

PSYCHOLOGICAL BASIS OF GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING

Diploma in Psychological Guidance and Counselling
Paper-I

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FOREWORD

Since its establishment in 1976, Acharya Nagarjuna University has been forging ahead in the path of progress and dynamism, offering a variety of courses and research contributions. I am extremely happy that by gaining 'A' grade from the NAAC in the year 2016, Acharya Nagarjuna University is offering educational opportunities at the UG, PG levels apart from research degrees to students from over 443 affiliated colleges spread over the two districts of Guntur and Prakasam.

The University has also started the Centre for Distance Education in 2003-04 with the aim of taking higher education to the door step of all the sectors of the society. The centre will be a great help to those who cannot join in colleges, those who cannot afford the exorbitant fees as regular students, and even to housewives desirous of pursuing higher studies. Acharya Nagarjuna University has started offering B.A., and B.Com courses at the Degree level and M.A., M.Com., M.Sc., M.B.A., and L.L.M., courses at the PG level from the academic year 2003-2004 onwards.

To facilitate easier understanding by students studying through the distance mode, these self-instruction materials have been prepared by eminent and experienced teachers. The lessons have been drafted with great care and expertise in the stipulated time by these teachers. Constructive ideas and scholarly suggestions are welcome from students and teachers involved respectively. Such ideas will be incorporated for the greater efficacy of this distance mode of education. For clarification of doubts and feedback, weekly classes and contact classes will be arranged at the UG and PG levels respectively.

It is my aim that students getting higher education through the Centre for Distance Education should improve their qualification, have better employment opportunities and in turn be part of country's progress. It is my fond desire that in the years to come, the Centre for Distance Education will go from strength to strength in the form of new courses and by catering to larger number of people. My congratulations to all the Directors, Academic Coordinators, Editors and Lesson- writers of the Centre who have helped in these endeavours.

*Prof. P. Raja Sekhar
Vice-Chancellor
Acharya Nagarjuna University*

SYLLABUS

DDGC01: PSYCHOLOGICAL BASIS OF GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING

PAPER - I

Unit-I - Definition, nature, function, importance, and limitations of guidance and counseling, Difference between guidance, counseling, and psychotherapy.

Unit-II - Organizational needs of guidance services – Areas of guidance.

Unit-III - Parenting, career guidance and counseling.

Unit-IV - Positive psychology – Introduction, life skills enhancing pleasure, engagement and meaning.

Unit-V - Human virtues guidance – Cognitive focused Approach - Creativity, mindfulness, optimism, Self efficacy – Interpersonal approach – Relationship connections, companion, forgiveness, love, empathy, altruism.

LESSON -1: DEFINITION, NATURE FUNCTIONS, IMPORTANCE, LIMITATIONS OF GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING

OBJECTIVES

- To introduce the concept of guidance and counselling.
- To discuss its nature
- Layout the various functions and importance of guidance and counselling
- List out the limitations of guidance and counselling.

STRUCTURE

- 1.1 Introduction
- 1.2 Definition and Nature of Guidance and Counseling
- 1.3 Functions of Guidance and Counseling
- 1.4 Importance of Guidance and Counseling
- 1.5 Limitations of Guidance and Counseling
- 1.6 Summing Up
- 1.7 Model Exam Questions
- 1.8 Suggested Readings

INTRODUCTION

'Counselling' has acquired different shades of meaning. This difficulty is due to the confusion between popular understanding of the term and technical and professional meanings of it. To counsel is to advise. Individuals seek advice in a variety of situations. It is evident that from the earliest times man has turned to his fellow beings for advice, encouragement, sympathy, comfort and understanding. He has been able to survive his hostile and hazardous environment only because of the innate concern of his fellow beings for him.

The goal of counselling is to help individuals overcome many of their future problems. In recent times, rapid social change caused by industrialisation, urbanisation and globalisation has led to varied and perplexing problems. For most people the pace of change is simply too fast and creates serious problems of adjustment. This means that counselling and

guidance should start early in school and should continue in order to enable individuals to meet vocational and personal problems of adjustment in later life. Naturally, counselling has to minister to a variety of problems, such as educational, vocational, marital, parental and personal.

Parents, teachers, friends, ministers, doctors, nurses, social workers, personnel officers, lawyers as well as a host of other people give counsel. Their purposes, methods and training vary enormously. Some give advice and some supply information. Some help the individual understand himself and his environment, to meet his needs and to deal with his problems effectively. Some are trained counsellors; others have had virtually no training. Nonetheless, all of them are concerned with helping people solve their various problems. Since problems can arise at any time in life, counselling must necessarily be a continuing process concerning persons of all age levels and placed in different life situations.

The major objective of all counselling is to help individuals become self-sufficient, self-dependent, self-directed and to adjust themselves efficiently to the demands of a better and meaningful life. Individuals are provided assistance to enhance their personal, social, emotional and intellectual development. Therefore, the counsellor's services are preventive, developmental and therapeutic in nature. In order to assist the clients, the counsellor must understand their needs, motives, perceptions, defenses, etc. In this sense, counselling could be defined as a therapeutic experience for otherwise reasonably healthy persons faced with problems. According to Carl Rogers, "Effective counselling consists of a definitely structured permissive relationship which allows the client to gain an understanding of himself to a degree which enables him to take positive steps in the light of his new orientation."

DEFINITION AND NATURE OF GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING

A popular definition is, "Counselling is an interactive process conjoining the counselee who needs assistance and the counsellor who is trained and educated to give this assistance". The counsellor can initiate, facilitate and maintain the interactive process if he communicates feelings of spontaneity and warmth, tolerance, respect and sincerity.

Smith (1955) defines counselling as "a process in which the counsellor assists the counselee to make interpretations of facts relating to a choice, plan or adjustments which he needs to make."

Counselling also has been defined as "a process which takes place in a one-to-one relationship between an individual beset by problems with which he cannot cope alone and a professional worker whose training and experience have qualified him to help others reach solutions to various types of personal difficulties" (Hahn and MacLean, 1955).

Pepinsky and Pepinsky (1954) state that counselling is that interaction which (1) occurs between two individuals called counsellor and client (2) takes place in a professional setting, and (3) is initiated and maintained to facilitate changes in the behavior of a client.

Patterson (1959) characterizes it as "the process involving interpersonal relationships between a therapist and one or more clients by which the former employs psychological methods based on systematic knowledge of the human personality in attempting to improve the mental health of the latter.

Blocher (1966) explains it as "helping an individual become aware of himself and the ways in which he is reacting to the behavioral influences of his environment. It further helps him to establish some personal meaning for this behavior and to develop and clarify a set of goals and values for future behaviour."

Rogers (1952) describes counselling as the process by which the structure of the self is relaxed in the safety of the client's relationship with the therapist, and previously denied experiences are perceived and then integrated into an altered self."

Several counsellors consider the definition given by Gustad (1953) very comprehensive statement indicating both the scope as well as the function of counselling. According to him, "Counselling is a learning oriented process, carried on in a simple, one-to-one social environment, in which the counsellor, professionally competent in relevant psychological skills and knowledge, seeks to assist the client, by methods appropriate to the latter's needs and within the context of the total personnel program, to learn how to put such understanding into effect in relation to more clearly perceived, realistically defined goals to the end that the client may become a happier and more productive member of society."

From a careful reading of the several definitions quoted above, it can be seen that the emphasis placed on the various aspects of counselling by different authors is not the same. The early concern was with cognitive factors, later this was widened to include the affective aspects as well. The counselling process was also viewed as a one-to-one process and in more recent years the relationship is increasingly becoming less restricted to a dyadic relationship and the scope is being widened to refer to more than one client.

Practically all the definitions concur with the view that counselling is a process which involves bringing about sequential changes over a period of time leading to a set goal. These definitions stress that the counsellor-counsee relationship is not casual, matter-of-fact and business-like but that it is characterized by warmth, responsiveness and understanding.

There are quite a few misconceptions regarding counselling. It would perhaps be useful to state that counselling is not, to help clarify our conception of it. Counselling is not:

1. Giving information though information may be given.
2. Giving advice, making suggestions and recommendations.

3. Influencing the client's values, attitudes, beliefs, interests, decisions etc., with or without any threat.
4. Interviewing clients.

Counselling is concerned with bringing about a voluntary change in the client. To this end, the counsellor provides facilities to help achieve the desired change or make the suitable choice. The client alone is responsible for the decisions or the choices he makes, though the counsellor may assist in this process by his warmth and understanding relationship.

Guidance

Guidance has been defined in many ways. While there are differences among them, there is broad agreement that the objective of guidance is essentially to render help. Sometimes it is used synonymously with the term counselling. But more often it is used with the preposition 'and', as in 'guidance and counselling'.

Guidance is the assistance given to individuals in making intelligent choices and adjustments. It is based on the conception that it is the duty and the right of every individual to choose his/her own way of life as long as his/her choice does not interfere with or infringe on the rights of others. It is based on the belief that the ability to make such (intelligent) choices is not innate but like other abilities must be developed. Every individual is potentially capable of achieving his goals. But from childhood he is continuously hampered by internal conflicts or external barriers. He has to learn to overcome the internal obstacles and free his latent creative power. This can eliminate wastage and destructiveness arising out of internal conflicts. The internal conflicts indicate that human beings are essentially emotional creatures. The intellect is only a minor portion of the total personality. Higher levels of achievement can be enormously enhanced by a constructive combination of feeling and intelligence.

The importance of this aspect of emotion and feeling has long been stressed by great thinkers and teachers. They have also emphasized the importance of developing appropriate attitudes towards society and its problems. One's likes and dislikes, one's longings and aversions really determine one's strivings and manner of progress. The truly

professional contribution to human welfare is in the area of emotion. The guidance counsellor has a unique opportunity to help clarify the role of emotions both in their positive and negative aspects. With this great potential, an individual can achieve within limits, whatever his perceptions of self, allow him to. He can rise to the challenge of becoming a productive person in the active process of fulfilment of potential for becoming – a life-long task.

Guidance is essentially a helping process that comprises providing material or non-material assistance to solve a problem which an individual may be facing at a given time. Although help from an external intervention or source may help overcome a problem here and now, however, it does not guarantee or obviate the occurrence of problems in future. Guidance in its psychological connotation is ore than mere provision of help for the solution of the problem on hand. It consists in helping the individual help himself without having to depend on others. In other words, it helps make the individual self-dependent and self-directed. The helping process, psychologically speaking, is broadly of two types:

1. It promotes the utilization of one's own potential;
2. It helps the onset of change in one's personality for desirable adjustment.

Guidance is concerned with the former, viz., helping to bring about the best possible utilization of the individual's capacities and the available environmental resources. Counselling is concerned with the latter, viz., change. Therapy is its goal. Personality change in a small or big way contributes to personality growth and development of the individual. Understanding the difference between change and utilization is important. A guidance counsellor helps facilitate educational and occupational choices. This can be explained as utilization of available capacities and resources rather than change in the individual's personality. On the other hand, when the client has a personality problem the aim is to bring about a change in the client. This is normally referred to as therapy. Of course, there is some ambiguity in the use of the term 'therapy'. In counselling, some kind of change is brought about in the client which is essentially therapeutic. It is commonly believed that therapy should aim at bringing about as much personality change as possible.

This notion owes its influence to psychoanalysis which has personality re-organisation as its goal.

In contrast, what is attempted in counselling is often a minimum change in personality. The guidance counsellor tries to help the counsellee discover for himself some blocked path, the clearance of which enables him to move forward. To be more specific, the change sought to be brought about through guidance is one direction rather than quantity. By facilitating a change, the direction is sought to be changed. The distinction to be borne in mind is that in psychopathology, the client's weaknesses are diagnosed and the necessary therapy made available. In guidance, however, the attempt is to discover the counsellee's strengths. A person who knows his real strengths can choose and act according to them, leading to healthy adjustment. Guidance helps the client discover his personality and decide how best he can use his assets and overcome the obstacles in his path.

Another important aspect in guidance is the manner in which the situation is structured for the client, taking into account his expectations and goals as well as the counsellor's. For example, an individual may be profoundly dissatisfied with life. He may really be looking for a good change. Therefore, what may be actually necessary is a small shift in direction rather than major changes. However, the client may not be satisfied with this suggestion. The counsellor has to persuade the client to discover for himself what his personality is like in terms of his interests, attitudes, etc., and decide for himself how he can overcome his obstacles and move forward.

The next important feature is the use of counselling relationship to reduce the client's anxiety. What the client needs is support, not shallow reassurance and encouragement of dependence. Support is the act of lending the counsellor's strength to the client to help him make the appropriate choices. The basic premise of this kind of help to be provided through guidance comes from the psychology of development and individual differences rather than from psychopathology and psychology of adjustment. The assumption is that there are many different ways of living and it would be best for the individual to make his own choices on the basis of knowledge of self and situation. He has to choose such that he can live life in his own way. Guidance thus has basic respect for the counsellee (unconditional self-regard)

and views the help he provides as enhancing the counsellee's freedom of choice, responsibility and commitment to his choice.

The guidance counsellor should have in his mind a model for guidance. Different guidance counsellors have different models depending on personality, preparation and goals. However, there are some common features. Allport outlined three common models of guidance:

1. The first views man as a 'reactive being'. In psychological terms, this could include naturalism, positivism, behaviorism, operationalism, physicalism – all included under scientific psychology.
2. The second model views man as a 'reactive being in depth'. This would include psychoanalysis, psychodynamics and the like. This view ignores the possibility of creative or cognitive development or transformed personhood.
3. The third model views man as a 'being-in-the-process-of-becoming'. This view is held by several theorists with different backgrounds. From the psychoanalytic tradition, Adler, Jung, Hartman, Horney, Erikson and Fromm have exposed this view. Goldstein, Maslow, Rogers, White and others emphasized this view as an essential characteristic of human nature. The guidance counsellor following this point of view strives to develop an attitude of tentativeness of outlook. Modern science has convincingly demonstrated that there is uncertainty in the phenomena of nature. If the growing individual cultivates the outlook of tentativeness, he can fearlessly and critically examine all dogmas – cultural, social, religious, etc., for what they are worth. It creates a positive view of the world and of one's own capacities. In this process, one may lose but also gain equally. Loss or gain can never be a matter of absolute certainty. William James stressed in the beginning of the present century how uncertain our foundation of values are. Like Cardinal Newman, James recognized the constructive power of commitment. Any ideal that leads to long-range constructive consequences is pragmatically true and psychologically sound. Tentativeness and commitment represent disintegrative and integrative aspects. A sound blend of these leads to an appropriate perspective. This can be helped to develop through guidance.

Guidance is a friendly concern to help an individual strive to develop a positive outlook.

The three models are important for guidance. The conception of man as a 'reactive being' may be explained in terms of stimulus and response ($S \rightarrow R$) behaviour. Different aspects in the environment stimulate the individual who responds to them. Understood in this way, a human being is no different from any other organism, simple or complex, which may be studied biologically. A few concepts and principles drawn from a careful study of organisms can explain any complex type of behaviour, including that of the human beings. The question, 'What does it mean to be a human being?' needs no special answer other than that a human being is a more complex organism and his behaviour reflects this complexity. It is predictable in principle as all behaviour can be explained in cause-and-effect relations. While the $S \rightarrow R$ position may explain most of human behaviour, it does not and cannot explain all of it, because it does not consider a human being's consciousness as a determining principle. A critical examination of human behaviour reveals the shallowness or inadequacy of the principle of man conceived as 'reactive being' to explain human activity. Often the parent, the teacher, or the administrator finds the child or the pupil or the individual behaving in a manner that baffles his expectations and understanding.

Further, in terms of this conception, human nature is viewed essentially as passive and dependent on external factors. The model of man as a reactive being in depth explains behaviour in terms of principles such as regression, reaction formation, and the like – all based on the psychoanalytic view that individual's reactions are also caused by internal forces usually unconscious in nature. Psychoanalytic causation explains in terms of the past history of the individual as the 'conditioned response' for behaviorists is the explanatory principle. On the basis of the model of 'reactive being in-depth', the principles of recall and recovery are central to guidance. Accordingly, guidance and counselling are carried out by unearthing and disclosing to the client the troublesome, repressed trauma. There is no place for an individual's capacity to disregard his past or reshape himself freely. As 'id' by nature does not change, the future can at best be 'redirected' and not transformed. In other words, what one becomes is what one is, and what one was. In Freudian terms, an individual seems never to be truly pro-active or even active. Almost all the time he is

reacting to some fixations and unconscious complexes. One of the prime functions of education is to provide opportunities for the wholesome development of such abilities among pupils. Guidance, in this sense, is an integral part of education.

It is customary to use guidance as an important service in an education system. The process of academic advising referred to earlier can be considered as an example of guidance. Guidance essentially consists of giving information. The pupil or individual seeking guidance is expected to make his own choices. The person giving guidance does not choose but helps in choosing the more desirable or most appropriate course of action. It is aptly said that 'guidance helps individuals to help themselves'. It helps them make their own choices in such a way as to promote or stimulate the gradual development of the ability to make decisions independently without having to take assistance from others. The essential function of guidance is to help make individuals responsible. Traditional education concerned itself with the 'three Rs', reading, writing and arithmetic. Modern education, in contrast, is concerned with 'four Rs', the fourth being responsibility. Individuals in a free society which cherishes democratic values are free. They are *ipso facto* responsible for their actions – good, bad or indifferent. Guidance as a service believes that individuals of average intelligence should be able to choose the right and discern the wrong. They should act voluntarily and not out of compulsion.

Guidance thus comprises the giving of information. The housewife needs to know the daily prices of provisions, the investor about the stock exchange rates, the marketing manager the consumer trends, and so on. Different people require different types of information at different times. The information required may be as simple as the arrival and departure timings of a particular train or as complex as the information required in making a vocational choice. Guidance thus, in its simplest sense, is to render help to those who seek it by providing reliable and dependable information.

There is a general agreement that counselling is a very significant aspect in any model of guidance. Some consider individual or group counselling the core of guidance. Counselling stresses the importance of in-depth exploration of feelings about self and the confidential nature of the client—counsellor relationship. Rogers (1951) holds that if the individual is

provided an understanding of the way he sees himself, he can do the rest in helping himself. This view emphasizes the growth of self towards self-actualization and self-realization. The term 'guidance' is often used synonymously with counselling. It involves highly sensitive listening with emotional or affective component of a client's personality, the counsellor creates a role that is non-translatable (and this is quite unintelligible to educational personnel). Counselling as a means of enhancing the ability for more effective personal choice assumes a significant part of the professional role.

Role of Counselling in Guidance

Guidance performs a complementary educational function, assisting normal development and personal autonomy. This would mean the creation of personal autonomy, purposeful action and effective personal decision making. From this point of view, counselling can be understood as an aspect of guidance. Equating individual counselling with guidance is to limit its scope. Guidance is an applied behavioral science, of which counselling is one aspect. Defining and differentiating between counselling and guidance is not easy. Besides, there has been a lot of ambiguity regarding its definition, which reflects the uncertainty with which views on guidance and counselling were elaborated and presented. Lortie (1965) holds that the current position of counselling refers to a diverse contradictory function. McCully could not find any consensus on the nature of the essential and primary services offered by the counsellors. Counselling may represent one of the services of the guidance function.

In counselling, as in guidance, more often than not, information is given. But the two are not the same. While information is necessarily given in counselling, all information-giving is not counselling. To the extent that information is given in both counselling and guidance, their respective fields appear to overlap. But counselling differs from guidance in that it is therapeutic. The most important area in which guidance services function is in the field of education. Counselling, on the other hand, may function in several settings and may include such diverse fields as education and industry.

The most important and popular aspect of guidance is generally known as vocational guidance. Vocational guidance is related to giving detailed and essential career information

concerning different vocational avenues, understanding the requirements, demands, limitations and prospects of vocational development, choosing a particular vocation in preference to another in the light of a fuller understanding of one's own needs, abilities, aptitudes and interests, and knowing the job requirements as well as what it offers. However, vocational guidance implies educational guidance. If we conceive education as a preparation for a suitable career, the choice of a vocation is determined by the course (s) offered. For example, a pupil who has not offered mathematics would not be acceptable for enrolment in an engineering course. Thus, he would be denied the chance of entering the engineering vocation. Thus, vocational guidance should go hand in hand with educational guidance. Without the latter, the former may not be fruitful and may even become impracticable.

One of the differences between counselling and guidance is that, unlike guidance, counselling has a therapeutic function. If counselling is therapeutic in function, it follows that counselling is a form of psychotherapy. This issue raises the question of how psychotherapy is related to counselling.

Nature of Counselling

Counselling is concerned with bringing about a voluntary change in the client. To this end, the counsellor provides facilities to help achieve the desired change or make the suitable choice. The client alone is responsible for the decisions or the choices he makes, though the counsellor may assist in this process by his warmth and understanding relationship.

Counselling as Hygiology

Hygiology is the study of the problems of normal people and the prevention of the incidence of serious emotional difficulties. Counselling could be more appropriately concerned with hygiology than with psychopathology of behavior. The psychiatrist, the clinical psychologist and the counselling psychologist are all concerned with psychotherapy. But they function at different levels. The counselling psychologist is almost always concerned with normal individuals who experience conflicts of different degrees of complexity, experience anxiety, are unable to decide and are subject to spells of vacillation. Indecision in matters of conflict-

resolution or choice of goals or paths of action is painful. The psychiatrist and the clinical psychologist are concerned with pathological cases involving serious emotional disturbances.

The importance of counselling in modern times cannot be overemphasized. It can become almost indispensable owing to such factors as rapid industrialization, increased knowledge, population explosion, urbanization, economic upheavals, technological innovations, ecological imbalances, excessive competition, impersonal bureaucracy, rapid rate of consumption of resources, impending threat of a holocaust etc.

Counselling as a helping relationship

Counselling in its essence is a 'helping relationship'. All of us seek to satisfy our personal needs. More often than not, in trying to gratify our needs, we find ourselves in conflicting situations in which our interests clash with those of others. But through the process of socialization in childhood, and later through education, we learn to moderate our desires such that there is no open clash. We may learn to suppress a few desires and inhibit other needs so long as our happiness is not endangered. In addition to human suffering caused by physical handicaps and clash of interests, a major source of suffering is to be found in one's own personality. Often a sense of personal inadequacy and inferiority leads to lack of self-confidence, withdrawal and lack of desire for achievement. Even if the individual has the desire or motivation, he is hindered by subjective and environmental factors. The psychological conflicts, namely those of goals, values, interests and the like, cause an ebbing of human enthusiasm and zest for life. The counselling psychologist alleviates this suffering by establishing a helping relationship. In the words of Rogers, a helping relationship is one "in which one of the participants intends that there should come about, in one or both parties, more appreciation of, more expression of, more functional use of the latent inner resources of the individual". The commonly observed relationships such as those between the teacher and pupil, husband and wife, mother and child, counsellor and counsellee, could all be considered helping relationships.

A helping relationship is characterized by certain essential features. According to Shertzer and Stone (1968), the helping relationship:

1. Is meaningful because it is personal and intimate.
2. Is affective in nature involving mild to strong emotional relationships.
3. Involves the integrity of the helper and the helped and is sustained voluntarily.
4. Involves the mutual consent of the counsellor and the counsellee either explicitly stated or implicitly to be inferred.
5. Takes place because the individual in need of help is aware of his own limitations and inadequacies.
6. Involves confidence reposed in the helper.
7. Is often achieved and maintained through communication and interaction; it involves give and take, that is, it is not a one-way process.
8. Involves a certain amount of 'structure'. The situation is either vaguely or clearly defined.
9. Is marked by the desire for change in the existing condition of the client, that is, it is concerned with the improvement of the client.

While most human relationships may involve the rendering or receiving of help, over the years, importance has come to be attached to providing help effectively and efficiently. In other words, helping has become professional in nature. According to McCully (1966), "a helping profession is defined as one which, based upon its specialized knowledge, applies an intellectual technique to the existential affairs of others toward the end of enabling them to cope more effectively with the dilemmas and paradoxes that characterize the human condition." In short, a helping profession involves specialized knowledge, trained skills and the desire to provide comfort to others.

Counselling as a solution to human problems

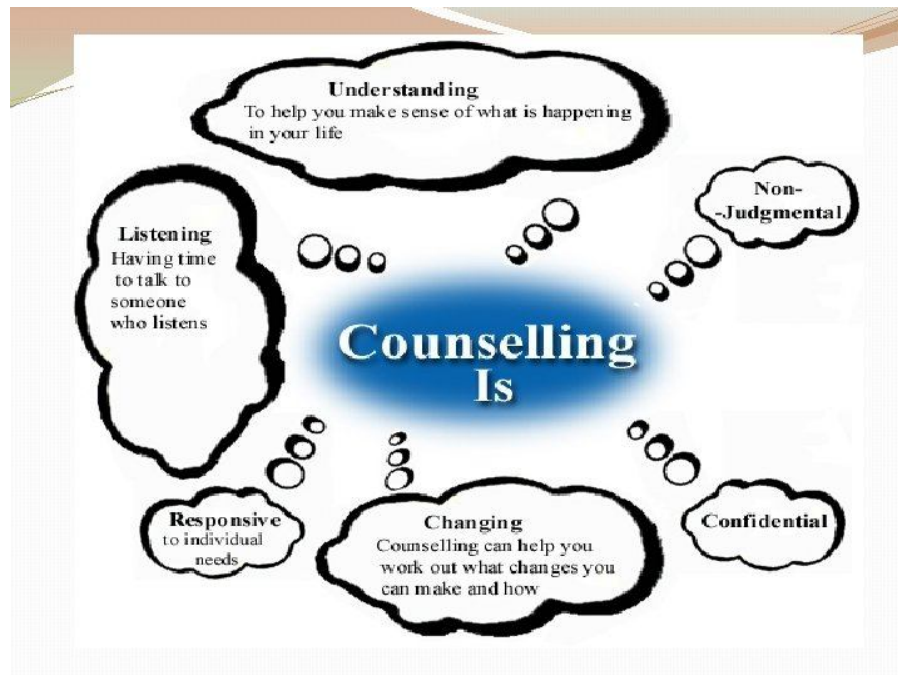
Counselling aims at helping the clients understand and accept themselves "as they are", such that they are able to work towards realizing their potential. Often this requires modification of attitudes, outlook and behaviour. The nature of the counselling process depends on the setting or the situation. The counselor accepts his clients and has

unconditional regard for their personality or self or self-worth. Naturally, counselling involves the feelings of clients. It is often because the feelings run strong that the counselling function becomes a highly delicate and specialized function. In addition to the concern for the feelings of the clients, counselling has a cognitive dimension through which a behavioral change is sought to be achieved. The client is received without any reservations and he is helped to state his problems and explore the possible solutions. The counsellor does not try to solve the client's problems or make choices that could reduce his emotional conflicts. Instead, through counselling, the client is helped to discover for himself his strengths and weaknesses. The self-understanding that is sought to be reached is often through the use of objective psychological instruments.

It is generally recognized that an individual has to resolve one's own problems. What is supposed to prevent the individual from making suitable choices is a lack of proper or adequate self-understanding and understanding of the environment. The counsellor aims at making the client act independently in a mature and responsible manner and with full understanding of the consequences. This is what is meant by personality development. A child or an adolescent is not able to act independently. He is not prepared to face the consequences of his actions. Hence, he is considered immature. A mature person, on the other hand, is expected to function efficiently, make desirable adjustments when he has the necessary understanding of his capacities and liabilities as well as the environmental conditions – physical, social and cultural – in terms of which he has to act. Counselling aims at helping individuals reach a stage or state of self-autonomy through self-understanding, self-direction and self-motivation. Such an individual suffers from the minimum of inhibitions, conflicts and anxieties. He is a 'fully-functioning person'.

There is a general agreement that counselling is a very significant aspect in any model of guidance. Some consider individual or group counselling the core of guidance. Counselling stresses the importance of in-depth exploration of feelings about self and the confidential nature of the client – counselor relationship. The term 'guidance' is often used synonymously with counselling. It involves highly sensitive listening with empathy and 'unconditional positive regard'. By exclusively emphasizing the emotional or affective component of a client's personality, the counselor creates a role that is non-translatable.

Counselling as a means of enhancing the ability for more effective personal choice assumes a significant part of the professional role.



FUNCTIONS OF GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING

1. **Adjustmental.** Guidance and counselling are *adjustmental* in the sense that they help the individual in making the best possible adjustment to the current situations in the setup the individual is in. professional and individualized aid is given in making immediate and suitable adjustment at problem points. At the same time, the adjustive attitude is to be developed in the individuals.
2. **Orientalional.** Guidance and counselling orientate the individuals in problems that one may come across in life and direct them towards long term personal aims and values. Awareness of the need to plan in the context of the complexity of the world of work is an essential prerequisite of going through education and preparation for career later on.
3. **Developmental function.** Guidance and counselling try not only to cure when the problems have occurred and done their damage, but begin before the problems arise and maladjustments occur. If unsolved problems are allowed to accumulate, their total effect may lead the student to the point where his capacity for growth is

blocked. In such cases, guidance and counselling may be of little or no help. That way guidance and counselling have a very important developmental function for helping the students achieve self-development and self-realization. Guidance and counselling also have to discharge the important function of furthering the welfare of the society and be important instruments of national development.



