

PEAS' Psychosocial Training Part 1: Psychosocial support for staff

Session overview

i. Session objectives

1. Introduction:

- Psychosocial support: an Overview
- Well-being, Self-care and mindfulness
- Psychosocial challenges
- Psychosocial challenges in Covid-19

2. Identification: Recognizing psychosocial needs

- Identifying Psychosocial needs

3. Response: Supporting people who are experiencing stress.

Session objectives

- 1. School leaders will understand the psychosocial effects of the Covid-19 pandemic**
- 2. Develop the skills to identify psychosocial challenges in yourself and others**
- 3. Understand what you can do to support yourself and colleagues to cope with psychosocial challenges**

1: INTRODUCTION

Psychosocial Support



What is psychosocial health?

- Psychosocial health is defined as a **state of mental, emotional, social, and spiritual well-being**
- It is important for all whether we are children, youths or adults
- Our psychosocial health is not only limited to our mental and emotional health, but also to our interpersonal relationships, socioeconomic status, living conditions and work environment
- Poor psychosocial health is associated a wide range of factors including rapid social change, stressful working conditions, gender discrimination, social exclusion
- Good psychosocial health helps us be more resilient to problems that occur
- The covid-19 pandemic represents a threat to physical health, as well as psychosocial lives of individual. The impact is most severe for marginalised groups.

What is psychosocial support?

There are many ways that we can support our own psychosocial health. Psychosocial support includes many different things.

- Taking care of our **mental health**
- Looking after our **wellbeing**
- Managing **stress** and **anxiety**
- Supporting **friends** and **family**
- Practicing **mindfulness**

What do you do to support your psychosocial health ?

2: IDENTIFICATION

Psychosocial Challenges in Covid-19 era.



Identification: Individual activity

Consider the following questions:

1. Why is it important to focus on psychosocial health during this time?
2. What are the challenges that staff may be facing due to the Covid-19 pandemic?

Identification: Individual activity

Consider the following questions:

1. Why is it important to focus on psychosocial health during this time?

Examples: So we can support each other, to help our community, to make sure we are able to do our jobs well

2. What are the challenges that staff may be facing due to the Covid-19 pandemic?

Examples: anxiety, stress, worries, difficulty sleeping, fear

Identification: Psychosocial Challenges in Covid-19

Common Challenges

- Feeling more anxious, worried, and tense than normal.
- Feeling distracted, nervous, and unable to focus.
- Finding yourself thinking about Covid-19 all the time.
- A general sense of high energy or being alert and in “overdrive”. Periods of high energy can be followed with sudden fatigue and feeling overwhelmed or helpless.
- Difficulty sleeping well.
- Isolating or withdrawing from others, and/or fear of going to public spaces.
- Craving more unhealthy food and dangerous things to cope with stress and tension.

What is stress?

- **Stress** is an emotion people feel when they are under serious pressure.
- Stress can make it difficult to **sleep**, can make you **cry**, feel **tension** or **anger**.
- Stress can be caused by several things: change, events and circumstances, responsibilities, uncertainty.
- You may feel irritable, aggressive, impatient, anxious, or afraid. Like your thoughts are racing and you can't switch off.
- You might struggle to make **decisions**, lose your appetite or eat more than usual; find it difficult to concentrate or sit still.

What is anxiety?

- **Anxiety** is another emotion that manifests as worried thoughts and changes in the body
- Anxiety can occur because of a **threat**
- The causes and symptoms of anxiety are very similar to the causes and symptoms of stress.
- You can tell you are anxious if you are feeling **nervous, restless, tense**. Your heart rate might be fast, and you may have a difficult time concentrating.
- Stress, anxiety and depression affect how our **bodies feel**, how we **think** and how we **behave**. These emotions are **completely natural**. But it is important that we learn how to effectively deal with these emotions.

Activity: identifying psychosocial challenges

Question for discussion: How can you identify psychosocial challenges in yourself or others? What should you look out for?

Feeling nervous or
tense a lot of the time

Difficulty concentrating

Fast heart rate

Increased irritability

Increased anger

Crying

Changes in appetite

Difficulty sleeping

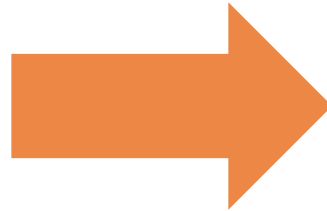
Restless behaviour

3: RESPONSE

Tools to Cope with Psychosocial Challenges



Response: Building a Toolbox to Cope with Covid-19





Response: Building a Toolbox to Cope with Covid-19

Wellbeing, Self-care, and
Mindfulness

Developing
Positive Habits

Developing
Positive
Relationships with
Others

Activities to
Support
Wellbeing, Self-
care, and
Mindfulness

Adjusting Back to
Work



What is wellbeing, self-care and mindfulness?

Wellbeing

Wellbeing is the state of being comfortable, healthy, and happy. It encompasses both physical and mental health.

Self-care

Self-care is the care taken by individuals towards their own health and wellbeing (UK Department of Health). It means taking care of both our physical and mental health.

