



MY-PWB

*Cultivating hope and
resilience for true wellness*

Mental Health and Mismatch Theory

HAVE YOU EVER WONDERED WHY....

Have you ever wondered why mental health professionals, doctors, nutritionists, social workers, etc., all offer the same type of advice?



Get out in nature.



Exercise



Prioritise sleep and rest.



Disconnect from screens



Eat balanced, healthy diets.



Connect with caring/loving people.

Literature indicates that these practices are essential when addressing the growing mismatch between our development environments and our lifestyles. Mismatch theory suggests that many contemporary health issues arise from a disconnect between these environments and the requirements of daily life.

WHAT IS MISMATCH THEORY?

In recent years, and with the aim for better understanding the rise in health challenges (medical and mental), a fundamental question was asked: Why are these issues increasing rapidly in modern society? Research focusing on mismatch theory suggested a causal connection between rapid environmental and lifestyle changes and increased risk of health issues. This theory suggests our current health challenges stem from a disconnect between our fast-paced modern society (characterised by rapid technological change, urbanisation, and altered social structures) and the conditions under which we physiologically, socially, culturally, and technologically developed.

There are three types of mismatching:



**Evolutionary
Mismatch**



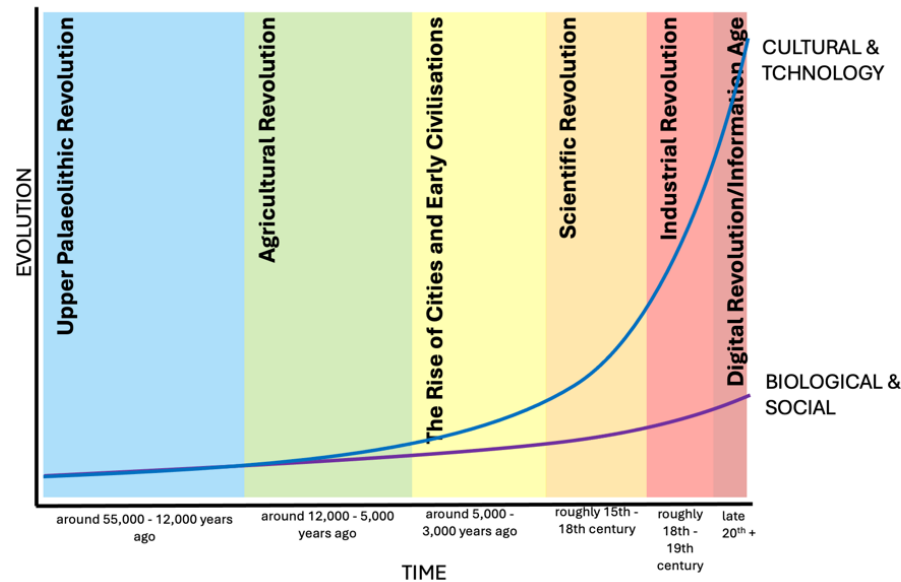
**Developmental
Mismatch**



**Individual
Mismatch**

EVOLUTIONARY MISMATCH

Our fundamental biology and social needs evolved over vast timescales, adapting to environments very different from today's. However, cultural and technological evolution has accelerated dramatically, especially in recent history..

