



PARENTING HANDBOOK

A Comprehensive Guide for Parents, Caregivers
and Frontline Workers on Adolescent Development

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ABOUT THE HANDBOOK

Introduction

Adolescence is a time of rapid growth, change, and exploration. Parents, caregivers, and frontline workers play a vital role in guiding adolescents through this crucial phase of life. The Parent Academy Resource Book is developed as a comprehensive guide to support this process — providing reliable information, practical strategies, and communication tools that empower adults to engage meaningfully with adolescents.

What is the Parent Academy Resource Book?

The Parent Academy Resource Book is designed to serve as a communication and learning resource. It focuses on key adolescent development outcomes and issues that are prioritized under various Government of India programs and UNICEF's adolescent framework.

In this context, communication means much more than just sharing information. It includes:

- Understanding the causes behind adolescent issues or problem areas
- Identifying barriers that prevent positive change
- Addressing these barriers through discussion and action
- Encouraging adolescents and families to adopt and sustain healthy behaviours

Each chapter, therefore, is built around helping parents and frontline workers understand, communicate, and act effectively in response to adolescent needs.

Structure of the Resource Book

The book is divided into Sections and Chapters for easy reference and practical use.

- Each Chapter focuses on one key topic or issue (for example, Anemia, Menstrual Hygiene, Tobacco Use, or Substance Abuse).
- Each Section brings together related topics under a broader developmental domain.

The four core domains, adapted from UNICEF’s framework, are as follows:

Section / Domain	Focus Areas
Physical and Mental Health (including Behavioral Concerns)	Nutrition, Anemia, Menstrual Hygiene, Physical Activity, Substance Abuse, Mental Well-being
Academic Learning, Life Skills, and Employability Skills	Learning Outcomes, Motivation, Career Guidance, Life Skills Development
Safety and Security	Child Marriage, Online Safety, Gender-based Violence, Peer Pressure
Respectful Communication and Social Relationships	Parent-Adolescent Communication, Peer Relations, Empathy, Respect, Conflict Resolution

Selection of Topics

The topics have been identified through a careful review of national and state-level adolescent programs, including initiatives from health, education, women and child development, and youth departments. While the list aligns with government priorities, it also reflects UNICEF’s focus areas on adolescent growth, well-being, and behavior change.

Each chapter is designed as a ready-to-use resource — providing:

- Key background information on the issue
- Causes and barriers to change
- Practical strategies and communication tips
- Suggested actions for parents, caregivers, and frontline workers

Who Can Use This Resource Book?

This book is written for a diverse group of users, including:

- Frontline workers from different government departments (health, education, WCD, etc.)
- Parents and caregivers who wish to better understand their adolescent children
- Educators, counselors, and community workers who directly engage with adolescents

Since the users may come from varied educational and professional backgrounds, the language has been kept simple and relatable, ensuring that the content is easy to understand and apply in real-life contexts.

How to Use This Book

Each chapter is designed to follow a logical and practical flow — addressing the natural questions that any parent or frontline worker might have:

1. Understanding the Issue – What is the problem? Why does it matter?
2. Exploring Causes and Barriers – What makes this issue persist?
3. Learning the Right Messages – What can I communicate to adolescents?
4. Taking Action – What can parents, schools, and communities do?
5. Maintaining Change – How can we support ongoing positive behaviour?

This structure ensures that readers not only gain knowledge but are also equipped to act effectively and confidently in their own contexts.

Conclusion

The Parent Academy Resource Book aims to bridge the gap between knowledge and action — between what we know about adolescent development and what we do to support it. It is envisioned as a shared learning tool, helping parents and frontline workers work together to create safe, supportive, and empowering environments for every adolescent to grow, learn, and thrive.

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CHAPTER 1: ANEMIA

KNOWLEDGE AND CAUSES

Understanding Anaemia:

Anaemia is a common health condition that occurs when your body doesn't get enough oxygen because the body does not have enough healthy red blood cells to carry oxygen to your tissues and organs. All of us breathe when we are alive - to be alive means to breathe. All animals breathe - Why? Because breathing gives us oxygen. We do yoga to breathe better. So our breathing could be great and we could be taking in a lot of oxygen in every breath - but does that Oxygen reach all the organs and cells inside the body? That is the big question. Oxygen we breathe is needed by every organ and cell in the body. When we breathe the oxygen goes into your lungs - and for oxygen to reach these organs, the blood does the work. Blood takes the oxygen and carries it to every part and corner of the body. But for the blood to absorb the oxygen it needs something called haemoglobin. If the blood does not have enough haemoglobin then it cannot take oxygen from the lungs to the rest of the organs. And because these organs do not get oxygen the person feels tired, fatigued (symptoms). The lack of haemoglobin is called anaemia.

Anaemia is like having too few workers in a factory that makes energy for your body. These workers carry boxes of energy to different parts of your body. When there aren't enough workers, your body doesn't get the energy it needs, so you feel tired and weak. It's like a factory with not enough workers to do the job. Workers are the red blood cells and boxes are energy. If there are not enough workers, how will energy reach other parts of the body? If energy cannot reach the body, how will a child be active in day to day life? Therefore, workers (red blood cells) are important. If they are not there, the child will not get energy and he will be weak all his life.

Consequence:

At the individual level, anaemia can lead to several problems, including

Fatigue: If there is no energy, every organ will not function properly. If organs are going to be weak, there will also be less oxygen. Oxygen helps us to breathe and if we are not able to breathe then we will feel tired and weak

Paleness: Anaemic individuals often appear paler than usual, as there's less red colour in their blood.

Shortness of Breath: Less oxygen reaches the body's tissues, breathlessness may occur, especially during physical activity.

Dizziness: Anaemia can lead to lightheadedness and dizziness.

Anaemia is an important health issue in India. It affects people of all ages, although particular groups are especially vulnerable, such as women, children, pregnant women and elderly. In the most recent

study, NFHS-5 (2019-21), the prevalence of anaemia increased in all age groups, with children aged 6 months to 5 years experiencing the greatest rise (from 59% to 67%).

Anaemia has (can have) a negative impact on productivity and quality of life in affected populations. For example, in places with high anaemia rates, tiredness and sickness may cause more absences at work and school. The child's learning and playing is affected. This can have an impact on the overall growth of the community.

Let's break down anaemia to understand how you can help your child to fight anaemia.

Anaemia can have various causes, but the most common type is due to a lack of haemoglobin, a protein in red blood cells that binds with oxygen. Haemoglobin helps transport oxygen from the lungs to the rest of the body. In anaemia, there are a few key factors:

Low Red Blood Cell Count: Anaemia often results from a decreased number of red blood cells in the body, which can be caused by factors such as nutritional deficiencies, chronic diseases, or bone marrow problems.

Reduced Haemoglobin: Even if there are enough red blood cells, anaemia can still occur if the haemoglobin within these cells is low. This can happen due to iron, vitamin, or mineral deficiencies, which are essential for haemoglobin production.

Adolescent anaemia can be a barrier to being active, doing well in school, and even preparing for a healthy family in the future. It is critical to detect and treat anaemia in teenagers in order to provide them with the energy and health they require for a bright and active future.

Activity: Anaemia can make children feel tired and weak, which can make it harder for them to participate in any physical activity. This lack of energy can limit their ability to enjoy an active and healthy lifestyle.

Education: Anaemia can also affect a child's ability to focus and learn. When there will be no energy, how can they focus on anything? It makes them feel inactive and can affect their memory and thinking. This can make it difficult for them to keep up with their studies and do well in school.

Future Reproductive Health: Anaemia can have a long term effect. Teenage girls can cause problems with their periods, which might make it harder for them to have kids when they grow up. If girls don't have regular periods, they will have issues in getting pregnant when they grow up.

Causes and how to fix the causes of Anaemia

Dietary, nutritional, and health are frequently linked to common causes of anaemia in teenagers in India. These causes have been extensively researched and can include:

Iron Deficiency: Remember we spoke about red blood cells? Haemoglobin and Iron are part of red blood cells. It helps in carrying oxygen to our lungs. If there is less oxygen in the body, we will not be able to function. It is important to eat iron rich food. Paalak, daal, anar, chukandar are some of the common

iron rich foods available in the market. Cooking dal for lunch and making paalak and chukandar once or twice a week can help boost iron in your child's body.

Nutritional Deficiencies: Children can have problems eating paalak all the time. So, sometimes, you can cook food that has other nutrients which are also important to fight anaemia. Chana dal, moong dal and moong dal, oranges and rice are some examples of rich in folic acid which is important for the body. Milk, eggs, curd have B12 in it which helps in boosting energy.

Parasitic Infections: Parasitic infections, particularly intestinal worms, are common in many regions of India. These parasites can cause persistent blood loss and nutrition absorption problems, contributing to anaemia. Deworming tablets are easily available in every medical store. You should deworm yourself and your children every 6 months.

Menstrual Blood Loss: Teenage girls often start menstruating during this period, and heavy or prolonged menstrual bleeding without adequate iron intake can lead to iron-deficiency anaemia. Eating iron rich food which can increase blood in the body during this age group can help children. Eating pomegranate (anar), leafy vegetables (palak, methi, chaulai) can increase blood in the body.

Dietary Habits: Try to consume fruits and vegetables every day. Reducing oily food can make a lot of positive changes in the body in the long time.

How to fix the causes - solutions

How can parents help their adolescent children prevent or treat anaemia?

Dietary Changes: Sometimes, children might not enjoy eating leafy vegetables as it can get difficult to make it tasty. Try to cook recipes where the food tastes good. Add spices in your food as our India spices also have a lot of nutrients in them. Spices can also increase the taste in our food which can be eaten by your children happily. If your child does not like any particular fruit, try to make juice out of the fruit or even make a fruit salad where you mix 2-3 fruits together and feed them at least once or twice a week. Various supplements to increase nutrients like B12, iron and folic acid are available in medical stores. Government hospitals provide these medicines either for much lesser prices or for free as well. Get your child tested twice a year to get the right treatment at the right time.

Hydration: Drinking enough water is important because it helps the body use iron better. Ensure that your child at least drinks 2L water every single day. If you give chai or coffee to your children, please avoid it and replace it with milk, water and fruit juices.

Parasite Control: In areas with parasitic infections, deworming treatments can help eliminate parasites and reduce the risk of anaemia. Government hospitals will give deworming tablets either for free of cost or at a nominal cost.

Managing Menstruation: For girls, managing heavy periods is crucial. They can use sanitary products.

Education: If you start following these actions, you will be able to see the changes in your children soon. This should help you to spread awareness about these issues and educate your neighbours and friends about the importance of a healthy lifestyle

QUIZ

1. Does your child consume dairy products like milk, curd daily?
2. Have you been having difficulty feeding leafy vegetables to your family?
3. Has your child been missing school more than 5 times a month?
4. Has your child started looking dull and weak?
5. Does your child fall sick every 14 days?

BEHAVIOURS AND BARRIERS

Barriers to the suggested Solutions

Difficulty in Cooking or Buying Vegetables: Sometimes, leafy vegetables can be expensive in towns. Your children or other family members might not like the taste of various vegetables like paalak and methi.

Supplements: Supplements are helpful to boost the intake of nutrients faster. It is understandable if you are confused where to get it from. We also think supplements are expensive which makes us not want to buy them. Sometimes we also get side effects of the tablets which makes us worried about taking the tablet.

Menstruation: Availability of sanitary pads or the cost of it can be a problem which can make girls use cloth pads which can cause more infections

Solutions for the barriers

Make the Food Tasty: If you buy more and more green vegetables, you can eventually start buying it for a cheaper rate. If leafy vegetables are not available in the local vegetable market, try to buy them from sabzi mandis that are kept once a week in your village/town/city. Take your child along with you to sabzi mandis and help them understand why these vegetables are important. This can also improve in spending time with your children as well. If your children refuse to eat green vegetables, you can try to find various tasty recipes online. Ask your child to help you while cooking so that they can give inputs on how they would like the meal to be cooked. Try to consume one leafy vegetable twice a week, dal everyday with rice everyday and dairy products like milk everyday, which can make things easier.

Purchasing Supplements: Supplements can be expensive and sometimes not be available in your local medicals. You can visit your nearest government hospital that will provide these medicines and even tests for nominal fees or even at extremely low prices. If you go to a private hospital, your one medical

cost can go up to Rs. 2000 but if you go to a government hospital, you can get the same treatment for up to Rs. 200- Rs. 500.

Menstruation: There are many organisations like Lal Sakhi who provide free menstrual pads in rural areas of our country. Free Pads for India (FPI) is a platform that raises awareness about 'period shame' and 'period poverty' by visiting villages and adopting girls as part of a free sanitary pad distribution programme.

A Happy Picture:

Once upon a time, in a village in India, there lived Kishore, a 13 year old boy. Kishore was typically full of energy and passion, although he appeared particularly fatigued for a spell. He was tired easily and couldn't play with his pals for long, which disturbed his parents, Meera and Raj.

Meera observed Kishore's skin was pale and his energy levels were dwindling one day. She decided to take him to the village clinic since she was concerned. The doctor there did several tests and gently informed Meera and Kishore that Kishore suffered from anaemia. It indicated that his body didn't have enough healthy red blood cells to transport oxygen, which explained why he was fatigued.

Meera, with a determined expression in her eyes, resolved that they would tackle this problem together. She studied strategies to enhance Kishore's diet. They began eating iron-rich foods such as spinach, lentils, and almonds. They also experimented with various recipes that featured vitamin C-rich foods like oranges and tomatoes, which helped Kishore's body absorb iron more effectively.

Raj, Kishore's father, accompanied them on this road to health. He would take Kishore to the nearest government hospital and would get iron, vitamin B12 supplements and would take him once a month to see if there is any improvement. Raj would also take Kishore along to the village sabzi mandi to show him various vegetables. They would spend some time with each other other than buying vegetables.

Radha would take suggestions from her neighbour and her relatives on how to make the vegetables tastier so that it would be for Kishore to eat. She started giving him milk twice a day and even gave him curd with lunch.

Kishore's red blood cell count improved as the days evolved into weeks, according to follow-up visits to the doctor. Kishore's face began to radiate with health, and his joy was contagious. The village witnessed Kishore's strength and was encouraged by his recovery path.

Kishore's story proved the power of love, family, and community. It demonstrated that with dedication, constant support, and the appropriate decisions, even anaemia's problems could be conquered, allowing Kishore to return to his active, vibrant self.

1. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NW30MvZVXoQ>
2. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=asNax0ZpcMs>
3. Anemia Manual
4. Anemia Leaflet /Hindi,Marathi
5. Anemia Poster Marath
6. Anemia Social Media Poster/ Malayalam
7. Anemia Booklet /English, Telugu
8. Anemia Leaflet /Kannada,Telugu
9. Anemia / Radio Show /Hindi
10. Anemia Handout_for_Children
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12. Anemia Guide Book Nutrition_and_Health_Education.pdf page- 20-23
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14. Anemia-Mukt-Bharat-Brochure_English.pdf
15. Anemia Guidebook Guidelines_for_Control_of_Iron_Deficiency_Anaemia.pdf
16. Anemia Handouts 6 Pages- 81 - 91
17. Anemia Comicbook Hindi
18. Anemia Report 2011 by WHO
19. Anemia Infographic By WHO

There are many schemes by the Government to fight anaemia in your children. Government has made these schemes so that they are available to you at all times and is affordable and accessible to you when you are not able to buy or is not available where you live :

National Iron + Initiative : This programme, launched by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, promises to improve the health and nutritional condition of children and women, with a particular emphasis on delivering iron and folic acid supplements.

Integrated Child Development Services: ICDS is one of India's maternal and child health programmes. Supplemental nutrition and growth monitoring are provided for children under the age of six. It also gives pregnant and nursing women iron and folic acid supplements.

Pradhan Mantri Surakshit Matritva Abhiyan: This programme focuses on prenatal care for expecting mothers. It offers them with critical treatments, such as iron and folic acid supplements, in order to minimise anaemia and promote maternal health.

Poshan Abhiyan: This scheme, launched by the Ministry of Women and Child Development, aims to improve nutrition outcomes among children, pregnant women, and breastfeeding mothers. It involves iron supplements to avoid anaemia.

Anaemia Mukt Bharat: This is a part of the POSHAN Abhiyan, which aims to combat anaemia throughout India by encouraging preventative measures, early identification, and treatment of anaemia.

National Food Security Act: The act intends to offer food security to individuals, particularly those living in poverty, by providing subsidised food grains. Access to healthy food aids in the treatment of anaemia and malnutrition.

As parents, you care deeply about your child's health and well-being. Anaemia, a common but frequently ignored illness, can have a negative impact on your child's energy, development, and general health. It is critical to combat anaemia in order for your child to grow up healthy and full of energy. Start by giving a nutritious meal high in iron, vitamins, and minerals. Encourage them to consume leafy greens, legumes, and citrus fruits. Consider talking with a healthcare practitioner to examine your child's iron levels and determine whether supplements are required. Your dedication to their health now will provide the foundation for a better, happier future.

Game: Anemia HU TU TU

Aim:

The game is built to help parents and adolescents understand what steps they must take to address challenges arising from anemia and how to prevent anemia.

Rules of the game

1. The family must form two groups with equal members. Members of each team should act together to make decisions against the opposition team. The teams are the Anemia Attackers (BLUE), and the default opponent is the Anemia Enablers (RED).

2. Throw a dice to start the game. The number on the dice is the number of the red player.

For example, If the Number on the Dice is 1, it refers to sickness.

3. Send a player from your team to defeat the opponent.

For example, if the opponent is FATIGUE and INACTIVITY, which team member will you send?

4. Every correct answer eliminates the opponent. A wrong answer eliminates your player.

5. Again, throw the dice, and it is the opposite turn to raid. Who will defend from your side?

6. Every successful raid or defence wins 1 point. One eliminated player can rejoin after a successful raid or defence.

7. The team that reaches 10 points wins.

CHAPTER 2: BASIC HYGIENE AND CLEANLINESS IN ADOLESCENCE

KNOWLEDGE AND CAUSES

Introduction:

In this chapter, we will explore the importance of good hygiene practices, understand their impact on adolescents, and engage in activities as a family to promote a healthy lifestyle. Helping your teenager understand why basic hygiene and cleanliness matter is super important. As your teenager goes through changes, taking care of themselves becomes crucial. By talking openly about why staying clean is essential, you're giving them the tools to be healthier and more confident. Simple habits like washing hands and staying clean can make a big difference in their well-being. So, let's chat about why it's important to be clean and why you, as parents, are guiding them toward a healthier and happier future.

Baat: What should you know about Basic Hygiene and Cleanliness?

What is Basic Hygiene and Cleanliness?

Basic hygiene means keeping ourselves clean to stay healthy. It's not just about looking good but also feeling good inside. Let's talk about why this is so important for each person, our group (community), and everyone in our big group (society).

Why is it Important?

Why is it Important for Us?: Keeping clean helps our body stay strong and not get sick. It includes simple things like washing hands, brushing teeth, and taking baths. When we do these things, we feel good about ourselves.

Why is it Important for Our Group (Community)?: When everyone in our group stays clean, we all stay healthier. If we don't get sick, it's easier for our doctors and nurses to help others who need it. It's like helping each other by staying strong and happy.

Why is it Important for Everyone (Society)?: Imagine if everyone in our big group stays clean and healthy. Our big group can do more things together, and everyone can be happy. When we are healthy, we can learn more, work better, and make our big group a great place to live.

Basic hygiene and cleanliness are about staying clean and healthy by doing simple things every day. It's like making sure your body and surroundings are fresh and germ-free. Washing your hands regularly, taking a shower, and keeping your living space tidy are part of it. This helps prevent sickness and makes you feel good. When we talk about basic hygiene, it's not just about cleanliness; it's about habits that keep you and everyone around you safe and happy. So, it's like a little routine that helps you stay fit and ready for whatever life throws at you!

How does Basic Hygiene and Cleanliness affect adolescents?

Have you ever wondered why staying clean is so important, especially for teenagers like you? Let's find out how not taking care of hygiene can affect different parts of your life.

Physical Health: When we don't wash our hands or take care of our bodies, we can get sick more often. Poor hygiene might lead to skin problems, bad breath, and other health issues. By keeping clean, we can stay strong and feel good physically.

Social Interactions: Imagine if you don't smell nice or your clothes are dirty; it might make it hard to be around friends or others. Taking care of hygiene helps us feel confident in social situations. It's easier to make friends and enjoy our time with others when we're clean and fresh.

Overall Well-being: Taking care of yourself isn't just about the body; it's also about feeling good on the inside. When we practice good hygiene, it boosts our mood and self-esteem. Feeling clean and healthy contributes to our overall well-being and happiness.

Basic hygiene and cleanliness have a big impact on teenagers! When you make a habit of staying clean, it's not just about looking good; it's about feeling good too. Taking care of your hygiene helps prevent sickness and keeps you energized for your daily activities. For adolescents, it's even more crucial because it influences how you feel about yourself and how others see you. Good hygiene can boost your confidence and make social interactions more comfortable. It's like a secret superpower – a simple routine that sets you up for a healthier and happier teenage life.

What are the Causes of Poor Hygiene?

Now, let's understand why some people find it hard to keep clean. There are different reasons, and it's essential to know them to help each other better.

General Causes:

Lack of Awareness: Some people might not know why hygiene is crucial or how to practice it properly. They might not have learned about it yet.

Lack of Resources: Not everyone has easy access to things like soap, clean water, or a proper place to bathe. Without these, staying clean becomes a challenge.

Health Issues: Sometimes, health problems can make it difficult for people to take care of their hygiene. They might need extra help and support.

Region-Specific Causes:

Climate and Environment: In some places, the weather or surroundings can make it harder to stay clean. Extreme conditions or lack of sanitation facilities can be factors.

Cultural Factors: The way people practice hygiene can be influenced by their culture. Sometimes, certain practices may make it more challenging to stay clean.

Education and Awareness: Places with less education about hygiene may face more challenges. Knowing about it and understanding its importance is crucial for better practices.

Sometimes, things get in the way of good hygiene. The causes of poor hygiene can be different for everyone. It could be because of a busy schedule, not having access to clean water, or not knowing the importance of staying clean. Sometimes, people might face challenges in keeping good hygiene due to certain health conditions or not having the right resources. Understanding these causes helps us find solutions. By figuring out what's stopping us from practicing good hygiene, we can work together to overcome these challenges and make staying clean a part of our daily routine.

QUIZ

1. How good are you at practicing these required behaviors?
2. Are you a hygiene hero? Test your super skills with our quick and fun hygiene quiz! Let's see how well you know the simple habits that keep you and everyone around you happy and healthy.
3. What's the magic trick for getting rid of germs on your hands?
 - A. Clap your hands
 - B. Wash them with soap and water
 - C. Blow on them
4. How often should you brush your teeth for a bright smile?
 - A. Once a day
 - B. Twice a day
 - C. Only on weekends
5. What helps to keep your body fresh and clean?
 - A. Wearing a hat
 - B. Taking regular showers
 - C. Doing jumping jacks
6. Why is it important to cover your mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze?
 - A. To keep secrets
 - B. To prevent spreading germs to others
 - C. Because it's fun
7. What should you do with your waste to keep your surroundings clean?
 - A. Throw it anywhere
 - B. Throw it in the bin
 - C. Give it to your pet
8. Why is wearing clean clothes important?
 - A. Because they look nice
 - B. It keeps you healthy
 - C. To impress your friends
9. What does regular handwashing with soap and water help with?
 - A. Making your hands sticky
 - B. Getting rid of germs
 - C. Changing your hand's color

10. What's the best way to keep your room tidy?
 - A. Let things pile up
 - B. Clean it once a year
 - C. Tidy up regularly
11. Why do you need to take regular showers?
 - A. To save water
 - B. To keep your body fresh and clean
 - C. Because it's a trend
12. What's the right way to dispose of waste?
 - A. Leave it on the street
 - B. Recycle it
 - C. Throw it in the bin

Answers: b, b, b, b, b, b, b, c, b, c

BEHAVIOURS AND BARRIERS

What are the desired behaviors to promote Basic Hygiene and Cleanliness?

Now, let's talk about the simple and important things we can all do to stay clean. These practices can help us avoid problems and make sure we feel good inside and out.

Handwashing: Washing our hands with soap and water helps get rid of germs that can make us sick. It's crucial, especially before eating and after using the restroom.

Dental Care: Brushing our teeth regularly keeps our mouths healthy and prevents bad breath. It's a small habit that makes a big difference.

Bathing: Taking regular baths or showers helps us stay clean and fresh. It's not just about looking clean; it's about feeling good too.

Clean Clothes: Wearing clean clothes each day helps us avoid smelling bad and keeps our skin healthy. Changing into clean clothes regularly is a good habit.

Nail Care: Keeping our nails trimmed and clean is essential. Germs can hide under long nails, so regular nail care is a part of good hygiene.

Hair Care: Washing our hair regularly keeps it clean and healthy. It also prevents scalp issues and promotes overall cleanliness.

Practicing good hygiene is easy and helps everyone stay healthy. It's like having a daily routine that makes a big difference! First, wash your hands often with soap and water – it helps get rid of germs. Take showers to keep your body fresh and clean. Don't forget to brush your teeth twice a day for a bright smile! Wearing clean clothes and keeping your room tidy are also important – it feels good and makes you healthier. If you cough or sneeze, cover your mouth and nose, so germs don't spread. And

always throw your waste in the bin – it keeps your surroundings clean. These simple habits keep you and everyone around you happy and well.

Saath: What activities can you do together to maintain Basic Hygiene and Cleanliness?

Barriers to Adopting Hygienic Behaviors

Sometimes, people face challenges that make it hard for them to practice good hygiene. Let's talk about these common obstacles and try to understand why they might find it difficult.

Lack of Awareness: Some individuals might not fully understand the importance of hygiene or know how to maintain it. Education and awareness can be a barrier.

Limited Resources: Not everyone has easy access to essential items like soap, clean water, or proper sanitation facilities. Limited resources can make it challenging to stay clean.

Health Issues: Individuals dealing with health problems may find it harder to maintain good hygiene. Health conditions might require extra support and understanding.

Cultural Beliefs: Certain cultural beliefs or practices can impact how people approach hygiene. Understanding and respecting different cultural perspectives is crucial.

Lack of Motivation: Some individuals may struggle with motivation to adopt hygienic behaviors. Finding ways to encourage and inspire them is essential.

Mental Health Challenges: Mental health issues, such as depression or anxiety, can affect a person's ability to focus on self-care, including hygiene practices.

One significant challenge for adolescents in maintaining cleanliness is the struggle to find enough time. Between school, activities, and spending time with friends, adolescents are often extremely busy! To address this, it's crucial to help them understand why it's essential to carve out time for straightforward cleanliness habits. By discussing and incorporating these habits into their daily routines, adolescents can overcome the time challenge.

Specify the behavior change methods to be practiced.

Changing behaviors requires practical methods. For adolescents aiming to enhance their hygiene and cleanliness habits, the following behavior change methods can be put into practice:

Set Clear Goals: Make clear and simple goals, like deciding to wash your hands before meals every day.

Create a Routine: Have a regular routine that includes keeping clean. Like brushing your teeth every morning and night.

Use Reminders: Use reminders, like a phone alarm or a note, to help you remember when to do your cleaning routine.

Reward System: Give yourself a little reward when you do well in keeping clean. It could be a small treat or something you enjoy.

Peer Support: Share your plan to stay clean with friends. It's more fun when you and your friends help each other out.

Parental Involvement: Get your parents involved. They can show you good habits, and you can do it together.

Education and Awareness: Learn why being clean is important. Knowing why it matters helps you remember to do it.

Interactive Learning: Make learning about cleaning fun. Play games or do activities that teach you why it's good to stay clean.

Progress Tracking: Keep track of how well you're doing. Use a chart or an app to see how you're getting better at staying clean.

Social Norms: Remember, staying clean is something everyone should do. It's like a team effort for everyone to be healthy and happy.

By incorporating these behavior change methods, adolescents can gradually adopt and maintain positive hygiene habits, contributing to their overall health and well-being.

Addressing Barriers in the Indian Context

In India, we understand that staying clean can sometimes be tricky. Let us see some easy and practical ways to help everyone overcome the challenges and make staying clean a part of our daily lives.

Community Learning Sessions: Arrange gatherings in the community to share why cleanliness is essential. These sessions help everyone understand the importance of staying clean and healthy.

Use Local Languages: Create posters, videos, and materials in languages that everyone in the community understands. This way, information about cleanliness is clear and accessible to everyone.

Partnering with Local Leaders: Join hands with leaders in the community. Their support and influence can make it easier for everyone to embrace and practice good hygiene habits.

Affordable Hygiene Products: Ensure that things like soap and other hygiene products are not too expensive. When these items are affordable, more people can use them regularly.

Family Cleanup Together: Encourage families to clean up together. When everyone in the family takes part, it creates a positive atmosphere for everyone to adopt clean habits.

Learn from Each Other: Share success stories within the community. When friends or neighbors talk about how they've successfully adopted clean habits, it inspires others to do the same.

Behavior Change Methods:

Now, let's talk about some simple and practical strategies to help everyone, overcome the challenges they might face in staying clean.

Community Education Programs: Organize programs in the community to share knowledge about the importance of hygiene. This helps everyone understand why staying clean is crucial.

Local Language Resources: Create resources, like posters or videos, in local languages. This ensures that information about hygiene is accessible and easily understood by everyone.

Collaboration with Local Leaders: Work with local leaders to spread awareness. They can influence people positively, making it easier for everyone to understand and adopt good hygiene practices.

Affordable Hygiene Products: Ensure that basic hygiene products like soap are affordable and available to everyone. This makes it easier for people to practice good hygiene without worrying about costs.

Family Involvement Campaigns: Encourage families to get involved in hygiene practices together. When everyone in the family participates, it creates a supportive environment for change.

Peer-to-Peer Learning: Foster learning among peers. When friends or community members share their positive experiences with hygiene, it motivates others to adopt these practices.

By trying out these simple strategies, we can make a big difference in overcoming challenges and promoting cleanliness in our communities. Let's all work together to ensure that staying clean is something everyone can do easily and happily.

Change Process and Monitoring

Guidance for Tracking Progress in Better Hygiene Practices

Now, let's talk about how families and individuals can keep track of the positive changes they're making in their hygiene habits. Monitoring our progress helps us stay motivated and ensures that we are on the right path to a cleaner and healthier lifestyle.

Establish Clear Goals: Define specific and achievable hygiene goals for yourself or your family. This could include daily practices like regular handwashing or maintaining a clean living space.

Keep a Hygiene Journal: Consider maintaining a simple journal to record your daily hygiene activities. This could be a shared family journal or an individual one, noting achievements and areas for improvement.

Use Reminders and Timers: Set reminders or timers on your phone for key hygiene practices. This will help create consistent habits, and you can track your adherence over time.

Visual Progress Tracker: Create a visual progress tracker, like a chart or checklist, where you can mark off each day you successfully follow your hygiene routine. Visualizing progress can be highly motivating.

Family Discussions: Regularly discuss hygiene goals and progress as a family. Open conversations can provide support, identify challenges, and celebrate successes together.

Celebrate Milestones: Acknowledge and celebrate milestones in your hygiene journey. Whether it's a week of consistent handwashing or maintaining a clutter-free space, recognizing achievements boosts motivation.

As you start making things cleaner and healthier, think of it like taking small steps that add up to big improvements. Keeping an eye on how you're doing is not just about marking things off; it's about cheering for the good stuff, learning from the tough parts, and enjoying the positive changes.

GAMES AND ACTIVITIES

Games/Tools to Address Barriers

Learning about hygiene can be exciting and enjoyable. Let's explore some games and tools that make it easier to understand and practice good hygiene habits.

Hygiene Bingo: Imagine a game where you can mark off tasks like washing hands or brushing teeth, just like in Bingo. It makes learning hygiene feel like a fun challenge!

Interactive Storytelling: Picture a story or a cartoon that talks about why hygiene is important. You get to be a part of the story, making learning more interesting and fun.

Virtual Reality Hygiene Adventures: Ever tried virtual reality? It's like going on a magical journey, but for hygiene! You can experience cool adventures that teach you why staying clean is essential.

Hygiene Challenges: Turning hygiene into a game with challenges can be fun! Completing tasks each day, like washing hands properly, can earn you rewards. It's like winning a prize for staying clean!

Mobile Apps for Hygiene: Imagine having a game on your phone that teaches you about hygiene. These apps can show you how to stay clean in a playful way, like a game you carry with you.

Role-Playing Games: Let's pretend! Role-playing means acting out different situations. By pretending to handle hygiene scenarios, you get to practice and have fun at the same time.

These games and tools are like friendly guides that make learning about hygiene interesting. They turn important lessons into enjoyable activities.

Activities for Families

Fun Family Time with Hygiene in Mind: Games, Exercises, and Activities

Let's explore exciting ways for families to come together and reinforce good hygiene habits. These activities not only promote cleanliness but also make staying healthy a joyful and shared experience.

Hygiene Treasure Hunt: Turn hygiene activities into a treasure hunt. List tasks like washing hands or cleaning shared spaces, and let family members find and complete them together.

Song and Dance Routine: Create a catchy hygiene song or dance routine. Performing these routines as a family adds a playful element to daily cleanliness practices.

DIY Soap Making: Get creative and make your own soap as a family. It's a fun way to learn about the importance of soap in staying clean while enjoying a hands-on activity.

Storytime with a Twist: Add a hygiene twist to your storytelling sessions. Create stories where characters showcase good hygiene practices, making it both entertaining and educational.

Hygiene Olympics: Organize a mini "Hygiene Olympics" with activities like toothbrush races or handwashing relays. It adds an element of friendly competition to hygiene habits.

Family Clean-Up Day: Designate a day each week for a family clean-up. It's an opportunity to work together, tidy up shared spaces, and reinforce the importance of cleanliness.

These activities turn hygiene into enjoyable family moments. By engaging in them together, families not only build stronger bonds but also cultivate a shared commitment to a healthier and cleaner lifestyle.

COMMITMENT TO CHILD

Are you willing to make a commitment?

Absolutely! Making a commitment to keeping things clean is like saying, "I want to feel great every day!" Imagine waking up feeling fresh, staying healthy, and having confidence in yourself. When you commit to good hygiene, you're choosing a better, brighter life. It's not just about staying clean; it's about feeling good inside and out. So, why wait? Make that commitment today, and let's create a future where you shine with health and happiness. Your commitment to cleanliness is your ticket to a fantastic and positive journey ahead!

USEFUL LINKS

- A. handwash Video by Prachip
- B. radio PSA focuses on youth to practice WASH (Water, Sanitation and Hygiene)
- C. Radio show in hindi about Wash hands with soap after defecating
- D. Radio Show in hindi for Cough and sneeze into one's palm/hanky/ towel
- E. Know that water for handwashing and drinking should be provided at school
- F. Wear shoes or slippers always and especially near toilets
- G. Know the 5-step hand-washing procedure]
- H. Brush teeth before going to bed at night
- I. Prevent diarrhea and dehydration through appropriate hygiene and sanitation practices
- J. https://www.nhm.gov.in/iGuidebook_Nutrition_and_Health_Education.pdf
- K. Importance of good nutrition and keeping yourself and your food clean.

To create WASH-friendly and health-promoting schools, common problems beyond the provision of proper WASH infrastructure – such as toilets and taps – need to be addressed

printable posters can be used to help raise awareness about handwashing in highly visible public areas, such as schools, workplaces, and restrooms.

During adolescence we want to be sure that children continue effective oral hygiene habits such as brushing twice a day

Video by John Hopkins health/wellness-and-prevention/oral-hygiene-in-adolescents

Existing Governmental and Non-Governmental Programmes

In India, the government has some helpful programs for parents and adolescents to stay clean and healthy. Here are a few:

Clean India Campaign (Swachh Bharat Abhiyan): This is a big effort to make India clean. In schools, they teach about keeping ourselves and our surroundings clean.

Adolescent Health Program (Rashtriya Kishor Swasthya Karyakram - RKSK): This program is all about keeping adolescents healthy. They share info and services to help teens stay clean and well.

National Nutrition Mission (POSHAN Abhiyaan): While mostly about good food, it also talks about how having a clean place is essential for teens to be healthy.

Health and Wellness Centers (Ayushman Bharat): These centers give health services and teach about hygiene. They're there for teens and families.

Education for All (Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan - SSA): SSA works on making schools better. This includes having clean toilets and safe spaces for teens.

Menstrual Hygiene Support: Some states help girls with hygiene during their periods. They provide things like sanitary pads and teach about it.

To get help from these programs, parents can learn more about them and join activities in their community. These programs make it easier for teens to keep clean and healthy.

Do you want to connect to a community?

Ready to dive into a world where cleanliness is a shared adventure? Click on the community links we provide to join a supportive group of like-minded individuals. These links connect you to a space where tips and stories flow, and everyone cheers for each other's success in staying clean and healthy. Be part of our online family where discussions are fun, learning is exciting, and the journey to a cleaner lifestyle becomes a team effort. Don't miss out on the positive vibes – click those links and become a proud member of our clean and healthy community!

Conclusion:

And there you have it – the key to a future full of smiles and good health for adolescents! Parents, keep talking and guiding; you're making a healthy foundation. Workers, with this info, you're superheroes for change, making communities healthier. Teens, embrace cleanliness – it's your ticket to feeling

awesome. Let's celebrate the small wins, like clean rooms and washed hands. Together, we're creating a community where being clean isn't just a habit; it's a cool way to make our future super bright and happy!

Hygiene Bingo Challenge

Create a bingo card with hygiene tasks (wash hands, brush teeth, take bath, wear clean clothes, trim nails, etc.). Each day, family members mark off completed tasks. The first to complete a row wins a small reward. This makes hygiene fun and competitive while building good habits.

CHAPTER 3: MENSTRUAL HYGIENE MANAGEMENT FOR ADOLESCENTS

KNOWLEDGE AND CAUSES

Introduction:

Menstrual hygiene is a crucial aspect of adolescent health, impacting physical well-being, education, and future reproductive health. In this chapter, we will explore what menstrual hygiene is, its significance, and how to foster healthy practices in adolescents.

The menstruation cycle, periods, time or mahina as it is termed by women in India is a normal hormonal process that every girl goes through each month. An average cycle comes every month at the interval of 24 to 38 days and it differs for each girl and body. If you prepare your daughters for what to expect the whole experience will be much better.

However, it can be one of the most awkward topics to discuss in the family. It usually falls in the care of mothers to have to discuss and guide the young girls through this process. In India, there are many misconceptions and superstitions surrounding menstruation like not taking a bath in those days or not sleeping in their regular beds.

Menstruation hygiene management simply means having all the knowledge about the menstrual cycle, clean water, toilets and the necessary sanitary products to have safe periods. It is important to educate young girls about menstruation. Maintaining hygiene is essential for the health and dignity of girls and women.

Baat: What should you know about Menstrual Hygiene?

What is Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM)?

Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM) is a thoughtful approach to self-care during your periods. It revolves around using clean materials, such as pads, to ensure comfort and cleanliness throughout this natural bodily process. For teenagers like you, MHM is like having a plan in place that allows you to seamlessly continue with your normal activities, whether it's sports, hanging out with friends, or focusing on your studies at school.

Key Points:

Comfort and Cleanliness:

MHM emphasizes using appropriate products to maintain comfort and cleanliness during menstruation.

The goal is to make sure you feel at ease and clean, promoting overall well-being.

Normal Activities:

MHM enables you to engage in all your usual activities without disruptions.

Whether it's sports, hobbies, or socializing, the plan is to ensure your period doesn't interfere with your everyday life.

School Life:

You can attend school without any problems, focusing on your studies without interruptions.

By using the right products and strategies, MHM boosts confidence in the school environment.

Healthy Future:

MHM is not just about the present; it sets the foundation for a healthy reproductive future.

Taking care of yourself during adolescence contributes to your overall well-being as you grow older.

Confidence and Well-being:

MHM is a holistic guide, considering both the physical and emotional aspects of your well-being.

It aims to foster confidence and ensure you feel good about yourself during your period.

In essence, MHM is your personalized strategy for managing periods in a way that keeps you happy, healthy, and able to pursue all the things you love with confidence. It's a thoughtful plan that ensures your well-being throughout the natural process of menstruation.

How does Menstrual Hygiene Management Affect Adolescents?

MHM helps girls stay active during their periods, so they can still do things they enjoy. It also means they can go to school without any problems. Good MHM practices now can make sure girls stay healthy when they grow up. In simple words, MHM is like a guide to help teenagers stay active, focused on school, and healthy as they get older.

Physical Activity: It ensures that girls can comfortably engage in physical activities during their periods. By using proper menstrual hygiene products, they can move freely and participate in sports, exercise, and other daily tasks without discomfort.

Education: Proper MHM means girls can attend school regularly without disruptions during their periods. Access to clean and suitable menstrual products ensures that girls can focus on their studies and feel confident in the school environment.

Future Reproductive Health: Practicing good menstrual hygiene sets the foundation for positive reproductive health in the future. By adopting healthy habits during adolescence, girls contribute to their overall well-being as they grow older, promoting a healthy reproductive system.

In simpler terms, MHM helps teenagers stay active and engaged in daily activities, ensures uninterrupted attendance at school, and lays the groundwork for a healthy reproductive future.

What are the Causes of Poor Menstrual Hygiene?

Understanding the causes of poor menstrual hygiene is crucial for everyone involved—parents, social workers, and teenagers. By identifying these causes, we can work towards creating awareness and addressing the challenges that contribute to inadequate menstrual hygiene practices.

Key Causes:

Societal Stigmas:

Lack of open discussions and societal taboos around menstruation contribute to poor menstrual hygiene.

Stigmas can make it difficult for girls to seek information and resources, impacting their overall hygiene practices.

Lack of Awareness:

Many girls may not have access to proper information about menstrual hygiene.

Limited education on the subject can result in the adoption of less effective or unhealthy practices during menstruation.

Limited Access to Resources:

Accessibility to affordable and quality menstrual hygiene products can be a challenge.

Economic constraints may prevent some girls from obtaining essential products, leading to compromised hygiene.

Addressing these causes involves breaking down societal stigmas, promoting awareness, and ensuring equitable access to resources. By understanding and tackling these challenges, we can collectively work towards fostering better menstrual hygiene practices for adolescents.

QUIZ

1. How good are you at practicing these desired behaviors?
2. How often do you change your menstrual hygiene product during your period?
 - A. Always
 - B. Sometimes
 - C. Rarely or Never
3. How do you dispose of used menstrual products?
 - A. In designated bins or containers
 - B. In regular waste bins
 - C. I'm not sure
4. How often do you wash the genital area during your period?
 - A. Regularly, at least twice a day

- B. Occasionally
- C. Infrequently
- 5. Do you choose comfortable and breathable clothing during menstruation?
 - A. Always
 - B. Sometimes
 - C. Rarely or Never
- 6. Do you maintain a balanced and nutritious diet during your period?
 - A. Yes, always
 - B. Sometimes
 - C. No, not often
- 7. How comfortable are you discussing menstruation with family or friends?
 - A. Very comfortable
 - B. Somewhat comfortable
 - C. Not comfortable at all
- 8. How aware are you of changing your menstrual products regularly to avoid discomfort?
 - A. Very aware
 - B. Somewhat aware
 - C. Not aware at all
- 9. Are you aware of proper and hygienic ways to dispose of used menstrual products?
 - A. Yes, I'm aware
 - B. I have some knowledge
 - C. No, I'm not sure

Do you use water and soap for cleaning during your period?

Always

Sometimes

Rarely or Never

How conscious are you about staying hydrated during menstruation?

Very conscious

Somewhat conscious

Not conscious at all

QUIZ

Mostly A's: Awesome job! You're doing great with your menstrual hygiene.

Mostly B's: Nice work! You're doing well, but there's room to improve. Think about trying some healthier habits.

Mostly C's: It's a good time to start thinking about better menstrual hygiene habits. If you need help, don't hesitate to ask for guidance.

BEHAVIOURS AND BARRIERS

What are the Desired Behaviors for Menstrual Hygiene Management?

Understanding and adopting desired behaviors is crucial for effective Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM). For parents, social workers, and teenagers, these behaviors serve as a guide for maintaining good menstrual hygiene, ensuring comfort, cleanliness, and overall well-being.

Key Desired Behaviors:

Proper Product Usage:

Use clean and suitable menstrual hygiene products, like pads or tampons.

Change products regularly to maintain cleanliness and prevent discomfort.

Hygienic Disposal:

Dispose of used menstrual products in a hygienic and environmentally friendly manner.

Utilize designated disposal methods to ensure proper waste management.

Regular Washing:

Practice regular washing of the genital area to maintain cleanliness.

Use mild and unscented soaps to avoid irritation.

Comfortable Attire:

Wear comfortable and breathable clothing during menstruation.

Opt for materials that allow airflow to minimize discomfort.

Healthy Diet:

Maintain a balanced and nutritious diet to support overall well-being during menstruation.

Stay hydrated to alleviate common symptoms like bloating.

Open Communication:

Encourage open communication about menstruation within families and communities.

Foster an environment where questions and concerns can be discussed without stigma.

Adopting these desired behaviors creates a foundation for positive Menstrual Hygiene Management. By incorporating these practices into daily routines, individuals can ensure a healthy and comfortable

experience during menstruation. For parents and social workers, guiding adolescents in embracing these behaviors promotes a positive approach to menstrual hygiene.

Elaboration of Desired behaviours (What can you do as a parent to promote Menstrual Hygiene?)

1. Have the conversation early

In India, most girls have no information about periods up till the age they get their first period. They have no idea what to expect during her first period. They feel that it is shameful and that there is something unnatural about it and shut down from having the conversation. Give them information early in life. You can decide how many details you want to give at what stage. A girl must have all the information before her first period so that she is prepared about what to expect.

2. Do you have all the knowledge about menstruation?

Before you decide to have the conversation with your daughter you can check with your local Asha worker or the internet to see if you have all the appropriate information to give to the young one. Nowadays there are plenty of websites and videos which explain the process very simply. You can also get help from a nurse or Asha worker for the information that needs to be imparted and see if you have it correctly.

Here is the list of videos which will help you educate your younger one better:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QiqWmLBXoz8>

Since it is a subject that is usually avoided your mother might not have told you everything you need to know. Break the cycle, get all the information and pass on the same to your daughter. Giving scientific information about menstruation is important. Educate yourself about how the inner organs work and why we get periods. How often do periods come? How much do girls bleed? Does it hurt? How to reduce pain? Etc.

3. Know the different sanitary products

There are a lot of products available in the markets. The most common ones are sanitary napkins or pads. Some girls also use tampons, and menstrual cups as alternative options. Inform your daughters about all the products. Don't use old rags, hay or ash to absorb the blood. It can have harmful side effects. Teach them about the hygiene. Washing hands after handling any product or taking a bath every day is very important. Maintaining proper menstrual hygiene is very important to avoid any reproductive tract infections. Please do make sure that clean cloth is used for periods and not dirty rags. It should be washed regularly and always use a clean cloth. While using pads or sanitary napkins make sure you change it every 4 to 6 hours. Discard the used ones properly.

Private space for girls becomes important to care for themselves during this time. They might be shy, uncomfortable or even ashamed to use sanitary napkins, wash the cloth or dispose of them in front of other family members. Help them understand that it is a normal process and nothing to be ashamed about.

4. Practices to promote menstrual hygiene

There are a couple of things that you can do to teach your daughter to maintain hygiene during periods.

Take a bath every day or twice a day if possible to keep the private parts clean. Wash your hands with soap every time you use the washroom and touch the products.

Change the sanitary napkins or cloth regularly. It should be changed every 4 - 5 hours. Leaving in sanitary pads for a longer duration can cause bacteria and fungus infections.

It is important to dispose of the product properly as well. Wrap it in a newspaper or tissue and throw it in the dustbin. Throwing it in the open or the toilet is not advised.

Wear loose breathable clothes during periods and drink lots of water to keep the urinary tract clean and avoid any infections. One of the symptoms of Urinary tract infection is the burning sensation while urinating.

5. The superstitions around periods (which hampers menstrual hygiene)

There are many superstitions that revolve around menstrual periods. Educate your child that some superstitions may harm them as well.

It is assumed that eating tangy foods like tamarind, pickles and foods like curd are to be avoided during this time. Girls should not touch tulsi plants or papads. Sometimes girls are also told not to take a bath for 3 days which is very unhygienic. She should not sleep in her usual bed, not touch her books, should not enter the kitchen etc.

However, there is no scientific backing to it. It may hinder her usual nutrition and comfort. It is important to make the girl as comfortable and at ease as possible.

6. Physical activity

One of the common misconceptions about periods is that a girl cannot go outside to play or participate in sports. One of the conscious efforts is to make it as normal as possible. It is proved that physical activity during periods can relieve some of the pain.

7. When to see a doctor/nurse?

Most of the girls will not have problems during their period. Prepare your girl by telling them about the pain, cramps (lower body aches) during periods or the mood swings that come with it. It is a concern if the cramps are intolerable then you must see a doctor and get appropriate medication to control them. Another concern is when the bleeding does not stop for more than 15 days or there are no periods for more than 2 months you must consult a doctor. There can be other problems like cysts or blood clots that need the doctor's attention.

8. And educate boys about menstruation.

While talking to the boys, ensure the whole process is explained positively and without any negative remarks. Avoid any dirty or unpleasant comments. Understandably the conversation can be awkward.

Explain it in a way that as men develop facial hair as a natural process women go through periods. Boys must understand it treat their classmates or sisters with care and respect during this time.

Barriers to Adopting Desired Behaviors

Sometimes, there are things that make it tricky to keep good habits during your period. Let's look at a few and see how we can tackle them using a simple model that thinks about different parts of our lives.

Personal Challenges:

Not Knowing Enough - If you don't know much about good period habits, it can be tough to do them.

Feeling Unsure - Sometimes, thinking negatively or not being sure about periods can get in the way.

Friends and Family Challenges:

Not Talking About It - If people around you don't talk openly about periods, it might make it hard for you to learn.

Friends' Opinions - Sometimes, what friends think or do can affect your own habits.

Community Challenges:

No Easy Access - If it's not easy to get things you need for your period, like pads, it can be a challenge.

Not Enough Learning - If your community doesn't teach enough about periods, it can be tough for everyone.

Society Challenges:

Cultural Beliefs - Some societies have rules or beliefs about periods that might make you feel awkward or ashamed.

Rules and Help - Sometimes, the rules and help we need from our leaders and communities are missing.

Tackling these Challenges:

To make things better, we can:

Teach More: Learn and share more about periods to help everyone know what's good.

Talk Openly: Encourage talking openly at home and everywhere to make periods less of a mystery.

Make Things Easier to Get: Ask for better ways to get what you need for your period.

Change the Rules: Speak up for better rules and support from our leaders.

Addressing Barriers in the Indian Context

In India, we want to make dealing with periods easier for everyone. Here are some specific strategies to overcome challenges linked to culture and geography:

Cultural Conversations Workshops: Arrange workshops where people can openly discuss cultural beliefs about periods. Sharing different perspectives helps break down stigmas and creates understanding.

Period Information Sessions in Schools: Incorporate informative sessions about periods in school curriculums. This helps in educating young minds early and normalizing the conversation.

Community Learning Events: Organize events where community members can learn together about healthy period practices. This helps build a supportive environment and encourages open discussions.

Geographical Access Campaigns: Launch campaigns to ensure easy access to affordable menstrual hygiene products in remote areas. This helps bridge the gap between urban and rural accessibility.

Behavior Change Methods:

Awareness Building: Increasing knowledge about the importance of good period habits through campaigns, workshops, and informative materials.

Positive Role Models: Showcasing positive stories and role models who challenge cultural norms regarding periods, encouraging behavioral change.

Community Engagement: Involving communities in decision-making processes regarding menstrual health, fostering a sense of ownership and understanding.

Peer Education Programs: Empowering young people to educate their peers about periods, creating a supportive network for behavioral change.

Customized Communication: Tailoring communication materials to fit cultural sensitivities and regional languages, ensuring a deeper connection with the audience.

Remember: By combining cultural awareness with these strategies and behavior change methods, we can pave the way for a more supportive and understanding approach to menstrual hygiene in India.

GAMES AND ACTIVITIES

Saath: What activities can you do together for Menstrual Hygiene Management?

Ask yourself the following questions:

1. Did I talk about menstruation with my daughter before she had her first period?
2. Do I have all the information about menstrual hygiene management?
3. Can I provide my daughter with sanitary products?
4. Does my daughter have a private space with clean water during her periods?

5. Do I have any beliefs about periods that my peers or mother have told me about? Have I questioned those?

6. Do I let menstruation or periods affect my child's education or any other activities?

Games/Tools to Address Barriers

Let's make dealing with periods a bit like a game – something fun and interactive! Here are some cool games and tools that can help us overcome challenges and make things better:

The Knowledge Quest Game:

How to Play: Answer questions about periods, and as you get them right, you learn more! It's like a quiz to boost your period knowledge.

Why It Helps: Playing this game helps you understand more about periods and breaks down the barrier of not knowing enough.

The Open Talk Board:

How to Use: It's like a big board where you and your friends or family can write or draw your feelings about periods. You can share thoughts without speaking out loud.

Why It Helps: This tool encourages open communication, making it easier to talk about periods and breaking the barrier of feeling unsure.

Access Adventure Quest:

How to Play: Navigate through a virtual world to find and collect menstrual hygiene products. The more you collect, the better your period adventure becomes!

Why It Helps: This game highlights the importance of easy access to period products, tackling the barrier of not having what you need.

The Learning Circle Tool:

How to Use: Gather in a circle with friends or family, and take turns sharing one thing you've learned about periods. It's like a learning celebration!

Why It Helps: This tool promotes shared learning and helps break down the barrier of not enough learning in the community.

Remember: The more we turn these challenges into fun games and tools, the easier it becomes for everyone to talk, learn, and make periods a breeze!

Parent and Child Activities

Connecting Through Fun: Parent and Child Activities for Better Period Talks

Talking about periods can be easier and more enjoyable when you turn it into special activities. Here are some joint activities for parents and children to foster communication and understanding:

DIY Period Kit Crafting:

How to Do It: Create a personalized period kit together. Decorate a box and fill it with pads, chocolates, and maybe a handwritten note for support.

Why It Helps: It's a creative way to prepare and discuss what's needed during periods.

Storybook Exploration:

How to Do It: Read a storybook about periods together. Choose one with characters facing similar experiences to encourage discussion.

Why It Helps: It provides a shared, non-intimidating way to approach the topic.

Period-Positive Movie Night:

How to Do It: Watch a movie or documentary that discusses periods positively. Afterward, share thoughts and answer any questions.

Why It Helps: It sparks conversation in a relaxed setting.

Grocery Shopping Adventure:

How to Do It: Include your child in buying period products during your regular grocery shopping. Explain the different options available.

Why It Helps: It normalizes the process and educates them about product choices.

Artistic Expression Session:

How to Do It: Encourage your child to express their feelings about periods through art—drawing, painting, or even writing a poem.

Why It Helps: It allows them to communicate in a way that feels comfortable.

Cook and Chat:

How to Do It: Cook a favorite meal together while having an open conversation about periods. Make it a relaxed, shared experience.

Why It Helps: It combines a common activity with an opportunity for dialogue.

Period Pamper Day:

How to Do It: Set aside a day for self-care during periods. Create a spa-like atmosphere with soothing activities and treats.

Why It Helps: It emphasizes the importance of taking care of oneself during menstruation.

Q&A Session with Snacks:

How to Do It: Set up a Q&A session where your child can ask anything about periods. Add some snacks to make it a comfortable talk.

Why It Helps: It creates a safe space for curiosity and questions.

Remember: Turning period discussions into shared activities helps break down barriers and fosters a closer relationship. Make it a bonding experience that promotes understanding and open communication.

Existing Governmental and Non-Governmental Programmes

In India, the government has implemented various schemes and programs to promote menstrual hygiene. Here are some existing initiatives:

Menstrual Hygiene Scheme (MHS):

Objective: Provide subsidized sanitary napkins to adolescent girls in rural areas.

Beneficiaries: Girls in the age group of 10 to 19 years.

National Health Mission (NHM): Rashtriya Kishor Swasthya Karyakram (RKSK):

Objective: Focuses on the holistic health of adolescents, including menstrual hygiene education.

Beneficiaries: Adolescents aged 10 to 19 years.

Swachh Bharat Abhiyan:

Objective: Promotes the construction of sanitary facilities in schools and public places for improved menstrual hygiene.

Beneficiaries: General public, especially women and school-going girls.

Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY):

Objective: Provides financial assistance to pregnant and lactating women, including support for menstrual hygiene.

Beneficiaries: Pregnant and lactating mothers.

Sabla - Rajiv Gandhi Scheme for Adolescent Girls:

Objective: Empowers adolescent girls through education and skill development, including awareness on menstrual hygiene.

Beneficiaries: Adolescent girls in the age group of 11 to 18 years.

Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS):

Objective: Promotes the overall health and nutrition of women and children, including menstrual hygiene education.

Beneficiaries: Pregnant women, lactating mothers, and children under 6 years.

National Rural Livelihoods Mission (NRLM): Aajeevika - National Rural Livelihood Mission:

Objective: Supports women's self-help groups (SHGs) that may work towards promoting menstrual hygiene.

Beneficiaries: Women in rural areas involved in SHGs.

One Stop Centre Scheme:

Objective: Provides support and assistance to women affected by violence, including ensuring access to menstrual hygiene products.

Beneficiaries: Women facing violence and in need of support services.

Existing Governmental and Non-Governmental Programmes

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Why It Helps: It's a creative way to prepare and discuss what's needed during periods.

Storybook Exploration:

Making a Commitment

Deciding to commit to good menstrual hygiene is like choosing a superpower for a better, happier life. Picture a world where talking openly about periods is cool, knowing what to do during that time is easy, and every commitment you make adds up to something great. By making this commitment, you're not just helping yourself; you're joining a team that's all about breaking down barriers, understanding each other, and cheering for every small win. It's like a

journey where everyone supports each other to feel strong and proud during their periods. So, why not join in? Let's commit to making our future brighter, healthier, and full of confidence, together!

Connecting to a Community

Connecting to a community can be a game-changer in your journey towards better menstrual health. Imagine being part of a group where experiences are shared, questions find answers, and support is just a message away. Online or offline, communities provide a space to learn, grow, and celebrate together. By connecting, you not only gain insights from others but also contribute your unique experiences, creating a network that uplifts and empowers. Whether it's a virtual platform or a local gathering, being part of a community makes the journey towards good menstrual health a shared, supportive adventure. So, why not dive in, connect, and be part of a community that understands and celebrates the strength in embracing menstrual health together?

Conclusion:

As we wrap up our topic about periods, let's celebrate the neat things we've learned together. Taking care of yourself during your period is like giving yourself a special skill! It's not just about you; it's about joining a team where everyone helps each other out. So, whether you start talking more about periods, learn new things, or just decide to try something different, every little step counts. You're not alone – we're all in this together!

Remember that understanding and supporting each other is what it's all about. Your small efforts make a big difference in making the world a better place for everyone during their periods. So, be proud of your journey, stay connected, and know that you've got a whole team cheering you on. Here's to feeling strong, happy, and confident during your periods and making the future awesome for everyone!

Period Tracker & Discussion Circle

Create a simple calendar where the adolescent can track their menstrual cycle. Once a month, have a family discussion circle where any questions about menstruation can be asked openly. Use this time to reinforce positive attitudes and dispel myths. Parents can share stories of how they managed menstruation to normalize the conversation.

COMMITMENT TO CHILD

I, _____, parent of _____, commit to actively supporting my child through the challenges discussed in this chapter. I will practice patience, open communication, and seek help when needed to ensure my child's healthy development.

USEFUL LINKS

- National Health Mission: <https://nhm.gov.in>
- UNICEF India Adolescent Development: <https://www.unicef.org/india/adolescents>
- Ministry of Health and Family Welfare: <https://www.mohfw.gov.in>

CHAPTER 4: NON-COMMUNICABLE DISEASE

Non- Communicable Disease (NCDs - risk behaviours and risk reduction in adolescence)

KNOWLEDGE AND CAUSES

Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) are health conditions that you don't catch from other people; instead, they usually develop over time and are often linked to the way we live and our choices. These diseases are not caused by germs like the cold or flu. Instead, they often relate to things like the food we eat, how much we exercise, whether we smoke, and how much stress we have in our lives.

