

## Assessing Mental Health Awareness and Self-Care Practices to Prevent Suicidal Thoughts among Students at Janata Multiple Campus (JMC)

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### Abstract

This study explores mental health awareness, self-care practices, coping strategies, and suicide prevention among students at Janta Multiple Campus (JMC). It focuses on their understanding, attitudes, and behaviors related to mental well-being. A mixed-methods approach was adopted, combining both quantitative surveys and qualitative tools. Data were gathered from 150 students across the Management, Education, and Humanities departments through structured questionnaires, including both closed- and open-ended questions. Additionally, three focus group discussions (each with 10 students) and in-depth interviews were conducted to capture deeper insights into students' personal experiences and perceptions. Findings suggest that while most students are aware of mental health issues, stigma remains a significant barrier to seeking professional help. Common stressors include financial challenges, family-related pressures, and academic workload. Although many students attempt self-care through journaling, meditation, or physical activity, these practices tend to be inconsistent. Alarming, a notable number of students admitted to having experienced suicidal thoughts, yet they often turn to informal networks such as friends or family rather than professional counseling. These insights underscore the urgent need for campus-based mental health programs that not only raise awareness but also reduce stigma and ensure accessible, student-friendly support systems.

**Keywords:** mental health, self-care practices, suicidal thoughts, help-seeking behavior, stigma

## Introduction

Mental health challenges among university students are becoming increasingly urgent in academic settings, as stress, anxiety, and depression are rising at an alarming rate. Research shows that nearly one in five college student's experiences a mental health disorder in a given year, and many of these cases begin before students even enter college (Auerbach et al., 2016). At Janta Multiple Campus (JMC), a rise in suicide cases has brought these issues to the forefront, emphasizing the need to identify root causes and develop effective interventions tailored to students' lived realities.

Students are frequently exposed to multiple stressors including academic demands, financial hardship, family expectations, and relationship difficulties that intensify psychological distress and increase vulnerability to mental health problems (Beiter et al., 2015). Despite growing awareness, stigma surrounding mental health remains a major barrier to help-seeking. Many students refrain from using support services out of fear of judgment, lack of trust, or misunderstanding about what services entail (Eisenberg et al., 2012). Furthermore, limited knowledge about mental health and coping strategies means many students remain unaware of the resources available to support their emotional well-being (Gulliver et al., 2010)

While existing research has extensively explored the general mental health challenges faced by students, there is a significant research gap concerning the specific self-care practices, attitudes toward mental health, and stigma associated with seeking help within the context of Janta Multiple Campus. Previous studies have largely focused on broader university settings in Western contexts, leaving a lack of localized data on the experiences of students in Nepal, particularly in smaller academic institutions. Furthermore, limited research has examined the intersection between self-care awareness and suicide prevention in this setting.

This study aims to address this gap by exploring the level of mental health awareness and self-care practices among students on Janta Multiple Campus, investigating their attitudes to mental health issues and exploring the stigma associated with seeking help. In addition, the aim is to identify common stressors and adaptation mechanisms used by students and the obstacles they face in practicing effective self-care. This study seeks to address students' perceptions of suicide and preventive

strategies, provide practical recommendations and foster supportive campus environments that promote mental well-being and reduce stigma. Finally, the study seeks to contribute to the efforts to prevent suicide through improving awareness of mental health, improving combat strategies, and the development of a culture of care within the academic community.

### **Literature Review**

Mental health among students has become a critical concern globally, with increasing rates of mental health disorders contributing to suicide risks. This literature review examines recent studies on factors influencing students' mental health, focusing on awareness, stigma, coping mechanisms, self-care practices, and suicide prevention efforts.

#### **Mental Health Awareness among Students**

Mental health awareness plays a crucial role in addressing mental health issues among students. Recent Research by Poudel, et al. (2024) examined mental health literacy and attitudes toward mental health problems among college students in Nepal and found no significant relationship between the two, indicating that knowledge alone may not lead to more positive attitudes. Similarly, a study by Pehlivan et al. (2021) state the participants had a low level of mental health literacy, females and people with a mental illness had higher mental health literacy scores.” Moreover, the study highlight that highlighted that awareness campaigns significantly increase help-seeking behaviors, though barriers to mental health services persist. (Duwal & Poudel, 2024), “study also emphasizes the need for school mental health programs and to include mental health literacy in the school curriculum.” (p. 5).

#### **Stigma and Help-Seeking Behaviors**

Stigma continues to be a significant barrier to accessing mental health services among students. According to Clement et al. (2015), stigma manifests as public stigma (negative societal attitudes) and self-stigma (internalized negative perceptions), both of which deter students from seeking professional help. Ahorsu et al, (2021) states that the peer-led intervention combining mental health promotion with group workshops provided a positive impact through increased mental health awareness and knowledge of coping strategies on self-help and helping others among university students.

