

Introduction and Methodological Background

Health

COURSE FOR EXPERTS

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. I will take care of my health!

An introductory activity on the general health topic, during which young people reflect on their own health, improve understanding of healthy behaviours and attitudes, and develop the ideas on how to build healthy habits.

2. The challenges of adolescence

An activity dedicated to the topic of adolescent development, which aims to raise awareness about the responsibility of adolescents for their own development, strengthen acceptance of their own experiences and the ability to positively solve life challenges.

3. My hierarchy of needs

An activity that focuses on supporting young people's ability to identify and prioritize their own needs, as well as to build individual strategies to meet them positively, through which young people develop self-knowledge and identity.

4. Feeling means living

An activity that aims to create a safe space to practice identifying and expressing emotions, through which young people develop an awareness of the function of feelings and learn positive ways to regulate their own emotions, thereby empowering mental health.

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 the Health Module targets experienced Youth Workers who want to expand their skills in supporting youth development. It provides a comprehensive methodology that can be adapted to conduct workshops targeting a wide diversity of youth groups, especially recommended for senior teenagers and well-integrated groups with a higher level of trust and security.

Each scenario is supplemented with a guide describing the implementation of the workshop, requirements for materials for participants, and theoretical descriptions for use by 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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