

Record of Discussion of Online Session on 'Capacity Building for Promoting Positive Mental Health, Resilience, and Wellbeing in Higher Education Institutions' held on 24.02.2025 at 10:00 AM

1. An online session was organised for the nominated faculty members of identified Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) on 'Capacity Building for Promoting Positive Mental Health, Resilience and Wellbeing' on 24.02.2025 from 10:00 AM.

2. This initiative is part of a broader integrated approach launched on 01.05.2024, by the Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Education, aimed at regularly developing faculty capacity to foster positive mental health and resilience among students. The programme is designed to provide continuous training to faculty members, helping them adopt and share best practices in supporting student wellbeing.

3. The modality of the online capacity building programme includes 2 sessions per month with 10 participants for each session from the identified set of HEIs starting from the month of May 2024. For the month of February 2025, two sessions were planned; first on 12.02.2025 and second on 24.02.2025. For the session held on 24.02.2025, a total of 50 participants (44 Nominated faculty members from centrally funded institutions) attended the session. **The list of participants is attached in the annexure.**

4. The session began with a welcome address by Mr. D. K. Sharma, Director, Higher Education who explained the aims and objectives of this programme. He explained that the goal of this capacity building programme through its various components is to incrementally build awareness and capacity to deal with issues of mental health in HEIs. Mr. Sharma spoke about the general decline of mental health in recent years and its impact on young people. Mr. Sharma cited statistics from the 2019 report of the World Health Organisation, saying that one in eight people globally suffer from mental health issues. The National Mental Health survey of 2015 also reports that 10% of India's population suffers from one or the other mental health concern. This number likely has increased post pandemic.

Mr. Sharma then spoke about the Economic Survey of India 2024-25 which lays emphasis on the need to address mental wellbeing, especially of the young people in the country. The Director then introduced the resource partners and invited them to take the session forward.

5. The resource partners for this session were:

- ❖ Dr. Jitendra Nagpal, Sr. Psychiatrist & Programme Director, Expressions India
- ❖ Ms. Geeta Mehrotra, Faculty, University and School Life Skills, Mental Health, and Wellbeing, Expressions India
- ❖ Prof. R. Sarathi, IIT Madras

6. Dr. Nagpal initiated the discussion by highlighting the significant changes in the mental health landscape, especially in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic. He expressed concern about the rising number of untoward incidents on campuses involving students, which have become more frequent in recent years. Dr. Nagpal emphasised the need for kindness to be valued as a core quality, urging the creation of a culture of kindness within HEIs. He stressed the importance of establishing an enabling environment with adequate counselling support for students' mental wellbeing.

7. Dr. Nagpal noted that India has a large youth population, with 400 million people in the 18-29 age groups, many of whom are in higher education. He questioned whether this large number should be seen as an advantage or a disadvantage. He highlighted the alarming rise of anxiety and depression cases, particularly post-COVID, and pointed out that global measures, such as Australia's ban on social media for children under 18, could serve as a potential model for addressing mental health concerns.

8. Dr. Nagpal called for greater emphasis on physical education and sports in schools and colleges to promote active lifestyles and prevent mental health issues. He also suggested working to bridge the gap between school and university education to ensure more holistic development. Reflecting on the societal value of material wealth over ethical values, he proposed that this emphasis contributes to the increasing mental health issues among students.

9. Dr. Nagpal introduced a proposed ecosystem-framework for mental health and wellbeing in universities, which outlined different levels of intervention: from integrating mental health into the university curriculum, including general health education, to offering professional management for students who need additional support. He described how the entire university community, including students, faculty, counsellors, and experts, should be involved at varying levels to ensure effective mental health management.

10. Ms. Geeta Mehrotra engaged participants in a series of creative, interactive exercises aimed at fostering deeper connections between faculty and students. These activities were designed to highlight the importance of creativity, humour, and interpersonal skills in promoting mental health. Ms. Mehrotra introduced the concept of adaptive life skills, which she explained are often lacking in young people, and emphasised how these skills could be cultivated.

11. She outlined ten essential life skills – emotional regulation, self-awareness, empathy, communication, interpersonal relationships, stress management, problem solving, decision making, creative thinking, and critical thinking – that are crucial for promoting psychosocial competence. Ms. Mehrotra urged that these life skills be integrated into education at all levels to support the development of resilience and positive mental health.

12. Ms. Mehrotra conducted a series of interactive activities with participants. Among these, she conducted a 'Would You Rather' activity where participants were asked to choose between two scenarios and reflect on the life skills connect to each choice. She also led a drawing exercise where participants were asked to depict a scenery. She explained that this exercise was intended to foster a shared consciousness which also accepting diverse perspectives.

13. Prof. R. Sarathi shared insights into the holistic wellness initiatives at IIT Madras. He highlighted the importance of collective responsibility for the happiness of students, faculty, and staff. Prof. Sarathi explained that wellness initiatives at IIT Madras include group activities designed to reduce academic stress, promote faculty-student interactions, and offer recognition awards to encourage a positive environment.

14. He pointed out that post-pandemic, students had missed the collaborative and conducive campus environment. As a result, IIT Madras focused on strengthening faculty advisor and mentee engagement and the timely implementation of infrastructure

modernization projects. Prof. Sarathi also spoke about the importance of leveraging experts, government agencies, and NGOs to address wellness initiatives.

15. Prof. Sarathi outlined the Khushal Initiative at IIT Madras, which aims to foster close associations between individual students and faculty for their overall wellness. The initiative includes regular wellness surveys, grievance redressal mechanisms, and independent counsellors visiting hostels and departments, ensuring that students have access to mental health support both within and outside the institution.

