

## **Record of Discussion of Online Session on 'Capacity Building for Promoting Positive Mental Health, Resilience and Wellbeing' held on 29.01.2025 at 10:00 AM.**

1. The Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Education held an online session on 29.01.2025, at 10:00 AM for nominated faculty members of selected Centrally Funded Institutions (CFIs). This session focused on 'Capacity Building for Promoting Positive Mental Health, Resilience and Wellbeing'.

2. This initiative is part of a broader Integrated Approach aimed at enhancing mental health, resilience, and wellbeing in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), launched on 01.05.2024. 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 program includes 2 sessions per month with 10 participants for each session from the identified set of CFIs starting from the month of May 2024. This was the 18<sup>th</sup> online session. A total of 73 participants (66 nominated faculty members) attended the session. **The list of participants is attached in the annexure.**

4. The programme began with a welcome address by Mr. Devendra Kumar Sharma, Director Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Education, who delivered the opening address. He acknowledged the importance of the session and its alignment with the broader national objective of promoting positive mental health, resilience, and wellbeing within the higher education ecosystem. This session was part of the integrated approach designed to address the growing mental health concerns that affect students in higher education institutions across the country.

5. Mr. Sharma shared the alarming global mental health statistics, citing a report from the World Health Organisation (WHO) in 2019, which revealed that one in eight people globally suffer from mental health issues, with anxiety and depression being the most common conditions. Additionally, he referred to the National Mental Health Survey of 2015, which indicated that over 10% of India's population suffers from mental health issues. Given the on-going challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is reasonable to assume that these numbers have risen.

6. Mr. Sharma highlighted that mental health issues are now being called a "silent epidemic," which makes it even more urgent to address the mental health needs of students in educational institutions. He cited the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, which advocates for the creation of learning environments that are not only engaging but also supportive of mental health. He emphasized that the goal of the capacity building programme was to help nurture such an environment, ensuring that students can reach their full potential and maintain their wellbeing.

7. He concluded by highlighting the need for faculty members to play an active role in creating a supportive culture within educational institutions, which includes

sensitizing faculty to mental health issues and integrating effective counselling systems within HEIs.

8. Mr. Sharma introduced the resource persons for the session:

- ❖ Dr. Jitendra Nagpal, Sr. Psychiatrist & Programme Director, Expressions India
- ❖ Ms. Geeta Mehrotra, Faculty, University and School Life Skills, Mental Health, and Wellbeing, Expressions India
- ❖ Dr. Nishat Afroz, Professor, Department of Psychology Banaras Hindu University

9. Dr. Jitendra Nagpal began his session by acknowledging the global rise in mental health challenges, particularly anxiety and depression. Dr. Nagpal explained that the scope of the meeting was to highlight the importance of addressing mental health within the higher education ecosystem and to discuss the crucial role that faculty members play in this process. Drawing from the NEP 2020, Dr. Nagpal emphasised the policy's vision of creating holistic, inclusive, and empowering educational environments that address not only academic learning but also socio-emotional wellbeing. He strongly emphasized that faculty members in HEIs are the "guardians" of student mental health on campuses. Faculty can be instrumental in promoting positive mental health and creating a culture where students feel safe, heard, and supported.

10. Dr. Nagpal also pointed out that India carries a significant portion of the global mental health burden, accounting for nearly 20% of the global cases of conditions like anxiety, depression and substance abuse. As such, faculty training is a vital component of any effort to promote mental health in HEIs. Faculty members should not only be aware of mental health challenges but also be trained as counsellors who can support students with mental health difficulties.

11. Dr. Nagpal spoke about how student often enter HEIs with high hopes and aspirations which can be dashed by academic and personal challenges. Faculty, he stressed, should provide a compassionate and understanding environment, helping students manage disappointments and adjust to the demands of adulthood. He proposed that mental health initiatives should involve an ecosystem approach, recognising that all stakeholders - students, faculty, family and the broader community - play a crucial role in fostering mental wellbeing.

12. Ms. Geeta Mehrotra 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. Ms. Mehrotra encouraged participants to engage in a "what if" activity, prompting them to imagine scenarios where they would have to wear a specific costume or communicate through songs. 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.

