

Bachelor Programme
(Generic Module)
SEMESTER-I
Social and Emotional Learning
PARTICIPANT'S WORKBOOK



Tata Institute of Social Sciences – School of Skill Education

----- TISS SSE -----
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Note: Every unit will include experiential and activity-based learning through case studies, experiential activities, and assignments.			

Total Credits: 2

Total Teaching Hours: 30

Course Objectives

Upon completion of the course, students should be able to:

- Explain core concepts of social emotional learning and emotional intelligence.
- Identify and discuss emotional responses, workplace stressors, and communication barriers in academic and professional settings.
- Apply basic communication, emotional regulation, and conflict management strategies in real-life situations.
- Demonstrate responsible help-seeking, reporting, and escalation practices related to wellbeing and safety concerns.
- Practice self-reflection and interpersonal skills to improve personal and professional effectiveness.

Unit I: Introduction to Social and Emotional Learning

1.1 Understanding Social and Emotional Learning (SEL)

a) What is Social and Emotional Learning?

- Social and emotional learning (SEL) places a strong emphasis on the value of social awareness development, healthy relationship building, and emotional understanding and management (Roger P. Weissberg & Timothy Shriver, 1980).
- It is the process of developing the skills necessary to identify and control emotions, cultivate self-care, and care for others, build wholesome relationships, and make moral decisions, and deal with difficult circumstances effectively.

b) Where Did It All Start?

- Social and emotional learning (SEL) has its origins in ancient Greece, when thinkers such as Plato promoted a comprehensive education that balanced moral, intellectual, artistic, and physical growth in order to foster excellent character.
- The purpose of education has always been to educate the full person. The foundation for SEL was laid in the early 20th century by educators like John Dewey, who supported student-centered learning that focused on the development of the whole child.
- Research published in 2018 highlighted Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) as an effective framework for promoting positive student outcomes. Mahoney et al. (2018), drawing on findings from several large-scale meta-analyses, reported that school-based SEL programmes can improve students' social and emotional skills, attitudes, behaviours, and academic performance.

Case discussion

Case 1

R, is a second-year student in a bachelor's programme. He is technically competent and performs well in practical tasks. During his skill training (internship), his supervisor gives him feedback that his work needs minor corrections and asks him to resubmit it.

R reacts defensively. He interrupts the supervisor, explains why he thinks his work is correct, and later avoids asking questions in the team. Over the next few weeks, his technical output remains good, but the supervisor notes that R struggles with feedback, teamwork, and communication. As a result, he is not given additional responsibilities and receives an average skill training evaluation.

Discussion points

1. Was R's problem a lack of technical skill?

2. Which skills were missing or underdeveloped?

3. What steps he could have taken to change the outcome?

4. How might this situation affect employability, despite good technical performance?

Learning message: Technical skills help you enter a profession, but social and emotional skills determine how far you grow in it.

c) Understanding the Meaning

Let us break down the words and understand their meanings.

1. What is learning?

- Learning involves developing knowledge and skills by engaging in experiences, practising them, and reflecting on what those experiences mean.
- Each individual learns in their own way. Some are observational learners- learning by observing new information. Some are experiential learners- learning by experiencing new events. Some individuals learn by imitation- copying the behaviour or actions and some learn by trial and error- make number of attempts for a particular task and find what works and some learn by insight- solving problems to gain new solutions or insights.
- Every creature, including human beings, is born with certain capabilities. For example, a newborn baby will cry if they are hungry to indicate their discomfort. These capabilities are known as instinctive behaviour. As an individual grows, he or she has to make certain adjustments in various situations of life. Therefore, he or she has to acquire various habits, knowledge, attitudes and skills, etc. The acquisition of all these things is called 'learning'.
- It means that learning is not acquired by birth, but is a process of acquiring competence by using hereditary resources.
- Temporary change in behaviour is not learning.
- From the very beginning, association is the process of learning by which individuals form connections between stimuli, events, or behaviours, leading to changes in response or behaviour.
- Not only the modification of behaviour by acquiring good things as per the social norms is learning but even behaviour modification by acquiring bad things comes under 'learning'. In other words, learning leads to change in behaviour but this does not necessarily mean that these changes always bring about improvement or positive development.
- This fundamental concept underpins how organisms adapt to their environment by predicting future events based on past experiences.
- We all learn new information by way of association. For example, a child may learn the concept of "dog" by associating various features like barking, fur, and four legs, and later generalise this concept to identify unfamiliar breeds.

Cycle of active learning

Receiving foundation knowledge and absorbing it → Engaging with the knowledge through discussions and interactions → Applying the knowledge in practice → Consolidating the understanding by teaching or explaining to someone else.

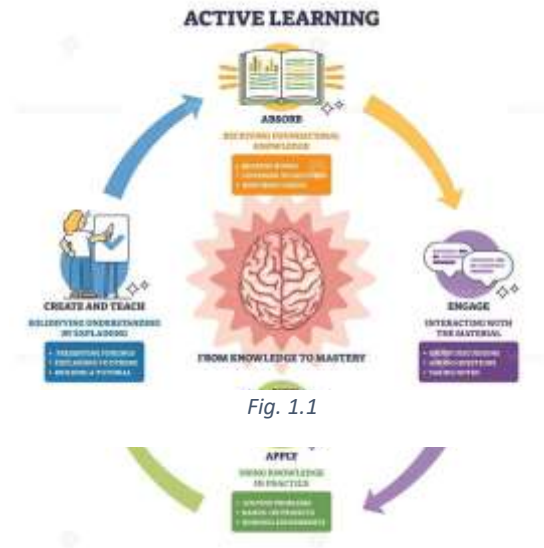


Fig. 1.1

Share one example of how you have learnt a new hobby by using the cycle.

2. What are social skills?

- Social skills involve the ability to communicate clearly, understand others, and respond appropriately in social and professional situations.
- Social skills are acquired through a combination of observational learning- learning from observing situations and people around you, and experiential learning- actually experiencing any situation which shapes the social skills of an individual.
- Individuals develop these skills by continuously observing their environment, interpreting the behaviours of others, and reflecting on their interactions in everyday contexts.
- This experiential learning process involves the application of social behaviours in real-life situations, followed by feedback and reflection, which collectively contribute to the refinement and internalisation of effective social functioning.
- Social skills began developing from infancy and change over time with experiences of each individual.

Share how you use your social skills in at least one place.

3. What are emotions and emotional skills?

- Emotions are complex inner states with three distinct components: individual experiences, bodily responses, and behavioural or expressive responses. Emotions are short-lived and guide us towards safety and survival, while helping us thrive in an ever-changing environment.
- More recently Paul Ekman and his colleagues have experimentally established the universal existence of 7 basic emotions.
- Basic emotions are joy, surprise, sadness, anger, disgust, fear and contempt.
- Emotional skills refer to the ability to recognise, express and regulate one's own emotions, which serves as the foundation for self-awareness and overall physical and emotional wellbeing.
- Emotional skills support awareness, regulation, and expression of emotions, helping individuals communicate and behave effectively in social and professional contexts.
- Recognising and labelling one's own feelings is the foundation of emotional development since it enables people to comprehend their inner moods and react accordingly.
- Darwin claimed in his book *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals*, published in 1872, that facial expressions of emotion are universal, not learnt differently in each culture.



Fig. 1.2

Share which emotion you feel presently and describe in one or two sentences.

4. What is intelligence?

- Intelligence refers to the ability to acquire, understand, and apply knowledge in different situations. Intelligence is subjective and varies from one individual to another.
- It is not merely book-learning, a narrow academic skill, or test-taking smarts. Rather, it reflects a broader and deeper capability for comprehending our surroundings – ‘catching on’, ‘making sense’ of things, or ‘figuring out’ what to do.
- Intelligence is neither purely innate (acquired by birth) nor purely learnt; it is the result of a complex interaction between genetic predispositions and environmental factors. It

means that, some individuals are inherently gifted and some individuals work on their limitations to overcome it.

- Intelligence is not a fixed trait but develops progressively through interaction between biological potential, environmental influences, and lived experiences.
- Thinking abilities are shaped over time through learning, problem-solving, social interaction, and exposure to diverse contexts.
- Educational experiences, emotional regulation, and social relationships play a critical role in supporting intellectual growth.
- Intelligence develops through active engagement with challenges, reflection on experiences, and the ability to adapt to changing demands.
- What is considered “intelligent” behaviour varies depending on social expectations, cultural values, and contextual demands.

Case discussion

Imagine two students are given the same task in class. One student understands the lesson quickly and answers questions in writing, while another student may take a little more time but explains the concept clearly to classmates or applies it well in a practical activity. Both students are intelligent—they just show their intelligence in different ways.

Note: Intelligence is not only about how fast you learn or how well you score in exams. It is also about how you understand situations, solve problems, learn from experiences, and use your abilities in real life. Presence of mind and sense.

Intelligence quotient (IQ): *Intelligence Quotient (IQ)* is a measure of a person’s reasoning ability. In short, it is supposed to gauge how well someone can use information and logic to answer questions or make predictions. It does not only include academic knowledge but skills like reasoning, problem-solving, memory, and pattern recognition.

Note: IQ assessments should only be conducted by trained professionals. Most IQ tests are administered by licensed clinical psychologists or neuropsychologists. These tests should not be self-administered through online websites or administered by other individuals claiming to be experts.

Video: What is Intelligence?

<https://youtu.be/ck4RGeoHFko>

Using the below case (Case 1 - Mr. R), identify the intern’s social and emotional understanding.

R is a second-year student in a bachelor’s programme. He is technically competent and performs well in practical tasks. During his skill training (internship), his supervisor gives him feedback that his work needs minor corrections and asks him to resubmit it.

R reacts defensively. He interrupts the supervisor, explains why he thinks his work is correct, and later avoids asking questions in the team. Over the next few weeks, his technical output remains good, but the supervisor notes that R struggles with feedback, teamwork, and communication. As a result, he is not given additional responsibilities and receives an average skill training evaluation.

d) Introduction to Emotional Intelligence

We have discussed the meaning of each word of social and emotional learning, but have you heard about the term emotional intelligence?

➤ What is emotional intelligence (EI)?

“Emotional intelligence is your ability to recognise and understand emotions in yourself and others, and your ability to use this awareness to manage your behaviour and relationships” (Bradberry & Greaves, 2009). Emotional Intelligence is also commonly referred to as Emotional Quotient (EQ).

➤ History of emotional intelligence

Peter Salovey and John D. Mayer coined the term ‘Emotional Intelligence’ in 1990 describing it as *“a form of social intelligence that involves the ability to monitor one’s own and others’ feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them, and to use this information to guide one’s thinking and action”*.

In the 1990’s Daniel Goleman became aware of Salovey and Mayer’s work, and this eventually led to his book, *“Emotional Intelligence”* in 1995. According to Daniel Goleman, emotional intelligence involves understanding both our own emotions and the emotions of others.

➤ Five elements of emotional intelligence

- 1. Self-awareness:** The capacity to identify and comprehend one's own feelings. It entails being aware of one's own advantages and disadvantages as well as how one's actions affect other people.
- 2. Self-regulation:** The ability to control and manage one's emotional reactions. This entails managing stress, maintaining composure, and adjusting to shifting conditions.
- 3. Motivation:** The capacity to control feelings in order to pursue objectives with vigour and tenacity. It involves being motivated to succeed and achieve.
- 4. Empathy:** The capacity to comprehend and experience another person's emotions. It entails identifying emotional clues and reacting correctly.
- 5. Social skills:** Managing connections to influence others to take desired actions. This involves establishing rapport, resolving conflicts, and communicating effectively.



Fig. 1.3

Interconnectivity of components

These elements are interrelated and frequently work together. For instance, self-awareness enables people to identify their emotional triggers, which is crucial for self-regulation. By facilitating improved understanding and communication with others, empathy improves social skills. People are motivated to use their emotional intelligence to accomplish both personal and professional objectives.

➤ Role of emotional intelligence in personal development

Emotional intelligence is vital to personal growth because it helps people better understand themselves and others. It promotes resilience, enhances communication abilities, and aids in emotional regulation. Better mental health, greater self-confidence, and a more optimistic attitude on life are all correlated with high EI.

➤ Why emotional intelligence matters today?

“Let us not forget that the little emotions are the great captains of our lives and we obey them without realising it”- Vincent Van Gogh, 1889.



Fig. 1.4

(2026). Kapable.Club. <https://kapable.club/blog/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/Key-Benefits-of-Having-Emotional-Intelligence-In-Oneself-1-1024x576.webp>

1. **Improved relationships:** People with high emotional intelligence typically have better relationships with others. Stronger bonds and less conflict result from their ability to comprehend, empathise, and communicate with others. Deeper ties and mutual support are fostered by empathetic people's increased awareness of the needs, viewpoints, and experiences of others. Emotional intelligence is important because it affects many facets of your personal and professional life.
2. **Effective communication:** People with higher emotional intelligence are better able to communicate their feelings and actively listen to others. This ability promotes improved communication in both personal and professional contexts, strengthening cooperation and teamwork. Additionally, it enables people to comprehend various viewpoints, resolve conflicts amicably, and come up with win-win solutions. This skill eases conflict and fosters harmony in interpersonal relationships.
3. **Stress management:** Individuals with greater emotional intelligence are better able to handle stress. By identifying stress triggers and early warning signs, they can take proactive

measures to manage their mental and physical health before stress becomes more severe. They are also better able to identify and regulate their emotions and use constructive coping mechanisms, which can enhance resilience and mental wellbeing.

4. **Adaptability:** People with high EI are better able to adjust to new situations. They can navigate the uncertainties of contemporary life and work environments by recognising and managing their emotions, remaining flexible in stressful situations, and solving problems creatively.
5. **Career success:** People with high EI are more self-aware and can identify their emotional triggers, areas for improvement, and strengths. They can regulate their impulses, maintain focus on their goals, and make sound decisions under pressure through strong self-awareness and self-regulation. People with high emotional intelligence (EI) often perform effectively in leadership roles, build strong professional networks, and handle workplace challenges with poise, contributing to their overall career success and professional development.

Human connection in a digital age

Human connection has become more crucial as technology, remote work, and virtual communication have grown in popularity. Although technology makes communication faster and more effective, it frequently lacks the emotional complexity that in-person conversations offer. This gap is filled by EI, which enables us to comprehend and react to other people's emotions even in virtual interactions. To ensure that team members feel heard and supported despite physical distance, a remote team manager might use emotional intelligence (EI) to assess team morale through video conversations, emails, and chat messaging. EI can be applied in customer service positions to comprehend and address the feelings of upset clients, resulting in more successful problem-solving and greater client satisfaction.

Activity

Connect at least 5 domains with emotional intelligence and describe benefits of being emotionally intelligent in that domain.



Fig.1.5

Source: Ude, G. (n.d.). *EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE: A Practical Guide with Recent Methodologies for Personal Development and Professional Success Transform Your Life and Achieve Success through Emotional Intelligence*. Retrieved August 17, 2026, from <https://6319de2c787f6367e66a12713cdab094.cdn.bubble.io/f1721166896056x772114054666583000/EMOTIONAL%20INTELLIGENCE%206x9.pdf>

Video: Difference between emotional quotient and intelligence quotient

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ujo_EO-ezEc

e) Concepts of SEL, and Their Relevance in Individual, Academic, and Workplace Contexts

➤ **How is emotional intelligence related to social and emotional learning?**

- SEL is deeply rooted in the concept of emotional intelligence (EI), drawing from foundational theories and models that emphasise the importance of understanding and managing emotions.
- Research indicates that EI is not fixed and can be enhanced through intentional practice, training, and feedback, with significant benefits for personal well-being, relationships, and professional success.
- Experiences such as receiving feedback, facing challenges, managing interpersonal conflicts, and observing emotionally skilled role models contribute significantly to the development of emotional intelligence.
- With consistent reflection and practice, individuals learn to respond to situations thoughtfully rather than reacting impulsively.
- Social and emotional learning provides the structured framework through which emotional intelligence is developed and strengthened.
- Through SEL activities and reflective practices, individuals learn to identify emotions, regulate emotional responses, empathise with others, communicate effectively, and make balanced decisions.
- While emotional intelligence (EI) and social and emotional learning (SEL) both focus on personal and interpersonal competence, they serve somewhat different purposes and contexts. EI focuses on an individual's emotional and interpersonal skills, often applied in areas such as personal development and leadership, whereas SEL is a developmental framework primarily used in educational settings to help students develop emotional and social competencies for navigating academics, relationships, and life.
- In simple terms, emotional intelligence (EI) is the outcome, while social and emotional learning (SEL) is the process through which these skills and competencies are developed.

How they connect

- Emotional intelligence focuses on *what a person can do emotionally*
- Social and emotional learning focuses on *how these skills are taught, learned, and applied*

- SEL provides to:
 - Build emotional awareness
 - Practice emotional regulation
 - Develop empathy and interpersonal skills
 - Apply emotional intelligence in academic, social, and workplace situation

Activity: “You receive feedback on an assignment or task that you worked hard on, but the feedback is more critical than you expected.”

Silently reflect on:

- What emotion(s) might arise in this situation?

- What is the first reaction that comes to mind?

Write brief responses to the following:

1. What emotions are you likely to feel in this situation?

2. How might you react immediately?

3. What are the consequences of your reaction?

4. Common emotions identified.

5. Is everyone reacting in the same way?

6. What are some common reactions that you can identify?

7. Is the consequence of your reaction positive or negative?

Note: There is no right or wrong answer.

➤ **Debunking myths about emotional intelligence**

"Think of a time when someone trying to 'be nice' actually caused more confusion or harm in a project or group setting. How would an emotionally intelligent person's approach differ from just being nice?"

1. **Not just about being “nice”:** When Emotional Intelligence (EI) was first introduced, it was assumed that it was just about being nice. But EI is much more. It involves self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy, and social skills, which can all be developed over time. Daniel Goleman, a key figure in EI research, highlights that these skills are not innate but can be learnt and improved. High EQ requires delivering tough feedback, enforcing firm boundaries, engaging in healthy conflict, and holding others accountable—all while maintaining respect and psychological safety. "Being nice" often avoids hard truths; high EQ communicates hard truths constructively.
2. **Emotional intelligence (EI) vs. soft skills:** Many people confuse EI with soft skills, but they are different. Soft skills encompass a range of interpersonal abilities like teamwork and communication, while EI focuses specifically on understanding and managing emotions. EI forms the foundation for many soft skills, making it a distinct yet critical concept.
3. **High EQ means suppressing or ignoring negative emotions:** Emotional intelligence is about *regulation*, not *suppression*. Suppressing emotions like anger, anxiety, or frustration leads to physical burnout and sudden behavioural outbursts ("amygdala hijack"). High-EQ individuals acknowledge, label, and process difficult emotions, using this awareness to respond constructively rather than bottling up their emotions.
4. **EQ means being highly sensitive or hyper-empathetic all the time:** Unchecked empathy can lead to compassion fatigue and emotional fatigue (absorbing everyone else's stress). True emotional intelligence includes cognitive empathy (understanding another person's perspective) alongside emotional boundaries. It allows individuals to support others without sacrificing their own mental well-being or decision-making clarity.

Questions

1. Who laid the foundation for SEL that supported student-centered learning?

2. What are some ways in which a person learns new information?

3. Fill in the Blanks:

_____ are short-lived and guide us towards safety, survival and help us in thriving in an _____ ever-changing environment.

4. Explain in one or two sentences about any 3 of the 5 elements of Emotional Intelligence.

4. True or false:

Is emotional intelligence just about being nice? _____.

1.2 Core SEL Competencies and Relevance in Skill-Based and Industry-Driven Careers

a) Core SEL Competencies

Social and Emotional Learning consists of a set of interrelated competencies that help individuals understand themselves, manage emotions, build positive relationships, and make responsible decisions. These competencies are widely recognised in all parts of life.

1. **Self-awareness domain:** This domain entails being aware of one's feelings, values, and personal goals. It includes evaluating one's strengths and weaknesses and developing self-efficacy. A high level of self-awareness requires the ability to understand the connections between thoughts, feelings, and behaviours.

Key aspects include;

- Recognising emotions as they occur
- Understanding personal strengths and areas for improvement
- Noticing the link between emotions, thoughts (cognition), and behaviour

2. **Self-management domain:** requires attitudes and abilities that help control emotions and actions. In order to accomplish personal and academic objectives, this involves the capacity to postpone satisfaction, regulate urges, handle stress, and persevere in the face of difficulties. It is influenced by a person's temperament, experiences, ability to stay focus and manage distractions, awareness of self, values, empathy, etc.

Key aspects include;

- Emotional regulation and stress management
- Goal-setting and time management
- Persistence and self-discipline

3. **Social awareness domain:** Managing relationships to move people in desired directions. This includes effective communication, conflict resolution, and building rapport. Developing social awareness involves practicing active listening, observing body language, and engaging in empathetic thinking. It is crucial for fostering inclusive environments, resolving conflicts, and building strong personal and professional relationships by ensuring interactions are respectful and attuned to the needs of others.



Fig. 1.6

Key aspects include;

- Empathy and perspective-taking
- Awareness of social and cultural differences
- Sensitivity to group and workplace norms

4. **Relationship skills:** provide students with the resources they need to build and sustain fulfilling relationships and behave in a way that complies with societal norms. In order to be competent in this area, one must be able to communicate effectively, actively listen, cooperate, resist unwarranted social pressure, resolve conflicts amicably, and ask for assistance when necessary.

Key aspects include;

- Clear and respectful communication
- Active listening
- Conflict management and collaboration

5. **Responsible decision making:** is a competency domain that calls for the attitudes, abilities, and information necessary to make rational decisions about one's own conduct and social relationships in a variety of contexts. To be competent in this field, one must be able to take into account safety considerations, ethical standards, accurate behavioural norms for dangerous behaviours, realistic assessment of the effects of different acts, and consideration of one's own and others' health and wellbeing.

Key aspects include;

- Evaluating consequences of actions
- Ethical and professional judgement
- Accountability and reflection

Video: What is SEL?

https://youtu.be/87zTsJ_Fxhc

Activity: Identify how each of the five SEL components appears in the situation and how it could be applied to respond effectively.

Scenario: A student intern is assigned a group task with a tight deadline. One team member is not contributing, another dominates discussions, and the intern receives critical feedback from the supervisor. The intern feels stressed and unsure how to respond. Discuss:

1. What emotions might the intern experience in this situation?

2. Identify and describe the five core competencies the student intern can develop in this situation.

b) Observable Behaviours Linked to Core SEL Components

Each component is observed in our behaviours in daily lives.

1. **Self-awareness:** The following behaviours may be observed in a self-aware individual:
 - Accurately identifies and names emotions in different situations.
 - Acknowledges personal strengths and areas for improvement.
 - Recognises emotional triggers and patterns of response.
 - Reflects on feedback without immediate defensiveness.
 - Demonstrates awareness of how emotions affect performance and interactions.

2. **Self-management:** The following behaviours may be observed in an individual who is able to manage his/her own emotions:
 - Remains composed during stress or pressure.
 - Uses appropriate strategies to manage strong emotions.
 - Demonstrates patience and impulse control.
 - Follows through on tasks despite emotional challenges.
 - Adjusts behaviour in response to changing demands.

3. **Social awareness:** The following behaviours may be observed in a socially aware individual:
 - Listens attentively to others' viewpoints.
 - Demonstrates empathy and consideration in interactions.
 - Respects cultural, social, and individual differences.
 - Recognises emotional cues in others.
 - Adjusts behaviour based on social context.

4. **Relationship skills:** In an individual who maintains healthy and supportive relationships, following behaviours may be observed:
 - Communicates thoughts and emotions clearly and respectfully.
 - Engages in active listening and constructive dialogue.
 - Collaborates effectively in group tasks.
 - Addresses conflicts calmly and seeks resolution.
 - Seeks or offers help appropriately.

5. **Responsible decision-making:** An individual who takes decisions responsibly may show the following behaviours:
 - Considers short- and long-term consequences of actions.
 - Weighs multiple perspectives before making decisions.
 - Demonstrates ethical reasoning and accountability.
 - Learns from mistakes and adjusts future behaviour.
 - Aligns decisions with personal and social values.

Based on the behaviours listed above, give an example of each behaviour you have observed in your day-to-day lives.

c) Obstacles and Challenges in Implementing SEL Skills

While implementing these SEL skills, there could be some challenges that can come in the way, working towards them will result in the development of SEL competencies. Most common challenges include the following:

- 1. Not realising that you need to change:** Change is an inevitable part of personal development. Without intentional effort to improve, personal growth may stagnate rather than continue. True self-improvement and the development of emotional intelligence (EI) cannot occur without first recognising and acknowledging the need for change. While supportive relationships are valuable, meaningful personal progress ultimately requires self-awareness, honesty with oneself, and deliberate, committed action.
- 2. Not being ready to change:** Recognising the need for change is meaningless without the willingness to make the necessary efforts and adjustments to achieve it. True personal transformation and EI growth do not happen automatically—they require personal accountability, sustained effort, and active commitment rather than passive hoping.
- 3. Accepting your defeat:** A deterministic mindset leads people to view their emotional shortcomings as unchangeable personality traits, using "that's just who I am" as an excuse for poor behaviour and failed relationships. While innate personality influences behaviour, emotional intelligence remains entirely adaptable through deliberate effort and self-challenge.
- 4. The wrong company:** Surrounding yourself with the wrong social circle severely restricts your emotional growth, as your development is heavily shaped by your immediate environment. Negative, indifferent influences reinforce poor habits, whereas high-quality relationships challenge your flaws and actively support your journey toward higher EI.
- 5. Trying to be perfect:** Perfectionism can undermine emotional growth by framing natural human mistakes as failures rather than as opportunities for learning. Developing EI is not about flawless behaviour; rather, it involves increasing self-awareness, learning from mistakes and reducing the likelihood of repeating them, while maintaining the resilience to forgive oneself and move forward.
- 6. Getting stuck in the past:** Dwelling on past mistakes can prevent you from recognising present and future opportunities. Everyone makes mistakes and poor choices, including people we admire. The real challenge lies not in the mistake itself, but in being unable to forgive oneself, learn from the experience, and move forward. High emotional intelligence involves viewing the past as a learning experience rather than allowing it to define one's present or future.

Activity: Understanding My Emotional and Social Awareness

This questionnaire is designed to help reflect on your current awareness of your emotions, behaviour, and social interactions in academic and work-related situations.

General instructions: The questionnaire does not assess intelligence, personality, or mental health. There is no right or wrong answer, and the responses are not used for grading or evaluation. Instead, the activity encourages students to notice how emotions and behaviours influence learning, teamwork, and professional conduct.

The statements in the questionnaire cover key areas related to SEL, including emotional awareness, emotional regulation, communication, and work-related behaviour. By responding to these statements, students begin to recognise strengths as well as areas that may require further development.

Respond honestly and use the questionnaire as a personal reference point for learning throughout the course.

General reactions: The following two questions determine your general emotional reactions to words and situations.

1. When criticised, I:

___ A. Ignore the criticism ___ B. Listen and learn ___ C. Become defensive ___ D. Get angry

Score: A=3 points B=4 points C=2 points D=1 point

Your score for this question: _____

2. In a difficult situation, I:

___ A. Get scared ___ B. Retreat if possible ___ C. Manage the situation with a positive attitude

___ D. Let others take the lead to manage the situation

Score: A=1 point B=2 points C=4 points D=3 points

Your score for this question: _____

Your score for general reactions section: _____

Behaviour/Responses

This set of questions helps you understand how you behave/respond to varying emotions and how well you can describe the emotions you are experiencing.

Emotional Reaction: When faced with situations, we react emotionally.				
Situation and Emotional Reaction	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Agree
3. When pursuing a goal, I am able to manage anxiety, anger, fear, and stress.	A	B	C	D
4. I am able to utilise feedback and criticism to grow personally and professionally.	A	B	C	D
5. I maintain a sense of humour at appropriate times and in appropriate places, without using sarcasm or hurting the feelings of others.	A	B	C	D
6. I am able to see things from another person's perspective.	A	B	C	D
7. I recognise how my behaviour affects others emotionally.	A	B	C	D
8. When I have a complaint, I am capable of expressing it properly.	A	B	C	D

9. I listen to others with patience and understanding.	A	B	C	D
Score: A=1 point B=2 points C=3 points D=4 points				
Your score for Emotional Reaction section: _____				
Awareness of Emotional Reaction: When presented with a situation, we can describe our emotional reaction				
Awareness of Emotional Reaction	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Agree
10. I have a great deal of discipline and I am self-motivated.	A	B	C	D
11. In stressful situations, I do not get irritated easily and I am able to contain my emotions.	A	B	C	D
12. Even if I believe I am right about something, I make an effort to listen to other people's viewpoints.	A	B	C	D
Score: A=1 point B=2 points C=3 points D=4 points				
Your score for Awareness of Emotional Reaction section: _____				
Situational Emotional Reactions: Your emotional responses determine how you would react in different types of common situations				
13. Two of your friends are having an argument. Your response is to . . .	<div style="margin-bottom: 10px;">A. <i>Try to help each one understand the other's one's point of view</i></div> <div style="margin-bottom: 10px;">B. <i>Avoid both of your friends until they quit fighting</i></div> <div style="margin-bottom: 10px;">C. <i>Choose a side and bad-mouth the other person</i></div> <div style="margin-bottom: 10px;">D. <i>Let both of them vent their emotions to you</i></div> <div style="margin-bottom: 10px;">Score:</div> <div style="margin-bottom: 10px;">A=4 points B=2 points C=1 point D=3 points</div> <div>Your score for this question:</div>			

14. Your friend tells you her mother has died. Your response is to . . .	<p><i>A. Allow your friend to express her emotions and offer your support</i></p> <p><i>B. Convince your friend to go out somewhere with some friends to get her mind off of her loss</i></p> <p><i>C. Give your friend some time alone</i></p> <p><i>D. Spend time with her, but avoid talking about her loss</i></p> <p>Score:</p> <p>A=4 points B=2 points C=1 point D=3 points</p> <p>Your score for this question:</p>
15. You are faced with an unpleasant task. Your response is to . . .	<p><i>A. Make a plan and work on the task a bit each day</i></p> <p><i>B. Put completion of the task off until the last minute</i></p> <p><i>C. Get the task over with as soon as possible</i></p> <p><i>D. Not do the task at all</i></p> <p>Score:</p> <p>A=4 points B=2 points C=3 points D=1 point</p> <p>Your score for this question:</p>
16. You find yourself involved in a heated discussion. Your response is to . . .	<p><i>A. Ask for a short break before resuming the discussion</i></p> <p><i>B. Give in and apologize because you want to end the argument</i></p> <p><i>C. Insult the other person</i></p> <p><i>D. Get quiet and stop responding to the other person</i></p> <p>Score:</p> <p>A=4 points B=2 points C=1 point D=3 points</p> <p>Your score for this question:</p>
17. Although you work hard on an assignment, you get a bad grade. Your response is to . . .	<p><i>A. Think about ways you could have improved your work and received better grade</i></p> <p><i>B. Confront the teacher, asking for a better grade</i></p> <p><i>C. Feel disappointed and criticise your own work</i></p> <p><i>D. Decide the class is stupid and stop putting working hard on</i></p> <p>Score:</p> <p>A=4 points B=2 points C=1 point D=3 points</p> <p>Your score for this question:</p>

<p>18. Your friend at work has an annoying habit. Every day it seems more annoying and worse. Your response is to . . .</p>	<p>A. Tell your friend about her annoying habit and why it bothers you</p> <p>B. Make a complaint to her supervisor</p> <p>C. Talk about your coworker's annoying habit to others</p> <p>D. Suffer silently</p> <p>Score: A=4 points B=2 points C=1 point D=3 points</p> <p>Your score for this question:</p>
<p>19. You are already involved in many tasks and projects and feel overworked when your boss assigns you a big new project. You feel . . .</p>	<p>A. Worried that you will never get all the work done</p> <p>B. Completely overwhelmed by the task before you</p> <p>C. Angry at your boss because he has not noticed how overworked you are</p> <p>D. Deeply depressed and sure you will never finish it all</p> <p>Score: A = 4 points B = 3 points C = 2 points D = 1 point</p> <p>Your score for this question:</p>
<p>20. You work hard on a project and the person with whom you are working publicly takes credit for work you did. Your response is to . . .</p>	<p>A. Immediately and publicly confront the person about the ownership of the work</p> <p>B. Take the person aside and tell them you want them to credit you when talking about your work</p> <p>C. Do nothing</p> <p>D. After the person finishes speaking, thank her immediately for sharing your work and then give the group more details</p> <p>Score: A = 4 points B = 3 points C = 2 points D = 1 point</p> <p>Your score for this question:</p>
<p>Your score for Situations section: _____</p>	

Now add up all of your points to see your current level of emotional intelligence.

