

# Considering Health Equity in Community Health Improvement Planning

May 2012

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Health Equity and Social Justice

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# Today's Topic: Considering Health Equity in Community Health Improvement Planning

## Today's presenter:

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## The Road Map: Key Questions for Discussion

1. Why is social justice important to consider in CHA and CHIP work?
2. How do I conduct a community health improvement process within a social justice framework?



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## The Road Map: Learning Objectives

1. Define health inequity.
2. Discuss types of information necessary for assessing and addressing health inequities.
3. Identify tools for further understanding and measuring health inequities as part of a community health improvement process.
4. Discuss experiences with applying a social justice framework to community health improvement processes.



# Assumptions

- Health is an asset or resource required for human development and well-functioning communities...
- Health is socially and politically defined...
- An accumulation of negative social conditions and lack of fundamental resources contribute to health inequities...

Source: Tackling Health Inequities Through Public Health Practice: Theory to Action, Richard Hofrichter and Rajiv Bhatia, eds. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2010.

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Why is social justice important to consider in  
CHA and CHIP work?





## Statistics: Why is Social Justice Important to Consider?

- “Compared to whites, African Americans and ‘Hispanics’ are more than twice as likely to have diabetes. Among people younger than 20, American Indians aged 10-19 have the highest prevalence of type 2 diabetes.” (CDC, 2011)
- “HIV prevalence rate for blacks was almost eight times as high as that of whites and nearly three times as high for ‘Hispanics.’” (CDC, 2007)
- “Infants born to black women are 1.5 to 3 times more likely to die than infants born to women of other races/ethnicities.” (CDC, 2011)
- “After declining for a period, overall US health disparities have been increasing since about 1990.” (Krieger et al. 2008)

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# The Principles of Social Justice

1. Social and Economic Equality
2. Political Equality and Democracy
3. Liberation and Emancipation
4. Autonomy

“Social justice is a matter of life and death. It affects the way people live, their consequent chance of illness, and their risk of premature death.” (WHO, 2008)

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A definition of health inequity that accounts for structures and processes of decisionmaking.



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## What is Health Inequity?

