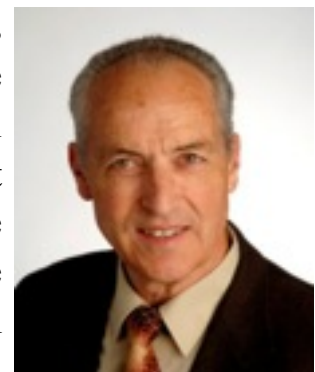




Concept of Health and Dimension of Health

DEFINITIONS OF HEALTH

The most commonly quoted definition of health is that formalized by the World Health Organization (WHO) over half a century ago. The WHO's definition of health was formulated at the start of WHO's constitution, which was adopted on 22 July 1946. In 1948, the WHO offered the following statement about health: "Health is a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease and infirmity" [1]. This definition is widely accepted as physical, mental and social healths are all interrelated. One cannot exist optimally without other's assistance. Physical health is essential for a healthy living. But when one is not mentally well, the person is likely suffer from diseases like high blood pressure, peptic ulcer and mental diseases. The person is also likely to be under drugs and alcohol and can cause injury to himself and to the society. Other than physical and mental health, social health is also equally essential. Definition of health can also be explained with the spiritual dimension for it has got immense influence on mental health. The physical health can be defined but the mental and social well-being is difficult to count. Hence, W.H.O.'s definition of health is an idealistic goal other than a countable number.



Several other generally accepted definitions of the noun 'health' exist. Florence Nightingale's definition of health states that "Health is not only to be well, but to be able to use well every power we have". Bircher[2] defines

health as “a dynamic state of well-being characterized by a physical and mental potential, which satisfies the demands of life commensurate with age, culture, and personal responsibility”, while Saracchi defines health as “a condition of well being, free of disease or infirmity, and a basic and universal human right” [3]. Australian Aboriginal people generally define health as “Health does not just mean the physical well-being of the individual but refers to the social, emotional, spiritual and cultural well-being of the whole community. This is a whole of life view and includes the cyclical concept of life-death-life [4]. Balog (1978) [5] and Dolfman (1973) [6] also studied the roots of the concept of health. Ustun and Jakob’s timely editorial [7] stresses the need for detailing meaningful definitions for health conditions. Although concern with health and disease has been a major pre-occupation of humans since antiquity, the use of the word ‘health’ to describe human ‘well-being’ is relatively recent. Seed house (1986)[8] defines health as “a state in which people are able to work towards attaining their realistic chosen and biologic potentials”. He suggests that the most useful way of conceptualizing 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.



According to Blum, 1972 [9], “Health is the person’s capacity to function to the greatest capacity, to maintain a balance appropriate to age and social needs; to be reasonably free of gross dissatisfaction, discomfort, disease or disability; and to behave in ways that promote survival as well as self-fulfilment or enjoyment”. He recognizes that health is about our capacity to function in relation to age and need, and emphasizes feelings such as enjoyment. Health is considered to be in some sort of balance which can be upset.

CONCEPT OF HEALTH

Historically, the word health appeared approximately in the year 1000 A. D. The word originally came from old English word ‘hoelth’, which meant a state of being sound, and was generally used to infer a soundness of the body [10]. More precisely, health was associated not only with the physiological functioning, but with mental and moral soundness, and spiritual salvation, as well. Though the word health has often been preceded by both positive and negative qualifiers such as good, bad or poor, it has always been regarded as a

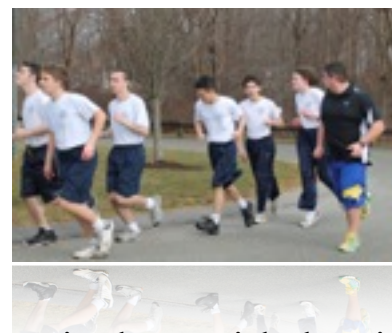
positive entity. For the ancient Greeks, health was always an attribute of paramount importance. Their initial ideas of health as a divine responsibility and illness as a super natural phenomenon were replaced by their recognition of the relevance of personal life habits and environmental factors for men's health status. The Greeks' ideas of health and illness have undoubtedly exerted a major impact on the Western views of health. However, with advances in the fields of medicine, science, sociology, psychology and politics, the more philosophical theories of health began to be challenged and substituted by more scientific ones.

