

Record of Discussion of Online Session of Capacity Building Programme for Promoting Positive Mental Health, Resilience, and Wellbeing, held on 31.10.2025 at 10:00 AM

An online session under the Capacity Building Programme for Promoting Positive Mental Health, Resilience and Wellbeing was conducted on 31.10.2025 as part of the Ministry of Education's sustained initiative to integrate mental health, resilience, and wellbeing into the higher education ecosystem. The programme has been conceptualised in alignment with the spirit of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, which emphasises inclusive, holistic, and student-centred education.

In his opening remarks, Prof. Kumar Suresh (NIEPA) highlighted that mental health has emerged as a significant challenge in higher education and must be treated not as an isolated concern but as a systemic one, embedded within institutional culture, policies, and everyday academic practices. He underscored that if mental health is not addressed effectively, India's much-celebrated demographic dividend can easily turn into a demographic burden, given the increasing prevalence of stress, anxiety, and psychological distress among young people

He further emphasised that the Ministry of Education has taken an exceptional and proactive step by steering this programme, with NIEPA facilitating and Expressions India providing technical and academic support, making it one of the Ministry's signature initiatives in the area of student wellbeing

The session saw participation from approximately 80 participants, of which 73 were nominated faculty members from 9 centrally funded higher education institutions across the country.

In his inaugural remarks, Prof. Kumar Suresh welcomed the participants and placed the session within the broader national policy and institutional framework. He noted that mental health is no longer a marginal issue but a "silent epidemic" affecting students and faculty alike, and addressing it requires coordinated institutional effort rather than isolated interventions. The program, he stated, is a response to gaps in awareness, institutional preparedness, and structured support mechanisms across campuses

He also highlighted the evolving role of faculty in creating a positive psychosocial climate on campus, noting that teachers are among the most important touchpoints in a student's journey and can contribute significantly to building a supportive ecosystem if they are sensitised and equipped appropriately. Prof. Suresh introduced the resource persons for the session:

- ❖ Dr. Jitendra Nagpal, Senior Psychiatrist and Programme Director, Expressions India
- ❖ Ms. Geeta Mehrotra, Expressions India
- ❖ Dr. Aprajita Khanna, Moolchand Medicity & Expressions India

Dr. Jitendra Nagpal, Senior Psychiatrist and Programme Director, Expressions India, elaborated on the conceptual foundations of the programme. He stressed that positive mental health should not be seen merely as the absence of mental illness, but as the capacity of individuals to contribute meaningfully to themselves, their community, and their environment. Quoting the updated WHO definition of mental health (2022), he reiterated that mental health involves the ability to cope with life stresses, realise one's abilities, learn and work effectively, and contribute to society

He also spoke about the growing socio-economic disparities, hyper-competitiveness, and career anxieties among youth, drawing attention to how these factors exacerbate mental health issues

globally. He pointed out that increasing inequality and pressure for achievement are contributing to psychological distress and maladaptive behaviours among students, and higher education institutions must counter this by fostering purpose, belongingness, and humanistic values in campus life

Dr. Nagpal emphasised the role of humanistic leadership in higher education, arguing that beyond administrative and pedagogical leadership, institutions must develop leaders who understand students as whole human beings, as thinking, feeling, social, and cultural individuals rather than only as academic performers

Ms. Geeta Mehrotra conducted an interactive and activity-based session aimed at familiarising faculty members with tools and techniques for fostering emotional safety and engagement in classrooms. She highlighted that communication is not merely verbal but involves active listening, empathy, and sensitivity to non-verbal cues.

She emphasised that a healthy classroom environment should be one where students feel heard, seen, and valued, and where open-ended questions, reflective dialogue, and participatory activities are encouraged. Such environments, she noted, help reduce anxiety, improve student–teacher relationships, and create a sense of belonging among learners.

Ms. Mehrotra also underlined the importance of creativity and experiential activities (such as movement exercises, group reflection, and storytelling) to enhance classroom connectedness and mental wellbeing. She encouraged faculty to adapt these methods in their own institutional contexts, depending on their discipline and student needs, to make learning spaces more inclusive and emotionally supportive

Dr. Aprajita Khanna focused on identifying and responding to psychosocial distress among students. She introduced the concept of “cardinal flag signs”— observable changes in mood, behaviour, social withdrawal, or academic functioning that may indicate underlying mental health concerns. She emphasised that faculty members, due to their regular interaction with students, are often in a position to notice these early warning signs and facilitate timely support.

