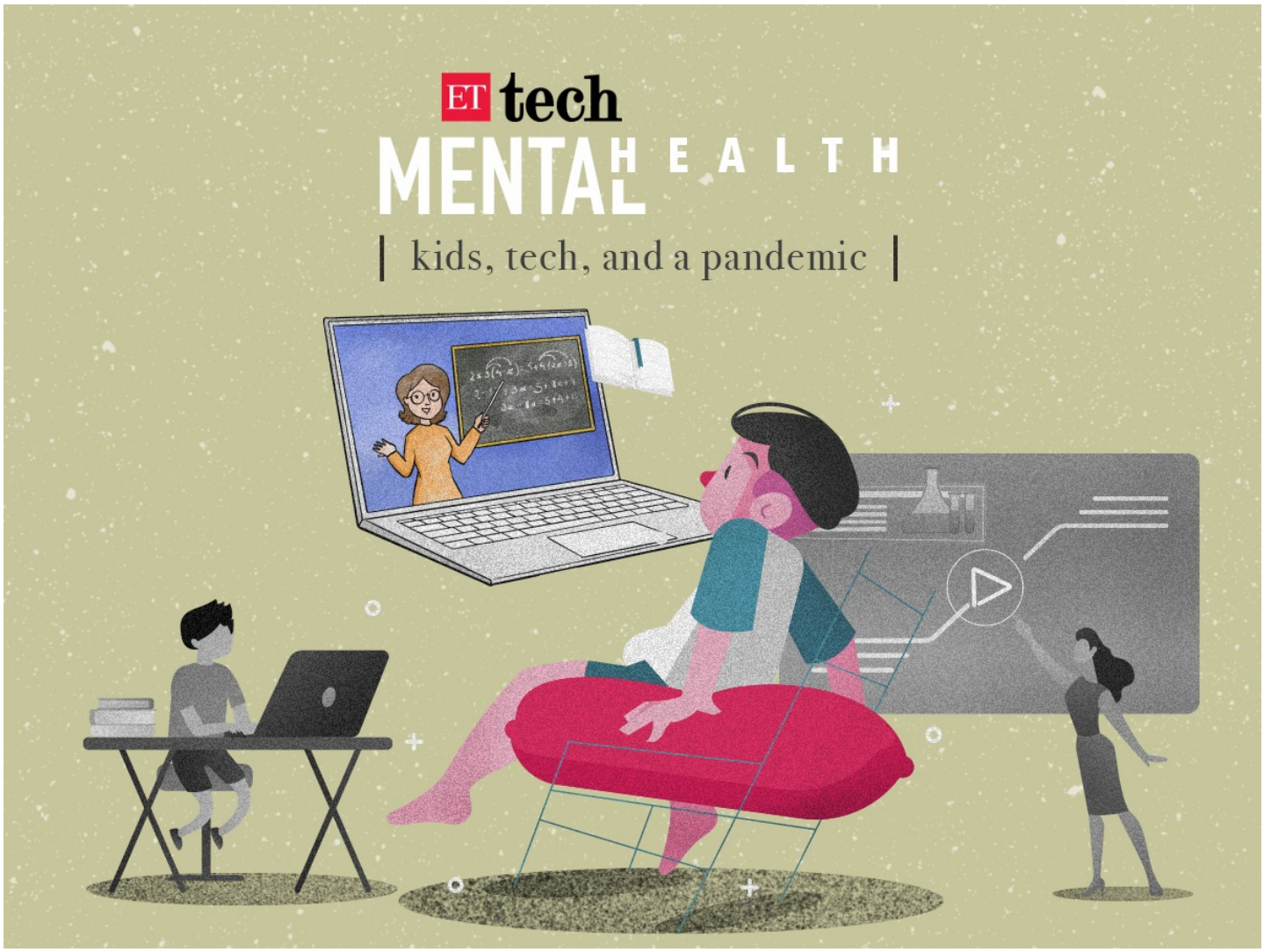
Twitter Thread by Shephali Bhatt

Shephali Bhatt
@ShephaliBhatt

Wrote about the short- and long-term mental health implications of online classes on children, and how we can do right by them going forward.

Featuring voices from India, the US, Brazil, Spain, Indonesia, Chile, Canada, Sweden, Lebanon, and Nigeria.

https://t.co/zPZYzVuPsd



10 months into online classes, isolated from friends and all things fun that the school brought along, kids are feeling lonely, angry, and demotivated to study. Psychologists say it may not be a passing feeling. And it is worrisome

ET tech



I thought things will stabilise with time.
But the longer online classes have gone, the more demotivated kids have become about studying. Parents and teachers are also struggling. I wonder how much education is really happening.

Ellen Braaten,
child psychologist and associate professor, Harvard Medical School

Children with social anxiety are struggling with the spotlight on them during online classes. Instagram creators are making videos on it with the intention of having fun perhaps? But YouTube has very unfunny real videos of teachers being trolled by kids during online classes.

Younger kids are missing out on basic skills like learning to read, do basic calculations, etc. Slightly older ones are showing signs of hyperactivity. They're not doing homework, switching video off and playing games online, some are even getting addicted to pornography.

