



Empathy to Action: Educators on the Frontlines

“As many of our teachers, counsellors, and education officials are present today, it is important to acknowledge your critical role in supporting students' mental health. You are on the front lines, shaping the future of Bhutan. While we often associate mental health with policies and healthcare, significant impact happens at the school level, where your support can be lifesaving.”

~ Her Majesty The Gyaltsuen, November 26, 2024

During The PEMA Symposium in November 2024, Her Majesty The Gyaltsuen underscored the vital roles of teachers, counsellors, and education officials in safeguarding the mental health and wellbeing of students. The educators were called upon to embrace empathy in our effort to create a safe, supportive, and nurturing environment for our children and youth.

In deep obeisance to Her Majesty's profound Royal Command, The PEMA Secretariat, in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Skills Development is implementing a nationwide effort to promote mental health and wellbeing including substance use prevention and care programs in schools. Recognizing that transformative mental healthcare begins at the school level, where early intervention can be lifesaving, this initiative seeks to empower school leaders, counsellors and teachers as frontline workers, equipping them with knowledge and tools to address the pressing mental health challenges in schools and the greater need to promote and build resilience of our children.





As part of this ongoing collaboration, a three-day workshop on Mental Health in Schools is planned in three regions involving a total of 365 participants across the country comprising DEOs/TEOs, Principals, School Counsellors, and Wellbeing Focal Teachers. The workshop for the western region started on May 8, 2025 with around 186 participants from eight Dzongkhags and two Thromdes. Of the total, 9 are DEOs/TEOs; 94 are Principals; and the rest are School Counsellors/Wellbeing Focal Teachers. Similar events will take place in Gelephu for the central region and in Mongar for the eastern region from May 13-15, and May 26-28, respectively.

The objectives of the workshop are to promote mental health and wellbeing in schools; streamline school-based substance use prevention and care; and build capacity of school leaders and counsellors in early identification and timely support.

Through continued and coordinated efforts, The PEMA Secretariat reaffirms our commitment to actualise Her Majesty The Gyaltsuen's vision of a compassionate and resilient Bhutanese society where every child is nurtured with understanding, support, and the opportunity to thrive.

