

## **Unit VIII**

# **Anthropological Components/traits and Public Health Interventions**

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## Anthropological Components/traits and Public Health Interventions

- Health Education Intervention
- Health Promotion Intervention
- Public Health Policy and Legal Intervention
- Public Health Infrastructure Development
- Community Organization and Participation

- An **intervention** is a combination of program elements or strategies designed to produce behavior changes or improve health status among individuals or an entire population.
- Interventions may include educational programs, new or stronger policies, improvements in the environment, or a health promotion campaign.
- Interventions that include multiple strategies are typically the most effective in producing desired and lasting change.

# Health Education

- **Health education** is the translation of what is known about health, into desirable individual and community behavior patterns by means of an educational process.
- The process by which individuals and groups of people learn to behave in a manner conducive to the promotion, maintenance or restoration of health.” – **John M Last**
- Health education is the process that informs, motivates and helps people to adopt and maintain healthy practices and lifestyles, advocates environment changes as needed to facilitate this goal and conduct professional training and researches to the same end.” – Conference on Social and Preventive Medicine, USA

# Health Education

- Health Education is the part of health care that is concerned with promoting healthy behavior.
- “A process aimed at encouraging people to want to be healthy, to know how to stay healthy, to do what they can individually and collectively to maintain health, and to seek help when needed.” – Alma Ata Declaration, 1978
- **Health education** is a process that helps to gain knowledge (K), develop attitude (A) and skills (S) as a result people can modify their health related behavior or practice in order to attain health.

- **Health education:** Any combination of planned activities leading to a situation where people want to be healthy; know how to attain health; do what they can individually and collectively and seek help when needed.
- This is one of the most cost-effective interventions.
- A large number of diseases could be prevented with little or no medical intervention if people were adequately informed about them and if they were encouraged to take necessary

- Recognizing this truth, the WHO's constitution states that "the extension to all people of the benefits of medical, psychological and related knowledge is essential to the fullest attainment of health".
- The targets for educational efforts may include the general public, patients, priority groups, health providers, community leaders and decision-makers.
- **The WHO (1998) defined** health education as 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

- Health education, as one component to the broader area of health promotion, provides a valuable contribution to the betterment of individual and community health.
- Health education as a tool for health promotion is critical for improving the health of populations and promotes health capital.
- According to Park and Park, “ Health education is that process, which help to bring desirable change in health knowledge, attitudes, behavior in the community”.

## **Objectives of Health Education:**

1. To help people to realize that health is the valuable asset of individual, family, and community.
2. To make people aware about how to achieve good health.
3. To encourage people to achieve good health by their own action and efforts.
4. To encourage people to utilize and develop the valuable health service in their community.

## **Scope of Health Education:**

- a. Home
- b. School Community
- c. Work site
- d. Clinical setting.

## **Foundation of Health Education:**

**a. Scientific Foundation:** ( Identification of germs and medicine, discovery and development of scientific instrument, surgery, Laboratory technology, organ transplant etc.

**b. Socio-Cultural Foundation:**

(Religious Festivals, birth and death rituals, marriage, worshipping, superstitions and other cultural traditions and rituals etc.)

**c. Educational Foundation:**

( Formal, and informal education, public awareness program, discussion based on public participation etc.)

**d. Psycho-behavioural Foundation:**

( Interest and need of individual, habits and behaviors, knowledge etc.)

**e. Legal Foundation:**

( Civil Rights, Human freedom, Constitutional provision related to health, legal punishment for irrational behavior etc.)

- Health Education Section was established under the Department of Health Services in 1961 for planning, implementing and evaluating health education activities in the country.
- Since the reorganization of Health Education Section and its upgrading into the National Health Education, Information and Communication Center (NHEICC) in 1993, it has been providing support to health programs and services by planning, implementation and evaluation of health education, information and communication policies, strategies, programs and activities in an integrated approach in the country.
- Health education and promotion is more than information dissemination. It is the process of helping people to improve the quality of lives by increasing the control or influence they have over the determinants of health that affect them.

