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ANNUAL MAGAZINE
DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY
ARYABHATTA COLLEGE
UNIVERSITY OF DELHI

Volume IV

Aryabhatta College

Benito Juarez Marg
University of Delhi



SRIJAN
Annual Magazine
Department of Psychology



Volume IV

From The Principal's Desk



The magazine published by the Department of Psychology is creating a new benchmark each year. The last year magazine has garnered immense appreciation from the scholars of Indian Universities and abroad. The painstaking efforts made by the teachers, and the students of the Department are bearing fruits. For the last four years, the Department has been bringing out the magazine in a highly calibrated and focused manner. The contents of this magazine reflect the inclination to explore the sociological and psychological issues affecting the people at large. In this Corona-affected year, this magazine will have transformative effect on the head and heart of the readers.

I have firm belief that the Department of Psychology will perpetuate its upward trajectory, and cherish its commitment to unravel the nebulous, esoteric psychological problems in a very lucid and simplistic fashion. Many of the articles penned by the students are the outcomes of the research-projects diligently supervised by the teachers. I wish the Department of Psychology all the best for the present and future accomplishments.

Prof. Dr. Manoj Sinha
Principal
Aryabhata College

From The Teacher In-Charge



It is a matter of pride for the college that the four years old Department of Psychology is publishing its fourth annual magazine. This year has been punctuated by many forms of hardships due to the Corona crisis. It has posed multiple obstacles in taking regular classes, mentoring research projects and taking care of the well-being of the students in a normal manner. The teachers of the Department have been saddled with additional responsibilities of looking after the mental health and dealing with psychological issues of the students living in different parts of country through the on-line counselling and constant audio-video interactions. The Department has performed these tasks with aplomb. Despite these hardships, the magazine has been published right on time. The magazine gives an insight into the emotional and psychological turmoil experienced by people in the face of the unprecedented lockdown. It also reflects in a nutshell, the various activities and achievements of the Department.

The Department of Psychology has always been in the forefront to discuss, debate and decipher the various psychological issues affecting the people. The Mental-Health Week has been celebrated in the first week of October, 2019 for this specific purpose. Many seminars and webinars have been held all through the academic year. The various research-projects have been supervised by the teachers. The teachers shouldered the mega responsibilities of looking after the well-being of the students during the lockdown. These things have contributed substantially in enhancing the name and fame of the college. I am sure that magazines to be published even in future will continue to reveal the grand, multi-dimensional growth of the Department. I wish them best of luck.

Dr. R. K. Dwivedi
Teacher In-Charge
Department of Psychology
Aryabhata College

From The Editorial Team



Note from the editorial team

We, the editorial team, proudly present the departmental magazine for the year 2019 – 20. We would like to express our gratitude to our teachers for their guidance and support throughout the process. Their trust in our abilities and interest in our opinions is what enabled us to work towards the completion of the magazine.

Given the state of the world, the process of creating this magazine was entirely unique with new unanticipated challenges but its completion functions as an emblem of the fact that creation and life goes on. With the publication of this magazine, we look back at our year of work with pride and also, put faith in the future team's abilities going forward.

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Table of Contents

I. Articles

1. Is the Smartphone Making us Dumb?.....	2
2. Mahabharata: A Psychological Perspective.....	5
3. Sleep Deprivation in College.....	8
4. Homophobia: A Grave Reality.....	12
5. Unhappiness: The New Disability.....	15
6. Video Game Addiction.....	18
7. Synesthesia.....	21
8. Parenting in Pandemic.....	24
9. Psychology of an Inexpressive Child.....	27

II. Webinars

1. Managing Emotions.....	32
2. Boredom and Our Selves Amidst Lockdown.....	34
3. Psychological Restoration.....	36
4. Engaging the Shadow in Times of Corona.....	38
5. It's My Life.....	40
6. Mental Health and Well Being.....	42
7. Opportunity to Rethink Self and Social Identity.....	45
8. Post Covid: EQ Paradigm.....	47

III. Reports

1. ShortMoviePresentation.....	49
2. Teacher'sDay.....	50
3. Applied Behavioural Analysis as a Technique of Intervention in Child Behaviour.....	52
4. Prof. Naveen's Class Series.....	54

V. Highlights of Key Academic Activities

1. MHAW'19.....	55
2. PSYGALA'20.....	61

V. Photo Gallery

IS THE SMARTPHONE MAKING US DUMB?

The year 2020 will be marked as the year of inordinate change and challenge in human history. Just right after the industrial revolution mankind became excessively busy in invention and discovery. It seemed like the suppression of the pre-industrialization era made us more creative and curious resulting in various kinds of inventions. We were so engrossed in that; we could not even differentiate between our needs and desires. If the invention is the outcome of need it brings happiness, but if it's based on desire it brings pleasure. Pleasure can never be the base of life. If we start counting our inventions again, we will find because of unthoughtful intentions, we have made this magnificent earth nothing but a dumping bag of garbage and that is ultimately going to put an extra burden on our mind as well.

These are the tangible aspects of those inventions, but it has a severe impact on the mental aspect of human existence as well. That's why when medical science is saving millions of lives every day, on the other hand, it's looking helpless to answer those problems which are related to our thoughts, emotions and cognitions. This is the era of complications, where we are struggling with our mind and its dynamism. The severity of it can be estimated with the fact that there is a drastic shift in illness and diseases. Earlier the causes of life-threatening diseases mostly used to be microorganisms but today most of the illnesses such as cancer and heart diseases which are directly or indirectly caused by maladjusted functions of our thoughts and emotions. These are known as lifestyle disorders. The term lifestyle disorders refer to the illness and diseases that are an outcome of unregulated patterns of our day-to-day living, such as the number of working hours, sleeping time, sedentary lifestyle, use of technology etc.

The invention of smartphones has been one of the significant outcomes of the human brain that has revolutionized the communication channels that we had earlier. But this new device is now being used not only as a communication device per se, but it has also replaced many mental activities that are important for better growth and development of our brain and mind. It has become an inseparable part of our day to day life. But this level of dependence needs to be explored and researched further to find out, whether other important mental activities are being compromised and to what extent?

At present, the number of smartphone users in the world surpasses three billion and is forecasted to further grow by several hundred million in the next few years. The smartphone was invented to bring people together but now we have reached the next level usage of the smartphone. No doubt it has become the most reliable companion of ours. We spend more time with it than any other device that we ever invented. This new device is supplementing or even supplanting various other mental functions.

Phonebooks, calendar, tip calculators, maps, gaming devices, printed books, naming a few of them. Now, this new device could help us with the above-mentioned tasks in a few seconds. But the result of research in this area is not encouraging. Reliance on smartphones and related technology is not helping cognitive functioning, rather harming our ability to think, pay attention, creative thinking, imagery, remember and regulate our emotions.

One specific outcome of this concern is that the current generation of children and adolescents are increasingly developing shorter attention spans because of their dependence on smartphone technology and early onset of usage of smartphones. Researchers have also claimed that excess usage of smartphones rewires our brains to constantly crave instant gratification. This craving to see the smartphone triggers such activities that toll a great deal to complete a particular task, there occurs a drift of attention from on-going task to the desire for immediate gratification which is less mentally taxing. Our attention required to do or complete a particular task is also severely affected by the notifications on our smartphone from external sources. Generally, because of a specific notification source, users often get engaged in a chain of a subsequent task, unrelated acts on the smartphone that extends the period of disruption.

An interesting fact has been found that task completion in one application got delayed by up to 400% by an intended interruption from another application of the device. So, the task that we complete in 1 hour, takes almost 4 hours to get completed. Some evidence also suggests that if the interruption is in the form of image or video, it's more detrimental on the task completion. Excessive use of smartphones may also lead to smartphone addiction, research suggests that individuals who score highest on smartphone addiction, they are significantly lower on self-regulated learning and they can't maintain the flow.



Our memory and knowledge are also being severely affected by the continuous use of a smartphone. Now continuously two terms “Google effect” and “Digital amnesia” have become very popular in the last few years. When we are more active in searching for information on our smartphones it makes us less inclined to encode the information; as a result, we struggle to put that information in our long-term memory and then recall failures take place. Results may be more frightening when the students use smartphones from an early age. Humans are “cognitive misers”.

We generally tend to rely on simple heuristics and mental shortcuts and that is becoming our habit because of smartphone use. We tend to avoid deep cognitive analysis. If we continue doing the same, it might be possible that even to decide what to eat for dinner tonight, we may have to use our smartphone.

Heavy users of smartphones exhibited less analytical “cognitive style” and have poorer performance on knowledge measures.

So overall if we see, on one hand, no doubt smartphones have given us much assistance but, on another hand,, it’s replacing many cognitive activities that are helpful for our attention, memory, task efficiency, goal-directed behavior, self-regulation, and flow of work are being compromised because of constant use of smartphones. So excess is never a solution rather it’s detrimental to constructive mental activities. It’s better to use smartphones with restrictions and our brain should be used for more and more mental activities.

- **Dr. Ravi Bhushan Prasad**

Assistant Professor

Aryabhata college

MAHABHARATA: AN EPIC From a Psychological Perspective

“What is found here may be found elsewhere but what is not found here cannot be found elsewhere.”

-Mahabharata’s beginning lines

The Mahabharata is the world’s greatest epic and longest poem. Composed of 110,000 Sanskrit couplets, it is often referred to as the “fifth Veda”, and is a historical treatise.

For decades, philosophers and anthropologists have studied the epic in great detail to bring out the essence of work in our lives and to show us how society progressed overtime after the Great War. Several researchers have tried to highlight various aspects of the epic, its layers, its transitions, subplots as well as the social questions it puts forward to us. The Epic has been a great source of inspiration and metaphors for writers and poets of not only India but the world to showcase human dilemma in situations of crisis, of realizing the consequences of one’s actions as well the path of ‘goodness’ that a person is supposed to follow in their lives.

But looking at the Great Epic from a psychological perspective is an experiment that remains to be done yet. Modern psychology, as we all know it, is highly influenced by western civilizations- their cultural background, historical settings and social structures and even the stories and tales they believe in. Psychology is still considered an emerging science in our country and that’s why it is not able to reach the literary masterpieces of our country. If we use the same knowledge of westernized psychology and try to apply it to *Mahabharata*, we may find the author of the epic was quite familiar with the psychological notions and had shown them brilliantly in his work.

Gordon Allport, who gave us one of the Trait theories of personality specified that there are three types of traits that can define an individual- cardinal, central and secondary. Cardinal traits are those that can define a person’s whole life. These traits are so influential in a person that one may remember that trait just after hearing the person’s name. These cardinal traits are mentioned in the Epic also as the *Pandavas* were shown with five unique and distinguishable characteristics that influence their actions throughout the epic. *Yuddhishtra* has righteousness and honesty, *Bheema* has strength and courage, *Arjun* is goal-oriented and determined, *Nakul* and *Sahdeva* are shown as being supportive, humorous and nature enthusiasts.

The traditional theory of well-being says that well-being is conceptualized into two broad categories i.e., hedonic and eudaimonic well-being. According to this theory, hedonism is a joyful or happy state in which the well-being lies and followed by the Eudaimonic state which is characterized by the actualization of one's potentials and attainment of each goal. These concepts are explained using examples of Arjuna and *Ekalavya* in *Mahabharata*. *Arjuna* enjoyed wellness by enhancing his potentials in archery (eudaimonic and hedonic pursuits). *Ekalavya* surpassed *Arjuna* in the skills of Archery but suffered from misfortune by sacrificing his right-hand thumb to the *guru* Drona as *Guru Dakshina*, thus, leaving behind his pursuits of wellbeing.

According to Das's *The Difficulty of Being Good- On the Subtle Art of Dharma* (2012), *Mahabharata* does not allow us to simply see the good side and bad side of the story for each character is constructed in a manner that one can debate throughout the epic about his deeds and his consequences. When we talk about the evil deeds of Duryodhana, we can relate his upbringing and attitude to the views in the cognitive perspective of psychology.

Albert Ellis and Aaron Beck were two cognitive psychologists who believed that sometimes, faulty behavior and attitudes are a result of dysfunctional cognitive structure. *Duryodhana* and his brothers always grew under the image of their blind father being disregarded and disrespected in the kingdom. Even though their father was the king, the insecurities of their father were manifested upon them and that's why they could never think about right actions to do. It was even interpreted by S.C. Bhattacharya (2018) and V. Dalmiya (2018) in their book, *Exploring Agency in the Mahabharata*—ethical and political dimensions of Dharma which mentioned that the foul comment of *Draupadi's* maid saying that 'a blind's son is too like a blind' immediately instigated all the war that happened after just because *Duryodhana's* insecurity was attacked by that statement. Thus, he was never able to think logically and ended up losing everything.

After Sigmund Freud gave his revolutionary theory of Psychodynamic perspective, many psychologists emerged as neo - Freudians like Erich Fromm and Alfred Adler. Erich Fromm's theory of human personality says that 'man is the only animal for whom his own existence is a problem which he has to solve'. *Karna*, the son of *Kunti* is an individual who never got satisfaction in what his identity was. Born as a son of a princess but raised as a charioteer's son, *Karna* always struggled in his life due to the social and caste discrimination and despite his skills as an excellent warrior, he was hardly respected by anyone around him. Even the one person he could consider as his friend, *Duryodhana*, was using him only against *Arjuna*. Such an individual is likely to suffer from bad temper and existential anxiety who questions the very purpose of his life at every instance.

