



# School Mental Health Training



**World Health  
Organization**

REGIONAL OFFICE FOR THE **Eastern Mediterranean**

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## Lecture 6

# Other health-promoting efforts that impact mental health



# Learning objectives



**healthy nutrition  
in a school setting**



**vision, hearing, speech**



**physical exercise in  
health promotion**



**exposure to electronic  
media** (screen time, internet  
addiction and cyber bullying)



**parents' role in supporting  
their children's education**

# Nutrition



Proper nutrition



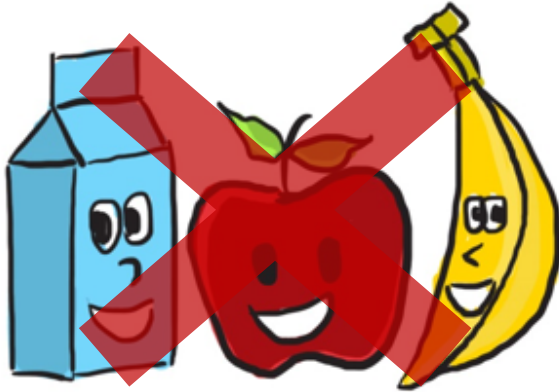
Healthy body



Healthy mind

**Nutritional deficiencies have an impact on cognitive and emotional development**

# Nutrition



**Malnutrition**



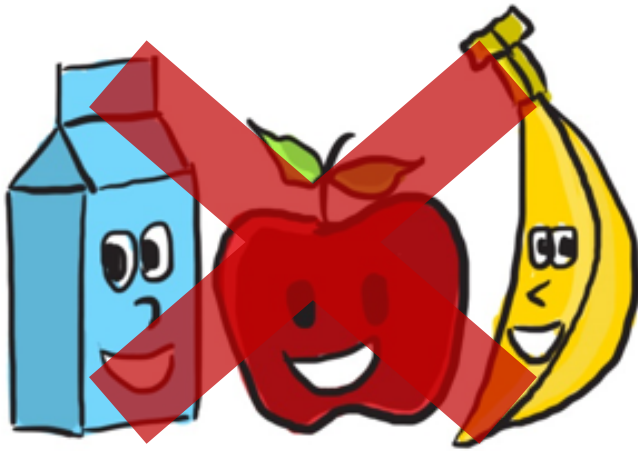
Single biggest contributor to  
**child mortality in the Region**

*WHO*

**1/3 children in the Region are underweight or stunted  
More of than 30% of the population have micronutrient  
deficiencies**

“The effect of under-nutrition on young children (ages 0–8) can be devastating and enduring. It can impede behavioural and cognitive development, educability, and reproductive health, thereby undermining future work productivity” **The World Bank**

# Nutrition



**Vitamin** (B, C, D and E) and **mineral deficiencies** (calcium, iodine, iron, magnesium, selenium & zinc)

**malnutrition**

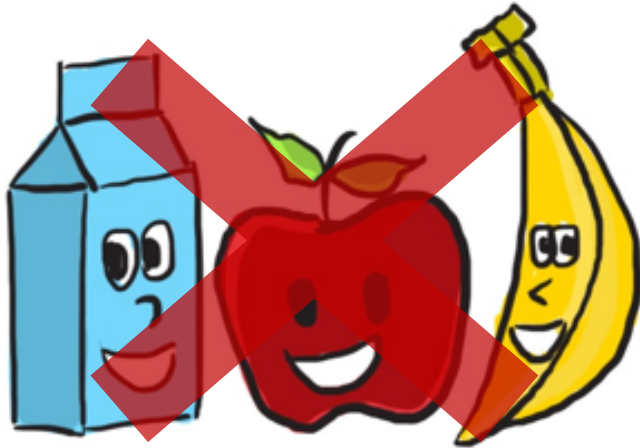


affects cognition and subsequently the ability to learn and retain



**lower IQ**

# Nutrition



**Malnutrition**



Greater behavioural problems  
Deficient social skills  
Decreased attention  
Deficient learning  
Lower educational achievement

**Children who have stunted growth and obesity**  
are more prone to develop self-esteem issues and mental illness

It is imperative that schools pay attention to the nutrition of their students and work with families to ensure children receive healthy diets



# Nutrition



## **The WHO Nutrition-Friendly Schools Initiative (NFSI)**

A school-based initiative to address the double-burden – under-nutrition and obesity – of nutrition problems throughout the life course

