

# How to improve school mental health amidst socioeconomic crisis



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# Content ..

- **Impact of socioeconomic crisis on children in Sri Lanka**
- **Strategies to improve school mental health during socioeconomic crisis**

# Impact of current socioeconomic crisis on children

## Impact on education

School closure- time to time  
Limited extracurricular activities  
Difficulties in buying learning materials  
Uncertainty about exams and future  
Increase school dropouts

## Online education and related factors

-screen addiction  
- Limited physical activities

## Increase mental health issues

Fear  
Sense of uncertainty  
Excessive worries  
Anxiety  
Depression  
Increase pre existing mental health issues

## Malnutrition

## Increase Child labour

## Teenage pregnancies

## Substance related issues

## Increase victimization of child maltreatment

## Increase exposure to domestic violence

## Adult related factors

- Increase adult mental health issues
- Substance misuse

What is mental health..?

# WHO definition of mental health

- Mental health is a state of wellbeing in which the individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with normal stressors of life , can work productively and fruitfully and is able to make contribution to his or her community



# Common mental health issues in children and adolescents

- Excessive fear , Sense of uncertainty
- Excessive worries
- Poor anger control , frustration
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Suicidal ideas
- Screen addiction
- Substance related issues
- Increase pre existing mental health issues



# Mental health issues can lead to....

- Missing school, School dropouts
- Behavioural problems at schools
- Difficulties in learning
- Poor school performance



- Strategies to improve school mental health



# Strategies to improve school mental health ctd

## **Main objectives**

- Mental health promotion and prevention of mental health issues
- Early identifications of mental health
- Early interventions

# Strategies to improve school mental health ctd

## 1. Train teachers to understand and recognize mental health issues in children

### Role of teachers

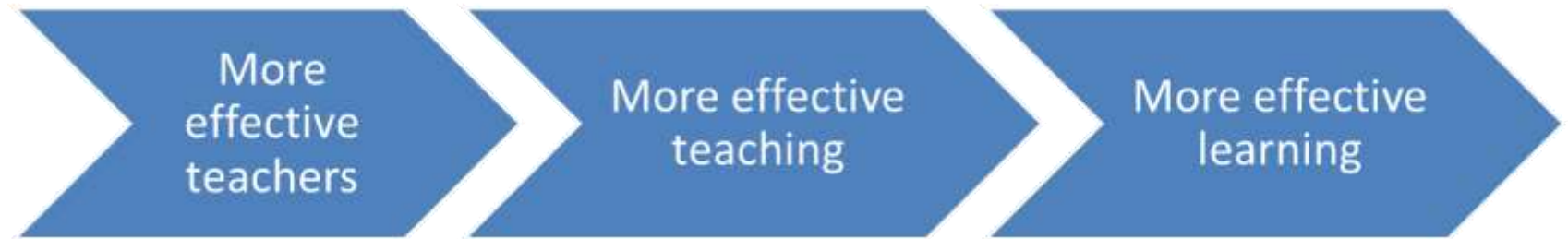
- Identify children with mental health problems
- Build a trusting relationship with the student so that the students can directly open up
- Refer the students to a counselor or a child psychiatrist if in need

# Strategies to improve school mental health ctd

## 2. Improve mental health of teachers



# Strategies to improve school mental health ctd



# Strategies to improve school mental health ctd

## **3. Train more school counselors**

Increased work load can reduce the effectiveness of care

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## **4. Increase parental awareness about mental health issues in students and empower them to provide support at home**

- Common features of mental health issues
- How to support children at home
- When and where to seek help

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**5. Combating stigma attached to mental health issues at school level and encourage individuals to seek help**

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## **6. Need to develop region specific infra structure and support**



# Strategies to improve school mental health ctd

## **7. Explore avenues to provide financial support for needy students**

(governmental , nongovernmental organizations, local supporters , self help groups etc)

- Food
- Stationary
- Uniforms
- Transport

# Strategies to improve school mental health ctd

## 8. At national level

- Flexibility in assessments, examinations
- Minimizing postponement of exams
- Provide tentative time periods for exams to minimize the feeling of uncertainty
- **Avoid considering school closure as the first option for crisis situations**
- More funds on school mental health

- **Questions ...?**

**Thank you ....**