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# Bhabad

## International Publication

## DEDICATION

“In dedication to the young minds and hearts, who are shaping the future, to the next generation of leaders, dreamers and changemakers and also to their amazing parents who nurture, guide, support and encourage all you teenagers to thrive”.



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**THANKYOU UNIVERSE FOR  
EVERYTHING!**

**- MONA LISA JAIN**

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# INTRODUCTION

## ***“WELCOME TO THE THRESHOLD OF LIFE – THE TEENAGE YEARS!”***

This is the time of immense change, self – discovery and exploration. As a teenager, you surely are navigating a whirlwind of emotions, physical transformations, and social pressures. Peer influence, social media and the quest for identity can lead to confusion, mistakes and uncertainty of the future.

This book is going to be your guide through all your turbulent years. Within these pages, we will be tackling the real issues you all are facing – right from body changes and your attraction to the opposite sex, to your rebellion nature against people in authority like parents, teachers, elder siblings, etc. and also of course your temptation to break free from the rules.

We together will explore the challenges of growing up and I will offer you practiced advice on how take control of your life, and make informed decisions, while we will also build a strong foundation for your bright future. Think of this book as your trusted companion or confidant who understands the ups and downs of adolescence.

We surely will work together to develop he skills, resilience and mindset needed to overcome any

obstacles and to also help you unlock your full potential. Let's embark on this awesome journey of self-discovery and empowerment, and get ready to take hold of your life with the reigns of confidence and purpose.

## CHAPTER 1

# UNDERSTANDING MENTAL HEALTH

Being in your teens is an incredible journey, its full of self – discovery, growth, and excitement. It's a discovery of who you really are or going to be when you grow up. But let's face it guys, this journey can also be overwhelming, stressful and downright though.

Between social media, school pressures, infatuations, relationships and body changes, its really easy and common to feel like you're losing control of your life. And on top of all there are expectations from thousands of people for you to behave like an adult and you have to handle all the problems all alone. No wonder many teens are struggling with mental health issues during this overpowering phase of their lives.

Mental health is just as important and its absolutely okay to acknowledge it when you're in the doldrums. Talking openly about your mental health state is perfectly okay, and you can talk to your pears, teachers, parents, counsellors or basically any elders. In this first

chapter lets address the elephant in the room and discover some real-life scenarios while exploring ways to prioritize your mental well – being, because “Mental health matters” and you are not alone in this world facing and dealing with these issues.

Before delving deeper into this topic, lets address how can we recognize and understand mental health issues.

- ❖ Pay attention to your emotions.
- ❖ Notice and understand if you’re feeling sad, empty, depressed or hopeless for an extended time period.
- ❖ If you feel anxious, worried or fearful without any specific reasons.
- ❖ Feeling irritable, angry or frustrated more than you usually do.
- ❖ Being disconnected from activities you usually enjoy, or spend lesser time with people you usually spend your company with.
- ❖ Understand if your emotions are impacting your life in a negative way including relationships, academic performances or even social gatherings.
- ❖ Identify changes in your behavior and notice if you are drawing yourself away from friends, family or

social gatherings in general. Analyze if you are avoiding tasks, responsibilities or challenges and understand if you are starting to have impulsive behavior where you get angry for no reason and get stressed without any burden.

- ❖ Notice if you experience changes in sleep patterns, your appetite and energy levels.
- ❖ Listen to your body and notice if you experience physical symptoms like stomach cramps, muscle tension, headaches or even irregular bowel movements.
- ❖ Notice if you suffer from insomnia, digestion issues, diarrhea and be frequently affected with cold, fever and vomiting. All these physical symptoms might or might not be related with stress, anxiety, other mental health factors affecting your life.
- ❖ Being honest with yourself and understanding if you are struggling to cope up with stress, relations, parents or friends.
- ❖ Are you feeling overwhelmed, stuck or hopeless and do you use substances like vapes, cigarettes, alcohol to escape or numb your feelings?

- ❖ Ask yourself, “Am I wearing a mask that hides my identity, simply trying to fit in with others and what if nobody cares if I die and no one actually loves me?”

*Once you find that you have ticked more than three answers in the affirmative, it is important for you to consider seeking help from others to bring back your beautiful life in track.*

The common teen struggles include the impact of social media, anxiety, pressure to succeed, body image issues, friendship drama, family struggles, etc. This case studies we will be discussing will help you feel less alone and you connect to others who also face such similar challenges. It is to make you understand that every teen is sailing in the same boat.

### **Case study 1**

Aarav, a 16-year-old high school student, spends hours scrolling through social media, comparing his life to his peers, while thinking he has nothing when his peers have everything he had always wanted. He keeps checking the likes and comments his posts get on social media platforms. Soon he starts feeling anxiously

inadequate in everything he does. Leading to problems like overthinking, sleepless nights and decreased self – esteem.

### **Case study 2**

Manav, an 18-year-old feels suffocated by his parents expectations to attend an Ivy League college. He is seen struggling to balance school work, extracurriculars and his social circle leading to a burnout, self – doubt and a fear for failure.

### **Case study 3**

Aalia, a 14-year-old is constantly bombarded with unrealistic beauty standards on social media platforms. Soon, she starts developing a negative body image for herself, leading to disordered eating habits, low self – esteem and has developed a fear of being judged by her peers.

### **Case study 4**

Sia, a 13-year-old is dealing with her parents messy divorce, resulting into her feeling guilty, angry and

uncertainty about her own relationships with her parents in the future. She can't help but feel that she is the reason for her parents divorce.

If we see, all these case studies resonate with almost everyone but maybe the situations will be different. Trust me, as a counselor, I get such cases almost everyday but its up to you, to pull up your socks, seek help and make a difference because there is nothing wrong in seeking help and acknowledge the fact that you need help.

Now that we have understood the issues of mental health and have seen their adverse effects on your life, its time to find out how you can overcome these mental health issues.

- ❖ By talking to someone while sharing your feelings with a trusted friend, family member, or even a mental health professional. It is always seen that when one talks about their problems and struggles, they reached to a solution almost immediately just



by simply talking. Sharing your problems with someone will help you analyze and solve them.

