

## HEALTHCARE PROMOTION

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**Cuvinte cheie:** Sănătate, comunitate, protecție, prevenire, abilități, personale, medii de suport

**Abstract:** This paper presents aspects of health promotion strategies of developing in this direction, stressing that health promotion is a process that takes place within the local community, addressing both the individual and the environment having as social benefits: reduced morbidity and mortality, increased longevity, healthier people and not least increasing the quality of life.

**Rezumat:** Lucrare de față prezintă aspecte legate de promovarea sănătății în vederea elaborării de strategii în această direcție, subliniind faptul că promovarea sănătății este un proces care se desfășoară în cadrul comunității locale, adresându-se atât indivizilor cât și mediului înconjurător având drept beneficii sociale: morbiditate și mortalitate reduse, longevitate mărită, oameni mai sănătoși și nu în ultimul rând creșterea calității vieții.

## INTRODUCTION

## Concepts

Health promotion is the process providing the individual and collectivities the possibility to increase the control over the health determinants and, by this, to improve their state of health (World Health Organization's 1986 Ottawa Charter).

Health promotion is the science and art to help people in changing their lifestyle in order to converge to the optimal health state (Michael O'Donnell 1986 American Journal of Health Promotion).

In the Joint Committee on Health Education Terminology 1991 the health promotion is defined as „the aggregate activities designed to improve the individual and public health by a combination of strategies including: competent implementation of behaviour change strategies, health education, medical protection measures, identification of risk factors, improving and keeping health”.

Thomas A. Butler says that “health promotion together with public health is one of the first and really multidisciplinary initiatives in the field of health which proves itself to be, in large extend, independent from medicine”.

#### Guidelines for health promotion contained in the Ottawa Charter:

- Strengthen the communities actions
- Building up public health policies
- Creation of aid means
- Development of personal skills
- Realignment of health services

Strengthening community action involves providing free or low cost opportunities for recreation and physical activities by:

- Cooperation with the community groups in order to provide pedestrian and bicycle paths
- organization of dressing rooms needed to change ones sports equipment and clothing

- development in the schools of special programs for the youth under risks
- support for providing the time needed for recreational facilities
- Improvement of parks and other public spaces where children can play together with adults in safety (physical safety and security against violence)
- building of community canteens where healthy food is provided at low cost.



Building up public health policies involves:

- Mobilization of all community sectors in order to enable to choose healthy food in places like: job, arenas and school canteens;
  - Cost reduction for public facilities for physical training making them “affordable” to children, youth and families;
  - Providing support for the availability of high quality food at an affordable price in rural and isolated areas;
  - cooperation with the local dealers;
  - establishment of local associations for providing food.
- Creation of aid means
- Cooperation with the schools in order to include more affordable possibilities for physical training for all students;
  - Support of healthy snacks, breakfasts and lunches within the public schools and faculties;
  - Assurance of children care and transportation; in order to increase accessibility to physical training programs;
  - to increase participation to social canteens and other food

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support programs;

- Providing support to the advising groups by “equals” in order to promote a healthy lifestyle.
  - Development of personal skills
- Increase of public education level by: mass- media, health fairs etc. by underlining the risk conditions;
- Cooperation with the community partners in order to provide nutrition programs and cooking lessons and also for providing care for children and transportation for the participants;
- Support for the development groups and children care, weight monitoring, etc.
- Realignment of health services
- Dissemination of knowledge on the heart health programs by health specialists;
- Development of partnerships between different sectors in order to discuss the local health issues and to cooperate in the implementation of preventing strategies.

Following the five main directions stipulated by the Ottawa Charter of 1986 the health promotion activities shall aim: to reduce the health risks, to develop a healthy lifestyle and to change some unhealthy behaviours. The participation is essential for the support of health promotion activities.

### Fundamental health promotion strategies

Fundamental health promotion strategies (Ottawa Charter, WHO, 1986):

1. advocacy for health
2. enabling all people to completely reach their health potential (enabling)
3. mediating between various interest of the society (mediating)

Advocacy for health is a combination of individual and social actions performed in order to receive the political engagement, support from politicians and social acceptability and help for a goal or a program in the field of health (WHO, 1992 apud Nutbeam, 1998).

### Priorities for health promotion

For the health promotion in the 21<sup>st</sup> century have been set forth five priorities (Jakarta Declaration, 1997 apud Nutbeam, 1998):

1. promotion of social responsibility for health;
2. increase of investment for health development;
3. extension of health promotion partnerships;
4. increase of community capacities and individual empowerment;
5. insurance of the infrastructure for health promotion.

The empowerment for health is the process by which people raise more control on the decisions and actions which jeopardize their health (Nutbeam, 1998).



The health promotion model has 3 different areas of activity but which, at the same time, are superposed:

- health education;
- health protection;

- prevention of illness.

Health promotion aims to develop individual skills and capacities to take actions, and the skills of the groups and communities to act together on the determining health factors.

### Determining health factors

- hereditary factors;
- physical environment;
- social environment;
- social-economic status;
- medical services
- lifestyle related factors



\*General social, economic, cultural and environment conditions; Life and work conditions, Social influences of the influences of the community; Individual lifestyle factors; Age, sex and hereditary factors

The effective health promotion activities aim to change the social, political and economic level (poverty, clean water, clean air, clean soil, good living conditions). All these factors are important for health, but the most significant influence in the developed world has the lifestyle, a factor that can be controlled.

