Module 2: Lecture 4

SCRIPT

Slide 1: Hello and welcome to the fourth and final lecture about the statewide health assessment module on environmental health. This lecture will focus on the section of the assessment that has to do with belonging.

Slide 2: The lecture will introduce the section and discuss social environments, community health, prenatal & early childhood, school, chronic conditions, and isolation. When the lecture is over, you will understand how inclusion and connections to people and communities intersect with environmental health.

Slide 3: Belonging involves our inclusion and connections to others in society. When relationships are meaningful, they can help prevent disease, disability, injury, and premature death. The assessment states, "we are social creatures, and belonging creates meaning, purpose, and hope for the future." Which explains how belonging is essential to daily living.

Slide 4: Throughout our lives, social environments change drastically, from social connections in school to college to work, etc., and the people we are around change as we go through different parts of our lives. Significant shifts in these environments happen as we age, yet the need for connection is still essential at all points in life.

Slide 5: In 2023, the Healthy Minnesota Partnership hosted conversations with community members to learn about their belonging; eight groups met to discuss several issues. Many people spoke about how their physical environment impacted their connection to others, such as their homes, neighborhoods, and access to nature/open spaces, which can positively or negatively impact you in MN. In addition, 3 of the eight groups shared that living in greater MN is a highlight and strength of living in MN because it brings interpersonal relationships and close connections to other people who can provide mutual aid during challenges. One person reported in the group, "I feel supported. I feel I belong. I feel valued. I can contribute my talents, skills, and ideas. It makes me feel worthwhile." This is related to their connection to others in their community.

Slide 6: Our sense of belonging is what creates healthy communities. Populations and communities experience a sense of belonging when they are not marginalized or excluded. When a person or population is stigmatized (labeled in a way that is limiting) or when they are not seen or heard by neighbors, employers, government, or those in power, it is harder to take part fully in society. This can result in a higher likelihood of poor health conditions and poor health outcomes like injury, addiction, abuse, trauma, depression, disease, disability, and death. When communities have a voice in decision-making, they can help to shape conditions that impact their lives and health, such as their workplaces and the institutions that serve these communities. The sense of belonging creates healthy communities.

Slide 7: One of the topics of group discussions was prenatal and early life experience. It's said in the SHA that "relationships, experiences, and the environment impact our lives before we are born and as we grow." We do not have control over how we're born or our early childhood, but our parents do, which impacts who we're around, where we go, and what experiences we have. From 2017-2018, the rate of death for pregnant people was 8.8 per 100,000 live births, with black people making up 23% of pregnancy-associated deaths when they are only 13% of the state's birth population. This example shows the disproportionate rate of representation in pregnancy-related deaths and displays how experiences can impact lives as we are born. People who spoke in the groups highlighted how important

it was to them that their children have accessible activities and spaces to play because it improves health and children's sense of belonging and helps the parents have space for their connections.

Slide 8: Adolescents belonging in their school environment set the stage for where they belong and participate in society as they become adults. A supportive and welcoming school environment can positively affect people's lives. In 2022, it was reported that 74% of students felt a sense of belonging, which shows that Minnesotan students generally feel essential connections for adolescents. Those who experience bullying in school or outside of school can negatively affect belonging, leading to avoidance and isolation for those who are bullied. In 2022, nearly 50% of students reported bullying at least once a month, and an increased percentage of students who are economically disadvantaged or LGBTQ+ shows the large number of students who could be impacted by bullying in the long term.

Slide 9: The Healthy Minnesota Partnership identified civic participation as a state strength, providing dental services for low-income, fair wages, good working conditions, and smoke-free environments. In 2022, the American Medical Association declared voting to be a social determinant of health and that states with lower voter turnout associated with worse health outcomes. This same year (2022) produced the highest voter turnout in the nation, with a turnout of 61% of eligible voters. Civic participation can impact many things, such as influencing policies and systems change, which directly impacts resident's lives, giving them the power to have a say in what they want their state to look like. In 2021, 36.7% of Minnesotans aged 16 and older had volunteered in the past year show that being civically engaged or voting on people making policies and volunteering impact our environments due to things like trash clean-ups.

Slide 10: People who are diagnosed with chronic conditions can be unfairly affected due to structural and social inequities, biases, and barriers. These biases and barriers often determine a person's income, conditions, and environment in which they are born, live, work, and even receive health care. Between the years 2015 and 2019, people identifying as American Indian had the highest cancer incidence rate for all sites combined compared to all other MN populations, showing a disproportionate rate of chronic conditions. Those who are isolated physically or socially are at greater risk for abuse, loneliness, depression, and injury. Something that puts people at risk for isolation is geography. People who live in greater MN are at risk due to increased distance from family, communities, or any needed services, all aspects of people's lives that can improve health.

Slide 11: The sense of belonging in our environments, whether that be with our communities, school, work, etc, can make an impact on our health throughout our lives. So, apply these concepts you've learned from this lecture to yourself. How has your sense of belonging in your environments impacted your health positively or negatively? Think of a specific example.

For any additional questions ask:
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