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Includes these items: Integrated Health Wheel; definitions of Health/wellness domains; Why focus on Health Promotion?; What is Community Health?; Blending the Integrated Health Wheel with Community Concepts; Consulting strategies

Integrated Health Wheel:

There are many definitions of health and each concept of health should be personally defined. Too often our western medicine practice focuses only on physical health. Part of Community Health Concept's philosophy (one you might want to consider for your health concept) includes an integrated and synergistic combination of different domains. These health domains include (but are not limited to): environmental, social, physical, emotional, spiritual, and mental (intellectual). All have equal importance and each reflects the health of the overall individual- meaning when one domain is not healthy, it has the potential to impair all other areas. Following are definitions used for these domains. These domain definitions only provide a context- each area, like overall health, should be personally defined.

1. *Physical wellness/health* reflects a healthy body maintained by eating right, exercising regularly, avoiding harmful habits, making informed and responsible decisions about health, seeking medical care when needed, and participating in activities that help prevent illness. A person with a physical challenge, a chronic illness, or other issues is not necessarily unhealthy, but must find a balance in health decisions to live the quality of life their body allows.
2. *Emotional wellness/health* requires understanding emotions and coping with problems that arise in everyday life. A healthy person can have and express a wide range of emotions such as anger, sadness, or joy and love. An unhealthy person either buries those emotions or expresses those emotions in inappropriate ways, such as violence, extreme depression, suicide, or mania, etc.
3. *Mental -Intellectual wellness/health* involves having a mind open to new ideas and concepts. A healthy person will be open to learning a variety of lessons (in life and in the classroom). This individual will ask questions about health care needs to better understand and learn about their body and choices. This individual will also seek understanding to learn from life lessons. An unhealthy person will remain closed to new ideas or will blame others for their poor performance. Racial, religious, gender, and age prejudices factor into this area by demonstrating

poor health. A person who is developmentally delayed or has been diagnosed with a mental health issue is not necessarily unhealthy, but as with physical health issues, they must find a balance in their lives using a variety of resources to live at their best quality of life. When you include social health concerns as a combination effect, this also means finding a balance that allows the individual to be socially well (for themselves and others).

4. *Spiritual wellness/health* reflects a state of harmony between you and others. It also means you have an understanding of your place in the greater universe. Keep in mind this does not mean religion specifically, although religion can factor into a personal sense of harmony and spirituality. Instead the focus is broadened to such a perspective it is hard to confine to a simple list of ideas. For example, it is the experience of watching the ocean waves crashing to the shore, of getting to the end of that tough mountain trail and seeing the view you worked hard to get to, of sharing in the miracle of birth or death, etc. A way to reach for spiritual wellness is by using all the senses. For example: an exercise to finding spiritual balance in a chaotic moment is to go outside to a pleasant place, breathe deeply and **SMELL the scents around you, SEE the details in the view, HEAR the sounds, FEEL the textures, and when possible TASTE your surroundings (such as salt spray)**. This is one of the reasons why food holidays are so important to most of us and are associated with those warm, fuzzy feelings. They ground us in our sense of place in the larger more chaotic universe with tastes, sounds, smells, textures, sights, and memories.
5. *Environmental wellness/health*: Refers to an appreciation of the external environment and the role individual's play in preserving, protecting, and improving environmental conditions. This domain looks not only at the impact that environmental pollutants have on all of us physically, mentally, spiritually, emotionally, and socially, but also looks at our impact upon the environment and the circle of involvement and effect this can create. Therefore, recycling and pollution are part of this domain, but understanding the human role as part of the environment is also important. For example, one study conducted in China, found people who live in rural areas have minimal visual distortions to eyesight by focusing on distances, whereas city dweller's eyes have adapted to nearsightedness. Also, think of how effective your learning or working experience is in a room if it is too hot or cold, lights are flickering, or a buzzing noise is heard in the background. Most of the concepts of Fung Shuei are part of this health domain.
6. *Social wellness/health*: refers to the ability to perform social roles effectively, comfortably, and without harming others. In this domain, we look at relationships, social norms and an individual's reaction to those relationships and norms. The child who sits alone in the class socially isolating him or herself, can be as unhealthy as the child who is the class deviant. It is important that boundaries are discussed and acceptance of differences in individual boundaries is encouraged. Again, prejudice or 'isms' (of any type) fall into this category from the perspective of respecting cultural, religious, and individual differences. *Occupational wellness* reflects your ability to enjoy what you are doing to earn a living or to

contribute to society. This is a specialized domain that can be included in the social health area and is an important focus for most adults.

