

Mental Health Education in School

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Introduction:

The word school is derived from Greek word '**Schole**', originally meaning "leisure" and also in which leisure is employed", or a group to whom lectures are given. School is a miniature society and it acts as a precious seed for college and university level education. The successful school life leads to development of psychologically sound and socially productive members of society. Around 20% of the world's children and adolescents are estimated to have mental disorders or problems. According to the WHO's 2001 World Health Report on "Mental Health: New Understanding, New Hope," during their lifetime, people as a whole have a 25% chance of having a mental illness or behavioral problem. Mental illness has several severe effects on the person, their family and their community. There is a great burden and responsibility over schools to give a proper and ideal shape to a child's personality. And this is possible only when schools will impart mental health education along with the academic education.

Mental Health.

Hadfield , "Mental health is the full harmonious functioning of the whole personality. " and as per him the three requirements of mental health are:

Full expression, Harmonization, The common End.

Characteristics of mentally healthy personality:

- Self esteem
- Living fully in the present
- Continuing to learn from his faults

- Ability to make independent decisions
- Creativity
- Able to accept responsibility
- Are competent and industrious
- Trust others and trust themselves
- Have a clear, integrated identity
- Realistic goals, consistence with age and abilities

Mental disorder

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in the US, suicide is the third highest cause of death for those between the ages of 15 and 24, and the second-highest for 25- to 34-year-olds. In Great Britain, the charity MentalHealth.org.uk reports that one in 10 children between the ages of one and 15 have a mental health disorder.

The term '**mental disorders**' is used to refer to a broad category of disorders, such as affective disorders (major depression, dysthymia, **Schizophrenia, epilepsy, somatization, substance abuse, bipolar disorder, psychosis,**) and different anxiety disorders (generalized anxiety disorder, posttraumatic stress disorder, etc).

Symptoms: Symptoms can be of three types:

Physical symptoms. Drumming with fingers, facial twitching, nail biting, restlessness, rocketing feet, scratching head, stammering and vomiting.

Behavioral deviations. Aggression, bullying, hyperactivity, lying, negativism, poor school achievement and sex disturbance.

Emotional symptoms: Persistent anxiety, intense conflicts and tensions, fear, hatred, inferiority complex, extreme timidity, and excessive worry.

Mental Hygiene

Mental Hygiene is the prevention of mental illness, the preservation of mental health, and the cure of mental illness.

American Psychiatric Association. Mental Hygiene consists of measures to reduce the incidence of mental illness through prevention and early treatment and to promote mental health.”

Crow and Crow. “Mental hygiene is a science that deals with human welfare and pervades all fields of human relationship.”

Purposes of mental hygiene:

Crow and Crow on the basis of aspects of mental hygiene emphasized three major purposes of mental hygiene:

1. The prevention of mental disorders through an understanding of the relationships that exist between wholesome personality development and life experiences
2. The preservation of the mental health of the individual and of the group
3. The discovery and utilization of therapeutic measures to cure mental illness.

Principles of mental health

Principles of mental health can be studied under two categories namely

1) Principles seeking adjustment with one’s self

It emphasizes over Self knowledge, Self acceptance, Self control, Integrating the self, Self shaping and balancing the level of aspiration.

2) Principles seeking adjustment with one’s environment

It includes positive and active attitude, Scientific approach, Creative experience, Training of the emotions, Proper satisfaction of needs, and to understand, accept and respect others.

Causes of mental hazards or bad mental health:

Broadly these factors can be classified into two main types:

a) **Hereditary : Caused due to abnormal genetic makeup.**

b) **Environmental: It includes**

- Poverty: it leads to inferiority complex, feelings of insecurity, lack of self-confidence
- Presence of step-father or step-mother:
- Over-protection of parents
- Discriminatory treatment towards children
- Very high ideals of parents:
- Broken homes
- Neighborhood
- Bad companionship
- Too much effect of media (TV, Internet) leading to fantasy and day dreaming .
- **Uncongenial school atmosphere: this includes**
 - Unpsychological and inefficient methods of teaching
 - Unsympathetic and harsh attitude of the teacher or strict discipline
 - too much home work.
 - Frustrated and maladjusted teachers.
 - Difficult courses
 - Lack of recreational or co-curricular activities
 - Too much competition in the school.

Development of Good mental Health

A). Methods which can be adopted by Parents:

- 1) Sympathetic and affectionate attitude
- 3) No over protection or under protection
- 4) Democratic attitude
5. No too much anxiety
6. Building self-confidence
7. Meeting legitimate needs
8. Providing guidance

A). Methods which can be adopted by schools

1) Pupil-centred education: Efficient and pupil centered teaching methods such as **Co-operative method learning , Project method, Play way method** etc can be used. appropriate use of **teaching aids** and new technology should be done. Psychological maxims of learning should be followed.

