

# UNHINGED

*Department of Psychology*



2020-21

ANNUAL MAGAZINE

KAMALA NEHRU COLLEGE

## **Acknowledgement**

We would like to extend our heartfelt gratitude towards our Principal, Dr. Kalpana Bhakuni and our faculty members for their continual support, guidance and patience, especially Dr. Yogeeta Bhatia (Teacher in-charge, Psychology Association in-charge) and Dr. Nasrina Siddiqi (Editor), without whose help and encouragement, Unhinged would not have been possible. Additionally, we would like to thank all the volunteers and contributors, for their help in creating the newsletter. We hope you enjoy this edition as much as we enjoyed putting it together.

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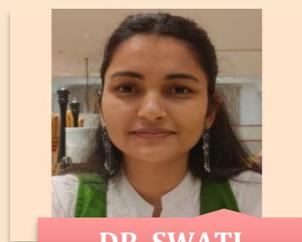
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# Achievers

## Session 2019-20



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# PSYCHOLOGY ASSOCIATION REPORT

April 2020 onwards.

The following activities were conducted -

- ✚ The Psychology Department of Kamala Nehru College in view of the current ongoing situation of the Covid-19 and various stresses related to it, conducted a web seminar for the second years on the topic “Practical training on Stress Management through Alternative Techniques in Psychology” by Mrs Bharti Kapoor (Subject expert) on 27 th April, 2020, coordinated by Dr Mandeep Kaur (Subject teacher) and Dr. Yogeeta Bhatia, the Teacher- In- charge of Department of Psychology. The seminar included the subject matter of stress, EFT (Emotional Freedom Techniques) and practice of meditation. Befitting the Covid-19 situation, the session ended with delving into the importance of gratitude in life. The event encouraged students to accomplish relaxation under the trying times of the Covid-19.
- ✚ The Psychology Department of Kamala Nehru College organised an online session on “What Fuels Communities to Prioritize Maternal and Child Nutrition: Case Studies from India and Myanmar” by Ms. Rai Sengupta on 4th May, 2020. She is an esteemed Development Consultant, currently working with IPE Global Limited and her work has been recognised by UNICEF. The expanse of her work and experience gave students an insight into community organisation and

information about the various problems associated with maternal health care in India. Through an in-depth analysis, she helped the students understand the economic distribution in Indian households along with their influencing agents. Furthermore, along with strong theoretical discussions, the session provided a platform for students to learn about real life community intervention experiences in Myanmar and India. The session also highlighted the importance of holistic and participatory interventions. The session helped to broaden perspectives and bring out a different reality than what mainstream psychology textbooks portray.

✚ In joint collaboration, the department of Psychology and Internal Complaints Committee hosted webinar on 26th May, 2020 to address some of the concerns and share critical reflections around online violence and sexual harassment against women. Dr. Kalpana Bhakuni opened the session by discussing how the rise of Internet age has led to empowerment of voices of women and other marginalized groups, yet it has also led to increase in the incidents of various forms of online sexual harassment including cyber stalking, rape threats, blackmail, picture morphing and even more. She stressed on the importance of discussing the feminist, legal and psychological perspectives on sexual harassment against women in online spaces. The esteemed panelists of the webinar included Dr. Bijayalaxmi Nanda, Acting Principal, Miranda House and a feminist scholar. Dr. Nanda spoke about a wide range of issues underlying women working in public spheres. She emphasized on the need to sensitize workforce to the changing work dynamics post Covid-19 vis-à-vis women's lives. Ms. Joseph

Monati, the second panelist made students and faculty aware of the information they are putting in the online world. He enlightened us with the information regarding the various legal redressal mechanisms available for women. Finally, Ms. Achira Chatterjee, a clinical psychologist shared that any discussion on sexual harassment against women cannot be at the expense of conversation with boys and men. Parents, teachers, and society need to understand how socially sanctioned objectification of women plays an important role in sexual harassment of women in online spaces. The webinar that saw the participation of over 70 participants, ended with a question and answer session and a vote of thanks.

