

Foundation Course in Social and Health Education - Part One

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Part One of the Foundation Course in Social and Health Education provides an opportunity for participants to develop a greater awareness of the personal dimension to human development. They are helped to examine the way they think about themselves and those around them (their 'cognitive map'). They are also helped to recognise their emotional responses to given situations and the ways in which they typically manage these responses.

The aim of the Foundation Part One course is to enhance the coping strategies and the personal effectiveness of those who take part. Through the course, they develop the capacity and confidence to discern, and act on the basis of, thoughts and emotions which enhance their wellbeing, whilst recognising and choosing not to act on the basis of those which detract from this. They also develop skills in assertive communication which enable them to negotiate new and constructive ways of being with those around them.

No formal educational qualifications are required to participate in the course. Instead, a considerable amount of life-experience is normally considered important, as well as a willingness to explore with others one's feelings, attitudes and values. Although the course involves limited teaching inputs, the principal methodology used is that of experiential group-work. The concrete difficulties and challenges that arise for participants in the course of their everyday lives are also explored through discussion, dramatisation and role-play.

Participants are not required to undertake any written work and there are no formal assessments or examinations.

However, for their own benefit, participants are encouraged to record their learning during the course in a personal learning journal.[1] Those who complete this course become eligible to proceed to the Foundation Course in Social and Health Education (Part Two). The course consists of weekly evening sessions of 2½ hours between September and the end of May (around 31 sessions in all), as well as 6 weekend day sessions of 7 hours (Saturdays or Sundays) and 2 half-day workshops. Normally there are around 16 participants in each group. [1] Special arrangements will be sensitively put in place for participants who experience literacy difficulties.