

India is a young country with nearly a third of its population under 18. This period of childhood and adolescence is integral in ensuring the future health and well-being of the youth and, indirectly, the nation. Children learn skills and develop relationships that enable them to traverse life's difficulties. But, this is also a period of vulnerability where they may experience adversities that may affect their life trajectories.

The role of caregivers in supporting and enhancing children's mental health cannot be overemphasized. Not only are they a model for children and adolescents to emulate but they are also a source of knowledge and emotional support. To enhance their knowledge is to give them the necessary tools to do their work better with the children.

This manual accompanies the training that the various Child Care Institutions' staff received about mental health literacy and working with children in the Juvenile Justice System in India. The manual covers key concepts about the mental health of children and adolescents and also includes materials to help with the referral process for any mental health consultation.

This manual is a product of the JAMS (Juveniles Accessing Mental health Services) project, a pilot project funded by the Grand Challenges Canada, NIHR conducted by Schizophrenia Research Foundation (SCARF), India. This project aimed at improving the mental health and wellbeing of adolescents in the various Child Care Institutions and also upskilling the staff to identify common mental health problems and refer the youth for appropriate treatment. This book is given to the participants after completion of training.



Schizophrenia Research
Foundation (India)



Grand Challenges Canada
Grands Défis Canada

Canada

FUNDED BY

NIHR

National Institute
for Health Research



JAMS book

Mental health knowledge for child care institution staff



This Book is compiled and designed by Schizophrenia Research Foundation, India



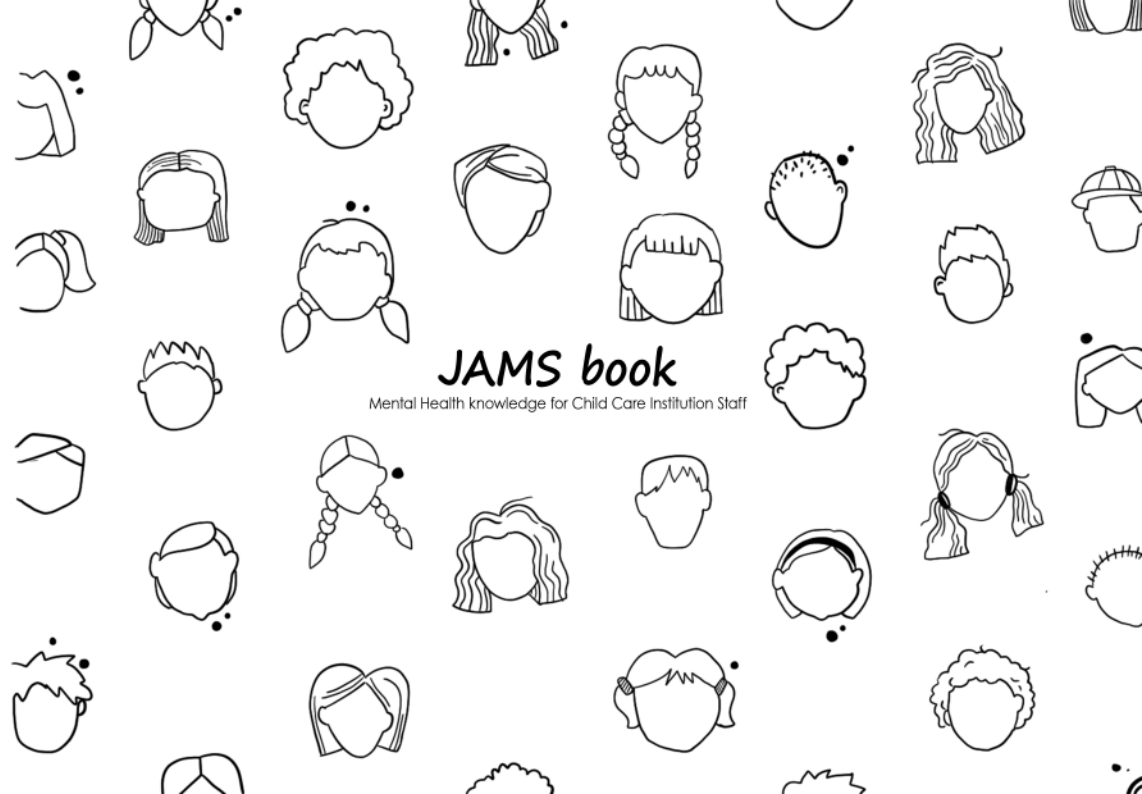
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JAMS book

