

Lesson 1: Healthy Life Management



Have you been to the Lyle Victor Albert Centre in Bonnyville, Alberta? This 180-seat performing arts centre is named for playwright Lyle Victor “Vic” Albert, who was brought up on a farm just outside Bonnyville.

One of the plays that has garnered Vic Albert the most recognition is *Scraping the Surface*. In this thought-provoking play, Albert uses his great sense of humour and comic timing as he explores adolescence through the eyes of someone with cerebral palsy—a life-long disability, caused by damage to the developing brain before, during, or just after birth.



View Segment 1: Healthy Life Management on your Student Support CD. This video segment features Vic Albert and some scenes from *Scraping the Surface*.

1. How does Vic Albert demonstrate healthy life management?

Compare your answer with the Suggested Responses at the end of the lesson.

The video segment Healthy Life Management emphasizes that wellness means more than absence of disease, disability, or medical problems. Wellness is measured by your ability to live life to the fullest and to maximize your potential.



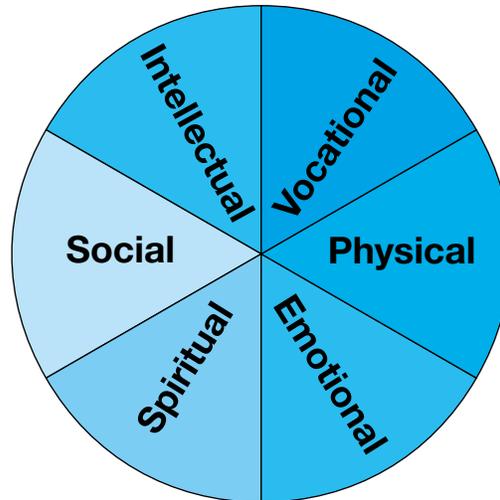
dimensions of health: aspects of health including physical, emotional, spiritual, social, intellectual, and vocational wellness

In this course you will examine six **dimensions of health**:

- ***physical dimension of health***: the aspect of health that deals with issues pertaining to the physical body
- ***emotional dimension of health***: the aspect of health that deals with the ability to express emotions appropriately; cope with conflict, stress, and change in a healthy way; and enjoy life; sometimes referred to as the psychological dimension of health
- ***spiritual dimension of health***: the aspect of health that deals with values—beliefs about what is important
- ***social dimension of health***: the aspect of health that deals with the ability to relate well to others
- ***intellectual dimension of health***: the aspect of health that deals with issues involving lifelong learning
- ***vocational dimension of health***: the aspect of health that deals with preparing for and engaging in work that provides personal satisfaction and enrichment

wellness wheel: a graphic that shows how the dimensions of health work together in a person's life

The six dimensions of health continuously interact and influence one another, and each dimension is equally important for personal health and well-being. To live life to the fullest you need to balance the physical, emotional, spiritual, social, intellectual, and vocational dimensions of your life. The following **wellness wheel** illustrates this balance:



If all of the dimensions of the wellness wheel are functioning properly, the wheel rolls along smoothly. If, however, one of the dimensions is neglected, the wheel will be off balance and run off course. Consider the following example:

Mr. Comeau is working at a job that is not challenging. He becomes unhappy and develops a sense of futility. His negativity causes others to avoid him, which increases his frustration and makes him lose sleep. Too little sleep causes him to be careless, and he trips and injures his leg.

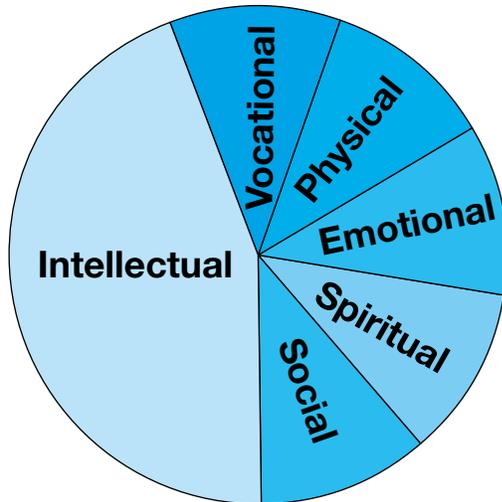
2. How are the vocational, emotional, spiritual, social, intellectual, and physical dimensions of Mr. Comeau's life affected?



