

Block-V

**Role of Psychology in Positive
Growth Across Life Span**

UNIT 12 POSITIVE GROWTH IN CHILDHOOD*

Structure

- 12.1 Learning Objectives
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12.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After studying this Unit, you would be able to:

- *Explain the theoretical perspectives on child development;*
- *Developing an understanding of resilience contributing to positive growth in children;*
- *Explain the risk and protective factors affecting development of resilience;*
- *Describe strategies to build resilience in children; and*
- *Discuss positive parenting approach contributing to positive development of children.*

12.2 INTRODUCTION

You must have already studied the earlier Units in this course and must have become aware by now about the significant role of psychology in the growth and well-being of human beings. In the present Unit we will focus specifically on the role of psychology for positive growth in childhood. In the subsequent Units, we will focus on youth and old age and discuss how psychology can be applied for the positive development and functioning at these stages of life.

The original mission of psychology as a discipline was not only to study “what is wrong with people?”, but also to focus on “what is right about people?” However,

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major focus of research in psychology has been on the deficits, difficulties and disorders faced by human beings rather than highlighting and building their strengths, and promoting optimal functioning. In addition to studying the disorders, it is equally important to focus on identifying and nurturing talents in human beings so that it can lead to a holistic positive development.

Children are the future of any nation. They can be considered as the building blocks of a growing and prospering country. Hence it is important that we nurture this future asset so that they realize their potentials, engage in positive behavior, function optimally, and contribute positively to the society. Research in Psychology pertaining to different stages of development including childhood, contrary to other branches of psychology, has always focused on “what works” across the life span (Snyder, Lopez, & Pedrotti, 2015). It has focused on the positive traits, personal and environmental resources that help in building resilience in children. In this unit, we will study how resilience can contribute to positive growth in childhood. Pertinent theories explaining child development will be described to facilitate understanding of children in the sociocultural context. This will help in designing appropriate intervention measures to promote positive growth in children. Further, since parenting is a crucial aspect of child development, the unit will highlight positive parenting practices.

12.3 THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES ON CHILD DEVELOPMENT

Childhood as a developmental stage has been explained by various theories. Here we will focus on the following three theories having significant implications for positive growth and development in children.

- **Erikson’s Psychosocial Theory**

Erik Erikson (1902-1992) has proposed a psychosocial theory of development where he talks about eight progressive stages of development across the entire life span. Each stage is characterized by developmental tasks which the individual at that stage needs to acquire and master. They also need to deal with the specific crisis or challenge of each stage to progress successfully to the next stage of development. This results in effective adjustment, positive growth and well-being in the individual.

The first four stages (refer to Table 12.1 below) in Erikson’s theory are crucial for the development of the child. As stated by Erikson, each stage is characterized by a crisis, resolving of which leads to favourable outcome for the individual. Experiences of children during the developmental stages will have a significant impact on the development of positive attributes in the child, their perception, beliefs, coping resources and interpersonal relationships. Children need to have a trusting relationship with the primary caregivers and other significant persons around them. This enables the child to feel secure and explore themselves and the environment around. It enhances the self-esteem of the child and builds other positive attributes which can foster resilience in them.

Table 12.1: Eight Stages of Development by Erikson

Stages	Crisis	Favourable Outcome	Unfavourable Outcome
Early Infancy (0-1yrs)	Trust vs Mistrust	Faith in the environment & future events	Suspicion, fear of future events
Late Infancy (2-3 yrs)	Autonomy vs Doubt	A sense of self control & adequacy	Feelings of shame and self-doubt
Early Childhood (4-5 yrs)	Initiative vs Guilt	Ability to be a “self-starter”, to initiate one’s own activities	A sense of guilt & inadequacy to be on one’s own
Middle Childhood (6-12 yrs)	Industry vs Inferiority	Ability to learn how things work, to understand & organize	A sense of inferiority at understanding & organizing
Adolescence (13-19 yrs)	Identity vs Confusion	Seeing oneself as an unique & integrated person	Confusion over who and what one really is
Early Adulthood (20-24 yrs)	Intimacy vs Isolation	Ability to make commitments to others, to love	Inability to form affectionate relationship
Middle Adulthood (25-64 yrs)	Generativity vs Self-absorption	Concern for family & society in general	Concern only for self-one’s own well-being and prosperity
Late Adulthood (65+ yrs)	Integrity vs Despair	A sense of integrity & fulfillment; willingness to face death	Dissatisfaction with life; despair over prospect of death

- **Ecological Systems Theory of Bronfenbrenner**

Urie Bronfenbrenner (1917-2005) has proposed an ecological systems theory of development which highlights a dynamic interaction between various systems that impact the development of the individual. It highlights a bidirectional influence, that is, the systems impacting the child’s development and also the child influencing the systems through the personal resources, personality characteristics and strengths they have. Thus it takes a holistic view of the child’s development. The theory talks about various systems in the child’s environment:

- Microsystem* refers to the immediate environment of the child such as family, preschool, daycare centre, and school system. Experience of the child in these environments determine the positive growth of the child. A conducive, encouraging family atmosphere, nurturing parents, caring and trusting caregivers, and encouraging teachers positively impact the child’s development.

- ii. *Mesosystem* indicates the relationship and interaction among the systems in the child's immediate environment. There needs to be common goals and coordination among these systems for the benefit of the child, e.g., both school and parents need to have a coordinated effort for the positive growth of the child.
- iii. *Exosystem* refers to the relationship between the child and the systems which the child is not directly involved in, but they still influence the child's growth and development in a significant way such as parents' work organization, neighbourhood, distant relatives etc. These systems may not be directly involved in a child's life, but still can influence the positive growth in children, e.g., violence in the neighbourhood locality may impact the child negatively, or attending a marriage function of an extended family member may have a positive impact on the child.
- iv. *Macrosystem* refers to the remote systems of government, political system, justice system, economy, war, culture and value system etc. Though the child does not directly interact with these, they may still impact the development and functioning of the child.
- v. *Chronosystem* refers to the historical time period in which the child lives. The broader happenings in that time period may also affect the other systems and thereby ultimately impacting the development of the child.

The above systems interact with each other and impact the positive growth in childhood. It can provide opportunities for the development of resilience in children and lead to thriving children.

- **Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory**

Lev Vygotsky (1934) states that the growth and development of the child is embedded in the sociocultural context. Social interaction and processes mediate the development of the child and influence their beliefs, values, learning and cognition. Thus learning and development of the child are socially mediated. Children learn from interaction with knowledgeable others in the society which facilitates their positive development.

Vygotsky talks about the *zone of proximal development* in this context (refer to Fig. 12.1 below). It states that the child's learning and cognitive development is facilitated when adults provide guided learning in the zone of proximal development of the child. In fact, it is not necessarily the adults only who can provide the guidance, but it can be the "*knowledgeable others*" who may be any adult, peer or even technology and other sources of knowledge which facilitate child's learning. They provide a *scaffolding* for the child's learning, that is, provide a structure or framework to the task so that one can learn it effectively.

Vygotsky's emphasis on social and cultural context affecting cognition and development of child highlights the importance of utilizing the resources in the environment of the child.

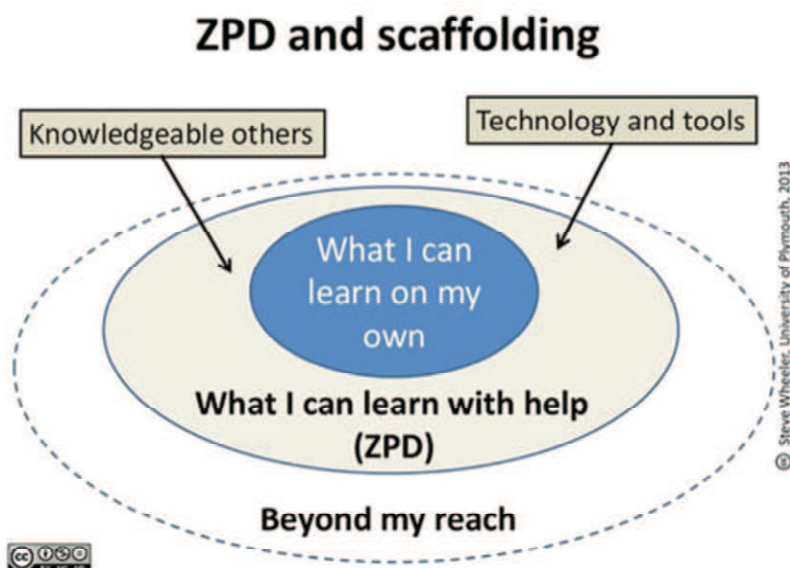


Fig. 12.1: Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development

Self Assessment Questions 1

1. Each stage in Erikson's psychosocial theory is characterized by _____ tasks which the individual at that stage needs to acquire and master.
2. Bronfenbrenner has proposed _____ theory of development.
3. _____ system in Bronfenbrenner's theory of development refers to the historical time period in which the child lives.
4. _____ has proposed the term scaffolding.

12.4 RESILIENCE IN CHILDREN

Raju, a class 8th child, has lost his father at an early age due to severe alcoholism. His mother, who works in different households as helper, faces difficulty in raising her two children, Raju and Simi, studying in class 6th. Raju has faced real hardship at such a young age, but he is determined to complete his studies so that he can do some good job and his family can have a comfortable life. He has a supportive uncle, a distant relative of his mother who helps out the family occasionally. Raju's classmates tease him, sometimes bordering on bullying, saying that "bewada ka beta" (son of a drunkard). He feels very hurt about it and feels depressed but his mother always soothes him and guides him to look ahead and focus on his goal in life. He is very hard working, sincere in his studies, and has good manners. Raju's class teacher also encourages him to do well.

The above case is an instance of resilience in Raju. He is able to face the challenges and move ahead in life. Children come from varied backgrounds and exposed to different types of situations and challenges in their life causing stress. It may be due to financial instability of parents, domestic violence, trauma, disability, bullying, poor academic performance etc. Some children are able to deal with these stressful experiences effectively, whereas others are not able to and it negatively impacts their development. How do children face these hardships depends on a variety of factors arising from personal, and situational contexts.

12.4.1 Meaning of Resilience

Resilience literally means bouncing back from severe adversity or challenging situation and performing effectively despite the hardship. It refers to facing the life's challenges successfully and showing positive growth. It indicates thriving of the child despite adverse situations and negative experiences. Resilience can be defined as positive growth or positive adaptation by the individual following extreme adversity (Kirsh, Duffy, & Atwater, 2015). Thus the impact of the adverse situation is short-lived and they bounce back from the stressful experience more quickly and more effectively than others (Tugade & Fredrickson, 2004). They are able to show positive growth and healthy functioning instead of suffering or having a long-term negative set-back. Hence it is different from recovery after a traumatic situation/experience. In the case of trauma recovery, the child has suffered through the trauma and then recovers gradually. However, resilience denotes that the child is able to quickly regain her/his balance in the event of adversity. There is a bouncing back with a new perspective, new growth and new healthy way of functioning. This helps the child in the attainment of developmental milestones and show excellence in various aspects of functioning (Snyder, Lopez, & Pedrotti, 2011). These positive outcomes arising from the bouncing back quality of resilience reflect the cultural values and expectations.

(You can refer to Unit 10 where you have already studied about resilience as a significant correlate of mental health and well-being).

12.5 RISK AND PROTECTIVE FACTORS IN CHILDHOOD

Why some children are able to show resilient attitude and behavior whereas others are not? There are various factors in the life of the child some of which can make the child vulnerable, while other factors can help them rise above the serious odds of life. These are called the risk factors, which make the child susceptible to the negative impact of adverse situations; and the protective factors that protect them from adversity, and bring out positive outcomes. Research (Masten et al., 2009) has found out a number of resources that can help the child become resilient. It may be noted here that although in general the protective factors can help build resilience in children, the impact of these need to be studied in the context of the specific culture and the child.

The risk factors in a child's life may include poverty, poor health, disease, parental socioeconomic status, dysfunctional home environment, being homeless, lack of proper care, neighbourhood crime and anti-social activities, lack of stimulation at home or in the environment around the child, e.g., in school etc. Thus the risk factors can be multi-faceted. Addressing the risk factors is important to foster resilience in children. At the same time, we need to emphasize on enhancing the protective factors, which can also be multi-faceted, so that they enable the positive growth of the child. Ultimately it is the combination and interaction of both risk and protective factors in the child's socio cultural context that impacts the resilience outcome.

As indicated by developmental theorists, children need to acquire relevant developmental tasks to function effectively, show competence and achieve in

different spheres. Competence can have three dimensions in childhood stage: school/academic, social, and conduct or behavior (Masten et. al., 1995). Two more competence included in adolescence stage are romantic and occupational. The risk factors can affect children and adolescents in a negative way in any of these dimensions of competence or a combination of them also.

Protective factors in a child's life can be broadly categorized into three aspects such as child's personal characteristics, family relationships, and external environment. Masten et. al. (2009) have listed these resilience resources under factors related to the child, family, and community (refer Table 12.2 below). The extent to which these resources protect the child and help them bounce back, along with variability in how and when particular resources are used in situations of risk will depend on the individual child and their context (Harvey & Delfabbro, 2004).

Table 12.2: Protective Factors in Children

In the child	In the family and close relationships	In the community and relationships with organizations
Easy temperament in infancy, adaptable personality traits	Positive attachment relationships	Effective schools
Self-regulation skills	Close relationships with supportive adults	Involvement in organizations like scouts/guides and different clubs etc.
Self-efficacy beliefs	Authoritative parenting style	Good neighbourhood culture
Problem-solving skills	Positive family climate	Public safety and security
Sense of meaning in life	Parental involvement in child's education	Availability of health facilities
Positive outlook on life	Parents' education and occupation	
	Close interaction with peer group members	

Source: Masten, Cutuli, Herbers, and Reed (2009)

12.6 BUILDING RESILIENCE IN CHILDREN

Resilience is an important attribute which was initially studied in case of disadvantaged children focusing on their invulnerability in situations of great disadvantage and adversity. The risk and protective factors in resilience highlights the implications for framing strategies to build resilience not only for the at-risk children, but also for all children. Resilience can be a significant asset for all children to face adversities in life and achieve positive psychological well-being and positive behaviours. It is not that we have resilience or do not have resilience.

Rather, it is an outcome of the resources that the child has, both internal and external. Thus resilience is considered in continuous rather than dichotomous terms (Condly, 2006).

Masten et. al. (2009) based on the protective resources they have listed (see Table 12.2 in earlier section), have proposed strategies to promote resilience in children and adolescents. These have been categorized under,

- *Risk-focused strategies* – focuses on reducing the risks and stressors in child's life and/or preventing it
- *Asset-focused strategies* – promoting and building resources in child's life in terms of number and quality of resources
- *Process-focused strategies* – focuses on the interaction and relationship between child and the various systems around the child, e.g., secure attachment between child and parents, nurturing relationship with significant others, healthy peer relationship, building self-efficacy beliefs, and adaptive cultural practices. Thus it aims at building up positive connections with cultural institutions and communities.

The individual child with their biological predispositions and learned behavior along with the external resources of family, society and culture are important in determining resilience in the child. Research studies have highlighted **Three principles** to build positive outcomes for children and families (Centre on the Developing Child, Harvard University, 2021). These core principles can help develop the building blocks of resilience leading to positive growth and psychological well-being in the child over the life course (Refer to Fig. 12.2 below).

These three principles operate in a cyclical way influencing each other in affecting the child development. The principles have implications for policy planning and practitioners in the field to design plans, programmes and interventions for the positive development and well-being of children so that they grow up to be healthy functioning, achieving and contributing adults.

1. Responsive relationships for children and adults

Supportive relationships or responsive relationships with parent, caregiver or any significant person in child's life helps build the foundation for resilience in the child which continues through their life. It helps protect the child from developmental risks and disruptions; and instills in them appropriate abilities, skills and behavior to adapt successfully and function effectively.

2. Strengthen core skills

Human beings need various core skills for planning, adapting and achieving goals that help them function effectively, achieve in life and live life in a harmonious way. Children need to learn these core skills early on so that it sets the path for positive development and a successful life. These core skills are the executive function and self-regulation skills. These skills enable the individual to use all the higher order mental processes such as thinking, problem solving, decision making, impulse control, setting goals etc. The core skills enable the child to engage in academic learning successfully, plan

for future and form satisfactory interpersonal relationships as they grow. Adults in the child's life and the specific sociocultural context of the child influence the development of these skills in the child, e.g., certain cultures emphasize on independence of the child more than others. As we have discussed earlier, Vygotsky's theory talks about scaffolding, which is the age-specific and context-specific guidance and support provided by adults for positive growth of the child.

3. Reduce sources of stress in the lives of children and families

The sources of stress for a child can be manifold arising out of inadequacies pertaining to self, and also related to their parents, family circumstances, school environment, neighbourhood climate, and the societal barriers, expectations and discriminatory practices etc. It may be noted here that certain amount of stress is inevitable and normal in a child's life; it provides opportunities to the child to use executive function and self-regulation skills, and strengthen these, helps develop coping skills of the child and leads to positive adaptation. However, severe stress on a continuous basis depletes the resources of the child, disrupts the positive development of the child and hampers the learning of necessary life skills. Hence it is important to take steps to reduce and/or prevent sources of stress and increase the resilience of the child.

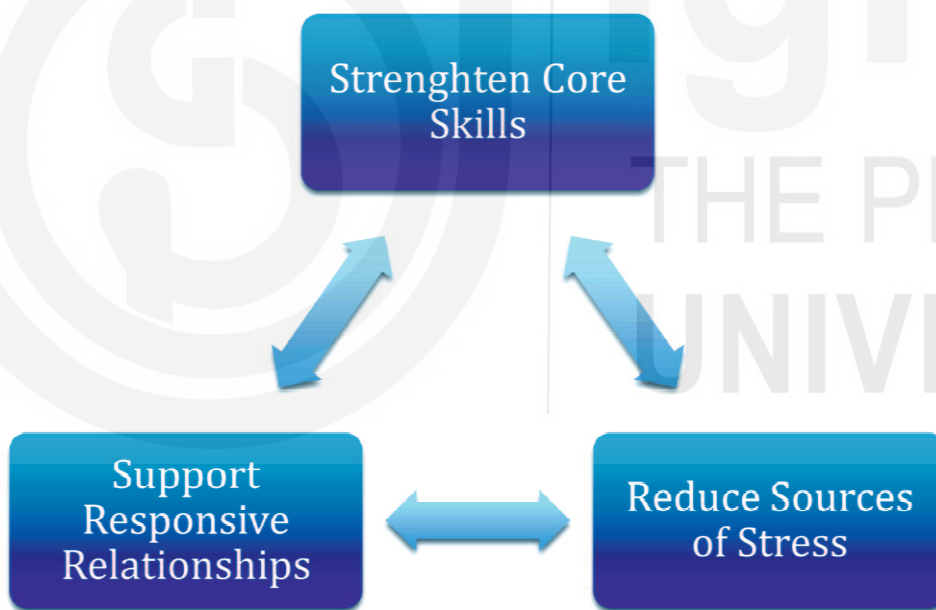


Figure 12.2: Core Principles of Development

Thus we can say that resilience depends on internal factors, i.e., inner strengths, and external factors, i.e., outside supports. Inner strengths consist of the child characteristics, self-regulation, positive outlook, thinking and other higher order cognitive skills. Outside support includes caring and nurturing relationship with parents and other adult members in family, school; positive role models in families and communities; and community resources such as activity clubs, support programmes for children with special needs, daycare centres etc. (www.beststart.org). Children are often protected by multiple “back-up” systems, particularly embedded in their relationships with other people in their homes and communities (Masten & Barnes, 2018).

The key to developing resiliency in children is to provide opportunities to children, both plentiful and meaningful (Katz, 1997). A comprehensive approach involving all the stakeholders with the aim of developing resilience in children will help them to thrive in life.

12.7 POSITIVE PARENTING APPROACH

Parents play a crucial role in the growth and development of children. They can contribute meaningfully to building resilience in children. One of the three core principles of development described above puts emphasis on responsive relationships between parents and the child. If the parent-child relationship is characterized by warmth, protection, guidance, freedom, and values, it will help the child to acquire skills and function in a healthy manner. For this, parents need to follow proper child-rearing practices.

Maccoby and Martin (1983), have expanded the three parenting style model of Baumrind, and advocated four types of parenting using a two-dimensional framework (Refer to Table 12.3 below). The **four parenting styles** such as authoritative, authoritarian, permissive and neglectful depend on the degree of control/demandingness and responsiveness by the parents. The authoritative style of parenting has been found to be the most effective one which positively impacts the growth and development of the child. They are high on both demandingness and responsiveness. They are more responsive to their child's needs, show warmth and caring; while at the same time set demands and have high expectations along with reasoning and guidance for the child.

Table 12.3: Four Parenting Styles

	HIGH CONTROL	LOW CONTROL
	AUTHORITATIVE	PERMISSIVE
HIGH RESPONSIVENESS	Firm & consistent control	Frequent expression of warmth & affection
	Monitor & impart clear standards for their children's conduct	Low enforcement of rules & authority
	Give priority to child's needs & abilities	High acceptance
	Implying age appropriate maturity demands	Taking the role of friend rather than parent
	Encourage children to be independent	Allow the child to make their own decisions
	Attentive	Minimal punishment
	Forgiving	
	Offering democratic climate	

	HIGH CONTROL	LOW CONTROL
	AUTHORITARIAN	NEGLIGENT
LOW RESPONSIVENESS	Expecting strict, unquestioned obedience to parental authority	Inattentive behaviour
	Not ready to accept child's individuality	Neglecting the child
	Disobedience is dealt by forceful & punitive discipline	Little interaction with the child
	Little communication between parent & child	
	Highly directive behaviour	

Recent advances in the field of parenting has focused on the use of *mindfulness in parenting*. Mindfulness involves paying attention to the present moment experiences without any judgement. Jon Kabat Zinn (1994, p. 4) has defined mindfulness as the awareness that arises from paying attention, on purpose, in the present moment and non-judgementally. Although mindfulness originates from Buddhist traditions, Jon Kabat-Zinn has advocated mindfulness as a secular practice. Various research studies have been conducted on mindfulness and psychotherapies have also been developed based on mindfulness.

Child rearing can be smooth and the stress arising out of parenting can be reduced if parents become mindful of the parent-child relationship in the moment. Parenting can be quite demanding, especially when one has less/lack of resources to support in raising the child. Each stage of development has different set of needs and requirements which the parents need to be aware of and cater to for optimal development of child. Parents act as caregivers, providers, motivators and facilitators for children so that they can stay healthy and happy, and acquire relevant skills, qualities, and values to be resilient and thrive. In the process, parents are burdened with various stressful situations which unless managed in a proper way, can affect negatively child's development and the parent-child relationship.

Such situations demand to be aware of oneself, one's emotions and reactions in the moment. Mindfulness helps in paying attention to our emotions, thoughts, bodily sensations, actions, and the environment around in the moment. When parents become mindful, they can focus on the parent-child relationship at the present moment and respond accordingly in the situation. Being mindful helps the parent in reducing stress, more aware of the child's needs, suspend judgement at the moment, focus on parent-child relationship itself, and become aware of child's well-being. It helps the parent to bring in develop empathy for the child, and bring in a sense of curiosity and open mind to know more about the child. This strengthens the relationship between parents and the child and paves way for positive growth of the child.

