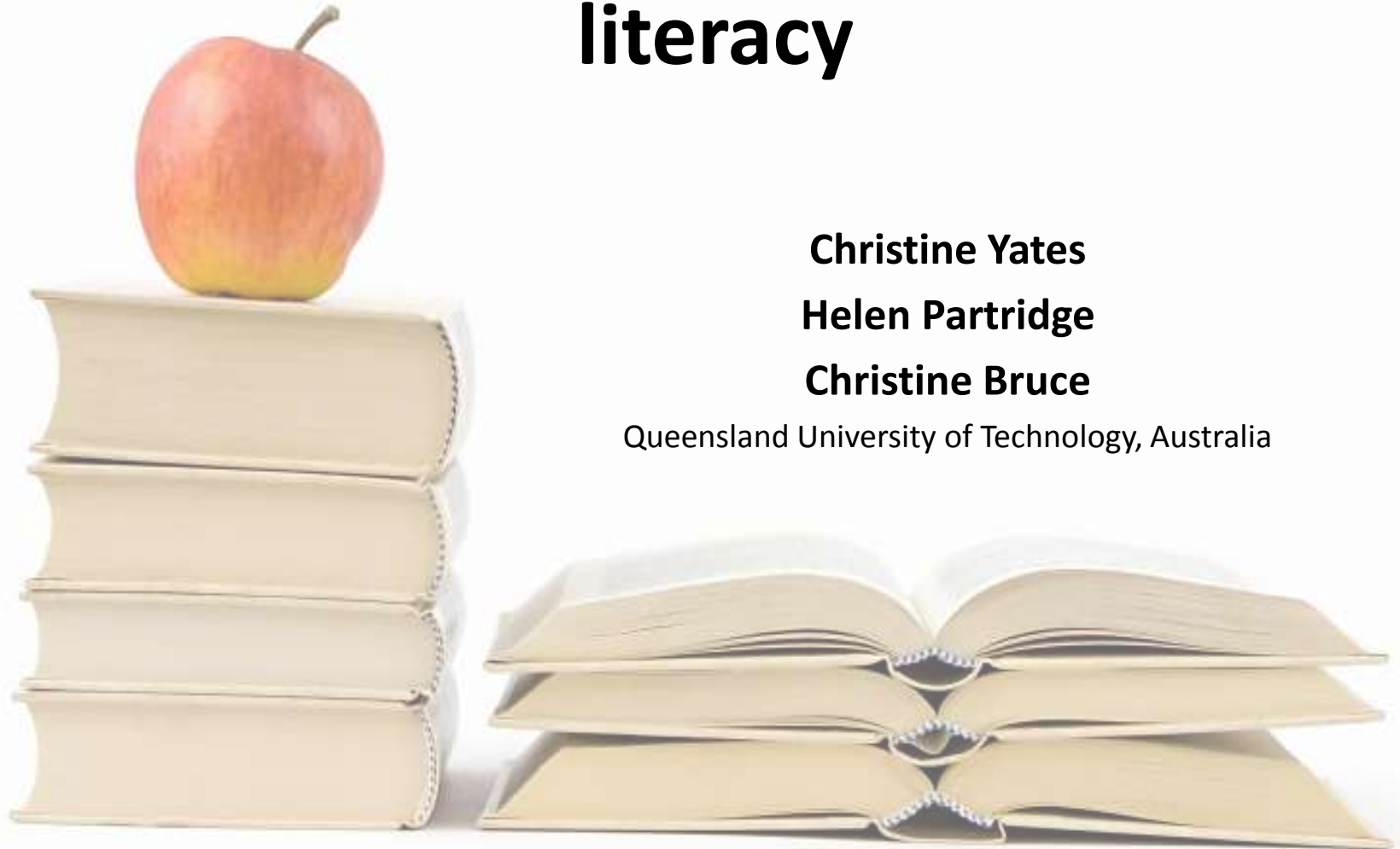


Experiencing information across the phenomenon of health information literacy



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Health Information Literacy

... a relational approach

Research Question

What are the qualitatively different ways in which people experience health information literacy?



Research Approach: Phenomenography



Phenomenography aims to map “the qualitatively different ways in which people experience and conceptualise various phenomena in the world around them.”

