



Allies for Reaching  
Community  
Health Equity

A project of the Center for Global Policy Solutions

## Culture of Health Institute for Leadership Development Online Training Resource Guide

### Understanding How the Social Determinants of Health Impact Health Outcomes

#### Course Description

The conditions in which we are born, live, learn, play and age exercise a powerful influence on the health of individuals and communities. By critically examining the role of neighborhood conditions, education, income and wealth, and the socio-political climate, this training will strengthen participants' understanding of the social determinants of health and their role in shaping health outcomes of diverse populations. Examples of programmatic, structural and policy interventions will be discussed to illustrate how public health practitioners, advocates and policymakers can effectively address social determinants and advance equity for populations and communities that have experienced persistent barriers to good health.

#### Learning Outcomes

By the end of this module, participants will be able to:

- Define the social determinants of health;
- Explain how inequities in neighborhood conditions, education, income and wealth, and socio-political climate affect health outcomes and health disparities;
- Understand how differential access to wealth-building policies and structures (beyond income) create unequal conditions for good health in communities across the United States; and
- Identify examples of effective local, regional, and national strategies for improving systems and policies that affect the social determinants of health.

## Module Outline

### Unit I: The Social Determinants of Health (SDOH)

- I. Social Determinants of Health (SDOH)
- II. Structural Determinants of Health framework
- III. ACEs and life course effects
- IV. Percent of health impacted by SDOH
- V. Connection to health equity definition and cliff analogy
- VI. Family scenarios

#### *Reflection Question 1: What determines health?*

- Make a mental list of as many things as you can to answer this question.
- Did you include work environment? Housing? Access to health care services?

#### *Reflection Question 2: Where to intervene to improve health and reduce inequities?*

- Imagine you have \$100 million dollars to improve health and reduce health inequities in the U.S.; where would you put the money?
- Where do you get the most impact for your investment in improving health?
- What is the strongest or most important determinant of health?

#### *References and Suggested Readings*

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<sup>1</sup> n.d., no publication data available.

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### Unit 2: Neighborhood Conditions

- I. Direct causal pathway: air quality and pollution, race/ethnicity, and asthma
- II. Indirect causal pathway: resource distribution
- III. Highlighted case: Moving to Opportunity
- IV. Other strategies for change
- V. Family scenarios

*Reflection Question 3: Think about a specific neighborhood where you lived growing up. Check any determinant where the way your neighborhood was built or structured allowed all people to achieve maximum health, regardless of their family financial situation. Check all that apply. It's also OK if you are unsure.*

- Neighborhood structured for walkability
- Access to nutritious food
- Affordable housing
- Safety
- Air/water quality

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## Unit 3: Education

- I. Health effects of education
- II. Effects of socio-economic status → education → health
- III. Intergenerational inequalities in education and health
- IV. Race/ethnicity → education and link back to residential segregation → neighborhood resources and opportunity
- V. Highlighted case: Harlem Children’s Zone
- VI. Other strategies for change
- VII. Family scenarios

*Reflection Question 4: Think about the community or region where you live right now. Can you easily identify the name of a public school that everyone knows provides the highest quality education?*

- Who goes there?
- What strategies do people use to give their kids a shot at good health?
- How can we switch to thinking about more community-oriented strategies?
- What would it look like to rebuild neighborhoods around a culture of health?

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### Unit 4: Income and Wealth

- I. Education, earnings, and quality of work
- II. Wealth v. income, racial wealth gap, gender
- III. How assets over life course build wealth and drive inequality if not equitably distributed
- IV. Effects on physical and mental health
- V. Highlighted case: SEED OK
- VI. Other strategies for change

*Reflection Question 5: What are the structural wealth-building mechanisms that have enabled you to build assets at different stages of your life? Check all that apply.*

- Matched retirement savings accounts offered through an employer
- Parental wealth (either inheritance or smaller gifts throughout life)
- Personal, public, or family savings for higher education
- Homeownership, home equity, mortgage interest deductions, etc.
- Health insurance provided through an employer

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## Unit 5: Socio-political climate

- I. Climate for LGBT youth
- II. Bullying and link to health
- III. Climate for people of color, Muslims, and unauthorized immigrants
- IV. Highlighted case: Sanctuary Cities
- V. Welcoming America
- VI. Other strategies for change
- VII. Family scenarios

*Reflection Question 6: To the best of your knowledge, which of the following strategies are included in your community’s public health policies or programs? Check all that apply*

- Sanctuary city / state policies
- Anti-racism efforts
- Bullying prevention
- Welcoming efforts for New Americans
- Programs to address mental health effects and trauma caused by bullying or hate crimes

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## Unit 6: Strategies for Change

- I. How most policies and practices to address SDOH and intentionally link to health equity solutions are cross-sector
- II. Rebuilding neighborhoods around a culture of health
- III. Cliff analogy

### *Reflection Question 7: What else determines health?*

- After participating in this training, what else can you add to your definition?
- List any new factors, determinants, or insights that you have gained about what determines health from this module.

### *References and Suggested Readings*

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