



Ensuring Mental Well-being in Digital Spaces

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A word cloud centered on the words "MENTAL HEALTH" and "TRAUMA". The words are in various sizes and orientations, using shades of green and blue. The background is white, and the entire graphic is set against a dark teal background with a red vertical bar on the right.

AWARENESS
WELLNESS
THERAPY
BENEFITS
RISK
RESEARCH
GRIEF
STIGMA
WORRIED
RELATIONSHIPS
TRAUMA
IQ
POSTPARTUM
CRISIS
PSYCHOLOGY
SELF HARM
POST-TRAMATIC STRESS
DEPRESSION
HEALTH
PSYCHOLOGICAL
CLINICAL
ANEXORIA
UNHAPPY
BIPOLAR
STRESS
GRIEF
ANXIETY
PHOBIA
GENETIC
ATTITUDE
EMOTIONS
DRUGS
COGNITIVE
TREATMENT

Health and wellbeing is **more than just the absence of an illness**. It includes our physical health and safety, social and emotional health, spiritual wellness and subjective sense of wellbeing.

Mental and emotional well-being is essential to overall health. Positive mental health allows people to realize their full potential, cope with the stresses of life, work productively, and make meaningful contributions to their communities.



Physical



Emotional



Environmental



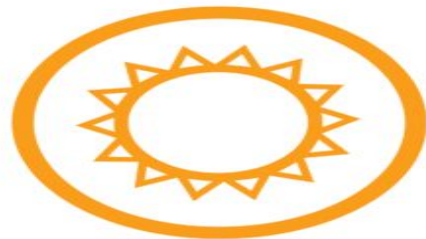
Financial



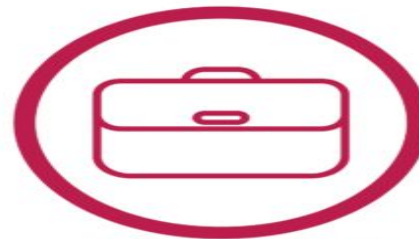
Intellectual



Social



Spiritual




Occupational

Dimensions of Well-being

Dimensions of mental/psychological well being

There are six dimensions of psychological well being:

- ▶ *Self-Acceptance*: Having a positive opinion about oneself
- ▶ *Positive Relationship with other*: Includes pleasure and satisfaction that comes from close contact with people.
- ▶ *Autonomy*: Refers to persons ability to pursue personal convictions and beliefs

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- ▶ *Environmental mastery*: This ability requires that the individual masters the environmental challenges around himself.
 - ▶ *Purpose*: Ability to find purpose and meaning in life
 - ▶ *Personal Growth*: Ability to realize one potential and work towards it.

What is Digital Well-Being?

- ▶ The concept of digital well being refers to the optimal state of health and well-being that one can achieve while using technology.
- ▶ It empowers us to take advantage of the benefits of technology while avoiding associated harms.
- ▶ It is an act of practising healthy digital habits.

How to do we do that?

- ▶ Taking a mindful and intentional approach to using technology that supports our thriving and optimal well-being.

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- ▶ Essentially it means to live holistically healthy lives considering all activities that involve use of digital technologies.
 - ▶ ***Technology should improve our lives and not distract from it.***
 - ▶ Digital well being enhances the use of technology itself to combat increased screentime by using restraint and it promotes wellness by enabling productive and healthy lifestyles.

- ▶ In order to thrive alongside technology, ***we have to enhance our skills.***
- ▶ Skills in the key areas that our digital behaviour relate to, and that includes our mental and physical health, our relationships, productivity, communication, environment.
- ▶ These are the various skills that students need to learn in order to navigate and thrive in the online world today.
- ▶ ***Skills-----need to learn...***

Why it is a concern?

- ▶ We are spending almost 70 minutes a day on OTT platforms, 40 min average session-----increase during multiple use
- ▶ We are using digital devices for work, learning, entertainment and all forms of communication.
- ▶ There has been an 47 % increase in data traffic since 2019, and 96% of this was constituted by 4G.
- ▶ Excessive use of pornographic content among adolescents
- ▶ Rising mental health issues among children and adolescents.
- ▶ Decreased life satisfaction with increased use and resulting stress.

Why it is a concern?