- ❖ By practicing self – care, and engaging in activities and surround yourself with people that bring you happiness, relaxation and a sense of fulfilment. Give yourself time to recharge and relax. Start noticing and analyzing the good points in yourself, how good your appearance is, how is your behavior, etc.
- ❖ Challenge negative thoughts in yourself and try to practice till you eventually succeed to replace the negative thoughts with positive optimistic thoughts, which you can achieve by practicing positive affirmations. Its up to you if you see your glass half full or half empty. Everything is in your mind and depends on your perspective.
- ❖ Stay connected and build a support network of friends, family and people who are going to be with you throughout or are struggling with the same problems. This will help you understand that you are not alone and there are people who value you.
- ❖ Focus on the present while breaking down your problems into manageable task. Focus on taking one

step at a time and remember that living in the present brings a bright future, not dwelling in the past. To help focus yourself you can try meditation or deep breathing. It certainly will help you calm yourself down and result into practical thinking.

- ❖ Reframe failure into opportunities for personal growth and learning, instead of it being a failure in your journey. Always remember that you learnt to walk after you fell down multiple times, but did that stop you from achieving what you wanted and desired? The key here is to never give up and keep bouncing back harder after every success.
- ❖ Celebrate all the small wins and learn to acknowledge and celebrate your achievements no matter how small. Do not ever wait for others to acknowledge you.
- ❖ Learn to love yourself and always be aware and keep in mind that you are unique and the special one to live such a beautiful life. Before loving others, learn to love yourself first. If you are proud of yourself and believe in yourself, all the small problems will disappear themselves sometime. And

always remember, that you do not have the right to end your beautiful life and that if you have come in this world, it is because of a reason and a motive. And no matter how hard it is, you will eventually find your reason soon so just hang in there.

- ❖ Seek professional help when you feel things have gone too far and you cannot solve them yourselves, seek help for a proper and reliable diagnosis with treatments.

### **Case study 5**

Sid had struggled with low self – esteem and he also struggled with depression. He started with small tasks to overcome these issues, including taking walks, drawing, reading, meditation and much more whenever he felt stressed. He also started practicing yoga and meditation regularly. He also learnt CBT techniques (Cognitive behavioral therapy) to challenge negative self-talk and instead replace it with positive attitudes. Today, he has understood his self-purpose and is a happier teenager eager to tackle new hassles that may come up his way. Always remember that overcoming

mental health issues takes time, patience and efforts. This case study demonstrates the importance of seeking professional help, build support and also practice self-care in order to live happily.

### **IMPORTANT INFORMATION**

The national suicide prevention lifeline in India is  
**1800-599-0019**

This is a toll-free number that provides 24/7 service and support to people in distress feeling suicidal or even for emotional support. It is operated by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, government of India.

Child line India: **1098** (toll- free and 24/7)

Is a helpline for children or teenagers in distress, abuse or exploitation

National Commission for protection of child rights  
(NCPCR)

**011-23478250 , 011-23478251**

Please note that these numbers and portals are subjected to changes. It's always better to verify them through their official websites. If you someone who is struggling or in immediate danger contact the local police or emergency services through the number **100**.

## CHAPTER 2

# REALTIONSHIP DYNAMICS

As a teenager, navigating relationships can be exciting, confusing and overwhelming. Managing relationships involves understanding yourself, communicate effectively and set up certain boundaries. Coming to the teenage years is a whole new world where you get more rebellious and get attracted to the opposite sex. But why is it that teenagers fall in and out of relationships so frequently. Here are some key points to why is it difficult for teens nowadays to stay in relationships:

### ❖ *Emotional vulnerability*

Teenagers go through significant physical, emotional and social changes which make you more vulnerable to stronger emotions and attachments. Having the need to explore outside, then in your comfort is what gets the teenagers more vulnerable and susceptible to stronger emotions.

### ❖ *Hormonal changes*

Constant fluctuating hormones during adolescence can intensely create stronger emotions and attractions. During adolescence, your body goes through significant hormone changes, including increased levels of oxytocin (the love hormone) and dopamine (the

pleasure and rewarding hormone). These hormonal changes intensify a teen's emotions and attraction. When you actually do realize that your hormones are controlling your mind, you can control your emotions and try concentrating on more important things.

### ❖ *Social pressure*

Peer pressure and the desire to fit in can influence teens to seek relationships. Friends and social media are in the top of charts for the reasons a teen wants to get in a relationship. Teenagers feel the pressure to be in a relationship because everyone around them is up to one and so teenagers feel the need to be in a relationship. Teenagers feel the need for having a partner to just be accepted by their peers. Social media platforms often present idealized relationships, showcasing only the positive made up aspects of the actual relationship. This creates unrealistic expectations a never-ending desire for a perfect relationship without considering the downfalls for the same to.

### ❖ *Infatuation*

Teens are more prone to intense infatuations, which leads to strong desires for a picture-perfect relationship. Infatuations are also time consuming and impractical judgements mostly.

### ❖ *Need for validation*

Teenagers mostly seek relationships in order to gain self-worth, validation and acceptance through their relationships. They mostly prioritize their partners approval and acceptance over their own needs without considering the potential consequences of their own emotional validation.

### ❖ **Brain development**

The adolescent brain is still developing, particularly the prefrontal cortex, which regulates decision making, impulse control and emotional regulation. This development can lead a lack of foresight in relationships.

All these factors combined can contribute to teenagers falling into relationships easily or sometimes forcibly often without fully understanding the complications of their own emotional state.

In today's time, emotions and relationships have to be handled very delicately by nurturing meaningful connections by investing in friendships that uplift and support you through. You have to set boundaries and establish clear expectations and limit friendships that are just for materialistic desires. It is important to be aware of red flags such as manipulation, control or mental and physical abuse of any kind.

### **Case study 1**

Raj, 18-years-old experiences his first heartbreak after a breakup with his girlfriend. Raj struggles to cope up with his emotions and feels isolated from his friends.

### ***Solution***

Raj should open up to his trusted friends and family members about his feelings, allowing him to process the full situation with his current emotions. He should also focus on self-care and find new hobbies to keep him busy.

### **Case study 2**

Maya – 16 feels pressured by her friends to post about her relationship but feels concerned about the judgements she might receive from her friends. The hard judgements as per her can also result into her peers ignoring her and then Maya being left all alone.

### ***Solution***

Maya should communicate her boundaries with her friends and partner, explaining her desires for her privacy. Maya also should block or limit social media utilization and access to her account in order to maintain privacy.

