



Social Model of Health – Dahlgren & Whitehead

Dahlgren and Whitehead (1991) talk of the layers of influence on health. They describe a social ecological theory to health. They attempt to map the relationship between the individual, their environment and disease. Individuals are at the centre with a set of fixed genes. Surrounding them are influences on health that can be modified. The first layer is personal behaviour and ways of living that can promote or damage health. –eg choice to smoke or not-Individuals are affected by friendship patterns and the norms of their community. The next layer is social and community influences, which provide mutual support for members of the community in unfavourable conditions. But they can also provide no support or have a negative effect. The third layer includes structural factors: housing, working conditions, access to services and provision of essential facilities.