Throughout the epic, *Krishna* emerges as a person with a similar ideology to the humanistic perspective of psychology, advocating everyone throughout the story about the righteousness of deeds, their actions, what to choose in the path of conflicts and most importantly, a belief that reflects what Carl Rogers' view that humans are innately good and they choose right things in their life.

In conclusion, I would like to bring out a metaphorical aspect from the Epic. If we see the literary work from a psychodynamic perspective, we can say that Krishna is the Self, Arjun is the Ego, *Yudhishtra* is Super Ego; the *Kauravas* are the various desires, ideas and tendencies of the human mind and Draupadi is the human behavior that is affected by the conflicts between ego, superego and the tendencies of the human mind.

- Sarthak Paliwal (1st year)

SLEEP DEPRIVATION IN COLLEGE

In today's age of competition and pressure, academic life is a crucial and often stressful period in everyone's life. Students often make concessions with their health and schedule to fit in their work and one of the most important things that is sacrificed first is sleep.

Almost all of us have stayed up late to finish assignments or study for a test the next day. It's so normal that 'pulling an all-nighter' which is a colloquial term for staying up for 24 hours is considered to be a normal thing in a college student's life.

In a study, 62.6% of the students surveyed were found to be poor sleepers and 20% of the students slept less than five hours a day. (Shad, Thawani and Goel, 2015)

Young adults' sleep schedules are often irregular and varying depending on various factors like personality, schedule, and the schooling system and test schedules. Often, they stay up late and get less sleep but the amount of sleep decreases as we get closer to tests or exams.

There is no exact clarity on why sleep is so crucial to us to function, different theories with great evidence propose that it may replenish and repair the cellular components that are used up by our body, allow for memory consolidation or slow down metabolism. While we do not completely understand the exact reason why we sleep, there has been ample of research showing the consequences of a lack of sleep or sleep deprivation.

Sleep deprivation is defined as obtaining inadequate sleep to support adequate daytime alertness. While there is no exact amount of sleep decided as a pre-requisite for everyone, it is generally thought to be about 8 hours.

Consequences of sleep deprivation

The consequences of sleep deprivation and daytime sleepiness are especially problematic to college students and can result in lower grade point averages, increased risk of academic failure, compromised learning, impaired mood, and increased risk of motor vehicle accidents

A huge result of sleep deprivation is daytime sleepiness. Sleepiness is defined as the inability or difficulty in maintaining alertness during the major waking period of the day, resulting in unintended lapses into drowsiness or sleep. In a study about, 88% students reported facing problems to stay awake or focused during the classes whereas only 12% students were able to focus in the classes due to sufficient sleep. (Rose and Ramanan, 2017).

Sleepiness can be circumstance-dependent with various factors increasing it like a passive lecture in a comfortable room not requiring active participation can make people sleepier. This can affect students by preventing them from paying full attention in class where it is required, missing out on important details, not functioning at the appropriate cognitive level.

Sleep has been known to be associated with memory and cognition. A theory proposes that sleep helps with memory consolidation i.e. transferring information learnt throughout the day into more permanent areas of the brain.

70.6% students reported having memory problems due to insufficient sleep. (Rose and Ramanan, 2017).

Often, staying up late is seen to be helpful to study for a test but studies have shown that those who get less sleep-in fact function worse as sleep seems to impact learning as well. In a study, subjects were tested on an episodic memory encoding task with a series of images to be tested 48 hours later. The subjects who were tested after 35 hours of sleep deprivation had almost 19% worse memory performance.

Hence, getting enough sleep can lead to poor memory. Sleepiness can impair attention and concentration. Lack of sleep also causes mood irritability. All of these factors can together ultimately affect the results that the students work hard for. In a study by Rose and Ramanan (2017), the students whose GPA were lower were associated with lesser sleep duration and suffered from sleep deprivation. Their cognitive functions of college students like memory, attention, and concentration were also impaired.



The lack of sleep also affects mood and causes irritability. It is not inconsequential that depression, a mood disorder has disturbed sleep as one of its major symptoms and depression is a commonly diagnosed disorder among college students. In such a situation, insufficient sleep can increase these depressive symptoms. Prolonged sleep delay has been found to be associated with loss of pleasure, punishment feelings, and self-dislike while improving sleep may improve depressive symptoms or improve overall mood.

Sleep also has an impact on energy or motivation. Lack of sleep makes people feel tired and sluggish all day. 83.3% students felt that they have less energy or motivation throughout the day. (Rose and Ramanan, 2017)

It can also contribute to burnout. In a study by Shad, Thawani and Goel (2015), the exhaustion dimension of burnout was higher in medical students who got significantly less sleep than non-medical students and was also seen to correlate to their PSQI sleep score.

One of the most concerning consequences of sleep deprivation and sleepiness is drowsy driving. Due to sleep deprivation, people can often fall into microsleeps which are periods of sleep that last from a few to several seconds that people often don't realize they are experiencing. This can be dangerous when someone is driving as it can lead to accidents. Sleep impairs concentration, cognitive capacities, alertness, etc., making driving more difficult.

Sleep deprivation also destroys neurons in our brain and while some amount of sleep lost can be caught, prolonged sleep deprivation can have an irreversible impact on our brain.

Causes of Sleep Deprivation in College

Sleep deprivation among students is often caused by poor sleep hygiene. Sleep hygiene consists of behaviors that contribute to a good, restful sleep and avoidance of activities that can interfere with it. It includes factors like a regular sleep schedule, quiet sleep environment, avoidance of caffeine or other stimulants and minimal use of technology around bed time.

The students often have poor sleep hygiene and hence, experience more sleepiness in daytime. For most college-aged students, the sleep schedule is highly varying. If the college schedule changes every day, it causes more variation. They often sleep late and wake up early.

The consumption of alcohol can also impact sleep by causing fragmented sleep or obstructive sleep apnea. By college age, students often indulge in late night drinking or partying and consume harmful amounts of alcohol.

The consumption of caffeine in the form of coffee, tea or energy drinks later in the day can reduce sleepiness at the appropriate time and improve the ability to sustain wakefulness and alertness. Caffeine due to its similar structure to adenosine can slot itself in adenosine receptor sites and prevent the body from feeling sleepy. It can also affect GABA to suppress sleep promoting pathway. Due to this it is often used to pull all-nighter or stay up late to study. They also consume coffee to prevent sleepiness throughout the day. The effects of caffeine can last from 5 to 7 hours implying that coffee consumed in the early afternoon can also interfere with sleep.

Energy drinks or sodas in a similar way have large amounts of caffeine in them and can also become addictive as they are used to combat inadequate sleep.

Inadequate sleep hygiene also encompasses the use of technology prior to bed. The light exposure from phones, computers etc., suppresses melatonin which regulates our circadian rhythm. Melatonin is low during the day and increases in the darkness informing our brain that it is time to sleep. When light exposure interferes with that, our brain perceives it to still be daylight and makes us less sleepy.

Stress can also be a cause for poor sleep behavior. Poor sleeping patterns are seen to be more common near tests or exams when due to stress, the students stay up later and later to study.

Ways to Maintain a Good Sleep Cycle

- Reducing the intake of caffeine.
- Not using technology in bed and only using the bedroom for sleeping to create an association of the space with sleep.
- Avoiding naps later in the day to deal with sleep deprivation. However, day-time naps can help improve academic performance by enhancing certain cognitive and performance tasks in case of an irregular sleep schedule.

- Vijayalaxmi (IIIrd Year)

HOMOPHOBIA

A Grave Reality

Love has no boundaries. We have all heard it multiple times throughout our life. We are taught to love everyone and everything but we live in a hypocritical world. Our movies, our songs and our culture has always approved of man-woman relationships but that too only after marriage. Love marriages in India were considered immoral and unethical and are still condemned by many sects of the Indian society, resulting in several instances of honor killing. While it took ages to develop some sort of acceptance towards love between a man and a woman before marriage, people in India still can't even think of same sex relationships. People are fearful of homosexuals and it gets so embedded in the culture that homosexuals experience shame and start fearing their own sexual orientation.

Homophobia is a culturally produced fear of or prejudice against homosexuals that sometimes manifests itself in legal restrictions or, in extreme cases, bullying or even violence against homosexuals. The term homophobia was coined in the late 1960s and was used prominently by George Weinberg, an American clinical psychologist, in his book *Society and the Healthy Homosexual* (1972). Although the suffix 'phobia' generally designates an irrational fear, in the case of 'homophobia' the word instead refers to an attitudinal disposition ranging from mild dislike to abhorrence of people who are sexually or romantically attracted to individuals of the same sex. Homophobia is a culturally conditioned response to homosexuality, and attitudes toward homosexuals vary widely across cultures and over time.

The group of people who differ in their sexual orientation and gender identity from the so called "normal" people, in a heteronormative, cis gendered society, fall under the umbrella of LGBTQIA+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, allies or asexuals, and others).

Some LGBTQIA+ people experience discrimination based on their sexual orientation or gender identity. This may be discrimination from religious institutions, companies, or from our government. Examples include same-sex couples not being allowed to marry, not getting job opportunities, getting legally fired just for being a part of LGBTQ community, or not being allowed into certain housing.

What is internalized homophobia?

Internalized homophobia is a term that is referred to people who experience homophobia while also being attracted to same-sex individuals themselves. Sometimes, people may have negative attitudes and beliefs about those who experience same-sex attraction, and then turn the negative beliefs in on themselves rather than come to terms with

their own desires. This may mean that they feel discomfort and disapproval with their own same-sex attractions, never accept their same-sex attractions, or never identify as lesbian, gay, or bisexual.

People dealing with internalized homophobia may feel the need to “prove” that they’re straight, exhibit very stereotypical behavior of straight men and women, or even bully and discriminate openly against gay people.

Amplification of Homophobia

For individuals who belong to other minority groups—such as racial or ethnic minorities—the effect of homophobia is significantly amplified. Some theories indicate that this is because some ethnic minority groups themselves might not be accepting of homosexuality which could, in turn, lead to internalized homophobia. Further, individuals who are associated with intersecting lines of stigmatized identity must deal with multiple forms and sources of discrimination and stigma. For instance, a black lesbian woman can face discrimination in many forms: sexism, homophobia, and racism.

Although there was a time when homosexuality was considered a mental illness, it is now clear through decades of research that being a sexual minority in and of itself is not a mental illness. Rather, the experiences of homophobia, discrimination, and stigma that LGB people are exposed to put these individuals at a higher risk of developing mental health issues due to chronic stress associated with these experiences.

When individuals are exposed to chronic stress, they are both physically and psychologically less resilient to normal life stressors. For instance, a gay man who lives in a state with no legal protections against discrimination in the workplace is likely to be very worried about losing his job if his identity is revealed. This is not only a source of very real concern, but psychologically can lead to persistent feelings of tension, anxiety, and distress. Constant stress and weakened resilience can lead to development of poor coping skills including substance abuse and negative thought patterns which are typically associated with anxiety and depression. People who are genetically prone to anxiety and depression are also more likely to suffer from these disorders under chronic stress conditions.

Pride Parade

Pride parades are outdoor events celebrating lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) social and self-acceptance, achievements, legal rights, and pride. The events also at times serve as demonstrations for legal rights such as same-sex marriage. Most pride events occur annually, and many take place around June to commemorate the 1969 Stonewall riots in New York City, a pivotal moment in modern LGBTQ social movements.

Every year several new members join the LGBTQ community to get educated about their rights and live as proud and dignified individuals without a hint of shame or guilt.

LGBT Rights In India

Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people in India face several difficulties which may be physical or social in nature. The country has repealed its colonial-era laws that directly discriminated against gay sex and transgender identification, but many legal protections have not been provided for including anti-discrimination laws and same-sex marriage.

In 2018, the Supreme Court of India decriminalised homosexuality by declaring Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code unconstitutional in respect of consensual homosexual sex between adults. Homosexuality was never illegal or a criminal offence in ancient Indian traditions but was criminalised by the British during their rule in India. It was indeed a historic moment for all Indians!

Closure

As laws around the country change and build toward more acceptance of lesbian, gay, and bisexual people, it is possible that the effect of minority stress may lessen. However, despite changing laws and cultural norms, people still hold on to homophobic beliefs and act in ways that promote wilful ignorance and discrimination that serve to put the community at risk both physically and psychologically. Finding sources of acceptance and safe spaces is critical in boosting resilience for those who face the many forms of homophobia. One thing that LGBT people can do to prevent the harmful effects of these experiences is to seek support both in their community, through friends and family, and mental health resources to help promote healthy coping tools. Also, the society that we live in needs to be sensitized towards the LGBTQIA+ community and move towards being more accepting. Let's preach the idea of love that we've always been taught because it is rightly said:

“Who would give a law to lovers? Love is unto itself a higher law.”

— Boethius

- Aastha Rana (1st year)

UNHAPPINESS: THE NEW DISABILITY

“People are just as happy as they make up their minds to be”

-Abraham Lincoln.

Would you call yourself a happy person? Among this depressed generation of today, do you dare to say that you are content in life?

A friend once asked me if I ever felt like counting the stars. I declined, saying that they're too many so I won't be able to count them all anyway.

“And some are even hidden behind others, and some in the dark sky. You know they are many, so you don't bother to count them.”, he added. He then asked me to replace the stars with the things in my life that make me a little happier than I could've been, and it made so much sense!

