

Record of Discussion of Online Session of Capacity Building Programme for Promoting Positive Mental Health, Resilience, and Wellbeing, held on 28.08.2025 at 10:00 AM

1. The 30th online session under the Capacity Building Programme for Promoting Positive Mental Health, Resilience, and Wellbeing in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) was conducted on 28th 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.

2. This initiative is part of a broader integrated approach aimed at enhancing mental health, resilience, and wellbeing in HEIs. The capacity building programme is designed to continuously raise awareness among faculty regarding mental health issues and wellbeing. It encourages the adoption and dissemination of effective practices that foster positive mental health and wellbeing for students on campus.

3. The modality of the online capacity building programme includes 2 sessions per month with 10 participants for each session from identified CFIs starting from the month of May 2024. For the month of August, 2 sessions were organised, of which the second one was held on 28.08.25. A total of 69 participants joined the session, out of which 62 were nominated faculty.

4. The session commenced with an opening address by Mr. Devendra Kumar Sharma, Director, Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Education. He outlined the background and rationale for initiating the programme, emphasising its alignment with the vision of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, which recognises student support as a cornerstone of quality higher education. He underlined that such support extends beyond physical infrastructure and must include an enabling environment that nurtures students' intellectual, cognitive, and emotional growth. Institutions, he stressed, must provide comprehensive counselling services, academic, psychological, and wellbeing related, so that students can reach their full potential.

5. Mr. Sharma further contextualised the programme by referring to recent Supreme Court interventions. He noted the constitution of a National Task Force for Suicide Prevention, which is conducting surveys and consultations to understand the root causes of student suicides. He also drew attention to the Court's recent guidelines in a July 2025 judgement, which mandate that all educational institutions, including schools, universities, and coaching centres must comply with 15 directives to promote mental wellbeing and prevent student suicides. Mr. Sharma stressed that education institutions, being part of society, bear the responsibility of fostering dialogue, building knowledge, and disseminating positive practices that can strengthen mental health ecosystems both on campuses and beyond.

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

- ❖ Dr. Jitendra Nagpal, Senior Psychiatrist and Programme Director, Expressions India
- ❖ Ms. Geeta Mehrotra, Expressions India
- ❖ Dr. Ritika Mahajan, MNIT Jaipur

7. In his opening remarks, Prof. Kumar Suresh, National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration (NIEPA) extended a warm welcome to all participants, resource persons, and faculty members joining from institutions across the country. He particularly acknowledged the sustained contributions of the resource persons, Dr. Nagpal and Ms. Mehrotra, who have played a central role in

conducting engaging sessions over the past year. He highlighted NIEPA's role as the nodal institution for coordinating the capacity building programme, noting that the initiative was both timely and essential.

8. Prof. Suresh emphasised that while India takes pride in its demographic dividend, its true potential cannot be realised unless the mental wellbeing of students is safeguarded through robust institutional mechanisms. He stressed that higher education institutions must go beyond classroom teaching to engage students meaningfully in all aspects of campus life, both academic and non-academic. Mental health, Prof. Suresh argued, is not only a matter of pedagogy but also of creating holistic environments where students feel supported. Importantly, he stressed that students must not be treated merely as beneficiaries but as active stakeholders in shaping institutional practices and decisions related to wellbeing.

9. Dr. Jitendra Nagpal built upon Prof. Kumar Suresh's introduction by situating the discussion within the broader complexities of contemporary life, where education must be seen not just as an academic pursuit but as part of a larger, inclusive approach to human wellbeing. He emphasised that the current times demand a bioscopic as well as a mesoscopic view of life on campus i.e. going beyond academic goals to focus equally on emotional safety, inclusivity, and holistic growth.

10. Dr. Nagpal highlighted that many young people experience a 'lurking emptiness' when transitioning from school to college, losing the sense of fullness that structured learning once provided. This gap, he argued, reflects the need to redefine education as a process of holistic human development. Faculty, he stressed, are not only pedagogical leaders but also the pillars of excellence in shaping the human mind, and they must ensure that institutions are safe not only structurally but also emotionally. He questioned whether institutions are adequately recognising early warning signs of stress among students, urging a proactive and preventive approach to mental health. Dr. Nagpal called on participating faculty to share their views.

11. Prof. Devansh Pandey from IIM Shillong shared a personal anecdote about encountering multiple cases of student suicides during his academic journey. He noted that despite counselling support, suicides persisted, often linked to students with a history of depression. This led him to raise an important question: can institutions identify high-risk students and provide them with targeted support while maintaining confidentiality?