### **Case study 3**



Aamir -15, befriends Vidya online, and Vidya starts to share her personal details and struggles to Aamir. Whereas Aamir starts to feel overwhelmed because he wants to help his friend but does not know how exactly to do that because he feels that if he gets involved, he will be in too deep and will be fully engrossed.

### ***Solution***

Aamir sets boundaries by acknowledging Vidya's trust and support within both of their comfort zones. And advises her to take help from an elderly.

These case studies demonstrate common relationship challenges that teenagers face regularly and includes solution to relationship management.

## CHAPTER 3

### **ACADEMIC PRESSURES**

Academic pressures are a pervasive and growing concern for teenagers in today's educational landscape. The teenage years are already complex and challenging period of time, marked by significant physical, emotional and social changes. Adding to this complexity is the mounting pressure to succeed academically, which can have lasting consequences on a teenager's mental health and wellbeing.

From the moment teenagers enter high school, they are stormed with the emphasis on the importance of great academic achievements in certain fields pressurizing the teenager. They are told that their grades, test scores and college acceptances will determine their future, whether it is successful or not. These pressures come from various sources like parents, teachers and other family members who want the good for their children but pressurize them. Pressure is also felt by some peers who are also navigating the same academics and there is sometimes continuous comparison between the two personalities for better marks obtained or achievements, mentally tiring the teens. Teenagers often feel lost, anxious and stressed about their academics and then struggle. This pressure to excel can lead to a range of negative consequences including, increased stress and

anxiety. It all eventually leads to decreased motivation, poor mental health and well – being, decreased creativity and severe burnouts and constant exhaustion. It is very essential to acknowledge and address these academic pressures with proper support and guidance for a healthy relationship with studies. Teenagers face numerous academic pressures which lead to complications in their health, mind and life.

**Some common pressures are,**

- ❖ High expectations from parents, teachers and sometimes their own self.
- ❖ Heavy work load like many assignments and excessive school work.
- ❖ Standardized testing and exam stress.
- ❖ Competition for grades, class rankings and college admissions.
- ❖ Pressure to take advanced placements on exams like Joint Entrance Examination (JEE), National Eligibility Entrance Test (NEET), International Baccalaureate (IB), Scholastic Assessment Tests (SAT) and American College Testing (ACT), etc.
- ❖ Fear of failure of disappointing others especially parents.
- ❖ Limited time for sports, extracurricular activities and hobbies, etc.
- ❖ Meeting specific GPA requirements for scholarships and academic eligibility.

- ❖ Managing time effectively to meet bottle neck deadlines.
- ❖ Coping up with certain learning difficulties and disabilities.

**Teenagers can overcome academic pressures by:**

- ❖ Setting realistic goals and priorities.
- ❖ Developing effective time management and organizational skills.
- ❖ Seeking help from teachers, classmates or seniors whenever needed.
- ❖ Practicing self-care and stress reduction techniques including activities like exercises, mindfulness, meditation, etc.
- ❖ Communicating openly with parents and teachers about your needs and requirements or even any special attention you may need.
- ❖ Embracing challenges and viewing failures as new opportunities for growth.
- ❖ Finding healthy outlets for stress, such as taking part in extracurricular activities by joining clubs or classes, etc.
- ❖ Building a support network of peers, mentors and even counselors if needed.
- ❖ Taking breaks and allowing time for relaxation and rejuvenation.
- ❖ Reframing negative self-talk and cultivating a growth mind set.

- ❖ Staying organized and utilizing tools like planners, diaries or apps to stay on top of your assignments.
- ❖ Learning to say “NO” to excessive commitments or responsibilities.
- ❖ Prioritizing timely sleep and maintaining a healthy lifestyle by exercising regularly and avoid junk food.

### Case study 1

Krishna, a talented and gifted artist feels bored and feels unchallenged in his science classes even though he is a bright student, but Krishna still continues with science because of his parents and teachers pressurizing him academically. He lacks motivation and interest in the same and instead he uses his time for his art works. This disengagement leads to poor grades, behavioral changes and mental health barriers which no one seems to understand as per him.

### Case study 2

Sakshi, a senior in college, feels pressurized to maintain her perfect GPA to secure a prestigious internship in her chosen field. Sakshi, then spends excessive hours studying and working on assignments, sacrificing her social life and self-care. Her quest for perfection in her academic records leads to anxiety, depression and has a fear of failure causing her to question her academic capabilities and career choices.

### Case study 3

Sagar, is studying in the US on a scholarship. He faces pressures to excel academically, navigating a new cultural environment and to meet the expectations of his family and his sponsors back home. Sagar also struggles with language barriers, cultural adjustments and homesickness leading to academic difficulties and feelings of isolation and being lonely.

These case studies illustrate the diverse forms the academic pressure can take and the impact it has on students well – being and academic performance, remember everyone’s learning style is unique, so no one should experiment with different techniques to find out what works best for you.

There are some effective studies to boost your concentration and grades which have worked amazingly on my students including tips like:

- ❖ Have 25 minutes study cycles followed by a 5 minutes break to calm down. After your cycles are completed you can then take a longer 15 – 20 minutes break.
- ❖ Engage with the material by summarizing the key points in your own creativity.
- ❖ Review the resource or material at increasingly longer intervals to solidify it in your long-term

memory. Try writing down what you want to review, it helped drastically.

- ❖ Break down complex information into smaller, manageable chunks organizing them into categories. You can also use associations, to acronyms or rhymes to encode information in a way that you will remember in the longer term.
- ❖ Ask yourself questions like “what’s the main idea?” to understand and interpret the concept better.
- ❖ Make use of diagrams, illustrations or even mental images to help you comprehend.
- ❖ Test yourself on the material, by asking teachers for tests, papers or take online resources to check yourself for the concept understanding.
- ❖ Allow your brain to store the memory and understand the concept thoroughly by getting sufficient amount of adequate sleep because it helps with the stress.

## CHAPTER 4

# **TRAUMA, RESILIENCE AND STRESS**

Life can be unpredictable and challenging at some point of time, and we may all face experiences test our emotional and mental well – being. Trauma in particular can have a very big impact on our lives, affecting on how we think, feel an interact with others. But it's not the presence of your challenges that define you, instead it is how you respond to these challenges.

