# The Company of Master Mariners of India

## CMMI MONTHLY LECTURE MEETING

**DATE: 12th JUNE, 2025**

**TIME : 1800 hrs (IST)**

CMMI

MENTAL HEALTH IS IMPORTANT

**SPEAKER: DR. SANDHYA RANI**

PHD. CONSULTANT ORGANIZATIONAL AND COUNSELLING PSYCHOLOGIST

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**TOPIC: "NAVIGATING MENTAL HEALTH: THE PSYCHOLOGICAL DIMENSIONS OF THE SHIPPING SECTOR"**

**For outstation Members:** Special arrangements have been made for you to attend this meeting on-line. **So Don't Miss it!**

**Venue- The Company of Master Mariners of India**

K. Raheja Prime, 5th Floor, Sag Baug Road, Marol Industrial

**Join Zoom Meeting -** Click here below
https://us02web.zoom.us/j/8117528372O

# Navigating Mental Health: The Psychological Dimensions in The Shipping Sector

NAME: Dr Sandhya Rani Ramadass
PhD., M. Phil. and M. Sc. in Psychology,

Designation
Organizational Psychologist and Psychological Counsellor,
Founder Partner, Element H Psychological Support Services, Chennai.

Affiliations :
Consultant Psychologist to Synergy Maritime, OSM Shipping, Visiting Faculty to HIMT, AMET, Maersk Training. Member of CCF, BPS, APA, InsPA, NAOP, IAAP, IAPS.

Field of interest:
Counselling, Training, Research, Assessments, Wellbeing, Mental Health, Workplace interventions.

Special Achievements  :
Licenced in Occupational Testing,
Proffesional Supervision for Budding Psychologist,
Certified Wellness trainer,
Licenced Human Element and Leadership Trainer

Element**H**
Psychological Support Services

Dr Sandhya Rani Ramadass PhD
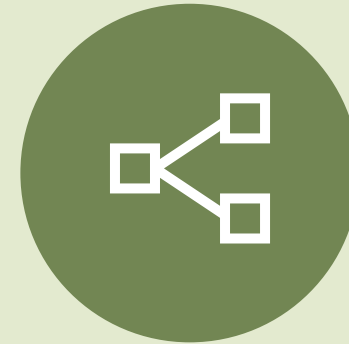Element H Psychological Support Services, Chennai

# **Synopsis**

MENTAL HEALTH

MANAGEMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH

PSYCHOLOGICAL DIMENSIONS

# Mental health Theme

- **It is time to prioritize mental health in the work place 2025**

- **Mental health is a universal human right 2024**

- **Mental health at work 2023**

# Stigma

- Going to a shrink!

- What will people think!

- Will get a job!

- What a shame for the family!

- No one will like to be with me!

- Life long condition!

- Life long medication!

- This never happened to any of my family members!

- I didn't have any trauma why did I get this!

# Myths and facts related to mental health

| Myth | Fact |
|------|------|
| Mental illness is incurable. | Mental illness is manageable with adequate support. |
| Mental illness makes you weaker. | People with mental illness can still be strong and resilient. |
| Mentally ill people are always dependent. | A mentally ill person can work and be productive. |
| Mentally ill people are unpredictable. | Not all mental illnesses have the same symptoms. |
| Mentally ill people are dangerous. | Not all people with mental illness are aggressive, and often they are not dangerous. |
| Mental illness is contagious. | Mental illness is not contagious. |
| Mentally ill people are unreliable, so you can't trust them | Discrimination worsens the lives of those with mental illness; they deserve equal opportunities. |

# Why Does Shipping Industry Need Mental Health Professionals?

- ➡ High Hazard Industry

- ➡ Priceless Human life involved

- ➡ Billions of Dollars involved

- ➡ World without Trade!

- ➡ Cultural Exchange benefits

- ➡ Constant adaptation to changes in policies across the globe

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# Life of Seafarers- PROS

- ✓ Lucrative salary

- ✓ Visit Many countries

- ✓ Hands on work

- ✓ No corruption

- ✓ Multinational exposure

- ✓ Global citizen

- ✓ Family sailing

- ✓ Adventurous

- ✓ Long vacations

# Life Of Seafarers – CONS

❖ Homesick/Living away from society

❖ Only 15-20 on board

❖ Many nationalities -hence lack of connect

❖ Changing time zones - no proper sleep

❖ Mental health issues

❖ Burn out stress and depression

❖ No immediate access to doctors/support/

Medicines

❖ Too many exams

❖ Difficult to get a life partner

❖ PTSD/ Risk of accidents/ permanent

injuries/death

❖ Relationships

❖ Communication gaps

❖ Not enough connectivity – Internet/Phone

❖ Not allowed in many countries to step

down for shore-1eave

❖ Dire consequences for mistakes. Strict rules

❖ Stringent deadlines and work load

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# Issues Faced On Board

Loneliness  and Homesickness

- Stress /Fatigue/Burnout

- Lack of immediate access to medical help

- Relationship or friendship conflict

- Generation Gap

- Hierarchical structure

- Difficulty relating to others

- Emergency situations at work

- An urge to use substances

- Physical or emotional outbursts

- Issues with sleep

# What Does Research And Statistics Reveal?

Based on a review of 63 studies, Risk factors of poor mental health among seafarers appear to be:

- Younger age
- Being single
- Poor physical health
- Exposure to noise/vibration
- Feeling unsafe
- High job demands
- Long working hours
- Night/irregular shifts

- Poor sleep
- Poor team cohesion
- Poor perception of management
- Poor social support
- Lack of autonomy
- Scheduling uncertainties
- Long duration at sea
- Over-commitment

# Mental Health Issues

- Anxiety
- Depression
- Aggressive Behaviours
- Violent episodes
- Self Harm
- Suicidal tendencies
- Trauma PTSD
- Grief
- Aggravating or worsening of existing well managed conditions