### **Core components of NFSI**

1. Have a written nutrition-friendly schools policy
2. Enhance school community awareness and capacity-building
3. Develop a nutrition curriculum
4. Create a supportive school environment
5. Provide supportive school nutrition and health services



# Eating disorders



These disorders present a group of conditions where those affected (most commonly **females**) develop an unhealthy relationship with eating

They are among the **most grave** of mental disorders

There are several types including **anorexia nervosa** where the person affected may suffer from a disturbed body image and abnormally low body weight

Affected individuals take extreme measures like restricting their food intake, overexercising and inducing vomiting



# Eating disorders



There are two types of **bulimia nervosa**, the **purging type**, where those affected typically binge and regularly self-induce vomiting or misuse laxatives, diuretics or enemas, and the **non-purging type** where other methods are used to prevent weight gain after bingeing

**Eating disorders can be life threatening and require professional care**



# Vision/hearing/speech



Students who present with unidentified problems in vision, hearing or speech may be thought to have mental illness



They may find themselves struggling at school and prone to **low self-esteem** and **school avoidance**

It is important that educators be aware of these possibilities and refer students as needed for vision and hearing screening and speech evaluation

# Physical exercise



Regular physical activity has significant physical and mental health benefits

Exercise improves strength and endurance, helps build healthy bones and muscles, can improve **blood circulation** and helps in **weight control**

# Physical exercise



Has beneficial mental health effects including reducing anxiety and stress, maintaining a healthy body image and increasing self-esteem

Helps keep children occupied with healthy activities

There is evidence linking school-based physical activity to cognitive skills and improved academic achievement

# Physical exercise



Physical activity should be incorporated into the school curriculum

Students should be encouraged to participate with a goal of achieving **60 minutes** of physical activity per day

# Media exposure



## 1. Screen time

The **American Academy of Pediatrics** recommends parental monitoring of media time  
With increased access to electronic media in schools and after school programmes, educators have a similar role to play



1. Limit the time children consume electronic media to **1–2 hrs/day**
2. Provide alternative activities for entertainment such as playing outside
3. Monitor the type of media children are exposed to for language, violence, and sexual content





# Media exposure



## 2. Internet addiction

is becoming an increasingly common problem and may manifest in a school setting in various ways, both directly and indirectly

### **Directly**

Students may find themselves spending excessive time online whether on school computers or hand held devices

### **Indirectly**

If students are up all night on the internet they may be late to school, appear tired or unfocused or may not come to school at all

# Media exposure



## 2. Internet addiction

No specific criteria exist to diagnose internet addiction. It varies from person to person. There is no set number of hours per day spent online that indicates internet addiction

### **Warning signs** (from helpguide.org)

- Losing track of time spent online
- Trouble completing tasks at school or at home
- Isolating from family and friends due to spending excessive time online
- Feeling guilty or defensive about your internet use
- Feeling a sense of euphoria while involved in internet activities

# Media exposure




## 3. Cyber bullying


### **Bullying that takes place using technology**

Different forms of electronic media, including social media, texts and emails, can be used to share rumours, embarrassing pictures or stories, hate or racist speech

Prevention of cyber bullying requires close collaboration between parents and school staff and interventions which can include monitoring children's online presence and encouraging communication to school staff if the child or a friend is being cyber bullied



# The role of parents in their children's education




Parents have a pivotal role to play in the education of their children

"Nearly **half** of a child's achievement in school can be accounted for by factors **outside the school**, including parent support"

*Professor Ronald Ferguson*





# The role of parents in their children's education


The parental role may be divided into several areas

**Supporting** the child's education at school and at home

**Providing** an environment that is conducive to learning at home

**Communicating** with school, and ensuring their child's academic attainment, emotional well-being and social development






# The role of parents in their children's education

Areas where parents can **support** their children

- Attendance
- Attitude
- Education as a priority
- Support
- Being a role model
- Involvement
- Communication







# The role of parents in their children's education

## Providing an environment that is conducive to learning at home

- Maintaining a calm and quiet environment
- Providing adequate nutrition and encouraging physical activity
- Limiting the use of electronics
- Maintaining structure and insuring adequate sleep
- Encouraging reading and doing homework





# The role of parents in their children's education

**Communicating** with school to ensure the child's academic attainment, emotional well-being and social development can involve:

- maintaining active dialogue with schools
- regular parent-teacher conferences to discuss the child's progress and coordinate efforts
- parent-teacher associations and other organizations intended to facilitate parents' involvement in schools







**Thank you**