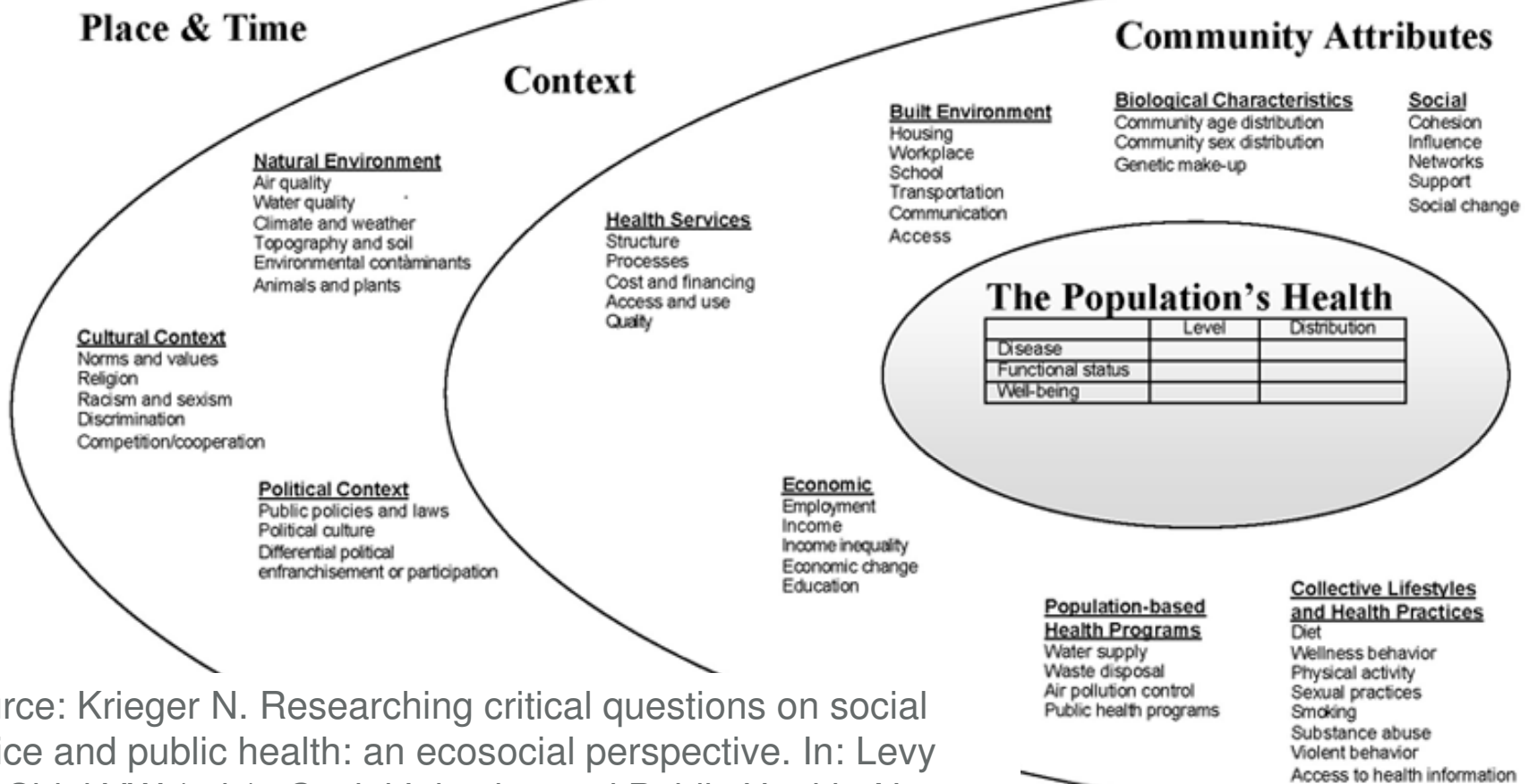
“Health inequities are systematic differences in health status that are unnecessary, avoidable, unfair, and unjust” (Margaret Whitehead, 1992).

Health Inequities vs...

