

National Seminar
on
**Stress and Mental Health: Nurturing Positivity
in Children and Adolescents**

Date: 2nd March, 2016

Timings: 9.30 a.m. - 5.30 p.m.

Venue: Convention Centre, IGNOU, Maidan Garhi, New Delhi

Seminar Brochure

Childhood and adolescence comprise crucial stages in the human life span development. The relevance of child and adolescent development for outcomes in education, health, life success, and societal well-being is being increasingly realised. Children and adolescents are the most important assets of any country that would determine the future of the nation. This is particularly true in the Indian context. According to Census of India (2011), children and adolescents constitute over 40 per cent of the 1200 million population of our country. It is important to nurture the potential of this demographic dividend.

Against this backdrop, it is important to take note of the fact that according to research, the incidence of mental health problems among children and adolescents is increasing worldwide. This holds for our country as well. India is a society in transition, and the stress is impacting everyone, including the vulnerable age groups of childhood and adolescence. A core aspect of human development involves coping with psychosocial stress. The resources available to cope with stress and the manner in which individuals actually cope may be important factors influencing patterns of positive adaptation and development as opposed to the onset of a plethora of socio-psychological and somatic problems.

Stress is deemed to be an inevitable part of life. While it is important to work towards reducing the stressors, it is equally important to work on improving one's coping strategies and resilience. Moving from negativity to positivity marks a major paradigm shift, and that is the need of the hour. The importance of the same during the foundational years of childhood, and the tumultuous years of adolescence, is

significant indeed. There is a strong felt need to promote positivity among children and adolescents to nurture happier, healthier, constructive skilled minds for tomorrow.

It is against the above backdrop that the Seminar proposes to discuss pertinent issues, including the following:

- How does stress impact mental health and well-being of children and adolescents?
- What are the ecological aspects and factors that influence stress and mental health of children and adolescents?
- Why is it important to foster positivity among children and adolescents?
- How can positivity among children and adolescents be nurtured?
- In what ways can parents, extended family members, teachers, and other stakeholders facilitate positivity and mental well-being among children and adolescents?
- What is the role of counselling and family therapy in promoting positivity?
- What are the necessary skills and attitudes that need to be developed for a positive mind?

During the Seminar, it is proposed to deliberate upon the above issues and related aspects in-depth. Focus would be on analyzing the emergent challenges in the area to promote positivity among children and adolescents and help ameliorate the negative impact of stress on the mental well-being of children and adolescents. The deliberations would help in coming up with a document with recommendations for the policy makers in the field.

Sub-themes of the Seminar

- Stress and Mental Health of Children and Adolescents: Issues and Correlates
- Positivity, Mindfulness, and Spirituality
- Education, Stress, and Young Minds
- Fostering Positivity: Role of Counselling and Family Therapy
- Skill Development: Nurturing Positivity in Children and Adolescents

Registration :

There is no registration fee for participation. However, it is mandatory to submit the duly filled-in registration form before 29th February, 2016. The participants will be given a Participation Certificate.

Seminar Coordinator: Prof. Neerja Chadha, Director, School of Continuing Education, IGNOU, Maidan Garhi, New Delhi.
Phone: 011-29536347; Email: soce@ignou.ac.in.

Patron: Prof. Nageshwar Rao, Vice Chancellor, IGNOU, Maidan Garhi, New Delhi.

Brief Report of the National Seminar on “Stress and Mental Health: Nurturing Positivity in Children and Adolescents” organized by SOCE on 2nd March, 2016



Dr. Vinod Aggarwal, Secretary, Govt. of India & Chairperson, Rehabilitation Council of India addressing the participants at the National Seminar in “Stress and Mental Health: Nurturing Positivity in Children and Adolescents” organized by SOCE.

A National Seminar on “Stress and Mental Health: Nurturing Positivity in Children and Adolescents” was organized by the School of Continuing Education, IGNOU on 2nd March, 2016 at the Convention Centre of the University.

The Seminar focussed on the relevance of child and adolescent development for outcomes in education, health, life success, and societal well-being. The National

Seminar was graced by dignitaries of repute in the niche area of stress and mental health among children and adolescents.

The Chief Guest at the Inaugural Session of the Seminar was Prof. Girishwar Misra, Vice Chancellor, MGAHV, Wardha. In his inaugural address, Prof. Girishwar Misra laid emphasis on the perception of mental health in the Indian context, and the importance of positivity. Quoting from Indian traditions and scriptures, Prof. Misra said that positivity had to be seen within a context, and emphasized the importance of everyone taking cognisance of the dignity and wellbeing of others in their interactions in day-to-day life. He further opined that the stress generated at the workplace impacts the child and family wellbeing. In his address, Prof. Girishwar Misra highlighted the importance of prosociality and altruism.

Prof Rajni Dhingra, Dean & Professor of Human Development, University of Jammu, J&K, was the Guest of Honour at the Inaugural Session. In her address, she spoke about the parent-child relationship and said that it was required of parents to give time and warmth to children for better bonding.