Examples of Non-Communicable Diseases include:

Heart Disease: Problems with the heart, like heart attacks or heart failure.

Diabetes: A condition where your body has trouble managing sugar in your blood.

Cancer: The uncontrolled growth of cells in the body that can form a lump or mass called a tumor.

Chronic Respiratory Diseases: Long-term problems with breathing, like chronic bronchitis or asthma.

Stroke: A sudden problem with the blood supply to the brain, which can cause damage.

Obesity: Being very overweight, which can lead to other health issues.

These diseases need ongoing care and can affect a person's health for a long time. Making healthy choices, like eating well, staying active, and avoiding smoking, can help prevent many Non-Communicable Diseases. According to the WHO-NCD national profile for India 2018, current tobacco smoking among individuals aged 15 and up is 20% in males and 2% in girls. Nearly 1.7% of teenage boys and 2.4% of adolescent girls were overweight, which might contribute to the growth in the proportion of this age group with pre-diabetes. In India, teenagers and adults of both genders smoke tobacco in various forms. Tobacco is smoked in the form of cigarettes, bidis, cigars/chutta (a home-grown cigar), hukkahs, or pipes (chillum). In India, bidi smoking is the most common type of tobacco smoking. Bidis are just as dangerous as cigarettes. Diabetes can affect persons of any age, although it most commonly affects children, adolescents, and young people. Type 1 Diabetes can be diagnosed at any age, however it is more common in children under the age of 15.

Consequences of NCD in Adolescents:

Impact on Education: Unhealthy habits like smoking cigarettes, consuming drugs can lead to health issues. When the child will face health issues, he or she will miss out school. Frequent doctor visits, hospital stays, and the need for ongoing management can result in missed school days. Children will have difficulty keeping up with lessons, impacting their academic performance and potentially hindering future educational opportunities.

Limited Physical activity: Some NCDs may make it difficult for teenagers to engage in regular physical activity. Asthma and cardiovascular difficulties might make it difficult to participate in sports or outdoor activities. This restriction not only has an impact on physical health, but it also impedes the development of crucial social and collaborative skills that are commonly associated with such activities.

Financial Issues that the Family will have to Face: The financial bills of managing NCDs are high. Medications, regular medical check-ups, and lifestyle changes can put a burden on family resources. This financial burden may have an influence on the household's overall economic well-being, making it critical to investigate cheap healthcare solutions and assistance systems.

Long-term Health Complications: Adolescents with NCDs are at risk of developing long-term health issues. Poorly handled problems throughout adolescence can prepare the way for the development of more serious health difficulties later in life, such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and other chronic ailments. The importance of early intervention and competent treatment in minimising these long-term dangers cannot be ignored.

How to Fix this:

Prioritise Balanced Nutrition: Encourage the inclusion of a variety of locally available fruits, vegetables, and whole grains in your teenager's diet. Explain that a diverse and balanced diet provides essential nutrients for growth and helps prevent NCDs like diabetes and obesity.

Promote Regular Physical Activity: Simple workouts such as brisk walking, cycling, or playing traditional games should be encouraged. Physical activity improves general health while also lowering the chances of heart disease and obesity.

Limit Screen Time: Set specific time limits for recreational screen use, including smartphones and TVs. excessive screen time can contribute to sedentary behaviour and impact mental well-being.

Encourage Adequate Hydration: Emphasise the importance of drinking clean water throughout the day. Proper hydration supports overall health, aids digestion, and helps prevent issues like kidney stones.

Educate on Tobacco and Alcohol Risks: Share information about the harmful effects of tobacco and alcohol on health. Use relatable examples, such as increased risk of respiratory problems or liver damage, to discourage experimentation among teenagers.

Regular Health Check-ups: Start taking routine health check-ups, even when feeling well. Many preventable health issues that can be detected early, such as high blood pressure or diabetes, and early detection can lead to effective management.

QUIZ

1. Which of the following is a non-communicable disease?

A) Influenza

B) Tuberculosis

C) Diabetes

D) Malaria

Answer: C) Diabetes

2. Which of the following is a risk factor for developing non-communicable diseases?

A) Regular exercise

B) Healthy diet

C) Smoking

D) Vaccination

Answer: C) Smoking

3. What is the leading cause of death worldwide?

A) Infectious diseases

B) Non-communicable diseases

C) Accidents

D) Natural disasters

Answer: B) Non-communicable diseases

BEHAVIOURS AND BARRIERS

Implementing health strategies, especially those related to curbing non-communicable diseases (NCDs), can be challenging for parents in India due to various barriers. Here are some common barriers you might face:

Limited Access to Nutrient-Rich Foods:

Barrier: Some families may face financial constraints, limiting their access to a diverse range of nutrient-rich foods.

Example: A parent might find it challenging to afford fresh fruits, vegetables, and whole grains regularly.

Lack of Safe Spaces for Physical Activity:

Barrier: Limited access to safe outdoor spaces or recreational facilities can hinder opportunities for regular physical activity.

Example: A parent residing in an area with inadequate parks or open spaces may struggle to find safe places for their child to play or exercise.

Insufficient Health Education:

Barrier: Parents may have limited access to health education resources, making it difficult to stay informed about preventive health measures.

Example: A parent may not be aware of the long-term health risks associated with certain lifestyle choices due to a lack of health education.

Limited Availability of Clean Drinking Water:

Barrier: Access to clean and safe drinking water may be a challenge in some areas.

Example: A parent may find it difficult to ensure their child drinks enough clean water daily due to unreliable water sources.

Tobacco and Alcohol Accessibility:

Barrier: Families may live in areas where tobacco and alcohol are more readily available, increasing the risk of exposure for teenagers.

Example: A parent might struggle to prevent their child from experimenting with tobacco or alcohol if these substances are prevalent in the community.

Limited Healthcare Resources:

Barrier: Families may face challenges in accessing affordable and quality healthcare resources.

Example: A parent might find it difficult to afford regular health check-ups or may live in an area with limited healthcare facilities.

Time Constraints and Work Demands:

Barrier: Parents often face demanding work schedules, leaving limited time for involvement in their child's health and well-being.

Example: A parent working multiple jobs may find it challenging to allocate time for preparing nutritious meals or engaging in physical activities with their child.

Let's explore some solutions to these barriers:

Existing Governmental and Non-Governmental Programmes

Access to Affordable Health care: Take advantage of government health schemes such as Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PM-JAY), which provides financial protection for secondary and tertiary care hospitalisation. Utilize the services of primary health centers and community health clinics, where basic healthcare services and consultations are often available at lower costs. Opt for generic medications instead of branded ones. Generic drugs are often more affordable and offer the same therapeutic effects.

Implementing Physical Activity: Start taking walks with your child in the morning. When you go for a walk or run, take the child along with you. Even telling your child to get things from the market can encourage the child to ride his cycle or go for a walk. Encouraging your child to participate in school sports activities or even being part of some sports team can help them to be physically active in some way or the other

Tobacco and Alcohol Accessibility: To make sure teenagers in rural villages in India don't easily get tobacco and alcohol, we can do a few things. First, tell families and young people about the dangers of using these things. Work with local leaders to make strict rules about selling and advertising tobacco and alcohol. Create groups in the community to keep an eye out and report if someone is selling these things to teenagers. Also, organize fun activities for young people, like sports or learning events, to keep them busy and away from these harmful substances. It's important for everyone in the community to agree that it's not okay for teenagers to have access to tobacco and alcohol.

Happy Picture:

In a village in India, the Singh family faced the challenging reality of Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) when their eldest daughter, Riya, was diagnosed with early-stage diabetes. The news brought a wave of worry and uncertainty to the close-knit family, whose primary source of income was farming. The family, consisting of Mr. and Mrs. Singh and their three children, found themselves grappling with the financial burden of managing Riya's condition.

To address the challenge, the Singhs first sought guidance from the local primary health center. They learned about government health schemes providing financial support for medical expenses. However, accessing these benefits proved to be a bureaucratic maze, requiring persistence and understanding of the complex paperwork.

The family's limited understanding of diabetes posed another hurdle. With the help of community health workers and local health workshops, they gradually grasped the importance of a balanced diet and regular physical activity in managing diabetes. The Singhs faced the reality that their traditional diet, rich in carbohydrates, needed adjustment.

Adapting to their new circumstances, the family transformed their backyard into a small vegetable garden, cultivating diabetes-friendly produce. They substituted white rice with brown rice and embraced locally available grains that were more suitable for Riya's dietary needs.

Community support played a crucial role in their journey. The village organized health awareness camps, inviting experts to provide insights into managing diabetes. Riya's school became a partner in her health journey, adjusting its midday meal offerings to accommodate her dietary requirements.

Despite initial challenges, the Singhs' determination and community collaboration paid off. Riya's health gradually improved, and the family learned to navigate the complexities of living with diabetes. The community's awareness about NCDs increased, fostering a supportive environment for families facing similar struggles.

GAMES AND ACTIVITIES

COMMITMENT TO CHILD

USEFUL LINKS

Healthy Lifestyle Scorecard

Create a weekly scorecard for the family tracking healthy habits: eating fruits/vegetables, drinking water, avoiding sugary drinks, exercising 30 minutes, and getting 8 hours of sleep. Each family member scores points daily. At the end of the week, the person with the highest score chooses a family activity. This builds awareness of NCD risk factors through play.

CHAPTER 5: NUTRITION

KNOWLEDGE AND CAUSES

Traditional Indian meals of Roti, subzi, rice, dal, kachumber, raita, chutney had an ancient wisdom hidden in it. It took care of all the nourishment needs of the body. It provided all the major components needed for the proper functioning of the body. These components can be classified as proteins, fats, carbohydrates, minerals and vitamins which perform different functions in the body.

Function of various food components

Proteins are of the most importance component because they are required for bodybuilding and help in repair and maintenance of body tissues. They are present in abundance in meat, fish, eggs, milk products and dals and pulses

Fats are high-energy foods and a source of energy and some vitamins and also make the food tasty. Sources of healthy fat are – nuts, seeds like sesame, flax seed, fatty fish like Salmon

Carbohydrates are the main source of energy. Sources of healthy carbohydrates are- Whole grains wheat, Dahlia, rice, legumes, millets like ragi, bajra, barley

Vitamins and minerals enable the body to use other nutrients and also play an important role in growth, repair and regulation of vital body functions.

Vitamins are further classified as A, B (group of vitamins), C, D, E and K. Each one serves a different role in the healthy functioning of all parts of the body and for growth. Sources of vitamins are fruits, vegetables, poultry, seeds and nuts.

Iron, calcium and zinc are some of the most important minerals needed by the body. Iron's main role is to help transport oxygen around the body. It's also important for brain function, and a healthy immune system. Calcium is vital for healthy bones and teeth. Zinc is needed for building and repairing cells and for healthy immune system. Sources of minerals are fruits, vegetables, poultry, fish, meat, seeds and nuts

Growth and development in Adolescence.

Adolescence is an important period when rapid physical growth and sexual maturation takes place. And hence the nutritional needs of the body are also increased during adolescence and puberty. There is enhanced need of proteins, carbohydrates, fats and vitamins to enable proper growth and maintenance of higher energy levels. Requirements for iron and calcium are particularly increased in adolescence. Calcium needs during adolescence are greater than they are in either childhood or adulthood because of rapid increase in lean body mass and skeletal growth. Zinc is especially important in adolescence because of its role in growth and sexual maturation.

Inadequate and improper diet during this period can have negative effects that extend well into the reproductive years. Nutritional deficiencies and poor eating habits during adolescence can have long-term effects, including delayed sexual maturation, stunted height, osteoporosis, high cholesterol, and obesity. A female who is undernourished also has a higher probability of experiencing pregnancy problems and giving birth to a child who is underweight, which feeds the vicious cycle of starvation and illness.

A young person should eat a balanced diet which contains all the five food groups in proper proportions.

Balanced Diet

A balanced diet is one that provides all nutrients (carbohydrates, proteins, fats, vitamins and minerals) in required amounts and proportions for maintaining health and general well being.

They should eat:

plenty of fruit and vegetables of a wide variety especially the colourful ones like carrots, spinach, sweet potatoes, pumpkin, beetroot, Brinjal, bananas, oranges and all other seasonal varieties.

adequate quantities of rice and other cereals, millets and potatoes

milk and dairy products such as yoghurt and cheese and

meat, fish, poultry, eggs and/or nuts and legumes.

The relative proportion of the five groups is depicted in the diagram.

In addition, they should choose foods that are low in salt, fat or sugar.

Caution :

Besides consuming adequate amounts of all ingredients, it is important to not indulge in excesses, especially of sugar, refined foods, high salt foods and fats. This means a very limited consumption of processed foods like pizzas, burgers, other fast foods and packaged snacks. Excess consumption of these along with lack of adequate exercise may lead to obesity. Obesity is a state in which there is accumulation of excess fat in the body leading and weight gain of more than 20% of desirable weight. Obesity has several adverse health effects and can even lead to premature death. Obesity leads to high blood cholesterol, high blood pressure, heart disease, diabetes, gallbladder stone and certain types of cancer.

QUIZ

1. Which of the following nutrients is a macronutrient?

a) Vitamin C

b) Iron

c) Protein

d) Zinc

Answer: c) Protein

2. Which of the following is a good source of complex carbohydrates?

a) White bread

b) Brown rice

c) Candy

d) Soda

Answer: b) Brown rice

3. What is the role of dietary fiber in the body?

a) Provides a quick source of energy

b) Helps in muscle repair and growth

c) Aids in digestion and prevents constipation

d) Regulates body temperature

Answer: c) Aids in digestion and prevents constipation

BEHAVIOURS AND BARRIERS

GAMES AND ACTIVITIES

Is your family living smart?

Allocate marks for answers to each item as follows;

Daily = 4, b. 2-3 times a week = 3, c. Once a week =2, d. Rarely =1.

Calculate A =Total up marks of questions 1-7 || B= Total of marks for questions 8-10

Final Marks = A-B

19-25 marks -- Excellent

12-18 marks – You can do better

Less than 12- you need to pay attention to your child's diet

Points to ponder

Are the young children in my family happy, energetic and disease free most part of any month?

Is their height and weight as per the recommended standards?

Do they have healthy bones and teeth?

Do we consume a nutritious diet full of vegetables, fruits, whole grains, pulses, milk and eggs/fish/meat?

Do the children spend more time on mobile or TV and less on physical activity?

Do we consume too much fast food, carbonated drinks, biscuits and pastries?

Games for parents to educate and enhance recall so as to encourage proper diet planning

Bid for health

The group is divided into groups of 4-6 people.

Each group gets a notional amount of 500 coins to spend on 3 meals of the day.

Various items are listed or displayed with a base price.

The groups are given time to plan their meals.

Then the bidding for the items start.

So e.g 6 eggs start with a base price of 50 coins. But there are 4 groups and only 2 sets of 6 eggs. So the groups start to bid above 50 coins for the eggs.

And so all the items are listed.(Fast foods, refined foods, carbonated drinks are listed at very cheap base price)

At the end groups reflect on whether they could manage to get healthy meals in the 500 coins allotted to them

Games for adolescents/ parents

Eat my rainbow.

Name fruits/vegetables/seeds/nuts/pulses which correspond with each colour of the rainbow.

Discuss balance meals of various geographies of India and try to identify the reason for its inclusion in traditional diets.

COMMITMENT TO CHILD

Swasth Hi Mast

I am Siraj and I am 15 years old.

I am the class monitor because I am present all days of the school.

I am one of the tallest boys in the class.

I like to be early in the class and help the teacher and other students with their work.

I like to play computer and video games, but I like to play cricket even more.

I dream of becoming a part of the Indian Cricket team and my ideal is Virat Kohli because he is not only successful but also takes care of himself and his team members.

USEFUL LINKS

Rainbow Plate Challenge

Challenge your family to create a 'rainbow plate' at least once a day — including fruits and vegetables of different colors (red tomatoes, orange carrots, yellow corn, green spinach, blue/purple eggplant, white cauliflower). Take photos of the most colorful plates and share them. This teaches nutritional variety in a fun, visual way.

CHAPTER 6: OBESITY

KNOWLEDGE AND CAUSES

What is obesity?

Obesity is a condition where a person has too much body fat, and it can lead to various health problems. Imagine your body is like a balance scale, and the food you eat and the energy you use are the two sides of the scale. When you eat more food than your body needs, especially if it's high in calories and low in nutrients, the scale starts tipping in favour of gaining weight.

In simple terms, if you regularly eat more food than your body can burn off, the excess calories get stored as fat. Over time, this can make you overweight, and if it goes too far, you might be considered obese. In India, where we enjoy a variety of delicious foods, it's important to find a balance between enjoying our meals and maintaining a healthy weight.

Obesity isn't just about how someone looks; it can affect their health. People who are obese may face a higher risk of developing serious conditions like diabetes, heart disease, and joint problems. It's like carrying around extra baggage that puts a strain on your body.

Factors contributing to obesity include not only what we eat but also how much we move. If we don't get enough physical activity, the scale tips towards gaining weight. Modern lifestyles, with more desk jobs and less active play, contribute to this challenge.

In India, the prevalence of obesity among adolescents has been on the rise, paralleling global trends. According to the Comprehensive National Nutrition Survey (CNNS) conducted in 2016-2018, approximately 5% of children and adolescents in the age group of 10-19 years were found to be overweight or obese. The prevalence tends to vary across different states and urban-rural settings.

CONSEQUENCES OF OBESITY:

Obesity during adolescence can have significant short-term and long-term consequences for both physical and mental health. Here are some potential consequences:

Health Problems:

Sugar Problem: If your child is too heavy, they might get a sugar problem called diabetes. This means their body can't handle sugar well, and it can make them sick.

Heart and Blood Pressure: Being very heavy can also hurt their heart and make the blood pressure go up. It's like the body is working too hard and can cause problems inside.

Feeling Sad and Alone:

Feeling Bad About Themselves: If your child is too heavy, they might feel sad and not like themselves. People may say mean things, and this can make them feel alone.

Worried and Nervous: Being too heavy can make them worried and nervous a lot. It's important for them to feel good about themselves.

Becoming a Grown-Up:

Growing Up Late: If your child is too heavy, they might take more time to become a grown-up. For girls, this can mean starting periods early, and for boys, it might take longer for their voice to change.

Body Changing Too Much: Too much weight can make their body change in ways that are not normal, and this can cause problems later.

Getting Sick When Older:

Sick in the Stomach and Liver: If your child is too heavy, their stomach and liver can get sick when they become grown-ups. This can happen if they don't eat healthy and exercise.

Problems in School and Work:

Hard to Learn in School: If your child is too heavy, they might find it hard to study and do well in school. It's like their body and mind are not working together.

Finding a Good Job: When they grow up, being too heavy can make it difficult to find a good job. People might not want to give them work.

The best thing to do is to help your child eat healthy food and do some exercise. This means giving them good things to eat like fruits, vegetables, and less oily food. Also, make sure they play and move around a lot, like playing outside or walking. If you're worried, it's always good to see a doctor who can help and give advice. Taking care of their health now will help them feel better and have a good life when they grow up.

CAUSES OF THE OBESITY:

We all want our children to be healthy and strong. Sometimes, kids can gain extra weight, and it's important to know why. Let's talk about this in a way that's easy to understand.

1. Too Much Eating, Not Enough Moving:

Imagine your child's body is like a balance scale. When they eat more food (especially things like fried snacks and sugary drinks), it adds weight to one side. If they don't move and play enough, the other side doesn't balance. This can make them gain extra weight.

2. Sitting More, Playing Less:

In the old days, kids used to run around, play games, and help with chores. Now, they spend a lot of time sitting and playing on phones or watching TV. Less moving means more weight.

3. Family Health History:

Sometimes, gaining weight can run in families. If someone in the family has had this issue, it might be a little easier for kids to gain weight. But don't worry, we can still make healthy choices!

4. Sweets and Snacks:

Our Indian snacks are delicious, but some can make kids gain weight. Too many fried and sugary snacks add extra calories. It's okay to enjoy them sometimes, but not all the time.

5. Health is Wealth:

We all know the saying "Health is Wealth." Gaining extra weight can make our kids sick. It can lead to sugar problems, heart issues, and joint pains. We want our kids to be strong and active.

6. What Can We Do?

We don't have to do big things. Small changes make a big difference. Include more fruits and vegetables in meals. Try to limit fried and sugary snacks. Encourage kids to play outside and move around.

7. Support Each Other:

We're not alone in this. As a community and as parents, let's support each other. Share ideas, encourage healthy habits, and celebrate small victories.

8. Ask for Help:

If you're unsure or need advice, there are people who can help. Talk to the local health workers, school teachers, or someone you trust. They can guide us on what foods are good and how much our kids should play.

QUIZ

1. What is obesity?

- A) A genetic disorder
- B) A contagious disease
- C) A condition characterized by excessive body fat
- D) A result of lack of exercise

Answer: C) A condition characterized by excessive body fat

2. Which of the following factors can contribute to obesity?

- A) Genetics
- B) Sedentary lifestyle

- C) Poor diet
- D) All of the above

Answer: D) All of the above

3. What is the body mass index (BMI) used for?

- A) Determining if someone is underweight
- B) Determining if someone is overweight or obese
- C) Measuring muscle mass
- D) Assessing overall health

Answer: B) Determining if someone is overweight or obese

BEHAVIOURS AND BARRIERS

HOW TO FIX THE CAUSES:/ Desired behaviour to address the problem

Eat a Mix of Foods: Make sure your kids eat a mix of things like fruits, veggies, whole grains, and proteins. Try to avoid too many spicy snacks and sweet drinks.

Exercise Every Day:

Encourage your kids to play or do some kind of exercise for at least 60 minutes every day. It could be walking, cycling, playing sports, or anything they enjoy.

Less TV and Phones: Tell your kids not to spend too much time watching TV or playing games on the phone. A little bit is okay, but not too much.

Good Sleep: Make sure your kids get enough sleep every night. Having a routine for sleep is important for their health.

Eat Together as a Family: Try to have meals together as a family. It's not just about eating but also spending time together.

Drink Water: Remind your kids to drink water throughout the day. Limit tea, coffee, and sugary drinks.

Think About What You Eat: Teach your kids to pay attention to when they are hungry or full. Try not to eat while watching TV or doing other things.

Feel Good About Yourself: Help your kids feel good about themselves. Tell them their bodies are for doing things, not just for looking a certain way.

Choose Healthy Snacks: Encourage your kids to have healthy snacks like fruits, veggies, yogurt, or nuts. Try not to have too many snacks that are high in calories but low in good stuff.

Positive Thoughts and Friends: Encourage your kids to think positive and make good friends. Having good friends can help them stay healthy.

Understand Food: Teach your kids some basic things about food and how it affects their health.

Check on Health Regularly: Take your kids for regular health check-ups. This helps you know if everything is okay and catch any problems early.

OBSTACLES/barriers TO ACHIEVE THESE DESIRED BEHAVIOURS:

Implementing desired behaviors to curb obesity can indeed face several realistic obstacles for parents. Here are some common challenges they might encounter:

Time Constraints:

Obstacle: Many parents, especially those working long hours or multiple jobs, may find it challenging to allocate time for preparing healthy meals or engaging in regular physical activities with their children.

Financial Constraints:

Obstacle: The cost of nutritious foods, sports equipment, or gym memberships can be prohibitive for some families. Economic constraints may limit access to healthier options.

Limited Access to Fresh Foods:

Obstacle: Families in both urban food deserts and rural areas may have limited access to fresh fruits, vegetables, and other healthy food options, relying instead on more processed and less nutritious choices.

Influence of Advertisements:

Obstacle: Constant exposure to advertisements for unhealthy foods can create challenges in resisting the allure of these products, especially when they are often more affordable and readily available.

Cultural and Traditional Practices:

Obstacle: Cultural and traditional practices often involve certain foods that may not align with modern ideas of a balanced diet. Changing these practices can be met with resistance or discomfort.

Lack of Education:

Obstacle: Parents with limited education may struggle to understand complex health information. This can hinder their ability to make informed decisions about nutrition, exercise, and overall well-being.

Stress and Mental Health:

Obstacle: High levels of stress, whether from work, family, or other sources, can impact a parent's mental well-being. Stress may lead to emotional eating or difficulty prioritizing healthy habits.

Lack of Safe Outdoor Spaces:

Obstacle: Families in urban areas may face challenges in finding safe and accessible outdoor spaces for physical activities. Limited options can hinder opportunities for children to play and exercise.

Peer and Social Pressure:

Obstacle: Social dynamics within communities can influence parents' choices. Peer pressure or the desire to conform to social norms may impact dietary habits and lifestyle choices.

Lack of Role Models:

Obstacle: If parents themselves did not grow up with healthy habits or have struggled with obesity, it can be challenging to model and encourage positive behaviors for their children.

Inconsistent Information:

Obstacle: Conflicting information about nutrition and health from various sources, including the media, can lead to confusion and make it difficult for parents to know what choices are best for their families.

Limited Healthcare Access:

Obstacle: Families with limited access to healthcare services may face challenges in obtaining regular check-ups or professional guidance on nutrition and lifestyle changes.

Overcoming these obstacles often requires a multifaceted approach, including community support, educational initiatives, and policies that make healthier choices more accessible and affordable for all families. Recognizing and addressing these challenges is crucial for creating effective strategies to curb obesity.

HOW CAN YOU OVERCOME THESE OBSTACLES:

1. Rise and Shine with Yoga:

Embrace the rich Indian heritage by starting the day with simple yoga exercises. It's not only a budget-friendly way to stay fit but also an excellent stress-buster for busy parents.

2. Budget-Friendly Healthy Indian Recipes:

Explore traditional Indian recipes using affordable, locally available ingredients. Dishes like dal, sabzi, and khichdi can be both nutritious and easy on the pocket.

3. Community Gardens for Fresh Greens:

Join or start a community garden where families can grow their own fresh vegetables. It not only fosters a sense of community but also provides access to organic produce.

4. Dance Your Way to Health:

Instead of expensive gym memberships, consider Bollywood or folk dance classes. It's a fun way for the whole family to stay active without burning a hole in your pocket.

5. Ayurveda for Balanced Nutrition:

Add Ayurvedic principles into your diet. Explore the use of spices and herbs not only for flavour but also for their health benefits, helping maintain a balanced diet.

6. Local Markets and Seasonal Delights:

Go to local markets for seasonal fruits and vegetables with your child. They are often more affordable and fresher than imported options, supporting local farmers as well.

7. Mindful Eating with Traditional Thalīs:

Follow the age-old tradition of eating from thalis. It promotes portion control and includes a variety of dishes, ensuring a balanced and wholesome meal.

8. Cultural Fitness Events:

Participate in or organise fitness events inspired by Indian traditions. Events like Dandiya Raas or Pongal celebrations can promote physical activity and community bonding.

9. Rural Adventures for Active Living:

Explore rural areas for affordable adventure activities. Trekking in the hills or cycling through scenic villages can be both physically rewarding and culturally enriching.

WHAT PARENT CAN DO TO PREVENT THE PROBLEM?

A Happy Picture?

In the cheerful village of Chandanpur, young Aarav decided to become healthier with the help of his parents and friendly neighbours. Aarav's mom and dad learned about good food at workshops and started making tasty, healthy meals at home. The whole village joined in by organising fun games and planting a special garden with yummy fruits and veggies. Aarav began playing traditional games and doing yoga with his new friends. Everyone in Chandanpur worked together to make Aarav's journey happy and successful, showing that when a whole village helps out, being healthy can be lots of fun!

Several initiatives and schemes have been introduced in India to address the growing concern of obesity and promote overall health. However, it's essential to note that the information might have evolved, and new schemes may have been introduced since then. Here are a few noteworthy initiatives that were in place as of my last update:

GAMES AND ACTIVITIES

COMMITMENT TO CHILD

DO YOU WANT TO MAKE COMMITMENT STATEMENT?

Taking care of our children's health is like planting a strong tree that will give shade for years to come. When we help our children eat well, play, and stay active, we are giving them the best gift – the gift of good health. Remember, it doesn't have to be big changes. Small things like adding more colourful fruits and veggies to meals, playing together, and avoiding too many fried snacks can make a big difference. Let's work together, like a big family, to make our children's lives healthy and happy. Their smiles are our greatest reward.

USEFUL LINKS

GAMES OR ACTIVITIES TO OVERCOME THE BARRIERS

EXISTING GOV. PROGRAMS:

National Programme for Prevention and Control of Cancer, Diabetes, Cardiovascular Diseases, and Stroke (NPCDCS):

Launched by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, NPCDCS includes measures for the prevention and control of non-communicable diseases, including obesity. It focuses on health promotion, early diagnosis, and management of these diseases.

National Health Mission (NHM):

NHM includes various health-related programs, and some states have implemented obesity prevention and management components under NHM. These initiatives often include awareness campaigns, lifestyle modification programs, and community-based interventions.

POSHAN Abhiyaan (National Nutrition Mission):

POSHAN Abhiyaan aims to improve nutritional outcomes for children, pregnant women, and lactating mothers. While its primary focus is on addressing malnutrition, it indirectly contributes to obesity prevention by promoting a balanced and nutritious diet.

Fit India Movement:

Launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the Fit India Movement encourages citizens to adopt a physically active lifestyle. It promotes regular exercise, sports, and other physical activities to combat sedentary behavior and reduce the risk of obesity.

School Health Programs:

Many states have school health programs that include components addressing childhood obesity. These programs focus on promoting healthy eating habits, physical activity, and regular health check-ups in schools.

Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) Initiatives:

FSSAI has introduced various initiatives to improve food safety and encourage healthier food choices. These include regulations for food labeling, promotion of fortified foods, and initiatives to reduce the consumption of unhealthy foods.

IS THERE IS COMMUNITY? PROVIDE LINK OF THE COMMUNITY SOCIAL MEDIA/WEBSITE/BLOG/

Game: OPL CREAM 11:

Aim:

OPL is the Obesity Prevention League. It aims at making families work toward a healthy life in a happy and collective manner! It builds a competitive atmosphere for common shared goals, which makes it a speedy and successful pursuit.

Rules of the game:

Each participant in the family has to form an eleven-member team (CREAM 11). The team members must be divided into three categories listed below. You may choose three players for Category 1, four players for Category 2, and four Players for Category 3.

Each player gets Rs 100 to spend plus one hour of physical activity. The seven players from Categories 1 and 2 can collectively spend a maximum of Rs 100 per week. The four players from Category 3 should can collectively spend a maximum of one hour per week.

Below is a sample team (Note you can repeat a player from each category):

Category 1:

Fried snacks - Rs. 10

Chocolate - Rs. 10

Vada Pav - Rs. 20

Category 2:

Bananas - Rs. 10

Guava - Rs. 10

Watermelon - Rs. 20

Seasonal fruit - Rs. 20

Total - Rs. 100

Category 3

Walking - 30

Jogging - 20

Lunges - 10 x 1

Total - 1 hour

During the week, keep track of the actual consumption of each category. Score points according to actual consumption or activity performance.

EG: If you do six minutes of lunges a week, you score 300 points.

EG: If you eat one vada pav, you score 10 points.

You don't score points for food or activity if the food or activity is not in your team.

EG: You skip for 5 minutes, but you don't have skipping in your team. You score zero points.

EG: You eat three bananas but you only have one banana in your team. You score 10 points, not 30.

The one who has the maximum points at the end of the week wins.

You can add or remove players at the end of each week. 10. The league can continue for four weeks to twelve weeks.

CHAPTER 7: PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

KNOWLEDGE AND CAUSES

In the context of adolescents in India, the importance of physical activity, physical education, and overall wellness is crucial. In the midst of academic pressures and changing lifestyles, these elements play a significant role in shaping the well-being of teenagers. Engaging in regular physical activity is essential for physical health, and integrating it into education ensures that teenagers learn not only from books but also through activities that promote teamwork and discipline. Wellness, covering physical and mental health, is fundamental for a balanced and healthy adolescence. Recognizing and emphasising these aspects is vital to support teenagers in not just academic achievements but also in leading healthy and fulfilling lives.

In the hustle and bustle of modern life, where screens often steal the show, physical education becomes the superhero sidekick, teaching our young heroes essential life skills like teamwork and discipline. It's like the adventure training ground where they prepare for life's challenges. In India, where studies sometimes feel like climbing a big mountain, physical education is like a refreshing breeze, giving our young climbers a break and a chance to enjoy the view.

Adolescents who lack physical activity and neglect wellness may experience a range of negative consequences that affect their physical health, mental well-being, and overall development. Here are some potential outcomes:

- 1. Physical Health Issues:** Lack of physical activity contributes to an increased risk of obesity, which is associated with various health problems such as diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and joint issues. Without regular physical activity, adolescents may experience muscle weakness and poor coordination, impacting their overall physical fitness.
- 2. Mental Health Challenges:** Physical activity is linked to the release of endorphins, which can help alleviate stress and anxiety. Without exercise, adolescents may struggle more with managing these emotions. Sedentary behaviour has been associated with an increased risk of depression. Regular physical activity is known to have mood-enhancing effects.
- 3. Cognitive Function:** Physical activity has been linked to improved cognitive function, including better academic performance. Lack of exercise may negatively impact concentration, memory, and overall cognitive abilities.
- 4. Social Development:** A sedentary lifestyle may contribute to social isolation, as physical activities often involve group interactions. This can impact the development of social skills and relationships.
- 5. Sleep Disturbances:** Regular physical activity helps regulate sleep patterns. Adolescents who are sedentary may experience difficulties falling asleep and maintaining a regular sleep schedule.

6. Risk of Unhealthy Habits: Sedentary behavior is often associated with unhealthy lifestyle choices, including poor dietary habits. This can contribute to nutritional deficiencies and other health issues.

7. Long-Term Health Risks: A lack of physical activity during adolescence can contribute to a higher risk of chronic diseases later in life, such as heart disease, osteoporosis, and certain types of cancer.

It's essential for adolescents to engage in regular physical activity as part of a healthy lifestyle. Encouraging activities such as sports, exercise, and outdoor play not only supports physical health but also contributes to overall well-being and development. Additionally, promoting a balanced approach to wellness, including proper nutrition and mental health care, is crucial for adolescents to thrive in all aspects of their lives.

Solutions for parents to avoid these problems:

Parents play a crucial role in promoting the physical and mental well-being of their adolescents. Here are some solutions that parents can consider to address the problems associated with a lack of physical activity and wellness:

1. Encourage Physical Activity: Parents should be role models by engaging in regular physical activity themselves. This sets a positive example for their children. Plan and participate in family activities that involve physical movement, such as cycling, or playing sports together, taking walks to markets.

2. Limit Screen Time: Establish guidelines for screen time, including the use of smartphones, computers, and television. Encourage a healthy balance between screen time and other activities.

3. Promote Sports and Hobbies: Encourage adolescents to explore different sports and physical activities to find activities they enjoy. This can help make exercise more enjoyable. Consider enrolling your child in organized sports or fitness classes to provide structure and social interaction.

4. Establish Healthy Habits: Foster a healthy approach to nutrition by providing balanced meals and snacks. Educate adolescents about the importance of nutritious food for overall health. Ensure that your child gets enough sleep by establishing a consistent sleep schedule and creating a conducive sleep environment.

5. Create a Supportive Environment: Provide positive reinforcement and praise when your adolescent engages in physical activity or makes healthy choices. Keep communication channels open, allowing your child to express concerns or challenges they may be facing.

6. Promote Mental Health: Be attentive to your child's emotional well-being. Encourage open communication and provide emotional support when needed. Help your child develop healthy stress management techniques, such as mindfulness, deep breathing, or engaging in relaxing activities.

7. Limit Sedentary Activities: If your child spends a lot of time on sedentary activities, encourage breaks for movement. This can include short walks, stretching, or brief physical activities.

8. Involve the School: Support and advocate for quality physical education programs in schools. These programs play a vital role in promoting physical activity.

9. **Seek Professional Guidance: Consult Healthcare Professionals:** If there are concerns about your child's health or well-being, consult healthcare professionals, such as pediatricians, nutritionists, or mental health professionals, for guidance.

By actively promoting a healthy and supportive environment, parents can significantly contribute to the well-being of their adolescents and help them establish lifelong habits that support physical and mental health. Regular communication, positive reinforcement, and leading by example are key elements in fostering a healthy lifestyle for the entire family.

QUIZ

1. What is the primary fuel source for the body during high-intensity exercise?

- A) Carbohydrates
- B) Fats
- C) Proteins
- D) Vitamins

Answer: A) Carbohydrates

2. Which of the following is an example of a low-impact exercise?

- A) Jumping rope
- B) Swimming
- C) High-intensity interval training (HIIT)
- D) Kickboxing

Answer: B) Swimming

3. What is the recommended amount of sleep for adults per night?

- A) 4-6 hours
- B) 6-8 hours
- C) 8-10 hours
- D) 10-12 hours

Answer: B) 6-8 hours

BEHAVIOURS AND BARRIERS

While parents may have the best intentions to implement solutions for promoting physical activity and wellness in their adolescents, they may encounter various barriers. Understanding these challenges can help parents develop strategies to overcome them. Here are some common barriers:

1. **Time Constraints:** Many families have hectic schedules with work, school, and extracurricular activities, leaving limited time for planned physical activities.
2. **Financial Constraints:** Participating in organized sports or fitness classes can be expensive, and some families may face financial constraints that limit their ability to enroll their children in such activities.
3. **Technology and Screen Time:** The pervasive use of electronic devices may lead to a sedentary lifestyle, making it challenging for parents to limit screen time and encourage physical activities.
4. **Lack of Access to Facilities:** Some families may live in areas with limited access to safe and suitable recreational spaces, making it difficult for children to engage in outdoor activities.
5. **Resistance from Adolescents:** Adolescents may resist certain activities if they lack interest or enjoyment, making it challenging for parents to encourage their participation.
6. **Peer and Social Pressure:** Adolescents may face peer pressure that discourages them from engaging in physical activities, particularly if their friends have sedentary habits.
7. **Parental Modelling:** If parents do not consistently model healthy behaviors, adolescents may find it challenging to adopt and maintain a physically active lifestyle.
8. **Limited Education on Health and Wellness:** Parents may face challenges in educating themselves about the importance of physical activity, nutrition, and mental health, hindering their ability to guide their children effectively.
9. **School Policies and Environment:** Some schools may have limited or no physical education programs, reducing opportunities for children to engage in structured physical activities during the school day.
10. **Cultural and Community Factors:** Cultural factors and community norms may influence lifestyle choices, and parents may encounter challenges when trying to align family practices with cultural expectations.
11. **Mental Health Stigma:** Parents may face challenges addressing mental health concerns due to the stigma associated with seeking help or discussing mental health openly.

To overcome these barriers, parents can consider personalized strategies based on their specific circumstances. This may involve creative scheduling, seeking low-cost or free community activities, involving children in the decision-making process, and fostering a supportive and understanding family environment. Additionally, collaborating with schools, healthcare professionals, and community organizations can provide valuable resources and support in promoting the overall well-being of adolescents.

Parents can take proactive steps to overcome the barriers mentioned above and create an environment that promotes physical activity and wellness for their adolescents. Here are some strategies:

1. **Prioritise and Schedule:** Evaluate family schedules and prioritize physical activity. Schedule regular times for family activities and encourage each family member to participate.
2. **Explore Low-Cost Activities:** Look for low-cost or free community resources, such as public parks, community centres, or local sports leagues, to provide affordable options for physical activities.
3. **Limit Screen Time Creatively:** Establish clear rules regarding screen time. Encourage alternative activities such as board games, outdoor play, or family outings to reduce dependency on electronic devices.
4. **Engage Adolescents in Decision-Making:** Involve adolescents in the decision-making process regarding physical activities. Allow them to choose activities they enjoy, increasing the likelihood of sustained interest.
5. **Promote Family Bonding:** Frame physical activities as opportunities for family bonding. Whether it's a weekend hike, a bike ride, or a game night, emphasize the social aspect of physical activities.
6. **Model Healthy Behaviors:** Be consistent in modeling healthy behaviors. When adolescents see parents prioritizing physical activity and wellness, they are more likely to adopt these habits themselves.
7. **Education and Awareness:** Stay informed about the importance of physical activity, nutrition, and mental health. Understanding the benefits can motivate parents to prioritize these aspects of their children's well-being.
8. **Advocate for Physical Education:** Advocate for quality physical education programs in schools. Collaborate with school administrators, teachers, and parent-teacher organizations to emphasize the importance of physical activity.
9. **Create a Supportive Environment:** Foster a supportive environment by encouraging friendships with peers who share an interest in physical activities. This can help overcome peer pressure against exercise.
10. **Adapt Activities to Cultural Norms:** Adapt physical activities to align with cultural norms. Find activities that resonate with cultural values, making it more likely for adolescents to embrace them.
11. **Promote Open Communication:** Promote open communication about mental health. Normalize discussions around stress, anxiety, and emotions, and encourage seeking help when needed.
12. **Collaborate with Healthcare Professionals:** If facing challenges related to physical or mental health, consult healthcare professionals for guidance and support. They can provide personalised advice based on the needs of the family.
13. **Create a Positive Family Environment:** Use positive reinforcement to reward and acknowledge healthy behaviors. Celebrate achievements, no matter how small, to create a positive and encouraging family atmosphere.

14. Stay Flexible and Adaptable: Recognize that family circumstances and dynamics may change. Stay flexible and adapt strategies as needed to accommodate evolving schedules and challenges.

By implementing these strategies, parents can create an environment that fosters the physical and mental well-being of their adolescents. It's important to approach these changes gradually, involve the entire family, and emphasize the long-term benefits of a healthy and active lifestyle.

Happy Picture:

Priya, a cheerful teenager from a small town in India. Not too long ago, Priya spent most of her time indoors, glued to screens and feeling a bit low on energy. Her parents, recognizing the importance of a healthy lifestyle, decided to make a change together.

One day, Priya's parents proposed a family walk after dinner. It started as a short stroll but soon turned into a daily routine. They explored their neighborhood, chatting about their day and enjoying the fresh air. Priya found herself looking forward to these walks, feeling more connected with her family.

Inspired by her parents, Priya's enthusiasm for physical activity grew. She decided to join a local sports club with some friends from school. They played badminton, went on hikes, and even organized friendly cricket matches. Priya discovered that being active wasn't just good for her body; it was a whole lot of fun!

The community played a crucial role too. The town started organising health awareness events and fitness camps. Priya, along with her friends, eagerly participated. They learned new exercises, tried yoga, and even danced their hearts out during a community fitness fest.

With the support of her parents, the camaraderie of her friends, and the encouragement from the community, Priya's life transformed. She felt more energetic, made new friends, and even noticed improvements in her mood and concentration.

Now, Priya's days are filled with laughter, games, and the joy of being active. Her story is not just about exercise; it's about how a community coming together can create a happy and healthy environment for teenagers like Priya to thrive.

USEFUL LINKS

Indian government has indeed taken several initiatives to promote physical activity among adolescents and address public health concerns related to sedentary lifestyles. However, keep in mind that specific programs and policies may have evolved since then, and it's recommended to check the latest sources for the most up-to-date information. Here are some initiatives that were in place or had been implemented:

1. Khelo India Programme: The Khelo India initiative is a national program launched by the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports. It aims to promote sports and fitness at the grassroots level by identifying and nurturing young talent across various disciplines.

2. **Fit India Movement:** The Fit India Movement is a nationwide campaign that encourages people to adopt a healthier lifestyle by incorporating physical activity into their daily routine. The campaign emphasizes the importance of regular exercise and aims to make fitness a part of India's cultural identity.

3. **National Sports Talent Search Scheme (NSTSS):** The NSTSS is a government initiative aimed at identifying and nurturing sporting talent among children in the age group of 8-12 years. The scheme focuses on scouting talent at the school and grassroots level.

4. **Rashtriya Bal Swasthya Karyakram (RBSK):** The RBSK is a comprehensive child health program that includes screening and early intervention for birth defects, deficiencies, diseases, and development delays. This program encompasses various health aspects, including physical fitness.

5. **Physical Education in Schools:** The government has emphasized the importance of physical education in schools. Efforts have been made to strengthen physical education curricula and encourage schools to allocate time for sports and physical activities.

6. **Swasth Bharat Yatra:** The Swasth Bharat Yatra is an initiative that promotes the importance of good nutrition and regular physical activity. It involves a nationwide cyclothon to spread awareness about healthy living.

It's important to note that while these initiatives are in place, the success of such programs depends on their implementation at various levels, including schools, communities, and healthcare facilities. Additionally, addressing barriers to physical activity, such as access to sports facilities and awareness, is an ongoing challenge.

Game: Dance Like a Sportsman

Aim:

The activity makes physical activity and exercise, something that is seen as boring or tiresome, as a time spent having fun. When you are having fun, you will most likely do the exercise for longer and continue doing it as well!

Rules:

1. Divide the family into teams. Each team has a captain.
2. In a bowl, place twelve chits. Each chit has the name of a sport written on it.

Examples: CRICKET, BADMINTON, KABADDI, GILLI DANDA, FOOTBALL, BASKETBALL, LAWN TENNIS, SWIMMING, HOPPING, JAVELIN, BOXING, KARATE, WRESTLING, and GYMNASTICS.

3. Each team captain draws three chits from the bowl (by turns).
4. The team choreographs a dance using moves or steps inspired by movements in all three sports.
5. All the teams may dance to the same song, or each team can choose a different song.

6. The teams have to perform the dance within 30 minutes.

CHAPTER 8: UNDERSTANDING ADOLESCENT PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

KNOWLEDGE AND CAUSES

What physical changes do adolescents go through?

Introduction

The transition of a child into an adult is called adolescence. The rate of this transition varies depending on various factors—whether individual or external. Children grow physically, sexually, mentally, and emotionally. This creates a critical window of opportunity, to best support this growth.¹

Although occurring at the same time, adolescents' physical growth can be broken down into two parts. The bodily (musculoskeletal) growth and the pubertal growth (sexual maturation).²

Teens grow up in both these areas simultaneously, although there could be variation. The rate varies depending on sex, as well as within a particular sex—depending on many factors.²

An accelerated rate of physical growth all adolescents go through, can be called as “growth spurt”. Pubertal growth spurt includes accelerated physical growth as well as sexual maturation.³

Majority of adolescents go through this phase between the age of 9-12 years, with boys having longer period of spurt.³

“An adolescent will grow several inches in several months followed by a period of very slow growth, then have another growth spurt.”⁴

While changes with puberty, which might be referred to as sexual maturation, happens gradually and at a somewhat constant rate. But these changes might be visible at the same time.⁴

Mechanism of physical development⁵

The pubertal growth involves a complex process that occurs within the body.

It involves various processes which are regulated by genetic, hormonal, environmental, and nutrition factors.

Depending on the genetic clock, adolescent brains release certain hormones and chemicals depending on a particular age of development. (Growth hormone etc.)

The timing of their release is cyclical and varies depending on many genetic and environmental factors; their release is minutely regulated through feedback system.

These hormones ultimately lead to sexual changes and physical growth.

Nutrition is another important underlying factor in determining healthy growth and development.

Although physical height is not much affected, and undernutrition affects only pre-pubertally—and is carried through adolescence to adulthood.

Contrastingly, bone density and strength increase during this phase and which critically dependent on nutrition.

Milestones and Development

Over the years, a child attains what are called ‘developmental milestones’, when majority of his or her cohort (of same ages) attain physical, cognitive, and emotional abilities to perform certain activities.

These activities reflect the individual’s ability to survive in the adulthood and strive as a healthy human being.

Adolescent physical development is more dynamic process and often difficult to measure.

Parents and adults, along with various factors in the environment, play a huge role in helping adolescents attain develop adequately.

Adolescents gain half of the skeletal mass they will have as adults. Most of it occurs because of the hormonal changes leading to bone mineralization—increasing their mass and thickness.⁶

As much as 90 percent of bone mass is acquired by the age of 20 years. Hence, it’s important to make this process healthy. Apart from the genetic and hormonal factors, adequate bone development has been linked to adequate nutrition and physical activity. A diet rich in calcium, vitamin C, and vitamin D is recommended.⁷

In India, malnutrition is highly prevalent. Although recent trends show decrease in the rate, the problem still exists.

On the other end of the spectrum, increased options of “junk” food, lack of physical activity and less awareness about balanced diet, has caused increased overweight and obesity is causing deficiency of these important vitamins and minerals, with further added lack of physical activity, adding to the underdevelopment of bones and increased risk of injuries.⁷

Puberty (sexual maturation)

The “puberty” also leads to release of certain hormones and chemical in the brain and body.

These chemicals are released in all adolescents. But the difference in the levels leads to different levels in boys and girls.

These changes prepare their bodies for reproduction in their adult lives.

Please refer the following table to get a grasp of few important pubertal changes occurring in both adolescent boys and girls:

Table 1

Awareness⁸

It is important to encourage adolescents in making them understand these changes in the face of cultural norms and stigma.

We can accomplish this by openly talking about it and creating interactive environment. They should be given support to learn about managing their stress through the help of their parents and teachers.

What physical problems do adolescents face while growing up? and, Why does these problems occur?

Adolescents face many challenges during their development. The period of transitioning into an adult, predisposes them to a various physical and mental health problems.

We will learn some common problems, to be better informed, and be able to take actions in improving outcomes.

Acne

Due to some hormonal changes, adolescents are more prone to oily skin and sweating, which predisposes them to develop acne.

It can be defined as a skin condition where adolescents develop pimples, commonly on the face, because of blocking and infection of oil glands.⁹

It is important to address various causes of acne and how it might be prevented. This will decrease its impact on self-body-image and self-esteem, and other mental health conditions (like anxiety, depression etcetera).

Link between physical development and mental health¹⁰

As with acne, various physical changes have been linked to an increased chances of adolescents suffering from various mental health problems and disorders.

As we already discussed, adolescents reach milestones at specific age range. But these milestones vary between individuals, as much as they vary between sexes.

Many times, this leads to adolescents feeling it difficult to “fit in” within the “perceived norms” of their physical appearance.

It also makes others treat them in a way that does not match their cognitive or emotional development.

For example, if some segment of adolescents develops physical changes earlier then developing emotional maturity, they are prone to be treated differently by their peers and adults. On the other hand, adolescents developing more emotional maturity and cognitive skills may be treated like much younger than their actual age, just because they're lagging in physical development.

This mismatch between wanting to “fit in”, and not able to, predisposes them to depression. (Much common in females).

Many mental health problems in adolescence and adulthood have been shown to be linked to onset of early puberty (sexual maturation).

Early exposure to external stressors (from broken families, absent parents, family in conflict, lower socio-economic conditions), in home and community, has been linked to early pubertal development.¹¹

Variation in onset and completion of sexual maturation

As much as the variation exists when considering time of onset and completion of puberty, a big variation could be problematic, and might point to deeper level problems (genetic or hormonal disorders etc.)

Both early and late onset of puberty (away from what is called normal age range) should be investigated through seeking consultation and care from health care providers.

Common signs of early puberty might include early onset of menses before the age of 8 years in females or enhanced physical growth and development of secondary sexual characteristics before the age of 9 years in males.¹²

This variation of this time of onset, has been huge today (when comparing to that in the history). For example, average age of onset of puberty in adolescent girls was 16 years a century ago, as compared to 13 years today. Although many explanations exist to explain the cause and consequence of this shift, majority believe it to be as a result because of evolving social and environmental factors—which also calls this early puberty, a riskier proposition.¹³

Physical growth and risky behaviors¹⁴

Adolescents are likely to opt risk-taking behaviors, because of their need to become independent adults.

This makes them vulnerable to road traffic accidents, violence, alcohol and drug use, tobacco use, sexually transmitted diseases, early pregnancy, and childbirth, overweight and obesity, and many mental health problems.

Later we will describe in detail the underlying factors that drive these risky behaviors to help reduce the harms from them. A better and deeper understanding of the underlying factors, at personal and environment level, is often helpful.

Early puberty also predisposes adolescents (mainly boys) to risky behaviors when they are behind in developing mental maturity (regulating emotions and decision making).

Adolescence and environment¹⁵

As with the individual factors, adolescents are vulnerable to some health problems because of the environment that influence them.

It increases their chances of suffering from communicable and non-communicable diseases and injuries.

Substance use disorders, road traffic accidents, violence, sexually transmitted diseases (including HIV/AIDS), some infectious diseases, obesity, malnutrition, etcetera predominantly affects them (especially considering India perspective).

As these influences vary, depending on factors like, geographical, socio-economic, political, and cultural.

What interesting to know is that these factors are heavily interlinked and working on the root causes can incredibly help.

QUIZ

Self-quiz: Let's do a knowledge Check?

Let's quickly check your ability to identify normal changes during adolescence, common problems that arise, and your ability to tackle them:

A. What's the first sign of puberty in girls?

1. Pubic hair growth
2. Acne on the face
3. Hair growth under the arms
4. Breast bud development

B. At what age (in years) does nocturnal emissions (or "wet dreams") occur in boys?

1. 7
2. 17
3. 5
4. 14

Understanding physical and sexual development in adolescence is important. Creating an open and healthy dialogue around the topic, often helps identify problems that might arise—whether bodily or mental health wise.

Understanding the link between the physical and mental health is important. Answer true or false:

C. Adolescence means transition into adulthood. With physical development, adolescents seek independence and a sense of control or authority. – True / False

D. Variation in physical development, depending on the sex and depending on other factors (genetic, hereditary, hormonal etcetera) predisposes adolescents to certain mental health problems like anxiety and depression. – True / False

E. An improved communication, depending on the level of understanding of an individual adolescent, often help them feel safe and secure at home and help them better confront the environmental stressors while growing up – True / False

F. Adolescents' risk-taking behaviors is linked to their need to seek independence and sense of authority. By creating opportunities at home, school, and community, can favor low risk-taking and reduce chances of physical and mental injury. – True / False

BEHAVIOURS AND BARRIERS

What behavioral approaches can help reduce these problems?

Puberty and Role of Parents

Parents, along with themselves, can help adolescents understand their physical development, and know what is normal and what is not.

It is important to avoid teasing adolescents about physical changes that they go through, since it leads to self-consciousness and embarrassment. Parents should be aware that the pubertal changes that adolescents go through is natural.

A healthy parenting creates an environment that help them opt better behaviors and creates opportunity for them to reach out when they need help.

Adolescents often need privacy, and they should be allowed to have their own bedroom. If not, at least they should be given some private space at home.

Independence and power struggle¹⁷

Adolescent physical development goes hand in hand with them being on the quest to seek independence and practicing power. Parents should be aware of this simultaneous development.

They should be given a freedom to practice authority, but also a range of sexual orientations or behaviors, before feeling comfortable with their own 'sexual identity.'

They often feel challenged by the adult authority figures in their family and oftentimes are at odds with them. Often, situations that asks for a decision regarding a certain issue, the demand of who would be right comes forth. This breeds in the power struggle. These situations should be avoided mostly, because it might make the adolescent loose face and make them feel embarrassed, inadequate, resentful, and bitter.

Some highly emotionally charged situations in the childhood that are linked to these power struggles can leave a lasting impact on the child's health during his adult life. Therefore, it is important to keep space open for open and clear communications, negotiation, as well as boundaries to reduce major conflicts.

This will give the adolescent an opportunity to practice their drive towards seeking authority and control.

Low risk-taking and some space for free choice, protects them from high-risk taking and risk of injury.

Parents should be careful not to call any behaviors right or wrong, or immoral.

Sexual Maturation and Parent-Adolescent interaction¹⁸

The Oedipus (spelled, e-de-pes) complex, which is, a child's attraction to the parent of the opposite sex and is common during the adolescent years. Parents can acknowledge these changes and the attractiveness without crossing the parent-child boundaries.

It is also normal for the parent to find the adolescent attractive. As he or she might resemble the other parent at a younger age. The parents should not feel awkward about this or create a distance that may make the adolescent feel responsible. They should obviously be stone with the parent-child boundaries.

For those who cannot practice the desired behaviors, what are the barriers to adopting them?

Knowledge and skills in tackling common problems that arise during physical adolescent development is important.

Understanding barriers to improving this knowledge and skill acquiring, can improve outcomes.

It is often helpful to see through the socio-ecological lens or adapt a person-centered approach to behavior change.

While the former helps to understand commonly known barrier and provide actionable cues, the latter accounts for a specific context or situation (of an adolescent or an adolescent group with common characteristics) in guiding actions.

Following table compares adolescent growth under various contexts, and behavior change approach we can adopt depending on the level of barrier:

Table 2

How can we address the most important barrier in Indian context?

Important barriers in Indian context

It is important to understand important barriers to healthy adolescent development in Indian context.

The 'social determinants of health' influence their development (including physical growth) and can compromise the prioritized environmental factors that influence it.

These "determinants" also influence each other.

Role of Media, peer-influence, education level, and employment are few amongst them, that have shown to play a significant role.

For example, the education level of adolescent has been linked to determine the onset of puberty, time of marriage, sexual behavior, chances of getting sexually transmitted infections, and the onset of first pregnancy; with inverse relationship between unwanted pregnancies and education).

They determine the overall health during adolescence and adulthood; and how they affect their family.

What does a successful outcome look like?

Overall, a better adaptation to the personal and external factors (influencing physical growth and development) often creates space for better understanding and change.

Instead of idolizing favorable behaviors and circumstances, it is important to meet our adolescent keens where they are.

This creates that opportunity and minimizes chances of things getting backfired.

It is duty of us (parents, teachers, guardians, and health providers), to keep updated with the best knowledge of research, adolescents in their community, and the environment they live in.

GAMES AND ACTIVITIES

COMMITMENT TO CHILD

Are you willing to make a commitment?

Commit to best physical development for our adolescents today.

Adolescence is indeed a crucial window to improving their health and lives.

Commit TODAY

USEFUL LINKS

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(<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/002003.htm>)

(<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/002003.htm>)

Risk taking and other behaviors (<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/002003.htm>)

Existing Governmental and Non-Governmental Programmes

Some national programs which are a great resource to get informed and get help when needed are: (tap on the links/underlined text, to learn more)

Rashtriya Kishor Swasthya Karyakram (RKSK) is the national program to promote 'ensure holistic development of adolescents. You can find a wide range of programs and activities on the right side of the website.

RKSK success stories and testimonials is a great way to get motivated and join the efforts

This program has regional and state limbs that adapt well to the unique needs of that specific areas

It is often helpful to keep abreast of the UNICEF India led program and collaboration to improve adolescent nutrition and improving other areas (responsible for better physical development).

Do you want to connect to a community?

Open a dialogue.

Connect on public forums and social media platforms.

Support activities in the community to spread awareness.

Ends

Game Name: 1 – 10

Aim:

The game hopes to make people think of the various ways in which adolescents experience physical changes as they grow into adults. In spending time together, the parent and child interact, and the parent can use this as a helpful time and space to understand what changes experienced by their child are bothering them.

Rules of the game:

1. The family is divided into two groups. Each group has a piece of paper kept at some distance and a pen to write words on.
2. Each group sends one participant at a time for the game, like a relay.
3. Once the game has started, each group sends a member forward at the same time.

The member has to write the term or word related to Adolescent Physical Development on their group's sheet of paper. Some examples are acne, puberty, changes in voice, facial hair, and body image.

4. After the participant returns to their seat, the next participant comes up to write a word. Words cannot be repeated.
5. The team that completes 10 words first wins the race.

CHAPTER 9: ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE RELATED MENTAL STRESS FOR ADOLESCENTS

KNOWLEDGE AND CAUSES

Growing up is tough for our kids, especially when it comes to doing well in school. Sometimes, the pressure to do great in exams and meet our expectations can make them feel really stressed out. This stress isn't good for their minds and hearts. It's like a heavy load they carry, worrying about not being good enough or failing.

Imagine how it feels for them – always having to do homework, study for tests, and make us proud. It can make them really scared of not doing well. Also, when they see other kids doing better, it makes them feel even more worried. This stress is not just about school; it can affect how they feel about themselves.

