Child Mental Health

Teacher's handbook to help primary school children

GTZ / BECAre, Vavuniya, Shanthiham, Jaffna

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Preface

Four out of five of the people affected by an armed conflict are civilians. In the past year alone half a million children were amongst the casualties worldwide. In the North East of Sri Lanka a full generation of young people have experienced violence. Beyond physical maiming, the psychological effects are many and can endure for a lifetime. Children who have seen their families and friends killed, or whose homes have been damaged and neighbourhoods made insecure, may have their development hampered, their psychological growth retarded, sometimes even stunted. Even more, this generation may reach adulthood convinced that conflicts can only be solved through revenge and hate, and that violence is a normal and acceptable form of life. That is why our children have to learn again that violence is not an inborn characteristic of man, but a learned behaviour.

The original inspiration for this training manual came from the "GTZ - Teacher In Service Project" in Trincomalee. They developed and field tested the "Joyful Learning" manual which is now in use all over the island. "Joyful Living" is a further development of the "Joyful Learning" and it addresses the specific needs of the children and the youth in the Vanni region. It was designed to provide teachers with information and intervention strategies which they can use in their efforts to secure the psychological well-being of children and youth. It is meant as a guidance to teachers who work with children and youth every day, suggesting ways on how to give some help and better support to traumatized children and youth.

Dear teachers, it is our hope that this manual will be widely used by you working with children in the classroom. It can raise awareness, identify problems, and train teachers and field staff. It can also help parents and communities to better understand their children who have seen the ugly sides of life.

Thank you!

Michael Hirth,

Programme Manager,
Basic Education Sector Programme,
GTZ,
Colombo
July 2002

A note of appreciation

Views on the socio-economic needs and the state of education in the North East Province of Sri Lanka have been expressed by the local as well as international community. Their views have been based on the civil war that raged in the region for many years and the effects it had on the population.

Anyone doing a sincere study on the living condition of the people in this region cannot do justice to his/her work without a study on the trauma caused by the war. When a civil war, foreign occupation, communal violence or social commotion erupts in any country, the most affected are the women and the children. So, when we try to study the living condition of the people in this region, it is necessary that we do a through study of the traumatic events and the effects they have had on children.

Our porject is based on this basic concept. We undertook scientific studies of traumatised children in the Vavuniya district and Vanni with the assistance of local and foreign experts. These studies have provided us with very important information. In the Vanni, 92% of the children were directly affected by war. Among them, 57% were unable to carry out their normal day to day activities. Among the school going children, more than 25% were affected psychologically. It is not an insurmountable problem to identify the damage caused to physical resources and to find remedies, But It is not an easy task to identify and understand the traumatised children and find remedies to their problems.

Only the experts in this field can identify such children, treat them for their trauma and bring them back to normalcy. In this task, the role of the teachers as guides of children is of primary importance and unavoidable. Unfortunately, our teachers are not trained enough in this field. To remedy this situation, our project has initiated training programmes to teachers in this field.

We are very happy in publishing this manual in Tamil and English. It offers suitable guidance for training. This manual has been developed by a team of resources in this field under the expert guidance of an internationally recognised personality, Professor Daya Somasundaram. We know how many months they have laboured to produce this manual despite numerous difficulties. We owe our deep gratitude to them all.

In publishing this manual, many hands were involved. We thank each and every one of them. First and foremost, let me specially thank Dr. M. E. Hirth, Head of Programme GTZ – BESP for his timely interventions through advice, guidance and support. Mr. R. Thiagalingam, Secretary, Provincial Ministry of Education, Human Resources, Cultural Affairs, Sports and Youth Affairs who has intended to use this manual throughout North East Province. Moreover, my sincere thanks to Mr. V. Ilankumaran, Director, Educational Activities, North East, who has cooperated with us in everyway when we undertook this venture.

Finally, I thank the teachers who are going to help, guide and care for the affected children.

Sundaram Divakalala,
Project Manager.
GTZ - BECAre,
Vavuniya

Note of congratulations

I feel very happy in sending this note of congratulations to "Child Mental Health", a manual for counselling which is being published for the first time with the objective of cultivating the mental health of our children.

This guide book has been brought out with the co-operative effort of Prof. Daya Somasundaram, Head, Department of Psychiatry, University of Jaffna, mental health experts at Shanthiham, Jaffna and the GTZ - BECAre, Vavuniya. It is a welcome manual that fulfils the needs of the day.

Almost all the children in the North East had been affected by the past war events. Moreover, the trauma caused in them may last for a very long time and hinder their stages of development.

They have lost their parents, their loved ones and friends. Their houses have been damaged. Children have witnessed these happenings and have become distressed. Being in such a traumatized mental condition, their whole personality development may get blunted.

Teachers have many opportunities to build up healthy communication and closer relationship with and among the children, parents and community.

It is my fervent hope that this "Child Mental Health" will help to train our teachers and through them the children will become mentally balanced, thereby getting better education.

I sincerely congratulate the GTZ - BECAre for its useful and valuable effort.

V. Ilankumaran,
Director,
Tamil Elam Education Council

About this handbook...

Children are the creators of the future. Hence, it is the responsibility of the present day adults to help and promote the appropriate development of children. The majority of children spend a good proportion of their time in school. Thus teachers have to play an active role in fulfilling the needs of children for love, care and support, in addition to their routine duties like helping them in their studies. We could see that most of the children tend to love, believe and listen to their teacher. They consider teachers as their role models and tend to copy their behaviour. In fact, they tend to accept their teacher's words as though they come from the Bible or Vedic literatures. This shows us the influence teachers, especially primary teachers, have on their students.

Since teachers could influence their students, naturally they are expected to have more responsibility towards their students. In other words, teachers automatically become the guardians of their students. They are expected to focus additional attention towards the growth and development of all the children studying in their classes. Simultaneously, they also have to identify the problems related to the growth and development and manage them accordingly. Sometimes this effort may go well beyond the administrative boundaries of the school structure, to interact with the child's family and/or community.

Even in normal circumstances, teachers are expected to identify and deal with the factors affecting the growth and development of children. Preventing infectious diseases, caring for the day to day injuries, paying attention to the functioning of sensory organs, identifying malnutrition and other physical problems, familiarizing themselves with the age related milestones, recognizing the withdrawn, problematic and slow learners and interacting with parents have become part and parcel of a teacher's job.

The learning activities of children depend not only on their physical health but also on their mental wellbeing. The entire learning processes in children including motivation, interest, attention, concentration, memory and intelligence are influenced by their mental health. Obviously children with psychological problems may show learning difficulties, problematic behaviours and non-cooperation in classroom activities. Hence, we could understand the importance of children's mental well being in the context of the teaching process.

The Northern and Eastern parts of Sri Lanka have unfortunately

not seen normalcy for the past two decades. The chronic civil war has had an enormous impact on the people living in these areas. The effects have gone beyond deaths, destruction, displacements, losses to cause social disintegration, chaos, repeated violence and deterioration in social values and norms. The war affects not only the adults, but also the children.

In reality the student population of the North Eastern parts of Sri Lanka have been born and have grown up amidst the war. They also have been sharing the direct and indirect effects of the war along with their adult parents. As they grow, they witness the different forms of violence, which become part of their 'normal' daily life. These may cause a definite impact on the mental health of children living in war zones.

In general, when we think about the effects of war, it may remind us of the deaths, injuries, destruction, displacements, refugee situations and economic embargos. However, the effects go well beyond these outside manifestations to be deeply embedded in the minds of people. These may manifest as nightmares, hyper-vigilance, startle response, nervousness and anxiety, which are sometimes considered as 'normal' experiences in that society, since they have been experienced and shared by many people.

Children are not exempted from the ill effects of war. In fact, their growing and developing minds are much more vulnerable and often left with permanent scars. These effects may be manifested in their cognitive, emotional and behavioural domains. Not surprisingly, when they no longer get the basic loving, caring and supportive environment, when they grow up in a society which is filled with violence they become brutalized in their minds, which may subsequently affect their natural psychological development and cause detrimental effects in their personality.

In this background, we could clearly see that teachers serving in war zones have added responsibilities, including identifying and handling the effects of war on their students, in addition to their routine duties. The teachers in these areas are expected to be equipped with enough special knowledge and skills to cope with this new demand.

This need has been recognized by BECAre, the education wing of the GTZ, an international organization that has been involved in the rehabilitation of the North and East of Sri Lanka. BECAre wants to train and equip the teachers in the North and East in order to make them

capable of identifying and handling the normal and special problems of the children of these areas. In this context, it seemed best that the teachers should have a handbook with adequate reference materials for their training and further reading. This book follows its predecessors, Joyful Learning and Joyful Living with the intention of providing more basic theory and practical aspects of child mental health. This book is primarily written by the resource persons of Shanthiham, a counselling and training centre in North of Sri Lanka, and teachers under North East Provincial Department of Education supported by BECAre-GTZ.

As mentioned earlier, basically this book is written with the view of developing and helping teachers to identify, understand and handle problematic and/or affected children in their classrooms. However, this book also contains basic psychological principles, which could be useful in dealing with all types of psychological problems in school children. The teachers who get the training based on this book should eventually develop themselves as teacher counsellors. Further, this book is also designed as a reading material for interested teachers and parents. Similarly, though this book is principally written about primary school students, the essential principles can be applicable to all students. Hence, any teacher can use these principles to understand and handle their students of any age.

The growth and development of children in primary schools is as crucial part of their life as is the foundation of a building. In other words, the good and bad life experiences of this age group will eventually affect their whole life. The teachers who guide these growing, developing children must have sufficient knowledge, proper attitude and good skills in child psychology. But, unfortunately, some of the teachers and administrators tend to think that teaching in primary section is an easy task! In reality, we need an attitude change among the parents, teachers and administrators about the importance of having specialized, skilled and good teachers in the primary sections of schools. Hope the dream will be realized one day.

The term counselling basically means helping a person who is unable to cope, or who faces difficult problems, particularly emotional problems, to sort out or cope with their situation. The counselling process is primarily based on a helping relationship. The counsellor helps the client to identify and manage the problems effectively. In this regard, we could call the counsellor a helper. The helping relationship is based on a trusting relationship between the counsellor and the client. Only after developing this relationship, clients start to talk about his/her own

problems, important events in their life, their feelings and meanings of their own problems. Sometimes, they want to pour out their emotions in front of a counsellor. Then, during the process of counselling the clients will review and if necessary change their cognitive, behavioural and emotional paradigm of their problems, which help them to take appropriate decisions about how to handle their situation effectively. In order to complete this counselling process the counsellor and the client should develop a healthy, trusting and human relationship. We could look at these principles in detail in Chapter eight.

The teachers who are functioning as counsellors also can have their own problems, which sometimes interfere with the helping relationship or the counselling processes. These teachers should be able to recognize their own problems and master them either individually or with the help of another counsellor or supervisor. This will help them to function as good teacher counsellors.

When a counsellor continuously helps clients mentally, he/she may also develop some psychological problems. He/she may get tired or become 'burnt out'. It is essential to organize peer group meetings, preferably weekly meetings, in order to share their experiences and difficulties; to exchange their views and opinions about their work with their colleagues; and to support each other in a collective way. These meetings will refresh the counsellors and prevent the burn out phenomena. In addition, a supervisor, who could be an expert or experienced counsellor, with whom the counsellors should have regular weekly supervision, could also contribute to the peer group meetings.

This book has nine chapters. The first chapter is about the meaning of mental health in general, how mental health is integrated with other dimensions of health and the meaning of deterioration in mental health.

Since, children are growing up and developing throughout their student period, their needs and their way of experiencing/ expressing their problems vary significantly according to their developmental stages. The teachers should know the principles of growth and development, which help them to understand the normal deviations and abnormal problems of each stage of development and to address those issues. Chapter two of this book discusses the growth and development of children.

In general, children actively involve themselves in educational activities. However, children who have problems in their physical and mental

health may show difficulties in learning. Chapter three of this book analyses learning in children.

Environment plays a major role in the growth and development of children. Children develop their concepts from what they perceive from the environment and what they mean from those perceptions. Further, they learn and modify their behaviours according to their successes and failures and according to the attention, encouragement, and reinforcements given to them. Special attention should be given to moral values, which they learn from adults, mainly from the parents and teachers. For example, when parents maintain their environment clean and tidy, children growing in the same environment will become clean and tidy in their activities including their educational activities. In contrast, when children grow in an environment where their parents and/or teachers use uncivilized harsh words, then the children also tend to use the same language. Similarly, as discussed already, the children in an environment with a violent culture tend to express language and behaviours consisting of violent themes. Hence, it is very important to understand children in the context of their environment.

It is obvious that children spend most of their time in their home and school environment. Therefore it is appropriate to discuss about these environments in detail in chapters four and five.

The next chapter of this book speaks about the trauma, which occurs in the context of war. Trauma in children can cause more long-term consequences than in adults. You could see more about trauma in chapter six.

The next three chapters describe the common problems in children and the different ways of handling those problems. Chapter seven describes the nature of the problems and the ways of identifying those problems. Chapter eight specially focuses on counselling skills. It is specially written with a view of providing sufficient knowledge and skills for a teacher who wants to become a counsellor. The basic principles of counselling are important in any sort of helping relationship and/or human relationship. Hence, this chapter plays an important role in this book. The following chapter discusses some of the simple psychological methods, apart from counselling, which are useful to teachers to handle the problems in effective ways. We hope that the teachers who are going to use this book will be trained in these simple methods.

All the chapters in this book have been designed to share a common framework. Each chapter consists of adequate theory about the particular subject in addition to the coloured text boxes of activities and practicals, which would be useful during the training and teaching process. Further, important points have been inserted either in specialized columns, coloured text boxes or in the edges of the main text in small font, in order to challenge and encourage creative thinking in the reader. Sufficient case histories and dialogues have been included in different text boxes. Line drawings and photos with some literary comments have also been added to facilitate the readers' thought process and understanding of the context. We believe that these will help the readers whenever they need them.

The resource persons who contributed to the production of this book have been acknowledged in a different page. Since this book is written by many authors one can expect variations in the language flow and the style of the presentations. Further, initially this has been written in Tamil and then been translated into English. This will cause a definite impact on the language flow. We hope that the readers will understand these limitations and accept our apologizes for the shortcomings.

As already discussed, this book will be useful to all teachers, parents, NGO workers and child carers in addition to primary school teachers. We expect constructive criticisms from our readers in view of improving our future editions and future publications.

Last but not least, we have to mention that this book is a joint effort which would not have been successful without the continuing encouragement and support of Mr. Sundaram Divakalala.

When this book facilitates the link between the resource person's views and the teacher's experiences, it will become a wonderful experience to both of them. We hope that one fine day we may enjoy that ecstasy.

Editors
Shanthiham
December 2003.

An Assessment

GTZ, through its Basic Education Sector Programme, has established a programme at Vavuniya for the development of basic education of the children, living in unfavourable areas. This programme commenced in February 2001. This programme endeavours to lead and rehabilitate the children who were traumatized by the bitter experiences in the past, to a happy and joyful life.

Parents, teachers and the school should participate in helping the traumatized children to recover and become normal. Children's mental state, their activities, skill development pertaining to their age and the relationships they have with others are the criteria to gauge the children's mental health. Children continue to grow. The knowledge of stages of development of normal children helps to identify the differences from other children. The natural development of the learning ability in children are enhanced by psychological factors such as enthusiasm, interest, intelligence, remembrance and clarity in understanding. Teachers have a major role in providing and developing these aspects. Physical disabilities and worries may affect the learning abilities very severely. Teachers must be specially trained to identify these problems and provide appropriate guidance.

This teacher's guide is a very appropriate handbook which contains all the necessary material. The authoritative persons in this field, Dr. S. Sivayokan, Mrs. Kohila Mahendran and Prof. D. J. Somasundaram have compiled this book. Counsellors from Shanthiham and teachers have worked hard in the endeavour of bringing out this book. I wish to express my sincere thanks to all of them at this juncture.

This book "Child Mental Health" consists of nine chapters.

They are;

1. Mental Well-being
2. Growth and Development
3. Learning
4. School Environment
5. Family
6. Calamities of War
7. Problems
8. Counselling
9. Ways of Helping

In each chapter, the objectives, the explanation for the teacher, activities to be done to understand the facts and other information are included. It is worthwhile to mention that the compilation of the book is very attractive and commendable.

How is the mental health of the children who are very happy and without any problems in their mind? What are the characteristics of these children? All these aspects are discussed very beautifully in the first chapter. How the growth and development of mentally healthy children takes place step by step? This subject is discussed in the second chapter, "Growth and Development". In the third chapter, "Learning", how learning causes development and its effects are clearly given. The importance of the part played by the school environment in the growth of the children and it's supportive and negative aspects are given in detail in the fourth chapter, "School Environment". In the raising of happy and healthy child, the part played by its family is very indispensable. The fifth chapter, "Family", explains, this and includes the duty of the teacher in this regards. Trauma may be caused by many factors. The disaster of war is major factor for the trauma in children of the North and East. This is stressed in the six chapter, "Calamities of War". The disasters of war are manifold. Problems caused by mental effects are many. They may be from stress to severe trauma. Normal stress may be eradicated in the long run by the teacher's love, support and counselling. Severe trauma will need medical help. Therefore the problems must be correctly identified and handled by teachers. These important facts are clearly emphasized in the seven chapter, "Problems". What is counselling? What are the characteristics of a counsellor? What are the methods and techniques of counselling? These technical aspects are discussed in the eighth chapter, "Counselling". In addition, in what way, love, support, empathy, tolerance and understanding would help the teachers to cope with the affected children? How can they handle them? These important features are shown in the last chapter, "Ways of Helping".

On the whole, this book is a treasure. I wish to express my thanks and appreciation to the Manager and other officers of the Development Programme for the Basic Education of the children living in unfavourable areas. There is no doubt that this book will be very useful to many people.

I wish to thank generally those involved with GTZ / BECAre in Basic Sector Programme implemented in North and East and specially the Chief Technical Advisor, Dr. M. E. Hirth.

I pray to God that the knowledge gained by teachers through this manual, "Child Mental Health" would help to eradicate commonly occurring mental problems among the children.

R. Thiyagalingam,

Secretary,
North-East Provincial Ministry of Education,
Human Resources, Cultural Affairs, Sports and Youth Affairs

Contents

Chapter 5 Family

Chapter 6: Calamities of War

Chapter 7: Problems

Chapter 8: Counselling

Chapter 9: Ways of Helping

The inner light
brings endless delight,
my treasure!

1

Mental Well-being

- What is mind?
- What is mental well-being?
- What are the qualities of children who are mentally healthy?
- What would be the expressions of children whose mental heath is affected?
- How can the mental well-being of children

be promoted?

1.1. Introduction

We use words such as well-being and health in many occasions. These expressions are used to describe either healthy or unhealthy physical conditions.

But "being healthy" should transcend the physical aspects and include the mental, social and spiritual aspects of heath. Because body, mind, society and spirituality have close links to each other, when one is affected inevitably the others are also affected. For example, when poverty prevails in a society, it would result in malnourished children with wasted muscles and bloated bellies. These children are usually unhappy, irritable and would cry frequently. Another example would be a small girl who has lost her father recently. When this loss has not been restituted, she

would be depressed, would lose interest in education and would exhibit loss of appetite. Consequently, the child would be affected by infectious diseases such as cold or fever.

Physical affects could be easily distinguished. But the psychological responses are not easily distinguishable. Child's mental state could be assessed by observing its thinking, actions, emotional expressions, behavioural patterns, learning and creativity. In other words we would come to know about the mental well-being of the child through these manifestations. We are going to learn about factors influencing a child's mental health and how to promote a child's mental well-being in this chapter.

1.2. Mental health and educational environment

Do you think that there would be a relationship between mental well being, physical health and social behaviour?

Teachers have a direct responsibility for the mental well-being of children. Because there is a close link between the mental well-being of children and their learning activities, the responsibility of school teachers for the mental bell being of students becomes very important.

Each and every child is unique in his or her own way. Everyone would be able to perform well in their areas of preference. Teachers should be able to identify their unique talents and skills and through these enhance their mental well-being.

Teachers should give equal importance to the psychological betterment of children as to other activities such as developing health habits among children and encouraging ways and means to improve their physical health.

The educational achievements of children with mental well-being would be usually high. These children would easily interact with their classroom and school environment and would function properly. But on the other hand, children with psychological problems would disrupt the school and classroom atmosphere. Further, other children also would be affected by these children. Thus it is important that teachers should also pay attention to the mental health of their students.

If the teachers are to promote the mental well-being of students, then it is important for them to understand about the mental health of students and they should know how to promote it.

1.3. What is mental health?

Mental well-being cannot be compared within a limited framework. It is related to physical health conditions, healthy social environment and healthy spiritual activities.

There is a psychological approach which separates the function of human mind into emotions, cognition and their resultant behaviours. All these aspects would be healthy in children with mental well-being. In other words, when emotions, intellectual functions and behaviours are healthy in a child we could decide that the child in mentally healthy.

Can we conclude that a physically handicapped person will always have psychological problems?

We could observe that children who are mentally healthy would show relevant age appropriate responses. It could be said that if a person is able to handle his daily routine well and is able to lead a normal life, then he possesses mental well-being.

1.4. Characters of mentally healthy children

The mental well-being of children could be known through their activities. Children's activities with their peers, the way they express their feelings, enthusiasm, interests, trustworthiness and their function within their family are some openings through which the quality of their mental well-being is shown. Children's behaviours differ at different ages and at different levels of development (see chapter 2), thus we could say hypothetically that if children show age appropriate behaviours then they are in good mental health.

Will the children with mental retardation have mental well being?

Further, there is another approach in which mental well-being is assessed on the basis of their social adaptability. For example, maintaining good relationship with other children in the class, good relationship with family members, and the ability to harmonise with the school and family atmosphere, ability to respect and follow the healthy rules and regulations in the home and school, be able to help others, be able to accept help from others when the need arises, and be able to behave in an ethical way for the good of the class or group are the qualities of a child in excellent mental health. However, when the family or school atmosphere becomes pathological, then a mentally healthy child will not be able to adapt to that and attempts to show its opposition.

Activity

⊙ Observe the picture shown above

⊙ Were you able to perceive anything about the mental health of the child A and B

⊙ Write down why this kind of mental state did occur to these children?

In all children's life, situations will arise where feelings such as happiness, sadness, anger, feeling of loss, fear, frustration or bitterness could occur. If a child is able to respond appropriately to a given situation then it could be considered mentally healthy. Children who are not mentally healthy would show improper responses, or would show little or excessive responses. Some times, they may not respond at all.

> → **Do you think that a child who is considered a good child would always be a child with excellent mental health?**
>
> "A child with "mental well-being" and "a good child" does not mean the same thing. Similarly a child who was not healthy in a particular environment during a particular period cannot be considered an "ill child" all the time.
>
> → **Do people who are amicable to society be considered to be in good mental health?**
>
> Generally people with proper mental health go along with the society. But when the whole society is in chaos, falling in line with that society itself is an indication of deteriorating mental health.
>
> → **Do you think there is a correlation between a person's mental heath and the amount of problems he/she is facing?**
>
> Problems do occur to all human beings. Similarly conflicts do occur in everyone's life. But people with good mental health would handle these problems better than the people not in good mental health

Generally mentally healthy children would show interest in playing, learning, performing their daily duties, and doing their part at home, school and temple. Usually mentally healthy children provide a role model for their peers and are respected by them. Further, they would be able to get along with their family, school and society.

Broad interests and activities develop their personality. It would be easier for a child with age-appropriate personality development to be a child of good mental health.

Generally, mentally healthy children are more open. Being trustworthy, trusting others and acting with confidence are qualities seen in these children. These children are able to show love to others and able to receive love from others.

Mentally healthy children have positive self-esteem and maintain positive self-image. They would feel good whenever telling their name, hearing it or thinking about themselves.

Mentally healthy children would show interest in getting to know new things. They would also be interested in creative activities, story telling, listening to stories, acting, dancing, singing or drawing.

Children with mental health would be able to handle problems and conflicts properly. Though, a person's mental health cannot be assessed easily, it could be identified from the way how a person deals with conflicts and bitter experiences when they do occur.

Activity

⊙ Ask the trainees to sit in pairs.

⊙ Then instruct them to close their eyes and to ponder over their past experiences.

⊙ Afterwards guide them to discuss the situations encountered, emotions that arose and how the situations were dealt with.

⊙ Later make them to arrive at a conclusion that situations and stirring emotions such as happiness, sadness, anger, loss, fear and frustration do arise in every one's life but the approach towards these situations do differ from person to person.

→ Mayuran is an year 4 student. He usually gets an average of 70 marks. He is very much interested in sports and games. He would be seen in the playground during evenings. It is customary for him to go to the temple early in the morning to worship. His school attendance is also very regular. He moves happily with other students.

→ Senthuran usually gets an average of 90 marks. But he rarely talks to others, plays, worships or enjoys the leisure time.

→ A teacher observed a year three student who doesn't respond when her name was being called. The teacher also came to know that this child once told a friend that her face is not attractive.

Activity

⊙ Divide the participants into small groups

⊙ Discuss about the mental health of the above mentioned children

1.5. Factors influencing mental health

We can't say that all children are in the same state of mental health. There will be differences in the state of mental health even though the opportunities, resources and facilities are same. We should understand that these difference are due to various factors that influence the child's developmental stages and growth of mental well-being in a complicated manner.

These factors could be brought under two categories. They are:

- ☺ Genetic factors
- ☺ Environmental factors

1.5.1. Genetic factors

Genetic factors are those qualities which children receive through their parents. These need not be the qualities of either father or mother. Even qualities that prevailed three or four generations earlier could be acquired through genetic factors.

Colour of skin and hair, type of hair, colour of pupil and even physical factors such as hight and weight are influenced by genetic factors. Further, a child's psychological qualities such as temperament and responsiveness are also influenced by genetic factors. Sometimes certain genetic diseases that affect the brain would cause psychological problems.

Though the school environment provides the same stimulation to all the children, their responses are not similar. There may be various reasons for this. But we should not forget that the genetic influence is also a reason for this difference in responsiveness.

When we get to know the influence of genetic factors, it is also important to know about the influence of the environment. Because this knowledge is essential in order to manipulate the environment in a positive manner in order to improve the mental health of children.

1.5.2. Environmental factors

The influence of environmental factors in child mental health is great. Though children are born with genetic traits, the environment influences the development or suppression of such qualities, and the creation and growth of new traits. That is why the people who are interested in child mental health, especially parents and teachers, should know about en-

vironmental factors that are important for children and the ways to manipulate the environment in a positive manner.

The environmental factors influencing child mental health are classified into two groups. They are;

- Biological environmental factors

- Physical environmental factors

Mother, father, siblings, relatives, neighbours, friends, school community, peer groups and pets come under biological environmental factors. Residence, playground, play materials, classroom, school environment and any other natural or synthetic things come under physical environmental factors.

Activity

The trainees should be divided into two groups and be guided to have a debate under the following titles:

Which influences the child mental health the most?

⊙   The Biological environmental factors

⊙   The Physical environmental factors

How to develop children with mental well being?

Developing children with mental well-being

This includes how to make a child mentally healthy, how to further develop them in a satisfactory manner and how to handle children who have psychological problems. Creating an appropriate environment plays a major role in developing a child with mental well-being. The psychological well-being of children who have problems could be helped by paying special attention to them.

1.6. Enhancement of mental well-being

Attempts should be made to enhance the mental well-being of children. The mental well-being would be automatically enhanced when they are involved in suitable activities and opportunities for their growth and development. But there might be children with psychological problems. While attempting to improve their mental well-being, teachers should not identify them in front of others. The affected children should be dealt with along with the other children whenever possible.

The children who need intervention could be identified from their behavioural patterns:

- Crying frequently without any reason
- Less sleep or sleep disturbance
- Nightmares
- Excessive sleep
- Shivering with excessive fear
- Negligence of food
- Bed-wetting
- Brutality
- Aggressive tendencies
- Shouting without reason
- Complaints of somatic symptoms such as headache, back ache, stomach problems and pain in the eyes.
- Withdraw
- Mistrust about others and lack of self confidence
- Inability to play with others
- Loss of memory
- Restlessness
- Inability to finish their work
- Negative thinking about the future
- Irregular school attendance

If children show any of these behaviours, then the reasons for these behaviours should be identified (see chapter 7). Further, the teacher should be able to understand the reasons and be able to guide them (see chapters 8 & 9). If everything fails, then it is important to obtain assistance from a psychologist or a psychiatrist.

Activity

Acquiring wealth

- ⊙ The children should be divided into four groups

- ⊙ Make a circle of 20 feet radius on the floor.

- ⊙ Ask the groups to start facing the four directions

- ⊙ Select 9 people from each group and number them from 1-5

- ⊙ Then draw a small circle in the middle and keep there around 15 different things such as ball, areca nut or lime. There will be 4 small circles near the four groups.

- ⊙ When the trainer randomly calls a number, then those who are denoted by that number will move together towards the things in the middle, pick one by one and put it in their groups circle.

- ⊙ If one group is able to gather 5 things then that group is considered the winner.

- ⊙ Since the things kept in the middle are not sufficient, participants are allowed to take things from other circles after the centre is empty. This will go on until one group gets 5 things. When this is achieved, others can't take the things from this circle.

- ⊙ The groups should not hide things or prevent other groups from taking things from their circle until they have 5 things kept in their circle.

Note

- ➝ Similar competition would be organised for other numbers also. Then there should be discussion about the lesson learned from this game.

- ➝ Later, explanation should be given to the participants about how to play a game in a dignified manner.

1.7.   Psychological needs

The following factors are needed for the development of a mentally healthy child.

- ☐ Availability of the basic needs such as clean water, nutritious food, air and medical facilities

- ☐ Supportive family, which provides love and care

- ☐ Secure environment

- ☐ Role models for children to follow

- ☐ Availability of stable environment which doesn't change frequently

- ☐ Ways and means to build confidence

- ☐ Encouragement through planned future events

- ☐ Finding out unforgettable past events, exploring the reasons for such events and accepting them

- ☐ Observing physical and psychological development to see whether they are age appropriate and then take necessary actions to rectify the situation if necessary

- ☐ Reducing the possibilities of loss and psychological stress

- ☐ Providing learning opportunities, stimulations and new experiences

- ☐ Giving chances to get day to day childhood experiences

- ☐ Providing opportunities to build self- confidence, to act on their own and to work in groups

- ☐ Giving opportunities for establishing relationships and contacts and chances to engage in play activities.

We could bring up mentally healthy children only if we are able to understand these factors and to develop them in our family, environ-

ment. school and society

1.8. Conclusion

What is mental health? The factors involved or those that affect the child's mental health are discussed in this chapter. Further, we have looked into the qualities of children whose mental health should be improved and the basic needs that have to be fulfilled.

We will pave way for the enhancement of children's mental health.

Education Environment

* Teacher
* Classroom
* Preschool environment
* School environment
* Private tutories

Society

* Peer groups
* Adults, elders and neighbours
* Socio-economic condition
* Peace
* Organizations (social, sports and religious)
* Traditional culture (folk festivals)
* Respect for rights
* Reconciliation and relationships

Family

* Mother
* Father
* Brothers and sisters
* Home environment
* Roles (dynamics)
* Extended family (relatives)

Child Mental Health (Determinants)

Development

* Suitable environment
* Stimulation
* Challenges, Problems
* Confidence (in others)
* Relationships
* Recognition & appreciation

Spirituality

* Values
* Ethics
* Norms
* Rituals
* Humanity

Heredity

* Genes
* Traits (personality, character), Resilience
* Intelligence (80%) [Before birth (maternal nutrition)]

Basic needs

* Physical needs (food, water, shelter and clothing)
* Love, relationships
* Security
* Recognition (from others as well as self recognition)
* Health (prevention, treatment etc.)
* Educational opportunities
* Self confidence (self esteem)

The rice from the fields

with jaggery sweet

cow's milk added

in the new pot

offer to the sun-god

2
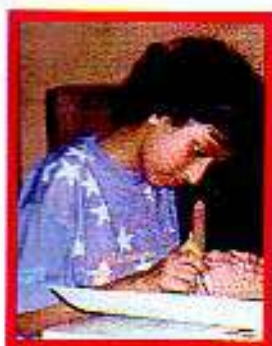
Growth and Development

- What is the differences between growth and development?
- What are the developmental stages of a child?
- What could be done by a teacher to enhance growth and development?

2.1. Introduction

We all aspire to see our children living a healthy life. To ensure a happy life to all our children we have to take several measures. Children grow and develop physically and psychologically according to their age. As stated in Chapter 1, food, proper housing, healthy relationships, love and care, security, attention, recognition and learning opportunities are necessary for normal physical and psychological growth and development. It is the responsibility of teachers and parents to guide and bring up children according to their individual characteristics and talents. It is important to have the knowledge about children's growth and developmental stages in order to carry out this task properly.

Children's development could be encouraged by uncovering their hidden talents. Parents, pre-school and school teachers should plan out activities which enhances physical and psychological development apart from activities focusing on cognitive development.

Today's children are the future society. Thus, how the society is going to be in the future will be determined by the way children develop today.

2.2. Growth and Development of children

2.2.1. Growth

⊛ *What idea comes up in your mind immediately when thinking about children's growth?*

When we generally think about the growth in children, the image of a healthy child in the advertisements of milk food for children immediately comes into our minds. When we think of healthy external appearances, it is usually an overall impression created by age appropriate height, body build, weight and temperament. If increase in height and weight, growth of organs and increase in functional qualities are normal; it is an indication of physical growth. Likewise growth and maturity also do occur in the brain. Children's behaviour, cognition and feelings also indicate growth and development due to this reason.

When does growth in children start?

The growth of children starts from conception. Formation and growth of organs continue inside the womb. If this growth process happens without any hindrance, then it is more likely that the child continues to grow well. That is why it is emphasised that proper nutrition and attention during pregnancy would be the foundation for the future growth of the child.

After childbirth, nutrition, health care activities, disease prevention, medical care and physical exercises should be given to the child according to its developmental stage. Teachers, Family Health Workers and parents should ensure such activities and should provide all other basic needs for the growth and development of children.