Self Assessment Questions 2

1. Resilience refers to bouncing back. True or False.

2. Resilience involves suffering or having a long-term negative set-back. True or False
3. Resilience resources are discussed under the factors related to the child, family, and _____.
4. Mindfulness involves judging of one's present moment awareness. True or false

12.8 LET US SUM UP

In the present Unit you learned about positive growth in children. Childhood is the most crucial period of development where the child needs to learn the tools and the knowhow to deal with the stresses of life. The most important factor is developing the resilience resources so that that it will help in positive development and positive functioning of the child. The risk and protective factors are described which need to be considered in designing plans, programmes and policies for the optimal functioning and well-being of children. Emphasis needs to be on developing the core strengths in children, reducing the stressors in their life, and creating responsive relationships between children and their parents, family and communities. This will help build and enhance resilience in children and result in positive outcomes. Parents, being an important part of a child's life, need to follow appropriate parenting practices as they can influence development of skills and values in the child. Bringing mindfulness to the parent-child relationship helps the parents manage stress, develop empathy for the child, and respond to the situation in a constructive and positive manner.

12.9 KEY WORDS

- Ecological systems theory of development** : highlights a dynamic interaction between various systems that impact the development of the individual
- Microsystem** : refers to the immediate environment of the child such as family, preschool, daycare centre, and school system. Experience of the child in these environments determine the positive growth of the child.
- Zone of proximal development** : states that the child's learning and cognitive development is facilitated when adults provide guided learning in the zone of proximal development of the child.
- Resilience** : refers to bouncing back from severe adversity or challenging situation and performing effectively despite the hardship.
- Asset-focused strategies** : refers to those strategies that help in promoting and building resources in child's life in terms of number and quality of resources.

- Authoritative parenting style** : involve being more responsive to the child's needs, showing warmth and caring; while at the same time setting demands and having high expectations along with reasoning and guidance for the child.
- Mindfulness** : involves paying attention to the present moment experiences without any judgement.

12.10 ANSWERS TO SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

Answers to Self Assessment Questions 1

1. developmental
2. an ecological systems
3. Chronosystem
4. Vygotsky

Answers to Self Assessment Questions 2

1. True
2. False
3. Community
4. False

12.11 UNIT END QUESTIONS

1. Explain Erikson's psychosocial theory of development and its implications for positive growth in child.
2. Explain the risk and protective factors that affect the positive growth of the child.
3. Compare the four parenting styles and analyze their strengths and limitations.
4. Mindful parenting is the need of the hour in post-COVID situation. Comment.

12.12 REFERENCES & FURTHER LEARNING RESOURCES

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UNIT 13 POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT*

Structure

- 13.1 Learning Objectives
- 13.2 Introduction
- 13.3 Defining Positive Youth Development (PYD)
 - 13.3.1 Principles of Positive Youth Development
- 13.4 Theoretical Frameworks and Models of PYD
 - 13.4.1 Theoretical Frameworks of Positive Youth Development
 - 13.4.2 Models of Positive Youth Development
- 13.5 Key Attributes of PYD
- 13.6 Positive Youth Development Programmes
 - 13.6.1 Specific PYD Programs
- 13.7 Evaluation of PYD Programmes
- 13.8 Let Us Sum Up
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13.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After studying this Unit, you would be able to:

- *Explain the concept of positive youth development (PYD);*
- *Describe the key attributes of PYD;*
- *Explain the various theories and models of PYD;*
- *Understand the PYD programmes from a positive psychology perspective;*
- *Describe specific PYD programmes in India and International context; and*
- *Point out the different aspects of evaluation of PYD programmes.*

13.2 INTRODUCTION

When we think of the youth, what is the image that usually comes? Most of you would be in the youth stage of life. What exactly is the age group of youth? What characteristics do they possess? Do they live with parents or independently? Do they study or do they work, or are they doing both simultaneously? Or are they neither in school nor doing any work? What are the issues and challenges do they face? What are their aspirations, potentials, and dreams? Do we find any

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difference in the characteristics and development of youth in relation to their gender, socio economic status, cultural background? Do their health condition, disability if any, and their sexual orientation affect their development, sense of identity and well-being? Do they have their own personal value system?

The United Nations defines youth, for statistical purposes, as between 15 to 24 years of age. It recognizes that youth is a fluid state as the age group may vary across societies and cultures. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), young people consists of 10 – 24 years of age group which includes adolescents (10-19 years of age), and youth (15-24 years of age). The UNICEF in its Convention on Rights of the Child, defines a child as upto 18 years of age. Legally also the Government of India considers an individual as a child till 18 years of age. The National Youth Policy 2014 of India has described youth as between 15-29 years of age. It has been estimated that the total youth population of India (15-24 years) is going to increase to 25 crores in the year 2021 (National Commission on Population, 2019). That is why India is considered to be a young country as the population of young people is more.

There are variations in the age range that marks the stage of youth. However, it is universally described as a transitional phase between childhood and adulthood. There is a movement from dependence stage of childhood towards independence of adulthood.

According to Erikson's (1994) psychosocial theory of development, one crucial task in the stage of adolescence is to establish a sense of identity. The crisis that the adolescents face during this stage of development is identity versus role confusion. As they go through various changes in physical, cognitive, moral, social and emotional dimensions, they try to gain a sense of understanding of their self. This identity development is influenced by the dynamic interaction between the adolescent as an individual and the varied contexts and situations in which they live and function.

Alongwith developing a sense of identity, the young people need to achieve other developmental tasks also, e.g., successful completion of education, getting into a decent job and career, forming romantic relationship, learning interpersonal skills, acquiring workplace values and attitudes, being more self-reliant, being socially responsible, and contributing to the community. They gradually move towards greater psychological and economic independence. However, there may be variations in the rate in which these are attained by the youth. For instance, the rural and tribal youth may achieve economic independence sooner than the urban youth who may be continuing their education for longer time and still exploring their career options. Hence it is important to consider the sociocultural context of the young people while trying to develop an understanding of them and planning for their betterment and well-being.

Definitely youth is a major stage in the human life span where a lot of changes happen simultaneously and peer, family and the community exert significant influence. The youth may be faced with various challenges related to these influences such as abuse, conflicts, domestic violence, negative peer pressure, substance use, bullying, anxiety and various mental health conditions also. For instance, with regard to suicide, youth (18 and above- below 30 years) is one of the vulnerable groups with 33% share of total police recorded suicide cases

(MoSPI, 2017). The youth needs to learn skills to navigate these adverse impacts on development.

At the same time, the youth is also full of potential, energy, dreams, ambitions and desire to achieve and excel. We have many examples of people in all walks of life who have succeeded and fulfilled their dreams despite all odds. Hence there needs to be a three-pronged approach to youth development: *intervention* (focusing on remediation), *preventive* (focusing on at-risk youth and preventing adverse consequences) and *positive development* approach (focusing on all youth developing their character strengths and skills). Thus positive youth development is based on building up of positive experiences and positive traits in the youth, and creating a positive culture in major sociocultural institutions in the life of the youth such as family and school.

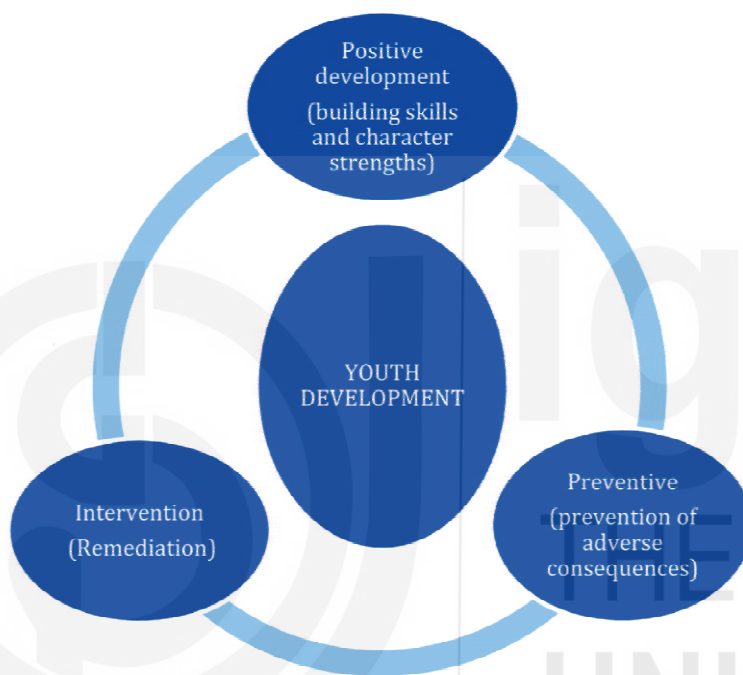


Fig. 13.1: Three-pronged Approach towards Youth Development

Supporting youth and preparing them for adulthood is a key focus for governments, policies and programs (Lerner et al., 2018). Positive Youth Development (PYD) is an approach to supporting youth, which believes that all young people can develop positively and provides avenues for this to occur (Benson, Scales, Hamilton, & Sesma 2007).

Indian success stories despite all odds

- *Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, a great scientist and the eleventh President of India, was born in a poor family and had to distribute newspapers after school.*
- *Sushil Kumar, famous Indian wrestler who has won medals in Olympics came from a lower-middle class family and had lack of proper diet, training facilities and finance, but overcame all odds to become world champion.*
- *Sudha Chandran, the internationally famous classical Bharatnatyam dancer, had to get her leg amputated at the age of 16. With a prosthetic*

'Jaipur foot' and her sheer dedication and determination, she defeated her disability and thrived.

- *Gautam Adani, the Founder of Adani Group had to drop out of his education due to lack of finance. However, he challenged all adversities and earned his first million by the age of 20 years.*
- *Girish Sharma, lost his one leg as a kid, but went on to become a badminton champion with just one leg.*
- *H. Boniface Prabhu, a Padma Shri awardee by the government of India in 2014, is a famous quadriplegic tennis player who had become quadriplegic at the age of four.*
- *Javed Abidi, the founder of the Disability Rights Group in India, had spina bifida and had to be wheelchair-bound by age 15. But he was not bound by his limitations and pursued his dreams is an activist in the field of disability.*

Success stories at global level

- *Marc Zupan, gold medalist in Paralympic, was quadriplegic after accident.*
- *Victor Frankl, is the author of best seller "Man's Search for Meaning", and key theorist of existential theoretical approach in psychology. He suffered extreme torture in Nazi concentration camps where his wife and family were killed.*
- *Albert Einstein is considered as a genius and is the Nobel prize winner in physics. However, he was jobless after his studies for long.*
- *Tom Cruise, one of the greatest and highest paid actor, received Academy awards and Golden Globe awards. He was surrounded by poverty, abusive father in early years.*
- *Oprah Winfrey, famous for her award winning talk show 'The Oprah Winfrey Show' is considered the greatest black philanthropist. She was raised in poverty by a single mother, was raped in her childhood, and faced severe hardship.*

13.3 DEFINING POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT (PYD)

The youth are a very important asset of any nation. So what are the goals the society envisages for the youth? What vision and approach does a nation have towards their youth? The dominant approach earlier was to view the youth as problematic (e.g., 'the angry young man' portrayal in the earlier Bollywood movies or the image of the youth as falling prey to use of drugs and alcohol and going astray) and their issues needed to be solved. However, the absence of problems and illness does not mean there is presence of wellness (Ryff & Singer, 1996, p. 14). Steps may be taken to reduce the problems and challenges to be solved.

However, this itself does not suffice to help the youth to self actualize and move towards fulfillment, empowerment and positive contribution towards the society. This requires a focus on the development of positive attributes and strengths of the youth.

It is important to address the problems and issues of the youth. However, problem-free does not mean that the youth are prepared to face life effectively, have acquired good character values, realized their full potential, are empowered and engaged, and meaningfully contribute to the society. Optimal psychological well-being requires one to go beyond the mere absence of mental illness. Rather than just being disease free or problem free, parents want their children to be safe, healthy, happy, moral, fully engaged in life, and productive contributors to the communities in which they live (Noddings, 2003).

The traditional medical model of health focuses on the absence of psychological distress and disorder. However, equal attention needs to be paid to the other side also focusing on the psychological well-being and positive functioning of individuals. Thus positive youth development brings in a balanced perspective by emphasizing the positive attributes in the youth and highlighting the person-context interaction in helping the youth to excel and thrive. It acknowledges assets along with problems, that is, takes into account the risk factors but at the same time capitalizes on the protective factors in the life of the youth. As Damon (2004) has stated, positive youth development recognizes the good in (young people, focusing on each and every child's unique talents, strengths, interests, and future potential. It aims mainly at understanding, educating, and engaging children in productive activities rather than at correcting, curing, or treating them for maladaptive tendencies or so-called disabilities (Seligman et. al., 2005).

Positive youth development(PYD) thus derives from positive psychology perspective and follows a strengths based approach focusing on assets and competence of the youth. It is multidisciplinary in nature as youth and their well-being related to different aspects are concerns of varied disciplines such as psychology, sociology, anthropology, social work, economics, public administration etc. In line with the principles of positive psychology, PYD includes not only the at-risk young people, but also all adolescents and youth. It aims at achieving the potential for all, providing positive experience and creating a positive relationship and a positive environment to the individual.

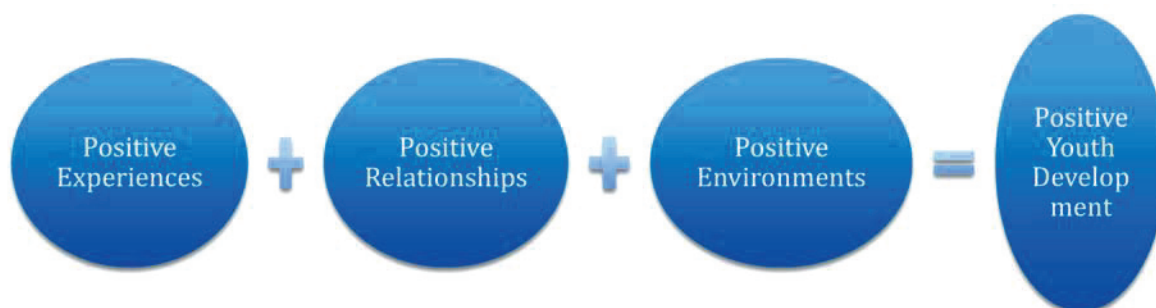


Fig.13.2: Aspects of Positive Youth Development

13.3.1 Principles of Positive Youth Development

1. All youth have the inherent capacity for positive growth and development. They are naturally resilient and can thrive in the face of adversity.

2. Resiliency, however, operates in a context and is influenced by environmental factors. Support and care from family and other external contexts moderate the adverse impact of events and help make the youth more hardy and resilient. This indicates a positive developmental trajectory and highlights the importance of the protective factors in the life of the youth.
3. Protective factors thus include assets related to both individual (e.g., personality traits, attitudes, character strengths etc.) and the environment (e.g., family relationship, role models, school belongingness, opportunities to pursue one's interests/hobbies etc.). Benson (1997) has talked about 40 developmental assets which you will learn in detail in later section.
4. There is a dynamic relationship between the individual assets and the environmental characteristics including the contexts and ecologies. These interact with the risk factors present in the life of an individual to determine if s/he will thrive or succumb. Hence it is important that the positive youth development programmes focus on developing various positive attributes/assets.
5. Thus it is important that the youth functions in nutrient rich relationships, contexts, and ecologies. All youth are benefitted from this including the at-risk youths.
6. Community plays a significant role and a 'critical delivery system' for positive youth development.

Thus positive youth development is a comprehensive system where the youth can play a major role themselves. The core ideas and concepts in PYD (Benson, Scales, Hamilton, & Sesman, 2006) consist of :

- Developmental contexts or the Community (the ecology) - which includes the family, school, peer group, neighbourhoods, workplace, clubs, programs etc.
- Nature of the child with inherent capacity to grow and thrive (the developmental strengths) – the positive traits and qualities in the youth
- Reduction of high-risk behavior and promotion of health, well-being and thriving

13.4 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS AND MODELS OF PYD

Earlier approaches to the study of adolescence characterized it as a period of 'storm and stress' as indicated by Stanley Hall. The dominant perception of major theoretical frameworks was that the life of adolescents was beset with various problems due to the transitional nature of this phase. Hence the objective was to deal with the problems and hence 'fixing the problems' was the main approach. Research focused on adjustment problems, health related issues, mental disorders, conditions of poverty, discrimination and deprivation etc. However, gradually there was a change in the approaches to the study of adolescence and youth. Similar to a coin having two sides, researchers started paying attention to the other side where the young were found to have talents, potentials, aspirations

and could thrive despite several odds in their lives. Thus focus was more on positive strengths in the individuals, in their environment and the dynamic interaction between them.

This led to a shift from the pathological orientation to positive growth orientation in the study of adolescents and youth, and positive youth development emerged as one of the positive approaches (Tolan et al., 2016). It talked about optimal development of the young people rather than just okay or good enough development. There was a shift from viewing the youth in terms of their incapacities/problems to having potentials, from deficit approach to strengths approach. Thus the positive youth development addressed not only the youths at risk, but also all the youth because they are considered as significant resources, which a nation cannot afford to neglect. It takes a holistic approach of the youth by studying them as embedded in the context of their ecologies which play an important role in the youth development. The youth are not just problems to be solved or fixed but they are full of potentials which need to be realized by paying attention to the dynamic interaction between them and their sociocultural context.

13.4.1 Theoretical Frameworks of Positive Youth Development

Three theoretical frameworks have been suggested underlying the Positive youth development (Benson et al., 2006):

1. *Theory of Human Development*

The human development theory focuses on the inherent potential of human beings. It posits that the youth are capable of positive development which includes two aspects: individual well-being and social well-being. That is, the youth are able to realize all potentials within themselves and they also contribute to the greater social good. Thus the theory identifies the possibility of active and constructive contribution to the development of self, community, and society (Benson et. al., 2006). It highlights the interplay between the individual and their contextual factors and ecologies which influence the developmental pathway of the individual. There is a bidirectional relationship between the person and the context. Both influence each other.

2. *The Theory of Context and Community Influence*

The theory highlights the dynamic role of contexts in influencing positive youth development. Most important theory here is the ecological systems theory of Bronfenbrenner (1979) which talks about different layers of systems or contexts in the life of an individual that affect development. It ranges from the immediate influence of systems of family, school, peer and neighbourhood to distal systems of political, social, religious and cultural institutions and the particular historical context in which the individual is living. For instance, in the current 21st century times, technology is exerting a greater influence on almost all aspects of our life and subsequently has an impact on our well-being.

These developmental contexts are interdependent in nature, e.g., what happens in family may influence the classroom transactions, or political happenings at the nation level can influence the functioning of school etc.

Further, studies have also identified certain *features of the positive developmental contexts /settings* that can facilitate the building of assets by the youth. NRCIM (2002) reports eight features related to the daily life settings and experiences of adolescents which have been found to help promote positive youth development (National Research Council and Institute of Medicine, 2002). These features can be considered as “active ingredients” of community development programmes for the youth. These are described in the Table 13.1.

Table 13.1: Eight Features of Positive Developmental Settings (NRCIM, 2002)

Features	Description
Physical and psychological safety	The developmental setting needs to be free from any harm, abuse, violence, and other stressful experiences. It needs to provide a sense of safety in both physical and psychological terms.
Appropriate structure	The environment needs to provide clear rules, boundaries and guidelines for the development of the child.
Supportive relationships	There needs to be secure attachment with the family members and a caring and nurturing atmosphere.
Opportunities to belong	An atmosphere of inclusion, engagement and integration needs to prevail and discrimination on the basis of diversity of youth needs to be avoided.
Positive social norms	It focuses on the importance of social values and morals for proper development
Support for efficacy and mattering	The developmental setting needs to offer opportunities to exercise independence, taking responsibility and engaging in meaningful challenge. It needs to develop a sense of being taken seriously or mattering.
Opportunities for skill building	The setting needs to offer opportunities to develop skills and competencies related to personal, cognitive, academic, social, emotional and vocational aspects. It emphasizes developing the human capital in all arenas.
Integration of family, school and community efforts	There needs to be a harmonious relationship and interaction among the three crucial aspects of a child’s life – family, school and community.

Thus these features of developmental setting of the youth will create positive atmosphere and lead to asset building in the youth. All the stakeholders in the developmental context of the youth need to work toward the common goal of achieving positive youth development

including positive experiences, positive relationships and positive contributions of the youth.

3. *The Theory of Context and Community Change*

This theory addresses the issue of how does the change occur. Now we know what are the ingredients that can lead to positive youth development and the positive outcomes out of these. But the question is ‘how does change occur’? In this regard, we first need to consider the *will* to change and the *capacity* to change (Granger, 2002). Various intervention strategies can address this. Secondly, there needs to be a *developmentally attentive community* (Benson et. al., 2003, p.389), that helps in asset-building a cross multiple contexts to facilitate the change process. This requires using strategies to make a vibrant community where there is interaction among all the members across age and sectors such as schools, clubs, organizations etc.

13.4.2 Models of Positive Youth Development

Several models of positive youth development guide the community programmes on PYD. These models assume that the adolescents and youth have the potential to thrive despite this stage of development considered as a stage of struggle and challenges on many counts including their personal development, academic, vocational and relationship aspects. Positive youth development recognizes and focuses on the strengths, resources and potential of young people, and works to build young people’s skills and engage them in communities (Lerner, 2004). Thus positive youth development can inform the development and implementation of effective PYD programmes.

Four such models are described below.

- *Developmental assets model (Benson et al., 2011)*

The model talks about 40 developmental assets, 20 internal and 20 external which combined together helps create positive experiences and well-being for the youth. Internal assets refer to the personal traits or qualities such as positive identity, social and emotional competencies, commitment to learning etc. which help the youth which guide the youth in positive direction and make proper choices and decisions. External assets include the external world around the youth consisting of family members, neighbours, community etc. which provide support, care, guidance and encouragement etc. which can help empower the youth to progress and thrive.

- *The 5Cs/6Cs Model (Lerner et.al., 2011)*

It focuses on the following aspects - competence, confidence, connection, character, care, and the added 6th C of contribution. Each C consists of a number of attributes/qualities which indicate positive development (Lerner et. al., 2005).

- a) Competence: a sense of capability in specific areas such as academic, cognitive, vocational and social
- b) Confidence: a global sense of self-worth and self-efficacy

- c) Connection: a positive and reciprocal relationship with family, peers, school and community
- d) Character: includes morality, value system and integrity
- e) Care: involves having sympathy and empathy for others
- f) Contribution: refers to the outcomes of all the other Cs which lead the youth to enhance their own development as well as contribute to the larger society as a result of these processes.

Thus the 5C/6Cs model describes a thriving youth in terms of these six aspects. It has been widely studied and the five Cs are viewed as indicators of thriving (King et. al., 2005). It is used as a theoretical model to design a programme or as outcomes to be achieved (e.g., Mercier et. al., 2019).

- ***The Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) Model by CASEL***

This model emphasizes the acquisition of social and emotional competencies which are significant for effective functioning in life. It includes intrapersonal competencies such as self awareness, self management and motivation; and interpersonal competencies such as social awareness, empathy and relationship skills. The SEL model is provided by the Collaborative of Academic Social and Emotional Learning (casel.org) .

- ***‘Being’ Model of PYD***

The ‘being’ model focuses on ‘being’ rather than ‘doing’, that is, acquiring skills and achieving things. It highlights the individuality of the youth, emphasizing on their character strengths, values, spirituality, meaning and purpose in life.

Self Assessment Questions 1

1. The National Youth Policy 2014 of India has described youth as between _____ years of age.
2. According to Erikson, the crisis during adolescence stage of development is called as _____.
3. There needs to be a three-pronged approach to youth development: intervention, preventive and _____ approach.
4. What is the criticism of the traditional medical model of health?
5. Assets are related to both individual and the _____.
6. What are the 6 Cs?