IMPORTANCE OF GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING

Adjustment is the basic problem of human life. The person who fails to adjust to his circumstances becomes a failure, suffers himself and inflicts it upon others, and is branded as an abnormal being. In this way, educational psychology, through its helping the individual in adjusting himself, helps to spread happiness, peace and organisation in society. Problems in human life do not come to an end, because new ones keep on arising. There is no end to trouble. A child, for example is faced by very new problems, much of his anxiety being centered around the work forced upon him by the teacher, or the means of dealing with the more recalcitrant of his friends and such minor things. He has not to worry about keeping the home fires burning. But these are problems that gradually engulf every individual as he grows older.

As a general rule most people marry and have children who must go to school and with equal inevitability fall ill and be treated for it, only go grow up and get married themselves

and keep the almost eternal circle moving forward. Thus, one trouble grows out of another, and never lets the individual being sit back contented and unharried. Human psychology is much like this. One desire arises and destroys the being's peace till it is satisfied. Hence, he immediately busies himself in searching for the means to satisfy this desire and achieves this after more or less trouble. But the story does not end here, it is followed by the arising of another desire, and the inevitable circle of objective, search for objective, obstacles in search for means of solving the desire, overcoming of the obstacles, possession of the satisfying object, satisfaction of the desire, and the arising of another desire. It is evident that every individual is continually faced with new objective the achievement of which entails the facing of many other difficulties. Guidance, therefore, helps the overcoming of all these difficulties that beset the achievement of an objective.

LIMITATIONS OF GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING

Just as there are benefits to the guidance and counselling programmes, there are limitations too. One also needs to bear in mind that there are different types of counselling. Directive, non-directive, eclectic, individual, group and many more. Depending on the kind of setting, the limitations too may differ. These may also be termed as constraints.

1. Person being counselled may not have trust in the counsellor.
2. Suspicion over the level of confidentiality. In such cases the counsellor will have to spend a lot of time over building rapport.
3. Personality of the counsellor or the counsellee may turn out to be the major limitation in the entire counselling process.
4. Adequate time needs to be invested in building trust as majority of the times, the clients feel uncomfortable to reveal their problems.
5. Counselling is a time-consuming process as one cannot find a solution immediately after one session. People need to be prepared to follow the schedules and the timelines as well as the advice given by the counsellor. This turns out to be extremely demanding for the clients.

There are shortcomings not only from the counsellee's perspective, but also from the counsellor's perspective too.

SUMMING UP

In this unit, you have read about the various definitions of guidance and counselling, understood its nature, functions, importance and limitations of guidance and counselling. A thorough understanding of the same would pave the way related to the dos and don'ts in counselling and also understand that counselling is a two-way process all about listening, understanding the problem and showing the various possibilities that are there to deal with the situation.

MODEL QUESTIONS

1. Define guidance and counselling. Also discuss the nature of guidance and counselling.
2. List out the limitations of guidance and counselling also touching upon what is its importance.

SUGGESTED READINGS

Narayana Rao (2008). *Counseling and Guidance*. New Delhi: Tata Mc-Graw Hill.

Singh Yogesh Kumar, *Guidance and Career Counselling*, A.P.H. Publishing Corporation, New Delhi.

Barkhi B. G. & Mukhopadhyay, (2008 – 10th Reprint), *Guidance and Counselling: A Manual*, Sterling Publishers Private Limited, New Delhi.

LESSON -2: DIFFERENCE BETWEEN GUIDANCE, COUNSELLING AND PSYCHOTHERAPY

OBJECTIVES

- To understand guidance, counselling and psychotherapy
- To discern the difference between guidance, counselling and psychotherapy

STRUCTURE

- 2.1. Guidance and Counselling
- 2.2. Distinction between guidance and counselling
- 2.3. Relation between counselling and psychotherapy
- 2.4. Summing Up
- 2.5. Model Questions
- 2.6. Suggested Readings

GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING

The terms 'guidance', 'counselling' and 'psychotherapy' are sometimes used interchangeably and sometimes mean different aspects.

1. Guidance is an organized service to identify and develop the potentialities of pupils. Comprehensive information about every (all the) pupil is collected with the help of different tests/tools, resources, which are recorded and interpreted.

The findings are communicated to the individual to help them to understand themselves. Pupils are also given information about educational and vocational opportunities available to them and are helped in their career planning and development. In counselling more often than not the information is collected and shared related to problem situations faced by the pupils. The individual is encouraged to talk about her/his problem(s). The counsellor may also ask questions, seek his/ her views, and make observations. Information sought through guidance makes the basis for counselling sessions. Based on the findings the individual is

encouraged to make suitable decisions and take actions to solve the problem(s). Thus, information's are gathered and shared in both the process but two are no same.

2. Guidance is helping individual to develop his/her potentialities for all round development whereas counselling helps individual to deal with complex problem situations and make adjustment/adaptations if necessary to lead useful life.

3. Guidance is promotive and preventive whereas counselling is therapeutic.

4. Guidance can be given in any normal setting whereas counselling requires a guidance may be done by any teacher or guiding person whereas counselling can be done by skillful counsellor who has had professional training in counselling.

5. Guidance may be done by any teacher or guiding person whereas counselling can be done by skillful counsellor who has had professional training in counselling.

6. Guidance is an integral part of education and assists in fulfilling in educational organized as a specialized services to deal with problem situations faced by students and may be of teachers.

7. Guidance includes some degree of counselling to help students deal with their day-to-day problems which is done by teachers, parents, significant others. Counselling includes guidance of individual which is done by Counsellors while helping students to solve their problems. This means there is over lapping and misuse of the terms.

DISTINCTION BETWEEN GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING

Here is a clear-cut distinction of what each one means and how they are similar or different from one another.

GUIDANCE	COUNSELLING
Guidance is broader and comprehensive	Counselling is in-depth and narrow
Guidance is more external, helps a person understand alternative solutions available to him and makes him understand his personality and choose the right solution.	Counselling helps people understand themselves and is an inward analysis. Alternative solutions are proposed to help understand the problem at hand.
Guidance is mainly preventive and developmental.	Counselling is remedial as well as preventive and developmental.
Intellectual attitudes are the raw material of guidance.	Emotional rather than pure intellectual attitudes are raw material of the counselling process.
Decision making is operable at an intellectual level in guidance.	Counselling operates at an emotional level.
Guidance is generally education and career related and may also be for personal problems.	Counselling is mostly offered for personal and social issues.

RELATION BETWEEN COUNSELLING AND PSYCHOTHERAPY

The relation between counselling and psychotherapy has been ambiguous as a result of the fact that the terms are amorphously defined and loosely used. Counselling is a service performed in many settings by different kinds of persons with varying backgrounds. They all represent people with a common interest, to assist those in need of help to overcome problems concerning adjustment to various situations in life.

Psychotherapy developed as a therapeutic technique in the treatment of illness in the traditional model. Later it came to be recognized as an important method of rehabilitation. Counseling developed in this tradition and psychotherapy initially aimed at helping those who were very ill and unable to adjust to the demands of life.

Counselling generally deals with the future: What shall I do with my problems?

Psychotherapy deals with the present: What am I doing that creates my problems?

Psychotherapy and counseling exist because of the need for them in our society which has become highly complex, multi-valued and multi-roled. Counselling and psychotherapy have developed to help individuals find appropriate strategies to function in relation to their personalities and the roles they are called upon to play.

Psychotherapy is the treatment of problems of an emotional nature by psychological means. Counselling also treats such problems by psychological means, the difference being that in counselling, the emphasis is on the individual. The treatment is started with the establishment of a professional relationship between the therapist/counsellor and the patient/client. The object of this relationship is to remove, modify or lessen the existing symptoms and promote positive personality growth. Though there are no differences between psychotherapy and counselling, certain distinctions are made and these need to be examined at some length. The distinctions are made on the basis of:

1. Individuals receiving help
2. Persons giving help
3. Severity of the problems concerned
4. Setting in which help is rendered

Psychotherapy consists of the whole range of psychologically based treatments by which trained practitioners help people who have psychological problems. Sometimes it is used in more restricted way. It refers to forms of treatment in which a psychotherapist and a client tackle client's problem though talking. Traditionally it focuses on serious problems associated with intrapsychic, internal, and personal issues and conflicts. Characteristically, it emphasizes the following issues:

- The past more than the present
- Insight more than change
- The detachment of the therapist
- The therapist's role as an expert

Psychotherapy is a systematic interaction between a therapist and a client that brings psychological principles to bear on influencing the client's thoughts, feelings, or behaviour to help that client overcome abnormal behaviour or adjust to problems in living. The interaction is between two or more individuals where one of them, called client or patient, is seeking help for a problem and the other participant, called therapist, provides necessary therapeutic help. The interaction is usually mediated by verbal means although facial expressions, bodily gestures and movement are also used. It usually involves a long-term relationship that focuses on reconstructive change. Psychotherapies are procedures in which persons with mental disorders interact with a trained psychotherapist who helps them change certain behaviours, thoughts, or emotions so that they feel and function in a better way. It helps the patients to manage their symptoms better and function at their best in everyday life. It consists of a series of techniques for treating mental health, emotional and some psychiatric disorders and helps the individuals understand what helps them feel positive or anxious, as well as accepting their strong and weak points.

The difference between counselling and psychotherapy can best be expressed by saying that counselling looks more often towards interpretation and development of the personality in the characteristic of a specific role problem. Psychotherapy looks more towards re-interpretation and re-organisation of malignant, conflictual elements within the personality through the relation with the therapist. The distinguishing processes are:

1. Ego integration and analysis of infantile conflicts or impulses; attention to conscious material as against unconscious or repressed material; and
2. Attention to the present as against the past.

Essentials of Psychotherapy:

- I. Systematic Interaction: Psychotherapy is a systematic interaction between a client and a therapist. The therapist structures the therapy process based upon a theoretical viewpoint and an understanding of the client's cultural and social background.
- II. Psychological principles: Psychotherapy is based on psychological theory and research in various areas such as personality, learning and abnormal behaviour.
- III. Thoughts, feelings and behaviours: Psychotherapy influences clients' thoughts, feelings and behaviour.

- IV. Psychological disorders, adjustment problems and personal growth: While psychotherapy is often used with people who have psychological disorders, it can also be used to help people with adjustment (loss of spouse, shyness) and personal growth.

Psychotherapy or talk therapy is currently used by psychologists and other professionals in different forms. It uses varied range of procedures and can be conducted with individuals as well as with groups. There are many different therapy styles and techniques including Psychodynamic Psychotherapy, Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT), Group Therapy, and Couples Therapy. The unique elements of psychotherapy are that it varies according to different theoretical perspectives. The first organised system of psychotherapy which has a considerable influence in the field of Psychology was Psychoanalysis by Sigmund Freud.

A distinction could be made in terms of specific goals and the manner in which they are achieved. In psychotherapy the goal is to overcome certain weaknesses by any practical means. The counselor, on the other hand, is concerned with the identification and development of positive strengths in the individual.

The techniques employed in the two fields may be different. In psychiatric psychotherapy the treatment is physical, it is either through the administration of drugs, electro-convulsive therapy or psycho-surgery largely on the organic basis, in terms of the medical model of treatment. On the other hand, in counselling, results or objectives such as ego enhancement, self-integration and self-direction are secured through the psychological techniques of establishing rapport and providing warmth and support to the client to help him gain insight into himself.

According to Patterson (1973), the two disciplines overlap greatly. Both draw their inspiration from the same personality theories. Tyler (1958) attempts to distinguish counselling from psychotherapy on the basis of the type of ailments treated by them. She states that it is not the job of counselors to remove physical or mental handicaps. According to her, such disorders fall in the domain of psychotherapy.

Robinson (1950) holds that counselling is concerned with aiding normal people to achieve better adjustment skills which manifest themselves in increased maturity, independence, an integrated personality and responsibility. Thorne (1950) is of the opinion that counselling is a special type of psychotherapy adaptable to problems of normal people. Blos (1946) considers that "counselling deals with relatively non-imbedded problem cases, that is, with those persons who have not developed rigid neurotic patterns, but are primarily pressurized from the outside environment."

Psychotherapy, according to the more orthodox view, is concerned with the reconstruction of the individual at both the conscious and unconscious levels. Unlike counselling, psychotherapy is more concerned with alleviating pathological conditions. Counselling lays stress on rational planning to solve problems of adjustment. In brief, psychotherapy utilizes psychoanalysis, hypnosis, and such other psychological approaches for therapeutic purposes. In psychiatry, in addition to the above, physical and chemotherapy are employed. Counselling, in contrast to the above, is almost always concerned with such problems as learning difficulties, minor conflicts involving feelings of anxiety, hostility etc.

SUMMING UP

Guidance, counselling and psychotherapy are all interrelated with one another, all of them having the basic premise of helping the person in any kind of a problem situation. To put in a nutshell, guidance is the assistance given to the individual in the process of development. It is a service meant for all and has a role to play in every developing economy. Counselling is helping the person to take decision to solve problems. Psychotherapy is the treatment of problems of an emotional nature by psychological means. All three of them have their own significant roles to play in helping individuals lead a successful life, handling life's situations and challenges.

MODEL QUESTIONS

1. Explain how guidance and counselling are different from one another?
2. What is the relation between counselling and psychotherapy?
3. What are the essentials of psychotherapy?

SUGGESTED READINGS

Narayana Rao (2008). *Counseling and Guidance*. New Delhi: Tata Mc-Graw Hill.

Singh Yogesh Kumar, Guidance and Career Counselling, A.P.H. Publishing Corporation, New Delhi.

Barkhi B. G. & Mukhopadhyay, (2008 – 10th Reprint), Guidance and Counselling: A Manual, Sterling Publishers Private Limited, New Delhi.

LESSON – 3: NEED, IMPORTANCE AND AREAS OF ORGANISATIONAL COUNSELLING

OBJECTIVES

The main objectives of this Unit are to

- Introduce the concept of organisational needs of guidance services
- Introduce the areas of organisational counselling

STRUCTURE

- 3.1. Introduction
- 3.2. Nature of Organisational Guidance and Counselling
- 3.3. Areas of Organisational Counselling
- 3.4. Summing Up
- 3.5. Model Questions
- 3.6. Suggested Readings

INTRODUCTION

Counselling is a long-term process, aimed at helping the counselled person(s) sort out their emotional problems and attain a better mental health. Employee counselling is a discussion between the counsellor and the counselled which is aimed at making the counselled person feel better and comfortable about self, and thus better equipped to deal with the daily life problems and work situations. According to Warren Redman "Counselling is a process of clarifying a problem held by another person (s), enabling them to take appropriate responsibility for that problem, and then assisting them to arrive at some form of resolution of the difficulty." Thus, counselling is a process of finding a resolution i.e., determination/perseverance of solving the problems faced and not necessarily a solution.

Employee counselling is guidance provided to the employees so that they can approach cope and solve their problems and the first towards this is the need to have an understanding of the problem. Counselling, therefore, helps the employees in understanding, what is the actual problem that is causing them the discomfort. The basic theory of counselling is to make a person well equipped to understand and deal with stress,

professional problem or an emotional problem, both in the present context as well as be prepared to tackle the problems of same nature in the future.

The modern workplace seems to demand more employee time than ever before, there are fewer resources with which to do the work and more and more employees are suffering from 'presenteeism' (needing to be seen to be at work while overstressed doing the job). Levels of stress seem to be at an all-time high. As employees struggle to cope, more and more employers, as well as health experts, are struggling to find new ways of managing workplace stress and its inevitable implications.

NATURE OF ORGANISATIONAL GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING

Over the years there has been a growing concern regarding the needs of an employee as an individual. Many organisations have seen and felt the need of guiding and helping their employees to solve their problems, pertaining to both personal life and professional careers. This change in the management attitude was not due to some sudden humane feelings for their employees, but was rather for the fact that, many a times organisations suffer losses as employees cannot give their best unless they are satisfied with all the factors affecting their lives. This aspect becomes much more relevant in the case of hospitality and tourism as the employees are in direct contact with the customers.

Earlier it was considered impolite to enquire about any employee's private life and counselling was mainly restricted to career counseling, but with the changing times this factor is no longer considered rude. Many a time, private matters such as near and dear ones sickness or death may hamper the employee productivity and employer intervention might help to ease the matter. This intervention is counselling, which now a days is a broad term encompassing all the factors affecting the employee's life – both personal and professional.

Why workplace counselling?

There are various reasons why employers are turning to counselling as one method, among others, of caring for their workforce. Employers' responsibility for the welfare of their employees is one reason. More and more employers realize that illness and productivity do not go well together. A healthy workforce produces. Furthermore, as more and more

health services have longer waiting lists or have limited availability of services like counselling and psychotherapy, companies are moving in to provide it speedily. The fact that employees are taking legal action is another reason for the introduction of counselling. A number of legal cases have made history on these points.

Employers have three responsibilities towards employees, breaches of which can result in employees suing successfully: (1) a duty to take care (which inevitably arises in the employment situation), (2) a breach of that duty, and (3) foreseeable injury. In the US there has been an increase of 5-15 per cent in compensation claims for work-related stress, and in Australia it is reckoned that 35 per cent of the cost of compensation pay-outs to government employees followed stress claims. One way of anticipating risk and providing relief from it is to offer counselling services.

Employers are turning to counselling as one way of helping to manage the mammoth changes taking place in organisations. Change is never easy: it disrupts, disorients, causes grieving and takes time. Support is needed for individuals and teams as transitions in organisations are managed. Counselling is one way of supporting employees as they cope with organisational change. Counselling can be seen as a way of improving mental health. Employees do not leave their problems aside as they turn to face their working day.

Counselling can itself be a source of organisational change. Rather than being just an appendage to a company, counselling can bring the values, the energy of change, the vitality of acceptance, a realization of who we are and what we can be, to the very dynamics of workplace life. Counselling values are about the importance and process of change, how people are empowered to manage their lives, how social responsibility is built into life, and how decisions can be made.

Counselling can influence organisational culture to work towards the ideal strong and adaptive culture that serves the company. There are some of the reasons why employers introduce counselling into the workplace. Cooper has divided the reasons into three categories: counselling as a caring facility; counselling to help employees deal with workplace change; and counselling as a means of managing stress.

Workplace counselling makes sense when it is realized that employees spend about one-quarter of their lives in work settings; that, for many, key relationships are part of their work; that personal identity is often bound up with jobs; and that almost all people integrate personal and professional lives to a great extent. Having counselling available in the workplace means that problems can be dealt with fairly quickly and can be worked through in the very environment from which they often emerge.

Traditional counselling programmes	Contemporary programmes
Emphasis on alcoholism as the basis of the problem	Broad-brush approach: any issue appropriate for service
Emphasis on supervisory referrals	Combination of supervisory referral, self-referral, and referral by others
Problems identified at late stage in development	Services offered at earlier stage in problem development
Services offered by medical or alcoholism specialists	Services offered by generalist counsellors with expertise in chemical dependency and other areas
Focus on troubled employees with job performance problems	Focus both on employees with work problems and on employees/family members with no performance problems
Confidentiality for referred employees	Confidentiality for referred employees; anonymity for self-referred employees or family members

NEED FOR ORGANISATIONAL COUNSELING

Emotional makeup of the employees plays a big part in their work efficiency. Counselling helps in understanding the employee grievances and also lets the employee know about the company rules and policies and disciplinary actions as well without being too much impersonal.

A need for counselling exists wherever there is a problem faced by the employees. The problem can be mid-life crisis or an emotional problem or a fear of extra workload due to a promotion and so on. Some of the various situations where counselling is required are:

1. STRESS

Stress is an important factor affecting employee performance and productivity. Stress is the strain or pressure that affects a person emotionally and physically. The result of the stress on the employee performance may vary from person to person and also on the reason of the stress. Different people have different levels or threshold for tolerating stress. Some people perform better under pressure while others end up not performing at all. The reason for the employee stress can be either due to on-the-job crisis or off the job problems. The causes can be:

(a) On the job causes:

Almost all the jobs are stress inducible and a lot depends upon the employee's working. Work pressures in hospitality industry such as deadlines to meet, work load, constant new ideas and changes to be implemented normally leads to a lot of strain and stress. The employees' stress threshold and nature in general would decide upon the pressure and strain that an employee would feel. For example, many a times a similar change may result in more productivity and better performance for one bar manager whereas it may result in stress induced low productivity in another case.

Frustration can also lead to stress. The frustration can be a result of over estimating one's own potential or under estimating one's own potential or too much work load and deadlines to meet or not getting a salary as expected or being passed over for a much-awaited promotion and so on. Frustration is a major cause of stress but many a times it may be a case of one-day or momentary frustration. For example: trying to finish a report in time for a meeting scheduled in an hours' time and if one is constantly interrupted then the person is liable to feel frustrated and irritated. It is so as one is not able to reach the desired goal.

Mostly it has been observed that job environment contributes a lot to the feeling of stress. A kind and helpful supervisor will make a frustrated employee feel better and a helpful colleague can help ease an overloaded and over worked co-worker. If one is not at ease and comfortable in one's surroundings, then he or she will not be able to give his or her best. It has been observed that office politics and groups affect interpersonal relationships thus affecting the work environment and the work potential of an employee.

Too much pressure and stress can result in 'burnout'. Burnout is the stage in a person's life when he or she feels that they have nothing more to give as a result of mental, emotional and physical exhaustion. This happens as a result of being under a prolonged period of stress. Nowadays, we are hearing about executives who reach their thirties and are cases of early burnout. This is usually due to the fact that they have put in too much time and energy for their work and constant work pressure has resulted in the total exhaustion.

(b) Off the job causes

Pressures outside the work environment also affect the job performance. The pressure can be due to marital problems, problems with children, major injury or illness or death in the family and so on. Stress due to personal problem affects the organisation as a person coming to work brings with him or her mental and emotional trauma of the personal life which very much affects the work output.

It can be implied that stress is a personal problem and is not easy to decipher if the other person is not ready to disclose. But there are a few symptoms, which indicate when a person is under stress and strain:

- **Absenteeism:** The number of days of absenteeism increases, as the person is not satisfied with the job or job environment or due to some personal problem. As a result, not only the individual suffers but also it costs the organisation a lot of money.
- **Illness:** Employee might report sick more often and not come in or come in late frequently. Also, the employee might start behaving irrationally in the office often resulting in emotional outbursts. Many a times the person starts getting short tempered and irritable and thus affecting the office environment and finally the productivity.

- Poor work quality: Stress mostly results in low self-esteem which causes in lowering the self-motivation. Running low on motivation, the employees do not work to their full potential, i.e., full capacity and abilities. This thus results in poor work quality and low performance.

The performance thus affected costs the organisation money as more people have to be recruited for doing the work of that employee who is not performing to his or her full potential.

Thus, stress is a major factor affecting an employee and counselling is required for the employee so as to analyse and understand the factors causing the stress.

2) Disciplinary Action

Counselling comes in handy while putting a disciplinary action in motion. Any typical disciplinary action in an organisation initiates with a verbal discussion with the offender, this is also counselling. Before punishing or giving any penalty to an employee a counselling session with the offender is a must where company rules and policies are again told to the employee and also about the penalties involved. The counselling during the disciplinary process puts emphasis on what the employee should do rather than putting the emphasis on what the employee should not do.

3) Pre-promotional

Counselling is required to quell any doubts regarding a new job or duties or power assigned with a job. Counselling is always used to put the employee to be promoted at ease with his or her would be new environment and to get him or her acquainted with his or her power, duties and job scope among other things, so that the employee is totally sure while taking over a new job/promotion.

4) Mid-career

Most of the good organizations now a days employ a counsellor to counsel the mid-career manager. Usually, the managers are well-educated and are very motivated till they realize that they have reached a stage where promotion and upward movement is possible only if

someone in the very top position vacates the position. During this period in their life, it is necessary that they should be counselled so that they do not start running low on motivation and do not get depressed or frustrated. Mostly the mid-career managers are aware of the problems related to their job and only need someone to listen to them and understand their plight and thus assist them to deal with expectations from life.

5) Pre-retirement

An employee spends all his or her life with an organisation and when the time for retirement comes, the person is apprehensive about his or her future. If the apprehension is not taken care of in time, then it will affect the work capacity of the employee during whatever time the employee is left with before his or her retirement and also affect those working in close contact of the employee. Counselling here can help the employee look forward towards the retirement with expectation and excitement rather than with apprehension. The other employees will also appreciate such a gesture and would reinforce their trust and loyalty in the organisation.

COUNSELLING FUNCTIONS IN AN ORGANISATION

The main objective of counselling is to help the employees attain a better mental, emotional and physical health. A counsellor is the one who can help a person realize a better tomorrow by the attainment of self-confidence, self-development, patience and self-growth.

The objectives of counselling are achieved through the counselling functions. The counselling functions are:

Advice: Advice giving is not desired for counselling, as it is a process of self-growth which advising would hamper. But many a times counsellors do have to advise so as to show/guide the counselled towards a path of action.

- **Reassurance:** Counselling has to provide reassurance to the employee that he or she is progressing well and moving towards achieving the desired goal. Reassurance here can be meant as encouragement also. This is mostly in the case of the

midcareer managers where counsellor can only reassure that everything will work out fine and also encourage him or her to work as the desired goal is within reach.

- **Communication:** Counselling is mostly about proper communication. A proper communication is required to pass the employee problems to the management and also to air the views of the management to the employees. Communication skills such as listening, providing feedback and so on are required for an effective counselling session.
- **Release of emotional tension:** Counselling gives a scope to the employees to release their emotional tension. Emotional outbursts help the employee to release one's anger and frustration to a sympathetic listener, which in turn helps in subsiding the tension.
- **Clarified thinking:** Discussing one's problem with someone helps the person to see those points and facts which have been overlooked earlier due to emotional involvement with the problem. The counsellor is not required to guide the person in such a case, as only listening to the outpouring will help. Once the counselled person starts speaking very soon many facts are clarified as the counselled starts thinking aloud which in turn results in rational and logical thinking and helps in solving the problems, real or imaginary.
- **Reorientation:** Reorientation is a result of clear thinking which helps an employee to assess oneself – one's potential and limitation and in accordance to them set new goals and values. Reorientation leads a person to have a better self-image and it also helps to treat the patients of depression. A clear self-image leads to be a more confident person and also a more effective worker.

WHO CAN COUNSEL IN ORGANISATIONS

An organisation can counsel its employees using either an in-house counsellor or acquire the help of outside agencies as well. The possibilities are:

1. **Manager:** Mostly in the smaller organizations the immediate managers help in counselling the employees as they are known to the employees and employees can open up fast and easily with the manager. But the same reason might work in the reverse also when an employee with a grievance against the manager cannot

possibly speak to the same manager about the reason of grievance. All said, this is the most common form of in-house counselling.

2. **HRD Manager:** HRD managers are often identified in an organisation as specialists to deal with all counselling work. The employees won't have to do a lot of explaining as the organisation is same and so the rules, policies and company structure is known to the manager. But since the department is same so the employee need not be scared of any retribution or tension with the immediate manager. This is also a form of in-house counselling.
3. **Volunteers:** There are many volunteers such as trainee HRD managers or students of HRD who usually are available as volunteers since they want to gain some experience. The use of volunteer is possible in large organisations, where the employees are large in number. This use of outside volunteers helps the employees express anger and frustration regarding the company policies or any other such problem that might be regarding the organisation as a whole.
4. **Outside agencies:** Many establishments are available which send their counsellors as and when required by an organisation. Mostly these are the organisations working for the employee welfare and running employee welfare programmes. Sometimes it can also be government assisted.
5. **In-house counsellors:** An organisation might decide to hire a professional counsellor as a company employee to work with the employees on a regular basis. This helps the organisation, as the counsellor doesn't have to be briefed about the company policies, rules and regulations and also the employees do not have to be introduced to the counselor as the other employees would already know him or her. Moreover, a regular counsellor can keep a track of the progress of the employees undergoing counselling such as a severely depressed employee, and so on.

Having an in-house counsellor has its plus and minus points. The employees might not talk freely as the counselor too is after all an employee of the same organisation and the fear of retribution is always there. Moreover, the question of confidentiality of the counselor is

also a problem. The counsellor might learn about some wrong doing by the employee/s and being an employee of the same organisation, the counselor would be in a dilemma whether or not to report the incidence, as it was said in confidence. The plus points are the employees are aware of the availability of counsellor to whom they can take their problems to whenever needed and will believe that the organisation cares about their problems and thus in the long run this enhances the loyalty towards the organisation.

SUMMING UP

Employee counselling is a major segment that contributes towards the efficient functioning of the employees at work and at home as well. Counselling in organisations needs to be imparted to fulfil certain basic functions like advice, reassurance, communication, release of emotional tension, clarified thinking and reorientation. The right type of counsellor is necessary so that the problem is rightly identified and the employee is benefitted. Counselling is needed at various stages and phases of work and one's life. When organisations take interest in their employees' wellness, they certainly will ensure that there is a department for handling such wellness issues.

MODEL QUESTIONS

1. Discuss the nature of organisational guidance and counselling.
2. What are the areas of organisational counselling?
3. Who can counsel in organisations?
4. What are the various counselling functions in an organisation?

SUGGESTED READINGS

Michael Carroll (1996). *Workplace Counselling: A Systematic Approach to Employee Care*. New Delhi: Sage Publications.