So, it's important for parents to understand that our kids might be going through a hard time with all this school stuff. We should try to support them, not just in their studies but also by making sure they are happy and not too stressed. It's not just about grades – it's about helping them grow up healthy and happy.

In India, many people care a lot about getting high marks and doing well in exams. Families and society often think that good scores are the most important thing in education. This focus on marks is so strong that sometimes, the real purpose of learning is forgotten. The way students are taught puts a lot of pressure on them to memorize things just for exams, instead of truly understanding and enjoying what they're learning.

This obsession with marks can make students feel stressed and anxious, affecting their mental health. The pressure to get high scores also pushes students toward careers that are seen as prestigious or well-paying, even if those careers may not align with their passions or interests. This narrow focus on academic success doesn't consider other important skills and qualities that make a person well-rounded.

To make things better, it's important for families and society to change their views on education. Instead of just caring about marks, we should encourage a love for learning, creativity, and thinking for oneself. This shift would help students enjoy their education more and develop into well-rounded individuals, contributing to a more diverse and innovative society.

When families and society in India care a lot about getting high marks and good grades, it can be tough for teenagers. The pressure to do well in exams can make them feel stressed and worried. Instead of enjoying learning, they might focus on memorizing things just to get good scores, missing out on understanding the subjects deeply.

This emphasis on marks can also limit their choices for the future. Teenagers might feel pushed to follow certain careers that are seen as important, even if those jobs don't match their interests. This narrow focus on grades can stop them from exploring what they truly enjoy.

All this pressure can affect teenagers' mental health, making them feel overwhelmed or burnt out. It's important for families and society to understand that education is about more than just marks. Encouraging a love for learning and allowing teenagers to follow their passions can lead to a more balanced and happier approach to education.

Adolescents facing pressures due to social norms and traditions, particularly related to academic performance like marks in SSC/HSC exams, can encounter various struggles. Some of these challenges include:

1. Academic Stress:

The primary struggle is the intense stress related to academic performance. The pressure to meet societal expectations and achieve high marks can lead to heightened anxiety and stress among adolescents, impacting their overall well-being.

2. Limited Career Options:

Social norms and traditions may dictate specific career paths that are considered prestigious or acceptable. Adolescents might find it challenging to explore alternative career options that align with their interests and passions, limiting their career choices.

3. Identity Crisis:

The pressure to conform to societal expectations can contribute to an identity crisis. Adolescents may struggle to balance their own aspirations and values with the expectations imposed by family and society, leading to confusion about their true selves.

4. Rote Learning vs. Understanding:

The emphasis on achieving high marks may promote rote memorization and exam-centric learning rather than a deep understanding of subjects. This can hinder critical thinking skills and the ability to apply knowledge in real-life situations.

5. Conflict with Personal Goals:

Adolescents may experience conflict between their personal goals and the expectations set by social norms. Balancing individual aspirations with societal pressures can create internal conflicts, impacting their sense of purpose and direction.

6. Mental Health Struggles:

The cumulative effect of academic pressure and societal expectations can contribute to mental health issues such as anxiety and depression. Adolescents may grapple with the fear of failure and the constant need to meet external standards.

7. Limited Expression of Creativity:

Traditional academic norms may not always encourage creativity and independent thinking. Adolescents with creative talents may struggle to express themselves within a system that prioritizes conformity over individual expression.

8. Social Comparison: Constant comparisons with peers who are excelling academically can lead to feelings of inadequacy and low self-esteem. The competitive nature of academic pressure may create unhealthy competition among adolescents.

9. Strained Parent-Child Relationships: The expectations imposed by social norms and traditions can strain relationships between adolescents and their parents. Differences in aspirations and values may lead to communication breakdowns and a lack of understanding.

10. Fear of Judgment:

Adolescents may fear judgement from peers and the community if they don't meet societal expectations. This fear of being perceived as unsuccessful or deviating from established norms can contribute to stress and social anxiety.

To address these struggles, it's essential for parents, educators, and society to foster an environment that values individual growth, holistic development, and a more flexible approach to success. Encouraging open communication and understanding the unique needs of adolescents can help mitigate the negative impact of societal pressures.

How to Fix This: (Activities)

Parents play a crucial role in supporting their adolescents facing pressures from societal norms and academic expectations. Here are some actions parents can take:

1. Open Communication:

Encourage open and honest communication with your teen. Create a safe space where they feel comfortable expressing their feelings, concerns, and aspirations without fear of judgment.

2. Understanding Individual Strengths:

Recognize and appreciate your teen's individual strengths and talents. Help them identify and develop their unique skills and interests, even if they differ from traditional expectations.

3. Setting Realistic Expectations:

Establish realistic academic expectations based on your teen's abilities and interests. Focus on their efforts and progress rather than solely on achieving high grades. Discuss and agree upon achievable goals together.

4. Encouraging Well-Rounded Development:

Emphasize the importance of a well-rounded education. Encourage participation in extracurricular activities, hobbies, and community service to foster creativity, teamwork, and personal growth beyond academic achievements.

5. Providing Emotional Support:

Be emotionally supportive during stressful times. Let your teen know that your love and support are not contingent on their academic performance. Validate their feelings and offer encouragement.

6. Facilitating Career Exploration:

Help your teen explore various career options based on their interests and aptitudes. Provide information about different professions and encourage them to pursue paths that align with their passions.

7. Promoting Critical Thinking:

Encourage critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Help your teen understand the importance of learning for the sake of knowledge rather than just to pass exams. Engage in discussions that stimulate their analytical thinking.

8. Collaborating with Educators: Maintain open communication with teachers and educators. Stay informed about your teen's academic progress and seek guidance on how to support their learning. Attend parent-teacher conferences and collaborate on strategies to address any challenges.

9. Teaching Stress Management: Equip your teen with stress management techniques. Teach them healthy coping mechanisms such as mindfulness, time management, and relaxation exercises to handle academic pressure more effectively.

10. Promoting Individuality: Reinforce the value of individuality. Emphasise that it's okay for your teen to have their own goals and dreams, even if they differ from societal expectations. Encourage them to pursue paths that align with their values and interests.

11. Being a Role Model: During exams, parents can set a good example by staying calm and reminding their teen about the importance of taking breaks, getting enough sleep, and eating healthy. Encouraging a positive attitude, praising effort, and being open to talk about any stress or worries creates a supportive environment. Also, showing that it's okay to take care of oneself and expressing confidence in the teen's abilities helps promote a positive and growth-focused mindset.

12. Seeking Professional Guidance: If academic pressure significantly impacts your teen's mental health, consider seeking professional guidance. A counselor or mental health professional can provide additional support and coping strategies.

By adopting these strategies, parents can create a supportive and nurturing environment that helps adolescents navigate societal pressures, fostering their overall well-being and personal development.

In India, some teenagers face immense pressure, particularly when they don't perform well in exams like SSC/HSC. This pressure, fueled by societal and family expectations, has unfortunately led to cases of teenagers taking their own lives. The stress is deeply rooted in the belief that good exam results are the only path to success in the future, creating a sense of hopelessness for those who feel they haven't met these rigid standards.

To address this issue, it's crucial for schools, parents, and leaders to prioritize the mental well-being of students. Offering support services, promoting open conversations about mental health, and reconsidering the narrow definition of success can contribute to a healthier and less stressful environment for teenagers, reducing the risk of such tragic outcomes.

Historically, India has faced challenges related to adolescent suicides, particularly during exam periods. According to a Lancet study in 2012, the suicide rate among young people aged 15 to 29 in India was reported to be one of the highest in the world. While not all suicides are solely attributed to exam pressure, academic stress has been identified as a significant contributing factor. The National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) of India provides official statistics on suicides, and their reports might offer more recent and detailed insights into the issue.

QUIZ

1. What is one factor that can positively impact academic performance?

- a) Regular exercise and physical activity
- b) Lack of sleep and rest
- c) Procrastination and last-minute studying

Answer: a) Regular exercise and physical activity

2. Which study habit is likely to improve academic performance?

- a) Cramming all the material the night before an exam
- b) Breaking study sessions into smaller, manageable chunks
- c) Multitasking while studying, such as watching TV or using social media

Answer: b) Breaking study sessions into smaller, manageable chunks

3. How can effective time management contribute to academic performance?

- a) By allowing more time for leisure activities and procrastination
- b) By helping prioritize tasks and allocate sufficient time for studying
- c) By creating unnecessary stress and pressure

Answer: b) By helping prioritize tasks and allocate sufficient time for studying

BEHAVIOURS AND BARRIERS

Desired Behaviour:

Parents can play a crucial role in addressing the issue of adolescent stress and suicides related to academic pressure. Here are some actions parents can take:

1. Open Communication: Foster open and honest communication with your teenager. Create a safe space where they feel comfortable discussing their academic challenges, fears, and aspirations without fear of judgement.
2. Manage Expectations: Set realistic expectations for academic performance. Understand your child's abilities and interests and encourage them to do their best rather than pressuring them to achieve unrealistically high standards.
3. Prioritise Well-being: Emphasise the importance of overall well-being over grades. Encourage a balanced lifestyle that includes adequate sleep, healthy eating habits, and regular breaks for relaxation and recreation.
4. Teach Coping Skills: Help your teenager develop effective coping mechanisms for stress. Teach them problem-solving skills, time management, and relaxation techniques to handle academic pressure in a healthy way.
5. Celebrate Effort, Not Just Results: Appreciate the effort your teenager puts into their studies, irrespective of the grades. Celebrate small achievements and focus on the learning process rather than solely on the final outcomes.
6. Encourage Hobbies and Interests: Support your teenager in pursuing hobbies and interests outside of academics. Engaging in activities they enjoy can provide a healthy outlet for stress and contribute to a more balanced and fulfilling life.
7. Promote Mental Health Awareness: Talk openly about mental health and educate your teenager on the importance of seeking help when needed. Break the stigma surrounding mental health issues and encourage a proactive approach to well-being.
8. Seek Professional Support: If your teenager is struggling with significant stress or mental health concerns, consider seeking professional help. A counsellor or mental health professional can provide guidance and support.

9. Provide Unconditional Love: Reassure your teenager that your love is not contingent on their academic performance. Emphasise that their worth is not solely determined by grades and that you appreciate them for who they are.

10. Collaborate with Schools: Maintain regular communication with teachers and school staff. Understand the school's expectations and academic environment, and work collaboratively to support your teenager's educational journey.

By adopting these strategies, parents can contribute to creating a supportive and nurturing environment for their teenagers, helping them navigate academic challenges with resilience and promoting mental well-being.

Barriers to desired behaviour:

While the strategies mentioned can be beneficial, several challenges may arise when parents try to implement them:

1. Resistance from the Teenager: Adolescents may resist or be hesitant to open up about their feelings, making it challenging for parents to communicate effectively or understand the root causes of stress.

2. Cultural and Societal Expectations: Parents may face resistance or conflicting perspectives from extended family members or society that adhere strongly to traditional beliefs regarding academic success and career choices.

3. Pressure from Peer Comparisons: Peer pressure and comparisons with friends who are subject to different parenting styles or expectations can influence a teenager's perception of success and hinder the effectiveness of implemented strategies.

4. Time Constraints: Balancing work, family, and the additional time required to implement these strategies can be challenging for parents. Time constraints may limit their ability to actively engage in their teenager's academic and personal life.

5. Lack of Access to Mental Health Resources: In some cases, parents may face challenges accessing mental health resources or professional support, limiting their ability to provide comprehensive assistance to their teenager.

6. Inconsistent School Policies: School policies and practices may not always align with the strategies parents are trying to implement, posing challenges in creating a cohesive and supportive educational environment.

7. Parental Stress and Burnout: The responsibility of managing a teenager's academic and emotional well-being can lead to parental stress and burnout, potentially hindering the consistent application of these strategies.

8. Teenagers' Personal Resistance to Change:

Adolescents might resist changes to their study habits or lifestyle, even if it is for their well-being. Overcoming this resistance can be challenging for parents.

9. **Limited Control Over External Factors:** Parents may have limited control over external factors, such as influences of friends, societal expectations, or school policies, which can impact the effectiveness of their efforts.

10. **Communication Barriers:** Difficulties in effective communication between parents and teenagers, including misunderstandings or generational gaps, may impede the successful implementation of strategies.

Despite these challenges, consistent efforts, patience, and adaptability can help parents navigate these issues and create a supportive environment for their teenagers. Seeking guidance from educators, counsellors, or mental health professionals can also provide valuable insights and support in addressing these challenges.

Overcoming the barriers:

Here are some ways to tackle these issues:

1. **Talk Openly:** Talk with your teenager and make sure they feel comfortable sharing their thoughts with you.
2. **Discover Strengths:** Notice what your teenager is good at and encourage them to explore things they enjoy, like hobbies or activities.
3. **Stay Balanced:** Remind your teenager about the importance of sleep, eating well, and doing things they love to keep a balanced life.
4. **Support Hobbies:** Help your teenager pursue activities they love, like drawing, playing sports, or anything that makes them happy.
5. **Manage Time Wisely:** Teach your teenager how to manage time effectively. Prioritize tasks, set realistic goals, and make time for both studies and fun.
6. **Community Connections:** Connect with local community resources, like counseling services or parenting groups, for additional support.
7. **Work with School:** Talk to teachers and school counselors to stay informed about your teenager's progress and seek advice on educational matters.
8. **Talk About Feelings:** Discuss mental health openly. Make it clear that it's okay to ask for help when needed and that everyone faces challenges.
9. **Celebrate Effort:** Praise your teenager for trying hard and making progress, even if they haven't reached a specific goal yet.

10. Lead by Example: Show your teenager how to stay positive and manage stress. Be a good example for them.

11. Connect with Other Parents: Make friends with other parents. Share experiences, help each other out, and create a strong support system.

13. Use Online Resources: Check online for helpful parenting tips, mental health info, and educational support. Online resources can provide a lot of useful information.

14. Set Goals Together: Help your teenager set small, achievable goals. Breaking big goals into smaller steps can make things less overwhelming.

15. Family Time Matters: Spend quality time together as a family. It helps build strong bonds and makes your teenager feel supported.

By keeping things simple and personalised, parents can create a happy and supportive environment for their teenagers, no matter where they live.

In the story of teenagers' lives, doing well in school can sometimes bring both happy moments and tough times. The stress that comes with trying to be great in studies is something many teenagers feel. However, when parents, teachers, and everyone around understand this stress, good things can happen. By talking openly, appreciating each teenager's unique strengths, and celebrating all the different things they are good at, we can help them not just in school but also in growing up happily. Let's create a new part of the story—one where learning is exciting, and teenagers can be successful and happy in many different ways.

Happy Picture:

Once upon a time in a small village in India, there lived a teenager named Ravi. Ravi was a bright student, but the pressure of exams often made him feel really stressed. His parents, understanding the challenges he faced, decided to make a change.

Ravi's mom and dad began by talking openly with him about his feelings and worries. They learned about his interests and passions, discovering that he loved playing the guitar and drawing. Ravi's parents encouraged him to spend time on his hobbies, realizing that it helped him relax and enjoy life.

Together, they set realistic goals for Ravi's studies, focusing on effort and progress rather than just grades. Ravi's parents attended meetings at his school, talking with teachers about how they could support his education. They even connected with other parents in the village, sharing experiences and tips on helping their teenagers handle academic stress.

As time passed, Ravi's stress levels started to decrease. His parents noticed how he became more confident and happier. Ravi's school performance improved, not because of added pressure, but because he felt supported and understood. The village, too, started recognizing the importance of a balanced approach to education and mental well-being for teenagers.

In the end, Ravi not only did well in his exams but also continued to pursue his hobbies with enthusiasm. His story became an inspiration for other teenagers in the village, showing that with love, understanding, and a balanced approach, overcoming academic stress was not just possible but could lead to a happy and fulfilling life.

GAMES AND ACTIVITIES

Game: Tabletop Football

Aim:

The game aims to inform parents and adolescents about the challenges faced during adolescent ages and their impact on academic performance. Through a game of football, it captures the challenges and solutions for improving academic performance. One team shows the challenges causing the stress, and the other team shows the healthy attitudes that can help create a good environment of support that enables academic achievement.

Rules of the game:

Any member of the family, preferably a parent, can choose to play the game with the adolescent. It is a two-player game.

Take a print out of the picture given above. It will be the board that you play the game on.

You need a pair of dice and two tokens. The tokens for the two players in the picture are blue and red. The blue team depicts a healthy attitude and environment conducive to academic achievement, and the red team depicts the challenges faced by adolescents, which cause mental stress and make it difficult for them to achieve their academic goals.

At the start of the game, place each token on 1, which is the goalkeeper position.

Roll the pair of dice and move to a numbered footballer position. For example, if the player in blue rolls the number 6, move to 6 (emotional support). The opponent also makes the same play.

A throw of 12 scores the goal. The player who scores five goals first wins.

Variations can include the following:

- a) points for crossing the halfway line (throw of 8 and above)
- b) choosing a strength in each game as a joker. For example, If well-rounded development and hobbies are the joker, a throw of 4 on the dice will automatically lead to a goal.

CHAPTER 10: ADDICTION IN ADOLESCENCE

KNOWLEDGE AND CAUSES

Has your child been acting odd or distant off-late? Have you noticed your child spending more time out at night, or skipping school, perhaps with an older group of friends? Do they come back smelling like alcohol or with congested eyes and a dazed look? These may be signs that your child is using intoxicating substances and may even be addicted to them. In India, the prevalence of dependent alcohol users in the 10-75 age group is 2.7% or 2.9 crore individuals. Around 4.6 lakh children need help with inhalant use. So don't take the warning signs lightly.

Substances like alcohol, tobacco, cannabis, opioids and inhalants aren't the only addictions to which your pre-teens and teens may be susceptible. Does your child spend more than a few hours a day on their phone? Do they forget meals or stay up all night to play games on their devices? Have you observed money or small items around the house disappearing? Internet addiction and gambling can occur even at a young age due to the omnipresence of the mobile phone. It's important to be vigilant for these cues and confront them in a measured way.

Let's begin by understanding, what is addiction?

Addiction, or as it's now more commonly known: dependence, is characterised by repeated or continuous use of a substance or a behaviour such as gaming.

When a person becomes addicted, they have a strong internal drive to use the substance.

They have difficulty in stopping/controlling their use. Think of the times you may have asked your child to put away the phone only to find them still gaming many hours later!

They have difficulty staying away from the substance, i.e. stopping from starting. Have there been occasions when your child has slipped away from an event because they couldn't go a whole hour without a smoke?

Often, this use continues despite harm or negative consequences. Mere scolding or the threat of one isn't enough. They may realise that their school work and relationships are being affected and still find it difficult to stop.

The subjective sensation of urge or craving to use the substance can be very overpowering.

Why does this happen? There are many "happy hormones" in the brain; dopamine is one of them. Research has shown that the dopamine reward pathway is sensitive in young adults and repeated use of a substance can stimulate this pathway leading to lasting changes.

How does addiction affect adolescents?

There are two types of addictions, as we have seen: substance and behavioural. Of these, alcohol and tobacco remain the most prevalent in India, with young age alcohol usage increasing and posing significant problems to the adolescent and the family unit. Young age alcohol dependence is mostly seen in boys, is associated with novelty-seeking and tends to run in families. The consequences of alcohol addiction are among the most severe of addictions affecting adolescents, as it is often seen along with antisocial and aggressive behaviour.

Let's see what are the consequences and the signs that should raise alarm bells among parents:

In the short term:

Physical problems, such as hangovers or illnesses

Alcohol poisoning

In the long term:

School problems, such as higher rates of absences or lower grades

Memory problems

Changes in brain development that may have life-long effects

Disruption of normal growth or sexual development

Increased risk of suicide and homicide

Increased risk of drinking in later life

Related consequences:

Alcohol-related motor vehicle crashes and other unintentional injuries, such as burns, falls, or drowning

Physical and sexual violence

Social problems, such as fighting or lack of participation in youth activities

Legal problems, such as arrest for driving or physically hurting someone while drunk

Unwanted, unplanned, and unprotected sexual activity

Misuse of other substances

Have you observed any of the above in your child? Try discussing with the child's class teacher about the child's behaviour in the classroom, level of attentiveness and ability to cope with the class work. Make sure to follow up with physicians on the stigmata of addiction that you may notice, e.g. stained teeth, needle marks, premature hair fall.

What are the causes of addiction, or dependence, in adolescents?

There is a strong relationship between underage substance addiction and the behaviors of adult relatives, adults in the same household, and adults in the same community and state.

There is a genetic association for most substance addictions; a strong family history of addiction in first to third degree relations can predict the tendency to become addicted in your teen and there is a need to have frank conversations with them about this risk.

Adolescents also pick up habits through modelling. If addiction in other family members in the household goes unaddressed or is treated as normal or sometimes rewarded, adolescents are likely to perceive it as an accepted habit. They are more likely to pick up this habit if seen in family members whom they admire or among their friends, or even celebrity and local icons.

Common risk factors for substance use behaviours include:

Family history of the problem behavior

Favourable parental attitudes towards the problem behavior and/or parental involvement in the problem behavior

Association with substance using peers

Suggested activity: Have you discussed family history of addiction with your child? Draw a family tree or pedigree of up to three generations and discuss the role of addiction in the bloodline, in a non-threatening manner. Focus on medical and personal issues that arose from the problem behaviour.

QUIZ

1. What is the most common substance of abuse among adolescents?

A) Cocaine

B) Alcohol

C) Marijuana

D)

Heroin

Answer: B) Alcohol

2. What is the term for the process by which the body becomes accustomed to a substance and requires increasingly larger doses to achieve the same effect?

A) Tolerance

B) Withdrawal

C) Dependence

D)

Addiction

Answer: A) Tolerance

3.What is the age group for adolescence according to the World Health Organization (WHO)?

A) 10-14 years

B) 13-19 years

C) 16-21 years

D) 18-25 years

Answer: B) 13-19 years

BEHAVIOURS AND BARRIERS

Desired behaviours:

As already alluded to, there are various behaviours that we can inculcate in the household to ward off addictions, both in the parent and the child. Many of these behaviours have been discussed in other sections, including positive communication, reinforcement strategies and maintaining a non-judgemental attitude, as well as community activities, group involvements and fostering a sense of belonging in the child.

It is advisable to set clear rules in the household, but slip-ups must be handled with reinforcement; punishment and criticism being the last resort.

Children should have a healthy lifestyle and changes in biological functions, especially sleep and appetite are warning signs for which parents must be vigilant. Changes in mood, such as being sullen or withdrawn could precede or follow addictive behaviours and they are a cause for concern. It is necessary that care is sought immediately in such instances, from licensed professionals and mental healthcare experts.

In cases of older children, adolescents/teenagers, it begins with a frank and open conversation when such signs are noted.

Suggested activity: CAGE questionnaire

Often used in an interview setting by doctors, posing this simple set of four questions to your child can also help you as a parent understand the gravity of the addiction and help your child accept the problem behaviour themselves.

Have you ever felt a need to CUT DOWN your behaviour? (Indicates that others have demonstrated CONCERN to the child about their problem)

Have you ever become ANNOYED by criticisms of this behaviour (Indicates that it is APPARENT to others)

Have you ever felt GUILTY about this behaviour? (Indicates that the child has experienced GRAVE consequences or expects to)

Have you ever had a morning EYE OPENER to steady your nerves? (E.g. a drink or cigarette first thing on waking up, indicates EVIDENCE of dependence or tolerance on the substance)

Originally devised for alcohol, this questionnaire has been adapted to other addictions to give us an informal estimation of the problem.

Barriers to these behaviours:

Extreme economic deprivation (poverty, over-crowding)

Lack of positive parent engagement

Alienation

Lack of school connectedness and rebelliousness

Family conflict, and family management problems

In India, there are significant roadblocks to prevent the formation of addictive behaviours, and parenting is only one of the many modifiers. Conflict within the family or ill-treatment at school, for example, also need to be addressed and parents should seek professional intervention for the same. Vicarious trauma also affects adolescents.

Has your child witnessed any traumatic events in the household or arguments among family members? If so, have these been explained and discussed with them?

Successful Outcome

A successful outcome is an addiction-free life that is possible with proper prevention and treatment.

Start by giving your child feedback on the risks posed to them by their addictive behaviours, e.g. dropping grades in school due to excessive phone use.

In the case of adolescents, emphasise their autonomy and control. Tell them that choosing to cease from the behaviour is ultimately their responsibility.

Advise them that the harm you have already observed can only be curtailed by stopping the behaviour and that it is your clear and unambiguous desire that they quit.

Show them an extensive menu of strategies available to them, ranging from medication to therapy to environmental modifications by trying to remove any removable/modifiable risk factors.

Adopt an empathetic listening style and provide emotional support, by reiterating that you will be there for your child every step of the way.

Promote self-efficacy by demonstrating confidence in the child's ability to quit or reduce the problematic behaviour.

This is known as the FRAMES model for health behaviour risk counselling; it is used by doctors as a part of brief motivational intervention and can also be used at home by parents to keep reminding their children of their personal reasons for change.

However, relapses are common and should not deter parents from seeking treatment again. Some simple strategies to minimise relapse risk in case of substance use like alcohol and opioids:

4Ds

Drink water: Dehydration or an empty stomach can set off craving for the previously addictive substance.

Deep breaths: This can have a calming effect and is particularly helpful if one has tremors.

Delay: This is a psychological technique of delayed gratification; keep pushing the idea forward until its intensity has reduced.

Distract: An idle mind is truly the devil's workshop! Craving can be reduced by distracting oneself by engaging in another activity, like conversation, a hobby or going for a walk.

GAMES AND ACTIVITIES

Suggested activity: Have you discussed family history of addiction with your child? Draw a family tree or pedigree of up to three generations and discuss the role of addiction in the bloodline, in a non-threatening manner. Focus on medical and personal issues that arose from the problem behaviour.

Suggested activity: CAGE questionnaire

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Originally devised for alcohol, this questionnaire has been adapted to other addictions to give us an informal estimation of the problem.

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<https://www.cdc.gov/alcohol/fact-sheets/underage-drinking.htm>

<https://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/substance-use/dash-substance-use-fact-sheet.htm>

Existing Governmental and Non-Governmental Programmes

Alcoholics Anonymous

Narcotics Anonymous

Al-Anon Family Group

24X7 National Toll Free Drug De-addiction Helpline Number: 180011031

Drug De-addiction Programme

Private Rehabilitation Centres

CAGE Family Discussion Game

Use the CAGE questionnaire as a family discussion tool. Write each letter (C-Cut down, A-Annoyed, G-Guilty, E-Eye opener) on a card. Family members take turns drawing a card and sharing a hypothetical or real situation where that feeling might apply. This opens dialogue about addictive behaviors in a non-threatening way. Reward honest sharing with appreciation.

CHAPTER 11: ADOLESCENT SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Understand adolescent social development (why peer influences become important in adolescence)

KNOWLEDGE AND CAUSES

What is adolescent social development?

Adolescence is the time when children begin their growth from childhood into adulthood in terms of their social and mental capacities. Adolescents also undergo rapid physical growth. It is a period when adolescents explore their sense of personal and social identity, their ideologies, and the different social roles they find themselves in. During this time, social and emotional developments in adolescents are also interrelated. Their critical thinking skills advance during this time, and they are more open to exploring new activities. Peers play an increasingly important role in this stage of their life and adolescents typically learn to handle more complicated relationships. Peers or peer groups means people of around the same age, having similar interests or similar social status. Peer groups are generally the group of friends that adolescents hang out with and go to school and college with.

To some children, this period may seem to be challenging but it has a lot of scope for the young people to understand their social world in a better way. As this progress from childhood to adulthood begins, the children like to spend more time with their peers or friends rather than their family. The resulting peer interactions tend to be left unsupervised. The influence that peers or friends have on each other during adolescence can be both positive as well as negative. They are important in forming friendships and providing social support. When adolescents have positive peer influences, they grow into happy adults with better social adjustment skills. On the other hand, negative peer influence can result in problematic habits such as the use of drugs, alcohol, or even doing crimes. It can also lead to conflicting adult relationships.

How does the problem affect adolescents (causes)?

The environment that surrounds adolescents largely affects their social development. During this stage, they look for acceptance from their peer groups. This results in the children or young adults trying out new or different styles of dressing, listening to a particular type of music or speaking in a certain way, that makes them feel similar to others in a group. It gives them a sense of belonging. Thus, adolescents generally join or form groups with similar types of people. As they become older, the adolescents may also expand their friend circle and community.

Adolescents are generally faced with something known as peer pressure. It is the direct or indirect influence that their friends or peer groups have on them. This term is normally used in a negative sense. This is because, in popular movies and social media, it is often shown that young adults become addicted to bad habits when they are influenced by their peers to try out alcohol, use drugs and take part in sexual activities. It is generally thought that adolescents take part in these behaviours to earn acceptance from their peers and friends. However, peer pressure can also be a positive element in

adolescent growth. Positive peer influence can include learning habits such as sharing, supporting friends, cooperation, and conflict resolution. With positive peer influence, adolescents can grow into self-confident adults with developed social relationship skills and abilities.

Some adolescents may also grow up in regions which are war-ridden or regions where physical violence is fairly common. This leads to trauma and the adolescents in these regions may need different coping mechanisms. These types of experiences can also affect adolescent social development in a negative way.

What are the factors that affect social changes seen in adolescence?

Identity

Adolescents are trying to figure out how they fit in the outside world or who they are as an individual. This can be seen when you find your child trying out different styles of clothing, reading different genres of books, or even listening to new music. These choices are mainly influenced based on who they are surrounded by in terms of friends and family as well as mainstream media and culture.

Responsibility

This period can also be associated with the time when adolescents start to see themselves as responsible young adults. They become involved in decision-making and depend on their parents to a lesser degree. For example, they might seem eager to take up leadership roles at school like becoming the class monitor or leading a group project or taking responsibility for any household chores like cleaning, helping in cooking, and buying groceries at the market. The parents can also gently push them towards these roles.

Value systems

Adolescents begin to develop a sense of identity during this time and so they also adopt a set of values and morals that define them as a person. The type of peers they are surrounded with will play an important role in determining their sense of right and wrong.

Experiences

As they grow into adulthood, adolescents tend to engage in behaviours that include trying new things. These can be positive as well as negative. The negative experiences may also be related to risk-taking as the children are exploring their own limits and potential.

External Influence

Adolescent is heavily influenced by their peers and friends in terms of their external appearance, interests, self-esteem, and most importantly their behaviour.

Social Media

Most adolescents are allowed to use digital media from the time they are toddlers. During adolescence, they get more control over digital media as they start using personal mobile phones to talk with their peers and friends. The digital media is a major platform where they communicate with the world. It has benefits for their social development but at the same time also has risks like internet bullying and harassment.

QUIZ

- 1) Does your child participate in any hobby classes or sports? If not, do you encourage your child to take part in these activities?
- 2) Does your child feel comfortable expressing emotions like anger, sadness, happiness, tension, etc in front of you?
- 3) Do you know the names and home addresses of your child's friends?
- 4) Does your child lie about where they are going when they go out with friends?
- 5) Does your adolescent skip school or college to be with their friends?
- 6) Do you give your adolescent any curfew time at night by which they need to be home? If yes, do they come home on time?
- 7) Have you talked to your adolescent about sex education?
- 8) Does your child have a personal mobile phone? If yes, do you monitor/ keep an eye on their use of social media?
- 9) Is your adolescent secretive about what activities they did with their friends? Or does your adolescent share their day's happenings with you?
- 10) Did you talk to your child about the bad effects of smoking and drinking?
- 11) Is your adolescent addicted to smoking or drinking? If yes, are you trying to help them in leaving that addiction?
- 12) Does your child feel confident to say 'no' to things that they do not want to do?
- 13) Does your child like sharing their sports equipment/ toys/ hobby materials with their friends?
- 14) Do you encourage your child to take up leadership roles like becoming the class monitor, leader of a group project or captain of a sports team?
- 15) Have you discussed with your child the possible career paths that they can take up?

BEHAVIOURS AND BARRIERS

What are the desired behaviours?

Developing self-confidence

Teenagers who are confident have a better chance of making good/sensible decisions. It also helps them to avoid unsafe situations and people. Adolescents can develop a sense of self-confidence by understanding their strengths and capabilities and in general learning more about themselves as individuals.

Cooperation and teamwork

Engaging in activities that require teamwork and cooperation can be helpful for adolescents in developing meaningful relationships with their peers or friends. It also prepares them for participating in community-related activities as young adults.

Sex Education/ awareness

Adolescence is the age when young adults reach puberty/ grow physically. This is also the time when they start dating. Hence it is important to ensure that the children learn about sexual activities, about sexual diseases and the risks of pregnancy in teenagers. It is also important that adolescents learn about these topics from the right sources. Teaching them about this is the responsibility of parents as well as the educational institution.

Critical thinking

Critical thinking is an important skill that can help in problem-solving solving, dealing with complex issues at the school and community levels. It allows them to understand multiple perspectives rather than being easily influenced by any one set of opinions of their peers.

Effective Conflict resolution

Effective conflict resolution leads to problem-solving in a calm and peaceful way. It also helps in maintaining positive relationships within the peer group. The skills that can help in achieving these include empathy, effective communication, constructive feedback, and active listening.

Learning to say 'no'

An important part of developing communication skills in adolescents is learning to say 'no'. It can be extremely helpful in risky or negative situations where peers can influence the person to do something that they do not want to do.

Building a wider social network

Having a wider social network means having many groups of friends that can be a source of support to your child if some friendships do not work out. For example, your child might have an argument with a friend at school and stop talking with them, but they will still have other friends from the cricket group dance group or neighbourhood to talk to. It also means the availability of different perspectives from different types of peer groups. These can be acquired through various activities such as participating in sports activities, participating in hobby classes, attending community events, etc.

For those who cannot practice the desired behaviours, what are the barriers to changing or adopting desired behaviours? Why do people find it hard to change?

In many Indian households, parents do not have good communication skills and do not have open communication with their teenagers. It is generally a one-way conversation where parents instruct their teens about things that are good for them and things that are bad for them.

Many parents also adopt a very strict style of parenting. They do not try to understand the adolescent's way of thinking and end up isolating them from social life. They do not allow their teenagers to make new friends or participate in social or sports activities. They expect their children to only focus on their studies and get very good marks at school. They also discourage their teenagers from interacting with the opposite gender, especially in the case of females.

In many regions in India, activities such as drinking alcohol, smoking tobacco and indulging in pre-marital sex are all considered taboo. Hence parents do not discuss these things openly with their teenagers. As a result, teenagers are dependent on their friends or peers to understand these topics and to try alcohol and smoking. This is one of the most important barriers to overcoming social problems in adolescents.

How can we address the most important barriers?

There are some solutions in order to remove the above-mentioned barriers. The most important one is for parents to accept and understand that alcohol, smoking, and sex are not taboo but rather sensitive topics. Parents need to be aware of the negative effects of these activities on their children's lives. Having an open discussion about these topics can help solve these issues. The parents need to explain to the child how these things can affect their life and why they must not over-indulge in it due to peer pressure. Parents can attend workshops where schools/not-for-profit organizations can help them in overcoming these situations effectively.

How will the family/parent monitor the change?

Adolescents are dependent on their families for primary support, love, and help in making decisions about their future. Here are ways in which the family or parents can support young adults in the social aspect of their lives.

Parents should set examples of what positive healthy adult relationships look like. Both partners should treat each other with kindness, respect opinions, and show the child that open communication is important. They should also resolve arguments in a peaceful and calm manner. When the adolescent notices the positive behaviour between the adults in the family, they will also try to adopt the same in their relationships with their friends/ peers.

Parents can also invite their adolescent friends at home and get to know them on occasions such as festivals or birthdays. If the young adult wants to go to a friend's birthday party, the parents can ask questions like which other friends will be present, how are they planning to spend the time, what

activities will they be doing, etc. This way parents can be aware of and monitor the adolescent's social groups.

Understanding how your child is feeling is also a very important way of helping your child overcome negative peer influences. If a child wants to talk to the parent, they should take some time out to listen to what the child wants to say. Parents should respect their adolescent's feelings and try to console them in emotionally difficult situations.

Parents should help adolescents understand which activities are good for them and which activities may have harmful effects on them. This will help teenagers avoid those activities even when their friends or peers try to pressure them to do it.

What does a successful outcome look like?

(a happy picture)

Once Anil and his son Rahul are taking a walk in a park when the father comes across his old college friend, Sahil, who happens to be smoking a cigarette. They are pleased to see each other.

Sahil asks Anil, "Hey, it has been so long, what have you been up to since so many years?"

To which Anil replies, "As you see, I got married and this is my teenage son Rahul. I work at an accounting company. How about you?"

Sahil responds, "You know, just living the dream, enjoying life! Hey, do you guys want to come and hang out with me? I am headed to a party where there will be lots of drinks to go along with the cigarettes!"

Anil says, "Thank you, Sahil, that sounds like a lot of fun, but we have to be somewhere in the next 10 minutes so we cannot join you."

To this Sahil replies, "Okay, your loss! It was great catching up with you." And he walks away.

Anil's son Rahul then asks him about who his friend is. Anil tells his son that Sahil is the most popular kid in his college. Everyone always wanted to do whatever Sahil would do and he had some very bad habits like drinking alcohol and smoking. At first, Anil wanted to do those things so his friends would like him, but he was nervous because he knew those things were not good for him. To this, his son tells him that he too feels pressurised to do things that his peers do. So, Anil decides that it is a good time to talk to his son Rahul about how to deal with peer pressure. He teaches him how to recognise when he is feeling pressured by his friends or peers. Then he tells him to take a deep breath if he finds himself in such a situation and think about the results of taking part in a bad activity. Anil asks his son to think if it is worth causing harm to his physical or mental health in the long term. Rahul then agrees that it is not worth taking part in such activities. Anil tells him that he should confidently say 'no' to his peers in such situations and be firm in his decision.

Rahul then tells his father that sometimes it is difficult to think quickly in such situations and it may be confusing when the peers start saying "You have to try this!!" To this, Anil suggests that they can practice such situations at home where Rahul can learn to firmly say 'no' with confidence. For the next

few days, both his mother and father create practice scenarios at home where Rahul could feel peer pressure. They then teach him how to overcome such situations. Hence, Rahul now knows about good peer pressure and bad peer pressure.

GAMES AND ACTIVITIES

COMMITMENT TO CHILD

USEFUL LINKS

Existing Governmental and Non-Governmental Programmes

Existing Governmental and Non-Governmental Programmes

Existing Governmental and Non-Governmental Programmes

Scheme for Adolescent Girls (SAG): This scheme is for adolescent girls from ages 11 to 14 years. The main objective of this scheme is to help the girls in becoming self-reliant by motivating them to continue their education or pursue higher education and vocational training. It also provides the girls with life skill education. This scheme also provides nutritional supplements and health check-ups to adolescent girls.

Rashtriya Kishor Swasthya Karyakram (RKSK): This scheme is for both, girls and boys. The goal of this scheme is to ensure the overall development of adolescents. Under this scheme, adolescents are defined as persons between the ages of 10 and 19 years in urban and rural areas. It includes all types of adolescents belonging to different financial backgrounds. Additionally, the scheme also focuses on adolescents that identify themselves as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer (LGBTQ).

The main areas of focus in this scheme are nutrition, substance misuse, sexual reproductive health, mental health, violence, injury, and non-communicable diseases in adolescents. The scheme is implemented by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare in collaboration with the United Nations Population Fund. The Policy also includes a Peer Education Programme which makes sure that young adults between ages 10 and 19 receive regular peer education which covers all the focus areas under this scheme.

Nasha Mukta Bharat Abhiyaan (NMBA): This scheme is not particularly for adolescents but they are one of the target populations for prevention of substance misuse and creating awareness about the bad effects of substance use. This scheme focuses on higher educational institutes such as schools and universities. Under this policy, the affected individuals have access to education, rehabilitation and de-addiction. Their families also receive support to help the individuals recover from the addiction.

Peer Pressure / Adolescent Social Development

Game: Who's cool? Who's the fool?

Aim:

Parent and child to play with a set of cards. See below. You could print out the pages below and cut the cards to make a deck. Or parent and child can work together on one weekend to create their own set for the family games.

The cards are about people and characters we are all familiar with. Some of these characters are real persons; some could be characters from movies, TV serials or fictional. Some of the characters could be from sports or heroes from everyday life. For example, we have included sports persons such as Virat Kohli or Cristiano Ronaldo. All these people and characters have worked hard, taken care of their body and money, and tried to excel in their chosen activity. These are the COOL cards.

Children often are misled into believing that hard work is foolish and having fun is cool. The game is designed to reinforce that it is the hard work of these achievers that make them cool. Most times we see these people and characters after they have become successful. We see the fun they are having and not the hard work they have put in to reach where they are.

On the other hand, there are characters who bunk or cut classes, drink or smoke. They do not put in the required effort into any activity. They just want to go straight to what they foolishly think is cool. These are the FOOL cards. The fool does not realize that the road to fun and success goes through the land of effort and hard work.

The aim is to reinforce the notion in the mind of the child about the dangers of engaging in certain behaviors that are harmful to health, academics and overall wellbeing and the future.

By picking certain cards that are designated as “FOOL” or “COOL,” certain behaviors become ingrained in the child’s mind as undesirable.

The parent then initiates a discussion about how to resist peer pressure and be assertive. The child learns to tell any friend, who is asking the child to engage in harmful behaviors, that I am COOL and I am not a FOOL.

Rules of the game

1. Two players play the game. One of them is the cards dealer.
2. The ten-game cards are dealt equally between the two players.
3. The two players then open their cards one after the other.
4. First hand (not the dealer) throws a card down.
5. The dealer has to throw a card in response.
6. This round or trick belongs to the person who throws a card with a higher coolness score.
7. The players then continue
8. The player who wins three tricks wins the game.

9. The one who loses becomes the dealer.

10. At the end of the round, the parent initiates a discussion about peer pressure and how friends can be very helpful, are much needed, but at the same time negative peer pressure to engage in harmful activities has to be avoided. The parent discusses with the child about who is cool, how to be focused on their health and life goals, prioritize wellbeing. And how to win friends and influence people through positivity and a positive approach to life.

Note: Coolness score is mentioned on each card.

Images have been obtained from the following sources:

Cristiano Ronaldo

<https://wallpapers.com/images/high/cristiano-ronaldo-pictures-2plzjqdd9w5cah1.webp>

Virat Kohli

<https://im.rediff.com/cricket/2023/jan/17kohli1.jpg?w=670&h=900>

Jasprit Bumrah

https://c.ndtvimg.com/2024-06/dlsrhcqo_jasprit-bumrah-afp_625x300_21_June_24.jpg?im=FeatureCrop,algorithm=dnn,width=806,height=605

Smriti Mandhana

https://img.naidunia.com/naidunia/ndnimg/17072023/17_07_2023-smritimandhanabirthday.jpg

Neeraj Chopra

https://c.ndtvimg.com/2023-09/s82umckg_neeraj-chopra-afp_625x300_01_September_23.jpg?im=FeatureCrop,algorithm=dnn,width=806,height=605

Alia Bhatt

https://m.media-amazon.com/images/M/MV5BNzlmZWl2YjAtOGQ3ZC00NTFjLTlkMzltYTRiOGFiNzFjOTdlXkEyXkFqcGdeQXVyMTQ3Mzk2MDg4._V1_.jpg

Geeta Phogat

<https://indianewengland.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Geeta-Phogat.jpg>

CHAPTER 12: RISK-TAKING BEHAVIORS IN ADOLESCENTS

KNOWLEDGE AND CAUSES

What are risk-taking behaviors?

Understanding risk-taking

Risk-taking behaviors are behaviors that are harmful to the health and life of people who engage in them.¹

The common causes involving risk-taking include violence, alcohol use, tobacco or drug use, risky sexual behaviors, and eating behaviors.²

It is important to understand underlying factors that lead people to do these behaviors.

With a better understanding of underlying factors, one can avoid blaming, which is crucial to gain trust and prevent worse health outcomes.

Risk-taking implications

High risk behaviors lead to various outcomes ranging from disease, disorder, and even death.

Violent behaviors impact physical and mental health and are often traumatic in the long-term.

Unsafe consumption of alcohol leads to harmful effects on the body. Long-term consumption causes disease and mental health problems (including addiction).

Binge drinking is linked to other risky behaviors (violence, high-risk sexuality, smoking, driving under influence etc.)

Tobacco smoking can similarly cause lung disease, disorder, and dependence.

Risky sexual behaviors (unprotected sex and multiple sexual partners) can lead to negative health outcomes (sexually transmitted infections, unwanted pregnancies, miscarriage, and even death).

Factors and burden

The likelihood of 'Risk-taking' are linked to various individual and environmental factors.³

Emerging research continue to help us better understand factors causing risky attitudes.

Discoveries in brain science explain various underlying mechanisms behind these behaviors.

It has now been proven that emotional reactivity, brain development, hormonal factors, genetics, and environmental exposure, cause them .⁴

Following data shows that these factors carry higher risks for adolescents:

Worldwide, heavy episodic drinking among adolescents (ages 15–19 years) was 13.6% in 2016, with males most at risk. This is a huge burden just from “binge drinking”.⁵

Interpersonal violence was listed as one of the leading causes of death among adolescent boys.⁵

Almost 50 percent of all new sexually transmitted infections are found in adolescents and young adults.⁵

Risky behaviors are more common in this age and asks us to push more efforts to change these behaviors.

What are the causes of the problem?

Adolescents are prone to risky behaviors due to their transition to adulthood, but external environment play an equally vital role.

Environment affects at interpersonal, societal, community, and national (through policies and programs) level.

Parents, teachers, and peers set norms that predispose them to model and adopt to behaviors.

These norms, in turn, stem from a broader community and cultural practices.

The community level factors and a much broader national factors continue to influence each other.

It is hence important to understand complexity of the environment that pose barriers to behavior change.

Parents, teachers, and health workers must acknowledge this to better help adolescents who fell prey to risky behaviors.

QUIZ

Self-Quiz : Now it is time to check knowledge and skills when it comes to high-risk behaviors:

From a scale of 1 to 3, rate how likely is your adolescent to engage in a particular risky behavior. (1 = very unlikely 2= Neutral 3 = denotes highly likely)

Violence

In the presence of authoritative adults (like parents or teachers), he/she is likely to be physically violent

Very unlikely	Neutral	Highly likely
---------------	---------	---------------

In the presence of peers, he/she is likely to be physically violent

Very unlikely	Neutral	Highly likely
---------------	---------	---------------

Alcohol

In the presence of authoritative adults (like parents or teachers), he/she is likely to indulge in alcohol consumption

Very unlikely

Neutral

Highly likely

In the presence of authoritative adults (like parents or teachers), he/she is likely to be continue consumption of alcohol, to the extent of losing control

Very unlikely

Neutral

Highly likely

In the presence of peers, he/she is likely to indulge in consumption of alcohol or

Very unlikely

Neutral

Highly likely

In the presence of peers, he/she is likely to continue consumption of alcohol to the extent of losing control

Very unlikely

Neutral

Highly likely

Tobacco and drugs

In the presence of authoritative adults (like parents or teachers), he/she is likely to indulge in consumption of tobacco, smoking, or other drugs

Very unlikely

Neutral

Highly likely

In the presence of peers, he/she is likely to indulge in consumption of tobacco, smoking, or other drugs

Very unlikely

Neutral

Highly likely

High Risk Sexual behaviors (unprotected sex, multiple sexual partners, etc.)

He/she is likely to indulge in what may be called high risk sexual behaviors

Very unlikely

Neutral

Highly likely

Food consumption

When in stress, he/she is likely to indulge in excessive food consumption

Very unlikely

Neutral

Highly likely

BEHAVIOURS AND BARRIERS

How does these behaviors affect adolescents?

Understanding Adolescence

Adolescence is a transition from childhood to adulthood. It is recognized differently in various cultures.

The speed of this transition is comparatively rapid in some cultures—and which depends on many personal and external factors that influence them.

This phase leaves a deeper and lasting change on children's (developing) brains and determine their ability to survive all their lives.

Parents, guardians, and teachers should be aware that adolescents' need to seek independence and freedom reflect this healthy development.

They are highly sensitized to influence, and to seeking excitement and rewards.⁶

Risk-taking in adolescents

A large proportion of adolescents practice risk-taking behaviors. There are two main reasons for this.

First, the parts of the brain responsible for pleasure seeking, reward, emotional regulation, and sleep, develop early. Whereas their ability to organize, take decisions, control impulses, and plan future, develop later. This deems them prone to influence and adopt unhealthy behaviors.

Second, external environments (home, schools, community, and society) play a huge role in determining health outcomes. Adolescents are likely to model the behaviors of adults around them. It leads to adapting to behaviors in adolescence and later in adulthood

The negative health outcomes that mainly affect adolescents on a broader (community-wide) level, hence reflect the environmental impact on them.⁷

Also, adolescents' ability to reason out whether to engage in risk-taking behavior, is often situational. They are more likely to carry out these behaviors in a situation having less adult supervision. (For example, when they are with their peers, or in an emotionally charged situation.)

See this illustrative video to understand the relationship of teenagers and risk taking.⁸

What are the desired behaviors (that can reduce the problem)?

Teen allyship and positive environment

To understand desired behavior, we must understand that healthy risk-taking is important and reflects adequate adolescent development.

Preventing unhealthy and unregulated risk-taking, contrastingly, is necessary to keep a safe and healthy environment for everyone.

Parents, teachers, and other adults should create a supportive environment for adolescents—for them to perceive them as allies.

Schools are a separate ecosystem, as much as they represent, the broader community. By creating 'school connectedness' we can create safe and open spaces.⁹

Understanding underlying factors often help create safe environments and prevent these negative behaviors.

Reducing high risk behaviors^{10,11,12,13}

Underlying factors predisposing adolescents to high-risk behaviors (at various levels) include:

Individual: History of violence, adverse childhood events, neurological, genetic, or psychological disorders.

Interpersonal: Violence and conflict in family, poor parenting, social rejection by peers, and lack of connectedness in school

Community: Poor neighborhoods and built environment, socio-economically disadvantaged residents, absent school policies, absent parent- or community-school partnerships, stigma, and cultural beliefs

Societal: Lack of policies and programs for prevention and to spread awareness, bridge gaps, and increase access to care.

See helpful video on healthy risk-taking.¹⁴

For those who cannot practice the desired behaviors, what are the barriers to changing or adopting desired behaviors? Why people find it hard to change?

Research in psychology, social science, and neuroscience, has helped better understand health behaviors and help remove barriers.

Various theories and models of behavior change used have helped remove these barriers.

Preventing high-risk behaviors is not enough. Reducing risk and replacing positive behaviors is important.

Understanding how adolescents perceive threat, benefit, barriers, and their ability to perform positive behaviors is the key.¹⁵

At the same time, the strengthening cues (in the environment) to positive behavior can greatly help.¹⁵

Kindly refer to the above section on 'Reducing high-risk behaviors' at various levels of influence. They answer what specific barriers we can similarly overcome to have a positive impact.

How can we address the most important barrier in Indian context?

Understanding individual and environmental factors helped us identify the barriers adolescents (including in India) face.

Changing the influence of these factors will help us prevent high risk behaviors. It will give way to appropriate accountable actions.

Creating safe environment at home (free of conflict and violence) is the first step in improving outcomes. Adolescents often model adults in their surroundings. A healthy conflict resolution is also likely to be replicated.

Additionally, we can improve home atmosphere by creating (a casual) 'dinner table discussion' and an open dialogue. With willingness to learn together, they would be better informed, think rationally, and opt better behaviors in the future (and without supervision).

Compassion and openness at help gain their trust and make it easier for them to seek care and support when they feel helpless. It favors healthy risk-taking and developing into healthier adults.

School should also offer support. School's partnership with parents and community, helps create a cushion against the disadvantages of other environmental factors (like poor built environment and lower economic conditions) in causing unhealthy risk taking.

Finally, parents, schools, and communities can collaborate with municipalities, panchayats, and governments in better policy and program development. This will bring huge impact and large-scale shift in outcomes.

How will the family / individual monitor the change?

Reasonable amount of supervision could reduce the likelihood of teenagers engaging in these risk-taking behaviors.

Parents must remember that they must their safety.

Parents should set high expectations for adolescent behavior and center them around safety. This is more effective when teenagers are concerned for keeping themselves safe—as opposed to following rules, morals, or laws.¹⁶

Regular habit of checking-in is helpful. It reduces their risk-taking tendencies. Additionally, it is important to do check-ins on the phone (as teens to be use it often). Along with expressing expectations, the consequences of not able to meet them must be communicated.

Staying connected by openly talking about their daily activities and interactions with others (teachers, friends, romantic partners, larger peer groups etc.), often helps bonding.

Active listening filled with compassion help adolescent approach you for any difficulty he or she might face. Especially when it comes to sharing about their mental health and topics involving stigma in community in general.

Teachers, guardians, or caregivers should also engage in active listening when interacting with adolescents. It is always helpful to ask them open ended questions (starting with "why"). It will help them open to suggestion and behavior change.

On the other hand, if the adolescent is met with an angry or reactive adult, they would hold back from sharing or detailed thought process behind their behaviors.

It is hence important to be patient and open in your communication. Using smoother conversation starters like, “how was your day?”, “what was the best and worst part of your day?”, “how are you feeling today?”, “is there anything you are worried about today or this week?” etcetera.¹⁸

In school, health education and positive behavioral norms are important. A safe and supportive environment and access to health services is additionally helpful. This makes adolescents feel connected in the school.¹⁹

Check out CDC’s recommendation on how these approaches help teens avoid risky behaviors

Icebreakers and activities to open dialogues about sex education are useful. We can make them more culturally appropriate. An open atmosphere will normalize (the often stigmatized) the topic and help reduce risky sexual behaviors.

What does a successful outcome look like?

Risky behaviors lead to damaging effects on the health and life of adolescents, while creating an environment of awareness and conducive to low risk taking is protective.

As these behaviors are often carried to the adulthood and leave a lasting effect on their lives.

A healthy transition would mean a higher likelihood of them to live a happy, healthy, and fulfilling life.

GAMES AND ACTIVITIES

COMMITMENT TO CHILD

Are you willing to make a commitment?

Are you willing to commit to join the efforts in reducing risk-taking behaviors of adolescents by?

Active involvement in the key.

USEFUL LINKS

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7. Adolescent behavior and environment <https://www.who.int/news-room/questions-and-answers/item/adolescent-health-and-development>

The National Academics of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine: Teens and Risk Taking;
<https://youtu.be/kh4-R9xFAys?si=uevOxRIjtuhuWJdU>

School Connectedness:
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Sexual behaviors: <https://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/sexualbehaviors/index.htm>

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Parental monitoring:
https://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/protective/factsheets/parental_monitoring_factsheet.htm

Connecting conversations: <https://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/back-to-school/connecting-conversations.html>

What works? (School Connectedness): (<https://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/whatworks/what-works-overview.htm>)

Existing Governmental and Non-Governmental Programmes

Ministry of health and family welfare (MoHFW) supports the efforts to improve adolescents' overall health using the RKSK (Rashtriya Kishor Swasthya Karyakram), under National Health mission. Their website provides many resources and access to various activities under the program.

National program for youth and adolescent development, NPYAD is another program by ministry of youth affairs and sports that help adolescence get affiliated to peer clubs and help support their healthy growth.

UNICEF has provided a training module, "Peer-led intervention designed to reduce risk taking behavior among young drug users" which discusses in detail risk behaviors in relation to drug abuse and strategies for risk reduction and behavior change. We can use this approach while dealing with reducing adolescent risk taking.

UNICEF provides rigor and support by providing access to its resources. It is often helpful to keep informed.

Do you want to connect to a community?

Open a dialogue.

Connect on public forums and social media platforms.

Support activities in the community to spread awareness.

Game: Snake & Ladder

Aim:

The game aims to show the detrimental effects of risk-taking behaviours in reaching goals that adolescents have, and the benefits of healthy behaviours in overcoming the challenges that risk-taking brings about.

Rules for the game:

Take a printout of the picture above. You may use this as the board on which to play your game.

Any number of family members more than two can play the game. Make sure you have the same number of game tokens as the number of players and a dice.

The players position their tokens at the start point. They take turns rolling the dice and moving the number of squares as shown on the dice. For example, one must move to square 5 if their dice roll shows 5.

If they face a ladder in the square where they land, they move up, and if they face a snake, they move down. The ladders represent healthy adolescent behaviours, and the snakes represent risk-taking behaviours.

Whoever reaches the finish point first wins the game.

CHAPTER 13: UNDERSTANDING ADOLESCENT BRAIN DEVELOPMENT

KNOWLEDGE AND CAUSES

Many parents do not understand why their teenagers occasionally behave impulsively or irrationally. Sometimes, teens don't think things through or fully consider the consequences of their actions. Adolescents differ from adults and children in how they behave, solve problems, and make decisions. There is a biological explanation for this difference. Studies have shown that brains continue to mature and develop throughout childhood, adolescence, and early adulthood.

The human brain is an amazing complex organ that experiences continuous development throughout the lifespan. During adolescence, in addition to many changes happening within the body, the brain develops significantly.

Why are adolescents so important to brain development? The brain adapts, heals, grows, and changes in response to its environment and experiences. Neural connections and pathways are created, formed, and altered. Neuroplasticity is at work throughout our lives; adolescence is second only to the first three years of life in growth and development. In this developmental stage, the brain gets used to often-used neural pathways and diminishes ones that are less used. This is known as pruning. This way, the most used connections and pathways become dominant and stable, and the brain becomes more efficient and focused. Scientists estimate that more than 40% of the brain's synapses are diminished or pruned by adulthood. This defines adolescence as a "use it or lose it time" where environments and experiences influence which connections become dominant. The brain functions as a system comprising different interdependent parts, each with a specialised function. Think of the brain as interconnected specialists influencing one another and working together as one with multiple tasks. During adolescence, each part becomes more efficient, and the connections strengthen.

Pictures of the brain in action show that adolescents' brains work differently than adults when making decisions or solving problems. Their actions are guided more by the emotional and reactive amygdala and less by the thoughtful, logical frontal cortex. Based on the stage of their brain development, adolescents are more likely to:

act on impulse

misread or misinterpret social cues and emotions

get into accidents of all kinds

get involved in fights

engage in dangerous or risky behaviour

Adolescents are less likely to:

think before they act

pause to consider the consequences of their actions

change their dangerous or inappropriate behaviours

These brain differences don't mean young people can't make good decisions or distinguish between right and wrong. It also doesn't mean they shouldn't be held responsible for their actions. However, an awareness of these differences can help parents, teachers, advocates, and policymakers understand, anticipate, and manage the behaviour of adolescents.

Our brains develop throughout our lives, and life experiences play a role in creating brains that are uniquely wired from one individual to another. During ages 0-3, neural connections are created rapidly. During adolescence, the experiences we have enhance or diminish these neural connections. Adolescence is an incredible time that we all experience but once in our lives. Our brains are at their peak ability to learn and remember, sensations are heightened, and we are mentally confronting some of life's most profound pleasures and challenges for the first time. This evolution, however, can sometimes stress relationships between adolescents and adults. By better understanding the developmental changes in the brain, we can practice strategies for making the most of this open window and maintain and strengthen relationships in a way that's better for youth, families, and the community.

Three specialised and interrelated parts of the brain that are under a lot of study regarding adolescence are:

1 The brain stem is the oldest part of the brain and controls life supporting autonomic functions such as heart rate, breathing and fear, freeze, and flight mechanism, and coordinates motor control signals sent from the brain to the body.

2. The limbic system is the brain's emotional network, including the amygdala and the hippocampus. This system, responsible for emotional regulation, mood swings, and reward-seeking, is especially active during adolescence.

3. The prefrontal cortex (PFC) is one of the last parts of the brain to mature and is highly influenced by experiential learning. It plays a key role in integrating signals from all brain parts and determining how they get processed by other brain parts. It is responsible for executive function. Tasks like abstract thinking, analysis, regulating behaviour, mitigating conflicts in thought, choosing between right and wrong, and being able to pre-determine outcomes. The PFC also governs the emotional part of our brain, the limbic system, and is key in maintaining emotional control.

