Mental health can be improved and will be improved but, the health care personnel, particularly Nurse professionals have to take on the 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 of 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 Jhaboda (1958) suggested six major categories for understanding the term mental health.


Maria Jhaboda (1958) also listed out certain dimensions of mental health as: Optimism, Adaptability, Emotional maturity, Perception of reality, Sociopathy.

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

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

4. Sharing of the problems with others 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 a 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 perfection.

...
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:

WHO 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 - thorough 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 information 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 core 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.

REFERENCE

Books