

MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES FOR STUDENTS

ANXIETY:

Anxiety is a normal human emotion that signals a response to perceived threat, change, or pressure. For students, it often shows up around academic demands, social expectations, or transitions. However, when anxiety becomes excessive, persistent, or interferes with daily functioning (studies, relationships, sleep), it moves from being helpful to harmful.

Signs and Symptoms:

- Constant or excessive worrying about tests, performance, what others think.
- Physical symptoms: rapid heartbeat, sweating, dizziness, stomach aches, headaches.
- Difficulty concentrating or staying still; on-edge or restless.
- Avoidance behaviours: skipping classes, avoiding group work, not participating.
- Sleep problems: trouble falling asleep, waking frequently, or being fatigued despite sleep.

Initial Self-helping Strategies:

- Practice deep breathing (e.g., inhale for 4, hold for 7, exhale for 8) or simple grounding (5-4-3-2-1 senses) when you feel anxious.
- Break large tasks into smaller steps; prepare for upcoming work to reduce uncertainty.
- Set aside “worry time” (e.g., 15 minutes) and postpone worrying outside that time, then shift to activity.
- Limit caffeine, heavy screen time before bed; ensure consistent sleep schedule.
- Talk with a friend, peer, mentor or counsellor about what triggers your anxiety; naming it reduces its power.

DEPRESSION

Depression goes beyond temporary feelings of sadness. It involves a prolonged combination of low mood, lack of interest in activities, and impairment in functioning (academic, social, personal). For students especially, the pressures of transition, performance, and identity can trigger or worsen depressive symptoms.

Signs and Symptoms:

- Persistent sadness, emptiness, or irritability most of the day, nearly every day.
- Loss of interest or pleasure in things you used to enjoy.
- Significant changes in appetite or weight; sleeping too much or too little.
- Fatigue, feeling slowed down, low energy.
- Difficulty concentrating, remembering things, making decisions.
- Feelings of worthlessness, guilt, hopelessness. Thoughts of death or suicide (in severe cases).
- Social withdrawal, drop in academic performance, ignoring personal hygiene.

Initial Self-helping Strategies:

- Establish a routine (consistent wake-up, meals, study, rest) to stabilize mood and energy.
- Engage in at least moderate physical activity (a 20-30 min walk or exercise) every day — activity lifts mood.
- Stay connected: reach out to supportive friends, share what you're feeling rather than isolating.
- Set small achievable goals each day (e.g., complete one reading, attend one club meeting) to rebuild confidence.
- Practice self-compassion: when you notice self-criticism ("I'm worthless"), pause and reframe ("I'm doing my best, I'm not defined by grades").
- If thoughts of self-harm, suicide, or inability to function continue, it's important to seek professional help immediately.

LONELINESS

Loneliness is the distressing feeling that comes when there is a gap between the social relationships you have and the ones you want. In a college or transitional student context, even surrounded by people, one can feel lonely due to moving away from home, adjusting to new peers, or not feeling understood. Left unchecked, loneliness can affect motivation, mood, and academic engagement.

Signs and Symptoms:

- Feeling disconnected from others or like you “don’t belong”.
- Spending most time alone, avoiding social situations, or not engaging in group activities.
- Feeling empty, sad, or “left out” even when with people.
- Low motivation to attend classes or social events; more time in isolation.
- Excessive use of social media or screens to compensate for real-life connection (but still feeling empty).
- Difficulty sleeping, persistent low energy or low mood due to lack of social support.

Initial Self-helping Strategies:

- Join one new campus club, society or peer group this semester — attend at least one meeting or event.
- Reach out to one person each week (“coffee chat”, study together) — link connection to a routine.
- Volunteer for a simple cause on campus: helping others helps you connect and feel meaningful.
- Practice “small talk” start: ask peer a question about their day, class; try to listen more than speak.
- Limit passive social media scrolling when feeling lonely; schedule an offline activity (walk, journaling, call a friend).

- Keep a journal of one positive interaction per day (“today I smiled at someone”, “someone said hi”) – helps you notice connection even in small ways.

FEAR

Fear is a natural emotion triggered by perceived danger or failure. In students, it often appears as fear of exams, public speaking, rejection, or not meeting expectations. While mild fear motivates preparation, excessive fear can limit growth, confidence, and decision-making.