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In the Nepalese context, “Mental illness is perceived as a 'spiritual dysfunction' or 'weak mind' and attributed to spirit possession, black magic, divine wrath and misdeeds committed in previous lives (*karmako phal*). There is a strong belief in traditional healing and the first point of contact for most people is the traditional, religious or faith healers (e.g. *dhamis, jhankris, baidangis* and *bijuwas*)” (Rai et al., 2021). The findings of Poudel, et al. (2024), emphasize that increasing knowledge alone is insufficient to reduce stigma; instead, culturally sensitive approaches are essential to challenge deeply rooted societal perceptions and misconceptions.

### **Coping Mechanisms and Stressors**

A study conducted at Kathmandu Medical College in Nepal found that 99.6% of undergraduate students reported high levels of perceived psychological stress, with 56.3% attributing it to academic factors such as workload and performance expectations. (Tuladhar, 2021). “The study found statistically significant differences before and after applying a mindfulness-based intervention program to improve socio-emotional and communication skills” (Maria et al., 2024). A study by Aryal et al. (2023) showed that students preferred to seek help from informal sources rather than professional sources. In addition, there is still stigma and fear among students regarding mental health and suggests that there is a need to have psychosocial intervention at colleges and educational institutions in order to promote professional help-seeking for any mental disorders including anxiety.

### **Self-Care Practices and Their Effectiveness**

Self-care plays a vital role in promoting mental well-being. Students benefited from being introduced to evidence-based practices for mediating the stress of trauma education, including journaling and mindfulness-based stress reduction (Shannon et al., 2014). Research by Guo (2025) show that physical exercise is a proactive resource investment behavior. It significantly enhances students' mindfulness and resilience. These psychological resources promote positive mental health indicators such as life satisfaction and positive affect, and at the same time, reduce negative factors like psychological distress.

The Creating Opportunities for Personal Empowerment (COPE) program, a brief cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT)-based intervention, demonstrated clinically

meaningful improvements in depressive and anxiety symptoms among college students. (Abney et al., 2019)

### **Suicide Prevention and Mental Health Interventions**

With rising student suicide rates, educational institutions have implemented various intervention strategies. Suicide is largely preventable and interventions to reduce suicide are available. Despite this, the Government of Nepal has not yet elaborated a specific national strategy for suicide prevention. WHO has identified “restricting access to means of self-harm/suicide”, “developing policies to reduce harmful use of alcohol as a component of suicide prevention”, and “assisting and encouraging the media to follow responsible practices for reporting of suicide” as key elements of an evidence-based population-level strategy to prevent suicide. A national campaign on stigma reduction and public awareness of mental illness, substance-use disorders and suicide should become an essential part of national mental health programmes to improve service coverage (Marahatta et al., 2017).

### **Western and Nepali Perspectives on Mental Health**

Mental health challenges among students in Western countries have been extensively documented. Awareness campaigns in Western universities focus on reducing stigma, promoting self-care, and offering institutional support, as highlighted by Gulliver et al. (2017), who explored the role of university staff in addressing mental health challenges among students.

According to Ebert et al. (2019), data from the WHO WMH-ICS Initiative revealed that attitudinal barriers including embarrassment and the preference to manage problems independently are among the leading reasons why college students across eight countries avoid seeking mental health treatment. The fear of social rejection among the adolescents and the need to maintain a strong public appearance contribute to reluctance in seeking help. Addressing self-stigma and incorporating mental health education into school curricula are imperative for improving access to mental health care. (Pokharel, 2025)

### **Cultural Influences on Mental Health and Self-Care in Nepal**

Cultural factors significantly shape attitudes toward mental health and self-care in Nepal. Rai et al. (2021) noted that traditional beliefs often conflict with modern

mental health practices, leading to reluctance in adopting professional interventions. Understanding mind-body relations in non-Western settings, their implications, and ways in which to reconstitute these relations in a less stigmatizing manner, medical anthropologists and mental health workers can contribute to the reduction of stigma in global mental health care. (Kohrt & Harper, 2008)

### **Theoretical Perspectives**

This study is guided by key frameworks to understand mental health, self-care, and suicide prevention among students.

#### **Social Cognitive Theory (SCT)**

Albert Bandura's SCT highlights the interplay between personal, behavioral, and environmental factors in shaping behavior, known as reciprocal determinism. Key components like self-efficacy and observational learning help explain how students' confidence and peer behaviors (e.g., discussing mental health or seeking help) influence attitudes toward mental health and self-care. This framework informs strategies to boost self-efficacy and promote help-seeking and self-care practices.

