

Selected Topics in Psychology
Health and Well-being
Prof. Alok Bajpai
Indian Institute of Technology, Kanpur

Mental Health and Illness

There is a whole new zingo or lingo, whatever vocabulary, whatever words you want to use, has come up in the last 20 years in the world and one of them, the most popular is stress. You have heard of this word, all of you, and around this stress there is lot of other words, which has come up, things, which were not known to people, like depression, like mental disorders. And on the periphery has emerged a whole billion dollar industry to keep people mentally healthy, these are pharmaceuticals, these are self-help books, self-help gurus and what not. It is a huge industry.

How is this supported? This is supported by some data. World Health Organization says, by 2020 every 4th Indian will be taking anti-depressant or anti-anxiety drug. This is what they said about 10 years back. Last year they said, that 36 percent of Indians are depressed. And believe me, anti-depressants and anti-anxiety drugs are the most prescribed drugs. Some people say depression is the number two killer in the world.

What is all this mess? You really do not know what is the truth, so it is worthwhile to examine, that what is mental health because obviously, what do we all strive for? We strive for being healthy and being mentally healthy. But if 36 percent people in the country are not well, it is a very, very sinister sign. So, I think it is not only a prerogative of psychiatrist and mental health professional and psychologists and the policy maker and the pharmaceutical people to know what is the truth, it is a prerogative of everybody to know it.

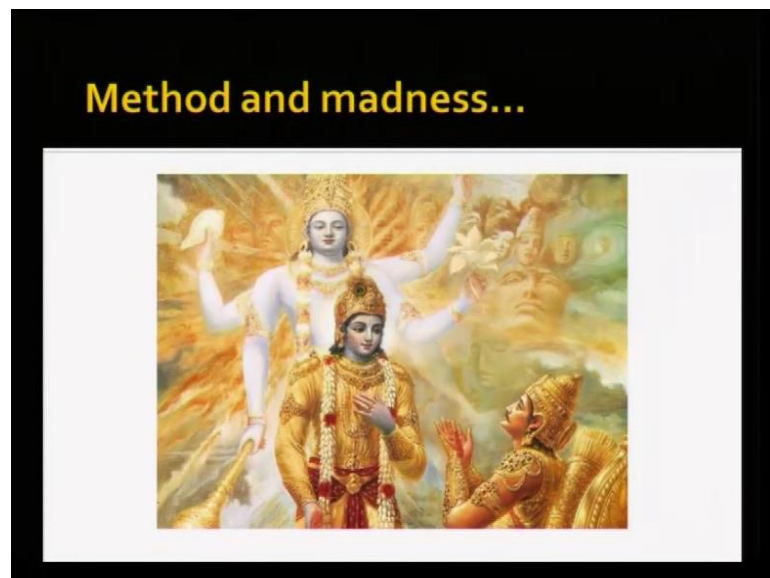
This is the truth and fact and statistics. If you believe statistics is truth, then this is the truth. But on the other hand, there is a whole lot of confusion in it, even the basic definitions. So, what we are going to do in next half an hour, 40 minutes, we just trace it back and let us see what happens, what is mental health and what is mental illness and how do mental health professionals perceive it, how does the society perceive it. Because obviously, nothing works in isolation, none of them is an island. So, it has to be an interactive thing.

So, let us go back, let us go back to the farthest point in history, the first sign where we know, what we call, you know, the common word, which is used in India for mental illness. What is it?

Student: [FL]

[FL] translation is mad. So, I am not talking mental illness; that we will see what it is. Mental illness is a word, which came in the last 50 years, courtesy us and courtesy people activists and all that. But what would be used in literature and history was word called madness. Let us go back to the first sign of madness.

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Do you know the man here? Two men, who are they?

Student: Lord Krishna.

Lord Krishna and?

Student: Arjun.

Arjun. Imagine, that this is not mythology, this was a story. There was a war. There was a man called Arjun who was the best warrior of that time. The whole war hinged on that man's performance, right. And he goes there and he says, I will not fight. What was he undergoing and what did Krishna do then? What did he do?

Student: Counsel; counsel.

Yeah, that was the, even if you go further you will find more stories, but let us take this as starting point because there is some people say it is mythology and even if it was true, it was happening at the beginning of those 5000 of years of history we know. We do not know the history of two lac years; we know history of 5000 years.

So, this man suddenly went into what? What happened to him? It has happened to all of us at some point of the time, exams, entrance, competition.

Student: Depression

Depression is a, one acute depression is just and if you read this text call Gita, read the first chapter, you will know what was happening. Arjun was saying my hands are going loose, they are shivering and I am sweating and I have, my mind is going blank, I am getting dizzy. All the signs of an acute panic attack. You listened to somebody who is having a panic attack or acute depression, somebody wants to run away, will tell you the same story. So, that was a first described acute attack of depression and the first psychotherapy in action.

