



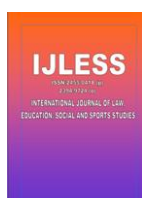
Life Skills – A Determining Factor for Mental Health among Students

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Abstract

Biological development among adolescent is considered to be significant and it brings physical changes in the life of adolescent. The adolescent develops further with social and mental changes which play an important role. During this phase, a man experiences conflict between child and parents, aggression, risk behaviour and emotional changes. There are different problems faced by them and this indicates that the problems which enter into the life of individuals should be addressed so that they do not face any kind of aggression. The adolescent male or female need to take care about their nature towards the other people around them as it could lead to problems like regression and stress. The students need not develop a feeling of loneliness and this will encourage them to apply their skills, handle anxiety and also focus on communication format and digital learning. It is important to handle stress in life with ease and when they attain certain skills in their life, it becomes easy for them to remove stress from their life.

Keywords: mental health, life skills, adolescence.

1. Introduction

During life span of an individual, adolescence is such a stage which is referred to as a phase of transition. This period brings physical changes and also there are psychological and cognitive development among the individuals. Biological development among adolescent is considered to be significant and it brings physical changes in the life of adolescent. The adolescent develops further with social and mental changes which play an important role. During this phase, a man experiences conflict between child and parents, aggression, risk behaviour and emotional changes. There are different problems faced by them and this indicates that the problems which enter into the life of individuals should be addressed so that they do not face any kind of aggression. The adolescent male or female need to take care about their nature towards the other people around them as it could lead to problems like regression and stress. The adolescent needs to establish a positive identity instead of developing a negative identity and also experience role of diffusion which could further lead to uneven skills and expectations. The goals in the life of individuals should be simplified and they should move in the right direction. When the goals in their life is not clear, there might be more dissatisfaction, social expectation, incertitude and mental stress among them. The adolescent would remain in risky situations when they do not realize further path which they need to take to move ahead in life. The adolescent face a lot of

stress at times in their life when they face a particular situation which is very new to them and they are unable to take a decision when they have to choose among different options. Adolescents must learn life skills and social competence for sound and smooth transfer from adolescence to adulthood. The students are an important part of the society. They have certain responsibilities which are put upon their shoulders by their parents and also teachers (Prasad, 2018). The life style of individuals demands various changes associated with religious, social and moral values.

2. Review of Literature

The people have developed their understanding about life skills and this has become popular among mental health professional during last decade. As outlined in a study by Hamburg (1990), life skill education based on needful abilities would always remain helpful to cope up from life pressures, living in complex community and also healthy dealing with the people. It takes a lot of efforts to handle life pressures and there is a possibility to deal with them with the help of life skills education. There are many life skills which would help an individual in dealing with developmental tasks and life challenges. As per self-determination theory which was proposed by Ryan & Deci (2017), there are certain basic psychological needs like competence, relatedness and need for autonomy which are useful in optimizing life skills among (Cronin et al., 2018). There has been emergence of life skills during the past decade, the professionals working in the field of mental health, have shown an interest in helping people in dealing with stress and aggression. Some studies indicated that with training, its positive effect has enhanced the abilities of individuals and made them overcome various problems associated with psychosocial factors like anxiety, depression, aggression and other interpersonal conflicts (Shabani et al., 2014).

3. About Life skills:

3.1 Meaning of Life skills:

According to WHO, Life Skills (Bhattacharyya, 2021) are defined as –“a group of psychosocial competencies and interpersonal skills that help people make informed decisions, solve problems, think critically and creatively, communicate effectively, build healthy relationships, emphasize with others, and cope with and manage their lives in a healthy and productive manner. Life skills may be directed toward personal actions toward others, as well as toward actions to change the surrounding environment to make it conducive to health.”

3.2 Definition of Life skill:

Life skills are defined as “a group of psychosocial competencies and interpersonal skills that help people make informed decisions, solve problems, think critically and creatively, communicate effectively, build healthy relationships, empathize with others, and cope with and manage their lives in a healthy and productive manner. Life skills may be directed toward personal actions or actions toward others, as well as toward actions to change the surrounding environment to make it conducive to health.” according to World Health Organization (WHO).

