

VAC-II HEALTH AND WELLNESS

UNIT-02 MIND - BODY AND WELLBEING

* Understanding mind-body connections.

The mind-body connection refers to the relationship between our mental and physical states. It recognizes that our thoughts, emotions, and behaviours can influence our physical health, while our physical health can influence our mental and emotional well-being. The ancient texts, such as Yoga sutras of Patanjali has a reference of the interrelationship between body and mind and the ways of improving the physical state through good mental health. The key points about mind-body connections are -

a) Influence of thoughts and emotions - Our thoughts

and emotions can affect our physical health. For eg., stress, anxiety, and negative thinking patterns can contribute to the development of negative physical conditions such as high blood pressure, digestive disorders, or chronic pain. Conversely, positive emotions, optimistic thinking, and a resilient mindset can enhance our immune system, improve healing process, and promote overall well-being.

b) Stress response → When we experience stress, our body responds by activating the "fight-or-flight" response. According to psychologist Carolyn Fisher, the fight-or-flight response, or stress response is triggered by a release of hormones. This physiological response involves the release of stress hormones, increased heart rate, elevated blood pressure, and tense muscles. Prolonged

or chronic stress can negatively impact our immune system, digestion, sleep, and overall health. Managing stress like meditation, relaxation exercises, or therapy can help maintain a healthier mind-body balance.

c) Placebo and Nocebo effects - The mind-body connection is evident in placebo and nocebo effect. The placebo effect refers to the phenomenon where a person experiences a perceived improvement in their condition simply because they believe they are receiving a treatment, even if the treatment is inactive.

Conversely, the nocebo effect occurs when negative expectations or beliefs lead to adverse outcomes or symptoms. These effects highlight the powerful influence of our beliefs and mindset on our physical well-being.

d) Mind - Body Interventions- Various mind-body interventions have been developed to achieve the mind-body connection. These practices help promote relaxation, reduce stress, enhance self-awareness, and cultivate a positive mental and emotional state.

e) Integrative medicine- Integrative medicine recognizes the importance of addressing both physical symptoms and the underlying psychological and emotional factors that may contribute to illness or affect the healing process. Acupuncture, Chinese Herbal Therapy, Chiropractic Therapy, Reiki, etc. are different types of integrative medicines.

f) Personal responsibility- Recognizing the mind-body connection highlights the

importance of personal responsibility for our health. It encourages us to adopt positive lifestyle habits, manage stress effectively, etc. and seek appropriate support and care when needed.

* Significance of mind-body well-being

Physical health → Chronic stress, anxiety, and negative emotions can contribute to the development of cardiovascular diseases, digestive disorders, and weakened immune function. Conversely, positive emotions, stress reduction techniques can enhance physical health and resilience.

Emotional and mental well-being → Physical ailments can impact our mood, self-esteem, and overall mental state. Taking care of our

body promotes emotional balance and supports mental well-being.

* Strategies for nurturing mind-body well-being.

a) Mindfulness and meditation → Practicing mindfulness and meditation cultivates awareness of the present moment, calming the mind and reducing stress. These techniques lead to a positive mind-body connection.

b) Physical Activity → Engaging in regular physical activity releases endorphins, which improve mood and reduce stress.

c) Healthy lifestyle choices → Healthy lifestyle choices that prioritize both physical and mental well-being must be adopted. These

choices include having a balanced diet, getting sufficient sleep, etc.

d) Emotional Regulation → Developing skills for emotional regulation by using techniques such as deep breathing, journaling, etc. can help manage and express emotions effectively, promoting overall well-being.

e) Social connections and support → Positive relationships and a support system provide emotional comfort, encouragement, and a sense of belonging, which positively impact mental and physical health.

f) Holistic approach → Practices such as yoga, acupuncture, etc. can promote relaxation, stress reduction, and balance, supporting

overall well-being.