Even if everybody is confident of understanding the meaning of health, to define it is not so easy. Many have tried to define it in different ways. The oldest concept of health was "Absence of disease". According to Oxford English Dictionary, health is "Soundness of body or mind, that condition in which its functions are duly and efficiently discharged"[11].



Defining the concept of health is not a settled matter, however. The 1984 World Health Organization defines Health as; "The extent to which an individual or a group is able to realize aspirations and satisfy needs, and to change or cope with the environment. Health is a resource for everyday life, not the objective of living; it is a positive concept emphasizing social and personal resources as well as physical capabilities. Health is, therefore, seen as a resource for everyday life, not the object of living; it is a positive concept emphasizing social and personal resources, as well as physical capabilities" (WHO 1984) [12].

A man in good health can only enjoy the happiness of life. Persons in ill health are liable to suffer physically and mentally. It is every body's aspiration to be healthy. Health is now considered to be one of our most important values. Many people, in particular in modern times, have regarded health as one of the most precious values in life. Health, as well as longevity, should, they think, be protected and enhanced as much as possible. Thus, the art and science of medicine has received a crucial place in the modern, both Western and Eastern, society. The doctors and other health workers are important people. They are highly regarded and they are well paid in most countries. In certain circles they have replaced the priests or even the gods of old times.



We can also see the rapid development of the movement of health promotion which is partly but not wholly connected to the development of medicine. Health promoters of various kinds play roles as advisors and supporters to many modern people. And the commercial industry has followed in these steps. Huge amounts of goods which purport to be beneficial for one's health have been marketed and successfully put up for sale.

Today, we find in most Western countries a great attention to health matters. In my own country, Sweden, several investigations have been made about this phenomenon. The best known studies have been performed by the Swedish professor of religious philosophy, Anders Jeffner. In his studies Jeffner asked a representative sample of Swedes the questions which are the highest values in their lives. A vast majority of these people put health on top

of their lists, which also contained values such as wealth, to take part in cultural activities, a high social status, a good family relation and a world in peace.

Health is, not unexpectedly, believed to be such a condition. Moreover, one must remember that it is only during the last century, because of the development of medicine and health promotion, that it has become possible to make radical improvements in the health status of people. Hygienic conditions in the rich countries are now such that one can mostly guarantee a reasonably healthy life to their inhabitants. It has also become possible to cure or prevent some of the most deadly diseases, such as smallpox and tuberculosis. Thus, it is only recently that it has become possible to really hope for a radical improvement of the health states of people in the world.



SOME HISTORICAL THEORIES OF HEALTH

Health, thus, is a notion primarily applicable to a human being as a whole. On the other hand, there are more specific derivative notions. Ever since antiquity, and reinforced by the Cartesian distinction between body and mind, it has been natural to separate somatic health from mental health. The interpretations of mental health have varied over time. The ancient notion of mental health was closely connected to morality, whereby the mentally healthy person was a person who lived a virtuous life, but this idea has lost most, though not all, of its significance today. The idea of spiritual health is also current in the health science although it is not systematically recognized. Bernhard Haring is a leading spokesman for a notion of health including a spiritual dimension: "A comprehensive understanding of human health includes

the greatest possible harmony of all of man's forces and energies, the greatest possible spiritualization of man's bodily aspect and the finest embodiment of the spiritual".



The various categories of health have connections to each other. Sometimes bodily health has been given priority in the sense that it has been viewed as a prerequisite for mental health. In the modern discussion about mental illness, one position, favoured in particular by medical doctors, is that all mental illness has a somatic background, i.e., that all mental illnesses if they exist at all are basically somatic diseases. The customary view, however, also in Western medicine, is that a person can at the same time be somatically healthy and mentally ill, or vice versa.

HEALTH AS BALANCE

The healthy person is a person in balance, normally meaning that different parts and different functions of the human body and mind interlock harmoniously and keep each other in check. The Hippocratic and Galenic schools (Hippocrates 460–380 BD and Galen 129-216/17 AD) were the first Western schools to develop this idea in a sophisticated way. They stated that a healthy body is one where the primary properties (wet, dry, cold, hot) of the body balance each other. In the medieval schools, following Galen, this idea was popularized and formulated in terms of a balance between the four bodily humors: blood, phlegm, yellow bile, and black bile[13].



The idea of balance is strong in several non-Western medical traditions. The Yajurveda tradition in India, for instance, declares that there are three humors acting in the body, the breath (vata), the bile (pitta), and the phlegm (kapha). The proportions of the three humours vary from person to person, and their actions vary according to the season, the environment, the life-style of the individual, and his or her diet. In good health the humors are in equilibrium. Disease is the result of their imbalance[14].