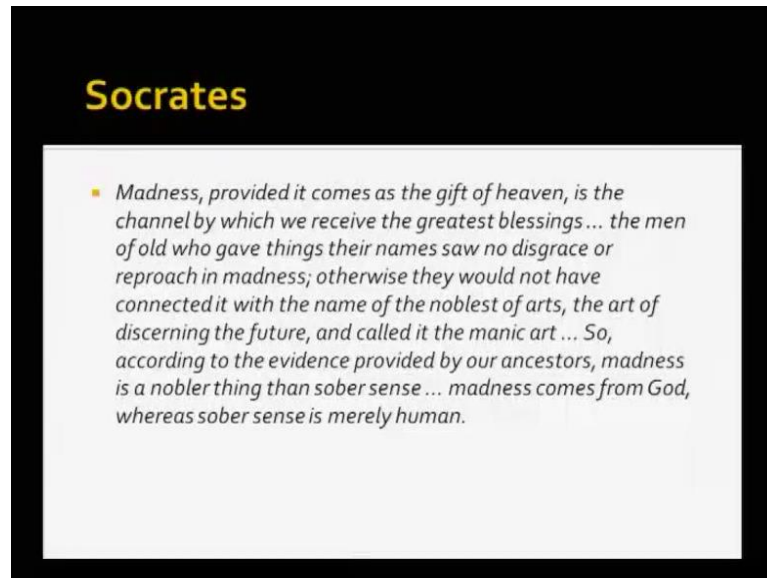
Krishna was not, Krishna did not take him and said come to my chamber, let us sit across the table and couch and talk. He said, boss let us do psychotherapy here itself and he did the wonderful psychotherapy. That psychotherapy still remain the best. But if there was a madness that was madness, there was a method in it. That madness was not very deviant, it was in a war field. So, you are asked, being asked to fight, you do not fight, you get into certain physical symptoms, your mind just gives away. And there is a man, luckily who is sitting in front of your chariot, who turns back and says, not everybody is so lucky. Not all Arjun's have Krishna's, at there, by there side.

So, that means, it was well known, even then people did not call it madness. But if all these symptoms are put into a modern classificatory system, Arjun will get a label like we are used to giving labels to everything.

Read this. Let us come to Greece. Socrates is one of the oldest philosopher. I am just telling you what, what is, has been the view point over time towards, what we call, madness, today. So, acute depression was not called a madness. Krishna told him to

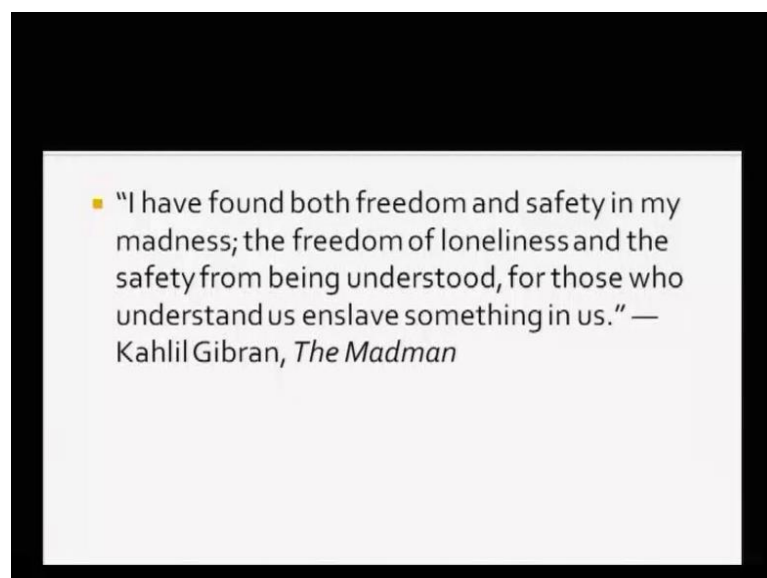
fight, that this is fine, temporary thing to go off. Panic attacks still remain the same by the way.

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Socrates has said, that madness is nothing to be ashamed off. All great things come out of madness, right. Madness comes from God. So, where sober sense is merely human and you all have heard the word called, there is a very thin line between a genius and a mad man. Some people remain on the both sides of it, one has to choose which side.

