

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT**

MANODARPAN

Psychosocial Support of Students, Teachers and Families for Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing

1. An Overview of the Endeavour:

- The outbreak of the global pandemic COVID -19 is a challenging time for everyone in the world, not only in terms of physical well-being, but also in terms of mental well-being. While the medical world is facing serious concerns, the often silent world of mixed emotions is leading to psycho-social stress for many, particularly children in tender ages who are yet to develop the socio-emotional skills to handle the stress.
- The world is awakening to the emerging mental health concerns, with specific focus on children, adolescents and youth, especially children with disabilities. Children and adolescents may be more vulnerable and may experience heightened level of stress, anxiety and fear, along with a range of emotional and behavioural issues.
- COVID-19 has also brought new stressors on parents and caregivers including teachers which can hamper their capacity to provide adequate support and remain positively engaged with their wards.
- Extraordinary times, require extraordinary measures. While it is important to focus on continuing education on the academic front, the Ministry of Human Resource Development would also like to give equal importance to the mental health and well-being of the students. With the emerging needs and concerns of students coming from diverse backgrounds and aspirations, a holistic and comprehensive guidance system in the form of counselling and wellbeing services for mental health and emotional wellbeing of students has become essential.

2. Manodarpan:

- Lot of emails, social media requests have been received by the Honourable Minister for Human resources Development Shri Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank' about the growing problem of mental health issues after the onset of COVID-19 . Seeing the magnitude of the problem Honorable Minister has set up a task force Headed by Joint Secretary (Institutions) in the ministry to look into the issue and suggest mechanisms for addressing the problem of Mental health. The task force came up with a plethora of recommendations which were accepted by the Minister and the name given for this initiative as ' MANODARPAN' , covering a wide range of activities to provide psychosocial support in a comprehensive and multimodal manner. The aim of Manodarpan is to help students to live their lives happily, effectively and

productively and become resilient over time with the help of life skills even in the face of challenges and roadblocks.

3. Expert Consultations for the initiative:

- A Working Group, having experts from the fields of education, mental health, child and adolescent psychology as its members has been set up in the Ministry on the 9th of April, 2020, to take the agenda forward. This Working Group undertook wide consultations with stakeholders for:
 - monitoring and promoting mental health of students
 - facilitating the providing of support to address the psychosocial aspects during and after COVID-19 lockdown through counselling services on national helpline, and online resources.

4. Manodarpan is a part of Atma Nirbhar Bharat Abhiyan:

- The Hon'ble Prime Minister, on 12.05.2020, launched the ATMANIRBHAR BHARAT ABHIYAN, a stimulus package for revitalising the economy of India post COVID-19 outbreak. The 'Manodarpan' initiative has been included in the ATMANIRBHAR BHARAT ABHIYAN, as a part of strengthening and empowering the human capital to increase productivity and efficiency through reforms and initiatives in the Education sector.

5. Various components of the manodarpan initiative:

| Sl. No. | Components | Target group | Purpose | Timelines |
|---------|---|--|---|--|
| 1. | Web page on the MHRD website url http://manodarpan.mhrd.gov.in | Students in school and higher education, families, teaching community | This will carry advisory, practical tips, posters, videos, do's and don'ts, FAQs and online query system, for psychosocial support. | Ready for launch |
| 2. | Advisory Guidelines | For students, teachers and faculty of School systems and Universities along with families. | To help identify areas of concern in COVID-19 times and give quick tips for dealing with them. | Ready for launch – this is part of the webpage |

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|----|---|-------------------------|---|---|---------------------------------------|
| 3. | National Helpline 8448440632 by the MHRD | Toll-free number | For a country wide outreach to students from school, universities and colleges. | <p>Through this helpline tele-counselling will be provided to the students to address their mental health and psychosocial issues.</p> <p>This unique helpline shall be manned by a pool of experienced counselors/ Psychologists and other mental health professionals and will continue beyond the COVID-19 situation.</p> <p>About 500 experienced counsellors have been enrolled to implement the national helpline, and 100 counsellors have been mapped to commence the first phase for students.</p> | Ready for launch |
| 4. | Handbook on 21st century skills for school students | | For school students | <p>For COVID-19 times, a different skill-set is required that would enable an individual to cope-up and succeed in facing the challenges in real-life, leading to his holistic progress. These skills are addressed as 21st Century Skills/ Learning Skills/ Transversal Competencies etc. in the Handbook.</p> | Ready for launch as a part of Webpage |

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| 5. | National level database and directory of counsellors | At School and University level | <p>The purpose is to enlist the counsellors whose services can be offered voluntarily for Tele-Counselling Service on the National Helpline.</p> <p>In the forthcoming months, a complete national resource database of counsellors and counselling services, serving the school and university system across the country shall be compiled.</p> <p>This database will help in effective planning and implementation of psychosocial support for students, families and teachers across the country during the COVID-19 and the times beyond.</p> | Partially completed – will be completed in July, 2020 |
| 6. | Interactive Online Chat Platform ‘ | Being made available for students, teachers, and families during COVID-19 and beyond. | <p>For contact, counselling and guidance by psychologists and other mental health professionals which will be</p> <p>Besides the above, an interactive app will be developed based on chat- bot to deal with various queries on mental health concerns of students.</p> | To be completed by August, 2020 |

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| 7. | Webinars, audio-visual resources including videos, posters, flyers, comics, and short films; with focus on convergence of resources from other Ministries/Departments, such as, resources on Fit India, Art and culture, etc. | For all stakeholders in the education system | Mental well-being is also a sum total of physical and creative well-being. Resources will be converged from various sources and uploaded as additional resource materials on the webpage. Crowd sourcing from students all over the country will also be encouraged as peer support. | Some aspects are already uploaded on Webpage. This is a continuing exercise. |
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The above resources mobilised through the MANODARPAN initiative are envisaged to facilitate a sustainable psychosocial support system for students, families and teachers and will be of great utility even in the post-corona times with proactive and preventive mental health and wellbeing services integrated into the mainstream of learning processes.

6. Need for establishing the ‘Manodarpan’ initiative:

- Over the years there is ample scientific evidence which strongly propagates the view that there has to be a consistent strong linkage between education and health so that schools become a medium for promoting health and wellbeing among children and adolescents.
- The CBSE affiliation Byelaws make it mandatory for schools to have at least one Counsellor on their rolls. Realizing the stress that children go through while staying away from parents, the Navodaya Vidyalayas have also appointed one part time counsellor per school.
- As per the UGC Guidelines 2015, all HEIs should mandatorily put in place a broad-based “Students Counseling System” for the effective management of problems and challenges faced by students.
- Providing effective support for mental health challenges is one of the most pressing issues for universities and colleges across India. It would be a moral dereliction of our duties as citizens and professionals if we turn a blind eye to the rising rates of suicides and depressions among the youth of India today.
- **According to ICMR (2017)**, in the age group 0-5 years, 33% of the children who go for advice on mental well-being are diagnosed with hyperkinetic syndrome. The common diagnoses in age group 6-11 years were: hyperkinetic syndrome, and conduct disorders. Multicentric studies by ICMR mention that 10-13% of children and adolescents suffer from mental health issues.