Mental Health knowledge for Child Care Institution Staff



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Communicating
with young people



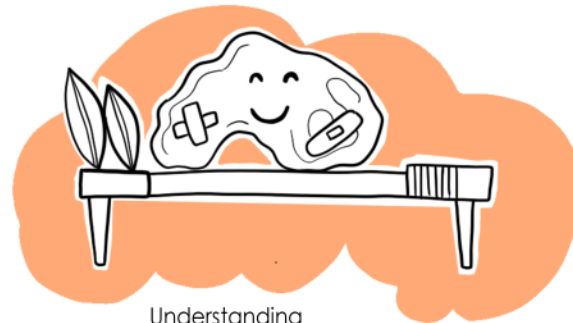
Understanding
Stress



Strategies for better mental
health in children



Influences on
mental health



Understanding
Mental Disorders

Child care mental health
assessment form

communicating with young people

Communication is the process by which information is exchanged. Ideas, thoughts and emotions need to be conveyed and received appropriately. This happens through speech, gestures and written work.

Factors influencing communication



Use language that is used by the child. They may not use the same words that adults use.



Paying attention to the verbal and non-verbal parts of communication



Quality and comfort in the relationship between those involved. Children communicate better with people they can build relationships with.

actions that help in good communication



Active listening



Validation of feelings



Educating not advising



Providing reassurance



Taking on and giving responsibility

qualities of a good listener

A good listener creates an environment where everyone feels safe to express ideas, opinions and feelings. They can creatively solve problems in partnership and save time, avoid conflict and misunderstandings.



Making and maintaining eye contact

Listening patiently

Being free of judgements

Maintaining privacy

Talking about emotions and experiences

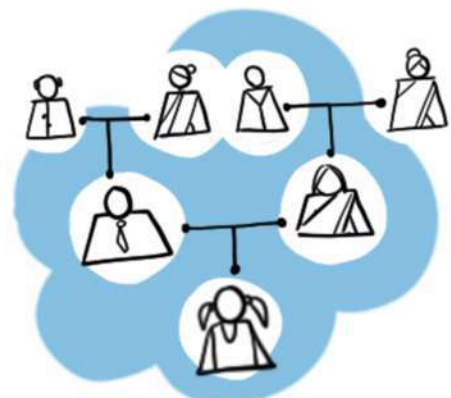
empathy

● Different people have faced different experiences and this changes the way they see the world.

● Empathy is the ability of one person to feel and understand what another person is going through in the way they experience it.

● Being quiet, giving one's undivided attention and gentle prompts to continue talking can help improve communication.

Influences on mental health



Genetics in children of persons with mental health illnesses.



Head injuries/ medical causes that are severe enough to affect brain's functioning



Exposure to toxic chemicals and drugs (alcohol, cannabis, etc.) that affect brain function



Brain Development



Patterns of thinking



How people express and regulate their emotions



Confidence and self-esteem



Exposure to role models



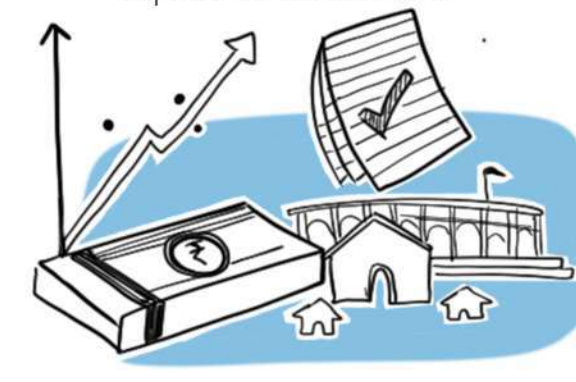
Peer influences
Quality and number of peers and activities engaged in with them



Family influences
Parenting behaviour, attitudes, parental health, material conditions and sibling relationships



Community influences
Neighbourhood safety, natural and built environment, school, health systems, access to sanitation & clean water.



