Dare to Care-Adolescent's Mental Health

Manoj Kumar[1]*

ABSTRACT

"Clouds come floating into my life, no longer to carry rain or usher storm, but to add colour to my sunset sky." — **Rabindranath Tagore**

These words of Rabindranath Tagore of maturity is the golden words of adolescent period which is the period of stress and strain, is a transitional phase of physical and psychological human development that generally occurs during the period from puberty to adulthood. Children during this phase undergo various changes physically, emotionally, spiritually but the most important factor is mental health of the adolescents. Mental health is affected by all the factors. Rightly said is healthy mind resides in healthy body, so being physically fit children can mentally grows in a positive way. It is the well being of emotional and social development by making healthy relationships with family and friends, being happy and positive about life, community participation and belonging, self- growth and resilience, achieving great heights by balancing challenges and stress in life. This paper discusses the mental health and mental illness of adolescents, factors affecting the mental health and providing strategies to children to overcome their mental disorders.

Keywords: *Adolescents, Mental Health, Mental health problems, Factors affecting Mental Health, Aiding positive Mental Health.*

Adolescents (10-19 years) are young people between the age group of 10-19 years. Adolescent period is a period of stress and strain in which various physical and psychological changes takes place. They are a group of people with their own specific requirements and needs. Children in this age undergo change in physical, emotional, spiritual and mental health. These changes should be balanced to cope up with the challenges and hardships of life. If these changes are not balanced and stabilized, can lead to various problems in future life of adolescents. It is the time when mental health problems and various health related issues tend to arise. Mental health issues are a common phenomenon among adolescents which needs an urgent call to tackle with great care as they are the most vulnerable group in regard with psychosocial problems.

[1] JRF, Research Scholar, Department of Education, Panjab University, Chandigarh, India
*Responding Author

Mental health is a level of psychological well-being, or an absence of a mental disorder. It is the psychological state of someone who is functioning at a satisfactory level of emotional and behavioural adjustment (Wikipedia). Mental health includes an individual's capability to enjoy life, and create stability between life activities and efforts to achieve psychological resilience and healthy attitude towards life. According to World Health Organization (WHO) mental health includes "subjective well-being, perceived self-efficacy, autonomy, competence, inter-generational dependence, and self-actualization of one's intellectual and emotional potential.

The major issue of adolescents' period is their mental health and its related problems. The present paper deals with the mental health of young children, factors such as parental support helps the improvement of mental health status of adolescents (Tewari et al. 2013), society, peer views, community development programs which helps in enhancing positive mental well- being of adolescents and the strategies which aids in improving mental status of children.

ADOLESCENTS' MENTAL HEALTH

Mental health and stability is a very important factor in a person's everyday life. Social skills, behavioural skills, and someone's way of thinking are just some of the things that the human brain develops at an early age especially at adolescent period in which energy should be channelized to the developing and sensitized to cope up with changing scenario. However, there are some who have difficulty with these kinds of skills and behaving like an average person. This is a most likely the cause of having a mental illness.

A mental illness is a wide range of conditions that affect a person's mood, thinking, and behaviour. About 26% of people in the United States, ages 18 and older, have been diagnosed with some kind of mental disorder. A good positive mental health should be laid in early life of a person.
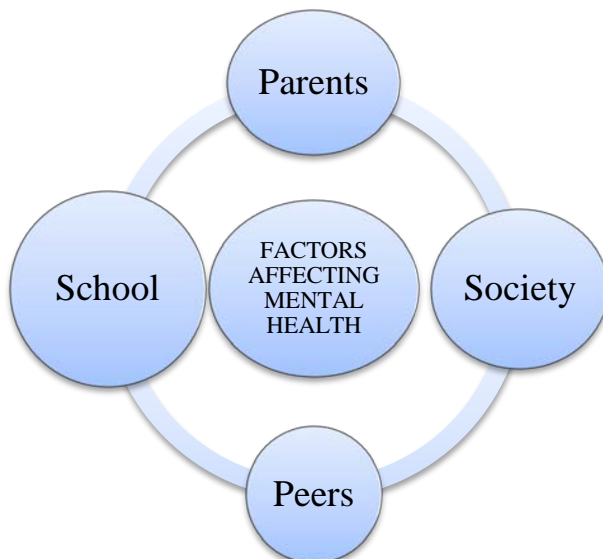
Factors Affecting Mental Health