#### **Cultural Perspectives on Mental Health**

In South Asia, including Nepal, cultural beliefs like mental health stigma, collectivist values, and reliance on family/community support deeply shape attitudes toward mental health and help-seeking behavior. Understanding these dynamics is essential for designing culturally sensitive interventions that reduce stigma and enhance mental well-being.

#### **Research Gap**

Although mental health challenges among students in Nepal are becoming more visible, there's still a lack of research exploring how students perceive these issues, how they cope, and what prevents them from seeking help. Cultural expectations, stigma, and a preference for traditional practices often make it harder for students to access professional support, affecting their overall well-being. Self-care methods like mindfulness and peer support show potential, but we know little about how effective or accessible they truly are in academic settings. Likewise, the role of academic pressure, family expectations, and social stress in shaping students' mental health has not been fully explored. Filling these gaps is crucial to developing culturally appropriate

strategies that support student well-being and help prevent suicide within schools and colleges.

### **Methodology**

This study employs a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative and qualitative methods to explore mental health awareness, self-care practices, attitudes toward mental health, and suicide prevention among students at Janta Multiple Campus. Using a descriptive and exploratory design, the research targets undergraduate and graduate students aged 16 to 30 across diverse disciplines, including health, management, humanities, education, and social work. A stratified random sampling technique was used to ensure representation from various faculties at Janta Multiple Campus, Itahari. A total of 150 students were selected from a student population of 4,807, according to Janta Multiple Campus student's record of 2024/2025. The sample includes students from management, humanities, and education faculties to maintain proportional representation. The questionnaire included both closed-ended and open-ended questions. Quantitative data was gathered through a survey and structured questionnaire designed to assess student's mental health knowledge, attitudes, and a self-developed structured questionnaire to assess awareness, attitudes, self-care practices, and suicide prevention measures. Qualitative data was collected through focus group discussions (FGDs) conducted with three groups each consists of 10 students from different disciplines and in-depth interviews with faculty members and mental health professionals to capture nuanced insights into perceptions, coping mechanisms, and barriers to mental health support. This mixed-methods approach ensures a comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing mental health and self-care behaviors among students, offering actionable insights for promoting mental well-being.

The questionnaire included both closed-ended and open-ended questions. Closed-ended questions provided structured response options to quantify mental health awareness, coping strategies, and self-care practices. Open-ended questions were included to explore participant's personal experiences, challenges, and suggestions related to mental well-being and suicide prevention.



**Result and Discussion****Table 1***Demographic Characteristics of Respondents*

Respondent Character	No. of Respondent	Percentage (%)
<b>Age Group</b>		
16-20	110	74
21- 25	38	24
26-30	2	2
Total	150	100 %
<b>Gender</b>		
Female	97	65
Male	53	35
Total	150	100 %
<b>Study Level</b>		
Bachelor	112	75
+2	38	25
Total	150	100 %
<b>Faculty</b>		
Management	85	57
Education and Humanities	65	43
Total	150	100 %
<b>Economic Status</b>		
Low income	14	9
Middle income	133	89
High income	3	2
Total	150	100 %

The data reveals that the majority of respondents (74%) fall within the 16-20 age group, followed by 24% in the 21-25 age group, with minimal representation from the 26-30 age groups. The sample is predominantly female (65%), with males constituting 35%. Most respondents are currently studying at the Bachelor's level (75%), while 25% are at the +2 level. Regarding academic focus, 57% are pursuing Management, and 43% are in Education and Humanities. Economically, 89% of

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respondents belong to middle-income families, 9% to low-income, and only 2% to high-income groups. This data highlights a higher representation of female students, middle-income families, and those in Management studies within the sampled population.

**Table 2**

*Descriptive Analysis of Mental Health Awareness*

Mental Health Awareness Level	No. of Respondent	Percentage
<b>Mental Health Awareness</b>		
Aware	135	90
Unaware	15	10
Total	150	100 %
<b>Sources of Mental Health Awareness</b>		
Friends/Family	52	35
School/College	43	29
Social Media	41	27
Books/ Research Articles	8	5
Counselling Services	6	4
Total	150	100 %
<b>Perception on Importance of Mental Health</b>		
Strongly Agree	36	24
Agree	101	67
Neutral Disagree	10	7
Strongly Disagree	3	2
Total	150	100 %
<b>Common Causes of Mental Health Issues</b>		
Financial stress	54	36
Family Issues	33	22
Academic pressure	32	21
Relationship Problems	16	11
Peer Pressure	3	2
Substance Abuse	9	6
Accidents	3	2
Total	150	100 %

The data shows that 90% of respondents are aware of mental health issues, reflecting a positive trend in awareness, though 10% remain unaware, indicating room for further education.

