

## **Record of Discussion of Online Session of Capacity Building Programme for Promoting Positive Mental Health, Resilience, and Wellbeing, held on 28.05.2026 at 10:00 AM**

1. An online session under the Capacity Building Programme for Promoting Positive Mental Health, Resilience and Wellbeing was conducted on 28<sup>th</sup> May 2026 as part of the Ministry of Education's sustained efforts to integrate mental health, resilience, and wellbeing into the higher education ecosystem. The session was organised for nominated members from centrally funded Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). A total of 68 participants joined the session out of which 60 were faculty members.

2. In his opening remarks, Mr. D. K. Sharma, Director, Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Education, welcomed the participants and resource persons. He highlighted that the Capacity Building Programme has completed two years and that the present session marked the 44<sup>th</sup> in the series, with the programme having reached out to more than 3000 faculty from more than 160 centrally funded institutions of higher education. He noted that the initiative has provided an important platform for faculty members to engage in discussions on creating supportive and inclusive higher education environments that enable students to realise their full cognitive, intellectual, and personal potential.

3. Mr. Sharma observed that concerns relating to mental health and wellbeing are receiving increasing attention globally as well as nationally. Referring to provisions in the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, health policy discussions, and recent judicial pronouncements, including the constitution of a National Task Force by the Hon'ble Supreme Court to address student wellbeing concerns in higher education institutions, he emphasised the need for sustained dialogue and institutional action. He underlined the critical role of faculty members as knowledge creators and mentors who can contribute significantly to building supportive campus ecosystems. He also informed participants that the Ministry is exploring the organisation of regional in-person capacity building programmes and continuing its efforts through annual national wellbeing conferences and other initiatives. Finally, Mr. Sharma welcomed the resource persons for the session including:

- ❖ Dr. Jitendra Nagpal, Senior Psychiatrist and Programme Director, Expressions India
- ❖ Ms. Geeta Mehrotra, Expressions India
- ❖ Dr. Usha Kiruthika, NIT Tiruchirappalli
- ❖ Prof. Shailender Swaminathan, Sapien Labs, KREA University

4. Prof. Kumar Suresh, NIEPA, highlighted the significance of the programme and acknowledged the contributions of the resource persons involved. Drawing upon his interactions with several centrally funded institutions, he noted that the programme has enhanced awareness among faculty members and institutional stakeholders regarding the importance of student mental health and wellbeing. While recognising that no single intervention can address all dimensions of the challenge, he observed that the programme has successfully sensitised institutions to the need for creating supportive systems for students.

5. Prof. Suresh emphasised that strengthening student wellbeing requires both institutional support mechanisms and active faculty engagement. He remarked that faculty members should view wellbeing initiatives not as an additional responsibility but as an integral part of their commitment to students. Stressing the importance of ownership, he noted that while some factors affecting mental health may lie beyond institutional control, higher education institutions can play a significant role in fostering belongingness, inclusion, and emotional support for students.

6. Dr. Jitendra Nagpal highlighted the critical role of faculty members in shaping institutional cultures that promote positive mental health and wellbeing. Referring to the UGC Guidelines on Mental Health and Wellbeing and the forthcoming School Mental Health Policy, he stressed the importance of creating a developmental continuum from school to higher education, where students are supported not only academically but also emotionally and socially.

7. Dr. Nagpal emphasised that education must go beyond academic achievement and employability to include life skills, emotional intelligence, resilience, and psychosocial competencies, in line with the vision of NEP 2020. Drawing on Indian knowledge traditions and contemporary research, he noted that mental health should be understood as a state of wellbeing that enables individuals to realise their potential, cope with challenges, and contribute meaningfully to society.

8. During the interactive discussion, participants identified key challenges affecting student wellbeing, including excessive competition, over-reliance on digital technologies, reduced interpersonal communication, loneliness, and inadequate preparation for handling failure and setbacks. Faculty members stressed the need to introduce life skills education at the school level and reinforce it throughout higher education. The discussion also highlighted the importance of faculty wellbeing, interdepartmental collaboration, peer support, and early identification of students requiring assistance. Participants suggested integrating art, music, literature, and other creative activities into campus life to strengthen social connectedness and emotional wellbeing.

