



HEALTH & HYGIENE, WELLNESS AND FITNESS

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ABSTRACT

The time is approaching when the child's physical education will be given as much consideration as his mental education. Emphasis is now being placed on the school nurse and teacher as well as the physician. A recent advance would also take in the parents' help and co-operation. Physical examination is fast changing from medical to health inspection; and administrative changes transfer work from the department of health to that for education. Dental, nutritional and postural observations are of first importance. Tests of fitness have not been quite satisfactory, but pulse rate before and after exercise seems the best. A programme of health education gives the most comprehensive out-of-school results. The school day is excessive in the information-fodder supplied but scantily assimilated; intelligence for age bearing little relation to time of school attendance. Out-of-school supervision is required for play and holidays. During the period surveyed there has been notable improvement in the hygienic and social aspect of education, in school sanitation, and in the scope of work of external health agencies acting on or through the schools.

KEY WORD: *child's physical education , information-fodder supplied , Dental, nutritional and postural observations.*

INTRODUCTION

You may be quite aware about the term 'health'. We generally understand it in terms of effective physical condition or functioning of the body. When we use the concept of health with reference to mind we use the term 'mental health'. In fact we need both physical as well as mental health. You must be aware that body can only function well when the condition of mind is balanced and healthy. In this lesson you will learn about the meaning of 'mental health' and 'hygiene'. You will also learn about the behaviors' and practices which indicate poor mental health as well as those which promote good health. Finally, you will learn some effective strategies to manage time so as to get optimum results.

CONCEPTS OF MENTAL HEALTH AND HYGIENE

Health is often used to refer to a state of physical, mental, social and spiritual wellbeing of the individual. Thus, mental health is one of the components of the broad concept of health. It is concerned with an optimum level of emotional and behavioral adjustment of the individual. It is a state of maintaining harmony or balance between the needs, desires, aspirations and attitudes of the individual with respect to the prevailing conditions in the external environment.

The term mental hygiene is closely related to mental health. We use the term hygiene to refer to keeping oneself and one's living and working areas neat and clean in order to prevent illness and disease. When we extend this concept to the domain of mind it stands for the art of developing, maintaining, and promoting necessary behavioral,



emotional, and social skills to sustain good, effective and efficient mental health. One can achieve this by following some basic strategies at mental and behavioral levels in one's daily life. These are as follows:

A. Reality Contact: In order to maintain good and sound mental health it is important to have a realistic appraisal of one's own reactions, emotions, and abilities. If you are in touch with reality you may be able to avoid a number of disappointments and frustrations in your daily life.

B. Impulse Control: A person with healthy adjustment would have good control over his/her behaviors' and impulses. So in order to maintain good mental health it is necessary that you should be in complete control over your impulsive behavior's.

C. Self-Esteem: The awareness about oneself is called self-concept. It includes all the statements about "I" or "me" expressed in terms of feelings, beliefs and values. Thus self-concept is sum total of all that a person is aware about his or her own self. Self-esteem is the evaluative component of self. The personal evaluation of self could be either positive or negative. A sense of personal adequacy or positive self-concept is essential for mental health.

D. Positive Thoughts: The quality of mental health depends on whether we direct our thoughts in positive or negative ways. Negative thoughts generate negative emotions such as anger, hate, jealousy, fear, and despair. The effect of such negative emotions on our mind is unhealthy. They also harm the endocrine system. Therefore in order to maintain good mental health, we need to develop the power of positive thinking which generates positive emotions such as love, joy, happiness, hope, compassion, empathy, and optimism in us. Such emotions strengthen our capacity to cope with various life challenges.

ASSESS YOUR MENTAL HEALTH

It may be quite interesting for you if you are asked to assess your mental health by just responding to some statements dealing with your daily life activities. These statements are given below. Each statement is followed by three alternatives namely "agree", "uncertain" and "disagree". After reading each statement, please decide whether you "agree", or "disagree" with it. It may also happen that you may not be able to decide whether you agree or disagree with a particular statement. In that case you are free to choose the alternative "uncertain". In order to express your view please encircle (O) which will best indicate your way of thinking and behaving.

MENTAL HEALTH, MENTAL ILL-HEALTH AND MENTAL ILLNESS

In order to understand mental health in a better way you are also required to know the meaning of mental ill-health and mental illness. Mental ill-health is defined as the absence of the qualities of positive mental health in the individual. For example if someone among you often displays negative feelings and attitudes about others, you can assume that this person is displaying the characteristics of mental ill-health. Mental illness is a broad term which includes almost all the disorders of behavior which are caused by faulty perception, emotion, thinking and attitude. Such individuals have problems in making adjustment with others in the society. We will discuss the categories of mental illness in lesson.

INDICATORS/SIGNS OF POOR MENTAL HEALTH

As human beings we are required to maintain sound mental health. However, we develop certain behavior's and habits which can lead to a poor state of mental health. Such behavior's range from mild irritation to severe forms of anxiety and depression.

The main behavior's which indicate poor mental health is as follows:

- (i) Haphazard and disorganized daily life routine.
- (ii) Short-tempered and irritating behavior.
- (iii) Anger and aggressive behaviour.
- (iv) Restlessness.
- (v) Increased or poor appetite and indigestion.
- (vi) Irregular sleeping pattern such as insomnia, disturbed sleep, or narcolepsy (excess sleep).

- (vii) Poor interpersonal relationships.
- (viii) Anxiety and worry.
- (ix) Negative attitude toward self and others.
- (x) Withdrawing from relationships.
- (xi) Irregular and abnormal physiological conditions (e.g., blood pressure, heart palpitation, and pulse rate).
- (xii) Excessive use of drugs (e.g., alcohol, tranquillizers, and hallucinogens).
- (xiii) Cigarette smoking and use of tobacco in other forms.

