

EDITORIAL



"ASMI- Spread Love Hope and Happiness!"

The District Action Group on Mental Health Team choose 'ASMI' as their logo. ASMI is a Sanskrit word denoting "I am, I exist". It also means 'to be' as I am, whoever I am. This 'I' of a human being is the 'true self', the essence of the individual and goes beyond identification with the phenomena or the material world. This self is the consciousness of the individual which when shrinks to become self-centred falls 'sick'. When it gets expanded to include others, it becomes mentally healthy. The larger picture of life changes our perception and thinking of the world for the better.

The material world in which we live and strive for is part reality and not the end reality. Money, status, position, power, gold, does not make for contentment in the ultimate analysis. Honing of talent, building of capacities, striving for perfection leading to achievement and actualisation of self is your prime duty but again not the ultimate truth. The development of your virtues in terms of ethics, morality, character, 'dharm', is the final frontier which defines you as a human being. Virtues such as love, hope, empathy, universal compassion, kindness, gratitude, contentment, service to society, gives meaning and purpose to life. The ASMI logo hence stands for these virtues. Covid pandemic has taught us these eternal virtues of survival with minimum material needs, brotherhood and service to society. We live together peacefully or perish together. These are the eternal principles promoted not only by the philosophies of the world but also by ROTARY!

"Service Above Self" and "He Profits Most Who Serves Best" are the official mottoes of Rotary.

This time, we introduce a guest column by Vijay Phanshikar, an eminent Editor of the leading English language daily newspaper 'The Hitavada'. He favours the column-name 'Moral Metaphor' because he feels that 'metaphor' is implied simile that does not need much elaboration. Vijay is also a non-Rotarian member of the Rotary clan.

Warm wishes,

Rita
-Rita Aggarwal.

INTRODUCING DAGMHI

Mental illness (major or minor) can disrupt a person's routine & hence it is important to know what we mean by mental health & mental illness; and understand the nuances. The District Action Group on Mental Health Initiatives (DAGMHI) RID 3030 has been formed to promote the same through various projects, activities and toolkits.

VISION:

DAGMHI will try to have a shared vision among the Rotarians who believe in promoting mental health and emotional wellness in society.

1. Mental illness is the number one cause of disability world-wide and second leading cause of death (according to WHO) and believe this issue needs to be addressed.
2. Remove Stigma: Mental illness can be talked about without being stigmatised.
3. Mental illness is treatable and preventable.

MISSION and AIMS:

1. To encourage all Clubs in RID 3030 to form 'mental health committees' (with Chairperson and members) and initiate programs/ projects on the myriad aspects of mental health.
2. To assist Clubs with program ideas and speakers.
3. To conduct district level activities (competitions, social media campaigns, webinars).
4. To offer training in Basic Counselling skills to school teachers as well as parents to help students.
5. To offer sessions on emotional thinking & intelligence.
6. To introduce REBT (Rational emotive behaviour therapy).

DAGMHI will work as a resource centre for the district.

Do join us as member; together let us change the number one cause of disability worldwide – mental illness to mental wellness.

-Dr. Aabha Pimprikar,
President DAGMHI. Contact: 9922825999.

EDITORIAL TEAM

Rita Aggarwal, Rotary Club of Nagpur.
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READERS MAY SEND QUERIES TO THE EDITOR ON
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News from Global RAG on Mental Health Initiatives



"Don't Bottle It Up"

Darren Hands, president of the Rotary Club of Plympton, came up with a social media campaign called "Don't Bottle It Up," which encourages people affected by depression, anxiety, or other issues to reach out for help. "The majority of people with mental health issues wait over a year to talk to someone," explains Hands. "Hopefully we can help break down some of the stigma through this campaign." Launched in 2017 in District 1175, the campaign features local athletes and celebrities posing with a water bottle and the message "Don't Bottle It Up." The ads note that one in four people in the United Kingdom have some form of mental illness, and urge people not to suffer in silence. The group has a Facebook page and a website, and today 28 public figures and about 60 Rotarians have shared their image and message on social media. Darren Hands has made it easy for Rotary members to participate in the "Don't Bottle It Up" campaign. "You simply take a photo of yourself holding a bottle and send it to me," says Hands, who posts it on social media and adds local health statistics to make the message more relevant.

