

Session plan for health and medical:

This section is based on the books 'Where there is no doctor' (WND), 'Health education an essential text for schools' (HE), 'Community health worker's manual' (CHW), AMREF manual 'Management of Solid and Liquid Wastes', 'A guide to health promotion through water and sanitation'. Each session will relate to a chapter or two of the books and should be taught using them as teaching aids, they have good explanatory drawings.

As the teacher you should read the 'Words to the village health worker' from WND and pass on to your class anything that you feel is important or relevant from that section.

You must also emphasise that these are **reference books** which people should use when an illness occurs. People must not feel that if they do not remember things from the session the information is not longer available. You, as a teacher do not need to remember everything either! If you have familiarised yourself with the books, you will know where to find what.

A satisfactory goal of these sessions is to create understanding about diseases, how they spread, the effects they have, and make people aware of the specific information about diseases which is available to them. You should be happy if people now come to you to ask questions about what to do even if the topic was covered in a session. Creating interest in the topics and getting people talking and thinking about them is a great outcome, the first step in learning.

Some sessions are much longer than others. If people seem interested continue but if people seem to be getting tired and are no longer paying attention then stop and make it into 2 or even 3 sessions. If you cannot tell how they are feeling ask them. Remember people have come out of choice, to make sure they keep coming always be thinking of them not you or your lesson plan. Be flexible!

Lots of listening always makes people tired, refer to your notes on teaching adults and try to make the sessions as interactive as possible. Be imaginative, some exercises are included but if you feel you can think of something better, extra or more fun include it. You should follow your guide to preparing a session (from the adult teaching section) for each session, the proposals below are NOT session plans, they are ideas about things you could include in your session.

Remember that you know your village and its people better than the book does. You may need to spend some time figuring out what the local names are for the different diseases, this is important to ensure people know it is relevant to them. Some illnesses may be grouped together under an umbrella term such as fever, in that case discuss with the group that many illnesses can include fever and try to make names for the different fever diseases within the group. If there are examples which do not seem relevant try to replace them with ones that are, people will relate better and take more interest in things they know about. If something is not relevant to the group omit it. The books are expert on medicine but you are the expert on your village, combine the two.

Session 1 What is an illness and where does it come from?

(P 67 to 91 HE and P 122 to 130 CHW and 1,2,3,4,8,9,10 of 'A guide to health promotion through water and sanitation')

The purpose of this session is to increase people's understanding of illnesses and their causes. The importance of this session is paramount, if people do not understand that there is a clear physical reason for illnesses they cannot conceive of avoiding them.

Start the session with a discussion about common illnesses and their perceived causes. Ask people what they know, how different illnesses are spread, what can be done to avoid spread. Write down all that is mentioned. This can be done for each illness later in the class but to start with, have an 'anything goes' brainstorm. During this discussion remember you must become the facilitator, ensure everyone has a chance to speak, do not let people interrupt each other, do not pass judgement, prompt quiet people to contribute.

Then spend some time explaining about germs and worms, which diseases they cause and how the spread. Explain clearly the transmission of bacterial, viral, protozoal diseases and worm infections, these terms may be daunting and hold little meaning for your students so instead use words that they understand such as the names of the associated illnesses.

Once you have established how disease is spread, look in more detail at common illnesses. Are they water borne? Airborne? Or sanitation related? What does this mean for prevention? Draw out the contamination cycles of a few different bacterial and/or viral diseases, with the help of the group (e.g. see story about John p126 CHW and make up some more yourself for help see p88 to 91 HE). When you feel people are starting to understand, split the class into groups and give each group an illness and a starting point, they should then draw out a cycle of how it would spread from the starting point to another or many other people. Each group should then present to the rest of the class, have a discussion after each presentation about how the spread could have been avoided.