2.2.2. Development of children

⊛ *Is teacher's contribution necessary for children's development?*

As children grow, their talents also improve according to their experiences. Development takes place when children respond appropri-

ately to different stimuli and grow in their ability to better express themselves. Several talents in children may lie hidden without proper opportunities. We can trigger their development by bringing out these talents. Behavioural changes occur in children due to their age and development. If the development is age appropriate at a particular time, then it will automatically pave way to development of the next stage. This kind of orderly developmental process will eventually contribute to the overall development of children.

Developing skills and activities according to the stage of development, showing appropriate responses to stimulus, acquiring decision making skills, maintaining good relationship with family and others, and becoming more and more independent are some of the qualities which indicate psychosocial development.

Helping children to develop normally is the responsibility of parents, teachers and society. Knowledge about the development stages of children would make it easier to provide suitable opportunities for development.

The growth and development in children are inter-related. This could be seen through our experience. For example, a physically well-developed child usually develops normally according to its developmental stages. On the other hand, a child whose growth is affected by frequent illnesses shows delays in development. Similarly, children who lack psychosocial development (e.g. children who are withdrawn) usually have growth problems. Thus it is important to pay our attention to both, growth and development simultaneously.

We should keep in mind that children's activities will be according to their stage of development and not according to our wishes.

2.2.3. Changes of development in children

What would a nine-month-old baby do when it feels hungry? What would a five year old or teenage child do when it is in the similar situation? What is your experience in this situation?

When feeling hungry,

-A nine-month-old baby cries.

-A five-year-old child would say that it feels hungry.

-A ten-year-old child would go and have its meals.

Shall we say that the same event would trigger different responses at different ages?

Here, we could see different behaviours as responses to the same need. These differences are due to the age and level of development. A grown up child understands the feeling of hunger and knows it should have its meals. The different responses in an infant, a five year old and ten year old are the indicators of development.

Activity

The trainees should be divided into groups and be asked to discuss about the responses of children of different age groups to the following situations and present their findings.

⊙ Father being separated from the family after going abroad in search of employment

⊙ A situation in which mother could not spend much time with other children due to the birth of a child.

2.3. Developmental stages

2.3.1.   Infancy (0 - 2 years)

The period from birth until two years is called infancy. Looking into the growth and developmental stages of infants during this period enables us to know and understand the child well. This is the first developmental stage after the birth, thus the assistance provided for development at this stage would provide a strong foundation for future development.

2.3.1.1.   Mother-child relationship

The infant becomes attached to the person who fulfils the needs for food and security. The infant feels satisfied when being touched, lifted and cuddled during feeding and caring.

Initially an infant's functions are eating, sleeping, crying, defecating etc. It cries when it feels uncomfortable; later, when it feels comfortable in the warmth of mother's closeness it becomes relaxed.

Though the infant is unable to completely identify its mother immediately after birth, it is able to recognise her after around one month. Similarly it is able to recognise people who closely associate with it by around 9 months and establish relationships. Mother's feeding with care enhances and strengthens the bond between mother and infant.

The Mother actually serves as a bridge for the infant and helps the infant to establish relationships with other family members. The infant's realization of mother's love is the first step towards this direction. Mother's activities should be able to provide love, trustworthy and secure feelings. If an infant is not in a position to get mother's care, then we should ensure that motherly love and care should be provided by the caretaker. This would help to maintain the infant's welfare and would pave the way in the future to establish social bonds.

Should the child merge with the society?

We would be able to easily recognise infants who have not received mother's or caretaker's love and care later, when they have grown up. These children would find it difficult to relate with others. It might be difficult for them to love others and receive loving care from others. They might be withdrawn from others, or over attached and caring. Further they would be seekers of love, which they didn't get during their infancy.

2.3.1.2. Using their mouth

⊛   *A ten-month-old infant puts almost all accessible things into the mouth. Is there any special reason for this behaviour?*

An infant tastes its food through its mouth. It establishes a relationship with the mother through breast-feeding. When an infant satisfies its hunger by using its mouth, it develops a tendency to use its mouth to get different experiences. These infants get satisfaction by putting whatever is available into their mouth.

When an infant doesn't suckle, it waves its hand and sucks its fingers. Adults could avoid taking out the fingers from the infant's mouth. Punishing the infant for this would lead to drastic consequences. Adults should consider that getting oral pleasure is a typical characteristic of this developmental stage. It is the responsibility of the mother to feed the infant whenever it feels hungry. The finger sucking would automatically be avoided if the infant is satisfied.

Is it appropriate for adults to consider finger sucking wrong? Is it detrimental to the well-being of the child?

If breast-feeding is not available or if that experience is not sufficient, then it would affect the later development of the child. Thumb sucking, chewing betel or chewing gum, biting nails or excessive talking are some of the behaviours through which an older child, who did not get the satisfaction at the early stage of life, would now get its satisfaction.

2.3.1.3.   Auditory skills

An infant would initially be startled by big noises. When it grows it also makes different sounds. When others encourage appropriate sounds and neglect inappropriate ones, the suitable sounds are learned by the child. Parents should provide opportunities for the infant to listen to different sounds. This would help the infant to develop listening skills, differentiating sounds, making sounds and other auditory and verbal skills.

2.3.1.4.   Language development

Though language development starts at this stage, infants usually start to imitate adult speech only after ten months. Parents and family members should use easy and understandable words in the presence of the infant. The infant should be made to understand what each word signifies. Parents should spend more time with the infant in order to achieve this. Though the number of words being used dramatically increases after one year, the infant develops the ability to use symbols earlier. Adults understanding the infant's use of symbols and acting accordingly would greatly enhance the development of various concepts in the infant.

E.g. A child showing a bowl of water when it feels thirsty.

2.3.1.5.   Physical development

⊛   *Do you think that knowledge regarding nutritional diet is necessary for mothers?*

We could see rapid physical growth in infants up to one year. Nearly 90% of the brain growth takes place during this period. Because of rapid physical and brain growth, it is important to give food with high protein content to the infant. If physical growth is affected in this period, mental growth is also affected. Physically unhealthy children frequently fall sick. Thus developmental activities are either curtailed or completely stopped.

It is important that parents, especially mothers, know about nutrition. Then only could they maintain optimal growth, development and health in children.

Activity

Title I:

⊙ Which activities could be done at home by parents to enhance physical growth in children?
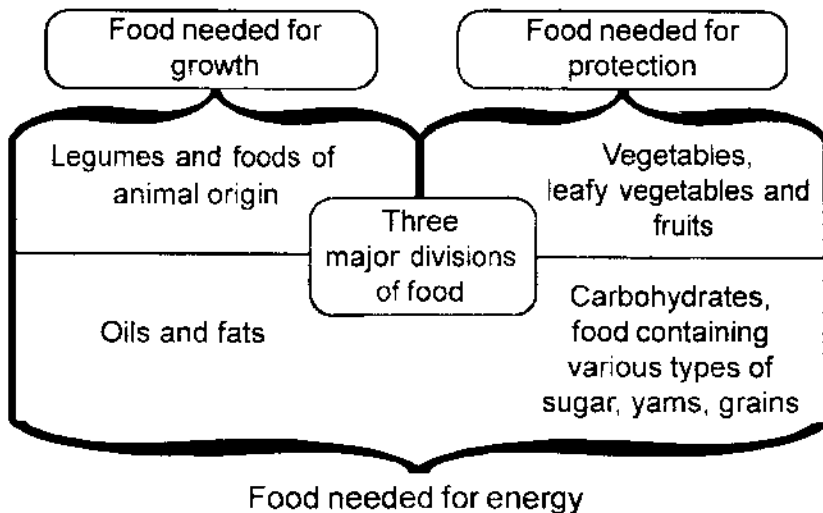
Title II:

⊙ Which activities could be carried out by teachers at school to enhance physical development?

Do you think that a child eating a heavy meal is physically and psychologically healthy?

2.3.1.6. Balanced diet

A diet which provides nutrition according to a child's age, sex, height and weight is a balanced diet.

Food needed for growth	Food needed for protection
Legumes and foods of animal origin	Vegetables, leafy vegetables and fruits
	Three major divisions of food
Oils and fats	Carbohydrates, food containing various types of sugar, yams, grains

Food needed for energy

2.3.1.7.   Motor activities

An infant uses its palm to grasp things until it reaches six months. After one year the usage of thumb and other fingers increases. It is the responsibility of the parents to provide opportunities to their infants to exercise their hands and fingers during this developmental stage. This enables infants to perform finer tasks and write properly during pre-school and school years.

We could help the develop-
ment of a
child by giving
it simple
objects,
which the
child likes
rather than
providing
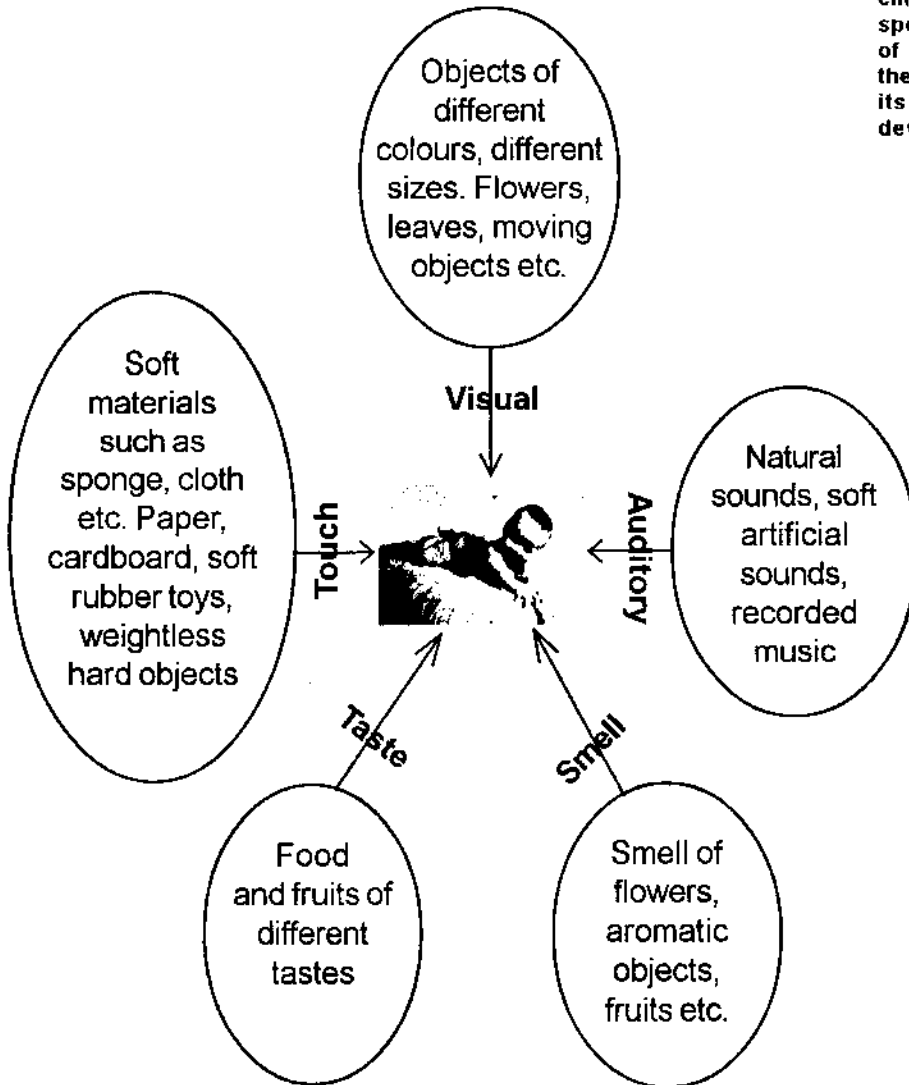expensive
toys.

Exercises suitable for motor development

→ Walking, running, jumping

→ Dancing and singing

→ Ball games

→ Winding the top

→ Making clay models

→ Playing with moving objects

→ Playing with playthings which need pushing and pulling

2.3.1.8.   Physical needs

☻   *Is it advisable to force children to go to the toilet before parents go for work?*

It is important to fulfil the physical needs of children such as hunger, thirst, defecation and sleep. We could observe expression of freshness in their faces while defecating. This indicates how children get satisfaction through defecation. Forcing children to defecate according to their parent's schedule is seen in several families. Apart from this, forcing children to toilet - train before sufficient maturation, for example insistence on maintaining cleanliness, punishing the child even if it gets little bit dirty and similar action, would create deep seated hatred in the child's mind or would make the child to pay abnormal attention to defecation. This would adversely affect the development of the child. Similarly, it is not advisable to force the child to walk or perform similar tasks before achieving muscular development.

Objects of different colours, different sizes. Flowers, leaves, moving objects etc.

Visual

Soft materials such as sponge, cloth etc. Paper, cardboard, soft rubber toys, weightless hard objects

Touch

Auditory

Natural sounds, soft artificial sounds, recorded music

Taste

Smell

Food and fruits of different tastes

Smell of flowers, aromatic objects, fruits etc.

We could pave the way to the development of an infant by using different stimulations and experiences in the environment.

An infant of this stage uses crying to make others to fulfil its needs. A child expresses it's happiness through smile and play whenever it gets appreciation or when its needs are fulfilled. When the mother, father and family members realize the reason for crying and act accordingly, in turn the child develops trust in them. The child develops mistrust in the family and the external world, whenever it's needs are not satisfied and when it is not appreciated. This child would be withdrawn, might avoid peer groups and may not trust others in its future life. Excessive mistrust might affect the development of the child in later life.

The society should act in such a way as to fulfil a child's needs so that the it is able to develop trust in the external world.

We could pave the way to the development of an infant by using different stimulations and experiences in the environment.

2.3.1.9. Emotions

Emotions of a new born infant would be more of a general nature. But by the fourth month, an infant would exhibit more specific emotions such as happiness, fear and anger. When a mother hugs and cuddles an infant, it feels happy. It experiences fear when it falls. It feels anger when it encounters difficulties in fulfilling its needs. It expresses its anger through crying.

Children usually fulfil their psychological needs through their mother, thus the mother should be able to understand the child's feelings properly and respond accordingly.

We have to pay attention to fulfil 'the' following health needs of children
→   cleanliness
→   nutrition and clean water
→   immunization
→   treatment facilities when ill
→   proper health habits
→   safety measures to prevent accidents.

Infants understand others' feelings such as anger and happiness. Fear is usually inculcated by adults. The child's emotional balance could be maintained only by fulfilling their needs.

The infant stage is the foundation level as we have seen earlier, thus the growth and development of this stage have to be proper in order to ensure development in later stages.

The defects and behavioural changes in childhood might be a result of what has happened and what has not happened during infancy. Further, some of the developments (e.g. language behaviour) continue into the other stages of development. Thus parents and teachers have to pay attention and provide appropriate encouragement even during the other stages of development.

2.3.2. Early childhood (2 - 5 years)

⊛ *Can you describe some of the developmental activities of pre-school children?*

Early childhood is a preparatory stage for school learning. Generally children go to pre-school at this stage. They will have opportunities to develop through various experiences there. The child gets exposure to the external world outside the secure family environment at this stage. Social relationships and socialization begins here.

2.3.2.1. Motor activities

We could see rapid motor development at the early childhood stage. Children are able to walk, jump and run at this stage. They play with toys. They throw balls and play with dolls. Parents at home and pre-school teachers can provide necessary exercises for the motor development and assist the development of children.

Bodily movement according to rhythmic sound makes body and mind relax

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Activities

The trainees will start in a circle and number them. Then they will mark a point in the circle. Afterwards they begin to trot when the group leader who stands outside the circle claps his hands. Then the group leader calls a number and the person denoted by the number might perform some activity while running and the others have to follow suit (Horse trot, Elephant walk etc.). When another number is called that person will do the activity whichever he likes and others will imitate.

2.3.2.2.   Language development

Language development rapidly increases between two to four years. By the end of five years, the child's vocabulary would be around two thousand. These children can relate stories. If elders can tell the beginnings of stories and ask them to finish them, it would be a good exercise for imagination, language usage and teaching morals through stories.

2.3.2.3.   Imitation

We could see children imitate various things while playing. When a child sees something it usually imitates it. It often imitates parent's actions. That is why parents should be good examples. Improper behaviours (Alcoholism, smoking, fighting etc.) of parents, their language usage and their actions (crying, quarrelling, symbolic body movements etc.) are usually permanently embedded in children and there is a high probability that they also would show them in their future life.

Can a child develop through imitation?   Pre-school teachers should also behave with such responsibility. Even films and tele-drama should be without violence and should illustrate good conduct.

Children should be provided with the opportunities to participate in fancy dress competitions by imitating good characters. This would inculcate the idea the he/she also should lead a similar life. This enables the child to develop good qualities.

Example: Swamy Vivekanantha, Mother Theresa.

Further, these kinds of characters could be introduced through stories, films and videos to the children.


Activity

How could parents contribute to physical, psychological, social and spiritual development of children through their imitating activities?

The trainees could be divided into groups to perform role plays as children and parents and be encouraged to identify the contribution of family and the environment in the development of children.

2.3.2.4. Group mentality

When group mentality develops, children would begin to play with other children of their age. Though they may not understand concepts such as cooperation and competition, by playing together they learn various habits and behaviours needed for social living. This provides the opportunity for social development. There are possibilities to learn unwanted habits when playing in groups, thus it is necessary to guide them to play with suitable groups.

Children observe their society in order to develop their own activities
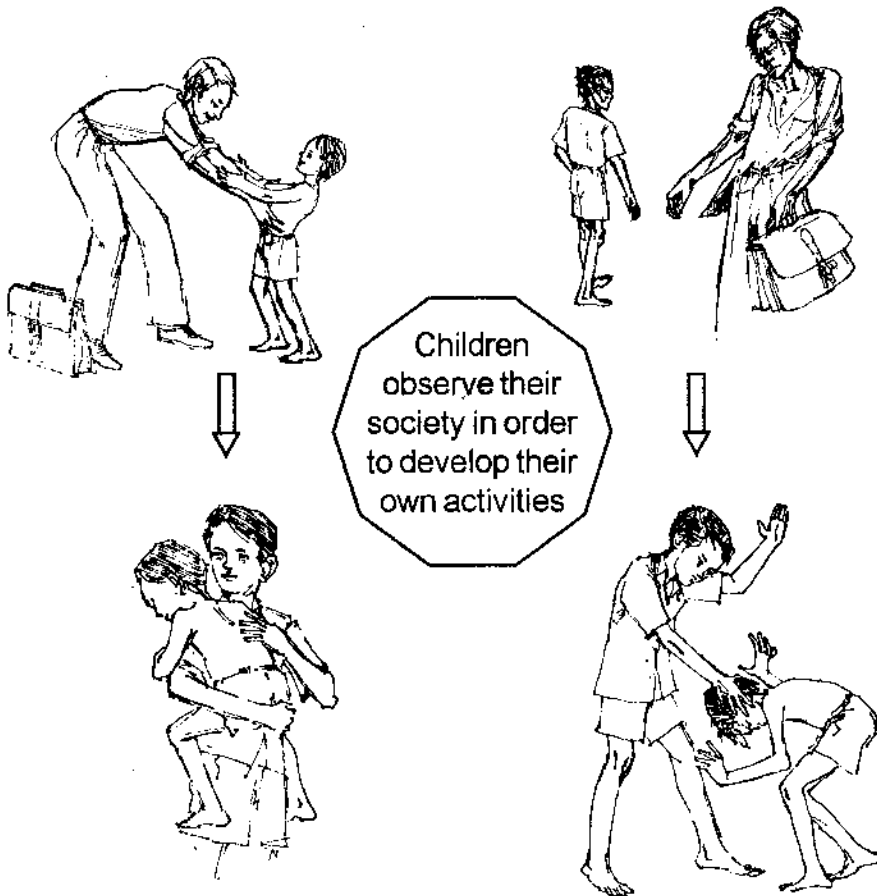
2.3.2.5. Gender differences

Development of awareness about gender differences is an important feature of this stage. A male child follows his father's traits and a female child adopts her mother's qualities. They would even ask questions regarding sex differences before reaching five years of age. Children select play materials according to their sex and sometimes they are encouraged to do so by society.

Usually fantasy, curiosity and creativity begin at this stage. Children ask various questions at home and pre-school. Teachers and parents should not neglect or suppress this. They should encourage their children by providing understandable answers to them. Creative talents and artistic appreciation could be developed at this stage.

If the children who try to create new things are appreciated then it would encourage their activities. On the contrary if their independent activities are not encouraged or blocked, then their self-confidence would be diminished and guilt feeling would be formed.

Initially children may not know the difference between fantasy and reality. Parent might think that their children are lying. But we have to make them to realize little by little the difference between reality and fantasy.

Children might show adamant behaviour and opposition. But parents should provide support, care and love to the child and set the limits for their behaviour. If parents show extreme restrictions, the adamant behaviour might increase. In that case their attention should be diverted to activities which would make them happy. Parents should be able to establish firmly but in a supportive manner the fact that they can't do whatever they think and they too have certain limitations.

If parents do everything for their children and not allow them to act on their own thinking that they are thereby showing their love, children would lose their self confidence. We have to appreciate their actions and provide them with due recognition. By recognizing appropriate behaviour and not giving due recognition to inappropriate behaviour, we can make them give up unwanted behaviour.

Child : (Happily) Mother!!! Mother!! Do you know how many things have I made with clay today?

I have organized them beautifully. Even Mala acca said. it is wonderful! Why don't you come and see it?

Mother : Throw everything away! Your hands are dirty! Clean it before your father comes or else he would scold you. How many times have I told you not to play with clay?

Child : ???

2.3.3. Childhood (5 - 12 years)

The child begins to establish contact with the outside world as it starts schooling.

Activity

The trainees should be divided into groups of five. One should take the role of a father who provides due recognition to the child and the second one should take the role of his child. The third person should take the role of a father who never recognizes his child and fourth one should take the role of his child. The fifth person in each group should be able to observe both situations and tell his opinion.

Not all children go to pre-school. That is why the teacher should consider the fact that for such a child the school atmosphere is entirely new. A child who lives in a homely atmosphere has to spend nearly four hours in school. Thus, substituting family relationships, especially the relationship of mother, provides a secure feeling to the child in the new environment. When a child sees the mother's love and caring relationship in a teacher, only then will a happy atmosphere for the child be established.

2.3.3.1. Motor activities

The physique of the child which was muscular during early childhood slowly transforms into long legs and thin body. The fine motor development will not be completed, thus these children would perform well in climbing, jumping. But stitching and drawing would be difficult for them

at this stage, they will develop these skills little by little. Teachers can also encourage this process of development. We could see children at this stage use most parts of their body while engaged in activities.

E.g.: When throwing a ball they would use the entire body.

Children would be very energetic though their growth process is a bit slow at this stage.

Children's cognitive and functional levels are enhanced and their creative skills, imagination and classification skills are strengthened during this stage.

The things they handle and the scenes they see increase with the expansion of their environment. They develop the desire to collect and posses things. Questions such as "what?" and "why?" are frequent. Their analytic tendency also develops. Further, whenever they come across an obstruction in their work, they would try to overcome it. This could result in aggression, anger, opposition and conflict. Relationship with peers, collective activities, competition in sports, agreements and disagreements would occur at this stage.

Whenever a child's actions are appreciated and needs are fulfilled, the child expresses happiness through laughing and playing.

Activity

How can analytic tendency and imagination skills be channelled through the school curriculum?

This could be studied in groups and the findings could then be presented.

Some childhood activities which could be encouraged:
- ⊙ Collecting different coloured things from the environment
- ⊙ Collecting things which could be bent
- ⊙ Collecting seeds
- ⊙ Finding out reasons for the noise in a market place
- ⊙ Finding out the possible ways to connect batteries and bulb to get light
- ⊙ Studying how to divert the path of the rays of sunlight

⊙ Hitting a hanging ball with hand or a bat

⊙ Engage in football practice

⊙ Taking part in a drama and playing the role of a character which shows lot of emotions

⊙ Story telling

⊙ Creative work (drawing, painting, making clay models etc.)

2.3.3.2. Needs

Love, recognition and security needs continue throughout childhood in a different dimension. Since the needs increase, even a small delay in satisfying them would create feelings such as anger, bitterness and feeling of being cheated in children. They express their anger by breaking things, shouting and grumbling during that time. Feeling of envy usually accompanies the need for love. Children who have missed love and care, envy other children who get love and attention. Children who have lost the support of their family can be satisfied by the support and care given by friends and teachers at school.

Do you think that punishment affects a child's feeling of security?

2.3.3.3. Emotions

Do you think that the child needs to know the reason for being punished?

Anger and happiness are transient and repetitive during early childhood. But during childhood feelings and emotions last longer. If a child of this age starts crying, then it would continue to cry for a while. Fear and anxiety are also usually observed at this stage.

Activity

Participants should be paired. Eyes of one of the pairs should be covered by a cloth and then he/ she should walk to a certain distance with the help of the other.

⊙ Walking only with the verbal instructions of the helper.

⊙ Walking with the physical assistance of the helper. (Helper could assist by directing physically and helping at turns etc.)

⊙ Walking with a person who is selected by the blindfolded person.

Following these exercises, discussions about the feelings of the person who is blindfolded should be carried out by the participants and the conclusion regarding the feeling of security based on the discussions should be presented.

A child who
knows which
action would
be rewarded
and which are
punishable
will develop a
sense of
security

Activity

⊙ Providing structured, limited freedom fulfilling needs and support from elders.

⊙ Providing unlimited freedom. Providing whatever the child likes, making all sorts of privileges available to the child.

Participants have to compare the children living in both circumstances and put forward their conclusions regarding the security needs of these children.

Fear about ghosts and animals are not natural but is inculcated by adults. For example parents threaten their children by saying "there is a devil in the well, if you go near, it will swallow you". The child's imagination further develops this story. Without threatening with such stories, parents could explain the danger (they can explain what would happen if somebody falls into a well). Building a protective wall to the well and building a fence around the well are the proper secure actions, which could be taken by the parent.

2.3.3.4.   Group feeling

Children have a habit of playing in small groups. These groups may not be permanent at the early days of schooling, but we could see that these groups became more permanent little by little with time. Agree-

ment between groups, conflicts, cooperation, competition and fights would occur frequently. They may form groups based on their gender or imitate activities of the parent or adults of the same gender. We can observe that boys form groups more quickly than girls. They may try to get whatever society respects or considers highly. Boys prefer to engage in playing with mechanical toys which involves technology. Girls would be encouraged to play with dolls, imitate cooking and decorating by society.

At the latter part of this stage, children would engage in activities such as cycling and acting that are related to the external world. So teachers should plan group activities appropriate for class work. 'Leadership' could be given on a rotation basis in order to develop leadership quality among children. Opportunities for sharing work, unity, acting with give and take, collective action, submission to leadership, and helping others are qualities in children which could be built up by the teacher.

The mentality to avoid clashes and conflicts could be inculcated through this. These qualities would help to develop social bondage and relationship skills among children.

Activity

Iceberg

One of the participants would be the ship and others would be icebergs. The children who are supposed to be the icebergs will sit on the ground while the child who is supposed to be the ship should be able find his way to the harbour blind folded, though the icebergs. Whenever the ship is at the verge of colliding with an iceberg, the iceberg would make 'ish' sound and warn the ship. The icebergs would guide the ship in the correct pathway to reach the harbour.

What are the attitudes, which would develop in children during this activity?

2.3.3.5. Language Development

When thinking about language development, availability of books, educated older siblings, healthy family environment where family members use language properly contribute greatly to speedy language

development and enrichment of language. We could help language development by encouraging the reading habit at this stage. Listening to the radio and reading the newspaper also would be of help in this regard. If there are faults in pronunciation, then parents and teachers should work with the children and should correct those faults.

Children would achieve the skills to organize words into long sentences and to use it in speech and writing due to their psychological

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Activity

The trainees would be divided into two groups and stand in two lines ten feet apart. They would hold play cards written in big bold letters facing them. When the game begins they would turn it towards the opposing line. The pairs with matching words will have to run in pairs.

Example: Leaf - Green

    Milk - White

This activity could be utilized to develop concepts about colour, reading skills and motor skills among seven or eight year old children. In this manner age appropriate words could be used to encourage language development in all ages. Further crossword puzzles, and making words with randomly selected letters also would encourage language development.

---

maturity.

Language skill is the basis to conceptualisation in children. If the teacher fails to pay attention and encourage language development, it would have a negative impact on children. At the same time, if the teacher encourages children to explore, then children themselves would read in order to know about different things.

2.3.3.6. Problem solving

Children of this stage would try to know the relation between different things and to use their logical thinking. Children who have used the trial and error method to solve problems would use thinking; analysing past experiences and practical application during the school going years. Thus the teacher should organize the classroom activities in such a

manner that children would be able to use their skills to solve practical and cognitive problems. Children who are at the latter part of this stage would use scientific methods to solve problems. Children get the ability to classify things and events by knowing the common and uncommon features of things and events. Following this, the skill to classify according to size, shape and odour also emerges.

As discribed above when we look at the achievements of this stage of development, we would realize the importance of it. Developing physical skills though participating in sports and games, formation of self-concepts, developing attachment with peers, acting independently and development of consciousness, morality, social norms and attitudes are clearly visible at this stage.

2.3.4. Adolescence (12 - 18 years)

Though we consider the developmental stages of primary school children in a detailed manner in this manual, we are also going to see briefly about adolescence, as it is also an important stage during student life.

Rapid physical growth takes place at this stage following childhood. As the growth of hands and legs are greater than the other parts of the body, these children might find it difficult to adjust their behaviour according to this spurt of growth. Secondary sexual characters are important at this stage. Growth of hair around sex organs, change of voice, broadening of chest and strengthening of muscles take place in case of males. Growth of hair around sex organs, beginning of menstruation, breast development and broadening of hips take place in case of females.

Further there would be considerable psychological stress encountered at this stage. Adolescents would like to be independent. They would form groups and develop social contacts. They may show interest in the opposite sex. Self-identity is also unique to this stage. If there are problems in this regard it might lead to inner conflicts.

The teachers who teach them should guide them with love and care. Planning activities in coordination with the students, engaging them in activities which would enable them to express their thinking and make them to participate in social work would help their growth and development.

2.4. Epilogue

The children who get appropriate experiences during their developmental stages would grow and develop without hindrance

We have seen the stages of growth and development in children and the importance of each and every stage. If there is a development defect at one stage, then it would affect development in the next stage. Thus we should provide the necessary opportunities, assistance, and the ways and means to alleviate their difficulties so that children grow and develop in a manner appropriate to their stages of development.

Developmental stages

Stage	Age	Important Characteristics	Cognitive Development (Piaget)	Psychosexual Stage (Freud)	Psychosocial Stage (Erikson)	Moral Development (Kohlberg)
Fetal	Until birth	Physical development	-	-	-	-
Infancy	24 months	Basic motor development Social bonds	Sensory motor stage	Oral and anal stage	Trust, mistrust	Pre-moral stage
Early childhood	2-5 years	Language development Sex differences Group play Preparatory stage for learning	Pre-operational stage	Phallic stage	Self-centeredness, Shyness	Obedience and punishment (stage 1) Mutual transactions
Childhood	6-12 years	More learning activities Group sports	Concrete operational stage	Latency	Self-centeredness, Inferiority complex	Good child
Adolescence	12-18 years	Beginning of young adult stage Higher cognitive activities Freedom from parents Social relationships	Formal operational stage	Genetality	Identity, Identity crisis	Law and order
Young adult	18-45 years	Work (job), Family development	-	-	Intimate relationship, Isolation	Social agreement (stage 5)
Middle age	45-65 years	Higher professional level. Self evaluation. Empty nest, Stage retirement	-	-	Creativity, development Stagnation	Following norms
Old age	65-death	Family happiness. Achievements. Dependency. Widowhood, Health problems	-	-	Wholeness, Loss of self	-
Death	-	-	-	-	-	-

The urchin

used to gathering fire wood

now takes more wings

and

joyously his satchel swings

3

Learning

- What do you understand from the word "Learning"?
- How does conceptualization take place?
- What are the factors influencing perception?
- What is intelligence?
- What is memory?
- What do you think about learning difficulties?

3.1. Introduction

Learning activities are important in a child's development. We usually think that learning activities begin at school. But they begin at the fetus stage. Then learning in the family, society and school environment contribute to the development of the child.

We have seen a 6-year-old boy playing with a cart made by him from tin, stick, rope and nails available in his environment.

We should understand that there is learning taking place even through these games; not only the physical activities but cognitive skills are also expressed through these games.

Activity

The trainees may discuss about the game mentioned earlier in pairs.

⊙   What is the concept behind this game?

⊙   What is the perception the students would get through this game?

⊙   What should come to their memory in order to play this game?

⊙   What difficulties would they encounter in this game?

They could share their views through similar questions.

3.2. Learning

⊛   *What do you mean by "Learning"?*

⊛   *What are the ways through which learning takes place?*

Learn with out doubts and then act accordingly -Tirukkural
    There are various changes taking place in children. Learning is the basis for these changes. It changes children's knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviour.

We could find out whether learning has actually occurred by observing the behaviour prior to learning and the behavioural changes after learning. For example children learn "when brushing the teeth, unwanted things would be cleaned out from them." And then if they practice it at home, it is the behavioural change due to learning.

All life situations provide a base for learning. A child learns the necessary things for life before coming to school. It absorbs the fundamentals of life from the mother or parents, relatives and neighbours.

Further they learn various things by listening, seeing, tasting, smelling, touching, doing and speaking. They learn by writing on sand and drawing on the wall with a piece of charcoal. They also learn the concepts of big, small, and more-less form their environment before coming to school.

Children learn to get involved in and enjoy singing, dancing and drawing at a tender age. This would occur while playing alone or in groups. They come to know about various physical, psychological and social activities through playing.

Though the child starts learning at home, it continues to learn at other places also.

The home environment (see chapter 5), social environment and school environment (see chapter 4) should be properly organized in order to assist this learning or else, an improper learning environment would bring about inappropriate behaviour.