9. Concluding the session, Dr. Nagpal outlined a four-tier wellbeing framework comprising awareness and promotion, peer support and early identification, counselling and assistance, and specialised care. He encouraged institutions to strengthen wellbeing initiatives and share best practices through national platforms and Ministry-led programmes.

10. The session was then led by Ms. Geeta Mehrotra and was focused on the role of life skills in promoting resilience, wellbeing, and positive mental health among students. Through a series of interactive activities and discussions, participants explored how everyday experiences can be used to foster emotional wellbeing and strengthen teacher-student connections. The discussion began with reflections on the importance of boredom, daydreaming, and unstructured time in encouraging creativity, and self-awareness. Participants observed that constant digital engagement often leaves little space for reflection and imaginative thinking. Activities such as reading, doodling, and simple leisure pursuits were identified as valuable forms of self-care.

11. Ms. Mehrotra introduced the concept of life skills as abilities that enable individuals to deal effectively with demands and challenges of everyday life through adaptive and positive behaviour. Participants discussed the importance of resilience, adaptability, and maintaining a constructive outlook when facing challenges. The conversation highlighted that academic qualifications alone are insufficient for leading a healthy and fulfilling life, and that life skills are essential for managing emotions, relationships, and stress.

12. Through activities involving storytelling, rapid-fire questions, doodling, image interpretation, and humour, participants experienced how life skills can be developed through experiential learning. The discussions demonstrated that such activities encourage communication, empathy, creative thinking, self-expression, and emotional regulation while creating a positive and engaging learning environment. The session concluded with a discussion on the diverse socio-economic, linguistic, and cultural backgrounds of students in higher education institutions and the need for inclusive approaches to wellbeing.

13. Dr. Usha Kiruthika from the National Institute of Technology Tiruchirappalli, presented the institute's comprehensive approach to student mental wellbeing. The Counselling and Guidance Cell (CGC) functions under the Dean of Students' Welfare and comprises faculty coordinators, full-time male and female counsellors, student representatives, and a partnership with an external counselling platform that provides multilingual, round-the-clock support.

14. A key objective of the CGC is to reduce the stigma associated with seeking mental health support. To encourage accessibility, counselling services are located within the central library, allowing students to visit discreetly. Counsellors are also available in hostels and through 24x7 helplines. The institute places strong emphasis on early outreach through orientation programmes for new students and parents, recognising that first-year students often face challenges such as homesickness, academic pressure, and adjustment difficulties.

15. The institute adopts a proactive and preventive approach through regular classroom awareness sessions, expert talks by psychologists and psychiatrists, and training programmes for faculty, hostel wardens, security personnel, and other staff who interact closely with students. These stakeholders are trained to identify behavioural changes and early signs of distress, enabling timely intervention and referral.

16. The CGC also promotes wellbeing through campus-wide engagement activities. These include awareness campaigns on important mental health observances, sticky-note campaigns featuring messages of encouragement, cycle rallies, marathons for suicide prevention awareness, creative workshops such as origami and music therapy, and recreational initiatives like "Board and Bond," where students engage in board games and peer interaction to relieve stress and build social connections.

17. An important component of the institute's strategy is its faculty mentoring system, supported by an in-house digital platform that helps mentors monitor students' academic progress and wellbeing. Data from counselling services indicate that students most frequently seek support for self-improvement, relationship concerns, grief, family issues, and stress management. Dr. Kiruthika highlighted that counselling is often less about providing solutions and more about creating a safe, confidential space where students can express themselves and feel heard.

18. Looking ahead, the institute plans to strengthen its wellbeing ecosystem through AI-enabled early identification systems, dedicated restorative spaces such as wellbeing gardens, interactive wellbeing kiosks, and a credit-based course on mental wellbeing and peer support. These initiatives reflect a whole-campus approach that integrates awareness, prevention, support, and community engagement to foster student wellbeing.

19. Prof. Shailender Swaminathan presented an evidence-based approach to understanding and improving student mental wellbeing through systematic and longitudinal data collection and analysis. He emphasized that while higher education institutions are increasingly committed to addressing student mental health, there remains a need for standardized, scientifically validated methods to assess psychological distress and wellbeing across institutions. Drawing on insights from psychology, psychiatry, neuroscience, and related disciplines, he highlighted the importance of measuring not only symptoms but also the extent to which those symptoms affect an individual's ability to function.