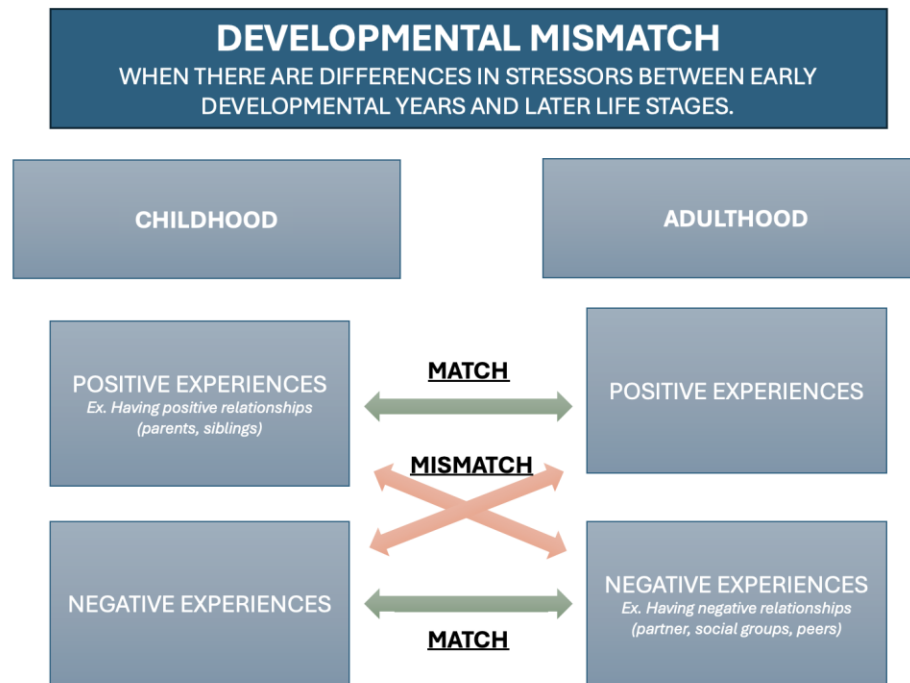


This shift has caused an evolutionary mismatch. Our bodies and minds remain adapted to past conditions, while we now face a rapidly changing technological and cultural world. This disconnect can lead to various challenges in our lives, such as sedentary lifestyles and high consumption of processed foods.

** The graph is a visual representation only. It is not based on specific scientific data; it illustrates the concept of differing rates of change.*

DEVELOPMENTAL MISMATCH

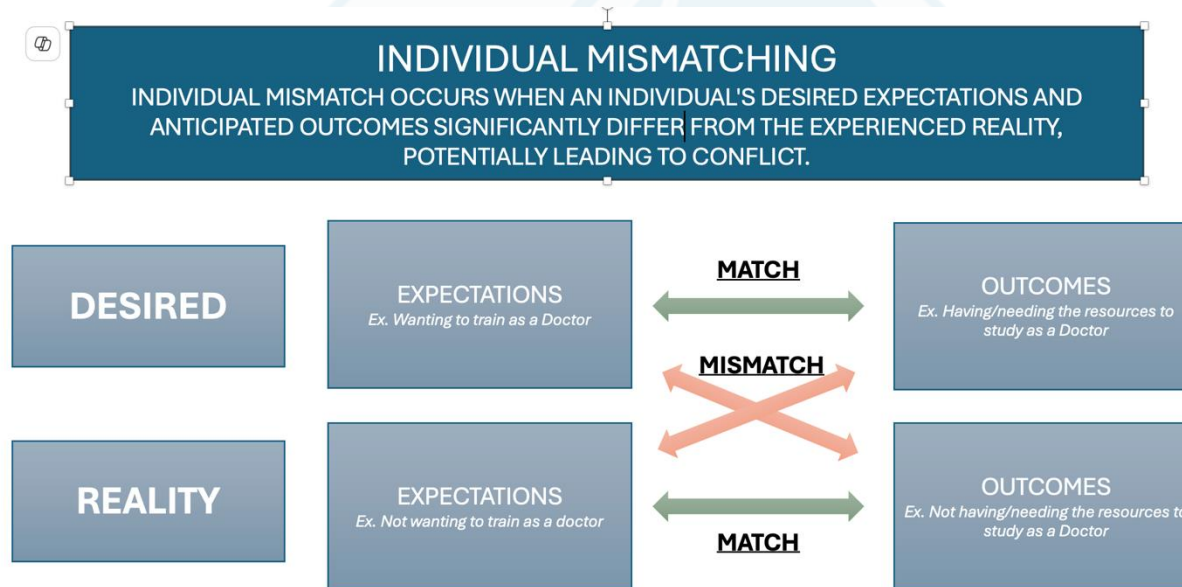
Some studies have suggested that differences in stressors between early developmental years and later life stages, which are mismatched, place an individual at high risk for poor health outcomes.



Those who grew up with positive relationships in their young lives can be at risk for struggling to adjust when managing stressors from negative relationships later in life.

INDIVIDUAL MISMATCH

Individual mismatch occurs when there is a significant difference between our expectations and reality, potentially causing conflict. A match exists when expectations align with outcomes, such as wanting to learn a new skill with available resources.



A mismatch arises when desires or expectations don't meet reality, like wanting a promotion without the necessary support. This misalignment can create challenges and dissatisfaction.

BRIDGING THE MISMATCH FOR BETTER WELL-BEING

The growing gap between our evolved needs and modern life can significantly impact our mental health. By understanding our own mismatches, we can identify where these disconnects occur in our lives.

The advice professionals offer - prioritising connection, nature, rest, healthy eating, and limiting screen time - is fundamental when mitigating mismatches. However, specific actions will be required when addressing key mismatches and aligning our lives to our needs. Consider exploring tools such as:

- **Self-Reflection/Journaling:** Identify mismatches through regular reflection.
 - **Values Clarification:** Align choices with your core values.
- **Mindfulness and Acceptance:** Manage stress through present-moment awareness.
- **Goal Setting:** Create purpose and direction with values-based goals.

If you are seeking support



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