Signs and Symptoms:

- Rapid heartbeat, sweating, trembling, or shortness of breath before tasks.
- Avoidance of situations (tests, presentations, or people) that cause anxiety.
- Persistent “what if” thoughts or worst-case scenarios.
- Difficulty focusing or feeling paralyzed by overthinking.
- Physical tension in shoulders, jaw, or stomach.

Initial Self-helping Strategies:

- Identify your fear and write it down — clarity reduces intensity.
- Visualize a positive outcome instead of failure.
- Practice relaxation: deep breathing or progressive muscle relaxation.
- Break challenging tasks into smaller, doable steps.
- Seek feedback from mentors to build confidence through gradual exposure.

INFERIORITY COMPLEX

An inferiority complex is a persistent feeling of being “less than” others. It often develops from constant comparison, criticism, or unrealistic standards. For students, it may show as self-doubt, social withdrawal, or fear of trying new things.

Signs and Symptoms:

- Frequent self-criticism or comparing yourself negatively with others.
- Avoiding competition or new opportunities due to fear of failure.
- Low self-esteem and difficulty accepting compliments.
- Over-dependence on others for validation.
- Feeling unworthy of success or appreciation.

Initial Self-helping Strategies:

- Focus on your strengths and achievements — keep a “success journal.”
- Set realistic goals that reflect *your* pace and progress.
- Replace negative self-talk with affirmations (“I am capable and learning”).
- Surround yourself with positive, supportive peers.
- Engage in self-development activities like volunteering or mentoring juniors.

BULLYING

Bullying is repeated aggressive behaviour that causes emotional or physical harm. It can be verbal, physical, or digital (cyberbullying). Victims may experience distress, fear, and lowered self-confidence, affecting their academic and social wellbeing.

Signs and Symptoms:

- Avoidance of certain people, classes, or social areas.
- Unexplained injuries, frequent headaches, or stomach aches.
- Sudden drop in academic performance or attendance.
- Emotional withdrawal, sadness, or irritability.
- Fear of using social media or checking messages.

Initial Self-helping Strategies:

- Speak up - inform a trusted teacher, counsellor, or authority figure.
- Do not retaliate; instead, stay calm and confident.
- Avoid isolation - spend time with supportive friends or peer groups.
- Save screenshots or evidence in case of cyberbullying.
- Remind yourself: bullying reflects the bully's behaviour, not your worth.

SUBSTANCE ABUSE

Substance abuse refers to the misuse of alcohol, drugs, or tobacco to escape stress or enhance mood. It can quickly lead to dependency, affecting physical health, academic performance, and relationships.

Signs and Symptoms:

- Sudden behavioural changes or secrecy about activities.
- Neglecting responsibilities and drop in performance.
- Mood swings, irritability, or unusual sleeping patterns.
- Physical signs: red eyes, poor hygiene, loss of appetite.
- Withdrawing from family and friends.

Initial Self-helping Strategies:

- Acknowledge the issue - awareness is the first step to recovery.
- Avoid peers who encourage or normalize substance use.
- Replace the habit with healthy coping methods like exercise or journaling.
- Seek help early from counsellors or addiction professionals.
- Participate in awareness or support programs on campus.

INTERNET AND TECHNOLOGY ADDICTION

Technology addiction involves excessive or uncontrolled use of the internet, social media, or gaming that interferes with daily life. For students, it may reduce focus, social interaction, and sleep quality.

Signs and Symptoms:

- Spending long hours online or on social media without purpose.
- Feeling anxious or restless when not using a device.
- Ignoring academics, sleep, or meals to stay online.
- Decline in real-life social interaction.
- Frequent headaches, eye strain, or fatigue.

Initial Self-helping Strategies:

- Set daily screen-time limits and track your usage.
- Schedule tech-free hours - especially before bedtime and during meals.
- Replace screen time with physical or creative activities.
- Keep devices away while studying or socializing.
- Use apps that remind or block overuse (e.g., Digital Wellbeing tools).

PROCRASTINATION

Procrastination is the habitual delay of important tasks despite knowing the negative consequences. It is often linked to perfectionism, fear of failure, or low motivation.

