



TEACHERS' TRAINING MANUAL ON LIFE SKILLS BASED EDUCATION

National Curriculum Council (NCC)
Ministry of Federal Education & Professional Training
Government of Pakistan



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Introduction

The *Teachers' Training Manual for Life Skills Based Education* (LSBE) adopts an inclusive approach for the capacity building of teachers who teach students as an integrated subject. As a multi-disciplinary subject; the curriculum of LSBE is combined with the concepts of general life skills. Therefore, teachers need to equip themselves with knowledge of the term “Life Skills Based Education” to effectively teach LSBE. Also need to develop skills in the use of interactive (generic as well as subject-based pedagogies) instructional approaches and teaching techniques specified in the Single National Curriculum (SNC) for LSBE and the new textbooks. Thus the training manual has been designed to enhance the capacity of primary school teachers in implementing the fairly new concept of LSBE in the schools.

The LSBE is intended to simulate students' curiosity and motivate them towards learning of the basic life skills. The LSBE component of curriculum aims to provide an enabling learning environment where children learn about themselves and the world around through meaningful activities. Not only this, it will also help address and bring to the surface the hidden issues or unleashed emotional stresses or discomforts children may face. It will open them up and will help teachers to explore the different personalities of children which in return will strengthen bonding between the teachers and student. The enhanced bonding between teachers and student will help children develop interests towards education and learning. Teachers, in this regard, need to be made aware of the fact that depending on the available opportunities, students in early grades (I-V) nurture their curiosity and are able to inquire, investigate and discover through critical thinking, problem-solving and decision making. As children are naturally inquisitive, curious and have innate abilities to explore the world around them they take great interest in the things around them and learn naturally if given opportunities for exploration, discovery and manipulation of objects—the pedagogical approaches emphasized in LSBE component of the curriculum.

Moreover, this training manual is developed keeping in view the scope of the first orientation training for primary teachers on LSBE (TOT) and the educational demographics and socio-economic realities of the country. The LSBE orientation training will be conducted for teachers across the country, therefore implementation of the training manual in different situation will require contextual adjustments.

The manual is prepared for initial training of the master trainers from ICT, Azad Jammu Kashmir (AJK) and Gilgit-Baltitan (GB) who will further cascade it in their respective regions. The Teachers' Training manual (TTM) is organized in four main sections.

The first section explains the aim of the training and outlines the overall learning outcomes of teachers with respect to LSBE. The second section provides an overview of the structure (content and schedule). The third section covers the training day plans, focusing on sessions' outcomes for the participants, learning activities and pace of the activities and required resources. It illustrates the topics to be covered in each session and corresponding teaching and learning activities pedagogical approaches and technique. The fourth section includes annexures containing handouts (reading material, presentation, worksheets, and other relevant instructional resources).





Objective of the Teachers' Training Manual

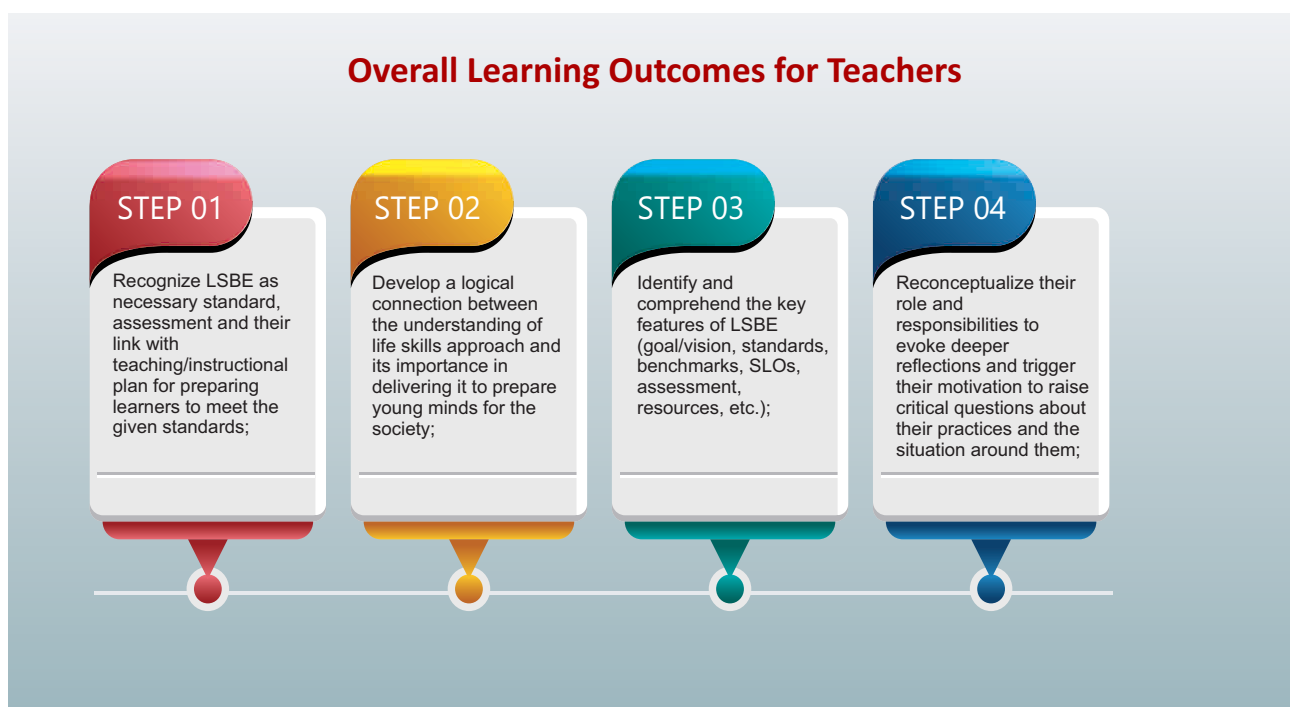
As LSBE is a multi-disciplinary not only restricted to a particular subject in the curriculum but its extract is incorporated throughout the curriculum.

The training manual for LSBE aims at preparation of teachers for effective implementation of the new concepts. Through the LSBE orientation training, teachers will get an in-depth understanding into the composition of LSBE as well as its implementation requirements. They will gain a better understanding about its importance and procedures to follow for effective understanding at children level. Teachers will be prepared for the effective implementation of the new curriculum for LSBE and textbooks. The training will enable teachers to get sensitized for applying child-centered pedagogies and use locally available resources and authentic assessment strategies in their classroom.

