

**SESSION AT
A GLANCE****Story/Discussion**

*Who is
responsible ?*

Discussion

Staying healthy

Home activity

Worksheet 24
*How healthy
are you ?*

Preparing for the session

This session, which tries to go beyond the traditional definition of 'good health', begins with a story based on a true incident. This story 'Who is responsible?' brings out the importance of social and economic factors in keeping one healthy. It also helps children to understand that being healthy means more than just the absence of physical illness. The discussion following the story is very important, so do spend time in getting the children to share their views. You may need to ask some more questions in addition to the ones provided in the session - so do read the story a couple of times and remind children of specific incidents to bring out the relevant points.

The second activity reinforces the idea that good health is a state of overall well-being, and that individual and social factors contribute to it.

Main ideas

- Good health means more than just an absence of illness.
- Apart from individual care, social and economic factors also contribute to our being healthy.
- Nutritious food, clean air and water, physical and mental exercise, the love and support of loved ones, rest and recreation, happiness and access to good healthcare are some factors that help keep us healthy. Every individual has the right to all this.

To conduct the session you will need

- Flipchart : *Who is responsible ?*
- Copies of Worksheet 24 (one copy per child)

Conducting the session

Briefly recap the main ideas of the earlier sessions on My Body. Get the children to recall some of the things they learnt, such as the different systems of the body and how they work together, the relationship between the body and the mind, how our body changes as we grow, and also illnesses and how to deal with them.

Then tell the class that in this session they will be learning about good health, and what we need in order to keep our body healthy.

Tell the children that they are going to hear a story about a young man named Rahul and his family. This is based on a true incident.

Activity 1 **Story/Discussion**

Who is responsible ?

Frame 1

Rahul sat on the floor, his head resting on his knees. He was in the town jail, arrested for killing a man, waiting for the judge to hear his case. Why had he killed a man he did not even know ? This man was riding his bicycle on his way to the market.

At the same moment Rahul crossed the road, drunk and unsteady on his feet. The bicycle collided with Rahul and both the men fell on the road in a heap. A heated argument followed and wild with anger, Rahul picked up a stone and hit the man's head with it.

Why had he become so angry ? He asked himself this question again and again but could not find an answer.

Stop the story at this point and ask the children why they think Rahul lost control of himself. Let them respond, then tell them that maybe the answer lies in his circumstances, so let us hear his story.

Rahul, a friendly, helpful boy, lived in a small village with his mother Savita and his father Rajaram. Rajaram worked for a rich landlord. When Rahul was still a boy, his father got TB. This got worse over the years as there was no healthcare centre from where



he could get treatment. Although the Government's TB control programme did give free medicines, patients had to travel to the nearest primary health centre for tests and medication. For Rajaram, this meant traveling 50 kilometres every two weeks - he simply could not afford it.

His health continued to weaken, until finally he was fired. This meant that the family lost their home as well, because it belonged to the landlord. Rahul was angry at this injustice, but his father managed to pacify him. They built a little hut at the edge of the village, near the garbage dump, and also cleared a small patch of land to grow vegetables to sell in the market.

Frame 2

Around this time a health care programme was started in the village, though there was no trained worker to treat the villagers. A visiting doctor gave free medicines to Rajaram and taught 11-year-old Rahul how to administer these medicines. A quick learner, Rahul soon began to help several sick people in the village. By the time he was 13, Rahul was assisting the team of health workers in the area. He would even go to other villages to help during school holidays.



Some months passed. The vegetable patch provided a small income for the family. Things were getting better and they had even begun to pay back their debts. With a secure roof over his head and two square meals a day, Rajaram's health also improved. However he never fully regained his strength as the treatment had come too late.

Unfortunately the family's misfortunes were not over yet - Rajaram fell ill with appendicitis and needed surgery. The villagers carried him on a stretcher to the road, and from there took him to the city hospital by truck. 13 year old Rahul, alone and afraid, accompanied his father. The cost of the surgery was as much as the family's annual income and soon they were reduced to begging.

While Rajaram was away, a wealthy neighbour stole his only ox. When Rajaram asked the panchayat for justice, they accused him of lying and fined him ! He did not seem angry, just sad. He said, "That's life, nothing can be done." Rajaram had lost his will to fight and the ability to start all over again - he simply gave up hope. Once again the family was destitute.

