Breathe each morn 'neath canopies green,
The zephyrs of bliss shall purge thou clean.

Emotions good that thrive in thee,
Nestles at ease in a mind that's free.
For, a mind that's wild and oft amuck,
Blames all sins upon the piteous luck.

Each cell within that breathes all day,
Seeks a mind that's pure and gay.
Positive thoughts like flowers in a garth,
Bring new hopes to adorn thy earth.

Early the hour, when the morn looks bright,
The breeze is sweet and brings delight.
Hear the bell that calls thy name,
Are you ready to win the game?

When the world runs to earn and burn,
Focus thy mind to feel and learn.
Feel for each one that crosses thy way,
They might have tales too bleak to say.

Behold thither! Beneath the smiling skies,
The haven of knowledge for thee lies,
With unfurled arms, it calls thy name,
The second mother that seeks no fame.

Sanchi Sidhu

T.G.T. English

Greenfields Public School, Dilshad Garden

Beyond the doors where lessons're taught,
And glorious values paint each thought.
Halcyon a mind can carry the most,
And in this world, be a reverend host.

Not just classes within the walls,
Or just games with sticks and balls,
Thou must learn from woods and birds,
Thou must feel their subtle words.

When thou stand 'tween roads entwined,
Dark clouds deceive thy baffled mind.
Worry not much and trust thy soul,
Close thy eyes and rivet thy goal.

Fear not e'er to speak for truth,
The world at times might seem too brute,
A fearless soul can conquer miles,
And spread around all happy smiles.

Not just books or mundane tasks,
Learn thyself from 'neath old masks,
Paint thy thoughts on canvas white,
Or fill blank pages with words that're right.

Write good poems or tales of life,
Scribble, too bold each story of strife.
Be the voice of those who're frail,
Let thy art aid many to sail.

Let's Come Together!!!

The world canvas presents a kaleidoscope,
Of myriad hues and varied forms.
Each rare and distinct,
Yet blending to create a mural unique.

Nature's vibrant medley,
Playing out a symphony,
Music that is at once heart-warming,
Celebrating diversity,
Interlinked in unity.

Ms. Uma Sengupta

TGT English

Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan's Mehta, Vidyalaya K.G. Marg, New Delhi - 110001

All world's a school,
Full of educational tools,
To learn and imbibe,
Values of mutual respect,
For every race, culture and sect.

For in togetherness lies our strength,
Come together to build a pattern magnificent.
A rich and intricate tapestry,
Interwoven with thoughts, ideas and skills brilliant.

My Feelings Matter

I reached my home on Monday noon
with trophy in my right hand
My parents saw, ignore the same
and told me to leave painting land...

I told them true art is my soul,
a passion that cannot be dead
They told me why to choose something
which might soon ask me to beg...

Be the one who treats others
or build the world in high estate.
They asked me what is wrong with me
for choosing art as my taste...

I smiled but cried in my heart
for once again they did shatter;
I wonder why is it with me
that my feelings do not matter.

I signed appeal of let me be
the one who uses her own wings.
They told me they gave birth to me
and called my wish my big sins.

Ms. Khushbu Grover
PGT English
St. Margaret Sr.Sec.School

A dream so big and wish too high,
I wonder if I must try
to let my parents understand
that no painting will make me cry.

My dad opened his box of harsh days
which gave him bad childhood
and mom showed marks of Sharmaji's son
living in my neighborhood.

They know their weapons of power
which conquer feelings of everyone
but what about my feelings
which were ignored as no one?

It has been ages from childhood,
currently I am 28
If you ask what have I achieved,
truly I have nothing to say.

My dream of choosing my career
went down in an unknown cave
and feelings of being happy soul
had long went inside a grave.

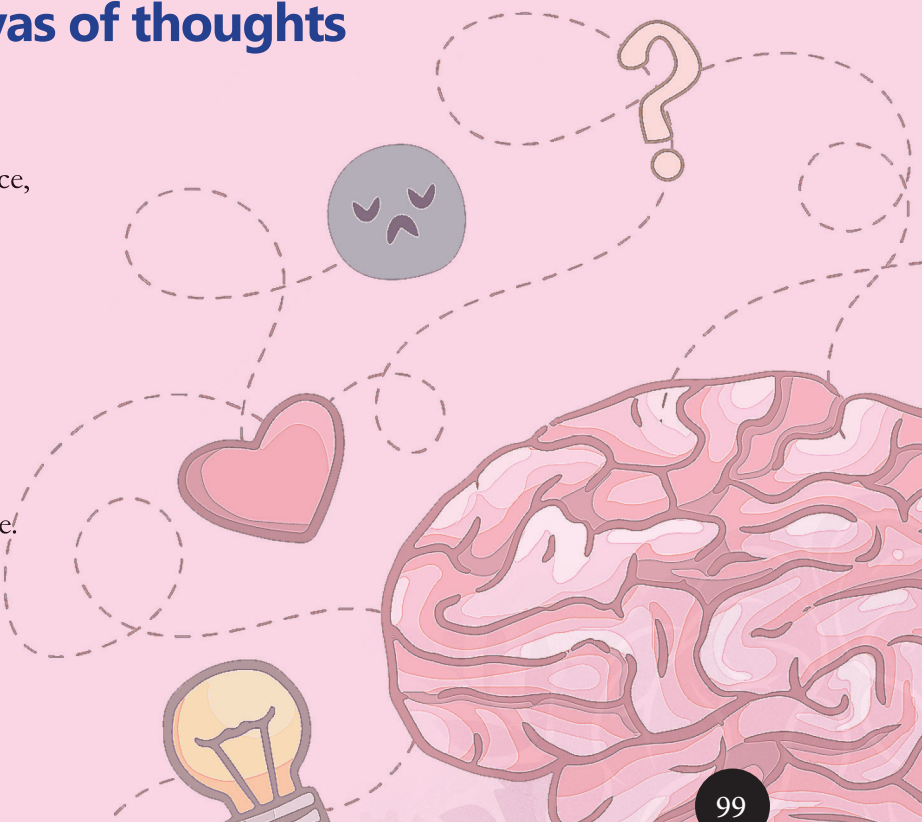
Canvas of thoughts

In the halls of knowledge, minds unfurl,
Nurturing wisdom, tales yet to swirl.
A canvas of thoughts, where seeds find space,
In fertile minds, fresh blossoms embrace.

Awareness blooms like petals fair,
In the garden of minds and fresh air.
Teachers, guides with empathetic might,
Illuminate paths, banish night.

Let's all echo whispers of resilience,
Champions of mind, with a heart's brilliance.
Together we forge a sanctuary, profound
Where mental health awareness is crowned.

Anuradha Chaudhary
TGT English
DLF Public School, Ghaziabad



Soulful Echoes: Embracing Minds with Compassion

In the halls of learning, minds unfold,
Where myths are shattered, truths retold.
Understanding mental health, a vital part,
We nurture awareness from the very start.

October's embrace, a month of care,
World Mental Health Day, a pledge we share.
Inspire sessions echo through the air,
Volunteers' voices, whispers of repair.

Junior wings flutter with mental health's grace,
Workshops weave wisdom, a delicate trace.
Music's soothing balm, a healing embrace,
Notes that resonate, filling every space.

Hand in hand, strangers unite,
On a painted wall, colors ignite.
The touch of hands, a bond takes flight,
Names inscribed, hearts alight.

Chalked affirmations, a vibrant array,
On designated walls, where emotions sway.
"Take one, leave one," kind words convey,
An exchange of love to brighten the day.

Mentors and Buddies stand, guardians of hope,
Guiding those on an intricate slope.
Professionals, listeners, helping to cope,
With struggles faced, a lifeline to grope.

Bodies in motion, minds in sync,
Physical health's impact, a bridge to link.

Yamini Gupta

PGT

Uttam School For Girls, B-Block, Shastri Nagar, Ghaziabad

Exercise, nutrition, sleep profound,
A trinity strong, mental wellness crowned.

Resilience blooms in the face of strife,
Building strength to navigate life.
Emotional intelligence, a compass rife,
Guiding through storms, calming the strife.

Safe spaces bloom in inclusive embrace,
Open dialogue, acceptance we trace.
Understanding flourishes, leaving no trace,
Of judgment, stigma, in this sacred space.

Seniors, teachers, counsellor, principal's grace,
Positive role models, a comforting base.
Guiding lights, a compassionate trace,
Influencing minds, fostering mental space.

Creativity's therapy, art's gentle stroke,
Music's melody, words gently spoke.
In curriculums woven, a healing cloak,
Minds find solace, where spirits evoke.

Parents join hands, a united front,
In fostering awareness, a vital hunt.
Techniques they share, a supportive affront,
To nurture their children, life's paramount.

Diverse backgrounds, cultures intertwine,
In mental health awareness, a tapestry fine.
Learning disabilities, a challenge assigned,
Yet support flourishes, hearts aligned.

In the garden of well being

In the garden of mental well being
We are working for the human well being

Where we sow seeds of compassion
With courage, curiosity and affection

We have to nurture the minds of children
With great care, comfort and passion

Daily we are going to water them
With trust, faith and pure reflection

To see them grow like a blooming flower
With knowledge, wisdom and perfection

In this way we irrigate the garden of mental well being
With nurturing minds and gratitude of self being.

Hamida begum

PRT

Hamdard Public School Talimabad, New Delhi

Mindfulness

In Uttam's embrace, where whispers of ink meet,
Bloom not just lessons, but hearts that retreat.
No Shakespearean echoes, but breaths soft and slow,
Mindfulness blooms, where anxieties don't grow.

Chalk-kissed corridors, where colors confess,
Idea Box whispers, a silent duress.
Red bleeds in anger, blue seeks a friend's hand,
Black masks a secret, in hues, understand.

Councils of solace, with doors ever open,
Tears find their haven, unspoken words spoken.
No judgment's cold gaze, just wisdom's embrace,
Adolescence cradled, finds solace in space.

Differing blooms blossom, in gardens embraced,
Special needs nurtured, no flower displaced.
Inclusion's rainbow, a symphony sweet,
Each girl finds her rhythm, with blossoms replete.

Laughter's bright symphony chases away gloom,
Vulnerability shared, in a welcoming room.

Ms. Nida Ahmed

PRT English

Uttam School for Girls, Ghaziabad

Hands reach in comfort, voices like a balm,
A tapestry woven, where resilience takes form.

English unfolds, not just grammar and rhyme,
But spirits unscripted, defying all time.
Stumbles and rises, a phoenix reborn,
Uttam's spirit whispers, "Bloom, brave and untorn."

Beyond academic heights, hearts take their flight,
Empowered young women, bathed in the sun's light.
Mental health's song sung, not in shadows confined,
Underneath well-being's sun, joy intertwined.

This story of Uttam, a blooming refrain,
A call to all classrooms, to break free from strain.
Weave mindfulness' magic, in lessons we share,
Let safe spaces blossom, where burdens all bear.

Not pressure's harsh grip, but compassion's soft touch,
Let young minds and hearts rise, like flowers so much.
Bloom, future's bright garden, where well-being reigns,
In Uttam's embrace, where joy breaks its chains.

Safe Haven for the Soul

In the garden of the mind, seeds of thought we sow,
Nurturing minds to flourish, like flowers in a vibrant row.
Each petal tells a story, a tale unique and bright,
A symphony of minds, with a gleam of light.

With sunlight of knowledge, let the shadows fade,
In this sanctuary of understanding, let no mind be afraid.
In the warmth of compassion, the dialogue begins,
Breaking the silence, where healing begins.

Amidst the blossoms, a delicate bud may hide,
A soul in need, where shadows may reside.
Tending the garden, with kindness as the key,
Supporting mental well-being, setting spirits free.

Tanu Arora

PGT English

Sadhu Vaswani International School for Girls

Mental health, a garden often unseen,
Break the stigma, let compassion be seen,
Embrace vulnerability, let it be known,
In this safe harbor, seeds of strength are sown.

Let awareness be the water that quenches the soul,
Encouraging them to heal and feel whole.
In this tapestry of thoughts, let kindness be the thread,
For mental health blooms where empathy is spread.

So let us tend to the garden, hearts intertwined,
Nourishing potentials, where a sanctuary we find.
With empathy and compassion, let their wings take flight,
With love and care, we weave a tapestry of light.

A Spectrum of Souls

“A Spectrum of Souls” invites you to explore the vast palette of human experiences, embracing the hues of diverse backgrounds and the delicate spectrum of mental well-being. It unfolds—a poetic journey celebrating the richness of cultural diversity. This poem is a lyrical testament to the strength found in unity and the beauty of acknowledging each unique note in the symphony of life.

Amidst a world of myriad shades,
A tapestry of cultures, diverse cascades.
Each thread tells tales of a unique lore,
A quilt of life, rich and evermore.
Through vibrant streets and quiet lanes,
Whispers of history, a mosaic sustains.
In every custom, a story untold,
A chapter of humanity, beautifully scrolled.

Dance of traditions, an intricate ballet,
Echoes of languages, in harmony they sway.
Respect the differences, let unity thrive,
For strength lies in the myriad ways we survive.
In minds, a kaleidoscope of thought,
A spectrum of emotions, battles fought.
Silent struggles beneath the surface reside,
Let empathy flourish, compassion be our guide.

Mental landscapes, complex and vast,
Nurturing understanding, breaking the caste.
No judgment’s shadow, only empathy’s light,
In the quiet battles, we find our might.
Beyond the boundaries of color and creed,
A shared humanity, the common seed.
Celebrate the uniqueness, embrace the unknown,
In unity, let our collective strength be sown.

