

## LESSON 17

### SELF AND PSYCHOLOGICAL PROCESSES

#### SUMMARY

As people grow, they develop their own concept of self which determine how they relate to others and perform the various activities. Our self-concept changes during the different stages of life. We perceive others as persons, relate to them and develop friendship and other kinds of close relationships. Also, we develop self-control and grow morally. Self goes beyond one's personal attribute and relates to the social world that we inhabit. In fact, self relates to the social world in a reciprocal manner as it influences our interactions with the social world and is influenced by it. In this process self also gets influenced by the social world.

#### Self in a Lifespan perspective

The studies suggest that some crude idea of self-recognition is noted by the middle of the first year. It is during this period that children start processing the voices and facial images of infants other than themselves. This is often interpreted as an indication of the beginning of self-other distinction.

The notion of self assumes different forms and undergoes important changes during the life course. Self, works as a powerful force which directs behaviours and shapes interactions in social

situation. Self undergoes transformation and many elements are included and excluded in one's self structure. People often strive for an ideal self. The chart given below describes the different stages of self through lifespan:

#### Infancy

- 15 to 24 months old infants have a visual self-concept. 3 years old do not have clear self-awareness. 4-5-year-olds have better self-representations.

#### Childhood and Adolescence

- In early childhood children start defining themselves on the basis of psychological attributes. In adolescence representations of the self, become much more subtle. Identity provides a stable sense of who a person is and what one's values and ideals are. Many adolescents experience identity crisis. They fail to have a coherent and enduring sense of self.

#### Early Adulthood

- the challenge of intimacy vs. isolation. Intimacy refers to the establishment of a committed relationship which is enduring.

#### Middle age

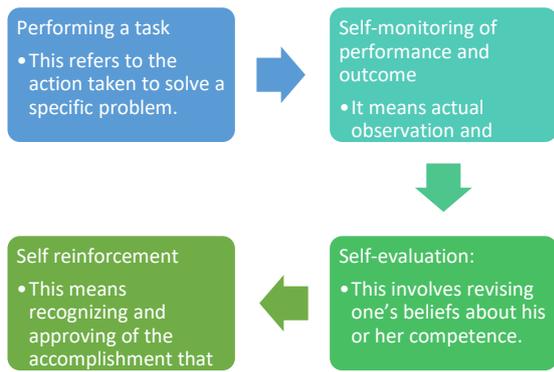
- In this period a person faces the crisis of generativity vs. stagnation. People are expected to engage in more and more generative activities. The term Midlife crisis is used for this stage when an interruption in the normal rhythm of life.

#### Old age

- The challenge in the stage is integrity vs. despair. In view of social mobility and disintegration of traditional family ties, many aged people suffer from poor self-concept. However, those who look back upon their lives with a sense of satisfaction that they have lived it well, experience a sense of integrity.

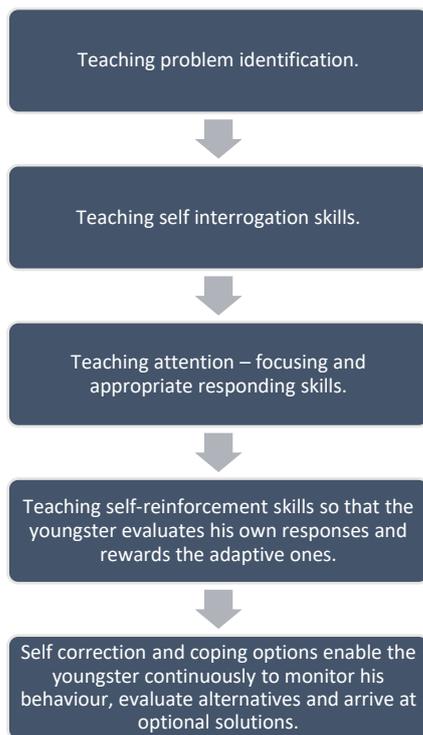
#### Self-control and its development

Self-control is a process of learning to regulate one's own behaviour in a manner maximally rewarding or satisfying.