It has been reported that about 20 percent of teens experience depression before they reach adulthood. More than 1 in 3 people said they are worried, or dealt with stress (Global Emotions Report, 2018). Having stated this, it wouldn't be wrong to assume and say that most of the population is not happy today. The growing suicide rates, increasing mental illnesses, anxiety, drug abuse, has all become 'part and parcel' of this generation. Is it because of the growing problems? I think not. Freud said that people strive to become happy and to remain so, which has two sides, a positive and a negative aim. It aims, on one hand, at an absence of pain and displeasure, and, on the other, at the experiencing of strong feelings of pleasure (Sigmund Freud, 1930). Now wake up the latent psychologist inside you, and ask the question I asked in the beginning. And if the answer comes as no, then ask, why? Why is it that Freud's theory of happiness cannot standing true for us today? This will probably make you start doubting the “no”.

Psychology defines happiness as a specific emotion that people feel when good things happen, it is a thought of satisfaction with life. We're all aware of the mental benefits it brings, but it can also do wonders when it comes to physical health. People have even credited their cancer cure with increasing love and happiness in their lives. Studies have actually proved that the life expectancy of happy people is up to ten years longer than unhappy people. Talking of heart diseases, optimists have a 77% lower risk when compared to pessimists, evidently because the feelings of joy, love, connection, optimism, and happiness replaces the harmful stress hormones in the body with healing hormones (Lissa Rankin, 2012).

Apart from the physical perks, researches have linked success with happiness. A person who is happy has a higher chance of achieving success than someone experiencing constant negative emotions (Lyubomirsky et al, 2005).

Social media today has tried to make us believe that we're the saddest generation, and we've fallen prey to it. Studies have linked the use of social media to depression, anxiety, poorer sleep quality, lower self-esteem, inattention and hyperactivity — often in adolescents (Gigen Mammosar, 2018). The growing competition of making ourselves look sadder than others is leading us to a gradual decay.

Now when you see any teenager calling himself depressed because he couldn't pass an exam, or get someone to feel the similar way they feel for them, or they don't feel competent to their peers, you need not pity them. Had the first kid been thankful for the opportunity he had to even study, he would focus more on learning, and lesser on achieving. Had the second kid been able to see the love other people had for him, and how much he mattered to others, leaving aside that one individual's attention he has been craving, he would've felt more worthy. Had the third kid started counting his abilities rather than disabilities, he would've developed a lot of self love. It has been said quite often, that all our unhappiness and suffering in life comes from our desires, which clearly implies that if our desires end, all of our unhappiness and suffering are sure to end with that. (Rahul Singh, 2016)

According to The Four Noble Truths from Buddhism, there is a lot of suffering in life. Some unhappiness and misery are inevitable, you may be causing some of your suffering, you can stop causing your own suffering. And once you cease to create your own suffering, you are more likely to live a good life, one in harmony with your deepest values and goals.

In the nutshell, there might be a variety of contributing factors, but the main cause of unhappiness lies within us.

I'm a teenager, and when my mother found me in the same state, she asked me to start penning down three good things that happened to me during the day, regardless of how small they were. I was reluctant at first, it seemed a bit stupid, still I thought of giving it a try, and the first thing I wrote was - "had pizza today", I love pizza, and I ate it today, and I was definitely happy about it, and I didn't even realize this. You see? That's how easy it is!

Another very significant method suggested by Meg Selig (2018), is the use of the word STOP to avoid self caused suffering:

S stands for seeing what you are doing to yourself. The mere recognition that you are hurting yourself is a big step forward. Self-awareness is inevitable for change.

T asks to charge and make the decision to change. Research shows that when you make the conscious decision to change, you are more likely to be successful.

O depicts brainstorming your Options and choosing one to try.

Finally, **P** is for Practice. The more you repeat a new behavior, the more habitual it will become.



“To be happy is a great talent. To be unhappy is nothing.” (Osho, 2003). Pain indeed is inevitable, and suffering is the only effectual medicine, which can let us cherish true happiness. Nothing supports this more aptly than this famous saying ‘happiness is not the destination, but rather the journey that we take every day’. Yet, among the little beautiful things in life, we are failing to find a reason to smile.

Now I ask you, isn't this a disability?

- Sama (1st year)

VIDEO GAME ADDICTION

In today's society, people are becoming less social in the real world. They find comfort in the closed walls of their rooms and in front of their mobile phone screens in a virtual world, it is sure that people's behavior and their lifestyle is changing. In such changing lifestyle, an interesting phenomenon has arisen by the name of Video game addiction or gaming addiction.

The World Health Organization recognizes this disorder in their International Classification of Diseases (ICD-11) as 'a pattern of persistent or recurrent gaming behavior, which may be online or offline, manifested by impaired control over gaming, increasing priority given to gaming to the extent that gaming takes precedence over other life interests and daily activities and continuation or escalation of gaming despite the occurrence of negative consequences'. (WHO, 2018)

Online multiplayer games played over internet where people from different parts of the world compete against each other, are games with attractive graphics, dark and violent content that increasingly attracts young minds. Games are immersive experiences that provide one with a high level of dopamine, and overexposure to this level of stimulation can cause structural changes in one's brain as observed by gaming researchers Patrick Markey and Christopher Ferguson (2017).



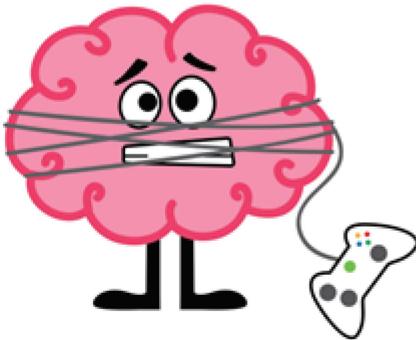
Palau and his colleagues (2017) indicated that gaming not only results in transient activity in many brain areas, but, over time, can cause long-term growth of at least some of those areas. Extensive gaming may increase the volume of the right hippocampus and the entorhinal cortex, which are involved in spatial memory and navigation. Just like any other addiction, gaming addiction is also harmful as it negatively affects person's social, academic and emotional areas of life (Watkins, 2019).

There are some antecedent factors that keeps this addiction going for long durations. Alcoholic patients often reveal that alcohol helps them forget the tension and stress they face in everyday life. Similarly, case studies of people with VGA shows that not only students but also adults who are indulged in excessive gaming play to keep their mind away from the stress and pressure

they face in day-to-day lives. Competition in this fast-paced world, everyday hassles, problematic relationships and dissatisfaction from one's job, all these factors lead a person to play endlessly in front of their screens so one can forget them for some time at least.

Taking into account that depression is associated with low self-esteem, low motivation, low life satisfaction, fear of missing out and need for acceptance by others, it can be assumed that depressive people are more likely to use Facebook or games in order to seek a safe place to interact with others (Hofmann & Nadkarni, 2012).

According to Freud, a person chooses denial when his consciousness is troubled or the internal forces are in some conflicts. Excessive gaming could be seen as a form of denial to one's problems and a complete opposite reaction that is formed in response to those problems. People become so fixated in their games that they lose control over their own lives. A child in America died by suicide leaving a note which said, "I failed to save my character. I can't live anymore." Another patient of V&A told his therapist, "What if I lose this life of mine! I will still have two more in my game!"



Another factor that is contributing to this addiction is violence. The modern man faces situations when he has to suppress his negative emotions. An employee who is faced with criticism from his superiors almost every day, a child who is bullied in school, an adult who is not able to get a job due to various reasons- all these people need an outlet for such emotions. Direct aggression is harmful to the person and surely, if we follow Freud's foot-

steps, we can say the Superego for once, may condemn such aggressive acts.

But Id still needs an outlet which is gained through violence in the games. Psychologists view this unburdening of negative feelings through gaming as catharsis. Many games are especially made with excessive gore and bloodshed, intended to attract young kids who become fascinated by killing the villains in heinous manners.

There used to be a time when Sublimation was a method to give the Id an outlet through creative means but now, many people choose the easier path of simply logging in as their character in the game and let all their emotions run in the virtual reality, thus bringing themselves to a time when their lives become confused and tangled in the maze of actual reality and this virtual reality.

In this modern world of decreasing real life socialization and increasing virtual relations, we need to take a step back and see what we are doing in the name of advancement. If a disorder like Video game addiction is being talked about, it's a clear sign that the technology that was made for human advancement is slowly turning the tables and ruining our civilization and maybe a time will come when we won't be able to tell whether technology was ever a boon to us or a curse.

- Sarthak Paliwal (1st year)

SYNESTHESIA: A WORLD FULL OF COLORS

Synesthesia is a rare neurological condition in which the neural connections in the brain assigned to the work of sensory perception are abnormally linked. A person listening to different pitches of sound may simultaneously experience different colors floating across their field of vision.

Synesthesia cannot actually be categorized as a disorder because it does not interfere with a person's lifestyle. In fact, research suggests that it has the power to improve it greatly. There have been multiple famous artists who proudly call themselves Synesthetes (a term used for people who claim to have Synesthesia). Some of the popular names include Billy Joel, Duke Ellington, Kanye West, Pharrell and many more musicians who based their music on the colors patterns they saw.

There is a wide variety of combinations in senses which come up in people with synesthesia. One of the most common forms is Grapheme-color synesthesia in which individual letters of the alphabet and numbers (collectively referred to as graphemes) are "shaded" or "tinged" with a color. Another famous form of synesthesia is Chromesthesia which links colors and sounds. Individuals with chromesthesia can be of two types: the ones who are able to see different shades of color upon hearing different shades of sound and the opposite; those who hear different pitches of sound when they see different shades of colors. In auditory-tactile synesthesia, certain sounds can induce sensations in parts of the body. The last form of synesthesia is mirror-touch. This is a form of synesthesia where individuals feel the same sensation that another person feels (such as touch). For instance, when such a synesthete observes someone being tapped on their shoulder, the synesthete involuntarily feels a tap on their own shoulder as well.

Of course, if one imagines themselves in the feet of any one of these Synesthetes, life would seem a bit more interesting. But what if it can be proved that once upon a time in every person's life, this ability was present? As infants do not have a developed brain, they do not yet possess neural connections which have established roles. So a study was conducted by Maria Konnikova in 2012 to test as to whether these infants have similar experience to some of the adult synesthetes. The study confirmed this hunch. Infants who were two and three months old showed significant shape-color associations which would be impossible without synesthesia. By eight months the preference was no longer pronounced, and by the time they were adults it was gone altogether. "Infants may perceive the world in a way that's fundamentally different from adults. As we age, we narrow our focus, perhaps gaining an edge in cognitive speed as the sensory symphony quiets down." (Wagner, 2012).

However, it is not yet proven that synesthesia completely disappears from an individual's life. Many instances suggest that among the youthful years, synesthesia is experienced in some way or the other. For example, some sounds can affect the somatosensory system. When fingernails are screeched against a chalkboard, it sends a jittery sensation in the teeth. This proves that the sensory neural connections are still linked in some way. Again, this can also be proved by a study conducted recently in which responses from synesthetes were collected. They were asked about the two different shapes and colors they saw while listening to two different pitches of sound. Following this, non-synesthetes (young adults) were asked as to which shape and color go better with which pitch of sound and to a great surprise, their answers were mostly the same as those described by synesthetes (Ward, 2016).

The chemical compounds reaching the brain from neural networks have the same components. The only difference is that it comes from different sensory sources and when the information from these sources interact with each other, the effect is multiplied. For example, when we hear someone speak and at the same time, we observe their lips in reality, the auditory and visual information reaching the brain is combined and the understanding of the information becomes better than if it is coming from a single source (hearing).

So now the big question comes into place. Does the youth of today seek the experience of synesthesia? Synesthesia, when it was discovered, became a widely popular topic in the field of science. One of the beliefs included that the hyped youth of those days took drugs in order to have a similar experience to those of synesthetes, knowingly or unknowingly. Drugs like LSD and marijuana produced experiences for young adults that synesthetes naturally experienced such as seeing colours and visual shapes (Mitchell, 1971).



Hence today, after so many years, when the drug intake of youth has multiplied exponentially, this topic can be rekindled. The slight possibility that the brain and body enjoy the effect of drugs could be related to the fact that it is in complete nostalgia of the infant days. It wishes to see what it hears and hear what it sees. And since, the natural capacity for the brain to do so is lost, it takes the help of drugs to do so. Along with the effect of the hormones on the brain, the drugs probably give the brain a party time.

Hallucinogens like LSD and Psilocybin (commonly known as magic mushrooms) cause a distortion of perception and the individual may experience temporary mixing of sensory experiences such as seeing sounds or hearing colors. As much pleasure, relaxation and synesthesia-like experience they may provide to the human body and brain, they have adverse effects after prolonged intake. They can cause a hormonal imbalance and interact profusely with the central nervous system, heart rate, respiration and blood pressure. Moreover, the 'acid-trip' is a very unpredictable experience. It can cause extreme euphoria or sadness based on the mood of the person before taking the drug. The extreme sadness raises a slight possibility for the individual to hurt himself/herself under the effect of intoxication.

Some physical side effects of both using hallucinogens, and in more extreme situations, an overdose, include memory loss, blurred vision, seizures, stroke and even death. Along with physically harming the body, hallucinogens can have an equally adverse psychological impact on the person. These include: psychosis, major depression, onset of schizophrenia, paranoia and, the worst of all, suicidal tendencies. Prolonged exposure to hallucinogens can expose the user to experience flashbacks. A flashback occurs when the person abusing hallucinogens goes through a trip after the effects of the drug have worn off. This can occur months or even years after the addict has stopped using the drug. One of the aspects of a hallucinogen addiction is that tolerance is rapidly built up and it takes several days for the body to completely rid itself of the drug. Its toxicity level is so low that there are really no withdrawal symptoms. So, the person might feel that s/he is never going to get addicted to a hallucinogen. These drugs have the potential to completely destroy one's personal and social life if help is not received at the right time. The maximum pleasure related parts of the experience are the hallucinations for most psychedelics' takers.

