

Health and Human Development
Teach Yourself Series
Topic 1: What is Human Development?

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What is Human Development?

The concept of human development varies significantly between Units 1 and 2 compared with Unit 4. In Units 1 and 2, human development is based on the individual, the way in which they develop at an orderly and predictable rate and how this development impacts upon the dimensions of health. In Unit 4, the focus is entirely different. The concept of human development is based on the resources and skills necessary to effectively and proactively engage in life, such as making decisions and participating in community. This is a more holistic approach to human development and the focus is shifting away from the individual to a more community based concept with the focus on achieving sustainability.

Defining Human Development

As it appears in Unit 1

In Unit 1 and 2, the concept of human development is based on individual human development, that is, as involving a series of orderly and predictable changes, which can be classified as physical, social, emotional and intellectual. Over the lifespan, individuals accumulate life experiences that affect both their health and individual human development. Individual human development is a process which continues throughout the lifespan, beginning with birth and ending with death.

Principles of individual human development include:

- it is continuous and involves gradual change
- includes physical, social, emotional and intellectual development
- there are individual variations in individual human development
- is influenced by genetic and environmental factors
- is orderly and predictable
- characteristics can be predicted at each stage of the lifespan

Each dimension of individual human development is explained below:

Physical development includes changes in the complexity and functioning of structures and systems in the body.

Examples of physical development include the brain increasing in size from birth, bones lengthening and hardening, organs maturing, as well as the many changes evident in puberty such as hair growth. Physical development also involves development in the coordination of different muscles. Motor development refers to the coordination of muscles and nerves that control body movement. Motor development can be divided between gross motor skills and fine motor skills. Gross motor skills are those skills that involve control of large muscle groups, examples of this movement including sitting, walking, running etc. Fine motor skills are those skills that involve the control of the small muscle groups in areas like the hands, examples of this movement being writing, playing a musical instrument, typing etc.

Physical development can proceed in different directions, these sometimes being called laws of development. According to the cephalocaudal law, development progresses from the top of the body downwards or from head to feet. According to the proximodistal law, development progresses from the middle of the body towards the extremities.

Emotional development is evident in changes in our ability to understand and control our moods and feelings. It involves the ability to be aware of our emotions and express them. Self concept and self esteem are directly related to emotional development. Self concept being the picture you have of yourself, with self esteem being how you feel about yourself.

Examples of emotional development include crying of a baby when upset, feeling satisfaction when having achieved something or sadness at the loss of something or someone.

Social development is evidenced through advancements in our behaviour patterns interacting with others. Social development includes learning cooperation and how to behave in certain groups, as well as our capability to form relationships. The first relationship that is often formed in life is to the primary caregiver.

Examples of social development include understanding of different roles people have in society, being able to form an intimate relationship, and children learning how to share in a social setting.

Intellectual development can be seen in changes in one's mental skills, including an increase in one's ability to think and reason. It includes development in our creative, imaginative, memory and language skills.

The focus of Unit 1 is defining individual human development and the different types of development and then applying this to the individual human development which occurs in the lifespan stage of youth.

Review Questions

1. Physical development during the lifespan stage of youth is a key characteristic.
 - a. Outline the physical development which occurs in male youth.

- b. Female youth also undergo significant physical development. Briefly outline the physical development for females.

2. Social development occurs at all stages of the lifespan although in the stage of youth, the role of socialisation becomes more significant.

a. Briefly outline the social development that occurs during youth.

b. How does social development impact upon emotional development during the stage of youth?

3. Which of the following is not an example of intellectual development?

- A. Improved problem solving skills
- B. Developing relationships
- C. Abstract thinking
- D. Decision making
- E. Concentration

SAMPLE

Solutions to Review Questions

1.
 - a. Males in the lifespan stage of youth experience significant physical development including: growth spurt, increase in muscle mass, broadening of shoulders, growth of pubic, underarm and facial hair, voice deepening, lengthening of the penis, production of sperm and acne on the face and possibly back.
 - b. Developmental changes which occur in female youth include: development of breasts, onset of menstruation, broadening of hips, fat deposition around hips and thighs, pubic and underarm hair, growth spurt and acne on face and possibly back.
2.
 - a. Social development that occurs during youth include: ability to communicate effectively, development of attitudes and beliefs, may take on roles and responsibilities such as part time work, sporting commitments, seeking independence from parents, initiative develops, peers have greater importance, role models important.
 - b. Social development is important for the development of meaningful relationships during youth, including those with peers based on friendship as well as romantic attraction. These relationships contribute to emotional development by promoting and instilling a sense of belonging and self worth, creating self esteem and developing confidence in their own identity.

3. *Answer: B*

Explanation:

Developing relationships is an important part of youth, but it is part of social development and not an example of intellectual development. The rest of the examples are important elements of intellectual development.