- As per **WHO 2017** report, more than 56 million individuals face depressive disorders (**Mann ki Baat-27/03/2017**). Every hour one student commits suicide in India, with about 28 such suicides reported every day, according to data compiled by the **National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB)**. The NCRB data shows that 10,159 students died by suicide in 2018, an increase from 9,905 in 2017, and 9,478 in 2016.
- Another data from **National Health Profile 2018** reveals that suicides in the country has increased by 23% from 2000 to 2015 with the maximum number of such deaths being reported in the 30-45 age group, followed closely by young adults between 18-30 years.
- Thus, it becomes very important to identify the illness at an early stage and consult a mental health professional and have focused programmes in place, at both school and college level to address mental health issues.

7. Understanding the gap:

- While dedicated student counselling centres are now a norm in premier governmental institutes like IIT's, adequate system and provision for resident psychologists who can intervene at the onset of emotional and mental problems, are yet to become commonplace in both governmental and private institutions/schools in the country. The top-notch institutes in the country still have some system in place but such mechanisms are almost non-existent in smaller institutes as well as schools, especially in tier-2 and tier-3 cities.

8. Bridging the gap to meet the needs:

Issues of well-being and psychosocial competence affect the entire school community including students, teachers, school administrators and members of the surrounding community. Specific mental health programmes addressing these issues improve coping skills, decrease stress and increase support for a healthy school community. Schools and Universities will need to focus on **early intervention to identify issues and provide effective support is crucial. On recommendations of the Working group, the Department of School Education and Literacy is planning out further support in promoting mental health and wellbeing in the following areas:**

- **Prevention:** creating a safe and calm environment where mental health problems are less likely, improving the mental health and wellbeing of the whole school population, and equipping pupils to be resilient so that they can manage the normal stress of life effectively. This will include teaching pupils about mental wellbeing through the curriculum and reinforcing this teaching through school activities and ethos.
- **Early Identification:** by training teachers to recognise emerging issues as early and accurately as possible.

- **Access to specialist support:** guidelines to this effect shall be prepared by the working group for states/UTs to set up an effective system for working with external agencies to provide swift access or referrals to specialist support and treatment.
- The components of the **School Mental Health Programme will become an integral part of ‘Health and Physical Education’**. In fact, the focus is on making health, fitness and nutrition programmes to become the basis for health and nutrition education rather than just focusing on ‘Creating Awareness’ in students about what they should eat, especially when a large percentage of children do not have access to adequate food.
- Making all **Early Childhood Education and Care Programmes from 0–6 years)** sensitive and responsive to the special needs of children, by training of family volunteers and Anganwadi Workers in the identification of the needs of the children with disabilities, use of age-appropriate play and learning materials and the counselling of parents and teachers/faculty.
- **Removing physical barriers and reviewing barriers created by admission procedures** (screening, identification, parental interaction, selection and evaluation) and making the curriculum flexible and appropriate to accommodate the diversity of students including those with Disability in both Cognitive and Non-Cognitive Areas and all types of Slow Learners.
- **All teacher education courses to include Health, especially Mental Health, Yoga and Physical Education as a compulsory subject.** For effective implementation of this subject advocacy is required at different levels of the Education and Health Systems Primary, Secondary & Tertiary Care. It is strongly recommending that the appropriateness of the design, materials and pedagogy be looked into for Health Programmes as interventions in the School/college Curriculum.
- Focus will also increase on the adolescent group with concerted programs of **Life Skills, Stress Management, Drug Abuse Prevention, Reproductive Health and allied areas.**
- Positive Parenting sessions in the Context of Child Mental Health and Resilience and Responsible Child Care.
- **Capacity Building for Teachers/faculty and Non-Teaching Staff, ensuring entire school/college awareness** and sensitivity for child abuse (including the POCSO act 2016) and all the other legal instruments important for the schooling systems.

9. Holistic report card:

- **On the directions of Honourable PM, the draft New Education Policy, 2020 has included** the complete redesigning of students’ report card, to make it holistic, 360-degree,

multidimensional report that reflects in great detail the progress as well as the uniqueness of each learner in the cognitive, affective, socio-emotional, and psychomotor domains.

- This report card will be initiated when the child first enters the schooling system and will continue till the child passes out from school.
- It will include teacher assessment, self-assessment and peer assessment, and progress of the child in project-based and inquiry-based learning, quizzes, role plays, group work, portfolios, etc.
- The holistic report card will form an important link between home and school, and will be accompanied by parent-teacher meetings in order to actively involve parents in their children's holistic education and development.
- The report card would also provide teachers and parents with valuable information on how to support each student in and out of the classroom.
- Artificial Intelligence based software will be developed and used by schools to help track growth of students through their school years based on learning data and interactive questionnaires for parents, students, and teachers, in order to provide students with valuable information on their strengths, areas of interest, and needed areas of focus, and to thereby help them make optimal career choices.
- **This Holistic Report Card will go a long way in providing timely interventions, not only for learning support, but also for mental and physical well-being support.**
- The work on this report card will be initiated immediately after the new National Curriculum framework is ready in April, 2021.

MANODARPAN- An initiative for MENTAL HEALTH AND WELL BEING of students of India

There is an urgency to generate Awareness, leading to Responsibility and Empowerment

Introduction:

- Mental health and Wellbeing contribute to all aspects of human life. Mental health is a state of well-being in which a person realizes his/her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his/her community. Mental health is an inseparable part of general health, essential for the well-being and functioning of individuals, families, communities and societies. It has an intrinsic value for the individual, society, and culture. **Mental health has a reciprocal relationship with the well-being and productivity of a society and its members. It is essential for the well-being and functioning of individuals.**
- Positive mental health is an important resource for individuals, families, communities, and nations. As an indivisible part of general health, it contributes to the functions of society, and has an effect on overall productivity. Mental health and Wellbeing concerns everyone as it is generated in our everyday lives in homes, schools, workplaces, and in leisure activities. Positive mental health contributes to the social, human, and economic capital of every society. It can be regarded as an individual resource, contributing to the individual's quality of life, and can be increased or diminished by the actions of society. An aspect of good mental health is the capacity for mutually satisfying and enduring relationships. There is growing evidence that social cohesion is critical for the economic prospering of communities and this relationship appears to be reciprocal.
- The outbreak of the global pandemic COVID -19 is a challenging time indeed for everyone in the world, not only in terms of physical well-being, but also in terms of mental well-being. While the medical world is facing serious concerns, **the often-silent world of mixed emotions is leading to psycho-social stress for many**, particularly children in tender ages who are yet to develop the socio-emotional skills to handle the stress.
- The world is awakening to the emerging mental health concerns, with specific focus on children, adolescents and youth, especially children with disabilities. Like adults, children and adolescents also experience mental health problems, but their problems are widely neglected and/or often wrongly diagnosed as an intellectual impairment. Children and adolescents may be more vulnerable and may experience heightened level of stress, anxiety and fear, along with a range of emotional and behavioural issues. The mental health status of children and adolescents is influenced by the family, and social and cultural environment.
- COVID-19 has also brought new stressors on parents and caregivers including teachers which can hamper their capacity to provide adequate support and remain positively engaged with their wards.