However, the truth remains the same. A non-synesthete, can never actually experience what a synesthete can. There might exist a temporary pleasure from the effect of drugs but it cannot match with the natural ability of a synesthete. Hence, the youth needs to be made aware of this phenomenon. Because awareness reduces the possibility of drug intake, this information is one step towards that goal. Drugs have the potential to lead the brain to a great downfall from its real capacities and once an individual is addicted at a young age, that's where they start to go down the ladder.

What the youth really needs to understand is that they may use drugs for the entertaining effects they have on their brain, but this entertainment comes at a cost of some or the other form of permanent damage to the bodily systems which would make their future colorless and hazy.

- Anushka. (IIIrd year)

PARENTING IN A PANDEMIC

The coronavirus pandemic has brought forth a number of challenges. It hasn't only changed our social life (or put an end to it), but it has also changed family life. Parents are dealing with the unprecedented challenge of dealing with children who are either too young to understand the situation the world is in, or are too old to be placated. Parenting is tough and stressful under any circumstance, but the current times might make it even harder. Parents and caregivers are attempting to work remotely or unable to work, while caring for children, with no clarity on how long the situation will last. For many people, just keeping children busy and safe at home is a daunting prospect. For those living in low-income and crowded households, these challenges are exacerbated. Parents themselves may be experiencing difficulty in constructively interacting with their children, avoiding punishment for bad behaviour, managing their anxious thoughts and talking about COVID- 19.

For young children who are out of school but aren't allowed to go to the playground and meet their playmates, it is difficult to understand why there has been a sudden change in their daily routine. Their ideas of cleanliness and sanitization may not be clear (DeJesus, Shutts, & Kinzler, 2015) and parents might have a hard time explaining it to them. Along with managing their own work, parents now have the responsibility of home-schooling the children and keeping them occupied. Not only are the parents living with increased stress levels and media fear, the pandemic has also put children at the risk of this parenting stress which may lead to violence and abuse.

With teenagers who live at home or who have come back from hostels to spend the lockdown with their families, it is a little more difficult. The adolescents want to have their own private space and make their decisions. They want to decide for themselves, how they want to spend the free time they have on hand. Social media may be a great outlet for many, but parents may be worried about their kid spending a little too much time on the phone. Chances of parent- adolescent conflicts are very high since they have never before in any situation have had to spend so much time together (Robin & Foster, 2002). While the parents cannot possibly let go of their need to protect their child from danger at any cost, it may be better if they tried to be a friend and confidante to their teenage child. This can help manage conflicts and the parents also may be able to share their feelings with their children. Both should come with activities they can do together-cooking, board games, and household chores.

With adults who live away from parents and have older parents, the worrying takes place both ways.

The parents who are significantly older and maybe at risk in a situation like this, are also stressing out about their children's safety whilst not wanting them to worry about their safety. The parental instinct to protect the children seeps right in and they want to do everything to prevent anything bad happening to the child. Utilising technology to stay connected can only help to a certain extent.

But times of hardship can also allow for creative opportunity for parents to build stronger relationships with their children and adolescents. Parents can utilise effective strategies to build positive relationships, divert and manage bad behaviour, and manage parenting stress. Parents might feel a lack of control since routines are disrupted. During uncertain times like these it might be better if parents followed their intuition and their internal navigation system which guides their parenting style. A positive parent-child relationship can also act as a protective factor for the child and lead to development of resilience (Berk, 2007). The incredible power of this attachment relationship can

make the children more compassionate and resilient.

A few tips for parents during the times of coronavirus-

Practicing self-care

Parental self-care is about recognising our feelings and taking the time to restore balance. If parents are overwhelmed, it would be difficult to handle children's emotions. If parents nurture self-care, it would be easier to respond to children's tantrums more compassionately. Also, parental self-care should be approached without feelings of guilt. It will only help strengthen the family dynamics.

Focus on positive news

Social media is full of unsolicited advice and panicky news alerts. Ignoring these and looking for positive news can help with positive thinking and developing a more positive mind-set. Positive thinking and optimism is associated with better health and well-being (Dowthwaite, 2007). Reading about small wins people are having during a pandemic can be a nice way to start the day.

Embracing remote learning

Parents can help children and teenagers create a realistic schedule for getting work done in defined periods, building in breaks and times for socializing, exercising and entertainment. The key principle is completing a session of work first and then rewarding them with something relaxing.

Going with the flow

Parenting during a pandemic is hard. Approaching things with an open mind can be helpful. Lowering expectations is hard when you're constantly comparing yourself to others, which is easy to do even in lockdown thanks to social media. The current situation provides a great opportunity to be led by the children. It also gives them an added sense of autonomy, which can promote positive emotional growth, and will help them develop executive functions skills like problem-solving, strategizing, and concentrating. Encouraging a consistent sleep schedule, providing opportunities of clean eating, coming up with a study routine can help maintain a positive mood.

Feel all the feelings

Giving children room to share their feelings without judgement and acknowledging the real stress they may be under can help with their self-esteem. But it is important that parents themselves find outlets for their feelings. Keeping emotions bottled up during a lockdown can be harmful for mental health.



Lockdown parenting is a balancing act between entertaining the children and providing them with opportunities of learning as parents grapple with disrupted daily lives. Dealing with this situation with a positive mind-set is difficult but a few tricks with a little patience can make parenting during challenging times like these easier.

WHO, UNICEF, the Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children, the United States Agency for International Development USAID, the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Parenting for Lifelong Health, and the UK Research and Innovation Global Challenges Research

Fund Accelerating Achievement for Africa's Adolescents Hub have collaborated to provide open access online parenting resources during COVID-19.

- Muskan Datta (IIIrd year)

PSYCHOLOGY OF AN INEXPRESSIVE CHILD

“In general, only a child who feels safe dares to grow forward healthily. His safety needs must be gratified. He can’t be pushed ahead, because the ungratified safety needs will remain forever underground, always calling for satisfaction.”.

– Abraham Harold Maslow, 1908-1970 (American Psychologist)

Has it ever happened to you that you wanted to say something to someone but you couldn’t? Or you felt either very happy, sad or angry but couldn’t let the emotions come out at the right time or even out at all? Many people face such situations, the inability to express, at one time or another. Sometimes people are unable to express themselves or their emotions throughout life, and it becomes a part of their basic nature or personality.

It may develop at any later stage of life like during adulthood or old age or, it may be the experiences of the child within you, guiding your ability to express at any other stage of life. The studies related to different aspects of this issue come within the purview of different fields of psychology like child psychology, developmental psychology and neuropsychology.

Nature

A person’s inability to express can be seen in two forms. In the first case, the person can’t express his/her emotions when he/she wants to. In the second case, the person struggles to express, so simply choosing the easier path of avoiding them. These may have several reasons ranging from biological to social or psychological. In some cases, this can be from the beginning of identity formation but in many cases, these develop and solidify over a period of time. Sometimes, they may be unable to identify his/her own emotions and feel emotionally numb. They may also lack empathy towards others.

Causes

The inability to express may be governed by several factors. It may be biological i.e., the causes of inability to express may lie in the genes or may be due to improper development of parts of the brain responsible for emotional behavior, like Amygdala. Abuse in early childhood or at any other stage of life, be it physical or mental, can have psychological implications and can lead to the problems of mental health, personal development and expression of emotions.

Researches state that people with Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) may deliberately inhibit the behavioral expression of emotion (Roemer et al., 2001).

The impaired ability to express may also be seen in the situations of elective mutism (person's refusal to speak in all social situations despite the ability to do so, often effect of trauma) and selective mutism (person's failure to speak in specific situations, strongly associated with social-anxiety disorder).

The exposure to a repetitive situation may also lead to desensitization of a person to the event or phenomenon, and ability of expression to that event is reduced.

The kind of outcome an expression of emotions brings in the form of either reinforcement or punishment, either positive or negative, decides whether the ability to express will enhance or get reduced as governed by 'Thorndike's law of effect'.

The personality of an individual also guides the emotions and its expression. Different personality types have different ranges of expression of emotion, like Carl Gustav Jung's Introvert personality types are less social and emotionally expressive than Extrovert personality types. The personality construct of Alexithymia, causes inability to identify and describe emotions of one's own or others (Sifneos,1973)

The type of relation between a child and their parents also affects the emotional development, and if the child is not allowed to express emotions or if taught or forced to suppress his/her emotions at a young age, it may lead to unhealthy emotional behavior later.

The peer group, relatives and institutions which are a part of the early environment in one's life affects the development of the ability to express. If the environment is supportive, friendly enough or non-judgmental, then the child will feel safe and try to reach others even in difficult times to express and will not develop an inability of expression.

The different rules, norms or cultural practices in a society or culture also affects a person's ability to express like the belief of males being less emotional than females may lead to reduced emotional expression in males. Several disorders like Bipolar Disorder and Emotional Detachment Disorder (EDD) and anxiety can also lead to inability to express in an individual.

Some medicines or other drugs have side-effects which can reduce emotional expression. For example Selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs) are a type of antidepressant, which may cause emotional blunting, or a switched-off emotional center (McCabe et al.,2009). Sometimes, medications are administered on purpose to reduce expression of some emotions when in clinical situations.

Other complications

Although the inability to express is a barrier in itself in the smooth development of personality and behavior of a person, it may lead to other problems as well.

Many studies suggest that due to this people may face problems and have to struggle with issues like depression, anxiety or other mental disorders. Although anxiety or disorders are itself causes of emotional inexpressiveness, they can also be outcomes or function as a cycle.

Expressive inhibition is associated with a range of undesirable outcomes in the general population including attenuation of positive emotion, greater experience of negative emotion, impaired self-esteem, poor interpersonal functioning, and lower overall well-being (Gross & John,2003).

The individuals with retarded ability to express also face social isolation. They feel separated from others. Their friends, family or relatives are unable to understand their emotions and they can form a social image of being rude. They may avert to substance abuse like drugs and alcoholism. The individual also loses enthusiasm and develops apathy and procrastination in work or events. At times, they are also not able to control their emotions and have sudden emotional bursts or meltdowns.

Precautions and treatment

The inability to express can be dealt with through different attempts or may be even prevented in the first place with some precautions. The individual can seek help from professionals like psychiatrist and psychologist or work at personal level to improve the situation. The person can try to understand emotions and start moving towards them consciously, for example through journaling, where you write down emotions associated with a particular situation and process them.

The person can try techniques like meditation and mindfulness. Involvement in creative and artistic activities may also help. The support group can also prove to be of great help in developing the ability to express emotions. Skill-based therapies can also help. One can also seek online therapy.

There are several methods of coping with the situation but, as it is said ‘prevention is better than cure’, we can take few precautions and try to stop or prevent the development of emotional inexpression. In doing so, the individual and the environment both play an important role. The parents, friends and institutions should try to provide a healthy environment to the individual so that his/her ability to express can develop (Power,2004). Therapies like play therapy can be used to guide positive development of emotions and their expression in early stages of childhood.

The person should also try to put more efforts in expressing emotions harder and reduce suppressing them. The individual should not wait for the situation to get severe, and try to seek professional help from a psychologist or psychiatrist at early stages.

The person also needs to develop a support group of friends or relatives for times in need to express emotions rather than suppressing or not addressing them.

The authoritative bodies of a cultural group or society should also revise norms restricting expression of emotions time to time for healthy development of ability to express. The behavior should also not be reinforced or punished in ways to develop problems as they affect it greatly (Rolls, 1999). The medicines producing these side-effects should also be stopped immediately and concerned medical professionals should be contacted immediately.

Terminology Aid

- According to Plutchik, there are 8 basic emotions- fear, anger, joy, sadness, acceptance, disgust, anticipation and surprise.
- Social anxiety disorder or social phobia is a chronic mental health condition associated with irrational anxiety or fear of being judged or of rejection in a social situation, worry about embarrassment or humiliation, or concern about offending someone.
- Thorndike's law of effect states that in a given situation, a response followed by a satisfying consequence will become more likely to occur and a response followed by an annoying consequence will become less likely to occur.
- In Journaling, we write down descriptive, physical sentences about a situation or topic, then move onto describing more emotional aspects of the situation.
- Mindfulness is a technique used in DBT (Dialectical Behavior Therapy) that helps people better tolerate their feelings and increase emotional distress tolerance.

- Kunal (1st year)

WEBINAR SERIES ON MENTAL HEALTH
DURING THE COVID-19 LOCKDOWN

“You can’t be prepared for everything life is going to throw at you.” We may have heard this or read somewhere several times, but we all felt it becoming true during unprecedented times like the pandemic of COVID-19. Suddenly the world was on lockdown and it felt like everything came to a pause. No one could have anticipated it or prepared for it. We can only adapt to the situation to survive. Everyone started adapting in their own ways, managing work, life, etc. But it is as important as physical health to take care of mental health to survive in times like these.

The Department of Psychology, Aryabhatta College, University of Delhi, organised a webinar series for the students and faculties of the college to help them through their journey to keep check of their mental and emotional health.