(Marton, 2000, p. 103)



Participants

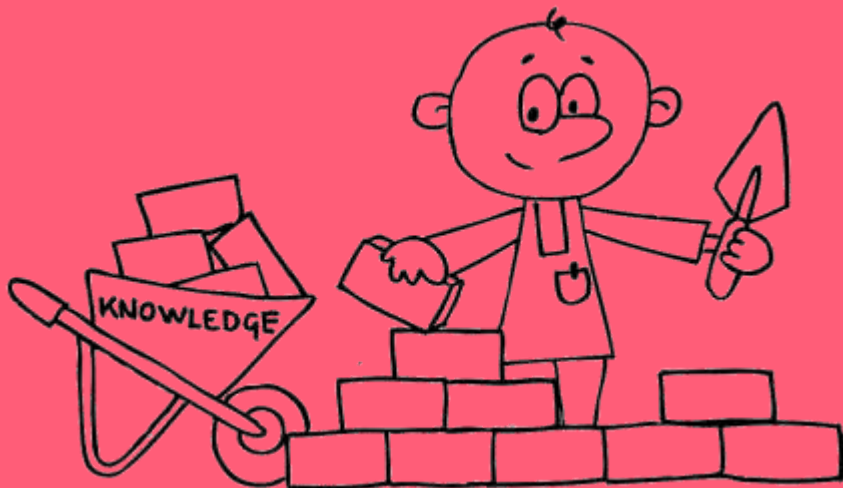
Data Collection

Research Findings



Health information literacy is experienced as:

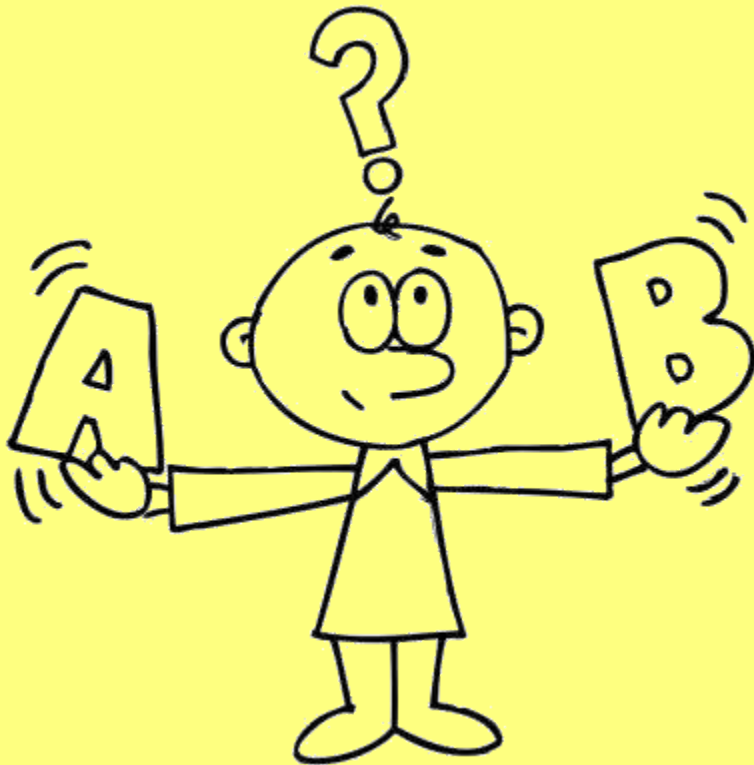
Building a new knowledge base



“Well probably the most relevant thing that I have come across was when I was diagnosed with mental illness. And I didn’t really have any history or understanding of anything other than the very bleary ‘some people are in asylums therefore they have a mental illness’. So does that mean now that because I have a mental illness I am going to end up in a mental hospital? So when it came to information at that stage, I knew very little... also I had had very little exposure to people who were coping with psychiatric problems. Although I do know that I have some slightly distant relatives who have had some problems I never actually found out what that meant.” [Participant 14]

Health information literacy is experienced as:

Weighing up information



“Probably when I had my knee operation. Obviously I asked a lot of questions of the doctor. I didn’t think he gave me enough and I didn’t really have a lot of time to make a decision. I looked on the internet. I also asked a friend because I knew her sister had had the same operation as well...Basically to find out if it was going to be worthwhile or is it going to be something that you pay a lot of money for and go through a lot of trauma but get little results in the end.” [Participant 2]

Health information literacy is experienced as:

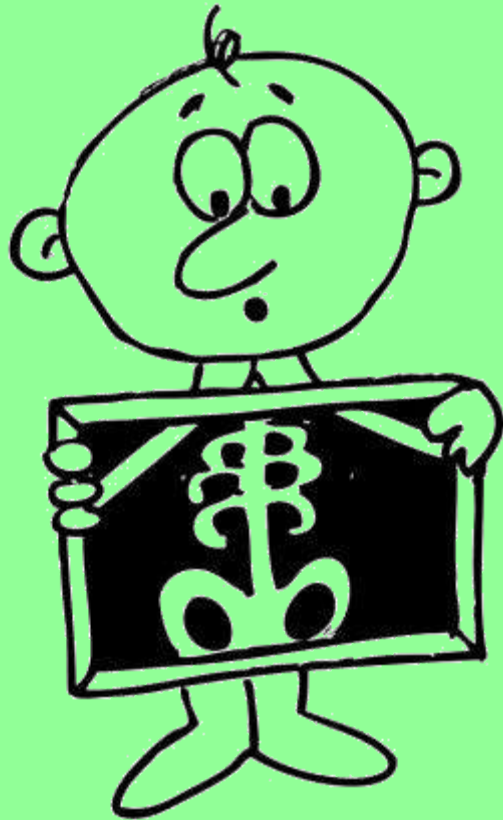
Discerning valid information



“So how authoritative is probably how I go about working through whether or not what they are saying makes sense. If I go to look it up on the internet, I don’t just go to the first place. It doesn’t matter if that first place says Bayer or Wikipedia or whatever. Because you don’t always know what is behind it. Whether it is well-intentioned nonsense, absolutely stupidity or somebody trying to make some money. You know there are a lot of well-intentioned idiots and some of them write very well. So I am looking for recognised people coming from recognised places. Things that are reputable.” [Participant 14]

Health information literacy is experienced as:

Paying attention to bodily information

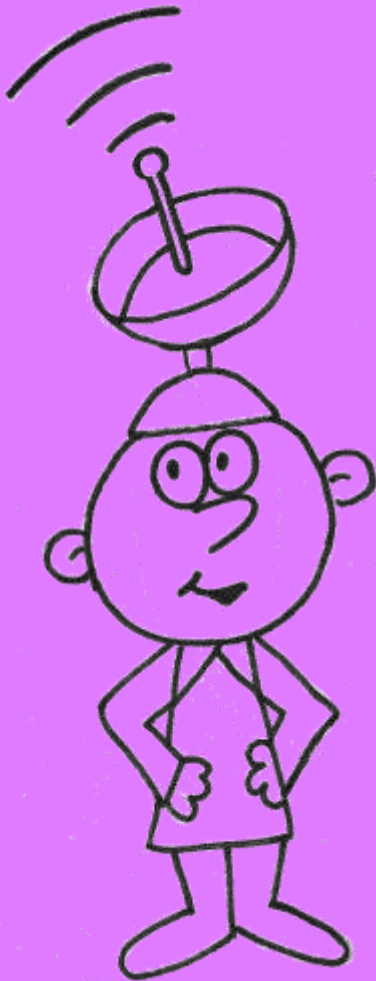


“... when my daughter was small I managed to rip the calf muscle in the back of my leg. I had had twinges two or three days before but had the idea if I just did things gently this would go away. This worked for two or three days until I decided to play a game of tennis, and I lasted about five minutes and then spent the next few weeks on crutches. I know now that over the years that if I stretch properly before I start, the right kind of exercises, well if something starts to hurt, I need to stop and listen to my body.”

[Participant 3]

Health information literacy is experienced as:

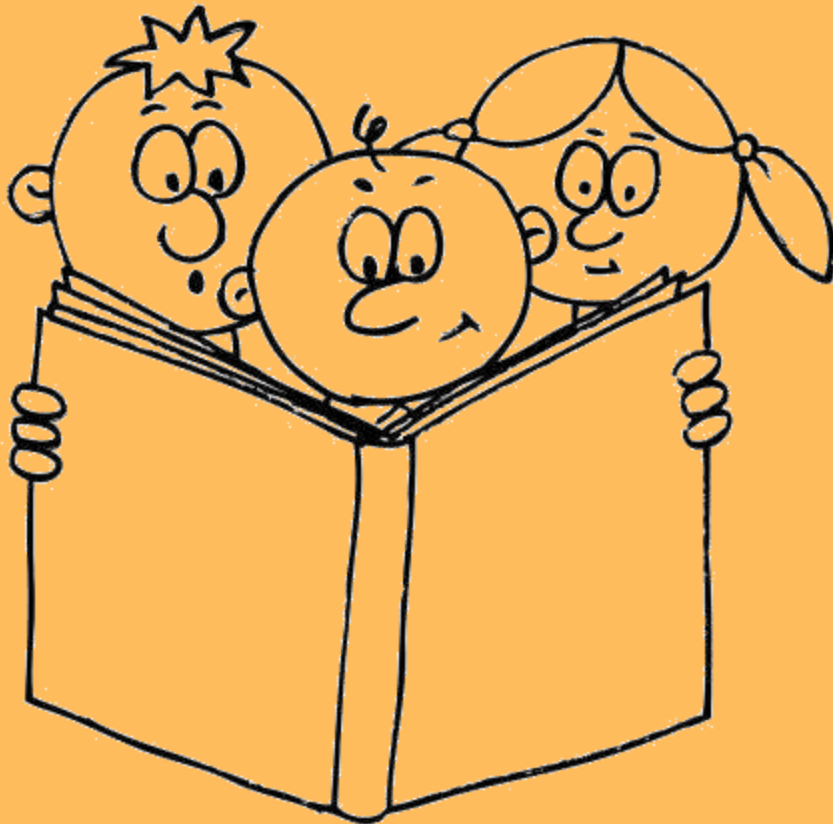
Staying informed about health



“... well one of my friends has irritable bowel syndrome. And as you get older your bowel changes and I thought “Oh, maybe I need to know a little bit more about this” – like prostate cancer and bowel cancer. So I started to have a bit of a look on the internet about it. Not that I have these things, but it’s nice to have a little bit of forewarning... And you know like my neighbour has just been diagnosed with diabetes and he came over the other night with this little pricker thing and we all had a go at testing the sugar in our blood. And I thought that perhaps I should just look a little bit into diabetes – just to find out a bit more information about it – just for interest really.” [Participant 13]

Health information literacy is experienced as:

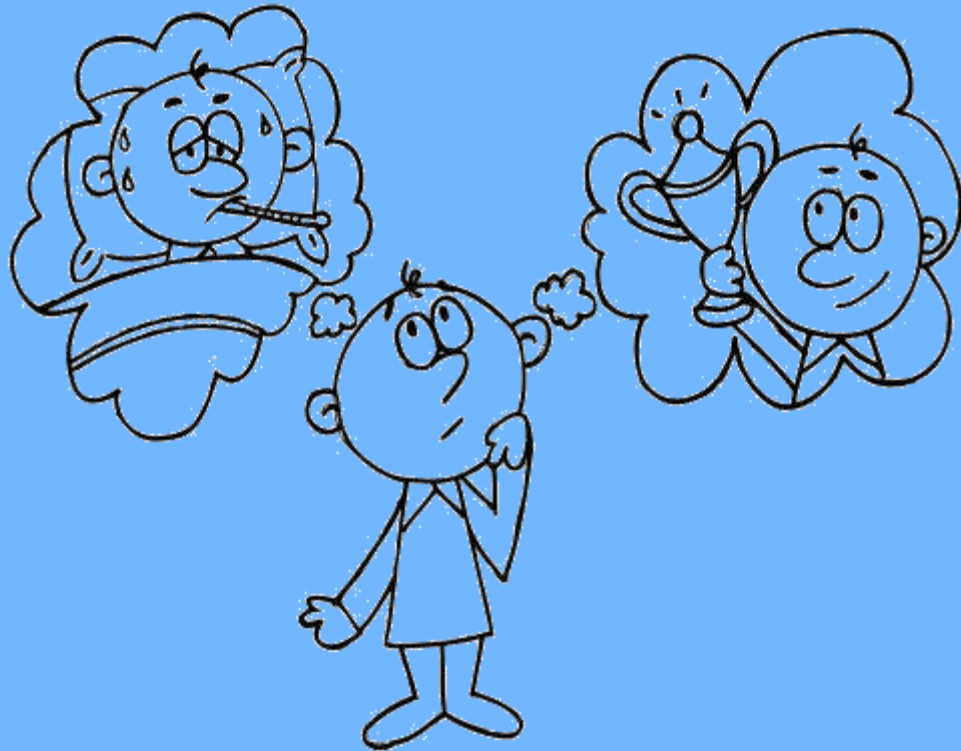
Participating in learning communities



“We had a chap who came last month who said that he was getting all the information he could, because his doctor doesn’t really know anything about it. So he came to us to get the information. A lot of time people come to our [diabetes] support group before they get to see the specialist, the diabetes educator, because there’s such a long waiting list to get in. So our support group can help them in that way.” [Participant 7]

Health information literacy is experienced as:

