



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**

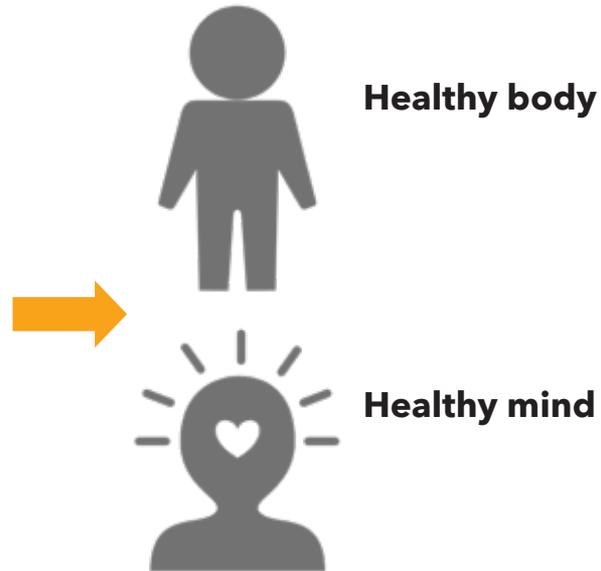


**exposure to electronic
media** (screen time, internet
addiction and cyber bullying)



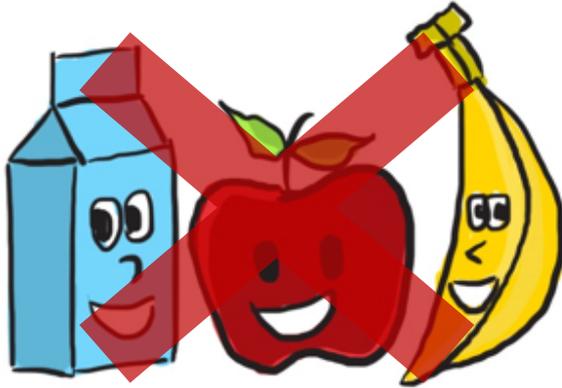
**parents' role in supporting
their children's education**

Nutrition



Nutritional deficiencies have an impact on cognitive and emotional development

Nutrition



Malnutrition



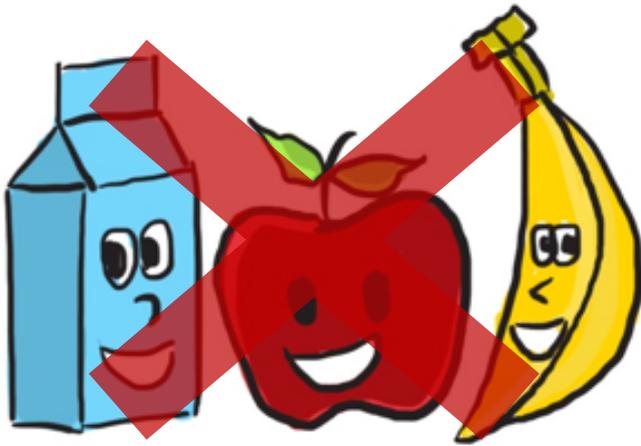
Single biggest contributor to
child mortality in the Region

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

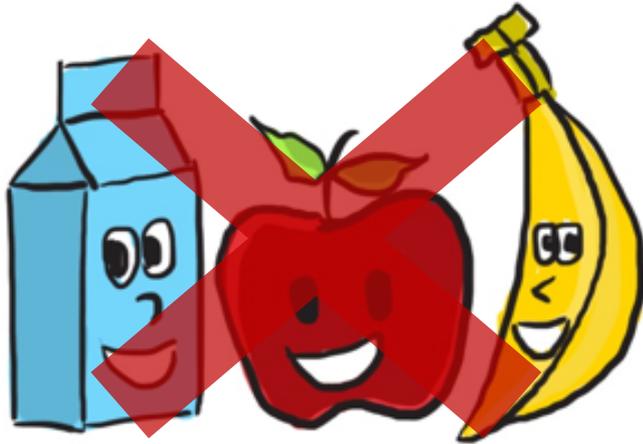


affects cognition and subsequently the ability to learn and retain



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