The primary sources of mental health awareness include Friends/Family (35%), School/College (29%), and Social Media (27%), with fewer respondents citing Books/Research Articles (5%) and Counseling Services (4%). This suggests that interpersonal relationships and educational settings play a significant role in shaping awareness, while professional resources offer an opportunity for improvement. A majority (67%) of respondents recognize the equal importance of mental health and physical health, with 24% strongly agreeing. Only 7% remain neutral or disagree, signaling a cultural shift toward prioritizing mental health alongside physical health. And 2% remain strongly disagree.

Financial stress (36%), family issues (22%), and academic pressure (21%) are significant contributors to mental health challenges. This aligns with Misra & McKean (2000), who identified academic pressure, financial difficulties, and relationship issues as common stressors linked to anxiety and depression. These findings highlight the complex nature of mental health challenges among students, with financial and familial stress emerging as significant contributors.

The data reveals the emotional impact of stress, with Sadness being the most common response (53%), followed by Anger (36%). Panic and Confusion are less frequently reported, affecting 8% and 3% of respondents, respectively. This suggests that sadness and anger are the dominant emotional reactions to stress, highlighting the need for targeted emotional support and stress management interventions.

Regarding willingness to share stress, 64% of respondents reported that they do not share their problems, while 36% indicated that they do. This highlights a major challenge in mental health support, as a significant portion of students tend to internalize their struggles. Promoting open communication and establishing safe spaces for expression could help improve mental well-being.

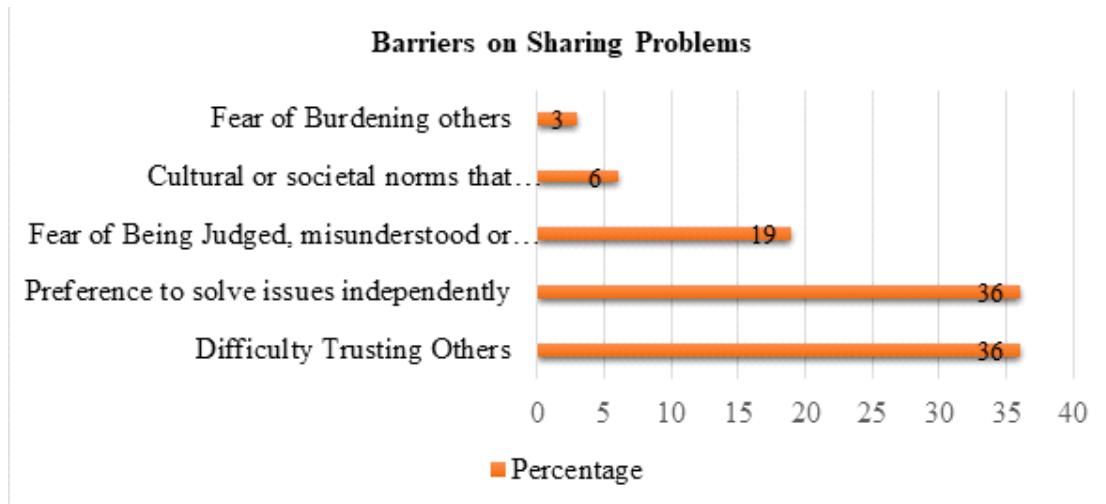
### **Table 3**

#### *Responses to Stress*

Responses to stress	No. of Respondent	Percentage
<b>Emotional Responses to Stress</b>		
Sadness	80	53
Anger	54	36
Panic	12	8
Confusion	4	3
Total	150	100 %
<b>Willingness to Share Problems</b>		
Share	96	64
Do not share	54	36
Total	150	100 %
<b>Support Systems for Sharing Problem</b>		
Close Friends	81	54
Family Members	65	43
Partners	4	3
Mentor/ Teacher	0	0
Counselor/ Therapist	0	0
Total	150	100 %

When it comes to preferred support systems, the majority (54%) of those who share their problems turn to close friends, followed by family members (43%). A small number (3%) confide in their partners, while none seek support from mentors, teachers, counselors, or therapists. These findings are consistent with Rijal et al. (2024), who found that Nepali students primarily rely on informal support networks, such as family and friends, for emotional support. However, these networks may not always provide effective coping mechanisms, highlighting the need for increased access to professional mental health resources.

This emphasizes the central role of personal relationships in providing emotional support, while highlighting a gap in the use of professional mental health resources that could be addressed through increased awareness and access.

**Figure 1***Barriers on Sharing Problems*

The data highlights several barriers preventing individuals from sharing their problems. The most common reasons are a Preference to Solve Issues Independently and Difficulty Trusting Others, each accounting for 36% of responses.

