



KEY MESSAGES

WHAT CONTRIBUTES TO SUCCESSFUL PUBLIC HEALTH LEADERSHIP FOR HEALTH EQUITY? An Appreciative Inquiry

Purpose

The purpose of this project was to identify factors or conditions that influence effective public health leadership to address social determinants of health and health equity.

Findings

It was found that successful leadership requires: organizational supports, bridging organizational activities with community action, and professional competencies.

1. Organizational supports

- Explicit commitment from formal leaders e.g. Board of Directors and senior corporate positions
- Allocate budget to smaller agencies, research and staff
- Human resources, policies, and strategies that support health equity activities
- High quality population level data on health equity and the social determinants of health
- Contribute to and adhere to external policies and standards on health equity

2. Bridging organizational activity with community action

- Participate in and acceptance of public health's role in community action
- Partner and engage with health equity champions, community organizations, and agencies that share health equity values

3. Professional competencies

- Knowledge about health equity derived from:
 - » *Inspiring teachers, formal education and expert peers*
 - » *Theoretical frameworks, especially Critical Social Theory which refers to a structural view of society and sources of inequality*
 - » *Continuous learning and reflection related to best practices, research and evidence*
 - » *Work experience*
- Skills
 - » *People skills*
 - » *Advocacy skills*
 - » *Communication skills; strategically breaking issues down into manageable parts*
 - » *Facilitation skills; using multiple strategies to achieve health equity goals and adapting those approaches to specific contexts.*
 - » *Taking advantage of opportunities and working effectively within policy environments to encourage a shift towards health equity*
- Attitudes
 - » *Passion, energy and motivation*
 - » *Moral conviction that action on the social determinants of health to improve health equity is the right thing to do*
 - » *The ability to take risks when necessary*

These key messages are drawn from *What Contributes to Successful Public Health Leadership for Health Equity? An Appreciative Inquiry* which is available at www.nccdh.ca.

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Production of this document has been made possible through a financial contribution from the Public Health Agency of Canada through funding for the National Collaborating Centre for Determinants of Health (NCCDH). The views expressed herein do not necessarily represent the views of the Public Health Agency of Canada.

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La version française est également disponible au : www.ccnds.ca sous le titre *Messages clés : en santé publique, quels facteurs facilitent l'exercice d'un leadership efficace en matière d'équité en santé? Interrogation appréciative*