

## Health Promotion and Inequalities

### Key Message

Health Promotion and Health inequalities are key issues for the UK and the EU more broadly. Whilst the health of people in Scotland is improving overall, there is still evidence of significant health inequalities within the poorest sections of the population. Inequalities exist in terms of mortality, physical and mental health and wellbeing and access to and use of health services. Statistics show that those who live in poverty in Scotland are likely to die 10 years earlier than those who do not live in poverty.

Factors or determinants that affect an individual's health and wellbeing: personal characteristics (age, gender, ethnicity, biological inheritance), the physical environment, the cultural circumstances, policies and laws, income, work, behaviour and lifestyle.

### Public Health

The public health priorities were published in 2018 by the Scottish Government and COSLA. The priorities reflect a consensus for co-ordinated action on:

- healthy places and communities
- early years
- mental wellbeing
- harmful substances
- poverty and inequality
- healthy weight and physical activity.

For the national perspective on Public Health you will find lots of information within the [NHS Scotland site](#).

There is also information relating to national learning initiative on the [NHS Education for Scotland site](#)

### Health Literacy

It has been found that people understand and remember only half of what we tell them. The effective practitioner must strive to ensure that the people who use our services have a strong understanding of their health journey, the choices they have and the rationale behind treatment options. That way they can be equal partners in their care.

Health literacy is about people having enough knowledge, understanding, skills and confidence to use health information, to be active partners in their care, and to navigate health and social care systems. Health Literacy is being increasingly recognised as a significant public health concern around the world.

You will find lots of resources and information relating to Health Literacy [here](#)

### What does this mean for the Effective Practitioner?

The effective practitioner appreciates that every interaction with the patient or client provides an opportunity for health promotion. Using a person-centred approach, it's acceptable to challenge patients/clients sensitively about their lifestyle choices. For example, for someone with liver disease, "have they thought about reducing or giving up drinking?"

It's important to be non-judgemental, be empathetic to the person's personal circumstances and know where and how to refer on if the patient or client is open to change. It is also vital to ensure the patient or client fully understands the information and options available to them.



### Learning Activities



### Reflection on health

You may want to discuss this with a friend or colleague.

- How would you describe health? What does it mean to you?
- What personal and cultural factors influence the choices you make?
- To what extent do you agree with the distinction that some inequalities are inherent, while others are socially produced, and 'unfair'?
- What do you think are the health and social inequalities in Scotland?
- To what extent do you think lifestyle 'choices', such as smoking or diet, are a matter of choice?

How do you feel this reflection could impact on your practice?

Ref: [Bridging the Gap, 2011.](#)

Record your learning in your professional portfolio.

**Related KSF core dimensions: personal and people development, equality and diversity.**

### Notes

Find more work-based learning activities on the effective practitioner website at [www.effectivepractitioner.nes.scot.nhs.uk](http://www.effectivepractitioner.nes.scot.nhs.uk)



## Impact of economic conditions

In recent years discussion about the economic conditions has been dominated with the language of 'recession', 'downturn', 'crisis', 'credit crunch', and 'cuts'...

Discuss with your peers what kind of impact you think the economic conditions are having on your service users in terms of:

- Living and working conditions
- Social and community networks
- Lifestyle factors
- Health and wellbeing.

How can you use this information to enhance the care you provide to your patients/clients?

Ref: [\*Bridging the Gap, 2011\*](#).

Record your learning in your professional portfolio.

**Related KSF core dimensions: personal and people development, service improvement.**

### Notes

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## Health Promotion

Consider patients and clients you care for where you suspect health behaviour has had a negative impact.

The next time you assess such a patient, consider the potential for a health promotion message. Consider:

- What should the message be?
- How and when will you raise the subject?
- Do you know where to signpost if the patient needs to be referred?

Having raised the subject:

- Was the patient 'open' to listening?
- Were your communication skills appropriate?
- What might you do differently the next time?

Discuss your experience with a colleague to find out their views about what you did and how they would raise the health promotion message when dealing with their patients/clients.

Record your learning in your professional portfolio.



**Related KSF core dimensions: communication and personal and people development.**

Notes