



MRS. IMON NEOGI SCHOOL COUNSELLOR



Q1 Why do you think that it is imperative for students to have access to a School Counsellor?

A School Counsellor is a person who is a good listener. She is unbiased, non-judgemental, and trained to deal with the various emotional and behavioural issues a child might face as when venting out makes you feel better. So it is indeed imperative to have access to a school counsellor. You need not have a 'problem' to visit a counsellor. You can visit her just because you want to share something or just to explore your thoughts and feelings. You are not weak if you are visiting a counsellor. In fact I feel it is very powerful, requires a lot of strength to be aware of and act on something that requires attention. Mental Health is important.

Q2 The pandemic has had quite a lot of adverse effects on mental health, especially on that of students. What ways would you suggest students can administer to try and get out of the slump?

Yes, the pandemic has been difficult for all of us, but I think children were the worst affected. But despite saying that, I feel that they are also the most resilient and flexible. Most have found brilliant ways to deal with it. There was so much I learnt from them when I would talk to them. Each one had devised their own creative ways of coping. I believe that every child has her strengths. They should focus on it. Discipline is the way forward. It will be difficult to get back to a routine but it is not impossible. I would suggest all of you to stop and look at the positive things around you, focus on what makes you happy in a day, be hopeful and of course grateful for what you have. Always remember you can outdo yourself and become a better version of yourself .

Q3. It is of extreme importance to have access to a counsellor but we have seen first hand that many students still feel ashamed or embarrassed to seek an appointment or meet you. What do you think can be done about this?

Oh yes! The stigma! I am so happy that you have brought this up. My question to you is - would you feel shy to visit a doctor for a headache? If not, why would feel ashamed or embarrassed to visit a counsellor for feeling sad or anxious? It is a myth that we need to control and manage it on our own. It is a myth that we have a serious problem if we visit the counsellor. It is also a myth that one is weak if they go to the counsellor. It is always more intelligent to act on our issues and work on them to sit over it and let it blow out of proportion. Prevention is better than cure, don't you think so? You are the future. You will need to support each other with this. If you see anyone going to the counsellor, please respect their decision to do so. Give them the space, do not ask unnecessary questions, do not judge them, and just be there with them. I am hopeful that your generation will be more aware and bring about a welcome change where visiting a counsellor will no longer be viewed as shameful or embarrassing.

4. As a counsellor, how do you keep yourself motivated amongst all this negativity and still keep going and help the students everyday?

I feel so privileged to be able to talk and share with you. I learn from each one of you I talk with. You are my motivation and a part of my beautiful journey as a counsellor. I am thankful for this. However, I also feel the need to talk to my therapist from time to time, and I do go for sessions myself. Yes, we all need it for our mental well-being. I also get to wear different hats - of a mother, a wife, a daughter, a friend. All of this keeps me going.