Overall Learning Outcomes for Teachers

By the end of the course, the participant will be able to:

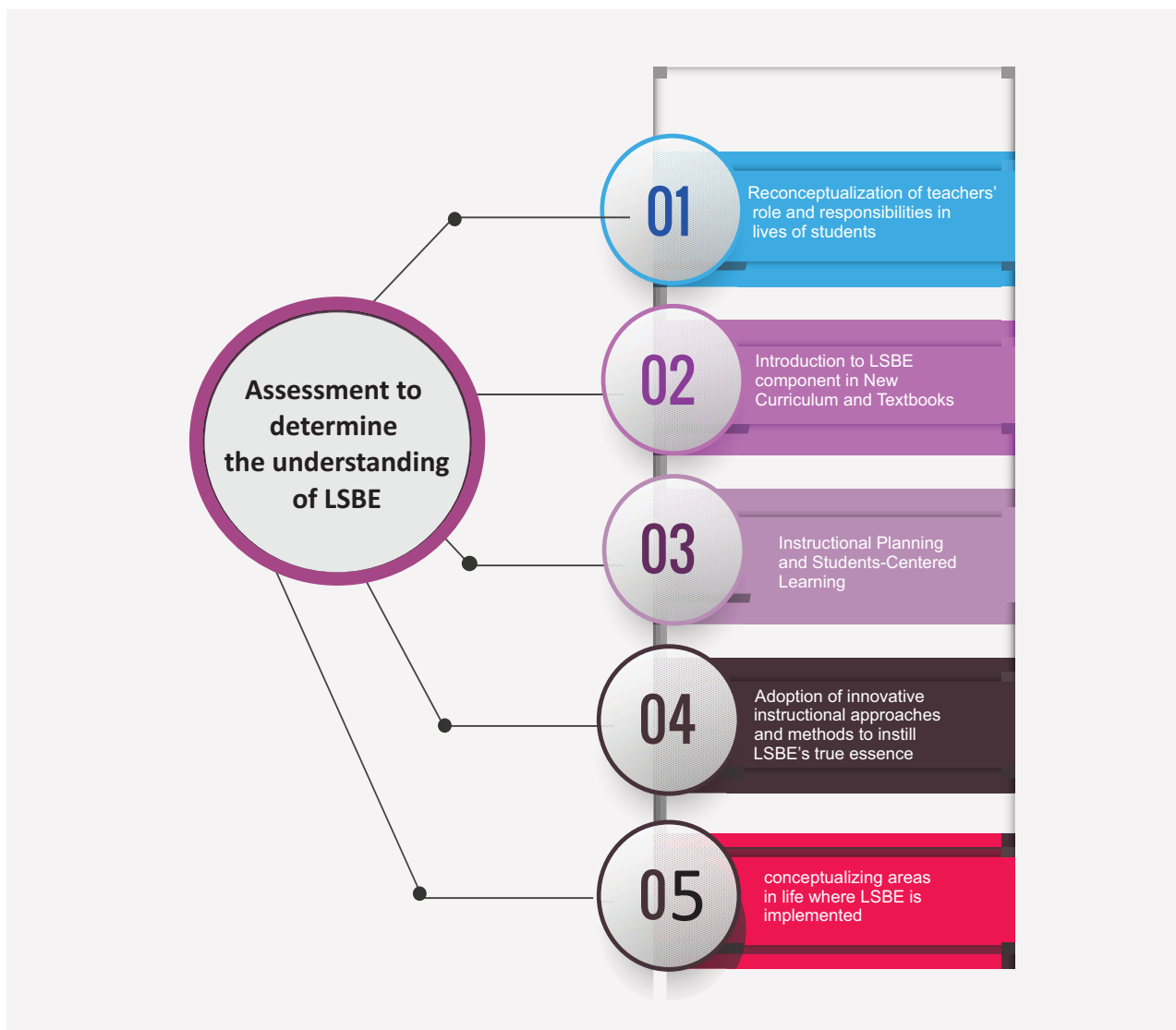
- Develop hands-on skills in the use of key pedagogies/instructional methods required to teach concepts with the help of textbooks and other instructional and technological resources.
- Focus on appropriate ethical and social development
- Focus on fostering of reasoning, problem solving, critical thinking and create skills for engaging in and with the target language





Structure and Content

The manual for the online training of LSBE teachers has been organized around six major themes. These themes and associated sub-theme together cover almost 360-degree professional development needs of practicing teachers. The manual is designed to be delivered through face-to-face/ online training mode spread over a period of eight hours (on a single day). The manual content areas comprise the following themes:



Instructional Strategies of the Training Programme

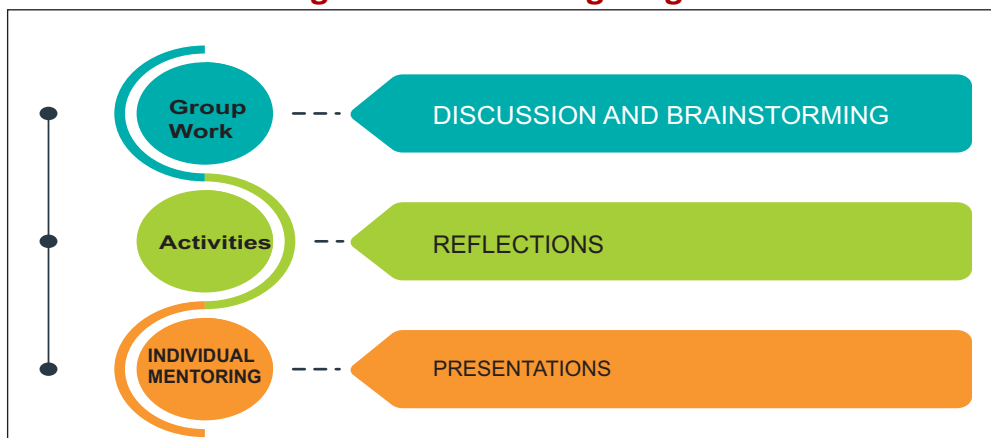
A wide range of instructional strategies and pedagogical techniques will be used including , but not limited to, the following:

Thus a wide range of training methodologies will be applied including power point presentation, problem solving, cooperative learning, independent study/homework, group investigation, group work, discussion, guided questions, question- answer, brain storming, guided inquiry, reflections and demonstration lesson.





Strategies of the Training Programme



Schedule of the Training

One instructional day is dedicated for the training of Master trainers. The training will be of 8 working hours starting from 9:00 am till 5:00 pm. The outline of the training workshop is provided as annex – I.

Detail of the Training Process

Session 1	Teachers' Role and Responsibilities and Introduction of LSBE Component in Curriculum and Textbooks
Learning Outcomes for the Participants	<p>By the end of this session the course participants are expected to be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflect and share their experience about choosing teaching as a profession; • Identify the challenges of the teaching profession; • Learn the concept of LSBE • Identify and recognize the characteristics of an effective teacher; and • Reflect and re-conceptualize their roles and responsibilities as LSBE teachers
Materials Required:	White board, markers, A4 paper, Charts, LSBE curriculum copies, stripes for grouping

Detail of the Process:

Discussion: Role of Teacher

- Participants will be explained through examples about the importance of teachers in student’s life and how do they impact their learning





- Master trainers will be explained about the impact of their hygiene and presentable dressing have on the learning of students

Discussion: Setting Classroom Norms as Teachers

- Participants will be asked to share classroom rules and the facilitator will record those rules on a chart paper.
- The participants will be asked to suggest reinforcement of those rules.
- The facilitator will record the shared reinforcement in the rules chart and display it in the classroom.

