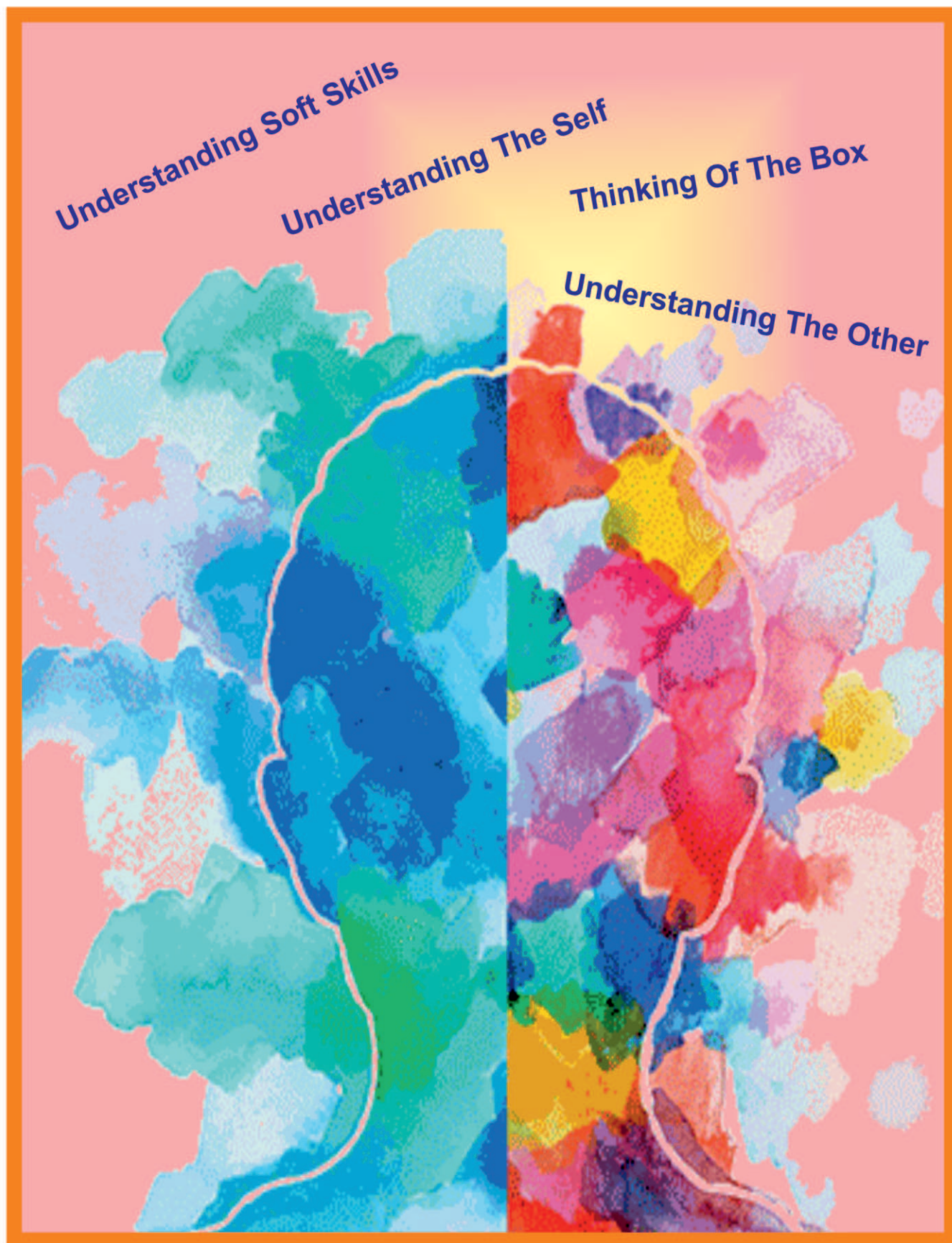




# **BEGE -145**

**SOFT SKILLS**





Indira Gandhi  
National Open University  
School of Humanities

# **BEGE -145**

## **Soft Skills**

Block

# **1**

## **UNDERSTANDING SOFT SKILLS**

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### **Block Introduction**

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### **UNIT 1**

#### **What are Soft Skills?**

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### **UNIT 2**

#### **Non-Verbal Communication**

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### **UNIT 3**

#### **Personality Development**

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December, 2021

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ISBN: 978-93-5568-267-3

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Printed and Published on behalf of the Indira Gandhi National Open University, New Delhi by Registrar, MPDD, IGNOU, New Delhi.

Printed at : Chandra Prabhu Offset Printing Works Pvt. Ltd., C-40, Sector-8, Noida-201 301 (U.P.)

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## **COURSE INTRODUCTION**

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### **BEGE -145 Soft Skills**

As we understand, there are two types of skills that we identify both in our personal lives as well as professional lives: soft skills and hard skills. Hard skills are technical skills that have to be learned through external training and are usually job-specific. Soft skills cover personality-based traits that are key aspects of what makes someone a good fit for a given role and a productive coworker in a group work environment. We are generally aware of hard skills as they are explicitly mentioned. We have seen people guessing about Soft skills on many occasions.

You will understand through the course that Soft skills generally fall into the category of interpersonal skills and inner values. Unlike hard skills, soft skills are generally not learned in professional training programs and are usually innate or gained through personal development. A person with strong soft skills usually has great communication skills or a strong work ethic. Through this course you will be able to generate a complete understanding on key soft skills such as Self-reflection, Adaptability, Learn ability and Emotional intelligence.

We will also learn about Appreciating different perspectives and also about ways Coordination with others. There will be a detailed discussion on Understanding disability and People management

When we are discussing Soft skills, it is important to understand the process of learning to be creative. Critical thinking is a crucial component and requires detailed discussion and understanding. It is also important to discuss various aspects of Decision making and problem solving. Soft Skills also relate to a futuristic understanding and that will be discussed in the concluding unit of the course Hark into the future.

We are sure that you will enjoy studying all the units and also achieve complete understanding of soft skills in your mind and conduct.



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## **Block Introduction**

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### **BEGE 145: SOFT SKILLS**

**BLOCK 1** is dedicated to the foundational understanding of soft skills. Soft skills are commonly used interchangeably with life skills, people skills, interpersonal skills, communication skills, workplace skills, cultural skills, management skills, and employability skills. Whatever the name, it is essential that you have to communicate or interact in public at some point or the other. Whether it is presenting your project work, interacting with your bosses, clients or teachers, appearing for group discussions or job interviews, or excelling in the real world, people from all streams need the all-important soft skills. Through the four units combined in this block you will understand Non-verbal communication, Personality development and also about Keeping fit. We will also understand about silence which is a passive nonverbal communication but at times can convey much more than words or actions. When a person becomes silent it can communicate many things for example the person is sad, mentally upset, angry, helpless, fearful, respectful, in disagreement, ignorant etc. It is a very effective tool to communicate the above-mentioned emotions. Basically, we try to understand the person's approach to time and it also helps us to understand the kind of person he/she is, his/her background and his/her organization by the importance he/she attaches to time.

We are sure that you will enjoy studying all the units and also achieve complete understanding of soft skills in your mind and conduct.

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## **UNIT: 1 WHAT ARE SOFT SKILLS?**

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### **Structure**

1.0 Objectives

1.1 Warm Up

1.2 Introduction

1.3 Defining Soft Skills

1.4 Some of the most valued soft skills include

**Activity 1/ Listening**

**Activity 2 / Speaking**

**Activity 3/ Writing**

**Activity 4 / Speaking**

**Activity 5 /Discussion**

**Activity 6 /Discussion**

**Activity 7/ Writing**

**Activity 8 /Discussion**

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**Activity 10 / Writing**

**Activity 11/Discussion**

**Activity 12 /Speaking**

**Activity 13 / Writing**

**Activity 14 /Speaking**

**Activity 15 / Writing/ Speaking**

**Activity 16 / Speaking**

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UNIVERSITY

*Understanding Soft Skills*

**Activity 17 / Writing**

**Activity 18 / Writing**

**Activity 19 / Discussion**

**Activity 20 /Writing/Discussion**

**Why are Soft Skills Important?**

**Activity 21 / Discussion and Writing**

**How to develop/improve your soft skills**

**Answers**

**Listening Text**

**Bibliography**

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## **1.0 Objectives**

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In this unit you will read about

- Introduction to Soft Skills
- Definition of Soft Skills
- List of valued soft skills
- Why are Soft Skills Important?
- How to develop/improve your soft skills

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## **1.1 Warm Up**

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*What are Soft Skills?*

What kind of work do you find boring and tiresome?

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Are you comfortable if there are other people who are willing to share some of this work with you?



If yes why, if no why not?

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What kind of work do you find interesting? Does this become better if you have people who are willing to share this work with you?

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*Understanding Soft Skills*

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## 1.2 Introduction

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According to a survey conducted, for many employers some of the most important traits that they seek in their employees are

- Written Communication Skills (82%)
- Problem Solving Skills (80.9%)
- Ability to Work in a Team (78.7%)

It is evident here that technical skills and computer skills often considered among the most important skills that a person should have are not considered as important. This also means that that employer is paying much closer attention to soft skills in the workplace than they did in earlier years. These skills are essential for both individual growth and career development.

Soft skills are commonly used interchangeably with life skills, people skills, interpersonal skills, communication skills, workplace skills, cultural skills, management skills, and employability skills. Whatever the name, it is essential that you have to communicate or interact in public at some point or the other. Whether it is presenting your project work, interacting with your bosses, clients or teachers, appearing for group discussions or job interviews, or excelling in the real world, people from all streams need the all-important soft skills.

Soft skills are essentially people skills-the non-technical, intangible, personality-specific skills that determine one's strengths as a leader, listener, negotiator, and conflict mediator.

They are in fact healthy supporters of communication and performance. They are recognized as connectors that build the gap and bridge relationships among the people at the workplace, leading to better productivity and performance.

To grow professionally in one's related field and also otherwise, it is essential to create healthy workplace relationships with peers, clients, customers, and others who are associated with the profession. Career development can be blocked by the lack of ability to get on well with people.

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### **1.3 Defining Soft Skills**

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Soft skills can be defined as non-technical skills that impact our performance in the workplace. Unlike technical or 'hard' skills, soft skills are not about the knowledge one possesses but the behaviours one displays in different situations.

They are defined as skills that one needs to have for a successful career at one's workplace. They generally include how one interacts with colleagues, solve work related issues and manage one's work in the office.

Soft skills can also be defined as a collection of positive attributes and competencies that can improve work performance and productivity, enhance relationships, and make an individual more marketable in the workplace.

Further, soft skills can also be broadly classified as a combination of personality traits, behaviours, and social attitudes that allow people to communicate effectively, collaborate, and successfully manage conflict. Soft skills are sometimes referred to as transferable skills or professional skills also.

People with good soft skills tend to have strong situational awareness and emotional intelligence to navigate difficult working environments while still producing positive results. This is especially important for leadership positions because good leadership is more about managing

people and directing their efforts toward the desired outcome rather than bringing any specific technical skills to bear.

Another benefit of soft skills in the workplace is that they help people to adapt to changing circumstances. Being able to communicate effectively during a time of uncertainty or collaborate with others when solutions aren't immediately obvious is hugely important whether someone is in a leadership position or not. Given their many applications, it is hardly surprising that organizations are doing more to assess a candidate's soft skills during the interview process.

Soft skills either can't be acquired or are notoriously hard to acquire through traditional education. They are considered to be a complement to hard skills, which refer to a person's knowledge and occupational skills. Sociologists sometime use the term soft skills to describe a person's emotional intelligence quotient (EQ) as opposed to intelligence quotient (IQ).

Therefore, we can conclude that

- Soft skills include attributes and personality traits that help employees interact with others and succeed in the workplace.
- Examples of soft skills include the ability to communicate with prospective clients and co-workers, mentor your co-workers, lead a team, negotiate a contract, follow instructions, and get a job done on time.
- Hard skills are measurable and usually obtained through formal education and training programs.
- Workers with good soft skills can help companies achieve higher levels of efficiency and productivity.

### **Check your progress 1**

**State whether the following statements are true or false:**

Soft skills are technical skills that we need to possess to get a good job.

Soft skills help us to work efficiently in a difficult situation.

Soft skills support in adapting to sudden changes in the work environment.

Most employers look for good soft skills in candidates during job interviews.

Soft skills are also defined as Emotional Intelligence Quotient.

It is not necessary to have good communication skills at your workplace.

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### **1.4 Some of the most valued soft skills include:**

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- Effective communication skills

- Leadership skills
- Team work
- Problem Solving
- Interpersonal Skills
- Adaptability/Flexibility
- Work Ethics

### **Effective communication skills**

Without sufficient skills to communicate, it becomes difficult to gain, hold, or enlarge interpersonal relationships especially at workplaces. Good communication delivers messages with clarity and responsibility to the receiver without any distortion or confusion. When communication is clear, employees get to know what is to be done and what more can be done to improve their performance.

Successful communication involves various components. One of them is verbal communication which refers to your ability to speak clearly and concisely. This ability to communicate involves knowing how you should speak to others in different situations or settings. For example, when working with a team on a project, you may need to communicate when you believe that an idea or process is ineffective. Finding a way to tactfully and skillfully disagree with others on the job without creating conflict is an important skill that employer's value. Verbal skills also help in fostering relationships that are collaborative and respectful, and ultimately, productive.

Good communicators can adjust their tone and style according to their audience, comprehend and act efficiently on instructions, and explain complex issues to colleagues and clients alike. Effective communication skills also include written communication, visual communication, active listening, confidence building, conflict resolution, organisational skills and also non verbal communication.

Nonverbal communication includes the capacity to project positive body language and facial expressions. Written communication refers to your skillfulness in composing text messages, reports, and other types of documents. Visual communication involves your ability to relay information using pictures and other visual aids. Active listening should also be considered a key communication soft skill because it helps you listen to and actually hear what others say. You need to be able to listen to understand how to best communicate with someone. Without strong listening skills, any communication efforts will be one-way and probably ineffective.

Another essential component is assertiveness that is the result of a positive flow in our thought process to communicate well with others. Sources claim that assertive people take responsibility for expressing their opinions, and make every effort to communicate successfully even when their ideas or wishes are in conflict with the ideas of others.

## Check your progress2

1. Suppose you have to deal with a difficult colleague on some work-related matter. What strategies would you use to communicate with the colleague effectively?
2. You are the manager of public relations department in your organisation. Describe a time when you had to handle complaints from a client. How did you manage to resolve it and yet remain calm and composed in such a situation? Write in about 100 -150 words your experience.

## Leadership skills

We need to have strong leadership skills and the ability to inspire others and lead our organisation or team to success. Companies want employees who can supervise and direct other workers. Moreover, they want employees who can cultivate relationships up, down, and across the organizational chain. Leaders must assess, motivate, encourage, and discipline workers and build teams, resolve conflicts, and cultivate the organization's working culture. Understanding how to influence people and accommodate their needs is an essential element of leadership. Soft skills development is often a key component of leadership training. People with good leadership skills also need to have a positive attitude and outlook, able to take quick and effective decisions, to communicate effectively, and have exemplary problem solving and conflict management skills.

### Activity 4 / Speaking

Each student in the class should write on a piece of paper the most important quality that a leader should possess. Each student can then share what he/she has written with the class and give reasons why they think this is the most important quality. The one quality which most students have written becomes the most desired quality of a leader. This will also help in discovering uncommon and remarkable qualities one would like a leader to have.

## Team work

The word TEAM is an acronym for

**T -Together**

**E – Everyone**

**A-Achieves**

**M- More**

<https://www.newindianexpress.com/nation/2020/jan/26/watch--crpf-women-bikers-showcase-daredevilry-at-r-day-parade-2094783.html>





Teamwork is working with people by offering the best of attitude, knowledge, and skills to other members of a team. While at the workplace, a team becomes an important place as it is a mixed bag of varying cultural backgrounds, varying perceptions, and differing ideas and opinions, but still, it tends to bind its constituents together to work for a common purpose.

Therefore, team work is about cooperating with co-workers to achieve a defined goal.