13.5 KEY ATTRIBUTES OF PYD

Catalano et al. (2004) have described 15 key constructs or attributes of positive youth development. These attributes have been derived inductively based on 77 PYD programs with positive outcomes. Further, these attributes reflect the conceptualization of PYD in different models described in the earlier section.

The 15 PYD attributes are given in the Table 13.2 below.

Table 13.2: 15 Attributes of Positive Youth Development (Catalano et. al., 2004)

Attribute	Explanation of the Attribute
1 Bonding	good relationships with peers and adults
2 Resilience	competence to overcome adversity
3 Cognitive competence	ability to think logically, creatively, and critically
4 Social competence	ability to maintain good social relationships
5 Emotional competence	ability to manage emotions
6 Moral competence	ability to make sound moral judgment
7 Behavioural competence	ability to take skillful verbal and non-verbal actions
8 Positive and healthy self-identity	having positive self-perceptions
9 Self-determination	ability to take age-appropriate action by oneself
10 Self-efficacy	belief that one has abilities and is able to attain goals
11 Optimism	belief in the future
12 Promotion of pro-social norms	developing pro-social behavior
13 Pro-social involvement	engagement in pro-social behavior
14 Appreciation of young people's positive behavior	desirable behavior of young people is properly recognized
15 Spirituality	having good relationship with oneself, others, and higher being

13.6 POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES

The concept of positive youth development (PYD) is understood in at least three interrelated but nevertheless different ways: (1) as a developmental process, (2) as a philosophy or approach to youth programming, and (3) as instances of youth programs and organizations focused on fostering the healthy or positive development of youth (Hamilton, 1999).

Thus PYD as a developmental process talks about the key *attributes* that the youth need to develop (discussed in previous section 13.5). In this section, PYD is discussed as an *approach* that can inform the development of youth programmes, and also highlights specific programmes who focus on PYD *outcomes*.

Positive youth development programmes are based on positive psychology perspective. Positive psychology provides the PYD a broad goal of helping the youth to thrive. What do we mean by thriving adolescent and youth? One aspect of it focuses on developing individual psychological characteristics which can include mainly character strengths, competencies, positive emotions, flow, and life satisfaction (Seligman et al., 2005). Thus it envisions a young person who living in the context of proper available health and safety, experiences more positive affect than negative affect, who is satisfied with his or her life as it has been lived, who has identified what he or she does well and uses these talents and strengths in a variety of fulfilling pursuits; and who is a contributing member of a social community (Seligman et al., 2005). In short, the youth is able to fulfill all their potentials, experience positive affect, is an engaged member of community and contributes meaningfully to the society. The PYD programmes broadly include skill building opportunities, positive relationships and opportunities for leadership and empowerment (Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2016).

There are three components that the PYD programmes need to consider in designing an effective programme: *the person, the context/environment related factors, and the interaction between the two*. The developmental and cultural settings of the youth play a powerful role in enhancing their potential and well-being. The individual characteristics of the youth interact with the features of these settings including family, school, neighbourhood and community that can result in positive outcome or otherwise. There needs to be an appropriate fit between personal, developmental and sociocultural conditions of particular youths. You have learned about Bronfenbrenner's theory in this regard in earlier section.

13.6.1 Specific PYD Programs

Society has always focused on addressing the needs of the youth, preparing themselves to become good citizens, and developing them into disciplined individuals with good character, moral values, and contributing to the collective good. The Government of India has established an exclusive Department of Youth Affairs and Sports in the International Year of Youth in 1985 which subsequently was turned into a separate Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports in 2000. The latest National Youth Policy (NYP, 2014) of the government of India envisions empowering the youth for contributing in the nation-building process. Towards this end, it advocates for a holistic development of the youth focusing on their health, education, sports, skill development for employment opportunities, engagement of the youth in community, public institutions, governance, policies and social justice areas. The National Adolescent Health Strategy (Rashtriya Kishore Swasthya Karyakram) is a major programme of the government of India.

Various programmes and initiatives have been taken for the development of the youth and making them an integral part of the nation building exercise, e.g., the Scouts and Guides at school level, National cadet corps (NCC) and National service scheme (NSS) at college level, YMCA, YWCA etc. The Rotary Club and Lions Club also aim at building character, values and service attitude among the young. Various life skills based programmes such as life skills education (LSE) aim at equipping the youth with necessary skills and capabilities to grow optimally and become productive members of the society. Thus the programmes aim at developing the personalities and character of the youth and enabling them to

become useful, productive and contributing members of the society. The youth have a right as well as an obligation to participate actively in shaping the destiny of the nation (Youth in India, 2017).

PYD programmes can be of three types in general such as *promotion*, *preventive* and *remedial* in nature. Thus they can help promote or enhance good values and attitudes in the youth. They can also be used to prevent the negative impact of risk factors in the youth, and/or to remediate or bring in changes in the youth and also suitable modifications in the environment of the youth.

Given below in the box are some widely recognized programmes on positive youth development which aims at reducing problems in young people and/or promoting their optimal development and psychological well-being.

- National Young Leaders Programme (NYLP): aims at developing leadership qualities among the youth to enable them to participate and contribute optimally in the development and progress of the nation
- Neighbourhood Youth Parliament (NYP): make the youth aware about the socio-economic-political issues and concerns related to the youth and communities in general.
- Youth for Development programme (YFDP): involves youth in 'shramadaan', i.e., voluntary labour in communities which helps develop the youth personality and a sense of dignity of labour in them.
- Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan (NYKS): It has centres all over India and undertakes activities related to varied issues of literacy, sanitation, family welfare, social issues, rehabilitation, justice, environment, entrepreneurship etc. so that the youth are engaged in the development of their own community and country.
- Rajiv Gandhi National Institute of Youth Development (RGNIYD) at Sriperumbudur, Tamil Nadu, established under the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, is a deemed University and an apex institution in the area of youth development. It is playing a seminal role in the teaching, research, training and extension activities related to youth development, functioning and well-being.

Various other programmes/facilities/schemes of the Government of India to provide opportunities to the youth for the development of their personality, character, skills and community engagement include National Programme for Youth and Adolescent Development (NPYAD), Tribal Youth Exchange Programme, Youth Hostels across the country, Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP), Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY). Various private and non-governmental agencies (NGOs), (e.g., Azim Premji Foundation, Teach for India, 3L Concept, a Mumbai based research organization that provides indigenous positive youth development programme for K-12 education, higher education and technical education) are also involved in the area of youth development, participation and engagement of the youth in their own growth as well as that of the nation.

- a) The United Nations has declared the year of 1985 as the International Year of Youth with the theme “participation, development, and peace” in recognition of the crucial role of the youth locally, nationally and globally. The various agencies of the UN also undertake youth-related plans and actions. For instance, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) considers youth as agents of change, social transformations, peace and sustainable development (Youth in India, 2017) and undertakes varied activities towards this. The UN also has United Nations Volunteers Programme which empowers the youth to engage in their own capacity development, actualization of potentials, and also be the harbingers of change in the larger society and policy level.
- b) SEL (Social and Emotional Learning): It is a widely used and researched programme by the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) (casel.org). It aims at promoting the social and emotional competencies of school students by establishing evidence-based practices. The goal is to address the child as a whole, and equip them to succeed in school as well as later in life by developing necessary skills and competencies related to academic performance, emotion management, prosocial behavior, interpersonal relationship etc.
- c) PATHS (Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies, Greenberg & Kusche, 1998): It is a school-based programme (30-45 sessions) aiming at development of social and emotional competence. It consists of activities related to self-awareness, self-control and social problem-solving.
- d) Penn Resiliency Programme (Gillham & Reivich, 2004): It is a school-based programme including 12 sessions focusing on preventing depression among children and adolescents by using cognitive and behavioural skills.
- e) Project P.A.T.H.S.: A PYD programme in Hong Kong, has been developed and rigorously evaluated and the findings based on different strategies showed that the project protected young people from risk behavior and promoted their thriving (e.g., Catalano et al., 2012; Alvarado et al., 2017).

13.7 EVALUATION OF PYD PROGRAMMES

The PYD programmes definitely contribute to the optimal development and functioning of the youth. However, they need to be intensive and extensive, keeping in mind the youth requirements and given at appropriate developmental stage. The programmes need to be planned and structured with hands-on and minds-on exercises under direct supervision. Further, the programs need to adopt a ‘person-in-environment’ approach, emphasizing the complex interplay between the two. A systemic view highlighting the different layers of systems in which the youth lives and functions need to be considered. The socio-cultural context also plays an important role in influencing the outcome of the PYD programmes. Further, the programmes need to be based on relevant theoretical frameworks.

Following are some of the aspects of evaluation with regard to the positive youth development programmes:

1. The PYD programmes need to be imbued with a positive perspective rather than just focusing on a disease model to youth development. These need to be based on a holistic view of human development. Both are equally important and complement each other in ensuring well-being of the youth.
2. The positive perspective on PYD highlights the personal qualities (cognitions, affect and behavioural dimensions) and the environmental factors influencing youth development. However, the contribution of biogenetic factors also need to be studied widely (Seligman et al., 2005) so that it leads to a comprehensive understanding on it. Like we have strong research base for the biological causal factors in case of psychopathology, similarly more research needs to be done to explore optimal development and positive character strengths from biological perspective.
3. Role of culture needs to be recognized in influencing the positive experiences and the optimal development of youth. Consideration and integration of socio-cultural aspects into the PYD programmes will make them authentic and sustainable.
4. The programmes on positive youth development need to be evidence-based and compiled to highlight the positive outcomes.
5. Majority of the PYD studies are pre-post based studies. There is need for more longitudinal studies which can point out at the causal relationships between the PYD attributes and well-being.
6. Most of the tools to assess PYD attributes are developed in the western context. It may be noted here that sociocultural contexts influence the developmental assets of youth in different ways (Benson et al., 2006), and also the PYD attributes. This necessitates the use of validated PYD assessment tools to measure the PYD domains (Zhou, Shek, & Zhu, 2020).
7. There is a dearth of Indian research on PYD. A review study by Hameed & Mehrotra (2017) suggests a significant paucity of Indian published literature on PYD programmes and PYD based mental health promotion programmes. Their findings highlighted using the positive youth development as a framework for youth mental health promotion.
8. Youth is not a homogenous group. The diversity owing to age, gender, race, class, economic status, disability etc. makes it challenging for the PYD programmes to cater to the needs of all youth. Further, the schooling system, especially in India, may not provide a uniform experience to the young people and shape their attitudes, beliefs and behaviours accordingly.

Thus overall the positive youth development programmes are crucial factors that can help harness the huge underutilized human resource of the youth for the betterment of the youth themselves, and also for the development and progress

of the country and the world. As Jamieson (2005) suggests, the PYD programmes can be made more effective and fruitful on the basis of the following: (a) the more, the better, (b) the earlier, the better, (c) the more structured, the better.

Self Assessment Questions 2

1. Who has described the 15 key constructs or attributes of positive youth development?
2. Positive youth development programmes are based on which perspective?
3. What are the three components that the PYD programmes need to consider in designing an effective programme?
4. What does SEL programme aim at?
5. Who has given the ecological systems theory?

13.8 LET US SUM UP

In this Unit you learned about positive youth development (PYD). It is a concept that marks a shift from problematic youth to thriving youth who are full of potential. PYD is viewed from the positive psychology perspective and; thus it aims at achieving optimal development and functioning of the youth in a positive family-social-cultural context which enables the youth to engage in positive contribution to the society. Various models of positive youth development are described which highlight the key attributes of PYD. Further positive youth development programmes are explained and specific PYD programmes in Indian and global context are described. Finally, different criteria of evaluation of PYD programmes are described.

13.9 KEY WORDS

Youth	: refers to the young people between 15-29 years of age as per the National Youth Policy of India, 2014.
Positive Youth Development	: includes a combination of positive experiences, positive relationships and positive environments in the life of the youth.
Resilience	: refers to competence to overcome adversity.
Thriving	: refers to not only surviving the adversity but also progressing and enhancing oneself.
Developmental Assets	: include both internal (individual-related) and external (environmental related) factors that help create positive experiences and well-being for the youth.
Social and Emotional Learning	: refers to various intrapersonal and interpersonal competencies related to awareness and management of emotions.

13.10 ANSWERS TO SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

Answers to Self Assessment Questions 1

1. 15-29
2. identity versus role confusion
3. positive development
4. The traditional medical model of health focuses more on the absence of psychological distress and disorder rather than on the psychological well-being and positive functioning of individuals.
5. Environment
6. competence, confidence, connection, character, care, and contribution

Answers to Self Assessment Questions 2

1. Catalano et al. (2004)
2. positive psychology
3. the person, the context/environment related factors, and the interaction between the two
4. SEL programmes aim at promoting the social and emotional competencies of school students and equip them to succeed in school as well as later in life.
5. Bronfenbrenner (1979)

13.11 UNIT END QUESTIONS

1. Discuss the concept of positive youth development.
2. Explain the 5Cs/6Cs model of PYD.
3. What is a PYD programme? Explore and identify certain youth development programmes in your city or State. Can these be called as PYD programmes? If so, why?
4. Identify a positive youth development programme in global context and analyze it in terms of its objective, approach and outcomes.
5. Discuss the criteria of evaluation of PYD programmes.

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UNIT 14 SUCCESSFUL AGEING*

Structure

- 14.1 Learning Objectives
- 14.2 Introduction
- 14.3 Understanding Ageing
- 14.4 Types of Ageing
- 14.5 Theoretical Paradigm of Ageing
- 14.6 Successful Ageing: Definition
 - 14.6.1 Building Blocks of Successful Ageing
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- 14.8 Strategies to Promote Successful Ageing
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14.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After studying this Unit, you would be able to:

- *Understand the meaning of ageing and its different subtypes;*
- *Explain the theories of ageing;*
- *Define successful ageing and its components; and*
- *Discuss different determinants and strategies to promote successful ageing.*

14.2 INTRODUCTION

“It’s not how old you are. It’s how you are old.”- Jules Renard

Successful ageing has been receiving much attention in recent years due to the longevity, growing elderly population and high risk for having various physical and mental health problems. Successful ageing is a state of health (physical and psychological) and vitality throughout one’s life span. It simply denotes health

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and well-being in latter decades of life. It has been so significant that the year 1999 was called as “Year of the Older Persons” by the World Health Organization. It gave an impetus to look for the factors and conditions that would develop an understanding of the problems of ageing and identifying the strategies for facilitating successful ageing. It is also worth knowing that there is diversity in the ageing process. Advancement in medicines and technological usage in health have led to increase in life expectancy, thus leading to a greater surge in the older population in both developed and developing countries. This increase in the elderly population has brought several issues related to physical and psychosocial problems. Increase in the longevity has brought the focus on how to old, with greater impetus to age well.

14.3 UNDERSTANDING AGEING

The proportion of older persons is increasing across the globe. It is projected that the total population of India will increase by 55% by 2050 and the elderly above 60 years will increase by 326% (UN, 2002). Presently India has around 90 million elderly and by 2050, the number is expected to increase to 315 million, constituting 20 % of the total population (UNFPA India, 2011). These data show an increasing trend in the percentage of aged population in India and with increase in longevity, the proportion of older persons in the country is expected to continue to rise in the future. This also means concomitant increase in the burdens associated with ageing.

Physical and psychological problems are likely to increase in older age as they are more vulnerable due to ageing process. Societies in the developing countries have been changing, in terms of structure and functions of its members, in consequent to the rapid migration from villages to towns and cities. Individuals with chronological age of 60 and above have been considered as older persons (UN, 2009). However, in ageing research, there are variations in terms of defining older adults and these cut off points have ranged between 50 and 60 years. Ancient Indian system and thought divides life span into four stages or ‘Ashramas’ and old age is said to begin at the stage of ‘*Vanprasth Ashram*’, starting at 50 years.

Ageing is a socially constructed phenomenon and how it is perceived and experienced is influenced by culture, societal expectations, and individuals’ lived experiences (Brooks, 2010; Chonody and Teater, 2018). Ageing is multidimensional and involves changes in biological, psychological and cognitive function. With increasing age, we often experience decline in physical and psychological functioning. As we grow older we experience several changes which affect our personal, social and professional life. These age related changes hamper our daily activities and one could become dependent on others. Presence of several disease and related disabilities also come into existence as one ages. Therefore, ageing is seen synonymous with chronic medical illnesses, disabilities, decline in cognitive abilities, decrease in functional abilities and changes in social roles.

Ageism refers to the negative perception, attitude and treatment of the elderly mainly because of their age. The younger people think that the elderly are not able to do anything, they consider them as weak, helpless, attribute negative qualities to them, and exhibit discriminatory behavior and practices towards older adults due to their age. Further, they are considered to be like infants who need to

be taken care of, and in many a cases, they are not involved in the family matters and are neglected as if they are no more useful now.

14.4 TYPES OF AGEING

- *Chronological Ageing*- It is the age of the person in years from the time one is born. A general impression about one's cognitive, psychological and social development is made from chronological age. However, other factors that influence development apart from chronological age are social, cultural and individual factors.
- *Biological Ageing*- It is the effect of ageing on one's physiological systems, as physiological age is the changes in individual's organismic structure and functions. It is also known as senescence (decline of cell or organism due to ageing) or functional ageing. The biological events occurring across time, gradually impairs the physiological system, which results in affecting the disease immunity of the individual and consequently leading to death. The physiological ageing is contingent upon number of factors such as genetic factors, nutrition, experiences of disease, one's vulnerabilities and the stage of development.
- *Psychological Ageing*- it is mainly an individual's capacity to adapt to the changing environment. Psychological ageing comprises of memory, learning and emotions, intelligence, motivation and self-perception. The psychological development or ageing is also context driven i.e. how environment plays a significant role in individual's growth and decline.
- *Social Ageing*- It is the changing experiences that individuals encounter in their social roles and relationships and as part of broader social structures (such as religious groups) as they pass through different phases of their life course. It is determined by the social activities of the individual and society's perception as appropriate or inappropriate at a particular age or stage of maturity.
- *Cognitive Ageing*- The cognitive abilities improves as we grow into adulthood. However, in later years there is age related decline in various cognitive functions such as memory, learning, processing speed. Certain cognitive skills such as vocabulary and general knowledge generally do not demonstrate any decline with increasing chronological age.
- *Sexual Ageing*- This refers to one's ability and desire to engage in sexual activity. However sexual desire remain active throughout life, even if one doesn't engage in active sexual activity. Sexologist opines that sexual responsiveness weakens in the male after the age of 60 years, however regularity of arousal, adequate physical well-being and a healthy mental orientation to the ageing process provide a favourable climate to the sexual performance that may extend up to or beyond the age of 80 years.
- *Affective Ageing*- Unlike other types of ageing, it has been seen that the emotional experiences and expressions improve with growing age. One is able to regulate emotions better with age. Negative affect and anger are experienced less. Culture, family environment and support impact the affective ageing.

Self Assessment Questions 1

1. What is ageism?
2. Differentiate between chronological and biological ageing.
3. Which stage indicates the old age stage in the 'Ashram' system of ancient India?

14.5 THEORETICAL PARADIGM OF AGEING

There are various theoretical perspectives on ageing. Let us know about them below.

1. Disengagement theory

As the term suggests, here the individual would disengage from one's active life as they become older. This theory was proposed by Cumming and Henry around 1961. Accordingly, older persons' voluntarily disengage themselves from their social responsibilities and involve themselves in a manner that would be more restrictive. This reduction in work is due to decrease in individual's physical and psychic energies. Sometime the disengagement is due to societal and cultural norms, where a particular set of behaviours are expected from older persons.

2. Activity theory

According to this theory, successful ageing indicates that one is able to maintain the earlier activities in the later years of life as well and also is able to have same attitudes towards them. It was proposed by Havinghurst (1961). According to activity theory, when older people continue to engage themselves in social activities, personal activities and pursuing certain hobbies or solitary activities, they not only remain active but also have higher self-esteem, and are lot happier. Activity theory has lot of similarity to the concept of successful ageing as it emphasizes on remaining productive in one's old age too.

3. Subculture theory

This theory was developed by Rose and Peterson (1965). According to this theory older people form subcultures and interact with others having similar backgrounds, experiences, attitudes, values, beliefs and lifestyles. Contrary to the activity theory, the subculture theory believes that the older people form the subculture due to social segregation, social differentiation and discrimination based on age. It assumes that people establish new ties and bonds based on similar age rather than other factors, thus leading towards having an isolated group of older persons only.

4. Selective Optimization with Compensation

This was developed by Baltes and Baltes (1990). According to this theory, as people grow older, restrictions in the functional domains increases. However they try to engage in some activities more depending upon their interests as well as they try to find ways to compensate for loss of

abilities and skills, e.g., hearing aids, walking sticks and socializing on phone. Successful ageing is a process that continues across the life course. Importance has been given to individual and cultural variations.

5. Proactivity Theory

This was developed by Kahana and Kahana (1996). This is based upon preventive and corrective proactivity. In spite of difficulties caused by old age such as chronic illness, loneliness etc., maintenance of good quality of life may be possible by utilizing internal coping resources and external social support. Proactive behaviour adaptations is facilitated and individual engages in positive health behaviour, helping others, planning ahead, modifying one's environment and role substitution. Proactive adaptation helps in buffering the negative effects of stressors and lifting the overall wellbeing of the individual. The proactivity theory sees successful ageing both as a process and outcome.

6. Socio Emotional Selectivity Theory

This was developed by Carstensen, Fung, and Charles (2003). It explains that older people prioritize emotional goals, adjust emotional regulations and social interactions to maximize positive experiences. They choose close relationships to optimize positive emotional experiences.

7. Gerotranscendence Theory

Developed by Tornstam (2005), the theory states that the older adult counteracts the mistakes one did in the middle age by legacy building and existential concerns and looks for newer meanings and essence.

8. Lifespan Approaches

A widely used approach to the study of old age is lifespan approaches. As the name indicates, the lifespan approaches focus on the changes and challenges that takes place throughout the developmental years. Here it is important to note the following about development:

- *Development is a continuous process and continues throughout the life.*
- *Development related changes occur not only in the biological domain but also psychological and social.*
- *Developmental changes occur in sequence and only when previous stage is reached the individual develops to the next.*
- *Development is also context specific to the culture and society in which an individual lives.*

Old age is viewed as a continuous development based upon the past experiences and present status. It focuses on general overall development changes rather than personality related variations. The lifespan psychologists include Jung, Adler, Erickson, Peck, Neugarten and Havighurst.

- i. *The Jungian approach.* According to this approach there are two types of orientations: *firstly* the one that is driven by instinctual drives

and excessive involvement of emotions in childhood and adolescence; *secondly* during the adulthood there is more emphasis on one's identity and involvement with family, work and society. Moving towards middle age and further old age, individual tries to maintain balance between the two, followed by increasing awareness of self, about life and the death. As the individual realizes the death which is inevitable, s/he tries to understand or search for the meaning. In this process of individuation, individual tries to focus on the 'other' aspect of self that had remained undeveloped, which are neglected intrapsychic realities. According to Jung, the ability of the individual to enrich one's inner life and understand and appreciate oneself is self-actualization. Further, accepting the ultimate, i.e., death and living life fullest should be the two important goals in old age.

