

AREAS OF STUDY

Students learn about:

Areas of study

- **Legal and social definition**

- Legal definition**

- Definition found in an official document released by a Government Department, NGO or used in a court of law.

- Examples

- The Aged**

- “The Aged are people aged 65 years or over” (Australian Bureau of Statistics)

- Homeless**

- “A person is homeless if, and only if, he or she has inadequate access to safe and secure housing.” (Supported Accommodation Assistance Program Act 1994)

QUESTION: Is there a legal definition for Youth?

- Social Definition**

- This is a definition accepted by the wider society. It can be positive and negative and ideally, a good student should be able to include both aspects.

- Example

- “The Youth are people aged 13-25 years. They are energetic and good with technology. Sometimes they are viewed as anti-authority and egocentric.

ACTIVITY: What could be a social definition for a group that you have/will study?

- **Identifying characteristics**

This is a generalized statement about the people that belong to the group. It often has points that relate to the social definition.

Examples

“The Disabled may have an impairment which restricts their ability to gain independence and employment.”

“The Youth are usually involved in education or at entry-level jobs in the workforce”.

ACTIVITY: Identify characteristics for a group that you have/will study.

- **Specific needs**

All groups are marginalised due to various aspects of their specific needs not being satisfied. Students need to demonstrate their understanding of the priority needs for each group by justifying the need.

The nine Specific Needs are

- Access to services
- Education
- Employment
- Financial support
- Health
- Housing
- Security and safety
- Self-esteem
- Sense of identity

Example

“3 specific needs for the Youth could be Education, Sense of Identity and Financial Support.”

ACTIVITY: Identify 3 specific needs for a group that you have/will study.

- **Government policies and regulations**

This includes laws passed in Parliament that either promote assistance to the group or put regulations in place to deny groups access to services/resources that will increase the safety of the population. Generally, policies are put into place to protect the group and/or wider society.

Examples “The Aged Care Act 1997 governs all aspects of the provision of residential care, flexible care and (Community Aged Care Packages) CACPs to older Australians. The Act sets out matters relating to the planning of services, the approval

of service providers and care recipients, payment of subsidies, and responsibilities of service providers.
(<http://www.seniors.gov.au/internet/seniors/publishing.nsf/Content/Aged+Care+Act>)

Home and Community Care Program (HACC) is jointly funded by Australian and state and territory governments. It provides community-based support services, such as home nursing, personal care, respite care, domestic help, meals and transport to people who can be appropriately cared for in the community and can therefore remain at home. The relevant law is the Home and Community Care Act 1985.

It is illegal to sell knives to people less than 16 years of age.

ACTIVITY: Identify 2 policies/laws relevant to a group that you have/will study.

• Community responsibility

Who in the community is responsible for the welfare of the group?

- The individual (first and foremost) who belongs to that group. The person needs to be well-informed and make good choices.
- The immediate family and other informal support offered by friends, neighbours and work colleagues
- Community organisations e.g. St. Vincent De Paul and the Salvation Army.
- Government Departments e.g. Centrelink, DoCS or Department of Housing

ACTIVITY: For some groups, there are specific organisations to assist the group. Provide examples for 3 groups.

• Rights of the group

These are specific issues for which this group has to fight for in order to achieve equality. It may include the right to a job or accommodation without discrimination, right to an education, right to express a culture and follow a belief or a right to be financially supported by the Government. Other possibilities could include the right to stay in your home and a right to adopt a child.

ACTIVITY: Identify 2 rights relevant to a group that you have/will study.

• Access to resources

This section can be done by addressing the 7 factors affecting access to resources in relation to the group in question.

- Education
- Ethnicity/culture
- Gender
- Socioeconomic status
- Location
- Age
- Disability

Similar to Specific Needs, it is important to be able to state at least 3 priority factors. Example "For rural people, Location, Education and Socioeconomic Status will all impact on their ability to access resources."

ACTIVITY: Identify 3 specific needs relevant to a group that you have/will study.

• Societal attitudes towards the group

This is the general way society views this group. Often it includes stereotypical judgements such as "Youth drive too fast" and "The Aged are a slow but significant menace on our roads."

Often the media contributes to the negative perception. A good student is able to identify both positive and negative societal attitudes held towards a group. This area is very similar to social definitions.

ACTIVITY: Identify 1 positive and 1 negative societal attitude towards a group that you have/will study.

- **Issues of concern for the group**

These issues are often apparent due to the media, a court case or a change in policy. For example, the dangers the Aged may pose to the community while driving has possibly grown from the news report of the Aged driver who drove into Sophie Delizio's preschool. Later, she was hit by a car driven by another elderly man. The Government, through the RTA, is now considering changes to the way the Aged are licensed.