This skill is crucial to your success in the workplace. Teamwork is *a cooperative process that allows ordinary people to achieve extraordinary results*. This skill consists of interrelated abilities that let you work effectively in an organized group. Teamwork skills are vital to employers, as teams are a basic organizational unit within many companies. Teamwork happens when people cooperate and use their individual skills to achieve common goals. Most employees are part of a team/department/division, and even those who are not on an official team need to collaborate with other employees. You may prefer to work alone, but it's important to demonstrate that you understand and appreciate the value of joining forces and working in partnership for the benefit of the organisation. This also reflects that you possess the soft skills necessary to engage in productive collaboration. Working in a team towards a common goal requires the intuition and interpersonal acumen to know when to be a leader and when to be a listener. Good team players are perceptive, as well as receptive to the needs and responsibilities of others. An efficient team is an asset to an organization.

### Activity 5 /Discussion

How do individual habits help or hinder the work in a team?

Discuss this in groups of 4 students and share your views with the other groups.

### **Activity 6 /Discussion**

Suppose you were working on a project, where you had to do everything by yourself, beginning with gathering data about sales records, revenue generated by the particular organisation, interviewing people, strategies used by the organisation, reasons for failure etc. Do you think working on this single handedly or working as a team would help you to deliver results better? Discuss this in groups of 4 and share the opinion of each group with the class.

### **Activity 7/ Writing**

Imagine you are part of a group of 8 students who plan to work on a project regarding “How to provide cheap and nutritious food for students in the college canteen”. How would you use teamwork skills to complete the project within a specific time period? List out the steps you would follow and the responsibilities that each team member would be given.

### **Activity 8 /Discussion**

Imagine you are the team leader of a team in the company you work in and your team was not able to meet the goal set by your company. What would you do in such a situation? What would you tell the members of your team to boost their morale and how would you present the situation to your manager? Discuss the responses to both questions in groups of 4 students and then share it with the rest of the class.

### **Problem Solving**

People who can resolve issues quickly and effectively are highly valued by their employers. The ability to use your knowledge to find answers to pressing problems and formulate workable solutions will demonstrate that you can handle and excel in your job. This may involve calling on industry knowledge to fix an issue immediately, as it occurs, or taking time to research and consult with colleagues to find a workable, long-term solution. Some of the other skills that one can include here are creativity, research, risk management and teamwork. But it is imperative to mention that problem solving does not just require analytical, creative and critical skills, but a particular mindset; those who can approach a problem with a cool and level head will often reach a solution more efficiently than those who cannot. And together with this motivating the whole team to resolve the problem is also important.

*Understanding Soft Skills*

A systematic approach for problem solving involves four basic steps:

Defining the problem

Thinking of possible alternative or options

Assessing and selecting a suitable alternative

Applying this for resolving the problem



At times one also has to work under immense pressure to meet deadlines which may also involve high stakes. Having a decisive attitude, an unfaltering ability to think clearly, and a capacity to compartmentalise and set stress aside are characteristics needed in these situations.

Time management is another essential skill that we need to have. Time management goes beyond being punctual. It is the ability to follow through on deadlines, scheduling and prioritising your work, and having a brief understanding of the time required for a particular project. It also includes being able to focus better on the task at hand without getting disturbed.

Managing one's time efficiently, organising and prioritising the problems are also important skills.

Therefore, meeting deadlines, achieving targets, delivering results, and finishing assignments, all within a time period is possible if we consciously manage the given time effectively. Hence one has to manage time to create competence and efficacy in a way that maximizes profit, minimizes stress and frustration, and makes achieve targets more easily.

Effective time management also enables us to make good decisions and increases job satisfaction.

### **Activity 9 / Discussion**

As a manager in the organisation you have been given an important file to keep in your custody. After a week, you realise that the file has gone missing. What will you do in such a situation? Discuss this in groups of 4 students and share your observations / solutions with the other groups.

### **Activity 10 / Writing**

Write a paragraph in about 100 -150 words on the skills required to resolve problems that you may encounter in your day to day college life. Support your answer with relevant examples.

### **Activity 11/Discussion**

In our day-to-day life we are always encountering some problem or the other and are finding ways to resolve it. Give some examples in the context of your family, friends and the work place where this occurs and ways of resolving them. Discuss this in groups of 4 students and share your observations / solutions with the other groups.

### **Activity 12 /Speaking**

You have gone to your college to appear for your final exams. On reaching college you realise that you have left your admit card at home. If you plan to go back home to collect it, you will be late for your exams. How best will you resolve this problem?

Discuss this in pairs and share the solution you have arrived at with the class.

## **Interpersonal Skills**

One of the most important of your soft skills comprises your 'people skills' or interpersonal skills. This includes building and maintaining relationships, developing rapport, and using diplomacy. It also includes giving and receiving constructive criticism, being tolerant and respectful regarding others' opinions, and empathizing with them. This is among the most important of all the soft skills because it is central to building teams with a strong foundation of trust and accountability and will help you establish good relationships with your co-workers and others.

### **Activity 13 / Writing**

You are part of a team where you are the team leader, and realise that one of the members of your team has made a contribution to the team far greater than you. Write in 50- 100 words what your reaction would be to this and what would you tell this team member.

### **Activity 14 / Speaking**

You have had a disagreement with a senior colleague about how you should approach a project or deal with a problem at work? What would you do in such a situation? Discuss this in pairs and share your views with the class.

### **Activity 15 / Writing/ Speaking**

You have been assigned with a task you are not familiar with? How would you handle it: Would you ask for help or would you try to find a solution by yourself? Write about what you think best you would do in about 100 words.

### **Activity 16 / Speaking**

You as the Chairman of your company have been asked to deliver bad news (possibly a wage cut) to the manager of your company because he has not performed well. How best would you do it? What do you think would be the other person's reaction? Discuss this in groups of 4 students and let every group share their views with the class.

## **Adaptability/Flexibility**

Flexibility or adaptability is an important soft skill, since it demonstrates a willingness to embrace new tasks and new challenges calmly and without fuss. Employers are always looking for candidates who can show a willing and upbeat attitude, and who are unfazed by change. Flexible employees are willing to help out where needed, take on extra responsibilities and can adapt quickly when plans change.

Therefore, it is important that one is able to adapt to changes. Employees who are capable of adapting to new situations and ways of working are valuable in many jobs and industries. Companies now want workers who can also shift gears or change direction as needed. As

organizations have become less hierarchical and agile over the last decade, it's more important than ever for employees to be able to handle many different tasks and demonstrate a willingness to take on responsibilities that might lie outside their area of expertise. For e.g. adapting to new technology and processes is a quality appreciated by most employers. Consistency, optimism and flexibility are some of the skills one needs to have to adapt to changes.

### **Activity 17 / Writing**

With the advent of the computer the way work is done in the banks or offices of other utility service, like the electricity department or the telephone department have changed dramatically. You now have ATMs to withdraw money, internet banking facilities and transferring or withdrawing money is much simpler. You can pay your bills directly through your account or through debit or credit cards with no hassle. Write a report in about 150 words on your views about this. Do you think this helps customers or it has created more difficulty for people?

### **Activity 18 / Writing**

Write a paragraph in about 150 words about the need for adapting ourselves as students for attending online classes because of the Corona Pandemic.

### **Activity 19 / Discussion**

Why do you think some people change jobs frequently, while others work for many years in the same organisation? Discuss this in pairs and share your views with the class.

One day you go to college and realise that you have brought the wrong textbook for the English class. Your English teacher does not appreciate sharing of text books in the class. What will you do in such a situation? Discuss this in pairs and share your views with the class.

What qualities do you think you need to possess to adapt yourself well in a new organisation? Let every student write at least two qualities which they think are the most important. Every student then shares it in the class and they can be listed on the blackboard. The two qualities which most students have written down become the most important qualities as per the views of the students.

### **Work Ethics**

Work ethics is the ability to follow through on tasks and duties in a timely manner without compromising on quality. A strong work ethic will ensure you develop a positive relationship with your employer and colleagues even when you are still developing technical skills in a new job. Companies expect you to be responsible and do the job you're getting paid to do, which includes being punctual when you arrive at work, meeting deadlines, and making sure that your work is error-free. And going the extra mile shows that you're committed to performing your work with excellence. Many employers would rather work with someone who has a strong work ethic and is eager to learn than a skilled worker who seems unmotivated. Work ethics also includes attention to detail, integrity, persistence and time management.

Moreover, it is of prime importance to maintain a greater level of ethics in order to grow professionally.

Being honest, stabilizing integrity, loyalty, and trust, and practicing mutual respect add value to workplace relationships and help in effective decision-making process during crucial times.

Abiding by the ethical codes encourages efficient work, inspires everyone to maintain self-control, motivates employees to remain loyal to their organization, and improves quality of work. Career advancement largely depends on ascertaining core values and moving ahead to work toward a cooperative and respected culture.

While hard skills are important for completing technical tasks, strong soft skills will make you the kind of worker employers want to hire, retain and promote.

### **Activity 20 /Writing/Discussion**

You have just come to know that your supervisor/boss is breaking the company's code of conduct. What would you do in such a situation? Write in about 100 words how you would go about resolving the issue.

### **Why are Soft Skills Important?**

In the job market, recruitment criteria are not limited to technical ability and specialist knowledge. Every job role requires some kind of interaction with others whether they are colleagues or customers, so soft skills will be important to most employers. Recruiters also look for people who have the potential to become leaders. They won't expect you to have all the qualifications and experience from day one, but they will need to know that you have the qualities that will allow you to learn and grow in the role.

Employers look for a balance of hard skills and soft skills when making hiring decisions. For example, employers value skilled workers with a track record of getting jobs done on time. Employers also value workers with strong communication skills and a strong understanding of company products and services. When communicating with prospective clients, workers with soft skills can put together compelling presentations even if their specific job is not in sales or marketing. Another valued soft skill is the ability to train fellow co-workers on new tasks.

It has been observed that senior company executives often are most effective when they have strong soft skills. For example, leaders are expected to have good speaking abilities, but good leaders also are good at listening to workers and to other leaders in their fields. *Senior company executives are always negotiating at different levels. When negotiating with employees, clients, or associates, leaders need to be skilled in staying considerate of what others want while remaining focused on pushing for what they want. Good leaders also need to know how to make their own work most efficient by strategically delegating tasks to workers.*

Companies often like to hire employees who possess soft skills that mesh well with the rest of the staff, considering them to be a good cultural fit for the company.

A collaborative spirit among workers is important. Team members who are able to work well with people of different age groups, temperaments and backgrounds are generally more productive and better able to focus on common priorities. Efficiency and output improve when workers collaborate by sharing knowledge and tools to get jobs done. The ability to learn new methods and technologies also is a desired soft skill for all workers.

Here are some examples of the difference made by soft skills:

- A doctor is required to have an extensive repertoire of hard skills, especially the ability to diagnose and prescribe treatments for an array of ailments. But a doctor who does not have the soft skills of emotional intelligence, trustworthiness and approachability is not likely to be very highly regarded by their patients.
- A salesperson, who may have an unrivalled and exhaustive knowledge of their market, will find it difficult to close a deal and retain their clients if they lack the soft skills of interpersonal skills and negotiation.
- A customer services professional with amazing organisational skills will only do well if they are also able to interact professionally with customers, and have empathy and listening skills.

Soft skills are not just important when facing external customers and clients. They are equally important when it comes to interacting with colleagues. Employers value soft skills because they enable people to function and thrive in teams and organisations as a whole. Soft skills also help the team members to effectively collaborate with each other and achieve synergistic results.

A productive and healthy work environment depends on soft skills. After all, the workplace is an interpersonal space where relationships must be built and fostered, perspectives must be exchanged and, occasionally, conflicts must be resolved.

Soft skills in the workplace are the driving force behind any company's success. You can teach people to use new software, or perform certain job-specific tasks rather quickly, but you can't teach them common sense or change their character. Therefore, soft skills in the workplace are valuable for the company's success.

### **Activity 21 / Discussion and Writing**

Suppose an employer has a choice between a highly-skilled candidate who's also emotionally intelligent, communicative, and instantly likable, and an equally skilled candidate who's totally unsocial. Who do you think the employer would give the job to? Discuss in groups of 5 students the answer to this with appropriate reasons and share with the other groups. On the basis of the discussion and your own opinion on it write a reasoned answer to this in about 100 words.

## **How to develop/improve your soft skills**

There are many ways in which you can develop or improve any of the soft skills mentioned above. Initially we need to do some self-reflection to understand and accept our shortcomings before we attempt to improve or develop them.

1. **Practice:** For example, if you feel that you need to improve your time management skills, then showing up for work or events on time or early and starting on projects at work earlier, so that you can complete them ahead of schedule are some ways to improve time management. You can also offer to take on more responsibilities at work (serving on committees, planning events, etc.) which can help you gain valuable experience and improve your soft skills.
2. **Observe:** There could be a possibility that your fellow professionals have strengths in various soft skills. Observe them keenly on the skill that they are good at. A colleague maybe very good at communicating effectively. You may discover that he/she often writes down notes when others are talking during meetings. This helps them organise their thoughts and so they are prepared to ask and answer important questions. Incorporate this when you are communicating.
3. **Set yourself specific, measurable goals** which you want to achieve and ask your friends or colleagues whom you trust for constructive criticism. This can help you to identify key areas of improvement for goal setting and areas of strength. You can then prioritise which soft skills to work on based on the feedback and work on those that you need to get a certain job or move up in the career you already have.
4. **Online training or help:** You can find several resources to help you learn tactics for improving the soft skills you want to focus on like books, podcasts or online classes. You might try out few different types of resources to see which are the most suitable for your learning style.

## **Answers**

### **Check your progress 1**

#### **State whether the following statements are true or false**

Soft skills are technical skills that we need to possess to get a good job. False

Soft skills help us to work efficiently in a difficult situation. True

Soft skills support in adapting to sudden changes in the work environment. True

Most employers look for good soft skills in candidates during job interviews. True

Soft skills are also defined as Emotional Intelligence Quotient. True

It is not necessary to have good communication skills at your workplace. False



## Activity 1/

### Activity 1/ Listening

#### Listening Text

Listen to people talking about strategies they use to make a good first impression. Write the name of the speaker against each strategy. One of the strategies written below is additional

#### A good first impression

**Usha :** I think it's important to remember people's names. One way that helps me remember the names of people I meet is to use the names. When I meet someone new, I try to say the person's name often during the conversation. For example, to remember Rei's name, I might say, "Nice to meet you, Rei." Or "So, Rei, where do you work?" I try to remember people's names by using them.

**Suman:** It's really difficult to have a conversation with someone who only "yes" and "no" or who gives very short answers to questions. When I'm having a conversation, I always try to add extra information. For example, at a party, if someone asks me if I like the music, I don't just say, "Yes." Instead, I say, "Yes, I do. I like this music, I really like jazz, too. That's my favourite." I think extra information makes the conversation more interesting.

**Mayank:** When I meet someone for the first time, I like to try to find something we have in common – something that's the same about me and the other person. Maybe we like the same food, or we go to the same school. For example, when I meet another university student, I might ask, "Have you ever taken a class with this professor before?" If we find something in common, we have lots of talk about, and the conversation continues.

**Vaishnavi:** Some people only talk about themselves, and they don't ask questions about the other person. But I think it's important to ask about the other person, too. When I meet someone new, I usually try to ask the other person questions and make small talk to get to know them. Small talk means just talking about everyday topics. For example, I say, "So, where are you from?" or "What do you do?" Or "Are you a baseball fan?"- Nothing too serious or too personal. I think asking about other people shows them you're interested in meeting them.

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## UNIT: 2 NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION

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### Structure

2.0 Objectives

2.1 Warm Up

2.2 Understanding Non-Verbal Communication

2.3 Functions of Non- Verbal Communication

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2.4.4 Haptic

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2.4.6 Sign Language

2.4.7 Silence

2.5 Let Us Sum Up

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### 2.0 Objectives

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In this unit we will read about

- What is Non-verbal Communication
- Understanding nonverbal communication
- Different kinds of nonverbal communication
- How nonverbal communication helps in communication

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## 2.1 Warm Up

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Is it necessary for communication to be face to face always?

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How do people who cannot speak or hear communicate?