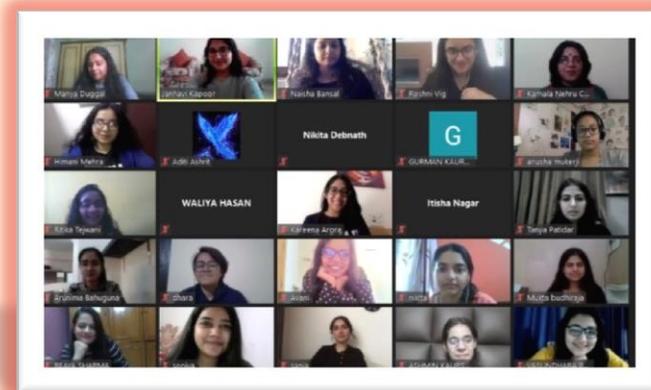
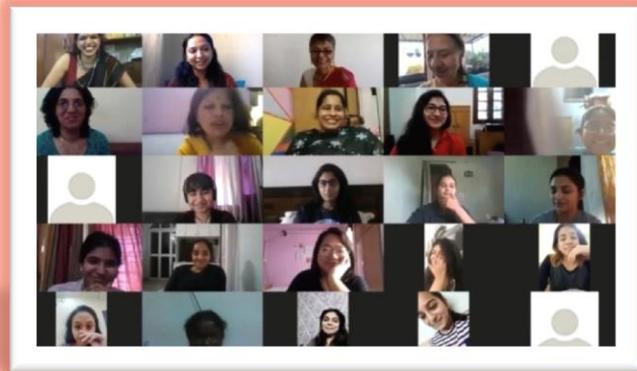
- ✚ On June 14th, 2020, the first and second years bid farewell to the graduating class of 2020 in an online mode through class group photograph, titles to each student and messages from the faculty.
- ✚ On Teacher's Day on 5th Sept, 2020, students expressed their affection with e-cards for their teachers in the online mode.
- ✚ World Mental Health day is an international day for global mental health education, awareness and advocacy against social stigma. Since the advent of Covid 19 pandemic, the world is on the verge of a mental health crisis, with daily doses of death, isolation and fear generating widespread psychological trauma. The department of Psychology marked World Mental Health day on 9th October, 2020 by organizing an online panel discussion on the theme, "Aftermath of the

pandemic: What lies ahead?” With this theme, we aimed to initiate a conversation on the surge of mental health issues during and after the pandemic, providing insight into managing difficult emotions and dealing with crisis in a resilient manner. Renowned clinical psychologist and Professor of Psychology (retired) Dr. Aroona Broota and Founder Director at Action For Autism (AFA) and autism activist Ms. Merry Barua were invited. The panel discussion was moderated by Dr. Itisha Nagar, Assistant Professor of Psychology, Kamala Nehru College and was well attended by over 120 students. Dr. Broota reflected on how the psychological fear of contracting the virus and the resulting social isolation had caused a wide range of symptoms of psychological distress: including low mood, insomnia, stress, anxiety, anger, irritability, emotional exhaustion, depression and post-traumatic stress symptoms. She also suggested some possible solutions for us to take care of our mental health during the stressful times. Ms. Merry Barua enlightened the students about how the pandemic and lockdown had affected people with disabilities and their families. The nationwide lockdown has been even harder for people battling with mental health disorders. Ms. Barua shared how people with disabilities are adjusting to the ‘new normal’ and how the need for social distancing has made it difficult for people to receive services like therapy and special education. The session ended with a round of question and answer from the audience.

- ✚ For the purpose of spreading awareness on Mental health, our Psychology students made a Mental Health Day video in October 2020, that finds its place on our college social media handles.

✚ On November 24, 2020, a Department Orientation was held online through zoom for first year students, where the first year students were introduced to all the faculty members of the department.

✚ On November 27, 2020, the second and third years warmly welcomed our first years in the Departmental Freshers Welcome, online through zoom platform.



