

DEFINITIONS

A strategy indicates an activity, e.g. here what people actively do in the context of an illness to mobilise resources and maximize results.

Chronic pain is considered to be chronic when it has been persistent or regularly recurrent for more than three months during the previous three months (1).

Chronic widespread pain according to the 1990 American college of Rheumatology (ACR) criteria, pain is considered widespread when present in both sides of the body and above and below the waist. In addition, axial skeletal pain should be present (2).

Coping strategies are the strategies people develop to manage stressful life situations: how people manage stress and strain. In stress research different coping styles are defined and studied (3). However, in this thesis the word 'coping' is used in a wider sense of everyday language: a synonym for managing one's own situation, without theoretical implications.

Disease refers to sickness as a physiological process: it can be described in an objective way, with measurements that can verify a deviating medical/physiological value (4,5).

Empowerment is about women and men taking control over their lives: being able to perceive alternatives, make choices and fulfil these choices. It is both a process and an outcome, individual and collective. Women's empowerment is essential to achieve gender equality. Outsiders cannot empower women, only women can empower themselves. However, institutions can support empowering processes at both individual and collective levels (6).

Gender refers to the economic, social and cultural attributes and opportunities associated with being a man or a woman, comprising the constant changes in being that take place in interaction with the environment in every culture at particular points in time (7, 8).

Illness refers to the person's subjective experience, perception and behaviour. Knowledge about it can only come from the persons' own descriptions, unlike disease, which can be identified independently of the sufferer's statement (4).

Multidisciplinary team refers to the efforts of practitioners from a number of disciplines. It may be a group of specialist physicians with different medical specialities, or a team of many different professions working together in rehabilitation (9).

Multiprofessional rehabilitation team is a team whose members are from different professions and working together to give a certain patient the best possible rehabilitation outcome (9).

Rehabilitation is a process aiming to restore an individual who suffers from disorder or loss of physical or psychological function, to an independent life with the best possible function and prerequisites for independence. Measures can include workplace changes or action of a medical, psychological or sociological nature. All measures should be based on the individual's condition and needs'. (Department of Health and Welfare, Sweden)

Rehabilitation back to work aims at recreating a person's working capacity and self-maintenance ability after he or she has recovered from sickness.

Sex refers to the biological characteristics that define humans as female or male (7).

Sickness is society's norms and values about what health is and what ill-health is (4).