Robert Nathan & Linda Hill (1992). *Career Counselling*. New Delhi: Sage Publications

<https://egyankosh.ac.in/handle/123456789/17053>

LESSON – 4: CAREER COUNSELLING FUNCTIONS IN ORGANISATIONS

OBJECTIVES

- To understand the career counselling in organisations
- To learn about the outcomes of career counselling

STRUCTURE

- 4.1. Career counselling in organisations
- 4.2. Ways in which it is used in organisations
- 4.3. Outcomes of career counselling
- 4.4. Decision-making problems
- 4.5. Summing Up
- 4.6. Model Questions
- 4.7. Suggested Readings

CAREER COUNSELLING IN ORGANISATIONS

Individuals approach career counselling when they, or perhaps someone else, have identified issues in their lives which they perceive to be primarily *career* related, and therefore appropriate for discussion with someone offering a *career* counselling service. This might be a service offered by an employer or an independent service. However, we believe it naive and unrealistic to help clients solve their *career* problems without allowing them to see the wider ramifications of their situation. In order to find the best solution to a career-related issue, we often find that clients need to examine their career problem in the context of their lives as a whole. This may be necessary for the following reasons:

- The desire for a more interesting job may be a reflection of a life stage or event outside of work.
- Problems can be linked (for example, a relationship difficulty at home may have precipitated a crisis at work).
- A long-time problem which has been tolerated may have become intolerable (for example, continuing relationship difficulties at work may have been tolerated until a 'last straw' incident).

- Lack of career advancement may be partly linked to poor interpersonal skills.
- Anger towards 'company policy' may reflect a general dislike, for example, of being controlled.
- An apparently realistic constraint (for example, a recession) may belie the need to focus on the emotions engendered by personal difficulties.
- Dissatisfaction with job content or career attainment may conceal a deeper lack of self-esteem.
- A client presenting as highly stressed may have chosen a job for its potential monetary rewards, but many years of being in unsatisfying work have taken their toll.

Another area where organisational needs of guidance services is required is in the area of career. Career support of different kinds has been available in a few organisations for many years. Many employers recognize career counselling as a useful tool to enable their staff to address career issues.

Over the past few years, employers have significantly reduced the numbers of people they employ: this has been market-driven, influenced by narrower profit margins, increased competition from local and global markets, more sophisticated IT driven systems and the outsourcing of services previously offered in-house. These pared-down organisations, lean almost to the bone of any excess resources, have to get the very best out of their existing staff, as well as keep their most valued people.

In a competitive marketplace, where market value is influenced by public and shareholder confidence, 'managing reputation' is also seen as key, as employers seek to enable staff to leave their employment with what one manager called a 'healthy goodbye'.

Employers have also encouraged more 'self-managed' career development, implying that employees are expected to think and act for themselves in planning their career futures. Perhaps because annual employee surveys often reveal that staff think their organisation is doing too little to help them in this endeavor, employers are now responding by offering appropriate resources, including learning and development advice and career support. This

may be a knee-jerk reaction to the criticism surfacing in employee surveys or part of a considered career-management programme.

Those staff most likely to leave when the job market becomes buoyant are those with the greatest confidence and market value. Research by Penna, Sanders and Sidney, an outplacement and career-management consultancy, entitled '*Itchy Feet*' points out the 'ever readiness' of staff to move employer. Employees indicated that, faced with an environment of internal promotion (46 per cent), better training and development (41 per cent) and recognition of their work (36 per cent), they would, however, stay put.

An effective career management strategy would include the following 'messages' to staff:

- *We can't offer you a career for life – but we want you to progress your career for as long as you stay with us.*
- *We shall get to know our people very well, and try to make the best possible use of their abilities.*
- *We shall make sure that our employees understand the business, and the employment market, so they can have several realistic options in mind.*
- *We will make sideways moves accessible.*
- *We will help employees understand the relationships between the work and the skills required to do that work.*
- *We shall work with our employees as active partners in the management of their careers.*

Such an approach can produce benefits of:

- *increasing the commitment of individuals to stay and deliver;*
- *building the capability to meet future demands;*
- *becoming the 'employer of choice';*
- *reducing staff turnover, thus saving huge recruitment costs;*
- *enhancing 'competitive advantage'.*

The ways in which career counselling is being used in organisations are as below:

Employers offer a number of career-management support activities. These include:

- Career development workshops (for example, for those facing restructuring and possible job loss, as well as those considering career or job change).
- One-to-one counselling/coaching with an internal or external resource.
- Mentoring
- Access to internal job market via Intranet
- Career and self-analysis tools on Intranet
- Succession training
- Outplacement support for employees leaving the organisation and wondering about their next steps.
- Career and personal-development workshops for potential senior managers, women, graduates and others at key decision points, and following attendance at a Development or Assessment Centre.
- External career workshops for senior managers wanting to review their career development to date, and plan the next phase.

What do people talk about in career discussions?

- Where they are, feelings about work
- Skills and performance
- Values and drivers, work-life issues
- Potential and aspirations
- Options in the organisation and outside
- Processes and politics
- Pros and cons of choices – direction
- Next steps, whom to see
- Managing change
- How to network
- Stress and time management
- Re-integration after a secondment or placement

- Review following attendance at a Development or Assessment Centre
- Learning and development needs, and what is available

The above is a long list of topics, most of which require some expertise and knowledge, in addition to the skills of counselling, and the infrastructure to provide it.

Line managers play a key role in providing career support; a good deal is provided informally or semi-formally and sometimes by mentors. Though the line managers are a good starting point, they have limited information and power and should ideally be able to refer on. Ideally, the following are involved in providing career counselling within, or for, employing organisations:

- Internal dedicated career counselling support service (for example, BBC, Shell) – provided for people wishing to assess the direction of their career, or to support people leaving the organisation.
- Trained pool of line managers across the organisation (for example, Audit Commission) – offering career discussions for staff at, and subsequent to, major organisational restructure.
- Learning and development specialists (for example, XL Capital Ltd) – linked to career development discussions with line managers.
- Training and development professionals (for example, Hillingdon NHS Trust) – linked to NHS ‘Skill escalator’ to encourage more flexibility to move jobs.
- Human resources and other development professionals (for example, BT) – as part of their work supporting ‘talent development’.
- Mentors responsible for career support (for example, Ernst & Young) – for example, when considering partnership as a possibility.
- Internal counsellors and occupational psychologists (for example, PWC, Metropolitan Police) – support includes personal development, psychometric testing, development centres, coaching.

- External career counsellors (for example, Career Counselling Services) – career counselling programmes to ‘take stock’ of talents, skills, experience, values and motivation.
- Executive, performance and development coaches (for example, Ashridge Management College) – career counselling relevant when performance development is affected by lack of interest or poor talent fit.
- Outplacement services (for example, Executive Action) – career assessment and job search support for executives whose jobs are redundant.

Outcomes of Career Counselling

Hirsh and Jackson reported the following examples of the impact of effective career conversations:

- Future direction (reported by over 60% of respondents)
- Self-insight (60%)
- Values information (55%)
- Feel good (50%)
- Job moves (32%)
- Career skills (22%)
- Retention (12%)

Employers sometimes express the concern that, by providing career counselling, issues will be raised which may cause the individual to leave the organisation. Whilst this is an understandable fear, effective career counselling can lead to a ‘win-win’ outcome; it not only gives people the tools to enable them to do the very bidding employers want, that is, be ‘self-directed’ in their career management, but also respects the rights of individuals to be autonomous. Sometimes that means an individual will decide to leave the organisation, but that is relatively rare. If it does happen, it may well prevent the organisation from further months or even years of under-productivity.

More likely, as the case of David shows, individuals will feel connected to their work, valued for their contribution, engaged with the organisation and motivated to contribute. Their willingness to apply and increase their capability will be enhanced. The organisation’s

capability to meet future demands will be enhanced by its ability to retain existing staff and to attract high-quality applicants, thereby unlocking the value chain which links personal success, business results and shareholder value.

David is 34 and works for one of the top accountancy firms. He is regarded sufficiently well to be considered 'partnership' material. Of late, David has expressed doubt about his future in the organisation – he has long nurtured a wish to run his own business. He enjoys football coaching and refereeing at the weekends. He has also just become engaged.

David is just not sure he wants the commitment that partnership will mean. His motivation has also gone right down, as he is overworked and has insufficient support, partly because several others in his department have left the organisation in recent months. His line manager, mentor and HR development adviser are agreed that some external, independent career counselling and 'assessment' may help him review his situation more objectively. They realise that they would be too biased to offer such assistance. They are concerned that, if they do not offer David some assistance, he will join the increasing numbers leaving the organisation. They agree that the content of the sessions will be confidential, and that David will report back afterwards with his reflections on the process and the results.

The following resulted from the career counselling:

David's motivation for his current work increased – he became clearer that he enjoyed the management aspect of his work.

He requested, and received, reassurance that he could work fewer hours, and have more support, in order to be freer to manage the work of others.

He was still not convinced that he should develop to partnership level, but felt happier to 'go along' with things for now.

Although David's employers clearly had their own agenda, they were sufficiently realistic to allow him the autonomy to make up his own mind about his future. David's increase in motivation towards his current job is, in our experience, quite typical following employer-supported independent and confidential career counselling. Allowing him this autonomy demonstrated their respect for his opinion and right to make up his own mind.

Making the case for more systematic and professional career support

A number of key questions need to be considered in case an organisation is introducing effective career support to its employees.

- What is on offer already, and is it working? Track what career conversations go on now, whom do people approach, what works and which resources you can draw on. Can staff approach others in the organisation to talk about career issues without their line manager getting cross?
- To whom would you initially offer career support? Be wary of positioning career support as a 'crisis only' service, unless you are happy for it to serve solely the needs of staff in a crisis situation.
- Where are the most fruitful career discussions likely to occur? Career conversations can be:
 - formal or informal, structured and 'diaried' or available 'on the hoof';
 - one to one or career planning workshops;
 - via training and development events;
 - offered internally through line managers or HR and development professionals;
 - referred to external career counsellors, especially when an internally driven conversation is likely to be overly influenced by conflicting agendas, when relationships are not conducive to an objective discussion or when an external view may well add value to internal perspectives.
- Do staff know they can come and talk to someone in Human Resources and Development about their career? You will need to address how you communicate what is on offer.
- Do you have people trained in career counselling? Training is essential for every manager offering career support. See Appendix E for details of providers of career counselling training.
- What would be the business benefits of investing in career counselling? Think of the 'bottom line'. You need to justify any investment. For example, the Audit Commission justified training a pool of line managers across the organisation during a time of significant change and upheaval, as it not only saved expensive one-off outplacement fees, but also built into the desired culture of continuing development for all staff.

- How would career counselling tie in with related activities, such as performance management, succession planning, assessment procedures and recruitment processes? Career-planning activities should be driven by individual requirements, and should feed into the organisation's career-management activities, along with, but separate from, performance management, succession planning, assessment and recruitment. Mix them up, and you will find it hard to do one of them successfully;

'short-termism' will prevail, with career planning, being a longer-term activity, losing out.

- What information and other resources do you, or could you, offer on the Intranet? Ensure that you combine any online self-assessment exercises with opportunities to talk these through with someone trained in career counselling. Provide accurate and up-to-date information, but neither overload people nor use the Intranet instead of face-to-face career support; they should complement each other.

- What is the organisation's strategy on career management, and how well communicated, understood and practised is it? If you are not clear what the strategy is, write a draft, and get it firmed up with the top person responsible before implementing any processes. The clearer you and your colleagues are, the easier it will be to communicate the services clearly.

- Are staff asking for better career management support through the employee survey? We often see career support services initiated following negative comments in the annual staff survey. It is important that there is a balance of responsibility in driving careers forward, shared between the employer and employee. Ask yourself not just 'Are we doing enough?', but also 'Are they doing enough?'

Support during Midlife transition

This can be a most confused time of life. It can bring a sense of physical decline. With increasing age, the length of retraining required, financial and personal commitments and the perceived difficulties of adjusting to a new lifestyle, a second or even third career can seem increasingly difficult to attain. In spite of outward signs of success, the person approaching the career counsellor may feel a sense of emptiness – a lack of fulfilment.

There may be an acute recognition of the gap between early aspirations and actual achievements. There may be a concern to do something 'more worthwhile'. Career counsellors could be asked to help clients recover their 'spark'. For some women, this may

be a time when, after bringing up their children, they want to return to a full-time career. Career counsellors could be asked to give help with assessing capabilities, restoring confidence and, in particular, looking at transferable skills.

Colin (1979) discusses the symptoms and causes of the so-called 'mid-life crises'. For many people it can be an opportunity for development, growth and fulfilment – see Clay (1989) for cases which demonstrate this.

Support at Forty-five plus

The possibility or reality of redundancy can hit at any time. Its effects will depend on many factors, including previous experience of redundancy, expectation of re-employment, previous sense of self-worth, the existence of a career plan, support from a partner and others, financial resources and practical as well as financial help from the employer. It can hit people particularly hard in this stage of life. Yet, with an ageing population, more employers are offering 'older-worker friendly' employment policies (for example, B&Q and Asda). Although the prospect of retirement may begin to emerge for some, others are having to and, in some cases, wanting to work beyond the traditional retirement age.

Some people may want to consider developing new, or reviving old, interests. The stereotype of 'slowing down' may be a concern for someone who is wanting to begin a new career. The prospect of an abrupt shift to leisure may cause fear or apprehension in some people whereas, with increased life expectancies, the post-retirement period should perhaps be seen much more positively as a 'Third Age' in which people can continue to grow and develop (Schuller and Walker, 1990). Some clients may want help in 'making sense of' or coming to terms with their past decisions so that they can more smoothly pass on to the next stage of their lives.

Problems to do with work—life balance

Work–life balance issues are of some concern to many clients coming for career counselling. For a few, they are crucial. Whilst the concern to address the lack of balance does often arise with people in their late twenties and beyond, many more younger people are setting out to avoid what they see as the trap into which their elders fell. 'Downsized' employers, increased levels of competition and lower profit margins are just a few of the factors that have contributed to pressures for higher levels of performance, and with fewer resources.

This means longer hours and overwork for people who no doubt have large financial outgoings. Such people may feel they have no choice but to continue in the same employment, even when it no longer matches their interests and values. Many more women now want to combine paid employment with mothering, whilst others, notably single mothers, may have little choice when they are the sole source of income. Thus, a common question clients want to address is how their work fits into the rest of their lives. Issues about work–life balance often arise for clients who are going through life transitions, or who have, or are considering having, children.

Laura had been working in a routine clerical job for ten years, since she left school; work had held very little significance for her. She was referred for career counselling by a bereavement counsellor, following the death of her husband. She now needed more satisfaction from her work.

Tariq worked long, anti-social hours in the catering industry. With two small children, he was beginning to feel that he was missing out on family life, and wanted a job which would allow him a better balance between work and family.

Althea had brought up two boys and a girl and had never worked outside the home. At the age of 36, she now wanted to get a job.

Malcolm was a self-employed builder, married to a nurse. After they had their first child, Malcolm's wife said she would like to go back to work and develop her career. His work was suffering because of a recession, and he wanted to discuss the implications of becoming a 'house husband'.

Jenny had been trained in teaching, but gave it up when she married. With two school-age children, she wanted to explore the possibilities of returning to work.

Consideration of the work–life balance may not initially be on the client's agenda in approaching a career counsellor, but it may need to be addressed if, for example, the

expression of a client's creativity at work is blocked and there appears to be more opportunity to develop it outside work.

When a client has work-life balance issues, an underlying conflict of values often exists, as the following case study illustrates:

Sandra came to career counselling saying that she was feeling 'burnt out' with social work, and tired and frustrated about all the reorganisations and cuts made to the services in her local authority. Although she was presenting with the career need to assess alternative possibilities for the future, during the first meeting it emerged that she had just discovered she was pregnant. At the age of 40, she had recently become very close to a man with whom she worked, and they had begun a sexual relationship. Having been a determinedly successful 'career woman' all her working life, she was feeling very agitated and confused about this relationship, her pregnancy and the implications for her future. Sandra was feeling torn in two directions. One side of her desperately wanted to move in with her friend and have a child 'before it's too late'. The other side of her felt that to do this would mean abandoning her many work responsibilities and 'causes' and sinking into a cosy and stereotyped domesticity which would be a betrayal of much of what she had fought against all her working life.

Decision-making problems

'I can't decide what to do' is probably the most common presenting problem with which career counsellors are faced. It may simply be the case that a client lacks the occupational information on which to base a decision, but an inability to make a career decision is more likely to stem from other causes, as Derek's case study demonstrates:

Derek was from Wales. He did exceptionally well at school, and went to Cambridge to read natural sciences. At first, although he felt out of place at times, he did very well. However, during his third year he became very unmotivated towards his studies, and this seemed to be connected with his lack of career direction. Exploration in several career counselling sessions revealed that Derek had never made a single educational decision himself, but had dutifully followed the advice of his teachers. In

spite of his ability, he was also frightened of making a commitment to a particular career, in case it was the 'wrong' one and he failed.

Ford (2002) views self-esteem – the level of satisfaction with self – as central to the ability to make a career decision. Raising self-awareness through career counselling can contribute to building self-esteem.

Some clients present as not *knowing* who they are; we often hear the statement 'I don't know my strengths and weaknesses.' Lack of a well-differentiated self-concept may be 'normal' for an adolescent client's life stage, as adolescents are likely to be separating psychologically from their parents and developing an independent identity as adults (Erikson, 1971). However, many adults who come for career counselling also lack a clear self-concept. These clients often ask for help in assessing their talents and capabilities in order to be better equipped to make a decision about which career direction to pursue. Other clients present as not *liking* who they are. They believe that they know themselves, but suffer from low self-esteem and need help in increasing it. Rational-emotive therapy has some useful frameworks to offer when considering career decision-making problems. Dryden (1979) states that, in his experience of career counselling, 'it is rare that a client is not subscribing to at least one of the irrational ideas outlined by Ellis (1962) that is relevant to his ability to make a career decision'. An example would be 'It is absolutely essential for me to reach the top in my chosen career; if I don't, it will be proof that I am a failure.'

Short-term solution-focused therapy offers some excellent tools to aid client decision making. One such tool is 'scaling'. Here is an example of how 'scaling techniques' may be used:

Career counsellor (Cc): I'd like you to imagine a scale of 1–10, where 10 indicates that you are completely clear and decided about what you are going to do next and 1 shows that you are absolutely undecided. Where are you now on this scale?

Client (Cl): Hmm about 4 or 5.

Cc: So what tells you you're at a 4 or 5 and not at 1?

Cl: Well, I am pretty clear now about what I like and dislike, and what matters to me. I know what I don't want to do.

Cc: OK, so if you moved up the scale a couple of points say, to 6 or 7, what would be in place then?

Cl: I'd have narrowed down the field to a couple of areas to look into.

Cc: What do you think needs to happen to achieve that?

This approach has a number of key points:

- It allows the client to determine his or her position on the scale.
- It focuses on resources and strengths already in place, not weaknesses and deficits.
- It moves from the general to the specific.
- It allows the individual the autonomy to set small steps towards achieving a future vision defined by the client.
- It defines success by observable differences, such as behaviour.

Problems brought about by change in organisations

The kinds of change in an organisation that can cause people to come for career counselling (or be referred by their employer) include:

- the need to apply for a previously held job in a restructured department;
- a change in the nature of a job: for example, primary teaching involves much more administration than it used to;
- technological changes, such as the impact of new IT systems on jobs and skill requirements;
- downsizing, leading to increased pressure on resources and more demanding performance targets;
- change of boss: for example, to a person whose philosophy and/or personal style is incompatible;
- change in organisational values: for example, a greater emphasis may be placed on business acumen;
- the liquidation of a small business; and
- reorganisation, leading to job loss or redundancy.

Redundancy

Although there is less stigma attached to redundancy in the 21st century, it is still rather an unmentionable word, often clothed in euphemistic phrases such as 'The company has had to downsize', 'Your job has been deleted' or 'We'll have to let you go.' A person whose job has been made redundant may approach a career counsellor with a deep sense of shock, a feeling of shame, a reinforced impression of his or her own inadequacies, a strongly defiant reaction, or a sense of relief. Some people will actually say to the career counsellor 'I have been made redundant' because they *feel* redundant. The reality is that usually it is the job, not the individual, that has been made redundant.

The process of movement from one life situation (for example, employment) to another (for example, unemployment) involves coming to terms with loss, and the intense feelings of grief experienced after a redundancy can be similar to those felt by the bereaved. The degree of pain felt will depend on many individual factors, but perhaps the length of time with the employer, expectancy of re-employment, previous unresolved experiences of loss and the available financial and emotional support are the key ones. The following case studies illustrate how the 'same' event (reorganisation and subsequent 'deletion' of a person's job) can be experienced quite differently because of these individual factors:

Timothy had been in the accounts department of his company for 25 years. He was proud of working for his company, and he worked 'beyond the call of duty'. Since his partner died of cancer two years previously, he had been working even longer hours. He was 49 years old, and had an ageing mother to support. When he heard his job was 'surplus to requirements' after a reorganisation, he was very upset. In career counselling, it took several meetings for Timothy to work through his feelings of shock, panic and grief.

Jan was 41. She had been employed in her job as a researcher for 12 years. However, although she liked doing research, she had ceased to enjoy working for her employing organisation. She had a new boss for whom she had very little respect, and for the past year she had been considering leaving. She had few financial commitments, and good emotional support at home. When she heard her job was

'deleted' due to financial cutbacks, her first reaction was a deep sense of relief. In career counselling, although she addressed some feelings of bitterness (that her boss appeared not to value her skills), she was able to come to terms with the emotional impact very rapidly.

Problems related to performance are perhaps the most obvious kind to precipitate the need for a visit to a career counsellor. 'Career' has, after all, been traditionally associated with achievement, and a career counsellor may well be seen as someone able to get the individual back on the, temporarily interrupted, path to success. There are two ways in which performance-related problems may come to light. Firstly, individuals may see themselves as having failed, or in a position where they might soon fail. Secondly, an employing organisation may have decided that an individual has, according to its requirements, failed. The two may or may not overlap. Below is a list of some common presenting situations which may be linked to performance problems.

- *Dismissal*
- *Poor performance appraisal*
- *Failure to gain promotion after internal assessment*
- *Being 'passed over' for promotion in favour of a younger colleague*
- *Results consistently worse than those of colleagues*
- *Criticism from significant others (for example, parents, partners) for lack of achievement*
- *Continuing rejections on the job market*
- *'Escaping' from failures by changing job/house/country*
- *Loss of motivation and effectiveness, which may arise because the person has reached a 'career plateau', perhaps through a lack of opportunities for career advancement.*

At such times of perceived failure, feelings which may have lain dormant for years can surface. For example, long-time low self-esteem led Paul to inappropriate career choices in the desire to gain recognition from his father, who was incapable of showing any love for his son because of his own 'stiff upper lip' upbringing. Perfectionist values led Alice to accept from herself nothing but the best, even though she was performing very capably in most areas. As with redundancy, this 'sudden realisation' can come as a shock: 'I've never failed/had a poor assessment/been rejected before.'

SUMMING UP

Effective career management strategies and career counselling and other measures to support it can contribute significantly to valued staff staying in the organisation. Any career support should be offered confidentially and is separated from other roles, such as recruitment and resourcing. Informal career conversations can be just as effective as those conducted formally. Good quality information should be available and accessible following career counselling. Having a clear strategy on career management to inform the kind of practices and support are needed.

MODEL QUESTIONS

1. Elaborate on the counselling functions in an organisation.
2. What are the problems brought about by changes in organisations?
3. How can systematic and more professional career support be offered?
4. What are the various outcomes of career counselling?

SUGGESTED READINGS

Michael Carroll (1996). *Workplace Counselling: A Systematic Approach to Employee Care*. New Delhi: Sage Publications.

Robert Nathan & Linda Hill (1992). *Career Counselling*. New Delhi: Sage Publications

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LESSON – 5: PARENTING

OBJECTIVES

- To understand the nuances of parenting
- To learn about family and child care in India
- To learn various principles of parenting
- To discern the different ways in which parents can be counselled

STRUCTURE

- 5.1. Introduction
- 5.2. Parenting
- 5.3. Family and child care in India
- 5.4. Principles of parenting
- 5.5. Counselling with parents
- 5.6. Summing Up
- 5.7. Model questions
- 5.8. Suggested Readings

INTRODUCTION

A family, especially parents, are a child's backbone. But care must be taken that the child develops into a wonderful independent individual. In India, from the kind of clothes children wear to the stream they choose to study in school, everything is decided by their parents. This even continues into the selection of college, course, city of work and even the spouse, where there is a huge role played by the parents in decision making, though not entirely. How does this parenting interference or influence shape/make or mar the life of a child is interesting to study. A lot depends on the parenting that the child receives and the kind of parent he turns out to be for his children. Too much of authoritarianism in parenting builds only resentment in the children and influences greatly the way they turn out to be as adults. That is the basic reason why the area of parenting has gained a lot of salience and a lot of research is done in the area too.

Parenting

Parenting is a challenging process, and many parents wonder at times whether they are doing the best for their child. Parent counselling and education are evidence-based approaches for helping parents to cope with a range of difficulties affecting their children. Parent counselling may help in the following issues that may cause distress:

- Children refusing to follow instructions
- Not being sure how to communicate effectively with their children
- Trouble implementing routines
- Finding it hard to know what emotions your child is experiencing
- Feeling like you are in a “power struggle” with your child
- Strategies to manage behavior are not working.

Counselling can occur with one or both parents, and focuses on helping parents to learn ways to encourage positive behaviour, manage undesirable behaviour, and understand the emotional needs of their children.

In the investigation of parent-child interactions, studies on parent-child relationships and parenting, parent attitudes, discipline methods and their impact on children’s development have been the primary areas of research. Developmental researchers in various cultures have over the years focused much of their attention on accounts of socialization patterns and the overt behaviour of the parents (when parents do) with limited attention to their thoughts as parents (what parents believe). Parental behaviour has been the preferred pathway to understanding development.

All parents have some ideas about the manner in which children ought to be raised, about what they feel must be an essential part of their children’s lives, about the goals and values that they consider important about children and childhood. These culturally shared ideas that parents have about children and their development are referred to as beliefs. They include parental explanations and understandings of everyday events, childcare customs

and choices and are often implicit, “taken for granted ideas” about the “right” way to think or act.

Parental beliefs or parenting is of value because they acknowledge the cognition of parents and recognize them as thinking beings. Additionally, these beliefs guide parental behaviour and activity. Because of their link with parental goals and values, parenting influences developmental outcomes directly or indirectly. Parenting is expressed in the manner in which the everyday lives and activities of children are organized. These routine activities are the visible representations that serve to convey beliefs to both parents as well as children.

The link between parental beliefs and behavior and from behaviour to the development of children is a tenuous one. However, “beliefs as parts of the parents’ psychological system are systematically linked to parental action and different forms of that link may have different consequences for the life-world of developing children”. Parental beliefs are constructed from the collective cultural resources to constitute the personal beliefs of parents. Definite cultural variations are also reflected in the fact that each cultural group determines for itself the manner in which parents bring up their children. These cultural scripts influence the different beliefs and practices of parents as well as the goals parents work towards. Despite intra cultural homogeneity, the variation in parenting beliefs must be recognized.

Parental beliefs come from individual experiences, interactions with family, friends and professionals as well as through cultural messages. Diverse cultural and familial positions contribute to the multiplicity of beliefs held by parents. Personal experiences such as education, occupation, socioeconomic considerations and “the availability of experts” make each parenting experience a unique one. The bidirectional flow of cultural messages implies a co-constructionist perspective in the development of parental beliefs. Parents and children are both receivers as well as a source of culture.

Family and Childcare in India

India is a nation characterized by cultural diversity and plurality at many levels. Heterogeneity is a salient feature of social reality. In India, the family is a key social institution that exerts a definitive influence on the lives of all its members. The family is central to all levels of social interaction and individuals are identified by the family they belong to, by their fathers and their forefathers. The family is the hub of all activity from the day a child is born. With a large majority of families having a joint structure, the identities of members also take on collective hues.

Children in India grow up in a network of multiple interactions with members from within and outside the family. Despite the pivotal role played by mothers in the lives of their children, the raising of children has often been a shared experience with family, friends and others in the neighborhood. This inclusive arrangement is especially prevalent in the case of joint families and in rural and semi-urban communities.

In urban nuclear households, the experiences of childhood and parenting show a great deal of diversity making it difficult to provide a single prototype. However, education and global interface has provided parents with new ideas about childcare and development which they integrate with traditional wisdom and practices to a lesser or greater extent as and when required. The smaller family size has also modified but not eliminated the involvement of extended kin members. Even though families are becoming smaller in size and essentially nuclear in structure (especially in urban metropolises), the ethos of the family continues to be characterized by “jointedness”.

There is a high value on being connected and the network of relationships is sustained across distances and changing aspirations, occupations and lifestyles. In the realm of family and childcare, changes due to urban mobility are visible in the altered patterns of family interaction, evolving role expectations and renewed ideas about motherhood and fatherhood. When mothers go out for work, arrangements of childcare and household management are bound to change.

With rapid urban influences several changes have been documented in the structure and functioning of families in India. Increased global and modern influences have initiated many changes in gender and class equations as well as in family dynamics. The plurality and contradictory nature of Indian social reality is vividly illustrated by descriptions of changing family structure and roles. The family in India continues to be at the center of social organisation. And yet, despite providing a point of anchorage, the role of the family is continually being altered. Its approval is less important and its disapproval is gradually becoming less significant.

