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12th Inter Island Public Health Forum

Rachel Flowers.

Vice-chair Policy Development Board
Chartered Institute of Environmental
Health



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One Road.....Many Paths!

A Competence-based Curriculum for Environmental Health

Maurice Brennan; Birmingham University, UK
Tony Lewis; Chartered Institute of Environmental Health, UK
Steve Konkel; Dublin Institute of Technology, Dublin, Eire



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The Problem

- In a fast changing world, qualifications that base themselves on the attainment of knowledge:
 - Have a limited 'half-life' - c.18 months
 - Tend to be parochial i.e. country-focussed
 - May be perceived as the keys to an 'exclusive' club



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Question

- Is there an approach that addresses this problem and focuses on what Environmental Health Practitioners can actually do?



Solution?

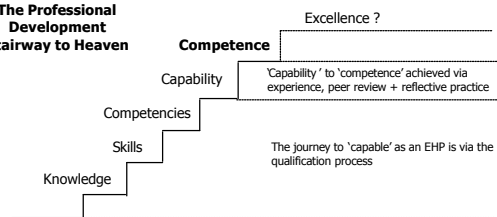
“Competence.....not qualifications”

UK Cabinet Office 2007



Competence - how do I develop it ?

The Professional Development Stairway to Heaven



2008

- IFF agrees that 'EHness' should be the basis of such a framework for curricula



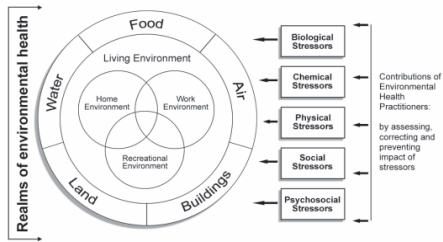
'EHness' is what EHPs have and others do not !!!

- It's an ability to identify, assess and manage risks to (public) health that arise from the impact of a range of stressors on our world



Environmental Health 2012 - A key partner in delivering the public health agenda

Sue Burke, Ian Gray, Karen Paterson and Dr Jane Meyrick ; Health Development Agency, UK 2002



There are three dimensions to 'EHness'

- Knowledge
- Skills
- Method



The knowledge

- Anatomy physiology and basic toxicology
- Social, physical and natural sciences
- Communicable and non-communicable diseases – vectors and control mechanisms (surveillance and control)
- Research methods
- Basic principles of risk assessment and management
- Principles of pest control and management



The knowledge (2)

- The built environment
- The principles of pollution prevention and control
- Health protection measures and methods
- Inequalities in health
- Principles of sustainable development
- Legal principles and processes



The Skills

- Determine and articulate the nature of a hazard and quantify the level of risk associated with that hazard
- Plan and execute statistically reliable sampling programmes, analyse and interpret data
- Plan and execute inspections, investigations and audits
- Obtain admissible evidence and apply due legal processes
- Design, implement and evaluate a research protocol



The Skills (2)

- Determining appropriate courses of action
- Organise self and work within organisations
- Effective communications
- Reflective practice
- Working with and within communities



The Method

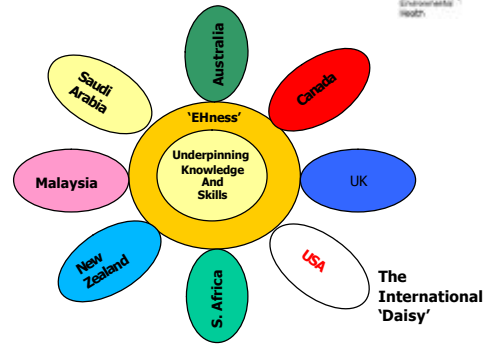
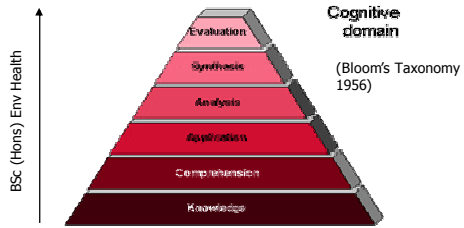
- Identify and articulate the range of actual and potential biological, chemical, physical, social and psychosocial stressors that may act upon and within the physical, social and human worlds
- Identify and articulate the points of possible impact of the stressors on and within the worlds
- Identify and articulate the mechanism of impact of the stressors on and within the worlds
- Identify and articulate the potential and actual public health implications that (may) arise from the impact of stressors on and within the worlds
- Identify and articulate the points at which EHPs may intervene to prevent, control or mitigate the impact of stressors on and within the worlds



The Method (2)

- Identify, communicate and engage with partner organisations, agencies, fellow professionals and others with whom appropriate intervention strategies might need to be formulated
- Identify and articulate the most appropriate intervention to exercise, having regard to the factors, be they political, financial and technological that are likely to influence the decision making process
- Design and implement appropriate intervention strategies in collaboration with others
- Monitor and review the effectiveness of the intervention strategy; altering or adapting it, where necessary, according to the actual or predicted outcome

The Level



Your Views

What do you think!

Send your comments to

Prof. Nancy Cromar, IFF Co-ordinator:
Email : nancy.cromar@flinders.edu.au
Phone: +61 8 8204 5731
Fax : +61 8 8204 5226
Rm 4E432.1 Level 4 Flinders University
Medical Centre