

## Prevention-- 5<sup>th</sup> class

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#### Lect 28

## **Health education and motivation**

All the national oral health strategies published in recent years have stressed the important role dental professional's play in promoting oral health through health education. It is very important that the health education messages given to the public are consistent and scientifically correct. Education involves the transfer of knowledge and skills from the educator to the student or learner

Health education is defined as any educational activity which aims to achieve a health related goal or Health education is a process that informs, motivates and helps people to adopt and maintain healthy practices and lifestyles, advocates environmental changes as needed to facilitate this goal and conducts professional training and research to the same end. According to above definition the three main objectives of health education are:

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 creates an awareness of health needs and helps people to do away with the misconceptions and ignorance they may have about health and disease.

2. Motivating people: People must be motivated 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 should 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

There are TEN principles of health education based on the principles of learning:

#### 1-Interest

Health education should be related to the interest of the people. People usually listen to information that they are really interested in knowing. Health programs should be based

on 'felt needs' of the people, i.e. needs the people feel about themselves. If the program is based on their need, they accept it and make the program a success. It is only then, that the purpose of health education program is fulfilled or achieved.

### **2-Participation**

People should be motivated to be a part of the health education program. If they participate actively, they will accept the program and will also encourage the others to do so. Group discussion, workshops, panel discussion are methods of active learning.

### **3-Comprehension**

It means capacity of understanding. An educator needs to know the level of understanding and education of the people towards whom the program is to be directed. The educator must try to educate in local language as much as possible or use language which people understand. Scientific or strange words which are difficult to understand must be avoided.

### **4-Known to Unknown**

A health educator must try to find out the existing level of knowledge of the people. He should start from what they know and gradually proceed further and provide them with new information, this is a slow process.

### **5-Reinforcement**

Remembering and learning new things in a single health campaign is not possible. For this, constant repetition is required. It is like booster dose. Constant reinforcement leaves a permanent impression on mind and helps them to understand and accept new health principles.

### **6-Learning by Doing**

Hearing and seeing does not make an individual a good user. Its only when they do the new thing, they can really appreciate new practice. So, the people should be motivated to do the new practice to understand it. This principle of learning by doing is based on a famous Chinese proverb "IF I HEAR, I FORGET; IF I SEE, I REMEMBER; IF I DO, I KNOW".

## 7-Motivation

All individuals have a desire to learn. Initiation of this desire is referred to as motivation.

It is of two types:

**Primary:** These are inborn desires which initiate people to take action, e.g. hunger, survival, etc.

**Secondary:** These are based on desires caused by external forces e.g. praise, reward or punishment. Health education motivation is an important factor for achieving results.

## 8- Good Human Relations

This principle states that to be a good health educator one must be friendly and possess good personal qualities. Health educator must listen patiently and should be sympathetic and kind. All this would make a health educator a good friend in whom people can confide and clear their doubts.

## 9- Soil, Seed and Sower

In terms of health education, **soil** refers to people to whom education is to be given. It is important to know the social factors, their belief, prior knowledge and health needs of the people. **Seed** refers to the health facts to be given to the people. They should be truthful and have a scientific base. **Sower** refers to the transmitting media. It should be simple, attractive and acceptable to the people. All three soil, seed and sower should be interrelated to have an impact on people.

## 10- Social Leaders

Community leaders are important medium for health education. As people respect them and listen to them they can play an important role in health education.

## COMMUNICATION

The art and science of communication forms the foundation of oral health education and disease prevention. Although, it was known that telling people is not enough to cause a change in behavior, often the way in which they are told is the most important factor in

communication effectively.

**There are four elements in the process of communication:**

**1. Communicator:** He is the person who has to deliver the health message. A good communicator:

- Has clearly defined objectives
- Knows the needs and interest of the audience
- Tries to find out the abilities of the audience
- Must have a valid and useful message
- Selects the best channel for communication.

**2-Audience:** They are the receivers of the health message. They are the target groups who need advice or the health message. They can either be the whole population or selective group like industrial workers, school children, expectant mothers etc.

**3. Message:** It is information which the communicator passes to the audience. For a message to be accepted by the audience it should be:

- Simple and understandable by the people
- Should fulfill the objective
- Should be of interest & needs of the audience.

**4. Communication channels:** These are the medium of communication. Selection of media is very important. It should be:

- Attractive
- Interesting and entertaining
- Efficient in conveying the health message clearly

**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.

## STEPS OF LEARNING

People are *unaware* of certain habit or behavior which is detrimental to their health. *Awareness* is given to them by giving them information. The information becomes relevant if it is conceived by them with *self-interest*, otherwise the facts are irrelevant. Only after the information has been accepted by an individual, a positive *attitude* can be adopted by the individual. A positive attitude towards the message may enable an individual to *believe* that a change in behavior is *required* and is beneficial for him. But an action may not necessarily follow. A *commitment* is necessary to bring about a permanent *behavior change*



