

SECTION

6

CAREER PATHWAYS



ACADEMIC AND CAREER PATHWAYS IN EDUCATION

Health Education Pathways

Physical Education Pathways

Sports Excellence Pathways

INTRODUCTION

As we move into Section 6, we will focus on career pathways and explore the variety of opportunities in health, physical education, and sports. This section will help you connect what you've learned to potential careers, showing how your interests and skills can lead to fulfilling professions. We will begin by looking at careers in the health and fitness industries, covering roles like educators and practitioners who promote well-being. You'll explore professions such as health educators, public health experts, and wellness coaches, learning how they help communities live healthier lives.

Next, we will examine careers in physical education, including PE teachers, coaches, and fitness trainers, and discuss how they inspire others to reach their fitness goals. We'll cover the required qualifications, skills, and career prospects, giving you insights into the rewards and challenges these careers offer.

Finally, we'll dive into sports careers such as coaching, sports science, and athletic training, and explore the support systems that help athletes perform at their best.

Throughout this section, we will engage in discussions, real-life case studies, and hear from industry professionals, giving you a chance to reflect on your strengths and envision your future career.

At the end of this section, you will be able to:

- Identify career pathways in health education
- Discuss career pathways in health education
- Discuss career pathways in physical education
- Identify career pathways in physical education
- Identify and discuss career pathways in sports excellence

Key Ideas

- A career refers to the sequence of employment, education or other professional activities that an individual engages in to pursue their long-term goals and aspirations and are driven by personal interests, skills and ambitions.
- A profession is a specific type of career that requires specialised knowledge, training and expertise and is regulated by professional organisations or governing bodies that establish standards, codes of conduct and educational requirements for individuals to practice in that field.
- Choosing a career that aligns with your interests has many benefits.
- A career in health education refers to a training path or profession that is centered on promoting, maintaining and improving the health and well-being of individuals and communities.
- Career pathways in physical education refer to the various routes that individuals can take to pursue different roles, positions and specialisations in physical education. Career pathways in physical education involve a range of professions and opportunities related to promoting physical activity, sports and movement.
- Career Pathways in Sports Excellence refers to the structured and progressive routes that individuals can follow to achieve high performance and professional success in sports.

INTRODUCTION TO THE CONCEPT OF CAREER PATHWAYS

What is a Career?

A career refers to the sequence of employment, education or other professional activities that an individual engages in to pursue their long-term goals and aspirations and are driven by personal interests, skills and ambitions.

As you commence your career, you might start with a small role like an internship, then move on to become a manager, and one day, you could be a director. Your career is shaped by what you love to do, the skills you have, and what you want to achieve. Remember, your career is a journey, not just a single job.

In summary, a career refers to the overall list of jobs and occupations a person pursues at certain points or throughout their life.

You're on the right path just by thinking about your career. Keep exploring, and great things will come your way!

What is a Profession?

A profession is a specific type of career that requires specialised knowledge, training and expertise and is regulated by professional organisations or governing bodies that establish standards, codes of conduct and educational requirements for individuals to practice in that field.

Think of it as becoming an expert in a particular field. For example, becoming a doctor, lawyer, engineer, teacher, or accountant.

A profession is associated with a specific area, such as medicine, law, engineering, teaching or accounting.

To work in a profession, you often need to pass exams, earn certifications, and follow certain rules set by professional organisations, like continuous professional development.

All professionals have a career, but not all careers are considered professions.

Differences between a career and a profession

1. Scope and specialisation

- **Career:** A career is the name for any occupation and covers many different jobs and industries. It allows you to explore different fields throughout your working life.
- **Profession:** A profession is a more focused and specialised area within a career. It is like choosing a specific field, such as medicine, law, engineering, teaching or accounting and becoming an expert in that area.

2. Education and qualifications

- **Career:** In many careers, formal education or specific qualifications may not be required. You don't always need formal education or specific qualifications to start a career. You can enter the field with different levels of education or training.
- **Profession:** Professions usually require higher education, like university degrees or specialised certifications. To practice a profession legally, you often need to meet strict educational and licensing requirements.

3. Ethical standards and regulation

- **Career:** In a career, you have your own personal values and ethics. There may not be formal code of conduct or rules that govern your actions.
- **Profession:** Professions have professional organisations or regulatory bodies that establish rules, ethical codes and guidelines. Professionals must follow these standards to ensure that is highly respected.

4. Public service and responsibility

- **Career:** Some careers are focused on serving the public, while others may focus more on individual success, personal growth or making money.
- **Profession:** Professions involve serving the public or society in some way. Professionals have a higher level of responsibility because they are entrusted with the well-being, health, safety, progress or legal matters of others.

5. Progression and advancement

- **Career:** Careers provide flexibility in terms of growth, transitions and changing job roles or industries. You can explore different paths and make changes along the way as you gain more experience.
- **Profession:** Professions often have well-defined career paths with clear steps for advancement. There are structured hierarchies, levels of expertise and opportunities to specialise within the profession.

Importance of Choosing a Career That Aligns with Your Interests

Choosing a career that matches your interests and passions is key to a fulfilling and successful life. Here's why:

- i. Job satisfaction:** When you pursue a career that aligns with your interests, skills and passions, you are more likely to enjoy your work. This leads to higher job satisfaction and overall happiness in your professional life.
- ii. Motivation and drive:** Having a career that connects with your interests, skills and passions gives you the motivation and drive to excel in your field. You will be more interested in learning and improving your abilities.
- iii. Increased productivity:** When you are engaged in a work which you genuinely enjoy, you are more likely to be productive. Your passion and energy will help you go the extra mile and achieve better results.
- iv. Personal fulfilment:** Choosing a career that aligns with your interests, skills and passion allows you to pursue something meaningful to you. This leads to a feeling of personal fulfilment and a greater sense of purpose in your professional life.
- v. Better performance:** When you work in a field that matches your skills and passion, you are more likely to perform at your best. Your natural abilities will be put to good use, enabling you to excel and achieve success.
- vi. Continuous learning:** When you choose a career based on your interests, skills and passion, you are more likely to enjoy the learning process. You'll have a natural curiosity and drive to expand your knowledge and skills in your chosen field.
- vii. Long-term commitment:** A career that aligns with your interests, skills, and passions is more likely to keep you engaged and committed in the long run. You'll be motivated to invest time and effort into developing your career path.
- viii. Resilience and perseverance:** Pursuing a career that you are passionate about helps you develop resilience and perseverance. When faced with challenges or setbacks, your passion will drive you to overcome the obstacles and continue moving forward.
- ix. Greater job opportunities:** Choosing a career aligned with your interests, skills and passions opens a world of job opportunities. You will have a better chance to excel in your field and stand out among others, increasing your chances of finding rewarding employment.