20. Using national and international data, he demonstrated a striking generational shift in mental wellbeing. Whereas young adults in 2008 generally reported the highest levels of wellbeing, by 2021 the youngest age groups were experiencing the poorest mental health outcomes. Similar trends were observed globally as well as in India, underscoring that declining youth wellbeing is a widespread phenomenon requiring urgent attention.

21. Prof. Swaminathan also highlighted emerging factors associated with declining mental wellbeing, including reduced family connectedness, excessive smartphone use, consumption of ultra-processed foods, and environmental exposures such as plastics and pesticides. Prof. Swaminathan stressed that institutions should focus on identifying the specific factors most strongly affecting their students rather than dispersing efforts across numerous interventions. By generating timely, data-driven evidence on student wellbeing and the effectiveness of existing initiatives, institutions can make more informed decisions, strengthen support systems, and develop targeted policies to enhance student mental health outcomes.

22. Dr. Dharma Rakshit Gautam from NIEPA concluded the session by emphasizing the growing importance of mental health, resilience, and wellbeing initiatives in higher education. He noted that the discussions highlighted the need for advocacy, early identification, and effective support systems to create inclusive and sustainable educational environments. He expressed gratitude to the Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Education, and acknowledged the contributions of the resource persons for their valuable insights on life skills, counselling systems, evidence-based interventions, and student wellbeing. He also thanked institutional leaders, faculty participants, and technical teams for their support and active engagement.

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**List of Attendees  
Faculty Members**

<b>S. No</b>	<b>Name of Institution</b>	<b>Faculty Nominated</b>	<b>Attendees</b>	<b>Absentees</b>
1	Central University of Haryana	No faculty nominated		
2	Central University of Himachal Pradesh	1. Anil Kashyap 2. Arun Kumar 3. Jay Prakash Singh 4. Manish Kumar Gond 5. Meenakshi 6. Monika 7. Neeraj Gupta 8. Ritambhara Kumari Upadhyay 9. Sandeep Swargam 10. Vivek Kumar Sharma	1. Anil Kashyap 2. Jay Prakash Singh 3. Manish Kumar Gond 4. Meenakshi 5. Monika 6. Neeraj Gupta 7. Ritambhara Kumari Upadhyay 8. Vivek Kumar Sharma	1. Arun Kumar 2. Sandeep Swargam
3	Ghani Khan Choudhury Institute of Engineering and Technology (GKCIET), Malda	1. Abhijit Mondal 2. Ajit Kumar Singh Yadav 3. Manas Kumar Pal 4. Pramod Kr. Prabhakar 5. Rajeev Kumar 6. Sanat Kumar Singha 7. Sandip Chanda 8. Soumi Bhattacharyya 9. Sourav Chandra 10. Susanta Dutta 11. Vivek Kumar	1. Abhijit Mondal 2. Manas Kumar Pal 3. Pramod Kr. Prabhakar 4. Rajeev Kumar 5. Sanat Kumar Singha 6. Sandip Chanda 7. Soumi Bhattacharyya 8. Sourav Chandra 9. Susanta Dutta 10. Vivek Kumar 11. Koushik Paul	1. Ajit Kumar Singh Yadav
4	Indian Institute of Information Technology, Allahabad	1. Gaurav Srivastava 2. Himanshu Maurya 3. Jayasri Sen Gupta 4. Kesav Ram Kaza 5. Naveen Saini 6. Priyanka Kamboj	1. Naveen Saini 2. Priyanka Kamboj 3. Ramesh Kumar Bhukya 4. Sonali Agarwal	1. Gaurav Srivastava 2. Himanshu Maurya 3. Jayasri Sen Gupta 4. Kesav Ram Kaza 5. Shanti Bhushan 6. Shanti Chandra