In classrooms diverse, my journey unfolds,
Teaching not just subjects, but stories untold.
Eager minds, a kaleidoscope of thought,
In this vibrant tapestry, lessons are sought.

A student’s journey, unique and bright,
Illuminating the room with their individual light.
Embracing questions from lands far and wide,
Cultivating curiosity, on knowledge we ride.

In a quiet corner, a student sat alone,
Whispers of struggles, a pain deeply known.
Through patient conversations, I extended a hand,
Navigating emotions, like grains of sand.
Together we journeyed through challenges faced,
In the realm of feelings, a safe space embraced.
With encouragement and support steadfast,
A student’s resilience bloomed at last.

A symphony of hearts, beats as one,
In this grand tapestry, our journey begun.
Acknowledging differences, yet connected we stand,
For love transcends, weaving dreams unplanned.
Yet, in the silence, whispers I’ve heard,
Of struggles and battles, each a sacred word.
Mental landscapes painted with shadows unseen,
In those moments, understanding grows keen.

So, we navigate through academic seas,
Anchored in empathy, where differences appease.
In the classroom’s embrace, diversity thrives,
Nurturing minds, where each student arrives.
Let this pedagogic odyssey be a testament true,
To the power of acceptance, in all that we do.
For in teaching and learning, a partnership grand,
Diversity and mental health, hand in hand.

Conclusion: A Spectrum of Souls, is not just a poem but an ode to the beauty found in acceptance, compassion, and the resilience that blooms when diversity and mental health are embraced hand in hand.

Ms. Reena Gera

T.G.T. English

Tagore International School, East of Kailash, New Delhi

Every Mind Matters

Good mental health is the concern for today. Its impact is vast,
On the overall well-being and academic performance, a shadow it casts.
Schools recognise its importance and indulge in various tasks,
Physical activity, workshops on stress management and also emotional well-being that lifelong lasts.

What else can be done is a question,
Building resilience, self-esteem and self- efficacy is a suggestion.
Prioritizing emotional well-being is of great worth,
Means to achieve it are in no dearth.

Our emotional well-being affects our work and academics.
Social relationships in school and friends that one picks,
Provide emotional security and social support and together many problems they can fix.
Active listening and understanding one's emotion brings emotional intelligence in motion.

Mental well-being too should be worked upon,
Mindfulness and meditation are tools to be touched upon.
Focussing your attention on a single task,
Being in the moment while the moment lasts.

Another crucial issue to be addressed is the usage of technology.
Excessive screen time impairs concentration,
It increases not only the risk of anxiety but also depression.
Sleep too gets impacted,
Before sleeping, phone and tv should be subtracted.

Physical activity during the day must be magnified,
Sports, running games and stretching should be amplified.
Endorphins and serotonin are discharged,
Dopamine and Oxytocin in the body take charge.

Stress should be tackled using task-oriented coping,
The problem should be directly attacked instead of using avoidance-oriented coping.
Relaxation and creative visualization are great techniques to manage stress,
Exercise too is a buffer and it is also important to rest.

We need to give sufficient time to sleep,
Putting things for the last minute should not be an option to keep.
Stepping out for fresh air is mandatory,
Self-acceptance and self-compassion for self-care are obligatory.

If we ever fail, we need to bounce back to sail.
Building resilience is imperative, it is the antidote to stress.
It helps clear life's mess.
Whenever we feel low, it is good to journal, hear music, paint or sing a little more.

In school we have a Counsellor who is highly empathetic,
Information is kept confidential and you leave the room energetic.
Counselling helps become authentic and helps change self-defeating behaviour,
We should remove the stigma because the counsellor is a saviour.

Teachers too are supportive and create a safe space,
Knowing no one would be judged, students show their true face.
Opinions are encouraged and students are respected,
For offering a different viewpoint, students are never subjected.

Making mistakes is an opportunity for learning,
With each mistake, wisdom is what they are earning.
Cultural diversity is celebrated,
And cultural sensitivity in the classroom is highly rated.

Respectful conversations are held,
The need to learn from each other is felt.
Students with learning disabilities are given extra attention and care,
With love and compassion, extremely well they can fare.

Parents also need to be involved,
With their guidance, many problems get dissolved.
Listening and being respectful to children, eating together can act like magic,
Even when situations are tragic.

We all have to work as a team,
For changes in the student's mental health to be seen.
Mental health is the most salient,
Utmost effort should be put to maintain and sustain it.

Shriya Khanna
PGT Psychology & Counsellor
Tagore International School, East of Kailash

Letter to the Classmates

Yes, I am not like you
I know, I am not like you
I do not look the way you do
I can not comprehend the way you do
My walk, my talk is different from you
But you know what...
What I feel is just the same as you.

Every day I wake up with dread
Another day when I wish I was dead
Why I am not like you. I do not know
I didn't want it but this is who I am
What to do?
In one day of my life, if you ever be
You will know how difficult it is, just to be
Yes...I know I am not like you
But is being 'different' such a big sin?
Uncover outer layers, please look within

No one can give me the happiness that only a friend can
Will you please be my friend, if you can?

Dr. Rajshree Tewari
PGT Psychology
Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan's Vidyashram, K.M.Munshi Marg, Jaipur



Blossoming Minds : A Symphony of Wisdom

Blossoming Minds: A Symphony of Wisdom
In the tender cradle of knowledge, minds unfold,
A symphony of learning, stories yet untold.
Nurturing minds like delicate blossoms in May,
In the embrace of wisdom, they find their way.

Teachers, like beacons, guide with a gentle hand,
Fostering dreams, helping understanding expand.
Each lesson a gift, each word a caring art,
Nurturing minds, igniting a hopeful spark.

In the quiet spaces where shadows may roam,
Mental health whispers, seeking a comforting home.
Fostering awareness like a soft, soothing breeze,
Guiding hearts through storms, putting troubled minds at ease.

Compassion, a currency exchanged in the halls,
Teachers and students, building resilient walls.
Nurturing minds with empathy's tender touch,
Fostering a haven where no one feels out of clutch.

Harmony echoes in laughter and in tears,
Senior years bring joys, but also fears.
Fostering awareness, a beacon in the night,
Guiding minds through struggles, towards the light.

Diversity blooms like a vibrant bouquet,
In the garden of minds, where friendships sway.
Nurturing respect for every unique bloom,
Fostering unity, dispelling any gloom.

Storms may come, with thunder loud and fierce,
Yet, within these minds, resilience will pierce.
Nurturing strength, like roots firmly entwined,
Fostering courage in the face of the grind.

In the harvest of knowledge, the season's end,
A bittersweet farewell, a message to send.
Nurtured and fostered, each heart holds a story,
With wisdom and dreams, they step into glory.

In the hallowed halls where minds found their voice,
Nurturing and fostering, a cause to rejoice.
A legacy of awareness, a poem of the heart,
In the tapestry of school, a work of art.

Ms. Ghazala Roy

PGT English

Tagore International School, East of Kailash, New Delhi

Harmony in Education : A Journey Through Words, Wisdom, and Well-Being

In a world where learning meets delight,
A journey embarked, passion in full flight.
Through words and wisdom, a teacher's art,
Crafting futures, a work of heart.

In the realm of words and tales,
Where literature's magic never pales.
In English class, a journey profound,
Mental health and life skills abound.

Parent-Teacher Meetings, a bridge to mend,
Guiding parents, and students to comprehend.
From traditional clashes to modern ways,
Informed strategies fill our days.

A story born from PTM's embrace,
Published, cherished, a literary grace.
Life Skills monthly, a curriculum blend,
From role-plays to interviews that transcend.

Class VIII, a legend of courage and grace,
Teaching self-awareness in life's embrace.
Responsibilities explored, traditions held dear,
A journey through India, pride crystal clear.

Interviews unfold, "On Being a Tagorean,"
Communication skills bloom and are honed.

Ms. Aastha Arya

T.G.T. English

Tagore International School, East of Kailash, New Delhi

Design Thinking and Innovation take flight,
Leadership traits and self-esteem ignite.

Mindfulness practices, a calming grace,
Meditation's embrace, a peaceful space.
Through Himalayan treks in a poetic guise,
Imaginations soar, touching the skies.

Counseling support in a safe space,
Building resilience, challenges to face.
Literary empathy, characters unfold,
In diverse perspectives, lessons are told.

Creative expressions in journals so dear,
A therapeutic outlet, emotions clear.
Media literacy, a critical eye,
Navigating a world where truths may lie.

Financial wisdom, a life skill so grand,
Savings and budgets, futures planned.
A seamless blend of language and life,
Prepared for challenges, devoid of strife.

In snapshots, your commitment stands,
A teacher's legacy in talented hands.
For mental health and skills, you strive,
In students' hearts, forever alive.

Pearled Compassion

When things go beyond your control
and everything seems to be giving you a blow
Pull up your socks and tell your intellect, it is time, to get set go
As the sprinter reaches the finish line and then takes a breath of relief
many around you hold this belief
that you are the one who holds the instinct
So, Step forward and face the world
For that's how we are pearled, to stay put, love and care
Behold, believe in and perceive all fellow beings
In the most virtuous way.... Clinging to the epistemology of Compassion

Deepti Tiwari

T.G.T English

Bal Bharati Public School, Noida

You too Shall Rise

Life is bizarre with its twists n turn
Along the curve you bend the stern
When worry & stress is pressing you down a bit
Rest if u must, to build up your grit

Weathering storm, both old & new
A sliver of sunshine through the hazy view
Unseen winds trying to make you sway
Listen to deep roots of resilience whisper, 'it's okay'

Embrace the challenges that come your way
For strength & growth, sprout from each dismay
We all stumble, as we hit a rough patch
But true resilience, gives us hope to latch

When deadlines pile and anxiety loom
Remember to create peace to help you bloom
Meditate, exercise or walk in the sun
Nurture your mind, let stress come undone

In times of worry, find solace in art
Express your emotions let sadness depart
Paint, sing, write or dance with your might
Creativity heals & restores your inner light

Practice gratitude, count blessings anew
Shift focus from stress to joys that accrue
Appreciate the wins, big or small
Resilience grows when gratitude stands tall

In classrooms filled with growing minds
Students face stress of various kinds
With assignments, exams and pressures high
Resilience and stress management, you must apply

Believe in yourself and your ability to cope
You are stronger than you think,
with resilience as your hope

Embrace flexibility & adapt to change
Life's unpredictable, it may re-arrange
Learn to adjust, find solutions along the way
A resilient mindset keeps stresses at bay

Every stumble, setback or mistake
Builds your courage & resilience to partake
Remember failures are lessons in disguise
Opportunities to learn, you too shall rise

Antima Kishore

Faculty English Department
Tagore International School, New Delhi

Illumined...

The onset of Spring, would surely
bring Different shades and vibrant breeze
of compassion and exhilaration;
where withered leaves would be left
and, the greener ones be kept;
to make a move and curtail the gloom
refining my flight to ascend,
paving ways to be receptive and
introspective a cautious inference in my glide
smoothing ruffled feathers, to broaden my horizons;
beholding empathy, sprucing communication and
active listening Resilient me, to be an emotionally healthy being.

Poonam Sharma

TGT (English)
Bal Bharati Public School, Noida
(Based on Emotional Intelligence and Mental Health)



Salvaging Sacred Souls

I lost a friend, would you like to know how and why?
Will tell you with a heaving heart and a mournful sigh!
He would have flourished and might have been with us,
Melodiously reciting a poem with an insightful crux.

Grade system flourished in the temples of knowledge.
An innocent soul lost hope, did anyone acknowledge?
Alas! The brutal academic pressure became the noose,
A grueling battle that my dear friend was bound to lose!

Engulfed in plummeting hopes and silent cries for help,
Clearly, we were losing him and he was losing himself.
Voracious appetite for knowledge was expected,
Nothing more was left to learn, he introspected.

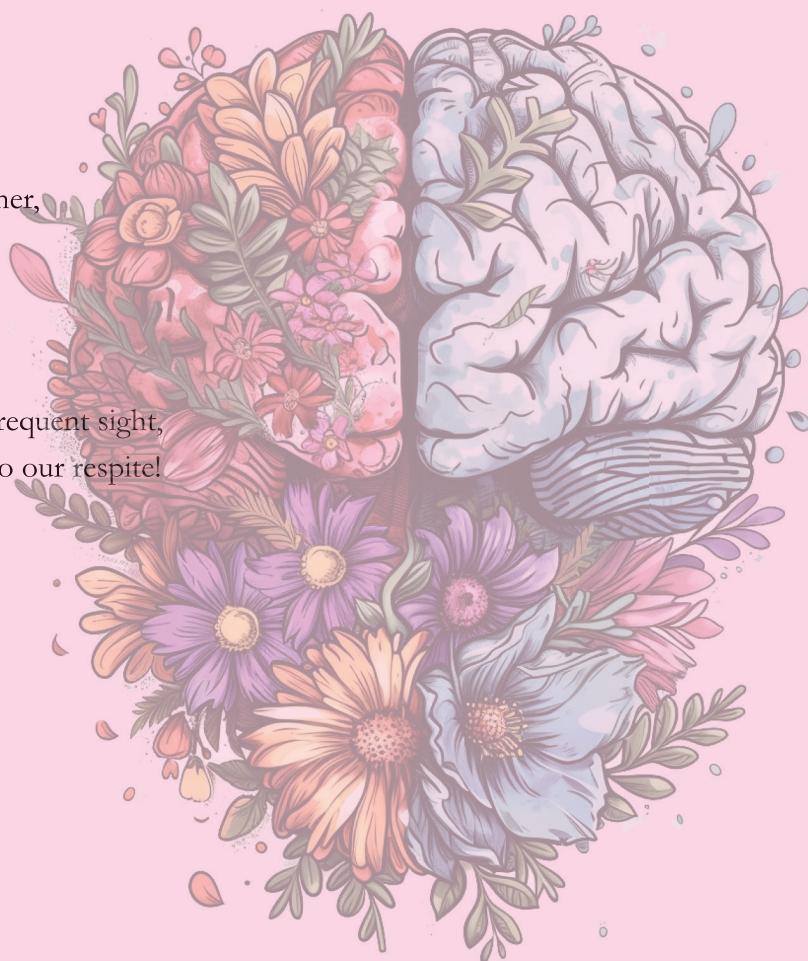
Venturing the crossroads without goal,
Trapped him in a morbid black hole.
Who was to be blamed, For the loss that deeply pained?
He was on his own, What on earth was gained?