Similarly, 19% of respondents in this study indicated with fear of being judged or perceived as weak as a reason for not sharing their problems which aligned with the research indicates that stigmatizing attitudes discourage students from seeking mental health support. It also align with Gulliver et al. (2010), found fear of being labeled as "weak" or "mentally ill" as a key barrier. While smaller percentages mentioned Fear of Burdening Others is 3 % and Cultural or Societal Norms that Discourage Sharing, both at 6 %.

These findings underscore the internal and external challenges that discourage open communication. Addressing these barriers through trust-building initiatives and fostering a culture of empathy could encourage more individuals to seek support.

Table 5 reveals a range of strategies used by respondents to cope with stress. The most common methods include Talking to someone (30%), followed by Self-Reflection or Journaling and Physical Activities (22% each). Meditation or Mindfulness accounts for 19%, while Listening to Music and Engaging in Hobbies are less commonly used (2% and 5%, respectively). These findings highlight the importance of

both social support and personal activities such as physical exercise and self-reflection in managing stress, suggesting the need for diverse resources to cater to various preferences.

**Table 4**

*Coping Mechanism and its Effectiveness*

Coping Mechanism and its effectiveness	No. of Respondent	Percentage (%)
<b>Coping Mechanisms for Stress</b>		
Talking to someone	45	30
Self-Reflection or Journaling	33	22
Physical Activities	33	22
Meditation or Mindfulness	28	19
Engaging in Hobbies	8	5
Listening to Music	3	2
Total	150	100 %
<b>Effectiveness of Current Coping Methods</b>		
Sometimes effective	87	58
Yes	56	37
No	7	5
Total	150	100 %

Regarding the effectiveness of these coping methods, 58% of respondents feel their strategies are sometimes effective, and 37% believe they are consistently effective. However, 5% report that their coping methods are ineffective. This indicates that while many respondents find their strategies helpful, there is still a small group that may benefit from additional support or alternative coping resources.

Table 6 reveals the majority of respondents feel somewhat comfortable discussing mental health (49%), while 25% feel very comfortable. A small percentage (11%) remain neutral, suggesting general openness but room for improvement in comfort levels. Moreover, 8% and 7% remain somewhat uncomfortable and very uncomfortable for discussing mental health issues.

**Table 5***Attitudes towards Mental Health*

Attitudes towards Mental Health	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Comfort Zone for discussing mental health issues		
Very Comfortable	38	25
Somewhat comfortable	74	49
Neutral	16	11
Somewhat Uncomfortable	12	8
Very Uncomfortable	10	7
Total	150	100 %
Perception of Seeking Help		
Yes	27	18
No	112	75
Unsure	11	7
Total	150	100 %
Willingness to Seek Professional Help		
Yes	82	55
No	42	28
Unsure	26	17
Total	150	100 %
Impact of Stigma on Students Seeking Help		
Yes	125	83
No	25	17
Total	150	100 %

Perception of Seeking Help for Mental Health Challenges in which 75% of respondents believe seeking help is not a sign of weakness, while 18% still perceive it as such. This indicates growing acceptance, though stigma persists among a minority.

Willingness to Seek Professional Help in which 55% of respondents are willing to seek professional help, 28% are reluctant, and 17% are unsure. While many acknowledge the importance of professional support, barriers still exist for a significant portion.

Stigma surrounding mental health remains a significant barrier to help-seeking behaviors among students. According to Corrigan et al. (2014), stigma manifests in two forms: public stigma, involving societal prejudices and discrimination, and self-stigma, where individuals internalize negative stereotypes about mental illness. This aligns with the research finding that 83% of respondents believe stigma prevents students from seeking mental health help, emphasizing the importance of anti-stigma initiatives and supportive environments.

This overwhelming response suggests that stigma remains a significant barrier to accessing mental health support among students. Addressing this stigma through awareness campaigns, education, and creating supportive environments could encourage more students to seek the help they need without fear of judgment.

**Table 6**  
*Self- Care Practices*

Self- Care Practices	Value	Percentage
Engagement in Self -Care Practices for Mental Health		
Yes	123	82
No	27	18
Total	150	100 %
Frequency of Self-Care Practices		
Daily	42	28
Weekly	4	3
Occasionally	83	55
Rarely	12	8
Never	9	6
Total	150	100 %
Perceived Sufficiency of Self-Care Practices		
Yes	62	41
No	48	32
Unsure	40	27
Total	150	100 %



