

## NUR1120 Exam Notes

### Community Health and Wellness

#### Principles of primary health care:

#### Chapter One Community Health and Wellness

1. Explain health, wellness and community health as socio-ecological concepts
  - WHO explains health as a state of complete 'physical, mental and social wellbeing and not merely the absence of disease.'
  - Research has provided evidence that improved social and community conditions, and not merely medical interventions have improved general health and wellbeing of individuals and communities
  - Major improvements in health are from: better social, economic, environmental conditions. These include smaller families, better nutrition, improved living conditions, healthier physical environment, better working conditions, greater emphasis on preventive care
  - Health is a product of reciprocal interactions between individuals and their environment; individuals bring to the environment a personal history, biology as determined by genetics and early environment, previous events that have affected health including prior injuries and illness and accidents, our current nutritional status, stressors – both good and bad events – that cause us to respond in various ways.
  - Becoming healthy depends on our ability to understand and manage the interactions between human activities and the physical and biological environments
  - Health and wellness of an individual and a family are affected by access to resources and social capital that enable a person to access particular health resources, including healthy food and good nutrition, preventive care, and access to education and health promotion, their general social situation, level of education; when a social environment is empowering it contributes to an individual's ability to become healthy – the community and the environment contribute to the conduciveness of an individual to become health. A healthy community contributes to individual wellness, and these are determined by the social determinants of health.
  - Gross National Happiness Index has been proposed as a measure of social and ecological wellness; happiness has been proposed as a pursuit rather than gross domestic product which is an indicator of production. Gross National Happiness Index is a measure of psychological wellbeing, the use of time, education, environmental diversity, health, community vitality, living standard and governance. These include the initiatives such as the Happy Planet Index, and the Canadian Index of Wellbeing, measuring outcomes of quality of life such as social health, economic and environmental trends. These all measure social health.

- Happiness and wellbeing increase longevity and make immune systems more robust, which in many cases improves health.
  - Pursuit of happiness is diametrically opposed to consumerism, which equates to consumption of goods, which is an empty and hopeless endeavour.
2. Identify the social determinants and structures of health and wellness
- The social determinants of health are those things in the social environment that contribute towards an individual's health; an individual interacts with these environments and that helps determine their health outcome
  - Access to employment, education, good nutrition, family stability, good supportive social networks, preventive health care and health literacy promote development towards good health
  - The social determinants of health include upstream, midstream and downstream factors
  - Upstream factors flow down towards an individual, and these include the broad aspects of the society, including economy and political stability. These also include social policies and economic reforms, and other public and societal provisions.
  - Midstream factors include the community an individual belongs to, whether or not they have employment, education, access to social welfare, access to healthy food, childcare, family planning, housing, food security and preventive medical care. Midstream factors also include social network and support, presence of stable housing environment and relationships and health relationships and healthy family dynamics. It also includes health promotion within the community, equitable access to health care and other opportunities.
  - Downstream factors are the biological markers that indicate the health status of the individual and their own health behaviours; these are either risky behaviours, or behaviours of concern including daily smoking, poor nutrition, excessive alcohol consumption, lack of physical exercise and presence of chronic stress. These are marked by biological indicators including things such as presence or absence of chronic illness such as COPD or diabetes, or blood pressure, or elevated cholesterol levels, or elevated stress hormones persistently, or elevated blood glucose levels.
3. Examine the inter-generational factors that influence health
- How family life affects health
  - Social learning model – family and parental role modelling and mentoring
  - Parental modelling of healthy behaviours such as daily exercise and consumption of fruit and vegetables leads to better health outcomes in children
  - An ideal mix of conditions can create a positive start to life that becomes sustained into adulthood and throughout ageing
  - Life course approach to understanding the social determinants of health
  - Improvements to the Social Determinants of Health (housing, employment opportunities, transportation or social services) can provide optimal conditions in which all family members can flourish and maintain good health over time.