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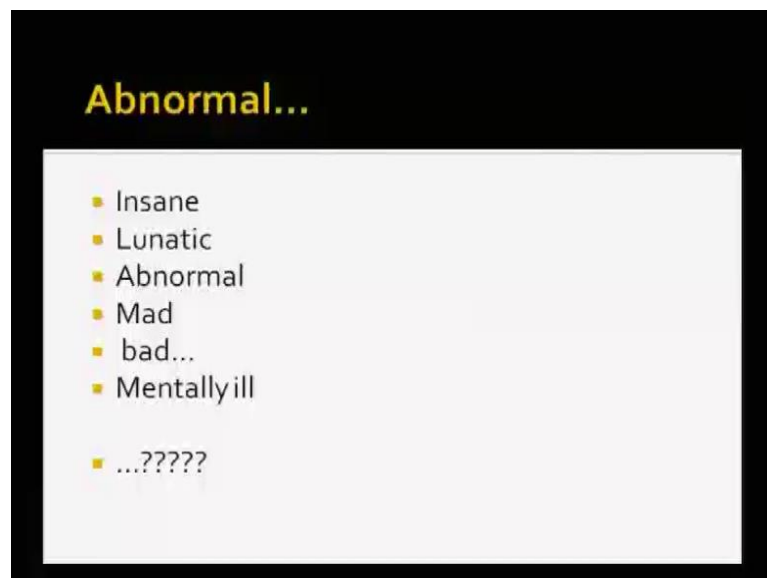
And this is, people prefer madness if at all they did anything call madness. So, there was a whole lot of people who took pride in the madness: Socrates, Abraham, Shakespeare has written everywhere, you see Hamlet, you see Macbeth, everybody. So, the big minds of all times, the literature, the philosophers, they, they never thought [FL] madness is something, which should be thrown out. They actually loved that by nature, which are brand psychotic.

In our times Saadat Hassan Manto, the greatest Urdu short story teller, actually had psychotic break down. Vincent van Gog, John Nash...

Student: John Nash.

John Nash, now what has happened over time is that these people started getting labels. And once society started giving them labels, then this whole concept of psychiatry and mental health and everything started.

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Let us see what are the labels they received. First of all, all these people were considered, once they started thinking about this as illness, then all labels started. We are very, human beings are very fond of giving labels. They cannot live without labels because labels give a certain framework, labels gives certainty. If we do not label anything, it is all free. Then, what is a problem? The problem is uncertainty that will keep creating anxiety.

Everybody wants to have a certain mindset to know the future. Now, what will next step is going to be. If you are just send out in the open and said there is no label, you would not do what you want. It will be a very, very discomfoting and disturbing experience for most people unless you have really trained your mind to be like that, into free flowing area, but that is very difficult.

These are some of labels you all have heard. This, insane, we still use this word, right. We do not use this word in psychiatry anymore. Insane is against what?

Student: Sanity.

Sanity; is sanity defined? I am just throwing some questions, keep thinking.

Student: No

When sanity is not defined, you are calling somebody insane, does not matter.

Lunatic, you have heard this word called lunatic, lunatic asylums. We do not use this word. Lunatic asylum came from what? Lunatics came from what? It is a raving lunatic, people used to say about Hitler, ((Refer Time: 09:52)) lunatic. Lunatic came from what? It was observation by some great people, that with the lunar cycle some people used to become disturbed on a full moon day. They almost equated to like sea, sea tides. There will be two, three days in a month where this people will be disturbed. At that time there were no other biological explanation. So, what they thought was, that because it is a full moon and this, all these, they did not even know magnetic field at that time. They just knew, that it is a full moon and there is a disturbance, so the...

This corroborative research, corroborate a set of facts with the other facts is still the hard core research method in psychiatry, today also. So, lot of research, which goes in psychiatry and mental health and all that. Sometimes you will really wonder is, what is happening. Nothing is happening, it is the same lunatic thing going on, full moon, illness. We find it here, that five people who walk on the, who put the first left foot forward fall. I am just throwing it, somebody may really find it. You should walk with you right foot forward first because you put left foot, chances are you may stumble. So, these type of thing, corroboration, it may not be the best way, but that is the only way.

Abnormal against what?

Student: ((Refer Time: 11:24))

Big question, big question. Mad we all know. In some societies, is mad people were not considered as mad, they were actually considered as bad. Have we evolved from that, yes or no? I do not think we have evolved. If you just look what was happening in our country few days back in Delhi, we are really not sure those people were mad or bad. One of them died also. How to decide? But then, there are systems evolved, there are certain things with the intent, there is an intent, you call them bad and there is no intent you call them mad, right.

So, poor man will lift, suppose bread, from a shop and a rich person who lifts up a watch from a shopping mall, who is mad and who is bad, have you ever thought? Lot of film stars were caught, Dubai, in Dubai lifting up watches and putting in there purse, but a person who steals a bread, who does not have food, who, who can you decide. It is very difficult. It is very difficult, really, I am telling you.

