

Mental Health and Happiness in Life

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Abstract

The tremendous and accelerating advances of modern science and technology have led to unprecedented progress and unprecedented problems. Wherever we look, we see the world changing with incredible rapidity and established customs, traditions and values changing with it. Indeed, one of the major problems today is the constant adjustment individuals must keep making to rapidly changing conditions and to change itself. For efficient functioning of the individual, he should not only possess sound bodily health but sound mental health also. But, unfortunately, it is startling to note that mental illness incapacitates more people than all other health problems together. Not only have mental health hazards significantly increased in number and complexity, but these have also affected the physical efficiency of individuals. So mental health is now recognized as an important aspect of an individual's total development and happiness in life.

Key words Mental Health, Happiness

Introduction

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The Concept of Mental Health

Mental health is the ability to make wholesome personal and social adjustment.

According to Hadifield, *mental health is the full and harmonious functioning of the whole personality.*

Cutts and Moseley defines mental health as *the ability to adjust satisfactorily to the various strains of the environment we meet in life and mental hygiene is the means we take to assure this adjustment.*

It is the developing capacity of the individual to form harmonious relations with others and contribute constructively to changes in his social and physical environment.

Mental health and education are closely related with each other. For any type of education, sound mental health is the first condition. If children are not in sound mental health, they cannot concentrate in learning and retain the knowledge received in the classroom. Learning is dependent on sound mental health. Healthy children have a desire to acquire more and more information and skills that will give them better control over their environment. So mental health is essential to the learning process as intelligence.

A mentally healthy individual possesses the following characteristics:

1. A mentally healthy person possesses socially adaptable behaviour.
2. He is emotionally satisfied and possesses a resilient mind.
3. His desires are in harmony with socially approved norms.
4. He possesses good habits and constructive attitudes.
5. He is capable of making decisions, assuming responsibilities in accordance with his capacities.
6. He is self confident, adequate, and free from internal conflicts, tensions or inconsistencies in his behaviour.
7. He is able to adapt successfully to the changing needs and demands of the environment.

Everyone in this world has to face a wide variety of problems from birth to death. Irrespective of our background, we have been encountering several challenges in our life. We can confidently assert that nobody is free from the clutches of stress and strain. In spite of all these difficult circumstances, we do find some of us are happy and contented and others not so happy and dissatisfied with various facts of life. This difference we can find among housewives, school children, college students, agricultural workers, land owners, industrial workers, executives, retired people, businessman and all other categories of human beings. What makes the difference? We need to know the sources of happiness. What are the guidelines for happy life?

The answer lies in our ancient wisdom and modern scientific researches in the field of mental health. Researchers have focused on well adjusted people, 'subjective well being', progressive outlooks and allied aspects of happiness. The following are the pith of mental health related to happy living. If one could follow these guidelines, he/she is found to be happy in this world in spite of innumerable problems,

struggles, uncertainties and what not. Let us understand the ways and means of achieving happiness. The better one's physical fitness, the greater is the likelihood that one will have the initiative and energy to achieve mental health. 'A sound mind in a sound body'. The following three factors need to be given importance.

- a. The quality of body movement or motor fitness - as measured by flexibility, agility, strength, power, endurance, co-ordination, speed & accuracy.
- b. The exterior dimensions and state of the body or physique- as determined by size or dimension (height, weight, chest width) body type (linear, muscular or stocky build) body posture and body fat.
- c. The organic functional state of the body as determined by the ability, of the individual to undergo endurance, such as running & swimming.

Healthy food habits, adequate sleep suitable physical exercises, yoga / meditation, early treatment of illnesses, immunisations etc would be helpful to maintain our physical health which in turn, is the basis of happiness. The value of health is always recognised only when one is ill or disabled. Let us develop healthy life styles to maintain our health.

- **The better one understands the reasons for goals of one's own conduct, the greater will be the control exercised over mental health process and interactions.**

In this world, most of us are interested to know about others rather than about ourselves. In this process one tends to compare with others continuously -resulting in feeling of inadequacy, inferiority and jealousy. In order to be happy, we need to examine ourselves in such a way that we become aware of our good/positive, as well as bad/negative qualities, strengths and weaknesses. No individual is full of strength only; likewise no individual is full of weakness only. The proportion in us need to be recognised by self understanding and we need to strengthen the positive qualities and strive to overcome the negative qualities as much as possible.

- **One's happiness is enhanced by improvement of one's relationship with others. Happiness consists in right human relationship.**

Let us recognise the fact that we need to develop meaningful relationships with our family members, neighbours, friends, colleagues and others in the society. Healthy relationships offer real strength to our happiness. Harmonious relationship increases our well being, whereas disharmony in relationship decreases the feelings of satisfaction with life. It is possible for everybody to develop new

healthy relationships and strengthen the existing relationships. They play a vital role intensifying happiness and preventing many stresses and strains.