Systemic influences
Economic condition of country, poverty and inequality, discrimination, access to social protection policies.

Biological influences

Psychological influences

Social influences

stress

Stress is the body's reaction to a change that requires a physical, mental or emotional adjustment or response. It is caused by a difference between the person's abilities and the needs from the environment. Stress can present with changes in a person's emotional state, motivation and behaviors.



Tolerable stress

Mental Health Problems



These stresses are much larger than "normal life" or may persist for longer periods of time.

They are associated with negative emotions, thoughts and behaviors that affect a person's ability to function.

People will need additional support to solve the problems, help with reducing the distress and improve functioning.

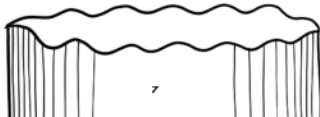
Everyday stress

Mental Distress



It is an inner signal that something in the environment is demanding but, is a part of a person's everyday life.

Some stress is an important and necessary aspect of health development especially when it occurs in the context of supportive relationships.



Intolerable stress

Mental Illness

When significant stresses are present and people have a biological or genetic risk of developing a disorder, they may develop a mental illness.

People may feel continuous challenges in their everyday functioning due to the stress and the symptoms of the mental illness.

Mental illnesses are present with a pattern of signs and symptoms that are significantly different from the person's usual state. This is a medical problem that needs immediate treatment.

Mental disorders in children may affect the way they are able to learn, interact with others, express emotions and cause problems getting through the day.



Restlessness



Sadness/ Guilt



Body aches



Loss of appetite



Anger



Rashes

Infection



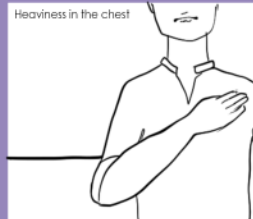
Bowel-related issues



Tiredness



Heaviness in the chest



Inability to focus



Lump in throat



Overthinking



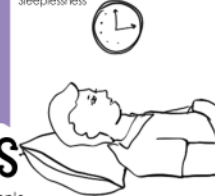
Sore muscles



Tendency to cry



Sleeplessness



Worrying



expressing stress

Stress is specific and can be felt differently by different people. Here are some ways people experience stress.

Mental disorders

Mental disorders present as disturbances in emotions, thoughts and behaviours. They can arise as a result of complex interaction of genetic and environmental factors. These affect the function of various brain circuits. Mental disorders tend to vary in intensity.

Symptoms of mental disorders



Functional:

Children with mental health problems may face difficulties in their interaction with their peers and family members and with academic performance.



Behaviours:

Changes in behaviours may indicate mental health problems. This can be observed when children play, study, interact with their friends and older individuals.



Emotions:

The intensity of the emotions expressed and appropriateness to the situation can indicate if there are mental health issues.



Physical changes:

Changes in patterns of sleep, appetite, energy levels, any physical complaints such as aches and pains, discomfort sometimes show up as symptoms.



Thoughts/ Cognition:

Thoughts are how we look at things which may be from our past, present or future. Our thoughts may affect other functions of our brain like being able to remember things, plan things, be motivated to get things done.

Behavioural disorders

Behavioural disorders involve a pattern of disruptive behaviours in children that last for at least 6 months and cause significant difficulties for the child and others in school, at home and in social situations.

These include disorders such as:



Conduct disorder: is a disorder that emerges in childhood or adolescence and the children have a difficult time following rules and behaving in a socially appropriate way. They may be aggressive, destructive and may violate the rights of others. This could manifest as stealing, fire setting, bullying others and cruelty to animals.



