

## **Health Equity and Social Justice List of Definitions**

### **Health Disparity**

“A health difference that is closely linked with economic, social, or environmental disadvantage. Health disparities adversely affect groups of people who have systematically experienced greater social or economic obstacles to health based on their racial or ethnic group, religion, socioeconomic -status, gender, age, or mental health; cognitive, sensory, or physical disability; sexual orientation or gender identity; geographic location; or other characteristics historically linked to discrimination or exclusion”

Source: Healthy People 2020. (2011). Disparities. Retrieved from <http://healthypeople.gov/2020/about/DisparitiesAbout.aspx>.

A disproportionate difference in health between groups of people; observable and measurable. By itself, disparity does not address the chain of events that produces it...the “*why?*”

Source: MPHI ADJUST Workshop

### **Health Equity**

“Health equity means that everyone has a fair and just opportunity to be as healthy as possible. This requires removing obstacles to health such as poverty, discrimination, and their consequences, including powerlessness and lack of access to good jobs with fair pay, quality education and housing, safe environments, and health care. For the purposes of measurement, health equity means reducing and ultimately eliminating disparities in health and its determinants that adversely affect excluded or marginalized groups.”

Source: Braveman P, Arkin E, Orleans T, Proctor D, and Plough A. *What Is Health Equity? And What Difference Does a Definition Make?* Princeton, NJ: Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, 2017.

A fair, just distribution of the social resources and social opportunities needed to achieve well-being.

Source: Health Equity and Social Justice Workshop Materials

### **Health Inequity**

A difference or disparity in health outcomes that is systematic, avoidable, and unjust.

Sources:

Braveman, P.A., Monitoring equity in health and healthcare: a conceptual framework. *Journal of health, population, and nutrition*, 2003. **21**(3): p. 181.; Whitehead, M. and Whitehead, The concepts and principles of equity and health. *Health Promotion International*, 1991. **6**(3): p. 217.

When disparities in health result from systemic, avoidable, and unjust social and economic policies and practices that create barriers to opportunity.

Source:

Whitehead, M. (1992). The concepts and principles of equity and health. *International Journal of Health Services* 22: 429-45

### **Oppression**

When a group of people, typically connected by a dimension of shared social identity, is prevented from having opportunities as a result of a misuse, abuse, and/or imbalance of power.

Source: MPHI ADJUST Workshop

### **Racism**

Race Prejudice + Power = Racism

Source: The People's Institute

“Racism is a system (consisting of structures, policies, practices, and norms) that structures opportunity and assigns value based on the social interpretation of how one looks (which is what we call “race”), that

- Unfairly disadvantages some individuals and communities
- Unfairly advantages other individuals and communities
- Saps the strength of the whole society through the waste of human resources.”

Source: Dr. Camara Jones, M.D, M.P.H

“Social and institutional power combined with race prejudice. It is a system of advantage for those considered white, and of oppression for those who are not considered white. It is a white supremacy system”

Source: Racial Equity Institute, Greensboro, NC

### **Social Determinants of Health**

“Social determinants of health (SDOH) are the conditions in the environments where people are born, live, learn, work, play, worship and age that affect a wide range of health, functioning, and quality-of-life outcomes and risks.”

Source: Healthy People 2030, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. Retrieved from <https://health.gov/healthypeople/objectives-and-data/social-determinants-health>

“The social determinants of health are the conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work and age as well as the complex, interrelated social structures and economic systems that shape these conditions”

Source: NCHHSTP Social Determinants of Health, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Retrieved from: <https://www.cdc.gov/nchhstp/socialdeterminants/index.html>

The economic and social conditions that influence the health of individuals, communities, and jurisdictions as a whole. They include, but are not limited to: safe affordable housing, quality education, job security, social connection, safety, availability of food, access to transportation and a living wage.

Source: Raphael, D. (2004). *Social Determinants of Health*. Toronto: Scholars Press.

### **Structural or Systemic Racism**

“A system in which public policies, institutional practices, cultural representations, and other norms work in various, often reinforcing ways to perpetuate racial group inequity. It identifies dimensions of our history and culture that have allowed unfair advantages and disadvantages based on racial groups to endure and adapt over time. Structural racism is not something that a few people or institutions choose to practice. Instead, it has been a feature of the social, economic and political systems in which we all exist”

Source: Adapted from The Aspen Institute’s Glossary for Understanding the Dismantling Structural Racism/Promoting Racial Equity Analysis

“Structural Racism lies underneath, all around and across society. It encompasses: (1) history, which lies underneath the surface, providing the foundation for white supremacy in this country. (2) culture, which exists all around our everyday lives, providing the normalization and replication of racism and, (3) interconnected institutions and policies, they key relationships and rules across society providing the legitimacy and reinforcements to maintain and perpetuate racism.

Examples include racist history, dominant cultural representations, popular myths, and compounded and chronic inequities, etc.”

Source: Structural Racism By Keith Lawrence and Terry Keleher.

<https://www.intergroupresources.com/rc/Definitions%20of%20Racism.pdf>