**GREATER SHEPPARTON**

# UNDERSTANDING FACTORS THAT IMPACT ON HEALTH AND WELLBEING

## You will need

**Blank piece of paper, coloured pens, pencils, texters, highlighters.**

Our health is made up of many factors such as where we live, the state of our environment, genetics, our income and education level, and our relationships with friends and family.

It is the interrelationships of these factors that contribute to our health status, our chances of maintaining good health or becoming ill or injured.

Factors that impact on our health and wellbeing can be grouped into **protective factors** and **risk factors**.

**Protective factors** for health can have a **positive** impact on health outcomes.

Protective factors are described as health-promoting behaviours, healthy conditions and environments, psychosocial factors and effective health services.

**Risk factors** can have a **negative** effect on health.

They include lifestyle or behavioural risk factors such as smoking, poor nutrition, excessive or risky alcohol intake, physical inactivity, psychosocial conditions such as isolation, low self-esteem and abuse or physiological such as high blood pressure or genetic factors.

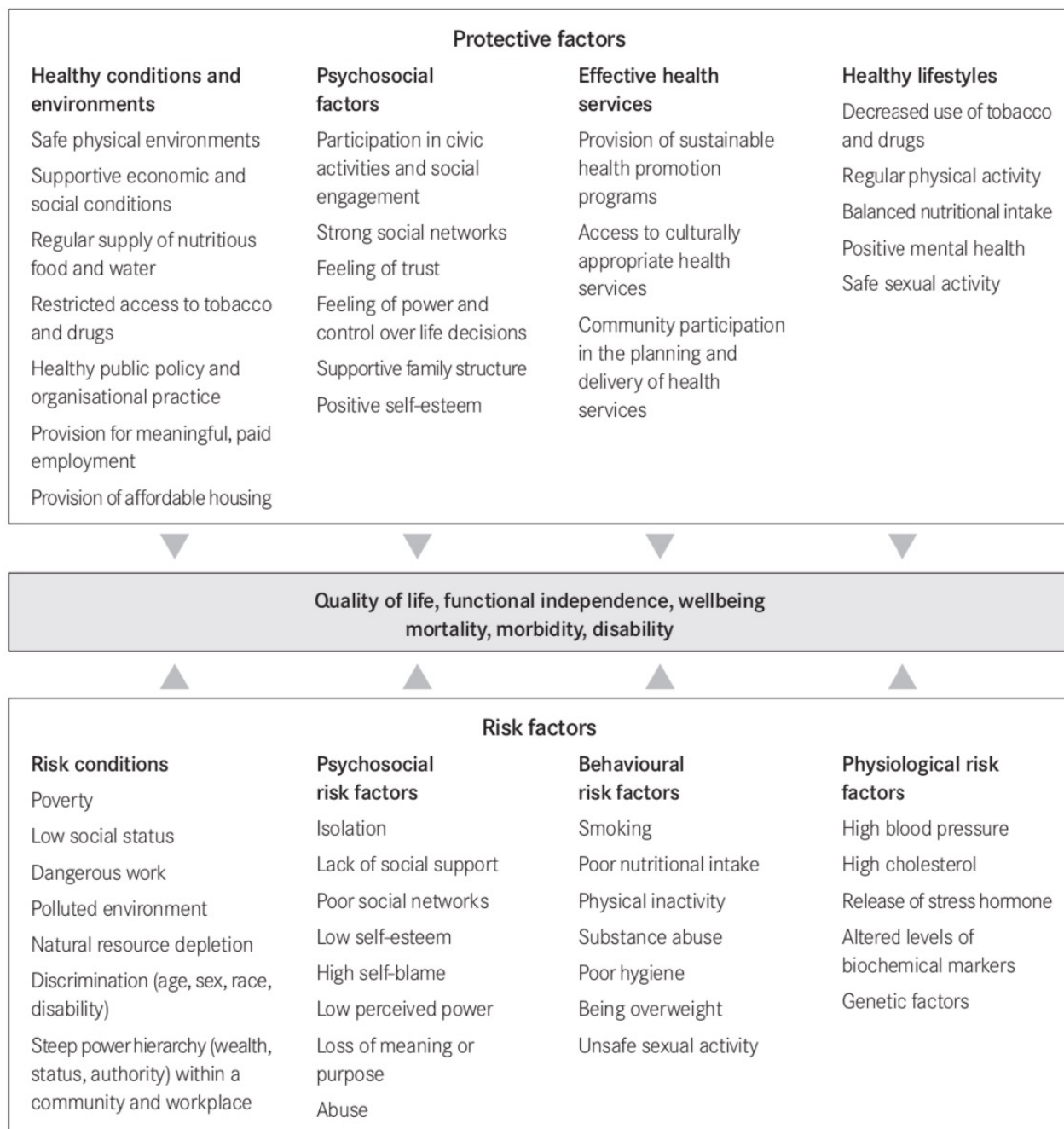---

### How to submit your completed activity sheet

Please save your completed activity sheet and then submit via email to **healthplan@shepparton.vic.gov.au** to have your ideas included in Council's Public Health and Wellbeing Action Plan.

