

# UNIT 3

## AUSTRALIA'S HEALTH IN A GLOBALISED WORLD

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### AREA OF STUDY 1

#### Understanding health and wellbeing

##### OUTCOME 1

Explain the complex, dynamic and global nature of health and wellbeing, interpret and apply Australia's health status data and analyse variations in health status

- 1 Concepts of health and wellbeing 3
- 2 Measuring health status 43
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### AREA OF STUDY 2

#### Promoting health and wellbeing

##### OUTCOME 2

Explain changes to public health approaches, analyse improvements in population health over time and evaluate health promotion strategies

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# TOPIC 1

## Concepts of health and wellbeing

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### 1.1 Overview

#### Key knowledge

- Concepts of health and wellbeing (including physical, social, emotional, mental and spiritual dimensions) and illness, and the dynamic and subjective nature of these concepts
- Benefits of optimal health and wellbeing and its importance as a resource individually, nationally and globally
- Prerequisites for health as determined by the WHO including peace, shelter, education, food, income, a stable ecosystem, sustainable resources, social justice and equity

#### Key skills

- Explain the dynamic and subjective nature of the concepts of health and wellbeing and illness
- Describe interrelationships between dimensions of health and wellbeing
- Explain the individual and collective importance of health and wellbeing as a resource
- Describe global benefits of the pursuit of optimal health and wellbeing
- Identify the WHO's prerequisites for health and explain their links to improved health outcomes

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**FIGURE 1.1** Optimal health and wellbeing is a resource for individuals, countries and the global population.



## KEY TERMS

**Chronic condition** any disease or condition that lasts a long time (usually longer than six months). It usually can't be cured and therefore requires ongoing treatment and management. Examples include arthritis and asthma.

**Civic participation** refers to involvement in a community group such as a union, professional association, political party, environmental or animal welfare group, human and civil rights group, or body corporate or tenants' association

**Communicable diseases** infectious diseases which are transmitted from the environment; including through air, water, food and other infected organisms (including other humans)

**Dimensions of health and wellbeing** these are the variables that influence an individual's level of overall health and wellbeing. The variables, frequently referred to as dimensions, are physical, social, emotional, mental and spiritual.

**Disease** a physical or mental disturbance involving symptoms, dysfunction or tissue damage

**Dynamic** continually changing

**Emotional health and wellbeing** the ability to recognise, understand and effectively manage and express emotions as well as the ability to display resilience

**Equilibrium** a state of balance and/or calmness

**Health and wellbeing** relating to the state of a person's physical, social, emotional, mental and spiritual existence and is characterised by an equilibrium in which the individual feels happy, healthy, capable and engaged

**Illness** a subjective concept related to personal experience of a disease

**Infirmity** the quality or state of being weak or ill; often associated with old age

**Mental health and wellbeing** relates to the state of a person's mind or brain and relates to the ability to think and process information. Optimal mental health and wellbeing enables an individual to positively form opinions, make decisions and use logic.

**Pandemic** the spread of infectious disease through human populations across a large region such as multiple continents or worldwide

**Pathogens** bacteria, viruses and other microbes that can cause disease

**Physical health and wellbeing** relates to the functioning of the body and its systems; it includes the physical capacity to perform daily activities or tasks

**Productivity** relates to the efficiency of production of goods and services. Productivity is measured by the amount of output produced per unit of input.

**Social health and wellbeing** the ability to form meaningful and satisfying relationships with others and the ability to manage or adapt appropriately to different social situations

**Spiritual health and wellbeing** relates to ideas, beliefs, values and ethics that arise in the minds and conscience of human beings. It includes the concepts of hope, peace, a guiding sense of meaning or value, and reflection on a person's place in the world. Spiritual health and wellbeing can also relate to organised religion, a higher power and prayer, values, a sense of purpose in life, connection or belonging.

**Subjective** influenced by or based on personal beliefs, feelings or opinions

**Vector** a living thing that carries and transmits pathogens to other living things

## 1.2 Concepts of health and wellbeing and illness

**▶ KEY CONCEPT** Understanding the dynamic and subjective nature of the concepts of health and wellbeing and illness

The concepts of 'health and wellbeing' and 'illness' are explored in this section.

### 1.2.1 What is health and wellbeing?

Understanding the concept of **health and wellbeing** is important for gaining an accurate awareness of the level of health and wellbeing experienced in Australia. This understanding allows areas for improvement to be identified and targeted. A deep understanding of health and wellbeing will also allow for predictions to be made about the likely effect that introduced strategies and actions will have on the health and wellbeing of individuals.



Health and wellbeing are concepts that were usually considered separately in the past. In modern society, however, they are often considered together, and refer to the overall state of a person's physical, social, emotional, mental and spiritual being and is characterised by an **equilibrium** in which the individual feels happy, healthy, capable and engaged.

In this section, the terms 'health' and 'wellbeing' will first be explored separately. Once each term is explored and discussed, the concept of 'health and wellbeing' becomes clearer.

In the past, health was often seen as relating to the body (the physical dimension), and more specifically the absence of disease. If a person was not sick or in pain, they were seen to be in a good state of health. In 1946 the World Health Organization (WHO) developed the first globally accepted definition of health which viewed health as a positive concept:

Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social wellbeing and not merely the absence of disease or **infirmity**.

### THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION (WHO)

When delegates first met to form the United Nations in 1945, establishing a global health body was discussed. The World Health Organization officially came to life in 1948 as the branch of the United Nations concerned with promoting health and wellbeing globally. More than 60 years later, the WHO stands as a global health force offering leadership on global health matters, providing direction for research and technical support to countries, and gathering evidence on and assessment of health trends.

**FIGURE 1.2** The WHO headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland



This definition was significant because it was the first time that health had been considered as being more than physical health. It also acknowledged that the absence of disease is only one aspect of health.

**FIGURE 1.3** Health and wellbeing moves beyond the physical aspect and includes factors such as social wellbeing.



Although the WHO definition moves beyond the physical aspects of health, it is still limiting because it doesn't give everyone the opportunity to be considered healthy. 'Complete' wellbeing in all dimensions is difficult to achieve and beyond the capacity of most people.

Forty years after this definition was drafted, it was clarified by adding that 'to reach a state of complete physical, mental and social wellbeing, an individual or group must be able to identify and to realize aspirations, to satisfy needs, and to change or cope with the environment'. Being healthy is essential in realising aspirations and satisfying needs and, according to the WHO, 'health is, therefore, seen as a resource for everyday life, not the objective of living'.

The clarification provided by the WHO makes the concept of health more inclusive and achievable. The notion of complete wellbeing is clarified by stating that health is an individual concept and will differ from person to person depending on many factors, such as health outcomes, biological and sociocultural factors, and the environments in which people live.

Although not identified in the original WHO definition, the notions of emotional and spiritual health and wellbeing have been an increasing focus as aspects of overall health and wellbeing and will therefore also be considered in this section.

**FIGURE 1.4** Overall health and wellbeing includes the five dimensions of health and how an individual feels about their life.



The WHO definition of health makes reference to the concept of ‘wellbeing’. Wellbeing is related to health and has been used frequently in recent years to describe how well an individual is living. Like health, wellbeing is not just the absence of disease or illness. Wellbeing is a concept that takes health outcomes into account, but also considers other factors in a person’s life and is related to happiness and life satisfaction. Wellbeing is sometimes described as how a person feels about themselves and their life.

As health and wellbeing are related concepts, they will be considered together in this study and will be taken to refer to the state of a person’s physical, social, emotional, mental and spiritual existence and is characterised by an equilibrium in which the individual feels happy, healthy, capable and engaged (see figure 1.4).

All aspects of an individual’s life contribute to their overall health and wellbeing. The Better Health Channel identifies a range of factors that are particularly influential on the overall level of health and wellbeing experienced (see figure 1.5). Some of these factors, for example ‘a sense of belonging’, relate specifically to a dimension of health and wellbeing (in this case, spiritual). Other factors, such as ‘regular exercise’, influence a dimension of health and wellbeing by enhancing the level of fitness (in this case, physical).

The health and wellbeing experienced by an individual is **dynamic**, meaning that it is constantly changing. The WHO definition also recognises health as being a *state* of wellbeing. These are key terms for gaining an accurate understanding of what health and wellbeing is. Health and wellbeing can be good one moment but then events such as accidents, illness, relationship breakdown and stressful events can alter the state of health and wellbeing very quickly. Health and wellbeing also has the potential to improve quickly. A person with a migraine who is experiencing poor health and wellbeing can rest and possibly take medication that can return them to good health and wellbeing.

In modern times, the concept of health and wellbeing is viewed in many different ways and is therefore said to be **subjective**. Although not being sick is still a fundamental aspect of health and wellbeing for most people, a number of factors influence the way people view health and wellbeing such as age, fitness, body weight, social networks, income, occupation, education and culture. For example:

- Physical health and wellbeing often deteriorates over time, so an elderly person may view health and wellbeing as the ability to carry out tasks independently such as living in their own home, cooking,

**FIGURE 1.5** The Better Health Channel identifies a range of factors that are particularly influential on overall health and wellbeing.



cleaning, washing, shopping and socialising. As people get older, the absence of disease may be particularly important in relation to health and wellbeing.

- A person with a **chronic condition** may see health and wellbeing in relation to the management of their condition. If their condition is being adequately managed and is having minimal impact on their life, they may see themselves as experiencing good health and wellbeing.
- An elite sportsperson may view health and wellbeing as the absence of sport-related injuries, the ability to train at full capacity, high levels of fitness and the ability to compete at the highest level.
- Parents of young children may view health and wellbeing as a concept related to their ability to function in their job, spend time with their children and provide for their family.
- Youth may see health and wellbeing as a concept related to their academic performance, sporting participation and physical and social functioning.
- A person living in a community with severe health concerns might consider themselves in a state of positive health and wellbeing if they are less sick than their peers, even if they have a serious disease or illness.
- Indigenous Australians often relate optimal health and wellbeing to having a strong connection to the land and their past (see the following case study on Indigenous perspectives).

## CASE STUDY

### Indigenous perspectives on health and wellbeing

Land is fundamental to the wellbeing of Aboriginal people. The land is not just soil or rocks or minerals, but a whole environment that sustains and is sustained by people and culture. For Indigenous Australians, the land is the core of all spirituality and this relationship and the spirit of 'country' is central to the issues that are important to Indigenous people today.

All of Australia's Aboriginal people were semi-nomadic hunters and gatherers, with each community having its own territory from which they 'made their living'. These territories or 'traditional lands' were defined by geographic boundaries such as rivers, lakes and mountains. They understood and cared for their different environments, and adapted to them.

*We cultivated our land, but in a way different from the white man. We endeavoured to live with the land; they seemed to live off it. I was taught to preserve, never to destroy.*

Aboriginal elder Tom Dystra

Indigenous knowledge of the land is linked to their exceptional tracking skills based on their hunter and gather life. This includes the ability to track down animals, to identify and locate edible plants, to find sources of water and fish.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people identify themselves through their land areas, their relationship to others and their language and stories — which may be expressed through ceremony, the arts, family, religion, and sports. Cultural heritage is passed on from one generation to the next.

**FIGURE 1.6** The land is particularly important for the health and wellbeing of Indigenous Australians.



There were about 600 different clan groups or 'nations' around the continent when Europeans arrived, many with distinctive cultures and beliefs. Their 'territories' ranged from lush woodland areas to harsh desert surroundings. Different groups developed different skills and built a unique body of knowledge based on their particular environment.

The system of kinship put everybody in a specific relationship to each other as well special relationships with land areas based on their clan or kin. These relationships have roles and responsibilities attached to them.

Kinship influences marriage decisions and governs much of everyday behaviour. By adulthood people know exactly how to behave,

and in what manner, to all other people around them as well as in respect to specific land areas. Kinship is about meeting the obligations of one's clan, and forms part of Aboriginal Law, sometimes known as the Dreaming.

Language is vitally important in understanding Indigenous heritage as much of their history is an oral history. Hundreds of languages and dialects existed (although many are now extinct), and language meaning, as well as geographic location, is used today to identify different groups.