WEBINAR 1: MANAGING EMOTIONS
IN THE LOCKDOWN
 by Dr. Garima Srivastava



The first webinar of the series was organized on 20th May, 2020 on the topic, “Managing emotions in the lockdown” by Dr. Garima Srivastava, assistant professor of psychology at Aryabhata College, University of Delhi. Her areas of interest include using films as a model of psychological analysis; counseling and clinical psychology; feminism and gender psychology. She has written and published many research articles in journals of national and international importance. She has also worked on several research projects in the area of mental health with the Indian Council of Medical Research and the

World Health Organization.

She began the talk with the description of the situation and by defining emotions. She said that in simple terms an emotion is a feeling like happiness, anger or disgust in a particular situation, and that they are universal irrespective of language, culture or gender. She emphasized on the importance of giving space to every emotion and made reference to a 2015 animated movie, “Inside Out”. Then she explained the several problems people faced during lockdown and the importance of adapting to the new environment. The lockdown brought along a lot of uncertainties with it and a decreased level of predictability for everyone. There was a lack of routine. People lost their level of social connection, pleasure of different activities. Some reacted to it in a positive way and some gave a negative response. Everyone was dealing with different problems at their own level.

She also pointed that we need to manage our life and our emotions, not control it or get rid of it. We can’t do that as they are a permanent part of us. She divided the methods to manage emotions into two categories- internal and external. Internal techniques mainly include breathing and Stop tec

In breathing, we need to focus on our breath when we are anxious to relax and incorporating it into our routine is better as it becomes more effective with practice over time. In stop technique, we need to stop and breathe and focus on something tangible using our senses like touch, vision and smell. It shifts our attention away from things that are making us anxious.

One can take help of apps and platforms like YouTube to get better at practicing these techniques.

External techniques focus on methods like scheduling your time including even time for thinking and talking about situations among other activities, exercises, and making a gratitude jar to remind us of the thing we are grateful for in our life. ABCDE technique can also be used to help manage emotions along with sphere of influence activity, where we draw a sphere on a sheet and write down all the things, we can control inside it and others we can't outside and focus on things inside the sphere.

She ended the webinar with Q&A session where she responded to the doubts and explained in response to the questions that it may take time to schedule your time. We can write down the disturbing thoughts during the activity and get back to it at the end of the day and not leave unattended. She also advised to have designated space in your home for work and we don't need to work whole day when we are at home. We also need to remain in contact with few close people and not be completely isolated. We also don't need to feel pressurized to be productive and define productivity for ourselves. She also drew attention that we may observe both positive and negative changes in us during this time and it's normal but it's up to us which changes we want to build upon and which ones we should let go of. We just should not do that without observation.

We all can agree that managing emotion is as crucial to survival as Managing physical health these days and this webinar helped us understand its importance and the ways to do it.

- Kunal (Ist year)

WEBINAR 2: BOREDOM AND OUR SELVES AMIDST LOCKDOWN

by Ms. Thangbiakching



People were locked inside their homes during this worldwide pandemic due to COVID-19. The countries suffered from economic crisis, health management issues and a lot of other problems. People of all ages faced different problems staying inside their homes like learning to ‘work from home’, staying inside the boundaries of their homes and the constant fear of catching the disease that felt like existing all around them.

But there was one problem that people of all ages commonly faced – boredom. To talk about this issue in detail, the Department of Psychology, Aryabhata College organized a virtual session on ‘Boredom and Our Selves Amidst Lockdown’ conducted by Ms. Thangbiakching, assistant professor at Aryabhata College. Being a Jungian oriented psychotherapist and having her interests lie in the field of storytelling, fables, myths and how they influence our personalities, she gave the students and staff some interesting insights about the topic.

She started the session by talking about Self and as we knew about it. While we consider ‘self’ as something we know about ourselves, she mentioned that all of us carry different ‘selves’ inside us and show them in different situations at different times. This lockdown altered our regular lifestyle, something we were really habitual to at a time and the sudden, surprising change caused a great deal of stress on people’s mental health. The various selves existing in a person were affected by it because the work and activities that used to keep them occupied throughout the day found them suddenly useless.

In our daily life, we follow a routine which we often complain as being boring and tiresome. To get out of that cycle of routine, we often break it by practicing some hobby or activity. Even in this lockdown, when people had surprisingly, a large amount of free time in their hands, they tried different things from cooking to painting to gardening, etc. But soon, all that excitement got lost and people started wishing for their old routine to come back. This made people irritated and bored.

This boredom, as the speaker mentioned, occurred because our selves couldn't find anything to do worth the time and thoughts like 'nothing is worth spending time on' and 'we don't know whether things will ever get fine' started occupying people's minds. People had no outlet for their energy stored inside them which made them feel closed and uncomfortable even in the comforts of their homes.

When people felt bored, they felt guilty of not being productive much hence, occupied themselves in unhealthy activities like binge eating or smoking or drinking to remove that guilt.

But the speaker mentioned that sometimes, we don't need to be productive and we should just be in the moment. Worrying constantly about the future or always feeling like engaging in some activity is not right. She even conducted a small breathing exercise which can help in calming people's mind and nerves, making them understand the benefits of being in the moment and also, letting go of things sometimes. When we learn to let go of our fears, we start occupying our mind in the present and thus, live with a better 'self' free of anxiety and worry.

Lastly, she concluded her seminar by saying that awareness of the surrounding and its acceptance along with compassion for other people and for one self can surely make our lives better and worth living.

- Sarthak Paliwal (1st year)

WEBINAR 3: PSYCHOLOGICAL RESTORATION

by Ms. Soshomi Makang

“It is not a failure to readjust my sails to fit the waters I find myself in.” - Mackenzi Lee



The department of psychology, Aryabhata college hosted a series of webinars to provide psychological assistance to the students amidst the gloominess of lockdown. Teachers in the webinars talked about managing our emotions and boredom in this situation, and the third in this series, was a talk on “psychological restoration” by Ms. Soshomi Makang (Assistant professor, psychology department, Aryabhata college) on 29th May, 2020.

The webinar began with an introduction by Dr. Halley Thokchom, and a few words by our Principal, Dr.

Manoj Sinha who talked about the current academic and overall situation due to lockdown, and also expressed his eagerness to learn about psychological restoration. Dr. R.K. Dwivedi, the head of the psychology department thanked Principal sir for his speech and Soshomi ma’am was introduced by Ms. Thangbiakching, who was the moderator.

Ms Soshomi began by stating that restoration is something that happens to us regularly, we tend to restore from relationships, from our anger, illness, trauma, addiction, and literally everything. She explained that restoration is the process of renewing our physical, psychological and social resources that diminish when we try to adapt with the daily needs. She highlighted that there are resources in us that lie dormant, because we are bound by routines. We define a man as someone who should be productive and know how to optimise, however, we tend to underlook the restorative element.

She went on and explained the three areas where restoration can be applied. The first being, an environment where she brought into light the nature deficit theory by Richard Louv which says that people are spending less time outdoors, which results in many behavioral problems.

She said that we can be protected by nature as it allows renewal of personal resources to meet daily demands. The ‘attention fatigue’ theory states that exposure to nature can help us overcome attention fatigue as we feel more rejuvenated when around nature related stimuli. She further explained it with the ‘trail making’ tests that have proved

that people who are more exposed to nature are more flexible cognitively, compared to those who don't.

Next, she explained the 'stress reduction' theory by Roger Ulrich which says that we are driven to restorative places and engage in scenes that evoke positive emotions in the need to regain our energy, so that we are more prepared when we are demanded.

The second and very important area, she explained, where restoration can be applied is our brain. She enlightened that 40% of our behaviour is driven by habits which are formed by reward and reinforcement pathways. We used to have habits before this lockdown which are no longer fitting to the current situation. Hence, we are forced to find alternatives, we must build new habits to substitute old ones. She called it 'rewiring our brain'. We need to restore, change our habits to adapt with the present scenario.

The third and final is the restoration of our morale. She explained that sometimes our problems are aggregated due to reduced morale, when we start questioning our competence. During this lockdown, we are feeling that we are left alone with our problems. She said that it is time that we look for an alternative, to take ourselves out of the demoralized state. For this, she added, we must look forward to learning new experiences to deal with solitude, integrate new patterns and break the old ones, develop skills to cope with the situation.

She summed up the talk by concluding that we must aim at restoring our brain capacity, increasing morale, building traits with personality that show independency, and also, environment restoration. There was a Q&A session in the end where she cleared some doubts, and also gave examples of how we can "rewire" our brain in this current situation of lockdown.

The webinar talked about something that isn't being much discussed in regards to lockdown and it indeed was very beneficial and informative.

- Sama Sarshar (1st year)

WEBINAR 4: ENGAGING THE SHADOW IN TIMES OF CORONA

by Ms. Nitika Kumar



Live Webinar Series on Mental Health during COVID-19 lockdown is an initiative of the Department of Psychology of Aryabhata College, wherein the Ms. Nitika Kumar was the esteemed guest speaker for the fourth webinar, titled “Engaging the Shadow in Times of Corona”. Ms. Nitika Kumar is an assistant professor at the Amity Institute of Psychology and Allied Sciences, Amity University. She completed her graduation from the Indraprastha College for Women and her post-graduation from University of Delhi. Her PhD work aims at understanding the archetypal psyche of women in Indian context and falls in the purview of Jungian analytical psychology. She has been a Senior Research fellow at the Indian Council of Medical Research. She is a member of the USA-India Jung foundation and has contributed publications in analytical psychology. Her areas of interest include Jungian analytical psychology, dream work, archetypal studies of stories, tales and mythology. Counselling and therapeutic psychology, personality studies and social psychology are her other allied interests.

Ms. Kumar began her session by narrating an old Germanic folklore and we knew then and there that we were about to be swept off our feet. From beginning to end, her charismatic oration and eye-opening content kept us glued to our screens. Her insights and analysis of tenets of Jungian psychology and the way she connected it to the ongoing pandemic was truly enlightening. The session began with a story and the relevance and importance of stories as a symbolic medicine for our psyche. “Look at your shoes and be thankful because your shoes are plain, because one has to live very, very carefully if your shoes are too red”, was the message she divulged right in the beginning and that definitely had our ears perked up for more. She went on to draw parallels from the story with the real world today— the red, handmade shoes, the old lady and the adoption, the addiction to the shoes and dancing and lastly, the crippling of the girl.

Intermittently, she weaved the explanations and importance of shadow work into the session. Shadow, a cardinal aspect of Jungian psychology, associated with the concept of “wholeness” of humans, was an extremely intriguing facet to learn about. We now know that just like everything a luminescent object casts a shadow, similarly, humans with their light of consciousness also have shadows and that’s what makes them whole— the light and the shadow.

Not only was this a one-way session, where she speaks and we marvel but she gave us plenty of food for thought. The fact that every human has their shadow, which are essentially blind spots in our personalities, and that shadows and darkness do not necessarily insinuate negativity, gave us a lot to ponder over. She opened our eyes to the existence of our own shadows and put us up to identifying it and working with it. I believe all of us have got a Project Shadow Work on our hands now and we'll be utilising our time indoors more fruitfully. Ideas such as that of moral tropism, culture, parenting and perfectionism, all leading to the development of our shadows, positive shadows are slightly more difficult to deal with compared to negative shadows, all of it left us boggled and starry-eyed at the same time. Finally, she segued smoothly from the concept of shadow into the final theme of the story and then into its implications in the real world today.

“Psyche has the ability to mirror the natural world”, she said and then went on to blow our minds with how the etymology of the word “corona” is directly related to the shadow that this pandemic has forced us to analyse. She reiterated Jung’s words that the shadow, if not assimilated into the personality bit by bit, can possess us or over power us, and we all felt that. In her own words, this pandemic is the shadow of technology that was ignored for a long time and it ended up enveloping the entire world.

So, we learnt that we are all born with our natural instincts, that are curbed and modified by society, which leads to the development of our shadows and in avoiding the shadow we develop addictions, which perniciously lead to our crippling. Today, amidst the pandemic, we are all crippled and its high time we connected with our shadows and worked with it to step into a better, fruitful future. That was our takeaway from the illuminating session by Ms. Nitika Kumar. The virtual dais was then open for questions and answers. Ms. Kumar managed to answer all the queries meticulously and brought the session to a graceful end. The webinar was concluded with a vote of thanks for our esteemed speaker by Dr. Ravi Prasad.

- Deeksha Parthsarthy (1st year)

WEBINAR 5: IT'S MY LIFE

by Dr. Vinay Kumar



It was a privilege for the entire Department Of Psychology of Aryabhata College to have Dr. Vinay Kumar who is an MBBS, MD Psychiatrist in Manoved Mind Hospital in Patna to conduct a webinar on the topic ‘It’s my life’ on 4th July, 2020.

The webinar commenced with Dr. Dwivedi, Head of the Psychology Department reminding us of Swami Vivekananda who left his mortal body on 4th of July and his words “An ounce of work is worth more than tons of knowledge “.

Next, Dr. Halley Thokchom, the moderator for the session invited our guest, Dr. Vinay Kumar. He started the session on an exciting note by reciting to us the lyrics of the famous song “It’s my life” by Bon Jovi. This song also happens to be the topic of the webinar. Through this he tried to explain that the main idea of living is to find happiness. He focused on three important aspects that are life, liberty and pursuit of happiness. Each one of us should have the right to life- to choose and chase our dreams. He further emphasized that everyone should do their duties diligently because only then the cycle of life will be complete and everyone will be able to live happily. He also pointed out that if we all do our duties then we won’t have to talk about ‘right’ to life because it will be automatically available to us.