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### Discussion

You have not done well in your exams and your father is upset about it— he either scolds you or shows his disapproval by not talking to you about it. Which do you think is a more effective way of making you realize your mistake or making you feel guilty?

Discuss this in groups of four and share the observations.

### Check your progress 1

**Read the phrases given below. Each of these phrases highlights a nonverbal cue which offers a clue to the attitudes, feelings and personality of a person. Can you guess what these cues suggest?**

The twinkle in her eyes

The knowing look of their smiles

The rigidity in his posture

The confidence in her eyes

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## 2.2 Understanding Non-Verbal Communication

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When a baby cries the mother usually understands if the baby is hungry, uncomfortable, sleepy or there is some other problem. Similarly, a substantial portion of our communication is nonverbal. Nonverbal messages or cues announce our state of mind, expectations and emotional status. Nonverbal communication is expressed through non-linguistic means. It is the actions or attributes of humans, including their appearance, use of objects, sound, time, smell, and space, that have socially shared significance and stimulate meaning in others.

According to some studies only about 7 percent of all communication is verbal i.e., oral or written taken together, over 50 percent is body language while 38 percent is paralanguage. Experts have found that every day we respond to thousands of nonverbal cues and behaviours including postures, facial expressions, eye gaze, gestures, and tone of voice. Our facial expressions, gestures, posture, our tone of voice are powerful communication tools. These nonverbal details reveal who we are and impact how we relate to other people. Nonverbal communication also plays an important role in how we convey meaning and information to others, as well as how we interpret the actions of those around us.

While verbal communication is important both in personal and professional relationships, it's not the words that one uses but our nonverbal cues or "body language" that speak the loudest. This nonverbal communication is often done instinctively rather than consciously. What a person actually says along with his or her expressions, appearance, and tone of voice might tell us a great deal about what that person is really trying to say. Nonverbal communication is generally unplanned but has more impact than verbal communication.

At times we may or may not be aware but when we interact with others, we are continuously giving and receiving wordless signals. All of our nonverbal behaviours—the gestures we make, our posture, our tone of voice, send strong messages. They can put people at ease, build trust, and draw others towards us, or they can offend, confuse, and undermine what we're trying to convey. These messages don't stop when we stop speaking either. Even when we are silent, we are still communicating nonverbally.

There are instances when what one is communicating verbally and what our body language is communicating may be two totally different things. If we say one thing, but our body language says something else, our listener will feel that we're being dishonest. When faced with such mixed signals, the listener has to choose whether to believe our verbal or nonverbal message. Since body language is a natural, unconscious language that broadcasts our true feelings and intentions, they are likely to choose the nonverbal message.

### Activity1

**Look at the examples given below to understand and interpret the nonverbal behaviour and contextual cues.**

- i. A little girl is hiding behind her mother and saying, 'I'm not afraid of the dog'
- ii. A mother cuddling her baby and saying, 'I love you very much.'
- iii. At each other who asks, 'Any questions?' and fails to wait for a response before moving on to the next point.
- iv. The child whose eyes are down cast and should rounded as she says, 'I'm sorry for breaking the vase.'
- v. The manager of an organisation who is busy on his computer and nodding his head while his junior is trying to explain a problem.

**Discuss with friends' what message is being conveyed in each of the cases and the role of the nonverbal cues in helping or impeding communication.**

### **Discussion on Activity 1**

Each of the above messages contain nonverbal cues that help reveal what a person is feeling. As the above situations illustrate, they may (1) contradict words, (2) emphasize or underscore words, (3) regulate their flow, (4) complement words, or (5) substitute for or take the place of spoken words. In the first case it is evident that the girl's actions and what she is saying are contradicting each other.

In the second case the love that a mother has for her child is getting reinforced by her action.

In the third case although the teacher asks a question, she carries on with her lecture without giving an opportunity for students to ask.

In the fourth case the nonverbal action of the girl complements when she is apologizing for breaking the vase.

In the final case the manager nodding his head to the discussion with his junior conveys that he is listening to him and his action is a substitution for his words. Whereas words are best at conveying thoughts or ideas, nonverbal cues are best at conveying information about relational matters such as liking, respect, and social control.

### **2.3 Functions of Non- Verbal Communication**

**Here are some of the functions of non-verbal communication:**

- **Repetition:** It repeats and often strengthens the message you're making verbally.
- **Contradiction:** It can contradict the message you're trying to convey, thus indicating to your listener that you may not be telling the truth.
- **Substitution:** It can substitute for a verbal message. For example, your facial expression often conveys a far more vivid message than words ever can.
- **Complementing:** It may add to or complement your verbal message. As a boss, if we pat an employee on the back in addition to giving praise, it can increase the impact of your message.
- **Accenting:** It may accent or underline a verbal message. Pounding the table, for example, can underline the importance of your message.

Source: *The Importance of Effective Communication*, Edward G. Wertheim, Ph.D.

## Check your Progress2

State whether the following statements are true or false:

- i. Communication can be both verbal and nonverbal.
- ii. Nonverbal communication forms a major part of all our communication.
- iii. Verbal communication is more effective than nonverbal communication.
- iv. Some examples of nonverbal communication are facial expressions, posture, eye contact.
- v. There cannot be a contradiction in what we say verbally and our nonverbal communication.

## Activity2

Many times, signals that we send out through various non-verbal cues help in communication. Here is one such example.

Ms. Sinha was being interviewed for a job. She was responding to the questions asked in the best possible way. She was not able to respond to all the questions and was honest about it. While sitting on the chair she was relaxed and had a confident posture. Although she was not able to answer all the questions, at no point did she show that she was nervous or uncomfortable. This reflected that she was confident and composed and she was given the job.

Given below are some instances of nonverbal communication. Try to analyse what that nonverbal gesture is trying to convey. There could be two or more messages that are being conveyed:

Fidgeting with your hands while talking to someone.  
Patting your colleague on the back.  
Sitting on a chair with legs crossed.  
Having a serious look at someone's face during a discussion.  
Not looking at someone in the eyes while talking.  
Talking to your mother in an irritated tone.  
Laughing loudly with your friends.  
Shaking hands firmly with your business partner.

## Check your Progress3

Identify which of the following actions is/are examples of non-verbal communication:

- i. We stop our car when the traffic signal turns red.
- ii. The ringing of the school bell for the next class.
- iii. A person talking over the phone.
- iv. A baby laughing /gurgling loudly.
- v. A young boy singing melodiously.



- vi. A young child clapping her/his hands excitedly when he sees his/her birthday gift.
- vii. A teacher frowning at a student who is not paying attention in class.
- viii. A young man screaming at someone.
- ix. The Principal of a school making a speech at the Annual Day function.
- x. Spectators cheering loudly for their favourite team during a cricket match.
- xi. Raising your hand during a group discussion.

Therefore, by improving how we understand and use nonverbal communication, we can express what we really mean, connect better with others, and build stronger, more rewarding relationships.

If we want to become a better communicator, it's important to become more sensitive not only to the body language and nonverbal cues of others, but also to your own. Our nonverbal communication cues—the way we listen, look, move, and react—tell the person we're communicating with whether or not we care, if we're being truthful, and how well we're listening. When our nonverbal signals match up with the words we're saying, they increase trust, clarity, and rapport. When they don't, they can generate tension, mistrust, and confusion.

### Activity 3

Students are talking about communication styles in their countries. Listen and tick (✓) the behaviours that are Ok; cross out (X) the behaviours that are not OK. The listening text is given at the end of the unit and may be read to you by a friend.

| Communication Style                  | Colombia | South Korea | Saudi Arabia |
|--------------------------------------|----------|-------------|--------------|
| <b>Interrupting in communication</b> |          |             |              |
| <b>Touching another person</b>       |          |             |              |
| <b>Disagreeing with others</b>       |          |             |              |
| <b>Refusing directly</b>             |          |             |              |

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## 2.4 Nonverbal communication types

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Let us now closely look at the different communication types regarding non-verbal communication:

- **Kinesics**
- **Paralanguage**
- **Proxemics**
- **Haptic**
- **Chronemics**
- **Sign language**
- **Silence**

**2.4.1 Kinesics:** Body language or kinesics is the most widely used communication medium by us. Many times, these messages are involuntary. It is important to understand what these messages are and how they are interpreted. Both the sender and the receiver understand the meaning of these body movements/ language in the particular cultural environment that they share. Emotions like anger, happiness, sadness, joy or restlessness find expression more through body language than by verbal language. However, it is important to understand that body language is indicative and cannot be relied upon always. Some of the more dominant body language that we encounter are given below. There are many ways in which we can improve our self-esteem using our body language.

Some of them are

Making eye contact while talking

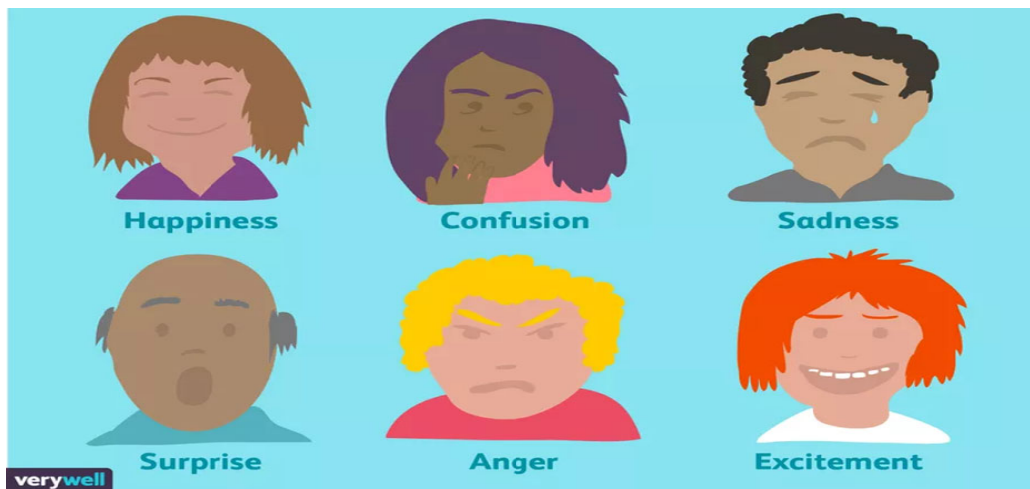
Having an erect posture/ standing straight

Keeping our chin up

Not fidgeting

Greeting others with a firm handshake

**Facial Expressions** are considered an important part of Kinesics. Facial expressions are responsible for a huge proportion of nonverbal communication. Our faces are the most expressive part of our bodies and convey countless emotions without saying a word. It is the prime communicator of emotion. Our ability to read the emotions depicted in facial expressions determines whether we will be able to respond appropriately to others' feelings. The look on a person's face is often the first thing we see, even before we hear what they have to say. And unlike some forms of nonverbal communication, facial expressions are universal. The facial expressions for happiness, sadness, anger, surprise, fear, and disgust are the same across cultures. Facial expressions communicate a range of emotions and can be used to infer personality traits and making judgments about a person.



#### Activity 4

Imagine yourself as part of each of the following scenarios:

- Your mother has had an operation. You are meeting with the doctor to discuss the diagnosis and future course of action. You search the doctor's face, looking for clues.
- You return home a day late from a business trip and miss an important family function. Your spouse meets you at the door. As you approach, your eyes focus on the face of your spouse.

Almost immediately, the face of the doctor or your spouse in each situation could cause you to worry, put you at ease, or upset you. What would your reaction be if the doctor had a confident smile and reassured you with a smile? What message would be conveyed if your spouse had a stern look on the face and did not acknowledge that you were back? Write about your reactions in both the cases in about 50 words.

#### *Gestures*

Gestures are woven into the fabric of our daily lives. Deliberate movements and signals are an important way to communicate meaning without words. Common gestures include waving, pointing, using fingers to indicate numeric amounts or using our hands when arguing or speaking animatedly, often expressing ourselves with gestures without thinking. However, the meaning of some gestures can be very different across cultures. While the "OK" sign made with the hand, for example, usually conveys a positive message in English-speaking countries— it's considered offensive in countries such as Germany, Russia, and Brazil. So, it's important to be careful of how we use gestures to avoid misinterpretation. Moreover, if our facial expressions and speech

content are not consistent, people whom we are communicating with could become confused by the mixed messages, which could lead them to question our honesty and credibility.

### ***Body Movement and Posture***

Consider how your perceptions of people are affected by the way they sit, walk, stand, or hold their head. The way we move and carry ourselves communicates a wealth of information to the world. This type of nonverbal communication includes your posture, bearing, stance, and the subtle movements we make. For example, if we have an erect but relaxed posture, gesture dynamically, feel free to stare at others, and interject your own thoughts even if it means interrupting another person, we are likely to be perceived as powerful. On the other hand, visible bodily tension, a downward gaze, and closed posture will contribute to perceptions of you as powerless.

### ***Eye gaze/contact***

The eyes play an important role in nonverbal communication. Since the visual sense is dominant for most people, eye contact is an especially important type of nonverbal communication. The way we look at someone can communicate many things, including interest, affection, hostility, or attraction. Eye contact is also important in maintaining the flow of conversation and for gauging the other person's interest and response. Looking at another person can indicate a range of emotions including hostility, interest, and attraction.

People also utilize eye gaze as a means to determine if someone is being honest. Normal, steady eye contact is often taken as a sign that a person is telling the truth and is trustworthy. Shifty eyes and an inability to maintain eye contact, on the other hand, is frequently seen as an indicator that someone is lying or being deceptive.

### ***Appearance***

Our appearance is a window to the kind of person we are. Our choice of colour, clothing, hairstyles, and other factors affecting appearance are also considered a means of nonverbal communication. Presenting ourselves appropriately plays an important role and gives an initial impression of our personality. Apart from our physical attributes of weight, height, colour of skin, it is important to have a pleasant appearance in the way we are dressed, our hairstyle, makeup and other accessories which is a significant nonverbal clue to the kind of person that we are. A person who is untidy in his/her appearance does not give a positive impression to the audience unlike a person who is dressed appropriately for the occasion.

### **Check your Progress4**

- i. What is Kinesics?

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- ii. List the various kinds of body language that we use to communicate nonverbally.

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- 
- iii. Which according to you is one of the most important of them and why?
- 
- 
- 

### 2.4.2 Paralanguage

Paralanguage refers to vocal communication that is separate from actual language. This includes the vocal qualities that go along with verbal messages, such as pitch, volume, rate, vocal quality, and verbal fillers (Andersen, 1999). Paralanguage is the way meaning is conveyed by how we say things (while speaking) that determines an interaction's outcome. We rely on vocal cues to help us determine the real meaning of spoken words.

It's not just what we say, it's **how** we say it. When we speak, other people "read" our voice in addition to listening to our words. Things they pay attention to include our timing and pace, how loud we speak, our tone and inflection, and sounds that convey understanding, such as "ahh" and "uh-huh. The tone of our voice can have a powerful effect on the meaning of a sentence. When said in a strong tone of voice, listeners might interpret approval and enthusiasm. The same words said in a hesitant tone of voice might convey disapproval and a lack of interest. Our tone of voice can indicate sarcasm, anger, affection, or confidence.

Read the following series of statements, emphasizing the underscored word in each sentence:

I am a good communicator.

I am a good communicator.

I am a good communicator.

I am a good communicator.

I am a good communicator.

By emphasizing the underscored word in each sentence, the meaning of that statement changes even though one has used the same words. Paralanguage is the communication effect of the speed, pitch, volume and connectivity of spoken words.

Many times, the tone of our voice conveys more than the words we speak. The tone of our voice can help us communicate what we meant to convey, or it can reveal thoughts we meant to conceal. It can reinforce or negate the words we speak. The sound of our voice communicates, revealing to others our emotional state, attitudes, personality, status, and

interaction maintenance, or turn-taking, needs. How we speak influences how others interpret our intentions, as well as how credible, intelligent, or attractive they judge us to be. For example, a friend might ask how we are doing, and we might respond with the standard "I'm fine," but how we actually say those words might reveal a tremendous amount of how we are really feeling. A cold tone of voice might suggest that we are actually not fine, but we don't wish to discuss it. A bright, happy tone of voice will reveal that we are actually doing quite well. A somber, downcast tone would indicate that we are the opposite of fine and that perhaps our friend should inquire further.