- Anthropological traits that influence health education interventions are:
  - Beliefs
  - Cultural Practices
  - Language and Communication
  - Social Structure
  - Gender Roles
  - Rituals and Ceremonies
  - Traditional Knowledge
  - Perceptions of Western Medicine

- **Belief Systems:** Cultural beliefs about health, illness causation, and healing practices greatly impact health behaviors. Health education interventions must consider these beliefs and address misconceptions to promote accurate health information.
- **Cultural Practices:** Anthropological traits encompass various cultural practices, such as dietary habits, hygiene routines, and traditional healing methods. Integrating culturally familiar practices into interventions can enhance acceptance and adherence.
- **Language and Communication:** The language used in health education materials and communication channels must align with the community's linguistic preferences and understanding for effective message delivery.

- **Social Structure:** Understanding the community's social organization, including family dynamics and community hierarchies, helps identify key influencers and stakeholders who can support the intervention.
- **Gender Roles:** In many societies, gender roles influence health-related decisions and access to healthcare. Tailoring interventions to address the specific health needs of different genders is essential.
- **Rituals and Ceremonies:** Anthropological traits may include rituals and ceremonies related to health and healing. Incorporating health education messages into these events can be impactful.

- **Taboos and Stigmas:** Certain cultural taboos or stigmas related to health issues may hinder open discussions. Sensitivity to these factors can shape how health information is presented and discussed.
- **Traditional Knowledge:** Indigenous knowledge about medicinal plants, healthcare practices, and coping mechanisms should be respected and, if appropriate, integrated into interventions.
- **Perceptions of Western Medicine:** In some communities, perceptions of Western medicine or modern healthcare may influence health-seeking behaviors. Understanding these perceptions can inform intervention strategies.

- When designing health education interventions, it is essential to take into account the anthropological traits of the target population to ensure that the intervention is culturally appropriate and effective.
- By acknowledging and working with the cultural context of the community, health educators can better address health challenges and promote positive health behaviors.

# Health Promotion Intervention

- ‘Health promotion is the process of enabling people to increase control over, and to improve, their health’ – (World Health Organization, Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion, 1986)
- Health promotion as a term was used for the first time in the mid 1970s (Lalonde 1974) and quickly became an umbrella term for a wide range of strategies designed to tackle the wider determinants of health
- The first international conference on health promotion meeting in Ottawa 21<sup>st</sup> day of November 1986 present for action to achieve 'Health for All' by the year 2000 and beyond.
- The conference was primarily a response to growing expectation for a new public health movement around the world.

# Health Promotion Strategies

- **Health Promotion Strategies** include: Advocate, Enable and Mediate
- **Advocacy** for Health is a combination of individual and social actions designed to gain political commitment, policy support, social acceptance and systems support for a particular health goal or programme.
- can take many forms including the use of the mass media and multi-media, direct political lobbying and community mobilization through, for example, unions of interest around defined issues.

- Similar to health education intervention, the different anthropological traits that affect health promotion intervention are:
  - Beliefs
  - Cultural Practices
  - Language and Communication
  - Social Structure
  - Gender Roles
  - Rituals and Ceremonies
  - Traditional Knowledge
  - Perceptions of Western Medicine

- By considering these anthropological traits in health promotion, promoters can develop culturally sensitive interventions that align with the community's values, beliefs, and practices.

# Public Health Infrastructure Development

- Public health is the practice of preventing disease and promoting good health within groups of people, from small communities to entire countries.
- In the current economic environment, public health seeks to improve its effectiveness and efficiency to produce a sustainable health system.
- Public health infrastructure provides communities, states, and the Nation the capacity to prevent disease, promote health, and prepare for and respond to both acute (emergency) threats and chronic (ongoing) challenges to health.

- **Infrastructure is the** foundation for planning, delivering, evaluating, and improving public health.
- Public health infrastructure has been referred to as “the nerve center of the public health system.
- It provides the necessary foundation for undertaking the basic responsibilities of public health.
- All public health services depend on the presence of basic infrastructure. **(Human Capital, Social Capital, Economic Capital, Natural Capital).**

➤ Every public health program—such as immunizations, infectious disease monitoring, cancer and asthma prevention, drinking water quality, injury prevention—requires health professionals who are competent in cross-cutting and technical skills, up-to-date information systems, and public health organizations with the capacity to assess and respond to community health needs.