- x. Work-life balance:** When your career aligns with your interests, skills, and passions, you'll find it easier to find a balance between work and personal life. Enjoying your work makes it less likely to feel overburdened or burnt out.
- xi. Positive impact:** Working in a field that aligns with your interests and passions allows you to make a positive impact on the world. You will have a sense of satisfaction and purpose for contributing to a cause or industry that matters to you.
- xii. Creativity and innovation:** Pursuing a career that aligns with your interests and passions encourages creativity and innovation. Your interests will drive you to think outside the box, bringing fresh ideas and solutions to your work.
- xiii. Networking opportunities:** When you are passionate about your field, you will naturally seek opportunities to connect with others who share your interests. This can lead to valuable professional networks and collaborations.
- xiv. Personal growth:** Choosing a career that aligns with your interests, skills and passions provides ample opportunities for personal growth. You will continuously learn, develop new skills and grow as a professional.

You've done a great job exploring these concepts. Remember, your career is a journey that is all about discovering what you love and working hard to achieve your dreams. Keep up your enthusiasm and hard work!

Activity 6.1

With a partner, differentiate between a career and a profession. Note two examples of each below:

A career is:

Examples include:

A profession is:

Examples include:

Activity 6.2

In a group, research using online tools or your school library the importance of choosing a career that aligns with your interests, skills and passion.

Write down your findings and share your thoughts with your classmates.

Activity 6.3

Career pathway role play

- In your group, select a career pathway in health, physical education, or sports (e.g., PE teacher, fitness trainer, health educator) and write it down.
- Research using online tools or your school library the daily tasks of your chosen career.
- Act out a typical day in the life of the chosen career. This will include tasks, interactions with clients, responsibilities, rewards, and challenges they might face.
- Based on your understanding of the career, develop a career plan in physical education, health or sports that you can build on as you progress in your education.

Note: Take into consideration a career which aligns best with your interests and skills

Activity 6.4

Career pathway debate

Topic: "Is a career in physical education more fulfilling than a career in health education?"

- Research the pros and cons of different careers in physical education and health education.
- Present a one and half page argument supporting your decision on the topic (either for or against the motion).
- Present your debate in class or with a peer.
- Take feedback and make necessary adjustments as take home notes.

Let's now look in more detail on careers in health education. Have you ever thought about being the one to guide others toward healthier lives?

We will explore careers like health educators, wellness coaches, and public health professionals. The roles of these professionals include sharing knowledge and inspiring positive health behaviours. We'll look at the qualifications needed and the benefits of working within these professions.

Let's discover how you can make a difference in people's lives through health education!

INTRODUCTION TO THE CONCEPT OF CAREER PATHWAYS IN HEALTH EDUCATION

Careers in Health Education

What is a career in health education?

A career in health education refers to a training path or profession that is centered on promoting, maintaining and improving the health and well-being of individuals and communities.

This type of career typically involves working in various areas of the healthcare sector or related fields where individuals can apply their knowledge of health, fitness and wellness to positively impact other people's lives.

Careers in health education

The following are some examples of careers/professions in health education that you can pursue:

- i. **Nutritionist/Dietitian:** A nutritionist/dietitian is a health professional who specialises in food and nutrition. They advise and guide on healthy eating habits, develop meal plans and help manage medical conditions through nutrition.



Fig. 6.1: A Nutritionist/Dietitian

- ii. Health Educator:** A health educator is responsible for promoting and educating individuals and communities about health-related issues. They develop programmes and materials to provide information on topics such as disease prevention, healthy lifestyle choices and healthcare resources.
- iii. Physical Therapist:** A physical therapist helps individuals recover from injuries or disabilities through physical rehabilitation. They assess patients' conditions, develop personalised treatment plans and guide them through exercises and therapies to improve mobility, reduce pain and restore function.



Fig. 6.2: *A Physical Therapist Helping Her Patient to Recover*

- iv. Sports Medicine Physician:** A sports medicine physician is a doctor who specialises in the diagnosis and treatment of injuries and medical conditions related to sports and exercise. They provide medical care to athletes, develop training and injury prevention programmes and may perform surgical procedures if necessary.



Fig. 6.3: *A Sports Medicine Physician Treating an Injured Footballer (Thomas Partey)*

- v. **Sports Psychologist:** A sports psychologist focuses on the psyche and mental strength of athletes for a successful performance. They work with athletes to enhance their mental skills, develop strategies for performance improvement, manage stress and anxiety and promote overall well-being in sports.



Fig. 6.4: A Sports Psychologist Having a Talk with His Athlete

- i. **Corporate Wellness Coordinator:** A corporate wellness coordinator develops and implements health and wellness programmes in organisations and workplaces. They educate employees on healthy lifestyle choices, organise fitness activities, conduct health screening and promote a culture of well-being in the workplace.
- ii. **Public Health Officer:** A public health officer is responsible for protecting and improving the health of a community or population. They develop and implement public health policies, conduct disease surveillance, coordinate health promotion and prevention programmes and respond to public health emergencies.



Fig. 6.5: A Public Health Officer Attending to a Client

iii. Researcher in Exercise Science: Researchers in exercise science conduct scientific studies and experiments to expand the understanding of human movement, exercise physiology and their effects on health and performance. They contribute to advancements in exercise-related knowledge and may work in academia or research institutions.

Benefits of a career in health education

Careers in health education promote an individual's personal health and well-being. They also contribute to the health of communities and society as a whole. They address various aspects of physical, mental and emotional health and play a vital role in creating healthier and more vibrant societies.

