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**Minding Mental Health in Teaching**

Introduction

Education is a fundamental aspect of every individual's growth and development, as it shapes their personality, skills, and capabilities. Teachers play a crucial role in molding students into productive and responsible citizens. However, in the present age, students' mental health is a significant concern that needs to be addressed by educators. Mental health refers to an individual's emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It is an essential aspect of every individual's life, and when compromised, it can affect their overall quality of life. The primary objective of this article is to highlight the importance of considering students' mental health conditions in the modern education sphere, especially at school.

The Current Scenario of Mental Health in Students

The present age is characterized by a high prevalence of mental health conditions among students. According to a study by the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), approximately one in five children and adolescents aged 6 to 17 years old have a mental disorder. Among these disorders, anxiety disorders are the most common, affecting approximately 32% of children and adolescents, followed by behavior disorders (13%), mood disorders (10%), and substance abuse disorders (8%). Furthermore, the prevalence of mental health conditions among students is increasing, as evidenced by a study conducted by the Center for Collegiate Mental Health (CCMH), which reported a 30% increase in the demand for counseling services among college students over the last decade.

The reasons for the high prevalence of mental health conditions among students are multifactorial. These include academic pressure, social isolation, family problems, peer pressure, and the increasing use of technology, among others. Academic pressure is a significant contributor to mental health problems among students, as they are expected to excel in their studies and perform well in exams. Failure to do so can lead to feelings of anxiety, low self-esteem, and depression. Social isolation and loneliness are also significant contributors to mental health problems among students, as they may feel left out or excluded from social groups. The use of technology, particularly social media, has also been linked to an increased risk of mental health problems among students, as it can lead to cyberbullying, addiction, and sleep disorders.

The Role of Teachers in Promoting Mental Health

Teachers play a vital role in promoting mental health among students. They are in a unique position to identify and address mental health concerns in their students, as they interact with them on a regular basis. Teachers can play a critical role in promoting mental health among students by creating a safe and supportive classroom environment, providing emotional support, and offering mental health education.

Creating a Safe and Supportive Classroom Environment

Creating a safe and supportive classroom environment is essential for promoting mental health among students. This involves creating an environment that is conducive to learning, where students feel valued, respected, and supported. Teachers can promote a positive classroom environment by encouraging open communication, fostering positive relationships, and promoting inclusivity. They can also create a safe classroom environment by addressing bullying and other forms of harassment promptly.

Providing Emotional Support

Providing emotional support is another critical aspect of promoting mental health among students. Teachers can provide emotional support by listening to their students, validating their feelings, and offering guidance and advice when needed. They can also refer students to counseling services or other mental health professionals if necessary.

Offering Mental Health Education

Offering mental health education is another crucial aspect of promoting mental health among students. Teachers can incorporate mental health education into their curriculum by teaching students about mental health, mental illness, and coping strategies. This can help students understand and manage their mental health and reduce the stigma surrounding mental illness.

Challenges in Addressing Mental Health Concerns in Students

While promoting mental health among students is essential, there are several challenges that teachers face in addressing mental health concerns in their students. These challenges include lack of resources

Lack of Resources

One of the significant challenges faced by teachers in addressing mental health concerns in their students is the lack of resources. Many schools do not have adequate resources to provide mental health services to students. This can include a lack of counselors, psychologists, and social workers. Teachers may also not have sufficient training in identifying and addressing mental health concerns.

Stigma Surrounding Mental Illness

The stigma surrounding mental illness is another challenge faced by teachers in addressing mental health concerns in their students. Mental illness is often stigmatized and can lead to discrimination and negative attitudes towards individuals with mental health conditions. This can make it challenging for teachers to identify and address mental health concerns in their students, as students may not feel comfortable seeking help or may be afraid of being stigmatized.

Lack of Time

Teachers also face time constraints in addressing mental health concerns in their students. Teachers have many responsibilities, including lesson planning, grading, and meeting with parents. Addressing mental health concerns requires time and effort, which can be difficult for teachers who are already overwhelmed with their workload.

Conclusion

In conclusion, promoting mental health among students is essential in the modern education sphere, especially at school. Teachers play a vital role in identifying and addressing mental health concerns in their students. Creating a safe and supportive classroom environment, providing emotional support, and offering mental health education are critical aspects of promoting mental health among students. However, teachers also face several challenges in addressing mental health concerns, including a lack of resources, stigma surrounding mental illness, and time constraints. Addressing these challenges is essential in promoting mental health among students and improving their overall well-being.

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