Gravely lost in the perilous life,
Every moment challenged him with a strife.
Dampening courage, brutal times loomed,
A dazzling bright star was thus doomed.

My heart ripped apart when I saw the wailing mother,
Shattered at heart for the treasured kidder.
Aggression, depression and substance abuse,
Degraded a convivial sapling to a recluse!

Heart-wrenching cases like this were becoming a frequent sight,
Thank goodness, now we have nurturing schools to our respite!
Learning requisite skills and taking the charge
Channelizing energies will have a great start!

Classrooms will have a creative demeanor
Something a child cannot ignore.
Noxious thoughts will be put to rest,
With education at its ever-best.



Rejuvenating nurture and tender revival,
Cultivate the thoughts, pertinent for survival.
It's a ray of hope for these precious lives,
The sacred soul will be salvaged before it dives.

Levitating transformation with Right to education
What a marvelous amalgamation!
Families will not have to grieve and gloom,
Over the loss of life that once bloomed.

Joy, gaiety and high spirits will prevail,
In toughest times, helping the pristine stars sail.
Metamorphosing, unleashing talent,
We will have humans who are gallant.

With a blissful life and the visions clearer
The salvaged soul will become a torch-bearer.

Ms. Prerna Anand

TGT English

Ahlcon International School, Mayur Vihar, Phase-1, Delhi



No More Ifs and Buts

No more ifs and buts.....
Stop making excuses,
The victim card is outdated!
There's always a way out,
Having no other option is overrated.

No more ifs and buts
Take off your rose tinted glasses,
Instead of following the lead, be a trailblazer!
As the phoenix rises from the ashes,
Sprint towards your destination, be the chaser.

No more ifs and buts.....
Be your own knight,
And not the pawn!

Rashi Rawal

PRT English

Apeejay School, Noida

Ditch your fears,
Embrace the unknown.

No more ifs and buts.....
Ignite your passion,
Burn the midnight oil!
Be the candle to eradicate darkness,
Sweat it out and toil.

No more ifs and buts.....
Your strength lies in your commitment,
Chase your destiny and do not sway,
Overcome obstacles with fearless pursuit,
After all, Rome was not built in a day!

Anxiety

The stagnant motion inside
Welcomes blindside,
Soaking sigh on a silent night
When gloomy thought fight,
Courageous fear binds thy mind
Just then anxiety enshrined,
Breathlessness , insomnia, distress and fear
Guards until you tear,
You drink, you smoke, you eat or roll
To evoke peace once stole,
You don't tackle but escape
And every-time your peace of mind gets rape,
Overthinking is new found connection
Even a small talk calls aggression,
Meditation, diet, exercise or hobby
Will make anxiety foggy,
A new build passion
Will create a transition
And the stagnant motion inside
Is being blindside

Harshita Makkar

Special Educator

DAV Pushpanjali Enclave



Shining Eyes Gleaming Bright

I thought I was just a teacher!
Until my eyes would shine seeing the bright faces in the wee hours of the day,
Until I saw those pretty smiles making their way,
Until I fixed their slack ties and crooked collars,
Until a child penned down the mother's day card for me, worth a trillion dollars!

Until I saw the walls of the school adorned by those caricatures,
Until I pampered them in running temperatures,
Until I laughed to my heart's content while on the trips,
Until I rebuilt some broken friendships.
A friend, a guide, a mother, a preacher,
And I thought, I was just a teacher!

Megha Sharma

DLF Public School

You Are More Than What You May Dream

I have seen your mighty highs and the treacherous lows.
In awe, admired your strengths, have also met your woes.
How I crave to tell you to calm down,
Seeing you stuck in the societal swamp of worries
That is engulfing you from toe to crown.

“Dear students, it is not the flashy grades that are the seed,
To build a firm future, ‘self-realization’ is what you need.
Hark! the whispers of the heart’s resilient grace.
For in your emotional strength, you’ll find a steady, guiding space.
Beyond equations and facts, where the soul’s colours blend,
Lies a strength profound, on which your spirits can depend.

Like a compass, guiding through uncharted sea,
Are your capabilities, beacons, strong and free.
So, on the stage of life, take up the gig you wish to embrace,
What others say or do, shouldn’t dampen your spirit; overshadow your grace.

Listen, your teacher’s voice whispers-
Ask yourself what excites you, what stirs your waking dream,
That pursuit of yours, will make you hustle; follow the beam.
In every critical question, see an opportunity’s gleam,
For you’re capable of more than you may even dream.”

Ms. Aayesha Ahmad

PGT English

Tagore International School, East of Kailash, New Delhi.

Trust Thyself

Be the one you'd respect
Build the trust in you and be yourself,
Don't get carried away by the superficial world
Believe in your instinct without any suspect.

You are not alone in the race
There are many more just like you,
Don't imitate others and compete with them
Believe in yourself and keep your pace.

You might have fallen and may fall
Past has gone but the future is in control,
Don't crib about the past and sulk over it
Believe in your potential just grow big and tall.

Your heart is swollen with joy and sorrow
Look for the one you trust more,
Don't find solace in friends at the surface
Believe in the true friend in you to follow.

Be good and tread on the path of altruism
Helping others is more than appreciation,
Don't wait for anyone to sing praises for you
Believe in the supremacy of optimism.

Knowing oneself is a real challenge
Once known you can't be perturbed,
Don't look for outer happiness
Mindfulness is a true pilgrimage.

Ms. Prabha Rawat

Ahlcon International School, Mayur Vihar, Phase-1 Delhi-110091

Pixel Pantomime : A Rhyme on the Perils of Screens and the Dance for Balance

In the age of screens and endless glare,
Where pixels dance and eyes just stare,
A tale unfolds of tech's cruel grip,
On minds it seizes, on sanity it does strip.

Children lost in a digital maze,
Their minds entangled in a pixelated daze,
Screens aplenty, oh what a sight,
For mental health, it's quite the fight.

Blinking cursors, flashing lights,
In the realm of screens, days turn to nights,
Little minds, once sharp and keen,
Now lost in the virtual screen.

Oh, the effects of this digital spree,
On mental health, it's plain to see,
Anxiety rises, attention takes flight,
From too much screen time, a perilous plight.

But fear not, dear seekers of balance,
For a remedy exists, let's enhance,
Here are tips, both kid and adult,
To break free from screens, to exult.

Unplug, Unwind, Rediscover the Sky
Tear your eyes away from the screen, oh my!
Step outside, breathe the fresh air,
Rediscover the world beyond the pixelated lair.

Ms Pinky Ghati

Assistant Teacher

Bal Bharati Public School

Ganga Ram Hospital Marg, New Delhi

Screen Time Limits, Oh What a Novel Thought
Set limits, dear parents, let it be taught,
For kids and adults alike, a balanced decree,
No endless scrolling, set your tech boundaries.

Tech-Free Zones, the Sacred Spaces
In the bedroom or at the dining places,
Banish screens from these sacred realms,
Let conversations bloom, let mental health helm.

Hobbies Galore, Rediscover the Joy
Pick up a book, a guitar, or a toy,
Hobbies aplenty, so much to explore,
From screens to passions, let minds galore.

Digital Detox, Oh the Sweet Relief
Take a break, it's beyond belief,
A day or a weekend, let screens rest,
Your mental health will surely be blessed.

Mindful Tech Use, the Key to Moderation
Use tech with purpose, avoid the temptation,
Be mindful, be aware, in every swipe,
A balance struck, a healthier type.

So there you have it, a rhythmic decree,
On balanced tech usage, hear the plea,
Let screens enhance, not take control,
For mental health's sake, let's reach that goal.

Unmasking Reality : An Emotional Odyssey

In worlds that seem both desolate and dim,
Where parched weeds meet the gaze at the brim.
Countless friends on lists that friendship feign,
Yet we find ourselves confined; fists clenched in pain.

Can we express our sentiments so true?
Can we voice the pain that within us grew?
Alas, for all, there exists an exquisite guise,
A mask that veils our truth, a clever disguise.
To feign joy, a self-imposed enterprise.

Ms. Rubina Rehan

PGT English

DPS Mathura Road

Adorn your cloak, shatter chains that bind,
Respond, retaliate, and don't leave it behind.
Life is fleeting, too precious for idle talk,
Don't merely exist like a statue on a walk.

Speak, share, converse, relax, let emotions flow,
Unleash your feelings, don't wait for the blow.
Have faith in the splendour,
the magnificence of this majesty divine,
He's there to transform the weary,
hold on to Him, you'll be just fine.

Seek the Balance

Dozens of loaded apps
Clear mobiles from unwanted crap
Scrolling social media
Limit the limitless encyclopedia

Use technology cautiously
Direct your focus flawlessly
Excessive and obsessive
Reorient your attention expensive

Do not enter the black hole
Check your habit bowl
Wrong information is slaughtering
Avoid your own faltering

Finding real in virtual
Can make life miserable
Do not double up
Control e-files piling up

Here a screen
There a screen
Avoid multiple screening
Track any useless multi-meeting

Clear your mind
Prioritize and unwind
You are not losing any what is up bout
Calculate the overall damage amount

Be tech-wise and never compromise
Your mental health is not a dice
Attention and productivity
Are your own responsibility

Submerge yourself
But never lose yourself
Be picky for any notification
Avoid gadget domination

There is a tsunami of information
Save your ship and regulate your attention
Help and healthy lifestyle is nearby
Do not keep mental health on standby

Try to detach from mobile
Save relations fragile
Your mind is a holy place
Keep seeking the desired mental balance.

Preeti Sharma

PGT

DAV Public School, Pushpanjali Enclave, New Delhi-110034



To Smile and Win

Sitting in an Examination Hall
I thought and thought and thought,
But I still couldn't make myself remember,
The past tense of think!!!!

Haven't you been stuck with the
Biggest demons of all
No, it's not the loss of money and power.
But...forgetting in an examination hall.

I somehow realise, my brain is actually not my friend!!
But is my teacher's secret ally.
Conspires to forget the notebook of the one, I dread the most,
Stinging me with its sly

And I hope against the hope that it somehow ended there,
But then there is mom at home and alas! It happens again....
The running tap, the wet towel on bed, my school uniform socks
They seem to disappear from my mind, miraculously appearing...
In front of mom's eyesight.... putting reputation to drain

How careless!! Silly you!! How lost you are
The phrases now define me!!!
I shall stamp everything on my arm...
But, the point is, to do that, who is going to remind me!!!

Trust me I am not the labels.
Not "Oh you always do so!"
But I am the continuous trials which under the failure,
You refuse to see so!

I remember very gleefully when rarely you pat my back,
And said, "Oh! Nice You did that!"
And I always thrived to do better just to see you smile.
Or when you said, no worries we will try together.
And I studied coz you were always there!

Believe me when I don't say it,
I have the worries which you have outgrown,
Not being liked in class, never being wanted.

Ms. Jayashree Deb
TGT Biology
Mount St. Mary's School, Delhi Cantt

जीवन जीने की युक्ति : तनाव से मुक्ति

‘तनाव’ – यह शब्द हमारे परिवेश का एक हिस्सा बन गया है। सर्वप्रथम, हमें यह समझने की आवश्यकता है कि तनाव है क्या? हमें तनाव क्यों होता है? उससे बचने के क्या उपाय हैं?