Balance is a powerful idea also in modern Western thought, in particular within physiology. The idea is then often to be recognized under the label of homeostasis (the Greek word for balance). Walter Cannon's (1871-1945) classical work on homeostasis [15] describes in detail how the various physiological functions of the body control each other and interact in feedback loops in order to prevent major disturbances.

The idea of balance or equilibrium (the Latin word for balance) has a rather different interpretation in the writings of Ingmar Porn. Here balance is a concept pertaining to the relationship between a person's abilities and his or her goals. The healthy person, according to Porn, is the person who can realize his or her goals and thus retain a balance between abilities and goals[16].

Health as a well-being, is an important aspect of health that the body and mind are well, both in order and function. But we may ask for the criteria of such well-functioning as how we know that the body and mind are functioning well. Person's subjective well-being is the ultimate criterion. When a person feels well, then he or she is healthy. This statement certainly entails problems, since a person can feel well and still have a serious disease in its initial stage. The general idea can, however, be modified to cover this case too. The individual with a serious disease will sooner or later have negative experiences such as pain, fatigue, or anguish. Thus, the ultimate criterion of a person's health is his or her present or future well-being.

It is a difficult task to characterize the well-being constituting health. If one includes too much in the concept there is a risk of identifying health with happiness. It is, indeed, a common accusation directed against the famous WHO definition of health that it falls into this trap[1]. Health cannot reasonably be identical with complete physical, mental, and social well-being, many critics say.

The absurd conclusion of this conception could be that all people who are not completely successful in life would be deemed unhealthy.

Some authors (for instance Hans-Georg Gadamer [17]) have pointed out that phenomenological health (or health as experienced) tends to remain as a forgotten background.

Health is in daily life hardly recognized at all by its subjects. People are reminded of their previous health first when it is being disrupted, when they experience the pain, nausea, or anguish of illness. Health is "felt" only under special circumstances, the major instance being after periods of illness when the person experiences relief in contrast to the previous suffering. Thus, although well-being or absence of ill-being is an important trait in health, most modern positive characterizations of health have focused on other traits. One such trait is health as a condition for action, i.e., ability.



Fig.1: Dimensions of

DIMENSIONS OF HEALTH

Health is commonly viewed as having seven dimensions (Fig.1). Each dimension contributes to our own sense of wellness or quality of life, and each affects and overlaps the others. At times one may be more prominent than others, but neglect of any one dimension for any length of time has adverse effects on overall health.

1. Physical Dimension

Most of us have a number of physiological and structural Characteristics we can call on to aid us in accomplishing the wide array of activities that characterize a typical day, and, on occasion, a not so typical day. Among these physical characteristics are our body weight, visual ability, strength, coordination, level of endurance, level of susceptibility to disease, and powers of recuperation. In certain situations the physical dimension of health may be the most important. This almost certainly is why traditional medicine for centuries has equated health with the design and operation of the body.

The physical dimension recognizes the need for regular physical activity. Physical development encourages learning about diet and nutrition while discouraging the use of tobacco, drugs and excessive alcohol consumption. Optimal wellness is met through the combination of good exercise and eating habits. As you travel the wellness path, you'll strive to spend time building physical strength, flexibility and endurance while also taking safety precautions so you may travel your path successfully, including medical self-care and appropriate use of a medical system. The physical dimension of wellness entails personal responsibility and care for minor illnesses and also knowing when professional medical attention is needed. By traveling the wellness path, you'll be able to monitor your own vital signs and understand your body's warning signs. The physical benefits of looking good and feeling terrific most often lead to the psychological benefits of enhanced self-esteem, self-control, determination and a sense of direction.



Watching what we eat, avoiding drugs and alcohol, wearing seat belts, and exercising are great places to start. But, as life gets hectic and stress creeps in, the physical dimension is usually the first to go. We are too busy to exercise, we don't have enough time to eat lunch, we drink too much coffee, and we don't get enough sleep. These are all things that we do that are detrimental to both our physical well-being and other areas of life as well. Physical wellness encompasses a variety of healthy behaviours including adequate exercise,

proper nutrition, and abstaining from harmful habits such as drug use and alcohol abuse. It means learning about and identifying symptoms of disease, getting regular medical checkups, and protecting from injuries and harm. Developing such healthy habits today will not only add years to your life but will enhance the enjoyment and quality of those years.

