Medical Peace Work

Glossary

Armed conflict:

Similar to violent conflict, but denoting conflicts where parties on both sides resort to the use of physical violence and weapons.

Codes of conduct:

The moral principles that are implicit or explicit in (inter-) national codes and which reflect good clinical practice.

Conflict:

Perception of incompatible goals in a goal-seeking system. Conflict is not necessarily violent. In fact, parties who have incompatible goals may deal with them in productive and non-violent ways.

Contemporary conflict:

The prevailing pattern of social and political conflicts at the beginning of the 21st century.

Cultural violence:

Cultural violence refers to those parts of religion, ideology, language, art, science, or cosmology which justify and legitimise the use of direct or structural violence (J. Galtung).

Direct violence:

A deliberate act or omission, acute or chronic, causing a reduction in the physical, mental or social potential of beings (J. Galtung).

Domestic violence:

Violence largely between family members and intimate partners, usually, though not exclusively, taking place in the home.

Health:

The World Health Organisation defines health as "a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity".

Impartial:

In the context of humanitarian aid, this refers to assistance that is 'guided solely' by the needs of individuals.

Independence:

In the context of humanitarian aid this has been defined by Joanna Macrae as the 'endeavour not to act as instruments of government foreign policy'.

Inequality:

Inequalities represent disparities in income, health, education, ownership of land, access to power and so on. Some inequalities are unavoidable: not all of us have the genetic make-up that will help us run the 100 metres as fast as Olympic sprinters. But many inequalities, such as those listed above, can be avoided. These avoidable inequalities are sometimes called inequities.

Inequity:

Inequities are inequalities that can be avoided through directed human action, most notably the application of government policy.

Morbidity:

Morbidity means illness or disease. Measures of morbidity such as the prevalence of chronic diseases can be used, among other measures, to help understand the health of a population.

Mortality:

Mortality means death. Measures of rates of mortality such as life expectancy and infant mortality can be used, among other measures, to help understand the health of a population.

Negative peace:

The absence of direct, structural and cultural violence (J. Galtung).

Nonviolent Communication (NVC):

A philosophical and pedagogical tool that encourages human connection and strengthens people's capacity to speak and listen with empathy.

Nuclear weapons:

A weapon whose explosive power results from a nuclear reaction. This reaction results in the release of an immense amount of energy in the form of an explosion, many times greater than that of conventional explosives.

Peace:

Not merely the absence of violence, but a state of mutual beneficial relationships, fair structures, and a culture of peace. Peace is also a capacity to handle conflicts with empathy, creativity and by non-violent means (J. Galtung).

Positive peace:

Not merely the absence of violence (negative peace), but constructive handling of conflict, the building up of peaceful structures and a culture of peace (J. Galtung).

Primary prevention:

Interventions that attempt to stop a health problem from occurring in the first place. Infectious diseases, for example, may be prevented through better hygiene and vaccination.

Primary prevention of violence:

Measures to reduce identified risk factors for violent attitudes, behaviours or structures, and to strengthen factors that have protective effects.

Reconciliation:

Repair of broken relationships and the restoration of peaceful relationships.

Refugee:

A person who, owing to well founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country.

Right to health:

The right to health or – more precisely – the right to the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health is established in Article 12 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. Measures states should take to fulfill the right are laid down in Article 12 and have been further elaborated in General Comments by the treaty's monitoring committee. The right to health is subject to the principle of progressive realisation outlined in the Covenant.

Secondary prevention:

Interventions where a health problem already exists. It focuses on preventing further deterioration. An example is screening for cancer.

Secondary prevention of violence:

Emphasis on early warning of existing violence through screening and the detection of its physical, mental and social symptoms. Even the de-escalation of a violent conflict and constructive conflict handling might be considered as secondary preventive approaches.

Structural violence:

Structural violence refers to socio-economic and political processes which violate basic human needs (J. Galtung).

Tertiary prevention:

Interventions, when acute health problems are under control, that can contribute towards preventing and mitigating the long-term negative effects. An example is physical therapy after a bone fracture.

Tertiary prevention of violence:

Measures that work towards psychosocial rehabilitation after violence has happened. It also entails preventing re-entry into a new cycle of violence through reconstruction, reconciliation and the transformation of the conflict.

Violence:

Unnecessary insult of basic human needs (J. Galtung).

Violent conflict:

The use of physical and psychological force or power to 'solve' a conflict.

War:

Extreme form of violence. Used as a means to solve conflicts between nation states, or between groups within a nation state (civil war).