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Even the most social kids are complaining of headaches every time they step out now.

They want to go back home and play games.
It'll be tough to get them de-addicted from screens.

Charanpreet Kaur,
child psychologist and special educator, Dehradun, India

Kids are acting out. "Earlier, acting out for kids meant spray-painting on public walls, for instance. With that option not available anymore, when they act out, it can be more serious, and it can jeopardise communities," says @ellenbraaten of @harvardmed.

Doesn't help that across countries, swathes of children from underprivileged communities simply do not have access to basic internet connectivity and electronic gadgets to support education in these times because of inequality and systemic racism.

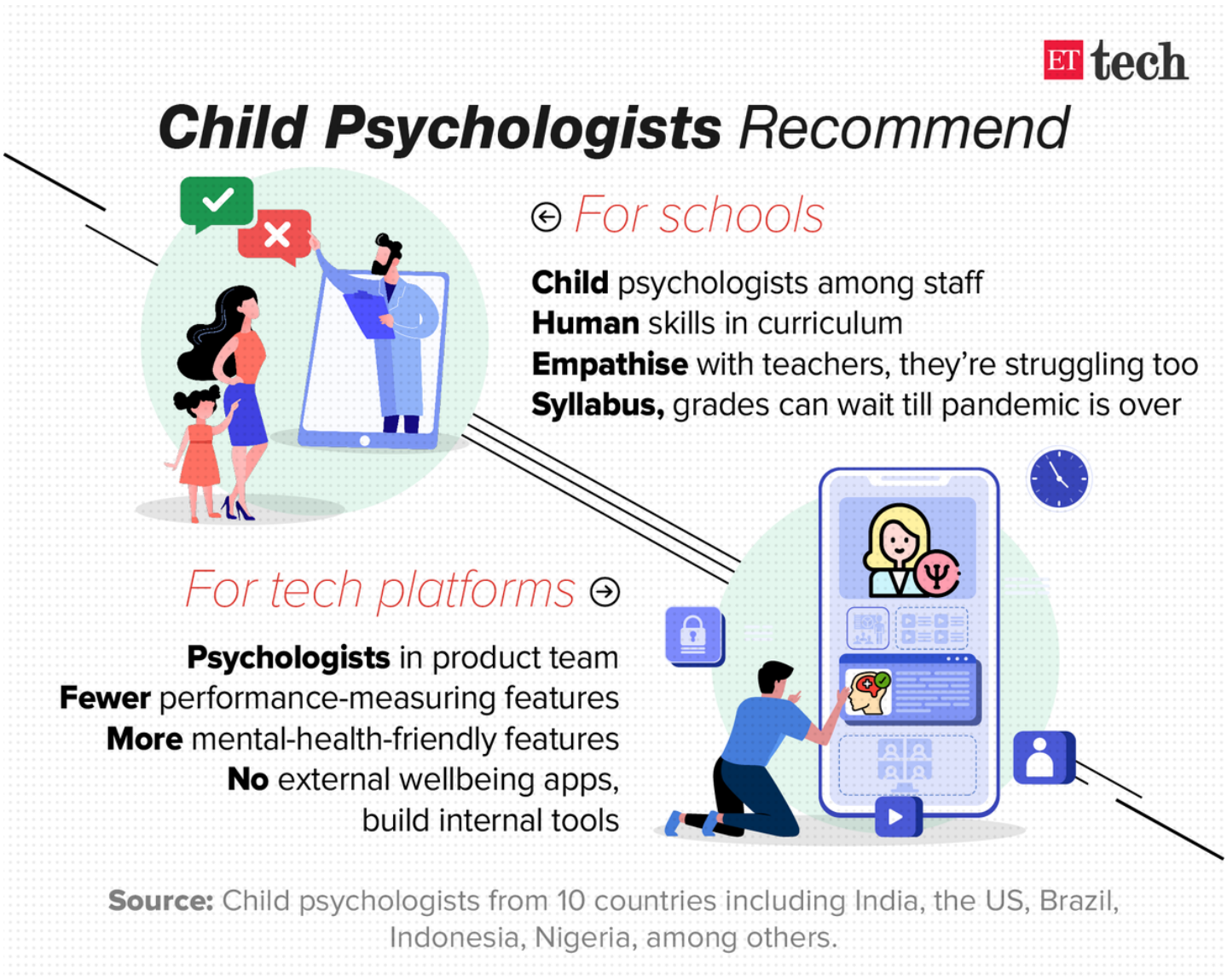
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Then there are unique challenges within communities. Eg.
1) In Indonesia, no culture of kids discussing their feelings with their parents.
2) Families of colour in the US do not talk about mental health and they're suffering more during this period, seeing racism on TV every day

Meanwhile, many countries are contemplating adopting a hybrid schooling model once the virus outbreak subsides. All the more important then that these mental health issues are addressed and attempts are made by parents, teachers, schools, tech platforms, society, to reverse them.