Why focus on Health Promotion?

There are many ways to achieve health. As you can see from the definitions in the *integrated health* wheel, exploring the many dimensions of health encourages more holistic sense of wellness. Western medicine focuses heavily on “cure” by treating symptoms of illness, removing diseased areas of our bodies, and re-linking our body’s mechanics. These all have great value and help many individuals. However, there are also many treatments not fully integrated into our health care system offered by other cultures and health philosophies. The federal government recognized the need for more research on these ideas in the 1990’s by encouraging more grants for treatment ideas including energy work, herbal and homeopathic products, prayer, mind-body concepts, etc. There is also a recognition that individuals naturally work, learn and grow in a variety of communities and more programs and grants are being delivered to “faith-based” groups, ethnic and cultural groups, rural communities, and others instead of the past individual-only focused programs.

World-wide, the global burden of illness is found in preventable lifestyle issues. America’s top killers are heart disease and cancer. In younger ages, most of the disabilities are caused by substance use, improper protection while using motored vehicles, and mental health concerns. All of these disabilities and diseases can be prevented. And even when life happens, there are healthier options for living with a chronic illness or disability that improves an individual’s quality of life and life span.

Promoting health is an important step. Those who move from simply telling an individual to exercise or eat right to supporting that person in their transition to better health choices will be more effective. Additional steps include providing community resources, effective ideas for change, and referring to informed providers who offer individualized options.

What is Community Health?

Community is a diverse concept studied and assessed in a multitude of fields. Many people are familiar with Public Health since county agencies work with health related projects, vital statistics, and health promotion. There are also a variety of private and public services at city, county, state, national and international levels that improve any population’s health.

Primary definitions for any type of community or population- based health include:

- geographic boundaries
- types of disease (ie diabetes, heart disease, HIV/AIDS)
- cultural and ethnic contexts
- gender

- and more!
- Communities also exist in pre-defined spaces- there are dormitory, hospital, school, and working departments where individuals share similarities and any health program that benefits that population benefits the entire organization! The idea is for you to define your community and determine what it needs!

Blending the Integrated Health Wheel with Community

When you overlay the *integrated wheel of health domains* on the idea of “community” you can see the many possibilities for health promotion! Habitat for Humanity is an excellent working idea of this concept. This program provides housing for individuals who otherwise would have a very difficult time buying a house. These individuals meet strict criteria for the program. Part of the criteria includes their willingness to put in “sweat equity”- several hundred hours of actual work on the housing project by themselves or volunteer family members. Other community volunteers help by providing materials, labor, and even donating houses for repair and eventual habitability.

If you consider the **6 domains of health** (link to the integrated wheel of health definition page)- you can easily see

- 1) the use of **social** health in the community service,
- 2) **emotional** health is expressed by individual helpers and is especially present in the pride of ownership and connection for the new home owner,
- 3) **environmental** health is present by a) moving the new home owner out of their present circumstances and into a healthy neighborhood and b) creating a sturdy house made with safe materials,
- 4) **intellectual** health is part of teaching all participants new skills, especially the homeowner who must pledge to maintain their house,
- 5) **physical** health is obvious in the amount of “sweat” everyone puts into the project, and finally
- 6) **spiritual** health is apparent in the support of many churches, the “blessing” of the home, and even more important, the sense of connection and “place” all who participate feel in this service project.

Community Health Concepts works with a variety of “communities” or “populations” to help assess health and needs, using local expertise. Although CHC provides expertise in community as a concept- YOU are the expert on your community or population! CHC will partner with community leaders to facilitate health promotion program planning, interventions, and evaluations as determined by community needs. Your community can use this information and training to continue this process.

Consulting strategies:

The focus on **individuals**, **professionals**, and **community/organizations** comes from the scope of practice for a Clinical Nurse Specialist (CNS). Kathlynn is a Community Health CNS meaning her specialty is the community. With her expertise in health promotion, Kathlynn can work with groups of individuals, professionals (health care and educators),

and communities/organizations to provide workshops and consultation to improve overall health from a personal and organizational approach.