



Volume 1- Issue 1

*"To be
Healthy
as a
Whole,
Mental
Wellness
Plays a
Role"*

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THE COUNSELLING CENTRE NEWSLETTER

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Teachers as Mental Health Soldiers

On 16th September, 2017, the Counselling Centre conducted a workshop titled 'Teachers as Mental Health Soldiers', for the teaching faculty of the college, international board, and state board schools. Senior Psychiatrist, Dr. Harish Shetty and the Counselling Centre team engaged the audience through role-plays and audio-visuals. Participants were invited to share their personal experiences of frequent mood swings, feelings of worthlessness, suicidal ideations and persistent anxiety.



The purpose of the workshop was to empower teachers, with the necessary skills to help themselves and others with mental health concerns. It emphasized the point, that mental wellness, like physical wellness, should be prerogative. As quoted by Dr. Shetty, "Mental Health is

too important to be left to mental health professionals alone."



The participants interacted in an enthusiastic Q & A session, to dispel myths regarding mental illness. It was a pioneering step towards the growing community of mental health advocates.

Safety of Children in Schools

On 25th September'17, Pratima Bhandarkar, Head of the Counselling Centre was invited by Doordarshan 'Sakhi Sahyadri' programme for live panel discussion on Safety of Children in Schools, along with Advocate Manisha Tulpule. Safety of children in the schools is not limited to

infrastructural provisions like CCTV cameras, additional security personnel and separate toilets for girls and boys, but extends more so to the emotional safety of students. Teachers' understanding of the child's emotional world is crucial in providing a secure base for the students. Child Protec-

tion Policies in schools should reflect the regulations, legislations and good practices. Welfare of the child is paramount and all school activities should centre around the physical, emotional, social and psychological needs of the child.



A DATE WITH DEPRESSION



You can be the ONE that Helps

Depression is more than just low mood and can affect anyone. It is caused by a combination of biological, psychological and social factors. Timely interventions can save a person's health, and possibly a life.

The Counseling Center organized a **one day workshop for teachers** to

understand depression and help be an ally in maintaining positive school mental health. With the increasing number of tweens, adolescents' manifesting depressive symptoms, families undergoing multiple stressors, understanding the illness is imperative. The workshop attended by 50

teachers from various schools across Mumbai was received with much enthusiasm and active participation. The workshop encapsulated identification of depression, strategies by which teachers can act as a support system for children and parents to aid in positive mental health in schools.

Hum Saath Saath Hain



Being a parent may seem like a difficult task, but it is a beautiful experience indeed. "Hum Saath Saath Hain – Parents, you are not alone, and we are all in this together." The workshop was conducted on 16th December, 2017.

The aim was to equip parents of the pre-primary section to face and effectively overcome the many challenges in this journey of parenting. It was an interactive session, involving role-plays and recounts of daily struggles

of parents. The workshop tackled developmental concerns gross and fine motor skills, behavior modification and reinforcement, and strategies for effective parenting.

Intervention to fill in the Interruption

School years form a major part of a child's life, and academic achievement is seen as a major contributor to his or her success story. Statistical evidence indicates, 10 per cent of the school children have specific learning difficulties which hamper aca-

demic progress. Specific Learning Disability is a neurological condition which interferes with effective learning and functioning throughout life. The children who are labeled as 'lazy' and 'underachievers' in fact, have high potentials,

which remain unseen. The difficulties can be minimized with early identification and **Remediation**. Remedial classes include specialized instructions to equip the students with modified learning strategies for improved performance.

"Every student can learn, just not on the same day or the same way"

-George Evans



THE LIFE SKILLS LAB

An effective education system targets holistic development of students. The State Board School in liaison with Counselling Center introduced **'THE LIFE SKILLS LAB'** - A Life Skills Education (LSE) program, for grades I - VII.

The activities in the curriculum include **World Health Organization (WHO)** pre-

scribed topics of self awareness and empathy, creative thinking, critical thinking, decision making, problem solving, effective communication, interpersonal skills and coping with emotions and stress. The modules are personalized to the developmental needs of students, enhancing their adaptive skills and emotional wellbeing.



"Education that helps young people to develop (Life skills) has Transformative potential"

- UNICEF

GRATITUDE CIRCLE

'Gratitude - a simple word that conveys a feeling of joy and satisfaction. Most of us associate gratitude with saying "Thank you" to someone who has helped us or given us a gift. From a scientific perspective, gratitude is not just an action. Gratitude is a positive emotion, which is really impor-

tant because it serves a purpose. It enhances the emotional well-being of a person, forms new social relations, or builds upon and makes current relations better.

