

# 1

## Let us build a healthy society

You are an important member of your family, school and the society. As you grow older your social circle enlarges. In the early part of your life your family and your school has a major influence on you. As you grow older the community at large will influence on you and you will also contribute to the community. Therefore, you must develop the skills needed to promote health in your community.

In previous grades you have learnt on promoting a healthy environment in your family and school.

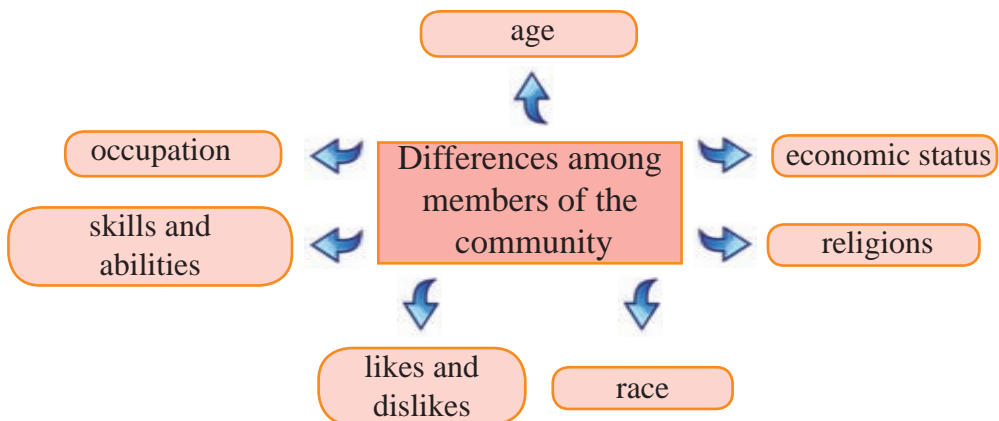
In this chapter we will discuss about the factors that affect the health of the community as well as health promotion and how we can contribute to promote the health of the community.

### Our community

Our community consists of the people around us and our environment.

There are differences among individuals in a community. However their basic needs are the same. It is the duty of all of us to ensure that the needs of all the members of our community are fulfilled.

Diagram 1.1



## Activity

Identify the skills you need, to associate with different people in the society. What are the advantages of developing such skills?

Different factors affect the health of our community. Among these the maintenance of the health standard and the balance in the environment are very important. For this, we need to develop qualities like healthy attitudes, obeying rules, being ethical and caring about the environment.

## Health of the individual

Health is a state of being free of disease and disability, and having physical, mental, social and spiritual wellbeing.

- |                  |   |
|------------------|---|
| Physical health  | - The state of being free from disease and being physically fit                                   |
| Mental health    | - The ability to face challenges successfully and be a productive and happy member of the society |
| Social health    | - The ability to maintain healthy relationships   |
| Spiritual health | - To have a meaning in life, and be able to maintain healthy relationships                        |

In a healthy community each member has good physical, mental, social and spiritual health.



Figure 1.1 - Maintaining physical, mental and social health



## Additional knowledge

### Benefits of maintaining good interpersonal relationships

Quantitative	Qualitative
■ Widens social network	■ Moral development
■ Reduces loneliness	■ Associates with groups that have a positive influence
■ Able to share knowledge	■ Develops healthy ways of thinking
■ Better security	■ Does not engage in anti-social activities
■ Develops communication skills	■ Engages in religious activities
■ Gets support when making decisions	■ Engages in social welfare

## Health problems in our community

Protecting our environment as well as maintaining of our own health is necessary to safeguard the health of the society. Therefore all the problems related to individual health and the environment, can be considered as community health problems.

Some of the most important community health issues are given below

1. Environmental pollution
2. Communicable and non-communicable diseases
3. Use of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs
4. Accidents and disasters
5. Abuse and exploitation

### 1. Environmental pollution

Environmental pollution is defined as the process which makes our environment unsuitable for living for humans and animals. Pollution alters the natural state of the environment.

Environmental pollution is caused by human actions and it results in health problems.

## Aspects of environmental pollution.

- Air pollution
- Water pollution
- Land / soil pollution
- Noise pollution



### Activity

Describe examples of environmental pollution found in your village or town.

## Air pollution

Air pollution is the change in the atmospheric composition due to contamination with toxic or harmful substances.



Figure 1.2 - Air pollution due to smoke emitted from factories

Air pollution results in;

- diseases of the respiratory tract
- cancers
- skin problems

## Water pollution

Water pollution is the change in the natural composition of water due to contamination by toxic or harmful substances.