Learning with parents
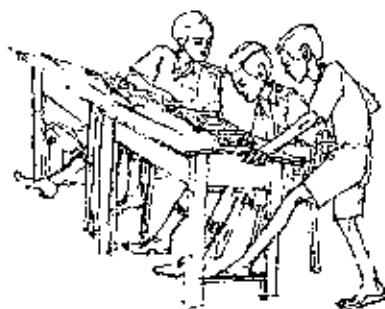
Learning through playing with other children

When making a kite at school, the students would collect the necessary materials and the teacher will make a model and guide the children to do the same. This is an example of a proper environment.

The habits learned in the cradle will persist up to the grave.

A mother asking a 10-year-old child to steal a mango from a neighbour is an example of an improper learning environment.

The knowledge, skills and attitudes that children already have may help in learning. These are the "inner conditions" for learning. All kinds of influences from outside are considered external learning conditions.

Further, the developmental stages of children also influence their learning. Knowing what the child should learn and how learning should take place determines the teacher's ability. The teacher who teaches according to the developmental level of the child will get good results.

Teacher's qualification is knowing the child.

3.2.1. Learning methods

Different types of learning takes place at different stages of a growing child. For example, "symbolic learning" is mostly used in language learning. Here, things are registered in the brain in the form of their names (see box for other learning methods)

☺   Conceptual learning: learning after understanding a concept

e.g.: Man evolved from the ape.

☺   Stimulus - response learning: learning through experience

e.g.: Experiencing the taste of mango

☺   Problem solving: if one side of a squire is 6 cm then the circumference is 24 cm

☺   Differential learning:

e.g.. Differentiating the pictures of birds and animals

☺   Learning laws and principals:

e.g.: Every action has an equal and opposite reaction
                                             - Newton's Law

☺   Word linking: joining the words

e.g.: Wonder and land as wonderland.

☺   Correlative learning: Paddy ―――― smell

Camphor ―――― fish

Sea ―――― rice

3.2.2. Motivation for learning

There should be motivation and interest in students for "learning" to take place. "Learning instinct" is natural during childhood. All living things learn in their early stages of life in order to manage the challenges of life. But this could be curtailed due to physical reasons (illness,

malnutrition), psychological or environmental factors. Bitter experiences might create a mental block. For example a teacher who uses severe punishment might destroy self-confidence and would cause a hatred in learning, especially in that particular teacher's subjects. This might continue throughout life.

Further, the child might feel frustrated if he/ she is forced to memorize things for hours. But on the other hand, students might show interest in learning or in certain subjects because of the teaching of a good teacher. Similarly negative family environment (see chapter 5) and school environment (see chapter 4) also would affect the motivation to learn. If no interest is shown in education at home, then the children of that particular household would also develop a similar mentality.

Are we fully using the curiosity of children in schools? Or are we suppressing it?

3.2.3.   Some approaches to enhance learning

3.2.3.1.   Developing language skills

Parents, peers, relatives and teachers play a major role in developing language skills in children. Teachers could employ various techniques in the classroom to develop language skills. For example, word building games, crossword puzzles, and introduction of new words could be used. Similarly, techniques to enhance language skills could also be employed at home.

Imposing learning upon children before the appropriate time would affect the natural development of a child.

e.g.: Talking to a child, encouraging him to read small books sing songs and tell stories, anecdotes etc.

3.2.3.2.   Activating senses

Children should be provided with opportunities to exercise their sensory skills such as touching, tasting, seeing, smelling and hearing in order to develop the functions of these senses. We could use different shapes, colours, surfaces, music, and painting in the classroom for this purpose.

3.2.3.3. Broadening knowledge

Going on tours, enjoying nature, festivals, cultural events, celebrations and games would develop sensory knowledge. Further seeing museums, zoos and bird and animal sanctuaries also would broaden knowledge.

It is good to encourage children to analyze and understand things. This will enhance their skills to differentiate things in order to understand them.

3.2.3.4. Developing motor skills

We can develop the children's motor skills by allowing them to play, run, jump, climb, ride bicycles, swim and to play with the merry-go-round with proper guidance. Development of motor skills according to the developmental stage will make the learning process much more easier.
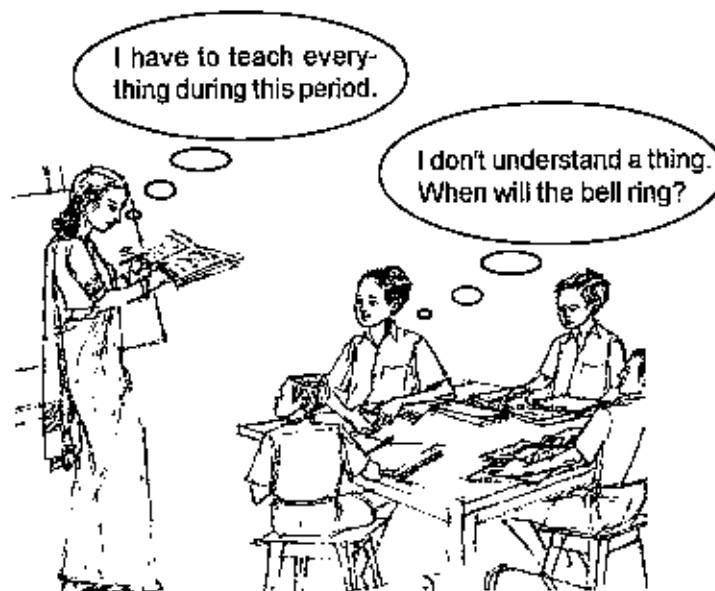
3.2.3.5. Developing relationship skills

Group interactions increases by participating in games, dramas, and by visiting temples, parks and beaches. The interactive skills would develop through such activities.

3.2.3.6. Developing social skills

These skills could be developed by providing opportunities to interact and talk in common places, schools and in religious and cultural gatherings.

When you have butter then why should you search all over for ghee

I have to teach everything during this period.

I don't understand a thing. When will the bell ring?

Activity

One intelligent child and one average student are listening to a teacher's teaching. Guide the participants to do a role-play.
(one teacher and two students)

Do you think their responses would be similar?

Let the trainees arrive at a conclusion through brainstorming.

Curiosity is natural among children. We could observe children dismantle toys while playing. We could encourage this and create a learning environment. Then the child would learn with curiosity easily, quickly and happily.

3.2.3.7. Developing problem solving skills

Children should be given the opportunity to face small problems according to their age and then they should be helped to solve that problem. Problems could be easily solved by discussing with family members.

3.3. Concepts

⊛   *What is a concept?*

⊛   *How does conceptualization take place?*

The knowledge (idea) about a thing or a subject the children possess is called "concept". Parents and teachers explain these concepts through names or symbols during their teaching activity.

e.g.: Tree, animal, car

Later, children internalize social and cultural concepts according to their development and opportunities for experience. This is an important aspect of socialization.

For example, the taste alone doesn't give the concept about "jackfruit". It's other qualities such as size, colour, smell and

Profitable crop would be known when it is still a seedling.

The characteristics of concepts

- Concepts are inter-related.

  e.g.: The concept of mango is related to the concept of fruits.

- Each concept has it's own special characteristics.

  e.g.: The physical characteristics are special in conceptualization of animals such as the dog, cat, goat, and cattle.

- There could be objective and subjective relationships in each concept.

  For example: In the concept of 'papaya', its shape is objective and happily tasting it is a subjective relationship.

shape in a combined form that gives the concept of jackfruit.

The children form their concepts about a thing from what they get through their senses. Then the feelings and emotions are added to it. Thus, if senses function properly , they would form the correct concept or else wrong concepts might be formed.

e.g.: If a concept such as "black things are horrible" is given, then the child would always think "black is bad".

There are two types of concepts. They are abstract concepts and concrete concepts.

Activity

The following should be either written or drawn in cards and shuffled.

Roof, head, door, bell, wall, window, hand, land, leg, wheel.

⊙   Concepts could be formed by selecting matching words and pictures. (e.g.: house)

⊙   Then discuss about items, which don't form a complete concept.

The concepts about love, and anger are examples of abstract concepts. Concepts about tree, flower or animal are concrete concepts.

It is easy to form and realize abstract concepts (love etc.) around 11 years of age. Because at this age cognitive abilities further develop (Gene Piaget calls this period of 11 to 18 years "Formal operational stage".)

But even before this, children would be able to feel abstract things such as love and anger.

The "conscience" forms by incorporating little by little the concepts of good and bad, good and evil, right and wrong, acceptability, guilt, responsibility, norms, ethics, and justice. Children intuitively internalize these concepts by get them observing others, especially parents and teachers, rather than by direct learning through verbal teaching. If conscience is properly formed then they would be able to guide themselves on their own and would be able to provide good models for others to follow.

3.4. Perception

⊛   *What do you mean by perception?*

⊛   *What are the factors influencing perception?*

There are several stimuli in the environment which attract our attention. These are perceived by our senses such as skin, tongue, eyes, nose, and ears. But usually one sensory organ doesn't receive several stimulations simultaneously. When one stimulation is received, other stimulations would be less effective.

e.g.: A student might find it difficult to read his lesson if he is called by someone else at that time.

Each sensory organ provides different sensual experiences. When some information is received through sensory organs, it is sent to the brain through nerves. This is called "sensory input"

The response of the brain to these sensory inputs is called "perception".

E.g.: A child hearing the sound of a motorcycle is sensory input while identifying it as his father's motorcycle is perception.
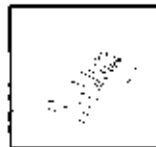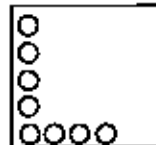
tion is determined by external factors.
Though the tracks seem to narrow down the brain decides that they are parallel.

Even when seeing a ring side-ways the brain decides it is a circle.
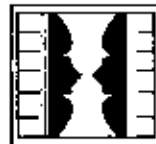
Cups or the faces, which comes first?

The rings or the overall figure? Which is perceived first?

The lines or the figure? Which is perceived first?

Activity

⊙ These pictures could be viewed by trainees.

⊙ Then they can think about perception.

⊙ They can put forward their ideas about perception and experience.

⊙ They can discuss about the influence of external factors.

Internal factors also determine perception. When a person sees something, what he has perceived earlier also influences his perception

Internal factors determining perception

☺ Experience: one student might fear the principal while another one might like him.

☺ Expectation: a girl who is expecting her mother who had gone to the market with a green saree might perceive another woman with a green saree who is walking along the road as her mother   at the first instance.

☺ Attitudes and norms:

- If a person is considered good then his actions also would seem good. On the other hand if a person is considered bad then his action also would seem bad.

- When a male student and a female student are friendly and if it is viewed with a negative preconception then the perception of it also would also be negative.

- A student who believes that nobody other than their teacher could sit in the teacher's chair, on seeing another person sitting on that chair would have a negative perception about him.

☺ Needs: A student, who is hungry, would imagine a parcel as a food parcel.

☺ Conceptualization: If a teacher is considered good then whatever he tells also would be considered good.

☺ Social norms: A person belonging to the upper caste considering the food provided by a person from the depressed caste as infected food.

Activity

Debate

The participants could be divided into two groups and have a debate on the following topic.

Perception would be always correct - would not be always correct.

⊙ The trainees could put forward their opinion and then come to a final conclusion.

⊙ They can conclude that both internal and external factors are important to perception.

(see box).

3.5. Intelligence

Intelligence is classified into three groups.

→   General intelligence: Skills to handle symbols and concepts, think-
ing ability, skill to understand are included in this.

→   Mechanical intelligence: The skill to handle instruments skillfully
comes under this.

→   Social intelligence: The ability to live in the society with others in an
agreeable manner.

⊕   *What is intelligence?*

⊕   *What are the types of intelligence?*

Combination of the skill to integrate reality, short term and long term
memory, logical thinking and analytic ability is considered intelligence.

Generally, the ability to solve problems is called intelligence.
Intelligence is needed to adapt to the environment, to alter behaviour
according to changes and to have relationships within society.

Intelligence is determined by genetic and environmental factors.
That is, mental retardation due to improper brain development might be
determined by genetic factors before birth. But after birth, facilities
available in the environment could develop intelligence.

Teachers should stimulate the interest to search for knowledge in

**Is it possible
to rectify
genetic
defects
through
environmental
factors?**

Intelligence is calculated through the following
equation:

$$\text{Intelligent Quotient} = \frac{\text{Mental Age}}{\text{Chronological Age}} \times 100\%$$

Average I.Q. is considered to be 100

Activity

The participants could discuss how mental age and physical age could be calculated.

Mental age: This could be calculated by administering a structured exercise designed for this purpose.

Physical age or numerical age: This could be calculated on the basis of the year of birth.

From this IQ could be calculated.

For example: If a 10-year-old child possesses only the skills of a

5-year-old (in speaking, reading and writing). Its IQ is calculated as follows:

$$IQ: \quad \frac{5}{10} \times 100 = 50\%$$

Similarly if an exceptional child aged 10 possess the skills of a 15 year old child, then his IQ would be as follows:

$$IQ: \quad \frac{15}{10} \times 100 = 150\%$$

order to develop and enhance intelligence. Intelligence would develop when the teacher introduces new things and correlate them with known facts. On the other hand, repeating the same lessons and giving notes and examining within that would suppress intelligence.

⇄ Nearly 2.5% of all students are having mental retardation. Among these, 85% would be with mild defect and rest of the 15% would be with moderate or severe defect.

3.5.1.   Mental Retardation

Children who struggle to manage daily needs and problems may have mental retardation. Their IQ would be less than 70. This might be

due to physical or psychological factors, malnutrition and environmental factors. (see box)

The majority of these children, that is 85% of them, have mild mental retardation. They can manage themselves. They could be trained to read and write and to go to school. Their facial and physical characteristics are also similar to the other students.

Mostly familial, social, cultural and environmental factors cause this defect. For example lack of environmental stimulation and educational opportunities for learning in early childhood as well as a family that does not motivate learning could be mentioned here.

By paying special attention early and through educational games, the IQ of the children with mild mental retardation could be improved. Teachers could pay special attention to these children. If they are ignored, then they would become problematic to society.

Causative factors of mental retardation

☺ During pregnancy

- Genetic defects

- Mother's age (usually over 40)

- Mother's illness or malnutrition

☺ During birth

- Complicated delivery

- Delay in crying (breathing) after birth

- Head injuries during birth

☺ During infancy

- Brain fever, cerebral malaria

- Serious head injuries

- Malnutrition

- Lack of stimulation in the environment

Activity

A student in an year 6 classroom was writing some words known to him rather than listening to the teacher. Further, he attracted the attention of other students. This student was identified by the teacher and duly punished. Then for the next period, another teacher who was trained in counseling skills came. Imagine that you are this teacher and explain how you would handle this situation. Some of the trainees could explain this and then the ideas expressed could be discussed at class level.

The rest of the 15% of children with mental retardation would be children with severe problems. Their IQ would be less than 50. These children have to be cared for as if they were infants. Children with moderate problems could be trained in special schools to fulfill their daily needs and to act independently.

e.g.: "Ark" organization at Uduvi in Jaffna.

3.6. Memory

- ⊛ *What is memory?*
- ⊛ *How does loss of memory occur?*

Memory also could be stated as retaining informaton. Teachers could look at it from three fundamental points. They are registration, retention, and recall.

For registration of a lesson, the student's personal characteristics, classroom atmosphere, student's level of attention, subject matter and learning methodology all contribute.
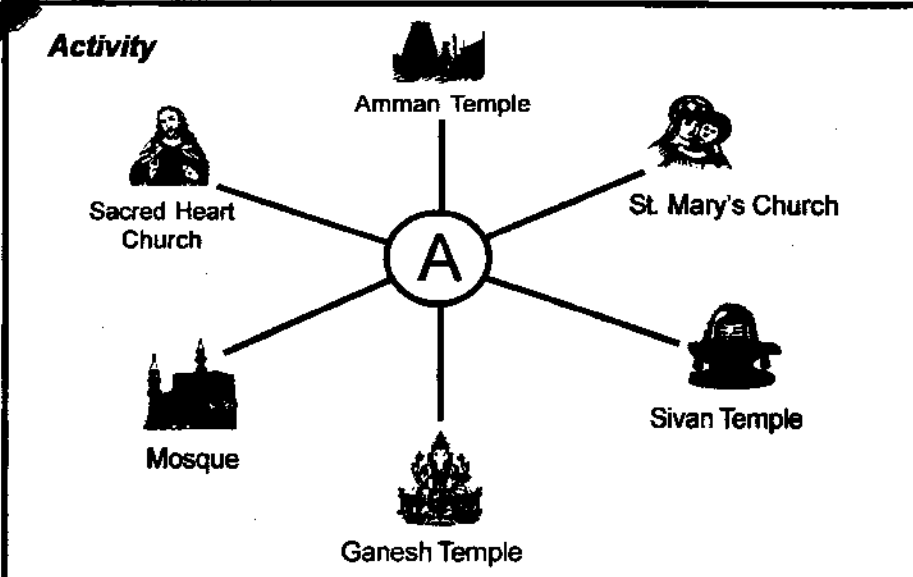
Retention of the information that has registered during the lesson is related to the student's memory. Interruption should be avoided during learning in order to improve registration. The speed of learning should suit the capacity of the student in order to store the information in memory. If the subject is meaningful to the student and if it is related to the earlier known information, then it would be well stored in memory. That is why the teacher should make lessons more meaningful and related to known

information. Giving exercises and doing revisions would further contribute to good memory. In addition, good physical and mental health also contribute to memory.

Recall would be easier if lessons are learnt in proper order. If they are associated with other items then retrieving would be easier by remembering those items. That is why teaching also should be done accordingly.

There are two types of memory.

☺   *Short term memory:* This is useful for immediate needs

☺   *Long term memory:* This is useful for long-term needs.

Activity

Ask the trainees to stand on a circle named A and then explain the places shown in the places. Afterwards the participants should be able to go to places when the names of places are called out based on how the places were named. The person who was able to identify most places based on his memory would be considered good in short-term memory.

Activity

Kamala was emotionally disturbed by a happening at home. She goes for an exam next day.

Suganya took rest after coming from school, did some revision and then goes for an exam the next day.

The trainees should be guided to discuss the memory of Kamala and Suganya.

Finally the concept that the order of Learning➔ Rest ➔ Revision ➔ Examination increases the memory should reach the trainees.

If the teacher teaches the subject in a meaningful manner, then the student would be able to convert short term memory into long term memory much more easier. Teachers should also be able to connect the lessons with the previous lessons.

We usually memorize things while preparing for an examination. But memorizing may not be needed if learning is meaningful and related to what we have studied earlier, because the subject would be then deeply engraved in our mind.

Some ways to improve memory

☺ Creating suitable conditions such as the place (which is free of interruptions), allocated time and environment.

☺ Interest, attitude and motivation for learning created by teachers.

☺ Identifying factors contributing to memory and providing training.

☺ Avoiding long training or teaching hours and providing rest inbetween the sessions.

☺ Using "chunking" of lessons in order to digest long subject matters.

☺ Structuring and organizing the lesson beforehand.

☺ Focusing attention on the lesson structure and rest inbetween lessons.

☺ Using questions to revise the lessons learnt in between teaching.

☺ Using appropriate teaching methods to make lessons easier and understandable.

☺ Provide appropriate encouragement and rewards (prizes and appreciation)

3.7. Learning difficulties

Students can encounter various kinds of difficulties in learning. These difficulties occur due to physiological (physical) and psychosocial factors.

Physical reasons are malnutrition, defects in skin, eyes, ears, mouth and nose and genetic defects.

If a child with a hearing problem or visual defect is identified and assistance is provided (hearing aid, spectacle etc.) then learning would take place properly. If these defects are not identified and dealt with properly, then the child would be considered retarded wrongly. His education also would be disrupted.

Poverty, war situation, displacement, family conflicts, alcoholism in a parent, illnesses and child abuse (see chapter 7 for further details) are psychosocial factors that can cause learning difficulties.

3.8. Conclusion

Learning concepts, motivation, perception, intelligence, memory and learning difficulties are important when we think of learning behaviour.

The following discussed in this chapter should be known by the teachers in order to enrich learning activities of children:

)(Children know the basic things needed for life before coming to school. They relate them in a meaningful manner and develop them at school.

)(Formation of correct concepts is important in learning.

)(Perception is the interpretation of sensual experiences received through sensory organs by the brain.

)(Intelligence is important to solve problems, to adapt and live in an environment and to alter behaviour according to changes.

)(Receiving information, storing, and retrieving are all aspects of memory.

)(Learning difficulties are determined by physical and psychosocial factors.
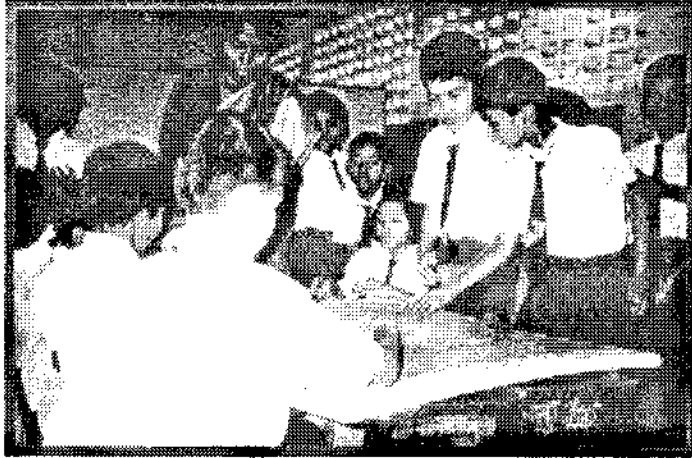
This holy place offers

new acquaintances

a lot to share

and the base

for a sound personality

4

School environment

- What is school environment?
- What are the needs of students?
- What would be the skills of an ideal teacher?
- What would be the situations in school which could create a positive or negative impact on child development?

4.1. Introduction

Though parents play a major part in children's life, the influence of the school environment increases when they start schooling. Children would seek emotional support from teachers similar to what they expect from parents. Though their experiences of socialization began before schooling, the school environment will play an important part in their continuing socialization. The environment influences a child even when it grows inside the mother's womb. The environment in which the child grows would change genetically endowed qualities to a certain extent. Heredity and environment are both important to a child's development.

The school environment contributes considerably to psychological development and enrichment. When the society and environment are not suitable for the psychological well-being of children, then their health and development would be adversely affected. School edu-

What would
you consider
as the school
environment?

cation considerably influences the planning of the future in the life of children. The school provides the environment in which their talents could come out and good qualities could be developed regardless of their family background. Thus the teacher could help develop the child further by learning about the school environment.

Activity

☉ The trainees should be asked to visualize their school environment for a minute.

☉ One of them should play the role of a trader who sells the environmental needs of schools.

☉ Others could bargain to buy whatever lacks in their school environment

☉ The needs of the buyer should be written in cards and then be sold.

☉ Then these cards should be displayed and the participants should be guided to identify their school's needs.

4.2. Importance of the school environment

⊛ *In what way is the school environment important to children?*

The physical and biological environment of the school influences the child's learning and morality.

4.2.1. Biological environment

The biological environment encompasses the principal, teachers, students, academic and non-academic staff, education officials and trees and plants in the garden.

These people assist the process of learning in children. They guide the academic activities, maintain unity, quality and amiable relationships among students and involve themselves in activities for student development. If they exercise excessive authority and suppression and fail to maintain amicable relationships or if they are negligent, then it would contribute to the uncontrollable bad qualities which would surface among students. At the same time, if they are actively involved in educational

activities and liked by students, they would be able to promote a healthy school environment and the children would be able to get a good education.

The school garden and trees also contribute to the educational
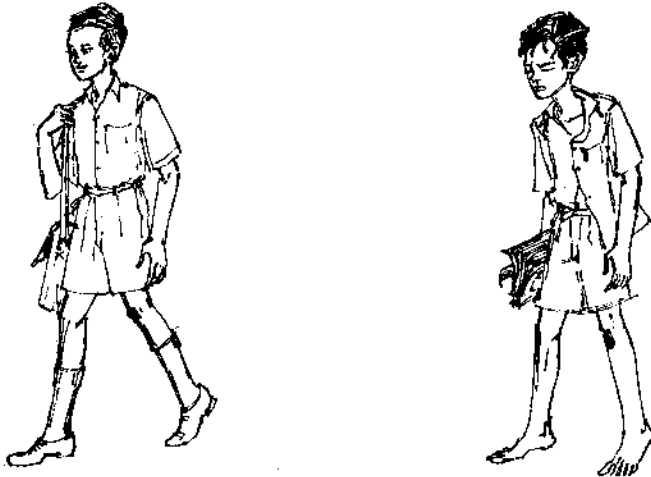
Activity

The participants could be asked to compare the two students shown in the above picture and to think about the influence of school environment on them.

activities of children. When children come into the school environment from their home environment it might be totally alien to them. But it is better to avoid a drastic change. Places such as parks, garden and shaded trees would refresh the children's minds. Schools without these might not be able to carry out their educational activities well. The children's mind and body might feel tired in such an environment. Heat and dust of summer and storm and shower in rainy season also would affect learning. If the school environment is attractive and beautiful then the students' minds also would be happy.
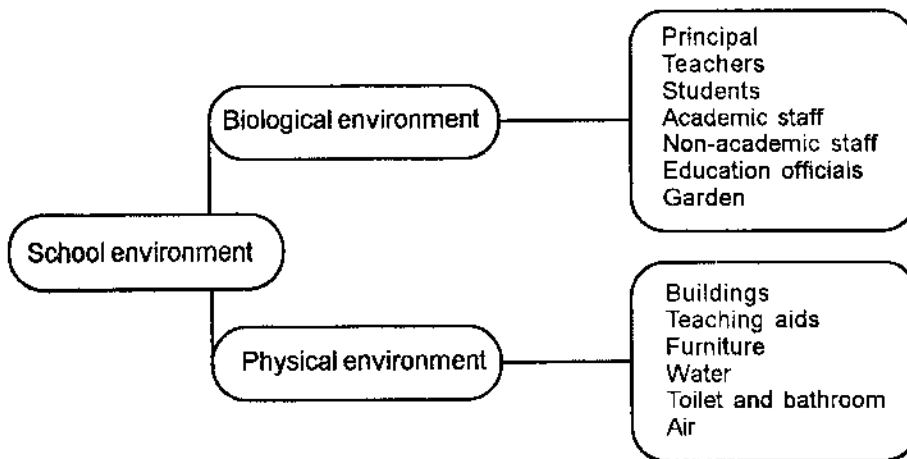
4.2.2. Physical environment

4.2.2.1. Buildings

The classroom should be built according to children's nature and age. According to the educational needs class rooms, office room, rest room, library, laboratory, activity room, auditorium, lecture halls and canteen would be there in a healthy school environment. Buildings which fulfil the needs of children and a peaceful atmosphere contribute to conducive learning activities . However, the necessary buildings needed for academic activities do not exist in most schools.

These schools continue their educational activities amidst great difficulties. Teachers are placed in a situation where they have to conduct their classes in thatched huts or under trees. But the learning atmosphere could be upgraded if the environment is modified with creativity. This would be an interesting challenge for the school community. Further, teachers could contact the education department, social organizations and old students in order to rectify the situation.

4.2.2.2. Furniture

This is also an aspect taken into consideration in developing the educational facilities of children. It is better to use tables and chairs according to the age and growth status of children. These should be made with light materials which would make it easier to carry them. Apart from this, it is important to have furniture such as equipment cupboard, teacher table and chair according to the educational activities of children. Schools which are damaged during the war and the backward schools do not have sufficient furniture. But principals and teachers use various other

things as furniture. The school development societies and old students' associations should come forward to fulfil these needs. Further schools could be assisted to acquire the necessary furniture through private or Non - Governmental Organizations (NGOs).

4.2.2.3. Teaching aids

Teaching aids are important components in the learning process of children. Blackboard, chalk, writing cards, picture cards and other classroom equipment come under this category. These equipment help the learning process.

4.2.2.4. Drinking water and toilet facilities

It is better if the school environment fulfils the essential needs of children. The level of education should be maintained and at the same time students could be made to follow good health-related practices. Clean drinking water and toilet facilities are important basic needs in this respect. Students should be taught how to utilize these facilities and these ideas should be reinforced in order to inculcate healthy habits in them. Some schools have health-related problems because they do not have the basic facilities and they don't pay attention to the health habits of students.

4.2.2.5. Playground

Playgrounds help to maintain physical and psychological heath of students. Games play a major role in providing relaxation and refreshment to a mind which has grown tired following lessons. Children of schools which do not have a playground (due to the congested school environment) would develop various psychological problems, and would show a lack of interest in learning. Further, they are unable to show their talents and skills. Present day educational activities are carried out through play. This again stresses the need for a playground. We could see some schools using neighbouring barren lands as playground (with permission).

4.2.2.6. External environment

The school environment and the external environment of the school should be peaceful, supportive and facilitate learning. If there is continuous noise and disturbance in the environment (market, highway etc.)

then teaching would be disrupted. Similarly, a war situation, security related problems and political activities would affect learning. It would in turn affect school attendance and interest in education. If there are mines or UXOs in the school environment, then it also would threaten the children. Further if anti-social activities, drug abuse or liquor business takes place near the school, then that would misdirect the children.

4.3. Qualities of a healthy school

    ◌   *Is the school atmosphere illustrated below suitable to learning and teaching or not? Justify your answer.*
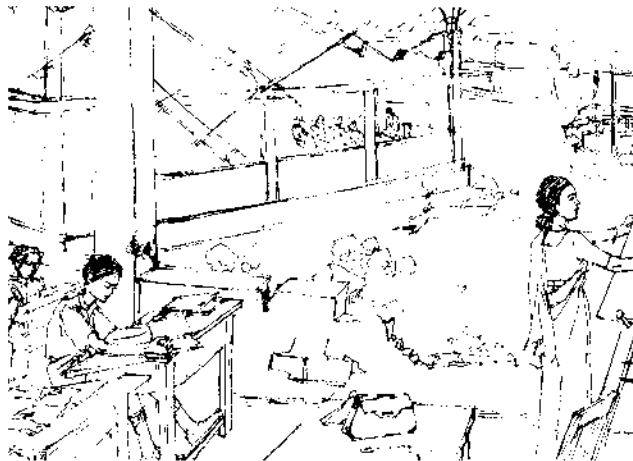
4.3.1. Class atmosphere

Every classroom in a school should be beautiful and clean with sufficient light and ventilation. One part of the classroom could be kept bare. This area could be utilized for sitting on the floor while using certain teaching equipments.

Even the furniture could be re-arranged by the teacher according to his teaching techniques. This would dispel monotony and motivate children to learn. Thus, if a teacher attempts to create a conducive atmosphere according to the needs with the available resources, then he would produce good results.

Furniture could be re-arranged to suit activities such as group learning, reading, handwork, or computer application.

Model arrangements of a class
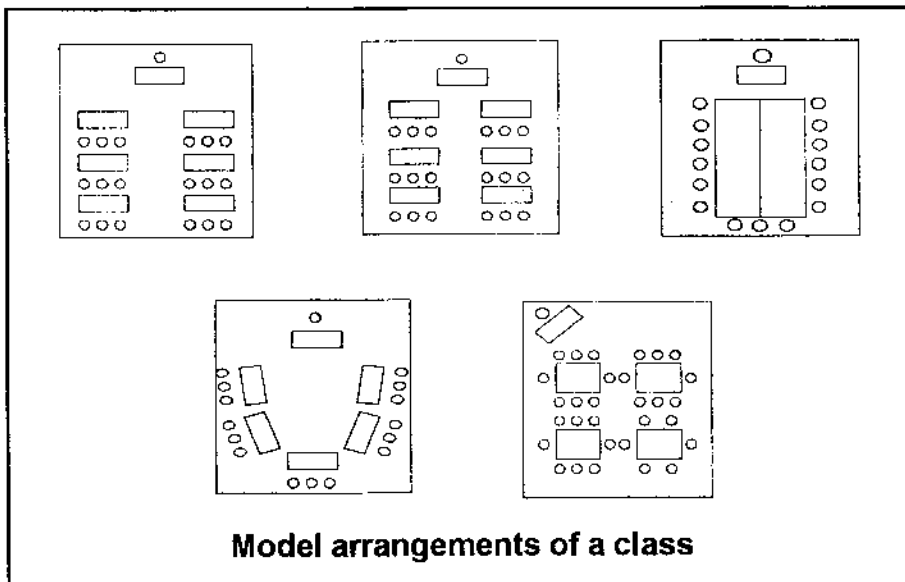
Activity

⊙ Participants could be encouraged to do role plays based on factors mentioned in the school atmosphere.

e.g.: Shady trees (teacher as a shady tree)

⊙ "I gave great influence among students. They learn under my shade. They play under me. I provide them clean air and coolness."

4.3.2. External environment of classroom

It is ideal if the following things are situated in the classroom surroundings:

☐ Shady trees
☐ Playground or play space
☐ Flower pots, herbarium
☐ Children's park
☐ Toilet a little further

Healthy school environment includes all the above mentioned facilities. Sometimes, children get spoiled by the school environment even though they are disciplined and come from a good family. A child might underperform and would behave improperly if it continues its education in a school which cannot even fulfil the basic needs. On the other hand, a child from a problematic family might perform and behave well in a healthy, well structured school environment. Thus, we could assume that the school plays a major role in moulding children's behaviour.

Activity

⊙ Participants could be asked to draw an ideal classroom arrangement

⊙ Then they should be asked to observe the picture shown in section 4.3.1.

⊙ Afterwards they have to make a comparison of what they have drawn and what they see in the picture and should make recommendations to improve the situation illustrated in this picture.

4.4. Teacher's skills

⊕ *What are the qualities of a good teacher?*

"Good" teachers are the ones who are concerned about teaching with attractive teaching aids and techniques according to the physical and psychological growth and development of children. Teachers should not impose their knowledge on children but should follow methods or techniques which would enhance a child's skills. The learning and teaching methods should suit the developmental level of children. It is the duty of the teacher to perform her teaching in a simple, understandable and appropriate manner.

Activity

Participants could be asked to sing the teachers' anthem. Then discussion could be initiated about the qualities of a teacher. Afterwards the participants would do an introspection to see whether the qualities mentioned are in them.

4.4.1. Love and support

The teacher's loving care and support enhances the growth and development necessary for the healthy life of children. When stepping into unfamiliar environment at school from the secure environment provided by the parents, children would expect similar support and care from the teacher. The students would be motivated and made interested if teaching activities are carried out with care in an appropriate manner or students would lose interest and would hate education.