**Source:** Adapted from <http://www.australia.gov.au/about-australia/australian-story/austn-indigenous-cultural-heritage>

#### Case study review

1. Explain ways that land promotes health and wellbeing of Indigenous Australians.
2. How does Tom Dystra compare the use of land between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians?
3. Discuss how kinship can promote health and wellbeing among Indigenous Australians.

## 1.2.2 Illness

**Illness** is a concept that relates to negative aspects of health and wellbeing. **Disease** is a term that is often associated with illness and, although these concepts are related, they are not the same. According to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2014), 'a disease is a physical or mental disturbance involving

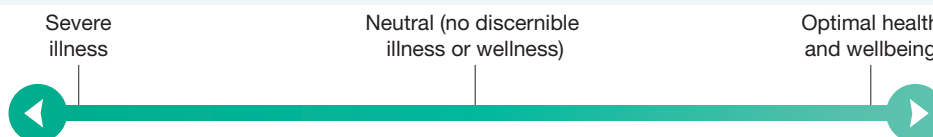


symptoms, dysfunction or tissue damage, while illness is a more subjective concept related to personal experience of a disease'. Just as wellbeing relates to how an individual feels about their health, illness relates to how a person feels about, and experiences, disease. In this sense, illness relates to the way a person feels as the result of a disease.

Diseases can be physical or mental in nature and can range from mild discomfort to severe pain. Different people may experience diseases in different ways. This can affect the level of illness experienced and reflects the subjective nature of this concept. Although some diseases are chronic, others can come and go, which contributes to illness being a dynamic concept that can change quickly. People may also view illness in different ways at different times depending on a range of factors including the number and severity of the diseases experienced, the age of the individual and past experiences of disease and illness. For example, a person with a high threshold for pain may experience a lower level of illness than a person with a low threshold for pain, even if their diseases are the same. An elderly person may be more physically fragile than a younger person, so the disease may take a greater toll, contributing to higher levels of illness for the elderly person. Two people with the same disease may experience different levels of illness as a result of their past experiences with disease.

The concepts of health and wellbeing and illness can be considered as a continuum, with optimal health and wellbeing at one end, and severe illness down the other (see figure 1.7). Those in the middle of the continuum would not be experiencing optimal health and wellbeing or severe illness, but would sit somewhere in between.

**FIGURE 1.7** Health and wellbeing and illness can be considered as a continuum.



## 1.2 Activities

### Test your knowledge

1. What is the WHO definition of health? Why might this definition have its limitations?
2. Why was the WHO definition of health significant when it was written?
3. Briefly explain what is meant by 'health and wellbeing'.
4. Identify the five dimensions of health and wellbeing.
5. Briefly explain the difference between disease and illness.

### Apply your knowledge

6. Devise your own definition of health and wellbeing. Share your results with others in the class.
7. Select three factors identified in figure 1.5 and brainstorm ways that each one could impact on overall health and wellbeing.
8. (a) Discuss why health and wellbeing is said to be subjective.  
(b) Identify five factors that may influence the way an individual views health and wellbeing.  
(c) Select two factors from part (b) and explain how each may influence how the individual views health and wellbeing.
9. Describe the characteristics a person with good health and wellbeing would display.
10. Brainstorm factors that could contribute to different levels of illness experienced by two people with the same disease.

## study on

Unit 3 > AOS 1 > Topic 1 > Concept 1

Dimensions of health and wellbeing Summary screens and practice questions

# 1.3 Dimensions of health and wellbeing

**▶ KEY CONCEPT** Exploring the dimensions of health and wellbeing

The WHO definition of health acknowledges that there are a range of **dimensions of health and wellbeing** — namely the physical, mental and social dimensions. In recent years, there has been an increased focus on the emotional and spiritual dimensions of health and wellbeing, which will also be considered in this section.

The physical dimension of health and wellbeing is often the focus of individuals, groups, government organisations and non-government organisations. Most statistics relating to health and wellbeing also tend to focus on the physical dimension. However, it is important to remember that the physical dimension is only one part of overall health and wellbeing, and the social, emotional, mental and spiritual dimensions must be taken into account if we are to gain an understanding of the overall health and wellbeing experienced by individuals or groups.

## 1.3.1 Physical health and wellbeing

**Physical health and wellbeing** relates to the functioning of the body and its systems; it includes the physical capacity to perform daily activities or tasks. Physical health and wellbeing is supported by factors such as regular physical activity, consuming a balanced diet, having appropriate rest or sleep, maintaining an ideal body weight, and the absence of illness, disease or injury. Simply ‘not being sick’ is perhaps the most basic level of physical health and wellbeing, but there are many other aspects of the physical dimension. A person may be free from disease and injury, but may not have enough energy to complete the tasks they need to. They may be unfit or overweight, all of which relate to physical health and wellbeing. It is only when the whole body and its systems are functioning to the best of their ability that a person can be considered as having optimal physical health and wellbeing.

Someone with optimal physical health and wellbeing may demonstrate the characteristics displayed in figure 1.8.

**FIGURE 1.8** Aspects of optimal physical health and wellbeing



### study on

Unit 3 > AOS 1 > Topic 1 > Concept 2

**Physical health and wellbeing** Summary screens and practice questions

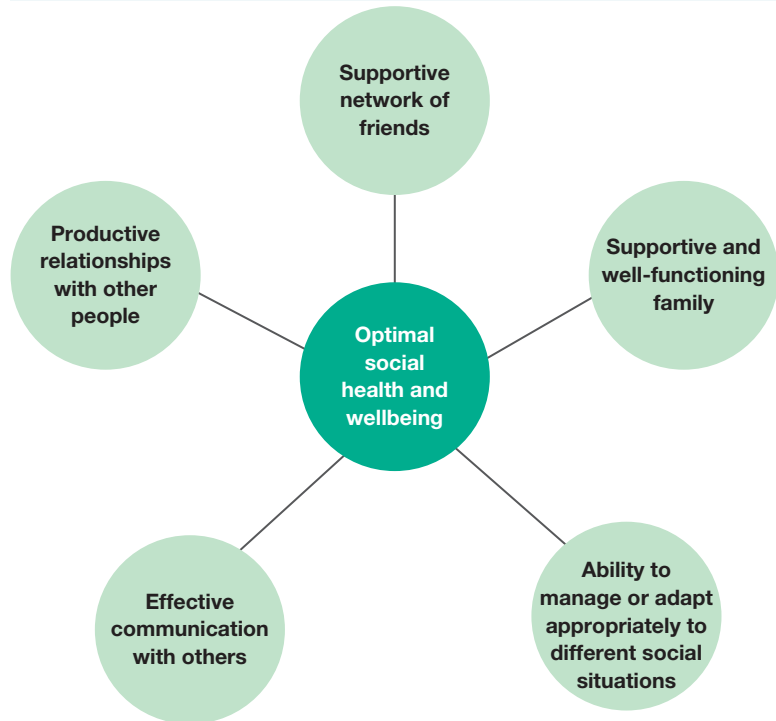
## 1.3.2 Social health and wellbeing

**Social health and wellbeing** relates to the ability to form meaningful and satisfying relationships with others and the ability to manage or adapt appropriately to different social situations. It also includes the level of support provided by family and within a community to ensure that every person has equal opportunity to function as a contributing member of the society. Social health and wellbeing is supported by strong communication skills, empathy for others and a sense of personal accountability.

The quality of relationships that individuals have with others is a key aspect of social health and wellbeing. Humans are social beings, and interacting with others is an important aspect of human existence. Sometimes these interactions are positive and add value to life. When an individual has a supportive group of friends, a supportive and well-functioning family and maybe an intimate relationship with another person, their social health and wellbeing is optimal. At other times, such interactions may not be as effective: a person may be in conflict with friends and family, or in the process of breaking up with a partner. Under these circumstances, social health and wellbeing would not be considered optimal. Like all dimensions of health and wellbeing, there will be changes over time. When optimal social health and wellbeing is not being experienced, there is potential for improvement.

Factors relating to optimal social health and wellbeing are identified in figure 1.9.

**FIGURE 1.9** Aspects of optimal social health and wellbeing



**FIGURE 1.10** A supportive network of friends is an aspect of good social health and wellbeing.



### study on

Unit 3 > AOS 1 > Topic 1 > Concept 3

**Social health and wellbeing** Summary screens and practice questions

### 1.3.3 Emotional health and wellbeing

#### Emotional health and wellbeing

relates to the ability to express emotions and feelings in a positive way. Emotional health and wellbeing is about the positive management and expression of emotional actions and reactions as well as the ability to display resilience. Emotional health and wellbeing is the degree to which an individual feels emotionally secure and relaxed in everyday life. Factors associated with optimal emotional health and wellbeing are identified in figure 1.11.

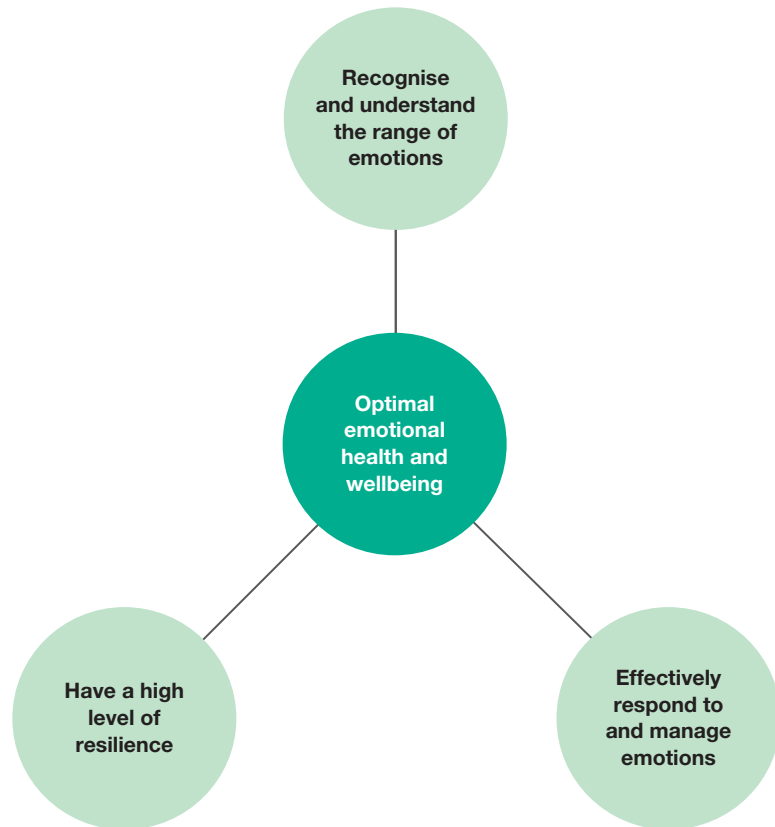
Experiencing a variety of emotions is part of human life. Researchers have identified a range of emotions, including:

- anger
- fear
- sadness
- disgust
- embarrassment
- surprise
- happiness
- excitement,
- satisfaction
- amusement.

Although the basic emotions are experienced by most people at some stage in their lives, they often experience them in different ways and in different circumstances. Consider embarrassment. Some people may feel embarrassed in a situation that would not cause embarrassment to others. They may also experience different degrees of embarrassment ranging from slight discomfort to severe anxiety. The situations in which embarrassment is experienced, and the manner in which it is experienced, are often influenced by the individual's level of emotional health and wellbeing.

People rarely experience one emotion on its own and are more likely to experience a mix of emotions. For example, changing schools as a child might trigger a range of emotions ranging from excitement to anxiety. These emotions can exist at the same time or occur one after the other. An emotionally healthy individual would recognise these emotions and be able to manage them effectively.

**FIGURE 1.11** Aspects of optimal emotional health and wellbeing



**FIGURE 1.12** Recognising and managing emotions is a part of emotional health and wellbeing.





The manner in which people recognise and respond to the emotions they experience can either promote or detract from their overall health and wellbeing. When an individual can accurately identify the emotion experienced, acknowledge why they are feeling a certain way, and act on the emotion in a responsible and mature manner, emotional health and wellbeing is said to be optimal. This does not mean that the individual only experiences positive or desirable emotions such as happiness and amusement. Emotions such as anger, sadness and fear are an important part of life and are appropriate in many scenarios. They can assist in identifying aspects of life that require attention. Research shows that experiencing and accepting such emotions is vital to our overall health and wellbeing, and trying to block these emotions can actually contribute to poor health and wellbeing. However, if these emotions become excessive, irrational, distressing or interfere with daily activities, emotional health and wellbeing can be adversely affected.