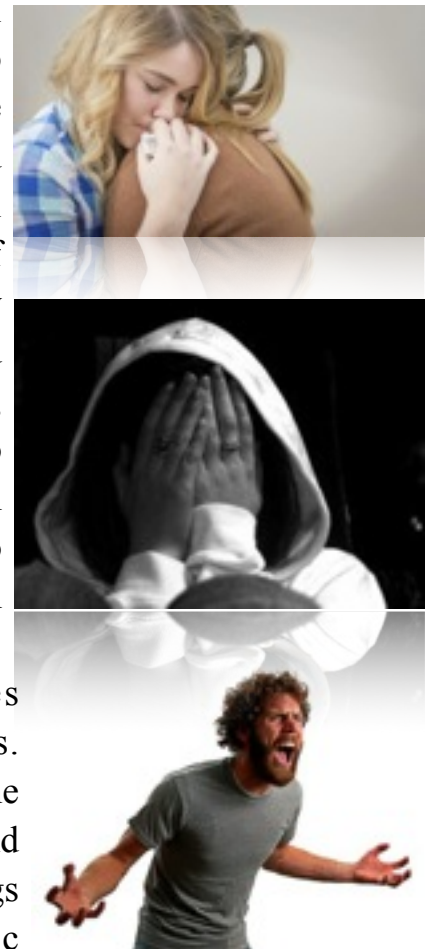
Tips for optimal physical wellness:

- ☑ Exercise daily
- ☑ Get adequate rest
- ☑ Use seat belts, helmets, and other protective equipment
- ☑ Learn to recognize early signs of illness
- ☑ Practice safer sex, if you are sexually active
- ☑ Eat a variety of healthy foods
- ☑ Control your meal portions
- ☑ Stop smoking and protect against second-hand smoke
- ☑ Use alcohol in moderation, if at all

2. Emotional Dimension

We also possess certain emotional characteristics that can help us through the demands of daily living. The emotional dimension of health encompasses our ability to cope with stress, remain flexible, and compromise to resolve conflict. For young adults, growth and development often give rise to emotional vulnerability, which may lead to feelings of rejection and failure that can reduce productivity and satisfaction. To some extent we are all affected by feeling states, such as anger, happiness, fear, empathy, guilt, love and hate. People who consistently try to improve their emotional health appear to enjoy life to a much greater extent than do those who let feelings of vulnerability overwhelm them or block their creativity.

The emotional dimension recognizes awareness and acceptance of one's feelings. Emotional wellness includes the degree to which one feels positive and enthusiastic about one's self and life. It includes the capacity to manage one's feelings and related behaviours including the realistic



assessment of one's limitations, development of autonomy, and ability to cope effectively with stress. The well person maintains satisfying relationships with others. Awareness of, and accepting a wide range of feelings in yourself and others is essential to wellness. On the wellness path, you'll be able to express feelings freely and manage feelings effectively. You'll be able to arrive at personal choices and decisions based upon the synthesis of feelings, thoughts, philosophies, and behaviour. You'll live and work independently while realizing the importance of seeking and appreciating the support and assistance of others. You'll be able to form interdependent relationships with others based upon a foundation of mutual commitment, trust, and respect. You'll take on challenges, take risks, and recognize conflict as being potentially healthy. Managing your life in personally rewarding ways, and taking responsibility for your actions, will help you see life as an exciting, hopeful adventure.

We often keep things inside instead of expressing ourselves in a healthy way. We don't have to deny how we feel. We can tell people what we think while expressing ourselves in a constructive manner. Emotional wellness means understanding how we feel, accepting our feelings, and learning how to express and cope with our emotions. Emotional wellness is a dynamic state that fluctuates frequently with your other six dimensions of wellness. Being emotionally well is typically defined as possessing the ability to feel and express human emotions such as happiness, sadness, and anger. It means having the ability to love and be loved and achieving a sense of fulfillment in life. Identifying the obstacles that prevent us from achieving emotional wellness and taking appropriate steps to cope with such problems is also important. Emotional wellness encompasses optimism, self-esteem, self-acceptance, and the ability to share feelings.



Tips for optimal emotional wellness:

- ☒ Tune-in to your thoughts and feelings
- ☒ Cultivate an optimistic attitude
- ☒ Seek and provide support
- ☒ Learn time management skills
- ☒ Practice stress management techniques
- ☒ Accept and forgive yourself.