Facts and figures:

- Mental illnesses are common and universal. Worldwide, mental and behavioural disorders

represented 11% of the total disease burden expressed in terms of disability-adjusted life years (DALYs).

- The **National Mental Health Survey (MoHFW, 2016)** highlights the escalating burden of Mental Health Problems in India.
- **The Lancet Study (2018)** reports the data of mental health scenario of India. **The gap between needs and services is crucial to understand.**
- Every hour one student commits suicide in India, with about 28 suicides reported every day, according to data compiled by the **National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB)**. The NCRB data shows that 10,159 students died by suicide in 2019, an increase from 9,905 in 2018, and 9,478 in 2017.
- **Recent data collected by WHO** demonstrates the large gap that exists between resources that are available in countries for mental health and the burden caused by mental health problems. In contrast to the overall health gains of the world's populations in recent decades, the burden of mental illness has grown. This neglect is based at least in part on confusion and false assumptions about the separate concepts of mental health and mental illness.
- Health promoting policies include policies in the health care sector, and also in the economic, environmental, and social sectors for positive impact on the determinants of health and improved health equity.

Challenges in our lives:

- In our daily life, we are faced with many challenges and dealing with such challenges is an inevitable part of life. At some point, every individual experiences varying degrees of setbacks. Some of these challenges might be relatively minor (e.g., failing an exam, not being accepted by the peer group, etc.), while others are on a much larger scale (e.g., losing a loved one, natural calamity, etc.).
- There are some difficult situations that can lead a person to feel sad, lonely, scared, nervous, or anxious. Some individuals have better resilience and are better able to handle such adversities of life and cope up with the problems. This does not mean that they do not experience distress, grief, or anxiety but it means that they can handle such difficulties in ways that foster strength and growth. On the other hand, there are individuals who may become overwhelmed by such experiences.
- It is important to understand that everyone feels sad or low sometimes, but these feelings usually pass with time. However, if these feelings last for more than two weeks and interfere with regular daily activities of an individual, it is likely to be a depressive disorder.
- **Depression** is a mood disorder that interferes with daily life of an individual and affects how she/he feels, thinks, and handles daily activities such as sleeping, eating, or working.
- **Anxiety** is a persistent feeling of worry, fear or nervousness. These feelings of anxiety and panic can interfere with daily activities, are difficult to control, are out of proportion to the actual danger and can last a long time. One may even avoid places or situations to prevent these feelings.

- **Stress** is the body's reaction to any change that requires an adjustment or response. Stress is a normal part of life. One can experience stress from daily life and experiences such as worrying about schoolwork or grades, peer group pressures, having negative thoughts about themselves. The body reacts to these changes with physical, mental, and emotional responses. Even positive life changes such as a new friend, getting to be the monitor of the class, getting to be stage anchor on annual function can produce stress.
- Stress can be positive, keeping us alert, motivated, and ready to avoid danger. Stress becomes negative when a person faces continuous challenges without relief or relaxation between stressors. As a result, the person becomes overworked, and stress-related tension builds.

Stigma around mental well-being:

- There is a lack of knowledge about mental health issues, with widespread stigma, prejudice and discrimination. 'Mental Health' is often misconstrued as treatment of mental disorder.
- In every community, there are people living with mental health problems who are likely to be isolated, abused and deprived of their fundamental human rights.
- Identifying Learning Disability at a young age is very important for child to be able to continue education in an effective manner. Often parents refuse to accept the fact that their child may have such a disability. This becomes a huge impediment in the child's progress.
- Children with Special Needs or Divyangjan are an important component of this population. It is imperative to recognize their needs and requirements and restore their dignity and identity.
- It is important to intervene at several levels, from local to national, to promote, prevent and manage mental health concerns.

Mental health – a social perspective:

- The mental health status of children and adolescents is influenced by the family, and social and cultural environment.
- Experience of poverty, violence, physical and sexual abuse, neglect and lack of stimulation may all have an impact.
- There is evidence for a link between a mother's mental health and the cognitive, social and emotional development of her child.
- Children of parents with mental health problems and disturbed homes are also vulnerable, as they may not receive adequate attention and care and, in contrast, often assume a level of responsibility that is beyond their capacity.
- For instance: *A boy aged 12 years of age studying in grade VI. He belongs to an upper middle socio-economic status. He stays in a joint family and his immediate family includes his sister who is in grade XII. Father is a business man and mother is a home maker. He is not able to complete his work on time in class. He has a lot of difficulty in writing and moreover, he writes very slowly and it seems disorganized. He makes a lot of spelling mistakes and not able to copy things from the board as well. He is found sitting idle and simply listening to the teachers who are teaching in class. On the other hand, the students in class do not support him and sometimes trouble him. Due to this, he replies them back either through hitting or by misbehaving. He gets instigated by others very*

quickly and acts aggressively towards them. When the parents are informed about it, they start blaming it on the school. They have no insight into the child's problem. Though multiple attempts have been made to make them understand about the problems the child is going through, they still blame it back on the school.

Similarly, a boy of age 15+ belongs to a business class family. He stays with his mother, father and brother. He is also not able to comprehend and interpret the languages such as Hindi and English. He shows specific behavioural patterns which include bunking the classes, arguing with teacher, raising his voice while talking to elders or classmates, does not obey rules and regulations, shows defiant behaviour toward others and gets aggressive on slight instigation by others and eventually turns violent. He gets along with those of his kind. Due to his behaviour patterns, he has been suspended more than once from school and he does not feel guilty about it. The mother of the child protects him too much and still takes his behaviour lightly and interprets him as a naughty child. The father does not have much time to spend with the boy and is mostly on international trips and thus not able to rectify the behavioural issues of the child.