Mindfulness

Mindfulness is the ability to be fully present, aware of where we are and what we're doing, and not overly reactive or overwhelmed by what's going on around us. We can practice mindfulness through meditation and breathing exercises.

Activity (5 minutes)

Take **5** minutes and finish the following sentences:

- **Wellbeing** is important because...
 - I practice **Self-care** by...
 - **Mindfulness** can help me because...
-
- If you feel comfortable, share your sentences on the chat box and react to others!
 - Next, we will cover some ways to take care of our mental health.

Response: Develop Positive Habits

There are many ways you can take care of your psychosocial health and cope with some of the difficulties of Covid-19

- Avoid alcohol
- Keep up with personal hygiene
- Eat healthy food
- Drink plenty of water
- Sleep early
- Limit the time you spend listening to TV & radio news about the virus
- Adopt a daily routine to develop a sense of "normalcy"

Discuss: Are there any other habits that can help us manage our psychosocial health during Covid-19?

Response: Develop Positive Relationships with Others.

Scenario 1: Silver's Case (Use 2 minutes to read this scenario in the chat box)

Task:

In the chat box...

1. Discuss your reflections on Silver's efforts to develop positive relationships in his team.
2. Write down one way you plan to support distressed teachers who might not be motivated to teach and support learners outside the classroom .
3. In less than 6 words, share how you plan to build a supportive work environment in your school...

Response: Develop Positive Relationships with Others

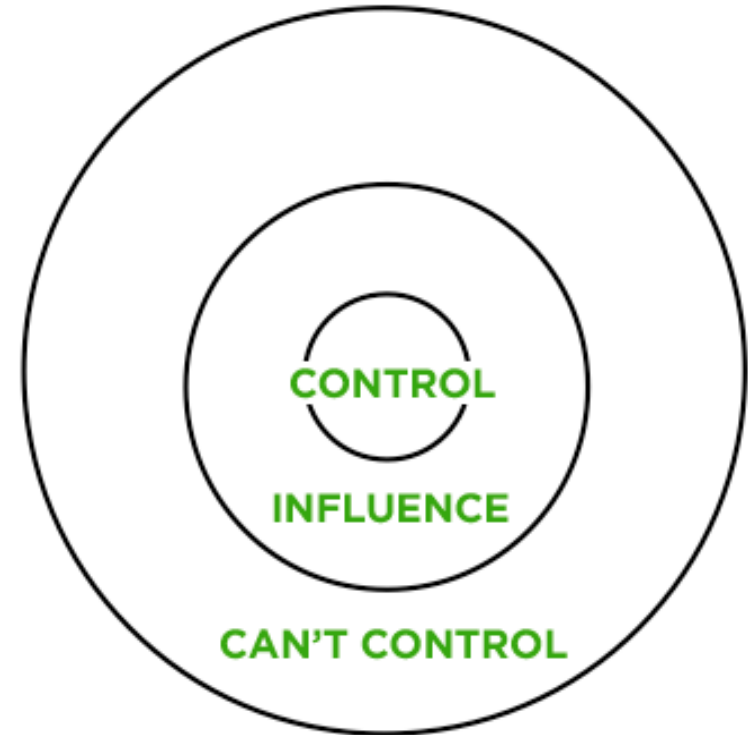
There are lots of ways we can develop positive relationships with others, including our friends and family members:

- **Check in** with friends and loved ones by phone, text, or WhatsApp.
- Show **empathy**: Recognize when stress, sadness and fear are showing up in the actions of others. **Listen** without judgement.
- **Avoid spreading rumours**. Click to add Get your information from reputable sources, such as the World Health Organization or the Ministry of Health.
- Be **calm and patient** with your children. Encourage them to relax and play.
- Be calm and patient with your spouse or partner. Financial stresses and health concerns can cause strain in a household. Recognize that you are in this together and **avoid conflict**.
- Even though large gatherings are banned, create rituals and **celebrate small moments** with members of your household.

Response: Sphere of Influence

Instructions:

1. On a blank piece of paper, draw a circle.
2. Write "within my control."
3. In this circle, list all problems or matters that you can control.
4. Next, draw a bigger circle around this and write "I can influence."
5. In this circle, list all the things you can influence but not completely control.
6. On the outside of the circle, write the words "Letting Go."
7. Here, list all the problems that are beyond your control or influence (take 5 minutes)



Response: Sphere of Influence

Scenario 2: **Samson's Case** (Use 2 minutes to read this scenario in the chat box)

Task: Brainstorm

In the chat box, indicate.....

1. Challenge (s) faced by Samson while executing his duties as a Local Council One chairman.
2. What you learn from Samson's experience ?

Note: Number 1 represents the challenge while 2 represents what has been learnt.

