

Why treat people...?

Introduction

This activity asks students to consider the premise behind the WHO publication "Closing the gap in a generation." They will be asked to rank the factors that affect health and wellbeing, and to justify their decision. This should provide a good opportunity for debate.

The full WHO document, as well as press release and summary information, can be found at:

http://www.who.int/social_determinants/thecommission/finalreport/en/index.html

The Activity

Show students the powerpoint which gives 9 different factors which may contribute to a person's health, wellbeing or illness. These have been identified by the WHO as affecting health inequalities throughout the world.

Students should then rank the factors using the 'diamond nine' template, with the importance of each factor decreasing as you go down the diamond. You may wish to give the students the factors on separate bits of paper initially to facilitate easy rearrangement.

Using their ranking, they should discuss how these factors affect health inequalities.

Resources

- 'diamond nine' template
- Powerpoint of factors.
- Cards with each factor on

Answers

There are no correct answers in this activity. Students will have their own opinions about the rank order of the importance of the factors, and their reasons for these opinions should be brought out in the discussion during the activity.

October 2008

How Science Works

Hc Society exercises controls on the development and application of science and technology.

Hg Many decisions about new technologies involve economic considerations, and raise social and political issues

Hi Decisions and opinions on ethical issues are based on values. An individual's view on an issue may be based upon a religious or moral position.

Hj Some decisions involve balancing the rights of certain individuals and groups against those of others.

Why treat people...?

The World Health Organisation have published a document called “Closing the gap in a generation: Health equity through action on the social determinants of health”.

“Social justice is a matter of life and death. It affects the way people live, their consequent chance of illness, and their risk of premature death. We watch in wonder as life expectancy and good health continue to increase in parts of the world and in alarm as they fail to improve in others.”

A child born in a Glasgow suburb can expect a life 28 years shorter than another living only 13 kilometres away. A girl in Lesotho is likely to live 42 years less than another in Japan. In Sweden, the risk of a woman dying during pregnancy and childbirth is 1 in 17 400; in Afghanistan, the odds are 1 in 8. Biology does not explain any of this. Instead, the differences between - and within - countries result from the social environment where people are born, live, grow, work and age.

WHO 2008

In the document they describe how the different factors listed below affect health, and give examples of places where these factors are being dealt with to improve health inequality.

1. Age, sex and hereditary factors
2. Agriculture and food production
3. Education
4. Health care services
5. Housing
6. Individual lifestyle factors
7. Unemployment
8. Water and Sanitation
9. Work Environment

The Activity

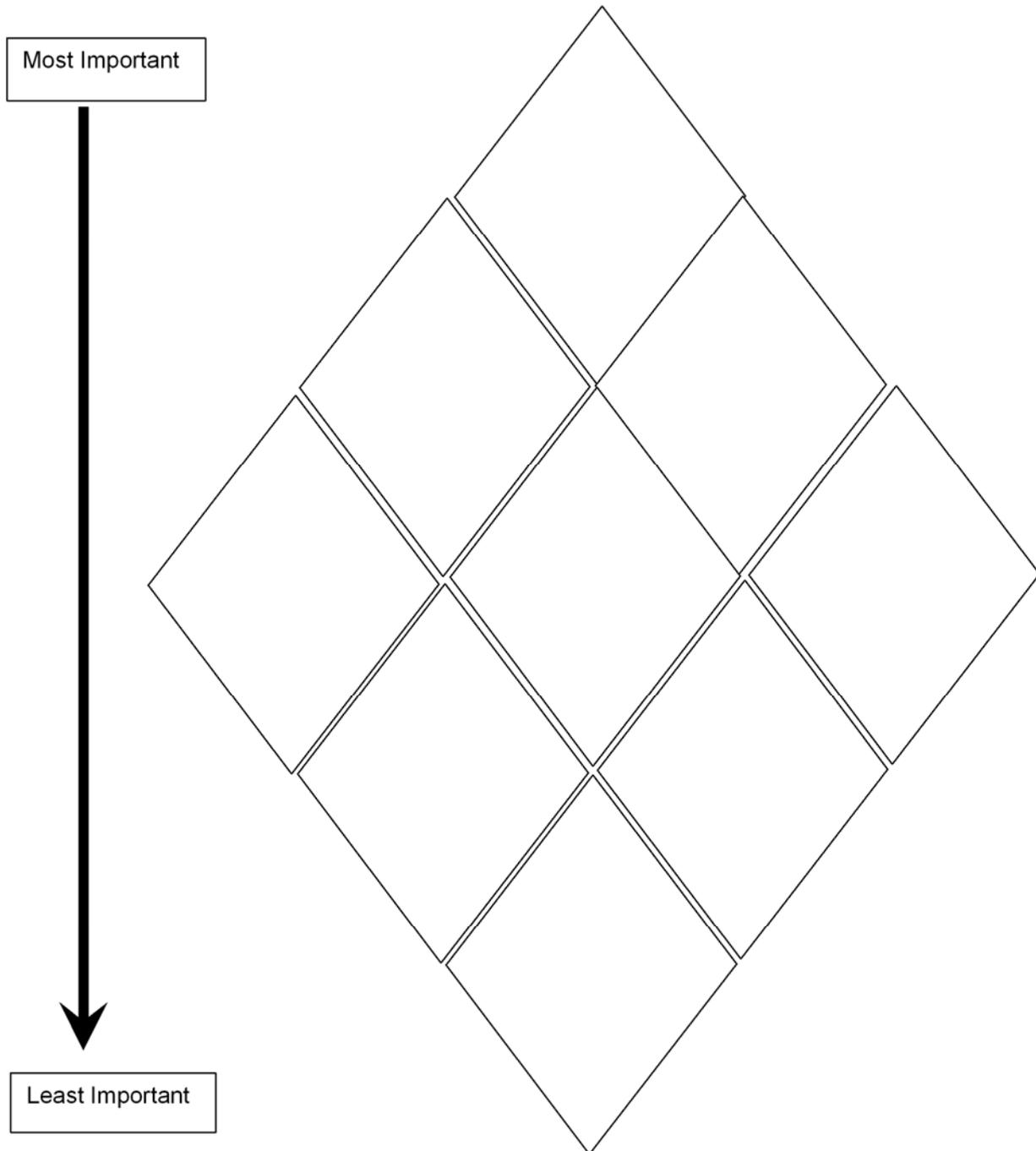
Sort these 9 factors into order of importance. Write them into the ‘diamond nine’ template.

In pairs or groups discuss

- why you have chosen that order
- how does each factor affect health?
- is it a personal or a social issue?
- how could the inequalities in that factor be reduced?

Diamond Nine

Write the factor you think is most important in causing health differences and inequalities at the top of the diamond, and the least important at the bottom. Now add the other factors in.



Age, sex and hereditary factors	Agriculture and food production	Education
Health care services	Housing	Individual lifestyle factors
Unemployment	Water and Sanitation	Work Environment