4.
 - a. Play contributes to physical development by encouraging the use of both fine and gross motor skills. Active play such as playing hide and seek or a game of cricket involves running around and developing gross motor skills and co-ordination. Play such as doing puzzles or painting involves the use of fine motor skills, improving dexterity, accuracy and control of the smaller muscles in the body.
 - b. The social development of children is enhanced by play as play involving other children requires them to learn social skills such as communication, sharing and appropriate behaviours. Imaginative play also allows children the opportunity to understand different social roles and responsibilities; they may role play being parents or working in a coffee shop, this modeling of behaviour is an important part of social development.

- 5.
- a. All types of development continue throughout the different stages of adulthood. Emotional development is enhanced through relationships and family, as is social development; intellectual development is furthered through occupation and potential for further study and physical development continues as the body reaches peak bone density and then with middle and late adulthood, the body begins to decline.
 - b. The physical development which occurs in adulthood includes: attainment of peak bone density and body mass, consolidation of strength, coordination and endurance, possible pregnancy, decline begins in middle adulthood with changes such as development of wrinkles, graying of hair, reduction in fine and gross motor skills and reduced body strength.
6. *Answer: C*
Explanation:
Development during childhood is characterised by a slower rate of growth, but steady growth and development. This is because growth and development is not as rapid as it is during prenatal, infancy and adolescence.
- 7.
- a. Decent standard of living includes: adequate food supply and nutrition to meet dietary requirements, shelter, access to health care, safety, access to a safe and reliable water supply, adequate sanitation and access to education.
 - b. Standard of living influences human development as an inadequate standard of living provides significant barriers to the attainment of human development. Elements such as participation in the community are inhibited if safety is a concern; attainment of knowledge is affected if access to education is unavailable; achieving full potential is limited by reduced educational opportunities as well as possible poor health as a result of inadequate food intake, water supply and shelter.
- 8.
- a. Knowledge is integral to breaking the cycle of poverty, which is necessary if individuals, families and communities are to reach their full potential. If an individual has access to education they can obtain knowledge which can assist them with employment opportunities, as well as having a better understanding of practices that can improve health, such as boiling water before consuming it. This in turn allows individuals to work towards achieving their full potential as active and engaged citizens.
 - b. Making choices and decisions which improve health of individuals or their families is an important part of achieving human development. Having the ability to make decisions gives individuals a feeling of control over their health and broader lives, this in turn contributes to leading a productive life based on interests and needs. All of these factors contribute to achieving human development.
- 9.
- a. Physical development such as the growth spurt that occurs during youth can have an impact upon physical health. Individuals may begin to reduce their participation in physical activity as they feel uncomfortable with how their new body looks and feels, this is particularly relevant to female youth. This can contribute to loss of physical fitness and potential excess weight gain (not linked to the growth spurt). During periods of rapid growth, some youth may also feel more lethargic and fatigued than usual, impacting upon their wellbeing.

- b. Youth who feel uncertain or embarrassed about the way that their bodies have changed due to puberty may also withdraw from some social interactions. This impacts upon the development of social skills and relationships during the important stage of youth. Youth is characterised as a stage of the lifespan where social connectedness is one of the key factors influencing health and development, not engaging in socialisation can have a significant impact on health and development.

10.

- a. Development such as physical changes and the process of socialisation have a significant impact upon mental health. Youth who have a positive body image and have accepted the changes that have occurred in their body have better mental health through healthy self esteem and self concept. The same can be said for youth who have important social relationships with their peers; this improves mental health by fostering a sense of self worth, belonging and self esteem. Individuals who lack the social connection and have poor body image are likely to see negative impacts on their mental health.
- b. Intellectual development during youth includes increased capacity to think and reason, decision making, acceptance of increasingly difficult concepts, improved memory and recall and a more mature thought process. This can impact upon the dimensions of health in the following ways: can improve physical health by having the knowledge to make decisions for better health, such as not smoking or eating a balanced diet; social health can be enhanced by understanding the importance of friendships and relationships.

11.

- a. Mental health refers to the ability to cope with daily life and periods of stress. It is about being able to think logically and sequentially and is linked with the emotional ability to respond to situations appropriately.
- b. Conditions such as depression can impact upon social development, as an individual may have withdrawn from social interaction and lost long term connections and relationships. Family relationships may also be affected. The emotional development of adults may also be affected, such as the inability to respond appropriately, loss of self esteem and self worth and may experience feelings of loneliness.

12.

- a. Physical development such as being able to crawl or walk broadens the potential for social interaction for children. By being able to move towards other children, they learn to initiate play, which improves their social development. The development of fine and gross motor skills also affects social development, as a child develops and refines these skills they are able to participate in a broader range of activities which include socialising, such as joining sports teams, or taking dance classes or music lessons.
- b. When children learn new skills, even from a very early age, the praise they receive promotes healthy self esteem. When a baby first rolls over and the parents clap and cheer, the baby learns that this is a positive behaviour; when a child is able to play catch and spends time in the backyard with their dad playing catch, this promotes positive self esteem and connection with the father. The attainment of skills such as playing the piano can develop pride in one's own abilities, again, something which promotes a healthy mental state.