

# Essentials of Mental Wellbeing and Healthy Supportive Ecosystem

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# Topics raised by participants for discussion

1. How to support each other?
2. How to develop inner coping resources in academic places
3. When to go for professional health
4. Time management, procrastination, emotional capacity, how to become emotionally strong
5. Career job issues,
6. Newer generation of psychologists
7. Spirituality & MH
8. How to choose between options
9. How to approach a person with MH issues
10. Problems which cannot be solved?
11. Training for peer support
12. What are parameters of symptoms or illness
13. Student Faculty issues, relationship
14. When to decide to move on, with the problem
15. How to prioritize
16. Systemic changes /activities for institution

# Background

- Students in high-performance institutes experience intense academic pressure, competition, and uncertainty.
- Why Mental Wellbeing Matters: Mental wellbeing influences learning, creativity, innovation capacity, and long-term professional outcomes.

# Mental Health in Professional Institutes

- Engineering and technology programs expose students to prolonged cognitive workload and competitive environments.

## **Common Stressors**

- Academic overload
- Competitive grading
- Sleep deprivation
- Career uncertainty
- Social isolation
- Others

# Introduction

- Stress is a state of mental or emotional strain resulting from adverse or demanding circumstances
- Stress is inevitable-- sources of stress, its severity, manifestations may vary
- Moderate degree of stress is necessary for optimal performance
- Low stress leads to complacency
- High stress results in a range of health consequences and relationship difficulties

# What causes stress to students in IIT BHU?

# Stress in Academic situations

- Characteristics of the Individual
  - Individual's personality
  - Those with psychiatric problems or family history
- Characteristics of the Course
  - Demanding study, pressures and timelines, projects
  - Tests, examinations, success and failure
  - To 'top', comparisons, competition
  - Hierarchy
- Interaction Effect-Individual and the institute
  - Relationship difficulties, peer pressure, sexuality, habits
  - Bullying, harassment

# Stress and coping

- Adaptive and healthy
- Maladaptive – avoidance , neurotic
- Unhealthy – substance use, alcohol, other behaviours
- Adjustment disorders
- Reactive disorders
- Psychosis, nervous breakdown

# Stress related disorders

- Adjustment disorders
- Anxiety, phobia, panic, depression
- Obsessive compulsive disorder
- Sleep and eating disorders
- Dissociative and somatoform disorders
- Deliberate self harm and suicidal behaviour
- Substance use, alcoholism, including performance enhancing substances
- Psychosexual dysfunctions
- Psychosis
- Others

# Mental Health in the Institutes

- Common Mental Disorders (CMDs) such as anxiety, depression, psychosomatic illnesses are common
- Personality types and its disorders, related to creativity or asocial, antisocial
- Substance abuse and dependence
- Absenteeism (presenteeism!), poor performance, productivity, disability etc.

# Self harm and suicidal behaviours

- Due to hopelessness and depression
- Impulsive
- Anomie and alienation
- Pain, bodily symptoms and suffering
- Psychological factors
- Stress due to any reason
- Due to endogenous depression

