Addressing Health Inequities: A Racial Justice Approach Using an Equity and Empowerment Lens

Ben Duncan
Health Equity Initiative Program Manager
Health Department
E & E Lens 101

• **WHAT is it?**
  - Framework, Definitions, IMPACT Questions, OUTCOME Areas

• **HOW do you apply it to your work?**
  - Case Studies

• **HOW will WE apply it to OUR work?**
  - IMPACT Questions, OUTCOME Areas
WHAT is it?

It is a framework of:

- Reflective Questions
- Focus on IMPACT in the areas of: People, Place, Process, Power
- 6 Outcome Areas
- supporting educational materials
WHY is Mult Co using it?

• We all benefit economically, educationally, and socially when ALL of our communities are thriving
• The time to act was yesterday
• The data has been presented, and is clear
• Our communities have spoken on these priorities
• As public servants we have an obligation to act
Causes of Health Inequities

**Root Factors**
- Poverty
- Discrimination
- Immigration status
- Institutional power

**Neighborhood Conditions**
- Toxic contaminants
- Joblessness
- Unequal education
- Poor transportation
- Inadequate access to food and exercise
- Marketing of unhealthy products
- Unhealthy housing
- Land use
- Access to healthy food
- Voter participation

**Risk Behaviors**
- Nutrition
- Physical activity
- Tobacco use
- Alcohol use
- Violence
- Hopelessness

**Disease, Injury, Mortality**
- Infectious disease
- Chronic disease
- Injury
- Infant mortality
- Life expectancy

Funding for
- Health Care Services
- Health Education
- Individual Services

Upstream: community based

Typical Govt: Downstream

Solutions to Health Inequities

**Root Factors**
- Poverty
- Racial discrimination
- Immigration status
- Institutional power

**Neighborhood Conditions**
- Toxic contaminants
- Joblessness
- Unequal education
- Poor transportation
- Inadequate access to food and exercise

**Risk Behaviors**
- Nutrition
- Physical activity
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- Hopelessness

**Disease, Injury, Mortality**
- Infectious disease
- Chronic disease
- Injury
- Infant mortality
- Life expectancy

Funding for
- Community empowerment
- Policy advocacy
- Social and economic policy change

**Upstream**

Scope of the work:

Structural

ASSESS the inequities in your system

IMPACT

Individual

ASSESS your individual & collective beliefs & behaviors

ACTIONS

ASSESS your individual & collective beliefs & behaviors
WHAT is it?

Socio-Ecological Model

UPSTREAM

Social Factors

- Social Inequalities
  - Race/ethnicity
  - Class
  - Gender
  - Immigration status

- Institutional Power
  - Corporations & other businesses
  - Gov't agencies
  - Schools
  - Churches

- Neighborhood Conditions
  - Physical environment
    - Land use
    - Transportation
    - Housing
    - Residential segregation
  - Social environment
    - Experience of class
    - Experience of racism
    - Experience of gender
    - Cultural assimilation/isolation
    - Population histories

DOWNSTREAM

- Health Status
  - Risk Behaviors
    - Smoking
    - Nutrition
    - Physical activity
    - Violence
  - Disease & Injury
    - Infectious disease
    - Chronic disease
    - Injury (intentional & unintentional)
  - Mortality
    - Infant mortality
    - Life expectancy

Individual Model

- Individual Knowledge
- Genetics

- Health Education
- Healthcare
## IMPACT on: People, Place, Process, Power

### PEOPLE
- Who is positively and negatively affected (by this issue) and how?
- How are people differently situated in terms of the barriers they experience?
- Consider Physical, Spiritual, Emotional and Contextual affects.

### PLACE
- What kind of positive “place” are we creating?
- What kind of negative “place” are we creating?
- How are public resources and investments distributed geographically?

### PROCESS
- How are we meaningfully including or excluding people (communities of color) who are affected?
- What policies, processes and social relationships contribute to the exclusion of communities most affected by inequities?
- Are there empowering processes at every human touchpoint?

### POWER
- What are the barriers to doing equity and racial justice work?
- What are the benefits and burdens that communities experience with this (issue)?
- Who holds the accountability?
APPENDIX 1

MENU OF OUTCOMES FOR ADVOCACY AND POLICY WORK

1. SHIFT IN SOCIAL NORMS
   Encompasses core and enduring social values, knowledge, attitudes and behaviors.

2. STRENGTHENING ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY
   Core capacities including staffing and leadership, organizational structure & systems, finances and strategic planning.

3. STRENGTHENED ALLIANCES
   Includes the level of coordination, collaboration and mission alignment among community and system partners, including nontraditional alliances, e.g., bipartisan alliances, non-traditional allies.

4. STRENGTHENED BASE OF SUPPORT
   Composed of grassroots, leadership and institutional support for particular policy changes that include the breadth, depth and influence of support among the general public, interest groups and opinion leaders.

5. IMPROVED POLICIES
   The stages of policy change in the public policy arena include policy development, policy proposal, demonstration of support (e.g., co-sponsorship), adoption funding and implementation.

6. CHANGES IN IMPACT
   The ultimate changes in social and physical lives and conditions (i.e., changes in individuals, populations and physical environments) that motivate policy change efforts.
At its core, the Lens guides the participant to:

- **Assess** your current organizational capacity for equity work.
- **Describe** current direction and strategies.
- **Identify** inequities and injustices in the current issue.

- Reflect and understand your strengths and challenges.
- Enhance what is leading to equity and empowerment.
- Eliminate strategies and root causes leading to inequities and injustices.
- Celebrate successes and improvements.
Equity and Empowerment Lens

Outcomes

- Individual understanding
- Improved policy development and language
- Strategic planning
- Workplanning
- Facilitation
- Decision-making

*Better outcomes for the communities we serve!!*
## Case Study Examples

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<tr>
<th>Internal</th>
<th>External</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Capital Improvement Plan</td>
<td>1. Portland Public Schools</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Food Resource Mapping</td>
<td>2. Climate Adaptation Plan</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Strategic Planning</td>
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Barriers to this Work

- Lack of acknowledgement and understanding of historically inequitable policies, official and unofficial (employment, housing & homeownership, education, health care, loans, etc.) and their effect on individuals, communities, orgs
- Organizational and individual resistance to change as well as sharing power
- The ‘–isms’ in practice
Lessons and challenges along the way—conditions for transformative change

- Create the space necessary to think and reflect, and willingness to “meet folks where they are at”
- Break down silos
- Work to understand not just identify the barriers to change
- Let go of needing to know the outcome / answer
- Live with a larger view of time -- this work is relational
- Inspire and innovate
- Maintain energy and enthusiasm
For more information, contact:

Ben Duncan
Multnomah County Health Department
Health Equity Initiative
Benjamin.e.duncan@multco.us
503-988-3663