The parent-child relationship is embedded in the socio-cultural, economic and historic location of the family and the community. The interface between parents and children emerges from their experience in culturally loaded interactions and from parents' own cognitions. Parental behaviour is therefore greatly influenced by the beliefs that people subscribe to. Living in urban circumstances creates specific demands for children, parents and families. These shifting priorities coupled with the rapid changes in Indian culture indicate the need to renew ideas about parenting and childhood in India, without losing sight of the persistent patterns. It is at this juncture that counselling can come in extremely handy and help maintain the semblance in families.

Parental love and affection are much needed and desired by children but in the process, parents do not understand that they are making the child overtly dependent on them. A child often stops pursuing his dreams and follows his parents' dreams. Academics are given a lot of importance and priority by Indian parents. Additionally, the Indian way of parenting is quite conservative. It is rare to see teenagers discussing topics like sex, drinking and smoking freely with their parents. In fact, a conversation on these topics is often avoided in Indian homes. As a result, children pick up information about these issues from the incorrect sources and end up adopting the wrong path. Parents need to understand that after an age they need to start becoming their child's friends than being their protectors as they can then help their child grow better.

Parental interference is not just limited to deciding the career options but also includes deciding the perfect alliance for their children. India is probably the only country where

arranged marriages are highly encouraged and love marriages are looked down upon. Such a form of parenting leads children to be economically, socially and emotionally dependent on their parents. Parents want to protect their children but being overprotective can lead to low self confidence levels in the children. Right kind of parenting can definitely shape the future of a child in today's highly competitive world.

PRINCIPLES OF PARENTING

Steinberg writes that while no parent is perfect, all parents can improve their parenting skills. The following principles are valid for anyone dealing with children, from parents to teachers, coaches, and even babysitters.

- What you do matters. How you treat and respond to the child matters, the child is watching. This important principle urges parents not to react spontaneously, but with a deliberate sense of what they wish to accomplish with a given response or intervention.
- You cannot be too loving. Steinberg insists that parents cannot love a child too much, as determined by expressions of warmth and affection. Rather, when we talk about 'spoiling'; a child with too much 'love', we are actually referring to the consequences of giving a child too many things in place of love, be the leniency, lowered expectations, or material gifts.
- Be involved in your child's life. This principle involves showing up for the relationship, being 'there' for the child mentally as well as physically. The consequences of adopting this one is that parents are constantly re-prioritizing and re-arranging their lives, sacrificing what they would like to do for what their child's needs mean that they should do. It does not mean taking over the child's duties, such as homework (or for that matter correcting it before it goes to the teacher who, after all, needs to see if the child is learning). It does not mean that the parent who has not stepped inside the sports complex by the end of the season to watch a single game of their child is not following this principle, and is probably also hugely disappointing the child.

- Adapt your parenting to fit your child. Parents who love having a baby around may be loath to see that baby develops, but grow the child must: no parental “freeze-framing” allowed. Frustrated parents have difficulty seeing suddenly rebellious toddlers frequently utter their favourite new word: “No”! but the drive toward individuation that underlies that refusal to cooperate is the same as the one that launches the late adolescent, prepared, into a responsible adult life. The drive toward mental and psychological autonomy that generates a sense of intellectual curiosity is also the one that makes the fourteen-year-old argumentative at home. It is easy to come down hard on children, enforcing parent-generated rules inflexibly and without regard for developmental milestones being reached, but a second look at what may be motivating behaviour is important for the child. For example, an irritable twelve-year-old who can’t seem to concentrate could be depressed or sleep-deprived. Steinberg advises parents to let professionals diagnose whether the problem is depression or, possibly difficulty structuring time in order to get homework and other duties completed in time to get sufficient sleep.
- Establish and set rules. Mental health helpers realise (but not all parents do) that self-discipline springs eventually from appropriate external discipline (read: boundaries set and rules followed) earlier on, as children learn to govern themselves based on how they were managed when younger. Steinberg tells parents that they should always be able to answer three questions: (1) “Where is my child?” (2) “Who is with my child?” (3) “What is my child doing?” Children who were reared without (reasonable) rules or boundaries enforced will have difficulty disciplining themselves later on. Note to parents: this is not an excuse for micro-managing, which may achieve the opposite effect!
- Foster your child’s independence. Similarly, to dealing with rules, the limits set externally by parents when the child is young are what allow the child to develop the internal limits (self-control) later. When parents also encourage independence, children gain a sense of self-direction. Successful, autonomous adult life requires both. You can be on the lookout for a common parental mistake: assuming that a strong drive for independence is rebelliousness or disobedience. You can help parents recognise, rather, that it is human nature to want to feel in control rather than be controlled by someone else.

- Be consistent. Steinberg insists that, when parents' rules vary from day to day (or situation to situation?), then the child's misbehaviour is the parents' fault, not the child's. Consistency, he claims, is the parent's most important disciplinary tool, suitably sharpened by clear identification of the parent's non-negotiables (e.g., a stance that a child might sometimes be allowed to stay up a bit later, but she is never allowed to jump into the swimming pool right on top of her little brother). The more the parent's authority is based on wisdom, not power, the less children will challenge it. Inconsistency is confusing for children.
- Avoid harsh discipline. Parents invoke many forms of excessive discipline, but the worst is that of physical punishment, says Steinberg. Children who are spanked, hit, or slapped are more prone to fighting with other children. They are more likely to be bullies and more likely to use aggression to solve disputes with others. Parents should never hit a child; spanking causes aggression, which can lead to relationship problems with others. "Timeouts" are much more effective.
- Explain your rules and decisions. Good parents have expectations for their child to live up to, but those may not be obvious to the child — or even teenager — with their lesser life experience and different priorities. While parents tend to over-explain to young children and under-explain to adolescents, it is still worth noting that explanations help to engender cooperation. When children know why a parent needs or wants something done, they are more likely to cooperate (note Principle 7 on consistency here; rules based on wisdom are more likely to be cooperated with).
- Treat your child with respect. If parents wish to get respectful treatment from their child, they must extend respect to them. Children should be extended the same courtesies as anyone else, including our friends, parents, and bosses. Parents should speak politely, pay attention when the child is speaking to them, and treat him or her kindly. Parents should try to please children when that is possible. Children will treat others the way their parents treat them and their relationship with their child is that child's foundation for relationships with others.

COUNSELLING WITH PARENTS

Most problem children are products of problem homes. The disturbing features in a home affect the harmonious development of the children. The incalculable harm which parents do to their children is usually not grasped by most parents. Parent counselling is aimed at helping parents become sensitive to the possible adverse effect of their behaviour on their children. By helping the parents gain a better understanding of themselves and their own personalities much harmony could be affected.

Parent counselling deals with the area of parent-child relationships concerning the dimension of dependence-independence. Most parents are deeply concerned about the well-being of their children and are afraid that if left to themselves the children may harm themselves. Hence, they become over-protective which is resented by the children. Another area of parent-child conflict concerns vocational choice. Most parents begin with the presumption that they know what is best for their children. Children have their own ideas and this usually results in a clash of ideas, interests and personalities. Parent counselling thus is one of the important services that can help foster a healthy home atmosphere.

It is becoming increasingly recognized that there should be a close liaison between school and home, parents and teachers. For this purpose, parent-teacher associations (PTAs) have been formed. The schools managed by local self-government bodies in India pay scant regard to the need for PTAs. A few missionary schools and private schools have been successfully holding PTA meetings and reporting encouraging results. It is firmly believed that there is a genuine need for counselling parents.

Parent-teacher meetings are becoming more common in schools. A parent may visit a teacher at the latter's request or a parent may want to know why his/her child has not done well in a particular subject handled by the teacher or ask the teacher for an explanation regarding a punishment to a pupil. There are other parents who believe in having informal contacts and hence visit schools. Sometimes parents may feel embarrassed or offended or belittled about being asked by the teacher to go over to the school to discuss their child. Some parents get annoyed because they believe that it is the business of the school to take complete charge of their children and that they have no role to play.

Parents usually are a heterogeneous lot. They have their own perceptions, expectations, prejudices, likes and dislikes about the school or about individual teachers. A teacher's apprehensions of parents are not entirely unfounded. They find that some of the parents are belligerent, fault-finding and unsympathetic. Some parents are uncooperative and disinterested.

Parents understandably are indulgent and so they see their children in a different light. On the other hand, for the teacher, the child of a particular parent is one of the several hundred pupils he may be seeing daily. The parent, as a parent, may not be able to see the problem of his or her child as the teacher sees it (as a problem of a member of his class). If the parent is told of a conduct problem of his child, he may feel hurt, embarrassed and may even become disturbed. The parent may take a defensive attitude or react in a hostile manner. Some parents may feel hurt and become very apologetic.

The counsellor has to see the pupil's actions without bias and enlist the parent's cooperation for doing something positive for the child. The parent, motivated by his protective instinct, may defend the child's actions. In all such cases, the counsellor must behave with great caution and professional experience to win over the confidence and trust of the parent and help him see the shortcomings or the problems of his child in an objective manner. This requires a considerable amount of sympathetic understanding of the parent. When once the parent's confidence and trust are secured, it becomes easy to enlist his/her cooperation. The assurance of confidentiality and privacy will reassure him/her.

Some parents have difficulty in expressing themselves. A parent may be reluctant to talk. The counsellor has to first establish a warm relationship to open up lines of free communication by talking about the positive aspects. The parent's initial resistance can be overcome slowly with patient handling. This brings home the importance of good relationships for the natural release of feelings. By adopting an understanding attitude, the defensive reactions of the parent can be surmounted and by persuading the parent to talk, his inhibitions can be overcome. It is always necessary to remember that the manner in

which the parent sees the problem of his child may be very different from the way in which the teacher or counsellor sees it.

The important objective of a parent-teacher conference is to gain insight into the child's behaviour to get a proper perspective from the point of view of the classroom situation and the home environment. If the parent thinks that he has to take the blame for the failing of his child he may take a hostile attitude towards the school but if the parent is made to feel that he will be helping in the resolution of his child's problems, he will take a different attitude. In the course of the meeting the parent may even be prepared to recognize the problems of his child which he would have otherwise stoutly rejected if presented in a different manner.

Sometimes parents' help is sought to gain some information on about the child's personality problems. Such information concerning the pupil may go a long way in resolving his problem and help him in his scholastic work.

In most PTA meetings, group sessions can be organized to use the group approach to resolve problems. In group situations people see their problems in relation to other people's problems and find them similar and, therefore, not unique. Understanding insights can help a great deal in reducing the tensions and anxieties of parents.

Parenting has therefore become an extremely tight rope walk. Parents wish to provide the best for their children and hence are on the lookout for good piece of advice on the same. There is abundant conflicting advice on how to raise a kid who is confident, kind and successful. At the same time, every aspect of being a parent has also become more complicated and more fraught with multiple things. Throughout the circus act of parenting, it is important to focus on balancing priorities, juggling responsibilities and quickly flipping between the needs of children, other members of the family and oneself. Modern day parents have the entire internet at their disposal and there is a host of information available. There are various parenting styles and no single style is considered as a right and perfect way.

SUMMING UP

Parenting is indeed a tight rope walk. And the selection of goal for parental counselling is based on parental needs, adaptation stage of parents, impact of disability, and the availability of resources and support system. Parent counselling removes the pressure of having to parent perfectly. One of the most common reasons parents avoid counselling is the idea that going to counselling means you have failed as a parent. In fact, it's the opposite. The counsellor's role is to work *with* the parent without judgment, helping the parent be the best mother or father they are able to be.

MODEL QUESTIONS

1. What is parenting?
2. Write short notes on family and child care in India.
3. Enlist the various principles of parenting.
4. Write about the chief characteristics of counselling with parents.

SUGGESTED READINGS

Davis, J.L. (2005). 10 Commandments of good parenting. WebMD.

Steinberg, L. (2005). The 10 basic principles of good parenting. New York: Simon & Schuster.

Robert Nathan, Linda Hill Estate (2008). *Career Counseling*. New Delhi: Sage Publications.

www.mentalhealthacademy.com.au

worldview.unc.edu (Beliefs on Parenting and Childhood in India)

LESSON – 6: CAREER GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING IN EDUCATION

OBJECTIVES

- To understand the nuances in career guidance and counselling
- To learn about how career counselling overlaps with other forms of help
- To discern the different types of issues that come under the purview of career counselling

STRUCTURE

- 6.1. Introduction
- 6.2. Career guidance
- 6.3. What is career counselling?
- 6.4. How career counselling overlaps with other forms of help?
- 6.5. Services offered by career counsellors
- 6.6. Issues brought to career counselling
- 6.7. Stress management and career counselling
- 6.8. Summing Up
- 6.9. Model questions
- 6.10. Suggested Readings

INTRODUCTION

Comprehensive career guidance tries to teach people to plan and make decisions about work and learning. Career guidance makes information about the labour market and about educational opportunities more accessible by organizing it, systematizing it, and making it available when and where people need it. It can be defined as a comprehensive, developmental program designed to assist individuals in making and implementing informed educational and occupational choices. This career decision then results in their social, financial and emotional wellbeing throughout.

Career guidance help students understand their strengths and weaknesses and then match them with their skills and interest so that they get the best suitable career choice. Professional career and college counselling help in narrowing down the options so that finding the right career or college becomes easy. There are six major advantages of career guidance and they are:

- Helps in determination of strengths and weaknesses
- Setting objectives for greater results
- Discarding confusion
- Getting to know various avenues
- Finding the right kind of support and motivation
- Getting the right kind of job search support.

Career guidance helps lay the foundation stone for career development. Career development in turn is the process of managing life, learning and work over the lifespan. It applies to everyone: children think about what they want to do as adults and start to form ideas about work and adult life during their early childhood development itself.

CAREER GUIDANCE

Career guidance was the central theme of the early guidance movement and consisted of helping the individual chose a suitable vocation. Today, vocational counselling is concerned with career maturity of the individual within a developmental stream. Towards this end, a counsellor designs intervention strategies to assist his client. The questions concerning vocational guidance continue to be vexing and unresolved owing to unpredictability in the rate of change in today's industrial society. Alvin Toffler (1970) has superbly portrayed the uncertain conditions that could verily result from super-industrialization. It makes rational career planning not only difficult but also impracticable owing to the accelerated rate of adolescence.

The counsellor, both at the elementary and secondary school levels, is emerging as a counsellor to students and consultant to teachers, parents and administrators. As counsellor of students, he helps resolve the problems of a few students and as consultant he is able to serve more students by consulting teachers, parents and administrators, thus enhancing sensitivity to teacher problems and deepening their insights into pupil behaviour

and activities and by initiating them in the basic skills of pupil guidance. This enhances the scope of the functioning of the counsellor and helps serve a larger body of pupils, leading to such desirable goals as better scholastic performance and a significant reduction in behavioural and discipline problems.

The increasing range of counselling services will lead to an interdisciplinary approach in the training and preparation of guidance personnel. More meaningful counsellor preparation programmes will have to be implemented. The most important future trend in this regard is the setting up of an increasing number of guidance services in the developing countries. For this the developing countries will require the cooperation and help of the advanced countries. Another possible trend of great significance is the adoption of standards for counsellor preparation and certification. Counselling may become more specialized so that specific needs of different segments of the society can be served differently and more appropriately.

The most fascinating possible trend could be that under the influence of counselling, far-reaching changes in the educational systems may be made, resulting in greater pupil involvement which would lead to more tangible behavioral changes in the desirable direction. Also, counselling practice could lead to improved instructional practices and evaluative techniques. Counselling may also be required in other consumer areas.

Counselling is yet to become a life career in the developing countries, as for example in countries like India where there is no provision for pupil guidance and counselling. The reasons for this neglect are not far to seek. The developing countries are facing an uphill task of improving the material lot of the people. When resources are meagre, it becomes impossible to attend to such things as pupil guidance and personality growth programmes. However, in the near future it is very likely that the Indian government will take genuine interest in providing counselling for students.

What is career counselling?

Many people, if asked to define career counselling, would probably opt for something resembling the approach proposed by Parsons, as long ago as 1909. He wrote:

In the wise choice of vocation, there are three factors.

1. A clear understanding of yourself
2. A knowledge of the requirements and prospects in different lines of work
3. True reasoning on the relations of these two groups of facts.

This approach is based on the measurement, through testing, of the client's aptitudes and interests, followed by a recommendation by an 'expert' on occupations which provide a match in terms of aptitudes and interests required. This process of 'talent matching' was the predominant form of assistance available to people seeking career help until the 1960s. For a number of reasons, we believe that career counsellors should not accept their clients' demands and expectations for 'advice on the best career'.

Firstly, making appropriate occupational decisions calls for the assistance of skilled and sensitive counselling: to reach the point where a rational decision can be made, emotional issues such as managing relationships, coping with loss and change and recovering from damaged self-esteem may first have to be addressed.

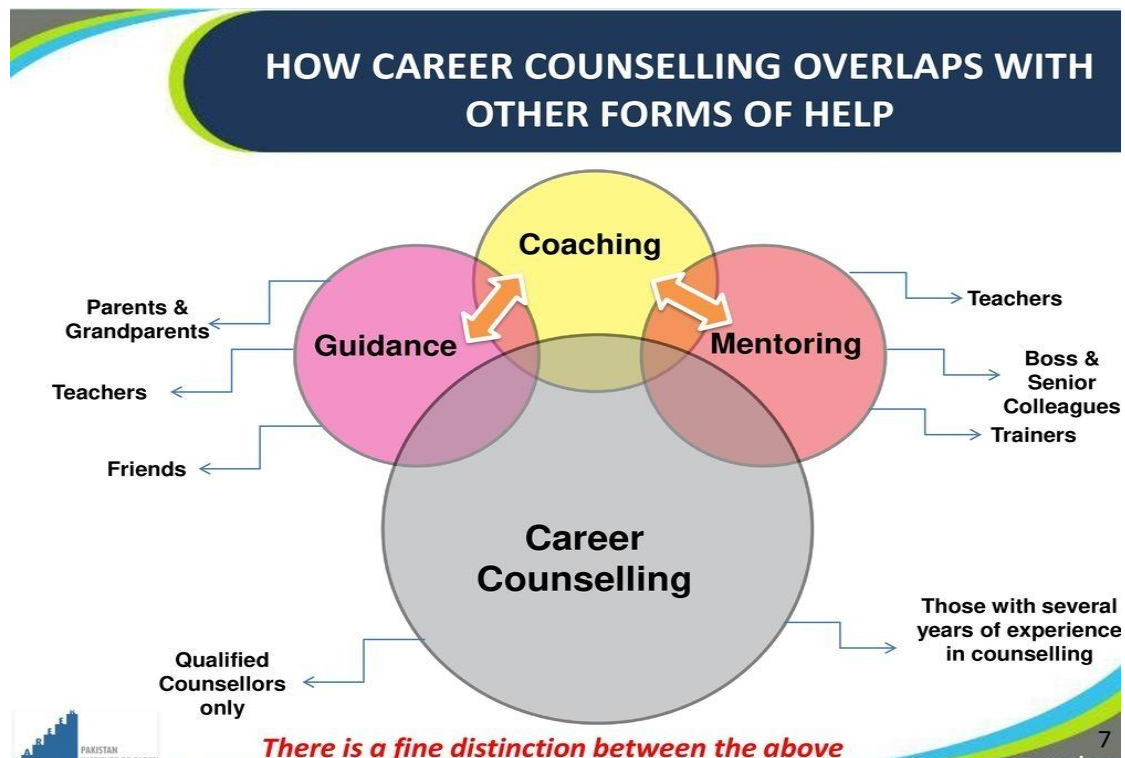
Secondly, since a 'job for life' is no longer a reality, lifelong decision-making skills are more conducive to the continuing challenge of making appropriate life and occupational choices, which are themselves increasingly interdependent.

Thirdly, employers require an increasingly flexible approach to their changing requirements, expecting employees to take responsibility for managing their own development, which might mean creating or accepting a 'development opportunity', such as a secondment, rather than waiting for promotion. There is also an increasing recognition that individuals themselves progress through a number of life stages and changes in their role requirements and responsibilities.

Fourthly, making decisions is very much a matter of personal responsibility. A counselling approach empowers people to take such responsibility where they, not the counsellor, are the 'expert'.

The career counsellor, like all other counsellors, provides time, support, attention, skill and a structure which enables clients to become more aware of their own resources in order to lead a more satisfying life. We see career counselling as a *process which enables people to recognize and utilize their resources to make career-related decisions and manage career-related issues*. Although focusing on the work-related part of a person's life, it also takes into account the interdependence of career and non-career considerations.

HOW CAREER COUNSELLING OVERLAPS WITH OTHER FORMS OF HELP



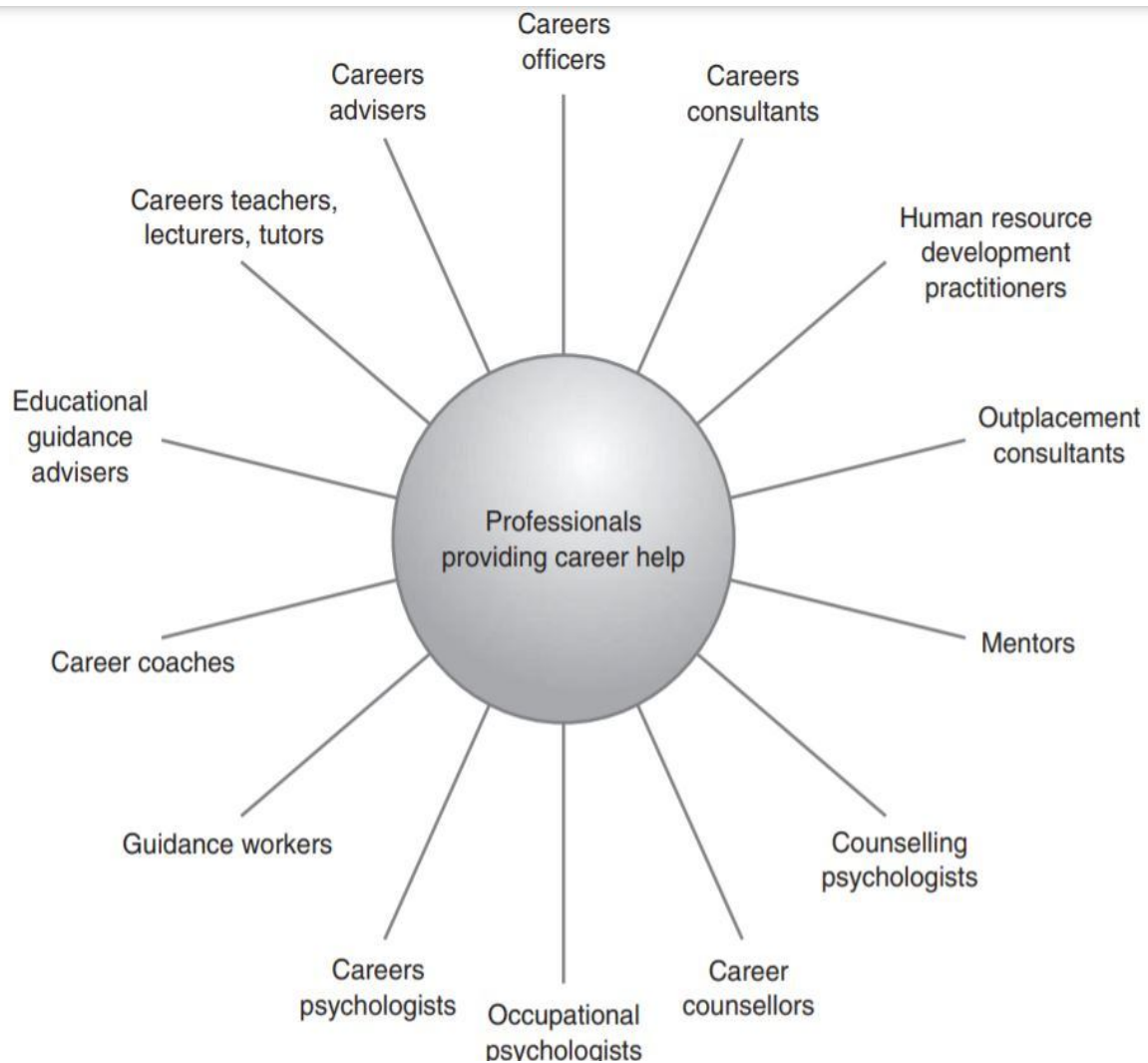
The above figure illustrates the overlap of career counselling with mentoring/personal counselling, careers guidance and coaching. The larger 'career counselling' circle indicates that the focus needs to remain on the *career* aspects of the client's life and the approach is primarily one rooted in *counselling*.

'Coaching' means different things to different people. People coming for career counselling are often unclear about their career direction. Coaching aims to enable people to become more effective in their current careers. There is overlap, but there is also a distinction.

In 1991 Hawthorn described 'guidance' as 'help for individuals to make choices about education, training and employment'. Today, the terms 'advice' and 'information', as well as 'guidance', are as commonly used to describe what careers services offer to potential users. We see this as a positive sign, being a move away from the directive and prescriptive connotations of the term 'guidance'. The *activities* of those involved in providing information, advice and guidance will involve counselling, as well as coaching, teaching, assessment and advocacy.

In addressing personal concerns regarding redundancy, retraining, relocation, retirement, relationships at work, promotion, career breaks and stress, career counselling necessarily overlaps with personal counselling.

Help for young people in making career decisions is offered by careers teachers in schools and professionally qualified staff employed by the organisations. There are various professionals involved in helping others to face career dilemmas and the same is depicted in the figure below.



An increasing number of employers offer career help to their staff, for example:

- Career development discussions to clarify career direction and/or development plans;
- Workshops for 'high potential' people to assess and reflect on their suitability for general management or partnership;
- Career support for specific groups, such as graduates, women or ethnic minorities;
- Career management centers or clinics, available for all on a confidential basis;
- Learning and development advice, information and counselling, to support career development;
- Outplacement help with job hunting for people whose jobs are being made redundant;
- Pre-retirement planning services;

- Advice, information and self-assessment exercises via an intranet site; and
- Coaching and mentoring.

Although traditionally offered on a one-to-one basis, career counselling is increasingly being offered in groups. There are a number of advantages of working in groups:

- They are economical to run;
- A group provides a wider range of resources, ideas and information;
- Participants realize that they are not alone, as others are facing similar issues;
- Mutual support is readily available both during and after the group's existence;
- There is less dependency on the career counsellor as 'expert'; and
- Groups provide more opportunities to use active techniques such as coaching in job-hunting skills.

The services which may be offered by career counsellors are as follows:

One-to-one career counselling:

- one-off consultation;
- a series of one-to-one meetings without assessment;
- a series of one-to-one meetings with questionnaire and test administration, feedback and counselling;
- a series of career counselling meetings with written assignments (but no tests); and
- a series of career counselling meetings with tests and written assignments.

Group career counselling:

- career development workshops (also known by other titles, such as career planning, review workshops or self-development groups).

Access to careers, learning and development information via a library or the Internet.

Coaching in job-hunting techniques, including CV writing and interview practice: this may be one to one or group based.

The majority of career counsellors provide their clients with access to careers information in some form. Some career counsellors make use of web-based occupational information and other careers guidance tools.

Stage	Client tasks	Counsellor tasks
Screening, contracting, exploring	<p>Making a preliminary assessment of the suitability of career counselling.</p> <p>Undertaking written preparation.</p> <p>Testing out readiness for and appropriateness of career counselling.</p> <p>Openness to exploring presenting concerns and influences on career and educational development and choices.</p> <p>Clarifying expectations of career counselling.</p> <p>Discussing and agreeing contract.</p>	<p>Educating and informing clients about career counselling, through written, spoken and face-to-face communication.</p> <p>Evaluating the client's readiness for and appropriateness of career counselling, suggesting more suitable forms of help, if necessary.</p> <p>Building rapport, facilitating exploration.</p> <p>Establishing contract (i.e. confidentiality, structure etc.).</p>
Enabling client's understanding	<p>Considering the questions: Who am I? Where am I now? What do I want? Where do I want to be?</p> <p>Completing self-assessment exercises, psychometric tests and questionnaires, as appropriate.</p> <p>Being prepared to tackle the question 'What's stopping me?'</p> <p>Researching information on work opportunities.</p>	<p>Facilitating exploration of feelings and beliefs associated with career concern/issues.</p> <p>Helping client to identify important themes and integrate self-understanding.</p> <p>Making appropriate use of self-assessment exercises and psychometric tests and questionnaires.</p> <p>Helping client to overcome blocks to action, using challenging skills, if appropriate.</p> <p>Signposting information on work possibilities.</p>
Action, outcome and endings	<p>Completing decision-making and action-planning exercises.</p> <p>Developing options and choosing between options.</p> <p>Putting decision into action.</p> <p>Agreeing research tasks, if appropriate.</p> <p>Addressing fears of change.</p> <p>Evaluating need for continued support.</p> <p>Reviewing progress made towards objectives during career counselling.</p>	<p>Enabling clients to generate ideas and choose between them.</p> <p>Supporting client in developing and monitoring action plan.</p> <p>Agreeing research tasks, if appropriate.</p> <p>Helping clients face ambivalence about the future.</p> <p>Exploring client's need for continued support.</p> <p>Stressing importance of maintaining momentum.</p> <p>Helping client to identify resources and sources of support.</p>

Issues brought to career counselling

Individuals approach career counselling when they, or perhaps someone else, have identified issues in their lives which they perceive to be primarily career relate, and therefore appropriate for discussion with someone offering a career counselling service. This might be a service offered by an employer or an independent service. However, it is naïve and unrealistic to help clients solve their career problems without allowing them to see the wider ramifications of their situation. In order to find the best solution to a career-related issue, clients need to examine their career problem in the context of their lives as a whole.