Resilience which is the capacity to absorb and recover from difficulties or experiences like trauma and stress is a vital skill that can be developed or strengthened. You should understand the impact of trauma, and focus on building resilience and learn effective stress management techniques. You should learn to transform your struggles into opportunities for growth, healing and transformation.

In this chapter, we'll explore the complex relationship between trauma, resilience and stress to provide practical tools and strategies for navigating life's challenges through ease.



You can build your emotional intelligence by:

❖ **Self – reflection**

Recognize and understand your emotions, values and motivations.

❖ **Emotional labelling**

Identify and name your emotions to process and manage the emotions you face.

❖ **Empathy**

Practice active listening and try to understand others perspectives.

❖ **Effective communication**

Express your emotions and needs clearly and respectfully.

❖ **Self – regulation**

Try managing your emotions, impulses and stress through healthy coping mechanisms.

❖ **Mindfulness**

Live in the present and be aware to regulate and recognize your emotions currently.

### ❖ **Develop self – awareness**

Understand your strengths, weaknesses and emotional triggers or the things emotionally triggering you.

### ❖ **Engage in activities**

That promote emotional intelligence lie reading, journaling or even participating in group activities.

### ❖ **Cultivate a growth mindset**

Try embracing challenges and view failures as opportunities for growth. For your personal growth you also need to build a support network of trusted individuals for emotional guidance and encouragement.

### ❖ **Try seeking feedback**

You need to seek help from trusted individuals for constructive inputs on emotional intelligence. Always remember that constructive feedback is better than a fake positive feedback because if the feedback is constructive it is not giving you false hopes and instead work towards being the best version of yourself. By incorporating these strategies, teenagers can develop emotional intelligence, leading to improved relationships, decision – making and overall well – being.

Trauma is a complex emotional and psychological response to an event that might distress you or be a bad experience that can have a lasting effect on your well – being and daily life. Teenagers can face various types of trauma’s including:

❖ **Acute trauma**

Car accidents, physical assault, natural disasters, etc.

❖ **Chronic trauma**

Occurs from prolonged and repeated exposure to harmful situation like witnessing domestic abuse, being bullied, or have faced extreme sexual, verbal or physical assault.

❖ **Development trauma**

Impacts on teenager’s development and attachment due to neglect or abandonment from parents, teachers or loved ones.

❖ **Intergenerational trauma**

It is mostly passed down through generations, influenced by historical events, cultural heritage or family dynamics.

### ❖ **Technology related trauma**

This stems from online harassment, cyberbullying or by spending excessive screen time on social media.

It is important to understand that trauma manifests differently in different people through different circumstances.

### **You can overcome trauma by:**

- ❖ Seeking support
- ❖ Processing emotions
- ❖ Practicing self-care
- ❖ Reframing negative thoughts
- ❖ Building resilience
- ❖ Creating a surrounding where you are safe
- ❖ Focusing and strengthening your best points
- ❖ Adapting to the ability of forgiving
- ❖ Practicing self – compassion
- ❖ By building a support system
- ❖ Seeking professional help

### ***Stress management***

In teenagers it is crucial to maintain their overall wellbeing, because adolescence can activate different stress routes like academic pressures, social relationships, extracurricular activities and body changes. Stress leads to anxiety, depression and some other mental health issues.

### **Stressed can be handled by:**

- ❖ Time management and prioritization
- ❖ Exercise and physical activity
- ❖ Mindfulness and relaxation techniques
- ❖ Positive self-talk and self-care
- ❖ Obtain a good sleep schedule
- ❖ Seek support from others

### **Case study 1**

Anand, a 15-year-old witnesses a car accident that kills his best friend. Initially Anand experiences intense grief, anxiety and flashbacks of the incident. With support from his family and some therapy, he begins with journaling, meditation and starts reconnecting with his friends. Slowly as time passes, Anand develops resilience and finds ways to honor his friend.

### **Case study 2**

Jay, a 13-year-old experiences bullying and physical abuse at school because of his physical appearance. He starts struggling with trust issues, overwhelming emotions and so he despises school.

With timely help, Jay diverts his attention to music and arts. He has now built a strong network of friends in his school who support him, and he is gradually healing and regaining control of his life.

### **Case study 3**

Uma, a 17-year-old is suffering from a chronic illness. Initially, she felt stressed and anxious about her near future. With the support of her parents, friends and close ones she started focusing on her present and sets goals for her life while continuously practicing gratitude. She now has developed resilience and adapts to her current situation while practicing positive affirmations.

## CHAPTER 5

# IDENTITY FORMATION

Identity formation is a crucial and dynamic process that takes place during adolescence. It is during this time that the teenagers navigate this pivotal stage, embarking on a journey of self – discovery, exploring and experimentation with various aspects of themselves to develop sense of identity. It is during this time that teenagers start asking questions to themselves like, “Who am I” and, “Where do I belong” or “What do I believe in”, etc. Teenagers discover their boundaries, explore their values, beliefs and passions.

Identity formation is a multifaced and ongoing process, having various dimensions, including

- ❖ Gender identity
- ❖ Ethics and cultural identity
- ❖ Sexual orientation
- ❖ Personality traits
- ❖ Interests and values
- ❖ Social relationships

As teenagers you will have to navigate this complex and confusing terrain, you may encounter challenges, contradictions, and some opportunities for growth. Ultimately, the journey of identity formation lays the groundwork for developing a stable sense of self,

enabling teenagers to transition into adulthood with confidence, purpose and direction.

### **The dimensions of identity formation in teenagers are:**

#### **❖ Gender identity**

Involves understanding and expressing your gender, which may or may not align with the sex at birth. Teenagers may explore and question traditional gender roles, expectations and stereotypes, and may identify as a male, female, non – binary, etc. These gender roles have started ever since your childhood, expecting boys to be playing sports and girls to be playing with dolls.

#### **❖ Ethnic and cultural identity**

This dimension encompasses a teenager's connection to their cultural heritage, traditions, value and beliefs. They may explore their family's history, cultural practices and community norms. Teenagers take belonging and pride in their ethnic and cultural backgrounds.

#### **❖ Sexual orientation**

This dimension involves understanding and expressing your emotional, romantic and physical attraction to others. Teens may explore and sometimes question their



sexual orientation and then may identify as heterosexual, homosexual, bisexual, asexual or queer.