# Burnout in Elite Institutions

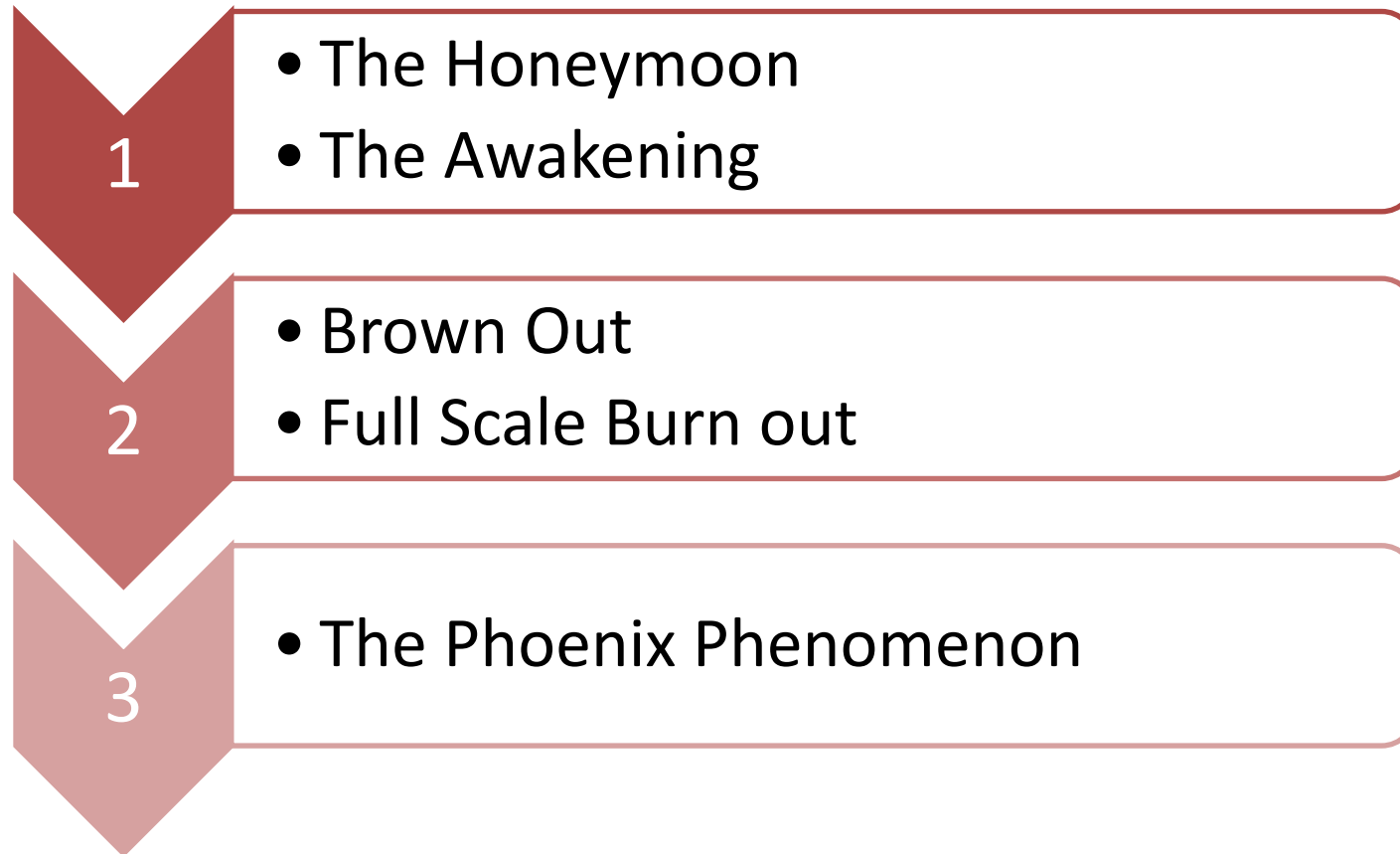
- Burnout emerges from chronic unmanaged stress leading to emotional exhaustion and disengagement.

## Stages of Burnout:

- Honeymoon: Job is wonderful, there is boundless energy and enthusiasm and all things seem possible.
- Awakening: Gradual realization that initial expectations were unrealistic. Disillusionment and disappointment grow and working harder doesn't change anything.
- Brownout: Experienced by chronic fatigue and irritability. Eating and sleeping patterns become irregular. Indecisiveness increases and productivity drops.
- Burnout: Brownout drifts remorselessly into full-scale burnout. Despair is the dominant feature, there is overwhelming sense of failure and a devastating loss of self-esteem and self-confidence.
- The Phoenix phenomenon

# Stress and Burnout

- A state of physical, emotional and mental exhaustion



# Bullying and Harassment

- Addressing bullying and harassment (*including sexual harassment*) is critical
- Signifies power inequity—person in a position of power (*by virtue of gender, position etc*) typically targets and victimizes the one below him/her.
- Adversely impacts mental health and wellbeing (*anxiety, depression, trauma-PTSD, low self-esteem*)
- Impacts academic efficiency and productivity

# Causes of Study- Related Stress

- High academic pace, time pressure
- Lack of control (work pace)
- Low participation
- Little support from colleagues and supervisor
- Poor career developments
- Job insecurity
- Long study hours
- Low incentives and appreciation
- Sexual and/or psychological harassment
- **No learn with fun**

# Causes of Study- Related Stress Contd..

## **Study-home interface**

- Conflict of responsibilities and roles
- Home environment
- Family exposed to study-related hazards
- Domestic violence, physical assault, rape
- Difficulties in daily life logistics

## **Person**

- Competitive, hostile
- Overcommitted
- Lack of self confidence

# What happens when you are stressed?

# Experiences of Negative Consequences

**Persistent stressful working conditions are associated with:**

- increasing absenteeism, presenteeism
- increasing tardiness
- Increasing dropouts
- decreasing performance and productivity
- decreasing quality of learning and training
- increasing unsafe working practices and accident rates
- increasing complaints from students
- increasing violent events
- increasing stress related disorders, and increasing costs through all of the above.