This was published in Rotary magazine in May 2021.

What are the learnings from this pandemic ?

Be simple, self reliant, truthful, hygienic, patient, healthy, caring, spiritual, humble, helping others, with less desires & full of gratitude. Imbibe these qualities in your daily life and enjoy a fruitful life ahead.

DECODING

ANXIETY

A 50-year-old mother is pacing restlessly in her home, clasping and unclasping her hands, sleepless even though it is past midnight and frequently gazing at the phone.

A 35-year-old man is feeling lethargic, drained and sleepy looking at the amount of work he has to do on a deadline.

A 14-year-old girl is weeping hysterically because she feels she will fail in her exam even though she has been preparing for it vigilantly. While her 19-year-old sister is full of energy, tuning pages, revising for her exam tomorrow, reading her notes. Her thirst and appetite is diminished, it seems as if she may never run out of energy. It is a race against time.

A young man of 25 years is sitting in an office, waiting for his job interview. He is well dressed, seems composed. Internally, his mouth is getting dry, pulse is racing and heart is pounding loudly. A thin sheen of perspiration is the only thing amiss in his appearance.

All the scenarios and people's behavior seem vastly different from each other, but the interesting thing is that all the people mentioned above are showing signs and symptoms of anxiety.

What is Anxiety?

American Psychological Association says, "Anxiety is characterized by feelings of tension, worry and physical changes like heightened blood pressure. People with anxiety disorder have recurring intrusive thoughts or concerns. They may avoid certain situations out of worry."

Anxiety can be prevented and managed at home with certain techniques like 'pranayam', yoga, meditation etc. But there are certain types of anxiety disorders that need professional intervention of a psychologist, counsellor or psychotherapist to get specific and timely help.

There are certain types of anxiety disorders-

1) Generalized Anxiety Disorder - a general sense of worry about a wide range of topics which may or may not be purpose oriented.

2) Panic disorder - when a person experiences a sudden attack of anxiety which is very strong, which may or may not be triggered by a specific event and may last from a few minutes to hours.

3) Phobias - an intense fear of a specific object, animal or event, which makes a person want to escape that situation by any means.

4) Social anxiety disorder - the fear of being judged by people, even friends and family, so the person prefers to avoid people and stay indoors.

5) Separation Anxiety Disorder - usually seen in children when they cling on to parents, don't want to go to school and fear that something bad will happen to them in the absence of the primary caregiver. Also seen in adults in the form of losing a loved one to distance or death.



Just as we know all people are unique, it has also been recognized that anxiety presents itself in different ways in individuals. The physical symptoms of all of the above are more or less the same.

It must be noted that if any of the anxiety symptoms are observed for more than 6 months professional help should be taken.

It is important to understand that all forms of anxiety are not bad.

When a person feels anxious before an exam or a job interview, this anxiety creates a state of alertness in them. This optimizes the energy levels and helps in better preparation and performance in the upcoming challenge.

-Dr. Geetanjali Jha,
Homeopath, Counselor,
Chairman- Reiki Council of India,
Bhopal.



ANXIETY

We hear the word Anxiety frequently and many times it is confused with phobias. Let us understand that anxiety means fear of unknown! There is no reason and if someone is constantly worrying to the extent that the person is unable to concentrate. Being conscious of something, being careful about things is all right, but if someone is worrying without any cause then it is something which should alarm the person or people around and the person must take professional help for getting counseled.

It is observed that severe anxiety may lead to panic attacks or may trigger other mental illnesses like severe phobias, obsessive compulsive disorder etc. Usually, anxiety and these types of disorders respond well to medication. In addition to the medicine, we must try to find out root causes of the anxiety, triggers associated with anxiety. It has been noted that heightened anxiety if untreated is dangerous and may culminate in to panic attacks, increased risk of heart attacks, increased stress hormones and related disorders, insomnia and its effects.

Although medicine handles the biochemical aspects, one must in addition to these, undergo thorough counseling as it helps in identifying causative factors like personality issues, relationship issues and significant associated behavioral factors. Invariably, the thinking process of the person, frustration tolerance of the person, emotional intelligence all are responsible for triggering insecurity, fear and anxiety. In counseling sessions, the counselor tries to analyze the mistakes /aberrations in thinking of the client enabling the client to develop more healthy ways of facing stress.

