

Strategies to Enhance Emotional Regulation Among Students Experiencing Paternal Emotional Disengagement in Selected Secondary Schools in Kasarani Sub-County, Nairobi County, Kenya

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ABSTRACT

Globally studies have reported paternal emotional disengagement to have a negative outcome on the mental well-being of students. The current study aimed to explore strategies for enhancing emotional regulation among students experiencing paternal emotional disengagement among students in selected secondary schools in Kasarani Sub-County, Nairobi County, Kenya. The study was anchored on Attachment Theory and Family Systems Theory. The study employed exploratory research design. Through purposive sampling a sample of 10 participants were selected to participate in the study which included teachers, school counselors, and administrators. The qualitative data was collected using Interview Guide. The data was analyzed thematically to identify strategies for enhancing emotional regulation. Qualitative findings identified school-based counseling, mentorship programmes, life skills training, peer support systems, parental sensitization, co-curricular activities, and supportive school environments as key strategies for strengthening students' emotional regulation and resilience. The study recommends strengthening students' emotional well-being through enhanced school-based counseling services, structured mentorship programs, and the integration of life skills education and emotional intelligence into the school curriculum. It further recommends future research on maternal emotional involvement and broader family relationships to provide a more comprehensive understanding of parental roles in students' emotional regulation.

Keywords: Strategies, emotional regulation, students, paternal emotional disengagement, secondary school students, Kasarani, Nairobi

INTRODUCTION

The family, as a universal and foundational social institution, plays a critical and irreplaceable role across all cultures in shaping children's emotional and social development. It is within the family unit that children first experience emotional attunement, moral instruction and social interaction. Families offer the earliest and most influential environments for emotional regulation, social norm internalization and identity formation (Longobardi & Harris, 2025). Even in diverse cultural settings, ranging from rural communities to indigenous societies, family engagement is directly associated with positive emotional health and social outcomes among children (Chen, Hong, & Wang, 2025).

Paternal emotional disengagement refers to a father's consistent lack of emotional involvement, support, communication, or responsiveness toward his child. It encompasses situations where the father is physically present but emotionally unavailable, indifferent, or neglectful of the child's emotional needs. Such disengagement can deprive adolescents of critical emotional modeling and attachment security, which are foundational for developing effective emotional control and coping mechanisms (Morris et al., 2017; Li et al., 2022). Consequently, diminished paternal emotional involvement may negatively affect students' emotional regulation, defined as the ability to recognize, manage, and express emotions appropriately in various social and academic contexts (Morris et al., 2007; Gross, 2015).

The family serves as the primary institution for child socialization in most societies (Ramos, 2024). Adolescence is a critical developmental period characterized by significant biological, cognitive, social, and psychological changes (Blakemore & Mills, 2014). Emotional experiences become more intense and frequent during this stage, particularly in response to parent-child conflict and peer interactions (García del Castillo-López, 2025). These changes coincide with substantial advances in emotion regulation strategies internal mechanisms that help individuals monitor, evaluate, and modulate their emotional reactions. The effective development of these strategies is crucial for mental health and social functioning (Young, 2019).

Dmitrieva and Espel (2023) examined the relationship between perceived warmth and hostility in father-daughter and mother-daughter relationships and their effects on daughters' depressive symptoms, romantic partner warmth, anxiety, and sense of agency. The qualitative study, conducted among 90 adjudicated adolescent females aged 13–21 years in Denver, Colorado, utilized two-hour interviews. The findings revealed that perceived paternal warmth intensified the negative effects of paternal hostility on daughters' anxiety and depressive symptoms. This suggests that adolescents may internalize and replicate paternal relationship dynamics, whether positive or negative in their own interpersonal relationships. The study concluded that emotional distancing may serve as a protective mechanism for adolescents experiencing paternal hostility, and that perceived paternal warmth does not always buffer against emotional maladjustment.

Chang et al. (2023) explored how youths in Singapore regulate emotions and the perceived significance of emotional regulation (ER) in daily life. Using a qualitative design involving 70 participants aged 15–24 years through one-on-one interviews and focus group discussions, the study identified strategies such as emotional awareness and acceptance, taking timeouts, emotional catharsis, and positive reframing. The findings underscored the centrality of ER in youth well-being and highlighted the need for structured efforts to strengthen emotional regulatory skills during adolescence. Laban et al. (2025) investigated how regular interactions with social robots could support emotional regulation through cognitive reappraisal among students at the University of Cambridge. Employing a mixed-methods design with 25 participants, the study found that interactions with social robots enhanced emotional self-regulation, encouraged introspection, and created a supportive space for discussing emotions. Participants reported improved understanding and control over their emotions. The findings suggested that technology-driven interventions may play a complementary role in promoting emotional well-being among students.

