

## **PRESS RELEASE**

# **34,023 students across 276 schools in six states covered by The Live Love Laugh Foundation's *You Are Not Alone***

**- *The flagship programme on mental health for adolescents completes one year -***

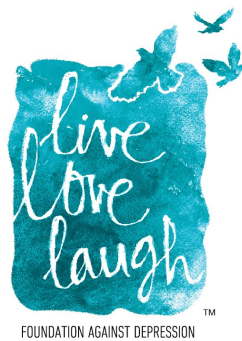
**Bengaluru, 11 May 2017:** *You Are Not Alone*, The Live Love Laugh Foundation's flagship programme on mental health for adolescents, which is conducted free of charge in schools around the country, has covered 34,023 students and 6,480 teachers across 276 schools in six states (Karnataka, Uttarakhand, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Gujarat and Delhi) over the last year.

*You Are Not Alone* focuses on educating adolescents and teachers on stress, anxiety, and depression while aiming to reduce the stigma that surrounds mental health. The programme has been designed and rolled out by The Live Love Laugh Foundation (TLLLF), an NGO founded by actor Deepika Padukone in June 2015 that aims to address the urgent need for better mental health awareness and the reduction of the societal stigma on the topic.

*You Are Not Alone* was launched at Sophia's High School in Bengaluru, Ms Padukone's alma mater in March 2016. Since then, the programme has been conducted in 276 schools, including more than 100 non-English medium schools, and delivered in English, Hindi, Tamil and Gujarati. A city-wise breakup where the programme has been conducted is as follows: 19 schools in Bengaluru (3808 students, 1310 teachers), 10 schools in Mumbai (2766 students, 119 teachers), 121 in Delhi (12908 students, 3974 teachers), 15 schools in Coimbatore (4058 students, 714 teachers), 65 schools in Baroda (7506 students, 281 teachers), 45 schools in Ahmedabad (2577 students, 72 teachers) and 1 school in Dehradun (400 students, 10 teachers)

Under the programme, separate sessions are conducted for students and teachers by the Foundation's own staff or professionals from partner organizations. The session for students involves a discussion on depression that aims at: a) building students' understanding of how such disorders could affect them or their peers; b) facilitating effective self-help, and; c) increasing their sensitivity towards supporting others around them who may be affected, including friends and family members.

The session for teachers and school authorities is geared towards making participants aware of the signs and symptoms of depression and anxiety, so they are better able to support or



seek the requisite professional help for vulnerable students. A booklet that addresses various aspects of mental health is also handed out to all participants and available in the local language at the sessions.

Commenting on the roll-out of *You Are Not Alone*, **Deepika Padukone, Founder - The Live Love Laugh Foundation** said, "We started this programme knowing that schools can be the first line of defense for emotional and mental health of children. With the massive incidence of mental health issues among the youth in our country, *You Are Not Alone* as well as other interventions for this age group are the need of the hour to help students and their teachers gain a better understanding of issues related to stress, anxiety and depression. TLLLF feels privileged to have been able to make a difference to these students by building awareness and showing them there is support available."

**Anna Chandy, Chairperson - Board of Trustees, The Live Love Laugh Foundation** said, "Post the sessions, several students have been forthcoming in their feedback on how they have been helped to understand the issues they are up against. Teachers have also begun to identify how mental health can impact students as well as recognize possible symptoms amongst the students. Further, school managements have been very positive and we have had cases where a principal at one of the schools has requested our help to integrate a focus on mental health in the curriculum."

"Typically, five per cent of participants tend to want immediate help after listening to our counsellors at the sessions," she said.

"All the requests we receive are directed to the TLLLF website ([www.thelivelovelaughfoundation.org](http://www.thelivelovelaughfoundation.org)) and the students are encouraged to make use of the extensive resources available there as well as engage with counsellors from our partner organizations listed on the site. It is heartening to see students coming out and discussing what may be bothering them and taking slow but sure steps to overcome their anxiety. TLLLF is grateful to have had the support of school managements' in rolling out this programme".

Over the next 12 months, TLLLF expects to expand the *You Are Not Alone* programme to include parents as well as students in reform homes. The programme will also focus on localisation of content and the roll-out of the programme to smaller towns and cities with the help of partners and volunteers.

Schools interested to host a programme for their students can write to the TLLLF at [info@thelivelovelaugfoundation.com](mailto:info@thelivelovelaugfoundation.com)

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