He talked about how we’re entangled in the cultural structures and how the “It’s my life” theory has made us self-centered. He related it to Narcissistic Personality Disorder wherein people have an inflated sense of self-importance. They tend to give a lot of importance to their own thoughts and sayings and may complain about not getting enough attention and admiration. Although it boosts self-confidence but it ends up making our self-esteem extremely fragile.

The point to be noted here is that this concept wasn’t present in India before Globalization and it seems to be another of its harms which often goes ignored by our eyes.

He gave a very significant message that during these unprecedented times, we all should understand that we need very basic things in order to survive and be happy. He looked on the positive side of this pandemic and talked about how our Nature is healing itself. The air has become cleaner and the rivers clearer. We can utilize this time to work on

ourselves and become a better person both physically and mentally.

He defined mental health as the ability to work, play and love. Nowadays, we are seeing deteriorating mental health of people due to fear, uncertainty and inability to meet their loved ones.

This ultimately leads to anxiety and depression and in extreme cases, people commit suicide. Dr. Vinay sir explained how it a long journey from anxiety to depression and ultimately suicide. He also spoke about the preventive measures which mainly include getting knowledge about it, talking about your problem and seeing a specialist before things get worse.

In the end, he gave the example of the famous neurologist Viktor Frankl who was put in the concentration camp along with his family. He didn't lose hope and continued his search of finding the meaning of life. After he was released, founded Logotherapy which helps people find the purpose of their life. It was a very inspirational session which was ended through even more inspirational words.

- Aastha Rana (1st year)

WEBINAR 6: MENTAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING: CURRENT CONCERNS

by Prof. Girishwar Misra

Prof. (Dr.) Girishwar Misra is a great stalwart of the field of psychology. He is considered as the Father of Indian Psychology, seeing his mammoth contribution towards highlighting the Indian perspective in psychology and broadening the horizon for the field in India. Prof. Misra was the vice chancellor of Mahatma Gandhi Antarrashtriya Hindi Vishwavidyalaya. He is an esteemed professor in the Delhi University, and many other universities of Bhopal, Allahabad, Gorakhpur. He is also a visiting professor in a prominent university of Berlin, an ESRC fellow in Sussex University, a Fullbright Nehru scholar and lecturer in the United States. His forte is social psychology and he has penned a variety of works in both English and Hindi.

He also received the National Award in the field of social science in 2009. It is, therefore, impossible to miss out Prof. Girishwar Misra whenever we talk about Indian psychology or psychology in general.

If we were to sum up the session in a few words, a shloka recited by Prof. Misra towards the end, aptly gives us a gist of all that is required in current scenario to promote mental health and well-being. For the webinar series, the Department of Psychology of Aryabhatta College was extremely blessed to have an eminent personality such as Prof. (Dr.) Girishwar Misra, grace the virtual dais with his presence and conduct an enlightening session on the current concerns about mental health and well-being. Very succinctly, he managed to substantiate the physical, social and psychological problems that have disrupted our lives due to so many restrictions that have been imposed upon us, ascribable to this global pandemic. He pointed out the major problem being faced by today's youth—the unfinished work, the unachieved goals, and the unfulfilled plans. This unsettlement and nomadic feeling are causing a plethora of psychological and mental health issues, even driving some towards grave measures like suicide.

The various forms of media and information are not making it any easier with their surplus of despairing news. But, he interjected, there is a ray of hope. For instance, when we see the increasing number of people getting infected by the coronavirus, at the same time, there are recovering cases from the infection. So, we need to look at the bright side.

Positivity was a recurring theme in Prof. Misra's session. He constantly urged us to inculcate positive thinking. It's no surprise that the grim situation worldwide has forced us into idleness and thus, overthinking. However, he offered a solution to avoiding pessimistic and self-defeating thoughts. The solution lies in engaging ourselves in simple but productive work, something that we wouldn't have done in our regular, busy lives—cooking, cleaning, gardening, writing, learning a new skill, it could be anything. The idea is to push our boundaries and take charge of our own narratives. Before this, our lives were governed by others but now it's time to think about everything we can do.



The circumstances are debilitating and people are facing a lot of stress, with regards to various aspects of their lives but according to Prof. Misra, stress is not arising so much from the situation at hand, but from the way we are perceiving the situation. In other words, our cognitive appraisals are very important, we may perceive the situation as a positive one, a negative one, as an opportunity or as something that is impossible to overcome. Our stress levels and feelings of positivity or self-defeat will depend on these appraisals. He went on to say that this is the right time to empower ourselves through self-discovery. It's not a time to sulk and wallow in the negativity

being brought about by the situation, but to explore our potentialities and capabilities, to utilise this time and learn new abilities. This is when we should identify our limitations and weaknesses and work upon them.

With the constant overflow of information and the despondency that it brings, our peace of mind has been disrupted. But it is our duty to regulate the peace and give ourselves a direction. To guide us towards a more positive way of thinking, Prof. Misra talked about the persistence of change, followed by the assertion that change is the only constant in our lives, nothing else stays constant. Over the years, as we grow, we realise our tastes and preferences change. He made a very optimistic and promising remark about the fact that since change is so inevitable, everything can change, even the unfortunate times we are currently stuck in. But this change has to come from within, it has to be brought about by us. According to him, we need to first and foremost identify ourselves and what we are capable of. We might think our bodies and our appearances are who we are but our body is simply an instrument that we need to utilise completely to bring about change.

Lastly, he said that humans are relational beings. We cannot completely divorce ourselves from the society, nature, the world or the universe. We need to realize that we are dependent on the ecosystem we are a part of, for our survival. We need to pay attention to our position in relation to this world, to the universe, to ourselves and to what we can contribute. This life is a gifted opportunity that we must utilise meaningfully. He pointed out how we now have psychiatrists and a vast amount of scientific literature to diagnose and treat mental health problems. But if we look towards our origins, our *upanishads* highlight *bhaya* (fear), *lobha* (greed), and *krodha* (anger) in our social lives, as the leading causes of diseases — both mental and physical. But how to fend off these enemies inside us? To answer this, he brought up examples of Buddha, Gandhi, Shankaracharya, and a common farmer. All of them are people who led life in a very minimalistic and simple manner. Thus, our takeaway from their example was to reduce our demands and wishes, in order to reduce problems that are caused by greed, fear and anger, as all three are interconnected. In order to regulate our social behaviour, we need to find the right conscience, in the sense that it helps and benefits others too. He mentioned that a lot of researches suggest that altruistic people are much happier and content with their lives. Our greed and our ego are our biggest enemies and this is the right time to deliberate over these matters and imbibe prosocial values. In order to ascertain a life free of pain, hardships and mental and physical problems, we must seek happiness from helping and benefiting others rather than just ourselves. After all, as Mahatma Gandhi rightly said, the world has enough for everyone's need, but not everyone's greed. And it is the consequence of our greed that we are facing today.

- Deeksha Parthasarthy (1st year)

WEBINAR 7: PANDEMIC: AN OPPORTUNITY TO RETHINK SELF AND SOCIAL IDENTITY

by Prof. Anand Prakash

The second webinar of the day and seventh of the series, 'Pandemic: An opportunity to rethink self and social identity', was addressed by Prof. Anand Prakash, Head, Department of psychology, University of Delhi. He has teaching experience of more than 40 years. He has taught courses like organizational behavior, psychology of human resources, qualitative research methodology, applied social psychology, appreciating diversity, and psychology at the margins. He has also organized many national conferences and workshops and worked closely with several institutions on different projects.



The session started with a brief introduction of the speaker.

Prof. Anand Prakash started with the present-day context of the topic. He said that now when the entire society is in a state of communal solitude, it can be seen both as a great adversity as well as an opportunity. And, it takes an evolved self to take it as an opportunity. We need to transform, make changes and rebuild the self-amidst the sense of loss among people. There is loss of normal routine and patterns, loss of security, and loss of future certainty. He pointed out that it is tough to express and manage emotions when one is uncertain about the future. We visualize the future through the fleeting present. He said, generally security comprises independence like in case of jobs or marriage, but in this COVID-19 situation, both security and independence are in danger.

Prof. Prakash explained different gradual stages of reaction to the situation, as at the beginning people were in denial. Later it changed to a state of anger and now we are in the state of negotiation, where we are learning to live with it in a balance. He explained the perspectives of the inner and outer world through a mythological story of race between *Ganesha* and *Kartika* to revolve around the whole world three times. If you have conquered the inner world, it will contribute to a greater self. Go slowly and explore your inner world, but don't lose perception of the external world too.

Body is the first step to our inner world and other three aspects are mind, emotions, and energy. He further discussed concepts like empirical world and existential self with references to different cultures, Upanishads and other mythological texts. He said our mental creations of reality are based on our experiences and impressions, and it is important to involve in self- interrogation for a better mind.

He pointed out that earlier objective of education was finding the truth and self, which has become employment and consumption centred, nowadays.

He told about the importance of harmony between smaller self and bigger self and how it serves one in a better way. Intelligence plays a major role in the development of one's identity and how they want to be treated in a specific way based on individual differences. Jordan B. Peterson, a clinical psychologist and professor of psychology, University of Toronto describes how pandemic has created different kinds of problems for people of different gender. He says, gender differences have two components- biological and cultural, and balance between the two should be maintained. Professor Prakash also emphasised the changing role of technological determinism and social and cultural determinism in these times of pandemic. He discussed the local sense of identity, its importance in expanding self and role of language, art and culture in doing so through a sense of shared heritage and mentality.

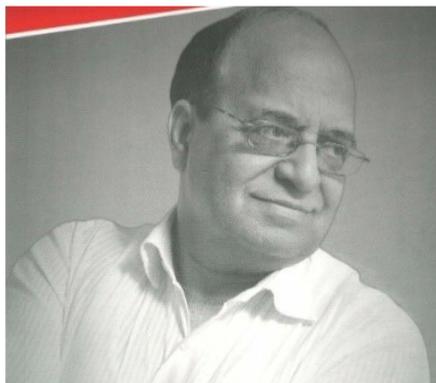
During the Q&A session, Prof. Prakash addressed several questions and discussed concepts like objective and subjective self-reflection, effects of digital presence on experience of self, cultural and identity divisions during the pandemic, and dealing with loss during these times. He also shared his personal experience from this COVID-19 situation that it caused him to consolidate his learning and thinking about the situation, and how it has helped him deal with these difficult ways in a calm way. It was a really enlightening session which helped us gain a better perspective to look at the situation. He said that this situation has made people more inclined towards inside, discover their difficulties, uncover their coverings, both good and bad, and emphasized on how we can look at it as an opportunity to rethink our self and social identity.

- Kunal (Ist year)

WEBINAR 8: POST-COVID-19: EQ PARADIGM

by Prof. N. K. Chadha

We are not in control of our emotions many times and during this lockdown when there was no surety of what may happen tomorrow or when precisely would life get back to normal, it became increasingly hard for people to manage their emotions. To discuss this issue and give guidance to students, Srijan, the Psychology Department of Aryabhata College, Delhi University organized an online seminar on EQ Paradigms in the Post COVID-19 times by Professor N.K. Chadha.



The discussion revolved around the topics of anxiety, feeling of restlessness and constant worry due to the lockdown and seeing the rising number of cases all over the country. Professor N.K. Chadha told us that in these times of hardship, there are not just financial and economic challenges that people have to face but as well as a series of challenges related to their personal being. He mentioned challenges of maintaining mental and physical health, developing the strength of resilience and developing a self 'fight or flight' mechanism.

According to him, having the feeling of resilience will give people faith over themselves and their capabilities and will help them deal effectively with the stressful situations. He also talked about learning to avoid procrastination. During these times when even though people have work but since there is no assurance of when things would get back on track, they are getting in the habit of delaying it or postponing it because the work feels pointless at that time. But it was mentioned in the discussion that delayed work or piled up work due to procrastination also leads to stress and anxiety, thus, it is better to do the work on time and remove at least some bit of anxiety that a person can.

Prof. Chadha briefed the students about the strength of Emotional intelligence – the ability to judge and understand your own emotions, know their strength as well as understand the emotions and feelings of other people. He said that a person with a high level of Emotional Intelligence, i.e. having high EQ (emotional quotient), is able to succeed better in life than a person with high IQ (intelligence quotient).

Good IQ can guarantee good grades and percentage but to be successful and happy in life, a person needs good relations with others, feeling of belongingness and connection with other people too. In this pandemic situation too, when many times, people's emotions become overwhelming for them and people get regular mood swings, a person with high EQ will know how to respect his emotions. He will, throughout his day, give time to his emotions too and find time to be happy, sad, silent, etc.

The four key domains of emotional intelligence that were mentioned during the lecture were 'Self Awareness', 'Social Awareness', 'Self-Management' and 'Social Management'. If a person is able to handle these four domains well, he/she is more likely to succeed in life with a much satisfied and happier mental state.

Thus, it was made clear that emotions are as important for people as any other thought or idea so people must learn to appreciate them, value them and understand them properly.

- Sarthak Paliwal (1st year)

REPORT ON MOVIE SCREENING

'*Anoocharito*', a Bengali short film written and directed by Sourav Sarkar, was screened on 28th January 2020 in the presence of the director himself, at Aryabhata College, University of Delhi. The film follows the perspective of a young child and how he is affected by parental conflict and separation from his friend. He feels alone and engages in different creative activities to keep himself occupied. It begins with a view of the child's room, the objects in his room, his drawings and artworks, which represent the child's emotions, his state of mind and his life. Much is expressed through symbolism in the film. The child remembers fond memories with his friend while looking at her picture and makes plans of activities they'll do together. This shows how the child longs for his friend and needs her. After the screening, the director took the students through the movie, frame by frame providing insight on the metaphors and meaning within the film, on how the film was created, and also answered questions from students. He also asked the audience what they understood and explained how the film can be interpreted differently using the details in each frame. He talked about the need for guidelines on good parenting and the impact parenting can have on the fragile mind of a child. He discussed the importance of media in spreading awareness and how it can be used to guide audience to mental well-being. At the end of the session, he also requested the audience to write about their own interpretation, and requested for the film. The screening allowed for an insightful discussion where media, psychology, and other disciplines intersected.

