

Mental Health Support for Students

NCERT has developed a specific module on “Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health” under the aegis of School Health Programme under Ayushman Bharat

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To address the burden of mental disorders, the Government of India is supporting implementation of the District Mental Health Programme (DMHP) under the National Mental Health Programme in 704 districts of the country for detection, management and treatment of mental disorders/ illness with the major components of counselling in schools and colleges, work place stress management, life skills training, suicide prevention services and Information, Education and Communication (IEC) activities for generation of awareness and removal of stigma associated with Mental Illness.

Under the aegis of the School Health Programme under Ayushman Bharat, NCERT has developed a comprehensive package titled “Training and Resource Material: Health and Wellness of School-going Children”. A specific module has been included on “Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health”, which has activities related to the mental health and well-being of students and teachers.

Modular Handbook on Early Identification and Intervention for Mental Health Problems in School Going Children has been developed in collaboration with Public Health Foundation of India (PHFI) which contains guidelines for early identification, detection and intervention of mental health problems (stress/illness) in school- going children, for hands-on training of teachers, counsellors and other stakeholders. The Handbook was launched by Ministry of Education on 06th September, 2022.

The Ministry of Education has taken up a proactive initiative, named, ‘Manodarpan’, covering a wide range of activities to provide psychosocial support to students, teachers and families for Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing during the COVID outbreak and beyond. Under the Manodarpan initiative, a Web page (URL: <http://manodarpan.education.gov.in>) has been created carrying advisory guidelines, Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs), Practical tips, posters, videos, do’s and don’ts for students, teachers/faculty and families for psychosocial support have been uploaded on the Web-page. A National Toll-free Helpline (8448440632) for a country-wide outreach to students from schools, colleges and universities to provide them tele-counselling to address their mental health and psychosocial issues during and after the COVID-19 situation has been set up.

NCERT has started ‘NCERT Counselling Services for School Children’ in April, 2020 to help school students across the country share their concerns. This service is provided free of charge by about 270 counsellors across different regions of the country. Live interactive sessions on ‘SAHYOG: Guidance for Mental Wellbeing of Children’ are telecast on 12 PM eVidya DTH-TV channels for classes 1 to 12. To handle stress and anxiety, recorded videos on Yoga are telecast through 12 DTH TV channels with effect from 1st September, 2020 from Classes 1 to 12 and also digital resources are made available in digital platforms, i.e., DIKSHA.

The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) provides pre and post examination tele-counselling facilities through centralized toll-free helpline.

Government of India has launched the National Tele Mental Health Programme (Tele MANAS) on 10th October 2022 to provide access to mental health care services to all through a centralized toll-free helpline (14416 or 1800-891-4416).

The Government vide Notification in the Official Gazette dated 04/12/2018 constituted the Central Mental Health Authority under the Mental Healthcare Act, 2017. After the expiry of its term, the Government vide Notification in the Official Gazette dated 11/11/2022 has nominated/appointed the non-official members of the CMHA. Till date four meetings of the Central Mental Health Authority have been held.

As per the information provided by the Ministry of Education, National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) has developed textbooks in Psychology for Classes XI and XII that cover the aspects of stress, anxiety and other related problems in schools. The chapter 3 on 'Meeting life Challenges' of the class XII textbook in Psychology tries to equip the students with causes of stress and the development of positive health. Consequent upon announcement of the National Education Policy (NEP), 2020, preparation of a new National Curriculum Framework (NCF) has been taken up.

NCERT has been engaged in strengthening the capacity of teachers and counsellors to extend the support to the students for their emotional and mental well-being, help to deal with fear and find ways of dealing with these. NCERT also offers the Diploma Course in Guidance and Counselling (DCGC) with teacher counsellor model so that such teacher apart from teaching can also extend help to students in dealing with academic, personal and career related issues.

The Union Minister of State for Health and Family Welfare, Dr. Bharati Pravin Pawar stated this in a written reply in the Rajya Sabha today.

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