

Social Determinants of Health



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Definitions

Health Disparity

....difference in incidence

Health Inequity

....difference that is unnecessary,
avoidable, unfair and unjust

Social Determinants of Health

....economic & social conditions
that influence health





Framework for Addressing Health Inequities

- **Health care determinants**

factors that can be addressed
by the health care system

- **Social determinants of health**

economic & social conditions
that influence health

Achieving Health Equity



***moving the dialog beyond access to health care
to social determinants of health and health equity***

Social determinants of Health

Factors in the social environment that contribute to or detract from the health of individuals and communities:

- Income
- Housing
- Education
- Transportation
- Access to services
- Physical Environment
- Socioeconomic status/position
- Discrimination by social grouping
- Social or environmental stressors

Source: www.cdc.gov/sdoh accessed on 11-9-07

SOCIAL POSITION MATTERS

- **Education and income are markers of *socioeconomic position*.**
- **People with lower socioeconomic position are more likely to have worse access to healthcare**
- **But social position also influences whether a person is**
 - **exposed to health risks**
 - **has resources to buffer health risks**

PLACE MATTERS

Researchers suggest that the things that determine where a person is on the social ladder also determine whether a person is surrounded by things that make it relatively easy or difficult to maintain healthy behaviors.





RACE MATTERS

Racial discrimination contributes to many factors affecting health including uneven distribution of income, education, neighborhood poverty, and access to health care.

Racial discrimination also constitutes a chronic stressor that contributes to poor health independently of these factors.



STRESS MATTERS

Chronic stress is toxic, setting in motion physiologic processes that can trigger diabetes

Researchers have found that people with lower socioeconomic position have higher levels of chronic stress—and have fewer resources to deal with stress



In Short....

“Poorer people live shorter lives and are more often ill than the rich. This disparity has drawn attention to the remarkable sensitivity of health to the social environment.”

Source: Social Determinants of Health, The Solid Facts. World Health Organization, 2003



Challenges

- ❑ Define and acknowledge the root causes of health inequity
- ❑ Choose where and how to focus efforts to eliminate those inequities
- ❑ Determine how to develop, implement and evaluate solutions.



Tackling Health Inequities Through Public Health Practice

- Develop your workforce
- Scan your environment
- Foster organizational & community leadership
- Complete communications planning
- Build non-traditional partnerships
- Research “promising practices”



Develop Your Workforce

- Raise staff awareness about SDOH
- Develop new staff orientation
- Provide on-going training
- Require viewing of *Unnatural Causes*
- Use common definitions to define & describe health equity work
- Integrate SDOH in to schools of PH curricula



Scan Your Environment

- Review state and local data on inequities
- Develop cross program goals and objectives
- Track health equity work across the organization
- Identify priority populations
- Build opportunities for programs to learn from each other

Foster Organizational and Community Leadership

- Identify internal and external champions early
- Seek senior management commitment
- Show episodes of *Unnatural Causes*, have facilitated discussions and supplement with state and local data
- Reframe the question
- Emphasize – health equity work is part of our PH tradition
- Don't give up



Complete Communications Planning

- Develop tools and messages to education stakeholders
- Use consistent messages
- Use common definitions
- Use plain talk
- Reframe the issue



Build Non-Traditional Partnerships

- Start early – trust needs time to develop
- Seek out community leaders as messengers
- Educate partners about the relationship between health equity and SDOH
- Assume public health need not and should not do this work alone.
- See health equity work as a foundation of public health and not extra work



Research Promising Practices

- ❑ Turning Point Initiative
- ❑ Louisville, KY Center for Health Equity
- ❑ Connecticut Health Equity Action Team
- ❑ Ingham County, MI Social Justice through Dialog
- ❑ King County, WA Equity and Social Justice Initiative
- ❑ Oklahoma State Health Equity & Resource Opportunities Division



National Association of
Chronic Disease Directors

Health Equity Interest Group

***“Eliminating Health Disparities
through
Social Justice”***





Three Priority Areas

- Continue to expand and integrate awareness efforts about SDOH
- Develop an advocacy plan
- Make recommendations to NACDD Board based on cultural competency assessment



Unnatural Causes: Is Inequality Making us Sick?

<http://www.unnaturalcauses.org/>

PBS Series - DVD

Action Toolkit

Discussion Guide

Policy Guide

Connect Up

Events Calendar

Handouts



Themes of Success Stories

- Increase awareness
- Staff development
- *Unnatural Causes* should be required for all staff
- Tool to promote policy change
- Encourage a variety of partnerships

General Resources

- ❑ CDC: www.cdc.gov/sdoh
- ❑ *Primer to Action: Social Determinants of Health*, www.ocdpa@opha.on.ca
- ❑ *Social Determinants of Health: The Solid Facts*, 2nd Edition. World Health Organization.
- ❑ *Data Set Directory of Social Determinants of Health at the Local Level*, Social Determinants of Health Workgroup, CDC
- ❑ *Unnatural Causes: Is Inequality Making us Sick?* www.unnaturalcauses.org
- ❑ *Tackling Health Inequities Through Public Health Practice: A Handbook for Action*, www.naccho.org



Health Equity Interest Group Resources

- Website
- Enhanced tool kit
- Success stories template
- Promising practices resources
- Cultural Competency assessment tool
- Networking & partnership opportunities

Alternative Ten Steps for Staying Healthy

1. Don't be poor. If you can, stop. If you can't, try not to be poor for long.
2. Don't have poor parents.
3. Own a car.
4. Don't work in a stressful, low paid manual job.
5. Don't live in damp, low quality housing.
6. Be able to afford to go on a foreign holiday and sunbathe.
7. Practice not losing your job and don't become unemployed.
8. Take up all benefits you are entitled to, if you are unemployed, retired or sick or disabled.
9. Don't live next to a busy major road or near a polluting factory.
10. Learn how to fill in the complex housing benefit/ asylum application forms before you become homeless and destitute.