General Reactions section: _____

Emotional Reaction section: _____

Emotional Reaction Awareness section: _____

Situational Emotional Reactions section: _____

Your Emotional Intelligence Score: _____

Source: Box Mann, S. (2019). *Emotional intelligence test/quiz*. Ice breaker Ideas. Reproduced for educational use with attribution to the original source.

Scores and their explanation

If your Emotional Intelligence score is...

Between 68 and 80:

You have extremely high emotional intelligence. You are skilled at understanding, interpreting, and acting appropriately upon your emotions and those of others. You deal effectively with emotional and social situations and conflicts, and express your feelings without hurting the feeling of others.

However, when so many people admire your people skills, it's easy to lose sight of your own needs so remember to make time for continued reflection and learning opportunities.

Between 60 and 67:

Although you score relatively high, you do have room for improvement. Watch the reactions of others to determine when you are using your emotional intelligence effectively and when you are not.

Objectively looking at social and personal situations where emotions run high and analyzing your success will help you improve your already high emotional intelligence even more.

Between 48 and 59:

You fall in the middle range when it comes to your emotional intelligence. Although you are responding appropriately in most situations, you still find yourself losing it sometimes. You probably have good relationships with some of your colleagues, but others may be more difficult to work with. You also get impatient with others and are sometimes uncomfortable in emotional situations.

Between 40 and 47:

Your emotional intelligence is a bit low. You probably struggle to manage your emotions in high pressure situations or when you get angry. You have some work to do to improve. Begin by trying to express your emotions after you are calm.

Below 40:

Your emotional intelligence is in the lower range. You are probably experiencing anxiety and stress on a daily basis. It's likely, too, that you find it hard to calm down after you've felt upset, and you may struggle to build strong relationships. Additionally, you are probably having difficulty at work, not making the progress you wish to or have strained interactions with colleagues.

d) Relevance of SEL in Skill-Based and Industry-Driven Careers

Consider the case of Satya Nadella, CEO of Microsoft. His empathetic leadership style has been credited with transforming Microsoft's corporate culture. Nadella emphasises understanding employees' perspectives and creating an inclusive environment. His decision-making process involves extensive listening and considering diverse viewpoints, which has led to innovative solutions and a more engaged workforce. Under his leadership, Microsoft has seen significant growth and revitalisation, illustrating the profound impact of empathetic decision-making.

Debriefing

Satya Nadella did not revitalise Microsoft by fixing computer code—he fixed how technical experts worked together. In technical and industry-driven careers, your hard skills get you through the door, but Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) determines how successful, safe, and productive your workplace actually is.

Why industry demands SEL?

In technical, trade, and vocational sectors, operational failure is rarely caused by a lack of technical knowledge alone. It usually stems from breakdowns in human interaction, stress management, and decision-making under pressure. Modern workplaces are tightly integrated, high-speed environments where individual emotional regulation and communication directly influence safety, quality, and profit.

1. High-stakes safety and error prevention: In industries like manufacturing, healthcare, construction, and logistics, unmanaged stress, distraction, or anger directly causes physical accidents and costly operational mistakes. Workers who possess strong self-awareness and self-management recognize their own fatigue and emotional triggers before those factors lead to skipped safety checks or workplace hazards.

2. Elimination of downtime and costly rework: Industry efficiency relies on smooth handovers between shifts, clear diagnostic reporting, and coordinated teamwork. When workers lack relationship skills or active listening habits, instructions are misunderstood, parts are misplaced, and jobs have to be redone. SEL skills turn technical groups into cohesive teams that minimise lost time and material waste.

3. Rapid adaptation to changing technology: Machinery, software, and industry protocols evolve constantly. Workers who struggle with SEL often react to new technology with defensiveness or anxiety ("know-it-all" attitude). In contrast, employees with high emotional maturity display a growth mindset ("learn-it-all" attitude)—they accept constructive feedback, ask questions without fear of looking foolish, and master new tools faster.

4. Conflict resolution in high-pressure environments: Technical work frequently involves tight deadlines, unexpected system failures, and demanding clients. Employees equipped with social awareness and empathy resolve disagreements constructively on the shop floor rather than allowing interpersonal friction to stall progress or destroy team morale.

5. Leadership pipeline and supervisory readiness: Companies do not promote workers to site managers, chief technicians, or shift leads based on hard skills alone. Advancement requires responsible decision-making, emotional stability, critical thinking and the ability to motivate others. Industry demands SEL because it builds the frontline leaders required to sustain business growth.

Discussion: Why skills alone are not enough?

Two employees have the same technical skills and qualifications. One struggles with feedback, avoids teamwork, and reacts emotionally under pressure. The other communicates clearly, manages stress, and works well with others.

- 1. Who is more likely to succeed at work? Why?

- 2. Share your situations at work or during internships where technical skills alone are not enough.

- 3. How communication, emotional control, or teamwork affect performance?

Questions

- 1. Name 5 components of Social and Emotional Learning.

- 2. What behaviours does a person with high social awareness show?

- 3. Choose the correct answer:
Why do companies require responsible decision-making competency for frontline leadership roles?
A) Because hard skills are no longer important for technical positions
B) Because frontline leaders are expected to teach technical courses to new employees
C) Because leadership roles require emotional stability, critical thinking, and the ability to motivate others to sustain business growth
D) Because regulatory standards mandate that site managers spend 50% of their time on HR administrative tasks

1.3 Application of SEL in Academic and Workplace Settings

While academic institutions often treat hard technical skills and personal (psychosocial) development as separate domains, modern industry realities require them to be fully integrated. Emotional maturity directly correlates to how effectively technical knowledge is applied in real-world environments.

a) SEL in Academic and Training Settings

In classrooms, laboratories, and vocational workshops, SEL provides the psychological foundation required for effective learning, skill acquisition, and personal resilience.

1. **Intellectual processing and information retention:** High levels of unmanaged anxiety, stress, or self-doubt interfere with memory and problem-solving. When students learn to regulate academic stress, their brains absorb complex technical procedures more efficiently.
2. **Reduction in dropout rates and academic burnout:** Technical and trade programmes often present steep learning curves. Self-management skills enable students to navigate difficult assignments, constructive criticism, and temporary setbacks without giving up or dropping out.
3. **Constructive peer collaboration:** Academic environments rely heavily on group projects, collaboration, and peer learning. Social awareness ensures that students share workloads equitably, respect diverse viewpoints, and resolve group friction without teacher intervention.
4. **Psychological safety and active participation:** Classrooms with a strong SEL culture encourage students to ask questions when confused, admit mistakes early, and seek help before failing—eliminating the fear of looking foolish in front of peers.

b) SEL in Workplace, Technical, and Industry Settings

In technical careers—ranging from healthcare wards and automotive plants to software support and construction sites—hard skills secure employment, but social-emotional competencies determine career longevity, job site safety, and operational productivity.

1. **Safety and hazard management:** In high-risk technical fields, emotional state directly impacts physical safety. Impatience, anger, or fatigue leads to skipped safety protocols, improper tool handling, and workplace accidents. Self-awareness acts as a primary safety mechanism on the shop floor.
2. **Elimination of operational downtime and waste:** Industrial efficiency relies on clear handovers between shifts, precise diagnostic reporting, and mutual trust. Miscommunication or defensive attitudes lead to misunderstood instructions, ruined materials, and expensive project delays.
3. **Adaptability to evolving technologies:** Machinery, software, and industry standards change rapidly. Workers lacking emotional maturity often respond to new processes with anxiety or defensiveness. Employees with strong SEL competencies embrace continuous learning, accepting technological shifts with curiosity rather than fear.
4. **Preparation for supervisory and leadership roles:** Technical expertise alone does not make a good foreman, floor manager, or shift lead. Advancement requires responsible decision-making, the ability to calm high-pressure situations, and empathy when managing team members through crises.

----- TISS SSE -----
Activity: The Academic to Workplace Translator

Your current classroom behaviours are rehearsals for their future jobs.

1. Write 4 common academic behaviours.
2. Identify the workplace equivalent of each academic behaviour and the core SEL skill involved.

Example

Academic Behaviour	Workplace Equivalent (What it looks like on the job)	Core SEL Competency
Asking a teacher when stuck on a problem	Asking a senior technician before touching unfamiliar machinery	Self-awareness
Studying calmly for a hard exam	Staying composed when a client or machine system fails under deadline	Self-management
Sharing work equally in a group project	Coordinating shift handovers and supporting team members on an assembly line	Relationship skills
Submitting original work on time	Following site safety rules and reporting equipment glitches immediately	Responsible decision-making

Academic Behaviour	Workplace Equivalent (What it looks like on the job)	Core SEL Competency

Debriefing: Every single workplace behaviour we just listed came directly from a classroom habit. You are not going to magically transform into a calm, communicative, responsible worker on the day you get your first job offer. The habits you build in this classroom every day—how you handle hard assignments, how you talk to peers, how you deal with corrections—are the exact habits you will carry onto the shop floor, hospital ward, or job site.

Many students will feel that rules are just *annoying obligations* but through this activity, they can understand that mastering SEL habits will be a shortcut for their future work life which makes it less stressful and easy.

----- TISS SSE -----
Explain

Classroom Habit (Today)	Career Outcome (Tomorrow)
Hiding mistakes to avoid shame	Risk of workplace accidents & termination
Asking for help when stuck	Fast technical growth & supervisor trust
Blaming peers for group failure	Passed over for promotions & shift lead roles
Staying calm under exam pressure	Trusted with high-stakes, crisis management tasks

Classroom Habit (Today)	Career Outcome (Tomorrow)

❖ **Reflection point**

Topic: SEL in the news

Find one recent news story, workplace incident, film/series scene, or public situation that demonstrates the importance of social and emotional skills.

Example

A news story about a workplace conflict → communication, empathy, emotional regulation and conflict management.

Then identify:

1. What happened?

2. Which social/emotional skill was relevant?

3. What could have been handled differently?

4. What does this situation tell us about the importance of SEL?

Questions

1. Choose the correct answer:

Why is technical expertise alone insufficient for an employee transitioning into a supervisory role on the shop floor?

- A) Technical knowledge becomes obsolete as soon as a worker moves into management.
- B) Leadership roles require high-level emotional maturity to handle high-pressure scenarios, manage team friction, and make responsible decisions.
- C) High-level positions rely entirely on social awareness, eliminating the need to understand operational workflows.
- D) Advanced technologies require supervisory staff to focus solely on continuous learning rather than team dynamics.

2. Fill in the Blanks: In academic and vocational settings, unmanaged anxiety and stress directly interfere with memory and _____, reducing a student's ability to retain complex technical procedures.

3. How do defensive attitudes and poor communication cause operational issues in industrial settings?

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Unit II: Resonating with Self

2.1 Self-Awareness and Emotional Regulation: Knowing Oneself

2.1.1 Understanding Self and Emotions

a) Activity: Understanding Self

You have some preliminary notion of yourself (i.e. who are you?) by completing the following sentences. You can write more points also by taking a separate sheet (it will be a good idea to note down the time you will take to finish this activity of writing about yourself).

Starting Time: _____

Example: I am a student.

I am

I am

I am

I am

I am

Ending Time: _____

Reflect on the following:

1. How easy was it for you to complete these sentences?

2. How much time did you take?

3. Different students took different amounts of time to answer these questions. Why?

b) What is self and identity?

In our lives, we typically make a variety of decisions, such as trekking, choosing a specific field of study, or lending a hand to someone in need. We also regularly make decisions about things like what to watch on TV, what to eat for a snack, when to go to bed, etc. These decisions are all based on our identity and self. We make decisions based on our understanding of who we are.

As individuals, we make meaning of who we are, what we might become, and the direction we ought to go in life. An individual's objectives, motivations, thoughts, behaviours, emotions, and capacity to control our actions are all influenced by our sense of self and identity.

“Be yourself. Everyone else is already taken.” – Oscar Wilde.

- When we think and feel about ourselves, we become mindful of our "self." According to Markus and Kitayama (2010), the self is the constantly evolving feeling of awareness and activity that directs behaviour and acquires shape as a person grows sensitive to the different surroundings it inhabits.
- The "I" that reflects and experiences, as well as the "me" that is the subject of reflection and experience, are both components of the self. The "me" is the Known, while the "I" is the

Knower. The "me" refers to the "who" aspect of the I, which includes one's needs, wants, emotions, attitudes, beliefs, and values. The "me" component is shaped by and integrated into one's current circumstances.

- For instance, we feel competent when we are successful. We feel incompetent when we don't succeed. Sometimes we need quiet, and other times we need stimulus. The self is always situated and, as a consequence, it always reflects its contexts.
- Identity can be understood as definition of self, i.e., it refers to a consistent sense of self, providing directions about what one can do, where does one belong, what to value. We can understand identity to be more stable than self-experience which is more momentary.

Video: Self-Identity

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=79HnuoJloyw>

c) Identity Formation

➤ Activity: Exploring 'Who am I?'

Steps:

1. Below are 3 columns which you have to fill out.
2. On the left you're going to write down the words or phrases that you think describe who you are.
3. Then on the right, you will write down words or phrases of how you think the world sees you. Then answer the question, "what do you wish people knew about you?"

You can take help of the following poster to identify your qualities.



Fig. 2.1

Explore My Identity	
<p>How I see me:</p> <p>Examples-</p> <p>I am strong.</p> <p>I am thoughtful.</p> <p>I am positive.</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>How the world sees me:</p> <p>Examples-</p> <p>She is brave.</p> <p>She is shy.</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>
<p>I wish people knew this about me:</p> <p>I am strong but I need support too.</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	

➤ **How is identity formed- Who am I?**

- Identity refers to a coherent sense of who we are, including our values, goals, beliefs, and group affiliations (such as gender, culture, or nationality). For example, a person may define themselves through personal roles, aspirations, and social identities.
- Identity formation begins early in life. Around 15–18 months, children start recognising themselves and distinguishing themselves from others, marking the initial development of self-identity. This sense of identity continues to evolve through social interactions, experiences, and cultural influences.
- A renowned psychoanalyst Erik Erikson proposed a theory about developmental stages that every individual goes through and explained about identity formation.
- Erik Erikson described adolescence as a critical stage of “Identity vs. Role Confusion,” where individuals actively explore the question, “Who am I?” During this phase, identity develops through examining personal values, beliefs, and roles.
- Accordingly, a clear identity is achieved when individuals are able to explore different possibilities and commit to choices, whereas lack of clarity may lead to role confusion.



Fig. 2.2

- Example- When you are growing up, you experience different situations and through these experiences, you learn how to deal with them. These experiences shape your personality, choices and identity as well.

➤ **Sociostructural influences on identity**

1. Socioeconomic status (SES) and identity

- Lower-income environments foster a self-construal of "hard interdependence," characterised by resilience, heightened vigilance toward external threats, and strong awareness of environmental constraints due to limited financial security.
- Conversely, comfortable environments foster "expressive independence," allowing individuals to focus on personal agency, choice, and individual self-expression. Ultimately, subjective social standing shapes how people think, feel, and act, while access to social capital (professional networks) and cultural capital (institutional familiarity) determines the future roles individuals consider possible for themselves.

2. Gender and identity

- Unlike physiological "sex", "gender" represents the sociocultural meanings and roles ascribed to masculinity and femininity, which individuals internalise as their psychological gender identity. Gender is a social construct.
- Primary agents of socialisation, including families, peers, schools, and media, continuously reinforce traditional gender roles and expectations—from toy choices and textbook representations to occupational stereotyping—ultimately perpetuating societal beliefs about how men and women should act, work, and express themselves.

3. Caste and identity

- Historically demeaning occupational labels assigned to lower-caste groups foster a sense of being devalued, while high-caste essentialism maintains social boundaries and perpetuates stigma even when individuals disidentify from traditional occupations.
- These internalised structural hierarchies are frequently expressed through submissive non-verbal behaviours during interactions with higher-caste members.
- However, viewing lower-caste identity as purely inferior is incomplete; collective participation in social movements and identification with leaders like Ambedkar foster Dalit pride, transforming the struggle into a revolutionary push for structural equality and freedom from exploitation.

4. Family, social circle and identity

- Family dynamics and social circles serve as fundamental social structures that actively construct and reinforce individual identity. Families act as the primary agent of socialisation, transmitting cultural values, behavioural expectations, baseline self-worth, and emotional coping mechanisms from early childhood.
- As individuals grow, their peer networks and broader social circles expand this identity by providing reference groups through which they seek belonging, test social roles, and compare their achievements.
- These relational environments shape personal agency and identity: supportive family and peer networks foster strong self-esteem, psychological resilience, and social confidence, whereas

restrictive or conflict-ridden social circles can instil identity confusion, social anxiety, or pressure to conform to group norms at the expense of authentic self-expression.

Case discussion

Sid is an 18-year-old and has recently started college. He feels uneasy in the new set up as he is not able to identify with his batch mates and is not able to make new friends. His school friends were very supportive and helped him in every way. Here he feels, he is not “cool enough”! Going to college is a task for him. His self-esteem is shaky, and he feels less confident every day. He shared his apprehensions and fears with his brother, who encouraged him to engage with his classmates. With much effort he tried hanging out with them. They were very different from him and tried new things for thrill. When Sid could not pretend to be “cool enough” he refused to indulge in the high-risk acts. His ‘friends’ made immense fun of him. He was not able to fit in.

- Sid is not alone; many college going students go through similar phases. Have you or any of your friends experienced anything similar?

Write about the development of your identity and understanding of self in early years which influence your academics, social and personal life as well.

❖ Reflection point

Healthy identity formation usually involves exploration first, then commitment. Identity formation is a continuous process shaped by exploration and commitment, influenced by personal experiences and social context. Look for a person who influenced your identity and write down a few lines about it.

d) Understanding Self-Awareness

- Self-awareness is the capacity to correctly identify one's own feelings, ideas, and values and how they affect behaviour in various circumstances, it is a fundamental element of social and emotional learning (SEL).
- To be self-aware is to have a thorough awareness of one's needs, drives, emotions, and strengths and shortcomings. Strong self-aware people are neither unduly pessimistic (looking from a negative perspective) nor overly optimistic (looking from a positive perspective). Instead, they are truthful, both with others and with themselves.
- Individuals with a high level of self-awareness understand how their emotions impact both themselves and other people.

Example

- Consider a self-aware individual Mr B, who carefully arranges his time and completes his work well in advance because he understands that pressing deadlines bring out the worst in him.
- Working with a difficult client will be possible for someone else who has a high level of self-awareness. He will comprehend how the client affects their emotions and the underlying causes of their annoyance.

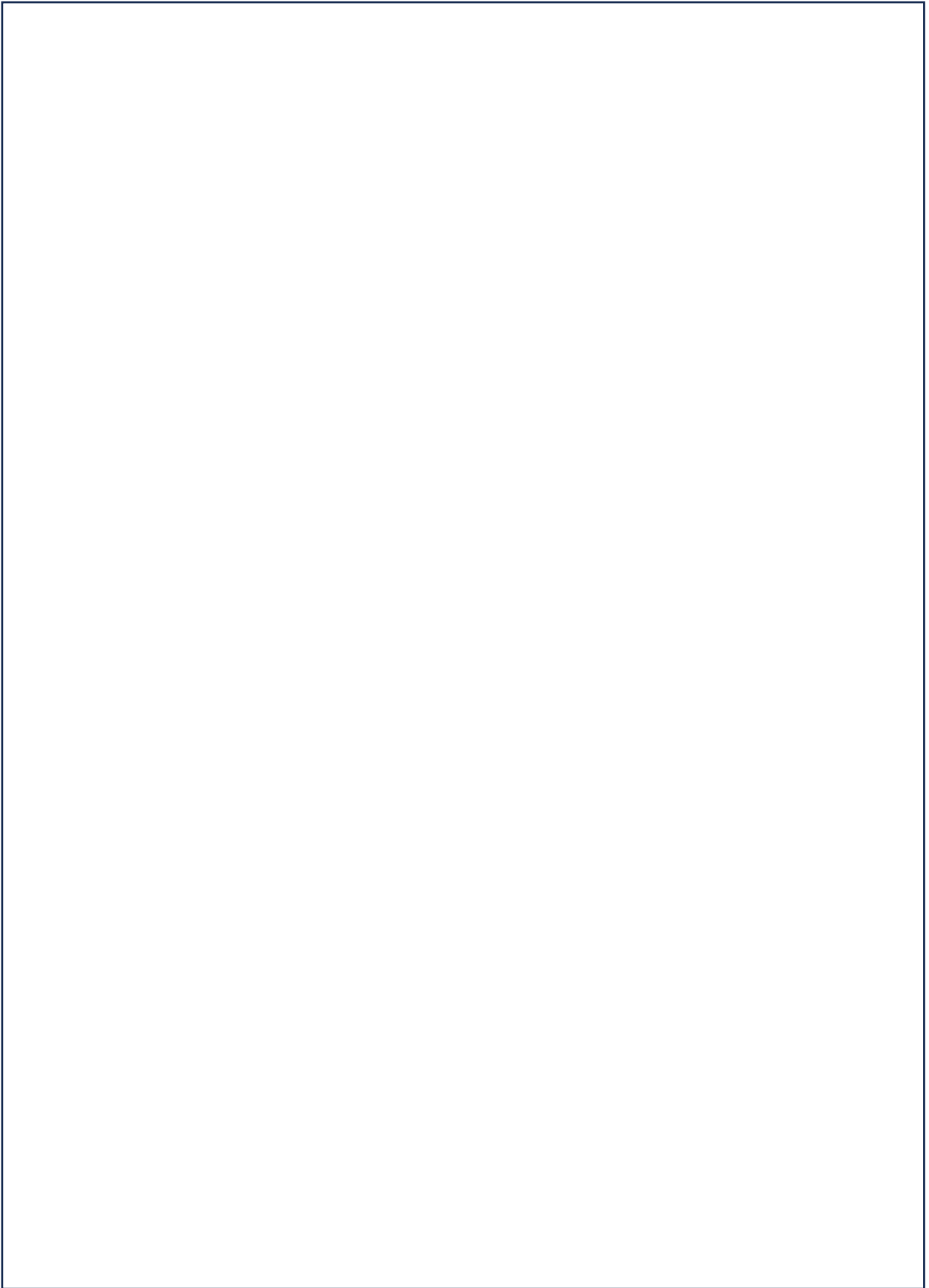
- **Activity: Create a Me Tree**

The steps:

- **Soil:** “I am supported by...”
 - Reflect on the people and communities that support you to grow strong and kind.
- **Tree trunk and branches:** “I am grateful for...”
 - Beginning at the bottom of the tree and working your way up through the branches, reflect on the places, things or experiences that you are grateful for (e.g., my family, friends, doctors that help me feel better when I am sick, school where I meet my friends, the outdoors where I can exercise and see new things, etc.)
- **Leaves:** “I love...”
 - Lastly, reflect on the many things that make you – YOU! They could be adjectives (funny, smart, kind, helpful, good friend, etc.) or your favourite hobbies and passions (playing soccer, painting, dancing with grandpa, learning math, etc.)

Example





Debriefing: Self-awareness is an ongoing process. As you learn new skills, make new friends, and discover new hobbies, your tree will keep growing. Keep this worksheet in your workbook and continue adding new leaves and branches whenever you discover something new about yourself.

➤ Why self-awareness is important?

Self-awareness seems to have become the latest catchword—and for good reason. Research suggests that when we see ourselves clearly, we are more confident and more creative.

- **Benefits of self-awareness:** Seeing ourselves clearly boosts confidence, creativity, and decision-making while improving communication, adaptability, and the ability to foster stronger personal and professional relationships.
- **The reality gap:** While most people believe they are self-aware, only **10% to 15%** actually are; however, mastering this trait is essential for personal growth and maintaining a realistic perspective of the world.
- Being self-aware helps individuals to stay in touch with reality about self and the world.

➤ Types of self-awareness

Two major areas of self-awareness consistently surfaced are:

- The first one, internal self-awareness, is the degree to which we are able to recognise our own values, passions, aspirations, fit with our surroundings, reactions (including thoughts, feelings, behaviours, strengths, and weaknesses), and influence on other people.
- It is found that internal self-awareness is adversely correlated with anxiety, tension, and depression, and positively correlated with happiness, personal and social control, and job and relationship satisfaction.
- Understanding how other people perceive us in light of the previously mentioned factors is the second category, external self-awareness.
- According to research, people are better at demonstrating empathy and considering other people's viewpoints when they are aware of how others see them. For example, employees are more likely to have a positive relationship with, be satisfied with, and perceive leaders who see themselves as their employees do as more effective overall.



Fig. 2.4

Video: Professional Skills: Self-Awareness

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SaoVqugPZQE>

➤ Self-awareness and leadership

- Self-aware leaders can recognise their own emotions. They know how their actions and inactions affect other people. Self-awareness in leadership is cogent as it enables you to understand yourself and how events affect you.

- There is a need for self-regulation, which will help with decision-making and stress management. Self-awareness helps in understanding one's own strengths and weaknesses. This helps individuals gauge their limits and monitor their reactions during their highs and lows. Self-awareness is also important for self-confidence, which is an aspect of emotional intelligence needed in leadership.

Activity: Lead the Room

1. You are acting as a leader giving instructions to the group while visibly tense and speaking rapidly. You can give instructions: quickly stand up, left hand up, right hand up, left hand down, right hand on head, sit down, stand up, touch left ear with right hand, put pen up, pen down, etc.

2. How did that make you feel (e.g., anxious, confused, defensive)?

3. Now, pause, take a slow breath, and deliver the exact same instructions calmly. How do you feel now and how was the other students' reaction to it?

4. Write about how a leader's internal self-awareness directly changes the team's trust and performance.

e) Identifying Personal Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats

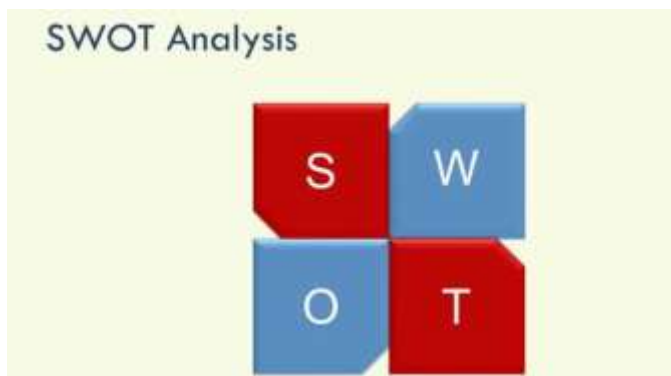


Fig. 2.5

SWOT stands for:

- Strengths
- Weaknesses
- Opportunities
- Threats

SWOT Analysis

1. Strengths

What are strengths in SWOT analysis?

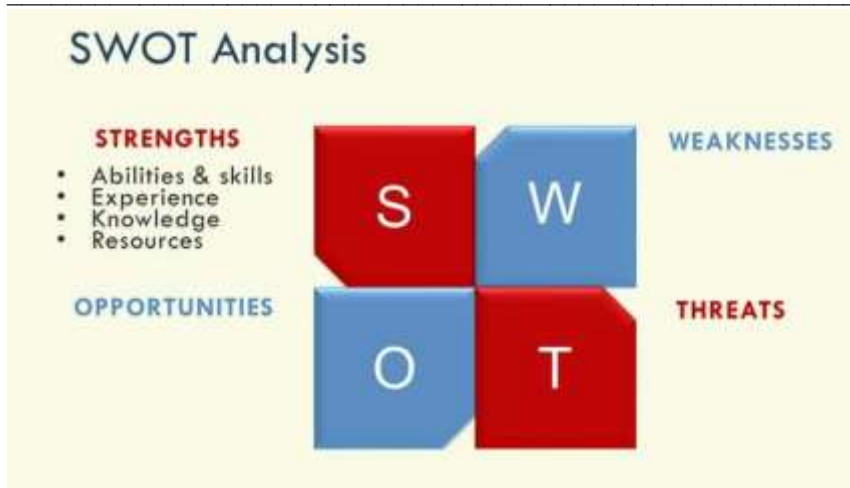


Fig. 2.6

These can be:

- The abilities and skills you have
- Previous experiences that can be useful for achieving your goal
- Your knowledge of the topic and any other resources such as money, technologies, instruments, the time you already have

2. Weaknesses

What are the weaknesses?

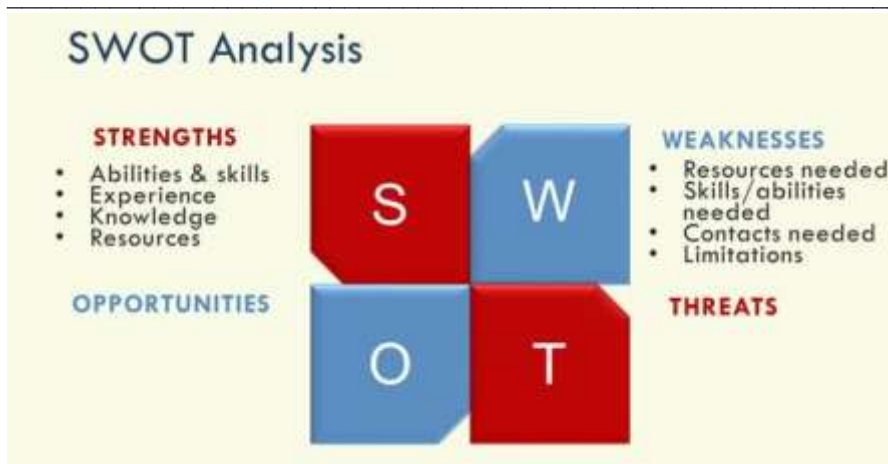


Fig. 2.7

Weaknesses are the opposite of strengths, such as things or skills you lack, contacts you need to make or other limitations. Listing your weaknesses is not meant to discourage you.

On the contrary, you list what you are lacking so that you can plan how to acquire those skills or things that you need to achieve your goal.

Strengths and weaknesses are down to you. They relate to what you as an individual either have or need to develop.

3. Opportunities

What are opportunities?