- Others may be disadvantaged in their start to life and may not be overcome by sufficient changes in any of the environments affecting their lives (\*SPEAK UP FOR THOSE WHO CANNOT SPEAK FOR THEMSELVES, HELP THEM TO OVERCOME\*)
- Changing circumstances can provide opportunities to improve health and wellbeing. A practical suggestion of this is provided through improved education leading to better employability, leading to better economic capital, which provides access to housing, nutrition, providing for children, paying bills and providing access to better preventive health care such as dental treatment
- For those affected by poverty, or environmental pollution, discrimination or lack of social support, this can perpetuate ill health
- A family's socio-economic status is an important determinant of health: better socio-economic status allows access to better health supporting resources such as childcare, nutrition, health literacy, preventive care and education
- Those employed at higher levels have better health than those employed at lower levels
- A child born into poverty lives in a situation of "double jeopardy" where interactions with the social determinants of health conspire against good health – for example generational cycles of unemployment and early childbirth, leading to poor role modelling and increased risk of homelessness
- Some children have inner resilience and are able to overcome, find opportunities to improve themselves and provide better outcomes for themselves and others
- Communities that support the poor have better overall health outcomes; communities that support the poor and provide better social support and economic support, social housing, access to food support and clothing, and education, and free health care improve the general overall living standard
- In indigenous communities, social capital is poor, and there is need for improvement in the living conditions of indigenous people
- Political decisions need to provide opportunities for education, that improve employability, which leads to better outcomes, and access to better and more health related resources
- Rural and isolated communities have less services to provide for poor families and access to diagnostic and preventive health services, and food costs more and there may be less recreational opportunities, leading to poorer health outcomes. There may also be social isolation, leading to poor health outcomes. In rural and remote communities and impoverished situations, there may be opportunities for education, health care or transportation to access services.
- Families who are able to access sufficient resources and sufficient external supports to cope with difficulties or traumas may be able to overcome multiple challenges throughout their lifetime, creating a more optimistic outlook for their child's health.  
\*Inner resilience\* This is achieved by empowering and collaborative partnerships between the family and community working together to cradle children's ability to cope, to grow and to learn. The presence and adequacy of community services and supports

are a matter of concern to all members of society, not just for those who are parenting a child. \*It takes a village to raise a child\*

- Health professionals can lobby governments to provide improved community supports
- Interventions that promote health across generations such as access to good childcare, education, nurturing and anticipatory guidance can help overcome the hazards of being born into impoverished circumstances or relatively deprived circumstances

4. Analyze the concept of social capital and its contribution to community health

- Social capital is an accumulation of wealth, but it is the kind of wealth that draws people together as a cohesive force in a climate of trust and mutual respect.
- Social capital helps develop civic engagement, trust, and norms of reciprocity among community members.
- Communities are strong when people are connected through networks, associations and other means of sharing information and a sense of purpose. Information flows through the community in many directions, people are compelled to help others for mutual benefit and they are more likely to participate in democratic institutions, thereby improving their accountability. When a realisation of community becomes strong, there is a greater likelihood of people realising shared goals and bonding together to become resilient to economic, social and environmental changes (NOTE COMMUNITY ASSISTANCE AFTER ENVIRONMENTAL DISASTERS).
- Social capital: mechanism to help communities cope with adversity and limitations as well as build a positive sense of place; cohesiveness, social support, a sense of belonging and providing community empowerment.
- Creates opportunities – regardless of age, gender, culture or other aspects of birthright. Also shifts people's expectations of their lives, improving mental health as well as the overall equality of community life.
- Community attitudes that bring people together can help strengthen health capacity
- Community health is also supported by: organisational structures, schools, workplaces, and community planning mechanisms. Collective bargaining for better schools, and other services such as health care, transportation, family friendly opportunities, education and job re-training, opportunities for physical activities, and community policing (neighbourhood watch). Each success leads to subsequent successes, working towards a more inclusive society.
- Examples include: uniting people in developing opportunities, galvanising community action to preserve the environment, undertake participatory school reform, bring local businesses together to prevent discrimination. Community vitality becomes increased. Capacity to thrive and change and respond to adversity and overcome it and provide greater respect and inclusion leads to empowerment. People can develop appropriate conditions for living and working.
- Involving community members in activities or projects to pursue common goals will help build social capital

5. Examine the factors that influence community sustainability

- Sustainable communities are those that work towards conservation and diversity of personal and physical resources. Community is bound by a common commitment to conserve not only the physical habitat, but all aspects of diverse physical, social and cultural environments.

People can be encouraged to focus on sustainability through: collaboration with local education, health, recreation, sporting, and business groups to ensure that the younger generation develops an affinity with their physical and social environments