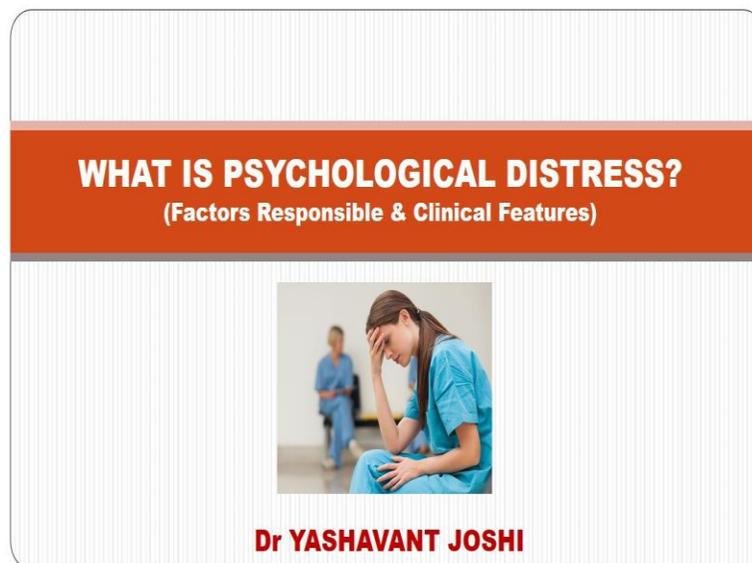


**Basic Certificate in Palliative Care**  
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**Week-03**  
**Lecture 03: What is Psychological Distress?**

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Week number 3, lecture number 3. Hello friends. In last lecture, we spoke about psychological aspects in palliative care. It was just a general introduction. Now, we come to the subject proper that is what is psychological distress, the factors responsible and the clinical features of psychological distress. We will also generally discuss people say psychological distress and some people say mental distress. So, all these things we will just see.

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## **Psychological Distress**

Psychological distress is a state of emotional suffering associated with stressors and demands that are difficult to cope within daily life. The lack of effective care for and difficulty in identifying psychological dis-stress is frustrating for patients and health professionals alike.

What is psychological distress. Psychological distress is a state of emotional suffering, emotional connected with your mind and not with your body. Emotional suffering and associated with stressors and demands that are difficult to cope within daily life. You all know that life is not easy, life is not a happy journey as such.

There are events which are very happy and there are many more events which are unhappy. So, it is a sort of thing which goes on and events some of the times when demands from our life are so much that we are unable to cope up and then our mind feels stressful. We cannot do anything about it and that is where that stressors produce tension, that is the mental tension and that is how we produce psychological distress. It is basically that when we are unable to cope up with the demands of our life, of our society, of our job, of our children, of our family and we feel helpless. So, we start thinking like that and our mind gives the way and that is how emotional distress takes place.

Listen again psychological distress is a state of emotional suffering associated with stressors and demands that are difficult to cope within our daily life. The lack of effective care for and difficulty in identifying psychological distress is frustrating for patients and health professionals alike.

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## **Psychological Distress**

Mental distress (or psychological distress) is a term used, by some mental health practitioners and users of mental health services, to describe a range of symptoms and experiences of a person's internal life that are commonly held to be troubling, confusing or out of the ordinary. Mental distress can potentially lead to a change of behavior, affect a person's emotions in a negative way, and affect their relationships with the people around them.

Some people refer it as psychological distress and some people refer it as mental distress. Mental distress is a term used by some mental health practitioners. I do not like this particular term mental distress you know because in our society what we say mental is mental is gone.

When you say psychologically it is still good that he has got certain psychological emotional problems, but when you say he has got mental distress. So, we just say he is a gone case now cannot be done anything about it and he has to remain in mental hospital, mental asylum. He cannot come back to our own civilized society in his family. Mental distress is a term used by some mental health practitioners and users of mental health services to describe a range of symptoms and experiences of a person's inter life that are commonly held to be troubling, confusing or out of the ordinary. They call them mental because now to them he is unfit to remain with the family or in the society and it is better to put him in a mental asylum otherwise he will be a nuisance, he will create nuisance in the society.