### ❖ **Personality traits**

Includes understanding your individual characteristics, like values, ethics, attitudes, interests and temperament. Teenagers need to explore their strength, weaknesses, personality quirks and disbeliefs to develop a sense of self - awareness and self – acceptance.

### ❖ **Social relationships**

This dimension encompasses a teenagers connections with family, friends, peers and the society. You may explore and navigate various social roles, develop communication skills and then learn to build and maintain healthy relationships.

### ❖ **Spiritual or religious identity**

It involves exploring and understanding your benefits, values and connection to something greater than oneself. Teenagers will question, adapt or even reject their family's spiritual or religious practices to develop their own sense of purpose and meaning.

These dimensions are interconnected and influence one another as teenagers navigate the complex process of identity formation.

Body image refers to how individuals perceive, think and feel about their physical appearance. This leads to various aspects like self – perception, self – acceptance, self- comparison and self-criticism. Maintaining a positive body image can be challenging due to societal pressures, media representation and personal experiences. Factors which influence body image may include traditional beauty standards, social media, family and peer influences maybe because of bullying, abuse, etc.

### **You can cultivate positive body image by:**

- ❖ Practicing self – compassion and self – care.
- ❖ Focus on yourself and your capabilities and not on others.
- ❖ Embrace your uniqueness and diversity.
- ❖ Surround yourselves with positive minded people and avoid people with negative mindsets.
- ❖ Engage in activities that promote self- esteem.

Body image is a personal journey and it is very necessary to practice self – love, self- acceptance and self- awareness to develop a healthy and positive body image.

### **Case study 1**

Raman, a 15-year-old reconnects with her ancestral heritage after his board exam from his maternal side. He

explores traditional practices, languages, customs and clothing, etc. He then starts respecting his cultural roots and finds a deeper sense of cultural identity.

### **Case study 2**

Deepika 13, is trying to figure out her interests and values. She then starts to experiment with different friend groups, hobbies, classes, etc. it is to find companions and discovers newer avenues.

## CHAPTER 6

# SOCIAL MEDIA AND ONLINE SAFETY

As a teenager, you certainly are not a stranger to social media and the internet. You use it to connect to friends and to share your thought and experiences online. But always remember, “With great power comes great responsibility”. When you are online you are not just interacting with friends and family, but you also are connecting with stranger, some of whom might have bad intentions. That is why it is very important and necessary to protect yourself and your privacy in the virtual world.

Online safety is crucial for teenagers because you are vulnerable to various risks and threats on the internet. But why is online safety important and necessary? Some reasons to why online safety is important include:

### ❖ Cyberbullying

Teenagers can be victims of online harassment, which can lead to emotional distress, anxiety and depression.

### ❖ Predators and abusers

Predators and abusers mostly target teenagers because they can be easily manipulated and are sometimes

naïve. The predators or abusers try and build trust and manipulate teens into inappropriate relationships, make teens do inappropriate things and take full advantage of their innocence to gain benefits.

### ❖ **Privacy and data protection**

Teens sometime without thinking much share personal information without realizing its repercussions, making them vulnerable to identity theft that is later used inappropriately.

### ❖ **Inappropriate content**

Exposure to explicit, violent or disturbing content can impact a teenager's mental health and also the wellbeing of the mind.

### ❖ **Online reputation**

Many of the teens online actions can affect their reputation a also their future opportunities such as college applications and job placements.

### ❖ **Phishing and scams**

Teens are also tricked into revealing personal information, send money deposits to the scammers and sometimes are forced to share photos or even meet up in person.

### ❖ **Mental health**

Excessive screen time and social media usage certainly contribute towards bad mental health state causing health hazards.

### ❖ **Sexting and internet exploitation**

Teenagers are many a times pressured into sharing explicit content which lead to legal consequences and puts them in a risk to go behind the bars.

### ❖ **Digital footprints**

The online activities of teenagers can create a permanent digital foot print, impacting their future. Always remember that nothing can be undone if you post something online and there always is a digital foot print left behind even if you delete it from your device.

In order to downplay these risks, it's essential for teenagers to understand online safety, the use of privacy settings, and then think critically about online content and seek help when needed.

**There are some safety tips for online safety like:**

- ❖ Be cautious with personal information and never show or disclose your address, phone number or location through settings like live location. It is careful to keep in mind when we post photos of

where we are at present like photo near by your house, you in your school uniform by your school or practically anything that can give away your personal information.

You should utilize your settings to limit what can others see and share about you.

- ❖ Think before you post and remember that online posts can be taken off but can never be deleted.
- ❖ Use strong passwords with mixed up letters, numbers and symbols to keep your accounts secure. Always try to skip easy passwords like you names and birthdates because they are an easy give away.
- ❖ Block and report suspicious accounts that you come across and do not engage with these users ever.
- ❖ Keep your software's always updated and up to date to ensure your device and account have the maximum privacy that is being given.
- ❖ Verify your sources and always check and verify if your post is correct. Be careful and cautious of any misleading information's or fake news.

*Cybercrime refers to criminal activities committed using computers, internet and other digital technologies. These crimes are committed against individuals, businesses or governments in order to scam them. It can result into financial loses, compromised*

*personal data or sometimes going to the extent of physical harm.*

***Some common types of cybercrimes include:***

❖ **Hacking**

Unauthorized access to computers and their computer systems or even network.

❖ **Phishing**

Scams that try to trick individuals into revealing sensitive information.

❖ **Identity theft**

Stealing personal data in order to impersonate someone else.

❖ **Online harassment**

Cyberbullying, stalking or threatening others online.

❖ **Malware**

Spreading viruses, trojans or ransomware to harm computer systems.



### ❖ **Cyberstalking**

Using technology to track or monitor someone's online activities.

### ❖ **Cyberterrorism**

Using technology to intimidate or coerce individuals or government.

### ❖ **Financial fraud**

Online scams, credit card frauds or money laundering are an example of financial fraud.

### ❖ **Intellectual property theft**

Stealing copyright materials or trade secrets.

### ❖ **Ransomware attacks**

Encrypting data and demanding payment for its release.

### ❖ **Data breaches**

Unauthorized access to sensitive information.

### ❖ **Cryptocurrency crimes**

Fraudulent activities involving digital currencies to stop cyberbullying.