### 2.4.3 Proxemics

The study of how space and distance are used to communicate is known as Proxemics. How space is utilized and how this utilization becomes meaningful is what space language is about. Space has a certain territorial dimension as well as conceptual dimension. Many organizations spend a lot of money to convey their image through the architecture of their building or the interior design of the office. Most workplaces organize their space in a manner that reflects the ethos or corporate culture of the organisation. The other dimension of this space refers to the proximity of distance between the sender and the receiver. This study of physical space and distance in interpersonal relations is called proxemics.

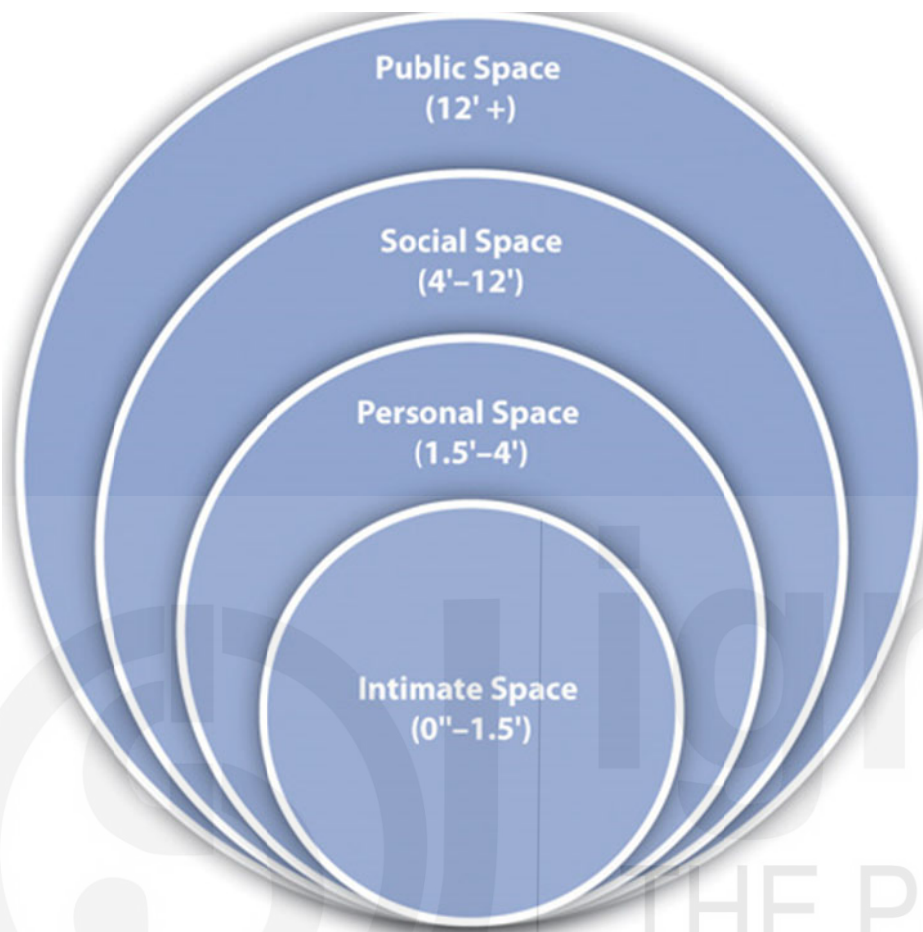
There are roughly four zones of space around us. Edward T. Hall divides the communication space into four distinct zones that distinguish the kinds of interactions we have and the relationships we share through them, namely intimate, personal, social and public. The intimate zone extends to one and a half feet around the person. This is a private zone where only family and close acquaintances communicate with each other. In this zone of communication patting or hugging each other are some examples of communication happening.

The next zone is the personal zone or space which extends from 1.5 feet to 4 feet. Close friends, colleagues and peers communicate in this zone. It is a relaxed and casual zone where informal, spontaneous and unplanned communication can take place.

The third zone extends between 4 to 12 feet and is referred to as the social space. Here relationships are more formal and official and the communication more organized. Professional discussions, instructions, business negotiations, requests meetings and persuasions are all part of this region.

The outermost region or the public zone is 12 feet and beyond. Events are formal in this zone. The speaker needs to use a microphone to communicate in this zone. The audience or the receiver are free to listen or respond to the speaker's observations. Here body language has a lesser role to play and oral communication and paralanguage have a more important role.





People from different cultures maintain the same four categories, but not necessarily the same distances. Cultural and family backgrounds also influence our use of space and personal body boundaries.

Understanding proxemics affords us opportunities to improve our relationships. By becoming aware of how space communicates, we attune ourselves to the nature of acceptable and unacceptable proxemic behaviour.

### Check your Progress 5

Assess the situations given below and write down in which zone this communication is taking place.

- i. A mother singing a lullaby to her child
- ii. A political leader addressing a public meeting
- iii. A board meeting of an organisation
- iv. Birthday celebrations of your sister
- v. Anniversary celebrations of your colleague



- vi. Job interview of a candidate
- vii. A discussion between a father and son on importance of joint families
- viii. A debate competition

#### 2.4.4 Haptics

Haptics refers to the study of communication by touch. Communicating through touch is another important nonverbal behaviour. Touch is necessary for human social development, and it can be welcoming, threatening, or persuasive. This nonverbal trait brings the sender and the receiver in direct physical contact. But this requires the maximum sensitivity to culture. What is an acceptable practice in one culture may be completely unacceptable in another culture. Although touch remains an important tool in interpersonal communication, the messages it communicates are varied. The amount of touching we do or find acceptable is, at least in part, culturally conditioned.

Touch is also a marker of organizational status. It is usually the senior who initiates it and is in a position to control it. In the Indian context men and women fold their hands to greet each other rather than shake hands. But now it is more commonplace to shake hands rather than to greet with folded hands. With time and more openness, it is acceptable both for men and women to shake hands with each other.

We communicate a great deal through touch. We use it for different purposes: to communicate attitude or affect, to encourage affiliation, and to exert control or power. Think about the very different messages given by a weak handshake, a warm bear hug, a patronizing pat on the head, or a controlling grip on the arm.

Touch can also be used to communicate affection, familiarity, sympathy, and other emotions and adds a degree of bonding for better interpersonal interactions.

It has also been observed that men and women convey different meanings through touch. Women tend to use touch to convey care, concern and nurturance while men use touch to assert power or control over others.

#### 2.4.5 Chronemics

Communication conveyed through a sense of time is called Chronemics. It deals with the manner in which we structure our time and interactions. Some of us are preoccupied with time, while others regularly waste it. Some of us are typically early, while others are chronically late. Some of us approach life with a sense of urgency, while others prefer a more leisurely pace. Some of us are early birds, functioning best in the morning, while others, night owls, perform best at night. Basically, we try to understand the person's approach to time and it also helps us to understand the kind of person he/she is, his/her background and his/her organization by the importance he/she attaches to time. Individuals not being on time for meetings, interviews give the impression that the person is inefficient and cannot manage things on time. It reveals the

character of the person. Chronemics is the ability to project time as a dimension of orderliness, discipline, sincerity, reliability, seriousness of purpose and punctuality. Organizational efficiency depends a lot on time management. But this is again a culture specific trait. In most western countries a lot of stress is laid on punctuality and time management, but in India being late for meetings or appointments conveys that the person is very important and busy and therefore not able to arrive on time for appointments or meetings.

Let us understand, what does it mean to be “on time”? How is the concept of punctuality construed? To be “on time” for a job interview may be interpreted differently from what it means to be “on time” for a party. The latter usually allows more flexibility.

#### **2.4.6 Sign Language**

Sign language uses symbols that are commonly understood within a particular group. Signs get their meaning by becoming substitutes for the idea or thing they replace. For example, the zebra crossing denotes that people should use it to cross the road. Generally, signs are used to convey simple meanings or messages. Traffic signals, maps, road signs graphs, alarms etc. convey a particular meaning. Sign language can be either audio or visual and nowadays a combination of the two i.e., the audio visual is a popular medium of communication.

*Audio Signs:* Audio signs is one of the most ancient communication practices. It continues to be used to convey the immediacy of the situation for example ambulance hooters, fire- tender sirens or police jeep sirens. In the workplace sound signals are used as markers of time for example the sirens in factories announcing change of shifts or the office buzzer to summon a subordinate. The telephone ring, the alarm clocks, the doorbell or the car horn are all examples of audio signs which we are familiar with.

*Visual signs:* These are generally illustrations that one associates with a meaning. For e.g. a red cross on the windshield of a car conveys that the car belongs to a doctor. Similarly, the picture of a bed or of a plate, spoon and fork while travelling on highways suggests that there is a restaurant ahead where the traveller can stop to have a meal. Visual signs are able to condense messages and helps the reader to comprehend the message easily. Some visual signs like traffic signals are universal in their message/ meaning. Visual signs also make the message more interesting or appealing especially maps and graphs.

*Audio- visual signs:* This is one of the most popular mediums to convey meaning in the present times. Some of the most popular among them is television, films, advertising and interactive websites. Its power to communicate and persuade is immense.

#### **2.4.7 Silence**

This is a passive nonverbal communication but at times can convey much more than words or actions. When a person becomes silent it can communicate many things for example the person is sad, mentally upset, angry, helpless, fearful, respectful, in disagreement, ignorant etc. It is a very effective tool to communicate the above-mentioned emotions. It can also be interpreted as

shyness, or disgust. But chances of one misinterpreting it is also high leading to misleading conclusions.

### Check your Progress 6

1. Many times, it has been observed that non-verbal communication helps in / supports verbal communication. Make a list of at least two instances where this happens.

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2. After reading this unit on non-verbal communication we understand that non-verbal communication is also at times culture specific, for example in some European countries it is acceptable for men and women to hug or pat each other to show familiarity. This is not the case in India. Give some examples of culture specific communication in the context of nonverbal communication. Support your answer with appropriate examples.

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### 2.5 Let Us Sum Up

In this unit you have

- studied about the importance of Non-verbal Communication
- understood that it is an integral part of communication
- been made aware of the different kinds of nonverbal communication
- understood how nonverbal communication helps in communication

### 2.6 Answers

#### Check your progress 1

**Read the phrases given below. Each of these phrases highlights a nonverbal cue which offers a clue to the attitudes, feelings and personality of a person. Can you guess what these cues suggest?**

The twinkle in her eyes = feeling happy, finding something amusing—a likeable personality

The knowing look of their smiles = attitude of suspicion, not trusting someone

The rigidity in his posture = introvert, inability to accept diverse views

The confidence in her eyes = extrovert with an ability to accept and tolerate

**Check your Progress 2**

- i. T
- ii. T
- iii. F
- iv. T
- v. F

**Check your Progress 3**

- i. We stop our car when the traffic signal turns red. **Non verbal**
- ii. The ringing of the school bell for the next class. **Non verbal**
- iii. A person talking over the phone.
- iv. A baby laughing /gurgling loudly. **Non verbal**
- v. A young boy singing melodiously. **Non verbal**
- vi. A young child clapping her/his hands excitedly when he sees his/her birthday gift.  
**Nonverbal**
- vii. A teacher frowning at a student who is not paying attention in class. **Non verbal**
- viii. A young man screaming at someone.
- ix. The Principal of a school making a speech at the Annual Day function.
- x. Spectators cheering loudly for their favourite team during a cricket match. **Non verbal**
- xi. Raising your hand during a group discussion. **Non verbal**

**Activity 3**

| Communication Style                  | Colombia | South Korea | Saudi Arabia |
|--------------------------------------|----------|-------------|--------------|
| <b>Interrupting in communication</b> | √?       | X           | √            |
| <b>Touching another person</b>       | √        | X           | √            |
| <b>Disagreeing with others</b>       | √        | X           | √            |
| <b>Refusing directly</b>             | X        | X           | X            |

#### Check your Progress 4

- i. Kinesics is the study of body language used for nonverbal communication. 50% of our communication happens through body language. We can express a variety of emotions through our body language. Some of them are anger, happiness, sadness, joy and restlessness.
- ii. They are the following:
  - Facial Expressions
  - Gestures
  - Body Movement and Posture
  - Eye gaze/contact
  - Appearance

#### Check your Progress 5

- i A mother singing a lullaby to her child **Intimate Space**
- ii A political leader addressing a public meeting **Public Space**
- iii A board meeting of an organisation **Social Space**
- iv Birthday celebrations of your sister **Personal Space**
- v Anniversary celebrations of your colleague **Personal Space**
- vi Job interview of a candidate **Social Space**
- vii A discussion between a father and son on importance of joint families **Personal Space**
- viii A debate competition **Social Space**

#### Listening Text

##### It's our style.

- A. Listen. Students are talking about communication styles in their countries. Check the behaviours that are not OK.

1.

Teacher: OK, everybody, today we're going to continue our discussion on communication styles. While you are in conversation with someone, you stop the other person to add your own idea, or to ask a question. In some cultures, it's OK to interrupt the speaker. How about in your countries? Yes, Luis?

Luis: Some people might interrupt in Colombia, but you really shouldn't. It really isn't polite. It's OK to ask questions to show you're interested in what the other person is saying, but it's best to wait until the other person finishes.

Teacher: What about interrupting in South Korea, Soon Jin? Is it common there?

Soon Jin: No, we usually don't interrupt- especially not older people, like parents. We listen to what they say. Interrupting is not good in Korean culture.

Teacher: How about in your culture Ali?

Ali: In Saudi Arabia, it's usually OK. It's just part of the conversation. Actually, I think if you interrupt, it shows you're a strong leader. You direct the conversation.

2.

Teacher: All right. The next point I'd like to discuss is touching the other person in conversation. In your cultures, do people usually touch each other during conversation? Luis, do you want to start?

Luis: Hmm. Well, in Colombia, personal connections are important. We often touch the person we are talking to – usually on the arm or shoulder. I think touching the person you're talking to gives a warm, friendly feeling. It's a good thing.

Teacher: Mmm-hmm. How about in your country, Soon Jin? Do Koreans usually touch the other person during conversation?

Soon Jin: Well, it depends. If I'm talking to a good friend, I might touch him on the arm or the hand yeah. I think touching is OK in Korea, as long as we know the person really well.

Teacher: OK, thanks. How about in your culture, Ali? What do people in Saudi Arabia do?

Ali: Oh, people touch each other a lot in Saudi Arabia, definitely, Sometimes I even hold hands with the person I'm talking to. Or maybe I touch the person to emphasize something I said, to say it more strongly.

Teacher: Great, thank you.

3.

Teacher: OK. Let's talk about another communication style: disagreeing. In some cultures, people feel it's impolite to disagree with others. What do you think, Luis?

Luis: In my culture, we respect people who speak well. Colombians like to argue and have discussions with each other. We are very direct when we disagree. We are not angry. That's just the way we talk.

Teacher: Soon Jin?

Soon Jin: It's really different in Korea. We don't usually disagree with or criticize others. Most people keep negative pinions to themselves, so we can keep a good relationship with the other person.

Teacher: Uh-huh. Ali?

Ali: Actually, It's OK to disagree in my country. It's kind of like interrupting. I think it shows good leadership.

4.

Teacher: Let's go on to our last style: saying "no" directly. For example, if someone asks you to do a favour—a friend asks you to help him with his English homework but you are very busy, or your boss invites you to a party but you are too tired to go. Is it OK to refuse— to say "no" directly? Luis?

Luis: I think that's tricky in Colombia, especially when it comes to family. We are very loyal to family members, so we should avoid saying "no" to them if they need us.

Teacher: OK. Soon Jin?

Soon Jin: Same thing in my country. We don't usually say "no" directly. We say "no", but we express it indirectly. The other person understands what we mean, even if we don't say it directly.

Teacher: And Ali?

Ali: In Saudi Arabia, it's similar. It's very important to respect your friends. So, if a friend asks you for help and you can't do it, you should try not to say "no" directly. It doesn't show respect.