- Protecting the health of entire communities is a massive undertaking that requires large-scale, coordinated efforts.
- It requires systematic data collection to monitor community health needs and identify underlying causes of health problems.
- It also requires a well trained network of public health professionals to develop and implement evidence-based health policies and intervention programs.

- Public health infrastructure is similarly made up of several different components.
- The three key components of a strong and effective public health infrastructure are:
  1. Capable and coordinated public health agencies
  2. A well qualified public health workforce
  3. Modern data and information systems
- Public health infrastructure provides the necessary foundation for all public health services—from vaccinations to chronic disease prevention programs to emergency preparedness efforts.

- Anthropological traits/components are vital in public health infrastructure development.
- By understanding and integrating these cultural elements, public health initiatives become more culturally sensitive, effective, and accepted by the communities they serve, leading to improved health outcomes and better community engagement.
- Traits like customs, beliefs, folkways, religious performances, rituals, taboos, tradition, artifacts, and superstitions play a crucial role in shaping health behaviors, attitudes towards healthcare, and the acceptability of public health initiatives.

## Customs and Beliefs:

- Customs and beliefs are deeply ingrained in cultural practices and significantly influence health-related behaviors and perceptions.
- Understanding these customs and beliefs is essential for designing effective public health infrastructure.
- **Example:** In a conservative community, certain customs may hinder women's access to healthcare services. Anthropologists identify the custom of male family members needing to accompany women to medical appointments. The public health infrastructure development plan involves creating female-only healthcare spaces and employing female healthcare providers to ensure that women feel comfortable seeking healthcare.

- Likewise, In a rural community, anthropologists identify a custom of using traditional remedies for common ailments.
- To integrate modern medicine into the community, the public health infrastructure development plan includes training local healthcare providers to work alongside traditional healers, fostering a collaborative approach to healthcare that respects local customs.

## Folkways:

- Folkways are traditional behaviors and customs that shape community norms.
- Public health initiatives must consider and respect these norms to gain community acceptance.
- **Example:** In a rural community, anthropologists discover a folkway of sharing food at gatherings.

This custom has implications for foodborne illnesses.

To address this, the public health infrastructure development plan includes health education programs on safe food handling practices during community events.

## **Religious Performances and Rituals:**

- Religious performances and rituals often play a significant role in shaping health behaviors and attitudes towards medical practices.
- Understanding religious beliefs is crucial for effective public health interventions.
- Example: In a community where religious rituals are performed before seeking medical care, anthropologists collaborate with religious leaders to incorporate health-related messages and encourage regular health check-ups into the rituals. This integration enhances the community's acceptance of public health infrastructure.

## **Taboos:**

- Taboos are cultural prohibitions that can impact health-seeking behaviors and hinder access to healthcare services.
- **Example:** In certain communities, discussing reproductive health or mental health openly may be considered taboo.

Anthropologists work to address this taboo by developing creative public health campaigns that use artwork and storytelling to convey essential reproductive health information or mental health information.

## **Tradition and Artifacts:**

- Traditions and artifacts hold cultural significance and can influence health practices and beliefs.
- Integrating these elements into public health infrastructure can increase its effectiveness.
- Example: In an indigenous community, traditional herbal remedies are an integral part of healthcare.

Anthropologists collaborate with traditional healers to integrate herbal medicine clinics into the public health infrastructure.

This integration respects the community's traditions while enhancing healthcare options.

## Superstitions:

- Superstitions can impact health-related decisions and may influence health-seeking behaviors.
- Example: In a community where certain symbols are associated with health risks, anthropologists work to dispel misconceptions through health education programs.

Public health infrastructure incorporates culturally appropriate signage to communicate accurate health information.