4.4.2. Authority and control

It is not necessary to threaten or physically punish children during teaching. Children who are brought up in a threatening environment would behave in an uncontrollable manner in the future even if they show a submissive appearance externally.

Control is essential for children but is should not be imposed and they should be made to understand it. Exertion of excessive authority would create fear and hatred in the minds of children. Control cannot be forced. When children consciously participate in educational activities, they learn about control on their own. When children who are suppressed by fear are relieved from it, they would behave in an uncontrollable manner. This would affect their personality development. A teacher should know this when enforcing authority. Further, physical punishment would give only short term benefits. On the other hand, controlling children without physical punishment would illustrate a teacher's skills and qualities. Punishments could be used to enforce control. But they should not be violent. Expressing non-agreement, speaking firmly, ignoring, sending the student out from the classroom for a while or appreciating others are some of the ways through which a teacher could punish the student. It is always better to make the student understand the limitats and to act accordingly.

4.4.3. Relationships

⊕   *What is missing in this class?*

Students become silent when they see their teacher's arrival. The teacher opens a book and writes some exercises on the black board. Then the teacher starts his own work while students are copying from the board. At the end, only two exercises books are being seen by the teacher.

A ten year old, Year 5 student was admitted to the hospital twice following complaints of stomachache. When nothing was found wrong physically, she was referred to the Psychiatric Unit. She met a counsellor there.

Counsellor : *Come and take your seat. What is your problem?*

Student : *I have severe stomachache. I feel pain frequently.*

Counsellor : *Is that so?*

Student : *This has prevailed for some time.*

Counsellor : *I understand. It makes things difficult...are you studying?*

Student : *I am in Grade 5. The Scholarship exam is nearing.*

Counsellor : *Tell me about this Scholarship exam.*

Student : *It is just three months for the exam*

Counsellor : *Yes*

Student : *I am the best in my class.*

Counsellor : *Yes, you are clever.*

Student : *I obtained 97 marks in Tamil, 90 in Religion and 90 in English.*

Counsellor : *You are very bright, I suppose.*

Student : *I fared very badly in Maths (crying)*

Counsellor : *How much was it?*

Student : *(bending her head) 84.*

Counsellor : *I think it is a good score.*

Student : *But my sisters score more than 95.*

Counsellor : *Then...*

Student : *The teacher caned every one who got less than 70.*

Counsellor : *But you scored 84.*

Student : *But she caned me also. She is the one who also teaches my sisters. She said while my sisters are scoring well, my score is not up to their level and caned me.*

Counsellor : *I understand..........It worries you a lot.*

Student : *When I think the way the teacher scolded me and caned me, I begin to hate her.*

Counsellor : *That incident created hatred in the teacher.*

The conversation continues in this manner.

If the students are to develop relationship skills, then there should be a cordial relationship among the principal, teachers and students. Teachers should alleviate fear and tension and encourage interest, self - control, enthusiasm and happiness. Further the teacher could guide the students to maintain amiable relationships with the principal, other teachers and fellow students. The authoritative communication pattern could be removed by developing understanding among everyone. Children would become good citizens by building positive relationships.

4.4.4. Trust

It is the duty of the teacher to build trust and confidence in their students. Children possess different individual characteristics. Teachers should be able to understand each child and guide them accordingly. The teacher - student relationship could be strengthened through conversations and by gentle, sincere and caring behaviour.

Trust could be built by making the child feel that the teacher is supportive of its activities and provides security. For example, a teacher might observe a normally happy child suddenly withdrawing or behaving aggressively with other students.

The teacher could discuss about this with the child concerned privately rather than asking in front of others. Then the child would trust that the teacher would not divulge his/ her personal matters to the others. It is good to build the trust in a manner in which the child would realize that the teacher could fulfil its needs, at least to a certain extent.

When the teacher observes the temperament and skills of the children and acts accordingly, the children would learn that they are being observed and cared for by the teacher. Then they would accept the teacher's guidance and control willingly.

4.4.5. Appreciation

Appreciation will improve the learning activities of children. Appreciation could be used by the teacher to encourage positive actions and to prevent negative activities. Generally, positive changes could be brought about by ignoring unwanted activities and by encouraging and appreciating positive activities. A teacher should guide the child with love rather than by punishing them. And even when punishment becomes necessary, it should be used non-violently so that the learning activities and mental state of the child are not affected while the child

realizes what it has done was wrong. When their achievements are appreciated, children will gain confidence and be motivated to do more. Similarly, when children make mistakes, the teacher should not only punish but also give the necessary guidance and support. The teacher's actions should be consistent and firm.

The teacher who has seen a painting of a Year 3 student

Teacher: 'O' good!

Useless appreciation: This sort of appreciation does not provide any room for further thinking.

Teacher: I like your painting. It is beautiful, and meaningful.

Useful appreciation: The child will realize that he can paint well and that he posses artistic skills.

When a child's mental state is affected by fear, insecurity, lack of support and appreciation his physical and mental health can be adversely affected. Further, it also affects his growing personality and development. That is why children should be provided with love, care and appreciation for their healthy development.

4.5. Teaching approach

Teaching activities should cater to the students' needs. We know that education and good qualities cannot be created through authority and repressive activities. It is better to carry out the teaching activities by encouraging the natural abilities of the student in a suitable atmosphere.

We should give priority to two-way communication during learning and teaching. The students will actively function and learn in such an atmosphere. A teacher should not unnecessarily interfere but should observe and guide the activities of the students. A teacher should reduce lecturing. She should discuss with students, explore the relationship between the subject matter and daily life and should compare it with what they have learned in other subject areas.

The students should be encouraged to explore and to collect information. If the students think that they are learning something important

Objectives

Revision

Observation

Empathy

Pre-planning

Understanding themselves

Attractive teaching

Being a catalyst

Understanding students;

Knowing individual qualities of students;

Make the students to develop good compatibility;

Engage in imagination and thinking

Sports and games

Fine arts

Skill to follow examples

Rest

Wholesomeness
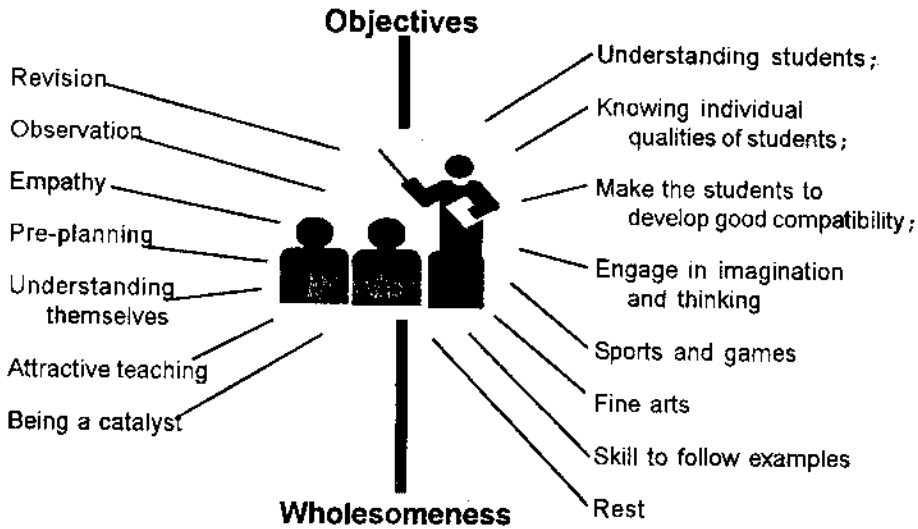
and useful, then they will automatically develop a 'liking' for learning.

4.5.1. Teaching aids

A teacher should learn to use teaching aids. Training in skills such as awareness, observation, comparison and analysis enhance the mental ability of children. These should be taken into consideration while selecting teaching aids and using them.

Activity

Aim: the trainees will come to know different sounds and they will invent new sounds.

Divide the trainees into 4 groups and ask the groups to stand in circles.

One participant should make 5 types of sound continuously

Then the others will follow, but they should not repeat a sound which was made by another person

Example I: A, A, A, A, A, A.... Urrrrrr... Vow, Vow, Vow, Vow... Mew, Mew, Mew, Mew...

Example II: clapping, stamping the ground with one foot, tapping the thigh, tapping the belly etc.

4.5.2. Games and fine arts

It is common for children to involve themselves in games and creative arts. Physical and mental abilities develop when children engage in play activities.

Fine arts are also important in the learning of children. Dance, music,

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Case I:

Yogamalar is the Year 3 class teacher. She entered the class with a smile. She enquired about the previous day's events (about what has happened at home). A latecomer entered the class at this juncture.

The teacher asked him why he was late. He said that his mother was suddenly taken ill and that he had to help his father to make arrangements to take her to the hospital. Then the teacher asked him to sit and started the lesson by reflecting on what she has taught the previous day.

She wrote the title of the new lesson on the black board and explained it through discussion. Then she asked a student to read the lesson. After the completion of a paragraph, she questioned the students and they gave her the answers. Then the students asked questions and the teacher explained them. After the completion of the second paragraph, exercises were explained and given by the teacher. At the end of the class, the teacher called the student who came late and talked to him. She asked about the health of his mother and consoled him.

Case II:

Ragamalar is the Year 3 class teacher. She entered the class with a tense expression. She asked the students to take out their exercise books and do the exercises of a certain lesson. One student told the teacher that the lesson was not completed in the previous class. Then she shouted at them and said that she had asked them to read it at home. Afterwards she went out of the class and stood at the entrance for a while. Then she corrected the exercise books.

At this juncture, one of the students in the backbench was seen dozing. She called him, scolded him and caned him. Then by the end of the class she told the students to copy the answers from Ravi's exercise book (A clever student).

Activity

The trainees should go through each of the cases and learn about classroom teaching by answering the following questions.

⊙ Is this teaching method appropriate?

⊙ What are the teaching aids used here?

⊙ Who participated more in the process?

⊙ What is your opinion about the role of a teacher?

⊙ How is the teacher - student relationship?

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art, story telling, handicraft, and acting are natural activities of children. That is why when these are incorporated into education, children would enthusiastically accept learning activities. Several things could be taught as arts. When teaching is carried out through fine arts, the individual talents of the students develop and learning also takes place more easily.

4.6. Student activities

Today's children are the leaders of tomorrow. So children's physical, psychological, social and spiritual development should be provided in a way that is appropriate for their developmental stage. In other words, the future of children depends on proper development during their early life. Therefore, teachers should closely observe children's mental health, growth and development (see chapters 1 and 2) and plan their learning and teaching activities accordingly.

Generally, children have a natural tendency to widen their experiences. According to the developmental stage of the child, their basic needs such as security, support, praise, new experiences and care should be satisfactorily provided. Children, who have not had their needs fulfilled properly at the early stages, will face difficulties in learning and other activities.

4.7. Conclusion

The school environment not only influences the learning activities of children but also their psychological and physical development. When

Qualities of students

Act according to the
instructions given by
their teacher and
volunteer on their own

Ask questions from the
teachers and answers
to teacher's questions

Use learning aids and
instruments

Would obtain help from
teachers and fellow
students whenever
encountering difficulties
in their learning process

Would examine or
scrutinise their own actions

Like being observed by the
teacher

Would engage in learning
with happiness and
enthusiasm

Would learn from social
resources

Would feel satisfied

A healthy student

An unhealthy student

Listen only to the
instructions

Would answer only
to the questions
posed by the teacher

May not know how
to use learning aids
or instruments

Would not seek help

Would not show
interest in their tasks

Would study only for
the exam

Learn without
happiness

Would not utilise
social resources

Would have qualities
such as envy

Would show reluc-
tance to come to
school

**Rajan is a healthy child.
What is health?
How does a healthy
child look like?**

Oblivious of

the hunter tracking them

the cuckoos in the grove

sing happily

and

journey into mind's space

fearlessly

5
Family

- What is a family?
- What are the characteristics of a healthy family?
- What are the contributions of parents and teachers to development in children?
- How are family activities affected?

5.1. Introduction

The family system is the important foundation for the healthy and happy development of a child. A child which lives in a healthy family grows with physical and mental health. This chapter discusses the family, its characteristics and types. Ideas about what should be the contribution of the family in the different stages of development of a child are also given in this chapter.

This chapter discusses the most important factors that affect the family system during this period. Factors like war, displacement, poverty, alcoholism, unresolved grief, and modernization are discussed. Among these, some problems act in a vicious circle. We are responsible for finding the ways to break this vicious circle.

Today, in our area, the nuclear family system is very common. This system is facing many difficulties. The family is affected when the woman from the family goes to work and when one of the parents goes abroad. Also

when the head of the family, father or mother, is dead because of the war or by other means or divorced, the natural functioning of the family is affected. In these situations, the most affected among the family members are the children. Maintaining the harmony of the family, providing role models for the children and rehabilitation are very important for the healthy development of affected children.

The joint family system is becoming rare in the Tamil area. When this family system was prevailing, family members were supportive of each other. The conflicts in relationships were solved by elders. Models, non-formal traditional counselling, love, support and shelter were there in the extended families. Today in our areas because of war and the changes in society geared towards globalisation, it is impossible to stop the disintegration of extended families.

We were living in a house enclosed on four sides. Grandfather used to tell his old experiences. We sat around him and listened. When the war was severe, uncle, aunty and others left for foreign countries because of fear. We were unable to bear the shelling, and were displaced as refugees. Grandfather passed away after a few days of our displacement. There is no one to tell stories now. In our home, we can hang a swing on the mango tree and play. But there is no space to play here. The hut also is very small. We are alone in this hut.

-A student living in a camp

5.2. Family

Husband, wife, children and their blood relations and others who are living together with them in a house can be called a family. This system is a natural unit that can withstand the changes of time and external pressures.

5.2.1.   The characteristics of a healthy family

We see families that are healthy. We see some families suffering from conflicts and problems. The reasons for these differences in the families lie in the characteristics of those families.

In a healthy family, love and support will prevail among the members. This love and support are the necessary basic ingredients for the smooth functioning of the family.

The praise of other members is an important factor for the functioning of the family. Understanding the feeling of the members of the family, respecting their feelings and being with them are also important for the functioning of the family.

If love is abundant in the home and righteousness prevails, the home is perfect and its end is all fulfilled.
-Thirukural

Suppose a boy in a family is afraid of darkness saying that "Ghost and spirits" are around. In this situation, the rest of the family members should help the boy to overcome the fear. A good family will endeavour to talk to the boy, understand his feelings and console him in a thoughtful way.

When external pressures and stresses occur, the family stands together and faces them. When one is affected others will help him to bear it. The other members of the family will fill the gaps in the family system and fulfil their duties.

The family which has all the above characteristics and functions healthily is a balanced family. In healthy families these will be the general aims. The family will function in general towards realizing these aims.

Family Balance

When the head of the family dies, all will experience grief. After a particular period, this condition must disappear. When another one takes the responsibility of the head and if the family could function again like earlier times, it can be considered that the family balance is restored in that family.

Family Head

For a ship, the captain is important. Likewise a head is important for a family. A good family head should be a model to others, a decision maker who is impartial and supportive.

The family balance circle

Control

Support

Clear leadership

Flexibility

Well organized

Alternate leadership

Individual desires

Working together

Respecting others' feelings

Maintaining individuality;

Respecting opinion

Supportive communicaion

Self-determined

Cooperative activity

Encouraging

Order
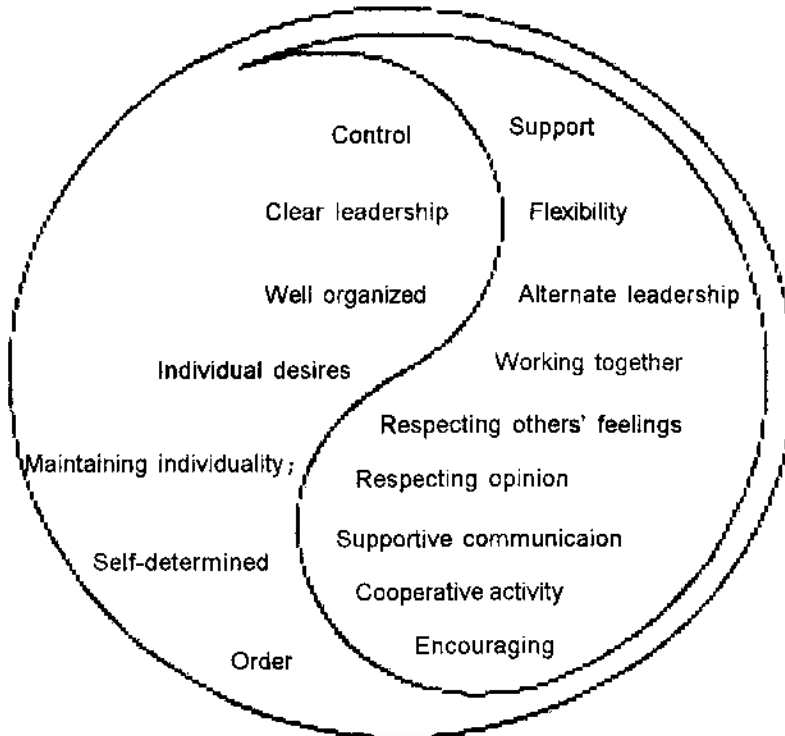
Controls are needed for this arrangement. The families which aim at reaching higher levels in education will have to have some controls, discipline, devotion and sacrifices. Studying early in the mornings and playing in the evenings could be followed as a practice. Such families, in addition to devotion and discipline, will have flexibility too. If the child who is engaged in studies falls ill, the members of the family attend to its needs till the child recovers from the illness. By these activities, they accept the controls and laws on their own in the interests of the family. This is the dynamics of a healthy family.

Healthy families are organized to accept changes in society. Tradition, religion, language and race are part of the family structure. But healthy families will not accept all the changes. They accept only appropriate changes into their families.

There are limits for every member of the family. Particular limits are needed for them to implement their activities and thoughts. For example, what are the activities that the father, mother or children have to engage in? How does each one talk with others? These limits are categorized as follows:

☐ People who have vague limits will have frequent interventions from others. They lose their personality. Because of this their self-activity and thinking will become vague. Any one can enter the limits and leave.

☐ People who have rigid limits will not be accommodative or flexible. They act as though their opinion is correct. These people will not appreciate the opinions of others.

☐ Those who have a clear limits, in addition to being very clear in their position and appreciate the opinions of others. If there is need they adopt flexibility too.
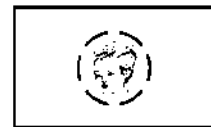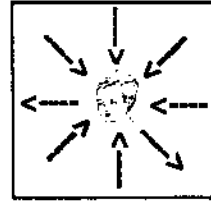
If there is a clear limit as mentioned above among the members of the family, then by maintaining healthy relationships, a well-functioning family could be created.

If the family relationships interrelated, as follows, it will be a better family.
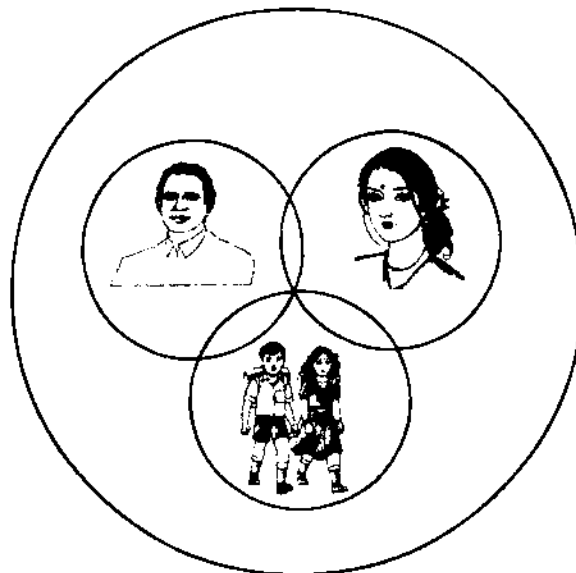
Healthy family

The limit of the relationship between husband and wife are sepa-

rately shown and the limit of relationships between parents and children appears separately. But there is also a limit for the relationships between all three.

In contrast to this, when limits are not fixed or appears rigid or vague, then when the family faces stresses, it will not be able to respond well.

Unhealthy family

Here it will be noticed that the family relationship is separated. This is harmful.

Activity 1

What is the family?

Put this question to the trainees. Group the trainees and analyse the question at the group level. Let each group present its results to the class.

Activity 2

What are the characteristics of a healthy family?

Give this question to the trainees. Then make them draw a picture of a butterfly.

Make every trainee write each characteristic in different colours.

Result: Make them observe that similar or dissimilar characteristics appear beautifully in different colours within a limit.

5.3 Types of family

⊛ *What are the types of family you know?*

The types of families could be seen differently. Due to the rapid changes in society many new family formations have evolved all over the world. Family types in any region could be considered under the following headings.

5.3.1. The nuclear family

The family in which the husband, wife and children live together in a house could be called the nuclear family.

Nuclear families are generally affected by economic and war stresses. Separation and loss could affect these families. Finding solutions to these problems is necessary for the psychical and psychological well-being of the children.
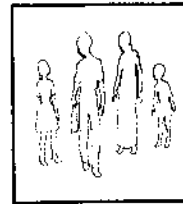
5.3.2. Extended families

Husband, wife, children and their blood relations living together under one roof is known as an extended family formation. It can be noticed that this formation of families has decreased in modern times.
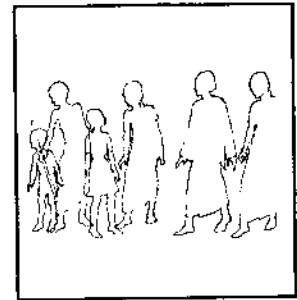
5.3.3. The family with a single parent

The family in which the husband or wife dies or are separated whie one lives with the children in a house is known as a family with a single parent.

The mother's is or the father's place is empty in this family. The single parent in this family has to fulfil the empty role for the children. Sometimes a close relative, for example an uncle or an aunty, may act as a foster parent. Sometimes in place of the dead or separated mother another woman comes as a stepmother and inflicts cruelty on the children. This situation should not be allowed if the children are to develop healthily. If a stepfather enters a family, he may not perform his role well and may even abuse the children. It is better for children if these types of situations do not arise.

5.3.4 . Children homes

Children who have lost their parents, or have been abandoned by their parents are reared in institutional organizations called children homes. Officers are appointed to look after the children in these homes. They serve as mother and father.

For the children who have no family set up, such homes become substitutes. These homes are supposed to fulfil the important needs of the children. Unfortunately, at times, undesirable developments take place in these homes. That is love, care and support for the children disappear; children are subjected to abuse and exposed to harmful behaviour.

Today there are numerous children homes. This situation is not suitable for the mental health of children. Steps must be taken to eradicate the shortcomings that are prevalent in these homes.

As far as possible, it is better not to send children to children homes. It would be better if families which can fulfil the basic needs of the children adopt these children. Children can then enjoy the facilities of a nuclear family.

The supervisors of children homes should be given necessary training to eradicate the short comings of the children homes.

It may be necessary to admit a small number of children to the children homes. There must be plenty of play materials and educational aids. Food and health facilities must be provided fully to minimize the short comings of the children homes to a certain extent. In addition these institutions must be supervised.

Activity

⊙   Get the trainees draw their families separately in drawing papers. Some can draw the family members using symbols.

  e.g.: they can show the family by drawing
       a bird nest with the birds in it.

⊙   Through the above activity children under stress could be identified.

5.4. Family and teachers' contributions in the development stages of a child.

Family expecting a delivery

Love and support from the husband

Harmony among family members

Participation in common activities

Avoiding stresses

Enough rest

Good medical facilities

Nutrition

Leisure

Prayer

Family raising a baby (0-2 years)

Breast feeding
Nutrition
Giving hope
Allowing oral pleasure
Love and support
Developing language knowledge

Medical facilities

Family raising a pre-school child (2-5 years)

Encouraging behaviours such as touch and curiosity

Training to answer nature calls

Avoiding punishments

Families with adolescents (12-19 years)

Delegation of family responsibilities gradually

Sharing of feelings

Discussing problems

Developing leadership qualities

Giving opportunities to show abilities

Encouraging independence

Family, raising a child (5-12 years)

Listening to opinions
Sending to school
Socialization
Peer encouragement
Nutrition, sleep
Encouraging creative activities
Engaging in activities like play, story telling

Developing self confidence

Child raising circle

Teacher who is a model to his students and an advisor to the parents is the best teacher

The development periods of a baby can be divided into several stages basing on their age (see tabulation in chapter 2). We can see in this portion, how parents and teachers could give physical and psychological support to children at every stage. From prenatal period to nearly six years, the support of the family is very important. After six years, when the child goes to school the teacher's participation becomes important. Thus it can be seen that in the healthy development of a child, family and teacher participation is very important.

It is the duty of the parents to encourage creativity in children and develop good habits. At the different stages of development, things to do and things not to do are shown in the picture.

In the development of preschool and school-going children, teacher participation becomes increasingly important. As mentioned in the school song, the children are coming from a home environment, and the teacher's duty is to support the children by showing affection and make them accept the new school environment.

At school, teachers are the models for children. Each activity of the teacher will have an impact on the behaviour of children. The child considers that the teacher's sayings to be the correct versions in the world. Therefore teachers should perform their duties carefully, with responsibility.

Family will engage itself to fulfil the health needs of the child

- Cleanliness
- Immunization
- Good health habits
- Helping to get medical care when they are sick
- Protecting from accidents
- Good food and clean water

Showing love to the children is not sufficient. The baby should feel the love shown. Presenting of gold chains or videoing the birthday of the baby will not make the baby feel the love. But when the baby cries for sleep, keeping it on the lap and singing a lullaby is the appropriate activity to make the baby feel the love.

"Maths   60
Tamil   70
English   55

....

...
Clever boy
Next time
You should
score more
marks"

"Maths   72
Tamil   78
English   64

....

....
Why couldn't
you score 100
for each
subject?"

| √ | | X |

Activity

Divide the trainees into 5 groups and guide them to analyse a child of the following types:

⊙   Healthy child

⊙   Handicapped child (retarded child)

⊙   Child who does not mix with peers and is reserved

⊙   Naughty child

⊙   Child who refuses to do an activity alone

What is the participation of the family regarding the children. How should it be hereafter. What can be done for the development of the child. Each group should discuss this and submit a report.

5.5. Factors affecting the activities of the family

The activities of a healthy family will take place regularly. If problems or stresses arise they are properly handled. Each member of the family is conscious of his duty, role, responsibility and is obliged to carry them out. For example, the father goes out to earn, the mother engages herself in cooking and the daughter cleans the house and son purchases goods.

In this family daily life would be very smooth. The family activities are not affected. The balance of the family is not disturbed. If sometimes the father falls ill and is unable to go for work, there may be stresses

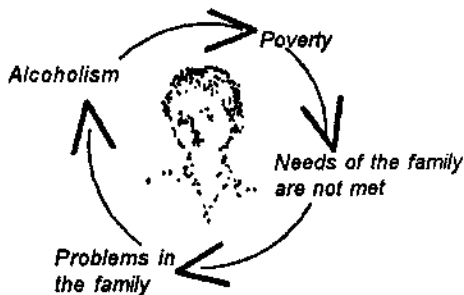in the activities of the family, and its balance could be affected.

Generally the factors affecting the activities of the family may be there within the family, and/or outside the family. Problems and complications in relationships within the family, and problems in members of the family in working together affect the activities of the family. These are the situations where the problems within the family affect the activity of the family

External factors such as war, displacement, alcoholism, poverty and diseases will affect the activities of the family. This is a situation where external problems affects the family.

For the last two decades our region has been very badly affected due to war. Among these adverse effects, losses are the most important. These include loss of life; physical, social and economic losses and loss of natural resources. All the foregoing losses will affect family activities.

Some problems function as a vicious cycle that affects the family.

Alcoholism — Poverty
Needs of the family are not met
Problems in the family

Vicious cycle

Alcoholism — Poverty
Needs of the family are not met
Problems in the family
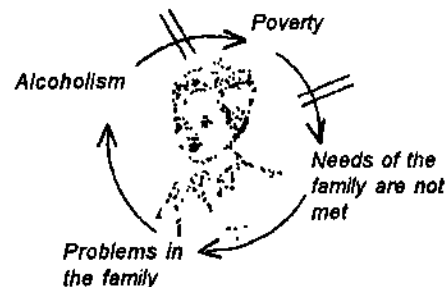
Breaking the vicious cycle

The ways of breaking the vicious cycle

Helping to overcome Alcoholism

Guiding them to adopt measures to eradicate poverty

Guidance for rehabilitation, building up unity

5.6. Problematic family

Children who come from a background of problematic families may become mentally affected. Unhealthy actions of some pathological families affect the student very badly and manifest abnormal reactions through him or her. For example, due to the activities of an alcoholic father or quarrel some parents, the student may be disturbed.

5.6.1. Teacher's role in the well-being of the student's family

Children from affected families also come to school. These children may be mentally affected. The teacher should find out the problems the child faces and take necessary steps to resolve them.

A united and well functioning family could promote and maintain the mental well being of children; and if children are mentally affected, they are able to help.

The family is the most suitable and natural resource for the mental health of the student. Therefore a teacher counsellor must always consider the family and link it to his activities.

At the beginning it is important to provide psychological support to the affected child. Parents could be contacted, depending on the severeness of the situation. In addition, steps could be taken to solve the problems through the Parent Teachers Association or the Old Boys' Association of the school. The teacher participation is necessary in these situations.

Teachers can ....

☐ Encourage family unity

☐ Teach the good aspects of family life

☐ Build up the relationships among family members

☐ Guide children to give respect to parents

☐ Encourage joint activities within the family

□ Help to fulfil the basic needs of the family (e.g.: employment for the father, income generating projects, guidance for economic assistance using the teacher's influence)

Help (as far as possible) to solve physical, psychological and social problems among members of the family.

□ When helping the affected student, explain your approach to the parents and include them as partners. When behaviour therapy is given, they also can do the same (positive and negative reinforcement) at their homes (see chapter 9)

□ Family counselling

□ Mobilize the extended family for help

Mani is 11 a year old active boy. He is clever in his studies. Mani's father is working as a clerk. The mother is a housewife. Father takes Mani for trips and temple festivals. Father understood all his needs and fulfilled them.

On a Sunday, as it was a holiday, father was engaged in cleaning the adjoining land. At the time, he stepped on a landmine and died due to haemorrhage as medical treatment failed. Mani was unable to bear the loss. He cried. Grandfather, uncle and others gave care, support and consoled Mani. Mother and grandfather kept Mani with them. Up to the anthiyeshdi ceremony, the relatives and neighbours visited and shared grief and supplied meals. Grandfather consoled him every day. When Mani was talking about the loss of his father, grandfather listened to him very patiently. He told Mani stories to cheer him up.

On the anthiyeshdi ceremony day many rituals were performed. Relatives and neighbours participated in the lunch. Mani began to understand that death is an unavoidable event in the life cycle.

Uncle took Mani to temple and cultural festivals. Uncle and grandfather took the role of his father and this compensated the loss of his father to a certain extent.

The role of teacher to help the affected student at the family level

⊙ Developing student's family relationship.

⊙ Making the student aware of the importance of the father, mother and relations

⊙ Having regular meetings with the family

⊙ Creating an awareness about the role a good family plays

⊙ Studying the background of the affected student and providing him suitable assistance

⊙ Explaining the needs of the children which parents can fulfil

⊙ Making arrangements to get necessary assistance for the students

⊙ Providing family counselling

Activity

Divide the trainees into two groups

Group 1: Perform a role-play to show problems in an unhealthy family

Group 2: Perform a role-play to show how a healthy family will face the above problems

5.7. Conclusion

In this chapter we have seen that the family consists of husband, wife, children and relations. The most important characteristics of a family are leadership, love, support, flexibility, limits and structure. Teachers can help children coming from affected families in many ways.

Let's work for the betterment of the family

The globe breaks open, the skies reverberate
Devils start their Dance of Death
The waters boil away, the oceans dry up
Justice flies apart
And Death embraces the babes
Even as they lie sucking
At their mothers' breasts
Evil laughs at the bloody carnage
In the battlefield.

- Murugaiyan

6

Calamities of war

- How does war become a stress?
- What are the consequences of war?
- What are its psychological impacts?
- What are the changes in children living in a war milieu?
- What are the approaches to mitigate and overcome war stresses?

6.1. Introduction

Children may experience myriads of psychosocial problems, which they express differently in keeping with their growth, development, adaptation and experiences. We shall look deeper into this in the next chapter. Our focus in this chapter will be on war and its consequences.

Twenty years of protracted war in our region has had its effects on every individual in some form or other. Apart from the physical destruction, the impact on the minds are many. Children are affected as much as adults. We shall look into this in detail.

War is a form of disaster where stresses may get exacerbated or new stresses may appear. Unlike in natural disasters, wars are planned and executed by men. Hence an element of anger towards those responsible is

The King who looks not to his defenses while there is time, will be taken unawares in the event of a war and will perish quickly.
-Tirukural

mixed with physical and emotional pain. Unfortunately modern warfare is directed against civil society. Unlike flood or storms, war continues causing series of losses and make return to normalcy difficult.

It is best if we know more about stresses of war, both common and specific to understand our children's behaviour, identify those needing help and respond appropriately.

6.2.   War stresses

Our physical and emotional response to a new environment or problem is experienced as stress, which is a common experience. Unlike our normal life experiences, when the episode is sudden, unexpected and beyond our control and terrifying as during natural disasters like cyclones, earth quakes, floods and volcanic eruptions or war, the effects can be severe in most of us.

Those in the North and East of Sri Lanka have been living with such prolonged disasters. Those who did not want to live under such conditions or were unable to cope, left. Those who remained were exposed to a few or multiple stresses. Though many were able to cope, unfortunately some were unable to do so.

The shady groves shower me with fire. Others' wilful wiles smart my heart.
-Sopa

In a war milieu, terrifying experiences like sudden shock, dreadful noises, threat to life and fear of death cause high levels of stress. Loss of property, death and injury to domestic animals and pets, seeing dismembered mutilated bodies, raw flesh and blood; The smell of coagulating blood, rotting flesh and of explosives get deeply entrenched in our minds to manifest, later in life, as trauma with serious consequences.

