



EDUCATION FOR MENTAL HEALTH

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Abstract

From Bhagvatgeeta, “Your mind is your great friend if you control it but, your mind is your greatest enemy if it controls you.”

As you know 21st century marked the era of globalization. The biggest challenge of this century is to develop the human beings who are competitive, effective, productive and capable of achieving excellence in international arena.

For the realization of success and to attain excellence in all walks of life the role of education in mental health is to keep one’s mind calm and quiet by various techniques. Selection and achievement of goal is the most important objective of life .It is the most difficult decision for the students whose mind is always wavering due to various environmental influences. However it is the practice of yoga that gives the technique of meditation to concentrate on the goal. To achieve the goal the path should be right and holistic.

Introduction:

“Conquer your own mind before conquering anything else” is the Indian message which if implemented religiously, will prove to be the ‘Indian key’ to the most desirable state of health. Almost every enlightened soul of India has given this message, the secret that opens the gate to the treasure of ‘Good health’.

According to Gandhiji 'Education means all round drawing out of the best in man-body, mind and spirit.' This means education should bring all round development of a human being at all levels of physical, mental and spiritual background.

As 21st century marked the era of globalization, in this converging international society there is a cut throat competition in all walks of life related to social, cultural, business, education, sports and governance etc. which creates indirect pressure on every level of students particularly in teenage students who shows a rapid physical transitions from a child to pre adolescence and from pre-adolescence to adolescence phase.

Children are often ill equipped to cope up with stress during this period .Success of academics does not mean only a goal achievement. Developing a balanced personality through education is the main aim of education. Practicing yoga , sports, listening music, healthy communication are some of the techniques for developing societal, personal, physical, mental and spiritual capabilities. Therefore the biggest challenge will be to develop the human being who should be competitive, effective, productive and capable of achieving excellence in international arena. For the realization of success and attain excellence in all endeavors there is a need of implementation of various techniques which should develop a individual who is capable of performing in all areas under all circumstances.

Role of education in mental health:

If the person in the society is healthy then that society is healthy. If the child inculcates good habits, he will grow up as a good healthy person. Physical health and mental health are the two sides of a coin. Physical health deals with the physical fitness. If the organs of the body are healthy then the whole body is healthy. A few days of exercise and a few days of good food will not make the person healthy. On the contrary regular correct exercise, balanced, nutritious diet and enough rest are necessary for good physical health.

Mental health is considered as the stability of mind. It is said that thought and actions go hand in hand. The mind thinks and body acts accordingly. Mental health means the ability of an individual to make personal and social adjustments. A mentally healthy person feels comfortable about him, is able to meet demands of his life and is able to take his own decision.

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.’

Aims and purposes of mental hygiene:

Mental hygiene does not merely limit itself to prevention and treatment of mental disorders or illness. It takes all the care for the preservation and promotion of mental health of the organism. Mental health has three aspects, namely the preventive, preservative and the curative approach.

1. Preventive phase-

- To list various causes of maladjustment personal as well as social.
- To furnish the knowledge of drives, needs, motives, conflicts of motives, frustrations and tensions etc.
- To suggest ways and means of achieving emotional and social adjustments.
- To suggest the solution for the inner conflicts and frustration.

2. Preserving and promoting phase-

- Developing total potentialities of an individual.
- Attaining emotional maturity and stability.
- Achieving personal and social security as well as adequacy.
- Developing healthy human relationships and group interaction.
- Helping an individual in acquiring sound body and normal mental health.

3. Treatment and curative phase-

- To furnish necessary knowledge regarding types of mental illness, disorders and diseases.
- To suggest various forms of therapy for the treatment and curing of specific mental illness and disorders.
- To suggest means for the rehabilitation and readjustment, the maladjusted and mentally ill persons.

Characteristics of a mentally healthy individual:

Mentally healthy persons acquire certain essential abilities and capacities that are helpful in developing them as socially adequate and emotionally stable, well balanced personalities.

From ‘Shaffer and Shoben’ ‘the ultimate aim of mental health is to assist every individual in the attainment of fuller, happier, more harmonious and more effective existence’.

A mentally healthy person shows following characteristics –

- Knows his strengths and weaknesses.
- Ability to change according to circumstances and situations.
- Emotionally mature and stable.
- Thinks independently and takes proper decision.
- Possess enough courage and power of tolerance.
- Socially adjustable.
- Possess adequate sense of belongingness and loyalty.
- Free from undesirable mental disturbance.
- Punctual, self confident and optimist.
- Adequate sex adjustment.
- Satisfied with his profession.
- Possesses socially desirable healthy interests and aptitudes.
- Shows well balanced life of work, rest and recreation
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Factors responsible for poor mental health-

They are divided into three main categories- 1. Hereditary factors
2. Physiological factors 3. Environmental factors