Envisaging health

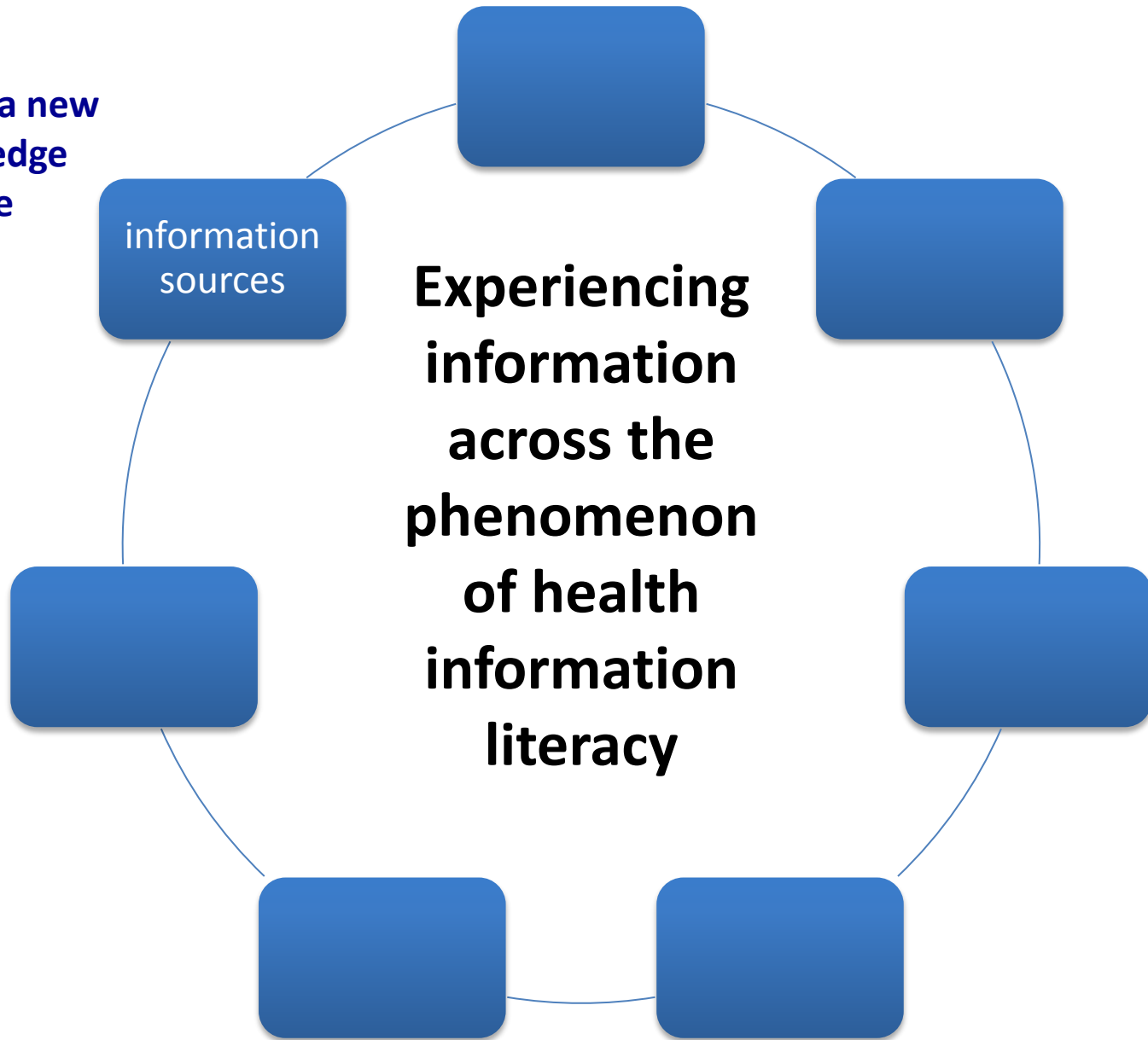


“... with regard to general health you see other people. So I’ll look back to my childhood and see or think about the lifestyles that my elders, people who were older than me had. So their lives were generally shorter. Their diet was terrible, but exercise was good, but diet was bad and general stress levels were very high. They ate a lot of fried foods, a lot of drinking. So recognising that from my memories is useful for me because I think that I really don’t want to go down that way.” [Participant 8]

What is 'information'?