6.2.1.   Children and war stresses

Generally, children are less prone to be affected (unlike adults) by the immediate effects of stressful situations. By nature they perceive events playfully, exploring with interest and curiosity with an unblemished, innocent mind. Not being able to fully comprehend the full meaning and consequences of catastrophic events such as the permanency of death, they are not as badly affected as adults. The impact of stresses are mitigated when parents are with the children setting good examples, and are supportive and good role models.

However, if parents are affected (especially the mother) or are separated, the consequences can be severe. Hence, because of the child's lack of knowledge and inability to act independently, parents, teachers and trustworthy persons should be supportive and set examples. Children learn directly or vicariously from responses to events by their parents, teachers and trustworthy persons through whom they give meaning to, express and manage their feelings. Hence the expression and management of stress is easily passed on from parent or adult to child.

Activity

Request the trainees to recollect a child who has been affected by war. Direct them to write down on paper the changes in emotion and behaviour. Then collect all the papers, exhibit and delete those inappropriate and bring about a consensus of the effects of war on students.

Additionally, prolonged exposure to changes, such as separation from one's natural environment (home, belongings, play material, friends, relations, pets, school) and the life style of a refugee can have multiple adverse effects on the child: especially by way of abnormal changes in their expression of emotions and behaviour and setbacks in their psychosocial development. Hence, more than the immediate impact, the manifestations are more in the long term.

- Malnutrition, poverty (lack of employment, economic difficulties, loss and destruction of house, property, farm etc.)

- State of ill health (breakdown of health services, unclean environment, increase in communicable diseases, decrease in resistance to disease)

- Displacement (from home, familiar environment, change of school)

- Losses (death of parents, missing persons, loss of home, property, play material, animals etc.)

- Witnessing violence, specially seeing one's family members or friends being victims (generally very brutal deaths)

    example: being shot, target to bombing; being hacked with

knives and axes; seeing murder being committed; flow of blood, pain, agony in death; seeing mutilated dismembered rotting bodies; seeing the destruction of one's home and public institutions.

☐ Experiencing violence (aerial bombing, artillery shelling, search and destroy, cordon and search operations by the military, torture, threat to life and use of force.)

☐ Perpetuating violence (armed conflict, murder)

☐ Disruption to the educational structure (this is of special importance to our region and shall be dealt with later.)

6.2.2. Displacement

Where war stresses are concerned, the impact may be direct or indirect. Death, injury, mutilation, seeing violence are examples of direct experience of stress while poverty, economic embargo, displacement, and refugee life are indirect stresses. Of these, displacement from the arena of battles, which we shall explore in detail, was commonly experienced by all.

Displacement is common to us all and has become part of our life. Where students are concerned they may have had to change schools often. At time their schools may have been destroyed, occupied by the forces or by refugees. Hence children have to bear inconveniences and trying situations to pursue their education. We can see in detail the effects of this in chapter 4. Regularity in attendance is disrupted by transport problems and fear in the parents. Poverty caused by displacement deprives children of exercise books and other school accessories. Apart from these, relationship problems may arise between displaced children and children from the school. In addition a common problem faced by all students is their inability to systematically prepare for state examinations. Uncertainty about education, the future, and employment opportunities may arise.

A healthy village life is damaged by displacement

Students in a war environment daily see or experience incidents related to violence: harassment at checkpoints, detention, abductions, recruitment for armed conflict, forced participation in violence and being subjected to armed training. They also see co students drop out due to inability to pursue studies, compatriots moving out of the region or going abroad. These cause a decline in the interest and trust in education.

> **Activity**
>
> The trainees may be asked to write a short essay on how life was before the displacement.

Having been displaced after a disaster, living in an unfamiliar environment may be mentally distressing. Living with friends and relatives, living in welfare centres, or two or more families living together in most instances is feasible. Those who go early may have a house for themselves.

As for children, at the beginning, displacement may not be clearly perceived. It might be an exciting experience, kindled by curiosity. In the displaced environment they begin to play, explore and find new friends. But as time goes by they will miss the structured familiar environment, play material, life style and feel distress and at times they may begin to create problems by demanding these from their elders. They may exhibit irritability, anger and disobedience.

Children attending school in a displaced environment may show decreasing interest in education, withdrawal, be uncompromising and disruptive in the class and unable to concentrate. In addition, displaced children and children from the school may get into conflict and have quarrels and brawls and segregate into groups. Unfortunately, at times, it is observed that teachers and education officers, unable to comprehend the problems of the displaced students tend to differentiate, overlook and demean them. In reality, these children are facing many problems, trying to cope in a new, unfamiliar environment. Most often they prefer to attend their familiar, earlier school. Hence they need more sympathy, concern, concessions and flexibility.

> **Activity**
>
> Divide the trainees into two groups. One group as the old students in a class and the other group as displaced students. Role play their dialogue and their conduct.
>
> These groups may change roles and repeat. Follow-up with a discussion on displaced children.

As for the grown-ups, in displacement, they too face difficult situations. When parents face difficulties the children too are affected.

Many obstacles are faced in getting accustomed to a new environment. The most important are the basic needs for living. As the saying goes "even if it is a rat burrow, it should be a separate burrow"; they need a separate place to live. Families may suffer due to want of privacy in places of displacement and welfare centres. They may not have op-

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Activity

The trainees may break into small groups, discuss and tabulate the problems of security caused by displacement. Bring about a consensus of opinion.

---

portunities to live their private lives, for intimate conversations or to resolve minor conflicts. As a result families encounter difficulties like members getting irritable, losing patience and living superficially.

Next they need help in the form of relief. However the relief the displaced get, is more often delivered without much concern, with an indifferent attitude for the purpose of accomplishment of the project alone. Often relief does not reach the target persons. The already unemployed daily wage earner loses confidence, gets disgruntled and becomes frustrated. Some, having enough time and nothing to do while away their time drinking. Others lose their abilities, becoming lethargic and lazy and dependent on relief.

Yearning for the old life is a common phenomena among the displaced. Thoughts of 'the feet that walked the sea', 'the dusty soil', the farm, 'home and its compound', trees and animals and above all the independent life at home and 'when will it be so' yearning will often torment them. Some, during a lull in war, will want to visit their homes and in doing so face dangerous situations like landmines. Some may dream of going home and living the old life. Children may incorporate into their play dreams of the old life and home. At times children, unable to adapt to the new environment, may show signs of withdrawal.

The people of the North and East have experienced continuous displacement over the past twenty years, some many times over. Almost all have been displaced once or more. Even if they have returned

Ravi is our son and is in Year 9. He is very good in his studies and interested too. We got displaced. After coming here he does not study and is less inclined to play. Just sits on the chair or bed and sleeps. He eats for formality's sake. When I request him to study, he angrily says 'Just keep quiet'. How can I make him study?

to their old abode; they live, unlike earlier, without a sense of permanency, belonging, protection and attachment to the home. This is a result of bitter experiences. However, at times, this affected mental state spreads throughout the society to become a collective disorder.

6.3. Expression of war stresses in children

Expression of war stresses in children, unlike in adults, differ in relation to their age and development.

During the early stages of war in our region, children were able to easily cope with stresses and expressions were of a low profile. Even though they greatly feared war manoeuvres, they expressed direct and appropriate responses. On occations where parents were immobilized by stress due to death or someone missing, children were able to take the role of the parents. Apart from the direct effects of war, the resultant separation from parents, being unsupported emotionally, displacement, transference by parents and elders of emotions of anxiety, sadness, grief and guilt have a psychological impact.
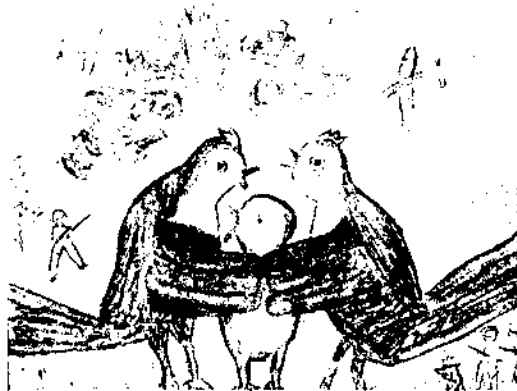
When a child is at a stage where he/she cannot fully comprehend and be aware of his/her environment, the parents or those close to him/her give meaning through verbal and nonverbal messages like body language and related expressions. Thus a child who is provided a healthy, trusted, loving and secure environment learns to successfully encounter stress.

As in other situations, stresses caused by war brings about psychological problems like trauma that affects the child's feelings, behaviour

Tharani is a 6 year old girl child and is in Grade one. She does not wish to go to school. She keeps aloof from other children while at school. She appears to be agitated, shy and afraid. She is less inclined to study. Very often she complains of a stomach ache in the morning before going to school. She will not go out alone.

When Tharani's mother was 3 months pregnant with Tharani her husband was arrested by the army. Tharani's mother is sad. Being displaced Tharani and her mother live with the families of paternal and maternal grandparents and an uncle in the same house. Her uncle has two children. Her grandmother often says that Tharani's father will return. Family members often speak about Tharani's father and feel sad.

Once when the army was on the road, Tharani shouted at high pitch 'release my father' . She says that she will hack and beat the army. She pleads with her mother to bring back her father. She says her father will return and take her on the motorcycle to school. She says her father kisses her in her dreams.

While counselling Tharani and her mother, the fact that Tharani's father will not return may be appropriately conveyed. By relating stories like 'Little elephant' she can be helped to face the reality and build self-confidence. It will be beneficial if a maternal uncle takes the place and role of the father. It will also be of help to Tharani if the extended family of Tharani's father is provided family counselling to bring about normalcy.

It is important that Tharani is given sympathy and opportunities to play with other children. In addition they may be advised to allow Tharani to socialize with others and be taken to temples, social events and gathering. Tharani may be allowed to ventilate her emotions through drawing and songs.

and cognitive functioning (see chapter 7). However, the following are specific to war situations:

6.3.1. Post Traumatic Stress Disorder - PTSD

Trauma is a common psychological manifestation of stress following war disasters. A brutal incident (as for example: sudden death of people, being injured, loss of limb, bloody scenes, agony during death, torture, rape etc.) when experienced in terror and helplessness gets

deeply imprinted in the recess of the mind. It becomes an unhealing scar in the mind causing them to repeatedly relive the incidents. Such incidents may appear at night as dreams or when awake as thoughts or flashbacks. At times the incident is felt as real and presently happening. Often related incidences trigger such re-experiences. Such occurrences will be experienced with an intense sense of fear and mental turmoil. Those in this condition will show frozen feelings, be unable to relate with others and will often cut themselves off, have sleep disturbances, be hyper alert, startle easily, experience hypersensitivity and have somatic complaints. If the incident could be mentally accepted and resolved, the scars may be healed and cured.

Adults with PTSD could be identified through talking and exploring. But identifying trauma in children may be somewhat difficult. They may hesitate to talk or mention their mental state. Rather, children may relive brutal experiences through play, drawing or story telling. Dreams may take dreadful forms. Their frozen emotional state, or withdrawal can be observed by parents and teachers.

Children often fantasize their future. "I will grow up to be a doctor..........", "I will become an engineer like my uncle............", "I will be a lorry driver........." are very common expressions. However affected

Ramanan is a student in grade 5. He lived in his village with his father, mother, brother and two sisters. In his eighth year, he saw firsthand his father bathed in blood after being hit by a shell. A year later he again experienced a life-threatening situation. One evening some persons who could not be identified came home and pulled his only brother out of the house, injured him in the presence of the whole family and dragged him away on the road. Ramanan and his mother and sisters feared that this may happen to them and left home to another place. Ramanan later heard that his brother was tortured and killed.

Presently Ramanan is studying in another school. The teacher while observing Ramanan in the class being fearful, hyperactive, aggressive, shocked by sounds, hiding himself and confused, met his mother and obtained the above information. In addition Ramanan's mother informed the teacher that he has nightmares, gets startled easily, screams in sleep, gets agitated and fearful on seeing green coloured clothes, often thinks of his father and brother and is uninterested in his meals.

Activity

⊙ You would have encountered children like Ramanan in your life. Stimulate them to recall similar life situations. 4 or 5 may be asked to narrate their stories.

⊙ Request trainees to give the causes for such behavioural changes and their manifestations. Write them on a flip chart. Encourage them to discuss their findings.

⊙ Direct a discussion with the question - Can a child like Ramanan be handled by teachers? If not, why?

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children may not have such thoughts or fantasies. Feelings of an insecure future, uncertainty of becoming an adult and constricting thoughts of life may prevail. They may give prominence to omens and have an outlook of a future with violence.

6.3.2. Brutalisation

Children growing immersed in an environment of war get used to witnessing losses, deaths, violent scenes, brutal events; and learn about strategies, weapons and arms used in perpetrating such events. This is reflected in the choice of play material depicting weapons of destruction and usage in common parlance of words such as '50 calibre', 'chain block', 'sahadai', 'heli', 'AK', 'shell', 'grenade', 'clip', 'bunker' and sentences like 'it is right to put into his head' (bullets), 'keep into his ear' (pistol), 'they understand only the gun'.

By continuously experiencing war, violence and its consequences, violence becomes accepted and respected by civil society. Children in time, learn to believe that violence is the only means of solving conflicts.

They do not see alternate ways of solving problems. Even if we return to peaceful living such long-term effects will continue over generations.

6.4. Handling war stresses

6.4.1. Talking

It is good to try talking to students about war disasters. During such dialogues it is best to allow the child to express appropriate feelings and emotions. Talking about incidents and understanding their reality will help to gradually bring about relief. (see 9.4.1.7.)

The teacher listening to such incidents with sympathy can bring about relief. As said locally, it is best to "talk, cry, and be relieved"

In talking often about severe, dangerous events and terrifying experiences as during a war, the teacher (while observing psychological symptoms) should help the child express emotions while describing events. This will help the child gradually get over the pain. Should a student come forth to talk about a problem, instead of generalizing by saying 'it happened to everybody, so don't talk about it' the teacher should help him/her by talking with empathy and patience and help the child lay down the burden.

A child who has been affected by a terrifying experience will specifically show symptoms of 'Post Traumatic Stress Disorder'. By taking the child through 'Narrative Exposure Therapy (NET)' (see 9.4.1.8.) we help the child to resolve past experiences. In repeatedly narrating the event and bringing out the feelings and emotions the teacher or parent will help the child recall details of the event. Hence, over time we will be able to help the child to fully accept past events and progressively overcome its effects. This approach is called Narrative Exposure Therapy or NET.

6.4.2. Activities

It is important to bring about recovery in children, as far as possible to pre-disaster levels (food, play, education).

Children may be encouraged to get involved in useful activities in the community, take responsibility in the welfare centre, school, partici-

pate in games, festivals and engage in group studies. Older children may teach the younger children, to be of help to the elderly, take part in gardening and sweeping which will keep the children active and provide a channel for mental stresses.

What hides the sky? What distroys the flower? The soul is shievering The wind blows the flame out

6.4.3.   Expression

In the long term it is healthy to find avenues for the expression of emotions instead of allowing them to be suppressed. Should a student cry in front of us, we should be patient and supportive till the child settles on its own without trying to stop him/her. If possible you may hold the child by the hand or shoulder and give an "I am with you" feeling. At times, bottled up feelings may gush out unexpectedly when triggered by something that is similar to the traumatic event.

Creative expressions like art and drama are helpful. These expressions will help students to some extent and give vent to emotions tormenting them. Even those who see such creations may identify themselves with similar situations and be relieved of related emotions.

6.4.4.   Time

Wounds caused in the mind following a disaster take time to heal. Time has the ability to bring about healing. Right handling of the time interval is important. It is essential to have sufficient rest and sleep. As far as possible, instead of being lethargic it is healthy to pursue studies and get involved in some forms of activity. Some students instead go

into a state of dependency. Spare time could be gainfully spent in play, talking in groups, writing, reading and attending to small work. Displaced children would like to talk with those of their own age for which opportunities may be provided.

6.4.5.   Bringing about relaxation

Provide help to maintain a state of relaxation in mind and body. Many mental and physical manifestations (reactions) following a disaster are a result of tension. These mental and physical manifestations (reactions) are reduced by overcoming tension by calming the mind. It is not intricate or difficult to bring about a relaxed, calm mental state. All you need is a little time spent orderly in the following methods to bring about a state of mental relaxation.

Understanding the problem is the first step in solving it.

Selecting a place to be alone, being relaxed and appreciating nature; listening to good music; repeating some thing over and over again; being aware and attentive to ones inhalation and exhalation of breath; and bringing about orderliness in breathing are some easy and useful techniques. Yoga such as Pranayama, Santhi Asanam, Japa and meditation may be learnt form an experienced Guru. Training children to relax both mind and body will enable the child to overcome stress and strengthen their ability to cope in a disastrous situation.

We wanted kerosene. But they gave lamps.

6.4.6.   Meaning

Increase in levels of stress may trap the child into loosing control and the ability to function. Even in extreme cases, identify small goals in life so that there isn't a complete loss of hope, which on accomplishment will create a "I can do it" sense of self confidence. Some children may get depressed. In an environment of disaster it is important and necessary to help a child search and find meaning in life and survival.

In situations where the stresses are continuous as in a refugee camp, values, norms and certain rules within the family may get disrupted and small squabbles and fights may ensue. Even small thefts may occur. Sexual harassment, abuses and breakdown of moral values may be observed in such an environment. It is best to be aware and

be watchful of such antisocial behaviour. "Being careful" is good and it is essential not to create new problems where the family is weak and vulnerable. As mentioned in chapter five the teacher should understand the family background, be in touch and strengthen ties and help normalize the family.

It is better to teach fishing rather than giving fish

6.4.7. Rehabilitation

Following a disaster varied forms of relief become necessary and many organizations come to help. Such relief is very helpful to people whose life has been shattered. However, some organisations take upon themselves the responsibility of making decisions of the type of help to be extended. In fact, the officers of the organization themselves decide what form of relief is needed. They will also place certain conditions of delivery. In addition the relief may not be need-oriented but be superficial. 'Now there is no fighting, help us go home' requests are not heeded.

At times without considering to psychological realities, they confine themselves to delivering rations and material help. In the long run this causes a condition of dependency and they may even start fighting for relief items. Guidance by teachers to families and the community to approach organisations that will meet identified needs will be helpful.

6.4.8. Groups

Forming groups among those with similar emotional problems (for example, widows, families with missing persons) within which trust, mutual support and fraternity is nurtured, where they could share experiences and have a sense of togetherness is a good approach.

Is it possible to be healthy in a diseased society?

6.4.9. Social approaches

Large-scale disasters affect individuals and the society at large. The Tamil community is experiencing the consequences of a protracted war. Such a society will have traits specific to it; herd behaviour, state of denial, breakdown of social values and norms and subsequent antisocial behaviour, lack of interest in community development are some. A community experiencing such upheavals is called a 'diseased society' or described as having 'collective trauma'. This will have its impact on children and the generations to follow.

When the society as a whole is facing problems, activities focusing on the society may play a role in reducing common stress. Cultural

rituals, festivals, funerals and weddings are social gatherings providing opportunities to meet, share emotions and find meaning in life. Games, meetings, story telling and listening, singsongs, drama and folk plays help at a social level to give vent to emotions and reduce stress.

It is healing to perform some form of socially acceptable therapeutic rituals to deal with unresolved problems that keep smouldering within like for example with 'disappeared' persons. Traditional practices like tying of a charmed thread, therapy by "compassionate gazing" and saying mantras are some such healing rituals. The teachers, not confining themselves to school activities, may assume leadership and support such activities.

6.5. Conclusion

It is important that teachers helping children in difficult circumstances acquire knowledge of the psychosocial consequences of war on children, their impact and therapeutic models of intervention.

Children can be seriously harmed when they lose the ability to cope with and manage stress. The teacher should not hesitate to provide appropriate help or make a referral where necessary. Early detection and intervention is the best.

Reconstruction:

no more

bunkers

and the woeful life

but

what of the harrowing memories?

7

Problems

- What are the causes of stress?
- What are the problems caused by stress in children?
- How can children under stress be identified?
- What are the problems the teacher could handle?

7.1. Introduction

Children in their normal day-to-day life face various psychosocial problems. However, most children handle them favourably, at times with the support of others, particularly their parents. Unfortunately, some children get affected by such psychosocial problems. If we look into the background of these children, they may not have had the support of their parents or the parents themselves would have been the cause of the problem. Some children by nature have a poor coping capacity and may handle problems to their detriment. Some may be affected by repeated, continuous problems. With a little observation the teacher may be able to find the cause and provide constructive help.

Apart from such normal day-to-day problems, children in our region were forced to face war and violence and experience social, economic and cultural upheavals. It is natural that children after experiencing such stressful, bru-

tal and painful situations show physical, psychological, behavioural and educational setbacks. Hence teachers of this region should know ways of identifying children who have been subjected to such varied stresses and provide help to mitigate its effects.

Becoming afraid, getting nightmares, biting fingernails are some manifestations of mental stress and conflicts deep in their minds. When threatened they may become violent or be withdrawn. They will encounter difficulties in learning and make somatic complaints. In time, these manifestations will affect the mental and physical development of the child. The teacher is duty bound to help children develop their abilities and blossom into knowledgeable good citizens by observing their behaviour, understanding and helping them face problems.

7.2. Ways to identify affected children

⊛   *What methods could be used for identification?*

In life, children at some stage or other, in some form or other, will become subjected to stress. Reactions to stress will differ from child to child. Stress is a result of the child's inability to face problems or situations. Children who are subject to stress will reflect its effects in different ways.

In addition to food, clothing and shelter, love, protection and self-esteem are some of the essential needs for the well being of the child (see chapter 1). If these are not met the normative development of the child is affected and may, later in life, cause behavioural disorders.

Close observation is essential in the identification of affected children. It is also important to explore their background with sympathy. It becomes further important when the child shows changes in behaviour, normal functioning or set backs in educational performances. The teacher has many opportunities to compare the child with other children of the same age in the class. Is the behaviour in keeping with his age and development? Or is it abnormal?. Abnormal reactions can be observed while at play, alone or with others, in the choice of words, in their drawings and in their behaviour. Asking the child the meaning behind such expressions will be useful.

For example, an affected child, while at play may display a sad face. They may also tend to withdraw from play. At times children take roles of family members and a child who has lost or is separated from

the father may disturb the play or the child may attempt to play without the role of the father. Events would have triggered thoughts related to his father, which might be disturbing. The child may also not have had a role model of the father.

Example: A child with no mother and father may not have anyone to provide his/ her basic needs. If no one provides the need for love, the child may not know emotionally the quality of the word 'love'. The child may get involved in fights with children in the school. In the future he/she may find it difficult to show love to his family and may be violent in the neighbourhood. If other needs too are not met, the child and the future adult may show occasional violent behaviour towards friends and relatives.

In addition, some children may try to prevail and direct play the way they wish. For example while playing 'cow and hay', some children, at every round may say, "it is I who will play the role of the tiger". Few may not complete the game and join other groups. Apart from choice of words and behaviour, other changes too may be observed. In addition to close observation, the teacher should endeavour to understand such changes. They should learn about the background of the child, gather information about the family while being cautious not to harm/ damage the child in the process. Teachers can build confidence in the child by giving positive encouragement, showing appreciation and praise. Talking with parents, former and present teachers will help to learn about the child's past behaviour and present changes.

New educational reforms require documentation of basic background information of the child from the commencement of schooling and progressively through each grade. This will provide information for initial investigations. Additional information may be obtained as described above.

It is of importance to differentiate between incidents directly experienced, incidents seen, incidents heard from others and about the apprehension that something might happen to them. Ascertain a clear picture of the incidents prior to the change of behaviour. The cause of the change becomes clear if it follows an incident (for example the father going abroad, change of school, poor examination results). You may also investigate the outcome of a recurring behaviour, its repercussions

or gains. For example, if the child is seeking attention through the behaviour it may mean the child needs attention, love and care. If repeated stomachache in the mornings helps prevent the child from going to school, it may be construed that the child has a problem in attending

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Activity

⊙ The teacher may get the students to play a game they like.

⊙ While playing the teacher can observe and identify children under stress by their actions and behaviour (example: being listless, sad).

⊙ The teacher can then follow the above procedures in identifying stress and learn about the circumstances that lead to it.

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the class or school. It is good to continue exploring the causes. Though children exposed to varying stresses show similar manifestation, it is best to know what really happened. Finding the real cause will make it easy to provide appropriate help. As a first step, in understanding manifestations of stresses in children, it is necessary to explore three important aspects.

⊛ *what type of experience has the child faced?*

⊛ *what are the child's feelings about the experiences?*

⊛ *which part of the experiences affects the child most?*

Finally, by exploring the background, family environment, past incidents and experiences, the teacher can understand the present condition of the child.

7.3. Causes of stress

⊛ *What do you think are the cause of stress?*

In the present environment children face various types of problems. If their basic needs are not met, their normal growth and development will be affected. We shall see what factors affect their health and well being.

7.3.1. Psychosocial factors

- family problems
- separation
- loss
- poverty
- malnutrition
- disease
- social problems
       (caste, religion)
- child abuse
- violence

- displacement
- disruptive educational
  environment
- unsuitable home environment
- natural disasters
- environmental and health
  problems
- alcoholism
- war

Thanu comes hesitatingly.

Teacher: *"Thanu! You did not say 'good morning' today."*

Thanu : *"Good.... morning...."* (Sits in the back seat)

Teacher: (comes looking at Thanu, hugs her and takes her into another room) *"You look sad, did you have your breakfast?"*

Thanu : *Hesitates and says "no teacher".*

Teacher: *"Dear! Please eat this"* (she gives her the food she has)

Thanu : *"I have eaten teacher"* (Tears roll down her cheeks)

Teacher: *"What dear"* (sits beside Thanu hugging her)

Thanu : *"I am scared teacher. My father would come drunk and beat mother and break the pots and pans."*

Teacher: *"Does he beat you?"*

Thanu : *"Last night he came drunk, tied me onto a tree and beat me."* (she shows the wounds)

Teacher: (Takes her home remedy and applies on the wounds) *"Is it hurting?"*

Thanu : *"No"* (says with a slight smile).

Teacher: *"I will visit your home this evening and talk to your mother"*

Thanu : *"Yes teacher, father will not be at home, please come."*

Teacher: *"yes Thanu, please go and study."*

Thanu : *"Thank you teacher."*

Activity

⊙ Based on the above dialogue, the trainees may be directed to assess the teacher's approach in identifying the affected child.

⊙ Bring about a discussion based on the highlights of the most appropriate approach.

⊙ Stress the need for love, care and sympathy apart from observation in identifying affected children.

7.3.1.1. Factors within the family

A good family is a University

The personality of a child is influenced and changes in relation to the emotional environment within the family (see chapter 5). Generally children in families affected psychosocially are deprived of basic needs and become subjected to various problems. In addition faulty role models, poor child care and wrong values will lead the child astray.

Children may get affected growing in single parent families without the father or mother, in large families with many children and with alcoholic parents. Children in single parent families might have difficulties in having their basic needs fulfilled. In addition, children growing up in families with no father or mother will be deprived of role models and will be unprepared for such roles later. Behavioural and relationship problems caused by alcoholism directly affect children. Alcoholism will further aggravate the already strained family economy. Moreover, children will experience a sense of fear in the unpredictable nature and sudden changes in behaviour of such parents which will eventually threaten the child's security.

Parents who pay too much attention to trivial matters disrupt normative development. These children may loose their ability to function independently using their own emotions and not learn rudiments of socialization. They will not be able to think on their own. They will less comprehend themselves and their little world. They become very dependent on parents. Some parents expect the child to follow old traditions inappropriate to a modern society. This may lead to relationship problems. The child tends to withdraw and in time may develop physical and psychological disorders.

It is very damaging when parents use children to take revenge over each other, start nagging and compel children to take sides. Children who get trapped in such tussles, on reaching adulthood will have difficulties in fostering good relationships.

Children growing in circumstances mentioned above will show disorderly behaviour and become a problem to themselves and others.

7.3.1.2.   Child Abuse

Child abuse is a common problem in the Tamil society. Acts of child labour, sexual exploitation, causing psychical and mental pain may be called child abuse.

Parents and caregivers depriving children of sufficient food, clothing, shelter, protection and medical attention and those who allow friends and others to abuse children may be considered committing acts of child abuse.

Breakdown of social values and structures in an uncertain, stressful environment has increased opportunities for sexual exploitation. However, such instances are hidden due to fear, shame and other reasons.

Child abuse include the following:

- failing to meet basic needs
- causing physical injuries
- engaging children in offensive acts
- unnecessary detention
- make children loose their confidence
- various forms of sexual exploitation
- subjecting children to corporal punishment
- not respecting children's opinion
- engaging children in war related activities
- child employment/ repressive measures by employer
- abandoning children.

We see children working along with their parents (to some extent) at home and in their fields for their own needs. But it is an offence to employ children to work for others. Children employed in places like homes, shops, hotels and factories are deprived of their basic needs and are subjected to physical and mental pain. However, in our country bringing to justice such offences is a difficult task.

Vanaja is a 12 year old girl child. She attends school. Her father is ill because of drinking. Mother finds employment in many homes. Mathan is a government employee who lives with his wife and two children close to Vanaja's house. Vanaja's mother obtained a loan from Mathan to meet her husband's medical expenses. She is now unable to settle the loan. Mathan pressurizes Vanaja's mother to somehow settle the loan. As a result Vanaja's parents force Vanaja to stop schooling and work at Mathan's house against her wishes. There Vanaja has to meet the needs of two children of her own age, in addition to attending to household work. When Vanaja gets tired she is insulted and physically punished. At the beginning, Mathan showed sympathy and love by physically touching her. By and by, he sexually abused her by feeling her body.

7.3.1.3. Poverty

Children living in poverty will not have their basic needs sufficiently met and their homes may:

- have limited living space with less opportunities for privacy and independence

- be unable to procure sufficient food and clothing

- lack means for normal activities, fulfilling expectations and a culturally oriented life style leading to a state of frustration and uncertainty in the future.

7.3.1.4. War

Our civil society has been greatly affected by the war where children live as refugees experiencing separation, loss of parents and relatives, and an uncertain environment (see chapter 6).

Having got displaced in a war milieu, the change in life style will always be disturbing, affecting the whole family, the children in particular.

Difficulties faced by children due to war

☐   They get isolated in a new environment devoid of social and family ties.

☐   They are forcibly separated from a familiar environment.

☐   As refugees they are forced to learn a new language and culture.

☐   They see murder, torture or threat to some close or known persons.

☐   They are directly affected by violence.

7.4. Effects of stress on the child and its manifestations

⊛   *What are its effects on the child?*

⊛   *What are the symptomatic expressions of the effect?*

7.4.1. Effects

Generally, we saw childrens are affected by many factors. These factors do not have similar effects on all children. Poverty is an example. Though the families of Geetha and Mohana receive a monthly income of one thousand rupees, Geetha's family is able to maintain family equilibrium by collective, careful planning. Hence poverty does not appear to be a problem for Geetha.

Some family factors which affect children

Father always drinks and assaults

When will father come?

Three months have passed after my mother's death

Too many people are in our house
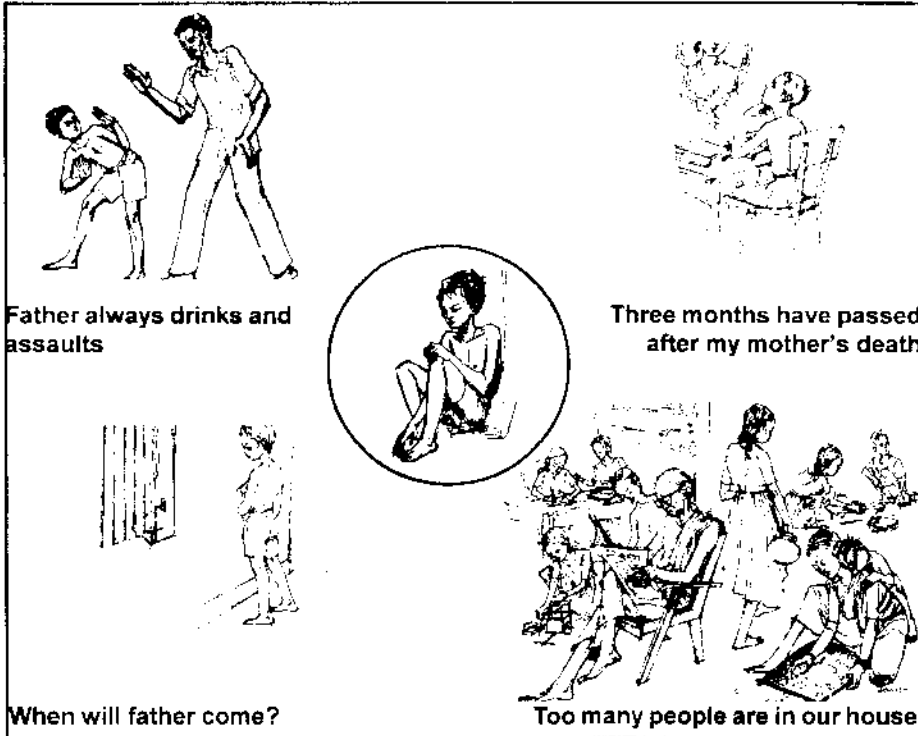
Activity 1

Role-play

- ☐ Direct trainees to imagine incidents shown above.

- ☐ Form small groups (of 4 or 5) and direct them to role-play their imagination.

- ☐ Get them to discuss and make conclusions on what they brought out in the role-play.

Activity 2

Use of dolls to play out incidents

- ☐ Direct trainees to use dolls to bring out one of the above incidents.

- ☐ Then direct them to play out their own life experiences or what they have seen as a story using dolls.

- ☐ Where necessary the trainees may ask appropriate open-ended questions.

However Mohana's family is less cohesive and collective in planning their life and face constant problems which disturb the family equilibrium. Thus Mohana becomes affected.

