

Record of Discussion of Online Session of Capacity Building Programme for Promoting Positive Mental Health, Resilience, and Wellbeing, held on 21.08.2025 at 10:00 AM

1. The 29th online session under the Capacity Building Programme for Promoting Positive Mental Health, Resilience, and Wellbeing in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) was conducted on 21st August 2025 from 10:00 AM to 1:00 PM. The session was organised under the guidance of the Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Education for nominated faculty from centrally funded HEIs. A total of 73 participants joined the session, out of which 66 were nominated faculty. This marked the continuation of a sustained national effort to integrate mental wellbeing into the culture of Indian higher education institutions.

2. The session began with an opening address by Mr. Devendra Kumar Sharma, Director, Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Education. He highlighted the Ministry's long-term commitment to mental wellness in campuses of higher education. He explained that this capacity building initiative focuses on centrally funded institutions (CFIs) with the aim of fostering enabling environments for wellbeing within these institutions so that they can serve as leaders and role models for the broader higher education ecosystem. He welcomed the participants and emphasized that fostering a healthy, inclusive educational ecosystem requires both structural measures and empathetic engagement from faculty.

3. Mr. Sharma welcomed the resource persons for the session:

- ❖ Dr. Jitendra Nagpal, Senior Psychiatrist and Programme Director, Expressions India
- ❖ Ms. Geeta Mehrotra, Expressions India
- ❖ Prof. Santanu Misra, IIT Kanpur

4. Prof. Kumar Suresh from the National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration (NIEPA) was invited to give opening remarks. Prof. Suresh emphasized the critical importance of the programme and expressed gratitude to the Ministry of Education for its support. He highlighted the growing concern of mental health issues across educational settings, noting that even schools are increasingly witnessing serious and unwarranted incidents of violence and distress, citing the recent Ahmedabad case as an example. Such instances, he stressed, should not be viewed in isolation but understood within a broader, systemic context.

5. Prof. Suresh pointed out that higher education institutions also face these challenges, with faculty bearing significant responsibility for creating positive ecosystems that support mental health and wellbeing on campuses. He underlined that while extreme cases often make headlines, day-to-day struggles with mental health are equally pressing, affecting nearly 10 percent of the population. Referring to mental health as a "silent epidemic" he called on faculty and institutions to work collectively toward fostering supportive environments. While acknowledging that transformation cannot happen overnight, he expressed optimism that sustained efforts, coupled with the active engagement of the Ministry of Education and faculty from across diverse institutions, can generate a ripple effect with long-term and far-reaching impact on the higher education landscape.

6. The session was then handed over to Dr. Jitendra Nagpal who reflected on the transformative journey of the Capacity Building Programme over the past year, during which nearly 30 sessions have been conducted with faculty from across the country. He expressed gratitude to the participating

faculty for shaping the dialogue into meaningful action, noting that many professors have emerged as role models and mentors, taking leadership in promoting wellbeing within their campuses. He emphasized that India, while rooted in a culture of wellbeing, must continuously revise, unlearn, and relearn to strengthen this ethos. Importantly, he underlined the growing integration of social sciences and behavioural research even in technology institutes such as IITs and NITs, which now examine themes like emotional ergonomics, human emotions, and the happiness index, signifying a vital amalgamation of knowledge, skills, and culture.

7. Dr. Nagpal argued that beyond technological or financial leadership, institutions must now foster *humanistic and humanitarian leadership*. He stressed that wellbeing is not an add-on to curricula but intrinsic to daily existence, shaping how individuals think, feel, and grow. Citing recent tragic incidents of suicide and violence in educational institutions, he highlighted the urgency of addressing mental health not as a data-driven exercise—since ample evidence already exists—but as a call to action. With India’s demographic dividend of over 400 million youth, he posed a critical question: whether this population will become an asset or a liability depends on how institutions integrate wellbeing into education. Drawing examples such as the *Manosmita* inter-school quiz on mental health and a national conclave at IIT Hyderabad that positioned students as resource persons and faculty as learners, he called for a renewed philosophy where young people are partners in action. Dr. Nagpal invoked Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam’s vision of teacher leadership in social and emotional learning, asserting that such leadership is more vital than academic scores alone. He concluded by inviting participants to share their impressions, asking whether mental health should remain narrowly defined or instead be recognized as a critical and integral part of higher education in the post-COVID era.