Enhancement of this skill was introduced in the IPC section as "Gratitude Circle". Children

learnt to express thanks in variety of creative ways. They danced, clapped, sang to rhythmic expressions of emotions and the classrooms were infused with a feeling of joy, togetherness and wholehearted fun.



PARENT- In STYLE

Needless to say, parenting is not an easy task in the present generation of tech savvy smart kids. Add on pressuring work schedules, every parent can relate to the demanding toll raising a child can take. The 1½ hour session, conducted on 12th March, 2018 for parents of CP 1, 2 Grades, fo-

cused on a simple 3 step mantra **"PDF"** - **P**lay time, **D**igital Diet and **F**amily time: the three main important things children need to have, to reduce behavioral issues most commonly noted, like gadget addiction, tantrums and poor social relations. Understanding normal developmental issues and identi-

fying the behavior that may require intervention from a specialist were highlighted. Establishing schedules, timely and consistent rewards for the child to ensure that a behavior pattern is established was discussed with the parents in an interactive session.

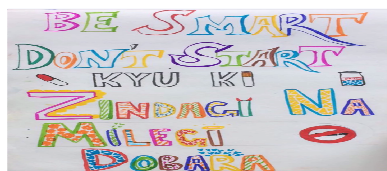
PIONEERING SCHOOL SAFETY POLICIES

The focus of educational institutions in present times cannot be limited to academics alone, but in fact extends to providing a sound and wholesome physical, social and psychological set up for children and youth. Recognizing this, and in accordance with the education institution's Mission Statement of 'Personality Development for Nation Building', the Counselling Centre has framed and integrated the Drug Policy and Child Protection Policy in the day

to day operation of the school and college in the best interests and holistic development of its students. The institution's **DRUGS POLICY**, released on World Mental Health Day, calls for a commitment to provide a drug free environment and observe **ZERO TOLERANCE** towards drug and alcohol use in all facets of the student's life whether on or off the school/college campus. The Policy provides clear guidance and procedures in drug related incidents. Drugs, in the policy includes tobacco, alcohol and illegal drugs, as mentioned

in the NDPS Act, as well as prescription drugs used outside medical and pharmaceutical advice. The school has adopted the '**Be Smart, Don't Start**' slogan as part of its **Drug Education Programme 'Zindagi Na Milegi Dobara'** aimed at helping students make positive choices and developing their social and decision making skills focuses on mental health issues along with developing healthy coping mechanisms to stress.

Sensitization and Training of teachers to identify signs of drug use among students is an important module of this programme.



Like wise the institution released its **CHILD PROTECTION POLICY** on

17th Sept 17. This policy emphatically reflects the voices of the children who are the major stakeholders of the institution. The policy, with its two-pronged approach i.e. protection of children and prevention of abuse, advocates **ZERO TOLERANCE to child abuse** of any kind and makes a commitment to the safety, health and well-being of its students. The policy gives clear guidelines on dealing with disclosures of abuse including procedures for a parent to report a concern or a complaint.

In addition, it includes steps and protective measures to address incidents of bullying and suicidal ideations. It draws upon various legislations like Indian Penal Code, Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO), Right to Education, Juvenile Justice Act and Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act. The inclusive policy emphasizes the protection of children with additional needs, disabilities, and

from weaker or disadvantaged backgrounds. **THE ANTI-BULLYING POLICY** is incorporated in this policy and emphasizes the school's zero tolerance to bullying.

The '**Stay Safe Programme**' plays a pivotal role in helping children develop the skills necessary to recognize and resist abuse and potentially abusive situations.

Staff training and awareness of child abuse, categories of abuse, signs and symptoms of abuse are part of the programme. The policies are live documents, which are reviewed and updated periodically, based on feedback and lessons learnt from the cycle of implementation, monitoring, evaluation and refinement.