Resilience relates to the ability to effectively deal with adverse or negative events and the associated emotions that occur throughout life. Such events include the death of a loved one, relationship breakdown, conflict with family and friends, financial stress and job loss. An individual's level of resilience can fluctuate over time and is influenced by a range of factors including levels of stress and social support. Having high levels of resilience is a key component of emotional health and wellbeing.

## study on

Unit 3 > AOS 1 > Topic 1 > Concept 5

**Emotional health and wellbeing** Summary screens and practice questions

### 1.3.4 Mental health and wellbeing

**Mental health and wellbeing** is the current state of the mind or brain and it relates to the ability to think and process information. A mentally healthy brain enables an individual to positively form opinions, make decisions and use logic. Mental health and wellbeing is about the wellness of the mind rather than illness. Mental health and wellbeing is associated with low levels of stress and anxiety, positive self-esteem, as well as a sense of confidence and optimism. The human mind is a complex thing, and it is what sets us apart from other animals. The way the mind functions determines mental health and wellbeing. When stress levels are low and a person feels relaxed and positive about themselves and life, mental health and wellbeing can be said to be optimal. Conversely, if a person is stressed and experiencing negative thought patterns about themselves, others, or the world in general, mental health and wellbeing may not be optimal.

Mental disorders are often associated with poor mental health and wellbeing, but these concepts are not the same. Mental disorders relate to conditions that significantly impact on thought processes and mental functioning, such as depression and anxiety. Mental health and wellbeing, on the other hand, relates to the overall functioning of the mind and can be positive or negative. All people have a level of mental health and wellbeing, whereas only some people have a mental disorder. Mental disorders have the potential to contribute to high levels of illness if they are not managed appropriately.

Self-esteem refers to how people feel about themselves. Having positive self-esteem means that people feel good about themselves. Self-esteem influences behaviour, as those with positive self-esteem are more likely to speak their mind and act independently and responsibly.

**FIGURE 1.13** Stress levels contribute significantly to the overall level of mental health and wellbeing experienced.



Confidence relates to believing in one's own worth and ability to succeed. Having confidence can help people accept challenges, such as volunteering to give a speech, and increase their chances of success because they are not concentrating on failure.

Individuals may have different levels of confidence in different aspects of their lives. Although it is based on past experiences, confidence can change rapidly as a result of factors such as one's personal appearance or comments made by others.

As with the other dimensions of health and wellbeing, there are many factors that influence the level of mental health and wellbeing experienced by an individual. These are summarised in figure 1.14.

**FIGURE 1.14** Aspects of optimal mental health and wellbeing



### WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN EMOTIONAL AND MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING?

Although emotional and mental health and wellbeing are related, they are not the same. Emotional health and wellbeing relates to appropriately experiencing, identifying and managing emotions, whereas mental health and wellbeing relates to the nature of feelings and thoughts that a person is having. Good emotional health and wellbeing does not mean that emotions and feelings are always positive. In fact, experiencing only positive emotions and feelings can indicate that emotional health and wellbeing is not optimal. As humans, we all experience negative events which can, and should, cause us to experience negative emotions and feelings. During these times, mental health and wellbeing may not be optimal, but if the emotions and feelings experienced are appropriate for the given situation, emotional health and wellbeing can be considered positive.

Experiencing stress is an aspect of mental health and wellbeing, but the manner in which the individual recognises and deals with the associated emotions relates to emotional health and wellbeing. The loss of a loved one is an event that often causes mental health and wellbeing to be impacted in a negative way. The person may feel sad and experience grief. An emotionally healthy person can identify and acknowledge these feelings and manage them appropriately.

'Emotions' and 'mood' are two terms that are often interpreted as meaning the same thing, but they are distinct concepts. Emotions usually relate to emotional health and wellbeing, and moods often relate to mental health and wellbeing. Emotions are often experienced in the short term, but they can be intense. Emotions are also likely to have a distinct and identifiable cause such as a disagreement with a friend, the loss of a loved one, experiencing success at school or being around people who make you happy. Mood is more closely related to mental health and wellbeing, and is usually milder than an emotion but longer lasting. In many cases, the cause of a mood is difficult to identify. For example, a person might feel particularly gloomy or optimistic for a number of days without any specific reason.

### study on

Unit 3 > AOS 1 > Topic 1 > Concept 4

**Mental health and wellbeing** Summary screens and practice questions

### 1.3.5 Spiritual health and wellbeing

Spiritual health and wellbeing is not material in nature, but relates to ideas, beliefs, values and ethics that arise in the minds and conscience of human beings. Spiritual health and wellbeing includes the concepts of hope, peace, a guiding sense of meaning or value, and reflection on a person's place in the world. Spiritual health and wellbeing can be highly individualised; for example in some traditions, spiritual health and wellbeing may relate to organised religion, a higher power and prayer, while in other practices it can relate to morals, values, a sense of purpose in life, connection or belonging.

A sense of belonging is a human need. A sense of belonging occurs when a person feels like a member or a part of the society or world in which they live. Belonging assists in seeing value in life and can help in dealing with painful experiences. Individuals who have a sense of belonging realise that everyone goes through hard times and that they are not alone. They are also more likely to feel supported in times of need. When individuals feel that they are connected to others and to the world in general, they are more likely to find positive aspects in negative events and deal with these situations in a more positive manner. Many people join clubs or organisations to help satisfy the need to belong, but this can also occur in informal ways such as friendship groups and daily interactions with others. All people can make a difference to the world they live in and doing this promotes feelings of belonging. People often find a sense of belonging in a range of different settings, including:

- family
- friendship groups
- volunteer groups
- sporting and social clubs
- the workplace
- school
- place of worship (such as temple, church, mosque or synagogue).

Establishing values and beliefs is a key component of spiritual health and wellbeing. Values relate to what an individual feels is important in life, and can include valuing family connections or freedom of speech. Beliefs relate to what an individual feels to be true or right, even though the belief may be unproven such as the belief in life after death. Examples of values and beliefs are shown in tables 1.1. and 1.2. Both values and beliefs guide the behaviours of individuals and influence the decisions they make. If a person values physical fitness for example, they may be less likely to binge drink or overconsume unhealthy foods. Living according to one's values and beliefs can assist in promoting a sense of satisfaction with life.

**TABLE 1.1** Examples of values

Values
Education
Tidiness
Fitness
Listening
Acceptance
Creativity
Career success
Wealth
Manners
Appearance
Fun
Socialisation

**TABLE 1.2** Examples of beliefs

Beliefs
God exists.
The mind can cure the body.
All people are created equal.
The planet is a resource to be used for human gain.
There is life after death.
Heaven exists.
It is wrong to steal.
Animals have rights.
Immigration should be encouraged.
People evolved through evolution.
Wealth should be shared equally.
Success is achieved through hard work.

Finding meaning and purpose in human existence and determining what is meaningful in our own lives are related to values and beliefs, which are key aspects of spiritual health and wellbeing. Meaning and purpose relate to an individual's sense of who they are and why they were born. Throughout history, humans have asked themselves what are sometimes referred to as 'life's ultimate questions':

- Who am I?
- Why am I here?
- What is the meaning of my life?

Although these questions may not be asked specifically or consciously, they form the basis for which people decide what they value and what they want to do and achieve in their life. The answers to these questions formulate an individual's meaning and purpose in life. Examples of purpose include:

- To tear down the walls that separate people who have significant disabilities from people who are able bodied.
- To speak up for the rights of all living creatures to ensure that all can live in harmony.
- To assist children in realising their true potential by challenging them and encouraging them to be their best.
- To create music that brings joy to people from all walks of life.

Peace and harmony are often characteristic of positive spiritual health and wellbeing. Accepting that we cannot control all that happens in our life, and looking for positives in all situations, can contribute to a level of health and wellbeing that enables people to deal more effectively with misfortune.

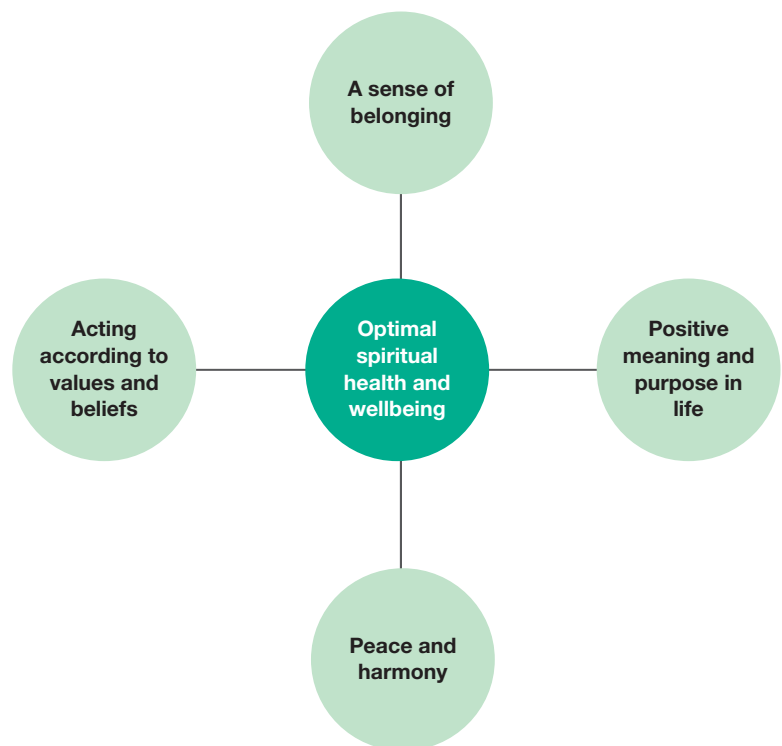
Many people associate religion with spirituality. Religion provides a structured and organised form of spirituality, but spirituality exists for many people without connection to an organised religion.

Characteristics of optimal spiritual health and wellbeing are shown in figure 1.16.

**FIGURE 1.15** Peace and harmony are characteristics of spiritual health and wellbeing, and they can be promoted by meditation.



**FIGURE 1.16** Aspects of optimal spiritual health and wellbeing





## 1.3 Activities

### Test your knowledge

1. Define the five dimensions of health and wellbeing. Give two examples of characteristics that relate to each.
2. Classify each of the following examples as a physical, social, emotional, mental or spiritual dimension of health and wellbeing.
  - (a) A sense of belonging to a community group
  - (b) Having an asthma attack
  - (c) Positive thought patterns
  - (d) Recognising the difference between embarrassment and anxiety
  - (e) Experiencing productive relationships with school mates
  - (f) Having adequate levels of energy
  - (g) Experiencing positive self-esteem
  - (h) Having effective communication with others
  - (i) Experiencing sadness at appropriate times
  - (j) Establishing and acting according to values and beliefs

### Apply your knowledge

3. Using examples, explain the difference between mental and emotional health and wellbeing.
4. Does optimal emotional health and wellbeing mean never feeling sad or down? Explain.
5. 'Religion and spirituality are the same thing'. Discuss this statement.
6. Brainstorm the range of factors that you feel influence your own level of health and wellbeing. Remember that health and wellbeing is not just physical.

## study on

Unit 3 > AOS 1 > Topic 1 > Concept 6

**Spiritual health and wellbeing** Summary screens and practice questions

## 1.4 Interrelationships between the dimensions of health and wellbeing

**KEY CONCEPT** Understanding the interrelationships between the dimensions of health and wellbeing

The five dimensions of health and wellbeing are interrelated; that is, they all affect each other. Although they will not all be affected in the same way or to the same degree, a change in one will usually have some effect on the other four. For this reason, all five dimensions need attention in order to achieve optimal health and wellbeing.

Overall health and wellbeing is determined by the combined levels of health and wellbeing in the five dimensions as shown in figure 1.17. Each circle represents a dimension of health and wellbeing. They all influence each other, and all combine to produce the overall level of health and wellbeing experienced.

When all five dimensions are as good as they can be, health and wellbeing is said to be optimal. Optimal health and wellbeing therefore refers to the highest level of health and wellbeing an individual can realistically attain. However, everyone is born with a different genetic potential and is influenced by different environments. As a result, every individual's level of optimal health and wellbeing will be different.