Session 2 How to avoid many sicknesses

(Chapter 12 WND, Chapter 4 CHW, Chapters 5 and 6 HE, 1,2,3,4,8,9,10 of 'A guide to health promotion through water and sanitation')

Review the cycles which you outlined in the last session, then go into more depth about how to avoid spread. Start with individual cases, later try to get people thinking about general rules which they could apply to their lives to avoid themselves and their families contracting diseases. Make sure in this session that people have understood how diseases are spread, if you feel that has not been taken on board then return to it.

WND explores avoiding illness disease by disease, whereas CHW looks more generally at how to keep your home and self healthy. You may feel this is a big enough topic for you to teach it in 2 sessions, one covering each approach.

This may need to be a different session, if so, start by having a discussion reviving the main points on preventing the spread of disease. Then outline:

- Proper human waste disposal (Latrines)
- Protection of water source
- Water collection and transportation
- Water storage
- Personal hygiene
- Domestic hygiene (safe handling of food/utensils, boiling water...)
- Environmental hygiene
- Vaccinations
- Other ways to prevent sickness and injury.

Throughout this session ask lots of questions about how these methods refer to the illnesses discussed during last session? If they do not relate them review the contamination cycle, you must create a link in people's minds between the illnesses and bad hygiene. If it is not clear by now return to it and explain it in a different way. Do not progress in the sessions until this has been understood.

If you would like to include a practical exercise, split the group into small groups and ask them to prepare a basic household plan of what rules should be put in place to best limit sickness. Each group should present to the rest of the class and have a question and answer session at the end.

Or

For a more focused exercise assign each group an illness or problem and each member a family position eg: younger and older child, mother, father, goat... (This should be fun if people seem to be getting offended or embarrassed, then just give the groups an illness.) After a few minutes discussion the groups should present to the class what each person will do to rid themselves of the illness and protect their family from catching it.

Discuss the outcomes of these activities as a group, get people thinking about these plans as things that apply *to them*, which they could start applying. Do not allow them to be abstract ideas which *other's* should do.

Session 3 Latrines:

(P 142-146 WND, Chapter 5 AMREF manual "Management of Solid and Liquid Wastes")

Carefully read the manual, it is very nicely written and provides a list of questions people should be able to answer by the end of the session.

Begin by asking why latrines are important. Relate it back to the 2 previous sessions, you need to hear that they prevent disease transmission, people may come up with other relevant answers which you should make a note of. If they do not mention health you must bring it up.

Outline (with pictures) the different types of latrines that can be built:

- Pit latrines
- Ventilated improved pit latrines
- Pour flush latrines
- Composting latrines
- Bucket latrines

Discuss with the group the cost and appropriateness of each type. Taking into account:

- The availability of resources to be used
- Affordability and social acceptability
- Availability of adequate land and space for future expansion
- The sanitary features and safety for users
- Problems of repair and maintenance

Have an exercise to plan creating latrines step by step including:

- o The collection of material or finances
- o Who might be in each group if communal
- o Who might be involved in the building them and keeping them clean.
- o Where they could be built
- o When they could be built

This must be brought into the practical realm as quickly as possible, get people thinking about them as a reality not a distant possibility.

Thinking of all these details can make something big, like this, seem possible. Keep bringing up the issue whenever relevant throughout the health sessions to emphasise how many illnesses are related to latrine use. Follow up on any plan that is conceived, however vague, do not let people just forget its importance.

Nutrition

You may decide that this is a good time to introduce nutrition as good health depends on being well nourished. It is up to you whether you would like to do one overview session on nutrition here or do the whole set of sessions. You should at least have a session showing that there is a clear link between health and nutrition, that well nourished people are less susceptible to diseases, can ward it off better and recover from it faster. See nutrition section for details of relevant books and session ideas.

Session 4 How to examine a sick person

(Chapter 3 of WND, Chapter 12 of CHW)

Be a bit selective with the material in this section, you want to emphasise the things people should look for themselves at home. Hence you may want to leave out things like checking blood pressure which they cannot do. Chapter 12 of CHW is suggested to give you ideas of ailments to use in your practical exercise.