## Editorial Team, 2020-21



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# Lucid Dreaming

*Tejasvita Medhavi, 3<sup>rd</sup> Year*

Edgar Allan Poe, the 19th-century poet, once famously remarked in his poem, “if what we observed and assumed around us was a dream or a dream within a dream.” Through his poem, he beautifully captured human musings on the nature of their existence, making one wonder whether our lives were just an illusion.

Annette Wynne even went on to suggest in her poem "Mighty Things" that the very creation of this earth and universe were part of God’s dream. Dreams and their hidden meanings have always been a source of intrigue for researchers, with the most famous work in this area having been done by Sigmund Freud (1958) on dream analysis. According to Carl Jung (1974), dreams could manifest in a form to fulfil our future goals and aspirations. Dreams could be categorized simply as daydreams, normal dreams, false awakenings - a sense of waking up when one is still dreaming, nightmares, and lucid dreams (Hicks *et al.*, 1999). Lucid dreams perhaps triumph all other types in terms of their therapeutic value and rarity of occurrence (Dresler *et al.*, 2012).

In pop culture, several movies have tried to project the concept. From ‘The Nightmare on Elm Street’, where adolescents try to battle a ghostly serial killer in their dreams, to Dystopian science fiction trilogy: the matrix that revolves around a hacker trying to escape the nightmare of a digitally generated reality, the term lucid dreaming finally captured the imagination of the masses only after the release of 2010 science fiction movie, ‘Inception. Inception caused the audiences to ponder upon the scope and

possibilities of lucid dreaming and deal with more pessimistic scenarios of dream dependency.

Lucid dreaming is the state of consciousness where we are aware that we are dreaming and to a certain degree can control those dreams. It is normally a rare experience. Among the people who had reported having had a lucid dream at least once in their lives, the ones who had experienced it with a frequency of once a month or more were only about 20% of the total (Snyder & Gackenbach, 1988).

Researchers have also demonstrated characteristics of self-awareness and time continuity parallel to the real-world in lucid dreaming. Lucid dreams are said to occur in the REM (Rapid Eye Movement) stage of sleep and were also linked to the phenomenon of false awakenings by Celia Green (1994). Lucid dreamers also report a greater level of tiredness post a lucid dream (Tholey, 1989). Biological studies have revealed that lucid dreaming is associated with increased functional connectivity between the associated prefrontal cortex and temporoparietal association areas, regions normally deactivated during sleep. (Baird, Castelnuovo, Gosseries & Tononi, 2018)

References to Lucid dreaming find mention in works of ancient philosophers like Aristotle to new age analytical philosophers like Descartes who encouraged skepticism of dreams in light of these sensory experiences (Windt, 2015). Interestingly, parallels of Lucid dreaming have also been drawn with Indian concepts of Yog Nidra, a state of self-awareness in deep sleep which ultimately leads to the reconciliation of 'atman' with 'brahman. According to Vedic texts, it is also believed to be a state of cosmic awareness

in which Lord Vishnu immerses himself at the end of each Yuga. Yoga Nidra is now often practiced in the form of an Asana to attain relief from stress and anxiety (Reddy *et al.*, 2016)

Lucid dreaming has also been thought of as a way for a person to pursue creativity, to explore answers to nature's fundamental questions and to realize one's potential and capabilities, etc. Could some scientific marvels of mankind be revelations stumbled upon by providence? Could the structure of the benzene ring that appeared as a snake forming a circle to bite its tail to August Kekule be a result of a lucid dream? Could lucid dreams help us become aware of our 'tacit knowledge'- the one which resides in our subconscious but we may be unaware of? Stephen LaBerge (1980) has tried to simplify the amazements of navigational dreams through his book "Exploring the World of Lucid Dreaming" and has enlisted several techniques in it to help one become a skilled lucid dreamer. Mnemonic induction of lucid dreams was a technique developed by LaBerge (1986) that could help potential lucid dreamers remember that they are dreaming and provide a list of reality checks as an aid. Galantamine, a drug usually prescribed to Alzheimer patients has also shown a greater tendency of dream recall and an increase in the frequency of lucid dreaming. Potential research in this area holds endless possibilities. (Stumbrys *et al.*, 2012)