This is an issue of concern because not only does it affect the Aged's access to resources (e.g. to shops, doctors, social events) but it also threatens their independence.

Often, issues of concern can be generated following reflection on Specific Needs. For example, most Socioeconomically Disadvantaged people require Financial Support. One of their issues of concern is that because most have no health insurance, they may have to wait a long time for elective surgery or dental work.

ACTIVITY: Identify 2 issues of concern relevant to a group that you have/will study.

- **Conflict between group and community interests**

In this section, you are identifying what this group may want to do which is not viewed positively by members of society. For example, youth may damage property and endanger people by skateboarding recklessly. They may have noisy parties that disturb other community members.

A cultural group may want a meeting place built in a suburban area which may conflict with community values.

The Homeless may want to sleep near shops under awnings which may deter shoppers.

Identify a source of conflict that arises between your group and the community.

- **Power within the group and the community**

We need to consider how powerful and organised this group is in lobbying Governments and other NGO's for change. Some groups are more cohesive and supportive of each other as a group, for example, Gays and Lesbians and Rural people.

Other groups are less organised and unstructured e.g. Socioeconomically Disadvantaged and the Homeless.

The ways a group can exert power is through voting, using the Internet to publicise a cause (e.g. Youth in Newcastle protesting against a proposed Lockdown of nightclubs) or by writing letters to Members of Parliament.

Some groups may appoint an advocate e.g. Michael J Fox speaking on Parkinson's Disease or may organise themselves into an organisation e.g. National Seniors Association.

Some groups may also lack power due to the nature of their condition e.g. an intellectually disabled person may not be heard due to communication issues. The Government appoints advocates and Guardians for some Disabled people so their views can be taken into account.

- **Positive contributions the group makes to the community**

What can this group offer that benefits the community? It is beneficial if you can explain and offer an example. The Aged contribute to volunteer work like Meals on Wheels by preparing and delivering the food. The Youth can also volunteer but they would be unlikely to do Meals on Wheels due to their involvement in school/education. They could be Youth Leaders at church, sports coaches and selling badges for Legacy.

It is more difficult to identify the positive contributions of some groups, for example, the Homeless and the Socioeconomically Disadvantaged. However, they provide opportunities for individuals and communities to offer compassion and charity and also, create employment opportunities for those who try to meet their needs e.g. Centrelink employees and those who work for the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program.

NOTE: The phrase is positive contributions the group makes to the community rather than the other way around.

- **extent to which community service groups assist in meeting the needs of specific groups**

In this section, you need to identify the community service groups involved and make an assessment of how well the needs of group members are met. For example, Youth may be assisted by Police-Citizens Youth Clubs for activities, local sports clubs and dance studios, Rotary for public speaking and overseas exchanges and church youth groups. You may conclude that Rural Youth have less opportunity to have their needs met by community service groups and also that youth from a socioeconomically disadvantaged background may also be unable to participate in recreational activities that cost money.

ACTIVITY: Identify 2 Community Service Groups that meet the needs of members of ONE of your groups. What needs do they meet? How does it impact the wellbeing of group members?

Students learn to:

- **discuss the rights, responsibilities and attitudes of individuals within groups to the wider community**

All groups have rights and with this come responsibilities. For example, a person with Bipolar has a right to live in the community but they have the responsibility to take their medication and continue under the instructions of their doctor. A Youth may be entitled to drive independently at 17 years but has the responsibility of obeying the road rules.

The attitudes of individuals within your nominated group should be tolerant and understanding towards the needs of others. This is not always the case. Youth can be intolerant of the Aged and be antagonistic towards Homeless and Gay and Lesbians. Members of the Rural group may feel that people in metropolitan areas do not appreciate their hardships and experiences. Members of some groups (for example Sole Parents and Disabled) may have a low self-esteem and a poor sense of identity as they believe that people in society do not value them as equals and as a result, may have resentment.

- **hypothesise about ways of resolving conflict that might exist between the group's needs and the expectations of the wider community**

We have identified the conflict between the group and the community in the earlier section. In this part, we need to suggest ways to resolve the conflict so the group members can meet its needs while not causing problems to the wider community. Youth need recreational pursuits such as skateboarding to meet self-esteem and sense of identity needs. However, youth like to use car parks and footpaths which lead to safety issues for other members of the community. However, by building skate parks and adopting regulations which prohibit skateboarding in a local mall, the local council can meet the needs of the Youth and resolve the conflict. Similarly, the Aged have a need for independence and want to continue driving for as long as they can to maintain social contact and attend medical appointments. This may pose a danger to the community. A hypothetical strategy is for the local community to fundraise for a bus to drive the Aged around or for the State Government to fund Taxi vouchers. Once again, the needs are met (Self-Esteem, Health) and the conflict in the community is resolved. In this section, you can refer to existing strategies or be innovative.

