

Physical and mental illness

GETTING STARTED

Make a list of various life events with your class. Identify each type of event under the headings **health and wellbeing**, **relationship change** or **life circumstances**.

Physical illness

We all feel ill from time to time with headaches or colds. These are illnesses that are unlikely to affect our development because they occur for a short time. When individuals experience more serious or long-term illness it has an impact on their growth and development. It reduces the individual's ability to carry out their usual activities. It often brings pain and discomfort, which affects mood and sleep.

Some physical health conditions, such as arthritis, are chronic. That means symptoms are long term. They may be eased, but the illness cannot usually be cured.

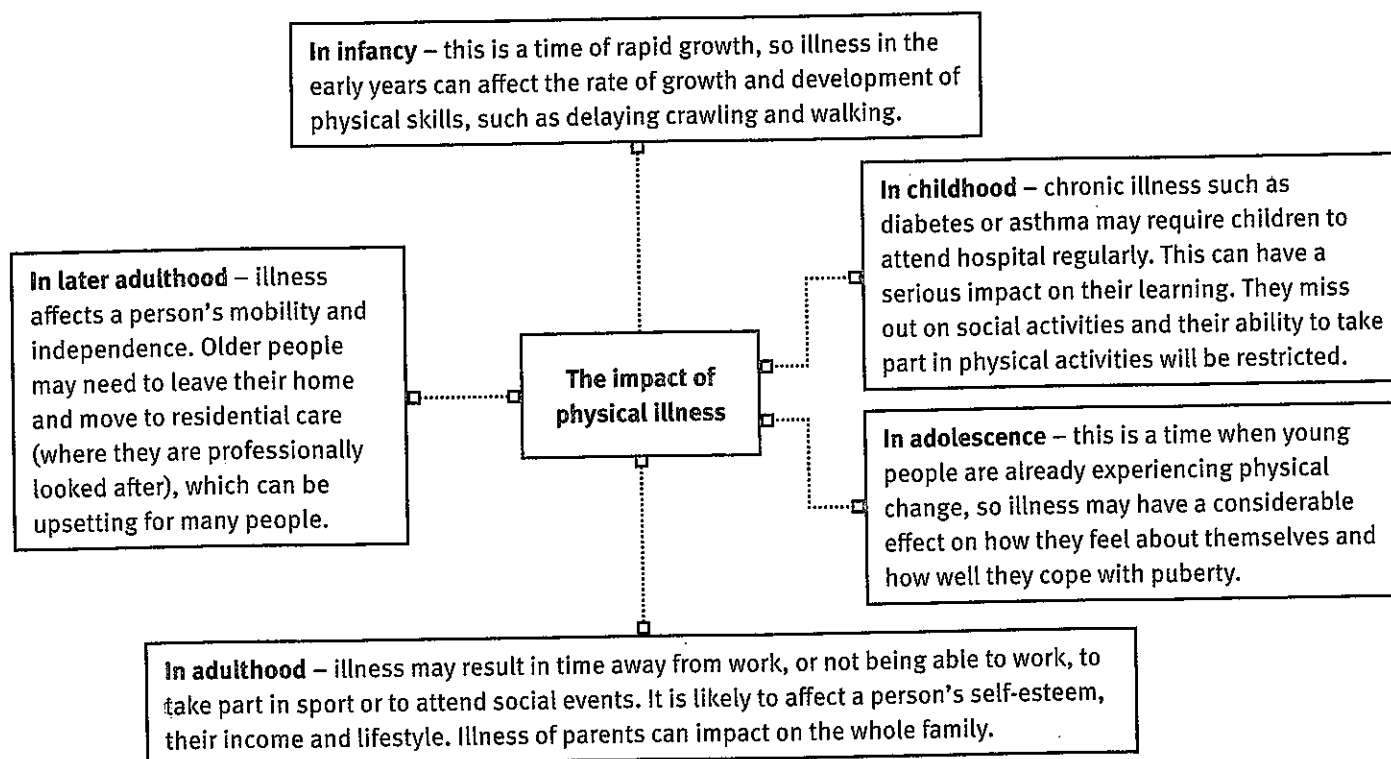


Figure 1.23: The possible impact of physical illness

ACTIVITY

Work in pairs to research one of the examples of ill health you learned about in Learning outcome A on pages 30–31.