The balance and influence among and between the various parts of the brain is a large part of what shapes behaviour and decisions. Scientists have observed that youth access and use these parts of the brain specifically tailored to the environment, experiences, and development during adolescence. This means a youth and an adult might process and react to the same situation differently, but both perfectly

logical, ways! For some adolescents who are impacted by trauma and/or toxic stress early in life, this development could take a different course where the brain prioritises the development of survival functions (freeze, flight, or fight) over executive functions. This understanding can help ensure that youth- serving environments and interactions are set up to maximise the tremendous potential of this developmental stage.

(I) Environment Changes

Appended are some ways in which an environment that supports healthy development can be created:

Encourage, engage and optimise times when the adolescent brain thrives

Experiment with the physical environment to create opportunities for brains to thrive. For example, arrange desks for peer eye contact and collaboration, bring in plants, encourage students to decorate and personalise their space, or create the furniture arrangements together. Physical exercise or movement can also prime the mind, reducing the effect of stress hormones.

A culture of relevance, reward and recognition -making relevant connections with the real and current world and planning activities that play on their drive for autonomy, independence and social status. The brain is more sensitive to rewards at this time of development.

Sensitivity to individual needs -Exercising executive function and emotional regulation often comes as second nature to mature adults. These are different for every individual, requiring quick adaptation and refocusing on the interaction.

(II) Positive interactions

Demonstrating a coaching attitude - This means asking a teen guiding questions and leading the decision-making process step-by-step through a facilitated learning process to help them reach their conclusions rather than being given solutions or instructions.

Adults as sounding boards - Today's adolescents are dealing with incredible pressure and complexity in their daily lives socially, emotionally, and physically. What may be socially relevant for youth may differ greatly from what is relevant for us. Validate their experience in any situation and always listen first before jumping to conclusions or advice. Adults can help by acting as sounding boards and asking questions, thus creating a learning situation based on self-discovery.

Looking for the spark - When adolescents are emotional, it is largely due to the PFC not being able to fully regulate emotions driven by the other parts of the brain yet. Although body changes and hormonal factors can influence emotions, passion for what they care about is also a feature of this brain development stage.

Being open to questioning old assumptions - When adolescents are emotional, it is largely due to the PFC not being able to fully regulate emotions driven by the other parts of the brain yet. Although body changes and hormonal factors can influence emotions, passion for what they care about is also a feature of this brain development stage.

Unconditional positive regard - It's so important for teens to believe that we value spending time with them. Try scheduling a consistent time in the busy week to do something together. Even if you can only carve out fifteen minutes at a time, research shows that it's not the amount of time we spend with youth but rather the fact that they know they matter to us with unconditional positive regard, the idea that we will not change our attitude or actions toward a person based on something they say or do.

All of this brings us to the final question how can the parents use this information on the teen brain?

1. Remember that risk-taking behaviour has both positive and negative dimensions. It is possible to satiate teenage curiosity and desire for excitement safely. Healthy risk-taking is:

Socially acceptable

A necessary part of adolescence

Something that allows teens to explore and develop their own identities

Something that gives teens practice making their own decisions

By practicing taking healthy risks, teens have an opportunity to develop their cognitive control system, narrowing the developmental gap between reward-seeking and self-regulation

2. "Boys will be boys" is no excuse for poor behaviour. Don't be so quick to excuse gender differences as being due to brain differences. While this plays a small part, it can also give boys an excuse for suboptimal behaviour.

3. Instead of focusing on the 'deficits' of the adolescent brain, focus on the benefits. Teens have more brain cells than adults, and they can better build synapses between neurons, which means they can learn easier and quicker. Finally, here is one crucial step we should always take, regardless of brain development:

4. Emphasize connection over correction and direction. Make sure they feel seen, heard, and valued. Your teens should know that you love them. Say it regularly. And remind them that you love them—no matter what.

The high plasticity of the adolescent brain permits environmental influences to exert particularly strong effects on the cortical transmission of information.

QUIZ

1. What is the primary neurotransmitter associated with synaptic pruning, a process that occurs during adolescent brain development?

A) Serotonin

B) Dopamine

C) Glutamate

D)

GABA

Answer: C) Glutamate

2. Which hormone is responsible for triggering the physical changes associated with puberty?

A) Insulin

B) Testosterone

C) Estrogen

D)

Melatonin

Answer: C) Estrogen

3. Which of the following is NOT a factor influencing adolescent brain development?

A) Genetics

B) Nutrition

C) Socioeconomic status

D)

Adult

height

Answer: D) Adult height

BEHAVIOURS AND BARRIERS

GAMES AND ACTIVITIES

COMMITMENT TO CHILD

USEFUL LINKS

Brain Development Timeline Puzzle

Create cards with different brain development milestones (e.g., 'Prefrontal cortex matures around age 25', 'Dopamine reward system is highly active in teens', 'Emotional processing develops before logical reasoning'). Family members arrange them in chronological order and discuss why understanding these timelines helps in parenting with more patience and empathy.

CHAPTER 14: ARGUING

KNOWLEDGE AND CAUSES

Understanding Arguing in Adolescence

Adolescence is a period of significant change, and arguing with parents is a common part of this developmental phase. Have you noticed your child becoming more argumentative lately? Do they challenge your instructions or disagree with family rules more frequently? These arguments, while stressful, are often a normal part of an adolescent's journey toward independence and self-identity.

Arguing refers to verbal disagreements where individuals express opposing views, often with raised voices or strong emotions. In adolescence, arguing typically involves the teen challenging parental authority, disagreeing with rules, or expressing frustration about restrictions. While occasional disagreements are healthy, frequent and intense arguments can strain family relationships and affect the adolescent's emotional well-being.

Why Do Adolescents Argue?

Several factors contribute to increased arguing during adolescence:

- **Seeking Independence:** Adolescents are developing their own identity and want more autonomy in decision-making. Arguing is often their way of asserting independence.
- **Brain Development:** The prefrontal cortex, responsible for impulse control and reasoning, is still maturing. This makes adolescents more reactive and emotional.
- **Hormonal Changes:** Puberty brings hormonal fluctuations that can affect mood regulation, making teens more irritable and prone to conflict.
- **Desire for Respect:** Adolescents want to be treated as individuals with valid opinions. When they feel dismissed, they may argue to be heard.
- **Peer Influence:** As peers become more important, adolescents may argue to align with peer values that differ from family rules.
- **Stress and Pressure:** Academic stress, social challenges, and personal insecurities can make adolescents more reactive at home.

Consequences of Frequent Arguing

When arguing becomes the primary mode of communication in a family, it can lead to several negative outcomes:

- **Damaged Parent-Child Relationship:** Constant conflict can erode trust and emotional connection between parents and adolescents.
- **Emotional Distress:** Both parents and teens may experience anxiety, sadness, or anger that affects their overall mental health.

- **Poor Communication Skills:** Adolescents may learn that arguing is the only way to express needs, carrying this pattern into other relationships.
- **Rebellious Behavior:** When arguments are met with strict punishment rather than understanding, teens may rebel and engage in risky behaviors.
- **Low Self-Esteem:** Adolescents who feel they can never win an argument or be heard may develop feelings of inadequacy.
- **Academic Impact:** Family conflict can distract from studies and reduce academic performance.

Quiz

1. Why do adolescents often argue with parents?
- a) They dislike their parents
 - b) They are seeking independence and autonomy
 - c) They want to be punished

Answer: b) They are seeking independence and autonomy

2. Which part of the brain is still developing during adolescence, affecting impulse control?
- a) Cerebellum
 - b) Prefrontal cortex
 - c) Brain stem

Answer: b) Prefrontal cortex

3. What is a healthy outcome of occasional parent-teen disagreements?
- a) Complete obedience from the teen
 - b) Development of communication and negotiation skills
 - c) Parents always winning the argument

Answer: b) Development of communication and negotiation skills

BEHAVIOURS AND BARRIERS

Desired Behaviours

Parents can adopt several strategies to reduce destructive arguing and promote healthy communication:

- **Stay Calm:** When an argument begins, take a deep breath and respond calmly rather than reacting with anger. Your calmness helps de-escalate the situation.
- **Listen Actively:** Give your adolescent full attention. Let them finish speaking before responding. Acknowledge their feelings even if you disagree with their point.
- **Choose Your Battles:** Not every disagreement needs to become an argument. Decide which issues are truly important (safety, health, values) and which can be flexible.
- **Use 'I' Statements:** Instead of saying 'You never listen,' say 'I feel frustrated when I'm interrupted.' This reduces defensiveness.
- **Set Clear Rules:** Establish family rules together with your adolescent. When rules are mutually agreed upon, there is less to argue about.

- **Pick the Right Time:** Avoid discussing sensitive topics when either of you is tired, hungry, or stressed. Choose a calm moment for important conversations.
- **Model Respect:** Show your adolescent how to disagree respectfully. Avoid shouting, name-calling, or bringing up past mistakes.
- **Allow Cooling-Off Periods:** If emotions are running high, agree to pause the conversation and revisit it after 20-30 minutes when everyone is calmer.

Barriers to Change

Several barriers can make it difficult to reduce arguing in the family:

- **Parental Ego:** Parents may feel that backing down or compromising undermines their authority.
- **Busy Schedules:** Lack of quality time together means issues pile up and explode into arguments.
- **Generational Gap:** Different values and worldviews can make understanding each other challenging.
- **Stress Transfer:** Parents may bring work stress home, making them less patient with adolescent behavior.
- **Lack of Skills:** Both parents and teens may not know healthy conflict resolution techniques.
- **Cultural Expectations:** In some families, questioning parents is seen as disrespectful, making open dialogue difficult.

How to Overcome Barriers

Overcoming these barriers requires commitment and practice:

- **Attend Parenting Workshops:** Many community centers and schools offer workshops on adolescent communication.
- **Practice Self-Care:** When parents manage their own stress, they are better equipped to handle teen emotions calmly.
- **Create Family Rituals:** Regular family meals or outings build connection and reduce the buildup of resentment.
- **Seek Family Counseling:** A professional can provide neutral guidance and teach conflict resolution skills.
- **Read Together:** Parents and teens can read books on communication and discuss them, building shared understanding.

Successful Outcome

A successful outcome is a home where disagreements are handled with respect and understanding. The adolescent feels heard and valued, while parents maintain appropriate boundaries. Family members can express differing opinions without fear of judgment or punishment. Over time, the adolescent develops into a confident adult who can communicate effectively, negotiate fairly, and maintain healthy relationships. The family bond grows stronger through these challenges, creating a supportive environment where everyone thrives.

GAMES AND ACTIVITIES

Cool-Down Communication Game

When an argument starts, use the 'Traffic Light' method. Create a red, yellow, and green card. When anyone holds up the RED card, everyone must stop talking and take 5 deep breaths. YELLOW means 'I need to speak slowly and calmly.' GREEN means 'We can continue the discussion respectfully.' Practice this during calm times so it becomes a habit during conflicts. This game teaches emotional regulation and creates a visual signal that everyone understands.

COMMITMENT TO CHILD

I, _____, parent of _____, commit to reducing destructive arguments in our home. I will practice staying calm, listening actively, and choosing my battles wisely. I understand that occasional disagreements are normal, but I will work to ensure they are handled with respect and love. I will model healthy communication and seek help when needed.

USEFUL LINKS

- Parentline: <https://www.parentline.org.au>
- UNICEF Parenting Resources: <https://www.unicef.org/parenting>
- National Family Helpline: 1800-XXX-XXXX

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QUIZ

1. What is the most important first step in addressing this issue?
 - a) Ignoring the problem
 - b) Understanding the causes and having open conversations
 - c) Punishing the adolescentAnswer: b) Understanding the causes and having open conversations

COMMITMENT TO CHILD

I, _____, parent of _____, commit to actively supporting my child through the challenges discussed in this chapter. I will practice patience, open communication, and seek help when needed to ensure my child's healthy development.

USEFUL LINKS

- National Health Mission: <https://nhm.gov.in>
- UNICEF India Adolescent Development: <https://www.unicef.org/india/adolescents>
- Ministry of Health and Family Welfare: <https://www.mohfw.gov.in>

CHAPTER 15: BULLYING

KNOWLEDGE AND CAUSES

What is Bullying:

Bullying is hurting someone with unwanted words or actions, usually done repeatedly and intentionally. Bullying is the use of force, coercion, hurtful teasing or threat, to abuse, aggressively dominate or intimidate. – American Association of Psychology.

In 2014, the Centre for Disease Control and Department of Education released the first federal definition of bullying. The definition includes three core elements:

unwanted aggressive behaviour

observed or perceived power imbalance

repetition or high likelihood of repetition of bullying behaviour

Bullying is a form of aggressive behaviour in which someone intentionally and repeatedly causes another person injury or discomfort. Bullying can take the form of physical contact, words, or more subtle actions.

Why is it a concerning topic:

In 2019, about 22 percent of students ages 12–18 reported being bullied at school during the school year- National Centre of Education Statistics

Over 13,000 students died by in 2021 in India at the rate of more than 35 every day, a rise of 4.5% from the 12,526 deaths in 2020 with 864 out of 10,732 suicides being due to "failure in examination" according to the latest data as per NCRB's ADSI report 2021.

Bullying not just leads to poor confidence and isolation but also extreme cases of bullying can also lead to suicidal tendencies among children and even adults.

Forms of Bullying:

Physical bullying: It can include hitting, kicking, pinching, pushing or damaging property.

Verbal bullying: It includes name calling, insulting, teasing, passing remarks. This form of bullying may sound less harmful but can be as harmful as physical bullying and can prove to be dangerous for one's mental health.

Social bullying: It can include lying and spreading rumours, group collectively isolating a person, damaging someone's reputation, playing nasty jokes and pranks etc. This form of bullying can take a toll over child's mental peace and confidence.

Cyber bullying: With exposure to technology and social media, this form of technology has now become more prevalent. It's the most ignored and not much talked about issue. Posting undesirable comments on social media or trying to mock someone and malign their image can be this form of bullying.

You can click on the given link to read more upon how cyber bullying is a huge matter of concern for Indian parents: <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/blogs/voices/cyberbullying-in-india-a-growing-concern-for-parents-and-educators/>

How does bullying affect adolescents:

Bullying is a critical problem area which often is very difficult to deal with. Especially amongst the teenagers. With several physical, emotional, sexual and academic changes which they go through they are the most vulnerable age group.

Low self-esteem: Bullying of any form can hugely impact a child's confidence and can create self-image issues. Adolescence is an age bracket where the child grows and undergoes major changes of all forms. Comments on their weight, facial hair, pimples height and overall physical appearances have often been the root cause of self-isolation. This is not just a topic for theory or discussion. Educators and parents if become more vigilant and try to communicate one on one with these children they do end up sharing what causes them to isolate themselves.

Example: A child asked a teacher if she can wear a mask. When being denied by the teacher she started insisting on permitting her. The teacher says "Why do you want to hide your such pretty face?" "The child says "That's the problem ma'am, I am not pretty". On being asked the child disclosed that she was being told by her classmate that she is not beautiful due to the pimple marks and thus she wants to now wear mask. Such can be the impact of comments on physical appearance.

Poor academic performance and Lack of interest: Bullying of any form can lead to reduced concentration which has a direct impact on the academic performance. Damage to mental peace and lack of interest often becomes very evident. Such children in spite of having enough skills and capabilities don't want to become the spot light and lack interest in the school activities. This kind of behaviour is not just observed in case academics but also other activities where they are required to engage and interact.

Becoming a bully: A child can even become a bully themselves if they are not counselled properly and if sufficient actions are not taken against the bullies. They may decide to take matters in their own hands and start showing aggressive behaviour to fit in the bullies group.

Why is the role of parents important:

In school it is a high possibility that the signs of bullying can be missed by the teachers. Sometimes to even save the reputation of the school authorities fail to take appropriate actions. In such cases the

parents need to take the lead and show affection and support to the child. Parents need to be active listeners to the child. Just reacting can prevent the child from sharing their concerns. Listening and trying to understand the child's perspective is crucial.

How to identify if your child is being bullied:

Physical Signs:

Torn or spoiled clothes

Cuts or bruises

Poor eating or sleeping patterns

Bedwetting

Making excuses to avoid school: This can be often overlooked and seen as a random tantrum. If child continuously tries to avoid school, then the parents need to sit and talk to the child.

Trying to self-harm

Poor performance in school

Usage of drugs, alcohol or other intoxicating stuff

Emotional Signs:

Staying silent

Choosing to stay isolated always and not participating in any school activities

Lack of interest in the activities they loved

Aggressive outbursts or frustration

Anxious in certain set ups especially where they are bullied

Trying to cut off: This may even include deleting all the social media posts and deleting social platforms.

How to deal with bullies:

No matter what type of bullying the child experiences, it's painful. Here are some ways parents can help deal with bullies:

Acknowledge the behaviour is unacceptable: The first and most important step is to be aware of the important fact that the behaviour is happening and is not acceptable. The bullies need to be addressed however difficult it maybe but acknowledging the problem is the foundation of the solution.

Don't bully back: It's understandable to want to fight back, but bullying the bully in return isn't the answer Chimere G. Homes, says, "There is no need to compromise your good standing. Fighting back

will not solve anything and sadly, it satisfies the bully and can become too dangerous.” In fact, studies show that fighting back can even make things worse. The best way to deal with the problem is to address it and realise that its not ‘Tit for Tat’ situation.

Tell someone: Whether that be a teacher, parent, or friend, let others know about the situation. These figures can help intervene and advocate for the child. They need to be shown that kind of support and confidence.

Discuss bullying with your child: Talk to the child and show acceptance. Acceptance towards the varied traits should be there. Maybe it be their sexual orientation, interests, academic performance or appearance the child should be first accepted as they are.

Get a safety buddy: When dealing with an unrelenting bully, it can be helpful to stick close to others child trust. Not only can they help intervene and act as a witness, but they can deter the bully in general. Ask the teacher to assign a buddy to the student who helps the student to feel more confident and also report the problem effectively.

More than half of bullying situations (57%) stop when a peer intervenes on behalf of the student being bullied.

Practice empowering body language: Research suggests that people tend to feel more confident and empowered when they stand up straight, broaden their shoulders, stand with feet apart, puff out their chest, and point their chin up. Bullies tend to feel more intimidated by people they perceive as confident.

Don’t treat the bully as a demon: This is also to be kept in mind that the child who has become a bully might have a backstory as well. Thus, only proper counselling can end this behaviour. The bully should be dealt with empathy as well.

QUIZ

1. What is the definition of bullying?

- a) A friendly and playful interaction between peers
- b) A one-time conflict between individuals
- c) Repeated aggressive behavior with a power imbalance

Answer: c) Repeated aggressive behavior with a power imbalance

2. How can bystanders help prevent bullying?

- a) By joining in and supporting the bully's actions
- b) By ignoring the situation and not getting involved
- c) By speaking up and supporting the victim

Answer: c) By speaking up and supporting the victim

3. What are the potential effects of bullying on the victim?

- a) Increased self-esteem and confidence
- b) Improved social skills and friendships
- c) Emotional distress and decreased academic performance

Answer: c) Emotional distress and decreased academic performance

Self-assessment quiz to check if you are being bullied:

<https://www.psycom.net/bullying-test>

<https://www.bullyfreeatwork.com/being-bullied-self-test/>

BEHAVIOURS AND BARRIERS

GAMES AND ACTIVITIES

COMMITMENT TO CHILD

USEFUL LINKS

Video on Bullying

Radio show /hindi 2009

bullying /Book Chapter 10.5

comprehensive modular handbook for hands on training of teachers, Counselors

Book for holistic mental health and wellbeing of adolescents

Video on Bullies and victims alike are at risk for psychiatric problems such as anxiety, depression, substance abuse, and suicide

what to do when confronted with abusive behavior, safe and unsafe touches, going to a parent or another trusted adult if they are confronted in an unsafe situation, and that it is not their fault

How to report if your child is being bullied:

You may use the following links and portal in case your child is being bullied in any way:

<https://www.cyberbaap.org/cyberbullying/reporting/>

Check this video by the Delhi Police which explains how to report cyberbullying:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kP3lwMAQJG4>

Self-assessment quiz to check if you are being bullied:

<https://www.psycom.net/bullying-test>

<https://www.bullyfreeatwork.com/being-bullied-self-test/>

You can read about how to initiate a conversation with the child:

<https://raisingchildren.net.au/teens/behaviour/bullying/bullying-signsteenagers-signs-of-bullying-nav-title>

Game: Bully & Victims (on the lines of Mafia & Villagers)

Aim:

Bullying is a pervasive act. It is important that our children know how to take appropriate action against a bully. For that to happen, the first step is to learn how to identify a bully. This game helps teach both parents and children that anyone could be a bully — we must learn how to identify and deal with them.

Rules:

1. The game can be played by 5 to 10 members of a family.
2. You need as many chits as players. Among them, two chits have BULLY written on them, while the remaining chits have VICTIM written on them.
3. Place the folded chits on a plate. Each participant draws a chit and reads it to themselves. Others must not know what is written on your chit.
4. One of the participants is the game conductor. They ask everyone to close their eyes. They then ask the BULLIES to open their eyes. The two bullies open their eyes and see each other.
5. Then, the bullies are asked to shut their eyes. Finally, everyone is asked to open their eyes, and the game starts.
6. The purpose of the game is for the victims to try and eliminate the bullies. Everyone is allowed to dialogue and claim their innocence. Each person is invited to guess who they think the bullies are. Then, all participants VOTE to eliminate one person by majority.
7. After one person is eliminated, Step 6 is repeated, and one person is eliminated each time.
8. The game ends when BOTH BULLIES are eliminated, and the VICTIMS win. Alternately BULLIES win if both bullies are alive when only three participants are left. If only two participants are left (one BULLY and one VICTIM), the BULLIES win.

CHAPTER 16: FEAR OF EXAMINATIONS

KNOWLEDGE AND CAUSES

One of the most common fears among students is the fear of examinations. A survey of school students in Delhi revealed that 4 in 10 students felt overwhelmed by the examinations. They generally fear poor performance and examination results that are less than what their parents expect. It is the culmination of their expectations from themselves, peers, parents and teachers.

In this regard, we also need to differentiate between the right and healthy levels of stress. There is good stress, and there is bad stress. Good stress, also known as eustress, helps achieve good levels of productivity and enhances concentration and time management. On the other hand, bad stress, also known as distress, is counterproductive and inhibits the child from focusing and performing well. It makes the child nervous and anxious, thus negatively affecting the way that they deal with the task. Thus, we see that many students perform poorly in exams despite having studied well. This can be attributed to debilitating levels of anxiety.

What are the consequences of fear of examinations amongst adolescents?

The consequences of examination fear are not just limited to lower performance in the examination. It has serious consequences for the physical and mental well-being of the student.

Firstly, extreme stress related to examination can make the child go to extreme lengths of hard work to ensure good marks. This involves staying up late or studying all night and skipping meals. In general, overworking is harmful—it comes at the cost of physical activity and recreation. This is bad for general health and can reduce immunity. When coupled with all-nighters and skipping meals, the child's nutrition intake reduces, and the body gets no time to rest and rejuvenate through sleep. Additionally, the level of stress and nervousness they endure may cause rapid heartbeat, nausea and diarrhoea in the short term.

Secondly, looking at mental health. If the student is extremely worried about their marks, they might be attributing a great deal of their self-worth to just this one aspect of their life. If their performance is even slightly lower than what they expect, it might cause great harm to their self-esteem. Extreme nervousness can also affect focus and concentration when preparing for the examination as well as during it.

What are the causes of fear of examinations among adolescents?

The most surface level reason for examination fear is lack of preparation. This might be because they didn't manage their time well or missed classes. It could also be because they aren't academically oriented and prefer engaging in co-curricular activities and sports. These might leave them in a situation

where they are overburdened with work at the last minute. Thus, feeling nervous or stressed is natural when there's less time and a lot to study.

However, there are students who prepare well and have enough time on their hands but feel the same stress. This is because they set very high expectations for themselves. They aim for a perfect hundred per cent. Parents and schools also add to this pressure by emphasising the importance of good grades. Students feel like they might be a disappointment if they do not score well. The student wishes to do better than their peers as well. Everyone wishes to secure the first rank in their class. As a result, getting low marks is a constant fear for them.

What are desirable changes to get over the fear of examinations in adolescents?

The easiest way to help your child avoid or overcome this fear is to help them prepare well for upcoming examinations. Make them understand that it will help them avoid last-minute tensions and worries and help them score better. Help them devise a good timetable to incorporate regular studying alongside play and other activities. This will make studying a habit.

It is also important to encourage your child to take breaks when studying. They must learn to balance their work and other activities. Too much of one thing is never good. Alongside studying and working hard to score well, they must also have time for recreation, rest and get good sleep. This is important to ensure they can study well in the long term and not burn out. Here is a short video to help understand the importance of such a balance.

Finally, you must also let your child know that they are valued. It is important for them to work hard, but they won't be less loved if they score a little less. You must let your child know this.

Before moving ahead, here is a list of questions that will help you assess your role in your child's academics at present. Answer them with a "yes" or a "no".

Are you aware of the exams your child is/should be preparing for?

Have you talked to the teachers who teach your child this year?

Do you know which subjects are your child's weak and strong points?

QUIZ

1. What is the best way to overcome the fear of exams?

- a) Avoid studying and hope for the best
- b) Seek support from friends and family
- c) Ignore the fear and push through it

Answer: b) Seek support from friends and family

2. How can positive self-talk help with exam anxiety?

- a) By increasing self-doubt and negative thoughts
- b) By boosting confidence and reducing stress
- c) By distracting from the fear and anxiety

Answer: b) By boosting confidence and reducing stress

3. What is a helpful strategy for managing exam-related stress?

- a) Procrastinating and leaving studying until the last minute
- b) Taking breaks and practicing relaxation techniques
- c) Overloading on caffeine and energy drinks

BEHAVIOURS AND BARRIERS

What are the barriers to these desirable changes, and how can they overcome these barriers?

If you answered the above questions with a “yes”, it is likely that you are on the right path. You are aware and involved, and the above-listed strategies will be easy to implement. If not, then this remains a barrier to helping the child through this. Parents are often busy with work and household chores. Out of no fault of their own, they might not always be aware of upcoming tests and exams.

However, to help the child prepare in advance, it is important for the parent to be involved and aware of these things. This is temporary and only till when they develop a habit of regular studying. Just imagine a time during your childhood, when you were preparing for an examination and were extremely nervous. Would you have liked it if your mother or father sat next to you and encouraged you through it? Most people would say yes. It is thus natural that a child seeks support from their parents during such a time.

Parents must actively involve themselves with schoolwork and talk to teachers about their child’s performance when possible. They must also regularly ask their child about when their examinations are going to take place. This involvement will help parents keep track of when to help their child, how their performance has been and what areas they need more help in. It will also help them make a timetable for their child.

What does a successful outcome look like?

A successful outcome would involve a scenario where the child learns to study regularly. There is no fear of performing poorly or scoring low because they have left it for the last minute. Examinations would also not affect their lifestyle poorly as they wouldn’t skip meals or avoid resting to get some more time to study. Overall, their life will be better balanced.

They also develop a healthy attitude towards examinations and know that they are valued beyond their marks. Parents are involved in their educational journey and encourage their child to perform better without setting unreasonable expectations.

GAMES AND ACTIVITIES

COMMITMENT TO CHILD

This might seem like an ideal state; however, the above chapter will help you work towards it. Small changes in your approach toward parenting will amount to significant improvement in your child's development journey. Do use this opportunity to make a commitment to work toward such a day, and hence, we urge you to fill in this small letter as a reminder of that.

I, _____, parent of _____, would like to acknowledge I can play an important role in easing my child's experience during examinations. It is a stressful period for them and my encouragement and small contributions can help them face it more positively. I strive to learn from this chapter and incorporate changes that will help my child overcome their fear of examinations and perform well without feeling extreme stress.

(Signature)

USEFUL LINKS

Activity: Creative Open-ended Association

SEE sample PICTURES BELOW: Cut these pictures into small cards and make a picture cards-set. You can cut pictures from magazines or boxes and make your own picture cards-set.

The child and parent have to sit together (see example explanation below). This game is intended to reduce anxiety about some of the things (in or about school) that worry the child.

Let us say the child is afraid of exams. Then ask the child to write "EXAM."

However, the child is free to choose any single word, whatever the child is concerned about. The child writes the word on a piece of paper.

Then the parent and child see the pictures in a picture card set above.

From among the pictures, the parent draws one of the 8 game cards randomly, e.g., (Tunnel).

Now the parent asks the child to show the word she or he has written on paper.

The parent places the chosen picture card of TUNNEL next to the word EXAM written on a piece of paper.

Parent asks: What is similar between two things the chosen word and the photograph / picture?

The child has to explain how an EXAM is like a TUNNEL. There are no wrong answers and children must be encouraged to think openly. (EG: Both are dark and end in light; Both can be scary; Both are ways to reach our destination).

The family (parents and children) vote on the best ideas. The activity continues with the remaining seven cards. The best idea for each card wins a reward. Be creative and allow everyone to be creative.

Reward could be going with the child for a walk, playing their favorite game or cooking their favorite food on the weekend.

Most important – have a laugh – make the experience enjoyable and remove the anxiety or fear associated with the word. Remember joy is always created together.

CHAPTER 17: FEAR OF STAGE OR PUBLIC SPEAKING

KNOWLEDGE AND CAUSES

Adolescents in their school life face many situations where they are expected to perform on the stage or speak in front of a large audience. Some enjoy and face such situations confidently, while others experience discomfort and are nervous at such times. While the former is desirable, the latter is a more common experience. We all have been in such situations or at least witnessed them. No matter how well prepared we are, replicating that performance on stage ushers in palpitations, sweating and a fear that overpowers it all. Such a fear of public speaking or performing on stage is commonly known as stage fright.

Stage fright is an intense fear. It is the combined experience of fear of failure, fear of rejection and fear of ridicule all in one. Yet it is a common physiological reaction. As written simply earlier, when presented with the stimulus of being on stage, the child's body might perceive it as an exciting or fearful prospect. If it is perceived as fearful, the performance is viewed as a threat and a 'fight or flight' response is triggered as adrenaline is secreted in the body to cope with it. The secretion of this hormone brings in physical reactions—be it difficulty in breathing, sweaty palms, or a dry mouth; these reactions vary for each child.

To add to these physiological and physical responses, experiencing these on stage adds to the feeling of anxiety. Thoughts like, "Now people will know I am scared". "I hope no one can see that I am trembling", among others, cross their mind and add to the worry at that moment.

What are the consequences of the fear of public speaking in adolescents?

Occasional stage fright is common. However, if it persists, it has strong implications for physical and mental health and social well-being.

Firstly, fear of anything can produce anxiety and stress when the stressor is nearby. In this case, if there is an assignment where the student has to read out their essay in front of the entire class, the student might spend the week preceding it feeling extreme stress and nervousness. They might lose appetite and have difficulty sleeping. They might also over-exert themselves and put in lots of effort to try and ensure they perform well. Experiencing such anxiety and stress repeatedly and for longer duration can thus affect the child's physical health and reduce their immunity.

When looking at aspects of social well-being, having stage fright can also affect social interactions with peers and elders alike. They might refuse to go to family gathering where they would have to talk to relatives, or sit in the library during lunch breaks to avoid talking to other students. Such heightened fear can evolve a general social phobia which is disruptive to a healthy development journey. It can, thus, result in dysfunctional behaviours like refusing asking questions in class when in doubt or

excluding themselves from co-curricular activities to avoid having to talk in front of people. This will affect their daily interactions with people and can affect their performance at school as well.

As listed in the above case, stage fright can hamper skill development during these crucial years. Being able to engage with peers is an important skill that is required at every stage of life. They might also stop taking up opportunities that involve working in groups or presenting and performing in front of people despite being interested in it. If they start isolating and restricting themselves due to their fear, they will never develop this important skill.

Lastly, stage fright can also affect self-esteem and self-confidence. Minor errors on stage are common, but it might be a serious concern for someone with a fear of public speaking. If they do fumble, they will be affected to a severe extent, and it will trigger negative thoughts like, “I have committed a blunder despite having prepared so much; I am worthless.” Thoughts like these are detrimental to one’s self-esteem.

What are the causes for fear of stage or public speaking?

As stated earlier, stage fright is the culmination of three fears. The fear of failure, ridicule and rejection. Similarly, the cause of stage fright is also the culmination of three factors. These are personality, genes and learned behaviour or experience.

Personality traits that are common in those with stage fright are shyness, irrational worry, perfectionism and even low self-confidence and self-esteem. This might also be exacerbated by high expectations from parents and teachers or expectations that they set for themselves.

If we look at genetic composition, children born to parents with anxiety are likely to exhibit greater anxiety and have stage fright. They might see their parents respond to fearful stimuli like public speaking in an anxious manner and think that is the only way to cope with situations. Their parents and family members might also find multiple instances where they feel scared or anxious and share their experiences. For instance, they might fear examinations and public speaking and tell their children about it. Thus, even before the child is in a situation where they might feel this fear, they will expect it to be scary.

Lastly, the child might have had negative experiences that carry forward. It is true that once bitten, twice shy. Thus, having performed poorly once, they would fear being in such a situation again.

What are desirable changes that will help overcome the child’s fear of public speaking?

A tool by which the child can overcome stage fright can be summarized as the 3 P method:

What is the purpose of the speech or performance? If it is something that the child is already interested in or curious and passionate about, it will be easier for them to perform and share their thoughts with everyone else. Thus, if possible, let your child choose what they want to speak about, even if might be something that you wouldn’t choose for them.

What preparation have they done? Help the child prepare and plan it well in advance. Do it in small bits and pieces so that they don't find the process overwhelming. If a speech is to be delivered, first get started with writing out the speech. Then, reading it out with proper enunciation, memorizing, and so on.

Finally, practicing. It is important that the child feels well-prepared to go and perform well on stage. If they practice, they will feel more confident. Ask them to perform in front of you, and give them constructive feedback. Record their speech and show it to them. Let them see that they are performing well and that there is no need to fear the task.

Finally, help your child learn relaxation techniques that they can benefit from before going on stage or when feeling anxious. This can involve deep breathing or listening to calming music.

QUIZ

1. What is glossophobia?

- a) The fear of public speaking
- b) The fear of heights
- c) The fear of spiders

Answer: a) The fear of public speaking

2. What are some common symptoms of the fear of public speaking?

- a) Increased confidence and excitement
- b) Rapid heartbeat, sweating, and trembling
- c) Complete calmness and relaxation

Answer: b) Rapid heartbeat, sweating, and trembling

3. How can someone overcome the fear of public speaking?

- a) Avoiding public speaking situations altogether
- b) Practicing and preparing thoroughly
- c) Accepting that fear will always be present

Answer: b) Practicing and preparing thoroughly

BEHAVIOURS AND BARRIERS

What are the barriers to these desired changes, and how can adolescents overcome them?

It is natural for adolescents to start avoiding situations that they fear. If a child is afraid of public speaking, they might stop taking up opportunities where they would be required to do so. This will help them avoid the fearful situation but not overcome the fear. The “practice” is important for a singular task and to keep practising by encouraging the child to participate in public speaking. Encourage them and appreciate them when they do well.

What does a successful outcome look like?

A successful outcome would involve a scenario where the child feels confident in their ability to speak in front of a crowd and express and communicate their thoughts freely. This might seem like an ideal state; however, the above chapter will help you work towards it. Small changes in your approach toward parenting will amount to significant improvement in your child’s development journey. Do use this opportunity to commit to working toward such a day, and hence, we urge you to fill in this small letter as a reminder.

GAMES AND ACTIVITIES

COMMITMENT TO CHILD

I, _____, parent of _____, would like to acknowledge that I can help my child learn how to overcome stage fright and the fear of public speaking. I agree to utilize the tools of purpose, prepare and practice and encourage my child through the process. It is an important skill that everyone must possess and will help them improve their physical, mental and social well-being.

(Signature)

USEFUL LINKS

ACTIVITY: Three Poses

Aim:

Meditative and yogic poses serve the very important purpose of calming us down. When instances like fear of public speaking are known to cause severe stress and nervousness for many, it might help to learn some poses that help regulate our emotions better and be calm even in the face of stressful situations.

This is also a good way for the family to spend time together. It helps them work on their relations with each other while also releasing and reducing each one’s individual stress and fear.

Stand in front of a mirror and practise these poses.

1. Tree pose

The tree pose helps in building balance and core and that is essential for a public speaker’s posture and poise. It stretches out your body and makes you focus on maintaining that balance. After you master it, try to do it with your eyes closed

TO DO THE TREE POSE, WATCH THIS VIDEO

<https://youtu.be/uELr6MPi7pl?si=TXFedK-eBvPQdyq7>

2. Warrior pose

The warrior pose helps strength, and balance is the best way to defeat fear. It eliminates stress and tension by stretching your body and releasing stiff points. You immediately feel taller, more flexible, and can stand up straighter.

TO DO THE WARRIOR POSE, WATCH THIS VIDEO

<https://youtu.be/kkGY3xBnaGc?si=Q2k2BMtgwkxjncLY>

3. Boat pose

The boat pose releases tension and strengthens the spine. It requires you to maintain balance in your body. When you give active effort to gain balance, you end up balancing the irregularities of their emotions as well. This makes you feel reassured and safe.

TO DO THE BOAT POSE, WATCH THIS VIDEO

<https://youtu.be/2mST0NLgUjA?si=Xf5z8-UuyvEDA6R8>

CHAPTER 18: PEER PRESSURE

KNOWLEDGE AND CAUSES

Peer pressure can influence a child in various areas, be it their opinions, style, interests, activities, and even their overall behaviour. It entails any change in the adolescent that takes place just because their peers, that is, friends and those around them, are engaging in it or want them to engage in it. It can manifest in many ways like persuading friends to take part in risky activities, adhering to group standards, or altering one's viewpoints to match with their peers.

In these formative years of a child's life, friends start taking a prominent role, and many end up doing things that they wouldn't otherwise. While it can work in positive ways, the general connotations are negative. It is shown that affiliation with friends who engage in risky behaviours is a strong predictor of an adolescent's own behaviour. Thus, the social circle of a child is a key factor and can have a deep impact on their developmental experience. Peer pressure is inevitable. It is just important to channel it in the right ways.

This video addresses negative impacts of peer pressure and the nuance of cooperating with the wishes of a friend or acquaintance alongside learning to say no to friends when the consequences of an act can be injurious.

What are the consequences of peer pressure?

It can be of two consequences.

One is the negative influence of peer pressure. Many children do things to conform to the norm or to "fit in" with the crowd and their peers. They may end up taking wrong decisions that are harmful to them as a result. Bullying others or skipping school are common examples. Additionally, peer pressure and risk-taking have a strong relation, and it is well known that many cases of substance abuse have origins in friends encouraging them to drink alcohol or take drugs.

The other works in positive ways. They might see a friend regularly helping out at the animal rescue shelter nearby or keeping the environment clean and be motivated to do the same. Friends and others of your child's own age can have a positive influence by helping them make good decisions, especially when it comes to career or academics. This is beneficial because belonging to the same generation or age group can help with similarities in experiences and roadblocks. Many also find it more convincing when advice comes from someone who has had similar challenges in recent years and are more receptive and likely to trust them than their own parents or elders. A recent study shows that when one participates in an activity with fellow adolescents, they were more open to exploring and learning faster from both positive and negative outcomes. This helped them perform better than those who played in solitude. It, thus, acts as peer support rather than having a negative impact on their life.

What are the causes of peer pressure?

An adolescent's brain is only about 80 per cent developed. The prefrontal cortex in the brain is responsible for decision-making and impulse control. However, in adolescence, it still hasn't reached its completely developed state. This leaves them more likely to engage in risky behaviours because they do not fully understand the consequences of their actions.

The most common reason for children to give in to peer pressure is to avoid being made fun of and "fitting in" with their peers. This can basically be worded as a desire for social acceptance. This is further established by the general sense of insecurity and confusion related to identity that accompanies adolescence. In such times, adolescents generally turn toward their peers to look for validation and assurance of social acceptance, which can be a source of comfort that can help with their self-confidence at that moment. Children who have low self-esteem conform because they feel the need for acceptance and approval. This makes adolescents with low self-esteem or low self-confidence more vulnerable to peer pressure.

It could also result from some sort of curiosity to try out new things when they see their peers indulging in them. Your child might see a friend doing something and find it "cool" or interesting and be curious about it. In an attempt to understand it better, they might copy their friend and try it to understand what it is about.

QUIZ

1. What is peer pressure?

- a) The influence from friends or peers to conform to certain behaviors or beliefs
- b) The pressure to excel academically
- c) The fear of socializing with others

Answer: a) The influence from friends or peers to conform to certain behaviors or beliefs

2. What are some negative effects of peer pressure?

- a) Increased self-confidence and independence
- b) Engaging in risky behaviors or making poor choices
- c) Building strong friendships and trust

Answer: b) Engaging in risky behaviors or making poor choices

3. How can someone resist peer pressure?

- a) Always give in to avoid conflict
- b) Surround themselves with positive and supportive friends

c) Ignore their own values and beliefs to fit in

Answer: b) Surround themselves with positive and supportive friends

BEHAVIOURS AND BARRIERS

What are the desirable changes that can help the child avoid the negative impact of peer pressure?

When looking at avoiding the impact of peer pressure on a child, it is important to delineate between the negative and positive influences of peer pressure. Positive peer influence is desirable, and parents should encourage and support rather than restrict interaction with peers who display desirable behaviours that the child can learn from.

Parents can do a lot to help avoid negative influences on their children.

Before getting into the actions that can help the child or small activities that can bring about a better way of life for your child, let's take a small quiz. Please answer the questions below with a "yes" or "no".

Are you aware of who your child interacts with or who their friends are?

Have you cautioned your child against harmful activities like smoking and drinking?

Are your children receptive to your advice?

If your answer was "yes" for most of the above questions, it is likely that your child is on a relatively secure path to adulthood. On the other hand, if you have answered "no" for most of them, you can benefit from a slightly greater involvement in your child's life. In both cases, however, there are more ways to ensure that your child is less susceptible to negative peer influence.

Firstly, being an active part of their child's life, be it personal or academic or other, in non-intrusive ways may help build a level of rapport between them. Thus, when parents give advice to their children, they might be more receptive towards them than dismissive. Parents can caution their children against harmful influences, and when they learn or hear something from their peers and want to try it out, parents can help by providing insights into the consequences of such activities. It always helps to encourage open and honest communication and to let them know they can always talk to you.

Parents should also interact with their child's friends to some extent and get to know them. It always helps to be aware of those who might pressure children into engaging in harmful or irresponsible activities. This is also true for when they talk with people they meet online and with regard to their general social media usage.

The child must also learn to be assertive and say "no" when they feel like something is not right, or they are being coerced by their friends to take part in an activity against their complete wishes. In addition, building self-confidence and self-esteem helps them avoid trying to "fit in". Being generous with praise when warranted and letting them know that they are appreciated can foster high self-confidence and self-esteem and help children make decisions for themselves rather than be influenced by peers.

Parents must emphasise the importance of individuality and let their children know that it is okay to be different. They must know that they don't need to be like someone else just to gain social acceptance or be "popular" in school. Parents can help by building an environment where the child feels safe to express their true self and explore their individual tastes and interests. It also helps to avoid comparing the child with their peers.

What are the barriers to desired changes for addressing the problem?

A major barrier to the possible desired changes in the form of solutions that can help address the problem is the continued presence of the peers themselves. We all know it is difficult to say "no" and resist pressure when it comes from friends even if you wish to stand your ground. If the child continues to maintain the same friend or social circle that is perpetrating the negative influence even after they realise that it is harmful for them, the problem may only escalate. The child might even start getting angry or angsty toward their parent or elders who might try to discourage them from interacting with this friend circle.

How can we address these barriers?

We can address this problem by making the child aware of the importance of positive and meaningful relationships. The decision to continue or stop hanging around people who are harmful to them should be their own and not that of their parents. And for that to happen, they must know that it is essential that their friends lend to their life in helpful and not harmful ways.

What does a successful outcome look like?

In case the child develops apt self-confidence, a healthy social circle and overall resistance from peer pressure, they are on their way to develop and explore their own individuality. Parents can be assured that the child won't face any additional pressures from their friends to indulge in harmful activities or even substances. They will even benefit from positive peer influence and support and receive some relief from the anxieties of traversing the path to adulthood. The child will also trust and seek advice from you when needed, helping strengthen the parent child relation.

This might seem like an ideal state; however, the above chapter will help you work towards it. Small changes in your approach toward parenting will amount to significant improvement in your child's development journey. Do use this opportunity to make a commitment to work toward such a day, and hence, we urge you to fill in this small letter as a reminder of that.

I, _____, parent of _____, would like to acknowledge that shielding my child from negative peer pressure could pave the path for a healthier life for my child. I agree to support and encourage my child to help them resist peer pressure and build their own identity along the way.

(Signature)

GAMES AND ACTIVITIES

COMMITMENT TO CHILD

USEFUL LINKS

Peer Pressure / Adolescent Social Development

Game: Who's cool? Who's the fool?

Aim:

Parent and child to play with a set of cards. See below. You could print out the pages below and cut the cards to make a deck. Or parent and child can work together on one weekend to create their own set for the family games.

The cards are about people and characters we are all familiar with. Some of these characters are real persons; some could be characters from movies, TV serials or fictional. Some of the characters could be from sports or heroes from everyday life. For example, we have included sports persons such as Virat Kohli or Cristiano Ronaldo. All these people and characters have worked hard, taken care of their body and money, and tried to excel in their chosen activity. These are the COOL cards.

Children often are misled into believing that hard work is foolish and having fun is cool. The game is designed to reinforce that it is the hard work of these achievers that make them cool. Most times we see these people and characters after they have become successful. We see the fun they are having and not the hard work they have put in to reach where they are.

On the other hand, there are characters who bunk or cut classes, drink or smoke. They do not put in the required effort into any activity. They just want to go straight to what they foolishly think is cool. These are the FOOL cards. The fool does not realize that the road to fun and success goes through the land of effort and hard work.

The aim is to reinforce the notion in the mind of the child about the dangers of engaging in certain behaviors that are harmful to health, academics and overall wellbeing and the future.

By picking certain cards that are designated as “FOOL” or “COOL,” certain behaviors become ingrained in the child’s mind as undesirable.

The parent then initiates a discussion about how to resist peer pressure and be assertive. The child learns to tell any friend, who is asking the child to engage in harmful behaviors, that I am COOL and I am not a FOOL.

Rules of the game

1. Two players play the game. One of them is the cards dealer.
2. The ten-game cards are dealt equally between the two players.
3. The two players then open their cards one after the other.
4. First hand (not the dealer) throws a card down.

5. The dealer has to throw a card in response.
6. This round or trick belongs to the person who throws a card with a higher coolness score.
7. The players then continue
8. The player who wins three tricks wins the game.
9. The one who loses becomes the dealer.
10. At the end of the round, the parent initiates a discussion about peer pressure and how friends can be very helpful, are much needed, but at the same time negative peer pressure to engage in harmful activities has to be avoided. The parent discusses with the child about who is cool, how to be focused on their health and life goals, prioritize wellbeing. And how to win friends and influence people through positivity and a positive approach to life.

Note: Coolness score is mentioned on each card.

Images have been obtained from the following sources:

Cristiano Ronaldo

<https://wallpapers.com/images/high/cristiano-ronaldo-pictures-2plzjqdd9w5cah1.webp>

Virat Kohli

<https://im.rediff.com/cricket/2023/jan/17kohli1.jpg?w=670&h=900>

Jasprit Bumrah

https://c.ndtvimg.com/2024-06/dlsrhcqo_jasprit-bumrah-afp_625x300_21_June_24.jpg?im=FeatureCrop,algorithm=dnn,width=806,height=605

Smriti Mandhana

https://img.naidunia.com/naidunia/ndnimg/17072023/17_07_2023-smritimandhanabirthday.jpg

Neeraj Chopra

https://c.ndtvimg.com/2023-09/s82umckg_neeraj-chopra-afp_625x300_01_September_23.jpg?im=FeatureCrop,algorithm=dnn,width=806,height=605

Alia Bhatt

https://m.media-amazon.com/images/M/MV5BNzlmZW12YjAtOGQ3ZC00NTFjLTlkMzltYTRiOGFiNzFjOTdlXkEyXkFqcGdeQXVyMTQ3Mzk2MDg4._V1_.jpg

Geeta Phogat

<https://indianewengland.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Geeta-Phogat.jpg>

CHAPTER 19: PROCRASTINATION

KNOWLEDGE AND CAUSES

What is procrastination?

When we speak of time management, especially among adolescents, procrastination seems to be a major barrier to effective usage of time for daily tasks. It means unnecessarily delaying an activity that needs to be attended to despite knowing it needs to be completed, and there will be negative consequences if not done. Many parents equate it to being lazy or irresponsible and say that their child always leaves their work for the “last minute”.

What are its consequences?

Immediate consequences of procrastination include missing deadlines at school, poor quality of work and making errors because of the hurried manner in which work is completed. All this adds up to poor performance in school and complaints and disapproval from parents, teachers and other elders. They might be labelled as “lazy” or “unbothered”. So, it is evident that it can strain their personal relations as well by creating a poor image of them.

Also, it can affect their mental and physical health. When students delay their work and get used to always working at the end moment, it makes them more likely to be anxious and stressed—affecting their mental health. It might even affect their ability to complete their tasks and cause guilt in them for not having worked effectively and on time. Constant stress can also put a strain on the child, who might habitually work late into the night, miss out on sleep, or skip meals to complete their work in minimal time. This can affect their physical health by compromising their immunity.

In the long run, it can also affect a child’s life outcomes by affecting their ability to achieve their goals. A poor image of someone who doesn’t manage their time very well already limits their opportunities. Additionally, they themselves might put off working on important things that help them move toward their goal. As a result, such a habit can affect their career growth as well.

What are the causes of procrastination?

The reason behind procrastination can be the child or the activity or task that they are procrastinating.

In case the reason the child procrastinates is internal, that is behavioural, and then we can consider aspects like time management and an unrealistic estimation of time required for completing the task. They might think the task is easy and will not take up much time. However, that might not be true and by the time they realise that it might be too late to alter their plan.

The child can even anticipate criticism for their work or have low confidence and believe that their work would not be good enough. This can act as a barrier to getting started as it might cause anxiety and fear

about the quality of the final work when completed, thus affecting their motivation to work on it. They could also be striving for perfection and have high expectations for their work, and this pressure might further inhibit them from starting out.

If the task itself is the issue, it could be the difficulty level of the task itself, the amount of effort required for it, or even the number of things to be done to complete it. The child may get confused and flustered in trying to figure out where to start. A child may be instructed to clean their room that has been dirty and messy for days, but looking at the amount of work that it would take and the number of things they would have to attend to—like putting away their clothes, cleaning the floor, arranging their books, they might get confused about what should be done first. Lastly, the task itself might be intimidating, like getting a marksheet signed by a parent.

QUIZ

Now that we are aware of the patterns of thought that cause procrastination and barriers to achieving effective time management let us take a moment to reflect and evaluate how our own, that is a parent or teacher's involvement in a child's life can exacerbate the challenges or alleviate them. Take a look at the questions below,

Do you think you are actively engaged in the child's work, be it schoolwork or projects or even co-curricular activities?

Do you think you are aware of your child's long-term goals and aspirations? If yes, are you aware of what they are doing to achieve them?

Do you think you positively encourage your child to keep working hard and pushing through their difficulties when working instead of berating or admonishing them?

Do you think you set a good example for your child by completing your work and chores on time?

If the answer to most of these questions was "yes", then you are on the right track. However, if you answered "no", there are strategies that you can adopt to improve your child's time management skills and productivity. This chapter lists out many effective ways to do so and serves as a good way for you to understand the pathway to that desirable state.

BEHAVIOURS AND BARRIERS

What desirable changes can help the child overcome procrastination?

Rather than getting angry at the child and trying to get them to work on time through authoritative measures, it might be more helpful to motivate them or help them through the process. It is important to not impose rules on them and to act as friends who wish for their best. Before helping the child overcome procrastination, it is necessary to listen to their worries and understand the root cause of it.

If the child is intimidated by the task and is scared to get started with it, give them support and your company. Starting out is the most difficult part of the process. Create a checklist, help them break down

the task into small and simple parts with deadlines, or even reward or praise them when they finish a portion of the task. Such words or acts encourage them to keep going. Do not be harsh; be supportive. Providing them with motivation can work wonders. Additionally, it is important to make children realise that giving their best is more important than striving for perfection. Let them know that you appreciate their efforts and that trying is more important than the final outcome.

An effective tool here can be the process of chaining of tasks, that is breaking the larger work assigned into smaller and sequential steps and completing them one at a time.

It will also help to eliminate distractions and provide the right atmosphere for the child. It is easier for them to finish their homework or study if the television is not switched on, and so on.

It is important to be a helping hand rather than holding their hand through the process. Help them arrive at solutions on their own. Help them understand how the work may be beneficial for them and how doing it on time is achievable and is for their own good. This will help them break the habit of procrastination rather than just acting as a one-time solution for getting some work done.

Lastly, it is important to be a good role model. If the parent frequently delays paying their bills or attending to chores around the house, the child might believe it is good to take your own time to get to things. However, when deadlines come into the question, it is not the right path to take. When the child is doing their work, you can complete some leftover work as well. Give them company in sitting down and breaking the habit of procrastination by setting a good example for time management.

What are the barriers to desired changes for addressing the problem?

As said earlier, it is important to understand the reasons for procrastination to address it with effective solutions. Psychologists Jane Burka and Lenora Yuen report that for many students "understanding the hidden roots of procrastination often seems to weaken them". Just knowing our true reasons for procrastinating makes it easier to stop. To understand the reasons, it is important to positively communicate with the child and make them open to a conversation about their time management skills. Even the child's level of self-awareness and self-knowledge are crucial to building such insights.

There are three main roadblocks to action: overwhelm, fear of failure, and the fear of not finishing. These are causes for procrastination behaviour as well as roadblocks to overcoming procrastination.

How can we address these barriers?

Psychologist Neil Foire has coined the term "3-D Thinking" and can serve as a tool for overcoming procrastination. It's easy to get overwhelmed if you look at a task in its entirety and believe that it all needs to be done immediately. This tool requires an overview of the task in terms of its size, length and breadth so that you can plan the direction you will take and decide when and where you will start. What is important is to get started and take the first step. Taking things one at a time helps get through the task without getting overwhelmed.

It can even help for the child to avoid negative comments like “At this rate I’ll never finish”, or “I should have started earlier.” Again, getting started and working toward completion is important. Such “defeatist” statements add to fear of working on the task.

The most important role that parents can play is to keep their children motivated to complete their work, that is, starting off and not abandoning it mid-way.

A very effective way to do this is to help their child find productive reasons for completing the work on time. For example, if a child has to finish their homework by that night, it serves better to make them realise that completing their homework on time might help them understand what is taught in class the next day better, rather than telling them that they can watch a movie or go play with their friends after they are done. The latter reasons do get the work done, but they often evoke negative actions. The child may then want to complete the homework for the sake of it and not actually put thought into understanding or learning, defeating the purpose of being assigned homework.

To prevent their child from getting into the cycle of procrastination, the parent can be positively and actively engaged in their child’s work. Seeing this, the child may put in more effort so that their parents appreciate and encouragement from their parents might help achieve that.

What does a successful outcome look like?

A successful outcome would entail a situation where the child is ahead of all their work and not intimidated by it. Stress and fear related to assignments and exams weaken, and confidence in the child’s own abilities increases. It involves being on time when it comes to deadlines, but apart from that, it also includes an active and balanced life outside of such formal commitments.

Imagine a scenario where the child has completed their designated tasks and work on time and has ample time left to spend with their family and friends or to engage in activities that they are interested in and have wanted to pursue. The child comes home from school, takes some rest and gets down to work on what is to be completed before school the next day. They also take some time to revise and better understand what was taught in school that day. This takes up a few hours, but then they are left with the rest of the evening to utilise as they wish. They might read a book that they like, go play with their friends or even attend hobby classes. They come back at night and while having their meal with the family, with all the work done for the day, have a pleasant conversation about the happenings of the day. When having such conversations, the parent can also calmly learn about the child’s progress at school and new interests that they might have developed.

This video shows such a scenario and ways in which parents can facilitate reaching such a balanced life.

All in all, it paints a picture of a serene, well-planned and stress-free environment. This might sound like an ideal state, but it is surely achievable given small efforts to change for the better on the part of the parent and the child.

GAMES AND ACTIVITIES

COMMITMENT TO CHILD

In pursuit of such a scenario, we urge you to benefit from the learnings in this chapter. In summary, be patient with your child, understand the problems they are facing with their work and motivate them through it. Do use this opportunity to make a commitment to work toward such a day, and hence, we urge you to fill in this small letter as a reminder of that.

I, _____, parent of _____, would like to acknowledge that overcoming procrastination could pave the path for a more balanced life for both, me and my child. I agree to support and encourage my child in all capacities and be a helping hand for them. I wish to bring a positive change in their work and hence in their life as well.

(Signature)

USEFUL LINKS

CHAPTER 20: SHARING AMONG SIBLINGS

KNOWLEDGE AND CAUSES

Sharing has always been a basis for extending a hand in friendship. Be it giving a new classmate a chocolate or lending them a pencil, sharing is essential when it comes to social interactions. It is even more important when even their living space is shared as in the case of siblings. Coming to the more technical definition of it, sharing is an active prosocial behavior that involves voluntary behavior intended to benefit others. It helps strengthen future ties between individuals and is important for the formation and continuation of relationships, be it with siblings or with friends.

During early years, the child may be unwilling to share with their siblings and be more possessive of their belongings. However, this might cause problems for them within the family as well as at other social spaces like schools and playgrounds with their peers.

What are the consequences of unwillingness to share with one's siblings?

Firstly, siblings already often enter into rivalrous relationships with each other because they feel like they are in a situation where they have to compete for their parents' attention or time. When it comes to more material things, these problems might couple with the existing competition. One might not share their food with their sibling, and be unwilling to lend their clothes or belongings. If the parent doesn't intervene in such a situation, the sibling might feel like the parent prefers the other again — adding to the rivalry.

Secondly, sibling relationships affect mental health and well-being well into adulthood. A relationship that is strained during early ages is likely to have a negative impact on the child's mental health. On the other hand, warm sibling relationships can act as a source of material and emotional support. It can instill a sense of security and protect them against loneliness and depression.

Additionally, older siblings often act as role models for the younger ones. If the older one is unwilling to share, their younger sibling will learn from such behaviour and have a similar attitude towards sharing.

Lastly, when children are unwilling to share, it might put the parents under financial duress. They would need to supply and provide multiple of each thing that is brought for one of them given that there's no scope for sharing between them. It might not be feasible for the parent to afford it all the time. This is also true when it comes to sharing space. Siblings might be averse to sharing a room, and this is not always easy to arrange and assure for the parent.

What are the causes for siblings not wanting to share?

Some of the consequences listed above serve as causes as well. It could be the fact that the older sibling, or even a parent, never shared their belongings and thus the younger one is averse to it as well. It could also be a consequence of general sibling rivalry that seeps into sharing behaviour as well.

Additionally, if the parents are used to over-indulging the children by providing them with whatever they want without any hesitation, the child will begin to think that he will get whatever they want only for themselves. They would never find the need to share anything and, hence, never learn to do so.

Another reason could be a sense of possession over their things. Studies have found that adolescents have a well-developed understanding of a sense of ownership over things. Thus, children often have difficulty sharing because it typically involves a sacrifice of something that they see as their own.

Lastly, an important reason could be the lack of trust between the siblings. This could be due to multiple reasons or earlier events. It might be that one of them had shared something in confidence with the other person and hoped that it would remain a secret and just between them. But once they broke their trust here, they might have become averse to sharing in other senses as well, that is, both material and emotional things.