# Policy and Legal Intervention

- Public health is a field which focuses on the improvement of the health outcomes for a group of individuals, has been described as consisting of three components: "health outcomes, patterns of health determinants, and policies and interventions".
- Policies and Interventions define the methods in which health outcomes and patterns of health determinants are implemented.
- Policies which are helpful "improve the conditions under which people live".
- Interventions encourage healthy behaviors for individuals or populations through "program elements or strategies designed to produce behavior changes or improve health status"

- **Health policy** is determined through laws, regulatory action, judicial decisions and the administrative actions of government agencies.
- It is defined as goal-directed decision making about health that is a result of an authorized public decision-making process.
- It can be further defined as those actions, non-actions, directions, and/ or guidance related to health that are decided by government or other authorized entities
- **According to WHO** “ An explicit health policy can achieve several things; It defines a vision for the future, it outlines priorities and the expected roles of different

- Public health activities aim to provide conditions in which people can be healthy and focus on entire populations for the prevention and control of risk factors, diseases and injuries through organized community efforts and efficiency.
- National Health policies, strategies and plan play an essential role in the defining a country's vision, policy direction, and strategy for ensuring the health of population.
- Public health policy has a profound impact of health status.
- Health Policy is one of the most important aspects of development of health of a country

- Policies and interventions are needed due to the inequalities amongst populations and the inconsistent way care is administered.
- Policies can include "necessary community and personal social and health services" as well as taxes on alcohol and soft drinks and implement smoking cessation policies.
- Interventions can include therapeutic or preventative health care and may also include actions taken by the individual or by someone on behalf of the individual.
- The application of population health is determined by the policies and interventions which can be implemented within an organization, city, state or country.

- The Constitution of Nepal identifies health as a fundamental human right and enshrines individual right to free basic health services, emergency health service and right to information about health to all.
- National Health Policy 2076 (2019) and the Nepal Health Sector Strategy (2015-2020) aspire to fulfill this constitutional mandate with defined strategies to expand quality health services to all.
- Successfully meeting these and other priorities identified by the Sustainable Development Goals, Government of Nepal will expand its investment in the sector and accord high priority aimed at effectively tackling existing and future challenges in health.

- Understanding anthropological components is critical for public health policymakers and legal professionals.
- By incorporating cultural sensitivity, community engagement, and respect for customs and beliefs into policy design, public health interventions and legal measures can be more effective, accepted, and sustainable within diverse communities.
- Additionally, by addressing and dispelling superstitions and taboos with evidence-based information, public health policies and legal interventions can work towards breaking barriers and fostering better health outcomes.

## **Customs and Beliefs:**

- Customs and beliefs shape health behaviors and attitudes towards healthcare, impacting the success of public health policies and legal interventions.
- **Example:** In a community with strong beliefs in the efficacy of traditional healers, public health policy may involve establishing regulations that recognize and integrate traditional medicine practices into the healthcare system.
- This approach respects the community's customs while promoting safe and effective healthcare practices.

## **Folkways:**

- Folkways influence community norms and practices, which can affect compliance with public health policies and legal interventions.
- **Example:** In a society where communal eating is a common folkway, public health policy might focus on implementing guidelines for safe food handling practices during gatherings to prevent foodborne illnesses.

## **Religious Performances and Rituals:**

- Religious performances and rituals can provide opportunities for health education and awareness, enhancing the impact of public health policies.
- **Example:** During religious gatherings or rituals, public health campaigns could be incorporated to disseminate information about preventive measures for specific health issues, such as distributing mosquito nets to prevent malaria in a region where religious gatherings are common.

## **Taboos:**

- Taboos can create barriers to accessing healthcare services and complying with health-related regulations.
- **Example:** In a community where certain medical treatments are considered taboo, public health policy may focus on culturally sensitive approaches to explain the benefits of these treatments and dispel misconceptions.

## **Tradition and Artifacts:**

- Traditions and artifacts reflect cultural identity and can influence health behaviors and compliance with legal measures.
- **Example:** In regions where certain cultural artifacts have significant importance, public health policy might involve using these artifacts to promote health messages or act as symbols for compliance with health regulations.

## **Superstitions:**

- Superstitions can impact health behaviors and influence the response to public health policies and legal interventions.
- **Example:** In a community where a superstition is associated with a specific health risk, public health policy could involve conducting educational campaigns that address these superstitions and promote evidence-based health practices.

# Community Organization and Participation

- Anyanwu, (1992) defined community as a group of people living in a given geographical environment, whether large or small and united by community interest.
- Hence, the term 'community' may be applied to a rural area, locality, city town, state or nation in which people share in common the basic conditions of life.
- Community organization covers a series of activities at the community level aimed at bringing about desired improvement in the social wellbeing of individual and groups.