# Causal and Contributing factors for Accidents

## Task Components

| Employees | Job | Equipment and Tools |
|---|---|---|
| Age<br>Ability<br>Experience<br>Drugs, Alcohol<br>Gender<br>Stress<br>Alertness, Fatigue<br>Motivation<br>Accident Proneness | Arousal, Fatigue<br>Physical workload<br>Mental workload<br>Work-rest cycles<br>Shift, shift rotation<br>Pacing<br>Ergonomic hazards<br>Procedures | Controls, Displays<br>Electric hazards<br>Mechanical hazards<br>Thermal hazards<br>Pressure hazards<br>Toxic substance hazards<br>Explosive hazards<br>Other component failures |

## Surrounding Environment

| Physical Environment | Social / Psychological Environment |
|---|---|
| Illumination<br>Noise<br>Vibration, Falls<br>Temperature, Humidity<br>Airborne pollutants<br>Fire hazards, Radiation hazards | Management practices<br>Social norms<br>Morale<br>Training<br>Incentives |

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# Reducing Human Error

- Checking Biases
- Conditions contributing to slips, lapses, mistakes and cognitive failures
- Internal and external factors
- Reducing on Mental load which is causing cognitive failures
- Threat due to blame culture even though most incidents are unintentional
- Both the organization and individual work collaboratively and not shift the load on only one.
- Enhance working conditions and Mental health to sustain focus and be productive

# Benefits Of Enhanced Mental Health

Help reduce reactions to distressing events

Increase one's emotional stability and resilience

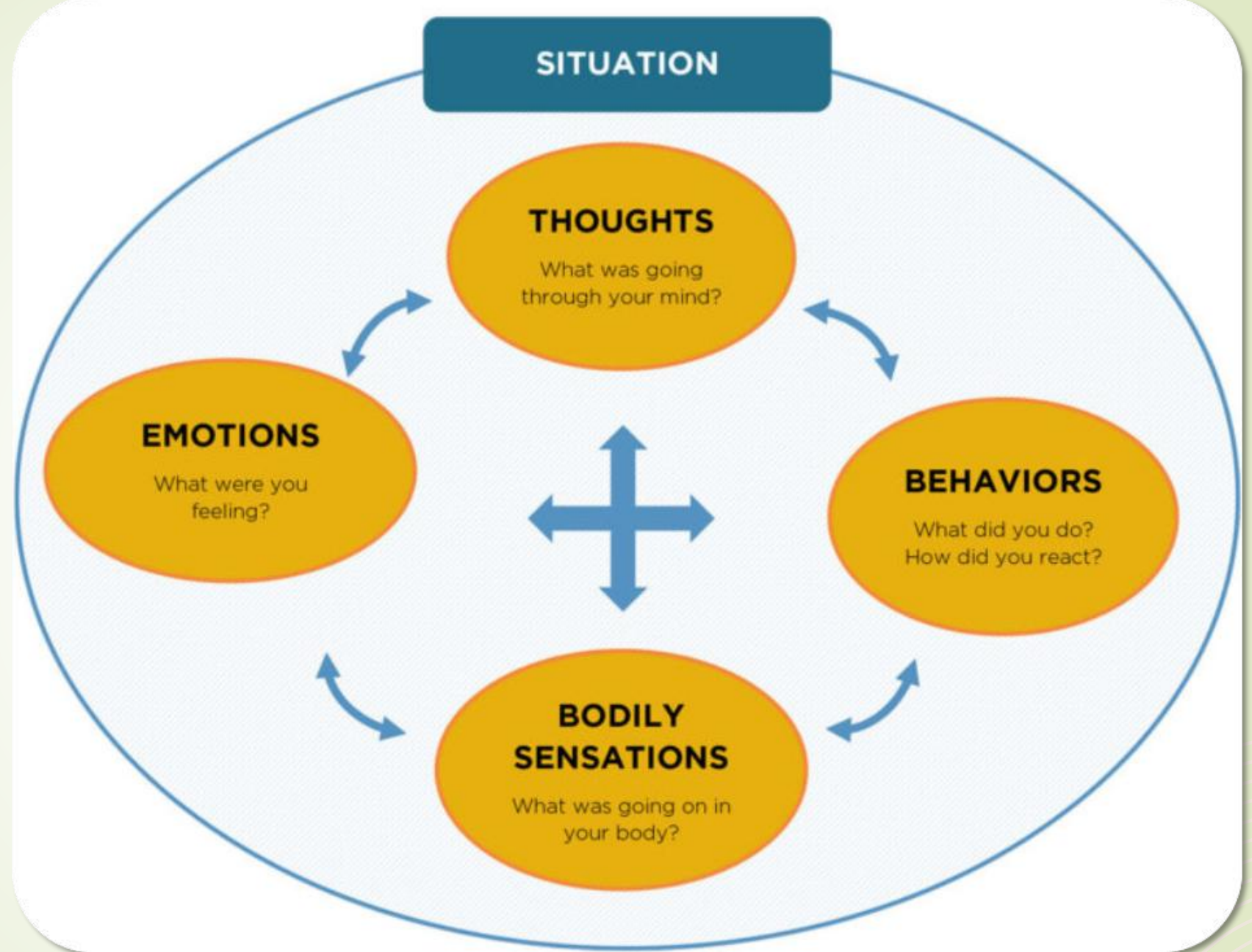Alter negative ways of thinking that could otherwise contribute to stress or self-harm during this time