- ▶ Social networking sites (SNSs), the modern-day embodiment of identity expression, **have revolutionized the way individuals construct and convey their individuality.**
- ▶ Digital spaces serve as virtual extensions of one's self, allowing for the expression of their preferred identity narratives.
- ▶ **'E-Personality'**-- selective self-presentation and idealized identities

Digital Burnout

- The problem of digital burnout, specifically refers to feelings of exhaustion, anxiety, depression, or diminished interest in a job stemming from too much time on digital devices.
- Physical signs include sleep disorders, decreased energy, and even chest pains. Chronic irritability can also occur along with fatigue.
- **In students or youngsters, eye strain and sleep disorders is the common sign of digital burnout.**

NINE STRATEGIES TO FOSTER STUDENT WELLBEING

in a digital environment

OVERCOMING ISOLATION AND LONELINESS

Strategy 1: Building a social presence model

Strategy 2: Peer tutoring

Strategy 3: Backchannelling

BOOSTING LEARNING ENGAGEMENT

Strategy 4: Gamification of learning

Strategy 5: Digital stories

Strategy 6: Digital participation and resilience

IMPROVING SELF-REGULATED LEARNING SKILLS

Strategy 7: Supporting metacognitive skills

Strategy 8: Managing workload

Strategy 9: Mindfulness

1. Overcoming Social Isolation and Loneliness

- **“Social Presence”** is the degree to which a person is perceived as a “real person” and connected to others in the process of communication through a medium.
- Social presence can be created by more meaningful and significant digital learning experiences as a way to decrease the feeling of being disconnected

- Invest time in guiding students on their digital learning journey, for example, through summaries and timetables of overall class progress on assignments or assessments; emails to summarize a recent forum discussion or to congratulate students on their progress.
- Provide timely feedback, incorporating empathy, feelings and emotions.
- Create open discussion forums, as a space where students can engage in informal discussions that are of interest to them.

Implications for practice in fostering wellbeing within learning environment

- Incorporate into the digital learning space personal profiles, individual learning portfolios and photos that provide students with social cues and visual connection.
- Design opportunities for students to express their feelings, experiences and ideas, for example, through discussion forums, digital groups or case studies; real-world scenarios; or sharing experiences about assignments.

2. Peer Tutoring

Peer tutoring refers to a variety of strategies in which learners work in pairs or small groups to provide each other with explicit teaching and assessment support. There are various scenarios to organize peer tutoring:

- **same-age peer tutoring**, when tutoring occurs between students of the same age or grade level
- **cross-age peer tutoring**, when tutoring occurs between students of differing ages where the older student tutors the younger student.
- **reciprocal peer tutoring**, when paired students alternate roles as tutor and tutee.

Implications for practice peer tutoring

- Plan “get to know each other” sessions or moments for personal bonding.
- Provide activities that are sufficiently challenging for the tutee to benefit from the tutor’s support.
- Design effective support for the tutor to ensure the quality of peer interaction and their individual wellbeing.
- Use tutoring activities to review or consolidate learning, rather than to introduce new material.
- Design an appropriate structure for the tutoring programme.

3. Careful integration (Backchannelling)

Backchannelling is a parallel type of digital communication that is happening concurrently with a specific face-to face or digital learning and teaching activity.

Examples of backchannelling could include various social media tools: ***chat rooms, quiz tools, social networking tools, polls, questions and answers tools, whiteboards, pinboards, message boards, etc.***

Implications for practice backchannelling

- Provide opportunities for peer-to-peer backchannelling that are linked to a specific pedagogical and wellbeing purpose.
- Involve students in establishing clear values and norms for constructive communication.

4. Gamification of learning

Gamification in the context of learning is a design process of adding game elements in order to change existing learning processes (Sailer, Homner 2020).

The intent here is to revise the process, so that users experience it as game-like (Landers et al. 2017).

Implications for practice gamification

- Provide options for students to choose between gamification and traditional methods in order to decrease potential anxiety and ensure a positive level of engagement.
- Continuously involve students in self-assessment and reflection on their engagement with gamified learning experiences.

5. Digital Stories

Digital stories are short videos/presentations that combine stand-alone and first-person narratives with the use of multimedia.

There are many different types of digital stories, for example: ***personal narratives*** – stories that contain accounts of significant incidents in one's life; ***historical documentaries*** – stories that examine dramatic events that help us to understand the past; and stories that inform or instruct the viewer on a particular concept or practice

Implications for practice digital stories

- Explicitly define the wellbeing aspect that you want to address through digital stories and provide sufficient information to students about the process.
- Make sure students possess enough digital literacy to be able to use appropriate tools in the process of digital story development.

6. Building Digital Resilience

Digital resilience represents the technical, emotional and critical thinking skills students (and educators) need to enjoy the benefits of the internet, while still spotting the dangers and managing the risks.

Various impact evaluations have shown that digital risk prevention and intervention programmes can be effective---- **education about cyberbullying, coping skills, empathy training, communication and social skills, digital citizenship, and parent education on cyberbullying.**

7. Developing Meta-cognitive Skill

Metacognitive skills are strategies applied consciously or automatically during learning, a cognitive activity, and communication to manipulate cognitive processes before, during or after a cognitive activity.