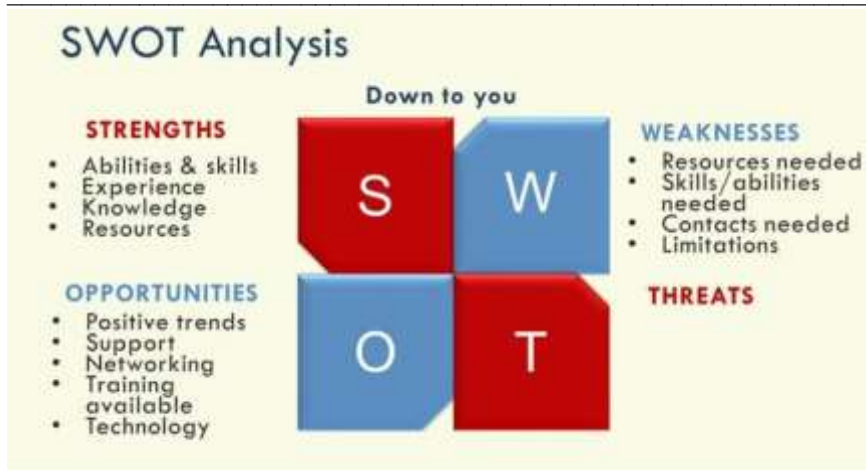


Fig. 2.8

Opportunities are situations in the environment around you that can be positive for achieving your goal. You can identify, grab or create opportunities.

For example, an opportunity can be a positive trend; support that is available for you to access; networking channels to tap into; available training, or new technologies that are being developed that could help you.

4. Threats

What are threats?

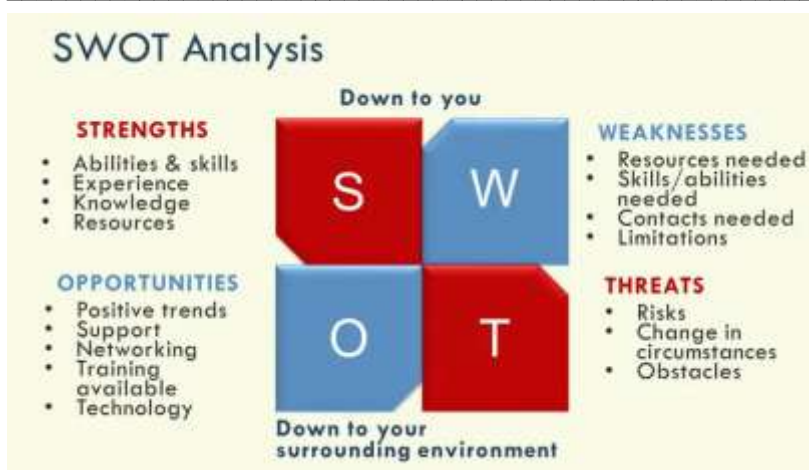


Fig. 2.9

Threats are things that can be an obstacle for you in achieving your goal.

The idea is that you identify threats so you can find ways to overcome them. If threats cannot be overcome, can you at least prepare to minimise their impact?

Threats can be any type of obstacle, including risks to do, for example, with a change in the state of the economy (this can also be an opportunity, depending on the situation) or sudden changes in your circumstances.

Opportunities and threats are down to other people and to the environment around you. They are not under your control but you can plan to make the most out of them or deal with them.

Application of SWOT analysis

SWOT Analysis		Internal Analysis	
		Strengths	Weaknesses
External Analysis	Opportunities	Combination Strengths-Opportunities: Matching strategy. Which strengths match with which opportunities? Which strengths can we use to increase our opportunities and their realisation?	Combination Weaknesses-Opportunities: Transformation strategy. How can we turn weaknesses into strengths? How can we create opportunities from weaknesses?
	Threats	Combination Strengths-Threats: Neutralisation strategy. Which strengths can we use to fend off threats and risks? Which threats can we encounter with which strengths?	Combination Weaknesses-Threats: Defense strategy. Where do our weaknesses lie? How can we protect ourselves from harm?

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* Maximising strengths to seize opportunities; minimising weaknesses to exploit opportunities; using strengths to lessen threats; minimising weaknesses to avoid threats.

By comparing internal capabilities with external conditions, the analysis is usually displayed as a 2x2 matrix to assist users in identifying internal strategic fit and external conditions. It helps in decision-making by enabling tactics such as:

➤ Activity: SWOT analysis discussion

Select any situation for using SWOT analysis in our day-to-day lives while making any decisions:

Strengths x Opportunities (maximising strengths to seize opportunities)	Weakness x Opportunities (minimising weaknesses to exploit opportunities)
Strengths x Threats (using strengths to lessen threats)	Weakness x Threats (minimising weaknesses to avoid threats)

SWOT analysis is a strategic planning tool used to evaluate Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats, helping individuals and organisations make informed decisions by connecting internal capabilities with external market conditions. It is widely applied to assess readiness, identify risks, and prioritise resources before committing to major changes or while making any important decisions.

Example 1: Work and career development

SWOT analysis is most frequently employed in the business sector at the beginning of the strategic planning process, when entering new markets, initiating major projects, or reacting to changes in the competitive landscape.

Businesses utilise it to:

- Ensure a competitive edge, shape business strategy by determining what they do effectively and where they need to expand
- Evaluate possible gaps in strategy and financial stability when assessing mergers, acquisitions, or partnerships
- Assist with risk planning by monitoring concerns in a risk register and modifying scope or timing prior to issues becoming more serious

Example 2: Individual development

SWOT frameworks are frequently used for personal objectives like career planning or changing jobs. By examining their skills, communication patterns, and leadership styles individuals can:

- Develop career plans that build on their strengths while considering all the aspects.
- Consider both their personal preferences and external circumstances when evaluating career options or new employment opportunities.
- Evaluate themselves to identify areas for improvement and further develop their abilities.

f) Emotional Triggers

Have you ever observed that certain situations, words/sentences, people, etc. can be overwhelming and because of which there is an instant reaction to it?

-
- All human beings have emotional hot buttons. Something happens, a person says something to us or we read a message. All of a sudden, it's like a button has been pressed, and we are grabbed by intense emotional reactions. We were feeling fine a moment earlier, but then certain kinds of events happen and, in a millisecond, we're upset, thrown off balance, and it may also be illogical.
 - We may find ourselves acting out of control in ways that are extremely unskilful – even damaging – to ourselves and others. We call this phenomenon triggering.
 - Triggers are events that tend to catapult us instantly into highly emotional reactions, often way out of proportion to the event itself. After we calm down, we may look back and regret things we said or did while in this altered state of reactivity.
 - When triggered, our capacity to think clearly and to act wisely is seriously decreased. If you look at the “mistakes” you’ve made – the things you later regretted saying and doing – many of these were impulsive reactions from your hot buttons being pressed. The ability to master our emotional reactivity is a core competency for leaders.
 - Our triggers are quite personal and it may vary from person to person. They may come from past experiences or may be just situational.

The usual trigger pathway

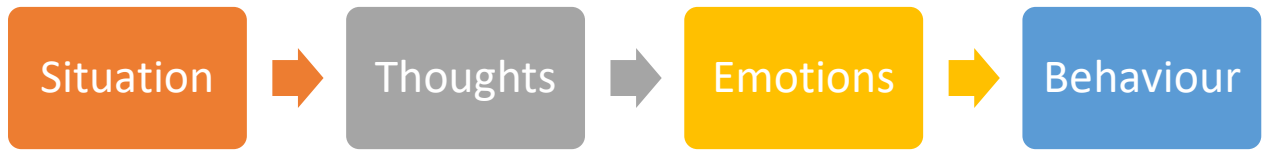


Fig. 2.10

Example

Your friend continues bothering you when you are working on a subject that needs constant concentration and you have a deadline tonight, which is starting to irritate you.

You may think things like, "I have to finish my work before deadline and my friend is not helping."

"This irritates me, and my friend ought to comprehend."

Anger, irritation, annoyance, and so on are examples of emotions.

You act in a way that you yell, "Don't irritate me," in front of everyone. Your friend sits away from you because he feels awful about it.

Describe a recent event and find their trigger pathway accordingly.

Video: Thoughts, Feelings and Behaviours

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PcFmrVZ0e-I>

➤ Interconnection between strengths, weaknesses, and triggers

1. Strengths can help manage weaknesses and regulate triggers

- **Managing weaknesses:** Internal resources, such as patience, empathy, or analytical abilities, act as a buffer. For example, you can use a strength like effective interpersonal communication to ask for assistance, assign tasks, or work together without ego if your weakness is a lack of technical understanding.
- **Regulating triggers:** When an external event activates an emotional reaction—such as receiving harsh criticism—a strength like high self-reflection or mindfulness allows you to pause before reacting. You use your inherent strengths to create a buffer between the trigger and your ultimate response.

2. Weaknesses may intensify emotional triggers

- **Amplification effect:** Emotional triggers are ignited by unresolved blind spots or insecurities.

A small piece of critical feedback won't merely feel like a suggestion if one's personal weakness is a fear of insufficiency; instead, it will cause a defensive outburst or shutdown.

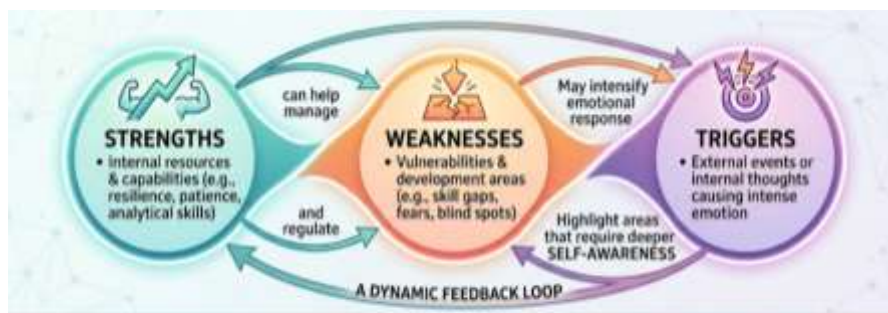


Fig. 2.11

- **Vulnerability**

loops: An underlying fear is validated when a trigger strikes a recognised weakness, which amplifies the emotional impact. By being aware of this loop, you can avoid misinterpreting a personal insecurity as an external threat.

3. Triggers highlight areas that require deeper self-awareness

- **Triggers as diagnostic tools:** Emotional triggers are in-the-moment alerts that directly refer to unresolved needs, boundaries, or vulnerabilities. Consider a trigger as informational data rather than something to just suppress.
- **Reframing the reaction:** You transition from a reactive to an enquiring attitude when you enquire, "Why did that specific comment bother me so much?" Triggers reveal the exact areas that require skill development, boundary-setting, or growth.

❖ Reflection point

Developing awareness of strengths, weaknesses, and triggers allows individuals to move from reactive behaviour to intentional action, leading to improved personal effectiveness and professional growth. Use SWOT analysis at least once in this week to make any decisions in your daily life and write a short report about it.

g) Emotional Responses

➤ Understanding emotions and emotional responses

Activity

Close your eyes and observe your own psychological state and note the following answers:

- What are your emotions?

- What is your predominant emotion right now?

- Name the emotion (Refer the chart to name the emotion)



Fig. 2.12

➤ What are emotions?

- As discussed earlier, human behaviour is greatly influenced by emotions. Emotions involve physiological responses, sensory experiences, movements and behavioural changes.
- They cause a variety of physical reactions in the body, such as changes in immune system activity, hormone levels and heart rate.
- They affect mental functions such as memory, decision-making and attention. They also have a significant impact on motivation.
- Emotions also play a role in communication and social interactions, influencing how we relate to others and interact in social settings.
- They can therefore have both immediate and long-term effects on our behaviour.
- As shown in the chart, different emotions are associated with specific names, facial expressions and behaviours.
- Paul Ekman, an American Psychologist conducted a cross-cultural study in 1992 and identified six basic emotions- anger, disgust, fear, happiness, sadness and surprise.

➤ Emotions vs. Feelings

- In everyday conversations, "emotion" is frequently used interchangeably with "feeling".
- Despite the words being used interchangeably, emotions and feelings are actually two different but connected phenomena.
- Emotions originate as sensations in the body. Feelings are influenced by our emotions but are generated from our mental thoughts.
- Let us look at a couple of examples: You notice the emotion of discomfort while giving a class presentation as your stomach clenches and your breathing gets constricted. Then your mind labels that as feeling awkward because it's a new experience for you. Yet another person with those same emotional bodily sensations, however, might label the experience as exciting because they get to attempt a new task.
- Awareness of emotions and feelings is a step towards self-awareness. This awareness is essential for mental and physical wellbeing, effective communication, and fruitful interpersonal relationships.



Fig. 2.13

➤ Three key elements of emotions

To better understand what emotions are, understanding their three key elements, known as the subjective experience, the physiological response, and the behavioural response is essential.

1. Subjective experience

This is the internal, personal aspect of how an emotion "feels" to you.

- **Highly personal:** While basic emotions (like anger or joy) are universal, the intensity and nuance vary. One person's "annoyance" is another person's "rage."
- **Multidimensional:** Emotions are rarely "pure." We often experience **mixed emotions** simultaneously, such as feeling both nervous and excited when starting a new job.
- **Context-dependent:** Your background and the specific situation shape the unique "flavour" of the emotion you experience.

2. Physiological response

This is the physical reaction your body has to an emotional stimulus, often beyond your conscious control.

- **Autonomic nervous system:** Your body has a control centre called the Autonomic Nervous System. It is like the autopilot on a plane; it handles things you don't have to think about, like your heartbeat, breathing, and digestion.
- **Fight-or-flight:** When you feel a strong emotion (especially fear or anger), this system flips a switch called "fight-or-flight." It is your body's way of asking: *"Do we stay and fight this, or do we run away fast?"*
- **The brain's role:** The amygdala (an almond-shaped structure in the brain) is the primary engine for processing fear and motivational states. If it sees something scary (like a snake or an angry person), it sends an instant electrical signal to the rest of your body to react—often before you have even "decided" to be afraid.

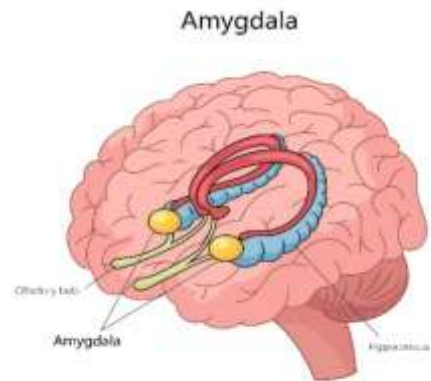


Fig. 2.14

3. Behavioural response

This is the actual outward expression of the emotion—how you act it out.

- **Communication and intelligence:** This includes facial expressions and body language. Emotional Intelligence (EI) is defined by how well we interpret these signals in others.
- **Cultural influence:** How we express emotions is dictated by sociocultural norms. For example, some cultures promote high arousal emotions like excitement or happiness and discourage the expression of low arousal emotions like sadness.

➤ Important form of self-expression and wellbeing

Case discussion

A 15-year-old boy Arnav, lives with his parents and grandparents in Mumbai. He is outgoing and enjoys company of people. In school, he has many friends and is good in studies as well. Recently he made a new friend in school, Rohan who has just transferred from a different school. Rohan was good with Arnav for few weeks but now has started teasing him in school. Arnav has tried to communicate that he does not like being teased but Rohan has continued doing it. Arnav has not discussed about this with anyone. Recently, he has stopped talking to many of his friends and is not taking part in any of the extracurricular activities. His parents have noticed this at home as well and asked him to be brave and not cry like a baby. Arnav felt that his parents did not understand him and due to this he did not share anything with anyone.

Arnav must be going through various emotions and feelings and how are they affecting his wellbeing?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mUImDSEEQq8>

h) Emotional Regulation

➤ Case discussion

Scenario: Maya is a project coordinator who has just presented a new strategy to her department. A senior director dismisses her strategy in front of the entire team, calling it "shortsighted" and "uninformed." Maya feels a sudden, sharp sting of shame followed by defensive anger.

Maya can react in 2 ways:

1) In this scenario, Maya focuses entirely on her outward appearance to ensure no one knows she is upset.

Maya freezes her facial muscles, keeps her voice flat, and ignores the lump in her throat. She says, "I understand," and quickly moves to the next slide.

The Result

- **Internal:** Her blood pressure spikes. Because she is so focused on not crying or snapping, she loses track of the rest of the meeting.
- **Long-term:** When Maya gets home, she feels "wiped out." She may dwell on the insult for days because the emotion was never processed, only hidden.

2) In this scenario, Maya uses a proactive strategy to change the way she interprets the director's words.

As Maya feels the anger rise, she pauses for a second and thinks: *"The director is under massive pressure from the board right now; his harsh tone is about his stress, not my competence. He's looking for flaws because he's scared of failure."*

The Result

- **Internal:** By changing her perspective, the "threat" response in her brain actually settles down. She feels a sense of calm objectivity rather than personal attack.
- **Outward:** She responds naturally: "I hear your concerns about the timeline. Let's look at the data I used for that section to see if we can bridge that gap."
- **Long-term:** Maya leaves the meeting feeling empowered. She handled a difficult person without carrying their "emotional weight" home with her.

1. As a young professional, what are the key differences you notice in how she may react in both the scenarios?

2. Out of these two reactions, are there any more?

3. Out of these two reactions, is there any one which is more appropriate?

➤ **Emotional suppression vs. regulation**

- Emotional suppression is the act of controlling the outward expressions of emotion, such as facial expressions or gestures, while internally experiencing the feeling.
- Unlike emotional regulation, which involves processing and adapting to emotions in a healthy way, suppression involves burying or denying feelings like anger, sadness, or fear without addressing them.
- While suppression may serve as a short-term coping mechanism to maintain social harmony or focus, it is generally considered a maladaptive strategy that prevents emotional processing.
- In the above-mentioned case, scenario one indicates emotional suppression. Where the individual does not express her emotions directly and in turn tries to suppress it. The result indicates that she feels more exhausted and has physical reaction as well.
- Whereas, in the second scenario, the individual is able to express emotions effectively and in turn feels much lighter.
- This explains the need to learn effective expression of emotions during daily interactions and specifically during highly provoking emotional situations.

➤ **Emotional reaction vs. response**

Emotional Reaction (The "Autopilot")	Emotional Response (The "Pilot")
A reaction is instant.	A response on the other hand usually comes more slowly.
When we say or do something “without thinking,” that’s the unconscious mind running the show. A reaction is based in the moment and does not take into consideration long-term effects of what you do or say.	It is based on information from both the aware mind and unaware mind.
It is defensive, impulsive, and often based on past triggers or survival instincts. It <i>happens</i> to you.	Responses are usually evaluative, intentional, and aligned with morals. It is something that we <i>choose</i> .

Video: Reacting vs. Responding

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B0n5Msh3Sv4>

❖ **Reflection point**

Write how reaction vs. response is presented here and the differences between both the scenarios.

Case

Aditya is a manager. It is Friday at 6:00 PM. A team member, Jay, walks into Aditya's office and admits that the data report that was due today will not be ready until Monday morning. This report is crucial for Aditya's meeting with the CEO on Monday.

Scenario 1: The emotional reaction

The moment Jay finishes speaking, Aditya's mind screams *threat!* His chest tightens, his face flushes red, and he feels a surge of heat. Without thinking, Aditya snaps: *"Are you kidding me? This is completely unacceptable. You're always dropping the ball lately! Just get out, I'll deal with this myself."* Aditya feels guilty later. Jay feels demoralised and disconnected. The professional relationship is damaged, and the work still is not done.

Scenario 2: The emotional response

Aditya feels the exact same surge of heat and chest tightness, but he utilises the "gap" between the feeling and the action. Aditya feels the anger. He takes one deep breath and recognises it: *"I am feeling panicked right now because I'm worried about the CEO meeting."*

Aditya waits three seconds and says: *"Jay, I'm very frustrated to hear that because I need this for the CEO on Monday. Walk me through what happened, and let's figure out if we can get the core data finished in the next hour so I'm not empty-handed."*

Aditya remains in control. Jay feels the weight of the mistake but stays motivated to help solve the problem. The goal remains the priority.

i) Emotional Regulation and Self-Management

➤ What is emotional regulation?

Emotional regulation is an awareness and understanding of one's emotions and their impact on behaviour, and the ability to manage those emotions in a more logical way. It helps us calm down during times of high emotion and control negative urges during times of emotional distress.

Individuals who have emotional regulation skills are able to:

- Experience, express and manage a range of emotions
- Engage in appropriate behaviours in response to emotional situations.
- Adjust well to transitions and new situations, and show a high tolerance for frustration.

➤ What is self-management?

- Self-management is a core competency involving the ability to regulate emotions, thoughts, and behaviours in various contexts to achieve personal, educational and occupational goals.
- Also referred to as self-control or self-regulation, these skills are critical for success in academics, relationships, and future careers, helping people manage stress, stay organised, and maintain motivation.

Key components and strategies for developing self-management include:

- **Emotional regulation:** Identify emotions, recognise physical signs of stress, and use coping mechanisms such as deep breathing, mindfulness, or taking breaks to calm down rather than reacting impulsively.
- **Goal setting and planning:** Encouraging the establishment of specific, measurable, and time-bound goals. This involves breaking larger objectives into manageable sub-steps and using tools like weekly calendars, to-do lists, and planners to manage time and responsibilities effectively.
- **Growth mindset and perseverance:** Fostering the belief that abilities can be developed through effort. Adults can support this by praising effort and strategy rather than innate intelligence, helping youth view challenges and mistakes as opportunities for learning rather than failures.
- **Self-care and healthy habits:** Promoting strategies like maintaining a consistent sleep schedule, engaging in physical exercise, and seeking social support from friends, family, or trusted adults to manage anxiety and depression.
- **Initiative and independence:** They encourage you to take ownership of your tasks, solve problems without constant adult intervention, and make proactive choices about your time and activities.

Video: Self-Management: Managing Yourself for Personal Success

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tX9i5yK2fWU>

➤ **Basic Tools for emotional regulation and self-management**

1. FEEL

Focus on the feelings

- ASK: What happened?
- ASK: How did it make you feel?
- Validate those feelings by saying:
 - It's okay to feel this way
 - I know it's frustrating

Evaluate the situation and all of its possible solutions

- ASK: What went wrong?
- ASK: What can you do to make it better?
- ASK: How can you solve the problem?
- ASK: What would happen if you choose to do that?

Enact (carry out) the best possible solution

- ASK: How could you carry out the solution?
- ASK: When will you carry out the solution?
- ASK: How well did the solution work?

Learn from the experience

- ASK: What could you have done differently?
- ASK: What did you learn from the experience overall?

Activity: Based on the above pointers, students can fill out the answers to the questions for any real-life incident that happened recently which brought up some sad/ angry/ irritable emotions.

2. STOP

The STOP skill consists of the following sequence:

1. **Stop**
2. **Take a step back**
3. **Observe**
4. **Proceed mindfully**

Stop: When you feel that your emotions seem to be out of control, stop! Don't react. Don't move a muscle. Just freeze especially those muscles around the mouth. Freezing for a moment helps prevent you from doing what your emotions want you to do (which is to act without thinking). Stay in control. Remember, you are the boss of your emotions. Name the emotion – put a label on it.

Take a step back: When you are faced with a difficult situation, it may be hard to think about how to deal with it on the spot. Give yourself some time to calm down and think. Take a step back from the situation. Get unstuck from what is going on. Take a deep breath and continue breathing deeply as long as you need and until you are in control. Do not let your emotions control what you do. It is the rare incident, indeed, wherein we need to make a split-second decision about anything. Hence, it is okay to take our time to decide how to respond.

Observe: Observe what is happening around you and within you, who is involved, and what are other people doing or saying. Listen to the negative thoughts that occur. To make effective choices, it is important NOT to jump to conclusions. Instead, gather the relevant facts so you can understand what is going on and what options are available.

Proceed mindfully: Ask yourself, "What do I want from this situation?" or "What are my goals?" or "What choice might make this situation better or worse?" or "What act will allow for success?" Stay calm, stay in control, and when you have some information and how that may impact your goals, you will be better prepared to deal with the situation effectively. Remember your brain needs time to think all of this through.

3. Opposite actions

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wxOICjG2is>

4. Flip the script (Name the story)

- Think about any short annoying scenarios (e.g., "*Someone spilled coffee on your notes*" or "*Your phone battery died at 1%*"). Now, you have 30 seconds to yell out the absolute dramatic worst-case reaction, followed immediately by 30 seconds of finding one calm, practical next step to solve the problem.
- It helps you catch terrible thinking early and practice mental reframing under low-stakes conditions.

❖ Reflection point

Your emotions and feelings are valid. You are the one who can manage it. For a week, observe different emotions and feelings you go through and note it. Use any of the techniques mentioned above and note your findings.

2.1.2 Digital Identity and Internalisation

How many social media apps do you use on daily basis? Now check your screen time of each app and make a note.

➤ Case discussion

Sameer would check his WhatsApp again and again; and his Facebook page for updates from his friends. His parents were very worried with his behaviour as he would barely read a newspaper or watch educational programmes on television but was more involved in WhatsApp and Facebook, which they felt would not help him grow and develop in his life.

Debriefing

The above case reflects the influence and effect of media, especially social media. In today's fast paced life, mobile phones have become an integral part of every one's life. Most of us are overly dependent on media. Media and especially social media help us to connect with one another without the barrier of a physical or geographical distance and we can be updated immediately with what is going on around us. However, one has to understand that media also has negative impact on us that can be detrimental to our social, psychological and even physical wellbeing.

➤ Activity: Creating a Digital Profile

Suggestions: The digital profile to be created may be for-

- A college student
- A job applicant
- An influencer
- A "perfect" professional

Part 1: Design a digital identity profile.

It must include:

- Name + One line bio (For example: Bio used on Instagram profiles)
- What kind of posts this person shares
- Personality traits (as shown online)
- What they *want others to think about them*
- What they would never show online

Part 2: Create the real version of this person behind the screen.

Add:

- Actual struggles
- Real personality differences
- Insecurities or pressures
- What they hide

Present:

- Their “digital persona”
- Their “real self”

Example:



Fig. 2.15

1. Why was there a difference?

2. Which version felt more real?

3. What shapes the digital identity and real life?

4. Is there a need to maintain these differences?

➤ **Digital identity**

In today's interconnected world, identity is shaped not only through family, culture, gender, or social relationships, but also through digital spaces. Social media platforms allow individuals to create and present a digital version of themselves.

This online identity is known as digital identity—the image, personality, and impression we create through our posts, photographs, comments, stories, and interactions online.

Digital identity may include:

- How we want others to perceive us
- What we choose to show or hide
- The values, lifestyle, and personality we portray online

Unlike face-to-face interactions, digital platforms allow individuals to:

- Edit and filter content
- Selectively present information
- Curate an ideal image

As a result, online identities are often carefully constructed versions of the self rather than complete representations of reality.

- **Video: What is Digital Identity?**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OGV5OBa938I>

Discussion

1. Do people present their real selves online?

2. Why do individuals edit photographs or carefully select content before posting?

3. How does online validation affect oneself? Is it different from validation received in person?

➤ **Online disinhibition effect**

The online disinhibition effect, first conceptualised by psychologist John Suler in 2004 describes how people tend to loosen up, feel less restrained, and express themselves more openly in digital spaces than they would in real-life, face-to-face interactions.

The two sides of disinhibition

- i. Benign disinhibition:** People share personal secrets, express deep emotions, show unusual acts of kindness, or reveal hidden vulnerabilities online that they might withhold in person. It can foster rapid familiarity, peer support, and authentic self-exploration.

Scenario: An introverted student who rarely speaks up in class posts a deeply reflective blog post about their personal struggles with career choices.

- ii. Toxic disinhibition:** People display inappropriate behaviour, aggressive outbursts, hate speech, or severe boundary-crossing. The absence of immediate social feedback makes individuals feel immune to real-world consequences.

Scenario: A social media user leaves a harsh, personal insult on a public figure's video comment section over a minor disagreement.

➤ **Digital identity formation and validation in digital spaces**

Digital platforms constantly expose individuals to:

- Beauty standards
- Success narratives
- Lifestyle expectations
- Social approval systems (likes, comments, followers)

Over time, people may begin to adopt these standards and compare themselves with others.

- In the current times, having a certain number of views/likes/comments are a sign of social acceptance. The term “influencer” has been going around since a few years now and it has become an actual career path that people follow.
- With this growth, comes the need for validation. The greater the number of likes and comments, the more accepted and validated you feel.
- Another side of this is the “cancel culture”. In many cases, if an “influencer” stands up for an ongoing social debate, the followers are quick to accept or reject their opinions. If their opinions are not accepted, they are cancelled.
- Thus, it is a phenomenon in which people criticise an individual who is thought to have acted or spoken in an unacceptable manner, and call (typically over social media) for that person to be disliked, boycotted, avoided or fired. This can lead to the individual’s exclusion from social or professional circles, either on social media or in person.
- This affects a person’s wellbeing on many levels. Some individuals cope with it well, while others struggle to do so. Individuals often link their sense of identity to the validation they receive.

➤ **Internalisation**

Internalisation refers to accepting external messages, expectations, and standards as part of one’s own self-belief system. These self-belief systems help us make sense of the world around us. We build our beliefs according to the experiences we go through from childhood.

This may influence:

- Confidence
- Self-worth
- Body image
- Behaviour
- Emotional wellbeing

Discussion

1. Do you think the use of digital filters is disrespectful to yourself?

2. Is not using them a source of stress for you? Can this have anything to do with your view of self?

3. Think of situations that make you feel sad on social media. Note them down. Do you think not exposing yourself to such a situation is a solution or do you think facing it and trying to find the issue within yourself is a solution?

➤ Digital footprint and permanence

A digital footprint is the persistent trail of data left behind by an individual's online activities, interactions, and device usage. In identity development, a digital footprint acts as a permanent, searchable record of one's curated self, public behaviour, and systemic interactions.

1. Types of digital footprints

- i. **Active digital footprint:** Intentional data shared by the user.

Examples: Posts, uploaded photos, blog entries, comments, public profile details, online petitions signed, and direct messages sent in public forums.

- ii. **Passive digital footprint:** Unintentional data collected in the background without the user actively typing or submitting it.

Examples: IP addresses, browsing history, location tracking, device metadata, app usage analytics, and behavioural data collected by cookies and algorithms.

2. The core characteristics of online footprints

- **Permanence (The "forever" effect):** Once content is published online, it is nearly impossible to completely erase. Screenshots, web archives, server backups, and re-shares mean that an impulsive post made today can persist indefinitely.
- **Searchability and aggregation:** Modern data tools aggregate scattered pieces of information—a forum post from five years ago, a current LinkedIn profile, and tagged photos—to construct a comprehensive profile of an individual's identity.
- **Context collapse:** Information posted for a specific audience (e.g., close friends) can be viewed out of context by unexpected audiences (e.g., family, admissions committees, or prospective employers), leading to misinterpretations of character.

➤ Online identity management

- Online identity management or OIM, establishes and maintains an individual's positive online persona.
- From creating a web presence, posting choice content, and solving problems related to online reputation, online identity management works to improve the quality and quantity of traffic that one's profile gathers.
- For example, for a politician, an online presence means being accessible; on the other hand, for a sportsperson, an online presence would mean giving a glimpse into his/her fans' lives. It is a complex planned process that needs a systemised approach to building this persona, establishing it across platforms and maintaining cordial relationships with all stakeholders.