2. Congenial school environment, can be provided by ensuring

- Inclusive education
- democratic discipline
- Freedom of expression
- Health and physical education
- Sex education
- Readings for mental health
- Balanced home assignment
- Formation of good habits

- Checking unhealthy competitions
- **Guidance services:** Providing educational, vocational and personal Guidance services time to time
- **To avoid the use of defense mechanisms:** Check the use defense mechanisms and encourage the students to express their emotions naturally. it means that the emotional or impulsive energy gets a release in a natural manner. It is neither redirected nor sublimated.
- Religious and moral education
- Including regular prayer, Yoga, and Meditation in daily time table.
- **Multidimensionality of curriculum:** Improvement and enrichment of the curriculum by including different types of activities and competitions based over **multiple intelligence**. It will help in catering needs of all the students.
- **Proper recording.** Maintaining cumulative record card (**CRC**), and case studies of students and referring of these records whenever required,
- **Ensure predictability.** Checking unpredictability by well planned weekly time tables and year planner
- **Family, community and service partnerships: Parent Teacher Meetings.** organized weakly, or twice in a month and whenever required can help by:
 - 1.. Proactively building connections with families and communities
 2. Recognizing the primary role of families in children and young people's learning and development, mental health and wellbeing.
 3. Supporting families to enhance their skills in developing positive relationships and their children's resilience
 4. Identifying children and young people who may be at risk of developing mental illness, engage their families and refer to appropriate early interventions

- **Improving mental health of the teachers.** This can be done by improving their economic status, and providing facilities and congenial environment and freedom of expression and decision. Teacher should himself possess emotional stability. He should have love for children, missionary zeal and patience. Modern teachers need to develop following competencies.

- 1) understanding children's social and emotional development
- 2) teaching and facilitating social and emotional learning
- 3.promoting positive behavior
- 4.listening and facilitation skills
- 5.understanding and promoting diversity
- 6.social and emotional awareness.

- **Organization of Regular medical examination by experts in this field in severe cases.**

C). Methods which can be adopted by State and social agencies

- Recognizing Good schools with respect to infrastructure and human resources
- Free education
- Eliminating evil influences
- Homely environment to illegitimate children
- Opening reformative agencies
- Recruitment of mentally healthy teachers
- Integrated Mental Health Promotion and Planning

This includes:

- integrating health promotion actions into teaching and learning, recreation and management processes
- School and early childhood education staff be supported to have the appropriate knowledge, skills and attitudes to promote mental health.
- have strategies to promote positive and responsible behaviour, and to prevent and respond to bullying, discrimination and harassment, including through the use of digital technologies.

Functions of mental health programmes and services in School

- Keeps issues from affecting emotional, academic, or physical development. Provides relief from symptoms earlier rather than later
- Can prevent long-term problems.
- Improves academic performance and personal relationships with family and friends
- **Identification of** Children with behavioral and emotional health
- **Assessment:** Interviews and Evidence Based Evaluations.
- **Intervention:** Individual, Group, Family Therapies; and Psychiatric Evaluations.
 - **Consultation:** With parents, teachers and providing crisis interventions.
 - **Facilitation:** Hospitalizations and Specialty Care
 - **Training:** Parent and Teacher trainings on mental health issues
 - Easy access for mental health services in communities where services are scarce.
 - Removes the stigma for mental health services.
 - Having programs on site allows teachers to spend more time on teaching
 - Fewer discipline problems school-wide and distraction from class work .

Importance of mental Health Education:

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in the US, suicide is the third highest cause of death for those between the ages of 15 and 24, and the second-highest for 25- to 34-year-olds. In Great Britain, the charity MentalHealth.org.uk reports that one in 10 children between the ages of one and 15 have a mental health disorder.

So there is the great importance of mental health education

1. It enhances all round development of a child by Improving
 - a) Physical, Intellectual, Emotional, Social, Aesthetic and Moral development.

Development in all such dimensions leads to ideal **Integrated personality**

2. Adequate adjustment with one own self and with environment.
3. Realization of goals
4. Prevention of mental disorders
5. Progress of society

Conclusions:

Mental health education is the need of the hour and the school can play a dynamic role in mental hygiene of students and staff. There is a need to change the prevailing education system. It should be broad based, inclusive and multidimensional. School-Based Mental Health Program offers a variety of services targeting those students who have emotional and behavioral difficulties in general education. The program oversees collaborations and initiatives with mental health agencies, hospitals, that treat, prevent and educate students and their families dealing with mental health issues that impede academic achievement.

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