1. Hereditary factors-

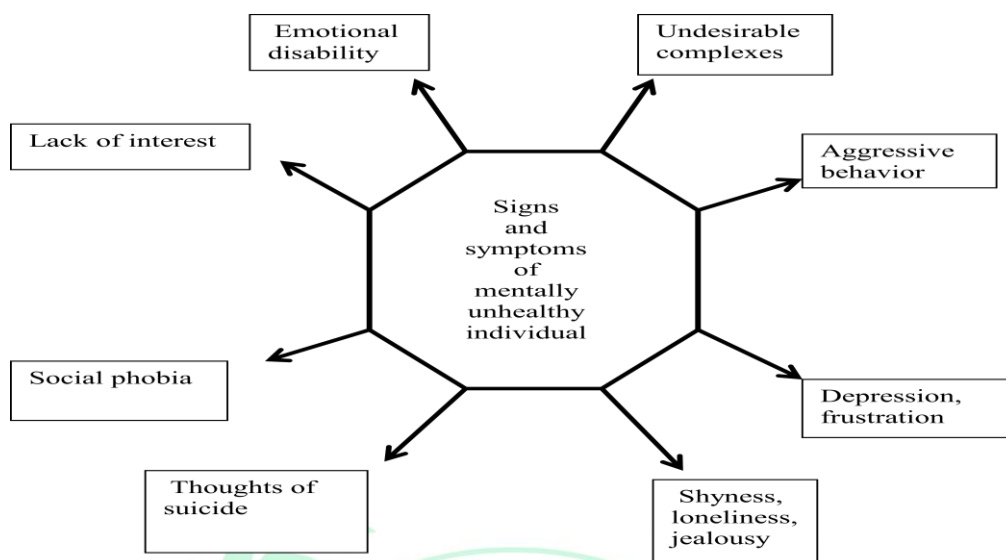
- a. Intellectual abilities.
- b. Physiological structure and appearance.

2. Physiological factors-

- a. Poor health
- b. Physical defects
- c. Mental diseases and disorders

3. Environmental factors (includes family, school and society)-

- a. Family atmosphere.
- b. Parental high expectations.
- c. Abused or deprived childhood
- d. Peer group relationships



Under such uncongenial and improper conditions children's basic needs are not satisfied. They do not get adequate safety and security, love and affection, acceptance and recognition for their proper adjustment and development and consequently develop inferiority feelings, unusual conflicts, anxieties and complexes that lead them to mental disorders.

School and teachers should do the following for the proper mental health of children-

Though the maintenance of proper mental health of children is not entirely the responsibility of the school and the teacher, yet they are supposed to play a significant role in helping their students in the maintenance of proper mental health.

The following measures may be found fruitful in this task-

1. Good physical health-

A sound body is said to possess a sound mind.

Programs-

- i. Regular physical exercise
- ii. Proper healthy habits
- iii. Balanced diet

2. Proper emotional development-

The student should learn to exercise control over their emotions and to express them in a socially desirable way.

Programs- 1. Meditation 2. Balanced nutritious diet 3. Reading of motivational books

3. Proper social relationship and acceptance-

A child must be accepted and admired by the group; rejection of a child by the group is very insulting.

Programs- 1. Group activities 2. Celebrating festivals together 3. Arranging get-together

4. Proper level of aspiration-

Student's interests, aptitudes, strengths and limitations should be known to them so that they should set a proper level of aspirations for themselves.

Programs: 1. Aptitude tests 2. Analyze critically 3. Prepare for proper adjustment

4. Positive behavior

5. No emphasis on perfection-

Students should keep in mind that complete perfection is an ideal. Teachers should know the importance of individual differences.

Programs- 1. Training should be given according to their interests and skills.

6. Checking unhealthy competitions-

Unhealthy competitions make children uneasy and perturbed. In the blind race of excelling others children lose their patience and presence of mind.

7. To avoid use of defense mechanism-

Children may often use defense mechanism to protect themselves from failures and frustrations. It leads them to serious mental conflicts and disorders. Therefore children should be helped to develop proper patience and power of tolerance to face the failures and frustrations in life.

8. Appropriate homework –

Teacher should assign the homework with great care. It should always suit the abilities and capacities of the students.

9. Freedom and self discipline-

Teachers should seldom use corporal and capital punishments in maintaining discipline. He should encourage self discipline on the democratic lines.

11. Sex education-

Sexual adjustment of the student is also great necessity in secondary schools for realization of their proper mental health. Therefore provision should be made for imparting adequate sex education to them.

12. Religious and moral education-

Loss of moral and spiritual values results in dishonesty, corruption, fighting which creates mental conflicts. So school must have provisions for balanced religious and moral education.

13. Need of proper guidance services-

In school there must be an adequate provision for guiding and helping children in their day to day problems.

14. Efficient methods of teaching-

Sometimes the improper teaching techniques and methods brings dissatisfaction and tensions in the minds of children so it should be planned according to the abilities and the capacities of the students.

15. Improvement and enrichment of the curriculum-

The attempts should be made to bring desirable changes and modifications in the existing curriculum.

16. Mental health of teacher- Teachers cannot be expected to improve the mental health of their students unless their own mental healths are sound.

17. Coping with stress-

Adequate provision for the proper outlet of emotional energy and creative artistic expression in the form of curricular activities brings positive results in helping children the acquisition of proper mental health.

Programs-

1. Practice of yoga
2. Sports
3. Listening music
4. Creative activities
5. Healthy communication
6. Parent-teachers get-together

Behavior of the teacher –

Teachers are said to be the second parents. So their behavior must be sympathetic. They must not play dictatorial role. Teachers must possess consistency in their behavior.

Actually as emphasized in the beginning the maintenance of proper mental health of children is a gigantic problem that needs all round efforts. The cooperation of state government, parents and other responsible members of the society is an urgent necessity to achieve success at this point. Uncongenial atmosphere at home and in social situations brings harmful impact on the tender minds of children. Therefore parents should be taken into confidence for achieving mental health of their children. State can also provide some financial support to the parents or schools for upbringing of children. Establishment of Child Guidance Clinics and some welfare organizations may also serve the purpose in the direction.

Occasional visits of psychiatrist and mental experts to schools may also bring desirable results. In this way the problem of maintaining proper mental health of children should be tackled from all the possible sources and measures.

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