



ECAS7003 Behaviour Change in Context

SESSION ONE LECTURE ONE: THE BIOPSYCHOSOCIAL
MODEL OF HUMAN BEHAVIOUR AND HEALTH &
WELLBEING IN THE 21ST CENTURY

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Session outline

- ▶ Understand the biopsychosocial approach to understanding human behaviour
- ▶ Recognise the key challenges in 21st Century society
- ▶ Explore definitions of health, quality of life and well-being

What challenges are faced in today's world?

- ▶ Climate change
- ▶ Care of the elderly
- ▶ Immigration
- ▶ Unemployment
- ▶ Cyber terrorism
- ▶ War
- ▶ Genetic engineering
- ▶ COVID
- ▶ Individual challenges?
- ▶ Local challenges?
- ▶ Welsh challenges?
- ▶ UK challenges?
- ▶ Global challenges?

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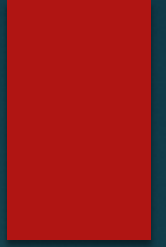
Key Challenges

- ▶ Safety & Security
- ▶ Poverty & Inequality
- ▶ Health & Welfare

Human Behaviour and the Environment

- ▶ Environments as Ecosystems – a community of living organisms and non-living components that interact to form a system (Massey, 2015).
- ▶ Dependence on environment for basic resources for life
 - ▶ Clean water
 - ▶ Nutritious food

Human Behaviour and the Environment



- ▶ WHO (2014): major environmental factors requiring action:
 - ▶ Air quality
 - ▶ Surface and ground water quality
 - ▶ Toxic substances and hazardous waste
 - ▶ Homes and communities
 - ▶ Infrastructure and surveillance
 - ▶ Global environmental health

Environment & Sustainability



- Human Development Versus Environmental resources
- Economic sustainability versus environmental sustainability

= ethical, legal and social debates



How can the application of
Psychology help tackle
these issues?

Psychology as a “Social Science”

“Social science is about evidence, but not only this. It is also about ideas, insight, understanding and, crucially, debate when there are no simple solutions to our collective private troubles. As a community [of social scientists] we should not be over defensive but it behoves us to demonstrate our value”

Howard Newby, 2015

Psychology as a “Social Science”

- ▶ “Private troubles” into “Public Issues”
- ▶ Empirical enquiry
 - ▶ Evidence for need for public reform
 - ▶ Recognition that causes of “private troubles” often sat beyond the Individual
- ▶ An important component of “public discourse”



Understanding health & health inequality

Defining Health & Wellbeing

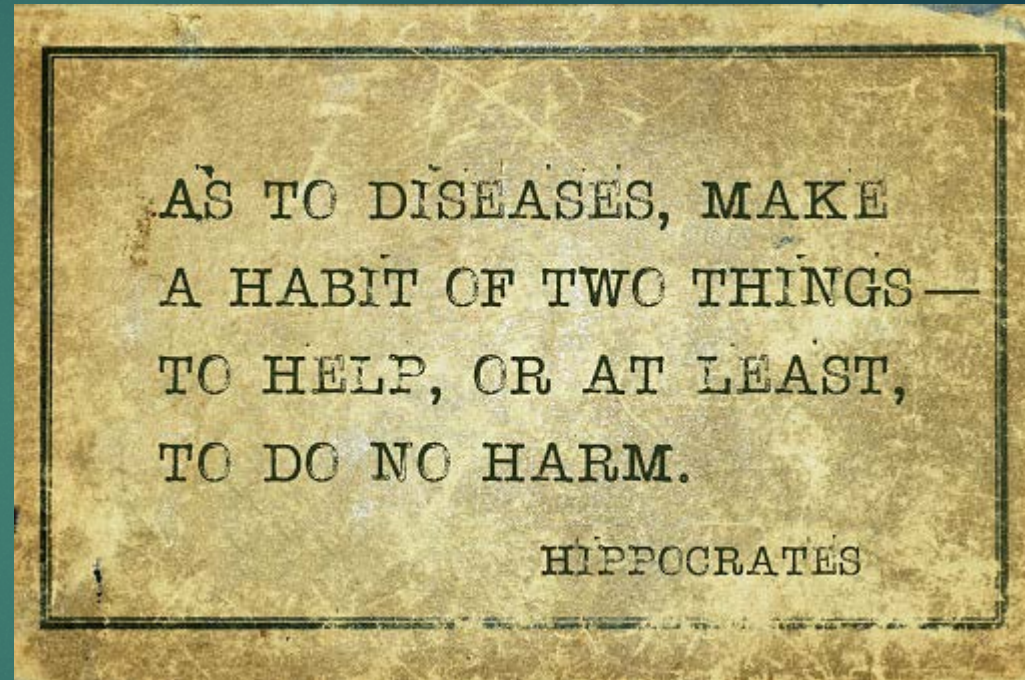
- ▶ Professional versus lay perspectives
- ▶ “Health” versus “Illness”
- ▶ “Health” versus “Wellbeing”
- ▶ “Quality of life”

