Adolescence is a ‘period of growing’ physically, psychologically, emotionally, socially and cognitively. It is a period beginning with the onset of puberty and ending when individuals assume adult roles and responsibilities. It is a crucial period as this phase presents various challenges that would affect their physical, psychological and emotional wellbeing, if these challenges are not met effectively. If adolescents are unable to set their goals or feel difficulty in achieving them, failure in making effective career choices or lack of effective interpersonal relationships especially with a peer group leads to a sense of identity crisis. In addition, today’s competitive world also produces many stressors with which the adolescents should learn to cope. Moreover, the environment – both home and external – also influences their personality development and wellbeing. Many social evils like substance abuse, anti-social elements, and social uncertainty may drift the attention of adolescents from their vision and mission. This may eventually lead to suicidal tendencies and depression. This is evident in the rise of the number of teenage suicides and cases of depression.

Hence, it is the need of the hour to focus on the wellbeing of adolescents. As adolescents are filled with energy and enthusiasm, their vigour has to be channeled into more constructive activities. The overall development of the adolescents can be achieved through ‘life enhancement strategies’ which can be planned both at their individual level and also at the community level.

Life Enhancement Strategies for Adolescents at Individual Level

The power of positive emotions and human strengths can be realized through a mindful approach to everyday living. Learning life enhancement strategies enables a person to develop positive emotions, human strengths and healthy processes. These strategies help to attain life’s three most important outcomes – connecting with others, pursuing meaning and experiencing some degree of pleasure or satisfaction.

Seligman (1998) referred specifically to love, work and play as three great realms of life which lead to the enhancement of quality of life. Similarly, Freud (1936) opined capacity to love, work and

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play eventually leads to the successful adjustment in different areas of life. Psychological researchers have referred to this capacity as “mental health” (Cederblad, Dahlin, Hagnell & Hansson, 1995). The life enhancement strategies that are to be developed by adolescents are:

- Identifying their strengths
- Increasing their levels of well-being
- Promoting resilience
- Learning effective coping mechanisms
- Developing self-efficacy

The five most notable strengths are:
- Gratitude
- Perspective
- Curiosity
- Hope
- Vitality (Benson, Leffert, Scales, & Blyth, 1998).

**Developing High Levels of Wellbeing**

Life enhancement strategies also include developing high levels of wellbeing. Wellbeing is a broader term which encompasses different domains of an individual like psychological well-being, social wellbeing and emotional wellbeing (Diener, Suh, Lucas & Smith, 1999).

The elements of psychological wellbeing include self-acceptance (possess positive attitude toward the self and feel positive about past life), personal growth (open to new experience and feel knowledgeable and effective), purpose in life (have goals and a sense of direction in life), environmental mastery (feel competent and able to manage a complex environment), autonomy (self-determining, independent and regulated internally) and positive relations with others (have warm, satisfying and trusting relationships). These components are essential for positive functioning (Ryff, 1989; Ryff & Keyes, 1995).

The elements of social wellbeing include social acceptance (have positive attitudes toward people and accept them), social actualization (belief society is evolving positively), social contribution (feeling that they have something valuable to give it to the society), social coherence (perceiving social world as intelligible, logical and predictable) and social integration (feeling and thinking as a part of the community), (Keyes & Lopez, 2002).

Pursuit of happiness (spontaneous reflections of pleasant and unpleasant feelings) and life satisfaction (a sense of contentment and peace stemming from small gaps between wants and needs) is one significant element (Bryant & Veroff, 1982; Lucas, Diener & Suh, 1996; Shmotkin, 1998). Emotional wellbeing consists of perceptions of avowed happiness and satisfaction with life, along with the balance of positive and negative effects. This threefold structure of emotional well-being consists of positive affect (experiencing enthusiasm, joy and happiness), absence of negative affect (absence of feelings like life is undesirable and unpleasant) and life satisfaction (a sense of contentment, peace and despite discrepancies between wants and needs with accomplishments and attainments).
Strategies for Promoting Resilience

Risk Focused Strategies: The objective of these strategies is to prevent or reduce risk and stressors. These include:

- Prevent child abuse or neglect through parent education.
- Reduce teenage drinking, smoking or drug use through community programs.
- Reduce neighborhood crime or violence through community policing. (Masten & Reed, 2002)

Process Focused Strategies: The objective of these strategies is to mobilize the power of human adaptation system. These include:

- Build self-efficacy of adolescents.
- Teach effective coping strategies for specific threatening situations.
- Foster secure attachment relationships between adolescents and parents through parental sensitivity training programs.
- Nurture mentoring relationships for adolescents with pro-social peers in healthy activities such as extracurricular activities.
- Support cultural traditions that provide children with adaptive rituals and opportunities for bonds with pro-social adults. (Doll & Lyon, 1998).