**Building a new
knowledge
base**



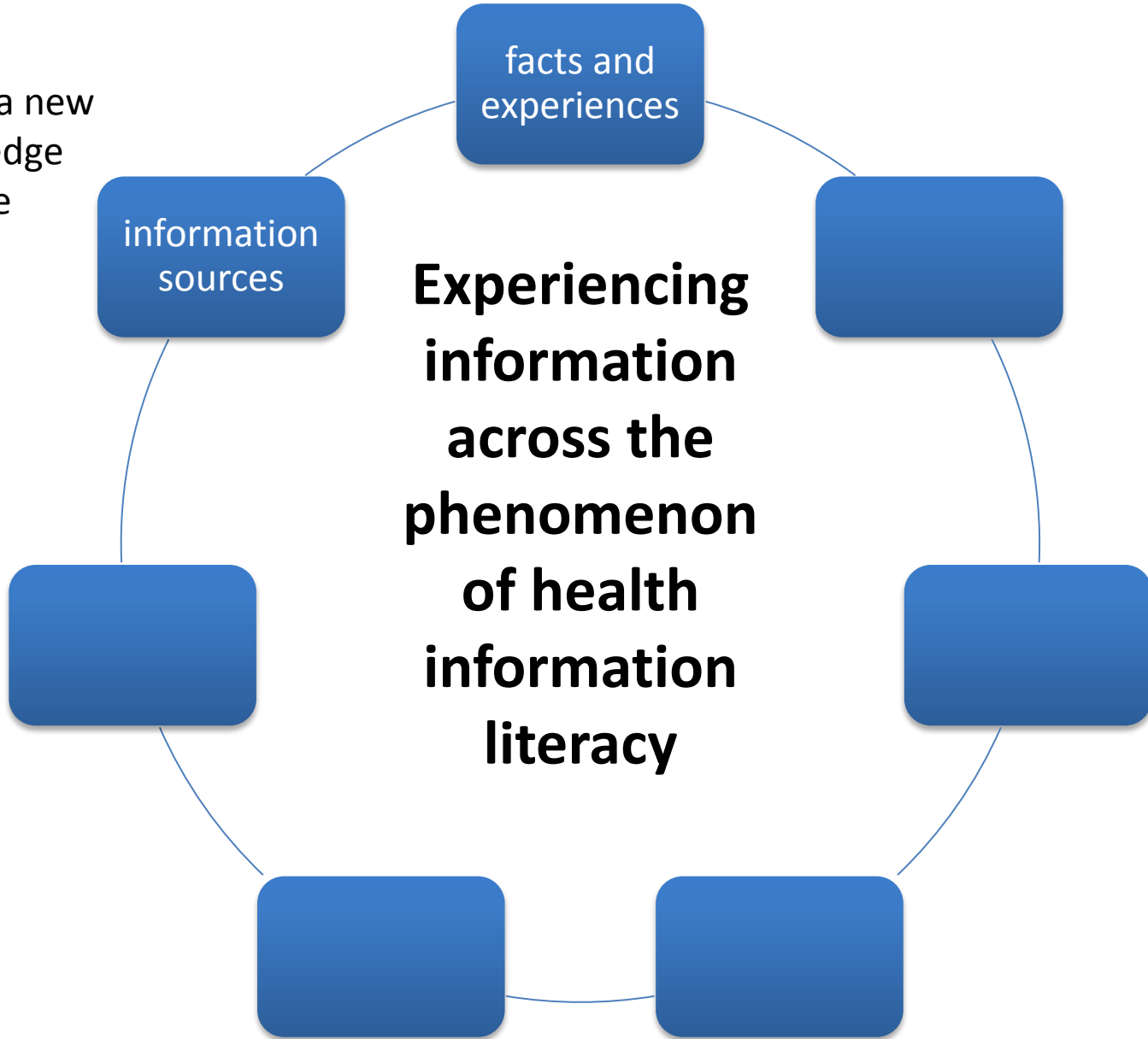
Weighing up information

facts and
experiences

Building a new
knowledge
base

information
sources

**Experiencing
information
across the
phenomenon
of health
information
literacy**



Weighing up information

facts and
experiences

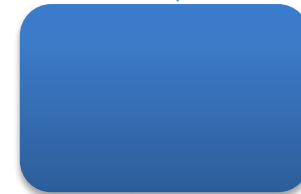
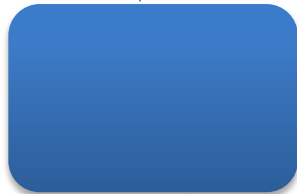
Building a new
knowledge
base