To discover how Council is working towards creating a healthy, liveable regional city download a copy of Council's Public Health and Wellbeing Plan https://greatershepparton.com.au/community/safety-and-wellbeing/municipal-health-plan

*Our Privacy Statement www.greatershepparton.com.au/sundries/privacy*

An example of **protective** and **risk factors** affecting health and wellbeing are provided in the table below.

Figure 2: The factors affecting health and wellbeing[25]

| Protective factors | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Healthy conditions and environments** | **Psychosocial factors** | **Effective health services** | **Healthy lifestyles** |
| Safe physical environments | Participation in civic activities and social engagement | Provision of sustainable health promotion programs | Decreased use of tobacco and drugs |
| Supportive economic and social conditions | Strong social networks | Access to culturally appropriate health services | Regular physical activity |
| Regular supply of nutritious food and water | Feeling of trust | | Balanced nutritional intake |
| Restricted access to tobacco and drugs | Feeling of power and control over life decisions | Community participation in the planning and delivery of health services | Positive mental health |
| Healthy public policy and organisational practice | Supportive family structure | | Safe sexual activity |
| Provision for meaningful, paid employment | Positive self-esteem | | |
| Provision of affordable housing | | | |

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Quality of life, functional independence, wellbeing
mortality, morbidity, disability

▲　　　▲　　　▲　　　▲

| Risk factors | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Risk conditions** | **Psychosocial risk factors** | **Behavioural risk factors** | **Physiological risk factors** |
| Poverty | Isolation | Smoking | High blood pressure |
| Low social status | Lack of social support | Poor nutritional intake | High cholesterol |
| Dangerous work | Poor social networks | Physical inactivity | Release of stress hormone |
| Polluted environment | Low self-esteem | Substance abuse | Altered levels of biochemical markers |
| Natural resource depletion | High self-blame | Poor hygiene | Genetic factors |
| Discrimination (age, sex, race, disability) | Low perceived power | Being overweight | |
| Steep power hierarchy (wealth, status, authority) within a community and workplace | Loss of meaning or purpose | Unsafe sexual activity | |
| | Abuse | | |

Source: Victorian Government, Department of Health and Human Services (2013) Integrated Health Promotion Resource Kit, pg. 22
https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/about/publications/policiesandguidelines/Integrated-health-promotion-resource-kit---Entire-practice-guide

When working to try to solve a health issue through the delivery of public health programs and services, we need to understand that health issues are made up of many inter-related and connected factors. Sometime there is no single explanation for what is causing the health issue and no single solution that fits all people or all situations.

However, we know if we can reduce or eliminate people experiencing risk factors and increase people experiencing protective factors, health outcomes will improve.

## Activity

To demonstrate how protective and risk factors are inter-related and connected this activity involves mind-mapping a health or social issue.

### Step 1
Select a health or social issue you are concerned or passionate about.

### Step 2
Write your chosen health or social issue in the middle of a blank page. This will form the starting point of your mind-map and represents the issue you will explore.

### Step 3
Think about all the contributing factors that result in your chosen issue. You can refer to the table to guide you or come up with your own. The factors you choose will become the branches of your map that stem from your issue in the centre of your page. You can explore each factor in more detail by adding sub-branches. When you add a sub-branch, use key words or phrases. This will allow you to explore more factors and connections between factors.

### Step 4
See if you can make connections between your chosen factors and identify these as a positive + or negative - connection.

- A positive connection: an increase in 'x' leads to an increase in 'y' or a decrease in 'x' leads to a decrease in 'y'

- A negative connection: an increase in 'x' leads to a decrease in 'y' or a decrease in 'x' leads to an increase in 'y'

- Start to connect each of your factors on the map

### Step 5
Colour code your map into key themes to explore.

Congratulations! You have just demonstrated how complex a health or social issue can be by creating a web of contributing factors.

### Step 6
Which part of your mind map do you think is most important to address and make positive change? Place a circle around this section of your mind-map.

## Step 7

What ideas do you have that could be delivered in your community to address the factors you have identified on your mind-map? Name your idea and provide a brief description. See if you can provide at three ideas – the more ideas the better!

**Idea 1**

**Brief description**

**Idea 2**

**Brief description**

**Idea 3**

**Brief description**