Frame 3

Rahul however was very angry. The once cheerful young boy was growing up to be a bitter young man, seething with anger at the injustices his family had to suffer. But worse was yet to come . . . When it was time for his secondary school board



examination, for which he had studied very hard, he had no money to pay the examination fee. He asked many people for a loan but they refused since they were tired of lending money to this family. He then asked the headmaster to waive his fees; this too was refused. With no hope left for the future, Rahul became more and more dejected.

He continued to work with the healthcare programme but now he had begun to drink. He was angry with people all the time, even with his friends - picking fights, abusing people and often having to be carried home drunk.

As it is he had grown weak because of the lack of nourishing food, and alcohol further weakened his body and his mind. The day the bicycle hit him, Rahul finally lost control. He killed a complete stranger over nothing !

What would the judge's verdict be ? Today as he awaited judgment, he wondered why all this had happened to him. He knew there was no way the judge would forgive him, although he had suffered many injustices. He knew that he had to take responsibility for his actions. And yet, he continued to wonder . . .

This young man had done so much for people around him. He was a hot-tempered, but basically good person. What had gone wrong? Who was to blame? What do you think?

At the end of the story initiate a discussion with the children by asking questions like the following.

- Why was Rahul angry with everyone?
- Do you think what he did in the end was wrong? Why?
- Do you think he should be punished?
- What had happened to Rahul's father Rajaram?
- Why do you think he was ill?
- Did the community help Rajaram when he was ill?
- Was Rahul ill?
- Do you think Rahul was well?
- Did this family need the support of their friends and community at large, in order to be well?
- Did they get this support?
- What are the things a person needs in order to be well?

Note down the answers to the last question on the blackboard. (*It is likely that the class will come up with suggestions such as : friends and love, money to buy medicines, government facilities such as hospitals, providing food, a house to live in, support from the community, a happy family, not having any problems at work or in school, a clean environment, etc.*)

The purpose of the discussion is to help the class understand the disadvantages that Rahul suffered and how these affected his well-being.

Sum up the discussion by making the following points.

Rajaram's illness worsened as a result of several factors. Not only did he not get proper medical care, Rajaram received very little support from his community. Being poor and having no job made his condition worse.

Rahul too was affected by these factors. While he was not physically ill in any way, he was not well either because he was always unhappy and angry.

We need support from our family, our community and the society we live in, in order to stay physically and emotionally healthy. This is true for all of us.

At the same time, all of us have to behave in a responsible manner. Thus, Rahul had no right to kill or even injure anyone, though he had faced many injustices himself.

Activity 2 **Information**

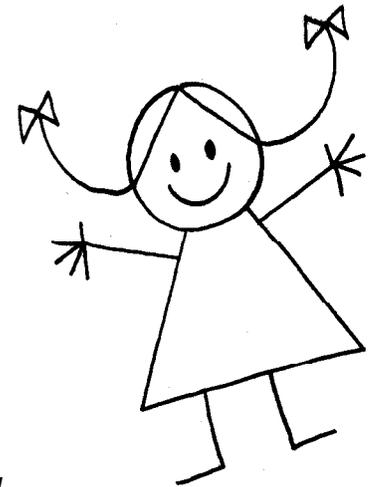
Staying healthy

On the blackboard, draw a picture of a child who looks healthy and happy. Ask the children to give her a name.

Tell them to look at the girl carefully and then write down in their notebooks why they think she is healthy.

After a few minutes, ask them to read out the reasons for the girl's good health. As each reason is read out, you could write it on the blackboard around the picture.

(The children may not call out all the factors, so make sure that you add the ones they have missed out. At the end of the activity, the following factors should have emerged : Nutritious food; clean air, clean water, good personal hygiene and clean habits, physical and mental exercise, love and support from family and friends, rest and recreation, freedom to express one's feelings, laughter and happiness, healthcare facilities.)



Point out that every human being has a right to enjoy good health, therefore everyone should have access to all these things.

Summing up**Conclude the session by making the following points.**

We have seen how the different systems in our body function together. Even when things go wrong, our body has the capacity to repair and heal itself. We therefore have to take care of our body and keep it healthy.

Being healthy means more than just being free from illness – it also means being able to enjoy life to the fullest. It means the body and mind working together. It means being in harmony with other people and with our environment.

Home activity

Worksheet 24

*How healthy
are you ?*

Distribute copies of Worksheet 24. Ask children to complete it at home and file it in their personal folder.

©Avehi-Abacus Project