Stress management and career counselling

Career counsellors will see many clients who are experiencing difficulty in coping. So, some knowledge of the nature of stress, its causes and strategies for coping with it will be useful. Today there is greater pressure than ever before for employees to perform well, and to do so with fewer resources. Job security can never be taken for granted, and the inevitability of change is an ever-present concern.

Making a choice of job and lifestyle based on clear information about strengths and weaknesses, interests and values, together with a consideration of external resources (such as support and commitments) may contribute to 'stress management'; but job and lifestyle choice will not be the only factors to consider.

Common questions which clients bring to career counselling:

- I feel at a crossroads in my career. Can you help me decide which way to go?
- I am shortly to be made redundant. Can you help me plan my future?
- I think I know what I want, but I can't seem to motivate myself. Can you help me explore what might be holding me back?
- I haven't worked for several years. Can you help me assess my true strengths and build up my confidence?
- I have growing feelings of dissatisfaction with my career. Can you help me reflect on the suitability of the career I have chosen?
- I'm not happy in my current job, but I am not sure whether I should change careers or just need a change of employer. Can you help me decide?
- Nothing seems to interest or excite me. I'm at a loss. Can you help me identify what really motivates me?
- I'm interested in so many things. Can you help me focus?
- My work and home life are out of balance. Can you help me gain some perspective and, consequently, a more satisfying balance?
- I think I know what I want, but I'm not being offered any openings. I'm uncertain whether I am aiming too high or if I need help improving my self-presentation. Can you help me address what could move me forward?

Every client coming for career counselling brings a unique response to whatever problems he or she is facing. A fundamental principle of any counselling intervention is that clients are allowed to find their own unique solution to a problem, *even if the problem being faced is a common one.*

Clients often come to career counselling feeling that they 'ought' to be different in some way from how they actually are; their individuality has not been allowed to flourish. Some of these feelings stem from parental values which have been internalized, so that people try to conform to or live up to parental expectations.

It is important for career counsellors to recognize the limitations of their skills, experience and qualifications in order to make appropriate and timely referrals to other qualified psychotherapists, counsellors or coaches.

SUMMING UP

With increasingly myriad career options rising, career counselling has become an essential part of people's life. Students after completing their education are often indecisive of what to do next. This indecisiveness could be a result of social pressure, lack of parental guidance, multiple career options, ignorance of personal potentials etc., career counsellors cater to these issues effectively. Although career counselling is vital to all age groups, teenagers can benefit most from it.

Besides students, career counselling also caters to employees who have already chosen a career and are not satisfied with it. These individuals are redirected towards their goals and are given insight into their professional orientation. Career counsellors also link students to experts who represent as models to encourage and to positively reinforce the students. Factors like life satisfaction, self-efficacy, happiness etc. are all co-dependent to job satisfaction. Therefore, there is a lot of importance given to career counselling.

MODEL QUESTIONS

1. What is career counselling? Elaborate.
2. How does career counselling overlap with other forms of help?
3. What are the services offered by career counsellors?
4. What are the issues brought to career counsellors?
5. Discuss stress management and career counselling.

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www.mentalhealthacademy.com.au

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LESSON – 7: INTRODUCTION, ASSUMPTIONS AND GOALS OF POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY

OBJECTIVES

- To learn about positive psychology
- To understand the different levels of positive psychology
- To know about the assumptions and goals of positive psychology

STRUCTURE

- 7.1. Introduction
- 7.2. Positive Psychology as a science
- 7.3. The levels of positive psychology
- 7.4. Assumptions and goals of Positive Psychology
- 7.5. Summing Up
- 7.6. Model Questions
- 7.7. Suggested Readings

INTRODUCTION

Positive psychology is a branch of psychology that utilizes scientific understanding and effective interventions to help people lead a more fulfilling life. Positive Psychology is the scientific study of the strengths and virtues that help individuals, communities and organizations to flourish.

Following the two World Wars research focused more on treatment of mental disorders. This was quite successful, as many disorders can now be cured. However, due to the focus on pathology, psychology became more of a 'victimology' which viewed humans as passive individuals controlled by external forces. Psychology focused more on the assessment, and treatment of mental illness. Positive psychology aims to widen the focus of psychology to study not just suffering and its mitigation but human strengths as well as virtues. Since the

time of Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle, the “good life” has been the subject of inquiry. As the field of psychology grew, the various psychological traditions contributed to our current understanding of the positive aspects of human experience.

Basically, there are four groups of individuals who focused on happiness and well-being before the emergence of positive psychology. They are as follows:

Greeks Aristotle’s (384–322 BCE) stated that the highest good for everyone was ‘eudaimonia’ or happiness. According to him, pleasure comes from engaging with virtuous activities.

Utilitarianism. According to Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill, policies of the governments should focus on achieving ‘the greatest good for the greatest number of people’. This is the principle of utility. Utilitarianism was the first field that measured happiness (Pawelski and Gupta, 2009). William James The main contribution of William James to positive psychology is through his book, *The Principles of Psychology*. The chapter, ‘The Emotions’, is quite relevant for positive psychology. He linked physiology, psychology and philosophy which helped in understanding the relationship between the mind and the body.

Humanistic psychology. Humanistic psychology emerged during the late 1950s as a reaction to psychoanalysis and behaviourism. It stated that these two systems of psychology look at the individual as a passive being. In this way they only depict the half picture of human nature. Humanistic psychology emphasized the study of the whole person. It believed that individuals are internally motivated to fulfil their human potential. Many psychologists see the roots of positive psychology in the humanistic psychology movement. Humanistic psychology however, criticizes positive psychology for leaving out important areas of research and that to prove that it is scientific positive psychology relies on quantitative methods. Martin Seligman, a professor at the University of Pennsylvania initiated the positive psychology movement. After years of his research on learned helplessness, in 1998 he became the President of the American Psychological Association (APA).

During the last 100 years the question that guided the thinking of most applied psychologists was “what is wrong with people?” After World War II, psychology was mainly a science of healing and so it focused exclusively on pathology and neglected the strengths, the development of which could actually prevent mental illnesses. Hence it focused on the dark side of human nature. It directed its attention to the study of mental illness and

understanding the conditions of the people suffering from these illnesses. People were looked at as passive controlled by external influences or inner conflicts. However, in the 21st century, the main question is “what is right with people?” This question addresses the main focus of positive psychology. It is now increasingly being understood that psychology is not just the study of weaknesses it is also a study of virtues and strengths. In contrast to the medical model which focuses on illness, positive psychology attempts to provide a balance by giving the brighter side of the picture also. In this it gives a complete picture of human thought and behavior. Hence, the main aim of positive psychology is to bring the study of strengths to the forefront.

The field of positive psychology concerns positive subjective experience, well-being, flow, joy, happiness, hope which help individuals and communities to thrive. Positive Psychology mainly studies positive emotions, positive individual traits, and positive institutions. Therefore, it studies positive emotions related to the past, present and the future. It studies positive individual traits such as courage, compassion, resilience, creativity, wisdom etc. positive psychology also studies the strengths that foster better communities. Positive psychologists aim to improve the human condition, and hence it enables people to lead a richer and more fulfilling life. The main areas of life where positive psychology contributes are work, raising kids to make them more resilient, establishing meaningful relationships, enhancing happiness and wellbeing and balancing positive and negative emotions.

Balanced view. Those following the pathology model, described some people at some particular times in their lives. They were also able to provide help to certain people with select problems. But they failed to provide a complete picture of humankind. Positive psychology in contrast focuses on what is good in mankind and its environment and how these assets and strengths can be inculcated. One of the major achievements of positive psychology has been its success in giving more attention to its theories and research findings. Martin Seligman has played a key role in igniting interest in this area and giving the label positive psychology (A term earlier used by Maslow, 1954).

Positive Psychology as a Science

Positive psychology strives to ensure that it is seen as a science and not as pseudoscience. For any discipline to qualify as a science, it is crucial for it to employ the scientific method for seeking knowledge. In *A Primer in Positive Psychology* (2006), Christopher Peterson acknowledges the usefulness of controlled experiments in psychology. However, he believes in using evidence to evaluate theories. Data from other sources such as case studies, interviews, surveys should also be considered. Many of the findings of positive psychology appear to be common sense. However, many of the findings within positive psychology are contrary to common sense. For example, many people believe that to be happy the two things required are physical attractiveness and great wealth. Research within positive psychology reveals that this is not true. Positive psychology attempts to follow the four main pillars of science: accuracy, objectivity, scepticism and open-mindedness.

The levels of positive psychology:

Positive psychology focuses on three levels - subjective, individual and the group.

- The subjective level involves the study of positive experiences.
- At the individual level, positive psychology aims to identify personal qualities, strengths and virtues.
- Finally, at the community level, the emphasis is on the qualities which help the communities to flourish

The scope of positive psychology:

Subject matter of positive psychology can be classified into three domains (Seligman 2002).

1. The pleasant life (pleasure)
2. The engaged life (engagement)
3. The meaningful life (meaning)

The first domain is the pleasant life which deals with positive emotions about the past, present and future. It aims to maximize positive emotions and minimize negative emotions. Next is the engaged life which deals with positive individual traits and engaging with interesting activities. The meaningful life deals with positive institutions and refers to having meaning and purpose in one's life.

Some of the major topics of interest in positive psychology include:

Happiness	Hope
Optimism and helplessness	Positive thinking
Mindfulness	Resilience
Flow	Wisdom
Character strengths and virtues	Emotional intelligence

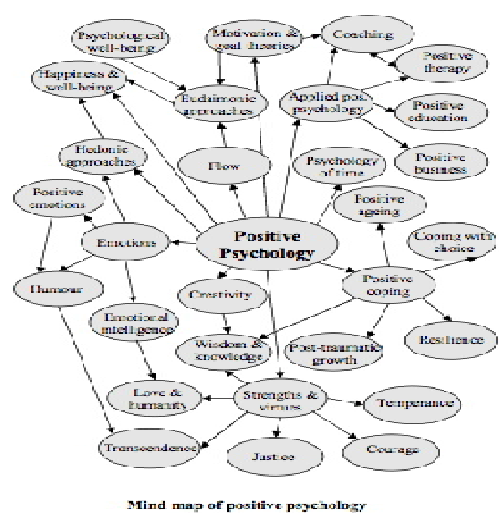
Positive psychology is a young field. Even in its short history it has focuses on many aspects of happy and healthy living. However, there are some areas that have yet to be explored in depth. One of such areas is the intersection between culture and positive psychology. Positive psychology is often criticized for taking a Western perspective. It is also said that the concepts and theories of positive psychology apply more to developed countries who are now in a post-materialistic era. Hence, positive psychology must take in from other cultures, concepts of good life and the factors affecting happiness.

Martin Seligman is a pioneer of Positive Psychology (the term itself was coined by Abraham Maslow), not simply because he has a systematic theory about why happy people are happy, but because he uses the scientific method to explore it. Through the use of exhaustive questionnaires, Seligman found that the most satisfied, upbeat people were those who had discovered and exploited their unique combination of “signature strengths,” such as humanity, temperance and persistence. This vision of happiness combines the virtue ethics of Confucius, Mencius and Aristotle with modern psychological theories of motivation. Seligman’s conclusion is that happiness has three dimensions that can be cultivated: the Pleasant Life, the Good Life, and the Meaningful Life.

The Pleasant Life is realised if we learn to savour and appreciate such basic pleasures as companionship, the natural environment and our bodily needs. We can remain pleasantly stuck at this stage or we can go on to experience the Good Life, which is achieved through discovering our unique virtues and strengths, and employing them creatively to enhance our lives. According to modern theories of self-esteem life is only genuinely satisfying if we discover value within ourselves. Yet one of the best ways of discovering this value is by

nourishing our unique strengths in contributing to the happiness of our fellow humans. Consequently, the final stage is the Meaningful Life, in which we find a deep sense of fulfilment by employing our unique strengths for a purpose greater than ourselves. The genius of Seligman's theory is that it reconciles two conflicting views of human happiness, the individualistic approach, which emphasises that we should take care of ourselves and nurture our own strengths, and the altruistic approach, which tends to downplay individuality and emphasizes sacrifice for the greater purpose.

Some detractors have criticized Positive Psychology as being intentionally oblivious to stark realities. And though Seligman ventures into the area of pleasure and gratification through his research in the area of positive emotion, there is much more to his work beyond this. In his study of the Good Life (cultivating strengths and virtues) and the Meaningful Life (developing meaning and purpose), positive psychology seeks to help people acquire the skills to be able to deal with the stuff of life in ever fuller, deeper ways.



Assumptions and Goals of Positive Psychology

The aim of positive psychology is to catalyse a change in psychology from a preoccupation only with repairing the worst things in life to also building the best qualities in life. To redress the previous imbalance, we must bring the building of strength to the forefront in the treatment and prevention of mental illness. The field of positive psychology at the subjective level is about positive subjective experience: well-being and satisfaction (past); flow, joy, the sensual pleasures, and happiness (present); and constructive cognitions about the future—optimism, hope, and faith.

At the individual level it is about positive personal traits—the capacity for love and vocation, courage, interpersonal skill, aesthetic sensibility, perseverance, forgiveness, originality, future-mindedness, high talent, and wisdom. At the group level it is about the civic virtues and the institutions that move individuals toward better citizenship: responsibility, nurturance, altruism, civility, moderation, tolerance, and work ethic.

Positive psychology concentrates on positive experiences at three time points: (1) the past, centring on wellbeing, contentment and satisfaction; (2) the present, which focuses on concepts such as happiness and flow experiences; (3) the future, with concepts including optimism and hope. Not only does positive psychology distinguish between wellbeing across time points but it also separates the subject area into three nodes:

- ▣ the subjective node, which encompasses things like positive experiences and states across past, present and future (for example, happiness, optimism, wellbeing);
- ▣ the individual node, which focuses on characteristics of the ‘good person’ (for example, talent, wisdom, love, courage, creativity); and
- ▣ the group node, which studies positive institutions, citizenship and communities (for example, altruism, tolerance, work ethic)

SUMMING UP

Positive Psychology is the scientific study of individual strengths and virtues. Since historical times, the “good life” has been the subject of inquiry. Humanistic psychology is the field

most identified with positive psychology. Martin Seligman initiated the positive psychology movement. In contrast to the medical model which focuses on illness, positive psychology attempts to provide a balance by giving the brighter side of the picture also. Positive Psychology mainly deals with positive emotions, positive individual traits, and positive institutions. Positive psychology strives to be a science and uses the scientific method.

MODEL QUESTIONS

1. What are the different levels of positive psychology?
2. What is positive psychology?
3. What are the assumptions and goals of positive psychology?

SUGGESTED READINGS

<https://epgp.inflibnet.ac.in/Home/ViewSubject?catid=31>

<https://positivepsychology.com/perma-model/>

<https://www.aipc.net.au/articles/happiness-and-positive-psychology/>

LESSON -8: PLEASURE, ENGAGEMENT AND MEANING IN LIFE

OBJECTIVES

- To learn about Seligman's PERMA Model
- Understand concepts of pleasure, engagement and meaning

STRUCTURE

- 8.1. Introduction
- 8.2. Seligman's PERMA Model
- 8.3. Positive Emotions
- 8.4. Engagement
- 8.5. Positive relationships
- 8.6. Meaning
- 8.7. Accomplishments/ Achievements
- 8.8. Summing up
- 8.9. Model Questions
- 8.10. Suggested Readings

INTRODUCTION

Positive Psychology views happiness from both the hedonistic and eudaimonic view in which they define happiness in terms of the pleasant life, the good life and the meaningful life. Peterson et al. identified three pathways to happiness from the positive psychological view:

Pleasure is the process of maximising positive emotion and minimising negative emotion and is referred to as the pleasant life which involves enjoyable and positive experiences. Engagement is the process of being immersed and absorbed in the task at hand and is referred to as the good life which involves being actively involved in life and all that it requires and demands. Thus, the good life is considered to result from the individual cultivating and investing their signature strengths and virtues into their relationships, work

and leisure (Seligman, 2002) thus applying the best of self during challenging activities that results in growth and a feeling of competence and satisfaction that brings about happiness.

Meaning is the process of having a higher purpose in life than ourselves and is referred to as the meaningful life which involves using our strengths and personal qualities to serve this higher purpose. The meaningful life, like the good life, involves the individual applying their signature strengths in activities, but the difference is that these activities are perceived to contribute to the greater good in the meaningful life.

Ultimately, it is a combination of each of these three elements described above that positive psychology suggests would constitute authentic and stable happiness.

The pursuit of happiness is one that humans have been working toward since the beginning of time. Yet the concept of “happiness” is often hard to accurately define.

Living the good life, flourishing, self-actualization, joy, and purpose are words that come to mind with happiness. Is it possible to experience any of these in the middle of a chaotic world and negative circumstances? Can we learn to grow or find skills that lead to this “good life?”

What Is Seligman’s PERMA+ Model?

Abraham Maslow (1962) was one of the first in the field of psychology to describe “wellbeing,” with his characteristics of a self-actualized person. The description of self-actualization is a foreshadowing of the PERMA model, which outlines the characteristics of a flourishing individual and Wellbeing Theory (WBT).

In 1998, Dr. Martin Seligman used his inaugural address as the incoming president of the American Psychological Association to shift the focus from mental illness and pathology to studying what is good and positive in life. From this point in time, theories and research examined positive psychology interventions that help make life worth living and how to define, quantify, and create wellbeing (Rusk & Waters, 2015).

In developing a theory to address this, Seligman (2012) selected five components that people pursue because they are intrinsically motivating and they contribute to wellbeing. These elements are pursued for their own sake and are defined and measured independently of each other (Seligman, 2012).

Additionally, the five components include both **eudaimonic** and **hedonic** components, setting WBT apart from other theories of wellbeing.

These five elements or components (PERMA; Seligman, 2012) are

- Positive emotion
- Engagement
- Relationships
- Meaning
- Accomplishments

The PERMA model makes up WBT, where each dimension works in concert to give rise to a higher order construct that predicts the flourishing of groups, communities, organizations, and nations (Forgeard, Jayawickreme, Kern, & Seligman, 2011).

Research has shown significant positive associations between each of the PERMA components and physical health, vitality, **job satisfaction**, life satisfaction, and commitment within organizations (Kern, Waters, Alder, & White, 2014).

PERMA is also a better predictor of psychological distress than previous reports of distress (Forgeard et al., 2011). This means that proactively working on the components of PERMA not only increases aspects of wellbeing, but also decreases psychological distress.

P - Positive Emotions

Positive emotion is much more than mere '**happiness**.' Positive emotions include hope, interest, joy, love, compassion, pride, amusement, and gratitude. Positive emotions are a prime indicator of **flourishing**, and they can be cultivated or learned to improve wellbeing (Fredrickson, 2001).

When individuals can explore, **savour**, and integrate positive emotions into daily life (and visualizations of future life), it improves habitual thinking and acting. Positive emotions can undo the harmful effects of negative emotions and promote resilience (Tugade & Fredrickson, 2004). Increasing positive emotions helps individuals build physical,

intellectual, psychological, and social resources that lead to this resilience and overall wellbeing.

Ways to build positive emotion include:

- Spending time with people you care about
- Doing activities that you enjoy (hobbies)
- Listening to uplifting or inspirational music
- Reflecting on things you are grateful for and what is going well in your life

E – Engagement

According to Seligman (2012), engagement is “being one with the music.” It is in line with Csikszentmihalyi’s (1989) concept of “flow.” **Flow** includes the loss of self-consciousness and complete absorption in an activity. In other words, it is living in the present moment and focusing entirely on the task at hand.

Flow, or this concept of engagement, occurs when the perfect combination of challenge and skill/strength is found (Csikszentmihalyi & LeFevre, 1989).

People are more likely to experience flow when they use their top **character strengths**. Research on engagement has found that individuals who try to use their strengths in new ways each day for a week were happier and less depressed after six months (Seligman, Steen, Park, & Peterson, 2005).

The concept of engagement is something much more powerful than simply “being happy,” but happiness is one of the many by-products of engagement.

Ways to increase engagement:

- Participate in activities that you really love, where you lose track of time when you do them.
- Practice living in the moment, even during daily activities or mundane tasks.
- **Spend time in nature**, watching, listening, and observing what happens around you.
- Identify and learn about your character strengths, and do things that you excel at.

R – Positive Relationships

Relationships encompass all the various interactions individuals have with partners, friends, family members, colleagues, bosses/mentors/supervisors, and their community at large. Relationships in the PERMA model refer to feeling supported, loved, and valued by others. Relationships are included in the model based on the idea that humans are inherently social creatures (Seligman, 2012). There is evidence of this everywhere, but social connections become particularly important as we age.

The **social environment** has been found to play a critical role in preventing cognitive decline, and strong social networks contribute to better physical health among older adults (Siedlecki, Salthouse, Oishi, & Jeswani, 2014).

Many people have a goal of improving relationships with those they are closest to. Research has demonstrated that sharing good news or celebrating success fosters strong bonds and better relationships (Siedlecki et al., 2014). Additionally, responding enthusiastically to others, particularly in close or intimate relationships, increases intimacy, wellbeing, and satisfaction.

How to build relationships:

- Join a class or group that interests you.
- Ask questions of the people you don't know well to find out more about them.
- Create friendships with people you are acquainted with.
- Get in touch with people you have not spoken to or connected with in a while.

M – Meaning

Another intrinsic human quality is the search for meaning and the need to have a sense of value and worth. Seligman (2012) discussed meaning as belonging and/or serving something greater than ourselves. Having a **purpose in life** helps individuals focus on what is really important in the face of significant challenge or adversity.

Having meaning or purpose in life is different for everyone. Meaning may be pursued through a profession, a social or political cause, a creative endeavour, or a religious/spiritual belief. It may be found in a career or through extracurricular, volunteer, or community activities.

A sense of meaning is guided by personal values, and people who report having purpose in life live longer and have greater **life satisfaction** and fewer health problems (Kashdan, Mishra, Breen, & Froh, 2009).

Ways to build meaning:

- Get involved in a cause or organization that matters to you.
- Try new, creative activities to find things you connect with.
- Think about how you can use your passions to help others.
- Spend quality time with people you care about.

A – Accomplishments/Achievements

Accomplishment in PERMA is also known as achievement, mastery, or competence.

A sense of accomplishment is a result of working toward and reaching goals, mastering an endeavour, and having self-motivation to finish what you set out to do. This contributes to wellbeing because individuals can look at their lives with a sense of pride (Seligman, 2012).

Accomplishment includes the concepts of perseverance and having a passion to attain goals. But flourishing and wellbeing come when accomplishment is tied to striving toward things with an internal motivation or working toward something just for the sake of the pursuit and improvement (Quinn, 2018).

Achieving **intrinsic goals** (such as growth and connection) leads to larger gains in wellbeing than external goals such as money or fame (Seligman, 2013).

Ways to build accomplishment:

- **Set goals** that are SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time-bound).
- Reflect on past successes.
- Look for creative ways to celebrate your achievements.
- The most basic assumption of positive psychology is that human goodness and excellence are as authentic as disorders and distress and therefore deserve equal attention from mental health practitioners. The discipline of positive psychology is primarily focused on the promotion of the good life. The good life refers to those factors that contribute most predominately to a well lived life. Qualities that define the good life are those that enrich our lives, make life worth living and foster strong character (Compton, 2005).
- Seligman (2002) defines good life as a combination of three elements: Positive connection to others or positive subjective experience; Positive individual traits and; Life regulation qualities.
- Positive connection refers to aspects of our behaviour that contribute to positive connectedness to others. It is the positive subjective experiences that includes the ability to love, forgive, and the presence of spiritual connections, happiness and life satisfaction that combine to help and create a sense of deeper meaning and purpose in life. Positive individual traits may include such things as a sense of integrity, the ability to be creative, and the presence of virtues such as courage and humility.
- Life regulation qualities are those qualities that allow us to regulate our day to day behaviour in such a way that we can accomplish our goals. Some of these qualities include a sense of individuality or autonomy, a high degree of a healthy self-control and wisdom to guide behaviour. According to positive psychology, the good life must also include the relationship with other people and the society as a whole (Park & Peterson, 2008; Duckworth, Steen & Seligman, 2005).
- A primary goal of what could be termed as the positive psychology movement is to be a catalyst for change in the focus of psychology from a preoccupation with repairing the worst things in life to also building positive qualities (Joseph & Linley, 2006). This is especially relevant to the therapeutic context, since positive psychologists would argue that the role of the therapist is not to simply alleviate distress and leave the person free from symptomatology, but also to facilitate wellbeing and fulfilment which is not only a worthwhile goal in its own right, it also serves as a preventive function that buffers against future psychopathology and even recovery from illness.

SUMMING UP

Positive Psychology views happiness from both the hedonistic and eudaimonic view in which they define happiness in terms of the pleasant life, the good life and the meaningful life. Peterson et al. identified three pathways to happiness from the positive psychological view.

Pleasure is the process of maximising positive emotion and minimising negative emotion and is referred to as the pleasant life which involves enjoyable and positive experiences. Engagement is the process of being immersed and absorbed in the task at hand and is referred to as the good life which involves being actively involved in life and all that it requires and demands. Thus, the good life is considered to result from the individual cultivating and investing their signature strengths and virtues into their relationships, work and leisure.

MODEL QUESTIONS

1. Discuss the PERMA model put forth by Seligman.
2. Elaborate the role positive relationships play in one's life.
3. Explain pleasure, engagement and meaning in detail.

SUGGESTED READINGS

<https://epgp.inflibnet.ac.in/Home/ViewSubject?catid=31>

<https://positivepsychology.com/perma-model/>

<https://www.aipc.net.au/articles/happiness-and-positive-psychology/>

LESSON -9: HUMAN VIRTUES GUIDANCE -- MINDFULNESS

OBJECTIVES

- To understand the concept of mindfulness under human virtues guidance

STRUCTURE

- 9.1. Introduction
- 9.2. Mindfulness
- 9.3. Concepts of Mindfulness
- 9.4. Summing up
- 9.5. Model Questions
- 9.6. Suggested Readings

INTRODUCTION-

Human virtues are character strengths such as generosity, loyalty and honesty, that make it possible for people to pursue worthwhile goals. In the current terrain of psychology, positive psychology is one such field that actively avoids discussion of virtue while it implicitly endorses values such as independence and mastery. The development of the Character Strengths and Virtues (CSV) handbook represented the first attempt by Seligman and Peterson to identify and classify positive psychological traits of human beings. The CSV provided a theoretical framework to assist in understanding strengths and virtues and for developing practical applications for positive psychology. This manual identified 6 classes of virtues (i.e., "core virtues"), underlying 24 measurable character strengths.

The CSV suggested these 6 virtues have a historical basis in the vast majority of cultures; in addition, these virtues and strengths can lead to increased happiness when built upon. Notwithstanding numerous cautions and caveats, this suggestion of universality hints

threefold: 1) the study of positive human qualities broadens the scope of psychological research to include mental wellness. 2) the leaders of the positive psychology movement are challenging moral relativism, suggesting people are “evolutionarily predisposed” toward certain virtues, and 3) virtue has a biological basis.

The organisation of the 6 virtues and 24 strengths is as follows:

1. **wisdom and knowledge:** creativity, curiosity, open mindedness, love of learning, perspective, innovation, prudence.
2. **courage:** bravery, persistence, vitality, zest
3. **humanity:** love, kindness, social intelligence
4. **justice:** citizenship, fairness, leadership, integrity, excellence
5. **temperance:** forgiveness and mercy, humility, self-control
6. **transcendence:** appreciation of beauty, gratitude, hope, humor, spirituality.

Recent research challenged the need for 6 virtues. Instead, researchers suggested the 24 strengths are more accurately grouped into just 3 or 4 categories: intellectual strengths, interpersonal strengths and temperance strengths. These strengths and their classifications, have emerged independently elsewhere in literature and values.

MINDFULNESS

Mindfulness, deep-rooted in the realms of Buddhism, is being given its due regard since its resurgence in the recent times. The topic is not confined only to the spiritual and academic exploration but also has become part of popular imagination. Mindfulness is gift of Indian Buddhist tradition and the *Pali* language espoused by them. The *Pali* word for mindfulness is *sati*, also meaning retention and alertness. Mindfulness is the intentional, accepting and non-judgmental focus of one's attention on the emotions, thoughts and sensations occurring in the present moment (Zgierska, 2009). In layman language, *mindfulness* is living in the present moment without being preoccupied by thoughts of the past or the future. It is a quintessential component of Buddhist practices of meditation, also including *vipassana*

(insight into reality), *anapanasati* (mindfulness of breathing) and *satipatthana* (foundation for mindfulness). Mindfulness originated as a movement to invigorate compassion, peace and non-violence in the world. Gradually, its areas and degree of impact have expanded to a vast number of areas such as medical practice, psychology and research, personal well-being and awareness, improving and enhancing relationships at home and the workplace. The notion of mindfulness is mostly aimed at inculcating a sense of self and the capability to create positivity. The practice of mindfulness is now increasingly used, in the field of psychology to treat mental health disorders, such as anxiety depression and chronic disorders. Psychologists and therapists have formulated contemporary therapies, fusing mindfulness and psychology (Kabat Zinn, 1979; Teasdale & Williams, 2002).