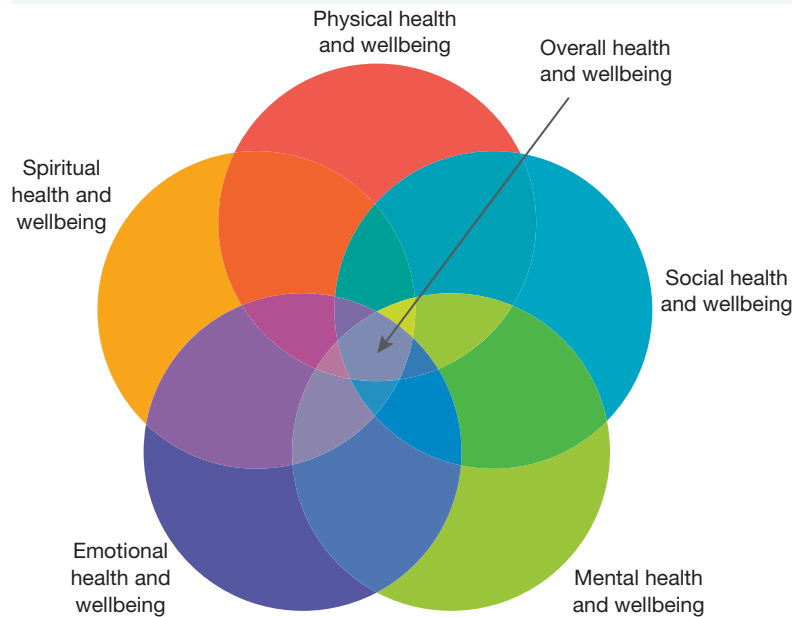
Exactly how do the dimensions of health and wellbeing affect each other? It is impossible to state exactly how an individual's health and wellbeing will be affected by a particular event because everyone is unique and each situation is different. We can, however, predict *possible* effects on health and wellbeing.

It is useful to explore the manner in which the five dimensions of health and wellbeing can influence each other. Table 1.3 shows a mix of both positive and negative impacts on health and wellbeing, but remember that the impact on each dimension will largely depend on the individual and scenario in question.

It is also possible to explore the possible impacts on the five dimensions of health and wellbeing in one particular scenario. Consider a student who has suffered a broken leg (physical health and wellbeing) and is recovering in hospital (figure 1.18). While in hospital and during the recovery phase, their health and wellbeing could be affected in numerous ways:

- Physical health and wellbeing
  - may not be able to exercise, so fitness levels reduce
  - could gain weight as physical activity levels decrease
  - immune and other body systems may be affected by the food given in hospital (this could have positive or negative effects on health and wellbeing, depending on what the diet was like before)
- Social health and wellbeing
  - might make new friends in hospital
  - may get a lot of visits from family members they would not normally see
  - will not be able to socialise and interact with friends at school and during leisure time
- Mental health and wellbeing
  - may be depressed about missing out on socialising with friends and family
  - may feel like they are a burden on their family
- Emotional health and wellbeing
  - could experience a range of emotions including frustration or feelings of loneliness
  - might be happy or sad to miss out on school
- Spiritual health and wellbeing
  - may develop a sense of belonging with those in the hospital setting
  - may accept that some aspects of life are out of their control, thereby promoting spiritual health and wellbeing.

**FIGURE 1.17** The five dimensions of health and wellbeing are interrelated and therefore affect each other.



**FIGURE 1.18** This individual's social, emotional, mental and spiritual health and wellbeing may be impacted by her physical health and wellbeing.



**TABLE 1.3** How the five dimensions of health and wellbeing can influence each other

	Physical	Social	Mental	Emotional	Spiritual
Physical		When an individual experiences good physical health and wellbeing, they are physically able to participate in activities with friends.	An individual experiencing good physical health and wellbeing is more likely to feel good about themselves and have positive self-esteem.	An individual who is sick may experience emotions such as fear and anger.	A person who is in a good state of physical health and wellbeing is able to connect with other members of society, which can enhance feelings of belonging.
Social	Having strong social networks can reduce the risk of a range of conditions including cardiovascular disease.		Having a close network of friends allows people to share problems with others, which can reduce stress.	Close social bonds allow individuals to be themselves and share their emotions with others.	When a person has social bonds, they are more likely to feel connected to society.
Mental	Stress can lower immune system function and increase the risk of infectious diseases.	If a person is experiencing good mental health and wellbeing, they are more likely to interact in a positive way with friends and family.		With low levels of stress and high self-esteem, an individual may be better able to fairly judge the emotions they are experiencing.	Stress is characterised by excessive self-focus. When an individual is focusing on themselves, they are less likely to feel connected to their community.
Emotional	If an individual can recover from misfortune, they are more likely to participate in their normal activities such as exercise, which can enhance fitness.	An individual who can express their emotions can share their feelings with friends, which can promote more meaningful friendships.	If an individual can process emotions effectively, they may feel better about themselves, which enhances self-esteem.		Experiencing appropriate emotions (both positive and negative) can assist in a person feeling connected to their world and the events that occur in it.
Spiritual	When an individual has purpose in life, they are more likely to take care of themselves physically so they can fulfil their purpose. This can promote a healthy body weight.	If an individual feels connected to their society, they are more likely to treat people fairly, which can enhance relationships.	Believing that life has a positive meaning and purpose can enhance self-esteem.	If a person acts according to their values and beliefs, they may feel more comfortable with the emotions they experience throughout life.	

Not all of the effects on health and wellbeing are negative. Sometimes a negative event can produce positive effects on one or more of the dimensions of health and wellbeing. You may have noticed that there is a range of effects on the various dimensions of health and wellbeing. It is also important to note that the effect on health and wellbeing will not always have a physical cause. For example, a relationship breakup (non-physical cause) can lead to a loss of appetite which can influence energy levels (physical health and wellbeing). If the newly single individual used to spend a lot of time with their partner's friends, they may now have to find a new group of friends (social). The person may experience a loss of confidence and doubt their own worth (mental). They may experience emotions such as loss, loneliness and anger (emotional). The groups in which they feel they belong may change (spiritual).

The following case study about Michelle looks at the effect of excessive stress on health and wellbeing.

## CASE STUDY

### Michelle's story

Michelle is a 26-year-old lawyer who works in a large corporation in the city. She has many responsibilities and generally copes with these very well. Recently, she was given a large contract to work on. The demands of the contract are substantial, and her work life has begun to dominate her free time as well as her working hours. Michelle has been feeling more stressed at work. Despite this, she has felt good about herself for being trusted to work on this contract.

Michelle has found that she has had to cut back on her social activities and other things she enjoys, such as being a part of the local netball club and spending time with her family. Missing such interactions has made her feel disconnected and sad at times, but she has been able to manage these emotions. She has also reduced the amount of time spent at the gym and preparing healthy meals, which has caused her to gain some weight.

### Case study review

1. Identify one example from Michelle's story that relates to each dimension of health and wellbeing.
2. For each dimension, identify how Michelle's health and wellbeing might have recently changed and justify your response.
3. Explain how the dimensions of health and wellbeing may be interrelated in Michelle's case.

## 1.4 Activities

### Test your knowledge

1. Discuss what it means when the dimensions of health and wellbeing are said to be interrelated.
2. Explain what is meant by 'optimal health and wellbeing'.

### Apply your knowledge

3. Either on your own or with a partner, brainstorm ways that:
  - (a) physical health and wellbeing could affect social, emotional, mental and spiritual health and wellbeing
  - (b) social health and wellbeing could affect physical, emotional, mental and spiritual health and wellbeing
  - (c) mental health and wellbeing could affect physical, social, emotional and spiritual health and wellbeing
  - (d) emotional health and wellbeing could affect physical, social, mental and spiritual health and wellbeing
  - (e) spiritual health and wellbeing could affect physical, social, emotional and mental health and wellbeing.
4. Explain how each of the following could have an impact on two dimensions of health and wellbeing:
  - (a) being educated
  - (b) contracting influenza (the flu)
  - (c) having a close group of friends
  - (d) feeling a part of a community group
  - (e) having positive thought patterns and an optimistic outlook on life.



## 1.5 Optimal health and wellbeing as a resource

**KEY CONCEPT** Exploring the importance of health and wellbeing as a resource individually, nationally and globally

In 1986 the World Health Organization stated that to reach an optimal level of health and wellbeing, ‘an individual or group must be able to identify and to realize aspirations, to satisfy needs, and to change or cope with the environment. Health (and wellbeing) is, therefore, seen as a resource for everyday life, not the objective of living’.

With this in mind, it becomes clearer that health and wellbeing is both a resource and an outcome. As a resource, health and wellbeing can provide benefits for individuals, countries and the world as a whole.

### 1.5.1 Importance of health and wellbeing as a resource individually

Similar to other traits such as knowledge, social skills and creativity, health and wellbeing is a characteristic of human existence. Like these traits, health and wellbeing can be used to enhance human life, but cannot be directly traded or sold for goods and services. It also cannot be obtained in exchange for goods and services.

On a basic level, optimal health and wellbeing reduces the risk of illness and premature death. The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2013) estimates that 4.5 million years of healthy life were lost in Australia in 2011 from either premature death or time lived with illness, disease or injury.

As well as reducing the risk of premature death and disease, optimal health and wellbeing increases the ability of individuals to live free from pain and concentrate on activities that improve their lives such as studying, working and socialising. Optimal health and wellbeing also decreases stress and anxiety and promotes positive emotions such as happiness.

Being healthy can assist in creating a cycle of wellbeing. It allows individuals to work more effectively and improve their lives, which in turn promotes health and wellbeing. For example, optimal health and wellbeing increases the capacity of individuals to:

- work productively
- gain an education
- earn an income
- exercise
- effectively run a household (e.g. shopping, cleaning, caring for children)

**FIGURE 1.19** Optimal health and wellbeing promotes restful sleep, which further enhances health and wellbeing.

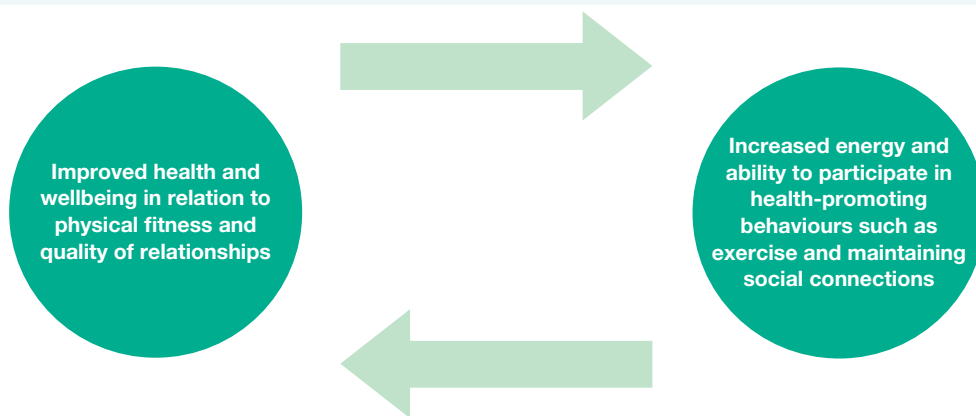


- spend time with friends
- work towards their purpose in life
- increase leisure time
- live independently
- sleep well
- maintain positive thought patterns.

All of these processes contribute to improved health and wellbeing, which increases the ability of individuals to further promote or improve their health and wellbeing as the example in figure 1.20 illustrates.

Optimal health and wellbeing also reduces healthcare costs for individuals. Illness can generate significant health-related costs such as doctor's consultations and medication. Individuals are often required to make financial contributions towards these costs, thereby reducing the amount of money that can be spent on other things.

**FIGURE 1.20** Optimal health and wellbeing is a resource that can be used to further promote the health and wellbeing of individuals.



Experiencing low levels of health and wellbeing can reduce quality of life. The individual may experience a reduced ability to participate in health-promoting activities and behaviours, and may not view life in a positive manner. This can mean that life is not lived to the highest level possible.

As well as promoting health and wellbeing in individuals, a population with optimal levels of health and wellbeing provides benefits at both country and global levels.

### 1.5.2 Importance of health and wellbeing as a resource nationally

In addition to its importance to individuals, optimal health and wellbeing has a number of social and economic benefits for a country's population as a whole (see figure 1.21).