Tips for addressing anxiety --

- ◆ Understand that anxiety is your habit.
- ◆ Understand the power of subconscious thoughts, you have much control over them than you think.
- ◆ Use affirmations like "I have anxious thoughts, but I also have the power to challenge and change them."
- ◆ Love yourself.
- ◆ Develop positive self-concept, overcome inferiority complexes

-Dr. Swati Dharmadhikari.

MY STORY

"Coping with Covid-Anxiety"

Dr. Nitesh Jha,
Psychologist, Delhi NCR.

In spite of being a Psychologist my experiences with covid was very distressing and insightful! It started with my brother, catching covid. When the symptoms continued to worsen after few days, hospitalization was recommended. On the first night at the hospital, during telephonic conversation at 12:00, mid night, his voice was agonizing, he seemed to be aggressive and irritated, he was restricting us to visit him assuming the threat of covid. His anxiety was equally worrisome for me. I felt a shivering, pounding heart and nervousness. As soon as he started recovering, my anxiety waned. Few days later, after his discharge from the hospital, I too tested covid positive. The symptoms appeared after a day and continued for 15 days. The situations become terrible when my wife too got covid I was struggling with covid symptoms on one side and the symptoms of anxiety at the other. Shortness of breathing, hyper vigilance to heart beats, cough, breathing etc., worry to lose job, sleeplessness all overwhelmed me. Questions of worry were flooding my mind. How will the requirement of oxygen, medicine, a bed in the hospital, be managed as there is an acute shortage? What if my family member too needs the same? Will we all lose our life? I worked very hard on my own mind. I realised that, this consistent worry is inappropriate, and it is distressing and hampering my life. If I will not control it, it will lead to severe illness. This insight literally helped me to beat my anxiety. I sought the help of my physician, shared everything about myself including my thoughts and feelings. As per his suggestions, I indulged in effortful thinking, household chores, practicing mindfulness every time, started introspection, connected with friends and family members. I avoided completely the usage of mobile, watching news, thinking too much. All of these efforts helped to cope with covid-anxiety. It was a stressful experience!



ANXIETY

Anxiety is a phenomenon, an alerting signal for impending danger that enables one to deal with the threat. It is similar to fear but what differentiates both is the factor, that anxiety is in response to inner, unknown, subconscious threat whereas fear is in response to external, known and definite threat. Anxiety when becomes pathological leads to disorder.

In anxiety disorder the fear production system is stronger than the fear regulation. It involves the emotional- cognitive processing brain structures i.e, Cortex, Limbic system, Amygdala, HPA axis etc, that regulates thinking, planning, social behavior, stress regulation- response, emotions and fear. Communication between these brain centers and networks are through neurotransmitters i.e, norepinephrine, serotonin and GABA. Alteration in brain structure or function, or neurotransmitter signaling due to any environmental experiences and underlying genetic predisposition increases the risk for disorder. Treatment modalities includes behavior therapy involving efforts to change thinking patterns and medicines that works by balancing the neurotransmitters.

F-actual

ANXIETY DISORDER

Anxiety disorders are the most prevalent psychiatric disorders with a current worldwide prevalence of 7.3% [4.8%-10.9%]

Among them, specific phobias are the most common, with a prevalence of 10.3%, then panic disorder with a prevalence of 6.0%, followed by social phobia (2.7%) and generalized anxiety disorder (2.2%).

They are more common in women, with women to men ratio 2:1

Anxiety disorders are commonly associated with other mental disorders.

(Dialogues in clinical neurosciences 2017 June)

-Dr. Snehal Nimbhorkar.

BEING IN HARMONY



Magic Mantras

Anxiety is a play involving memory and imagination, and occurs regularly.

I will share magic mantra as to keep anxiety levels in control-

Breathing - close your eyes, gently inhale and exhale counting 3, repeat 10 times. This gives time to refocus on your thoughts and feelings.

Mantra: "With every breath I feel enhanced calmness and steadiness"

Focus on your feelings- make an appointment with yourself to review and analyse your feelings.

Mantra: "I will accept what I cannot control"

Meditation: meditate for 5 minutes at least each day for a month at the same time. It will be very satisfying to see your progress

Mantra: "I can control myself"

Yoga poses : a few poses:



Hero pose :
This seated posture helps you find ease in stillness of this pose.



