Individual responsibilities and human rights as a means to healthy living

A responsibility mainly looks at an individual's moral accountability in society.

- Society expects certain standards of morals and always expects an individual to act in a responsible manner and be able to live with consequences of his/her actions without burdening others.
- This theory of responsibilities is based on a social structure of responsibility beginning **with the family, self, then friends, community and social groups and the government** as the final authority to intervene where others have failed.
- This means in our personal and individual communities we must share responsibilities in order to live in harmony

Human rights

A moral principles or norms that describe standards of human behaviour.

These are:

- Universal and are inherent entitlements to human beings regardless of their differences. We are all obligated to respecting human rights of others and bound by international law and ratified by our majority of states.
- **The Dec 1998 resolution 53/144 Declaration on the rights and responsibility of an individual, groups, organs of society** to promote and protect the universally recognised human rights and fundamental freedoms as adopted by the General assembly, **reaffirms that the state has a responsibility and duty to promote and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms and further recognises the right and responsibility of an individual, groups and associations to promote respect** for and foster knowledge of human rights and fundamental freedoms at national and international levels.
- Article 6 (a) declares , **" everyone has a right ,individually and in association with others to seek, obtain, receive and hold information about all human rights and fundamental freedoms, including having access to information as to how those rights and freedoms are given effect in domestic, legislative, judicial and administrative systems."**

Responsibility

- Individual responsibilities relate greatly to human rights and the two influences each other.
- Both aim at peaceful and a harmonious co existence of human beings.
- An individual's responsibility of acquiring knowledge and boosting the level of awareness has a great impact to the health of a community.
- It is the responsibility of an individual to learn public issues and understand the laws and policies of a community or state to influence positive change or better

Human rights and responsibility

- Individual responsibilities have seen freedoms attained, women suffrage ended, slave trade abolished and now our responsibilities can play a role in fighting segregation and discrimination in treatment and care of the key population and the marginalised groups in HIV prevention.
- The concept of rights relates to freedom from interference by other individuals or state and calls on individual obligations to his community, his friend, his family and public health.
- An individual is actually part of a larger community; family, neighbours, village, country etc. For an individual to be part of this larger community, individual suppression and violations need to be eliminated

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- To benefit the community an individual must take responsibilities for his actions. This is because every right is a duty bound.
- As individuals our responsibilities create an objective standard that benefits community. E.g. learning about HIV creates awareness that helps prevent infection or getting involved in risky sexual behaviour.

HOW DO WE THEN BUILD A HEALTHY COMMUNITY

- Through understanding and being aware of a public problem we enrich our capacity as individuals to do something in solving that problem.
- As individuals we can create a purpose with a shared responsibility to bring hope in bettering community.
- We can share information and through a wider network effect a positive change
- We can be cautious of our actions and bear the consequences of whatever action by encouraging our social responsibility e.g. reflect on what we do and why we do it but not based on personal satisfaction if it affects another human being.
- We can live in solidarity so that much as we have a duty to ourselves we also have a duty to fellow human being
- Advocate for human rights respect
- Behavioural risk reduction
- Help fight stigma by raising awareness

Conclusion

- Taking responsibility and acting responsibly in the choices we make and how we go about our lives may affect our health, community health and public health at large.
- we can think about risks regardless of our freedoms to do as we please and make right or careful choices that can positively affect good healthy.
- It’s everyone’s responsibility to put society on the right truck because responsibility comes with a service