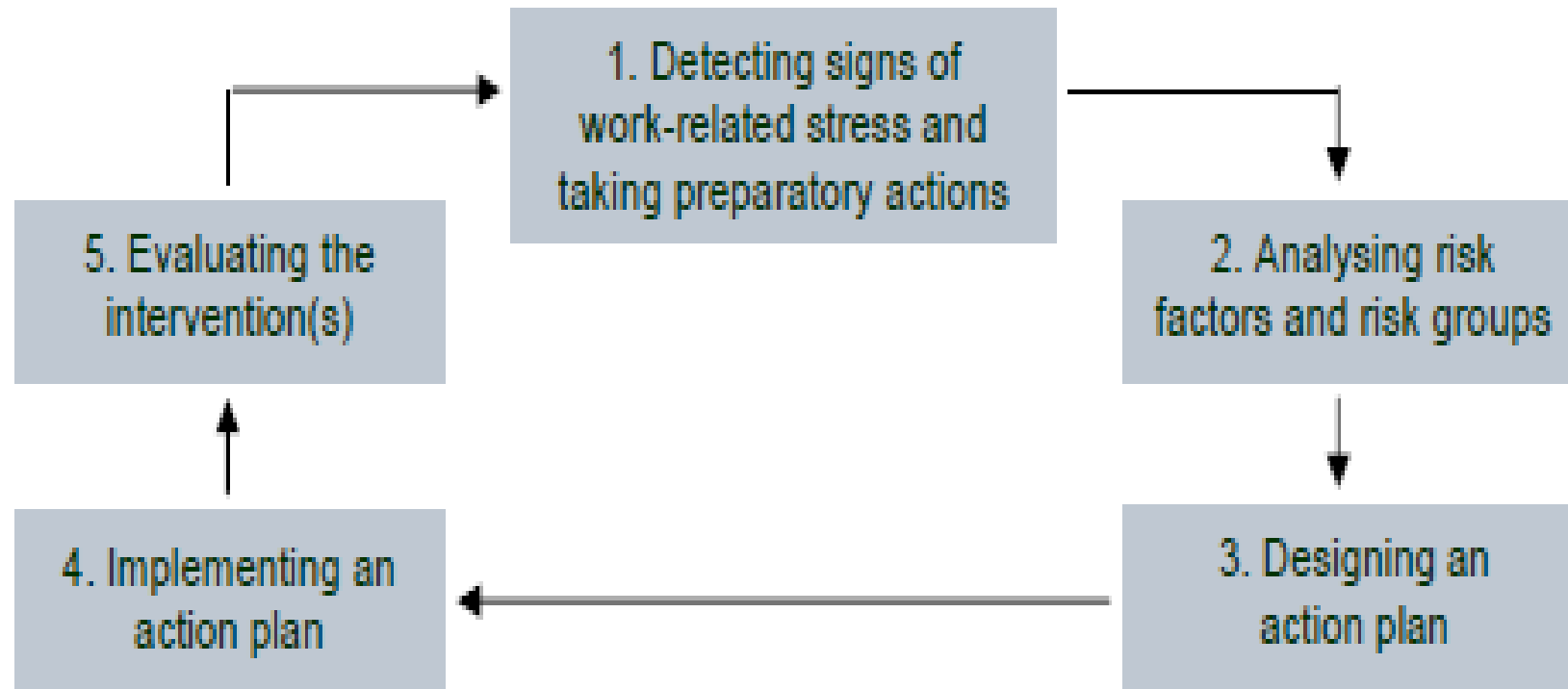
# How can we reduce stress?

# Factors for success in preventive action

- acknowledge a health or academic-related problem
- treat academic stress like any other problem
- act on the problem
- involve students in the intervention as they know best
- acknowledge students as 'experts'
- understand that management has to act on changes in the organizational structure
- use a stepwise approach
- use a clear structure of tasks and responsibilities, and a schedule
- use different types of solutions, for both short term and longer term success
- after care: ensure the organization and its students are taken care of during the process, as well as after the first round....

amended after Kompier et al, 1998

# Process of Stress Prevention



# Dimensions of Wellbeing

- Emotional
- Psychological
- Social
- Academic functioning
- Spiritual / philosophical

# Protective Factors

- Peer belonging
- Mentorship including from Alumni
- Healthy lifestyle
- Institutional support
- Access to counseling

# Need for Ecosystem Approach

- Single interventions are insufficient; comprehensive institutional ecosystems are required.
- Student Wellbeing Ecosystem: Integration of prevention, monitoring, mentorship, clinical support, and institutional culture.