Response: Activities to support wellbeing

- ***Exercise, maintain a healthy balanced diet, and getting enough sleep.***
 - Exercise won't make your stress disappear, but it can help clear your thoughts and deal with your problems more calmly.
- ***Talk to someone you trust, or journal.***
 - Sometimes just expressing how you feel or telling someone how you feel can help you process what you are feeling, and why you are feeling it.
 - You will feel less alone, get a sense of resolution, and possibly plan for how to improve the situation. You can also do breathing exercises.
- ***Seek help.***
 - Anxiety and stress can be treated by talking to a trusted friend or adult about your emotions, exercising regularly, eating healthy foods, participating in activities you enjoy and maintaining a low-stress lifestyle.



Response: Activities to support wellbeing

The **STOP-THINK-GO method** can be used to support others to manage their own problems. For people to recover well, they often need to feel that they have some control in their lives. The best way to support others is to help them to help themselves.

1. STOP: Help a person to pause and consider what problems are most urgent. Support a colleague to use the sphere of influence to identify a problem which they can do something about.

2. THINK: Encourage the person to think of ways to manage that problem. The following questions can help:

What have you done in the past to overcome problems like this?

What have you already tried doing?

Is there someone who can help with managing this problem (friends, relatives, workmates)

Do other people you know have similar problems? How have they managed?

3. GO: Help the person to choose a way to manage that problem and try it out. If it doesn't work, encourage the person to try another solution.

Response: Adjusting Back to Work

- **Discuss:** What can you do to be well prepared to bounce back to work successfully?
- **Talk and Connect:** It is important to keep in regular communication with people at work.
- **Plan and Prepare:** Think about your job and situations. How can you plan ahead to feel prepared for any changes?
- **One Step at a Time:** Focus on the next day and week and don't worry about how things will look in the future.
- **Monitor Your Wellbeing:** Have regular check-ins with yourself and practice self-care techniques.

Reflection activity:



Think of 1 or 2 answers for each of these questions (share your answers in the chat box)

- How will you look after your psychosocial health?
- What activities can you do to help manage stress and anxiety?
- What signs of poor psychosocial health will you look out for in yourself and others?
- How can you use what you've learned to support others, including staff at your school?

Tools to support your and your staff's wellbeing

This 'signs of stress – self assessment' will help you to assess your own stress levels and monitor your well-being.

Using this can help you keep track of your stress and remind you to put it into action some of the strategies we've learned today.

You could also share this with staff to help them self-assess their stress.



Signs of Stress - Self Assessment



Teacher Resource

Please answer the following questions honestly. Total your score at the end. If you don't want to, you don't have to share your score with anyone. This is to help you identify how much stress you are under. This is a difficult time for all of us and it's important to take care of yourself.

	Never (1)	Once a month (2)	Often/once a week (3)	Always(4)
1. I feel tense and nervous				
2. I have physical aches and pain				
3. I am always tired, physically and mentally				
4. I cannot tolerate noises				
5. My work no longer interests me				
6. I act impulsively				
7. I can't get distressing events out of my mind				
8. I am sad and feel like crying				
9. I am less efficient than I used to be				
10. I have trouble planning and thinking clearly				
11. I have difficulty sleeping				
12. Doing even routine things is an effort				
13. I am cynical or very critical				
14. I have bad dreams or nightmares				
15. I am irritable, minor inconveniences or demands annoy me a lot				
16. I am spending more time at work than initially				
Total:				

Add up your total score:

- o Under 20: Your stress is normal, given the conditions around us right now.
- o From 21-35: You may be suffering from stress. Identify ways of reducing your stress.
- o Above 36: You may be under severe stress. Please ask for help from someone close to you. If possible, talk to a counselor.

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Tools to support your and your staff's wellbeing

This wellbeing checklist will support you to make sure that staff, learners and parents are receiving psychosocial support when you reopen your school.

We will look in more detail at how you can support learners' wellbeing in the next session.



Wellbeing Checklist

Learners: Ensure all our learners feel safe and cared for. Make your presence felt in school by spending more time than usual in classrooms and talking to learners throughout the day.		
Task	Date (week of...)	Notes
Be visible at the start and end of the day to greet learners with a smile.		
Make sure all teachers have a copy of their class list with all learner phone numbers and addresses.		
Find out (with help from teachers) how each learner and their family are doing. Discuss a plan for learners who might need additional support.		
Visit all classrooms and speak to learners about well-being. Share a positive message with them about the power of community and supporting each other.		
Teachers: Know how each teacher is doing and encourage them to focus on their well-being. Lead by example and share openly how you are taking care of yourself during this time.		
Lead a staff meeting focused on well-being. Share how you are managing all the stress.		
Check-in with each teacher 1:1 to see how they are doing. Thank them for their hard work.		
Do something to recognize the hard work of teachers and make them feel appreciated - teachers should feel that they are part of a school team that cares for them and their wellbeing.		
Parents - Community: Establish clear lines of communication with all parents. Share regular updates about safety, well-being and the school's plan for the future. Encourage parents to focus on well-being at home.		
Ensure that all families have access to someone from school that they can call. Discuss a plan of communication with your teachers to ensure someone is always in touch with families.		
Share 'welcome back to school' message (written/audio). Talk about safety and well-being.		
Share how the school is putting a safety and well-being plan in place for learners.		

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