- Health Disparities
- Social Determinants of Health

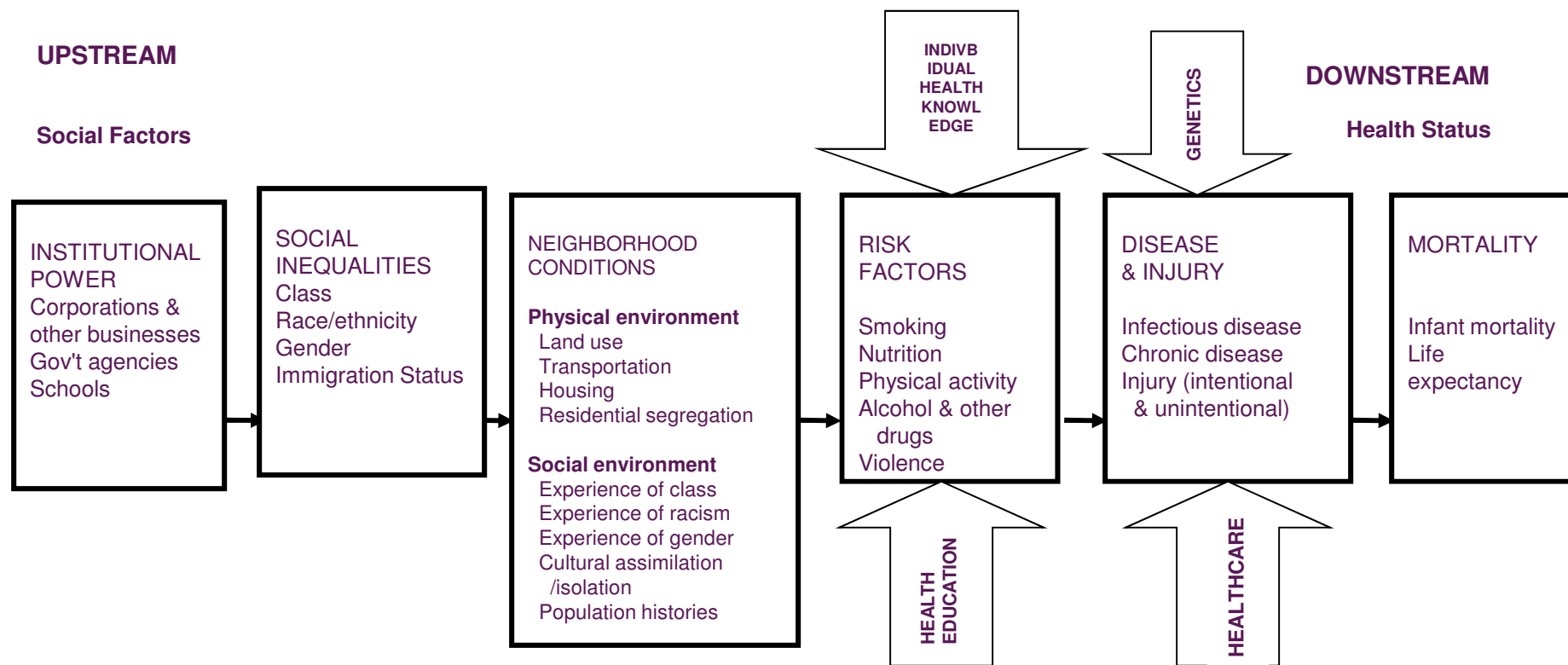


Influences on the population's health



Source: Krieger N. Researching critical questions on social justice and public health: an ecosocial perspective. In: Levy BS, Sidel VW (eds). *Social Injustice and Public Health*. New York: Oxford University Press 2006; 460-479.

**FRAMEWORK FOR UNDERSTANDING HEALTH INEQUITIES  
BAY AREA REGIONAL HEALTH INEQUITIES INITIATIVE**



## How Public Health Can Affect Change

- Being present at meetings, hearings
- Having access to relevant documents
- Influencing decisions by being included in the process
- Exposing and publicizing patterns of decisions to a larger public and the interests involved
- Encouraging mobilization of the public, especially those groups historically excluded from participating in decisions that affect their health and well-being
- **Supporting or conducting assessments**

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How do I conduct a community health improvement process within a social justice framework?





# A Social Justice Framework

QUESTIONS	CURRENT FRAME	SOCIAL JUSTICE FRAME
<b>What is the source of the problem?</b>	What biological and behavioral risk factors predispose people to illness and death?	What interests and power structures tend to undermine health and wellness?
<b>What is the goal?</b>	How do we reduce disparities in health outcomes?	How do we eliminate the social injustices that produce inequities in health outcomes?
<b>What is the strategy?</b>	What interventions—e.g., social programs and services—are necessary to address health disparities?	What kind of collective action and structural social changes are necessary to tackle health inequities?
<b>What needs to change?</b>	What unhealthy behaviors should we discourage among vulnerable populations?	What economic policies and social conditions predispose people to health hazards and illness?
<b>Who defines the problem?</b>	Which government officials, expert researchers, or media personalities best understand the issue?	Which community residents and grassroots organizations can best define the issue?



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# A Social Justice Framework

<b>Who decides how to address the problem?</b>	Which public officials and research institutions will decide on appropriate courses of action?	How can we work within our communities to define and prioritize public health concerns?
<b>Who needs to change?</b>	How can we responsibility and public accountability to protect the public promote greater personal responsibility for health?	How can we create social responsibility and public accountability to protect the public good?

Source: Roots of Health Inequity: A Web-based Course for the Public Health Workforce at [rootsofhealthinequity.org](http://rootsofhealthinequity.org).