Examples are executive-function processes, such as verbal mediation, self-regulation, planning, judgment and self-monitoring.

Implications for practice meta-cognitive skill

- Encourage students to think about the goal of their learning (set by the teacher or themselves) and to consider how they will approach the task.
- Support students to self-assess the progress they are making; this includes the self-testing and self-questioning activities necessary to control learning and make changes to chosen strategies.
- Adjust efforts to promote metacognition to grade levels. Primary students need more scaffolded support for developing metacognition than secondary students.

8. Managing work (Planning skills)

Managing workload is a complex set of self-management skills, covering planning and monitoring skills, time management skills, the ability to manage distraction and perseverance towards a learning goal.

Objective workload commonly comprises compulsory curriculum instruction hours; additional instruction time; the number of assessment events or concentration of the internal or external assessment moments in a given period.

Subjective workload expresses the impact of the objective workload on perceptions, emotions and attitudes.

Implications for practice managing work

- Help students to set small, reachable goals that they can work towards.
- Use various tools to track students' progress such as: time management logs, checklists, rating scales for students' self-assessment.
- For challenging content, break learning content into units with clearly specified objectives which are pursued until they are achieved.

8. Mindfulness

Mindfulness means maintaining a moment-by-moment awareness of our thoughts, emotions, bodily sensations, and surrounding environment with openness and curiosity.

People who are self-focused, as well as non-judging towards their inner experiences, are better at self-regulated learning and growth.

Implications for practice mindfulness

- Start and End of the Day: Begin and conclude with a few minutes of deep breathing.
- Use brief breathing exercises between activities.
- Integrate short mindfulness breaks throughout the day.
- Incorporate stretching or basic yoga poses.
- Have students write down daily gratitude.
- Share gratitude as a class.

Implications for practice mindfulness

- Engage students in mindful drawing or coloring.
- Create art using natural materials.
- Explain the concept and benefits of mindfulness.
- Assign projects related to mindfulness themes.
- Use calming decorations and quotes.
- Practice mindfulness yourself and demonstrate it to students.

Some common themes to remember as teacher/guardian

- Screen time is the total time spent per day in viewing screens such as mobile phone, TV, computer, tablet, or any hand-held or visual device.
- If any of the essential activities such as sleep, physical activity, study, family, meal, and hobby times is displaced due to screen time, then it is called excessive screen time and it should be reduced.
- Avoid the use of digital devices in children <2 years.

Some common themes to remember as teacher/guardian

- Healthy media usage promotes learning, creativity, social interaction, and holistic wellness.
- Unhealthy media usage affects physical, psychological, social, and academic wellbeing of a child.
- Implement digital rules, digital hygiene, and nurture responsible digital citizenship.
- Consult a mental health professional at the earliest on detecting flag signs of media addiction.
- Act as a role model for healthy media use.

Fostering Healthy Communications

- Follow the golden rule of interpersonal relationships; treat others, as you want yourself to be treated. Never post hurtful messages. Disagree politely
- Use the right language for communication. Avoid the use of swear words. Do not use all caps while typing, as it implies that you are screaming
- Do not post private information such as home address and passwords

- Respect the copyright laws and do not download or copy without permission
- Think before you type, post, and share to check, if it is true, kind, and legal. Before posting a picture, discuss with a parent/ think. Anything posted online cannot be erased permanently, as it leaves a digital footprint.
- Never meet a digital friend in person alone whom you have never met before
- Make internet a safe place by reporting online misbehavior to trustworthy adults

If others repeatedly post hurtful or inappropriate messages, follow these steps:

- Take a break from the online world
- Block the sender
- Do not respond to the hurtful message
- Save the message to enable reporting
- If you know the bully, try talking to their family members
- Try contacting the digital platform provider to block and report the bully. If bullying does not stop, report to the cyber police

Cyberbullying, sexting, and online sexual solicitation are cybercrimes and can be reported at <https://www.cybercrime.gov.in>

Setting Boundaries and Breaks

- Scheduled breaks (regular breaks)
- Screen free zones (eg meal time, pre sleep bed time routine)
- Encouraging offline activities (even when substitutes are present in online)
- Awareness of fatigue and burnout and screen free management.
- Set limits for notifications

Seeking timely help

- If you feel that your mental health is seriously disturbed, do not hesitate to seek help from a mental health professional.
- Talking to a psychologist or therapist can provide the necessary support and solutions.

While the digital age offers unprecedented opportunities, it's crucial to recognize and address the impact it has on our mental health and well-being.

By practicing digital detox, mindfulness, and finding a balance between online and offline activities, we can protect our mental health in this fast-paced and interconnected world.

Remember, taking care of our mental well-being is as important as staying connected, and finding a healthy equilibrium is the key to thriving in the digital age".