Signs and Symptoms:

- Constantly postponing tasks or studying at the last minute.
- Feeling stressed or guilty about unfinished work.
- Distraction through social media or irrelevant tasks.
- Difficulty starting tasks even when time allows.
- Declining academic performance or missed deadlines.

Initial Self-helping Strategies:

- Use the “two-minute rule” - start small; if it takes less than two minutes, do it immediately.
- Break tasks into smaller, achievable goals.
- Set deadlines and use planners or timers (Pomodoro technique).
- Reward yourself for completing steps.
- Reflect on the reason behind avoidance - fear, boredom, or perfectionism - and address it consciously.

IMPROVING MEMORY AND CONCENTRATION

Memory and concentration are essential for academic success. However, distractions, stress, poor sleep, and unhealthy habits can weaken attention and retention. Strengthening focus involves training the mind, maintaining physical health, and creating effective study habits.

Signs and Symptoms:

- Difficulty retaining information or recalling learned material.
- Mind wandering during lectures or reading.
- Forgetting daily tasks, deadlines, or study plans.
- Lack of motivation or frequent distractions.
- Feeling mentally tired even after minimal study.

Initial Self-helping Strategies:

- Get 7–8 hours of quality sleep and maintain a balanced diet.
- Study in short, focused sessions (25–30 minutes) followed by brief breaks.
- Avoid multitasking; focus on one task at a time.
- Practice mindfulness meditation to strengthen attention.
- Review lessons regularly using visual aids or summaries.

INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIP ISSUES

Healthy relationships with friends, family, and peers are vital for emotional stability. Conflicts, misunderstandings, or lack of boundaries can create stress and loneliness. Developing empathy and effective communication builds stronger, more respectful connections.

Signs and Symptoms:

- Frequent arguments, jealousy, or emotional distance.
- Feeling misunderstood or unappreciated.
- Overdependence or withdrawal from relationships.
- Difficulty trusting or forgiving others.
- Emotional exhaustion after interactions.

Initial Self-helping Strategies:

- Listen actively and avoid interrupting when others speak.
- Express feelings calmly and clearly without blame.
- Set healthy boundaries and respect others' limits.
- Reflect before reacting — respond, don't react.
- Apologize and forgive sincerely to rebuild trust.

IMPROVING COMMUNICATION

Effective communication is a core life skill that promotes clarity, understanding, and cooperation. Students often face barriers such as fear of judgment, low confidence, or poor listening habits. Strengthening communication helps in academics, teamwork, and personal relationships.

Signs and Symptoms:

- Difficulty expressing thoughts or emotions.
- Nervousness or fear during public speaking or group work.
- Frequent misunderstandings or conflicts.
- Interrupting or dominating conversations.
- Avoiding discussions or feedback.

Initial Self-helping Strategies:

- Maintain eye contact and a calm tone while speaking.
- Practice active listening — focus fully on what the other person says.
- Use positive body language and facial expressions.
- Join group discussions or clubs to gain confidence.
- Reflect daily: “How clearly did I express myself today?”

FORGIVENESS

Forgiveness is the process of letting go of resentment or anger toward oneself or others. Holding onto grudges can cause emotional distress, anxiety, or bitterness. Learning to forgive promotes inner peace and emotional freedom.

Signs and Symptoms:

- Replaying past hurt or injustice repeatedly in your mind.
- Feeling anger or resentment toward a person or event.
- Difficulty trusting or moving on.
- Emotional exhaustion or sadness when recalling the issue.
- Desire for revenge or justice that blocks peace.

Initial Self-helping Strategies:

- Acknowledge your hurt instead of suppressing it.
- Reflect on what you learned from the experience.
- Try empathy — understand that everyone makes mistakes.
- Practice self-forgiveness for your own past errors.
- Engage in relaxation or journaling to release emotional pain.

GRATITUDE

Gratitude is the appreciation of positive aspects of life, relationships, and experiences. Practicing gratitude improves emotional balance, optimism, and resilience. It shifts focus from what's lacking to what's meaningful.

Signs and Symptoms:

- Constant dissatisfaction or comparing self with others.
- Focusing mainly on problems or what's missing.
- Taking achievements or relationships for granted.
- Frequent complaints or negative thinking.
- Emotional fatigue or lack of motivation.

