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Health Equity at the Ground Level

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Biologic Expression of Gender Relations:

- Domestic violence
- Reduced options to negotiate safe sex
- Risk of HIV infection, other STD's
- Greater risk for women of living in poverty
- Greater risk for men of injury due to crime outside of home
- Greater risk for men of injury at work


Krieger, N. (2001) *Embodying Racial Inequality: An Ecosocial Perspective On Understanding And Eliminating Social Inequalities In Health*. Presented at Minority Health Conference: "Eliminating Health Disparities by 2010", Nashua, NH, April 3, 2001.



Biologic Expression of Race Relations:

- Racial discrimination contributes to:**
- Chronic stress
- Increased allostatic load
- Increased risk of hypertension, diabetes
- Increased risk of substance use/abuse problems

Krieger, N. (2001) *Embodying Racial Inequality: An Ecosocial Perspective On Understanding And Eliminating Social Inequalities In Health*. Presented at Minority Health Conference: "Eliminating Health Disparities by 2010", Nashua, NH, April 3, 2001.




Biologic Expression of Class Relations:

Childhood poverty contributes to:

- Shorter height
- Increased susceptibility to infectious disease
- Tendency toward low birth weight in reproductive years
- Increased risk of exposure to toxins


Krieger, N. (2001) *Embodying Racial Inequality: An Ecosocial Perspective On Understanding And Eliminating Social Inequalities In Health*. Presented at Minority Health Conference: "Eliminating Health Disparities by 2010", Nashua, NH, April 3, 2001.



The Social Gradient


- Poor economic circumstances affect life throughout the life-cycle.
- Low social ranking increases chances of disease: Among middle class office workers, lower ranking staff suffer much more disease than higher ranking staff.
- The longer people live in stressful circumstances, the greater the physiological wear and tear they suffer, and the greater the odds of decreased quality of life.





The Social Gradient

- Disadvantage may have many forms:
 - Poor education
 - Insecure employment
 - Hazardous or dead end job
 - Poor housing
 - Inadequate retirement or pension
 - Physical/mental disability
 - Victimization by violence



Stress

- Social Factors contribute to long term stress levels
- Long-term stress has a greater impact on health than high stress.
- But the combination of HIGH and LONG-TERM stress set individuals up for greater chances of chronic, poor health.

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Stress

- Factors that increase stress:
 - Continuing anxiety
 - Insecurity
 - Low self-esteem
 - Lack of control over work and/or home life
 - Social Isolation
 - Low income

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Stress

- Stress affects:
 - Heart rate
 - Respiration
 - Sleep/wake cycles
 - Hormonal responses
 - Metabolism
 - Reproduction

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Stress

- Leads to increased susceptibility to :
 - Increased infections
 - Diabetes
 - High blood pressure
 - Stroke
 - Depression
 - Aggression
 - Drug/alcohol/tobacco use and abuse

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Social Exclusion

- Poverty, relative deprivation and exclusion affects health status:
 - Absolute poverty – lack of basic material necessities continues to exist.
 - Relative Poverty – Being much poorer than those around you (less than 60% of national median income) is more common.

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Social Exclusion

- Poverty creates conditions that impair people's
 - Access to adequate housing
 - Access to decent education
 - Transportation options
 - Ability to be included in social life of the community

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People with Disabilities

- More likely to have education interrupted
- Less likely to be continuously employed
- More likely to be socially isolated
- More likely to have difficulty accessing competent health care



High School Drop Out Rates

Overall MA (% Enrollment)	3.1
Hispanic, Any Race	7.4
Black/African American	5.1
Native American	3.2
More than one race, Non-Hispanic	3.2
White	1.8
Asian	1.6



But when you take a closer look...

Overall Dropout Rate (% of Enrollment)	3.1
Limited English Proficiency	8.5
Low Income	4.7
Special Education	4.7
Cities	4.7
Towns	1.4

Lack of Parental Engagement



- Parents in marginalized communities are poorly prepared to support their child's education
- Many have emotional scars left from their own educational experiences
- Many parents avoid engaging with schools and feel intimidated and fearful of talking with teachers and administrators.

- Students fear being teased and ostracized if they do well in school
- Media supports images of white students becoming successful, students of color falling by wayside of being diverted by bad choices.
- Good academic performance seen as "white".



Smoking



- Smoking rates continue to climb
 - In ethnic communities
 - Among youth/teens
- More advertising in ethnic neighborhoods
- Easy access to cigarettes (e.g. "loosies")
- Higher rates of chronic stress

Stress



- Alcohol and drugs relieve the experience of stress, but cause other stressors
- Alcohol and illicit drugs readily available in most communities
- Alcohol widely advertised in ethnic and poor communities
- Justice system favors incarceration, not treatment

Coping with Stress



- Mental Health Services continue to be under-utilized by members of disadvantaged groups
- Few professionals who represent ethnic minorities
- Stereotyping by mental health professionals
- Strong class bias in delivery of care
- Stigmatization of mental illness

Exercise



- Lack of education and support re low cost, culturally appropriate ways to stay active.