तनाव जीवन की वह स्थिति है जब मनुष्य किसी कार्य को समय पर सही तरीके से करने में सक्षम नहीं है, तब उसका दिमाग एक चिंताग्रस्त स्थिति में आ जाता है और वह उस स्थिति से स्वयं को बाहर निकालने का प्रयास करता है। वह जब तक उस चिंतायुक्त स्थिति से बाहर नहीं आता है; उसका समाधान नहीं निकाल लेता है; अपने कार्य को सही ढंग से निश्चित अवधि के अंतर्गत पूर्ण नहीं कर लेता है, तब तक चिंताग्रस्त रहता है और यह तनाव मनुष्य को मानसिक रूप से पीड़ित कर धीरे-धीरे उसे शारीरिक और मानसिक रूप से ही रोगी बना देती है। प्राचीन समय में संयुक्त परिवार हुआ करते थे; सब मिल जुलकर रहते थे; कठिन समय में एक-दूसरे का सहारा बनते थे; एक-दूसरे का आत्मबल बन जाते थे; एक दूसरे की ताकत बन जाते थे; एक-दूसरे के सुख-दुख को बाँट लेते थे। घर के बड़ों के साथ साथ बच्चे भी मिलजुलकर परिवार में पोषण पाते थे। उनके संस्कारों को ग्रहण करते थे और आत्मविश्वास व मजबूत इरादों से परिपूर्ण होते थे, जिसके कारण कठिन परिस्थितियों को देखकर वे शीघ्र ही घबराने नहीं थे।

आज समय व स्थितियाँ बदल गई हैं। आज हम दो और हमारे दो की संस्कृति से बढ़ते हुए हम – हम दो हमारा एक- की संस्कृति के छोर पर आकर रुक गए हैं। आज एकल परिवारों को बढ़ावा मिला है। बदलती जीवन-शैली के कारण अधिकतर बच्चों का पालन पोषण घर में अकेले रह कर ही होता है क्योंकि वे अकेली संतान की गिनती में आते हैं। आज अधिकतर माता-पिता दोनों ही नौकरीपेशा हैं। अतः उनकी व्यस्ततम दिनचर्या के कारण मार्गदर्शन की कमी बच्चों के आत्म-बल और आत्मविश्वास को कमजोर करती दिखाई देती है।

ये बदलता माहौल हमें आज सोचने पर मजबूर करता है कि विपरीत परिस्थितियों में यह किस प्रकार से अपनी सोच में परिवर्तन लाकर तनाव मुक्त रह सकते हैं और जीवन को खुशहाल बनाकर आगे बढ़ सकते हैं। आज केवल अध्यापिकाएँ या छात्र या अभिभावक ही इन

स्थितियों के शिकार नहीं है, अपितु सम्पूर्ण समाज ही तनाव के दंश को झेल रहा है, जिससे बाहर निकलने के उपाय हमें खोजने ही होंगे।

सर्वप्रथम हमें विद्यालय में कक्षाओं में मिलजुल कर परस्पर सहयोगी बनकर कार्य करने की प्रवृत्ति को बढ़ावा देना होगा, जिससे कि हम एक-दूसरे के आत्मविश्वास को बढ़ा सकें। एक-दूसरे से आगे निकलने की होड़ में हम स्वार्थी बनते जा रहे हैं। अतः अपने स्वार्थ को पीछे छोड़कर एक दूसरे का सहायक बनना होगा; एक दूसरे को अकेलेपन के भय से मुक्त करना होगा।

समर्थ विद्यार्थियों को कक्षा में कमजोर छात्रों का संबल बनना होगा; अध्यापिकाओं व प्रतिभाशाली छात्रों को अपने अहं को त्यागकर पीछे छूट रहे छात्रों का हाथ पकड़ना होगा।

परिवार, समाज की संकल्पना भी इसी आधार पर की गई है कि अकेला व्यक्ति अपने जीवन को अकेले नहीं जी सकता, उसे साथी की आवश्यकता होती है। अतः इन सभी बातों को ध्यान में रखते हुए तनाव-मुक्त जीवन जीने के लिए हमें कुछ बातों को ध्यान में रखना होगा।

योग, व्यायाम, खेलकूद तनाव से मुक्ति पाने के लिए रामबाण उपाय हैं। वास्तव में ये हमें जहाँ मनोरोगी होने से बचाते हैं, वहीं हमें शारीरिक कष्टों से भी मुक्ति दिलाने में सक्षम हैं।

दिनभर के काम से थकने के उपरांत हमारे मन-मस्तिष्क व शरीर को विश्राम की भी आवश्यकता होती है। अतः समयानुसार हमें अपने शरीर और मस्तिष्क की आवश्यकताओं का भी ध्यान रखना चाहिए।

तनाव से मुक्ति के लिए हमें परस्पर बातचीत अवश्य करनी चाहिए। इसका एक लाभ तो यह होता है कि दूसरों से बात करके हमारा मन शांत हो जाता है और दूसरा लाभ यह होता है कि बातचीत से आपसी रिश्तों में, संबंधों में प्रगाढ़ता आती है और समस्याओं के नए-नए समाधान भी मिल जाते हैं। गीत-संगीत भी तनाव से मुक्ति का एक अच्छा साधन है, जो मस्तिष्क की उड़ान पर रोक लगाकर उसे आनंद व विश्राम देता है। तनाव-मुक्त मनुष्य की कार्य-क्षमता दुगुनी हो जाती है और अच्छे परिणाम सामने आते हैं।

यहाँ एक बात और ध्यान देने की है कि अध्यापिका हो या विद्यार्थी अथवा अभिभावक, परस्पर सम्मान की भावना एक-दूसरे के आत्मविश्वास को बढ़ाती है; भावनाओं की अभिव्यक्ति के लिए उचित वातावरण प्रदान करती है; जिससे कि तनावपूर्ण स्थिति से जल्दी ही छुटकारा मिल जाता है।

अध्यापिकाओं के लिए भी यह आवश्यक है कि वे कक्षा में विद्यार्थियों से जुड़ें। कक्षा के वातावरण को हल्का-फुल्का बनाएँ, जिससे कि विद्यार्थी पढ़ाई को बोझ न समझें। उन्हें गतिविधियों के माध्यम से पढ़ाया जाए। सभी विद्यार्थियों को आगे आने के अवसर दिए जाएँ। उनके व्यवहार में यदि कोई बदलाव दिखाई दे, तो उसका कारण जानने का प्रयास करें। साथ ही उसके निदान के लिए भी प्रयासरत रहें।

रंगों की दुनिया भी बहुत चमत्कारी होती है। कुछ बच्चों को रंगों से खेलने में भी बहुत आनंद आता है। चित्रकारी करते हुए वे अपने तनाव को भूल जाते हैं। कहने का तात्पर्य यह है कि अपनी रुचि के अनुसार कार्य करने पर भी तनाव से मुक्ति पाई जा सकती है।

नीता कक्कड़

पी. जी. टी. (हिंदी)

न्यू इरा पब्लिक स्कूल, मायापुरी

कक्षा में, विद्यालय में अथवा पड़ोस में मित्र का होना भी आवश्यक है। कहा भी गया है कि मित्र तो सौ दवाओं की एक दवा है। बचपन हो या यौवन अथवा बुढ़ापा - हर अवस्था में मित्र की उपस्थिति खुशियों के खजाने के रूप में होती है। बहुत बार तो मित्र न बनने की स्थिति में भी तनाव पैदा हो जाता है। यहाँ पर अध्यापिकाओं की भूमिका बहुत महत्वपूर्ण हो जाती है। कक्षा में किसी बच्चे की उपेक्षा न हो; सभी मिल-जुलकर रहें, इसका उत्तरदायित्व भी अध्यापिका पर ही आता है।

हम सभी जानते हैं कि स्वस्थ शरीर में ही स्वस्थ मस्तिष्क निवास करता है। अतः आज खुश रहना सभी की आवश्यकता है। यही कारण है कि 20 मार्च को विश्व प्रसन्नता दिवस घोषित किया गया है। इसलिए खुश रहने के कारणों को नहीं ढूँढना है, अपितु हर परिस्थिति में खुश रहने का प्रयास करना है। यदि हम ठान लें, तो निश्चित रूप से हम अपने प्रयासों से भावी पीढ़ी को तनावमुक्त और खुशहाल जीवन दे सकते हैं।

परवरिश

मनुष्य इस सृष्टि की सर्वश्रेष्ठ कृति है क्योंकि उसको ईश्वर ने बुद्धि दी है जिसका प्रयोग करके वह संसार में अपनी श्रेष्ठता सिद्ध कर सकता है। इस सर्वश्रेष्ठ कृति को सही दिशा देने के लिए परवरिश अत्यंत आवश्यक है। एक बालक उस कच्ची मिट्टी के समान है जिसे सही परवरिश के द्वारा देवता भी बनाया जा सकता है लेकिन इसके विपरीत राक्षस भी बनाया जा सकता है। आज के समय जहाँ संयुक्त परिवार खत्म हो रहे हैं, एकाकी परिवारों का चलन बढ़ रहा है वहीं माता-पिता की जिम्मेदारी अपने बच्चों की परवरिश में और महत्वपूर्ण हो जाती है।

हालाँकि परवरिश की कोई मान्य परिभाषा तो नहीं है लेकिन माता-पिता अपने बच्चों को समय के महत्व को अवश्य सिखाएँ, जिसके लिए उन्हें स्वयं भी समय का महत्व समझना होगा क्योंकि बच्चे हमारी बातों से ज्यादा हमें देखकर सीखते हैं। अपनी उम्मीदों को उन पर ना थोपें, उन्हें इस प्रकार से बड़ा करे जिससे वह अपने निर्णय ले सकें। उनके निर्णय में उनके सहयोगी बने और इस प्रकार बच्चों की सही परवरिश परिवार, समाज और देश को सुखद और सफल बना सकती है।

रुचिका अग्रवाल

तितिक्षा पब्लिक स्कूल, दिल्ली

एक कदम आप चलो, एक कदम हम चले !

जिंदगी एक पल है
जिसमें न आज है न कल है
जियो इसे इस तरह कि लगे
बस यही हमारी जिंदगी का
सबसे हसीन पल है।

आजकल प्रतिस्पर्धा और सफलता की ऊँचाइयों का जोर है हर कोई ऊँचे-से-ऊँचे उड़ना चाहता है। ऐसे में जो पीछे रह जाते हैं, जो गति के साथ चल नहीं पाते, वे लोग मानसिक रोगों का शिकार हो जाते हैं।

ऐसे में हमारी पीढ़ी निराश और हताश होकर सोच रही है कि ऐसी क्या कमी रह गई हमारी परवरिश में जो आज इन बच्चों ने हमें इस कटघरे में लाकर खड़ा कर दिया। अपने सुखों को ताक पर रखकर हम इनका जीवन सुधारने में लगे रहे और ये न जाने कौन-सी दुनिया में खो गए। इन्हें किसी के दुख तकलीफ का एहसास नहीं है। इनमें थोड़ी-सी भी सहनशक्ति नहीं। दया, करुणा, सहयोग के भाव नहीं, एक छोटी-सी गलती, अपमान या बात इन्हें तनावग्रस्त कर आत्मघाती बना देती है और ये एक पल में निर्णय लेकर इसे अंजाम तक पहुँचा देते हैं। कैसी हो गई है यह नई पीढ़ी! चारों तरफ डर का साया, मौत का भय, निराश और उदास माँ-बापा क्यों.. आखिर क्यों..?

कारण है- 'मानसिक स्थिति'। जी हाँ, जिसके बारे में हम सोचना ही नहीं चाहते, जानना ही नहीं चाहते और इसे नजरअंदाज कर देते हैं। और तो और इसके बारे में बात करने में भी अपमानित महसूस करते हैं। यह सबसे खतरनाक है क्योंकि 'मानसिक रोग' भी किसी भी अन्य रोग की तरह ही है। इसका भी समय पर इलाज करना अनिवार्य है।

शारीरिक स्वास्थ्य की तरह ही मानसिक स्वास्थ्य भी जीवन के हर चरण में, बचपन और किशोरावस्था से लेकर वयस्कता तक महत्वपूर्ण है।

मानसिक रूप से स्वस्थ व्यक्ति ऊर्जावान होता है। वह दैनिक कार्यों को बिना थकान का अनुभव हुए कर सकता है। लेकिन मानसिक स्वास्थ्य की पहचान सरल नहीं है क्योंकि इसके ज्यादातर लक्षण सामान्य ही

लगते हैं। जैसे - अकेलापन, उदासी, किसी भी आनंद में आनंदित न होना, थकान महसूस करना, ऊर्जा कम होना, नींद की समस्या, भोजन की आदतों में बदलाव, आत्मघाती सोच अत्यधिक गुस्सा आना.. आदि। यहाँ दिया गया हर संकेत मानसिक रोग का इशारा नहीं है। लेकिन अचानक से कुछ भी हो... तो हमें सतर्क रहने की आवश्यकता है, तब इसका उपचार अनिवार्य है।

प्रश्न उठता है- क्या इसका उपचार संभव है? और उत्तर है - हाँ। इसका उपचार किया जा सकता है। आवश्यकता है कि हम उसके लिए अपनी आदतों में कुछ सुधार करें। किसी ने ठीक ही कहा है-

“आप अपना भविष्य नहीं बदल सकते, परंतु आप अपनी आदतें बदल सकते हैं और निश्चित रूप से आपकी अच्छी आदतें, आपका भविष्य बदल सकती है।”

सबसे पहले आत्मकुंठा को निकाल कर स्वयं से प्यार करें, खुद को महत्वपूर्ण समझें। उसके लिए प्रतिदिन सक्रिय रहना आवश्यक है, तो व्यायाम करके मूड अच्छा करें - 'स्वस्थ तन तो स्वस्थ मन'। अच्छा और पौष्टिक भोजन करें ताकि ऊर्जा बनी रहे। नियमित रहना अच्छा है लेकिन कभी-कभी नियमों को छोड़कर भी जिएँ। इससे जीवन में नीरसता या नकारात्मकता नहीं आती। हमें खुश रहने का प्रयास निरंतर जारी रहना चाहिए।

तनाव से केवल
समस्याएँ जन्म ले
सकती हैं
समाधान खोजना है
तो मुस्कुराना ही पड़ेगा

मन को नियंत्रित करें। भगवान श्री कृष्ण भगवद् गीता में कहते हैं कि मन को निरंतर 'अभ्यास और वैराग्य' से नियंत्रित किया जा सकता है।

ऐसे विचार जो दिल या दिमाग को परेशान कर रहे हैं, उनका बोझ न लें। अपने प्रिय व्यक्ति से चिंता या दुख साझा करें क्योंकि बात करके मन शांत हो जाता है और समस्या का समाधान मिल जाता है।