In a survey of 70 Swedish students carried out by Adrian Parker (2017), 13% of respondents reported having mutual or shared Lucid dreams at the rate of one or more per month. Increasing intensity and frequency of lucid dreaming is known to increase the incidence of mutual dreaming, which can prove as a way of stimulating consciousness

in people. Robert Waggoner (2009), the author of 'Lucid Dreaming: Gateway To Inner Self' incorporates the concept of 'maya' to highlight human's intrinsic capacity of artistic creation and the grand illusion that the universe is. According to him, we as humans are not passive experiencers of this illusion but active co-creators in tandem with greater creative cosmic powers that control 'maya'. He states "mutual dreaming serves to provide evidence that space, like time, is fundamentally not as we perceive it." Referring to the Sanskrit word 'maya' he calls "the lucid dreamer as co-creator together with the larger self of the dream world that he or she then experiences. The separation of the selves might be due to the belief in ourselves as being separated and apart instead of part of a larger whole". The lucid dreamers while creating these dreams not only give flight to their aspirations but also imprint a part of themselves onto their grand designs.

Lucid dreaming has found applications in terms of combating phobias, nightmares, and providing a sense of mastery that leads to healing. To realize that one is dreaming gives a person the ability to deal with any fearful object or situation that they might encounter (Gott *et al.*, 2020) They know that the object is not real, they are the creators of their dreams and this insight diminishes fear. Lucid dreaming could be induced to combat phobias and nightmares. Triumphant fear by confronting it, as done through lucid dreaming, finds parallels in popular fantasy series, Harry Potter by JK Rowling, wherein a magical entity 'boggart' assumed the form of the worst fear of the person who beheld it but could be turned to a funny creature by uttering the spell 'Riddikulus'. Realizing that we are more powerful than our weaknesses can help us banish our fear for them.

However, voluntary lucid dreaming should be done with caution. REM state of sleep is vital for the body's rejuvenation and revitalization. Its disruption can lead to a wide variety of health problems ranging from stress and anxiety to shorter life expectancy. Moreover, people suffering from diseases that impair the sense of reality should refrain from lucid dreaming such as patients of schizophrenia as lucid dreaming could magnify their problems. (Dresler *et al.*, 2015)

Many times, life poses us with grave challenges. Our lives could perhaps benefit from adopting the principle of Lucid dreams. Taking control of our lives and navigating hurdles in our way to reach our goals is something only we can do. The power to create and control lies with us.

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## Look Inside

*Pramiti Digra, 2<sup>nd</sup> Year*

Look inside

I am still alive

Insecure to the core

Fears that don't really matter

A belief system that was shattered

I took it upon myself

To please everyone

Conforming to the norms

That decided the way I looked

A silhouette that was all I became

Years of confirmation and yet nothing changed

Insecurities held power

Power which once was mine

Realization hit

Stop chasing! Stop Conforming!

I screamed at myself

You are beautiful, strong and unique Accept yourself and be free

Look inside

You are still alive

## Through Riya's Lens

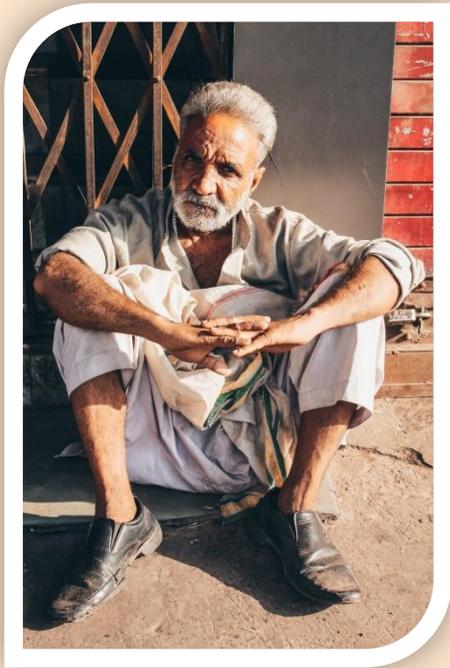


*"Nature is the art of god"*

The green hills stretch out as far as the eye can see, beautifully soaking the sunlight and effortlessly merging into the clouds. The picturesque village surrounded by hills gives a breathtaking view in Gangtok, Sikkim.