Kurata et al. (2024) explored the experiences of secondary school students living without fathers in Lesotho, using attachment theory as the analytical framework. Through qualitative interviews with 10 students, the study found that paternal absence was associated with low self-esteem, feelings of abandonment, and emotional instability. However, students demonstrated resilience by developing coping mechanisms such as engaging in hobbies, building friendships, and participating in community activities. The study emphasized the importance of targeted school and community interventions to support adolescents coping with paternal absence. Geduld (2024) examined how parents in higher-quintile schools in South Africa foster emotional self-regulated learning among their children through involvement in homework. Using a qualitative design involving eight parents from primary and secondary schools, the study found that authoritative and supportive parenting, reinforced by socioeconomic advantages, facilitated the development of emotional self-regulation skills in learners. However, skills related to volition, self-reflection, and self-monitoring remained underdeveloped. The study recommended that schools guide parents, particularly in low- and middle-income settings, on how to reinforce emotional self-regulated learning, suggesting that extended family members such as uncles could replicate paternal engagement in contexts of father absence.

Olatunji (2025) investigated the role of teacher-child rapport in shaping emotional development and academic performance among students in Sub-Saharan Africa. The study adopted a mixed-methods approach involving students and teachers from Nigeria, South Africa, and Kenya. Findings revealed that supportive teacher-student relationships, characterized by warmth, empathy, and trust, were associated with improved academic performance and emotional regulation. The study highlighted the significance of social-emotional learning (SEL), culturally responsive classroom management, and reduced class sizes in strengthening students' emotional competencies. Teachers trained in SEL were found to create continuity between home and school, mitigating emotional deficiencies linked to unsupportive family environments. Too et al. (2022) examined the influence of peer support on students' preparedness for transitioning from secondary school to university in

Kenya. Using qualitative and quantitative methods, the study engaged 375 first-year university students at Moi University. The findings indicated that peer support enhances emotional sharing and adjustment during transition periods. Participants reported that encouragement and positive peer interactions contributed to effective emotional coping. The study recommended collaboration between secondary schools and universities to prepare students emotionally for post-secondary transitions, particularly for those lacking parental emotional support.

Jeong et al. (2024) evaluated the implementation of a community-based parenting program in rural Western Kenya, focusing on gender-responsive adaptations. Using a qualitative design with 36 participants from Nyamira and Vihiga counties, the study found that father participation differed from that of mothers, emphasizing the need for father-inclusive programming. The findings suggested that programs designed to actively engage fathers, through flexible scheduling, mentorship sessions, and community-linked events, can enhance caregiving practices and improve children's emotional regulation. The study recommended integrating father-sensitive interventions within broader family support frameworks to promote emotional development among adolescents. Ann and Allen (2024) explored teachers' experiences in fostering student resilience and social-emotional competence in West Laikipia, Kenya. Using a qualitative descriptive design involving 12 secondary school teachers, the study found that teachers nurtured resilience by providing emotional support through extracurricular activities and mentorship. However, the findings also highlighted insufficient professional development in promoting social-emotional competence. The study concluded that enhancing teacher training in emotional resilience and SEL could improve students' academic performance and socio-emotional growth.

The reviewed studies provide diverse insights into strategies that enhance emotional regulation among adolescents. Dmitrieva and Espel (2023) emphasize the nuanced influence of paternal warmth and hostility on adolescents' emotional adjustment, though their findings are contextually limited to adjudicated females in the United States. Similarly, Chang et al. (2023) and Laban et al. (2025) identify general emotion regulation strategies, such as awareness, reappraisal, and technological aids, but do not address father-child dynamics or resource-limited school environments. Studies by Kurata et al. (2024) and Geduld (2024) highlight the coping mechanisms of students lacking paternal support and the role of parental involvement in fostering emotional regulation. However, these studies do not sufficiently explore school-based approaches that can mitigate the emotional gaps created by paternal disengagement, particularly in low- and middle-income contexts. Moreover, Geduld's focus on higher-quintile schools limits the applicability of findings to public secondary schools in Kenya.