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## 2.7 Bibliography

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## UNIT 3: PERSONALITY DEVELOPMENT

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### Structure

- 3.0 Objectives
- 3.1 Introduction
- 3.2 What do we mean by the term personality?
- 3.3 Some key definitions of personality
  - 3.3.1 Gordon Allport
  - 3.3.2 Sigmund Freud
- 3.4 Factors that determine personality
  - 3.4.1 Biological Factors
  - 3.4.2 Environmental Factors
  - 3.4.3 Socio Cultural Factors
- 3.5 The five-factor model
- 3.6 How can we develop our personality?
- 3.7 Importance of personality development.
- 3.8 SWOC analysis
- 3.9 Simple tips for personality development
- 3.10 Let us sum up
- 3.11 Suggested readings
- 3.12 Answers

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### 3.0 OBJECTIVES

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The objective of this unit is to help you

- understand the significance of personality development as an important soft skill not just in the professional sphere but also in your personal life.
- become aware of the factors that influence your personality
- realise that all of us have inherent strengths and unique qualities which we need to strengthen and use to our advantage.
- do a SWOC analysis to enhance your personality and to harness challenges as opportunities.
- work on aspects of your personality which need to be developed for holistic growth.

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### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

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You must have wondered why some people attract more attention and are more popular amongst friends and colleagues. Furthermore, why despite similar academic qualifications, some get selected for jobs easily while others struggle. You must have found some of your friends to be more pleasing, positive and easy going and you like to spend time with them while others are always critical and negative, and you prefer to avoid them. What is that makes people unique and distinctive? What is it that makes some more interesting and amiable? What makes you pay more attention to some as compared to others? And why when despite the fact that you and your siblings have the same upbringing, yet you all are different in several ways.

The difference lies in the personality. Our personalities distinguish us from each other and makes us distinctive and unique. Those with a more wholesome personality are bound to attract us more than others. Have you ever thought what exactly is meant by the term 'Personality'? How do we define it? What are its components? Is it inherent or can it be cultivated and developed? Were we born with our personalities or were there factors that influence it? How can we be like those whom we see as our idols? Is personality development possible and how can we work on it?

Personality is characterized by certain distinct attributes which some possess in greater degree than others. These attributes may be our character traits, emotions, thoughts, habits, attitudes, temperament and responses to the environment around us or the situations we find ourselves in. While some of these qualities are inherent and biologically determined, others are subconsciously acquired through our early environment and education, there are still several that we develop and enhance through conscious effort, which is called 'personality development'. Of all the soft skills, personality development is perhaps all encompassing. It involves learning how to communicate better, to have higher levels of emotional intelligence, to be more empathetic, to be less biased and prejudiced and to have higher order of critical thinking and problem-solving skills. In short, personality development is not just about how we project ourselves to others but to be better versions of ourselves.

#### Check your progress 1

- 1 Listen to a panel discussion on TV and then analyse which speaker were you listening to carefully. Make a list of the qualities of that speaker that you paid attention to the most.

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- 2 Also make a list of reasons why you did not pay much attention to the other speakers. What is it about them that you did not particularly like?

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### 3.2 WHAT DO WE MEAN BY THE TERM ‘PERSONALITY’?

Personality is derived from the Latin word, ‘Persona’ which derives its roots from ‘per’ (through) and ‘sonare’ (to sound). This draws its genesis from the masks used by actors on stage while performing different roles in Greek and Roman theatre. Since there were limited actors to play several characters, the masks gave them their distinct identities as they enacted their parts, bringing alive the characters they were foregrounding. In a way, this also refers to the roles we play in our lives, the way we project ourselves in society. The great Roman poet Cicero (106 - 43 BC) further added to this possible meaning by suggesting that our personalities are what we appear to be in front of others, which may or maynot entirely be who we really are and that it is our personality that distinguishes us from others around us. The Greek physician and philosopher Hippocrates (460-370 BC), on the other hand posits that imbalance in four primary body fluids leads to difference in our temperaments and personalities, thereby associating personality with ‘humors’ or body fluids. The four fluids being blood, phlegm, yellow bile from the liver and black bile from the kidney. People with more blood than the other three fluids were generally more cheerful and those with more phlegm were calm. Those with yellow bile were choleric or angry and a higher quantity of black bile led to melancholy. This theory is no longer considered valid by modern psychologists but paved the way for other theories. For example, Galen, a Roman physician and philosopher (129-210 AD) asserted, “Sharpness and intelligence are caused by yellow bile in the soul, perseverance and consistency by the melancholic humor, and simplicity and naivety by blood. But the nature of phlegm has no effect on the character of the soul”<sup>i</sup>. Based on the theories mentioned above is an indicative table for the theory of humors and personality.

| Blood               | Yellow Bile    | Black Bile  | Phlegm       |
|---------------------|----------------|-------------|--------------|
| <b>Friendly</b>     | Bitter         | Melancholic | Low spirited |
| <b>Cheerful</b>     | Short tempered | Fearful     | Forgetful    |
| <b>Sanguine</b>     | Angry          | Sickly      | Reserved     |
| <b>Enthusiastic</b> | Choleric       | Depressive  | Introvert    |
| <b>Active</b>       | Aggressive     | Lazy        | Calm         |
| <b>Social</b>       | Restless       | Sad         | Passive      |

## Check your progress 2

- 1 Make a list of your character traits and habits and compare them to those of your parents and siblings. Those common to your immediate family members are biological traits.

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- 2 What do understand by the term 'personality'? Is it static and fixed or can we enhance our personality?

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## 3.3 SOME KEY DEFINITIONS OF 'PERSONALITY'

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While several psychologists have attempted to define what they understand by the term personality, no two definitions are same. Each theorist approaches the study of personality from a different angle. According to American psychologists Randy Larsen and David Buss, "Personality is a stable, organized collection of psychological traits and mechanisms in the human being that influences his or her interactions with and modifications to the psychological, social and physical environment surrounding them. American Psychological Association offers the following definition, "Personality refers to individual differences in characteristic patterns of thinking, feeling and behaving. The study of personality focuses on two broad areas: One is understanding individual differences in particular personality characteristics, such as sociability or irritability. The other is understanding how the various parts of a person come together as a whole". And for Weinberg & Gould, personality is "The characteristics or blend of characteristics that make a person unique". While some psychologists focus on character traits as genetic, others see it as formed by our early education, environment and socio-cultural influences. All of them agree that these make us distinctive and unique to a certain degree. Let us look at the theories of two key psychologists in the next section to understand the concept of personality better.

## Check your progress 3

- 1 What is common to the three definitions of personality given above?

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### 3.3.1 Gordon W. Allport

Gordon W. Allport, an American psychologist was amongst the first few to undertake a full-length study on personality. His seminal work, *Personality: A Psychological Interpretation* (1937) offers the following definition. “Personality is the dynamic organization within the individual of those psychophysical systems that determine his unique adjustments to his environment” (p. 48). For Allport, personality is dynamic and organic, it is neither fixed nor static. It keeps evolving and changing as we grow older and respond to socio cultural stimulants around us. It encompasses both our physical and psychological traits and encompasses both body and mind. Allport later included “characteristic behaviour and thought” (1961, p. 28) to his definition. With this addition, he made the term more self-reflexive and prone to change. He was also the first to introduce character traits as an important element of personality. These are our distinctive tendencies in terms of our responses and habits and differentiate us from others. Allport and Henry Odbert’s close study of the English Dictionary revealed more than 4000 words which describe character traits which he categorized into Cardinal, Central and Secondary traits. Cardinal traits become generic adjectives wherein names of people get associated with their traits and we use these names to describe others. For example, Hitler was Machiavellian or My friend Rahul is a Romeo or His father is a Hitler. These describe dominant traits associated with well-known personalities. Central traits are the foundation of our personality. These are adjectives one would use to describe ourselves and others broadly. For example, I am an extrovert, or My friend is honest and shy. The third category, i.e. Secondary traits are linked to attitudes and usually are responses to certain situations, for example feeling nervous before going on stage or anxiety before an exam.

Raymond Cattell, a well-known psychologist also worked on the trait theory and reduced Allport’s long list of 4000 traits to a mere 16 key attributes which distinguish us from each other. His Sixteen Personality Factor Questionnaire also known as 16PF is used by career counsellors and personal counsellors to help in both professional choices and personal growth<sup>ii</sup>. Cattell’s 16 key attributes and their parameters are listed below:

| Warmth              | Outgoing or reserved         |
|---------------------|------------------------------|
| Reasoning           | Abstract or rational         |
| Emotional stability | Calm or reactive             |
| Dominance           | Forceful or submissive       |
| Liveliness          | Spontaneous or conscious     |
| Rule-consciousness  | Conformist or non-conformist |
| Social-boldness     | Unrestrained or restrained   |
| Sensitivity         | Tender or cold               |
| Vigilance           | Suspicious or trusting       |
| Abstractedness      | Imaginative or practical     |
| Privateness         | Reserved or open             |
| Apprehension        | Worried or confident         |
| Openness to change  | Flexible or rigid            |
| Self-reliance       | Independent or dependent     |
| Perfectionism       | Disciplined or undisciplined |
| Tension             | Restless or relaxed          |

## Check your progress 4

1 What do you understand by Allport's definition of personality?

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2 Use Cattell's 16 key attributes/ traits to chart elements of your own personality.

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### 3.3.2 Sigmund Freud

Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory of personality focuses both on nature and nurture i.e. our natural instincts that are inherent and innate, and influences which nurture us or shape our personality. Moreover, he asserted that human behaviour and personality is a result of the combination of the id, ego and the superego. According to him, we operate at different levels of consciousness of which the most significant is the unconscious level. The unconscious aspect of our mind is the most powerful and controlling as we are not aware of it. The id is the most instinctive part of our personalities, which is at the same time biological and inherent in humans and operates on the principle of wish fulfillment. The ego is the reality principle and is located in our interaction with the outside world, it takes into account social behaviour, family bonds and underlying norms of collective living. The superego is a combination of what we have learnt from parents and our environment and experiences in early childhood and can be linked to our conscience. A combination of all three lead to the complexities in our behaviour and personalities. The id is a part of us from birth and controls the instincts and reflexes, the ego moderates the id and is expressed in socially accepted behaviour, and it helps us deal with reality. The superego defines our sense of right and wrong, it suppresses the irrationality of the id and helps us adhere to an accepted code of conduct. A balanced combination of the three leads to a balanced personality but an imbalance leaning towards id will lead to dominant or impulsive personalities and a stronger superego might lead to a person being either too judgmental or lacking in judgment.

According to Freud, our personalities are not static or fixed but develop as we grow. Modern day theories of personality development have evolved from Freud's ideas of personality and its development. His psychodynamic theory is equally important to understand development of personality. By the age of five, he asserted, our personalities are largely established, and which have developed because of the interplay of biological forces and the environment around us. Freud charts the development of personality through five distinct psychosexual stages. The first stage is 'Oral' as our primary interaction from birth to a year is defined by activities involving

tasting and sucking. There is implicit trust as this stimulation is gratified by those feeding us. As in every stage, this oral stage too will have conflicts. In this case weaning off the mother or the care giver is a source of conflict. If this is not handled carefully, and a child has issues weaning off, this will result in aggression and may lead to thumb sucking or nail biting at an early stage and drinking and smoking later. The next stage which is the 'Anal' stage is focused on bladder and bowel movements or toilet training in layman's terms. Control of bodily movements leads to a sense of independence and gives the child a sense of accomplishment. If handled competently, this leads to a sense of self-worth, and productive and positive behaviour. Negative responses at this stage in terms of punishment or ridicule will lead to negative development in the personality. Children will become rigid, obstinate and obsessive. The next stage is the 'Phallic' stage, wherein children discover the biological differences which mark them as girls and boys, and it is in the 'Latent' stage from six years of age to puberty that children develop social skills and interact proactively with world outside via schools and peer groups. This stage is of importance to development of several social skills including communication, personality development, empathy and emotional quotient. The penultimate stage is the 'Genital' stage, which continues from puberty to death. By this stage if balance has been maintained in all other stages, an individual is in harmony with self and others and is a well-balanced being. Though there are several fallacies in Freud's theories yet its importance in the understanding of the growth and development of personality cannot be denied.

### Check your progress 5

- 1 What do you understand by Freud's concept of id, ego and superego?

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- 2 Explain Freud's psychodynamic theory of personality.

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## 3.4 FACTORS THAT DETERMINE PERSONALITY

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You must have understood by now that personalities are neither influenced nor developed by any one single factor but by a combination of several factors such as biological and hereditary factors, environmental factors which include not just our early environment during childhood but also socio-cultural factors such as our families, schools, friends and peers and later our workplace etc.

### 3.4.1 Biological & Hereditary Factors

These are attributes that we are born with, be it physical or psychological. These factors influence our body type, physical structure, facial features, energy levels as well as temperament. These are genetic and influenced partly or wholly by our parents or grandparents. Influence of biological and hereditary factors on personality have been proven by various studies. This is further corroborated by parents who can attest to the fact that newborn babies have differing dispositions – some babies are calmer while others are irritable. Aggression, timidity, being sociable or reserved are usually genetic attributes. And though we inherit some of these traits, we are not trapped in them. It takes efforts but with due effort and patience, we can modulate ourselves and bring the required changes in our personalities.

### 3.4.2 Environmental Factors

While biological factors constitute the element of ‘nature’ in us, the nurturing element is the environment around us. Our families, relatives, friends, home, school, classmates including the language we are first exposed to constitute our early environment and have a tremendous formative influence on our personality. Research into the background of criminals who have committed heinous crimes reveal that they did not have the benefit of the right environment while growing up. Most balanced and well-rounded developed personalities have been nurtured in a harmonious environment conducive for holistic growth.

### 3.4.3 Socio-Cultural Factors

The society around us impacts our personality immensely. Though the primary nurturing comes from home and family, society is the larger unit that influences us through our social interactions. The socio-economic status that we are born in and our education levels also impact our personality. The term culture denotes shared value systems within members of a community which go on to be the defining characteristics of that group. These collective system of values and beliefs, behaviour, attitudes and customs are a significant influence on our personality.

### Check your progress 6

- 1 Reflect on different aspects of your personality and try and gauge which were influenced by any of the factors mentioned above. For example, which aspects of your personality are hereditary, and which have been influenced by the environment and which are socio-cultural influences.

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### 3.5 THE FIVE-FACTOR MODEL

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Influenced from Allport's trait theory wherein along with Henry Odbert, he extracted around 4000 words that constitute the wide spectrum of human traits or attributes, Raymond Cattell narrowed it down to sixteen as detailed above. Traits are features which help ascertain our behavioural patterns and are the basic and fundamental units of our personality. These remain constant no matter which situation we may be in. They vary in individuals but may or may not be similar in siblings. Similarities in the way we respond as siblings are attributed to genetic factors. Modern psychologists though prefer Robert McCrae and Paul Costa's five factor model which describes five dimensions of human personality. Psychometric tests which evaluate our personalities use scores based on these five dimensions detailed below.

1. **Openness** is suggestive of people who are thoughtful, reflective and have a higher degree of propensity towards intellectualism and creativity. They are willing to try new ideas and activities and are more flexible to change. They are adventurous and willing to take risks. On the other hand, people with lower levels of openness are rigid and habitual. They prefer being in their comfort zones and regular routines and are not comfortable in unfamiliar environment or situations.
2. **Conscientiousness** refers to a higher sense of responsibility and duty. They are aware of their actions and its consequences. Generally, well organised, they have focused goals and are motivated, diligent and hard working. Those with lower levels of conscientiousness are relaxed, not punctual, less inclined to adhere to deadlines and are more impulsive than others.
3. **Extraversion** indicates traits such as outgoing, talkative, assertive and energetic behaviour. Those with extraversion traits are sociable and gregarious and usually the centre of attraction in a group. They enjoy meeting people and are comfortable with strangers. At the other end of this spectrum is introversion – people who are introverts, shy and prefer meeting a select group of friends.
4. **Agreeableness** encompasses those who have higher emotional intelligence and are empathetic and kind. This group are cooperative and well-liked by peer groups. They are the peace makers as they avoid conflicts and confrontations. Those who do not have a higher degree of agreeableness are self-centered and will not step forward for others.
5. **Neuroticism** indicates emotional swings and irritability. People in this category of traits over think and are prone to anxiety. They are the ones who will see the glass half empty rather than half full. Frustration, stress and anger governs this personality type.

