

# Addressing Social Determinants of Health and Equity Within Treatment and Recovery

Enhancing Health Outcomes Through  
Comprehensive Approaches

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**Opioid  
Response  
Network**

# Working with communities.

- ✧ The SAMHSA-funded *Opioid Response Network (ORN)* assists states, organizations and individuals by providing the resources and technical assistance they need locally to address the opioid crisis and stimulant use.
- ✧ Technical assistance is available to support the evidence-based prevention, harm reduction, treatment and recovery of opioid use disorders and stimulant use disorders.

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# Working with communities.

- ✧ The *Opioid Response Network (ORN)* provides local, experienced consultants in prevention, treatment and recovery to communities and organizations to help address this opioid crisis and stimulant use.
- ✧ *ORN* accepts requests for education and training.
- ✧ Each state/territory has a designated team, led by a regional Technology Transfer Specialist (TTS), who is an expert in implementing evidence-based practices.



# Contact the Opioid Response Network

- ✦ To ask questions or submit a request for technical assistance:
  - Visit [www.OpioidResponseNetwork.org](http://www.OpioidResponseNetwork.org)
  - Email [orn@aaap.org](mailto:orn@aaap.org)
  - Call 401-270-5900



# Learning Objectives

- ✦ Understand the concept of Social Determinants of Health (SDOH) and their significance in influencing health outcomes in rural communities.
- ✦ Recognize the unique challenges and disparities related to healthcare access, substance use, and overall health in rural areas.
- ✦ Identify key social determinants, such as economic stability, education, healthcare access, and social support networks, that impact health equity in rural communities.
- ✦ Gain knowledge of evidence-based strategies and best practices for tailoring treatment and recovery programs to address SDOH in rural settings.
- ✦ Understand the role of cultural and social factors in shaping health disparities and learn strategies to address them effectively.



# Understanding the SDOH in Rural Communities

- ✦ **Access to Healthcare:** Rural areas often have limited access to healthcare services, including primary care, specialty care, mental health services, and substance use treatment.
- ✦ **Economic Stability:** Rural communities may experience higher levels of poverty and unemployment compared to urban areas.
- ✦ **Education:** Lower educational attainment levels in rural areas can affect health literacy, employment opportunities, and socioeconomic status.
- ✦ **Social Support Networks:** Rural communities often have tight-knit social support networks, which can positively influence health outcomes. However, social isolation and limited access to support services may also be prevalent, especially among older adults and individuals with disabilities, leading to increased risk of depression and other mental health issues.
- ✦ **Physical Environment:** Environmental factors, such as access to clean water, air quality, housing conditions, and exposure to environmental hazards, can impact health outcomes in rural areas.
- ✦ **Cultural and Social Norms:** Cultural beliefs, social norms, and attitudes towards health and healthcare may vary among rural communities.
- ✦ **Health Behaviors:** Lifestyle factors, including diet, physical activity, tobacco use, and substance use, are influenced by SDOH in rural communities.



# Recognizing and Addressing Unique Challenges

## ✦ **Community Needs Assessment**

- Conduct comprehensive community needs assessments to identify the specific challenges and priorities of rural communities.
- Engage community members, local organizations, and stakeholders in the assessment process to ensure their perspectives are included.



# Recognizing and Addressing Unique Challenges

## ✦ **Partnership and Collaboration**

- Foster partnerships and collaboration among various stakeholders, including government agencies, non-profit organizations, healthcare providers, educational institutions, and community leaders.
- Collaborative efforts can leverage resources, expertise, and support to address challenges more effectively.





# Recognizing and Addressing Unique Challenges

## ✦ **Tailored Solutions**

- Develop tailored solutions that address the unique needs and circumstances of rural communities.
- Recognize that one-size-fits-all approaches may not be suitable for rural areas due to differences in population demographics, geography, and resources.



# Recognizing and Addressing Unique Challenges

## ✦ Investment in Infrastructure

- Prioritize investment in rural infrastructure, including transportation, healthcare facilities, broadband internet access, and utilities.
- Improving infrastructure can enhance connectivity, access to services, and quality of life for rural residents.



# Recognizing and Addressing Unique Challenges

## ✦ **Healthcare Access**

- Expand access to healthcare services by increasing the number of healthcare providers in rural areas, supporting telehealth initiatives, and providing financial incentives for providers to practice in underserved areas.
- Establish mobile clinics and telemedicine programs to deliver healthcare services directly to rural communities, particularly in remote areas with limited access to traditional healthcare facilities.



# Recognizing and Addressing Unique Challenges

## ✦ **Economic Development**

- Support economic development initiatives that create job opportunities, promote entrepreneurship, and diversify local economies. Invest in workforce training programs, small business support services, and infrastructure projects to stimulate economic growth in rural areas.



# Recognizing and Addressing Unique Challenges

## ✦ **Education and Workforce Development**

- Improve access to quality education and training programs that prepare rural residents for high-demand careers in fields such as healthcare, agriculture, technology, and skilled trades.
- Enhance opportunities for lifelong learning and skill development through partnerships with educational institutions, vocational training centers, and online learning platforms.