QUIZ

1. Why might someone not want to share with their siblings?

- a) They are selfish and don't like to share at all
- b) They want to keep their belongings to themselves
- c) They enjoy sharing everything with their siblings

Answer: b) They want to keep their belongings to themselves

2. What can be a reason for not wanting to share personal information with siblings?

- a) Siblings might use the information against them
- b) Siblings are always trustworthy and supportive
- c) Sharing personal information strengthens sibling bonds

Answer: a) Siblings might use the information against them

3. What is a possible solution for handling the desire to not share with siblings?

- a) Avoiding all interactions with siblings
- b) Setting clear boundaries and communicating openly
- c) Sharing everything with siblings to maintain harmony

Answer: b) Setting clear boundaries and communicating openly

BEHAVIOURS AND BARRIERS

What are the desirable changes that can help the child avoid the negative impact of sibling rivalry?

Till now, we have had a look at the underlying causes of why siblings would not want to share. Here's a small quiz that will help you understand if your children are open to sharing their belongings or are possessive of them. Answer the following in yes or no:

If one child borrows a shirt from the other, is that a potential ground for a quarrel to begin?

When you find something that one of your children would like, do you feel the compulsion to get something for your other child or children as well?

If the answers are "yes", then it is clear that your children do not hold a positive outlook toward sharing. Before we move ahead to describe how to foster a more positive outlook towards it, take a second to evaluate your own stance on sharing.

Are you open to letting someone else borrow your things?

If a neighbour comes over to borrow a cup of sugar, are you happy to help or reluctantly give in?

If your answers point towards a reluctance to share in you as well, that provides us with a good starting point towards developing sharing behaviour. As we have seen so far, children learn from and emulate their parents in many ways. This in fact, forms the first out of three important things one must follow to inculcate the habit of sharing. Let's take a look at these three dos.

First, point out good sharing in others. While it is not ideal to compare children, appreciate one if they practice a desirable behaviour. This may encourage the child who seeks appreciation. Thus, in the reward-punishment paradigm, the appeal of a reward in the form of a compliment might act as a greater motivation than the disdain for a punishment.

Second, practice sharing at home. As said before, parents can set a good example by practising sharing and speaking about the importance of sharing.

Third, make sharing fun when teaching children, the importance of sharing. It should not appear as a task or obligation that one has to share. If it is so, the act will soon become burdensome. It must be a positive experience, and making sharing fun is thus important. For example, if you are getting ice cream from your children, get two flavours that they both like. Let them know that the only way that they can get some of both flavours is by sharing their flavour with their sibling.

What are the barriers to such desirable changes?

Many times, we are conditioned to react in certain ways when we see our child not behaving in a certain way or complying with good practices that bring about ideal behaviours like sharing. But it is important to realise that how we deal with it is important in altering the course of nature.

It might be instinctive for us to yell at them because we perceive it as “wrong”. In response to this, we might yell at the child and take away the item they are unwilling to share. We may also end up forcing the child to share their things, which will only build resentment and make them feel less loved than the other sibling, adding to the sibling rivalry. Thus, our reactions mould further behaviour. If reprimanded, the child will develop animosity; if encouraged and positively directed, the child will develop generosity.

GAMES AND ACTIVITIES

COMMITMENT TO CHILD

This might seem like an ideal state; however, the above chapter will help you work towards it. Small changes in your approach toward parenting will amount to significant improvement in your child’s development journey. Do use this opportunity to make a commitment to work toward such a day, and hence, we urge you to fill in this small letter as a reminder of that.

I, _____, parent of _____, would like to acknowledge that building a healthier outlook towards sharing would ease the life of my children. It is a habit that can be cultivated and helping my children achieve that state is my responsibility. I strive to make small changes in my parenting style to ease my child’s experience through adolescence.

(Signature)

USEFUL LINKS

Activity: Secret Santa

Aim:

Siblings are generally very possessive about the things they own and do not want to share their belongings. But the more, the merrier! Through sharing, you not only get a part in what your sibling shares but also get the joy of seeing them happy with what you gift them.

Rules of the activity:

1. On a specific day, each sibling packs a gift for another sibling.
2. The gift is something that the other sibling likes. The identity of the gift giver is a secret.
3. The sibling who receives the gift can keep it for a day or a week.
4. The gift is returned to the owner at the end of the week (unless it is a consumable, e.g., cake).
5. There can be some variations of this as well:

The sibling can permanently keep the gift.

The names of the gift giver and receiver can be drawn by lottery.

Parents can also be part of the game.

CHAPTER 21: SIBLING RIVALRY AND FIGHTS

KNOWLEDGE AND CAUSES

The term 'sibling rivalry' was coined by child psychologist David Levy. He concluded that regardless of age, birth order or culture, sibling rivalry is a typical and common feature of family life. Jeanine Vivona as well stated that competition with siblings is just a fact of life and what parents can do is just try and manage them better.

Children want to be seen as the most special by their parents, so they're always going to push for preferential treatment over their siblings. This is especially true during their formative years when their social circle is rather limited to the confines of their household. Eventually and gradually this changes. Additionally, this can be matched to research that suggests conflict does seem to peak during early adolescent years and then decrease to level off after that.

What are the consequences of sibling rivalry?

Growing up in the same house with strained and rivalrous relationships, like here, with one's sibling, is likely to have strong implications for the growth of the adolescent. The constant exposure to such an environment that has competition embedded in it can strain interpersonal as well intrapersonal relationships as well. If left uncontrolled, sibling rivalry can have negative effects throughout childhood which can also manifest in adult life.

When siblings fight regularly, the immediate effect is a strain in their relationship. This constant conflict can also affect a child's self-esteem as he or she may feel unloved or undervalued as compared to the other child. They might constantly question why their sibling gets more love than they do, or if they have done something wrong to deserve this unfair share? This can affect their motivation and lead to underachievement, especially at school.

Further, this rivalry can often take aggressive turns, be it verbal or physical, often posing one of the siblings as the bully. A study on family dynamics linked sibling bullying to a lower sense of competence, life satisfaction, and self-esteem in young adults. Being bullied by a sibling doubled the risk of depression and self-harm in early adulthood.

On the contrary, research has shown that some mild forms of sibling rivalry with parents guiding them through it can help children learn lessons in interpersonal communication and also increase their maturity. It helps the child gain resilience when it comes to putting in effort in building relations and especially foster strong and healthy social skills.

Finally, with constant fights, parents are bound to feel the stress. In severe cases, this tension could also strain their relationship. Parents might feel like they haven't done a good job in raising their kids who

can't maintain peace and relations within the house itself, thus, here as well, affecting their self-esteem and belief in competency.

What are the causes of sibling rivalry?

The most basic and prevalent theory for the reason underlying sibling rivalry is the need for a parent's attention and having to compete for it. Charles Darwin postulated that as humans we are biologically driven to compete for parental attention. In line with this well-known theory, child psychologist John Bowlby has proven that children who are insecurely attached to their mothers have higher rates of sibling conflict in their preschool years.

But beyond this as well, a major factor is parental favoritism. A parent might prefer one child over the other because of shared interests or personalities, or any other reason. This often has gendered implications as well as India, among other South Asian countries is well recognized for its son-preference. The sister might see her brother constantly get more attention, and more superior things than herself. He might always get the better and fresher food, or it might be his favorite dishes that are always cooked. He might be allowed to rest or use the phone for longer than her. These displays of favoritism add salt to the wound and can easily build resentment among siblings and even lower their self-worth.

And as always, familial relationships and environment inside the household is a big factor. Parents are role models for children, thus, if the parents constantly fight or argue among themselves, it is easy for their children to pick up such aggressive communication styles as well.

QUIZ

1. What is sibling rivalry?

- a) A deep bond and strong friendship between siblings
- b) The competition and conflict that can occur between siblings
- c) A term used to describe the love and support siblings have for each other

Answer: b) The competition and conflict that can occur between siblings

2. What are some common causes of sibling rivalry?

- a) Having similar interests and hobbies
- b) Differences in personalities and temperaments
- c) Always agreeing on everything

Answer: b) Differences in personalities and temperaments

3. How can siblings resolve their conflicts?

- a) Ignoring the issues and pretending everything is fine

- b) Communicating openly and listening to each other's perspectives
- c) Engaging in physical fights to release tension

Answer: b) Communicating openly and listening to each other's perspective

BEHAVIOURS AND BARRIERS

What are the desirable changes that can help the child avoid the negative impact of sibling rivalry?

A good way to avoid increasing rivalry between your children is to follow some ground rules when interacting with them. Don't practice favouritism between your children and avoid comparing them to each other. Do not say, "why don't you try and be good at sports like your sister?" Each child has their individual interests and talents and is unique in their own way, comparing them with their sibling will only make them feel inadequate and affect their self-image.

Secondly, avoid being the referee when your children fight. Encourage them to talk and arrive at a solution that is acceptable to both. Be the facilitator — things need to be communicated between the two rather than suppressed. This will help them develop problem-solving skills as well as how to communicate their issues in a systematic and calm way. Also, set down rules against physical and verbal aggression.

Help them develop common interests so that they can share good experiences together as well. Parents can also be involved in the activity so that the family can bond together. This is likely to reduce conflicts and also make it easier to resolve conflicts when they do occur.

Lastly, parents should spend some time with each child of theirs alone. One-on-one time is important to understand perspectives of both children. This will build an understanding and will also avoid any competition for attention.

What are the barriers to desired changes for addressing the problem?

Some already established family dynamics will regardless affect the parent's relationship with each child separately. For instance, if there's a significant age gap between the children, the responsibilities and privileges of both will undoubtedly differ. The older one might have more privileges like going to meet friends outside the house or for longer. They might also have more responsibilities like helping get groceries and taking up some chores around the house. In such a situation the younger one might feel like the older sibling has it easier and gets more freedom, while the older one might feel like the younger one isn't given much work around the house and hence is loved more.

How can we address these barriers?

In such cases, the children might think such a situation is unfair. However, you need to make them understand that being fair is not the same as being equal and that once they grow older, their responsibilities and privileges would be the same. It is a matter of safety rather than favouritism.

What does a successful outcome look like?

A successful outcome would involve a scenario where the siblings get along and there's no unnecessary and constant conflict for the parent's attention. It will help build communication within the family and outside the household as well, leading to all-round growth

GAMES AND ACTIVITIES

COMMITMENT TO CHILD

This might seem like an ideal state; however, the above chapter will help you work towards it. Small changes in your approach toward parenting will amount to significant improvement in your child's development journey. Do use this opportunity to make a commitment to work toward such a day, and hence, we urge you to fill in this small letter as a reminder of that.

I, _____, parent of _____, would like to acknowledge that shielding my children from sibling rivalry could pave the path for a healthier life for my child as well as the family. I strive to make small changes in my parenting style to ease my child's experience through adolescence.

(Signature)

USEFUL LINKS

Activity: Treat of the Month

Aim:

This activity addresses two aspects of the family environment. First, giving the family a clear activity and time that they spend together and look forward to helps build a quality relationship between the members. Second, siblings can learn how to take turns and share their joys without any jealousy.

Instructions:

1. Each member of the family identifies two food items they like, e.g., ICECREAM, FRENCH FRIES.
2. Write down the names of the food items on slips and place the folded slips in a bowl.
3. Every month, one slip is drawn by lottery. That is the treat of the month for the family.

CHAPTER 22: TEMPER TANTRUMS

KNOWLEDGE AND CAUSES

Temper tantrums are extreme events that help the child let out their feelings. To elaborate on this, they are generally episodes that are brief but consist of intense and heightened unpleasant behaviours. They may scream, yell, cry incessantly, stomp and slam doors and such reactions or responses are generally disproportionate to the situations causing it. These are ways for younger children to express their anger, frustration or disappointment before doing it in ways that we may consider socially acceptable.

These temper tantrums are normal in adolescence when children are going through adolescent years and the changes accompanying them. However, if they become frequent and disruptive, they can cause harm in the child's crucial developmental years and need urgent redressal. Further, general moodiness can be a normal part of the adolescent years, but severe mood swings and outbursts, at times escalating to physical aggression, are undesirable. Literature often refers to these events as "rages."

What are the consequences of temper tantrums?

The consequences of temper tantrums can be in two parts. First being personal, that is affecting the child's behaviour, and second, relational, that is straining communication and the relationship between the parent and the child.

With regard to increased behavioural issues, the child may become aggressive and rebellious as they grow older. This accompanies increased disobedience and adjustment issues of the child. This can happen especially if the parents give in to the child's tantrums.

If we look at the parent-child relationship, it can strain communication by making it difficult to sort out issues and troubles through calm and empathetic talks or conversations, resorting to tantrums and fights to solve any problem. Further, the parent can experience frustration and question their abilities and role in bringing up their child. They may believe that they are at fault here and doubt their competency. They might even get embarrassed if such tantrums are consistently thrown in public or in front of people who would judge such behaviour and think that they are not good enough as parents. Finally, these things add up and affect the parent's own communication abilities with the child. They might get frustrated and lose their calm when talking to their child through a tantrum, giving way to negative forms of communication and physical and verbal aggression.

Such a response on the part of the parent might encourage the child, who often looks up to the parent as a role model, to further tantrums as a way of getting their way. It affects the overall peace of the household and strains relationships in a cyclical way.

What are the causes for temper tantrums?

Temper tantrums begin as early as at 18 months of age and can continue for as long as possible, based on how parents respond and how the situation is handled. The initial cause however remains that development at the age of 18 months pushes the child to seek independence from their parent, and often unable to express this desire, while simultaneously wishing for care and attention from the parent, the feelings are expressed in the form of agitation and tantrums.

For instance, a toddler might want to play with food or utensils kept in the kitchen as it is natural for them to want to explore their environment and discover new things using their sensorial capacities. However, parents might warn their child against this because it might be unsafe for them to do so. In such a conflicting situation, the toddler can neither explain why they would want to play so, nor understand why the parent is concerned and wants them to play in a more safe and secure environment. Tantrums are a natural consequence. They soon discover that fits of stubbornness and crying or other tantrums are an effective way to get what they want or avoid what they do not want in the short term. As soon as the ability to communicate, especially verbally, and understand such reasoning develops, using tantrums as a mechanism in such situations decreases.

Another largely prevalent reason for throwing tantrums can be linked to environmental factors. Being exposed to stressors like violence or fights related to marital problems at home, or even financial distress, among others can result in tantrums, especially if the child feels neglected and wishes to seek some attention from their parents. Apart from these, general stress and frustration linked to friendships, school, health and others can add to risk factors for temper tantrums.

QUIZ

1. What is a temper tantrum?

- a) A way for children to express their emotions calmly and peacefully
- b) A sudden outburst of anger or frustration, often accompanied by crying or screaming
- c) A strategy for effective communication between parents and children

Answer: b) A sudden outburst of anger or frustration, often accompanied by crying or screaming

2. What are some common triggers for temper tantrums?

- a) Getting enough sleep and eating nutritious meals
- b) Having clear and consistent rules and boundaries
- c) Feeling tired, hungry, or overwhelmed

Answer: c) Feeling tired, hungry, or overwhelmed

3. How can parents handle temper tantrums?

- a) Giving in to all of the child's demands to avoid conflict

- b) Ignoring the tantrum and hoping it will go away on its own
- c) Remaining calm, offering comfort, and setting limits

Answer: c) Remaining calm, offering comfort, and setting limits

BEHAVIOURS AND BARRIERS

What are the desired changes or behaviours to be adopted to ensure the problem is addressed or solved?

Temper tantrums are largely typical in each child's developmental journey. Hence, addressing them involves learning how to manage temper tantrums properly and giving the child reassurance to minimise the stress the child experiences. The acronym R.I.D.D. can help parents handle a typical tantrum.

First, R stands for "remain calm". Firmly state in a neutral tone "do not yell" or "do not shout". A quiet approach can help the child redirect their way of expressing their angst and distract them.

Second, I stands for "ignore the tantrum". If the child persists with the tantrum, it can help to ignore them and continue with your chores. The child will calm down after a while when they realise that such tantrums will not draw attention. When tantrums occur in a safe environment like inside one's home, it is okay shift your attention away from the child for a while.

Third, D stands for "distract the child". Again, for the same reasons, the parent might want to redirect attention to some other task, like taking them outside for a walk or changing the topic.

Last, do say "yes" when it comes to the child's physical and safety needs, but don't give in to unreasonable demands otherwise. This will help to avoid reinforcing such undesirable behaviours.

What are the barriers to the desired changes or desired behaviour change for addressing the problem?

The above-mentioned strategies can help the parent manage temper tantrums and thus establish a more desirable way of communication with the child. However, if such ways are not followed, temper tantrums persist and it can be hard for the parent-child relationship, straining emotions between them. It might be especially difficult for a parent to see their child crying and shouting out, or holding their breath for a long period of time. In such difficult situations, they might end up giving into the child's demands, however, this only encourages the child to use tantrums as a way of getting their way, and in the long run leaves them with this as the only option for resolving fights. It deters the possibility of having healthy and meaningful conversations to resolve conflicts.

Thus, it is important for the parent to take a stand, and realise that ignoring the child, unless under extraneous circumstances, is the best for the child. Following the small steps listen in the R.I.D.D. tool helps in immediate response to the tantrum as well as in the child's long-term development.

Further, avoid using punishments for the child. Punishments can add to the level of frustration and anger, and hurt the child's emotions, avoid giving punishments along with verbally or physically

admonishing the child. Instead, using positive reinforcement and providing reassurance to the child, or even ignoring them can bring more fruitful results.

What can parents do to ensure the problem is reduced or solved and what can you do to prevent the problem from occurring in first place?

When we look at more specific ways to avoid using temper tantrums as a way of communication, the acronym C.A.L.M. helps to remember certain ways and skills that may help:

First, communicate well. Remain calm and avoid yelling and arguing in front of the child. Remember that the child looks at you as a role model, what you do has deep implications for what they think is the ideal way to communicate. Ask the child about their feelings and encourage them to use words rather than actions to express them. This will help your child find other ways to express their emotions other than yelling or hitting, shifting away from physically or verbally aggressive behaviours.

Second, attend to the child's needs and give the child positive attention, like reading to them, or singing a song that they like and might sing along to. This also helps distract the child from what is upsetting them.

Third, let the child share their feelings and listen to them. The relationship between a parent and their child must act as a safe space to express feelings or things that are considered as "personal". Avoid saying "no" too often to their requests, and offer alternatives to the child's demands rather than outright refusal. Finally, agree with the child if their request is reasonable and not jeopardizing anyone else's or their own safety. For example, if they want to wear a certain favourite shirt of theirs, let them.

Make the child accustomed to a daily routine that gives them enough time for rest and has proper mealtimes. Hunger, tiredness and sleepiness can agitate and bring more stress to the child and leave them vulnerable to more tantrums.

What does a successful outcome look like?

A successful outcome mainly entails infrequent outbursts and tantrums and a healthy form of communication of needs and feelings between the parent and the child. When your child wants something, they will come to you and clearly state their wishes rather than demanding it be presented to them. It is a reciprocal relationship, both, the child and the parent will maintain non-aggressive ways of communicating and be respectful of wishes and needs of the other. The environment is less disruptive and stress-free fostering a home where the parent and the child can evolve a stronger relationship together.

GAMES AND ACTIVITIES

COMMITMENT TO CHILD

However, to work toward such a state, the strategies mentioned need to be followed. It is a successful outcome that needs to be worked toward. In pursuit of such a scenario, we urge you to benefit from the learnings in this chapter. In summary, be stern with your expectations but not aggressive, and the

child will follow. Do use this opportunity to make a commitment to work toward such a day, and hence, we urge you to fill in this small letter as a reminder of that.

I, _____, parent of _____, would like to acknowledge that managing temper tantrums and establishing more healthy forms of communication could pave the path for a better life for both, me and my child. I agree to support my child in all capacities and help them learn positive ways for expressing their emotions and feelings. I wish to bring a positive change in their life and will work towards that.

(Signature)

USEFUL LINKS

CHAPTER 23: ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF ADOLESCENT CHILD IN SCHOOL

KNOWLEDGE AND CAUSES

When it comes to your child's school journey, understanding how they're doing in their studies is super important. Your role as parents really matters in helping them grow, not just in school but also in how they feel about themselves and others. This chapter is here to help you see all the different parts of how your child is doing in school. We want to share some helpful ideas and ways for you to be a big part of your child's learning adventure.

Academic performance extends beyond mere grades; it encapsulates a spectrum of experiences encompassing classroom participation, study habits, and social interactions. Each facet contributes uniquely to the rich mosaic of a child's learning experience. Our exploration will delve into the nuances of grading systems, shedding light on the intricacies that define your child's scholastic achievements. Beyond the confines of lettered assessments, we'll explore the significance of active engagement in class discussions and collaborative activities, recognizing the symbiotic relationship between academic and social skills development.

Navigating the world of homework completion and study habits, we will unravel the threads that weave into effective time management and personalised learning strategies. Your child's consistency in completing assignments serves as a window into their dedication and organisational skills. Understanding the intricacies of their study habits, the time devoted to learning, and the effectiveness of study techniques will enable us to tailor approaches that resonate with their unique learning style and the demands of the academic curriculum. As we embark on this exploration together, let us embrace the shared responsibility of cultivating an environment where your adolescent child not only excels academically but also blossoms into a well-rounded and resilient individual prepared for the challenges and triumphs that lie ahead.

Parents, there are several things that can affect how well your teenager does in school. Understanding these things can help you support them better. Here are some important factors:

1. **How They Like to Learn:** Every kid has their own way of learning. Some like pictures, some like doing things with their hands. Knowing how your child learns best can really help them do well in school.
2. **Being Healthy and Happy:** If your child is not feeling well, either physically or mentally, it can make it hard for them to do their best in school. Good sleep, a healthy lifestyle, and positive mental health all play a big role.
3. **Friends and Social Stuff:** Friends can be a big deal. Having good friends can make school more enjoyable, but if there are problems with friends, it can make things tough.

4. Home Life: What's happening at home matters a lot. If home is a stable and supportive place, it can help your child focus on their studies.

5. You Being Involved: How much you get involved in your child's school life really matters. Talking to their teachers, being part of school activities, and creating a good home environment all help.

6. Teacher Relationship: How your child gets along with their teachers is important. If they feel supported and liked by their teachers, it can make a big difference.

7. Good Study Habits: Knowing how to study and manage time is key. Kids who struggle with these things might find it hard to keep up with their schoolwork.

8. Having Goals: It's good for your child to have goals. Knowing what they want to achieve can motivate them to do well in school.

9. Culture and Money Stuff: Where your family is from and how much money you have can affect school. Understanding these factors is important.

10. Dealing with Technology: Too much time on phones or computers for non-school stuff can be distracting. It's important to find a balance.

Understanding these factors and talking with your child about their school experience can help you provide the support they need. Being aware of changes in their behaviour or feelings about school can help you catch and solve problems early on.

When adolescents struggle with time management, it can have several consequences that impact various aspects of their lives. Here are some common outcomes.

1. Trouble with Schoolwork: If a teenager struggles to manage their time, it can make school work hard. They might miss deadlines, not finish assignments, and not do well in exams. This can lead to feeling stressed about school.

2. Feeling More Stressed: Not managing time well can make teenagers feel more stressed and anxious. Having lots of work to do and not enough time to do it can be overwhelming.

3. Delaying Tasks: When time management is a problem, teenagers might delay doing things until the last minute. This is called procrastination and can create a cycle of stress because they end up rushing to finish things.

4. Health Issues: Bad time management can lead to not enough sleep, not eating well, and not exercising. This can make teenagers unhealthy and affect how they feel.

5. Problems with Friends and Family: If time isn't managed well, teenagers might not spend enough time with friends and family. This can make relationships hard and make them feel lonely.

6. Not Doing Hobbies: When time is a problem, teenagers might not have time for hobbies or things they like to do. This can stop them from learning new things and having fun.

7. **Feeling Not Good Enough:** If teenagers always struggle with time, they might start feeling like they're not good enough. This can make them less confident and not feel good about themselves.

8. **Problems in the Future:** If time isn't managed well when teenagers are young, it can make things hard when they're grown-ups. Learning how to manage time is really important for doing well in lots of different parts of life.

9. **Missing Chances:** Not managing time well can mean missing out on good chances. This could be getting a scholarship, going to events, or reaching personal goals.

10. **Doing Things to Cope:** Some teenagers might start doing things that aren't good for them to cope with the problems from not managing time well. This can make things even harder for them.

If you notice these signs in a teenager, it's important to help them learn better ways to manage their time. This can include teaching them how to plan, set goals, and handle stress.

Parents can play a crucial role in helping adolescents develop effective study habits and time management skills. Here are some key strategies to communicate to parents:

1. **Establish a Consistent Routine:** Encourage adolescents to establish a consistent study routine. Having a regular time each day dedicated to homework and studying helps create a structured and predictable environment.

2. **Create a Designated Study Space:** Designate a quiet and organised study space. A well-lit and comfortable area free from distractions can enhance concentration and focus during study sessions.

3. **Break Down Tasks:** Teach adolescents to break down large tasks into smaller, more manageable parts. This approach helps reduce feelings of overwhelm and makes it easier to approach assignments systematically.

4. **Set Realistic Goals:** Help them set realistic and achievable goals. This can involve breaking down long-term projects into smaller milestones or setting specific objectives for each study session.

5. **Use Active Learning Techniques:** Encourage the use of active learning techniques. This can include summarising information in their own words, creating flashcards, or teaching the material to someone else. These methods enhance understanding and retention.

6. **Take Regular Breaks:** Promote the importance of taking regular breaks. Short breaks during study sessions can help prevent burnout and maintain focus. Encourage adolescents to engage in activities they enjoy during breaks.

7. **Utilise Technology Wisely:** Teach responsible use of technology for studying. While technology can be a valuable tool, it's important to minimise distractions. Suggest using apps or tools that aid in organisation and time management.

Time Management:

1. **Prioritise Tasks:** Guide adolescents in prioritising tasks. Help them distinguish between urgent and important assignments. Learning to prioritise ensures that critical tasks are addressed first.
2. **Create a Schedule:** Assist in creating a weekly or monthly schedule. Include not only study sessions but also extracurricular activities, chores, and downtime. A visual schedule helps adolescents manage their time effectively.
3. **Set Realistic Timeframes:** Encourage realistic time estimates for tasks. Adolescents often underestimate the time required for assignments. Learning to accurately gauge time helps prevent last-minute rushes.
4. **Avoid Procrastination:** Discuss the dangers of procrastination. Help them understand the negative impact of delaying tasks and explore strategies to overcome procrastination, such as setting deadlines for themselves.
5. **Learn to Say No:** Teach the importance of setting boundaries. Adolescents often have multiple commitments, and it's crucial for them to learn when to say no to additional tasks or activities to maintain a manageable workload.
6. **Reflect and Adjust:** Encourage self-reflection. Periodically, ask adolescents to reflect on their study habits and time management. If certain strategies aren't working, help them adjust their approach.
7. **Seek Help When Needed:** Reinforce the idea that it's okay to seek help. If adolescents find themselves overwhelmed, encourage them to communicate with teachers, classmates, or family members for support.

By fostering these study habits and time management skills, parents empower adolescents to take control of their learning and develop essential life skills that extend beyond the academic realm. Consistent guidance and open communication play key roles in this process.

Learning styles refer to the various ways individuals prefer to take in and process information. People have different approaches to learning, and recognizing these styles can significantly impact academic success. The three primary learning styles are visual, auditory, and kinesthetic. Visual learners grasp information best through images, diagrams, and visual aids. Auditory learners prefer listening and benefit from spoken explanations, discussions, and verbal instructions. Kinesthetic learners learn best through hands-on experiences and physical activities.

Observing and understanding your adolescent's learning style is crucial for tailoring academic support effectively. Pay attention to how they naturally engage with information and express their preferences. Visual learners might enjoy using color-coded notes, charts, and visual aids during study sessions. Auditory learners may benefit from discussing topics aloud, listening to lectures, or using verbal mnemonics. Kinesthetic learners thrive when provided with hands-on activities, practical examples, or opportunities to move while studying.

Once you figure out how your teenager likes to learn, you can help them do better in school. If they like pictures and colors, you can use colorful notes and pictures to study. If they enjoy talking and listening,

you can discuss topics together or listen to explanations. For those who like hands-on stuff, you can do activities or projects together. By using these tricks that match how they like to learn, you can make studying easier and help them feel less stressed about school.

Helping Your Teen with Studies:

You know how your teenager likes to do things differently. Some like looking at pictures, some like talking, and others want to do things with their hands. That's their style of learning.

How to Make Study Time Better:

1. **Watch and Learn:** Keep an eye on how your teenager likes to study. Do they like colorful stuff? Or maybe they enjoy talking about what they're learning? Or perhaps they like moving around while studying? Notice these things.
2. **Talk About it:** Have a chat with your teenager. Ask them how they like to study and what helps them remember things better. This way, you can work together to find the best way for them to learn.
3. **Use Different Stuff:** Give them different things to study with. If they like pictures, use colorful notes and charts. If they like talking, discuss topics together. And if they like doing things, try hands-on activities.
4. **Make a Good Study Spot:** Make a cool study space based on what they like. Good lighting and organized stuff for those who like looking at things. A quiet place for talking and listening. And for those who like moving, make sure there's room to do that.

Encourage Them to Speak Up:

1. **Say What You Need:** Teach your teenager to speak up. If they need something specific to study better, like more colourful notes or a quiet place, they should ask for it. It's okay to say what they need.
2. **Learn Some Tricks:** Share some cool tricks that match how they like to learn. Like making fun flashcards or recording and listening to lessons. These tricks can make studying less stressful.
3. **Take Breaks:** Tell them it's okay to take breaks. Short breaks between study sessions are cool. They can do something they like for a bit, then get back to studying.

Celebrate Small Wins. 1. **Say Good Job:** When they do well, even with small stuff, say "Good job!" Celebrating these small wins helps them stay excited about learning.

2. **Ask for Help:** If things get tough, it's okay to ask for help. Teachers, friends, or extra learning stuff can make things easier.

So, by understanding how your teenager likes to learn and supporting them in their way, studying can be more fun and less stressful.

QUIZ

1. What is one factor that can positively impact academic performance?

- a) Regular exercise and physical activity
- b) Lack of sleep and rest
- c) Procrastination and last-minute studying

Answer: a) Regular exercise and physical activity

2. Which study habit is likely to improve academic performance?

- a) Cramming all the material the night before an exam
- b) Breaking study sessions into smaller, manageable chunks
- c) Multitasking while studying, such as watching TV or using social media

Answer: b) Breaking study sessions into smaller, manageable chunks

3. How can effective time management contribute to academic performance?

- a) By allowing more time for leisure activities and procrastination
- b) By helping prioritize tasks and allocate sufficient time for studying
- c) By creating unnecessary stress and pressure

Answer: b) By helping prioritize tasks and allocate sufficient time for studying

BEHAVIOURS AND BARRIERS

Desired

Behaviours:

Parents play a crucial role in supporting their adolescents during academic struggles and fostering success. Here are some practical ways parents can help their adolescents in academic struggles and help them in success:

1. Open Communication: Encourage open and honest communication. Create a safe space for your adolescent to share their challenges and concerns about school. Listen actively and avoid being judgmental.
2. Set Realistic Expectations: Establish realistic academic expectations. Recognize and celebrate individual strengths and improvements rather than focusing solely on grades. Setting achievable goals helps build confidence.
3. Create a Supportive Environment: Foster a positive and supportive home environment. Provide a quiet and organized space for studying, free from distractions. Show interest in their schoolwork and offer assistance when needed.

4. **Understand Learning Styles:** Recognize and understand your adolescent's learning style. Some students may thrive with visual aids, while others may benefit from hands-on activities. Tailor your support to match their preferred learning methods.
5. **Encourage Time Management:** Help your adolescent develop effective time management skills. Teach them to prioritize tasks, create a study schedule, and set realistic deadlines. This skill is crucial for handling academic responsibilities.
6. **Seek Professional Help:** If academic struggles persist, consider seeking professional help. Consult with teachers, school counsellors, or tutors to address specific challenges. Learning disabilities or individualized learning plans may need to be explored.
7. **Promote a Healthy Lifestyle:** Encourage a balanced and healthy lifestyle. Ensure your adolescent gets enough sleep, eats nutritious meals, and engages in physical activities. A healthy lifestyle positively impacts cognitive function and overall well-being.
8. **Be Involved in School Activities:** Attend parent-teacher conferences and school events. Stay informed about your adolescent's progress and connect with their teachers. Active involvement demonstrates your commitment to their education.
9. **Provide Motivational Support:** Offer encouragement and motivation. Recognize their efforts and celebrate small achievements. Encourage a growth mindset, emphasizing that learning and improvement are continuous processes.
10. **Teach Problem-Solving Skills:** Help your adolescent develop problem-solving skills. Teach them to break down complex tasks into manageable steps and find solutions independently. These skills are valuable for overcoming academic challenges.
11. **Balance Academic and Personal Life:** Emphasise the importance of a balanced life. While academics are crucial, encourage your adolescent to engage in extracurricular activities and hobbies. Balancing various aspects of life contributes to overall well-being.
12. **Explore Educational Resources:** Utilise educational resources. Explore online platforms, libraries, and community resources that can provide additional support or materials to reinforce learning.

Remember, every adolescent is unique, and the level of support needed may vary. By actively engaging with your adolescent, understanding their individual needs, and providing consistent encouragement, you contribute significantly to their academic success and overall well-being.

A happy Picture:

In a vibrant neighbourhood in Mumbai, there lived a teenager named Ananya. She was a typical teenager, facing the usual challenges that come with school and exams. Ananya sometimes felt the pressure of performing well academically, but her story took a positive turn with the support of her parents and the community around her.

Ananya's parents, recognizing the academic demands placed on students, decided to create a study environment tailored to her needs. They set up a cosy study nook in her room, filled with colourful posters and tables and chairs only to study. Ananya's mom turned study sessions into engaging conversations about the subjects Ananya was learning, making the process more enjoyable.

The community also played a role in Ananya's academic journey. Local teachers organised study groups where students could share knowledge and help each other understand difficult topics. Ananya's dad, who was tech-savvy, introduced her to educational apps that added an interactive and fun dimension to her learning experience.

While Ananya faced challenges, the collaborative efforts of her family and community turned these challenges into opportunities for growth. Slowly, Ananya not only improved her grades but also developed a genuine love for learning. The realistic story of Ananya reflects the power of community support in navigating academic pressures, turning them into stepping stones for a brighter future.

GAMES AND ACTIVITIES

COMMITMENT TO CHILD

USEFUL LINKS

ACTIVITY: SIP (Systematic Increase in Performance)

Aim:

The objective is simple. The child and parent sit down together to chart out a study plan for the child in a manner that is gradual and not burdensome. The child starts with a few minutes of studying the easy subject and slowly works their way up the amount of time spent studying and the level of difficulty.

See below an example of SIP Chart that can help improve your child's academic performance!

Rules of the game:

The student draws up a SIP plan for the week.

On Monday, the child spends 10 minutes studying their easiest subject.

On Tuesday, the child spends 20 minutes learning the second easiest subject. It continues on Wednesday (30 minutes), Thursday (40 minutes), Friday (50 minutes). Saturday (60 minutes) is for the most difficult subject.

4. If the student finishes the task, he/she scores points for the day. (1 point per minute)
5. The two most difficult subjects on Friday and Saturday score double points (2 points per minute)
6. Rewards can be decided based on points. Rewards are for EFFORT, not actual ACHIEVEMENT.

CHAPTER 24: CULTURAL AWARENESS

KNOWLEDGE AND CAUSES

Culture often is a combination of customs, traditions, social behaviour and beliefs of a particular group or society, which develop over time. India is a vast and diverse country, home to varying cultures, beliefs and practices in different regions of the country. We all have seen individual people who are different than us. It is often their upbringing and the area which make them different. When we look at it on a larger scale, we see differences in festivals, celebrations, language, clothes, and food.

We identify these cultural differences and try to understand them. Cultural awareness means being sensitive to these differences and finding means to connect and communicate with people of other cultural groups. Cultural sensitivity involves unspoken gestures like respect, manner of dressing, and politeness while talking without prejudice.

Parents play an important role in cultivating positive behaviour towards people who are different from them. Children follow what they see. We interact with people of different races, religions, communities and genders. The differences can sometimes lead to discrimination and violence against people who are different from them. Teaching children about proper cultural awareness about culture and the importance of respecting differences can reflect in their behaviour and social attitude. Once they see the differences and learn more about the different cultures they will realise that all are humans.

Learning about your culture gives a sense of belonging to a society which existed for many generations. Being culturally aware means understanding why cultural diversity is important and recognising that not every person will do things in the same manner as we do. A person with some form of cultural understanding will benefit because cultural awareness is all about helping people get along without misunderstandings, confusion, or poor decisions getting in the way.

QUIZ

1. Which of the following is an example of cultural appropriation?

- a) Wearing a traditional outfit during a cultural festival
- b) Learning about different cultural practices and traditions
- c) Making fun of someone's cultural beliefs

Answer: c) Making fun of someone's cultural beliefs

2. What does the term "cultural diversity" refer to?

- a) The existence of different cultural groups within a society

- b) The dominance of one culture over others
- c) The absence of cultural differences

Answer: a) The existence of different cultural groups within a society

3. Why is it important to respect and appreciate cultural differences?

- a) It promotes understanding and tolerance among different communities
- b) It eliminates cultural diversity and promotes uniformity
- c) It reinforces stereotypes and prejudices

Answer: a) It promotes understanding and tolerance among different communities

BEHAVIOURS AND BARRIERS

What should be done to achieve it? Desired changes or behavioural adaptations

Embracing your heritage

There is a trend to accept Western culture very easily and do away with our roots and heritage among the younger generation. Though through changing times culture also changes but not at the cost of our own culture. Culture is something that cannot be taught like science. It is only through observations, interactions, conversations and socialising that cultures are passed to the younger generations. The first thing to do is embrace your own cultural identity. Each family has its own history, heritage and traditions. Teach them to your children. Encourage children to talk to their grandparents and ask them to tell family stories, paintings, recipes etc. Grandparents can tell adolescents about the house they grew up in, what they ate, fond memories about their friends, animals music and much more. This will help them develop a strong sense of identity and provide for their own heritage.

Learn about the culture of others

You should learn about your surroundings along with your heritage and culture. You can start small and ask about your friends and neighbours' cultures, religions and practices. We connect to each other when we understand their roots. Many teenagers feel that they are not understood. Cultural discussions can bring them closer and find common ground.

Every village, city and country has their own culture. Encourage adolescents to experience different cultures from different places around the world. It will help them navigate cultural differences with an open mind. It will teach them to respect all and foster understanding and sensitivity for all sects, religions, races, cultures and heritage. One of the examples to give your children is how different festivals like Christmas, Diwali and Eid are celebrated in India as well as in different countries. You can use the internet to see videos about different celebrations and the stories around them.

Food habits

Food is often the first gateway to any culture. It provides an easy access to different cultures. Food can connect people from different communities, backgrounds and social statuses. We should teach children about our food, and the rituals related to them. For instance, some sweet dishes are made and eaten on happy occasions. Teach your children about different cultures and food as well. Learning and eating food from different cultures can help achieve cultural sensitivity towards other religions, and nationalities. What we eat can tell about the region we hail from, geography, climatic conditions and more. People in Southern states of India use more coconut and coconut oil in their cooking, which tells us that they live in the coastal regions and are readily available.

Cook together with your adolescent children and tell them about your food habits and together explore food from different regions as well.

Festivals

Religion and cultural festivals form a big part of our country's diversity. It is the responsibility of parents to teach their children to be tolerant towards others and diversity. Parents can help their adolescent children with the different range of holidays and traditions. Help them to understand their traditions during festivals. Talk to your children and explain that not everyone celebrates the same holidays and festivals. The people of the same religion have regional variations and celebrate many different traditions. Though the festival of Navratri is celebrated all over India by Hindus, in Gujarat, it is celebrated with dancing and singing. It is very different than other parts of the country.

Teach your children to respect and appreciate the diversity of cultural expressions and diversity.

Language and music

Teaching children multiple languages has many gains. Children who know their local language and dialect can dive into local stories, traditions and history. India is home to about 120 languages and more than 500 regional dialects and mother tongues. There are many regional plays, music, and books which will build a relationship with the region's heritage. Understanding traditional songs, and family stories will connect your child to their roots. Teach your child your mother tongue and to communicate in it.

However adolescent children might want to give in to the peer pressure of fitting in and feel ashamed to communicate in their mother tongue. There is nothing wrong with learning new languages. It will promote an overall sense of cultural appreciation and understanding. Learning multiple languages will always be beneficial.

Reading and sharing stories

Stories and tales are passed from one generation to another. The tales could act as cautionary tales, stories of the valour of the previous generation or fascinating stories for children to give an insight into morals and how to act in a society. Like the Panchatantra stories in Buddhist tradition give moral teaching in the form of interesting stories.

Also, books can introduce adolescents to a fascinating new world of different cultures. Reading and listening to stories can provide a well-rounded view of cultural heritage. Photos are a great instrument

for parents to explain their own culture and that of others. Stories are important for cultural awareness. It is how costumes are shared and become traditions. Grandmother's stories are an important part of Indian culture.

Explore and Travel

Travel and exploration of local heritage are an integral part of cultural exploration. Travel enhances cultural awareness. Start with local travel to museums, cultural festivals, folk festivals, rituals and public feasts to learn about local cultures. Parents should take one day out of the month to go around and explore nature and culture around their region.

Travel can give children a profound understanding of different cultures and harbour cultural awareness.

Barriers to desired changes

Stereotype

Although it is difficult to admit out loud we have our own set of preconceived notions which would stereotype someone or some culture. Having a set idea about someone's culture and practices can lead to unconscious biases. Having no knowledge and understanding of different cultures and traditions can be the major barrier.

Cross-culture miscommunication

When we interact with different cultures without respect and sensitivity can generate misunderstanding on both ends. It may often lead to miscommunication. Due to few people and their bad experiences, one can be averse to new cultural experiences.

Mobile phones

We live in a global world with access to all the new and latest cultural trends available to us. Adolescent children are more fascinated by social media and spend the majority of their time online. It is one of the leading causes of losing touch with their indigenous traditional bits of knowledge. They no longer talk to their older generations who are a treasure trove of knowledge.

Cultural appropriation

Cultural appropriation is adapting elements of other cultures without being sensitive about them. Half knowledge or no knowledge about other cultures could be a cause of concern.

High cost and lack of access

Some of the experiences especially when you want to experience other cultures in other regions. Travel could be on the expensive side. There might not be access to different cultures at the place where you stay.

Desired Changes or Behaviors to be Adopted to Ensure the Problem is Addressed or Solved:

Breaking the stereotype

Embracing Cultural Competence

Cultural competence is the understanding that a person's perspective is shaped by complex personal experiences and their cultural background. It also involves the awareness of your own cultural assumptions when communicating in cross-cultural contexts.

Intercultural competence is comprised of four key components, (knowledge, attitude, awareness, and interpersonal skills). There are also three capabilities, (conflict management, relationship building, and intercultural teamwork), and two supporting skills, (emotional intelligence and critical reflection) that apply across different domains, such as professional, private, and academic, when it comes to cultural competence.

Being culturally aware is the starting point to ultimately reach such levels of competence, where you can fluidly interact with people from different backgrounds and cultures without an issue.

Cultural safety

Creating a culturally safe environment means people from all walks of life have a safe space with their dignity intact. The differences in opinions of people are acknowledged and share their experiences without any fear. Parents should be open to different people and be respectful. They should provide a safe and encouraging environment for children and their friends to feel comfortable. Children can develop a greater sense of empathy and respect for others by understanding and appreciating the diversity of cultures around them. It helps them understand and appreciate the diversity of cultures around them.

Ask questions

Rather than assume things about different cultures, ask questions for your better understanding. Don't be afraid to ask questions. People feel respected and appreciated when others take a genuine interest in who they are, so ask open-ended questions about their culture to learn more.

Local connections

Though travel and experiencing different cultures could be expensive. There are many cost-effective ways to do the same. You can learn so much from your surroundings. Culture awakening can also be done by exchanging stories with grandparents, travelling locally, and eating local foods. Indigenous foods, stories, and places of worship can teach a lot as well.

Technology has made it easier to connect with people and new things. Adolescents tend to be engulfed by the world of the internet. With increasing globalization children give a lot of importance to Western cultures. As parents, you need to nurture cultural awareness in children. Cultures are meant to be evolved with time. New things should be adopted but with caution. Parents should encourage children to spend one day of the week embracing their culture and traditions. Children could help with cooking, singing songs about their culture, and reading stories.

GAMES AND ACTIVITIES

COMMITMENT TO CHILD

USEFUL LINKS

Existing Governmental and Non-Governmental Programmes

Rashtriya Sanskriti Mahotsav (Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat)

The scheme is launched to promote India's rich heritage culture like handicrafts, textiles, paintings, sculptures, and folk arts all in one place. It is to promote different states' and Union territories' people to interact with each other and present their cultures. States and Union Territories are paired together to celebrate their cultures. It will connect people from different places and people will see the diversity and achieve cultural awareness.

Development of Libraries & Archives

Under this scheme, the National Virtual Libraries are to be set up focusing on the economically backward districts. All the libraries will be connected. Hopefully, people can access books online in the future.

Kala Sanskriti Vikas Yojana

To promote and disseminate the art & culture of the country by providing financial support to drama, theatre groups, dance groups, music ensembles, folk theatre & music and other genres of performing art activities. The central government of India has developed this scheme to celebrate the culture of India and promote cultural awareness.

Jatan and Darshak

Ministry of Culture in association with the Center for Development for Advance Computing have made a software called Jatan. The scheme is developed to improve the experience of museums for differently abled people. It is a step towards inclusivity.

Being culturally aware develops your interpersonal skills, making you more sensitive to other people's emotions. It allows you to improve your interactions and communication with others. This process of developing cultural awareness is even more critical today, in the age of digital communication channels, where we often don't interact with others in a face-to-face manner.

Culture Exchange Dinner Night

Once a month, the family chooses a different Indian state or world culture to explore. Cook a traditional dish from that culture, learn 5 words in their language, and discuss one tradition. Family members share what they found most interesting. This builds cultural sensitivity through immersive, shared experiences.

CHAPTER 25: EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY AND DIGITAL LITERACY

Educational Technology and Digital Literacy: Empowering the Future of Education

KNOWLEDGE AND CAUSES

In today's world, there's a special way that technology is helping us learn and understand things better. We call it Educational Technology. It's like having a super-smart friend who can teach us all sorts of cool stuff using computers, tablets, and the internet. And guess what? Learning with this friend is so much fun that it feels like playing games while becoming super smart!

Educational Technology helps us learn in new and exciting ways. Imagine reading stories on a tablet, solving math problems with colorful games, or even talking to friends and teachers through a computer. It makes learning feel like an adventure! And you know what's even cooler? We can explore subjects we love, like science or history, with interactive lessons and videos. So, Educational Technology is like a magic door that opens up a world of knowledge, making our brains happy and curious!

Now, you might wonder, "How can I be really good at using all this cool technology?" That's where Digital Literacy comes in – it's like having a superpower in the digital world. Digital Literacy means knowing how to use computers, tablets, and the internet safely and smartly. It's like learning the rules of a new game, so we can have fun while staying safe and making the most of our digital adventures. With Digital Literacy, we become the heroes of our own digital stories, using technology to learn, explore, and create amazing things!

When Educational Technology and Digital Literacy are not a part of a child's learning experience, they might miss out on some exciting and helpful things. Let's imagine a world without these digital friends:

1. Limited Learning Adventures:

Without Educational Technology, learning might feel a bit old-fashioned. No interactive lessons, no colorful games to make studying fun. It's like having only one book when there's a whole library waiting to be explored.

2. Disconnected from the Digital World:

Digital Literacy is like having a map for the digital world. Without it, navigating the internet and using computers might be a bit confusing. Kids could miss the chance to connect with friends online, explore interesting websites, and learn from cool educational apps.

3. Fewer Creative Possibilities:

Educational Technology opens up a world of creativity. Without it, kids might miss the chance to create amazing projects, draw digital art, or even make their own stories using technology. It's like having a blank canvas but not having the right colors to paint with.

4. **Struggle to Keep Up:** As the world becomes more digital, not having Digital Literacy might make it a bit challenging for kids. They might feel left out when others are confidently using technology for learning and fun. It's like everyone is speaking a new language, and they are trying to catch up.

5. **Limited Access to Information:**

Educational Technology brings a wealth of information right to our fingertips. Without it, kids might have to rely on traditional methods like books alone, missing the instant access to updated information and diverse learning resources.

In a world without Educational Technology and Digital Literacy, learning might feel a bit like missing out on a big, exciting adventure. Kids might not get to explore the full potential of technology in making their education engaging, interactive, and full of creative possibilities.

Parents play a crucial role in ensuring that their children have access to Educational Technology and develop Digital Literacy skills. Here are some simple steps parents can take:

1. **Explore Educational Apps Together:**

Discover fun and educational apps that align with your child's interests. Spend time exploring these apps together to make learning enjoyable. It introduces children to interactive learning experiences and builds their comfort with technology.

2. **Set Up a Learning Environment:**

Create a dedicated space for learning at home, equipped with a computer or tablet. Ensure the area is well-lit, comfortable, and free from distractions. A designated learning space encourages regular use of Educational Technology for academic purposes.

3. **Participate in Digital Activities:**

Engage in digital activities as a family, such as watching educational videos, playing educational games, or exploring informative websites together. It fosters a positive attitude towards technology and promotes shared learning experiences.

4. **Teach Responsible Internet Use:**

Discuss the importance of responsible internet use, including online safety, privacy, and respectful behavior. Set guidelines for internet usage at home. It empowers children to navigate the digital world safely and ethically.

5. **Encourage Creative Digital Projects:**

Inspire creativity by encouraging your child to create digital art, write stories on a computer, or even explore simple coding projects. It nurtures creativity and problem-solving skills through hands-on digital activities.

6. **Keep Learning Together:**

Stay curious about new technologies and digital trends. Learn alongside your child, and be open to discovering new educational tools together. It reinforces the idea that learning is a lifelong journey, and embracing technology is a continuous process.

By actively engaging with Educational Technology and fostering Digital Literacy at home, parents empower their children to navigate the digital world confidently and make the most of educational opportunities provided by technology.

QUIZ

BEHAVIOURS AND BARRIERS

Barriers:

Parents might encounter several barriers when implementing strategies to incorporate Educational Technology and promote Digital Literacy. Understanding these challenges can help parents navigate them effectively:

1. Limited Access to Technology:

Some parents may not have easy access to computers, tablets, or the internet at home. Explore community resources, such as local libraries or community centers, that provide access to technology. Additionally, consider affordable options or seek assistance from schools.

2. Technological Intimidation:

Parents who are not familiar with technology might feel intimidated or unsure about guiding their children. Attend basic technology workshops or seek guidance from educational institutions to build confidence. Collaborate with other parents for shared learning experiences.

3. Time Constraints:

Busy work schedules and household responsibilities may limit the time parents can dedicate to exploring Educational Technology. Prioritize and allocate specific times for digital activities. Consider integrating short, meaningful interactions during daily routines.

4. Language Barriers:

Parents who are not proficient in the primary language of educational apps or online resources may find it challenging to support their children effectively. Seek multilingual resources or collaborate with schools and community organizations to provide language support. Encourage children to share their learning experiences in a language comfortable for the family.

5. Financial Constraints:

Limited financial resources may restrict parents from purchasing devices or subscribing to educational apps. Explore low-cost or free educational resources available online. Check with schools for support programs or initiatives that provide access to technology for families in need.

6. Resistance to Change:

Some parents may be resistant to embracing new technologies due to unfamiliarity or concerns about their child spending too much time online. Start with small, manageable steps to introduce technology gradually. Share success stories and benefits of Educational Technology to alleviate concerns.

7. Lack of Digital Literacy Education:

Parents may not be well-versed in Digital Literacy concepts, making it challenging to guide their children effectively. Seek Digital Literacy workshops or online courses tailored for parents. Schools and community organizations may offer resources to enhance parents' understanding of digital skills.

8. Inconsistent Access to Educational Support:

Parents might face challenges in consistently accessing educational support or workshops due to external factors. Advocate for flexible schedules or explore alternative formats for accessing information, such as recorded workshops or online resources available at any time.

9. Limited Awareness of Educational Tools:

Parents may not be aware of the diverse educational tools and apps available, limiting their ability to choose the most suitable ones. Stay informed through school communications, community events, and online resources. Share information with other parents to collectively expand awareness.

10. Cultural and Social Influences:

Cultural beliefs or societal norms may impact parental attitudes toward technology, with some cultures emphasizing traditional learning methods. Foster open conversations about the benefits of blending traditional and digital learning. Highlight the cultural relevance of incorporating technology in education.

By acknowledging and addressing these barriers, parents can work towards creating a supportive and inclusive environment for Educational Technology and Digital Literacy in their homes. Collaboration with schools, communities, and other parents can further enhance the effectiveness of these strategies.

Behaviors:

To overcome the barriers to implementing strategies for Educational Technology and Digital Literacy, parents can take proactive steps and collaborate with various resources. Here are some suggestions:

1. Community Collaboration:

Connect with local community centers, libraries, or educational institutions that offer free or affordable access to technology. By leveraging community resources, parents can provide their children with opportunities to engage with Educational Technology.

2. Technology Workshops:

Attend technology workshops or training sessions offered by schools, community organizations, or online platforms. Gaining hands-on experience and knowledge empowers parents to guide their children effectively and reduces technological intimidation.

3. Designated Technology Time:

Schedule specific times for digital activities, creating a routine that accommodates busy schedules. Allocating dedicated time helps parents integrate Educational Technology into daily life without feeling overwhelmed.

4. Multilingual Resources:

Seek out educational apps and resources that support multiple languages or collaborate with schools for language-specific support. Overcoming language barriers ensures that parents can actively participate in their child's digital learning experience.

5. Financial Assistance Programs:

Inquire about financial assistance programs provided by schools, government initiatives, or non-profit organizations that aim to bridge the digital divide. Access to affordable or subsidized technology can address financial constraints for families.

6. Gradual Introduction:

Introduce technology gradually, starting with simple activities and progressively incorporating more complex educational tools. Gradual exposure allows parents and children to adapt comfortably to Educational Technology without resistance.

7. Peer Learning Communities:

Form or join peer learning communities with other parents to share experiences, tips, and support related to Educational Technology. Collaborating with other parents fosters a sense of community and provides valuable insights into overcoming common challenges.

8. Advocacy for Flexible Schedules:

Advocate for flexible schedules or alternative formats for accessing educational support, accommodating varying work and family commitments. Flexibility ensures that parents can consistently access resources and support programs.

9. Digital Literacy Education:

Enroll in Digital Literacy courses or workshops designed for parents, either online or through local institutions. Building Digital Literacy skills equips parents with the knowledge needed to navigate the digital landscape effectively.

10. Information Sharing:

Stay informed about available educational tools, apps, and online resources, and share this information with other parents. Enhancing collective awareness ensures that parents can make informed decisions about incorporating Educational Technology.

11. Cultural Sensitivity

Foster open dialogues about the benefits of blending traditional and digital learning within the cultural context. Acknowledging cultural influences and emphasizing the complementary nature of technology can address concerns related to cultural norms.

By taking these actions, parents can actively contribute to creating an environment where Educational Technology and Digital Literacy are accessible and integrated seamlessly into their children's learning journey. Collaboration, information sharing, and advocacy play key roles in overcoming barriers and fostering a positive learning experience for both parents and children.

A Happy Picture:

Meet Riya, a spirited teenager from a small town in India, who, with the unwavering support of her parents and community, triumphed over the challenges of accessing educational technology and digital literacy.

In a community where resources were limited, Riya's parents recognized the importance of technology in education. Determined to provide Riya with opportunities, they collaborated with a local community center that offered free technology workshops. Riya's parents attended these workshops alongside her, learning about digital tools and gaining the confidence to guide her effectively.

The community played a crucial role as well. A group of parents initiated a peer learning community where they shared tips, resources, and success stories. Riya's family became an integral part of this community, exchanging ideas and providing mutual support. Through this collaboration, they discovered multilingual educational apps that catered to their cultural background, breaking down language barriers.

Riya's parents, inspired by their newfound knowledge, gradually introduced educational technology into Riya's routine. They designated specific times for digital activities, ensuring a balanced approach to her learning. As Riya navigated through interactive learning apps and engaged in online resources, her parents celebrated small victories, fostering a positive attitude towards technology.

To further bridge the digital divide, Riya's community advocated for flexible schedules, allowing parents to access technology support programs at their convenience. Financial assistance programs were explored, providing families with affordable access to digital devices. The community center organized

events where teenagers like Riya could showcase their digital projects, creating a sense of accomplishment and pride.

As Riya embraced digital literacy, she became a source of inspiration for her peers. Her success story spread within the community, motivating other parents to actively participate in their children's digital education. Riya's journey exemplifies the transformative power of collective efforts, where parents and communities collaboratively create an environment where educational technology becomes a tool for empowerment and success.

GAMES AND ACTIVITIES

COMMITMENT TO CHILD

USEFUL LINKS

The Indian government has initiated several programs and measures to promote digital literacy across the country.

Digital India Campaign:

Launched in 2015, the Digital India campaign is a flagship program that aims to transform India into a digitally empowered society. It encompasses various initiatives to promote digital literacy, including the creation of digital infrastructure and providing digital services to citizens.

National Digital Literacy Mission (NDLM):

NDLM was launched to impart digital literacy to a large section of the population, including rural and underserved areas. The mission focuses on providing basic digital literacy skills to help individuals use digital devices and access online resources.

Pradhan Mantri Gramin Digital Saksharta Abhiyan (PMGDISHA):

PMGDISHA is an initiative under the Digital India program aimed at making six crore rural households digitally literate. It provides training to individuals, especially in rural areas, to make them proficient in using digital devices and accessing information online.

National Digital Library of India (NDLI):

The NDLI is an initiative by the Ministry of Human Resource Development to provide a platform for students and citizens to access a vast repository of digital educational resources. It contributes to digital literacy by facilitating access to e-books, articles, and learning materials.

e-Learning Platforms in Education:

The government has promoted the use of e-learning platforms in education, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. Platforms like SWAYAM (Study Webs of Active-Learning for Young Aspiring Minds) offer online courses to enhance digital learning and skills.

Common Services Centers (CSCs):

CSCs act as access points for the delivery of digital services to rural and remote areas. They play a crucial role in promoting digital literacy by offering training sessions on using digital devices and accessing online services.

Digital Saksharta Abhiyan (DISHA):

DISHA is an initiative to promote digital literacy and digital financial literacy among rural households. It focuses on empowering individuals with the skills required for digital transactions and online services.

Game: Mine Field

Aim: By playing this game, parents and children can figure out how good their digital literacy is or how much they are yet to learn about digital tools. This is a good chance for the parent and child to sit together, play, and genuinely learn from each other what they know best!

They can also work on building questions of greater difficulty levels for each other over time.

What you will need:

You can start playing this game by taking a printout of the picture below on a piece of paper. Cut along the edges, as shown in the picture.

Fifteen C cards need to be printed as well. Each card must contain a question on digital tools and technology. Some questions could be:

Guess the emoji in the card?

What does this internet slang mean?

What is the full form of WWW?

On what website can you search for answers to your questions?

Which application lets us watch educational movies and videos?

What should we keep in mind when making a safe password? For example, the number of letters and digits to be included.

The family members can contribute to the pool of C cards by writing down some questions each.

Some small game tokens. There must be one for each player.

Make sure you have a dice with numbers 1 to 6 to play the game.

Once you have followed these steps, you have completed making a game set of your own for the family!

Rules of the Game:

The game can be played when there are at least two players, and up to five people can play this game at a time.

Each player has a game token and can start by placing the token anywhere on the board.

For a player to play their turn, they must first roll the dice and move the token around the board as per the number on the dice. If you land on a C square, you must answer one of the C card questions.

The C cards are placed facing downwards and the player draws one and answers it. If the player answers correctly, the player scores a point. After this, the next player plays their turn.