* Implications of mind-body connection

The key implications of mind-body connection are —

a) Physical health: Chronic stress, anxiety, and negative emotions can contribute to the development of cardiovascular diseases, digestive disorders, and weakened immune function. Conversely, positive emotions, stress reduction techniques can enhance physical health and resilience.

b) Mental and emotional well-being →

Negative thinking patterns, self-limiting beliefs, and unmanaged stress can contribute to mental health issues such as anxiety and

depression. Conversely, nurturing positive thoughts, practising self-compassion, and developing effective stress management techniques can promote mental well-being.

c) Stress reduction → Chronic stress has detrimental effect on both the mind and body. It can weaken the immune system, disrupt sleep patterns, and contribute to various health problems. Stress reduction techniques like meditation, mindfulness, etc. can help activate the body's relaxation response, reducing the impact of stress on our physical and mental health.

e) Holistic healing → By addressing the underlying emotional and psychological factors that may contribute to physical

ailments or diseases, holistic healing approach can enhance body's natural healing processes.

d) Resilience and coping → When faced with challenging circumstances, individuals with a well-developed mind-body connection can effectively manage their emotions, adapt to changes, and bounce back from adversity.

e) Lifestyle choices → The mind-body connection influences our lifestyle choices. Engaging in regular physical activities, adopting a balanced diet, etc. contribute to better physical health and support mental and emotional well-being.

f) Personal growth and self-awareness → By developing a deeper understanding of the ways

in which our thoughts, emotions, and behaviours impact our well-being, we can make conscious choices that are in line with our values and goals.

✘ Well-being - why it matters?

Well-being is of utmost importance as it relates to the overall state of being happy, healthy, and content in all aspects of life. Well-being is important because of the following reasons -

Quality of life → When we prioritize our well-being, we enhance our ability to enjoy life, engage in meaningful activities, and experience a sense of fulfilment. It allows us to live a life that is rich in positive experiences, relationships, and positive growth.

Health and longevity → Well-being is closely linked to physical health. By maintaining a healthy lifestyle, we reduce the risk of chronic diseases, enhance our immune system, and increase our energy levels.

Mental and emotional resilience → Well-being includes mental and emotional well-being. When we prioritize our mental health, we develop strategies to manage stress, build emotional intelligence, cultivate positive relationships, and develop a sense of purpose and meaning.

Productivity and performance → When we take care of our well-being, we are more likely to have increased focus, creativity, and motivation. This leads to better perform-

ance at work, improved academic achievement, etc.

Relationships and social connections → When we give importance to our well-being, we tend to invest in nurturing and maintaining positive relationships, which are vital for our emotional well-being and social support.

Prevention and early intervention → By focusing on maintaining and improving well-being, we can prevent the onset of physical and mental health issues. Thus, by prioritizing well-being, we can seek support when needed, ensuring that potential problems are addressed before they escalate.

Self-fulfilment and personal growth →

When we prioritize well-being, we are more likely to engage in activities that promote personal growth, self-reflection, and self-improvement. Well-being provides the foundation for personal fulfilment and realization of our potential.

✱ Digital well-being

Digital well-being is a term used to describe the impact of technologies and digital services on people's mental, physical, social, and emotional health. It is a complex concept that can be viewed from a variety of perspectives and across different contexts, which are —

a) Individual perspective - This involves identifying and understanding the positive

benefits of using digital technologies and services and being aware of the potential negative outcomes of it. Hence it involves searching the ways to manage and control these to improve well-being.

b) Societal or organisational perspective-

This perspective involves the responsibility of the providers of digital systems, services, and content for ensuring that these are well-managed, supported, accessible and equitable.

* The importance of digital well-being are as follows—

a) Mental and emotional health Excessive use of digital technology, such as spending excessive time on social media or playing

Video games, can negatively impact our mental and emotional well-being. It can lead to feelings of loneliness, social comparison, anxiety, and decreased self-esteem.

By practising digital well-being, such as setting limits on screen time, taking digital detoxes, and being mindful of our online activities, we can protect our mental and emotional health.

b) Physical health → Excessive screen time and sedentary behaviours associated with digital technology can contribute to a sedentary lifestyle, leading to physical health issues such as obesity, musculoskeletal problems, and sleep disturbances.

Practicing digital well-being includes involving oneself in regular physical activity, taking breaks from screens, and taking active steps to reduce the negative impact of prolonged digital device use.

c) Productivity and focus → The constant availability of digital devices and the distractions they bring can hamper our productivity and ability to focus.

