

Lecture 1.1 Concepts of Health

Definitions of Health

- "A state of complete physical, emotional and social well-being, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity" - World Health Organisation

Beliefs, philosophies and evidence

- Consider treatment of your own illness
- Evidence (behind the policy within the educational practices) used within your practice may not always fit with your own beliefs
- Sometimes you may be involved in treatments that do not fit with your own beliefs, or parent may want to involve you in treatment which conflicts with the practices - creates major ethical dilemma
- Recent controversial cases - withholding medical intervention in favour of alternative therapies have sometime occurred in infant death, and criminal prosecutions have resulted

Neoliberalism or Social Justice Approach

- Australia uses a mix of neoliberalist and social justice arguments in regards to health reforms.
 - Neoliberalist - arguments relate to individualism, privatisation, and decentralisation. A basic idea is that individuals should be allowed to make choices about their health care and health risks. E.g. major reforms to smoking - up to the individual, should not take control away from individuals
 - Social Justice Approaches - community based and often government led. It is assumed that the role of the government is to make sound policy to prevent and treat illness.
- Beliefs are closely aligned to other political beliefs about personal vs state responsibilities
- Debates - criticisms around government policies, turning into a 'nanny state', overly regulated, often controlled by the industry

Problems with Social Justice Approach

- Individuals feel their freedom is inhibited
- Business and other agencies (e.g. schools) often enforce compliance at a cost e.g. more refrigerators, comes at a cost to them

Problems with Neo-Liberalist Approach

- Assumes it is easy to make appropriate healthy choices e.g. French fries from McDonalds - quick and easy, convenience
- Assumes adults can make healthy choices for children

- Increase in overweight/obese adults in US - 45% in 1980 and 70% in 2008
- Is it keeping up with changes? E.g. screen time, decreased physical activity

Government, school/childcare, parent, child responsibilities

- There is constant conflict about who should take responsibility for health. Promotion of food products is an example:
 - Health advocates generally argue for greater government regulation. For example, most would argue for no advertising during children's tv viewing time (which occurs primarily during adult shows in the early evening, not in children's timeslots).
 - Some argue that it is a parental responsibility, not the role of Government – we should not be a 'Nanny State'.
 - Some argue that schools and childcare should be more proactive. In particular, associating junk food with fund raising (creating a positive association with the product) and selling junk food in school canteens in a problem.
 - Whatever the decision, it is also important that children are educated about making good food choices – they are not passive recipients, learn quickly that a whole food (apple), is healthier than food has been altered (food bar)

Changes over time

- 1900s: common - gastro, malnourishment, killers - pneumonia and tuberculosis
- Now: common - asthma, obesity, diabetes, anxiety, killers - accidents (car accidents in particular)
- Changes due to changes in practices
 - Vaccinations - debate/change legislation - social justice approach 'No Jab, No Pay'
 - Anti-smoking campaigns
 - Medical drugs
 - Better education
- Attitude changes also:
 - Breastfeeding - change in attitude, more beneficial than bottle
 - Childbirth
 - Interventions
 - Medicines
 - Cleanliness

At-risk populations

- Indigenous children - lower life expectancy (80 vs 70), higher rates of specific diseases

- Children with special needs - higher rates of illness, emotional issues (depends on particular special need)
- Children of parents with drug dependency - impedes care of child
- Children of parents with mental illness - instability, unpredictability
- Children born prematurely - physical vulnerabilities
- Children living in poverty - insufficient housing, level of food

Variations on 'typical'

- We are all on a spectrum - this is desirable
- Diagnoses change e.g. autism has a broader criteria - number increased
- Focus on strengths not deficits - particularly important with children
- Inclusion is an ethical process of acting and influencing
- How we label, and discourses can warp inclusion
- Terminology can be a problem ('special', 'needs', 'disabilities', 'normal', 'typical' and so on) when accompanied by exclusion attitudes (which is why it is frequently and deliberately changes)
- Students have been found to be more empathetic than teachers - should be encouraged/nourished
- It is punitive to exclude a student who wishes to be included and could be included with additional help
- It is fair to provide both students and parents a role in decisions
- The voice of students is important
- Celebrate differences - human need it and thrive on it
- NSW schools policy is inclusive - people who enact the policies vary in practice

Prevention

- Can be at an individual or population level
- E.g. I may be at low risk for contracting 'Whooping Cough', but may work with infants who are at risk - by receiving vaccination I am preventing the spread of the illness