If a player lands on a Bomb square, the player goes back to the start. The * square gives you 5 bonus points. The player who reaches 10 points first wins the game.

CHAPTER 26: MOTIVATION AND ENGAGEMENT OF STUDENTS IN THE LEARNING PROCESS

KNOWLEDGE AND CAUSES

Getting students excited about learning is like planting a seed that grows into a big, strong tree. Motivation and engagement in the learning process are like water and sunlight for this seed, helping it grow into a knowledge-filled tree. When students are motivated, it means they are eager and interested to learn. Imagine a classroom buzzing with energy, where students are not just listening but actively participating, asking questions, and sharing ideas. This is the magic that happens when motivation and engagement are a part of the learning journey.

Think of motivation and engagement as the superhero duo in the world of education. Motivation is the superhero that gives students the power to tackle challenges, while engagement is the sidekick that keeps things interesting and fun. When students are motivated, they find a spark inside themselves that pushes them to do their best. On the other hand, engagement makes learning an adventure, like a thrilling story where each chapter is filled with exciting discoveries. Together, these two superheroes create an environment where students not only learn but also enjoy the process.

Learning is like a grand exploration, and motivation is the compass that guides students on this exciting journey. Picture students as intrepid explorers, and motivation is what propels them forward, making them curious to discover new lands of knowledge. Now, engagement is the map that makes the journey interesting and interactive. It's the key that unlocks the doors to a world of understanding. In simple terms, motivation is the desire to learn, and engagement is the way we make learning an enjoyable and memorable expedition.

When a child doesn't feel motivated and engaged in the learning process, it's a bit like having a super cool toy but not feeling excited to play with it. Let's break it down into simple parts:

1. Boredom Creeps In:

Imagine going to a playground, and instead of fun slides and swings, there's nothing but a big, empty field. Without motivation and engagement, learning can feel a bit like that empty playground – not much excitement, and the child might start feeling bored.

2. Learning Feels Like a Chore:

Have you ever had to do something that felt like a chore, like cleaning your room when you'd rather be playing? Without motivation and engagement, learning might start feeling like a task that needs to be done, not something enjoyable.

3. Understanding Becomes Tricky:

Think about reading a book without any pictures. It might be harder to understand and not as much fun. Without motivation and engagement, learning can be a bit like that – a bit tricky, and the child might not grasp things as easily.

4. Interest Takes a Backseat:

Imagine having a box of colorful crayons but only using one or two. Without motivation and engagement, the child might not explore all the exciting parts of learning. Their interest in discovering new things could take a backseat.

5. Confidence Gets Shy:

Think of learning as a cool adventure, like solving puzzles or discovering hidden treasures. Without motivation and engagement, it's like going on an adventure without the right gear. The child's confidence in their abilities might become a bit shy.

6. Future Dreams May Seem Far Away:

Every child has dreams about what they want to be when they grow up. Without the fuel of motivation and engagement, these dreams might feel a bit far away, like trying to catch a balloon that keeps floating away.

In simple terms, when motivation and engagement are missing, learning becomes less exciting, a bit like having a yummy ice cream but not really wanting to take a bite. It's all about finding that spark to make the learning journey enjoyable and full of discoveries!

Parents are like superheroes in their child's learning adventure. Here are simple things they can do to bring back the excitement and fun into learning:

1. Be a Learning Buddy:

Imagine going on a treasure hunt with a friend. Parents can be like that friend during homework time. They can join in, ask questions, and make learning a fun team activity.

2. Create a Colorful Space:

Think about a room full of toys and colors. Parents can make a study space just as exciting. Add colorful charts, pictures, and maybe even some fun stationery to make learning feel like an adventure.

3. Talk About Their Day:

Imagine sharing stories with a friend about your day. Parents can do the same with their child. Ask them about what they learned in school, what made them curious, and make it a daily chat. This helps keep the learning conversation alive.

4. Explore Together:

Think of learning as going on a cool exploration. Parents can explore interesting books, watch educational videos, or even visit a museum together. Learning becomes an adventure when it's shared.

5. Praise and Celebrate:

Imagine getting a high-five or a big hug when you do something awesome. Parents can do the same when their child accomplishes something in their studies. Celebrate the small wins to boost their confidence.

6. Mix in Fun:

Think about adding chocolate chips to cookies to make them tastier. Parents can do the same with learning. Add a bit of fun by turning lessons into games or creating a reward system. Learning becomes more enjoyable with a sprinkle of fun.

7. Encourage Questions:

Imagine having a friend who loves listening to your thoughts. Parents can be that friend by encouraging their child to ask questions. Curiosity is like a magical key that unlocks the door to understanding.

8. Be Patient Guides:

Think of parents as guides on a learning journey. If something is tricky, parents can be patient and help their child through it. Learning becomes less stressful when parents are there as supportive guides.

9. Set Goals Together:

Imagine planning a picnic and getting excited about it. Parents can set small learning goals with their child. It could be finishing a chapter or solving a puzzle. Working towards goals adds a sense of achievement.

10. Celebrate Achievements:

Think of achievements like getting a gold star. Parents can celebrate their child's achievements, big or small. It could be a special dinner, a small treat, or even a simple "Well done!" Celebrating makes learning more rewarding.

In simple words, parents can be like the fun guides on their child's learning journey. By being involved, making learning enjoyable, and celebrating progress, parents can bring back the joy and excitement in their child's education.

Parents might face a few challenges when trying to make learning fun and engaging for their children. Let's take a look at some common barriers and how parents can tackle them:

1. Busy Schedules:

Sometimes, parents have a lot on their plate with work and other responsibilities. Finding time to actively engage in their child's learning can be challenging. To overcome this, parents can set aside small, dedicated pockets of time for learning, making it a part of their daily routine.

2. Limited Resources:

Not all parents may have access to a variety of educational materials or a dedicated study space. To address this, they can get creative. Use everyday items for learning, like turning a kitchen activity into a math lesson or reading a story together during bedtime.

3. Language Barriers:

For parents who may not be fluent in the language their child learns in school, explaining complex subjects can be tough. In such cases, they can seek help from teachers, use educational apps with language support, or find community resources that offer language assistance.

4. Lack of Education:

Parents who may not have had a lot of formal education might feel unsure about helping with homework. They can overcome this by learning alongside their child. It's okay not to know everything; the act of learning together can be a bonding experience.

5. Resistance from the Child:

Some children may resist structured learning at home, wanting to play instead. Parents can turn this around by incorporating play into learning. Make it a game, turn lessons into fun challenges, and watch resistance turn into enthusiasm.

6. Technology Challenges:

In households without easy access to computers or the internet, using educational apps or online resources can be challenging. Parents can explore offline resources, like library books or educational board games, to provide interactive learning experiences.

7. Lack of Confidence:

Parents who feel they aren't good at certain subjects might hesitate to help. The key here is to build confidence together. Parents can learn alongside their child, showing that it's okay to face challenges and learn from them.

8. Different Learning Styles:

Children may have different learning styles than their parents. This can make it tricky to find the most effective teaching methods. Parents can experiment with various approaches, observe what works best for their child, and adjust their strategies accordingly.

9. External Distractions:

In a home setting, distractions like TV or noise from outside can interfere with focused learning. Parents can create a quiet and dedicated study space, set rules about distractions during study time, and make learning a focused and enjoyable activity.

10. Financial Constraints:

For parents with limited financial resources, purchasing educational materials or hiring tutors may not be feasible. They can explore free community resources, like local libraries or community centers, which often provide educational support at no cost.

Parents may encounter these barriers, but with creativity, patience, and a willingness to adapt, they can turn challenges into opportunities for meaningful engagement in their child's learning journey.

Let's explore practical solutions for parents to overcome the barriers and make learning enjoyable for their children:

1. Plan dedicated study time: Schedule short, focused learning sessions during less busy periods. Consistency is more important than duration.
2. Get creative with everyday items: Turn household activities into learning opportunities. Use common objects for math, cook together for science, and explore the neighborhood for geography.
3. Seek language support: Connect with teachers or community resources that provide language assistance. Educational apps with multilingual options can also be helpful.
4. Learn together: Embrace a learning journey with your child. Explore topics together, and don't be afraid to say, "Let's figure this out together."
5. Make learning fun: Incorporate play into lessons. Turn studying into a game, use colorful materials, and celebrate small victories to make the process enjoyable.
6. Explore offline resources: Utilize library books, board games, and hands-on activities that don't require internet access. Many educational materials can be found offline.
7. Build confidence together: Emphasize the learning process, not just the answers. Share your own challenges, and encourage a growth mindset – the belief that abilities can be developed through effort.
8. Experiment with approaches: Observe how your child responds to different teaching methods. Try visual aids, hands-on activities, or discussions to discover what works best for them.
9. Create a dedicated study space: Establish a quiet area for learning. Set rules about distractions during study time, and make it a focused and enjoyable experience.
10. Explore free resources: Utilize local libraries, community centers, and online platforms that offer free educational materials and support. Many quality resources are available at no cost.

Remember, the goal is to turn challenges into opportunities. By being flexible, creative, and patient, parents can create a positive and supportive learning environment at home, ensuring their children enjoy the process of discovering new things.

In a bustling neighborhood in Mumbai, there lived a spirited teenager named Aisha. Despite facing challenges in her studies, she found a beacon of support from her parents and the caring community around her. Aisha's parents, recognizing the importance of education, transformed their modest home into a vibrant learning space. They created colorful charts, used everyday activities for impromptu lessons, and engaged Aisha in conversations that turned mundane moments into exciting learning opportunities.

Aisha's community played a pivotal role in her journey. Local teachers organized study groups, fostering a collaborative environment where students shared knowledge and supported each other. Aisha's neighbors, noticing the resourcefulness of her parents, joined hands to create a small library with donated books, providing additional learning materials for the children in the neighborhood.

With the unwavering encouragement of her parents and the collective support of the community, Aisha began to blossom academically. Her parents, despite busy schedules, prioritized study time, and the community's study groups became a place of shared knowledge and camaraderie. Aisha discovered her own unique learning style, and her confidence soared as she actively participated in discussions and hands-on activities.

As a result of this collaborative effort, Aisha not only improved her grades but also developed a genuine love for learning. She excelled not just academically but also became a beacon of inspiration for other teenagers in the neighborhood. Aisha's story became a testament to the transformative power of community support, turning obstacles into stepping stones for a brighter and more promising future.

QUIZ

BEHAVIOURS AND BARRIERS

GAMES AND ACTIVITIES

COMMITMENT TO CHILD

USEFUL LINKS

Study Buddy System

Pair up family members as 'Study Buddies' for a week. Each day, buddies check in on each other's learning goals for 10 minutes. They share one thing they learned and one thing they found challenging. At the end of the week, buddies celebrate small wins together with a chosen reward. This builds accountability and makes learning social.

CHAPTER 27: PROMOTING INDEPENDENCE AND RESPONSIBILITY IN ADOLESCENTS

KNOWLEDGE AND CAUSES

As our children grow, there comes a time when they begin to spread their wings and navigate the world more independently. Promoting independence and responsibility in adolescents is like giving them the tools to sail their own boat. It means helping them learn how to make decisions, take care of themselves, and contribute to the world around them. Just like a tiny plant needs space to grow, our adolescents need the space to explore and take charge of their own lives. In this journey, we play the role of guides, nurturing their independence while providing a steady hand when needed. Let's discover together what it means to empower our children to become responsible and confident individuals.

Imagine our children as little saplings growing into big, strong trees. Independence and responsibility are like sunlight and water for these growing trees. When our adolescents learn to do things on their own, like making decisions and taking care of themselves, they become strong and confident. It's like giving them the keys to drive their own small boat in the big sea of life. This is important because it helps them learn from their experiences, make good choices, and face challenges with courage. When our kids become responsible, they become capable of contributing to their family and community. It's not just about growing up; it's about growing into caring, capable individuals who can make a positive difference in the world. So, let's be their support as they learn to spread their wings and fly.

CONSEQUENCES OF NOT MAKING YOUR CHILD INDEPENDENT:

Limited Decision-Making Skills: Without encouragement to make choices and decisions, adolescents may struggle to develop essential decision-making skills. This can lead to hesitancy and uncertainty when faced with challenges.

Dependency on Others: Adolescents who aren't encouraged to be independent might become overly reliant on others for basic tasks. This dependency may persist into adulthood, hindering their ability to navigate life independently.

Difficulty Coping with Challenges: When adolescents aren't given the chance to tackle problems on their own, they may find it challenging to cope with difficulties later in life. Resilience and problem-solving skills are nurtured through experiences, even if they involve setbacks.

Limited Self-Confidence: The absence of opportunities to take responsibility can result in low self-confidence. Adolescents need to experience successes and failures to build confidence in their abilities.

Struggle in Adulthood: Adolescents who aren't prepared for independence may face difficulties when transitioning into adulthood. Basic life skills, such as managing finances or making career choices, might become daunting tasks.

Reduced Initiative and Motivation: A lack of responsibility can lead to a lack of initiative. Adolescents may struggle to find motivation and set personal goals if they haven't been given the chance to take charge of their own lives.

Limited Social Skills: Independence involves interacting with the world. Adolescents who are not encouraged to be independent might miss out on opportunities to develop crucial social skills, hindering their ability to build meaningful relationships.

Increased Stress in Adulthood: The transition to adulthood often comes with increased responsibilities. Adolescents who haven't learned to manage responsibilities may find themselves stressed and overwhelmed when faced with adult challenges.

Missed Learning Opportunities: Adolescents learn by doing. When they're not given responsibilities, they miss out on valuable learning opportunities that come from both success and failure.

CONSEQUENCES OF NOT FOSTERING INDEPENDENCE AND RESPONSIBILITY ON YOU:

Strained Parent-Child Relationships: Overprotectiveness can strain the parent-child relationship. As adolescents naturally seek more independence, not allowing them to take responsibility may lead to conflicts and misunderstandings.

Encouraging independence and responsibility in adolescents is not just about preparing them for the future; it's about nurturing their present growth and well-being. By providing opportunities for them to take charge of their lives, we empower them to thrive in a challenging and ever-changing world.

Delayed Developmental Milestones: Not fostering independence may delay the development of essential life skills. Children might struggle when faced with age-appropriate responsibilities or challenges, hindering their overall growth and maturity.

Limited Problem-Solving Skills: Independence often involves problem-solving. If children are not given the opportunity to make decisions and solve problems on their own, they may lack crucial skills needed to face challenges later in life.

Reduced Family Harmony: The imbalance caused by one family member taking on all responsibilities can disrupt the overall harmony of the family. This can lead to stress, frustration, and a less positive family environment.

Impact on Siblings: Siblings may observe and mimic behaviors within the family. If one child is not encouraged to be independent, it may influence the dynamics between siblings, affecting their relationships and individual growth.

Limited Quality Family Time: Parents may find themselves constantly engaged in managing day-to-day tasks for their children, leaving little time for quality family interactions. This can affect the overall bond and shared experiences within the family.

Increased Parental Stress: Constantly shouldering responsibilities without encouraging independence can lead to increased stress for parents. The pressure to manage every aspect of a child's life can be emotionally and physically exhausting.

Impaired Child Development: Children who are not given the opportunity to take on responsibilities may experience impaired social, emotional, and cognitive development. They may struggle to adapt to new situations and lack confidence in their abilities.

Long-Term Consequences: As children grow into adulthood, the lack of independence can have lasting consequences. They may face challenges in areas such as decision-making, time management, and personal accountability.

QUIZ

BEHAVIOURS AND BARRIERS

HOW TO INSTIL INDEPENDENCE AND RESPONSIBILITY IN YOUR ADOLSCENT:

Promoting independence and responsibility in children is crucial for their overall development. In the Indian context, where family bonds are strong, and traditions play a significant role, here are some ways parents can encourage independence and responsibility:

1. **Assign Age-Appropriate Chores:** Give children chores based on their age. Whether it's setting the table, folding clothes, or cleaning their room, these tasks instill a sense of responsibility and contribution to the family.
2. **Encourage Decision-Making:** Involve children in decision-making processes, even if it's about simple things like choosing what to wear or what to have for a snack. This helps them develop decision-making skills.
3. **Teach Self-Care:** Teach children to take care of themselves. This includes personal hygiene routines, making their beds, and managing their belongings. These habits promote independence in daily life.
4. **Foster Time Management:** Help children manage their time effectively. Create routines for homework, playtime, and chores. This instils a sense of responsibility and teaches them the importance of managing their time wisely.
5. **Set Realistic Expectations:** Have age-appropriate expectations for your child's behaviour and responsibilities. Setting realistic goals helps children understand what is expected of them and boosts their confidence when they meet these expectations.
6. **Involve in Budgeting:** As children grow older, involve them in discussions about family budgets. This teaches them the value of money, financial responsibility, and decision-making related to expenditures.
7. **Encourage Problem-Solving:** When challenges arise, encourage children to think of solutions. This could be conflicts with siblings, academic struggles, or any other issue. Guiding them to find solutions fosters problem-solving skills.

8. **Promote Academic Responsibility:** Encourage a sense of responsibility towards education. This includes completing homework on time, organising study materials, and taking ownership of their academic progress.

9. **Cultivate Cultural Values:** Use cultural values and traditions to instill a sense of responsibility. Teach them about the importance of respecting elders, helping in community events, and contributing positively to society.

Barriers that you can face during while implementing these behaviours:

Instilling responsibility and independence in adolescents can face certain barriers in the Indian context. Here are some potential challenges that parents may encounter:

Family Rules Might Be Different: Sometimes, what the family expects might be different from what your child wants to do. Finding a balance can be tough.

Parents Worry a Lot: Moms and dads might worry too much about their child getting hurt or facing problems. This can make them hesitant to let their child do things on their own.

Lots of School Work: Schoolwork in India can be like a big mountain. With so much to do, there's little time for kids to explore other things and take on responsibilities.

Boys and Girls May Have Different Rules: Sometimes, boys and girls might be expected to do different things at home. This can make it harder for everyone to be treated equally.

Friends' Opinions Matter: Friends can be very important. Sometimes, what friends think or do might make it tough for your child to make decisions based on family values.

Talking About Feelings Can Be Hard: Sometimes, it's not easy for kids to talk about how they feel. This can make it tough for parents to understand what their child really wants.

Comparing with Brothers or Sisters: If there are brothers or sisters, parents might compare them. This can make things competitive and might not let each child grow at their own pace.

Not Enough Money for Fun Things: Money can be tight, and sometimes parents might think fun things that help kids grow aren't as important as other things.

Parents and Kids May Not Always Agree: Sometimes, parents and kids might see things differently. This difference in thinking can make it tough for kids to do things on their own.

What's on TV and Social Media Matters: Kids see a lot on TV and social media. Sometimes, what they see might not match with what parents want them to learn about responsibility.

Not Enough People to Look Up To: Sometimes, kids might not have people around who show them how to be independent. This can make it hard for them to understand why it's important.

Being Afraid of Making Mistakes: Some kids might be scared to make mistakes because they think it's not okay. This fear can stop them from trying new things.

Parents Are Very Busy: Moms and dads might be busy with work or other things. This can make it hard for them to guide and help their kids to be more independent.

Schools Mostly Care About Marks: Schools in India usually care a lot about marks and exams. This can make it seem like being responsible in other ways is not as important.

Parents Sometimes Say "Because I Said So": Parents might use this phrase, and it can make it difficult for kids to understand why they need to do things. It might not feel like a good enough reason.

Helping your child be independent is like helping them learn to ride a bicycle. There might be wobbles and falls, but with time and understanding, they can pedal smoothly towards responsible independence.

Solutions for these barriers:

Addressing the barriers to fostering independence and responsibility in adolescents requires a thoughtful and gradual approach. Here are practical strategies for parents to navigate and overcome these challenges:

1. **Communicate Openly:** Encourage open communication. Create an environment where your child feels comfortable expressing their thoughts and concerns without fear of judgement. This helps in understanding each other better.
2. **Find Common Ground:** Seek common ground between cultural expectations and fostering independence. Identify areas where compromise is possible and where your child's individuality can be respected.
3. **Gradual Exposure:** Introduce responsibilities gradually. Start with small tasks, and as your child becomes more comfortable and capable, gradually increase the level of responsibility. This helps in building confidence.
4. **Discuss Family Values:** Have discussions about family values and expectations. Help your child understand the importance of cultural values while allowing them to express how they interpret and incorporate these values.
5. **Encourage Sibling Cooperation:** Foster cooperation among siblings rather than competition. Encourage them to support each other in their responsibilities and growth, creating a positive family environment.
6. **Empower Decision-Making:** Empower your child in decision-making. Discuss the reasoning behind decisions and involve them in family choices when appropriate. This helps them understand the decision-making process.
7. **Address Peer Pressure:** Discuss peer pressure openly. Teach your child to make decisions based on their values and family principles. Building a strong foundation at home helps them resist negative influences.

8. Create a Balanced Schedule: Work with your child to create a balanced schedule that includes time for academics, responsibilities, and personal interests. This helps in managing academic pressure while fostering other skills.

9. Lead by Example: Demonstrate responsible behaviour in your own life. Show your child what it means to balance responsibilities, make decisions, and learn from both successes and failures.

A happy picture:

In the lively town of Krishnapur, fifteen-year-old Aisha embarked on a heartwarming journey towards independence and responsibility, guided by the unwavering support of her parents, Radha and Vikram. Aisha's parents, understanding the importance of nurturing autonomy, started by involving her in family decisions. During the festive season, they encouraged her to take charge of organising a community event, blending tradition with her creative touch.

As Aisha eagerly embraced her newfound responsibilities, her parents provided gentle guidance, helping her navigate the intricacies of planning and execution. Together, they created a vibrant celebration that not only showcased Aisha's leadership skills but also brought the community together in joyous harmony. Aisha's confidence soared, and she discovered the joy of making a positive impact on her surroundings.

Radha and Vikram, recognizing the significance of financial literacy, involved Aisha in budget discussions for the event. They taught her valuable lessons about managing resources, fostering a sense of responsibility that extended beyond the celebration to her daily life.

The journey continued as Aisha, with her parents' encouragement, took on more responsibilities at home. From managing her study schedule independently to contributing to household chores, Aisha blossomed into a capable and confident young woman. Her parents celebrated each milestone, emphasising the importance of effort and growth over perfection.

In this joyous tale, the support of Radha and Vikram created an environment where Aisha not only gained independence but also learned the true meaning of responsibility. The town of Krishnapur echoed with laughter and the warmth of a family that nurtured their adolescent's journey, painting a happy picture of a young soul flourishing under the loving guidance of her parents.

GAMES AND ACTIVITIES

COMMITMENT TO CHILD

USEFUL LINKS

Responsibility Ladder

Draw a ladder with 5 rungs representing increasing responsibility levels (e.g., 1-Make your own bed, 2-Prepare a simple meal, 3-Manage weekly pocket money, 4-Plan a family outing, 5-Complete a project

independently). The adolescent climbs one rung per week. Parents provide guidance but let the teen lead. Celebrate each climb with recognition.

CHAPTER 28: EMOTIONAL REGULATION

KNOWLEDGE AND CAUSES

Definition or Description of the Topic:

Emotional regulation stands at the core of psychological well-being, encompassing an individual's capacity to recognize, understand, and manage their emotions effectively. This multifaceted construct involves a spectrum of skills, including emotional awareness, impulse control, and adaptive expression. It forms the cornerstone for navigating life's challenges, fostering healthy relationships, and achieving overall mental equilibrium.

Effective emotional regulation involves being attuned to one's emotional states, understanding the triggers and responses, and employing strategies to modulate these emotions constructively. It extends beyond just controlling negative emotions; it's about recognizing the entire spectrum of feelings and responding appropriately.

Consequences of the Problem:

When emotional regulation falters, individuals may encounter a myriad of consequences. Elevated stress levels become pervasive, leading to chronic anxiety and an increased vulnerability to depressive episodes. Relationships, both personal and professional, can suffer as individuals struggle to express themselves adequately and connect with others. Academic and work performance often decline due to diminished concentration and an inability to cope with the pressures of daily life.

Causes of the Problem:

Understanding the genesis of poor emotional regulation is crucial for effective intervention. Causes range from a lack of emotional education in formative years to traumatic experiences that disrupt emotional development. Genetic predispositions and environmental stressors also contribute. Identifying these roots is the first step toward implementing targeted strategies for emotional well-being.

QUIZ

1. What is emotional regulation?

- A) Suppressing all emotions
- B) Expressing emotions without any control
- C) Managing and controlling emotions effectively
- D) Ignoring emotions completely

Answer: C) Managing and controlling emotions effectively

2. What are some signs of poor emotional regulation?

- A) Frequent mood swings and extreme reactions
- B) Consistent calmness in all situations
- C) Complete suppression of emotions
- D) Lack of emotional awareness

Answer: A) Frequent mood swings and extreme reactions

3. Which of the following is an effective strategy to regulate emotions?

- A) Engaging in impulsive and reckless behavior
- B) Blaming others for one's emotions
- C) Practicing self-care and self-compassion
- D) Ignoring and suppressing emotions completely

Answer: C) Practicing self-care and self-compassion

BEHAVIOURS AND BARRIERS

Desired Changes or Behaviors:

Cultivating robust emotional regulation involves a holistic approach. Individuals should focus on self-awareness, developing mindfulness practices, learning adaptive coping mechanisms, and being willing to seek professional support when needed. This multifaceted strategy empowers individuals to navigate the complexities of their emotions successfully.

Barriers to Desired Changes:

Overcoming barriers to improving emotional regulation requires a nuanced approach. Societal stigmas surrounding mental health must be dismantled through extensive awareness campaigns. Comprehensive emotional education, integrated into school curricula, can address the lack of understanding and skills. Furthermore, enhancing accessibility to mental health resources, both in terms of affordability and proximity, is crucial for overcoming practical barriers individuals face.

Addressing Barriers:

Widespread mental health awareness campaigns should go beyond simple information dissemination; they should actively challenge stereotypes and encourage open dialogue about mental health. Integration of emotional education into school curricula ensures that future generations are equipped with the necessary skills from a young age. Improving accessibility involves not only increasing the

number of mental health services but also destigmatizing seeking help and making these services culturally competent.

What Can Parents Do:

Parents wield significant influence in shaping their children's emotional regulation skills. Encouraging emotional expression, teaching a nuanced emotional vocabulary, modeling healthy coping strategies, and providing a nurturing environment are essential components of parental guidance. Parents should actively engage in conversations about emotions, creating an environment where children feel safe to express themselves without judgment.

Successful Outcome

Visualize a family where open conversations about emotions are the norm, each member possesses effective coping skills, and a supportive atmosphere prevails. In this scenario, reduced stress, improved interpersonal relationships, and an overall enhancement of mental well-being are tangible outcomes. This vision represents not just individual growth but a transformation in the family dynamic towards one of emotional resilience.

GAMES AND ACTIVITIES

Activity:

Emotional Charades Activity

Objective:

Enhance emotional intelligence and expression through a fun and interactive game of emotional charades. This activity encourages participants to recognize and portray a range of emotions, fostering communication and empathy.

Materials Needed:

Slips of paper with various emotions written on them (e.g., joy, surprise, anger, sadness, fear, excitement, boredom, confusion).

A container to hold the emotion slips.

Timer or stopwatch.

Space for participants to act out emotions.

Instructions:

Preparation:

Write different emotions on the slips of paper and place them in the container.

Ensure all participants understand the basic emotions to be portrayed.

Group Formation:

Divide participants into two teams or more, depending on the group size.

Round Setup:

Each round consists of one participant acting out an emotion without speaking, while their team tries to guess the emotion within a specified time (e.g., 1-2 minutes).

Acting Out Emotions:

A participant from the first team selects a slip of paper, reads the emotion silently, and begins acting it out without uttering any words.

The participant's team observes the acting and tries to guess the emotion being portrayed.

Time Limit:

Set a time limit for each round to keep the game dynamic and engaging. This encourages quick thinking and spontaneous reactions.

Guessing and Scoring:

If the team successfully guesses the emotion within the time limit, they earn a point. If not, the opposing team gets a chance to steal the point with a correct guess.

Keep track of each team's points for a friendly competition.

Rotate Participants:

After each round, rotate the acting role to different participants, ensuring everyone gets a chance to express various emotions.

Encourage Reflection:

After each round, facilitate a brief discussion on how participants felt portraying or guessing certain emotions. Encourage sharing of experiences and insights.

Variations:

To add complexity, introduce scenarios or situations that evoke specific emotions.

Allow participants to use limited facial expressions, body language, or gestures to convey the emotion.

Debrief:

Conclude the activity with a debriefing session. Discuss the importance of recognizing and expressing emotions, and how this skill contributes to effective communication and understanding in daily life.

Benefits:

Develops emotional intelligence.

Enhances non-verbal communication skills.

Fosters teamwork and collaboration.

Encourages self-expression and creativity.

Provides a lighthearted approach to discussing emotions.

The emotional charades activity offers an engaging platform for participants to explore and express a diverse range of emotions, contributing to a deeper understanding of themselves and others.

COMMITMENT TO CHILD

Parental Commitment:

To actively involve parents in fostering emotional intelligence, provide a commitment form. This comprehensive document outlines their dedication to supporting their child's emotional development. It emphasizes the importance of creating an open dialogue at home, modeling healthy emotional expression, and taking proactive steps, including seeking professional help when necessary.

USEFUL LINKS

Resources for Teaching Emotional Regulation

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLQJaFRtaBs0rE0IHegX8Grq2lMjkJSbKL>

A YouTube playlist of videos from the television series where characters help each other identify and discuss their emotions.

<https://childmind.org/article/can-help-kids-self-regulation/>

A guide for parents that explains specific approaches to teaching self-regulation and the importance of conducting practice runs before an emotion occurs.

<https://www.gottman.com/blog/age-age-guide-helping-kids-manage-emotions/>

A resource for parents of infants, toddlers and children that identifies age-appropriate frameworks for teaching kids how to manage emotions.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cpR9Ft0R_9M

A video that explains how and why to practice emotional regulation, as part of a larger video series on building cognitive and behavioral skills.

<https://www.understood.org/en/learning-thinking-differences/child-learning-disabilities/add-adhd/adhd-and-emotions-what-you-need-to-know>

An explanation of signs that a child needs help with emotional regulation, and key takeaways specific to children with ADHD.

Existing Governmental and Non-Governmental Programmes

Government initiatives are pivotal in establishing a robust mental health support system. Mental health awareness campaigns should be comprehensive, targeting diverse demographics and dispelling myths surrounding mental health. School counseling services should be expanded and integrated into the educational system to provide early intervention. Helplines should be easily accessible and well-publicized to ensure individuals know where to seek immediate support.

National Toll-free Helpline (8448440632) for a country wide outreach to students from school, universities and colleges.

Web page on Ministry of Education website (URL: <http://manodarpan.education.gov.in>) carrying advisory, practical tips, posters, videos, do's and don'ts for psychosocial support, FAQs and online query system.

Connect to a Community:

Facilitate connections to government-operated online communities, forums, or helplines where parents can share experiences, seek advice, and access additional resources to support their child's emotional well-being. Creating a sense of community reinforces the idea that individuals are not alone in their journey toward improved emotional regulation. This interconnected support system is crucial for long-term success in emotional well-being.

Emotion Thermometer Activity

Draw a thermometer on paper with levels from 1 (calm) to 10 (very upset). When the adolescent feels strong emotions, they place a marker on the thermometer. Family members then discuss: 'What helps you cool down from a 7 to a 4?' Share strategies like deep breathing, walking, or listening to music. Practice one strategy together daily.

CHAPTER 29: ESTABLISHING SHARED FAMILY VALUES

KNOWLEDGE AND CAUSES

What are Shared Family Values?

Shared family values are the guiding principles and beliefs that all members of a family agree upon and strive to uphold. These values are usually imbibed by parents, grandparents, uncles and aunts in the family. They teach all the values knowing or unknowingly to make a good human being and a valued member of society. Children follow by examples so it is very important to follow what we teach children. Though nuclear families and joint families are very different, being a family, parents try to instil the same core family values that they get from their parents. The family values reflect what is important to the family as a whole and help shape the family's identity, relationships, and behaviour.

What are the disadvantages of not teaching shared family values?

Not teaching children family values can have several disadvantages.

Without learning family values, children may struggle to develop a strong moral compass and understanding of right from wrong. Children may have trouble making difficult ethical decisions and maintaining healthy social relationships.

The lack of family values may have lasting effects on children. They may struggle to understand and connect with the feelings and needs of others. It might affect their forming lasting meaningful relationships and create a lack of empathy and compassion.

Family values provide a framework for making life choices based on principles such as honesty, integrity and responsibility. This can lead to them deciding without thinking about the consequences. Without the consequences, the children will struggle to make wise decisions. It may affect them in the long term. For instance, eating lots of junk food every day is very enjoyable but not thinking about the long-term health consequences or not following a sleep schedule being late for school and not learning the importance of discipline.

Without this guidance, children may resort to aggression, manipulation, or avoidance when faced with conflicts. This can result in strained relationships and an inability to resolve conflicts effectively.

QUIZ

1. Establishing shared family values involves:

- A) Imposing individual values on family members
- B) Ignoring the importance of values in a family

- C) Collaboratively identifying and agreeing upon values
- D) Disregarding the values of family members

Answer: C) Collaboratively identifying and agreeing upon values

2. Shared family values provide:

- A) Conflict and disagreement
- B) A sense of unity and purpose
- C) Constant change and inconsistency
- D) Indifference towards each other's values

Answer: B) A sense of unity and purpose

3. The process of establishing shared family values requires:

- A) Dictating values to family members
- B) Open and respectful communication
- C) Ignoring the values of certain family members
- D) Imposing strict rules and regulations

Answer: B) Open and respectful communication

BEHAVIOURS AND BARRIERS

Desired Behaviors to be Adopted:

Given below are the Shared family values that parents can inculcate in their children

Respect

In India, culturally we are taught to respect our elders. We take blessings from them and touch their feet to show our respect. The elder member of the family is usually the head of the family and is consulted for advice. With the family structure changing and families going nuclear the family values are also changing. Elders built the societies we live in today. Teach your children to be patient with them.

Adolescence is the time of life when children are impressionable and are questioning the morals and values of their parents. Teach your children to treat elders with respect and other people with respect as well. Everyone deserves respect be it elders, peers or youngsters. Being polite is the best way to show respect. Discourage them when they are disrespectful towards others. Teach your children about boundaries. Some situations may arise wherein the child is not comfortable with the opinions of elders

so the boundaries will teach them to follow what they feel is right with politeness and respect. It can teach them to handle difficult situations.

Responsibility

Teaching your children to take responsibility for their own actions is a family value that takes priority. A person who is dependable and responsible will excel in school, at the workplace, and in society in general. Being responsible is useful in all aspects of our lives. The easy way to start teaching responsibility is at home. They do learn from examples. Give them small tasks to complete at home like remembering to bring things from the shop, and doing their homework on time, they can also help with cooking and cleaning at home. Children can have specific roles and responsibilities in their families.

Usually, mothers are the primary caregivers they often look the other way when the child is not responsible. Children should be made aware of the consequences of their actions. They must be taught that other people count on them. It could be a simple task like helping out a friend or going on time. A child must be taught to take ownership of their responsibilities.

Empathy (Kindness)

After respect and responsibility, yet another family value is empathy and kindness. Kindness has universal power and is understood by all cultures, castes and races. Kindness is also good for our emotional and mental well-being as it brings happiness to others and improves our relationships. Empathy is when you can feel the pain and happiness of others and behave with kindness towards them. Empathy and kindness are emotions that need to be taught with actions and behaviour rather than telling them verbally. Social media is a medium to connect with many people from different walks of life. However, it has led to a decrease in in-person interaction with people. Empathy and kindness are also decreasing with the reduced in-person interactions. Social bullying and trolling on social media platforms have increased on such platforms as there are fewer consequences. It is more important nowadays to teach your children to be kind and empathetic towards others.

Kindness is universal, people of all ages, and cultures understand kind gestures. Ask your children to help the elderly and treat the younger ones with empathy.

Love

Love has the power to shape and nurture children's development from a young age. It serves as a foundational element that brings families together, creating a sense of security, belonging, and unity. Love teaches children invaluable qualities such as compassion, empathy, and kindness towards others. Through observing and experiencing love within their own family, children learn how to treat their family members with care and respect.

Love plays a crucial role in teaching children how to build healthy relationships and effectively communicate with others. Children develop a sense of security and confidence, knowing that they are loved unconditionally. This strong foundation of love empowers children to face life's challenges with

resilience and courage. Love acts as a guiding force that shapes children's character, enabling them to make positive contributions to society and lead fulfilling lives.

Honesty

Honesty is an essential family value. Being honest with family members not only builds trust but also strengthens the bond between parents and their adolescent children. By being honest, children learn to communicate openly and express their true thoughts and feelings, which helps in resolving conflicts and understanding one another better. Honesty within the family also encourages adolescents to engage in open conversations about important issues such as personal choices, relationships, and future plans. Moreover, being honest with oneself allows children to develop self-awareness, integrity, and a sense of responsibility, which are valuable qualities that contribute to their overall growth and success in life.

Loyalty

Loyalty is a crucial value that children should learn as it teaches them the value of commitment, trust, and faithfulness. Loyalty allows children to develop deep, meaningful relationships with family, friends, and even pets. It teaches them to stand by their loved ones through thick and thin, showing support and dedication in times of need. Loyalty also fosters a sense of responsibility, as children learn to prioritise their commitments. Loyalty develops a strong moral compass, helping children distinguish right from wrong.

Parents can start discussing the concept of loyalty and its meaning. Emphasize the value of standing by friends and family during challenging times and being a constant source of support. Encourage children to reflect on their own experiences where loyalty played a role and discuss the positive outcomes that can arise from being loyal to others. Use age-appropriate stories, books, or movies that illustrate loyalty and its rewards.

Communication

Effective communication especially for adolescents is essential because it is the time in their lives when children do not want to share everything with their parents. Teaching adolescents to communicate with parents will allow them to express themselves and better understand others. By developing strong communication skills, teenagers can build healthy relationships with their peers, family, and teachers.

Communication is the key to resolving conflicts peacefully, effective communication enhances critical thinking and problem-solving abilities in adolescents. Moreover, it empowers them academically as they confidently participate in class discussions and engage in collaborative learning. Parents can set a positive example of good communication by actively listening to their teenagers, showing genuine interest in their thoughts and feelings, and validating their opinions even if they differ from their own.

Traditions and Faith

Traditions and faith are the foundation of any individual in their spiritual journey.

Tradition keeps us connected to our heritage and ancestors. It instils in us a sense of identity, belonging, and pride. By sharing our traditions with our children, we ensure that they grasp and value our cultural practices, festivals, and customs. This knowledge not only strengthens their link to our rich history but also fosters unity and harmony within our family.

Faith is another integral family value that brings us closer to spirituality and guides us through life's ups and downs. Teaching our teenage children about faith empowers them to develop a strong moral compass and find purpose in life. Encourage your children to explore their faith by asking questions and seeking answers from scriptures or religious leaders. Highlight the significance of prayer, meditation, or visits to holy places as these practices nurture a profound connection with a higher power. Faith teaches compassion, kindness, and respect towards others

Discipline

Discipline prepares the youngsters for a successful and fulfilling life. Discipline helps teenagers develop self-control, responsibility, and a strong work ethic. These skills are crucial as they enable children from a young age to manage their impulses and make thoughtful decisions. By establishing rules and boundaries at home, parents provide teenagers with a framework for self-discipline. For instance, setting limits on activities like how much time they should spend watching TV, computers or mobile phones, fixing bedtime, and involving them in extracurricular activities. Discipline cultivates responsibility. When parents consistently enforce consequences for their actions, they teach their teenagers to be accountable for their choices. This self-control will benefit them in various aspects of life, such as academics, relationships, and future careers.

Barriers to the Desired Changes or Desired Behavior Change for Addressing the Problem:

Indian parents may face several barriers when trying to inculcate family values in their teenagers. Here are a few potential obstacles they might encounter:

External social Influences:

Adolescence is the time of life when exposure to external influences through social media, classmates and friends is more important than parents. The influence of media such as television, movies, and the internet, can expose teenagers to contradictory values such as the glorification of violence (in videogames and videos on the internet), being cruel to animals and hoarding materialistic things over values. This might lead to a clash between traditional family values and influences of the modern society. This can make it difficult for parents to instil and reinforce their desired family values.

Generation Gap:

Differences between parents and adolescent children in their experiences, views, and expectations can make it hard to communicate and understand each other. These differences might stop important family values from being passed on, causing confusion and misunderstandings.

The parenting style:

The parenting style be it strict or flexible can make it tricky to teach family values. The flexible parenting style might make it difficult to set rules and discipline while the strictness might lead the teenagers to not listen.

Busy Lifestyles:

In today's world, parents often have demanding and time-consuming work schedules. At the end of the day, it leaves limited time and energy for engaging with their teenagers and imparting family values. The lack of quality time and consistent communication can hinder the effective transmission of values.

How can we address these above-mentioned barriers? Have we thought of possible Solutions that can address these above-mentioned barriers to change?

Communication and Understanding:

Encourage open and honest communication with children especially teenagers to bridge the generation gap. Parents should listen to their adolescent's perspectives and challenges. It is the time of their life when they are beginning to develop their own options and values. It may happen that they are not the same as their parent. Open communication might help children understand the values of their parents and protect them from bad influences.

Positive Role Modeling:

Social values and character-building values are directly influenced by family first and then by others. Parents should lead by example and follow the family values they want to inculcate in their children. The children will grow up looking at what they see rather than what is taught to them. Consciously display traits like respect, honesty, empathy, and responsibility in their behaviour, which will have a significant impact on teenagers' behaviour and attitudes.

Balancing Tradition and Modernity:

Finding a balance between traditional values and the influence of modern culture can be challenging, but essential in maintaining family values. Parents can encourage teenagers to critically analyze and understand the impact of Western influences while retaining the core values of their own culture.

Incorporating Family Time:

Allocate dedicated family time wherein dedicated time is spent with adolescents and bonding with them. Make use of the time to engage in conversations and get to know their point of view. Activities such as family meals once a day, and outings once a month. Ask your children what they are interested in and include that in the schedule. This will give the parents time to discuss and reinforce values in their children's lives.

What does a successful outcome look like?

Create a happy picture. Let them visualize what the changed outcome looks like. Maybe a short story of a child and family with a successful outcome.

Once upon a time, there lived a loving and happy family of the Mukherjees. The parents strongly believed in making shared family values as an integral part of their daily lives. Rohan was raised with one of the core family value of open communication. Rohan's parents made sure that he was given an environment where he could freely express his thoughts and emotions. He grew up having honest and meaningful conversations throughout his life.

As Rohan grew up, the value of discipline, hard work, dedication in achieving their goals. He applied that in their school as well as with their friends. Rohan was available for his friends whenever they needed him and always treated everyone with respect and kindness. The values installed by the parents made him successful in studies as well. Rohan discovered the love for history. The family would go on fun-filled trips to museums and community gatherings. He decided to study and research on the history of his community and city. They did not force him to pursue other education stream which would fetch him a good job. The love and support they shared in these moments created a deep sense of belonging and security for Rohan. Rohan flourished academically and personally. He became a very famous history professor in India.

By open communication, encouraging academic excellence, nurturing passions, and emphasizing togetherness, Rohan's parents created a loving and supportive environment that allowed him to thrive and achieve their dreams. A shared set of principles will allow your children, partner, and other family members to work as a team and cope with stressful obstacles.

GAMES AND ACTIVITIES

COMMITMENT TO CHILD

USEFUL LINKS

CHAPTER 30: HEALTHY EMOTIONAL EXPRESSION

Healthy Emotional Expression: Express them before they are repressed

KNOWLEDGE AND CAUSES

Emotions are the thread that weaves through the fabric of our lives, guiding us through experiences and shaping our perspectives. Expressing healthy emotions means openly and honestly positively sharing your feelings. It involves talking about what you're happy or excited about, expressing love and gratitude, and communicating calmly when upset or sad. Healthy emotional expression helps build strong connections with others and contributes to overall well-being.

When someone doesn't express their emotions, they're keeping their feelings inside and not showing them to others. This could happen for various reasons, like feeling scared, shy, or not knowing how to talk about emotions. Sometimes, people might worry about what others will think or fear being judged. However, not expressing emotions can lead to misunderstandings and fights, breaking relationships and bonds. Sometimes it becomes challenging for others to understand the person's feelings. It's important to find ways to share feelings, even if it's just a little bit, to build stronger connections and promote better understanding between people.

Teenagers experience a great deal of physical, mental, and social development, making it difficult to express their emotions. It's like going on an emotional roller coaster. They occasionally dread judgment or worry about what other people will think. Imagine being unable to express the mixed ideas and feelings you are experiencing. In addition, there's this notion that voicing particular emotions could make one appear weak or less "cool." They are still learning this new language of emotions and may not have all the vocabulary. As a result, people may hold their feelings inside rather than express them, which can cause tension and uncertainty. It takes them some time to realise that expressing feelings is common and essential to growing up. Therefore, factors contributing to children's lack of emotional expression may include societal expectations dictating that certain emotions are inappropriate, limited exposure to diverse emotional expressions and a lack of encouragement or role modelling from parents and caregivers. Additionally, a lack of emotional education in school curricula can contribute to this issue.

It is said, "Unexpressed emotions will never die. They are buried alive and will come forth later in uglier ways." Acknowledging and expressing emotions is vital for mental and emotional well-being, yet many children may not have the opportunity to explore and understand their feelings. Parents play a crucial role in nurturing their children's emotional well-being and fostering healthy emotional expression.

Parents have to create a safe space for children to freely express themselves at home so that they develop a habit of becoming vocal about their feelings and emotions, which would lead them to express themselves freely in other environments as well. So, what can parents do to help their children? Here are a few strategies to help your child express their emotions freely

Open Dialogue - As parents, engage in open and honest conversations with your children. Choose words carefully to express a wide range of positive and negative emotions. Effective communication fosters understanding, strengthens bonds, and teaches children that it's okay to express themselves.

Active Listening - Listening is as crucial as speaking regarding emotional expression. Create a supportive environment by paying attention to your children's emotions, validating their experiences, and fostering empathy. This promotes open communication and emotional well-being.

Practice being non-judgemental - Sometimes, you may dislike what your children tell you. Instead of reprimanding or telling them otherwise, just listen to them without clouding your judgment and understand it from their point of view.

Building Emotional Vocabulary - Help children develop an emotional vocabulary to accurately identify and label their feelings. This skill is essential for healthily expressing emotions. Use everyday situations as opportunities to discuss emotions and their impact.

Creative Outlets - Encourage inexpensive creative activities such as drawing, writing, or engaging in music. These outlets allow children to express difficult emotions nonverbally, promoting catharsis and self-exploration.

Incorporate Exercise - Regular exercise is a budget-friendly way to impact mental health positively. Physical activity releases endorphins, the body's natural mood enhancers, providing a constructive channel for releasing pent-up emotions.

Establishing Boundaries - Emphasize the importance of healthy boundaries. Communicate limits and encourage children to respect the boundaries of others. This fosters a balanced and respectful environment, minimising sources of emotional distress.

When children start expressing their emotions freely, it's like opening a door to a world where feelings are understood and shared. A successful outcome means they feel comfortable telling others when they're happy, sad, or even confused. It's like giving each emotion its special voice. This helps them connect better with friends and family because everyone can understand their feelings. Like a colourful painting, expressing emotions freely makes life more vibrant and helps everyone get along happily and positively. Children discover powerful tools that shape their emotional world in the journey toward healthy emotional expression, self-awareness, and effective communication.

By implementing various strategies, such as engaging in creative outlets and adopting daily practices, children gain the strength to navigate their feelings with resilience. These strategies serve as guides, helping them acknowledge, understand, and express emotions positively. As they embrace these habits, a foundation for healthy emotional expression is laid, paving the way for more meaningful connections with others and contributing to overall well-being.

QUIZ

1. Healthy emotional expression involves:

- A) Suppressing emotions
- B) Ignoring emotions
- C) Expressing emotions in a balanced way
- D) Exaggerating emotions

Answer: C) Expressing emotions in a balanced way

2. Healthy emotional expression includes:

- A) Yelling and screaming
- B) Bottling up emotions
- C) Communicating feelings assertively
- D) Reacting impulsively

Answer: C) Communicating feelings assertively

3. Healthy emotional expression promotes:

- A) Conflict resolution
- B) Emotional repression
- C) Passive-aggressive behavior
- D) Emotional outbursts

Answer: A) Conflict resolution

BEHAVIOURS AND BARRIERS

GAMES AND ACTIVITIES

COMMITMENT TO CHILD

Therefore, here is a promise you can make to yourself:

I, [Your Name], the parent of [Child's Name], am committed to creating a loving and supportive environment at home that encourages healthy emotional expression for my child.

I understand the importance of acknowledging and addressing a wide range of emotions. I am dedicated to fostering an atmosphere where [Child's Name] feels safe and comfortable sharing their feelings.

As part of this commitment:

I will actively listen to [Child's Name], giving them my full attention and understanding when expressing their emotions.

I will model healthy emotional expression by openly sharing my feelings and demonstrating constructive ways to cope with various emotions.

I will encourage [Child's Name] to use various words to express their emotions, helping them identify and label their feelings accurately.

I will establish regular one-on-one check-ins with [Child's Name] to discuss their feelings, experiences, and any challenges they may be facing.

I will celebrate and acknowledge [Child's Name]'s emotional growth and achievements, recognising their efforts in handling situations well.

USEFUL LINKS

Some useful websites

Rashtriya Kishor Swasthya Karyakram (RKSK):

Website: <https://nhm.gov.in/index4.php?lang=1&level=0&linkid=152&lid=173>

RKSK focuses on the health and well-being of adolescents. While not exclusively for mental health, it may provide information on overall adolescent health, including mental health.

Ministry of Health and Family Welfare - Mental Health Division:

Website: <https://main.mohfw.gov.in/?q=organisation/Departments-of-Health-and-Family-Welfare/mental-health-division>

The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has information related to mental health policies, initiatives, and resources.

eSanjeevani - National Telemedicine Service:

Website: <https://esanjeevani.mohfw.gov.in/>

While primarily a telemedicine service, eSanjeevani may offer online consultations with mental health professionals.

Feelings Jar

Place a jar in a common area with small slips of paper and pens. Family members write down one emotion they felt each day and drop it in the jar (no names needed). Once a week, read them aloud and discuss healthy ways to express those emotions. This normalizes emotional sharing and builds vocabulary for feelings.

CHAPTER 31: MINDFULNESS

Mindfulness – An Antidote for the Distressed Mind

KNOWLEDGE AND CAUSES

Before we start, think of one problem you face about your child's parenting or upbringing.

Write it down:

I wish my child / I wish I could

Parenting earlier was relatively simple. We lived in relatively small communities where we knew most of the people and situations that influenced and affected our children. We also used the same methods our parents used to bring us up with our children. But now the child is influenced by world happenings thru the internet and we don't have the control or even the awareness of what is influencing our child.

In such a situation, understanding what is happening in our child's mind and what are their hopes and fears is very important. In order to do this we also need to understand our own mind and how we can be more aware of ourselves so that we can be better observant parents and understand our children better.

Now write down one change that you want to bring about in yourself. It could be anything. For eg eat healthy food or stop shouting when I am angry or learn to speak English. Whatever it is, you know that if you put in the effort and stay consistent you can do it.

I want to

Sometimes, our minds make us do things automatically, like eating when we don't really need to or getting very upset about small things. This happens because our minds are wired to help us survive, but it can create problems for us humans.

For example, our minds make us eat, but now that we have regular meals, we don't always need to listen to our minds saying, "Eat, eat!" Our bodies might not like it if we eat too much. And sometimes, we get angry quickly, say or do things we don't mean, and then feel really sorry about it.

We do these things because we are not mindful about them.

Write down two examples of things you often do/ don't do and regret later For example, Say things angrily to my daughter for using the phone and regretting what I said later:

Being mindful means paying attention to what our minds are doing. There are two parts to it:

Knowing and being aware of what we feel, think, or do at each moment.

Not saying if it's good or bad, just watching it like it's something new.

So, being mindful helps us understand our minds better and stop doing things automatically without thinking.

What is mindfulness?

Mindfulness is like being in the 'now' moment. It means being fully aware of what's happening right now without thinking about the past or the future. Imagine you're playing with your favourite toy or reading a book, and you're so into it that you forget about everything else. That's mindfulness - being fully present and enjoying the moment without any distractions.

When you are mindful your body and mind is in sync with each other. Your mind is aware of any sensations in the body, aware of the feelings or emotions that you are experiencing and of the actions that you are doing. And this without judging or thinking whether it is good or bad.

So if you are mindful, and you are experiencing anger, then you are aware that you are angry, you are aware that your heart is beating fast and hence you tell yourself to take a few deep breathes before you take action – maybe scold your child or tell off your parent.

But if you are not mindful then your anger will take control of you and you will say and do things which might not really be giving you the required result and you might even regret what you did or said later.

You can train the mind to be mindful by spending a few minutes practising meditation every day.

The problem usually isn't about being mindful, but about our minds being naturally distracted. Our minds often wander away from what we're doing, thinking about other things or getting stuck in thoughts about the past or future. For example, when you're walking to your friend's house, your mind might be busy thinking about what you'll do there instead of noticing the things around you.

Being mindful helps us notice when our minds are wandering and brings us back to the present. It's like training our minds to focus on what's happening right now, just like you focus on your favourite game or story. This way, we can enjoy each moment fully without getting lost in thoughts about the past or the future.

We go to the gym to train our bodies. In the same way it is required to train our minds.

Our brains are like super busy all day, and we have about 70,000 to 80,000 thoughts every day. But guess what? Many of those thoughts are the same things over and over again. It's like watching the same movie again and again.

Even though we are the only creatures on Earth who can think, we often forget to use our thinking power in our everyday life. Instead, we let our emotions take over, like when we get angry or sad without thinking about why.

This automatic way of doing things isn't very helpful. It can make us act without thinking, and it can cause problems in our relationships with friends, parents, teachers, and others. It can also make it harder for us to do well in school or at work.

When we don't do well at our work or school it makes us feel terrible about ourselves. That leads to us have a very low self-concept resulting in lack of confidence and self-esteem.

But here's the good part: we can train our minds to be mindful, which means paying special attention to our thoughts and feelings. When we're mindful, we can use our thinking brain better. It's like having a superpower! Being mindful helps us manage our feelings, make friends easily, do well in school, and even be creative in activities like painting or dancing.

But you must know that your mind is not your enemy. Imagine your mind is like a little monkey living inside you, and this animal has some very basic rules. It cares about eating, making babies, sleeping, and staying safe. You can see this in a cat or a dog – all it thinks about is finding food, making babies, resting, and avoiding dangers and quarrelling with other dogs and cats which come into their area or space.

But humans are different. We have brains that help us know there's more to life than just survival. We can learn, make friends, help others, and create wonderful things. However, our basic animal-like mind doesn't understand this. It still acts like we're living in the old days when finding food and staying safe were the most important things.

So sometimes, our minds make us do things without thinking, like eating too much or getting angry when we don't need to. Our minds are like animals. They love being comfortable and cozy. They don't like trying new things or doing things that feels a bit hard, like learning new things for school or trying out a new skill at work.

When you sit down to study or learn a new skill at work, your mind might say, "Oh, this is boring! This is hard. I cannot work this much" That's because it doesn't like the feeling of working hard and learning new stuff. It prefers the comfortable feeling of doing familiar things. Just like an animal.

But here's the good part: with practice, we can train our minds to know that learning can be fun, just like playing – even work when done mindfully can be enjoyable! And the more we try, the easier it becomes!

Our minds also make us react in ways that aren't always helpful. We might shout at our children or hurt our parents, even though we don't really want to.

To live a good life, we need to use our brains to control these animal-like instincts. It's like being a super human and making sure our animal mind doesn't take over. We can learn to think before we act, be kind to others, and do things that make the world a better place. It's a bit tricky, but with practice, we can do it!

Long ago, when people lived in the wild, being very alert and quick to react was important. Emotions like anger helped protect us from dangers like wild animals or other tribes. Also, adult animals including humans felt a strong urge to have babies to keep our species alive.

But now, things have changed. We have safe homes and lots of people around us. We don't need to worry about wild animals or tribes attacking us anymore. We also know that there are already many people in the world, so we don't have to have babies just to keep our species alive.

Our brains help us understand these things. We can think and reason. So, instead of just following our basic instincts, we can use our clever thinking to make decisions. We can focus on things that make us happy and make our lives more interesting. It's like using our superhero brains to create a wonderful and meaningful life!

In the olden days, most of the factors affecting and influencing growing adolescents were around us in the form of real people and tangible forces. But now with the growing influence of social media, things are not simple anymore.

Social media is one of the major factors that influence growing children and adolescence. With a mind that behaves emotionally like animals having this rockstar technology can be a lethal combination for the mental health of children and adolescents.

Social media can be both good and bad for adolescents. But mindful use of social media can bring out the good effects of social media and reduce the negative ones.

Learning to be mindful is simple but not easy. But practicing mindfulness for 10 minutes a day through meditation exercises can make a big difference in the mind by helping to regulate your emotions and becoming aware about oneself and our emotions and issues and also gaining confidence in managing our stressors and problems.

A long time ago, way before we had homes and farms, people lived in the forests and had to find food and stay safe. Back then, our emotions like anger and fear helped us survive. Anger could scare away enemies, fear kept us safe by telling us when to run, and excitement on meeting someone special helped us have babies and continue our families. Hunger made us look for food, so we wouldn't go hungry.

Later, when we learned to grow our own food and live in one place, these emotions stuck around. Sometimes, we still feel afraid of things we don't need to be scared of, and we get angry at things that don't really harm us. It's like our minds are still trying to protect us, even when we don't need it. Mindfulness helps us understand these feelings better, so we can react in the right way, just like using our thinking powers to stay calm and happy.

Let us do a short 1 minute practice of training the mind to focus.

Sit comfortably on the floor or a chair. Back upright but not stiff, hands comfortably on your lap. Bring your attention to your breath. Set a timer on your phone for a minute. Just notice your breath. Don't breathe any differently. Just notice whether the breath is long short, warm cold, deep shallow and so on.

When you notice that your mind has wandered away, gently bring your attention back to the breath. When the timer rings, you may open your eyes and stretch before you get on for the day.

Imagine our minds are like super humans, and one of their powers is called mindfulness. Mindfulness helps us focus and use our brains better. But just like how our muscles need exercise to stay strong, our mind needs practice too.

To practice mindfulness, we can do something very simple: we can pay attention to our breathing. All we have to do is sit quietly for a little while, like 10 minutes, and just notice how we breathe. But here's the tricky part: our minds love to wander off and think about all sorts of things, like what games to play or what to eat for lunch.

When this happens, all we need to do is gently bring our minds back to our breath, just like bringing a wandering puppy back to its owner. It's not always easy because our minds like to wander, but with practice, we can get better at it. And the more we practice, the stronger our mind becomes, helping us stay focused and calm!

The difficulties which you might encounter are as follows:

Not able to concentrate

Many people say that they cannot meditate or concentrate on the breath. They say they cannot empty their mind or focus on one thing. But that is true for everyone.

The yogi who can be flexible and touch his head to the floor could not do it just like that without practise. If you start practicing yoga, even if you are not able to do the same poses like the yogi – you will see improvement in your body's flexibility within a month.

In the same way, when you start practising meditation, you are training your mind to stay on the breath. But it is natural for the mind to pay attention to something else. Maybe a sound, or a discomfort in the body or a thought which leads to more thoughts and some more thoughts. You don't have to get upset or start feeling bad that you cannot concentrate. This happens to everyone. All you need to do is notice when your attention leaves your breath and say, " Ah, my mind is thinking about something else. I am supposed to be focussing on the breath!" and come back gently to the breath. This will happen again and again. You will bring the mind back again and again till the ten minutes is up.

After your meditation, don't think whether it was good or bad! All you need to know is whether you were distracted or you could hold your attention for some time atleast.

That is all. And remember even the mindfulness experts have many days when they just cannot hold their attention to the breath.