- Community organization involves the collaboration of separate community or welfare agencies with or without the additional participation of statutory authorities, in the promotion of joint initiatives.
- Community organization is a term that is popularly employed in the social work community.
- Reconstruction begins at the community level. A good reconstruction strategy engages communities and helps people work together to rebuild their housing, their lives, and their livelihoods.

# Community Organization and Participation

- Community-based approaches require a somewhat different programming flow that begins with mobilizing social groups and communities and having the community conduct its own assessment.
- A very strong commitment and leadership from the top are needed to implement a bottom-up approach, because pressure is strong in an emergency to provide rapid, top-down, autocratic solutions.

- ✓ The community needs to be engaged in order to identify concerns, goals, and abilities, but there may not be consensus on these items.
- ✓ Engagement of the community may bring out different preferences and expectations, so agencies involved in reconstruction must be open to altering their preconceived vision of the reconstruction process.

- The community organization model is a participatory decision-making process that empowers the community to improve people's health. It emphasizes active participation from the community in identifying key health issues and strategies to address them.
- **Local People Participation:** (Bottom up approach, Decentralization, Listen to the people, Putting the last first, Using local resources, manpower, and local knowledge etc.)
- Community participation is especially important in emergency sanitation programs where people may be unaccustomed to their surroundings and sanitation facilities.

- Numerous methods exist for community participation, but they need to be adapted to the context, and nearly all require facilitation and other forms of support.
- Transparency and effective communication are essential to maintaining engagement and credibility with the community and within the community during the reconstruction process.
- The reconstruction approach may affect the type and level of direct participation in reconstruction.

# Ways to Promote Community Involvement

- **Promote** active and representative participation toward enabling all community members to meaningfully influence the decisions that affect their lives
- **Engage** community members in learning about and understanding community issues, and the economic, social, environmental, political, psychological, and other impacts associated with alternative courses of action
- **Work actively** to enhance the leadership capacity of community members, leaders, and groups within the community
- **Be open** to using the full range of action strategies to work toward the long-term sustainability and well-being of the community.

- Incorporating anthropology components and traits into public health community organization and participation interventions helps create culturally appropriate, relevant, and acceptable initiatives.
- By respecting cultural beliefs, customs, and traditions, public health practitioners can build trust and rapport with the community, leading to increased engagement, participation, and ultimately better health outcomes.

## Customs and Beliefs:

- Understanding customs and beliefs allows public health organizers to design interventions that align with the community's cultural values and practices, leading to increased community engagement and participation.
- **Example:** In a community that values traditional healing practices, public health organizers can collaborate with traditional healers to incorporate culturally appropriate health messages and practices into their interventions.
- This collaboration fosters community trust and encourages greater participation in health programs

## **Folkways:**

- Incorporating folkways into public health interventions helps build rapport with the community and encourages active participation by aligning with established norms and behaviors.
- **Example:** In a community where daily communal gatherings are a common folkway, public health organizers can use these gatherings as opportunities to disseminate health information and conduct health screenings, ensuring broad participation and accessibility.

## **Religious Performances and Rituals:**

- Utilizing religious performances and rituals as platforms for health messages helps reach a larger audience and enhances community involvement in public health initiatives.
- **Example:** During religious festivals, public health organizers can collaborate with religious leaders to integrate health education sessions or conduct health camps where community members can access various healthcare services, making the most of the festive gathering.

## **Taboos:**

- Respecting and addressing taboos helps create a safe space for community members to engage with public health interventions without fear of going against cultural norms.
- **Example:** In a community where discussing certain health issues is considered taboo, public health organizers can conduct small-group discussions or one-on-one sessions with trusted individuals to address those issues discreetly and sensitively.

# Tradition and Artifacts

- Incorporating traditions and artifacts into public health interventions adds cultural relevance and strengthens community involvement.
- **Example:** In a community with a strong tradition of using art, public health organizers can collaborate with local artists to create murals or posters that convey health messages, making the information more engaging and accessible to community members.

## Superstitions:

- Addressing superstitions with empathy and evidence-based information helps dispel misconceptions and encourages participation in public health activities.
- **Example:** In a community with superstitions about vaccinations, public health organizers can hold community workshops to provide evidence-based information about vaccine safety and efficacy, addressing concerns and increasing vaccination rates.

**Thank you!**