The above factors are supported by the studies of Hinshaw (2005) which states that friends and family plays an important role in maintaining stability and mental health of children. They play the role of a support system for the adolescents.

According to Connell et al (2009) showed that disrupted home life, parental strife or divorce, parent mental illness, abuse, and social problems at school have all been shown to increase a teen's risk for mental illness and problems.

Studies of Dodge & Godwin (2013) revealed that social-cognitive processes such as social- skill training groups, parent groups, curricula may play an important role in the development of antisocial behaviour in youth. The intervention in the form of Fast Track Intervention revealed that children in the intervention showed decreased levels of antisocial behaviour at the end of 9th grade.

Studies by Lam, L.T (2015) showed that there is a significant relationship between parental mental health which was assessed using the Depression, Anxiety, Stress Scale (DASS) , particularly depression, and the Internet Addiction status of their children. These results have direct implications on the treatment and prevention of Internet Addiction among young people.

ADOLESCENT'S MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), mental health disorders are one of the leading causes of disability worldwide. Three of the ten leading causes of disability in people between the ages of 15 and 44 are mental disorders, and the other causes are often associated with mental disorders.

Mental health problems emanates during late childhood and early adolescence. Some of the several mental health problems include: depression, anxiety disorders, behavioural disorders, ADHD, mood disorders, suicidal ideation, psychological distress etc.

Mental health problems or disorders in younger age accounts for the major disease problem which begins during the age of 12- 24 years. Teenage life is confronting and hard enough to cope with, let alone with the extra burden of mental illness. Often teenagers are unaware of their condition, do not know where to seek help for, do not want to be treated differently to their peers, or are ashamed of their illness and do not want to be discussed which is the major stigma for treating mental health problems.

A study found that teens who "stew", or dwell on problems were significantly more likely to suffer from major depression disorder than those who allowed themselves to be distracted (Moore et al., 2013).

Ranasinghe (2015) conducted a study on 7904 students in India and found out that 25.5% had symptoms of depression, 8.6% reported loneliness, and 7.8% reported anxiety-related insomnia.

Ransinghe & Ramesh (2015) found out that reduced mental health status in adolescents may lead to worse hygiene behaviours and an increased risk of infections. Teachers, parents, healthcare workers, and other adults who observe suboptimal hygiene status in an adolescent should consider whether this indicates a mental health issue that requires clinical services.

COPING UP STRATEGIES

- Adolescents with mental health problems are usually non willing to seek help from psychological services. According to Chen & Fang (2014) self-stigma and attitudes toward help-seeking; additionally, the relationship between the number of externalizing problems and willingness to seek help was mediated by self-stigma and attitudes toward help-seeking, except for public stigma which emphasized the importance of stigma, particularly self-stigma, for adolescents in seeking help from psychological services.

- WHO is strengthening the provision of mental health services through the implementation of the mental health Gap Action Programme (mhGAP). The program aims at scaling up services for mental, neurological, and substance use disorders for low and middle income countries.

- Cheng (2016) reviewed 36 publications and suggested that integration of meditation is a potential, low-cost, curative and non- intrusive method which can be inculcated in physical activities, music and art therapies and promotes adolescent's mental wellness.

- Classroom based educational programs can be introduced in the schools to improve mental well- being of students. Perry et.al (2014) conducted a study on 380 students to see the effect of classroom- based educational resource on adolescent mental health literacy and found out that "HeadStrong", a classroom based educational program improved mental health literacy and reduced the stigma.