Digital well-being involves managing digital distractions, setting boundaries, and practicing techniques such as time blocking and task prioritization to enhance productivity and maintain focus on important tasks.

d) Digital balance and mindfulness →

Digital well-being emphasizes the importance of finding a healthy balance between online and offline activities. Being mindful of our digital usage allows us to allocate time for meaningful offline interactions, hobbies, and self-care.

e) Relationships and social connections →

While digital technology offers opportunities for connectivity and social interactions, it can also hinder the development of meaningful relationships and face-to-face connections. Engaging in digital well-being practices involves setting boundaries, nurturing personal relationships, and practicing mindful digital communication to foster authentic connections and social well-being.

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f) Privacy and digital security → Digital well-being includes safeguarding our privacy and maintaining digital security. Being mindful of the information we share online, using strong passwords, and staying informed about digital threats and scams are essential for protecting our personal information and ensuring a safe digital experience.

g) Digital literacy and empowerment → Digital well-being involves developing digital literacy skills and being aware of the potential risks and benefits of digital technology. By understanding how digital platforms work and by making informed choices, we can empower ourselves to navigate the digital world.

in a way that promotes our well-being.

★ The negative impact of digital technology on health are—

a) Digital eye strain → Digital eye-strain, sometimes called Computer Vision Syndrome (CVS), is one of the most reported symptoms of too much screen time. Symptoms of digital eye strain include dry eyes, redness around the eyes, headaches, blurred vision, neck and shoulder pain.

b) Sleep disorder → Using digital devices like laptop, tablet, or smartphone shortly before going to bed can affect our ability to fall asleep. This is because the so-called blue light from devices can

lead to heightened alertness and disturb our body clock.

c) Physical inactivity → Excessive use of digital devices can lead to physical inertia. Too much use of digital devices has been linked to an increased risk of range of health conditions, including obesity, heart disease, cancer, and diabetes.

d) Psychological issues → Constant use of digital social media is detrimental to mental health as it promotes anxiety, stress, and depression.

* Health Beliefs and Perspective of Indigenous People Pertaining to Assam and North East India

Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim and Tripura are together called as North Eastern states.

This region also has treasured the traditional healing systems and health beliefs based on their age old experience and knowledge. The indigenous people of North-East India have unique health beliefs and perspectives that are deeply rooted in their cultural, traditional, and spiritual practices. These beliefs shape their understanding of health, illness, and well-being and influence their approaches to healthcare.

a) Holistic approach → Indigenous communities often view health holistically, considering the interconnectedness of the body, mind, spirit, and environment. They believe that maintaining balance and harmony in all these aspects is essential for overall well-being. Illness is seen as an imbalance or disharmony in one or more of these elements.

b) Spiritual beliefs → Spirituality plays a significant role in health beliefs of indigenous communities. They often believe that spiritual factors influence health outcomes and that illness can be caused by spiritual disharmony. Traditional healers are consulted to address spiritual aspects of illness and restore balance.

and performing Aai Xakam to get rid of measles and other such things like herpes and mumps in Assamese Society. Apeswari Sabah (Fairy rituals) is performed in some parts of Assam to treat abnormal behaviour, depression and anxiety among the young girls. Similarly the bodo tribe of Assam believes that shadow of ghost are the malevolent spirit. If any person come on touch with those spirits may suffer unconsciousness, stokes, abnormal behaviour etc. The persons suffered in those conditions are treated by the oja (shaman). The oja performs various religious rituals, utters mantras to treat the persons. The oja gives tabis (amulet) which is made with metal and the various parts of animals and plants. Again, such kind of practices are prevalent in Karbi Community. To get rid of bad spirit, Kurusar (Shaman) performs rituals using basil leaves, mantras, and the patient's used cloth. Another very common super natural belief relating health is 'Mukhalaga' or indigestion due to catch of evil eye. To cure the indigestion problem and to ward off the evil eye, 'Adajara' or 'Panijara' is taken from the medicine man. 'Adajara' and 'Panijara' are the mantra infused ginger and water which are given by the traditional healer to the person, suffering from indigestion due to evil eye vision.

• **Traditional Healing Practices:** Indigenous communities have a rich tradition of using traditional healing practices that are deeply rooted in their culture. They extracted all the resources from nature and used it in healing. These practices often involve the use of herbal remedies, rituals, ceremonies, and specific healing techniques passed down through generations. Traditional healers are highly respected and trusted for their knowledge and expertise in treating various ailments.