		7. Ramesh Kumar Bhukya 8. Shanti Bhushan 9. Shanti Chandra 10. Sonali Agarwal		
5	Indian Institute of Information Technology, Sri City	No faculty nominated		
6	Indian Institute of Information Technology, Guwahati	No faculty nominated	1. Subhasish Dhal	1.
7	National Institute of Technology, Durgapur	1. Amit Kumar 2. Ashutosh Roushan 3. Asmita Bose 4. Dipto Deb 5. Imlimaong Aier 6. Pankajini Mahanta 7. Ranjeet Kumar 8. Ravita Saraswat 9. Richa Sharma 10. Sujit Karmakar 11. Surajit Biswas	1. Amit Kumar 2. Ashutosh Roushan 3. Asmita Bose 4. Dipto Deb 5. Imlimaong Aier 6. Ravita Saraswat 7. Sujit Karmakar 8. Surajit Biswas	1. Pankajini Mahanta 2. Ranjeet Kumar 3. Richa Sharma
8	National Institute of Technology, Calicut	1. Akansha Singh 2. Althaf S 3. Arjun Anil Kumar 4. Jagadeesha T 5. Manju Mahipalan 6. Muhammad Shafi K 7. Nithya M 8. S Saravana Kumar 9. Sreejith SS 10. Sreekanth VK 11. Sunitha	1. Nithya M 2. Sreekanth VK	1. Akansha Singh 2. Althaf S 3. Arjun Anil Kumar 4. Jagadeesha T 5. Manju Mahipalan 6. Muhammad Shafi K 7. S Saravana Kumar 8. Sreejith SS 9. Sunitha
9	Indian Institute of Technology, Kanpur	1. Abhilash Patel 2. Aditya Vikram 3. Amit Kuber 4. Ark Verma 5. Chaithra Puttaswamy 6. Dasari LVK Prasad 7. Niraj Mohan Chawake	1. Abhilash Patel 2. Aditya Vikram 3. Amit Kuber 4. Ark Verma 5. Chaithra Puttaswamy 6. Dasari LVK Prasad 7. Niraj Mohan Chawake 8. Rachana Agrawal	1. Sana Khanum

		8. Rachana Agrawal 9. Sana Khanum 10. Sudhanshu Shekhar Singh 11. Swathi Battula	9. Sudhanshu Shekhar Singh 10. Swathi Battula	
10	Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi	1. Jaya 2. Varsha Singh 3. Vinay Suhalka 4. Vivek G Nair	1. Jaya 2. Varsha Singh 3. Vinay Suhalka 4. Vivek G Nair	-
11	IIM Calcutta	No faculty nominated		
12	IISER Mohali	1. Anil Kumar Dasanna 2. Debdulal Saha 3. Kinjalk Lochan 4. Pankaj Kushwaha 5. Pritam Mondal 6. Priya Kumari C.P. 7. Raju Attada 8. Santhosh Kumar Pamula 9. Santosh B Satbhai 10. Sharmila Bhattacharya 11. Vidya Devi Negi	1. Debdulal Saha 2. Kinjalk Lochan 3. Pritam Mondal 4. Priya Kumari C.P. 5. Raju Attada 6. Vidya Devi Negi 7. Aruna Sharma	1. Anil Kumar Dasanna 2. Pankaj Kushwaha 3. Santhosh Kumar Pamula 4. Santosh B Satbhai 5. Sharmila Bhattacharya
13	National Institute of Advanced Manufacturing Technology (NIAMT), Ranchi (Carried over from previous online session on 14.05.2026)	1. A. M. Murmu 2. Amitesh Kumar 3. B Mallick 4. Jagesvar Verma 5. Khushboo 6. N. K. Singh 7. Pavitra Singh 8. Ratnakar Das 9. S Basu 10. Vineet Chak	1. Khushboo 2. Pavitra Singh 3. Vineet Chak	1. A. M. Murmu 2. Amitesh Kumar 3. B Mallick 4. Jagesvar Verma 5. N. K. Singh 6. Ratnakar Das 7. S Basu
14	Unidentified	-	1. Subrata Roy 2. M Mohan Jagadeesh Kumar	-

Affiliation Details	Name of the Attendees
Ministry Officials, Resource Persons, Officials from NIEPA	1. Mr. D. K. Sharma, Director, Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Education 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

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|  | <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>4. Prof. Kumar Suresh, NIEPA</li><li>5. Prof. Dharma Rakshit Gautam, NIEPA</li><li>6. Dr. Usha Kiruthika, NIT Tiruchirappalli</li><li>7. Prof. Shailender Swaminathan, Sapien Labs, KREA University</li><li>8. Ms. Richa Shrivastava, Consultant, D/o Higher Education</li></ol> |
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