Examples of specific benefits from careers in health education:

- i. You can develop lifelong fitness habits, learn teamwork and sportsmanship. Your knowledge of this helps prevent health issues associated with a sedentary (inactive) lifestyle.
- ii. It contributes to disease prevention, weight management and overall well-being by educating individuals about balanced diets and the impact of nutrition on health.
- iii. People improve their physical fitness, reduce the risk of chronic diseases and enhance their quality of life by engaging in regular exercise.
- iv. It assists in sharing accurate health information, which empowers people to make informed decisions that positively impact their well-being and prevent health issues.
- v. It assists people to regain functional independence and mobility. It also helps in enhancing their overall quality of life after injuries or surgeries.
- vi. It contributes to the prevention of epidemics, promotes healthy lifestyles and ensures overall improvement of community well-being.
- vii. At workplaces, the services of health staff help reduce health-related dangers and improve employee morale and productivity through regular physical exercises.

Activity 6.5

Role model a career in health

- Identify any career in health (health educators, nutritionists, physical therapists, etc.).
- Take into consideration your skills and interest before choosing your career.
- Consider what dress and equipment may be necessary for this career, and depict your chosen career identified above.
- Model the role and responsibilities of the chosen career to your peers.

- Take observation comments from peers and make adjustments where necessary.

Based on your research into your chosen career, answer the following questions:

1. How can your chosen career benefit an individual?

2. How can your chosen career benefit your community?

3. How can your chosen career benefit your country?

Share your thoughts with your group.

Activity 6.6

Discuss with your classmates how a sports team in your school can benefit directly or indirectly from the careers identified in the previous activity.

Make notes below:

Activity 6.7

Community interviews

- Visit your school or community health centre.
- Interview health workers on their roles.
- Based on the information gathered create a short video or audio podcast sharing what you learned about these careers.
- Share your understanding on the practical implications of these careers in health education with the your class.

Top tip: Prepare your questions in advance of the interview. Share your questions with your teacher before visiting the health centre.

Let's now shift or focus to the professionals who keep us moving such as PE teachers, coaches, fitness trainers, and more. These careers are perfect for those who love sports, exercise, and motivating others.

We will discuss the various career paths you can take, the skills you will need, and the potential for career growth. Whether you are interested in teaching students, coaching teams, or training individuals, there's a place for you in this field. Let's get excited about the possibilities in physical education!

CAREER PATHWAYS IN PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Careers/Professions In PE

Career pathways in physical education refer to the various routes that individuals can take to pursue different roles, positions and specialisations in physical education. Career pathways in physical education involve a range of professions and opportunities related to promoting physical activity, sports and movement.

These various career pathways contribute to the growth of sports, the development of an individual's skills and character and the promotion of an active lifestyle. Each pathway offers unique opportunities for professionals to make a positive impact in their respective roles.

The following are examples of career pathways in physical education:

- a. Fitness Centre Manager:** Fitness centre managers oversee the operations and staff of a fitness facility. They are responsible for managing the facility, ensuring equipment are well-maintained, organising fitness programmes and creating a welcoming environment for members.



Fig. 6.6: *A Fitness Centre Manager Assisting His Client*

- b. Recreation Director** Recreation directors plan and coordinate recreational activities and programmes for individuals or groups. They work in settings such as community centres or resorts. They also organise events like sports tournaments, arts and crafts workshops and other leisure activities.
- c. Sports Journalist** Sports journalists report on sporting events, athletes and related news. They gather information, conduct interviews and write articles or produce broadcast materials for various media outlets such as newspapers, magazines, websites, radio or television.



Fig. 6.7: *Kwabena Yeboah - A Celebrated Ghanaian Sports Journalist*

d. Sports Marketing Specialist

Sports marketing specialists promote and advertise sports teams, events or products. They develop marketing strategies, create campaigns and utilise various channels to engage with target audiences and drive interest in sports-related activities.



Fig. 6.8: A sports marketing consultant with a client

e. Sports Events Planner

Sports events planners coordinate and manage sporting events such as tournaments, races or competitions. They handle logistics, budgeting and marketing, ensuring smooth execution and an enjoyable experience for participants and spectators.

f. Strength and Conditioning Specialist

Strength and conditioning specialists design and implement exercise programmes to enhance athletic performance. They work closely with athletes to improve their strength, endurance, flexibility and overall physical fitness through tailored training plans.



Fig. 6.9: A Strength and Conditioning Trainer

g. Exercise Equipment Designer

Exercise equipment designers create and develop fitness equipment and tools used in exercise and training. They combine knowledge of biomechanics, ergonomics and user needs to design safe, effective and innovative exercise equipment.



Fig. 6.10: *Physical Exercise Equipment*

h. Physical Education Teacher

A physical education teacher instructs students in physical fitness, sports and healthy living. They develop lesson plans, lead activities and educate students on the importance of exercise and overall well-being.



Fig. 6.11: *A PEH Teacher with His Class of Learners*

i. Sports Coach

A sports coach will provide instruction and guidance to athletes or sports teams to improve their skills, strategy and performance. They design training programmes, organise practice sessions and motivate athletes to achieve their full potential.



Fig. 6.12: *A football coach*

j. Personal Trainer

Personal trainers work one-on-one with individuals and groups to develop customised exercise programmes and provide guidance in achieving fitness goals. They assess clients' needs, provide instruction on proper techniques and offer continuous support and motivation.

k. Exercise Physiologist

Exercise physiologists study how the body responds and adapts to exercise. They assess individuals' fitness levels and prescribe exercise programmes. They also provide guidance on optimising performance, managing health conditions and preventing injuries.



Fig. 6.13: *An Exercise Physiologist and His Client*

l. Physical Trainer

Physical trainers specialise in preventing, diagnosing and treating sports-related injuries. They work with athletes to provide immediate care, develop rehabilitation plans and promote overall wellness and injury prevention strategies.

m. Professional Athlete

This is a career that individuals with special sports talents and who are highly skilled take up to compete in various fields of sports both locally and internationally. Professional athletes compete in sports such as athletics, cycling, water sports, gymnastics, weightlifting, combat sports, football, skating, etc.