Empower individuals to make decisions that support their wellbeing as opposed to attempting to please others and harming self or relationships
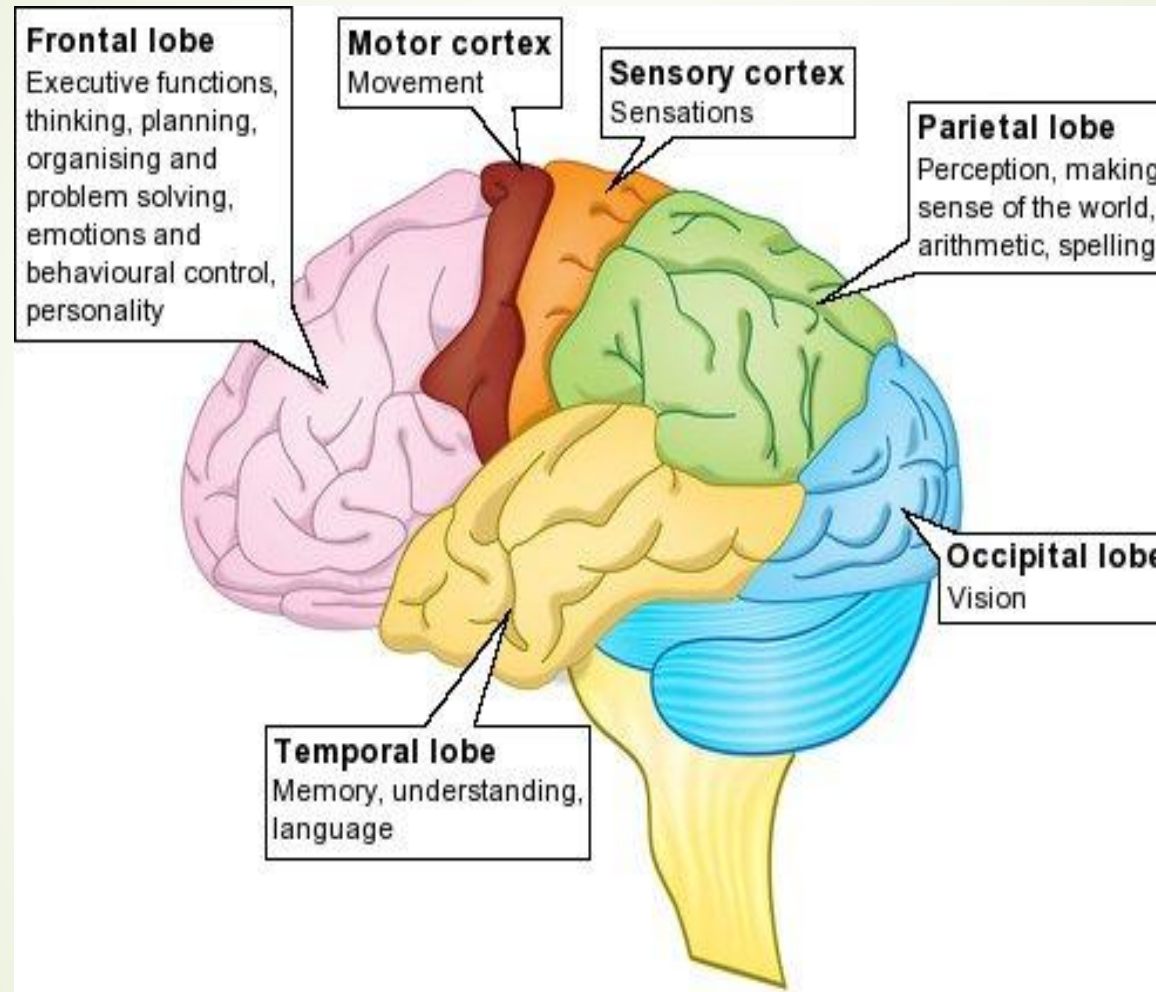
Improve interpersonal relationships with others

# Mind – Body Connect

# Neuropsychology

✓ **Response Inhibition** – The ability to evaluate a situation and how someone's behavior might affect task

✓ **Working Memory** – The ability to hold information in mind while performing complex tasks

✓ **Emotional Control** – The ability to manage emotions to help regulate and guide behavior

✓ **Flexibility** – The ability to revise plans in the face of obstacles, setbacks, new information, or mistakes

✓ **Sustained Attention** – The capacity to attend to a situation or task in spite of distraction, fatigue, or boredom



**Frontal lobe**
Executive functions, thinking, planning, organising and problem solving, emotions and behavioural control, personality

**Motor cortex**
Movement

**Sensory cortex**
Sensations

**Parietal lobe**
Perception, making sense of the world, arithmetic, spelling

**Occipital lobe**
Vision

**Temporal lobe**
Memory, understanding, language

✓ **Task Initiation** – The ability to begin a task without undue procrastination in a timely fashion

✓ **Planning and Prioritizing** – Make decisions about what's important to focus on and what's not
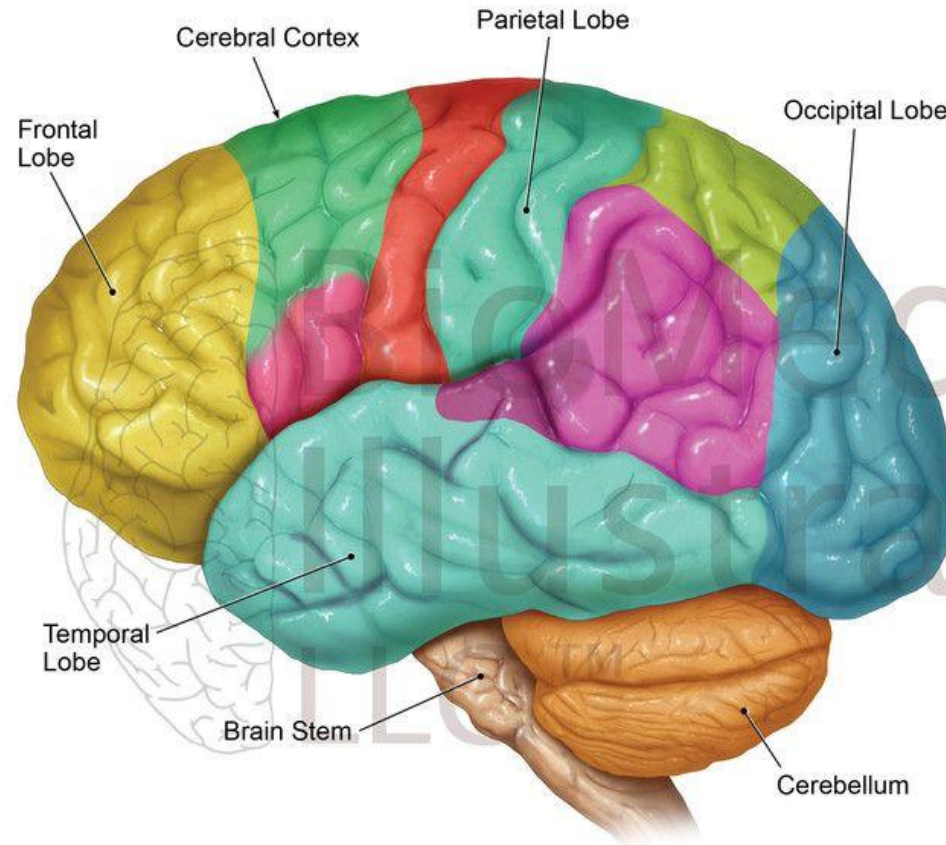
✓ **Organization** – The ability to create and maintain a system for arranging or keeping track of important details and items