- Vijayalaxmi (IIIrd year)

TEACHERS' DAY

“The teacher refines and reconciles the different currents of thought. He adopts the method, not of denial, but of presentation and shows how these different lines of thought converge towards the same end.”

-Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan



On 5th September 2019, the Psychology Department of Aryabhata College, celebrated Teacher's day in the most marvellous way possible. As a tribute to teachers, there was a band performance put up by students which left the whole audience awestruck. What was even more beautiful, was the performance put up by one of the beloved teachers, Dr. Ankit Prakash. He held together the whole audience with his perfect singing and the applause which didn't seem to want to die out.

After the singing, there was a cake cutting ceremony for the teachers and the Principal, Dr. Manoj Sinha who made a special appearance. Everyone present there enjoyed themselves. Then, two of the students, Khushboo Arora and Samyak Verma gave a speech in order to honour the teachers.



They expressed the gratefulness students felt for their teachers. For every teacher, Dr. R.K. Dwivedi, Dr. Ravi Bhushan, Dr. Halley, Dr. Ankit Prakash, Ms. Soshomi, Dr. Garima Srivastava, Ms. Thangbiakching Guite and Dr. Neera, the students laid down tremendous praises.



The importance of their lectures and them making college a better place for the students was appreciated. Towards the end of the speech, all students raised their imaginary glasses to give a toast to the teachers.

To top it all, Dr. R.K. Dwivedi, teacher in-charge of the Psychology Department gave a thank you note speech to the students. He expressed his gratitude, saying, “The teacher’s job only exists for and by students. They are the ones who

made teachers what they are today”.

The event ended on a happy note. The teachers were so nice and modest that it couldn’t be deciphered that who was more thankful, the teachers or the students.

- Anushka Madaan (IIIrd year)

**TALK ON 'APPLIED BEHAVIOURAL ANALYSIS
AS A TECHNIQUE OF INTERVENTION IN
CHILD BEHAVIOUR'**

by Professor S.P.K Jena

The department of psychology of Aryabhata College, University of Delhi, organised a talk by Dr. S.P.K Jena, associate professor of Applied Psychology (Delhi University) on 'Applied Behavior Analysis As A Technique Of Intervention In Child Behaviour' on 3rd September 2019, to help students increase their understanding about various topics like Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA), Operant Conditioning, Token economy programme, Think Aloud programme, Extinction burst and Stimulus deprivation.

The session began with a welcome and introduction speech by Dr. R.K.Dwivedi, teacher-in-charge, Department of Psychology.

Dr. S.P.K. Jena started the talk with the explanation of ABA, he explained that Applied Behaviour Analysis includes behaviour therapy and its applications. It is the practice of applying different psychological principles of learning which leads to change in behaviour.

He stated the development of Behaviourism school of thought which searches for explanation of behaviour in environment and learning. He explained major contributions of behaviourists like John B. Watson and his experiments on behaviour in children. He also mentioned B.F. Skinner and his training of animals like pigeon and albino rats to the extent of firing weapons. He also stated that different aspects of the environment can change the human behaviour.

He redefined ABC in another way as Antecedent, Behaviour and Consequence respectively and emphasised understanding behaviour in terms of these ABC's. He said that behaviour is not individual in nature, in fact, it is a complex combination of responses.

He explained about operant and pre-operant behavior through simple and understandable demonstration of opening a bottle cap, which can be done only if used in a particular way. He also shared his experience of using Token economy programme as a way of reinforcement where people are given food or any other prize in exchange for the number of tokens earned or left with them. These tokens are earned but performing the desired behavior.

Along with examples, he put light on the importance of removal of reinforcement and drew attention towards the situations where people mistakenly or unknowingly rein-

force unwanted behaviour. Suppose, there is a child who bangs his head against a wall and when the mother sees, she stops him and lifts him in her lap; here the behaviour of banging against wall will increase because mother is unknowingly reinforcing behaviour by the comfort of her lap. In another case, parents unknowingly increase the demanding behaviour in children by fulfilling their every demand, maybe to avoid their child's shouting and crying. He also spoke against this behaviour of parents and quoted 'NEVER BRIBE YOUR CHILD'.



He also explained different phenomena related to various behavior types like:

Stimulus deprivation, the effect of one stimulus on the effect of another stimulus like loud background. For example, music reduces the amount of hunger while eating.

Habituation effect, the demand of increased number of stimuli increases every time than previous one like in cases of addiction of different substances.

He also explained about Think aloud programme which is used to treat behavior in people who often say that they will do something but they don't. He explained that only biological bases alone cannot

explain human behavior completely and also explained free floating anxiety to the students.

During the Questions and answers session, Dr. Jena helped students clear their personal doubts related to the talk wherein he re-explained critical terms and discussed the topics like positive psychology, self-reinforcement, benefits of diary writing habits, parent dependent personality and ways to use ABA to improve behavior in children.

The talk was overall a learning experience for everyone which highlighted the importance of consequences and its effect on behavior; Applied Behavior Analysis, and how behavior can be changed in a particular way. It emphasized on the importance of ABA in regular daily life situations as well, rather than complex environments like hospitals, or psychiatric centers. One can incorporate few things not only as a professional but also as an individual in the daily life to improve it in many ways.

- Kunal (1st year)

REPORT ON LECTURE SERIES BY **Dr. Navin Kumar**

Students of the psychology department of Aryabhata college had the privilege to be a part of lecture series given by Dr. Navin Kumar, Associate Professor in psychology at Bhim Rao Ambedkar College, University of Delhi. Dr. Navin has a doctorate in psychology from the University of Delhi and has been teaching since 20 years now.

The first talk with the first year student of B.A. (H) Psychology, on Indian psychology was on the 11th of February, 2020. Dr. Navin Kumar enlightened them with a generous amount of knowledge of the field. He was very patient while clearing the doubts of the students, and even welcomed answers from the students.

The second talk was for the 3rd year students on the 17th of February, 2020. The lecture was on positive psychology, a relatively new field. Dr. Navin himself is the executive editor of "journal of positive psychology". It was yet another fruitful session for the students.

His next talk was on media psychology with the 2nd year students on the 26th of February, 2020, where he discussed about social media and how it impacts students. He also identified how students have changed over generations. He also brought into light the importance of counseling in this regard. The lecture was followed by a very interactive question and answer session.



The last lecture, which took place on the same day, was on organizational psychology, attended by both the 2nd and 3rd year students of Psychology (H), where he eloquently explained about the field, while clearing the existing doubts of the students.

The entire lecture series by Dr. Navin Kumar was very illuminating for the students, and it was a pleasure to have him in the college, packed with knowledge about various psychological fields.

- Sama Sarshar (1st year)

MHAW'19
TUESDAYS WITH MORRIE: Movie Analysis

Tuesdays with Morrie is a 1999 television film adaptation of Mitch Albom's book of the same name. The movie revolves around themes of love, regret, forgiveness, the value of human relationships and most importantly about treasuring life itself. It was screened as a part of Mental Health Awareness Week' 19 at Aryabhata College, University of Delhi and was thoroughly enjoyed by one and all.

In the movie, Mitch Albom is a sports commentator and a journalist who gets caught up in his own life. Janine, the girl he loves, feels that she is never given any priority. One evening, while flipping through TV channels, Mitch accidentally lands up on an edition of Nightline, where he sees Morrie Schwartz being interviewed. Morrie is a retired Sociology professor from Brandeis University and was Mitch's old professor whom he hadn't seen in 16 years and had promised to remain in touch with. During the interview, Morrie reveals that he is suffering from Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS) also known as Lou Gehrig's disease. It is a fatal disease which causes the death of neurons controlling voluntary muscles and ends up taking the life of the individual. Having seen the interview, Mitch is moved to the extent that he plans to visit his old professor. Morrie, who is taken care of by his nurse, Connie, seems extremely elated to have Mitch in his company. This becomes a routinely activity. Mitch visits Morrie every Tuesday and brings him food. They enjoy each other's company and their bond grows stronger as they indulge in several thoughtful and reflective conversations. Morrie divulges many stories from his childhood, his relationships with his mother, stepmother and father. Mitch also attends the living funeral of Morrie. As the bond between Mitch and Morrie strengthens, Mitch and Janine seem to grow apart and the two eventually break up. Having explored topics such as love, marriage, family, relationships and death, Mitch decides to record all of Morrie's powerful pieces of advice and anecdotes. Mitch mistakes he had been making and decides to make amends. He proposes to Janine as a changed man and Janine accepts his proposal. Their last conversation included Morrie describing his perfect day consisting of his family, friends, great food, soothing walks and real talks.

The film beautifully depicts the relationship between a student and a teacher and how Morrie, who is on the verge of death, teaches Mitch about the beauty of life and relationships as he says, "Death ends a life, not a relationship." Detachment and forgiveness have been emphasized upon and convey the true way of living life as a journey. To sum it up, Morrie subtly quotes, "The truth is, once you learn how to die, you learn how to live."

- Aastha Rana (Ist year)

PSYCHOLOGY DEPARTMENT AND NIBS AND BRUSHES SOCIETY - OPEN MIC

On 27th September 2019—the promotion day of Mental Health Awareness Week 2019 organised by the psychology department of Aryabhata College—students of the college witnessed an Open Mic poetry session on the theme ‘Suicide Prevention and Mental Health’. The Psychology Department collaborated with Nibs and Brushes, the fine arts and creative writing society of the college, to bring about this event.

Being a one-of-a-kind poetry event, the poets chose words to express their concern about mental health, and their views on positive thinking, optimism and suicide prevention, all while presenting some great pieces.

Students of the psychology department too spoke about suicide and how it can never be a solution to a problem in their poems. A line from one of the poems translates as, “Suicide is not ending your grief, it’s just passing your grief to someone else”. The college students actively spoke as well as listened on the issue and thus, a completely new way of talking about one’s mental anguish and issues was presented—through art and poems.

CONFESSIONS AND DISCUSSION “LET’S TALK ABOUT IT”

The psychology department of Aryabhata College—in its line of events on the theme ‘Suicide Prevention and Awareness’—initiated a confession drive on 27th September, 2019 in the college premises.

A box each was kept in two parts of the college and people were asked to write about their anxiety, stress, relationship issues, any past incident, or simply anything that concerned their mental health. This initiative was done to encourage students to talk about their problems, the issues that always lurk in the background to which people never pay attention to and still they continue to affect them.

On the second day of the Mental Health Awareness event, the confession boxes were opened up and a panel of teachers along with the students read various anonymous confessions by students and discussed those problems and how one can help such individuals.

The Department's head, Dr. R. K. Dwivedi said, "Acknowledging the problem is the biggest step in solving it. The people who talk about their mental issues are brave and courageous."

The confessions were categorised in three categories. The first category consisted of the confessions where people elucidated, quite boldly, their problems, their frustrations, their anger, anxiety, stress and even depression. Many of the students felt like most of the problems highlighted in confessions covered the areas of bullying, body shaming, competition, overthinking and less emotional support. The second category included the confessions where people talked about their journey of suffering and coming out of it, how they recovered from their problem and fought it well. They spoke how positive self-talk and healthy social support made them feel worthwhile in their lives. The last category of confessions included people's positive outlook on life, how they appreciated life and felt optimistic even in their day to day activities. The last set of confessions were most important because they told a really crucial aspect of life, and that is acceptance — acceptance of your own self is extremely important in maintaining a good mental health.

Ms. Soshomi Makang said, "Honesty with oneself is important. When one writes about it, one does catharsis in front of oneself. Thus, the first cry of help comes from oneself and even that help comes from oneself."

To sum up the event, Dr. Dwivedi gave a unique and optimistic outlook on life by saying that sufferings and problems are nothing but opportunities to bring out the best in oneself. Those are the moments that define our capabilities and personality. Thus, the MHA 2019 was brought to an end with a fruitful discussion on mental health, suicide and how communication can become a bridge between the one asking for help and the one who wishes to help.



TALK ON SUICIDE PREVENTION

by Dr. Priti Dhawan

As a part of the mental health awareness week, the Department of Psychology, Aryabhata College, organized a talk on ‘suicide prevention’ by Dr. Priti Dhawan, faculty member at Lady Shri Ram College, University of Delhi. She began by asking the audience questions like - “Do you choose to release all your regrets?” “Do you choose to express your decisions that didn’t work as you hoped?” If not, then she asked them to try and choose to share them today, which is why she titled her talk as “STARTING A CONSERVATION”

She brought into light the concept of self- awareness, or the conscious knowledge of one’s own self. The importance of resolving inner conflicts was also highlighted. Dr. Priti then emphasized the importance of psychological first aid and went on to describing the signs of mental discomfort.



The first sign being is verbal warning. When a person makes a direct statement of intention of committing suicide, it shouldn’t be taken lightly. Another hint is when a person has a vivid plan, consisting of specific details like layout and location of suicide.

Also, a person who has attempted suicide must be taken special care of. 80% of the suicides follow a prior attempt. There are a variety of indirect signs too.

