

Mental health can be improved and will be improved but, the health care personnel, particularly Nurse professionals have to take up lot of responsibilities and explore plenty of opportunities to promote better understanding of positive mental health among people. To provide appropriate mental health care services to the needy population, Nurses have to develop certain strategies. This article discusses about the concept of mental health, certain ways to improve mental health, possibilities, of acquiring life skill, suggestions, nursing approaches to promote positive mental health.

Concept of positive mental health

Mental health is a total embodiment of harmonious relationship within and outside an individual. "It is a process of adjustment which involves compromise, adaptations, growth and continuity". (Bhatia and Craig, 1965).

WHO (1987) defined Mental health as "the capacity in an individual to form harmonious relations with others and to participate in, or contribute constructively to the changes in his social and physical environment".

Maria Jahoda (1958) suggested six major categories for understanding the term mental health.

An **Attitude** towards one's self- understanding and acceptance of one's **strengths and weaknesses**, **Achievement** of the best growth and development by **realising one's potentials**, **Capacity** for understanding stress and anxiety, **Autonomy** of action in difficulties, **Perception** of reality and **being concerned** about others and mastery of the environment.

Maria Jahoda (1958) also listed out certain dimensions of mental health as; **Optimism**, **Adaptability**, **Emotional maturity**, **Perception** of reality, **Sociopathic ten-**

deacy, **Freedom** from nervous symptoms, **Sense of security**, **Freedom** from negativism, **Attitude** towards self, **Social conformity**, **Attitude** towards others, **Recreational pursuit**, **Regular habits**, **Freedom** from withdrawal tendency, **Mastery** of the environment, **Concept** of degree of freedom.

Certain ways to promote positive mental health

Mental health research findings suggest the following ways and means of promoting positive mental health.

1.. The better one's physical fitness, the greater is the likelihood that one will have

Healthy and harmonious relationship increases our well being and the feelings of satisfaction with life. It prevents a lot of stress and strain.

4. Sharing of the problems with others with whom one has confidence, is a very healthy way. The effects of 'Catharsis', 'Confusion', self-disclosure' and 'ventilation' are scientifically proved effective ways of coping with day to day tension and a way to promote positive mental health.

5. An optimistic outlook is highly helpful in overcoming several problems in our life. The one who has a pessimistic approach finds any problem in life as an end. Having too much of optimism or pessimism is not good but, do have a realistic optimism.

6. Understand the reasons for success and failure. Plan the strategies in time and put efforts adequately to reach the goals.

7. Positive mental health is the result of balanced schedule consisting of both work and play.

A proportionate mixture of work and recreation leads to positive mental health. Neither should we be 'workaholics' nor 'idlers'. Let us be responsible individuals with adequate outlets like games, hobbies, outings, and other interests.

8. Try to be humorous - smile costs nothing. Develop the habit of enjoying jokes and sharing jokes with others. Let us try to laugh at ourselves, our absent mindedness, inaccuracies etc. Let the jokes be harmless to any body.

9. One should, instead of expecting perfection in himself, learn to be satisfied with doing the best he can at any given time.

Being perfect in all the activities is an impossible task in this world. What one can do is to use best of one's abilities/skills. An attitude of perfec- →

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Dr. K. Lalitha

the initiative and energy to achieve mental health.

Healthy food habits, adequate sleep, suitable physical exercises, yoga/ meditation, early treatment of illnesses etc. would be helpful to maintain our physical health and in turn promote positive mental health.

2. The better one understands the reasons for goals of one's own conduct, the greater will be the control exercised over mental health process and interactions.

We need to examine ourselves in such a way that we become aware of our good/ positive, as well as bad/negative qualities, strengths and weaknesses. No individual is full of strength only, likewise, no individual is full of weaknesses only; The proportion in us need to be recognised by self understanding and we need to strengthen the positive qualities and strive to overcome the negative qualities as much as possible.

3. One's happiness is enhanced by improvement of one's relationship with others. Happiness consists in right human relationships.

Author :

Addl. Prof. of Nursing Dept. of Nursing
NIMHANS Bangalore
[the time of writing this article]

tionism leads to problems of infinite varieties frustrations, hostility, aggressions, disrespect etc.

10. Mental health is strengthened by giving attention to the present situation. Plans need to be translated into concrete actions. Thinking and doing should go together for positive mental health.

III. Life skills to promote positive mental health:

W.H.O. has recommended the following life skills to be taught to every individual to promote positive mental health. They are:

1. Decision making - learning basic steps for decision making.
2. Problem solving - learning steps of problems solving and generating solutions to difficult problems or dilemmas.
3. Creative thinking - developing capacities to think in creative ways and adapting to changing social circumstances.
4. Critical thinking - through making objective judgement about choices and risks.
5. **Effective communication** - developing **assertive communication** in the face of pressures in life.
6. Interpersonal relationship skill - learning to value relationship with friends and family and seeking support and advice from them in time of need.
7. Self awareness - identifying one's own assets, strengths and weaknesses.
8. Empathy - through caring of people and avoiding prejudice and discrimination of people who differ.
9. Coping with emotions - understanding how emotions affect the way we behave and coping with emotional distress.
10. Coping with stress - equipping with **different** methods to cope with stressful situations.

IV Possibilities and suggestions to promote mental health :NIMHANS Model

The National Institute of Mental Health and Neuro Sciences (NIMHANS), a Multidisciplinary Institute in the frontier area of Mental Health and Neuro Sciences leads the health professionals to

promote positive mental health through various activities. To name the few are:

1. Organising Mental Health Camps in different taluks and villages.
2. Forming District Mental Health Committees headed by Deputy Commissioner.
3. Organising orientation to personnel of mass media about **promoting positive mental health**.
4. **Arranging interaction sessions with social welfare personnel.**
5. **Establishing contact with voluntary agencies like Rotary clubs, lions clubs, women's clubs, youth clubs and allied agencies.**
6. **Developing and conducting programmes to Zila Parishad members on need for improving mental health in the community.**
7. Screening films on mental health in villages.
8. Sensitising the teachers on issues related to mental promotional activities.
9. Organising workshops for State Health Administrators on development of Mental Health Service in the country.
10. Conducting training program in "Student's Counselling" for college teachers.

V. Nurses promote positive mental health

In order to facilitate appropriate mental health care to all sections of the people, particularly to the rural population, Nurses could work in collaboration with non governmental organisations, voluntary agencies and with religious organisations to extend primary mental health care services.

To quote a few,

1. Educating the community about importance of basic needs for promotion of mental health.
2. Prevention of infection, trauma and chemical poisoning before, during and after birth.
3. Educating the parents and other specific groups responsible for healthy psychosocial development of children, importance of play, recreation, role modelling, cautioning against over protection etc.
4. Education on the acquired lesions of

the central nervous system leading to mental and neurological disorders.

5. Education and identification pertaining to high risk groups in the community who are vulnerable for mental disorders during their life time.
6. Undertaking counselling services to the parents of physically and mentally handicapped children.
7. Offering of anticipatory guidance to prevent psychological problems e.g. Individual going for major surgery, individual suffering from chronic physical disorders etc.
8. Provide school mental health care services.
9. Remove misconceptions about mental illness.
10. Educate the individuals on healthier coping mechanisms.

Conclusion:

As a part of World Health Day celebration, in many countries, Nurses are making a march to develop understanding about the importance of positive mental health care settings. They should focus on concepts of healthy living based on "humanistic - holistic care", as the central care of all their nursing practice. Health care reform, patient, family and community needs, scientific developments, economic realities and social relations will mould and shape, role and functions of Nurses towards promotion of positive mental health in all.

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