✓ **Time Management** – The ability to estimate how much time is available

✓ **Goal-Directed Persistence** – The capacity to establish a goal and follow through on achieving i

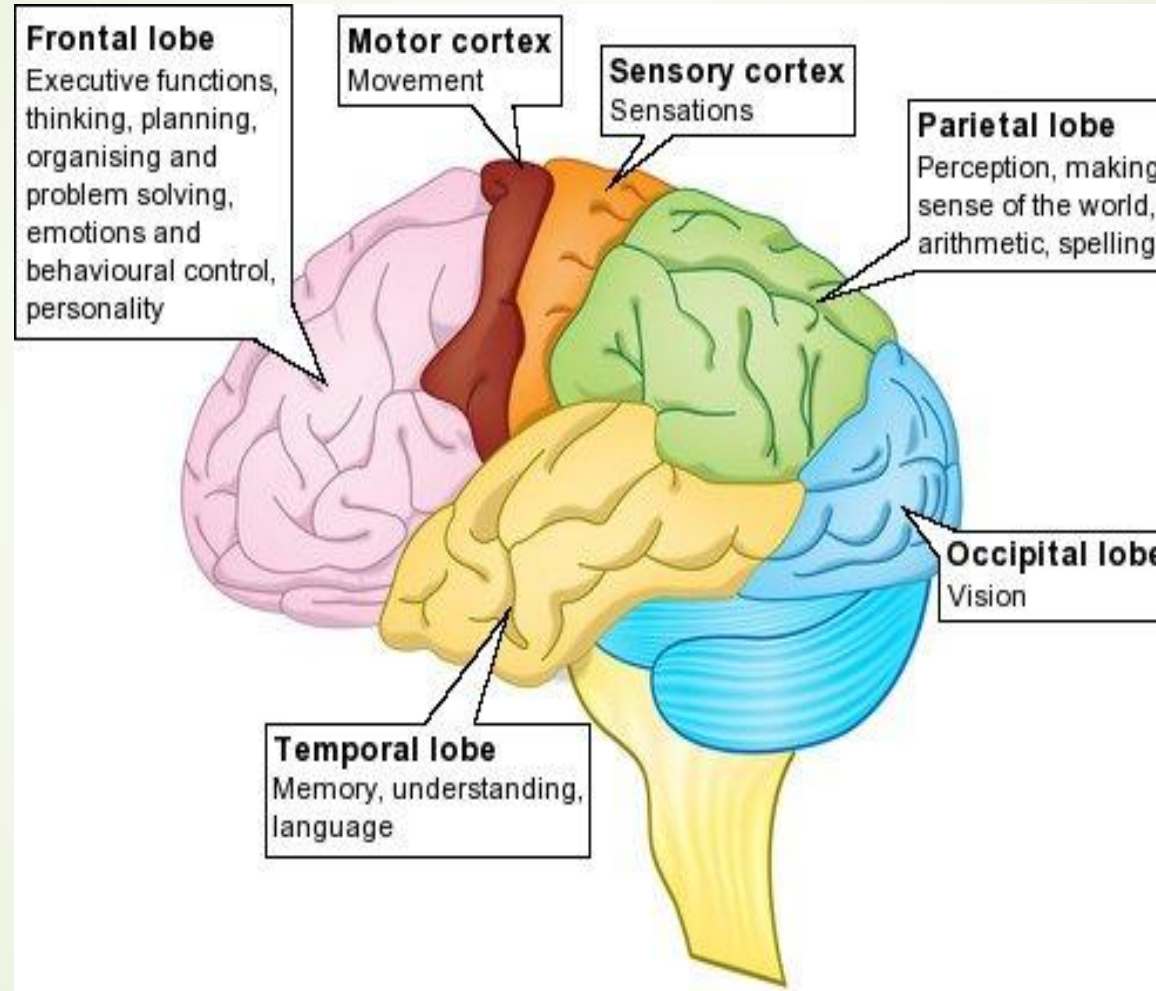✓ **Metacognition** – The ability to self-monitor when performing a task

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# **Medical aspects**

- DSM 5 - APA
- ICD 10 – WHO
- Disorders, Illnesses, Conditions, Medications, Self harm and Suicide

- Psychotic/Neurotic/Organic/Personality/Environmental
- Symptomatic/ Episodes/Duration/Frequency/
- Managed with or without medication

# Symptoms and Management

**Some Symptoms**

- Change in routine like sleep, diet, health , activities and recreations
- Observe erratic patterns
- Consistently worsening of symptoms
- Lack of enjoyment
- Not in touch with reality
- Always talking or extremities, giving up, pointless, over hyped
- A behavior which is not the usual of the individual
- Harming others or self

**How to Manage?**

- Check for prescriptions
- Isolate if necessary but don't leave them alone
- Keep under someone's watch or take turns to keep watch
- See if symptoms reduce after medications
- Encourage daily routine
- Support Groups and Help lines
- Report abnormal behaviors even if false alarm

# Barefoot Counselling

# Who can be a counsellor?

**Professional Counsellor**

Trained and supervised professional. Masters degree in Psychology/Counselling/2-3 years of supervision

**Barefoot counsellor**

1. Mental health workers

2. Peer groups /team member

3. A senior / department head dealing with many people

4. Teachers

5. Anyone interested to Help

# Goals of counselling?

- Provides psychosocial support

- Strengthens the sense of individual responsibility

- Helps to build on new information

- Helps in understanding the need for modifying life styles.