- For the youth of our country who are self-employed or working in private companies, it may be overwhelming to realise that their career growth has suddenly come to a halt and they might have missed some important opportunities that could have helped them move up their careers or in the organizational ladder. This has impacted their mental health and wellbeing, especially in today's time.
- Also, parents with young children experience greater stress about balancing their own work with needs of their families, such as children's studies, along with continued anxiety about managing finances, not only in this period but even for later.
- The sudden halt in work, loss of income, the fear of losing job completely or simply the fear of being dependent again, are the biggest apprehensions these days.
- **The mid-life population** are also facing mental health concerns, especially in times of COVID-19. The market conditions may take time to revive, which can lead to small-scale enterprises to be in distress, impacting their emotional health.
- *A retired college professor, age 65, lost his wife in a car accident where he was driving. He has been living alone in his flat as his children are in jobs and live in other states. He has been very sad after losing his wife as she was the only one he used to talk to. According to the neighbours he is always sad now and doesn't want to talk to anyone. Sometimes he doesn't come out of his house for many days.*

Elderly population is the most significant emerging demographic phenomenon in the world today. By 2050, the proportion of older persons 60 years and above is projected to rise to 21.1 per cent, which will be two billion in number. Asia has the largest number of world's elderly (53 per cent). This pressure of increasing numbers of elderly will intensify in the next 50 years. Among various mental disorders, depression accounts for the greatest burden among elderly. Depression and other mental health concerns decreases an individual's quality of life and increases dependence on others. If these mental health concerns are left untreated, it can have significant clinical and social implications in the lives of the elderly.

The Turbulent Teens: Need for counselling

- Teenagers are gullible and easily influenced by peers. Their immediate circle of interaction involves parents, teachers and peers. They constantly seek validation from these persons and their self-image is often a reflection of these influencers and how they perceive them. Some times in the face of peer pressure the teenager gives in to socially wrong behaviours, mainly because he wants to be acceptable and popular in the peer group or has fear of being rejected. It has been found that substance use in adolescence is an important social problem directly impacting academic achievement, high school dropout rate, early sexual initiation, and troubled interpersonal relationships. Similarly, device addiction is also coming up as huge issue, particularly in urban areas. This again underscores timely availability of a counsellor.
- ***Rohit** has fully prepared for his class XII Board Exams. He has gone through his text books, practiced from almost all Sample Question Papers. Still he feels nervous. If he tells his parents, he will certainly be scolded. Who can help him build his confidence to face exams? **Shivani** does not have any interest in Mathematics. She did not perform well in her pre-boards too. Now she is too worried about her final exam. she fears she won't get through the subject and spends sleepless nights. Who can she talk to?*

These illustrations are the mere tip of an iceberg as the problem is perhaps much bigger than we can imagine. Most of us have experienced these situations in our lives.

Hundreds of thousands of our students today face the same problems and may not know what to do. Their problems and challenges also grow exponentially with their age. Invariably teenagers or adolescents go through identity crisis, being at the crossroads of childhood and adulthood. The physical, emotional and social transformations further add to their confusions and turmoil.

- They seek out a person who is, supportive, understanding and objective. This is where the counsellor comes in; a person who has the right attributes of being an attentive listener, skilled enquirer, an empathetic responder and most of all is non-judgmental.
- Counselling can help an individual in building confidence which leads to a positive Self image. The counsellor intervenes and solves the crisis.
- It often happens that an individual in dire need of counselling fails to get the same on time because, either trained counsellors are not available, or the individual hesitates to approach a counsellor face to face.
- However, modalities of this desired intervention for counselling are varied; beginning with face to face counselling to virtual counselling or Tele-counselling.
- Tele helpline has the advantage of giving immediate support and assistance, affordability, ease of access (for geographically isolated, physically challenged, special needs persons, anonymity which is comforting to some callers, who find it less intimidating and feel encouraged for self-disclosure.
- Due to the limited availability of psychiatrists, psychologists, counselors, social workers and other mental health professionals Tele-counseling is an effective method to provide access to specialized help.
- Therefore, tele-counseling can emerge as a new age panacea for unmet needs of counselling.
- Understanding this need, CBSE which is 90 years old premier national board of our country has been providing tele-counselling for 23 years continuously not only in India but also across the

world where it has affiliated schools. Over the years it has helped millions of students and parents voluntarily through free of cost telephonic counselling. Today this facility has been broad based and has multiple levels, through newspaper columns, IVRS, social media handles. Similarly, the NCERT and several universities have also been operating a tele-counselling service.

- These efforts are now being converged into a national toll-free helpline, Manodarpan.

The Face Off: Depression and suicide

- Recent episodes of suicide have numbed the nation. Feeling sad and upset in certain situations is normal, and everyone goes through this once in a while. In case the feelings are severe, prolonged, unexpected, seem unusual, or have no apparent cause, there is a reason to be concerned. One can become sad or even depressed after sudden changes in life, like a change of school or house, family breakdown, neglect, abuse, bullying, and physical illness. A child may show mood swings, fear, loneliness, boredom and may even indulge in self-procrastination.
- Communication and sharing are critical for a person facing this crisis. The trained counselor provides the much-needed confidentiality in case of emotional crisis.
- **Early diagnosis and effective treatment** of mental health concerns can also lead to significant reduction in mortality due to suicide and medical illnesses, and health care costs. **Early identification and intervention** are the mainstays of holistic health whether physical or mental. Among teenagers we find common *mental* health concerns which need to be addressed, like stress, anxiety, bullying, learning disability, alcohol and substance abuse.

Prevention, promotion and management of mental health and wellbeing- a whole society approach:

- **Create inclusive environments**
 - Create inclusive environments that respect and protect the basic rights of everyone, including people with mental health problems.
 - Strengthen community networks and encourage collective responsibility for preventing alcohol/drug abuse, gender discrimination and community and family violence.
 - Encourage stakeholders that are involved in promoting mental health and well-being, e.g. working with women's clubs on gender issues or with a local non-governmental organization focusing on early interventions with children.
- **Facilitate Inclusion in Community-Based Programmes**
 - Form a community and consult and involve people with mental health problems and their family members in jointly tackling issues, identifying barriers and possible solutions in meeting basic needs, including access to health services, education, livelihood and social security.
 - Identify mental health personnel, users of mental health services and/or family members who could be trained.

- Intense involvement at grassroots for a happy, sharing, empathetic colony, village or district through humanitarian approach for positive mental health by the Heads of the administrative areas.
- **Overcome Stigma and Discrimination in the Community**
 - Public knowledge is very limited about mental health problems and the possibility of recovery. To enable people with mental health problems to participate actively in society, common myths, prejudices and discrimination need to be addressed. Suggested activities include the following:
 - Ensure that people are treated with dignity and respect at all times.
 - Identify key people in the community who can assist Community based mental health programmes to deliver positive messages and images about mental health. These people may include influential people, such as local political or religious leaders and icons in different fields like sports, films, music and arts.
 - Media can play a key role in spreading positive message about mental health
 - Make contact with the identified key people and provide them with information about mental health issues in their community, e.g. invite them to be guests of honour at events that local or regional communities have organized.
- **Contribute to the Empowerment Process**
 - Recovery from mental health problems is very closely linked to empowerment.
 - Build positive relationships with people who have mental health problems and their family members based on open communication and trust.
 - Recognize that people with mental health problems and their family members have personal knowledge and skills. Ensure there is a focus on people's strengths, and encourage them to play an active role in the recovery process.
 - Make people aware of the available treatment and support options in their community to enable them to make informed decisions about actions they want to take.
 - Link people with mental health problems and their family members with self-help groups.
 - Encourage and support self-help groups to advocate for the development of accessible, affordable and acceptable community mental health services.
 - Raise awareness about the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in partnership with others and address local and national laws to enable people with mental health problems to exercise their rights.
- **Mental Health & Life skills**
 - Integrating life skills as abilities for adaptive and positive behaviors for helping community to effectively deal with demands & challenges of everyday life. The MHRD is working on integrating this area at all levels of education.
 - Integration of age appropriate life skills imbibes a rounded development of everyone as a lifelong human resource for self and the environment and the nation at large.