> **Change in environment**
>
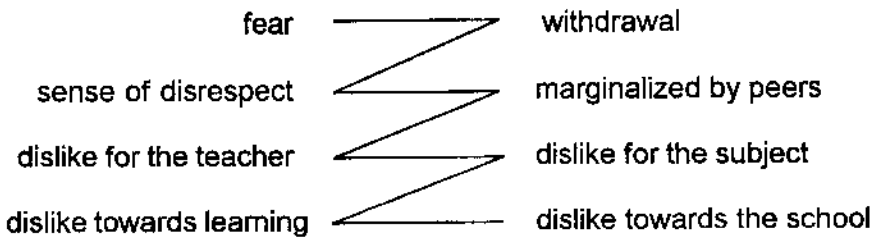> The mother while cleaning discards a favorite toy of the child. The child looking for the toy does not find it. This makes the child feel sad and angry.

Even normal changes in the family environment can cause problems for children. In addition a small problem can affect the child in many ways. For example subjecting a child to punishment can ramify as follows,

fear	withdrawal
sense of disrespect	marginalized by peers
dislike for the teacher	dislike for the subject
dislike towards learning	dislike towards the school

Children who face such varied problems express them in many different ways. All parents are aware that a child has its own fears and sorrows but they are unaware of the cause when a child is agitated or restless. They may say *"why is our child getting so afraid.... there is no reason for her to be afraid."* Such questions constantly disturb their own mind and that of the child.

7.4.2. Symptoms

7.4.2.1. Emotional problems

Sadness, fear, restlessness, feeling distributed, lethargy, irritability, suspicion, withdrawal with fear, crying easily, relationship problems with parents, siblings, co students and teachers are expressions of an emotionally disturbed state.

Emotional changes

☐ Anger   ☐ Sadness

☐ Hate   ☐ Irritability

☐ Frustration   ☐ Fear

☐ Guilt feeling   ☐ Anxiety

☐ Yearning   ☐ Unhappiness

7.4.2.2   Somatic complaints

Psychological problems caused by stress may manifest as physical complaints. Some common post-stress somatic complaints are given below (see box):

⊙ Headache   ⊙ Rapid breathing   ⊙ Lethargy

⊙ Pain   ⊙ Loss of appettite   ⊙ Fainting

⊙ Deep, slow breathing ⊙ Aches   ⊙ Palpitation

⊙ Vomiting   ⊙ Breathing difficulties ⊙ Nausea

⊙ Loose motions   ⊙ Giddiness   ⊙ Numbness

⊙ Frequent urination   ⊙ Chest pain   ⊙ Sighing

⊙ Heaviness in head   ⊙ Stomach ache

⊙ Tremor   ⊙ Generalized aches and pains

Malarvali is studying in year 2. Her mother complains that for the last few days Malarveli is taking deep breaths. "When the father was well she was his pet but since he lost his leg to a landmine two month ago" said the mother and started to cry. Malarvali then began to take deep breaths.

7.4.2.3.   Behavioural disorders

Children express the effect of stress in a variety of ways: become excessively active or in contrast, be less active, are naughty, get drawn into fights, commit violence, be a constant nuisance, lie, steal, oppose respected persons, disrespect others, be disobedient, not attend school, misbehave at school, are indisciplined, and show antisocial behaviour.

Komathi is an 11-year-old child studying in year 6. She lives with her mother and two sisters. When she was six she had seen her father being shot by unidentified gunmen. After the death of the father she became the pet of the mother and two sisters who looked after her needs.

Komathi's attendance at school has become irregular with complains of frequent headaches, stomach pain and fatigue. She often looks with sorrow at the picture of her father. She also frequently quarrels with her second sister.

Activity

☐   What are the causes for Komathi's problem?

☐   How was Komathi expressing her emotions?

☐   Direct trainees to discuss the answers in groups and present their views at the class level.

Activity

⊙   The trainees may act out (in non-verbal body language) an unforgettable life event.

⊙   While six or seven individually mime the rest can observe.

⊙   Get them to write the emotional expressions they identified in the mime and discuss.

Stresses may delay the psychosocial development of the child or cause developmental disorders. Children may regress in behaviour to earlier developmental stages or may lose developed skills. For example he/she may exhibit earlier childish behaviour, be physically attached to parents and demand parents to join them in going to sleep, hide themselves on seeing strangers, show stubborn attitudes and behaviour, frequently cry, loose the already acquired bowel and bladder control and may regress to bedwetting in sleep.

Changes in behaviour

❏ Dependency	❏ Lack of curiosity
❏ Isolation	❏ Involve in violence
❏ Aggression	❏ Stubbornness
❏ Withdrawal	❏ Seeking to be alone
❏ Talking less	❏ Self harm
❏ Sleep disturbance	❏ Cry easily
❏ Regression	❏ Poor performance in activities.
❏ Loss of interest in food	

7.4.2.4.   Cognitive impairments

Children may show impairment in the acquired levels of cognition, education and speech.

Stresses may be expressed symptomatically in many forms such as stammering, speechlessness (inability to talk) and learning disorders. In addition, in the long term, the child may find it strenuous to think and concentrate, comprehend and recall from memory and may lose interest in the future.

Activity

⊙ "The effects of war has further strengthened the minds of children." Stimulate a debate for and against. Trainees may moderate and direct the debate.

Teachers with a keen sense of observation will be able to identify the expressions of the effects of stress in children while learning, at play and in drawings. Research has established that abnormal changes at play or in drawings are symptoms of the effects of stress.

Teachers who identify physical, psychological and behavioural changes in affected children may use creative activities such as storytelling, drawing, drama, play and reading to identify the psychological causes. Such an approach will not only help in finding the cause but also provide the child some relief (see chapter 9).

If the drawing depicts any of the following the teacher may ask the child for additional information.

- symbols in excess
- differences in spacing in the drawing
- abnormality in the size of figures
- family size being smaller or larger or if some member is missing

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Activity

⊙ Direct them to draw freely

⊙ Ask them to relate the message behind the drawing
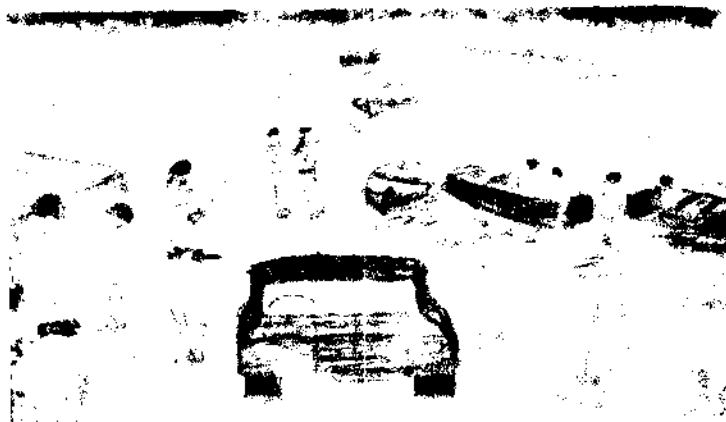
7.5. Problems encountered by children

7.5.1. Common problems

⊛   *What are called common problems?*

⊛   *What are the common problems among children?*

Problems common to most children which are of a mild nature and those that could be easily handled are called common problems.

In normal life, many encounter various types of problems. If the effect of the stress caused by problems gets intensified severe repercussions may occur. Normally children can undergo stress by the way parents respond to problems. Changes in the family environment, its duration and intensity cause psychological problems in the child.

If these problems are not identified and appropriately handled, with time, the child's learning activities, classroom behaviour and relationships will get affected and long term development blocked. Hence early identification of children with problems and intervention is important.

7.5.1.1. Lack of concentration

Some students may find it difficult to concentrate. They may be restless, struggle to learn, comprehend, recall, be forgetful and lose efficiency in doing simple arithmetic and writing. Stress may be one of the causes. Mental retardation, psychological problems, or hyperactivity can be predisposing factors.

To help such students gain concentration, the teacher should introduce an orderly structured life style and continue to pay attention, be encouraging and provide concessions, rewards and gifts. Yoga and meditation will be helpful.

7.5.1.2. Fear

It is normal for anyone to experience fear. It helps us avoid and overcome dangerous situations. However, some children express fear by getting excited, stammering, showing avoidance, anxiety and not being able to say something in sequence, bring out their abilities and cope. This causes the child to be ridiculed by co-students, reprimanded by the teacher and hinders the child's progress. These in turn will further aggravate the fear, anxiety and anger.

Some children may fear to go to school. They may fear to go for the first time to a new school, meeting new teachers or feel threatened by co-students. These will cause the child to come late to school, get absent or avoid participation in school activities or even leave school. Such children will have difficulties in learning and obtaining good grades.

As much as a child may fear a new environment, the child may fear objects, for example, show fear and avoid seeing a snake, rat or cat.

It is important that such children receive the teacher's love and care while talking and in other interactions. When a child is facing a new environment the teacher should be able to recognise the needs in relation to the family background. Behaviour therapy can be successfully used, while relaxation techniques will bring about a reduction in the sense of fear. Systematic desensitisation will help to overcome fear of objects or situations (see chapter 9).

7.5.1.3.   Refusal to attend school

As mentioned above (7.5.1.2), some children may fear attending school. They may not attend school because of a threatening situation in school, difficulties encountered while travelling to school (as for example biting dogs, war manoeuvres, lonely paths) or parents preventing the child from going (for example to attend to some work at home or mother being sick). Teachers should ascertain the reason for the child's inability to attend school and take appropriate remedial measures. The teacher should also, as far as possible, make arrangements for the child to attend school. At times, to start with, parents may be encouraged to accompany the child.

7.5.1.4.   Learning difficulties

The basic needs of the child not being fulfilled and adverse social values cause learning difficulties. Hungry children will not be able to attentively participate in classroom activities and will be seen to be lethargic and withdrawn. Adverse social values, imparted specially in early childhood (for example, a girl child need not pursue studies, or association with male children is unacceptable), make the child withdraw from group activities.

Teachers discriminating and marginalizing children (on account of caste, religion) will cause frustration in the child and will not allow the

Sarojini studied in Grade 3 and has been promoted to Grade 4. She is adamant that she be admitted to a new school in the coming year. She often gets stomach pain, is less interested in studies, frequently gets angry and has lost interest in play.

She was clever in her studies. She received high marks in all subjects. While in her class she had observed what was happening in the adjoining class. In that class she had seen the teacher beating students. She feared that she too will have to study under this teacher. When requested to draw the environment teacher she drew the following picture. (see next page)

The child was provided appropriate counselling. She was given opportunities to speak openly. She was encouraged with empathy to share her fears. She was taught relaxation exercises. She was requested to draw whatever she wished.

Parents were called for discussions about the child. They were asked about their opinions, aspirations and wishes. The mother, was very keen about her studies and was anxious about the forthcoming grade 5-scholarship examination. She was expecting the child to perform well at the examination. She mentioned that she sends the child in the morning and evening for additional classes to private teachers. She agreed that she makes the child study till late in the night. She wakes the child at five in the morning and makes her study. She complained that unlike earlier the child has lost interest and refuses to study. The examination is close and she was worried sad as to how the child will perform.

Parents were consoled and advised to reduce pressure regarding the examination and let the child participate in other activities and play and be given sufficient rest.

If the child does not show any improvement she was assured that they will be helped to change the school. Confidentially the matter was discussed with the particular teacher and higher authorities and it was explained that physical punishment will not have the desired effect.

child bring out his abilities. Failure to praise a good performance will cause bitter feelings. Heavy punishment by the teacher will make the child hate the subject and education in general. Such acts will bring about guilt feelings, low self esteem, anger and frustration and the child may react by becoming violent, tell lies or steal.
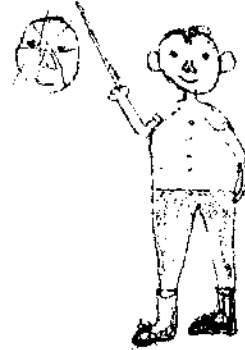
For example, when sufficient food is not available for a child from a poor family, the child, while at school, may take other children's food not considering it an offence. Unfortunately, on the long term if other needs too are not met the child may begin to steal. The teacher (and others) should not consider it a big offence and label the child a 'thief'. In time, with the increase in capacity to think, the child will realise its mistake. The teacher instead of punishing such children with unacceptable behaviour may provide (in addition to such basic needs as food) advice in a form the child will realise its mistake. Learning the cause for such acts will enable the teacher to find sources of help for the family to overcome hunger and poverty (see chapter 5).

Punishment at school is one of the reasons for a child to develop hatred towards learning. For example, should a teacher have some form of conflict with the child's parents or relatives, he may displace that anger onto the child. Generally, children who experience such punishments may cease to have future goals. They may dislike education and drop out of school and develop socially unacceptable behaviours.

7.5.1.5.   Exam tension

Since the present system of education is examination and result oriented, children from Grade one onwards develop exam tension. It reaches its climax with the Grade five scholarship examination. Unfortunately many parents and teachers are party to it. Increase in levels of exam tension may disrupt the learning process.

7.5.1.6.   Difficulties in speech

Some children, specially males, find difficulties in speech and pronunciation (stammer). Such difficulties increase in the presence of others and on being observed. In most instances they may suffer from fear and anxiety.

The teacher can help the child through speech therapy by teaching the child to slowly and progressively pronounce letters first, then words and sentences. In time they may be trained to read paragraph by paragraph.

7.5.1.7.   Difficulties in working as a group

An only child in a family, those over protected and denied opportunities of contact with those of their age (e.g.: pre-school) will find it difficult to interact with the school community. They will want for themselves the material given to the group. They may not have the ability to give and share, and thus not be able to get involved as a group. Some children may become dependent on teachers and parents for all their actions and not be able to act on their own. The teacher should encourage the child to get involved in group activities and advise other children to give in and accommodate the child.

7.5.1.8.   Inferiority complex

Inferiority complex is a big problem in our society. The way parents bring up children and the teacher - classroom - school environment contributes and determines to a great extent the development of this trait. The tender minds of children are progressively damaged in many ways. Children brought up to be timid, obedient and controlled are easy to manage. However, such children become inactive, uninterested, are less eager and lack imagination and creativity. They learn to be silent and will hesitate to express their opinion. This should be considered a big loss to our community because it is the active child that learns to be confident, think independently, express opinions and become future leaders, inventors and scientists.

Hence teachers should discourage and change such attitudes; help, praise and encourage children to develop their self-esteem, self-confidence and ability to think independently.

7.5.1.9.   Children with sight and hearing difficulties

When children with sight and hearing disabilities are not identified early they will get marginalized and develop problems. For example, should a child incorrectly copy what is on the black board or a word chart, finds it difficult to repeat or repeat quickly, the child may be suspected to have sight or hearing difficulties; and if neglected may become retarded and the learning process delayed.

Hence it is important that the teachers gain the skills to identify such common problems. If necessary, identified children could be directed for specialized care.

7.5.2. Special problems

⊛ *What do you understand by special problems?*

⊛ *What are special problems?*

Children subjected to excessive stress will be seen to have severe behavioural problems. It may not be possible for parents and teachers to manage such children. It is the duty of the teacher to refer such children to those who have been specially trained in the management of such children.

7.5.2.1. Hyperactivity

A few children will show hyperactivity. They will be seen always doing something or other, skipping from one activity to another without completing any. They will be a nuisance to other children. Normally, they will not be able to be seated but be seen loitering, running outside, taking objects and dropping them. They will forever be in motion. They will not be able to focus on one thing at a time and their attention will be drawn hither and thither. They are prove to accidents.

It will be very difficult for the teacher and parents to manage such children. Teachers and parents may become tired and exhausted. Such children need a controlled and structured environment, orderly organized activities in an accident-free surrounding with easily attainable goals. With increase in age this condition tends to decrease.

7.5.2.2. Excessive aggression

Children with aggressive behaviour will have hostile feelings. There are many reasons for the development of such feelings. Hence it is important to find out the real cause for such behaviour. Poor family structure, faulty and incomplete socialization, unmet needs and wrong role models may cause aggression. In addition, children who are not satisfied in expressing their hostility may become destructive. Some may without any feeling of guilt or pity engage in extremely gruesome acts. Nothing will attract them for long. Trying to control or advice the child will not have much of an impact because it becomes less important to them what others think about them. Development of their conscience would

have been impaired. Such children generally commit acts of violence and destruction, get involved in fights and refuse to go to school. In most instances, these are expressions of extreme anger or uncontrollable fury while in some, frustration and sorrow may also trigger such actions.

They will need a controlled and structured environment while providing opportunities for the ventilation of their aggressive feelings. It is important they be given clear goals and norms (rules).

7.5.2.3. Excessive fear

Fear of heights, snakes, venomous insects, new faces, abduction, traffic accidents and war events are normally seen in children. Generally children fear darkness. These fears decrease with age.

Some children experience a continuous sense of fear. Anxiety is one form of expressing this emotional disturbance. Because of anxiety they will fear to do anything and became virtually immobilized. The fear will be completely baseless like "the roof may fall", "lightning may strike" and "my family may be destroyed by floods". They will show excessive fear even for a normal incident. These fears will be numerous and without any cause.

In most instances, a little exploration will reveal threatening or abnormal situations; or, having been marginalized and not having parental love and care when it was most needed. They can be trained to manage their fears. Relaxation exercises are especially well suited for this (see chapter 9).

7.5.2.4. Separation anxiety

Some children find it difficult to be separated from their parents especially their mother. To begin with the child may fear to be alone in the classroom without the parents. This may be a reason for their refusal to go to school. These children may not have experienced separation under normal circumstances from their parents or would have been forced to be separated under stressful situations (war, disasters, displacement). Such children, even when separated for a short while will, on return, begin embracing and clinging to the parents. The teacher in such situations can begin in the classroom by separating the child from the parents for a short while and gradually increase the intervals over time.

Kanthan is a 11 year old child. At school he was promoted from Grade 6 to Grade 7. He obtained high marks in all subjects. He is the only child in the family.

His mother and father are separated over the past 2 years. While living with the mother he visits his father. At his mother's home they speak ill of the father and while at his father's home they speak ill of the mother. Hence the mother prevents the child staying at the father's home.

Over the past one year he spends more time in prayer (he is unable to abruptly end it). On removing his slippers he attempts to keep them straight and parallel. He takes water many times in the receptacle while drinking. After using the toilet he pours water 10 to 15 times. He washes his hands with soap and water many times over. On locking the gate he returns to make sure it is locked. He will arrange his books neatly many times. He becomes stubborn over anything. He expresses much anger.

On making him to draw, he portrayed a beach scene beautifully and neatly. He drew two tall coconut trees on the beach and two small boats sailing in mid sea.

Having been counselled over the past one year he is showing improvement.

The parents should provide the child a loving, protective, nurturing environment. The child should be told as to where they are leaving and what time they would return. They should keep their promise.

7.5.2.5. Withdrawal

The child may exhibit an increased sense of shyness and fear. He may be unduly obedient. He may tend to withdraw, be alone and quiet. Such children will find it difficult to express their normal emotions. They will have few friends and will avoid group activities. To begin with they will want others to show affection towards them.

These children will avoid conversations with teachers and students. They will hesitate to loudly and emphatically answer questions. They may confine their reply to just 'yes' or 'no'; and at times, may not respond at all. They will be quiet and silent for long periods. At play, they would select for themselves the most passive role.

During childhood they may not have had the necessary stimuli for growth and development. The child may have been deprived of the mother's complete love and care. For some, recent experiences may have been bitter. Especially the child would have been deprived of opportunities in building relationships. The teacher should explore and find out the cause for being withdrawn, whether it is of recent origin or from early childhood.

Teachers should help children overcome being withdrawn. Children should be encouraged to socialize and get involved in group activities. The teacher should encourage other children to associate with the child.

7.5.2.6. Depression

At times, some children unlike others, may seem to be lethargic and overwhelmingly sad. They may start crying at the slightest provocation, be uninterested, withdrawn, delayed in performance and complain of loss of appetite and feeling weak. In most instances, the child may have experienced a loss, specially the death of a family member, close relative or friend. The teacher should talk to the child with empathy and provide support with love and care.

7.5.2.7. Grief

The sorrow following the loss of a loved one is termed grief. This is an expected reaction. Though children do not fully comprehend death, they will feel the loss in keeping with their age and stage of development. Hence it is not healthy to manage death by hiding it or telling falsified stories (father went abroad) since someway or other they will learn the truth. Hiding will only aggravate the pain.

For the long-term mental health of the child, it is best that the incident is talked about, details discussed and he/she allowed to participate in the funeral rituals and provided with opportunities to ventilate emotions. It is also good to exchange feelings with others and receive their support. These activities help assimilation of the loss of a close relationship. To begin with, it is acceptable that the child is depressed for some time. However, the child should progressively get over it. It is good that someone takes the important role of the lost mother, father or sibling (example an aunt may take the role of the mother). In most instances the surviving parent may take over the role of the deceased.

7.5.2.8.   Bedwetting

It is estimated that 10 to 15 percentage of children over the age of ten pass urine while asleep. Some wet their clothes during the day. Most children learn bladder control around three years of age. However, when children who have learned to be dry, begin bedwetting, psychological causes may be suspected. In most cases, the child will overcome this problem, on its own, in time.

Going to a new place, fear, anxiety, feeling of insecurity, change of school or teacher and problems within the family predisposes a child to bed wetting.

Though bedwetting is common in pre-school children, older children too may have this problem. Scolding, punishing or ridiculing the child will not be of help. Making the child take responsibility for its consequences with loving care is a good approach. For example the child can be made responsible for removing wet clothes and cleaning up.

The following are some important factors in children wetting themselves.

→   Manifestation of seeing fearful incidents.

Example: firing of shells, fighting or violence against known persons.

→   A result of changes in family life.

Example: parents leaving the house, birth of a sibling or disturbed family environment.

→   Anxiety or insecurity.

Example: being alone in darkness, separation from home, worries about insecurity in the family.

Manoharan is 8 years old. He lost his parents on account of bombing and was admitted to a children's home. On arrival at the children's home he was a 'good boy'. After 3 months he started bedwetting in the night. He was punished for this by the warden. Presently he bed wets 2 or 3 times during the night. In the morning he rolls up his mat, throws it to a corner and goes to school. Even with much effort he has not changed said the warden.

Activity

⊙   How can Manoharan's problem be handled?

⊙   Get the trainee to discuss.

⊙   Help the trainees to clarify the positive and negative aspects of each action.

7.5.2.9. Somatic complaints

Children at times make multiple physical complaints. Somatic complaints are those physical complaints without any medical origin. Headache, stomachache, stomach pain, pains, aches, fainting, tightness around the chest, sporadic body aches and pains are some commonly made complaints.

Children mentally disturbed for various reasons complain of physical symptoms by which, in some way or other, indirectly he/she is benefited. By this they may be relieved of important responsibilities or avoid a stressful situation. Somatic complaints are also forms of attention seeking. However, it is wrong to assume that they are wilful acts by the child. In reality they dislike experiencing the physical aches and pains.

For example, if a child becomes aware that he/ she has not completed the assigned home work at the time of leaving to school, the child may say that something is happening in the stomach. Parents on hearing this may think the child is unwell and stop him from attending school.

It is best to disregard somatic complaints and pay more attention and importance to other activities. Relaxation techniques and artistic or cultural activities will be helpful.

7.5.2.10. Tics

Some children may exhibit continuous or repeated annoying or disturbing behaviour. If you observe them carefully without their knowledge, they may repeatedly squeeze their nose, tighten muscles (mouth, hand, neck), twitch their face and often engage in thumb and finger sucking, biting of finger nails, grunting and rubbing their eyes. They may have

fainting attacks in school. Such behaviour occurs when they do not receive attention from others, when important needs are not met and when experiencing stressful situations. These acts are attention seeking. They may not occur while at sleep or when their attention is drawn elsewhere.

Though such expressions are often repeated by children they do not become permanent. However they may appear when the child gets emotionally disturbed or when he/ she has nothing to do. The child could be helped by finding the cause for such expressions and to appropriately to deal with the problem. In addition steps mentioned in part 7.5.2.9. could be adopted.

Akilan is a 7 year old student. He was referred to the Psychiatric Unit of the Teaching Hospital, Jaffna by the Pediatrician. It was complained that while writing and drinking tea his hands tremble and that he unnaturally shakes his head. In addition, he is slow in speech and his class teacher observed him to be slow in class work in comparison to other children. He begins to tremble every time he starts to write or speak.

By nature Akilan is left-handed. On beginning to write and over a period of 3 months he was forced to change to his right hand. To achieve this his mother and aunty punished him by beating him.

With a view helping Akilan, he may be encouraged to draw whatever he wishes through which he may give vent to his emotions.

He may be given opportunities to openly talk about his problems with a child counsellor.

He may be taught relaxation exercises to calm his body and mind. By this his tremors and other somatic complaints could be reduced.

Akilan began to write with his left hand. In our culture the left hand is considered dirty and used to remove waste. It is also considered offensive and disrespectful to give something with the left hand. Akilan through punishment was forced to change to the right hand. This may be the cause of the problem. Hence his parents should be advised that Akilan should not be stopped or punished if he wishes or by chance uses his left hand.

7.5.2.11. Mental retardation/ handicap

Mentally retarded children, unlike children of their own age will be seen to behave like children in younger stages of development (see chapter 3). They will tend to regress and fail to have a realistic view of the world around them. They may hesitate to talk to others and when talking, usually use small sentences.

Children with severe mental retardation may remain in a particular position for a long period of time or may be seen rocking themselves back and forth in a chair. They may be unresponsive and not make any complaints. They may cause self-inflicted wounds - for example, bang their head on objects or use the door to squeeze their fingers, and at times even apply dirt on themselves. They may find difficulty in differentiating the edible from the non-edible. They may repeat the very same act without any changes over many hours - for example continue to twist a piece of thread over and over again.

Some children when questioned will repeat the question over and over like a parrot and not respond to any stimulation.

Mild to moderately handicapped children will find it difficult to compete with other children in the class and tend to get isolated. They will be slow learners and the teacher may direct them to the backbenches. However with a little patience, effort and some special education they will be able to acquire basic knowledge.

7.6. Conclusion

We have so far learned to identify affected children and difficulties faced by them in situations such as war, family problems, child abuse and poverty. We also saw how stress arises from unpleasant experiences and its psychological, psychical and behavioural manifestations.

By observing such expressions we saw how the teacher could explore and identify the problem. We called problems, which could be easily handled common problems, and serious problems which require specialized help as special problems.

In the next chapter we shall see how these problems could be handled and resolved.

When dry leaves rustled

she screamed

thinking it was a storm

then the cold breeze blew

soothing

the sweating body

8

Counselling

- What is counselling?
- What are the characteristics of a counsellor?
- What are the micro skills of a counsellor?
- Why do we want to help students?

8.1. Introduction

In the previous chapters, we discussed about the various problems that students face. This chapter and the following one will deal with the ways that can be used to solve them.

This chapter would deal precisely with a counselling session, the micro skills of a counsellor, and the characteristics of a counsellor.

Micro skills like attending, active listening and empathic response are discussed one after the other. But that does not mean that they should be applied in that order. All the micro skills are needed as a whole during a counselling session. For example, when challenging is used by the counsellor, he will also attend to the client, actively listen to him/ her and show empathic responses.

It is not necessary that a counsellor should use all the micro skills with all the affected students. Many of the problems of small children can be successfully handled using skills like attending, active listening and empathy alone. At the same time a counsellor may have to use a skill like exploring options in more than one session to solve the problem of an adolescent child.

Each and every student is unique, so it depends on the counsellor to use the appropriate micro skill to a particular student and help him/her.

A student usually comes to a counsellor only when he feels uneasy, not when he is OK. So it is the duty of a counsellor to make his mind healthy once again.

8.2. Characteristics of a counsellor

It is expected that a counsellor will have better personality traits when compared to that of an ordinary teacher.

He is first of all committed to his own growth - physical, intellectual, socio-economical and spiritual for he realizes that helping often involves modelling the patterns of behaviour his clients hope to achieve. A teacher counsellor will be always ready to help the child and he would have attained the skills and attitudes to do it. He will have the proper behaviour and values to be the role model for the client.

Counsellors make their bodies work for them by having nutritious food and proper exercises.

A counsellor need not be an ideal person. But he continues to grow

It will be more useful if they have a higher I.Q. They respect good scientific theory and good research for the ways in which they can nourish enlightened practice. They read a lot and discuss matters with their colleagues to get clear ideas. They read especially literature with symbols and an artistic touch. They will also make what they read work for them. They are also able to evaluate their own work.

They can easily understand all the human needs and they are not afraid of deep human emotions.

Good helpers know that helping is a great deal of work, but they also know that working wisely is just as important as working hard - that is they are more interested in accomplishments than in behaviour.

They can use body language effectively and they see helping as a goal - oriented, accomplishment oriented dialogue.

They will try to understand the child heart to heart, for they can see the world through their client's eyes. The teacher counsellor will respect the children by attending to them, by working with them, by talking with them without judgment and by having trust in their positive psychological forces.

Counsellors are not afraid to share themselves and their own experience if they see that it will advance the helping process. The teacher counsellor loves the child and he/ she will show interest in the development of the child.

Counsellors talk meaningfully but precisely, with a humane tint. They are duty conscious and have a responsible attitude. If they take the responsibility of a client, they will try hard for the betterment of the child. The counsellor will not hesitate to talk openly about the relationship between the counsellor and the client if necessary, with the client.

Don't expect something from others that you, yourself, can't do

Efficient helpers are people of imagination. They will also facilitate the development of imaginative skills in the client. Good counsellors are practical people too. They know that the process of helping is developmental.

They follow a comprehensive helping model, but are not rigid in its applications. The model is not central; clients are. The counsellor has a good communication skill in a one to one situation and in groups too.

They do not help others in order to satisfy their own needs. They are not afraid to enter the inner world of clients.

They can mobilize their own psychological energies to make children use their own energies.

The counsellors may have their own problems. But they will be aware of the problems and will know how to handle them. They know who they are and there is space for psychological growth in their lives.

The world we live in is not ideal. The human beings are also not ideal. So a counsellor may have some defects. But he/she will always try to correct them.

> **Activity**
>
> Each trainee may compare his/ her personality with the list of character-istics given above. They may be asked to identify the component that needs development. A discussion may be encouraged at the class level.

8.3. Sessions

There is a saying in Tamil that you know your wife when you are poor, a friend when you are in trouble and a relative when you are sad.

The famous Tamil scholar, Dr. M. Varatharajan, says in one of his novels, "Even the flies and ants come to you when you are sweet. So look for people who come to see you when you have difficulty".

It is always essential to have somebody in life to share your deep ambitions, emotions and wishes. When a child in need comes to the teacher counsellor, a session starts. A teacher counsellor going in search of a child to help is rather an exception than a rule, for example when the child is found with a suicidal thought or tendency.

If the child who needs help is a relative of the teacher counsellor, it is better to send the child to another teacher counsellor.

The pre-concepts that may be found in the mind of this relative-teacher about the child or his family members may affect this process of counselling.

Although counselling sessions are generally done weekly, the interval may be increased or decreased in view of the severity of the problem. But a counsellor need not always change it according to the wish of the client.

When we fix a time for counselling, it is essential for the counsellor to be there in time. If not, the child may get the idea that, "The counsellor is not interested in my problem" and such an idea will affect the positive relationship between the client and counsellor, which in itself is therapeutic.

It is always better to have a counselling room in the school. It should

be a quiet room of moderate size with two identical chairs. The room need not be luxurious, but it should be safe. It is good if the people outside can't hear the voices from within. The child must feel that what he/ she says will be kept confidentially.

The most appropriate colour for the walls is green. You may use other colours also other than red. You may have two small stools beside the chairs. A handkerchief may be put on the stool. It is better to have the room clean without any unnecessary provisions. Even then, you may have one or two pictures of natural scenery and a flower vase. It is advisable to have a white board also.

There will be an obtuse angle between the chair of the client and the counsellor. We may let the child decide the distance between the chairs by seeing what is most comfortable for the child. The child should be allowed to maintain a safe psychological distance between her and the counsellor. This safe distance may vary from child to child.

At this movement we may recall what Benjamin Franklin said, "Love thy neighbour, but don't remove the fence".

There is a belief that it is better to have the child to the left side of the counsellor because the right cerebral hemisphere deals more with emotions.

You may decide whether the door should be closed or not. It is better to have the door open when there is a gender difference between the client and the counsellor. If the client is a girl and the counsellor a male, you may allow a friend of the girl to sit at a distance within the room.

Teacher :		*Good morning Sarmila. What did you have for breakfast?*
Child	:	*Strings*
Teacher :		*O. K. Did you come by bus to school as usual?*
Child	:	*Yes*
Teacher :		*Right. Let's now come to the subject. You may tell me about your difficulty?*

You may start the first session with some casual talk. Then the tension of the child may go down. But when you come to the second or third session, this causal talk is not needed because the client might have come ready to reveal something.

The counsellor need not be in a hurry, if the child doesn't talk for sometime. After sometime, the counsellor may ask, "Do you find it difficult to start?" Then when the child has started to talk, the counsellor may give prompts and cues appropriately like O. K., right, I see, to encourage talking. Then a rapport will be built up between the client and the counsellor. Some children will be able to come out with their problems while drawing or doing something else.

A session is not proper if the counsellor is tired. For a session that goes up to 45 - 50 minutes you need a lot of psychological energy. To write the report of the session the counsellor may need another 10 minutes. But it is better to avoid looking at the clock to the face of the client.

If the child enters into a deep emotional state in the session, it is essential to help the child to balance himself before the end of the session. The counsellor may summarize the session at the end.

The white board in the room may be used to write the options of the student or to draw a symbolic diagram by the counsellor to give an insight to the student.