#### Check your progress 7

- 1 How does Robert McCrae and Paul Costa's five factor model help us understand our personality better?

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### 3.6 HOW CAN WE DEVELOP OUR PERSONALITY?

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As is clear by now, we are born with certain character and behavioral traits that define our personality, and these are influenced by biological and hereditary factors. Our personalities are not static or fixed and evolve and grow along with our experiences and interactions with the outside world. The five-factor model discussed above also indicates that each of us are distinct and differences in the dimensions of our temperament can be mapped and measured in qualitative terms. And though influences during our childhood and adolescence leave a stronger mark on our personality unconsciously, a conscious effort on our part as adults can also lead to the desired development in our personality. We cannot completely change our physical body structure; it is possible to be leaner and slimmer but not possible to increase one's height or bone structure significantly. While our bodies and facial features are a component of our personality, they are not entirely so. Not all popular actors are tall and handsome and nor are all actresses beautiful, but yet they leave a mark because of their talent and personalities. It is most important to understand that all of us have inherently different and unique skill sets. What we are born with, others have to work towards acquiring it and what we desire in ourselves is equally possible only if we put our minds towards getting it. We can enhance our personality by enhancing our strengths, and by working on our weaknesses and by using challenges as opportunities. Life will keep throwing challenges at us, be it at the workplace or be it in personal relationships. We will be forced to move out of our comfort zone and to reorient ourselves according to the changing needs and environment.

Personality development defines the ability to develop and enhance our personalities to our advantage. While it is important to work on our physical and mental health, it is equally important to pay attention to the health of our personality. It is an important component of who we are and what we appear to be to others. It enhances our confidence and adds to our sense of self-worth. It makes us more positive, flexible and makes us more popular and desirable. For a healthy, wholesome and balanced personality, we must first know ourselves and an objective analysis helps us to understand ourselves better, to know our core strengths and which parts of our personality need to be honed and developed. A SWOC analysis is the first step to knowing ourselves before we work on improving our personality.

#### Check your progress 8

- 1      What does the term 'Personality Development' mean?
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### 3.7 IMPORTANCE OF PERSONALITY DEVELOPMENT

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Personality Development is an important soft skill for holistic development. Having the desired personality adds to self-confidence and self-esteem. It makes you feel good about yourself and the environment around you. This leads to balanced and healthy relationships at the personal front and improves your productivity at work which ensures success and well-being at all fronts. Developing and enhancing your personality is important for several reasons. Some of them are listed below:

**Individuality:** Having a well-developed personality sets you apart from others and gives you your distinctive personality. You will leave an impression in the minds of the people and will be remembered for your behaviour, manners, appearance and attitude and you will not be yet another face in the crowd. Do not attempt to copy others, you have your own qualities, enhance them instead of working towards what does not suit you.

**Enhances Self-confidence and Esteem:** Working on your personality will add to your confidence levels and make you more confident and augment your sense of self-worth and esteem. It is a win-win situation, the more developed your personality, the better you feel about yourself and your higher self-esteem enhances your personality further. You will be able to maintain a healthy work-life balance and find greater levels of satisfaction in both if you are confident and feel good about yourself.

**Reduces Stress:** Well balanced and healthy personalities seem to have a stress-free existence, but that is not the case, they face work related pressures as much as anyone else except they are able to deal with them better. Being positive and facing difficulties head on with a smile reduces complexities. An understanding that nothing lasts, and difficulties are challenges which should be seen as opportunities only help us to progress to make problems less problematic.

**Positive attitude:** Nothing works like positivity, having a positive and cheerful personality not only makes you a happy person but also more desirable to others. A positive person will never crib or criticise but always has something encouraging to say. Solutions come easy to such people and they make great leaders and ideal team-mates.

**Discipline:** A balanced cheerful personality is usually well disciplined too. Not only are they punctual but hard workers too. Deadlines do not deter them as they do not shirk work and take on any challenge as a learning opportunity. Such people are not rigid either and adapt easily to the changing environment both at the workplace and at the personal front too.

**Communicates Easily:** Well developed and balanced personalities are open minded and willing to share easily. They are large hearted and communicate their feelings easily. They do not hold grudges and are easy going. They are upfront and share their thoughts without hesitation. They are generally more comfortable speaking on a public platform as well as they neither lack confidence nor do they suffer from nervousness.

## Check your progress<sup>9</sup>

1 Is personality development desirable? Why?

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2. Which aspects of your personality would you like to improve?

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## 4.8 SWOC ANALYSIS

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SWOC is an acronym for Strength, Weakness, Opportunities and Challenges. It is the first step towards personality development. It is important to have a clear and objective understanding about oneself. Only then can you harness your positives and work on your weaknesses. In short, personality development starts with a self-analysis. While there are several tools and tests available on the internet to evaluate yourself, most look at the following parameters. Go through the list given carefully, analyse yourself objectively and rank yourself on a scale of 1 to 10 with 1 being the lowest and 10 the highest. This list is merely indicative of parameters and not an exhaustive list.

1. Communication
2. Confidence
3. Problem Solving
4. Critical Thinking
5. Empathy
6. Flexibility
7. Adaptability
8. Time Management
9. Stress Management
10. Creativity
11. Acceptance of Criticism
12. Decision making ability
13. Willingness to work as a team
14. Understanding of different cultures
15. Resourcefulness

Once you have ranked yourself on the parameters given above, do a SWOC analysis by going through key pointers given below.

### Strengths:

1. Think about yourself objectively and identify what sets you apart from others.
2. What is it that you have that enhances your ability to interact with others and perform a task better?
3. What are your core strengths and what do you enjoy doing the most?
4. What do other people appreciate in you the most?

### Weaknesses:

1. What do you avoid doing the most? Focus on why you are avoiding it?
2. What do you think are your weaknesses?
3. Talk to your friends and peers and find out where they think you need to improve.
4. Where do you lack confidence and why?

### Opportunities:

1. In which aspects do other people have an edge over you? Is it a skill set or competency or personality trait?
2. How can you acquire it?
3. Are you abreast with the latest developments in your field, perhaps lack of knowledge makes you less confident.
4. What you do not have as desired personality traits can be acquired with effort. Make a list and work conscientiously towards it.

### Challenges:

1. Challenges are not always situational or outside us. Set personal goals and work towards achieving them.
2. Set small and achievable goals and stick to the timeline scheduled.
3. Prepare daily to do lists for these goals and derive satisfaction from fulfilling smaller targets. You will get to the ultimate goalpost eventually.
4. Challenge yourself to make steps in the right direction and keep motivating yourself. Small treats and self-awards are as motivating as repetition of the mantra – I can do it; I will do it and I have done it.

### Check your progress 10

1. Attempt a SWOC analysis of yourself

| STRENGTH | WEAKNESS | OPPORTUNITY | CHALLENGE |
|----------|----------|-------------|-----------|
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|          |          |             |           |
|          |          |             |           |
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### 3.9 SIMPLE TIPS FOR PERSONALITY DEVELOPMENT

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You would have understood by now that personalities can be developed if we know the right direction and make conscious efforts towards it. Personality is neither static nor fixed but is organic and dynamic and evolves with changing situations and circumstances. Depending upon our skill set and professional needs, we need to modulate our personality. A doctor may be an excellent medical practitioner but may need to work on his patient management and likewise a teacher may be a good researcher but might have to improve his/her communication skills. All of us have our strengths which we should capitalize on but there is always scope for improvement. The following are some simple tips for personality development.

1. **Self-evaluation** is the first step to personality development. Do a SWOC analysis, use metrics easily available on the internet and other sources or use the above-mentioned traits and attributes as a testing zone to chart your strengths and weaknesses. Make a list of what you admire in others, what you would have wished for yourself. Do not forget to prepare a list of your weaknesses too. Study those you admire carefully; they have their weaknesses too.
2. **Step out of your comfort zone** and push the boundaries step by step. Do not restrict yourself to the comfortable and habitual. Set small targets and test yourself periodically. If uncomfortable taking to strangers, do make it a point to introduce yourself to a new person at the next party. Your comfort level will grow naturally.
3. While doing a SWOC analysis, keep in mind the **soft skills you need for your work profile**. Work on that to begin with. If listening is an important part of what you do, inculcate patience and if speaking and interacting with public is part of your profile, reach out to strangers and learn to initiate conversations. It may be stilted at first but will emerge naturally as you go on.
4. **Inculcate a positive and optimistic outlook**. Nothing adds to your personality as much as positivity does. It is the magnet which attracts others to you and makes you feel much better with yourself. Everything is possible with a positive mindset. Optimism leads to better opportunities as challenges are not seen as setbacks but vistas that only lead you further.
5. **Surround yourself with like-minded people**. While several of us enjoy being alone, it is important to meet and interact with like-minded people. Laughter and cheer are important part of our lives and healthy interactions expose us to different points of view. Meeting new people is very good for us as it widens our horizon and there is so much to learn from others.
6. **Inculcate a reading habit**. Reading gives us the much-needed exposure to other's lives and experiences. Choose a genre that you think you will enjoy the most and gradually widen your reading tastes. Reading autobiographies and biographies of your idols is very inspirational and focusing on the personality traits of great leaders and thinkers and learning from them in an engaging way is also helpful.

7. **Pay attention to physical fitness and your appearance.** Though a book should never be judged by its cover but yet first impressions are usually the lasting ones. How we appear to other is significant to their impression about you. Being physically fit is not about size zero or a gym toned body but a healthy approach to life and being appropriately dress for an occasion reflects your attention to others as well.
8. **Self-reflection, Meditation and Yoga** – While keeping physically fit is important, mental health is equally important if not more so. Keep aside some time every morning for yourself to reflect about the day gone by, do a few minutes of meditation and some yoga to rejuvenate you. This works wonders and adds to your confidence levels. You will start enjoying the peace this brings and will value this self-medication more and more.
9. **Work on your communication skills.** Most people lack confidence because they believe they have poor communication skills particularly when they have to speak in front of a large gathering. They suffer from anxiety, sweaty palms and usually have a fluttering sensation in the stomach with racing heart beats and choking sensations. Such people can easily overcome all of these by systematically working on their communication skills. Simple techniques like speaking aloud while reading a newspaper, indulging in role playing and recording oneself as one speaks to listen and analyse later helps a lot. This is particularly so when one has to speak the acquired language, usually English.
10. **Improve your Body Language** – Observe those whom you admire minutely. Focus on their body language, their posture, gait, tone, pitch amongst other paralinguistic features. Improve your gait by practicing walking with a stack of books on your head, correct yourself when you realise that you are slouching, actively remind yourself to sit erect and most important practice the art of shaking someone's hand. It should be a firm grip, neither too tight nor too slack. These days a graceful namaste is also appropriate. Paying attention to such details goes a long way in developing our personality.

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### 3.10 LET US SUM UP

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In this unit, we have discussed what constitutes the term, personality, its etymology and select definitions that sum up the attributes it entails. We have looked into the views of two key theorists on personality i.e. Gordon Allport and Sigmund Freud. The factors that influence personality have also been detailed along with the five-factor model by Robert McCrae and Paul Costa. What is meant by the term personality development and how it can be developed has been taken up along with the need for the same. The immense benefits of personality development have also been detailed along with delineation of the first step towards it i.e. SWOC analysis.

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### 3.11 SUGGESTED READINGS

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Allport, G. W. (1937). *Personality: A psychological interpretation*. New York: H. Holt and Company.  
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## 3.12 ANSWERS

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### Check your progress 1

- 1 Listen to a panel discussion on TV and then analyse which speaker were you listening to carefully. Make a list of the qualities of that speaker that you paid attention to the most. (Indicative answer) I watched a panel discussion on TV last night, it was on the election results. There were four panelists, two of them were political analysts and two were representatives of different political parties. The moderator was balanced and reached out to each one of them for their views. I observed all four carefully and based on my observations, I realized that I paid most attention to panelist no. 3 as she seemed the most balanced, rational, calm, and communicated well without getting impatient or angry. She came well prepared with statistics and observations, she did not react to provocation by others, instead stood her ground well and made her points in a reasonable manner. She came across as a positive person with a well-developed personality.
- 2 Also make a list of reasons why you did not pay much attention to the other speakers. What is it about them that you did not particularly like? (Indicative answer) The other three panelists were creating more noise than giving a reasoned argument. One was very impatient and did not wait for others to finish and tried to dominate the panel discussion. The second panelist was argumentative and did not agree to anything the other three said. He seemed irrational and angry while the third did not communicate at all. He seemed timid, and neither did he interject when he could have but also did not speak well when addressed directly.

### Check your progress 2

- 1 Make a list of your character traits and habits and compare them to those of your parents and siblings. Those common to your immediate family members are biological traits. (Indicative answer)

| Myself                | My father | My mother  | My brother |
|-----------------------|-----------|------------|------------|
| <b>Extrovert</b>      | Extrovert | Introvert  | Introvert  |
| <b>Quick to react</b> | Impatient | Calm       | Calm       |
| <b>Act fast</b>       | Reactive  | Thoughtful | Passive    |



|                  |            |          |                    |
|------------------|------------|----------|--------------------|
| <b>Talkative</b> | Gregarious | Reticent | Attentive listener |
| <b>Positive</b>  | Positive   | Positive | Positive           |

Based on the list given above, it is clear that I am more like my father and we are similar in nature, but both my brother and I are positive individuals as we acquired this from our parents biologically.

- 2 What do understand by the term ‘personality’? Is it static and fixed or can we enhance our personality?

Personality is characterized by certain distinct attributes which some possess in greater degrees than others. These attributes may be our character traits, emotions, thoughts, habits, attitudes, temperament, and responses to the environment around us or the situations we find ourselves in. While some of these qualities are inherent and biologically determined, others are subconsciously acquired through our early environment and education, there are still several though that we develop and enhance through conscious effort, which is called ‘personality development’.

### Check your progress 3

- 1 What is common to the three definitions of personality given above?  
While several psychologists have attempted to define what they understand by the term personality, no two definitions are same but there are common elements in the three definitions given above. While some psychologists focus on character traits as genetic others see it as formed by our early education, environment, and socio-cultural influences. All though agree that these make us distinctive and unique to a certain degree.

### Check your progress 4

- 1 What do you understand by Allport’s definition of personality?  
According to Allport, personality is dynamic and organic, it is neither fixed not static. It keeps evolving and changing as we grow older and respond to socio cultural stimulants around us. It encompasses both our physical and psychological traits and encompasses both body and mind. He later added components of “characteristic behaviour and thought” to his definition and was also the first to introduce character traits as an important element of personality.
- 2 Use Cattell’s 16 key attributes/ traits to chart elements of your own personality.  
(Indicative answer)

Using Cattell’s 16 key attributes, following is an attempt to chart my personality

|                            |                 |
|----------------------------|-----------------|
| <b>Warmth</b>              | <b>Outgoing</b> |
| <b>Reasoning</b>           | Rational        |
| <b>Emotional stability</b> | Reactive        |
| <b>Dominance</b>           | Forceful        |

|                           |              |
|---------------------------|--------------|
| <b>Liveliness</b>         | Spontaneous  |
| <b>Rule-consciousness</b> | Conformist   |
| <b>Social-boldness</b>    | Unrestrained |
| <b>Sensitivity</b>        | Tender       |
| <b>Vigilance</b>          | Trusting     |
| <b>Abstractedness</b>     | Practical    |
| <b>Privateness</b>        | Open         |
| <b>Apprehension</b>       | Confident    |
| <b>Openness to change</b> | Flexible     |
| <b>Self-reliance</b>      | Independent  |
| <b>Perfectionism</b>      | Disciplined  |
| <b>Tension</b>            | Restless     |

### Check your progress 5

- 1 What do you understand by Freud's concept of id, ego and superego?

The id is the most instinctive part of our personalities, which is at the same time biological and inherent in humans and operates on the principle of wish fulfillment. The ego is the reality principle and is rooted in our interaction with the outside world, it takes into account social behaviour, family bonds and underlying norms of collective living. The superego is a combination of what we have learnt from parents and our environment and experiences in early childhood and can be linked to our conscience. A combination of all three lead to the complexities in our behaviour and personalities. The id is a part of us from birth and controls the instincts and reflexes, the ego moderates the id and is expressed in socially accepted behaviour, and it helps us deal with reality. The superego defines our sense of right and wrong, it suppresses the irrationality of the id and helps us adhere to an accepted code of conduct.

