

## **Session with Dr V S Ravindran on “Adolescent Mental Health Crisis”**

**Date- April 19, 2023**

Delhi Public School, Sector 45, Gurgaon in collaboration with ICTRC (Institute of Counsellor Training Research and Consultancy organized an online session on the topic ‘Adolescent Mental Health Crisis’ on April 19, 2023 from 10:00 am to 11.30am.

Director Principal Ms Aditi Misra, in her welcome address thanked Dr Ravindran for his valued association with DPS Gurgaon, and for helping the education fraternity with the necessary answers and practical solutions to crisis situations. She emphasized that the topic under discussion “Adolescent Mental Health Crisis” is a burning and pertinent topic especially after the covid lockdown period wherein people who were deprived of sustenance from family and friends underwent a crisis situation. She referred to Adolescents as “Between Agers” as they are confused between their role as a grown up and a child. They often get mixed signals from people around them leading to an identity crisis.

### **Key points highlighted by Dr Ravindran**

Dr Ravindran opened his talk by appreciating the topic chosen with the emphasis on the word ‘crisis.’ He explained the meaning of the term ‘Crisis’ as being a stage of confusion when old strategies and ways of working do not yield answers. He agreed with the audience about being in the stage of crisis and gave personal anecdotes to validate his views. Through his relevant examples, he expressed that the teachers in the school must be well versed with the difference between gender identity and sexual orientation and should not be taken by surprise if students talk about LGBTQI+. As parents are often in a state of denial regarding their child having a Mental health problem, teachers must be empathetic towards the feelings of children. He highlighted the need of training all teachers in Mental Health First Aid to be able to recognize the warning signs and symptoms of Mental Health conditions and problems. He apprised the audience about the Three Tier Approach to dealing with any crisis situation in schools. First tier deals with conducting programmes for all the children in school, second tier focuses on concentrated programmes for children who are vulnerable or have been showing some warning signs and third tier approach centers around the problems that have actually happened through one-on-one sessions and the identification of referral agencies if required.

He also stressed upon the role of school counsellors to be involved in all three domains of a child’s holistic growth i.e developmental, preventive and remedial for optimal functioning of the school. He emphasised that Principals must have a referral directory to be able to reach out for professional help in times of need. He shed light on the warning/ tell tale signs of children who are facing Mental Health problems and crisis. The COVID pandemic has led to an increase in mental health problems in adolescents like anxiety, social awkwardness, clinical depression etc. due to disruption in the normal developmental process. He emphasised on the four ‘C’s that educators must be aware of viz Conscious, Concern, Commitment and Competence.

Thereafter, the specific concerns of participants were effectively handled by Dr Ravindran during the Q&A session.

He mentioned that the teachers must undergo minimum 7 days training program on the topics like how to be empathetic, non-judgmental, good listener, understand SEL needs of the children, general awareness of Mental Health conditions, common disabilities like ADHD, ASD, Conduct disorders etc.

Prof. Keshav in his vote of thanks, thanked the dignitaries and participants and especially thanked Director Principal Ms Aditi Misra for partnering with ICTRC and always lending support to their programmes.

The session was well attended by 545 delegates from schools pan-India, GPSC and NPSC schools, along with heads from schools overseas. It was an interesting and empowering session which was well received by those in attendance.