In the introduction to the Seminar, Prof. Neerja Chadha, Professor of Child Development and Director of the School of Continuing Education, as well as the Seminar Organizer, emphasized that childhood and adolescence comprise crucial stages in the human life span development. Mental health and well-being of children and adolescents, who comprise the future of our country, is a vital area of concern; more so in the contemporary context. The National Seminar was organized as an attempt to take stock of the ground reality, analyze the emergent challenges, and discuss ways of fostering positivity among children and adolescents; drawing upon our traditional strengths as well as research-based evidence.

The Inaugural Session was followed by three Plenary Sessions, in which eminent personalities in the field of Child and Adolescent Mental Health expressed their views on different topics.

The first Plenary Session was chaired by Prof. Girishwar Misra, Vice Chancellor, MGAHV, Wardha and Prof. Manju Mehta, Professor of Clinical Psychology (Retd.), AIIMS, Delhi. The Speakers in the Session were Prof. Rajni Dhingra, Dean, &

Professor of Human Development, University of Jammu, J&K who spoke on “Children and adolescents in armed conflict situations: Focus on mental health”, Prof. Neerja Chadha, Professor of Child Development, IGNOU, Delhi who spoke on “Stress and mental health of children and adolescents: Issues and correlates” and Dr. Vibha Sharma, Associate Professor, IHBAS, Delhi who spoke on “Positivity, mindfulness, and spirituality: Need and relevance to inculcate these among children and adolescents to foster good mental health”.

The second Plenary Session was chaired by Prof. Manju Mehta, Professor of Clinical, Psychology (Retd.), AIIMS, Delhi and Prof. Rajni Dhingra, Dean, & Professor of Human Development, University of Jammu, J&K. The Speakers in the Session were Ms. Poonam Chaubey, Principal, Greater Valley School, Greater Noida who spoke on “Inclusion, Stress and Positivity”, Dr. Renu Gulati, Associate Professor, IHE, Delhi who spoke on “Frustration Tolerance and Anger Management among Children and Adolescents” and Dr. Amiteshwar Ratra, Assistant Professor, STRIDE, IGNOU who spoke on “Fostering positivity: Role of Counselling and Family Therapy”.

The third Plenary Session was chaired by Prof. Rajesh Sagar, Department of Psychiatry, AIIMS and Prof. Neelam Sood, Department of School and Non-formal Education, NUEPA, New Delhi. The Speakers were Prof. Rajesh Sagar, Department of Psychiatry, AIIMS who spoke on “Stress, Mental Health and Young Minds” and Dr. Jitendra Nagpal, Sr. Consultant Psychiatrist, Moolchand Medicity, Delhi and Ms. Geetanjali, Academic Coordinator, Expressions India, Delhi who spoke on “Skills for Fostering Mindfulness among Children and Adolescents”.

The Valedictory Session of the Seminar was graced by very senior, eminent dignitaries. Dr. Vinod Aggarwal, Chairperson, Rehabilitation Council of India and Secretary, Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities, Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Govt. of India, was the Chief Guest at the Valedictory Session. In his Valedictory address, Dr. Aggarwal congratulated the University for organizing a national seminar on such a pertinent theme in the present-day context. He said that children are the most important asset of the country, and there are many issues pertaining to their well-being which need to be addressed on priority basis. Dr. Aggarwal cited his experience as Chief Executive,

National Trust where he found that disabilities amongst children, if detected early, can be acted upon and solutions found to the impediments encountered.

Dr. Jitendra Nagpal, an eminent Psychiatrist, was the Guest of Honour at the Valedictory Session of the Seminar. In his address, Dr. Jitendra Nagpal said that earlier mental health had been ignored and left to only mental health departments. But now the importance of mental wellbeing was being recognised and being talked about by non-mental health departments also, and this in itself is a big step forward. Such discussions would help prevent children from succumbing to disorders, and instead, help in leading them towards a normal life. Dr. Nagpal emphasized that it was important for all sectors within the government to come together to help and support children and ensure that their mental health issues are not treated as a disease, but as a problem which can be sorted out and addressed. This would help to make a more positive society and a progressive nation.

Giving his presidential address the Hon'ble Vice Chancellor (I/c) of IGNOU, Prof. Nageshwar Rao elaborated on the impact of stress on the mental health of the individual. In this context, he explained that there are two types of stress - positive stress and negative stress. The positive stress has the purpose of giving us energy, but we need to minimize our negative stress. He also motivated the participants not to be overwhelmed by stress, but rather to understand it in their various personal and professional roles. He highlighted that we need to manage stress and help the others to do the same. He expressed the hope that the deliberations of the seminar would provide inputs for policy formulation in mental health and stress.

The National Seminar was attended by around 150 participants from across the nation. The Seminar was highly appreciated by all the participants.



Prof. Girishwar Misra, Vice Chancellor, MGAHV, Wardha and other dignitaries lighting the auspicious lamp at the Inaugural function of the National Seminar on "Stress and Mental Health: Nurturing Positivity in Children and Adolescents" organized by



Dr. Jitendra Nagpal, eminent Psychiatrist & Guest of Honour at the Valedictory Function sharing his views at the National Seminar on "Stress and Mental Health: Nurturing Positivity in Children and Adolescents" organized by SOCE.