# Recognizing and Addressing Unique Challenges

## ✦ **Social Support and Community Engagement**

- Strengthen social support networks and community engagement initiatives to combat social isolation, promote social cohesion, and build resilience.
- Support community-based organizations, volunteer groups, and recreational programs that foster social connections and community well-being.



# Recognizing and Addressing Unique Challenges

## ✦ **Environmental Stewardship**

- Promote environmental stewardship and sustainable practices to protect natural resources, preserve rural landscapes, and mitigate environmental hazards.
- Encourage conservation efforts, renewable energy projects, and land-use planning strategies that prioritize environmental sustainability and resilience.



# Recognizing and Addressing Unique Challenges

## ✦ **Policy Advocacy**

- Advocate for policies and legislation that address the unique needs of rural communities, including increased funding for rural development programs, healthcare reform, and infrastructure investments.
- Engage policymakers at the local, state, and federal levels to raise awareness of rural issues and advance policy solutions.





# Evidenced-Based Strategies to Address SDOH

## ✦ **Integrated Care Models**

- Implement integrated care models that address both physical and mental health needs alongside social determinants.
- This includes co-locating primary care, behavioral health services, and social services within the same facility or through collaborative partnerships.



# Evidenced-Based Strategies to Address SDOH

## ✦ **Community Health Workers (CHWs)**

- Train and deploy community health workers (CHWs) who are familiar with local resources, culture, and language to provide outreach, education, and support services.
- CHWs can help bridge the gap between healthcare providers and community members, particularly in rural areas with limited access to healthcare.



# Evidenced-Based Strategies to Address SDOH

## ✦ **Telehealth and Telemedicine**

- Expand telehealth and telemedicine services to increase access to healthcare in rural communities.
- This includes virtual appointments with healthcare providers, remote monitoring of chronic conditions, and telepsychiatry services for mental health treatment.
- A program/provider may need to provide phones or wifi hotspots or other technology that will allow clients to access telehealth services more consistently.
  - **Telehealth works best if the client has access to a genuinely private space on a regular basis.**



# Evidenced-Based Strategies to Address SDOH

## ✦ **Transportation Assistance**

- Provide transportation assistance or shuttle services to help rural residents access healthcare appointments, treatment programs, and support services.
- Collaborate with local transportation providers, volunteer groups, and community organizations to coordinate transportation options.



# Evidenced-Based Strategies to Address SDOH

## ✦ **Financial Assistance Programs**

- Offer financial assistance programs or sliding fee scales to reduce barriers to healthcare access for individuals with limited income or resources.
- This may include subsidized healthcare services, medication assistance programs, and discounted or free transportation vouchers.



# Evidenced-Based Strategies to Address SDOH

## ✦ **Community-Based Support Groups**

- Establish community-based support groups for individuals recovering from substance misuse or managing chronic health conditions.
- These support groups can provide peer support, encouragement, and practical strategies for coping with challenges related to SDOH.



# Evidenced-Based Strategies to Address SDOH

## ✦ **Culturally Tailored Interventions**

- Develop culturally tailored interventions and educational materials that resonate with the values, beliefs, and preferences of rural communities. Consider local customs, traditions, and cultural norms when designing treatment and recovery programs.



# Evidenced-Based Strategies to Address SDOH

## ✦ **Collaboration with Social Service Agencies**

- Collaborate with local social service agencies, non-profit organizations, and government agencies to coordinate comprehensive support services for individuals and families.
- This may include assistance with housing, food security, employment, and legal services.





# Evidenced-Based Strategies to Address SDOH

## ✦ **Employment and Vocational Training Programs**

- Offer employment and vocational training programs that provide skills development, job placement assistance, and support for individuals seeking to re-enter the workforce or improve their economic stability.



# Evidenced-Based Strategies to Address SDOH

## ✦ **Peer Support and Recovery Coaching**

- Train peer support specialists and recovery coaches who have lived experience with substance use or mental health challenges to provide guidance, encouragement, and advocacy for individuals in treatment and recovery.



# Evidenced-Based Strategies to Address SDOH

## ✦ **Health Education and Literacy Programs**

- Implement health education and literacy programs that empower individuals to make informed decisions about their health and navigate healthcare systems effectively.
- Provide resources, workshops, and educational materials on topics such as chronic disease management, medication adherence, and preventive care.



# Evidenced-Based Strategies to Address SDOH

## ✦ **Evaluation and Quality Improvement**

- Continuously evaluate treatment and recovery programs to assess their effectiveness in addressing SDOH and improving health outcomes in rural settings.
- Use data-driven approaches to identify areas for improvement and implement quality improvement initiatives accordingly.



# The Role of Cultural and Social Factors

## Cultural Beliefs and Practices

- **Impact:**
  - Cultural beliefs and practices influence health behaviors, perceptions of illness, and healthcare-seeking behaviors.
  - Different cultural norms regarding diet, exercise, alternative medicine, and illness management can contribute to disparities in health outcomes.
- **Strategies:**
  - Culturally competent care: Train healthcare providers to understand and respect diverse cultural beliefs and practices, ensuring that care is tailored to the needs and preferences of patients.
  - Community engagement: Engage community leaders, religious institutions, and cultural organizations to promote health education and awareness within culturally diverse communities.