Discussion: Discussion on the Overall Objectives of the LSBE Component

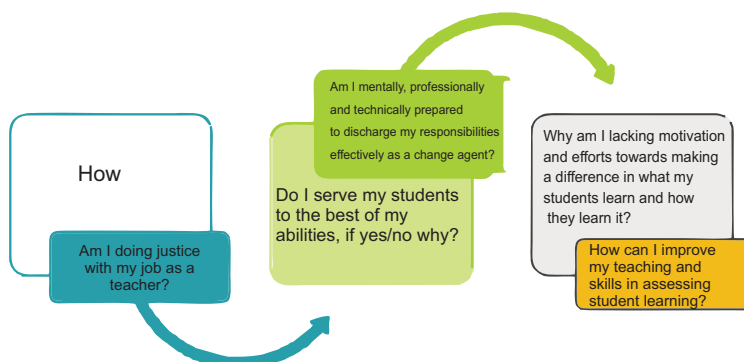
The overall objectives of the course will be shared with the participants through a PowerPoint presentation. They will be asked if these objectives are aligned with their training needs.

Explain that the ultimate objective of the teachings through text books should be to improve the quality of life of learners, particularly adolescents & youngsters, by adding to their mental, physical and emotional well-being. The contents of the textbooks should induce and cultivate skills and abilities or adoptive and positive behavior which would enable the learners to deal effectively with demands and challenges of everyday life. The lessons and exercises of the textbooks should enhance the following key Life Skills:

- i. **Decision making and problem solving** by having ability to foresee consequences of different decisions;
- ii. **Critical thinking** by analyzing information and experiences objectively
- iii. **Communication and interpersonal skills** to help youngsters to relate in positive ways with the people they (will) interact;
- iv. **Self-awareness and empathy** to be able to appreciate ourselves and to understand and accept others the way they are;
- v. **Managing feelings and emotions** to increase internal locus of control to understand and address the reasons of stress, anger and apathy.

Activity 1: Reasons for Choosing Teaching as a Profession

The participants will be provided with cards of two colour (green and yellow). They will be asked to pick a green card if they become a teacher by choice and yellow if they become a teacher by chance. After selecting the cards participants will write a short story about choosing teaching as a profession and paste it on the designated place on the wall. Through the gallery walk, the participants will read each other's stories. At the end, the participants will generate discussions and the facilitator will ask master trainers to rate themselves on the following questions.





Session 2	Instructional Planning and Students - Centered Learning and Adoption of innovative instructional approaches and methods to instill LSBEs true essence
Learning Outcomes for the Participants	<p>By the end of this session the course participants are expected to be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Challenges and expectations of the teaching profession • Enabling learning environment (provision and its importance) • Goals and vision of LSBE in compliance to the real life skills, their identification, vision, SLO's and benchmarks etc. • Review of the LSBE targets achieved in curriculum and their advancements • Understanding of life skills approach and its importance in delivering it to prepare young minds for the society; • Recognize LSBE as necessary standard, assessment and their link with teaching/instructional plan or preparing learners to meet the given standards • Awareness on importance of character building, social values, personal hygiene and health, cyber fraud etc • Discussion about the lesson and group activity (social and ethical values)
Materials Required:	White board, markers, A4 paper, Charts, LSBE curriculum copies, stripes for grouping

Details of Process:

Activity 1: Identification of areas in life where LSBE is applicable

The facilitator will form four groups and will ask them to freely write their ideas on paper about the taboos of society. They will be asked to address the issues along with their possible solutions as a teacher.

Teachers will be asked to fill in open-ended questionnaire that comprises of various situations a child may be facing. Along with it they will be given following roles to tackle the



- What will be the course of action ***if you see a child not known to you is crying*** or seems to be in trouble?
- What will be the course of action ***if you find a child without a parent/guardian*** etc.?
- What are ***the areas that needs to be identified taboos that are not discussed*** and how they





are to be solved in different roles provided above?

- Discuss about the **unpleasant childhood memory** of teachers' as being students and what was the factor making the memories unpleasant. Ask teachers if these factors and situation still exist and what is the role of teacher in making the situation better?
- A childhood memory (unpleasant) of all participants that they faced. What could have they done in that scenario and who should have helped them?

Discuss about the unpleasant childhood memory of teachers' as being students and what was the factor making the memories unpleasant. Ask teachers if these factors and situations still exist and what is the role of teacher in making the situation better?

Discussion: Student-centered approaches and methods:

Each participant will be provided with an A4 size paper and tempo markers. They will be asked to draw their hand and write at least 5 student-centered learning approaches to adopt for better understanding. Ask a few participants to share their ideas with the whole group.

Take Away: Many ideas shared for engaging students in effective learning process

Session 3	Conceptualizing areas in life where LSBE is implemented and Assessment to determine the understanding of LSBE
Learning Outcomes for the Participants	By the end of this session the course participants are expected to be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Challenges and expectations of the teaching profession • Enabling learning environment (provision and its importance) • Understanding real time situations and planning their solutions • Awareness of cyber world, bodily changings and coping • Learning of bringing issues on the surface and discussing them out for their elimination
Materials Required:	White board, markers, A4 paper, Charts, LSBE curriculum copies, stripes for grouping

Details of Process:

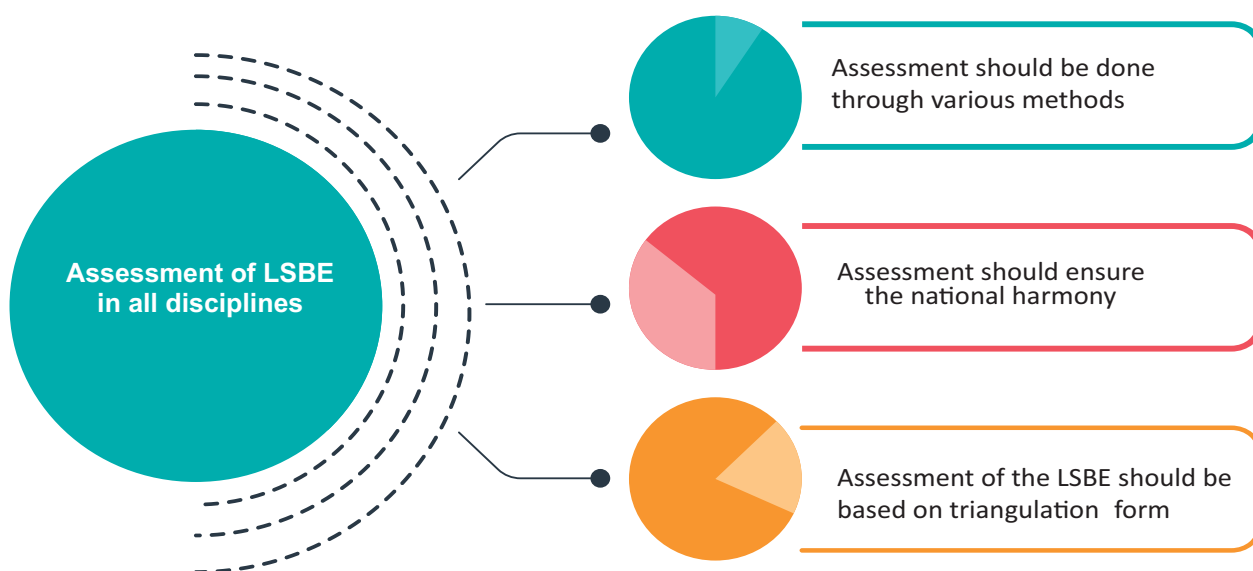
Discussion and Brainstorming

Discuss that the participants of the National Consultative Workshop on Life Skills Based Education held on October 29, 2020 at the National Curriculum Council, Islamabad developed overarching guiding principles to design the Assessment Methods. These are being discussed here and shall govern the Assessment Methods described in the following sections:





- i. LSBE should be assessed in all disciplines through picture stories, multiple choice questions, narrating events and incidences from newspapers, extended environment & media etc.;
- ii. Narration of pleasant or unpleasant events based on student's experiences & observations;
- iii. High order thinking based activities such as analytical reading;
- iv. Task orientation (role-plays) for awareness on LSBE such as event management, monitoring school assemblies etc.;
- v. Assessment of the LSBE should be based on triangulation form i.e. students at the top with teachers and parents/community on the sides.
- vi. Assessment should be done through various methods such as questionnaire, self-checklist, direct questions, activities etc.
- vii. Assessment should ensure the national harmony by being above any bias;
- viii. Students' assessment at primary and secondary level should be done according to the checklist given in the curriculum.



As the Learning takes place in students heads where it is invisible to others, therefore, the learning must be assessed through a well thought-out performance mechanism: what students can do with their learning. Assessing students' performance can involve assessments that are formal or informal, high or low stakes, anonymous or public, individual or collective. A well-structured performance assessment process should ideally comprise of following stages:





Activity: Solving real-time case studies

The facilitator will provide various case studies to each group to discuss and define issues underlying and their solutions. Case studies will be the real-time scenarios of cyber bullying, fraud, child abuse etc.

Ask for their feedback and opinion about different case studies and contribute focusing on LSBE and need and importance.

Explain that focusing on some methods of Student's Learning Outcomes in the Life Skills, following important points should be kept in mind while applying a set of assessment methods:

- What are students supposed to get out of each assessment?
- How and to what extent the assessments are aligned with the SLO?
- What is intrinsic value of the assessments in terms of:
 - Knowledge acquired
 - Skill development
 - Values clarification
 - Performance attainment
- How are homework and classwork related to exams?
- How is the (teacher's) feedback on student work provide to help students improve?
- Are the assessment structured in a way to help students assess their own work and progress?

It is suggested that the Student's Learning Assessment techniques are a combination of both Summative as well as Formative Assessment tools to ensure that these work for every student in keeping with his/her aptitude, communication skills and level of confidence.

Presentations:

The master trainers will be asked to prepare presentation groups comprising of their overall learning from the session on LSBE, traits of a good exemplary teacher and their draft plan to roll out ToT among teachers.

Note: This is a Live document and is subject to advance and/or amend as and when required.





ANNEXURE

Annex – I Outline of the Training Workshop

Annex – II Twelve Characteristics of an Effective Teacher

Annex – III Islamic Reference Material on LSBE





ANNEXURE

Annex – I Outline of the Training Workshop

Time	Session Title	Details of Session
8:30	Arrival and Registration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Registration and Recitation
09:30	Teachers' Role and Responsibilities and Introduction to LSBE Component in Curriculum and Textbooks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduction of LSBE Reasons for choosing teaching as a profession Reconceptualization of the characteristics of an effective teacher Importance of teacher's/ impact of teachers on student's lives (learning, interests in subject, participation etc) Student-centered learning (Principles and theories of student-centered learning) Teaching approaches and methods Learning styles (auditory, read and write, spatial and kinesthetic)
10:45	Tea Break	
11:00	Instructional Planning and Students-Centered Learning and Adoption of innovative instructional approaches and methods to instil LSBE's true essence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Challenges and expectations of the teaching profession Key features of LSBE (goal/vision, standards, benchmarks, SLOs, assessment, resources, etc.) Review of the LSBE targets achieved in curriculum and their advancements Life skills approach and its importance in delivering it to prepare young minds for the society. LSBE as necessary standard, assessment and their link with teaching/instructional plan or preparing learners to meet the given standards Importance of character building, social values, personal hygiene and health, cyber fraud etc.
13:00	Lunch Break	
13:45	Conceptualizing arrears in life where LSBE is implemented and Assessment to determine the understanding of LSBE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussion on real life case studies and scenarios and building conclusions Activities of brainstorming for LSBE Micro-lessons and discussions Assessment strategies Assessment tools Action plan





Annex – II

Twelve Characteristics of an Effective Teacher

(Readings/Handouts, Worksheets, Templates)

Resources for Session-1

Taken from: Walker, R. (2008)

Characteristic 1: Prepared

The most effective teachers come to class each day ready to teach.

1. It is easy to learn in their classes because they are ready for the day.
2. They don't waste instructional time. They start class on time. They teach for the entire class period.
3. Time flies in their classes because students are engaged in learning—i.e., not bored, less likely to fall asleep.

Characteristic 2: Positive

The most effective teachers have optimistic attitudes about teaching and students. They

1. See the glass as half full (look on the positive side of every situation)
2. Make themselves available to students
3. Communicate with students about their progress
4. Give praise and recognition
5. Have strategies to help students act positively towards one another

Characteristic 3: Hold High Expectations

The most effective teachers set no limits on students and believe everyone can be successful. They

1. Hold the highest standards
2. Consistently challenge their students to do their best
3. Build students' confidence and teach them to believe in themselves

Characteristic 4: Creative

The most effective teachers are resourceful and inventive in how they teach their classes. They

1. Celebrate if the class reaches its academic goals
2. Wear a clown suit
3. Agree to participate in the school talent show
4. Use technology effectively in the classroom





Characteristic 5: Fair

The most effective teachers handle students and grading fairly. They

1. Allow all students equal opportunities and privileges
2. Provide clear requirements for the class
3. Recognize that “fair” doesn't necessarily mean treating everyone the same but means allowing every student to succeed
4. Understand that not all students learn in the same way and at the same rate

Characteristic 6: Display a Personal Touch

The most effective teachers are approachable. They

1. Connect with students personally
2. Share personal experiences with their classes
3. Take a personal interest in students and find out as much as possible about them
4. Visit the students' world (sit with them in the cafeteria; attend sporting events, plays, and other events outside normal school hours)

Characteristic 7: Cultivate a Sense of Belonging

The most effective teachers have a way of making students feel welcome and comfortable in their classrooms.

1. Students repeatedly mentioned that they felt as though they belonged in classrooms taught by effective teachers.
2. The students knew they had a good teacher who loved teaching and preferred it to other occupations.

Characteristic 8: Compassionate

The most effective teachers are concerned about students' problems and can relate to them and their problems. Numerous stories established how the sensitivity and compassion of caring teachers affected them in profound and lasting ways.

Characteristic 9: Have a Sense of Humor

The most effective teachers do not take everything seriously and make learning fun. They

1. Use humor to break the ice in difficult situations
2. Bring humor into the everyday classroom
3. Laugh with the class (but not at the expense of any particular student)

Characteristic 10: Respect Students

The most effective teachers do not deliberately embarrass students.