### Hereditary factors

The genes contain coded information which determines everything. A breakdown of the code or a wrong code may have health effects. Practicing healthy living habits can change the effect of these genes and that shows the importance of counselling individuals on the effects of a healthy life.

### Physical environment

- **Climate**
- **Food and water:** Contaminated water may cause enteritis, diarrhoea and cholera epidemics which cause many deaths in the underdeveloped countries. Certain conditions such as: famine, drought and pests may affect the quality and the quality of our food supply.
- **Soil pollution:** Following industrial expansion the concentrations of the following pollutants increased: lead, carbon monoxide and benzene and that has adverse health effects. The most severe threats of air pollution are acid rains and ozone depletion.

### Social environment

"Social systems have become more important than the physical environment in individual survival because they control the distribution and access to those factors which are now influencing mortality levels." (Ratcliffe J, 1980).

### Social-economic status

Typically, when income, education and occupation have higher levels, mortality rates are lower. In countries where economic resources are greater, there is a higher standard of living, which leads to better access to services and medical resources, and also to good environments and lifestyles.

When recession occur the health indicators decrease.

### Medical services

Access to health care, improvements in emergency services, development of preventive care, curative and rehabilitation medical services are important elements in

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ensuring a good health. For those living in poverty or in rural areas is difficult to access such services.

### Lifestyle related factors

Lifestyle generally refers to how we live - attitudes, habits and behaviours - in everyday life. A healthy lifestyle requires a natural and harmonious living. This includes avoiding adverse health behaviours: the use of harmful substance, unhealthy food, lack of physical exercises and stress.

Practicing healthy living habits (healthy food, physical activity, giving up tobacco, alcohol, and drugs) may reduce the risk of developing chronic diseases.

### PROTECTIVE FACTORS FOR HEALTH

Healthy living environment and conditions	Psychological and social factors	Efficient medical services	Healthy lifestyles
Healthy physical environment	Social involvement and activities	Provision of preventive services	Reducing tobacco and drugs consumption
Good social and economic conditions	Strong social networks	Attainability of proper medical services	Regular physical exercises
Easy access to water and food	Feeling of confidence	Community involvement in planning and providing medical services	Balanced diet
Restricting access to tobacco and drugs	The feeling of power and control over own decision		Mental health
Public strategies and sound organizational practices	Beneficial effects of family structure		Healthy sexual behaviour
Access to good and well paid jobs	Self-confidence		
Access to affordable housing			

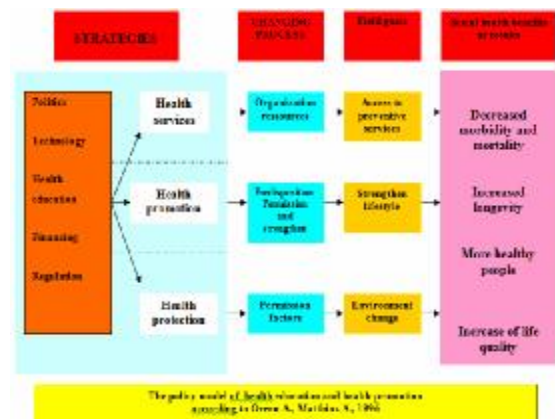
### Principles of health promotion

- it works with people and not against them;
- it is a process which takes places in local communities;
- it addresses the underlying health causes rather than the immediate ones;
- it is addressed both to individuals and the environment;
- stresses the positive dimensions of health;
- includes and should involve all sectors of society, it should appeal to the participation of everybody;
- involves the entire population in the context of its everyday life;
- its central element is the effective public participation in defining problems, making decisions and carrying out activities aimed to change and improve health determinants.

### HEALTH RISK FACTORS

Hazardous conditions	Psychological and social risk factors	Behavioural risk factors	Physiological risk factors
Poverty	Loneliness	Smoking	Hypertension
Dangerous jobs	Lack of social protection	Insufficient food	Hypercholesterolemia
Polluted environment	Poor social network	Sedentarism	Stress hormone hypersecretion
Impoverishment of natural resources	Lack of self-confidence	Drugs and alcohol abuse	Misbalance of

			biochemical markers
Discrimination (criteria: age, sex, race, disability)	Low perceived power	Improper hygiene	Genetic factors
Social misbalance (belongings, statute, authority) in a community or at job	Loss of sense of value or purpose	Obesity	
	Abuse	Hazardous sexual behaviour	



The seven areas of the policy model for health education and health promotion have the following meaning

- Preventive services, e.g.: immunization, blood pressure measurements, use of nicotine chewing gum for giving up smoking;
- Preventive medicine education, e.g.: information and advises on giving up smoking;
- Health protection by preventive methods, e.g.: water fluoridation;
- Health education, for health protection by preventive methods, e.g.: lobbying for enactment of mandatory seat belt wearing;
- Positive health education, e.g.: introduction of life skills in the mind of young people;
- Positive messages for health protection, e.g.: the policy related to smoking at job;
- Health education focussed on positive health, e.g.: lobbying for passage of a law to ban the advertising of tobacco products.

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