information
sources

**Discerning
valid
information**

something that
exhibits certain
qualities

**Experiencing
information
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information
literacy**



Weighing up information

facts and experiences

Discerning valid information

something that exhibits certain qualities

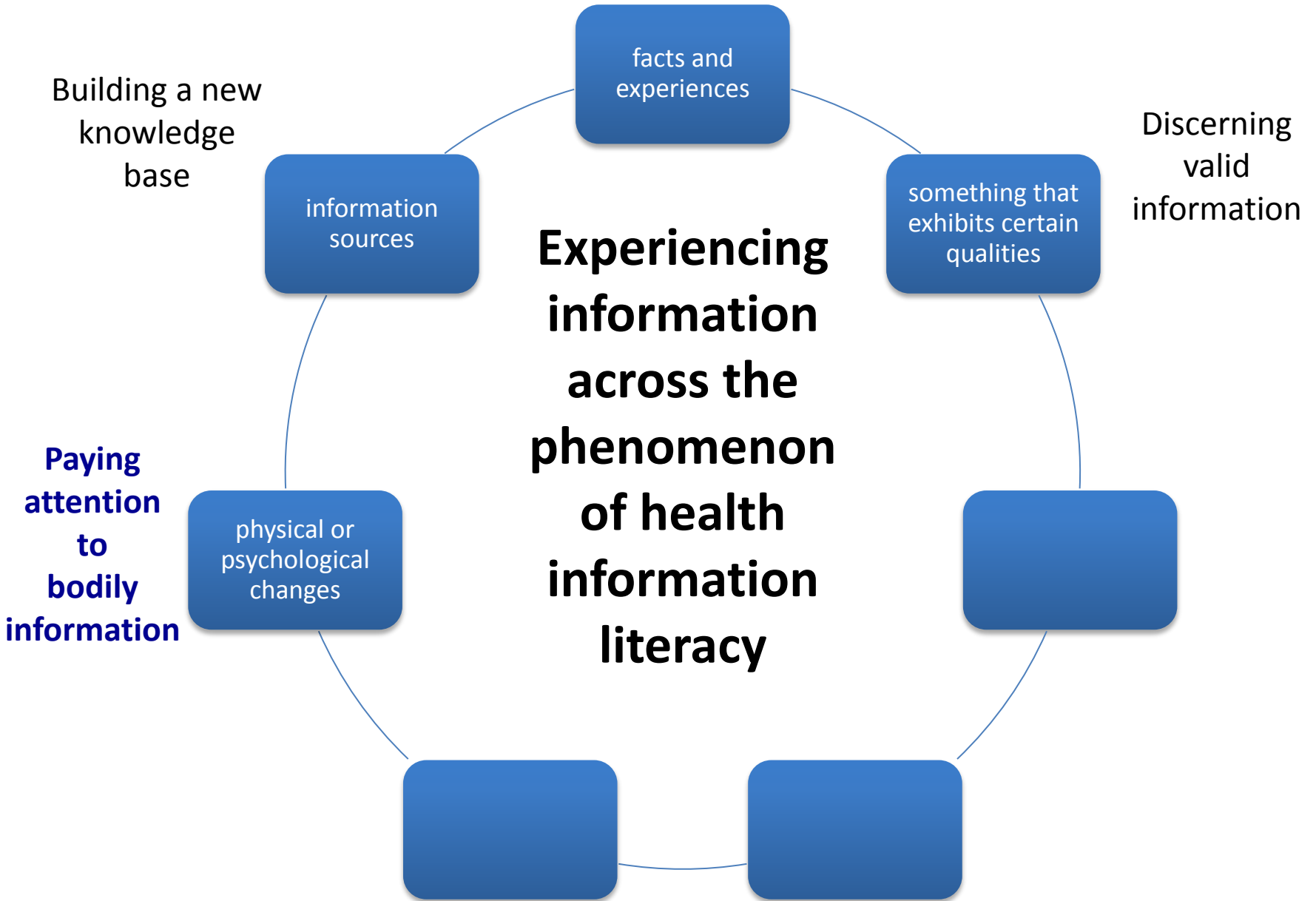
Experiencing information across the phenomenon of health information literacy

