

Mental Health Cell

Annual Report

A.Y.2023-24

Mental health is important at every stage of life, from childhood and adolescence through adulthood. It also helps determine how we handle stress and make healthy choices. The Cell works towards the overall well-being of students. With the objective of extending emotional support and ensure mental health of students and staff, Mental Health Cell organized various programs and initiatives aimed at enhancing awareness, providing support, and fostering a culture of mental health within the college community throughout the year. The activities undertaken by the Cell are as thus:

- **Weekly Personal Counselling Sessions**

Every Wednesday, the college offers one-on-one counselling sessions facilitated by professional therapist, Ms. Shruti Tekawade. The empathetic listening, personalized guidance helps students to face and to navigate through their concerns.

The college has appointed, professional counsellor and therapist in order to provide counselling, guidance and support to students. Many students have opted for one-on-one personal counselling for different issues that include anxiety, relationship problems, depression and career guidance, to name a few.

- **Orientation Session-**

At the onset of the academic year, we conducted an orientation session for incoming students. It was conducted on 22nd June, 2023 by professional counsellor and therapist Ms. Shruti Tekawade. This session aimed to introduce them to the resources available at the Mental Health Cell and to emphasize the importance of mental well-being in academic success. Students were advised about dealing with their day-to-day personal, emotional, social problems.

- **Happiness Index-**

A survey was conducted among teaching and non-teaching staff to find out their state of mental well-being and level of their happiness. Happiness of teachers is important not only for themselves but also for society as a whole. The Oxford Happiness Questionnaire developed by Michael Argyle and Peter Hills was used for the same. The survey revealed that average happiness level of staff was 'Above Average/Pretty Happy'.

- **Sessions on 'Tension-Free Life'-**

The Cell organized two sessions on 'Tension-Free Life' on 11th and 27th December 2023 for students and for non-teaching staff respectively. Dr. Mangala Pansare of Manashakti Research Centre, Lonavala, conducted these sessions. It was an interactive session with activities related to functioning of brain. She guided about stress management techniques, brain stimulating activities and games, etc.

- **Anxiety Test for students-**

Everyone has to face problems of stress and anxiety. College students also face anxiety due to different factors such as peer pressure, academic performance, financial, family related, career related anxiety, etc. Recognizing the prevalence of anxiety among college students, the Cell conducted an Anxiety test of 440 students by using the State

Trait Anxiety Inventory developed by C.H. Spielberger. The report of the test revealed that the average anxiety level of students is high.

- **Session on ‘Dealing with exam related stress’-**

A session on ‘Dealing with exam related anxiety’ was held in college on 10th April 2024. It was facilitated by a professional counsellor and therapist Ms. Shruti Tekawade. The session was organised by Mental Health Cell and Mentorship Cell of DES SNFLC. This session was organized to address the common issue of stress and anxiety that students face as they prepare for their upcoming university examinations. The initiative aimed to provide students with practical strategies and emotional support to manage the pressures associated with academic evaluations.

The session aimed to educate students on different types of stress, the origins of anxiety, and various coping mechanisms that can be employed to tackle exam-related stress effectively. The session delved into the root causes of anxiety, highlighting factors such as fear of failure, lack of preparation, and high expectations from oneself or others. The counsellor outlined the physiological and psychological impacts of stress, explaining how it can impair cognitive functions, reduce concentration, and negatively affect performance. Various coping mechanisms were shared with the attendees, emphasizing the importance of activities such as meditation, proper sleep, maintaining a healthy diet, and regular exercise in managing stress levels. She highlighted the need of engaging in activities that promote relaxation, such as deep breathing exercises, meditation, and physical exercise.

The students showed keen interest in the session, actively participating in discussions and asking questions to gain further insights into dealing with exam-related stress. By addressing both the practical and emotional aspects of exam-related stress, the programme not only prepared students for their exams but also contributed to their overall mental well-being.

This dedicated support system of Mental Health Cell not only enhances students' mental health and academic performance but also cultivates a nurturing campus environment where individuals feel heard, supported, and equipped to thrive.

