

CONCEPTS and DIMENSIONS of HEALTH and HEALTH BELIEFS

Public health
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Learning Outcomes

- Explore what health means to you
- Identify the various dimensions of health
- Recognise the need to address health beliefs



Definition

- What is health?
- Why do we as practitioners need to consider people's health?



Health

- From the word *Hael* meaning whole
- Two common meanings in everyday use
 - Absence of disease
 - 'a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being, not merely the absence of disease or infirmity' (WHO 1946)



Weakness of W.H.O.

- A Complete state of well-being appears too idealistic. In this view can anyone be healthy?
- If someone was to be in a complete state of well-being what would they be like?
- Can time deprive a person of their health as they age?



World Health Organisation (1984)

“The extent to which an individual or group is able, on the one hand, to realise aspirations and satisfy needs; and, on the other hand, to change or cope with the environment. Health is, therefore, seen as a resource for everyday life, not the object of living; it is a positive concept emphasising social and personal resources, as well as physical capabilities”. (WHO 1984)



Seedhouse (1986)

- Suggests that the most useful way of conceptualising health is to see it as providing the 'foundation for human achievement'. It is a means to an end rather than a fixed state that a person can or should aspire to. Thus, with the appropriate resources of health, people are more easily enabled to achieve their potential



Dimensions of health

- Physical health
- Mental health
- Emotional health
- Social health



Dimensions of health cont.

- Spiritual health
- Sexual health



Wider dimensions

- Societal – health and the way society is structured
- Environmental – physical environment in which people live



Concepts

- Lay concepts
- Professional concepts



Beliefs

- Def: The information a person has about an object or action. It links some object to an attribute.



Beliefs

1. I believe in the saying that 'A leopard cannot change his spots'.
2. I believe that 'wait and see' is a good philosophy for life.
3. I want everyone to be like me.
4. I usually put off important decisions.



Health beliefs

- Health professionals need to be aware of the health beliefs, traditions and practices of the different cultural and ethnic groups coexisting in the particular society in which they practice.



Health Promotion

- Search for health needs
- Stimulation of awareness
- Influence on policies affecting health
- Facilitation of health enhancing activities



Health needs assessment

Child Health

- Growth and development
- Weight, height, nutrition
- Every child matters (UK DOF, 2004)

Maternal Health & Wellbeing

- Antenatal care
- Postnatal care
- Parental capacity
- Environmental factors



Conclusion

- Health and being healthy means different thing to different people
- No agreement on what is meant by health
- Health is used in many different contexts to refer to different aspects of life
- No right or wrong way of regarding concepts of health
- Different people have different and conflicting views of health



Evaluation Questionnaire

WHO (1946) Def of health

- 'A state of complete _____, _____, and _____ wellbeing, and not merely the absence of _____ or infirmity'
- Name 4 dimensions of health.
- Name two wider dimensions of health.
- What is a belief?



References

- Ewles, L and Simnett, J. (2003) *Promoting Health: A Practical Guide: 5th edition*. Edinburgh: Bailliere Tindall
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THANK YOU