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# Health Improvement Process Steps

1. Prepare and Plan
2. Engage the Community
3. Develop a Vision
4. Conduct Health Assessment(s)
5. Prioritize Health Issues
6. Develop a Health Improvement Plan
7. Implement Health Improvement Plan
8. Evaluate and Monitor



# Social Justice: Health Improvement Process Steps

STEP	SAMPLE ACTIONS (WITHIN A SOCIAL JUSTICE FRAMEWORK)
<b>Prepare and Plan</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Choose a model/framework that accounts for decisionmaking processes and institutional power.</li> <li>• Assess workforce competencies and organizational standards and policies for eliminating health inequities.</li> </ul>
<b>Engage the Community</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adopt a social justice framework for community engagement that integrates the principles of social justice.</li> <li>• Define your organization’s “community” honestly and clearly.</li> <li>• Aim for “comprehensive community consultation,” “bridging,” and “power-sharing.”</li> </ul>
<b>Develop a Vision</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advocate for a community health improvement vision that emphasizes eliminating health inequity.</li> </ul>
<b>Conduct Health Assessment(s)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use indicators that account for inequality, social conditions, and institutional decisionmaking.</li> </ul>



# Social Justice: Health Improvement Process Steps

<b>Prioritize Health Issues</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Solicit community input on priority areas as part of a “comprehensive community consultation.”</li></ul>
<b>Develop a Health Improvement Plan</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Advocate for health improvement strategies that address inequality, social conditions, and institutional decisionmaking.</li><li>• Refer to past and ongoing health improvement initiatives in jurisdictions that have embarked on a community health improvement process within a social justice framework.</li></ul>
<b>Implement Health Improvement Plan</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Implement a CHIP in collaboration with community members (and local public health system partners).</li><li>• Support community initiated and directed action.</li></ul>
<b>Evaluate and Monitor</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Refer to the community health improvement vision that emphasizes eliminating health inequity.</li></ul>

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Data necessary for assessing and addressing health inequities in a community.