So, it is better to put him on the lock and key. Mental distress can potentially lead to a change of behavior, affect a person's emotions in a negative way and affect their relationship with the people around them and therefore we put the people who has got mental distress in mental asylum. We call it mental hospital, but the people we have got so many people with mind psychological disorders. They go to a psychiatrist get the

treatment otherwise also without the treatment also they lead a normal life. They are not volatile, they are not violent and they will not create this role in the society.

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### Psychological Distress

- Certain traumatic life experiences such as: bereavement, stress, lack of sleep, use of drugs or alcohol, assault, abuse or accidents can induce mental distress. ***This may be something which resolves without further medical intervention, though people who endure such symptoms longer term are more likely to be diagnosed with mental illness.*** This definition is not without controversy as some mental health practitioners would use the terms mental distress and mental illness interchangeably.
- Some users of mental health services prefer the term mental distress in describing their experience as they feel it better captures that sense of the unique and personal nature of their experience, while also making it easier to relate to, since everyone experiences distress at different times. The term also fits better with the social model of disability.

Certain traumatic life experiences such as bereavement, stress, lack of sleep, use of drugs, alcohol, assault, abuse, accidents can induce mental distress. But such things like lack of sleep of course, if it is continuous lack of sleep yes, but if you do not sleep for a day or two or a week you know does not put you in that psychological distress category. This may be something which resolves without further medical intervention though people who endure such symptoms longer term are more likely to be diagnosed with mental illness. This is what I was telling you. Such symptoms do come in our life also.

We also we come under stress. Our wives, our children, children particularly you see they have to study a lot, they have to face so many exams, unit tests, they have to do well in competitive exams. So, they all we all of us come under stress, but as and when the situation improves it is all fine, we are happy again. So, does not mean most of us have got psychological distress, temporary distress and when the situation improves again we

are psychologically okay. So, we do not require medication as such, but if this situation prolongs when I say prolongs for months together for years together then yes that particular stress can get converted into psychological distress.

Some users of mental health service prefer the term mental distress in describing their experience as they feel it better captures the sense of unique and personal nature of their experience. This I agree with them because generally they treat only mental distress the people who are very violent cannot be tackled within the family background. So, they need some special assistance and special assistance, special medications, specialists are available only in mental hospital. So, we put them there in the mental hospital.

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### **What Is Psychological Distress?**

*Think of a time when you felt sadness. Maybe it was after losing a loved one or losing your job. How did you respond to the situation? While some people may have no difficulty dealing with these events, they may trigger unpleasant feelings that make it impossible to cope and carry on with normal activities in others. For those of us who experience these unpleasant feelings and have difficulty coping, we are experiencing psychological distress.*

**Psychological distress** is a general term used to describe unpleasant feelings or emotions that impact your level of functioning. In other words, it is psychological discomfort that interferes with your activities of daily living. Psychological distress can result in negative views of the environment, others, and the self. Sadness, anxiety, distraction, and symptoms of mental illness are manifestations of psychological distress.

What is psychological distress? Think of a time when you felt sadness, maybe it was after losing a loved one or losing your job, you see you feel sad many times even when you fail in the exam you are sad.

It happens I just said life is a roller coaster sometimes you are up and sometimes you are down. How did you respond to the situation while some people may have no difficulty dealing with these events they may trigger unpleasant feelings that make it impossible to cope and carry on with normal activities in others. For those of us who experience these unpleasant feelings and have difficulty coping we are experiencing psychological distress. It is a general term used to describe unpleasant feelings or emotions. What did what should not worry if such things happen? If prolongs then I suggest make some psychologist and he will give you vision means.

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### **What Is Psychological Distress?**

So, no two people experience one event the exact same way.

**Psychological distress is a subjective experience.**

That is, **the severity of psychological distress is dependent upon the situation and how we perceive it.** We can think of psychological distress as a continuum with 'mental health' and 'mental illness' at opposing ends. As we continue to experience different things, we travel back and forth on the continuum at different times throughout our lives.

