

PLANNING ACTIVITIES TO PROMOTE MENTAL HEALTH IN LIBRARIES

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Abstract:

Mental Health has become a major challenge around the world. Libraries can help people stay mentally healthy. Today many people feel stress, sadness, or pressure. Libraries are calm and safe places where people can relax, read, learn and connect with others. The paper describes different activities that libraries can plan like reading programs, yoga, art activities and awareness sessions to reduce stress and improve well-being it also explains why such programs are needed and how librarians can support users. The main idea is that libraries can play an important role in promoting mental health for students, teachers, and the community.

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Introduction:

Mental health means how we think, feel and handle our daily life. Today many people especially students face stress, pressure, and worry. Libraries are peaceful places where people can relax, read, and feel calm. They are not just for books; they are also safe spaces for learning and supporting each other.

People spend a lot of time in libraries, these places can help improve mental health. planning activities like reading programs, meditation, yoga, art and craft sessions, and awareness workshops, libraries can help reduce stress and promote a healthy mind. These activities not only improve mental health but also help students study better and feel more positive. So promoting mental health through library activities is becoming an important need in schools and communities. This paper explores how libraries can plan, organize and implement activities to promote mental health.

Need for Mental Health Promotion in Libraries:

1. *Students and People feel a lot of stress, so they need a calm place to relax.*
2. *Libraries are peaceful, which helps the mind feel better.*

3. *Mental health affects learning a calm minds studies better.*
4. *Many people feel lonely, and libraries can give them a safe place to connect with others.*
5. *Libraries can provide correct information about mental health and reduce wrong beliefs.*
6. *Reading helps reduce stress, so libraries encourage healthy habits.*
7. *Library activities can improve confidence and help people express their feelings.*
8. *Libraries are open for everyone, so more people can get help easily.*
9. *Modern life causes pressure, and libraries can offer relaxing activities like art, yoga or games.*
10. *Promoting mental health creates a positive environment in the school or community.*

Objectives of the Study:

1. To understand why mental health is important in libraries.
2. To find out which activities can help improve mental health.
3. To plan useful programs in the library for students and users.
4. To see how librarians can support mental balance.

5. To create a calm and positive environment in the library.
6. To encourage students and people to take care of their mental health.
7. To suggest ideas that can make library mental health programs better.
8. To support students emotionally during exams and busy times.
9. To allow students to share their feelings in a supportive environment.
10. To teach simple methods like meditation, breathing exercises, or art of relaxation
11. To improve the overall learning environment of the library.
12. To reduce fear or stigma related to mental health issues.
13. To promote social interaction so student do not feel lonely

Role of Libraries in Mental Health Promotion:

Libraries contribute to mental health in multiple ways:

1: Providing a Safe Space

Libraries offer a peaceful environment that helps reduce stress and anxiety. The quiet atmosphere encourages relaxation and emotional regulation.

2: Access to Information and Resources

Libraries provide books, journals and digital resources on mental health topics such as stress management, mindfulness, counseling and wellness.

3: Emotional Support through Social Interaction

Group reading sessions, book clubs and storytelling circles give students and community members opportunities to connect and share experiences.

4: Encouraging Healthy Study Habits

Time management workshops and study skills sessions help students manage pressure and reduce burnout.

5: Promoting Creativity and Expression

Art clubs, writing workshops and creative events offer emotional expression and therapeutic benefits.

Methodology:

This research is based on a qualitative review of books, journals, online resources, case studies and existing mental health programs in libraries. Observations and analysis of best practices from school, college and public libraries were also included.

Planning Activities to Promote Mental Health in Libraries:

Effective Planning is the foundation of good mental health activities. Libraries must follow several steps.

1. Identifying Needs of Users

The first step understands the needs of students and community members. Libraries can use:

- Surveys
- Feedback forms
- Interaction with teachers and parents
- Observation of user behaviour

This helps to identify stress levels, common problems and required support.

2. Setting Clear Goals

Libraries should define what the activities aim to achieve such as:

- Stress relief
- Awareness building
- Social bonding
- Emotional support
- Creativity enhancement

Clear goals guide planning and implementation.

