

Fostering Social and Emotional Well-Being in The Classroom

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Abstract

Social and Emotional Well-being refers to an individual's ability to understand and manage one's emotions, make sound decisions, build healthy relationships and be able to sustain them, act empathically. This is necessary for people to achieve their goals, develop healthy identities and manage emotions. Positive social development and emotional maturity is required to lead successful and effective life. Positive social and emotional well-being increases the capacity to withstand difficulties as well as cope with these situations. Times have changed and in this age of technology social settings have changed. Demands from youngsters have changed. Young students have many stressors in their life in the present scenario like identity crisis, aspirations, career choices, social and peer pressure etc. These situations are affecting the well-being of students resulting in depression, substance abuse, obesity, anxiety, hyperactivity disorder, attention deficit etc. Sound mental health is needed for the development of effective individuals. Education has become one of the influential instruments of social change so this problem needs to be addressed in classrooms to help young adults adapt to situations and their healthy adjustment in the society. Researches have shown that students who are supported to develop their self-worth, emotion regulation skills, and social competencies, are able to flourish into self-motivated and independent learners. Teachers need to adopt right set of teaching strategies and also present ideal behavior.

Keywords: Social and Emotional Well-being, Self-identity, resilience, teaching strategies

Social and Emotional development of a student is of paramount importance in ascertaining their holistic development. It has been established by studies that sound social and emotional well-being of students affect their achievement in school, work and life. This aspect has not gained attention in conventional classroom teaching as it has always been perceived to be the duty of parents and family members to train students socially and emotionally. In present context, this has become relevant topic, as students are being affected socially and emotionally due to exposure to gadgets and also rising competition has increased stress in youngsters. These are challenging times for young students due to the exposure to internet and social media.

The ability to comprehend and control one's emotions, make moral decisions, establish and uphold relationships, and comprehend and sympathize with others is known as social emotional wellbeing. These skills help an individual to achieve his/ her goal and develop his/her own identity and manage emotions. Our capacity to build and sustain healthy connections, effectively interact with others, and surround oneself with a supportive network is what we refer to as social well-being. Our ability to accept emotions of others and responding empathically and adopt to a variety of situations is also a part of our social well-being. Emotional intelligence refers to our capacity to recognize and control our emotions in a way that enhances and maintains our mental health as well as our ability to deal with life's challenges. This includes the ability to identify what you are feeling, how to navigate these emotions in a way that leads to stable and supportive relationships with others.

Adolescents are recognized to be lacking in social and emotional well-being. Many reasons are cited for this but this is also a part of developmental process in which young students face problems of adjustments. An attempt is to be made to understand the psychological perspective of this issue, which can be resolved if proper care and attention is given to students who are entering into adolescence.

Identity crisis: The young students who are in adolescence demonstrate identity crisis. Their young minds have developed and they have developed the ability of critical thinking, observation. They begin to realize their potential, their interests. This age is of experimentation, where they are easily attracted towards new actions as well as want to be a part of adventure. They are being treated as adults are expected to behave as so by parents, teachers. They tend to think about their future and develop new perceptions regarding their role in society but they suffer from identity crisis. The period of identity crisis happens during the fifth stage of Erikson's stages of development. During the crisis, a person experiments with different roles and identities. At the conclusion of this developmental stage, a person either experiences identity confusion or has overcome the crisis and established a strong identity. In Erikson's theory, an identity crisis is a normal, predictable part of healthy development. If an adolescent gets supportive environment where he is listened to, given advice and given choices then he is able to adapt to situation and resolve the conflict.

Career Choices: The adolescents have developed thinking skills, they are more aware of their skills, interests, abilities and capabilities. They want to pursue a career of their choice, according to their interest. This sometimes create a conflict with aspirations of their parents and society at large. So the young students are in constant pressure to assert themselves and

pursue their goal. This creates differences with their parents and other relations. The adolescents feel lonely and sometimes they start indulging in rebellious behavior. Psychologists term this phenomenon as generation gap where the adults fail to understand their children and try to force their choices on their children and also expect that they choose a career according to them.

