

MENTAL HEALTH WELLBEING REPORT

SPRING SEMESTER 2022



OVERVIEW

Our Counselling Department offers a safe, confidential space where students can speak to caring professionals who support and guide them in processing their challenges, learning coping techniques, and finding out more about themselves and others. This report reflects on Woodstock's recent wellbeing activities that have been instrumental in student wellness. The impacts of Covid have greatly affected student emotional wellbeing. For instance, several research studies have found behavioural changes in children and their expression of emotions during Covid quarantine, including difficulty concentrating, boredom, irritability, restlessness, loneliness, discomfort, and expression of worries. In light of these challenges, our Counselling Department undertook many mental health awareness measures, such as training Wellbeing Ambassadors as peers helping fellow students with their mental wellbeing.

ME AND MY FEELINGS SURVEY

Reopening the school following closure for Covid involved, among other things, staff sensitizing and capacity building in our Staff Retreat at the beginning of the academic year. During the school year we also conducted a survey using the Me and My Feelings questionnaire, a school mental health inquiry tool provided by the Anna Freud Foundation to help understand the views and self-expression of children and adolescents regarding their mental health, to which we added several socio-demographic data points for an even clearer picture. Notable survey results indicated that about 75 percent of respondents expressed feeling happy most of the time; 12 percent reported feeling lonely at times; 11 percent reported frequent crying; 22 percent reported sleep issues; 80 percent reported enjoying being at school; and 65 percent reported feeling comfortable sharing with a peer about their emotional concerns. Based on these findings, we initiated the Wellbeing Ambassadors Programme to make support easily accessible, even at dorms.



WELLBEING AMBASSADORS PROGRAMME

This programme identifies – after a thorough vetting process – and trains students in Grades 11 and 12 who will be able to provide active peer listening for other students on campus. Wellbeing Ambassadors are equipped to promote wellbeing on campus by reaching out to students in need of a buddy or in challenging situations requiring resolution. This peer support group of Wellbeing Ambassadors aims to spread positivity through awareness sessions and interactive events to raise consciousness about pertinent issues around mental health. All of these students aim to improve student wellbeing at Woodstock and give students an outlet for their feelings closer to home.



CELEBRATING MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS DAY

Our school-wide mental health awareness week raised awareness about the concept of positive emotional wellbeing through self-care. Staff and students participated enthusiastically in the activities which included Words of Appreciation, Wall of Kindness, Mental Health Walk, I Am Awesome Mirror, Greeting Wednesday, Building an Emotions Tree, and more. Dr Sunita Rani, Professor at the Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration, encouraged students to start building meaningful emotional connections with each other.

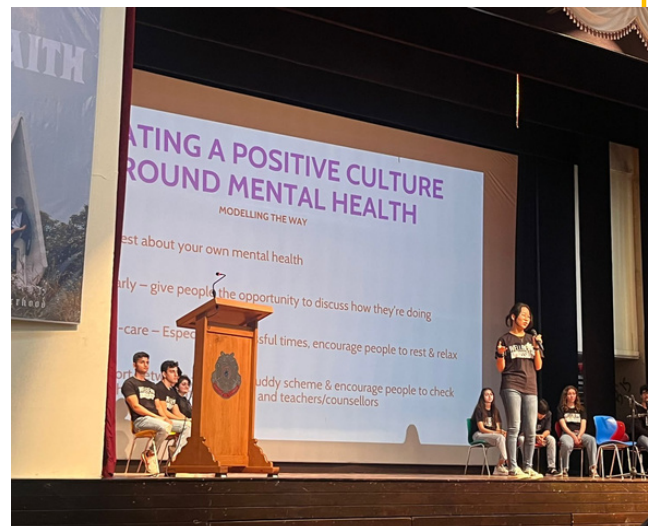
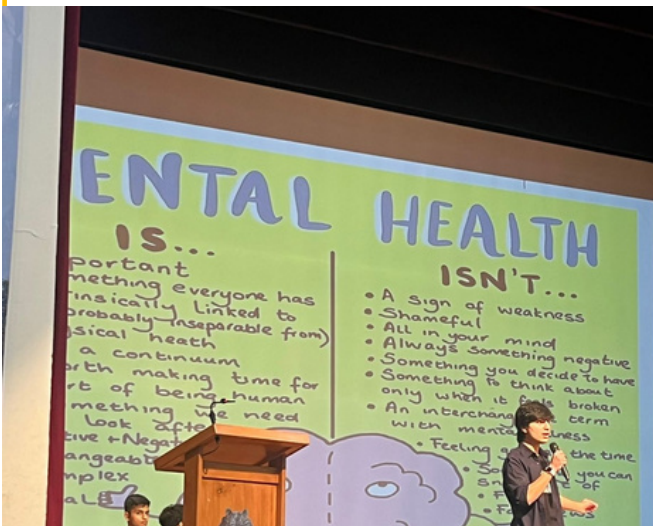


BUILDING BRIDGES – BUILDING MENTAL HEALTH

This very successful programme conducted by the Wellbeing Team spread the message of mental health in nearby schools. Our Wellbeing Ambassadors made the students aware of

- The importance of early recognition
- Practical tips on building resiliency
- The importance of practicing positive coping skills
- Tips to develop study and time management skills
- Healthy boundaries

Awareness building skits showcased various day to day scenarios a student might face. We wrapped up with a discussion on some positive coping mechanisms. The team covered a wide range of topics that included stigma around mental health, social media and mental health, substance use awareness, cyber safety, resilience, and practical tips to beat stress and anxiety.