3. Selecting Suitable Activities

Activities should be age appropriate, inclusive and practical. Some examples include:

A. Mindfulness and Meditation Sessions

Short guided meditation sessions help reduce anxiety and improve focus

B. Reading Therapy

Books with positive messages, self-help themes or motivational stories help users understand emotions and build resilience.

C. Art and Craft Workshops

Drawing, paintings and craft activities encourage self-expression and relaxation.

D. Yoga and Breathing Exercises

These help improve calmness and emotional balance.

E. Stress Relief Corners

Libraries can create cozy reading corners with plants, soft seating and inspirational quotes.

F. Peer Support Groups

Group discussions encourage social support and reduce loneliness.

G. Mental Health Awareness exhibitions

Displays of posters, books and pamphlets help spread knowledge.

H. Film Screenings and Storytelling Sessions

Motivational films and therapeutic storytelling support emotional bonding.

I. Workshops by Psychologists

Experts can conduct sessions on stress management, exam anxiety, emotional intelligence etc.

J. Creative writing and Journaling Sessions

Writing allows individuals to express feelings privately and safely.

4. Collaboration with Experts

Libraries can collaborate with:

- Counselors
- Psychologists
- Social Workers
- Teachers
- NGOs
- Health departments

These partnerships ensure that activities are professional and impactful.

5. Creating a supportive Environment

A positive environment is just as important as activities. Libraries should ensure:

- Clean, quiet spaces
- Adequate lighting
- Comfortable seating
- Indoor plants
- Friendly staff
- No judgment atmosphere. These elements naturally promote mental peace.

6. Promotion and Communication

Libraries must actively promote activities through:

- Notice boards
- Social media
- School announcements
- Posters
- Library websites

Good communication increases participation

7. Implementation and Management

Activities need proper scheduling, resource allocation, and staff involvement. Librarians must ensure:

- Timely organization
- Availability of materials
- Guidance for Participants
- Supportive supervision

8. Evaluation and Feedback

After activities, libraries must evaluate success through:

- Feedback forms
- Attendance records
- Observation
- Interviews

This helps improve future programs.

Benefits of Mental Health Activities in Libraries:**1. Improved Emotional Well-Being**

Users feel calmer, happier and more confident.

2. Better Academic performance

Stress management leads to better concentration and learning.

3. Enhanced Social Interaction

Group activities help build friendships and reduce loneliness.

4. Increased Use of Library Services

More people visit and engage with the library.

5. Positive Institutional Image

School, Colleges and community libraries become known for supporting wellness.

6. Development of Life Skills

Participants learn resilience emotional intelligence and problem solving.

Challenges in Implementing Mental Health Activities:**1. Lack of Trained Staff**

Many librarians are not specially trained in mental health support.

2. Limited Resources or Budget

Some libraries cannot afford materials, experts or dedicated spaces.

3. Stigma around Mental Health

Some users may hesitate to participate due to fear of judgement.

4. Low Participation

Awareness is often low, leading to poor attendance.

5. Time Constraints

Students may have busy schedules and cannot attend activities regularly.

Recommendations:

1. Provide basic mental health training for librarians.
2. Allocate small budgets for wellness programs.
3. Create dedicated mental wellness corners inside the library.

4. Involve students and teachers in planning activities.
5. Use digital tools such as mental health apps, e-books and webinars.
6. Strengthen partnerships with mental health organizations.
7. Conduct monthly wellness programs for continuity.
8. Promote activities creatively to increase participation.
9. Encourage anonymous help desks for users needing private support.

Conclusion:

Planning activities to promote mental health in libraries is not only possible but essential in today's world. Libraries are trusted, accessible and peaceful spaces that can significantly contribute to emotional well-being. By organizing creative, educational and supportive programs, libraries can help users cope with stress, enhance their social skills and improve overall mental health.

Well organized activities, proper collaboration and continuous evaluation can transform libraries into wellness friendly environments. This research concludes that mental health promotion should be an integral part of modern library services, benefiting individuals and communities alike. Therefore, mental health promotion should be seen as an important part of library services in schools, colleges and communities.

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