Teachers who give the highest respect, get the highest respect. They

1. Respect students' privacy when returning test papers





2. Speak to students in private concerning grades or conduct
3. Show sensitivity to feelings and consistently avoid situation that unnecessarily embarrass students

Characteristic 11: Forgiving

The most effective teachers do not hold grudges. They

1. Forgive students for inappropriate behavior.
2. Habitually start each day with a clean slate
3. Understand that a forgiving attitude is essential to reaching difficult students
4. Understand that disruptive or antisocial behavior can quickly turn a teacher against a student, but that refusing to give up on difficult students can produce success

Characteristic 12: Admit Mistakes

The most effective teachers are quick to admit being wrong. They

1. Apologize to mistakenly accuse
2. Make adjustments when students point out errors in grading or test material that has not been assigned

Taken from: Victoria, S. G. (2013)





Annex – III

Islamic Reference Material on LSBE

Life Skills Based Education (LSBE) In the Light of Quran & Sunnah

Education is a process for achieving a permanent change in a learner's life. Towards this aim, it is extremely important to target not one aspect of personality but a holistic change in a person's life. Align with cognitive domain and important factor of change in affective domain of the learner. In other words, in order to get ready to face the challenges of future, it is extremely necessary to work on skills improvement of the learners.

Towards this end, Life Skill Based Education is aimed at readiness of the learners to face an unseen future. It is designed to facilitate the practice and reinforcement of psychosocial skills in a culturally and developmentally appropriate way. It contributes to the promotion of personal and social development, the prevention of health and social problems, and the protection of human rights. In view of ground realities and emerging challenges for youth, both in and out of school, now Life Skill Based Education (LSBE) has become a priority of government of Pakistan. Accordingly, it has been included in certain National Policies such as Youth Policy, National Education Policy, and Population Policy.

World Health Organization identified five basic areas of life skills that are relevant across cultures:

- (1) Decision-making and Problem-solving**
- (2) Creative and Critical Thinking**
- (3) Communication and Interpersonal Skills**
- (4) Self-Awareness and Empathy**
- (5) Coping With Emotions and Coping With Stress**

These life skills are not only important from a social point of view but also get backing from the teachings of religion. Religious traditions are a mix of cognitive, behavioral, and emotional practices to fulfill the material as well as spiritual need. Therefore, the theory of a real religion is one that addresses all aspects of human needs and identifies the way of satisfying them. Islam is the perfect way of life that believes in holistic personality change of its followers. Here ten life skills will be discussed with reference to Quran and Hadith:





Decision Making and Problems Solving Skill

For a successful life, decision making skills are of prime importance. Students should be taught the importance of right decision making and why successful life depends on timely decisions. The students should be oriented how to analyze pros and cons of different decisions. One of the most important ways of making decisions is consultation.

In Surah Aal e Imran Allah SWT asks Rasulallah (S.A.W.W):

وَشَاوِرْهُمْ فِي الْأَمْرِ ۖ فَإِذَا عَزَمْتَ فَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُتَوَكِّلِينَ (آل عمران: ۱۵۹)

Consult them in the matter. And when you have decided, then rely upon Allah. Indeed, Allah loves those who rely [upon Him].”

اور (ضروری) معاملات میں ان سے مشورہ کیجیے پھر جب آپ (کسی بات کا) عزم کر لیں تو اللہ پر توکل کیجیے بے شک اللہ توکل کرنے والوں کو پسند فرماتا ہے۔

وَالَّذِينَ اسْتَجَابُوا لِرَبِّهِمْ وَأَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَأَمْرُهُمْ شُورَىٰ بَيْنَهُمْ وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ يُنفِقُونَ ۝ (الشورى: ۳۸)

And those who have responded to their lord and established prayer and whose affair is [determined by] consultation among themselves, and from what We have provided them, they spend.

اور جو اپنے رب کا حکم ماننے ہیں اور نماز قائم کرتے ہیں اور ان کے معاملات آپس کے مشورے سے (طے) ہوتے ہیں اور جو کچھ رزق ہم نے انہیں عطا فرمایا ہے اس میں سے خرچ کرتے ہیں۔

Holy Prophet (S.A.W.W) Said:

مَا سَفَىٰ عَبْدٌ بِمَشُورَةٍ ۝ وَمَا سَعَدَ بِإِسْتِغْنَاءِ رَأْيٍ (قرطبی/ ۴۱۶۱)

No one ever lose or get disappointed by mutual consultation. Also no one gains any benefit by not mutually consulting

جس نے مشاورت کی وہ کبھی غمگین نہ ہو گا اور نہ ہی کوئی باہمی مشورہ نہ کرنے سے کوئی فائدہ اٹھائے گا

The ability to make decisions through consultation helps people to decide on a variety of issues such as choosing friends, career, jobs, etc. For the students too, it is extremely important to make their decisions in consultations with the ones who are knowledgeable.

Creative and Critical Thinking

Islam urges the people to travel, to move around and ponder upon the creations of Allah. In this way it invites the people to think creatively in the light of careful observation. Allah says in the Quran:





قُلْ سِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَانظُرُوا كَيْفَ بَدَأَ الْخَلْقَ ۚ ثُمَّ اللَّهُ يُنشِئُ النَّشْأَةَ الْآخِرَةَ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ (الحکبوت: ۲۰)

Say, [O Muhammad], "Travel through the land and observe how He began creation. Then Allah will produce the final creation. Indeed Allah, over all things, is competent."

آپ فرمادیجیے زمین میں چلو پھرو تو دیکھو کہ اس نے کس طرح مخلوق کی ابتدا فرمائی پھر اللہ ہی اسے دوسری بار پیدا فرمائے گا بے شک اللہ ہر چیز پر بڑی قدرت والا ہے۔

The Holy Quran is eternal and a complete code of life. It encourages us to use our abilities to analyze, evaluate, and synthesize what we read to critically develop an effective and suitable response.

Allah states in Surah Imran:

الَّذِينَ يَذْكُرُونَ اللَّهَ قِيَمًا وَقُعُودًا وَعَلَىٰ جُنُوبِهِمْ وَيَتَفَكَّرُونَ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْأَرْضِ رَبَّنَا مَا خَلَقْتَ هٰذَا بَطِلًا مُّسَبِّحًا
فَقِنًا عَذَابَ النَّارِ (سورة آل عمران: 91)

They are those who remember Allah while standing, sitting, and lying on their sides, and reflect on the creation of the heavens and the earth and pray, "Our Lord! You have not created all of this without purpose. Glory be to You! Protect us from the torment of the Fire.

