



CONCEPT, AIMS, OBJECTIVES, SCOPE AND PRINCIPLES OF HEALTH EDUCATION

INTRODUCTION

Health education is a continuum of learning experiences that enables students, as individuals and as members of society, to make informed decisions, modify behaviors, and change social conditions in ways that are health enhancing and increase health literacy. It is based on a multidisciplinary foundation of knowledge. The intent of the health education is to promote the individual's competence regarding health, well being and safety. The task of the health education is to develop the individuals' cognitive, social, functional and ethical capabilities, and their capabilities for regulating.



Thus, Health education like general education is concerned with the change in knowledge, feelings and behavior of people. In its most usual form, it concentrates on developing such health practices as are believed to bring about the best possible state of well being (WHO).

Health Education

Health education is the “Consciously constructed opportunities for learning involving some form of communication designed to improve health literacy, including improving knowledge, and developing life skills, which are conducive to individual and community health.” In other sense, health education is any combination of learning experiences designed to help individual and communities improve their health, by increasing their knowledge or influencing their attitude. The WHO health promotion glossary describes health education as not limited to the dissemination of health-related information but also “fostering the motivation, skills and confidence (self-efficacy) necessary to take action to improve health”, as well as “the communication of information concerning the underlying social, economic and environmental conditions impacting on health, as well as individual risk factors, risk behaviors, and use of the health care



system”. A broad purpose of health education therefore is not only to increase knowledge about personal health behavior but also to develop skills that “demonstrate the political feasibility and organizational possibilities of various forms of action to address social, economic and environmental determinants of health”.

The concept of health education

The field of health education needs to establish a conceptual basis that provides a legitimate focus and direction for health education. Health education should recognize that notions of health are human constructs which are restricted by man's interpretation of the functional integrity of the body and mind and relative to the activities and interests of individual societies. Health education should define health as that state of body and mind functioning which affords man the ability to strive towards his functional objectives and his culturally desired goals. The function of health education should be to impart knowledge for the purpose of developing the powers of reason and judgment in order to help people make their own choices about patterns of living which enhance the well functioning of the body and mind.



Aims of Health Education

1. To inform general public about promotion of healthy living.
2. To create an informed body of opinion and knowledge.
3. To give the public right information regarding medication.
4. To facilitate the acceptance and proper usage of medication.
5. To ensure that the community regards health as an asset.
6. To equip the individual with skills, knowledge and attitudes in order to help him solve his own problems.
7. To promote the development by one's actions and efforts and proper use of the health services.
8. The aim of imparting health education to children is mainly to help them develop a sound physique and also to acquaint them with the laws of health.
9. Early diagnosis and management.
10. Health promotion and disease prevention.
11. Utilization of available health services.

Objectives of Health Education

Some of the objectives of health education are highlighted below:

1. To increase knowledge of the factors that affect health.
2. To encourage behavior which promote and maintain health.
3. To cultivate the desirable health practices and health habits
4. To enlist support for public health measures, when necessary, to press for appropriate governmental action.
5. To encourage appropriate use of health services especially preventive services.
6. To inform the public about medical advances their uses and their limitations.
7. To provide information to the people about healthy living.
8. To establish a scientific attitude towards health.

9. To identify health problems and take preventive measure against communicable diseases.
10. To improve environmental sanitation and cleanliness of their home and surroundings.
11. To know and to appreciate the view that health is an asset to every individual and good health is the foundation of prosperity.
12. To teach the students to fight against superstition and prejudices in the community regarding bad health practices.
13. To influence and motivate the students, children, adults, parents to attend periodic medical examination through health education programme.
14. To enable the individual to know the effects of exercise, rest, recreation on health and propagate the danger of population explosion on health.
15. To appreciate the health programmes undertaken by the school and community and to improve it.

The Scope of Health Education

Health education is a very vast subject. It has a very wide and broad scope. It is dependent and closely related to many other aspects, besides health. These aspects include housing, economic security, agriculture or industrial prosperity etc. normally, health education includes the following:

1. Food and its importance in the development of human body.
2. Water, air, light, physical exercise, recreation, rest and sleep, etc.
3. Adverse effect of abnormal conditions and bad habits on the physical and mental health of an individual.
4. Prevention of diseases and their causes.
5. Mental health, domestic hygiene, sex hygiene and community hygiene.
6. Emergency and first aid.
7. Safety education.
8. Consumer education and health education.
9. Misuse of alcohol, tobacco and other stimulants and depressant.
10. International health.

Principles of Health Education

Some of the main principles of health education are as follows:

1. Interest
2. Participation
3. Comprehension
4. Motivation
5. Reinforcement
6. Known to unknown
7. Learning by doing

Interest

Before starting any health related topic, the interests of the students should first be considered. Health educators must find the real needs of the students and only then the teaching learning process will be effective. Health related programmes can thus be initiated successfully.

Participation

Participation is based on the principle of active learning through group discussion, panel discussion, workshop, seminar etc as they all provide great opportunities for active learning. Health education is not just the personal element of an individual but also includes social well being. So, health education must include all the various elements which help in an overall holistic development of a person. The personal and community health are closely interlinked and interdependent.

Comprehension

In health education one must determine the level of literacy and understanding for which the teaching is directed. Children in the lower level find it difficult to understand the meaning of health and this is the main reason for them lacking in interest regarding health. Language for communication is an important part in delivering health education. The language for communication should be understandable to the students. One barrier to communication is the use of the words which cannot be understood. Usage of technical or medical terms should be avoided as far as possible. So, teaching should be within the mental capacity of the children.

Motivation

We know that in every person there is a fundamental desire to learn something. In common term awakening of this desire is called motivation. There are two types of motives i.e. primary motive and secondary motive. Generally, primary motives are sex, survival which initiates people in to action. Basically these motives are inborn desires. But secondary motives are based on those desires created by the external forces or incentive.

Some of the secondary motives are praise, love, rivalry, rewards, punishment and recognition. Therefore, in health education, motivation has become an important factor. The incentive must be emphasized positively as against the negative.

Reinforcement

A person cannot learn all that is new in a single period. Repetition at various intervals is useful. It assists in comprehensive understanding so health education needs reinforcement in order to boost up the health of an individual.

Known to unknown

For imparting health education, it is always recommended to proceed from the known things to the unknown things. For bringing out things from the known to the unknown, the pre-requisite or previous knowledge of an individual should always be considered first. By understanding the known things new insights can be developed. Thus, it should be started from where the individuals are and what they understand otherwise it cannot proceed to new knowledge. In this way, systematic knowledge is built up and a wide horizon of new ideas and knowledge is gained.

Learning by doing

Learning is an action process. It has process of continuity, not a memorizing one of the narrow sense. Here, we can mention one of the Chinese proverb "If I hear, I forget, If I see, I remember, If I do, I know". So in the learning process, it needs doing or so called practice on

regular basis is very much important. Therefore, health habits like other habits should be cultivated through practice and by following certain rules rigidly.

CONCLUSION

Health education is concerned with the change in knowledge, feelings and behavior of a person. The function of health education should be to impart knowledge for the purpose of developing the powers of reason and judgment in order to help people make their own choices about patterns of living which enhance the well functioning of the body and mind. Health habits like other habits should be cultivated through practice and by following certain rules rigidly.