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Topic Name - Relationship Between Body and Mind

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Lecture Title

Relationship Between Body & Mind

Academic Script

Hello viewers. Welcome to the bachelor course of **Psychology with Special Reference to Physical Education**. Today we'll discuss about of body and mind and also draw a relationship between body and mind.

BODY AND MIND

The mind is about mental processes, thought and consciousness. The body is about the physical aspects of the brain-neurons and how the brain is structured. Many theories have been put forward to explain the relationship between what we call mind (defined as the conscious thinking 'you', which experiences your thoughts) and your brain (i.e. part of your body).

How body and mind work

The brain and the body are constantly sending messages to each other. These messages tell the brain and body to make changes and adjustments to the way they are working. For example, if your eyes told your brain a car was travelling towards you at speed, it would send a very fast message to the body to step back out of harm's way. Similarly, if your stomach was empty and your body needed fuel, your brain would listen to that message and send you in search of food. So, the mind and the body are in constant communication to keep you healthy.

An example of this close relationship between the mind and body is the 'Fight-Flight' mechanism. This alarm system developed to keep us safe from danger, like the threat of predators. It is triggered when you feel threatened and it makes your body get ready for a fight or for running away (e.g. by making your heart beat faster and your muscles tense up).

These physical symptoms are the result of the release of stress hormones in the body, such as cortisol and adrenaline. Unfortunately, it is less helpful for modern day threats. Things like money worries or fears about the future can trigger this 'fight or flight' response, even if it is not that helpful for solving the problem.

The Powerful Role of Thoughts

“There is nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so.” Shakespeare

Life presents lots of situations which can be perceived as threatening and trigger the stress response. Our thoughts and judgements about situations have a very important role, determining whether this stress response is triggered or not.

For example, if you ran for the bus and immediately afterwards had uncomfortable symptoms like a pounding heart and sweating, you might have the thought, “Gosh, I’m not as fit as I used to be” and continue your journey as usual without any great change in how you feel. However, if you had a family history of heart attacks and had a recent diagnosis of high blood pressure yourself, you might instead have the thought, “I’m having a heart attack”, and feel very frightened and call an ambulance. This example shows that the same experience, interpreted differently, can result in very different feelings and choices

HOW DO THE MIND AND BODY AFFECT EACH OTHER?

There are certain factors which affect the body and mind.

1. PHYSICAL FACTORS

The way physical changes in the body occur in response to our thoughts, feelings and reactions is not fully understood. However, below are some possible mechanisms.

- **Stress Hormones and their Effects**

The body’s stress hormones, which include adrenaline and cortisol, are designed to have a short term effect, giving us enough physical energy and strength to get out of dangerous situations. This surge of ‘Fight-Flight’ hormones can have temporary effects such as a raised heart rate, sweating, shaking, shortness of breath etc. However, when these hormones are released frequently, they are thought to have a long term effect on the body, affecting how it works as a whole. This may make it harder for the body to keep all of its organs and systems working as they should.

- **The immune system**

Immune system may be less effective when stress hormones are released regularly, i.e. chronic stress. This may be because the body focuses on the task it sees as most important, avoiding the threat, rather than using energy to detect infections and keep them under control.

- **Healing**

Healing gets slowed down. Like the immune system, when the body believes it is under attack it puts tasks that are not immediately essential, like repairing damaged cells, on the back-burner. While this is OK in the short-term, in the long term it can cause physical problems by slowing down recovery.

- **Digestion**

like healing digestion is also put on the back burner during times of stress which can lead to digestive discomfort such as abdominal pain, nausea, constipation, diarrhoea and bloating etc..

Psychological Factors

Thinking styles can affect how you feel emotionally and physically. Some common thinking styles make it seem very likely that something bad is going to happen. This can lead to feeling worried, sad or upset regardless of whether the thought is true or not.

- **Thinking Styles**

How you think – your ‘thinking style’ – can affect how you feel emotionally and physically. Some common thinking styles make it seem very likely that something bad is going to happen. This can make you feel worried, sad or upset even though the thought is not true.

- **Making sense of your condition**

When you have a health problem, it is normal to try to make sense of it by working out what it means for you and your life. The way you feel about the problem and how you deal with it may depend on the answers to some important questions, such as: What kind of problem am I facing? Is it minor or serious? How do I feel about it? Am I worried, stressed or down about it? Can I cope with this problem? Are the things I’m doing working? Your answers will affect how you feel physically and emotionally. They will also have an effect on what you feel able to do day to day. In the long-term, they may even affect how limited you are by your condition.

Think about these two examples: Dave has been diagnosed with high blood pressure. Mr.Ajay believes this is a very serious and dangerous diagnosis because his father died from a heart attack. He feels very worried about it and doubts whether he can cope. He has tried to look after himself by exercising, like the doctor advised, but this seemed to make him feel worse, making him more worried, so he stopped. He struggled to stick to the tough exercise regime he set himself so feels guilty and ashamed as well.

Mr.Rohit also has high blood pressure. Rohit knows it is not something he can ignore but he believes it is common and treatable so he is not very worried about it. He spoke to his Doctor who prescribed some medication and gave him advice about his diet and exercise. He goes out and exercises, even though he often doesn’t feel like it. But if he misses his gym session or run, he tries not to beat himself up about it and gets straight back into it the next day.

