
UNIT 1 LIFE SKILLS

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1.0 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- describe the concept and categories of life skills;
- explain the social, negotiating, thinking and coping skills in detail; and
- develop competency in using life skills in everyday life of self and adolescents.

1.1 INTRODUCTION

An adolescent spends the major part of their lives in schools with teachers and peers. The school is the place which provides an environment for formal education, skill building and to develop a perception and attitude towards the world outside. We need to go beyond mere knowledge gain and to broaden our perspective towards developing the skill and attitudes of the adolescents.

This block will give you a perspective towards the role and responsibilities of a teacher for growing adolescents and in the first unit we would discuss on Life Skills which would help us not only improving the approach to deal with the

adolescents but also the content for their skill development process. And you will finish the unit by an assignment which would test your understanding of the subject in this unit. In addition, you will undertake several activities, analyze several case studies to reflect and understand the Life Skills and the need of it in everyday life. These exercises would help you in preparing your assignment.

1.2 CONCEPT, DEFINITION AND CATEGORIES OF LIFE SKILLS

Among the numerous skills that each individual possess there are certain set of skills which help us in effective living, thus rightly coined as Life Skills. The following sections and subsections in this unit will give you an overview of Life Skills, its meaning, importance, categories and application. To begin with let us understand the word and concept behind the word Life Skills.

1.2.1 Concept and Meaning of Life Skills

Life Skills as a concept originates from the period that man started living in the world. The search began with the basic survival skills which made them live. As time passed on and individuals increased in number thus societies, communities and countries were formed. The individuals living required more skills than the certain basic skills to survive. These skills for example would include *dealing with conflict that cannot be resolved, dealing with authority, making and keeping friends or relationships, cooperation, solving problems, being aware about oneself, thinking differently or divergent thinking, analysing things and taking a decision, dealing with stress, negotiation, clarification of values, resisting pressure, coping with disappointment, planning ahead, empathy, dealing with emotions, assertiveness, active listening, respect, tolerance, trust, sharing, sympathy, compassion, socialibility, self esteem etc.* Thus the key words that could be derived from the list would for these psycho-social skills are: personal, social, interpersonal, cognitive, affective and universal.

Educational initiatives over the period of three decades have also contributed towards the enhancement and development of the concept of Life skills. In 1968 the world educational system analysis brought out the loopholes in education. In 1972 Faure Commission introduced “Learning to be” and the concept of linkage learning life skill came to limelight.

1.2.2 Definition and Interpretations of Life Skills by the UN and other Agencies

When you hear the word life skills what comes in your mind. Jot down those responses in the learning journal. Are the responses like skills for life, how to solve our problems, to live, etc. then you are on the right track in the next sub-unit you would understand the different dimensions how life skills have been defined by various organization.

We may discuss life skills as defined by various agencies :

- a) **The International Bureau of Education (IBE)** derived its understanding from the Delors four pillars of learning (learning to know, learning to do, learning to be and learning to live together) and defined life skills as personal

management and social skills which are necessary for adequate functioning on an independent basis.

- b) **The World Health Organisation (WHO)** has defined life skills as “the abilities for adaptive and positive behaviour that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life”.
- c) **UNICEF** defines life skills as “a behaviour change or behaviour development approach designed to address a balance of three areas: knowledge, attitude and skills” UNICEF has further explained life skills as psychosocial and interpersonal skills that are important for day to day existence.
- d) **UNFPA’s** focus of life skills learning in population education curricula, with a focus on sexual and reproductive health. They utilize life skills as an approach to impart knowledge on various health issues using participatory methodology.
- e) **UNESCO’s** main area of intervention includes education, thus their orientation of Life Skills is inclined towards it. Thus they believe education in the 21st century must provide a harmonious balance between academic education and practical skills development, including technical and vocational education.

1.2.3 Generic, Problem Specific and Area Specific Life Skills

Each concept has various classifications attached to it and in this sub section you will understand the classification of life skills. Life Skills has been classified in two categories firstly on the basis of its nature and secondly on the basis of its application in various life situations. On the basis of nature life skills are classified as Generic skills, and on the basis of application we can classify the skills into Problem specific skills and Area specific skills. Generic skills are the skills that are required for the overall development of the personality. Problem specific skills are the specific abilities that are particularly necessary while dealing a problem situation. Area Specific Skills are the skills needed to handle the different operations related with an area effectively.

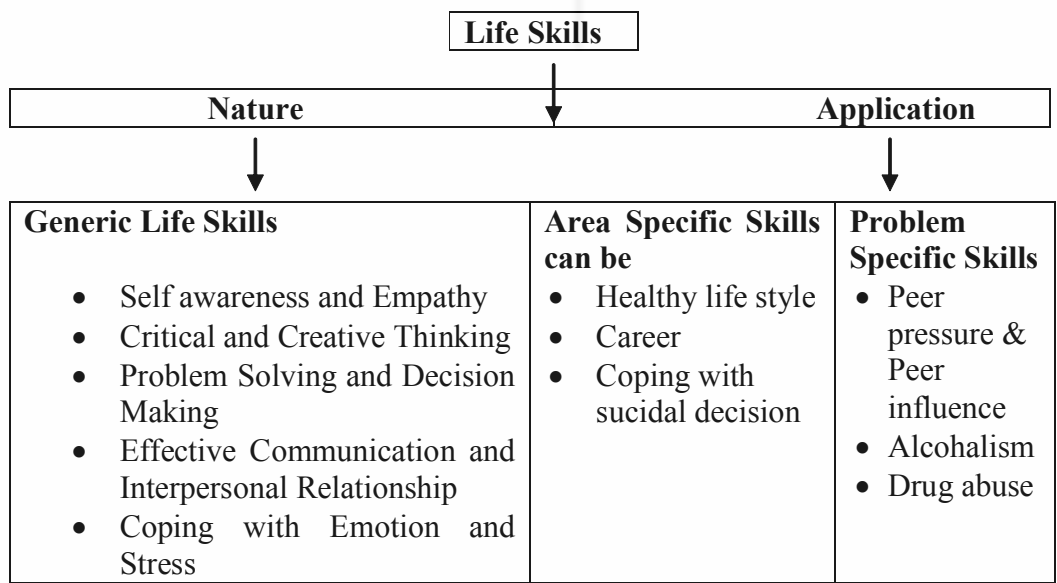


Fig. 1.1 : Classification of Life Skills

- **Generic Life Skills**

Generic Life Skills are the Core Life Skills that are proposed by World Health Organisation. These are skills that are used on basis of their nature and use. These 10 core Life Skills can be paired into five as they are related each other.