- **Having a confidential relationship with other person selected friend, counsellor and relative adds to the probability that one can establish and maintain the perspectives on his own problems that are essential to happiness.**

It is scientifically proved that one of the effective ways of coping with day by day tension is to share with others. Talk it out 'sharing of the problems with others whom one has confidence is a very healthy way. If problems are suppressed they accumulate everyday, ultimately resulting in problems the psychogenic headache, asthma, arthritis, ulcers and other psychosomatic problems. The effects of 'catharsis confession', 'self disclosures' and 'ventilation' are made use in psychotherapy and group therapies in dealing with even severe problems. But in selecting the person with whom one shares his problems, one should be very careful. It cannot be done with anybody and everybody. It could be a professionally trained counsellor or good friend or life partner, or a well wisher, in whom one has confidence.

- **The view one takes of problems, situations and dilemmas is often as important as are the actual objective events.**

Two students fail in the examination. One gets depressed, withdrawn, loses hope in life and tries to commit suicide. Other tries to analyse the reasons for failure and takes necessary steps to pass in the next examination. What does it show? The problems do not affect us much, but the view or the perception about problems determine our reactions and disturbances. An optimistic outlook is highly helpful in overcoming several problems in our life. If one has pessimistic approach, it is difficult to be happy in any part of the world. What is required in our life is neither too much optimism nor too much pessimism but a realistic optimism. This attitude will positively change our life to a great extent.

- **Worry and anxiety may be reduced by careful assessment of the current situation, by examination and possible revision of goals and by devises more appropriate plans.**

Failures and disappointments are usually caused by unrealistic high expectations inadequate efforts or plans. So by analysing the present situation, it is possible to understand the reasons for success & failure. Many a time our goals needs to be phased out, or revised to suit our capacities. It is equally important, we plan our efforts adequately to reach the goals.

- **Increasingly as one approaches maturity, a genuine sense of security derives from developed skills which enables one to meet and solve problems.**

This emphasizes the value of experience. As we experience more in this world, we tend to know more about the problems as well as problem solving strategies. As a result, we develop confidence in ourselves, self esteem increases and we feel secure in our life. Everything cannot be achieved overnight. The element of time is very important. Aging has its own advantages especially when it provides a rich and wide experience.

- **A happy life will be more readily achieved when there is an appropriately balanced schedule consisting of both work and play.**

All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy. Involvement in one's work is very important. But one need not become addicted to work. It is as bad as addiction to alcohol and drugs. Likewise, we should not spend all our time in recreations. A proportionate mixture of work and recreation lead to happiness. Neither should be 'workaholics'; nor 'idlers'. Let us be responsible individuals with adequate outlets like games, hobbies, outings and other interests.

- **While planning for the future is a part of progressive man's opportunity, happiness is fortified by giving major attention to the present situation.**

Let us focus on what we can do to feel comfortable and keep others comfortable too. If we can look after the 'present' the future will become alright. Plans need to be translated into concrete actions, procrastination leads to unhappiness whereas, positive action results in happiness. Thinking and doing should be together for happy life.

- **One tends to see what he looks for and the zest for living can be increased by one's tuning into the humour which resides in daily situations.**

Let us try to be humorous. 'Smile costs nothing'. Let us develop the habit of enjoying jokes and sharing jokes with others. Humour in life is very precious for happy life. We should not miss it by any chance. First, let us try to laugh to ourselves, our absent mindedness, inaccuracies etc. Let us try to laugh to ourselves, our absent mindedness inaccuracies etc. Let the jokes be harmless to anybody.

- **One should instead of expecting perfection in himself learn to be satisfied with doing the best he can at any given time.**

Being perfect in all activities is an impossible task in this world. More one tries to be perfect, more he gets into problems. 100% perfection is not a reality. If we aim at such perfection, he will never be able

to initiate or complete any activity. What one can do is to use best of one's attitudes/skills. If it is not resulting in perfection, it does not matter much. An attitude of perfectionism leads to problems of infinite varieties, frustrations, hostility, aggressions, disrespect etc.

- **One approach to human affiliation which is essential to happiness is to capitalise on the values and aspirations of religion of love.**

All the religious emphasizes the importance or love. Rarely do we practice this concept in our life. More one develops feelings of love to others, more could become humane, helpful, understanding honest and sincere. Hatred causes may problems in our day-to-day life. A mind with negative thoughts hinders happy life in this world. Love enriches our lives - links us with spiritual forces. The essence of spiritual aspect love.

- **The person who is able to enjoy the ordinary occurrences of daily living tends to be substantially above average in happiness.**

Happiness can never be bought. it is available in plenty. It is left to the individual to pick it up. Many of the ordinary occurrences are matters of joy and happiness. One can enjoy the nature, sunrise, sunset, water, trees, rain, plants, flowers, mist, playful children, pet animals and so on so forth. In our preoccupation with various things, we ignore such colourful events in our life.

Nobody can follow all these principles of happiness – at least let us choose some which are practical and try to practice them. One can see the difference in the life. The world cannot be changed. But we can change ourselves to make us happy in this world. It is the firm belief if the ancient wisdom as well as modern researches on mental health that by following these guidelines one could be happy and also make others happy. Thus happy living in this world is a reality. Let us achieve it in systematic ways. By achieving these healthy ways of life, it is possible to be happy and prevent many problems and also cope with any type of problems we encounter in course of our life.

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