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## What is a Health Promotion Officer?

A Health Promotion Officer (HPO) is a health professional specialising in improving and maintaining the health of populations and reducing health inequities among population groups. Health promotion includes action directed at strengthening the skills and capabilities of individuals, as well as action directed towards changing social, environmental and economic conditions at the broader level.

## Roles of a Health Promotion Officer

The Health Promotion (HP) profession has evolved alongside and in response to the international health promotion movement and the broader new public health movement eg World Health Organization's Ottawa Charter, 1986; Jakarta Declaration, 1997; Bangkok Charter for Health Promotion (2005). The Ottawa Charter articulates key action areas for health promotion including: building healthy public policy, creating supportive environments, strengthening community action, developing personal skills, and reorienting health services

HPOs are responsible for the planning, implementation and evaluation of health promotion projects using a variety of strategies, including health education strategies, mass media strategies, community development and community engagement processes, advocacy and lobbying strategies, social marketing strategies, health policy strategies, structural and environmental strategies. Workforce development and capacity building strategies are also important components of health promotion practice.

## Career Opportunities

Many HPOs are employed by health departments or health services located in the community. HPOs work as designated project managers, project officers, project consultants, evaluation and research officers, communication officers. All these roles have the common aim of improving the health of the population and reducing health inequities among population groups.

## Qualifications Required

Entry level HPOs are required to have a tertiary degree (or equivalent) in health promotion or a relevant health or social science discipline (eg. psychology, public health, nursing, medicine, communication, nutrition, sociology, social work, occupational therapy, education). Many senior HPOs also have additional degrees including Post-Graduate or Master of Health Promotion or Master of Public Health and doctorate degrees.

## Supervision provided

A comprehensive orientation program is provided for all new staff members with ongoing support.

## Personal skills required of a Health Promotion Officer

- Good oral and written communication skills
- Good negotiation skills
- Organisational ability
- Able to work as part of a team
- Able to work independently with instructions