School-centered research by Olatunji (2025), Ann and Allen (2024), and Too et al. (2022) demonstrate that teacher support, peer relationships, and SEL initiatives are effective in enhancing emotional well-being and resilience. However, these studies do not focus specifically on adolescents experiencing paternal emotional disengagement. Additionally, Jeong et al. (2024) underscore the importance of father-inclusive parenting programs but do not address how schools can compensate when fathers remain unresponsive to engagement efforts. From the review the existing body of research lacks context-specific interventions tailored to adolescents facing paternal emotional disengagement in Kenyan secondary schools. Few studies identify culturally grounded, structured strategies that schools can implement to strengthen emotional regulation among this demographic. Furthermore, there is limited empirical evidence on the relative effectiveness of peer-led, teacher-facilitated, and community-supported interventions in addressing emotional regulation challenges among these students. The current study therefore seeks to address these gaps by identifying and examining strategies that schools in Kasarani Sub-County can adopt to enhance emotional regulation among students experiencing paternal emotional disengagement, guided by emotional regulation theory and grounded in the lived experiences of affected adolescents.

METHODOLOGY

The study employed exploratory research design to explore the lived experiences and coping strategies of students facing paternal emotional disengagement. The study was conducted in Kasarani Sub-County, one of the administrative divisions of Nairobi County, Kenya. Kasarani is a densely populated urban area that hosts a mix of residential neighborhoods, commercial centers, and a variety of educational institutions, including both public and private secondary schools (KNBS, 2019). The sub-county has a diverse population representing different socioeconomic backgrounds, which provided a suitable context for examining emotional and behavioral patterns

among adolescents. Given the unique challenges related to family structures and parental involvement in urban settings such as increased parental work-related absenteeism, single-parent households, limited family cohesion, and reduced parental supervision, Kasarani Sub-County offered a relevant environment to explore the strategies to enhance emotional regulation among students experiencing paternal emotional disengagement in selected secondary schools in Kasarani Sub-County, Nairobi County, Kenya.

The study was conducted with teachers, school counselors, and administrators who served as key informants who could provide adequate on strategies to enhance emotional regulation among students experiencing paternal emotional disengagement. Through purposive sampling a sample size of 10 participants was recruited, comprising school counselors, teachers and administrators who work closely with students and are familiar with their emotional and behavioral patterns. Purposive sampling was appropriate for qualitative inquiry as it enables the researcher to deliberately select information-rich participants who possess relevant experience or insight into the phenomenon under study (Patton, 2015). These participants were selected based on their professional roles and direct engagement with students, which positions them to provide informed perspectives on strategies to enhance emotional regulation among students experiencing paternal emotional disengagement. A sample of this size is considered sufficient to yield rich, context-specific insights while ensuring that data collection and analysis remain manageable within the scope of the study.

To collect data an interview guide was used. The participants included school counselors, teachers, and administrators who interact closely with students and are well-positioned to provide informed perspectives based on their observations and professional experiences. The interview guide consisted of open-ended questions. It includes three thematic sections: (1) understanding experiences of paternal emotional disengagement, (2) identifying emotional regulation strategies among students, and (3) exploring school-based support mechanisms. Semi-structured, open-ended questions were used to allow for flexibility and depth. Interviews were conducted in a private setting within the school, audio-recorded with consent, and transcribed for thematic analysis. To ensure credibility, the researcher used member checking by sharing transcripts and summaries with participants to confirm accuracy. Additionally, peer debriefing was conducted with both internal and external academic peers to enhance the credibility and confirmability of the qualitative findings. Internal peer debriefing involved the research supervisors and academic advisors from the host university, who provided methodological and analytical feedback during data analysis and interpretation. External peer debriefing included experienced researchers or colleagues in the fields of psychology and education from other institutions who are not directly involved in the study. These peers were critically reviewed the coding process, emerging themes, and interpretations to identify potential researcher biases, ensure consistency between the data and conclusions, and promote a more objective and balanced interpretation of the findings.

Interviews were conducted face-to-face within school premises in a quiet and private environment to ensure confidentiality and comfort. Each interview session lasted approximately 30–45 minutes and were audio-recorded with prior consent. The researcher guided the discussion using a pre-tested interview guide focusing on strategies to enhance emotional regulation. The interviews were transcribed verbatim and anonymized during analysis. Qualitative data from semi-structured interviews was analyzed using thematic analysis as outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006). This method involves identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) within the data, enabling an in-depth understanding of strategies that support emotional regulation. The qualitative data analysis was conducted systematically through three main stages: open coding, axial coding, and thematic identification. Qualitative findings were organized by theme with supporting narrative and direct quotations.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study was set to explore the strategies to enhance emotional regulation among students experiencing paternal emotional disengagement in selected secondary schools in Kasarani Sub-County Nairobi County. The demographic of the participants are provided followed by the findings of the study.