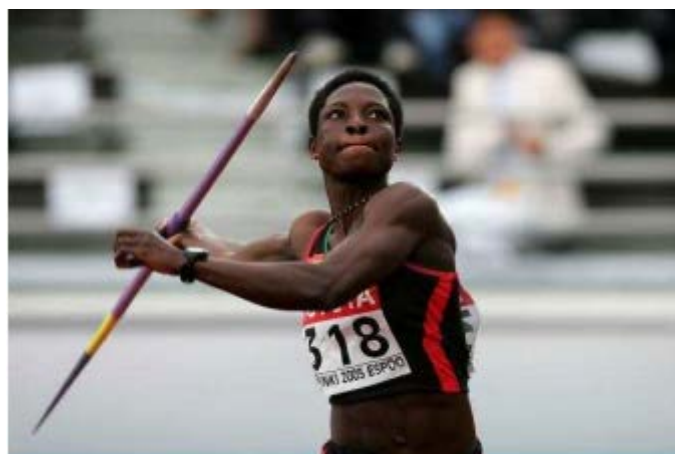


Fig. 6.14: *Ghana's Heptathlete – Margaret Simpson, Throwing Javelin*

Activity 6.8

Career Exploration Task

- Identify a specific career in physical education you are interested in (sports coach, physical trainer, sports journalist etc.).
- Research your chosen career.
- Identify a professional from your community who works in your chosen career.
- Prepare questions in advance and engage with the professional in a question and answer session.

Based on your own research and discussion, complete the following:

What can you do to attain this career? Include four qualities required to be successful in this career. Make notes below:

My chosen career:

- Join with four of your classmates. Discuss their chosen careers, including the role of the career and what you can do to attain it. Make notes below:

My classmates chosen careers:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

Reflect on what you have learned from your classmates and professionals in your community. How has this influenced your thinking about potential careers in physical education. Make notes below:

Activity 6.9

Career Pathway Mapping

- Choose a specific career in physical education and create a pathway map
- Outline the education, certification, skills, and experiences needed to achieve in that career.
- Use charts, diagrams, or digital tools to design and present your pathway maps.
- Share your pathway maps with the class, discussing similarities and differences between various careers and the importance of planning for the future.

Activity 6.10

In your group, evaluate three careers in physical education that are not currently common in Ghana.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

What are the benefits to sports development in Ghana of promoting these careers?

Benefits to sports development in Ghana

With your group, note ideas on how these careers can be made more common in Ghana?

These careers can be promoted by:

Activity 6.11

Portfolio Creation

- Compile evidence of your skills and experiences related to physical education.
- Use the information to create a portfolio that includes projects, activities, and reflections related to physical education. This portfolio should showcase your interests, skills, and career goals.
- Include in your portfolio: certificates, photos, and written reflections of your experiences.
- Compare your portfolio with a classmate.
- Make the necessary adjustments in your portfolio for class discussion.

Activity 6.12

Use your portfolio to participate in a mock job interview for a position related to physical education. Remember to showcase your knowledge and enthusiasm for the field.

Use the space below to reflect on your interview. What went well and what will you change?

Are you clear on the qualifications, skills, benefits and challenges of working in physical education?

What does it take to excel, from acquiring the right certifications to developing the necessary personal qualities?

This is your opportunity to ask questions, share your thoughts, and get a clearer picture of what it takes to succeed in physical education careers. Write your reflections in your notebook.

CAREER BENEFITS IN PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Benefits of career pathways in physical education

Some of the benefits of career pathways in physical education are:

- i. **Development of skills and attitudes:** Physical education plays a pivotal role in shaping learners' attitudes towards physical activity and sports. They teach fundamental movement skills, teamwork and sportsmanship, contributing to the holistic development of learners.
- ii. **Training and mentorship:** Physical education enables coaches to provide specialised training, guidance and mentorship to athletes. With this training, they become role models and help athletes reach their full potential. They also enhance their skills and excel in their chosen sports.
- iii. **Safety and well-being of athletes:** Through physical education, athletic trainers prevent, diagnose and treat injuries related to physical activity and sports. Their expertise ensures the safety and well-being of athletes, enabling them to perform at their best.
- iv. **Event administration and management:** Physical education trains sports administrators to manage sports programmes, events and facilities. They handle logistics, budgets, scheduling and coordination, ensuring smooth operations within the sports industry.
- v. **Specialised education and curriculum development:** Curriculum developers are trained to design educational programmes that align with the latest teaching strategies and educational standards. This contributes to the improvement of the physical education curriculum and enhances the learning experience for learners.
- vi. **Sports events coordination:** Sports events coordinators organise and manage sports competitions, tournaments and events. They create engaging and memorable experiences for participants and spectators alike.



Fig. 6.15: A Well-Organised Sports Programme

- vii. **Sports marketing:** Professionals in this field are equipped with the knowledge and skills to promote sports events, teams and athletes to the public and to keep them financially sustained. This contributes to the growth and popularity of sports by creating effective business and marketing campaigns through positive public engagements.
- viii. **Promotion of sports to the public:** Physical education trains media professionals to cover sports events through various mediums, including television, radio and online platforms. This plays a crucial role in bringing sports to everybody in every part of the world.



Fig. 6.16: A Journalist with a Former Ghana Black Stars Goalkeeper (Richard Kingson)

- ix. **Meeting the psychological needs of athletes:** With the aid of physical education, sports psychologists are trained to work with athletes to enhance mental strength, focus and performance. Their guidance contributes to athletes' psychological well-being and competitive spirit.
- x. **Studying the science of sports:** Researchers and analysts are educated to study sports performance, trends and data. These insights help coaches, athletes and sports organisations make informed decisions to improve strategies and training programmes.
- xi. **Making sports accessible for all:** In order to open up sports to all, physical education trains specialists in adaptive physical education to cater to individuals with disabilities. This provides tailored physical activity programmes that promote inclusion, independence and overall well-being.



Fig. 6.17: Sports for All, All for Sports (A Paralympic Athlete)

- xii. Providing entertainment:** Physical education trains recreational programme coordinators who design and manage recreational programmes. These professionals help to entertain and encourage people of all ages and all walks of life to engage in physical activities for leisure and enjoyment.



Fig. 6.18: Ghanaian Musician (Stonebwoy) Performing at the FIFA Fan Festival in the Qatar 2022 World Cup

Activity 6.13

Explain how an identified career in physical education can help to improve the health of children, the youth and the elderly.

My chosen career is:

This improves the health of children, the youth and the elderly by:

Children:

Youth:

Elderly:

Activity 6.14

Your group has been tasked with organising a sports festival.

- Assign a role to each member of your group (e.g., event coordinator, logistics manager, budget officer, marketing specialist).
- Work together to outline the steps needed to organise the festival, including:
 - i. Selecting a theme for the event (e.g., track and field super carnival, football gala, tournament).
 - ii. Planning logistics (e.g., venue, equipment and schedule).
 - iii. Creating a budget and identifying potential sponsors.