Concepts of Mindfulness: Mindfulness has certain concepts, which are similar to it, in theory and practice. Some of those concepts are:

i. Awareness: It is the ability to be conscious of the events, objects, surroundings or a particular situation. Awareness can be either internal or external. Being conscious at every moment is what awareness or mindfulness is about. Spiritual leaders, philosophers and psychologists have propagated awareness of the self. Duval & Wicklund (1972) postulated a theory that self-awareness based on motivational properties deriving from social feedback. It is of utmost importance to be aware about one's choices, goals, values and beliefs. Spiritual teacher Osho believed that awareness while meditating means accepting life as it comes.

ii. Wakefulness: In the context of mindfulness, wakefulness has a different meaning. It can be best described as a state of awareness, in every waking moment. (Kabat Zinn, 2012). Wakefulness enhances our subjective well-being and heightens our contentment with our inner selves and the world.

iii. Positive Evaluations: Inability to inculcate positive evaluations of oneself, or self-acceptance could lead to emotional difficulties. If an individual is engaging more in self-evaluation than self-acceptance, s/he is more likely to compensate for the deficits perceived in self. Someone who accepts oneself as s/he is would tend to be mindful. Carson & Langer (2006) view the acceptance of self as a mindful choice.

Mindlessness and Negative Evaluation

Mindlessness is a state of mind, in which the individual is neither mindful nor aware. According to Langer (2012), many have procured such mindless activities in order to escape from feeling lamentable or dejected. Practicing mindlessness tends to put one off-track in any aspect. Mindlessness practices can be identified in our daily routine: practices of body, speech and mind. Example – Flipping TV channels, trying to study with house party music blaring through music system or leaving all the lights on when leaving your apartment, etc. As mindlessness maybe concerned with past, it can also happen in cases of preoccupation with futuristic thoughts, i.e., fantasizing or obsessing about the future with unrealistic demands or dwelling on a pleasant memory. Inculcating positivity and mindfulness gradually in self or maybe with the help of a professional can reduce the acts of mindlessness as well.

Negative Evaluation: Self-depreciation or negatively evaluating oneself is a self-derogatory practice. Evaluating oneself with negativity would lead to difficulties like lack of self-confidence, poor academics, drug/alcohol dependence, etc.

Rigid Stereotypical Thinking: Toomey (2012) has distinguished between mindful stereotyping and mindless stereotyping. Mindless stereotyping has been characterized by holding a perceived negative stereotype, condemning any new incoming information and engaging in cognitions and behaviors favouring the in-group and being biased and discriminated towards other groups. In contrast, mindful stereotyping can be characterized by holding the belief consciously, metacognitively that we are part of an entire group and are open to new incoming information and are better at dealing with others

Achieving Mindfulness

One can achieve mindfulness through practicing mindfulness meditation, a systematic way to focus your attention. Mindfulness meditation can be practiced on your own, following instructions from an audio clip or through books. A meditation teacher can also be consulted to practice mindfulness, who could guide one during practice. Also, there are various institutes, which conduct courses on mindfulness meditation. This chapter would detail on the ways to achieving mindfulness by Jon Kabat-Zinn (2012). He has listed 5 steps in achieving mindfulness in its true nature. These steps are discussed below in brief.

Entering: The beginning of mindfulness starts with inculcating awareness about one's thoughts, words, deeds and reactions. For mindfulness meditation, it is necessary to be aware of our own breathing, as our breath. Buddha's teachings find awareness of breath as an important phenomenon as it contains in itself one's capacity for wisdom and compassion. According to Kabat-Zinn (2012), awareness of breath is more concerned with our attention than merely breathing. It is about the oneness of the perceiver and the object/situation/event attended to. Mindfulness meditation shouldn't be considered seriously, as it is supposed to be an effortless element of our lives. It should be pursued with authentic integrity. Mindfulness is to be present in the present. Preoccupation with thoughts of past or future disrupts the process of meditation, but practice helps in this case. Entering can thus be characterized by the following: awareness of thoughts and actions, awareness of the process of breathing, adjusting your daily routine, attention and awareness are skills that can be acquired, getting rid of our obsession with own self.

Sustaining: The phase of *sustaining* is concerned with applying the concepts learnt in the entering phase in our daily routine. This phase integrates all sensory systems of an individual and the individual feels connected to his inner self on a deeper level. The attentiveness and awareness becomes a part of the individual's routine and ultimately, the practitioner's mind is prepared to enter a deeper level of meditation. The sustaining phase is concerned with the following: being attentive and affectionate, meditation affects all sensory systems of the body, meditation makes the practitioner feel connected to self, tendency to question our thoughts and deeds arises, realization that the individual is a 'whole' in any circumstance, mind prepared to set into a deeper meditation.

Deepening: In the deepening process, the practitioner learns that 'liberation is in the practice itself'. He employs an attitude of nonviolence and experiences empathy for others. He teaches himself to conserve the energy that would usually drain out during meditation in his beginning phase. The practitioner spreads his knowledge of mindfulness to others who

would need this knowledge. The phase of deepening is characterized by the following: acting and reacting appropriately, treating others in a non-judgmental way, recognizing your weaknesses and ditching them, feeling empathetic for others, able to conserve energy during meditation, considering life as a precious gift and enjoying every moment as it comes, and spreading the knowledge of mindfulness.

Ripening: This phase is the all-round attitudinal change of the practitioner. By reaching this phase, he has mastered how to lead his life with the right attitude at the right time. He has incorporated several changes in his lifestyle, which now revolve around his meditation practice. Few of the evident characteristics of an individual in the phase of ripening are: non-judgmental, trustworthy, non-striving, accepting self and others, letting go of the past.

Practicing: After an individual has mastered mindfulness meditation, he practices it moment by moment. He becomes mindful of his eating habits, breathing, body, mind and emotions. He has now contemplated mindfulness as Pure Awareness.

Benefits of Mindfulness

Mindfulness is known to have several advantages to one's psychological, emotional and physical

well-being. Some of these benefits are mentioned below:

Inter-connectivity of the Mind and the Body: Mindfulness activates the connection of mind and the body. It develops the inter-connectedness of all systems, organs and cells. This integration makes us more consciously aware of our inner selves. The connection with our inner selves helps us be more socially connected with others as well.

Healing: Mindfulness not only enables us to achieve physical relaxation but also the ability to get rid of our fears. Moments of stillness during meditating brings along a sense of oneness – that we are already connected with self and spirit. Believing in the power of —now allows us to be completely engaged in the present moment, without being preoccupied by thoughts of the past or the future. This belief enables one to realize that these are the physical conditions that make us suffer, and we are capable of coming to terms with the situation and transforming suffering into well-being.

Attunement of the Mind: Practicing mindfulness and complete awareness stimulates emotional circuits in the brain, which further bring along several advantages, such as increase in levels of well-being, happiness, resilience and a great improvement in cardiac functions and the immune system (Siegel, 2007). Mindfulness seems to transform functioning of the brain, thus aiding in a greater emotional balance (Ihnen & Flynn, 2008).

Relaxation: Though relaxation is not an objective of mindfulness, but it is surely one of its many positive outcomes. Through relaxation individuals suffering from high amounts of stress and burnout can relieve oneself of stress and other negative experiences. Such relaxation-based mindfulness helps in being calm and relaxed.

Improving Productivity Levels: Occupational and organizational stress directly affects an individual's productivity levels. A distressed and fatigued employee is someone who works mindlessly. By practicing mindfulness, the employee would be able to manage his stress levels, making him/her a healthier person and easier to manage work stress. The technique of mindfulness, when applied by the employers of an organization, will improve their relations with the employees and will prove to be beneficial to the organization as well.

A Compassionate Mind: Mindfulness meditation can train the practitioner's mind to inculcate reactions to most events with positivity. The alterations in emotional circuits of the brain after practicing mindfulness suggests increase in happiness, compassion and optimism.

Better Relationships: Intrapersonal relationships definitely benefit from practicing mindfulness, but recent studies have shown positive outcomes even in cases of interpersonal relationships. In a study carried out at University of North Carolina (2004) on relatively happy, non-distressed couples analysed that couples who practiced mindfulness noticed significant improvement in their relationship. Inadequate and inefficient communication in relationships is bound to increase emotional pain between couples. Suppressing one's feeling and emotions toward his/her partner doesn't help. Mindfulness training for couples is the most appropriate solution for cases of conflicts, anger outbursts or even divorce.

Better Societies: The prime objective of the mindfulness movement is to create better societies. Wars and drugs don't make up for a better society. Mindfulness when applied effectively and efficiently by all would create a society with positivity and compassion in bold letters. The ease and benefits of practicing mindfulness can help people from any cultural background, age or interest group.

Clinical implications of mindfulness

Apart from the practical and general domains of life, mindfulness has been found effective in treatment of various clinical problems. According to Didonna (2009) major clinical implications of mindfulness can be categorized into following four categories:

▣ ***Increased "living in the moment" time:*** Mindfulness can be an important technique to avoid the ruminations of the past, or sometime it helps us by cutting our contact with the past. In most of the clinical problems like depression or obsessive disorders it is the inability and tendency of the patient to dwell in the past that proves a major hurdle to therapy. According to Jain et al. (2007) participation in mindfulness training can effectively reduce a person's habit of living in the negativities of past, and develop a positive attitude. Mindfulness, if practiced properly, helps individual to attain clarity of thought and helps in focusing more on the current things, thus enhancing the quality and enhanced perception of current time.

▣ ***Increased positive affect:*** Negative emotions are the major cause of many clinical problems. Getting hold of negative emotions and not letting it go drains a person of constructive energies leaving him further vulnerable for negative and destructive thought processes. Barhofer et al. (2007) studied 22 patients with acute suicidal tendencies. They found that after undergoing a session of mindfulness-based cognitive therapy the level of positive affect among the patients improved as measured by the EEG activity.

▣ ***Reduced stress reactivity:*** If we keep the stressor characteristics constant and then how we react to the stressor affects our health and subjective well-being. The studies (Goleman & Schwarz, 1976) have shown that subjects with meditation mindfulness experience reached earlier to a calmer state of mind as compared to normal control group subjects. The

researchers found that all the subjects with meditation experience are also exhibit more initial sensitivity to the negative events but they also reach faster to the stage of equanimity because of their greater ability to let go of negative experiences.

▣ **Enhanced cognitive vitality:** Meditation based mindfulness can also help avert the cortical thinning of frontal cortex that is mainly associated with the old age. Age induced cortical thinning creates many social and emotional problem for the old age people. A study showed that as compared to normal control group subjects without any meditation practice, the experimental group subjects practicing Zen meditation possessed thicker cortex area (Didonna, 2009)

Applications

The mindfulness meditation is applicable in various areas. Some of the major areas where mindfulness has been successfully been applied are:

▣ **Healing our own Self:** Mindfulness has been used successfully to heal people in emotional and physical pain, without the use of any prescribed drugs or medical operations. It is a transformative way of healing that is easily applicable and effective.

▣ **Mindfulness in Relationships:** Couples who practice mindfulness together tend to alleviate their emotional pain and difficulties in the relationship without much effort. It is an effective way to avoid conflicts at home, and makes one better at dealing with relationships, romantic or otherwise.

▣ **Mindfulness in Schools:** Successful attempts have been made to apply mindfulness in school children. One such example is of a pilot study conducted by Mindful Schools and University of California on 'mindfulness and children', which involved 915 children and 47 teachers. The Mindfulness showed statistically significant improvements in behavior as compared to the control group with only 4 hours of mindfulness instructions given to the students at a very low cost.

▣ **Mindfulness at Work:** Introducing mindfulness at work could help strengthen the foundations of an organization. It helps the employers and employees to: increase self-awareness, raises levels of emotional intelligence, strengthens cognitive effectiveness,

empathize more readily, communicate more clearly, focus more consistently, and direct your thoughts more appropriately.

SUMMING UP

Mindfulness originated as a movement to invigorate compassion, peace and non-violence in the world. Gradually, its areas and degree of impact have expanded to a vast number of areas such as medical practice, psychology and research, personal well-being and awareness, improving and enhancing relationships at home and the workplace. The notion of mindfulness is mostly aimed at inculcating a sense of self and the capability to create positivity. The practice of mindfulness is now increasingly used, in the field of psychology to treat mental health disorders, such as anxiety depression and chronic disorders.

MODEL QUESTIONS

1. Discuss the concepts of mindfulness.
2. How can one achieve mindfulness?
3. What are the benefits of mindfulness?
4. Discuss the clinical implications of mindfulness.
5. What are the various applications of mindfulness?

SUGGESTED READINGS

Snyder, C. R., Shane J. Lopez, and Jennifer Teramoto Pedrotti. ***Positive Psychology***. The Scientific and Practical Explorations of Human Strengths. 2nd ed.

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LESSON -10: THE CONCEPT OF HAPPINESS

OBJECTIVES

- To understand the concept of happiness
- To discern the various aspects of positive emotions

STRUCTURE

- 10.1. The Three dimensions of happiness
- 10.2. The role of positive emotions
- 10.3. Strengths
- 10.4. Contribution to Happiness
- 10.5. Flow and Happiness
- 10.6. Personality traits and Happiness
- 10.7. Biology of Happiness
- 10.8. Happiness and Culture
- 10.9. Authentic Happiness
- 10.10. Summing Up
- 10.11. Model Questions
- 10.12. Suggested Readings

THE THREE DIMENSIONS OF HAPPINESS

According to Seligman, we can experience three kinds of happiness:

1. Pleasure and gratification
2. Embodiment of strengths and virtues
3. Meaning and purpose

Each kind of happiness is linked to positive emotion but from his quote we can understand that there is a progression from the first type of happiness of pleasure/gratification to strengths/virtues and finally meaning/purpose.

The Pleasant Life: Past, Present & Future

Seligman provides a mental “toolkit” to achieve what he calls the pleasant life by enabling people to think constructively about the past, gain optimism and hope for the future and, as a result, gain greater happiness in the present.

Dealing with the past	Happiness in the present	Optimism in the future
Among Seligman’s arsenal for combating unhappiness with the past is that which we commonly and curiously find among the wisdom of the ages: gratitude and forgiveness. Seligman refers to American society as a “ventilationist society” that “deem[s] it honest, just and even healthy to express our anger.” He notes that this is often seen in the types of therapy used for issues, problems and challenges. In contrast, Seligman extols the East Asian tendency to quietly deal with difficult situations. He cites studies that find that those who refrain from expressing negative emotions and in turn use different strategies to cope with the stresses of life also tend to be happier.	After making headway with these strategies for dealing with negative emotions of the past and building hope and optimism for the future, Seligman recommends breaking habituation, savouring experiences and using mindfulness as ways to increase happiness in the present.	When looking to the future, Seligman recommends an outlook of hope and optimism.

The role of positive emotion

Many studies have shown that positive emotions are frequently accompanied by fortunate circumstances (e.g., longer life, health, large social networks, etc). For example, one study observed nuns who were, for the most part, leading virtually identical lifestyles. It seemed that the nuns who expressed positive emotions more intensely and more frequently in their daily journals also happened to outlive many of the nuns who clearly did not. Another study used high school yearbook photos of women to see if the ultimate expression of happiness (a smile) might also be used as an indicator as to how satisfied they might be 20 years later. When surveyed, those who were photographed with genuine, “Duchenne” smiles were

more likely to find themselves, in their mid-life, married with families and involved in richer social lives.

In short, positive emotions are frequently paired with happy circumstances. And while we might be tempted to assume that happiness causes positive emotions, Seligman wonders, instead, whether positive emotions cause happiness. If so, what does this mean for our life and our happiness?

The Good Life: Embodying the 6 virtues and cultivating the 24 strengths

VIRTUES

One notable contribution that Seligman has made for Positive Psychology is his cross-cultural study to create an “authoritative classification and measurement system for the human strengths”. He and Dr. Christopher Peterson, a top expert in the field of hope and optimism, worked to create a classification system that would help psychologists measure positive psychology’s effectiveness. They used good character to measure its efficacy because good character was so consistently and strongly linked to lasting happiness. In order to remain true to their efforts to create a universal classification system, they made a concerted effort to examine and research a wide variety of religious and philosophical texts from all over the world (Seligman 2002, p. 132).

They were surprised to find 6 particular virtues that were valued in almost every culture, valued in their own right (not just as a means to another end) and are attainable. The 6 core virtues are:

- Wisdom and knowledge
- Courage
- Love and humanity
- Justice
- Temperance
- Spirituality and transcendence

STRENGTHS

For Seligman, the strengths are the “route” through we achieve virtues in our life.

Seligman clarifies the difference between talents and strengths by defining strengths as moral traits that can be developed, learned, and that take effort. Talents, on the other hand, tend to be inherent and can only be cultivated from what exists rather than what develops through effort (Seligman 2002, p. 134). For example, many people consider musical ability as more or less inherent and can only be strengthened. On the other hand, one can cultivate the strength of patience, which can lead to the virtue of temperance.

Seligman provides a detailed classification of the different virtues as well as a strengths survey that is available on his website: www.authentic happiness.org.

Seligman sees the healthy exercise and development of strengths and virtues as a key to the good life – a life in which one uses one’s “signature strengths every day in the main realms of your life to bring abundant gratification and authentic happiness.” The good life is a place of happiness, good relationships and work, and from this point, Seligman encourages people to go further to seek a meaningful life in the continual quest for happiness.

The Meaningful Life

Meaning and flow

Positive emotion alienated from the exercise of character leads to emptiness, inauthenticity, depression and, as we age, to the gnawing realization that we are fidgeting until we die (Seligman 2002, p. 8).

Here Seligman states, rather dismally, that there are no shortcuts to happiness. While the pleasant life might bring more positive emotion to one’s life, to foster a deeper more enduring happiness, we need to explore the realm of meaning. Without the application of one’s unique strengths and the development of one’s virtues towards an end bigger than one’s self, one’s potential tends to be whittled away by a mundane, inauthentic, empty pursuit of pleasure.

Seligman expands on the work of his contemporary and colleague, Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, in the area of “flow” to explain, in part, what he means by the meaningful life. Investing oneself into creative work creates a greater sense of meaning in life and accordingly, a greater sense of happiness.

Altruism

Seligman goes one step further than Csikszentmihalyi by exploring the experience of flow and the loss of self-consciousness that is involved in acts of altruism and of kindness. How can we use our strengths and virtues to achieve a meaningful life? One example could be a gifted martial artist who experiences great pleasure in perfecting her skills in karate and winning prizes in tournaments. Yet then she discovers that one autistic child she is teaching shows signs of enormous improvement. This makes her feel so good that she opens a class for children with special needs. Seeing these children overcome their challenges gives her still greater happiness. Finally, she becomes so absorbed in the happiness of these children that she forgets about her own happiness! This situation enables her to enrich the lives of others while engaging her own strengths and virtues.

Contributions to Happiness

The concept of happiness is the corner stone of the assumptions of positive psychology. Happiness is characterised by the experience of more frequent positive affective states than negative ones as well as a perception that one is progressing toward important life goals (Tkach & Lyubomirsky, 2006). Identifying factors that contribute to happiness has proven to be challenging. Interestingly though, one thing that does stand out in the research to date is that the attainment and pursuit of pleasure may not always lead to happiness.

Certain kinds of environmental factors or conditions have been found to be associated with happiness and include such things as; individual income, labour market status, health, family, social relationships, moral values and many others. Ultimately, in the pursuit of understanding happiness, there are two main theoretical perspectives which focus on addressing the question of what makes people feel good and happy. These are the hedonic and eudaimonic approaches to happiness.

Hedonic well-being is based on the notion that increased pleasure and decreased pain leads to happiness. Hedonic concepts are based on the notion of subjective well-being. Subjective well-being is a scientific term that is commonly used to denote the 'happy or good life'. It comprises of an affective component (high positive affect and low negative affect) and a cognitive component (satisfaction with life). It is proposed that an individual experiences happiness when positive affect and satisfaction with life are both high.

Eudaimonic well-being, on the other hand, is strongly reliant on Maslow's ideas of self-actualisation and Roger's concept of the fully functioning person and their subjective

wellbeing. Eudaimonic happiness is therefore based on the premise that people feel happy if they experience life purpose, challenges and growth.

This approach adopts Self-Determination Theory to conceptualise happiness. Self-determination theory suggests that happiness is related to fulfilment in the areas of autonomy and competence. From this perspective, by engaging in eudaimonic pursuits, subjective wellbeing (happiness) will occur as a by-product.

Thus, life purpose and higher order meaning are believed to produce happiness. It appears that the general consensus is that happiness does not result from the pursuit of pleasure but from the development of individual strengths and virtues which ties in with the concept of positive psychology. The differences between eudaimonic and hedonic happiness are listed below.

- *Hedonic (Subjective Wellbeing)*: Presence of positive mood Absence of negative mood; Satisfaction with various domains of life (e.g. work, leisure); Global life satisfaction.
- *Eudaimonic (Psychological Wellbeing)*: Sense of control or autonomy; Feeling of meaning and purpose; Personal expressiveness; Feelings of belongingness; Social contribution; Competence; Personal growth; Self-acceptance.

Flow and happiness

Another key contribution positive psychology has made to our understanding of the qualities and attributes of well-being is in the concept of flow. Flow is defined as an optimal state of engagement, happiness and peak experience that occurs when an individual is absorbed in an intrinsically motivating challenge. Flow is typically characterised by being immersed in a specific activity that incorporates the following elements:

1. Concentration toward the task at hand that appears effortless and is not associated with mental strain or aggressive efforts to repress or control thinking,
2. Involvement in the task to the point where there is no need to think about what needs to be done before it is done, and
3. Enjoyment through being involved in and doing the specific activity

The state of flow has been implicated in the pathways to happiness and thus expands further the concept of happiness beyond the pleasure state. To conclude on the influence of flow **Csikszentmihalyi** (1990) suggests that happiness is brought on by the experience of flow that allows people to enjoy life and function better in a number of different contexts.

Personality Traits and Happiness

Personality studies indicate that happy and unhappy people have distinctive personality profiles. For example, happy people tend to be more extraverted, optimistic and usually have high self-esteem. Happiness is also considered to be an emotion produced by positive and negative events and experiences. Interestingly, a number of reports have shown that extraverted individuals are happier than introverted individuals in the context of a broad range of life experiences.

This has been attributed to the idea that extraverts react more strongly to positive stimuli designed to induce positive emotions when compared to introverts. Extraverts are also reported to have a better fit with their social environment that may trigger positive emotions of happiness. As such, extraverts are more likely to experience happiness than introverts who may not thrive in similar social settings. Happiness has also shown to be associated with easy sociability that involves natural, pleasant interaction with other people, another attribute typical of the extravert. Happiness of extraverts can be partially explained by their choice of enjoyable situations while those that are socially unskilled (e.g. introverts) may avoid such situations.

In contrast, unhappy people tend to have high levels of neuroticism. Neuroticism is the tendency to be vulnerable to feelings of anxiety and depression when faced with potentially stressful situations. Thus unhappy people are believed to be more reactive to unpleasant emotional stimuli compared to happier counterparts under the same conditions (Diener, Oishi & Lucas, 2003). Hofer, Busch and Kiessling (2008) support this point of view in stating that neuroticism is negatively associated with subjective wellbeing (happiness) while openness to experience, agreeableness, extraversion and conscientiousness are positively related to subjective wellbeing (happiness).

Biology of happiness

This view purports that Individuals are born with the genetic makeup to be either “very” happy, reasonably content, or chronically dissatisfied. Positive emotions have been shown to coincide with higher levels of activity on the left side of the brain’s prefrontal lobes. A key player seems to be the neurotransmitter dopamine, which carries “feel good” messages between brain cells.

High levels of dopamine have been implicated in feelings of happiness while low levels may result in feelings of depression. Lykken and Tellegen (1996) concluded from their study of twins that most people have an average level of happiness or a “set point” that is innate in them and therefore independent of environmental factors.

They suggest that after we adjust to the effects of temporary highs and lows in emotionality (for example, happiness and sadness) we return to our biological “set point”. While it is

understood that very intense feelings of joy or sadness may keep people off their “set point” for somewhat longer periods, it is believed that eventually every one returns to their baseline level of wellbeing that is believed to be set by genetics.

From the biological perspective, depending on an individual’s genes, some people may have a natural enthusiasm for life, deriving pleasure from ordinary activities, or may require unusual adventures. But regardless of what makes us happy, a quiet walk or a jungle safari, after the initial high, we return to our happiness set-point regulated by our level of dopamine. For some people it is suggested that their set point may lean towards positive emotionality (high level of dopamine) whereby they will tend to be cheerful most of the time. Those with a set point directed more towards negative emotionality (low dopamine) will tend to gravitate toward varying degrees of pessimism and anxiety. It is also proposed that the biologically-programmed set-point isn’t really a point, it’s a range.

In this context we can influence this range thus being able to alter our “set point” by creating an environment that is more conducive to feelings of happiness. That is why factors such as family environment, education level, and cultural factors all have an impact on an individual’s sense of happiness and wellbeing. Thus, rather than being a *carte blanche* on the individual’s state of happiness, the biological view still considers environmental factors to be an influence on the more enduring trait of happiness but only within the confines of a set-point range.

Happiness and Culture

When it comes to happiness, culture is considered to play a significant role. Researchers have concluded that most people across the globe do desire some form and degree of happiness. But that pursuit of happiness varies greatly depending on one’s culture and circumstances. For example, very poor nations and those in dramatic political change invariably report the lowest levels of subjective well-being.

Conversely, many of the wealthy and democratic Scandinavian countries consistently report the highest levels of happiness. But a culture can also be poor in resources and rich in happiness as well. Latin American nations, for example, appear to have a more positive orientation and value happiness more than other countries. At the other end of the scale, East Asian and African nations often place other values ahead of happiness, such as mastery and pleasing one’s family or group.

Thus, how we individually define and experience happiness has as much to do with our cultural influences as it does with our personality, biological dispositions, personal goals and other individual factors. What this means is that while most people in practically every society will likely desire some form of well-being (both psychologically and physically), what

they value will greatly determine what shape that pursuit of happiness is and what it will look like once acquired.

Because of such cultural variance in what factors contribute to high levels of happiness and well-being, it must be concluded that there are more determinants to happiness beyond the scope of what positive psychology currently understands. What is perhaps important to understand is that each culture finds its own sources of well-being and maximises these by building from their own cultural resources to pursue their own individual happiness.

Authentic Happiness

Positive psychology uses the term authentic happiness to describe the combination of behaviours that constitutes happiness and a good life. Authenticity in this context refers to both the ability to recognise and take responsibility for one's own psychological experiences and the ability to act in ways that are consistent with those experiences. Authentic happiness is thought to derive from the identification and cultivation of signature strengths and virtues.

Thus, authentic happiness suggests that we all have signature strengths that we use in challenging times to bring about change. The idea is that individuals should focus on their strengths and not their weaknesses in order to attain authentic happiness. The focus is on drawing on those strengths and using them as tools to maximise meaningful life. Greater authenticity was also linked to less depression and less perceived stress and fewer complaints of physical problems, creating a conducive climate for happiness.

Seligman (2002) differentiates between strengths and talents as they are often confused in the identification of individual signature strengths. It is suggested that strengths are moral traits while talents are innate. Talents are said to be relatively automatic whereas strengths are more voluntary. Although talent does not involve a choice about possessing it, there is a choice of whether to burnish it and where to deploy it.

Strength on the other hand involves choices about when to use it and whether to keep building it (Seligman, 2002). It is argued that signature strengths are built from the discovery and ownership of the strengths that an individual already possess. Seligman and his colleagues have identified 24 signature strengths and 6 virtues that are believed to be necessary for one to attain the authentic happiness.

SUMMING UP

According to Seligman, we can experience three kinds of happiness: pleasure and gratification, embodiment of strengths and virtues and meaning and purpose. Each kind of happiness is linked to positive emotion but from his quote we can understand that there is a

progression from the first type of happiness of pleasure/gratification to strengths/virtues and finally meaning/purpose. This unit gives a clear understanding of the various associated aspects with happiness.

MODEL QUESTIONS

1. Discuss the role of positive emotions.
2. What are the various contributions to Happiness?
3. Elaborate personality traits and Happiness.
4. What do you understand by biology of Happiness?
5. How does happiness differ in cultures?
6. What is authentic happiness? Explain.

SUGGESTED READINGS

Snyder, C. R., Shane J. Lopez, and Jennifer Teramoto Pedrotti. ***Positive Psychology***. The Scientific and Practical Explorations of Human Strengths. 2nd ed.

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LESSON -11: CREATIVITY

OBJECTIVES

- To understand the various aspects of Creativity
- To learn about the theoretical issues in Creativity
- To understand the various applications of Creativity

STRUCTURE

- 11.1. Introduction
- 11.2. Aspects of creativity
- 11.3. Characteristics of creative people
- 11.4. Expressing Creativity
- 11.5. Theoretical Issues in Creativity
- 11.6. How to be creative?
- 11.7. Applications of Creativity
- 11.8. Summing Up
- 11.9. Model Questions
- 11.10. Suggested Readings

INTRODUCTION

Creativity is a highly valuable resource for humans. Creativity is universally appreciated. This is a quality that is required in all walks of life, be it in schools, at organizations, at play or at home. There are differences in the magnitude of creativity among people, wherein some people may be more creative than the others. Creativity is valued a lot amongst people and there are various programs that are run to promise instilling creativity in children. 'Out of the box' thinking as we may call it in everyday life is a sign of creativity.