In the previous sessions you have looked at cause and prevention, now you are looking at effect, bring the cycles of contamination back out. It is important to see that this is a continuation of the same topic, that because of the cycles and lack of prevention, people experience symptoms.

This can be a very interactive and fun session, try to bring some props: a thermometer, a torch, a watch, a ribbon... whatever you can find. Secretly tell people which illness and symptoms they have and role play diagnosing them with the help of the group or just give them a symptom and, with the groups help, try to determine all the possible diseases associated with it. Once you have covered the different steps of diagnosis and what the symptoms might mean, split them into small groups or pairs and have them continue with the role playing. Emphasise to them that *at this stage it is learning the steps of examining a person which is important*, you want them to remember to ask questions, look at the person, check their temperature, pulse, respiration, eyes, ears, throat, nose, skin, belly, muscles... This is when you should explain that the book is a reference book, so if they check these things in someone who is sick they can then come and look up or explain the symptoms in the book.

Session 5 Some very common sicknesses and Sicknesses that are often confused

(Chapters 2 and 13 WND, Chapters 9 and 12 of CHW)

There is quite a lot of material to cover in this chapter, you may decide to split it into 2 sessions or that some of the illnesses are not very relevant to your area in which case you could leave them out. At this stage you do not need to read all of chapter 9 CHW, use the list of diseases from WND chapter 13, but you can use CHW for clarification, extra information or if you find it more enjoyable to read. This section is about symptoms, the diseases they are associated with and how to deal with them. You could approach it in a few different ways. One would be to start with group work, where each group is given a symptom and they have to think of which illnesses that may be associated with and how to deal with it. Alternatively you could give each group a disease and they would tell you the symptoms and how to deal with them. Afterwards discuss each symptom or illness as a group, the only problem with this is that people could get angry or embarrassed if there are many false beliefs which have to be corrected. You are asking for the answers before teaching what they are, if they understand this there should be no embarrassment but you should think carefully about the members of your group before deciding to use this exercise.

Another approach would be to do a few diseases or symptoms at a time and after each set have a doctor patient role play where they practice the examination skills from last session and apply the newly learnt solutions. The role plays could be done by the whole group in sets of 2 or by 2 people in front of the rest of the group, the former would take longer than the latter.

After you have covered the common illnesses spend a bit of time emphasising the difficulties of diagnosis, they have now learnt how to examine someone and common illnesses, here you want to show that symptoms often overlap between illnesses. Start off by asking them "In light of the diseases and symptoms we have just covered do you think any illnesses might be confused?". Get them to talk about which symptoms could be misleading and ask or explain how they can be told apart, if they can (without clinical tests).

Session 6 How to care for a sick person

(Chapter 4 WND, Chapter 1 WDN and Chapter 2 CHW)

Chapter 4 gives broad guidelines as to how to look after people when they are sick. It outlines how sick people differ in their needs from healthy people. It is quite a short chapter so it would be good to also refer back to how to prevent the person's illness from spreading to others.

The other two chapters are about traditional customs and healing, not everything in these chapters is relevant to this session (session 15 explores the topic in more detail) but it explores some issues that you should be thinking about at this stage. Prepare for this session by thinking about and finding out how people currently care for people who are sick. Some traditional practices are helpful or harmless but there are some which can cause harm, such as drying out people with diarrhoea because it is a wet disease. If you pinpoint any harmful practices in your community this is a good opportunity to try and get people thinking differently. You must be sensitive, do not simply tell people they are wrong. Explain the correct procedure in logical terms, slowly proceeding through the causes and effects of each behaviour, then ask about the other method and what it consists of, break it down into single behaviours and review the causes and effects of each one. If you pinpoint helpful practices do the same with these so that people see that you are not trying to change everything they do, you are just informing them that some practices are misguided. Keep it logical, theoretical and impersonal so that people do not feel attacked. Let people ask questions, if they feel you are wrong let them voice it, make it a discussion where you all give your point of view. You must prepare well for this kind of discussion, be sure that you understand fully why you are suggesting the behaviour change, do not just repeat what you read in the book, personalise it if you are convinced you will be able to convince others, if you are not you will not. If the discussion turns aggressive and you feel people are getting too worked up, drop it and move on, no one learns when they are angry, you can always come back to it another time. This session will probably work best as a discussion group, make it informal, sit in a circle with the students, everyone will have looked after a sick person at some point so everyone should have a contribution to make. You can still have a board to write or draw things on but do not stand by it, just get up and write on it when you need to and get other people to write on it when they make an important point. This kind of atmosphere will make suggestions about behaviour change seem less imposing and more open to discussion.