On the 10th of October 2022 our Wellbeing Team visited the village of Dhana, located two hours from Woodstock, to spread the message *Make Mental Health for All a Global Priority* to schools in and around the Thatyur block of Tehri District. Three inter-colleges and two degree colleges participated in the event in which our team conveyed the importance of mental health through skits in the local language. The presentation again covered a wide range of topics that included stigma around mental health, social media and mental health, substance use awareness, cyber safety, resilience, and practical tips to beat stress and anxiety.

CELEBRATING WORLD MENTAL HEALTH DAY



HEALTHY MIND – HEALTHY SCHOOL INITIATIVE

These home room and dorm sessions with different grade levels helped students build strong, trusting relationship with their peers and initiate dialogue on various aspects of mental health. The programme gives all students a platform to open conversations and develop student awareness of good mental health.





Theme of the month TAKE THE TIME TO TALK AND UNPLUG..

Happy Holidays dear students!

We hope you all are staying well and are enjoying your holidays. After two long years of virtual learning, you all got a chance to be on the campus and enjoy the hillside. Now it's time to engage constructively with your loved ones! Make the best out of your holidays ! Choose wisely – stay connected with your feelings and emotions. Be positive. Be hopeful. Be helpful. Use this time to make a difference in your life or in the lives of someone else. Work on areas of personal growth, spend quality time with family, and focus on goals for the future..

Even if you can't meet few distant loved ones, call them - you never know the impact of what a simple 5-minute phone call could do for someone. Spread that love each and every day. May the sky stay blue, may the wind be at your back, and may you find something that makes you smile each and every day! Be mindful of what is still within your power to do and do it. Take time to reflect on who or what is most important to you. This is a good time to take good care of you and to be kind to others.

COUNSELLOR CONNECT – OUR MONTHLY NEWSLETTER



Theme of the month LIFE IS WONDERFUL, DON'T MAKE IT PAINFUL. JUST QUIT SMOKING!

Among teenagers,
e-cigarettes have become more
popular along with many other
smoking products,

Most e-cigarettes contain nicotine, which is highly addictive especially for teens. E-cigarettes and e-cigarette liquid may contain nicotine, even if they have been labelled 'nicotine free'. One e-liquid pod can contain as much nicotine as a packet of cigarettes.

Nicotine exposure during the teenage years can harm brain development, which continues until about age 25. It can impact learning, memory and attention, and increase risk for future addiction to other drugs. Young people who use e-cigarettes may be more likely to go on to use regular cigarettes.



Contributors

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Theme of the Month – EMPATHY

COUNSELLING TEAM

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Empathy is one of the most important aspects of creating strong relationships, reducing stress, and enhancing emotional awareness – yet it can be tricky at times.

We might consider ourselves to be empathetic, but sometimes with certain people and in particular situations, our natural ability and desire to empathize can be diminished or almost non-existent, especially these days.

It's important to understand that empathy is not sympathy. When we're sympathetic, we often pity someone else but maintain our distance (physically, mentally, and emotionally) from their feelings or experience.

Empathy is feeling with a person, rather than feeling sorry for a person.

<https://mike-robbins.com/the-power-of-empathy/>



BE A BUDDY, NOT A BULLY – ANTI-BULLYING AWARENESS DAY

Be a Buddy, Not a Bully was celebrated at Woodstock as a part of Anti-bullying Awareness Day. Based on the theme, our Wellbeing Ambassadors organised activities that included poster making and slogan writing competitions. Staff and students participated in a *Be a Buddy* quilt making activity. Early Years students took part in kindness and friendship colouring activities and made friendship bracelets for themselves. The message conveyed was, “Together we can make Woodstock a better, safer, happier place.”



MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS SESSION FOR WOODSTOCK GRADES 8, 9, 10

Our Counselling Department and Wellbeing Ambassadors organised a mental health awareness session for peer to peer support. The Wellbeing Ambassadors presented on pertinent mental health issues such as exam anxiety and time management. Students participated actively and asked important questions of these peer leaders.





BRIDGING THE GAP BETWEEN COMMUNITIES

Our Counselling Department and Wellbeing Ambassadors teamed up again to organise a mental health awareness session for the Sanatan Dharam Inter-College in order to encourage holistic wellness within the community. The Wellbeing Ambassadors presented on pertinent mental health issues such as exam anxiety, social media usage, POCSO awareness, and other topics. The students in attendance again participated actively and asked important questions of these peer leaders.

