

THE AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE OF PARAPSYCHOLOGICAL RESEARCH



‘The Australian Institute of Parapsychological Research, Incorporated (AIPR, Inc., or Parapsychology Institute) was established in 1977 and is a non-profit community association. The AIPR is based in Sydney, New South Wales, and its membership is world-wide.

The aims of the organisation are:

- To collect, assess and disseminate factual information about claims of psychic (paranormal) phenomena.
- To support and encourage parapsychology (the scientific study of paranormal phenomena and paranormal belief). (If you have recently had psychic or spiritual experiences, you are invited to participate in Monika Goretzki’s study: Unusual Experiences. Or try Rosemary Breen’s study on paranormal events in everyday life: Paranormal Experiences.)
- To provide support in matters to do with alleged or actual experiences of a paranormal nature that may require relief of suffering, distress, or helplessness (see seeking help).
- To undertake or promote activities (e.g., fundraising, social events, etc.) in support of the above.

AIPR-INFO SHEET: PSYCHIC AND PSYCHO-SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

‘This information sheet discusses personal growth with reference to psychic and mystical experiences. It does not discuss the healing of other persons (see information sheet on healing).

Mishlove lists three types of psychic development (21).

Accidental: Occurs spontaneously after certain events, such as an accident, surgery, near-death experience, guru contact, or “UFO encounter.”

Non-intentional: Occurs as a by-product of training for another purpose, as in yoga or meditation used to induce mystical experiences.

Intentional: Happens during training for the specific purpose of inducing psychic experiences.



Mishlove also classifies development into two systems:

Pre-scientific: for example, yoga; Buddhism.

Modern popular: for example, Spiritualism; Silva method; Transcendental Meditation; Milan Ryzl program; A Course in Miracles. **(Mention of specific courses does not imply endorsement by the AIPR.)**

Hierarchy of wellbeing

Personal growth refers to individual psycho-spiritual development, that is, achieving full potential and integrating the whole person.

The whole person includes three aspects: body, mind and spiritual (termed 'spirit' by Christians). Other names for these three aspects are: (i) pre-personal or subconscious; (ii) personal, conscious or self-conscious; and (iii) transpersonal or super-conscious (34).

This information sheet adopts the five-stage model of Vaughan (32,33) - physical, emotional, psychological, existential, transpersonal - but adds a psychic stage. The stages form an approximate ladder or hierarchy, though the steps on the ladder overlap. Each higher step includes all lower ones, and thus more completely describes the health and personal growth of the human individual.

Physical (material) health

Being aware of body sensations and avoiding physical pain. Includes awareness of diet and exercise. Medical practice until recently, largely focussed on physical health.

Non-acceptance of stages 2 or 3 to 6 can manifest as excessive or compulsive behaviours related to material health, for example: obesity (excess food intake); anorexia (excess dieting); compulsive shopping (5) and substance abuse. The term "excessive appetites" (22) to describe such compulsions is apt.

Emotional Health

Being aware of positive and negative feelings, such as anger, sadness, love and joy, and avoiding emotional pain. This is a focus of the humanistic psychology of Rogers and Maslow (19, 25).

The emotions are controlled by the endocrine system, which is closely connected with the nervous and immune systems. Emotional health thus cannot be separated from both physical and psychological health. The motivation of behaviour cannot be separated from emotions.



Psychological (mental) health

Being aware of conscious thoughts and avoiding psychological pain. Includes life-skills such as cross-cultural communication (10, 19, 25, 31).

Self-concept, that is, the individual ego, is strengthened. Intuition is balanced with critical thinking (9, 32).

Existential health

Accepting all the realities of human existence, including death, loneliness, the meaning of life, and the limitations of the ego. Includes the ability to accept body-mind unity within separate individual existence.

A person having a good job, family and social life can still feel unhappy: life has no meaning. This is called existential pain/angst/neurosis (6A,18,36,37). Access to spirituality is missing. The person has come close to a “religious conversion” experience. This condition supports the reality of spiritual experiences and their suppression in our technology society.

Transpersonal (spiritual) health

Transcendence of ego identity, that is, awareness of the mystical experience - the “higher” state of consciousness characterised by a sense of unity with the universe, ecstatic joy and intense love and insight (4,7,13,14,34). See information sheet on mystical experiences.

Frequent minor mystical experiences (peak experiences) have a major impact within society (12). Maslow says they lead to “self-actualisation”.

All religions have a common mystical experience, but many paths are available, being unique expressions of the diversity of human individuals. Some persons have theistic mystical experiences (the presence of a personal God); others have impersonal mystical experiences.

Psychic (parapsychological) health

Being aware of psychic experiences such as ESP, apparitions and out-of-body experiences (20,21,26,30). These lie at the interface between normal consciousness (stage 4), and spiritual states (stage 6). Methods of psychic development are much the same as those for developing mystical experiences.

Fantasy addicts, or fantasy prone persons, are the 4% of people who report regular psychic experiences such as ESP, out-of-body experiences, automatic writing, visual and auditory hallucinations (apparitions), and the sensations of being touched, of temperature changes, and of “past lives” (35). Fantasiers live in a trance much of the day. They easily develop psychosomatic symptoms, and allegedly make good healers.



Rather than negative connotations, the experiences have creative potential: the novelist Charles Dickens had a rich fantasy life, including premonitions and seeing apparitions of his characters (1).

The occult dimension

Occult beliefs and rituals are based on psychic and mystical experiences. Some, such as astrology and numerology can yield personal growth, though others such as Satanism attract many disturbed people.

Psychic or mystical experiences are commonly confused with associated occult beliefs. A spontaneous experience of clairvoyance, for example, can be described scientifically. Religious counsellors who describe such an experience as “the occult” can needlessly frighten clients.

Methods of psychic development are the same as those for mystical experiences.



Suggested resources:

Aipr-info Sheet: Psychic and Psycho-spiritual Development

<https://www.aiprinc.org/psychic-and-psycho-spiritual-development/>

Victor Zammit:

<http://www.victorzammit.com/afterlifevoices/index.htm>



Conscious spirituality  *in search of truth...*

[LINK TO PSYCHIC INDEX](#)