Interventions

- Sometimes are for individuals, but can often be class-wide or school-wide.
- Many interventions are fun for everyone, but not those at risk - e.g. some interventions for coping with stress involving play

Treatments

- Tend to be individually based and often monitored by a clinician

Cure

- Some illnesses are cured, but for many illnesses, the severity of symptoms is lowered.
- Be wary of proposed cures in particular areas, such as autism

World Health Organisation Approach

- Sociological approach (Upstream) - policies that shape the economic, social and physical environments e.g. distribution of employment
- Lifestyle approach (Midstream) - Policies that directly influence behaviour e.g. reducing energy intake and increasing physical activity, 70% of canteen food has to be considered 'healthy'
- Health Services (Downstream) - Policies that support health services and clinical interventions

Government Guidelines

- Usually based on research and developed by expert panels. In areas of child and physical activity and nutrition, the Get Up and Grow guidelines are the best to access
- Government guidelines change in response to changes in research
- In recent years, there has been increases in the minimum amounts of physical activity recommended at all age levels - recommendations relating to sedentary time are also emerging

Government and industry health promotion

- If in doubt, use health promotion material from government sources (not industries who make profits from the products)
- Current controversial areas - tobacco, DrinkWise, toddler formula

Public Health experts vs Industry

- Public health experts - lobby for government based interventions such as taxes, restrictions and prohibition
- Industries (involved in manufacture/distribution of health damaging products) - push for self-regulation and education to support individual choice

Health at home vs health in child care and schools

- Family germs are different to community germs
- Hygiene practices at home do not need to be as stringent as they are in community settings
- In general, the younger the age-group you are working with the more vigilant you need to be about hygiene - infections spread easily in settings with large numbers of infants/children

- Important to teach children about the difference between what we do at day care and what we do at home - sharing drink bottle with parent vs peers, eating something of floor at home vs in shopping centre

Ethical Issues

- Not allowing children to attend childcare when unwell
- Not allowing enrolment of children who are not immunised
- Fund raising through sale of chocolate or canteen junk food
- Banning certain foods due to allergies of individual children e.g. nut allergies

Lecture 1.2

Sustainability

People, planet and places

- Macquarie Uni has decided this is its triple bottom line - not just recycling paper or 'worm farm'
- Sustainability and campus - Macquarie Uni is ecologically sound, socially just and economically viable in all its activities
- Leave things better than when you found them - e.g. planting a tree for the next generations - planning for future generations

The Six Capitals

- Financial
- Manufactured
- Intellectual
- Human
- Social & Relationship
- Natural

National Quality Standards

- QA 3.3 - The service takes an active role in caring for its environment and contributes to a sustainable future (NQF p.10)
- QA 3.3.1 - Sustainable practices are embedded in service operations (NQF p.10)
- QA 3.3.2 - Children are supported to become environmentally responsible and show respect for the environment
- Changes to NQS - proposed changes to eliminate 3.3.1 and 3.3.2 as centres were often failing to achieve these

Materials

- Multi-purposed
- Open-ended
- Clay (Mia Mia - 24 years old), Branches

- Examples - pretend swimming lessons, pool lost property - old goggles, kickboards
- Ask organisations and families for donations - old cameras etc.

Early Years Learning Framework

- Outcome 2: Children are connected with and contribute to their world
- Explore, infer, predict and hypothesise in order to develop an increased understanding of the interdependence between land, people, plants and animals.

Be Aware

- Are we teaching despair? - Teach children to love the world
- Are we being hypocritical? - Children watch, they know if you're doing what you tell them you should do

Six-Month Sustainability Goals - Mia Mia 2017

- To develop habit of turning off monitors when not in use
- Develop habit of turning off adult bathroom lights when not in use
- To buy Australian grown/made where possible
- To reduce consumption of things
- To increase 'reuse and recycle' for play equipment presented to children
- Increase community outreach

Treasure Project

- Seventh time this collection has been implemented
- A bag is sent out for families to collect treasure
- Once returned it is sorted and organised
- Then decisions are made about where, who and what we will use it for (often the children guide is with their play)

Staff/people

- How sustainable is an ece school in its staffing
- Over stretched, burnt-out staff are unsustainable
- Good ratios, excellent working conditions, intellectual nourishment and collegiality make for sustainable staff
- Pay parity for teachers with teachers in primary school needs to occur soon

Families/people

- Philosophies of relationships include families
- Welcomes and get together
- Time to chat, to meet and to celebrate
- Expectations that families will join you