Populations with optimal levels of health and wellbeing experience greater economic benefits such as higher average incomes, greater productivity, less absenteeism from work, less reliance on social security, and reduced healthcare and associated caring costs. Social benefits of optimal health and wellbeing for countries include improved life expectancy and other health outcomes, reduced levels of stress in the community, more participants in social activities such as community activities and volunteering, and less strain on the health system (contributing to shorter waiting lists for elective surgery for example).

The most basic way to examine the importance of health and wellbeing at a national level may be through measurable indicators. The measurable costs of health and wellbeing are often related to aspects of the physical dimension, but it is important to remember that illness in relation to any dimension will impact on the person as a whole and also contribute to lower levels of health and wellbeing for the population.

Optimal health and wellbeing decreases reliance on the health system, and this has economic benefits. Doctors' consultations, medication and other health services cost Australians over \$161 billion in 2014–15. Many of these costs could be saved if all people experienced optimal health and wellbeing. In fact, the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists estimated the economic cost of mental illness

alone to be close to \$100 billion in 2014. Savings due to improved health and wellbeing could be used to promote quality of life in Australia by making more money available for resources such as education, improving infrastructure including housing and transport systems, the development of new industries by confident individuals challenging themselves and trying new things, and providing social security for those experiencing hardship.

When populations are experiencing optimal health and wellbeing, they are more equipped to work productively. This increases **productivity** as individuals are more likely to be engaged with their job and work to the best of their ability. According to the report *The Health of Australia's Workforce* (Medibank

Private 2005), it has been estimated that 'the healthiest Australian employees are almost three times more productive than their colleagues'. Further, 'employees with poor overall health status are far more likely to be absent from work, and are nine times more likely to have sick days, compared to healthy employees'. Optimal health and wellbeing therefore increases the ability of people to work and earn an income, and this in turn increases the economy of the country through higher taxation revenue. Fewer people rely on social security payments as a result of reduced unemployment, further enhancing the economy of the country.

The importance of optimal health and wellbeing from a social perspective is often difficult to measure, but is just as important as the economic benefits.

Optimal health and wellbeing reduces the risk of premature death and the development of illness and disease. As well as improving health indicators and outcomes from a population perspective, improved health and wellbeing serves to reduce levels of stress and anxiety that communities experience as a result of loved ones experiencing premature death or illness. The health system also benefits from optimal health and wellbeing as the number of encounters with the health system (such as doctors' consultations and hospital admissions) reduces, thereby shortening waiting times for those who do require healthcare.

A population experiencing good health and wellbeing is more likely to participate in meaningful employment. Having a healthy and productive workforce assists in reducing the pressure on the workforce as a whole. When

**FIGURE 1.21** The importance of health and wellbeing nationally



**FIGURE 1.22** Good health and wellbeing contributes to productive employment.



fewer people are taking time off work, all people can concentrate on their own jobs. This further decreases stress and other work-related pressures.

Levels of social participation are higher in populations experiencing optimal health and wellbeing. Social participation promotes feelings of belonging and also acts to provide vital resources and services to a society through activities such as volunteering and **civic participation**. Other examples of social participation include involvement in formal activities provided by organised groups such as sport or physical recreation groups, arts or heritage groups, and religious or spiritual groups or associations; and informal activities with friends and families, including social gatherings and the provision of support and care for those in need, such as the sick or immobile.

Optimal health and wellbeing can create a cycle through generations. Parents experiencing good health and wellbeing have an increased capacity to adequately care for and raise their children. As a result, their children are more likely to experience optimal health and wellbeing themselves. This produces future generations who are able to provide for themselves and their families, and contribute to the society and country in which they live.

### 1.5.3 Importance of health and wellbeing as a resource globally

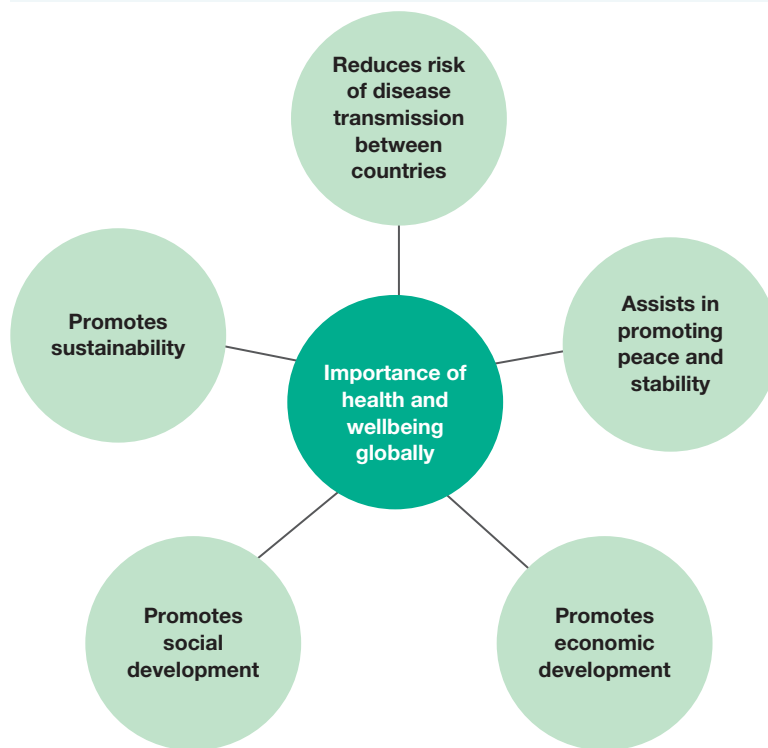
As well as being an important resource for populations within countries, optimal health and wellbeing provides a range of benefits for the population on a global scale as shown in figure 1.23.

Optimal health and wellbeing can reduce the risk of infectious or communicable diseases spreading between countries. Infectious or **communicable diseases** refer to diseases that are passed from one person to another from either direct or indirect contact:

- direct contact — through touch (e.g. chicken pox), sexual intercourse (e.g. syphilis, HIV), saliva and droplets from coughing (e.g. influenza), and through human waste such as faecal or oral transmission (e.g. hepatitis A)
- indirect contact — through water (e.g. cholera), food (e.g. E. coli), blood (e.g. hepatitis B and HIV), and **vectors** such as mosquitoes (e.g. malaria).

Given favourable conditions, these diseases can spread quickly from person to person and can result in a **pandemic**, where the disease spreads across large geographical regions and affects a high proportion of the population in a relatively short period of time. Pandemics can have serious consequences for the global population including significant rates of illness and premature death, reduced workforce participation and productivity, the shutdown of non-essential services, disruptions to travel and the transport of goods, food shortages, school closures, and the breakdown of law and order. In times of crisis such as in the event of a pandemic, people are often unable to go about their daily activities and instead shift their focus to survival, which impacts on all aspects of life.

**FIGURE 1.23** The importance of health and wellbeing as a resource globally





With globalisation and the increase in affordable transportation, these diseases have the potential to spread more quickly today. As a result, reducing infections and maintaining good health and wellbeing are increasingly important.

Populations experiencing good health and wellbeing contribute to world peace and security. When populations are healthy, they are more likely to be able to work for the benefit of themselves, their country and the planet. They can be productive and have an increased ability to access the resources they require for a decent standard of living such as employment, education, food, water, shelter and healthcare. When populations are not in a positive state of health and wellbeing, they may resort to extreme measures in an attempt to access these resources to ensure their survival. This can contribute to conflict on a national and international level.

Optimal health and wellbeing on a global scale can also promote sustainability. When people have their needs met and feel good about themselves, they are more likely to live their lives in a sustainable manner. They can work productively and provide for their families. The government will generate a greater amount of taxation revenue which can be used to promote sustainable energy, water and agricultural systems.

Children are often the most vulnerable to poor health and wellbeing. When health and wellbeing is poor, children cannot focus on education or thrive in a manner that will promote social and economic development and sustainability in the future.

Good health and wellbeing is essential for optimal trade between countries. Healthy populations are better equipped to produce goods and services that can be traded on the global market. Global trade is increasingly important for the economic development of many countries. It generates revenue that helps the governments of trading countries to provide their populations with essential resources and services such as education, public housing, healthcare and infrastructure. Poor health and wellbeing can therefore have significant impacts on the social and economic development of a country, especially on low-income countries that often do not have the economic or social resources to deal with the negative consequences of poor health and wellbeing.

**FIGURE 1.24** Good health and wellbeing improves access to education for children around the world.



## 1.5 Activities

### Test your knowledge

1. Discuss ways that optimal health and wellbeing can act as a resource:
  - (a) individually
  - (b) nationally
  - (c) globally.
2. Explain how optimal health and wellbeing can create a positive cycle:
  - (a) for individuals
  - (b) through generations.

### Apply your knowledge

3. Explain why promoting good health and wellbeing is a priority for many governments.
4. Discuss what each of the following quotes is saying about health and wellbeing as a resource.
  - (a) A man too busy to take care of his health is like a mechanic too busy to take care of his tools — Spanish proverb.
  - (b) It is health that is real wealth and not pieces of gold and silver — Mahatma Gandhi

## study on

Unit 3 > AOS 1 > Topic 1 > Concept 8

Optimal health and wellbeing as a resource Summary screens and practice questions

# 1.6 Prerequisites for health — part 1

**KEY CONCEPT** Understanding the prerequisites for health — peace, shelter, education and food

In 1986, the World Health Organization held an international health conference in Ottawa, Canada. One of the key objectives of this meeting was to provide guidance to governments and other groups on how to improve the health and wellbeing of all people worldwide. The resulting document is referred to as the Ottawa Charter.

The Ottawa Charter identifies specific prerequisites or basic conditions and resources that must be available if any gains in health and wellbeing are to occur. Identifying prerequisites assists governments and other groups that work towards providing all people with the basic necessities for a decent life. The prerequisites are shown in figure 1.25.

Many of these prerequisites impact each other, so individuals and communities who have access to one of them often experience an increased ability to access the others. For example, a peaceful society is more conducive to attending school to receive an education. An education increases the ability to gain meaningful employment and earn an income. An income can be used to purchase shelter and food.

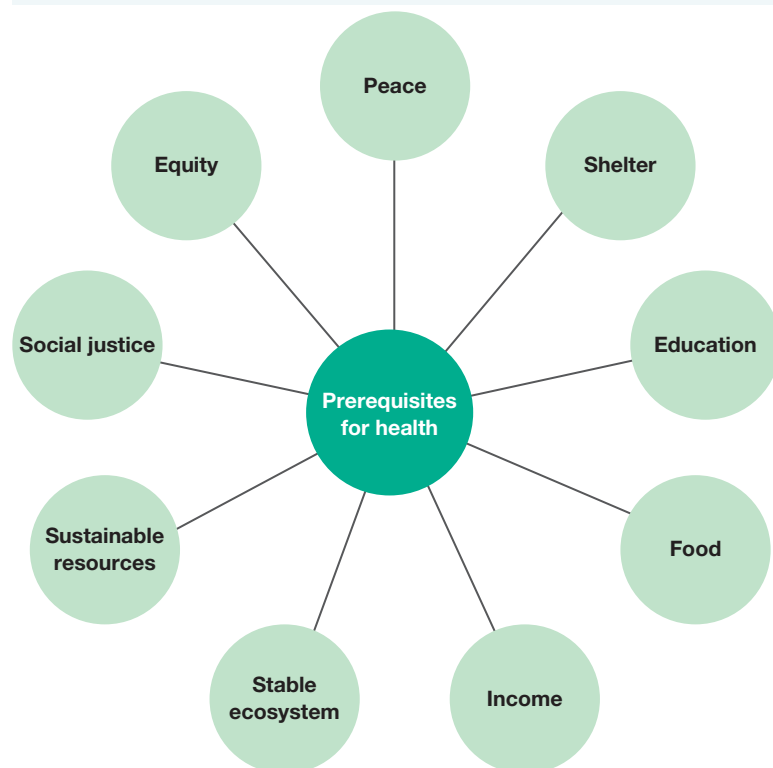
The prerequisites can impact health and wellbeing in countless ways, and it is not possible to address all impacts in this section. As a result, a selection of impacts will be explored for each prerequisite.