Oppositional defiant disorder: is a type of behavioural disorder characterized by children being uncooperative, defiant and hostile towards peers, parents, teachers and other authority figures and may have a chronic irritable mood.

Mood and anxiety disorders

Mood disorders are characterized by persistent and prolonged changes in the emotions of individuals. These are associated with changes in their patterns of thinking, behaviours, and psychological functions and may affect their functioning.

Mood disorders include:

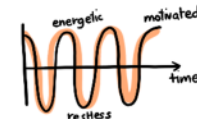


Depressive disorders can be of varying intensity but characterized by low mood, lack of interest in pleasurable activities and associated changes in thoughts, behaviours and biological functioning.



Anxiety disorders are characterized by excessive and unreasonable fears, that may be generalized or specific and associated with physical, behavioural changes and may affect their functioning.

Children can be anxious in very specific situations such as talking in front of people or may worry a lot.



Bipolar Disorders: Children with bipolar disorder may have episodes of depression or mania.

In mania they may have symptoms of feeling unreasonably happy or angry. They may feel like they have too much energy and feel very restless and motivated to do too much work or talk too much and sleep too little.

Trauma Related Problems

Trauma is an experience of any intense event that threatens or causes harm to the child's emotional and physical well-being.

Complex trauma describes both the children's exposure to traumatic events and their long-term impact.

Traumatic events are generally interpersonal in nature and include various forms of abuse (physical, emotional and sexual abuse) or neglect.

Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is a condition that emerges when people experience a severe and life-threatening situation. This may have a lasting impact on their emotional health. PTSD may present with symptoms lasting at least 1 month or more in children. They include:



Emotional symptoms:

Children may have difficulties with being able to relax and may appear to be more aggressive and violent at times. On the other extreme, sometimes children may say that they are not able to feel emotions.



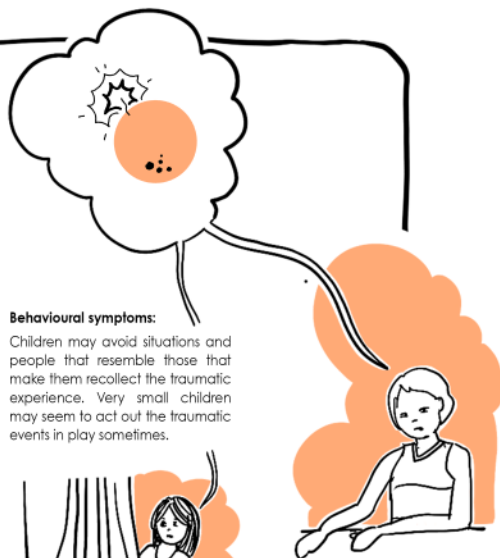
Behavioural symptoms:

Children may avoid situations and people that resemble those that make them recollect the traumatic experience. Very small children may seem to act out the traumatic events in play sometimes.



Cognitive symptoms:

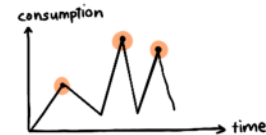
Children may repeatedly imagine and replay traumatic events that happened to them, re-experiencing various sensations that they had at that time. They may also develop new worries or fears and have trouble focusing.



substance use disorders

Drugs are different chemicals (like tobacco, alcohol) that affect people's brains and give a sensation that some people may find pleasurable.

Substance use disorder is said to occur when



Trying to stop or reduce use but being unable to



It causes problems in their work or relationships



It causes physical or psychological problems

Neurodevelopmental disorders

They are a group of conditions that start when the child is developing (i.e., early life) and have an effect on their personal, social, academic and in the future occupational functioning.

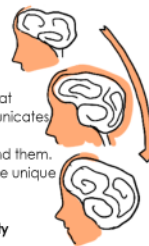
These among others include conditions such as:

Intellectual disability:

Intellectual disability is a lifelong condition that affects cognitive ability (learning, understanding) and adaptive functioning (difficulty in managing daily activities). Individuals with intellectual disability can be trained by appropriate methods to develop these skills to varying levels of independence.