- ii. *The Adlerian approach.* According to this approach, individuals define themselves in context to others. It assumes that wellbeing depend upon one's social involvement and satisfactory lifestyle. Community feeling and social interest are important for old age.
- iii. *Erik Erikson's approach.* The last stage in Erikson's (1950) eight stages of psychosocial development is characterized by 'ego integrity vs. despair'. Ego integrity can be achieved in the older age after having lived a satisfactory and fulfilling life. Once the person has completed his/her responsibilities and exhibited mastery over one's work in the previous stage, ego integrity is achieved. The concept of successful ageing is more subjective in nature. It depends upon individual's experience rather than the objective evaluation, e.g., ego despair is observed in individual's who see their life as unproductive, and didn't achieve anything.
- iv. *Peck's approach.* Robert peck's (1968) theory of development mainly focused on middle age and old age by elaborating Erikson's eighth stage of development. It talks about the developmental tasks of ego differentiation, body transcendence, and ego transcendence. Here ego differentiation is the self-assessment by the individual regarding what s/he is going to do after retirement beyond the work role; body transcendence can be understood as the compensatory actions for one's physical limitations through cognitive, social and emotional life. Ego transcendence would be legacy building keeping in mind the end, on the principle of generativity. It talks about accepting life, contributing to future generations and having a sense of their life being worthwhile.
- v. *Neugarten's approach.* According to Neugarten (1964), as the individual progresses towards older age there is a withdrawal from the outer world and emergence of preoccupation with the inner self. This was referred as interiority of the personality. The individual should be understood in terms of the social framework of the society.
- vi. *Havighurst's approach.* According to Havighurst (1972), personality organization and coping style are the main factors involved in adjustment to old age. Old age requires one to make adjustments to

(a) decreasing physical strength and health; (b) retirement and reduced income; and (c) death of one's spouse. These factors along with financial security, societal norms, beliefs, provisions for elderly influence life satisfaction. Further it is important to establish an affiliation to some group having person of similar age, being flexible in adapting to changing roles and trying to live satisfactorily.

Ageing is a continuous inevitable process where certain deficits and decline may occur. However, there are instances of many older people who are able to lead a very active, energetic, healthy life and the effect of age on their functioning is minimal. Have you ever wondered WHY? Researchers have been studying this aspect of ageing where people live to their optimal even in their 70s or 80s despite decline in physical and cognitive areas. This is known as ageing well or successful ageing.

Let us know more about successful ageing.

“Healthy Ageing is the process of developing and maintain the functional ability that enables well-being in older age” (WHO). *Functional ability* includes,

- Ability to meet one's basic needs
- Ability to learn, grow and make decision
- Mobility
- Ability to build and maintain relationship
- Ability to contribute in society

This combines the intrinsic capacity of the individual, the environment a person lives in and how people interact with their environment.

“Decade” is an initiative taken by WHO in bringing together all stake holders such as government, NGOs, civil society, international agencies etc. to improve the life of the older people by collaboratively working towards it from 2021-2030.

The objectives of “Decade” are action to promote health, prevent disease, maintain intrinsic capacity and enable functional ability.

- Change how we think, feel and act towards age and ageing.
- Ensure that communities foster the abilities of older people.
- Deliver person centered integrated care and primary health services that are responsive to older people.
- Provide access to long term care for older people who need it.

14.6 SUCCESSFUL AGEING: DEFINITION

Successful ageing is a multi-dimensional concept that includes physical, social and psychological well-being. Successful ageing can be understood in terms of longevity along with good physical, psychological and social health and well-being. There have been several terms used as synonymous to successful ageing

(SA) in the literature, such as positive ageing, active ageing, ageing well, healthy ageing, optimum ageing, productive ageing, vital ageing, robust ageing and joyful ageing.

The term successful ageing first came to limelight after book ‘Successful Ageing’ by Rowe and Kahn in 1987. However, as we have read under theoretical paradigm, many others have also brought this aspect of ageing before Rowe and Kahn. According to Havighurst (1961), successful ageing is ‘adding life to years’ and getting satisfaction from life. Rowe and Kahn (1987) further popularized this term and enumerated **three components of successful ageing**: (a) avoiding disease and disability, (b) maintaining high cognitive and physical functioning, and (c) engagement with life. Previously ageing was considered to be associated with diseases, disabilities, and restrictions in one’s activities. It was only later that successful ageing was considered not only the absence of disease and disability but also as related to psychosocial factors.

Ryff (1989) listed few criteria that are important in successful ageing. These are: self-acceptance, positive relationships with others, self-determination, control over the environment, purposefulness in life, and personal development. According to Ryff, ageing is an evolutionary process, and growth and excellence in one’s life is possible. Later, Moody (2005) suggested that successful ageing consist of key ideas such as “life satisfaction, longevity, freedom from disability, mastery and growth, active engagement with life, and independence”.

As one can see, the concept of successful ageing is so broad and includes so many different aspects, it may be difficult to bring all of them together in any single definition. At the same time, it has been an evolving concept. In an interesting study by Depp and Jeste (2006), it was found that several different components are used to define successful ageing. Majority of the definitions included functional disability/ functional performance as a core component, followed by cognitive functions, life satisfaction/welfare, productive/social engagement, absence of disease, longevity, health/wellbeing, environmental factors and finance. Each of these components emphasizes on the potential and benefits of leading an optimal life during old age. Further, definitions of successful ageing involve objective criteria emphasizing outcome and achievements. Later it was realized that subjective experience of the old people was equally important. Therefore, successful ageing is a multidimensional concept and involves both subjective and objective criteria.

14.6.1 Building Blocks of Successful Ageing

The following components can be considered to be the building blocks of successful ageing:

- Physical component: Physical component includes absence of physical illness, disability and independent incarrying out physical functions. Physical well-being can be understood as maintaining good physical health and being independent for activities of daily life.
- Psychological component: It refers to capacity to engage in different mental activities, feeling happy, absence of cognitive and psychological problems. This also includes acceptance of self, personal growth, purpose

or meaning in life, positive relations with others, environmental mastery and autonomy.

- Social component includes social acceptance, social actualization, social contribution, social coherence and social integration. It indicates being able to lead a meaningful social life by being actively involved in it and contributing towards it.

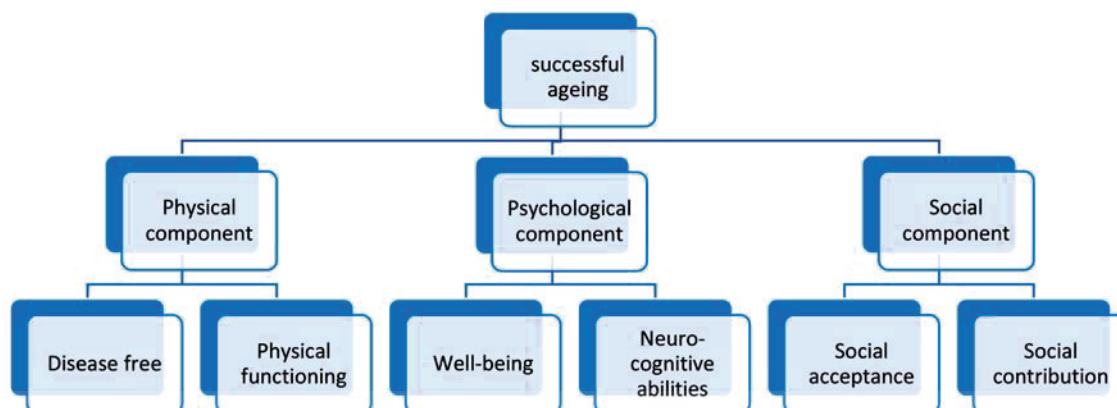


Fig. 14.1: Building Blocks of Successful Ageing

Self Assessment Questions 2

1. What is disengagement theory?
2. Name the theme of the eighth stage of Erikson's psychosocial development.
3. What is successful ageing?
4. What are the three main components of successful ageing?

14.7 PREDICTORS OF SUCCESSFUL AGEING

Several factors have been found to be important predictors of successful ageing. Understanding of the predictive factors help in guiding interventions for promotion of successful ageing. They help in enhancing quality of life, decreasing mortality and morbidity.

14.7.1 Subjective well-being

Subjective experience of happiness or well-being is regarded as crucial for successful ageing. High subjective well-being is considered beneficial as it enhances our ability to cope and deal with challenges. Subjective well-being can be conceptualized in terms of an affective component (presence of positive affect and absence of or low negative affect) and a cognitive-evaluative component (sense of satisfaction in life) (Diener, 1984). Higher subjective well-being is associated with better health and longevity, cardiovascular health and good immune system.

One's physical and mental well-being have also been found to be affected by resilience. Resilience buffers and protects against traumas, losses, deprivation, and threats. Research on resilience initially was carried out on children with deprivation but later on it has been spread to other areas as well and its role in successful ageing is now well established.

Several demographic factors have also been found to affect our subjective well-being and correlate with successful ageing. It has been seen that people with higher education have a better sense of well-being during old age. Higher education leading to better job opportunities and in turn resulting in increased income, enables elderly to have better access to resources and hence have better chances of successful ageing. Marital status and good social support also play an important role in predicting successful ageing.

14.7.2 Cognitive functioning

Cognitive functioning refers to higher mental processes including attention, executive function, speed of processing, language, learning, memory and visuo-spatial function (Refer to Fig. 14.2 below). Higher cognitive functioning is another crucial component for successful ageing. Better cognitive abilities such as planning, problem solving and memory can help us to deal with our day-to-day challenges and enable us to function independently. Better cognition could enhance our confidence, self-esteem and well-being. On the other hand, cognitive impairment can affect our physical and psychological well-being.

It may be noted here that normal ageing affects our cognition especially decline in processing speed and memory. However, such decline is considered normal and does not require professional help or support. On the other hand, many a times memory problems could start affecting our decision making and activities of daily life. And such condition might be called dementia. Dementia is a general term for loss of memory, and other thinking abilities that are severe enough to interfere with daily life. According to World Health Organization, “**dementia** is a syndrome due to disease of the brain, usually of chronic or progressive nature, in which there is impairment of multiple higher cortical functions, including memory, thinking, orientation, calculation, learning capacity, language and judgement” (ICD-10). Dementia is associated with significant medical, psychological and social burden. There are 3.7 million Indians with dementia and the total societal costs is about 14,700 crore and the numbers are expected to double by 2030.

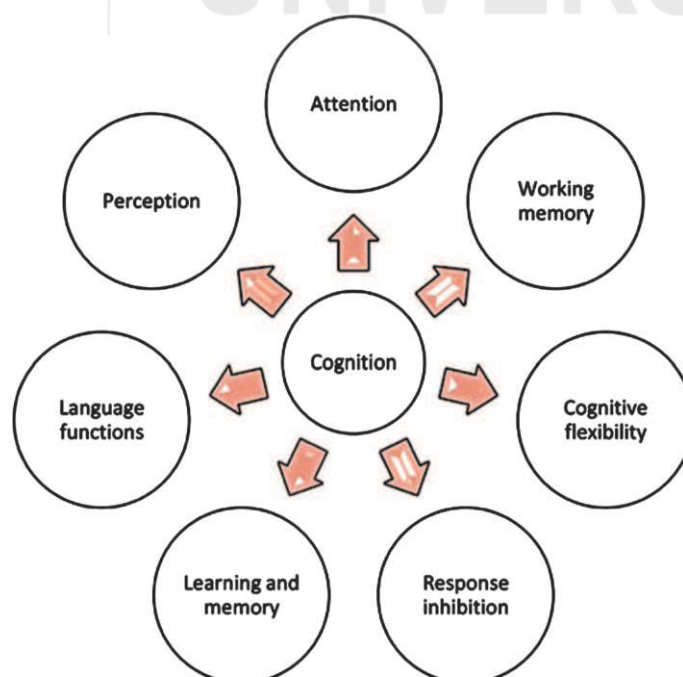


Fig. 14.2: Higher Cognitive Functions

14.7.3 Physical functioning

Health is usually considered as wealth. Better health is associated with happiness and ageing successfully. Ageing can attract a host of physical and mental health problems such as arthritis, hypertension, hearing problems, anxiety and depression. Presence of physical or psychological problems could adversely affect our well-being and psychosocial functioning including quality of life. Poor quality of life is associated with low subjective experience of successful ageing. On the other hand, absence of disease and disability enables us to function independently and enhances our subjective experience of successful ageing (as proposed by Rowe and Kahn, 1987). Physical and mental illness can adversely affect our independence, social activities, leisure activities as well as instrumental activities of daily living and such interruption might compromise successful ageing. Therefore physical and psychological health and well-being is necessary components of successful ageing.

Common health related Problems in old age

- ✓ Hearing problems
- ✓ Visual problems
- ✓ Decline in muscle mass and strength
- ✓ Slowness in psychomotor speed
- ✓ Urinary incontinence
- ✓ Cardiovascular disease
- ✓ Hypertension
- ✓ Osteoarthritis
- ✓ Diabetes
- ✓ Forgetfulness
- ✓ Dementia
- ✓ Depression

14.7.4 Positive personality traits

The role of personality cannot be denied in the process of successful ageing. Several personality characteristics have been found to be positively related to well-being and longevity. The big five personality traits (Fiske, 1949, McCrae & Costa, 1987): openness to experience, agreeableness, extraversion, conscientiousness and neuroticism have been found to be associated with environmental mastery, purpose in life and self-acceptance. Several researches have been carried out and established the inevitable role of personality traits in ageing successfully. Having a meaning or purpose in life makes one's life objective

and significant. It also helps in understanding the negative or stressful events in more positive way.

Resilience, optimism, perseverance, self-efficacy, hardiness, ego resiliency are some of the other characteristics found to be related to well-being and in ageing successfully. Resilience, mentioned in earlier section also, is an important component in subjective well-being. Resilience is considered both as a process and an outcome.

Research studies consider resilience to be a dynamic developmental process rather than resilience as a personality trait. Resilience can be enhanced and strengthened, however presence of certain other traits can affect the outcome such as, optimism, which is having a strong conviction that good rather than bad will only happen; perseverance, which is undertaking tasks and challenges and finishing them; self-efficacy plays a strong protective role in handling challenges and stresses in life. As defined by Bandura, “self-efficacy is people’s beliefs in their capabilities to produce desired effects by their own actions”.

Another term which is often used with resilience is “ego-resiliency”. It is the capacity to overcome, and bounce back from adversity, and has been considered to be a stable personality trait. It has been found that adults high on ego-resiliency exhibited greater physiological and emotional recovery from stress. Similarly another trait which is psychological hardiness, is also associated with resilience, as it enables older adults to handle difficulties and challenges in later years. Psychological hardiness consists of three interrelated dispositions- commitment (not alienation), control (not powerlessness), and challenge (not threat). Another personality characteristic which is very important is hope, that is, having positive expectation from future and also working towards it.

14.7.5 Living life fullest

There are several intentional and effortful activities that we do in our life in order to make our life more productive and healthy. Indulging in a variety of such activities is useful such as drawing, gardening, reading, painting, stitching, embroidery, cooking or learning new skills, engaging in physical activities, making effort to enhance quality relationship, donating and helping people, spending time with nature and so on. It is worth mentioning here that active participation in effortful activities could have far reaching beneficial impact on our physical, psychological and social health. For example, leisure or social activities involve some form of physical, mental or social stimulation which in turn improves our physical and psychosocial well-being. Similarly, participation in social activities is known to enhance interactive skills, sense of belonging, purpose, support as well as physical and mental stimulation. To summarize, engaging in the health behaviours such as having good eating habits, exercising or doing some physical activity, getting health checkups regularly, avoiding smoking and alcohol, maintaining a regular routine and sleeping well, reduce the chances of physical health problems. Social activities, recreational activities and creative activities also affect one’s physical, mental and cognitive well-being.

14.8 STRATEGIES TO PROMOTE SUCCESSFUL AGEING

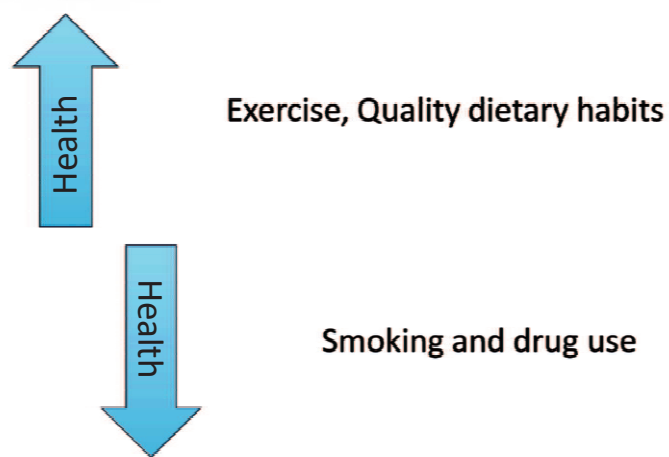
Over the years various strategies have been found to be effective in promoting successful ageing. Such activities comprise of active participation in regular physical activities such as walking and yoga, eating a balanced diet, self-monitoring of one's own health, following a healthy lifestyle, engaging in social relations, having a positive attitude towards self and others, doing things that gives happiness, staying mentally active by doing activities such as reading newspaper, solving quizzes, learning new skills, improving knowledge about latest technology.

Let us discuss a few salient ones below in detail.

- ***Life style matters***

Age related decline in physical and cognitive functions are often associated with life style and related factors. Lifestyle factors are our own learned habits and behaviors, and hence it is modifiable in nature. Exercise, sleep patterns, cigarette smoking, drugs use, medications, alcohol use, caffeine consumption, eating habits, use of seat belt, helmets are some of the examples of life style factors. Successful ageing can be achieved by keeping in mind the above things and following a healthy life style such as abstaining from smoking and drug use, doing physical activity and regular exercise and sustaining quality dietary habits.

Beneficial role of physical activities/exercise and quality dietary habits is widely reported in scientific literature. It is well proven that physical activity is associated with better health, memory and cognition. Further it reduces our risk to develop ageing related health problems such as cardiovascular disease, hypertension, diabetes and other physical and brain related problems.



- ***Social support helps***

Quality social support is considered important for successful ageing. Our social ties, relationship and related support are known to enhance

our well-being. It is basically network of people such as friends, relatives, neighbors or significant others who are accessible or available for support and help. Social support can be available in terms of structure (size of network) and function (emotional or instrumental) it serves. Having quality support system is associated with healthy and successful ageing. High quality social support is known to enhance our coping to deal with the stress as well as illness through perceived support and assistance.

Benefits of social support

- ✓ Longevity
- ✓ Better physical health
- ✓ Better emotional health and well-being
- ✓ Tangible assistance
- ✓ Information and guidance

- ***Keep learning***

Constantly engaging in varieties of stimulating activities like learning new things, reading, exploring new things, doing creative activities, playing stimulating games are known to improve our cognitive functions. Cognitive or mental stimulation helps keep our brain healthy. Beneficial effects of such activities are widely reported in successful ageing literature. Cognitive activity enhances our brain resilience and therefore helps to achieve successful ageing. Participation in different activities can stimulate as well as enhances our physical, social and cognitive functions.

14.9 LET US SUM UP

Successful ageing is a multi-dimensional concept that includes physical, social and psychological well-being. Successful ageing can be understood in terms of longevity along with good physical and psychological health and well-being. it is related with health and well-being in latter decades of life. Several factors have been found to be important predictors of successful ageing including subjective well-being, better physical and psychological health, personality traits and participation in different activities. Healthy life styles, mental and cognitive stimulation, participation in social activities are known to be effective in promoting successful ageing.

14.10 KEY WORDS

Ageing

: is multidimensional and involves changes in biological, psychological and cognitive function. How it is perceived and experienced is influenced by culture, societal expectations, and individuals' lived experiences.

- Ageism** : refers to the negative perception, attitude and treatment of the elderly mainly because of their age.
- Subculture Theory** : explains that older people form subcultures and interact with others having similar backgrounds, experiences, attitudes, values, beliefs and lifestyles.
- Successful Ageing** : is a multi-dimensional concept that includes physical, social and psychological well-being.
- Dementia** : is a general term for loss of memory, and other thinking abilities that are severe enough to interfere with daily life.

14.11 ANSWERS TO SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

Answers to Self Assessment Questions 1

1. Ageism refers to the negative perception, attitude and treatment of the elderly mainly because of their age.
2. Chronological ageing is the age of the person in years from the time one is born, whereas Biological ageing is the effect of ageing on one's physiological systems, as physiological age is the changes in individual's organismic structure and functions.
3. Vanprasth Ashram

Answers to Self Assessment Questions 2

1. Disengagement theory proposes that the individual would disengage from one's active life as they become older.
2. ego integrity vs. despair
3. Successful ageing is a multi-dimensional concept that includes physical, social and psychological well-being.
4. The three main components of successful ageing are, (a) avoiding disease and disability, (b) maintaining high cognitive and physical functioning, and (c) engagement with life.

14.12 UNIT END QUESTIONS

- 1) Describe theories of successful ageing.
- 2) Describe different types of ageing.
- 3) Define successful ageing and its components.
- 4) Briefly discuss predictors of successful ageing.
- 5) Discuss different strategies to promote successful ageing.

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UNIT 15 PROMOTING GROWTH AND WELLNESS: POSITIVE INTERVENTIONS*

Structure

- 15.1 Learning Objectives
- 15.2 Introduction
- 15.3 Emerging Trend: Positive Psychology
- 15.4 Theoretical Perspectives
 - 15.4.1 PERMA Model: A Well-being Theory by Martin Seligman
 - 15.4.2 Flow Theory of Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi
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 - 15.4.4 Carol Ryff's Six-factor Model of Psychological Well-being
 - 15.4.5 Diener's Tripartite Model of Subjective Well-being
- 15.5 Positive Interventions: Concept and Mechanism
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 - 15.6.1 Gratitude
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- 15.10 Key Words
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15.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After studying this Unit, you would be able to:

- *explain the basic concepts of positive psychology and positive interventions;*
- *discuss the theoretical perspectives on positive psychology;*
- *describe various types of positive interventions for promoting growth and wellness; and*
- *explain the significance, scope and criticism of positive interventions.*

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15.2 INTRODUCTION

“We have discovered that there are human strengths that act as buffers against mental illness Much of the task of prevention in this century will be to create a science of human strengths whose mission will be to understand and learn how to foster these virtues in young people.”

- Martin E.P. Seligman (2002)

Since beginning of the discipline of psychology as a science, researchers and clinicians have been trying to foster growth and positive well-being, greater adaptability, and nurture emotional strengths. Over the years, success of using the positive interventions shows that by focusing on positive emotions and behaviour, it is possible to improve the quality of life and help people move beyond into a flourishing lifestyle. One of the more interesting findings is that a focus on positive emotions, virtues and strengths may even be helpful in fighting more devastating emotional problems, such as depression. Recent contributions to assessment in psychotherapy continue to focus on positive emotions and behaviours, and to expand the possibility of positive interventions. There is a need to focus on joy, hope, and optimism as much as on anxiety and helplessness. In this Unit, we will be discussing about the concept and meaning of positive psychology and positive interventions, the scope and importance of these and variety of positive interventions. We will also discuss about the limitations of these interventions and the scope for the future researches in detail.

15.3 EMERGING TREND: POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY

Although the field of positive psychology is new, however, the search for the optimal human functioning and study of human character and virtue exists since the beginning of human life. All the religious texts, saints and philosophers talk about happiness and how human beings should be optimally utilising their potential. In the field of psychology, we can see the base of the concept of positive psychology in the humanistic theories. In their holistic concern for achieving optimal mental health, these humanistic theorists such as William James, Alfred Adler, Carl Jung, Carl Rogers, and Abraham Maslow moved away from the disease or deficiency model of health and built up the foundations for the positive psychology.

Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi (2000) define positive psychology as the scientific study of realising optimal human functioning with the objectives to identify and use those factors that help people and communities thrive and flourish. In the year 1998, Martin Seligman, in his famous presidential speech of the American Psychological Association, addressed and challenged the members of the association to make people's lives more fruitful and satisfying by helping them to identify and nurture their talent rather than just focusing on treating mental illness. This speech became the call to action, strengthened, as well as widened, the idea of many counselling psychologists who had long been motivated by Humanistic Psychologists such as Abraham Maslow and Carl Rogers' perspective to focus upon self-actualisation. In short, positive psychology is defined as a “science of positive subjective experience, positive individual traits, and positive institutions” that pursues to “understand and build the factors that allow

individuals, communities, and societies to flourish” (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000, p. 5).

Positive psychology is mainly focusing on developing human strengths, character, virtues, and the good things in life while dealing along with challenges and shortcomings of life. Hence Positive psychology is all about making a balance in both taking care of pathology as well as building on the fulfilling lives as much as possible. It works on finding out the factors leading to pathology and what protects them.

15.4 THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

Various perspectives of positive psychology that have informed and influenced the designing and development of positive interventions are described below.

15.4.1 PERMA Model: A Well-being Theory by Martin Seligman

Positive psychology takes you through the countryside of pleasure and gratification, up into the high country of strength and virtue, and finally to the peaks of lasting fulfilment, meaning and purpose.

- Seligman, 2002

In his book, *Authentic Happiness* (2002), Martin Seligman suggested three types of a happy life which can be studied:

- *The Pleasant life:* It refers to the “life of enjoyment,” where people enjoy and savour the various positive feelings and emotions in their daily life such as pursuing interests, having entertainment and relationships.
- *The Good Life:* It refers to the “life of engagement” where people engage themselves deeply in various activities and experience a flow in their life. For instance, losing sense of time when you are engaged in reading a story by your favourite author.
- *The Meaningful Life:* It refers to the “life of affiliation,” where people try to derive meaning and purpose in life by extending themselves and contributing to the society. When you go beyond the limited individual goals to larger goals at the community and global level, it helps develop a meaning to one’s life and leads to a positive sense of well-being.

Seligman has given his PERMA model of well-being which consists of five elements as explained below.

P- Positive Emotion

E- Engagement

R- Relationships

M- Meaning

A- Accomplishments

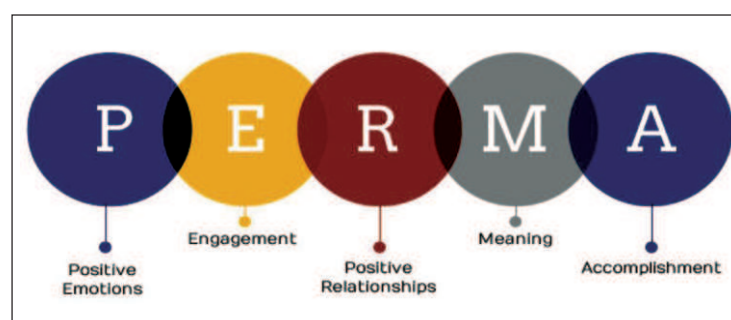


Fig. 15.1: Five Aspects of PERMA Model

P- Positive Emotion

Positive emotion is not just about 'happiness', it is also about joy, affection, love, hope, gratitude, kindness, care, dignity, delight, interest, etc. It means the individual's experience of positive mood and feelings which are comforting and uplifting. Cultivating positive emotions helps in individuals' wellbeing and flourishing as these helps to build different resources such as physical, psychological, emotional, and social which in turn makes individuals resilient and improves their overall wellbeing. Working on building up positive emotions intentionally helps individuals to improve their automatic thinking pattern and behaviour which helps them to discover, appreciate and assimilate these positive emotions in their day-to-day life.

There are number of strategies which can be applied to build positive emotion such as devoting time with people you love, pursuing your favourite activities or hobbies, playing musical instrument, listening to joyful and inspirational music, reflecting and being grateful for your life, helping others selflessly, etc.

E- Engagement

Seligman (2012) defines engagement as "being one with the music" which is quite close to one of the co-founders of positive psychology, Csikszentmihalyi's (1989) concept of "Flow". Flow means you are completely absorbed and enjoys the activity in which you are presently engaged in. In other words, it is being fully present in the 'now' moment and completely absorbed or engaged in the activity at hand.

This 'flow' or 'engagement' occurs when an individual's level of skill or strength matches with the difficulty level of the task or the challenge. So, to attain the flow or engagement, it is important that individuals make use of their best character strengths which makes the idea of engagement much more compelling than merely "being happy." Research evidence suggests that individuals who practice their strengths in different ways every day for a week found to be happier and less depressed in the follow up sessions. Thus, happiness is one of the by-products of engagement.

There are a number of ways to enhance engagement, e.g., observing and living the present moment, taking part in hobbies you truly love which makes you lose track of time when you do them as you completely get absorbed in them, spending time in nature or your balcony plants, with your pets, enjoying your daily activities or routine tasks, being mindful of happenings around you, discovering and practicing your character strengths, and doing things which you are good at.

Check out the book '*Flow: The Psychology of Happiness*' by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi for more understanding of the concept of flow.

R- Relationships

Relationships are very important for human beings as problems in relationships and social interactions affect the well-being of people to a great extent. People establish relationships for the need of love, affection, and for a sense of belonging.

Interactions with spouse, family members, friends, colleagues, superiors, subordinates, and community at large - all are crucial for individual's happiness and overall wellbeing. In the PERMA model, Relationships refer to feeling of being supported, loved, and appreciated or respected by significant others. Improving the relationships with significant others makes the personal, professional, and social life much happier and easier. Thus, most of the individuals have a goal of enhancing relationships with important near and dear ones. Research evidence suggests that we need human relationships not only for sharing our grief and sadness but also for sharing happiness and success.

Some of the things which can be done to build relationships are building friendships with people you are familiar with or in your surroundings, being in touch with people, joining a club or group of activities you enjoy, reaching out to people, knowing about them, sharing about self, helping people in need, etc.

M- Meaning

There is an innate human tendency to search for meaning in our life and a fundamental need of importance of our being and/or self-worth. According to Seligman (2012), meaning means a sense of belonging and/or doing something for others which is greater than serving only ourselves. When a person is going through any significant challenge or hardship in life, having a purpose helps them sail through and give them a path.

Our personal values and/or beliefs play an important role in finding a sense of meaning. Research evidence support that people who are having a purpose in life have higher life satisfaction, better wellbeing, and longer life. Every individual may have their own different purpose in life which may be followed through in different ways like having a great profession, doing a creative job, working for a social or political cause, or a religious/spiritual belief or participating in additional, volunteer, or community services.

There are various ways to find meaning in life like working for a cause or organization that is close to your heart, trying different and innovative endeavours to create or find things you relate with, helping others, following your passions, spending quality time with people who are important to you, etc.

Check out a life changing book *Man's Search for Meaning* by Viktor Frankl (1946), an Austrian neurologist and psychiatrist and founder of logotherapy.

A- Accomplishments

The fifth element of PERMA Model is accomplishment which is also called as achievement, mastery, or competence. We all feel proud if we have achieved or done something good. This sense of accomplishment or achievement requires that an individual should have goals, work toward attainment of these goals, achieve mastery in the task, and have self-motivation and determination to achieve their goals. These achievements help an individual to have high self-worth, strengthens self-esteem and build confidence. This leads the individual to achieve

more and more and gain mastery over a task, which in turn results in a sense of well-being in the individual. For instance, have you ever noticed when a child is able to do something on his own without help, how proud the parents feel and seeing them the child feels good and tries to do that again and again? The child also feels motivated to try out new things which are more challenging. Thus achievements make people feel happy and in turn they achieve more and more.

Accomplishment requires persistence and passion to achieve our goals. One can set the SMART goals to achieve things. That is, the goals need to be **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**chievable, **R**ealistic and **T**imebound. Further, it is important to reflect and learn from the previous achievements or successes, and find innovative ways to celebrate achievements or reward yourself to set the pace for future accomplishments.

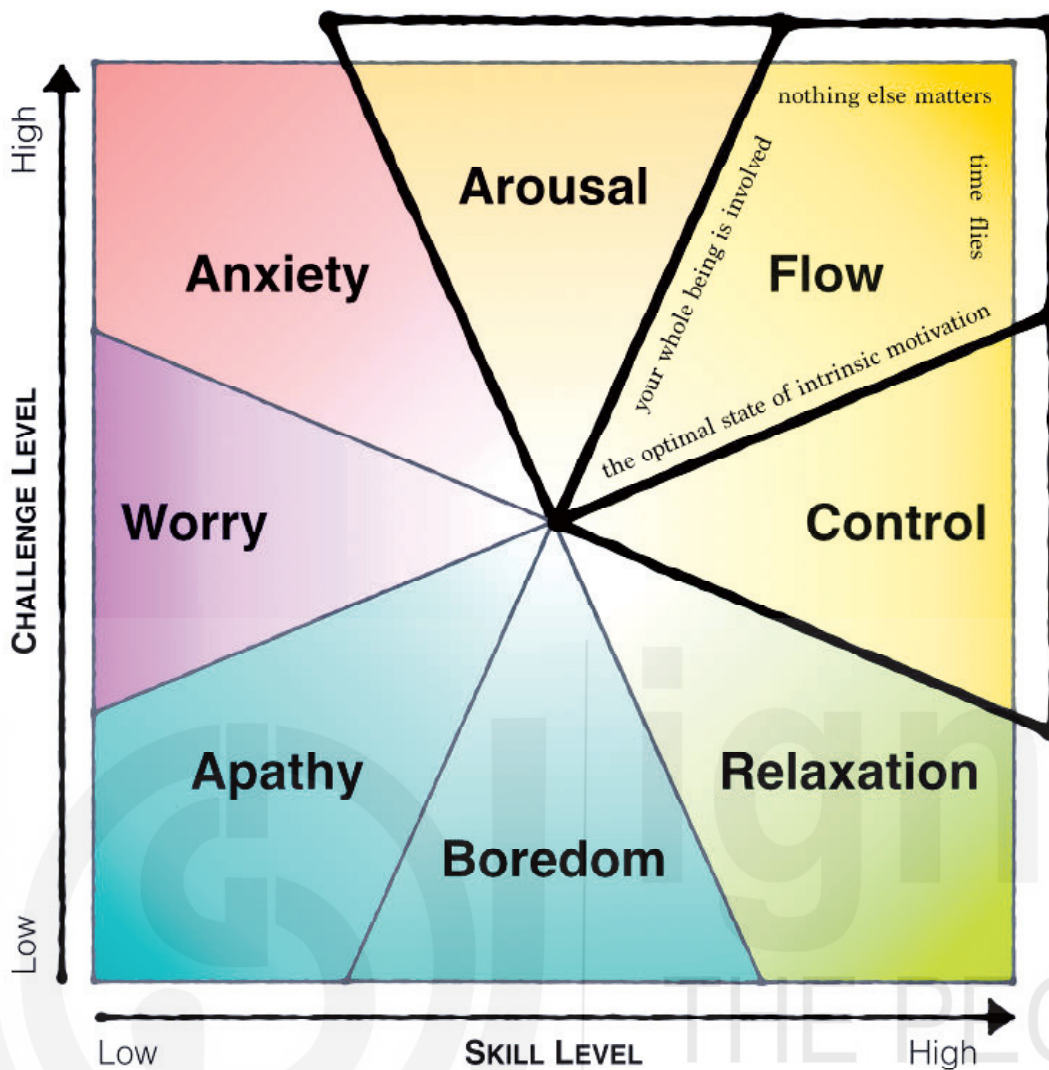
Self Assessment Questions 1

1. PERMA Model of well-being is given by _____.
2. Which of the following is NOT the component of PERMA model?
 - a) Positive Emotion
 - b) Engagement
 - c) Enjoyment
 - d) Accomplishments
3. Who gave the concept of “Flow”?
4. To accomplish, we do require _____ to achieve our goals.
 - a) persistence and passion
 - b) permanence and prayers
 - c) intermittence and indifference
 - d) appearance and affluence
5. What does “SMART” stands for?

15.4.2 Flow Theory of Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi

Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi pioneered the Flow Model which represents the emotional state of an individual while doing an activity. The notion behind Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi's theory is that individuals are much happier when they enter into a state of “flow”. Flow can be defined as having high level of focus and concentration in any task where you get the sense that ‘time is flying’. The activity provides you just the right level of challenge so that you get neither bored nor overwhelmed, and are able to focus on it. The challenge of the situation is as per one's personal abilities. Flow helps the individual to feel intrinsically rewarding; it can also support the goal achievement (e.g., winning a match) or improve individual's skills (e.g., becoming a better public speaker).

MIHÁLY CSÍKSZENTMIHÁLYI'S FLOW MODEL



Source: <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/828873506392245599/>

15.4.3 Barbara Fredrickson's Broaden and Build theory of Positive Emotions

Developed by Barbara Fredrickson (1998), this theory proposes that positive emotions (such as happiness, interest and anticipation) broaden one's consciousness and enhances original, exploratory thoughts and actions. Fredrickson argues that while negative emotions narrow thought-action repertoires, positive emotions broaden these repertoires, enabling us to draw on a wide array of possible cognitions and behaviors in response to emotional stimuli. Positive emotions do not have any immediate survival value but these help to ward off one's mind from immediate needs and stressors. Positive emotions broaden one's attention. Through this perspective, positive emotions permit us to be free to be creative, playful, curious, and experimental, and from these behaviors flow opportunities to gain new physical, social, and intellectual resources.

15.4.4 Carol Ryff's Six-factor Model of Psychological Well-being

Ryff's model is based on Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics, "where the goal of life isn't feeling good, but is instead about living virtuously" and not only about

happy feelings. Carol Ryff has proposed six factors important for an individual's psychological well-being, satisfaction, and happiness. Psychological well-being includes positive relationships with significant others, personal mastery, autonomy, a feeling of purpose and meaning in life, and personal growth and development.

According to Ryff, the following six factors are considered key elements of psychological well-being:

- *Self-acceptance*: It refers to having a positive attitude toward self; acknowledging and accepting multiple aspects of self comprising both good and bad qualities; and feeling positive about the past life.
- *Personal growth*: It is working for one's self-development and realizing one's potential; gain in self awareness; is open to novel experiences; and reflect on oneself to grow and expand.
- *Purpose in life*: Here the person focuses on having goals in life and a sense of meaning and purpose.
- *Environmental mastery*: One has a sense of mastery and competency in managing the environment; control multifaceted range of external activities; use surrounding opportunities effectively; and is able to select or create situations appropriate to his or her personal needs and values.
- *Autonomy*: It refers to being independent and self-determinant; able to deal with social pressures; regulate and evaluate himself or herself by personal ethics.
- *Positive relations with others*: It is having trusting, warm, and satisfying relationships with others in his or her life; think of other's welfare; having empathy, affection, and intimacy; and appreciate the reciprocity in human relationships.

15.4.5 Diener's Tripartite Model of Subjective Well-Being (SWB)

Diener (1984) advocates "three distinct but often related components of wellbeing: frequent positive affect, infrequent negative affect, and cognitive evaluations such as life satisfaction" in his Tripartite model of subjective well-being. This model considers well-being as a general evaluation of an individual's quality of life in terms of three important components:

- **Life satisfaction**, which is composed of overall judgments of one's life and satisfaction with specific life domains (such as work satisfaction) are considered cognitive components of subjective well-being. In simple terms, how well one's life measures up to aspirations and goals;
- *Positive affect* (pleasurable feelings); and
- *Negative affect* (painful feelings). **Affective Balance** refers to the emotions, moods, and feelings an individual has. These can be all positive, all negative, or a combination of both positive and negative.

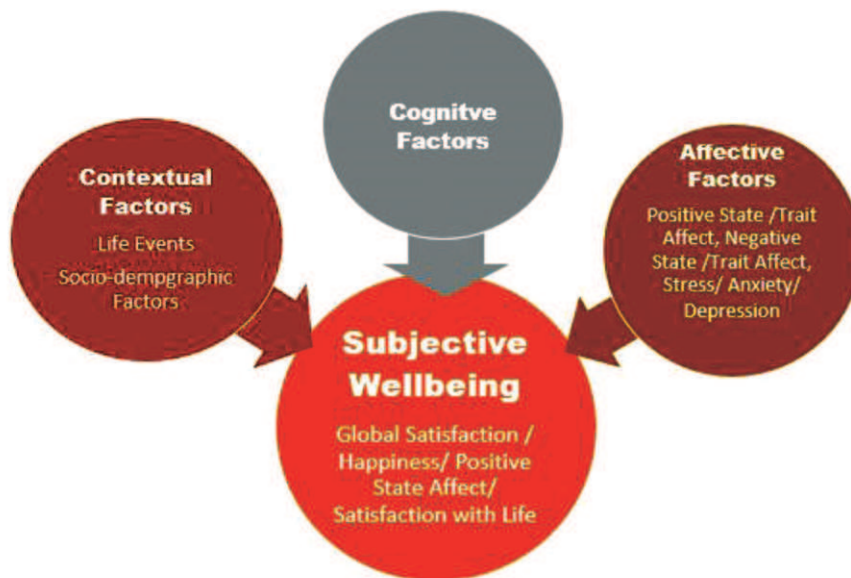


Fig. 15.2: Tripartite Model of Subjective Well-being

(Adapted from Galiha, I.C. & Pais-Riberiro, J.L. (2011). Cognitive, affective and contextual predictors of subjective wellbeing. *International Journal of Wellbeing*, 2(1), 34-53, p.38)

15.5 POSITIVE INTERVENTIONS: CONCEPT AND MECHANISM

“A positive intervention is an evidence-based, intentional act /or series of actions (behavioural strategy) meant to increase (away from zero) that which causes or constitutes well-being and flourishing in non-clinical populations.” (Rose, N. 2018).

Positive interventions are based on the principles of positive psychology and derive from the theoretical perspectives of positive psychology described in the earlier sections. Hence they are also termed as positive psychology interventions (PPIs). Analyzing the above definition we can see the following key aspects in it:

Positive intervention: These interventions are called ‘positive’ as they focus on enhancing one’s well-being, positive emotions, healthy relationships, personal growth and fulfillment, thus highlighting the positive aspects of life. These interventions try to focus on pleasant feelings and savouring memories, being mindful, or practice and encourage the deliberate use of character strengths and virtues by individuals to develop these traits.

Evidence-based: The various positive interventions are based on robust research findings. For example, positive emotions are not just about feeling good for some time, but it is much more than that focusing on building character strengths and harnessing individual potential.

Intentional Activity: Positive interventions work on the premise that all the potential lies within self and with deliberate efforts individuals can be helped to achieve their fullest potential through autonomy, and self-efficacy. Hence, it is important for a person to have some amount of motivation, determination, and self-discipline, to perform the positive intervention.

Increase the Wellness/Away from Zero: Positive psychology interventions (PPIs) aim at not only reducing the distress, but the major focus is to increase the overall well-being and flourishing in the positive direction, i.e., away from zero. If we take a continuum, one end will be the presence of disease and distress – the negative, the mid point is zero, i.e., the absence of distress, and the other end will be positive - well-being and flourishing. However, it may be noted that the absence of disease/distress does not automatically mean health and happiness. Hence it is possible that a person who do not have any kind of mental illness or suffering may not be experiencing well-being or flourishing whereas a person may experience flourishing even with suffering and illness.

Elements of Well-being and Flourishing: The PPIs are derived from the theories of well-being. They focus on increasing the positive cognitions and emotions like happiness, having positive relationships and experiences, life satisfaction, engagement, autonomy, finding meaning and purpose of life, realising their fullest potential, etc., thus creating positive psychological well-being.

Non-clinical Populations: Although research studies examine the effectiveness of positive interventions for clinical populations, yet mostly these interventions are used for the ‘normal population’ which means people who are not having any clinical symptoms.

Basic Mechanisms of Positive Interventions

What are the basic mechanisms underlying the positive interventions? Positive interventions use different cognitive, emotional, and behavioural strategies to bring in positive changes in one’s life, improve one’s happiness and well-being. Positive intervention activities help them to have more positive thoughts, positive emotions, and positive behaviours.

Most of human beings try to find happiness in different ways such as getting higher salary, better job, having a big house, a big car, destination holidays, and the list seems to be endless. However, rather than changing one’s life events (like career, income, location, marital status, etc.) as these require more efforts, time and sometimes out of one’s control, one can use simple cognitive, emotional and behavioural approaches to significantly improve one’s happiness. It also leads to increased health and well-being, better work life and relationships.

All positive interventions are intentional in nature (can be created by self or others) which are used to increase the well-being of people. Positive interventions can be used intentionally to increase the well-being in others such as character development and strength enhancing programs. Positive interventions can be used as a habit formation strategy as we all learn different habits in our childhood. The purpose of all the positive interventions is to nurture the optimum health and achieve the maximal functioning of human beings.

Positive interventions require one to do mainly two things:

- Focusing on one particular positive attribute, and
- Working towards building it by putting in the necessary energy and effort.

The first element of focusing/concentrating or paying attention on good things in life is of utmost importance which was also stated by William James, the Father of American Psychology that voluntarily controlling our attention is essential for

building up the reasoning, character and will in human beings. Hence, intentionally paying attention on good things in life will enhance positive emotions. Various meditational practices are adopted such as loving-kindness meditation, body scan meditation, mindfulness-based meditation, transcendental meditation, vedic meditation, yoga meditation, etc. for building on intentional paying attention, to deepen and enhance our lives.

The second element of functioning of positive interventions is to take a purposeful and powerful action to bring the change in our behaviour. The sense of being in control gives the feeling of independence and well-being. Without having a goal, the individual does not feel motivated to act or change the behaviour. Having a realistic and achievable goal helps a person to stay focused and develops high sense of self-efficacy. When an individual achieves his/her personal goal/s, the sense of achievement prevails leading to a purposeful or meaningful life.

Thus, it can be stated that undertaking positive interventions can help individuals to have more positive thinking, increased levels of positive emotions, and exhibit positive behaviours i.e., achieving meaningful life goals, developing feeling of autonomy and self-efficacy.

Self Assessment Questions 2

1. Positive interventions are not intentional act or series of actions to promote well-being.

True/False

2. What is NOT important for a person to have some amount of to perform the positive intervention.

- a) motivation
- b) determination
- c) egoism
- d) self-discipline

3. To increase the wellness, we must move away from zero on a continuum of

- a) Left side
- b) Right side
- c) No need to move
- d) None of the above

4. 'Normal population' means people who are not having any clinical symptoms.

True/False

5. Positive interventions do NOT help individuals to have more

- a) Positive Thinking
- b) Positive emotions
- c) Positive behaviours
- d) Positive circumstances

15.6 TYPES OF POSITIVE INTERVENTIONS

There are many interventions included under positive interventions which can be divided into seven main categories: gratitude, savouring, meaning, empathy, kindness, optimism, and strengths. Let us discuss each of these below.

15.6.1 Gratitude

Gratitude: Gratitude refers to be thankful for all the good things we have in our life. It involves expressing our appreciation and gratefulness towards people or things; this in turn creates positive feelings in us. Various activities have been designed based on research for enhancing one's sense of gratitude.

Some of the gratitude exercises and activities are given below.

1. **Gratitude Journaling:** Writing down a few things you are grateful for is one of the easiest and most popular exercises available. In this, people practice gratitude for self-reflection and not to be shared with others.
2. **Gratitude Letter** where the person writes his feelings of gratefulness and expressed or shared in the form of writing and give it to the concerned person (Gratitude Visit).