8. In the discussion, Ajay G. Namdeo from Hemvati Nandan Bahuguna Garhwal University, highlighted efforts at his university to reduce student isolation by addressing “low dead zones” on campus. These are areas where students tend to remain alone. He explained that the institution is working to identify students who are isolated and provide them with opportunities for group assignments and collaborative activities, thereby encouraging teamwork and social growth rather than solitude.

9. Dr. Sumant Kumar Bishwas from IIM Lucknow, emphasized the need to introduce mental health sensitization from the very start of a student’s or employee’s/faculty’s journey through campus orientation programs. He pointed out that while current orientations focus heavily on academic rules and regulations, they often neglect mental wellbeing. He advocated for support systems at institutional, hostel, and peer levels, stressing the importance of normalizing the use of counselling services. According to him, reluctance to seek counselling arises from stigma, and this must be countered by framing counselling as expert guidance for dealing with stressors, whether academic, personal, or family-related. He also underlined that the nature of mental health challenges varies between undergraduates, postgraduates, and research scholars, and therefore interventions should be tailored accordingly.

10. Adding to these points, Gyanesh Kumar Tiwari from Dr. Harisingh Gour Central University, Sagar, called for a comprehensive, coordinated approach to mental health that integrates institutional efforts with national priorities. He stressed the importance of reviving and highlighting indigenous mental health practices, enabling students and faculty to incorporate them into daily life. He proposed that each HEI should develop professional teams capable of serving both the institution and the surrounding community, thereby extending impact beyond the campus. He also emphasized lifestyle

elements such as adequate sleep, healthy routines, family ties, community festivals, and local traditions, as protective buffers against poor mental health. Finally, he called for urgent action to dispel misconceptions about mental health and integrate such policies with existing centers for greater effectiveness.

11. Ms. Geeta Mehrotra facilitated an interactive session on life skills, values, and wellbeing in education. She encouraged faculty to draw from their own experiences as mentors, parents, and educators to reflect on how life skills such as decision-making, empathy, and problem-solving are modelled in both classrooms and homes.

12. Ms. Mehrotra urged participants to move beyond theoretical understanding and apply values-based life skills in their teaching and engagement with students. She engaged in an extended discussion on the importance of life skills and their applications in diverse situations. She outlined essential life skills such as emotional regulation, self-awareness, empathy, communication, problem-solving, and critical thinking, all of which are critical for promoting psychosocial competence.

13. Prof. Santanu Misra, IIT Kanpur, was invited as a resource person to share his insights on IIT Kanpur's Wellness and Counselling Centre as an exemplar. As the Head of the Institute Counselling Service for the past three years, he outlined both long-standing and recently introduced practices aimed at fostering a supportive environment for students.

14. Prof. Misra began by noting that IIT Kanpur has one of the oldest and most established counselling services among Indian HEIs. He described this as a dynamic, evolving system that has continuously adapted to the changing needs of students. He elaborated on the framework they use at IIT Kanpur, which begins each semester with him sending an email to all faculty outlining indicators of student distress and expected support responses. The institute operates a robust multi-layered support system that includes three full-time psychiatrists and nine clinical counsellors, all appointed as permanent officers. The counselling team works closely with faculty, who are trained to be the first line of observation and referral.

15. Prof. Misra stressed the importance of confidentiality, non-judgemental engagement, and cultural sensitivity in dealing with student concerns. He pointed out that faculty members are trained not to make inquiries into students' backgrounds – such as caste, religion, or financial status – when offering support. Instead, they are encouraged to focus on building trust and ensuring that students feel heard and supported.

