

# Health and illness

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This paper was prepared for the \_\_\_\_\_ taught by \_\_\_\_\_. Health and Illness

What is health? What is illness? When talking about health and illness, one refers to the authorities for its definition, like the World Health Organization. According to World Health Organization, health is “ a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity”. This means that health is not just a state of being well without sickness but rather an overall inclusive definition that affects even the social well being of the person – or how well he behaves in society. The definition also includes mental health. I think World Health Organization did not include the definition of illness as such because illness is actually an aspect of health, since it is not merely and absence of disease.

For me though, health is a general condition of the mind, body and spirit – it could be well or unwell. A person with a healthy outlook in life is usually physically healthy as well. Sickness can be a disease or an illness. Disease, for me, is physical damage to one’s body – a deficiency, maybe, or a wound or trauma. Illness, on the other hand, refers to the sociocultural context of having a disease, and this includes the experience and perception of a disease. It may also include religious and spiritual infirmities and disbeliefs. What I mean about the sociocultural context is that the patient and his community define, classify the episode of sickness in a way that it is meaningful to them and the society in general. It does not have to be a technical “ malfunction of the body”, and can accommodate meaning defined by how a person is feeling and thinking.

References:

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