- Self awareness and Empathy
- Critical and Creative Thinking
- Problem Solving and Decision Making
- Effective Communication and Interpersonal Relationship
- Coping with Emotion and Stress.

We will discuss on these skills in detail in following section.

- **Application Oriented Life Skills**

Life skills are abilities that are used by individuals to face the challenges of everyday life. These skills are to be used in combination with regard to the requirements. We need an appropriate combination of life skills mainly in two situations. One is when we have to face a problem and the other is that when we would like to improve our performance in a particular area. The skill that we need to imbibe to settle the problem is called **Problem Specific Skills** and the skill that we need to imbibe to improve our performance in a specified area is called

- **Area Specific Skills**

When you read ahead you will acquire an overview of how the skills can be used in combination with examples under the categories.

These sub sections would have given you an idea about the importance and relevance of Life Skills for individuals in day to day life. Adolescents being in the transition period tend to learn and adopt to things faster than adults thus when introduced to them it would be highly effective for them to meet the challenges of everyday life.

Check Your Progress 1

a. Define life skills according to the World Health Organisation.

.....
.....
.....
.....

b. List out the ten core life skills spelt out by WHO.

i) vi)
ii) vii)
iii) viii)
iv) ix)
v) x)

1.3 LIFE SKILLS – SOCIAL AND NEGOTIATION SKILLS

Aristotle a very ancient philosopher very rightly said that “We are all social beings”. Thus if we illustrate more on that we can understand that human being live in a place where not only that individual but also other people are around him/her. Neuroscience has discovered that our brain’s very design makes it sociable, inexorably drawn into an intimate brain- to brain linkup whenever we engage with another person. While we interact with people we tend to establish relationship, communicate, understand others feelings, emotions and existence, try to be useful to other and oneself. These activities require certain skills that would enable individuals to effectively execute the duties of them as a social being. These skills would come under the category of social and negotiation life skills. This sub unit would exemplify the various skills that are required to an individual to be an acceptable social being.

The sub-sections would in detail explain the social skills and negotiation skills and its need to internalize them.

1.3.1 Self Awareness and Empathy

A) Self Awareness

What do I want in my life?

What are my dreams, goals?

Who are the people I like?

What are my strengths and weaknesses?

Do I want to work or study further?

Do I understand myself?

Have you ever asked these questions to yourself which lead to the answer ‘I’. Answering that question is the most difficult one but also the most important one. Thus the first life skill that we should understand and internalize – Self Awareness. **The Self-awareness** includes recognition of our personality, our strengths and weaknesses, our likes and dislikes. Thus it is a skill that would help an individual of being aware about one’s capabilities, thoughts, behaviour, mannerism, tastes, aptitude, dreams, strengths and weakness.

Self Awareness is rightly called the mother of all skills and it involves to introspect into ourselves and various dimensions of the word “I”. Knowing oneself is the beginning of a journey towards wholeness and this is the basic requirement to develop one’s personality.

Self awareness includes our recognition of ourselves, our character, strengths, weaknesses, desires and dislikes. It can help us to recognize when we are stressed or feel under pressure. It is often a pre-requisite for effective communication, interpersonal relationship and developing empathy for others.

(WHO)

When we talk about awareness of an individual there are various dimensions that an individual should explore as physical, cultural individual, interpersonal and professional self awareness. The figure No 3 clearly gives us an idea about the various dimensions of self awareness.

- **Individual self awareness** includes personal values, beliefs, ambitions; reflection of individual feelings, attitudes, ones likes and dislikes etc.
- **Interpersonal self awareness** moves on towards an individual’s intimacy needs, importance of relationships in life, level of trust, emotional expressions with others, identifications with others etc.
- **Cultural self awareness** is a process of recognizing personal biases prejudicial beliefs, stereotypic attitudes, sensitivity to ones personal heritage, embracing others cultural heritage, attributes to respect other cultures including, language, religion, practice and dress.
- **Physical self awareness** is awareness of one’s own body, existence and acceptance of the same. This is very important as the issues related to body image are on an increase which is leading to several psychological problems. Thus by being aware of it and accepting it would help an individual to deal with such issues.
- **Professional self awareness** is to recognize and accept the various skills that you have or could be developed as profession later and further which would help us to develop it into our career.

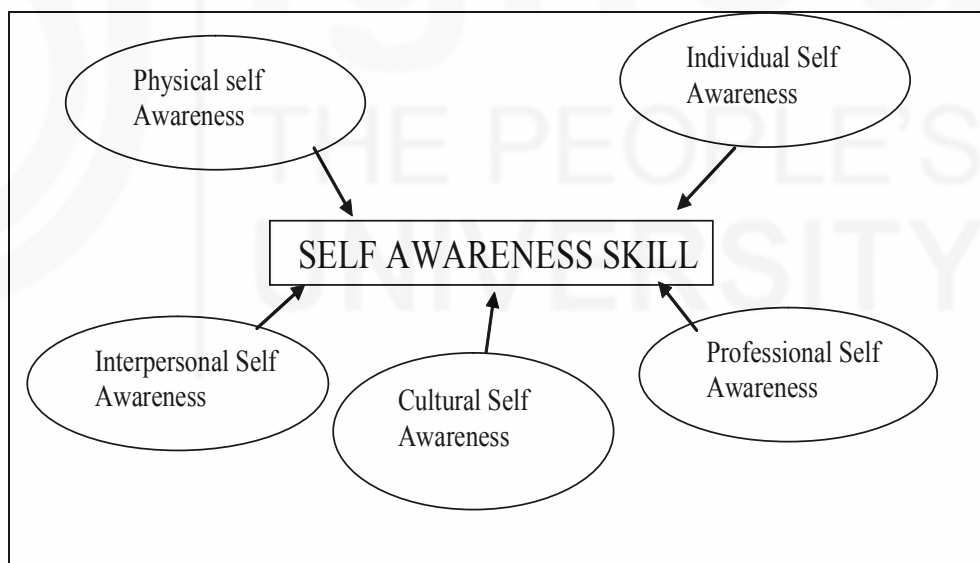


Fig. 1.2 : Dimensions of Self Awareness

Once we know the dimensions of self awareness we need to also understand the process how one could be aware about oneself. Know thyself surely means being aware of your personality and all the complexes related to it. SWOT Analysis is a simple method to understand one self.

Activity 1

Take a piece of paper and write five things you like in you and five things you want to change. Then discuss the same with your close friend.