Digital Distraction: This is an age of Information and Communication technology. The new generation is exposed to all types of information through various gadgets and internet. The world has transformed into a global village. Post pandemic teaching and learning has also undergone transformation, which has increased students' exposure to digital devices. The students are expected to complete their assignments online. Students are taking help of online learning platforms. This dependency on electronic devices and more particularly internet has exposed young minds to diverse content which may sometimes harm the students. Research studies have established that increased exposure to digital devices results in loss of concentration, low computational skills as well as poor language skills.

Another aspect of this digital age is social media which helps to build relationships, helps to express oneself and develop creativity. But on the other hand, the social media also misguides the students, have negative psychological impact on young minds. It is imperative that such platforms should be used judiciously. The students who are active online, they also suffer mentally and physically. They may develop feeling of loneliness and lethargy.

Thus, these factors are challenges to social and emotional well-being of adolescents. To ensure holistic development of students, they should be taught to cope and adjust to these situations. They need to be taught resilience which means the ability to withstand difficulties, face challenges and develop mental toughness. This is very essential in maintaining Social and Emotional Wellness of the child.

Research studies prove that children who feel emotionally supported are more likely to engage in learning, demonstrate better academic performance and develop essential life skills.

School as a community can help to create conducive environment that ensures social and emotional wellbeing of students. Teachers also share the responsibility of polishing young talent and training efficient individuals who will ultimately build a welfare society. This can be done by adopting following strategies in the classroom and beyond:

1. Build positive relationships: Teachers should respect individual identities, choices and abilities. They should help foster the students' abilities and skills. They should appreciate students, appraise them and make them confident.

2. **Empathy:** Teachers should teach and model empathy as it is the ability to understand the feeling of others which plays an important role in social and emotional development as it helps to develop emotional intelligence and interpersonal skills. Teaching empathy helps students to better understand their own emotions and those of their peers resulting in better social interactions. This shall help in conflict resolution as this helps the students to understand others' perspectives and communicate effectively. Developing empathy among the students also helps to build positive relationships which in turn helps to create supportive classroom environment. Students feel valued and understood leading to stronger teacher-student and peer relationships.

3. Promote teamwork and collaboration: In order to prepare children for success in a collaborative and interconnected society, it is imperative that educators foster teamwork and collaboration in the classroom. Teachers should aggressively encourage teamwork and collaboration as it helps to develop real-world skills. In the classroom, collaborative activities give students the chance to understand and benefit from diversity, which improves their capacity for critical thought and problem-solving. This also helps to develop communication skills, conflict resolution. Through teamwork, students are able to assign duties according to their unique abilities and talents. This not only facilitates the faster completion of tasks but also fosters a sense of ownership and shared responsibility among team members. Working in teams also helps to develop Critical Thinking: This improves their collective capacity for information analysis, choice evaluation, and well-informed decision making. This increases engagement, that is, it helps to keep students more on-task than off-task.

4. Celebrate achievements of students: Honoring students' accomplishments is essential to establishing a supportive and inspiring learning environment. Acknowledging and praising students' achievements helps them feel more confident, develop self-belief, promotes their sense of accomplishment, and cultivates a positive outlook on learning. Secondly, this helps to increase motivational level. Acknowledging accomplishments encourages desirable behavior and academic performance. It supports the notion that perseverance, hard effort, and dedication pay off. On a whole, it helps to create a Positive Learning atmosphere as the students feel respected. This also leads to cultivation of healthy competition.

5. Cultivate a Growth Mindset: This is characterized by their belief in their capacity to learn and develop over time. It motivates people to see difficulties as opportunities to develop their skills.

All these strategies help to foster social and emotional wellbeing of students. Teachers shall always strive to reduce academic stress. For this they need to train students in time management

skills. It is recommended that educators work in tandem with parents and guardians to facilitate the social and emotional growth of their pupils. Use available community resources to improve kids' general wellbeing in and out of the classroom. By putting social and emotional health first in the classroom, teachers support students' holistic development by fostering an atmosphere in which they can flourish intellectually, emotionally, and socially.

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