Demographic Characteristics Participants

The participants were drawn from key student support roles within the school environment. The majority of participants were teachers, alongside a smaller number of school counselors and heads of department, ensuring

representation of both instructional and psychosocial support perspectives. In terms of professional experience, most participants had between 6 and over 10 years of service in the school or in student support roles, indicating a relatively experienced cohort with substantial institutional knowledge. A smaller proportion reported 2–5 years of experience, while very few had less than 2 years. Regarding capacity building in student mental health, the findings showed that most participants had received some form of training related to student mental health or counseling, although a notable minority reported no formal training in this area. Overall, the demographic profile suggests that the qualitative data were obtained from experienced education professionals, with varying levels of formal preparation in student mental health support, thereby providing diverse and credible insights into the study phenomenon.

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The findings for this study were derived from qualitative data collected from guidance and counseling teachers, and were analyzed using content analysis. This involved identifying, categorizing, and interpreting recurring themes and patterns in participants' responses regarding effective interventions and support mechanisms for students experiencing paternal emotional disengagement.

School-Based Counselling Interventions

A dominant theme across participants was the importance of individual and group counseling in supporting students' emotional development. Teachers reported that counseling provides a safe space for students to express their emotions and learn coping strategies. Teacher 3 noted, "We use individual counseling, peer support groups, and mentorship programs to support students." Similarly, Teacher 5 stated: "We offer counseling sessions... and even allow students to go for further counseling outside the school." These interventions help students develop self-awareness, emotional expression and coping skills, which are essential for effective emotional regulation.

School-based counseling interventions, including individual and group counseling, represent a dominant strategy for supporting emotional regulation among students experiencing paternal emotional disengagement, aligning with Attachment Theory's proposition that secondary attachment figures can provide corrective relational experiences and promote "earned security" (Bowlby, 1988; Guyon-Harris et al., 2019). Teachers reported using individual counseling, peer support groups, mentorship programs, and referrals for outside counseling, with individual counseling allowing personalized attention to unique family circumstances while group counseling facilitates peer modeling and normalization of emotional difficulties—strategies supported by research showing that emotional awareness, catharsis, and cognitive reappraisal effectively enhance emotion self-regulation (Chang et al., 2023; Laban et al., 2025). From a Family Systems Theory perspective, counseling introduces a new relational resource that may compensate for paternal "emotional cutoff" (Bowen, 1978), though sustainable change ideally requires complementing school-based interventions with efforts to engage fathers and modify family interaction patterns directly (Goldenberg & Goldenberg, 2012; Thi Hong et al., 2024).

Mentorship Programs and Role Modelling

Mentorship programs emerged as a critical strategy, particularly for students lacking paternal guidance. Teachers emphasized the need for positive role models within the school environment. Teacher 4 highlighted, "Mentorship programs... and collaboration between schools, families and the community ensure holistic support." Teacher 2 added, "Schools can provide guidance, mentorship and a supportive environment." Mentorship helps fill the gap created by paternal disengagement by providing guidance, emotional support and positive behavioral modeling.

Mentorship programs were identified as a critical strategy for students lacking paternal guidance, with teachers emphasizing that schools can provide mentorship and a supportive environment to address the attachment gap created by paternal emotional disengagement. From an Attachment Theory perspective, mentors serve as "secondary attachment figures" who offer corrective relational experiences that may gradually modify insecure internal working models through reliable emotional responsiveness and positive role modeling (Guyon-Harris et al., 2019). This finding is supported by Kurata et al. (2024), who found that students experiencing father absence in Lesotho developed coping strategies by seeking support from mentors and community members, and

by Ann and Allen (2024), who documented that Kenyan teachers effectively functioned as informal mentors through extracurricular activities. Male mentors may be particularly valuable, as Jeong et al. (2024) recommended gender-responsive, father-targeted program adaptations to improve engagement. However, from a Family Systems Theory perspective, while mentorship introduces a new element into the student's social system, its effectiveness may be limited if the family system remains unchanged, highlighting the need to integrate mentorship with direct efforts to improve father-child relationships rather than relying solely on compensatory interventions (Bowen, 1978).

