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Wisdom and resilience

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Everybody is regularly confronted with life events or problems, where there is no clear outcome, or no way out, no possibility to make things undone, or negative consequences whatever you do. This refers to major life events like the decision to marry a person or not, but also do daily problems like staying at home with the sick child or going to work. There are also irrevocable negative life events, injustice, humiliation, loss, which are such that persons cannot free themselves from what happened, from ruminations or accusations against oneself and others and remain in a defiant or helpless position. To deal with such life events wisdom is a human capacity which allows "to solve unsolvable problems". In recent years wisdom psychology has become a major area of research. Wisdom is, similar to assertiveness or other psychological skills, given to everybody and needed on a daily basis. Wisdom is a multidimensional construct encompassing knowledge about facts, contextualism, value relativism, uncertainty intolerance, change of perspective, acceptance of emotions, emotional serenity, empathy, sustainability, or distance of oneself. As wisdom is a capacity of problem solving it is also a resource which helps to cope with negative life events and therefore can prevent dysfunctional reactions or mental illness. Research has shown that wisdom competencies can be taught and learned. There are first developments to integrate wisdom psychology in counselling and cognitive psychotherapy. Wisdom psychotherapy uses special methods like the "paradigm of unsolvable problems" in order to stimulate patients to look at their life problems from new perspectives and use new problem solving strategies.

Biography

Michael Linden has studied medicine and psychology and is a state licensed physician in psychiatry, psychosomatic medicine and psychotherapy. He is Professor of Psychiatry and Psychosomatic Medicine, Director of the Research Group Psychosomatic Rehabilitation at the Charité University Medicine Berlin, and Head of the Department of Behavioral and Psychosomatic Medicine at the Rehabilitation Centre Seehof, Teltow/Berlin, Germany. He is speaker of the psychotherapy section of the German Association of Psychiatry, member of the Scientific Advisory Board on Psychotherapy of the Federal Chamber of Physicians and Psychotherapists, and speaker of the council of training institutes of the German Behavior Therapy Association. Research interests are adjustment and reactive disorders, cognitive behavior therapy, rehabilitation for psychological disorders. He has done extensive research on embitterment as a mood state in general and on "Posttraumatic Embitterment Disorders (PTED)" in particular. He has published more than 300 papers in peer reviewed journals and 15 books.

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