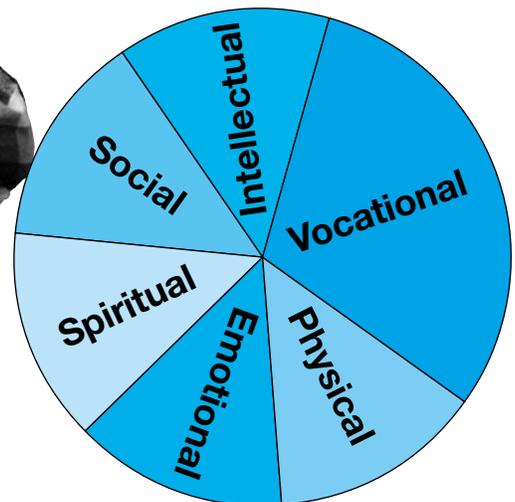
Compare your answer with the Suggested Responses at the end of the lesson.

Achieving a perfect balance in all dimensions is a challenge for most people. People at various stages in their lives have different demands on them. As a result they will place more emphasis on certain aspects of their lives and ignore other aspects. Consider the following examples.

- Adelle, a medical student, spends the majority of her time and effort on the intellectual dimension of her life. Her wellness wheel looks like this:



- Cameron, a young adult who recently entered the workforce, spends more time and effort on the vocational dimension of his life. His wellness wheel looks like this.



Go to page 1 of Assignment Booklet 1A and respond to questions 1 and 2 of Section 1.

Determinants of Health

determinants of health: the range of factors that determine a person's health status

A number of factors, called the **determinants of health**, affect the dimensions of people's lives and determine their level of health. The following story illustrates this complex interrelationship.

Why Is Jason in the Hospital?

Why is Jason in the hospital?

Because he has a bad infection in his leg.

But why does he have an infection?

Because he has a cut on his leg and it got infected.

But why does he have a cut on his leg?

Because he was playing in the junk yard next to his apartment building and there was some sharp, jagged steel there that he fell on.

But why was he playing in a junk yard?

Because his neighbourhood is kind of run down. A lot of kids play there and there is no one to supervise them.

But why does he live in that neighbourhood?

Because his parents can't afford a nicer place to live.

But why can't his parents afford a nicer place to live?

Because his Dad is unemployed and his Mom is sick.

But why is his Dad unemployed?

Because he doesn't have much education and he can't find a job.

But why ...?

3. Identify some of the complex factors—the determinants of health—that contributed to Jason being in hospital.

Compare your answer with the Suggested Responses at the end of the lesson.

population-based approach to health: an approach that aims to improve the health of the entire population and to reduce health inequities among population groups

“Why Is Jason in the Hospital?” illustrates that improving health is a shared responsibility and emphasizes the need for a **population-based approach to health** in addition to a personal approach to health.

¹ *Toward a Healthy Future: Second report on the Health of Canadians*, (Ottawa: Public Health Agency of Canada, 1999), <<http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/ph-sp/phdd/determinants/index.html>> (09 May 2007). Reproduced with the permission of the Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada, 2007

One of the key determinants of health at the population level is the physical environment—both natural and human-built. Contaminants in air, soil, water, and food can contribute to serious illness, including cancer, respiratory disease, and gastrointestinal ailments.



Another key determinant of health at the population level is the social environment. For example, poverty, illiteracy, unemployment, and family violence negatively impact the health of citizens.



4. With a partner or small group, brainstorm a list of other key determinants of health at the population level.

Statistics Canada examined the school drop-out rate for 2002, 2003, 2004, and 2005. They reported that on average the drop-out rate was especially high in rural and small-town Alberta and Quebec. In both those areas, about one in five 20- to 24-year-olds had not completed high school and was no longer going to school. Drop-out rates were also high in rural and small-town Manitoba.

5. With a partner or small group, discuss these statistics. If education and literacy are determinants of health, how does dropping out of school impact the well-being of individuals and their communities?

Compare your answers with the Suggested Responses at the end of the lesson.

Many organizations in Canada provide services that aim to improve the well-being of communities, families, and individuals by taking measures such as the following:

- preventing pollution of a community's air and land through enforcement of regulatory controls and management of hazardous wastes
- assuring that a community's drinking and recreational waters are safe
- controlling and preventing infectious diseases such as measles and tuberculosis
- formulating policies designed to protect the safety of the public, such as seat belt and worker safety laws
- creating violence-prevention programs and offering counselling services



6. With a partner or small group, brainstorm a list of private and governmental organizations that contribute to the health of Canadians.

Compare your answers with the Suggested Responses at the end of the lesson.

Although private and governmental organizations exist to promote your personal health and well-being in one way or another, your personal wellness is primarily your responsibility. One of the most important ways that you can improve your health is through the choices you make in your daily life.



