Using Situational Assessment and Identifying Priority Populations in Program Planning: Evidence and Practice-based Planning Framework

Daniela Seskar-Hencic, Manager, Planning & Evaluation
Donna Garstin, Public Health Planner
Learning Objectives

- Share our attempt to incorporate situational assessment and identification of priority populations from the PHAS protocol into a planning framework
- Find out what other organizations think about this approach
- Discuss other considerations for addressing priority populations
OPHS and Health Inequities

• OPHS and PHAS protocol give direction

• Need to disaggregate “population”

• Respect the impact principle and do no harm

• Priority populations $\Rightarrow$ narrowing health inequity gaps $\Rightarrow$ achieving population health goals
Another Planning Model? What is unique about it?

- Health inequities are the focus of planning
- Uses local and diverse evidence
- Examines accessibility of existing programs and how to reduce barriers
- Acknowledges various sources of evidence, research and practice, and engages the community and stakeholders
When would we use this model?

- Creation, review, and modification of health equity focused policies and programs

- Not suitable for minor modifications of activities or minor program changes, however...
  - some stages and tools could be used for this purpose
Evidence and Practice-based Planning Framework

1. Define Issue
2. Situational Assessment
3. Discussion & Recommendations
4. Approve Decision
5. Allocate Resources
6. Implementation
7. Evaluation

Communicate Results
Communicate Recommendation
Communicate Decision
Communicate Results
1. Examine literature, local research, & evaluation results
2. Examine local health data
3. Analyze relationship between health indicators and social determinants of health (SDOH)
4. Identify information gaps
5. Engage key stakeholders and discuss:
   • Findings
   • Local context
   • Identified priority populations and potential approaches
6. Determine priority populations and suitable practices
   • Based on local need, impact, capacity & collaboration
Situational Assessment
1. Literature and Evaluation Results

• Describe relationship between socio-demographics and health indicators, health risks, and service use

Examples:
• Who's at risk for poor oral health?
• Are women living on low-incomes visiting Early Years Centres?
• Determine incidence of poor health outcomes or other health risk indicators
  • e.g., low or high birth weight; injury rates

• Data sources may include:
  • PH information systems, e.g., ISCIS, CCHS
  • Administrative information systems
  • Local/Regional planning documents
  • Neighbourhood-level data
Situational Assessment
3. Analysis of Health Inequities

- Analyze relationship between health indicators and SDOH to identify health inequities
  - e.g. pregnancies by age ⇒ teen pregnancies
    ⇒ teen pregnancies and low income

- Understand current situation for specific local groups through qualitative inquiry
  - e.g. low birth weight and low income
    ⇒ low birth weight and immigration status
    ⇒ low birth weight and history of oppression
Does literature or practice suggest priority populations not identified through mapping SDOH and existing data sources?

Gather additional information from:

- **Service providers**
  - Who are the populations they serve?
  - What are their health behaviours?
  - Who are and are not accessing services?
  - Who is not benefiting from programs and why?

- **Identified populations/neighbourhoods**
  - What are their lived experiences and practices?
  - What supports & services would be welcome?
Define process to engage key stakeholders in discussing results and examining local context

Consider community & political context:
- What current partnerships exist and should be maintained?
- What are current trends that may provide opportunities or reflect best practices?
- How ready is the community for the considered approach? Is there a need to further engage partners?
- Are there approaches that have proven to work better than others for some priority populations (e.g. Aboriginal groups, immigrant groups, young mothers)?
6. Determine Priority Populations & Suitable Practices

- Review and discuss findings from all sources of evidence
- Review and discuss:
  - Community health needs
  - Mandate
  - Potential impact
  - Resources required
  - Capacity
  - Collaboration
- Decide on priority populations and most suitable practice
Discussion

- First Impressions?
- Would you use it? If yes, how?
- Is it doable? What would be easy? What would make it difficult?
- What other questions would you ask?
  - What else is important for using an equity lens?
More on this Planning Framework and Related resources:

At this conference:

1. Presentation: Using an Evidence-based Framework to review Prenatal Health Fairs in the Region of Waterloo
2. Workshop: How do I address health inequities in my Program Development: Using First Steps to Equity in Population Health Assessment, Planning, and Evaluation

Related resources:

• First Steps to Equity
• PHAS Protocol
• Input into Guidance Documents
• Region of Waterloo Website  www.region.waterloo.on.ca/ph
Step 1:
• Go to www.region.waterloo.on.ca/ph
• Under “Resources” click “Partners and Professionals”

Step 2:
• Click on link: “Evidence and Practice-based Planning Framework – with a focus on health inequities”
• For a summary of why we need to work with priority populations and how this relates to population health, see link “Population Health Summary.”

For more information:
• Daniela Seskar-Hencic, Manager, Planning & Evaluation, 519-883-2258 or sdaniela@region.waterloo.on.ca