

Introduction and Methodological Background

Health

COURSE FOR BEGINNERS

GE4Youth /Global Education for Youth Workers



Health

Area introduction

Health is a fundamental human right, encapsulating a broad array of perspectives and dimensions. It's a multifaceted concept that addresses the physical, mental, and social well-being of individuals, rooted in the recognition of their fundamental rights to health and well-being.

1. Physical Health

Primarily, health is often perceived through the lens of physical well-being. It focuses on the absence of diseases, injuries, and ailments, stressing the importance of nutrition, regular exercise, and consistent medical care. For youth, this emphasizes the necessity of a balanced diet, regular physical activity, and preventive healthcare to foster robust physical health.

2. Mental Health

Beyond physical health, mental well-being forms an integral part of the definition. It encompasses emotional, psychological, and social aspects. For youth, this perspective emphasizes resilience, coping mechanisms, the ability to manage stress amidst the challenges of adolescence. Mental health also includes the promotion of positive relationships, self-esteem, cognitive development and emotional regulation crucial for their overall well-being.

3. Social factors

Moreover, social determinants play a crucial role in defining youth health. Access to education, socioeconomic status, family dynamics, and community support significantly impact their health outcomes. Recognizing these determinants is crucial to address disparities and create environments conducive to healthy development.

4. Health as Development

The health of youth is intrinsically linked to their overall growth and potential. Optimal health during this period is foundational for cognitive development, educational attainment, and future productivity. Investing in their health goes beyond immediate well-being. Healthy youth are better equipped to





contribute to their communities, engage in education, and participate in the workforce. Investing in their health becomes an investment in the economic, social, and human capital of a nation.

5. Health as a Value

Health is more than just the absence of illness. It represents a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being. The World Health Organization advocates for this holistic perspective, emphasizing the promotion of a balanced life where youth have the resources and abilities to thrive across various aspects. Implementing this definition involves fostering environments that support youth development, ensuring access to quality healthcare, and encouraging healthy lifestyles.

Recognizing health as a dynamic aspect of lifelong development, interventions targeting youth health have significant long-term implications. The choices made during this period impact not only immediate well-being but also future health trajectories. Valuing youth health translates into investments and policies supporting their physical, mental, and social well-being, ensuring a healthier, more prosperous future for societies.



Methodology background

The module is designed as the complementary course, divided into four topics, among which each relates to a different approach to health:

1. *An introduction to the general concept of human health, emphasizing beliefs, values and attitudes toward health.*
2. *Health defined as the capability of every human being to develop, grow, change and improve.*
3. *Health understood as the capacity to continually expand self-knowledge and the ability to self-direct, by identifying and meeting one's own needs.*
4. *Mental health in the sense of emotional intelligence, defined as the acquirable skills of understanding one's own and others' feelings, expressing, processing and regulating emotions in the harmony with oneself.*

Each of the above health approaches is addressed in one of the four activities, which are designed as comprehensive workshop scenarios. Activities are structured gradationally, from a general view of health to its specific aspects, directly addressing the knowledge of adolescent development and integrated with diverse concepts of health. Thus, it is recommended that the scenarios be carried out in the proposed order:

1. **What does it mean to be healthy?**
An introductory activity on the general health topic, during which young people create their own collective definition, as well as reflect on their own beliefs and attitudes towards a healthy lifestyle.
2. **It is fun to grow!**
An activity dedicated to the topic of adolescent development, during which young people have the opportunity to increase their understanding and acceptance of their experiences, form positive beliefs about themselves and the attitude of responsibility for their own development and health.
3. **What do I need?**
An activity aimed at raising awareness and practicing the ability to meet one's own needs, during which young people have the chance to form positive health habits and strengthen self-knowledge.
4. **I can feel it**
An activity that focuses entirely on practicing abilities related to emotional intelligence, enabling young people to develop the competencies to cope with life's difficulties, promoting peer support and improving mental resilience.

The entire workshop methodology is developed with direct reference to the developmental norms of adolescents, according to the definition of developmental psychology and neuroscience studies. Thus,





the main goal of the entire module is to strengthen the developmental potential of adolescents, in parallel with promoting responsibility for their own health and fostering the knowledge, skills, positive values and attitudes toward health.

Developmental norms of adolescence are fostered through addressing specific competencies and values, detailed in the *GE4Youth project*:

1. Emotional sensitivity:

- Self-respect and respect for others
- Open-mindedness
- Changing perspectives

2. Novelty seeking and Creative Exploration:

- Critical thinking
- Creativity and dealing with complexity
- Decision-making

3. Social Engagement:

- Teamwork and cooperation
- Proactivity
- Social responsibility and solidarity

Recommendations

This version of Health Module is designed for Youth Workers who have little or no experience in implementing workshops on health or its particular aspects. The methodology can also be used to conduct workshops for poorly integrated groups or younger adolescents.

Each scenario is supplemented by the guide for Youth Workers, including instructions for the implementation of the workshop, required materials for participants and brief theoretical explanations for the facilitators.

Sources:

- <https://www.who.int/news-room/commentaries/detail/health-is-a-fundamental-human-right>
- <https://www.who.int/data/gho/data/major-themes/health-and-well-being>
- <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/mental-health-strengthening-our-response>
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