- 2 Explain Freud's psychodynamic theory of personality.

According to Freud, our personalities are neither static nor fixed, they evolve and develop as we grow. He has charted this growth in five distinct phases – The first stage being 'Oral' defined by activities such as tasting and sucking, the next being the 'Anal' stage which focusses on bladder and bowel movement or control of bodily movements. This is followed by the 'Phallic' stage which is marked by an awareness of biological differences. The 'Latent' stage mars the growth upto puberty and is characterised by development of social skills. The final stage is the 'Genital' stage which continues till death. A balance in each stage leads to a well-developed and balanced personality.

### Check your progress 6

- 1 Reflect on different aspects of your personality and try and gauge which were influenced by any of the factors mentioned above. For example, which aspects of your personality

are hereditary, and which have been influenced by the environment and which are socio-cultural influences? (Indicative answer)

Since our personalities are influenced by a combination of several factors, the following is an analysis of factors governing my personality.

- Body type – average height - Biological & Hereditary Factor
- Brown eyes & round face- Biological & Hereditary Factor
- Extrovert and confident – Hereditary Factor
- Trusting and loyal – Environmental Factors
- Religious – Socio-Cultural Factors
- Hard working - Socio-Cultural Factors

### **Check your progress 7**

- 1 How does Robert McCrae and Paul Costa's five factor model help us understand our personality better?

Robert McCrae and Paul Costa's five factor model describes five dimensions of human personality. Psychometric tests which evaluate our personalities often use scores based on these five dimensions:

- Openness, which is suggestive of people who are thoughtful, reflective and are willing to try new ideas and activities and are flexible to change.
- Conscientiousness, which refers to a higher sense of responsibility and duty. It reflects motivation, diligence, and a tendency to work harder than others.
- Extraversion indicates traits such as outgoing, talkative, assertive, and energetic behaviour. Those with extraversion traits are sociable and gregarious and usually the centre of attraction in a group.
- Agreeableness indicates those who have higher emotional intelligence and are empathetic and kind. Such people are cooperative and well-liked by peer groups as they avoid conflicts and confrontations.
- Neuroticism indicates emotional swings and irritability. People in this category of traits over think and are prone to anxiety.

### **Check your progress 8**

- 1 What does the term 'Personality Development' mean?  
Personality development defines the ability to develop and enhance our personalities to our advantage. Our personalities are not static or fixed. While some character traits are genetically defined, we can work consciously and enhance our personalities as desired.

## Check your progress 9

- 1 Is personality development desirable? Why?  
Yes, development of personality is not just desirable but essential too. It is an important soft skill for holistic development. It is a significant component of who we are and what we appear to be to others. It enhances our confidence and adds to our sense of self-worth. Furthermore, a well-developed personality will lead to a positive attitude and help deal with stress better. It will help us communicate with others and build a positive and cheerful environment round us.

- 2 Which aspects of your personality would you like to improve? (Indicative answer)

There are several aspects of my personality that I would like to work on. For example, I am lazy and find it difficult to complete tasks on time. I have to work consciously to set daily targets and complete tasks. Moreover, I am timid and shy, find it difficult to talk to strangers. I must work on my confidence levels and communication skills.



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## UNIT: 4 KEEPING FIT

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### Structure

- 4.0 Objectives
- 4.1 Introduction
- 4.2 Physical Fitness
  - 4.2.1 Simple tips to maintain physical fitness
  - 4.2.2 Advantages of physical Fitness
- 4.3 Mental Health
  - 4.3.1 Key to mental health
  - 4.3.2 Healthy brain
- 4.4 Stress free living
- 4.5 Happiness quotient
- 4.6 Integrating mind, body and spirit
- 4.7 Let us sum up
- 4.8 Suggested readings
- 4.9 Answers

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### 4.0 OBJECTIVES

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The objective of this unit is to help you to

- understand the concept of keeping fit with simple tips to follow a healthy and holistic lifestyle.
- realize that being physically fit or having a toned body is not enough. Mental health and stress-free living are integral to keeping fit.
- integrate mind, body and spirit to be a wholesome, well developed personality.

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### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

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Fitness is the key to good health and mental wellbeing. It not only adds to longevity of life, keeps chronic lifestyle diseases at bay but also improves its quality significantly. It is not something we should ever take for granted but work on it constantly. It is a myth that those who are slim and

have the right body weight are the fittest as parameters of fitness are different for everyone. Moreover, it is important first to understand the concept of fitness. Keeping fit is an all-encompassing concept that everyone should follow which includes not only being physically fit, but also mentally at peace, to be able to handle stress and to be calm and composed when faced with adversities, and to have higher levels of emotional intelligence and to not only be happy but also spread happiness.

Fitness does not only refer to being physically fit, to maintaining one's energy levels and improving one's stamina but also refers to integrating one's mind, body and spirit. Mental fitness is a key component as is spiritual connect and peace. They are all interlinked and are at the root of the development of one's personality and the base for the required soft skills. Employers today are looking for candidates who take fitness seriously, which does not mean gym toned bodies. On the contrary, they are looking for wholesome and well-developed personalities who are conscious of their fitness levels and work proactively towards it. Multinational corporations also work proactively towards providing an environment which encourage both physical and mental fitness. Google and Facebook, two multinational giants amongst several others take the happiness quotient of their employees very seriously. Workspaces are ergonomically designed with green innovative spaces, and happy colours with ample sunlight and fresh air to reduce hierarchy and encourage creativity. This unit will focus on different aspects of fitness i.e., physical, mental and how mind body and spirit should all be in sync for holistic fitness and development.

### Check your progress 1

1. What do you understand by the term 'Keeping fit'?

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2. What does fitness include?

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## 4.2 Physical Fitness

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Physical Fitness is integral to mental wellbeing and vice versa. Health is paramount and it is an invaluable asset which we should cultivate and treasure the most. Even the wealthiest people cannot enjoy their wealth if they are not healthy. Keeping physically fit let us live our life to the fullest. Working on our physical fitness helps us burn calories, aids weight loss and maintain optimum body weight. Those who are fit are less prone to lifestyle diseases. Ideal body weight coupled with a balanced stress-free mind is the key to happiness. Healthy and fit people have

higher energy levels, stronger cognitive functions and are able to face adversities and challenges better than those who are sluggish and physically unfit.

Fortunately, the young generation today is more conscious and aware of the importance of being physically fit. It requires patience and ongoing effort; initially both mind and body will be resistant but with constant exercise, the levels of serotonin, dopamine, and norepinephrine in our body increase, and these endorphins lead to a higher happiness quotient and that itself becomes a propeller and motivator. Consistency is the key factor and not the number of hours spent in keeping ourselves fit. Besides, it is not enough to exercise daily in any form, be it walking, jogging, cycling, or swimming or be it moderate to rigorous exercise indoors in gyms or outdoors in parks. It is even more important to treat your body as a temple and give it due care and respect by eating a well-balanced diet and ensuring sound sleep for at least six hours daily.

#### **4.2.1 Simple tips to keeping physically fit**

1. Moderate to rigorous exercise daily depending upon your body type and requirement. Daily exercise could be a minimum 45-minute walk/ run/ jog in the open. Exercising outdoors amidst natural surroundings is ideal as it gives us much needed fresh air as well. It is more important to be consistent and to vary our physical fitness routine so that monotony and boredom do not set in. More importantly, focus on what excites you, the motivating factor is the key to fitness.
2. Well balanced meals at proper intervals which take into account the right element of proteins, carbohydrates and micro-nutrients. It is equally important to structure your meals so that you do not miss the most important meal of the day, i.e. breakfast. Inclusion of roughage by way of consuming fresh fruits and raw vegetables daily helps keep the digestion system optimal. Keeping yourself hydrated also keeps you fit, so it is imperative that we drink between 2-3 litres daily depending upon our gender, body size and physical activity.
3. A minimum of six hours of sleep daily will lead to an energized and stress-free day. The importance of a well-rested body and mind cannot be emphasised enough. Good sleep leads to higher energy levels and productivity. It is cyclical in nature – an active body will sleep well, and good sleep will lead to more productive energy.
4. Avoiding smoking and drinking alcohol as they are both detrimental to physical health. The root cause of several diseases is consumption of tobacco and alcohol. It leads to addiction which directly impacts health and fitness levels. The myth that smoking and drinking with peer groups is the ‘cool’ thing has been busted. As a matter of fact, what is the ‘cool and correct’ thing to do is to focus on your fitness and avoid anything that harms your body and mind.
5. Pick up a physical sport that you enjoy the most. Devote some time playing it every week along with friends or family. It will not only keep you physically fit but also add to your sense of wellbeing. BDNF or brain derived neurotrophic factor is a protein in the brain

that aids in the growth of new brain cells when one exercises on a regular basis. This protein also helps in strengthening memory and cognitive abilities.

6. Motivate yourself and set small goals regularly. Motivation and consistency are the key to physical fitness. It is important to set achievable targets else one tends to give up easily. Do not fall into the trap of quick weight loss diets and protein rich foods to achieve fitness targets. They may give you quick results but are harmful in the long run.
7. There are several free apps on mobile phones which help us to keep a track of our physical activity and calorie intake. It is important to burn as many calories as we gain by eating the right kind of food and the right portion size and exercising accordingly to maintain ideal body weight.
8. Do not try to conform to socially gendered norms regarding body types and sizes. All of us are unique and born with different body types. There is a difference between being thin, slim or lean and being fit. Focus on being fit rather than attaining size zero or gaining a six-pack abdomen else you will be doing more harm to yourself than good. Set your own goals and compete with only yourself.

### **Check your progress 2**

1. What should one do to keep oneself physically fit?

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### **4.2.2 Advantages of Physical Fitness**

1. Physical fitness increases not life expectancy but also improves the quality of one's life. Several studies have linked physical fitness with a longer and better lifespan. It keeps your energy levels high and improves muscle strength and memory.
2. It helps to keep the doctor away as maintaining physical health keeps illness at bay and helps in controlling and negating lifestyle diseases such as hypertension and diabetes. It also improves blood circulation and augments levels of good cholesterol. Furthermore, it improves your immunity towards seasonal and other ailments such as cough and common cold and also protects you from muscle wear and tear and inhibits ligament stretch and pull. It also aids in healing of wounds faster.
3. Being physically fit is also linked to better sleep and vice versa. The fitter you are, the better is your sleep quality which impacts your physical health positively. Nothing like a sound sleep to augment the quality of your life.
4. Both physical fitness and sound sleep helps reduce stress and tension occasioned by personal and professional exigencies. Clinical studies have proven that those who



exercise daily deal with stress better and are more positive individuals. It also keeps one mentally alert and sound.

5. Furthermore, being physically fit adds to the feel-good factor. You feel good about yourself and that boosts your self-confidence and self-esteem. Exercising releases certain hormones which enhances and elevates your spirit and brings good cheer.
6. The mind, body and spirit are inextricably linked. A healthy and physically fit body will lead to better mental health and prevent anxiety and depression. It also keeps age linked mental degeneration at bay.

### Check your progress 3

- 1 Why should we work on our physical fitness?

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- 2 How is sleep linked to our fitness levels?

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## 4.3 Mental Health

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According to the World Health Organisation, “Mental health is a state of well-being in which an individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community”. It is an integral part of keeping fit. Physical fitness will not bear any advantages if one is not mentally fit. The term ‘Mental Health’ does not simply denote absence of mental illness but instead as WHO asserts, “is fundamental to our collective and individual ability as humans to think, emote, interact with each other, earn a living and enjoy life. On this basis, the promotion, protection and restoration of mental health can be regarded as a vital concern of individuals, communities and societies throughout the world”. And just as one has to work consistently to being physically healthy and fit, it is equally important to pay attention to our mental fitness. It defines our being and personality. More importantly, let us first understand the factors that constitute mental fitness.

### Check your progress 4

- 1 What do you understand by the term mental health?

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### 4.3.1 Key to Mental Health

1. Stimulate your curiosity by picking up a new hobby or a new sport. It is important to stimulate our brain cells by giving it new information or activity to process at regular intervals. Reading the newspaper or about progress in science or astronomy or anything of your interest will broaden your knowledge base and also keep you mentally fit.
2. Energise your brain cells by using them more often. Anything that we do out of habit does not exercise our brain enough, it needs to be stimulated and sharpened regularly just as much as we exercise to keep our muscles strong, we need to exercise our brain cells as well. Sudoku and word puzzles are very good exercises for the brain, they are easily available at all levels of complexity. Start with simple ones, your brain will ask for more complex levels once it is ready.
3. Video games when played in moderation are very good for enhancement of cognitive and locomotive coordination. These are an intrinsic part of mobile phone technology and hence easily available. But due care must be taken to play these in moderation. Set aside 15 minutes to half hour once in two days or twice/three times weekly and ensure that you stick to the schedule. Though these are good stimulants, the danger of being addicted to these far outweigh its advantages.
4. Give your brain a proper diet just as you eat a nourishing meal to keep your body fit. Reduce consumption of saturated fats and reduce usage of trans fats. Add walnuts and flax seeds to your daily diet which are especially beneficial for brain cells.
5. Physical exercise stimulates brain cell as well. Both physical and mental health are interlinked and beneficial to each other. Picking up new forms of exercise challenges the brain as well as it adapts to new challenges.
6. Developing new skills also stimulates brain cells. It is important to feed your brain with novelty and creativity. The more innovative your changes are, be it in daily routine or in reading preferences or in sports or skills, the more challenged and stimulated the brain will be. It needs nurturing just as much as your body does.
7. Just as your body needs a warm up exercise before you commence physical training, in the same way, the brain needs to be trained as well. It needs to be sharpened and that happens only with constant practice. There are several tools available on the internet which constantly test your brain in terms of visualization and memory. Logical reasoning and analytical skills are tested by these aids which are free and easily available.
8. Yoga and meditation are the best nourishment for mind, body and soul. These are the magic drugs which do wonders for physical, mental and spiritual healing and fitness. These are India's gifts to the world and their benefits cannot be stressed enough. Keep some time daily, preferably in the morning and practice yogic asanas starting from the basic to more complex ones. Each asana works on scientific principles and has immense benefits on the mind, body and soul. A few minutes of meditation daily helps deal with

stress and anxiety. It elevates the spirit and fills our being with positivity and peace. Practice gratitude and mindfulness. Spend a few minutes listing things, people and opportunities to be grateful for— you will realise that the list is way too long. Mindfulness needs practice, it is the technique of being in the present without harking back to the past or worrying about the future. The more you concentrate on the present, there will be greater clarity and understanding.

## Check your progress 5

- 1 How do you keep yourself fit mentally?

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### 4.3.1 Healthy Brain

Just as much as we exercise regularly to maintain physical fitness, we must exercise our brain as well to maintain mental fitness. We have to ensure that our brain cells are stimulated and active. It doesn't take much effort to do the needful to maintain healthy brain cells but it is easy to let it become sluggish by spending a lot of time indoors watching the 'idiot box'. Spending hours watching television at home does make one an 'idiot' as the brain goes into a sleep mode. Brittany Burgunder, a former professional tennis player and a certified coach in eating disorders rightly pointed out, "No food will ever hurt you as much as an unhealthy mind". To keep our mind fit and brain sharp, we must follow the simple tips given below:

1. Intellectual stimulation is very important to keep the brain cells active and sharp. One way of stimulating the brain is to read as much as you can. Read on a variety of subjects, this will not only widen your knowledge base but also keep you stimulated.
2. Boost your memory cells by playing memory linked games and intelligence boosters such as sudoku, jigsaw and crossword puzzles and chess amongst several others. There are several free apps on your mobile phones now which help you sharpen your brain and memory such as Abacus, Lumosity and Brainwell and Logic grid puzzles. These will help you to multitask easily and to take quick and correct decisions when needed.
3. Pick up a new hobby periodically. These add novelty to your daily quotidian and keep your brain and body stimulated. Be it drawing or clay modelling, gardening or playing a musical instrument. It is more important to keep experimenting, this will not only lead to stimulation of brain cells but also help develop your personality.
4. Pick up a new foreign language. Learning new languages also enhances your cognitive function and adds to your understanding of other cultures and leads to increased emotional intelligence besides keeping your brain active.
5. Eat brain rich food that enhance brain function with antioxidants such as spinach, broccoli and other leafy greens, whole nuts, particularly walnuts and berries. Green tea which is

rich in polyphenols and antioxidants and coffee are known to be stimulants if taken in moderation. Eggs have several much-needed micronutrients such as B6, B12 and folate and chlorine. Fatty fish rich in healthy oils and omega 3 fatty acids are also recommended if you are inclined toward seafood. All berries, particularly blueberries are also considered good food for the brain. All these boost memory and brain function and must be included in moderation in your daily diet.