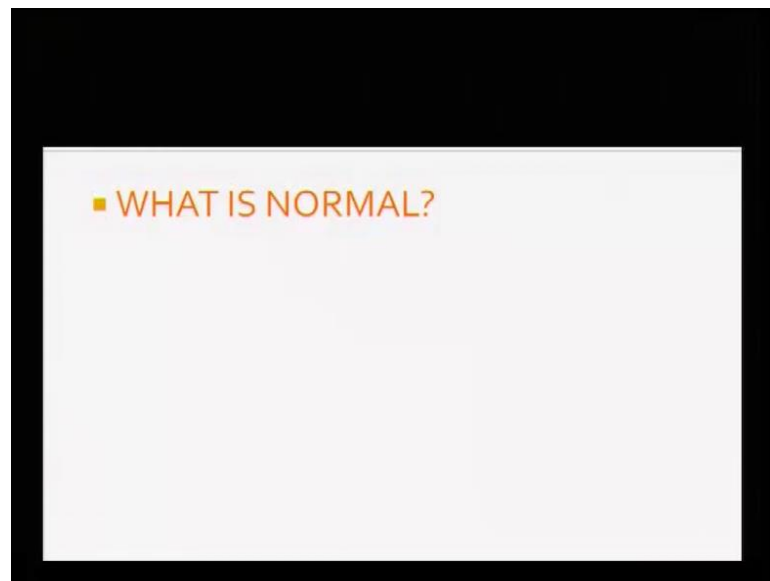
Just why I am stuck telling you all these, that is very easy to tell you how we decide, this is mentally ill and this is, one of you may come and say I am having this and if I am a good psychiatrist I will not take time and put a label on you. And that is not the best way because it is very difficult to decide, very difficult to decide what is what. Because a person who lifts shop or rich person who lifts up is called a kleptomaniac, right, that they have a compulsive stealing. This person who lifts up is hungry. Act is the same, different context, but the context decide.

But this is the big thing, context. But do you work on context is the question. The same panic attack for Arjun was a context, but a panic attack when you are coming out of the lift is a different context, alright. There is no big deal in coming out of the lift or going into the lift, but you go into the lift and you have a panic attack.

Not so, now, after all this lunatic asylum and activism and some people thought that and they thought it correctly, that why delegate people by telling them you are lunatic or inferior or whatever, alright. We started calling it mentally ill. So, now there is a whole lot of activism, which is going on, which I do not know what will come out in next 20 years, like let me give you an example.

All this children who have deficits, like mental retardation and all this, these are all diagnosis, but people have stopped calling them as deficient children or deficit or abnormal. They have started calling them mentally challenged, alright. Yeah, when you can call them mentally challenged, I do not even call them mentally challenged. This is what is the problem, but because, I will tell you why we call them. We will discover why have we started calling people like this and that and...

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What is normal? Can anybody define what is normal?

Student: The characteristics, which are shown by majority of the population.

Right, so is normal, what is statistically normal?

Student: ((Refer Time: 15:26)) statistically.

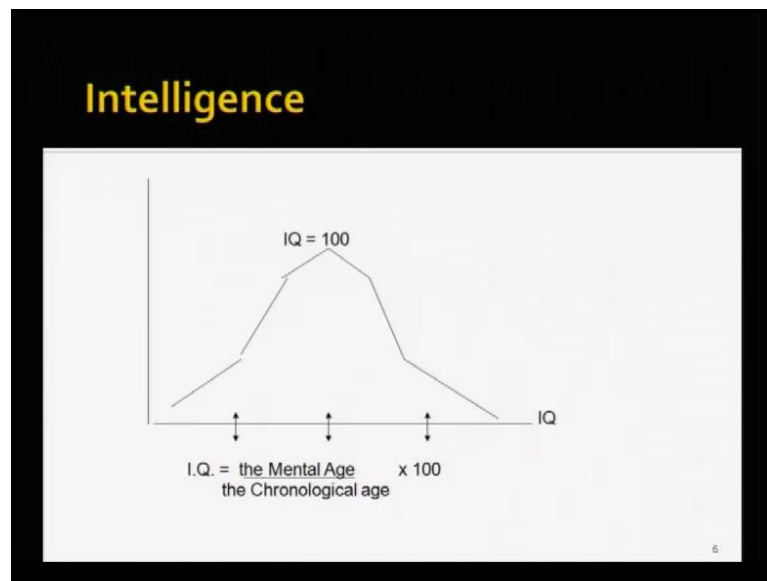
Alright, any other definition.

Student: Actually, there is no definition.

Yeah, last lecture I had sentence, which was very crazy sentence, lot of people will kill me for that. If there is, normal sanity is insanity. Normal sanity is insanity because most of the time you are trying to do what others do. So, if you are trying to do what others do, you are insane or sane is a million dollar question.

I am not telling this here, I will tell it to psychiatrist also, they may outcast me someday, but never bother, think over. I mean, I will, I will throw more question today than answers, but you, because you are going to run this country someday, you will be making policies and all that. So, if you keep this thorn in your head, someday you may really modify things. I agree your definition, this is what we are taught, ok.

