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MENTAL HEALTH AND HYGIENE

You may be quite aware about the term ‘health’. We generally understand it in terms of effective physical condition or functioning of the body. When we use the concept of health with reference to mind we use the term ‘mental health’. In fact we need both physical as well as mental health. You must be aware that body can only function well when the condition of mind is balanced and healthy. In this lesson you will learn about the meaning of ‘mental health’ and ‘hygiene’. You will also learn about the behaviours and practices which indicate poor mental health as well as those which promote good health. Finally, you will learn some effective strategies to manage time so as to get optimum results.



OBJECTIVES

After studying this lesson, you will be able to:

- explain the concepts of mental health and hygiene;
- distinguish mental health from mental ill-health and mental illness;
- explain behavioural symptoms of poor mental health;
- describe health behaviours which sustain good health; and
- learn strategies for time management.

19.1 CONCEPTS OF MENTAL HEALTH AND HYGIENE

Health is often used to refer to a state of physical, mental, social and spiritual well-being of the individual. Thus, mental health is one of the components of the broad concept of health. It is concerned with an optimum level of emotional and behavioural adjustment of the individual. It is a state of maintaining harmony or balance between the needs, desires, aspirations and attitudes of the individual with respect to the prevailing conditions in the external environment.



Notes

The term *mental hygiene* is closely related to mental health. We use the term hygiene to refer to keeping oneself and one's living and working areas neat and clean in order to prevent illness and disease. When we extend this concept to the domain of mind it stands for the art of developing, maintaining, and promoting necessary behavioural, emotional, and social skills to sustain good, effective and efficient mental health. One can achieve this by following some basic strategies at mental and behavioural levels in one's daily life. These are as follows:

- A. Reality Contact:** In order to maintain good and sound mental health it is important to have a realistic appraisal of one's own reactions, emotions, and abilities. If you are in touch with reality you may be able to avoid a number of disappointments and frustrations in your daily life.
- B. Impulse Control:** A person with healthy adjustment would have good control over his/her behaviours and impulses. So in order to maintain good mental health it is necessary that you should be in complete control over your impulsive behaviours.
- C. Self-Esteem:** The awareness about oneself is called self-concept. It includes all the statements about "I" or "me" expressed in terms of feelings, beliefs and values. Thus self-concept is sum total of all that a person is aware about his or her own self. Self-esteem is the evaluative component of self. The personal evaluation of self could be either positive or negative. A sense of personal adequacy or positive self-concept is essential for mental health.
- D. Positive Thoughts:** The quality of mental health depends on whether we direct our thoughts in positive or negative ways. Negative thoughts generate negative emotions such as anger, hate, jealousy, fear, and despair. The effect of such negative emotions on our mind is unhealthy. They also harm the endocrine system. Therefore in order to maintain good mental health, we need to develop the power of positive thinking which generates positive emotions such as love, joy, happiness, hope, compassion, empathy, and optimism in us. Such emotions strengthen our capacity to cope with various life challenges.

Activity 1**Assess Your Mental Health**

It may be quite interesting for you if you are asked to assess your mental health by just responding to some statements dealing with your daily life activities. These statements are given below. Each statement is followed by three alternatives namely "agree", "uncertain" and "disagree". After reading each statement, please decide whether you "agree", or "disagree" with it. It may also happen that you may not be able to decide whether you agree or disagree with a particular statement. In that case you are free to choose the alternative "uncertain". In order to express your view please encircle (O) which will best indicate your way of thinking and behaving.



Notes

	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree
1. I am satisfied and happy with my life.	3	2	1
2. My life is very happy.	3	2	1
3. Even when I am with the members of my family, I feel lonely	1	2	3
4. I am confident about my abilities	3	2	1
5. I have not been able to achieve as much as I want to.	1	2	3
6. I am not as adequate and competent as others are.	1	2	3
7. I am very intelligent and competent.	3	2	1
8. I do not want to mix up with others.	1	2	3
9. People are generally selfish.	1	2	3
10. I have no zest for living.	1	2	3
11. I generally trust people and have no problem in getting along with them.	3	2	1
12. I experience a sense of well-being.	3	2	1
13. I get enough love and satisfaction from my family and others.	3	2	1
14. I am generally able to solve my problems when I encounter them. I do not remain in conflicting situation.	3	2	1
15. I have no goal in life. Life just drags on.	1	2	3

Key

After giving your view on each statement, add the score of all the alternatives you have chosen. The total of all the 15 items is your mental health score.

Interpretation

Obtained Score	Your Mental Health
36-45	Good
26-35	Fair
15-25	Poor



Notes



INTEXT QUESTIONS 19.1

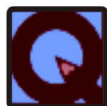
1. What do you understand by the term health?