Autism spectrum disorders:

Are a group of conditions that affect how a person communicates, interacts with others, and experiences the world around them. People with autism may have unique strengths and challenges.



Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD):

This developmental challenge can present itself in multiple domains including when studying, engaging with peers or in adaptive functioning.

Specific Learning disorders

Specific learning disabilities are developmental disorders that affect the child's brain's ability to receive, process, store, and respond to information. They can impact skills like reading, writing, math, and reasoning, even though the child may have average or above-average intelligence.

PSYCHOSIS

Psychosis is a complex problem that commonly starts around teenage years.

Persons with psychosis present with symptoms that suggest a break from reality which includes - experiencing sensations in the absence of any external stimuli like being able to hear voices or see things that others are unable to. (Hallucination)

Believing things that may not be real such as having suspicions that may not be based in reality (Delusions)

Children and adolescents with psychosis may have problems with not being able to focus, not participating in academic activities or even be disruptive at times due to their symptoms.

Goals of Raising children:

Building awareness of self, others, their own abilities, limitations and emotions.

Building boundaries to help them be independent

Develop core values which are unique to each growing environment

Grow physically, socially, emotionally and interpersonally

Build trust in themselves, their caregivers and the world

Steps to building a positive environment

Anticipate problems

Consider consequences

Improve communication

Pay attention

Assess the situation

Ways to improve compliance and behaviour of a child:

Give positive attention and engage in different activities/ games.

Respond to the most important problem behaviour with appropriate consequences

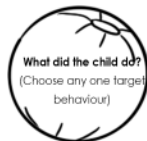
Do not use threats or physical punishments when the behaviour is problematic.

Praise/ Reward when you observe positive behaviour.

Be consistent about rules and limits.

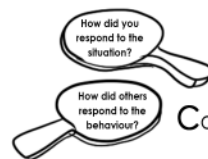


Antecedents



What did the child do?
(Choose any one target behaviour)

Behaviours



Consequences

ABC's of assessing child's problems



Cool down

Wait to observe your emotion and calm down before trying to control anyone else.



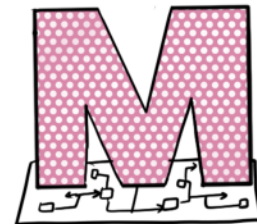
Assess options

Consider your options of what you can do now. Weigh the risks and benefits of your current actions.



