

## Adjustment and Mental Health: Contemporary View

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### Introduction

Life for man has always been about adaptation and adjustment to his environment. If man has evolved and reached his status, it is only because of these two traits. The more we are able to adapt and adjust, the more we are in harmony with existence. In psychology, adjustment refers to the behavioral process of balancing conflicting needs, or needs challenged by obstacles in the environment. Humans and animals regularly adjust to their environment. For example, when they are stimulated by their physiological state to seek food, they eat (if possible) to reduce their hunger and thus adjust to the hunger stimulus. Adjustment disorder occurs when there is an inability to make a normal adjustment to some need or stress in the environment [1].

Adjustment means change in the way that someone behaves or thinks: a period of adjustment. Well-adjusted is emotionally healthy and able to deal well with the problems of life:

Adaptation refers to the process of changing something to make it suitable for a new situation or to the environment [2].

### Mental health has been defined in two approaches:

**First**, negative definition: mental health is the absence of mental disorder. Psychiatrists always depend on this definition and clinical approach for diagnosis and treatment.

**Second**, Positive definition: mental health is the relative emotional, mental, and social state of well-being that reflects the higher level of adjustment during our interaction with environment (External and Internal). Psychologists supported this recognition for assessing and treating clients [3]. Positive psychology, psychological well-being, qualitative living, excellence in living, feeling wellness are the synonyms which are used interchangeably for mental health.

According to these approaches, mental health has been defined as "The higher level of adjustment" And not just the absence of mental disorder [4].

What are the positive conditions and criteria for mental health? The following characteristics represent the most significant criteria and cues of mental health:

- Self-concept: Self-understanding, self-acceptance, self-esteem, self-actualization.
- Emotional stability

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- Coping with stress
- Social and occupation functioning.
- Developmental experiences
- Consistency of ability/aptitude with aspiration
- Consistency between thoughts and manner [5].

We use adjustment and well-being substitute of mental health because this term has been contained the significant characteristics mentioned above.

The adjustment with environment divided to:

- Internal environment (recognizing personal adjustment)
- External environment (recognizing social adjustment)

### Adjustment disorders:

An adjustment disorder is a short-term maladaptive response to a stressor, resulting in the development of emotional and/or behavioral symptoms. These symptoms result in marked distress in excess of what would be expected, as well as significant impairment in functioning.

The stressor, generally, is an event of a serious and unusual nature that an individual, or group of individuals, experiences. Most problems that we face in life are because of being unable to adjust or adapt. Most of us are mal-adjusted and maladapted to our internal and external environment. And greater the degree of mal-adaptation, greater is our misery and suffering. And we are not able to adapt very often because we are seeking things and conditions that don't always exist in this world. Most of us are seeking permanent security and safety, in a world that can be unsafe and insecure. We are looking for peace in a world where conflict is common. We are looking for certainty when we know for sure that the only thing that is certain about the future is the uncertainty. We crave good health, when we live in conditions and have lifestyles which make us prone to disease. None of us want to die, although we know very well that death is an inevitable consequence of life, and that everything born here has to die one day [4].

Adjustment disorders are associated with high risk of suicide and suicidal behavior, substance abuse, and the prolongation of other medical disorders or interference with their treatment. Adjustment disorder that persists may progress to become a more severe mental disorder, such as major depressive disorder. Adjustment disorder is sometimes referred to as Situational Depression [6]. The mental

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symptoms of adjustment disorders can include: rebellious or impulsive actions, anxiousness, feelings of sadness, hopelessness, or being trapped, crying, withdrawn attitude, lack of concentration, loss of self-esteem, suicidal thoughts, depressed mood, impaired occupational/social functioning, agitation, trembling or twitching, physical complaints (e.g. general aches and pains, stomachache, headache, chest pain), palpitations, Conduct disturbances (e.g. truancy, vandalism, reckless driving or fighting), withdrawal, anxiety, worry, stress and tension [7]. Diagnosis depends on the.

### Following trends and symptoms:

- The reaction clearly follows a life stressor. Within three months of stressor onset, emotional and behavioral symptoms develop in response to stressor.
- Symptoms seem excessive compared to what would normally be expected in relation to stressor and/or symptoms significantly impair occupational, school, or social functioning.
- Symptoms are not explained by another diagnosis.
- Symptoms are not part of bereavement.
- Symptoms do not last longer than six months after end of stressor.
- The diagnosis may be acute (symptoms last less than six months) or chronic (symptoms last six months or longer as when stressors are chronic or have lasting effects).

**In sum**, The cause of adjustment disorder is a life stressor and personal /social conditions. In adults, adjustment disorder is commonly a result of stressors related to marital discord, finances, or work. In adolescents, common stressors include school problems, family or parents' marital problems, or issues around sexuality. Other types of stressors include the death of a loved one, life changes, unexpected catastrophes, and medical conditions such as cancer and subsequent treatments [8].

A person with an adjustment disorder/stress response syndrome develops emotional and/or behavioral symptoms as a reaction to a stressful event. These symptoms generally begin within three months of the event and rarely last for longer than six months after the event or situation. In an adjustment disorder, the reaction to the stressor is greater than what is typical or expected for the situation or event. In addition, the symptoms may cause problems with a person's ability to function; for example, the person may have trouble with sleep, work, or studying [1]. The types of adjustment disorder are Adjustment disorder with: depressed mood, anxiety, disturbance of conduct, unspecified.

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