16. The session was concluded by Dr. V. Sucharita from NIEPA, who gave a vote of thanks, acknowledging the valuable contributions of the resource persons and participants.

List of Attendees
Faculty Members

S. No.	Name of Institution	Faculty Nominated	Attendees	Absentees
1	Central University of Karnataka	1. Akhilesh Mishra 2. Astha 3. Basavaraj Kubakaddi 4. Basavaraj M S 5. Devarajappa S 6. Lakshmana G 7. M Prashanth 8. Niteen B 9. Pavitra Alur 10. Rameshbabu Tamarana 11. Vijyendra Pandey	1. Astha 2. Basavaraj Kubakaddi 3. Basavaraj M S 4. Devarajappa S 5. Lakshmana G 6. M Prashanth 7. Pavitra Alur 8. Rameshbabu Tamarana 9. Vijyendra Pandey	1. Akhilesh Mishra 2. Niteen B
2	Dr. Harisingh Gour Vishwavidyalaya	No Faculty Nominated	1. Gyanesh Kumar Tiwari	
3	Hemvati Nandan Bahuguna Garhwal University	1. Ajay Gajanan Namdeo 2. Anuja Rawat 3. Deepak Kumar 4. Jai Prakash Bhatt 5. Kavita Bhatt 6. Manju Pandey 7. Monika Gupta 8. Mukul Pant 9. Munesh Kumar 10. Rajendra Singh Negi 11. Surendra Singh Bisht	1. Ajay Gajanan Namdeo 2. Anuja Rawat 3. Kavita Bhatt 4. Manju Pandey 5. Munesh Kumar 6. Rajendra Singh Negi	1. Deepak Kumar 2. Jai Prakash Bhatt 3. Monika Gupta 4. Mukul Pant 5. Surendra Singh Bisht
4	IIIT Tiruchirappalli	1. J. Kokila 2. Banoth Ravi 3. D Suresh 4. M. Ambika 5. M. Harish Adhithya 6. S. Padmathilagam 7. T. Sugirtha	1. J. Kokila 2. D Suresh 3. S. Padmathilagam	1. Banoth Ravi 2. M. Ambika 3. M. Harish Adhithya 4. T. Sugirtha

5	IIIT Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh	1. Bindu Singh 2. Deepshikha Agarwal 3. Mary Samuel 4. Niraj Kumar Vishvakarma 5. Padma Tripathi 6. Rahul Kumar Verma 7. Saurabh Shukla 8. Shubhra Jain 9. Susheel Tiwari 10. Varun Sharma	1. Mary Samuel 2. Padma Tripathi	1. Bindu Singh 2. Deepshikha Agarwal 3. Niraj Kumar Vishvakarma 4. Rahul Kumar Verma 5. Saurabh Shukla 6. Shubhra Jain 7. Susheel Tiwari 8. Varun Sharma
6	National Institute of Technology, Rourkela	1. Amrita Singh 2. Arnab Sarkar 3. Eru Banoth 4. Neha Soman 5. Pawan Kumar 6. Shashi Kumar 7. Shyamal Guchhait 8. Siturani Patre 9. Sunil Khuntia 10. Susanta Kumar Bisoi 11. Tushar Gupta	1. Amrita Singh 2. Neha Soman 3. Pawan Kumar 4. Shashi Kumar 5. Shyamal Guchhait 6. Siturani Patre 7. Sunil Khuntia 8. Susanta Kumar Bisoi 9. Tushar Gupta 10. R. K. Biswal	1. Arnab Sarkar 2. Eru Banoth
7	National Institute of Technology, Silchar	1. Asha Rani M. A 2. Atanu Sahu 3. Avadh Pati 4. Chandrajit Choudhury 5. Dibya Nanda Mishra 6. Dinamani Biswal 7. Prosun Mondal 8. Rupak Dutta 9. Shanti Gopal Patra 10. Shivendra Kumar Pandey 11. Susmita Rabha	1. Rupak Dutta 2. Shanti Gopal Patra 3. Susmita Rabha	1. Asha Rani M. A 2. Atanu Sahu 3. Avadh Pati 4. Chandrajit Choudhury 5. Dibya Nanda Mishra 6. Dinamani Biswal 7. Prosun Mondal 8. Shivendra Kumar Pandey
8	IIT Hyderabad	1. Ambika S 2. Harikrishnan Unni 3. Meenakshi	1. Mohammad Shahid 2. Neeraj Kumar	1. Ambika S 2. Harikrishnan Unni 3. Meenakshi

