

Statement of Philosophy of Health Education

Health education is an incredibly diverse and holistic field of study, and I have truly enjoyed my experience for the past few years. This field has become a passion of mine and I intend to spend my career not only utilizing my knowledge and skills to help others, but also advocating for the profession and the importance of what health education specialists do. Through my education and experience in this area, I have developed my professional statement of philosophy of health education.

We Must Teach Skills

I believe that true changes in behavior happen when one is taught the skills required to make that change. Providing information alone is important, but we must be able to teach and/or demonstrate skills to those we are educating. Otherwise, our audience will leave with knowledge and no ability. Ensuring that our audience has the skills required for change is a major part of building their self-efficacy.

We Must Focus on the Positive

Over the past few years, I have learned the importance of seeing progress and positive outcomes when trying to make a health behavior change. We know, as health professionals, that a person's body will see positive outcomes if that person stops smoking tobacco. However, our client who is going through the experience of cessation may only see the negatives of how they feel i.e., mood swings or feeling tired. It is my job to help them see and focus on the positive impact this choice is having on their body and future.

We Must Work Together

I have learned through my work experience that the health field tends to have cliques, and people generally do not cross over and work with those in other fields. I believe changing this fact would be beneficial not only to patients and clients, but also to us as professionals. Most health professionals recognize the health wheel and the different dimensions of health. Most would also acknowledge how all the dimensions affect one another. I believe it is extremely important for all of us to realize the work one person/department is doing in their area could have a tremendous impact on another. We must communicate with one another, utilize the skills of other professionals, and combine our experiences to produce the best outcomes.

We Must Start Early

I believe the best way to instill change in a society is to start early. We must educate children about subjects such as mental health, substance abuse, and general health/wellness to eliminate stigma and fill knowledge gaps. If we expose children to these subjects early in their lives, I believe we can create a society in which we all protect ourselves against disease and we seek help when we need it.

We Must Empathize

Finally, I believe the best characteristic for a person working in the health field to possess is empathy. We must have the ability to empathize with those we are educating, not just sympathize. We must be able to put ourselves in our patients' and/or clients' shoes and see the situation from where they stand. If we can do this, I believe we will have a better chance of building relationships with those we serve, and therefore create a positive impact on their lives.