Qutub Minar, one of the finest and "tower of victory" for Qutab-ud-din Aibak and for me as i managed to snap a soaring airplane with the tallest minaret in the world.





*"Loneliness is the surest sign of old age"*

- Amos Bronson Alcott

Photographed on the streets of Chandni chowk, Delhi. 'He is old but he is strong' is the thought that comes to my mind every time I take look at this picture. His face tells a story about the hardships he faced; he is tired but also determined.

Shakespeare said, *"The eyes are the window to your soul"*

These crinkled eyes were once filled with curiosity and amazement but now the vision is cloudy and obscured with cataracts: Old age.

Location - Jaipur, Rajasthan.



*\*Photographs by Riya Raj, 3<sup>rd</sup> Year*

## **Resilience in Uncertain Times**

*Aarushi Sharma, 3<sup>rd</sup> Year*

“The oak fought the wind and was broken, the willow bent when it must and survived.”

- Robert Jordan, *The Fires of Heaven*.

The idea of resilience in humans has originated from material science that refers to the property of a material to restore its shape after stress or distortion, this in fact makes resilience a metaphor. The human race is the most resilient race on the planet, as most of the time, we are quickly able to adapt to our situations without any serious consequences. Many contemporary studies have proven this. A research conducted by Ann Masten and Norman Garmezy (2008) after 9/11 found that most individuals when exposed directly or indirectly to terrorism or other large scale problems did not show severe trauma but exhibited remarkable resilience. This makes us question; if resilience is a necessary human trait, then why do some people have a problem in developing it?

### **How Do We Define Resilience?**

The American Psychological Association (APA) has formally defined resilience as the process of adapting in the face of adversity, tragedy, threats and significant sources of stress- such as family and relationship problems, serious health problems and workplace and financial stressors, therefore it is the capacity to adapt to stressful circumstances, and bounce back from adverse events.

Developmental psychologists have long been interested in the construct of resilience, which has been broadly defined as “a dynamic process wherein individuals display positive adaptation despite experiences of significant adversity or trauma (Luthar & Cicchetti, 2000, p. 858).

In the corresponding times of a global pandemic, it is more than necessary to develop resilience and advance problem-solving skills as it will prove helpful during overwhelming experiences, help us maintain a balance in our lives during stressful periods, and also protect us from development of any mental health issues.

### **The Anatomy of Resilience**

We tend to believe that resilience is an individual trait that we gradually develop as we grow older, but this is not the case. Resilience as a matter of fact is a combination of personality traits acquired during development years such as intelligence, the big five personality traits, high self-efficacy, an internal locus of control, and psychological flexibility that together serve as predictors of resilience in an individual. A study conducted by Friberg et. al in 2005 clearly identified a strong positive relationship between resilience, intelligence and personality factors. Therefore, we can say that the degree of resilience that we possess depends on the intensity of traits that we developed over the years. Just like personality, resilience also exhibits individuality.

### **The Role of Emotional Intelligence in Building Resilience**

An emotionally intelligent individual has the ability to be aware of one’s own emotions, those of people around him, and also possesses the skill to manage it successfully.

This is one of the most sought after traits in the present times which continues to be of utmost importance. Having a higher than normal emotional quotient and high resilience goes hand in hand (Frajo-Apor *et al.*, 2015). An emotionally intelligent person is aware and would be better equipped to handle a situation therefore possessing a higher resilience, but the opposite may not be always true. An overtly resilient individual may not have a higher emotional quotient as they tend to keep going on in a difficult situation a lot of times, even if it hurts their mental or physical wellbeing.

If we dissect Daniel Goleman's Model of Emotional Intelligence, we find the components required to solve the problems we face. According to Goleman, Boyatzis and Rhee (1999) the five capabilities of emotional intelligence are self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy and social skills. These can help us develop an appropriate coping strategy while also managing our emotions simultaneously which can lead to an effective result.

An emotionally intelligent person can not only solve the problems at hand but can also assess the forthcoming difficulties, making them better equipped to manage the looming adversities. People with a higher emotional quotient often become good leaders.