# Framework Overview

- Preventive education
- Early detection
- Mental health services
- Mentorship networks
- Healthy campus culture

# Preventive Wellbeing Education

- Stress management training
- Resilience programs
- Mental health literacy
- Lifestyle education
- Survival tips by seniors, alumni – successful or ‘failures’

# Early Detection Systems

- Periodic wellbeing surveys
- Digital wellbeing check-ins
- Faculty alerts
- Peer referral systems

# Accessible Support Services

- Counseling centers
- Psychiatric consultation
- Crisis response systems
- Online therapy platforms

# Mentorship Networks

- Faculty advisors
- Peer mentors
- Alumni mentors
- Career guidance
- Independent mentors

# Healthy Campus Culture

- Balanced academic policies
- Safe hostels
- Recreation and sports
- Student engagement
- Interpersonal relations

# Digital Transformation of Campus Wellbeing

- Technology allows scalable monitoring and support for large student populations.
- AI-Enabled Wellbeing Monitoring: AI tools can analyze behavioral, academic, and lifestyle indicators to detect early distress.

# Digital Data Streams

- Academic engagement
- Learning platform activity
- Sleep and activity patterns
- Self-reported mood

# Behavioral Signal Detection

- Machine learning models identify patterns associated with stress, burnout, or depression.
- AI Alert System: Early warning signals sent to counseling teams or advisors while maintaining privacy safeguards.
- Precision Mental Health Concept: Personalized mental health support based on individual risk profiles and behavioral data.

# Precision Campus Mental Health Model

- Data collection
- Risk stratification
- Personalized interventions
- Continuous monitoring

# Risk Stratification

- Low risk : Stress, no safety risk
- Moderate stress: Distress + some risk
- High distress: Suicidal intent / immediate danger
- Crisis risk: attempted self harm or harming others

## **Red flag indicators**

- Suicidal thoughts
- Withdrawal
- Substance misuse
- Hopelessness
- Sudden behavior change

# Personalized Interventions

- Self-help modules
- Peer support
- Counseling referral
- Psychiatric treatment

# What type of intervention do students want?

# Interventions

- Adaptive Digital Interventions: Apps delivering stress reduction, cognitive training, sleep improvement, and mindfulness.
- Role of Faculty in AI Ecosystem: Faculty advisors receive guidance on identifying struggling students and facilitating referrals.
- Peer Support in Digital Era: Peer mentors supported by digital platforms for early engagement and support.
- Integrated Student Wellness Center coordinating counseling, mentoring, and digital systems.

# Monitoring & Evaluation

- Wellbeing indicators
- Service utilization
- Academic engagement
- Burnout prevalence
- Audits