SWOT Analysis

SWOT is... **(Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats)**. A SWOT analysis focuses on the internal and external environments, examining **strengths and weaknesses** in the **internal environment** and **opportunities and threats** in the **external environment**. Imagine your SWOT analysis to be structured like the table below:

I N T E R N A L	Your Strengths	Your Weaknesses
E X T E R N A L	Opportunities	Threats

Fig. 1.3: Representation of SWOT analysis

Every person has **three concepts of self**, the **one** that we show to the world i.e. perceived self, **second** is what we actually have i.e. real self, and **third** one is what we think we are and we have i.e. ideal self. It is a fact that most people do not understand themselves. Our SWOT Analysis is unique and helpful for every person to know their areas of proficiency and defects.

Benefits and Advantages of Personal SWOT Analysis

There are lots of benefits and advantages of Personal SWOT Analysis or in other words understanding oneself, few of them are as follows:

- Develops strategies and strengths to achieve your goals
- Shine amongst your friends and colleagues, for best job prospects
- Indicates your present position on the path of success
- Enhances your career, personality and life
- Better understand who you really are as a person
- Maximize your strengths and minimize your weaknesses
- Explores and enhances your hard skills and soft skills
- Focuses your Attitudes, abilities, skills, capacities and capabilities.

To internalize each skill you will have to practice the skill yourself. Thus after explaining each skill you would have to do the activity which will help you understand the skill better. Do this activity in your learning journal.

Activity 2

The “I” need to be explored for which complete the following sentences

1. I like myself because
2. I feel best when
3. I feel important when
4. The best thing about my body is
5. I fear from
6. Five years from now I see myself as
7. The thing that worries me the most is
8. I don't like to
9. I Need help in
10. My greatest strength is

These are just ten sentences to help you to begin exploring yourself. Ask as many as questions to yourself and make note of them.

Repeat this exercise every six months, since when we grow as individuals with time, we understand ourselves better.

Thus understanding oneself leads to a way towards success. The second skill that we would understand is the Empathy skill.

B) Empathy

Often when we feel low and feel like crying, we are grateful for someone who comes and gives us a **warm hug** and makes us feel that they **love us unconditionally** in spite of our faults. This in a nutshell is the basis of the next most important life skill called **Empathy**.

Empathy is the ability to imagine what life is like for another person. It allows us to find the **common ground** between ourselves and others – and on this ground we are able to make decisions that benefit ourselves **without hurting others**. Empathy creates wonderful results only when we are willing to let others know how we feel.

There are two approaches in Empathy like Affective and Cognitive approach.

The Affective approach defines empathy as an observer's emotional response to the affective state of another. The affective definition of Empathy emphasizes on the appropriateness of the viewer's emotional response, for example, when a person fall on the road, your immediate response of lending a hand to get up and see how much s/he is hurt.

Cognitive theories emphasize that empathy involves understanding the other's feelings (Kohler, 1929). These theories also refer to cognitive processes such as role-taking, switching attention to take another's perspective (Mead, 1934). Thus when we talk about empathy we refer to both the cognitive activity that is going on in an individuals mind to understand another persons feeling or emotion and the second part of it is to give an appropriate reaction to the person.

Empathy refers to the ability to understand the true feelings another persons is trying to express and the ability to communicate this understanding to the other.⁴Empathy represents the foundation skills for all social competencies required for work. These include:

- Understanding others: sensing other’s feelings and perspectives and taking active interest in their concerns
- Service orientation: anticipating, recognizing and meeting others needs
- Developing others: sensing other’s development needs and postering their abilities
- Leveraging diversity: cultivating opportunities through diverse people.

To internalize and practice empathy as a skill, we need to imagine ourselves in various situations. Below mentioned is a case scenario which will help you to understand the empathy skill better.

Activity 3

Below given is a situation, analyze the situation and write how could one empathize with the person. (use your learning journal to workout the activity)
 Situation A: group of children were watching television in a room. The programme was very interesting and humorous. All the children would burst out laughing as the characters in the programme would do something hilarious. But Abhinaya was the only child who would start laughing after the other children. All his friends used to tease him and make fun of him as ‘tube light’ as he never understood the joke on time and always laughed late. The trainer noticed this and spoke to Abhinaya, when it was revealed that he had a disability in hearing and he could only see but not hear. So when everybody laughed he used to understand that it is something funny and starts laughing.

1.3.2 Effective Communication and Interpersonal Relationship

In the category of the life skill two important skills that helps one to negotiate and establish relationship are effective communication and interpersonal relationship. This sub unit will help you understanding the components of these two skills and the need to internalize these skills for effective living.

A) Effective Communication

Case Study - Saritha and her friends go back from tuition everyday late in the evening and a group of boys tease them while a pass by. This was turning out to be a everyday affair so one day Farida confronted those boys calmly and softly asking them not to trouble them and also said that if they continue this then she would complain to the police. Thus, she effectively communicated her displeasure in an assertive tone.

When we speak things out our problems are solved. Just speaking alone is not the solution, one has to effectively communicate our ideas and thoughts. This brings to our notice the need of understanding and practicing effective communication.

In brief Communication is the exchange of information between people, e.g., by means of speaking, writing, or by using a common system of signs or behaviour. Man is a social animal, and communication is intrinsic to human nature.

Communication may be defined as - “A process of sharing facts, ideas, opinions, thoughts and information through speech, writing, gestures or symbols between two or more persons”. It is something that is universal and happens all the time. We are communicating all the time with others. While you are reading this, we are trying to communicate to you.

Effective communication is an essential component of our life at the interpersonal, inter-group, intra-group, organizational, or external levels. The skill of effective communications facilitates our understanding of the other person’s point of view and how they see the world. Then you can adjust your own communication to take that into account. This helps in improving relations and coping with emotions and stress. Thus utilizing one life skill helps in bettering other life skills.

The main components of effective communication include:

- a) Verbal communication
- b) Non-verbal communication
- c) Active Listening communication

a) Verbal communication

Verbal communication means oral or spoken communication. These include words, language through which we want to communicate our thoughts.