“Life skills are a group of empowering skills that enable people to cope with life and its challenges and changes. Life skills support psychosocial well-being, promoting good communication, positive thinking, analytical skills and goal setting, cooperation and coping”, according to Psychosocial Centre, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

3.3 Ten core Life Skills

WHO has proposed ten core Life Skills which are essential skills for the individuals in facing challenges associated with living and maintaining mental equilibrium. Such life skills need to be imported in every adolescent or child during educational period in colleges and schools. When core life skills are

developed among college and school students, it helps them in dealing with various challenges which might come in their way, the life skills are mentioned below:

(a) Problem Solving: The individuals will be able to solve their problems when they understand the situation in which they are and then make an attempt to solve such problems by applying their life skills which they have learnt.

(b) Decision Making: A decision can be made when both the sides of the coin are judged and final decision should be made about selecting any one option. Every action has a pros and con and the risks involved in solving them might be different. The loss or gain should be judged before making final decision.

(c) Creative Thinking: The ideas that an individual has should be creative and innovative. There are many ideas and methods which could be applied by the individuals and it is important that the individuals do not follow a single process of solving a problem, rather find out some new methods and techniques to come out of a problem.

(d) Critical Thinking: Every situation has two sides and it is important to evaluate both the sides. Critical thinking is important as it would help in making the final decision of exercising a particular activity. The actions taken can result in another problem, hence the effect should be analyzed before we take any action. The effect could be negative or positive, hence both the sides need to be evaluated.

(e) Self Awareness: The individuals should be self-aware about their capabilities and limitations. Every individual has their own weaknesses and strength and they should realize them in advance. Whenever any situation comes before them, they should be able to evaluate their capabilities and accordingly solve the problems.

(f) Empathy: An individual should understand expressions, views and experiences with sympathy. One should make efforts towards having empathy towards others. People should evaluate the situation which the others are facing and accordingly make efforts to face such a situation when it comes before them.

(g) Interpersonal Relationship: The individuals should develop interpersonal relation, as it would help them in knowing each other and also establish better relationship. They will be able to deal with friends and other people in their work place.

(h) Good Communication:

An individual should have a good communication skill so that he or she could express their feelings and ease out their functioning in life. Communication of emotions and feelings is very important for well-being.

(i) Management of Stress: Stress needs to be managed so that there is no such health issues faced by the individuals. Sometimes there is stress among individuals life and they need to understand the reason behind it so that they do not face any such stressful situation later on.

(j) Management of Emotions: Healthy and appropriate methods of managing a person's emotions would go long way in preventing mental and physical disorders. The individuals could be of any age, they face a lot of emotional consequences and they need to be managed.

3.4 Classification of Life Skills

Life Skills can be classified into following three broad categories –

(a) Thinking Skills: These skills are the ones which enhance logical faculty of brain with the help of problem solving, thinking creatively, analytical ability and critically analyzing various problems that might come in their way.

(b) Social Skills: These skills would include communication skill, interpersonal skill, leadership skill, advocacy skill, management skill, team building skill, co-operation etc.

(c) Emotional Skills: These skills would involve being comfortable and knowing about oneself. Self-management plays a very important role and it becomes important to manage ones emotions, family pressure, stress and peer pressure.

4. About Mental Health

4.1 Meaning of Mental Health

Mental Health (Bhattacharyya, 2021) is usually referred to as emotional, behavioural and cognitive well-being of an individual. Mental health is connected with the behaviour of the individuals like the way they behave, feel and think. It helps in preserve the ability of a person in handling stress and further enjoy life in every way possible. It would involve reaching a balance between efforts, responsibilities and life activities that could help in achieving psychological resilience. All individuals feel that health is the only wealth which cannot be bought through money. Health is considered as a condition wherein the condition of being free from any illness or injury is said to be as a healthy state or else the individual is not considered to be healthy.

4.2 Definition of Mental Health

“Mental health is about enhancing competencies of individuals and communities and enabling them to achieve their self-determined goals. Mental health should be a concern for all of us, rather than only for those who suffer from a mental disorder”, according to World Health Organization (WHO).