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Let me take an example of intelligence. You all know what IQ test is. IQ test is the mental age upon your real age into 100, agreed? This is just a number. If I say you have IQ of 140 and I have a IQ of 70, what does it mean? What does it mean? Nothing, does it mean anything? You have your life, I have my life, you may make a rocket, I may make [FL], how does it matter? How does it matter? It does not matter. But you know, what happened at the beginning of 20th century and even before that, 19th, this drama was used to control people.

Psychiatry has always being a big tool in that hands of politicians, psychologist also. This tool was used because you see, this is the bell shape curve, 1 standard deviation, 2 standard deviation, all populations comes into that, right. So, normal is in-between n less, n less, right. This was being used by some people to control the black population. That is how they came to it. They said, they have less IQ, like dalits were told they will, they have less IQ.

Who, who said there is less IQ. When you do this test, if I am not paying attention to it or if I am anxious I will perform badly and they are heavily, verbally loaded, which were done initially, right, heavily verbally loaded. So, if I have not been given a chance to develop my language, I will not perform well. So, after sometime, after 50 years of all this drama, some people started devising performance test, that is fine if you are verbally not good, let us perform. And now, anyways, it has evolved to more or less sensible level.

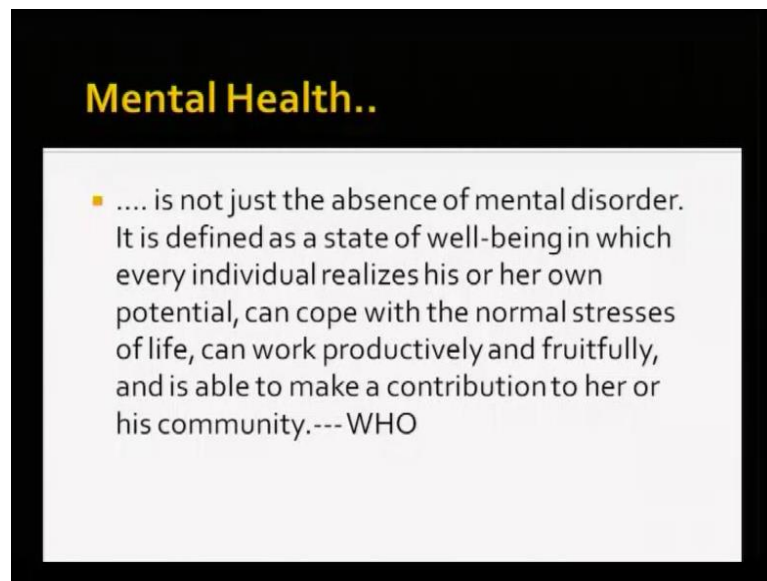
So, IQ tests are normally now used for certification. I, I, in my last 10 years I have not bothered to get an IQ test done for anybody. Even when this states mental retardation, I say damn it, do not bother because what will you do? The moment you get a IQ test, you know what happens? This is the source of all drama. Source of the drama is, that if I do IQ test and I tell, that you have IQ of 80, this information will be in your head for life. And the moment I tell you, that your IQ is 80 and Albert Einstein's IQ was 160, you will start comparing unnecessarily. You get into a loop of inferiority complex, I cannot do this, I cannot do that and this, then that drama. And what will happen is, that you may have a potential, but it will not work. I am just telling you an isolation about intelligence.

So, now what, the theory has changed. They say, there is guy call Gardener. Gardener said, why you are bothered about IQ and all that. There are 7 types of intelligence and there are many more type of intelligence we do not know. Some people are motor intelligent. Motor intelligence means, they can use their body very well; dancers, athletes, cricketers. Some people use their music intelligence; all great musicians and music sense is wonderful. You may have your visual intelligence much more developed than your verbal intelligence or you may have verbal, even interpersonal and intrapersonal. Some people have very good skill of solving others problem. Politicians, they have such good interpersonal skills; some people have very good intrapersonal skills. So, there are whole lot of type of intelligence.

Why do you have to have a unitary construct of signal IQ? It means, that in somebody one type of intelligence may be much more developed than the other type, that is what is being understood now, which is fine. And this is all the result of all this churning, which is going on last 40 years in our heads because we also do not like, that why blame people, why tell them this and that. But anyways, that is how the world goes.

So, and so, if it can happen, intelligence, it can happen in lot of other things. Your own information taken out of contexts can be used to label. These are the confusions, which were actually prepared in the minds of people who have made classificatory systems and I will just bring you to 2013, what is happening. We are, we are amidst a huge crisis right now, the whole psychiatry, ok.

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So, what is mental health? This is a definition by WHO, is not just the absence of mental disorder, it is defined as a state of well being in which every individual realizes his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully and is able to make a contribution to her or his community, alright.