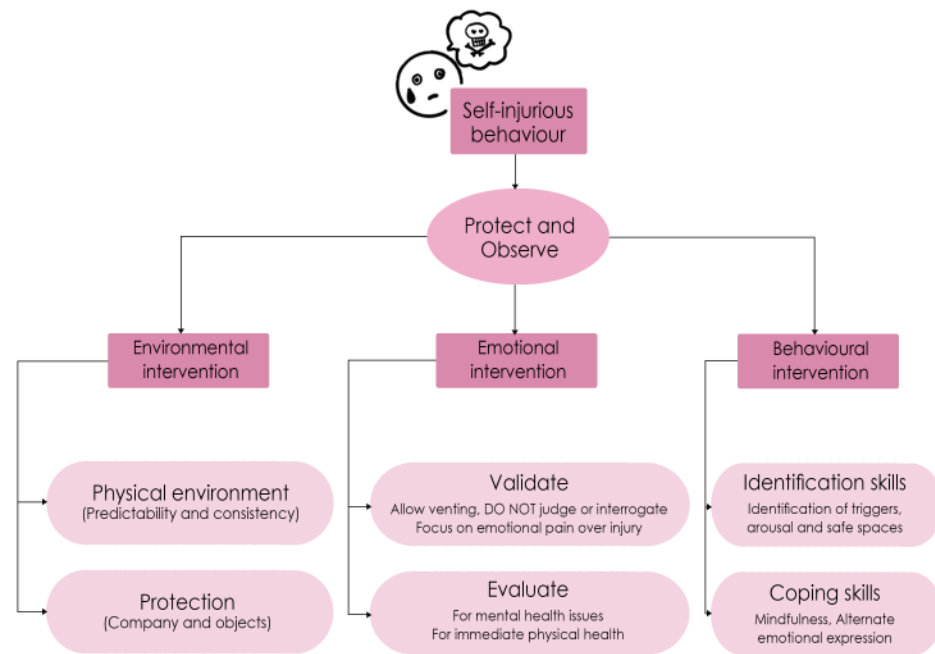
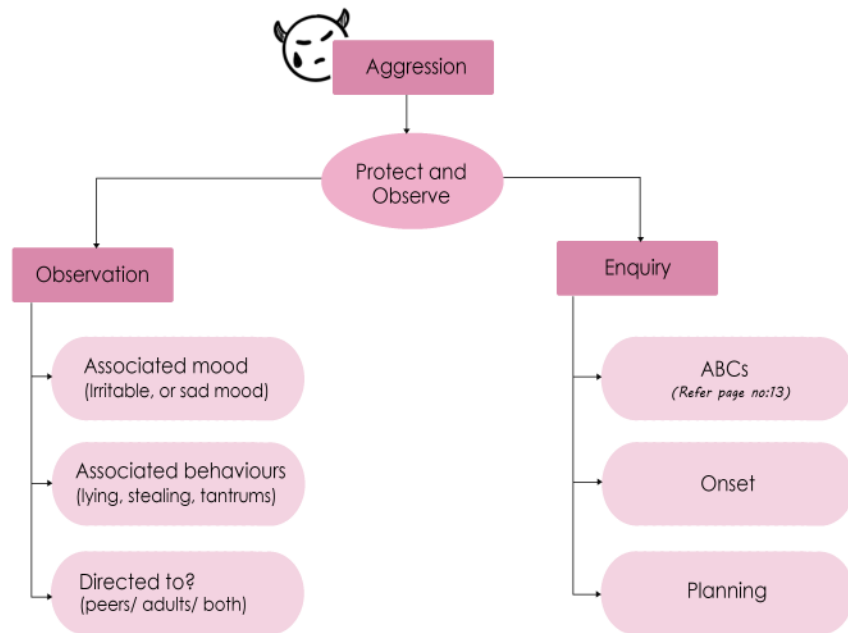
Listen with empathy

Empathy does not mean approval or agreement just an attempt to understand what is going on from the child's viewpoint



Make a plan

Think about the issues that contributed to the current behavior and make a plan for how these could be changed.



INITIAL PRESENTATION FORM FOR CHILDREN FROM _____ CENTER

Name of the child									
Date of birth			Age		Gender	Male	Female	Other	
Name of the caregiver with the child					Length of stay in the center				
Contact number and name of primary care giver									
Current grade		Performance		Good		Average		Poor	Not Known
Does the child have any medical/surgical problems									
Is there a family history of any known mental health problems?				Yes	No	Not Known			
Did the child meet milestones on time (Approximately similar to other children?)				Yes	No	Not Known (please describe)			
What is the current problem that you have noted?									
What are the current behaviors (social interactions, daily activities, any aggression or self-harm behavior)									

TO BE FILLED BY THE MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONAL

Clinical assessment	
Differential diagnosis considered	
Recommendations	Investigations: · Behavioral: · Psychological: · Environmental: · Pharmacological: Others:
Target symptoms for staff to observe	
Other recommendations	
Follow up	

Signature and stamp of Professional

FOLLOW UP FOR CHILDREN FROM _____ CENTER

Name of the child			
Age		Sex	
		Date of last follow-up	
New complaints			
Target symptoms change			
Difficulties in treatment recommendation			
Any changes in medical or social environment			

TO BE FILLED BY THE MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONAL

Clinical assessment	
Differential diagnosis considered	
Recommendations	·Investigations: ·Behavioral: ·Psychological: ·Environmental: ·Pharmacological: Others:
Target symptoms for staff to observe	
Other recommendations	
Follow up	

Signature and stamp of Professional