## 1.6.1 Peace

Peace can be defined as the absence of conflict. When a community or country is experiencing peace, there is a decreased risk of premature death, serious injury, disability and other adverse effects that are usually associated with conflict. Peace therefore promotes the physical health and wellbeing of all people.

From an individual perspective, the risk of injury and premature death associated with conflict decreases during times of peace, and the accompanying reduction in levels of stress and anxiety

**FIGURE 1.25** The prerequisites for health under the Ottawa Charter



can enhance mental health and wellbeing. A peaceful environment increases the ability of people to move freely around their community and go about their daily activities such as working, accessing food, going to school and socialising. This enhances their choices, allows them to pursue their purpose in life and further promotes health and wellbeing.

Peace promotes the preservation of infrastructure including roads and other transport systems, agriculture, water and electricity systems, healthcare facilities, schools and places of employment — all of which are often destroyed during conflict.

Access to food and water lowers the risk of disease, and access to infrastructure provides opportunities for socialisation and leisure activities, reducing levels of stress and anxiety, allowing people to feel secure and safe, and promoting feelings of belonging in the community. As a result, health and wellbeing are promoted.

A peaceful country increases the capacity of governments to provide resources and services that promote health and wellbeing. As resources are not being used to sustain a war effort, they can be invested in governance, education, healthcare, trade development, social security and infrastructure, all of which promote social and economic development which in turn promotes optimal health and wellbeing.

**FIGURE 1.26** Infrastructure, including transport systems, are more likely to be preserved during times of peace.



## 1.6.2 Shelter

Shelter describes a structure that provides protection from the outside environment. Adequate shelter is a basic human right and provides a number of benefits to health and wellbeing. These include protection from the elements, privacy, safety and security, reduced risk of disease, reduced stress and anxiety, ability to focus on employment or education, and more time to pursue a purposeful and meaningful life.

Many geographical regions experience extreme weather events which contribute to hundreds of thousands of deaths each year. Adequate shelter can provide protection from such occurrences and assist in reducing levels of stress and anxiety as exposure to extreme weather is decreased.

**FIGURE 1.27** Adequate shelter is a basic human requirement yet many people do not have access to it.





Protection from adverse weather can promote adequate sleep, which in turn can increase the ability to pursue employment and education in the waking hours. Adequate sleep also increases the capacity of individuals to participate in activities that add value to life, such as socialising and participating in the life of their community. This promotes social health and wellbeing.

Adequate shelter promotes feelings of privacy, safety and security by reducing the ability of others to enter the living space of residents, and this enhances mental wellbeing by reducing stress and anxiety. Inadequate shelter on the other hand is a key contributor to crimes against people, including assault and theft.

Shelter acts to provide protection against the spread of infectious diseases. Diseases such as malaria are spread by mosquitoes, which can easily target people who are not protected by adequate shelter. Children are particularly susceptible to such conditions, which can result in premature death or a reduced ability to gain an education and lead a fulfilling life.

Having adequate shelter also means that people do not have to spend energy and time in searching for a place to sleep and finding protection from the elements. This allows more time to pursue employment and education. Shelter further facilitates education by providing children with a place to study and prepare for school.

Having adequate shelter can provide stability in an individual's life and contribute to a sense of belonging in the community in which they reside. Finally, adequate shelter also often includes other resources that can promote health and wellbeing such as toilet facilities, clean water, electricity and cooking facilities.

### 1.6.3 Education

Education impacts health and wellbeing in numerous ways. Education empowers individuals and increases their ability to earn an income, understand health promotion messages, exhibit healthy behaviours, and find meaning and purpose in life. As a result, educated people often have greater access to the resources required to experience high levels of health and wellbeing.

Education is often a key requirement for obtaining meaningful and well-paid employment that promotes economic development and increases the ability of individuals to afford resources such as food, shelter and healthcare, all of which promote health and wellbeing. Meaningful employment also promotes self-esteem and provides a sense of purpose and meaning in life, which enhances spiritual health and wellbeing.

Educated individuals are more empowered to take control of their lives. Educated women for example are particularly advantaged in relation to having a say in the decisions that affect their lives, such as when and if they get married and whether or not to have a family.

Access to education promotes literacy. Literacy refers to the ability to read and write, and literate individuals are more likely to participate in health promoting behaviours such as eating well, exercising regularly, maintaining social connections and accessing healthcare when required.

### 1.6.4 Food

Adequate food intake is both an essential requirement for life and a basic human right. 'The state in which all persons obtain nutritionally adequate, culturally appropriate, safe food regularly through local non-emergency sources' (VicHealth) is referred to as food security. Food security increases the ability of individuals to consume the required nutrients, which is important for the functioning of the human body. It provides the energy required for individuals to complete daily tasks and reduces the risk of malnutrition. Some of the nutrients in food are important for increasing immunity to disease. With food security, individuals spend less time looking for food and are less likely to experience stress because they know there is food available. This can promote mental health and wellbeing.

Access to appropriate and nutritious food helps to provide adequate levels of energy. Adequate energy increases the capacity of children to attend school and learn. Improved health and wellbeing due to adequate nutrition enables individuals to work and earn an income. This ultimately contributes to the improvement of the economy of a country.



Adequate nutrition can lead to improvements in an individual's intellectual capacities. For example, optimal intake of iodine and polyunsaturated fats promote intellectual functioning. As a result, individuals may develop the intellectual skills required for employment in later life, and the awareness or skills to access knowledge that will help them to understand the importance of health-related factors such as nutrition, hygiene and the symptoms of disease.

Adequate nutrition promotes optimal immune system function. The immune system works

constantly to fight off **pathogens**, thereby helping to prevent illness and promote health and wellbeing. Many pathogens are opportunistic, meaning that they are more likely to infect people who are experiencing reduced immune system function, especially children. As a result, adequate nutrition is a significant protector against premature death and poor health and wellbeing.

In 2014–16 there were more than 700 million people around the world experiencing ongoing food insecurity that hindered their ability to lead a healthy, active life. As a result of the number of people experiencing food insecurity, a significant amount of time and energy is spent trying to acquire food or money to buy food. Consequently, less time is spent on activities that promote health and wellbeing such as attending school or work, or on the pursuit of leisure activities.

**FIGURE 1.28** Food provides the energy that is required for many aspects of life, including physical activity and socialisation.







## 1.6 Activities

### Test your knowledge

1. Identify the nine prerequisites for health according to the World Health Organization.
2. Define 'peace'.
3. Explain what is meant by 'shelter'.
4. In which document were the prerequisites for health identified?
5. What is the purpose of identifying prerequisites for health?

### Apply your knowledge

6. Select the prerequisite from this section that you believe has the greatest impact on health and wellbeing and justify your choice.
7. Explain how peace may promote two dimensions of health and wellbeing.
8. Discuss how education may promote physical and spiritual health and wellbeing.
9. Explain how food can promote social and mental health and wellbeing.
10. Explain how adequate shelter may promote two dimensions of health and wellbeing.
11. Access the **Homelessness** weblink and worksheet in the Resources tab in your eBookPLUS, then complete the worksheet.
12. Access the **Food** weblink and worksheet in the Resources tab in your eBookPLUS, then complete the worksheet.

-  Explore more with this weblink: Homelessness
-  Explore more with this weblink: Food
-  Complete this digital doc: Homelessness worksheet  
Searchlight ID: doc-22677
-  Complete this digital doc: Food worksheet  
Searchlight ID: doc-22678

## 1.7 Prerequisites for health – part 2

**▶ KEY CONCEPT** Understanding the prerequisites for health– income, a stable ecosystem, sustainable resources, social justice and equity

The previous section explored a number of prerequisites for health and wellbeing, including peace, shelter, education and food. This section examines income, a stable ecosystem, sustainable resources, social justice and equity.

### 1.7.1 Income

Income is an underlying factor for many health and wellbeing outcomes. From an individual perspective, income increases the ability to afford resources such as healthcare, recreation, transport and education. From a population perspective, income increases the capacity of governments to provide social services and resources such as public housing, education, and health care; social security; infrastructure; recreation facilities such as parks and gardens; and law and order. All of these resources and services promote health and wellbeing.

Healthcare often requires a patient to make some payment. Having a decent and reliable income allows individuals to more easily afford healthcare such as immunisations, medication, checkups and surgery. As a result, many conditions can be prevented or effectively treated and this promotes physical health and wellbeing.

Having access to money means that people are better able to afford activities that they enjoy such as recreational pursuits and socialising. This can promote the dimensions of health and wellbeing.

Income increases the ability of people to access transport such as bicycles, motor vehicles and public transport. Transport is often required to access a range of resources such as education, employment, recreation, healthcare and food, all of which work to enhance health and wellbeing.

**FIGURE 1.29** A decent and reliable income enables individuals to participate in activities they enjoy, such as golf.



An income increases the capacity of parents to send all of their children to school. Unlike Australia, in many countries it is girls who miss out on an education when financial resources are scarce. Adequate incomes mean that all children have the opportunity to attend school and achieve higher levels of education. Income and education often form a cycle so that those with higher incomes can often afford higher levels of education than those on lower incomes, and higher levels of education increase the ability of individuals to earn higher incomes. Both income and education contribute to improved health and well-being outcomes.

Governments receive income from the taxes paid by individuals and businesses. When average incomes of individuals and businesses are high, the revenue that the government has available to spend on infrastructure and services is also likely to be high. Governments are responsible for providing a range of resources and services that promote health and wellbeing:

- Public housing is an important source of shelter for many individuals, and a government with a high income is better equipped to provide it. Housing provides protection from the elements, provides a sense of safety, and promotes health and wellbeing.
- With an adequate income, governments can provide basic public health and education systems. This promotes the health and wellbeing of all people as those in need are generally prioritised, not just those with the ability to pay.
- Social security relates to benefits provided by government to those in need. Such benefits come in many forms which include food, income, healthcare and housing. The income a government receives directly influences its ability to provide such resources, and in turn influences the level of health and wellbeing experienced among the population.
- Infrastructure such as roads, telecommunications and ports (both air and shipping) promote health and wellbeing by increasing the ability of individuals to receive an education, gain employment, trade their goods and generate an income. Such infrastructure also increases access to other health promoting resources such as education, food, water and sanitation, and health facilities.
- Governments can provide recreation facilities such as public pools, basketball courts, parks and gardens that work to prevent illness. Being physically active promotes physical health and wellbeing by improving fitness and maintaining a healthy body weight. Citizens can socialise in these settings, and this promotes social interaction and social health and wellbeing.
- Governments with adequate income can commit more money to maintaining law and order by providing a police force and judicial system. This assists in ensuring human rights are upheld, which can reduce stress and anxiety and thereby promote mental health and wellbeing.

**FIGURE 1.30** For governments, adequate income allows the provision of services such as public healthcare.





## 1.7.2 A stable ecosystem

An **ecosystem** is a community that consists of all of the living and non-living components of a particular area. The living components include plants, animals and micro-organisms such as bacteria, and the non-living components include weather, rocks, soil and watercourses.

A stable ecosystem occurs when balance is achieved between the environment and the species that live in an environment. Stability indicates that all living things are having their needs for food, water, shelter and reproduction met without causing detrimental effects to the natural environment. Every ecosystem will experience fluctuations in the balance or stability that it experiences, but changes should not be too pronounced to ensure stability is preserved.

As living beings, humans are a part of an ecosystem. We rely on many other components of the environment to survive and experience optimal health and wellbeing. For example:

- Plants and animals are made up of organic matter which is used for food.
- Plants and animals provide opportunities for employment such as the fishing and agriculture industries.
- Predictable weather patterns contribute to effective farming.
- Human shelter is often made from natural materials such as timber and stone.
- Clean water and air are products of the ecosystem in which we live and are vital for human survival.
- Sources of renewable energy such as water, wind and waves are increasingly important as non-renewable resources such as coal and oil reserves decline.
- Natural fibres used for clothing and other goods are derived from the ecosystem.
- Natural environments are often used as a source of relaxation and recreation. This contributes to feelings of connectedness to the natural world, which enhances spiritual health and wellbeing.
- Many substances used to manufacture medicines are sourced from the natural environment.

A balanced ecosystem means that these resources are available for human use and can regenerate as quickly as they are used. An ecosystem that is not balanced can mean that resources are used faster than they can regenerate, which can have significant impacts on human health and wellbeing.