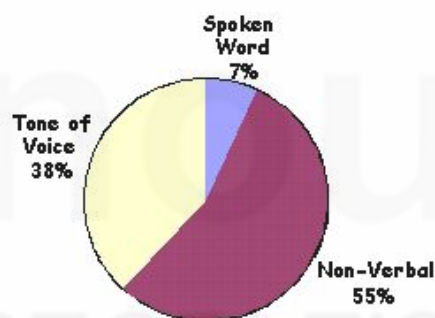


Fig. 1.4: Non Verbal Communication

b) Non-verbal communication

Sutton (1979) suggests that while spoken communication is concerned with information giving, non verbal communication is the ‘music behind the words’ conveying feelings and attitude. The importance of these non-verbal cues can be understood by considering the work of Dr. Albert Mehrabian. According to him, when an individual is speaking, the listener focuses on the following three types of communication:

- Actual Words - 7%
- The way words are delivered (tone, accents on certain words, etc.) - 38%
- Facial expressions - 55%.

A few non verbal cues include nodding in agreement or denial, smiling, tears, face tuning red, hand gestures etc.

c) Active Listening communication

Listening is the most important area in effective communication. It is a non verbal attending behaviour. This behaviour conveys the attitude of the person who is being communicated the interest level, the attentiveness etc. Silence is also one of the important aspect of listening.

The ‘**Communication Process**’ includes the following elements:

- a) **Sender** - The person who sends the message. Also known as the **source**.
- b) **Receiver** - The person who receives the message.
- c) **Message - Subject matter** of communication. It may contain facts, ideas, feelings or thoughts.
- d) **Feedback** - Receiver’s **response or reaction** or reply to the message, which is directed towards the sender.

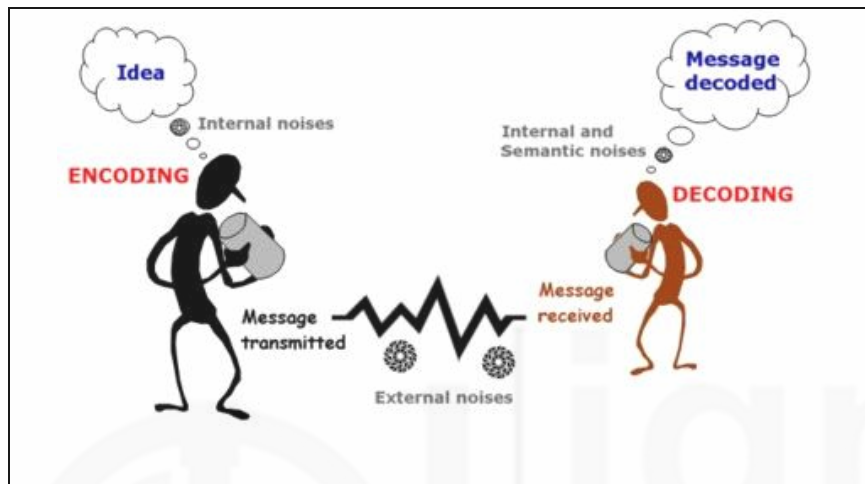


Fig. 1.5 : Process of Communication

The figure 5 will give you a clear understanding that the sender encodes a message to through a medium, admits all the external and internal noises and the receiver decodes the message and sends in appropriate feedback. The figure 5 shows us various things as external and internal noises, these are hindrances towards effective communication. There are several barriers that lead to effective communication as:

- Environment – the physical environment
- Interruptions – as phone calls, knock at the door
- Overload – a lot of information being transferred to the receiver which causes ineffective communication.
- Preoccupation – on either the sender or the receivers side would lead to ineffective communication.
- Stereotyping – can distort communication as it refers to a fixed conventional representation.
- Past Experiences – can impede communication whether the experience is consciously remembered or unconscious.
- Translation – the use of language is very important in verbal communication.

In the following worksheet, fill in one incident in which you feel that things went wrong because of your communication with the other person. Further also mention how you could have improvised the situation after understanding the effective Communication Skills.

Activity 4

**Worksheet 1
Communication**

Incident:

I communicated to them by:.....

Where I went wrong

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

How could I have best dealt it:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Once we have understood the importance of communicating effectively in life, we need to know that as we communicate we create relationships among people. Thus the next skill is also a very important social skill which helps us to build, sustain and break relationships effectively.

B) Interpersonal Relationship

Each individual live in a society which has people and we need to maintain relationships with people around us. And an **interpersonal relationship skill** is a relatively long-term association which helps individuals to make, maintain and break relationships between two or more people. An individual is in need of interpersonal relationships as –

- Interpersonal Relationship are social associations, connections, or affiliations between two or more people.
- It helps one emphasizing with people, which makes ones relationship with others responsible and effective.
- This would help in strengthening the existing relationships.
- Helps one to build new relations both personal and professional.

There are several relations that we encounter in our day to day life, formal and non formal, the various types of Interpersonal Relationships are:

- Friendship
- Family
- Romantic
- Professional relationships
- Casual relationships
- Neighbours
- Community – religious groups, social groups

Once we have understood about the various kinds of relationships you also need to know how interpersonal relationships are formed. One of the most influential models of relationship development was proposed by psychologist, George Levinger. This model was formulated to describe heterosexual, adult romantic relationships, but it has been applied to other kinds of interpersonal relations as well. According to the model, the natural development of a relationship follows five stages:

- a) **Acquaintance** : Becoming acquainted depends on previous relationships, physical proximity, first impressions, and a variety of other factors. If two people begin to like each other, continued interactions may lead to the next stage, but acquaintance can continue indefinitely.
- b) **Buildup** : During this stage, people begin to trust and care about each other. The need for compatibility and such filtering agents as common background and goals will influence whether or not interaction continues.
- c) **Continuation** : This stage follows a mutual commitment to a long term friendship, romantic relationship, or marriage. It is generally a long, relative stable period. Nevertheless, continued growth and development will occur during this time. Mutual trust is important for sustaining the relationship.
- d) **Deterioration** : Not all relationships deteriorate, but those that do tend to show signs of trouble. Boredom, resentment and dissatisfaction may occur, and individuals may communicate less and avoid self-disclosure. Loss of trust and betrayals may take place as the downward spiral continues.
- e) **Termination** : The final stage marks the end of the relationship, either by death in the case of a healthy relationship, or by separation.

The relationships have to be very carefully enriched and sustained and there are certain skills that an individual should adapt to for sustaining healthy relationships.

- Commitment and Passion
- Intimacy
- Honesty and Trust

- Sharing the views, thoughts and various incidences of life, etc. with the help of effective communication.
- Strive for productive conflict and repair. At times you are going to be angry with others. Don't suppress your anger and don't blow up with it either. Instead, speak up in a calm, respectful way about what you need or want to be different. Know how and when to apologize.
- Warmth, curiosity and respect. These are the top three qualities that will attract others to you. Always treat others with respect. Don't be dismissive, use sarcasm or demean people. Be warm, Smile, Be kind. And, finally, take a natural interest in the lives and experiences of others. Treat others as special and show that you care.
- Empathy

Now that you have understood the skill conceptually you need to analyze your relationship status. The given below worksheet will help in understanding your relationship better.