information sources

Building a new knowledge base

physical or psychological changes

Paying attention to bodily information



Weighing up information

facts and experiences

Discerning valid information

something that exhibits certain qualities

Building a new knowledge base

information sources

Experiencing information across the phenomenon of health information literacy

Staying informed about health

something relevant to a particular stage of life

Paying attention to bodily information

physical or psychological changes

Weighing up information

facts and experiences

Discerning valid information

something that exhibits certain qualities

Building a new knowledge base

information sources

Experiencing information across the phenomenon of health information literacy

Staying informed about health

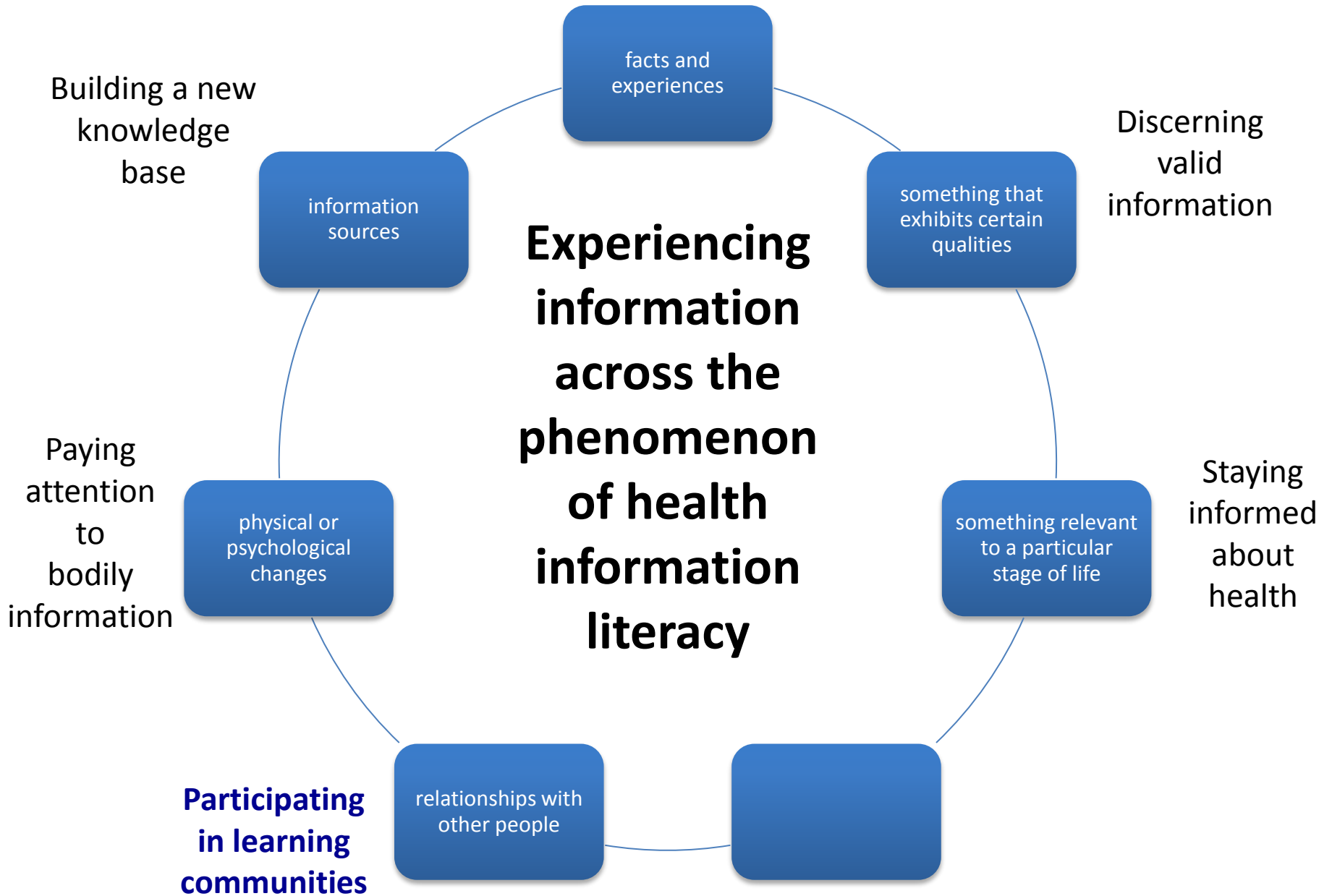
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Participating in learning communities

relationships with other people



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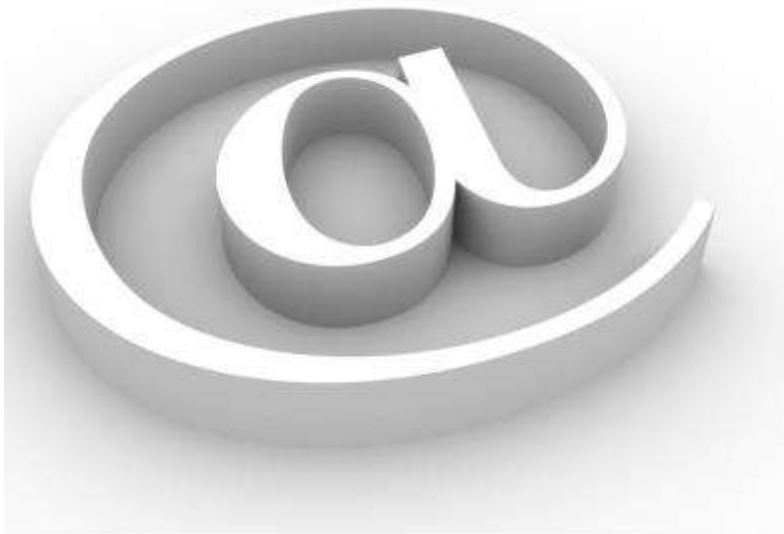
role models

Envisaging health

Implications?



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