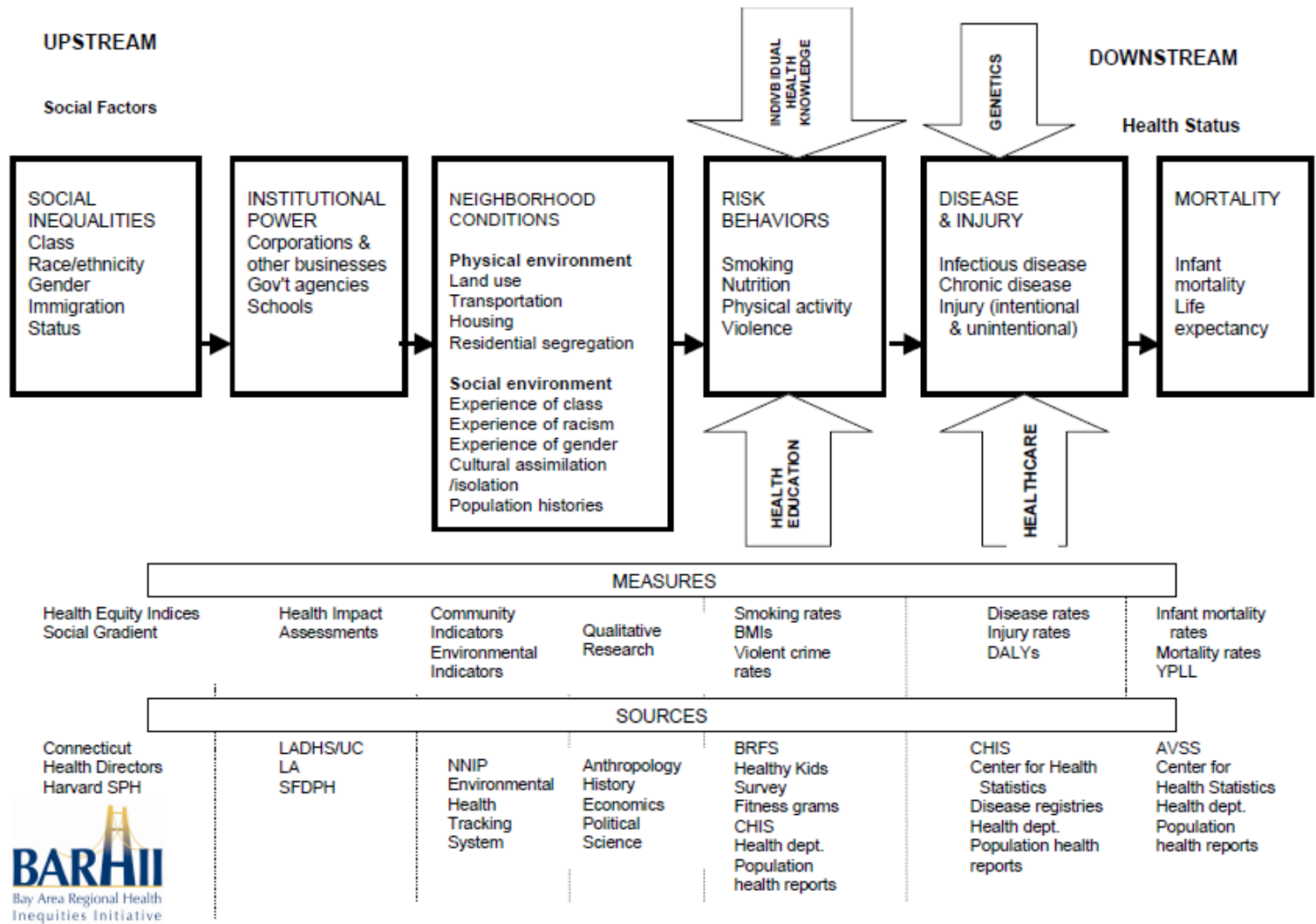


# Sample Domains

- Economic security, financial resources
- Economic inequality
- Racial segregation
- Civic participation
- Livelihood security and employment opportunity
- Environmental Quality
- Adequate, affordable, and safe housing
- Community safety and security
- Transportation
- Access of medical care



**FRAMEWORK FOR UNDERSTANDING AND MEASURING HEALTH INEQUITIES  
BAY AREA REGIONAL HEALTH INEQUITIES INITIATIVE**



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Tools for further understanding and measuring health inequities as part of a community health improvement process.



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## Tools and Resources

For more information about health equity and social justice:

- *Tackling Health Inequities Through Public Health Practice: Theory to Action*, Richard Hofrichter and Rajiv Bhatia, eds.
- *Roots of Health Inequity: A Web-based Course for the Public Health Workforce* ([rootsofhealthinequity.org](http://rootsofhealthinequity.org))



## Tools and Resources

- **NACCHO's Community Health Assessments and Community Health Improvement Plans for Accreditation Preparation Demonstration Project Resources for Social Determinants of Health Indicators**
- **The Bay Area Regional Health Inequities Initiative ([barhii.org/](http://barhii.org/))**
- **The Alameda County Public Health Department ([acphd.org/](http://acphd.org/))**
- **Connecticut Association of Health Directors ([cadh.org/health-equity.html](http://cadh.org/health-equity.html))**
- **San Francisco Department of Public Health's Healthy Development Measurement Tool ([www.thehdmtool.org](http://www.thehdmtool.org))**

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## Tools and Resources

- **County Health Rankings and Roadmaps**  
([www.countyhealthrankings.org](http://www.countyhealthrankings.org))
- **The Diversity Data project** ([diversitydata.sph.harvard.edu/](http://diversitydata.sph.harvard.edu/))



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Discuss experiences with applying a social justice framework to community health improvement processes.

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# Your Experiences



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