

Mental Health Matters

When I visited a school, as a guest speaker, on Mental Health Day, children asked me unfiltered questions and expressed their true selves with no inhibition and genuinely sought solutions. This helped me introspect about my thoughts and perceptions about the world. I realized that despite the age gap, our thoughts were not very different.

In our role as teachers or adults, it's crucial to stress that, like physical health, mental well-being is equally important for children and young adults. We must continuously remind them of the significance of their mental health and guide them in navigating the complexities of life. We must encourage children and young adults to share their feelings and concerns, much like reporting issues with the car so they can be addressed promptly. For example, children should get valuable insights on handling bullying effectively including who they can speak with about their experiences.

Taking care of mental health can be explained using the analogy of maintaining a car. Just as regular maintenance ensures a car runs smoothly, taking care of mental health through open communication is essential. Here are some ways in which we can help children practice habits that can help their mental health:

- Children need to experience the power of being in a state of non-doing every day for at least 5-8 minutes and the magic it can create in their lives.
- Friendship choices can be compared to selecting the right ingredients for a recipe. Just as we carefully choose ingredients to make a delicious dish, children should be guided to choose friends who add positivity and support to their lives. Highlighting examples of supportive friendships can help young minds understand the importance of surrounding themselves with the right people.
- The impact of negative online influences is akin to junk food affecting our physical health. We must guide children to follow online content that nourishes their minds, similar to choosing nutritious foods for a healthy body.
- Encourage them to think of hobbies as a mental workout or a creative outlet, just like going to the gym or playing a sport is essential for physical fitness. Engaging in hobbies they're passionate about can help alleviate stress and enhance their overall well-being.

Lastly, seeking help for mental health is akin to asking for directions when lost. Just as it's perfectly acceptable to ask for directions when we're unsure of a route, seeking help from a counsellor or trusted adult is a sign of strength when navigating life's challenges.

In essence, as responsible adults, we must convey the importance of mental health through relatable examples to children regularly and provide guidance to help them make informed choices, build supportive relationships, and seek help when needed. This empowers them to lead mentally healthy lives in our ever-evolving world.

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