13. Ms. Mehrotra also asked participants to draw a picture of a scenery, explaining that this exercise was intended to foster shared consciousness and open the door to accepting diverse perspectives. While many participants drew similar scenes, the exercise reinforced the idea that there is always value in embracing individual differences. The goal was to break down the formal barriers between faculty and students, helping to cultivate an environment where both can engage openly with one another. Emphasizing the importance of life-skills, she discussed how these skills – such as empathy, problem-solving, communication, and self-awareness – are integral to wellbeing.

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. The session was then handed over to Dr. Nishat Afroz from Banaras Hindu University (BHU), who presented a comprehensive case study on the Wellbeing Services Cell (WSC) at BHU. She explained how BHU has implemented a multi-faceted approach to mental health and wellbeing, which includes both proactive and reactive strategies to support students. Key features of the WSC include:

- Physical activities and sports: BHU promotes physical fitness as an essential component of mental wellbeing.
- Psychological wellbeing: BHU has developed a framework to address mental health concerns through peer-to-peer counselling and professional psychological support.
- Development of Hostel coordinators and wardens: These individuals have been trained to act as first responders to students' mental health needs.
- Student leadership and wellbeing committees: BHU has empowered students to take leadership roles in promoting wellbeing on campus.

16. Dr. Afroz highlighted the recruitment of psychology interns who are placed as peer counsellors across the campus to provide support to students. Additionally, BHU has hired experienced counsellors to manage complex cases requiring professional expertise. She shared that in late 2023, BHU launched a training initiative for hostel coordinators, admin wardens, and faculty members to act as primary counsellors and normalise the discussion of mental health issues. This training was offered to 56 faculty members in a six-day course, with an additional 133 faculty members receiving one-day sessions.

Dr. Afroz concluded her presentation by emphasizing the importance of institutional arrangements for mental health and wellbeing, calling for the establishment of

dedicated mental health centers within universities and on-going collaboration among institutions.

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## Annexure

List of Attendees

## Faculty Members

S. No.	Name of the Institution	Nominated Faculty Members	Attendees	Absentees
1	Dr. Harisingh Gour Vishwavidyalaya	Abhishek Bansal Anil Kumar Jain Ayush Gupta Hemant Patidar Naveen Singh Praveen Kumar TD Rajnish Agrahari Rupendra J. Chourasiya Sanjay Sharma Shashi Kumar Singh Yogesh Kumar Pal	1. Abhishek Bansal 2. Anil Kumar Jain 3. Ayush Gupta 4. Hemant Patidar 5. Naveen Singh 6. Praveen Kumar TD 7. Rajnish Agrahari 8. Rupendra J. Chourasiya 9. Sanjay Sharma 10. Shashi Kumar Singh 11. Yogesh Kumar Pal 12. Naveen Kango 13. Ritu Yadav	None
2	English & Foreign Languages University	Alankar Kaushik Anumula Sreedevi C. Sharada Eligedi Rajkumar R. Kishore Kumar Revathi Srinivas Saumya Sharma Sonba M Salve T. J. Rekha Rani V. B. Tharakeshwar	1. C. Sharada 2. Eligedi Rajkumar 3. R. Kishore Kumar 4. Revathi Srinivas 5. Saumya Sharma 6. Sonba M Salve 7. T. J. Rekha Rani 8. V. B. Tharakeshwar	1. Alankar Kaushik 2. Anumula Sreedevi
3	Mahatma Gandhi Central University	Ambikesh Kumar Tripathi Asha Meena Babaloo Pal Narendra Singh Pankaj Kumar Singh Parmatma Kumar Mishra Pathloth Omkar Pawan Kumar Shivendra Singh Shyam Babu Prasad Sweta	1. Ambikesh Kumar Tripathi 2. Asha Meena 3. Babaloo Pal 4. Narendra Singh 5. Parmatma Kumar Mishra 6. Pathloth Omkar 7. Pawan Kumar 8. Shivendra Singh 9. Shyam Babu Prasad	1. Pankaj Kumar Singh