Session 7 First aid

(Chapter 10 of WND)

This session is long and includes a lot of information, try to keep it light and do not race through it, you can always split it over a few sessions. It is better they learn all about something than a little about a lot of things.

Break up the giving of information with games and question, for example after covering a few topics, stop and review them. Break the group into patient and doctor pairs give each patient a problem which the doctor has to pretend to cure; then swap the roles and change the problem. This is not a test, let them know they ask you if they cannot remember or did not understand.

This can be done just between the patient and doctor or you could have each treat the problems (or explain what they would do) in front of the group, this should depend on the size of the group. If there are many people it will take too long but if there are few it can be a good way for everyone to review each case. The bandage section can also provide a good break from listening. Try to find or ask people to bring old bits of fabric to use. Again in pairs had people bandage each other up in different ways.

Diseases (Session 8-14):

The following sessions look in detail at diseases which affect certain parts of the body. Some sessions are long others short, look through them all at once and decide how you want to split or group them. This will depend on: how relevant the included diseases are to your area, the length of the sessions and what your class is interested in. Get them involved in your decision, ask them if there is anything they would like to know about. Think about what is common in the community, keep it relevant to them. You may decide to just chose a few relevant illnesses from each section that is fine, let them know that there are more that you can talk about if need be or that they can ask about privately, but focus on those of interest.

Teach these sessions with constant reference to cause, spread, symptoms, cure and prevention. Many of the cures need medication; make sure people understand you are not trying to get them to remember the exact treatments, only help them know when people have a curable illness and when to look for help. To keep sessions interactive have lots of diagnostic role play, discussions about the effects of diseases on the effected, their family and the community in general.

Session 8 Skin problems

(Chapter 15 WND, Chapter 9 CHW)

Session 9 The eyes

(Chapter 16 WND, Chapter 9 CHW)

Session 10 The teeth, gums and mouth

(Chapter 17 WND, Chapter 9 CHW)

Session 11 The urinary system and the genitals

(P243-251 WND, Chapter 9 CHW)

Session 12 Sexually transmitted diseases

(P252-257 WND, Chapter 9 CHW and "Kitabu cha Magonjwa ya Zinaa: Jielekeze Mwenyewe")

Session 13 AIDS

(P255-257 WND, Chapter 9 CHW and AIDS Fact sheet)

This topic merits a full session, it is important that people understand the effect on lifestyle which it has. You must talk about the spread and preventative methods, making sure people understand its cycle and that it can be symptomless for a long period. You must also have a discussion about its effect on livelihoods and the community. This will no doubt be a sensitive topic which people have experience with, you must make it clear that it is not a shameful condition, that openness and honesty about it will help to deal with it and prevent its spread.

Session 14 Mental health

(P195-199 CHW, P337-340 WND)

This is a delicate issue as there are often no cures, but it is important that people understand the causes behind mental illness, some are birth defects, many are the result of early malnutrition. People must be aware that mental disabilities are natural (not punitive) and that they are not dangerous. People with disabilities need help and caring not exclusion and punishment, many can be still helped in the community if treated well and given roles suited to their capabilities.

