Understanding Adolescent And Youth Mental Health
Mental Health And Youth

Mental health is an extremely vital part of a person’s sense of well-being. Good psychological well-being means a state where someone is functioning at a satisfactory level of emotional and behavioural adjustment.

Young people are severely affected by the consequences of bad mental health. The stigma that comes with mental health issues makes it difficult for young people to address their problems.

AN ESTIMATED 11-31 MILLION YOUTH SUFFER FROM REPORTED MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS IN INDIA.
Mental Health Issues

WHAT CREATES THEM?

One of the reasons the youth finds itself experiencing mental health issues is the increased level of competition, lack of support systems and lack of resilience. Another major reason is the environment and the various degrees of social pressure that one may be subjected to. This could range from academic pressure, restrictive gender roles, repressed sexuality, etc. Even though a certain amount of stress is important for us, but chronic stress has negative effects on mind and body both.
What Can We Do Better?

SELF CARE CAN CONTRIBUTE TO YOUR MENTAL WELL-BEING

Various studies have shown that regular exercise, a nutritious diet, good sleeping routine and adequate socialisation can help one maintain mental stability during stressful periods in life.

CONSULTING EXPERTS

Consulting experts who can help one achieve a better state of mental well-being is also a solution that one can look at, despite it holding the most amount of stigma. Due to this stigma, people are not able to avail mental health services when they wish to. Overcoming the stigma and helping them find an expert can help people cope in better ways.
This curriculum runs through 12 hours and is spaced across six sessions. It addresses the intersections between mental health, gender and sexuality for young people and adolescents between the ages of 15-25. The aim of the curriculum is to create awareness on mental health among young people by addressing the gaps in Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) and mental health programming models. The curriculum also aims to break the stigma that exists around one’s mental well-being.
In the sessions run across 2017-2019, many participants expressed to have been dealing with psychosocial disabilities as a result of their sexuality, gender, and environmental stress. While the curriculum design does not incorporate providing mental health services, however, it addresses the need to seek professional help.
Findings From
ON GROUND IMPLEMENTATION

Creating Safe Spaces
Cathartic Experience
Self-Harm
Seeking Help
SESSIONS

- Introduction to Mental Health
- Assertive communication and intersectionality
- Active listening and stress mapping
- Addressing mental health stigma
- Bullying and abusive relationships
- Seeking mental health help
Session 1
Introduction To Mental Health

Time: 2.5 hours

TO INTRODUCE PARTICIPANTS TO MENTAL HEALTH

WHAT LEADS TO GOOD OR BAD MENTAL HEALTH?

TO ADDRESS STRESSORS THAT MAY LEAD TO MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS

TO SHOW THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PHYSICAL HEALTH AND MENTAL HEALTH

TO ADDRESS THE INTERSECTIONS OF MENTAL HEALTH WITH GENDER
Session 2
Assertive Communication and Intersectionality

To address power hierarchies (caste, class, gender, sexuality, age, etc.) in various relationships.

To understand how gender and sexuality plays a role within these relationships.

To be aware of one’s own emotional needs in any relationship, and being able to assert them.

To address current forms of communication within various relationships (aggressive, passive or assertive).

To provide participants with tools for effective assertive communication.

Time: 2.5 hours
Session 3
Active Listening And Stress Mapping

Time: 2.5 hours

To make participants understand the importance of hearing someone out.

To understand the importance of a support group.

What happens when you actively listen to someone?

To draw links between active listening and assertive communication.

To address what are the factors contributing to mental stress.
Session 4
Bullying And Abusive Relationships

To understand what constitutes bullying

To be able to identify an abusive relationship

To be able to know who an abuser/bully is.

To be able to create communication strategies to stand up to bullies/abusers.

Time: 2.5 hours
Session 5

Addressing Mental Health Stigma

To bring out the different ways mental health and physical health issues are treated.

To address self-stigma when it comes to dealing with mental health issues.

To address what are the factors contributing to mental health stigma.

To understand how mental health stigma affects people across all genders.

Time: 1.5 hours
Session 6
Seeking Mental Health Help

TO DISCUSS VARIOUS KINDS OF MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT SYSTEMS.

TO PROVIDE PARTICIPANTS WITH A LIST OF MENTAL HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS.

TO BE ABLE TO CREATE AWARENESS ON THE IMPORTANCE OF ACCESSING MENTAL HEALTHCARE.

TO ADDRESS THE STIGMA ATTACHED TO APPROACHING PROFESSIONAL MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES.

Time: 1.5 hours
CREATE A SAFE SPACE
This can be done by setting ground rules that accommodate their needs.

SELF-CARE
It is important for you to take care of yourself. Remember to take adequate breaks between sessions, and between workshops.

NO-JUDGEMENT
Don’t judge participants’ coping mechanisms, or try to provide them with the ‘right’ coping mechanisms. However, facilitate a discussion about how different things may work for different people.

VOCABULARY
Ask the participants what language they prefer the session to be conducted in.. Refrain from using an exclusively binary, and heteronormative language during the sessions, as it will just reinforce existing narratives around gender and sexuality.

TOUGH SITUATIONS
In case if an emotionally charged situation comes up in which the participants cry, or talk about having engaged in self-harm in the past – make sure to offer them support. After that, always make sure to talk about seeking professional help.
THANK YOU!