

## Positive Discipline Promotes Adolescent Mental Health.



### Psychology

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### ABSTRACT

*Adolescence is a crucial period for an individual to establish values, attributes and character building. In today's competitive scenario, adolescent has various distractions leading in a negative direction.*

*Adolescent mental health is central to the future development of a country; its lacking creates problems in families and society. Positive discipline at home and school creates healthy interpersonal connection, each person's contribution has meaning and value. Adolescent's connectedness increases academic success, life skills and decreases risky behavior. (Resnick et al, 1997; Battistich,1999).*

*The present paper emphasizes the keys for effective implementation of well designed programmes at home and at school for promoting mental health.*

### INTRODUCTION

World health organization defines health as "a state of well being in which the individual realizes his/her own abilities, can cope with normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully and is able to make contribution to his/her community". Adolescents can become pride of their elders, communities and even their nation (Heckinger 1992). The present paper emphasizes the importance of parents and schools in enhancing adolescent mental health.

### CURRENT STATUS OF ADOLESCENTS

Adolescents face a great threat to their mental health as the rates of depression, suicide; homicide, substance abuse etc. are on the rise. Adolescents today encounter difficulties and more life challenges than previous generation, yet they are provided less guidance and intervention for their personal developments. (pajares and urdan, 2004 pg. 3)

Thus mental, social and behavioral correlates of health problems have resulted in lowered quality of life, A variety of signs may point to mental health problems/serious emotional disturbances in adolescents leading to disruption of emotional and adjustment functioning. Due to these invisible problems adolescents damage their self-image, emotional well-being, lose confidence to solve problems in daily life, dropping out of school, difficulty in interpersonal relations within and outside family, academic under achievements, undermine school performance, poor social performance. Etc.

### NEED FOR INTERVENTION

According to (UNICEF, 2004) young people below 25yrs of age represent almost 50% of the world's population. India has the largest population of adolescents in the world with 243 million individuals aged between 10-19 yrs. This population is at the threshold of mental illness which requires immediate attention. Studies from India have revealed that the prevalence rate of mental problems to be 12.5% in 8-16 yrs, community based sample from Bangalore (srinath s.et al, 2f005), 9.4% In 8-12 yrs old from a community sample in Kerala (Hacket. R.&et al, 1999) and 6.3% in 4-11 yrs old school children in Chandigarh (Malhotra.s. et al, 2002).

### PROMOTING MENTAL HEALTH

The key to promoting youth mental health is through strategies that should be implemented at home and in school. According to WHO family connectedness was identified as one of the top five protective factors related to youth well-being, parents play a key role in providing a sound mental health for their children. Prabhjot Molhi (2000), effective discipline requires that parents

in the context of a positive, supporting relation use disciplining strategies that help to increase the desired behavior and reduce inappropriate behaviour.

Parents discipline the child in the process of child rearing. The second most intimate environment where the child spends most of the time is in school. The child gets disciplined by parents at home and by teachers in school. Till recently disciplining was meant to teach the child do's and don'ts accompanied with corporal punishment, which left its negative shades on the child's mental health. But now discipline has a new dimension with positivity enhancing the child's mental health.

### POSITIVE DISCIPLINE

Discipline is teaching children how to be in harmony with themselves and get along with other people. With philosophy and techniques drawn from the writings of Rudolph Dreikurs (Dreikurs, 1968; Dreikurs and Cassel, 1972; Dreikurs and Grey, 1968), Nelsen et al (2001) proposed a model of positive discipline A core concept underlying positive discipline model, drawn from Dreikurs is that all behaviour problems can be directly linked to "four mistaken goals of behaviour" or "hidden reason" (Nelsen et al, 2000 P.94). The four mistaken goals are-

1. To gain undue attention
2. To experience sense of misguided power over others.
3. To seek revenge and
4. To socially withdraw or convey inadequacy.

The foremost aim of discipline is the development of "self discipline". Dreikurs defined self discipline as "Discipline without imposed authority by any individual, but imposed by the individual himself and that of the group, the development of intelligent self-control rather than blind obedience because of fear". (Dreikurs and Cassel, 1972, P.22)

According to Dreikurs, self discipline is necessary for one to function successfully in a democratic society. Nelsen et al (2000) shares this perspective, prescribing three "empowering" self perceptions and four "essential skills" to be developed in children. The three self perceptions concern personal competence, social belonging and autonomy. The four essential skills encompass intrapersonal skills, interpersonal skills, judgement skills and systemic skills. Positive discipline helps children learn self-discipline without fear and gives guidelines for what behaviour is acceptable and then supports them to abide by these guidelines. Positive disciplining is child centric.

### PARENTING POSITIVE DISCIPLINE

The most common challenge parent's face is disciplining their children. Effective discipline focuses on increasing positive behaviour. Numerous studies show that teens who perceive their parents as both kind and firm are at lower risk for smoking, use of marijuana, alcohol or being violent. (Aquilino, 2001, Baumrind, 1991; Jackson et al, 1998, Simmons, Morton et al 2001). Parental supervision, in particular, appears to be of crucial importance in preventing a range of adolescent risk behaviours (Coleman, 1997; De Vore and Ginsburg, 2005). Adolescents who feel close to their parents show more positive psychosocial development and behavioral competence, less susceptibility to negative peer pressure, and lower tendencies to be involved in risk-taking behaviors Resnick Bearman. Blum and others (1997).