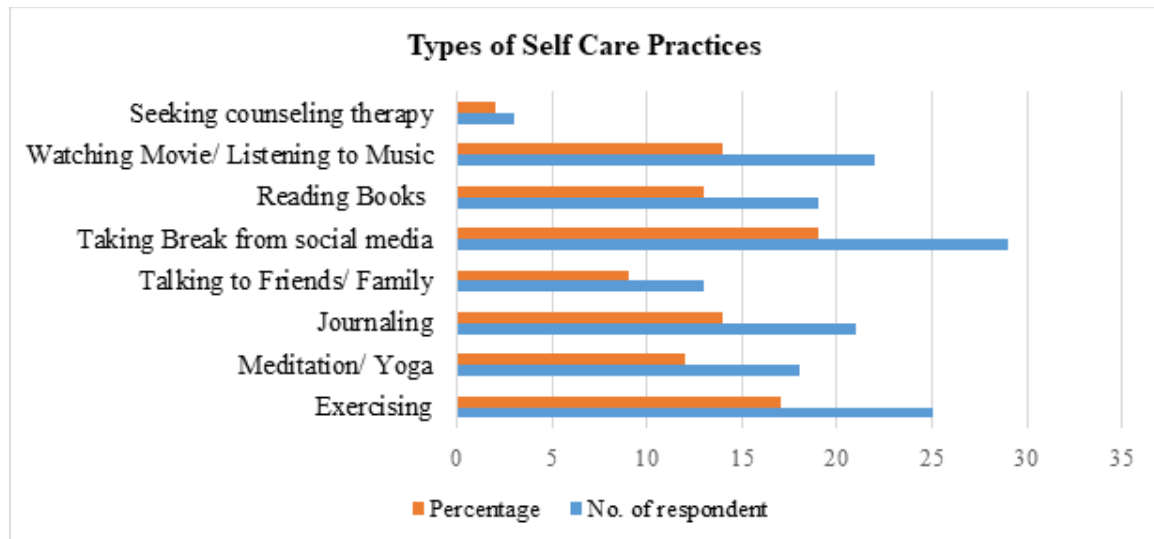
The data shows that the majority of respondents, 82 %, practice self-care for their mental health, while 18 % do not. This indicates a strong recognition of the importance of self-care among respondents. However, the minority w Self-Care Practice for Mental Health

The majority of respondents (82%) engage in self-care for their mental health, indicating strong awareness of its importance. However, the 18% who do not practice self-care suggest an opportunity to further promote its benefits for mental well-being. Self-care frequency varies: 28% practice it daily, 55% do so occasionally, 3% weekly, and 8% and 6% report rarely or never engaging in self-care. This highlights inconsistent self-care habits, suggesting the need for regular self-care promotion.

Regarding Perceived Sufficiency of Self-Care Practices; 41% feel their self-care practices are sufficient while 27% is unsure, and 32% feel their practices are insufficient. This points to a need for guidance and resources to improve the effectiveness of self-care practices.

**Figure 2**

*Types of Self-Care Practices Engaged by Respondents*



The data highlights a range of self-care practices that respondents engage in to support their mental health. The most common activity is Taking Breaks from Social Media (19 %), followed by Exercising (17%) and Watching Movies/Listening to Music (21%). Other frequently practiced methods include Meditation/Yoga (9%), Journaling

(14%), and Reading Books (13%).

Less commonly reported activities include Talking to Friends/Family (5%) and Seeking Counseling/Therapy (2%). This data underscores a preference for informal and individual self-care practices over professional mental health support, pointing to the need to further advocate for the benefits of seeking professional help.

**Table 7**

*Suicidal Thoughts and Support Received*

Suicidal Thoughts and Support Received	No. of Respondent	Percentage
Experience of Suicidal Thoughts		
Yes	36	24
No	114	76
Total	150	100 %
Sources of Help		
Self	112	75
Friends	26	17
Relatives	12	8
Teacher	0	0
Professional	0	0
Total	150	100 %

The data reveals that 76 % of respondents have not experienced suicidal thoughts, while 24 % have. Among those who have had such thoughts, received support from an individual and found relief, and another managed to overcome the situation through self-reflection without external support and by thinking about their family members they stop themselves to experience suicidal thought. These findings underscore the critical need for accessible mental health resources and support systems.

Among the 24 respondents who have experienced suicidal thoughts or attempts, the majority, 75%, managed to cope on their own. A smaller number sought help from relatives (8 %) or friends (17%), while no respondents reported seeking assistance from professionals or teachers.

This data highlights the critical role of self-reliance in managing mental health crises for many individuals, but it also underscores the lack of professional intervention

or support from trusted figures like teachers. This presents an important opportunity to improve access to professional mental health services and to encourage a more open environment for seeking help.

### **Key Insights from Open-Ended Responses and FGDs**

#### **Understanding of Mental Health and Self-Care**

Students viewed mental health as encompassing emotional, psychological, and social well-being, while self-care was seen as managing one's health through emotional awareness, stress management, physical care, and self-love. Suggestions included recognizing flaws, self-reflection, and seeking professional help. While most acknowledged the importance of mental health, responses varied in depth, indicating a need for enhanced awareness and education.