Initial Self-helping Strategies:

- Maintain a gratitude journal — note three good things daily.
- Express appreciation to teachers, friends, or family regularly.
- Reflect on small wins and personal growth moments.
- Practice mindful awareness — enjoy simple joys of the present.
- Replace “I have to” with “I get to” for a positive mindset.

KINDNESS

Kindness is a conscious act of compassion toward others and oneself. It enhances mood, reduces stress, and strengthens social connection. Practicing kindness builds emotional intelligence and contributes to a positive campus environment.

Signs and Symptoms:

- Irritability or impatience with self or others.
- Indifference to others' emotions or needs.
- Frequent negative judgments or criticism.
- Feeling isolated or disconnected.
- Guilt after being harsh or dismissive.

Initial Self-helping Strategies:

- Perform one small act of kindness daily — compliment, help, or listen.
- Avoid harsh self-criticism; treat yourself with gentleness.
- Engage in volunteer or peer-support activities.
- Practice empathy — try to see situations from others' perspectives.
- Reflect nightly on one kind act done or received that day.

SELF-ESTEEM & SELF-IMAGE

Self-esteem reflects how much a person values and accepts themselves. Students with low self-esteem may constantly compare themselves with others, fear failure, or underestimate their abilities. Building a healthy self-image improves confidence, motivation, and overall emotional health.

Signs & Symptoms:

- Frequent self-criticism or negative self-talk.
- Seeking excessive validation from others.
- Avoiding challenges for fear of judgment.
- Feeling “not good enough” despite achievements.
- Difficulty accepting compliments.

Initial Self-Help Strategies:

- List personal strengths and achievements daily.
- Replace self-critical thoughts with affirmations like *“I am learning and growing.”*
- Spend time with supportive people who uplift you.
- Set realistic goals and celebrate small wins.
- Limit social media comparisons; focus on personal progress.

PERFECTIONISM

Perfectionism involves striving for flawlessness and setting unrealistically high standards. While ambition can motivate success, extreme perfectionism often leads to stress, procrastination, and burnout. Learning to balance effort and self-acceptance fosters mental peace.

Signs & Symptoms:

- Fear of making mistakes or disappointing others.
- Spending excessive time perfecting small details.
- Constant dissatisfaction with results.
- Avoiding new tasks due to fear of failure.
- Feeling anxious or irritable when goals aren't met.

Initial Self-Help Strategies:

- Replace “*perfect*” with “*good enough for now.*”
- Focus on progress, not perfection.
- Break tasks into smaller, achievable steps.
- Allow yourself to make mistakes and learn from them.
- Practice relaxation before deadlines to manage anxiety.

OVERTHINKING & RUMINATION

Overthinking occurs when the mind repeatedly analyses past events or worries about the future. It drains energy, affects sleep, and increases anxiety. Breaking this cycle through mindfulness and healthy distractions restores focus and calm.

Signs & Symptoms:

- Replaying conversations or decisions repeatedly.
- Difficulty falling asleep due to racing thoughts.
- Constant “what-if” thinking.
- Trouble focusing on the present.
- Feeling mentally exhausted or tense.

Initial Self-Help Strategies:

- Write down recurring worries to gain perspective.
- Schedule a daily “thinking time” to limit rumination.
- Engage in grounding activities (breathing, walking, stretching).
- Distract the mind with creative or physical activities.
- Practice mindfulness meditation for 10 minutes daily.

ANGER MANAGEMENT

Anger is a natural emotion, but uncontrolled anger can damage relationships and wellbeing. Recognizing triggers and practicing calm expression helps channel anger into constructive communication and action.

Signs & Symptoms:

- Frequent irritation or impatience.
- Yelling, slamming objects, or verbal aggression.
- Physical symptoms such as rapid heartbeat or tension.
- Feeling guilty or regretful after outbursts.
- Difficulty forgiving or letting go of resentment.

Initial Self-Help Strategies:

- Pause and count to 10 before responding.
- Identify triggers and plan calm alternatives.
- Use deep breathing or physical exercise to release tension.
- Express feelings using “I” statements (e.g., “*I feel upset when...*”).
- Reflect afterward on what triggered the anger and what helped.