- Make time for hobbies and interests: Hobbies bring a sense of fun and freedom to life that can help to minimize the impact of stress. Those who feel overwhelmed or stressed can benefit from hobbies because they provide an outlet for stress and something to look forward to.

- **Yoga and Physical Education**

- Being physically active even in COVID times is very crucial for overall well-being of the mind and the body. Any form of exercise, that can be done at home, such as, yoga, skipping, Pilates, calisthenics, dancing, etc. must form a part of every one's routine to stay healthy.
- Modern research has shown that one of the most effective ways for reducing cortisol production and related stress response in body, without taking any pills, is yoga. It is also known that when we hold our body in a yogic posture for a few breaths, the parasympathetic nervous system is stimulated, which in turn lowers our Blood pressure, thereby enabling a better post-stress response.

We understand that while it is important to focus on continuing education on the academic front, is essential to give equal importance to the mental health and well-being of the students. With the emerging needs and concerns of students coming from diverse backgrounds and aspirations, a holistic and comprehensive guidance system in the form of counselling and wellbeing services for mental health and emotional wellbeing of students has become essential.

Hence, the '**MANODARPAN**' initiative covering a wide range of activities to provide psychosocial support to students, teachers and families for Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing during the COVID outbreak and beyond has been undertaken. The 'Manodarpán' initiative has been included in the ATMANIRBHAR BHARAT ABHIYAN, as a part of strengthening human capital and increasing productivity and efficient reform and initiatives for the Education sector.

Under the initiative, a webpage has been created on the website of MHRD containing advisory, practical tips, posters, videos, do's and don'ts, FAQs and online query system, for psychosocial support for students, teachers and faculty of School systems and Universities along with families.

A National Toll-free help line 8448440632 to provide tele-counselling for students to help cope with the situation has also been established. Through this helpline tele-counselling will be provided to the students to address their mental health and psychosocial issues. This unique helpline shall be managed by a pool of experienced counselors/ Psychologists and other mental health professionals. A National Directory of Counsellors is being created by mapping counsellors at school, college and university level. Under Manodarpán, it is envisaged that an enduring psychosocial support system is put in place in schools and higher education institutions for proactive and preventive Mental Health and Wellbeing services and integrated with the mainstream of learning process.

SOME LIFE LESSONS

- **Viktor Emil Frankl** was an Austrian neurologist and psychiatrist. In 1944, following Nazi annexation of Austria, Frankl was selected for transfer to a labour camp to Kaufering and later Tuerkheim, subsidiary camps of Dachau in Bavaria, Auschwitz. He was a Holocaust survivor and penned down the famous book "Man's Search for Meaning" which he started writing during his days of captivity in concentration camps. The book is a meditation on what the gruesome experience of Auschwitz taught him about the primary purpose of life: the quest for meaning, which sustained those who survived. For Frankl, the meaning of life came from three possible sources: purposeful work, love, and courage in the face of difficulty. These are lessons learnt in times of atrocities, struggle for survival in the harshest circumstances we can ever imagine but should never forget in times of crisis.
- How many of you have read the HARRY POTTER series? How many of you have seen the movie based on the book? Do you know the name of the writer of the book? Yes, its **J.K.Rowling**. J.K. Rowling's life before Harry Potter is well known. Living in poverty, she was an unemployed single mother who spent her days writing in local cafes. But at the same time, she was also suffering from severe depression and battling suicidal thoughts. Shortly before beginning her famous series, Rowling even underwent cognitive behavior therapy in an attempt to improve her illness. Fortunately, Rowling is healthier and happier these days, but immortalized her bout with severe depression in Harry Potter. Her suicidal thoughts inspired the Dementors, terrifying creatures that feed off of the happiness of humans
- **Prince Harry:** In April 2017, the Prince told The Telegraph that he "shut down all his emotions" for almost two decades after the death of his mother, Princess Diana. It wasn't until he was 28 years old, during a period of time when he felt "very close to a complete breakdown" and faced anxiety during royal engagements, that he began to see a professional to address his grief.

Now 34 and "in a good place," Harry has encouraged others to open up about their own struggles. In 2016, he started the Heads Together campaign with Prince William and Kate Middleton to help "end the stigma around mental health issues."
- **Varun Dhawan:** In what came as a shock to many, the famous Bollywood film actor Varun Dhawan revealed he was fighting with depression when he was shooting "Badlapur". The actor did see a doctor for it and was prescribed medication.
- **Buzz Aldrin:** The famous astronaut who defied odds -- and gravity -- by landing on the moon alongside Neil Armstrong in 1969 struggled with depression and alcoholism after his inspiring feat. "I can't recall ever sharing my pain with another male friend or confiding in anyone that I was struggling to hold life together," he wrote in his book *Magnificent Desolation*. "At first the alcohol soothed the depression, making it at least somewhat bearable. But the situation progressed into depressive-alcoholic binges in which I would withdraw like a hermit into my apartment." After treating his depression and alcoholism, Aldrin went on to serve as the chairman of the National Association of Mental Health.

Depression

In our daily life, we are faced with many challenges and dealing with such challenges is an inevitable part of life. At some point, every individual experiences varying degrees of setbacks. Some of these challenges might be relatively minor (e.g., failing an exam, not being accepted by the peer group, etc.), while others are on a much larger scale (e.g., losing a loved one, natural calamity, etc.). These are some difficult situations that can lead a person to feel sad, lonely, scared, nervous, or anxious. Some individuals have better resilience and are better able to handle such adversities of life and cope up with the problems. This does not mean that they do not experience distress, grief, or anxiety but it means that they can handle such difficulties in ways that foster strength and growth. On the other hand, there are individuals who may become overwhelmed by such experiences.

It is important to understand that everyone feels sad or low sometimes, but these feelings usually pass with a time. Depression is more than just sadness. Depression is a mood disorder that interferes with daily life of an individual and affects how s/he feels, thinks, and handles daily activities such as sleeping, eating, or working. The term “depression” often characterizes feelings of being sad, dejected, hopeless, worthless, irritable, unmotivated, as well as a general lack of interest or pleasure in life. When these feelings last for more than two weeks and interfere with regular daily activities of an individual, it is likely to be a depressive disorder.