- For adults, there is very little support for the inevitable setbacks and failures in the journey toward healthier lifestyle choices.
- Economics present major barriers:
 - Working multiple jobs
 - Living in unsafe neighborhoods
 - Long commute times to/from work

Safety



- Neighborhood may be unsafe
- Or may be PERCEIVED as unsafe

Public Transportation

- Many problems in
 - Quality
 - Access
 - Cost
 - Availability
- Major issue in finding, keeping employment



Transportation

- Healthy Transport means less driving and more walking, and cycling, backed up by safe reliable public transportation
- Promotes regular exercise, reduces:
 - Heart disease
 - Obesity
 - Stress
 - Auto accidents
 - Reliance on non-renewable fuels

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- Healthier options may be seen as
 - Age inappropriate
 - Culturally inappropriate
 - Requiring skills not available
 - Dangerous



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Open Space

- Cities and Towns struggle to create and maintain safe open space
- Lack of safety in evening and after work hours
- Creation of Friends of "My Park" coalitions
 - Bring generations together
 - Create exercise in cleaning maintaining, using space
 - Teach about public policy
 - Create shared ownership



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Community Engagement

- Get the community into the policy/program before you put the program into the community.
- Bring youth into conversation
- Each one, reach one.



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- Information does not flow into distressed communities in usable ways:

- Not presented as relevant
- Literacy level too high
- Information is marginalized
- Not available to LEP audiences
- Difficult to access for people with disabilities



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1.

Breads, Cereals & Grains

A bagel the size of a hockey puck = 2 servings

- Health experts recommend that adults eat at least six servings of breads, cereals and grains daily. At least half of those grainservings should be whole grain*. A bagel the size of a hockey puck equals two of those servings.

2. Meat, Poultry or Seafood

A meat, poultry or seafood portion the size of a deckof cards = 1 serving

- Health experts recommend that adults eat two servings of leanmeat, poultry or seafood daily. An average serving size is three ounces cooked. That's the size of a deck of cards.

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Health Literacy not taught in school

- How to make an appointment
- Common questions
- How to understand prescription labeling/instructions
- How to ask your doctor questions
- How to fill out a health screening form
- Understanding
 - informed consent
 - procedure preparations
 - advance directives



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Food

- Having it is good! Having healthy food is much better!
- Lack of healthy food creates malnutrition and food insufficiency.
- Excess intake is often related to a variety of illness conditions
- US is prone to overconsumption of energy dense, high sodium, high fat, high sugar foods.

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- Many parents never learned to cook
- Microwave culture
- Perceptions of difficulties in learning to prepare healthy meals
- Food insufficiency – cheap food is available, healthy food is not.



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Retail Food Environment Index

$$RFEI = \frac{\# \text{ Fast Food Restaurants} + \# \text{ Convenience Stores}}{\# \text{ Grocery Stores} + \# \text{ Produce vendors}}$$

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Retail Food Environment Index: Blue Hills Parkway, Milton

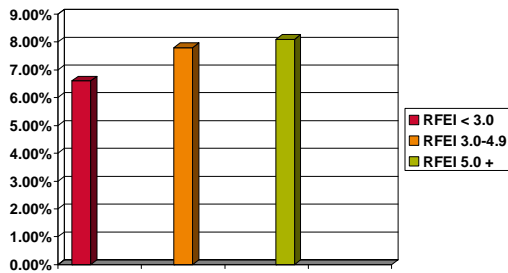
$$RFEI = \frac{6 \text{ Fast Food} + 2 \text{ Convenience Stores}}{1 \text{ Grocery Stores} + 1 \text{ Produce Vendors}}$$

$$RFEI = 4.0$$

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Diabetes Prevalence by RFEI, Adults 18+



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Food

- Even after accounting for individual characteristics and community income, adults with a higher retail index (RFEI) are more likely to be obese, and more likely to have diabetes.

Designed for Disease: The Link between Local Food Environment and Obesity and Diabetes (2008) Policy Link, California Center for Public Health Advocacy. www.policylink.org

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Social Capital

- Encourage activities that
 - Bring generations together
 - Encourage activity
 - Bring neighbors together



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Big Changes, Big Investments

- Long-Range Public Policy
 - Supports difficult change
 - Build capacity
 - Can make a huge difference in communities
- Educates a new generation of activists



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Built Environment

- Influences the physical surroundings and options for healthy behaviors:
 - Lack of parks
 - Safe play/exercise spaces
 - Lack of green space
 - Presence of environmental toxins (air, ground, water)
 - Presence of highways, truck and bus routes
 - Sidewalks, street crossings
 - Sidewalk "cut outs" for wheeled chairs, strollers
 - Sheltered bus stops
 - Street lights

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- "There is also a lot of construction going on in that area..they just finished building a BJ's then Lowe's is going in although there is a Home Cheapo (sic) right there also..there is an office park called Crown Colony that houses many things including medical offices houses a hotel etc... If [you] were looking for housing you would look at the Centre Street and surrounding area but again nothing convenient such as stores not even a pizza place. If you needed supermarkets, restaurants you would have to hop on the T and go a stop or two and that would be costly after a while."

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