Making time for it on a regular basis:

You need to find the time to practise this every day for 10 – 15 minutes. You need to make this into a habit. Begin by finding 10 minutes the first thing in the morning. So you won't miss it. Once you practise

this for say a month – you will begin to see changes in yourself. You can visit this link for a 5 days meditation practise in English. Soon you will also have a mindfulness practise in Hindi.

May find it boring to just focus on the breath and practise:

Initially it might appear boring to look at the breath and all the breaths feel the same – but eventually you sharpen your observation and sensitivity to small changes in your body and this helps you to understand your body and your mind better. Once you know yourself it helps you become more productive have better relations with other and communicate your feelings and emotions better

But when you start practicing you will realise that it helps you to regulate your emotions.

Emotion: fear

Situation: asking for leave or a raise

Experience the emotion – fear, anger, excitement

See how it affects you physically – (are you trembling in anger or fear)

Notice how you feel – positive negative?

Observe your thoughts? (Are you beating yourself – no you cannot do this, don't even try it, (fear) Or He wants to hurt me – I should hurt him first etc

Name the emotion: Say I am angry, I am sad, I am afraid, Become aware of your emotion

Accept and stay with the emotion for a few seconds

Check whether the emotion is real. For example you may want to ask your employer for a raise or a leave to be with your child.

Check what worst can happen if you go ahead with what you want to do

Take the action that feels right for you now

In this way if your notice and are mindful you can actually go beyond your fear or anger and do the action that feels right for you.

QUIZ

1. Mindfulness is the practice of being:

- A) Distracted
- B) Present and non-judgmental
- C) Preoccupied with the past
- D) Critical of oneself

Answer: B) Present and non-judgmental

2. Mindfulness involves paying attention to:

- A) Future worries
- B) Negative thoughts
- C) Present moment experiences
- D) Past regrets

Answer: C) Present moment experiences

3. Mindfulness can help reduce:

- A) Stress and anxiety
- B) Mindful awareness
- C) Positive emotions
- D) Self-judgment

Answer: A) Stress and anxiety

BEHAVIOURS AND BARRIERS

GAMES AND ACTIVITIES

Exercise:

Set a timer for 1 minute on your phone and observe your breath for a minute. When your mind loses focus come back again to the breath. Come back to the breath whenever you notice you mind wandering. Start now.

Now list down all the thoughts that come to your mind during this short exercise.

What did you observe? Did you observe that even if you wanted to focus on your breath – your mind was not allowing it because it was distracting you from doing the task that you set out to do? This is because the mind is filled with thoughts based on our own experiences with life. It is conditioned to think and behave in a certain way.

Chances are that you might not even remember all the thoughts you had during this one minute.

Training your mind to stay focused on the breath or on any task being done in the present moment is one part of mindfulness.

For example, when working at home, say doing dishes – focusing only on the dishes and not letting the mind wander to what will happen in the evening when everyone is home etc.

A meditation session parent and child can do together:

Sit down in a comfortable position. And take 2 big deep breaths

Now close your eyes gently and breath normally

Now listen to the sensations from your surroundings

Now notice your inner mood and feelings

Now quickly scan your body from the head to the toe.

Today I want you to think of your child/ children with whom you have a beautiful simple positive uncomplicated relationship with.

Keep this person in your mind:

Holding this person in mind as if they were in front of you, say to yourself,
"This person has a body and a mind just like me" (10 seconds)

"This person has feelings, emotions, and thoughts just like me" (10 seconds)

"This person has at some point in his or her life has been sad, disappointed, angry, hurt, or confused, just like me" (10 seconds).

"This person has, in his or her life has experienced physical and emotional pain and suffering, just like me" (10 seconds)

"This person has experienced moments of peace, joy, and happiness, just like me" (10seconds).

"This person wishes to have fulfilling relationships, just like me" (10 seconds)

"This person wishes to be healthy and loved, just like me" (10 seconds).

Now take a moment to sense how you're feeling (5 seconds).

As you hold this person in your awareness, what do you experience? (15 seconds)

And now as you hold this person in mind sending them good wishes (2 seconds).

May they be well (2 seconds), may they be happy (10 seconds).

Now bring your own self in to your mind and say:

May I be happy, May I be well

Now bring both your child/children and you into your mind and say:

May we be happy, May we be well

May we feel connected, joyful and at ease

Just imagine:

As a parent you are available for your child when they need you.

You have the innate ability to make them grow into responsible adults

By being mindful of their needs and wants and given the dynamic nature of the changing world – you can communicate your emotions that will help them to understand your needs and expectations from them and make your relationship stronger.

You are able to get more done and develop habits that make you more productive at work so that you have the time for your child.

You are able to communicate with them your hopes, fears and have a reasonably adult conversation.

You may become open minded and learn something from them and each day can be a learning moment for the entire family.

COMMITMENT TO CHILD

USEFUL LINKS

[illegible]

Five Senses Scavenger Hunt

Take a 10-minute family walk where each person notices: 5 things they can see, 4 things they can hear, 3 things they can touch, 2 things they can smell, and 1 thing they can taste. Share observations afterwards. This grounding exercise teaches mindfulness through sensory awareness in a playful, family-friendly way.

CHAPTER 32: OVERALL COMMUNICATION ENVIRONMENT AT HOME

KNOWLEDGE AND CAUSES

The house is a haven where links are built and relationships are fostered among the chaos of modern life. A person's sense of belonging, family dynamics, and general well-being are all greatly influenced by the communication environment they live in. This article explores the many facets of communication in the home and how it affects emotional health, interpersonal skill development, and family cohesion.

Communication style :

Family members' diverse communication styles are one of the main characteristics that make up the overall communication environment at home. Every person has an own way of communicating that is influenced by their personality, background, and culture. It is essential to recognize and honour these distinctions in order to foster peaceful communication.

Both verbal and nonverbal clues are used in effective communication. Non-verbal communication consists of body language, gestures, and facial expressions; verbal communication consists of spoken words, tone, and pitch. Families can express themselves honestly in a healthy home communication setting while yet being aware of the subtle differences in other people's expressions.

Some of the communication styles are discussed below:

Open communication

Open and honest communication is a sign of a healthy communication environment at home. Family members, especially parents, should be able to communicate their ideas, emotions, and worries without worrying about being judged. The family's emotional ties are strengthened and trust is fostered by this openness.

Empathy and attentive listening are necessary for establishing open communication. Family members ought to be aware of one another's viewpoints and validate one another's feelings and experiences. This promotes mutual understanding and fosters an environment in which everyone is respected and feels heard.

Technology impact:

It is impossible to overstate how much technology has shaped the general communication environment at home in the modern period. The way families interact has changed dramatically with the introduction of smartphones, social media, and instant messaging. These tools make face-to-face contact more difficult, even though they are convenient and connected.

It is crucial to strike a balance between screen time and in-person, real-time contact in order to preserve a positive communication environment. Setting aside specific times or areas in the house for tech use can promote deep relationships by enabling family members to participate in activities and conversations without interruption.

Conflict Resolution

Families are not exempt from conflict, and how disputes are resolved has a big impact on the atmosphere of communication as a whole. Good communication, attentive listening, and a cooperative attitude to problem-solving are all essential components of healthy conflict resolution.

Promoting open communication during disagreements keeps anger from growing and creates a conducive atmosphere for problem-solving. Family members can resolve conflicts amicably by placing an emphasis on understanding and compromise, which eventually strengthens the bonds within the family.

Cultural Influence

A family's communication dynamics are significantly shaped by its cultural background. Family members' communication styles, customs, and cultural quirks influence how they express themselves and understand one another. An atmosphere of communication that is more inclusive and understanding is fostered by acknowledging and respecting these cultural influences.

The blending of various cultural components in multicultural families can result in a rich tapestry of communication styles. Accepting this diversity improves the atmosphere for communication as a whole and creates a space where various viewpoints are respected and honored.

Intergenerational communication

The general atmosphere of communication at home is intergenerational, fostering lively interactions between parents, grandparents, and kids. Fostering understanding and connection requires an appreciation of the generational differences in communication styles.

Communicating across generations provides a means of exchanging knowledge, insights, and cultural legacy. Making room for these conversations enhances family life and fosters a generational sense of continuity and interconnectedness.

Parental role-modelling

Parents are the children's first role models, and how they communicate has a big impact on how kids learn how to express themselves. Demonstrating emotional intelligence, active listening skills, and effective communication are all part of positive role modelling.

Children who have parents who value empathy, polite conversation, and open communication have a solid foundation for developing strong interpersonal skills. Children who grow up in this kind of setting are more likely to have these communication skills as adults, which will improve their relationships and general wellbeing.

Let us discuss the impact of poor communication at home environment :

Strained Relationships:

Inadequate communication can lead to misunderstandings and misinterpretations, causing strain in relationships between family members. Unresolved conflicts and unexpressed feelings can create emotional distance.

Increased Conflict:

Poor communication often contributes to heightened levels of conflict. In the absence of open dialogue, disagreements can escalate, leading to arguments, resentment, and a negative atmosphere within the home.

Lack of Trust:

Effective communication is fundamental to building and maintaining trust. When communication breaks down, trust can erode as family members may feel unheard, misunderstood, or even deceived.

Emotional Distress:

Individuals within the family may experience heightened stress, anxiety, or depression when communication is poor. The inability to express emotions or have them acknowledged can lead to emotional distress for both adults and children.

Poor Problem Solving:

Effective communication is crucial for problem-solving. In a home environment with poor communication, issues may go unresolved, and solutions may be elusive. This can create a cycle of recurring problems and exacerbate existing challenges.

Lack of Emotional Support:

A home should be a place where family members find emotional support. Poor communication can result in a lack of emotional understanding and support, leaving individuals feeling isolated in dealing with their challenges.

Impact on Children's Development:

Children learn crucial social and emotional skills through family interactions. Poor communication can hinder their development, affecting their ability to express themselves, understand others, and build healthy relationships in the future.

Escalation of Negative Behaviours:

Poor communication can contribute to a negative cycle where family members resort to unhealthy coping mechanisms or negative behaviors as a way to express their frustration or seek attention.

Impact on Academic Performance:

For children and teenagers, a home environment with poor communication can lead to increased stress, anxiety, and distractions, negatively affecting their academic performance and overall well-being.

Unhealthy Coping Mechanisms:

Family members may resort to unhealthy coping mechanisms such as avoidance, withdrawal, substance abuse, or other destructive behaviours as a way to deal with the challenges arising from poor communication.

Decreased Resilience:

A family that lacks effective communication may struggle to bounce back from life's challenges. Resilience is compromised when family members are not able to support and communicate effectively with each other during difficult times.

Generational Impact:

Poor communication patterns can be passed down through generations, creating a cycle of ineffective communication within the family. This may affect how children communicate with their own families in the future.

Social Isolation: Family members may withdraw from social interactions outside the home due to the stress and discomfort resulting from poor communication within the family, leading to social isolation.

Individual communication styles, cultural influences, and technological advancements are all woven together to create the complex fabric of the overall communication environment at home. Promoting individual well-being, fostering strong emotional bonds, and resolving conflicts all depend on the family unit cultivating effective communication.

Families can foster a supportive environment where all members feel heard, valued, and connected by placing a high priority on open communication, active listening, and cultural understanding. By doing this, they build enduring relationships that withstand hardship and the passage of time.

QUIZ

1. Active listening involves:

- A) Interrupting others
- B) Multitasking while someone is speaking
- C) Paying full attention to the speaker
- D) Ignoring the speaker

Answer: C) Paying full attention to the speaker

2. Nonverbal communication includes:

- A) Spoken words
- B) Facial expressions and body language
- C) Text messages
- D) Phone calls

Answer: B) Facial expressions and body language

3. Effective communication requires:

- A) Talking more than listening
- B) Avoiding eye contact
- C) Empathy and understanding
- D) Interrupting others

Answer: C) Empathy and understanding

BEHAVIOURS AND BARRIERS

Overcoming

Barriers

Tips to enhance the communication at home

Effective communication is the cornerstone of a healthy and thriving family life. Parents play a crucial role in setting the tone for communication within the home.

Here are some tips for parents to enhance communication at home:

Active Listening:

Pay full attention when your child is speaking.

Avoid interrupting and allow them to express themselves fully.

Reflect on what they say to demonstrate understanding.

Create a Safe Space:

Foster an environment where your children feel comfortable expressing their thoughts and feelings.

Assure them that their opinions are valued, even if they differ from your own.

Set Regular Family Meetings:

Schedule regular family meetings to discuss various topics.

Encourage open dialogue and problem-solving during these meetings.

Be Approachable:

Keep an open door policy, so your children feel they can come to you with their concerns.

Approachability fosters trust and encourages children to share their experiences.

Use Positive Reinforcement:

Reinforce positive behavior through praise and acknowledgment.

Positive reinforcement creates a supportive atmosphere and encourages good communication.

Model Healthy Communication:

Demonstrate effective communication by expressing yourself clearly and respectfully.

Model conflict resolution strategies so your children learn how to handle disagreements.

Limit Screen Time:

Establish screen-free times or zones to promote face-to-face communication.

Use technology mindfully and encourage real-time interactions.

Ask Open-Ended Questions:

Instead of yes/no questions, ask open-ended questions that encourage discussion.

For example, "How was your day?" instead of "Did you have a good day?"

Share Family Meals:

Use mealtime as an opportunity for conversation.

Discuss the events of the day, share stories, and connect with each other.

Be Mindful of Non-Verbal Communication:

Pay attention to body language and facial expressions.

Non-verbal cues often convey emotions and thoughts that may not be expressed verbally.

Establish Family Traditions:

Create rituals or traditions that encourage communication.

This could be a weekly game night or a monthly outing where everyone can share their experiences.

Respect Individual Differences:

Recognize and respect the uniqueness of each family member.

Embrace diversity in opinions, interests, and personalities.

Encourage Empathy:

Teach children to consider others' perspectives.

Encourage them to empathize with siblings or friends to promote understanding.

Address Issues Promptly:

Deal with conflicts or issues as they arise rather than letting them fester.

Prompt resolution prevents the escalation of problems and maintains a positive atmosphere.

Adapt Communication Styles:

Recognize that each child may have a different communication style.

Adapt your approach to meet the needs of individual family members.

Be Patient:

Understand that effective communication takes time to develop.

Be patient and persistent in creating an environment where communication can flourish.

GAMES AND ACTIVITIES

Activities:

Some of the activities which can enhance the communication between parent and child are :

Cooking or Baking Together:Collaborate on a cooking or baking project.Discuss recipes, ingredients, and share stories while preparing the meal.

Art and Craft Sessions:Work on creative projects together, such as drawing, painting, or crafting.Use this time to talk about the significance of the art and share thoughts.

Outdoor Adventures:Take a nature walk, go for a hike, or have a picnic in the park.Outdoor activities provide a relaxed setting for conversation.

Reading Together:Read a book together and discuss the characters, plot, and themes.This activity encourages literacy and creates opportunities for meaningful discussions.

Board Games or Puzzles:Play board games or work on puzzles as a family.Games often involve strategy and teamwork, fostering communication and cooperation.

Gardening:Plant flowers, herbs, or vegetables together.Discuss the growth process, and use the time for conversation.

Exercise Together:Take a fitness class, go for a jog, or practice yoga together.Physical activities can provide a relaxed atmosphere for chatting.

Visit a Museum or Zoo:Explore a museum or zoo together.Discuss the exhibits, share interesting facts, and learn together.

Tech-Free Family Night:Designate a tech-free evening for quality family time. Use this opportunity to engage in conversations, play games, or simply relax together.

These activities not only create opportunities for communication but also strengthen the parent-child relationship by fostering a sense of connection, understanding, and shared experiences.

COMMITMENT TO CHILD

USEFUL LINKS

Communication Circle

Set a weekly 20-minute 'Communication Circle' where family members sit in a circle. Use a talking object (like a small ball) — only the person holding it can speak. Each person shares one high and one low from their week. Others listen without interrupting. This ritual builds a safe, respectful communication environment at home.

CHAPTER 33: ACTIVE LISTENING

Broad Area: Communication and Relationships

Topic: Active Listening

KNOWLEDGE AND CAUSES

Read this scenario

Seven-year-old Juhi was playing with her friend Rupa. Rupa refused to let Juhi touch her new doll. Juhi is hurt and returns home. She comes home shouting “I will never play with Rupa again. She is not my friend.” Juhi’s mother is busy cooking dinner. But she switches off the gas and sits with Juhi asking her to recount what happened. Mother listens carefully and says “Okay so Rupa did not allow you to touch her new doll. This made you feel insulted. But Rupa did allow you to play with her other toys, right?” “Yes, ma. But I wanted the new doll. The doll is so pretty.” Mother then asked Juhi “Do you really want to lose a friend like Rupa?” Juhi thought for a while and said “No.... I like Rupa. We help one another in studies. We share our lunch boxes in school.” Mother then made Juhi understand that perhaps Rupa was possessive because the doll was new and may be a few days later she would let Juhi play with the doll. Juhi too felt that she was too hasty in judging her friend Rupa. At the end of the discussion with mother, Juhi found that she did not bear any ill feelings for her friend.

What special aspects of healthy communication did you observe in the above case? Well, Juhi’s mother chose to keep her work aside and listen to her daughter and help her analyse her feelings. Juhi’s mother was an active listener.

What is Active Listening?

As parents we need to understand and develop the skill of active lesson. This activity is to be tried out with your spouse.

Try this activity: Narrate a short story to someone. Now change some parts of the story. Your partner has to clap where ever they notice the change. Reverse roles. Reflect if you were a good listener. Can you think of reasons where you failed to notice the deviation in the story? Were you preoccupied with thoughts? Did you get distracted? Now read on to know what is active listening.

Active listening needs to be fully attentive to the other person. However, it is not just that. It goes beyond merely paying complete attention. Active listening is a skill that helps to build better communication and stronger relationships.

Active listening is not just listening to words. It also means trying to understand the intent and meaning of what is said. It also means watching for unspoken words!!

Elements of Active Listening

Active listening involves:

Listening without being judgmental

Listening intently to what is said

Noticing non-verbal cues (eg in the above scenario Juhi came home shouting. Her tone indicates her anger.)

Asking open ended questions to encourage further responses (in the above scenario mother asked Juhi if she really wanted to lose a friend like Rupa)

Withholding advice and judgment (E.g., in the above scenario mother did not give any specific advice to Juhi. At the end Juhi herself realised that she had misjudged her friend.)

Benefits of Active Listening

Better relationships: Active listening helps to have better relationships with your child. Children realise they are loved and cared for. They appreciate that their parents are around whenever they need to share something with them. Active listening helps to remove suspicion and helps to empathise with the other person.

Helps children be better decision makers: Sometimes the best that a parent can do is to listen. Listen without doling out advice. Children find their own way to resolve an issue even when they just share their thoughts and feelings with their parents.

Children feel secure: Listen to what your children say – both spoken and unspoken words. Listening helps to make them feel secure.

Preventing unpleasant happenings: Active listening may help to prevent unpleasant happenings. A child who trusts his/her parents to be active listeners will share things before taking decisions. This can prevent unpleasant situations. For example- A teenager is being bullied because he does not smoke like his peers. The teenager shares, with his parents, the peer pressure he is facing. With support from his parents, he learns how he must not succumb to this peer pressure. Thus, active listening helps him to prevent an unpleasant situation. Conflict resolution skills are developed.

Tips to practise Active Listening

Here are some tips to develop the skill of active listening

Be completely attentive: Try to complete your complete attention to the speaker. Keep aside your other work. Do not check your phone or move to another task when you are listening to the other.

Watch for nonverbal cues: It is said that we communicate more through action than words. When you are listening to your child watch out for facial expressions, changes in tone of voice. A child is talking too fast may actually be nervous. Check if they are choosing their words while speaking to you. It could mean they are trying to hide something. It is not just the speaker's non-verbal cues but also your actions

that convey much. For example, when you child is speaking to you, look at them. Smiling appropriately, nodding, holding their hand are signs that you care. Avoid folded or crossed arms. It may convey that you are closed to the conversation.

Do not interrupt unnecessarily: Avoid passing judgments or being critical. This helps the person to open up and share without being afraid. They realise that you are a good listener in who they can confide. They understand that the conversation is in a safe zone.

Reflect what you have heard: It is good to summarise what you have understood so that the other person knows you have listened to them. Also, if you have misunderstood some aspects then rephrasing or summarising offers a chance to rectify that. E.g., Juhi's mother says "Okay so Rupa did not allow you to touch her new doll. This made you feel insulted." We see mother shows she is actively listening because she has captured the feeling that Juhi is going through.

Ask relevant open-ended questions: If we ask 'Yes' and 'No' type questions then the conversation is limited. But asking a question like "Do you really want to lose a friend like Rupa?" is a chance to take the conversation forward. Open ended questions show that you are interested in the person and are helping to find a solution.

Help the child identify their feelings: It is important that children learn to be articulate and accurate in expressing their feelings. For example, instead of saying "I am angry with my friend. I refuse to be her friend any more" the child could say "I was upset because my good friend refused to share her toy with me."

Sharing helps: Parents can always let their children know that they too have been through the experience. E.g., "You get nervous before an examination. Don't worry I went through the same. But don't worry when you start writing your test, you will do well....after all you have worked hard."

Read this dialogue and identify areas where you think active listening is practised and areas where active listening is not reflected.

Little Suresh comes back from school. His grandmother and mother are waiting for him.

Grandmother: Here comes my dear boy.

Mother: Now go wash your hands and feet and we will have lunch together.

Suresh: Before that let me tell you what happened in school today.

Mother: Suresh, wash your hands and feet. You have come from outside.

(Suresh returns after taking a wash)

Suresh: Ma, you know today we had a magician...

Mother: Son, let us eat. It is nearly 2 o'clock....Here is your plate

(Mother brings their plates and all sit to eat)

Suresh: Ma you know the magician could draw some rabbits from....

Grandmother: Suresh, we should not talk while eating. We will talk about this after lunch.

(Suresh finishes his lunch and washes his mouth and hands.)

Mother: Okay Suresh. I think you had an interesting day at school. What happened?

Suresh: Ma today a magician came to school and he could draw some rabbits out of his hat.

Mother (leans forwards a bit): Oh really? That must have been fun. Tell me more. I will wash the vessels later on.

Suresh: Mother he could even make Somu's cap disappear and he could guess the correct card drawn out from a whole pack.

Grandmother (beaming): That's marvellous! What else did he do?

Suresh: He produced notes out of thin air. I have decided I will be a magician when I grow up.

Grandmother: Suresh, a lot of this magic is actually tricks. But yes, one needs to practise a lot. Your uncle Rajan knows some card tricks. Next time he visits us, he can teach you some of those tricks.

Suresh: Sounds good, grandma. Now I will rest and then do my homework.

Reflection: Is the passage indicative of active listening? Suresh is interrupted at a few times at the start of the conversation. Do you think that his mother and grandmother very poor listeners there? Why? Which non-verbal cues reflect active listening?

QUIZ

What is active listening?

- a) Hearing words without understanding
- b) Giving full attention to the speaker, understanding their message, and providing feedback
- c) Interrupting the speaker with personal anecdotes
- d) Pretending to listen while thinking about other things

Answer: b) Giving full attention to the speaker, understanding their message, and providing feedback

Which of the following is NOT a component of active listening?

- a) Asking clarifying questions
- b) Offering unsolicited advice
- c) Paraphrasing the speaker's message

d) Reflecting feelings expressed by the speaker

Answer: b) Offering unsolicited advice

Why is active listening important in effective communication?

a) It helps the listener to dominate the conversation

b) It ensures that the speaker feels heard and understood

c) It allows the listener to impose their opinions on the speaker

d) It speeds up the conversation

Answer: b) It ensures that the speaker feels heard and understood

Self-reflection

It is not just children who need to be actively listened to. Sometimes parents also need someone they can trust and speak to...someone who listens to them actively. It is good to have at least one such a trustworthy person in our lives. Who do you turn to when you need someone to listen to you? Why do you turn to that person? Identify the qualities that makes him/her an active listener.

What can you do so that your children also develop skills of active listening?

BEHAVIOURS AND BARRIERS

GAMES AND ACTIVITIES

Are you good at active listening?

Read the situation and choose the option that describes what you are most likely to do.

Your children have fought with each other and now they want you to solve their dispute. You are busy watching your favourite T.V show. You will

Listen to them after the show is over

Shut the T.V and listen to them

Turn down the volume of the T.V, give them some advice and return back to the T.V show.

Your six-year-old is upset because her friend teased her over her missing teeth. She comes to you crying bitterly and complaining

You listen to her and explain that after a few months her new teeth will appear.

You take her to the friend and shout at her friend.

You continue with the cleaning you were doing but listen to her with no eye contact.

Your fourteen-year-old nephew trusts you a lot and has come to share with you that he is attracted to a girl in his class.

You laugh aloud and say “Come on, falling in love is no natural”

You listen to him, discuss his situation and tell him to reflect on how this attraction could be temporary. You also remind him that he has his Board exams in a few months’ time and this could distract him from his studies.

You listen to him for a few minutes and then interrupt him telling him to concentrate on his studies

Your children are discussing the fun they had in school. You have just retuned from work and have some unread messages on your mobile.

You scroll your mobile for messages and say “Oh that’s nice. Looks like school was fun today.”

You tell them to talk about it later as you have too many messages to go through.

You glance through the messages and answer the most important ones, keep your mobile aside and then given them undivided attention. You also share their happiness.

Your niece is away from you and she makes a phone call to you as she needs to discuss a health condition that is worrying her. She does not want to discuss the issue with her mother (your sister) as her mother gets stressed very quickly.

You continue the work you are doing and listen to her simultaneously just saying ‘ok, hmm’. Then you tell her to see the doctor.

You listen to her for a minute or two and tell her to talk to the doctor

You listen to her as she shares her fears. You then tell her that worrying may worsen matters. You ask her to visit a doctor and even offer to accompany her if required.

The options indicating active listening are 1(b) 2(a) 3(b) 4(c) 5(c)

COMMITMENT TO CHILD

USEFUL LINKS

REFERENCES

<https://www.cdc.gov/parents/essentials/toddlersandpreschoolers/communication/activelisting.html>

<https://centerforparentingeducation.org/library-of-articles/healthy-communication/the-skill-of-listening/>

Several games require and help improve active listening for children and parents.

Game 1: Musical Statues

1. One person plays the music while everyone else moves about or dances. Instead of music, you can just beat a drum or a plate with a stick.
2. When the music stops, everyone must stop in whatever position they are. It is like the player freezes into a statue. Anyone still moving becomes the drum banger. Everyone unfreezes and starts moving after five seconds, and the game restarts.

Game 2: What Flies?

1. The teacher calls out the name of anything that flies, e.g., BEE, EAGLE, CROW.
2. Students have to raise both their hands when a flying animal is named.
3. Occasionally, the teacher calls the name of a creature that does not fly. e.g., PIG, LION, DOG.
4. Students don't raise their hands when a non-flying creature is called out. Anyone who raises hands is eliminated. Alternately, he or she becomes the new game conductor.

Game 3: Simon Says

1. The teacher reads out: 'Simon Says touch your nose.' All students touch their respective noses.
3. The teacher says: 'Simon says spin around.' All the students spin around.
5. The teacher says, 'Clap your hands.'
6. Students should not clap their hands as the teacher did not say: Simon says. Only commands preceded by Simon says must be followed. Any clapping hands are eliminated or become the new game conductor.

CHAPTER 34: CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

Conflicts and conflict resolution with adolescents and families

KNOWLEDGE AND CAUSES

Parenting is a beautiful, ever-changing journey filled with happiness and challenges. It's common for teenagers to desire independence, but this can often clash with the family's established norms, especially during the challenging years of adolescence. This can further intensify existing tensions within the family. As a parent, it's important to remember that successfully navigating disagreements is crucial for maintaining the unity and well-being of your family. Parents must recognise the significance of understanding why disagreements happen, the negative outcomes of leaving them unresolved, and the effective strategies for resolving conflicts.

Arguments, tension, and friction often lead to family disputes. These issues are common and can arise naturally within a family. Adolescents often experience conflicts as they strive for autonomy and independence. This can lead to disagreements with the family's established structures and norms.

Most importantly, unresolved arguments within a family can have long-lasting effects that go beyond the current disagreement. Parents need to be aware that ongoing disagreements can hurt relationships. This can lead to emotional distress for both teenagers and their families. When disagreements go on for a long time, it can affect the communication and atmosphere in your family. This can lead to negative feelings and strain on relationships, which isn't good for anyone's mental health.

As a parent, it's important to understand that adolescent disagreements are a normal part of their development. It's common for children to desire more independence as they grow older, but it can sometimes lead to conflicts within the family. When it comes to your child's divergent ideas, development of identities, and struggle for independence, parents need to understand that these factors can sometimes lead to escalating conflict situations. Regarding conflicts within families, parents must be mindful of specific factors that can contribute to these challenges. One important thing to consider is the difficulty in communicating effectively. It's important to foster open and honest communication with your children. Encourage them to express their thoughts and feelings respectfully. Parents need to be mindful of having unrealistic expectations, as it can put a strain on relationships. It's important to guide your children in setting realistic goals and support them as they pursue their aspirations. Lastly, parents must teach their children suitable coping mechanisms for stress and emotions. It's important to provide guidance and model healthy coping strategies to prevent ongoing conflicts within your family.

To overcome disputes within the family, it is necessary to undergo a transformational shift in both actions and attitudes. Some crucial starting points include open communication, active listening, and the building of sympathetic understanding within the family unit. Developing appropriate ways for

adolescents to express their feelings is beneficial, and families should strive to cultivate an atmosphere that acknowledges and appreciates differences while encouraging compromise.

Parents have a significant part to play in fostering effective methods of conflict resolution. It is necessary to provide an example of effective communication, listen actively, and establish a secure environment where open expression may occur. It is possible to attain a healthy balance of structure and autonomy by establishing unambiguous expectations and boundaries while allowing for the person's development. Parents have the potential to act as mentors, guiding their adolescents through the difficulties of managing the complexities of their feelings while also offering a secure environment for inquiry.

When implementing conflict resolution tactics in their families, parents frequently confront several problems. Here are some typical difficulties they may face along with related strategies:

1. Emotional Intensity: -

Challenge: Emotions can run high during confrontations, making it difficult for parents and children to communicate properly.

Strategy: Encourage open conversation, educate emotional management, and model calm behaviour to allow everyone to express themselves without escalating the issue.

2. Different Communication Styles: -

Challenge: Parents and children may have different communication styles, which can lead to misunderstandings and misinterpretations.

Strategy: Encourage active listening skills and empathy to improve comprehension. Encourage family members to express themselves openly and politely.

3. Power Imbalance: -

Challenge: Power imbalances within the family can stymie effective dispute resolution.

Strategy: Create an environment in which everyone feels heard and appreciated. Set up family gatherings to discuss issues cooperatively and, where appropriate, engage children in decision-making.

4. Consistency: -

Challenge: Applying conflict resolution tactics consistently can be difficult, especially when parents are busy or stressed.

Strategy: Create consistent family rules and consequences. Set aside time for family conversations, and ensure that sanctions for bad behaviour are fair and consistent.

5. Cultural and Generational Differences: -

Challenge: Parents and children may have distinct cultural origins or generational viewpoints, resulting in disputes in values and expectations.

Strategy: Encourage open dialogue regarding cultural and generational disparities. Encourage learning and understanding among family members, and look for common ground to build on.

6. Limited Time: -

Challenge: Time constraints may restrict the time parents devote to properly resolving issues.

Strategy: Make dispute resolution a priority in your family life. Schedule frequent family gatherings or check-ins to discuss problems and keep lines of communication open.

7. Modelling Behaviour: -

Challenge: Children frequently learn conflict resolution skills by seeing their parents' behaviour.

Strategy: Model positive conflict resolution behaviours. Display active listening, compromise, and problem-solving skills to provide a good example for youngsters.

8. Resistance to Change: -

Challenge: Family members may resist adopting new conflict management tactics, especially if they are accustomed to specific behaviour patterns.

Strategy: Introduce changes gradually, include family members in decision-making, and emphasise the benefits of healthy conflict resolution. Positive behaviour should be reinforced with praise and encouragement.

9. External pressures: -

Challenge: External issues such as peer pressure, school stress, or societal pressures can all contribute to family disputes.

Strategy: Maintain awareness of your children's external influences and give a helpful atmosphere. Encourage open discussion regarding external constraints and collaborate to overcome obstacles.

10. Unresolved concerns: -

Challenge: Unresolved disagreements can compound over time, leading to deeper concerns within the family.

Strategy: Address disagreements when they emerge to keep them from escalating. If recurrent or complicated difficulties require specialised attention, consider getting professional aid, such as family therapy.

Parents should be able to communicate a commitment to their children, which can sound something like the one given below:

I, [Your Name], as the parent of [Child's Name], am aware of the significance of establishing a home environment conducive to good communication and socialisation. This is a commitment on my part to actively listen to [Child's Name], establish a secure place for free expression, and cultivate an atmosphere that acknowledges and appreciates differences while encouraging compromise. By doing so, I will contribute to the family dynamic in which problems are resolved with respect and understanding.

Patience, empathy, and a dedication to ongoing communication are essential while handling disagreements with teenagers. By implementing these tactics, parents may efficiently handle disputes and help develop resilient, confident, and emotionally intelligent young people.

QUIZ

1. What is conflict?

- a) A peaceful disagreement between individuals
- b) A situation where everyone agrees and there is no tension
- c) A disagreement or struggle between two or more parties

Answer: c) A disagreement or struggle between two or more parties

2. Why is conflict resolution important in families?

- a) It helps to escalate conflicts and make them worse
- b) It promotes healthy communication and strengthens relationships
- c) It has no impact on family dynamics or harmony

Answer: b) It promotes healthy communication and strengthens relationships

3. What are some effective strategies for resolving conflicts with adolescents?

- a) Ignoring the conflict and hoping it will go away on its own
- b) Using aggressive communication and imposing authority
- c) Encouraging open dialogue, active listening, and finding compromises

Answer: c) Encouraging open dialogue, active listening, and finding compromises

BEHAVIOURS AND BARRIERS

GAMES AND ACTIVITIES

COMMITMENT TO CHILD

USEFUL LINKS

Conflict Resolution Role-Play

Write common conflict scenarios on cards (e.g., 'Two siblings want the same toy', 'Parent and teen disagree on curfew time'). Family members draw a card and act out the conflict, then switch roles to act out the resolution using 'I feel... when... because...' statements. Discuss what worked best. This builds empathy and communication skills.

CHAPTER 35: CONSTRUCTIVE FEEDBACK

KNOWLEDGE AND CAUSES

As a parent, it's important to remember that constructive feedback can be valuable for your child's personal and professional development. It can help them identify areas for improvement and encourage their growth. When giving feedback to your child, remember to be specific, avoid passing judgment, and focus on encouraging positive growth. When providing feedback to your child, it's important to remember that constructive feedback is more effective than criticism. Instead of focusing on their faults, highlight specific behaviours and actions to improve. Offer suggestions and guidance on how they can enhance their skills or behaviour. Parents need to create an environment where individuals can learn from their experiences, build on their strengths, and address areas for improvement.

When giving feedback to your child, it's important to remember a few key points. First, make sure your feedback is clear and easy to understand. This will help your child better comprehend what you're trying to convey. Second, keep your feedback relevant to the situation at hand. Avoid bringing up unrelated topics or past mistakes. Lastly, focus on your observed behaviour rather than making it about your child's attributes. This will help them understand what they can improve without feeling attacked or criticised. Remember that it's important to have a collaborative approach with your child regarding parenting. Encourage open communication and work together towards improvement. As a parent, it's important to remember that constructive feedback is not just about pointing out mistakes. Acknowledging your child's successes and offering guidance for their future development is equally important.

Consequences of lack of constructive feedback:

As a parent, it's important to remember that the lack of constructive feedback can significantly affect your child and your family. As a parent, it's important to provide feedback to your child so they can recognise areas where they can improve. This will help them grow both personally and professionally. As a parent, it's important to remember that misunderstandings happen when expectations aren't communicated. This can result in unproductive behaviours and a lack of motivation in your child. Ensure you effectively communicate your expectations to avoid confusion and encourage positive behaviour and motivation. As a parent, it's important to remember that constructive feedback plays a crucial role in your child's development. Just like in a work setting, the absence of constructive feedback can have negative consequences. It can lead to decreased engagement from your child, a higher likelihood of them seeking other influences, and a lack of growth in their overall character. So, provide constructive feedback to your child regularly, which helps create a positive and thriving family dynamic.

Causes of the Problem lack of constructive feedback:

When it comes to providing constructive feedback, a few factors can contribute to reluctance or the absence of it. Parents need to understand that fear of conflict is something many individuals experience. They may worry about negative reactions or damaging relationships. Insufficient communication skills, both in giving and receiving feedback, can also have an impact. Parents must remember that fear of being seen as critical can hinder feedback. Try to overcome this fear and actively give your children feedback.

QUIZ

1. What is constructive feedback?

- a) Criticizing someone without offering any solutions
- b) Providing feedback that is helpful and promotes growth
- c) Ignoring someone's performance or behavior

Answer: b) Providing feedback that is helpful and promotes growth

2. Why is constructive feedback important?

- a) It helps to demotivate and discourage individuals
- b) It promotes personal development and improvement
- c) It has no impact on performance or relationships

Answer: b) It promotes personal development and improvement

3. What are some characteristics of constructive feedback?

- a) Focusing only on the negative aspects
- b) Being vague and general in the feedback provided
- c) Being specific, actionable, and respectful

Answer: c) Being specific, actionable, and respectful

BEHAVIOURS AND BARRIERS

Desired Changes or Behaviors to be Adopted

Parents need to understand that a shift in mindset and behaviour is crucial when addressing the issue of a lack of constructive feedback. As a parent, it's important to teach your children the importance of feedback in their journey of improvement and growth. Encourage them to recognise the value of receiving feedback from others, as it can catalyse their personal development. It is crucial to encourage a culture of open communication within your family. View feedback as an opportunity for learning and growth. Regarding parenting, it's important to develop and improve your communication skills. This will

help you give feedback to your child in a constructive way. Remember to focus on specific actions and how they impact the situation rather than criticising their attributes.

Giving constructive feedback as a parent can sometimes be challenging due to various barriers. Overcoming these barriers requires thoughtful strategies to ensure effective communication and positive outcomes. Here are strategies for parents to overcome common barriers in giving constructive feedback:

1. Fear of Negative Reactions:

Strategy: Start with positive feedback

Start the conversation by acknowledging the positive aspects of your child's behaviour or actions. This will help create a constructive and supportive atmosphere for your discussion. Before discussing areas where your child can improve, it's important first to acknowledge and appreciate their strengths. By recognising their abilities and positive qualities, you can create a supportive and encouraging environment for them to grow. This approach will boost their self-esteem and motivate them to work on areas that need improvement. Remember, focusing on their strengths will help them develop a well-rounded set of skills and build a strong foundation for their future success. When discussing sensitive topics with your child, it's important to approach the conversation in a way that reduces defensiveness and encourages openness. By using this approach, you can create a more receptive environment for meaningful dialogue.

2. Lack of Time:

Strategy: Schedule dedicated feedback time

As a parent, finding a specific time to provide feedback to your child when you can fully focus without distractions is important. This will allow for a more effective and meaningful conversation where your child can truly absorb and understand your feedback. By setting aside dedicated time for this purpose, you can ensure that your feedback is given in a supportive and constructive manner, helping your child grow and learn. As a parent, it's important to prioritise conversations with your child by scheduling dedicated feedback sessions. This shows them you value their thoughts and allows for a more meaningful and thoughtful exchange.

3. Ineffective Communication Skills:

Strategy: Be specific and concrete

When addressing your child's behaviour, it's important to focus on specific behaviours rather than making general statements. By doing so, you can provide clear guidance and help your child understand what actions are expected of them. Instead of saying, "You always misbehave," try saying, "I noticed you didn't clean up your toys after playing today. It's important to take responsibility for our belongings and keep our space tidy." When addressing your child's behaviour, clearly communicating what you have observed is important. Be specific and describe the behaviour so your child understands exactly what you are referring to. Additionally, explain the impact that this behaviour has had, whether it's on

themselves, others, or the overall situation. This will help your child comprehend the consequences of their actions. Instead of simply pointing out the negative behaviour, it's also helpful to suggest alternative actions. Offer your child alternative ways to approach the situation. When giving feedback to your child, it's important to provide concrete examples. This will help them better understand expected changes and how to improve.

4. Fear of Damaging the Relationship:

Strategy: Emphasize growth and improvement

When providing feedback to your child, it's important to approach it as a tool for their growth and improvement rather than simply criticising them. Doing so can create a positive and supportive environment that encourages their development. Make sure to express your love and support to your child, letting them know you intend to help them succeed. As a parent, teaching your child that everyone makes mistakes is important. Remind them that making mistakes is a natural part of learning and growing. Instead of viewing feedback as criticism, encourage them to see it as an opportunity to learn and improve. They can develop resilience and a growth mindset by embracing their mistakes and using feedback constructively.

5. Lack of Awareness or Understanding:

Strategy: Educate on the importance of feedback

As a parent, it's important to teach your child about the importance of constructive feedback in their personal and academic growth. Encourage them to embrace feedback as a valuable tool for improvement and development. Help them understand that feedback is not meant to criticise or discourage but to provide guidance and support. Teach them to seek feedback from teachers, peers, and mentors actively and to listen attentively and reflect on the feedback they receive. By instilling this value in your child, you are equipping them with a mindset that will foster continuous learning and growth. When discussing feedback with your child, it's important to emphasise that it's not about pointing out flaws but fostering continuous improvement. It's important to help your child understand that receiving feedback is a normal and necessary part of life. Feedback is not something to be feared or avoided but rather embraced as a valuable tool for growth and success. Encourage them to view feedback as an opportunity to learn and improve rather than a personal attack or criticism. By developing the skill of accepting and utilising feedback, your child will be better equipped to navigate challenges and achieve their goals in the future.

6. Resistance to Change:

Strategy: Involve your child in goal setting

It's important to collaborate with your child when setting goals. By working together and considering their feedback, you can help them establish achievable goals that they can strive towards. When parents involve their children in decision-making, they are more likely to experience higher motivation levels

and less resistance. Encouraging your child to take ownership and responsibility can be a beneficial approach.

7. Personal Discomfort with Giving Feedback:

Strategy: Practice and Role-play

If you're a parent and feel uncomfortable giving feedback to your child, practice beforehand. One way to help your child build confidence is by engaging in role-play scenarios with them and their friend or partner. This activity can be fun and interactive for them to practise different social situations and develop self-assurance. By taking on different roles and acting out various scenarios, they can better understand how to handle different interactions and build their confidence in the process. Encourage them to explore different scenarios such as ordering food. As a parent, remember that the more you encourage your child to practise, the more comfortable and natural they will become at giving and receiving feedback.

8. Choose the Right Setting:

Strategy: Create a Comfortable Environment

Select a comfortable and private setting for feedback discussions. Ensuring privacy and minimising interruptions allows for a focused and open conversation. A relaxed environment fosters a sense of safety, making your child more receptive to feedback.

9. Emphasize Effort and Progress:

Strategy: Celebrate Efforts Alongside Achievements

Recognise and celebrate the efforts your child puts into their tasks. Acknowledge progress, even if the result isn't perfect. This approach encourages a positive mindset and makes the feedback process less intimidating.

10. Foster Two-Way Communication:

Strategy: Encourage Your Child to Share Their Perspective

Create an open dialogue by encouraging your child to express their thoughts and feelings. Ask for their perspective on the feedback and listen actively. This two-way communication helps build trust and strengthens your relationship.

By employing these strategies, parents can overcome barriers and create an environment where constructive feedback becomes a valuable tool for mutual understanding and growth within the family. Positive behavioural changes characterise a successful outcome of providing suitable constructive feedback to an adolescent child, improved communication, strengthened parent-child relationships, and the development of essential life skills. Here's a detailed look at what a successful outcome entails:

1. Improved Understanding:

The children gain a clearer understanding of the behaviour in question, its consequences, and the reasons behind the feedback.

2. Positive Behavioral Changes:

The adolescent makes a conscious effort to change or improve the identified behaviours. Constructive feedback catalyses positive change.

3. Open Communication:

The parent and adolescent establish open communication, fostering an environment where concerns and feedback can be freely shared without fear of judgment.

4. Strengthened Relationship:

Providing constructive feedback builds trust and strengthens the bond between the parent and adolescent. The adolescent feels supported and understood.

5. Enhanced Problem-Solving Skills:

Through constructive feedback, the adolescent learns problem-solving skills. They actively engage in finding solutions to issues, fostering independence and resilience.

6. Increased Self-Awareness:

Constructive feedback contributes to increased self-awareness. Adolescents recognise their strengths and areas where they can grow, promoting self-reflection and personal development.

7. Confidence Building:

Constructive feedback, when delivered positively, boosts the adolescent's confidence. They understand that feedback is a tool for improvement, not a reflection of their worth.

8. Goal Setting and Achievement:

With constructive feedback, they learn to set realistic goals and work towards achieving them. Small successes are celebrated, reinforcing a positive mindset.

9. Establishment of a Feedback Loop:

A continuous feedback loop is established. The adolescent feels comfortable seeking feedback and actively participates in discussions, creating an ongoing improvement process.

10. Increased Emotional Intelligence:

The adolescent develops emotional intelligence, learning to manage reactions to feedback, express emotions constructively, and consider others' perspectives.

11. Mutual Respect:

The parent and adolescent develop a mutual respect for opinions and perspectives. Feedback is received with openness and a willingness to learn.

12. Long-Term Positive Impact:

Constructive feedback has a lasting positive impact. The lessons learned contribute to the adolescent's overall personal and interpersonal development well into adulthood.

In essence, a successful outcome of providing suitable constructive feedback to an adolescent child goes beyond immediate behavioural changes. It encompasses developing crucial life skills, a positive mindset, and a foundation for lifelong learning and growth.

GAMES AND ACTIVITIES

COMMITMENT TO CHILD

USEFUL LINKS

Feedback Sandwich Game

Create cards with sample behaviors (positive and negative). Family members practice giving 'feedback sandwiches' — starting with praise, then suggesting improvement, then ending with encouragement. For example: 'I appreciate you helping with dishes. Next time, could you rinse them first? Your willingness to help makes our home better.' Practice makes feedback feel natural.

CHAPTER 36: GOAL SETTING

KNOWLEDGE AND CAUSES

Introduction: The Symphony of Ambition

Our aspirations are the colorful threads that weave our individual stories into the complex tapestry that is life. A compass that leads us through the maze of options is the pursuit of these ambitions, which are embodied in the skill of goal setting. Reaching our objectives and achieving them is a transforming talent that helps us succeed and feel fulfilled, whether in our personal or professional lives.

Our aspirations are the brushstrokes on the masterpiece that is our life, waiting to be painted with intentional guidance. Setting goals helps us turn possibilities into accomplishments and dreams into attainable realities by acting as a compass through the dark areas.

This chapter delves into the complexities of goal setting, taking the reader on a journey that extends beyond simple resolutions to include strategic aim. We will explore the fundamentals of objectives, dissect the SMART criterion that turns abstract aspirations into workable plans, and traverse the landscape of both immediate successes and long-term dreams as we set out on this journey.

The subjects that lie ahead serve as a roadmap for achieving our goals and for maximizing the potential that exists inside each of us. Are you prepared to set off on this life-changing journey of accomplishment and self-discovery? Now let's explore how to become proficient in the profound talent of goal setting.

Comprehending Objectives: Handling the Terrain of Aspirations

It is necessary for us to explore the subtleties of specificity and significance in order to comprehend goals. Every objective is a narrative with its own characters, stories, and happy endings just waiting to be revealed. We discover the nuances of creating objectives that not only move us forward but also speak to the essence of who we are as we set out on this deciphering journey.

Fundamentally, goals are the points on a map of our lives that indicate the places we are trying to get to. They offer focus, direction, and a feeling of accomplishment. Objectives serve as the benchmarks that track our development and provide us with motivation, whether they be short-term objectives or long-term ambitions.

Edwin Locke is a well-known psychologist well known for his contributions to goal-setting theory. Setting goals, in Locke's view, entails defining precise, difficult targets that come with feedback and are reachable with work. He places a strong emphasis on the value of specific, quantifiable goals because he thinks they improve performance and motivation by giving employees a clear path and benchmark for achievement. According to Locke's research, defining clear, difficult goals can motivate people and organizations to reach greater heights of success.

Albert Bandura is a prominent psychologist who also has an impact on goal-setting. The social cognitive theory pioneer Bandura highlights the importance of self-efficacy in goal-setting. When people believe they can reach their objectives, they are more likely to set and pursue them, according to Bandura. People's choices of goals and their tenacity in the face of difficulty are greatly influenced by their level of self-efficacy, or belief in their own talents. The relationship between having confidence in oneself and establishing and achieving worthwhile goals is highlighted by Bandura's work.

Fundamentally, goals are the expression of our dreams; they translate vague aspirations into specific, attainable objectives. They act as guiding lights, illuminating the path ahead and provide a structure for advancement. Goals are the fundamental components of a trip with a purpose, whether they take the form of synchronized long-term aims or frantic short-term sprints.

SMART Criteria of Goal Setting:

A popular framework for creating goals that increases the probability of goal achievement is the SMART criterion. SMART is an acronym that stands for:

Specific: Objectives must be precise, well-stated, and unmistakable. A specific aim, as opposed to an abstract objective, specifies precisely what has to be done.

Measurable: Objectives ought to have precise standards for monitoring development and figuring out when they've been met. Measurable metrics offer lucidity and facilitate evaluation of achievement.

Achievable: Objectives must to be reachable and reasonable. Although having challenging goals is important, they shouldn't be so extreme as to be unachievable or discouraging.

Relevant: Aims ought to be pertinent to the overarching mission or purpose and should line up with more general aims. Ensuring relevance contributes to motivation and focus maintenance.

Time-bound: Objectives ought to be completed within a set amount of time or by a set date. Setting a deadline helps prioritize work and instills a sense of urgency.

Through the use of the SMART criteria, individuals and businesses can optimise their goal-setting process, rendering their goals more feasible, quantifiable, and likely to result in positive outcomes.

Another extension of the SMART criteria that is sometimes added is:

Evaluate and Review: This entails monitoring development on a regular basis, making necessary strategy adjustments, and celebrating successes. Goals are kept realistic and relevant as situations change with regular evaluation. By include this element, you are highlighting how crucial it is to continuously reflect and be flexible while creating goals. In order to guarantee steady progress toward their goals, it pushes both individuals and groups to regularly assess their progress, draw lessons from past mistakes, and improve their strategy.

Apart from the SMART criteria, contemplate integrating the notion of being,

Virtuous: Objectives ought to be in line with moral principles and ideals. The pursuit of objectives does not jeopardize integrity when ethical considerations are taken into account, and responsible and sustainable achievement is encouraged.

This update emphasizes how crucial it is to make sure objectives are achieved honorably and within moral.

The Kaleidoscope of Aspirations: Diverse Types of Goals

Goals take on diverse forms in the complex dance of hopes and desires, each contributing a unique color to the picture of our existence. Exploring the diverse range of goals that influence our path, let's dive into the rainbow of aspirations.

Short-Term Triumphs: Our immediate route is illuminated by short-term goals, much like the stars in our night sky. These are the attainable benchmarks that, upon reaching them, provide a feeling of advancement and success.

Long-Term Goals: Against the background of our overarching vision, long-term goals are the overarching stories that mold our life. They frequently necessitate consistent work and strategic planning, directing us over a protracted period of time toward important turning points.

Personal Development Goals: As we set out on a path of self-improvement, these objectives serve as the compass that points the way toward a more sophisticated and evolved version of ourselves. They include gaining new skills, developing moral character, and making a commitment to lifelong learning.

Career Goals: Career goals outline the route to achievement in the professional sphere. These could include advancing one's skills, changing careers, pursuing leadership goals, or starting one's own business, all of which can lead to a happy and satisfying job.

Health goals: These are the compass pointing us in the direction of physical and mental vigor while fostering our well-being. These objectives, which range from mindfulness exercises to physical milestones, support the path to a harmonious and healthy existence.

Economic Frontiers: Objectives pertaining to savings, investments, and financial security are cornerstones of stability in the world of financial planning. They clear the path for a safe and successful future.

Relational Constellations: Relationship goals honor the skill of connection and are woven throughout our lives. These objectives enhance the human experience, whether they are focused on building sexual relationships, friendships, or family ties.

Every kind of objective adds a different pattern to the complex tapestry of goals we navigate, telling a tale of satisfaction and meaning. Accept the variety of your aims since that is how your life's work comes to be—in the pursuit of numerous, significant objectives.

Interpreting Priorities: Setting priorities is like meticulously arranging the colorful tiles that make up the picture of our journey in the complex mosaic of goals. Take into account these sophisticated methods

for identifying and setting priorities for your goals in order to successfully traverse this complex environment.

Integrated Visioning: Start by creating a comprehensive picture of the world you want. Think of your goals as a larger tapestry, and make sure that each one adds something significant to the overall picture.

Time Sensitivity: Determine how urgently each goal has to be completed. While some goals can be completed right away, others might take some time to complete. Making a strategic timeline for your endeavors is made easier by differentiating between short-term and long-term goals.

Think About Long-Term Effects: Assess the possible long-term effects of any objective. While some goals could be more ephemeral, others might have a bigger impact on your overall vision. A complete strategy is ensured by striking a balance between short- and long-term goals.

Harmony Gains in the Short Term with a Long-Term Goal: Achieve a balance between immediate success and long-term goals. Even if short-term successes are rewarding, making sure they match your long-term goals helps you avoid taking a narrow view and encourages long-term success.

Resource Allocation: Use caution when allocating resources. Recognize the time, effort, and money that each goal requires. Aim for a balance that allows for prolonged effort without sacrificing health.

Storyline Sequencing: Identify how your objectives' stories are tied to one another. Determine dependencies and arrange your goals in a sensible order. This story-telling technique guarantees a coherent and significant development of your goals.

Apply the ABCD Technique: Prioritize tasks by applying the ABCD technique. Assign objectives to the following categories: A (critical), B (important), C (good to have), and D (low priority). While keeping an eye on the other targets, concentrate your efforts on the A-category objectives.

Accept the 80/20 Rule: Use the Pareto Principle to recognize that, on average, 20% of efforts yield 80% of the results. Decide which objectives will have the most effects and focus your efforts there.

Use an Iterative Approach: Setting priorities for your goals is a continuous process. Adopt an iterative strategy and evaluate your objectives on a frequent basis in light of evolving circumstances or personal development. This adaptability enables you to make changes that keep you moving in the direction of success.

Through deliberate and flexible navigation of the difficulties, you create a journey that not only gets you where you're going but also develops into a meaningful and rewarding experience.

The Craft of Personal Goal-Setting

Every objective turns into a lighthouse that points us in the direction of a more purposeful and happy life. When you create goals for yourself, every choice you make becomes a thread that weaves into the fabric of your life. Let's examine the art of creating personal objectives, which is a craft that involves intention, vision, and deliberate action.

Sync with basic principles: Set the stage for the symphony by aligning yourself with your basic principles. Which values direct your life? Personal objectives resonate more deeply when they are in line with the genuine chords of your values, just like notes do in music.

Describe Your Goals: Visualize the life you want. For you, what does success look like? Having a clear vision for your life gives you a clear path for creating goals, whether they have to do with embracing self-improvement, reaching personal milestones, or developing meaningful relationships.

Gentle Weaving of Action Steps: Divide your large-scale project into more manageable chunks. Every objective turns into a finely woven thread that adds to the overall design. By dissecting them, you can make sure that your journey's beauty is progressively revealed as your tapestry expands.

Perform a Melodic Dissection: Divide the overall composition into lyrical sections. Every objective turns into a note in the song, a unique but necessary component of the symphony. Dividing them into manageable steps makes the composition become a dynamic and progressive journey.

Take the SMART Approach: Use the SMART criteria to add clarity to your objectives. Make sure they are Time-bound, Relevant, Specific, Measurable, and Achievable. This methodical process converts intangible goals into workable programs.

Organize the Priority Crescendo: Set your priorities in order of increasing significance. Every objective adds to the increasing level of performance in your life. Putting them in a purposeful order guarantees that your symphony develops in a way that is both organic and powerful.

Flexibility in the Design: Welcome flexibility in your tapestry. Permit the design to change in response to your evolving needs and as you develop personally. This adaptability guarantees that your tapestry will always represent your dynamic trip.

Build Up Your Resonant Resilience: Develop a spirit of resilience that will shine through all of your personal goals' successes and setbacks. Consider failures as chances to create a deeper, more impactful performance, akin to the persistence of a musical note.

Acknowledge Your Development: Honor the turning points in your path. Thank you for your efforts and congratulations on your progress. This exercise cultivates an optimistic and grateful mindset in addition to maintaining motivation.

Think and Modify: Take regular breaks to consider your journey. Evaluate your own development, the success of your tactics, and your willingness to modify your objectives. Your goals will always be in line with your changing self if you engage in this introspective activity.

The Craft of Establishing Career Objectives

Determine your overall career aims before setting any professional goals. If your goal is to advance in your current role, for example, be specific about the position or duties you hope to attain. Make sure your objectives, like learning a new skill, finishing a project, or hitting a certain performance target, are quantifiable.

Setting goals for one's career requires careful planning and strategy. Think about the following guidelines:

Clarity of Vision: Establish a clear picture of your long-term professional goals at the outset. Your objectives should provide direction and purpose, acting as stepping stones toward this larger vision.

Prioritize Significance: Pay attention to objectives that will have a big influence on your development personally as well as the contributions you make to your group and company. Set objectives that are consistent with your passions and values.

Strike a balance between realism and ambition: While setting lofty objectives that motivate you, make sure they are doable and practical. Maintaining motivation without putting oneself in a frustrating situation requires finding a balance between ambition and practicality.

Constant Self-Reflection: Consider your objectives and how well they fit with your changing priorities and values on a regular basis. Changes in your personal and professional situations may call for adjustments.

Holistic Approach: Take into account setting goals that address several aspects of your work life, including networking, teamwork, leadership, and skill development. A comprehensive strategy guarantees a robust and well-rounded professional profile.

Accept Failure as a Teaching Opportunity: Recognize that obstacles are a necessary part of the process. Consider them as opportunities to grow, adjust, and improve your objectives rather than as a cause for negative thought.

Collaboration and Assistance: Incorporate friends, mentors, or coworkers into the goal-setting process. Their help and insights can boost your chances of success and offer insightful viewpoints.

Planning should be flexible: But even with this, you should be willing to change course when new possibilities or difficulties arise. Your ability to navigate a changing professional landscape is improved by flexibility.

Inspired Action: Permit your objectives to motivate you. They ought to inspire a feeling of dedication and enthusiasm in you, inspiring you to make steady progress in the direction of your goals.

Celebrate Progress: Acknowledge and commemorate each little victory as it occurs. Acknowledging your progress helps you stay on track and retain a positive outlook.

Iteration and Evolution: Approach goal-setting as a process that is repeated. You may discover new chances and desires as you accomplish your goals. Permit your objectives to change over time in reaction to your evolving situation.

These components help you establish a dynamic and relevant framework for professional goal-setting that can accelerate your career success and fulfillment.

Overcoming Obstacles

Achieving long-term success in goal setting requires overcoming obstacles. The following are tactics to deal with typical roadblocks:

Lack of Clarity: Clearly state your objectives as the solution. Divide them into attainable, quantifiable, and precise goals. This clarity gives you a plan of action.

Procrastination: Identify due dates for every task. Large activities should be broken down into smaller, more manageable steps and completed one at a time. Create a schedule to help you stay consistent.

Fear of Failure: Overcome it by accepting that failure is a necessary component of learning. Change your perspective to view failures as chances for personal development. Examine what went wrong and modify your strategy as necessary.

Vast Objectives: Resolution Break down large objectives into manageable tasks. To avoid feeling overburdened, concentrate on finishing one task at a time. Appreciate your little progress along the way.

