Perceptions of their health
- Perceptions of the health of others
- Implications of different perceptions of health
- Perceptions of health as social constructs
- Impact of the peers, media and family
Perceptions of their health

- A variety of factors shape an individual’s perceptions on health including education, family, culture and personal experiences.
- It is often difficult to judge one’s own health as everyone has different perceptions.
- As an individual moves through life you tend to become more informed about a realistic evaluation of one’s own health.
Studies have shown that a person’s own perceptions of their health are good indicators of their actual health and wellbeing and a valid predictor of future health.

- Rate your own health as either excellent, very good, good, fair or poor.
- How would others rate your health?
Using a similar rating scale - rate the following groups of people’s health

- Your parents
- The elderly
- The homeless
- Elite athletes
- Gays and lesbians
- People living in Africa
- Mentally ill
- Perceptions of the health of others

- Individuals easily make judgements about others
- Generally one’s perceptions of the health of others are based on their experiences – positive or negative
- Individuals will use these experiences to make judgements regarding the health of that particular group or person
The meanings different people give to health will also be a contributing factor.

Example
A person who equates health to socialising, enjoyment and fun may perceive someone who works long days and weekends as unhealthy.
The person working may perceive themself as healthy as they are able to work everyday and provide for their family.
1. Why might a homeless person consider themselves healthy?
2. Why might an elderly person consider themselves healthy?
3. Why might a person with a mental illness consider themselves healthy?
- Implications of different perceptions of health

- People’s perceptions have a significant influence on their lifestyle choices and behaviours
  Example – perceptions based around the impact of alcohol

- Differing perceptions of health has the potential to reinforce stereotypes
  Example – body image for young males and females

- Differing perceptions may also contribute to varying expectations of people’s capabilities
  Example – the elderly in regards to physical activity
- Implications of different perceptions of health

1. What is your perception of under age binge drinking? What, if any is the implication of this?

2. What is your perception of girls playing rugby? What, if any is the implication of this?

3. How do you treat someone with a mental illness? What, if any is the implication of this?
A construct is something that is formed as a result of various influences.

Our perceptions of health are recognised as being based on social constructs.

This construct is formed because of socio-economic status, geographic location, culture, gender, age, educations, religion, media, family and friends.
- Perceptions of health as social constructs

- What are some of the health compromising behaviours young people exhibit while driving?
- What are the factors that influence them to take these risks?
People know the various health risks associated with various behaviours.

People still engage in these behaviours because the other factors are stronger than the knowledge of what is ‘good’ for their health.

Provide 3 examples where young people despite knowing the obvious risks still engage in ‘risky’ health behaviours.
- Impact of the media, peers and family

- The media plays a significant role in disseminating health-related information and increasing people's understanding of health issues
- The media is influential in shaping attitudes, values and behaviours relating to what good health looks like
- The media often promotes thin, slim bodies for women and muscular strong bodies for men causing individuals to go to great lengths to try to achieve this
- Sustained media coverage about certain issues can lead to heightened public concern and government action
- Impact of the media, peers and family

- Families have a tremendous impact
- Parents and family are role models from the earliest of years
- If a family values physical activity as fun and important then the individual is more likely to participate
- If a person is surrounded by active people they are more likely to be active themselves
- Families influence the health perceptions of their members by the values they hold and lifestyles they lead
A young person’s peer group can have an impact in regards to attitude and behaviours relating to health

Example
If binge drinking is considered an important part of their social agenda then those who do not participate may be ostracised