Resources for Working Toward Health Equity

Iowa Department of Public Health

Overview

This guide provides a **menu of resources** to think about when addressing health equity. It is meant to spur conversation, generate ideas, and provide examples. It is not a comprehensive list of resources, and it is not a list of steps that must be followed. Find the resource(s) that works best for your program.

The **IDPH Health Equity Resource Library** contains resources on a broad array of topics, including assessment, planning, implementation, and evaluation. The Resource Library can be accessed at in the shared google folder, All_Iowa_Department_of_Public_Health, in the Health Equity Resource Library folder.

Questions to Think About When Working Toward Health Equity

1. What is the outcome to be achieved?

2. What populations are not achieving the desired outcome?

3. What extra challenges do priority populations face? Why aren't current activities and interventions adequate?

Assessment

Possible Activity	Related Resources Available
Evaluate disparities using data standards.	IDPH Data Standards ● Many data resources are available that assess disparities in outcomes, including the IDPH Scorecards.
Use qualitative methods to assess WHY and HOW identified disparities exist.	Participatory Methods (PMs) ● Seek out those voices that are typically unheard in decision-making ● Position all perspectives as 'experts' on equal footing ● Empower community members to define, express and analyze their reality ● Ensures community voice is carried through planning, implementation, and evaluation phases. http://www.participatorymethods.org
Assess structural risks and strengths at the state and/or community level. Structural factors include economics, structural racism, and the built environment.	THRIVE Tool ● Use for assessing community-level determinants of health ● Designed to support community health improvement planning ● Can be applied to local, state, and national initiatives https://www.preventioninstitute.org/tools/thrive-tool-health-resilience-vulnerable-environments

Planning

Possible Activity	Related Resources Available
Apply health equity lens.	Plan4Health ● List of resources to plan for health equity ● Collaborative effort among many partners including the CDC and the American Planning Association http://plan4health.us/health-equity-resources/
Identify community partners.	Creating and Maintaining Partnerships Community Tool Box ● Toolkit with resources to help people work together to build healthier communities ● Provides guidance for developing partnerships among diverse stakeholders to address a common goal https://ctb.ku.edu/en/creating-and-maintaining-partnerships
Engage the community in developing strategies and priorities.	Detroit Urban Research Center ● Resources for using Participatory Methods (PMs) to drive planning and implementation http://www.detroiturc.org/interpreting-and-applying-data-to-inform-community-change.html
Consider policy, systems, and environmental strategies for change.	Plan4Health ● Resources for implementing policy, systems, and environmental change http://plan4health.us/policy-systems-and-environmental-change-strategies/
Assess how the community will be impacted.	Health Impact Assessments (HIA) and Health Equity Impact Assessments (HEIA) ● Look at health from a broad perspective to determine the potential effects of a proposed policy, plan, program, or project on a population's health and the distribution of those health impacts ● Aim to identify unintended positive and negative impacts on population health http://www.pewtrusts.org/en/projects/health-impact-project/health-impact-assessment http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/heia/

Implementation

Possible Activity	Related Resources Available
Use inclusive communication and tailor communication to be effective for priority populations and other stakeholders.	Effective Communication ● Includes translation and use of preferred modes, such as social media or radio https://www.rwjf.org/en/library/research/2010/01/a-new-way-to-talk-about-the-social-determinants-of-health.html Inclusive Communication ● Includes using people-first language, being aware of how language can rank or prioritize populations, and avoiding gender-specific terms http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/opi/healthequity/resources/windsor-essex-toolkit.html (starting on page 14)
Use feedback loops to assess effectiveness. Ask questions and create a dialog.	Active Listening ● Strategy to make a conscious effort to create a mutual understanding and to hear the complete message being communicated https://ggia.berkeley.edu/practice/active_listening
Implement practical and appropriate activities driven by community engagement.	Community Engagement ● Work in partnerships with key stakeholders ● Gather community input to drive activities https://www.rwjf.org/en/library/features/achieving-health-equity.html
Track the outcomes.	Performance Management ● Track impact among priority populations ● Focus on outcomes, rather than inputs such as services

Evaluation

Possible Activity	Related Resources Available
Assess what works, for whom, under what conditions, and whether the inequities increased, decreased, or stayed the same.	CDC Health Equity Guide https://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dch/pdf/HealthEquityGuide.pdf (Evaluation content starts on page 30)
Assess impact of activities on outcomes among disparate groups.	Minnesota Department of Health's Health Equity Evaluation Resources http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/opi/healthequity/resources/sort/survey-assess.html
Assess the value of activities among priority populations.	Academy Health - Getting from What to Why: Using Qualitative Methods in Public Health Systems Research https://www.academyhealth.org/publications/2013-11/getting-what-why-using-qualitative-methods-public-health-systems-research
Engage and share conclusions with communities.	Sharing and discussing findings ● Builds capacity and increases awareness among priority populations ● Provides data needed for communities to decide on next steps
Act on evaluation findings.	Quality Improvement ● Supports activities in any phase of the program cycle ● Creates an iterative cycle for continual improvement ● Use QI to find ways to close or lessen the gap between populations.

For more information about any of these activities, please contact:

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