She also stressed that the aim is not to label students with clinical diagnoses, but to build a supportive psychosocial climate where students feel safe to communicate their struggles. She encouraged faculty to adopt a holistic lens while engaging with students, going beyond academics and understanding them as individuals with emotional, social, and personal dimensions to their lives

In her concluding remarks, Dr. Khanna emphasised that when students feel acknowledged and valued by their teachers, it contributes significantly to their confidence, self-awareness, and psychological resilience. She noted that such interactions can help students recognise their strengths and navigate challenges more effectively in both academic and personal domains

The faculty interventions and subsequent discussion converged on a shared recognition that student mental health must be treated as a core institutional responsibility rather than a peripheral support function. Participants highlighted the urgency of strengthening campus counselling systems, with several institutions sharing ongoing efforts to establish or expand dedicated counselling centres and student support committees. Faculty members expressed concern about the increasing emotional distance between teachers and students in large and highly competitive academic environments, noting that this disconnect weakens students’ sense of belonging and makes it more difficult for them

to seek help when required. Discussions also reflected on the heightened stress levels among students during examinations, internships and placement seasons, often accompanied by unhealthy coping behaviours such as sleep deprivation, digital overuse and social withdrawal.

Participant faculty further reflected on how parental expectations and societal pressure continue to shape students' academic choices, sometimes forcing them into disciplines they have little intrinsic interest in, thereby leading to disengagement, self-doubt and emotional distress. Language barriers and hierarchical academic cultures were also identified as structural factors that deepen inequalities and affect students' confidence and participation in institutional life. In this context, the group strongly emphasised that mental health must be approached from a holistic lens, recognising students not merely as academic performers but as emotional, social and psychological beings navigating multiple pressures.

The discussions reinforced that fostering positive mental health on campus requires integrating life skills such as critical thinking, emotional intelligence, communication and collaboration into regular teaching-learning processes, rather than limiting them to isolated workshops. Faculty members acknowledged their pivotal role in creating emotionally safe classrooms where students feel heard, respected and supported, while also emphasising the need for continuous capacity building to help teachers recognise early warning signs of psychological distress and respond appropriately. The session concluded on the note that sustainable institutional change will require not only policy frameworks and infrastructure for counselling, but also a cultural shift towards empathy, openness and shared responsibility for student wellbeing across all stakeholders in higher education.

**List of Attendees
Faculty Members**

S. No.	Name of Institution	Faculty Nominated	Attendees	Absentees
1	Mahatma Gandhi Central University	1. Abhay Vikram Singh 2. Ambikesh Tripathi 3. Amit Ranjan 4. Arttatan Pal 5. Asha Meena 6. Babloo Pal 7. Bidhu Bhushan Mishra 8. Buddhi Jain 9. Garima Tiwari 10. Shyam Kumar Jha	1. Asha Meena 2. Bidhu Bhushan Mishra 3. Buddhi Jain 4. Garima Tiwari	1. Abhay Vikram Singh 2. Ambikesh Tripathi 3. Amit Ranjan 4. Arttatan Pal 5. Babloo Pal 6. Shyam Kumar Jha
2	National Sanskrit University	1. A. Charukesh 2. Adarsh M. A. 3. D. Jyothi 4. D. Nallanna 5. G. Nagalakshmi 6. J. B. Chakravathi 7. K. Leenachandra 8. Krishnakumar Bhargav 9. M. G. Nandana Rao 10. O. G. P. Kalyana Sastry 11. T. Latha Mangesh	1. A. Charukesh 2. Adarsh M. A. 3. J. B. Chakravathi 4. O. G. P. Kalyana Sastry	1. D. Jyothi 2. D. Nallanna 3. G. Nagalakshmi 4. K. Leenachandra 5. Krishnakumar Bhargav 6. M. G. Nandana Rao 7. T. Latha Mangesh
3	Pondicherry University	1. A. Chidambaram 2. B. Rajeswari 3. C. Satheesh Kumar 4. D. Purushothaman 5. G. Subhalakshmi 6. Gurminder Kaur 7. Pothula Sujatha 8. S. Geetha 9. Toka Swu 10. Valerie Dkhar 11. Vijaykumar. R	1. A. Chidambaram 2. B. Rajeswari 3. C. Satheesh Kumar 4. D. Purushothaman 5. G. Subhalakshmi 6. Gurminder Kaur 7. Pothula Sujatha 8. S. Geetha 9. Toka Swu 10. Valerie Dkhar 11. Vijaykumar. R	1. A. Chidambaram 2. B. Rajeswari 3. C. Satheesh Kumar 4. D. Purushothaman 5. G. Subhalakshmi 6. Gurminder Kaur 7. Pothula Sujatha 8. S. Geetha 9. Toka Swu 10. Valerie Dkhar