Tree pose:
This standing pose helps you focus inwards, quietening your racing thoughts.



Triangle pose:
This energising pose helps ease and relax your neck and back



Standing Forward Bend :
This pose helps relax your mind while releasing tension in body

Mantra: "I have done more than enough today"

Practice of the above mantra will keep will help keep your mind calm and in harmony.

-Deepa Aggarwal

GUEST COLUMN



MORAL METAPHOR

VIJAY PHANSHIKAR

Editor, The Hitavada, (a daily newspaper)

"Why should I leave my 'dharma'?"

The sadhu (saint) stood still in the river midstream, offering a steady gaze to the morning Sun, as if sucking in its golden glow to light up his inner being. The river was in sort of a spate and water flowed fast and relentless, ripple after ripple. Suddenly, the sadhu's focused attention was distracted by a scorpion going under the water and then rising again -- flailing for life. The sadhu picked the insect in his right palm with an idea of throwing him onto the river bank. But the scorpion bit him hard and the sadhu dropped him. The insect started sinking again. So, the sadhu picked him up to save him. The scorpion bit him again -- and again -- and again .. until the sadhu could finally throw him to onto the river bank.

The insect made his way away and clutching his black-and-blue right hand by his left, the sadhu came out of the stream, obviously in pain. The people on the bank watched all this and asked the sadhu one simple question , "Maharaj, when the scorpion was biting you so many times, why did you pick him up again and again? He has hurt you so badly .."

The sadhu smiled, though in pain, and said, "Friends, if the insect is not willing to leave his 'dharma' of biting, why should I leave mine -- of helping?".

Then the sadhu left clutching his hand -- leaving the people to decipher the moral metaphor of the incident.

In reality, the sadhu offered a practical example of correct thinking. Most of us are all the time willing to make compromises with our principles and basic attributes just because we wonder what the society would feel. In the process, we find ourselves distorted beyond recognition, and lose our core values and traits that make us distinct from others, thus keeping ourselves away from an autonomous personality, which is our right.

Opinion kills ..

We aren't born with opinions
it develops over time
Likes and dislikes become reality
Pleasure and pain follows naturally
Everyone opines I am right
Fight occurs and people divide
As Opinion kills...

One in a million search for the truth
Some get to meet a true Master
Rest all carry on their ordinary life
Increasing their own ignorance...

Those who do meet a Master
Also bring up their own opinion
But Master always taught
Not to carry any opinion
Just abide in your self- nature
Which is your Real Self
Without any opinions
As Opinion kills ...

What one must understand
Is that everyone have
Their own opinions
But need of the hour is
To carry everyone together
Opinions are not true
When everything perishes
How can opinions be true
Don't get carried away
By different opinions
As opinion kills ...

Go beyond opinions
See oneself in everyone
Look at what is common
And not at what is different
Oneness is the ultimate truth
NoOpinion should be the key
Let it all work as per Almighty's wish
For all that happens is only as per his wish

- Murali Raghavan,
President, RC Deolali.

LAUGH

People who fall asleep
quickly freak me out.
I mean, don't they have
thoughts?



CLUB REPORTS

"FUN WITH FEELINGS"

Rotary club of Nagpur Vision organised a session for the rota kids of the club and clubs all over the district. Three eminent speakers Rtn. Rita Aggarwal, Kavita Saraf and Rucha Gaikwad conducted this very enlightening session. 100 enthusiastic kids joined the zoom meeting. Many joined through Facebook live. It was house-full!

After the formal welcome and remarks by President Jatin Sampat, Moderator Rita Aggrawal took off with a story as a perfect start to an engrossing session. Kavita Saraf made the kids do a lot activities which made them aware of the various feelings and emotions. She told the kids it's okay to feel the way you do, but what's important is how we control them and how we convey them. Rucha also made the kids realise the importance of expressing their feelings. It was a great session which kids enjoyed and appreciated. The floor was then left open for a quick Question and Answer session. The session was anchored by Rota kids Dia Singhvi, Avantika Urganlawar, Rishit Agrawal and Om Urganlawar. Vote of thanks was proposed by Arnav Mehta. The program was coordinated by Rtn. Sonal Singhvi.

-AnjuliMinocha.