#### STRATEGIES FOR INCREASING POSITIVE BEHAVIOR

1. Positive reinforcement – Rewarding desired behaviour
2. Collaborative problem solving – parents should work out with the child to solve problems
3. Praised desired behaviour
4. Educate the child to choose appropriate behaviour
5. Teach effective ways to manage stress
6. Spend special time with the child
7. Model positive behaviour
8. Create good relation with child
9. Evaluate teaching whether it strengthens or weakens the relationship
10. Set limits
11. Intervene and connect empathetically

#### STRATEGIES THAT INCREASE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF DISCIPLINE

1. Keep positive emotional tone, show affects
2. Set limits clearly and calmly
3. Be consistent in discipline techniques
4. Reward positive behaviour with attention and praise
5. Develop and maintain regular times for daily activities
6. Co-ordinate discipline techniques with spouse
7. Model the behaviour you would like your child to exhibit.

#### POSITIVE DISCIPLINE IN SCHOOLS

According to Nelsen et al (2000) Teachers should develop 3 empowering self-perceptions, and four essential skills to prevent wide range of social and emotional problems. Nelsen et al (2000) highlights the importance of a democratic classroom climate. Encouragement is viewed as the foundation of positive discipline (Nelsen et al; 2000 P.161) and a key to motivating learning, enhance self-esteem, develop positive teacher student relation, and preventing, social, emotional and behavioural problems. Positive discipline devotes greater attention to class meetings than any other strategy. Class meetings serve to prevent and correct misbehavior and foster four essential skills noted previously. "Mistakes" are viewed as opportunities for students to learn appropriate behaviour and to develop the three self perceptions and four essential skills mentioned earlier.

Through research three interventions that provide alternative means for addressing school discipline have emerged.

1. School wide positive behavioural interventions and supports (SWPBIS).
2. Social and emotional learning (SEL)
3. Restorative justice model.

SWPBIS focuses on creating and maintaining school and classroom climate that positively enforce good behaviours school wide and then respond to children engaging in problem behaviours with a tiered structure of intervention and support.

SEL has two features, building supportive teacher – student rela-

tionships and encouraging student centered self discipline.

Restorative justice model facilitates community circles that bring together victims, offenders, their supporters and other community members affected by the offense.

PBS – Positive Behaviour Support model is EBS, Effective Behavioural Support. This model emphasizes a school wide system that defines, teaches and encourages appropriate behaviour in children in elementary and middle schools. This model provides four major perspectives.

1. School wide support
2. Specific setting
3. Classroom support
4. Individual student support

Project PATHE (Positive Action Through Holistic Education)- The goals include intensifying educational skills, diminishing anti social behaviour and enhancing educational and career development.

STEP – School Transitional environmental program. It increases student accountability and enhance students abilities to learn school rules and expectations.

RCCP – Resolving Conflict Creatively Program. The goal is to make certain that students acquired the skill needed to diminish violence and develop more caring relationships.

Assertive Discipline – Developed by Leecanter in 1976. It is a classroom management method that focuses on the rights of teacher to regulate behaviour.

GREAT – Guiding Responsibility and Expectation for adolescents for Today and Tomorrows. This program nurtures in students those skills, behaviour and attitudes that enhance the likelihood of healthy outcomes for themselves, their peers and the school environment.

RIPP – Responding In Peaceful and Positive ways –A subcomponent of GREAT problem solving model is the backbone of the RIPP curriculum (Meyer et al 2001).

Research over 30 years suggests that Proactive school wide approaches are best practices in addressing the challenge of maintaining discipline. There are a number of research based approaches to provide proactive systems of behavioural support in schools. Some of the effective proactive behavioural support programs are

1. Center on positive behavioral interventions and supports (University of Oregon).
2. First step to success (Sopris west)
3. Positive adolescent choices training
4. Project ACHIEVE
5. Promoting positive thinking strategies
6. Second step curriculum

#### CONCLUSION

Today's adolescents are tomorrow's pillars of the nation. So they need to be mentally physically healthy to contribute productively to the society. In today's cut through healthy and strive for excellence. Parents and school a play a key role in providing a sound mental health to the child.

Parenting positive discipline enhances self discipline, self esteem and psychological well being. The school plays an important role in further disciplining the child. Thus parenting positive discipline and implementation of proactive school wide ap-

proaches for disciplining will enhance the adolescent's mental health. So youth with better mental health demonstrate more socially positive behaviour and engage in few risky behaviour. Perceiving parents as kind and firm will decrease engaging adolescents in risky behaviour (Morton et al 2001).

Positive discipline will make the adolescent responsible, with good interpersonal relation better communication and more resilient. It will enhance social skills, life skills and emotional stability, which prepares the adolescent for better adult life. Intervention school based model along with parental involvement in disciplining the child will promote positive mental health among adolescents.

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