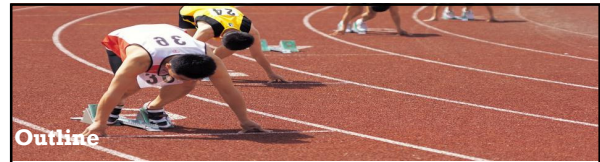




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Communicating about the everyday factors that affect our health

Sume Ndumbe-Eyoh
Pemma Muzumdar
Ottawa | CHNC 2014



Outline

- Identify dominant worldviews and frames through which we understand health equity and the social determinants of health
- Apply effective communication strategies about the social determinants of health and health equity



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Communicating More Effectively

- Communications is a core activity in public health
- As public health professionals, we are expected to communicate to various audiences on a daily basis.
- Increasing awareness and understanding of impact of the everyday factors that affect our health can be a driver for more effective action



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Common Messaging Guidelines

- Written by Canadian Council on the Social Determinants of Health (Available at www.ccsdh)
- NCCDH & CPHA developing an example applying the guidelines (income inequality)



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Common messaging guidelines

- Craft messages that resonate with your audience and potentially expand their perspectives
- Create communication that is memorable and easy to share or repeat; and
- Reach audiences who typically have not been aware of or open to your messages



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Context

- Health and healthcare are top priorities for Canadians
- Belief that they have good knowledge of health issues
- Usually identify disease, illness and health care as key health policy issues



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Context

- Generally uniformed about the social determinants of health
- Belief that health is influenced by individual factors and access to health care vs. social and economic factors (e.g. income, education, employment, social connections, gender, race)



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Awareness and action

- Individuals who recognize structural causes of ill health are more likely to support policies to address resulting health inequities
- Effective messaging → contribute to action

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Values and beliefs

- Independence and personal autonomy
- health is viewed as a personal responsibility within the control of individual
- The role of choice – right and wrong choices at the individual level

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ACTIVITY

- Pick a SDOH
- On the cards – write down the first word or image which comes to mind

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Values and metaphors

Deep metaphors

- Journey vs. structural

Values

- Social justice vs. market justice



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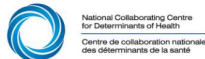
Social Justice worldview & structural metaphors

- In a structural view of the world, everything is tied together, there is an orientation towards equality, and inequality is a sign of imbalance. This view seeks balance and equality.
- In a social justice world, there is emphasis on the collective good, where basic assurances are available to all.

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Market justice worldview & journey metaphor

- In a market justice world, the free will of the market and the effort of individuals is the ultimate driver and this determines the outcome.
- Journey: Life is about evolution/journeys in an uncertain world. Imbalance is natural, equality is unrealistic. This view seeks overall progress.



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News Media in Canada

- "Health" News stories = 4732
- 13 daily Canadian newspapers
- Healthcare = 65%
- Physical environment = 13%
- Socio-economic environment = 6%
- Personal health practices = 5%
- Scientific advances = 4%

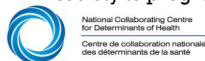
Telling stories: News media, health literacy and public policy in Canada. *Social Science & Medicine*, Volume 64, Issue 9, May 2007, Pages 1842-1852. Hayes, et al.



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What does this mean for how we communicate?

- Interest in health and health care
- Frame messages consistent with audience values
- Non-partisan language
- Individual choices + broader social and economic factors
- Situations and circumstances vs labeling individuals
- We vs they
- Problems & **solutions** – conditions for people and society to progress



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Let's start a conversation about health... without talking about healthcare



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Guiding Principles: Focus

- The most effective communications are highly focused and single-minded. If your desire is to expand or grow a perspective, the best way is to start narrow.
- >> start narrow and expand**



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Guiding Principles: Align

- We all view the world differently.
- Effective communications align with the values and beliefs of those you are communicating with.

>> it's all about the receivers

Appeal to "universal values"

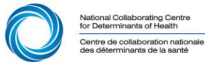
Fairness, prevention,



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Focus

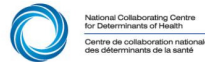
- Clear message
- Know your audience
- Best ways to approach them



ACTIVITY

At tables

- Chose a social determinant of health
- Identify your key audience
- What is your message? What do you want them to know?



Examples

- Demonstrates significant gaps between the health of *wealthy and poor* people



Expressing concepts

- Translate theoretical language into tangible concepts
- Use clear, plain language
- Make issues tangible with stories



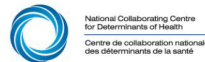
FACTS

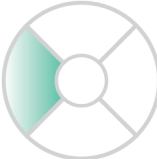


Words matter




- Social determinants of health
- Health inequalities
- Vulnerable groups
- Poverty
- Racialized groups






PARTICIPATE IN POLICY DEVELOPMENT
Lead, support and participate with other organizations in policy analysis and development, and in advocacy for improvement in health determinants and inequities.

NCCDH, 2014
Alberta Health Services: Establishing a province-wide social determinants of health and health equity approach. Available at:
<http://nccdh.ca/resources/entry/alberta-health-services>



Conclusion

- Some language which is the norm in public health equity work does not resonate with some audiences
- Communication messages need to be tailored for different audiences
- Effective communications [framing] can be used as a tool to support long-term action to improve health equity



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