### **To stop cyberbullying follow these steps:**

- ❖ Become ignorant to cyberbullying by not responding to the person bullying you online and try not respond because the messages that you may send can be used against you.
- ❖ Document evidence - Save screenshots, messages, emails sent to you by the bully.
- ❖ Report the incident to the social media platform and if the situation escalates contact public services in order to attain help.
- ❖ Block by using the privacy setting and restrict contact.
- ❖ Report anonymously if you feel afraid to report directly.
- ❖ Educate yourself - Try learning more about online safety, digital citizenship and cyberbullying prevention.

### **Case study 1**

Arman, 14 is sent mean comments on Instagram by classmates which included threats and insults. He started feeling anxious and disturbed. He then built up the courage and reported this incident with the help of few friends. After the complaint the school was involved in order to discipline the bully after a brief talk with his parents.

### **Case study 2**

Purvi is a 15-year-old who befriended a fake friend who was a scammer on Facebook. The scammer had created a fake profile and pretended to be caring and trustworthy, the scammer had said his age was 15 as well but he turned out to be a 42-year-old. He soon after gaining her trust started asking for her private photos and money. Purvi gave him what he wanted but she soon fell in depression and stopped eating and sleeping instead all she did was overthink. After gathering up all her courage she reported and talked to her parents about the same, who then later reported the scammer and helped Purvi recover. Purvi after this always prioritized online safety.

### **Case study 3**

Kapil, a 17-year-old was left excluded from a group on WhatsApp which consisted all his friends. Later out of guilt another friend of him told him that Kapil was always the subject of discussion and was made fun of. Kapil spoke out about the same to his college authorities and that group chat was shut down and the bullies had to face repercussions.

These case studies illustrate the importance of online safety, social media responsibility and cyberbullying prevention. After reading all this you must be feeling that the internet is a bad place to be one but social media

and internet can benefit teenagers in several way that include:

❖ **Connection and community**

Social media will help you connect with family, friends and likeminded individuals who may help you in future.

❖ **Self-expression and identity**

Social media platforms provide an outlet for you to express yourself, share your interests and showcase your talents.

❖ **Access to information and resource**

Social media offers plenty of information on various topics concerning various prospects on topics like education, health, social causes and much more.

❖ **Networking and other opportunities**

Social media connects teenagers with different professionals, mentors and various other personalities in their respective fields of interest.

❖ **Creative expressions showcasing**

Social media platforms allow teens to showcase their creative talents, like performing arts including music, dance and writing.

### ❖ **Support systems and resources**

The platform can provide access to support groups, mental health resources and crisis helplines.

### ❖ **Staying informed and aware**

Social media will help you stay up-to-date and inform you about all the recent events, news and social issues happening.

### ❖ **Developing digital literacy and skills**

Using social media can help teenagers develop essential digital skills, such as communication, critical thinking and problem solving.

### ❖ **Building self – esteem and confidence**

Can act as an platform where teenagers share their achievements and receive positive affirmations and feedbacks.

### ❖ **Play a vital role in future career planning**

It develops a professional online presence if used properly and will build professional relations that may help you.

To maximize these benefits, it's essential for teenagers to use social media responsibly, maintain a healthy

balance between the online and offline world and have set priorities like online safety and well-being.

## **IMPORTANT INFORMATION**

You can report cyberbullying or cybercrime through the following numbers:

Reporting portal - **1930**

Cybercrime helpline - **155260**

Maharashtra - **1923**

Delhi – **155360**

Kerala - **0471-2320500**

Please note that all these numbers are 24/7 available and are toll-free. They may be subjected to change and it will be better to review these numbers and verify them through official sites.

## CHAPTER 7

# SUNBSTANCE ABUSE AND ADDICTION.

Substance abuse and addictions is a growing concern that affects not only the individual but also the families, communities and the society as a whole.

Adolescence is a crucial part of development which is marked by significant physical, emotional and social changes. It is during this stage that teens are more prone to experimenting with different types of substances which leads to addiction eventually. Factors such as peer pressure, mental health, trauma and accessibility contribute to the likelihood of substance abuse and addiction in teenagers. If this problem is left undressed, substance abuse and addiction can have a long-lasting consequence. Some consequences may include impaired brain, strained relations and increased possibility of overdosing which might lead to death. It's necessary to address this issue with compassion and patience.

Teenagers may get attracted to substance abuse and addiction for a variety of different reasons and factors like:

### ❖ **Peer pressure and social influence**

Teenagers often try fitting in with their peers and may feel the pressure to experiment with substance to, “Get in” or be accepted or sometimes to be seen as cool to impress your peers. “YOLO” is also seen to be cool and trendy but in reality, it builds up pressure.

### ❖ **Curiosity and experiment**

Adolescence is a time of exploration and some teenagers just try substances out of curiosity and to experience something new.

### ❖ **Mental health and self-medication**

Teenagers struggle with anxiety and depression or other mental health issues may eventually lead to substances as a way to cope up with their emotions. Some teens who want to be happy and forget things for the present take substances but then, they have to pay long term repercussions.

### ❖ **Impulsivity**

Teenagers tend to act more impulsively, which leads to substance use without any subconscious thinking and don’t give it a second thought and just go for it.



### ❖ **Accessibility and normalization**

Easy access to substances, especially in social networks can increase the probability of experimentation and curiosity.

### ❖ **Low self-esteem and identity crisis**

Teenagers nowadays struggle with self-acceptance, body image or identity formation and think of substance abuse as an easy way to escape when in reality it does give you the pleasure for some hours but after it you may face drastic headaches, acidity and feel the urge to vomit throughout and not forgetting the long term impact too.

### ❖ **Brain development**

The adolescence brain is still developing, particularly the prefrontal cortex which controls the decision making and impulse control as substances. Doing substance abuse can alter the structure and the function, leading to risks of addiction.

### ❖ **Stress and emotional regulation**

Teens may turn to substance abuse to cope with stress, anxiety or emotional struggles. The pressure to perform well academically, socially and in extracurriculars can get overwhelming and because most of the teenagers do

not have healthy coping mechanisms and so they choose the easy way out while not considering the consequences.

### ❖ **Lack of education and knowledge**

Limited knowledge about the consequences and risks of substance abuse can lead to lack of understanding about the potential threats on their mind and body.