Psychological distress is a subjective experience that is the severity of psychological distress is dependent on the situation and how we perceive it. I also go on undergone so many psychological things you know, but I just take it even to me giving so many lectures here in few days' time it is also psychological distress to speak continuously, but then we are taken it we are taken the task. So, we feel of course, some sort of psychological distress, but for couple of days and thereafter it just goes off.

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## **Key Points in Relation to The Experience of Illness**

**All illnesses have a psychological impact, because illness is a threat to self :**

- Any life stressor leads to physical consequences that can be prolonged
- Unexplained symptoms are common but their perceived significance and experienced severity varies between individuals even if the apparent causes are similar
- An important factor that can influence how a person copes with an illness is how they perceive the illness
- Insight into and effective coping responses for ill health are useful adaptive mechanisms that can be learned
- Constitutional and developmental factors influence how we experience symptoms

Key points in relation to the experience of illness. Why are we talking about illness here? Because most of our illness is have an effect on psychological effect. In fact, I have heard some of the doctors and clinicians saying that almost 95 percent of this is we call them psychosomatic.

Psychosomatic, Psycho means psychological, somatic means body they are interrelated more than 95 percent. Whenever body is affected and we are unable to cure that particular illness of our body automatically our mind gets affected because mind also stays there in the body it gets affected. So, any illness for few days it may not have that effect on our mind it does not becomes psychological distress, but if it continues yes it does become a psychological distress because our mind gets affected adversely continuously. Any life stressor leads to physical consequences that can be prolonged. Prolonged illness can bring you psychological distress.

Unexplained symptoms are common, but the perceived significance and experience severity varies between individuals and even if the apparent causes are similar. An important factor that influence how a person copes with an illness is how they perceive the illness that depends on your mental strength. If you are trust on yourself you think that you are capable of overcoming this particular problem, may be psychologically may not be distressed so much as another person who is weak mentally will feel about it. Insight into an effective coping responses for ill health are using adaptive mechanisms

that can be learnt. Constitutional and developmental factors influence how we experience symptoms.

Development factors that is where the parents come into in grooming stage of children we have to tell we have to teach our children you see life is not easy my dear friends. Here at home we are there parents are there whatever you say if possible we can we just fulfill your demands your food or your education your clothes and other thing, but this is not going to happen when you are adult and we are not here in this world. Life is like this prepare yourself for the tough situation which are going to challenge you in the future. From the very beginning you have to mentally toughen our children that grooming stage itself that is called developmental factors. If a child is weak, soft, fearful then naturally he will have lots of psychological problems even if a small challenge comes up in his life he will be afraid of it to tackle it.

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### **Factors that contribute to an individual's psychological experience of illness**

- Genetic/constitutional factors
- Home/child rearing practices
- Significant life events
- Developmental stage at which life events occur
- Beliefs about illness
- Cultural and societal environment
- Availability of significant others for support and confiding
- Socioeconomic factors

Factors that contribute to an individual psychological experience of illness genetic, constitutional, developmental we just discussed about it. Again it comes up here how the child has been reared up in home grooming significant life events what has happened when you are a child you see life events means so many things happens someone very close by very loved one in the family dies your whole home gets burned your house is

they get destroyed in the earthquake your father loses the job so many things these are these are the significant life events and they are not good events so they affect your psyche during the developmental stage.

Developmental stage at which life events occur belief about illness some people they are afraid you know they have fallen sick oh my god I have fallen sick oh it is normal you have a bike or you have a four wheelers car a puncture is going to place what is the problem you make use of the stepney change the tyre is it a matter of so much of shock and thinking about talking about body is also like this body is not going to work by the way our heart is a machine which works all throughout from birth till we live maybe so many years 50, 60, 70, 80 doesn't stop and when it stops we are no more but yes hands and other organs sometimes some trouble will be there you might feel sick some fever some cough running nose so this these things no don't worry have that capability to face this don't talk about it try restore your health yourself if not possible meet some clinicians go to the doctor cultural and societal environment availability of significant others for support and confiding significant others that denotes your wife your friends your siblings brothers sisters anybody you know all these people when they come into your life and you really love them therefore I always say my dear friends the family people they are meant for love and not for fighting if you create love and friendship all around you will never have psychological distress and at all if you have then there are so many people to support you. Socio-economic factor society money finances are bad.