- iv. Developing a marketing plan to promote the event.
- As a group, present your plan to the class.

Activity 6.15

- With a partner discuss the various careers in sports management and administration.
- Use key skills such as leadership, communication, financial planning, and strategic thinking to guide in your discussion.
- Identify which of these skills are most critical for specific careers (e.g., the importance of leadership in being a sports coach or communication in sports marketing).
- Analyse how these skills apply to real-world scenarios.
- Reflect on which skills you believe are most important and why.
- Write down how these skills can help you pursue a career in physical education.

Activity 6.16

- Identify and write down opportunities for the promotion of sports in your school, community and Ghana at large.
- Use the information to design an advocacy plan to address these gaps. The plan should include clear objectives (e.g., increasing student participation), Strategies (e.g., social media campaigns, school-wide events), resources needed (e.g., funding, partnerships with local sports clubs), timeline for implementation.
- Compare your advocacy plan with a classmate.
- Ask questions or offer suggestions and make necessary adjustments to your plans for improvement.

Take home activity:

Use your knowledge of careers in physical education to write a proposal to the Minister for Youth and Sports on why these careers should be given critical attention to help reduce youth unemployment in Ghana.

It's time to switch our focus to look at the exciting world of sports excellence. From sports coaching to sports science and athletic training, these careers are all about pushing the boundaries of human performance. We will learn about the support systems that help athletes achieve their best, including the role of nutritionists, physiotherapists, and sports psychologists. We will also discuss how to start a career in these fields and the various opportunities for specialisation.

IDENTIFICATION AND DISCUSSION OF CAREER PATHWAYS IN SPORTS EXCELLENCE

Career Pathways in Sports Excellence

Career Pathways in Sports Excellence refers to the structured and progressive routes that individuals can follow to achieve high performance and professional success in sports.

a. Stages to attaining sports excellence

Athletes who attain sporting excellence go through a series of stages or milestones over years of practice and dedication before getting to this level.

The typical stages are as follows:

- i. **Talent identification:** This is the process of recognising and nurturing young athletes with the potential for high performance.
- ii. **Skill development:** This involves structured training and coaching programmes designed to improve athletes' technical, tactical and physical skills.
- iii. **Competitive experience:** This refers to opportunities given to young athletes to compete at various levels, enabling them to gain experience and exposure.
- iv. **Professional development:** This is the stage of final preparation for careers in sports which include sports competition, sports management, coaching, sports science, media etc.
- v. **Transition to professional careers:** This is the stage where support and guidance are given to athletes as they progress and begin professional sports or related careers.

b. Careers in sports excellence

Achieving excellence in sports can lead to a variety of rewarding career pathways both within and beyond the realm of competitive sports. Here are some potential career pathways for individuals who have achieved sports excellence:

- i. **Professional athlete:** The most direct path is to pursue a career as a professional athlete. This involves competing at the highest levels of your chosen sport and earning income through contracts, sponsorships, endorsements and prize money.





Fig. 6.19: Professional Athletes

- ii. Coach or trainer:** Coaches use their expertise to guide and mentor aspiring athletes, helping them improve their skills and achieve their potential.



Fig. 6.20: Sports Coaching

- iii. Sports manager or agent:** Sports managers and agents represent athletes in contract negotiations, endorsements and other business deals. They help athletes manage the business side of their careers and ensure they receive fair compensation.
- iv. Sports administrator:** Working in sports administration involves roles in sports organisation, governing bodies and sports management companies. This could include positions in event planning, marketing, public relations and more.
- v. Sports psychologist:** Sports psychologists work with athletes to enhance their mental resilience, focus and performance. They help athletes cope with stress, pressure and anxiety, improving their overall mental well-being.
- vi. Physical therapist or sports medicine professional:** With a background in sports, a learner can pursue a career in physical therapy, sports medicine or orthopedics. These professionals' help athletes recover from injuries and optimise their physical condition.



Fig. 6.21: Sports Therapist

- vii. Sports journalist or broadcaster:** A person with a passion for both sports and communication, can become a sports journalist, commentator or broadcaster. These roles involve covering sports events, analysing games and conducting interviews.

- viii. Sports nutritionist or dietitian:** Nutrition plays a crucial role in an athlete's performance and recovery. Sports nutritionists or dietitians design specialised meal plans to optimise athletes' energy, endurance and overall health.
- ix. Fitness and personal trainer:** A learner can become a personal trainer or fitness instructor, helping individuals improve their overall health and well-being through exercise and physical activity.



Fig. 6.22: *Fitness Trainers*

- x. Sports marketing and sponsorship officer:** Sports marketing professionals work on promoting sports events, teams and athletes. They handle branding, advertising and sponsorships to enhance the visibility and popularity of sports-related ventures.
- xi. Sports analyst:** Sports analysts use data and statistics to analyse player performance, team strategies and game outcomes. This field is becoming increasingly important for making informed decisions in sports.
- xii. Event manager:** Event managers plan, organise and execute sports events, from small local competitions to large-scale international tournaments.
- xiii. Sports technology and innovation officer:** This field involves working with technology to develop new equipment, wearables, training tools and software that can enhance athletes' performance and training methods.
- xiv. Sports researcher and academic:** A person with a strong interest in sports science can pursue a career in research or academia to advance the understanding of human performance, training techniques and injury prevention.
- xv. Officiating official:** Officiators are the watchdogs of every sport where they learn the rules, regulations and codes of ethics that govern every sporting discipline. They ensure that athletes and every other person conducts herself/himself according to laid down rules.



Fig 6.23: *Officiating Officials*

Source: Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries, Government of Western Australia (2019). Further and extensive reading can be done at their website (See Reference).

Activity 6.17

Research two careers within sports excellence. Identify key skills and qualifications required to succeed in these careers. Note these below:

Career 1:

Skills and qualifications required:

Career 2:

Skills and qualifications required:

Activity 6.18

Interview, research or listen to a visiting speaker who is a sports professional from your local community to understand their career journey.

Note the benefits, challenges faced, skills developed and any advice they have for you as someone who aspires to work as a sports professional.

Top tip: Prepare in advance what you would like to research or ask.

Activity 6.19

In your group, research a talent development programme in Ghana.

Identify how young athletes are scouted, trained and supported to achieve excellence in sports.

Evaluate the effectiveness of this programme and discuss its impact on sports careers with your classmates.