Core pillars of online identity management

- **Authentic alignment:** Reducing the gap between your real-life values and your public digital persona. Aligning these profiles reduces the stress of "performing" online and protects against identity fragmentation across different platforms.
- **Privacy controls and security:** Managing platform settings, permissions, two-factor authentication, and data-sharing preferences to protect personal information from passive tracking or unauthorised access.

- **Reputation and footprint curation:** Regularly auditing your active digital footprint (posts, comments, tagged media) to ensure your public record accurately reflects your professional standards and long-term goals.
- **Mindful engagement:** Recognising behavioural triggers—such as the *online disinhibition effect*—to prevent impulsive posting, emotional burnout, or toxic interactions.

Practical strategies for managing your digital presence

- **The "front-page" rule:** Before publishing any content, ask yourself: *"Would I be comfortable seeing this quote or picture printed on the front page of a newspaper or viewed by a future employer?"*
- **Platform separation:** Intentionally separate your professional identity (e.g., LinkedIn, professional portfolios) from personal interaction channels (e.g., private group chats, personal social accounts) using distinct privacy controls.
- **Regular footprint audits:** Search your name periodically in a private browser window to review public-facing information, untag yourself from irrelevant media, and archive outdated accounts.
- **Pause before posting (emotional regulation):** When feeling strong emotions (anger, frustration, excitement), draft your response offline and wait at least 10–15 minutes before sharing to avoid impulsive digital disinhibition.

➤ Netiquette

All the communities create a code of conduct or rules to run effectively. A word made by joining 'net' and 'etiquette', these rules are necessary to facilitate interaction using technology.

Video: What is Netiquette? <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CWbtbycHZok>

➤ Issues and concerns

The virtual world offers multiple platforms and avenues to facilitate communication. However, online spaces also address several issues and concerns.

- First and foremost, the raging concern is cyberbullying and online harassment. The aggregation of individuals voicing their opinions in public spaces always leads to the side-tracking of alternate viewpoints by those in the mainstream. When encountering individuals from diverse backgrounds, one needs to respect their diversity and adopt an approach of inclusivity in all communication. Some communities where online harassment is not monitored may experience negativity and toxicity.
- Another major concern is the spread of misinformation and fake news over these platforms. In the era of information spreading at a click, one must be very careful while passing information. One may also become a victim of an online scam if not vigilant.
- While most of the issues can be addressed by effective moderation and community leadership, every user has a responsibility and must be vigilant to keep the communities safe for everyone.
- Lastly, addiction in these communities may lead to psychological issues within individuals, resulting in ill effects on their mental as well as physical health.

❖ Reflection point

The "digital boundary" matrix

Create a quick 2x2 grid to evaluate your daily social media habits and decide what to keep, adjust, or eliminate.

Example

Keep Doing	Start Doing
Habits or accounts that leave you feeling grounded, inspired, or authentically connected.	New practices that bring your online presence closer to your offline self.
Stop Doing	Boundary to Set
Accounts, comparison triggers, or posting habits that drain your self-esteem.	One concrete rule (e.g., no phones during meals, unfollowing trigger accounts)

Keep Doing	Start Doing
Stop Doing	Boundary to Set

Questions

1. Fill in the Blanks:

A. _____ is the capacity to correctly identify one's own feelings, ideas, and values and how they affect behaviour in various circumstances, it is a fundamental element of social and emotional learning (SEL).

B. _____ refers to a coherent sense of who we are, including our values, goals, beliefs, and group affiliations (such as gender, culture, or nationality).

C. _____ are short lived and _____ develop over the period of time.

D. The _____, first conceptualised by psychologist John Suler in 2004 describes how people tend to loosen up, feel less restrained, and express themselves more openly in digital spaces than they would in real-life, face-to-face interactions.

2. Explain 2 types of self-awareness in brief.

3. Choose a correct answer: What does SWOT analysis stand for?

- a) Strengths, weights, opportunities and threats
- b) Strong, weaknesses, opportunities and threats
- c) Strengths, opportunities, threats and weaknesses
- d) Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats

Answer _____

----- TISS SSE -----

4. What is the usual trigger pathway?



5. Explain briefly about emotional regulation and suggest any 1 tool for it.

2.2 Personal Growth and Reflective Practice

2.2.1 Reflection as a Learning Practice, Building Resilience, and Personal Effectiveness

a) Reflection as a Learning Practice

- Reflection is the deliberate process of thinking about an experience to understand what happened, what was learned, and what can be done differently in the future.
- Reflection goes beyond simply remembering an experience. It involves using an experience as a source of learning.

Reflection and overthinking, both involve thinking about an experience, but the purpose and outcome are different.

Reflection	Overthinking
Focuses on understanding an experience	Repeatedly focuses on the same thought or problem
Asks, “What can I learn?”	Often asks, “What if...?”
Looks at facts and different perspectives	May focus on assumptions or worst-case scenarios
Leads towards learning or action	Often leads to confusion or inaction
Has a sense of direction or purpose	Can become repetitive
Helps improve future decisions	Can make decision-making more difficult

Give a few examples of the difference between reflection vs. overthinking.

Simple reflective cycle

Experience → Reflection → Learning → Future Action

For example, a student receives critical feedback on a presentation. Instead of only feeling disappointed, the student considers what contributed to the feedback, identifies areas for improvement, and decides what to change before the next presentation.

Reflection can help individuals:

- Learn from successes and mistakes
- Identify what worked and what did not
- Improve future performance
- Recognise areas for development and
- Make more informed choices

Activity: What? So, what? Now what?

This activity is a tool for using reflection in daily lives.

- **'What?'** helps you describe the situation you want to learn from. You should identify the facts and feelings of the situation.
- **'So, what?'** allows you to extract the meaning of 'What?'. Moreover, you should question what knowledge you and others had in the situation, and what knowledge or theories that could help you make sense of the situation.
- **'Now what?'** allows you to create an action plan for the future based on the previous questions.

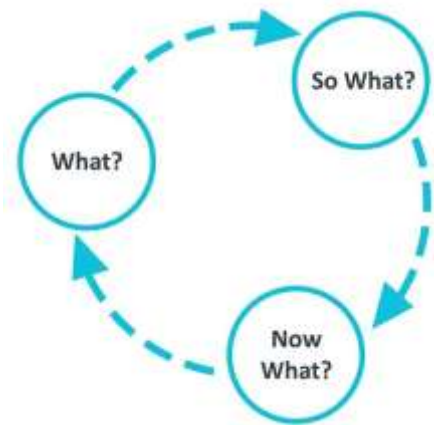


Fig. 2.16

Source: Rolfe et al. (2001) Reflective Model

Step 1: Select any situation of choice which is troubling you.

Step 2: Write down the “What?”

Examples: What ...

- ... is the context?
- ... is the problem/situation/difficulty/reason for being stuck/reason for success?
- ... was I/we/others trying to achieve?
- ... was the outcome of the situation?

Step 3: Write down “So, what?”

Examples: So, what...

- ... does this tell me/teach me/imply about the situation/my attitude/my practice/the problem?
- ... was going through my mind in the situation?
- ... did I base my decisions/actions on?

Step 4: Write down “Now what?”

Examples: Now what...

- ... do I need to do in the future to do better/fix a similar situation/stop being stuck?
- ... might be the consequences of this new action?
- ... considerations do I need about me/others/the situation to make sure this plan is successful?
- ... do I need to do to ensure that I will follow my plan?

(Source: Rolfe et al. (2001) Reflective Model Exercise: What? So What? Now What?)

b) Building Resilience and Personal Effectiveness

➤ Case discussion

Srinivasa Ramanujan, the great Indian mathematician faced some initial struggles as a child. After experiencing illness, death of siblings and being moved between his grandparents’ and parents’ house, he discovered his mathematical abilities at a young age. However, he continued to struggle with ill-health, finances and college education. Despite being hailed as a mathematical genius, he had to leave college without a degree due to his poor interest in non-mathematics subjects. Throughout all these challenges, he continued to pursue his work in mathematics. Finally, he obtained his formal degree from the University of Cambridge. In his brief life while being faced with several challenges, he was able to make significant contributions to the field of mathematics.

➤ What is resilience?

- Resilience is the ability to adapt to challenges, recover from setbacks, and continue working towards goals.
- Resilience does not mean avoiding difficulties or never experiencing disappointment. It involves responding to challenges constructively, adapting one's approach, and seeking appropriate support when required.

➤ Characteristics

1. Overall awareness: People who are resilient are sensitive to their own emotions and those of the people around them.

2. Being realistic: Resilient individuals are realistic about the fact that life brings problems and challenges and they understand that they will need to change as much as possible.

3. Locus of control: If you have a sense that you have some control over your life, you are likely to manage situations more effectively and be more resilient.

4. Solving problems: People who are resilient tend to have effective and efficient problem-solving skills.

5. Social connections: Resilient people have a good and productive social system and they are willing to share their problems and emotions.

6. Mental agility: Those who are resilient are flexible in their thinking and approach to situations, even during difficult times.

7. Mindset: People with resilience think positively and consider that they can survive a situation rather than succumb to it.

➤ **What is personal effectiveness?**

- Personal effectiveness refers to the ability to manage oneself, one's responsibilities, and available resources effectively to achieve desired goals. It involves understanding what needs to be done, deciding how to approach it, taking responsibility for one's actions, and adapting when circumstances change.
- Personal effectiveness is not simply about being busy or completing a large number of tasks. It is about using one's time, abilities, and resources purposefully and responsibly.

➤ **Personal effectiveness in academic and workplace settings**

- Personal effectiveness becomes particularly important when individuals move from structured educational environments into professional settings.
- Students may be expected to manage deadlines, coordinate with others, take initiative, respond to feedback, and handle changing priorities.
- For example, an intern may be given multiple tasks with different deadlines. An effective approach would involve understanding the requirements, prioritising the tasks, planning the available time, communicating when clarification is needed, and following through on commitments.

2.2.2 Values and Constructive Decision-Making

a) What are values?

- Values are our heart's deepest desires for the way we want to interact with the world, other people, and ourselves. They're what we want to stand for in life, how we want to behave, what sort of person we want to be, what sort of strengths and qualities we want to develop.
- They are often culturally defined views about what is good or bad and what is important in life.
- They are not just abstract ideas but are actively integrated into our lives, influencing how we perceive the world and how we interact with others.
- Values vs. goals: Values are like a compass. A compass gives you direction and keeps you on track when you're travelling. Likewise, our values do the same for the journey of life. Our values guide us about right and wrong. But goals are like the things you try to achieve on your journey: they're like the sights you want to see.

➤ **Types of values**

- **Personal values:** Individual beliefs shaped by personal experiences e.g. Ambition, courage, independence, self-discipline.
- **Social values:** Promote social wellbeing and unity e.g. Respect, equality, justice, tolerance.
- **Moral/ethical values:** Define what is right and wrong, help in ethical decision-making, e.g. Honesty, integrity, fairness, responsibility.
- **Cultural values:** Shared by a specific group or society, passed down through generations, e.g. traditions, customs, language, rituals.
- **Professional values:** Guide behaviour in the workplace, e.g. punctuality, accountability, teamwork, confidentiality.

Give examples of each type of value that you can identify in your daily lives.

➤ How values are shaped?

Values are shaped through:

Family and upbringing: Early on, values are cultivated in children by the family members.

Culture: Culture and society have their own set of dominant beliefs and values that they carry out on their members.

Community: Interaction with your local community, positive and negative reactions to the behaviour shown is noted, like humanity or selfishness.

Education: Teachers play an important role in reinforcing certain beliefs, attitudes and behaviours.

Peer influence: Peers at various stages of life can influence the values. Depending on the peer group, values can change as individuals adapt to fit into the group.

Life experiences: Early on, any positive or negative experiences shape the value system.

➤ Video: What Are Your Personal Values? How to Define and Live by Them

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NprWF3h6YVo>:

➤ Value conflict

Case discussion

Imagine two friends, Aria and Sam. Aria just bought a very expensive, bright neon green outfit for a big party and asks Sam, "Do you like it?"

Sam thinks the outfit looks completely silly.

- If Sam values absolute honesty: He says, "*Honestly, it looks terrible on you and the colour hurts my eyes.*" (He chose Truth over Comfort).
- If Sam values kindness/harmony: He says, "*Wow, it's so vibrant! You look so happy wearing it!*" (He chose sparing her feelings over the brutal truth).
- The value conflict: If Aria feels insulted by Sam's honesty, they are not just fighting about clothes. They are clashing because Aria expects support from a friend, while Sam believes a true friend always tells the truth.
- A value conflict occurs when deeply held values, core principles, or ethical standards clash with one another. Unlike a simple disagreement over facts or resources, a value conflict hits at the heart of identity—what an individual or a group believes is inherently "right," "good," or "important."

- Value conflicts generally fall into two categories: internal (when a person experiences a conflict between their own values) and interpersonal (when people have conflicting values).

➤ How to resolve value conflicts

Find a higher common value: Ask what each conflicting value ultimately provides to determine if they share a higher, compatible value.

Reframe conflicting opinions: Often, the conflict stems from views about values (e.g., "I must choose one") rather than the values. Rewiring these views can dissolve the perceived conflict.

Assess deal-breakers: Determine if the conflict is resolvable through compromise or if it represents a fundamental misalignment that may require separation or withdrawal to maintain integrity.

b) Constructive decision-making

- All human activities revolve around making choices or taking decisions. Decision-making may be defined as the process of deciding to adopt a certain course of action from various alternatives, to achieve a set of predetermined goals.
- Decision-making is future oriented, as the sole objective of making a decision is to guide organisational and human activities towards achieving the future objectives. Decision-making process involves investing the organisational resources in realising a predetermined goal or solving a problem by following a specific course of action.

➤ Decision-making process



Fig. 2.17

Decision-making is a process which involves the following steps:

- 1. Definition of the problems:** While defining the problem, it is the responsibility of the decision-maker to identify in detail the possible alternatives to the problem in structured format.
- 2. Collection of data:** The next step is to collect the required data for evaluating the problem. Correct and accurate data is the basis of sound decision-making.

3. Formation of a model: Models help in evaluating alternatives. Based on the data available and possible scenarios, various alternative models are prepared to get a real life feel and arrive at the best choice.

4. Evaluation: The decision-maker must analyse the model on the basis of realistic components.

5. Framing and decision: The quality of decision depends on the reliability of the available data and also on the validity of the various developed models. Framing a decision may not be possible in the absence of authentic data and flexible decision models.

6. Follow-up actions: Perhaps the most important consideration in arriving at a decision is anticipating its likely impact or reaction on the concerned areas. Hence, the decision-maker must have follow-up plans or strategies for dealing with the reactions of implementing the selected decision.

➤ **Decision-making styles**

1. **Autocratic:** The leader defines the problem, analyses it, generates and evaluates alternative solutions, and selects the most appropriate solution.
2. **Autocratic with Group Input:** The leader makes the decision but seeks the group's input to help analyse the problem and identify possible solutions.
3. **Individual Consultative Style:** The leader consults selected individuals separately to gather their views and suggestions before making the decision.
4. **Group Consultative Style:** The leader consults the group collectively to gather views and suggestions before making the decision.
5. **Group-Based Decision-making:** The leader defines the problem and invites the group to participate in generating, evaluating and selecting a solution.
6. **Participative Style:** The leader facilitates the decision-making process, encouraging all group members to participate actively in identifying the problem, exploring alternatives and reaching a decision.
7. **Leaderless Team:** The group has no formally appointed leader. A process leader may emerge or be selected by the group to facilitate decision-making for a particular problem.

➤ **Activity: The Crisis Council**

This activity is aimed at improving group decision-making in high-stress and unusual situations.

Scenario: The team/s will play the role of an emergency council for a futuristic space colony.

A sudden, catastrophic event (e.g., radiation leak, supply ship failure, unknown illness) has occurred, and the participants have 7 minutes to make a plan to minimise loss and ensure survival.

Steps:

1. Form groups
2. Provide a brief crisis scenario

Example: Heavy rainfall has caused severe flooding in the area around the city. Classes are suspended, transport services are disrupted, and many office workers, students, etc. are unable to return home.

Some are anxious because they cannot contact their families. Others want to leave immediately despite warnings that the roads are unsafe. There is limited food and drinking water available, and phone networks are becoming unreliable.

3. Each team receives:

- A list of limited resources (e.g., food, medical supplies, oxygen tanks, tools).
- A set of roles (e.g., medic, engineer, leader, biologist), which they can assign among themselves.

4. The team must decide how to:

- Allocate resources.
- Prioritise actions.
- Communicate with the rest of the colony.

At the end, each team presents its Crisis Action Plan.

Discussion

1. What decision-making approach did you use (e.g., voting, consensus, role-based authority)?

2. How did you manage differing opinions?

3. Would you change anything in hindsight?

❖ Reflection point

Reflect on the following questions:

1. What decision-making style do you generally use? Is it, in your opinion, the most effective one?

2. Based on your present experience, what style of decision-making most captures your energy and commitment? Which style least captures your energy and commitment?

3. Ask your friends or supervisors how effective you are as a leader/manager in directing the decision-making process. Also ask, "How could I do better?" You will learn a lot (and some of it you may not want to hear!).

Questions

1. Fill in the blanks:

_____ is the deliberate process of thinking about an experience to understand what happened, what was learned, and what can be done differently in the future.

2. Choose the correct option

Simple reflective cycle:

- A. Reflection → Learning → Future Action → Experience
- B. Reflection → Future Action → Experience → Learning
- C. Experience → Learning → Future Action → Reflection
- D. Experience → Reflection → Learning → Future Action

Answer: _____

3. Give any 4 characteristics of a resilient person.

4. A _____ occurs when deeply held values, core principles, or ethical standards clash with one another.

2.3 Self-Acceptance: Accepting Yourself as You Are

2.3.1 Self-Concept and Self-Management

➤ What is self-concept?

- The self-concept is our internal "knowledge base" about who we are. It becomes more abstract and complex as we age, organised into three primary pillars:
- Physical self-concept – It includes the image of one's body, appearance, its attractiveness, e.g., How do I look? Am I attractive? Which part of the body am I most happy with? Which part of the body I am not happy with?
- Psychological self-concept – It includes one's personality traits, abilities, weaknesses, level of adjustment, e.g., Am I smart, rude, anxious, honest, outgoing, good in chess, art, or pathetic in sports? Can I take care of myself?
- Attitudinal self-concept – It includes one's values, beliefs, convictions, ideals, philosophy of life, e.g., Am I a cautious spender or a spend thrift? Do I like a life full of excitement and change or safe, secure life?

- This concept is a mix of how we see ourselves internally and how we believe the world perceives us.

➤ **Components of self-concept**

- **Ideal self:** The ideal self is the person you want to be. This person has the attributes or qualities you are either working toward or want to possess. It is who you envision yourself to be.
- **Self-image:** Self-image refers to how you see yourself at this moment in time. Physical characteristics, personality traits, and social roles affect your self-image.
- **Self-esteem:** How much you like, accept, and value yourself contributes to your self-concept. Self-esteem can be affected by a number of factors, including how others see you, how you think you are compared to others, and your role in society.

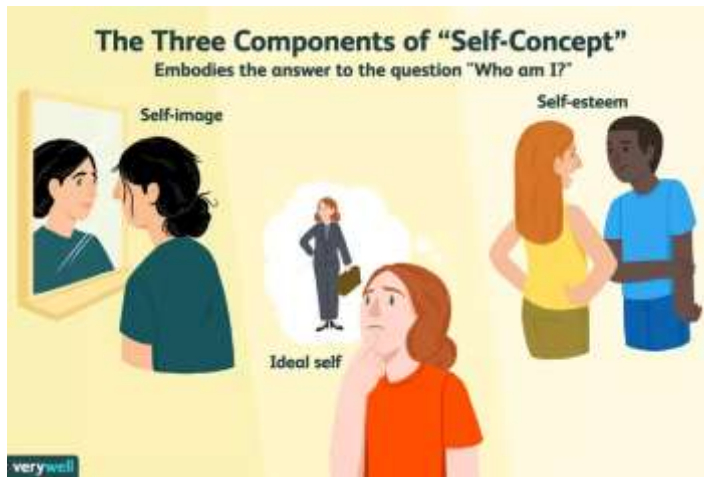


Fig.2.18

Source: <https://www.verywellmind.com/what-is-self-concept-2795865>

Activity: My Inner Coach: Self-Esteem Exercise

We all have an inner voice that talks to us throughout the day. Sometimes this voice is critical and harsh—this is our inner critic. Other times, it is motivating and kind—this is the inner coach.

Describe a time when you were hard on yourself:

My Critic

This is all your fault!

*You'll never
get this right.*

You're a loser – just give up!

*Everyone is
laughing at you.*



My Coach

Get back up and keep going!

*Doing your best is
what matters most.*

Learn from your mistakes.

*Don't waste time on
blame and regret.*

What does your critic say?

What does your coach say?

The inner critic is the voice that ignores everything you're doing well and jumps on every mistake. If unchallenged, this voice will hamper with your mood and confidence.

The inner coach asks to transform what your critic says into something an encouraging coach might say. This helps you view situations in a better light and treat yourself kindlier.

➤ **Understanding self-image, ideal and real self**

People often develop ideas about themselves based on:

- Appearance.
- Academic performance.
- Social status.
- Family expectations.
- Peer feedback.
- Social media influence.

Self-image is the perception you have of yourself, influencing confidence and how you interact with the world. What you see when you look in the mirror and how you picture yourself in your head is your self-image.

➤ **Self-image vs. self-concept**

- Self-image and self-concept are strongly associated, but they're not *quite* the same thing.
- Self-concept is about "Who am I?", broad, cumulative, and multidimensional belief system and self-image is a narrower, more immediate component of self-concept that reflects how an individual perceives themselves at a specific moment or in a specific context, often focusing on physical appearance and concrete traits.
- Self-concept is a more overarching construct than self-image; it involves how you see yourself, how you think about yourself, and how you feel about yourself. In a sense, self-image is one of the components that make up self-concept.

➤ **Difference between self-image, the ideal self and the real self**

- The ideal self is an idea deriving from Carl Roger's theory. Rogers proposed that the personality is composed of the real and ideal self.
- The real self is how a person sees themselves as they are today. The ideal self is how they would like to be. It is influenced by their life experiences, society's expectations, and people they admire or look up to.
- Self-image can often exist in relation to one's ideal self. Usually, there is an incongruence between one's real and ideal selves and their self-image.
- That is to say, how someone imagines themselves to be in an ideal life may differ from how they see themselves, which, in turn, can differ from who that person actually is and is perceived by others.
- The greater the gap or disparity between what we like to be (ideal self) and what we are (real self), the greater the disharmony within our self. The greater the difference between our ideal and actual selves, the more likely we are to experience a state of incongruence, which can lead to low self-esteem, anxiety and maladjustment.

Discuss: Describe your differences in your self-image, real and ideal self.

Video: Self-Image, Actual Self and Ideal Self

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n8RYyavDqIE>

➤ **What is self-esteem?**

- If self-concept is our perception of our traits, beliefs and opinions, then self-esteem is our evaluation of self-concept as good, bad, worthwhile, useless, etc. It is our evaluation of our own worth based on assessment of our self-concept.
- Self-esteem reflects a personal psychological characteristic relating to self-judgement based on one's values about humans (Alesi et. al., 2012). It indicates being aware of one's value system and an emotional evaluation of one's self-worth (Schunk, 1985).
- One may have low academic self-esteem based on poor feedback on one's performance in school. One may have high social self-esteem based on one's popularity amongst school friends.
- In addition to evaluations about abilities and attributes, self-esteem is also defined in terms of one's feelings of affection for oneself. People who like themselves have high self-esteem. People who have ambivalent or mildly positive feelings about themselves have low self-esteem. Self-hate can result in various kinds of mental illnesses.
- Thus, in a broader sense, self-esteem is the extent of liking that one has for oneself and the kind of evaluation one makes of one's abilities and attributes. It is not necessary that positive evaluation of self will be accompanied by self-liking.
- A person who considers oneself as attractive or popular may not feel good about herself/himself. Similarly, a person who is poor in academics may still like oneself.
- The dark side: People with defensively high self-esteem are actually harbouring a low self-esteem (inferiority complex). They often feel threatened by anyone who questions their self-esteem. They need repeated praise and are often boastful and arrogant.

Video: What is Self-Esteem?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gC5hAAvhCIE>

➤ **Increasing your self-esteem: Some tips**

- Learn a new skill in areas such as academics, cognitive development, social interaction, and work-related skills.
- Go beyond your comfort zone.
- Question your self-limiting beliefs, challenge your thoughts.
- Focus on your strengths.
- Engage in affirmative talk, tell yourself positive and kinder words.
- Be clear about your goals and values.
- Do not hesitate to talk to others and take their help.
- Recognise the 'hero' within you, tap onto your inner strengths.
- Remember that you are more than your circumstances, the way you respond matters more.
- You are unique, so do not compare with others.

➤ **What is self-acceptance?**

- Self-acceptance refers to the ability to recognise, acknowledge, and value oneself completely — including strengths, weaknesses, emotions, appearance, experiences, and limitations.
- It involves accepting oneself without excessive self-criticism or constant comparison with others.
- Self-acceptance does not mean avoiding growth or improvement. Rather, it means:
“I recognise myself as worthy and valuable while continuing to learn and grow.”

➤ **Lack of self-acceptance**

- Lack of self-acceptance can lead to a fractured sense of self deep within your mind, where one part of you is angry, upset, annoyed, ashamed, or disappointed with another part of you.
- These fragmented parts can only reconcile when you forgive and accept yourself.
- In fact, research has shown that having low self-confidence and a negative view of oneself was linked to lower levels of gray matter in parts of the brain that regulate emotions and manage stress. This can increase one's risk of emotional disorders and stress-related health conditions.

Activity: What do People Notice First?

“What do you think people notice first about you?”

Examples

- Appearance.
- Confidence.
- Communication.
- Dressing.
- Achievements.
- Social Media Presence.

“Do these things fully define a person?”

Discuss

1. How people notice details about you and how it makes you feel?

2. Do they hold onto any flaws that are pointed out? How it feels when they are praising any qualities?

This helps in understanding various qualities or shortcomings that everyone has and their acceptance of it.

➤ **Why is it so hard to accept yourself as you are?**

We're hard on ourselves. Many of us are more understanding and forgiving of others than we are of ourselves. It doesn't make a lot of sense. If anyone is going to be on your side, it should be you. There are some common signs that you are too hard on yourself:

- 1. You dwell on your mistakes:** This accomplishes nothing positive. It does accomplish several things that are negative.
- 2. You compare yourself to others:** There's always someone richer, better looking, more musically talented, “luckier,” or has children that do better in school.

- 3. You don't give your own ideas a fair chance:** How many great ideas have you had, but ultimately dismissed?
- 4. You spend too much time thinking about your past failures**
- 5. You can't take a compliment well:** There are good things about you. It's okay when others acknowledge those things. Your inability to accept a compliment from others is a sign that you don't accept yourself.
- 6. You're unrealistic:** Being unrealistic might be seen as being kind to yourself, but it's not. You're ultimately being hard on yourself.

Accepting yourself is definitely hard. We have been taught that the ideal person is financially successful, athletic, attractive, cool under pressure, hilarious, creative, and the life of the party. Most of us will never check all of those boxes.

➤ **Influence of comparison and validation on self-acceptance**

Social comparison involves evaluating oneself against others, which can be upward (comparing oneself with those perceived as better) or downward (comparing oneself with those perceived as worse off).

External validation is the approval sought from others to feel accepted and worthy, triggering temporary dopamine releases.

In contemporary society, people are constantly exposed to:

- Social comparison.
- Beauty standards.
- Achievement pressure.
- Expectations regarding success and lifestyle.

Continuous comparison may lead individuals to feel:

- "I am not good enough."
- "Others are more successful or attractive."
- "I need validation to feel valued."

However, self-worth cannot depend entirely on external approval. Healthy self-acceptance develops when individuals begin to value themselves beyond performance and comparison.

Activity: Labels (Deconstructing Self-Imposed and External Labels)

Write three labels you would use to describe yourself.

Examples:

- Hardworking.
- Shy.
- Emotional.
- Average.
- Confident.

Discuss

1. Who gave you these labels?

2. Did you choose them yourself?

3. Are these labels permanent?

This will help in understanding effect of various labels that individuals put on self and are given by others.

➤ Learning self-acceptance

Self-acceptance is a skill that can be learned. Upbringing, life experiences, society's influences, past trauma, criticism, social comparison, self-talk, and support systems can also affect how well we are able to accept who we are.

Video: Tips for Self-Acceptance

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LWD8QmI2evo>

Discuss: What are some ways students accept themselves?

➤ Self-compassion

We usually think of compassion as something we show towards others. But we can, and should also show compassion towards ourselves. Self-compassion means showing compassion towards ourselves when we suffer, fail or feel inadequate. Experts suggests that there are five ways to bring self-compassion into your life: via physical, mental, emotional, relational, and spiritual methods. Here are a few:

- **Comfort your body:** Eat something healthy. Lie down and rest your body. Massage your own neck, feet, or hands. Take a walk. Anything you can do to improve how you feel physically gives you a dose of self-compassion.
- **Write a letter to yourself:** Describe a situation that caused you to feel pain (a breakup with a lover, a job loss, a poorly received presentation). Don't blame anyone but acknowledge your feelings.
- **Give yourself encouragement:** If something bad or painful happens to you, think of what you would say to a good friend if the same thing happened to him or her. Direct these compassionate responses toward yourself.
- **Practice nonjudgemental attitude towards self:** This is the nonjudgemental observation of your own thoughts, feelings, and actions, without trying to suppress or deny them. When you look in the mirror and don't like what you see, accept the bad with the good with a compassionate attitude.

- Instead of:
 “I am a failure.”
 A self-compassionate response becomes:
 “I made a mistake, but I can learn from it.”

Discuss: How self-compassion can be a daily practice and what steps you can take to be self-compassionate.

Activity: Step into Your Stretch Zone

There are three personal zones of achievement: comfort zone, stretch zone, and panic zone. One needs to go beyond the comfort zone (where the person does not want to enter into new arenas or put in more efforts), and also the panic zone (where the person does not want to take any risk). Stretch zone is where you are willing to take reasonable risks based on self-awareness and can take failures as learning experiences to move forward. Doing what we like, trying out the unknown, being vulnerable can help us to be flexible and open to new learning experiences. This will increase our self-belief. Think about any aspect in your life where you can benefit by stepping into your stretch zone and actually take steps to carry it out.

❖ Reflection point

Sit individually in a quiet/open space and write a short reflective essay on: “Remember what makes you, you.” The reflection may include:

- Personal qualities they value in themselves
- Experiences that shaped them
- Challenges they overcame
- Values or relationships important to them

Questions

1. Fill in the blanks:

A. The _____ is our internal "knowledge base" about who we are. It becomes more abstract and complex as we age.

B. Self-concept is about _____, broad, cumulative, and multidimensional belief system and _____ is about how an individual perceives themselves at a specific moment or in a specific context, often focusing on physical appearance and concrete traits.

2. Name and explain 3 components of self-concept

3. True or false:

If self-concept is our perception of our traits, beliefs and opinions, then self-esteem is not our evaluation of self-concept as good, bad, worthwhile, useless etc. It is our evaluation of others worth based on assessment of their self-concept _____.

4. Suggest any 3 ways we can practice self-acceptance.

4. What is the dark side of self-esteem?

6. The greater the gap or disparity between what we like to be (ideal self) and what we are (real self), the greater the disharmony within our self. True / False _____.

