

Need to invest in mental health literacy to address challenges of youth: KU VC



Srinagar, Dec 5: To equip teachers with essential knowledge and tools to effectively address mental health concerns among students, the Department of Social Work, Kashmir University (KU) on Tuesday inaugurated a two-day training workshop focussing on the mental health literacy for school teachers.

During the two days of knowledge exchange, the participants will deliberate on the prevalence and incidence of mental health issues, stressing the pivotal role of relevant stakeholders in collectively addressing and mitigating these concerns.

In her message, Vice Chancellor, Kashmir University, emphasised the critical importance of mental health literacy among teachers in addressing the health challenges faced by today's youth.

"Investing in mental health literacy among our teachers is pivotal to effectively address the multifaceted health challenges encountered by the youth in our society," she said, adding that by arming educators with the necessary tools and knowledge, the aim is to cultivate a more empathetic, supportive and informed educational ecosystem.

Prof Nilofer Khan also urged for concerted efforts in integrating mental health education into teacher-training programmes.

Head, Department of Psychiatry, Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences (IMHANS), Srinagar, Prof M Maqbool Dar elaborated on the identification and understanding of signs and symptoms associated with mental illnesses, including the growing occurrences of OCD (Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder) and phobias in the region.

“Parents have a crucial role to play in supporting the mental well-being of their children,” he maintained.

Head, Social and Preventive Medicine, GMC (Government Medical College), Baramulla, Prof Abdul Majeed shared insights into motivational interviewing techniques aimed at facilitating positive behavioural changes among young individuals grappling with mental health issues.

Programme in-charge, Department of Social Work, Dr Aadil Bashir underscored the pivotal role of mental health literacy among educators in addressing the pressing health concerns confronting today's youth.

He said, “Workshops like these empower the educators in addressing problems related to mental health of the youth with proper solutions.”

During the workshop, a newly developed manual, shedding light on various mental health issues and authored by Dr Aadil Bashir and Senior Research Fellow, Dr Misba Rafiq was unveiled and shared among the participants.

Dr Misba Rafiq highlighted the concerning lack of psychological resources such as coping mechanisms, stress management techniques, social skills and emotional regulation abilities among young individuals.

“This deficiency has been contributing to the increasing instances of poor mental health in today's youth,” she added.

Faculty at the Department of Social Work, Dr Sarfaraz Ahmad, delivered the vote of thanks.