

Smart stress therapy for city collegians

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That vibrant environment, company of friends and being a part of various academic and co-curricular activities; college life for most in one of the most memorable experiences in life. But, if you look at a college student's life closely, they also face a number of day to day challenges that contribute to their [stress](#) levels. If overlooked, it can escalate and hamper their academic performance, emotional and physical well-being.

While students are exposed to a considerable amount of stress, city [colleges](#) find it necessary to help the students as well as teachers to introduce them to the coping strategies. Gujarat Technological University (GTU) is the first college of the city to have planned a month long stress free campaign scheduled for March. As student coordinator of this activity, Akash Shah said, "Around 100 students have registered themselves for the first round. They will be given tips on various ways to remain stress free. We have invited motivational speakers and consulting psychologists to help us out." Recently, over four lakh students with over 17,000 faculty members and administration staff from engineering, pharmacy, MBA and MCA departments of the university along with other colleges in the state have announced being part of this stress free campaign month.

Numbers speak

A study done by the National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences (Nimhans) revealed that about 11 per cent of college students have attempted suicide last year. "In a strange incident, a student wrote his <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/ahmedabad/smart-stress-therapy-for-collegians/articleshow/57461571.cms>

suicide note in his examination paper stating that he was unable to cope with the pressure of his studies," says Harmeet Kaur, assistant lecturer at a city based college. Such cases show the rising level of stress in students in India. What is causing this stress? Usually, if it is a student, we immediately relate it to study and exam pressure. But it's not just the exam pressure that causes depression. Bosky Jadhav, a clinical psychologist says, "Incompatibility between mental and physical developmental changes, burden to multitask, decreasing role of peers as stress buster and [parents](#) turning children as tools for realizing their unfulfilled dreams are some of the unnoticed and unaddressed reasons."

Campaigns and initiatives

With the rise in stress levels, city colleges are taking steps to beat the blues away. Many institutes have included it in their curricula. As one of the former students of IIM-A, Siddharth Raman says, "A few years ago, we had invited Kathak maestro Birju Maharaj to our campus to explain the role of music and dance as a stress reliever." He went on to add that music and dance can indeed help keep track of career goals in highly competitive environment which is included in their curricula now.

Many campuses organize regular events and activities to ensure stress free environment. "We have a SMILE (Seeking Meaning in Life Through Expressions) Club in our college. Students along with faculty members perform mime, mimicry, street plays and various other stress relieving activities once a week," says Partha Chatterjee, president of the club, HLCC.

Along with various workshops, mostly all the city colleges have a counselling cell. "Lot of students come to us with various problems related to adjustment and personality. We use well-equipped psychological tests for measuring the intensity of problems and help the students accordingly," says Janki Dave, counsellor, GNLU. Also, there are helpline numbers that serve the students.

Specially for parents

While institutes focus on projects and projects, families and parents can make invaluable contributions in terms of preventing the causating factors of stress from occurring and consuming their children. "I recently attended an exclusive workshop for parents at my daughters' college. We were basically given a few tips to parenting in a stress free manner," says Heena Shah, mother of a student from NIRMA University. As also Jadhav suggests, "Understanding the child is very important. Be a pillar of strength, inculcate trust and let the child be on its own. Just keep this in mind that it is all about your child excelling in life, rather than in a school or a college!"