

Record of Discussion of Online Session of Capacity Building Programme for Promoting Positive Mental Health, Resilience, and Wellbeing, held on 17.02.2026 at 10:00 AM

1. An online session under the Capacity Building Programme for Promoting Positive Mental Health, Resilience and Wellbeing was conducted on 17th February 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 94 participants joined the session out of which 86 were faculty members.

2. This was the 37th online session in the ongoing fortnightly series since the launch of the programme in May 2024. The initiative continues to support the development of institutional ecosystems that are sensitive to student wellbeing, aligning with objectives of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. Mr. D. K. Sharma, Director, Department of Higher Education, while welcoming the participants, outlined the rationale and evolution of the Capacity Building Programme. He informed that the programme has so far engaged more than 2,500 faculty members from centrally funded institutions through a structured system of fortnightly nominations. He emphasised that the programme draws from the NEP's vision of creating a supportive, engaging, and inclusive education ecosystem, with specific focus on academic counselling and support mechanisms to help students cope with stress and psychological challenges.

3. Mr. Sharma stated that mental health concerns are widespread across society and continue to be stigmatised, making it imperative for higher education institutions to proactively work towards awareness building and destigmatisation. Referring to interactions held by the Ministry in the aftermath of recent distressing incidents of student suicides on campus, he noted that faculty members often expressed a lack of training to identify and respond to student distress, despite being the primary and most consistent point of contact for students in classrooms and hostels. At the same time, students reported gaps in academic guidance, emotional support, and encouragement for participation in activities that build life skills. Mr. Sharma highlighted that these divergent expectations point to the need for creating institutional space to sensitise and equip faculty to respond to evolving student needs, and stated that the present programme seeks to address this gap through sustained engagement and dialogue.

4. The following resource persons were invited for this session:

- ❖ Dr. Jitendra Nagpal, Senior Psychiatrist and Programme Director, Expressions India
- ❖ Ms. Geeta Mehrotra, Expressions India
- ❖ Prof. Nishat Afroz, Banaras Hindu University
- ❖ Prof. Shailender Swaminathan, Sapien Labs, KREA University

5. Prof. Kumar Suresh, National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration (NIEPA), highlighted the sustained role played by the Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Education, in institutionalising the Capacity Building Programme and noted that the initiative has completed nearly two years of continuous engagement with faculty from centrally funded institutions. Reflecting on the evolution of the programme, he observed that while awareness of mental health issues in higher education institutions was initially limited, sustained dialogue over successive sessions had helped build greater consciousness and openness among faculty members. He acknowledged that

student mental health challenges arise from a wider societal ecosystem and cannot be attributed solely to institutions or teachers; however, he emphasised that higher education institutions, particularly centrally funded technical institutions and residential institutions, remain critical sites for preventive and supportive action, especially given the severity of recent incidents.

6. Prof. Suresh pointed out the importance of robust institutional support systems, noting that while many HEIs have established wellbeing centres and formal structures, their effectiveness depends on active functionality rather than symbolic or purely notional compliance. He stressed that faculty members, as daily points of contact with students, play a pivotal role beyond academic instruction, and can significantly influence student wellbeing through supportive engagement, mentoring, and inclusive pedagogical practices. Drawing attention to the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020's emphasis on equity and inclusion, he urged faculty to reflect on innovative teaching-learning strategies that ensure no student is excluded from the classroom experience. Prof. Suresh concluded by reiterating that while programmes such as the present one aim to sensitise and initiate reflection, the ultimate responsibility for fostering a supportive and wellbeing-oriented institutional environment rests collectively with institutions and faculty as equal stakeholders in higher education.

7. The session was then handed over to Dr. Jitendra Nagpal who commenced his address by appreciating the Ministry of Education for foregrounding mental health and wellbeing as a central concern within the higher education ecosystem. He emphasised that education must move beyond academic outcomes to address the holistic development of learners, drawing upon India's indigenous understanding of the multi-layered human personality reflected in concepts such as the *Panchakoshas*. Aligning his remarks with the vision of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, he noted that youth wellbeing cannot be treated as separate from classroom and campus life and must be embedded within everyday institutional practices. He underlined that mental wellbeing is not merely the absence of illness but a positive state enabling individuals to cope with life's challenges, realise their potential, and contribute meaningfully to society.

8. Referring to national data, Dr. Nagpal highlighted the growing prevalence of mental health challenges among young people and cautioned against over-reliance on curative approaches in view of the severe shortage of mental health professionals in the country. He strongly advocated a shift towards preventive and promotive strategies, calling upon institutions, families, faculty, and peers to collectively create joyful, empathetic, and inclusive learning environments. Participating faculty members, drawing from their institutional experiences, echoed this view and stressed that psychosocial competencies are as critical as academic and livelihood skills. They also highlighted the increasing pressures faced by students due to academic competition, career anxieties, and the transition from school to university, pointing to the need for sustained institutional support.