Counselling Room
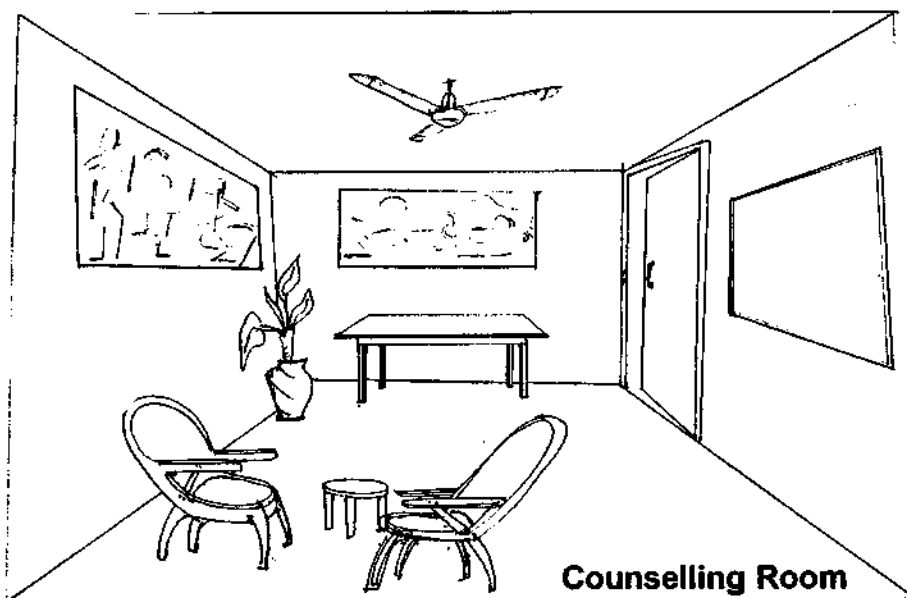
Note: It is not a must that each and every teacher counsellor needs a room. When there is less facility in the school, the teacher may find a place from the available resources. You may talk seated on the ground or on a mat. You may use the classroom after school, or use a tree shade. You may even go walking with the child. Anyhow, see that the story is kept confidential and there is no interruption during the session.

In our culture relatives stay for eight days in the house where there has been a loss. How does it help to come out of the

Activity

Small groups can draw a plan diagram for the counselling room and then discuss all the diagrams at the class level. All may come to a common conclusion as to how an efficient counselling room would look like.

8.4. Counselling micro skills

8.4.1. Attending

☺   *What is the importance of attending?*

☺   *Do you think that attending is a micro skill?*

To be with the affected child physically and psychologically is called attending.

When the counsellor attends to the child, he will get the message that the teacher is with him. At the same time the counsellor is also getting ready to listen actively. The quality of the attending by the counsellor will be felt by the child in a way. The body language of the teacher while attending may support the child or worsen the situation.

The student will trust the teacher counsellor if the attending is complete. The child will then easily open up, she will come out with the important parts of her problem. If the attending skill is not properly applied, the child will lose hope and this will obstruct her talk.

Attending skill consists of five components:

O   sit properly (face the client)

O   open (adopt an open posture)

O   lean forward

O   eatablish eye contact

O   relax

The teacher is expected to give positive body language, non-verbal messages, and facial expressions when the student relates her story especially when the traumatic point comes up. Then the child will get the message that what she tells is heard and understood properly.

In a classroom it is o.k. to have a child with a special need or an affected child always by the side of the teacher.

8.4.2. Active Listening

When a teacher answers satisfactorily the questions of a child, then the child is motivated to ask more questions. In the same way, when the teacher listens actively to what is said, the child will be encouraged to tell more. Hence the micro skill of active listening is very important to a teacher counsellor.

If the counsellor begins to think about what he is going to say in reply, while listening, then he is distracted. The counsellor should concentrate on the child and observe the non-verbal behaviour. A teacher cannot miss them.

Theesan is 7 years old. He is very irregular to school. After his absence on Monday and Tuesday he came to school on Wednesday. Before the teacher called him, he came running to the teacher and told her, "Teacher I saw a white van on the road abducting two children". He had a pencil which he kept rolling in his hand while telling the story. What is the non-verbal message of Theesan, which the teacher may have observed?

Observing and reading the client's non-verbal behaviour, posture, facial expressions, moments of silence, tone of voice and the like will give a lot of information. An efficient counsellor will listen to all these. When the listening is effective, the counsellor may at times guess what the student wishes to tell. Collecting a lot of facts is not important in listening. It is entirely possible to collect facts but miss the person. If the counsellor gets involved in his own thoughts, listening will be affected. If the counsellor is really interested in the child, listening will not be a problem.

If the counsellor judges the merits of what the child is saying in terms of good - bad, right - wrong, relevant - irrelevant, etc. listening will

not be complete. Also the listening will not be active if the counsellor uses filters to listen what he likes.

If the teacher counsellor has personal problems and they are not solved, then the listening may become inadequate. He could listen to the child completely only when his mind is in peace.

The counsellor will not interrupt the child while talking for any reason. On the other hand, he will encourage her to talk more and come out with her emotions by verbal and nonverbal cues like 'yes', 'then?'

The primary school children may tell their story with fantasy and creativity. Even then, the counsellor will actively listen.

Activity

Six trainees who like to do role-play will come in front. Two of them as a pair will talk at the same time. There will be no listening at all. The second pair will role play as if when one is talking the other will listen partially doing some other work. In the third pair, one will listen actively while the other talks.

After finishing the role-play, a discussion may be motivated on no listening, partial listening and active listening.

The trainees may be guided to come to the conclusion that active listening takes an important part in human relationships.

8.4.3. Empathy

⊗ *What is empathy?*

⊗ *Why is it difficult to show empathy towards others?*

The empathic responses will have the event and the emotions related precisely

Empathy is the basic feeling of human relationships. It is difficult for us to look at ourselves others look at us. Similarly, it is also difficult for us to look at others they look at themselves. At the sametime, one's feeling may differ from his self concept. Even then, empathy is an attempt to go into the inner world of the other person.

Each and every child will have a unique inner world. It is easy to understand the child when the teacher gets into this inner world and gets acquainted with it.

Empathy is the important part of attending to others. So it is therapeutic also. Children find it difficult to open up easily because of the fear that they may not be understood properly or they may not be accepted. They would have had the experience of such rejection. So empathic responses remove that fear.

A teacher counsellor will be able to give empathic responses by words and by non - verbal reactions. By putting our feet into the child's shoe, we will be able to understand the child and his problem better. The empathic responses will use the same language style as the child. We may have to show advanced empathy in some exceptional situations. When a child couldn't say something although she wanted to, we may help to bring it out through advanced empathy.

Child: The teacher who does mathematics for us punished me one day because I didn't do my home work. After that incident I'm afraid to be in the mathematics class. I hate to come to school also.

Teacher's empathic response: You have got a fear and hatred because of the punishment given by the mathematics teacher.
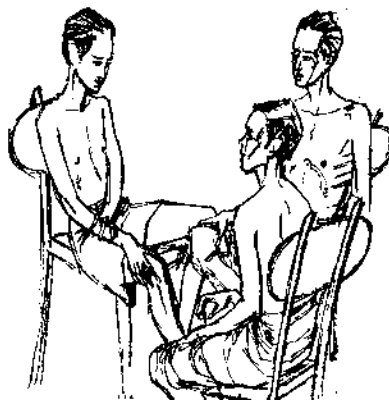
Does the teacher have to enter into the same emotional state of the child when she gives the empathic response?

All human beings like people who give empathic responses.

Activity

The trainees can be asked to write the empathic responses for the following statements individually. The cards with empathic responses may be collected and exhibited. The trainer can have a class level discussion to decide which empathic responses are more appropriate.

☉ Our father would beat us if we play without studying. Very often he says that we have to work at home. Very often it is I who has to do shopping. I have to sweep the house. He won't allow me to play. You know I have a sort of... this... on my father.

☉ I came late to school yesterday because of a puncture of my bicycle tyre. That is the fact. Usually I come early to school. Yesterday the discipline teacher had put me on the late comer's queue. All who came late were punished by him. We had to weed the garden. I joined the group. I didn't know how to say the truth. I started crying.

Assignment

The trainees may be asked to write the empathic responses for the following statements of a student as homework. The answers maybe discussed in the following class.

→ A child is sitting in front of you for a long time. His eyes are full of tears. He didn't say anything. [Time is passing]

→ We have lost our father due to shelling. I have to take "thosai" cooked by my mother to the canteen and take the cow to the field daily before going to school. I have to walk the distance too. I'm always tensed up when I think whether I'll be late to school.

→ Selvi lost fifty rupees the other day in the class. Everybody says that I am the thief. But honestly I didn't take it.

Activity

The trainees may be divided into small groups, each group containing three members. In each group one will take the role of a client, another will take the role of the teacher counsellor who gives empathic responses, and the third the role of an observer. The observer will take notes on the empathic responses. The notes of the observer may be discussed at class level to make things more clear. In the next round the trainees may change their roles. The trainee who took the role of the client will now take the role of either the teacher counsellor or the observer.

8.4.4. Reframing

⊛   *It is possible for an individual to see an event from various angles?*

⊛   *Is it possible to see positively things which are normally perceived negatively?*

We have seen people describing the same event in various ways. Each of us perceive things in completely different ways. When a person looks at an event, his previous knowledge, experience, emotions, beliefs and expectations are all involved in his perception. So a person from a different environment might see this event in a completely different way. Normally the children who face so many problems or those who give problems are the ones who perceive the world very negatively. At the same time, they will have a low self-esteem about their thoughts, emotions and behaviour.

The teacher counsellor has to listen actively to the child when the child describes his emotions and thoughts. The counsellor has to give empathic responses too. She has to try and understand the event from

Two men looked out of the windows. One saw the stars and the other saw the mud.

Child: Mum scolds me all the time. She says that I don't get up early in the morning. Then she scolds me for getting late to go to school. If I get less marks in the school, she punishes me. She is not happy if I don't go for the tuition class. Even if my younger brother tears my exercise book, she doesn't blame him. She hates me and I'm sure she likes my brother.

Counsellor: Maybe your mum wants a bright future for you. I don't know whether she doesn't know how to show her interest in any other way. Maybe that she wants you to study better. Maybe that she has got an extreme ambition about your life and this is the only way she knows to accomplish it. What do you think?

It is good to see things positively for mental health. Also it is better to guide children to look in a positive way.

Activity

Some complaints of the students may be given to the trainees They can discuss in small groups as to how they can reframe the observations. Trainees may role play the reframing skill using the statements discussed.

e.g.:

Student: My class teacher doesn't talk to me for some time. She looks to the other side whenever she sees me. She is angry with me because I am naughty. Sometimes she hits me too, even then she doesn't say anything.

the child's point of view. But when it is necessary, the counsellor has to change the picture to a new frame. This doesn't mean that the point of view of the child is not important. This means that the counsellor has to help the child to view the world more broadly.

The client may then come out with the problem more precisely. It is helpful sometimes to find the hidden emotion.

Beeshmar sent Dharman and Dhuriyothanan into a village to judge the people. Returning from the same village, Dharman said, "All of them are good natured" but Dhuriyothanan said, "All of them are bad animals".

8.4.5. Focusing

⊛ *What do you mean by the word focus?*

⊛ *What do you think is focusing in relation to counselling?*

The mind of the client might wander in all directions. The counsellor has to help her to focus on her important emotion and on the critical event.
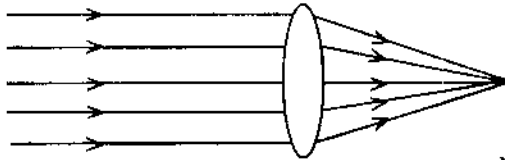
When parallel light rays go through a convex lens they get focused in a single point.

A counsellor has to use the skill of focusing when he feels that the client is repeating many events, in a disorderly way. When the skill of focusing is used, the client may be able to see things more clearly. The confusion of the client will decrease. She will not go in a disorderly way.

Student: My elder brother has left the house and gone somewhere last week. Dad drinks a lot and because he scolded my brother, he ran away. Mum is always in the kitchen. I get a numb feeling in the head and I fear a lot. A boy follows me wherever I go.

Teacher counsellor: I understand that you have a lot of problems. Brother leaving the house, dad drinking, mum not interested in you, and the boy who follows you. Out of all these which seems to give you more difficulty?

Student: The boy who follows me.

Teacher: Although you have many problems, the one that needs solution first is the problem of this boy?

Student: yes.

8.4.6. Exploration

✤ *What do you understand by the term exploration?*

✤ *What do you mean by open questions?*

We can't expect that the client will always tell his story with a motivation and freedom. Very often the teacher counsellor has to facilitate the child. The teacher may have to ask in more detail about some particular events - may have to explore them a bit.

Exploration will help them to come out with their experiences, behaviour, and emotions. Exploring within oneself helps sometimes to return to normalcy more easily. But the information we get using exploration should be used only to understand the child better and to solve his problem.

A teacher counsellor may use questions for exploration. She may also use some statements or phrases. The client may find it difficult to answer if the questions are too many. A tone of inquiry should be avoided. The counsellor should also see to it that it is not only a question and answer session without taking them anywhere.

The questions should go with the flow or thoughts of the client. They should not disturb the thought process. There should be a goal to each and every question asked. Then it takes the client to a useful point. In case questions are asked it must help the student, help to solve the problems. One need not ask a question just to collect information. Always use open ended questions to clarify some issues.

> **Teacher :** How would you feel if you are in a school that you like most?
>
> **Client :** I would feel happy.

Here, this question has taken the student to a new insight. A counsellor may use a closed question if she needs a particular data precisely.

> **Teacher :** How many schools have you changed within the last five years?

Closed question: Are you angry?

Open question: What are your feelings?

All the questions should centre around the student and the issues that are important to him. They need not be related to our own ideals.

This is a part of the dialogue with a student who lost his foot in a land mine

Teacher: If I allow you to ask a question what will that be?

Student: (after a pause) I shall ask myself, "Why have I become so weak mentally?" (he is crying)

This question has touched the insight of the boy.

In a way, it is not a must that the counsellor should ask questions when exploration is done. If a client sitting in front of the counsellor is kicking the table, the teacher may say like this:

Teacher   :   It seems to me that you are angry. But I don't understand why.

This statement itself is exploring. Sometimes a direct question may be useful.

Teacher   :   I understand how this behaviour of your dad makes you feel angry. But it will be helpful if you tell me what you will do in such situations.

Client   :   I won't do anything.

Teacher   :   You said that he made some negative comments about you last Sunday, then?

Client   :   Then... I asked him to buy a bicycle for me.

A single word or a phrase may be used as a probe.

Client   :   I become tired at the end of the day.

Teacher   :   Tired?

Sometimes responses like, "yea", "uh", "right" are enough. At other times body language can be used.

Client   :   I don't know whether I can tell you this. I didn't tell it to anybody else.

Teacher   :   (leans forward nodding the head)

It is always better to follow a question with basic empathy rather than exploration or probing. It is not appropriate to ask more than two questions at a stretch.

Sometimes a counselling process might end up without a single question. This may be the case with children who come only with emotional problems. The teacher counsellors who are new to the field may tend to ask a lot of questions. The session becomes therapist-centred when the counsellor asks a lot of questions. At the sametime, if the beginning of the session starts with questions and answers, then the client will only expect questions rather than thinking on his own. Then some important event or feelings may not come out. So, questions are used only as a last weapon.

It is important that the things that are useful to the client are only dealt with while explorating. It is better to avoid questions starting with "why?" One has to give cognitive answers to such questions. We want answers from inside the heart rather than generalizations or explanations.

So, the questions are asked only to make the client open up, to make him see things more deeply and to be more clear about his problem.

When the skill of exploration is used, the student will go in front. The counsellor may walk beside and give him a summary whenever needed.

Activity

The trainees will forms groups of two and divide the following questions into open questions and closed questions. Then the open questions are changed into closed ones and vice versa.

- ⊙ Who do you like?
- ⊙ What do you want to say about your family?
- ⊙ Do you get very angry?
- ⊙ Is your problem a big one?
- ⊙ How do you see your dreams?
- ⊙ Do you feel tense in school?
- ⊙ Where can you start and how can you proceed?

8.4.7 Challenging

⊛ *What do we understand by the word challenging?*

⊛ *When do we need the skill of challenging in the case of an affected child?*

Though it is important for a teacher counsellor to understand the child, it is also necessary at times to know the truth. Most of the clients may need a change in their thoughts, feelings and behaviour.

Children are quit flexible. It is not difficult to bring about changes in them. The teacher counsellor may help to bring about a change. The quality of the change and the success of the change depends on the counsellor. But the student should be willing to change. Behaviour therapy that brings about a change is a different process.

Usually children have more mental energy than we expect. When an antisocial behaviour is seen in a student, or when his behaviour disturbs the general school discipline, challenging may be used to make a change. Challenging may facilitate the student to test his inner and outer emotions.

Challenging may be used when a student is reluctant to come out with his problem, or when he is not clear abut his behaviour, feelings and experiences. Challenging may also be used to create a new scenario about himself and about the world, to see a new insight, to set goals, to see the options when there are blocks and to come out with clear ideas without confusion.

When challenging is successful, the student will see the dark side of her mind, and she will get a clear insight. She will see a meaning in life and find new ways to live.

Challenging should be done when the student does not accept that the problem is his or when he is not able to come out with his problem in

Student: I'm happy in school. I've no problem with the principal (The voice is dull and frustrated. The face shows lines of sadness).

Counsellor: I listen to you saying that you are happy and you don't have any problem with your principal. Still, I observe sadness in your face and a depression in your voice.

a clear way so that a solution could be found. It is also helpful when the child cannot accept his true emotions, behaviour and experience, when the child is playing mental games, when he is not able to understand the result of his behaviour and when he is not willing to go along a new way.

The counsellor should use only the information given by the student (by words or by non verbal methods). She should not use information that is obtained in some other ways for challenging. The teacher need not be passive or aggressive when the skill of challenging is used. She should be assertive during the session. She should not use her own ideas for challenging. Challenging should not be used only to maintain social values. The counsellor should not become emotional when she pinpoints some problems.

Advanced empathy may be used to do the challenging. Self-disclosure may be used to support the view. The counsellor needs courage to do the challenging at times. The counsellor may give a summary at the end of a challenging session. Serious challenging may not be necessary for primary school children.

The success of challenging is the success of counselling.

Challenging is easy if the focusing is done properly and a trusting relationship is built up between the student and the counsellor.

8.4.8. Goal setting

- ⊛ *Do you think that each and every student has a goal in his school life or that there should be one?*

- ⊛ *What will be the result in life if the goal is not clear?*

It is always better if the teachers observe if all the students have clear goals and whether they go forwards towards them. Many students who have emotional problems lack direction. The counsellor may help them to develop a sense of direction. With a sense of direction comes a sense of hope.

When there is a goal it is easy to help them to move from where they are to where they want to be. When the goal is clear, self-responsibility and versatility increases. Then the teacher counsellor may develop a "I can" spirit in students. Then it is possible to take "victory" as a challenge and act towards the short term and long term goals.

Students in emotional turmoil do not use their imagination. When the student is in stress, the general consciousness might be constricted and it is the duty of the counsellor to widen it again. The counsellor may also help the student to develop a range of new scenery. Then it is easy to start working with solving the problems. Setting goals focuses the student's attention and action. It also mobilises his psychological energy to be used towards the goal.

It increases persistence in setting goals and also motivates the student to search for strategies to accomplish them. Reframing will be confirmed and the way to solve the problems will be clear. It helps to establish outcomes that can be measured or verified.

Are you sure that the goals of children are always decided by them?

The teacher counsellor may make sure that the goal of the student is within the control of the student, and the goals chosen are in keeping with the values of the student. Also the counsellor may make sure that the goals set are the student's goals. It is also useful to help the student to determine a realistic time frame for the accomplishment of goals.

Humanity remembers with thanks people like Ghandhi, Mother Terasa, Abraham Lincoln and Einstein because they achieved their long term goal in life successfully.

Activity

Trainees are formed into groups of two to discuss their goals in life. They can also discuss the difficulties they had in the journey. A few may share their own experience or what they heard from the partner in the plenary level.

Guru Dronar's students, Archchunan, Bheeman, Dhuriothanan and others, were standing beneath a tree one day while learning to shoot arrows. Guru asked the students to aim at a parrot on the tree, and questioned them, "What do you see?" one of them said, "I see the tree", another said, "I see the parrot on the tree". But Archunnan said, "I see the neck of the bird". Later when they tried to shoot the bird, only Archunnan was suc-

8.4.9. Exploring options and facilitating actions

☺ *Are there many ways to reach a goal?*

☺ *How can you decide which is more efficient when there are many ways?*

The micro skills we have learnt so far would have helped the counsellor to see the problems of the child and to solve them. Empathy would have helped the student to reduce his distress and see the different ways to solve his problems. But sometimes, the student does not move forward and appears to get "stuck". The counsellor then asks the student what his options are. "What do you see as your options?" is an open question. He may discard some options as impossible while discussing. However, it is better to consider all the options because the option the student ruled out may turn out to be the one which he will eventually choose. If the student fails to see an option which is obvious to the counsellor, it can be put forward in a tentative way not as directive advise.

The student may be encouraged to talk about the positive and negative aspects of each option. It is better to discuss the most unlikely option first. The student's feelings about the various alternatives must be taken into account, logical thinking may pull him in one direction and feelings may pull him in another direction. It is more important for the student to feel comfortable with an option. Otherwise he will not stick to it. One has to look at the loss the student will experience in the decision process. While making a decision it is better to ask which will cost less? Which loss is acceptable, because losses affect our feelings. Better to ask the student to tell the part of him that wants option A and to explore that part fully, and then to tell about the part of him that wants option B and to explore that fully. The counsellor may allow the student to integrate the two opposite parts of himself and not to feel confused, but to accept that both are valid parts of himself.

If the student is 'stuck', the counsellor may give him permission to remain stuck for a week and then work with him next week.
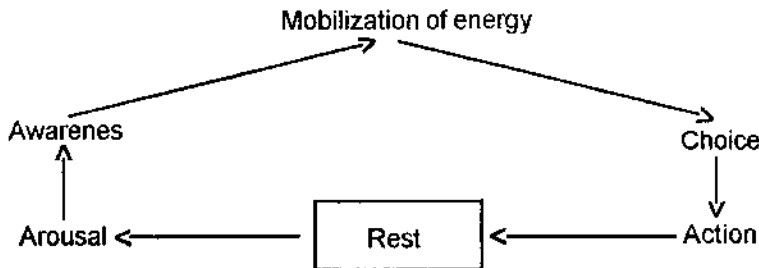
Sometimes, once awareness is raised, the student will move with ease around this circle.

In life we do not stay in a state of rest.
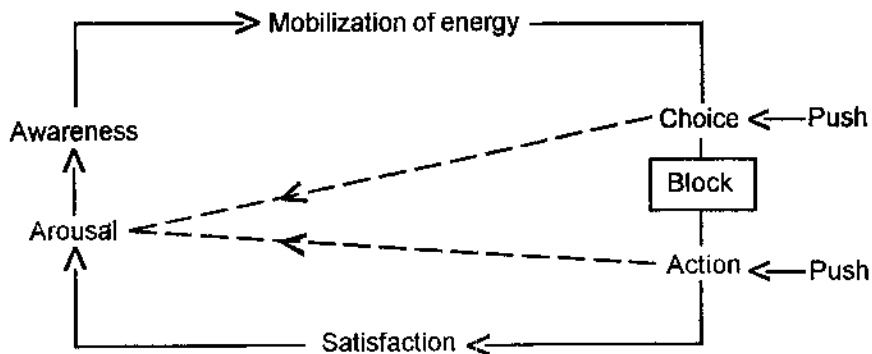
We move around the awareness circle again and again, and most people get struck with blocks. When there is a block, one has to return to the awareness point in the circle. The counsellor may ask the student what message she is getting from her body, from her emotional feelings and from her thoughts when she experiences her inability to decide or act.

The counsellor has to remember that the more he pushes a student to make a choice or to take action, the more blocked she is likely to become.

In life it is easy to do the routine work. But it is a risk to start with something new. There may be unknown consequences and these could be painful.

Blocks include the inability to deal with one's own feelings, the inability to cope with the reaction of others, fear of consequences, fear of repetition of past bad experiences, and the intuition of inappropriate shoulds, musts and oughts. Blocks also include the fear that something comfortable or rewarding will be lost, or that one lacks the skill to carry out the desired action.

Activity

Seran is a clever boy in Grade 5. He has a dream of becoming an engineer. When the scholarship test results were out, he became disturbed because he didn't get through the exam. His parents asked him to go to a popular school for Grade 6. But he said, "I'm not going to school at all".

Seran has been now directed to a teacher counsellor. Small groups of trainees may be asked to identify the options that can be selected by Seran. They may also be asked to identify the advantages and disadvantages of each and every option from the student's view. Finally the groups may identify the option with less loss and the one that will get emotional support. The work done by the group may be written on flip charts and used for plenary discussions. The trainer may ensure that all the trainees come to appropriate decisions.

If you are on the correct path, you will reach the goal even if it is a bit delayed.

It is the duty of the counsellor to make the student identify her goal and to prepare her mind to make decisions. Then the first step towards goal achievement may be identified and confirmed. Then the counsellor has to help the student to decide how to carry out the first step. Deciding when to carry out step one comes next. The counsellor may reward the student in some way for carrying out step one. The child may be encouraged to act in the same direction, and reassess the overall goal and evaluate her acts.

Sometimes exploring options and facilitating actions may not be needed for primary class children. In many instances, parents may be approached to set the goal and to solve the problems. Family counselling may also be used to solve the problems of children.

8.4.10. Termination

⊛   *If termination is not satisfactory, what will happen?*

The relationship between the student and the counsellor will eventually have to come to an end. That should be planned well. The counsellor may feel that a new experience she has been enjoying all this time is going to end. The student may also feel that the support he has got all this time is coming to an end. It is better to do the termination without causing such a deep feeling as far as possible.

A termination is successful if the student feels that he could solve his problems in his own in future and the counsellor is also satisfied with her work. Emotions may be involved in a termination. One has to look at it as an incident in a continuing life process. A counsellor should prepare the student for termination in the sessions that precede termination.

> **Teacher counsellor**
>
> We have met so many days and talked a lot. We have seen development also. We had a goal that we have to come to a point where counselling is not needed at all. It seems to me that we have almost come to that point. So we may terminate in a week or two.

If the goal of the counselling process is clear, there will be no confusion as to when the termination should be done. At a proper place, the student would also feel that this relationship is not needed after this. A counsellor may make the student realize from the first session itself that the relationship would come to an end one day. Termination does not mean that the student would have no problems in future. It does not mean that all the problems of the student are solved. A student may seek the help of the counsellor in the future too. But everyone feels happy to rely on their own inner resources to solve problems. This is true with children also. A counselling process may come to an end with the satisfaction that the student is now able to solve his own problems.

> *Activity*
>
> The trainees may be divided into small groups to role-play a termination session. A discussion may follow to see which role-play was better than the others.

8.5. Conclusion

This chapter discussed about the various micro skills of a counsellor. The skills become part of the personality of the counsellor with experience. Such a teacher counsellor will be an asset in helping thousands of affected children in her area.
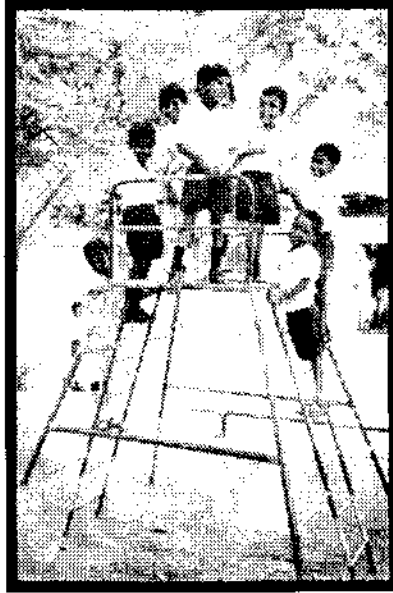
The young palmyrah grows

sheathless

In the beauty of a thousand flowers

it looks like the moon

but

the senses are like the sun

9

Ways of Helping

- What type of children need psychosocial help?

- What are the psychological ways of help you use daily?

- Is it possible to change behaviour?

- What are the benefits of keeping the mind and body in a relaxed state?

- What do you mean by expression?

9.1. Introduction

It is common for children to have mild physical, psychological and social problems. When they are affected we could observe changes in their behaviour and decline in their learning activities. Even though we are adults, we find it difficult to face stresses such as losses, threats, destruction and separation. Thus we can realise that children also would be affected.

During these stressful situations, it is important for us, teachers, to support children who need help and bring them back to normalcy. Ways to help and interventions are explained in this chapter. Teachers can modify these to suit the child's psychological maturity, environment and their daily educational activities. It is the duty of the teacher to assist the children to return to normalcy on their own,

to provide opportunities to express their feelings and to deal with their problems. It is important to consider the developmental stage of the child when observing them, guide them to continue their activities and encourage the family to participate in these activities when you try to help.

Ways of Helping

Normal circumstances	Special circumstances
□ Listening	□ Expressive methods
□ Supporting	□ Behavioural therapy
□ Problem solving	□ Play methods
□ Conflict resolution	□ Narrative Exposure Method
□ Dealing with anger	□ Relaxation
	□ Counselling
	□ Family therapy

Expressive methods

Music (Singing)	Dancing	Art (Drawing)	Clay modelling	Drama (Acting)	Story telling

Relaxation techniques

Breathing exercises	Muscular relaxation (Physical)	Relaxation exercises (Psychological)	Chanting	Exercises for inner peace	Meditation	General relaxation exercises

---

Activity

What ways would you use to deal with a child who needs help and to bring it back to normalcy?

Answers to this question could be written in cards and be displayed.

The participants could be directed to have a discussion about the answers and to arrive at unanimous conclusions.

9.2. Techniques to bring back normalcy

When we, adults, are affected our daily activities might be some times disrupted. We get disturbed as we are unable to return to normalcy. Similarly, some children also would show abnormal reactions when they face problems. Then the teacher should identify this and should pay additional attention. They can be brought back to normalcy by the following techniques. These techniques are classified into two groups. They are;

- ☐ Easy techniques (under normal circumstances)

- ☐ Special techniques (under special circumstances)

All primary teachers should possess knowledge regarding these methods. The teacher could apply his/ her own general knowledge, intellect, creativity and artistic resources to modify these techniques. It is certain that the teacher - student relationship would be improved and the child's mental state made more joyful through these methods.

9.3. Easy techniques

⊛ *There are two students in your classroom who frequently fight. How will you handle them?*

Even when learning activities are taking place in a healthy, conducive atmosphere, the teacher should manage small conflicts, problems and expression of anger. These methods which help to restore normalcy in children are ones called "easy techniques" which we are going to look into:

- ☐ Listening
- ☐ Supporting
- ☐ Conflict resolution
- ☐ Problem solving
- ☐ Anger management

A child could be brought back to normalcy even in a single day by these methods in the classroom. Supporting and listening are the common techniques which should be always followed in normal teacher-student relationships. (See chapter 8 for details.)

9.3.1. Conflict resolution

Differences of opinion might surface and vanish frequently among students who study together. Sometimes, this might persist and would disrupt the classroom atmosphere. Stop talking to each other, slapping, casting angry looks and exchanging verbal volleys are some of the indications of disharmony in the classroom.

Teacher's observation is important in handling this conflict situation. Some may not be outwardly observable. Sometimes the problematic child(ren) may not be identified. There is an organized step-by-step approach in conflict resolution. The following explains the process involved. The conflicts arising among students could be dealt with by appropriately applying these steps.

Identifying the conflict
↓
Identifying the students concerned individually or as groups
↓
Identifying their needs
↓
Understanding their fears and suspicions
↓
Pave way to appropriate dialogue
↓
Provide guidance to arrive at an acceptable decision to both sides.
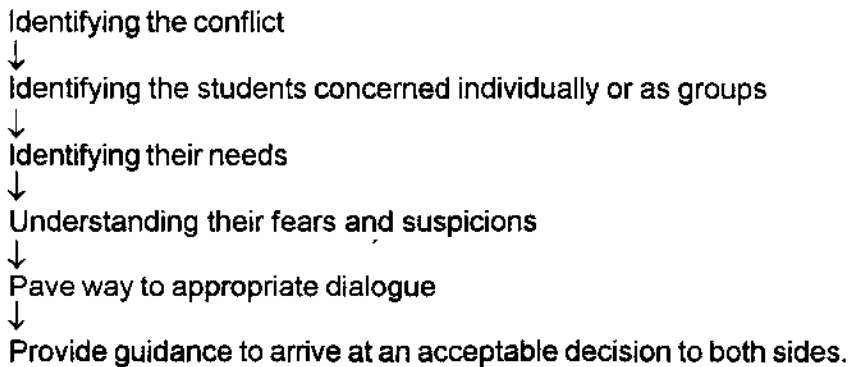
9.3.2. Problem solving approach

External pressures (stresses)
War
Displacement
Malnutrition
Poverty
Physical illness
Social discrimination
Loss
Trauma
Inappropriate environment
Family problems

When ever there are disruptions to learning activities of students it develops into a problem. Though internal and/or external factors can be responsible for problems, most of the problems are attributed to external pressures. (See box)

A child who faces these stresses might become a problematic child in the classroom. Then the teacher should transform himself into a "problem

solver" in these circumstances. It is important that the teacher should be a neutral person and should function with real interest in children during these circumstances. At the same time, finding solutions should not drag on, solutions should be reached in a short span of time. The teacher should be trained to differentiate between conflict and a problem and to deal with it appropriately.

- ☐ Two children fighting for a marble - conflict

- ☐ Several students fail in an examination - problem

Problem solving is also a continuous process involving different steps.

Problem solving methods

⊙ How do you see and understand the problem?

⊙ When did it start?

⊙ For how long has it persisted?

⊙ What is the cause for the problem?

⊙ What are the direct and indirect impacts of this problem?

⊙ How have you attempted to handle the problem in the past?

⊙ What are the ways to approach or solve this problem?

⊙ What is the best, possible practical strategy at this moment among these?

⊙ Try implementing that strategy

⊙ Evaluating whether it is successful

⊙ If it is a failure then trying out another strategy

⊙ Again evaluating.........

Note: These steps could be followed according to the age of the children and level of impact. The methodology explained in 8.4.9. could be used to solve the problem.

9.3.3. Dealing with anger

⊛ *Is anger a bad characteristic?*

⊛ *Is there anyone who never gets angry?*

Anger usually occurs in everyone. Most people consider it a bad quality. Every living thing experiences anger at one time or another.

When the mode of expression of anger (or suppression) brings an unhealthy outcome, anger is considered a bad, negative quality and despised. Anger which doesn't hurt others is healthy to a certain extent. We have to identify anger at the initial stages and safeguard ourselves and others from it.