- These days' social networking sites are being used in great and among youth it is very common. Kanyinga & Hamilton (2015) studied that addressing cyber bullying victimization and proper use of SNSs among youth can help in reducing the risks of mental health problems.

- According to Comprehensive Mental Health Action Plan 2013-2020, the four major objectives are to strengthen effective leadership and governance for mental health, provide comprehensive, integrated and responsive mental health and social care services in community-based settings, to implement strategies for promotion and prevention in mental health and to strengthen information systems, evidence and research for mental health.

CONCLUSION

Thus in the end it can be concluded that adolescent period is a hard period in which the child might look physically mature and stable but deep inside he or she is still enfolding into being a

mature person. They are physically, emotionally, spiritually and mentally developing into a young mature person. This development should be taken care of by looking into the mental health of the child which not balanced with changing times can lead to mental health problems such as depression, anxiety, ADHD, mood disorders, psychological distress etc. These can be overcome by aiding classroom educational programs for liberating children with mental problems, inculcating meditation and yoga classes in schools, reducing self and public stigma among children to seek help for them and open up with their problems to the psychologists and psychiatrists. These problems can be overcome by the right positive environment and strong family and community support and bond.

REFERENCES

Adolescents and Mental Health: http://www.who.int/maternal_child_adolescent/topics/adolescence/mental_health/en/ accessed on 21-3-16.

Chen, H; Fang,X.et.al. (2014) Associations among the number of mental health problems, stigma and seeking help from psychological services: A path analysis model among Chinese Adolescents. Children and Youth services Review, 44, 356-62.

Cheng, F.K (2016) Is meditation conducive to mental well-being for adolescents? An integrative review for mental health nursing. International Journal of Africa Nursing Sciences.4, 7-19.

Comprehensive mental Health Action plan: http://www.who.int/mental_health/action_plan_2013/en/ accessed on 26-3-16.

Dodge, K.A; Godwin, J. (2013) Social Information Processing Patterns Mediate the Impact of Preventive Intervention on Adolescent Anti-Social Behaviour. Psychological Science. DOI: 10.1177/0956797612457394.

Hinshaw, Stephen, P. (2005). "The Stigmatization of Mental Illness in Children and Parents: Developmental Issues, Family Concerns, and Research Needs.". Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry, 46 (7), 714–34.

Kanyinga, H.S;Hamilton, H.A.(2015) Social networking sites and mental health problems in adolescents: The mediating role of cyber bullying Victimization. European Psychiatry, 30, 1021-30.

Lam, L.T (2015) Parental Mental Health and Internet Addiction in adolescents. Addictive Behaviours, 42, 20-23.

Mental Health: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mental_health accessed on 23-1-16.

Moore, M. N., Salk, R. H.,et al. (2013). Genetic and Environmental Influences on Rumination, Distraction, and Depressed Mood in Adolescence. Clinical Psychological Science. doi:10.1177/2167702612472884.

Murray C., Lopez,A.(2002). World Health Report 2002: Reducing Risks, Promoting Healthy Life. Geneva, Switzerland: World Health Organization.

O'Connell, M. E; Boat, T;Warner, K. E.(2009). Preventing mental, emotional, and behavioural disorders among young people: Progress and possibilities. Washington, DC: The National

Academies Press; and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

Perry, Y; Petrie. K.(2014) Effects of a classroom-based educational resource on adolescent mental health literacy: A cluster randomised controlled trial. Journal of Adolescence, 37(1), 1143-1151.

Ranasinghe, S; Ramesh, S et al. (2015) Hygiene and mental health among middle school students in India and 11 other countries. Journal of infection and Public Health.

Tewari et al (2013) Mental Health status of Adolescents in relation to perceived Parental support. Journal of the Indian Academy of Applied Psychology, 39, 213-21.

The world health report 2001 - Mental Health: New Understanding, New Hope" (PDF). WHO. Accessed on 22-3-16.