12. Dr. Prasanna Bhat from IIT Palakkad emphasised the need to balance academic excellence with compassion and inclusivity on campus. While premier institutes push students toward high achievement, he noted that those who struggle or fall short should still receive dignity, respect, and affection to reduce stress and foster confidence. He argued that students must not feel their lives are wasted if they do not become top performers, as setbacks are natural.

13. The session was carried forward by Ms. Geeta Mehrotra who engaged participants in a series of creative and interactive exercises. The activities were designed to foster deeper connections between faculty and students and to highlight the importance of creativity, humour, and interpersonal skills in promoting mental health. She explained that such activities encourage creative thinking and self-expression helping participants explore their emotions and ideas in a non-threatening way. These activities can be adapted for use with students, promoting emotional literacy and social cohesion in the classroom.

14. Ms. Mehrotra explained that life-skills help individuals cope with life's challenges and adapt positively to various situations. In the context of teaching, she proposed that educators should integrate life-skills into their teaching practices to help students not only excel academically but also thrive emotionally and socially.

15. Dr. Ritika Mahajan from MNIT Jaipur outlined the institute's journey in building a structured student wellness ecosystem under the Dean of student Welfare. Since 2023, the institute has created a formal position of coordinator, Wellness and established a Wellness Club, run largely by students across UG, PG, and PhD programmes. This club has become central to promoting awareness, organising activities, and advocating for inclusive policies that support mental health on campus. Over the past two and a half years, initiatives have been organised around five broad themes: onboarding and support, community engagement, awareness and education, data collection, and policy advocacy. Key activities include wellness camps during orientation, where incoming students participate in sessions on social, mental, digital, and physical wellbeing. These camps also feature psychometric assessments and screenings, the results of which help identify students needing early support and connect them with the institute's newly appointed full-time counsellors.

16. Beyond orientation, the Wellness Club conducts regular workshops with psychologists, dieticians, and external organisations, while also experimenting with more informal formats such as nature walks and fun group activities to encourage participation. Health camps, digital wellbeing assessments, and policy advocacy with decision-makers are other major components. Dr. Mahajan emphasised the challenges faced, including stigma around seeking help, high costs of therapy, occasional misuse of services, and difficulty in vetting credible partners among many religious and private organisations seeking to collaborate.

17. Dr. Mahajan's reflections underlined three important learnings: the need for confidentiality and trust, early identification and handholding of vulnerable students, and engaging every stakeholder, including faculty and staff, in awareness and sensitisation efforts. She concluded by noting that the greatest strength of MNIT's wellness programme lies in its student-led model, which has shown immense potential to build a culture of care and inclusivity on campus, while future initiatives will expand assessments, capture lived experiences through the "Voices of MNIT" project, and integrate sensitisation more seamlessly into classroom life.

List of Attendees
Faculty Members

S. No.	Name of Institution	Faculty Nominated	Attendees	Absentees
1	Central University of Punjab	1. Alpna Saini 2. Anugraha Merin Rajan 3. Deepak Chauhan 4. Jasvinder Singh Bhatti 5. Manju Jain 6. Meenakshi 7. Ramakrishna Wusirika 8. Sajad Ahmad Najar 9. Shubhdip Kaur 10. V K Garg 11. Zameerpall Kaur Sandhu Bajwa	1. Anugraha Merin Rajan 2. Jasvinder Singh Bhatti 3. Manju Jain 4. Ramakrishna Wusirika 5. Sajad Ahmad Najar 6. Shubhdip Kaur	1. Alpna Saini 2. Deepak Chauhan 3. Meenakshi 4. V K Garg 5. Zameerpall Kaur Sandhu Bajwa
2	Jamia Milia Islamia	1. Akanksha Juneja 2. Alisha Khatun 3. Ambareen Jamali 4. Anwara Hashmi 5. Khursheed Afaq 6. M. Faijullah Khan 7. Meena Osmany 8. Saifur Rehman Farooqi 9. Shazia Haider 10. Sheema Aleem 11. Vasim Akram	1. Akanksha Juneja 2. Alisha Khatun 3. Ambareen Jamali 4. Khursheed Afaq 5. M. Faijullah Khan 6. Meena Osmany 7. Saifur Rehman Farooqi 8. Shazia Haider 9. Sheema Aleem 10. Vasim Akram	1. Anwara Hashmi
3	IIIT Kalyani	No Faculty Nominated	1. Dalia Nandi 2. Oishila Bandyopadhyay 3. Rinky Sha 4. Kaoushik K Mukherjee 5. S. K. Hafizul Islam	

