

Working population records rise in stress

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Graphic: Abir Bhaduri

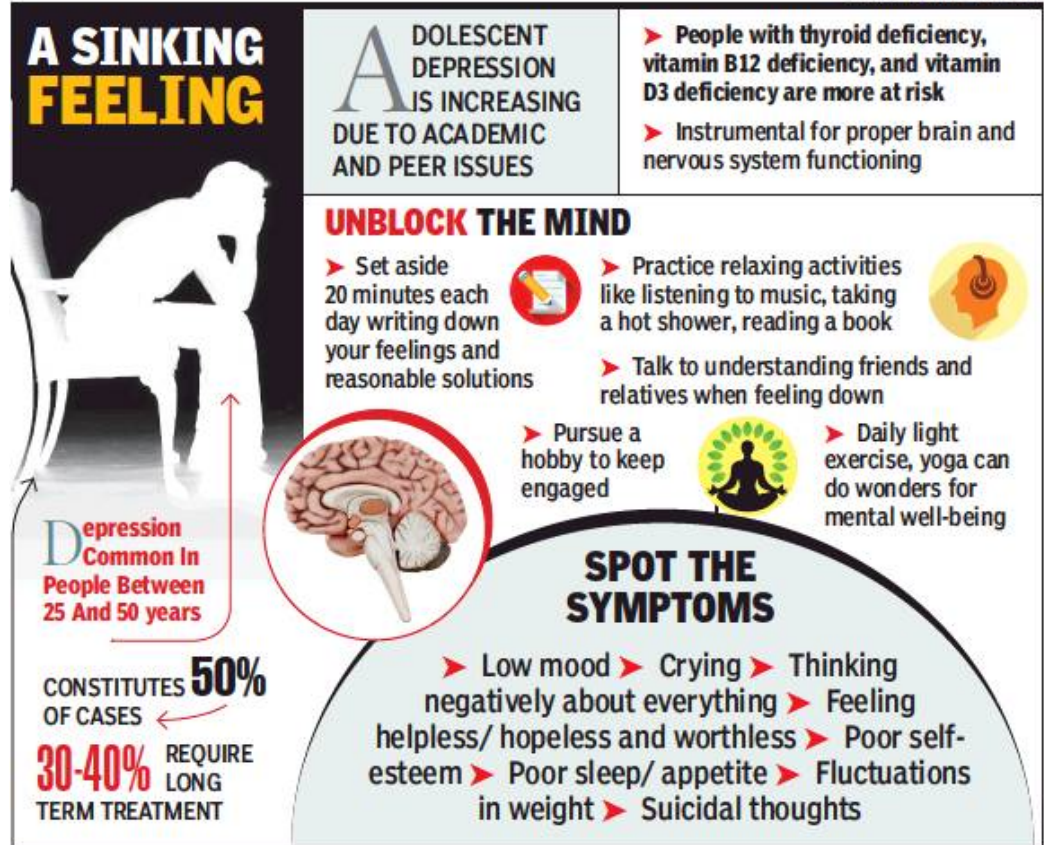
Ahmedabad: Abhinav Sharma (name changed), 40, a mid-level executive in a city-based firm, consulted a psychiatrist when he realized that he was getting angry at every small thing that annoyed him. The consultation revealed that it was a cocktail of issues—he was battling anxiety on workfront, had difficulty in settling down in work from home routine, had to constantly face his family members and missed spending time with close friends to vent out his frustration.

Dr Hansal Bhachech, a city-based psychiatrist, said that Covid-19 has not spared any age group in impact. "Right from toddlers who have attention deficit to screen addiction on one side of the spectrum to the elderly living alone and having jitters about going out and catching the infection on the other, we see a large range of patients. But in terms of rise, the working age population (roughly defined as 25 to 50 years) has showed it the most," he said, adding that anxiety and depression are most reported traits with which the patients are flocking the consulting rooms.

"The working population has to go out to run the family, run the enterprises and prove their self-worth even in the time of the pandemic," said Dr Jinesh Shah, a city-based psychiatrist.

"They are also one of the most affected in terms of infection – so the fear of contacting Covid-19 is real for many. We have seen approximately 30-40% rise in the cases reported from this age group, which is clearly tip of the iceberg."

He added that the most prominent characteristic in the working age group is neuroticism. "Their small traits get magnified – if there's small sle-



ep disturbance, it gets developed into insomnia. If there's anxiety, it becomes disorder and so on. We have also seen cases where people devote a long time in prayers compared to pre-Covid time," said Dr Shah.

Dr Gopal Bhatia, a city-based psychiatrist, said that several medical professionals also required help due to

the fear that they would contact the viral infection or they would become the carriers for their near and dear ones. "There is disruption in lifestyle, fear of going out, several are facing economic issues, family-related issues and disruption of working pattern. Majority of these issues are faced by the working age population and thus, reporting is naturally higher in this age group," he said.

MENTAL HEALTH