

Count Me In! How Inclusion can Help Reduce Health Disparities and Work for System Change

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Prevention
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Who we are

Ontario Prevention Clearinghouse (OPC) builds health promotion capacity and fosters the development and implementation of effective prevention and health promotion strategies to improve the health of Ontarians and Canadians.

- OPC builds the capacity of health promoters to implement health promotion strategies, based on the [Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion](#), that address the [determinants of health](#).
- OPC is Ontario's leading bilingual health promotion organization.

We start by defining *health*

- Health is:
 - A state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. (WHO, 1948)
 - Created and lived by people within the settings of their everyday life; where they learn, work, play and love” (Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion, 1986)



And Defining *Health Promotion*

- Health promotion is:
 - The process of enabling people to increase control over the determinants of health, and thereby improve their health.
(Regional framework for health promotion, WHO 2002)

Health Disparities in Canada

- Canadians among world's healthiest, but some Canadians are less healthy than others
- Aboriginal, ethno-racial, immigrant
- Income, education, geographical distance
- Healthy immigrant effect

Reduction of health disparities is important not only for those in poorer health, but it also results in overall improvement in the health of the population.

How do we address the determinants of health to create a healthier population and reduce health disparities?

Consider where we want to be and what needs to change through the lens of inclusion

What is Inclusion?

- Inclusion focuses on social structures and conditions, rather than the specific factors that contribute to each individual's social exclusion or inclusion.
- Inclusion is a powerful health promotion strategy that helps us reduce health disparities, promote equity and achieve health for all.

Inclusion & Health Count Me In!

- Inclusion as a way to improve the health of individuals and communities
- Define inclusion
- Create tools for inclusion and health
- Participatory project funded by the Laidlaw Foundation and the Public Health Agency of Canada

Inclusion is about Belonging

Part of being healthy is *belonging* -- to a family, a community, a society. It makes us feel good. It makes us healthy. It makes us want to reach out to others. Belonging makes our communities healthy, too.

Defining Inclusion

An inclusive society creates both the *feeling* and *reality* of belonging and helps each of us reach our full potential.

We build the reality of belonging together by engaging our society to ensure it.

The Feeling of Belonging

The *feeling* of belonging emerges through caring, cooperation, and trust.

The feeling of belonging flows from attitudes, behaviors, structures, processes, environments.

The Reality of Belonging

The *reality* of belonging emerges through equity and fairness, social and economic justice, and cultural as well as spiritual respect.

The reality flows from missions, mandates, structures, policies, programmes and advocacy.

Determinants of Health

We experience the feeling and reality of belonging through the determinants of health, including:

- income
- employment
- education
- community
- environment
- equity

Groups & Belonging

Groups *experience* the feeling and reality of belonging in *different ways* in a diverse society.

Specific factors vary within and among groups. We must take those factors into account to ensure belonging.

Tools for an Inclusive Ontario

- Who? Your group and the specific factors that influence your group
- What? The determinants of health
- Where? Ways to measure belonging
- How? Strategies and targets to promote inclusion

The Matrix

<u>Group, e.g.</u>	<u>Specific Factors for your Group</u>	<u>Determinant of Health</u>	<u>Indicators for Individuals, Families, Communities</u>	<u>Indicators for Agencies, Government, Schools,</u>	<u>Strategies for Inclusion</u>	<u>Targets for Inclusion</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • gender • age • sexuality • location • ability • race • other 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • income • employment • education • community • environment • equity 				

The Feeling of Belonging

This emerges from cooperation, caring, trust.

Look for attitudes, beliefs, behaviors, processes, environments:

- Do we create environments where people feel comfortable? How?
- Do we show them that we care? How?
- Do we show that we trust them, and they can trust us? How?
- How do we create inclusive processes? What would these look like?

The Reality of Belonging

This emerges through equity & fairness, social & economic justice, and cultural & spiritual respect.

Look for missions, mandates, policies, programmes and advocacy:

- Do our missions, mandates, and policies encourage equity & fairness; cultural & spiritual respect?
- Are we aware of the social and economic issues and disparities around us?
- How do these play a part in including or excluding people?
- What would inclusive policies and practices look like?
- What would an inclusive structure look like?
- How do we include those most affected in this process?

Ontario Inclusion Learning Network

- Partnership of health & social service organizations dedicated to promoting inclusion
- Drawn from health promotion, healthy communities, women's health, disability, HIV/AIDS, social planning, education
- Adopted COUNT ME IN definition of inclusion
- Policy paper
- Developing capacity to create inclusive research, policy/programme development, communications, evaluation for governmental & non-governmental organizations in Ontario

Inclusion Projects

- Ontario Women's Health Network
 - Count Us in ! Community action research for and with homeless women www.owhn.on.ca
- Ontario Healthy Communities Coalition
 - Creating Inclusive Community Organizations toolkit www.healthycommunities.on.ca
- Community Living Ontario
 - Ontario's Community Inclusion Project-research about inclusive school cultures – pilot with Kawartha Pine Ridge & District School Board www.communityinclusion.ca
- Community Development Council Durham
 - Durham Child Nutrition Project – utilizing inclusion to ensure every child in Durham Region attends school well-nourished and ready to learn www.cdcd.org

More Inclusion Projects

- Inclusive Cities Canada
 - Looking at inclusion in five different cities in Canada.
www.inclusivecities.ca
- Social Planning Network of Ontario
 - Projects designed to 'close the distance' between specific marginalized populations & mainstream community life www.closingthedistance.ca
- Laidlaw Foundation
 - Inclusion as a focus on child and family policy
 - Supporting a consortium of organizations to create social & economic inclusion indices for national, provincial, local use www.laidlawfdn.org
- Alternative Planning Group (APG)
 - 4 umbrella organizations serving South Asian, Chinese, Hispanic and African communities in Toronto
 - Research on the meaning of inclusion in their communities in a social planning context www.cassa.on.ca

OPC's further work on Inclusion

Inclusion forums across the province:

- Six locations, 200 participants from 75 organizations
- In English and French
- Support health promoters incorporate inclusion into their work

Key Themes

- Inclusion affects health
- Inclusion is intuitively simple and complex at the same time
- People generally understand the concept of inclusion, but want tools and resources to be able to work inclusively
- Current silo thinking along with fragmented funding patterns defeat inclusion

Some questions that remain...

- Is inclusion simply the opposite of exclusion?
- Whose responsibility is it to ensure inclusion?
- How are those who are marginalized and excluded involved in this process?
- How does power influence inclusion, and where does it reside?
- What needs to change for inclusion to happen?
- How do we promote inclusion with those who do not include?
- How do our own assumptions and beliefs come in the way of inclusion?
- How do we move beyond the us/them dichotomy that we often work with?
- How does current “silo-thinking” along with fragmented funding patterns defeat inclusion?
- Are we including people in existing structures, or do we change the structures themselves?
- Does creating inclusive structures automatically ensure inclusion?

Inclusion is about finding out what works, and mobilizing resources to resolve the problems brought about through social exclusion.

Inclusion focuses us on overall health, but also on health disparities. Belonging/inclusion makes us healthy. Exclusion reduces individual and collective health.

Inclusion is about creating a society where each of us can reach our full potential.

Thank You!

For more information

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