				11. Vijaykumar. R
4	Sikkim University	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Anand Pariyar 2. Chukey Bhutia 3. Maheema Rai 4. Manju Rana 5. Mugip Hang Limboo 6. Namita Behera 7. Pravinder Kaur 8. Rakesh Basnett 9. Rinchen Ongmoo Lepcha 10. Satyananda Panda 11. Sumnima Rai 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Chukey Bhutia 2. Maheema Rai 3. Manju Rana 4. Mugip Hang Limboo 5. Namita Behera 6. Pravinder Kaur 7. Rakesh Basnett 8. Satyananda Panda 9. Sumnima Rai 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Anand Pariyar 2. Rinchen Ongmoo Lepcha
5	IIIT Bhagalpur, Bihar	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Abhinav Gautam 2. Dilip Kumar Choubey 3. Gaurav Kumar 4. Himadri Nayak 5. Pradeep Kumar Biswal 6. Prakash Ranjan 7. Sandeep Raj 8. Sanjay Kumar 9. Sunil Kumar 10. Suraj Kumar 11. Tameshwer Nath 12. Dheeraj Sinha 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Abhinav Gautam 2. Gaurav Kumar 3. Himadri Nayak 4. Sandeep Raj 5. Suraj Kumar 6. Tameshwer Nath 7. Dheeraj Sinha 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Dilip Kumar Choubey 2. Pradeep Kumar Biswal 3. Prakash Ranjan 4. Sanjay Kumar 5. Sunil Kumar
6	IIIT Agartala, Tripura	No Faculty Nominated		
7	National Institute of Technology, Delhi	No Faculty Nominated		
8	National Institute of Technology, Goa	No Faculty Nominated		
9	National Institute of Technology, Manipur	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Alok Kumar Baranwal 2. K. Somorjit 3. Kh. Sachidananda 4. Manash Kumar Mishra 5. Oinam Bidyapati Chanu 6. Ranajit Saha 7. Sanasam Bidyabasuni Devi 8. Sangeeta Laishram 9. Shagolsem Lenin 10. Shahnawaz Ahmed 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Alok Kumar Baranwal 2. K. Somorjit 3. Kh. Sachidananda 4. Manash Kumar Mishra 5. Oinam Bidyapati Chanu 6. Ranajit Saha 7. Sanasam Bidyabasuni Devi 8. Sangeeta Laishram 9. Shagolsem Lenin 10. Shahnawaz Ahmed 	None

		11. Shuma Adhikari	11. Shuma Adhikari	
10	IIM Visakhapatnam	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Asmita Verma 2. Damini Singh 3. Kaveri Krishnan 4. Milan Kumar 5. Monika 6. Neena Pandey 7. Pankaj Vishwakarma 8. Prashant Premkumar 9. Prince Doliya 10. Rahul R 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Asmita Verma 2. Damini Singh 3. Kaveri Krishnan 4. Milan Kumar 5. Monika 6. Neena Pandey 7. Pankaj Vishwakarma 8. Prashant Premkumar 9. Prince Doliya 10. Rahul R 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Milan Kumar
11	IIM Sambalpur	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Dhananjay Dewangan 2. Dharen Kumar Pandey 3. Janvi Rakesh Patel 4. Rahul Sindhwani 5. Ramakrushna Padhy 6. Rohit Gupta 7. Sanyka Banerjee 8. Soumya Guha Deb 9. Soumyakanta Mishra 10. Sourabh Kumar 11. Sujit Kumar Pruseth 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Dhananjay Dewangan 2. Dharen Kumar Pandey 3. Rahul Sindhwani 4. Rohit Gupta 5. Soumyakanta Mishra 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Janvi Rakesh Patel 2. Ramakrushna Padhy 3. Sanyka Banerjee 4. Soumya Guha Deb 5. Sourabh Kumar 6. Sujit Kumar Pruseth
12	IIM Mumbai	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ajaya Kumar Panda 2. Amit Kumar Das 3. Bhavya Kapoor 4. Disha Sharma 5. Mainak Mazumdar 6. Manupati Vijay 7. Priyanka Verma 8. Rakesh Verma 9. Rony Mitra 10. T. Prasad 11. Utpal Chattopadhyay 12. Nikhil Mehta 13. Manoj Kumar Tiwari 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ajaya Kumar Panda 2. Amit Kumar Das 3. Bhavya Kapoor 4. Mainak Mazumdar 5. Manupati Vijay 6. Priyanka Verma 7. Rakesh Verma 8. Rony Mitra 9. T. Prasad 10. Utpal Chattopadhyay 11. Nikhil Mehta 12. Manoj Kumar Tiwari 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Disha Sharma

Additional Attendees

Affiliation Details	Name of the Attendees
<p>Ministry Officials, Resource Persons, Officials from NIEPA</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Prof. Kumar Suresh, NIEPA 2. Dr. Jitendra Nagpal, Senior Psychiatrist & Program Director, Expressions India 3. Ms Geeta Mehrotra, Faculty, University and School Life Skills, Mental Health and Wellbeing, Expressions India 4. Dr. Aprajita Khanna, Moolchand Medicity & Expressions India 5. Dr. Garima Malik, NIEPA 6. Ms. Richa Shrivastava, Consultant, MMTTP, Ministry of Education 7. Ms. Akansha Yadav, Consultant, MMTTP, Ministry of Education