

Quadrant II – Transcript and Related Materials

Programme: Bachelor of Arts (Second Year)

Subject: Psychology

Course Code: PSS102

Course Title: Psychology and Life Adjustment

Unit: 01

Module Name: Characteristics of Effective Adjustment

Module No: 03

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Notes

Concept of Adjustment initially borrowed from biology (adaptation).

Adaptation refers to efforts by a species to adjust to changes in its environment. Adjustment refers to the psychological processes through which people manage or cope with the demands and challenges of everyday life. It is the process through which human beings maintain a balance between their resources and the demands placed on them by their environments. Historically, mental and emotional health professionals have conceptualized adjustment as absence of characteristics that define abnormality.

Thus, anyone free of pathological symptoms was considered well adjusted. Current view is that strengths rather than lack of weakness underlie good adjustment.

Characteristics of Effective Adjustment:

1. **Accurate perception of reality:** Our experience of reality is subjective in nature even when we are experiencing the same objective world. Hence there is no absolute accurate or inaccurate perception of the world. However, psychologists have developed standards for ascertaining agreement among individuals. Social judgements about us can help us perceive reality. Most of our perceptions about ourselves are coloured. Our biases, desires, and motives can alter our perceptions of reality. A well adjusted individual perceives himself/herself and their environment

in a fairly realistic manner. Such individuals set realistic goals in life by pragmatically assessing their strengths and weaknesses. Such an approach helps them avoid future disappointments, frustrations and stressful situations. Well-adjusted individuals are also likely to accurately recognize the consequences of their own actions.

2. Ability to cope with stress and anxiety: Stress and anxiety are our body's responses to pressures of life. It is Inevitable. In many cases we experience stress due to social comparisons. Materialism can also be a source of stress and anxiety. A well adjusted individual is likely to cope with such pressures in a healthy and effective manner. Those individuals who are maladjusted are highly likely to use inefficient and sometimes dangerous method of coping. Well adjusted persons are likely to possess the following abilities which may help them experience less severe stressful situations:

1. Good self control (delayed gratification)
2. Better self regulation
3. Autonomy and sense of purpose
4. Hobbies and interests.
5. Psychological hardiness and optimism

Ill adjusted individuals usually cope with stress and anxiety using the following methods:

1. Denial or inaction
2. Indulgence and Substance abuse
3. Aggression
4. Emotional suppression

3. Positive self-image: Self-concept refers to a collection of beliefs that one has about themselves. A person's self-concept or self-image plays an important role in processing information, regulating emotion, and motivating behaviour. All of the above are important in adjustment. Each of us is not one self but many selves. When these perceptions are not in agreement, the individual is more likely to be maladjusted. How do we develop self-perceptions? Labels such as " you are bad" or "you are useless" may cause the individual to have a very negative self image thereby leading to maladjustment. Since these labels are a product of our environment which we internalize, we can modify our self-perceptions.

Although effective adjustment requires us to have a positive self-image, it is important not to lose sight of the realities of ourselves, our strengths as well as our weaknesses.

4. Good interpersonal feelings: Humans are social animals which makes us seek social interactions. People who are satisfied with their relationships are likely to be better adjusted than those who are not socially active. Emotional apathy can lead to interpersonal difficulties. Well adjusted people are able to achieve appropriate degrees of intimacy in their social relationships. They are competent and confident in their interactions with others. They are liked and respected by others and in turn they like and respect others. They also understand the challenges associated with sustaining healthy relationships.

In Summary: A well adjusted individual is someone who perceives the world in an accurate manner. Such individuals use constructive coping mechanisms to deal with stress and anxiety. They have a realistic yet positive sense of self. And lastly they show a high level of self-efficacy in social situations.