

Community

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Dental Health Education

Health education

Health education is defined as a social science that draws from the biological, environmental, psychological, physical and medical sciences in order to promote health and prevent disease, disability and premature death by education-driven voluntary behavior change activities.

So it is defined as any educational activity which aims to achieve a health related goal.

Definition by *WHO*: any combination of learning experiences designed to help individuals and communities to improve their health, by increasing their knowledge or by influencing their attitude.

Dental health education.

Dental health education is the process of imparting information about dental health. It will help an individual to keep the oral cavity healthy because good oral hygiene helps a person to prevent oral disease such as periodontal diseases, bad breath and other dental problems.

Goal of oral health education

The goal is to improve knowledge that may lead to adoption of desirable oral health behaviors that contribute to better oral health. A basic oral health care program that introduced by World Health Organization for less industrialized countries includes oral health education and emphasizes on the integration of health education with other oral health activities such as provision of preventive, restorative and emergency dental care.

Objectives of health education :

1. Informing people:

The primary objective is to inform people or provide them with the scientific knowledge about the prevention of disease and promotion of health. This will create an awareness of health needs and help people to do away with the ignorance and misconceptions they may have about health and disease.

2. Motivating people:

People should be motivated in order to change their habits and ways of living as many current health problems are directly related with them. for example drug addiction, cigarette smoking, pollution of water, sedentary lifestyles, etc.

3. Guiding into action:

The people must be encouraged to use wisely the health services available to them. They may need help to adopt and maintain healthy lifestyles and practices which may be new to them.

Setting for oral health education

- Primary care
- Schools and colleges
- Hospitals and clinics
- Preschool education and care
- Local authority services
- Workplace
- Commercial organizations
- Community based initiatives
- Older people's residential homes.

Steps in health education planning

1. Identify needs and priorities.
2. Set aims and objectives.
3. Decide the best way of achieving the aims.
4. Identify resources.
5. Plan evaluation methods.
6. Set an action plan.
7. Evaluation.

Identify needs and priorities

The public health problem must be identified to establish the objectives. The people requiring oral health education also must be identified. Specific group should be selected, in order to ensure health education activity is tailored to their particular needs. In planning effective health education, both professionally defined needs and the target group's concern (felt and expressed needs) should be taken into consideration.

Set aims and objectives

An aim can be set based on the assessed needs of the group specifying the desired change that is planned. One aim could be to improve and maintain the periodontal health through more effective plaque control methods.

Decide the best way of achieving the aims

Once desired aims and objectives have been formulated, the best way of achieving them should be decided. By this stage, the content and method of education should be apparent.

Identify resources

The resources needed and available to implement the program should be identified. In health education, resources may include people's expertise and existing skill, and material such as leaflets or oral hygiene aids.

Plan evaluation methods

A full evaluation of any health education program is a very important element. Evaluation is designed to assess whether the set aims and goals have been achieved. For this, appropriate evaluation measures should be selected.

Set an action plan

The planned action for the program should be initiated.

Evaluation

Evaluation information can be collected both during and at the end of the program to assess the impact of the program.