

10 years of GCPH seminars

What have we learned? What should we do?

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The Mission mattered

- The GCPH was charged with creating ‘fresh thinking’ to help Glasgow confront seemingly intractable public health problems.

Philosophy (what we think) matters

- Anthony Grayling S1L1
- There is such a thing as ‘the good life’.
- Each individual and each community has an ‘ethos’.
- ‘Civic conversation’ and how it might be developed.

History matters

- Tom Devine S2L2 The Transformation of Scotland – ‘the scale of the changes experienced in Scotland over the past fifty five years amounts to a significant transformation - these changes have their roots in an earlier history’
- ‘Will Glasgow Flourish?’

Health Status matters

- Michael Marmot's point about health as an indicator of societal flourishing
- Let Glasgow Flourish
- Understanding Glasgow
- Relative Decline in life expectancy
- Inequality
- So called Scottish and Glasgow Effects
- Working aged people hit hardest

The fundamental determinants of health matter

- Bruce Link S4L1
- ‘Fundamental social causes: underlying and persistent phenomena in society and the economy – such as differential access to resources, networks, prestige etc – help protect those possessing them from the burden of disease and death. This helps to explain the continuing nature of inequalities in health despite the changing nature of the primary causes of illness and death.’

Biology matters

- Bruce McEwen S3L3 – ‘A range of external factors – everyday environmental factors, major life events and traumas – combine with individual differences in nature and nurture and behavioural responses to create a perception of stress in the brain. This generates physiological responses which, in the normal course of events, lead to stress adaptation and recovery. However, where stressors become chronic rather than acute this leads to an increase in allostatic load which in turn has adverse consequences for health and wellbeing.’
- Elizabeth Gould – effects on brain etc.
- Rachel Yehuda – how effects are transmitted to the next generation.

The inner life matters matters

- Avner Offer S5L1 – hedonic treadmill
- Richard Layard S1L4 Public Policy should be about maximising happiness not GDP
- Oliver James S4L5 – Affluenza

The Economy matters

- Tim Jackson S6L2 Prosperity without growth - up to the level of about \$15,000 per capita, life expectancy increases but not thereafter
- Guy Standing S8L1 **Precariat**: those with insecure, short term, precarious income or jobs.

Ecology matters – Geoffrey Boulton S4L2

- Key scientific discoveries such as those of Copernicus, Hutton and Darwin remind us that human beings are neither the centre nor the pinnacle of creation.
- The earth, over its 4.5 billion year history, could be likened to an angry beast – the last thing humans should do is poke it with a stick!
- Every human society which we know about has a narrative and perspective on its relation with the earth and nature.
- It used to be thought that the human drama was being played out against an unchanging environmental background, that the earth was a static system, and that the only outcome of using its resources was human material benefit. It is now known that these resources are finite and the consequences of their exploitation are complex.
- Extreme events have happened before and they can happen again.

Recognising the limits of policy/the state matters

- James Scott S4L3 – Seeing like a state
- His most extensive example was that of the development of scientific forestry in Germany in the 18th century. In order to tax effectively the state focussed its efforts on the extent of timber and firewood production which neglects the many other aspects of the forest – flora and fauna, bark, sap, fungi, etc. In developing this method the German state devised a census of trees based on standard sizes and the systematic growing of trees in a monocultures forest of linear planting designed to maximise revenue. This form of forestry based on official knowledge was widely adopted before it was understood to have disastrous consequences for forests and their ecologies.

Resilience matters

- Jerry Sternin S3L1 – positive deviance
- Anthony Hodgson S7L4
- Drawing on Holling's work on Panarchy - change as a cyclical rather than a linear phenomenon and resilience means regaining a more adapted state not the previous condition.