3. **Gratitude Jar**

The gratitude jar is a stunningly simple exercise that can have profound effects on your wellbeing and outlook. It only requires a few ingredients: a jar (a box can also work); a ribbon, stickers, glitter, or whatever else you like to decorate the jar; paper and a pen or pencil for writing your gratitude notes; and gratitude!

Step 1: Find a jar or box.

Step 2: Decorate the jar however you wish. You can tie a ribbon around the jar's neck, put stickers on the sides, use clear glue and glitter to make it sparkle, paint it, keep it simple, or do whatever else you can think of to make it a pleasing sight.

Step 3: This is the most important step, which will be repeated every day. Think of at least three things throughout your day that you are grateful for. It can be something as benign as a coffee at your favorite place, or as grand as the love of your significant other or dear friend. Do this every day, write down what you are grateful for on little slips of paper and fill the jar.

Over time, you will find that you have a jar full of a myriad of reasons to be thankful for what you have and enjoy the life you are living. It also will cultivate a practice of expressing thanks.

If you are ever feeling especially down and need a quick pick-me-up, take a few notes out of the jar to remind yourself of who, and what, is good in your life.

Source: <https://positivepsychology.com/gratitude-exercises/>

Researchers emphasize that the gratitude letter must be given to person, it is written about, preferably in person and should be read aloud. Researchers suggest that simply writing a full account of one's gratitude towards other is helpful but giving the letter to the person has even stronger positive effects.

Overall, all the gratitude activities found to enhance health and well-being by increasing positive emotions and decreasing symptoms of anxiety and depression. Research evidence suggest that people practicing gratitude tend to be more attentive, energetic, determined, enthusiastic, helpful, joyful, optimistic and have more meaningful life than the non-practitioners. Research also indicates that grateful people get less anxious, depressed, lonely, and materialistic. However, it is important to understand that doing such activities once in while or standalone activity may not be very helpful, and effects will be short-lived. So, it is crucial to note that for more sustainable long-term effects, these activities should be practised or used in everyday life.

To develop an 'attitude of gratitude' you can do some of the activities like keeping a gratitude journal, writing a gratitude or thank you letter, jotting down what went well, penning down three good things, etc.

15.6.2 Savouring

Bryant and Veroff (2007) describes it as observing, appreciating, and enhancing the positive experiences of your life. Savouring helps you slow down and deliberately pay attention to all your senses i.e., sight, sound, smell, taste, and touch and thought and or emotions. The main aim of savouring is to focus attention and being aware about your experiences and lengthening its pleasurable effects. The fundamental principle of savouring is to help individuals to pay attention deliberately on each part of an experience. Savouring positive interventions can have several goals varying from sensory experiences such as related to food or smell to other mental and cognitively oriented stimuli such as memories and other emotional experiences. Researchers suggest that individuals practicing savouring regularly are happier and have higher level of satisfaction with life as well as less depressive symptoms than those who do not. Effectiveness of savouring interventions depend on several factors like whether the experience which we are concentrating on is meaningful or not, doing it in the presence of other people, writing about it, employing humour etc.

Schueller and Parks (2014) suggested two subcategories of savouring interventions. In the first one, individuals are taught and asked to concentrate on general principles of savouring and then they are encouraged to practice these and make them general skills. For example, reflecting on two pleasurable experiences for 2-3 minutes every day, make them last longer like eating your favourite chocolate. You can concentrate on different parts which chocolate is made of, paying attention to the wrapping, texture, taste, and smell. Look at all these parts and prolong the experience and see how these are all linked together. Despite being very simple, practicing such savouring techniques show improvements in the level of individual's well-being. You can practice this type of savouring in varied situations and use it as a general skill.

In the second type of savouring activities, individuals are taught to concentrate and encouraged to practice these as a specific skill or activity. For example, in a

“mindful photography” intervention (Kuntz, 2012). The individuals were directed to take pictures, which they find meaningful, creative, and beautiful, daily for at least 15 minutes. Performing this for only two weeks, showed more positive emotions in the individuals than those who did not do such activities. An active-constructive responding is another example of a specific savouring skill where a person helps a friend or loved ones to prolong and savour the good experience or news. is— a series of behaviours that help a friend or loved one prolong and savour a piece of good news (Gable et al., 2004).

Savouring activities can also be classified based on the time. In this, there are 3 types of savouring:

1. Savouring the past, which is also known as reminiscence or nostalgia. For instance, recollecting happy memories of school or college with a childhood friend.
2. Savouring the present or savouring the ‘now’ moment. For example, enjoying the ice-cream by completely being absorbed in its flavour, smell, and taste.
3. Savouring the future, also described as anticipation. For instance, visualizing the examination hall for your upcoming exam and doing well and after that going for a vacation with your friends or family to your favourite destination.

Savouring interventions grouped according to their temporal orientation reviewed by Smith, Harrison, Kurtz, and Bryant (2014).

Past-focused savoring interventions

- Thinking about positive events (Lyubomirsky, Sousa, & Dickerhoof, 2006)
Spending 15 minutes throughout three days savoring a positive experience by actively reflecting on thoughts and emotions related to it was found effective in enhancing wellbeing and happiness.
- Positive reminiscence (Bryant, Smart, & King, 2005). Spending two sessions of 10 minutes each day over one week using memorabilia or positive imagery to reminisce about positive events demonstrated increased positive affect.
- Three good things (Seligman, Steen, Park, & Peterson, 2005)
Noticing and writing down three events and reflecting on the reasons why they happened can boost happiness levels for up to six months.

Present-focused savoring interventions

- Adopting a positive focus (Bryant & Veroff, 2007)
Taking a daily 20-minute walk while trying to notice as many positive elements as possible can increase happiness levels after one week.
- Mindful photography (Kurtz, 2012)
Taking meaningful and awe-inspiring photographs for at least 15 minutes twice a week can enhance mood in the short term.

- Daily savoring exercises (Schueller, 2010)

Using different **present moment** savoring exercises daily, one week for each exercise, and taking a few minutes to engage in the experience can boost happiness after one week of finalizing the intervention.

Future-oriented savoring interventions

- Positive imagination (Quoidbach, Wood, & Hansenne, 2009)

Visualizing four positive events that are likely to happen tomorrow each day for two weeks can increase positive affect.

- Benefiting from scarcity (O'Brien & Ellsworth, 2012)

Thinking about the impermanence of a positive event can enhance the savoring experience and bring about higher levels of positive emotions.

Source: <https://positivepsychology.com/savoring/>

15.6.3 Meaning

Meaning is very important in our life as it performs two vital functions in our life. One that it provides necessary foundation for us to be more resilient and bounce back from adversity and second it gives us a sense of direction which help us to set our goals and targets and achieve them. Meaning based positive interventions basically focus on building the individual's understanding about what brings meaning to their life and what they can do to achieve this meaning. Since research suggests that having a meaningful or purposeful life is essential to happiness and ability to live a good life and feel satisfied. Research also suggest that finding life purpose or meaning is not one day task it is often a slower process, a gradual realization which takes place overtime.

The positive interventions which can facilitate individuals to find the meaning or purpose of one's life through different activities such as reflecting on the kind of work or job a person does, meaning of one's profession or re-crafting your work. Find out how can you make your work more meaningful, think about what small changes you can make to bring more meaning to your work. Set a meaningful goal and plan, or just simply write and reflect on one's life.

Do You Know Your Why: 4 Questions to Find Your Purpose”:

1. How does your life align with...
 - I. What makes you come alive? (These are things bigger than you that put “a fire in your belly.” These are things that you really care about that you are willing to put yourself)
 - II. What are your innate strengths? (What things naturally come easy to you?)
 - III. Where do you add the greatest value? (In other words, what are you well placed and equipped to help solve in your workplace, career, organization, or industry? Focus on the opportunities, roles and career

paths where you are most likely to succeed and therefore find the greatest sense of accomplishment and contribution)

IV. How will you measure your life?(What are your core values and how are you aligning with them?)

2. In what areas are you doing well?
3. What would you like to continue doing?
4. Choose one specific area that you would like to improve upon. What is one small thing you can do today to improve this area?

Source: Do You Know Your “Why”: 4 Questions to Find Your Purpose. Margie Warrell. October 30, 2013. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/margiewarrell/2013/10/30/know-your-why-4-questions-to-tap-the-power-of-purpose/#40868cc973ad>

15.6.4 Empathy

Empathy is seeing and feeling like what other person is going through, being in another person’s shoes helps you to look at and understand from other person’s perspective. Empathy strengthens the social relationships by promoting an understanding within the relationship. Several research propose that meaningful social connections can be built by nurturing empathy in people which is essential for happiness. Several activities can be used to develop empathy such as loving kindness meditation where an individual uses meditation technique to create positive feelings and emotions towards self and/or others. Research

Activities that build empathy

1. Inside the story

We all have our favourite book, movie or t.v. show. This activity make you relate to the character(s) inside the story!

Next time you are reading your favorite book or watching a movie, pause and ask yourself the following questions:

- What do you think character ‘a’ is feeling right now?
- Why do you think character a feels that way?
- What about character ‘b’, can you imagine what they are going through?
- If you were character ‘a/b’, what would you do differently?

By putting yourself inside the story, you will practice empathy for others.

2) The blindfold challenge

This activity help creates understanding for people who have little to no eye sight. You will need some old glasses from the dollar tree or old sunglasses, and some duct tape. Create the blackout glasses by putting tape over the lenses. If you don’t have any glasses, make a blindfold out of a scarf or old t-shirt.

When you introduce the game, do NOT mention it's an activity about eye sight. Simply ask your child to do the tasks below with the blind fold on. *Make sure you supervise your children so they stay safe and don't peak!*

- Brush your teeth
- Find and put on a sweatshirt
- Get a glass of water
- Go outside and find something in the back yard

The game is over when your child at least attempts all the challenges. Make sure to encourage them throughout. (It's OK if they don't complete them all, this activity can be very hard).

The second part of this activity is to REFLECT with your child.

Here are some questions you ask your child following the activity:

- Was that challenge easy or hard?
- Why was it hard?
- Was it scary sometimes not being able to see?
- Did you know that many kids and adults don't have any eye sight?
- Could you imagine not having any eyesight?
- How would your life be different?
- How would you like your friends to treat you if you were blind?

Source: <https://www.downtoearthvitality.com/activities-that-build-empathy-in-kids>

discovered that doing this activity lessens the depressive symptoms in people and improve their life satisfaction and increases positive emotions and behaviours in general.

Some other empathy based positive interventions concentrates on building perspective taking, which reduces the misunderstanding between two people and thus promotes stronger social bonds. Some research literature also suggests that promoting empathy can also promote, forgiveness and thus increasing happiness and greater overall wellbeing of people.

15.6.5 Kindness

Being kind and thoughtful not only to others but to self as well can be a great way to wellbeing. In kindness activities, individuals are asked to perform intentional acts of kindness towards self (such as forgiving self for mistakes, taking good care of health, gifting self some 'me' time) and other people (such as giving small gifts, donating things to the needy one, giving free services like teaching someone, visiting and spending time with orphan children or old people in old age home). It is not necessary that you help people by spending money only. The act of kindness could be as small as opening the door for someone who is loaded with bags in hand, offering water to thirsty, or offering your seat in metro or bus.

It has been noted irrespective of the act of kindness, big or small, it gives an immense pleasure and happiness. Research also noted that kindness is a common attribute of happy people, and happy people found to help others more. Thus, it is a circular cycle where one strengthens the other.

Another example of a kindness positive intervention is “prosocial spending”, or spending money for some cause or on others. Such as simply buying onetime meal for a homeless person or a child, sponsoring for the education of a girl child or any child, donating books, uniform, cloths, etc. for an orphan age home, getting a movie ticket for a colleague, or donating to charity like doing something for family of soldiers who lost their life in saving us. Research has strong evidence that spending money on others, rather than on oneself leads to promote well-being and happiness. All these examples go against the popular belief that “money cannot buy happiness”, but it emphasizes that if it is spent on welfare of others or kindness, it actually does and that is why you will see that many philanthropists donate money for the social uplifting or cause close to their heart. Some of them are Azim Premji, Ratan Tata, Bill Gates, Warren Buffett, and the list is

Activities to Teach Kindness

1. Spreading the Love

Have each student write his or her name at the top of a blank piece of paper. Then, tape each student’s piece of paper to their back. Have students walk around the room and write one positive thing about each person on their piece of paper. At the end, have students partner up and read each other’s papers out loud to each other. They will love hearing all of the nice things others have said about them!

2. Don’t Forget Yourself!

Ask students to notice any negative self-talk they might do that makes them feel not so good about themselves. Give them sticky notes and markers, and have them write a positive affirmation to combat each negative thought. For example, “I’m not smart enough” can become “I am always learning new things!” Then, instruct them to post the sticky notes in places where they are likely to see them every day, such as the bathroom mirror — and whenever the negative thought creeps in, replace it with the positive one!

3. Get in the Kindness Zone

Set up a Kindness Zone in the library. Create a bulletin board with the heading “Kindness Counts!” Post some of Upstart’s Kindness Cards around the board.

Then, place a decorated box near the bulletin board. Write a variety of random acts of kindness on slips of paper and put them in the box (ideas include holding the door for someone, saying hello to a student you don’t know, letting someone go in front of you in line, etc.). Have kids draw one slip from the box each week and then sign it and turn it in when it is completed. Post the completed kind acts on the bulletin board. When all of the kind acts have been posted, reward the class with a special treat.

4. Kindness Superstars!

Tell students to be on the lookout for random acts of kindness. When they see another student doing something nice for someone else, have them write the student's name on a slip of paper along with the kind deed. Tell students to put the papers in a designated spot, such as an envelope or a box. Once a day, take the names out and post them on a bulletin board along with a star sticker. Title the board "Kindness Superstars!"

Source:<https://ideas.demco.com/blog/8-simple-activities-to-teach-kindness/>

endless if you search the google. These are some of the famous one but if you see around, you will find so many people helping others in whatever way they can small or big does not matter, what matter most is as a social being, how kind you are to others.

"Too often we underestimate the power of a touch, a smile, a kind word, a listening ear, an honest compliment, or the smallest act of caring, all of which have the potential to turn a life around."

— Leo Buscaglia

15.6.6 Optimism

According to Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary, optimism is "the tendency to be hopeful and to emphasize or think of the good part in a situation rather than the bad part, or the feeling that in the future good things are more likely to happen than bad things". In other words, optimism is an attitude of an individual which echoes his/her belief or hope about the result of an activity or task, or overall ending, will be positive and favourable.

Here are some easy techniques you can use to boost your optimism:

1. Use The Mirror Technique

You may have never heard of the secret mirror technique, but if you have, you will probably understand how easy and helpful this technique can be.

In the morning and in the evening, stand in front of a mirror, look at yourself and start saying what you like about yourself.

Give yourself confidence, praise yourself and tell yourself how great you are.

Doing this can really start to change your mindset and help you with your confidence. You can start to feel much more positive and optimistic about yourself and your life.

2. Only Use Positive Words When Talking

When you are talking to others and even yourself, try and stick to using positive words only, and refrain from any negative words.

You should try and stop using words such as 'no', 'can't', 'won't', and 'don't', and replace them with more positive words. This way you are changing your physical words and your brain can start getting used to a more positive language.

3. Read An Inspiring Book

Sometimes it can be quite hard to get inspired, especially if you are not able to find anything that inspires you right now.

It's always a good idea to read an inspiring book and you can start to feel much more optimistic and motivated after reading about someone else's successes. It can also help you to see how far someone else has come, even when faced with challenges like you may be.

Source: <https://www.thelawofattraction.com/positive-thinking-exercises/>

In activities of optimism, individuals are asked to have positive expectations and think about the future in a positive way. For example, in the activity 'best possible self in future' people write about how they see their best possible self in future for about 10-15 minutes. Another similar activity where participants must assume that they lived a happy, long and a fruitful life and have to write their 'life summary' kind of their own biography. The purpose of this activity is to make them examine and reflect on their daily life routine if they want to live or do something differently to create their ideal life. Practicing these simple activities also show the substantial improvements in people's subjective well-being and decrease in the illnesses.

15.6.7 Strengths

Strength are the personal qualities of the people which rejuvenates them and enable them to achieve their optimal performance and the most important is it feel like 'the real you'. It is very likely that your strengths are the things that you are good at. People often get confused about strength with competencies, talent, or skill but in positive psychology they are not the same thing. They are morally valued and cannot be wasted. Also, you do not have to force yourself to use your strengths, you will be naturally motivated to do so. Empirical research evidence suggests that using your "strengths" every day is beneficial to your psychological wellbeing in a several ways such as increased resilience, enhanced vitality, better confidence and self-esteem, improved happiness, and decreased stress. Not only it increases your happiness, but research suggests that it also improves your work performance, make you more engaged and more likely to achieve your goals.

Activities to Develop Strengths

1. Positive Strength-Based Introductions

In this activity, you will write about an occasion when you were at your best and then reflect on the personal strengths you displayed at the time.

Instructions:

- Write a 300-word introduction describing yourself at your very best.
- The introduction should have a beginning, middle, and end.
- It should be about one concrete moment in time, not a collection of multiple occasions.

- It must be written in a positive tone.

On completion of the activity, consider the following questions:

- a. What strength(s) does this story illustrate?
- b. Do you use this strength often?
- c. Do the strengths and values present in the story you told show up in different areas of your life?
- d. How can you make these strengths more prominent in your everyday life?

2. Looking for Strengths in Others

It can be difficult for you to recognize your strengths; however, learning how to spot strengths in others can help you identify and acknowledge your own personal strengths.

List three strengths for each of the following people and think about the ways these individuals successfully utilize their strengths.

- A close friend
- Someone they admire
- An acquaintance

Source: <https://positivepsychology.com/strength-based-skills-activities>

The activities which are included under “strengths”, make people realize, utilize and/or build one’s strengths. Researchers show some apprehension in using strength-based activity such as the “identify and use” strategy might lead to dependability and rigidity of strengths. They suggest that while using strengths-based positive interventions, it is important to be cautious and use your ‘practical wisdom’ to make sure that their application is appropriate. For example, honesty is considered a strength, but in some situation being honest can hurt someone’s feelings or leads to a conflict. So, in applying these, it is vital to also develop what Schwartz and Sharpe (2005) call “practical wisdom” – the ability to use one’s strengths *when appropriate and beneficial*.

3. Self-Assessment Questions 3

1. Gratitude means to be thankful of all the good things you have in your life. True/False
2. Which one is Not the main aim of savouring _____?
 - a) focus attention
 - b) being aware about your experiences
 - c) shortening its pleasurable effects
 - d) lengthening its pleasurable effects.

3. Meaning is very important in our life as
 - a) it provides necessary foundation for us to be more resilient
 - b) it gives us a sense of direction which help us to set our goals and achieve them
 - c) Both of the above
 - d) None of the above
4. Being empathetic does not help you to understand from other person's perspective. True/False
5. "prosocial spending" is an example of _____.
 - a) Spendthrift
 - b) Kindness
 - c) Forgiveness
 - d) None of the above
6. optimism is "the tendency to be _____.
 - a) Helpful
 - b) Hopeful
 - c) Mindful
 - d) Careful
7. The ability to use one's strengths *when appropriate and beneficial* is known as _____.
 - a) Practical wisdom
 - b) Traditional Wisdom
 - c) Intelligence
 - d) Knowledge

15.7 IMPORTANCE OF POSITIVE INTERVENTIONS

Although psychologists have given attention to the positive side of the human behaviours before, yet the focus has increased more in 1990s and continuing in the present time due to several reasons. One of the main reasons is the stark economic gap in our society and the higher level of subjective distress felt by people. Csikszentmihalyi (1999) highlighted people's pathetic condition in his article, "if we are so rich, why aren't we happy? The materialistic value has gone up over the past few decades yet the happiness and well-being index is going down which is illustrated beautifully in the "paradox of affluence," by Myers (2000b).

Modern times with loss of joint family system and change in the structure of family such as single parents, high rates of divorce, both parents working, families

leaving their native place in search of “better lifestyle”, high rates of child abuse, poverty, suicides, increased number of lifestyle diseases, invasion of new viruses like covid-19, all have contributed to decreased well-being and happiness index of people. According to Seligman (1998), despite being twice as rich as we were four decade ago, we are ten times more likely to be depressed. All this has led to the dire need of adopting and practicing positive interventions to move away from the zero to positive side of health and well-being continuum.

Positive Psychology aims at happiness. Martin Seligman, one of the propounder of Positive Psychology, writes, “Positive psychology is about ‘happiness’....” Acknowledging that ‘happiness’ is a “promiscuously overused word,” he explains more clearly what he means by it: “I use ‘happiness’ and ‘well-being’ as soft, overarching terms to describe the goals of the whole positive psychology enterprise” (p. 127). He opted “Authentic Happiness” as the title of his book on positive psychology. There are different ways to achieve happiness such as promoting positive emotions for the pleasant life, developing strengths and virtues for good life, and applying one’s strengths and virtues for the betterment of others than oneself for the meaningful life.

The holistic optimum health can be achieved with the help of psychological nutrients which are important for the higher well-being. These nutrients include a sense of belongingness, sense of independence or autonomy, sense of competence or mastery, self-efficacy and self-regulation which are considered essential to improve the individual’s resilience and functioning during difficult time. These ‘nutrients’ can be cultivated with the regular exercises, our minds can be trained as we train our body muscles.

15.8 CRITICISM OF POSITIVE INTERVENTIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTION

- Positive interventions are derived from the field of positive psychology. Positive psychology itself is criticized that it is “old wine in new bottles” because it heavily borrows from humanistic psychology and is quite identical to counselling psychology.
- There is a common misunderstanding about positive psychology that it is not a matured science and those who study, or practice positive psychology engage in Pollyanna thinking which refers to positivity bias, i.e., the tendency to focus overly on positive only and ignoring the other side of things.
- Research on positive intervention has also been criticized on the ground that what exactly is a “positive intervention”. Without clear set of standards for categorizing interventions as “positive”, it is difficult to understand which one we should count in positive interventions and which one not.
- Further, positive interventions are looked upon as nothing more than self-help strategies. Therefore it is very crucial for positive psychologists to be aware of overstretching and must maintain the field as a true scientific discipline.
- Positive psychologists must develop universally accepted classification of positive interventions which are evidence based and empirically proven to be effective.

- Most of the research carried out and concepts established till now have centered around individual's flourishing and not at collective level. The complex systems and networks of social relations and structures greatly influence the individual's well-being. Research needs to focus on a systemic approach and come out with evidence informed system based positive interventions.
- Positive psychology focuses on our attitude towards life as responsible for our health and happiness, ignoring the importance of the environment and circumstances which are also equally important in individual's health and wellbeing.

Hence, it is important that the future research focus on these pertinent questions and criticism in order to establish itself as an evidence based field of study.

15.9 LET US SUM UP

In this Unit you learned about the concept and meaning of positive intervention and how these can be used to promote growth and well-being of individuals. The theoretical frameworks related to positive psychology were described, based on which the various positive interventions such as gratitude, kindness, optimism, strength, savouring, etc. are developed. The elements of positive interventions like evidence-based, deliberate act or series of actions which are used to increase the positive well-being (away from zero) and flourishing in normal population were explained. You also learned about different activities for positive interventions in each of the positive psychological constructs. Finally, the criticism regarding positive interventions with some suggestions for future research were described.