### **Resilience During a Pandemic**

The ongoing worldwide pandemic has caused a lot of uncertainty, with a plummeting economy and layoffs, people are facing problems in all spheres of life, be it emotional, physical, financial or social. This makes resilience an appreciable quality to possess. Promoting resilience among people and organisations starts with understanding what resilience is. Resilience is not a single trait outcome that can be measured at a point, we

can simultaneously experience post-traumatic stress and growth, and these outcomes dynamically evolve throughout our lives. It is not biological and takes deliberate effort. While researchers have studied and argued over nuanced definitions and requirements for resilience, they all agree that it can be increased with practise. For those who do not possess this skill, it is high time to cultivate deliberate resilience, as without it, facing the problems in the world can be intense and difficult. As the human race, we have endured a lot of pain and suffering in the past these months and we still see no end. Darwin stated that nature functions on the theory of survival of the fittest, but I believe that being fit does not only mean adapting to the changes physically but also showing mental strength in overcoming adversities. The COVID-19 Pandemic has proven to be such a situation which has taught us the importance of our physical health as well as mental wellbeing.

### **How to Build Resilience**

According to the American Psychological Association (2012), some techniques to build resilience are:

#### ***Build Connections***

Being around understanding and empathetic people can help understand that we are not alone in a crisis. Joining a group such a faith-based community or a civic group or any other type of local organisation can provide us with the necessary social support that is required to face a problem

#### ***Foster Wellness***

This can include taking care of your body. They say that a healthy body means a healthy

mind and that is important to build resilience. Having a positive lifestyle can help us deal with stress effectively. Another way to improve one's wellness is to practice mindfulness. Meditating and engaging in other spiritual practises makes us ruminate on all the things that we are grateful for and thus, helps us keep a positive outlook on life which in turn makes us more resilient.

### ***Finding Purpose***

We can find our purpose by engaging in prosocial behaviour, moving towards our goals that are ambitious but at the same time realistic and by looking for opportunities for self-discovery to understand our strengths and weaknesses better.

### ***Embracing Healthy Thoughts***

We can do this by accepting change, keeping things in perspective, maintaining a hopeful outlook for problems and learning from our pasts. This will help us be optimistic towards the problem and hence increase our resilience.

### ***Seek Help***

Using one's own resources and strengths is one of the ways to build resilience but sometimes we might get stuck or have a difficulty on this road of resilience that may require help from others. We should not be ashamed from seeking professional help from a licensed mental health expert, or one's friends and family. We should remember that we are not alone and seeking help should be considered a good option to cope.

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# **Self-Exploration**

## **Importance of Self Love**

*Srishti Singh, 2<sup>nd</sup> Year*

Self-love is the most important aspect of our living. Many people work so hard and are engulfed in their schedule so deeply that they don't even have time to appreciate themselves. You may even find people who hate themselves for such reasons where it's not even their fault. People hate themselves for not succeeding, for not being able to speak up, for not having desirable attributes. This hatred towards your own soul destroys the magic of your uniqueness, your specialty. There is society to judge you and label you at every moment; how can we hate ourselves? At the end of the day "we" are all we have got. Our body does a lot for us. It heals the wounds, helps us to do our daily chores. Self-love is a conscious choice. Our body is like a map and we should study every bone from head to toe. We have abundance of love within ourselves which we try to give to others but how can we give it to others without giving it to ourselves? It doesn't happen overnight; it's a slow process. We often blame ourselves when things don't work. Learn to forgive yourself. Self-love helps us to rationalize our decisions and set boundaries for ourselves that anything is too expensive if it costs us our mental peace. Do things that make you happy, don't seek others approval for doing things. When you truly love yourself, you make wise decisions that won't harm you. As I spent more time with myself, I deepened the connections with my inner self. There are small gestures of self-love like passing by a shop just to buy flowers for yourself, being proud of your little achievements, taking a break if things are getting toxic, cooking for yourself, laughing

out loud, and many more. It's a really beautiful thing that we have the right to make choices in our life so why don't we choose self-love and happiness? So keep breathing and drink a lot of water. I know it's a slow process so take your time and love yourself!