3. Intellectual Dimension

The ability to process and act on information, clarify values and beliefs, and exercise decision-making capacity ranks among the most important aspects of total health. In fact, for many college-educated persons, this dimension of health may prove to be the most important and satisfying of the six. In fact, for all of us, at least on certain occasions, this will hold true. Our ability to analyze, synthesize, hypothesize, and then act upon new information enhances the quality of our lives in multiple ways.



The intellectual dimension recognizes one's creative, stimulating mental activities. A well person expands his or her knowledge and skills while discovering the potential for sharing his or her gifts with others. Using intellectual and cultural activities in the classroom and beyond the class room combined with the human resources and learning resources available within the university community and the larger community, a well person cherishes intellectual growth and stimulation. Traveling a wellness path, you'll explore issues related to problem solving, creativity, and learning. You'll spend more time pursuing personal interests and reading books, magazines, and newspapers, while keeping abreast of current issues and ideas. As you develop your intellectual curiosity, you'll actively strive to expand and challenge your mind with creative endeavors.

Intellectual wellness is characterized by the ability to make sound decisions and to think critically. It includes openness to new ideas; motivation to master new skills; and a sense of humor, creativity, and curiosity. Striving for personal growth and a willingness to seek out and use new information in an effective manner for personal and social development are also part of intellectual wellness. The intellectual dimension encourages creative, stimulating mental activities. Our minds need to be continually inspired and exercised just as our bodies do. People who possess a high level of intellectual wellness have an active mind and continue to learn. An intellectually well person uses the resources available to expand one's knowledge and improve skills. Keeping up-to-date on current events and participating in activities that arouse our minds are also important.

Tips and suggestions for optimal intellectual wellness include:

- ☐ Take a course or workshop
- ☐ Learn (or perfect) a foreign language
- ☐ Seek out people who challenge you intellectually
- ☐ Read

☑ Learn to appreciate art

4. Social Dimension

A fourth dimension of health encompasses social skills and insights. Initially, family interactions, school experiences, and peer group interactions foster social skill development, but future social interactions will demand additional skill development and refinement of already existing skills and insights. In adulthood, including young adulthood, the composition of the social world changes, principally because of our exposure to a wider array of people and the expanded roles associated with employment, parenting, and community involvement. The social abilities of many nontraditional-age students may already be firmly established. Entering college may encourage them to develop new social skills that help them socialize with their traditional-age student colleagues. After being on campus for a while, non traditional age students are often able to interact comfortably with traditional-age students in such diverse places as the library, the student center, and the bookstore. This interaction enhances the social dimension of health for both types of students.



The social dimension encourages contributing to one's environment and community. It emphasizes the interdependence between others and nature. As you travel a wellness path, you'll become more aware of your importance in society as well as the impact you have on multiple environments. You'll take an active part in improving our world by encouraging healthier living and initiating better communication with those around you. You'll actively seek ways to preserve the beauty and balance of nature along the pathway as you discover the power to make willful choices to enhance personal relationships and important friendships, and build a better living space and community.



Making contact and reaching out to others can be difficult, but very rewarding. Communication and sharing is important to your social life and vital to your sense of well-being. Social wellness refers to our ability to interact successfully in our global community and to live up to the expectations and demands of our personal roles. This means learning good communication skills, developing intimacy with others, and creating a support network of friends and family members. Social wellness includes showing respect for others and

yourself. Contributing to your community and to the world builds a sense of belonging.

Tips and suggestions for optimal social wellness include:

- ☑ Cultivate healthy relationships
- ☑ Get involved
- ☑ Contribute to your community
- ☑ Share your talents and skills
- ☑ Communicate your thoughts, feelings, and ideas

5. Spiritual Dimension

The fifth dimension of health is the spiritual dimension. Although certainly it includes religious beliefs and practices, many young adults would expand it to encompass more diverse belief systems, including relationships with other living things, the nature of human behaviour, and the need and willingness to serve others. All are important components of spiritual health. Through nurturing the spiritual dimension of our health, we may develop an expanded perception of the universe and better define our relationship to all that it contains, including other people. To achieve growth in the spiritual dimension of health, many people undertake a serious study of doctrine associated with established religious groups and will assume membership in a community of faith. For others, however, spiritual growth is believed to occur, in the absence of a theist-based belief system, as they open themselves to new experiences that involve nature, art, body movement, or stewarding of the environment. Interestingly, the role of the spiritual dimension of health was given an increased measure of credence when studies published in the scientific literature, including a statistical review of forty-two earlier studies, demonstrated a consistently longer life for persons who regularly participated in religious practices, particularly for women. This was true even when factors such as smoking, alcohol use, and income were statistically eliminated. Contradictory to these findings, however, was a report suggesting that the ability of prescriptive prayer (prayers of intercession) to enhance healing and extend life could not be supported by current research due to design flaws in the studies made to date.