Human Healing matters

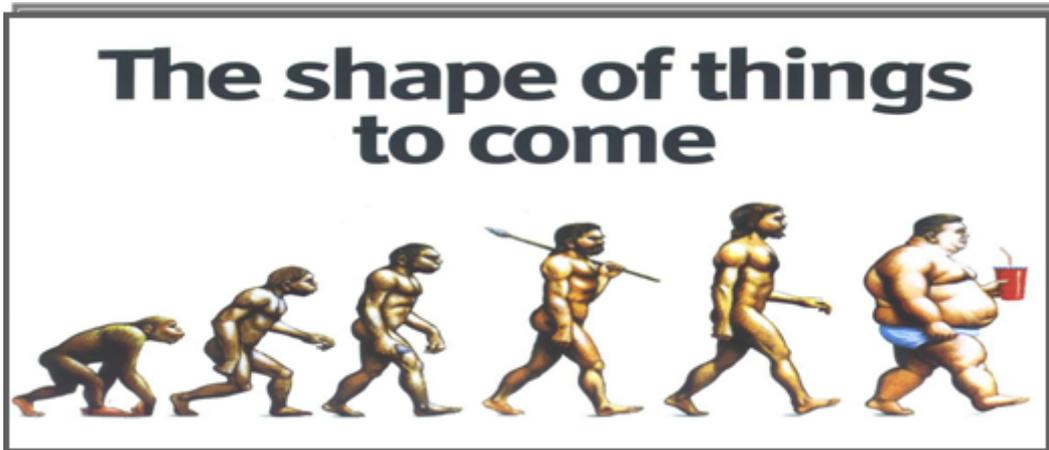
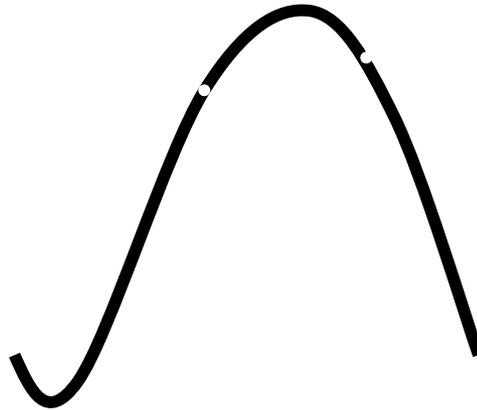
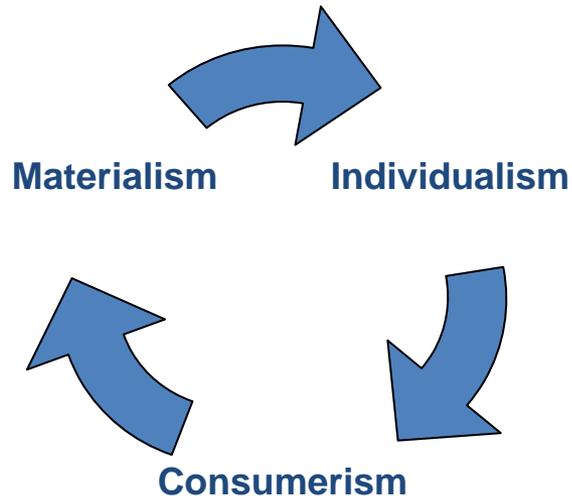
- David Reilly S9L2
- The Healing Shift
- ‘what might emerge from our efforts to improve health and wellbeing when we shift our focus from external interventions towards life's innate drive to restore equilibrium and wholeness’

Transformational change matters

Maureen O'Hara S1L6

- Need hospice workers for the old world that is dying and midwives for the new world that is being born.
- In changing times, the collective consciousness must evolve or collapse =>
- We can detect an emergent new consciousness.

Modernity is in crisis



Belief in progress???

Belief in growth???

An integral approach

- We need activity in all four quadrants
- We need ways of living that integrate change in all four
- No single quadrant will be the driver of change

	Inner/ Subjective	Outer/ Objective
Individual level	I The inner life	It Objective – empirical biological, physical
Collective level	We The inter- subjective or cultural world	Its Systems, structures, economies



What's next for the health of society?

Website Resources:

Videos

Podcasts

Papers