- Enables the process of getting to know the nature of the problem

- Assists in making realistic decisions

- Reduces the impact of problems on the individual and his or her family and friends.

- Facilitates the building up of self confidence, self esteem and self respect

- Brings about positive changes in life style

- Facilitates behavioural change

# Who needs counselling?

- Individuals going through life events

- Individuals going through major change

- Stress, grief, depressed, anxious, feeling helpless, inadequate, scared, breakup, separation, new job, new roles and responsibilities, negative thoughts, disappointments, relationship problems, family problems, health issues, facing extreme challenges, overwhelmed

- Prolonged disturbed states where he/she unable to come back to normal state

- Motivated to change and willing to talk

- BASICALLY – Anyone and Everyone .

# Some types of Barefoot Counselling

- ◗ Psycho social Education

- ◗ Psychological First Aid

- ◗ Relaxation/Mindfulness

- ◗ Process oriented

# Stress and Coping

- Stressors
- Life events
- Work place related colleagues/deadlines/inexperienced or incompetent
- Family related – children/spouse/relatives
- Social and Environmental stressors
- Major
- Minor
- Cumulative effect of Minor stressors



STRESS LEVEL

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# **What are coping skills?**

- Use of cognitive and behavioral strategies to manage the demands of a stressful situation to reduce the negative emotions and conflict caused by stress (APA, 2020)

- Involve the use of one's own resources to maintain emotional well-being.

# Coping Skills- Brain Storm

**HEALTHY**

- Helps to be productive
- Self aware
- Social support
- Exercise
- Ask Right questions
- Use mental health tools
- Assertiveness
- Recreational and relaxing activities

**NOT HEALTHY**

- Addiction
- Excessive screen time
- Conflicts
- Repeating negative patterns
- Self Harm
- Yelling / fighting with loved ones
- Giving up
- Isolation

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# **Quick Coping**

- Grounding techniques

- Spot jogging

- Sip water

- Breathe out loud

- Focus on breath

- Move every 30 minutes

- Who is in control?

- Prioritise

- Check manuals , process, make calls or discuss

- STRETCH STRETCH STRETCH

# Long Term Coping

- Healthy habits

- Holidays/Recreations

- Quality time

- Routine

- Hobbies

- Spiritual well being

- Deep breathing

- Invest in Relationships- support group Mental Health Professional

# Solution Focused Approach

- What now?

- What would make it better?

- What changes?

- What to do to make things like you want to?

- How do you want it? How to reach there?

- If there were a miracle what would happen.

- Preferred future

- Past Success

- Appreciate – reinforce – Build hope

- Exceptions

- Therapeutic change

- Scaling

# Mental Health at the Workplace

- Managing People

- Managing Self

- Managing Work

- Psychological Safety

- Healthy Coping

- Efficiency and Job Satisfaction

# Managing Work

- Time Management Techniques
- Decision making
- Problem solving
- Goal Setting
- Stress management
- Change management
- Conflict management
- Critical Thinking

# Being Work Ready

- Membership in Associations networking groups

- Constantly upgrade Resume and online profiles e g LinkedIn

- Upgrade knowledge, skills – read books – Management programs

- Learn essential software, programs, languages

- Attend self development, leadership programs

- Use online resources , videos, podcast etc streamed by professionals.

# **Managing People**

Psychological safety

Empathy

Gratitude, forgiveness, Altruism

Maintain healthy relationships

Work on relationships

# Psychological Safety

**Goals**

- Diversity
- Inclusion
- Belonging

**Leaders model the following**

- Everyone matters
- Invite Inputs
- Respond Appreciatively

**Willingness to**

- Have Awkward Conversations
- Direct communication despite hierarchy
- Have challenging conversations
- Be wrong
- Receive feedback

the
fearless
organ

Creating Psych
Workplace fo
Innovation, a

Amy C. Edmondson
HARVARD BUSINESS SCHOOL

WILEY
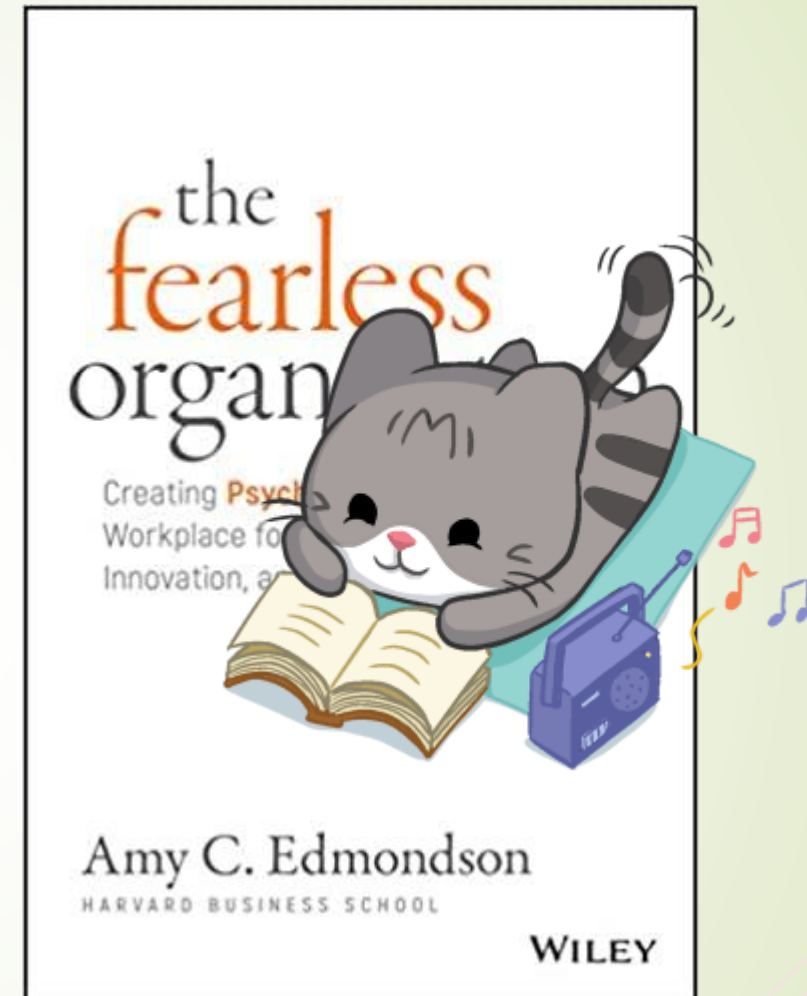
# How to create a psychologically safe environment for my people?