### **Whole is Greater Than its Parts**

*Srishti Singh, 2<sup>nd</sup> Year*

One bad experience doesn't mean you're a bad person. After all that's just a part of you, there are many parts of you, you're not even aware of some of them till now. You're more than your mistakes. Whole is greater than its parts, that's what gestalt psychology says. It takes a few seconds to just say bad things to ourselves when things don't work out the way we want them to and when we make mistakes. We overlook our good qualities and forget that we are human and we are supposed to make mistakes. It's okay to crawl, cry, hide, fall, or break. We got to fall and sometimes fall again to finally understand the reason behind certain things. Appreciate yourself and celebrate yourself even if the only thing you manage to do is brush your teeth in the morning, it counts. Let people judge you for your specific part, you do you. You're whole without validation of others.

# **Autism Spectrum Disorder**

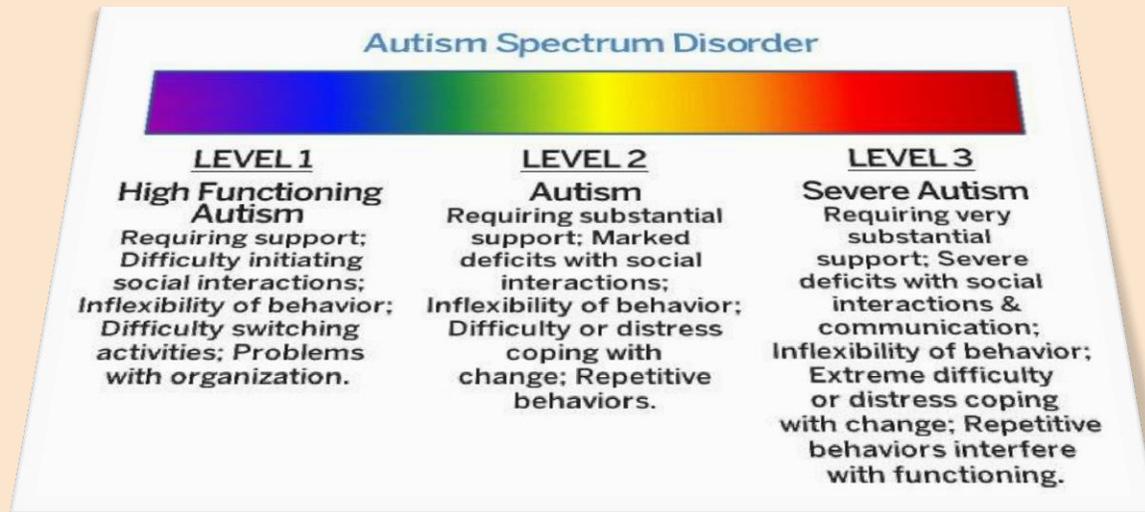
*Ananya Ghosh, 3<sup>rd</sup> Year*

Many children are late learners, late speakers and even late walkers, however sometimes these delays are indicators of a much serious problem. If not identified and treated early, they can lead to difficulties in later years of life – both for the individual and their loved ones. Autism Spectrum Disorder refers to a group of neurodevelopmental disabilities that impact development in two key domains (APA, Copeland, 2018):

A. Social Communication (Social and emotional reciprocity which are deficits in non-verbal communications and inability to maintain relationships with others, failure of back-and-forth conversation, failure to imitate or respond to social interactions, reduced sharing of interests and emotions).

B. Repetitive and restricted patterns of behavior (Stereotyped or repetitive motor movements/ use of objects/speech, insistence on sameness, highly restrictive fixated interests, hyper/hypo reactivity to sensory input or unusual interests in sensory aspects of the environment).

Apart from this, it is important to know why autism is considered to be a spectrum disorder. Autism is seen as a spectrum disorder due to the variability of symptom expression. Symptoms can range in severity and the support that an individual may require depending on its severity.



Like all other mental health disorders, diagnosis of Autism is also done by using Diagnostic and Statistical Manual 5 (DSM 5) which describes Autism in terms of levels of support required.