#### **Challenges in Maintaining Mental Health and Self-Care**

Students cited overthinking, stress, lack of confidence, and social isolation as major challenges. Other barriers included family issues, financial constraints, cultural stigma, and fear of judgment. These highlight the need for efforts to reduce stigma, increase awareness, and provide accessible resources.

#### **Emotional Responses to Suicide**

Some students admitted to having suicidal thoughts but resisted them due to the love and support of their families. Witnessing suicides evoked sadness and reflections on systemic failures to address underlying issues. Many emphasized the need for justice and timely intervention for those at risk.

#### **Recommendations to Improve Mental Health Awareness**

Students generally suggested incorporating mental health education into school curricula, promoting open discussions, and creating safe environments. They emphasized professional counseling, lifestyle changes (e.g., reduced screen time, physical activity), and addressing societal pressures and academic stress. A holistic approach combining education, emotional support, and a positive environment was recommended.

#### **Strategies to Prevent Suicide**

Proposed strategies included mental health awareness programs, fostering self-care, promoting communication, and building supportive environments. Respondents

highlighted the role of parents in reducing pressure and creating a positive atmosphere at home. Collectively, these insights call for community-based, supportive, and proactive measures to address mental health and prevent suicide.

### **Overall Findings**

The data collected from the respondents provides valuable insights into the current state of mental health awareness, self-care practices, and support systems among students. The findings reveal key themes, challenges, and areas for improvement in addressing mental health concerns:

#### ***Mental Health Awareness***

A significant majority of respondents expressed awareness of mental health issues, with many acknowledging the importance of mental health alongside physical health. However, despite this awareness, there remains a clear need for more comprehensive education and awareness programs to reduce stigma and encourage open discussions about mental health. While many students reported being familiar with general mental health and self-care practices, a notable proportion indicated that their knowledge was not in-depth or comprehensive. Additionally, several students felt that the current mental health education provided on campus was insufficient, highlighting a gap in detailed knowledge and the need for further initiatives to address this issue.

#### ***Challenges in Maintaining Mental Health and Self-Care***

Respondents identified common challenges such as overthinking, stress, social anxiety, and lack of support as major contributors to their mental health difficulties. Financial barriers, time constraints, social isolation, and family issues were also frequently mentioned as significant obstacles to practicing self-care. Additionally, stigma, both social and cultural, continues to prevent many students from seeking help, with a considerable number expressing concerns about feelings of guilt, judgment, or being perceived as weak if they disclose their mental health struggles.

#### ***Self-Care Practices and Coping Mechanisms***

Most respondents recognize self-care as essential, with practices such as journaling, exercise, meditation, and talking to loved ones commonly cited. However, only a small proportion engage in self-care on a daily basis, with many practicing it occasionally or rarely. Despite these efforts, a significant number of respondents feel

that their current self-care practices are inadequate to effectively cope with stress and mental health challenges. This highlights the need for better guidance on maintaining consistent self-care habits and enhancing emotional resilience.

### ***Seeking Help and Support***

While the majority of respondents expressed a willingness to seek professional help if experiencing mental health challenges, many students remain reluctant to share their problems with others due to fear of judgment or a lack of trust. Those who did seek help primarily turned to friends, family members, or relied on themselves, with professional support being rarely sought. Additionally, most respondents acknowledged that stigma is a significant barrier to seeking mental health support, and many emphasized the need for more accessible professional intervention and counseling services

### ***Emotional response to suicide and factors that stop students committing suicide***

The study revealed that most respondents expressed sadness and concern when witnessing suicides, often questioning the reasons behind such actions. Many reflected on their own lives, stating that suicide would not be an option for them. Some respondents who had experienced suicidal thoughts shared that thinking about their families, particularly their parents, helped them resist these thoughts. Additionally, participants emphasized a sense of injustice, pointing to the lack of adequate support and justice for individuals who died by suicide. These findings highlight the emotional impact of suicide on communities and underscore the urgent need for systemic interventions and support mechanisms.

### ***Prevention and Suicide***

Respondents highlighted the importance of awareness programs, self-care, and open communication in suicide prevention. They emphasized positive thinking, sharing problems, and the role of professional therapy and supportive environments in reducing risks. Public awareness campaigns are essential to challenge mental health stigma, along with creating safe spaces where individuals, especially students, can openly discuss their struggles without fear of judgment.

### ***Social Work Interventions***

Social Work Intervention at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels to address mental health challenges, promote self-care, and prevent suicide among students:

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### ***Micro-Level Interventions***

At the micro level, social workers provide personalized support that can make a real difference in students' lives. One-on-one counseling, especially through evidence-based approaches like Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT), helps students understand and manage stress, anxiety, and depression. These sessions empower them to build healthier thought patterns and practical coping strategies. Alongside this, individualized self-care plans often including mindfulness and physical activity have been shown to improve emotional regulation and overall well-being (Kabat-Zinn, 1990).