What can platforms do? Get CHILD PSYCHOLOGISTS on product teams. More focus on mental-health-friendly features than efficiency-enhancing ones. The latter comes to product teams naturally so will be added anyway. Also ft. reccos for schools here ■■

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What can parents do? Firstly, talk to children about mental health and its importance. This quote from Eniola, a child and educational psychologist from Nigeria, is my favourite insight from the story. So simple, so thought-provoking.

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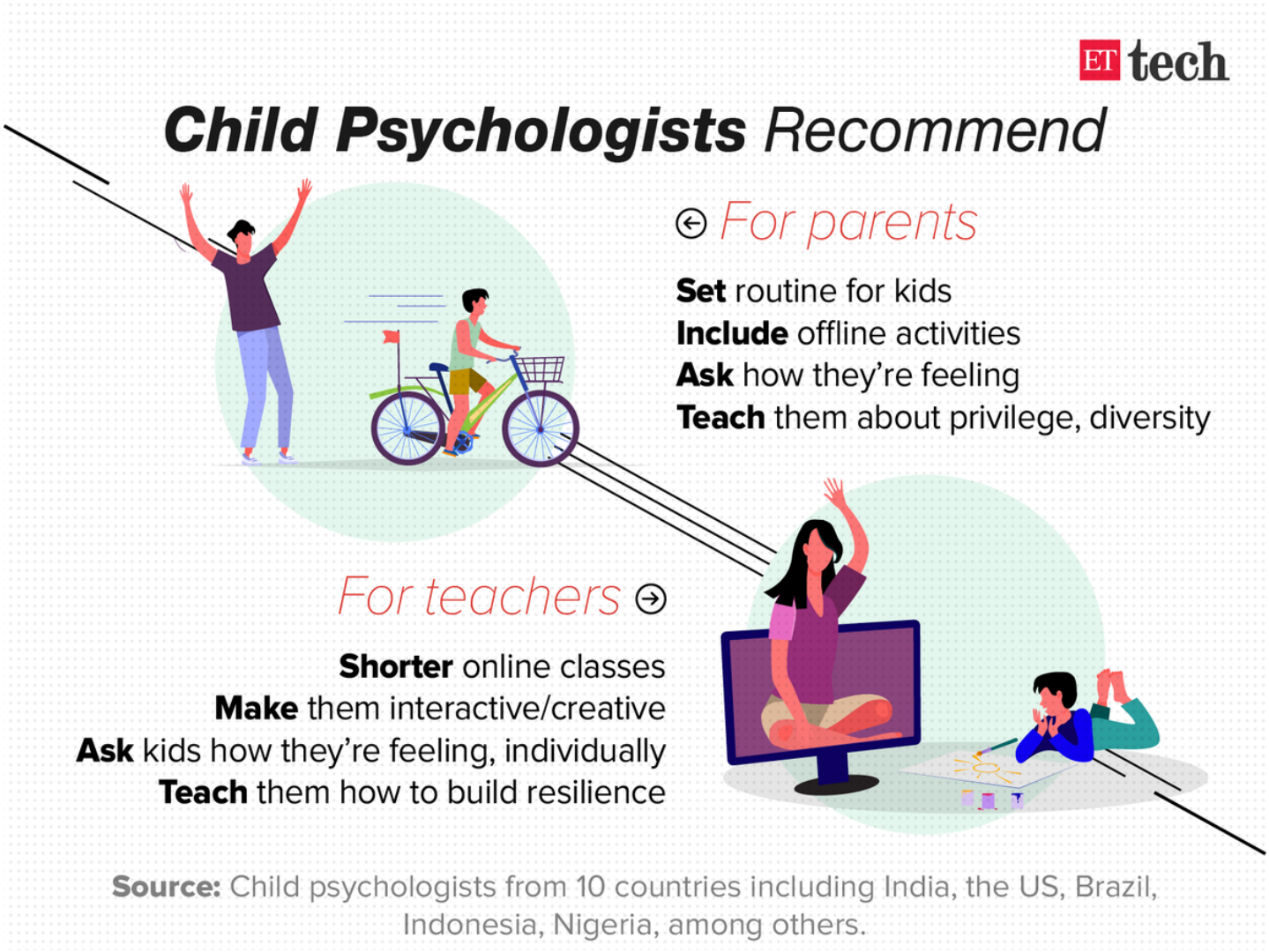
Kids are conditioned to respond to "How are you?" with "I'm fine". We need to tell them it's okay to say they're not okay if that's how they feel.

Eniola Shakirah Olajobi,

child and educational psychologist, Nigeria

Ultimately the onus of boosting a kid's morale will rest on parents, teachers and, to some extent, the society at large.

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Adults will have to broaden their definition of what constitutes learning for children. Most of all, they'll have to learn not to be too harsh on themselves, too.

https://t.co/zPZYzVuPsd

ET tech



With online classes exposing kids' personal spaces, adults will need to teach them about privilege, about not comparing with those who have more or less.

Grace E Sameve,
clinical child and adolescent psychologist, Indonesia

Working on this story was an eye-opening exercise. One that revealed that there's never been a more pressing need to do right by our next generation, the future of the world.

Hope the story helps us all start a conversation around this

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