What it does not talk about? It does not talk about what, when and how. We all have, if you apply this definition onto yourself, there would have been occasions when we would have not been mentally healthy because there are times when we are not realizing our potential. There are times when we are not able to cope with normal stress. We all go crazy, if at all there is something called crazy, but does that, yeah...

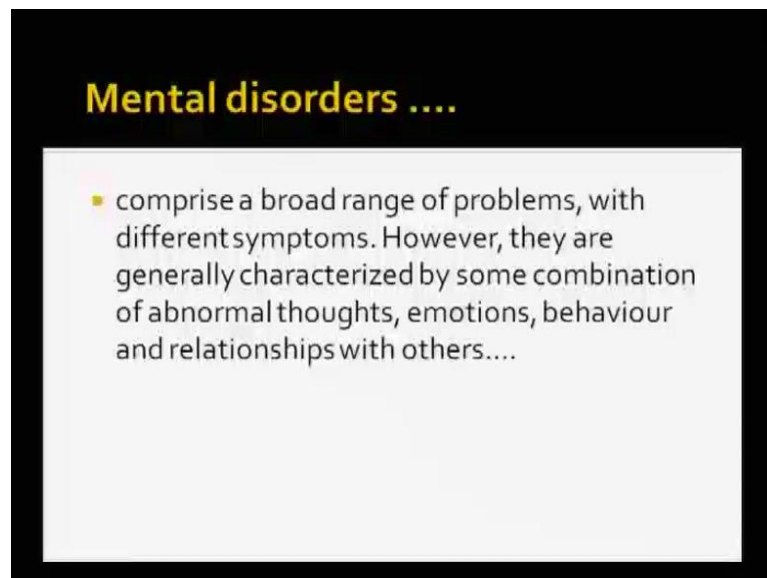
Student: This definition looks ((Refer Time: 22:15)) taking human beings as robots, more like a machine.

Absolutely; WHO is being paid dollars for all this. They, see the problem is, that people, that is what I am saying I have. Why I am challenging this whole concept? I am not

challenging in this lecture, but most of others challenging this concept because these are definitions, which have been made putting into the, into a larger frame of life.

What about dimensions life is in, and there they did not realize the whole problem because we are, we have not evolved a perfect system of it. There are reasons for it and as we go along you will know why this definition has been evolved.

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Now, this is mental disorders. If that is mental health, this is mental disorder. It comprises a broad range of problems with different symptoms. However, they are generally characterized by some combination of abnormal thoughts, emotions behavior and relationship with others.

By these two definitions all of us, some, at part of time would fall into being mentally ill, but it is not so because when once we started defining mental illness, you also put tag of duration onto it. Like, if you are sad for half a day, we would not call it depression actually. You have to be persistently sad for two weeks or similarly, if you have a single panic attack you do not treat it. You have four panic attacks in a month, then you treat it or if you have such symptoms for 1 month, then you are called this, so that once in a while you have all this, it will not qualify for mental illness.

How we reach this duration and all is again we will see when we talk of DSM. So, what is in, when we, when we do not know what is normal, we do not know what is abnormal,

right. So, how do we decide? Are these people who are mentally ill different from us? Are they people who were born from some other species, are they different, another descendant from Mars? No, they are like us. If you remove their mental illness, are not they like us? They are, that means, we are no different.

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Big question. So, that two things, which we still do not know, whether mental illness is on a continuum from healthy, normal to, there is a little problem. You have adjustment reaction ditched by your girlfriend/boyfriend. You go into a tizzy for two weeks. It is an adjustment reaction, you bounce back 100 percent. The people who face such situation, will go into depression. So, it is a normal reaction. So, somewhere between that and then to a minor illness. And then to, is it this from mental health to illness, that all of us have a potential of what a fully mentally ill person has. We may be at 10, he may be at 100 or it is a discrete, are they different people? Are they people who were not like us?


But if they are not like us, they are in our families. Even if they are not like us, they are, in our families, are those families different where there is mental illness or are they in our families. I guess they are in our families, then they are no stigmatized separate families, that this family will have mental illness and this family not because there is such a wide spread gene pool, which is in all of us. 90 percent genes are the same from our African grand, grand, grand, grand grand mother that is a same gene. So, whether

gene pool is the same, then the tendency to have illness is the same. This is something which is very concrete. So, who is ill? Statistics

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Who is ill?

- IS MENTAL HEALTH DEFINED BY A UNITARY CONSTRUCT?
- OR
- IS CONTEXT DRIVEN?



Twitter screenshot by Sandhya, 1985

Who is this man? Was he ill? Was he ill? When whole England was in overcoat, this guy was moving with a shawl and chappal, not even a sock. You know this famous story, he went to meet King George, right, in his, this is slightly under dressed. When he is slightly overdressed he has a shawl and he walks up and he said Mr. Gandhi somebody says, Mr. Gandhi, do not you think you are under dressed to meet the king. He says, does not matter. He is over dressed for me. Was he ill? Big question, the outside the strategy this is out of even that two standard deviation, the last tip of something, there is a line there. Now, this is very important to think, think over sometime in your life.