- Be a role model first
- Accept mistakes
- Acknowledge we are only human
- Clarify expectations
- Show humility
- Laugh at yourself
- Welcome feedback from juniors
- Transformational leader
- Everyone has a right to be what they are
- Buddy groups
- Casual activities, games, tournments,
- Discourage stereotyping and discrimination

# Maintaining inter-personal relationships with colleagues

- Watch movies together

- Order something for each other/ buy a meal

- Say wow and appreciate

- Say Wonderful and Thanks

- Talk about key moments – topics - circle time

- Have a meal/ cup of coffee together

- Play games together – SPORTS

- Memes, reading or hobby group, talent day

- Celebrate themes , days or festivals

# How to help your team /family?

**How to help?**

**Listen-Empathise-Validate their pain**

**Remind them how they handled earlier/how can they see things differently?**

**Establish routine and self care**

**Plan fun activities together**

**Encourage every small step**

**Bring in Hope**

**Bring in the fact that they are important**

**Let them know they are not alone and help is around – call help line**
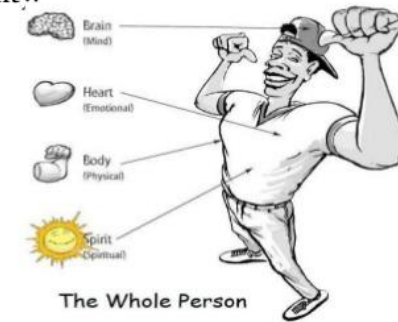
# Managing Self

- Assertiveness
- Stress Management
- Emotional Intelligence
- Expanding my wellness tool kit
- Work Life Balance - Integration
- Looking forward to breaks and vacations
- Mental Holiday
- Practice mindfulness, content, peace

# SELF CARE

- Wellbeing – Health- WHO
- Physical –
  - exercise, diet, sleep, rest
- Mental-
  - stress, emotions, hobby, relax
- Social-
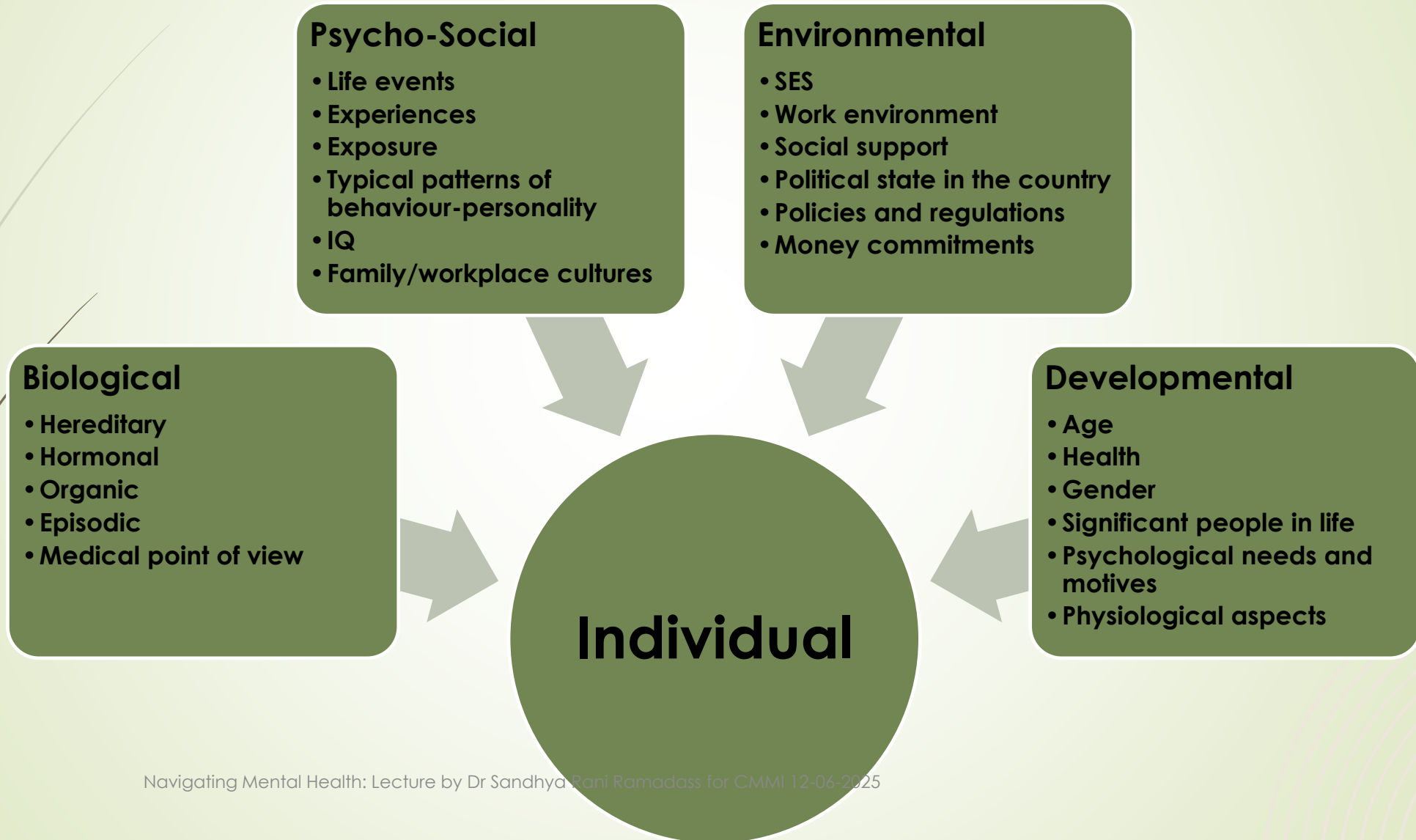  - prosocial, helping, forgiveness, gratitude, contentment, peaceful, support group, venting,