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Unit III: Towards Healthy Social Dialogue

3.1. Social Awareness and Inclusive Interactions

➤ What is social awareness?

Social awareness is the ability to understand, empathise with, and respond to the feelings, needs, and perspectives of other people and diverse groups. It is a core pillar of emotional intelligence. It helps individuals navigate group dynamics, respect social norms, and build healthy relationships.

Developing social awareness is important because it helps students to become responsible, empathetic, and socially responsible individuals. It encourages them to appreciate diversity, respect different opinions, understand issues such as inequality, discrimination, disability, gender, and environmental concerns, and contribute positively to society. Socially aware students are better able to communicate and collaborate with people from different backgrounds, resolve conflicts constructively, and make informed decisions.

➤ Skills associated with social awareness

- **Perspective-taking:** Perspective-taking involves the ability to look at and understand a situation or concept from an alternate point of view.

E.g., if you watch a movie with your friends, everyone may have a different perspective about it. Some of your friends might like the actors and their acting while others might like the story and the direction. Some may appreciate the cinematography whereas others may not like the movie at all. If you consider the situation from every one's point of view, all these viewpoints are valid from their respective perspectives. In every situation in life, you will find such differences in perspectives. People have varied perspectives because of their personalities, backgrounds, past experiences, sociocultural norms and various other factors.

- **Empathy:** Empathy is defined as the ability to understand and share the feelings of another person. A common saying associated with empathy is to “put yourself in his/her shoes.”

E.g., if your friend is sad because of certain incident, you may imagine yourself in the same situation, at his place and may feel sad.

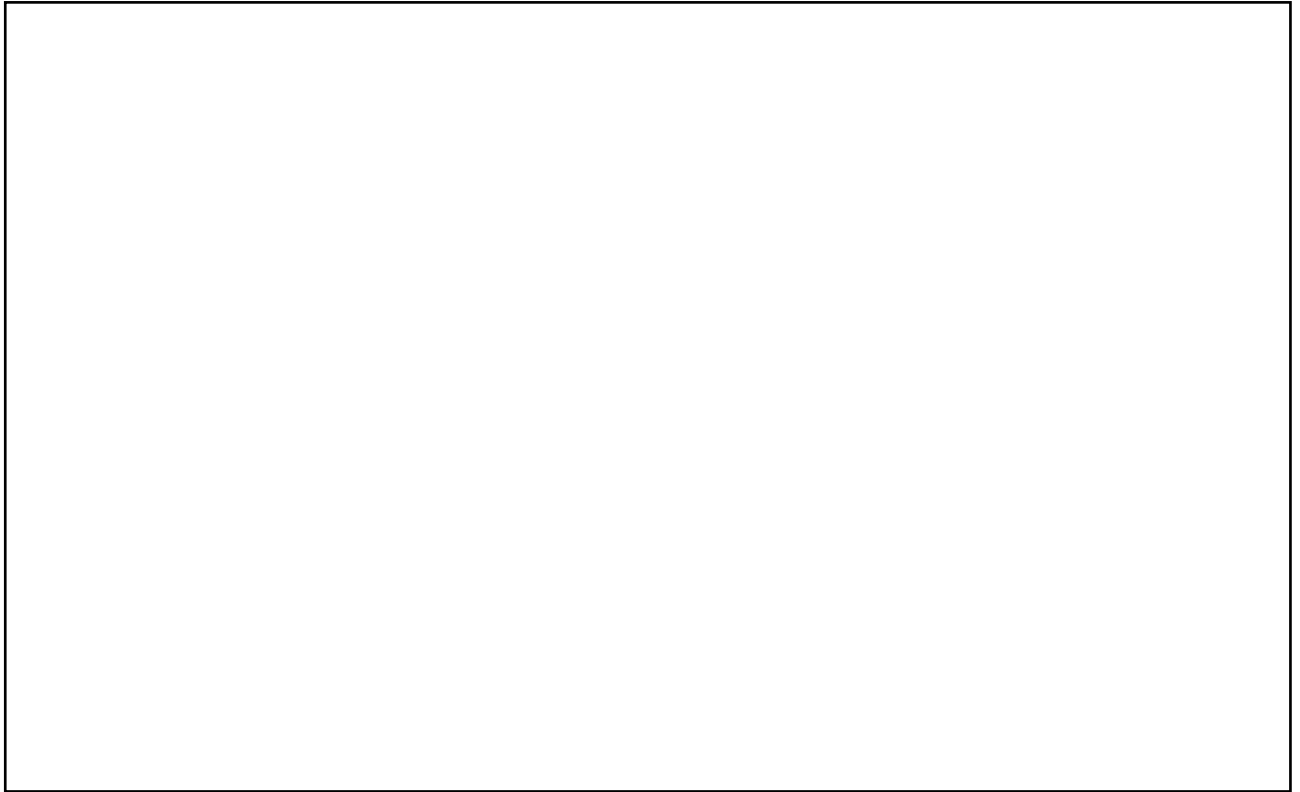
- **Appreciating diversity:** Learn the value in recognising that each individual is unique and that differences in race, creed, gender, sexual orientation, or belief should be celebrated rather than ignored or argued.

- **Respect for others:** View the world with an open mind and ask questions rather than make judgements. Despite their differences, students are asked to treat each other with kindness and curiosity rather than hatred or prejudice.

E.g., your friends or classmates may come from various cultures, may be speaking various languages, may have varied food habits. You should appreciate this diversity and respect everyone.

3.1.1 Understanding Diversity and Inclusion: Recognising Bias and Stereotypes

- **Activity:** Draw a picture based on various themes like fruit market, flowers and butterflies in the garden, a wedding, animals in the jungle, a family, etc.



Write similar real-life scenarios on the basis of following questions.

1. What types of fruits are available in the fruit market? What are the differences and similarities among them? What are the uses of the different fruits?

2. Ask yourself and answer similar questions for other pictures like the garden, animals in the jungle, etc.

3. What do you see in the wedding? How the gathering of the people looking like? Do they all look same? Is the skin colour, height, body composition same for all?

Summary: Variations in different aspects of human beings and other living beings is a natural phenomenon. Diversity is the law of nature. No two persons or animals can be exactly the same. Even the non-observable characteristics can differ, such as tone of voice, personality traits, abilities, habits, etc. The same diversity exists in the classroom. No one is perfect. Each one of us has certain abilities, positive qualities and limitations. These differences do not make us inferior or superior to others.

➤ **What is diversity?**

Diversity refers to the differences among people. These differences may include:

- Gender and age.
- Culture, language and region.
- Religion, beliefs and values.
- Socioeconomic background.
- Education and life experiences.
- Physical and intellectual abilities, including disabilities.
- Family and social environment.
- Personality, perspectives and communication styles.
- Professional experiences.

Diversity brings different ideas, experiences and viewpoints into a classroom, workplace or society.

➤ **What is inclusion?**

Inclusion means creating an environment where everyone feels respected, valued, accepted and able to participate. It is not enough to have diverse people; everyone should have equal opportunities to contribute and grow.

Diversity and inclusion are important because they-

- Encourage creativity and innovation.
- Improve problem-solving and decision-making.
- Promote respect and understanding.
- Reduce prejudice, discrimination and stereotypes.
- Create a sense of belonging.
- Prepare students for diverse workplaces and society.

➤ **How can students promote inclusion?**

- **Respect differences:** Accept that people may think, communicate and behave differently.
- **Avoid stereotypes:** Do not judge people based on assumptions about their group.
- **Listen actively:** Give others an opportunity to express their views.
- **Use inclusive language:** Communicate respectfully and avoid discriminatory expressions.
- **Challenge discrimination:** Speak up when you notice unfair or exclusionary behaviour.
- **Include others:** Make an effort to involve people who may feel left out.
- **Be open to learning:** Different experiences can broaden your understanding of the world.

Key messages

- Diversity gives us different perspectives; inclusion ensures that those perspectives are heard and valued.
- An inclusive society does not require everyone to be the same. It requires us to respect differences while ensuring dignity, fairness and equal opportunity for everyone.

➤ **Recognising bias and stereotypes**

Every day, we make decisions about people, situations, and events. We form impressions quickly—sometimes without consciously thinking about them. These judgements help us navigate a complex world, but they can also lead to biases and stereotypes.

It is important to understand how these mental shortcuts influence our thoughts, decisions, relationships, and behaviour. Becoming aware of our biases can help us make fairer, more objective, and more respectful decisions.

➤ **What is a bias?**

A bias is a strong leaning or preference for or against something, often leading to an unfair or unobjective judgement. For example, during an interview, a recruiter may unconsciously feel more positive towards a candidate because the candidate comes from the same college of the recruiter. He may not intend to discriminate, but this preference can influence the final decision.

Bias can affect many areas of life, including:

- Group formations in the college or university.
- Recruitment and selection.
- Academic evaluation.
- Workplace relationships.
- Team formation.
- Promotion and career opportunities.
- Helping behaviour.

➤ **Common types of bias**

- **Confirmation bias:** The tendency to look for information that supports what we already believe and ignore information that challenges it.

Example: If you believe that a particular friend is careless, you may notice her mistakes but overlook her good behaviour.

- **Halo effect:** The tendency to allow one positive characteristic to influence our overall impression of a person.

Example: A student who communicates confidently may be assumed to be highly competent in every area or a student who is performing during college festival, is recognised as best performer in every area.

- **Horn effect:** The opposite of the halo effect. One negative characteristic influences our overall judgement of a person.

- **Similarity bias:** The tendency to prefer people who are similar to us in background, interests, education, language, or personality.
- **Gender bias:** Judging people differently based on assumptions about gender.

Example: Assuming that men are better suited for technical leadership roles or that women are naturally better suited for caregiving roles.

➤ What is a stereotype?

A stereotype is a generalised belief or assumption about a particular group of people. Stereotypes simplify people into categories and assume that everyone in a group has similar characteristics.

Examples include beliefs such as:

- "Young people are irresponsible."
- "Older employees cannot learn technology."
- "People from a particular region are more hardworking."
- "Extroverts make better leaders."
- "People who are quiet lack confidence."

Although stereotypes may sometimes appear positive, they can still be limiting because they ignore individual differences.

➤ Bias vs. stereotype

The two concepts are related but different.

Bias	Stereotype
A tendency or preference that influences judgement	A generalised belief about a group
Can influence decisions and behaviour	Influences how we perceive people
May be conscious or unconscious	May be positive or negative
Example: Preferring candidates from a familiar institution	Example: Believing graduates from a particular institution are more capable

➤ Why do biases and stereotypes develop?

Our brains constantly receive large amounts of information. To process this information efficiently, we often use mental shortcuts. These shortcuts can be useful, but they may also lead to inaccurate conclusions.

Biases and stereotypes can develop through:

- Family and upbringing.
- Culture and social norms.
- Media and popular culture.
- Personal experiences.
- Peer groups.
- Education and social environment.
- Repeated exposure to certain beliefs.

The important point is that having a bias does not automatically make someone a bad person. What matters is whether we recognise our biases and take steps to prevent them from unfairly influencing our decisions.

➤ **How can we reduce bias?**

We cannot always eliminate every bias, but we can become more aware of it and manage its influence.

- **Pause before judging:** Avoid making immediate conclusions about people based on limited information.
- **Question your assumptions:** Ask yourself: *"What evidence do I actually have for this belief?"*
- **Look for individual differences:** Remember that belonging to a particular group does not determine an individual's personality, ability, or behaviour.
- **Consider different perspectives:** Listen to people whose experiences and backgrounds differ from your own.
- **Use objective criteria:** In academic and professional decisions, use clear and relevant criteria rather than personal preferences.
- **Be open to correcting yourself:** Changing your opinion when presented with new evidence is a strength, not a weakness.

Activity: A Simple Reflection Exercise

Think of a person you met recently. Write down your first three impressions about that person.

Now ask yourself:

1. What information did I use to form these impressions?

2. Did I make any assumptions?

3. Did I judge the person based on her appearance, language, age, gender, education, or background?

4. What additional information might change my opinion?

5. Would I make the same judgement if the person belonged to a different social group?

Students may present the activity in the class as instructed by the facilitator.

Key messages

- Biases and stereotypes are part of human thinking, but they do not have to control our behaviour. Awareness is the first step towards managing bias.
- Developing the ability to question our assumptions, evaluate evidence objectively, appreciate individual differences, and treat people fairly is an important professional skill.
- Biases and stereotypes lead to many social problems like discrimination and stigma.

3.1.2 Inclusion and Perspective-Taking

We live, study and work in increasingly diverse environments. People differ in their abilities, backgrounds, cultures, languages, socioeconomic circumstances, personalities, experiences and ways of thinking. These differences contribute to the richness of society and the workplace.

As discussed earlier, diversity refers to the presence of these differences among individuals in a group or community. Inclusion means creating an environment in which everyone feels respected, valued and supported, regardless of their differences. It ensures that people are not merely present but also have equal opportunities to participate, express their views, contribute meaningfully and develop a sense of belonging.

For example, a workplace may employ people from different backgrounds and abilities, but it may not be inclusive if some employees are excluded from important discussions, subjected to stereotypes or denied opportunities for growth and advancement. A truly inclusive workplace recognises and respects individual differences and ensures that everyone has a fair opportunity to contribute and succeed.

➤ What is perspective-taking?

Perspective-taking does not mean that we must agree with another person's opinion. Instead, it means making an effort to understand:

- What the person may be experiencing.
- How they may interpret the situation.
- What challenges they may be facing.
- What factors may influence their behaviour.
- What support or accommodation they may need.

For example, consider a cancer patient who is not ready for the treatment. One cannot conclude that the patient does not have health awareness. There might be various reasons for this. The patient might be depressed, may not have adequate money, may not have anyone who will take care of her, may not have treatment facilities in the vicinity or there may be some other reason which others may not be aware of.

Instead of making an assumption, we can ask, listen, and understand.

➤ Disability and inclusion

Disability is an important area of inclusion. People may experience physical, sensory, intellectual, developmental, cognitive, or psychosocial disabilities. Their abilities and needs can vary considerably.

An important principle is that disability should not be viewed only in terms of an individual's limitations. Sometimes the greatest barriers are created by the environment, social attitudes, communication practices, or organisational systems.

For example, a person who uses a wheelchair may be fully capable of performing their job, but a building without ramps or accessible facilities can restrict their participation. Similarly, a person with a hearing impairment may participate effectively in a meeting if captions, written material, or appropriate communication support are provided. A person with mild mental retardation may perform simple tasks but most of the time, is denied of such opportunities.

Therefore, inclusion requires us to identify and reduce unnecessary barriers.

➤ Inclusive practices

Inclusive practices include the following:

- Providing accessible physical environments.
- Making information available in appropriate formats.
- Providing reasonable accommodations where required.
- Asking individuals what support they need rather than making assumptions.
- Focusing on abilities, strengths, and contributions.
- Providing equal opportunities for education and employment.
- Avoiding language that is insensitive, dismissive, or patronising.
- Including persons with disabilities in social, academic, and professional activities.

c) Avoiding the "helping" trap

Sometimes people may unintentionally make a person with a disability feel helpless by providing assistance without asking. For example, immediately pushing someone's wheelchair or physically assisting them without permission may be inappropriate. A respectful approach is: "Would you like any assistance?" If the answer is no, that choice should be respected.

Inclusion is therefore not about assuming what another person needs. It is about respecting autonomy and providing appropriate support when requested or required.

Activity

1. Watch the Movie Clip – “Tare Zameen Par” and write your key take aways

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XjFJ_fu_J3A

2. Try to touch the ceiling. No one will be able to do. This means we all have some limitations. Now touch a particular point on the wall at a certain height. You may be able to touch it because of your height, or you may not be able to reach it. However, this does not make anyone inferior to others. Similarly, everyone has some abilities and some limitations. These differences do not make anyone inferior to others. Write down your abilities and limitations.

➤ **Inclusion in a diverse social context**

In everyday social life, people come from different cultures, religions, languages, socioeconomic backgrounds, family structures, genders, class, caste, age groups, and abilities. Inclusive behaviour means being open to these differences and avoiding assumptions or judgements based on stereotypes. It involves listening to others, respecting their culture, gender, respecting different viewpoints, using respectful language, and ensuring that no one is deliberately excluded from social activities or conversations.

For example, an inclusive student group would ensure that everyone gets an opportunity to participate in discussions and activities, including students who may be shy, have a disability, or come from a different cultural or linguistic background.

Example

When interacting with people from different backgrounds, we should avoid generalisations such as:

"People from this community are always..."

or

"People of this age group cannot..."

Instead, we should recognise that each individual is unique.

➤ **Inclusion in the workplace**

Workplaces bring together people with different experiences, skills, perspectives, and ways of working. An inclusive workplace provides equal opportunities for participation, learning, growth, and recognition. It encourages employees to express their ideas without fear of discrimination or ridicule.

Inclusive workplace behaviour includes:

- Respecting colleagues regardless of their background or position.
- Giving everyone a fair opportunity to contribute and participate in making decisions.
- Avoiding discriminatory jokes, stereotypes, and exclusionary behaviour.
- Being sensitive to different cultural and personal needs.
- Providing reasonable support or accommodations when required.
- Valuing different perspectives while making decisions.
- Addressing bullying, harassment, and discrimination appropriately.
- Give and receive feedback respectfully.

Example

- Imagine that a team member speaks very little during meetings.
- A quick judgement might be:
"She doesn't have much to contribute."

An inclusive and perspective-taking approach would be:

- *"I wonder whether there is something preventing her from participating. Perhaps I should give her an opportunity to share her views."*
- The difference is significant. The first response judges the person; the second response creates an opportunity for inclusion.

➤ Why inclusion matters?

Inclusion benefits both individuals and society. When people feel accepted and respected, they are more likely to participate, communicate openly, develop confidence, and contribute their abilities.

Inclusion is not simply about allowing differences; it is about valuing those differences and creating conditions in which everyone has a genuine opportunity to participate and succeed. As future professionals and responsible citizens, students can contribute to inclusion by practising empathy, respect, openness, and fairness in their everyday interactions.

The useful principles are:

- Different does not necessarily mean deficient.
- Diversity becomes meaningful only when accompanied by inclusion.

➤ Equality and equity

Understanding inclusion also requires distinguishing between equality and equity.

Equality means providing the same treatment or opportunity to everyone.

Equity recognises that people may have different circumstances and therefore may require different forms of support to achieve fair participation.

For example, providing the same printed material to every student may appear equal. However, a student with a visual impairment may require the material in an accessible digital format. Providing that alternative is not giving the student an unfair advantage. It is removing a barrier to participation.

Thus, inclusion sometimes requires us to provide different forms of support to achieve a fair opportunity.

➤ Respectful and inclusive communication

Communication is one of the simplest and most powerful ways of promoting inclusion. Respectful communication involves the following:

- **Listen actively:** Give the speaker your attention and avoid interrupting unnecessarily.
- **Use respectful language:** Avoid insulting, stereotyping, or demeaning expressions.
- **Do not make assumptions:** A person's appearance, disability, accent, gender, age, or social background does not tell us everything about them.
- **Ask rather than presume:** If you are unsure about someone's needs, ask respectfully.
- **Respect personal choices:** Allow individuals to express their preferences regarding communication, assistance, or participation.

- **Give everyone an opportunity to speak:** In group situations, ensure that quieter members are not consistently overlooked.
- **Disagree respectfully:** Inclusion does not mean that everyone must agree. People should be able to express different opinions without being ridiculed or attacked.

Before interacting with someone whose experience is different from our own, we can remember the **LISTEN** approach:

L – Look beyond assumptions

Do not judge a person based on stereotypes or first impressions.

I – Identify your own biases

Recognise that your perceptions may not always be objective.

S – Show respect

Use appropriate language, tone, and behaviour.

T – Try to understand

Consider the person's experiences and perspective.

E – Engage and include

Give the person opportunities to participate and contribute.

N – Never presume

Ask when you need to understand someone's needs rather than making assumptions.

➤ **Inclusive behaviour in everyday situations**

Inclusive behaviour can be demonstrated through simple everyday actions.

In a classroom

- Invite different students to participate.
- Do not ridicule mistakes.
- Make learning materials accessible where possible.
- Respect differences in language and communication styles.
- Avoid assuming that quiet students have nothing to contribute.

In a workplace

- Give credit to people for their contributions.
- Avoid excluding colleagues from informal or formal discussions.
- Evaluate performance based on relevant competencies rather than stereotypes.
- Make meetings accessible to employees with different needs.
- Encourage different perspectives when solving problems.

In social situations

- Do not make jokes at someone's expense.
- Avoid commenting unnecessarily on another person's disability or personal circumstances.
- Include people in conversations and activities.
- Respect differences without making them the centre of attention.

Case example

A company has hired a highly qualified employee who has a hearing impairment. During team meetings, the employee appears to participate less than other members.

Some colleagues assume:

"Perhaps she is not interested in the discussions."

A perspective-taking approach would involve asking:

- Is the meeting environment accessible?
- Can the employee hear all speakers clearly?
- Are important points also provided in writing?
- Is there an opportunity for the employee to contribute in a way that works for them?

The organisation may introduce practical measures such as written agendas, captions, written summaries, or other appropriate accommodations.

The objective is not to lower expectations or provide an unfair advantage. The objective is to remove unnecessary barriers so that the employee can demonstrate her abilities.

➤ Case Study

Case 1: Understanding and supporting a student with disability

A student studying in Class VIII gradually stopped attending school regularly. He remained absent for several days at a time and, even when he attended school, he preferred to stay alone and rarely interacted with his classmates.

The teachers observed that he did not actively participate in classroom activities. He often did not respond when questions were asked in the class, did not complete his homework, and obtained low marks in examinations. Based on these observations, some teachers assumed that the student was not interested in studies and lacked motivation.

Over time, his frequent absenteeism became a concern for the school.

One day, the student's parents visited the school and met the principal. They expressed their concerns about the behaviour of some teachers and students towards their son. During this interaction, the school came to know that the student had a hearing disability. He also had a significant visual difficulty and required spectacles with a high prescription.

The student's disability had not been adequately understood or recognised by the school community. His difficulties in hearing and seeing clearly affected his ability to follow classroom interactions and participate confidently in academic activities.

The student was being teased by some of his classmates because of his hearing disability and his thick, high-prescription spectacles. These experiences made him feel embarrassed, anxious and increasingly uncomfortable in the school environment.

As a result, he gradually withdrew from his peers. He stopped interacting with other students, became nervous in the classroom and eventually started avoiding school altogether.

His low academic performance and lack of participation were therefore not simply signs of disinterest in studies. They were connected to his disability, experiences of bullying, lack of peer acceptance and the absence of appropriate support.

Key issues identified

- **Disability-related barriers:** His hearing and visual difficulties affected his classroom participation.
- **Misinterpretation of behaviour:** Teachers interpreted his silence and non-participation as lack of interest in studies.
- **Bullying and teasing:** Negative behaviour from classmates affected his confidence and emotional well-being.
- **Social isolation:** He gradually stopped interacting with his peers and preferred to remain alone.
- **School absenteeism:** His anxiety and discomfort eventually led him to avoid attending school.
- **Lack of awareness:** The school community initially did not understand the challenges associated with his disability.
- **Academic difficulties:** Incomplete homework, poor classroom participation and low examination scores were viewed as academic shortcomings rather than possible indicators of unmet support needs.

Case discussion: An inclusive perspective

This case highlights the importance of looking beyond a student's visible behaviour. A student who does not answer questions, does not complete homework or remains absent frequently may not necessarily be uninterested or unwilling to learn. There may be underlying physical, emotional, social or learning-related barriers affecting the student's participation.

An inclusive school environment would seek to understand why a student is struggling before judging the student. Teachers, parents and peers need to work together to identify the student's needs and provide appropriate accommodations and emotional support.

In this case, teachers could have explored whether the student was able to hear classroom instructions clearly, whether he could see the board comfortably, and whether he was facing difficulties with his peers. Awareness about disability among students could also help reduce teasing, stigma and exclusion.

Peers also could have played an important role in this case. They could have simply interacted with this boy with empathy. This would have helped them to understand the reason of his behaviour.

Discussion questions

1. What assumptions did the teachers make about the student's behaviour?

2. What could have been the reasons for his poor classroom participation?

3. How did teasing and bullying affect the student's behaviour?

4. How could the teachers have identified his hearing and visual difficulties earlier?

5. What steps could the school take to create a more inclusive classroom?

6. How can classmates contribute to making students with disabilities feel accepted?

7. What does this case teach us about the importance of perspective-taking?

8. How can teachers distinguish between a student's lack of motivation and difficulties arising from an unmet need?

Case 2: Social inclusion

Mukta is a first-year undergraduate student who recently joined a college in a large city. She comes from a small town and is the first person in her family to attend college. She has completed her schooling in the vernacular medium. She is quiet and hesitant to participate in classroom discussions and college activities.

Mukta notices that many students form groups based on language, region, socioeconomic background, and previous school friendships. During group assignments, she is often left out because she speaks differently from most of her classmates and is not familiar with their social networks. Many of the students had studied in the English medium school. So, Mukta used to feel hesitant to speak with them. Some students used to make casual comments about her accent and background. Although these comments are not intended to hurt her, Mukta gradually became uncomfortable and started avoiding group activities.

One day, the class was asked to prepare a presentation. Mukta had some good ideas and strong research skills, but her group did not initially give her an opportunity to contribute. Another student, Sushil,

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notices this and suggests that everyone should have a specific role. He encourages Mukta to present the points because she has worked extensively on that part of the project.

Later on, the group began to listen to her ideas. Mukta was able to contribute confidently and the presentation went well. Over time, other students also began interacting with her. The experience helped the class understand that inclusion is not simply about allowing someone to be present; it is about ensuring that everyone has an opportunity to participate, contribute, and feel respected.

What does this case illustrate?

This case demonstrates social inclusion—the process of ensuring that individuals, regardless of their background or differences, can participate meaningfully in social, educational, and community life.

Discussion questions

1. What factors contributed to Mukta feeling excluded?

2. What role did Sushil play in promoting inclusion?

3. How could the teachers have created a more inclusive classroom from the beginning?

4. Can apparently harmless jokes or comments contribute to social exclusion? Why?

5. How might exclusion affect a student's confidence, participation, and sense of belonging?

6. What can students do in their everyday interactions to promote social inclusion?

7. Think of a situation in college where someone may be unintentionally excluded. What could be done differently?

❖ **Reflection point**

Disability and Inclusion Awareness

Students can go around their residential area and ask three people (ages- 15, 25 and 50) below questions about their understanding of disability and inclusion:

1. Have you heard about the term “person with disability” and what is your understanding of the term?
2. Do you know the previous terms used instead of “person with disability” and have you or someone you knew used it?
3. What are your personal assumptions about disability? Does our society include them or exclude them?
4. Do you think our environment is accessible for a person with disability?
5. Suggest any two ways to develop an inclusive society.

Students will write a report on the basis of the answers received from each age group. Note the points discussed and the differences within the age groups.

Answer the following

1. What is the key difference between *Diversity* and *Inclusion* as described in the text?

2. How do *Perspective-Taking* and *Empathy* contribute to social awareness?

3. What is the distinction between a *Bias* and a *Stereotype*, and how do mental shortcuts lead to them?

4. Distinguish between *Equality* and *Equity* in an inclusive setting?

5. Why should we avoid the "helping trap" when interacting with persons with disabilities?

6. What does the "LISTEN" framework stand for in promoting respectful and inclusive communication?

3.2 Communication Skills, Teamwork and Conflict Management

3.2.1 Effective Communication: Empathy, Active Listening, Verbal and Non-Verbal Communication, and Communication Styles

a) Understanding Communication

➤ What is communication?

Communication is a two-way active process of sending, receiving, and sharing information, thoughts, ideas, or feelings between or among people. It requires a sender to convey a message and a receiver to understand it.



Fig 3.1

Source: <https://pumble.com/learn/communication/communication-process>

Effective communication is not simply about speaking or sending a message; it also requires the other person to receive, understand, interpret, and respond to that message. The sender communicates a message, while the receiver listens and provides feedback, which helps the sender know whether the message has been understood correctly. For example, when a teacher explains an assignment, students may ask questions or repeat the instructions to confirm their understanding. The teacher can then clarify any confusion. Similarly, in the workplace, if a manager gives an employee an instruction, the employee may ask for clarification or confirm the expected deadline. This exchange ensures that both people have a shared understanding. Active listening, feedback, clarification, and appropriate responses are therefore essential components of two-way communication.

➤ **Key components of the communication process**

- **Sender:** The person who starts the talk or shares the idea.
- **Message:** The core thought or info sent.
- **Channel:** The medium used (like voice, text, or video).
- **Receiver:** The person who gets the message.
- **Feedback:** The reply that shows the receiver understood.

➤ **Main types of communication**

- **Verbal:** Spoken words used in chats or calls.
- **Written:** Text messages, emails, or letters.
- **Non-Verbal:** Body language, face looks, and hand signs.
- **Visual:** Signs, charts, and symbols.

➤ **Importance of effective communication**

Effective communication is the clear and successful exchange of information, emotions, and intentions between people. It matters because it prevents misunderstandings, stops conflicts before they grow, builds deep trust, and helps teams or families reach their goals together.

➤ **Key skills for effective communication**

- Empathy
- Active listening
- Clear messages (verbal)
- Appropriate body language (non-verbal)

Empathy and active listening are important qualities for effective communication because they help people understand not only what is being said but also the feelings and perspectives behind the words.

- **Empathy:** Empathy involves putting oneself in another person's situation and responding with sensitivity and understanding, it is not just feeling sorry for someone, it is climbing down into their emotional experience and be with them.
- **Active listening:** Active listening means fully focusing on, understanding, and responding to a speaker rather than just passively hearing their words. It involves paying close attention to the person's verbal message, tone of voice, and non-verbal cues to grasp their complete meaning and feelings.

For example, if a friend says, *"I am finding it difficult to manage my workload,"* an empathetic and active response would be, *"It sounds like you are feeling overwhelmed. Would you like to talk about*

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what is making the workload so difficult?” Instead of immediately giving advice or dismissing the concern, the listener acknowledges the person’s feelings and encourages them to share more. Similarly, when a student says, *“I am afraid I will not perform well in the examination,”* a teacher might respond, *“I understand that you are worried about the examination. Let us discuss the areas you are finding difficult.”* Such communication builds trust, reduces misunderstandings, and creates a supportive environment in both personal and professional relationships.

Activity: Experience Sharing

Think of a time when you discussed a problem or concern with someone and felt better after sharing it. Share your experience.

Discuss

1. Why did you feel better?

2. What were the qualities of the person?

3. How active listening and empathy were significant in this situation?

Now share the opposite experience, i.e., you shared a problem or concern with someone but you had a negative experience.

Discuss

1. Why didn’t you feel better?

2. Which characteristics of the person made you to feel uncomfortable?

3. Discuss how empathy and active listening would have made the difference.

- **Clear messages:** Clear messages are an essential part of effective communication. A message is clear when the speaker expresses thoughts, information, or instructions in a simple, specific, and unambiguous manner so that the receiver understands exactly what is meant. Clear communication avoids confusion, assumptions, and misunderstandings. For example, instead of saying, *“Please finish this soon,”* a manager can say, *“Please complete the report and submit it by 4:00 p.m. today.”* Similarly, instead of telling a student, *“You need to improve your work,”* a teacher can say, *“Please improve the introduction and add two relevant examples before submitting the assignment.”* Thus, clear communication answers important questions such as what needs to be done, who needs to do it, and by when, making communication more effective and productive.