Can mental health be defined by a unitary construct? Let me give you an example. I gave you one example of stealing. The other example is, if suddenly one of us removes our clothes and start wandering on the street with just one leaf to cover your below waist, what will happen? In this campus, I will tell you the destination. The destination is health center, counselling office, health center, me or Sandhya Mahendru or mental hospital, right. You go to a place called Bastar in MP. They still live like that. Forget Bastar, 10 years back I used to drive from Agra to Jaipur, near Bharatpur where there is a bird sanctuary, women in the whole two three villages, they do not wear any anything on the torso, Today, 10 years back.

Student: Africa; Africa

Africa, in India I am telling Bharatpur. Bharatpur is just next door. But if Rakhi Sawant does it in Mumbai, whole censor board will start.

What is unhealthy? What is unhealthy and what is mental health? Somebody doing, a poor man doing an obscene gesture on the street is mentally ill, you always accept. What about the item number songs in Bollywood? Are they mentally unhealthy or healthy? If they are mentally unhealthy and we pay two crore rupees to them, then there is something wrong with us, right. So, this is very, very difficult to define.

In western culture, touching feet, they will they will not accept it. In our culture, we do not accept, we do not touch feet, we will, we still get a slap. I still, I am, I am 48 and I hear from my 70 year old uncle, [FL], you kids have a problem, bloody grown up beyond your boots. I still hear such things. This is what happens.

This is what I am trying to tell you. Lot of mental health issues are context driven. It is a fallacy on the part of people who diagnose. It is a fallacy on the part of people who treat to call everything an illness. Like for me, if you ask me somebody has broken up in love affair, I would not call them mentally ill and depression. I know it, this is, this should happen because this happened to Ghalib. So, he wrote lot of poetry. You do not go and treat Ghalib. Ghalib was depressed, he was alcohol dependent, alright. Had you treated him, what if, would this poetry would have come out?

John Nash was called to world psychiatry secretary association Madrid conference and he stood up and he said, thanks you treated me, but please do not take away my creativity. If my illness in my creativity, let it be.

Student: Actually, I have seen John Nash also.

Yes.

Student: And once ((Refer Time: 31:00)) John Nash one of a mathematician's friend came and told him, above all you a person who has dedicated his life to logic and perfection could say, that you are seen through sort of ((Refer Time: 31:15)). And John Nash only said, the mathematics comes to me in the same way ((Refer Time: 31:25)).

Absolutely; absolutely.

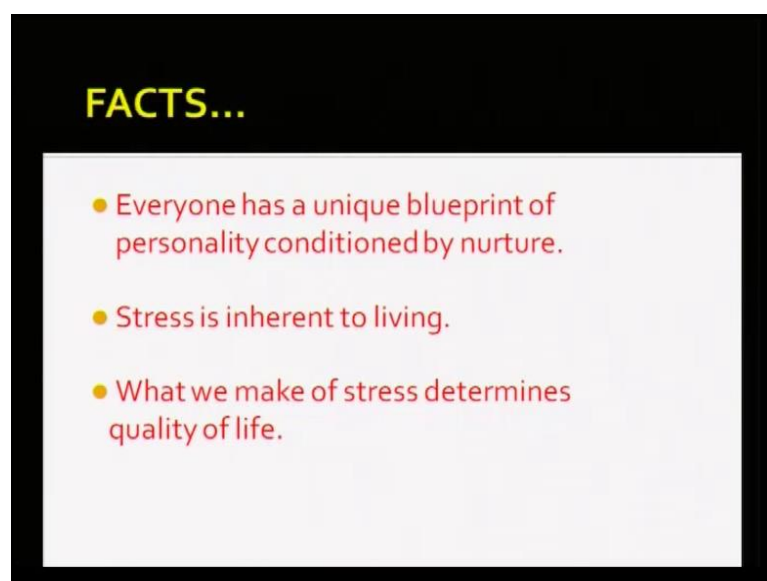
Student: ((Refer Time: 31:26)) dreams.

Everything, everything, all big things come there. Socrates has said it, it is a gift from God. So, again I am saying, do not get mad. But what I am being trying to say, it is all context driven.

You go to the nude camp, they live nude there. You know, certain area you go and tell them, that why are you doing this? They will come and say why are you doing this. Osho, you know Rajneesh? He was asked why are you keeping a beard. He said, I am living naturally, you are living unnaturally by shaving. So, what I am trying to tell, that this is, there is no answer to it. It is a blur.