No matter what religion one practice, your spiritual sense of wellness is the part of you that develops values. Everyone creates their own rules that provide a sense of who they are and why things work the way they do. Just a few minutes a day of quiet time to gather your thoughts can have powerful results. Spiritual wellness involves possessing a set of guiding beliefs, principles, or values that help give direction to one's life. It encompasses a high level of faith, hope, and commitment to your individual beliefs that provide a sense of meaning and purpose. It is willingness to seek meaning and purpose in human existence, to question everything and to appreciate the things which cannot be readily explained or understood.

People can derive meaning and purpose through nature, art, music, religion, meditation, or good deeds performed for others. Spirituality transcends the individual to create a common bond with humanity. A spiritually well person seeks harmony between what lies within as well as the forces outside.

Tips and suggestions for optimal spiritual wellness:

- ☐ Explore your spiritual core
- ☐ Spend time alone/meditate regularly
- ☐ Be inquisitive and curious
- ☐ Be fully present in everything you do
- ☐ Listen with your heart and live by your principles
- ☐ Allow yourself and those around you the freedom to be who they are
- ☐ See opportunities for growth in the challenges life brings you

1. Environmental Wellness

Environmental wellness is an awareness of the unstable state of the earth and the effects of your daily habits on the physical environment. It consists of maintaining a way of life that maximizes harmony with the earth and minimizes harm to the environment. It includes being involved in socially responsible activities to protect the environment. Examples of environmental threats include ultraviolet radiation in the sunlight, air, chemical, noise, water pollution, and second-hand smoke.

Although some environmental concerns are beyond our control, there are things that can be done to promote a healthier earth.

Tips and suggestions for optimal environmental wellness:

- ☐ Stop your junk mail
- ☐ Conserve water and other resources
- ☐ Minimize chemical use

- ☑ Reduce, Reuse, Recycle
- ☑ Renew your relationship with the earth

2. Occupational Dimension

A significant contribution made by the currently popular wellness movement is that it defines for many people the importance of the workplace to their sense of wellbeing. In today's world, employment and productive efforts play an increasingly important role in how we perceive ourselves and how we see the "goodness" of the world in which we live. In addition, the work place serves as both a testing ground for and a source of life enhancing skills. In our place of employment we gain not only the financial resources to meet our demands for both necessities and luxuries, but also an array of useful skills like conflict resolution, experiences in shared responsibility, and intellectual growth that can be used to facilitate a wide range of non-employment related interactions. In turn, the workplace is enhanced by the healthfulness of the individuals who contribute to its endeavors.



It may include the actual work that you do, the roles that you play and/or the responsibilities that you have as a full time parent or student. Being occupationally well means seeking opportunities to grow professionally and to be fulfilled in the job whatever that may be.

Occupational wellness involves preparing and making use of your gifts, skills, and talents in order to gain purpose, happiness, and enrichment in your life. The development of occupational satisfaction and wellness is related to your attitude about your work. Achieving optimal occupational wellness allows you to maintain a positive attitude and experience satisfaction/pleasure in your employment.

The occupationally well individual contributes her/his unique skills/talents to work that is meaningful and rewarding. Values are expressed through involvement in activities that are personally rewarding for you and make a contribution to the well being of the community at large. Occupational wellness means successfully integrating a commitment to your occupation into a total lifestyle that is satisfying and rewarding.

Tips and suggestions for optimal occupational wellness include:

- ☑ Explore a variety of career options
- ☑ Create a vision for your future

- ☑ Choose a career that suits your personality, interests, and talents
- ☑ Visit a career planning/placement office and use the available resources
- ☑ Be open to change and learn new skills

disables.

CONCLUSION:

Health as a well-being, is an important aspect of health that the body and mind are well, both in order and function. Health is commonly viewed as having seven dimensions viz. physical, emotional, intellectual, social, spiritual, environmental and occupational dimensions. Each dimension contributes to our own sense of wellness or quality of life, and each affects and overlaps the others. At times one may be more prominent than others, but neglect of any one dimension for any length of time has adverse effects on overall health.