Water pollution result in;

- cholera
- diarrhoea
- skin problems
- mosquito borne diseases
- allergies
- cancer
- renal diseases



Figure 1.3 - Water animals are destroyed due to water pollution

## Land pollution

Land pollution is the degradation of land so that it is no longer usable.

When the land becomes unclean it results in;

- breeding of mosquitos and flies
- spread of diseases
- lose of soil nutrients
- landslides and other natural disasters



Figure 1.4 - Land pollution due to improper disposal of garbage

## Sound pollution

Sound pollution is the emission of sound at harmful intensities.

Sound pollution can result in;

- hearing problems
- stress
- difficulty in concentration
- loss of tranquility



Figure 1.5 - Sound pollution due to noise from motor vehicles

## Activity

List illnesses that can be caused by environmental pollution.

### **Causes of environmental pollution**

- Destruction of forests
- Improper disposal of garbage
- Chemicals and other non-degradable waste released from factories
- Burning coal, fossil fuels, plastic and polythene
- Haphazard use of agrochemicals
  - Large scale, unregulated construction

### **Preventive methods of environmental pollution**

- Preservation of forests
- Proper management of garbage
- Enacting laws to prevent environmental pollution
- Following proper standards in the use of agrochemicals
  - Ensuring standards when constructing buildings

## **2. Communicable and non-communicable diseases**

Communicable diseases can be spread from one infected person to another eg: dengue, malaria, diarrhoea, tuberculosis and sexually transmitted diseases.

Diseases, which cannot be transmitted from one person to another, are known as non-communicable diseases.

eg: hypertension, diabetes, mental illnesses, cancers and stroke.

Illness causes many problem situations like disability, reduction in level of activity, reduction in life span and mental distress. It also affects areas like education, work, day to day functioning and economic status of the individual and the country.

We can prevent illness by maintaining good hygiene, immunization, prompt treatments of illnesses, keeping environment clean and adopting a healthy life style.

We will discuss in detail about illness in Chapter 21.



### 3. Use of tobacco and related drugs

Use of tobacco and drugs cause many social problems. Use of them directly or indirectly results in heart disease, respiratory illness, cancers, crimes, conflicts and other anti-social behaviours, disrupting family relationships, disregard for cultural norms, mental and physical problems and reduction in life span.

Passive smoking which is inhalation of smoke from other smokers can result in illness. The foetus can be harmed due to inhalation of cigarette smoke by pregnant mothers. Therefore smoking should be banned in public places and people who do so should be penalized.

We need to educate the public about the negative effects of tobacco and other drug use, enforce laws, be aware of media portrayals, rehabilitate users and engage in sports and cultural activities in order to prevent use of tobacco and other illegal drugs.

### 4. Accidents and disasters



Figure 1.6 - Home accidents

Accidents and disasters can happen anywhere. Home accidents, road accidents, animal attacks, occupational injuries, food poisoning and sports injuries are examples of accidents. Floods, drought, tsunami and wars can result in disasters. Accidents and disasters cause injury, illness, mental distress, damage to property, environmental pollution and even death.

We can prevent accidents and disasters by learning about the causes of accidents and disasters, taking precautions and following rules. We need to know how to prevent accidents and disasters and about the first-aid we can administer in such situations. We can reduce the negative consequences by proper intervention.



## 5. Abuse and coercions

Abuse is defined as behaviours which harm someone, against accepted social morals. Coercion is to encourage someone by using force or threat to engage in antisocial activities.

We should all aim at getting rid of abuse and coercions from the society. You must develop the skills necessary to protect yourself from those who try to abuse or coerce you. You must also ensure that you do not engage in activities which abuse or coerce others.

Sexual abuse, employing of under-aged children as domestic workers, verbal abuse, neglect and physical and mental abuse are examples of abuse and coercions.

Abuse and coercion can result in illness, mental distress, sexually transmitted diseases, unwanted pregnancies and endanger the life.

Those who have been abused or coerced can be directed to various institutions that could help them. Department of Probation and Child Care, Children and Women's Bureau desks in Police stations are examples of such institutions. These institutions provide safety for those who are abused or coerced and they maintain confidentiality of information.



Figure 1.7 - Employment of under-age children as domestic workers

### Activity

Discuss how you can protect yourself from abuse and coercions.  
Recall what you have learnt in previous grades.