9. The discussion further emphasised the pivotal role of faculty as first observers of student distress and as ambassadors of a wellbeing culture on campus. Faculty interventions in the discussion highlighted the importance of addressing faculty wellbeing alongside student wellbeing, noting that emotionally healthy educators are better positioned to nurture supportive academic ecosystems. Dr. Nagpal reiterated that mental health must be viewed as a shared institutional responsibility rather than a specialised service, and encouraged HEIs to adopt integrated, whole-institution approaches that prioritise prevention, early support, and the co-creation of wellbeing initiatives with students.

10. Subsequently, Ms. Geeta Mehrotra conducted an interactive and experiential session aimed at strengthening psychosocial wellbeing and life skills through participatory methods such as visual prompts, humour-based reflections, storytelling, and guided discussion. Faculty participants engaged in interpreting images, sharing brief narratives, and reflecting on emotions, demonstrating how simple, low-cost activities can foster emotional expression, connection, and engagement within academic spaces. The session illustrated the effectiveness of experiential learning in creating psychologically safe environments and reducing barriers to communication between faculty and students.

11. Building on the activities, Ms. Mehrotra facilitated a discussion on core life skills such as self-awareness, empathy, communication, coping with stress and emotions, problem-solving, and adaptability, and their relevance in higher education contexts. Faculty members reflected on integrating these competencies into classroom practices through role modelling, storytelling, and informal interactions. The discussion showcased that holistic wellbeing spans physical, emotional, social, and mental dimensions, and reaffirmed the pivotal role of faculty in creating supportive, inclusive environments that nurture student resilience and long-term wellbeing.

12. Prof. Nishat Afroz, Associate Dean (Student Development), Banaras Hindu University, shared BHU's comprehensive and institution-wide approach to student wellbeing, rooted in the creation of a sustained *culture of care*. She outlined how the University has translated recommendations from the National Wellbeing Conclaves (2024 and 2025) into practice through a two-pronged model combining specialised mental health support with large-scale preventive and promotive initiatives. Key measures included strengthening the counsellor-to-student ratio, implementing suicide prevention and "Yes to Life" campaigns, gatekeeper training for hostel staff and wardens, leadership sensitisation, faculty mentorship programmes, seven-day student induction programmes, alumni engagement, and data-driven wellbeing planning. She highlighted the establishment of dedicated wellbeing infrastructure, multidisciplinary teams, faculty-level committees, and student-led initiatives that integrate physical activity, creative engagement, community outreach, and peer support to foster resilience, belonging, and healthy lifestyles across a large and diverse campus.

13. Prof. Afroz emphasised that BHU's model relies primarily on internal institutional resources, with faculty members positioned as the first point of contact and support for students. She noted that preventive approaches, such as creative arts, sports, open-mic forums, stage performances, and community engagement, have contributed to reduced academic stress, improved emotional resilience, and a more inclusive campus environment, as reflected in systematic feedback and wellbeing surveys. Addressing faculty concerns regarding lack of training, she underscored that empathy, attentive listening, and small everyday actions such as dedicating a few minutes in class to check in with students can make a significant difference without requiring specialised clinical skills. She concluded by reaffirming that vibrant campus life and faculty engagement are foundational to student wellbeing and academic success, while also acknowledging the need for stronger communication and incentives to enhance student participation in wellbeing activities.

14. The session was then handed over to Prof. Shailender Swaminathan who presented insights from large-scale, longitudinal data on mind health collected across India through both online and offline modes over the past two years. He explained that mind health, as measured in his work, goes beyond the presence of psychological symptoms and focuses on an individual's ability to function productively, cope with life's challenges, and engage meaningfully with academic and daily tasks, in line with the

World Health Organization's definition of mental wellbeing. Drawing on comparative data from 2008 and 2021, he highlighted a significant shift in age-wise mental wellbeing patterns, noting that while young adults earlier exhibited relatively high levels of wellbeing, recent data shows a marked decline among youth, with wellbeing improving only at later stages of adulthood. He emphasised that this decline among young people, including students, has been sharper in India than in many global counterparts, warranting urgent attention from higher education institutions.