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## Why is addressing mental health so important?

Mental health is an *integral* and *essential* component of health.

- "Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity." (WHO constitution)
- Currently, depression is the 4<sup>th</sup> leading cause of disability...
- ...by 2030, depression is predicated to be the **leading cause of disability globally** (overtaking cardiovascular disease)



Why should we address mental health so important health is a state of complete physical mental and social being well-being and not merely the absence of disease of infirmity. WHO is saying this WHO means World Health Organization. My friends we in India what we are talking about health is swast (Sanskrit word meaning health). In Sanskrit we call it swast, swa means myself, ast means I have to stand in that myself you know when I am fine I'm I'm I have got full swast Nirogu means rogue nahi hain that is called Nirogi. Diseaseless means he doesn't have a disease. We since so many time time immemorial immemorial we say swast and we do not say health and when swast refers is physical, mental and social well-being. All the factors if you got positive factors then you can say oh my swast is good, my swast is good, mentally I'm fine, physically I'm bloody strong, socially I got lots of support from our family friends. I love them, they love me this is what is required you know. WHO is just teaching us there are number of things they have been changing the definition but our definition of health remains the same swast when we say swast physical, mental and social well-being that is called swast.

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## Types of Psychological Distress

The following are types of major mental distress:

- Anxiety Disorder
- Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)
- Depression
- Bipolar disorder
- Schizophrenia



Let's see type of psychological distress what we say anxiety disorder we worry so much we are totally uncertain about the future what is going to happen. PTSD post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, bipolar disorder and schizophrenia.

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## Causes of Psychological Distress

- **Traumatic experiences**, such as the death of a loved one, are causes of psychological distress. *Psychological distress can be thought of as a maladaptive response to a stressful situation.* Psychological distress occurs when external events or stressors place demands upon us that we are unable to cope with. For example, we may struggle to accept that a loved one is no longer with us. As a result, we become sad and have trouble getting out of bed, we are unable to focus at work, and we lose interest in social activities.
- **Major life transitions**, i.e. moving to a new place or graduating from college, can be a source of psychological stress if you are unable to cope with the demands that these transitions place on you or are having difficulty adjusting to the new situation.
- **Sudden unexpected events**, such as a loved one's death of a heart attack or being fired from a job, can also cause psychological distress.

Causes of psychological distress. Traumatic experiences major life transition this is what happens what are the major life transition from a child you become adolescent from adolescent you become young when you are young no problem but when you get married

again there are two people wife and husband they are to look after each other so these are called major transition in our life and nobody has taught us how to complete this transition positively. It has to come up on its own by saying observing here or there but we are not. So, when major transition takes place and then thereafter so many unexpected events takes place you are happily married and all of a sudden someone dies wife or husband you are happy happily married and something happens some discord in the family and a divorce takes place children dies you know so all these things they are major disaster in our home a lot of stress comes naturally. I mean there's such situation anybody gets a shock anybody gets a shock but if you are mentally strong then within few days you can rebound. You can regain your strength fight it out and you can start leading a normal life again.

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### Causes of Psychological Distress

Even everyday stressors, such as traffic, have the potential to cause psychological distress. Some other sources of psychological distress include:

- Cancer and other medical illness
- Divorce
- Starting a new job
- Being a victim of bullying
- Adverse school experiences
- Adverse work experiences
- Infertility
- Mental illness



Cancer and other medical illnesses, divorce, starting a new job new job means new boss what is he going to do what is he going to ask for me will it be a eight hours job or ten hours job new job is far away from your own home earlier job was just nearby you start your vehicle and within ten minutes you are at the place of location of job but now it is 50 kilometers away you know. So all those things when you start a new job. Victim of bullying you are a make personality so people always push you. Adverse school

experience, adverse work experience, infertility you do not have any issue and mental illness mentally you are sick.