		4. Mohammad Shahid 5. Neeraj Kumar 6. Phanindra Jarmpana 7. Rajesh Ittamalla 8. Safvan Palathingal 9. Saurabh Sandilya 10. Shirshendu Das 11. Suresh Perumal 12. Maria Morris	3. Rajesh Ittamalla 4. Saurabh Sandilya 5. Shirshendu Das 6. Suresh Perumal 7. Maria Morris	4. Phanindra Jarmpana 5. Safvan Palathingal
9	IIT Jodhpur	1. Amrita Puri 2. Anand Mishra 3. Appala Naidu Gandhi 4. Ganesh Manjhi 5. Milan Hazra 6. Monika Dubey 7. Prasenjit Tribhuban 8. Priyanka Singh 9. Sumit Kamal 10. Sunita	1. Amrita Puri 2. Anand Mishra 3. Appala Naidu Gandhi 4. Monika Dubey 5. Priyanka Singh 6. Sunita	1. Ganesh Manjhi 2. Milan Hazra 3. Prasenjit Tribhuban 4. Sumit Kamal
10	IIM Lucknow	1. Diksha Mittal 2. Gaurav G.B. 3. Jalaj Pathak 4. Medha Bakhshi 5. Nabila Khan 6. Priyanshu Gupta 7. Sampa Anupurba Pahi 8. Shivashish Tripathi 9. Sumant Kumar Bishwas 10. Utsav Pandey 11. Veethica Smriti	1. Diksha Mittal 2. Gaurav G.B. 3. Nabila Khan 4. Priyanshu Gupta 5. Sampa Anupurba Pahi 6. Shivashish Tripathi 7. Sumant Kumar Bishwas 8. Veethica Smriti	1. Jalaj Pathak 2. Medha Bakhshi 3. Utsav Pandey
11	IIM Kozhikode	1. Anisa Bhutia 2. Irfanulla Farooqi 3. Kalpit Sharma 4. Qambar Abidi 5. Shikha Bhattamishra	1. Anisa Bhutia 2. Irfanulla Farooqi 3. Kalpit Sharma 4. Shikha Bhattamishra 5. Shruti R	1. Qambar Abidi 2. Varun Yadav

		6. Shruti R 7. Silpa Satheesh 8. Sudhanshu Maheshwari 9. Suraj Gogogi 10. Varun Yadav 11. Vijay Kuriakose	6. Silpa Satheesh 7. Sudhanshu Maheshwari 8. Suraj Gogogi 9. Vijay Kuriakose	
12	Unidentified		1. Sandesh J R 2. Abhishek Kumar Jain	

Additional Attendees

Affiliation Details	Name of the Attendees
Ministry Officials, Resource Persons, Officials from NIEPA	1. Mr. D. K. Sharma, Ministry of Education 2. Prof. Kumar Suresh, NIEPA 3. Dr. V. Sucharita, NIEPA 4. Dr. Jitendra Nagpal, Senior Psychiatrist & Program Director, Expressions India 5. Ms Geeta Mehrotra, Faculty, University and School Life Skills, Mental Health and Wellbeing, Expressions India 6. Prof. Santanu Misra, IIT Kanpur 7. Ms. Richa Shrivastava, Consultant, MMTTP, Ministry of Education