Signs and Symptoms

Depressive episodes may take place spontaneously, during or after an adversity such as death of a loved one, a romantic break-up, a medical illness, or other life events. Such an episode is disabling and interferes with the individual’s ability to work, study, eat, and sleep. Some people with major depression may feel that life is not worth living and some will attempt to end their lives.

A major depressive episode may include these symptoms:

- Persistent sad mood, most of the day, nearly every day
- Loss of interest or pleasure in hobbies and activities, including sex
- Feelings of guilt, worthlessness, helplessness
- Decreased energy, fatigue, feeling “slowed down”
- Difficulty in concentrating, remembering, making decisions
- Insomnia, early morning awakening, or excessive sleeping
- Low appetite and weight loss or overeating and weight gain
- Thoughts of death or suicide, suicide attempts
- Restlessness or irritability

Causes of Depression

Depression does not have a single cause. It can be triggered, or it may occur spontaneously without being associated with a life crisis, physical illness or other risk. There can be several factors that contribute to cause depression:

1. Trauma: When people experience trauma at an early age, it can cause long-term changes in how their brains respond to fear and stress. These brain changes may explain why people who have a history of childhood trauma are more likely to experience depression.

2. Genetics: Mood disorders and risk of suicide tend to run in families, but genetic inheritance is only one factor.

3. Life circumstances: Marital status, financial standing and where a person lives have an effect on whether a person develops depression.

4. Brain structure: Imaging studies have shown that the frontal lobe of the brain becomes less active when a person is depressed. Depression is also associated with changes in how the pituitary gland and hypothalamus respond to hormone stimulation.

5. Other medical conditions: People who have a history of sleep disturbances, medical illness, chronic pain, anxiety, and attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) are more likely to develop depression.

Treatments

Although depression can be a devastating illness, it often responds to treatment. Early diagnosis and intervention with appropriate treatment are always critical steps to feeling better, especially for adolescents and youth. If one experience depression symptoms for most of the day, every day, for more than two weeks and their feelings start affecting many parts of their lives, they should seek help and support from a professional. Treatment can include any one or combination of medications, psychotherapies including cognitive behavioural therapy, family-focused therapy and interpersonal therapy, self-management strategies and support from the loved ones.

Self-management Strategies

- **Indulge in things you used to enjoy:** Engage in a hobby you used to enjoy or think you'll enjoy. Immerse yourself in it. Go easy on yourself. Take it slowly. If you used to enjoy gardening, plant a single plant. If you used to enjoy a long walk, take a short one. Gradually build up to more enjoyable experiences.
- **Plan a schedule:** Introduce structure into your everyday life. Make a schedule of what to do every day and gradually expand this as you start to feel better. A schedule can put some direction back into a day that might otherwise feel empty or aimless. Make sure to break large tasks into small ones, set priorities, and do what you can.
- **Try to be active:** Exercise releases a natural antidepressant chemical in the brain and gets you into doing something active. Start small with a simple walk and gradually work up to a routine that fits with your needs and enjoyment.
- **Spend time with loved ones:** Support from people who love and care about you is an important part of the healing process. Talk with friends, family and colleagues who make you feel good and understand your feelings.
- **Start writing a journal:** Document your feelings somewhere personal and completely private without worrying that anyone will judge you for them. A diary can become your collaborator

in the struggle against your depression because it eventually provides you with evidence of what improves your mood as well as what brings it down.

- **Mind-body-spirit approaches (Meditation):** The aim of meditation is not to push aside stress or block out negative thinking, but rather to notice those thoughts and feelings, all the while understanding that you don't have to act on them.
- **Be kind to yourself:** Be gentle with yourself. Remember that life is not a race or a competition. Remind yourself that you matter, you have great value as a person.

Strategies to Help

- **Seek professional help:** If you know someone who has depression, first help him or her see a health care provider or mental health professional.
- **Encourage patience:** Offer support, understanding, patience, and encouragement. The effects of counseling and medication are gradual. Your loved one might be attending regular sessions before noticing an effect. Neither of you should give up hope before the counseling and medication has had time to work.
- **Be a good listener:** The best thing you can do is listen to your loved one talk about the depression. Be prepared to hear anything that he or she may say. Try not to look too shocked even if he or she is saying something truly awful, because that will shut them down. Be open and caring. Listen without judgement. When your loved one tells you something upsetting, encourage him or her by saying, "It must have been very difficult for you to tell me that" or "Thank you so much for opening up."
- **Be there for them:** Invite them out for walks, outings, and other activities. Help your loved one see the positive side of things. When talking with your loved one, try to hold as much positive conversation as possible. Depression can make people feel isolated like no one cares. Even if you have demonstrated your concern by doing things to help your friend, he or she may need to hear you say that you are there for them in order to believe it. Let them know that you are available and that they should talk to you right away if they need you.
- **Recognise the signs of suicide:** Never ignore comments about suicide as people with depression can have immense feelings of hopelessness and helplessness that can become too much to bear. If your friend talks about suicide, take it seriously. Don't assume they won't act out on their thoughts, especially where there is evidence that they have a plan.

II.

Understanding Anxiety

In our daily life, we face with many difficulties and stressful life events like moving to a new school, changing friends or fear of rejection or public speaking. Experiencing anxiety in such situations is a normal part of life. Anxiety is a persistent feeling of worry, fear or nervousness. Many people feel anxious at times, especially when faced with stressful events and changes (may be sudden) in their lives. It's a natural human response when we perceive that we are in danger. However, if these continuous feelings of anxiety impact the ability to function everyday work, then it may be said that a person is having anxiety disorder. These feelings of anxiety and panic can interfere with daily activities, are difficult to control, are out of proportion to the actual danger and can last a long time. One may even avoid places or situations to prevent these feelings.

Signs and Symptoms of Anxiety

Common anxiety signs and symptoms include:

- Feeling nervous, restless or tense
- Having a sense of impending danger or panic
- Having an increased heart rate
- Breathing rapidly (hyperventilation)
- Sweating
- Trembling
- Feeling weak or tired
- Trouble concentrating or thinking about anything other than the present worry
- Having trouble in sleeping
- Experiencing gastrointestinal (GI) problems
- Having difficulty controlling worry
- Having the urge to avoid things that trigger anxiety

Risk factors

- **Trauma:** Children who endured abuse or trauma or witnessed traumatic events are at higher risk of developing an anxiety disorder at some point in life. Adults who experience a traumatic event also can develop anxiety disorders.
- **Stress due to an illness:** Having a health condition or serious illness can cause significant worry about issues such as your treatment and your future.
- **Stress build-up:** A big event or a build-up of smaller stressful life situations may trigger excessive anxiety — for example, stress due to not able to make friends, adjustment to a new school, a death in the family, or ongoing worry about academics.
- **Other mental health disorders:** People with other mental health disorders, such as depression, often also have an anxiety disorder.
- **Having anxiety disorder among blood relations :** Anxiety disorders can run in families.
- **Drugs or alcohol:** Drug or alcohol use or misuse or withdrawal can cause or worsen anxiety.

