

# **Health Visitors; professionals promoting community health**

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## **Editorial**

Health Visiting is targeting health inequalities and quality of life in communities, and is linked with public health and health promotion interventions in the community [1]. Health Visiting is implemented by using four enduring processes, that is the principles of Health Visiting, which are:

- The search for health needs
- The stimulation of an awareness of health needs
- The influence on policies affecting health
- The facilitation of health-enhancing activities

These principles are about health promotion, not assistance; they provide an integrated framework, and they are all underpinned by a particular value and view of health [2].

Health Visitors are responsible for the assessment of communities' health needs and they plan, implement, and evaluate health promoting interventions [1]. In order to reduce health inequalities, Health Visiting offers the potential for health promotion and early identification for interventions or referral to needed services and proven programmes [3].

Health Visitors play a leading role in improving health outcomes by applying the three main concepts that guide Health Visiting:

- a. It is salutogenic (health-creating), which involves being proactive, identifying and building strengths and resources (personal and situational), and being solution-focused.
- b. It demonstrates a positive regard for others (human valuing), through keeping the person in mind and shifting the Health Visitors' focus to align with the client's

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needs, recognising the potential for unmet needs, actively seeking out potential strengths, and maintaining hope.

c. It recognises the person-in-situation (human ecology), through assessing and acting as a continuing process, always taking account of the individual and their personal and situational circumstances, whether acting in the client's space or the community [4].

Working with individuals as well as communities makes Health Visiting unique in the area of public health, providing opportunities for greater creativity in health promotion and prevention. Health Visitors' accessibility, ability to work with individuals, families, and communities gives Health Visiting its distinctive identity [5]. Health Visitors emphasize on strengthening programmes for individuals, families, and communities by implementing organised home visits, which are their traditional "tool" for achieving a good level of public health [6]; these are included in the core practices in delivering Health Visiting, along with Health Visitor-client relationship, and needs assessment. Health Visitors are skilled public health practitioners and they enjoy a privileged position in their access to individuals, families, and communities, directly witnessing their health needs and challenges [7].

Health Visitors provide expert advice, support, and interventions to all, and they are uniquely placed to identify the needs of individuals and families, and refer or direct them to existing local services, thereby promoting early intervention. They also have a role in community asset mapping, identifying whether a particular community has any specific needs by offering support through working in partnership with other professionals. They can help communities help themselves and thus promote community health [8].

The success of Health Visiting is related to three main areas:

- Organising Health Visiting services to support best practice,
- Delivering proven programmes and interventions to promote health and well-being and,
- Having a suitably skilled and trained workforce [9].

To conclude, Health Visitors plays a crucial role in promoting community health through reducing health inequalities with a wide spectrum of activities including physical and mental health well being throughout the lifespan for individuals, families, and communities. Home visits and the liaison to health services are important tools for every Health Visitor in order to address community health needs. However, Health Visitors should not work in isolation but rather be part of a multi-disciplinary team with respect and understanding of each other's different role and contribution to health care.

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