EMOTIONAL REGULATION

Emotional regulation means managing feelings effectively so they don't control behaviour. For students, balancing emotions like frustration, sadness, and excitement supports focus and decision-making. It's a key life skill for resilience and maturity.

Signs & Symptoms:

- Sudden mood swings or emotional outbursts.
- Difficulty calming down after stress.
- Overreacting to minor issues.
- Avoiding emotions or suppressing them completely.
- Struggling to communicate feelings clearly.

Initial Self-Help Strategies:

- Label emotions accurately (e.g., "*I feel anxious,*" not "*I'm bad.*").
- Take deep breaths or brief time-outs during stress.
- Reflect on triggers and coping methods through journaling.
- Practice relaxation or mindfulness techniques daily.
- Share emotions with a trusted friend, mentor, or counsellor.

SLEEP DIFFICULTIES

Good sleep is essential for concentration, emotional stability, and academic performance. Many students experience sleep disturbances due to stress, screen time, or irregular routines. Consistent sleep hygiene improves energy, memory, and mood.

Signs & Symptoms:

- Difficulty falling or staying asleep.
- Feeling tired despite adequate time in bed.
- Frequent nightmares or restless nights.
- Trouble waking up on time or oversleeping.
- Low focus, irritability, or daytime drowsiness.

Initial Self-Help Strategies:

- Maintain a consistent sleep schedule — even on weekends.
- Avoid caffeine, heavy meals, or screen use before bedtime.
- Practice relaxation techniques like deep breathing or soft music.
- Keep the sleeping space dark, quiet, and comfortable.
- Engage in moderate physical activity during the day.

TIME MANAGEMENT & STUDY HABITS

Effective time management helps balance academics, personal life, and rest. Poor organization or procrastination can lead to anxiety and burnout. Building structured routines enhances focus and self-confidence.

Signs & Symptoms:

- Frequent last-minute studying or missed deadlines.
- Feeling overwhelmed by workload.
- Poor prioritization or multitasking confusion.
- Wasting time on distractions or social media.
- Guilt or stress from incomplete tasks.

Initial Self-Help Strategies:

- Plan each day using a to-do list or timetable.
- Set realistic goals — divide big tasks into smaller steps.
- Use techniques like the Pomodoro method (25 min focus, 5 min break).
- Review daily progress and adjust priorities.
- Reward yourself after completing tasks to boost motivation.

MOTIVATION & GOAL SETTING

Motivation fuels persistence and achievement. However, students often lose motivation due to burnout, failure, or lack of clarity in goals. Understanding personal “why” and setting realistic objectives helps maintain enthusiasm and direction.

Signs & Symptoms:

- Lack of interest in studies or activities once enjoyed.
- Frequent procrastination or excuses.
- Comparing self to others leading to discouragement.
- Feeling lost or unsure of purpose.
- Giving up easily when faced with obstacles.

Initial Self-Help Strategies:

- Set SMART goals — Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound.
- Visualize desired outcomes to stay focused.
- Start with small, manageable steps to build momentum.
- Surround yourself with positive, goal-oriented peers.
- Reflect weekly on personal progress and growth.

DIGITAL DETOX & SCREEN BALANCE

Technology enriches learning but excessive use can harm focus, sleep, and mental health. Students often face screen fatigue from social media, gaming, or online classes. Creating mindful digital habits promotes balance and real-world engagement.

Signs & Symptoms:

- Compulsive checking of phone or notifications.
- Feeling anxious when away from devices.
- Reduced attention span or eye strain.
- Neglecting offline relationships or hobbies.
- Sleep disruption due to late-night screen time.

Initial Self-Help Strategies:

- Schedule “no-phone” hours daily, especially before bedtime.
- Turn off non-essential notifications.
- Replace screen time with creative or outdoor activities.
- Track daily screen usage and set healthy limits.
- Engage in face-to-face social interactions regularly.

ACADEMIC BURNOUT

Academic burnout is emotional and physical exhaustion caused by prolonged academic stress. It can lead to disinterest, low performance, and emotional detachment. Recognizing signs early and adopting healthy coping habits can prevent severe distress.