- **critically analyse the relationships between societal structures and the ability to satisfy needs**

To critically analyse a relationship, we need to show the relationship between the societal structures and their ability to meet needs. Societal structures include Media, Recreational Providers, Spiritual Structures, Welfare groups, Health supports, Education and Employment opportunities and the Legal system. The family can also be considered as a societal structure.

To answer a question on this point, students need to identify which societal structure meets a need and how effectively this is done.

For example, Youth have a variety of structures that meet their needs. A school provides Education which can lead to employment opportunities. Through recognition in sports, academics or leadership, a Youth may successfully meet the needs of Sense of Identity and Self-Esteem. Conversely, a family may offer Safety and Security to this group, but many Homeless youth have come from homes where these needs were not met.

In critically analysing, you need to show depth and logic. For example "Youth Allowance paid by Centrelink may permit a youth to continue to tertiary education which may meet needs of Employment following completion of the course. This will enable the person to provide their own Financial Support. However (this is critical analysis), the amount paid is insufficient to meet anything more than basic needs and as a result, the Youth may be unable to complete the course.

Aged people have access to Nursing Homes which may meet their needs for Housing and Health. However (this is critical analysis), Sense of Identity and Self-Esteem may be threatened through institutionalized living arrangements. Also, nursing homes are a heavy burden on Australia's Health system.

A three stage process can be used here.

- Identify the relevant societal structures
- Identify the needs met by these structures
- Critically analyse -- How well do these structures meet the needs?

For ONE group, complete this process. Often a societal structure meets more than one need.

- **propose modifications to the social environment that facilitate the satisfaction of the group's needs**

What is the social environment? This is where a person works, rests and plays (Mars Bar Ad). In other words, their home, workplace and where they interact in the

community. Students need to consider what changes are needed so group members are better able to meet their needs.

Modifications may include:

- Legal changes e.g. Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 and Equal Employment Opportunity Act which can assist members of a variety of groups to meet needs of Education, Employment and Financial Support and Housing.
 - Physical changes e.g. kerb cuts and ramps to enable access to shops by physically disabled people. They can meet needs of Access to Services and Self-Esteem.
 - Technological changes e.g. use of motorised wheelchairs, pedestrian crossings for hearing impaired people who may use the touch sensors or visually impaired people who may listen for the higher frequency sound.
 - Educational interventions e.g. using anti-bullying strategies in schools to help youth meet Safety and Security issues. Also, school students who complete courses in Aged Care or interact with the Aged at a Nursing Home will generally have an increased tolerance, understanding and respect for this group.
 - Vocational changes e.g. changes in work patterns may allow Sole Parents, Disabled, Aged and Chronically Ill to meet Employment, Financial Support and Self-Esteem issues
- **think critically about equity issues faced by groups and formulate management strategies to address them**

Equity is a key concept in this core. Equity refers to fairness and justice and many of these groups are at disadvantage. Areas of inequity that can be discussed include:-

- Socioeconomic (financial) inequity – many of the groups
- Health inequities – Chronically ill, Rural, Socioeconomically disadvantaged
- Social inequities (Social stigma and negative stereotypes) – Aged, Youth, Disabled, Homeless, Sole Parents
- Political inequities- Gay and Lesbian, Cultural groups
- Geographical (remote location) inequities- Rural
- Educational inequities- Socioeconomically Disadvantaged, Rural, Cultural groups and Homeless
- Discrimination due to racial, age, sexual and gender issues
- Unequal access to resources and services e.g. employment, accommodation, transport

A management strategy is a plan or action to achieve a goal. In this section, the student could discuss what is already in place or develop a plan. This could be using an existing law or proposing change in a law, a new policy or government funding to meet the need. An example could be that the Disabled may have trouble accessing employment. A current strategy is to decrease the cost to the employer through subsidies. Another strategy could be to decrease the cost to employers of training an intellectually disabled person by having an outside trainer learn the job and break it down to a level an intellectually disabled person could understand.

Another example could be used to decrease the educational inequities that Rural youth face. They often have inexperienced teachers who stay for a minimal time until they transfer to a metropolitan area. A strategy which is currently in place allows for experienced teachers to be paid more money than their metropolitan colleagues. In

this way, Rural youth have the benefits of experienced teachers. Using technology, e.g. videoconferencing and online courses, could allow these young people to access more subjects which could increase retention rates and interest in education.