Fig 3: Madhuriam



Fig 4: Nemu



Fig 5: Bormanimuni



Fig 6: Narasingha



Fig 7: Nayantora



Fig 8: Titaphul

List of few common herbs used to treat ailments in North East India

Sl No	Local Name	English Name	Part Used	Form and Process of Usage	Ailment and Disease
1	Siju	Indian Spurge Tree	Leaf	Juice	Cough
2	Baheka Tita	Basaka	Flower and leaf	Juice prepared from leaves and flower can be fried in less oil and can be taken with rice.	Stomach Problem, acidity
3	Teteli	Tamarind	Ripe Fruit	Juice or paste	High Blood Pressure
4	Nefafu	East Indian Glory Bower	Leaf	Boiled leaf	Hypertension
5	Ou Tenga	Elephant Apple	Fruit	Boiled Fruit	Prevent Measles
6	Saguni Lata	Tende	Twig	Root	Diabetes
7	Mahaneem	Margosa	Leaf	Juice Paste, fried leaf	Darma problem, Indigestion, Measles
8	Naharu	Garlic	Root	Raw Paste or	For cough and cold.
9	Manimuni	Asiatic Pennywort	Leaf	Fried Raw or in boiled juice, raw juice can be taken with milk.	Inflammation, menstrual problem, skin disease, improvement of nervous system, fever, dysentery, diarrhoea etc.
10	Tulsi	Basil	Leaf	Raw or	For treatment of cough and cold.
11	Madhuriam	Guava	Leaf	boiled juice Juice	For Enterobiasis and bowel problem

Source : <https://www.ijnrd.org/papers/IJNRD2208108.pdf>

Community and interconnectedness-

Indigenous communities place great emphasis on the collective well-being of the community. Health is seen as a shared responsibility, and individuals are expected to support and care for one another. Collective rituals and ceremonies are often performed to promote community health and harmony.

Environmental Connection → Indigenous

people in Assam and North-East India have a strong connection to the natural environment. They believe that their health is deeply intertwined with the health of the land, forests, rivers, and other natural resources. Practices such as traditional farming, foraging, and

using natural resources for healing are common, emphasizing the importance of maintaining ecological balance for overall health and well-being.

Oral tradition and knowledge transmission

Indigenous health knowledge is often transmitted through oral traditions, stories, and folklore. Elders play a crucial role in preserving and passing down traditional healing practices, plant knowledge, and cultural beliefs related to health and well-being.

Recognizing and respecting the wisdom and knowledge held by elders is essential when engaging with indigenous communities.

Language and cultural sensitivity →

Language and cultural sensitivity are key aspects when interacting with indigenous communities. Using local languages, respective cultural practices, and involving community leaders and traditional healers in healthcare decisions can foster trust, understanding and effective communication.

* Promoting human strength and life enhancement

It involves recognizing and cultivating various aspects of human strength and virtue. These qualities are essential for personal growth, well-being, and the development of a thriving society.

Classification of human strength and virtue

Moral virtues → Moral virtues encompass ethical and moral qualities that guide our behaviour and interactions with others. They include honesty, integrity, compassion, fairness, kindness, and empathy. These virtues form the foundation for building strong relationships, promoting social harmony, and fostering a just and caring society.

Intellectual strengths → Intellectual strengths refer to the capacity for critical thinking, curiosity, creativity, and intellectual growth. These strengths involve the ability to acquire knowledge, think analytically,

solve problems, and engage in lifelong learning. Intellectual strengths empower individuals to adapt to new challenges, contribute to innovation, and make informed decisions.

Emotional Resilience → Emotional resilience involves the ability to navigate and adapt to challenging emotions and life circumstances. It encompasses qualities such as self-awareness, emotional regulation, optimism, and perseverance. Emotional resilience allows individuals to cope effectively with stress, bounce back from setbacks, and maintain mental and emotional well-being.

Physical strength and vitality → Physical strength and vitality are essential for

overall well-being. They involve maintaining good physical health through regular exercise, proper nutrition and self-care practices. Physical strength enables individuals to engage in daily activities, pursue their goals, and enjoy an active and healthy lifestyle.

Social intelligence → Social intelligence refers to the ability to understand, communicate, and connect effectively with others. It involves qualities such as empathy, active listening, social awareness, and cooperation. Social intelligence enhances our relationships, promotes teamwork, and fosters a sense of belonging and social cohesion.

