

LIFE SKILL EDUCATION FOR YOUTH

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Abstract

Our education system, as is prevalent today, is rather lopsided. It lays optimum focus on the acquisition of knowledge even at an expense of skills, attitudes and values. Living as we do a sophisticated life style in a sophisticated society, what we require is nothing short of a sophisticated mode of education. Knowledge in itself has little value unless it is put to use. We need today, among other things, life skills in a big way rather than were memorization of information. Life skills are skills, strengths and capabilities that help individuals face problems of their everyday life with a positive attitude and go about with their everyday tasks effectively. Life skills education would place us on the highway to growth and development, in the process, enabling us to lead our lives as effectively and efficiently as possible. The word Life Skills has come to be popularly used in the context of emerging health issues for young people in different parts of the world.



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Life skills are abilities for adaptive and positive behavior that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life (WHO). It transforms knowledge into positive behavior."

"Adolescent is a phase where rapid physical & physiological changes take place with significant influence on physiological and sexual behavior. These are the years when an individual is vulnerable to negative peer pressure, risk taking, experimentation and misinformed decision making relating to their behavior and sexuality, which not only affects the self development of the individual but also the family and the society."

Life skills enable individuals to translate knowledge, attitudes and values into actual abilities - i.e. "What to do and how to do it". Life skills are abilities that enable individuals to behave in healthy ways, given the desire to do so and given the scope and opportunity to-do so.

Life skills have been defined by the World Health Organization (WHO) as “abilities for adaptive and positive behavior that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life”. They represent the psycho-social skills that determine valued behavior and include reflective skills such as problem-solving and critical thinking, to personal skills such as self-awareness, and to interpersonal skills. Practicing life skills leads to qualities such as self-esteem, sociability and tolerance, to action competencies to take action and generate change, and to capabilities to have the freedom to decide what to do and

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who to be. Life skills are thus distinctly different from physical or perceptual motor skills, such as practical or health skills, as well as from livelihood skills, such as crafts, money management and entrepreneurial skills . Health and livelihood education however, can be designed to be complementary to life skills education, and vice versa.

Core Life Skills

Life Skills are abilities for adaptive and positive behavior that enables individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life - (WHO).

➤ **Self Awareness**

Self Awareness includes our recognition of ourselves, of our character, of our strengths and weaknesses, desires and dislikes. Developing self-awareness can help us to recognize when we are stressed or feel under pressure. It is also often a prerequisite for effective communication and interpersonal relations, as well as for developing empathy for others.

➤ **Empathy**

Empathy is the ability to imagine what life is like for another person, even in situation that we may not be familiar with. Empathy can help us to understand and accept others who may be very different from ourselves, which can improve social interactions, for example, in situations of ethnic or cultural diversity. Empathy can also help to encourage nurturing behavior towards people in need of care and assistance.

➤ **Effective Communication**

Effective Communication is an ability to express ourselves both verbally and non-verbally in an appropriate way in relation to our cultures and situations. This means being able to express desires, opinions, and fears and seek assistance and advice in times of need.

➤ **Interpersonal Relationship**

Interpersonal Relationship Skills are skills that helps us to understand our relations with others and relate in a positive/reciprocal manner with them. It helps us to maintain relationship with friends and family members which are an important source of social support and also be able to end relationships constructively. It may mean being able to make and keep friendly relationships, which can be of great importance to our mental and social well-being.

➤ **Creative Thinking**

Creative Thinking contributes to both decision making and problem solving by enabling us to explore the available alternatives and various consequences of our actions or non-action. It helps us to look beyond our direct experience, and even if no problem is identified, or no decision is to be made, creative thinking can help us to respond adaptively and with flexibility to the situations of our daily lives. It adds novelty and flexibility to the situation of our daily life.

➤ **Critical Thinking**

Critical Thinking is an ability to analyze information and experiences in an objective manner. Critical thinking can contribute to health by helping us to recognize and assess the factors that influence attitudes and behavior, such as values, peer pressure, and the media.