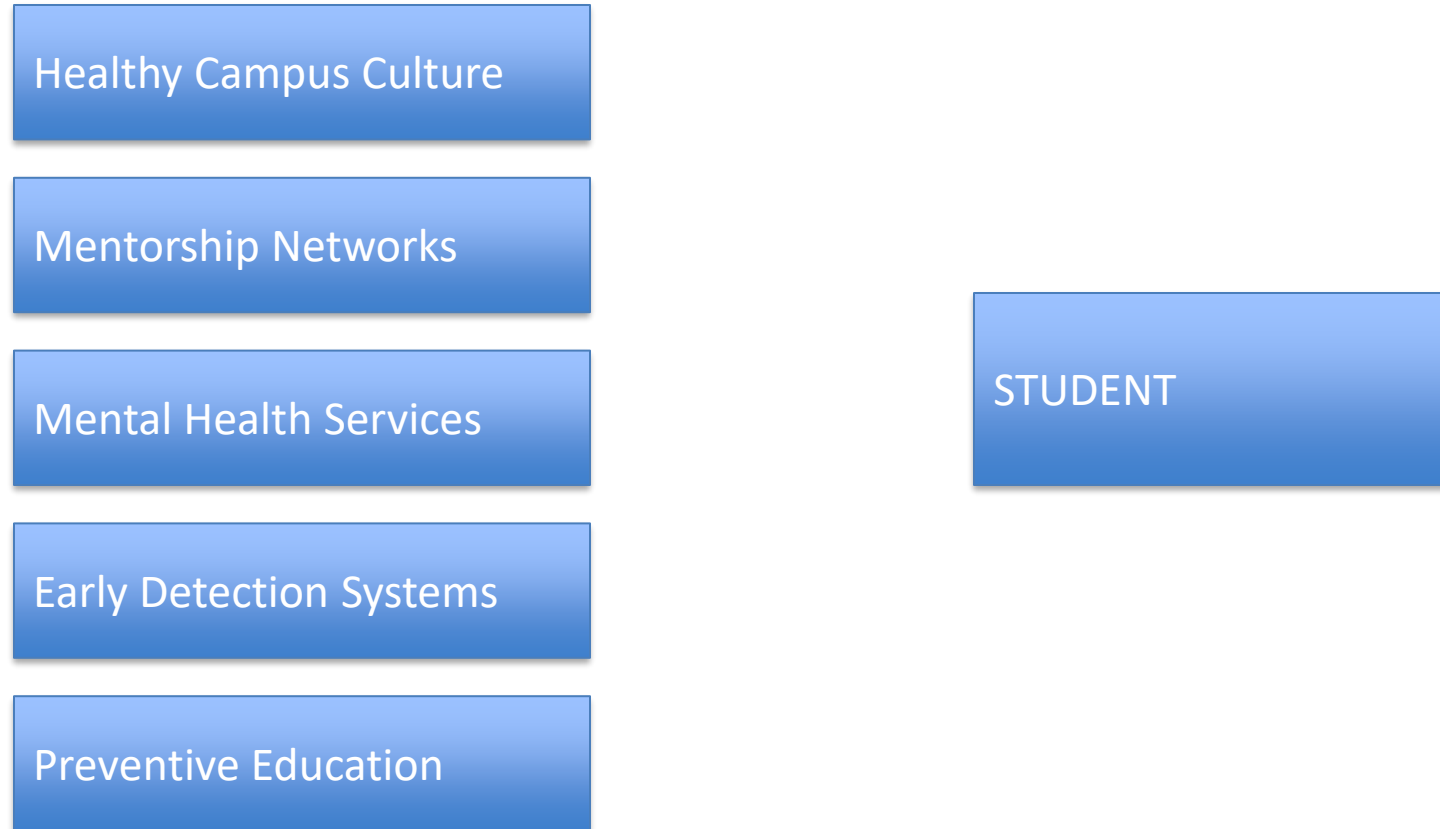
# Expected Outcomes

- Reduced burnout
- Improved resilience
- Early detection of distress
- Enhanced campus wellbeing
- “Successful” lives and careers, QOL

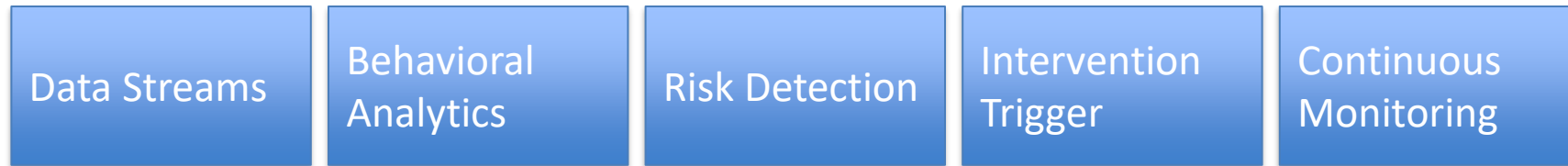
# Policy Implications & Conclusions

- Wellbeing ecosystems and AI tools should be integrated into institutional governance.
- AI-enabled ecosystems combined with precision mental health approaches can transform student wellbeing in IITs.

# IIT Student Wellbeing Ecosystem Model



# AI-Enabled Campus Wellbeing Monitoring Framework



# Precision Mental Health Model for Campus Populations



# Possible suggestions

- Professional skills development programmes
- Career guidance activities
- Integrate health, wellness and mental health
- Training of trainers programmes
- Encourage extracurricular and sports activities
- Flexibility in approach
- Spiritual growth & meaning of meaning; failures and successes

# Summary & Recommendations

- Mental health is critical for an individual's productivity and efficiency at work
- Organizations may conduct mental health awareness/sensitization programmes
- Screening for CMDs should be integrated with routine screening for physical /medical health problems
- Institutes can maintain screening questionnaires, which individual's may use for the purposes of self-screening as well.

# Summary & Recommendations

- Institutes may network with health and mental health service providers, in order to make appropriate referrals
- Mental health & wellbeing can be integrated into students/faculty welfare schemes/ programs
- Ethical issues such as maintaining confidentiality of those seeking help for mental health concerns is important

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TedX talk on Unmentor-the negative mentor

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-2Vbrdy1ajM&t=364s>