Session 15 Healing without medicines, Right and wrong uses of modern medicines and Home cures and popular beliefs

(Chapter 1, 5 and 6 of WND and Chapter 2 of CHW)

You will have touched on some home cures and popular beliefs in session 7. If there were topics left unfinished this is a good time to revisit them. Bear in mind your past experience with the group and try not to get caught in the same pitfalls. Make sure that you spend as much time, if not more, focusing on the home cures which are good as on those which are bad. Try to relate home cures to modern medical practices and vice versa, so that they all become curative methods instead of being separated factions which people must choose between.

Start the session with a short section on healing without medicine, many of the illnesses which you have looked at in previous sessions need medical cures these can be expensive so hearing that sometimes they are not needed will be welcomed news.

Then move onto when it is right and wrong to use modern medicine and good and bad home cures. The format of this session should be like session 7, an informal discussion group with people sharing information and opinions.

Health and sickness in particular groups

The following sessions should be targeted at the groups of people that they affect. That is not to say that only mothers and children can attend the session about the health and sickness of children, it means that you should advertise that the session is taking place and try to get people of the target group or who care for the target group to attend. Some of the topics in these sessions may be repeating things from earlier sessions, to avoid it seeming repetitive emphasis the link to the targeted group.

Session 16 Information for mothers to be and recent mothers

(Chapter 19 WND, Chapter 5 CHW, Chapter 8 HE)

Some of the information in the reading may not be appropriate to your audience; there is a great deal of information about delivery and its complications. Unless you have a separate class for midwives and women about to give birth you may want to summarise this to focus on showing the importance of having a midwife (or at least help) during childbirth.

The focus of this session should be on the needs of mothers and mothers to be, nutritional needs (this will be covered in detail in the nutrition sessions but should be touched on here), immunisations, hygiene, rest, exercise that she can continue doing and that she should avoid....

Discuss with mothers how they coped with their pregnancies and what problems or discomfort they experienced. Then go through the things which can be done to ease the discomfort of common problems like morning sickness or lower back pain. Also outline problems which are not normal and can indicate sickness.

If there are pregnant women who are interested take them through the stages of birth and how to prepare for it. Spend some time clearly explaining the correct process for cutting the umbilical cord, dispel any harmful myths that might surround this process, such as smearing it with cow dung. Emphasis the need for a clean birthing environment, relate it back to the cycles of infection.

Session 16 Family planning

(Chapter 20 WND, P84-89 CHW, Chapter 10 HE)

Child spacing is a very important issue which is often neglected. The reasons for this vary, some people do not have access to family planning methods, others do not see the benefits of spacing children, still others feel constrained by their religious beliefs. Find out how your group feels about these practices and if anyone uses them. Would they be open to finding out more about them or have they already learnt about and rejected them. If so find out on which grounds.

Good family planning has many benefits, ask the class if they know what these are. One is the improved health of the mother for two reasons. Firstly pregnancy is very demanding for the body, secondly the more children a mother has, the more work she has to do, so she becomes tired and sick. Child spacing is also good for the health of the children. It helps prevent malnutrition as babies are breast fed for the correct amount of time, it also gives the mother time to recover and provide adequate care for the child. The father also benefits as there are less people for him to support so he need not worry so much and can more easily provide food for everyone.

Present the idea that having 4-5 healthy children is better than 10 sick and malnourished children. Do people agree or not, if people do not, find out why. The reasons are often linked to high infant mortality. If this is one of the reasons given, start a discussion about why infant mortality is high, what are the common reasons for infant mortality. Many of the reasons are linked to malnutrition, bad sanitation and mothers being weak and unable to care for their children. Good child spacing can reduce child mortality.

What are the different methods of child spacing, explain each of them in turn and find out how what people already know and feel about them. Follow up on this topic, if people showed interest discreetly ask them if they need help selecting a contraceptive method and help them figure out the next steps to getting help.