



BETTER MENTAL HEALTH FOR BETTER WORLD

Naseem Ahmed Khan

MPGC LKO



ABSTRACT

Last few decades have indeed been a period of rapid transformation. The world around us has progressed at a tremendous pace, and our lives, our living styles and the environment we live in, all have been subjected to drastic changes. Such changes have not only affected each and every area of our lives but one aspect that has been most adversely affected due to these changes is our mental health. Few people, if any, in this modern world escape psychological stress and strain of major proportions. We know that under enough pressure, continued over a long enough period of time, anyone can be overwhelmed and bend. All of us have "breaking point". Imagine our society with a large number of its members suffering from mental disturbances of one form or the other. It indeed would be a sad day if we have to live in such a society. Mental, health has, therefore, assumed a much greater importance world over.

KEYWORDS: psychological stress , breaking point , mental disturbances.

INTRODUCTION:

In the past, mental disturbances, mental deviations mental sickness usually went unrecognized until they were , so far advanced that they were very difficult to treat. One reason for this delay lay in our attitudes towards them. Fortunately, the old hopeless belief that mental disease is wholly predetermined by heredity and therefore inescapable, has given way before the evidence that environment may also play an important part, particularly during childhood. This viewpoint permits a more optimistic view, and underlies the truth that closely—knit family ties and a stable social structure are the best safeguards against the development of mental health problems later in life. Keeping abreast these lines of thought, the society is slowly losing its horror of mental disease and is coming to regard it as curable like any other sickness. Canadau (1959) has very rightly summed up with his encouraging statement that, if treatment is begun early enough, vast majority of persons with mental disturbances can nowadays be restored to a useful place in the society.

Most children are born healthy, with a strong resistance to illness and with an inborn direction of growth towards normal maturity. Given reasonably adequate environment and comfortable relationship with people, this growth takes place automatically. The most important relationships of a child are with his family. These relationships are the earliest and the most influential on the mental health of the child. It will not be wrong to state that there is nothing fundamentally wrong with babies, its what parents do to babies that creates problems of mental health. Therefore, it is this period which is crucial for nurturing the future citizens of this world, and it has cast an onerous duty on us to spread awareness among masses as to what mental health is.

The Preamble of the Charter of World Health Organization (1980) points out that, "A nation's greatest-asset is ink's people, more so when they are endowed with the highest attainable standard of health, which promotes creativeness, dynamism, determination, productivity and the self-confidence to

move ahead. Health is basic requirement not only for the fulfillment of human aspirations but also for the enjoyment by all mankind of a better quality of life".

The word "Mental" usually implies something more than the purely cerebral functioning of a person, it also stands for his emotional affective states, the relationship he establishes with others and a quite general quality that might be called his equilibrium in his socio-cultural context. Similarly, "Health" refers to more than physical health: it also connotes the individual's intra-psychic balance, the relationship of his psychic structures with the external environment and his social functioning. It is not surprising that the combination of two such terms produces an elastic and ambiguous concept.

Many people when they hear the term mental health generally think of mental illness. But mental health is far more than the absence of mental illness. Mental health is something all of us want for ourselves, whether we know it by name or not. When we speak of happiness, peace of mind, enjoyment or satisfaction, we are usually talking about mental health. Mental health has to do with everybody's everyday life. It means the overall way that the people get along with their families, at school, on the job, at play with their peers, and in their communities. It involves the way that each person harmonizes his or her desires, ambition, abilities, ideas, feelings and conscience in order to meet the demands of life.

Deutsch and Fishman (1963) in their Encyclopedia of Mental Health while describing the concept of mental health have observed that 'mental health is a state of being which is relative rather than absolute, in which a person has effected a reasonably satisfactory integration of his instinctual drives. His integration is acceptable to himself and to his social milieu as reflected in the satisfactory nature of his interpersonal relationships, his level of satisfaction in living, his actual achievement, his flexibility, and the level of emotional maturity he has attained.

Various attempts have been made in the past to assess the magnitude of mental disturbances. One such comprehensive study that deserves to be mentioned here is by Offer (1967) who studied a group of 222 boys selected at random from the school in age group 13-18 years. He administered a number of physiological, psychological and clinical tests to find their health status. He on the basis of his findings, concluded that 12 boys were found to be in the first category of "absence of mental illness symptoms", 82 in the second category of "presence of mental illness symptoms", 32 in the third category of "requiring clinical assistance", and 96 in the fourth category of "requiring only general help". Study shows that even the children who appear to be outwardly just normal, need constant care. These results are indeed startling. We indeed have to be very careful while monitoring mental health among the so called normal people.

For us to have a better world, it is but natural to visualize its citizens not only having no mental disturbance but also possessing a positive mental health. Six categories have been suggested by Jahoda (1959) to comprehensively understand the nature of positive mental health. These are:

1. An attitude toward one's self, in which self-inspection leads towards acceptance of weaknesses and pride in strengths; a clear image of what one really is and an identification with it so that one is motivated toward inner stability.
2. Growth and development toward self-realisation of one's potentialities, a blending of one's total personality toward achieving the best of what one might become.
3. Integration of one's personality involving a balance of psychic forces, a Unified outlook on life and some capacity for withstanding anxiety and stress.
4. Autonomy of action in which the individual determines behaviour from within instead of drifting with the impact of present stimuli-independence in the face of difficulties
5. A perception of reality which is relatively free from what one, wishes things, might be and which involves his being attentive to and concerned with the welfare of others.
6. Mastery of the environment through:
 - The ability to love.
 - Being adequate in love, work and day.
 - Competence in human relations.

- Capacity to adapt oneself to current circumstances.,
- Ability to draw satisfaction from environment; and
- Willingness to use problem solving approaches in the life processes.

In nut shell it can be conducted that mental health is the ability get along with oneself and with others, to be independent in most things but at the same time realize how depended one is on Others in our complicated society. A mentally healthy person can withstand adversity without becoming depressed and can rise up and try again. He is able to help others less fortunate than himself in an altruistic manners without expectation of reward except an inner satisfaction. He is not self-centered but is interested in others and is able to give himself to others Without demanding reciprocation. He is happy without being carefree. He holds up his end in work or play when others are involved. This is a long list of wishful abilities, and of course, only few people can Meet all these requirements completely.

In these days of wars, cold wars, threats of terrorism looming large, unclear bombs extending perpetual threat, spiraling and increasing populations, hunger and epidemic ,diseases threatening our survival it is probably a healthy sign to display some anxiety and concern, so long as this does not become pre-occupation': To ignore the eminent danger and to make no efforts to avoid it is certainly, not a We can envisage a better world only through better mental health of its citizens. No other way, no other short –cuts.

REFERENCES:

1. Deutsch; A. & Fishman, H. The EncyClopedia of mental health, 1963.
2. Jahoda, Maxie. Current Concepts of Positive mental health. New York: Basic Books, 1959.
3. Offer, D. Normal Adolescents -Interview starategy and selected Results. Arch. Gen. Psychiar, 17, 1967: 285-290
4. World Health Organization. Charter of Health Development, A milestone for WHO Chronicle, Vol. 34, No. 5, 1980.