

Record of Discussion of Online Session on ‘Capacity Building for Promoting Positive Mental Health, Resilience and Wellbeing’ held on 27.08.2024 at 10:00 AM.

On August 27, 2024, an online session was conducted for nominated faculty members from various Centrally Funded Institutions (CFIs) on the topic of ‘Capacity Building for Promoting Positive Mental Health, Resilience, and Wellbeing.’ 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 program is designed to provide ongoing training for faculty members, helping them adopt and share best practices in supporting student wellbeing.

2. The online capacity-building program features bi-monthly sessions, each accommodating 10 participants from the selected HEIs, starting from May 2024. For August 2024, two sessions were scheduled, with the second session on the 27th attracting 77 participants, including 70 faculty members (Detailed list of participants is annexed).

3. The session began with a welcome address from the Director of Higher Education, who outlined the program's objectives as part of the Malaviya Mission Teacher Training Programme, inspired by NEP 2020's focus on student mental health. He emphasized the importance of these sessions in creating a supportive environment, not only the students in HEIs but also for faculty. He explained the modality of this session and shared that regular follow-up session will also be conducted to reinforce learning and implement effective practices. Following his welcome address, he introduced and welcomed the resource partners to the session.

4. The resource partners for this session were:

- Dr. Jitendra Nagpal, Senior Psychiatrist & Program Director, Expressions India
- Dr. Ameeta Mulla Wattal, Chairperson & Executive Director, Education, Innovations, Training, DLF Foundation Schools and Scholarship Programmes
- Dr. Aparajita Dixit, Senior Psychologist, Expressions India and Master Trainer, University & School Mental Health

5. Dr. Ameeta M. Wattal began the session by highlighting the critical need to bridge the gap between school and higher education to ensure a smoother transition for students. She pointed out that while school life is often highly regimented and stressful, with students attending supplementary tuitions and coaching, higher education institutions bring their own set of challenges. Students often enter these institutions expecting a respite from stress, only to be met with intensified academic pressures and a lack of guidance. This sudden shift can result in feelings of disappointment and emotional unrest as students navigate the adult world among high-performing peers without adequate support.

6. Dr. Wattal emphasized the necessity of humanizing the transition process and making students aware of the realities of higher education before they arrive. She addressed several issues, including the stigma surrounding mental health, cultural hesitations in seeking help, and the lack of mental health resources within educational institutions. She noted the growing institutional recognition of mental health needs and stressed the importance of regularly updating guidelines and policies related to mental well-being and academic pressures. Additionally, she pointed out the unrealistic expectations placed on students, especially those from rural areas who face pressures from their families and communities, highlighting the urgent need for more supportive measures.

7. Dr. Jitendra Nagpal addressed the challenges of interpersonal relationships and the pressures faced by students in higher education. He observed that students often experience loneliness and a

sense of alienation at the start of their college life, with this feeling varying depending on the type of institution. Liberal arts programs, which offer more opportunities for self-expression and stress relief, contrast sharply with technical and professional institutions like IITs, where students are expected to immediately excel without much room for de-stressing or sharing their experiences. Dr. Nagpal also raised concerns about gender safety in higher education, particularly in light of recent incidents, advocating for gender-sensitive environments and better safety measures.

8. Dr. Wattal responded by highlighting the importance of robust reporting systems and infrastructure designed to address gender safety, as seen in some international contexts, and suggested similar measures for India. She stressed the need to amplify the student voice and foster greater dialogue between students and faculty. Dr. Nagpal supported this by calling for increased inter-faculty and student dialogue, emphasizing that faculty well-being directly impacts student well-being. He advocated for faculty training in mental health and wellbeing, promoting a collaborative mentor-mentee system, and suggested flexible curricula to allow faculty more time for student support.

9. Dr. Sukumar Pal from Visva Bharati highlighted the challenges that come with institutional growth, noting that as the number of students increases, the ability of faculty to engage individually and monitor students' well-being diminishes. This difficulty in maintaining close relationships between faculty and students can impact the support system for students.

10. Dr. Aparajita Dixit then addressed various signs of mental distress among students, such as increased social media use, sleeplessness, lethargy, lack of interest in class, and feelings of stagnation or alienation. She emphasized that while faculty are often the first to notice these signs, not all instances of distress are immediately alarming. However, when daily functioning is compromised, it is crucial to intervene. Dr. Dixit stressed the importance of a friendly and empathetic approach by faculty and encouraged reaching out to peers for advice when students are reluctant to open up. She also highlighted the need for greater vigilance in recognizing self-harming behavior and suicidal tendencies, which often begin in school but become more pronounced in higher education.