When you make lifestyle choices, do you consider the health benefits and risks? For example, do you go biking without a helmet, or do you ride in an automobile without wearing a seat belt?

The impact of lifestyle choices on your health may be immediate or long term. Following are two examples to illustrate this point:

- Developing the positive habit of daily physical activity will help to maintain an appropriate weight in the short term and improve heart and circulatory system health in the long term.
- Developing the negative habit of smoking contributes to stained fingers and teeth in the short term, and increases your risk for lung cancer or chronic lung diseases such as emphysema in the long term.



7. With a partner or small group, brainstorm a list of lifestyle choices that may have an immediate or long-term effect on a person's health.

Compare your answers with the Suggested Responses at the end of the lesson.

Go to page 4 of Assignment Booklet 1A and respond to question 3 of Section 1.

Looking Back; Looking Ahead

In this lesson you analyzed the dimensions of health and their interconnectedness, the dynamic nature of balance in life, and the impact of the determinants of health. Your health is one of your most important assets. You can improve your health through the choices you make in your daily life. In the next lesson you will explore how you view yourself and the various dimensions of your life.

Glossary

determinants of health: the range of factors that determine a person's health status

dimensions of health: aspects of health including physical, intellectual, emotional, spiritual, social, and vocational wellness

population-based approach to health: an approach that aims to improve the health of the entire population and to reduce health inequities among population groups

wellness wheel: a graphic that shows how the dimensions of health work together

Suggested Responses

1. Vic Albert demonstrates healthy life management because the different dimensions of his life are balanced. He is an author and actor, so his intellectual and vocational needs are being met. He is positive and humorous, so his social, emotional, and spiritual needs are also being met. He is physically well and clearly able to manage his disability, so his physical needs are being met.
2. Mr. Comeau is working at a job that is not challenging, so his vocational needs are not being met. He becomes unhappy and develops a sense of futility, so the emotional dimension of his life is affected. His negativity causes others to avoid him, which increases his frustration, so the social and emotional dimensions of his life are affected. Too little sleep causes him to be careless and he injures his leg, so ultimately the physical dimension of his life is affected.
3. Following are some of the determinants of health that affected Jason's health: his living conditions (a run-down neighbourhood), his father's income (his father is unemployed), his father's education level (his father does not have much education), his mother's health and income (she is ill and cannot work), and the family's social support network (no one seems to be helping them).
4. Responses will vary. The Public Health Agency of Canada identifies the following key determinants of health at the population level:
 - income and social status
 - social support networks
 - education and literacy
 - employment/working conditions
 - social environments
 - physical environments
 - personal health practices and coping skills
 - healthy child development
 - biology and genetic endowment
 - health services
 - gender
 - culture

Go to the following website and click on any determinant to learn more about it:

<http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/ph-sp/phdd/determinants/index.html>

5. Dropping out of school has an impact on the educational and vocational dimensions of the lives of individuals. People with higher levels of education will be able to obtain better jobs. As Jason's story illustrated, low-income, uneducated people and their families often have an added burden of health issues. The well-being of a community with a higher school drop-out rate will be affected. The health-care system may become strained and more costly because more people need the services. Schools and other institutions may also be affected.

6. Answers will vary. Following are some possible responses:

- local and provincial crisis and counselling services such as Brooks and District Women’s Emergency Shelter, Youth Emergency Shelter Society, Fort McMurray Family Crisis Society
- regional health organizations such as Peace Country Health Region, which provides a variety of health-care services to the Peace River area, including emergency and acute care, home care services, outreach programs, continuing care, public health, specialty clinics, mental health services, and many rehabilitation and prevention programs
- provincial agencies such as Alberta Health, Alberta Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission, Alberta Centre for Active Living, Alberta Centre for Injury Control and Research, Alberta Mental Health Board, Clean Air Strategic Alliance, and Native Counselling Services of Alberta
- national agencies such as Health Canada, Canadian Blood Services, Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada, Canadian Cancer Society, Canadian National Institute for the Blind, Canadian Diabetes Association, Alzheimer Society of Canada, Canadian Cystic Fibrosis Foundation, and Canadian Dental Association

7. Responses will vary. Following are some lifestyle choices that may have an immediate or long-term effect on a person’s health:

- getting enough sleep
- eating a balanced diet
- staying in school and getting an education
- going regularly to the doctor, dentist, and optometrist
- making and maintaining supportive friendships
- taking part in sports or clubs
- doing volunteer work
- learning about a career by job-shadowing someone

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