# The Role of Cultural and Social Factors

## Language and Communication Barriers

- **Impact:**
  - Language barriers can hinder effective communication between patients and healthcare providers, leading to misunderstandings, misdiagnosis, and inadequate care.
  - Limited English proficiency can also result in reduced access to health information and services.
- **Strategies:**
  - Interpreter services: Provide interpreter services or bilingual staff to facilitate communication between patients and healthcare providers.
  - Health literacy programs: Offer health literacy programs in multiple languages to improve understanding of health information among diverse populations.



# The Role of Cultural and Social Factors

## Stigma and Discrimination

- **Impact:**
  - Stigma and discrimination related to race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, and mental health can result in barriers to healthcare access, reluctance to seek care, and poorer health outcomes.
- **Strategies:**
  - Anti-stigma campaigns: Launch public awareness campaigns to combat stigma and discrimination, promoting acceptance and inclusivity within healthcare settings and communities.
  - Training and education: Provide training for healthcare providers on cultural competence, diversity, and implicit bias to reduce discrimination and improve patient-centered care.



# The Role of Cultural and Social Factors

## Community Resources and Support Systems

- **Impact:**
  - Availability of community resources, social support networks, and access to healthcare services can influence health outcomes.
  - Disparities in access to resources can contribute to inequalities in health status and healthcare utilization.
- **Strategies:**
  - Strengthening community networks: Build partnerships with community organizations, non-profits, and government agencies to expand access to resources, support services, and healthcare programs.
  - Patient navigation programs: Implement patient navigation programs to help individuals navigate complex healthcare systems and overcome barriers to care.





# The Role of Cultural and Social Factors

## Intersectionality

- **Impact:**
  - Intersectionality refers to the interconnected nature of social identities, such as race, gender, class, and sexuality, and how they intersect to shape experiences of discrimination and health disparities.
- **Strategies:**
  - Intersectional approaches: Adopt intersectional approaches that recognize the unique experiences and needs of individuals with multiple marginalized identities, addressing the complex interplay of social factors in shaping health outcomes.



# SDOH and Adolescents in Rural Communities

## Access to Education

- Access to quality education and resources in rural schools may impact adolescents' academic performance, social development, and future opportunities.



# SDOH and Adolescents in Rural Communities

## **Healthcare Access**

- Limited access to healthcare services, especially specialized care and mental health services, can affect adolescents' physical and mental well-being in rural areas.

## **Economic Stability**

- Adolescents: Dependence on family income and economic resources can impact adolescents' access to nutritious food, safe housing, and educational opportunities in rural areas.



# SDOH and Adolescents in Rural Communities

## **Social Support Networks**

- Peer relationships, family dynamics, and social networks within rural communities play a significant role in adolescents' social development, mental health, and risk behaviors.

## **Environmental Exposures**

- Environmental factors such as air and water quality, exposure to agricultural chemicals, and access to recreational spaces can impact adolescents' physical health and development in rural areas.



# SDOH and Adolescents in Rural Communities

## **Substance Misuse and Risk Behaviors**

- Risk factors for substance misuse, risky behaviors, and mental health issues may differ among adolescents in rural areas, influenced by peer influences, family dynamics, and access to prevention and treatment services.

## **Digital Access and Technology Use**

- Access to technology, internet connectivity, and digital resources can impact adolescents' academic performance, social interactions, and health literacy in rural areas.



# References

- ✦ Adler, Nancy E., et al. 2019 “The Importance of Social Determinants of Health in Predicting the Distribution and Progression of Chronic Health Conditions”
- ✦ National Rural Health Association 2017 "Health Disparities in Rural Communities: What Factors and Solutions Can Help?"
- ✦ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) "Rural Health Model"
- ✦ American Public Health Association (APHA) "Health Equity and Social Determinants of Health"
- ✦ Mautone-Smith, N., & Chao, J. 2021. Health Disparities Among Rural Adolescents: A Systematic Review of the Literature and Insights From a Small Rural Town"



# Additional Material

## "Health Equity and Social Determinants of Health"

**Publisher:** American Public Health Association (APHA)

**Description:** This resource provides an overview of health equity and social determinants of health, offering insights into the root causes of health disparities and inequities. It covers various factors contributing to health inequities and offers strategies for addressing them.

**Link:** [Health Equity and Social Determinants of Health](#)

## "Community Health Assessment Toolkit"

**Publisher:** Community Tool Box, University of Kansas

**Description:** This toolkit offers practical guidance and tools for conducting community health assessments to identify health needs, assets, and disparities. It includes step-by-step instructions, data collection methods, and resources for engaging communities in the assessment process.

**Link:** [Community Health Assessment Toolkit](#)



# ORN Evaluation Survey Link

Please scan the below QR code or use the link below to access a very brief survey.



Link to Survey: <http://tinyurl.com/yc57b4th>

The survey will ask about your satisfaction with the training program you just completed as well as some basic demographic information. Your responses will help the Opioid Response Network improve the services they provide.

Thank you in advance for completing this survey!