Any behavioral indication or indirect statement that might show a person’s disinterest in living. Symptom of depression also cannot be ignored when it comes to assessing risk of suicide. The chances of committing suicide are 20 times more for the people suffering from depression. Another factor is hopelessness, when a person loses purpose in life.

Apart from the psychological signs, intoxication is one of the reasons leading to suicide. 1/4th of suicides are attached to alcohol or any intoxication addiction as a factor. Marital separation is yet another cause. There is a 4 times higher risk for separated couples for suicide, and the risk is even higher for males. Clinical syndromes also have a significant influence on suicide. People with brain syndromes, have the highest suicide rate.

It has been found that there is 3 times higher risk in males than in females, of committing suicide, and vice versa in attempting suicide.

Thus, gender is another factor to be considered. Apart from gender, there is the age factor. The highest risk is in the age group 45 – 54 years, followed by the age group of 75-84 years. This is mainly because they don't find purpose in life anymore, or don't have dreams to chase. Living alone is another risk associated with increasing suicide rates. Risk is considerably reduced with a spouse, and even more with children. Bereavement is yet another factor: 50% of individuals who commit suicide, have lost their mothers in the past 3 years. Suicide risk tends to be higher around the anniversary of the loss. Unemployment also increases the risk to succumb and end life. Sleeping, eating and other disorders also tend to increase risk of suicide. Another risk factor is impulsivity. People with poor impulse control are at higher risk. Rigid thinking also forces people into this ideation. Apart from this, if any stressful or undesirable event has occurred in a person's life, he is more susceptible to suicide. Lack of belongingness and feeling unworthy and left out which can also lead a person into taking his life.

After listing out the signs, Dr. Priti suggested some ways of turning the risk around -

The first method is to build character strength of people. She advised the students to initiate and praise five people 'verbally' every day for their character and virtues. Trust should also be built by practicing various trust building exercises. Next, she emphasized the importance of starting a conversation on topics of mental health.

At college level, she suggested creating peer support programs, maintaining an emotions box where people can write their feelings, which they're unable to express otherwise or starting a happiness club where a community can be created through building gratitude by journaling, and other techniques.

In the end, Dr. Priti requested all to pledge to share, to talk and to listen, so that the growing evil of suicide can be prevented. The talk was very informative and students felt more aware and educated about the signs of suicide and its prevention.

- Sama Sarshar (1st year)



SEMINAR BY Dr. Ruchi Verma

1st October, 2019 marked the second day of the Mental Health Awareness event organised by Psychology Department of Aryabhata College, Delhi University. The theme of the event was Mental Health promotion and suicide prevention and it a privilege to have Dr Ruchi Verma, join us for a seminar on “Developing skills to prevent suicide”. Dr Ruchi Verma is a clinical psychologist at the Institute for Human Behaviour and Applied Sciences (IHBAS). She enlightened and educated the audience with her vast knowledge and viewpoints on suicide and its prevention. The session began with a very informative presentation on the topic where she briefly discussed about suicide and its causes, moving on to highlighting the role of every individual in the prevention of suicide once they are aware of the warning signs.



She talked about the perils of modern-day media glorifying alcohol and substance abuse as a cure to distress, as it is one of the leading causes of suicides worldwide. In the course of her lecture, she also decoded various myths people have about suicide. For instance, the belief that suicide is an impulsive act and happens without warning, that suicidal people are determined to die and, talking about suicide would promote it are all erroneous beliefs and the reality

is that suicidal people display warning signs before committing the act, they are often ambivalent about living and dying and talking about suicide does not promote it, rather it encourages people to rethink it. She urged everyone, on an individual level, to observe and identify early warning signs, to extend help by actively listening to the cry for help, to encourage and mobilize social support and seek help of mental health professionals. Highlighting the role of a mental health professional, she spoke about being non-judgemental, allowing ventilation of thoughts and emotions, crisis intervention, medical management and therapeutic intervention. An interactive and illuminating question-answer session followed the lecture, in which she meticulously answered the various questions posed by the students and the faculty members. The seminar concluded with a vote of thanks to the guest speaker. The audience was left with a heightened awareness about skills to prevent suicide and a pledge to help those suffering with suicidal thoughts and other forms of mental distress.

- Deeksha Parthasarthy (Ist year)

PSYGALA 2020

Paper presentation competition



The Department of Psychology organised its first paper presentation competition, as a part of the annual department fest, PSYGALA. The event was held in the psychology lab on 6th February, 2020. The theme of the event was ‘Youth and Mental Health’ and papers based on recently culminated, original research in psychology and allied fields were invited. The event was organised by

the Editorial Board and received an excellent response to the invitation for abstracts of research papers. All entries were reviewed, and 9 entries were selected for the competition. The panel of judges consisted of Dr. Suparna Jain, Associate Professor at Dault Ram College, Dr. Garima Srivastava, Ms. Ching, Dr. Halley Thokchom and Dr. Ravi Prasad who are assistant professors at Aryabhata College. The diverse panel of judges ensured a fair, unbiased representation of the various branches of psychology.

All the selected teams presented their papers, and were then asked questions by the judges. The judges not only asked questions but also gave insightful inputs and guided the participants on how they could improve their papers. The papers ranged from topics like effects of negative emotions, qualitative analysis of poetry, academic stress, and attitudes towards mental illness, impact of social media and the feminine psychology. It was indeed a sea of brilliance, as one team after another came forward armed with incredible, original findings.

Ms. Nitya Prakash was declared the winner of the competition for her paper titled “The Melancholic Feminine”. The runner’s ups were Mr. Arjun Gupta and Ms. Rajnandini Sarkar for their paper titled “Comparing Attitudes towards Mental illnesses across college students”.



The second runner up was Ms. Vijayalaxmi Samal for her paper titled “The Relationship Between Socioeconomic Status and Academic Anxiety among College Students”. All papers were well received by the audience and encouraged a healthy discussion on the topics of the papers.

All participants were given certificates of participation and the winners were given certificates of achievement. The event highlighted the importance of research in the field of psychology and encouraged students to pursue research in different fields of psychology.



YOUTH AND MENTAL HEALTH

Day 1 of Psygala witnessed a very fruitful session on Youth and Mental Health by Dr. Karuna Mehta. She began by stating the facts which affect a person's mental health: how we think, how we control our thoughts, influence of our childhood experiences, etc. She brought into light the critical tasks of every stage in one's life, and the coping strategies one can use.



She emphasized the importance of positive psychology, improving our thoughts from within, doing our best rather than focusing on the negative aspects. We always tend to blame others, while what's wiser is, to take our own responsibility, opt for problem solving to avoid the stressful situation instead of letting negativity overpower our thoughts and behavior.

Dr. Karuna then listed out the different ways by which the youth can guard their mental health.

She advised Opting for transactional analysis approach: A method of therapy wherein social transactions are analyzed to determine the ego state of a person [whether parent-like, child-like, or adult-like] as a basis for understanding behavior. One must try to be flexible in life, as rigidity leads to disappointment and failures. It is sometimes important to unlearn a few habits if they aren't working in your favour.

“We can always rewrite the script of our life.” she added.

The worst we can do in a negative situation (like depression) is to start “enjoying” it. Few people start using their adversities as a tool to gain attention and sympathy, and begin considering it appropriate, without even realising.

We must also take care of our physical health to avoid any other problems and in turn, safeguard our mental health.

We should learn to empathize with others and their problems, only then we can fully understand why someone is behaving in a particular way and thus, we can save ourselves from getting hurt by people's behaviours or actions. We also need to improve our social skills: to understand others, to have the ability to cooperate.

Having a good network of friends is very important for a healthy mind. People who perceive everything in life in a negative way can mould your perception of life, leading you to have a cold and apathetic view of life.

The emotions we experience are a result of our thinking. If one constantly has pessimistic thoughts about everything in their life, nothing will ever seem to make them content. We must change our thoughts to replace negative feelings with positive feelings.

Accepting criticism in a positive way is another secret to good mental health. Work on your strengths, rather than focusing merely on your weaknesses. This will enable you to have respect for, and confidence on yourself. Bibliotherapy is one of the best ways to change thoughts. Books can mould you into a whole different person and help in being a better individual by keeping your mind active and fresh.

We can also do cognitive restructuring: A process of learning to identify and dispute irrational or maladaptive thoughts, known as cognitive distortions, which are commonly associated with emotional wellbeing. It helps you to change the negative or distorted thinking that often lies behind bad moods or unhappy feelings.

Dr. Karuna summed up her talk by stating that, being easy on others, and more importantly on ourselves, is very essential. We must always forgive others and ourselves, when in distress and not able to perform.

The entire session was very informative, and a much needed one, considering the fast pacing mental health issues in the youth today.

- Sama Sarshar (1st year)

**“MIRROR MIRROR ON THE WALL,
I AM SEXY, DAMN YOU ALL”**

by Dr. Kanika Ahuja

On 5th February 2020—as a part of the PsyGala celebration—Dr. Kanika Ahuja, Assistant Professor at Lady Shri Ram College for Women, addressed an afternoon session on body image issues, its title being, “Mirror mirror on the wall, I am sexy, damn you all”. As the world witnesses a rise in eating disorders, changing beauty trends, and general body dissatisfaction, a topic like this was welcomed with genuine interest by the students.



Dr. Ahuja brilliantly elucidated, with the help of a presentation, how beauty trends have formed and further shape the consumers of this information. With the current trend being the strive to be thin, it was interesting to note that celebrities are thinner today than they ever were in their prime during the 1980s-90s. It is rare to find today’s artists in various industries without “the fit body”—heavily-muscled, with a tight workout regime, and flat stomachs.

The way this impacts today’s generation can be quite dangerous, leading to low self-esteem, placing one’s worth on outer appearances, and bringing others down who are lesser than, by fat-shaming or skinny-shaming them. Passing casual slurs has become so common, but we don’t realise what impact it has on someone else or on our opinions of ourself and others around us. The speaker conducted an exercise where she showed slides of pictures of famous celebrities from photoshoots and asked us to write down what we found most appealing about the person in the picture or the first thing that caught our eye when we saw them. At the end, when the answers were discussed, it was found that almost all of them pertained to appealing physical features like eye colour, hair lustre, smooth skin texture, flat stomach, long legs, or a long face and angular face structure.

Further, she also touched upon how pictures are fabricated to target the audience. These photos show famous celebrities with tight, blemish-free, spotless skin. Scars and dark circles are airbrushed; face lifts are photoshopped. Seeing such “perfect” features makes people, especially young adults and adolescents who are still forming opinions about themselves or are quite impressionable, to question themselves. The beauty industry is quite literally feeding off of our insecurities with sales booming in cosmetics, and more people going in for surgeries to alter their natural features to look more appealing. An activity was conducted where the audience came up to a mirror set in the middle of the room, one by one, looked at themselves, and went back to their respective seats to write down 10 things they liked about themselves, with at least 4 things being something physical. Some later shared their lists. It was surprising to note that many struggled to write down 10 things they liked about themselves. It was a mirror put in front of us to show us how we are too quick to judge out insecurities and faults, but don’t appreciate our better qualities that readily.

Fashion has also contributed to large-scale damage on the environment. Because fashion trends change every year, what’s “in” is accepted, what isn’t is discarded. Fashion is the biggest contributor to waste production today. The speaker told the audience an interesting fact: when you buy an article from Amazon and don’t like it or it doesn’t fit your needs and you return it, instead of packing it again and selling it further, Amazon finds it cheaper to dump it in Third World countries like Vietnam, never to be used or bought again. While globalisation has been a boon to many in terms of introducing people to new brands and accessories, it has a large-scale degrading impact on the environment.

Another trend discussed was of body sizes. A size zero is considered beautiful, whereas anything more is discouraged. While many fashion houses are changing this mindset, there still remains a demand for models to maintain a size zero figure. This figure entails a strictly-monitored diet plan to reduce calorie intake and dropping in body fat. This is very much seen even when you go in to buy clothes at retail shopping stores. The mannequins on display decked up in clothes are always a standard size—thin. So much so that their sizes are smaller than the average consumer who is coming in to buy products. As retail sizes go up, there is a shortage of variety and quantity. You will readily find a pair of jeans from 26-30 inches waist size (smaller sizes) as compared to those around 34-36 inches. This forces people to want to lose weight and develop low self-esteem because they are not accepted as they are. Luckily, there have been a few brands exclusively dedicated to plus-size clothing, however the overall impression remains the same.

Lastly, the importance of body-neutral conversations was discussed. It is important to steer the conversation away from heavy importance on outer appearances.

For understanding the same, an activity was conducted where a group of 3 students were given a dialogue and they had to think of a reply that did not focus on the appearance of the person. For example, one dialogue could be “I don’t want to wear that dress because it makes me look fat with too much emphasis on my thighs.” Instead of saying something along the lines of “why don’t you find a dress according to your body type?”, something much appropriate could be said, for example, “I think it’s more about with how much confidence you carry that dress rather than how it really looks, and I can tell you have it in you.”

The session was an eye-opener as studies and statistics were quoted to show how big and widespread really is the impact of today’s beauty trends. It made us question our preconceived notions of what “beautiful” is and how it affects a community as a whole. Questions were entertained at the end by Dr. Ahuja, followed by a vote of thanks.

- Titiksha Singh (IIIrd year)

PHOTO GALLERY

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Deeksha Parthasarthy



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Driшти Kalra



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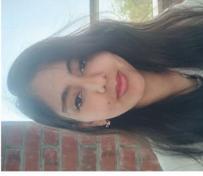
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