They are available on the institution's website for reference:- <http://www.smsheettyinstitute.org/>



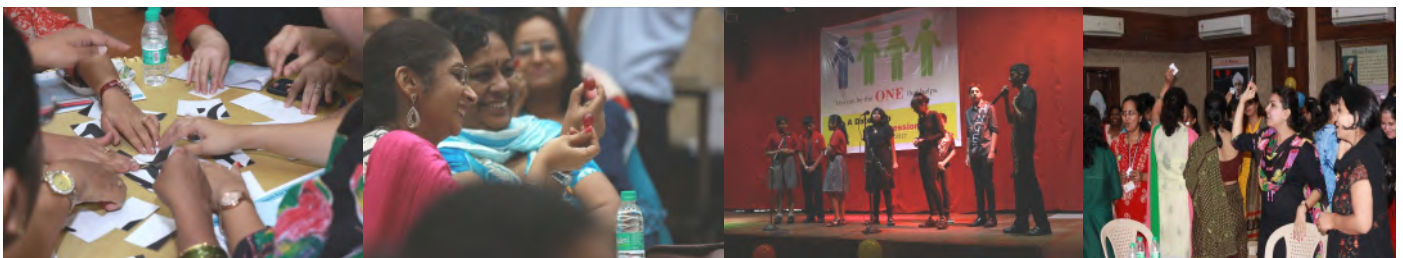
POCSO training for Security Staff

Life Skills Education Program



I-VII Grade students involved in Team Work, decision making, learning to communicate effectively, creative thinking, developing an attitude of gratitude and understanding emotions.

Date with Depression



Depression can be puzzling

Practicing Mindfulness

IG students enact Depression

Way through the blues

Teachers as Mental Health Soldiers



Handling Suicide Sensitive

Discuss Mental Health openly

Empathize and Empower

Panel discussion

Responsible Netism



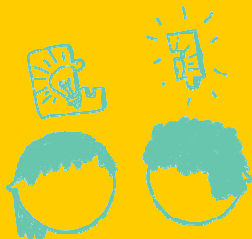
Chk.Pt. students with Ms. Sonali Patankar on Cyber Safety



Peer Training on Study Skills



Students training their classmates for smart studying



Peer Moderator

Peer Moderator Program - a venture by Fortis Hospital involved enabling students to help train their peers in necessary study skills.

Four students from Grade 9 participated in this program on 7th December 2017 and were expertly equipped with better learning strategies.

They conducted a session for their classmates, thus emphasizing their role as a "Peer Moderator" and helping their classmates in effective learning. The key areas in the session included strategies to study, minimize stress and increasing self confidence. The underlying message was "Study

Smart while Working Hard" and their classmates were in complete accordance.



Supporting the Shadow Support

Children with difficulties often have challenges in a classroom environment. And enabling the child to overcome or adapt to the challenges is a demanding and innovative task. To help the shadow teachers be more effective in their

work, group sessions were held every month.

The aim of the sessions was to build interactive group learning, introduce basic understanding of neurodevelopmental disorders and troubleshooting daily

difficulties. Teachers started to rely on each other as a team and working more cohesively with each other. They felt more emboldened in their efforts and it improved their interactions with the children.



XII grade students expressing What makes them HAPPY !

Together We Can !

Wholehearted participation in any activity is a trait observed in all our college students. The zest and energy of our students can be reflected in multifold areas.

The students of Junior

college were leading participants in being propagators for positive mental health. They gladly welcomed the initiative of being 'Mental Health Soldiers' to help their friends in times of stress. They were equipped with understanding commonly

faced stressors of college life and techniques to help themselves and others. They understood that in liaison with their capable teachers, they could be a strong support system to each other. "Together We Can" was truly a resounding feeling that could be seen in the effervescent crowd.



Sessions with Degree College

Degree college teachers thoroughly enjoying at the De-stress session



'Mental health Soldiers' with degree college students



House keeping, Security and Bus staff members exploring their inner child and sharing perfect moments of joy :-)

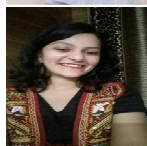
Professional Development



Hello...from the Team



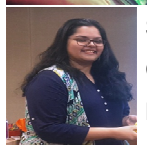
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MSW, Dip. Play Therapy, PGDMS
Counsellor: Checkpoint, IG,AS, IB



Nidhi Chheda - Clinical Psychologist
Counsellor: State Board (Secondary Section)



Natasha Mehta-Counseling Psychologist
Counsellor: Junior College, IPC (Afternoon)
Degree College (BMS,BSc.IT,BBI,MSc.IT)



Sushreeta Sule - Clinical Psychologist
Counsellor: Pre primary , IPC (Morning)
Degree College (BAF,B.Com,BMM,M.Com)



Divya Nair - Clinical Psychologist
Counsellor: State Board (Primary section)
International board (CP)



Regina Corda - Special Educator
State Board (Secondary section) and
Students with SEN



Sarah Thomas- Special Educator
State Board (Primary section) and
Students with SEN



Lakshmi Vivishnavel - Special Educator
Preprimary; IPC, CP, Checkpoint and
Students with SEN

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