Treatments

If the individual's worries, fears, or has anxiety attacks which have become so immense that they are causing extreme distress or disrupting their daily routine, then it becomes important to seek professional help. If someone has anxiety that is severe enough to interfere with their ability to function in their everyday life, medication may help relieve some anxiety symptoms. However, therapy, exercise, or self-help strategies can also help an individual to deal with their anxiety.

Self-help Strategies

- **Breathe deeply:** Take a moment to focus on taking deep belly breaths. Inhale for 4 seconds, hold the breath for 4 seconds, and then release it for 4 seconds. Doing this for 1-2 minutes should help to calm your nerves quickly.
- **Meditate:** Consciously taking your thoughts off **the triggering** stressor and focusing them inwards on something peaceful will reduce your anxiety and fear immensely.
- **Do something you love:** Take at least ten minutes during your day to practice a hobby or pastime which brings you peace. This may be reading, playing sports, playing music, or making art. Giving yourself an outlet will help to remove the anxiety from your mind both immediately and in the long run.
- **Connect with others:** Loneliness and isolation can trigger or worsen anxiety, while talking about your worries face to face can often make them seem less overwhelming. Make it a point to regularly meet up with friends and share your worries and concerns with a trusted loved one.
- **Practice relaxation techniques:** Relaxation techniques such as Mindfulness meditation, progressive muscle relaxation etc. Focus on a particular thought or pattern of thoughts that make you anxious and naming the emotions that surface without passing judgment or being critical of them. If the emotions get too intense, back off a bit and focus on your breathing.
- **Exercise regularly:** Exercise is a natural stress buster and anxiety reliever. Rhythmic activities that require moving both your arms and legs are especially effective. Try walking, running, swimming, martial arts, or dancing.
- **Get enough sleep:** A lack of sleep can exacerbate anxious thoughts and feelings. Try going to bed and waking up at the same times every day. This will help to regulate your sleep cycle, which will help you to get better nights of sleep. Avoid using your phone, laptop, and television in the hour before you go to bed.
- **Eliminate anxiety-inducing caffeine from your diet:** If you struggle with anxiety, you may want to consider reducing your caffeine intake, or cutting it out completely. Similarly, alcohol can also make anxiety worse. And while it may seem like cigarettes are calming, nicotine is actually a powerful stimulant that leads to higher, not lower, levels of anxiety.

Strategies to extend help

Immediate help -

- **Help them to get grounded:** Anxiety can pull your loved one out of the here and now, so help them return to the present moment and reorient themselves with grounding. Hold their

hands gently and calmly repeat grounding statements, like “I am here. You are not alone. You are safe.”

- **Take deep breaths together:** If your loved one is anxious; they might breathe faster than normal. Slowing down the breath can help relieve anxiety, so guide them through their breathing by slowly counting to 4 on the inhales, telling them to hold the breath for a few counts, and then counting to 8 on the exhales. To guide them, you might say, "Let's take a few deep breaths together."
- **Take them to a quiet place:** Sometimes panic attacks are caused by overstimulation, and going to a quiet place can help. Try to find a place where you can be alone with them so you can help calm them down.
- **Stay positive and encouraging:** Try to be as positive and encouraging as you can. Help them remember that they are safe.
- **Speak in a gentle soothing voice:** Raised voices, shouting, or fast-talking may kick up anxiety even more. To prevent your own communication style from worsening their anxiety, talk to them softly.

Providing Long-term Support

- **Acknowledge their experience:** Try to empathize with their experience and acknowledge their feelings. You might say, “I can see this is hard and scary for you. You are so brave for trying to fight it.”
- **Encourage them to share their feelings:** Bottling up emotions can make anxiety worse in the long run. If your loved one seems like they want to say something but they shut themselves down before saying it, encourage them to share with you. Let them know that you are there to support them.
- **Positively reinforce healthy behaviours:** Compliment them if they manage to deal with their stress.
- **Be Supportive:** A lot of anxiety stems from feeling like it is their fault or that something is wrong with them. Help them understand it is not their fault. This helps calm them and not put added anxiety onto them. Be supportive and kind to them.
- **Encourage to seek professional help :** Help the person to feel comfortable in seeking professional help

III.

Coping with Stress

Stress is the body's reaction to any change that requires an adjustment or response. Stress is a normal part of life. One can experience stress from daily life and experiences such as worrying about schoolwork or grades, peer group pressures, having negative thoughts about themselves. The body reacts to these changes with physical, mental, and emotional responses. Even positive life changes such as a new friend, getting to be the monitor of the class, getting to be stage anchor on annual function can produce stress. Stress can be positive, keeping us alert, motivated, and ready to avoid danger. Stress becomes negative when a person faces continuous challenges without relief or relaxation between stressors. As a result, the person becomes overworked, and stress-related tension builds.

The body's autonomic nervous system has a built-in stress response that causes physiological changes to allow the body to combat stressful situations. This stress response, also known as the "fight or flight response", is activated in case of an emergency. However, this response can become chronically activated during prolonged periods of stress. Prolonged activation of the stress response causes physical and emotional exhaustion.

Signs and symptoms of Stress

Stress can cause many types of physical and emotional symptoms. Following are some signs that stress may be affecting you:

- Diarrhea or constipation
- Forgetfulness
- Frequent aches and pains
- Headaches
- Lack of energy or focus
- Stiff jaw or neck
- Tiredness
- Trouble sleeping or sleeping too much
- Upset stomach
- Use of alcohol or drugs to relax
- Weight loss or gain

Causes of Stress

There can be numerous life events/situations/experiences that can cause stress. Sometimes fear and uncertainty can cause stress when you regularly hear about the threat of terrorist attacks, global warming, and toxic chemicals on the news, it can cause you to feel stressed, especially because you feel like you have no control over those events. Some of the common causes of stress are follows:

- Having a heavy workload or too much responsibility
- Working long hours
- Having poor management and decision-making
- Having to give speeches in front of classmates

- The death of a loved one
- Moving to a new home
- Chronic illness or injury
- Emotional problems (depression, anxiety, anger, grief, guilt, low self-esteem)
- Taking care of an elderly or sick family member
- Traumatic event, such as a natural disaster, theft, or violence against you or a loved one