➤ **Problem Solving**

Problem Solving enables us to deal constructively with problems in our lives. Significant problems that are left unresolved can cause mental stress and give rise to accompanying physical strain. This is having made decisions about each of the options, choosing the one which is the best suited, following it through the process again till a positive outcome of the problem is achieved.

➤ **Decision Making**

Decision Making helps us to deal constructively with decisions about our lives. It is the process of making assessment of an issue by considering all possible/available options and the effects different decision might have on us.

➤ **Dealing with Emotion**

Dealing with Emotion is an ability, which involves recognizing emotions in others, and ourselves, being aware of how emotions influence behaviors and being able to respond to emotions appropriately. Intense emotions, like anger or sorrow can have negative effects on our health if we do not react appropriately.

➤ **Coping with Stress**

Coping with Stress is an ability to recognize the source of stress in our lives, its effect on us and acting in ways that help to control our levels of stress. This may involve taking action to reduce some stress for example changes in physical environment, life styles, learning to relax etc.

IMPORTANCE OF LIFE SKILLS EDUCATION

Where life skills education is well developed and practiced, it enhances the well being of a society and promote positive outlook and healthy behavior. In particular, it enables the individual to:

- translate knowledge, attitude, skills and values into action;
- behave responsibly and this leads to healthy living;
- develop positive attitude towards themselves and others;
- develop full potential;
- promote the state of mental well being as this motivates them and others;
- promote risk free behavior;
- communicate effectively;
- develop negotiation skills;
- improve self perception by:
 - building self confidence
 - building self esteem
 - building self worth

Life Skills Education has long term benefits to the society. These include educational, social, health, cultural and economic benefits.

❖ Educational benefits

- Strengthens teacher pupil relationship
- Leads to desirable behavior change
- Improves discipline in schools
- Reduces learner problems such as truancy, absenteeism drug and substance abuse and teenage pregnancies
- Helps learners to improve their performance

❖ Social Benefits

- Improves the socialization process among learners such as relating to others in a friendly way
- Enables learners to choose good and reliable friends
- Helps learners to use their leisure time properly
- assists learners to recognize and avoid risky situations

- Bring about meaningful interaction among learners, teachers and the school community
- Helps in character building.

❖ **Health Benefits**

- Leads to prevention and control of diseases such as STIs, HIV and AIDS
- Contributes to a person's general well being (physical, mental, emotional and social)
- Leads to less strain on health facilities
- Helps people to be responsible for their own and other people's health

❖ **Cultural Benefits**

- Enables people to adopt and maintain meaningful cultural practices and avoid practices that may put self and others at risk
- Promotes harmonious interaction between people of different cultures
- Helps in the clarification of values in the society

❖ **Economic Benefits**

- It leads to high productivity due to a motivated, strong and energetic labor force
- Savings are increased as money used e.g. on management and control of HIV and AIDS can be invested elsewhere. Resources such as time and money are saved as learners acquire skills to manage themselves and their environment.
 - rehabilitation of drug and substance abuses
 - repair of damaged property
 - buy teaching learning resources

Life Skills Education at School level

CBSE after eight years research introduced "Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation" at IX & X class during 2010 with grading system. The CCE is school based evaluation of students that covers all aspects of student's development. The evaluation and assessment is based on various areas as described as :

- Life Skills (Thinking Skills, Social Skills and Emotional Skills) &
- Attitudes and values (towards Teacher, School mates, School Activities, Environment & Value system).

Life Skills Education at Graduate and Post graduate level

The Life Skills Education at Degree level is of great utility and therefore Institutes having Professional & Non professional courses are providing the “Life Skills (soft Skills) Education” training in Personality Development Programme (PDP) with the objective of overall grooming of students in Social, Public & Private sector, their own development for functional capabilities and also their responsibility towards nation building. The Institutes are in acute demand of Life Skills / Soft Skills Trainers to carry on in house Personality Development Programme.

References

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