

Colleges take steps to tackle depression among students

Padmja Sinha

padmja.sinha@hindustantimes.com

THANE: The recent death of 24-year-old Bangalore resident Arjun Bhardwaj, who jumped from a 5-star hotel in Bandra, has prompted colleges in the city to come up with ways to tackle depression among students.

Taking a cue from the theme of World Health Day — 'Let's talk about depression', college authorities are asking students to talk to them if they are stressed.

Colleges are taking cognisance of the pressure students are under. Colleges have identified specific staff members to help them implement programmes to tackle mental illnesses.

"The recent suicide has prompted us to become more observant of our students. We have asked our faculty members tell students to speak up if something is bothering them," said Nitin Joshi, director, Bedekar Institute of Management.

Competitive pressure and peer pressure are two of the reasons why students are under a lot of stress, said experts.

Teachers said school counsellors play an important role in such an environment as they can teach students to differentiate between positive and negative stress.

"Many students are used to studying only at the eleventh hour. We are trying to make students aware that academics is just a supporting tool that will help them excel in life. We will not hire a private counsellor, but have asked our teachers to aid students. We have reached out to the students' parents to find out if any of them are suffering from family problems and if we can help resolve them," added Joshi.

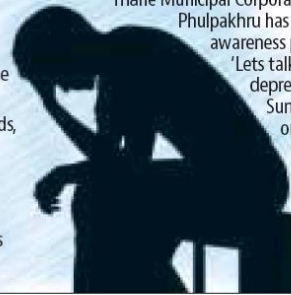
CD Marathe, principal, Dnyansadhna College said a team

HOW YOU CAN DEAL WITH STRESS AND DEPRESSION

- Engage in activities you like such as reading, listening to music, going for a walk or cycling
- Do not seek comfort in addictive substances
- Talk to your friends, family or teachers
- Learn to differentiate between positive and negative stress
- Seek help early

'LET'S TALK ABOUT DEPRESSION'

Thane Municipal Corporation and NGO Phulpakhru has organised an awareness programme, 'Let's talk about depression' on Sunday (April 9) on Teen Hath Naka service road. The day-long event will start at 6am.



comprising 25 teachers and students will screen students, reach out to the vulnerable ones and try to resolve their issues.

"The problem should be identified at the initial stage. We formed a team to help students," added Marathe.

He said the staff had identified a student who was later diagnosed with severe depression. After finding out that problems at home were affecting the student, the college referred him to an expert.

"Another student was depressed as he was unable to pay his college fees. We helped him too. We allow the students to remain anonymous, which is why they are willing to speak up," added Marathe.

Experts said many schools and colleges have designated counsellors and teachers to help students, but some students are unwilling to approach them.

"Colleges should stress the importance of mental health and tell students to speak up about depression and stress. A weekly or monthly awareness programme should be conducted and

➤ We have reached out to the students' parents to find out if any of them are suffering from family problems and if we can help resolve them.

NITIN JOSHI, director, Bedekar Institute of Management

experts should be invited to talk about the early signs of depression," said Shailesh Umate, Thane psychiatrist.

"Our counsellors and teachers reach out to students regularly. We frequently invite doctors to conduct sessions on mental health. We have even referred students to a psychiatrist," said Naresh Chandra, principal, Birla College.

Thane Municipal Corporation in coordination with NGO Sidhanth Pratishthan has organised an awareness programme 'Let's talk about depression' at Teen hath Naka service road on Sunday.