- **Activity:** Read the following case studies and write the improved communication that would have helped in the situation

Case 1: Clear communication at the workplace

Situation: A supervisor asked an employee, Amit, to prepare a presentation for an upcoming meeting and said, “*Make a presentation on the project and keep it ready for the meeting.*” Amit prepared a detailed 30-slide presentation. However, during the meeting, the supervisor expected only a brief 10-slide presentation focusing on the project's progress, challenges, and future plans. The supervisor was dissatisfied, and Amit felt that he had completed the task as instructed.

What went wrong?

The supervisor did not clearly communicate the purpose, length, content, and deadline of the presentation. Amit also did not seek clarification when the instructions were unclear.

Improved communication:

Learning point:

Clear communication is a two-way process. The speaker should give specific instructions, and the listener should ask questions when something is unclear. This prevents misunderstandings and improves efficiency.

Case 2: Clear Communication in the classroom

Situation: Riya, a first-year college student, was asked by her teacher to submit a group assignment. The teacher said, “*Submit the assignment soon and make sure it is properly done.*” The students were unsure about the deadline, format, and what was expected in the assignment. As a result, some students submitted their work late, while others prepared the assignment in a different format.

What went wrong?

The teacher's message was too general and did not clearly communicate the task, deadline, format, and expectations.

Improved communication:

Learning point: Clear communication provides specific information about what needs to be done, how it should be done, and when it should be completed. This reduces confusion and helps everyone work towards the same goal.

- **Appropriate body language:** This is also called non-verbal communication. It refers to the use of facial expressions, eye contact, gestures, posture, and other non-verbal behaviours that support and reinforce what we say. Positive body language can communicate confidence, respect, openness, and interest, while inappropriate body language may create misunderstanding or make others feel uncomfortable. For example, maintaining comfortable eye contact while speaking with someone shows attention and interest; sitting or standing with an open and relaxed posture can convey confidence and approachability; and nodding occasionally can indicate that one is listening. Similarly, a warm facial expression can make a conversation more welcoming. In contrast, constantly looking at a mobile phone, avoiding eye contact, crossing one's arms while someone is speaking, or frequently checking the time may suggest disinterest or impatience. For instance, during a job interview, sitting upright, maintaining appropriate eye contact, smiling naturally, and listening attentively can create a positive impression. Appropriate body language should also be sensitive to cultural and social contexts, as gestures and acceptable levels of eye contact may differ across cultures.

Examples of appropriate body language in communication

- **Maintaining appropriate eye contact:** Looking at the person while they are speaking shows attention and interest.
Example: During an interview, a candidate maintains comfortable eye contact with the interviewer rather than constantly looking at the floor.
- **Using an open posture:** Sitting or standing comfortably without turning away or closing oneself off communicates openness.
Example: A teacher faces students while explaining a topic instead of turning away from them throughout the discussion.
- **Nodding and showing attentiveness:** Occasional nodding can indicate that you are listening and following the conversation.
Example: When a colleague explains a problem, you nod and maintain an attentive expression to show that you are listening.
- **Using appropriate facial expressions:** Facial expressions should match the situation and message.
Example: Smiling naturally when greeting someone communicates warmth and friendliness, while a concerned expression may be appropriate when someone is sharing a difficulty.
- **Using suitable hand gestures:** Natural and moderate gestures can make communication more engaging and understandable.
Example: A presenter uses hand movements to emphasise important points rather than making excessive or distracting gestures.
- **Respecting personal space:** Maintaining an appropriate physical distance helps the other person feel comfortable.
Example: During a professional conversation, a person maintains a comfortable distance instead of standing too close to the other person.
- **Avoiding distracting behaviours:** Checking the phone, constantly looking at the clock, tapping fingers, or repeatedly looking away may communicate disinterest.
Example: During a meeting, keeping the phone aside and focusing on the speaker demonstrates respect and attention.

Key messages

- Communication is a two-way process involving a sender, message, channel, receiver, and feedback. Effective communication happens when the receiver understands the message and responds appropriately.
- There are different types of communication—verbal, written, non-verbal, and visual. Each type helps people share information, ideas, feelings, and intentions in different situations.
- Effective communication prevents misunderstandings and builds trust. Key skills include empathy, active listening, clear messages, and appropriate body language.
- Body language supports spoken communication. Appropriate eye contact, open posture, suitable facial expressions, gestures, nodding, and respecting personal space show attention and respect, while distracting behaviours can create a negative impression.

b) Communication Styles

- **Communication style** refers to the way a person expresses thoughts, feelings, opinions, and information while interacting with others. It includes the choice of words, tone of voice, body language, listening behaviour, and the manner in which a person responds to others. A person's communication style can influence how a message is understood and how relationships develop. Common communication styles include assertive, passive, aggressive, and passive-aggressive styles. An assertive person expresses their views clearly and respectfully while also considering the needs and opinions of others. A passive person may avoid expressing their needs or opinions, whereas an aggressive person may express themselves in a forceful or disrespectful manner. Passive-aggressive communication may involve expressing disagreement indirectly, such as through sarcasm or deliberate delay.

For example, instead of saying, *"I cannot complete this task by today; could we extend the deadline?"*, an assertive communicator communicates the difficulty clearly and respectfully. Developing an appropriate and flexible communication style helps individuals build positive relationships, manage disagreements, work effectively with others, and communicate with confidence and respect.

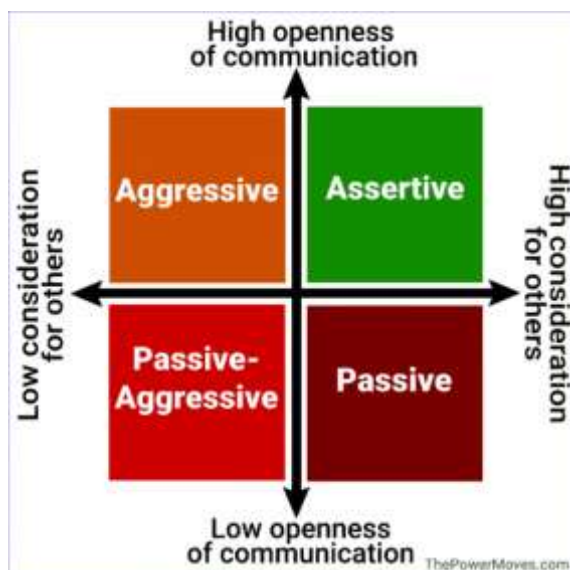


Fig. 3.2

Examples of Different Communication Styles

Communication Style	Example	What it Communicates
Assertive	"I understand that this task is important, but I already have another deadline. Can we discuss a realistic timeline?"	Confidence, clarity, and respect for both sides.
Passive	"It's okay, I'll do it somehow," even when the person is already overloaded.	Avoidance of expressing needs or concerns.
Aggressive	"You never give proper instructions! Just leave it; I'll do it myself."	Anger, dominance, or disrespect.
Passive-aggressive	"Sure, I'll finish it. Since apparently nobody else has time to do it."	Indirect anger, resentment, or sarcasm.

Example in a classroom

Suppose a student feels that a group member is not contributing to an assignment.

- **Passive:** "It's fine, I'll do the whole assignment."
- **Aggressive:** "You are completely useless. You never do any work."
- **Passive-aggressive:** "Don't worry, I'll do everyone's work as usual."
- **Assertive:** "I feel concerned because we need everyone's contribution. Can we divide the remaining tasks and agree on who will complete each one?"

Key learning: Among these styles, assertive communication is generally the most effective because it allows a person to express their thoughts, feelings, needs, and boundaries clearly while respecting the other person.

➤ Tips to improve the communication

Students need effective communication skills for academic discussions, presentations, interviews, group projects, internships, and future professional roles. The following tips can help:

- **Listen actively** – Pay attention to the speaker, avoid interrupting, and ask questions when something is unclear.
- **Speak clearly and concisely** – Express your ideas in simple, organised language. Avoid unnecessary jargon, especially when communicating with people from different fields.
- **Be confident but respectful** – Share your opinions confidently while remaining open to different perspectives.
- **Use appropriate body language** – Maintain comfortable eye contact, sit or stand with an open posture, and use natural facial expressions and gestures.
- **Think before you respond** – Take a moment to understand the question or situation before answering. A thoughtful response is often more effective than a quick response.
- **Ask for clarification** – Do not hesitate to ask questions when instructions or expectations are unclear. For example, "*Could you please clarify the deadline and expected format?*"
- **Develop empathy** – Try to understand the feelings, experiences, and perspectives of others before responding.
- **Adapt your communication style** – The way you communicate with a professor, peer, employer, client, or friend may need to be different depending on the situation.

- **Give and receive feedback positively** – Treat constructive feedback as an opportunity to improve rather than as personal criticism.
- **Practise professional communication** – Learn to write clear emails, participate appropriately in meetings, make professional presentations, and communicate respectfully in digital spaces.
- **Be mindful of tone** – The same words can have different meanings depending on tone. Maintain a polite and professional tone, particularly during disagreements.
- **Practise regularly** – Participate in discussions, presentations, debates, group activities, and interviews to gradually build confidence and communication skills.
- **Remember:** Effective communication is not about speaking more; it is about expressing yourself clearly, listening carefully, understanding others, and responding appropriately to the situation.

Assignment - Record a video of yourself communicating with others. Reflecting on the above points, identify your strengths and areas for improvement in communication. Make a note of them and start practising.

➤ **Assertive communication**

- Assertive communication is the ability to state your feelings, needs, and boundaries clearly and respectfully without being passive or aggressive.
- Passive communication means hiding your own needs and avoiding conflict, while assertive communication means expressing your needs clearly while respecting others.
- Aggressive communication prioritises your own desires and attempts to control others at their expense, often using force, intimidation, or disrespect to control the situation.



Fig. 3.3

Examples

Passive	Assertive	Aggressive
I am scared to say I am right.	You may be right but, in my perspective, I am right too.	I am right and I care for no other opinions.
I do not want to go but I don't want him to feel avoided.	I wish I could come but I am really sorry I can't	I am not coming, if you don't like it, that's your problem not mine.
She is wrong in this matter, but if I say that she may feel upset so I better stay quiet.	May I request that we review this matter? There could be some mistake, and I am sure we would want it to be flawless.	You are wrong and you better get it right!! I don't know how can you be so careless in this matter!

Activity: Assertive Communication – Role-play

Any situation can be handled in three ways; write how you will communicate in the following situation in three different ways:

1. Submissively
2. Assertively
3. Aggressively

Situation 1: Home is all messed up and the mother is very upset.

Situation 2: You bought an expensive product online which is faulty and they are unwilling to replace it.

Situation 3: Your team doesn't take up the work pro-actively and your boss gets overburdened due to this.

Situation 4: You want to say 'no' when friends make a plan for going out.

➤ **Communication skills self-assessment checklist**

Assess how effectively you communicate by using the following scale.

Indicate how frequently you engage in the following behaviors when communicating with other people.

Use this scale to describe your behaviour.

4 – I always do this.

3 – I often do this.

2 – I sometimes do this.

1 – I seldom do this.

0 – I never do this.

- _____ 1. When I have something to say, I am open and honest about my need to say it.
- _____ 2. I communicate with an awareness that the words I choose may not have the same meaning for others as they do for me.
- _____ 3. I recognise that the message I receive may not be the same one the other person intended to send.
- _____ 4. Before I communicate, I ask myself who I am communicating with and how this may affect the way they receive my message.
- _____ 5. As I communicate with someone, I pay close attention to verbal and non-verbal cues that indicate whether I am being understood.
- _____ 6. I make my messages as brief and to the point as possible.
- _____ 7. I consciously avoid the use of jargon with those who may not understand it.
- _____ 8. I consciously avoid the use of slang words and colloquialisms with those who may be put off by them.
- _____ 9. I try not to use red-flag words (words that might trigger an emotional response) that may upset or distract the receiver of my message.
- _____ 10. I recognise that how I say something is just as important as what I say.
- _____ 11. I analyse my communication style to determine what non-verbal messages I send and how well they convey the meaning I intend to communicate.
- _____ 12. I carefully consider whether my message would be best understood in a face-to-face conversation, over the telephone, or in writing.
- _____ 13. I form opinions about what others say to me based on what I hear them saying rather than what I think of them as a person.

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- _____ 14. I make a genuine effort to listen to ideas with which I don't agree.
- _____ 15. I look for ways to improve my listening skills.

Total Score

Find your score in the following table.

Score	Interpretations.
50 – 60	Extremely effective communicator who almost never contributes to misunderstanding.
40 – 49	Effective communicator who only infrequently causes communication breakdown.
30 – 39	Above average communicator with occasional lapses. You cause some misunderstandings.
20 – 29	Below average communicator. Need to make extra efforts to improve the communication.
10 – 19	Needs a lot of improvement.
Less than 9	You should get the formal training and mentoring in communication skills.

Summary

- **Communication style affects relationships and understanding.** The way we use words, tone, body language, and listening behaviour influences how others understand us and respond to us.
- **There are four common communication styles.** These are assertive, passive, aggressive, and passive-aggressive. Assertive communication expresses thoughts, needs, and opinions clearly while respecting others.
- **Assertive communication is clear, confident, and respectful.** It helps people express their feelings, needs, and boundaries without avoiding the issue or disrespecting others.
- **Effective communication requires continuous practice.** Active listening, clear speech, appropriate body language, empathy, asking for clarification, adapting to situations, accepting feedback, and practising regularly can improve communication skills.

Answer the following

1. What are the main communication styles? Explain with examples.

2. Write five tips to improve communication.

3. What is the difference between assertive and aggressive communication?

4. What is collaborative problem-solving?

5. Explain the difference between response and reaction.

3.2.2 Teamwork and Collaboration: Group Dynamics, Trust Building, Team Work and Cooperation

a) The Rabbit and the Turtle Story

Video: The Power of a Team - Together Everyone Achieves More - The Rabbit and Turtle Modern Race Story

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xevQ2yTyK9Y>

Teamwork and collaboration are important life skills for students because academic, professional, and social situations often require people to work together towards a common goal. Teamwork means working with others by sharing responsibilities, ideas, and efforts to achieve a shared objective. Collaboration goes a step further by encouraging individuals to combine their knowledge, skills, and perspectives to solve problems and create better outcomes. Effective teamwork helps students develop communication, leadership, problem-solving, adaptability, and interpersonal skills that are valuable in the workplace.

Day-to-day examples of teamwork include participating in sports such as cricket and football, organising family or other functions, and working together on daily tasks at the office or at home.

b) Group Dynamics

Group dynamics refers to the way people interact, communicate, influence one another, and behave within a group. Every group consists of individuals with different personalities, abilities, experiences, expectations, and communication styles. These differences can strengthen a team when they are respected and managed effectively.

Positive group dynamics develop when members-

- Communicate openly and respectfully.
- Listen to and value different opinions.
- Understand their roles and responsibilities.
- Participate actively in group activities.
- Handle disagreements constructively.

Examples

1. In a college group project, one student may be good at research, another at writing, another at designing presentations, and another at speaking confidently. When each member contributes according to their strengths, the group can perform more effectively.

2. Four students are asked to prepare a presentation on climate change. Initially, two students want to focus on causes while the others want to focus on solutions. Instead of arguing, they discuss both perspectives and divide the presentation into causes, effects, solutions, and individual responsibilities. This demonstrates healthy group dynamics.

c) Trust Building

Trust is the foundation of a successful team. Team members need to believe that others will be honest, responsible, respectful, and dependable. Without trust, people may hesitate to share ideas, ask for help, or take responsibility.

Trust can be developed through:

- **Reliability:** Doing what one has promised to do.
- **Honesty:** Communicating truthfully and openly.
- **Respect:** Accepting different opinions and abilities.
- **Accountability:** Accepting responsibility for one's actions.
- **Support:** Helping team members when they face difficulties.

Example: Suppose a student is responsible for collecting research material for a group assignment. The student completes the task on time and shares the material with everyone. Other members begin to depend on that person because he or she has demonstrated reliability. Repeated responsible behaviour strengthens trust.

d) Teamwork

Effective teamwork requires people to work together rather than simply working side by side. Team members should understand the common goal, clarify their responsibilities, coordinate their efforts, and support one another.

Good teamwork involves:

- Setting clear common goals.
- Dividing tasks fairly.
- Communicating regularly.
- Respecting individual strengths.
- Meeting deadlines.
- Providing constructive feedback.

Example: A group of students is organising a college cultural event. One student manages finances, other coordinates participants, one student handles publicity, and another manages the venue. Although their responsibilities are different, they regularly communicate and coordinate their work. The success of the event depends on their combined effort.

e) Cooperation

Cooperation means willingly working with others and contributing to a common purpose. It involves sharing responsibilities, helping others, compromising when necessary, and putting the team's goals ahead of personal differences.

Cooperation does not mean that everyone must agree on everything. Instead, it means that differences are discussed respectfully and solutions are found that benefit the group.

Example: During a group assignment, one member is unable to complete a task because of an unexpected academic commitment. Another member helps complete part of the work while the first student takes responsibility for another task later. Such flexibility demonstrates cooperation.

f) Managing Differences and Conflict

Differences of opinion are natural in any team. Conflict becomes problematic when team members stop communicating respectfully or allow personal disagreements to interfere with the common goal. Students can manage conflict by listening carefully, understanding different viewpoints, focusing on the issue rather than the person, and looking for mutually acceptable solutions.

Example: Two students disagree about how to conduct a research project. Instead of criticising each other, they explain the reasons for their preferred approaches and compare the advantages of both. The group finally combines elements of both approaches. This turns a disagreement into an opportunity for collaboration.

➤ **Why teamwork and collaboration matter for students**

Developing teamwork and collaboration skills prepares students for the realities of the workplace. Most professional environments require employees to work with colleagues, supervisors, clients, and people from diverse backgrounds. Students who can communicate effectively, build trust, cooperate with others, manage differences, and contribute responsibly are more likely to function effectively in professional teams.

These skills also help students become more confident in expressing their ideas while learning to appreciate the contributions of others. Teamwork teaches an important lesson: a successful team is not one in which everyone thinks alike, but one in which different strengths and perspectives are combined to achieve a common goal.

Example

Consider a group assignment in college. Five students are given the task of preparing a report and presentation. They discuss the requirements, divide the work according to individual strengths, set deadlines, and regularly review one another's progress. When one member faces difficulty, others provide support. They may have different opinions, but they listen, discuss, and reach decisions together. The final project reflects the combined effort of the entire group. This simple experience helps students practise group dynamics, trust building, teamwork, cooperation, communication, and conflict management—skills that are equally valuable in their future careers.

Summary

- Effective teamwork is built on trust, communication, cooperation, respect, accountability, and a shared purpose.
- Learning to work effectively with others is not only important for academic success but also an essential foundation for becoming capable, responsible, and collaborative professionals.

Answer the following

1. Give five examples of teamwork.

2. Explain the role of trust and cooperation in team work

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3. Why teamwork and collaboration matter for students?

3.2.3 Agreeing to Disagree: Types of Conflicts Commonly Seen, Basic Conflict Resolution and Negotiation

Activity: Push Pairs

- In pairs, get each person to stand facing each other. They put their arms straight out in front of them to shoulder level and touch palms with the other person. They are going to push as hard as they can against each other so get them to stand in a way that is safe.
- Once they have pushed and felt what it was like – keep them pushing and then suddenly stop pushing. Feel how much of a relief it is.

This is what happens when we are in conflict with someone. Each of us is trying to ‘push’ our message or point of view, creating stress in the process.

Everyone will experience a sense of relief when the conflict is resolved. Write your observations.

a) Understanding Conflicts

➤ What is conflict?

Conflict is an active disagreement between people with opposing opinions or principles. Conflict is also a situation in which beliefs, needs, facts, etc. are very different and cannot easily exist together.

Activity: Share an example of a conflict in your own life and whether the conflict was resolved, if so, how it was resolved?

➤ Main types of conflict

- **Internal conflict:** A mental or emotional struggle inside a single person.
- **Interpersonal conflict:** A direct disagreement or fight between two or more individuals.
- **Group conflict:** Tensions or power struggles that happen within a single group or between entirely different groups.

➤ **Common causes**

- **Different values:** People care about different things or hold different beliefs.
- **Limited resources:** There is not enough money, time, or space for everyone.
- **Poor communication:** Misunderstandings lead to hurt feelings or false assumptions.
- **Power struggles:** One party tries to control or dominate another.

Activity: Write down how conflict is expressed? What are the benefits of conflict resolution?

How conflict is expressed

- Fights, Wars.
- No cooperation.
- Expression of anger – including passive anger.
- Arguments.
- Avoiding behaviour.
- Not speaking with each other.

Benefits of conflict resolution

- Builds stronger relationships.
- Facilitates goal achievement.
- Enhances commitment.
- Generates new insights.
- Less conflicts means other important goals get more attention and time.
- Promotes trust.
- More effectiveness and efficiency at work.
- Stress managed effectively.
- More conducive environment.

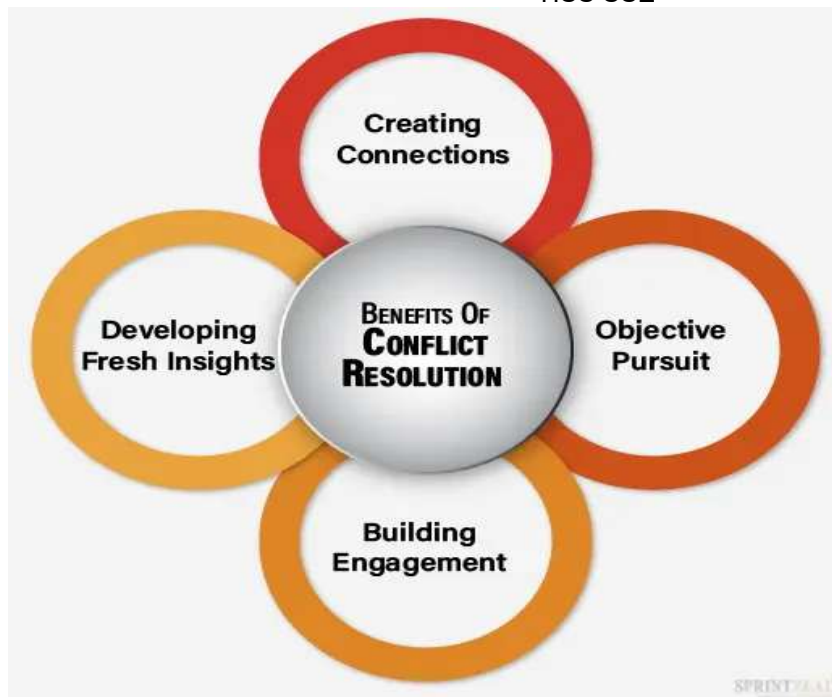


Fig. 3.4

b) Basic Conflict Resolution and Negotiation

➤ What is conflict resolution?

Conflict resolution is a structured process through which individuals or groups identify the causes of disagreement, communicate their concerns, and work towards a mutually acceptable solution.

➤ Steps of conflict resolution

1. **Recognise and acknowledge the conflict:** The first step is to recognise that a conflict exists rather than ignoring or avoiding it. Early recognition can prevent the disagreement from escalating.

Example: Two students working on a group project realise that they disagree about how the presentation should be prepared. Instead of avoiding the issue, they acknowledge the disagreement and agree to discuss it.

2. **Understand the source of the conflict:** Identify what is actually causing the disagreement. The visible issue may not always be the underlying cause. Conflict may arise from differences in goals, values, expectations, communication styles, roles, resources, or perceptions.

Example: A disagreement between two team members about workload may actually be caused by unclear division of responsibilities.

3. **Create a safe environment for discussion:** The people involved should have an opportunity to express their views without fear of personal attacks, humiliation, or retaliation. Choosing an appropriate time and place for discussion is important.

Example: Instead of arguing during a meeting, team members may agree to discuss the issue privately after the meeting.

- 4. Listen actively to each other's perspectives:** Each person should have an opportunity to explain their concerns. Active listening involves paying attention, asking clarifying questions, paraphrasing what the other person has said, and avoiding premature judgement.

Example: "If I understand you correctly, you feel that you were given less time to complete your part of the assignment. Is that right?"

- 5. Separate people from the problem:** The focus should be on the problem or behaviour, rather than attacking the personality or character of the other person.

Instead of saying:

"You are irresponsible."

A more constructive statement would be:

"The report was submitted late, which affected the team's ability to complete the final presentation."

This approach reduces defensiveness and keeps the discussion solution-oriented.

- 6. Identify common interests and needs:** Conflict resolution becomes easier when people look beyond their positions and identify what they both want or need.

Position: "I want to present first."

Underlying interest: "I need enough time to explain my section properly."

Finding shared interests can create opportunities for cooperation.

- 7. Generate possible solutions:** The people involved should brainstorm several possible solutions rather than immediately arguing about who is right. At this stage, it is useful to consider different alternatives without judging them too quickly.

Example: If two students want to use the same topic for a presentation, possible solutions could include dividing the topic into two areas, selecting related topics, or working together on a larger theme.

- 8. Evaluate and negotiate the alternatives:** The possible solutions should be evaluated according to fairness, practicality, available resources, and the needs of everyone involved. Negotiation may involve compromise, accommodation, or collaboration.

A good solution should ideally address the important interests of all parties rather than simply allowing one person to "win."

- 9. Agree on a solution and clarify responsibilities:** Once a solution has been selected, everyone should clearly understand what will be done, by whom, and by when.

Example: Rahul will prepare the introduction by Wednesday, while Aisha will prepare the data analysis by Thursday. Both will review the final presentation together on Friday.

- 10. Implement and follow up:** Conflict resolution does not end when an agreement is reached. The agreed solution should be implemented and reviewed after an appropriate period.

Example: After two weeks, a team may discuss whether the new division of responsibilities has actually reduced the conflict.

- 11. Learn from the conflict:** Conflict can provide an opportunity for personal and professional development. Individuals can reflect on what triggered the conflict, how they communicated, and what could be handled differently in the future.

Effective conflict resolution is not about proving who is right; it is about understanding different perspectives and finding a constructive way forward.

c) Conflict Resolution Skills

Conflict resolution skills are the abilities that help individuals understand disagreements, manage emotions, communicate effectively, and work collaboratively towards acceptable solutions.

The five key conflict resolution skills

Skill	What it involves
1. Active listening	Listening carefully, and understanding before responding
2. Emotional regulation	Managing emotions during disagreement
3. Empathy and perspective-taking	Understanding another person's perspective
4. Clear and assertive communication	Expressing needs respectfully and clearly
5. Collaborative problem-solving	Finding solutions that address everyone's important concerns

1. Active listening: Listening carefully to understand the other person's perspective rather than simply preparing a response. This includes asking questions, paraphrasing, and acknowledging what the other person has said.

Example: "So, you feel that your contribution was not considered when the decision was made. Is that correct?"

2. Emotional regulation: The ability to manage anger, frustration, anxiety, or defensiveness helps prevent a disagreement from escalating. Taking a pause before responding can be useful. Example: Instead of immediately responding to criticism, a student takes a few minutes to calm down and then discusses the issue.

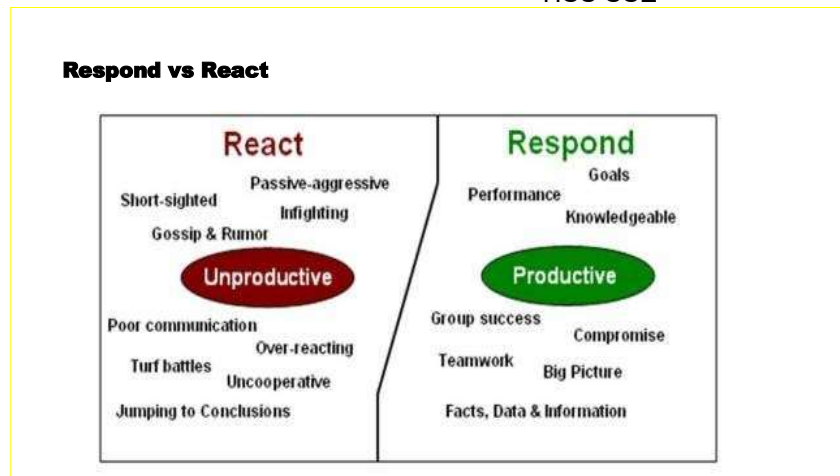


Fig. 3.5

3. Empathy and perspective-taking: Trying to understand the feelings, experiences, needs, and viewpoint of another person. Empathy does not necessarily mean agreeing with them. Example: A team member recognises that a colleague's missed deadline may have resulted from unclear instructions rather than lack of commitment.

4. Clear and assertive communication: Expressing concerns respectfully and directly without being aggressive or passive. Using “I” statements can reduce blame.

Instead of: “You never listen to anyone.”

Say: “I feel that my suggestions are not being considered during our discussions.”

5. Collaborative problem-solving: Focusing on the issue rather than blaming individuals and working together to identify practical solutions.

Example: Instead of arguing about who caused a delay, a team identifies what caused the delay and develops a revised timeline.

In addition to above, compromise play an important role in conflict management. Sometimes, each person may need to give up something to reach a workable agreement. Compromise can be useful when time or resources are limited.

Don'ts of conflict resolution

1. Using offensive language	9. Walking away without resolution
2. Blaming and accusing	10. Being rigid
3. Interrupting and talking over others, not listening actively	11. Seeking revenge
4. Defensive behaviour	12. Making ultimatums
5. Escalating emotions	13. Ganging up
6. Making assumptions	14. Being impatient

7. Ignoring nonverbal cues	15. Dismissing feelings
8. Bringing up past conflicts	16. Assuming agreement

Activity: Assess your ways of handling conflicts by using the following questionnaire.
If the score is on the higher side, then you need to work on your Conflict Management Skills.
What are the benefits of conflict resolution?

Name: _____

How I Handle Conflict

Put a check in the boxes to show how you would typically handle conflict with friends and family.

My Response:	Usually	Sometimes	Never
• Raise my voice or yell	☐	☐	☐
• Ignore	☐	☐	☐
• Apologize	☐	☐	☐
• Walk away	☐	☐	☐
• Suggest solutions	☐	☐	☐
• Complain	☐	☐	☐
• Forgive	☐	☐	☐
• Threaten	☐	☐	☐
• Look for a win-win	☐	☐	☐
• Call others names	☐	☐	☐
• Understand all points of view	☐	☐	☐
• Get upset	☐	☐	☐
• Ask for and adult to help	☐	☐	☐
• Use humor	☐	☐	☐
• Cry	☐	☐	☐
• Let others have their way	☐	☐	☐
• Assign Blame	☐	☐	☐
• Work toward agreement	☐	☐	☐
• Make a deal	☐	☐	☐
• Work it out fairly	☐	☐	☐
• Other: _____	☐	☐	☐

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Summary

- Conflict resolution: Managing disputes effectively requires core skills such as active listening, emotional regulation, empathy, clear "I" statements, and collaborative problem-solving.
- Productive vs. unproductive interactions: Reacting is often unproductive, short-sighted, and emotionally defensive, whereas responding is productive, goal-oriented, and focused on facts and compromise.
- The goal of conflict resolution is not to eliminate disagreement, but to manage differences constructively and turn conflict into an opportunity for understanding, learning, and collaboration.
- Active listening, emotional regulation, empathy, clear and assertive communication, collaborative problem-solving are the key skills of conflict management.
- Compromise plays an important role in conflict management.