جو کھڑے اور بیٹھے اور لیٹے (ہر حال میں) خدا کو یاد کرتے اور آسمان اور زمین کی پیدائش میں غور کرتے (اور کہتے ہیں) کہ اے پروردگار! تو نے اس (مخلوق) کو بے فائدہ نہیں پیدا کیا تو پاک ہے تو (قیامت کے دن) ہمیں دوزخ کے عذاب سے بچائو

At another place in Holy Quran the below mentioned Ayat also shed light on creative & critical thinking

وَالَّذِينَ إِذَا ذُكِّرُوا بِآيَاتِ رَبِّهِمْ لَمْ يَخِرُّوا عَلَيْهَا صُمًّا وَعُمْيَانًا (سورة النحل: 73)

And those who, when reminded of the verses of their lord, do not fall upon them deaf and blind

اور وہ لوگ کہ جب انہیں ان کے رب کی آیتوں کے ساتھ نصیحت کی جاتی ہے تو ان پر یہ ہرے اور اندھے ہو کر نہیں گرتے۔

Critical and creative thinking capabilities would make a person more efficient and Quran also laid emphasis on critical thinking, especially about the decision for happy family life. The Quranic verse also relates to spousal responsibility before entering matrimony:

وَلَيْسَتَغْفِيْفِ الَّذِينَ لَا يَجِدُونَ نِكَاحًا حَتَّىٰ يُغْنِيَهُمُ اللَّهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ ۗ وَالَّذِينَ يَبْتِغُونَ الْكِتٰبَ مِمَّا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُكُمْ فَكَاتِبُوهُمْ إِنْ عَلِمْتُمْ فِيهِمْ خَيْرًا ۚ وَأَنَّهُمْ مِّنْ مَّالِ اللَّهِ الَّذِي ءَاتٰكُمْ وَلَا تَكْرِهُوا ۚ فَتَبٰتِلْكُمْ عَلَىٰ الْبِغَآءِ ۚ إِنْ أَرَدْتُمْ تَحْصِنًا لَّا تَبْتِغُوا عَرَضَ الْحَيٰوةِ الدُّنْيَا وَمَنْ يُكْرِهِنَّ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ مِنْ بَعْدِ إِكْرَاهِهِمْ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ

Let those who find not the wherewithal for marriage keep themselves chaste until Allah gives them means out of His grace. 16 (24:33)

اور جن کو بیاہ کا مقدور نہ ہو وہ پاک دائمی کو اختیار کئے رہیں یہاں تک کہ خدا ان کو اپنے فضل سے غنی کر دے۔ اور جو غلام تم سے مکاتبیت چاہیں اگر تم ان میں (صلاحیت اور) نیکی پاؤ تو ان سے مکاتبیت کر لو۔ اور خدا نے جو مال تم کو بخشا ہے اس میں سے ان کو بھی دو۔ اور اپنی لونڈیوں کو اگر وہ پاک دامن رہنا چاہیں تو (بے شرمی سے) دنیاوی زندگی کے فوائد حاصل کرنے کے لئے بدکاری پر مجبور نہ کرنا۔ اور جو ان کو مجبور کرے گا تو ان (بیچاروں) کے مجبور کئے جانے کے بعد خدا بخشنے والا مہربان ہے





This verse enjoins believers to enter into marriage only if one is capable of bearing the responsibility of raising a family and is in a position to meet the physical, social, and economic needs of the spouse and offspring.

The Quran lays down the principle of prolonged breastfeeding that physiologically leads to the spacing between pregnancies pointing to the permissibility and even encouragement of birth spacing.

The mothers shall give suck to their offspring (breastfeed) for two whole years.16(2:233

In pain did his mother bear him, and in pain did she give him birth. The carrying of the (child) to his weaning is (a period of) thirty months.16 (46:15)

Questioning is also an important aspect of critical thinking. Allah (SWT) gives this example by asking several questions thus inviting people to focus on different issues.

Allah SWT asks the human beings how many favors and blessings of Allah they would deny. In Surah Ar-Rahman this question comes thirty-one times:

فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ (الرَّحْمَنُ 13)

So, which of the favors of your Lord would you deny?

اور تم اپنے رب کی کون کون سی نعمتوں کو جھٹلاؤ گے

Through this Sura, Allah (SWT) encourages critical thinking by inviting the people to think about all the bounties Allah (SWT) has bestowed upon human beings.

In a Hadith, the Prophet (PBUH) said:

“Who so goes out in search of knowledge, he is in the path of Allah till he returns.”

(Mishkat-ul-Masabih, 1939: 1-351)

جو کوئی علم کی تلاش میں نکلے، جب تک واپس نہ لوٹے اللہ کی راہ میں ہے

Appreciation of **gender equality** is yet another important life skill for today's youth. Allah (SWT) created both men and women equal. No one has superiority over another as they both were formed from the same soul. The Qur'an, while addressing the believers, often uses the expression, “Believing Men and Women” to emphasize the equality of men and women in regard to their respective rights, duties and virtues. The Quran says:

وَلَهُنَّ مِثْلُ الَّذِي عَلَيْنَهُنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَلِلرِّجَالِ عَلَىٰ هُنَّ دَرَجَةٌ

“And for women are rights over men similar to those of men over women.” (2:228)

اور عورتوں کے لیے مردوں پر ایسے ہی حقوق ہیں جیسے مردوں کے عورتوں پر





In surah Nisa, Allah (SWT) also states that:

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اتَّقُوا رَبَّكُمُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ نَفْسٍ وَاحِدَةٍ وَخَلَقَ مِنْهَا زَوْجَهَا وَبَثَّ مِنْهُمَا رِجَالًا كَثِيرًا وَنِسَاءً ۗ (النساء: ۱)

“O mankind! Fear your Lord Who (initiated) your creation from a single soul, then from it created its mate, and from these two spreads (the creation of) countless men and women.”

لوگو اپنے پروردگار سے ڈرو جس نے تم کو ایک شخص سے پیدا کیا (یعنی اول) اس سے اس کا جوڑا بنایا۔ پھر ان دونوں سے کثرت سے مرد و عورت (پیدا کر کے روئے زمین پر) پھیلا دیئے۔

Communication and Interpersonal Skills

Communications skills are one of the most important life skills that is needed for learners today. Learners should be encouraged to always communicate all their issues, fears, confusions and questions for guidance and appropriate information. This can be done by giving simple examples and stories of everyday life. The learners should be taught the concepts of body language, paralinguistic and appropriate usage of words for effective engagement with peers, teachers, parents, and others. These are communication and interpersonal skills which minimize the chances of any conflict.

Allah has sent every Prophet in His own nation so that he could preach to them in an open and clear manner and he would not face any problem in understanding his nation. This is also highlighted in the Quran as:

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ رَّسُولٍ إِلَّا بِلِسَانِ قَوْمِهِ (سورہ اعراف: 4)

And We did not send any Messenger but with the language of his people so, that he might explain to them clearly (by their own language)

اور ہم نے ہر رسول اس کی قوم کی زبان کے ساتھ ہی بھیجا تا کہ وہ انہیں واضح کر کے بتا دے

Similarly, Holy Prophet SAW persuaded Hazrat Zaid bin Sabit (RA) to learn the Saryani language to preach the teachings of Islam to other nations in their local language.

The verses of the Holy Quran and Traditions of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) highlight this topic. Similarly, the life of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) is the practical example of communication and interpersonal skills.

In Quran Allah (SWT) teaches the Holy Prophet (PBUH) the art of communication in these words:

ادْعُ إِلَى سَبِيلِ رَبِّكَ بِالْحُكْمَةِ وَالْمَوْعِظَةِ الْحَسَنَةِ ۗ وَجَادِلْهُمْ بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ ۚ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِمَنْ ضَلَّ عَنْ سَبِيلِهِ ۗ وَهُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِالْمُهْتَدِينَ (الاحزاب: ۱۷۵)

Invite to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good instruction and argue with them in a way that is best. Indeed, your Lord is most knowing of who has strayed from His way, and He is most knowing of who is [rightly] guided.