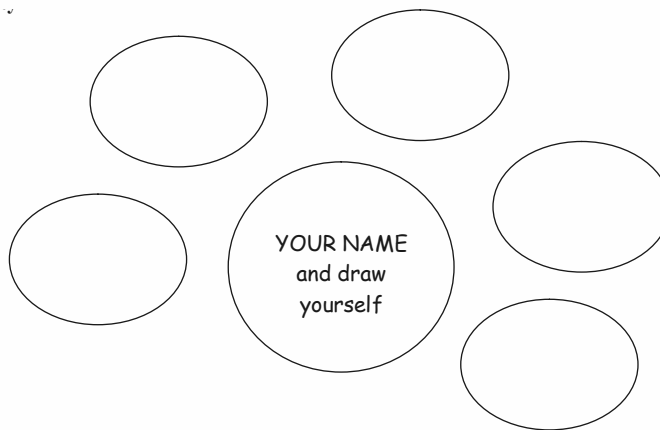
Activity 5

Draw yourself in the middle and in the circles around your name depict each circle the relationship with the name of the person— these could be friends, family, community members, school teachers etc. you could add as many as circles as you want.

Once you have finished drawing the circles, draw lines between your name and the relationship circles.

- Single line for a relationship which is not very close
- Double lines for close relationship
- Triple lines for their best relationship.

On each of the lines you need to write why you consider the relationship very close, not so close.



Do this activity in your learning journal. You could increase the number of circles around you according to the relations you have.

Check Your Progress 2

- a. the 5 dimensions of Self awareness are
- i).....,
 - ii).....,
 - iii).....,
 - iv)
 - v)
- b. Three barriers to communication are:
- i)
 - ii)
 - iii)
- c. Write 'V' to the phrase that illustrates Verbal Communication or 'NV' to the phrase that illustrates Non Verbal Communication.
- i) A person reading a letter
 - ii) A teacher looking to a student with anger
 - iii) Singing the national anthem
 - iv) Nodding head silently
- d. Three points how we sustain our relationship
- i)
 - ii)
 - iii)

1.4 LIFE SKILLS – THINKING SKILLS AND COPING SKILLS

Human mind is nothing short of amazing, it gives rise to cures for deadly diseases, to works of art and beautiful music and further to the development of many conveniences of present life. The main essence of the human brain is the function of thinking which is an essential cognitive activity. It is always directed to achieve some end or purpose. It is further explained as a mental exploration which is very rapid, swift, covering and expanse of time and space simultaneously. What are you thinking about now? If you have answered that question, then it's safe to say that at least to some extent you are thinking about the words in this page. Perhaps you are also thinking of your friend, a movie, something what your dad said, solving a problem, deciding what to next thus our brains are on steady activity every minute of the day. For effectively perform and decide things we need to develop our skills to think rationally and imaginatively and to solve problems and decide efficiently. Therein lies the need for understanding and internalizing the thinking skills as Critical and Creative Thinking; Problem Solving and Decision Making.

1.4.1 Critical and Creative Thinking

Among the thinking skills the two main important skills which helps an individual in the mental processes is the critical thinking which helps us in analyzing a situation, issues and creative thinking which helps us to look into the various options which are available beyond the obvious ones.

Critical thinking is an ability to analyze information and experiences in an objective manner. It helps us to recognize and assess the factors that influence attitudes and behaviour, such as media and peer pressure influences. (Life Skills Education in Schools, WHO)

A) Critical Thinking

In one day how many choices do we make, how many decisions do we take, how many situations do we analyze, and while doing all these things we use one important skill i.e. the critical thinking skill. Now we are going to understand these skills, its definition, characteristics and importance. We can understand the critical thinking skill to be a purposeful, self regulatory judgement which results in interpretation, analysis, evaluation, and inference as well as explanation of the situation, issue.

Moore and Parker defines Critical Thinking is “the careful, deliberate determination of whether we should accept, reject, or suspend judgment about a claim, and the degree of confidence with which we accept or reject it”.

Critical thinking skills are abilities which include:

- To recognize problems
- To find workable means for meeting those problems
- To gather and marshal pertinent information to recognize unstated assumptions and values
- To comprehend and use language with accuracy, clarity and discrimination
- To interpret data
- To appraise evidence and evaluate statements
- To recognize the existence of logical relationship between propositions
- To draw warranted conclusions and generalizations
- To put to test the generalizations and conclusions at which one arrives
- To reconstruct one’s patterns and beliefs on the basis of wider experience
- Render accurate judgments about specific things and qualities in everyday life.

A well cultivated critical thinker

- raises vital questions and problems, formulating them clearly and precisely;
- gathers and assesses relevant information, using abstract ideas to interpret it effectively;

- comes to well-reasoned conclusions and solutions, testing them against relevant criteria and standards;
- thinks open-mindedly within alternative systems of thought, recognizing and assessing, as need be, their assumptions, implications, and practical consequences; and
- communicates effectively with others in figuring out solutions to complex problems;
- organizes thoughts and articulates them concisely and coherently
- distinguishes between logically valid and invalid inferences
- suspends judgment in the absence of sufficient evidence to support a decision
- attempts to anticipate the probable consequences of alternative actions
- understands the idea of degrees of belief
- can learn independently and has an abiding interest in doing so
- habitually questions one's own views and attempts to understand both the assumptions that are critical to those views and the implications of the views;
- is sensitive to the difference between the validity of a belief and the intensity with which it is held;
- recognizes the fallibility of one's own opinions, the probability of bias in those opinions, and the danger of weighting evidence according to personal preferences;

Critical thinking is a skill to think critically, involving three things:

- a. an attitude of being disposed to consider in a thoughtful way the problems and subjects that come within the range of one's experience
- b. knowledge of the methods of logical inquiry and reasoning
- c. and some skills in applying those methods.

Once we have analyzed a situation the next step is to know the options available around us which involves the creative thinking skill in an individual.

Activity 6

Below given is a situation, you have to analyze it and write if there is any rationale behind that? If yes what? And if no then why?

The inter school competition has began and as the sports teacher you have to decide on a student who will have to represent the school. Arya is your choice but he has got lot of opportunities before. A new boy in school satish is equally good. The school reputation has to be taken under consideration.