### ❖ **Family dynamics and surroundings**

Exposure to substance abuse at home, lack of parental supervision or family conflicts can increase the likelihood of substance abuse. Mostly teenagers with a history of substance abuse, conflict or neglect are more likely to engage in substance use.

### ❖ **Social media influence**

Nowadays, substance use has been normalized and glorified on social media platforms making substance abuse more appealing to teenagers.

Always keep this in mind that each individual has different circumstances and often a combination of these factors contribute to substance abuse and addiction among teenagers.

Substance abuse and addiction can be categorized in various ways.

## **Here are some common types:**

### **❖ Alcohol abuse**

Excessive, binge or daily drinking leads to a dependence on alcohol and aggressive behavior.

### **❖ Illicit drug abuse**

Use of illegal drugs like marijuana, cocaine, heroin, methamphetamine and more.

- **Prescription drug abuse**

Misusing of prescribed medications like painkillers, stimulants and sedatives.

- **Tobacco abuse**

Smoking, vaping, e – cigarettes or using any other tobacco products.

- **Inhalant abuse**

Using household products like solvents, gases and cream to get high.

- **Steroid abuse**

Using anabolic steroids to enhance athletic performance or appearance.

- **Caffeine abuse**

Excessive consumption of caffeinated products like coffee, tea, energy drink, cold drinks, etc.

## **Types of addictions**

- **Substance use disorder**

Addiction to alcohol to alcohol, drugs, tobacco etc.

- **Behavioral addictions**

Non substance related addictions such as

Gambling disorder, internet addiction, sex addiction, food addiction, shopping addiction and exercising disorder.

*Sometimes these categories can overlap and individuals can experience multiple types of substance abuse and addictions.*

### **Case study 1**

Mike, a 17-year-old student was prescribed pain medication after he faced an sports injury. He slowly started getting addicted to the opioids in the drug and started to purchase the same pills for longer time durations then he should have. After his parents found out about his addiction, they took him to a doctor who helped him recover. Today, mike has completed his

treatment and had understood his grave mistake. It was not easy for him to get over his addiction, but after constant support from his parents and doctor he came out of his addiction.

### **Case study 2**

Reshma, who is 19 started using cocaine at parties because her peers forced her and put peer pressure on her constantly. She soon became dependent on drugs and was always under the influence. After her health started to worsen, she confessed to her hostel authorities and parents. The authority and her parents together put her in a rehabilitation center to recover. She today is perfectly okay, and after understanding how she herself was ruining her life, she never went back to drugs regardless of any pressure that she faced.

### **Case study 3**

Gurpreet started drinking to cope with stress, soon he became addicted to the same. Once under the influence of alcohol he took out his father's car late at night to enjoy with his friends and show off. Unfortunately, he met with an accident and killed a man. Now he is facing a jail sentence as he was underage and driving under the influence. His parents are devastated because their only son wasted his life because of an addiction.

After reading these case studies, you have understood that there is always a solution with right treatment and support. Here are some more tips on how teenagers can overcome addiction or substance abuse:

- **Acknowledge and accept**

After you recognize that you have a problem, accept it and work towards overcoming this problem.

- **Seek professional help**

Consult a doctor, therapist or counsellor who can help you and specializes in adolescent addiction.

- **Assessment and diagnosis**

Get a comprehensive evaluation to identify the type and severity of addiction.

- **Detoxification**

Try and safely manage your withdrawal symptoms under medical supervision.

- **Support groups**

Join groups that are age – specific like teen anonymous or narcotics anonymous to meet and interact with substance abusers like you to get peer support and understanding.

- **Relapse prevention**

Develop strategies to manage triggers to prevent relapse of your addiction. Techniques like Cognitive Behavioral therapy (CBT), Motivational Interviewing (MI) and many more to help you fight the relapse.

- **Alternate therapies**

Consider alternative approaches like art, music or outdoor therapy to compliment the traditional treatment.

### ***IMPORTANT INFORMATION***

National institute of Mental health and Neurosciences -  
**080-26995201/5202**

Tobacco Quitline - **1800-11-2356**

**For more help be a part of organizations like:**

- Narcotics anonymous (NA)
- Alcoholics anonymous (AA)
- SMART recovery India

## CHAPTER 8

# GOAL SETTING AND FUTURE PLANNING

Setting goals and planning for your future is an empowering and very exciting process. It is a chance to explore all your passions, values and aspirations and helps you create a beautiful future by achieving your dreams. You need to set goals, for gaining clarity, focus and motivation to succeed. But when you enter your teens, you tend to stand at the crossroads, sometimes confused at this transition from adolescence to adulthood. But goal planning is necessary and important to help you take the right decision about your future life without regrets.

By setting goals and planning your future you tend to develop a sense of direction and purpose in life.

- Learn to prioritize and manage your time effectively.
- Learn to cultivate
- Set a clear vision for your education, career and personal life.
- Learn to identify your strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.
- Try and embrace flexibility and adapt to changes.



Always keep in mind that goal setting is a journey and not a destination. Goals can keep changing as your life starts to grow and take turns. But you should take all the ownership of your future to unlock your potential and set yourself for success and fulfillment.

So, let's start and while keeping in mind the following points for goal setting:

❖ **Make your goals “Smart”**

“S” for being specific, and defining what exactly you want to achieve.

“M” measurable, always quantify your goal to track your progress.

“A” achievable, set achievable goals to ensure your goal is realistic and attainable.

“R” relevant, align your goals with all your values and interests.

“T” time restrictive, set a specific deadline or timeframe to achieve your goal.

❖ **Set both short- term and long-term goals**

All the short-term goals should be directed towards the near future for less than a year, whereas long term goals should be directed towards goals which you want to achieve after a year or more, there should be an envision

for your future ahead and of what you will want to achieve.

### ❖ **Write down your goals**

Always have your goals in written to make them concrete and tangible, after which you can review and revise your goals regularly.

### ❖ **Make your goals positive**

Focus on what you can add to your goal and not subtract from your goal.

### ❖ **Focus on what you want**

Always remember what you want to achieve, rather than what you are told. Always remember about framing your goals in positive affirmations.

### ❖ **Break down bigger goals into small parts**

Separate you big goals into smaller achievable goals and then create an action plan with smaller tasks to finally reach your end goal.

