

Common Definitions

Race

The grouping of people based off of characteristics of physical appearance, including skin color, hair, and facial features. These groupings are not based on biology or genetics, but were created to justify social inequalities.

Health Literacy

The ability to get, read, understand, and use information to make good decisions that impact well-being and health.

Health Equity

This exists when all people have the opportunity to attain their full health potential and no one is disadvantaged from achieving this potential because of the color of their skin, level of education, gender identity, sexual orientation, the job they have, the neighborhood they live in, or whether or not they have a disability.

Determinants of Health

Factors that influence health status, including: biological factors, like age; behavioral factors, like tobacco use; environmental factors, like housing quality; social factors, like neighborhood segregation; economic factors, like income; and access to healthcare.

Cultural Competency

An ongoing process of increasing awareness of oneself, increasing knowledge of others, and developing skills to have positive interactions and relationships with others. This involves valuing diverse perspectives, being self-reflective, questioning generalizations and stereotypes, and being aware of the role biases play in perspectives.

Culture

Age, cognitive ability, country of origin, degree of acculturation, education level, environment, family and household composition, gender identity, health practices, health beliefs, or religious practices.

Ethnicity

Cultural factors that influence a person or community such as nationality, culture, ancestry, language, and beliefs.

Health Disparity

A difference in health outcomes across populations groups. The definition indicates that a difference exists, but it doesn't consider whether the difference is caused by something preventable.

Bias

Can be explicit (conscious) or implicit (unconscious). They are formed by many things including culture, experience, and up-bringing. They influence how we interpret situations. Even when implicit or unconscious, they cause prejudice or favoring of one thing, person, or group compared with another, usually in a way considered to be unfair.