



STUDENT NAME: ANITA BAZZONI CRUZ (2326502)

MODULE: LIVING WELL: A LIFE-COURSE APPROACH TO
HEALTH AND WELLBEING (BMNS4014)



Living well - A Life course approach to Health & Wellbeing

Content:

- Definition of health and well-being
- The importance of promoting health and well-being through different life stages
- Importance of a life-course approach to health and well-being

Definition of Health and well-being

According to the World Health Organization (1948), health is “a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity”.

Health is interpreted differently by individuals and perspectives, making it unrealistic to define a single concept that fits all contexts (Van Druten et al. (2022).

Well-being is determined by how individuals perceive their health (Cambridge University Press, 2019). It is personal experience that cannot be assessed objectively by external groups, including healthcare professionals.(Simons and Baldwin, 2021).

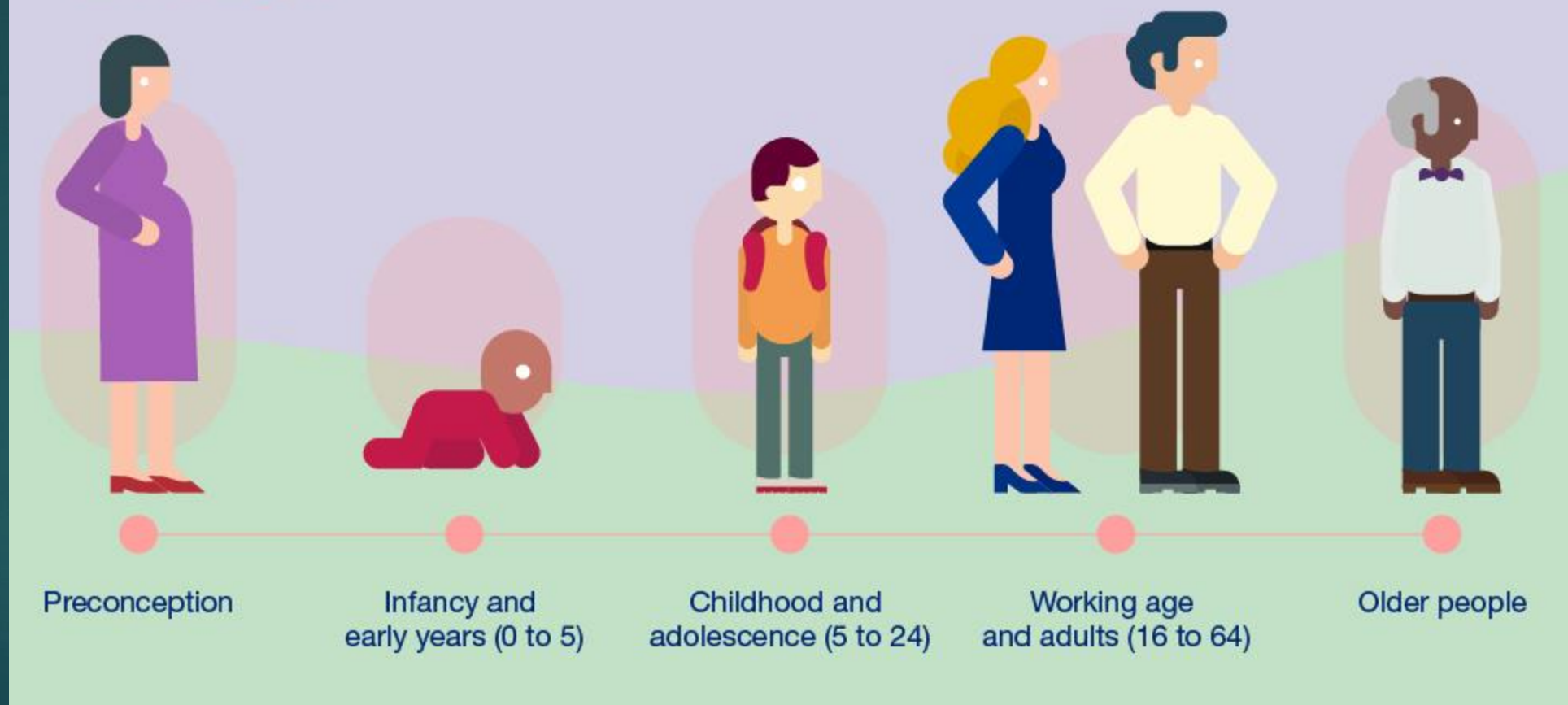
The importance of promoting health and well-being through different life stages

Health and well-being are dynamic elements that change as we move through different stages of life, including childhood, adolescence, adulthood, and old age. Each transition can lead to significant transformations (Montgomery et al., 2023).

Numerous studies highlight the importance of examining health and risk factors at different stages of life. This approach encourages a deeper understanding of how these factors affect individuals over time, allowing us to develop personalised plans to enhance health and well-being. (Zuber et al, 2023).

The life course approach

Life stages



Key principles of a life course approach:

- Early Life & Childhood: The foundation for lifelong health (nutrition, development, education)
- Adolescence & Young Adulthood: Healthy behaviours, mental well-being, and lifestyle choices
- Adulthood & Aging: Managing chronic diseases, social engagement, active lifestyle
- Elderly Well-being: Maintaining independence, dignity, and quality of life

How to promote well-being:

- Physical Health: Exercise, nutrition, preventive care
- Mental & Emotional Well-being: Stress management, mental health care
- Social Health: Community, relationships, and social support
- Environmental Factors: Safe living conditions, clean air, access to healthcare

The importance of a life course approach to health and well-being

A life course approach to health and well-being shows how biological, behavioural, and social factors interact throughout an individual's lifetime to impact health outcomes. This perspective confirms that health is shaped significantly by experiences and exposures from before conception through old age, rather than being solely determined by genetics or individual choices. (Smith et al., 2024). This approach shows that taking action early during critical periods is important for lowering the risk of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) in the future and preventing these diseases from being passed down through generations (Jacob, 2022).

While infectious diseases were once the main concern, lifestyle-related chronic diseases have become more common and are now the leading cause of death worldwide (Skybova et al., 2021). NCDs account for 41 million deaths annually, or 74% of global deaths. These diseases are long-lasting and evolve slowly, significantly impacting patients' quality of life and requiring ongoing treatment (López-Tenorio et al., 2024).

Positive and negative influences across the life course

Protective factors:

- having a healthy and balanced diet
- an environment that enables physical activity
- good educational attainment
- being in stable employment with a good income
- living in good quality housing
- having networks of support including friends and family



Risk factors:

- smoking
- adverse childhood experiences
- crime and violence
- drug and alcohol misuse
- poor educational attainment
- poor mental health



The physical and mental health of an individual, along with their overall well-being, is shaped by many factors during their lifetime. These factors impact lifestyle choices, including living conditions, physical activity, stress, diet, and social interactions (Public Health England, 2019).

The influence of these factors can affect individuals for a long time (Prabakar, 2024).

Understanding these elements helps us recognise the impact of health on both individuals and society. Different strategies, including prevention, health promotion, and policy changes, are essential for addressing inequalities and building resilience (Adams, 2024).

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A pair of hands holds a small, square chalkboard with a light-colored wooden frame. The chalkboard has a black surface with the words "ANY" and "questions?" written in white chalk. The word "ANY" is in all caps and a larger font, while "questions?" is in a smaller, lowercase font. The background is a solid, clear blue sky.

ANY
questions?

Thank you