तू बदलावों से क्यों घबराता है
थोड़ा अलग करने में क्यों हिचकिचाता है
जरा संभल, एक कदम तो चल
नई राह निकलेगी
थोड़ी कोशिश तो कर।

नई राह और नई मंजिल को ढूँढने में हम अपने लिए सुरक्षित माहौल ढूँढना सीख जाएँगे। अपनी देखभाल की आदत हमें पड़ जाएगी। जब हम अपनी देखभाल कर पाएँगे तब तनाव से मुक्त होना सीख जाएँगे। समझदारी से आगे बढ़ना, हर पल सचेतन अवस्था में रहना और प्रातः काल ध्यान करना हमें मानसिक स्वास्थ्य प्रदान करेगा। किसी ने कहा था-

“डिग्रियाँ तो तालीम के खर्चे की रसीदें हैं, ज्ञान तो वही है जो किरदार में झलके।”

अपने अर्जित ज्ञान को अपनी व्यावहारिकता में लाकर तकनीक का संतुलित प्रयोग करें। अपने स्वभाव में लचीलापन रखें, किसी भी बात को लेकर अड़ें नहीं। अहंकार का त्याग करें।

अहंकार सत्य सुनने की क्षमता को खत्म कर देता है।

जब हम सत्य का सामना नहीं कर पाएँगे तो हम उससे भागेंगे, तनाव का शिकार होंगे। यदि अपनी भावनाओं को नियंत्रित करना हम सीख जाते हैं तो यह स्पष्ट है कि हमारा मानसिक स्वास्थ्य अच्छा है। लोगों में मानसिक स्वास्थ्य को लेकर जागरूकता बढ़ाने की आवश्यकता है। इसी को ध्यान में रखकर 10 अक्टूबर को विश्व मानसिक स्वास्थ्य दिवस के रूप में मनाया जाता है।

परिवार में बैठना और आनंदित होना भी एक अच्छा विकल्प है। बुजुर्गों के पास बैठना उनसे ज्ञान अर्जित करना और बच्चों में बैठकर उनकी भोली मुस्कुराहट में सब गम भूल जाना, हमारे मानसिक स्वास्थ्य को बेहतर बनाएगा।

अब विचारणीय है कि यदि सारे काम बच्चों को खुद ही करने हैं तो फिर स्कूल, अध्यापकगण और अभिभावक क्या कर रहे हैं? दरअसल स्कूल भी अपने तरीके से छात्रों के मानसिक स्वास्थ्य का ख्याल

रख रहे हैं। विद्यालय में बहुत सारे कार्यक्रम, बहुत सारी गतिविधियाँ और कार्यशालाएँ बच्चों के मानसिक स्वास्थ्य को ध्यान में रखकर करवाई जाती हैं। जैसे- ‘स्ट्रेस मैनेजमेंट कार्यशाला’ जिसमें तनाव से बचने के उपाय, तकनीक और अभ्यास सब सिखाया जाता है। विद्यालयों में प्रशिक्षित काउंसलर्स नियुक्त किए गए हैं। छात्र खुलकर उनके सामने अपनी समस्या रखते हैं और उसका निदान पाते हैं। चित्रकारी, नृत्य, गीत-संगीत, नाटक, मेले, स्कूल की पिकनिक खेल-महोत्सव, सांस्कृतिक कार्यक्रम... आदि। ये सारी गतिविधियाँ बच्चों के मानसिक स्वास्थ्य को बेहतर करती हैं। पाठ्यक्रम में भी इस प्रकार के प्रयास किए गए हैं - जैसे कक्षा दसवीं की हिंदी की पाठ्यपुस्तक स्पर्श में ‘झेन की देन’ पाठ। इसमें छात्रों को मानसिक रोग के कारण और निवारण दोनों बहुत अच्छी तरह समझाए गए हैं।

माता-पिता भी अध्यापकों के साथ मिलकर अपने बच्चों के मानसिक स्वास्थ्य को बेहतर करने में सहयोग रहे हैं।

जो छात्र सीखने में विकलांग है उनका भी विद्यालय खास ध्यान रखता है। वे छात्र अन्य छात्रों के साथ उसी कक्षा में बैठते हैं। कक्षा में इस प्रकार के छात्रों के साथ कोई दुर्व्यवहार न हो इसका ख्याल विद्यालय रखता है।

“कभी-कभी शब्द नहीं होते तकलीफ बताने को, बस दिल करता है कोई समझ ले, संभाल ले, गले लगा ले।”

मानसिक रूप से अस्वस्थ व्यक्ति को अपनी तकलीफ बतानी नहीं आती। उसकी तकलीफ को समझना चाहिए, संभालना चाहिए और अपनापन जताकर उसे उस तकलीफ से बाहर निकालना चाहिए, यही इसकी दवा है।

जो बदला जा सके

उसे बदलिए

जो बदला न जा सके

उसे स्वीकारिए

जो स्वीकारा न जा सके

उससे दूर हो जाइए

लेकिन खुद को खुश रखिए।

खुशहाल जीवन जीने का सिर्फ एक यही उपाय है।

डॉ. किरण सोनी

टी. जी. टी. (हिंदी)

दिल्ली पब्लिक स्कूल, सेक्टर-45, गुडगाँव

मानवीय मूल्य और दायित्व बोध

चरित्र निर्माण, व्यक्तित्व का विकास, नागरिक एवं सामाजिक व्यक्तित्व का विकास, तथा संस्कृति का संरक्षण और विस्तार शिक्षा के मूल उद्देश्य हैं। इन उद्देश्यों की प्राप्ति तभी संभव है जब बालक में बाल्यकाल से ही मानवीय मूल्यों का बीजारोपण किया जाए। विद्यालय आदि शिक्षण संस्थान इन मूल्यों को पल्लवित - पुष्पित करने का साधन व माध्यम बने। मानव मूल्यों और आदर्शों के आधार पर देखा जाए तो भारतीय शिक्षण संस्थानों तथा गुरुकुल का गौरवपूर्ण इतिहास रहा है। गुरुकुल में दी जाने वाली शिक्षा भारतीय मूल्यों, जीवन जीने की कला तथा छात्रों के व्यक्तित्व विकास के साथ-साथ सामाजिक उत्तरदायित्वों से युक्त संपूर्ण शिक्षा थी। बदलते काल खंड में शिक्षा का स्वरूप बदला। यह बदलाव परिस्थितिजन्य था अथवा आवश्यकतानुसार यह अधिक महत्त्व नहीं रखता।

लेकिन इन बदलावों की परिणति मानवीय मूल्यों के ह्रास के रूप में हुई है यह चिंतनीय विषय है। वर्तमान संदर्भ में मानवीय मूल्यों, परंपराओं व आदर्शों की उपेक्षा के चलते परिवेश में संवेदनहीनता की स्थिति उत्पन्न हो गई है। अवसरवादिता व अनैतिकता विद्यार्थियों में घर करती जा रही है। ऐसे में विद्यार्थियों को नैतिक मूल्यों से परिचित कराना अत्यंत आवश्यक हो जाता है। शिक्षा ही वह माध्यम है जिससे विद्यार्थियों में प्रेम, दया, विश्वास, करुणा व त्याग की भावनाएँ विकसित की जा सकती हैं। शिक्षा के द्वारा ही व्यक्ति को कुसंस्कार व मानसिक गुलामी से बचाया जा सकता है। विकृतियों, अंधविश्वासों, क्रूरता व शोषण के विरुद्ध खड़ा किया जा सकता है। शिक्षा का उद्देश्य केवल भौतिक संपन्नता प्रदान करना नहीं है, बल्कि अच्छा इंसान व बेहतर नागरिक बनाना है। मानसिक विकास के बिना भौतिक विकास सार्थक नहीं। बच्चों के कंधों पर ही कल के समाज का उतरदायित्व है। जब उनमें मानवीय मूल्यों और संवेदनाओं का अभाव होगा तो उनसे यह कैसे आशा की जा सकती है कि वे पारिवारिक और सामाजिक कर्तव्यों के प्रति निष्ठावान बनें। संवेदनाशून्य व्यक्ति से कर्तव्यबोध की आशा नहीं की जा सकती।

यदि भारत को पुनः विश्वगुरु के रूप में प्रतिष्ठित करना है तो विद्यालय के परिवेश से लेकर पाठ्यक्रम तथा विभिन्न गतिविधियों में मूल्यों का समावेश अनिवार्य है। मूल्य ही हैं जो छात्रों को घर और विद्यालय में

स्वस्थ पारस्परिक संबंध विकसित करने की क्षमता प्रदान करते हैं। शिक्षा प्रणाली ऐसी होनी चाहिए जिससे छात्र संवैधानिक मूल्यों और मौलिक कर्तव्यों के लिए प्रतिबद्धता विकसित करे, वे स्वयं में देशभक्ति की भावना को मजबूत करने और वैश्विक परिदृश्य में अपनी भूमिका को समझ सकें। मूल्य परक शिक्षा व्यवस्था में शिक्षण संस्थानों और शिक्षकों की सक्रिय भागीदारी अत्यंत महत्वपूर्ण है। यदि विद्यालय उपवन है, तो विद्यार्थी उसमें विकसित होने वाले फूल। यहाँ शिक्षक वह कुशल माली है जो शिक्षा की खाद से उनका पोषण करता है। निरंतर अध्ययन, मनन एवं कार्यान्वयन करते हुए, विद्यार्थियों में नई चेतना, उमंगों को जगाते हुए उन्हें मानवीय मूल्यों से जोड़कर जागरूकता प्रदान करता है। आज ऐसे शिक्षकों की आवश्यकता है जो विद्यार्थियों को अंकों की दौड़ से बाहर निकालकर संस्कारों के सहज मार्ग पर चलने का अवसर दे।

स्वावलंबन, मैत्री, विनम्रता, सहयोग, ईमानदारी, समर्पण, जिज्ञासा, कल्याण एवं सौहार्द जैसे मूल्यों को पनपने का व्यावहारिक एवं प्रायोगिक अवसर दे। विद्यालय रूपी प्रयोगशाला में संस्कारों के प्रयोग कर स्वयं छात्रों को अवसर दें। मूल्यों को व्यावहारिक धरातल पर उतारकर ही छात्रों को जिम्मेदार नागरिक बनाया जा सकता है। यही कारण है कि नई शिक्षा नीति में शामिल नवाचार और स्वीकृत प्रावधानों से विद्यार्थियों को देश की विविधताओं के दर्शन करने, उत्सवों में सम्मिलित होने का अवसर मिलेगा बल्कि वह उन मूल्यों, आदर्शों और संस्कारों को भी सहज रूप से आत्मसात करने में सक्षम होंगे जो उन्हें एक जिम्मेदार नागरिक बनने में सहायक सिद्ध होंगे। वैज्ञानिक दृष्टिकोण, लोकतांत्रिक, चारित्रिक एवं आध्यात्मिक मूल्यों को मन में बैठाना और सौंदर्यपरक विकास करना ही नई शिक्षा नीति का लक्ष्य है। आशा है इस लक्ष्य प्राप्ति से विद्यालय पुनः माँ शारदा का मंदिर होगा, ज्ञान-विज्ञान की अनवरत गंगा बहने लगेगी। द्रोण, चाणक्य जैसे आचार्य अर्जुन और चंद्रगुप्त सरीखे शिष्य तैयार कर देश को विश्व-गुरु का दर्जा दिलाने में कामयाब होंगे। अभिभावकों का आदर्श संतान बनाने का सपना साकार होगा। समाज को समाज की सभ्यता की सीढ़ी चढ़ने वाले लोग मिलेंगे, विश्व को शांति दूत मिलेंगे, मानवता को मानव और प्रकृति को सच्चे हितैषी मिलेंगे।

पूनम साहा

द एयर फोर्स स्कूल, सुब्रतो पार्क नई दिल्ली- 110010

दिमागी पोषण और स्कूलों में मानसिक स्वास्थ्य जागरूकता

“मन का स्वास्थ्य, शरीर के स्वास्थ्य से भी अधिक महत्वपूर्ण है।”

गांधी जी के कहे ये कथन तनाव तथा दबाव से जूझते हुए मानव के लिए उपयोगी सिद्ध होते हैं। एक स्वस्थ जीवन का सबसे महत्वपूर्ण भाग हमारा शारीरिक स्वास्थ्य तो होता ही है परंतु मानसिक स्वास्थ्य भी उतना ही महत्वपूर्ण होता है। यदि हमारा दिमाग मजबूत है, स्वस्थ है तो हम हर समस्या का समाधान सरलता से कर सकते हैं। इसके विपरीत यदि हम शारीरिक रूप से मजबूत होकर भी दिमागी रूप से बीमार व कमजोर हैं तो ऐसा शरीर मानो उस व्यक्ति के समान है जिसके हाथ पैर तो हैं फिर भी वह पंगु है। आखिर यह मानसिक स्वास्थ्य है क्या? क्या यह मानव के सर्वांगीण विकास में सहायक होता है? क्यों इसके बिना शारीरिक बल भी कमजोर पड़ जाता है? इन सभी प्रश्नों का जवाब यदि यह दिया जाए तो गलत न होगा कि मानसिक स्वास्थ्य वह सकारात्मक ऊर्जा है जो हमें तनाव से मुक्त करती है, निर्णय लेने में सक्षम बनाती है। हमारे लक्ष्य को प्राप्त करने में एक सेतु का काम करती है। हमें सफल बनाने में सहायक होती है।