2. Explain the relationship between mental health and mental hygiene.

3. What strategies can we adopt to maintain good mental health and hygiene?

19.2 MENTAL HEALTH, MENTAL ILL-HEALTH AND MENTAL ILLNESS

In order to understand mental health in a better way you are also required to know the meaning of mental ill-health and mental illness. *Mental ill-health* is defined as the absence of the qualities of positive mental health in the individual. For example if someone among you often displays negative feelings and attitudes about others, you can assume that this person is displaying the characteristics of mental ill-health. *Mental illness* is a broad term which includes almost all the disorders of behaviour which are caused by faulty perception, emotion, thinking and attitude. Such individuals have problems in making adjustment with others in the society. We will discuss the categories of mental illness in lesson.



INTEXT QUESTIONS 19.2

1. What is the difference between mental ill-health and mental illness?

19.3 INDICATORS/SIGNS OF POOR MENTAL HEALTH

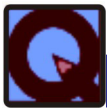
As human beings we are required to maintain sound mental health. However, we develop certain behaviours and habits which can lead to a poor state of mental health. Such behaviours range from mild irritation to severe forms of anxiety and depression. The main behaviours which indicate poor mental health are as follows:

- (i) Haphazard and disorganized daily life routine.
- (ii) Short-tempered and irritating behaviour.



- (iii) Anger and aggressive behaviour.
- (iv) Restlessness.
- (v) Increased or poor appetite and indigestion.
- (vi) Irregular sleeping pattern such as insomnia, disturbed sleep, or narcolepsy (excess sleep).
- (vii) Poor interpersonal relationships.
- (viii) Anxiety and worry.
- (ix) Negative attitude toward self and others.
- (x) Withdrawing from relationships.
- (xi) Irregular and abnormal physiological conditions (e.g., blood pressure, heart palpitation, and pulse rate).
- (xii) Excessive use of drugs (e.g., alcohol, tranquillizers, and hallucinogens).
- (xiii) Cigarette smoking and use of tobacco in other forms.

The above may cause threat to mental health. If an individual is frequently involved in such behaviours or remains in a particular state for a long period then it is more likely that (s)he may develop various kinds of mental disorders.



INTEXT QUESTIONS 19.3

1. Give any four signs of poor mental health.

2. Which behaviours of a person sustain good health?

19.4 BEHAVIOURS WHICH SUSTAIN GOOD HEALTH

In modern life scientific and technological advances have created many facilities for comfort. However, if we develop dependency on them, our lifestyle becomes very sedentary and fragile. In order to overcome the risks involved in such a life we should observe certain precautions and engage in behaviours which promote and sustain good health. Ayurveda, the science of Indian medicine, deals with four aspects of lifestyle which can ensure good health in us. These include right food (*Ahara*), right recreation (*Vihara*), right routine (*Achara*), and right thinking (*Vichara*). Observing certain practices ensures a healthy and happy life. Let us examine each of these aspects in some detail.



Notes

(i) **Food (Ahara):** Food is the most important aspect of life. Compared to non-vegetarian food vegetarian food is safe and invigorating for a healthy body. For better health one must eat fresh fruits and vegetables with enough fiber content. Oily, spicy, junk and processed food causes obesity, hypertension, heart disease, diabetes, gastric ulcer and even cancer. Our daily food should contain green vegetables, fresh fruits, beans, honey, curd, milk, butter oil which provide enough of vitamins, minerals, iron, antioxidants and fibers. In addition there should be a balanced proportion of each category of food in our daily intake. We should also maintain fixed meal times. Chewing food properly and eating in controlled manner are good for health.

(ii) **Routine (Achara):** Routine consists of three kinds of activities in which an individual indulges in. These are taking food and doing activities as per the seasonal demands called *Ritucharya*. It means taking food and doing activities in accordance with seasons. We must eat and act according to the characteristics of seasons. Thus in summer we should take light food containing little oil but plenty of fluids such as curd, fruit juice, rice curry and beans. During the winter and autumn seasons sweet and salty food can be taken in larger quantity such as milk products, vegetable soup, ghee, rice and oily food. During the spring season light food with less content of oil should be taken such as preparation containing gram and rice. During the rainy season food with astringent, acidic, salty and sweet taste are taken.

Day routine (*Dincharya*) and night routine (*Ratricharya*) refer to eating and doing activities according to the time of day and night. One should get up early in the morning before sunrise. Drinking water should be the first act after waking. It ensures smooth excretion of body waste, and is a sure remedy for constipation. After excretion of feces and cleaning of teeth, massage of the body should be done before taking bath. Thus there should be proper time for each and every activity in the cycle of twenty four hours.

(iii) **Recreation (Vihara):** Doing exercise and morning walk are the most important components of recreation. It makes the body light and strong. It increases the immunity, resistance power of the body and capability to work. During exercise toxins of the body are excreted with perspiration. It increases the appetite of the individual. The health problems such as heart disease and diabetes are also controlled by daily exercise. Exercise delays the ageing process and prevents impotence. It helps in purifying blood as the increased intake of oxygen and expulsion of carbon dioxide helps removal of dead cells from the body. Recreational activities like music also help in maintaining good health.

