Health Equity Defined

WHAT IS HEALTH EQUITY?

Equity is the absence of avoidable, unfair, or remediable differences among groups of people, whether those groups are defined socially, economically, demographically or geographically or by other means of stratification.

-World Health Organization

Health equity means that everyone has a fair and just opportunity to be healthier.

This requires removing obstacles to health such as poverty, discrimination, and their consequences, including powerlessness and lack of access to good jobs with fair pay, quality education and housing, safe environments, and health care.

-Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

The route to achieving equity will not be accomplished through treating everyone equally. It will be achieved by treating everyone justly according to their circumstances.

-Interaction Institute for Social Change

Research shows that problems like poverty, unemployment, low educational attainment, inadequate housing, lack of public transportation, exposure to violence, and neighborhood deterioration (social or physical) shape health and contribute to health inequities.

-National Family Sciences Foundation

Image sourced from: https://www.ahealthierworld.jhu.edu/understand-health-equity

- Johns Hopkins Alliance for a Healthier World
Health Equity Defined

Everyone has a fair & just opportunity to attain optimal health

Involves learning & understanding community need

Beyond understanding requires real action to remove/dismantle barriers to resources

Story Based Strategy
http://www.storybasedstrategy.org/blog/the4thbox
Health Inequity is Systemic & Systematic

- **Systemic**: Embedded in the system and the process
- **Systematic**: Follows the system as designed
Health Inequity is Systematic

Systematic:

e.g. the national landscape of health and healthcare policy and decisions
Fostering Inequity & Injustice: Systems-level

Reducing Medicaid Eligibility and/or limiting access to services

Cumbersome requirements for health care programs

Education/Housing/Zoning/Healthcare policy
Inequity & Injustice

• Always be mindful of language, policies, and systems that are not equitable

• Be mindful of the uniqueness of each place/person/population

• Be mindful of one size fits all approaches - universal vs targeted universalism
Applying an Equity Lens

- Structural/Institutional Barriers Exists (always)
  - Don’t question, just combat
- What systems/practices/programs are in place that continue to foster privilege and inequity?
- How is inequity fostered in the health policy/recommendation of interest?
- What can we change in these systems/policies?
- What is our sphere(s) of influence to increase equity?
What can you do?

• Understand the embeddedness of racial inequality & inequity

• Use an anti-racism, social justice lens

• Advocate, advocate, advocate
Opportunities for Advancing Health Equity

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Include</th>
<th>Equity &amp; Inclusion: Include the people!</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Improve &amp; Streamline</td>
<td>Improve &amp; Streamline Access</td>
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<tr>
<td>Promote</td>
<td>Promote equity in outcomes - Collect REL</td>
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<tr>
<td>Push</td>
<td>Push beyond barriers at every level</td>
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