

PERSONAL PHILOSOPHY STATEMENT OF HEALTH EDUCATION

Health education is a broad definition that may represent a different meaning and purpose to every individual involved in the health profession. It imparts an opportunity to establish change with the individuals and settings around us. Since the beginning of my health education journey, I have believed in embodying a state of holistic wellness, including its seven areas: physical, social, emotional, intellectual, spiritual, occupational, and environmental. Many individuals may misinterpret the meaning of wellness; however, this is where a health educator comes in to guide their audiences by using tailored approaches and dialogues that are considered valuable to their client or patient. Using a multi-faceted approach towards wellness is essential to impact our audience's behaviors, cognitive thinking, and personal belief in healthy living. Moreover, one of the most valuable characteristics of a health educator is the capability of adapting different approaches and theories in their appropriate settings and purposes. As health educators, we are constantly learning and bringing in new information for the betterment of ourselves, and the people and environment that surround us. Health education and promotion will always grant the opportunity to learn and support the actions of living conducive to the health of individuals, groups, and communities through the usage of combined, planned learning experiences and mechanisms that lead to whole-person wellness. There are two components that exemplify my personal philosophy: cultural competence and equity.

One of the components of my philosophy of health education is cultural competence. Cultural competence is the ability for a healthcare provider to understand and unify factors, like race, ethnicity, nationality, language and many others, into the delivery and structure of the healthcare system (GeorgeTown University, 2021). Through cultural competency, we can improve health outcomes and contribute to the eradication of racial and ethnic health disparities. Using cultural competence, I will aid individuals and communities to achieve their health goals by modifying my methods to fit with their views and beliefs without disrespecting their customs and traditions. In addition, I believe in the freeing/functioning philosophy that promotes the development of the entire person and helps them make the best health choices, based on their needs and interests rather than social expectations. Enforcing a "one fits all" method will not only discourage clients from following a healthy lifestyle but create a relationship of distrust. Through my experiences as an intern at Advent Health of Ocala, I have encountered moments where patients aren't willing to be candid about their lifestyles due to the fear of judgment and other barriers. However, many patients have opened up due to the promotion of a comfortable

and stress-free environment where they can share their thoughts and worries. Hiring bilingual staff, designing brochures in a low literacy format, and creating an accessible environment for each patient are methods that further eliminate barriers in patient care. The courses I have completed as a health education student have enlightened me on the proper skills and behaviors to exert. Assisting patients to foster feelings of security in a healthcare environment and adequately explaining the following steps in attaining their health goals through cultural awareness and respect will guide their journey towards wellness with reassurance and confidence.

Another component of my philosophy is equity. Health education continues to change through new research as we aim to create a healthy environment that is attainable for all who emerge from different backgrounds, ethnicities, beliefs, and incomes. It is essential to advocate for equal access to healthcare and wellness resources in the communities that surround us. Jane Addams, a social reformer and activist, was a predominant leader in the history of social work and women's suffrage in the United States and advocated for world peace. Her quote, "The good we secure for ourselves is precarious and uncertain . . . until it is secured for all of us and incorporated into our common life" really spoke to me. Like Jane Adams, I strive to become a leader in my community and become an advocate for the equal accessibility of health resources. An impactful change can begin with a conversation with your client and adapting your methods to their needs and desires. For example, being a member of Splash Pals imparted the opportunity to make a difference in the Gainesville community among children with disabilities. We provided parents with multiple resources and opportunities that aided in their children's mental, physical, and emotional growth. I witnessed firsthand how grateful the parents were for the accessibility and equal opportunity their children were being provided with; I was honored to be a part of it.

In conclusion, I believe all of my experiences as an undergraduate health education student and the knowledge transmitted through my studies at the University of Florida have provided me with a tremendous desire to make a difference in the field of health education. Learning about health education and promotion has allowed me to understand and comprehend that I must advocate for change for those who do not have a voice. I have also learned that every person is different when it comes to their needs and that my methods may not always reap the same results. As health educators, we have the power, capabilities, and responsibility of making this world a better and equal place to empower each other in making healthy choices and following holistic lifestyles.