These examples show that your thoughts and beliefs about your condition and your coping skills are important and can affect how you manage your symptoms.

- **Expectations**

Our expectations about what is about to happen can affect the kind of experience we have. For example, studies have shown that people expecting to feel pain, report stronger pain when given a harmless electric shock compared with those not expecting pain given the same shock. This could mean that expecting examinations or procedures to be painful and unpleasant, and thinking about the pain you expect to feel, could actually make the experience worse.

3. Physical Factors

- **Feeling down**

Feeling down or depressed can have effects on your body. Fatigue, poor sleep, changes in appetite as well as increased aches and pains are all associated with feeling down and depression.

- **Anxiety**

When you are frightened or anxious you can also get lots of physical symptoms such as a racing heart, sweating, shaking, feeling dizzy and feeling sick. Although these symptoms are not dangerous, they are often unpleasant and you can wrongly think they are signs of a more serious condition.

- **Anger**

The changes that happen in your body when you are angry are similar to those that happen when you are anxious. Your heart may beat faster, you may start to sweat and feel hot and tense. Others may notice you becoming quite flushed and red in the face.

Positive Links Between Your Mind & Body

The mind-body relation does not only have bad effects on our physical and emotional state. It can also have good effects. You may recognise some of the examples below.

- i. Relaxation**

When you get a chance to relax, such as having a bath, sitting in the sun, listening to a calming piece of music or practising meditation, you may notice changes in your emotional state such as feeling less tense and more at ease. There are also changes that happen in your body such as your heart beating slower, your breathing slowing down and your blood pressure going down.

- ii. Exercise**

Many runners and other athletes talk about feelings of physical and emotional well-being during and after exercise. You can feel this after lots of other activities as well, such as walking, going up the stairs or going to exercise classes. It is thought that chemicals called endorphins, which your body produces when you exercise, are what make you feel happier.

- iii. Positive events, pleasure and achievement**

When positive things happen such as getting good news, laughing with friends or being meeting with friends or family after a time apart, you usually feel happier and more at ease. During these times, you may also feel more physically alert and active rather than sleepy and sluggish. The same can happen when you do activities you enjoy or something that gives you a sense of achievement. These examples show the powerful effect of positive experiences on both your mind and body. Using the mind-body relation to help you manage your health

- iv. Look after yourself physically**

Try to eat a well-balanced diet. Take regular exercise if you can. Think of an activity which you can manage and might enjoy. If you have not been active for a while, you might need to take any exercise quite slowly. Eating well and keeping active can help to make you less stressed and

tense. Allow yourself enough time for sleep and rest, but try not to worry if you are not sleeping well. Having a regular bedtime, and allowing yourself time to wind down before bed, can help. Try not to have any alcoholic drinks just before bed or to rely on caffeine during the day. These will only make you feel worse in the long run.

v. Learn to relax

Learning how to relax can help your mind and body. You can try different things until you find one that works for you. For example: Listen to relaxing music or ‘white noise’ such as the sound of waves crashing. You can download free white noise apps to your smartphone or use Google to find audio files to download to your PC or MP3 player, or buy a CD.

vi. Balance your awareness

Being aware of your body can help you to make wise choices. But being too aware can make it hard for you to focus on other things. This means you can miss out on fully enjoying the good things in life. Being too aware can also cause you unnecessary worry and distress, which can make your symptoms feel worse.

vii. Talk to someone

When you are feeling stressed, anxious or down you might not feel like talking. You might even want to avoid talking about things such as your health and symptoms that make you feel anxious or down. But talking to someone you trust about how you are feeling can really help. You might want to let them know that they can help you just by spending some time with you and listening.

viii. Understand your thinking

Understanding what sets off your fight or flight response is a good first step. Sometimes it is a powerful thought that pops into your mind after something upsetting or stressful.

ix. Useful questions to ask yourself

How likely is it that this thought is true? Is there any evidence against this thought? Is there another way of thinking about what is happening? What would you say to a friend?

x. Try paying attention in a different way

When you are upset or feeling unwell physically, you can start thinking about the past, and how things were better or worse. Or you can think about the future and all the worrying things that might still happen. Being stuck in the past or the future in this way can be very draining physically and emotionally and can make it hard for you to live fully in the here and now. One way around this is to try taking a curious attitude towards whatever is happening right now, including your thoughts, feelings and sensations, without judging them or trying to change them. This approach is called ‘mindfulness’.

xi. Be guided by your values

When you are having a hard time, physically or emotionally, it can make you feel like opting out of doing things such as exercise or meeting with friends, for example. Not doing these things

may seem to help in the short term but you can miss out on the things that really matter to you in the long term, such as close relationships or good health.

Try to ask yourself what things matter to you most. For example, perhaps it is your family, friends, health, work or hobbies. Try to do something most days that keeps you in touch with your values. Usually, there is more than one way of living your life guided by your values.

- **Do things you enjoy**

Look out for chances for fun, laughter and pleasure. This could mean meeting a friend who makes you laugh, watching a repeat of a comedy show you like or making time for things you really like doing such as an afternoon of watching football or a soak in the bath. Also, try to do things that will give you sense of satisfaction.

Typically humans are characterized as having both a **mind** (nonphysical) and **body**/brain (physical). This is known as dualism. Dualism is the view that the **mind** and **body** both exist as separate entities.

