

Fostering Mental Health in Learners: Concerns and Prospects

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As educators we are aware of the fact that Mental health is an important issue for learners. Educationalists have recognized the impact that a learner's mental health has on learning and academic achievement, and they realize that there is a great deal teachers can do to help learners with mental health issues to succumb the situations. Mental health awareness is becoming an important part of a school's curriculum now a day because of its importance.

The National Alliance of Mental Illness records shows that one in five people live in this globe with some sort of mental diseases or disorders. It is assumed that the average age of mental illness is fourteen, most of them don't seek any help or guidance until the situation becomes worse. In this situation majority of the learners are not able to complete their studies. So it is high time to take appropriate action for dealing with this issue. For that we need to integrate comprehensive services and support systems throughout the school levels. We need to provide strategies for assessing mental health needs through proper in-service training to educators. Also provide access to behavioural and mental health services and programs. The most important aspect is that building collaborative relationships between the school and students' families and communities.

Teachers and administrators can work to promote awareness with their students. Main elements to include in this awareness program include the concept of self-care and responsibility 'for one's own mental health and wellness, with an emphasis on the fact that mental health is an integral part of health, and the concept of recovery from mental illness. Teachers and learners should be provided with ways to recognize signs of developing mental health problems, and there should be opportunities around the awareness and management of mental health crisis, including the risks of substance abuse and suicidal tendencies. The training should include the concept of fostering self-confidence, self-esteem, and self-efficacy in learners. Moreover, there is need to address the relationship between mental health, substance abuse and other negative behaviours as well as the negative impact of stigma and cultural attitudes towards learners suffering from mental illness.

We all know that learners spent most of their active hours in school or colleges, it just make sense to have mental health awareness and education become part of the curriculum. When we empower learners with sufficient knowledge related to mental health and hygiene, they will be able to get help they demands regarding their issues. We can identify the symptoms of mental health issues through signs and circumstances. Some immediate changes in behavior such as being aggressive, showing withdrawal tendencies can be an indication to a much bigger mental issue. So it is important that we the parents and teachers become aware of the signs associated with mental illness so can we can provide the needed support for those who are in need. The earlier we identify the issue, it is always beneficial to the learner.

As educators we need to have an open-door-policy to communicate effectively with our learners and listen carefully to their concerns and issues. Communicate with them regularly and be honest to them in dealing with issues. Establish positive rapport with them so that they are ready to open up their emotions in an emotionally safe environment. Mental health disorders in children is a complex issue that requires a coordinated effort from parents, schools, health workers, and community outreach. So early detection and intervention are crucial factors in the goal towards reaching at problematic children before conditions leads to serious issues.

As educators, we can provide students with opportunities, resources and support they need. The important aspect is as I mentioned earlier, to promote their self-confidence and self-esteem. Moreover provide learners with the opportunities, resources and support they need.

Health both physical and mental to an extent depends upon the food they consume. So need to encourage healthy food habits. Also they should be provided with outlets to relieve anxiety and stress. Stress coping activities like meditation, nature walk, physical exercises etc. Fosters a student's overall mental health and ability to handle stress and worries. We should take care of the school policies that support mental health such as preventing different types of abuses and bullying. Outdoor learning and play in collaboration with peers can do a lot in preventing mental issues and in fostering positive mental health.

A number of minor and major disorders are faced by the current learners, especially in this pandemic era. So we need to identify it at the earliest and impart the needed support to them. Depression is a common mood disorder that involves persistent feelings of sadness, hopelessness and loss of interest in previously enjoyable activities. Most learners in the present generation experience anxiety from time to time. Even

though it is a common issue, excess of accumulation of ongoing feelings of worry, and tension can interfere with day to day life of children. When the daily life of the learner is disrupted, anxiety becomes a medical condition that needs medical treatment. Every mental disorder has its own specific symptoms. If we noticed symptoms related to any issues, immediately take proper actions to help the learner to overcome the situations. Institutional guidance bureaus can do a lot in this aspect.

Mental health problems can have a wide range of reasons and causes. Some of the main reasons are negative childhood experiences, traumatic situations or neglect in childhood period. Being a social isolate also matters. Racial discrimination, social stigma, gender issues also there. Sudden loss of dear ones, extreme poverty and physical illness are other reasons. Parental unemployment, homelessness. Substance abuse, domestic violence all are reasons for lowering the mental health. Mental health is more than the absence of mental illness. Mental health is a state of wellbeing where people can meet their learning potential. It is a state of wellbeing where learners can meet their learning potential, cope with normal issues and stresses and establishes good interpersonal relations in family, community and in schools.

Conclusion:

Developing effective mental health programs in educational Institutions is much needed step in the present situation. Efforts to care for the emotional well-being of children and youth can extend beyond the classroom to families and communities. Institution based mental health programs should focus on promoting mental wellness, preventing mental health problems and providing the needed counselling and medical treatment. As educators we need to recognize our students are at risk when they are experiencing mental health issues. Try to promote the healthy social and emotional development of all children and youth.

Select Websites:

1. <https://www.unicef.org/coronavirus/8-teacher-tips-student-mental-health>
2. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1154566.pdf>
3. <https://www.netsweeper.com/filter/education-web-filtering/7-ways-to-promote-mental-health-awareness-in-schools-2/33318>
4. <https://www.wgu.edu/heyteach/article/importance-mental-health-awareness-schools1810.html>
5. <https://www.bestcolleges.com/resources/top-5-mental-health-problems-facing-college-students/>