## 1.7.3 Sustainable resources

Sustainability is defined by the United Nations as ‘meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.’ Sustainable resources therefore relate to ensuring that the resources used to promote health and wellbeing in the present are available for future generations, so they too can experience a good quality of life. Resources required for energy production, food and water supply, employment, housing and healthcare are examples of materials that must be sustainable if current standards of health and wellbeing are to be maintained.

Many resources that are currently used for energy production such as oil, gas and coal, can take millions of years to regenerate. So once these resources are used, they are not available for future generations. The transition to sustainable energy production such as wind and solar power will assist in satisfying energy needs into the future, allowing future generations to enjoy uninterrupted access to resources such as heating,

**FIGURE 1.31** A stable ecosystem is required to provide many resources required for human life such as clean water.





cooling, electricity and transport. These resources are often required to engage in activities such as education, employment, sleep, food production and recreation, which all work to promote health and wellbeing. For example, adequate heating and cooling can promote productivity at school and this in turn can promote emotions such as contentment, which enhances emotional health and wellbeing.

Sustainable food and water sources are required for human survival and optimal health and wellbeing. Agriculture currently accounts for over 35 per cent of total land use on Earth and over 70 per cent of total freshwater use. As the population of the world continues to increase, the need for fertile land and fresh water will continue to rise. Sustainable use of land and water is therefore required to ensure that future generations have a reliable food and water supply to prevent disease and enhance health and wellbeing.

Fisheries are another source of food and income for billions of people around the world. Fish populations are decreasing due to overfishing and habitat destruction. If this trend continues, food availability and income generation will be negatively impacted, reducing the ability of many people to achieve optimal health and wellbeing.

Forests and other natural environments provide resources such as timber for building shelter and other structures, clean air for respiration and disease prevention, fibres used for manufacturing and clothing, and substances used for medicine production. Ensuring the sustainability of natural environments is therefore essential to provide these essential resources and promote an adequate standard of living in the future.

### 1.7.4 Social justice

**Social justice** can be defined in a number of ways, but the common underlying theme is equal rights for all, regardless of personal traits such as sex, class and income, ethnicity, religion, age or sexual orientation. Social justice means that all people are treated fairly, including women and girls in both their private and public life. Social justice includes economic justice, which means that poverty and discrimination are targeted to improve the lives of those who may have been the victims of injustice in the past. Social justice includes celebrating diversity and promoting the health and wellbeing of all people.

The Australian government's concept of social justice reflects this understanding, defining a socially just Australia as one in which there is:

- a fair distribution of economic resources
- equal access to essential services such as housing, healthcare and education
- equal rights in civil, legal and industrial affairs
- equal opportunity for participation by all in personal development, community life and decision-making.

**FIGURE 1.32** Wind and solar power are examples of sustainable resources.



When society is just, all people have the same access to resources and opportunities, including:

- formal education
- meaningful employment and fair pay
- adequate shelter
- social security
- food and water
- healthcare
- recreation and leisure activities
- community participation.

The importance of these resources for health and wellbeing have already been discussed. Equality of access to these resources is an issue that continues to impact the lives of billions of people globally. Equal access to these resources ensures that every person has the same opportunity to promote their health and wellbeing, and the outcomes of a person's life are not dictated by factors out of their control such as ethnicity, sex or age.

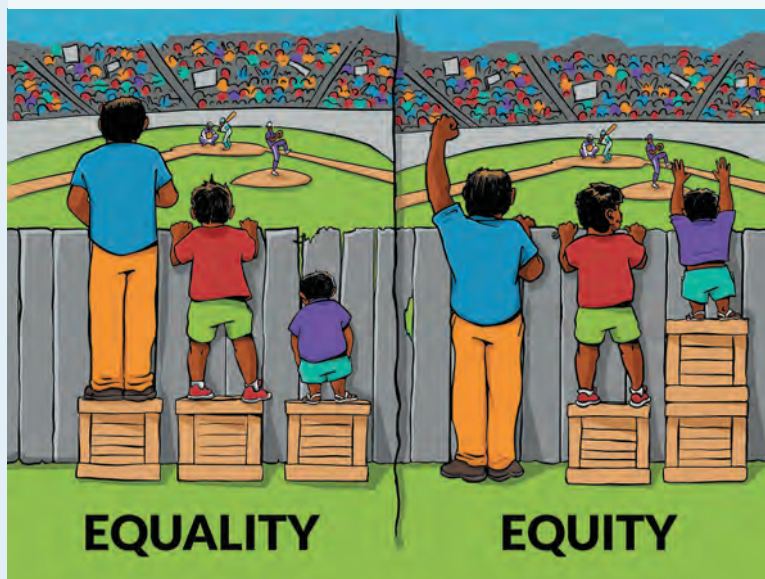
### 1.7.5 Equity

Equity is a concept that relates to fairness and social justice. As already discussed in this section, a range of resources are required to promote health and wellbeing, and all people should have access to the resources they require for a decent standard of living.

In basic terms, equity means that there are minimum levels of income and resources that all people should have access to. All people in the community should have access to fundamental resources, and governments should implement laws and policies that ensure no person is disadvantaged in their ability to access such resources.

#### WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE EQUITY AND EQUALITY?

**FIGURE 1.33** A visual representation of the difference between equality and equity



Equity and equality are two terms that are often used interchangeably and, even though they are related, they are distinct concepts.

- Equity relates to fairness. It is about providing every person with the resources they need to lead a good life and experience a high level of health and wellbeing. Equity includes taking unfair circumstances into account, so that those who are disadvantaged are given the opportunity to participate in life on a level playing field.

- Equality relates to all things being equal. Equality is important when all people experience the same conditions such as income, education and occupation.  
These concepts can be explored further by considering the financial assistance provided by the government (often referred to as social security or social protection) as an example:
  - Equality would be achieved if all people in Australia received the same amount of government assistance regardless of their income, education, home ownership status, level of health and wellbeing experienced including chronic illness or disability, and access to healthcare.
  - Equity is reflected when the amount of government assistance provided takes into consideration a person's specific circumstances such as income and access to resources such as employment. Equity means that those who need the most assistance receive more support.
1. Briefly explain the difference between equity and equality.
  2. Other than social security, discuss an example that illustrates the concepts of equality and equity.
  3. Explain why equity is important for achieving health and wellbeing from a population perspective.

Equity relates to a need for fairness in relation to an acceptable quality and standard of living. It goes beyond enforcing laws, and ensures that all people can share in the benefits of a society. This can work to reduce feelings of segregation and thereby enhance feelings of belonging and promote spiritual health and wellbeing.

Equity promotes health and wellbeing by ensuring access to

- education
- employment
- human rights
- resources such as healthcare.

In order to promote health and wellbeing, equity is a key consideration within and between generations. It also extends to issues of social justice and the sustainable use of resources.

Equity as a concept is fundamental to health and wellbeing. Many individuals and population groups do not experience the same level of health and wellbeing as the rest of the population. Promoting equity improves opportunities for these groups and increases their ability to achieve optimal health and wellbeing.

## 1.7 Activities

### Test your knowledge

1. Briefly explain the following terms:
  - (a) ecosystem
  - (b) sustainability
  - (c) social justice
  - (d) equity.

### Apply your knowledge

2. Explain how generating an income can assist governments in promoting health and wellbeing.
3. Explain how having an adequate income can promote the health and wellbeing of individuals.
4. Explain how a stable ecosystem may promote three dimensions of health and wellbeing.
5. Explain the difference between social justice and equity.
6. Select two prerequisites from subtopic 1.6 and two from subtopic 1.7 and explain how they are interrelated; that is, how they can impact each other.

## study on

Unit 3 > AOS 1 > Topic 1 > Concept 9

Prerequisites for health and wellbeing Summary screens and practice questions

# 1.8 Topic 1 review

## 1.8.1 Key skills

**KEY SKILL** Explain the dynamic and subjective nature of the concepts of health and wellbeing and illness

To provide an adequate explanation of the dynamic and subjective nature of health and wellbeing and illness, an explanation of the concepts (health and wellbeing; illness) is a good starting point.

When explaining any key term, it is important to include all the crucial aspects of the concept. Frequent use of these terms is a good way to gain an understanding of what they mean and when they should be used. When explaining a key term, try to avoid an explanation that is too narrow. For example:

- An explanation of health and wellbeing could acknowledge that there are many aspects or dimensions to health and wellbeing but all relate to the state of a person's existence in relation to the physical, social, emotional, mental and spiritual dimensions and how the person feels about their life.
- An explanation of illness could include that it is a concept related to personal experience of a disease.

The following is an example of an explanation of health and wellbeing:

Health and wellbeing is not just the absence of disease, although this is an aspect of optimal health and wellbeing. Good health and wellbeing is a subjective concept that means different things to different people. Broadly, health and wellbeing relates to a person's physical, social, emotional, mental and spiritual being, and is characterised by an equilibrium in which the individual feels happy, healthy, capable and engaged.

It is also beneficial to be able to explain each dimension of health and wellbeing because these are crucial components of this concept. In addition, it is useful to provide examples that relate to each dimension so that their possible impacts on health and wellbeing can be predicted in a particular scenario. For example, it is useful to know that physical health and wellbeing refers to 'a state of physical well-being in which a person is physically able to perform their daily activities without restrictions'.<sup>1</sup> Physical health and wellbeing includes the physical capacity to perform tasks, physical fitness, body weight, blood pressure and energy levels.<sup>2</sup>

This skill also requires an explanation of the dynamic and subjective nature of health and wellbeing and illness. To satisfy this part of the skill, it is important to acknowledge that health and wellbeing and illness are dynamic and can therefore change quickly. The following example discusses the dynamic nature of these concepts:

The concepts of health and wellbeing and illness are dynamic, which means that they can change quickly and the way in which an individual views them can change over time.<sup>3</sup> Events that can occur quickly and contribute to changes in health and wellbeing and illness include:

- Recovery from disease. A person who is experiencing a high level of illness and poor physical health and wellbeing due to having a disease may access medication or surgery that can cure the condition or relieve symptoms, which reduces pain and increases levels of energy. This improves physical health and wellbeing and contributes to a decrease in illness.
- Forming new relationships. If an individual has few social connections, they may experience poor social health and wellbeing. If they make new friends, this can provide opportunities for social interaction which improves social health and wellbeing.
- Personal achievement. A person who is experiencing poor emotional health and wellbeing may achieve at school, work or in the community, which can promote a sense of pride that then

<sup>1</sup> A definition or explanation of physical health and wellbeing is provided.

<sup>2</sup> A range of factors that relate to physical health and wellbeing are identified.

<sup>3</sup> An introduction of the dynamic nature of the concepts is provided including an understanding of the term 'dynamic'.



enhances emotional health and wellbeing. Personal achievement can also promote self-esteem, which is an aspect of mental health and wellbeing.

- Community participation. A person experiencing poor spiritual health and wellbeing may become involved in community activities which can promote a sense of belonging, and this can then enhance spiritual health and wellbeing.<sup>4</sup>

Similarly, incidents such as infection, conflict, the loss of a loved one, social isolation and sadness can occur rapidly and cause negative impacts on the dimensions of health and wellbeing and illness.

The way an individual views health and wellbeing and illness is also dynamic and can change throughout life as a result of a range of factors such as age, disease, living conditions, employment and levels of energy. This also reflects the subjective nature of these concepts.<sup>5</sup>

An example of an explanation of the subjective nature of these concepts could be:

The concepts of health and wellbeing and illness are subjective which means they mean different things to different people.<sup>6</sup>

For example, a student may view health and wellbeing as a concept related to their ability to complete school tasks and maintain social connections. Whereas a parent may view health and wellbeing as a concept related to their ability to provide for their family and run an efficient household.<sup>7</sup>

An individual with a high threshold for pain may not view illness as related to the presence of disease, but rather an inability to function normally, whereas a person with a low threshold for pain may view illness as the presence of any disease.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Specific examples of how health and wellbeing and illness can change quickly are provided.

<sup>5</sup> The fact that an individual's view of health and wellbeing and illness can change over time is outlined.

<sup>6</sup> An introduction to the subjective nature of the concepts is provided including an understanding of the term 'subjective'.