15.10 KEYWORDS

Empathy	: is the ability to understand and share the other persons' feelings or perspective.
Flourishing	: is a process of growing healthy or being well, developing or growing successfully.
Gratitude	: is an attitude of being thankful or grateful of all the good things we have in our life.
Optimism	: is the tendency to be hopeful about the result of an activity or task, or overall ending to be positive and favourable.
Positive interventions	: are evidence-based, intentional activities meant to increase positive emotions, well-being, individual's growth, better creativity, healthy relationships, personal fulfilment, and other desired results.
Positive psychology	: is the scientific study of realising optimal human functioning.
Savouring	: refers to focusing attention and being aware about our experiences and lengthening its pleasurable effects.

Strengths

: refer to personal qualities of people which rejuvenates them, makes them feel like ‘the real you’ and enables them to achieve their optimal performance.

Promoting Growth and
Wellness: Positive
Interventions

15.11 ANSWERS TO SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

Answers to Self Assessment Questions 1

1. Martin Seligman, 2. C-Enjoyment, 3. Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, 4. A-persistence and passion, 5. Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timebound.

Answers to Self Assessment Questions 2

1. False, 2. C-egoism, 3.B-Right side, 4. True, 5. D-Positive circumstances

Answers to Self Assessment Questionsans 3

1. True, 2. C-shortening its pleasurable effects, 3. C-Both of the above, 4. False, 5. B-Kindness, 6. B-Hopeful, 7. A- Practical wisdom

15.12 UNIT END QUESTIONS

1. Define ‘positive interventions.’ Elucidate the features of positive interventions in detail.
2. Explain the mechanism of functioning of positive interventions.
3. What are different types of positive interventions? Describe in detail some suggested activities to carry out these interventions.
4. What is PERMA Model of well-being given by Martin Seligman? Explain the different components and some strategies to achieve for each component of the PERMA Model.

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UNIT 16 COUNSELING AND PSYCHOTHERAPY*

Structure

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- 16.3 Meaning of Counseling, Guidance and Psychotherapy
 - 16.3.1 Differentiating Counseling, Guidance and Psychotherapy
 - 16.3.2 Assessment Techniques
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 - 16.4.3 Basic Counseling Skills
- 16.5 Counseling in Different Settings and Populations
 - 16.5.1 School Counseling
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 - 16.5.4 Counseling Aged Population
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16.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After studying this Unit, you'll be able to,

- *Define counseling and psychotherapy;*
- *Differentiate between counseling, guidance and psychotherapy*
- *Discuss the process of counseling and psychotherapy;*
- *Describe the skills of counseling;*
- *Explain counseling in different settings and populations; and*
- *Know the importance of ethics in counseling and psychotherapy.*

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16.2 INTRODUCTION

By now you have learned and understood the concept of self in psychology which has implications for our good mental health and well-being. The self in its various dimensions related to thinking, personality, emotions and motivations etc. impacts our adjustment and functioning in daily life. Our dysfunctional attitude and relationship and ways of coping affect our mental health and psychological well-being. These may be reflected in our ordinary day-to-day problems related to anxiety, fear or stress, or may be emotional suffering of a severe nature. In the previous units, you learned about various ways to deal with these and achieve positive growth across lifespan. In this Unit, you will learn about how counseling and psychotherapy can help us in our mental health and well-being.

16.3 MEANING OF COUNSELING, GUIDANCE AND PSYCHOTHERAPY

The terms counseling and guidance are used frequently in our day-to-day interactions. You also must have heard the term psychotherapy, but probably have not much idea about its meaning. These are the different techniques which help us in dealing with various mental health related problems and conditions, and aim at promoting positive growth and development. Hence it is important to be clear about their meaning, nature and scope when we use the terms in a professional way.

Let us first distinguish between informal counseling and formal counseling. The former refers to counseling and guidance given to us by our parents, friends, teachers and the elderly whenever we are in any difficult situation or are depressed and frustrated, or want direction and suggestion. Here, based on their experience and expertise, they provide counseling and guidance to us. Whereas, formal counseling is provided by a person trained in counseling in a professional setting with an aim to enable the person to address his or her problems and difficulties. The goals of professional counseling and guidance is self direction, self realization, self dependent, ultimately leading to becoming a fully functioning person. You also must have heard about counseling when one qualifies in engineering or medical entrance test or any other professional course. This is different from the formal counseling offered in a professional setting to alleviate the sufferings and help the person to deal with the challenges of life.

Counseling is thus a helping relationship which enables the person to help himself or herself. The guidance counselor helps the person to understand his or her needs, interests, aptitudes, aspirations and goals on the one hand; and his/ her situation and role in the family, community and the society on the other hand; and then arrive at an appropriate decision, choice and action. Thus counseling and guidance helps us to make intelligent choices, decisions and plans. Counseling and guidance is not giving opinion, advice or providing instruction; nor it is influencing the other person's beliefs and attitude. It is a professional relationship where the counselor listens to the client actively and helps him/ her to understand and/ or improve his/ her behavior, character, values and life situation. It is a facilitative relationship that allows the client to explore possibilities and alternatives so that appropriate steps and decisions can be taken.

Counseling is both an art and science. It is both a process and an action. In order for the counseling to be effective, the process through which counseling takes place needs to be effective and fulfill certain conditions to create a proper therapeutic environment/ counseling climate so that the counseling goals can be reached. It is the ability to listen and respond in a way that will help others understand their situation, solve their own problems and realize their potentials. It is the art of helping others arrive at an appropriate and effective solution / decision by their own analysis of the situation and facts. This requires skillful use of counseling skills without an attempt to influence the values and beliefs of the client. At the same time, counseling needs to follow certain steps and techniques in a systematic manner and there needs to be clear defining of roles and responsibilities of both counselor and client. The counseling process needs to be structured with time limits and role limits being clearly specified so that both the counselor and client know about their roles and responsibilities in a counseling context.

Let us see some definitions of counseling.

Biswalo (1996) defines counseling as a process of helping an individual to accept and to use information so that he/ she can either solve his/ her present problem or cope with it successfully.

Webster's Dictionary defines counseling as "consultation, mutual interchange of opinions, deliberating together."

Gladding (1996) defines counseling as a relatively short term, interpersonal, theory based process of helping persons, who are basically psychologically healthy, to resolve developmental and situational problems. Thus counseling is different from psychotherapy and psychiatry that are concerned with severe mental disorders.

According to British Association for Counseling and Psychotherapy (2002), counseling takes place when a counselor sees a client in a private and confidential setting to explore a difficulty a client is having, distress that the client may be experiencing or perhaps the client's dissatisfaction with life or loss of a sense or direction and purpose.

American Counseling Association (ACA) and Division 17 of the American Psychology Association have given three features of counseling and guidance:

- Client's realistic acceptance of his/her own capacities, motivations and self-attitudes.
- Client's achievement of a reasonable harmony with his/her social, economic and vocational environment.
- Society's acceptance of individual differences and their implications for community, employment and marriage relations

Pepinsky and Pepinsky point out that "counseling relationship refers to the interaction which (i) occurs between two individuals called 'counselor' and 'client', (ii), takes place within a professional setting and (iii) is initiated and maintained as a means of facilitating changes in the behavior of the client. The counseling relationship develops from the interaction between two individuals, one a professionally trained worker and the other a person who seeks his services."

All these definitions point at a few main things with regard to counseling:

- Counseling is a profession.
- It aims at establishing a professional relationship with the client to enable him/ her solve the problems.
- It has definite structure and steps.
- Counseling is theory based.
- Counseling deals with educational, personal, social and vocational concerns.
- Counseling addresses issues of persons who are considered to function within the normal range.
- Counseling enables clients to learn new ways of thinking, feeling and behaving.
- Counseling follows ethical guidelines.

16.3.1 Differentiating Counseling, Guidance and Psychotherapy

We often use the terms counseling, guidance and psychotherapy interchangeably. However, there are differences among these terms when we are concerned about the professional meaning of the terms. Let us first see the difference between counseling and guidance. Guidance is a term used to denote the process of helping an individual to gain self understanding and self direction (self decision making) so that he/ she can adjust maximally at home, schools or community environment (Biswalo, 1996). Guidance provides information, suggestion and direction for future action. Guidance can be described as pre- problem, i.e., before the problem occurs. However, counseling is post – problem, i.e., a problem has already occurred and counseling is provided to find a solution to the problem. Though information giving is also there in counseling, however, the major focus is on bringing about changes in personality and behavior with an aim to solve the problem. Thus counseling is more remedial in nature with a goal to help the person deal with the conflicts and problems in life. The functions of guidance and counseling can be described as below in Fig. 16.1.

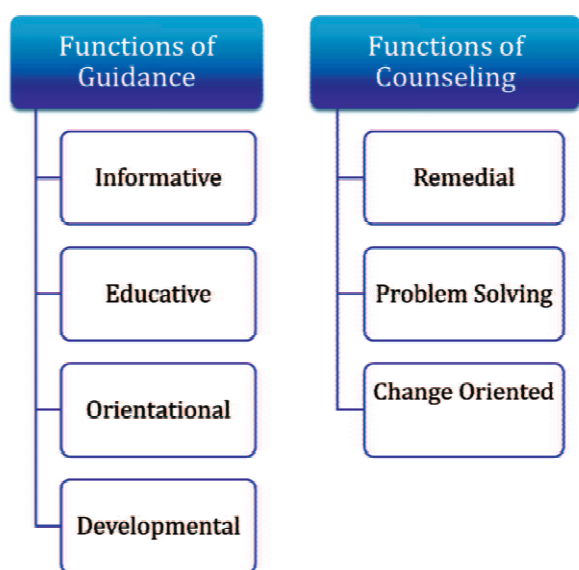


Fig. 16.1: Functions of Guidance and Counseling

Counseling also differs from psychotherapy. Counseling is concerned with the normal day to day issues and problems of living. It is an important service which caters to our daily living hassles and anxieties that are not of severe nature; nevertheless they create dissatisfaction, disharmony, and hamper the quality of our life.

On the other hand, psychotherapy deals with problems of severe nature that may have serious implications for living an effective balanced life. Psychotherapy thus involves long term relationship with the client and can be provided in both inpatient and outpatient settings. However, counseling is provided only in outpatient setting as it concerns mild problems of daily living. Thus psychotherapy is related more to clinical setting. Psychotherapy focuses on the past and aims at bringing about insight. On the other hand, counseling focuses more on the present and aims at bringing about change in the behavior and personality of the client.

We can see a few definitions of psychotherapy below.

Strupp (1986) defines psychotherapy as the systematic use of a human relationship for therapeutic purposes of alleviating emotional distress by effecting enduring changes in a client's thinking, feelings, and behavior.

Wolberg (1988) defines psychotherapy as a form of treatment for problems of an emotional nature in which a trained person deliberately establishes a professional relationship with a client with the object of(i) removing, modifying or retarding existing symptoms; (ii) mediating disturbed patterns of behavior; and (iii) promoting positive personality growth and development.

Thus psychotherapy, like counseling involves a professional relationship between the therapist/ clinical psychologist and the client. However, it deals with psychological problems of a more serious nature and is long-term. It uses different therapeutic techniques based on psychological theories for treatment of mental disorders, behavioural problems, maladjustments, alleviating distress and promoting positive growth.

16.3.2 Assessment Techniques

Counselor and psychotherapists use different assessment techniques as part of the counseling/ therapeutic interview. Important methods of assessment include interview, observation, and psychological tests. These provide relevant information to be used in different stages of counseling and contribute to the effective outcome of counseling and psychotherapy.

- **Interview**

Interview is one of the most commonly used assessment tool. Counselors use interview method to help gather information about clients and clarify results of other assessments.

After establishing rapport, the counselor engages in what is called intake interview or history taking in which detailed history of the client both in the past and the present is collected. In addition to the background data of the client, the appearance and behavior of the client are also noted. History taking is the first important step to understand and analyze the problem. Data regarding different aspects of the client's life is collected

such as information about the family, client's educational history, medical history, work experience, social relationships, client's behavior, attitudes, values, coping strategies and strengths etc. These help in understanding the client in a comprehensive manner which in turn can facilitate explaining the psychological issues/problems in client's life and deciding on appropriate interventions.

The counselor/therapist should keep note of the following aspects during the interview:

- Verbal. What is the client saying?
- Para-verbal. How is the client saying it? What is the tone, pace, words used, volume etc.
- Non-verbal. What are the postures and gestures of the client? What do they convey?
- Situation. Where is the interview conducted and for what purpose?

Interview can be structured, i.e., carefully planned and systematic which follows pre-determined steps and questions; whereas unstructured interview allows for flexibility, that is, the client can have more freedom in the topic and direction of the interview. Here, open questions are used more.

- **Observation**

The counselor/therapist must be a keen observer who can get important information from observing the non-verbal behavior of the client. The behaviours to be observed are,

- Appearance: is the client neatly dressed or clumsy; calm or composed?
- Posture: How does the client sit or stand?
- Eye contact: Does the client maintain eye contact?
- Behavior/ Manner: Is the client agitated, restless, anxious etc.?
- Body language: Do the gestures of the client convey anything?

The non-verbal cues are significant indicators of the affective or feeling aspects of the client. Behavioral observations may be used clinically to add to interview information or to assess results of treatment.

There are different types of observation method: (a) Naturalistic Observation, where behavior is observed in its natural setting; (b) Participant Observation, where the observer is a participant, thus allowing an insider's view of the situation; (c) Structured Observation, which controls the influence of external factors that may affect the behavior; and (d) Unstructured Observation, which allows a broad spectrum of behavior to be observed. All these techniques provide inputs for the effectiveness of counseling and therapy sessions.

- **Psychological Tests**

Psychological tests are objective and standardized measure of a sample of behavior. Standardization is the most important term here, which

means the test is characterized by a uniform procedure of administration, scoring and interpretation. A good psychological test must be both reliable, i.e., give consistent results over time, across raters etc.; and valid, i.e., measure what it intends to measure. It should also have proper norms. Different types of psychological tests are used to measure aptitude, attitude, interest, achievement, personality and intelligence. These provide useful information for counseling related to various aspects or dimensions of the individual. These tests may be verbal, non-verbal or performance tests; and can be administered individually and/or in the group.

Self Assessment Questions 1

1. Define counseling.
2. What are the functions of guidance and counseling?
3. Mention the important factors which the counselor need to take note of during a counseling interview?
4. What are the types of observation method?
5. What do psychological tests measure?

16.4 PROCESS OF COUNSELING AND PSYCHOTHERAPY

Counseling, being a profession, follows certain systematic steps to reach the counseling goals. The ultimate aim of the counseling is the well-being of the client. Towards this end, it is very important to create a therapeutic atmosphere in the counseling situation which will help create trust and confidence in the client, and encourage him/ her to explore things from different perspectives.

Counseling is a process having a beginning, middle and end. It begins with establishing a relationship with the client and ends with terminating this relationship and following up to find out the effectiveness of counseling provided.

The counseling process can be described in five broad steps/ stages which are cyclical in nature. The steps are as follows:

- Establishing rapport
- Understanding and Assessing the problem
- Goal setting
- Counseling Intervention Strategies
- Termination and Follow up

Rapport establishment. The first step in the counseling process is establishing rapport or relationship with the client. Since counseling is a helping relationship,

the client needs to have trust and confidence in the counselor in the first place. To build this up, forming a proper rapport or relationship with the client is the crucial first step, which will enable the client to feel at ease and open up. The success of rapport establishment determines the success of other counseling steps and achievement of counseling goals.

The counseling relationship is a special relationship in that it is not a social relationship, but a professional relationship in which the client and counselor together progress towards achieving counseling goals. This relationship is based on trust, empathy, genuineness, warmth, mutual understanding and confidentiality. This relationship building is a continuous process; however, this first step is important in laying the foundation for trust and confidence, and the hope for a solution. The client is also informed about the structure, roles and responsibilities of both the counselor and the client.

Assessment of the Problem. Once the relationship building is done, the next important step is to understand and assess the problem. Different counseling skills are required here to identify and understand the problem. The problem stated by the client may or may not be the real one, sometimes, the problem might be something else. As the client interacts with the counselor and opens up revealing his or her motives, intentions, expectations, belief systems, insecurities, ambitions and perceptions; the understanding about the problem becomes more clear. What appears to be the problem to the client initially may not be the actual problem. The counselor uses different techniques of assessment such as observation, initial interview, case history and use of psychological tests to help in the assessment of the problem.

Goal setting. Once the problem is clearly understood, the next step is to decide on the goals to tackle the problem. It should always be remembered that goals are set mutually. As Galileo said, “You cannot teach a man anything, you can just help him to find it within himself.” Counselors should establish goals for counseling in agreement with the client, then only the goals can be achieved. The client and counselor need to agree upon setting of the goals. Goals can be short term as well as long term goals. Goal setting serves various functions as described by Cormier and Hackney (1987) as follows:

- **Motivational function.** When clients are encouraged to specify the desired changes, they feel motivated to achieve those outcomes.
- **Educational function.** Clients begin to mentally rehearse new responses they can make to the situation once they decide upon the changes.
- **Evaluation function.** Goal setting helps to select appropriate strategies to achieve those goals. It also facilitates assessing the progress of the clients.
- **Clarification.** Goal setting helps clarify the main concerns and issues that need attention.

Intervention Strategies. The next step after setting of goals is to select the counseling techniques and strategies to be used for achieving those goals. Depending on the client’s nature and personality, and the feasibility, the strategies

are decided. Here, it may be noted that if the strategies do not work out well, then both counselor and client go back to the previous steps and rework. It may be that the problem was not clearly understood or the goals were not properly set; so it is a cyclical process.

Termination and Follow Up. This is the last step of the counseling process which has its own significance. Counseling, being a relationship, has to be ended in an appropriate and effective manner. The counselor needs to take care different issues such as, preparing the client for the termination beforehand; making the process of termination a gradual and smooth one, not an abrupt one; dealing with issue of client dependence on the counselor; overcoming resistance to termination; attending to any unresolved issues; indicating a follow up plan; and finally instilling confidence in the client that the client can handle the things on his/ her own now.

Thus broadly we can describe the counseling process in terms of three stages such as

- Developing the counseling relationship
- Working in this relationship
- Terminating the counseling relationship

Psychotherapy also can be described in terms of these three broad phases – beginning, middle and terminal phases, i.e., establishing a working relationship conducive to jointly work towards a common goal; working in this relationship to assess problems, and employ interventions to achieve goals and solutions; and terminating the relationship, signifying the attainment of goals decided upon and readiness of the client to move on independently.

Thus both counseling and psychotherapy process move through the stages described above. The main objective of the process of counseling and psychotherapy is to know and understand the main issues/problems of the client, and to employ different strategies and techniques to bring about changes in maladaptive thoughts and behavior, and promote positive growth and development. The only difference is that counseling addresses mild day-to-day problems of psychological nature such as anxiety, sadness, conflict and hurt feelings; whereas psychotherapy deals with problems of severe nature. Hence, psychotherapy is long-term and uses more number of sessions. Throughout this process, the counselor/ therapist use various counseling skills about which you will learn in the following sections.

16.4.1 Physical Setting of Counseling/Psychotherapy

The relationship between the client and counselor is marked by confidentiality. It is a situation where the client comes with his/her problems and difficulties and expects to learn how to deal with them. Hence the counselor/therapist should inspire trust and confidence in the client. The physical setting in which counseling or psychotherapy is conducted should make the client feel welcome and relaxed to be able to share things. It should exude warmth and comfort. It should be

properly lighted with adequate ventilation. The room should be neatly arranged without any clutter. The place should also ensure confidentiality.

Further, the counselor needs to exhibit attending behavior to the client, which can be characterized as below.

S – sit squarely, i.e., face the client straight without any barrier in between

O – adopt an open posture

L – lean towards the client slightly; it indicates interest in the client

E – eye contact with the client should be proper

R – relaxing manner needs to be exhibited by the counselor/therapist

16.4.2 Core Conditions of Counseling/Psychotherapy

There are certain main or core conditions which are important for creating the therapeutic climate which will help in client sharing and working towards changes or solutions. In the absence of this therapeutic atmosphere, counseling or psychotherapy will not be effective. These core conditions are trust, acceptance, genuineness, unconditional positive regard and empathy. Let us discuss about these in detail.

- (i) **Trust:** The counselor/therapist aims at creating a trusting and safe environment for the client so that the latter feels assured enough to share his/her thoughts and feelings. The client is in a state of anxiety and disturbed feelings, with a lack of confidence and trust. The foremost requirement in a counseling relationship is to build up trust in the client for the counselor and the counseling situation. This should be established in the first session itself. When clients perceive the counselor as trustworthy, they will take greater emotional risks of expressing their inner anxieties, worries, and fears. This increases the chance of therapy success.
- (ii) **Acceptance:** The client has come to the counseling/therapy situation feeling rejected, devalued and abandoned of his/ her perceptions, feelings and values. Counselor conveys to the client a sense of acceptance irrespective of the client's views, behaviours and actions. The client is accepted as he/ she is, without any judgement or criticism. This conveys respect for the client as an individual. Trust and acceptance are the starting points in any counseling relationship.
- (iii) **Unconditional positive regard:** The counselor/therapist has positive regard or respect for the client which should not be based on any condition. The client is accepted and respected for what he/ she is. There are no conditions put on the relationship. The counselor accepts the client in total. Unconditional positive regard communicates caring, worth and dignity to the client (Rogers, 1957). It is an attitude of valuing the client as a unique and worthwhile person (Cormier & Hackney, 1995). Being respected for without any conditions or judgements attached frees the individual and opens up possibilities of change within the individual.

- (iv) **Genuineness:** It refers to being genuine or real about who we are. The counselor/therapist comes across to the client as being a person who is genuinely interested in the client's welfare. He/ she does not put up a mask or a façade. This is crucial to create trust in the relationship. The counselor also needs to be congruent with his/ her feelings; expressing his/ her feelings and attitudes at the moment. There is consistency in the counselor's words, actions and feelings. Such transparency also encourages the client to get in touch with his/ her own real feelings.
- (v) **Empathy:** The counselor/therapist is able to show empathy towards the client by experiencing the client's world as he/she experiences it. It communicates a real understanding of the client's situation, thus fostering trust in the client.

The above are the key elements of a counseling relationship which leads to an effective counseling/therapeutic environment. According to Rogers (1957), unconditional positive regard, genuineness, congruence and empathy are the necessary and sufficient conditions for all good interpersonal relations and for all therapeutic change.

In addition, there are also certain basic counseling skills required for effectiveness of the therapy and positive outcome of counseling and therapy intervention.

16.4.3 Basic Counseling Skills

The success of the entire counseling process depends on the use of counseling skills by the counselor/therapist. Right from the beginning of building up rapport with the client till the termination of the counseling, the counselor/psychotherapist needs to use various counseling skills in an effective manner.

The basic counseling skills which are required during counseling and psychotherapy are described below.

- (i) **Attending skill:** Attending skills are important through the entire process of counseling; however, more so in the initial stages of counseling to create trust and acceptance. Attending skills also help in conveying genuineness and empathy. Attending means focusing on the client and concentrating on what he/ she is telling. Attentiveness can be both verbal and non verbal. Verbal attentiveness is conveyed through such phrases and prompts as, 'yes', 'go on', 'uh..mm' etc. Non-verbal attentiveness is conveyed through the counselor's postures and gestures. The body language of the counselor should communicate genuine interest in the client. As shown in the Figure 16.2 below, non-verbal component contributes more to communication (Mehrabian, 1971) – only 7% of our communication is verbal, whereas 58% is gestures and 35% is voice tone.