بلایئے اپنے رب کے راستہ کی طرف حکمت کے ساتھ اور عمدہ نصیحت کے ساتھ اور ان سے اُس طریقہ سے بحث کیجیے جو بہترین ہو بے شک آپ کا رب ہی خوب جاننے والا ہے اسے جو اس کے راستہ سے بھٹک گیا اور ان کو بھی خوب جانتا ہے جو ہدایت یافتہ ہیں۔





فَبِمَا رَحْمَةٍ مِّنَ اللَّهِ لِنْتَ لَهُمْ ۗ (وَلَوْ كُنْتَ فَظًّا غَلِيظَ الْقَلْبِ لَانفَضُّوا مِنْ حَوْلِكَ) (آل عمران: ۱۵۹)

So by mercy from Allah, [O Muhammad], you were lenient with them. And if you had been rude [in speech] and harsh in heart, they would have disbanded from about you.

تو (اے نبی) یہ اللہ کی طرف سے رحمت ہے کہ آپ ان کے حق میں بڑے نرم ہیں اور اگر آپ سخت مزاج اور سخت دل ہوتے تو یقیناً وہ آپ کے پاس سے منتشر ہو جاتے۔

Holy Prophet (PBUH) presented best examples of both verbal as well as non-verbal communication and interpersonal skills. He (PBUH) said:

“Allah Almighty is kind, loves kindness and awards such reward on the basis of kindness which he does not award on harshness nor on anything else”. (Sahih Muslim, Hadith No.2593)

اللہ تعالیٰ نرمی کرنے والا اور نرمی کو پسند فرماتا ہے اور نرمی کی بنا پر وہ کچھ عطا فرماتا ہے جو درشت مزاجی کی بنا پر عطا نہیں فرماتا، وہ اس کے علاوہ کسی بھی اور بات پر اتنا عطا نہیں فرماتا۔

Quran emphasizes an important aspect of verbal communication, soft tone. Allah (SWT) advised Hazrat Musa (AS) and Hazrat Haroon (AS) to use soft words in front of the Pharaoh in these words:

فَقُولَا لَهُ قَوْلًا لَّيِّنًا لَّعَلَّهُ يَتَذَكَّرُ أَوْ يَخْشَىٰ (طہ: ۴۴)

And speak to him with gentle speech that perhaps he may be reminded or fear [Allah].

لہذا تم دونوں اس سے نرمی سے بات کرنا شاید وہ نصیحت قبول کرے یا ڈر جائے۔

The Quran Majeed and Hadith provide guidelines to maintain effective communication and interpersonal skills. It has established guidelines, norms, and regulations to govern all forms of interpersonal communication and relationships.

Hazrat Aishah (R.A) Narrates:

The Messenger of Allah did not speak quickly as you do now, rather he would speak so clearly, unmistakably, that those who sat with him would memorize it” (Jami' al-Tirmidhi, 3639).

ام المومنین عائشہ فرماتی ہیں کہ رسول اللہ ﷺ تمہاری طرح جلدی جلدی نہیں بولتے تھے بلکہ آپ ﷺ ایسی گفتگو کرتے جس میں ٹھہراؤ ہوتا تھا، جو آپ ﷺ کے پاس بیٹھا ہوتا وہ اسے یاد کر لیتا۔

In interpersonal communication, Rasulullah (S.A.W) has provided a set of rights to other human beings.

Rasulullah said:

“Six are the rights of a Muslim over another”. It was said to him, “What are these, Allah's Messenger?” He then said, “When you see him, greet him; when he asks you to a feast, accept it.” When he seeks your advice, give it to him, and when he sneezes and says, “All praise is due to Allah,” you say Yarhamuk Allah (may Allah show kindness to you); and when he is ill, pay him a visit; and when he dies, follow his bier” (Muslim, 2162).

رسول اللہ ﷺ نے فرمایا: "ایک مسلمان کے لیے اس کے بھائی پر چھ چیزیں واجب ہیں: سلام کا جواب دینا، چھینک مارنے والے کے لیے رحمت کی دعا کرنا، دعوت قبول کرنا، مریض کی عیادت کرنا اور جنازوں کے ساتھ جانا۔"





Self-Awareness and Empathy

These are the skills that enable people to appreciate themselves and to understand and accept others the way they are.

In Quran e Majeed Allah (SWT) says:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُغَيِّرُ مَا بِقَوْمٍ حَتَّى يُغَيِّرُوا مَا بِأَنْفُسِهِمْ (الرعد: ١١)

Indeed, Allah will not change the condition of a people until they change what is in themselves..."

اللہ کسی قوم سے اپنی نعمت کو نہیں بدلتا جب تک کہ وہ خود اس کی ناشکری نہیں کرتے۔

Knowing oneself is key to improving self. It helps become better person and as a result being able to get closer to Allah.

قَدْ أَفْلَحَ مَنْ زَكَّاهَا (الشمس: ٩)

"Indeed he succeeds who purifies it (his soul)."

یقیناً جس نے اس (نفس) کو پاک کر لیا وہ کامیاب ہو گیا۔

The example of self-awareness is also depicted in this Hadith:

الْكَيْسِيُّ مَنْ دَانَ نَفْسَهُ وَعَمِلَ لِمَا بَعْدَ الْمَوْتِ

عقل مند اور دانا وہ شخص ہے جس نے اپنے نفس کو جان لیا اور موت کے بعد والی زندگی کے لئے تیاری کی

The wise and sensible is the one who knows his own self and prepares for life after death.

Empathy is the ability to put yourself in someone else's shoes and understand their emotions. In Quran e Majeed Allah (SWT) says about the Holy Prophet (PBUH):

لَقَدْ جَاءَكُمْ رَسُولٌ مِّنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ عَزِيزٌ عَلَيْهِ مَا عَنِتُّمْ حَرِيصٌ عَلَيْكُمْ بِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ رَءُوفٌ رَّحِيمٌ (التوبة: ١٢٨)

There has certainly come to you a Messenger from among yourselves. Grievous to him is what you suffer [he is] concerned over you and to the believers is kind and merciful

یقیناً تمہارے پاس تم ہی میں سے ایک (عظمت والے) رسول تشریف لائے ہیں ان پر تمہارا مشقت میں پڑنا بہت گراں گزرتا ہے تمہارے لیے (بھلائی کے) بہت خواہش مند ہیں مومنوں کے ساتھ بہت شفقت فرمانے والے نہایت رحم فرمانے والے ہیں۔

Staying away from false pride and arrogance is focused in islamic teachings. In Quran Majeed Allah SWT says

وَلَا تُصَعِّرْ خَدَّكَ لِلنَّاسِ وَلَا تَمْشِ فِي الْأَرْضِ مَرَحًا ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ كُلَّ مُخْتَالٍ فَخُورٍ (الفرقان: ١٨)

And turn not your face away from men with pride, nor walk in insolence through the earth. Verily, Allah likes not like any arrogant boaster.