### Check your progress 6

1 Why is television called the idiot box?

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2 What should we do to stimulate our brain cells?

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### 4.4 Stress free living

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Hans Selye in 1936 defined stress as “the non-specific response of the body to any demand for change”. According to him, stress is the cause of several diseases and reflects in the failure of the coping mechanism of the body to stressors which lead to ulcers, hypertension and heart attacks amongst several other complications. He called them “diseases of adaptation”. Stress can be triggered by several factors. They could be linked to money, pressures at work, family, health issues, complications in relationships or anything which may not be in our control. It reflects the lack of adaptability to any unexpected change. An unhealthy lifestyle too is one of the predominant reasons that cause stress. It is important to identify our stress triggers and deal with them effectively. Stress may lead to rise in blood pressure, increased heart rate, formation of ulcers and tightened muscles which if not dealt with leads to severe health complications and diseases. The key psychological signs of stress are anxiety, anger, irritability, insomnia or lethargy, inability to concentrate, lack of motivation, constant worrying amongst others. This is one of the main causes of depression which is becoming rampant amongst today’s youth as they battle their inner fears which are compounded by social media.

#### Simple tips to deal with stress:

1. Exercise daily to keep yourself physically fit. A fit person is able to deal with stress much better than an unfit person. Factor in forty five minutes of moderate activity in your daily schedule. It helps to clear your mental cobwebs and keeps stress at bay.

2. Yoga and meditation are the magical antidotes to stress. They help the body and mind recuperate from the stresses of daily living. A few simple asanas such as the Sukhasana or the easy pose reduces physical and mental stress, Balasana or the child pose helps deal with anxiety, Anandabalasana or the happy child pose reduces fatigue and pranayama is best for anger and stress management.
3. Reach out to friends and talk to them about your thoughts and problems. Talking to them helps to reduce stress and gives you an objective point of view. Choose your friends with care, the right mindset and sound advice are good stress busters.
4. Stay positive and surround yourself with positivity and good cheer. There are some who will always see the glass empty and will be critical and negative always. Steer clear from such people, they will only accentuate your stress levels. Instead, spend time with those who exude positive vibes and energy.
5. Maintaining a work life balance is integral in today's fast paced life. It is important to make time for family bonds and periodic vacations to balance work-linked pressures. Reach out to childhood friends and relatives and celebrate every achievement, big and small.
6. The best way to destress is to switch off social media and mobile phones periodically. It is not important to have hundred friends on facebook or a large number of likes on your Instagram page, it is more important to meet the few friends that you have regularly. Trolls on social media are potential causes of stress, steer clear and detoxify from gadgets at regular intervals.

### Check your progress 7

- 1 What causes stress and how can one deal with it?

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## 4.5 Happiness Quotient

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Our mental state and happiness are integral to our fitness levels. Those who are positive and cheerful are well developed personalities and have a higher emotional quotient. Such people will attract others and are more desirable as friends and colleagues. Happiness is a state of mind and cannot be located in material goods and achievements. Aristotle, the famous Greek philosopher rightly said, "Happiness depends upon ourselves". It is a choice; we can choose to be happy and positive or see the negatives in everyone and everything around us. While happiness cannot be quantified, it qualifies our worldview and approach to life. Happiness index is acknowledged by Governments around the world as a measure of development and growth. It is measured through surveys wherein citizens rank factors that add to their happiness. Bhutan has been declared the happiest country in Asia, it is the only country which measures its development through GNH or

Gross National Happiness. Not only has it progressed materially but also has taken into account the spiritual and mental wellbeing of its citizens. According to the UN World Happiness Report 202, India lags way behind by being ranked 139 out of 149 countries.

It is important to analyse the factors that can accentuate our happiness. How much is in our control and how much can we acquire it? While nearly 50% of our happiness stems from our temperament and personality type, some are more cheerful than others, 40 % depends upon our outlook to life and only 10 % depends upon external factors. Amongst all other factors, good health is the predominant key to happiness, it is directly proportionate to our happiness quotient. For those, who work on their physical fitness, a daily run or jog adds to their levels of happiness. Furthermore, happiness multiplies when shared. Being in the company of good friends and relatives adds to our happiness quotient. And if you are fortunate to be in a profession that you enjoy being in, life couldn't be better. Since the better part of our day is spent at our workplace, it is important to enjoy doing what you do. Intellectual stimulation also adds to our happiness and cheer and if it is generated at our workplace, it benefits us even more so. And lastly, it is essential to reboot our body and mind periodically, to give it the much needed break from the stresses of daily living. No medicine better than a visit to mother nature. Being amidst natural surroundings like the mountains or seaside is both recuperative and regenerative. Switch off your laptop and mobile phone and just soak in the sights and sounds that provide mental peace and happiness.

### Check your progress 8

1. What do you understand by the term Happiness Quotient and how is it linked to fitness?  
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2. What makes you happy? Think about it and prepare a list of people, things and activities that add to your happiness quotient.  
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## 4.6 Integrating Mind, Body and Spirit

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Holistic fitness is possible only when our mind, body and spirit are in a harmonic balance. Sweating it out in the gym is of not much use if there is no mental peace and spiritual balance. A healthy and happy being leads to clarity in mind and purpose. The individual is in harmony with forces within and outside oneself and can deal with problems and stress only if he or she is fit at every front. Yoga, breathing techniques and meditation activate the mind, brings clarity and peace and adds to a state of spiritual and emotional harmony. Integrating physical and mental fitness along with maintaining equilibrium and harmony is the key to a happy and healthy life.

According to H.E.Davey, “For us to sustain mind and body harmony, and function as whole human beings, we need to discover the actual nature of the mind’s characteristics.” And that can be achieved through mindfulness, which is to be consciously and acutely aware of one’s feelings and sensations while steering clear of interpretation and judgement. Dictionaries define mindfulness as “the quality or state of being conscious or aware of something” and “a mental state achieved by focusing one’s awareness on the present moment, while calmly acknowledging and accepting one’s feelings, thoughts, and bodily sensations, used as a therapeutic technique”.

The key to mindfulness is to be aware of one’s feelings and responses to changes around us, to pay attention to occurrences in the present and to condition oneself not to be judgmental or critical. It also includes mindful eating i.e. to be aware of what one is eating, the calorie intake and nutritional value, to learn to listen to people carefully, not to react hastily and to observe one’s surrounding. Other values to be cultivated are patience, tolerance, forgiveness, and acceptance. This will help reduce stress, keep us active, make us more gainfully productive, and sensitize us to the issues around us. This helps in both critical thinking and problem solving besides enhancing our emotional intelligence substantially. Most important it will lead to a sense of not just ours but the wellbeing of others as well and will integrate our mind, body and spirit for holistic fitness.

### Check your progress 9

- 1 What do you understand by the term ‘mindfulness’?

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- 2 How does mindfulness help us in our fitness levels?

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## 4.7 LET US SUM UP

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In this unit, multifarious aspects of keeping fit have been discussed. Physical fitness and its advantages have been taken up along with simple tips to maintain optimum physical health. Furthermore, being physically fit and healthy is not enough, one must ensure mental health and wellbeing as well. Mental health also includes keeping our brain cells active and sharp and just as we work on our body to build muscles and enhance flexibility, likewise our brain cells need continuous exercise as well. There are several ways to exercise our grey matter and they have been delineated in this unit along with a discussion on how to handle stress. Stress is not only the genesis of several diseases but also a catalyst. It expedites

and compounds issues linked with both mental and physical fitness. It is imperative that we identify our stressors and learn to deal with them effectively. Our happiness quotient too is an important marker of our fitness levels and we must consciously work towards being happy. Finally, fitness is neither just physical nor mental but an integration of our mind, body and spirit and holistic fitness is necessary for a long, happy, and healthy life. Holistic fitness must be the goal for all as it leads to a well-developed personality with enhanced emotional intelligence and other soft skills.

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## 4.9 SUGGESTED READINGS

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Brogan, Kelly. (2019). *Own yourself: The surprising path beyond depression, anxiety, and fatigue to reclaiming your authenticity, vitality, and freedom*. Hay House Inc.

Eramo, Kim D. (2015). *The mind/ body toolkit. 10 tools to instantly increase your energy, enhance productivity and even reverse disease*. Createspace Independent Pub

Lieberman, Daniel. (2020). *Exercised: The science of physical activity, rest and health*. Allen lane.

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## 4.10 ANSWERS

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### Check your progress 1

- 1 What do you understand by the term 'Keeping fit'?  
Keeping fit is an all-encompassing concept which includes not only physical fitness, mental strength, higher levels of emotional intelligence, ability to be calm, positive and cheerful despite all odds but also entails a complete balance between body, mind and soul.
- 2 What does fitness include?  
Fitness is a holistic term which includes physical fitness, maintaining optimum BMI index (body weight according to one's height), higher levels of energy, mental strength and fortitude, a positive and cheerful attitude, optimum levels of emotional intelligence and a harmonious balance between body, mind and soul.

### Check your progress 2

- 1 What should one do to keep oneself physically fit?  
One should exercise regularly to keep oneself physical fit, preferably outdoors early morning, or evening. Having well balanced nutritious meals at regular intervals which should include required portions of green vegetables and fruit is important along with keeping oneself hydrated. Furthermore, a rested body and mind adds to physical fitness hence it is important to sleep well every night. Abstaining from alcohol,



tobacco and other body harming substances is equally important for fitness. Motivation and persistence are the key to staying physically fit.

### **Check your progress 3**

- 1      Why should we work on our physical fitness?  
We must constantly work towards maintaining optimum fitness levels as it not only increases life expectancy but also improves its quality. It improves muscle strength and memory as well. Physical fitness helps in controlling and negating lifestyle diseases such as hypertension and diabetes and also improves blood circulation and augments levels of good cholesterol and more importantly builds our immunity against seasonal ailments. A physically fit body sleeps better and good sleep augments fitness. Physical fitness also helps maintain mental strength and helps deal with stress and problems with a calm and cheerful attitude.
- 2      How is sleep linked to our fitness levels?  
Sleep and fitness levels are interlinked as the fitter you are, the better is your sleep quality which in turn impacts your physical health positively. Furthermore, both physical fitness and sound sleep help reduce stress and tension occasioned by personal and professional exigencies.

### **Check your progress 4**

- 1      What do you understand by the term mental health?  
According to the World Health Organisation, “Mental health is a state of well-being in which an individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community.” It is an integral part of keeping fit. The term ‘Mental Health’ does not simply denote absence of mental illness but instead as WHO asserts, “is fundamental to our collective and individual ability as humans to think, emote, interact with each other, earn a living and enjoy life. On this basis, the promotion, protection and restoration of mental health can be regarded as a vital concern of individuals, communities and societies throughout the world”.

### **Check your progress 5**

- 1      How do you keep yourself fit mentally? (indicative answer)  
I try to keep myself mentally fit by reading on diverse topics regularly and by solving one word puzzle and sudoku daily. Furthermore, I ensure that I include walnuts and flax seeds in my daily diet as they are good for the brain. I also walk for 40 minutes daily as part of my physical fitness regimen as this keeps me mentally alert and fit as well. Besides I am very fond of yoga and meditation which help me relax and makes me calm and positive.

### **Check your progress 6**

- 1 Why is television called the idiot box?  
Television does not stimulate our brain cell if we watch it for long hours, instead it makes us an 'idiot' as the brain goes into a sleep mode. Most shows are neither informative nor knowledgeable and do not engage with us in an intelligent way. One must choose what one watches with care and avoid spending long hours watching television.
- 2 What should we do to stimulate our brain cells?  
Intellectual stimulation is an integral part of keeping fit. Reading on diverse topics will make us knowledgeable, widen our horizons and stimulate us further. We can boost our memory cells by exercising them by solving word games, sudoku or jigsaw puzzles. There are several games available on smart phones nowadays like Abacus, Lumosity, Brainwell and Logic grid puzzles which help stimulate and activate brain cells. Picking up new hobbies and skills also help keep our brain cells active. Moreover, eating brain rich food that enhance brain function, antioxidants such as spinach, broccoli and other leafy greens, whole nuts, particularly walnuts and berries are also very helpful.

### **Check your progress 7**

- 1 What causes stress and how can one deal with it?  
Stress can be triggered by several factors. They could be linked to money, pressures at work, family, health issues, complications in relationships or anything which may not be in our control. It reflects the lack of adaptability to any unexpected change. An unhealthy lifestyle too is one of the predominant reasons that cause stress.  
  
Stress can be effectively dealt with by being physically fit and by practicing daily yoga and meditation which are the magical antidotes to stress. Friends and family are great stress busters, and we must make time to talk to them and ensure that we surround ourselves with positive and cheerful people. It is equally important to detoxify from social media and strictly put a limit to the time spent on phones and other devices. We must also maintain an optimum work life balance, take periodic vacations and make time for other hobbies and skills as this helps manage stress levels effectively.

### **Check your progress 8**

- 1 What do you understand by the term Happiness Quotient and how is it linked to fitness?  
Happiness quotient is a concept which is an approximate measure of happiness achieved by each person in his/her life. Basically, it defines how happy we are as individuals. And though it cannot be quantified in a defined measure, it qualifies our worldview and approach to life. Amongst all other factors, good health is the predominant key to happiness and is directly proportionate to our happiness quotient. For those, who work on their physical fitness, a daily run or jog adds to their levels of happiness which, further adds to their sense of mental well-being and keeps them mentally strong and fit as well.

2. What makes you happy? Think about it and prepare a list of people, things and activities that add to your happiness quotient. (Indicative answer)

I like interacting with positive people, they add to my happiness quotient. Furthermore, reading, listening to soft music, and playing chess calms me and makes me happy. Gardening also soothes my nerves just as cooking does. I feel peaceful and stress free the most while meditating and doing yoga, which I try not to miss in my daily schedule.

### Check your progress 9

- 1 What do you understand by the term ‘mindfulness’?  
Dictionaries define mindfulness as “the quality or state of being conscious or aware of something” and “a mental state achieved by focusing one's awareness on the present moment, while calmly acknowledging and accepting one's feelings, thoughts, and bodily sensations, used as a therapeutic technique”. It is being aware of one’s feelings and thoughts and helps control one’s reactions to external stimulants and stressors.
- 2 How does mindfulness help us in our fitness levels?

The key to mindfulness is to be aware of one’s feelings and responses to changes around us, to pay attention to occurrences in the present and to condition oneself not to be judgmental or critical. It also includes mindful eating i.e. to be aware of what one is eating, the calorie intake and nutritional value, to learn to listen to people carefully, not to react hastily and to observe one’s surrounding. Other values to be cultivated are patience, tolerance, forgiveness, and acceptance. This will help reduce stress, keep us active, make us more gainfully productive, and sensitize us to the issues around us. This helps in both critical thinking and problem solving besides enhancing our emotional intelligence substantially. Most important it will lead to a sense of wellbeing not only of ourselves but of others as well and will integrate our mind, body and spirit for holistic fitness.

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<sup>i</sup>Jouanna, Jacques (2012), "The Legacy of the Hippocratic Treatise, The Nature of Man: The Theory of the Four Humours", Greek Medicine from Hippocrates to Galen, Brill, p. 340, doi:10.1163/9789004232549\_017, ISBN 978-90-04-23254-9

<sup>ii</sup><https://openpsychometrics.org/tests/16PF.php>