

A Study between Meaningful Time Utilization and Depression during COVID Times

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EDITORIAL

The present unprecedented times have called for changes that we had to accept which we were hitherto unprepared for. Apart from taking immense toll on our daily livelihood, global economy, businesses, jobs, travel plans, education and other things a great impact has been observed upon the human mind as well.

People around the world has been forced to live within the four walls of their homes, a situation they had never been used to. Apart from the fear and uncertainty of jobs and income there had been enough reason for people to fall into the clutches of depression. While there had been immense videos and messages circulating in the social media on how to utilize time in best ways during these COVID times yet many people had fallen into a cycle of unproductivity and meaningless time pass by watching television and not utilizing time in a meaningful manner.

However, there are people who had been trying to utilize this time in a meaningful manner by remaining productively engaged, following a discipline, doing positive activities like yoga, meditation, practicing a passion, learning new things and thus doing self-development.

Therefore, it has been seen on interviewing some random people that the trend showed depression affected those who indulged in meaningless activities which were giving pleasure for the time being but eventually caused more emptiness and fear of the uncertain. The people who remained engaged meaningfully were on the other hand able to combat negative feelings and could attach positive meaning to these unprecedented times as they believed that they could indulge in things which improved their skill set and also took them to a better position than they had been before the COVID situation.

It has also been observed that people who initially started with monotonous activities and were feeling depressed eventually were able to combat the negative feelings once they started to spend time in a disciplined manner by doing meaningful and productive things.

A trend has also emerged during these interviews that people have started to believe that learning new things and gaining knowledge in multiple areas can help them to remain in a better position when there is lot of unemployment happening due to the pandemic.

The idea presented here is that meaningful activities including learning new skills, exercise and yoga, pursuing a hobby or a passion or honing existing skills to upgrade oneself and so on can create a great positive impact on mental health as compared to the meaningless activities like watching movies and seasons on Netflix, Amazon Prime and so on on television. These have been seen to have an addictive quality to induce the desire in us to keep watching thereby spending days doing almost absolutely nothing productive. While watching movies and seasons can be a respite from the daily hectic schedule but during times of lockdown and stay at home situations his feeling of unproductivity and meaningless activity often leads to feelings of worthlessness and hopelessness in such uncertain times of the pandemic.

Meaningful activities on the other hand help to create a sense of self-worth and productivity even in times of uncertainty. Exercising and yoga release hormones that create a positive feeling coupled with staying fit and in shape. Honing existing skills and learning new things can create a sense of confidence to be able to combat challenging situations of job loss and employment issues. Connecting to family, friends and other human beings can also be a positive means to spend time as this can also combat feelings of hopelessness and fear. All these can bring us to talk about neurotransmitters which can create happy feelings and thus evade any possibilities of depressive symptoms.

By honing skills and learning new things the goal oriented nature in us can release dopamine. Connecting to others and trying to motivate them to feel happy can make one feel important and needed thus releasing serotonin. Achieving small goals and reminiscing about daily positive activities can go hand in hand to create positive feelings.

Oxytoxin is the next happiness factor which can strengthen interpersonal bond and intimacy. Instead of spending time

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alone in front of TV or the mobile phone people who spend the time during stay at home in getting closer to family members and feeling loved in the process can feel much happier and positive to deal with challenges. Simply by hugging each other oxytocin can be released and create a much positive effect. Exercising and physical activity can release endorphins which can relieve stress and anxiety.

The goal is to remain meaningfully engaged so that the time is spent productively which will not only give a sense of self-worth but also add to overall wellbeing and happiness thus reducing the chances of feeling overwhelmed with feelings of depression.