15. Prof. Swaminathan further discussed key factors contributing to declining student mind health, including reduced family connectedness, excessive and early smartphone use, poor nutrition and increased consumption of ultra-processed foods, sleep deprivation, and exposure to environmental pollutants. He underscored the importance of continuous, real-time assessment of student mind health to identify root causes and to evaluate the effectiveness of institutional interventions, rather than relying on one-time surveys or static reports. He noted that the data-driven approach enables institutions to prioritise interventions that demonstrably improve wellbeing and productivity. He also highlighted the importance of sharing personalised, confidential mind-health feedback with students to promote self-awareness and behavioural change, and of providing aggregate, actionable insights to institutions and counsellors to strengthen targeted support systems. Prof. Swaminathan concluded by emphasising that such measurement-based approaches are intended to complement existing counselling and wellbeing initiatives in HEIs and to support evidence-informed decision-making for improving student mental health and overall educational outcomes.

16. The session concluded with a vote of thanks by Dr. Suman Negi from NIEPA.

**List of Attendees
Faculty Members**

S. No	Name of Institution	Faculty Nominated	Attendees	Absentees
1	Central Sanskrit University	1. Amrita Kaur 2. B. Venkata Lakshmi Narayana 3. Dhawal Sharma 4. G. C. S. Negi 5. Heera Pandey 6. Jyoti Singh 7. Kavita Bisariya 8. Kripashankar Sharma 9. Krishna Kumari 10. Leena Sakkarwal 11. Mahesh Jha 12. Nandadulal Mandal 13. Pavan Kumar 14. Pradeep Kumar 15. Prafull Gadpal 16. Shish Ram 17. Shivanand Mishra 18. Sidhartha Sankar 19. Srishti Tiwari 20. Vidhyadhar Prabhala 21. Vijay Kumar Dadhich	1. Amrita Kaur 2. B. Venkata Lakshmi Narayana 3. Dhawal Sharma 4. G. C. S. Negi 5. Heera Pandey 6. Jyoti Singh 7. Kavita Bisariya 8. Krishna Kumari 9. Leena Sakkarwal 10. Mahesh Jha 11. Nandadulal Mandal 12. Pradeep Kumar 13. Prafull Gadpal 14. Shish Ram 15. Shivanand Mishra 16. Srishti Tiwari 17. Vidhyadhar Prabhala 18. Vijay Kumar Dadhich	1. Kripashankar Sharma 2. Pavan Kumar 3. Sidhartha Sankar
2	Central University of Orissa	No Faculty Nominated		
3	Dr. Harisingh Gour Vishwavidyalaya	1. Ajeet Jaiswal 2. Akhilesh Kumar Singh 3. Anil Kumar Tewari 4. Atibha Vijaya Singh 5. Babita Yadav 6. Divya Bhanot 7. Ekta Shrivastava 8. Mangal Singh Bisen 9. Manvinder Singh Pahwa	1. Ajeet Jaiswal 2. Divya Bhanot 3. Mangal Singh Bisen 4. Manvinder Singh Pahwa	1. Akhilesh Kumar Singh 2. Anil Kumar Tewari 3. Atibha Vijaya Singh 4. Babita Yadav 5. Ekta Shrivastava 6. Rupali Saini 7. Suneet Walia

		10. Rupali Saini 11. Suneet Walia		
4	Guru Ghasidas Vishwavidyalaya	No Faculty Nominated	1. Amit Saxena 2. Manorama	-
5	Mahatma Gandhi Antarrashtriya Hindi Vishwavidyalaya	1. Avadhesh Kumar 2. Datturam Devune 3. Devendra Kumar 4. Harpreet Kaur 5. Harshalata J Petkar 6. Maitreyee Prakash 7. Ram Awadh 8. Sandip M Sapkale 9. Shailesh Marji Kadam 10. Shiv Singh Baghel 11. Tejaswi H. R.	1. Datturam Devune 2. Devendra Kumar 3. Harpreet Kaur 4. Harshalata J Petkar 5. Maitreyee Prakash 6. Ram Awadh 7. Sandip M Sapkale 8. Shiv Singh Baghel 9. Tejaswi H. R. 10. Jyoti Lehakpure	1. Avadhesh Kumar 2. Shailesh Marji Kadam
6	Rajiv Gandhi University	1. Abhishek Kumar Yadav 2. Amit Kumar 3. Gunjan Kumar Saurav 4. Kakali Goswami 5. Kaushalendra Pratap Singh 6. Narender Singh 7. Padi Hana 8. Proshanto Kumar Saha 9. Satchit Prasun Mandal 10. Sonika Gupta 11. Topi Basar	1. Gunjan Kumar Saurav 2. Kakali Goswami 3. Narender Singh 4. Padi Hana 5. Proshanto Kumar Saha 6. Satchit Prasun Mandal 7. Sonika Gupta	1. Abhishek Kumar Yadav 2. Amit Kumar 3. Kaushalendra Pratap Singh 4. Topi Basar
7	University of Delhi	1. Aarti Bardhan 2. Chandra Prakash 3. Chhavi Sharma 4. Kanupriya 5. Koteswar Rao 6. M Khyothunglo Humtsoe 7. Mamta Tripathy 8. Nirja Sharma 9. Sanjeevani 10. Snigdha 11. Vikramendra Kumar	1. Aarti Bardhan 2. Chandra Prakash 3. Chhavi Sharma 4. Kanupriya 5. Koteswar Rao 6. M Khyothunglo Humtsoe 7. Mamta Tripathy 8. Nirja Sharma 9. Sanjeevani 10. Snigdha 11. Vikramendra Kumar	-
8	Central Tribal University of Andhra Pradesh	1. Anirudh Kumar 2. Appasaba L. V. 3. Bonthu Kotaiah 4. D. Narayana	1. D. Narayana 2. Jitendra Mohan Mishra	1. Anirudh Kumar 2. Appasaba L. V. 3. Bonthu Kotaiah