So, on what basis do we decide somebody is ill, if it is context driven and if it is mentally healthy, if after taking dope you are supposed to go crazy. And what is abnormal in that because cannabis use is very common in villages and all that, right. In your hostel it is not. In, in eastern UP villages, the mothers used to give bit of morphine to the kids, so that they sleep in the day time and they can go and work in the field. Today, if you tell this. So, that means, it is time and space and everything besides what is healthy. But we are still there, we have buttered our forte and we will decide.

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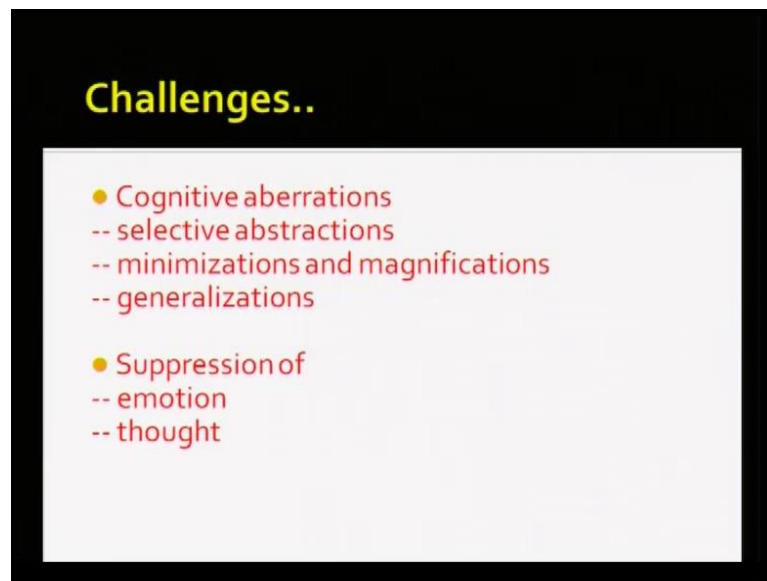
FACTS...

- Everyone has a unique blueprint of personality conditioned by nurture.
- Stress is inherent to living.
- What we make of stress determines quality of life.

So, what are the facts? Let us, I will tell you the normal facts. Everybody has unique blue print of personality conditioned by nurture, alright. No confusion in this. Stress is inherent to living. If you do not have stress, you would not perform. But stress, again, is good stress and bad stress. What we make of stress determines quality of life. Simply, there is some stress, your performance improves. The stress goes beyond a point, your performance drops. Between this confusion this whole billion dollar industry is making money, everybody, all the gurus, all self-help things, all yoga. Barack Obama has said, that yoga is a good spiritual exercise and it is nobody's copyright and all that.

So, what I am saying, that what is inherent and being given to you by nature, by simple mathematics called Yerkes-Dodson curve. Simple mathematics, stress till a certain level will improve your performance, beyond a certain level it will fall, simple. There is a good stress; there is a bad stress. What you make out of your life determines your quality of life and you do not need rocket science to understand this, simple.

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What are the challenges to living in normal life? Cognitive aberration, we all have, you now understand cognitive aberrations, but we all have faulty logics, right. Cognitive aberrations come by selective abstraction. You, you have given a set of data, you will see what you want and then get worried, right. Like, you have being told, that you will, small kids or school kids report card. The report card is the huge selective abstraction. What is the report card nobody knows, but then what is abstract? The report card is determining

my passing. From here starts the problem, passing, because more important knowledge gains a second hand. There is cognitive aberration and unfortunately, cognitive aberration is present not in kids. They do not know all this. It is present in the teachers and parents.

Minimization and maximization, what should not be paid attention to we bothered too much about it, right, and what should be paid attention, you do not bother. This is called minimization. So, these are normal things.

Generalization, specific thing, you generally, all hall 1 drinks alcohol, what, 30 percent would drink and make [FL]. But those 30 percent can ride over. Politicians, politicians, this is a typical thing we do. Cognitive aberration, all politicians are bad, you cannot do this. Please, for God's sake, 540 MPs cannot be bad, they are human beings like us. There will be hardly 40 or 60 or 100 at max will be real corrupt and bad. Who these 100 becomes? These 100 becomes a huge number, rest 400 were poor people who are working. This is generalization actually; this is generalization, everybody is bad. But this induces anxiety.

Suppression of emotion and thought, we all do this, is not it. We have to, otherwise we would not survive.

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What are the sources of all this trouble to normal people? Let us look at the normal problems, then we will see whether we turn into mentally ill.

Self, we are a problem to ourselves. There is no bigger problem on earth than me, right. There is a great poet, Surdas. You have heard of Surdas? He used to write poetry on Krishna. He wrote, that you ought God are you. Till this date you have been saving all this bloody minor puppies, save me, then I will know you are a God. So, this is in the mind of human beings from ages.

Work, work is a problem always and you have to work to earn your livelihood. It is not a good way of living, nevertheless. Relationships are meant for problems; sometimes support.