

Abstract

Community Health Assessment: Understanding Health, Health Inequity, and Social Determinant Experiences of Public Housing Residents in Danville, Virginia

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Background: Health initiatives that aim to better understand and improve health inequities disproportionately experienced by specific populations are a public health priority. Training members from the affected community to implement efforts can result in more culturally appropriate strategies and solutions that address health disparities and the non-medical factors that shape them. **Objectives:** 1) Conduct a needs assessment to understand health inequities experienced by African American residents within public housing communities in the rural city of Danville, Virginia; 2) Describe the training process used to prepare women from the participating communities to lead assessment implementation; and 3) Discuss how resulting data were used to pilot subsequent projects. **Methods:** Trained community members organized health assessments to orally administer a mixed-methods questionnaire to learn about community member's access and use of health care resources; health behaviors and health status; social support of family/friends; health needs and challenges; local health policies; and demographic information. **Results:** Six community members were trained and two hundred and nine community members representing four public housing communities participated in the survey. **Conclusions:** Results provided significant insight regarding factors that contribute to experienced health inequities as well as potential solutions. Data showed significantly low rates of community members participating in collaborative decision-making groups to develop local health policy and health equity-related solutions for their communities. A four-week inclusion and equity training was piloted to help decision makers address bias, communication, and identity-related competencies that prevent community members from equitable representation and access in decision-making processes to address their own needs.

Diversity and culture Implementation of health education strategies, interventions and programs Planning of health education strategies, interventions, and programs Public health or related research