(iv) **Thinking (Vichara):** Sound and positive mental health can only be maintained with right kind of thinking. A person who is mentally fit and healthy has self-satisfaction, accommodative intellect, ability to accept criticism, understanding of the emotional needs of others, and self-control. Such individuals are neither

driven by greed or lust nor dominated by fear, anger, attachment, jealousy, guilt or worry. On the social front an individual with positive thinking enjoys good friendships and earns respect from everybody.

Thus an individual can maintain a sound, healthy and happy life if (s) he follows the above health promotive behaviours.

Activity 2

Briefly describe the principles of health promotion that you should follow. Compare with the test you have taken in Section 19.1. What steps will you adopt to promote your health.

19.5 STRATEGIES FOR TIME MANAGEMENT

You know that we have only twenty-four hours in a day to perform all the activities. We generally fail to organize activities according to the time available. This creates a lot of pressure, tension and frustration. This happens because we do not allot a fixed time for any activities. This habit often results in doing inappropriate activity at an inappropriate time. Hence it is very important to prioritize activities and organize them according to available time. This we can do by scheduling the activities of twenty-four hours in order of priority and importance. The structured routine is called *activity schedule*. Before preparing an activity schedule we are required to make a list of activities which are supposed to be done during the twenty-four hours. Thereafter we should sequence these activities in terms of importance. For example the time for study, play, and sleep should be properly arranged. In addition to activity schedule, listing of activities in a diary and following it up can also be a good technique of time management. In order to make it clear let us discuss the basic principles of time management one-by-one.

Manage Your Time

Activity		Strategy
I	Preparing a list of work	You can plan it one day in advance at night. Try to prepare a list of work you have to accomplish next day. Identify and list all that you have to do.
II	Prioritize the list	From the list you have prepared for the day, prioritize the work. Put the toughest task first and keep the easiest task for the later part of the day, when you are tired and low on energy. Take best advantage of the hours when you work best.





Notes

III	Identify uninterrupted periods	Some tasks may require sustained attention and uninterrupted periods. Keep such tasks for periods when you can devote time without any interruption.
IV	Flexible schedule	You should be prepared to face events that are not planned and you did not expect them. Thus, be flexible to handle such unexpected events.
V	Time of exercise	Set aside some time in your daily schedule for exercise and yoga. Time spent on such activities helps to maintain good mental and physical health and results in increased productivity.
VI	Leisure time activities	Set aside some time each day or work to do some planned leisure activity. It gives mental and physical rest and break from the daily routine. For example, listening to music, watching favourite programme on television, gardening, painting, playing favourite sports etc.

Activity 3

Managing Time

Make a time-table of your daily activities. Now list the ways you can manage your time in a more efficient way.



WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNT

- The term health refers to a state of physical, mental, social and spiritual well-being of the individual. Mental health is one of the components of the broad concept of health. It is concerned with an optimum level of emotional and behavioural adjustment of the individual.
- The term *mental hygiene* refers to keeping oneself and one's living and working areas neat and clean in order to prevent illness and disease. When we extend this concept to the domain of mind it stands for the art of developing, maintaining, and promoting necessary behavioural, emotional, and social skills to sustain good mental health.



- *Mental ill-health* is defined as the absence of the qualities of positive mental health in the individual. *Mental illness* is a broad category which includes all the disorders of behaviour which are caused by faulty perception, emotions, thinking and attitude.
- Ayurveda, the science of Indian medicine, deals with four aspects of lifestyle which sustain good health in us. These are food (*Ahara*), recreation (*Vihara*), routine (*Achara*), and thinking (*Vichara*). Observing certain practices related to them ensures a healthy and happy life.
- We generally fail to organize activities according to the time available. This creates a lot of pressure, tension and frustration. A structured routine involves making an activity schedule.



TERMINAL QUESTIONS

1. What are the main strategies to achieve the state of good mental hygiene?
2. Describe the indicators of poor mental health.
3. Describe any three strategies of time management.



ANSWERS TO INTEXT QUESTIONS

19.1

1. State of well-being, mental health is part of health and deals with optimization of emotional and behavioral development.
2. Mental hygiene refers to relevant behavioral, social skills for restoring mental health.
3. Reality context, impulse control, self-esteem and positive thoughts are the main strategies.

19.2

1. Mental ill health refers to absence of positive mental health and mental disorders involve disorders caused by faulty psychological functioning.

19.3

1. Disorganised daily life routine, irritations, and aggressive behaviour, disturbed sleep, anxiety, negative attitude towards others, withdrawal, abnormal physiological conditions, excessive use of drugs and smoking.

MODULE - V

*Health and Well
Being*



Notes

2. *ahara, vihara, achara, vichara.*

Hints for Terminal Questions

1. Refer to section 19.1
2. Refer to section 19.3
3. Refer to section 19.5