Emotion – Focused Coping: Emotional approach to a problem involves active movement toward rather than away from a stressful encounter. Two processes in approach – oriented emotion – focused coping involves emotional processing or attempts to understand emotions and a second process reflects emotional expression or free and intentional display of feelings (Stanton, Kirk, Cameron & Danoff-Burg, 2000). Encouraging the adolescents to develop this coping style is an essential aspect.

Enhancing Self-efficacy (I Think, I Can)

Bandura (1997) defined self-efficacy as “people’s beliefs in their capabilities to produce desired effects by their own actions.” It is a learned human pattern of thinking rather than a genetically endowed one. It begins in infancy and continuous throughout life span. Self-efficacy is based on the premises of social cognitive theory which holds that humans actively shape their lives rather than passively reacting to environmental forces. So, there is need to turn the attention of youth towards:

- Previous successes in similar situations
- Modelling on others in same situation.
- Imagining oneself behaving effectively

Life Enhancement Strategies for Adolescents at Community Level

Teachers, counselors and psychologists should recognize the good in the youth and focus on each child’s strengths and potential (Damon, 2004). Youth should be engaged and their energies should be invented in their process of development which is ongoing. They should interact with their environment and other change agents (peer groups and adults) who support healthy development and work with institutions (that create climates conducive to growth and conduct programmes that foster
change) to meet their basic needs and cultivate assets. Through their initiative, momentum builds and youth who are capable of meeting basic needs, challenge themselves to attain other goals. They use assets to build additional psychological resources that facilitate growth. Positive attitude of youth generates physical and psychological competencies that serve to facilitate the transition into an adulthood characterized by striving for continued growth. The positive qualities of the youth combine with the resources of the environment and positive agents in the context of a program to promote healthy development. Healthy development is marked by the attainment of some of the following positive outcomes (Catalano, Berglund, Ryan, Lonczak & Hawkins, 1998):

- Rewarding Bonding
- Promoting social, emotional, cognitive, behavioural and moral competencies
- Encouraging self-determination
- Fostering spirituality
- Nurturing a clear and positive identity
- Building beliefs in the future
- Recognising positive behaviour
- Providing opportunities for pro-social development
- Establishing pro-social norms

Some teenagers are not really struggling with major life problems but do not possess the personal assets or environmental resources needed to reach many of their goals as they transition into adulthood. So, the challenge for those who might fall through the cracks is to build the confidences and competencies in young people.

**Mentoring Programme**
- To provide caring and supportive relationship
- Positively influence youth
- At community/school/college level

This mentoring programme may promote the good — academic achievement, parental trust and prevent bad – violence, alcohol, drug use and truancy (Tierney & Grossman, 2000).

**Life Skills Development Programme:** This prevents the bad — the onset and severity of depressive symptoms and promotes optimism and better physical health (Gillham & Reivich, 2004). W.H.O. also recognized the need of inculcating life skills in the adolescents not only for their success in life but also for enhancing their wellbeing. Life skills include — Goal setting, Self-confidence, Positive attitude, Emotional intelligence, Communication Skills, Problem-solving and decision-making skills to name a few. Of all these, empathy skill is regarded as a prerequisite to be a good human being.

**Joint focus of College students and Positive agents (student peers, faculty and Staff) on Developmental Tasks**

Development of competence should be a primary developmental direction or goal for students during their educational experiences. With increased confidence in their resourcefulness, students
then begin working on the developmental tasks of managing emotions, moving through autonomy
toward interdependence, developing mature interpersonal relationships, establishing identity, developing
purpose and developing integrity (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). Progress toward each of these goals
equip students to succeed in school, work and life in general. More intentional focus on developing
colleges and universities into positive socializing systems could enhance the value of a college
education for the students and society at large. Integrating Strengths Development Programming
into the college experience also could enhance the positive effects of higher education (Lopez,
Janowski & Wells, 2005).

If psychologists, social workers and other allied professionals who are interested in the psychological
development of adolescents form a panel and generate the support of government and non government
organizations in implementing these strategies at the state and national level, definitely, there would be
a change in the personality development of adolescents across the country. In fact, the future of the
country depends on the present adolescents overall development.

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