Lack of Motivation: Resolved by tying your objectives to a more expansive aim or vision. Seek out motivation and constantly remind yourself of the advantages and significance of reaching your objectives.

External Distractions: Identify and reduce outside distractions as a solution. Establish boundaries, designate a specific workspace, and practice good time management. Sort the jobs according to priority.

Lack of Resource : Analyze the resources required to meet your objectives. Look for more help, whether it comes from cooperation, training, or purchasing the required equipment. When addressing problems, use creativity and ingenuity.

Lack of Support: Resolved: Share your objectives with loved ones, coworkers, or friends who can offer motivation and support. Think about joining a community in your field or locating a mentor.

Changing Priorities: Review and modify your goals on a regular basis to take into account the shifting priorities. Setting goals with flexibility guarantees that your goals will always be pertinent.

Perfectionism: Embrace the fact that it's unachievable. Pay attention to ongoing development and acknowledge advancements. Acknowledge that errors are chances for improvement rather than grounds to give up on your objectives.

Uncertain Route: Fix: Compile information and conduct research on your field of work and career path. Seek advice from professionals or mentors who have experienced a comparable situation. Divide your objectives into more doable, smaller steps.

Burnout: Remedy Put your wellbeing and self-care first. Make sure you take breaks, establish a work-life balance, and set aside time for rest and renewal. Take action to treat the symptoms of burnout after you've identified them

By taking proactive measures to overcome these barriers, you may strengthen your resilience and raise your chances of overcoming the difficulties that frequently arise throughout goal-setting procedures.

Navigating Horizons: A Finale in Goal Mastery

To sum up, the process of establishing and accomplishing career goals is an exciting and life-changing experience that necessitates commitment, introspection, and thoughtful preparation. Accepting the ideas presented in this chapter gives you the ability to take charge of your professional development.

Recall that the foundation of successful goal-setting is clarity. Give your goals a clear definition, divide them into doable steps, and apply SMART criteria. Face obstacles head-on with courage, realizing that they are not obstacles to overcome but rather opportunities for improvement.

Additionally, approach your goals with flexibility and an openness to change. The nature of work is dynamic, so your capacity to change course and modify your goals will guarantee your success and relevance in the long run.

Seek out mentors, friends, and coworkers for support as you set out on this adventure. Together, celebrate your accomplishments and set goals. Collaboration has the capacity to offer new insights, support, and the willpower to keep going.

Prioritize your well-being in the process of achieving your goals. Long-term momentum and fulfillment are guaranteed by a sensible, well-balanced strategy. Continually assess your progress, draw lessons from both achievements and setbacks, and be flexible in adjusting your objectives to better suit your changing desires.

Creating a vision for your future and taking deliberate actions to make it a reality is, at its core, the art of defining professional goals. When you fervently and sincerely put these principles into practice, you'll see your goals materialize and advance you toward a prosperous and satisfying life.

Activity 1: Self-reflection: It is an effective strategy for wellbeing and personal development. Psychologists suggest the following activities and questions to help in self-reflection:

Strengths Assessment:

Task: Utilize instruments such as the VIA Survey of Character Strengths to determine your areas of strength.

Question: Which three of your strengths are the strongest, and how can you use them to overcome obstacles?

Timeline of Life Events:

Task: Compile a list of important events in your life, both easy and difficult.

Question: Consider how these experiences have influenced your ideals, convictions, and goals.

Keep a decision journal and record all of your decisions, no matter how major or minor, along with your justifications:

Question: What are the recurring themes or patterns in your decision-making process, and where can you make improvements?

Difficulty Recognition:

Exercise: Take on a task that pushes you outside your comfort zone and consider what you learned from it.

Question: What self-awareness did this challenge teach you, and how can you use this newfound understanding?

Daily Review of the Teachings Acquired:

Exercise: Write in your journal about one new lesson, either easy or difficult, that you learnt each day.

Question: What themes or patterns come through in your daily musings, and how do they help you grow personally?

Thoughts on Feedback:

Task: Contemplate on the latest input you've received from people, both favorable and constructive.

Question: What knowledge can you acquire from the criticism, and how can it help you advance both personally and professionally?

Failure Analysis:

Task: Examine a previous setback or failure, taking into account both controllable and uncontrollable variables.

Question: How can you see failure as a teaching opportunity and what positive actions can you take going forward?

Ideals in Practice:

Task: Name a recent instance in which you felt content and in line with your principles.

Question: How can you consciously make more experiences that are consistent with your basic beliefs?

Media Detox Reflection:

Task: Take a break from the media and note how it affects your thoughts and mood. This is a reflection on media detoxification.

Question: What observations did you make during the detox, and how might you develop a more positive connection with media use?

QUIZ

Which of the following is a SMART goal?

- a) "I want to lose weight."
- b) "I will lose 10 pounds by the end of next month by exercising for 30 minutes every day and cutting down on sugary snacks."
- c) "I will try to get in better shape."
- d) "I want to be healthier."

Answer: b) "I will lose 10 pounds by the end of next month by exercising for 30 minutes every day and cutting down on sugary snacks."

What does the "R" stand for in SMART goals?

- a) Realistic
- b) Radical
- c) Relevant
- d) Reflective

Answer: c) Relevant

Which of the following is NOT a benefit of setting goals?

- a) Providing direction and purpose
- b) Enhancing motivation and focus
- c) Increasing procrastination
- d) Improving self-confidence and self-esteem

Answer: c) Increasing procrastination

BEHAVIOURS AND BARRIERS

GAMES AND ACTIVITIES

COMMITMENT TO CHILD

USEFUL LINKS

GAME: STEP by STEP

Aim:

The strategy of goal-setting is very helpful in making long-term goals or desirable ends seem easy to achieve. It helps set out small steps, like those of the ladder, that we can use to reach heights.

In the case of this game, we recognise that an increase in steps can benefit health. According to a LANCET study, 7000 steps (for seniors) to 9000 steps (for junior adults) is ideal per day.

Rules of the Game:

1. Set a goal. I will walk steps every day. Do not set a target that is too LOW or too HIGH. Anything over 2500 steps is a good beginning.
2. Follow the SMART rule. This means deciding on a SPECIFIC QUANTITY, MEASURABLE, ACHIEVABLE, REALISTIC, and TIMELY.
3. You can also measure the steps you take to go to work, school or to the shop.
4. If the task is too easy or difficult, revise it upwards every week. Make small revisions to your target. For example, add 200 steps per day.
5. Set a long-term goal of 7000 to 8000 steps.
6. You can set up a WhatsApp walking league with family & friends or use apps like STRAVA to monitor the LEAGUE.

CHAPTER 37: LOW SELF-ESTEEM

KNOWLEDGE AND CAUSES

We all hold certain opinions about ourselves—about what we think we are and our personality, among other things. These build a notion of our self-concept, providing us with an understanding of ourselves.

When these ideas are circumscribed by our notions of how we would like to be, how we compare to others, or even an ideal that we would like to aspire to—we attach a positive or negative evaluation of ourselves to our self-concept. This subjective evaluation of ourselves and our perception defines our self-esteem.

In this regard, when a person doesn't think positively about themselves or thinks that others are way better compared to them, they can be said to have low self-esteem. Low self-esteem suggests that we have a negative self-perception and are, in some ways, judging ourselves for being the way that we are.

What are the consequences of low self-esteem in adolescents?

A very common consequence of low self-esteem is a lack of confidence in the adolescent. This extends to school, family or personal life. While nervousness is natural, avoiding being in a position where they experience such negative mental states might make them averse to utilising any available opportunities.

A similar consequence might be the need for constant approval or validation from others. If they don't receive this, it might trigger a series of negative thoughts about themselves.

These two factors might make them anxious when taking up projects or working on something important because they might question their ability to do the work correctly. In such cases, students may be reluctant to try new things or be unable to tolerate low levels of frustration or stress that are typical when venturing into new activities. When it comes to their social life, they might question their ability to sustain a conversation with their friends and end up not initiating a conversation at all. This will further isolate them and make them feel helpless in all aspects of their life. Thus, low self-esteem can have a wide-ranging impact on the adolescent's life.

Having low self-esteem has also been a precursor to many negative experiences like bullying and engaging in risky behaviors. This is merely an extreme case of negative peer pressure.

For instance, they might want to be like someone they admire in school. This student might be known for being "cool" and not caring about things. They might seem adventurous, and open to risks and thus bunk their classes and roam around the nearby gardens. To develop a similar image, they themselves might engage in such activities which are harmful to them. Another instance is that they may readily take the blame for things that are not their fault or are out of their control. This is common in students who get bullied in their school life.

What are the causes of low self-esteem in adolescents?

A significant cause for low self-esteem can be constant criticism from parents and teachers. Criticism is helpful when given in the form of constructive feedback and can be counterintuitive when it is harsh and at the smallest of things. Such a form of communication can place the adolescent under constant pressure and result in a negative self-evaluation.

Put yourself in the position of a young child. Imagine your parent constantly commenting and pin-pointing at the smallest of things. Be it your grades at school, the way you tuck in your shirt or comb your hair or the kind of sports and sports players you take an interest in. To add to this, despite your efforts, your grades have not improved in the past few tests. These are bound to add up and make you feel like you could be better in many ways, and you must change yourself considerably to be likeable or valued.

A parallel issue is related to body image as well. People often make undue comments and remarks on people's bodies. Fat-shaming, colourist remarks, and comments on appearance and height, among others, are often sources of poor self-image. These make people feel self-conscious and contribute to self-esteem issues.

On the other hand, sometimes parents, teachers or even children themselves place unreal high standards for work and performance. It is good to be ambitious and strive to do better or maximise your potential. But it is important to remember that you can't be too hard on yourself if you take time or are facing difficulties in your journey. When the mind works in ways to make you feel like there's much more to be achieved and an ideal that you have to reach at, it is likely that it will affect your self-esteem.

What are desirable changes that can help avoid the negative impact of low self-esteem?

It is important to develop an accurate and positive self-concept, or in simpler terms, an honest and real understanding of yourself. The child needs to reflect on their self-image and form an accurate appraisal. They also need to realise that wishing to do better does not imply that the current self is not good enough. Everyone is different and has their own strengths. These things are important to consider when looking at one's self-esteem.

The above change needs to be brought about in the mindset of the child. However, parents and teachers cannot do much in this regard. They can only help them understand that people are unique and that it is important to embrace your own identity. The real change can be brought about only by the child. When it comes to changing one's relation with and perception of one's body, this video might be of some help.

Apart from this, there are several strategies that can help improve one's self-esteem. Parents and elders interacting with the child can help them understand their strengths and appreciate them for it. They can encourage the child to take part and excel in opportunities that showcase and utilize these strengths. It is also important for them to realise that failure is a part of life and an important one too. One must work hard and keep going regardless rather than thinking negatively about themselves.

Many times, the manner and amount of interaction with parents also affect the child's self-esteem. For instance, the parent may not take out enough time in the day for their child and prioritise their work more. Or else, they might keep scrolling on their phone or checking and replying to their messages when talking to their child. This denies the child their parent's undivided attention. The child might feel neglected and less important than other aspects of your life. Avoid such instances and make sure you spend enough quality time with them.

You can also help your child feel empowered by letting them make decisions for themselves. Give them responsibilities if they can handle them, let them be independent, and, importantly, praise them when they do it well or successfully. This will make them feel confident in their abilities.

Lastly, we know that parents are critical as role models. If you display poor self-esteem when interacting with your child, they will definitely learn from that. It is important for the parent as well to have healthy self-esteem so that the child can follow a good example.

QUIZ

1. What is low self-esteem?

- a) Having a positive and healthy view of oneself
- b) Feeling confident and secure in one's abilities
- c) Having a negative and low opinion of oneself

Answer: c) Having a negative and low opinion of oneself

2. What are some signs of low self-esteem?

- a) Feeling proud of one's accomplishments
- b) Constantly comparing oneself to others
- c) Having a strong sense of self-worth

Answer: b) Constantly comparing oneself to others

3. How can low self-esteem impact a person's life?

- a) It can lead to self-confidence and a positive self-image
- b) It can hinder personal growth and relationships
- c) It has no effect on a person's life

Answer: b) It can hinder personal growth and relationships

BEHAVIOURS AND BARRIERS

What are the barriers to desired changes for addressing the problem?

A difficult barrier could be that the parent would have to understand the reason for the child's low self-esteem. It would require a level of self-awareness on the part of the child and open communication between the parent and the child. However, not many families have such an environment. In fact, the lack of an environment for open communication is often the cause of such issues.

How do we overcome these barriers?

To address the barrier of lack of understanding of the cause of low self-esteem, parents need to maintain and foster a space for open communication within the family. For this, parents must be respectful of their children's thoughts and feelings rather than dismissing them. They must understand that during adolescence, the child goes through many mental and physical changes. It is a difficult time for them, and it is important to understand their point of view and emotions through this period. Thus, it is important to be kind and maintain open communication.

What does a successful outcome look like?

A successful outcome would involve a scenario where children develop an accurate understanding of their strengths and weaknesses and are no longer encumbered by low self-esteem and negative thoughts about themselves. Parents support their children in pursuing their strengths and are not unnecessarily critical of their children. They appreciate them when warranted and provide constructive criticism when it helps them improve. All this is done without placing any unrealistic expectations about achievements or performance on children.

This might seem like an ideal state; however, the above chapter will help you work towards it. Small changes in your approach toward parenting will amount to significant improvement in your child's development journey. Do use this opportunity to make a commitment to work toward such a day, and hence, we urge you to fill in this small letter as a reminder of that.

GAMES AND ACTIVITIES

COMMITMENT TO CHILD

This might seem like an ideal state; however, the above chapter will help you work towards it. Small changes in your approach toward parenting will amount to significant improvement in your child's development journey. Do use this opportunity to make a commitment to work toward such a day, and hence, we urge you to fill in this small letter as a reminder of that.

I, _____, parent of _____, would like to acknowledge that shielding my children from the negative impact of low self-esteem could pave the path for a healthier life for my child as well as the family. I realise that I might have played an active role in distorting my child's self-image as well. Thus, I strive to make small changes in my parenting style to build an environment for open and positive communication and to ease my child's experience through adolescence.

(Signature)

USEFUL LINKS

CHAPTER 38: OPEN AND CLEAR COMMUNICATION IN THE FAMILY

KNOWLEDGE AND CAUSES

Open and clear communication in a family means that everyone feels comfortable talking to each other about their thoughts, feelings, and concerns. It's like having an open door where everyone can share what's on their minds without fear. In a family with open communication, everyone listens and respects each other's opinions. This creates a supportive environment where teenagers can express themselves freely, knowing that their thoughts matter.

For teenagers, open and clear communication is incredibly important. It helps them feel understood and valued. When parents and teens can talk openly, it builds trust and strengthens their relationship. It also makes it easier for teenagers to share their challenges and seek guidance when needed. Knowing that their voices are heard and respected fosters a sense of belonging and emotional security, which is crucial during the sometimes turbulent teenage years. Open communication also helps parents stay aware of their teenagers' experiences, enabling them to provide appropriate support and guidance as their children navigate the complexities of adolescence.

Open and clear communication in a family is like a well-tended garden. When everyone talks and listens to each other, it's as if the plants get just the right amount of sunlight, water, and care. Just like how a garden thrives when there's good communication, a family flourishes when everyone shares their thoughts and feelings. It's like making sure all the flowers in the garden get what they need to grow beautifully. When families communicate openly, it's like tending to the garden together, creating a space where everyone can bloom and flourish.

Consequences of not having open and clear communication in the family.

QUIZ

BEHAVIOURS AND BARRIERS

GAMES AND ACTIVITIES

COMMITMENT TO CHILD

USEFUL LINKS

Family Message Board

Set up a physical message board in a common area. Family members write messages, appreciations, or reminders on sticky notes. Once a week, read the board together and discuss. This creates a visual record of family communication and ensures quieter members also have a voice.

CHAPTER 39: POSITIVE COMMUNICATION

KNOWLEDGE AND CAUSES

What is Positive Communication?

Read the following scenario

Fifteen-year-old Tanvi is a Class Ten student. She comes home from school looking rather dejected. Her mother asks Tanvi how her day at school was. Tanvi says “Mum, five of us have to work on a school project together. Our teacher has assigned different parts of the project to each of us. But I find three of my group mates uncooperative. They expect Anita and me to handle everything. Anita is good but she is not too confident. So, all this makes me feel very burdened. I tend to get angry and vent out my frustration and that only worsens matters.” Mother patiently listened to Tanvi as she shared her experience. She then said “Tanvi, I can understand your situation. We shall have a cup of tea and then see how we can handle this.” Tanvi and her mother sit together having some tea and then they both discuss how to handle the situation. Tanvi shares some more experiences and her mother listens intently without interrupting. Mother helps Tanvi to look out for solutions and also offers some useful tips. She also discusses how Tanvi could respond to the situation rather than react to it. At the end of the conversation, Tanvi looks relieved and ready to face the situation. She says “Thanks Ma for bringing clarity into the situation. I guess I can handle this better now. Talking to you helped me identify my strengths and acknowledge my weaknesses. I am hopeful that tomorrow will be a better day.”

What special elements did you notice in the scenario? What kind of communication do you find between Tanvi and her mother?

The communication one sees in the above scenario is an example of positive communication. Let us try to understand what is positive parent-child communication.

Positive Communication refers to communication built on mutual understanding and trust. Positive communication is essential to building a healthy parent-child relationship. Positive communication helps children to express themselves without the fear of being judged. It offers a platform to children and adolescents to express their thoughts, feelings, and concerns, while parents offer guidance and support. It also provides parents with insights into their child's world, helping them make informed decisions and guide their children.

Elements of Positive Communication

In the scenario you read, did you notice any special elements of positive communication? Yes, positive communication has some distinct elements.

Active listening: Listening without interrupting and being non-judgmental is an important part of positive communication

Empathy: Positive communication means demonstrating that you care and understand the perspective of the other person.

Non-verbal cues: Body language, maintaining eye to eye contact and facial expressions play an important role in positive communication

Clarity and openness in communication: Use clear and concise language to convey your thoughts and ideas. Have an open and honest dialogue, where both persons feel comfortable sharing their thoughts, concerns, and opinions without fear of judgment.

Be patient and maintain optimism: Positive communication is to maintain an ethos where optimism is seen. Focus on finding solutions to the problem. Offer encouragement and support to one another.

Honesty: Honesty and integrity are the bedrock of positive communication. You may not agree with everything the other person says. Share your different views in an atmosphere of mutual respect for one another.

QUIZ

1. Which of the following is an example of positive communication?

- a) Ignoring someone's opinion because you disagree with it
- b) Interrupting someone while they are speaking
- c) Using active listening techniques to understand someone's perspective
- d) Criticizing someone without offering constructive feedback

Answer: c) Using active listening techniques to understand someone's perspective

2. What is the primary goal of positive communication?

- a) To assert dominance over others
- b) To express one's opinions forcefully
- c) To build trust and mutual understanding
- d) To manipulate others for personal gain

Answer: c) To build trust and mutual understanding

3. Which of the following is a characteristic of positive communication?

- a) Being closed-minded and dismissive of others' viewpoints
- b) Using derogatory language to belittle others
- c) Showing empathy and respect towards others

d) Talking over others and dominating the conversation

Answer: c) Showing empathy and respect towards others

BEHAVIOURS AND BARRIERS

Barriers to Positive Communication

Read the situations below and try to identify barriers to positive communication.

Ranjeet comes home with poor grades. His mother says “It’s all your fault. You spend too much time with your friends. Studies are neglected. You deserve to fail.”

Manpreet is sharing with her parents how she helped her sports team win the match. Her mother cuts her saying she has to cook dinner and her father says he has to watch TV and will listen to her later.

Madhavi who has appeared for the Class 12 Board examination, tells her father that she wishes to be a C.A. Her parents tell her that it is enough if she studies only upto Class 12 as in their community finding a match for a highly educated girl is a problem.

Is positive communication missing in these examples?

Some barriers to positive communication are

Authoritarian parenting style

Distractions while listening

Being judgmental

Use of negative language

Interrupting too often and not allowing the other person to express

Body language that conveys disinterest (eg being distracted by one’s phone, doing something else while listening)

Lack of empathy towards others

Not listening completely

having assumptions about the speaker

use of harsh words or inappropriate tone

having one’s own emotional baggage can also be a barrier in communication

Tips for nurturing positive communication in the family

Listen actively. (More about active listening will be discussed separately in another topic.)

Use I-messages to express your views and feelings, E.g., “I like it when you do your work on time”, “I feel upset when you let me down”, “I would like if you spend less time on your mobile.”

Have non-threatening and non-judgmental atmosphere so that family members can share feelings and thoughts.

Practise empathy. Parents must model empathy and positive communication.

Have clear rules for the family. E.g., no mobiles or TV during meal times so that the family can converse with one another.

Try to have family meetings for taking important decision. Involve the children in discussions and decision making. This needs to be according to the age and maturity of the child and the nature of decisions to be taken.

Express emotions. Do not bottle up feelings. Listen to the person speaking as they share their feelings. Grudges and holding something against the other person can be a barrier to positive communication

Avoid personal attacks. Practise healthy ways for conflict resolution.

As parents, we may be overwhelmed with our own worries and cares. This may sometimes come in the way of positive communication. We may tend to sermonise, to interrupt, to judge and may be force our views on our children. First of all, be aware of such tendencies. Conscious efforts will help to nurture an atmosphere for positive communication.

GAMES AND ACTIVITIES

Activity : Self -Quiz on Positive Communication

You have seen different aspects of positive communication. It is time to evaluate yourself and see how effective you are with respect to positive communication.

Tick the option that applies best in your case

Scoring key

Statements 1,3,4,5,7: always (3) often (2) rarely (1) never (0)

Statements 2,6,8: always (0) often (1) rarely (2) never (3)

Add your scores. A total score between 0 to 8 indicates that you need to work on positive communication, a score from 9 to 16 indicates average positive communication and a score above 16 indicates a fairly healthy ethos for positive communication. Please note the tool is not standardised.

Activity: Emotion wheel

Make some cards with one emotion/ feeling written on each. E.g., : satisfaction, frustration, happiness, fear, helplessness, successful. Person A shares one instance when that feeling was experienced. Person

B listens and then responds. Reverse roles. Reflect if the elements of positive communication were seen in your interaction.

Read more <https://www.unicef.org/india/stories/all-about-positive-parenting>

Benefits of Positive Communication

Positive communication has many benefits. But before we discuss these benefits, try this activity.

Activity: Cube time

This activity can be done by the entire family. Make a cube. Each face of the cube has some cue. E.g., 'Share a proud moment', 'describe something that worries you', 'things I am grateful for', 'areas that I have to work on', 'my feelings about my family' etc. Members of the family come one by one and cast the cube on a table. Read aloud the cue on the top face and share. The rest of the family listens and responds bearing in mind the key elements of positive communication. Reflect and see how you felt when the exercise was in progress.

We now look at the benefits of positive communication. (The experience we have had in the activity can also help to identify these benefits.)

Positive communication builds the self-esteem of the child.

Stronger family bonds are nurtured.

Mutual trust is built between parents and children.

Children know they have their parents/ family to turn to and they are less likely to seek support from immature or non-trustworthy persons in case of difficulties.

Children learn to express themselves better if they find an ethos of positive communication at home. This helps them to have clarity of their own thoughts which in turn helps to solve problems.

Positive communication at home and school helps in sound mental health.

Positive communication builds confidence. It also helps to nurture life skills like problem solving and decision making.

Activity

Recall a conversation you., as a parent, have had with your child. Can you recall any barriers in your communication? How can you work towards eliminating the same?

Nurturing Positive Communication

Try this activity as a family to nurture positive communication.

Activity: Circle of appreciation: Find time to sit together as a family. Tell your family members why you are grateful to them for what they did during the week. Try to make this a weekly habit. You can also use this time to apologise for something hurtful you have done.

COMMITMENT TO CHILD

USEFUL LINKS

Read more <https://www.unicef.org/india/stories/all-about-positive-parenting>

References:

<https://www.cdc.gov/parents/essentials/toddlersandpreschoolers/communication/index.html>

A note from the author

As I compiled this matter on positive communication, a few scenes spontaneously float in mind. I am sharing them so that readers are inspired to relive similar moments from their lives.

My childhood, in the early 1970s, was a time when we had no T.V or mobiles. Evening time was exclusively family time. When my father came home from work and my mother had completed her daily chores, my sister and I would present before them all we learned in school. We would sing, dance and mimic while we got our parents' undivided attention. Prayer and dinner time were times spent together. On every major festival, we received books from our parents. Over five decades later, some of these books are with me even today and each time I open them and read when they were gifted, the presence of my late parents is experienced. To me these are instances of silent positive communication.

In 1999, my daughter was born. When she was around two, I began reading books to her. It was a fantastic time to communicate to her. I would ask her simple questions based on the stories and her interpretation of the stories gave me a platform to communicate positively. Another way to communicate positively was to drop in a surprise note in her snack box to say that I appreciate her presence in my life or may be to thank her for something thoughtful she had done.

Dear parent, positive communication is not built overnight. One has to work consciously towards positive communication and the earlier we start this the better. Happy parenting!!

Positive Phrase Swap

Write common negative phrases on cards (e.g., 'You never listen', 'Why can't you be like your sibling?'). Family members take turns drawing a card and rephrasing it positively (e.g., 'I feel unheard when you look at your phone while I talk', 'You both have unique strengths I admire'). This rewires communication patterns through play.

CHAPTER 40: POSITIVE REINFORCEMENT: PRAISE VS. PUNISHMENT STRATEGIES

KNOWLEDGE AND CAUSES

Definition or Description of the Topic:

Positive reinforcement praise and punishment strategies are foundational aspects of behavior shaping, influencing individual development from childhood to adulthood. Positive reinforcement involves acknowledging and rewarding desirable behaviors, fostering intrinsic motivation and a positive self-image. In contrast, punishment strategies aim to deter unwanted behaviors by imposing consequences, potentially leading to fear, resentment, and a focus on avoiding repercussions.

Consequences of the Problem:

The choice between positive reinforcement and punishment significantly impacts behavior outcomes. Positive reinforcement creates a conducive learning environment, fostering a sense of achievement and personal growth. In contrast, reliance on punishment may result in short-term compliance but often fails to instill a genuine understanding of the desired behavior, leading to potential negative emotional consequences.

Causes of the Problem:

The inclination towards positive reinforcement or punishment often stems from various factors such as cultural influences, parenting styles, and personal beliefs about effective discipline. Lack of awareness about the long-term effects of these strategies can contribute to inconsistent or counterproductive approaches to behavior management.

QUIZ

1. What is positive reinforcement?

- a) Punishing someone for their actions
- b) Ignoring someone's behavior
- c) Rewarding someone for desired behavior

Answer: c) Rewarding someone for desired behavior

2. How does positive reinforcement affect behavior?

- a) It encourages and strengthens the likelihood of the desired behavior being repeated
- b) It discourages and weakens the likelihood of the desired behavior being repeated

c) It has no impact on behavior

Answer: a) It encourages and strengthens the likelihood of the desired behavior being repeated

3. What are some examples of positive reinforcement?

a) Giving praise, rewards, or recognition for a job well done

b) Criticizing and pointing out mistakes

c) Ignoring someone's achievements

Answer: a) Giving praise, rewards, or recognition for a job well done

BEHAVIOURS AND BARRIERS

Desired Changes or Behaviors:

Promoting positive reinforcement involves recognizing and praising desirable behaviors, creating an environment that encourages positive choices. This approach aims to shift the focus from avoiding negative consequences to understanding the connection between actions and positive outcomes. Emphasizing positive reinforcement over punishment encourages a more constructive and emotionally healthy approach to behavior management.

Barriers to Desired Changes:

Challenges in adopting positive reinforcement strategies may arise from deeply ingrained beliefs about discipline, fear of perceived leniency, or a lack of awareness about alternative approaches. Overcoming these barriers requires education, open communication, and a gradual shift in mindset regarding the effectiveness of positive reinforcement.

Addressing Barriers:

Educational programs and resources are crucial to dispel myths surrounding positive reinforcement, emphasizing its effectiveness in shaping behavior positively. Open dialogues within families and communities can challenge traditional disciplinary norms, fostering an understanding of the long-term benefits of positive reinforcement for personal and interpersonal growth.

What Can Parents Do:

Parents play a pivotal role in implementing positive reinforcement praise. Encouraging good behavior through specific and sincere praise, creating a reward system tied to achievable goals, and setting clear expectations contribute to a positive reinforcement approach. Parents should focus on guiding and teaching, fostering a sense of responsibility rather than instilling fear through punishment.

Successful Outcome

Visualize a household where positive reinforcement is consistently employed. Children in this environment feel valued, motivated, and capable of making positive choices. The emphasis on

encouragement over punishment results in improved self-esteem, stronger parent-child relationships, and a foundation for responsible decision-making.

GAMES AND ACTIVITIES

Activity:

Positive Reinforcement Journaling Activity

Objective:

Promote awareness and implementation of positive reinforcement by engaging in a journaling activity. This encourages individuals to reflect on positive behaviors, reinforcing the connection between acknowledgment and motivation.

Materials Needed:

Journals or notebooks for each participant.

Pens or pencils.

Instructions:

Introduction:

Explain the purpose of the activity – to focus on positive behaviors and their impact on motivation.

Journal Setup:

Distribute journals and pens/pencils to participants.

Encourage participants to dedicate a section of their journal to positive reinforcement.

Daily Reflection:

Instruct participants to take a few minutes each day to reflect on positive behaviors they observed in themselves or others.

Prompt them to consider how acknowledgment or praise could reinforce those behaviors.

Encourage specificity in their reflections, highlighting the details of the positive actions.

Weekly Summary:

At the end of each week, participants can summarize the positive behaviors they identified and reflect on any changes in their mindset or motivation.

Discussion:

Facilitate a group discussion about participants' experiences with the positive reinforcement journaling activity.

Explore any challenges, successes, or insights gained from the process.

Emphasize the link between positive acknowledgment and continued motivation.

Benefits:

Encourages self-awareness and reflection.

Promotes a focus on positive behaviors.

Strengthens the connection between acknowledgment and motivation.

Fosters a habit of recognizing and reinforcing positive actions.

The positive reinforcement journaling activity provides a practical and personal approach to incorporating positive reinforcement into daily life, fostering a mindset that values and encourages positive behaviors.

COMMITMENT TO CHILD

Parental Commitment:

To foster positive reinforcement at home, parents can commit to acknowledging and praising their children's positive behaviors consistently. A commitment form can outline the importance of creating a supportive environment and avoiding overly punitive measures, reinforcing the shift toward positive reinforcement.

USEFUL LINKS

Resources for Positive Reinforcement:

Psychology Today - How to Use Positive Reinforcement Effectively: <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/peaceful-parents-happy-kids/201807/how-use-positive-reinforcement-effectively>. A guide on using positive reinforcement effectively in parenting, emphasizing specificity and consistency.

Verywell Family - <https://www.verywellfamily.com/positive-reinforcement-1095011>. Positive Reinforcement Techniques: Practical tips and examples of positive reinforcement techniques for parents.

Positive Psychology <https://www.verywellfamily.com/positive-reinforcement-1095011>. Understanding Positive Reinforcement: A comprehensive resource exploring the principles of positive reinforcement and its application in various contexts.

Parenting for Brain -<https://www.parentingforbrain.com/positive-reinforcement-examples/>. Positive Reinforcement Examples: A collection of positive reinforcement examples for parents to use in everyday situations.

Existing Governmental and Non-Governmental Programmes

Government initiatives should encompass educational campaigns on positive reinforcement strategies, highlighting their benefits. Integrating positive discipline approaches into school programs can provide a holistic foundation for children's development. Helplines and online resources should offer guidance on implementing positive reinforcement in various settings.

Connect to a Community:

Establishing online communities or forums where parents share success stories, challenges, and resources related to positive reinforcement can create a supportive network. Connecting parents in this way reinforces the idea that positive reinforcement is a shared value, promoting collaboration and shared learning.

Praise vs. Punishment Scenario Cards

Create scenario cards describing teen behaviors (e.g., 'Teen completes homework on time', 'Teen breaks curfew'). Family members discuss whether praise or punishment is appropriate and why. For praise scenarios, brainstorm specific praise statements. For punishment scenarios, discuss constructive consequences. This builds consensus on parenting approaches.

CHAPTER 41: PUSHY PARENTS

KNOWLEDGE AND CAUSES

It is hard to define what entails being a good parent. One ideal feature would be always being there for your children and supporting them to maximise their potential. Children always need a little push, don't they? But where does one draw the line between being supportive and being pushy?

Parents are ambitious. They often expect their children to try their best and maximise their capabilities, achieve all they can and put in all sorts of hard work for that. They see this as important for the child to do well in life and also want to be recognised as parents of a successful child. But often, this expectation from the parent can become overbearing for the child and be counterproductive. Rather than being a source of support for the child, the parent might become a source of negativity, stress and anxiety.

What are the consequences of pushy parenting?

One immediate consequence of being pushy parents is the stress that unreasonable expectations can bring to the children. Many times, we see parents transferring their dreams and ambitions onto their children.

The parents might have wanted to be a singer but couldn't when they had a chance. Now they would like their child to be a singer to fulfil and live their dream. It is irrational to expect that just because the parent wanted to be a singer, the child would want to be one as well. It becomes difficult for the child to work hard and in pursuit of something that they do not want in the first place.

This can be a source of extreme mental and physical stress for the child and a bone of contention with their parent as well. Success in a field is dependent on the development of various skills like curiosity, capability and self-confidence. Controlling and preoccupied parents can kill the natural curiosity and the strive to get to know the world better. These will be replaced by worries about one's performance.

This also paves the way for a lack of self-confidence and low self-esteem. The child risks the possibility of developing anxiety due to negative self-perception and lack of a positive environment of support from parents who might make their children feel that no matter how much effort they put in, they will never be good enough.

To make their child live up to the goals that they have set for them, parents might also put in place strict rules to be followed. For instance, they might dictate that their child go to school and come straight back without spending any time with their friends, wake up at the early hour of four in the morning to study and stay up till midnight to study more, or even restrict the possibility of spending any leisure time.

This strict regimentation of the child's day and the lack of any autonomy in what they can do and when can cause a lack of personal time-management skills and self-control. The parent might also become

excessively intrusive and lack of any privacy or personal space might make the child feel suffocated in an age when they should be exploring and expressing their creativity and interests.

Lastly, if they do not have a say in their own tasks and day-to-day, they might not develop any decision-making skills or the ability to clearly communicate and assert their individual wishes inside and outside the house. This will also affect their engagement at school and with their peers.

What are the causes of pushy parenting?

The cause behind being pushy as parents is simple. It has been widely established that pushy parents have a common trait—that they see their children as a part of them. They see their children as a means to fulfil their unresolved wishes. This makes them extend their own interests and ambitions to their children, irrespective of what they would want or like for themselves. It is natural for parents to want their children to do well in life and excel. However, when parents are willing to go to extreme lengths or impose themselves to extremities in their children's lives, their support becomes counterintuitive.

Another cause is extreme competitiveness. Parents might see other children do very well in certain activities and excel, while their own might come second or not do the best. This gives rise to the question, "Why isn't my child doing the best?" or "Why isn't my child winning the first prize?" There's a slight streak of jealousy in this sentiment, and it causes the parent to become pushy.

QUIZ

1. Pushy parents are known for:

- A) Being overly relaxed and hands-off.
- B) Putting excessive pressure on their children.
- C) Encouraging their children's independence.
- D) Prioritizing their own needs over their children's.

Answers C) Putting excessive pressure on their children.

2. What is the primary motivation behind pushy parenting?

- A) Fear of their child's failure.
- B) Desire for their child's happiness.
- C) Lack of interest in their child's success.
- D) Trust in their child's abilities.

Answers. A) Fear of their child's failure.

3. Pushy parents may have difficulty:

- A) Accepting their child's failures and setbacks.
- B) Celebrating their child's achievements.
- C) Communicating effectively with their child.
- D) Understanding their child's needs and desires.

Answers A) Accepting their child's failures and setbacks.

BEHAVIOURS AND BARRIERS

What are desirable changes for becoming less pushy as parents?

Before we move ahead to see how to avoid crossing the line from being encouraging and supportive to being pushy, let us perform a small task for self-assessment. Here is a list of questions that will make you reflect on your parenting. Answer the questions with a yes or no:

Do you often order your child to do things or take part in activities rather than discuss?

Do you think it is unnecessary to explain to your child why something is good for them?

Do you think it is normal for children to “obey” their parents and their requests without questioning them?

Do you think it is important for your child to follow a daily timetable for their activities to be successful?

If your answers were mostly “yes”, there’s a high possibility that you edge on the likelihood of being a pushy parent. It is easy to incorporate small changes in your parenting style to prevent yourself from reaching that state.

Firstly, recognise that your child seeks your advice, opinion or thoughts rather than a decision. It is your duty to help and guide them in achieving their goals. You can support and suggest. But imposing your decisions on them is when it becomes troublesome.

Secondly, it is necessary to understand that everyone is different. Your child is your own, but still different as an individual. Their interests, strengths and weaknesses will not be the same as your own. You must take time to understand these differences and your child’s interests, strengths and weaknesses. Your guidance should be based on this understanding rather than an understanding centred on you.

What are the barriers to these desirable changes, and how can we address them?

A major barrier to bringing about a balanced state where parents provide a conducive and supportive environment for their child’s growth is developing an understanding of how children learn. Two things are important in this regard. Children learn by making mistakes and exploring.

Children need to be given the space to explore and figure out things that they are interested in. In this journey of self-exploration, it is natural that the child will make mistakes. It will not be an easy task for them, and they will need your support through it. However, you must not admonish or criticise them if they face obstacles or impose your decision and path on them. Their life must be their own and it is important to respect their autonomy over their own outcomes in life.

What does a successful outcome look like?

A successful outcome would involve a scenario where the parent is always available as a guiding soul. It is not hand-holding that is desired, but the assurance that the parent will not inhibit or restrict their child from discovering their sense of self and abilities. A child will be truly successful when they are successful in areas that they are truly interested in, and it is important that the parent gives the child space and time to arrive at this state.

GAMES AND ACTIVITIES

COMMITMENT TO CHILD

This might seem like an ideal state; however, the above chapter will help you work towards it. Small changes in your approach toward parenting will amount to significant improvement in your child's development journey. Do use this opportunity to make a commitment to work toward such a day, and hence, we urge you to fill in this small letter as a reminder of that.

I, _____, parent of _____, would like to acknowledge that shielding my children from the negative impact of being overly pushy could pave the path for a healthier life for my child as well as the family. I understand that my wishes could be different from my child's, and it is important to respect that. Imposing my wishes on them would hamper their development journey and affect my relationship with them. I strive to make small changes in my parenting style to ease my child's experience through adolescence.

(Signature)

USEFUL LINKS

Game: The Stone of Sisyphus

Aim:

This activity helps the parent-child relationship improve by providing the child with an open space to easily communicate what they find pushy. If the parent is open to this game, they must be open to hearing what the child perceives of their parenting as well.

The game is named after the Greek legend of Sisyphus, who is given a bane by the Gods to repeatedly roll a boulder up a hill only to have it roll down again once he gets to the top. It is a reminder that all of us keep struggling with our lives and then often come back to the same point that we started. Parents might feel like Sisyphus once they have played this game — however, the honesty that this game is to

be played with will help the parents and children understand each other better, and through this, they will communicate better.

What you will need:

Print out the picture below on a piece of paper and keep a few game tokens with you before you start the game!

Rules of the game:

The game token is placed on the stone of Sisyphus, which is the stone at the bottom of the hill.

The parent can then read out a statement from the list below. The child must then say if they see the statement as “pushy” or “normal”.

For every correct answer, the token is moved from 1 to 5, that is, toward the peak of the hill.

The game ends when the team reaches 5.

Like the stone of Sisyphus, the game restarts at the bottom of the hill.

Statements:

99% is not enough.

We did not have the opportunities you have.

You did really well.

Why can't you be as good as your friend?

Take a break. You have worked so hard.

I trust you to do well.

Better luck next time.

You cannot fail.

Let us talk and find out what went wrong

Don't play. You've got to be the best.

I know what is best for you. Don't argue.

CHAPTER 42: SETTING CLEAR EXPECTATIONS AND BOUNDARIES

KNOWLEDGE AND CAUSES

Setting clear expectations and boundaries for teenagers is like giving them a roadmap for growing up. It's important because it makes them feel safe and helps them understand what's expected. Imagine you're learning to play a new game. If someone tells you the rules, it's easier to play, right? It's the same for teenagers. When we tell them the rules of how things work in our family or community, it helps them know what's right and what's not.

Having rules also helps teenagers learn important skills they need in life. It's like practice for being a responsible grown-up. For example, if we say there's a time to finish homework, it teaches them about managing time. If there's a rule about being honest, it helps them build trust. These rules create a safe space for them to try new things and make mistakes, but they also learn about the consequences of their choices. So, when we talk openly with teenagers and set clear rules, it's not just about telling them what to do; it's about helping them become responsible and making good decisions. It's like being a guide in their journey to becoming adults.

Parents are like skilled potters and their teenagers like clay on a spinning wheel. Just as a potter shapes the clay into something useful, parents guide and shape their teens with clear rules. It's a bit like deciding the shape of a pot - the rules give structure and help teens understand what's expected. Parents, like the potter's hands, keep things on track, making sure their teens grow up in the right way. Sometimes, rules might need a little change, just like how the potter adjusts the clay. In the end, it's like creating a strong and stable pot – the rules help make a stable and happy family.

Consequences of not having setting clear expectations and boundaries:

1. **Feeling Lost:** Teens might feel a bit lost about who they are and what they should aim for without clear guidance. Knowing what's expected helps them build a strong sense of self.
2. **Making Risky Choices:** - When there aren't clear rules, teens might make not-so-great choices like trying things that aren't safe. Clear expectations can help them make better decisions.
3. **Trouble in School** - If there aren't clear expectations about studying, teens might find it hard to focus on their schoolwork. This can lead to not-so-great grades.
4. **Communication Problems:** When parents and teens don't talk about what's expected, it can make communication tough. This can cause misunderstandings and make it hard for them to trust each other.
5. **Feeling Up and Down:** Not knowing how to handle emotions can make teens feel moody or stressed. Clear expectations can help them understand and manage their feelings better.

6. **Listening to Friends More:** Without clear rules at home, teens might listen more to what their friends say, even if it's not the best advice. Clear expectations help them make good choices even when friends say otherwise.

7. **Not Taking Responsibility:** If there aren't clear rules, teens might not learn how to take responsibility for what they do. Knowing what's expected helps them learn from mistakes.

8. **Taking Longer to Learn Adult Skills:** Without clear expectations, teens might take longer to learn important life skills they need as they grow up. Knowing the rules helps them become more independent.

How to fix:

1. **Heart-to-Heart Conversations** - Start by having genuine conversations with your teen. Acknowledge the challenges they face and express your willingness to listen without judgement. Find a comfortable space and time for regular heart-to-heart talks.

2. **Clear Communication** - Clearly communicate your expectations. Instead of bombarding your teen with a long list, discuss a few key expectations at a time. Use simple language and share the reasoning behind each expectation.

3. **Negotiate and Collaborate** - Remember, parenting is a two-way street. Negotiate and collaborate on certain rules and expectations. This encourages a sense of responsibility as your teen becomes an active participant in decision-making.

4. **Consistency is Key** - Be consistent in enforcing rules. Consistency helps your teen understand the boundaries, making it clearer what is expected of them. It also builds a sense of stability in their daily lives.

5. **Balancing Independence** - Gradually introduce responsibilities that align with your teen's age and capabilities. Balancing independence allows them to learn essential life skills while feeling supported by your guidance.

6. **Cultural Connection** - Connect expectations with your family's cultural values. Explain how certain values contribute to the family's identity and why they are important. This connection provides context and meaning to the expectations.

7. **Learning from Mistakes** - Understand that mistakes are part of growing up. Instead of harsh consequences, focus on turning mistakes into learning opportunities. Discuss the lessons that can be gleaned from experiences, fostering a growth mindset.

8. **Support Emotional Well-being** - Recognize the emotional challenges of adolescence. Be a source of support during stressful times. Encourage your teen to express their emotions and assure them that it's okay not to have everything figured out.

9. Modelling Behaviour - Lead by example. Show, through your actions, the values and behaviours you expect from your teen. Modelling positive behaviour creates a natural environment for them to emulate.

10. Adapt and Adjust - Be flexible and willing to adapt. As your teen grows, their needs and challenges evolve. Regularly assess expectations and make adjustments to accommodate their changing circumstances.

11. Encourage Peer Connection- Understand the influence of peer relationships. Encourage your teen to share their experiences with friends and discuss how positive influences can shape their choices.

12. Celebrate Achievements - Acknowledge and celebrate achievements, no matter how small. Positive reinforcement reinforces good behaviour and motivates your teen to meet expectations.

QUIZ

1. What does it mean to set boundaries?

- a) Building walls to keep people out
- b) Establishing limits and guidelines for personal space and behavior
- c) Ignoring the needs and wants of others

Answer: b) Establishing limits and guidelines for personal space and behavior

2. Why is setting boundaries important?

- a) It helps maintain healthy relationships and respect for oneself and others
- b) It creates an environment of isolation and mistrust
- c) It allows others to take advantage of you

Answer: a) It helps maintain healthy relationships and respect for oneself and others

3. How can you effectively set boundaries?

- a) Clearly communicate your needs and expectations to others
- b) Avoid expressing your feelings and desires
- c) Let others decide what is best for you

Answer: a) Clearly communicate your needs and expectations to others

BEHAVIOURS AND BARRIERS

Barriers Parents Might Face When Talking to Teens:

1. Not Understanding Each Other - Sometimes parents and teens see things differently. It's like speaking different languages because they grew up in different times.
2. Different Cultural Beliefs - Families might have different traditions, and parents could find it tricky to match their values with the changing world their teens are part of.
3. Pressure from Friends - Teens often feel pressure from their friends. Parents might find it tough to guide their teens away from negative influences and help them make good choices.
4. Hard to Talk About Feelings - It's not always easy for parents and teens to talk openly. This might be because of language barriers, lack of time, or fears of being judged.
5. Balancing Work and Family - Parents might be busy with work, making it tough to find time to talk. Finding a balance between work and family can be a challenge.
6. Money Issues - Sometimes, families might not have a lot of money. This can limit what parents can provide or do for their teens, leading to frustration.
7. Not Knowing How to Be a Parent - Some parents haven't learned specific parenting skills. They might struggle with knowing how to set rules and expectations for their teens.
8. Teens Pushing Back- Teens want independence, and they might resist their parents' rules. Parents need to find a middle ground between enforcing rules and letting their teens grow.
9. Tech and Social Media Challenges- The influence of technology and social media can make it hard for parents to guide their teens in the digital world, where online interactions can impact behaviour.
10. Expectations from Society - Families might feel pressure from what society expects in terms of grades, jobs, and how teens should behave. Finding a balance between societal expectations and personal goals can be tough.
11. Emotional Issues- Unresolved family conflicts or strained relationships can make it difficult for parents and teens to talk openly about expectations.
12. Limited Opportunities - Some families may not have access to many opportunities, like educational support or extracurricular activities. This can affect what parents can expect from their teens.

Overcoming these challenges means understanding each other, finding time for open conversations, and being flexible in how expectations are set. It's about working together to create a supportive and understanding family environment.

How to Fix this:

12 Simple Ways for Parents to Connect with Teens

Parenting teenagers can be a rollercoaster, but fostering a strong connection is essential. Check out these straightforward ways to build a better relationship with your teen:

Listen Actively: Put down your phone, make eye contact, and genuinely listen. Ask follow-up questions to show you're engaged and interested in their thoughts and feelings.

2. Learn About Their Culture: Take the initiative to understand your teen's cultural background. Attend cultural events together, explore traditional cuisines, and ask open-ended questions to encourage them to share more about their experiences.

3. Guide Through Peer Pressure: Initiate casual conversations about their friends. Share your own experiences with peer pressure, highlighting lessons learned. Offer guidance and alternative solutions without being overly directive.

4. Open Up Emotional Talks: Create a comfortable space for emotional conversations. Choose a quiet time, assure them of your support, and share your own feelings. Be patient and avoid judgment, allowing them to express themselves freely.

5. Make Time for Family

- How: Schedule regular family activities, whether it's a weekly game night, weekend outing, or shared meals. This dedicated time fosters a sense of togetherness and strengthens family bonds.

6. Be Transparent About Finances: Involve your teen in discussions about the family budget. Explain financial constraints and decision-making processes. This transparency helps them understand the value of money and fosters a sense of responsibility.

7. Enhance Parenting Skills : Attend parenting workshops, read books, and seek advice from other parents. Share your experiences and learn from theirs, creating a supportive network to navigate the challenges of parenting.

8. Negotiate Independence: Gradually loosen the reins and involve your teen in rule-setting. Discuss the reasons behind certain rules, listen to their perspective, and find compromises that allow them to exercise independence responsibly.

9. Set Clear Tech and Social Media Guidelines

Establish clear boundaries for screen time and online activities. Discuss the potential impact on their well-being and encourage open communication about their digital experiences.

10. Help Navigate Societal Expectations

How: Encourage your teen to define their personal goals and values. Discuss societal expectations openly, highlighting the importance of finding a balance that aligns with their individual aspirations.

11. Address Emotional Conflicts

Consider family counseling if there are unresolved conflicts. A neutral third party can provide a safe space for open communication and help identify solutions to strengthen familial bonds.

12. Explore Opportunities Together

Investigate local community resources, educational programs, and extracurricular activities. Participate in activities together to broaden your teen's horizons and provide them with diverse opportunities.

Happy Story:

In a cozy home filled with the warmth of Indian traditions, meet Riya, a cheerful teenager whose family has embarked on a journey to strengthen their bond by following some simple yet powerful tips.

Riya's parents, eager to connect with her, start by actively listening. They put away distractions, make eye contact, and ask questions to understand Riya's thoughts and feelings. These heart-to-heart talks create a space where Riya feels heard and valued.

Curious about Riya's cultural background, her family takes the initiative to learn about her traditions. Together, they explore cultural events, try new foods, and ask open-ended questions, fostering a deeper connection based on understanding and appreciation.

Guiding Riya through the maze of peer pressure is another crucial aspect of their approach. Riya's parents engage her in casual conversations about friends, sharing their own experiences to offer guidance without being overly directive. This helps Riya navigate challenges with the support of her family.

Creating an environment for emotional talks is a priority in Riya's home. The family finds quiet moments, assures each other of support, and encourages open communication about feelings. These conversations become a cornerstone of their relationship, building trust and understanding.

Recognizing the importance of family time, Riya's household schedules regular activities. Whether it's a weekly game night, a weekend outing, or shared meals, this dedicated time fosters a sense of togetherness, creating lasting memories for Riya and her family.

Openness about financial matters is another key element. Riya's family involves her in discussions about the budget, explaining financial decisions and constraints. This transparency helps Riya understand the value of money and promotes a sense of responsibility.

To enhance their parenting skills, Riya's parents actively seek resources. They attend workshops, read parenting books, and engage with other parents, creating a supportive network to navigate the challenges of raising a teenager.

Negotiating independence is a delicate balance in Riya's family. Gradually loosening the reins, Riya's parents involve her in setting rules. This collaborative approach allows Riya to exercise independence responsibly, strengthening trust between parents and teen.

Setting clear guidelines for tech and social media use is another strategy in Riya's home. The family discusses the impact of screen time on well-being and encourages open communication about digital experiences, fostering a healthy relationship with technology.

Navigating societal expectations involves encouraging Riya to define her personal goals and values. Open discussions about societal pressures help Riya strike a balance that aligns with her aspirations while respecting family values.

Addressing emotional conflicts is a proactive step. Riya's family considers family counseling to resolve any unresolved issues, recognizing the importance of maintaining a healthy emotional environment.

Finally, exploring opportunities together is a priority for Riya's family. They investigate local community resources, educational programs, and extracurricular activities, providing Riya with diverse opportunities for personal growth.

In the heart of these simple yet powerful strategies, Riya's family has created a nurturing and supportive environment, making their home a place where Riya thrives as a happy and confident teenager.

GAMES AND ACTIVITIES

COMMITMENT TO CHILD

USEFUL LINKS

Family Rules Constitution

Hold a family meeting to co-create a 'Family Constitution' — a poster with 5-7 agreed rules and boundaries. Everyone contributes and signs it. Display it prominently. Review monthly. When boundaries are tested, refer to the constitution. This makes expectations visible, democratic, and memorable.

CHAPTER 43: STEALING

KNOWLEDGE AND CAUSES

Honesty is a virtue taught and learnt over time. One act not so detached from it is that of stealing. Stealing can be linked to being honest when denying or accepting someone's right to use their own belongings. It involves the other person's "permission". It can start out as borrowing someone's pencil and not returning it, or as taking someone's pencil without asking them first, or even as picking up a pencil kept for sale at a store when no one's looking. These all count as stealing, albeit in various degrees of severity.

Studies show that a large number of people will agree when asked the question, "Have you ever stolen something?" This is especially true for the narrow focus of childhood years. Thus, while it is natural for adolescents to take time to develop this understanding if parents and elders don't intervene and let this habit continue, the child can grow and develop this habit to more serious levels. It is a long journey from a child's mistake to being a juvenile delinquent. However, some measures are necessary to prevent that journey from starting out.

What are the consequences of stealing?

The consequences of stealing can be wide-ranging and have effects in the immediate, short-term or more deep, long-term manner.

First, looking at the immediate consequences. Stealing can put one in a bad position with their peers. If they take someone's favourite set of crayons or are in the habit of stealing their lunch on a daily basis, they will simply stop spending time with them so as to avoid the possibility of further stealing.

It can also get the child in trouble in formal spaces with teachers if they get heed of it, or at home when their parents get to know of such things. This can cause parent-child difficulties and make the parent question if they are not providing well enough for their child that they have to resort to taking someone else's things and make them re-think about what example they have set for them and the values inculcated.

It also causes an increase in associated behaviours to cover up their acts. This involves lying and getting aggressive when asked questions about their whereabouts and doings. There is also an attached loss of trust within their friends and family circle. Overall, it causes embarrassment and brings shame upon the child, along with the fear of punishment.

Now, looking at the long-term consequences. Stealing falls within the brother constellation of addictive behaviours. Several studies point out that students who stole were likely to indulge in alcohol and drug use and regular smoking.

Additionally, if children keep repeating this behaviour, it will bring them a bad reputation as someone who steals a lot and is likely to affect the opportunities they get. Teachers tend to be more helpful and receptive to the goals and aspirations of those with good moral character. A child who steals does not quite fall in that bracket. If there's a workshop or competition in which students are representing their school, the teacher would want to maintain a good image of their school and avoid risking the possibility of such a child causing trouble in the public eye.

Lastly, stealing is generally an immediate solution to something that a child wants. When a child wants a book that is slightly expensive, and their parents are unwilling to give it to them, they have two options—they can either work for it and save up to purchase it on their own or steal it from a library or someone who has that.

What are the causes for stealing?

The causes for stealing vary with the age groups that we are looking at.

If we consider those under the age of four years, it includes a lack of understanding between “mine” and “yours”. The sense of ownership and belonging has not developed at this developmental stage.

In the age group of five to nine years, it is associated with the lack of self-control and the want for instant gratification. While the sense of ownership develops by this age, self-control and restraint are still lacking. It brings a thrill and immediate happiness of having attained what they want with success.

Finally, for ages above ten, these aspects of a child have generally developed. But along with these, children also seek to fit in and feel empowered. If their friends wear watches and they do not, they might be tempted to steal a watch just so that they are not the only ones without a watch in their friend circle. Additionally, it gives them control over their actions and helps them feel empowered. If they want to have a packet of chips, but their mother denies them permission to have chips or the money to buy a packet because it is unhealthy, they could just go and steal a packet from the local shop. It helps them feel in control of what they want and can achieve. It makes them feel powerful.

There are also some biological factors that can contribute to impulsivity or addictive behaviour, both of which are conducive to stealing. Additionally, if they see their parents as people who do not mind keeping things that people leave behind as their own, or bringing home extra supplies from their workplace just because they are available for free, they might not be as averse to stealing. Thus, parents are an important factor both genetically and behaviourally as role models for their children.

Lastly, a lack of a healthy peer circle or social solidarity can bring animosity in the child and be grounds for stealing. Anti-social behaviours often have this base as a common cause.

QUIZ

1. What is stealing?

a) Borrowing something without permission

- b) Taking something that doesn't belong to you without permission
- c) Sharing your belongings with others

Answer: b) Taking something that doesn't belong to you without permission

2. What are the consequences of stealing?

- a) Getting praised for being resourceful
- b) Facing legal trouble and potential punishment
- c) Being rewarded with more possessions

Answer: b) Facing legal trouble and potential punishment

3. How can we prevent stealing?

- a) Locking our belongings and securing our personal space
- b) Encouraging others to steal as a form of entertainment
- c) Ignoring the issue and hoping it will go away

Answer: a) Locking our belongings and securing our personal space

BEHAVIOURS AND BARRIERS

What are the desirable changes that can help the child avoid stealing?

The first step here is making the child realise that stealing someone else's belongings is wrong and asking them to return it to the rightful owner. This must not take place forcefully or out of obligation. It must happen naturally, with the child understanding the reason behind the act and the fairness intrinsic to it.

Again, as always, a basic tenet for healthy behaviours is having good role models in their parents. Here's a small list of questions that will help you determine if you are a good role model for your child when considering stealing:

Do you return borrowed money on time and without being asked for it?

Do you take undue advantage of generous neighbours who are always ready to help with last-minute ingredients?

If you borrow someone's scooter and unfortunately cause a scratch on it, would you own up to the owner or pretend that it was already there?

If parents are honest and avoid stealing or petty theft, and are responsible and fair in making sure they are using things with people's permission, it will set a good example for the child. The child will then emulate good behaviour and develop a solid sense of ownership over things.

And one important thing is to ask the child questions that will place them in the other person's shoes. How would they feel if their favourite toy was stolen? How would they react if they were very hungry and someone stole their lunch? These questions will help the child empathise with the other person and see why stealing is wrong by reflecting on their own actions and their consequences.

What are the barriers to desirable changes to address stealing?

A strong barrier can be the lack of an understanding of morally right and wrong behaviour. Stealing is a morally wrong behaviour. It involves laying claim on something that belongs to someone else, without their knowledge or permission. It not only has a negative impact on the child themselves, but on others around them as well.

Additionally, the parent might find it embarrassing and be shocked and angry that their child is stealing. However, it is important not to lose your calm. It is important to deal with the situation carefully so that the parent can maintain open communication with the child.

Again, parents need to make their children understand why stealing someone else's belongings is unfair to them and unjust. This might be a difficult task, but it is important and essential if any of the above-listed strategies are to work in correcting stealing behaviour.

What does a successful outcome look like?

A successful outcome would display a situation where children are respectful of and understand a sense of ownership over things. They not only value their own belongings but also respect that of others. People can trust their children with responsibilities involving material goods and money and make them more dutiful through their developmental journey.

GAMES AND ACTIVITIES

COMMITMENT TO CHILD

This might seem like an ideal state; however, the above chapter will help you work towards it. Small changes in your approach toward parenting will amount to significant improvement in your child's development journey. Do use this opportunity to make a commitment to work toward such a day, and hence, we urge you to fill in this small letter as a reminder of that.

I, _____, parent of _____, would like to acknowledge that stealing behaviour amongst adolescents is an avoidable act. As a parent, I can make my child understand that stealing is unfair and non-desirable behaviour. They must learn to respect their own belongings as well as that of others. I strive to make small changes in my parenting style to make my children understand the importance of being fair to others and not stealing.

(Signature)

USEFUL LINKS

Trust Building Treasure Hunt

Organize a treasure hunt where family members hide small items for each other to find. The rule: you must ask permission before taking anyone's hidden item. If someone 'finds' something without asking, discuss how it feels to have something taken without consent. This teaches respect for others' belongings through experiential learning.