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### **Symptoms of Psychological Distress**

As we previously stated, psychological distress is a subjective experience. Just as no two people experience events in the same way, no two people manifest psychological distress in exactly same way. For example, suppose that you and your mother were in a car accident and both experienced psychological distress as a result. Yet while you experience sleep disturbances, fatigue, and sadness, your mother experiences anxiety related to driving and memory problems and avoids social activities.

What are the symptoms, symptoms and causes.

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### **Symptoms And Causes**

The symptoms for mental distress include a wide range of physical to mental conditions. **Physical symptoms** may include sleep disturbance, anorexia (lack of appetite), loss of menstruation for women, headaches, chronic pain, and fatigue.

**Mental conditions** may include difficulty in anger management, compulsive/obsessive behavior, a significant change in social behavior, a diminished sexual desire, and mood swings.

Symptoms of mental distress include a wide range of physical to mental condition both type of symptoms physical as well as mental. physical symptoms may include sleep disturbance anorexia that's a lack of appetite you don't feel hungry at all, loss of menstruation for women, headaches, chronic pain and fatigue and mental condition may include difficulty in anger management, compulsive, obsessive behavior a significant change in social behavior or diminish sexual desire and mood swings up and down.

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**Other Symptoms  
Psychological Distress**

- Weight gain
- Anger management problems
- Obsessive thoughts or compulsions
- Physical symptoms not explained by a medical condition
- Decreased pleasure in sexual activities
- Hallucinations (Bhranti)
- Delusions (False Belief)
- Reckless acts i.e. excessive shopping sprees
- Belief that others can hear your thoughts
- Belief that your thoughts are not your own
- Strange or unusual behaviors, i.e. wearing your clothing backwards

Other symptoms, weight gain, anger management problems, obsessive thoughts. Physical symptoms not explained by medical condition, decreased pleasure in sexual activities, hallucinations. Alag alag tarake bhranti hoti rahte hain pratidin (Hindi Phrase meaning Different types of delusions keep happening everyday). Delusions, reckless acts that is excessive. Shopping spree, sometimes you feel like shopping, shopping, shopping even economically you are not strong but still you spend your money and then you bring about economic disaster in your families. Believe that others can hear your thoughts, believe that there are so many beliefs unnecessary you are thinking that other people are listening your thoughts and they behave abnormally with you. Strange or unusual behavior wearing your clothing backwards this or that you know there are so many psychological distress.

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## **INDICATORS Potential for Psychopathology**

The following may be indicators of potential for psychopathology and a focus on bodily symptoms:

- Lack of emotional expression or openness about feelings
- Low self-esteem
- History of recurrent traumatic life events, especially in early years
- History of childhood or parental illness
- Adverse life circumstances
- Previous history of functional problems and unexplained symptoms

There are certain indicators for potential for psychopathology. Who, what sort of, what category of people may fall into this line of psychological distress psychopathology. The people who do not express their emotions they are not open about their feelings they keep everything within. So, naturally if you keep things within what will happen if that whistle in a cooker doesn't work what will happen and the pressure of the vapor builds in, it cannot go out through that whistle it will burst the whole bloody whistle. This is what happens. After all the tongue has been given basically so that you express your emotions you be open. That pressure will come out and you feel relaxed.

Low self-esteem you have to build your own self-esteem. After all we are the wonderful creature of this God and everybody's you are one of them have trust on you self-confidence. History of recurrent traumatic life events this happens this is not in our control sometimes certain things do happen in our life. Every couple of years something happens in our life somebody dies us you lose your job or home gets burnt you know but then one has to after all we have come here in this life and such things will happen take it in correct spirit. History of childhood adverse life circumstances and previous history of functional problems and unexplained symptoms. So these are the potential such people can fall to this.

