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1. What made you choose child psychology as your area of specialization, and what do you find most rewarding about working with children and adolescents?

Ans. I've always been interested in understanding how people develop, but child psychology particularly stood out to me because early experiences can have such a strong influence on a person's later development. Children may not always have the words to express what they're feeling, so their emotions often come through their behaviour, play, or interactions.

What I find most rewarding is seeing those small but meaningful changes like when a child communicates something independently, becomes more confident, or develops a skill they were struggling with. Those moments can be very rewarding for both the child and the family.

2. How is working with children and teenagers different from working with adults?

Ans. With children, you can't always expect them to directly tell you what they're experiencing. We often need to understand them through play, activities, observation and their behaviour.

With teenagers, there is usually more verbal communication, but building trust and respecting their growing need for independence becomes especially important. In both cases, understanding their developmental stage is essential because the way we communicate and intervene has to be appropriate for their age.

3. What are some of the most common psychological challenges you see in teenagers today, and have you noticed these changing over the years?

Ans. Some common concerns are anxiety, academic pressure, low self-esteem, peer pressure, relationship difficulties and identity-related concerns.

I think what has changed is the environment in which teenagers are growing up. Social media has added another layer of comparison and pressure, because they are constantly exposed to how others look, live and succeed.

At the same time, I think there is more awareness about mental health now, and teenagers are becoming more open to seeking help, which is definitely a positive change.

4. How do you build trust with a child or teenager who may not initially want to talk to a psychologist?

Ans. I think the first step is not forcing them to talk. If a child or teenager feels that they are being questioned or judged, they're naturally going to become guarded.

With younger children, I may start through play or an activity they enjoy. With teenagers, I try to give them some control over the conversation and allow them to share at their own pace.

Ultimately, trust is built when they consistently feel heard, respected and not judged. Once they understand that you're there to understand them rather than simply correct them, they are usually more comfortable opening up.

5. How important is the role of parents and family in a child's psychological treatment?

Ans. It is extremely important because a child doesn't develop in isolation. Their family and everyday environment have a significant influence on their emotional and behavioural development.

Parents can play a very important role by understanding what may be behind a child's behaviour and learning how to respond more effectively. At the same time, especially with adolescents, we need to maintain appropriate confidentiality and give them a space where they feel safe to express themselves.

So ideally, the psychologist, child and family work together as a team.

6. How do you distinguish between normal teenage behaviour and behaviour that may indicate an underlying psychological problem?

Ans. I think the key is to understand that not every emotional or behavioural change during adolescence is a psychological problem.

Adolescence naturally involves mood changes, wanting more independence, changes in friendships and sometimes challenging rules.

What concerns me more is a persistent or significant change from the young person's usual behaviour, particularly when it starts affecting their daily functioning. For example, withdrawing from activities they previously enjoyed, major changes in sleep or appetite, persistent anxiety or low mood, or a noticeable decline in academics or social relationships.

So, I would consider the frequency, intensity, duration, change from their usual behaviour and impact on functioning rather than labelling something as a problem immediately.

7. With social media becoming such a major part of teenagers' lives, how do you think it is affecting their mental health and self-esteem?

Ans. I think social media can have both positive and negative effects. It can help teenagers connect with others and find communities where they feel understood, but one major concern is social comparison.

They are constantly seeing carefully curated versions of other people's appearances, relationships and achievements, which can create unrealistic expectations and affect their self-esteem.

So rather than simply telling teenagers to stay away from social media, I think it's more important to help them develop healthy boundaries, digital awareness and a sense of self-worth that isn't dependent on likes, followers or online validation.