When students face emotional crises or suicidal thoughts, immediate support becomes critical. Trained social workers skilled in crisis intervention and risk assessment can help de-escalate distress and connect students with the right care Gould et al. (2016).

Education around mental health is equally important. By reframing help-seeking as a sign of strength rather than weakness, psycho-social education challenges stigma and encourages students to reach out when they need it (Corrigan & Watson, 2002).

The results of this study support these findings, highlighting that personalized, direct interventions at the micro level can significantly contribute to the mental well-being of students. These interventions help reduce stigma, promote coping skills, and offer timely support during emotional crises, which aligns with existing research on the effectiveness of such approaches in educational settings.

### ***Mezzo-Level Interventions***

Mezzo-level interventions focus on creating supportive communities within educational institutions. Peer support groups have proven effective in reducing stigma and promoting help-seeking behavior by providing safe spaces for students to share experiences. Ahorsu et al. (2021). Workshops on stress management and emotional regulation also empower students with practical tools to cope with academic and personal challenges, leading to improved mental health outcomes. Training faculty and staff to identify and assist students in distress enhances early intervention and creates a responsive academic environment. Programs like Mental Health First Aid have been successful in this regard. Similarly, family engagement programs strengthen communication and support networks, helping students manage stress and improve

coping strategies

These interventions work together to build a culture of care, enabling students to access support and develop healthier coping mechanisms. Additionally, mental health clubs or resource centers on campus serve as vital support networks, where students can access information, participate in therapeutic activities, and find informal emotional support.

### ***Macro-Level Interventions***

On the macro level, social work interventions address systemic and policy-level barriers to mental health care and suicide prevention. Advocacy for integrating mental health education into school curricula is supported by research showing that early intervention reduces stigma and encourages help-seeking behavior (Kieling et al., 2011). Making affordable and accessible mental health services available on campuses is vital, as students with such access report improved well-being (Eisenberg et al., 2009). Additionally, large-scale awareness efforts, including social media campaigns, have shown promise in changing perceptions. Campaigns featuring real student experiences can foster empathy and reduce stigma across academic communities (Naslund et al., 2016)

Moreover, Collaboration with NGOs and government agencies is also key to enhancing funding and implementing culturally relevant suicide prevention strategies. Evidence from global initiatives suggests that comprehensive, multi-level approaches involving both governmental and non-governmental actors are more effective in reducing suicide rates among students. Legislative advocacy plays a critical role in promoting student well-being by regulating academic workloads, ensuring confidentiality, and implementing anti-discrimination protections.

In conclusion, a multi-level approach comprising micro-level interventions like counseling, mezzo-level community support, and macro-level policy advocacy effectively addresses student mental health and suicide prevention. This integrated strategy fosters emotional regulation, reduces stigma, and creates supportive environments for students.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the findings, several steps can be taken to strengthen mental health

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awareness and support for students. Educational institutions should introduce regular programs and workshops that educate students about mental health and encourage positive self-care habits. Creating a safe and understanding environment where students feel comfortable sharing their struggles is key to breaking the stigma around mental health. Promoting everyday practices like mindfulness and stress management can help students build healthier ways to cope with challenges. Schools and campuses also need to ensure that professional support such as counseling and therapy is both available and accessible. Finally, encouraging open, ongoing dialogue among students, teachers, and parents can provide much-needed emotional support and help reduce feelings of loneliness or disconnection.

### **Conclusion**

This study highlights that while students at Janta Multiple Campus demonstrate a general awareness of mental health issues, significant barriers continue to hinder effective mental health management. Persistent stigma, inconsistent self-care practices, and a heavy reliance on informal support systems such as friends or self-guidance often prevent students from seeking professional help. The findings reveal that academic pressure, financial strain, and family-related concerns are major stressors contributing to student's emotional distress. Notably, 24% of the 150 respondents disclosed having experienced suicidal thoughts. Among these, many identified their families particularly their parents as a key emotional anchor, which served as a protective factor against the escalation of such thoughts.

Despite this, the underutilization of professional mental health services remains evident. The majority of students (75%) reported managing their struggles independently, while 17% turned to friends and only 8% to relatives. Alarming, none reported seeking support from teachers or accessing counseling services on campus.

These insights point to an urgent need for institutional action. Prioritizing mental health education, reducing stigma, and ensuring accessible, student-friendly counseling services are essential steps toward fostering a supportive and responsive academic environment. Promoting consistent self-care and normalizing help-seeking behavior will not only enhance individual well-being but also contribute to broader suicide prevention efforts within the student community.

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