मनुष्य एक ऐसा प्राणी है जो भावनाओं और संवेदनाओं से घिरा हुआ है। मन के भावों की अभिव्यक्ति को नियंत्रण में करना एक ऐसी कला है जो जीवन को सरल बनाती है। हर वह बालक जो अपनी भावनाओं को सही प्रकार से चलाता है, वही साध्य है। वही व्यक्ति जीवन में सफल होता है। भारत में जहाँ कई वर्षों पहले कितने ही छात्र कुपोषण का शिकार हो जाया करते थे परंतु आज यदि हम विद्यालय स्तर पर दिमागी पोषण की बात करें तो हम यह पाएँगे कि सरकार द्वारा समय-समय पर कई ऐसी योजनाओं को आयोजित किया है जिनके माध्यम से बालकों के दिमागी पोषण व शारीरिक बल दोनों को ऊर्जा मिलती रहे।

इसके लिए चाहे विद्यालयों में छात्रों को आहार यानी ‘मिड डे मील’ उपलब्ध कराने की व्यवस्था हो या बालकों को शरीर और मानसिक रूप से किस प्रकार पोषित किया जाए उसके लिए कार्यशालाओं का आयोजन हो। विद्यालय की सबसे बड़ी भूमिका एक छात्र को ऐसा स्थान प्रदान करने की होती है जहाँ बालक स्वतंत्र होकर अपने बौद्धिक विकास के साथ-साथ अपने मानसिक विकास को भी मजबूत कर पाता है। अपनी भावनाओं को भी मजबूत कर पाता है इसके लिए इस प्रकार की योजनाएँ बनाई जाएँ कि विद्यार्थी जो छात्र के मस्तिष्क को सही

प्रकार से पोषित कर सके जिस से छात्र का सर्वांगीण विकास हो सके। भिन्न-भिन्न गतिविधियाँ जो बालकों के मन मस्तिष्क पर एक सकारात्मक छाप छोड़ें जिसमें छात्रों को आगे बढ़ने की प्रेरणा प्राप्त हो, छात्र अपने निर्णय लेने में सक्षम बने व मानसिक रूप से मजबूत बने।

नई राष्ट्रीय शिक्षा नीति भी इस बात पर बल देती है कि एक स्वस्थ मस्तिष्क के लिए सकारात्मक विचारशीलता, समर्पण और स्वस्थ जीवन शैली अत्यंत महत्वपूर्ण है। विद्यार्थियों को सही आहार, पर्याप्त नींद और मानव संबंधों का भरपूर ज्ञान व लाभ मिले। कई ऐसी संस्थाएँ हैं जो बालकों व छात्रों के विकास के लिए कार्य करती हैं जैसे- यूनिसेफ (संयुक्त राष्ट्र अंतर्राष्ट्रीय बाल आपातकालीन कोष) का उदाहरण देना यहाँ उचित होगा जो कई देशों के साथ मिलकर भिन्न-भिन्न मुद्दों पर विकास का कार्य करती हैं। इसका विशेष कार्य 190 से अधिक देशों और क्षेत्रों में बच्चों के जीवन को बचाने, उनके अधिकारों की रक्षा करने और बचपन से किशोरावस्था तक उनकी क्षमता को पूरा करने में मदद करने के लिए काम करता है। लोगों को बेहतर जीवन देने में सहायता प्रदान करता है।

यूएनडीपी यानी संयुक्त राष्ट्र विकास कार्यक्रम भी इसी प्रकार के कार्य में अपना भरपूर योगदान देता है। इनकी रिपोर्ट द्वारा पता चलता है कि देश के अधिकांश हिस्सों में विद्यालय स्तर पर छात्रों का विकास किस प्रकार किया जा रहा है। यदि हम एक देश के जनसांख्यिकीय लाभांश की बात करें जिसका अर्थ उस आर्थिक विकास से है जिसमें किसी देश के कामकाजी आयु वर्ग से लाभ प्राप्त करना होता है। दार्शनिक अमर्त्य सेन द्वारा स्थापित ‘क्षमता दृष्टिकोण’ के अनुसार ‘मानव विकास का साधन है’ उनके अनुसार आप एक देश के जनसंख्या के लाभांश की प्राप्ति तब कर पाएँगे जब उनकी उन सभी मूलभूत सुविधाओं पर निवेश किया जाए। यह मूलभूत सुविधाएँ उनके स्वास्थ्य, उनकी जरूरत व उनकी शारीरिक बीमारी इत्यादि से जुड़ी मदद होती है। नई राष्ट्रीय शिक्षा नीति छात्रों की इन्हीं सभी आवश्यकताओं पर बल देने का प्रयास करती है।

जहाँ कई वर्षों तक हमारी शैक्षिक संस्थाएँ केवल छात्र के बुद्धिमत्ता स्तर पर ही कार्य करती थी। आज छात्रों के लिए मानसिक स्वास्थ्य के स्तर पर भी कार्य करने

की आवश्यकता देखी जा रही है। छात्रों के बीच बिगड़ता मानसिक स्वास्थ्य कोटा व मुखर्जी नगर जैसे स्थानों पर देखा जा सकता है, जो आज मौत की फैक्ट्रियाँ बनता जा रहा है। समाज या परिवार के दबाव के कारण छात्र अपनी मन की इच्छाओं को मार कर इन फैक्ट्रियों में अपना दम घोटते जा रहे हैं। प्रतिस्पर्धा व प्रतियोगिता की बढ़ती भावना ने भी छात्रों के मानसिक स्वास्थ्य पर गहरा असर डाला है।

कुछ मानसिक बीमारियाँ जैसे डैमनशिया, एल्जाईमर्स डिजीज, ओ.सी.डी एवं पार्किंसन्स। यह समस्त रोग छात्रों को गंभीर रूप से प्रभावित करते हैं और उनके अध्ययन की क्षमता को नकारात्मक रूप से कम कर देते हैं। इन बीमारियों से छात्रों के मस्तिष्क में तनाव व संकीर्णताएँ उत्पन्न होती हैं। इस प्रकार उनका दृढ़ संकल्प और उनकी निश्चयता में अभाव हो जाता है एवं उनके

प्रिया पाल

टी.जी.टी. (हिंदी)

टैगोर इंटरनेशनल स्कूल, वसंत विहार, नई दिल्ली

जीवन में नए परिवर्तन आ जाते हैं। इन मानसिक रोगों की उत्पत्ति से छात्र अपने विद्यालय में भी परीक्षाओं में विफल होते दिखाई देते हैं। इन बीमारियों के चिकित्सा हेतु अभिभावकों को प्रयास करने की आवश्यकता है।

अब इस समस्या का निवारण शीघ्र अति शीघ्र करने की आवश्यकता है। फिर से एक ऐसा वातावरण हो जिसमें एक बालक सपने सयुक्त परिवार के साथ अपनी समस्याओं को साझा करे। मोबाइल पर न रह कर नई-नई गतिविधियों का हिस्सा बने। अभिभावकों को भी संभलने की आवश्यकता है उन्हें बालक की बातों को स्वीकृति प्रदान करनी चाहिए, उन्हें अपने बालक को समझना चाहिए, उनके साथ दोस्ताना व्यवहार करना चाहिए, अपनी इच्छाओं को बालक पर थोपना नहीं चाहिए। बालक के मानसिक स्वास्थ्य को मजबूत बनाने का बीड़ा अभिभावक और विद्यालय दोनों की साझेदारी द्वारा ही चल सकता है।

अवसाद से मुक्ति का ही केंद्र है : विद्या मंदिर

मंदिर-मस्जिद जाने का सीधा सा तात्पर्य यही है, कि मन में शांति का मधुर संगीत इस प्रकार गुंजायमान होने लगे जैसे फूलों के परागों के पास पहुँचकर भौरों का आह्लादन। जिस प्रकार मूर्ति का निर्माण मूर्तिकार करता है, चित्र का निर्माण चित्रकार करता है और मृत्तिका से निर्मित बर्तनों का निर्माण कुंभकार करता है, ठीक इसी प्रकार उत्कृष्ट बालकों का निर्माण अध्यापक ही करता है। इसीलिए स्कूलों को विद्या मंदिर कहा जाता है। विद्यालय में उत्साही शिक्षकों के बल पर ही सुंदर-सुंदर नए कोपलों का उदय संभव है।

चाणक्य की वह पंक्ति किसे याद नहीं होगी- “शिक्षक साधारण नहीं होता, सृजन और प्रलय दोनों उसकी गोद में पलते हैं।” शिक्षक होने के नाते यह सोचना होगा कि प्रत्येक छात्र की प्रसन्नता उसकी पहली प्राथमिकता है। हिंदी साहित्य में सकारात्मकता को जीवंत रखने के लिए न जाने कितने उदाहरण हैं - पाश की लिखी वह पंक्ति - ‘सबसे खतरनाक होता है सपनों का मर जाना’ हमें सदैव प्रेरित करती रहती है कि सपनों को कभी मरने मत दीजिए। छात्रों को सकारात्मक बनाए रखने के लिए आवश्यक है - शिक्षक का सकारात्मक रहना।

गोपाल दास नीरज जी की ये पंक्तियाँ-

कुछ पानी के बह जाने से सावन नहीं मरा करता है।

कुछ दीपों के बुझ जाने से आँगन नहीं मरा करता है।

चंद्र खिलौनों के खोने से बचपन नहीं मरा करता है।

कुछ सपनों के मर जाने से जीवन नहीं मरा करता है।

अतः मुझे पूर्ण विश्वास है कि जीवन की यह निशा अतिशीघ्र ही सुनहरे क्षितिज की ओर अग्रसर होगी और नव-प्रत्यूष का आगमन होगा।

शत्रुघ्न प्रसाद तिवारी

टी.जी.टी. -हिंदी

आर्मी पब्लिक स्कूल शंकर विहार, नई दिल्ली

मनोदर्पण

आज की तेजी से बदलती जीवन-शैली न केवल बड़ों बल्कि बच्चों को भी प्रभावित कर रही है। पहले यह माना जाता था कि हँसते-खेलते, दिनभर धमाचौकड़ी मचाते बच्चों को तो कोई मानसिक तनाव हो ही नहीं सकता परंतु अब तो यह समस्या स्कूल जाने वाले छोटे-छोटे बच्चों में भी दिखाई दे रही है, जिसका मुख्य कारण या तो पढाई-लिखाई का बोझ है, या भविष्य की चिंता में अंधी दौड़ में भागना है। अपने संगी-साथियों से लगातार आगे बढ़ने की होड़ में, हमारे बच्चे न जाने कहाँ उलझकर रह जाते हैं और जरा-सी हार का सामना करते ही उनके हौसले पस्त हो जाते हैं। यहाँ अगर सोशल मीडिया की आभासी दुनिया का जिक्र किया जाए, तो इसमें कोई दो राय नहीं होगी कि देश-विदेश में की सैर पर निकले अपने साथियों को देखकर, पूरी साज-सज्जा के साथ उनकी 'profile picture' देखकर हमारे बच्चे हताश होने लगते हैं। उन्हें अपना जीवन नीरस-सा लगने लगता है। उनके माता-पिता की उनसे अनगिनत उम्मीदें उन्हें इस भँवर में और गहराई तक ले जाती हैं और वे उससे बाहर निकलने की बजाय, उसमें और फँसते चले जाते हैं। घर के बड़े अकसर यह नहीं समझ पाते हैं कि उनके बच्चे को क्या चाहिए ? और बस ! वे अपनी इच्छाएँ उन पर थोपना शुरू कर देते हैं। इसकी वजह से बच्चा परेशान रहने लगता है, अकेलापन महसूस करने लगता है, उसका आत्मविश्वास डगमगाने लगता है और अपनी ही भावनाओं को ठीक से न समझ पाने के कारण मानसिक रोगों का शिकार हो जाता है। कितना कड़वा सच है यह कि-जिस उम्र में बच्चों को हँसी-खुशी के माहौल में रहते हुए, खेल-कूद करते हुए, हर पल, कुछ नया सीखते रहना चाहिए, उस उम्र में छोटे-छोटे बच्चे, बड़ी-बड़ी मानसिक बीमारियों की चपेट में आ जाते हैं और यह समाज उनकी ओर मदद का हाथ बढ़ाकर, उन्हें थामने की बजाय इधर-उधर के अंधविश्वासों और सामाजिक चलन, में ही जकड़कर रह जाता है।

आँकड़े बताते हैं कि यह एक आम बीमारी है और आज हर 4 में से 1 व्यक्ति मानसिक रोगों का शिकार है, जिसका इलाज भी संभव है। बस आवश्यकता है- सकारात्मकता बनाए रखने की, अपने आप से भरपूर प्यार करने की, अपने पर पूरा-पूरा विश्वास बनाए रखने की और फिर देखिए कि किस तरह आप अपनी सभी परेशानियों को भूलकर, मानसिक और शारीरिक दोनों तरह से, एक स्वस्थ जीवन बिताते हैं।

किसी ने सच ही कहा है-

परिस्थितियाँ बदलना जब मुमकिन न हो,
तो मन की स्थिति बदल ले

ये जो सब काले साये हैं,
जो अपने अंदर घुटन समाए हैं,

उनसे तू घबरा मत, भरोसा रख, हाथ थाम,
दिल का दरवाजा खोल और संग-संग कदम बढ़ा

डर के साये खुद-ब-खुद थक के, हार जाएँगे,
और तू जीत जाएगा,

भरोसा रख, हाथ थाम,
दिल का दरवाजा खोल और संग-संग कदम बढ़ा!