Changing perspectives

- ▶ Traditional definitions – biopsychosocial focus
 - ▶ Sociological
 - ▶ Environmental
 - ▶ Biological
 - ▶ Cultural
- ▶ Emphasis on the individual in an environment and the “agents of disease” (Wilson et al., 2015)

Changing perspectives

- ▶ Hippocrates – 400BC
 - ▶ Health as the balance of the four humours



Changing perspectives

- ▶ Chinese definitions
 - ▶ Harmony between man and environment
 - ▶ TAI CHI



Changing perspectives

- ▶ Native American culture
 - ▶ Holistic balance of spiritual, cultural and social environments



Changing perspectives

- ▶ Buddhism/Hinduism
 - ▶ Necessity for man to living in harmony and undertake behaviours conducive to a fruitful life



Changing Perspectives: The Medical Model

- ▶ Dominant approach of early 20th century
- ▶ Health as the absence of disease
- ▶ All diseases having specific cause
- ▶ Focus on identification, treatment and prevention of all diseases



World Health Organisation (1984)

- ▶ Health as “a complete state of physical, mental and social well-being, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity”
- ▶ Health as a basic human right
- ▶ Equity and empowerment central



Changing Perspectives: Public Health & Health Promotion

- ▶ Shift to understanding the wider factors that influence health
- ▶ A return to a biopsychosocial approach
 - ▶ Sociological
 - ▶ Biological
 - ▶ Genetic
 - ▶ Psychological
- ▶ Recognition of wellbeing rather than disease

Changing Perspectives: Public Health & Health Promotion

Individual Approaches:

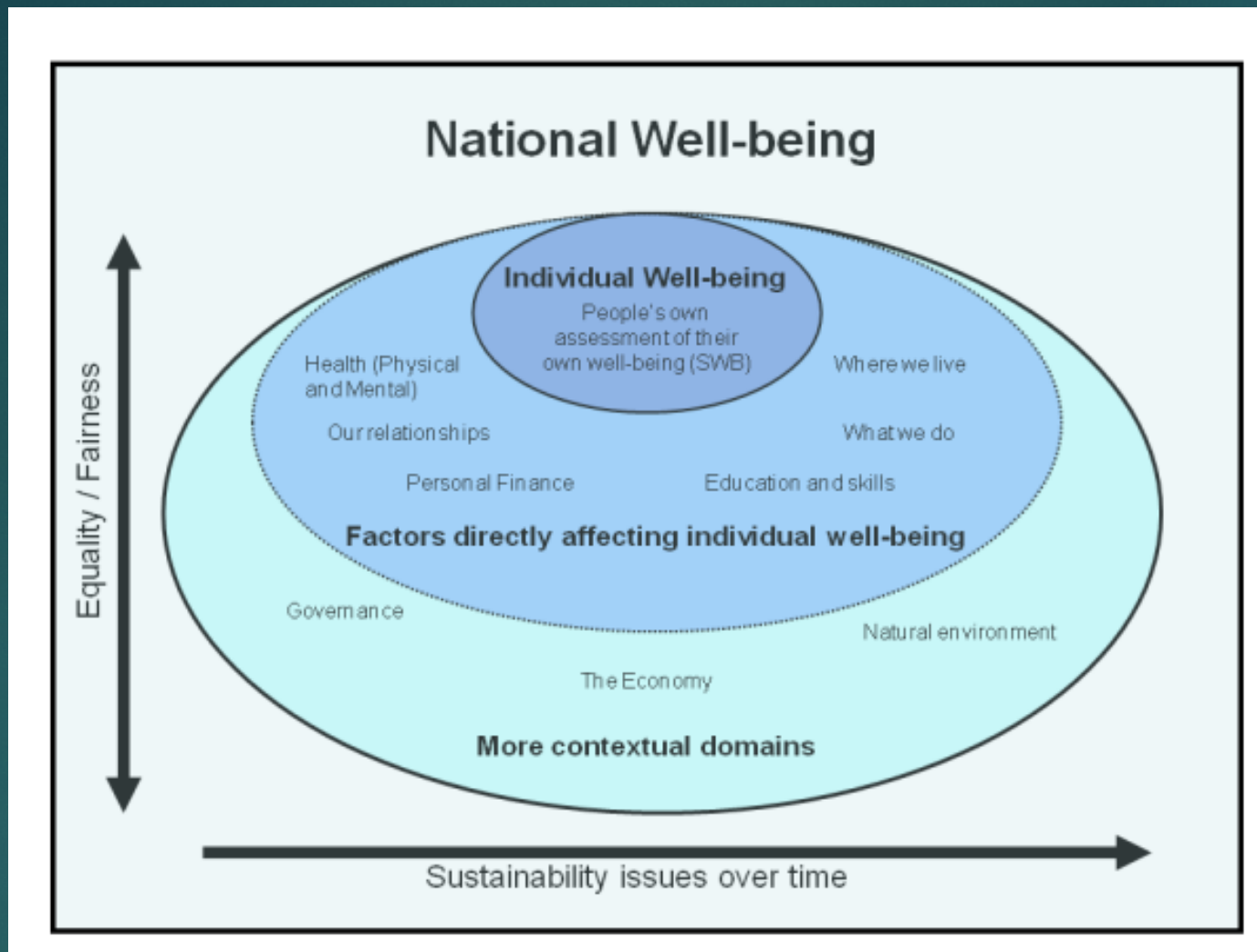
- ▶ Individuals seen as responsible for their own health
- ▶ Individuals need more active support to make better decisions about their health
- ▶ Individuals should be supported to change their behaviours and make healthier choices

Public Health & Health Improvement

Mabhala (2012): Principles and values underpinning health improvement

- ▶ Social justice
- ▶ Equality
- ▶ Fairness
- ▶ Intergration
- ▶ Partnership & Cooperation

Recognition that tackling the wider determinants of health inequalities needs joint working between health and social policy makers



Source: Beaumont (2011), cited in Wilson et al. (2015)

Public Health

Please watch the following two videos:
in the synchronous session that follows we will discuss:

What are some of the common public concerns/health challenges on a global scale?

Great short introduction to Public Health on Moodle

- ▶ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oy1CAMObRzc>

TED X Talk on Moodle

- ▶ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-Rm4QwsWEZM>

Conclusions

- ▶ We need to understand human behaviour in the context of the environmental, social, and political systems in which they occur
- ▶ Health is a contested topic interpreted and defined in many different ways
- ▶ Health is often subjectively defined by the individual in contrast to more objective definitions of disease/absence
- ▶ Recognition that health is more than the mere absence of disease – seen within a biopsychosocial framework with implications for health improvement and health promotion