Activity 6.20

It's time to bring your learning together. Use your knowledge to create a personal sports career plan based on your interests and goals.

Be sure to include the following in your plan:

- Short and long-term objectives
- The skills and qualifications required
- An outline of the steps you are going to take to achieve this desired career.

Review Questions

1. Explain the importance of choosing a career that aligns with your interests, skills, and passion. How can this influence your long-term job satisfaction and personal fulfillment?

A career that aligns with my interests, skills, and passion

2. Dilnaz is passionate about promoting health in her community and has excellent communication skills. However, she is unsure whether to pursue a career in public health or physical education. Analyse the factors she should consider and recommend a suitable career path for her.

3. Copy and complete the table below comparing the roles and responsibilities of a health educator and a fitness trainer, including the necessary qualifications, daily tasks, and potential career advancements.

Criteria	Health educator	Fitness Trainer
Necessary qualifications	Bachelor's degree in health education, public health, or related field	
Daily tasks		
Potential career advancements		Senior trainer, fitness program director, gym manager, specialised fitness roles (e.g., sports trainer)

4. Describe how health and wellness can be promoted in your community through a career in health?
5. Evaluate the benefits of technology on the career prospects of health educators and wellness coaches. How can staying updated with technological advancements improve their effectiveness in promoting health?

6. Complete the table below by comparing the roles and responsibilities, and educational requirements of a health educator, a sports medicine physician, and a public health officer.

Career	Roles and Responsibilities	Educational Requirements
Health Educator	Develops educational programmes, conducts workshops, assesses community health needs, and provides resources to promote healthy lifestyles.	Bachelor’s degree in health education, public health, or a related field; certification (e.g., CHES) may be required.
Sports Medicine Physician		
Public Health Officer		

7. Describe the impact of a physical education teacher on student development and discuss the various roles they play in promoting physical activity, health, and overall well-being among students.

8. Evaluate the role of sports journalists in promoting sports development in Ghana and indicate how their work contributes to the growth of sports.

9. Analyse the importance of fitness centre managers in the promotion of an active lifestyle.

10. Develop a community sports event as a Sports Events Planner. Include the event objectives, logistics, budgeting, marketing strategies, and a post-event evaluation plan.

- 11.** Discuss how a career in physical education contributes to the holistic development of learners, particularly in shaping their attitudes towards physical activity and sports.

- 12.** Explain the importance of a sports psychologist in supporting athletes' mental health and how their work contributes to overall sports performance.

- 13.** Analyse the role of athletic trainers in ensuring the safety and well-being of athletes. How does their expertise help in preventing, diagnosing, and treating sports-related injuries?

- 14.** Demonstrate how careers in physical education contributes to reducing social issues in schools, communities and in Ghana at large.

- 15.** Explain the stages an athlete typically goes through to achieve sports excellence and discuss how each stage contributes to the overall development of the athlete.

16. Imagine a young athlete who has just transitioned to a professional sports career. Discuss the challenges they might face during this transition and propose strategies to overcome them. Include the role of support systems such as coaches, mentors, and sports psychologists.

17. Copy and complete the table below

Career	Key Responsibilities	Required Skills and Qualifications	Potential Challenges	Opportunities for Career Growth
Professional Athlete		Physical fitness, strategic thinking, resilience		
Coach or Trainer				
Sports Manager/Agent				
Sports Psychologist	Improve mental resilience and focus of athletes			Research, consultancy, academic roles
Physical Therapist				

18. A sports manager must negotiate a contract for a professional athlete. What factors should the manager consider to ensure fair compensation? Discuss how the manager can balance the business side of sports with the athlete’s career aspirations.

Answers to Review Questions

1. Choosing a career that aligns with your interests, skills, and passions is essential for long-term job satisfaction and personal fulfillment. When your career matches your interests, you are more likely to enjoy your work, leading to increased motivation and productivity. Skills alignment ensures you are competent in your role, reducing stress and frustration, and allowing for continuous growth and success. A career that matches your passions gives you a sense of purpose, making your work feel meaningful and fulfilling. Over time, this alignment can lead to greater job satisfaction, a more positive work-life balance, and overall happiness.
2. Dilnaz should consider factors such as her long-term career goals, the work environment she prefers, the population she wants to impact, and the educational requirements for each path. If she prefers working in community settings, influencing public policy, or conducting health campaigns, a career in public health may be more suitable. Public health roles often involve programme development, policy advocacy, and working with diverse populations. On the other hand, if Dilnaz enjoys direct interaction with students, teaching, and promoting physical activity, physical education might be a better fit. Physical education allows her to work in schools, directly influencing young people's health and fitness. Given her passion for community health and strong communication skills, a career in public health may align better with her interests and long-term goals.

3.

Criteria	Health educator	Fitness Trainer
Necessary qualifications	Bachelor's degree in health education, public health, or related field	Certification in fitness training, personal training, or related field
Daily tasks	Develop and implement health education programmes, conduct workshops and seminars, assess community health needs, create educational materials	Design and supervise exercise programs, conduct fitness assessments, guide clients on nutrition and lifestyle changes, monitor client progress
Potential career advancements	Advanced positions in public health, health programme management, health policy, or academic roles	Senior trainer, fitness program director, gym manager, specialised fitness roles (e.g., sports trainer)

4. Health educators play a vital role in raising awareness about health issues, designing and implementing educational programmes, and providing resources to help individuals make informed decisions about their health. For example, as a health educator, you could work in schools to teach students about nutrition, exercise, and mental health, helping to establish healthy habits from a young age.

Additionally, you could collaborate with community organisations to develop outreach programmes that address specific health concerns, such as smoking cessation or diabetes prevention, thereby improving public health outcomes and reducing healthcare costs.

- Technology has significantly enhanced the career prospects of health educators and wellness coaches by providing new tools and platforms for reaching and engaging with the public. Online health education platforms, mobile health apps, and social media have expanded the reach of health education programmes, allowing professionals to connect with a broader audience and deliver personalised health interventions. Staying updated with technological advancements enables health educators and wellness coaches to use data analytics to tailor programmes to specific populations, leverage telehealth services to provide remote counseling, and use virtual reality for immersive health education experiences. By integrating technology into their practice, these professionals can enhance their effectiveness in promoting health, improve accessibility to health information, and ultimately contribute to better health outcomes.

6.