Life Skills and Emotional Intelligence Training

Participants emphasized the integration of life skills education and emotional intelligence training into the school curriculum as a key strategy. Teacher 1 explained, "Integrating emotional intelligence training into the curriculum... enhances counseling services." Teacher 5 recommended, "Introducing more life skills lessons... and emotional awareness programs." These programs equip students with skills such as, emotional awareness, self-regulation, problem-solving and interpersonal communication.

Participants emphasized integrating life skills and emotional intelligence training into the school curriculum as a proactive, universal approach to enhancing emotional regulation, with teachers recommending emotional awareness programs that systematically teach skills such as emotional awareness, self-regulation, problem-solving, and interpersonal communication, core competencies aligned with Gross's (2015) process model of emotion regulation and social-emotional learning frameworks (CASEL, 2020). Empirical support comes from Olatunji (2025), who found in Sub-Saharan African schools that teachers trained in social-emotional learning created consistency between school and home, improving students' emotional self-regulation and academic achievement, and from Chang et al. (2023), who demonstrated that youth can effectively learn emotional awareness, acceptance, and cognitive reframing through structured training. From an Attachment Theory perspective, explicit skills training provides cognitive-level tools that may partially compensate for the implicit, relational learning missing in students with disengaged fathers (Delgado et al., 2022), though critics note that skills training is most effective when combined with relational interventions addressing underlying attachment insecurities (Cassidy et al., 2025). Family Systems Theory further suggests that as students develop better emotional regulation, their improved emotional functioning may positively influence family interactions, potentially reducing paternal disengagement over time (Goldenberg & Goldenberg, 2012).

Peer Support Systems

The use of peer support groups was identified as an effective approach to help students cope with emotional challenges. Teacher 4 noted, "Peer support groups... help students who struggle with emotional regulation." Peer groups provide students with, a sense of belonging, emotional validation and opportunities to share experiences. This is particularly important for students who may lack emotional support at home.

Peer support groups were identified as an effective approach to help students cope with emotional challenges, providing a sense of belonging, emotional validation, and opportunities to share experiences that directly address unmet needs resulting from paternal disengagement. From an Attachment Theory perspective, peer support facilitates "attachment transfer" "the normative developmental shift from parental to peer attachments, which becomes particularly significant for adolescents lacking secure paternal foundations, though structured facilitation by trained adults is essential since peers may lack maturity to provide healthy emotional guidance (Allen & Tan, 2020; Rubin et al., 2015). Empirical support comes from Too et al. (2022), who found that peer support in Kenyan secondary schools facilitates emotional sharing and successful transitions, and from Kurata et al. (2024), who documented that students experiencing father absence develop resilience through friendships and community activities, recommending that peer support systems be formally structured rather than left to informal arrangements. From a Family Systems Theory perspective, while peer support groups introduce new systemic influences that may partially counteract paternal emotional disengagement, their effectiveness may be limited if students return to unsupportive family environments, highlighting the need to integrate peer support with interventions that address the family system directly (Bowen, 1978).

Parental and Community Involvement

Despite paternal disengagement, participants emphasized the importance of involving parents, guardians, and the wider community in supporting students. Teacher 2 stated, “Parental sensitization through psycho-education... and collaboration between schools, families and the community is important.” Teacher 1 similarly noted, “Strengthening communication between teachers and parents is key.” These efforts aim to, improve parental awareness, encourage emotional involvement and strengthen support systems beyond the school.

Participants emphasized involving parents, guardians, and the wider community through parental sensitization, psycho-education, and strengthened teacher-parent communication, reflecting a systemic understanding that sustainable change requires modifying family interaction patterns rather than merely compensating for deficiencies. This strategy aligns with Family Systems Theory (Bowen, 1978), which views paternal emotional disengagement as a relational pattern within the family system requiring family-level intervention, and with Attachment Theory, which holds that improving the primary attachment relationship through parental engagement is optimal, with secondary attachment figures providing “earned security” only as an alternative (Guyon-Harris et al., 2019). Empirical support comes from Jeong et al. (2024) in rural Western Kenya, who recommended gender-responsive, father-targeted program adaptations (e.g., evening or weekend sessions) to improve paternal engagement and children's emotional regulation outcomes, and from Geduld (2024), who suggested that schools can support parents, including uncles or relatives to replicate paternal engagement, in cultivating emotional self-regulated learning skills. The current findings extend this literature by demonstrating that even in contexts where fathers are disengaged, schools can work to involve them through sensitization and psycho-education, suggesting that paternal emotional disengagement may be responsive to targeted interventions that increase fathers' awareness and skills rather than being a fixed characteristic.

