HEALTH-PROMOTING PERSONAL PROJECTS OF OLD PERSONS IN NORTHERN SWEDEN

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Predicted longevity of old persons may impose a challenge to welfare and care systems. The concept personal project describes occupations that are extended, interrelated sequences of deliberate actions salient in time. They are aim to achieve personal goals coherently contributing to health and well-being. Such personal projects create meaning in people’s lives and enhance health and well-being. This study was aimed to explore personal projects relevant to health and well-being during the forthcoming 12 months described by old persons in northern Sweden.

Eleven old persons (mean age = 76 years) living in their community homes, who had reported high health in a previous study, were purposively selected and interviewed. Data was analysed by content analysis deductively guided by the concept personal project.

The findings revealed 14 personal projects which were categorised into the 5 core projects: Keeping the family together, Enjoying one’s life at home, Being close to nature, Cultivating oneself, and Promoting conditions for healthy aging. Each of the 14 personal projects comprised several sequential occupations constructing the personal projects.

Coherently, findings illuminate a projects system relevant for health and well-being constructed by core projects including personal projects comprising sequential occupations. These findings are discussed in relation to promotive health aspects elucidated by earlier research on the concept personal project, which found core projects to be essential for anchoring project systems.

Core projects and personal projects identified in this study may contribute to health professionals’ knowledge of a coherent structure of occupations promoting healthy ageing.