		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Jitendra Mohan Mishra 6. Saratchandra Babu M 7. Shankar Reddy Kolle 8. Sridevi Parikipandla 9. Srinivasan T 10. Suresh Babu K 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Saratchandra Babu M 4. Shankar Reddy Kolle 5. Srinivasan T 6. Suresh Babu K 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Sridevi Parikipandla
9	IIIT Kota	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ajay Nehra 2. Amit Kumar 3. Amit Kumar Garg 4. Anand Agrawal 5. Ashok Kumar Kherodiya 6. Chetna Sharma 7. Gyan Singh Yadav 8. Isha Pathak Tripathi 9. Parikshit Kishor Singh 10. Vinita Tiwari 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Amit Kumar 2. Amit Kumar Garg 3. Anand Agrawal 4. Ashok Kumar Kherodiya 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ajay Nehra 2. Chetna Sharma 3. Gyan Singh Yadav 4. Isha Pathak Tripathi 5. Parikshit Kishor Singh 6. Vinita Tiwari
10	IIIT Lucknow	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ankita Shrivastava 2. Bindu Singh 3. Deepshikha Agarwal 4. Madhurima Datta 5. Niharika Anand 6. Niraj Kumar Vishwakarma 7. Shubhra Jain 8. Sirsendu Shekhar Barman 9. Sushil Kumar Tiwari 10. Varun Sharma 	-	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ankita Shrivastava 2. Bindu Singh 3. Deepshikha Agarwal 4. Madhurima Datta 5. Niharika Anand 6. Niraj Kumar Vishwakarma 7. Shubhra Jain 8. Sirsendu Shekhar Barman 9. Sushil Kumar Tiwari 10. Varun Sharma
11	IIIT Surat	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Anand Pratap Singh 2. Bikash Patra 3. Khamosh Yadav 4. Manish Kumar Rai 5. Neelima Agrawal 6. Nidhi Nitin Desai 7. Rachit Nimavat 8. Sachin Dattatraya Patil 9. Tanmay Dubey 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Anand Pratap Singh 2. Bikash Patra 3. Khamosh Yadav 4. Manish Kumar Rai 5. Neelima Agrawal 6. Rachit Nimavat 7. Sachin Dattatraya Patil 8. Tanmay Dubey 9. Vijay Kumar Patel 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Nidhi Nitin Desai

		10. Vijay Kumar Patel		
12	National Institute of Technology, Silchar	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Anup Kumar Sharma 2. Debjit Bhowmik 3. Gautam Choubey 4. L. V. Prasad 5. M. V. Swati 6. Papri Sutar 7. Ranjay Hazra 8. Shanti Gopal Patra 9. Suganya Devi K. 10. Vipin Chandra Pal 11. Wasim Arif 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Anup Kumar Sharma 2. Debjit Bhowmik 3. Gautam Choubey 4. L. V. Prasad 5. M. V. Swati 6. Papri Sutar 7. Ranjay Hazra 8. Shanti Gopal Patra 9. Suganya Devi K. 10. Vipin Chandra Pal 11. Wasim Arif 	-
13	Unidentified Affiliation		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Brijesh Yadav 2. Navin Kumar Tripathy 3. Shailendra Kumar 4. Shaileah Kadam 	

Affiliation Details	Name of the Attendees
Ministry Officials, Resource Persons, Officials from NIEPA	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 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 4. Prof. Nishat Afroz, Banaras Hindu University 5. Prof. Shailender Swaminathan, Sapien Labs, KREA University 6. Prof. Kumar Suresh, NIEPA 7. Dr. Suman Negi, NIEPA 8. Ms. Richa Shrivastava, Consultant, Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Education