The above may cause threat to mental health. If an individual is frequently involved in such behaviors or remains in a particular state for a long period then it is more likely that (s)he may develop various kinds of mental disorders.

BEHAVIOURS WHICH SUSTAIN GOOD HEALTH

In modern life scientific and technological advances have created many facilities for comfort. However, if we develop dependency on them, our lifestyle becomes very sedentary and fragile. In order to overcome the risks involved in such a life we should observe certain precautions and engage in behaviours which promote and sustain good health. Ayurveda, the science of Indian medicine, deals with four aspects of lifestyle which can ensure good health in us. These include right food (Ahara), right recreation (Vihara), right routine (Achara), and right thinking (Vichara). Observing certain practices ensures a health

(i) Food (Ahara): Food is the most important aspect of life. Compared to nonvegetarian food vegetarian food is safe and invigorating for a healthy body. For better health one must eat fresh fruits and vegetables with enough fiber content. Oily, spicy, junk and processed food causes obesity, hypertension, heart disease, diabetes, gastric ulcer and even cancer. Our daily food should contain green vegetables, fresh fruits, beans, honey, curd, milk, butter oil which provide enough of vitamins, minerals, iron, antioxidants and fibers. In addition there should be a balanced proportion of each category of food in our daily intake. We should also maintain fixed meal times. Chewing food properly and eating in controlled manner are good for health.

(ii) Routine (Achara): Routine consists of three kinds of activities in which an individual indulges in. These are taking food and doing activities as per the seasonal demands called Ritucharya. It means taking food and doing activities in accordance with seasons. We must eat and act according to the characteristics of seasons. Thus in summer we should take light food containing little oil but plenty of fluids such as curd, fruit juice, rice curry and beans. During the winter and autumn seasons sweet and salty food can be taken in larger quantity such as milk products, vegetable soup, ghee, rice and oily food. During the spring season light food with less content of oil should be taken such as preparation containing gram and rice. During the rainy season food with astringent, acidic, salty and sweet taste are taken. Day routine (Dincharya) and night routine (Ratricharya) refer to eating and doing activities according to the time of day and night. One should get up early in the morning before sunrise. Drinking water should be the first act after waking. It ensures smooth excretion of body waste, and is a sure remedy for constipation. After excretion of feces and cleaning of teeth, massage of the body should be done before taking bath. Thus there should be proper time for each and every activity in the cycle of twenty four hours.

(iii) Recreation (Vihara): Doing exercise and morning walk are the most important components of recreation. It makes the body light and strong. It increases the immunity, resistance power of the body and capability to work. During exercise toxins of the body are excreted with perspiration. It increases the appetite of the individual. The health problems such as heart disease and diabetes are also controlled by daily exercise. Exercise delays the ageing process and prevents impotence. It helps in purifying blood as the increased intake of oxygen and expulsion of carbon dioxide helps removal of dead cells from the body. Recreational activities like music also help in maintaining good health.

(iv) Thinking (Vichara): Sound and positive mental health can only be maintained with right kind of thinking. A person who is mentally fit and healthy has self-satisfaction, accommodative intellect, ability to accept criticism, understanding of the emotional needs of others, and self-control. Such individuals are neither and happy life. Let us examine each of these aspects in some detail. Driven by greed or lust nor dominated by

fear, anger, attachment, jealousy, guilt or worry. On the social front an individual with positive thinking enjoys good friendships and earns respect from everybody.

Thus an individual can maintain a sound, healthy and happy life if (s) he follows the above health promote behaviors.

STRATEGIES FOR TIME MANAGEMENT

You know that we have only twenty-four hours in a day to perform all the activities. We generally fail to organize activities according to the time available. This creates a lot of pressure, tension and frustration. This happens because we do not allot a fixed time for any activities. This habit often results in doing inappropriate activity at an inappropriate time. Hence it is very important to prioritize activities and organize them according to available time. This we can do by scheduling the activities of twenty-four hours in order of priority and importance. The structured routine is called activity schedule. Before preparing an activity schedule we are required to make a list of activities which are supposed to be done during the twenty-four hours. Thereafter we should sequence these activities in terms of importance. For example the time for study, play, and sleep should be properly arranged. In addition to activity schedule, listing of activities in a diary and following it up can also be a good technique of time management. In order to make it clear let us discuss the basic principles of time management one-by-one.

HAVE LEARNT

- The term health refers to a state of physical, mental, social and spiritual wellbeing of the individual. Mental health is one of the components of the broad concept of health. It is concerned with an optimum level of emotional and behavioral adjustment of the individual.
- The term mental hygiene refers to keeping oneself and one's living and working areas neat and clean in order to prevent illness and disease. When we extend this concept to the domain of mind it stands for the art of developing, maintaining, and promoting necessary behavioral, emotional, and social skills to sustain good mental health.
- Mental ill-health is defined as the absence of the qualities of positive mental health in individual. Mental illness is a broad category which includes all the disorders of behavior w are caused by faulty perception, emotions, thinking and attitude.
- Ayurveda, the science of Indian medicine, deals with four aspects of lifestyle which sustain good health in us. These are food (Ahara), recreation (Vihara), routine (Achara), and thinking (Vichara). Observing certain practices related to them ensures a healthy and happy life.
- We generally fail to organize activities according to the time available. This creates a lot of pressure, tension and frustration. A structured routine involves making an activity schedule.

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