**HEALTH**

- Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well being and not merely an absence of disease or infirmity.

Brain (Mind)
Heart (Emotional)
Body (Physical)
Spirit (Spiritual)

The Whole Person

# Approaches In Understanding People – Psychological dimensions

**Psycho-Social**
- Life events
- Experiences
- Exposure
- Typical patterns of behaviour-personality
- IQ
- Family/workplace cultures

**Environmental**
- SES
- Work environment
- Social support
- Political state in the country
- Policies and regulations
- Money commitments

**Biological**
- Hereditary
- Hormonal
- Organic
- Episodic
- Medical point of view

**Developmental**
- Age
- Health
- Gender
- Significant people in life
- Psychological needs and motives
- Physiological aspects

**Individual**

# Core Psychology Concepts

- Law of Individual differences – Everyone is Unique
- Personality – Nature Vs Nurture – Type and Trait approaches
- Intelligence IQ, Singular Vs Multiple
- Attitude – Perceptions based on experiences and available information.
- Emotions – Emotional Regulation. Emotional Intelligence
- Behaviour – Visible, Actions, Learned
- Motivation – Needs, Drives, Goals, incentives
- Stress – Stressors,
- Learning – Conditional, Observational, Social
- Memory – Brain, Short term, Long term, Working Memory

# Life experiences affecting individuals

- STRESS, Response to stress
- COPING– Healthy Vs Unhealthy
- GRIEF, - Bundle of emotions
- TRAUMA , - Reliving trauma - PTSD
- ABUSE – Affects personality, coping,
- PTSD – Response to a trauma, disaster or traumatic experience
- Culture – Values
- Diversity
- Generation Gap
- Real world Vs Ideal world
- Locus of control

# Consequences

- General Health
- Work Life Balance
- Quality of life
- Life Satisfaction
- Well Being Social – Physical -Mental
- Wellness
- Chronic Symptoms – Physiological (aches and Pain)–Psychological (Helpless, Anxious, Depressed, Burnout)

# Empathy exercise

- Trust

- Listening

# Modern Approach

- Creating conditions to bring out the best in individuals and groups

- Leaders are not perfect

- Leadership is not only for those on the top

- Person-Job Fit

- Work Life Integration

- Set of trainable/developable skills

- Everyone has access to information

- Everyone has to upgrade

# Areas in Psychology that applies to Shipping Sector

- **Organizational Psychology**/Behaviour-Teamwork, Leadership Interpersonal relations, Structure and systems- EXECUTION, PROCESS, OPERATIONS AND MANAGEMENT

- **Environment Psychology** –Effect of noise, light, physical environment, weather, climate, etc – how to optimise the environment - PERFORMANCE

- **General Psychology**-Personality, Motivation, Emotions, Stress, Learning, Communication, Brain – DAY TO DAY

- **Cross Cultural Psychology** – dynamics due to similarities and differences –GLOBAL CULTURE

- **Cognitive Psychology** – Decision making, attention, problem solving, memory - ERRORS

- **Social Psychology** -Relationships, trust, support systems, families, groups , dynamics of people interactions,

- **Counselling Psychology** – Help in decisions, problem solving, coping

- **Abnormal Psychology** -Clinical, medical etc

- **Community Psychology**, **Development Psychology , Educational Psychology**

- **Research and development** – Constant work in progress

# Positive Psychology

- Risk Factors

- Protective Factors

- PSYCHOLOGICAL CAPITAL – HERO - HOPE_EFFICACY_RESILIENCE_OPTIMISM

# Emerging fields in Psychology

**Neuropsychology & Neuroethics**

- Focus: How brain structures and functions influence behavior and cognition.

- Emerging angles: Brain-computer interfaces (BCIs), neuroenhancement, ethical dilemmas of brain data.

**Eco-psychology & Climate Psychology**

- Focus: Human relationships with the environment.

- Applications: Psychological impacts of climate change, promoting sustainable behaviors, eco-anxiety.

**Psychoinformatics**

- Focus: Using data science, machine learning, and big data to understand behavior.

- Example: Predicting personality traits from social media use.

# Emerging fields in Psychology

**Cultural Neuroscience**

- Focus: How culture and biology interact to shape behavior and brain function.

- Why it's new: Combines cultural psychology, neuroscience, and anthropology for a more holistic view.

**Epigenetic Psychology**

- Focus: How environmental factors influence gene expression and psychological traits.

- Research areas: Trauma inheritance, development, stress response mechanisms.

**Space Psychology**

- Focus: Psychological challenges in long-duration space missions.

- Applications: Isolation, group dynamics, resilience in astronauts.

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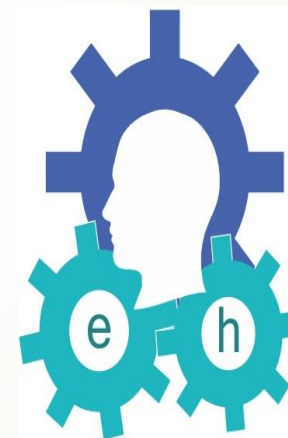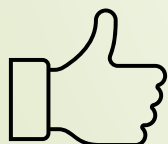
# Future Directions -

1. Train more seafarers and their families in Barefoot Counselling, encourage more support personnel who can empathize better so that better referrals and interventions can be provided. Helplines, wellness wings etc.