Creativity is a prized possession, wherein individuals who exhibit creativity are given patents and copyrights to protect their creativity. Creativity is often honoured with prizes,

promotions and awards. There are creative geniuses also who have lived beyond the fate of time and death for their creative inventions or acts that they have done. Some examples are such as that of Aristotle, Shakespeare, Michelangelo etc. The word *creativity* comes from the Latin term *creo* which means "to create, make".

Creativity can be defined through the following definitions which are comparatively recent: Michael Mumford (2003) defined creativity as "over the course of the last decade, however, we seem to have reached a general agreement that creativity involves the production of novel, useful products" (p. 110). Creativity can also be defined "as the process of producing something that is both original and significant. Csikszentmihalyi (1996) has defined creativity in terms of those individuals judged to have made significant creative, perhaps domain-changing contributions.

According to Simonton (2002) creativity should fulfil these two conditions:

1. Creativity must be *original*. The ideas have to be novel, surprising and unexpected or perhaps even shocking.
2. Creativity must be *adaptive*. The ideas should be specific and relevant to the current needs and the times in which the creativity is being brought about.

Thus, general definition of creativity is seen as 'adaptive originality.'

Aspects of Creativity:

Mel Rhodes (1961) gave various aspects of creativity. They are the Four 'P's- process, product, person and place. Process focuses on the thought processes that go into the creative thinking process. The main theories describing the creative process are the divergent thinking as given by Guilford and the stages of creative process as given by Wallas. As a product it emphasizes on the ability to produce more. As a person it gauges the intellectual habits, ideation processes, expertise, autonomy etc. The 'place' connotes the context in which it takes place, that is, flexibility, non-conforming attitudes etc.

Characteristics of Creative People

Creative people do have a different personality profile. Through various researches (e.g., Sternberg & Lubart, 1999; Batey & Furnham, 2006; Batey, Furnham & Safiullina, 2010) a few of the following personality traits stand out that help define a creative person: open to experiences, less conventional, less conscientious, self-confident, self-accepting, driven, ambitious, dominant, hostile, and impulsive.

Expressing Creativity:

There are various ways and avenues in which individuals can express their creativity. A few of the areas through which one can express one's creative potential are:

- a) Linguistic- creativity through words in the form of poetry, stories, literature etc
- b) Spatial- expressing creativity activities such as drawing, architecture, puzzles, etc
- c) Musical- creativity expressed through songs, rhythms etc
- d) Bodily- creativity expressed through dance, postures, athletics etc.
- e) Logical – creativity through numbers and strategic thinking

Theoretical Issues:

Apart from the various empirical research findings in the field of creativity, there are still some theoretical issues that need to be addressed. One of them is the prevailing Nature-Nurture issue, and the other is the Small c versus the Big C.

Nature-Nurture Issue

The most common debate for most psychological constructs is the nature-nurture issue. Creativity can be inculcated or it is something that people are born with. Creativity is an interactive process of influence of genes and environment. As quoted by Simonton (2002) "genes may contribute to creativity according to a multiplicative (emergent) rather than a simple additive model (Lykken, 1998; Simonton, 1999c). As a further complication, it may very well be that various environmental influences interact with genetic factors with equally complex functional relationships (Eysenck, 1995). To some extent, creative development

requires a specific congruence between genetic inheritance and environmental stimulation. This intricate genetic-environmental determination helps to explain why creativity may display a highly skewed cross-sectional distribution in the general population (Simonton, 199b). When optimal creative development requires a precise configuration of many different factors, it becomes more difficult for people to emerge who have the total package" (pp. 195).

Small c versus Big C Creativity

Small c creativity connotes creativity that is for everyday life and Big C creativity is has its contributions for culture and history. These two levels of creativity lie on the same continuum of creative activity. Big C creativity emerges out of creative geniuses and the small c out of creative persons. Small c creativity is what happens with us in daily lives. The 'Aha' moments of creating a new dish, finding way outs in non-conventional manner, kids coming up with various products that may be made with waste stuff etc. people may not pay so much attention to the small c creativity. Small c creativity is mostly inspired by the environment that we live and the surroundings that we are a part of.

How to be Creative?

Creativity is a must for a progressive world. Innovative ideas solve problems, make things easier and contribute to development. Small efforts can help make people get a creative mind. Following are a few tips that can help:

- ▣ **Thinking differently-** creative people usually think differently. They have views that stand apart from the usual ones. Curiosity also ignites the creativity in a person.
- ▣ **Independent thought-** having the courage to have an independent thought is very important to be creative.
- ▣ **Removing mental blocks-** not restricting oneself from expressing the ideas that come to our mind; having an attitude of speaking out one's mind, irrespective of how impossible that idea may sound.
- ▣ **Flexibility-** being flexible in one's problem-solving acts. Thinking outside the box can make one open-minded and flexible and result in creativity.

☐ **Playing with children-** this is one of the easiest to do. As mentioned earlier, children happen to be very creative and this spark of creativity is contagious and helps us in developing our creativity.

☐ **Try new things-** it is very important to break the monotony in life to stay creative. Engaging with different products or even engaging with the regular products but in a different manner also helps.

Another set of techniques was given by Nickerson (1999) who provides a summary of the various creativity techniques that have been proposed:

- ☐ Establishing purpose and intention
- ☐ Building basic skills
- ☐ Encouraging acquisitions of domain-specific knowledge
- ☐ Stimulating and rewarding curiosity and exploration
- ☐ Building motivation, especially internal motivation
- ☐ Encouraging confidence and a willingness to take risks
- ☐ Focusing on mastery and self-competition
- ☐ Promoting supportable beliefs about creativity
- ☐ Providing opportunities for choice and discovery
- ☐ Developing self-management (metacognitive skills)
- ☐ Teaching techniques and strategies for facilitating creative performance
- ☐ Providing balance

Applications of Creativity:

As creativity is a highly desirable quality amongst individuals, it thus becomes imperative to start early in honing these qualities. However, the development and enhancement should be aimed at every stage of life, be it children, young adults and adults.

In childhood

Children are creative. Their creativity exhibits in the form of play, imaginative stories, learning etc. However, this creative spirit usually declines as they grow. This is mostly due to the fact that their imagination is labelled as childhood and parenting soon forces them to

start acting and behaving like adults. Thus, their creative plays soon get replaced with most adult-like behaviour that lacks that spark of creativity. Thus, it is imperative to start early at home where the parents should encourage their children's creative acts. Also, at school the curriculum should be such that encourages and relies on heavy weightage given to creativity. Also, it has been found that heritability factors do play a role in creativity development along with the environmental influences (Simonton, 1999c). Thus, following this viewpoint, creative development programs can aim at identifying children who have creative spark and then subsequently providing them proper environment to nurture creativity.

In adults

There are tremendous individual differences in adults for creativity. Some adults may be very creative so as to be labelled as 'creative genius' whereas others may not be, be it work or at home. Various factors seem to influence creativity in adults, for example, it was found by Amabile (1996) that creativity is affected by extrinsic reward, evaluative supervision and time pressure. In various other fields such as marketing, creativity develops as a group phenomenon. Creativity can flourish under rich conditions of brainstorming. Thus, organizations can put in efforts to enhance such creative influences. Also, Simonton (1975) has shown that certain conditions such as military conflict, political anarchy, depress creativity in most domains

SUMMING UP

Creativity is a prized possession, wherein individuals who exhibit creativity are given patents and copyrights to protect their creativity. Creativity is often honoured with prizes, promotions and awards. There are creative geniuses also who have lived beyond the fate of time and death for their creative inventions or acts that they have done. Some examples are such as that of Aristotle, Shakespeare, Michelangelo etc. This unit gives an understanding of the various theoretical issues and applications of Creativity.

MODEL QUESTIONS

1. Define creativity and discuss the characteristics of creative people.
2. Discuss the Small c versus Big C Creativity.

3. How to be creative?
4. Elaborate on the applications of Creativity

SUGGESTED READINGS

Snyder, C. R., Shane J. Lopez, and Jennifer Teramoto Pedrotti. ***Positive Psychology***: The Scientific and Practical Explorations of Human Strengths. 2nd ed.

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LESSON -12: OPTIMISM, SELF-EFFICACY

OBJECTIVES

- To understand Optimism
- To learn about self-efficacy
- To understand the relevance and significance of self-efficacy

STRUCTURE

- 12.1. Optimism
- 12.2. Explanatory Optimism
- 12.3. Unrealistic and realistic optimism
- 12.4. Importance of Optimism
- 12.5. Self-efficacy
- 12.6. Sources of Self-efficacy
- 12.7. Efficacy activated processes
- 12.8. Development of Self-Efficacy Beliefs
- 12.9. Importance of self-efficacy
- 12.10. Summing Up
- 12.11. Model Questions
- 12.12. Suggested Readings

OPTIMISM

Optimism and pessimism refer to the positive and negative predictions that people make regarding their future. Some people look usually on the bright side of events, while others look on the dark side.

Therefore, it can be said that optimists expect good things to happen to them while pessimists expect bad things to happen to them. Many studies have provided evidence for the optimistic bias. Optimism has been linked to psychological and physical well-being. The study of optimism has contributed a lot to what we understand about optimism today. There are several other constructs that are similar or related to optimism and they pose a methodological issue. Two of these concepts are hope and self-efficacy. People with high self-efficacy expectancies believe that their personal efforts determine the outcome of events. Whereas self-efficacy looks at self as a causal agent, optimism takes a broader view of the potential causes at work. Hope reflects the will as well as the ways. The confidence aspect in hope is similar to optimism however there is more emphasis on personal agency. Pessimism has been found to resemble the construct of neuroticism. Neuroticism involves a tendency to worry, and experience unpleasant emotions. Therefore, it can be said that a sense of pessimism is a part of neuroticism. Optimism and pessimism relate to people's expectations for the future. Due to this they are linked to the expectancy-value theories of motivation. Expectancy-value theories assume that behavior is directed on the pursuit of goals. When a goal is important to someone, the greater is its value. Expectancy is a sense of confidence or doubt about whether goal can be attained or not.

Expectancy-based theories generally suggest that the best prediction of behavior can be made when the level of the expectancy fits that of the behavior being predicted. When confronting a challenge, optimists are more confident whereas pessimists are more doubtful. This has implications in terms of differences in taking health risks, taking precautions, and being persistent in one's efforts to overcome health threats as well as differences in coping responses.

Explanatory styles

People have explanatory styles which influence the way they explain various life events. According to the theory behind explanatory style, optimism and pessimism are defined by unstable and specific versus stable and global patterns of explanation for negative outcomes. Abramson, Seligman, & Teasdale (1978) applied the attribution theory. This approach believes that people's explanatory style determines how they explain an event. This influences their expectation of future events.

Explanatory style consists of three dimensions: internal/external; stable/unstable and global/specific. According to this model, if the person considers bad events as internal, stable and global they have a pessimistic explanatory style. However, optimistic explanatory style explains the causes of negative events as external, unstable and specific. When faced with a challenge, optimists are more confident whereas pessimists remain doubtful.

Unrealistic and realistic optimism

Unrealistic optimism (Weinstein, 1989) describes the mismatch between dispositional optimism and actual probability of occurrence of events. It refers to the discrepancy between the inevitability of adverse circumstances and the anticipation of experiencing life as good. Optimistic bias or unrealistic optimism has been demonstrated across a wide variety of positive and negative events.

Realistic optimism is defined by Sneider (2001) as the 'tendency to maintain a positive outlook within the constraints of the available measurable phenomena situated in the physical and social world'. Realistic optimists believe they have more control over themselves, their lives and their destinies. A realistic optimist is defined as someone who looks on the bright side of life but at the same time has an understanding of reality. The main difference is between believing that one will succeed, and believing that one will succeed easily. This is the difference between being a realistic optimist and an unrealistic optimist.

Importance of optimism

Optimism has been linked to positive mood, academic, and occupational success and good health. Pessimism has been found to be related to depression, failure, social isolation, mortality etc.

Optimism and Subjective Well-Being: Since optimists are people who expect to have positive outcomes, they usually experience positive feelings. Pessimists expect negative outcomes and therefore they usually have negative feelings of anxiety, guilt, anger etc. Seligman (1998) reported that optimistic people experience less depression and increased

enjoyment in social interactions. Several studies have reported a strong relation between an optimistic outlook about the future and happiness.

Optimism, Pessimism, and Coping: Optimists and pessimists have been found to use different coping methods. Optimists use more problem-centered coping than pessimists and a variety of emotion-focused coping techniques as well. Hence, it can be said that optimists have a coping advantage over pessimists. Thus, optimists appear generally to use approach oriented coping strategies, and pessimists tend to use avoidant coping strategies. In the workplace, optimists use more problem-focused coping than do pessimists like self-control and directed problem solving (Strutton & Lumpkin, 1993). Pessimists use more emotion-focused coping such as escapism, and using social support. In studies of AIDS patients too, optimism has been found to be related to active coping strategies.

Optimism and Health Behaviors: Optimistic people are healthier and happier. They cope better with stress using more effective coping strategies. They form better social support networks around themselves. They have healthier lifestyles which prevent them from developing illness. If they develop illness they adhere to medical advice and have healthier lifestyle and behavior patterns. Many studies show that optimists report more health promoting behaviors than pessimists. The route by which optimism might be associated with better health is through effects on the immune system. It has also been found that optimists suffer fewer life traumas, which make them vulnerable to illness and have better social support. In spite of the various benefits of optimism mentioned above, several theorists have suggested that in some situations optimism may be potentially damaging. Optimists may fail to protect themselves against threats. Another possibility is that the optimist's worldview might be more vulnerable to a traumatic event than that of a pessimist.

Optimism and work performance: When hiring people for jobs three characteristics must be considered: aptitude, motivation and optimism. Working with Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, Seligman (1995) studied optimism in insurance agents. He found that life

insurance agents were highly optimistic and that the optimists performed better than pessimists.

Changing Pessimism to Optimism: Researches with twins suggest that optimism is subject to genetic influence (Plomin et al., 1992). Optimism relates both to neuroticism and to extraversion, both of which are known to be genetically influenced. An important factor in the development of optimism or pessimism is early childhood experience. Insecurity of adult attachment is related to pessimism. One of the most straightforward ways for changing pessimism to optimism is through cognitive behavioral therapies. These are applied to problems such as depression and anxiety. The goal of the cognitive therapies is to make the cognitions more positive thereby reducing distress.

The approaches for changing pessimistic thinking to optimistic are all built on the same principles of —ABCDE (Seligman, 1992).

A - Adverse event or situation- Identifying adverse situations that one routinely faces and writing down the objective descriptions of them.

B- Beliefs about that event- Learning to hear and record the beliefs about those events which come to mind.

C - Consequences of those beliefs- Feeling the consequences of those beliefs and writing them down in terms of emotions and what one did.

D- Disputation and Distraction - Disputing those beliefs or distracting oneself.

E – Energization- Finally, noticing what happens to one's energy and willingness to act when one disputes the negative beliefs.

Another method for enhancing optimism is personal efficacy training. The focus of such training is on increasing specific kinds of competence by the use of assertiveness training or social skills training. Training in specific areas like problem solving, decision making etc can also improve the level of optimism in a person.

Another method which is frequently used is Instructional Counselling for optimism. In this method, cognitive techniques are used for teaching optimistic beliefs. Another technique which can be used is the 'What if' technique. Negative self-talk creates anxiety and reduces

happiness. By associating 'What If' with positive hopeful outcomes we can experience calm. Relaxation techniques can also be employed. When faced with adverse situations, one must calm down and try to have positive and optimistic thoughts. To conclude, optimism and pessimism influence how people perceive and explain events in their lives. They influence people's subjective experiences and actions when they try to deal with problems. However, being optimistic or pessimistic has implications for achievement, mental and physical health, coping and well-being.

SELF-EFFICACY

Self-efficacy is the core aspect of Bandura's social cognitive theory. Bandura (1995) defined self-efficacy as the belief in one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to manage prospective situations. Self-efficacy involves the belief that one can effectively perform certain actions. Our efficacy beliefs determine our expectations about the outcomes of our actions and this in turn determines our behavioral performance.

People's beliefs in their capabilities to obtain desired outcomes are very important as they determine the types of behaviors people will undertake and how much efforts they will put in. A related construct is Perceived Self-Efficacy which is the belief that one can perform difficult tasks and cope with failures. Perceived self-efficacy helps in setting of goals, putting of effort, persistence and recovery from failures.

Self-efficacy is usually treated as domain specific. But recently some researchers have also conceptualized a generalized sense of self-efficacy across a wide range of situations. There is a positive relationship between general self-efficacy and specific self-efficacy.

According to Bandura (1995), individuals possess a self-system through which they exercise control over their thoughts, feelings, and actions. The self-system is made up of cognitive and affective structures which are involved in perceiving, regulating, and evaluating behavior. Self-efficacy makes a difference in people's feelings, thoughts and action. Low self-efficacy is related with depression, and anxiety while high self-efficacy leads to accomplishments, reduces stress, and enhances well-being. A person with strong self-efficacy beliefs is able to lead a more self-determined life; consider difficult tasks as

challenges and not as threats. Self-efficacy influences the level of stress one experiences while dealing with difficult circumstances. It also determines one's level of accomplishments; level of effort and whether one's thoughts are positive or negative.

Sources of self-efficacy

According to Bandura (1997), there are four major sources of self-efficacy beliefs:

Mastery experiences: Mastery experiences are the most effective way of creating a high level of efficacy. Successes help in building strong self-efficacy beliefs whereas failures undermine it. High self-efficacy beliefs come from past experiences of success.

Vicarious experiences: Self-efficacy beliefs also develop by learning from the experiences of other people. Exposure to successful role models helps in enhancing self-efficacy. Competent models display effective skills through their behavior. Perceived similarity to the models influences the effect of modelling on self-efficacy. If the assumed similarity is more, the more influence the models' successes and failures will have on the person. When people observe the successes of others it enhances their self-efficacy beliefs required for attaining success.

Verbal persuasion: Another way of strengthening self-efficacy beliefs is through verbal persuasion. A person who is persuaded that he/she possesses the capabilities required to perform given tasks is more likely to put in greater effort as compared to one who has self-doubts. Social persuasion motivates people to try hard to succeed in the task. A person's self-efficacy is increased when he/she is encouraged by others that he/she is capable of successfully completing a task. Guidance from others helps in correcting one's performance.

Physiological/emotional states: Emotional arousal also influences self-efficacy. High negative emotional arousal may interfere with performance, whereas positive emotional arousal can enhance performance. Mood also affects people's judgments of their self-efficacy. Positive mood enhances self-efficacy, whereas negative mood diminishes it.

Imaginal Experiences: Apart from the four sources mentioned above, Maddux (1995) introduced imaginal experiences as another source of self-efficacy. He suggested that self-efficacy beliefs can be developed by imagining oneself behaving in hypothetical situations. These images may be derived from actual or vicarious experiences. They may also be developed by verbal persuasion in systematic desensitization and covert modelling. Imaginal

modelling has been used successfully in interventions to enhance assertive behaviors (Kazdin, 1979).

Efficacy-activated processes

Self-efficacy beliefs affect functioning through four major psychological processes (Bandura, 1992). They are as follows:

Cognitive Processes: Most human behavior is determined by one's cognitions like thinking, decision making reasoning etc. Setting goals for oneself is influenced by how one appraises his/her capabilities. People with strong self-efficacy beliefs set higher goal challenges for themselves and are more committed to achieving them. Self-efficacy beliefs also influence the expectations of people. People with strong self-efficacy beliefs, visualize success scenarios while those with low self-efficacy visualize failure scenarios. Remaining task oriented during stressful situations is also affected by self-efficacy beliefs.

Motivational Processes: Self-efficacy beliefs help in regulating one's motivation. People form beliefs about what they can do. There are three different forms of cognitive motivators: causal attributions, outcome expectancies, and goals and self-efficacy beliefs play a role in each of these. Causal attributions affect motivation, and performance through self-efficacy beliefs. In expectancy-value theory, motivation is regulated by the expectation that a certain action will lead to certain outcomes. Self-efficacy beliefs determine the goals people set for themselves and the effort invested.

Affective Processes: People's beliefs in their coping capabilities influences how much stress they may experience. Self-efficacy to exercise control over stressful situations plays an important role in anxiety arousal. Stronger the self-efficacy beliefs about self-regulation, the more successful the person is in taking up health promoting behaviors.

Selection Processes: Self-efficacy beliefs influence one's life course by affecting the types of activities and environments people select for themselves. Any factor that affects choice behaviors has a huge impact on personal development. This is because the person will choose activities and environments which further enhance his development. In career choice and development too self-efficacy beliefs influence the course of life through the choices that one makes. When self-efficacy is high, the range of career options a person considers becomes high and it leads to greater interest in career options. Due to this there is better preparation for the attainment of the goal thereby leading to success.

Development of Self-Efficacy Beliefs

Self-efficacy beliefs start developing in early childhood as children go through various types of experiences. The growth of self-efficacy continues to evolve throughout life. According to Bandura (1967, 2001), there is a triadic reciprocal causal relationship between personal, behavioral and environmental factors. Cultural factors and power structure also play a very important role in developing self-efficacy beliefs.

The initial basis for developing a sense of efficacy is provided by the exploratory experiences of the child. Children who are successful in controlling environmental events are more competent in learning new efficacious responses. The role of family is very important role in the development of self-efficacy beliefs. Families differ in their capital: financial or material, human or non-material, and social resources (Bradley & Corwyn, 2002). Families with greater capital provide richer experiences which further enhance children's efficacy beliefs. Parents, who create opportunities for efficacious actions, help in the social and cognitive development of their children. Peers act as models of self-efficacy. A great amount of social learning occurs among peers. One can judge one's self-efficacy beliefs by comparing with one's peers. Peer influence operates greatly through peer networks which are large group of peers with whom the adolescent associates (Schunk & Meece, 2005).

The school plays an important role in the development of the child's cognitive competencies. Children acquire knowledge and problem-solving skills at school. Adolescence is often characterized as a period of crisis and the ease with which one makes the transition from childhood to adulthood depends on self-efficacy beliefs.

During adulthood people have to cope with many challenges emerging from marital relationship, parenthood, and careers. Adults with a high level of self-efficacy know how to strike a balance between different relationships and between relationships and career. Those with a low level of self-efficacy are highly vulnerable to stress and depression since they are unable to cope with these challenges. Major life changes occur in later years due to retirement, loss of friends or spouse and diminishing physical and cognitive capabilities. Low self-efficacy leads to vulnerability to stress and depression in old age.

Importance of Self-efficacy

The importance of self-efficacy beliefs has been proved in various settings. Many recent researches have shown a relationship between self-efficacy and other outcome-related behaviors.

Self-Efficacy and Psychological Adjustment: General self-efficacy has been found to be negatively correlated with negative affect, anxiety, depression, anger, stress, and physical symptoms. Self-efficacy beliefs have also been found to be negatively related to clinical problems like phobias and addiction.

High self-efficacy has been found to be related to the management of stress, higher self-esteem, better well-being, and better physical health. It also helps in overcoming substance abuse problems and eating disorders.

Self-Efficacy and Physical Health: Self-efficacy helps in explaining why people adopt healthy or unhealthy behaviors. Beliefs about self-efficacy influence health in many ways: First, self-efficacy beliefs influence whether a person will adopt healthy behaviours, curb unhealthy behaviours, and maintain behavioural changes during difficulties. All the major theories of health behaviour include self-efficacy as a key component. Self-efficacy beliefs also influence biological processes that play a role in health and disease.

Self-Efficacy and Self-Regulation: Self-efficacy helps in understanding how we guide our own behavior in the pursuit of our goals. Self-efficacy beliefs influence the goals we set, our choices of goal-directed activities, level of effort, and the effectiveness of problem solving and decision making.

Self-Efficacy and psychotherapy: Self-efficacy theory helps in understanding how to increase a person's self-efficacy to overcome problematic situations. Self-efficacy theory suggests that psychotherapeutic interventions should also help in developing efficacy for successful problem solving. These strategies are based on the four sources of self-efficacy.

Self-efficacy and academic performance: In the academic domain self-efficacy has been found to be related to technological/computer literacy, writing; choice of academic major, teacher preparation, and mathematics learning. Students with strong self-efficacy beliefs usually challenge themselves with difficult tasks. These students put in a lot of effort to meet their commitments, and attribute failure to controllable things. Self-efficacious students also recover quickly from setbacks, and are more likely to achieve their personal

goals. Self-efficacy plays a vital role in educational attainment. Self-efficacy has powerful effects on learning. General self-efficacy is also positively related to need for achievement.

Self-efficacy and work performance: The role of self-efficacy in improved performance at work is immense. Bandura (1986) observed the relationship of self-efficacy with increased effort and motivation. Martinko and Gardner (1982) found that low self-efficacy is associated with learned helplessness. Self-efficacy also predicts the range of career options considered, occupational interests and personal effectiveness as well as entrepreneurial activity. Efficacy beliefs influence employees' motivation and performance in organizations.

SUMMING UP

Optimism has been linked to psychological and physical well-being. The study of optimism has contributed a lot to what we understand about optimism today. There are several other constructs that are similar or related to optimism and they pose a methodological issue. Two of these concepts are hope and self-efficacy. People with high self-efficacy expectancies believe that their personal efforts determine the outcome of events. Whereas self-efficacy looks at self as a causal agent, optimism takes a broader view of the potential causes at work. Hope reflects the will as well as the ways. The confidence aspect in hope is similar to optimism however there is more emphasis on personal agency. This unit delves deeper into various other aspects of self-efficacy as well.

MODEL QUESTIONS

1. What is optimism? Elaborate.
2. What is meant by self-efficacy?
3. Discuss the importance of self-efficacy.

SUGGESTED READINGS

Snyder, C. R., Shane J. Lopez, and Jennifer Teramoto Pedrotti. **Positive Psychology: The Scientific and Practical Explorations of Human Strengths**. 2nd ed.

<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/j.1468-5914.2007.00322.x>

LESSON -13: RELATIONSHIP -- LOVE

OBJECTIVES

- To understand the nature of relationships
- To learn about romantic love
- To understand the theoretical explanations of love

STRUCTURE

- 13.1. History of research on romantic love
- 13.2. Models for explaining love
- 13.3. Evolution of love
- 13.4. The triangular theory of love
- 13.5. Self-expansion theory of love
- 13.6. Love across cultures
- 13.7. Communicating love

INTRODUCTION

History of Research on Romantic Love

In Greek terms, four traditions in the history of love (Singer, 1984, 1987) can be noted: (a) **Eros**: the search for the beautiful, (b) **philia**: the affection in friendship, (c) **nomos**: submission and obedience to the divine; and (d) **agape**: the bestowal of love by the divine. In an attempt to give a comprehensive history of love, Irving Singer came up with the classic —The Nature of Love , a book that comes in three large volumes (1984, 1987). The Nature of Love is a philosophical history of love from antiquity to the modern era.

Hatfield (1988), Hatfield & Rapson (1996) proposed that passionate love, as an intense attraction, has existed in all cultures and all historical periods and is essentially a —human

universal. In one of their studies, Hendrick and Hendrick (1993) asked college students to write essays about their romantic relationships or about their closest friendship. Not only was friendship the dominant theme in describing romantic relationships but almost half of the participants spontaneously named their romantic partner as their closest friend. Consistent with these findings, Sprecher and Regan (1998) found that both companionate love and passionate love were related to commitment and relationship satisfaction. Friendship, along with passion, is thus an important ingredient of love. Later on, Hendrick and Hendrick (1992, 2009) also hypothesized that only during the last 300 years or so have cultural forces led people to develop a sense of self that was capable of loving and caring for a romantic partner over a lifetime. Simpson, Campbell, and Berscheid (1986) examined college students' perceptions of the importance of love as a basis for marriage, in data collected over a 30-year period. Students over time reported romantic love as being an increasingly important basis for marriage.

The growth of love marriages spread widely in the Western world in the 18th century. In the Indian context, love has always played a key role in both mythology and modern dynasties. From the tales of Ramayana and Mahabharata, to those of Jodha-Akbar and Mumtaz-Shahjahan, Indians have a rich history of love stories. Though the traditions of arranged marriages are predominant in the tales of matchmaking, love marriages have off late found a new growth. Another noteworthy point here is that arranged marriages have worked successfully over the centuries and so in a way; it might be a query that does love work out well even when it doesn't come up as one's own choice?

Models for Explaining Love

Theories of love are difficult to classify. Nevertheless, they may be grouped under two broad headings; naturalistic/biological and psychological/social.

Naturalistic/Biological Approaches: Recent studies have begun to explore some of the biological underpinnings of our need for belongingness. For example, oxytocin is a pituitary hormone which sometimes is referred to as the —cuddle hormone because close physical contacts such as touching, hugging and kissing stimulate its release (Hazan, Campa & Gur-Yaish, 2006). Oxytocin, along with vasopressin helps humans and about 3 percent of other

mammal species to experience lasting, monogamous love. These two chemicals are associated with our ability to form memories of others and help us recognize other people. They're also released, along with dopamine, during sex. Oxytocin levels however are at their highest during sexual orgasm, in both men and women (Uvnas-Moberg, 1997).