11. This highly interactive session involved Q&A sessions and experience sharing by the faculty members of the participating HEIs. During the course of experience sharing, it was observed that there exists gap in understanding in differentiation between the aspects related with psychological /emotional/ mental wellbeing vis-à-vis students with learning disabilities. It was informed that a separate 'Capacity Building Program on Specific Learning Disabilities' is being conducted by MoE in which faculty members can join to be able to enhance their understanding on the issue.

12. Dr. Nagpal, while concluding, further reinforced the need for in-house psychologists and an enabling environment for student expression. He suggested inviting alumni to share their experiences with students and urged faculty to implement small, reflective changes to enhance campus mental well-being. He also recommended that faculty share best practices and participate in the upcoming mental health week and the Mental Health conclave to promote positive mental health initiatives.

13. The session ended with a vote of thanks.

List of Attendees

Faculty Members

S. No.	Name of the Institution	Nominated Faculty Members	Attendees	Absentees
1	Central University of Karnataka	Prof. Pavitra R Alur Dr. Chitkala Venkareddy Dr. Sujatha Susanna Kumari. D Dr. Bhawna Dr. Suchismita Sahoo Dr. Sanjeevarayappa N. C Dr. M. Siva Dr. Uday Patil Dr Nagaraj Y Dr. Mandala Chandrashekhar Goud Prof. Vijendra Pandey (Coordinator)	1. Dr. Chitkala Venkareddy 2. Dr. Nagaraj Y 3. Prof. Pavitra R Alur 4. Dr. Sujatha Susanna Kumari. D 5. Dr. Uday Patil	Dr. Bhawna Dr. Suchismita Sahoo Dr. Sanjeevarayappa N. C Dr. M. Siva Dr. Mandala Chandrashekhar Goud
2	Central University of Kerala	Prof. Mohammedunni Alias Musthafa Prof. K.J. Thomas Dr. Deepthi K Dr. K. Shiva Kumar Dr. Asha S Dr. Thejaswini Venkatesh Dr. Ausree Sreenivasan Dr. Jasmine M Shah Dr. Rajendra Baikady Dr. Saba Anees Prof. Joshith V P (Coordinator)	1. Dr. Jasmine M Shah 2. Dr. Rajendra Baikady 3. Dr. Saba Anees 4. Dr. Thejaswini Venkatesh 5. Prof. M N Musthafa	Prof. K.J. Thomas Dr. Deepthi K Dr. K. Shiva Kumar Dr. Asha S Dr. Ausree Sreenivasan
3	Visva Bharati	Subhashree Sanyal Sukumar Pal Neelmani Jaysawal Sudeshna Saha Firdous Barbhuiya Kishore Chandra Swain Sarita Anand Manoj Kumar Sharma Sukesh Lohar Ramu Hembram Jyoti Ratan Ghosh (Coordinator)	1. Sh. Firdous Barbhuiya 2. Smt. Jyoti Ratan Ghosh 3. Smt. Neelmani Jaysawal 4. Sh. Ramu Hembram 5. Smt. Sarita Anand 6. Smt. Subhashree Sanyal 7. Smt. Sudeshna Saha 8. Sh. Sukesh Lohar 9. Sh. Sukumar Pal 10. Sh. Sumedh Ranvir	Kishore Chandra Swain Manoj Kumar Sharma