### ❖ **Identify your strengths and be adaptable**

Always be flexible to adapt to changes and recognize your skills. After recognizing your skills and abilities you can achieve your goals accordingly. Try learning

more new skills that can be a great help in achieving your goal.

### ❖ **Create accountability**

Share your goals with someone you trust and someone who will appreciate your progress. Sometimes during the process you may feel demotivated but these trusted people can then give you positive and constructive feedback which will make you feel motivated.

### ❖ **stay positive and have patience**

Being consistent throughout the process is very important because good things will take time to come and you have to be persistent in order to achieve your goal.

***Teenagers can plan their future in an optimistic way by:***

- ❖ Exploring their interest and passions.
- ❖ Set up realistic goals
- ❖ Seek guidance when needed
- ❖ Develop a growth mindset
- ❖ Focus on the present
- ❖ Practice self – care and stress management
- ❖ Stay open minded and adaptable
- ❖ Build positive and real relations
- ❖ Embrace lifelong learning
- ❖ Create a vision board journal

- ❖ Take calculated risks
- ❖ Focus on the journey and not just the destination
- ❖ Practice gratitude
- ❖ Stay true to yourself

*By following these tips, teenagers can cultivate a positive and empowering approval for planning the future.*

### **Case study 1**

Dhiraj, a college student wanted to land his dream internship. In order to achieve his goal he made use of the vision board. He wrote success quotes, stated what he wanted to achieve and used his creativity for the same. After reviewing his vision everyday, he set a mindset to achieve his goal and today he has attained the very same internship and is very happy. He also implemented a schedule which he followed diligently throughout.

### **Case study 2**

Ananya, studying in secondary school wanted to improve her grades in mathematics. In order to achieve her goal, she attended extra classes for mathematics, and she also started to prioritize practicing mathematics more. She abided by a study schedule and with her hard work and perseverance she topped and scored the highest from the full division in mathematics subject.

These case studies demonstrate how teenagers can apply goal setting and future planning techniques to achieve success in their goals and targets.

## CONCLUSION

As we conclude this journey through these challenges and triumphs of adolescence, remember that these teenage years are a threshold to a variant future. You have navigated the complexities of mental health, relationships, academics, trauma, identity formation, social media, substance abuse and goal setting. You all have learnt that its okay to be confused, to question and to seek guidance.

As you stand at the crossroads of childhood and adulthood, always remember that your choices and actions today shape the tomorrow you will inherit. Never let peer pressure, social media or fear dictate and slow your path. Instead, embrace your authenticity and cultivate all your resilience to make meaningful connections.

You are the architect of your future, so don't be afraid to dream big, take risks and learn to stumble and fall. Every wrong step is an opportunity to learn and grow. Your identity is a canvas, waiting for the vibrant colors of your passions, value and believes. As you move forward, remember that mental health and wellness is a journey, not the final destination. Nurture your mind and body and surround yourself with people who like and support you genuinely. When the darkness closes in on you, you know that you are not and never will be

alone. So, reach out and seek help because there is no shame in doing so. In this transformational year, you have discovered the power of self-awareness and self-care. Carry these tools with you as you walk on the unknown path. Remember that your worth is not defined by marks or grades, the number of likes or followers, but by the depth of your heart, the strength of your character and the resilience of your spirit. As you spread your wings, ready to take flight, understand and know that the world needs your uniqueness, perspective and talents. Do not let anyone dull your sparkle or silence your roar. You are the future- bright, bold and beautiful. Go ahead and claim your place and respect in the world.

**My best wishes are always with you. God bless you!!**

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Mona Lisa Jain, is a person of hope, inspiration and empowerment. With extreme passion for motivating others, she left her high paying college professor job after 17+ years off service to start freelancing by taking soft skills, motivational, travel and tourism, management, image building, etc. sessions to a large audience. She is also a counselor and through her journey, she has touched the lives of countless individuals, transforming them, giving them hope and by spreading happiness wherever she goes. She has written countless articles in leading national newspapers and frequently writes blogs on various



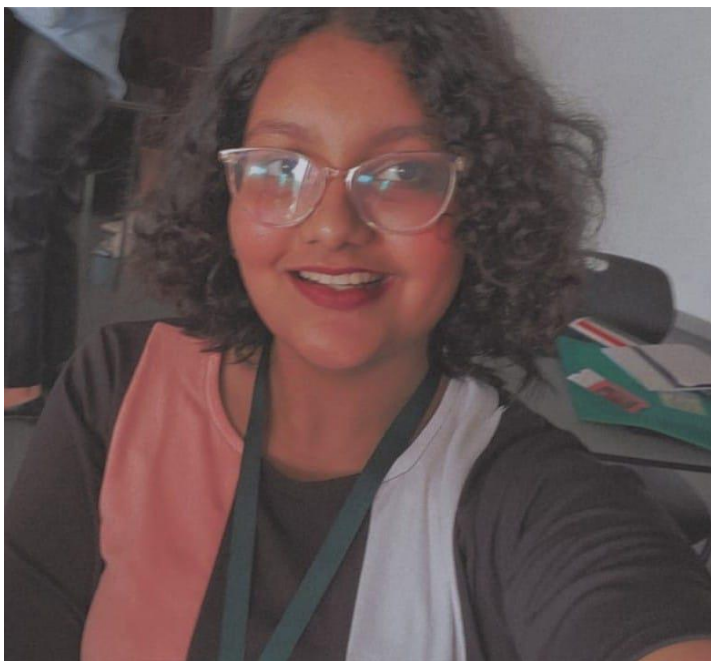
social platforms. She also works for numerous social causes from organ donation to cancer awareness, empowering women and teenagers. Her passion for her work motivates her to strive for perfection leading to outstanding accomplishments for which she has received 67+ state and national awards. With a heart full of love and compassion with a mind full of purpose, she wants to excel in every field to leave a lasting impact for the generations to come.

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## ABOUT THE CO – AUTHOR



Pearl Jain herself is an teenager, who has always believed in herself to push the boundaries to do something different. She has always been inclined towards drawing and painting and has a very good command over her languages and is an efficient orator. She has always been fascinated by the human mind and it is this interest of hers, that has brought out her eagerness to help the author – her mother compile this book by giving her own teenage perspectives to it. She strongly believes that by combining your passion with

your studies, her generation can bring about an optimistic change to the world.

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