Signs & Symptoms:

- Constant fatigue or lack of motivation to study.
- Irritability or emotional numbness about academics.
- Decline in academic performance despite effort.
- Difficulty concentrating or retaining information.
- Feeling detached or cynical about goals.

Initial Self-Help Strategies:

- Take regular breaks and maintain leisure time.
- Set realistic study goals and avoid overcommitting.
- Connect with peers or counsellors for support.
- Practice relaxation, exercise, or mindfulness daily.
- Reconnect with the purpose behind your studies.

PEER PRESSURE

Peer pressure occurs when students feel influenced by friends or social groups to behave or think in a certain way. While positive peer influence can motivate healthy competition, negative pressure may lead to poor decisions or stress. Learning to assert personal values helps maintain individuality and confidence.

Signs & Symptoms:

- Doing things against personal beliefs to fit in.
- Anxiety or guilt after following others' opinions.
- Fear of rejection or exclusion from the group.
- Frequent comparison or seeking approval from peers.
- Decline in academic focus due to social distractions.

Initial Self-Help Strategies:

- Identify personal values and boundaries clearly.
- Learn to say "no" confidently but politely.
- Choose friends who respect individuality.
- Engage in activities that reflect your interests and strengths.
- Seek support from mentors or counsellors when feeling pressured.

HOMESICKNESS & ADJUSTMENT ISSUES

Homesickness is common among students living away from home for the first time. Missing family, familiar surroundings, or cultural comfort can lead to sadness and anxiety. Adjustment takes time and self-compassion — building new routines and connections helps ease the transition.

Signs & Symptoms:

- Persistent longing to go home.
- Difficulty sleeping or eating properly.
- Withdrawal from social or academic activities.
- Frequent crying or feelings of loneliness.
- Trouble focusing on studies due to emotional distress.

Initial Self-Help Strategies:

- Stay in touch with family through scheduled calls.
- Personalize your living space for comfort.
- Engage in campus activities or clubs to meet new people.
- Maintain a structured daily routine.
- Share your feelings with peers or the counsellor — you're not alone.

ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIP CHALLENGES

Romantic relationships can provide emotional support but may also cause stress when faced with misunderstandings, breakups, or imbalance. Emotional awareness, boundaries, and self-respect are essential for healthy relationships.

Signs & Symptoms:

- Emotional dependency or insecurity in the relationship.
- Jealousy, overthinking, or trust issues.
- Mood swings or academic decline after conflicts.
- Difficulty concentrating or loss of motivation.
- Feelings of heartbreak or emptiness after breakup.

Initial Self-Help Strategies:

- Communicate openly and respectfully with your partner.
- Maintain individual hobbies and friendships.
- Practice emotional independence — your worth is not defined by a relationship.
- Allow yourself time to heal after emotional pain.
- Seek professional counselling if distress persists.

COPING WITH FAILURE OR REJECTION

Failure and rejection are natural parts of growth. However, many students internalize them as personal shortcomings, leading to low self-worth or anxiety. Reframing failure as feedback strengthens resilience and self-confidence.

Signs & Symptoms:

- Feeling hopeless or losing motivation after setbacks.
- Avoiding challenges for fear of failing again.
- Harsh self-criticism or guilt.
- Emotional withdrawal or overthinking about the event.
- Comparing self to others who succeeded.

Initial Self-Help Strategies:

- Reflect on what can be learned from the experience.
- Separate your self-worth from outcomes.
- Discuss setbacks with mentors or counsellors for guidance.
- Focus on effort and growth, not perfection.
- Practice positive self-talk and gratitude daily.

MINDFULNESS & SELF-COMPASSION

Mindfulness is the practice of being fully present and non-judgmental about one's thoughts and emotions. Self-compassion involves treating oneself with kindness during struggles. Together, they promote emotional balance, resilience, and clarity.

Signs & Symptoms (When Mindfulness Is Lacking):

- Acting impulsively or reacting emotionally to stress.
- Difficulty focusing or staying present.
- Harsh self-judgment after mistakes.
- Feeling constantly restless or dissatisfied.
- Neglecting emotional or physical needs.