❖ Reflection point

Students will write how they will communicate in aggressive, passive, and then assertive styles in the following scenarios:

1. You are standing in line at the check-out and two salespeople are engrossed in a deep conversation ignoring you.

2. Your teacher graded a paper that you feel should have received a higher mark.

3. Someone calls you a name that is hurtful.

Answer the following questions

1. What are the five core skills required for effective conflict resolution?

2. Explain the benefits of conflict resolution.

3. How does using "I" statements help in conflict resolution?

4. Explain the role of compromise in conflict resolution.

5. What is emotional regulation?

3.3 Professional Boundaries and Escalation

3.3.1 Responsible Communication, Reporting and Escalation in Academic and Workplace Settings

a) Responsible Communication

Responsible communication means sharing information truthfully, clearly, and backed by real evidence rather than misleading claims. It matters because it protects trust, prevents legal trouble, and builds stronger personal and professional relationships. It helps in cutting down the conflicts.

Here are a few examples;

Irresponsible: "Your team missed the deadline, and now the entire project rollout is ruined."

Responsible: "I see the delay on this module is pushing back our rollout date. What blockers is your team facing, and how can we realign resources to get back on track?"

- **Accepting Message Ownership**

"I realise my initial email left room for ambiguity. Let me clarify what the exact deliverable is so we are on the same page."

- **De-escalation**

Accusatory: "You never listen to me and you always cancel our plans at the last minute."

Responsible: "I feel frustrated when plans change suddenly because I plan my week around them. I would appreciate it if we could let each other know about changes at least a day earlier."

Activity – Share the examples of responsible communication which you have come across.

b) Reporting and Escalation in Academic and Workplace Settings

In a university setting, a structured reporting and escalation framework is available to address grievances, ranging from academic disputes to other issues, transparently, while maintaining confidentiality and ensuring efficient resolution. Rather than approaching senior leadership directly, students should follow the established multi-stage process to resolve issues at the lowest possible administrative level before escalating them further.

Stage 1: Local and informal resolution

- **Action:** The complainant attempts to address the concern directly with the individual involved or the immediate supervisor, as appropriate to the nature of the concern. For example, in case of a disagreement, the student may discuss the matter with the designated representative of the academic institution or the concerned faculty member.
- **Objective:** To resolve misunderstandings immediately through direct discussion, wherever possible, without initiating a formal grievance process.

Stage 2: Formal resolution

- **Action:** If informal resolution is unsuccessful, direct engagement is not possible or appropriate, or the matter requires the involvement of an institutional representative, the student should submit the grievance in writing to the designated department or official in charge, such as the coordinator, senior manager or head.
- **Mode of communication:** Official email IDs should be used for written communication. Messages sent through WhatsApp to an individual's personal number do not constitute official institutional communication. Verbal communication, such as an official discussion or telephone call, may also take place but should be supported by written communication for documentation.
- **Requirements:** The email must include a clear and accurate description of the events, details of any previous attempts to resolve the issue informally, and the outcome sought. Supporting documents, if any, may be enclosed for reference.

Stage 3: Escalation

Action: If the student remains dissatisfied with the decision at Stage 2, they may request a review by the designated senior authority or the Head of the School, in accordance with the institution's established procedures.

Requirements: The email must include a clear and accurate description of the events, details of previous attempts to resolve the issue, the decision received at Stage 2, and the reasons for seeking a review.

Escalation should generally be considered when the issue cannot be resolved at a lower administrative level. Wherever possible and appropriate, students should attempt resolution at Stage 1 or Stage 2 before proceeding further. However, serious matters or issues requiring urgent intervention may be reported directly to the appropriate authority, in accordance with institutional procedures.



Note: *Responsible communication should be used in reporting and escalation.*

❖ **Reflection point**

Based on the case scenario below, students will identify the pros and cons of reporting the incident and suggest an appropriate escalation process.

Case

Rahul is a student in Grade 10 who lives in your neighbourhood. You have known him since he was a young child and share a friendly relationship with him.

Rahul's mother tells you that he has been experiencing bullying at school. Some students have been targeting him because he tends to be quiet and does not usually interact with others. Rahul has never complained about the incidents or spoken openly about what has been happening.

Yesterday, a physical altercation took place at school and Rahul sustained minor injuries. His mother is concerned and feels that the incident should be reported. However, Rahul's parents are unsure whom they should approach and what steps they should take.

Summary

- **Definition and impact of responsible communication:** Responsible communication involves sharing information truthfully, clearly, and with evidence to build trust, prevent legal trouble, de-escalate conflicts, and strengthen relationships.
- **Core behaviours:** It emphasises taking ownership of one's messages (e.g., clarifying ambiguities) and using constructive "I" statements to resolve disputes without placing aggressive blame.
- **Structured multi-stage escalation:** In a university setting, grievances are handled through a step-by-step framework to resolve issues transparently and efficiently at the lowest administrative level possible.

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- The framework progresses from Stage 1 (direct/informal discussions) to Stage 2 (written submission to the designated department or official in charge via official emails) and finally Stage 3 (formal review request to the designated senior authority or the Head of the School, if unresolved).

Answer the following

1. What is responsible communication and why is it important?

2. How does an "accusatory" response differ from a "responsible" response when dealing with a problem?

3. What is the first stage of the university reporting framework to address grievances, and what is its main objective?

4. What must be included in Stage 2 formal grievance submission?

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Unit IV: Mental Health Awareness and Wellbeing

4.1 Understanding Mental Health as a Continuum

a) What is Mental Health?

Mental health is a state of mental wellbeing that enables people to cope with the stresses of life, realise their abilities, learn and work well, and contribute to their community. It is a basic human right (WHO, 2026).

Mental health exists on a complex continuum, which is experienced differently from one person to the next.

At any one time, a diverse set of individual, family, community and structural factors may combine to protect or undermine mental health.

Although most people are resilient, people who are exposed to adverse circumstances are at higher risk of developing a mental health condition.

b) Mental Health Stigma in India

- Stigma is bias or negative judgement directed toward individuals or groups based on certain characteristics they possess. It involves labelling, stereotyping, and discriminating against people, often resulting in their social exclusion and marginalisation. Stigma creates an "us versus them" mentality that separates those who are stigmatised from the rest of society.
- Stigma around mental health is a persistent social epidemic rooted in cultural beliefs, family honour concerns, and low awareness, which prevents millions from seeking necessary professional care.
- It is driven by the misconception that mental illness is a sign of moral failure, weakness, or spiritual deficiency (such as evil possession), leading to widespread discrimination and social isolation.



Fig. 4.1

➤ The stigma manifests in several critical ways

- **Public and self-stigma:** Individuals are frequently labelled as "pagal" (crazy) or dangerous, leading to internalised shame and reduced self-esteem.
- **Family secrecy:** Families often hide diagnoses to protect their social standing and marriage prospects, fearing collective shame.
- **Gender disparities:** Women face higher stigma due to traditional gender roles, with symptoms often dismissed as "hysteria" or emotional instability.
- **Rural-urban divide:** Stigma is more pronounced in rural areas due to limited mental health literacy and stronger adherence to traditional superstitions.

Consequences include a treatment gap where over 70% of adults with mental health challenges do not seek help, resulting in delayed treatment, worsened outcomes, and increased risk of suicide.

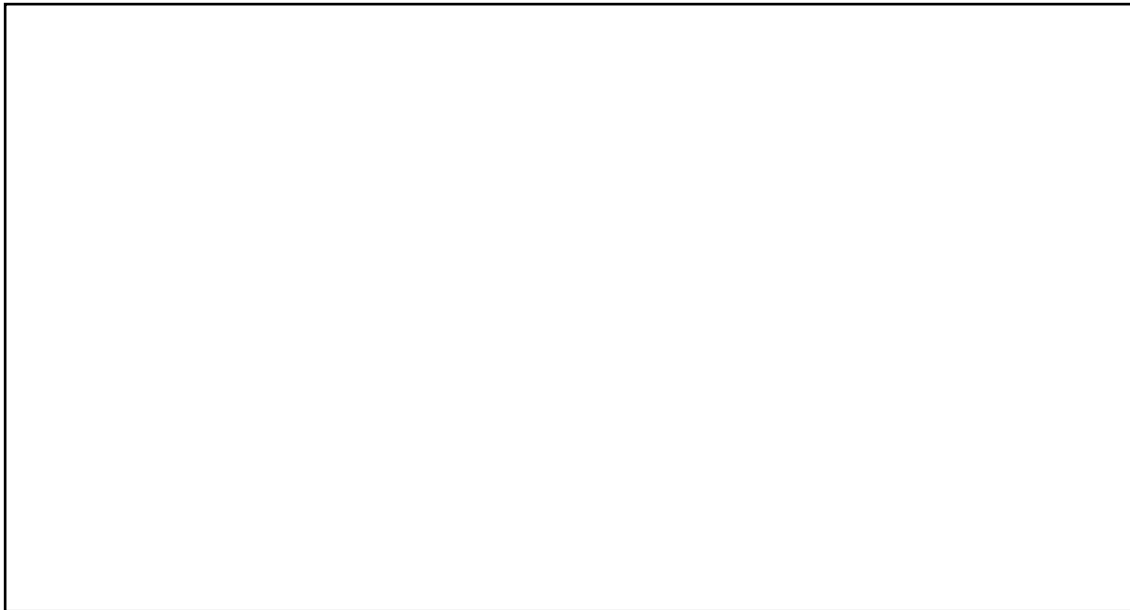
While younger generations are gradually becoming more aware, systemic change requires sustained education, workplace policies, and community engagement to normalise help-seeking behaviour.

Video: India's mental health stigma and lack of access to therapy

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uSszbqLTz8s>

Activity: Create an Attractive Poster

Create an attractive A4 size posters with slogans to promote mental health awareness, reduce stigma about mental health and people accessing help. You can use your creativity and draw the posters. Handwritten posters are preferred.



c) Factors Affecting Mental Health in India

- **Sociocultural and economic drivers:** Rapid urbanisation, financial instability, academic pressure, and a shift towards materialism are important contributors to rising stress and anxiety in India. Social stigma remains a critical barrier, with cultural beliefs often attributing mental illness to supernatural causes or moral failings. Such feelings can significantly delay treatment-seeking behaviour and contribute to the substantial treatment gap, estimated at 70%–92%.
- **Demographic and environmental factors:** These further influence mental health outcomes, with women facing higher risks due to domestic violence, economic dependence, and gender-based discrimination, while rural adolescents may be vulnerable due to poverty, substance abuse, and limited access to care. Workplace stress, including toxic cultures and job insecurity, affects the urban workforce, while family dynamics such as pressures within joint family and intergenerational conflicts can contribute to psychological distress across age groups.
- **Biological and genetic factors:** Key biological determinants include genetic predisposition, family history, changes in neurotransmitter activity, including low serotonin and dopamine, abnormal brain structure or function, and hormonal changes affecting the endocrine system. Additionally, physical factors such as brain injuries, neurological conditions (e.g., epilepsy), birth

trauma, and chronic physical illnesses (such as cancer or cardiovascular disease) can affect mental wellbeing through changes in brain function, physiological processes, and stress responses.

- **Structural deficiencies in the healthcare system:** These include a severe shortage of mental health professionals, with only 0.3 psychiatrists per 100,000 population, and limited budgetary allocation, with less than 1% of the total health budget spent on mental health. These limitations restrict access to mental health services and contribute to the substantial treatment gap in India (Gururaj et al., 2016).

d) Mental Health Continuum Model

The model goes from healthy, adaptive coping (green), through mild and reversible distress or functional impairment (yellow), to more severe, persistent injury or impairment (orange), to clinical illnesses and disorders requiring more concentrated medical care (red).

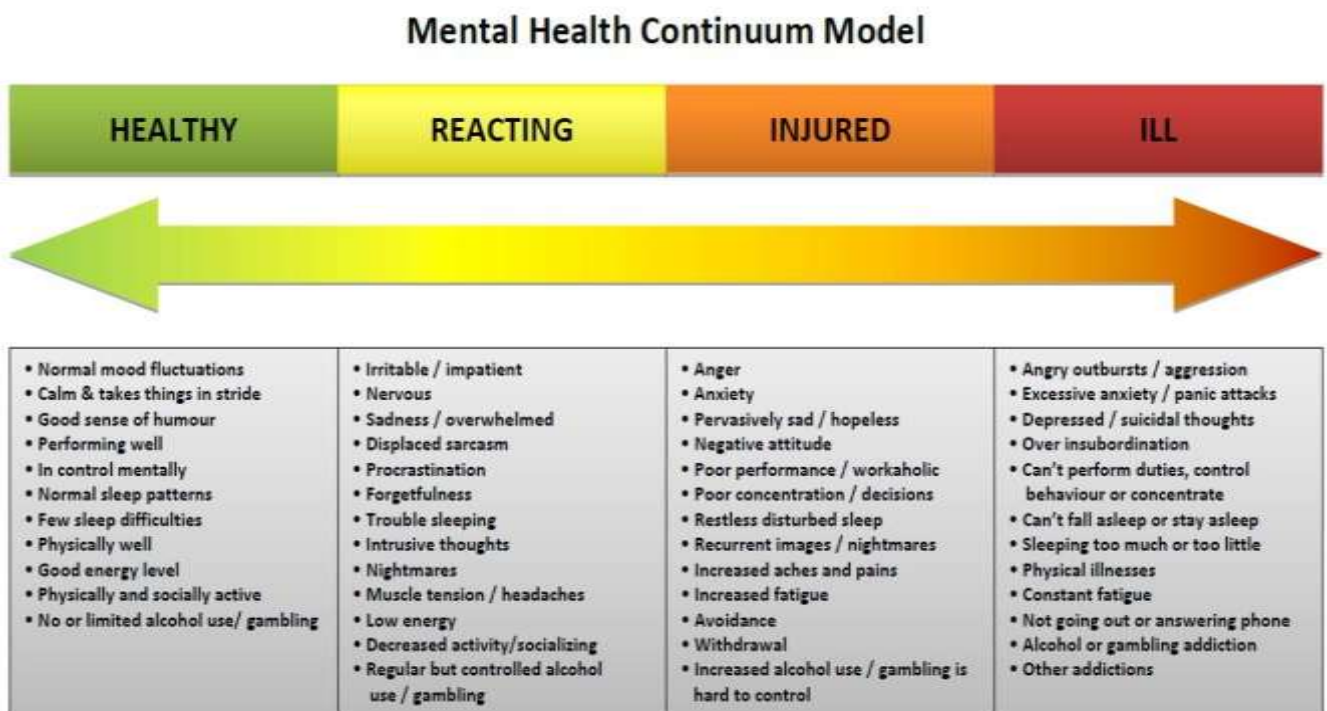


Fig. 4.2

The arrows under the four-colour blocks denote the fact that this is a continuum, with movement in both directions along the continuum, indicating that there is always the possibility for a return to full health and functioning. In this way, no one is 'written off' simply because they are showing symptoms of an illness, or are being treated for a disorder or disease. There is also a recognition that the earlier that intervention of some sort is provided, the easier it is to return to full health and functioning (green).

➤ The illness–wellness continuum

The continuum includes three key concepts of wellbeing:

- Wellness is a process; it is always moving up and down, right, and left. Moving from one paradigm to another does not signify personal achievement or shortcoming; it is a natural process we all go through at some point in life.
- Presence of illness does not imply the absence of wellness and vice versa. They differ in degree and do not follow an all-or-none principle.
- At any point, we have the potential to push ourselves from illness to wellness.

Activity: Identify the Zone

Identify functioning according to various zones based on the tool given below for various situations:



Flourishing – Feeling generally well, functioning effectively, maintaining relationships and engaging with everyday activities.

Going Okay – Experiencing some stress or difficulties, but generally able to manage everyday responsibilities.

Struggling – Difficulties are becoming more frequent or intense and are beginning to affect functioning, relationships, routines or wellbeing.

Severely Impacting – Distress is significantly affecting everyday functioning and the person may need additional support.

Situation 1: Riya has an upcoming exam. She feels nervous but continues studying, sleeping adequately and talking to her friends.

Situation 2: Arjun has been feeling exhausted and irritable for several weeks. He is struggling to concentrate but he is trying to motivate himself and engage in helpful activities like sports.

Situation 3: You see several classmates posting about internships, achievements and exciting events. You start comparing yourself with them and feel that you are falling behind.

Situation 4: A group member is not contributing to a project. Ananya feels frustrated and angry but discusses the issue with the group, divides the remaining work and completes her part.

Situation 5: For several weeks, Priya has been experiencing intense distress. She is frequently unable to attend classes, has stopped completing basic responsibilities and has withdrawn from people around her. She feels unable to manage her usual routine.

e) Common Myths and Facts about Mental Health in India

Mental health issues are common, treatable medical conditions, yet they are frequently misunderstood due to deep-rooted stigma and lack of awareness.

Activity: Mental Health – Myths vs. Facts

Identify and write down whether the statement is a myth or a fact about mental health in India.

Sr. No.	Statement	Myth or Fact?
1.	Mental illness is caused by black magic or evil spirits.	
2.	Mental illness is a medical condition unrelated to personal strength.	
3.	Mental illness is a sign of weakness.	
4.	Mental health conditions arise from biological, psychological, and social factors, not supernatural causes.	
5.	Mental health issues are rare or not serious.	
6.	Mental disorders are common and can significantly affect daily functioning.	
7.	People seek mental health support for stress, anxiety, relationship difficulties, and emotional distress—not only for severe mental illness.	
8.	Only “mad” people need treatment.	
9.	Mental illness is not a moral or spiritual failure.	
10.	Mental illness is punishment for past sins.	
11.	Many mental health conditions begin in childhood or adolescence.	
12.	Recovery from mental illness is impossible.	
13.	Modern psychiatric care is ethical, safe, and regulated, with ECT administered under anaesthesia when clinically indicated.	

f) Addressing Misconceptions Through Awareness

Contact-based education: One of the most effective stigma-reduction strategies is direct interaction with people who have recovered. Seeing individuals living fulfilling and productive lives challenges stereotypes and builds empathy.

Fact-based education: Myth-busting through structured awareness programmes improves mental health literacy. Effective approaches include the following;

- Simple explanations of causes and symptoms.
- Creative education like street plays and story-telling.
- Information about free government services.
- Clarification of treatment options beyond medication.

Emphasising recovery: Sharing recovery stories counters the myth that mental illness is permanent, emphasises that recovery is possible, strengthens hope, and reduces fatalism.

Language modification: Using culturally appropriate language—avoiding harsh labels, using symptom descriptions, and applying person-first language—makes mental health more accessible.

Cultural adaptation: Culturally sensitive programmes can be more effective when they:

- Involve traditional healers and religious leaders in promoting mental health awareness.
- Adapt messages to local customs, languages and ways of understanding mental health.
- Respect existing cultural beliefs while introducing medical perspectives on mental health.

Research consistently shows that culturally adapted interventions have stronger and sustained impact.

❖ Reflection point

Mental Health – What Comes to Mind?

Write words/phrases you associate with:

- Mental health _____
- Mental illness _____
- Mental wellbeing _____

Write:

1. Are mental health and mental illness the same?

2. Can someone experience stress and still have good mental wellbeing?

3. Can someone with a mental health condition experience period of wellbeing?

Answer the following:

1. What is WHO definition of Mental Health?

2. What are some ways in which mental health stigma manifests in India?

3. According to the mental health continuum model, what does green zone and red zone indicate?

4. True or false: In India, a substantial treatment gap exists, with stigma and cultural beliefs contributing to delays in treatment-seeking behaviour and a treatment gap estimated at 70%–92%.

4.2. Recognising Signs of Common Stress, Stressors, Burnout, Emotional Distress, and Managing Emotions Under Pressure

a) Understanding stress and stressors

➤ What is stress?

- Stress is a daily occurrence in our lives. When we talk about stress we usually refer to the stress experienced in adulthood rather than during childhood.
- Stress is defined as the internal processes that occur as people try to adjust to events and situations.
- Adults as well as children experience stress in their daily lives. Stress is not a specific event but an ever-changing process in which the nature and intensity of our responses depend not only on the stressors we experience but also on how we think about them and how much confidence we have in our coping skills and stress coping resources at a given time (Bernstein, 2012, p. 519).

➤ What is a stressor?

A stressor is any event, situation, external stimulus or internal condition that triggers a stress response in the body or mind. In simple terms, a stressor is what causes stress, while stress is how the body and mind respond to it. For example, an examination or a conflict may act as an external stressor, while worrying thoughts may act as an internal stressor.

Types of stressors are as follows:

- **Financial stressors:** Rising cost of living, debt and loans, economic uncertainty educational expenses, healthcare expenses, insufficient income, lack of retirement savings, unexpected expenses, etc.
- **Physical stressors:** Environmental toxins, extreme weather or temperature conditions, light pollution, natural disasters, noise pollution, nutritional deficiencies, physical illness, physiological demands, etc.
- **Psychological stressors:** Academic pressures, caring for others, dealing with loss, family conflicts, life transitions, perfectionism or self-imposed pressures, personal health concerns, traumatic events, feelings of isolation, etc.
- **Social stressors:** Cyberbullying or online harassment, discrimination and stigma, life transitions leading to changes in social roles, parenting challenges, peer pressure, relationship issues, social expectations, social isolation, workplace social dynamics, etc.

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- **Occupational stressors:** Career development concerns, pay rates, challenging work environments, high workloads or overwork, inadequate rewards or recognition, limited promotion opportunities, job insecurity, lack of control or autonomy, poor interpersonal relationships at work, etc.
- **Life change stressors:** Children leaving home, divorce or relationship breakup, marriage or the start of a relationship, the birth of a child, a new health diagnosis or illness, loss of a job or unemployment, etc.

Activity: Stress Detective

On the basis of the situations below, identify the following:

Stressor → Possible response → Possible impact → What may help?

Examples:

- i. Multiple assignments due together.

- ii. Difficult supervisor.

- iii. Conflict with a friend.

- iv. Financial concerns.

- v. Starting a new internship.

- vi. Balancing work, college and family responsibilities.

b) Understanding Stress and its Signs

➤ Recognising signs of stress

Stress can affect different areas of our lives.

Physical	Emotional	Cognitive	Behavioural
Tiredness	Irritability	Difficulty concentrating	Procrastination
Headache	Frustration	Racing thoughts	Withdrawal
Sleep changes	Feeling overwhelmed	Forgetfulness	Changes in routine
Muscle tension	Anxiety	Difficulty in making decisions	Changes in eating

One sign alone does not necessarily indicate a serious problem. It is useful to consider changes, frequency, intensity and impact on functioning.

How often? → How intense? → How long? → How much is it affecting functioning?

Activity: Four-Signal Challenge

Based on the following sentences, identify whether each is primarily:

Physical | Emotional | Cognitive | Behavioural

- "I cannot concentrate on my assignment." _____
- "I have been getting headaches before presentations." _____
- "I am becoming unusually irritable with my classmates." _____
- "I keep postponing important tasks." _____

Then write how one stressor can lead to several types of responses.

c) Burnout

Burnout is a state of physical, emotional, and mental exhaustion caused by prolonged or repeated stress, particularly in occupational contexts. The World Health Organization (WHO) classifies it as an "occupational phenomenon" rather than a medical condition, resulting from chronic workplace stress that has not been successfully managed.

It is characterised by three primary dimensions:

- Feelings of energy depletion or exhaustion.
- Increased mental distance from one's job, or feelings of negativism and cynicism related to the job.
- Reduced professional efficacy.

While often linked to work, burnout can also stem from long-term stress in other areas of life, and differs from general stress by involving a sense of emptiness and hopelessness rather than just feeling overwhelmed.

In academic and workplace settings, burnout may involve:

- Emotional or physical exhaustion.
- Feeling detached or negative towards studies/work.
- Reduced motivation.
- Feeling less effective.
- Difficulty recovering after rest.
- Reduced sense of accomplishment.

Burnout is different from simply having a tiring day or a busy week. The pattern, duration and impact are important.

➤ **Recognising burnout**

The symptoms of burnout can mirror depression. Depression is a diagnosable mental health condition, burnout is not. Burnout tends to be a response to a specific environment or situation. Depression is not necessarily a response to one specific trigger and the symptoms are more general. With burnout, once you detach from work or whatever is causing the burnout, you will feel better; but not with depression. Burnout has many of the same symptoms as stress. These three symptoms are associated with burnout.

- i. Feeling tired or exhausted.
- ii. A lack of enthusiasm and increased negativity towards your job.
- iii. Decreased ability to perform your job. Often, burnout results in depressive symptoms, such as sadness or a lack of hope.

It can also contribute to a wide range of negative emotions and even physical symptoms, such as:

- Frustration or anger.
- Irritability or annoyance.
- Anxiety, agitation, or restlessness.
- Physical feelings of stress, such as headaches, stomach issues, body pains, or fatigue.

Activity: Stress, Tired or Burnt Out?

A: “Neha stayed up late for two nights to complete assignments. After submitting them, she rests and returns to her normal routine.”

B: “Rahul has been under pressure for several weeks and feels tired but continues managing his responsibilities.”

C: “For several months, Sameer has felt exhausted, detached from his work and increasingly ineffective despite continuing to push himself.”

What do you notice in each case?

Note: Emphasise observation rather than diagnosis.

➤ **How to manage burnout**

• **Student burnout**

It is managed by prioritising self-care, time management, and realistic goal-setting. Effective strategies include breaking large assignments into smaller tasks, scheduling regular breaks using methods like the Pomodoro Technique (25 minutes of work followed by a 5-minute break), and ensuring adequate sleep and physical activity. It is critical to set boundaries, such as protecting transition time and avoiding overcommitment, while building a support system of friends, family, or campus counselling services to share the load and gain perspective.

• **Early career burnout**

Management focuses on managing expectations, setting professional boundaries, and practicing strict self-care. Key steps include blocking "me time" in your calendar for hobbies or exercise, removing work-related notifications after hours to switch off, and recognising physical cues like sleep loss or frequent illness. If stress becomes overwhelming, utilise Employee Assistance Programmes or seek external professional support, such as a psychologist, to address the root causes and prevent long-term mental health issues.

Video: How to Deal with Burnout

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YvjBKqsJqAo>

d) Emotional Distress and Managing Emotions Under Pressure

➤ **Emotional distress**

It refers to a state in which a person is experiencing difficult emotions that may make it harder to manage everyday situations.

It may include:

- Sadness;
- Anger;
- Fear;
- Frustration;
- Anxiety;
- Helplessness;
- Feeling overwhelmed; or
- Difficulty coping with a situation.

Difficult emotions are a normal part of life. However, persistent or intense distress, particularly when accompanied by significant changes in functioning, may indicate that additional support is needed.

➤ **Recognising changes**

Look for changes in:

- Usual behaviour;
- Attendance;

- Academic/work performance;
- Relationships;
- Sleep or daily routines;
- Participation in activities; and
- Ability to manage everyday responsibilities.

It is important not to minimise another person's experience by saying:

“Everyone goes through this.”

Instead, a supportive response may be:

“It sounds like things have been difficult. Would you like to talk about what has been happening?”

➤ **Managing emotions under pressure**

Pressure can make us react quickly. Emotional regulation involves recognising and managing emotions in ways that are appropriate to the situation.

Emotional regulation is not the same as suppressing emotions. The goal is not to stop feeling an emotion, but to understand it and choose how to respond. Some strategies that can help you manage emotions under pressure and respond to challenging situations more thoughtfully are:

i. Pause to respond

Pause → Identify → Understand → Choose → Respond

Pause: Give yourself a moment before reacting.

Identify: Name what you are feeling.

Understand: Consider what triggered the emotion and what thoughts may be influencing it.

Choose: Consider possible responses and consequences.

Respond: Choose an appropriate response.

ii. Preparation and visualisation

Break high-pressure events into smaller steps and visualise yourself handling challenges with calmness and clarity before they occur.

iii. Stoic perspective

View anxiety as a normal signal of caring rather than a sign of failure, and focus only on what is within your control while accepting external factors.

Activity: Pressure → Pause → Choose

Situation: Your supervisor gives you critical feedback about your work in front of your team.

Answer the following:

Trigger: What happened?

Emotion: What might you feel?

Immediate reaction: What might you be tempted to do?

Consequence: What could happen if you react immediately?

Constructive response: What could you do instead?

Debrief: Stress and difficult emotions are part of everyday life. Awareness of signs, patterns and changes in functioning can help individuals respond early and seek appropriate support.

Video: How to Stay Calm under Pressure

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CqgmozFr_GM

❖ Reflection point

The Energy and Depletion Matrix

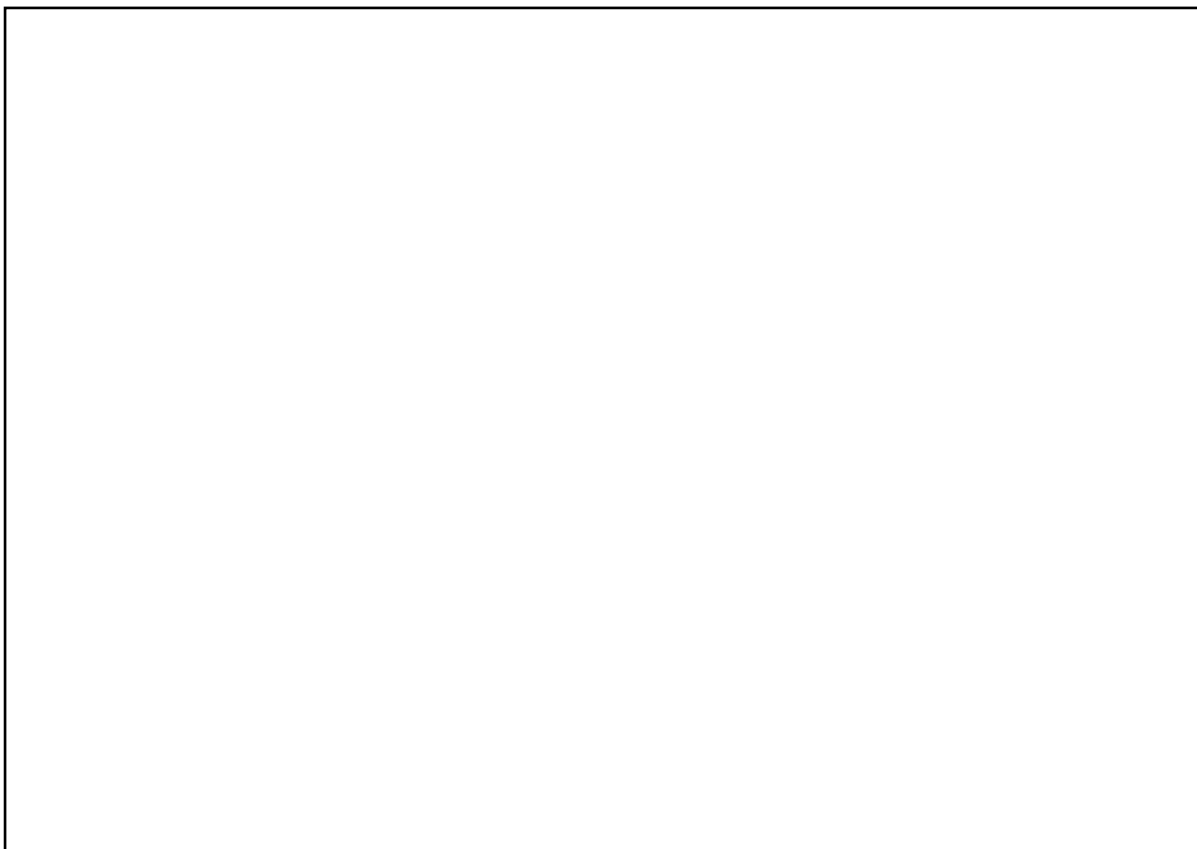
Map personal stressors across two key dimensions: Impact and Control.