Career	Roles and Responsibilities	Educational Requirements
Health Educator	Develops educational programmes, conducts workshops, assesses community health needs, and provides resources to promote healthy lifestyles.	Bachelor’s degree in health education, public health, or a related field; certification (e.g., CHES) may be required.
Sports Medicine Physician	Diagnoses, treats, and prevents sports-related injuries, provides rehabilitation programmes, and advises on injury prevention and performance enhancement.	Medical degree (MD or DO), residency in sports medicine, and licensure as a physician; board certification in sports medicine.
Public Health Officer	Monitors and investigates public health issues, develops and enforces health policies, and implements programs to prevent disease and promote health.	Bachelor’s degree in public health, biology, or a related field; often requires a Master of Public Health (MPH) and relevant certifications.

- A physical education teacher plays a key role in promoting student development by encouraging physical activity, teaching essential skills, and fostering a lifelong appreciation for health and fitness. They help students build physical competence, confidence, and teamwork skills while also educating them about healthy lifestyle choices. Additionally, they create inclusive environments that support mental and emotional well-being through exercise and social interaction. PE teachers also act as role models, promoting positive attitudes toward physical activity. Their impact extends beyond physical health, contributing to students' social, cognitive, and emotional growth.

8. Sports journalists in Ghana play a vital role in promoting sports development by bringing attention to local and international sporting events, athletes, and sports initiatives. Their reporting helps to raise public interest, support for sports programmes, and inspire the next generation of athletes. Additionally, they provide a platform for discussing sports-related issues, advocating for better infrastructure, and highlighting the achievements of Ghanaian athletes. However, they may face challenges such as limited access to resources, pressure to meet deadlines, and the need to balance unbiased reporting with maintaining relationships within the sports community.
9. Fitness centre managers are pivotal in promoting an active lifestyle by ensuring that fitness facilities are accessible, safe, and welcoming to the public. They oversee the operations of fitness centres, manage staff, and maintain equipment to create an environment conducive to regular exercise. By offering a variety of fitness programmes, classes, and personalised training, they cater to the diverse needs of individuals, helping them achieve their fitness goals. Moreover, they play a key role in community outreach, encouraging people to adopt healthier lifestyles and educating them on the benefits of regular physical activity.
10. **Event Objectives:** To promote community engagement and healthy living through a weekend sports festival.
 - **Logistics:** Secure a venue, arrange for equipment rentals, coordinate with volunteers, and ensure medical services are available.
 - **Budgeting:** Allocate funds for venue rental, marketing, staff, and contingencies.
 - **Marketing strategies:** Use social media, local radio, and posters to promote the event; partner with local businesses for sponsorship.
 - **Post-event evaluation:** Conduct surveys to gather participant feedback, analyse attendance figures, and assess the event overall impact on the community.
11. A career in physical education contributes to the holistic development of learners by instilling values like teamwork, discipline, and sportsmanship. Physical education teachers and coaches focus on teaching fundamental movement skills, which form the basis for lifelong physical activity. These professionals help shape learners' attitudes toward maintaining an active lifestyle, promoting physical and mental well-being. Additionally, physical education fosters a sense of fair play and respect for others, contributing to the overall moral development of students.
12. Sports psychologists play a critical role in supporting athlete's mental health by helping them manage stress, improve focus, and build resilience. They provide strategies to enhance mental toughness, which is crucial for peak performance, especially under pressure. By addressing psychological barriers, sports psychologists' help athletes maintain a positive mindset, recover from setbacks, and sustain motivation. Their work directly influences an athlete's performance and overall well-being, making them an indispensable part of a sports team.
13. Athletic trainers are essential in ensuring the safety and well-being of athletes. Their expertise in injury prevention, diagnosis, and treatment is vital for maintaining athlete's physical health. Athletic trainers develop injury prevention

programmes, conduct regular health assessments, and provide immediate care during sports events. By ensuring athletes receive proper treatment and rehabilitation, they help prevent long-term damage and ensure that athletes can return to their sports in optimal condition. This role is crucial in minimising risks and enhancing performance.

- 14.** Career pathways in physical education can significantly reduce social vices among youth by providing constructive outlets for energy and creativity. Careers like sports coaching, recreational programme coordination, and athletic training offer young people opportunities to engage in positive activities, develop self-discipline, and build social networks. For example, sports programmes can steer youth away from crime by providing them with a sense of purpose and belonging. Additionally, sports psychologists can help address mental health issues, reducing the likelihood of substance abuse or other destructive behaviors.
- 15.** Athletes who achieve sports excellence typically progress through five stages:
 - **Talent identification:** This stage involves recognising young athletes with the potential for high performance. This can be done through scouting programmes, sports camps, and school competitions. Talent identification is crucial because it sets the foundation for nurturing future stars by ensuring that only those with genuine potential are selected for advanced training.
 - **Skill development:** Once identified, athletes undergo structured training programmes that focus on improving their technical, tactical, and physical skills. This stage often involves working with coaches to enhance specific abilities required for their sport, such as agility, strength, and technique. The development of these skills is essential for athletes to compete effectively at higher levels.
 - **Competitive experience:** At this stage, athletes are given opportunities to compete at various levels, from local to international competitions. This exposure is vital for gaining experience, building confidence, and learning how to perform under pressure. It also allows athletes to measure their progress against peers.
 - **Professional development:** As athletes mature, they prepare for professional careers in sports. This includes not only competition but also opportunities in sports management, coaching, sports science, and media. Professional development ensures that athletes are well-rounded and have options beyond just playing their sport.
- 16.** Transition to professional careers: This final stage involves guiding athletes as they transition into professional sports or related careers. Support systems, such as mentors and sports psychologists, play a crucial role in helping athletes navigate the challenges of this transition, including managing expectations, financial planning, and career longevity.
 - A young athlete transitioning to a professional sports career might face several challenges, including adjusting to higher levels of competition, managing increased expectations, and balancing training with personal

life. Financial management and media scrutiny can also be new sources of pressure. Strategies to overcome these challenges include:

- **Mentorship:** Having a mentor who has experienced a similar transition can provide valuable guidance and support.
- **Coaching and psychological support:** Continued coaching and mental health support can help the athlete maintain focus and confidence.
- **Time management:** Learning to manage time effectively to balance training, rest, and personal life is crucial.
- **Financial planning:** Working with a financial advisor can help the athlete manage earnings and plan for the future.

17.