What will you do? Write your answer in your leaning journal.

B) Creative Thinking Skill

Who is a creative thinker? Are only writer artist scientists or somebody who tries to create something new? The answer would be no. Creative thinking skill is used

not only for discovering but also get solution for ordinary day to day problem. Thus the product of creative thinking may be either enhancing the old, or creating a new.

Stages in creative thinking

Graham Wallis studied the steps involved in creative thinking, according to him there are 5 stages of creative thinking :

- preparation – the thinker here formulates the problem and collect the fact and materials considered necessary for a new solution.
- Incubation – here some of the ideas that where incurring with solution tend to fade in addition the creative thinker may have experiences that provide clues to the solution, here the unconscious thought process is involved.
- Illumination – occurs with its “aha” insight experience. That is an idea for solution suddenly comes up into conssciousnous.
- Evaluation- this is the apparent solution which is tested to see if it is satisfactorily solved the problem. In case it results to be unsatisfactory, the thinker is back at the beginning of the creative process.
- Revision

People who think creatively seem to have some personality feature in common. Evidence obtained from objective and subjective personality test indicates that “original” or creative people tend to have the following traits:

- a. They prefer complexity in some degree of apparent imbalance in phenomena.
- b. They are more complex psycho dynamically and have greater personal scope.
- c. They are more independent in their judgments.
- d. They are more self assertive and dominant.
- e. They reject suppression as a mechanism for the control of impulse.

Activity 7

Below mentioned is a situation which I am not able to resolve, use your creative thinking skill and try and find solutions to it. In your learning journal write down 5-7 alternatives.

You reach work late because of traffic, and have missed a very important meeting. Because of which your seniors are very angry and annoyed with you. One after another they come and tell you the importance of time. What will you do?

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1.4.2 Problem Solving and Decision Making

In this section you would explore the details on problem solving skill and decision making skill.

A) Problem solving skill

A **problem** is an obstacle which makes it difficult to achieve a desired goal, objective or purpose. It refers to a situation, condition, or issue that is yet unresolved. In a broad sense, a problem exists when an individual becomes aware of a significant difference between what actually is and what is desired.

Every problem asks for an answer or solution. Trying to find a solution to a problem is known as problem solving. In order to understand the process to solve a problem we need to know what a solution is. **A solution is the management of a problem in a way that successfully meets the goals established for treating it.** The problem solving has the following steps given.

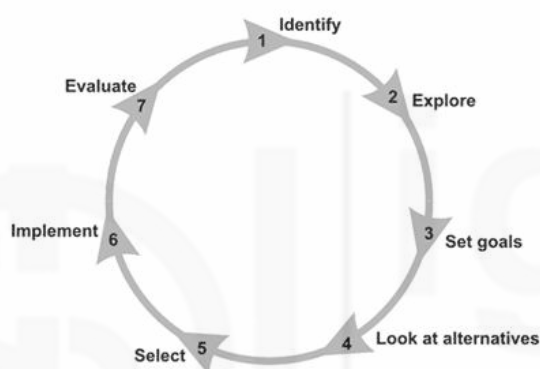


Fig. 1.6: Problem Solving Process

- a. **Identify:** WHAT is the real problem? In simple words, write down the key issues in the problem.
- b. **Explore:** WHY is there a problem? What has caused this problem? Usually a problem has more than one cause. List them all. Also write any important circumstances or explanations about the problem.
- c. **Set Goals:** WHAT outcome are we hoping for? What is your objective?
- d. **Look at Alternatives:** HOW can we solve it? Brainstorm! This is where you can use your imagination. During this stage, first come up with all the ideas you can think of. Let some ideas be wild. This is “Thinking out of the box” and is the way many new inventions took place. Look at it from different perspectives.
- e. **Select:** WHICH solution is most appropriate - given your circumstances? You have a collection of possible solutions. Write them all down. Then look over your ideas and choose what you think is the finest solution among them.
 - What are the positive and negative consequences of each option?
 - Which will work best for you under the given circumstances?
- f. **Implement:** ACT on your solution. It won’t always work. Even if it doesn’t — you have others to try. Problems are an important part of life, and it is always in your best interest to improve your ability to create good solutions.

- g. Evaluate and Reflect:** Is the problem solved or partially solved? Was the strategy useful? Can it be repeated? If not, then go back to step number 1 and re-look the problem and options again.

Problem solving helps us to deal constructively with problems in our lives. It empowers us not only to control our problem, but also turns them to **opportunities**. Significant problems that are left unattended can cause mental stress and give rise to accompanying physical strains.

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The next step after we evaluate and reflect is deciding on one particular option and to know the details of which we would read through the next sub unit.

Activity 8

Below find a difficult situation for which you need to find a solution.

You have got an increment in your work place and you inform your family about it. Immediately your son asks for a bicycle and your daughter asks for a new expensive book. You can afford only one of the above. How will you solve the problem?

Write the answer in your Learning journal.

B) Decision Making Skill

Case Study- Sai was an employee in a reputed organization but he was unhappy with the work that he was doing. He got an opportunity in another organization but not as reputed as the one he was working in. Sai is confused and doesn't know how to make a decision.

In our life, we have to take small and big decisions, but there is no perfect way to take the right decision as the decision differs from person to person. In this sub section we will explore the various aspects in decision making. by WHO 'Decision Making helps us to deal constructively with decisions about our lives. A good decision would be one whose outcome would be positive or beneficial.

Decision making skill can be regarded as an outcome of mental processes (cognitive process) leading to the selection of a course of action among several alternatives. Every decision making process produces a final choice. The output can be an action or an opinion of choice.

Decision can be of various types, below mentioned are various types of decisions–

Types of decision making :

a. Irreversible

The decision once made, cannot be unmade-such as when signing an agreement to buy or sell a house.

- Commits you irrevocably when there is no other satisfactory option to the chosen course.

- Should never be used as an all or nothing instant escape from general indecision.

b. **Reversible**

The decision can be changed completely – before, during or after the agreed action begins.

- Allows you to acknowledge a mistake early in the process rather than perpetuate it.
- Can be used when you see the circumstances may change, so that reversal may be necessary.

c. **Experimental**

The decision is not final until the first results appear and prove themselves to be satisfactory.

- Requires positive feedback before you can decide on a course of action.
- Useful and effective when correct move is unclear but general direction of action is understood.

d. **Trial-and-error**

Taken in knowledge that changes in plan will be forced by what actually happens in the course of action.

