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INCLUSIVE OF CALCUTTA TIMES

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FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 2026

TIMES CITY

3

## Providing emotional & social support can help deal with new-age pressure, say counsellors

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**Kolkata:** While mental health experts across Kolkata witnessed a concerning trend of gadget addiction among teens, they said the mental health of these young minds was affected by many other factors. They said good parenting, regular supervision, and providing emotional and social support can help kids overcome some of the issues. If things don't get resolved at home, they advised parents to seek professional help.

They said the apparent suicide pact by three sisters in Ghaziabad could be a one-off incident but stressed the importance of parents staying alert, given the fact that behavioural changes, self-harm, or suicidal tendencies among adolescents were on the rise.

"This is a fact that there is a rising trend of screen/gadget addiction among children,

### HOW TO HELP YOUR CHILDREN

- > **If addicted**, encourage them to **leave the habit gradually, and not abruptly**
- > **Limit their screen time to 2 hours a day**
- > **Encourage them to have their screen time under supervision**
- > **Provide them emotional, social, physical, social, educational, and sexual**

Make sure that they are not addicted to any online game or other online activities

#### protection

- > **Watch for any tell-tale sign of distress caused by any factor**
- > **Talk to them to encourage and help them come out of the situation**
- > **If it does not work, seek professional help**



Image: AI

which is affecting their mental health. These games are designed to be addictive, and the kids may start living in a virtual world in due course, isolating themselves from society. While making them withdraw from such games abruptly is not ideal, this factor alone may not trigger an extreme step like suicide," said Sanjay Garg, consultant, mental health and behaviour

sciences at Fortis Hospital Anandapur.

Psychiatrist Sabyasachi Mitra of CK Birla Hospitals said addiction to gaming and social media among kids was rampant post Covid, and parents were seeking help. But forcing children to withdraw from it abruptly may be perceived by them as punishment, which generated anger. "But a child's mental health is affected

by many factors. If they face trauma during their growing years, especially in the family, between parents, these can ingrain psychological revulsion that they are unable to manifest. This is a pressure cooker-like symptom which leaves them helpless and may compel them to take a drastic step like suicide to get out of it," said Mitra.

They said that most pa-

rents, however, were aware of the mental health issues their children faced and came for professional help if it could not be resolved at home.

Psychotherapist Minu Budhia, founder, Caring Minds International, cited factors like emotional distress, loneliness, pressure, anxiety or depression, inability to cope with failure, and a lack of emotional support at home, leaving these children vulnerable. "Parents play a vital role by providing emotional safety, listening without judgement, and noticing behaviour changes early. Allowing kids to fail without fear of punishment and seeking timely professional help can be life-saving," Budhia said.

Experts said if the Ghaziabad sisters had not been attending school for a long time, it was not normal for the parents to overlook it. They said a dysfunctional family can do om a child's mental health.