Career	Key Responsibilities	Required Skills and Qualifications	Potential Challenges	Opportunities for Career Growth
Professional Athlete	Compete in sports, maintain peak condition	Physical fitness, strategic thinking, resilience	Injury risk, media scrutiny	Sponsorships, coaching, media roles
Coach or Trainer	Train and mentor athletes, develop training programs	Leadership, communication, expertise in the sport	Pressure to produce results, managing diverse personalities	Advancement to head coach, sports director
Sports Manager/ Agent	Negotiate contracts, manage athlete's business affairs	Negotiation skills, legal knowledge, business knowledge	Balancing athlete's interests with business demands	Career growth as a top sports agent, management roles in teams
Sports Psychologist	Improve mental resilience and focus of athletes	Degree in psychology, specialisation in sports psychology	Overcoming stigma, ensuring athlete participation	Research, consultancy, academic roles
Physical Therapist	Rehab athletes, design injury prevention programmes	Degree in physical therapy, expertise in sports medicine	Pressure to expedite recovery, risk of re-injury	Specialisation, private practice, sports team positions

18. In negotiating a contract for a professional athlete, a sports manager must consider several factors which include but are not limited to the following:

- **Fair compensation:** The manager must ensure the athlete is compensated fairly based on their performance, market value, and potential. This includes salary, bonuses, and other financial incentives.
- **Endorsements and sponsorships:** The manager should negotiate deals that align with the athlete's brand and career goals, ensuring long-term benefits.
- **Career longevity:** The manager must balance immediate financial gains with the athlete's long-term career, avoiding short-term decisions that could harm the athlete's future.
- **Work-life balance:** Ensuring the athlete's schedule allows for adequate rest and personal time is essential for maintaining overall well-being.
- **Legal considerations:** The manager must ensure that all contract terms comply with legal standards and protect the athlete's rights.

Extended Reading

These links will help you further explore careers in health:

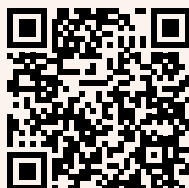


- https://youtu.be/4Bln7NKDaNQ?si=2Z1uel5njkc_qDuK



- <https://youtu.be/qXh3j03P5QI?si=QMPnseAZqCWCNDWB>

These links will help to guide you on how to make choices in sports careers:



- <https://youtu.be/5WYrZlqIdrk?si=Gpz6UvE1SkSkcs5n>

These links will help you further your understanding on career pathways in health:



- https://youtu.be/4Bln7NKDaNQ?si=2Z1uel5njkc_qDuK



- <https://youtu.be/qXh3j03P5QI?si=QMPnseAZqCWCNDWB>



- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tX6ItCbVnIw>



- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rHHoGHwE_xg



- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l0CRnwdNZ9I>

Watch the following videos for more information on careers in physical education:



- <https://youtu.be/lPg3De0S8ns?si=m2uxnAtbqdZKcBRi>



- https://youtu.be/hWcRLtUonyo?si=T_F0VEw_dXbIA7TD

This video gives you access to information on how to choose a career path in seven simple steps:



- <https://youtu.be/zhpqgqWc1Q>

This video gives information on career pathways in teaching physical education:



- <https://youtu.be/hWcRLtUonyo?si=-qiNzO3FIZJwsrMf>

The links below will help you access more information on career pathways in specific physical education related areas:



Kinesiology: <https://youtu.be/hyh2RgJhufM?si=fDIRCZv3WcjeZhJo>



Physical Therapist: https://youtu.be/WKJ_xxnuQvs?si=njEeti684A9dydaW



Athletics Trainer: <https://youtu.be/2dN-NMtRSos?si=xMekUDACOb-nvWo5>

This link will further support you to understand careers in sports excellence:



- <https://youtu.be/DIszVwhq7k8?si=HNCUurmEVsGbQrpL>

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GLOSSARY

Anxiety:	A feeling of worry, nervousness, or unease about something with an uncertain outcome.
Biomechanics:	The study of how the body moves and functions, often related to mechanics and physics.
Chronic:	A condition or illness that lasts for a long time or keeps coming back.
Clarity:	The quality of being clear and easy to understand.
Administrators	A person responsible for managing or overseeing the affairs of an organisation, business, or institution.
Diagnose	To identify the nature or cause of a condition, problem, or disease.
Conditioning	The process of training or preparing the body for a specific activity or performance, often through regular exercise and other physical activities.
Cope	To manage or deal with a difficult situation.
Compensation	Payment or reward given in return for work done or a loss sustained.
Dietician	A qualified healthcare professional who specialises in diet and nutrition, often working in hospitals or clinics to help manage health conditions through diet.
Endorsement	The act of giving one's public approval or support to someone or something.
Health education:	Teaching people about health and wellness, including how to maintain a healthy lifestyle and prevent illness.
Logistics	The planning and organisation of details, especially related to the movement and coordination of resources.
Holistic	Considering something as a whole, rather than just focusing on individual parts.

Mentorship	Guidance or advice provided by a more experienced person to someone less experienced.
Mobility	The ability to move or be moved easily.
Negotiations	Discussion aimed at reaching an agreement.
Nutritionist	A person who is an expert in food and nutrition and gives advice on how to eat for better health.
Nurturing	Caring for and encouraging the growth and development of something.
Orthopedic	Related to the branch of medicine dealing with bones, muscles, and joints.
Pivotal	Extremely important or crucial, serving as a central or essential part.
Resilience	The ability to recover quickly from difficulties or setbacks.
Roleplay	Acting out or simulating a situation or role, often for practice, learning, or entertainment.
Routes	Paths or ways taken to get from one place to another.
Sedentary	Involving a lot of sitting and little physical activity.
Sportsmanship	Fair and generous behavior or treatment of others, especially opponents, in a sport or competition.
Sport analyst:	A person who studies and provides expert opinions on sports, often focusing on statistics, strategy, and performance.
Sport excellence:	Achieving high-level performance or outstanding achievement in a sport through skill, dedication, and training.
Sports journalist:	A person who writes about or reports on sports events and news.
Stress	Mental or emotional strain caused by challenging or demanding situations.
Therapist	A professional who helps people manage or overcome mental, emotional, or physical problems.
Vibrant	Full of energy, life, and enthusiasm.
Watchdog	A person or group that monitors and ensures that rules are followed, often to prevent wrongdoing.
Wellness	The state of being healthy in body and mind.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



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