

Health Equity: Glossary of Terms



- **CLAS:** Cultural and Linguistic Appropriate Services
- **Community-Based Participatory Research (CBPR):** A systematic investigation with the participation of those affected by an issue for the purpose of education and action or effecting social change. It is less a method of research and more an orientation that reflects how community voices and culture are integrated into the process and resulting outcomes.
- **Community Culture:** a set of core beliefs, values, practices, principles, or behaviors that are held by a group of people who have common interests and a willingness to work together to achieve them.
- **Community Engagement:** When all people within a defined community have meaningful opportunities to provide input on a project or process.
- **Community Forums:** A physical place where community members can gather, and express opinions related to a particular initiative.
- **Cultural Competence:** A set of academic and interpersonal skills that allow individuals to increase their understanding and appreciation of cultural differences and similarities with, among, and between groups.
- **Cultural Humility:** A lifelong commitment to self-evaluation and critique, to redress the power imbalances in the physician-patient dynamic, and to develop mutually beneficial and non-paternalistic partnerships with communities on behalf of individuals and defined populations. An institution committed to cultural humility would be characterized by training, established recruitment and retention processes, identifiable and funded personnel to facilitate the meeting of program goals, and dynamic feedback loops between the institution and its employees and between the institution and patients and/or other members from the surrounding community.

- **Culture:** A set of beliefs, traditions, values, practices, attitudes, principles, and behaviors shared by members of a particular group.
- **Focus Groups:** A diverse group of people, usually small in number, who are brought together to have a moderated discussion on a particular topic. The results are typically used to inform the direction of a particular initiative.
- **Health Equity:** Health equity is achieving the highest level of health for all people. Health equity entails focused societal efforts to address avoidable inequalities by equalizing the conditions for health for all groups, especially for those who have experienced socioeconomic disadvantage or historical injustices.
- **Health Inequity:** As opposed to inequality – has a moral and ethical dimension, resulting from avoidable and unjust differentials in health status. (WHO)
- **Health Inequalities:** Can be defined as differences in health status or in the distribution of health determinants between different population groups. (WHO)
- **Policy, Systems, and Environmental Improvement:** Policy interventions may be a law, ordinance, resolution, mandate, regulation, or rule (both formal and informal). Systems interventions are changes that impact all elements of an organization, institution, or system. Environmental interventions involve physical or material changes to the economic, social, or physical environment.
- **Social Determinants of Health:** These are the circumstances in which people are born, grow up, live, work, and age, as well as the systems, put in place to deal with illness. These circumstances are in turn shaped by a wider set of forces: economics, social policies, and politics. (See [Social Determinants of Health Key Concepts](#), World Health Organization)