<sup>7</sup> Specific examples of the subjective nature of health and wellbeing are provided.

<sup>8</sup> Specific examples of the subjective nature of illness are provided.

### Practise the key skill

1. Explain what is meant by the terms 'dynamic' and 'subjective'.
2. Provide three examples of characteristics associated with optimal emotional health and wellbeing.
3. Explain the subjective nature of health and wellbeing.
4. Explain the dynamic nature of the concept of illness.

**KEY SKILL** Describe interrelationships between dimensions of health and wellbeing

In order to master this key skill, it is important to be able to explain each dimension of health and wellbeing (physical, social, emotional, mental and spiritual) and to be able to identify examples of characteristics that relate to each. A useful approach is to practise identifying the dimensions of health and wellbeing in case studies or in examples drawn from personal experience.

When describing the interrelationships between the dimensions of health and wellbeing, it might be necessary to describe the possible effects on health and wellbeing in a scenario or context that is totally unfamiliar. Again, practising identifying possible effects on health and wellbeing can be beneficial. Start by thinking of something (a set of circumstances such as relationship breakdown, illness or stress) that could affect one of the dimensions and then brainstorm ways that the dimensions of health and wellbeing could be affected by it. When doing this, remember that all five dimensions of health and wellbeing will be affected including the dimension where the initial effect occurred. For example, a condition such as rheumatoid arthritis (which relates to physical health and wellbeing) will lead to other impacts on physical health and wellbeing (such as reduced fitness) as well as impacting on social, emotional, mental and spiritual health and wellbeing.

In the following scenario, Josie has just broken up with her boyfriend of six months and is feeling upset and anxious. During the course of the relationship, Josie had begun to associate with her boyfriend's friends. She now feels that she has neglected her own friends and that it may be difficult to re-establish links with them.

The following response explains how Josie's breakup may have affected her health and wellbeing.<sup>9</sup>

As Josie is feeling upset and anxious, she may not be eating properly or exercising. This may affect her fitness levels and her body weight (an aspect of physical health and wellbeing).<sup>10</sup> She is upset and anxious (mental health and wellbeing). She may experience emotions such as grief for her relationship and learn how to recognise this emotion (emotional health and wellbeing). Her friendship circle has been thrown into turmoil (social health and wellbeing) and she may feel that she no longer belongs to a social group (spiritual health and wellbeing).<sup>11</sup>

9 If the question doesn't specify, try to cover a range of dimensions of health and wellbeing.

10 Link the example to the dimension of health and wellbeing.

11 The other four dimensions of health and wellbeing are also addressed.

### Practise the key skill

5. Explain how having chicken pox could affect the dimensions of health and wellbeing.
6. Explain how experiencing depression may affect social and spiritual health and wellbeing.
7. Discuss how regular exercise could influence three dimensions of health and wellbeing.
8. Explain how leaving school at the end of year 10 to start an apprenticeship could affect health and wellbeing.

**KEY SKILL** Explain the individual and collective importance of health and wellbeing as a resource

This skill requires links to be made between good health and wellbeing, and positive outcomes for both individuals and groups.

The first step in developing this skill is understanding aspects of optimal health and wellbeing in relation to each dimension. For example, optimal mental health and wellbeing includes:

- low levels of stress
- high self-esteem
- positive thought patterns
- high levels of confidence.

Once aspects of optimal health and wellbeing are known, links can be made between each aspect and benefits for individuals or groups. For example:

- Low levels of stress allow individuals to focus on activities that improve their life such as studying, working or socialising.
- Low levels of stress also improve immune system function and promote physical health and wellbeing by decreasing the risk of contracting infectious diseases. This decreases the amount of money that must be spent on healthcare including doctor's consultations and medication.
- High self-esteem encourages people to do their best in all aspects of their life, including work. This can contribute to higher performance at work and a higher income. Income is a resource that can be used for healthcare, food, clothing, shelter and socialising, which all enhance quality of life.
- Positive thought patterns reduce the risk of developing mental illnesses such as depression. This decreases the economic costs to the community of treating these diseases.
- Confidence contributes to individuals challenging themselves and trying new things. This can assist in developing new industries which can contribute to economic growth on both personal and national levels.

It is important to practise making links between each dimension of health and wellbeing and benefits for both individuals and populations because a range of possible links exist. Consider the following example where the importance of optimal health and wellbeing is discussed in relation to individuals.

Optimal physical health and wellbeing means that a person is less likely to experience an infectious or chronic condition.<sup>12</sup> With less illness, individuals are more equipped to work and earn an income.<sup>13</sup> This income can then be used to provide resources such as food, shelter, clothing and adequate healthcare, which can further promote health and wellbeing by

12 An aspect of optimal health and wellbeing is identified.

13 A link is made between the aspect of health and wellbeing and a benefit for the individual.

reducing levels of stress (mental health and wellbeing), provide adequate levels of energy for socialising (physical and social health and wellbeing), give the individual a sense of purpose in life (spiritual health and wellbeing), and assist in experiencing positive emotions such as satisfaction (emotional health and wellbeing).<sup>14</sup>

14 Specific links to aspects of improved quality of life and increased health and wellbeing are made.

### Practise the key skill

9. Explain how optimal social health and wellbeing can be a resource for individuals and communities.
10. Explain how spiritual health and wellbeing can be a resource nationally.

**KEY SKILL** Describe global benefits of the pursuit of optimal health and wellbeing

To demonstrate this skill, benefits of optimal health and wellbeing on a global scale must be understood.

Although the initial focus of a response may be on individuals, the benefit to large numbers of individuals around the world experiencing optimal health and wellbeing must be addressed in order to satisfy this skill. In this sense, the focus shifts from an individual perspective to a global context. For example, to explain the global benefits of reduced rates of communicable diseases, a response may reflect the following:

Reduced rates of communicable diseases such as malaria mean that fewer people experience the symptoms associated with this condition and therefore fewer people will die as a result.<sup>15</sup> With people in better physical health and wellbeing, they have an increased capacity to work and to be productive members of society. With more people being productive, a greater amount of resources such as food and shelter can be provided to meet the needs of the community.<sup>16</sup> This works to decrease conflict between countries as more people are able to access the resources they need for a decent standard of living, and this increases their ability to lead lives they value and promotes health and wellbeing.<sup>17</sup>

15 An example of health and wellbeing in a global context is identified.

16 Links are established between the example of health and wellbeing and the benefits for individuals and communities

17 Benefits of optimal health and wellbeing on a global scale are identified.

### Practise the key skill

11. Explain how optimal health and wellbeing can promote economic development globally.
12. Besides economic development, outline two global benefits of optimal health and wellbeing.

**KEY SKILL** Identify the WHO's prerequisites for health and explain their links to improved health outcomes

The first step to achieving this skill is to be able to recall the nine prerequisites for health as identified by the World Health Organization:

- peace
- shelter
- education
- food
- income
- a stable ecosystem
- sustainable resources
- social justice
- equity.

The use of **mnemonics** or acronyms can be used to assist in remembering such lists. For example:

- **P**eople **s**hould **e**at **f**ood, **i**ncluding **s**ome **s**ustainable **s**alad, **e**njoyably
- **P**eace **S**helter **E**ducation **F**ood **I**ncome **S**table **S**ustainable **S**ocial **E**quity

Although knowledge of the prerequisites is still required, remembering this mnemonic can assist in recalling the first letter of each one.

Once the prerequisites can be identified, links must be made from each one to improved health and well-being outcomes. In order to make such links, an understanding of each prerequisite is essential so possible impacts on health and wellbeing can be discussed. For example, **peace**<sup>18</sup> means that **infrastructure is less likely to be destroyed**.<sup>19</sup> **This increases the capacity of individuals to access resources such as water. Water assists in promoting physical health and wellbeing by keeping people hydrated.**<sup>20</sup>

18 One of the prerequisites is identified.

19 An impact of the prerequisite is stated.

20 A specific link to improved health and wellbeing is made.

### Practise the key skill

13. Create a mnemonic to assist in recalling the names of the nine prerequisites identified in the Ottawa Charter.
14. Explain how each of the following can promote health and wellbeing:
  - (a) income
  - (b) a stable ecosystem
  - (c) equity.



## 1.8.2 Topic summary

- Health and wellbeing is a concept that refers to the state of an individual's physical, social, emotional, mental and spiritual existence and is characterised by an equilibrium in which the individual feels happy, healthy, capable and engaged.
- Health and wellbeing is a dynamic concept which means it can change regularly and/or quickly.
- Health and wellbeing is viewed in many different ways and is therefore said to be subjective.
- A range of factors influence how an individual views health and wellbeing including age, fitness, body weight, social networks, income, occupation, education and culture.
- Indigenous Australians place significant importance on the land and their ancestry in relation to their health and wellbeing.
- The five dimensions of health and wellbeing are physical, social, emotional, mental and spiritual.
- Physical health and wellbeing relates to the functioning of the body and its systems; it includes the physical capacity to perform daily activities or tasks. Factors that relate to physical health and wellbeing include body weight, fitness, energy levels and the absence or presence of disease or illness.
- Social health and wellbeing is the ability to form meaningful and satisfying relationships with others and the ability to manage or adapt appropriately to different social situations.
- Emotional health and wellbeing is defined as the ability to recognise, understand and effectively manage and express emotions as well as the ability to display resilience.
- Mental health and wellbeing relates to the state of a person's mind or brain and the ability to think and process information. Optimal mental health and wellbeing enables an individual to positively form opinions, make decisions and use logic. Mental health and wellbeing relates to the current state of the mind, the nature of the feelings experienced and how a person feels about themselves.
- Spiritual health and wellbeing relates to ideas, beliefs, values and ethics that arise in the minds and conscience of human beings. It includes the concepts of hope, peace, a guiding sense of meaning or value, and reflection on a person's place in the world. Spiritual health and wellbeing can also relate to organised religion, a higher power and prayer, values, a sense of purpose in life, connection or belonging.
- The five dimensions of health and wellbeing are interrelated; that is, they all affect each other.
- Optimal health and wellbeing is a resource for individuals, countries and the global population.
- For individuals, optimal health and wellbeing reduces illness and increases the capacity for people to work towards what they want out of life such as employment, socialising and caring for others.
- For countries, optimal health and wellbeing reduces health-related expenditure, increases productivity and economic development, and promotes civic participation.
- Globally, optimal health and wellbeing promotes economic and social development and reduces the risk of conflict.
- The WHO identifies nine prerequisites that each have a range of effects on health: peace, shelter, education, food, income, a stable ecosystem, sustainable resources, social justice and equity.
- Peace reduces the risk of premature death and injury and increases the ability of people to work, attend school and spend time with loved ones.
- Adequate shelter provides protection from the elements, but also provides a safe place for people to spend their time and pursue activities, such as study, that promote health and wellbeing.
- Education increases the ability to earn an income and be a productive member of society. Educated individuals are more likely to experience high levels of health and wellbeing.
- Food is vital for proper human functioning. Having access to a reliable food supply also reduces stress and allows more time to pursue activities such as study and work.
- Income allows individuals to purchase goods that promote health and wellbeing such as food, healthcare and adequate shelter.

- A stable ecosystem means that resources such as food and water are available for human use and can regenerate as quickly as they are used. An ecosystem that is not balanced can mean that resources are used faster than they can regenerate, which can have significant impacts on human health and wellbeing.
- Sustainable resources mean that the resources used to promote health and wellbeing in the present are available for future generations, so they too can experience a good quality of life.
- Social justice relates to equal rights for all, regardless of personal traits such as sex, class and income, ethnicity, religion, age or sexual orientation.
- Equity relates to fairness and means that there are minimum levels of income and resources that all people should have access to.

### 1.8.3 Exam preparation

#### Question 1

- (a) Briefly explain what is meant by spiritual health and wellbeing. **(2 marks)**
- (b) Briefly describe the difference between mental and emotional health and wellbeing. **(2 marks)**

#### Question 2

Darren was recently diagnosed with anxiety (a mental illness). Explain how Darren's condition may impact three dimensions of health and wellbeing. **(3 marks)**



#### Question 3

Briefly explain why shelter and sustainable resources are important for improved health outcomes. **(4 marks)**

#### Question 4

Outline two benefits of optimal health and wellbeing as a resource globally. **(2 marks)**

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