Courage and resilience → Courage and resilience are virtues that enable individuals to face challenges, take risks, and overcome obstacles. They involve the willingness to step outside one's comfort zone, embrace change, and to keep trying in the face of adversity.

Spiritual strength → Spiritual strength relates to the sense of purpose, meaning, and connection to something greater than oneself. It encompasses qualities such as gratitude, mindfulness, inner peace, and compassion. Cultivating spiritual strength provides individuals with a sense of purpose, helps them find meaning in life, and supports

their overall well-being.

✳ Cultivating inner strength → It involves developing resilience, self-confidence, and a sense of purpose that can help individuals navigate life's challenges and thrive in various aspects of their lives. Here are some key ways to cultivate inner strength.

Self-awareness → Developing self-awareness is the first step in cultivating inner strength. It involves understanding one's values, strengths, weaknesses, and emotions. Self-awareness allows individuals to identify areas for growth, make informed choices, and align their actions with their values and goals.

Emotional Regulation → This involves recognizing and understanding one's emotions, practicing self-care, and developing healthy coping mechanisms. Emotional regulation allows individuals to navigate difficult situations, maintain mental well-being, and make rational decisions.

Mindfulness Practice → Mindfulness is a powerful tool for cultivating inner strength. It involves being fully present in the moment, observing thoughts and emotions without judgement, and developing a non-reactive mindset. Mindfulness practice can enhance self-awareness, reduce stress, and improve overall well-being.

Building Resilience → Resilience is the ability to bounce back from setbacks and adapt to challenges. Building resilience involves reframing negative experiences, learning from failures, and developing a positive mindset. It also involves cultivating a support system of friends, family, or mentors who can provide encouragement and guidance during difficult times.

Self-compassion - Practicing self-compassion is essential for cultivating inner strength. Self-compassion allows individuals to develop a positive self-image, bounce back from failures.

Setting and pursuing goals - Setting

realistic and challenging goals provides a sense of purpose, motivation, and direction. The process of pursuing goals builds resilience, determination, and a belief in one's abilities.

Cultivating gratitude → Practicing gratitude can strengthen inner resilience and enhance overall well-being. Cultivating gratitude involves regularly expressing appreciation for positive aspects of life, acknowledging the support of others, and focussing on the present moment.

Continuous learning and personal development → Engaging in continuous learning expands knowledge, builds skills, and fosters adaptability. It

also helps individuals stay curious, open-minded, and prepared for new opportunities and challenges.

Seeking support → Seeking support from others, whether through friendships, family, or professional help, is a sign of strength. Surrounding oneself with a supportive network provides encouragement, perspective, and guidance in times of need.

* Hope and Optimism → Cultivating hope and optimism involves maintaining a positive mindset, embracing possibilities, and finding strength and motivation even in challenging situations. Now hope and optimism

contribute to inner strength are given below:-

→ Finding meaning and purpose →

Hope and optimism provide a sense of meaning and purpose in life. They help individuals see beyond current difficulties and believe in the possibility of a better future.

→ Resilience in face of adversity →

Hope and optimism enable individuals to bounce back from setbacks and face adversity with resilience. They help in reframing setbacks as temporary and manageable, allowing individuals to find alternative solutions, learn from failures, and maintain a

positive outlook despite challenges.

→ Positive mindset and emotional

well-being →

cultivating

hope and optimism involves maintaining a positive mindset, embracing possibilities, and finding strength and motivation even in challenging situations.

→ Motivation and goal setting →

Hope and optimism drive motivation and goal setting and inspire individuals to set ambitious yet attainable goals. Hope fuels the belief and determination that these goals can be achieved.

→ Improved problem-solving skills → Hope and optimism enhance problem solving skills by promoting a constructive and open mindset. They encourage individuals to view challenges as opportunities for growth, to seek creative solutions, and to remain flexible in the face of adversity.

→ Enhanced physical health → Researchers suggest that individuals with a positive outlook may have lower rates of cardiovascular disease, better immune system functioning, and improved overall health.

→ Building and maintaining relationships → Hope and optimism contribute to the development and maintenance of positive relationships. Individuals who possess hope

and optimism are more likely to engage in supportive and nurturing relationships, leading to increased social connections and a stronger support network.

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