اور (ازراہ غرور) لوگوں سے گال نہ بھلانا اور زمین میں اکڑ کر نہ چلنا کہ خدا کسی اترانے والے خود پسند کو پسند نہیں کرتا





Empathy is a sign of brotherhood and could be found in the golden rule of Islam as depicted in this hadith: **"None of you will have faith till he wishes for his brother what he likes for himself." (Al-Bukhari:13)**

آپ ﷺ نے فرمایا: "تم میں سے کوئی شخص مومن نہیں ہو سکتا یہاں تک کہ اپنے بھائی کے لیے وہی چیز پسند کرے جو اپنے لیے پسند کرتا ہے۔"

About Self-awareness Rasulullah (S.A.W) guides the believers to understand the difference between the virtue and the sin.

'Would you like to ask me about virtue and sin?' he said. 'Yes,' I said, and he continued, 'Question your heart.' Virtue is that by which the soul enjoys repose and the heart tranquility. Sin is what introduces trouble into the soul and tumult into man's bosom, whatever fatwas people may give you".
(Musnad Ahmad)

"کیا تم مجھ سے نیکی اور بدی کے متعلق پوچھنا چاہتے ہو؟" آپ ﷺ نے پوچھا۔ میں نے کہا "جی ہاں،" اور آپ ﷺ نے فرمایا "اپنے دل سے پوچھو، نیکی وہ ہے جس سے تمہاری روح خوشی محسوس کرے اور دل کو سکون ملے۔ گناہ وہ ہے جو روح کو بے چین کر دے اور سینے میں بے آرامی محسوس ہو خواہ کوئی فتویٰ ہی کیوں نہ لے چکے ہو۔"

The Prophet's words "Question your heart" and the explanation that "Sin is what introduces trouble into the soul" indicates the importance of self-awareness in one's life.

Coping with Anxiety, Emotions and Stress

Anxiety and depression are the side effects of today's busy lifestyle. Most of the people today face the issues of anxiety, depression, and stress in one or the other way. Hence, it is of prime importance to guide the learners that these are common problems and that the cure is also in their hands.

There may be many reasons behind the stress and anxiety. It may be loss of a loved one, some disease of self or any close relative, financial burden, or peer pressure. Another issue that haunts present day children and youth is comparing themselves with others. In all these and other such situations it is important to understand the cause of stress and then the most suitable remedy under the circumstances.

One needs to realize that this world is a place of examination and everyone is tested in different ways. Holy Prophet Says

أَنَّ أَشَدَّ النَّاسِ بَلَاءَ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ ثُمَّ الْأُمَمَلُ فَالْأُمَّلُ (ترمذی-3398)

دنیا میں سب سے زیادہ آزمائشیں انبیاء پر آئیں گی۔ پھر جو نیکی اور تقویٰ میں بنتنا زیادہ ہوگا، اس کو اتنا ہی زیادہ آزمایا جائے گا

The greatest trials in the world have come upon the prophets, then the one who is more in righteousness and piety will be tested.

Allah says:

لَتُبْلَوْنَ فِي أَمْوَالِكُمْ وَأَنْفُسِكُمْ (آل عمران: ۱۸۶)

"You shall certainly be tried and tested in your possessions and in your personal selves."

یقیناً تم اپنے مالوں اور اپنی جانوں سے ضرور آزمائے جاؤ گے۔





At the same time, it is important to understand that no situation is beyond control and no burden is unbearable. Allah promises us that He will never put a burden on us for which we do not have the power to deal with:

لَا يُكَلِّفُ اللَّهُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا (البقرة: ۲۸۶)

Allah does not charge a soul except [with that within] its capacity.

اللہ کسی شخص پر اس کی طاقت سے زیادہ ذمہ داری نہیں ڈالتا۔

One needs to focus that everything that happens is for a reason and we are to accept it with patience and positive attitude. This belief is very important that everything that Allah creates in our life is for a better result. With this understanding one may find oneself standing tall against any calamity and trouble. Patience is the best cure that is prescribed by Allah Almighty in the following verse:

وَلَتَبْلُوَنكُمْ بَشِيئًا مِّنَ الْخَوْفِ وَالْجُوعِ وَنَقْصٍ مِّنَ الْأَمْوَالِ وَالْأَنْفُسِ وَالثَّمَرَاتِ ۗ وَبَشِّرِ الصَّابِرِينَ (البقرة: ۱۵۵)

And We will surely test you with something of fear and hunger and a loss of wealth and lives and fruits but give good tidings to the patient.

اور ہم ضرور تمہیں آزمائیں گے کچھ خوف اور بھوک سے اور اموال اور جانوں اور پھلوں کے نقصان سے اور آپ صبر کرنے والوں کو خوش خبری دے دیجیے۔

Another way of finding peace of heart is remembrance of Allah (SWT).

أَلَا بِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ تَطْمَئِنُّ الْقُلُوبُ (الرعد: ۲۸)

Unquestionably, by the remembrance of Allah hearts are assured.

اللہ کی یاد ہی سے دل مطمئن ہوتے ہیں۔

Holy Prophet (PBUH) asks the believers to be patient in the time of calamities. He (PBUH) said:

“The example of a believer is that of a fresh tender plant; from whatever direction the wind comes, it bends it, but when the wind becomes quiet, it becomes straight again. Similarly, a believer is afflicted with calamities (but he remains patient till Allah removes his difficulties.) And an impious wicked person is like a pine tree which keeps hard and straight till Allah cuts (breaks) it down when He wishes”

[Bukhari : 5644].

رسول اللہ ﷺ نے فرمایا: مومن کی مثال درخت کی ہری شاخ جیسی ہے کہ جب بھی ہوا چلتی ہے تو اسے جھکا دیتی ہے اور کبھی اسے سیدھا کر دیتی ہے پھر مصیبت برداشت کرنے کے قابل بنا دیتی ہے اور فاجر انسان صنوبر کی طرح ہے جو سخت اور سیدھا کھڑا رہتا ہے یہاں تک کہ اللہ تعالیٰ جب چاہتا ہے اسے اکھاڑ پھینکتا ہے۔





While discussing controlling one's emotions, Rasulallah (S.A.W) said:

“The strong man is not one who can wrestle well, but the strong man is one who can control himself when he is enraged” (Bukhari, 6114).

“رسول اللہ ﷺ نے فرمایا: ”پہلوان وہ نہیں جو کشتی کرتے وقت دوسرے کو بہت زیادہ پچھاڑنے والا ہو کہ بلکہ پہلوان وہ ہے جو غصے کی حالت میں اپنے آپ پر کنٹرول کر لے۔“

It is clear that we may find best example of life skills in the blessed life of Rasulallah (S.A.W). The best way of dealing with stress is to put faith fully in Allah (SWT) because no worry or depression is mightier than Allah's mercy.

In Quran e Majeed, Allah (SWT) says:

وَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ ۚ وَكَفَىٰ بِاللَّهِ وَكِيلًا (الاحزاب: 3)

And rely upon Allah and sufficient is Allah as Disposer of affairs.

اور خدا پر بھروسہ رکھنا اور خدا ہی کارساز کافی ہے





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