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Empowering People: Effective Social Work Approaches & Strategies



COUNSELLING NEED AMONG ADOLESCENT STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT *Adolescent group comprises of people between the ages of 10 to 19 years (WHO). The multidimensional development during adolescence presents a number of challenges to them. Adolescents are under pressure to meet the academic expectations of teachers, parents and self. A higher achievement is valued in the society, which puts pressure on students. Experience suggests that adolescents are at greater risk of getting into trouble if their parents are not clear about what to tell them, while concentrating on academic performance among the adolescence. Parents often are not prepared to deal with the challenge that their adolescent is learning to hold her and his reins. Most parents ignore the psychological needs of their adolescents which in turn will affect their mental health. In this paper the researcher assessed the adolescent students' need for counselling which will be helpful for early identification and prevention of mental health problems. Sample comprised of 60 students (30 boys & 30 girls) from Higher Secondary Schools in Trichy District. The findings and suggestions will be discussed in the presentation.*

Introduction

Adolescents are the back bone of country. Their voices are important in all domains. They embody a tremendous amount of untapped positive energy and resourcefulness that gets released and set in motion in the process of growing up supported by adults, central to action. This stage is located between childhood and adulthood, when the child is neither very young nor very old. It is more than a merger of childhood into adulthood. The age range accepted by WHO is between 10-19 years. This period is marked by changes in the person of all developmental dimensions (physical, cognitive affective and behavioural), heightened social expectations, new roles, and uncertainties. It is a phase marked by evolving sexuality. They tend to become idealistic and interested in deriving own theories. They like to make their own decisions. They have high emotional sensitivity and the attraction towards opposite sex is on the rise as a natural corollary of growth. They become distant from parents, and close relationships with friends. The intimacy with peer group increases as it becomes important to create new opportunities to interact with outside world and explore it without adult surveillance/restrictions. They enjoy being part of the peer group. Adolescents experience sudden mood swings from feeling extremely happy to extremely sad. They become temperamental and are often not understood ad appreciated by adults around . They are search of an answer to 'who am I ?' overall, it a phase of high and lows characterised by multiple creative dreams and confusions about one's physical, intellectual, emotional and social self, and career. The multidimensional development during adolescent enables Children in unfolding their developmental assets and presents a number of challenges to them and their socializing agents (parents, teachers, and significant others). Adolescents are under the pressure to meet the academic expectations of teachers, parents and self. The challenges for adolescents are coping with the demand to regularly attend the school, the pressure of studies and examinations, to prepare for separation from parents find a career, to become perfectionist, learn to remain cool and resilient and do well also on adverse circumstances.

Experience suggests that adolescents are at greater risk of getting into trouble if their parents are not clear about what to tell them. Although most adolescents are not happy when parents tell them what to do or not do, they understand and believe that parents are care about them. Adolescents communicate with peers much more closely than parents, teachers and others with whom they communicate only what is necessary. The nature and type of communications adolescents have with their peers, teachers and parents affect their overall behaviour and well-being. Parents need to be more consultative and extend their communications to cover diverse topics of interest to adolescents beyond academics and discipline. The discussions related to the forbidden subjects of sex, drug, alcohol tobacco use, prior to exposure can increase the chances of adolescent's acting responsibility. The exercise in communication starts from early childhood when parents play with the children, listen to their small tasks, laugh and pat, and reinforce the appropriate behaviour. Children need to be given adequate opportunities to express themselves without inhibitions and to know basic information about their parents, like level of education, jobs and approximate incomes. There are many children who do not have knowledge of their parents' own timing may be necessary to be children. Some fathers seem to have minimal communication with children, especially the daughters. The communication between adolescents and parent and/or with adults depends on their sense of mutual understanding and respect. Some parents have hard time in understanding the adolescent's need for privacy, and they want to know everything their teens think, plan and the details of persons they communicate with. Most of the children's psychiatric disorders were unidentified because of parent's ignorance and negligence. They face pressures of a different hue than encountered by the earlier generations, and have to learn the needed skills to live effectively now and be prepared to cope future challenges.

It is essential to help and guide the youth to worthwhile channels through the introduction of guidance and counselling services. Guidance and counselling aim at orienting individuals to face the ever-changing challenges in today's fast- moving technological world. Fuster (2002) points out the goals of counsel-

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ling as facilitating behaviour change, enhancing coping skills, promoting decision-making, improving relationships and facilitating the client's potential. Primary prevention initiatives are important not only for mental health professionals but for school personnel as well. Diverse environmental variables impact mental health and there is a need for guidelines to increase adolescent coping skills and to provide them with adequate support systems (Hall, 2002).so it is the responsibility of school, parents and the society to make the adolescent to be the good citizen in future.

Literature Review

Cruz,et al (2007) examined the needs young people expressed. Greater percentage of females asked to talk about sexuality and family problems while more males than females asked about reproduction health and mental health.