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## **INDICATORS**

### **Potential for Psychopathology**

- Health beliefs and explanations that are very disease-oriented or externally controlled ('it's the back, it's gone again, last time they said it was fibers that had scarred...') and that cannot easily be reconsidered with the clinician – a tenacity of insistence on the 'body' denotes a strong world view at this end of the spectrum
- Dissatisfaction with attempts to share decision-making and to encourage self-help, which may appear to undermine the patient's perceived need for professional care and referral

Health belief and explanation that a very disease oriented or externally controlled. It is the back it is gone again. Last time they said it they start believing in everything whatever is possible no explanation will do anything to them dissatisfaction will attempt to share decision making and to encourage self-help which may appear to undermine the patient's perceived need for professional care and referral.

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## **The Positive Psychology Movement**

- The positive psychology movement and corresponding social capital/new economics perspectives in public health, exemplified by the Foresight Mental Capital and Wellbeing Project (2009), draw attention to the **desirability of developing reliable and valid standardised scales to measure Psychological Well-being**. As summarised in the WHO report (Freidli; 2009, p.2): “a growing number of longitudinal studies confirm their [i.e. well-being scales] power to predict outcomes, for example, longevity, physical health, quality of life, criminality, drug and alcohol use, employment, earnings and pro-social behaviour (e.g. volunteering)”. In much the same way that we have accepted the need to measure physical health and well-being rather than being restricted to measures of illness and dysfunction, *we need psychometrically sound assessment tools for psychological well-being*. Unless these two attributes are perfectly negatively correlated – just opposite ends of the same continuum - attending only to distress risks leaves important gaps in our understanding of health, well-being, quality of life and resilience.

Recently this 2010 onwards a positive psychology movement had started positive means positive and this generally talked about psychological well-being. Psychological well-being is about lives going well.

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## Psychological Well-being

- Psychological well-being is usually conceptualised as some combination of positive affective states such as happiness (the hedonic perspective) and functioning with optimal effectiveness in individual and social life (the eudemonic perspective) (Deci & Ryan [2008]). As summarised by Huppert ([2009], p.137): ***“Psychological well-being is about lives going well. It is the combination of feeling good and functioning effectively.”*** By definition therefore, people with high PW report feeling happy, capable, well-supported, satisfied with life, and so on; Huppert’s ([2009]) review also claims the consequences of PW to include better physical health, mediated possibly by brain activation patterns, neurochemical effects and genetic factors.

We must enjoy our life it's the combination of feeling good and functioning effectively. You must feel good every time in any circumstances and in the given circumstances if you do your work hundred percent you feel happy. How do you work hundred percent.

Again the principle of Gita what Krishna said karmani adikarashtu mafalisue kadachana (Sanskrit phrase meaning). You've got rights on the work what type of work you will do. But, forget about the results give it in the hands of Lord. If you are done well something will turn out well and whatever comes out just accept it as it is. By definition therefore people with high PW report feeling happy, capable, well-supported satisfied with life. PW that is psychological well-being that factor. But, definition does people by birth they remain happy must have seen people there are so many people in the life they always smile. You also must have seen your friends or others you know. So, such people that that factor of well-being is very high and they feel happy, they feel capable, well-supported, satisfied, consequences of such PW to include better physical health meditated, mediated possibly by brain activation patterns neuro neurochemical effects

and genetic factors. So, this is what we should try and follow psychological well-being and it's a weapon to fight against psychological distress.

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### **Social Support is an Answer!**



Last my different psychological problems will come up. There is nobody in this world who doesn't have a psychological problem. It's a simple, don't worry about this term psychological when you feel unhappy we have got a problem and doctors will call it a psychological problem. So such problems will come in your life. Sometimes they are very big and sometimes are very small, sometimes they go away in few days and certain times they remain with months together. In such situation we call it psychological distress. People mental health expert they call it mental distress whatever it may be I just tell you my dear friend social support is the answer that's the key. Remain activated have enough social support, do some service to the people, believe in your family, look after and respect your parents, look after and respect your children, friends and everyone. This is the social support and things will come and go and will remain happy forever. Thank you.