

Engage Parents More Imaginatively On Cyber Wellness

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IT IS unsurprising that parents are not interested in cyber wellness talks ("Parents not keen on cyber-wellness talks"; last Saturday). While they recognise the dangers of social media and the Internet, school sessions about these issues are unnecessarily pedantic, repetitive or monotonous. More significantly, if the cyber-wellness talks are perceived to be mere platforms for the regurgitation of information, parents will, in all likelihood, give them a miss.

Moreover, parents and students can readily access such information online. Websites provide wonderful expositions on how parents and their children can develop healthy relationships for the purposes of open communication. More often than not, cyber-wellness presentations in schools place an excessive emphasis on the "dangers" and the negative aspects of the Internet, painting it as a place of traps and pitfalls rather than as a channel of opportunities. The traditional reliance upon "warnings" is simply not feasible.

Instead of holding talks or workshops, where the exchange of views is one-directional, schools could arrange for interactive sessions - along the lines of a World Cafe format - for participating parents to share their experiences in a collaborative manner.

The session can be structured in such a way that facilitators are needed merely to ensure that the event takes place smoothly.

Often, individuals are more convinced - and engaged - when they hear about real-life situations and how cyber-wellness difficulties were dealt with. Listening to successes and failures will attract more parents to participate.

As the sessions grow with exposure, it can be expanded to students, or collective slots where both parents and students meet to discuss the subject.

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