Janetis S.T (2012) In his study focused on the major concerns and constrains of college students that need counselling assistance and developed a comprehensive counselling program in the Indian higher education scenario . The study conducted in Tamil Nadu identifies the various mental health problems faced by students in the institutes of higher education. Nearly 33.02 per cent of the students being studied reported that they were disturbed by one or another problem during the last six months that needed some assistance from others. The significant issues behind this disturbance were identified as: friends (22.75%), economic related issues (21.65%), family problems (19.42%) and love affairs (17.75%). This shows that a great number of students are having some major issues that obstruct their focus on studies. A comprehensive counselling program can help the adolescents in the critical period of confusion and excitement and make them more productive.

Vijyalaxmi Chouhan and Varsha Josh (2014) investigated the Counseling Needs of adolescents. A sample of 120 respondents was selected. The Psychological counseling Need Scale (PCNS) was used. Data were analyzed using t test. It was found that there is no significant difference between the response of male and female adolescents.

Sivagurunathan et al (2015) in their review article on Adolescent Health: Present Status and Its Related Programmes in India intend to create awareness among the stakeholders about the importance of strengthening adolescent health services in order to meet their felt needs. Article stated that Access and availability of health care services are severely limited. Lack of accurate information, absence of proper guidance, parent's ignorance, lack of skills and insufficient services from health care delivery system are the major barriers. Interventions should focus on providing psychological and mental health services and behaviour change communication towards leading a healthy lifestyle, restricting advertisement related to junk food products, awareness creation about reproductive and sexual health, educating parents to prevent early marriage, teenage pregnancy and to counsel their children on nutrition and reproductive health. Universal coverage of Adolescent friendly clinics is highly recommended. To be cost effective, all health services addressing adolescent should come under single programme.

Methods & Materials

Aim: To study the perceived counseling need among adolescent boys and girls

Objectives

- To study the socio demographic details of the respondents
- To assess the level of perceived counseling need among the respondents
- To give suitable suggestions for improving the mental health of adolescents

Universe and Sampling: The researcher used descriptive research design. The universe of the study consists of eleventh grade students from two Government Higher Secondary Schools at Tiruchirapalli (Government Boys higher Secondary School and Government Girls higher Secondary School).Through simple random sampling 60 students were selected, 30 in each school(30 boys & 30 girls).

Tools: Socio demographic details and basic knowledge on counseling were assessed using self prepared questionnaire. Psychological counseling need was assessed by a tool developed by Vijaya lakshmi chouhan and Arora.

Results & Discussion

Table No: 1
Socio Demographical Detail of the Respondents

S.No	Socio Demographic Detail	Number	Percentage	
1	Age	15 16 17	6 31 23	10 52 38
2	Gender	Male Female	30 30	50 50
3	Residence	Urban Rural	50 10	83 17
4	Religion	Hindu Muslim Christian	56 3 1	93 5 2
5	Type of Family	Nuclear Joint Family	52 8	87 13
6	Income	Below-10000 10000-20000 Above-20000	31 3 26	52 5 33

The above table shows that more than half (52%) of the respondents belong to the age group of 15years.there is equal number (50%) of respondents from both gender. majority of the respondents (83%) are hailing from urban area and vast majority (93%) of them are Hindus. Majority of the respondents (87%) are from nuclear family. More than half of the respondents' family earns below 10000 per month.

Table No: 2
Distribution of Respondents Based on their Awareness on Counselling

S.No	Counselling awareness	Number	Percentage
1	Whom you share your problem?		
	Parent Friend Siblings Teacher	32 53 8 7	19 32 5 4
2	Sharing helps me for		
	Relief Peaceful Joyful Acceptance	19 17 9 15	32 28 15 25
3	Awareness about counselling		
	Yes No	17 43	28 72
4	Awareness about Psychiatric Hospitals		
	Yes No	7 53	12 88
5	Do you need counselling?		
	Yes No	3 57	5 95

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The above table shows the respondents awareness about counselling. More than half of them (53%) like to share their personal problems with their friends only and they get (33%) relief while sharing it.

Majority of the respondents (72%) are unaware about counselling services available for mental health problems and majority of them (88%) unaware about psychiatric hospitals available for treating mental illness. Vast majority of the respondents (95%) feel that they do not need counselling. Due to lack of awareness about counselling they feel that they are not in need of counselling.

Table No: 3
Distribution of Respondents Based on Psychological Counselling Need Scale
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Sl. No	Level of need	Number	Percentage
1	Low	26	43
2	High	33	55

It is inferred from the above table that more than half (55%) of the respondents are highly in need of psychological counselling. while asking them directly about counselling need they feel that they do not want it. But standardised scale assessment clearly shows that they need counselling services and orientation about counselling programme.]

Conclusion

Though adolescence is usually a healthy period, several risk factors of adult diseases which begin in adolescence can be prevented with proper interventions during this period, though with challenges. They often feel stuck between wanting independence and still needing guidance. Parents have greater responsibility in guiding their children but due to cultural barriers they neglect to talk about physical and physiological change. Educating parents and teachers to improve the quality of relationship with children to ensure a safe, secure and appropriate environment is needed. Unfortunately most of the schools do not have proper counselling facilities. The educational institutions should come forward for equipping the children properly for cultivating life skills, moulding personality and promoting capacities to choose right vocation according to their aptitude and interest through an organized programme of guidance and counselling. Counselling should be strengthened by well trained healthcare providers and involve parents and elders of the family in home-based counselling.

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