### Self Instructional Training (SIT) -

This kind of instruction focuses on the development of major skill areas emphasizing “self-talking” responses. The steps of self instruction are as follows:

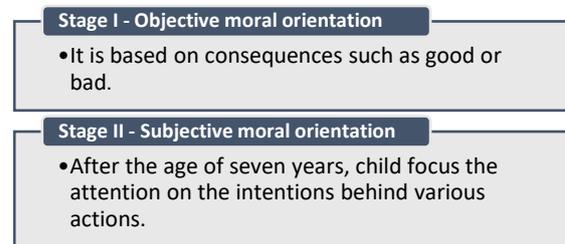


### Moral Development

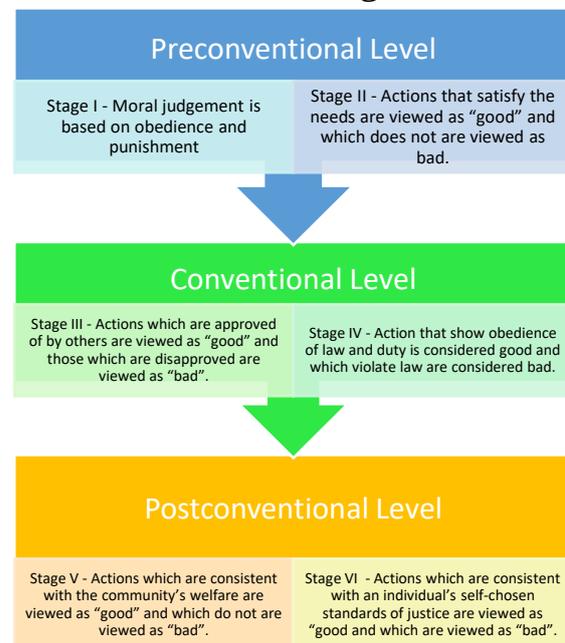
Development of the notions of “right” and “wrong” is an important aspect of social development. These notions help a person to balance the self-interest and well-being of others.

Piaget found that younger children up to 9-10 years of age show **morality of constraint** where children think in terms of conformity to social rules and focus only one aspect of an event.

Older children follow **morality of cooperation** where they think about the intentions and do not consider rules as unchangeable. Moral development starts early in childhood and it happens in stages.



According to Kohlberg, moral reasoning passes through three different levels as given below:



Kohlberg used certain situations in which a moral dilemma is presented and the task of person is to solve the dilemma. The solution

arrived at indicates the stage of moral reasoning being used by the person.

## Role of Family

The various domestic exchanges regarding rights and wrongs and parental expressions of regulations contribute to the development of morality. The actions and emphases on acceptable behaviour by parents play an important role in moral development. The early experiences outside the family (e.g., preschool, peers, and neighbourhood) also contribute to the development of morality.

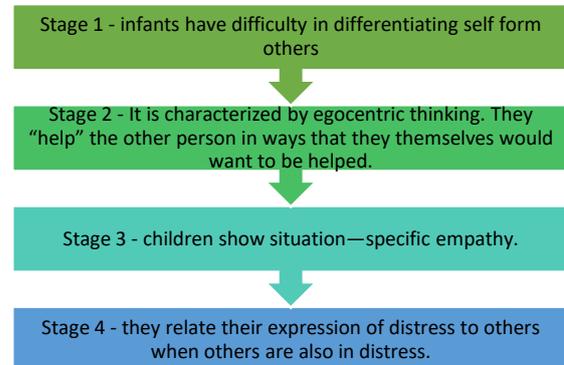
Gilligan has proposed that while male children are socialized to be independent and achievement oriented, female children are socialized to be nurturing and maintain a sense of responsibility. Womanhood or femininity is often linked with self sacrifice and care of others.

## Pro and Anti-Social Behaviour

**Pro-social behaviours** are behaviours which benefit another person. They include cooperation, sharing and helping when others are in distress. Children pass through four predictable stages in the development of empathy which makes pro-social behaviours possible. (See the next diagram).

Children can learn helping behaviour by imitating other known people. Opportunities for responsibility taking, role playing,

reinforcing desirable behaviour as and when it occurs will strengthen the development of pro-social behaviour.



**Anti-social behaviours** are characterized by truancy, delinquency, theft, vandalism and other forms of violation of the accepted social rules and convention. In some cases of antisocial behaviour the causal factors may be more personal than environmental, whereas in other cases it is vice versa. However, there is always a mixture of both personal and environmental influences, in varying proportion that leads to delinquent behaviours.

Psychological management of antisocial behaviour would include counselling and guidance for learning socially constructive behaviours, assertiveness training or social skills training which will enable them to shed aggressive behaviour or channelize the aggressive behaviour into something constructive. This would enable the growing child to benefit own self, as well as the society.

## **Evaluate yourself**

1. Discuss self in a lifespan perspective.
2. What is the role of family in the development of self?
3. Discuss the stages of development of empathy.