Initial Self-Help Strategies:

- Practice mindful breathing for 5–10 minutes daily.
- Pause before reacting — observe emotions without judgment.
- Replace self-criticism with phrases like *“I’m doing my best.”*
- Engage in slow, mindful activities (e.g., walking, journaling).
- Treat yourself as you would a close friend in distress.

BODY IMAGE & SELF-ACCEPTANCE

Body image refers to how individuals perceive and feel about their physical appearance. Influences from media, peers, or cultural ideals can distort self-image and affect confidence. Promoting body acceptance and healthy habits helps students develop self-respect and emotional wellbeing.

Signs & Symptoms:

- Constant comparison with others' looks or body type.
- Dissatisfaction despite normal appearance.
- Extreme dieting or exercise patterns.
- Avoiding mirrors or social events due to body shame.
- Low self-esteem or mood swings related to appearance.

Initial Self-Help Strategies:

- Focus on body functionality, not appearance — appreciate what your body *can do*.
- Limit exposure to unrealistic beauty content on social media.
- Practice self-care through balanced nutrition and rest.
- Use positive affirmations: “*I am more than my appearance.*”
- Engage in hobbies that build confidence and joy.

SOCIAL MEDIA IMPACT

Social media connects people but can also lead to comparison, distraction, and emotional fatigue. Students may feel pressure to maintain an ideal image online. Mindful and balanced use supports digital wellbeing and authentic self-expression.

Signs & Symptoms:

- Checking social media compulsively or losing track of time.
- Comparing achievements or appearance with others.
- Mood changes based on likes, comments, or followers.
- Reduced real-life interaction or productivity.
- Anxiety or sleep loss due to online engagement.

Initial Self-Help Strategies:

- Schedule specific times for social media use.
- Follow positive and educational accounts only.
- Take periodic “social media detox” days.
- Remind yourself that online images often don’t reflect reality.
- Prioritize real-life communication and connections.

HOPE & OPTIMISM

Hope and optimism are the foundations of emotional strength. They help students see challenges as temporary and manageable. Nurturing a hopeful mindset promotes resilience, motivation, and better mental health outcomes.

Signs & Symptoms (When Hope is Low):

- Persistent pessimism or negative self-talk.
- Difficulty seeing purpose or direction in life.
- Giving up easily after setbacks.
- Feelings of helplessness or stagnation.
- Loss of excitement for the future.

Initial Self-Help Strategies:

- Reflect on past achievements to remind yourself of strengths.
- Set small, meaningful goals for the short term.
- Use gratitude journaling to focus on what's working well.
- Surround yourself with positive influences and role models.
- Engage in activities that align with personal values.

TRAUMA AWARENESS & HEALING

Trauma results from deeply distressing experiences that overwhelm one's ability to cope. Students may face trauma from family conflict, abuse, accidents, or loss. Understanding trauma responses and seeking timely help are crucial for healing.

Signs & Symptoms:

- Flashbacks, nightmares, or intrusive memories.
- Avoidance of reminders related to the event.
- Emotional numbness or sudden anger and fear.
- Difficulty trusting others or forming close relationships.
- Physical symptoms like headaches or sleep disturbances.

Initial Self-Help Strategies:

- Acknowledge your emotions without judgment — healing takes time.
- Ground yourself using breathing, counting, or sensory techniques.
- Maintain daily routines to regain stability.
- Avoid isolation — connect with supportive friends or mentors.
- Seek professional counselling or trauma therapy when distress persists.

SUICIDE PREVENTION AWARENESS

Suicidal thoughts can arise from feelings of hopelessness, isolation, or intense stress. Early recognition and support can save lives. Every student should know that help is available and reaching out is a sign of strength, not weakness.

Warning Signs:

- Expressing feelings of hopelessness or being a burden.
- Withdrawal from friends, activities, or academics.
- Talking or writing about death, or giving away possessions.
- Sudden calmness after a period of distress.
- Self-harm or reckless behaviours.

Initial Self-Help & Support Strategies:

- Talk openly with a trusted friend, counsellor, or faculty member.
- Avoid isolation — connect immediately when distress increases.
- Contact **Tele-MANAS (14416)**, **KIRAN Helpline (1800-599-0019)**, or local mental health services.
- Create a safety plan — note coping methods and emergency contacts.
- Remember: emotions are temporary; support is always available.