कोमल मैदीरत्ता

टी.जी.टी. (हिंदी)

बाल भारती पब्लिक स्कूल, नौएडा



आज के दौर का विद्यार्थी

आज के दौर का विद्यार्थी, प्रतियोगिता की होड़ में शामिल,
क्या करें, क्या न करें,
इस तर्क-वितर्क में खो गया उसका नन्हा सा दिल ।

सफल न होता, तो घर वालों की घुड़कियाँ सुनता,
सफल होता तो, अक्विल आने के सपने हैं बुनता।

भविष्य निर्माण के नाम पर खो जाता है बचपन,
चुनौतियों को उसके कंधे, कब तक करेंगे वहन।

इन नन्हे चेहरों पर है प्रश्न यह गहन,
मानसिक बोझों का कब होगा दहन?

स्कूल इस प्रश्न का उत्तर बनकर आता है,
छात्र के जीवन में जो, साथी नया कहलाता है।

विद्यालय वह प्रांगण है जो, संतुष्टि का गागर है,
छात्र-रूपी-मोतियों से भरा, शांति का सागर है।

दिन भर का थका दिमाग, यहाँ कलात्मक बन जाता है,
बेसुरा बालक भी जब, राग सुर में गाता है ।

काँपते हाथों में भी, रंग नए बिखरते हैं,
चित्रकला में जब वह अपने, भाव भर कर रखते हैं।

नन्हे नन्हे कदमों में एक, नई थिरकन मच जाती है,
नृत्य की भंगिमाएँ जब, दिल में घर कर जाती है।

आलस का पर्दा उठकर, स्फूर्ति -सी छा जाती है,
जब टन टन टन टन टन, खेल की घंटी बज जाती है।

भिन्न-भिन्न है छात्र सभी, भिन्न-भिन्न है कौशल,
फिर भी सब की दुविधाओं का, एक ही होगा हल,

बचपन की डाली है लचीली, इस पर खिलाने देंगे फूल
मानसिक बोझ नहीं होगा अब, यह प्रण लेता है हर स्कूल।

करुणा बागची

टी.जी.टी. (हिंदी)

दिल्ली पब्लिक स्कूल इंदिरापुरम

आज का बच्चा

जो छीन रहा है सुकून और उमंग
बढ़ती महत्वाकांक्षाओं के साथ बढ़ रहा है डर
नाजुक से कंधों पर भविष्य का बोझ ढोता
आज का बच्चा
जाम में घंटों फँसा, खाँसता,
आज का बच्चा!
कोचिंग और घर के हिंडोले में झूलता
आज का बच्चा!
कान में ब्लूटूथ लगाए
फोन में कहीं सुकून ढूँढता,
आज का बच्चा !
रोज नए एक टैस्ट की डेटशीट मुट्टी में दबाए
दबाव में तेज साँसों की आवाजाही को महसूस करता
आज का बच्चा !
हिदायतें ही हिदायतें
इन हिदायतों में कोई तो अपना हो
जो तकलीफ सुन सके
खामोश आँखों से कोई अपना-सा ढूँढता,
आज का बच्चा !
डॉट, हिदायत, तमाम सुझावों का बोझ लिए
हिम्मत हारता,
आज का बच्चा !
और हम रोज नए मनोचिकित्सक ढूँढते
नीतियाँ बनाते
क्या हटा पाएँगे महत्वाकांक्षाओं का बोझ ?
क्या हटा पाएँगे बेरोजगारी का खौफ ?
काम के बोझ से लदे माता-पिता
दे पाएँगे समय
टोकने की बजाए
क्या खिलखिलाहटों का शोर दे पाएँगे ?
प्रतिस्पर्धा के इस दौर में
कोचिंग सेन्ट्रो की इस अजनबी-सी भीड़ में
क्या वाकई शिक्षक ढूँढ पाएँगे ?
क्या उनके मन तक झाँक पाएँगे ?
अखबारों की सुर्खियों में छपे
कोचिंग सेन्टर के विज्ञापनों की
सालों साल छपती तस्वीरों में
रोजगार का कहीं आश्वासन दे पाएँगे ?
कोई ऐसा विश्वस्त हाथ दे पाएँगे
जो काँपते डरे हाथ को सहला दे
और कह दे कुछ नहीं होगा
मैं हूँ ना
ऐसा अपना-सा, मनोचिकित्सक के इस
बने फार्मेट से परे
कोई सारथी कोई साथी
या सही मायने में कोई शिक्षक.....

आरती शर्मा

सनबीम इंग्लिश स्कूल भगवानपुर



रोल नंबर 21

मैं सुबह-सुबह बस एक बार याद किया जाने वाला अंग्रेजी में रोल नंबर 21 हूँ
उस बेंच के कोने में बैठा हुआ वो क्लास की गिनती करने वाला
स्कूल की यूनिफॉर्म में मैं एक संख्या भर हूँ,
गुण-अवगुण से परेसाधारण का मानवीकरण हूँ मैं
मैं सुबह सुबह बस एक बार याद किया जाने वाला अंग्रेजी में रोल नंबर 21 हूँ
रोज मैं समय पर आ जाता हूँ,
असेंबली में कहीं बीच की हाइट में खड़ा हो जाता हूँ,
शांत-सरल सा, एक बस चेहरा भर हूँ,
मैं सुबह-सुबह बस एक बार याद किया जाने वाला अंग्रेजी में रोल नंबर 21 हूँ
वो जो कुछ बच्चे होते हैं ना, जिन्हे हमेशा 90% मिलते हैं,
अरे वो ! जो रोज फर्स्ट बेंच पर बैठते हैं, मैं उन जैसा काबिल नहीं हूँ।
हमारी नृत्य की अध्यापिका जब सांस्कृतिक कार्यक्रम में बच्चे चुनने आतीं हैं ना,
तो मैं वो गायक, नृत्यकार, कलाकार या फनकार भी नहीं हूँ,
मैं सुबह सुबह बस एक बार याद किया जाने वाला अंग्रेजी में रोल नंबर 21 हूँ
नाखून, बाल सब सुलझे हुए, माँ डाँट कर, तेल लगाकर जो भेजती है,
मैं वो निम्न-माध्यम वर्गीय की परिभाषा-सा हूँ,
इसलिए मैं वो जो 'कूल और हैपनिंग' तो बिलकुल भी नहीं हूँ,
मैं सुबह-सुबह बस एक बार याद किया जाने वाला अंग्रेजी में रोल नंबर 21 हूँ।
आत्मविश्वास से मैं कभी मिला नहीं
विनम्रता सीखते-सीखते कहीं मैं रह गया,
मैं वही नोटों की दुनिया में सिक्कों की खनक भर हूँ,
मैं सुबह-सुबह बस एक बार याद किया जाने वाला अंग्रेजी में रोल नंबर 21 हूँ
पर मैं क्या इसीलिए ही स्कूल नहीं आया था
कि मेरे साधारण को विशेष बना दें ?
मुझे मेरी अंदर की कला को ढूँढ़ने में थोड़ी मदद ही कर दें ?
थोड़ा कुछ सीखा दें,
थोड़ी-सी कला,
थोड़ा-सा फन,
थोड़े-से मार्क्स बढ़ जाँँ ।
और मैं इस दुनिया के काबिल बन जाऊँ ?
मैं उस कोने के बेंच पर बैठा हुआ, रोज टीचर को तकता हुआ-सा वो मौन चातक हूँ,
जो इस इंतजार में हैं,
कि मुझ पर भी नजर पड़े, मेरा मन भी कोई पढ़े !
ये एक मानसिक उपद्रव है
जो रोज सुबह खुद को आईने में देख उछाल मारता है,
और गुणी, बुद्धिमान बच्चों में रोज गुम होकर लौट आता है,
विश्वास करो, मैं इस मानसिक वेदना से मुक्ति चाहता हूँ
सीखना चाहता हूँ, दिखना चाहता हूँ
टीचर की पुचकार और लाड़ चाहता हूँ,
और मैं सुबह-सुबह बस एक बार याद किया जाने वाला अंग्रेजी में रोल नंबर 21 बिलकुल नहीं रहना चाहता हूँ ।

जयश्री देब

माउंट सेंट मैरी स्कूल, दिल्ली कैंट

बारहवीं के बच्चे

लो फिर आ गया है
मार्च का महीना
अपने आप से ही बड़बड़ाते, कुछ कहते
या फिर गुमसम रहते
बच्चे और माँ-बाप
बड़ी आसानी से
कहीं भी देखे जा सकते हैं,
पिछले दो-चार सालों से ये बच्चे
मेडिकल और इंजीनियरिंग की कोचिंग लेते
दिल्ली यूनिवर्सिटी के रंगीन सपनों की मनोहारी उड़ान भरते
अपनी और अपने माँ-बाप की इच्छा पूरी करते
सारी दुनिया भूलकर जुटे हैं जी-जान से,
क्योंकि अब समय आ गया है
उस अंधी दौड़ में, वाकई अंधे बनकर दौड़ लगाने का।
काश ! ये समझ पाते
डॉक्टर-इंजीनियर की डिग्री, और
दिल्ली यूनिवर्सिटी की 100% की कट-ऑफ से
आगे भी है दुनिया, जिसमें
हर तरह के पंछी उड़ान भरते हैं
खूब खुलकर अपने जीवन को जीते हैं
और, आगे बढ़ते हैं।
बच्चों! तुम भी इक नई उड़ान भरो
इस अंधी दौड़ को भूलकर
नवजीवन का आगाज करो।

कोमल मैदीरत्ता

टी जी टी (हिंदी)

बाल भारती पब्लिक स्कूल, नौएडा

पहचान

रहते हो क्यों तुम खोए -खोए से,
जागे हो फिर भी हो सोए-सोए से,
क्यों हो गए हो निराश तुम,
छोड़ते हो क्यों आस तुम
आज अंधेरा है तो क्या !
कल उजाला भी तो आएगा,
सूर्य के प्रकाश में तिमिर खो ही जाएगा,
देखो एक राह नई तुम्हें है निहारती
जगाने आत्म विश्वास तेरा तुझे है पुकारती,
कब तलक तू यूँ ही घबराएगा,
उतरेगा नहीं जब तक नाव में तो कैसे पार जाएगा ?
बन जा पतवार अपनी खुद ही खुद को तार दे!
सर्वश्रेष्ठ रचना तू प्रभु की, बस इतना जान ले!
ना हो हताश तू, अब स्वयं को पहचान ले,
अब स्वयं को पहचान ले।

अनूप कुमारी शर्मा

पी.आर.टी (हिंदी)

बाल भारती पब्लिक स्कूल, मानेसर

मेरा अंतर्द्वंद्व

आज फिर मैंने क्लास में टॉप किया है,
स्कूल की हर एक्टिविटी में पार्ट लिया है।
खेलकूद हो या वाद विवाद की प्रतियोगिता,
हर क्षेत्र में अपनी दिखाई है योग्यता।

पापा का सपना है मैं डॉक्टर बन जाऊँ,
साइंस बायो लेकर सबसे अक्विल आ जाऊँ!
उनकी आँखों ने जो देखे हैं सपने,
वह मुझे ही तो पूरे हैं करने।

शाम को डांस क्लास और स्विमिंग ज्वाइन करा दी,
कोई भी प्रॉब्लम आई, आपने झट से भगा दी।
ऐसे ही, माँ ने जिंदगी आसान बना दी,
और पापा ने, हर चीज दिला दी।

हर राह पर उनका कहा माना है मैंने,
पूरा आसमान साफ किया,
कि मैं अब जाऊँ उड़ने।

मेरी हर समस्या का समाधान निकाला आपने,
हर बार गिरने से पहले संभाला आपने।
आज असली दुनिया में मैंने पैर रखा है,
मैं कौन हूँ, क्या चाहता हूँ,
अब जाकर परखा है।

नहीं समझ आ रहा, आगे क्या करना है,
खुद की राह खुद ढूँढना,
अब सीखना है।

आपने हर खतरे से ऐसे बचाया,
कि अब अपनी राह खुद ढूँढ ना पाया।
मैं क्या चाहता हूँ,
और क्या निर्णय लेने हैं,
शायद ही मेरे अपने कोई सपने हैं।

माँ की परछाई और पापा की शान हूँ मैं,
ऐसे में कैसे कह दूँ,
कि ओवर स्ट्रेस्ड हूँ मैं।

पापा, अब जिंदगी के निर्णय खुद लेने पड़ेंगे,
पता नहीं कितने ही झगड़े अकेले लड़ने पड़ेंगे।
माँ! मुझे अपनी स्वतंत्र पहचान बनाने दो,
अपनी गलतियाँ करके मुझे खुद से सीखने दो।

