

DSE CARES FOR THE MENTAL HEALTH OF IT'S STUDENTS

DSE – Lockdown Online Social activities: A Report

The Department of Special Education anticipating the potential mental stress of its staff and students, started organizing online activities for them. The activities are planned and managed by two of the staff members who are identified as the CAS (Coordinators for Social Activity).

The online sessions bring a lot of laughing, pulling legs (figuratively speaking) and alleviates the sense of loneliness thus increasing the serotonin and dopamine levels in the brain. This helps control the impact of the stress and permits the body to relax thus easing the mind from the edge of the fight or flight reaction to stress.

Other than bringing the stress levels down the social activities also help develop a sense of camaraderie and companionship. The students and staff both, self-expressed that they 'enjoy' the activities.

We have a strength of 49 students and 15 staff members (including Arushi teachers, the part time and non-teaching staff). It was a challenge to bring the group together and ensure complete participation. However, Zoom still continues to have the best capability and features so far.

We had our first social activity of Housie on Skype. Tickets were created on an excel sheet and a random number generator was used to identify the call out numbers. All the participants had a great time.

The Antakshari activity was an exciting session filled with laughter and music and joy. The session was similar to the usual Antakshari except for it being held online.

The next activity we held was Dumb Charades. But since it was conducted on Zoom, we had limited participation. The reason for choosing Zoom was the grid view and spotlight facility which enables us to see all participants at one time on the screen.

The activity was a rousing success and we ended the session after almost 2 hours with requests for repeat sessions from the participants.

Our next few sessions planned are Hangman, Hotspot by the Teapot and Housie.