Menninger (1945) writes; Let us define mental health as the adjustment of human beings to the world and to each other with a maximum of effectiveness and happiness. It is the ability to maintain an even temper, an alert intelligence, socially considerate behavior and a happy disposition.

Bhatia (1982) considers mental health as the ability to balance feelings, desires, ambitions and ideals in one's daily living. It means the ability to face and accept the realities of life.

Kumar (1992) Stated that Mental health is an index which shows the extent to which the person has been able to meet his environmental demands – social, emotional or physical.

4.3 Foundations of Mental Health

There are different factors that lay the foundation of mental health and they have been mentioned below:

(a) Hereditary Factors

There are certain hereditary factors and it impacts an individual's mental health. The individuals at times face certain issues associated with heredity factors which could be their health or even the ways they deal with stress or any challenge. Individual inherits are related to growth, intelligence and appearance of an individual.

(b) Physical Factors

There are different physical factors which have a significant relation with mental health. The physical factors would include mental health of individuals, their winning smile, influence of others and other factors. People who are having greater strength, robust health and better looks enjoy a better social advantage in the society.

(c) Role of Home, School, Neighborhood and Community

There are different factors that are said to be Social Factors and they are associated with the individual's own life. The individuals can have a different personality which would impact their behaviour towards

others. Social environment helps in shaping the skills, attitude, interests, habit, goals and values which the individuals are interested to acquire.

(d) The Satisfaction of Basic Needs in the Period of Childhood

The individuals need to be satisfied with the basic needs based on social or physical factors. Mental health of a child would vary in their upcoming years and the students at times lots of stress due to their work load and also the type of challenges which they face when they grow older.

5. Life Skills and Mental Health Development:

Research indicates that there is a need to have supportive feelings and relationship as this will help in connectedness among the friends, family, mentors and faculty members. They play a protective role which helps in promoting emotional well-being among individuals. It is very important to apply certain ways for implementing comprehensive approach during the pandemic –

1) Support Development of Life Skills:

There is a need to develop a support mechanism where the students do not feel lonely while handling harsh situations. The young adult should get enough support to identify and manage emotions in their new paradigm (Bhattacharyya, 2021). The faculty members can develop a virtual platform through which they could mentor students in facing stressful situations.

2) Promote social connectedness:

In the busy days, it becomes difficult for people to remain connected physically, but there is a possibility for them to maintain a social connect. The young adults and teens focus on their friendship and maintain communication with the other classmates. There are some avenues which help in creating social connectedness which might include online accountability partners or online study group. Some Institutes also conduct some activities online for connecting them with the society or create social connectedness.

3) Identify students at risk:

Colleges/ Schools should identify the mental health of students. If they find any situation wherein the students are having mental stress, they should be handled in a different way so that such a problem does not get connected with a suicidal behaviour or any other health issue. The faculty members should identify important patterns that they find among the students and if they find anything suspicious or feel some kind of behaviour which is not suitable, they can action and incline them to move towards a better position.

4) Increase help-seeking behaviours:

The students can take the help of faculty members in changing different situations which come in their way. The students at times do not feel like discussing their feelings with their families and this would encourage them to discuss them with the teachers. It is important that the students understand their mental situation and accordingly tackle with them. There are different counseling centres which help the students in dealing with stress and suggest certain possible solutions.

5) Counselling for Parents:

The parents should not force the students to perform certain tasks which they are not willing to perform. If they are important then the parents should try to explain the importance of such tasks and accordingly the students can perform them. The students need more time and care which their parents should provide and accordingly the students can come out of their issues instead of struggling from them regularly.

6. Conclusion

The behaviour of students of schools or colleges should be evaluated and accordingly they should be guided to move ahead in life by facing all the mental health problems being faced by them. Sometimes of the students face certain issues related to mental health and the school authorities should take an action against the one who has created such problems. The working conditions of the students would be different, some of them start training or earning at an early stage and such students would have more exposure towards finding a solution to the stressful situations. There are many students who are not willing to put in efforts in earning or are simply spending their time in some other tasks which may not much fruitful. The students sometimes face a lot of stress in their life and the may not be able to understand the reason behind them, hence problems associated with stress should be explained to them and accordingly they can take final decision about facing such a situation.

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