**Level 1** – Individuals may be verbal but have difficulty initiating or sustaining interactions with others. They may have decreased interest in interacting with others. Their repetitive behavior may interfere with interaction. An example of ASD level 1 is a person who is able to speak in full sentences and engages in communication but whose to-and-fro conversation with others fails, and whose attempts to make friends are odd and typically unsuccessful.

**Level 2** – May require substantial support. There may be marked deficits in social interactions even with supports in place. Restrictive and repetitive behaviors are obvious to observers and they may cause distress when interrupted. An example of ASD level 2 is

a person who speaks in simple sentences, whose interaction is limited to narrow special interests, and who has markedly odd nonverbal communication.

**Level 3** – May require very substantial support. They may have severe deficits in verbal and non-verbal communications. They have very limited initiation response to social overtures by others. Their restrictive and repetitive behaviors interfere across all contexts. An example of ASD level 3 is a person with few words of intelligible speech who rarely initiates interaction and, when they do, makes unusual approaches to meet needs only and responds to only very direct social approaches.

This diagnosis should be done only by a medical professional. It is important to seek out medical diagnosis as it might help in determining the medical course of treatment or required services that the individual is eligible to receive (CDC, 2015). On an average, children identified as autistic are not diagnosed before the age of four, although diagnosis could even be made at two years of age.

According to the Centre For Disease Control (2014), the prevalence of ASD in 2014 was 1 in every 68 children. It was also found that boys are 5 times more likely to be identified with autism (1 in 42 boys; 1 in 189 girls have ASD). Demographically, white and caucasian children are more likely to be identified with ASD than black or hispanic children.

The *theory of mind* is the recognition that other people have thoughts, ideas and feelings that may be different than our own (Jassey *et al.*, 2019). Research suggests that this area is delayed or absent in individuals with autism. Lack of the theory of mind impacts the ability to show empathy, take other's perspective and interpret their behaviors and

intentions. By ages 3-5, children understand that beliefs are individual mental representations. They also understand that someone else's beliefs may differ from their own. This ability can be demonstrated by using a false belief test (verywell mind, 2019).

Once rapport is formed with a 5-year-old child, we can introduce the *Sally-Anne Test* which was developed by Simon Baron Cohen, 1985 (It is a test that all children are expected to pass when 5 years old). In this, the child is shown two dolls – Sally and Anne. The child is then asked to identify each of the dolls by their names. Sally is given a basket and Anne is given a box. Both these items are kept in front of the respective dolls after stating the items. Sally puts a marble in her basket and goes out to play. Anne takes out the marble and keeps it in her box. Now, the child is asked where the marble is kept. After that, the child is asked where Sally would look for her marble when she comes back from the playground. If the child says that Sally would look in the box, then it can be understood that the child is unable to understand others' perspectives and might have some autistic inclination.

While all children require love and care, individuals with autism need a little extra. In order to support them, it is important to leverage their strengths and passion. Although the recurrent and repetitive behavior are seen as a problem, their intense passion and interest can be an asset if used to shape learning, interaction and careers. A known example in the field is that of *Temple Grandin* who had intense love for animals and as his interest was leveraged, and ended up becoming a professor and a consultant in the animal livestock industry. Most autistic individuals are good at something and bad at many others. Instead of just focusing on the deficits, it is important to help them in developing their special skills (the skills which they already possess). It is important to

create learning opportunities out of an individual's interest to better reach children with autism (P., 2016).

After years of research and trials, Dr. Sally Rogers (2010) came up with the *Early Start Denver Model*. The first test involved forty-eight children of the age of 18 – 30 months. The key features of this model included: learning opportunities every 10 seconds; parents trained to continue therapy at home; combination of several science-based practices; aimed at very young children and around twenty hours of therapy every week. Proper use of evidence-based practice has been seen to produce greater outcomes. It also helps to preserve time and funds by focusing only on those methods and techniques that are useful.

*Here is a link to better understand the Sally-Anne Test*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QjkTQtgLH4>

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**Image Sources:**

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