In order to understand the brain's response to love, one must examine the brain and fully comprehend the myriad array of structures involved. One of the main structures involved with falling in love is the limbic system. The particular system is well known as being the part of the brain involved in emotional response. The limbic system is actually several structures combined, including the basal nuclei, the thalamus, and the hypothalamus. While all of these structures are vital, the hypothalamus is directly involved in both behavioral and sexual function. Combining these two important functions, one can see how the limbic system is so crucial to falling in love.

Evolution of Love

The question as to why humans love has been answered from an evolutionary perspective. We love because we are meant to reproduce. Species continue through reproduction, and continuation of the species is paramount in evolution. Since mating is the ultimate goal, then feelings of romantic love are merely a vehicle towards this goal. Mellen (1981) argued that the survival of the human species necessitated an emotional bond between breeding pairs of partners so that both partners would attend to their helpless infants. Adult humans are designed to respond to the cries and babbles of infants; and rush to feed them and pick them up. The burden of child care is so intense that it takes two parents to bring up even one baby. Buss (1988) defined love as consisting of behaviors enacted by both females and males that strengthen the bonding function and ultimately serve to perpetuate the human species.

Psychological/Social Approaches: Given the intense interest in love, psychologists over the past few decades have taken a different stand on this humane feeling of love. Few of these conceptualizations are discussed below:

Passionate and Companionate Love: Berscheid and Walster (1978) classified romantic love into passionate and companionate love. They defined passionate love as a state of total

absorption of two lovers, typically involving strong sexual attraction, infatuation, exclusivity, and emotions that run full gamut from ecstasy to anguish. Companionate love on the other hand is manifested in a strong bond and an intertwining of lives that brings about feelings of comfort and peace. It is slower-developing in comparison to passionate love and also, less emotional, calmer and more serene. The two forms can occur simultaneously or intermittently rather than sequentially (from passionate to companionate).

The Triangular Theory of Love:

In Sternberg's triangular theory of love, intimacy, passion and commitment each represent one side of a triangle describing love shared by two people (Sternberg, 1986, 1987). The **intimacy** component is primarily emotional or affective in nature and involves feelings of warmth, closeness and connection in the love relationship. The **passion** component is motivational and consists of the drives that are involved in romantic and physical attraction, sexual consummation, and related phenomena. The **commitment** component is largely cognitive and represents both the short-term decision that one individual loves another and the longer term commitment to maintain that love. According to Sternberg, these three love components differ with respect to a number of properties, including stability, conscious controllability, and experiential salience.

Self-Expansion Theory of Love

Aron and Aron (1986, 1996), based on Eastern traditions (e.g., Hinduism) concerning the concept of self, proposed that humans have a basic motive for self-expansion. The emotions, cognitions and behaviors of love fuel one's ability to expand the self. This growth of self may incorporate physical possessions, as well as power and influence. Falling in love creates a rapid expansion of self-boundaries and therefore is pleasurable.

Attachment Approaches: This approach raises the intriguing possibility that some of our most basic, and perhaps unconscious, emotional responses to intimacy are shaped by the kind of relationship we had with our parents. It was developed out of the work of Bowlby (1969) and Ainsworth (1979), who studied the types of relationships that infants form with their caregivers. For example, Hazan and Shaver (1987) applied attachment theory to adult love relationships, noting that it provides an explanation for both the joys and the sorrows manifested in adult love and embraced the categories of secure, avoidant and anxious attachments. In 1991, Bartholomew and Horowitz further categorized the avoidant attachment type into dismissive and fearful.

Love across Cultures

While some scholars note that the rich texture and subtle nuances of love need to be understood within a cultural context (Dion & Dion, 1996); others believe that most fundamental aspects of love transcend place and time. One of the foci of cross-cultural research on love is the idea of romantic love as a prerequisite for marriage, the results are mixed when comparison is made between individualistic and collectivistic cultures, Sprecher et al. (1994) found that there is no difference in the beliefs of individuals in USA and Japan regarding the influence of love on marriage, on the other hand Levine et al. (1995) studied 11 cultures and found the individuals from individualistic cultures were more likely to put love as an essential criteria for marriage than individuals from collectivistic cultures.

In studying ethnic groups in US under the shadow of love, Hendrick and Hendrick (1986) found that Asian students scored lower on Eros love and higher on Storge and Pragma love than Black or White Americans. Dion and Dion (1993) compared the love styles of ethnically diverse groups of students in Canada, and found that Asians scored higher on Storge love than Anglo groups. Sprecher et al. (1994) explored American, Japanese, and Russian love styles. Though there certainly were cultural differences (Japanese respondents identified less with certain romantic beliefs, and Russians were less likely to require love as a prerequisite for marriage), the respondents from all countries were found to be similar in many love attitudes and experiences. For example, Regan (1998); Regan & Berscheid (1999) noted that sexual desire is a fundamental component of romantic love. In a large-scale study of sexual behavior in the United States, Laumann, Gagnon, Michael, and Michaels (1994) found that respondents who expressed the greatest physical pleasure and emotional satisfaction in their relationships were those in partnered, monogamous relationships. More recently, Sternberg has focused on love as a social construction, varying across time and cultures (e.g., Beall & Sternberg, 1995).

Landis and O'Shea (2000) examined the concept of passionate love across several countries and found that this construct seemed to have unique factor structures across different cultural groupings, dimensions such as insecurity–security, other-centeredness–self-centeredness, and instability–stability. Different cultural practices, such as arranged

marriages, may also dictate the value love has within a society, which is very much the case in India. Some researchers have found differences in constructs such as emotional investment or in the experiences of passionate or companionate love among different cultural groups.

Communicating Love

Considering the evidence for the cross-cultural differences in attitudes and style related to love, it can be said that the speech and expression of love also differs. Although numerous insights are generated regarding communication by various ethnographic studies across cultures, however speech events related to friendship and love are not known and also the differences in the activities or events that constitute the scenes for expressing love are not known. Seki, Matsumoto, and Imahori (2002) conducted a study that examined the cross-cultural differences related to expressions of intimacy between individuals from USA and Japan, they found that the Americans reported greater intimacy, openness and physical contact for expressing intimacy while the Japanese cite greater understanding as an intimacy form. In another recent study, Wilkins and Gareis (2006) examined the locution 'I love you' cross culturally. Results indicated that the use of the locution 'I love you' fluctuates greatly across cultures: while in some culture it is used exclusively for romantic declarations of love, it has a much wider distribution in others. They also found that this phrase was used more by females and by those who used English.

SUMMING UP

Love is a set of emotions and behaviors characterized by intimacy, passion, and commitment. It involves care, closeness, protectiveness, attraction, affection, and trust. Love can vary in intensity and can change over time. It is associated with a range of positive emotions, including happiness, excitement, life satisfaction, and euphoria, but it can also result in negative emotions such as jealousy and stress. When it comes to love, some people would say it is one of the most important human emotions. Yet despite being one of the most studied behaviors, it is still the least understood. For example, researchers debate whether love is a biological or cultural phenomenon. Love is most likely influenced by both biological drives and cultural influences. While hormones and biology are important, the way we express and experience love is also influenced by our personal conceptions of love.

This unit gives an in-depth understanding of the various theoretical explanations put forth to explain love.

MODEL QUESTIONS

- What are the various models of explaining love?
- Discuss various theories of love.
- Elaborate love across cultures.

SUGGESTED READINGS

Snyder, C. R., Shane J. Lopez, and Jennifer Teramoto Pedrotti. ***Positive Psychology***. The Scientific and Practical Explorations of Human Strengths. 2nd ed.

<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/j.1468-5914.2007.00322.x>

LESSON -14: COMPASSION & FORGIVENESS

OBJECTIVES

- To understand the various nuances in Compassion.
- To learn about the intricacies of forgiveness

STRUCTURE

- 14.1. Compassion
- 14.2. Forgiveness
- 14.3. Types of Forgiveness
- 14.4. Forgiveness as a technique of positive living
- 14.5. Positive Psychology of forgiveness
- 14.6. Forgiveness and Happiness
- 14.7. Applications of Forgiveness
- 14.8. Summing Up
- 14.9. Model Questions
- 14.10. Suggested readings

COMPASSION

The idea of compassion has origins in both Western and Eastern philosophies. Within the Western tradition, Aristotle often is noted for early writings on the concept of compassion. Likewise, compassion can be traced in the Eastern traditions of Confucianism, Taoism, Buddhism, and Hinduism. In Confucian teachings, compassion is discussed within the concept of *jen (humanity)* and is said to encapsulate all other virtues. Within the Taoist belief system, humanity also reflects behaviours that must occur naturally, without premeditation. Finally, the Buddha often is described as “perfectly enlightened, and boundlessly compassionate”. As such the idea of compassion, or *karuna*, also is woven throughout Buddhism as a virtue on the path toward transcendence. Finally, within the

Hindu tradition, compassion is called for in good actions towards others, which will direct followers upon the path that will not require them to return to Earth after death.

In recent writings in positive psychology, physician Eric Cassell (2002) proposes the three following requirements for compassion: (a) the difficulties of the recipient must be serious; (b) the recipient's difficulties cannot be self-inflicted, and (c) we, as observers, must be able to identify with the recipient's suffering. Compassion is described as a "unilateral emotion" that is directed outward from oneself. In Buddhist teachings, the attainment of compassion means being able to "transcend preoccupation with the centrality of self" – to focus on others rather than merely on ourselves. The ability to possess feelings for something completely separate from our own suffering allows us to transcend the self and, in this way, to be closer to the achievement of the good life. In fact, transcendental compassion is said to be the most significant of the four universal virtues, and it often is called Great Compassion (*mahakaruna*) to distinguish it from the more applied *karuna* (Sangharakshita, 1991). Similarly, although discussed in somewhat different ways as Confucian, Taoist, and Hindu principles, the capacities to feel and to do for others are central to achieving the good life for each of these traditions as well.

Possessing compassion helps the person to succeed in life and is viewed as a major strength within the Eastern tradition. Feeling for fellow group members may allow identification with others and development of group cohesion. Furthermore, acting compassionately fosters group, rather than personal, happiness. Compassion also may come more naturally to the person from a collectivist culture than to someone from an individualist culture. On this point, researchers have argued that a collectivist culture may breed a sense of compassion in the form of its members' prosocial behaviors (Batson, 1991; Batson, Ahmad, Lishner, & Tsang, 2002). When a group identity has been formed, therefore, the natural choice may be group benefits over individual ones. More information from qualitative and quantitative studies in this area would be helpful in defining the mechanisms used to foster such compassion.

Peterson and Seligman (2004) indicate that "humanity" may be viewed as a "universal strength" in their book, *Character Strengths and Virtues: A Handbook and Classification*. For both Western and Eastern traditions, they hold that the ability to feel for others is a necessary part of the search for the good life. Compassion, an aspect of humanity, involves looking outside ourselves and thinking about others as we care for and identify with them.

This other-than-self focus is needed to transcend one's physical body, according to Eastern traditions. Thus, nirvana can be attained only when one's independent identity and the self-motivated desires that accompany it are eradicated completely. In moving toward the good life, therefore, compassion is essential for dealing with daily life tasks. As one walks along the path toward this good life, the continual goal is to transcend the human plane and to become enlightened through experiences with others and the world. Compassion asks people to think outside themselves and to connect with others. Additionally, as the person comes to understand others, she or he comes closer to self-understanding. This is yet another key component in attaining transcendence.

FORGIVENESS

Forgiveness is one of the supreme human virtues. The idea of forgiveness is integral to many religious texts, scriptures and philosophical discourses. William Shakespeare in his classic work *The Merchant of Venice* has considered mercy as the finest of all human qualities. In the Hindu religious mythology, a defining quality of all gods is the ability to forgive and punish. The idea and ability of forgiveness has been more often connected with the idea of divinity as compared to the ability to punish. In Buddhism a form of forgiveness called compassion has been considered a way of achieving Nirvana or salvation.

There is an increasing need in the society for an absolute understanding of forgiveness. Traditionally, forgiveness was conceptualized as acting on a mere moral or religious intention. Although several empirical articles have been published in research journals about forgiveness, those with a philosophical or psychological perspective appeared only a few decades ago. (McCollough, Pargament & Thoresen, 2000). Adequate financial resources and research teams working on scientific research on forgiveness could create a global awareness for the significance of forgiveness research.

Forgiveness is a comprehensive word and it comes in many forms and varieties. Words like mercy, compassion, excusing, forgetting, etc., can be associated with the idea of forgiveness. Forgiveness is a positive pro-social behavior and the chances of its being confounded with the other kind of pro-social constructs like compassion or mercy are significantly high. As previously stated, forgiveness is a positive pro-social behavior which involves the presence of the victim, a perpetrator and a criminal act or wrongdoing from the

perpetrator to the victim. If in response to the perpetrated wrongdoing the victim forgives the wrong doer then we call it an instance of forgiveness. Thompson et al (2005) describes forgiveness as relieving oneself of the negativity fastened to the transgressor. The target of the consequent forgiveness may be either oneself or another person or the situation.

Further, a look at the existing research literature suggests that forgiveness has been defined either as a response, or as a personality characteristic, or as a characteristic of the social unit. These three aspects of definitions have been discussed below:

▣ *As response*, forgiveness can be defined as a pro-social change in thoughts, emotions and/or behaviors of a victim toward the wrongdoer. Conceptualizations of forgiveness as a response are based on one primary feature: when people forgive, their thoughts and behaviors towards the offenders become less negative and more pro-social eventually. (McCollough et al, 2000).

▣ *As a personality characteristic*, forgiveness may be explained as a tendency to forgive others in diversified circumstances. Although most people fall around the mean of the population in a forgiveness-unforgiveness continuum, the disposition to forgive itself may have certain aspects. (Mullet et al, 1998).

▣ *As a characteristic of social units*, forgiveness may be described as a virtue similar to intimacy, trust or commitment. Some social institutions like families or marriages are characterized by a higher intensity of forgiveness, whereas other institutions, which cast out members who transgress, are characterized by less forgiveness.

Types of Forgiveness

Forgiveness can be distinguished between positive forgiveness and negative forgiveness. Positive (or emotional) forgiveness is a therapeutic process of absolute forgiveness, which also involves reinstituting positive feelings and thoughts toward the offender. Negative forgiveness, on the other hand, is a situation in which forgiveness is extended while brooding over the act of transgression. Negative forgiveness, also known as decisional forgiveness, involves mere overt inhibition of a retributive response, mostly in the interests of social acceptance. Yet, grudges are formed and sustained.

The two types of forgiveness indicate two distinct psychological processes. In pure positive forgiveness, cognitive restructuring is used to create the belief that retribution, of any kind is unnecessary. Retribution is instead a coping mechanism in situations where the hurt avoidance failed. Emotional forgiveness is not expected to improve psychological well-being

but to restore well-being following the negative feelings or grudges. Negative or decisional forgiveness, on the contrary, involves a dissonance in the thought process of the victim; his positive well-being maybe enhanced by the thought that he has forgiven the transgressor, but the negative effect of grudge holding and anger would sustain. However, the process of adapting to consonant thoughts about the transgression will occur in varying degrees, depending on variables such as the degree of hurt, or victim's capacity for forgiveness. The meta-analysis of Wade et al. (2005) confirms a positive relationship between the time spent in group counselling and the intensity of forgiveness. It was concluded that changes in forgiveness patterns reflect the passage of time and strength of training to reduce negative forgiveness.

Forgiveness as technique of positive living:

Many psychologists believe that forgiveness plays an important role in the well-being of individuals and societies. The common acts of forgiveness are known to indicate potential benefits, when trying to resolve social conflicts or a relationship or general health of society (Bono, 2005). Commonplace forgiveness goes a long way in creating a harmonious society. Positive emotions, thoughts and behavior are inculcated depending on the degree of genuineness. Genuine forgiveness requires the victim to be compassionate and benevolent toward the transgressor and to part with the right to revenge and resentment. Forgiveness generally leads to small but positive outcomes in psychological and physiological health and well-being. Forgiveness indicates high levels of compassion and empathy toward the wrongdoer.

Positive psychology of Forgiveness

Forgiveness, in the context of positive psychology, assumes that dwelling on the negative aspects related to the hurt would continue to damage psychological health. It is conceptualized forgiveness as a motivational phenomenon (McCollough, Worthington & Rachal, 1997).

Forgiveness & Happiness

Forgiveness, in context of positive psychology, emphasizes on enabling one to experience peace and calm in the present moment without holding grudges and inhibiting retributive thoughts. (Friedman, 2009). Forgiving lets one stay centered in the present than dwelling on the past or worrying about the future. Genuine, positive forgiveness helps one to return to

his core self, of peace, love, happiness, strength and joy. Forgiveness allows us to let go of our negative feelings towards the transgressor. Negative forgiveness has been shown to affect cardiovascular activity and increase stress levels. Meditation practice helps us to clear the past from mind and body, so as to enjoy a better health, increase in constructive energy and a renewed sense of our existence. Although the relation between forgiveness and happiness has a biblical framework, empirical studies in the field of positive psychology are also increasing. Yet, limited research has been done to study the link between these concepts. Maltby et al (2005) have theorized a positive correlation between forgiveness and happiness. Happiness is considered as the supreme form of human contentment and satisfaction. If forgiveness reflects human strength and positive thinking, it would be expected that that a positive association between the two concepts exists.

Applications of forgiveness:

The concept of forgiveness has been applied in many situations and disciplines. Below are listed

some of the major areas of human life where forgiveness has its applications.

▣ ***Forgiveness & Health:*** Worthington et al (2006) pointed out that unforgiving responses lead to poor health, especially cardiovascular activity and blood pressure. People with high blood pressures, generally are less forgiving than those who are forgiving. Researches also explain that forgiving people have better social support, are less likely to depend on alcohol or drugs, and are less prone to anxiety and depression. Acquiring the capacity to forgive can prove to be beneficial to families dealing with health issues (Friedman, 2009). Studies indicate that individuals who are forgiving have lesser risks of heart attack and experience less anger and physical pain than unforgiving individuals. Hence, forgiveness enhances your health.

▣ ***Forgiveness in Marriage:*** Researchers studying forgiveness in interpersonal relationships are of the opinion that forgiveness is essential part of marriage and relationship dynamics. People who are capable to forgive experience greater levels of marital satisfaction and longevity, better communication, and enhanced intimacy. It also reduces the negative affect in the relationship. Forgiving is also important after a divorce (Friedman, 2009). The mere absence of the spouse doesn't suppress the emotional

conflicts. It is necessary to learn to forgive your spouse. It saves one from repression of emotions of sadness or anger toward the spouse, which could instead result in more negativity and frustration. It is not necessary that all marriages benefit from forgiveness interventions and hence, it is necessary to highlight the need for intensive research on appropriate targets for such interventions (McNulty, 2008).

▣ ***Forgiveness as a Healing Process:*** Forgiveness can help alleviate psychological problems like anxiety, stress, depression, etc. Also, forgiveness has an impact on psychological well-being of an individual. It can be used to recover from psychological issues and to boost one's self-esteem and hopefulness (Enright, 2001). It is important to confront the issue and let go of the self-inflicted emotional pain and hurt.

SUMMING UP

Compassion literally means “to suffer together”. Among emotion researchers it is defined as the feeling that arises when you are confronted with another's suffering and feel motivated to relieve that suffering. Psychologists generally define forgiveness as a conscious, deliberate decision to release feelings of resentment or vengeance toward a person or group who has harmed you, regardless of whether they actually deserve your forgiveness. Forgiveness does not mean forgetting, nor does it mean condoning or excusing offenses. This unit delves into the nitty-gritties of both compassion and forgiveness and touches upon the theoretical aspects too.

MODEL QUESTIONS

1. What is compassion? Elaborate.
2. What is forgiveness? Discuss the types of forgiveness.
3. What are the various applications of forgiveness?

SUGGESTED READINGS

Snyder, C. R., Shane J. Lopez, and Jennifer Teramoto Pedrotti. ***Positive Psychology: The Scientific and Practical Explorations of Human Strengths***. 2nd ed.

<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/j.1468-5914.2007.00322.x>

LESSON -15: EMPATHY AND ALTRUISM

OBJECTIVES

- To understand the topic of empathy
- To understand altruism

STRUCTURE

- 15.1. Introduction
- 15.2. Empathic Emotion
- 15.3. The Empathy Altruism Hypothesis
- 15.4. Summing Up
- 15.5. Model questions
- 15.6. Suggested readings

INTRODUCTION

Human behavior is holistically guided by an interdependent nature and we spend a lot of time in our lives helping others in many different ways. From a small act of helping someone locate an address to volunteering to help victims of natural disasters, we engage in a lot activity, consciously or unconsciously that basically benefit someone else- a friend or stranger for that matter. But in terms of Psychology, the question lies in exploring the reasons behind this human nature to even put themselves in danger to help someone else. However, when social psychologists started unfolding the pages of helping behavior in the late 1960s, they didn't ponder over the decision of why people helped, but rather on why people fail to help when we think they should.

Over the past 50 years however, the focus of helping behavior and its related ideas have changed and we find under its wraps the processes of empathy and altruism. Empathy is a kind of emotional response to the plight of another person. It is the ability to put oneself in

the place of another person and feel what she/he does. Rather than mimicking someone else's emotions, it is about having an accurate sense of what she/he might be feeling like.

The term *altruism* is used to describe two distinct phenomena. The first is *behavioral altruism*, which refers to helping behavior that is either very costly to the helper or conveys no self-benefit for the helper. The second is *psychological altruism*, which refers to a motivation to increase the welfare of another as an end in itself. Although the latter definition is commonly used among psychologists and philosophers, the former is popular among researchers who study non-human animals.

Altruism is when we promote someone else's welfare even at the cost or risk of our own interests. It stands in opposition to being selfish and refers to a specific form of motivation that leads people to engage in behaviors that are aimed at benefitting others. It aims at increasing another's welfare. The reason for altruistic motivation is empathic concern. Empathic concern is an otheroriented emotional response driven by the perceived welfare of someone in need. Considerable evidence suggests that empathic concern motivates one to engage in altruistic behavior.

Whether or not empathy is a part of essential human nature has been a topic long debated. Universal egoism states that everything we do are ultimately aimed at self-benefit. Egoism is the motive to pursue some sort of personal benefit through targeted behavior. This personal benefit can take the form of relieving the negative emotions that an undesirable situation produces in us. Proponents of pure altruism agree that the motivation for much of what we do is egoistic. But some of us to some extent are capable of being motivated with an ultimate goal of benefiting someone else. So, they propose that altruism, if not completely, is a part of basic human nature, one that arises out of empathic motions like compassion, sympathy, tender-heartedness and the like.

Empathic Emotion: A Potential Source of Altruistic Motivation

An important source of altruistic motivation is other-oriented emotional reaction elicited in congruence with the perceived welfare of them. This reaction has variously been called empathy; sympathy; sympathetic distress; and compassion.

Eight uses of the term Empathy (Batson, 2009): In relation to the concept of empathy, there seem to emerge eight different standpoints, as given by Daniel Batson. These are being discussed below:

1. *Knowing the thoughts and feelings of another person:* Various researchers state knowing

another person's internal state as empathy, cognitive empathy, or understanding.

2. *Assuming the posture of an observed other or mimicking the neural response:* Preston & de

Waal (2003) put forth the idea that while trying to take the posture of an observed other, or trying to feel what the other person goes through, one goes through a state of mimicking the neural response. This not necessarily means imitating the motor behavior, but having similar kind of neural responses. The neural responses become similar because perception and action work on the same neural circuits. So as the perceptions become similar, so do the neural response and thereby one starts to get a better glimpse of the other person's internal states.

3. *Feeling as another person would feel:* Feeling the same emotion that another person would feel

is a common understanding of empathy. Philosophers call coming to feel as the other feels as sympathy.

4. *Intuiting or projecting oneself into another's situations:* This state also has been called —projective empathy (Becker, 1931). We try to project ourselves into another's situation and

with the help of intuitive feelings, try to feel as they do.

5. *Imagining how another is feeling:* Wispe (1968) called imagining how another is feeling

psychological empathy. Stotland (1969) spoke of an —imagine other perspective.

6. *Imagining how one would feel in the other's place*: Adam Smith (1759/1853) referred to this act of imagination as — 'changing places in fancy'. Mead (1934) called it —'role taking'. It is also known as —perspective taking.

7. *Being upset by another's suffering*: The state of personal distress evoked by seeing another in

distress has been given a variety of names such as sympathetic pain; promotive tension; unpleasant arousal and empathy.

8. *Feeling for another person who is suffering*: The term 'empathy' refers to an emotion that is

other-oriented and is *congruent* with the perceived welfare of someone else. Congruence refers to the valence of the emotion- positive or negative. However, congruence of emotion doesn't imply that the content of what you feel for the other person has to be the same.

The Empathy Altruism Hypothesis

Daniel Batson in the year 1991 forwarded the empathy-altruism hypothesis on the basis of findings that there are instances in which egotism doesn't hold as explanations to helping behavior. It proposes that empathic concern for a person who needs help produces altruistic motivation due to which one engages in helping behavior. Empathizing with another person increases the likelihood of helping that person. Proponents of egoistic alternatives however disagree and have to say that altruism results only from one of the three categories of empathy inducing egoistic motives i.e., reward seeking, punishment avoidance, and aversive arousal reduction. The advocates of empathy-altruism hypothesis do not completely deny the existence of egoistic motives for altruistic behavior, but they put forward that not all helping behavior is a hedonistic expression of human selfishness. Benefits to self are not always the ultimate goal for engaging in pro-social behavior; in fact, they many times are unintended consequences. People help others even if there are no rewards.

Egoistic Alternatives to the Empathy-altruism hypothesis: Since the Renaissance, the dominating

notion has been that altruism is guided by the motive of egotism. And modern scholars (Mansbridge, 1990, Wallach & Wallach, 1983) hold on to the position that we help others because it profits us to do so. Egotism-altruism camp, as they can be called, have to view that no matter how selfless our behavior might seem, but we engage in it only because

there are underlying benefits for us, such as social appreciation, material rewards etc. The egotistical or self-benefitting actions that involve altruism can take variant forms, but can be clubbed among three major forms.

Aversive-Arousal Reduction: The most frequently proposed egoistic explanation is the empathy helping relationship. It proposes that feeling empathy for a suffering person is unpleasant, and to eliminate these feelings that are causing distress, benefiting that person is a means to this self-serving end.

The experiments testing this against the empathy-altruism hypothesis do so by varying the ease of escaping further exposure to a suffering victim. Since it states that empathic arousal is a result of seeing the victim suffering, one can reduce this arousal by helping behavior or by escaping away from the situation altogether. But escaping from the situation doesn't allow one to reach the altruistic goal of relieving the victim's distress. Therefore, the aversive-arousal explanation predicts elimination of the empathy-helping relationship when escape is easy; empathy-altruism hypothesis does not. Results of experiments testing these competing predictions have consistently supported the empathy-altruism hypothesis, not the aversive arousal reduction explanation. The chance for easy escape during an emergency situation reduces the likelihood of helping behavior only for people predominantly experiencing personal distress rather than empathy. Those experiencing a predominance of empathy will help irrespective of whether or not possibilities of escape are present. These results therefore cast serious doubt on this popular egoistic.

Empathy-Specific Punishment: A second egoistic explanation claims that through socialization people learn that obligation to help and shame and guilt for failure to help leads to empathy for someone in need. When faced with emergency situations they engage in self-talk of what will others think of them if they do not engage in helping behavior, or what perceptions they will hold about themselves. So, in order to escape these feelings of guilt, shame etc., they engage in altruistic behavior. But here again, experiments have failed to support the egoistic idea and have rather patterned on the empathy altruism hypothesis (Batson, 1991).

Empathy-Specific Reward: The third egoistic explanation claims that people learn through socialization that special rewards such as praise, honour, and pride occur on helping a person for whom they feel empathy. This form of egoistic explanation has been tested and

received no support (Batson et al., 1988). But two variations of this explanation have been proposed. Cialdini et al. (1987) proposed the negative state relief explanation where they suggested that empathy experienced while witnessing another person's suffering is a negative affective state (sadness, sorrow), to relief which the person feeling empathy engages in altruistic or helping behavior. A second variation on an empathy specific reward explanation was proposed by Smith et al. (1989) where they proposed that empathically aroused individuals help in order to feel joy at the needy individual's relief. Experimental results consistently have supported the empathy-altruism hypothesis.

SUMMING UP

Empathy is the ability to understand another person's perspective and to share his or her feelings while altruism is the practice of selfless concern for others' welfare. The empathy altruism hypothesis explains helping behaviors as resulting from feelings of empathy and compassion towards others, which arouse an altruistic motivation directed towards the ultimate goal of improving another person's welfare. This unit touches upon the major concepts of empathy and altruism and delves deep into the empathy-altruism hypothesis.

MODEL QUESTIONS

1. Define empathy and altruism.
2. Discuss in detail the empathy altruism hypothesis.

SUGGESTED READINGS

Snyder, C. R., Shane J. Lopez, and Jennifer Teramoto Pedrotti. ***Positive Psychology***. The Scientific and Practical Explorations of Human Strengths. 2nd ed.

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