Fig. 4.3

Draw a 2x2 grid on a sheet of paper

1. Write: List 5–8 personal or professional stressors currently consuming emotional bandwidth.
2. Plot: Place each item into one of the four quadrants based on its impact and how much personal control they hold over it.
3. Reflect: Examine Quadrant 3 (High Impact / Low Control). This quadrant represents the primary driver of helplessness and burnout.
4. Action Prompt: *"What is one boundary, request, or cognitive shift you can make to move an item out of Quadrant 3, or protect yourself from its drain?"*



Questions

1. Fill in the blanks: Stress is defined as the _____ that occur as people try to adjust to events and situations.
2. True or False: Only adults experience stress in their daily lives and children do not _____.
3. What are different types of stressors?

4. What are symptoms of burnout?

5. Give any 2 techniques to manage emotions under pressure.

4.3 Self-Care Practices

➤ Understanding self-care

Self-care is the practice of individuals, families, and communities actively promoting health, preventing disease, maintaining wellbeing, and coping with illness, with or without the support of healthcare providers.

Defined by the World Health Organization (WHO) as a critical component of universal health coverage, it involves conscious decisions to manage physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual health through lifestyle choices and informed actions.

Self-care is not about avoiding responsibilities or feeling positive all the time. It involves maintaining habits and using strategies that help us manage everyday demands.

Self-care may include:

- Adequate sleep and rest;
- Physical activity;
- Healthy routines;
- Relaxation;
- Spending time with supportive people;
- Recreation and hobbies;
- Managing responsibilities;
- Taking appropriate breaks; and
- Seeking support when needed.

➤ Self-care vs. avoidance

The distinction between self-care and avoidance lies in the intent behind the action and its long-term impact. Self-care is a proactive choice to nurture wellbeing, leaving you feeling rejuvenated and better equipped to face challenges. In contrast, avoidance is a reactive attempt to numb or escape discomfort, which often provides temporary relief but leads to increased stress, guilt, and stagnation over time.

Self-care: “I have been working for several hours. I will take a short break, eat, rest and return to the task.”

Avoidance: “I am feeling stressed about the assignment, so I will keep postponing it.”

A break can be self-care when it helps recovery and allows us to return to what needs to be done.

➤ **Activity: Self-Care – Myth or Reality?**

1. “Self-care means taking a break from responsibilities.” _____
2. “Self-care is only about relaxation.” _____
3. “Asking for help can be a form of self-care.” _____
4. “Self-care looks the same for everyone.” _____
5. “Sleep and physical activity can influence mental wellbeing.” _____

Write whether you agree or disagree and explain why.

4.3.1 Basic Self-Care Techniques

- **Physical fitness**

Regular physical activity can support overall physical and mental wellbeing. It does not necessarily mean intensive exercise. Walking, stretching, sports, dancing or other forms of movement can be incorporated into everyday routines.

- **Sleep and rest**

Adequate sleep and recovery are important for concentration, mood, energy and everyday functioning.

- **Nutrition and hydration**

Regular meals, adequate hydration and balanced nutrition contribute to physical wellbeing and can support energy levels and daily functioning.

- **Relaxation**

Relaxation techniques can help create a pause from physical and mental tension. One basic technique is progressive muscle relaxation, where different muscle groups are briefly tensed and then relaxed.



Fig. 4.4

- **Breathing**

When people are stressed, their breathing may become faster or shallower. Becoming aware of breathing and slowing it down comfortably can provide a brief pause during stressful situations. The aim is not to force the breath but to practise slow, comfortable breathing.

- **Grounding**

Grounding helps shift attention towards the present moment, particularly when a person feels overwhelmed.

5-4-3-2-1 Grounding

Identify:

- 5 things you can see
- 4 things you can touch
- 3 things you can hear
- 2 things you can smell
- 1 thing you can taste

- **Mindfulness**

Mindfulness involves paying attention to the present moment with awareness rather than automatically reacting to thoughts, emotions or surroundings.

It can be practised during:

- Walking;
- Eating;
- Listening;
- Studying; or
- Observing one's surroundings.

Activity: Self-Care Toolkit

Practise three or four brief techniques:

1. Breathing awareness
2. 5-4-3-2-1 grounding
3. Mindful observation
4. Short relaxation exercise

Write: “When might this technique be useful in everyday life?”

Video: Simple Self-Care Tips to Become a Better You

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bARpudRvNgA>

4.3.2 Healthy Coping Strategies

Coping refers to the ways people respond to challenges and manage difficult situations.

Healthy coping strategies are adaptive behaviours that help you process emotions and solve issues. They may require more initial effort but lead to lasting wellbeing.

Unhealthy coping strategies are maladaptive behaviours that involve avoidance, numbing, or escapism. They tend to exacerbate distress over time and can harm physical health, finances, or relationships.

Two broad forms of healthy coping are:

i. Problem-focused coping

This involves addressing the source of the problem.

For example:

- Creating a study plan;
- Discussing a problem with a group member;
- Asking for clarification;
- Seeking information; or
- Breaking a large task into smaller steps.

ii. Emotion-focused coping

This involves managing the emotional response to a situation.

For example:

- Talking to someone;
- Relaxation;
- Physical activity;
- Taking an appropriate break; or
- Mindfulness.

Both approaches can be useful depending on the situation.

- **Helpful coping strategies**
- **Problem-solving:** A strategy where you take direct, active steps to address the root cause of stress, particularly when the situation is changeable.
- **Social support:** It is a primary healthy coping strategy that acts as a buffer against stress by providing emotional, instrumental, informational, and appraisal support.

- **Physical activity:** Engaging in regular movement helps reduce stress hormones like cortisol while triggering the release of endorphins, dopamine, and serotonin, which are natural mood lifters.
- **Recreation and hobbies:** Alleviate stress by triggering endorphin and dopamine release, lowering cortisol, and promoting mindfulness through focused engagement. Effective strategies include creative arts (painting, crafting, writing) to process emotions, physical activities (yoga, hiking, sports) to reduce anxiety, and mind-body practices (meditation, gardening) to restore attention.
- **Healthy routines:** Include maintaining consistent sleep schedules, eating nutritious meals, and incorporating daily physical movement like walking or yoga to regulate emotions.
- **Taking appropriate breaks:** It is a critical healthy coping strategy that reduces stress, prevents burnout, and improves emotional regulation by allowing the mind and body to reset.
- **Communication:** Essential healthy coping strategies that reduce stress by replacing reactive emotions with thoughtful responses.
- **Seeking professional support:** It is a primary adaptive coping mechanism that involves engaging with therapists, counsellors, or psychiatrists to manage stress and emotional difficulties.
- **Planning and organising:** Effective problem-focused coping strategies that help manage stress by breaking overwhelming tasks into manageable parts, creating structure, and prioritising actions.

Some strategies may provide temporary relief but may not address the underlying issue. In case the concerns are persistent, they should be notified.

Activity: Coping Choice

Situation: “You have received a disappointing result and have another assessment coming up.” Write down some of the possible responses you are likely to give.

Classify each of the following responses as:

Helpful Now | Helpful Long-Term | Avoidance | Potentially Harmful

- Ignore the result completely.
- Talk to a friend.
- Review where you lost marks.
- Spend the whole night scrolling online.

- Create a revised study plan.
- Avoid attending the next class.
- Take an evening to relax and then return to preparation.
- Ask the teacher for feedback.

Write: Can a strategy that gives short-term relief still create problems in the long term?

4.3.3 Goal-Setting

Goals provide direction and can help turn intentions into manageable actions.

Effective goals should be:

Specific – Measurable – Achievable – Relevant – Time-bound

Instead of:

“I need to become more organised.”

Try:

“For the next two weeks, I will spend 10 minutes every evening planning the next day's priorities.”

Activity: From Overwhelmed to Action

“I need to get my life organised.”

Turn it into 2–3 specific actions.

For example:

- List all current responsibilities.
- Identify the three most important tasks.
- Allocate time for each task.
- Review progress at the end of the week.

The purpose is to show how breaking a broad goal into smaller actions can make it more manageable.

4.3.4 Time Management

Time management involves planning and organising how time is used across different responsibilities and activities. Useful strategies include the following:

- **Prioritising:** Identify what needs attention first.
- **Urgent vs. important:** A task may be urgent, important, both, or neither.
- **Breaking tasks down:** Large tasks can feel overwhelming. Breaking them into smaller steps can make them easier to begin.
- **Scheduling:** Assign realistic time slots to important activities.
- **Managing distractions:** Identify activities that regularly interrupt concentration.
- **Building in breaks:** Breaks can support concentration and recovery.
- **Avoiding procrastination:** Starting with a small, manageable step can make difficult tasks easier to approach.

Activity: Design Your Week

i) **Instructions:** Riya is a fictional student who is balancing studies, an internship, family responsibilities and personal wellbeing. Study her current weekly schedule and redesign it to make her routine healthier and more manageable.

Riya's current weekly schedule

Day	Schedule
Monday	6:00–7:30 a.m. Morning routine and breakfast; 8:00 a.m.–2:00 p.m. Classes (including a lunch break); 2:00–3:00 p.m. Commuting; 3:00–4:00 p.m. Meal, rest and preparation for the internship; 4:00–7:00 p.m. Internship; 7:00–8:00 p.m. Return commute and dinner; 8:00–10:00 p.m. Assignments; 10:00 p.m.–12:00 a.m. Personal tasks, phone use and preparation for the next day; 12:00–6:00 a.m. Sleep.
Tuesday	6:00–7:30 a.m. Morning routine and breakfast; 8:00 a.m.–2:00 p.m. Classes (including a lunch break); 2:00–3:00 p.m. Commuting; 3:00–4:00 p.m. Meal, rest and preparation for the internship; 4:00–7:00 p.m. Internship; 7:00–8:00 p.m. Return commute and dinner; 8:00–10:30 p.m. Family responsibilities and assignments; 10:30 p.m.–12:00 a.m. Personal tasks and phone use; 12:00–6:00 a.m. Sleep.
Wednesday	6:00–7:30 a.m. Morning routine and breakfast; 8:00 a.m.–2:00 p.m. Classes (including a lunch break); 2:00–3:00 p.m. Commuting; 3:00–4:00 p.m. Meal, rest and preparation for the internship; 4:00–7:00 p.m. Internship; 7:00–8:00 p.m. Return commute and dinner; 8:00–10:00 p.m. Assignments; 10:00 p.m.–12:00 a.m. Personal tasks, phone use and preparation for the next day; 12:00–6:00 a.m. Sleep.
Thursday	6:00–7:30 a.m. Morning routine and breakfast; 8:00 a.m.–2:00 p.m. Classes (including a lunch break); 2:00–3:00 p.m. Commuting; 3:00–4:00 p.m. Meal, rest and preparation for the internship; 4:00–7:00 p.m. Internship; 7:00–8:00 p.m. Return commute and dinner; 8:00–10:30 p.m. Assignments; 10:30 p.m.–12:00 a.m. Personal tasks and phone use; 12:00–6:00 a.m. Sleep.
Friday	6:00–7:30 a.m. Morning routine and breakfast; 8:00 a.m.–2:00 p.m. Classes (including a lunch break); 2:00–3:00 p.m. Commuting; 3:00–4:00 p.m. Meal, rest and preparation

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	for the internship; 4:00–7:00 p.m. Internship; 7:00–8:00 p.m. Return commute and dinner; 8:00–10:00 p.m. Family responsibilities; 10:00 p.m.–12:00 a.m. Phone use, personal tasks and preparation for the next day; 12:00–6:00 a.m. Sleep.
Saturday	7:00–8:00 a.m. Morning routine and breakfast; 8:00–9:00 a.m. Commuting and preparation; 9:00 a.m.–1:00 p.m. Internship; 1:00–2:00 p.m. Return commute and lunch; 2:00–5:00 p.m. Assignments; 5:00–6:00 p.m. Rest and phone use; 6:00–8:00 p.m. Family responsibilities; 8:00–9:00 p.m. Dinner and personal tasks; 9:00–11:00 p.m. Social media and recreation; 11:00 p.m.–1:00 a.m. Phone use and preparation for sleep; 1:00–7:00 a.m. Sleep.
Sunday	7:00–8:00 a.m. Morning routine and breakfast; 8:00–9:00 a.m. Personal tasks and preparation for study; 9:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m. Assignments; 12:00–3:00 p.m. Family responsibilities and lunch; 3:00–4:00 p.m. Rest and phone use; 4:00–6:00 p.m. Assignments; 6:00–7:00 p.m. Dinner and personal tasks; 7:00–10:00 p.m. Social media and recreation; 10:00 p.m.–12:00 a.m. Phone use and preparation for the week ahead; 12:00–6:00 a.m. Sleep.

Additional information

- Riya sleeps for about 5–6 hours on most days.
- She gets very little time for exercise and meaningful recreation.
- Assignments often accumulate because she starts them late.
- She frequently feels tired and stressed.
- She spends considerable time on her phone, particularly late at night.

Task

Redesign Riya's weekly schedule to create a healthier and more manageable balance between:

- Classes
- Assignments and study time
- Internship and work
- Commuting
- Family responsibilities
- Sleep
- Exercise
- Recreation and relaxation

Discuss

1. What changes did you make to Riya's schedule?

2. Which activities did you prioritise, reduce or rearrange?

3. How can your redesigned schedule help reduce stress and improve wellbeing?

4. What strategies can you apply to your own weekly schedules as a student?

ii) Create Your Own Weekly Schedule

Instructions: Now prepare a realistic weekly schedule that balances your studies, assignments, taught classes, on-the-job training, commuting, family responsibilities, sleep, exercise, recreation and relaxation. Allow some flexibility for unexpected tasks or changes in plans.

Discuss

1. What did you prioritise?

2. What did you reduce?

3. Did you include enough sleep and recovery?

4. Did you make the schedule realistic?

5. What could happen if there is no flexibility in the plan?

❖ **Reflection point**

The Self-Compassion Protocol (Writing a Letter to Yourself)

1. Identify a recent situation where you felt overwhelmed, made a mistake, or felt you were "failing" to keep up.
2. Write a brief letter or paragraph addressing yourself from the perspective of a wise, empathetic friend or mentor.
3. Guiding Framework:
 - Acknowledging the Pain: *"It makes complete sense that you feel overwhelmed right now because..."*
 - Normalising the Experience: *"You aren't the only one struggling with this; anyone in your position would feel this way."*
 - Offering Supportive Action: *"Instead of pushing harder, what is the kindest, most practical thing you can do for yourself today?"*
4. Based on this, write the letter in the space given below.

Fill in the blanks

1. _____ is not about avoiding responsibilities or feeling positive all the time. It involves maintaining habits and using strategies that help us manage everyday demands.
2. Goals provide _____ and can help turn intentions into _____ actions.

Answer the following

1. What are the two types of coping?

2. How to do goal setting?

3. Suggest any five basic self-care practices to follow every day.

4. Give two reasons to practice self-care in our everyday lives.
-
-

References

- Evergreen Therapeutics. (2025, May 27). *The difference between self-care and avoidance: Are you healing or hiding?* <https://evergreentherapeutics.ca/self-care-or-avoidance/>
- World Health Organization. (n.d.). *Self-care for health and wellbeing.* https://www.who.int/health-topics/self-care#tab=tab_1

4.4 Reaching for Help

➤ Understanding help-seeking

Help-seeking is the proactive process of seeking assistance, support, or solutions from external sources to address a problem that an individual cannot resolve independently. It is defined as a problem-focused, intentional behaviour involving interpersonal interaction with formal sources (such as healthcare professionals) or informal sources (such as family and friends).

Help-seeking means recognising when support may be useful and taking appropriate steps to access it.

Despite the availability of services, 70% to 92% of individuals with mental disorders in India do not seek professional treatment, primarily due to stigma, shame, lack of mental health literacy, cost barriers, and geographic inaccessibility. Many individuals prefer informal sources such as spiritual healers or religious shrines, viewing these as more culturally acceptable than psychiatric intervention (Lancet Psychiatry, 2016).

People may hesitate to seek help because of:

- Fear of judgement;
- Stigma;
- Belief that they should manage everything alone;
- Lack of awareness about available services;
- Uncertainty about whom to approach; or
- Concerns about confidentiality.

Seeking help is not a sign of weakness. It can be a responsible way of responding when a situation becomes difficult to manage.

➤ Informal sources of support

- Friends.
- Family.
- Trusted peers.
- Mentors.

➤ **Academic/workplace sources**

- Faculty.
- Programme coordinators.
- Supervisors.
- Counsellors.
- Student support services.
- Institutional committees.

➤ **Professional sources**

- Counsellor.
- Psychologist.
- Psychiatrist.
- Doctor.
- Other appropriate healthcare professionals.

Activity: Who Would You Approach?

Situation A: You are experiencing examination stress.

Situation B: You have been experiencing emotional distress for several weeks.

Situation C: You are experiencing conflict with a friend.

Situation D: You experience inappropriate behaviour at your workplace.

Situation E: Someone tells you that they are thinking about harming themselves.

For each situation, write:

Who could be an appropriate first point of contact?

Then write when the situation may require further escalation or professional support.

4.4.1 Recognising Psychological Wellbeing and Suicide Risk Awareness

a) Recognising Psychological Wellbeing

➤ **Psychological wellbeing can be understood through the following areas:**

- Mood;

- Thoughts;
- Behaviour;
- Relationships;
- Daily routines;
- Ability to manage responsibilities; and
- Overall functioning.

➤ **Screening and clinical assessment**

Students may encounter psychological wellbeing questionnaires or screening tools. It is important to understand the difference between screening and diagnosis.

Screening is a systematic process of evaluating individuals or items to identify specific characteristics, risks, or suitability based on predefined criteria, typically used as an initial filter before deeper assessment or selection. It can help identify whether further assessment may be useful.

Clinical assessment is the systematic process of collecting and analysing data to evaluate an individual's psychological, biological, and social functioning in order to inform diagnosis and treatment. It is a comprehensive, ongoing procedure used by healthcare professionals that extends beyond a single test to include multiple methods such as clinical interviews, behavioural observations, standardised psychological testing, and review of collateral information from medical or personal records. A clinical assessment is conducted by an appropriately qualified professional and involves a more detailed evaluation

Important: A questionnaire or online test should not be used to diagnose oneself or another person.

➤ **When to go for screening and proceed to clinical assessment?**

- Screening is performed early (e.g., at intake, admission, or during routine preventive care) to identify potential risks or symptoms in individuals who may be asymptomatic or have immediate, unverified health needs. It is characterised as a brief, narrow-scope process used to flag individuals for further evaluation, monitor treatment progress, or determine eligibility for specific interventions without providing a definitive diagnosis.
- Clinical assessment is conducted after a positive screen or when symptoms are present to provide a comprehensive, in-depth examination of the individual's functioning across multiple domains. This process involves qualified professionals using detailed instruments or interviews to confirm or rule out diagnoses, develop treatment plans, and assess severity, serving as the definitive step following the initial risk identification provided by screening.

b) Suicide Risk Awareness

➤ **Facts about suicide rates in India**

- Globally, close to 800,000 people die by suicide every year; that is, one person every 40 seconds. For each suicide, there are more than 20 suicide attempts.
- Risk factors include experience of loss, loneliness, discrimination, a relationship break-up, financial problems, chronic pain and illness, violence, abuse, and conflict or other humanitarian emergencies. The strongest risk factor for suicide is a previous suicide attempt.

- National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences (NIMHANS) has identified that for every suicide death in India, there are over 200 people with suicidality and 15 suicide attempts, highlighting a massive hidden burden of mental health distress. A key study found that 5.1% of Indian adults experience suicidality, with women (6%) more affected than men (4.1%), and the highest prevalence among those aged 40–49 for women and 60+ for men (2016 study).
- Young people aged 15–29 are disproportionately affected, with suicide now being the leading cause of death in this age group in India, surpassing road traffic accidents and other causes of death (Office of the Registrar General & Census Commissioner, India, 2025).

NO. 1 CAUSE IN 2020-22

Cause Of Death Among 15-29-Yr-Olds	Male	Female	Overall
Suicide	16.3	18.2	17.1
Road Accidents	22.2	5.6	15.6
Cardiovascular Disease	9.6	10	9.8
Unintentional Injuries (Not Road Accidents)	10.4	6.1	8.7
Digestive Diseases	6.5	6.4	6.4
Respiratory Infections	4.1	6	4.8
All Other Causes	30.9	47.8	37.5

Source: Sample Regn System Cause of Death Report 2020-22; figures in %

Suicide risk is a serious safety concern. You should understand the importance of recognising concerning statements or changes and connecting the person with appropriate support.

➤ Warning signs

It may include the following:

- Significant changes in behaviour;
- Withdrawal;
- Expressions of hopelessness; or
- Statements suggesting that the person does not want to live or believes others would be better without them.

Video: What is Suicide?

<https://youtu.be/UtRvHv3wujo>

➤ Some terms to keep in mind

Terms	Simple explanation
Suicidal thoughts / ideation	Thoughts about dying, death, or ending one's own life.
Suicidal intent	An intention or desire to act on suicidal thoughts.
Suicidal plan	Having thought about how, when, or where they might act.
Suicidal attempt	An act carried out with an intention to die, regardless of the outcome.

➤ How to respond as a student

Notice → Take Seriously → Listen → Connect → Escalate

- Take the person's words seriously.
- Listen without judgement.

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- Avoid dismissing or minimising their experience.
- Encourage connection with an appropriate professional or trusted support person.
- Follow institutional or emergency procedures when there is an immediate safety concern.

Do not promise to keep information secret when someone's immediate safety may be at risk.

Note: Important course boundary

You are being introduced to recognition, supportive response and referral. You are **not** being trained to conduct a clinical suicide-risk assessment.

Activity: What Would You Do?

Below are situations with increasing levels of concern.

1. Your friend tells you they feel low.
2. Your friend has been complaining that they feel nothing.
3. Your friend is sitting alone, excludes himself from all social contact, does not pay attention in class, gets angry easily and wants to be left alone.
4. Your friend is actively telling you about their intent and plans of suicide.

Identify:

What do you notice? → How would you respond? → Who could you contact? → When would escalation be necessary?

➤ **Asking for help and accessing support**

How to ask for help

A person may find it difficult to know what to say. Help-seeking can begin with a simple and direct statement, such as:

- “I have been feeling overwhelmed and I need some help.”
- “I have been having thoughts about dying and I don't know what to do.”
- “I am worried about someone and I think they may need help.”
- “I don't feel safe being alone right now.”
- “Can you help me connect with a counsellor or mental health professional?”

It is not necessary to explain everything at once. The important first step is to tell a trusted person and connect with appropriate support.

➤ **Where can a person seek help?**

1. Trusted people

- Parent or family member.
- Friend or trusted peer.

- Teacher/faculty member.
- Mentor or programme coordinator.
- Supervisor or another trusted person.

2. Institutional support

- College/school counsellor.
- Student support or counselling unit.
- Designated faculty/student-support personnel.
- Appropriate institutional committee or authority, where relevant.

3. Professional support

- Counsellor.
- Psychologist.
- Psychiatrist.
- Doctor or other qualified healthcare professional.

4. Telephone/helpline support

You can contact a mental-health helpline directly when they need immediate emotional support or do not know where else to begin.

Important mental health helplines in India

Services	Number	Availability / Purpose
iCALL	9152987821 Or icall@tiss.ac.in	Available from Monday to Saturday: 8:00 am to 9:00 pm
Tele-MANAS – National Tele Mental Health Programme	14416 or 1800-89-14416	24×7 tele-mental-health support across India. Provides counselling and can connect callers with appropriate mental-health services.
Kiran	1800-599-0019	24/7, 13 languages
Emergency services	112	For an immediate emergency or immediate danger, contact emergency services or go to the nearest emergency department.

Tele-MANAS is the Government of India's national tele-mental-health service and is intended to provide accessible mental-health support across India, including referral/linkage to further services when required.

If someone says they are thinking about suicide

Remember:

Notice → Take Seriously → Listen → Connect → Escalate

- **Notice:** Pay attention to statements or behaviour that indicate serious distress or thoughts of suicide.
- **Take it seriously:** Do not dismiss the person or assume they are “just saying it.”
- **Listen:** Stay calm and listen without judging or arguing.
- **Connect:** Help the person reach a trusted person, counsellor, mental-health professional, or helpline.
- **Escalate:** If there is an immediate safety concern, do not leave the person to manage it alone. Follow institutional emergency procedures and seek immediate professional/emergency assistance.

Remember: Students are *not* expected to diagnose, assess suicide risk, or solve the person's problem. Their role is *to recognise concern, respond supportively, and connect the person with appropriate help.*

4.4.2 Key Provisions of Mental Healthcare Act and POSH Act

a) Key Provisions of Mental Healthcare Act, 2017

The Mental Healthcare Act, 2017 provides a legal framework relating to mental healthcare and the rights of persons with mental illness.

For this course, you need awareness of key rights rather than detailed legal interpretation.

Important areas include:

- **Right to access healthcare:** Every person has the right to access affordable, quality mental healthcare funded by the government, including integration into general healthcare services at all levels.
- **Decriminalisation of suicide:** Section 115 presumes that any person attempting suicide is under **severe stress**, mandating that they not be prosecuted or punished under the Indian Penal Code.
- **Autonomy and consent:** The Act emphasises informed consent, allowing patients to create advance directives to specify future treatment preferences and appoint a nominated representative for decision-making.
- **Protection from abuse:** Patients are protected from cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment, including bans on unmodified electroconvulsive therapy (ECT), chaining, and solitary confinement.
- **Non-discrimination:** Healthcare must be provided without discrimination based on gender, religion, caste, sexual orientation, or political beliefs, with insurers required to cover mental illness on par with physical illness.
- **Rights and dignity:** Persons with mental illness have rights that should be respected, including dignity and humane treatment.
- **Confidentiality and privacy:** Mental-health information should be handled with appropriate confidentiality and respect for privacy, subject to applicable legal and safety requirements.
- **Right to complain/seek redressal:** Students should know that people have mechanisms to raise concerns about deficiencies in mental-health services and violations of their rights

Activity: Identify whether the following statement is a Myth, Right or Provision, Needs Further Clarification?

- A person with a mental illness should be treated differently from everyone else.
- Mental health information should be handled with confidentiality.
- A mental health condition automatically means that a person cannot work or study.

b) Key Provisions of POSH Act, 2013

The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013 provides a framework for preventing and addressing sexual harassment at the workplace.

For students, the focus should be on understanding what constitutes inappropriate behaviour, where to seek help, and how institutional mechanisms work.

Key areas include the following:

- Meaning of sexual harassment.
- Unwelcome behaviour.
- Workplace and institutional contexts.
- Prevention and prohibition.
- Internal Committee/Internal Complaints Committee.
- Complaint and redressal process.
- Confidentiality.
- Protection against retaliation or victimisation.
- Appropriate institutional mechanisms.

You should also understand the difference between:

Seeking support → Making a formal complaint → Escalating a concern

These may involve different processes and should not automatically be treated as the same.

4.4.3 Recognising, Recording and Reporting Harassment Through Appropriate Institutional Mechanisms

a) Recognising

Harassment or inappropriate behaviour may involve:

- Verbal behaviour;
- Non-verbal behaviour;
- Physical behaviour;
- Digital/online behaviour;
- Repeated unwanted communication; or
- Misuse of power or authority.

An important consideration is whether behaviour is unwelcome or inappropriate in the given context.

b) Recording

When documenting an incident, focus on factual information, including:

- Date;
- Time;
- Place;
- What happened;
- Who was involved;
- Names of witnesses, where relevant; and
- Relevant messages or other evidence, where appropriate.

Avoid exaggeration, assumptions or unnecessary sharing of information.

c) Reporting

Concerns should be reported through the appropriate institutional mechanism.

The appropriate route may depend on:

- The nature of the concern;
- The people involved;
- The institution's policies; and
- The level of immediate risk.

Activity: Report or Escalate?

Select any situation and Identify:

1. What is the concern? _____
2. Who should be approached? _____
3. What should be documented? _____
4. What should the person avoid doing? _____
5. Is immediate escalation required? _____

Case discussion: Bullying and escalation

Rahul is a Grade 10 student who lives in your neighbourhood. You have known him since he was a young child and share a friendly relationship with him.

Rahul's mother tells you that he has been experiencing bullying at school. Some students have been targeting him because he tends to be quiet and does not usually interact with others. Rahul has never complained about the incidents or spoken openly about what has been happening.

Yesterday, a physical altercation took place at school and Rahul sustained minor injuries. His mother is concerned and feels that the incident should be reported. However, Rahul's parents are unsure about whom they should approach and what steps they should take.

Discussion questions

1. What should the parents do first?

2. What could an appropriate escalation process look like?

3. Who within the school could the parents approach?

4. What information should they document?

5. What could be the possible benefits of reporting?

6. What concerns might the family have about reporting?

7. How can Rahul's safety and wellbeing be supported?

8. When might further escalation be required?

Possible escalation flow:

Concern/Incident → Immediate Safety Check → Class Teacher/Course Coordinator → School Counsellor/Relevant Committee → School Authority → Further Appropriate Authority, if required

The exact process will depend on the institute's policies and the nature and seriousness of the incident.

❖ **Reflection point**

My support map

Create a simple support map:

Me → People I trust → Institutional support → Professional support → Emergency support

Identify categories of support rather than being required to disclose personal experiences.



Final reflection

1. One sign that tells me I may need to pause and take care of my wellbeing is:

2. One healthy strategy I can use is:

3. One person/service I could approach for support is:

4. One thing I have learned about seeking help is:

Mental wellbeing is dynamic. Recognising changes early, using healthy coping strategies, maintaining supportive routines, and knowing when and where to seek help are important life skills. Seeking support is a responsible response to difficulty, not a sign of weakness.

A. Multiple choice questions

1. Which statement best describes mental health?
 - a) It means the absence of mental illness
 - b) It refers only to a person's emotions
 - c) It includes emotional, psychological, and social wellbeing
 - d) It remains the same throughout a person's life

Answer _____

2. Which of the following may be a sign that stress is beginning to affect a person's functioning?
 - a) Occasional tiredness after a busy day
 - b) Persistent difficulty concentrating and completing routine responsibilities
 - c) Feeling happy after completing a task
 - d) Taking a short break during work

Answer _____

3. Which response is most appropriate when someone expresses suicidal thoughts?
 - a) Tell them to think positively
 - b) Promise not to tell anyone
 - c) Take the concern seriously and connect them with appropriate support
 - d) Tell them that others have bigger problems

Answer _____

B. Fill in the blanks

1. Mental health can be understood as a _____ and may change over time.
2. When a person is experiencing serious emotional distress or suicidal thoughts, they should be encouraged to seek _____ and connect with appropriate support.

C. Short answer questions

1. What is the difference between stress and burnout?

2. Write any three healthy self-care or coping strategies that can support mental wellbeing.

3. What should you do if a friend tells you that they are having suicidal thoughts?

4. Name two people/services within an educational institution that a student can approach when they need mental health support.

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