S. No.	Name of the Institution	Nominated Faculty Members	Attendees	Absentees
4	NIT, Agartala	Dr. Vivek Kumar Anand Dr. Mithun Roy Dr. Rupam Gupta Roy Dr. Nabarun Biswas Dr. Mriganka Sekhar Manna Dr. Sharmistha Sharma Dr. Awnish Kumar Dr. Sagarika Panigrahi Dr. Yogesh Kumar Sariya Dr. Dharendra Kumar Pandey Dr. Litan Bhaumik (Coordinator)	1. Dr. Litan Bhaumik (Coordinator) 2. Dr. Mithun Roy 3. Dr. Mriganka Sekhar Manna 4. Dr. Nabarun Biswas 5. Dr. Sagarika Panigrahi	Dr. Vivek Kumar Anand Dr. Rupam Gupta Roy Dr. Sharmistha Sharma Dr. Awnish Kumar Dr. Yogesh Kumar Sariya Dr. Dharendra Kumar Pandey
5	IIT BHU, Varanasi	Prof R K Mishra Prof B N Sharma Dr Abhishek Kumar Srivastava Dr Sanjay Kumar Dr Sunil Mishra Dr Sukhada Dr. Akhilendra Pratap Singh Dr Rosy Dr Gowri Balachander Dr Pramod Soni V. Ramanathan (Coordinator)	1. Dr. Abhishek Kumar Srivastava 2. Dr. Akhilendra Pratap Singh 3. Prof. B N Sharma 4. Dr. Gowri Balachander 5. Prof. R K Mishra 6. Dr. Rosy 7. Dr. Sanjay Kumar 8. Dr. Sukhada 9. Dr. Sunil Mishra 10. V. Ramanathan (Coordinator)	Dr Pramod Soni
6	IIT Dharwad	Subhash Mehto Siba Narayan Swain Debalina Chakravarty Rajshekar K Prof. Santosh Kumar Prof. Rakesh Lingam Prof. Hiranya Deka Prof. Nagaveni S Prof. Ruma Ghosh Dr. Ridhima Tewari (Coordinator)	1. Smt. Debalina Chakravarty 2. Prof. Hiranya Deka 3. Prof. Nagaveni S 4. Sh. Rajshekar K 5. Prof. Rakesh Lingam 6. Dr. Ridhima Tewari (Coordinator) 7. Sh. Siba Narayan Swain 8. Sh. Subhash Mehto	Prof. Santosh Kumar Prof. Ruma Ghosh
7	IIM Kozhikode	Prof. Qambar Abidi Prof. Payal Anand Prof. L. Ramprasath Prof. M. Geetha Prof. Satish Krishnan Prof. Rachappa Shette Prof. Prantika Ray	1. Prof. L. Ramprasath 2. Prof. M. Geetha 3. Prof. Qambar Abidi 4. Sh. Rachappa Shette	Prof. Payal Anand Prof. Satish Krishnan Prof. Rachappa Shette Prof. Prantika Ray Prof. Roopak Kumar Gupta

S. No.	Name of the Institution	Nominated Faculty Members	Attendees	Absentees
		Prof. Roopak Kumar Gupta Prof. Ram Kumar P. N. Prof. Shannu Narayan Sh. Sojan George (Coordinator)	5. Prof. Ram Kumar P. N. 6. Prof. Roopak Kumar Gupta 7. Prof. Shannu Narayan	Prof. Ram Kumar P. N. Prof. Shannu Narayan
8	IIM Udaipur	Amogh Kumbargeri Kirti Mishra Saurabh Gupta Vijayta Doshi Samadrita Bhattacharyya Ashish Sachdeva Bhavya Singhvi Pramod Dudhe Ria Mishra N Viswanathan Rajesh Nanarpuzha (Coordinator)	1.Sh. Amogh Kumbargeri 2.Sh. Ashish Sachdeva 3.Smt. Bhavya Singhvi 4.Smt. Kirti Mishra 5.Sh. N Viswanathan 6.Sh. Pramod Dudhe 7.Smt. Ria Mishra 8.Smt. Samadrita Bhattacharyya 9.Sh. Saurabh Gupta	Vijayta Doshi
9	NITTR Chandigarh	Dr. Ritula Thakur Dr. Balwinder Singh Dhaliwal Dr. Meenakshi Sood Dr. Ashok Kumar Er. Shano Solanki Dr. Sudhakar Rao Patange Dr. Garima Saini Dr. Mala Kalra Er. Amardev Singh Er. Amandeep Kaur Prof. Rakesh K Wats (Coordinator)	1. Er. Amandeep Kaur 2. Er. Amardev Singh 3. Dr. Ashok Kumar 4. Dr. Balwinder Singh Dhaliwal 5. Dr. Garima Saini 6. Dr. Mala Kalra 7. Dr. Meenakshi Sood 8. Mr. Rakesh K Wats 9. Dr. Ritula Thakur 10. Er. Shano Solanki 11. Dr. Sudhakar Rao Patange	None
10	IIM Calcutta	Nomination Not Provided by the Institution		
11	University of Kashmir	Nomination Not Provided by the Institution		
12	NIT Andhra Pradesh	Nomination Not Provided by the Institution		

Additional Attendees

Affiliation Details	Name of the Attendees
Ministry Officials, Resource	1. Dr. Jitendra Nagpal, Senior Psychiatrist & Program

Affiliation Details	Name of the Attendees
Persons, & Officials from NIEPA	<p>Director, Expressions India</p> <p>2. Dr. Ameeta Mulla Wattal, Chairperson and Executive Director, Education, Innovations and Training, DLF Foundation Schools</p> <p>3. Dr. Aparajita Dixit, Senior Psychologist, Expressions India and Master Trainer</p> <p>4. Sh. Devendra Kumar Sharma, Director, Dept. of Higher Education, MoE</p> <p>5. Sh. Ramesh Kumar Sharma, Under Secretary, Dept. of Higher Education, MoE</p> <p>6. Ms. Aarti Srivastava, NIEPA</p> <p>7. Sh. Parishrut, NIEPA</p>