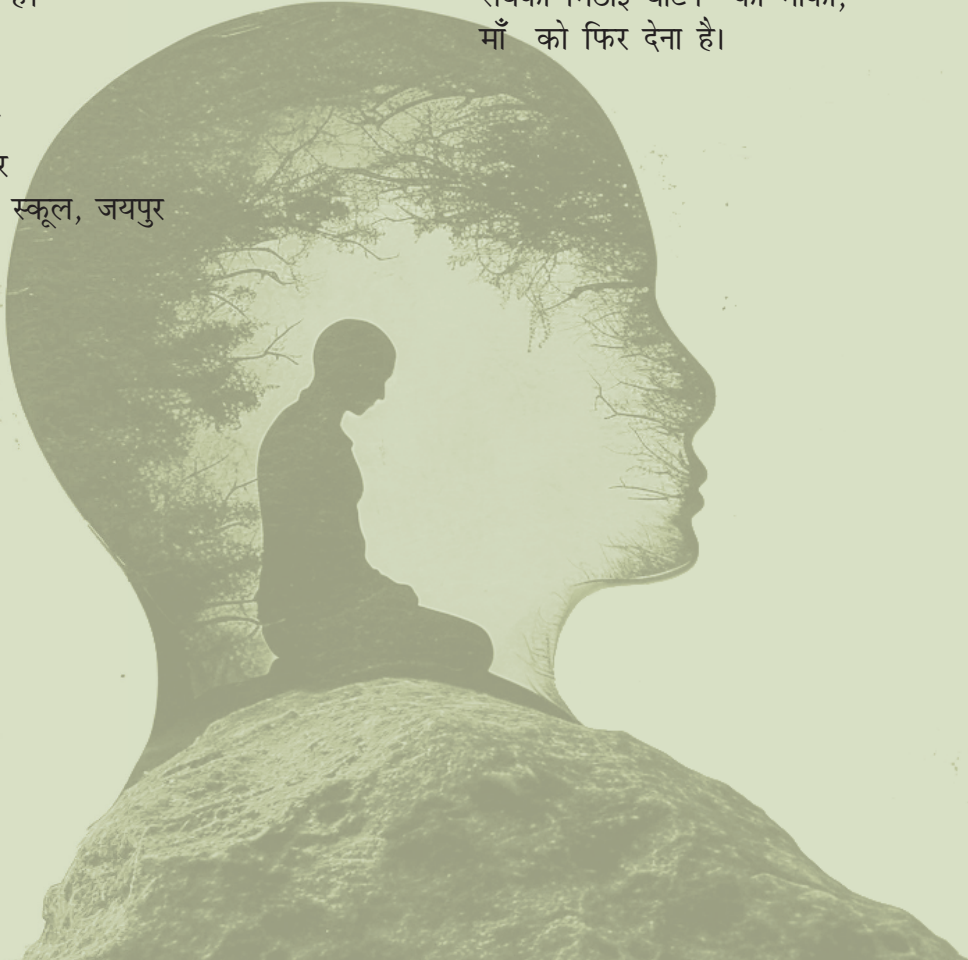
पर मैं हूँ अपने माँ पापा की आँखों का तारा,
उनसे कैसे, क्या कहूँ,
मैं आज समझ नहीं पा रहा।

वैसे भी अगले साल फिर टॉप करना है,
सबको मिठाई बाँटने का मौका,
माँ को फिर देना है।

दक्षिता पाठक

स्कूल काउंसलर

दिल्ली पब्लिक स्कूल, जयपुर



स्वस्थ मन का मंत्र

मन की यह कैसी दशा है
व्यर्थ ही रो रहा है, जाने कौन-सा बोझ ढो रहा है ।
नकारात्मक विचार मन को झिंझोड़ते हैं
और अंदर ही अंदर मुझे तोड़ते हैं ॥

अपने आप को परेशान, चिंतित और डरा हुआ पाता हूँ
दैनिक कार्यों को ठीक से करने में असमर्थ हो जाता हूँ
खांसी, बुखार होता तो डॉक्टर को दिखा देता
स्वस्थ होने की दवाइयाँ ही उससे लिखा लेता ।

पर मन की स्थिति का किससे करूँ बयान
किससे पूछूँ और कैसे करूँ इसका निदान ?
तभी कोई फरिश्ता जैसे स्वर्ग से उतर कर आया
और बड़े प्यार से उसने मुझे समझाया ।

यह एक मानसिक विकार है
अपनी यह स्थिति क्यों तुम्हें स्वीकार है ।
आज कितने ही लोग इस मनःस्थिति से जूझ रहे हैं
किसी तरह इस चक्रव्यूह से निकलने का रास्ता बूझ रहे हैं ॥

आधुनिक जीवनचर्या इस स्थिति की जिम्मेदार है
सोशल मीडिया और मोबाइल का अत्यधिक प्रयोग बेकार है ।
संयम और समझदारी से इस विकार से निदान पाओ
मेडिटेशन और व्यायाम को जीवन में अपनाओ ॥

मनोचिकित्सक से मिलो और समस्याओं को खुल के बताओ
दोस्तों और परिवार जनों के साथ समय बताओ ।
संतुलित खान-पान खाओ और भरपूर नींद की आदत डालो
दैनिक कार्यों में व्यस्त रहो और बदलाव को स्वीकारो ॥

मानसिक स्वास्थ्य को महत्व दो और संरक्षित करो
सकारात्मक और आशावाद को विकसित करो ।
मन और शरीर हैं एक दूसरे के पूरक,
मन स्वस्थ तो तन स्वस्थ
मानसिक जागरूकता के प्रति करें,
समग्र दृष्टिकोण का मार्ग प्रशस्त ॥

विनीता गर्ग

एस आर डीएवी पब्लिक स्कूल
दिल्ली

वो खामोशी किस काम की

वो खामोशी जिसमें आत्ममंथन न हो
वो खामोशी जिसमें खुद से बातें न हों
वो खामोशी जिसमें सवालों के जवाब न मिलें
वो खामोशी जिसमें चेतना न हो

वो खामोशी किस काम की.....
माना आत्ममंथन थोड़ा मुश्किल है
खुद से बातें करना भी आता नहीं
क्या जरूरी है कि उस राह पर चले
जिस राह पर चलना आता नहीं

तोड़ दो खामोशी सीख लो अभिव्यक्ति
अभिव्यक्ति से घबराओ नहीं
जो है दिल में कह दो वही
वो खामोशी किस काम की.....
क्यों तुम इतने खास हो
जो नहीं किसी के पास हो
क्यों अपने जैसा ढूँढ़ते हो
क्यों नहीं हर किसी से घुलते-मिलते हो
जिंदगी में हार जाना लाजिमी है

पर जिंदगी से हारना नहीं कभी
एक चुप्पी का बोझ बहुत भारी है
तोड़ दो इस चुप्पी को क्योंकि जिंदगी हमारी है.

विजयलक्ष्मी शर्मा

भारतीय विद्याभवन मेहता विद्यालय
नई दिल्ली

सुनो रे भाई, सुनो रे बहना!

मेरी ये रचना मुख्या रूप से स्कूल के बच्चों और निराश व्यक्तियों के लिए है जो जीवन की छोटी छोटी समस्याओं से शीघ्र ही घबरा कर , मानसिक अवसाद से पीड़ित हो जाते हैं , किसी से भी अपने दिल की बात साझा नहीं करते और अंत में घुट कर हम सब का साथ छोड़ कर इस दुनिया को अलविदा कह जाते हैं।

क्या हुआ

ऐ बहन मेरी , ऐ भाई मेरे,
ऐ दोस्त मेरे ऐ प्यार मेरे,
मेरा मन मस्तिष्क ये कहता है,
नाहक दुःख क्यों तू सहता है ?

क्या हुआ ,जो तू ना हुआ सफल,
हर पल प्रयास कर नए प्रयोग,
कुछ ना कुछ तो आएगा,
रफ्तार तेरी जो बढ़ाएगा,

अपनी कमियों को तलाश ले,
इम्तहाँ के लिए तराश ले,
निराश ना हो जो मन का ना हो,
क्या पता वही तेरी राह बने,

जाने कितने विफल हुए ,
फिर हासिल किए बड़े मुकाम,
अनवरत विफल प्रयोगों से,
कितने वैज्ञानिक बने महान,

चकाचौंध की इस दुनिया में,
मत भागो बन के अंधे,
सफलताओं की मंजिल पर,
तेरा नाम लिखा है ऐ बन्दे,

अटूट भरोसा रख दिल में,
मेहनत से मिलेगा उसका पता,
योद्धा असल वो कहलाता,
संघर्ष जो हर पल है जीता,
बिना युद्ध हथियार जो डाले,
जीते जी मर जाता है,

सुनील अग्रहरी

संगीत अध्यापक

एहल्कोन इंटरनेशनल स्कूल, मयूर विहार

कायरों की श्रेणी में वो,
अपने नाम को पता है ,
लक्ष्य हासिल करने के लिए ,
जोर लगा एड़ी चोटी का ,
गलती को तुम जगह ना दो ,
कितनी भी चाहे हो छोटी ,

यूँ ही नहीं हिमालय पर ,
कोई विजय पताका फहराता,
हौसला सख्त चट्टानों-सा,
ले कर ही आगे बढ़ पाता ,

हर पल तुम तैयार रहो,
जीवन में अच्छा करने को,
खुदा ने तुझको भेजा है,
कुछ काम अनोखा करने को,

सब में कुछ न कुछ है छुपा,
अपनी खूबी को पहचानों,
ज्ञान-विज्ञान विचार विमर्श से,
दूर ना हो नर संतानों,

वक्त तेरा भी आएगा,
जब तू भी सफल कहलाएगा,
पिघला दे जो मेहनत का लोहा,
वो ही सोना बन पाएगा,

तन्हाई को ना आने दो,
सब के संग तुम चले चलो,,
पर डर के अपनी विफलता से,
कभी मौत से ना तुम गले मिलो
कभी मौत से ना तुम गले मिलो !



हमारा जीवन और मानसिक स्वास्थ्य

सौभाग्य हमारा जब जगता है
तभी मानव तन-मन मिलता और खिलता है
हे राम ! बड़े आभारी हैं !
दिया है तूने तन-मन, अनमोल रतन
और दिया है तूने-जीवन का अतुलित वैभव-आनंद
जन्मोपरांत, भव-बंधन में बाँधा तूने !

तन-मन से मिलकर कर्मबंधन में हम बँध जाते हैं,
इस दुनिया का है रूप अनोखा,
यह भव जग कभी राग-द्वेष का भाव दिखाता तो,
कभी मन में उपजे भावों में सत्य प्रकाश से जगमग होता ।

मन में उपजे भावों में
रच-बस कर कभी सफलता के पलने में हम झूलें
कभी विफलता के कड़वे घूँट हैं पीते,
आशा - निराशा की धारा में बहते,
कभी कश्मकश, कभी द्वन्द्व भरे जीवन का स्वाद हम चखते,
और हमारे कोमलगात नन्हें-मुन्ने बच्चे भी इससे नहीं अछूते,

उनकी निश्छल दुनिया भी बड़ी निराली है,
बड़ी अल्हड़ - मतवाली है,
माँ की गोद - तजकर जब वे विद्यालय जाते हैं,
शिक्षा के बढ़ते बोझ तले अक्सर थक जाते हैं,
बढ़ते विषयों की नव तकनीकों से
कभी मन से बोज़िल हो जाते हैं,
प्रतिस्पर्धा के भँवर जाल में फँसकर
चुनौतियों से दो-दो हाथ भी करते जाते हैं
कभी नहीं आयु में ही - अवसादों के घेरे में आ जाते हैं,
कैसे इन नव पौधों या नई पीढ़ी की
मानसिकता को स्वस्थ बनाया जाए ?

सवाल, हर शिक्षक-अभिभावक के लिए बहुत बड़ा है
कैसे अपने नौनिहालों को खुशहाल बनाया जाए ?
कैसे अपने अनमोल रत्नों को
आज के नवाचारों से अवगत कराया जाए?
तो आइए, ऐसा कुछ करते हैं,
मन के हर कोनों में नव-उमंग-तरंग को भरते हैं,
आओं, बच्चों के सपनों में चार चाँद लगाया जाए,
उनके सुंदर भावों में,
संभावनाओं के वट-वृक्ष को उगाया जाए,
चलों, विद्यालय में कुछ मनमोहक नियम बनाया जाए
मन के सूनपन से उन्हें बाहर निकाला जाए,

शारीरिक व्यायाम खूब कराया जाए,
 भावों की धारा में बहकर
 उनकी कुदरती प्रतिभा को खूब निखारा जाए,
 हम शिक्षक-अभिभावक मिलकर
 चलो स्वस्थ वातावरण तैयार करें,
 जिससे नवसृजन, नव - रचना के फूल खिले,
 चलो, अपने कर्णधारों को
 अर्जुन सरीखा लक्ष्य पाने हेतु
 उनमें एकाग्रशक्ति जगाते हैं,
 ध्यान - योग की महिमा उन्हें सिखाते हैं,
 चलो, खेल-खेल में, तार्किक उन्हें बनाते हैं,
 नई उद्बोधन शैली सिखलाते हैं,
 जीवन - चक्रव्यूह को तोड़ने की नई-नीति से अवगत कराते हैं,
 तनाव-रहित करने की खातिर पौष्टिक आहार खिलाते हैं
 चलिए, उनके कोमल मन को निर्भीक बनाया जाए ,
 शैक्षिक क्रिया-कलापों से उन्हें आत्मविश्वासी बनाया जाए ,
 चलो, साहस- शौर्य-पराक्रम का नूतन बीज उगाते हैं
 तभी, बच्चे इस नव युग में सच्चे-अच्छे नागरिक बन सकेंगे,
 नई विज्ञान-धारा में बहकर नए आविष्कारक कहलाएँगे,
 नई खेल प्रतियोगिताओं में साधकर
 हम नए विराट कोहली देख पाएँगे,
 नए राजनीति के गुण सीखकर वे
 नए राजनेता बन दुनिया को वश में कर पाएँगे ।
 'क्योंकि मन की जीत ही सबसे बड़ी जीत है'

डॉ. मंजुलता मिश्रा

सनबीम इंग्लिश स्कूल, भगवानपुर