2. Recognize seafarers as a community and develop common practices and traditions to encourage socializing and provide opportunities to interact support to each other

3. Identify and upgrade obsolete machineries, processes and work systems, to reduce blame culture and human error.

4. Reduce power high and power mongering which can result due to hierarchy and have flat systems.

5. Look out for signs of mental health issues and act immediately. Everyones' safety is everyones' responsibility.

6. Invest in Research and Development to constantly improvise quality of work and personal life.

7. Never Hesitate to call a professional even if it is false alarm

# References
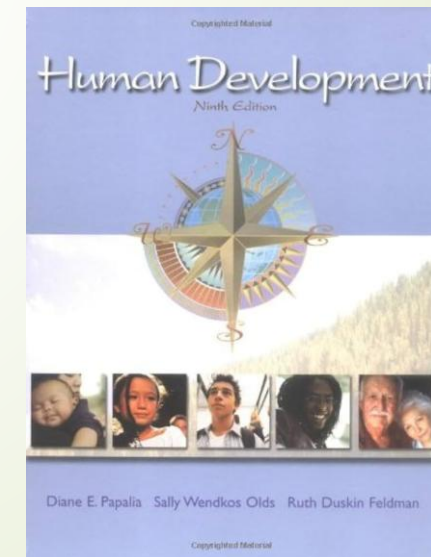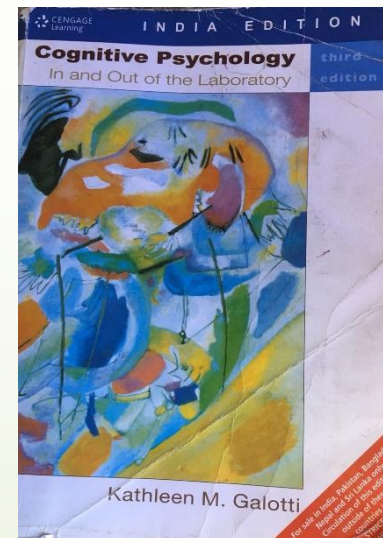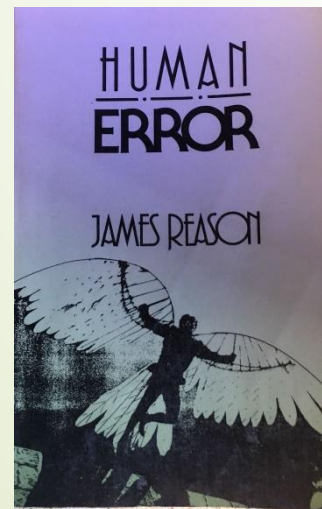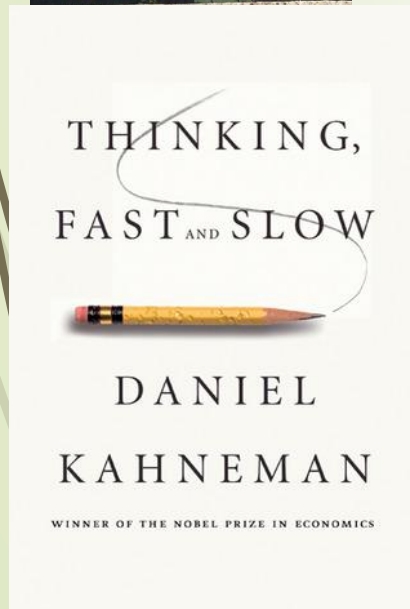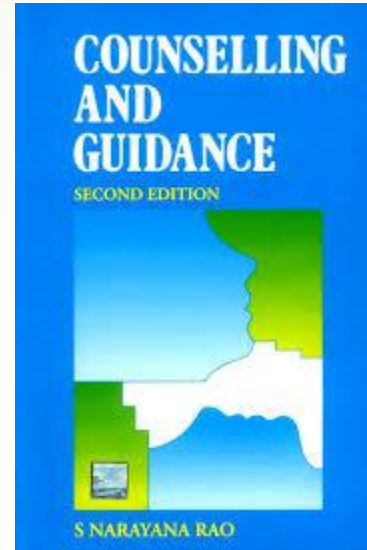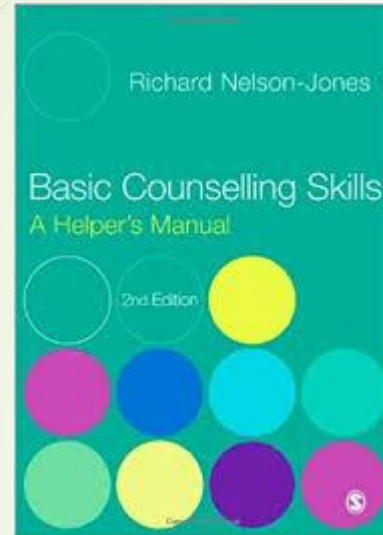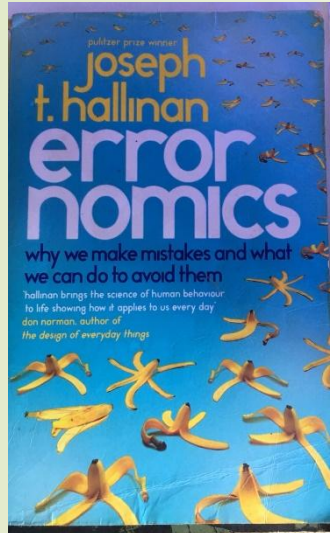
# THANK YOU FOR YOUR INVOLVEMENT DISCUSSIONS?

- **Dr Sandhya Rani Ramadass. Ph.D.**
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- **Elementh.in**