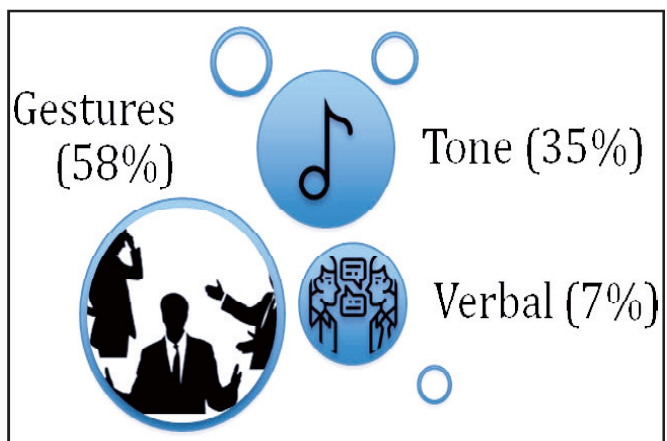


Fig.16.2: Aspects of Communication

- (ii) **Active listening:** Listening is much more than simply hearing and active listening means listening with real understanding and paying attention not only to the words but also to the client's thoughts, behaviour and feelings. The counselor is not distracted and does not judge what the client is saying. This helps the client to feel understood and validated. This also reflects the client's state of mind accurately.

Active listening or attentive listening is required through the entire process of counseling. It enables the counselor to respond back to the client in a way which makes communication between the client and counselor more open and effective. There are certain barriers to communication which the counselor needs to keep in mind.

Barriers to communication:

- Giving advice
- Offering solutions
- Preaching
- Judging or criticizing
- Praising and agreeing
- Reassuring
- Analyzing

- (iii) **Paraphrasing and Reflection:** The counselor needs to listen to the client and respond appropriately. While responding, the counselor can focus on the content as well as the feeling of the client, that is, what the client says and how does he/ she feel. The skill to respond accurately to client's thoughts and feelings enables the counselor to convey empathy. Paraphrasing focuses on the cognitive component of the client's message, while reflection focuses on the affective component of the client's message. It is not simply repeating back the client's words. On the other hand, the counselor rephrases the client's thoughts and feelings in a fresh way. This gives feedback to the client that the counselor is really trying to understand him/ her. This also helps the client to see things in a more focused way.

- (iv) **Self disclosure:** It refers to revealing things about oneself that are related to the context of the counseling. Self disclosure helps the counselor come across as being genuine. It also enables the client to see things in a less severe way, that is, there are others with similar experience or situation. However, a bit of caution needs to be exercised with regard to the extent to which the counselor should self disclose. It should not be too much as it may impact the professional relationship negatively.

- (v) **Immediacy:** The skill of immediacy helps the client and counselor become aware of the situation in counseling at the present moment. At times during the counseling process, there might be a feeling of no progress, or the client becoming indifferent etc.; in such situation, the counselor uses immediacy to focus on the feelings experienced by the client and the counselor at the present moment. It conveys genuineness and tries to refocus on the goals of counseling.

(vi) **Confrontation:** The counselor sometimes need to confront the client regarding his/ her potentials, defenses, discrepancies or distortions in his/ her behavior. This will act as a challenge to the client encouraging him/ her to see things from a different angle.

(vii) **Questioning:** The counselor uses open-ended questions and close-ended questions during the counseling interview. Open-ended questions are those which allow the client to elaborate and expand the things. Whereas close-ended questions elicit single-word responses. Use of more open-ended questions helps the client to open up and express his/ her thoughts and feelings in an elaborate way. The counselor needs to make an appropriate use of open-ended and close-ended questions depending on the context and requirement of the counseling situation.

Besides the above counseling skills, the success of any counseling/therapeutic relationship between the client and counselor/therapist depends on two main things:

- **Personal qualities of the counselor/therapist:** They should have positive mental health, open-mindedness, genuine concern for fellow human beings, caring and understanding attitude, sensitivity and critical thinking. Thus self-awareness, awareness about others and understanding others are important personal qualities that helps one to become an effective counselor/therapist. They need to be clear about their attitudes, motives, beliefs and values. A helping attitude with sensitivity and empathy makes for the base of an effective counselor/therapist. They should also have a sense of warmth and genuineness in helping others.
- **Professional qualities of the counselor/therapist:** Counseling is a profession and the counselor needs to acquire the professional qualities by undergoing proper education and training, learning the skills and competencies, and adhering to the counseling code of ethics. Proper academic training in counseling theory and skills is essential to be called as a counselor. Ethical guidelines need also to be followed to ensure a professional conduct during the process of counseling.

Both personal and professional qualities of counselors/therapists are important in creating a facilitating relationship and bringing about therapeutical change in the client.

Apart from counsellor's personal and professional qualities, client's factors/variables such as attitude and motivation for change, expectation of improvement due to the therapy/counselling, etc. play a role in the counselling effectiveness.

Self Assessment Questions 2

1. Why is goal setting important in counseling?
2. How does establishing rapport in counseling help?
3. Explain SOLER technique.

4. What are the personal qualities required of a counselor?
5. Why does counselor need to have unconditional positive regard for the client?
6. What is attending skill?
7. Distinguish between open ended and close ended questions.

16.5 COUNSELING IN DIFFERENT SETTINGS AND POPULATIONS

Counseling and guidance personnel has significant role to play in varied settings ranging from educational set up to the workplace. The counselor serves a varied group of clientele with diverse needs. The role of counselor is always geared up to meet the needs of the client and enable them to achieve their potential and goals. Counseling mainly aims at helping the client understand himself/ herself, explore and weigh the options, and decide the course of action. The goal of counseling mainly is to enable the client to overcome the immediate problem and also to equip them to meet future issues and problems. In this regard, counseling aims at three things: self-awareness of the client, understanding the strengths and limitations, and finally bringing change in the behavior and personality of the client.

The role of counselor by and large remains the same for all types of counseling situations. However, there is a little difference in the role of the counselor in vocational counseling and personal counseling. In the former – educational and vocational counseling, the counselor is mainly concerned with factual information. The major task here is collection, organization and dissemination of career related information. The counselor helps the client in becoming aware of one's self and then making a proper decision regarding educational and vocational choices. However, in counseling clients with emotional and behavioral problems, the counselor aims at enabling the client to express his/ her feelings, understand the fears and anxieties, resources and weaknesses; and make intelligent choices, plans and decisions. Thus the overall emphasis of educational and vocational counseling is on the cognitive aspect whereas counseling related to personal issues put emphasis on affective aspect.

The different settings in which counseling and guidance personnel can serve are described below.

16.5.1 Counseling in Schools

Counseling rendered in schools is called educational and vocational counseling. Counselors in schools play an important role in guiding our future generation in educational and vocational choice. As the child grows, he/ she needs to be aware of his/ her interests, strengths, limitations and values so that he/ she can be aware of himself/ herself and learn to take proper decisions and make good choices in life. The school counseling and guidance personnel works in collaboration and partnership with the school teachers, authorities, parents, educators, and community members to help the students adjust successfully to the school situation, achieve well and make a smooth transition to higher education and work field.

The counselor in the school plays a varied role ranging from counselor to consultant, and coordinator. He/ she acts as an agent of orientation, assessment and prevention. The counselor provides orientation to the students to facilitate his/ her life in the school. As an agent of assessment, the counselor assesses the students with regard to their abilities, skills, interests, attitude and aptitude so that proper guidance can be given for the future path. The counselor also has an important role to play in recognizing early warning signs, preventing school violence and promoting a safe school. The school mental health practices can be strengthened with the contribution of the school counseling and guidance personnel.

The role of a school counselor at the elementary school stage is as follows.

- Orienting the child with regard to the goals of the school
- Finding out the early warning signs of future problems like learning difficulties, acting out behaviours like fights, impulsiveness, restlessness, obstinacy, moodiness, bullying, depression etc.

The role of the counselor at the secondary and higher secondary stage is as follows.

- Orienting the students with regard to the programs, policies and counseling activities of the school
- Assessment of the students
- Helping students' academic achievement
- Providing guidance and counseling at high school and higher secondary stage
- Counseling students about their personal development
- Prepare the students' for their work life later on

16.5.2 Counseling Adolescents

Adolescence is a crucial phase in the growing stage of our children. It is commonly known as a transitional period between childhood and adulthood. It has such an important influence on the personal, social and emotional growth and development of the individual that counseling of adolescents has received special attention.

Adolescents are neither children nor adults. They are in a phase of transition from a carefree childhood to an independent responsible adulthood. They move from being part of a family group to being a part of the peer group and then standing on their own. In the process, they face uncertainties, insecurities and anxieties about their ownself, their relation to others, their future and their role in the society. Counselor provides the much needed counseling and guidance to the adolescents at this crucial juncture of their life.

Adolescents experience growth spurt and the associated biological and physiological changes. This also has an effect on their emotional and social life. Adolescents continually explore, challenge and change their perception and thinking about the way they view their world. The role of counselor is to understand this phase of life: the adolescents' aspirations and inhibitions; their achievements

and insecurities; and their sense of independence and need for affiliation also. A few points regarding adolescent counseling are as follows:

- Helping adolescents to become aware of themselves
- Enabling them to understand and deal with peer pressure
- Providing guidance about risk taking behavior
- Counseling them about issues of friendship and sexuality
- Helping them to understand their goals and aspirations

16.5.3 Counseling in Family

The role of counselors in the context of family is becoming much more crucial with increase in challenges related to socio-cultural changes in family structure and functioning, and advances in communication and technology. Family values and relationships have undergone changes which has an impact on each of the family members. Family is the main instrument in the socialization of the child. It plays an important role in the growth and development of the individual. It shapes the attitudes and belief system of its members.

As an individual has a life span, similarly a family has a life cycle starting from courtship and marriage to empty nest and old age when children leave home and the couple is again on their own. Throughout this life cycle, demands are placed on the family by its' members, tensions arise, expectations come up, arguments made, justifications given and rebellions are made. At the same time care, support, advice, guidance and encouragement are also given to its' members by the family. A dynamic family system evolves with the changing times and contributes to the achievement and success of the members.

The role of the counselor is to help the members understand the family as a system. The counselor addresses the issues of family tension, guilt, blame and scapegoating, faulty communication, maladjustment and family expectations. The counselor helps the members conceptualize and experience their problems from a broader perspective. This creates open and clear interaction among family members, overcome family crisis and responding to the challenges effectively. The goal of the counselor is to change the family system to make it better and more effective.

16.5.4 Counseling Aged Population

With increase in health care facilities and average life expectancy, the population of aged is increasing. As per Census of India (2011), the total population of elderly aged 60+ is nearly 104million, which is 8.6% of the total population of India, and is predicted to become 20% of the total population in India by 2050.

Further, the disintegrating of traditional joint family system has led to the aged people either living alone or put into the old age homes/institutions. Old age is characterized by so many changes related to developmental aspects like decrease in physical abilities, reduced social relationships, reduced income, more leisure time, and acquiring new roles of being grandparents. The aged are also faced with discrimination and prejudiced attitudes such as they are absent-minded, forgetful, mad people, helpless etc.

Thus physical decline, social decline and negative psychological impact of the old age stage may combine to affect their mental health and well-being. Hence counseling for the aged population is important to ensure a good healthy life for them.

Counseling for the aged needs to focus on two fronts:

- Provide counseling to the elderly to integrate their life experiences and give a meaning to it. In addition to promoting active living where the elderly/aged can engage in activities to increase their physical, cognitive and social functioning, they also need to connect to the spiritual dimension of human existence (Gladding & Batra, 2018, p. 82). There is a need to go beyond or transcend their lived experiences and derive meaning from it.
- Modifying the attitudes of people within the systems in which the aged live, e.g., family, neighbourhood, community etc. (Sinick, 1980). This will help change the negative attitude of people towards the aged which in turn will help improve their well-being.

16.5.5 Counseling for Substance Use and Behavioural Addiction

Substance use is at a physiological level which involves use of alcohol, smoking and other drugs. Whereas behavioral addiction refers to 'process addictions' which includes addictions to such things as Internet use, shopping, gambling, video gaming, sex, work etc. Key features of addiction are,

- Craving or excessive use of the substance or the thing, e.g., internet.
- Compulsiveness, that is the person is not able to control, reduce or stop the behavior
- The person suffers from withdrawal symptoms if the substance or behavior is stopped
- The person keeps engaging in the behavior despite continued negative or poor consequences

Thus there is over use, compulsive use, tolerance for the substance and inability to control the behavior despite harmful impact of it on self and others around.

Counseling and psychotherapy play an important role in the treatment of substance use and behavioural addiction. These focus on identifying the 'risk factors', i.e., the factors which increase the risk of the addiction, and the 'protective factors' that protect the person from using the substance or engaging in the behavioural addiction. Counseling interventions such as assertiveness training, psychoeducation, motivational interviewing, motivation enhancement therapy, solution focused therapy etc. have been found to be quite effective in dealing with substance use and behavior addiction.

Self Assessment Questions 3

1. Describe the role of counselor in family counseling?
2. What are the functions of a counselor at the secondary and higher secondary stage of counseling?
3. What are the key features of substance use and behavioural addiction?

16.6 ROLE OF CULTURE IN COUNSELING/ PSYCHOTHERAPY

Cultures have a significant influence on our life. We are surrounded by our culture everywhere and culture influences each and everything we do and think. Culture impacts our perceptions, thoughts, feelings and actions. Therefore, we need to be aware of the influence of our culture on our behavior.

Helping professions such as counseling need to consider the role of culture on human beings so that they can provide better service to their clients. Cultures have been in existence since long and influencing the personality and development of human beings in varied ways. Multiculturalism essentially means respect for diversity. It may be noted here that all guidance and counseling situation can be termed multicultural as clients from various backgrounds and cultures come for counseling.

Let us see the meaning of multiculturalism here. Most often, we think multicultural means belonging to different races and ethnicity. However, multicultural should also include gender, age, social class, religion, language etc. The clients by virtue of belonging to a particular gender, age or socio-economic status and class, bring their unique personal history and culture into the guidance and counseling situation. A counselor, sensitive to multicultural factors, needs to take cognizance of these things. For example, you learned earlier about the physical setting in counseling situation, and it was mentioned that the counselor should face the client straight and should have proper eye contact. However, the space needs and space perceptions may vary depending on the client's and counselor's gender, their class or status etc. Similarly in some families, it may not be appropriate for a child to look straight in the eyes of the adult. So if the client is a child coming from such a family, he/ she may not maintain proper eye contact.

Hence, the role of counselor/therapist becomes more crucial from a multicultural perspective. Every counselor should be aware of the multiculturalism in counseling. A trained counselor/psychotherapist should be aware of his/ her own cultural perceptions, stereotypes and beliefs, and how these color his/ her thoughts and behavior. They should also respect the client's cultural beliefs and interactions. Being sensitive to the cultural issues, helping the clients to see things from alternate perspectives, recognizing the importance to have open dialogue about issues related to culture can maintain the respect and dignity of the client and make the counseling process more effective.

16.7 ETHICS IN COUNSELING/PSYCHOTHERAPY

Counseling as a profession follows certain ethical guidelines. Ethics helps maintain professionalism and ensures the safety and benefit of the clients. Ethics refers to the professional values, principles and standards that govern the relationship between the client and the counselor/therapist. It outlines the professional responsibility of the counselor or therapist. Ethical standards serve the following purpose:

- Promotes the stability and dignity of the profession

- Provides guidelines in case of disputes and malpractices
- Ensures competent professional behavior
- Protects the client from any harm arising out of counseling
- Protects the interests of both the client and the counselor
- Promotes the welfare and wellbeing of the client

Following are some ethical guidelines involved in counseling and psychotherapy:

- (i) Confidentiality: The client needs to be ensured of the confidentiality of whatever the client expresses during the counseling process. Remember the first step of the Counseling process – rapport establishment. An important task of counselor in this stage is to talk about confidentiality to the client. Being assured of confidentiality helps the client build trust on the counselor and encourages the client to share his/ her troubled thoughts and feelings, worries and anxieties. However, there are *limits to confidentiality*. It refers to situations where the counselor can disclose the information shared by the client. In cases of threat to the life of the client or the counselor or any other person, and in cases of requirement by the law, the counselor can breach this confidentiality.
- (ii) Informed Consent: The client needs to be informed about the fees, counseling process, therapy requirements and procedure, tasks or assignments to be done by the client, involvement of any other person such as family members, parents, school etc. so that the client provides her/his consent by being fully aware about it.
- (iii) Beneficence: It refers to acting in the interest of the client for his/ her welfare. Beneficence refers to the counselor's responsibility to do good for the client.
- (iv) Non-maleficence: Non maleficence is the concept of not causing any harm to the client. It includes avoiding sexual, financial and emotional or any other form of client exploitation; avoiding incompetence or malpractice; not providing services when unfit to do so due to illness, personal circumstances or intoxication. The counselor/therapist has the responsibility to avoid causing any type of harm to the client.

Counseling deals with human beings who are in distress and problem and come or referred to the counselor for help, support and guidance. Hence counselors have a high ethical responsibility to provide counseling and/or therapy in a very professional manner, maintaining the trust and protection of the client, and delivering in an effective way for the betterment of the client.

16.8 COUNSELING IN CHANGING INDIA

Counseling in India is of ancient origin. Lord Krishna is considered as the greatest counselor who counseled the distressed Arjuna during the Mahabharata war. The Bhagawad Gita embodies the finest principles of counseling for all time to come. Indian tradition has always considered the parents and teachers as counselor. They are held in high esteem having the capability to provide counseling to the young generation.

However, with globalization and economic changes, the youth looks to alternative sources for getting information and guidance, e.g., the internet. Rapid development in information and communication technology, urbanization and industrialization have placed new and unique demands on the individuals. The new age Indian today is confused, unsure, lacks direction and decisiveness. At the same time, he/ she has vision, will power, belief in himself/ herself, and the desire to do something.

In such a scenario, the role of counselor has become very crucial. Society is changing; along with this, attitudes, aspirations and values of the individuals are also changing. For example, attitudes of the society towards women climbing up the ladder of work hierarchy and getting success is becoming comfortable. The counselor has to rise to the occasion in this changing India and sustain the confidence of the individuals in the counseling service.

Self Assessment Questions 4

1. What do you mean by multicultural issues in counseling?
2. What is the importance of confidentiality in counseling?

16.9 LET US SUM UP

In this Unit you learned about the meaning of counseling and differentiated it from guidance and psychotherapy. The five main steps/ stages in the counseling process were described. You also learned about how should be the physical setting of a counseling situation and the skills which an effective counselor/therapist should possess. The role of counselors in various settings and populations was described. Further, the unit highlighted the importance of being sensitive to multicultural issues in counseling and psychotherapy. Finally, the ethical standards in counseling and psychotherapy were described.

16.10 KEY WORDS

Counseling	: Counseling is more remedial in nature with a goal to help the person deal with the conflicts and problems in life.
Guidance	: Guidance provides information, suggestion and direction for future action.
Psychotherapy	: Psychotherapy deals with problems of severe nature that may have serious implications for living an effective balanced life.
Unconditional Positive Regard	: Refers to accepting and respecting the client for what he/ she is without putting any conditions on the relationship.
Immediacy	: The skill of immediacy helps the client and counselor become aware of the situation in counseling at the present moment.

- Beneficence** : It refers to acting in the interest of the client for his/her welfare.
- Non-maleficence** : Non maleficence is the concept of not causing any harm to the client.

16.11 ANSWERS TO SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

Self Assessment Questions 1

1. According to Pepinsky and Pepinsky counseling is “a relationship which refers to the interaction that (i) occurs between two individuals called ‘counselor’ and ‘client’, (ii), takes place within a professional setting and (iii) is initiated and maintained as a means of facilitating changes in the behavior of the client. The counseling relationship develops from the interaction between two individuals, one a professionally trained worker and the other a person who seeks his services.”
2. Functions of Guidance are Informative, Educative, Orientational and Developmental; whereas the functions of counseling are Remedial, Problem Solving and Change oriented.
3. The counselor should keep note of the following aspects during the interview:
Verbal. What is the client saying?
Para-verbal. How is the client saying it? What is the tone, pace, words used, volume etc.
Non-verbal. What are the postures and gestures of the client? What do they convey?
Situation. Where is the interview conducted and for what purpose?
4. The types of observation method are naturalistic, participant, structured and unstructured observation methods.
5. Psychological tests measure aptitude, attitude, interest, achievement, personality and intelligence.

Self Assessment Questions 2

1. Goal setting is important in counseling as it serves the following functions: motivational, educational, evaluation and clarification.
2. Establishing rapport in counseling helps the client to build up trust and confidence in the counselor.
3. SOLER stands for Sit squarely, Open posture, Leaning forward, Eye contact and Relaxing manner.
4. The personal qualities required of a counselor include open mindedness, genuineness, caring, sensitivity and critical thinking.
5. The counselor needs to have unconditional positive regard for the client as it conveys caring, worth and dignity to the client.

6. Attending skill is paying attention to both verbal and non-verbal aspects of the communication of the client.
7. Open-ended questions are those which allow the client to elaborate and expand the things. Whereas, close-ended questions elicit single-word responses.

Self Assessment Questions 3

1. The counselor addresses the issues of family tension, guilt, blame and scapegoating, faulty communication, maladjustment and family expectations. The role of the counselor is to help the members understand the family as a system to make it better and more effective.
2. The functions of the counselor at the secondary and higher secondary stage is as follows:
 - Orienting the students with regard to the programs, policies and counseling activities of the school
 - Assessment of the students
 - Helping students' academic achievement
 - Providing guidance and counseling high school and higher secondary stage
 - Counseling students about their personal development
 - Prepare the students' for their work life later on
3. The key features of substance use and behavioural addiction include craving, compulsive use, tolerance for the substance and inability to control the behavior despite harmful impact of it on self and others around.

Self Assessment Questions 4

1. Multicultural issues in counseling refer to not only race and ethnicity, but also age, gender, social class and status etc.
2. Confidentiality in counseling helps the client to have trust on the counselor and encourages the client to share his/ her troubled thoughts and feelings, worries and anxieties.

16.12 UNIT END QUESTIONS

1. Counseling is both an art and science. Explain.
2. Describe the various steps in the counseling process.
3. Explain the importance of the core conditions of counseling.
4. Describe the role of counselors in adolescent counseling.
5. Why is multicultural counseling crucial?
6. Counseling has become the need of the hour in the changing Indian society. Justify.

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Fig 16.2:

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16.14 SUGGESTED READINGS

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The collage features several IGNOU documents and posters. At the top left, a notice titled 'IGNOU launches NEW PROG.' mentions the 'CERTIFICATE IN SPANISH LANGUAGE & CULTURE (CSLC) PROGRAMME' and the 'SCHOOL OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES'. Below this, a 'DIGI NEWS' notice from 18th Dec 2018 states 'Re-Scheduled Examination of Dec. 2018' and lists 'Examinations Cancelled and re-scheduled' with a table for course codes, original schedules, and re-scheduled exams. Another 'DIGI NEWS' notice from 17th Dec 2018 mentions a 'One-day Training Programme Supervisor - Basic (Level 1)' for SDA. On the right, a large poster titled 'LET US JOIN HANDS TO CREATE SKILLED HEALTH MANPOWER RESOURCES TO BUILD A HEALTHY NATION' is in collaboration with the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare. It lists programs: Certificate in General Duty Assistance (CGDA), Geriatric Care Assistance (CGCA), Phlebotomy Assistance (CPHA), and Home Health Assistance (CHHA). It includes contact information for enquiries and a QR code for the web portal.

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