- Produce a poster or four PowerPoint slides with PIES headings.
- Outline the possible impact of your chosen illness.
- Present your information to the class.

Mental and emotional ill health

There are many different types of mental illness and disorders. Mental ill health affects the mind. It can impact on an individual's ability to carry out their usual activities and interact with others. It is estimated that mental health conditions are experienced by one in four people.

Emotional ill health describes difficulties individuals experience in coping with everyday life. It may result in anxiety, leading to mild or sometimes severe depression.

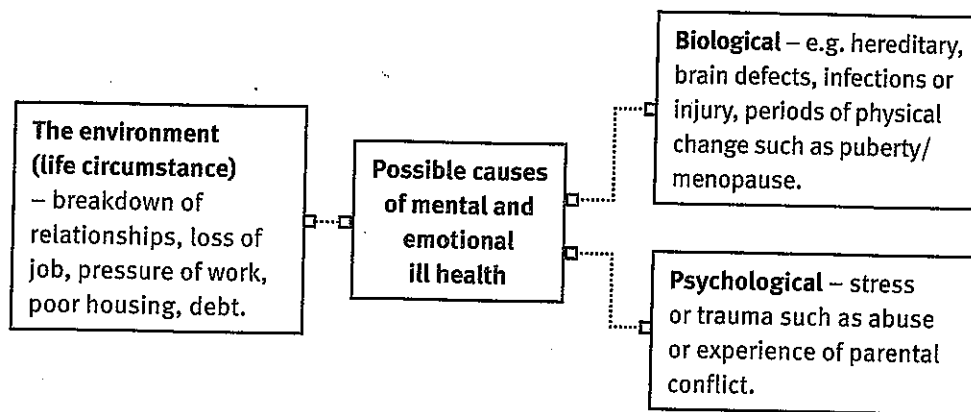


Figure 1.24: Some of the causes of mental and emotional ill health

The impact of mental and emotional ill health on development (PIES)

Physical

Sleep patterns are often affected, so individuals feel run down and tired. A person may become lethargic and reluctant to take part in physical exercise, leading to reduced fitness and mobility. Untreated mental health disorders may result in physical ill health, such as cardiovascular disease or cancers.

Intellectual

Mental health conditions affect how people think, react and make decisions. It can impact on short-term memory. Children may lose concentration easily and function less well at school. Adults may not be able to focus on their work, which could lead to them losing their job.

Emotional

Stress and anxiety may be the cause of, or a symptom of, poor mental health. Anxiety or depression may prevent individuals from making safe lifestyle choices. Heightened emotions cause physical symptoms such as a fast heart rate, chest pains or sweaty palms. Mood can be particularly affected at the onset of puberty or menopause, when individuals may display mood swings. At times they may be energetic and impulsive, while at others tearful.

Social

Individuals may find difficulty in building friendships if their condition is not understood. There can be difficulties in long-term relationships and intimacy, causing breakdowns of relationships. Individuals may feel they are being shunned because of a lack of understanding from others. They could find others are dismissive or unkind. It can result in the person avoiding people, and even isolating themselves from contact.

DID YOU KNOW?

Although there is more information about mental ill health, there is still a great deal of stigma (shame) around the issue. People can be hurtful and unkind towards others experiencing poor mental health, causing upset and distress.

BEST PRACTICE

Knowing the signs of mental and emotional ill health helps health and care workers to respond and support individuals appropriately.

CHECK MY LEARNING

Produce an 'emotions' poster.

On the left of your poster, use words and images that best express the feelings of a person with positive emotional wellbeing.

On the right, use words and images that best express the feelings of a person who is experiencing emotional ill health.

Outline how negative feelings may impact on PIES.