

# CONCEPTS and DIMENSIONS of HEALTH and HEALTH BELIEFS

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Public health  
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# Learning Outcomes

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



# Definition

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



# Health

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- 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.

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- 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)

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“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)

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- 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

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



# Dimensions of health cont.

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- Spiritual health
- Sexual health



# Wider dimensions

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



# Concepts

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- Lay concepts
- Professional concepts



# Beliefs

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



# Beliefs

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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

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- 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

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



# Health needs assessment

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## **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

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- 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

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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?

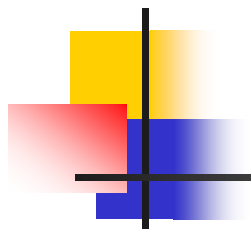


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THANK YOU

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