S. No.	Name of the Institution	Nominated Faculty Members	Attendees	Absentees
			10. Sweta	
4	National Institute of Technology, Manipur	A Azhoni Aheibam Dinamani Singh Ashish Ranjan Ashutosh Kumar Singh Khundrakpam Johnson Singh Nagarajan. S Sabindra Kachhap Sangeeta Laishram Shagolsem Lenin Singh Sorokhaibam Nilakanta Meitei Sunil Panday	1. A. Azhoni 2. Ashish Ranjan 3. Ashutosh Kumar Singh 4. Khundrakpam Johnson Singh 5. Sabindra Kachhap 6. Sunil Panday	1. Aheibam Dinamani Singh 2. Nagarajan. S 3. Sangeeta Laishram 4. Shagolsem Lenin Singh 5. Sorokhaibam Nilakanta Meitei
5	National Institute of Technology, Nagaland	B Shakila Biswajit Barman Daijiry Nazary Dhanesh Sing Das Dushmanta Kumar Das Guru Prathap Reddy M Prakash Nagaraju Baydeti Palungbam Roji Chanu Shambu Kumar Mahato	None	1. B Shakila 2. Biswajit Barman 3. Daijiry Nazary 4. Dhanesh Sing Das 5. Dushmanta Kumar Das 6. Guru Prathap Reddy 7. M Prakash 8. Nagaraju Baydeti 9. Palungbam Roji Chanu 10. Shambu Kumar Mahato
6	IIT (ISM) Dhanbad	Aarti Kumari Ajeet Yadav Ananda Shankar Hati Madhulika Gupta Mahendra Naktuji Nandanwar Niptika Jana Pawan Gupta Subhankar Sen Sukanta Halder Tanweer Alam	1. Aarti Kumari 2. Ananda Shankar Hati 3. Sukanta Halder 4. Tanweer Alam	1. Ajeet Yadav 2. Madhulika Gupta 3. Mahendra Naktuji 4. Niptika Jana 5. Pawan Gupta 6. Subhankar Sen
7	IIT Tirupati	Ishapathik Das Kaushik Pal Krishna AS Lokesh Kumar Kalahasthi	1. Lokesh Kumar Kalahasthi 2. Prateek Sharma 3. Krishna AS 4. Ranjith	1. Ishapathik Das 2. Kaushik Pal 3. Rudra Sekhar Manna 4. Samyukta

S. No.	Name of the Institution	Nominated Faculty Members	Attendees	Absentees
		Prateek Sharma Ranjith Thangavel Rudra Sekhar Manna Samyukta Bhupatiraju Sriram Sundar Varsha Bhat Murari Singh Sourav Chakraborty	Thangavel 5. Sriram Sundar 6. Varsha Bhat 7. Murari Singh 8. Sourav Chakraborty	Bhupatiraju
8	IIM Tiruchirappalli	No Faculty Nominated	1. Vijaya V 2. Pravin Tambe	None
9	NITTTR Bhopal	A. K. Sarathe Anjana Tiwari Asmita Khajanchee P. K. Purohit R. P. Khambayat Ranjit Singh Chauhan Ravi Kumar Gupta Sanjay Agrawal Seema Verma Suman Pattnaik	1. A. K. Sarathe 2. Asmita Khajanchee 3. P. K. Purohit 4. R. P. Khambayat 5. Ranjit Singh Chauhan 6. Ravi Kumar Gupta 7. Seema Verma 8. Suman Pattnaik	1. Anjana Tiwari 2. Pallavee Bhatnagar 3. Sanjay Agrawal
10	Guru Ghasidas Vishwavidyalaya	No Faculty Nominated	1. Dr. Ratnesh Singh 2. Prof. Manorama	
11	Unidentified		1. Sreedevi Anumula 2. Prof. Anand Prakash Tripathi 3. Dr. C. P. Upadhyay 4. Veerandra Matsaniya 5. Netra Pal Singh 6. S Krishna Addepalli	

#### Additional Attendees

Affiliation Details	Name of the Attendees
Ministry Officials, Resource Persons, Officials from NIEPA	1. Mr. Devendra Kumar Sharma, Dept. of Higher Education, Ministry of Education

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>2. Mr. Ramesh Kumar Sharma, Dept. of Higher Education, Ministry of Education</li><li>3. Dr. Amit Gautam, National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration (NIEPA)</li><li>4. Dr. N. K. Mohanty, National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration (NIEPA)</li><li>5. Dr. Nidhi Sabharwal, National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration (NIEPA)</li><li>6. Dr. Jitendra Nagpal, Senior Psychiatrist &amp; Program Director, Expressions India</li><li>7. Ms Geeta Mehrotra, Faculty, University and School Life Skills, Mental Health and Wellbeing, Expressions India</li><li>8. Dr. Nishat Afroz, Banaras Hindu University</li><li>9. Richa Shrivastava, Consultant, MMTTP, Ministry of Education</li></ol>
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