## Community Health Promotion

Community health promotion enables people to improve their health by controlling the factors which influence their health.

We can prevent environmental pollution, illness, tobacco and other drug use, accidents and disasters, abuse and exploitation by community health promotion. We can make use of life skills, which we learnt about previously to help us in these activities.



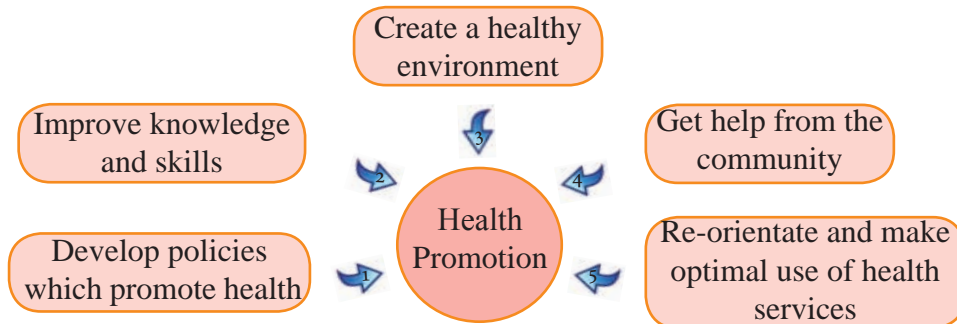
### Activity

Display a list of life skills in your class room.

## Community health promotion activities

We learnt five themes, which can be used to promote the health of our family and our school. We can use the same themes for community health promotion.

Diagram 1.2



### 1. Develop policies which promote health

This is one of the main strategies of health promotion. We need to identify the main factors which affect our health and develop appropriate policies. We can develop policies at individual, institutional, regional and national levels.

Eg: Daily exercising, maintaining a healthy canteen, providing subsidies, adding iodine to salt and maintaining food standards.

## **Activity**

Identify a few policies which can be easily implemented and promote health in your area. Educate your relatives and neighbours about them.

## **2. Improve knowledge and skills**

Acquisition of knowledge necessary to cope with life and the development of life skills are important in health promotion. We can improve knowledge on health for all the age categories through schools or other educational institutions. We also can implement community activities, which improve such knowledge and skills.

Eg. Conducting sports competitions, aesthetic activities, health and education workshops and distributing books which contain information about health.



Figure 1.8 - Health workshops

## **3. Create a healthy environment**

The physical, mental and social environment should be healthy. It should provide your needs.

Eg: Basic needs, love and protection, facilities for sports, medical facilities and clean environment

## **4. Get help from the community**

Individuals and the community must take responsibility for health promotion. The entire community must contribute to health promotion. The family, schools, shops, work places, temples, churches, different societies etc must all contribute to community health promotion.

Eg: Shramadana activities, making the environment attractive, replanting forests, conducting of health camps, dengue prevention activities

## 5. Reorientate and make optimal use of health services

Shortcomings of the health services should be identified and health services should be reorientated to meet the health needs of the society.

Eg: Identifying shortcomings in hospitals, ensuring availability of investigations, mobile health facilities, counselling services.



Figure 1.9 - Mobile health facilities

### Activity

Discuss with your friends how you can contribute to health promotion.

## Advantages of health promotion

- Reduction of communicable and non-communicable diseases
- Reduction of health care expenditure
- Ensuring a pleasant environment
- Developing good social relationships
- Minimizing conflicts
- Improved quality of life

## Summary

The people and the environment around us are a part of our community. The society or the community consists of different types of individuals.

It is important to ensure the health of individuals and maintain a healthy environment to ensure the health of the community.

Environmental pollution, communicable and non-communicable diseases, use of tobacco and harmful drugs, accidents and disasters, abuse and coercions are examples of major health problems.

Community health promotion is the process of enabling the people to control the issues which affect their health and to improve the health standard of the community.

The five main themes of community health promotion are developing policies which promote health, developing personal knowledge and skills, creating healthy environments, getting help from community and reorientating and making optimal use of health services.

Health promotion results in economic and social benefits and improves quality of life.



## Exercise

1. Discuss the differences between individuals in a community
2. What are the two main components of community health promotion?
3. What are the major health problems that affect our society?
4. How can you prevent communicable diseases in your community?
5. What are the negative consequences of tobacco and other drug use?
6. Name the different types of accidents and disasters which can happen in your community
7. Define abuse and coercion
8. Name the five themes of health promotion