

Primary Health Care Initiatives (PHCI) Project
Contract No. 278-C-00-99-00059-00
Abt. Associates Inc.

PRINCIPLES OF HEALTH EDUCATION

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Understand the role of all health care providers in health education
- Understand the basic principles of communicating health promotion and preventive messages

TEACHING STRATEGIES

- Present didactic material using transparencies, with adequate time for comments and questions
- Use small groups to identify appropriate health education messages, and to develop a short role play to present one or two of these messages by each group.

EQUIPMENT AND MATERIALS NEEDED

- Overhead projector and transparencies
- Flipchart and markers for small group brainstorming (2-3)

LEARNING POINTS

- Health education is the job of everyone in the Health Center
 - Not just the doctor or nurse
 - Functions of Primary Health Care
 - Treatment of illness
 - Prevention of illness
 - Promotion of health
- Focus on most common and serious health problems in Jordan
 - Smoking
 - Injuries and death from auto accidents
 - Diabetes
 - Hypertension
 - Diarrhea in small children
 - Severe respiratory infections in children and the elderly
- Talk about promoting good health, not just how to treat current problems.
Examples:
 - A person with recently diagnosed hypertension can be encouraged to exercise regularly in addition to taking medicine
 - Healthy young people can be encouraged to put on seat belts every time they get into a car, or to stop smoking
 - The parents of a child with a respiratory infection can be encouraged to give vegetables and fruit to the child, in addition to the medication
- Be brief

- Short, simple statement can be just as effective as longer discussion
- Examples:
 - “Have you stopped smoking yet?”
 - “Be sure and put on your seat belt.”
 - “How are you doing in losing weight?”
 - “Be sure and give your baby as much of this ORS as he wants”
- Repeat health messages
 - Repetition of health messages by various health professionals can help reinforce the change
 - Best situation is when the doctor, nurse, pharmacist, and other health workers all involved with preventive and health education messages
- Be scientific
 - Give health education messages that are known to be scientifically accurate
 - Do not repeat ideas that may be out-of-date or not proven
 - Examples of messages that should NOT be repeated:
 - “My father always treated his cough by smoking 3 cigarettes at once!”
 - “A child’s diarrhea will stop if you do not give any solid food for 3-4 days”
 - “The best way to cure a skin ulcer is to put goat’s urine on it twice daily”
- Use educational material
 - Reinforce health message by offering pamphlet or other written material on the issue
 - Keep supply of appropriate written material available
 - If health education discussion is scheduled, invite to attend the session
 - Remember, simply giving out written material is not as effective as combining one-on-one discussion with written material

GROUP EXERCISE

1. Divide into small groups. Ask each group to brainstorm and develop 3-4 brief health education messages or ideas that are important to the patients that they treat. (15-20 minutes)
2. Have each group present their health education messages to the other groups using the flip chart. In addition, ask each group to select one health education message, and present this message using a short mini-drama or role-play.

CRITICAL ELEMENTS FOR REFERRAL TO PHYSICIAN OR NURSE

- Questions from patient that you do not feel qualified to answer
- Patient discusses new problems or symptoms that were not discussed with doctor
- Questions from patient that require a further examination by the doctor to be able to answer

CRITICAL ELEMENTS FOR EVALUATION OF COMPETENCE

- List the basic principles of effective health education in the Health Center
- Describe effective methods of presenting health education and preventive messages to patients as they are treated in the Health Center.