16. The session concluded with a call for continued collaboration between faculty, students and other stakeholders in HEIs to build a comprehensive and sustainable framework for promoting mental health and wellbeing. Participants were encouraged to integrate the strategies discussed into their academic and extracurricular practices to create a more supportive and resilient campus environment.

Annexure**List of Attendees**
Faculty Members

S. No.	Name of the Institution	Nominated Faculty Members	Attendees	Absentees
1	Rajiv Gandhi University	Anup Kumar Das Arnab Ghosh Arvind Kushwaha Bharat Kr Allam Kakali Goswami Mohd. Asghar Proshanto Kr Saha Ravi Ranjan Kumar Samir Bhadury Sayan Bayan Varsha Patnaik	1. Arnab Ghosh 2. Arvind Kushwaha 3. Bharat Kr Allam 4. Kakali Goswami 5. Proshanto Kr Saha 6. Ravi Ranjan Kumar 7. Samir Bhadury 8. Sayan Bayan 9. Varsha Patnaik	1. Anup Kumar Das 2. Mohd. Asghar
2	National Sanskrit University	A. Chandulal Dasari Nallana G. Nagalakshmi Gyanarajan Panda Niranjan Mishra Pradeep Kumar Bag Ema PTG Ranga Ramanujacharyulu R. Chandrasekhar Somnath Dash Y. Vijayalakshmi	1. A. Chandulal 2. Niranjan Mishra 3. R. Chandrasekhar 4. Somnath Das	1. Dasari Nallana 2. G. Nagalakshmi 3. Gyanarajan Panda 4. Pradeep Kumar Bag Ema 5. PTG Ranga Ramanujacharyulu 6. Y. Vijayalakshmi
3	Manipur University	Huidrom Suraj Singh Konhoujam Khelchandra Singh Ksh Anand Singh Kshetrimayum Birla Singh L. Santosh Singh M. Premjit Singh Potshangbam Nongdam Puren Meetei Senjam Sunil Singh Takhellambam Deepamanjuri Devi Th. Rupachandra Singh Thangajm Robert Singh	1. M. Premjit Singh 2. Potshangbam Nongdam Puren Meetei 3. Senjam Sunil Singh 4. Th. Rupachandra Singh 5. Thangajm Robert Singh	1. Huidrom Suraj Singh 2. Konhoujam Khelchandra Singh 3. Ksh Anand Singh 4. Kshetrimayum Birla Singh 5. L. Santosh Singh 6. Takhellambam Deepamanjuri Devi
4	Nagaland University	I Talisenla Imsong Imlisongla Longkumer	1. Imlisongla Longkumer	1. I. Talisenla Imsong

S. No.	Name of the Institution	Nominated Faculty Members	Attendees	Absentees
		Kedovikho Yhoshu Lobeno Mozhui Mary N. Odyuo Neizhanuo Golmie R. Chumbemo Ngulli Rashmi Shagolsem Herojit Singh Toshimenla Jamir Waluniba	2. Lobeno Mozhui 3. R. Chumbemo Ngulli 4. Shagolsem Herojit Singh 5. Waluniba	2. Kedovikho Yhoshu 3. Mary N. Odyuo 4. Neizhanuo Golmei 5. Rashmi 6. Toshimenla Jamir
5	IIIT Guwahati	Debashree Devi Kaveri Deb Krishnendu Hazra Kukil Khanikar Masihuddin Mustafizur Khandakar Radhika Sukapuram Ripudaman Singh Rupjyoti Saha Rusha Patra Sanjay Moulik	1. Krishnendu Hazra 2. Kukil Khanikar 3. Radhika Sukapuram 4. Sanjay Moulik	1. Debashree Devi 2. Kaveri Deb 3. Masihuddin 4. Mustafizur Khandakar 5. Ripudaman Singh 6. Rupjyoti Saha 7. Rusha Patra
6	NIT Nagaland	Amit Kumar Singh Arambam Neelima B. Shakila Dilwar Hussain Mazumder J. Arul Valan Jay Chandra Dhar Lithungo Murry M. Prakash Nagaraju Baydeti Nzanthung Ngullie	1. Dilwar Hussain Mazumder 2. Lithungo Murry 3. M. Prakash	1. Amit Kumar Singh 2. Arambam Neelima 3. B. Shakila 4. J. Arul Valan 5. Jay Chandra Dhar 6. Nagaraju Baydeti 7. Nzanthung Ngullie
7	NIT Karnataka Surathkal,	Abhilash M H Amba Shetty Debashree Chakraborty Gopal Rawat Hari Mahalingam Janani T. Jisna V. A. M. C. Chandan Ravi Roshan Sabiha Alam Choudhury Shashi Bhushan Arya	1. Abhilash M H 2. Amba Shetty 3. Debashree Chakraborty 4. Gopal Rawat 5. Hari Mahalingam 6. Janani T. 7. Jisna V. A. 8. M. C. Chandan 9. Sabiha Alam Choudhury 10. Shashi Bhushan	1. Ravi Roshan

S. No.	Name of the Institution	Nominated Faculty Members	Attendees	Absentees
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8	School of Planning and Architecture, Bhopal	Ajay Khare Anand Wadwekar Binayak Choudhury Garima Tamrakar Parama Mitra Sandeep Sankar Sanjeev Singh Saurabh Popli Tapas Mitra Vikram Kohli Vishakha Kawathekar	1. Binayak Choudhury 2. Parama Mitra 3. Saurabh Popli 4. Vikram Kohli	1. Ajay Khare 2. Anand Wadwekar 3. Garima Tamrakar 4. Sandeep Sankat 5. Sanjeev Singh 6. Tapas Mitra 7. Vishakha Kawathekar

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 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. R. Sarathi, IIT Madras 5. Dr. Shivakumar Kandekar, National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration 6. Richa Shrivastava, Consultant, MMTTP, Ministry of Education