- Allows you to adapt and adjust plans continuously before full and final commitment
- Uses positive and negative feedback before you continue with a particular course of action.

e. **Made in stages**

After the initial step, further decisions follow as each stage of agreed action is completed.

- Allows close monitoring of risks, as you accumulate evidence of outcomes and obstacles at every stage.
- Permits feedback and further decision before the next stage of decision is made.

f. **Cautious**

Decision allows for contingencies, and problems that may crop up later.

- Limits the risks inherent in decision making, but also may limit the final gains.
- Allows you to scale down projects that look too risky in the first instance.

g. **Conditional**

Decisions altered if certain foreseen circumstances arise. An either/or decision, with options kept open.

- Prepares you to react if the competition makes a new move or if the game plan changes radically.
- Enables you to react quickly to ever changing circumstances.

h. **Delayed**

Put on hold until decision makers think the time is right. Go ahead given when the required elements are in place.

- The decision environment will be larger, providing more information. There is also time for more thoughtful and extended analysis.
- New alternatives might be recognized or created.
- The decision maker's preferences might change. With further thought, wisdom, maturity, you may decide to buy car Y instead of X.
- However may mean that you miss opportunities.

When we talk about taking a decision there are several models and here we would discuss two of them as:

1) **POWER model**

P = Problem - Clearly identify the problem and define it

O = Options - Brainstorm and creatively think of many options

W = Weigh each option - pros and cons including feelings about each

E = Elect and Enact the best option - Implement your decision

R = Review and Reflect - Does this work? If not, go back to options and repeat

2) **3 C's model** - This is also an easy to remember method. The 3 C's are :

Challenges - Problem(s)

Choices - Options available

Consequences - Positive and negative consequences of each option

Keep in mind the ripple effect of the decision taken on the family, peers and near and dear ones.

Activity 9

Below is given a situation which you might encounter in day to day life. Now you have to properly understand the situations and take a decision for the person using the POWER model and the 3 C's.

Situation

The annual sports meet of your school is tomorrow. You have been assigned very important task of escorting the chief guest throughout the programme. But in the morning there has been an emergency at home. You have to be there in both situations which are equally important. What would you do?

P-

O-

W-

E-

R-

- Challenge :
- Choices :
- Consequences

In everyday life we encounter with several situations that needs immediate and effective decision making skill. Thus you could conscious start using these techniques in small decisions so that automatically you follow while taking important decisions.

Check Your Progress 3

a. Write the definition of Problem solving.

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b. What are the terms you should clarify when faced with a problem?

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c. What are the seven steps of ‘problem solving’?

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d. Fill in the blanks:

- i. The three types of decisions are the decision,, and a decision.
- ii. The two approaches to decision making are and

e. Use the Decision Making Model given in 1.4.2 for making a decision in the following situation:

You are single and living away from your family. Your lease for your rented apartment is coming to an end and you know that you have to move to new premises now. You are not sure whether to invest in your own apartment, take the spare room offered to you by your colleague in office, or to go in for

another rented apartment. It is quite difficult for a single person to get a rented apartment but buying your own also involves a lot of money. Moreover, your ancestral home is your own (i.e. not rented) but you also know that you will in all probability never be going back to stay there permanently.

So now you have to make a Decision. Go ahead and do it.

1.5 COPING WITH EMOTION AND STRESS

Let us now read about coping with emotion and stress in details.

1.5.1 Coping with Emotion

An emotion is a mental reaction (as anger, fear or happiness) subjectively experienced as strong feeling usually directed toward a specific object and typically accompanied by physiological and behavioural changes in the body. (Merriam Webster dictionary).

Coping with emotions is a Life Skill which is extremely important for living a successful and healthy life. All human beings have emotions - that is normal. But one has to know when and how to express these emotions, and how to cope with them.

Emotions can be grouped into "Positive" and "Negative" emotions. Positive emotions like joy and love make us feel good. They also broaden our outlook, thinking and actions. They build our personal resources and make us energetic, thus improving our long term health and well-being.

Negative emotions like anger, guilt, sorrow act like brakes. But they can also alert us to problems and trigger the process of learning new things. They can motivate us, inform us and help us to learn. At times, a so called negative emotion is also helpful, depending on whether we know how to use it as a tool or get immobilized by it ourselves.

Coping with Emotions involves recognizing emotions within us and others, being aware of how emotions influence behaviour and being able to respond to emotions appropriately. Intense emotions like anger or sadness can have negative effects on us if we do not respond appropriately.

This skill involves recognizing emotions within yourself and others, i.e. being aware of how emotions influence behaviour, and being able to respond to emotions appropriately. In every minute of our lives we undergo feelings like being happy, shy, excited, scared, angry, sad, loved, fearful and jealous etc.

These feelings or emotions can be of two types i.e. positive and negative feelings.

POSITIVE FEELINGS				NEGATIVE FEELINGS			
INTENSE	STRONG	MODERATE	MILD	MILD	MODERATE	STRONG	INTENSE
Loved	Happy	Fond	Friendly	Tired	Unhappy	Bitter	Hate
Alive	Joyful	Pleased	Relaxed	Timid	Nervous	Guilt	Terrified
Worthy	Brave	Popular	Smart	Unsure	Bored	Anxious	Hurt
Respected	Eager	Glad	Content	Upset	Annoyed	Hopeless	Furious

Coping with our emotions helps us to:

- Express feelings productively.
- Respectfully confront someone when you are bothered by his or her behaviour.
- Express difficult feelings without attacking the self-esteem of the person.
- Clarify for you and the other person precisely what you feel.
- Prevent feelings from building up and festering into a bigger problem.
- Communicate difficult feelings in a manner that minimizes the other person's need to become defensive and increases the likelihood that the person will listen.

The Importance of Coping with Emotions:

- Better skills for resolution of Conflicts
- Peace in the world
- Improved interpersonal relationships
- Better skills in handling interpersonal problems
- Fighting for justice
- Decrease in violence and crime (less delinquent behaviours)
- Better self esteem
- Improved problem solving
- Better impulse control
- Better coping with anxiety

Activity 10

Given below are certain emotions. You have to write down the situations where you experience these emotions and the reactions that you give usually. Further you need to analyze if these reactions needs improvement:

Emotion	Situation	Reaction	Needs improvement
HAPPY			
SAD			
SCARED			
EXCITED			
ANGRY			
ENVY			
GUILTY			
JEALOUSY			
LOVE			
DISSAPPOINTMENT			

This activity will help you to understand the places where you need improvement. Add more emotions if you like and see how you respond.