			6. Imon Mukherjee	
4	IIIT Pune	1. Anagha Uday Khiste 2. Chandrakant Narayan Guled 3. Dipen Bepari 4. KM Divya Chaturvedi 5. Mahesh Joshi 6. Priyank Jain 7. Sanga Chaki 8. Shrikant Salve 9. Shubham Shukla 10. Sonam Maurya 11. Vagisha Mishra	1. Sanga Chaki 2. Vagisha Mishra	1. Anagha Uday Khiste 2. Chandrakant Narayan Guled 3. Dipen Bepari 4. KM Divya Chaturvedi 5. Mahesh Joshi 6. Priyank Jain 7. Shrikant Salve 8. Shubham Shukla 9. Sonam Maurya
5	National Institute of Technology, Srinagar	1. Amandeep Singh Rehal 2. Ashok Kumar 3. Fatima Jalid 4. Janibul Bashir 5. Maktedar Shrikant Shivaji 6. Mukund Dutt Sharma 7. Nitika Kundan 8. Pankaj Kumar 9. Prabal Verma 10. Pramod Kumar Yadav 11. Srinibash Mishra	1. Amandeep Singh Rehal 2. Fatima Jalid 3. Janibul Bashir 4. Maktedar Shrikant Shivaji 5. Mukund Dutt Sharma 6. Nitika Kundan 7. Pankaj Kumar 8. Prabal Verma 9. Pramod Kumar Yadav 10. Srinibash Mishra 11. Shrikant S Maktedar	1. Ashok Kumar
6	Sardar Vallabhbhai National Institute of Technology, Surat	1. Abhilasha Chaudhuri 2. Chandanben Pankajkumar Gor 3. Gohel Jignasa Narsinhbhai 4. Golak Santra 5. Naresh Yarramsetty	1. Gohel Jignasa Narsinhbhai 2. K. V. Praveen Kumar	1. Abhilasha Chaudhuri 2. Chandanben Pankajkumar Gor 3. Golak Santra 4. Naresh Yarramsetty 5. Patel Chetankumar Ramanlal 6. Rahul Dixit

		6. Patel Chetankumar Ramanlal 7. Rahul Dixit 8. Rajesh Choudhary 9. Ritambhara Jangir 10. Shweta Shah 11. Sudeep Singh Sanga		7. Rajesh Choudhary 8. Ritambhara Jangir 9. Shweta Shah 10. Sudeep Singh Sanga
7	IIT Patna	1. Abhinoy Kumar Singh 2. Daya Sagar Gupta 3. Lalita Kanwar Shekhawat 4. Mahendra Ram 5. Manish Singh 6. Nitin Kumar 7. Nitish Raja 8. Rahul Mishra 9. Sonal Shrivastava 10. Sushmita P 11. A. K. Thakur 12. Saloni	1. Abhinoy Kumar Singh 2. Daya Sagar Gupta 3. Lalita Kanwar Shekhawat 4. Mahendra Ram 5. Manish Singh 6. Nitin Kumar 7. Rahul Mishra 8. Sonal Shrivastava 9. A. K. Thakur 10. Saloni	1. Nitish Raja 2. Sushmita P
8	IIT Palakkad	1. Ajeesh M. Omanakuttan 2. Anoop George 3. Avirup Mandal 4. Birenjith Sasidharan 5. C. R. Jayanarayanan 6. Debarati Chatterjee 7. Kali Prasad 8. Prasanna Bhat 9. Sarmistha Singh 10. Swapnil Hingmire 11. Tessy Grace Mathews	1. Ajeesh M. Omanakuttan 2. Avirup Mandal 3. C. R. Jayanarayanan 4. Kali Prasad 5. Prasanna Bhat 6. Sarmistha Singh 7. Swapnil Hingmire	1. Anoop George 2. Birenjith Sasidharan 3. Debarati Chatterjee 4. Tessy Grace Mathews
9	IIM Shillong	1. Achinta Kumar Sarmah 2. Atul Mehta	1. Atul Mehta 2. Devansh Pandey	1. Achinta Kumar Sarmah

		3. Devansh Pandey 4. Neelam Rani 5. Parijat Upadhyay 6. Prasanta Kumar Chopdar 7. Rohit Joshi 8. Sanjita Jaipuria 9. Sheetal 10. Vinay Yadav 11. Vishakha Bansal	3. Neelam Rani 4. Parijat Upadhyay 5. Sanjita Jaipuria 6. Sheetal 7. Vinay Yadav 8. Vishakha Bansal	2. Prasanta Kumar Chopdar 3. Rohit Joshi
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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. Jitendra Nagpal, Senior Psychiatrist & Program Director, Expressions India 4. Ms Geeta Mehrotra, Faculty, University and School Life Skills, Mental Health and Wellbeing, Expressions India 5. Dr. Ritika Mahajan, Malaviya National Institute of Technology, Jaipur 6. Dr. Kashyapi Pramod Kumar Awasthi, NIEPA 7. Ms. Richa Shrivastava, Consultant, MMTTP, Ministry of Education