Co-curricular Activities and Student Engagement

Participants also recommended encouraging student participation in co-curricular activities as a way to enhance emotional regulation. Teacher 5 suggested, “Encouraging participation in co-curricular activities.” Such activities help students, release emotional tension, build confidence and develop social skills.

Teachers recommended encouraging student participation in co-curricular activities to enhance emotional regulation by helping students release emotional tension, build confidence, and develop social skills through experiential learning. From an Attachment Theory perspective, co-curricular activities provide a “secure base” for exploration (Bowlby, 1988), partially compensating for the lack of paternal support for risk-taking and exploration that securely attached adolescents typically receive (Puglisi et al., 2024), while also offering opportunities for “situation modification” and “response modulation” (Gross, 2015). Empirical support comes from Kurata et al. (2024), who found that students experiencing father absence developed resilience through hobbies and community activities, and from Ann and Allen (2024) in West Laikipia, Kenya, who documented that teachers-built relationships with students via extracurricular activities, providing parenting and practical support that contributed to resilience, academic performance, and social-emotional competence. From a Family Systems Theory perspective, co-curricular activities introduce new systemic influences that may positively affect students' emotional functioning and potentially create changes that reverberate back into the family system, as a student who develops confidence and regulation skills may interact differently with their disengaged father, gradually modifying family interaction patterns (Bowen, 1978).

Creating a Supportive School Environment

Another key strategy identified was the need to create a safe, inclusive, and supportive school environment where students feel valued and understood. Teacher 5 emphasized, “Schools can provide a supportive environment... to promote students' emotional stability.” This includes, positive teacher-student relationships, open communication channels and emotional safety within the school.

Teachers emphasized that creating a safe, inclusive, and supportive school environment, characterized by positive teacher-student relationships, open communication channels, and emotional safety, promotes students' emotional stability and represents a key strategy for enhancing emotional regulation. This approach aligns with

Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological systems theory, wherein the school mesosystem can partially counterbalance negative effects of a dysfunctional family microsystem, and with Attachment Theory, which suggests that supportive school environments provide opportunities for "earned security" through relationships with teachers as secondary attachment figures (Olatunji, 2025). Empirical support comes from Olatunji's (2025) study across Nigeria, South Africa, and Kenya, which found that supportive teacher-child relationships, teacher empathy, positive communication, and culturally responsive classroom management improved students' emotional self-regulation and academic achievement, and from Ann and Allen (2024) in Kenya, who documented that teachers who built relationships with students created supportive environments that promoted resilience and social-emotional competence. From a Family Systems Theory perspective, while the ideal intervention would directly improve the dysfunctional family system, creating supportive school environments represents a practical, feasible approach that benefits all students, with teacher training in social-emotional learning being crucial for creating consistency between school and home (Olatunji, 2025; Ann & Allen, 2024).

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that school-based counseling, mentorship programs, life skills training, peer support, parental involvement, co-curricular activities, and supportive school environments are important strategies for strengthening emotional regulation among students experiencing paternal emotional disengagement. The study recommends to The Ministry of Education and school administrators should strengthen school-based counseling services by recruiting and deploying trained counselors to schools and establishing structured counseling programs. Implementation can include scheduled individual counseling sessions for identified students at least once every two weeks, while group counseling sessions should be conducted weekly to address common emotional and behavioral challenges. Additionally, timely screening and follow-up assessments should be conducted to identify students in need of support and monitor progress over time. School principals and teachers should enhance mentorship programs by assigning each student to a mentor, such as a trained teacher, senior student, or community role model. Mentorship interactions should be scheduled at least once per week (formal sessions), with informal check-ins encouraged continuously. Schools should also organize monthly mentorship forums or talks where students can engage with role models and discuss personal and emotional development issues.

Suggestions For Further Research

Intervention-based studies evaluating counseling and school support programs should be conducted to assess the effectiveness of strategies such as counseling, mentorship, and life skills training in improving emotional regulation among affected students. This would provide evidence on which interventions are most impactful in real school settings. Future studies may consider involving students, parents, counselors, and teachers to provide a more comprehensive understanding of emotional disengagement and regulation challenges. A mixed-methods or longitudinal research design could help evaluate the effectiveness of interventions such as counseling programs, mentorship initiatives and life skills education over time. Researchers should examine how factors such as socioeconomic background, family structure, gender, and school environment influence students' emotional responses and strategies.

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