⊛ *Then, can we suppress anger?*

'No' that is also an unhealthy situation

Ways to deal with anger

→ As a fist step the child could be asked to run (jog) for a while. After it feels tired, you can call the child separately and discuss the problem in detail.

→ During this conversation, you have to talk about the matter which caused the anger, listen to the complaints and should provide opportunities to express feelings.

→ If the anger is justifiable, then you should accept it and try to work out a way to solve the problem.

→ You can educate the child about relaxation techniques.

→ If necessary you can provide the basic needs such as food or water and then have the discussion.

→ If anger persists, then you can use the 'empty chair technique' to ventilate the anger. You could ask the child to come and sit in a private place. Put an empty chair in front of him and ask him to imagine that the person the child is angry with is in the chair. Let him express whatever he feels against that person verbally.

→ If a child is excessively angry, you can give a pillow to the child and ask him to imagine that the pillow is the person who he is angry with. The child can then do what ever he likes to the pillow. This also would help to ventilate the feelings of anger.

→ You could even provide instruments such as drum, raban or dolki to play or ask the child to throw a ball to a maximum distance.

These would pave the way to express anger easily and appropriately.

Note: These exercises should be continued until the child returns to its normal state and relaxes. The opportunity should be provided. If the anger could be dealt with easily, then it is appropriate to use only these simple techniques.

Children get angry like adults, thus the teacher should guide the child to express the anger through healthy ways and means.

❦Why do children get angry?

Children feel angry when there is an obstruction to what to natural like to do. For example, an action, which makes them happy is interrupted; or, if some body intervenes in their independence; or, if they are hurt or encounter bitter experiences; or, if you ask them to do some thing they don't like, then they would feel angry.

In other words, whatever obstructs their happiness or well-being would make them angry. Thus the teacher should be very careful in guiding the child to deal with its anger.

❦   *The child gets angry now.*

We can see that children react immediately when they get angry. They would hit, kick, scratch, spit, bite, shout or would stab with a pencil. There may be several other violent expressions, which could come out. This would deeply affect the classroom atmosphere. The children would show rigidity, palpitation, perspiration, heavy breathing and violent expression when they are in the grip of this feeling. These would disrupt the interest in learning. It is the duty of the teacher to bring the child out of this situation.

First of all, children who express anger in the classroom should be identified. Then the reason for anger should be identified through personal discussion. The levels of anger and the causative factor for anger would differ from child to child and with circumstances.

9.4. Special techniques

We are going to see the special methods used to assist children who need help. It is notable that most of these special methods are worked out through the normal activities of the child. Their special skills are stimulated by this. These methods such as dancing, singing, drawing, creative activities, games, story telling and acting are found in the primary school curriculum. It is important for the teacher to encourage children during these activities. These can be either individual activities

Expressive methods

or group activities.

9.4.1. Expressive method

When the child expresses its psychological affliction and feelings through these activities, it helps the child to get rid of the affliction and to return to normalcy.

9.4.1.1. Singing

Singing is a favourite activity of children. It is wrong to think that musical ability is needed for this. Generally, we could see children humming while doing something. We can see a difference in children who need help. They would not participate in singing, be withdrawn or would

just observe what is happening. Sometimes they would be aloof or disturb the singing.

The teacher should take special care of these children, approach them and identify the problem, and then incorporate them into the activity. It is important to provide the opportunity to sing. Initially the teacher could sing with the child. Then the child would be allowed to sing with the group. Then the child could be asked to sing on its own. The child could be even asked to sing along with other sources such as radio, television or video. It is good to encourage them through appreciation. Further, even new songs could be taught to them.

9.4.1.2. Dancing with singing

This is also an expressive method. It is called "music and movement" in primary education. Children could be allowed to sing and dance after teaching them a song with rhythm. The teacher should approach the children who do not participate, talk to them and bring them back to normalcy.

A child might naturally not show interest in singing. Some others might be shy by nature.

The children should be given opportunity to perform their bodily movements according to their wish when helping them to ex-

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Activity

Two participants should be called out and when one of them makes movements with the index finger the other should imitate it with bodily movements. This could be modified into an artistic form.

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press their feelings through dancing. They can be directed to dance, jump or move according to a rhythm.

9.4.1.3. Drawing

Children will express themselves and their feelings through art. The message expressed by them might be direct or sometimes indirect. In some cases there may not be anything significant. Children could be asked to draw whatever they like with pencils or colours. There is no

need that the drawing should be artistic. The following features in the drawing should be observed in order to guess their possible psychological significance.

- The pattern of lines drawn
- Choice of colours
- The selection of scene or theme
- The illustrated incident/ things/ people
- Organization of the drawings

There may be differences between the first drawing and later draw-

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Activity

⊙ Provide some drawing equipment and observe the participants while acting on their own

⊙ Similarly, the participants also should be guided to observe children in their classroom.

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ings. This might be an indication of the psychological changes taking place. The teacher should understand this. It is important to initiate discussions based on the drawings. But there is no need to insist on this. The important thing is to provide continuous support to the child.

9.4.1.4. Handicraft

The children could be encouraged to create whatever they like on their own by using clay, colour papers, gum and flowers, leaves, shells, seeds and dried leaves available in their environment or else the teacher could guide the children by doing it.

The classroom should be organized in a manner, which would encourage the child in creative activities during the learning process (see chapter 4)

It is notable that the concept of bringing opportunities, resources and environment to the child rather than the child going to them is introduced in the new educational reforms.

We could observe that learning becomes healthy and useful when we make the environment according to the children's liking. Further we could learn about any mental problem children may be having through their expression using the materials they find in their environment. Generally, we could come to know about this from the colours and shapes they choose. For example, when a child is facing a stressful situation and is disturbed, it would select dark colours. The shapes may not be

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Activity 1

⊙ The participants should be sent out to collect flowers, leaves, dried leaves, shells, seeds and feathers and be guided to make things from these. Their work could be exhibited and discussion could be initiated on the basis of what has been created.

⊙ Similarly participants could be guided to do the same activity with children in their classroom.

Activity 2

⊙ The trainees should be paired and one should play the role of sculptor and other should play the role of clay.

⊙ The sculptor should imagine that the other is the sculpture he wanted to make and guide him accordingly.

⊙ The person who plays the role of sculpture should not move on his own.

⊙ Then get the opinion of the sculptor about the sculpture through discussion and guide them to observe how the feelings of sculptor is expressed through his sculptures.

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regular. You should encourage children to engage in handwork according to their age, development and their liking.

The opportunity to express their emotional problems is given to the children through these activities.

9.4.1.5. Drama

Though this is a group activity, each child could express him/herself though this. Drama is a medium through which children could be observed individually. Children always like to imitate. Thus children

stores could be dramatized, and their expressions could be observed. Further, they could also be assisted to bring out their emotions.

Activity

The trainees should be divided into three groups and be guided to act the 'lion and rabbit' fable. Provide opportunity for each selected character to express their emotions.

Observe the following emotions among trainees and note them down.

- Anger
- Fear
- Valour
- Straightforwardness
- Kindness

You should try to involve affected children in drama activities. If they show reluctance, then they should be encouraged. Initially you could assign roles, which the children like. The causative factors of the trauma could be the theme. Little by little, the affected student could be made to take assigned roles. For example, the student could be assigned the role through which he/she can ventilate his/her emotions.

9.4.1.6. Story telling

Story telling is also an important expressive method. Children are very much interested in story telling. They would also be interested in repeating the stories they have listened to. This technique uses their skills to ventilate their stresses. When they are directed to formulate a story, it is likely that their own problems would come out as stories. There is a possibility for them to get solace through these indirect expressions.

Further, we could help a child tell a story completely or partially in a group or individually. Whenever the child finds it difficult to tell the story we could help the child by asking questions. The teacher could guess what would follow and ask for details accordingly. It is important that the teacher should be supportive and caring during this. All children should be given the opportunity to tell stories. Special efforts should be taken in cases of silent, withdrawn and reluctant children. The teacher could

employ techniques such as encouragement, games and further questioning to make the child talk.

> When elders tell stories (puranas, epics) to children it is better to avoid telling extremely unbelievable, phantasized stories. The stories should develop trust and enhance the personality. They should deal with reality. It is better to avoid horrible punishments (going to hell, curse etc.) and violence in stories.
>
> The "Little Elephant" story can be introduced to children.

If several students are affected by an events that took place in that area, then it could become the theme of a common story. For example, if parents have died due to violence, then the story of the baby elephant could be used. When they listen to the story in which the characters have been affected in a similar manner, they would then be able to understand what had happened to them. They would also learn positive approaches through the characters. You could allow children to question and clear their doubts during the story telling.

Things to be observed in this method.

→ Suitable place

→ Working with the purpose of building trust

→ Attentive listening

→ Providing self-satisfaction by allowing to act independently

→ Providing support and continuous assistance

→ Assisting to recall details of incident

9.4.2. Narrative exposure method

This is essentially child centred. The child will be assisted to narrate a traumatic incident in his/ her own language. This is a very effective expressive method. The teacher who listens should accept the child as he is and intently listen while giving empathetic answers. Open questions could be asked in order to encourage the

child. The teacher should familiarize him/herself with the inner world of the child. The child gets consolation by relating what has happened to a supportive person. You could further develop an idea of what has happened with information from parents. You could help the child to ventilate the feelings and emotions experienced during that particular event. Later, you could assist the child to face the trauma and to get over it.

9.4.3. Play method

Children are naturally interested in play. Generally, if a child doesn't show interest or is withdrawn from play, then we can assume that there might be some difficulty. Certain (organized) play activities pave the way for the child to represent and express the traumatic event. When playing with playthings, the child's interest, needs and conflicts would surface from the way it selects the play materials. Further, the situation, the way toys are used, their play activities, trend and underlying meaning would reflect directly or indirectly what has happened. The child would be able to work through, digest, accept and then overcome the trauma by continuing the play.

Apart from this, the child would come out with suppressed emotions and energies through games involving greater physical activity. Generally, interest in games should be inculcated in children. This could be achieved through individual and group games. The teacher also could take part in certain complicated play and then ask the child to explain what has happened. Further, the teacher should guide the play in a healthy manner to reach a satisfactory end.

Qualities acquired through play and games
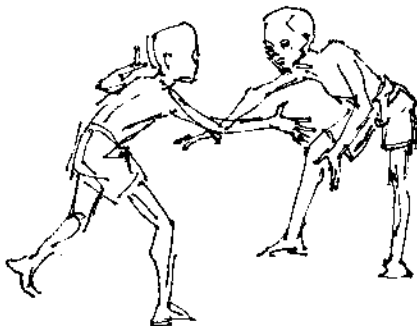
Collective mentality

Cooperation

Ability to give in

Follow rules and regulations

Obedience to leadership

Equal acceptance of failure and success

Learn to develop relationships with peers

Ability to control bodily movement

A teacher observes a child expressing what has happened to its family through play using toys, model house and plane. Then he speaks to the child to find out what has happened. The child demonstrates how his house was bombed, how people were injured and how the house was damaged. At this point the child struggles not knowing what to do. The teacher could get involved in the play at this time and assist the child to evacuate the injured in an ambulance and to rebuild the house.

Getting encouraged

Getting relaxed through expressing feelings and emotions

The teacher could use her own creativity to select appropriate games.

9.4.4.   Behavioural approach

It is one of the special methods to regulate inappropriate behaviour observed in a child. Appropriate behaviour could be encouraged by paying attention, appreciation, providing prizes and other positive reinforcements.

At the same time inappropriate behaviour could be eliminated or controlled by ignoring, neglecting, leaving them unobserved, keeping silent and withdrawal. Thus there is no need for physical punishment to correct an inappropriate behaviour. Sometimes, contrary to what we expected to achieve through physical punishment, it might cause long term adverse psychological effects in students and would cause hatred of school and learning. Further, it might even push them towards showing opposition and to resort to violence.

9.4.5.   Relaxation techniques

We may experience adverse physical and psychological changes when we face different stresses of daily life. We may not be able to function well when the stresses caused by these changes are too much

Raji is an eight-year-old girl. She is now in year 4. For the past one week she avoids entering the classroom and stays at the entrance in order to perform her class work. Fear, reluctance and inability to trust others are observed in her behaviour. Asked by the class teacher she told that one day when she was alone in the classroom writing, she was locked inside by some upper class boys. She shouted and cried and was rescued by a teacher who had heard the commotion. From that day onwards Raji stays at the entrance leaning on the door in order to prevent it being locked. Then the teacher tried to bring this behaviour back to normalcy.

The teacher stayed inside the classroom and corrected the child's exercise book. When it came into the classroom and showed the exercise book, the teacher appreciated it.

The teacher stayed in the middle of the class and called the child inside and kept her by his side while explaining the lessons.

In a few days Raji started sitting inside without reluctance. The teacher gave recognition by making her the class monitor.

Afterwards the teacher called her to his side, looked at her exercise books and appreciated her.

for us. Similarly, these may adversely affect children who may show unhealthy responses. Breathing exercises, shanthi asana, inner-peace exercises, relaxation exercises, meditation, and chanting mantras would be useful to alleviate these unhappy responses. The mind and the body would be calmed by these exercises and the child would return to normalcy. Some known yoga techniques also could be used for this purpose.

Usually it is important to observe the following while using these techniques:

❑   A quiet place with sufficient ventilation and light should be selected for this purpose.

❑   The exercises should be done at least half an hour every day.

❑   Suitable cotton clothes should be worn during the exercise

❑   It is preferable if a soft, peaceful background music is played during the exercises.

9.4.5.1. Breathing exercise

Whenever peace of mind is disrupted, breathing becomes irregular, shallow and rapid. An appropriate place should be selected before starting the breathing exercise.

9.4.5.2. Progressive muscular relaxation exercise

Relaxation means getting relieved from tensions and stresses. The

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Activity

Ask the trainees to stay in a circle. Then tell them to breathe in a regular manner.

⊙ Keep the hands relaxed, breathe in very deeply raising the left shoulder

⊙ Then bring down the left shoulder while exhaling

⊙ Afterwards raise the right shoulder while inhaling very deeply

⊙ Following this bring down the raised shoulder while exhaling

Yoga and Pranayama (breathing exercise) could be trained from a guru. (the trainees should be directed to continue doing this)

Ask a trainee to lie down on a bed sheet spread on the floor. Then instruct him to keep the body relaxed and then to consciously relax the parts of the body beginning from the toes

⊙ My toes are getting relaxed..............

⊙ My foot is getting relaxed........

Repeat these commands in the mind and relax the whole body part by part.

Chanting "Om Shanthi" is also acceptable during this exercise. The exercise could be concluded after relaxing the whole body. Chanting "Om Shanthi" at the end of each command is also practised. Participants could be guided to do this exercise even while sitting on a chair.

Then the trainees should be instructed to provide this training of Shanthi Asana (relaxation exercise) and Savasana (corpse posture) to others.

body would begin to relax when the mind is relaxed likewise when the body is relaxed, the mind is also relaxed.

Similar to this process, when mind is tensed, body too becomes tensed and when body is tensed mind becomes tensed. So when performing relaxation exercises, we could understand this inter-dependency of mind and body.

A child's muscles are usually tensed when it is under stress. If this continues for a while, then it would manifest as physical symptoms such as headache, stiff neck and tiredness and psychological symptoms such as anxiety, startled reaction and fear.

9.4.5.3.   Inner peace exercise

This exercise is useful not only for aggressive children but also for others. This exercise would be difficult when the mind is tired and when a person is exposed to multiple stresses. Then you should discuss with

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Activity

Guide the trainees to sit in their seats in a relaxed manner.

Trainer: " Concentrate on the white spot in front of you on the floor. When this is registered in your mind close your eyes slowly. Now we are sitting in a comfortable chair in this hall. We can hear birds singing, noise of vehicles and sound of temple bell outside. Now we have become a weightless sponge and going higher and higher. There are buildings, pastures, the main street and moving vehicles beneath us. Now we are sitting on a grassy patch in a high hill.

How happy are we now! Oh! How beautiful the whole world is! How happy are we in this beautiful world! There is greenery everywhere!.....blue sky......moving clouds! We are happy and let's make others feel happy. Our responsibilities call us back. We will return to our former place. Our happy journey is going to begin again. We are coming back the same way to the entrance of our hall. We are sitting in our seats with a contented happy relaxed mind. Now we are slowly opening our eyes.

Activity

⊙ Ask the trainees to sit in a circle. Keep a small lamp in the middle of it and tell them to intently look at it.

⊙ Guide them to think about good things

⊙ Watch the regular breathing pattern

⊙ Ask them to close their eyes slowly and guide them to chant mentally

⊙ Continue this for five minutes

⊙ Time could be increased slowly after a week

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the participants in order to win their trust and confidence, and to make them willingly close their eyes to perform this exercise. There is no need to think that "meditation" is something performed by hermits and saints in lonely recesses and mountainous ravines.

It is easy to inculcate good thinking and creativity in a concentrated mind. Meditation is good for concentration and relaxation. Introducing this to children would be useful for their future.

9.4.5.4. Chanting Mantras or reciting prayers

This is also a relaxation technique. When a meaningful word or a phrase is repeatedly said while sitting in a peaceful place in a relaxed manner, mental peace would be acquired. This word or phrase could be something associated with religion, name of a deity or else a common phrase such as "Om Shanthi". Christians could say "O Jesus, have mercy on us" or Muslims could say "Subahanallah" in repitition. Initially chanting could be vocalised but after sometime this could be done silently in one's mind. Time could be allocated daily for this kind of relaxation at the classroom level or school level. This would be very useful to bring peace and calmness in case of children.

9.4.5.5. Meditation

Learning is made easy, memory is increased and the body is kept healthy through meditation. A suitable place should be selected for this. The body should be kept erect (spine should be straight and head uprigh) while meditating. Anything commendable and respectable could be used as a focal point of meditation. A word or a source of light could be used for this purpose. Even one could meditate on his own breathing. If the mind wanders, then again attempt should be made to bring it back to the focal point of meditation.

9.4.6. Counselling

Severely affected children could be helped by a teacher counsellor. But it would be better if all teachers possess the basic knowledge and skills of counselling. A child should be handled carefully when it is being relieved form the stresses of a problem. The counselling approach is helpful in building the teacher-student relationship with trust, to observe the child from their perspective and to bring it back to normalcy. Chapter 8 of this manual is especially devoted to this.

9.5. Conclusion

In this chapter we have seen methods which could be used to deal with affected children and ways of bringing them back to normalcy. Easy and special methods and activities are explained here. Some of these methods could be modified according to the maturity of the child, circumstances, type of problem and the environment. Further, some of the methods are included to enhance teachers' knowledge. These would be useful to teachers when solving the problems of grown up children in their school.
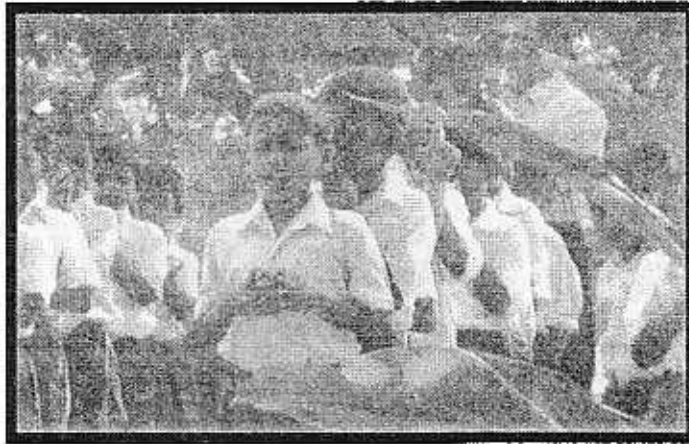
War and Peace

Fight,
Fight, oh... fight.
Fight for peace,
Fight hates love.
Fight destroys kindness.

Fighting is killing the nation.
Fighting is destroying relationships.
We lost our parents.
We live in poverty.

Peace
Peace, oh... peace.
Peace abhors fighting.
Peace gives happiness to life.
And happiness to the heart.

Peace develops Truth.
Peace unites the nation.
Peace in one's life is the ultimate goal.
Peace brings progress.

Boy, aged 11

"The Cry of My Heart" - Children's Responses to War and Peace
ZOA - 2002

English -Tamil Glossary

Ability	-	ஆற்றல்கள்
Abuse	-	துஷ்பிரயோகம்
Action/ function	-	செயற்பாடு
Active listening	-	உற்றுக்கேட்டல்
Adaptive	-	இயல்பாக்கம்
Advanced empathy	-	அதி ஒத்துணர்வு
Aggressive	-	ஆக்ரோஷம்
Aggressive character	-	மூர்க்க சுபாவம்
Agreement	-	இணக்கம்
Aim	-	இலக்கு
Altruistic	-	உன்னதம்
Anger	-	கோபம்
Anti social activity	-	சமூக விரோதச் செயற்பாடு
Anxiety	-	பதற்றம்
Anxiety	-	பதகளிப்பு
Appreciation/ praise	-	பாராட்டு
Approach	-	அணுகுமுறை
Attending	-	உடனிருத்தல்
Attention seeking	-	கவன ஈர்ப்பு
Attentive listening	-	வடிகட்டிச் செவிமடுத்தல்
Attitude	-	மனப்பாங்கு
Authority	-	அதிகாரம்
Awareness	-	விழிப்புணர்ச்சி
Bad experience	-	கசப்பான அனுபவங்கள்
Behavioural change	-	நடத்தை மாற்றம்
Behavioural patterns	-	நடத்தைக் கோலங்கள்
Behaviour	-	ஒழுக்கம், நடத்தை
Behaviour therapy	-	நடத்தைச் சிகிச்சை
Belief	-	நம்பிக்கை
Biological environment	-	உயிரியற்சூழல்
Body language	-	உடல்மொழி
Brutalisation	-	வன்மமடைதல்

Cerebral hemisphere	-	மூளையவரைக் கோளம்
Challenge, face	-	எதிர்கொள்ளல்
Character	-	சுபாவம்
Child centred education	-	பிள்ளைமையக்கல்வி
Child with special needs	-	விசேட தேவை உள்ள பிள்ளை
Clear limit	-	துலக்கமான எல்லை
Closed questions	-	மூடிய வினாக்கள்
Cognition	-	அறிவாற்றல்
Cognitive	-	அறிகை
Communication, relationship	-	தொடர்பாடல், உறவு
Community approach	-	சமூக அணுகுமுறை
Community resources	-	சமூக வளங்கள்
Complaint	-	முறைப்பாடு
Concentration	-	மனதை ஒருமுகப்படுத்தல்
Concept	-	எண்ணக்கரு
Conduct disorder	-	இயல்புக்கு மாறான நடத்தை
Conflict	-	முரண்பாடு
Conflict resolution	-	முரண்பாடு தீர்த்தல்
Cope/ manage	-	கையாளுதல்
Counselling	-	உளவளத்துணை
Counselling room	-	உளவளத்துணை அறை
Creative	-	ஆக்கத்திறன்
Creative activities	-	ஆக்கவியற் செயற்பாடுகள், படைப்பாக்க செயற்பாடுகள்
Crisis	-	நெருக்கடி
Culture	-	பண்பாடு
Curiosity	-	ஆராய்வுக்கம்
Data, information	-	தகவல்
Dependence	-	தங்கி வாழும்
Depression	-	மனச்சோர்வு
Deteriorate	-	கெடுதல்
Development	-	அபிவிருத்தி, விருத்தி, மேம்பாடு
Developmental stages	-	உளவிருத்தி நிலைகள்
Difficulties in Learning	-	கற்றல் இடர்ப்பாடுகள்

Difficulty	-	இன்னல்
Dimension	-	பரிமாணம்
Disaster	-	அனர்த்தங்கள்
Displacement	-	இடம்பெயர்வு
Drawing	-	படம் வரைதல்
Drive	-	உந்தல்
Dynamics	-	இயக்கம்
Educational environment	-	கல்விச் சூழல்
Efficiency	-	வினைத்திறன்
Emotion	-	உணர்வுபூர்வமான
Emotional expression	-	உணர்ச்சி வெளிப்பாடு
Empathy	-	ஒத்துணர்வு
Enrichment	-	செம்மைப்படுத்தல்
Enthusiasm	-	உற்சாகம்
Environmental factors	-	சூழற்காரணிகள்
Equality	-	சமத்துவம்
Exam tension	-	சோதனை அழுத்தம்
Experience	-	மீள் அனுபவம்
Exploration	-	துருவி ஆராய்தல்
Exploring options	-	பல்வேறு பாதைகளைத் தேடல்
Expressive/ emotive method	-	வெளிப்பாட்டு முறை
Extended family	-	கூட்டுக் குடும்பம்
External environment	-	வெளிச்சூழல்
External factor	-	புறவயக் காரணி
Facilitating action	-	நடவடிக்கைகளைத் துரிதப்படுத்தல்
Family balance	-	குடும்பச் சமநிலை
Family support	-	குடும்ப ஆதரவு
Family therapy	-	குடும்ப உளவளத்துணை
Fantasy, imagination	-	கற்பனை
Fear, phobia	-	பயம், அச்சம்
Fine arts	-	நுண்கலைகள்
Firm	-	உறுதியான
Fixed limit	-	வரையறுக்கப்பட்ட எல்லை

Focus	-	குவியம்
Focusing	-	குவியப்படுத்தல்
Forget	-	மறதி
Frustration	-	விரக்தி

Generalization	-	பொதுமைப்படுத்தல்
Gifted child	-	மீத்திறன் பிள்ளை
Globalisation	-	உலகமயமாதல்
Goal setting	-	இலக்கு நிர்ணயம் செய்தல்
Grief (bereavement)	-	இழவிரக்கம்
Grief (sadness)	-	துக்கம்
Group	-	குழு

Habit	-	பழக்கவழக்கம்
Handwork skill	-	கைத்திறன்
Health	-	ஆரோக்கியம்
Health deterioration	-	சுகாதாரச்சீர்கேடு
Health habit	-	சுகாதாரப் பழக்கவழக்கம்
Hereditary	-	பரம்பரை
Hereditary factor, genetic factor	-	பரம்பரைக் காரணி
Hyperactivity	-	அதீத செயற்பாட்டு நிலை

Ideal world	-	இலட்சிய உலகம்
Identify	-	இனங்காணுதல்
Image	-	பிம்பம்
Imitation	-	பாவனை செய்தல்
Impose	-	திணிப்பு
Independence	-	சுதந்திரம்
Individuality	-	தனித்துவம்
Inferiority complex	-	தாழ்வு மனப்பான்மை
Influence	-	செல்வாக்கு
Inner vision	-	அகக்காட்சி
Inner world	-	அந்தரங்க உலகு
Insecurity	-	பாதுகாப்பின்மை
Instructions	-	அறிவுறுத்தல்கள்

Intelligence	-	நுண்ணறிவு, விவேகம்
Interest	-	ஆர்வம்
Internal factor	-	அகவயக் காரணி
Internalise	-	உள்வாங்குதல்
Interrupt	-	இடைநிறுத்தல்

| Joyful | - | மகிழ்ச்சி |
| Judgment | - | தீர்ப்பிடுதல் |

| Kinship | - | இரத்த உறவுகள் |
| Knowledge | - | அறிவு |

Land mine	-	கண்ணிவெடி
Language skill	-	மொழித்திறன்
Leadership	-	தலைமைத்துவம்
Learning	-	கற்றல்
Learning condition	-	கற்றல் நிபந்தனை
Learning difficulty	-	கற்றல் இடர்ப்பாடு
Learning methods	-	கற்றல் வகைகள்
Learning outcome	-	கற்றல் வெளிப்பாடு
Learning performance	-	கற்றல் அடைவு
Learning process	-	கற்றல் செயற்பாடுகள்
Limits	-	எல்லைகள்
Listening	-	செவி மடுத்தல்
Long term memory	-	நீண்டகால ஞாபகம்

Malnutrition	-	போசாக்கின்மை
Manifestation	-	பிரதிபலிப்புகள்
Meaning in life	-	வாழ்வின் அர்த்தம்
Memory	-	ஞாபகம்
Mental ability	-	உள ஆற்றல்
Mental age	-	உள வயது
Mental energy	-	உளச்சக்தி
Mental environment	-	உளச்சூழல்
Mental Health/ Well being	-	உளநலம்

Mental retardation/ handicap	-	விவேகக் குறைபாடு
Mental state, Mood	-	மனநிலை
Micro skills	-	நுண்திறன்கள்
Minor	-	மிதமான
Model	-	மாதிரி
Modernization	-	நவீனமயமாக்கல்
Motivation	-	ஊக்கல்
Motor skill	-	உடலியக்கத்திறன்
Muscular relaxation	-	தசைத் தளர்வு
Narrative exposure therapy	-	சம்பவ விபரிப்பு முறை
Needs	-	தேவைகள்
Negative	-	மறைமுகமாக
Negative thoughts	-	மறையான எண்ணங்கள்
Nocturnal enuresis	-	படுக்கையை நனைத்தல்
Normal life	-	இயல்பு வாழ்க்கை
Nuclear family	-	தனி கருக்குடும்பம்
Nutrition	-	போசாக்கு
Observation	-	அவதானிப்பு
Open questions	-	திறந்த வினாக்கள்
Oppression	-	அடக்குமுறை
Orphanage	-	சிறுவர் காப்பகங்கள்
Partial listening	-	பகுதியாகக் கேட்டல்
Peace (inner)	-	அக அமைதி
Peer group	-	சகபாடிக் குழுக்கள்
Perception	-	புலக்காட்சி
Personality	-	ஆளுமை
Physical effect	-	உடல் விளைவு
Physical environment	-	பௌதீகச் சூழல்
Planning	-	திட்டமிடுதல்
Positive	-	நேராக
Post traumatic stress disorder	-	நெருக்கீடுக்குப் பிற்பட்ட மனவடு நோய்
Problem	-	பிரச்சினை

Problem solving	-	பிரச்சினை தீர்த்தல்
Psychosocial problems	-	உளசமூக பிரச்சனைகள்
Punishment	-	தண்டனை
Quality	-	பண்பு
Range of Attention	-	கவன வீச்சு
Rays of light	-	ஒளிக்கதிர்
Reconstruction	-	புனர்நிர்மாணம்
Reframing	-	பார்வை மாற்றம் செய்தல்
Rehabilitation	-	புனர்வாழ்வு
Relaxation exercise	-	தளர்வுப் பயிற்சி
Relaxed	-	தளர்வாக இருத்தல்
Remind	-	மீள நினைவுபடுத்தல்
Response	-	துலங்கல்
Rituals	-	கிரியை/ சடங்கு
Role models	-	முன்மாதிரிகள்
Role play	-	நடிபாகம்
Satisfaction	-	திருப்தி
School refusal	-	பாடசாலைக்குச் செல்ல மறுத்தல்
Security	-	பாதுகாப்பு
Self confidence	-	தன்னம்பிக்கை
Self control	-	சயகட்டுப்பாடு
Self evaluation	-	சுயமதிப்பீடு
Sensation	-	புலனுணர்ச்சி
Senses	-	புலன்கள்
Separation anxiety	-	பிரிவுப் பதகளிப்பு
Session	-	அமர்வு
Short term memory	-	குறுங்கால ஞாபகம்
Signs	-	குறியீடுகள்
Situation for Learning	-	கற்றலுக்கான களம்
Skills	-	திறன்கள்
Social adaptation	-	சமூக இணையாக்கம்
Social changes	-	சமூக மாற்றம்

Social effect	-	சமூக விளைவு
Social environment	-	சமூகச்சூழல்
Social factor	-	சூழற்காரணி
Social norm	-	சமூக நியமம்
Social skill	-	சமூகத்திறன்
Socialization	-	சமூக மயமாக்கல்
Somatization	-	மெய்ப்பாடு
Soul	-	ஆத்மா
Speech difficulties	-	பேச்சில் சிரமம்
Spiritual motivation	-	ஆன்மீக ஈடுபாடு
Stammer	-	கொன்னை தட்டுதல்
Step farther	-	மாற்றுத் தந்தை
Step mother	-	மாற்றுத் தாய்
Stimulus	-	தூண்டிகள்
Storage	-	சேமித்தல்
Story telling	-	கதை கூறுதல்
Stress/ tension	-	நெருக்கீடு, அழுத்தம்
Structure	-	கட்டமைப்பு
Suggestion	-	கருத்தேற்றம்
Suicide	-	தற்கொலை
Support	-	அரவணைப்பு, ஆதரவு
Symptoms	-	அறிகுறிகள்
Teaching aid	-	கற்பித்தல் உபகரணம்
Therapeutic methods	-	இயல்பாக்கல் முறைகள்
Thought	-	சிந்தனை
Trainee	-	பயிலுநர்
Trainer	-	பயிற்றுநர்
Trauma	-	மனவடு
Undesirable behaviour	-	பொருத்தப்பாடற்ற நடத்தை
Unique/ individuality	-	தனித்துவம்
Unity	-	ஒற்றுமை
Vague limit	-	மழுங்கிய எல்லை
Value	-	விழுமியம்

Ventilate, express	–	வெளிப்படுத்தல்
Vicious circle	–	விஷவட்டம்
Well-being, health	–	நலம்
Withdrawal	–	ஒதுங்குதல்

Education in difficult times......................

Next to the family, the primary school is the place of importance in the world of a child. The school environment is a social institution that not only determines the present state of the child but also the future generation. Teachers undertake an immense responsibility in their noble task of teaching students, promoting their well being and molding future citizens. The mental state of a student will determine their learning capacity, interest and ability. Hence, it is essential for the teacher to know about the mental state of their students. What is the mental state of a child? How to assess it? How does one promote psychosocial well-being while teaching? How does one identify mental health problems and what are the ways to help? These are all matters that every teacher should know about. The purpose of this manual is to provide this knowledge and skill. Although this psychosocial training manual has been prepared mainly for primary school teachers; other teachers, parents, those who work with children and social workers can also benefit from this manual.

This kind of service to promote well-being is needed in normal times. However, many surveys and research undertaken in this region have found that the recent widespread destruction and calamities of war have had a devastating psychological effect in children. Teachers are well placed to help these children regain their mental health. It will be the children who will ultimately have to rebuild the broken society and create a bright future. This manual will be of help in this essential service.