Managing Stress

- **Keep a positive attitude:** Accept that there are events that you cannot control. Stay positive and take care of yourself.
- **Be assertive instead of aggressive:** Assert your feelings, opinions, or beliefs instead of becoming angry, defensive, or passive. Set limits appropriately and say no to requests that would create excessive stress in your life.
- **Learn and practice relaxation techniques:** Accept that you cannot completely eliminate stress from your life, but you can control how much it affects you. Relaxation techniques such as yoga, meditation, and deep breathing activate the body's relaxation response, a state of restfulness. When practiced regularly, these activities can reduce your everyday stress levels and boost feelings of joy and serenity. They also increase your ability to stay calm and collected under pressure.
- **Exercise regularly:** Regular exercise can lift your mood and serve as a distraction from worries, allowing you to break out of the cycle of negative thoughts that feed stress. Rhythmic exercises such as walking, running, swimming, and dancing are particularly effective, especially if you exercise mindfully.
- **Sleep:** Get enough rest and sleep. Your body needs time to recover from stressful events.
- **Engage your senses:** Engage one or more of your senses—sight, sound, taste, smell, touch, or movement. The key is to find the sensory input that works for you. Does listening to an uplifting song make you feel calm? Or smelling ground coffee? Or maybe petting an animal works quickly to make you feel centered? Everyone responds to sensory input a little differently, so experiment to find what works best for you.
- **Make time for hobbies and interests:** Hobbies bring a sense of fun and freedom to life that can help to minimize the impact of stress. Those who feel overwhelmed or stressed can benefit from hobbies because they provide an outlet for stress and something to look forward to.
- **Seek out social support:** Spend enough time with those you love. The simple act of talking face-to-face with another human can trigger hormones that relieve stress when you're feeling agitated or insecure. Even just a brief exchange of kind words or a friendly look from another human being can help calm and soothe your nervous system. So, spend time with people who improve your mood and don't let your responsibilities keep you from having a social life. Make it a priority to build stronger and more satisfying connections.
- **Seek help:** Seek professional treatment with a psychologist or other mental health professional trained in stress management to learn more healthy ways of dealing with the stress in your life.

How to help your loved one deal with stress

- **Actively listen:** Talking things through openly with someone we trust can help us see things differently and find new solutions. Even just knowing that somebody is there to listen can make a huge difference. Giving someone who is feeling stressed your time and undivided attention is one of the best things you can do to support them. Be gentle and kind to them whenever they share their difficult experience with you.
- **Offer reassurance:** Remind them that this will not last forever and that the situation can improve. This will help them keep things in perspective.
- **Help them identify their triggers:** Help them identify situations and activities when they feel more stressed. Also identify situations that help them to feel less stressed and more in control. Your observations of their behaviour can help them identify patterns that they hadn't noticed before.
- **Help them relax:** Relaxation techniques such as meditation or mindful breathing exercises can help us stay calm. When practised regularly they improve and strengthen our response to pressure. And regular practice is easier to stick to when you've got someone to practice with. Help your loved one take back control by encouraging them to take mindful pauses whenever they start to feel overwhelmed.
- **Support them to seek professional help:** Talk to your loved one about discussing things with a professional if they are finding it difficult to manage their emotions.

708577/2020/SS Division

F. No 10-12 /2020-Sch.4
Government of India
Ministry of Human Resource Development
(Department of School Education & Literacy)

Shastri Bhawan, New Delhi
Dated the 09th April, 2020

ORDER

Subject: Setting up of working group to monitor and promote the mental health issues and concerns of students and to facilitate providing of support to address the mental health and psychosocial aspects during and after COVID-19.

A Working Group is constituted with the following composition to monitor and promote the mental health issues and concerns of students and to facilitate providing of support to address the mental health and psychosocial aspects during and after COVID-19 :

1. Ms. L.S. Changsan, Joint Secretary (Institutions), MHRD-Coordinator.
2. Dr. Shayama Chona (Padma Bhushan & Padmashree), Founder President of Tamana Association.
3. Dr. Jitendra Nagpal, Mental Health Expert, Senior Psychiatrist, New Delhi.
4. Dr. M.P. Poonia, Vice Chairman, AICTE, New Delhi.
5. Prof. Rajesh Khanna, Dean Student Affairs, IIT, Delhi.
6. Prof. Anjum Sibia, Head (DER), NCERT.
7. Ms. Rama Sharma, Head of Media Unit, CBSE.
8. Dr. Kashyapi Awasthi, Assistant Professor, NIEPA.
9. Mrs. Sudha Acharya, Senior Educationist.
10. Ms. Aprajita Dixit, Child and Adolescent Psychologist, New Delhi.
11. Mrs. Vasanti Tyagrajan, Senior Educationist.
12. Dr. Mala Kapur Shankardass, Sociologist, Delhi University, New Delhi.
13. Dr. Ritu Sharma, Asst. Professor Psychology, Central University of Haryana.
14. Mrs. Rekha Chauhan, Counseling Psychologist, School and University Counseling services.
15. Ms. Cynthia Douglas, Asst. Professor, Department of Psychology, Osmania University.
16. Mrs. Ankita S. Agarwal, School Mental Health & University Counselor.

2. The terms of reference of this Working Group are as under :

- (i) To suggest ways and means to monitor and promote the mental health issues and concerns of students and to facilitate providing of support to address the mental health and psychosocial aspects during and after COVID-19.
- (ii) To prepare guidelines and suggestions for students, teachers and parents for handling stress and anxiety. Guidelines for students should be specific such as students preparing for Boards, final year exams, interviews, undergoing coaching or away from home in hostels and students with special needs, etc.

Contd.....

- (iii) To provide counseling assistance to students through mobile, phone, email, and Social Media, etc., and identify resource pool of Counselors country-wide.
- (iv) Prepare small videos and fliers containing tips from educationists and mental health professionals and upload the same on official websites of the Ministry of HRD and all its autonomous bodies/institutions.
- (v) To set up a 24x7 helpline to be manned by the resource pool of counselors.

3. The National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) will arrange/ manage the venue of meetings of the Working Group and provide secretarial assistance to the Working Group. Payment for sitting fees/TA, as would be due to the Working Group members, will be made by NCERT. All the expenses in connection with the sitting and other activities of the Working Group shall be borne by NCERT.


(T.S. Rautela)

Deputy Secretary to the Government of India
Tel. 2338 3193

To,

1. Ms. L.S. Changsan, Joint Secretary (Institutions), MHRD - Coordinator.
2. Dr. Shayama Chona (Padma Bhushan & Padmashree), Founder President of Tamana Association.
3. Dr. Jitendra Nagpal, Mental Health Expert, Senior Psychiatrist, Programme Director, Expression India, New Delhi (inclusion.expressionsindia@gmail.com).
4. Dr. M.P. Poonia, Vice Chairman, AICTE, New Delhi. (vcm@aicte-india.org).
5. Prof. Rajesh Khanna, Dean Student Affairs, IIT, Delhi. (deansa@admin.iitd.ac.in).
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15. Ms. Cynthia Douglas, Asst. Professor, Department of Psychology, Osmania University (cgd2711@gmail.com).
16. Mrs. Ankita S. Agarwal, School Mental Health & University Counselor. (anikitapsy09@gmail.com).
17. Director, NCERT - for information and appropriate action. (director.ncert@nic.in).
18. PPS to Secretary (HE/SE&L)-for information. (secy.dhe@nic.in).


(T.S. Rautela)

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