1.5.2 Coping with Stress

Stress is an internal process that occurs when a person is faced with a demand that is perceived to exceed the resources available to effectively respond to it, and where failure to effectively deal with the demand has important undesirable consequences.

In other words, stress is experienced when there is an awareness of a substantial imbalance between **demand** and **capability**, under conditions where failure to meet the demand is perceived to have unwanted consequences.

Thus **stress** is a condition or feeling experienced when a person perceives that the demands on him exceed the personal and social resources he is able to mobilize.

When we mention stress, there are two kinds of stress one is the eustress that is required for an individual to effectively perform and the second is distress i.e., the stress which brings down our capacity to perform and we feel ‘stressed’ thus coping is an essential part which helps us to stabilize in situations. There are various things that causes stress and these causes are called stressors.

Stressors – Cause of stress

Stress can be positive and negative. On the positive side it alerts us to a threat and increases our level of arousal and activation which can help us be more effective in coping with the threat. It is mismanaged stress or an over-abundance of stress which causes strain and can be devastating for the person or the system.

Stress can be both negative and positive; it is categorized into eu-stress i.e., positive stress and de-stress i.e., negative stress. Though the word stress and positive does not coincide, still.

Common Symptoms of Stress

PHYSICAL	MENTAL	BEHAVIOURAL
Headache	Absent minded	Irritability
Change in sleep pattern	Poor concentration	Anxiety
Change in appetite	Poor memory	Angry
Stomach pain	Reduced output	Cries easily
Vomiting, Loose motions	Repeated errors	Withdrawal
Grinding of teeth	Mental block	Depressed
Dry mouth and throat	Poor performance	Jealousy
Sudden gain or loss in weight	Reduced creativity	Restlessness
Reduced sex drive	Poor judgment	Substance Abuse

With every new situation arises the need of achievement and performance. This pressure to excel with other concerns leads us towards the need of handling with the unpleasant situations. **Coping with Stress** means recognizing the sources of stress in our lives, recognizing how this affects us, and acting in ways that help us control our levels of stress, by changing our environment or lifestyle and learning how to relax.

There are two ways to deal with stress one is in relation to the problem i.e.,

problem focused coping, when stressor is a pertaining problem and we handle the situation and another way to deal is emotion focused coping when our focus is on the emotion which has caused the stress and we change the current emotion by thinking of jokes, deviating ourselves etc. When we understand it there are several ways to control or bust the stress and a few among them have been discussed below.

- S-T-R-E-A-C-H stand on your tip toe whenever you feel under pressure and stretch your body
- Laugh
- Do conscious breathing – the right kind of inhale and exhale of air through nose and mouth brings in fresh air into the lungs which calms one down.
- Listen to music, which is the best remedy which calms us internally.
- Yoga and meditation
- Talk less and listen more
- Express your stress in a positive manner, take charge of it deal with it.

Each and every individual have their own ways of dealing with stress the above mentioned are some common and widely used methods, the students could be asked to discuss on the various ways that they know of in dealing with stress.

Activity 11

Worksheet
Stress

- Mention 5 situations where you are highly stressed
- Why do you think you become stressful under those situations?
- What are your fears related to those situations?
- What do you think is your strengths in overcoming the stressful situation?
- Whom do you think is reliable for support at that period?
- How would you deal with it?

Check Your Progress 4

a. What are stressors? Write a note on the stressors that you encounter in daily life situation.

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b. Emotions are intricate part of our lives. Elucidate the sentence in 200 words.

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c. “You have to complete your syllabus in another one month and one of your family member falls sick” you are extremely stressed because of this. How would you destress yourself?

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1.6 APPLICATION OF LIFE SKILLS - PROBLEM AND AREA SPECIFIC LIFE SKILLS FOR ADOLESCENTS

On the basis of the application life skills are divided into two parts i.e. area specific and problem specific in the following section ahead we would discuss on these two classification.

1.6.1 Area Specific Skills

Area specific skills are competencies that facilitate individuals to enhance in the areas that they have to improve. For example, healthy life style, career, substance abuse, prevention and coping with suicidal tendencies etc.

The basic concept behind acquiring Life Skill is to enable a person to maximize his development through the optimum Utilisation of the human resources. It includes resource identification, planning and improvement. The Generic Skills makes a person to understand the basic skills and the applicability of it. In the case of problem specific skills, we are using combination of skills for settling the problem.

1.6.2 Problem Specific Skills

Problem specific Skills are a combination of abilities that would make the individuals understand and cope with the difficulties that they encounter. For example, peer pressure, alcoholism, saying no, abuse etc.

As people are different in their behaviour, intensity of the problems will also differ accordingly. Problems can be solved only by the appropriate and timely use of Life Skills. In the case of Problem Specific Skills we are identifying the strength and combination of Generic Skills needed to avoid the specific problem and keep away from such problems in future. Here, the combination of skills, its priority, and the strength of internalizing based on the priority is most important.

1.7 LET US SUM UP

In this unit you have read about life skills You must have comprehend the set of all five like skills and its importance for the adolescent to handle the change in their life. You have also read about application of life skills which will help you to use these skills practically with adolescence.

1.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1

- a. WHO has defined life skill as the abilities for adaptive and positive behaviour that enables individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life.
- b.
 - i) Self-awareness
 - ii) Empathy
 - iii) Critical thinking
 - iv) Creative thinking
 - v) Effective Communications
 - vi) Interpersonal relationship
 - vii) Coping with stress
 - viii) Control on emotion
 - ix) Problem solving
 - x) Decision making

Check Your Progress 2

- a.
 - i) individual self awareness
 - ii) physical self awareness
 - iii) interpersonal
 - iv) cultural self awareness
 - v) professional self awareness
- b.
 - i) environment
 - ii) preoccupation
 - iii) interruptions
- c.
 - (i) NV
 - (ii) NV
 - (iii) V
 - (iv) NV
- d.
 - i) Commitment and Passion
 - ii) Intimacy
 - iii) Honesty and Trust

Check Your Progress 3

- a. Problem solving helps us to deal constructively with problems in our lives. It empowers us not only to control our problem, but also turns them to opportunities.
- b. Purpose, Situation, Problem, Cause, Solution
- c. The seven steps in problem solving are:
 - i) Identify
 - ii) Explore
 - iii) Set goals
 - iv) Look at alternatives
 - v) Select
 - vi) Implement

- vii) Evaluate
- d) Fill in the blanks:
 - i) Irreversible, trial and error, experimental
 - ii) power model, 3 c model

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