



National Collaborating Centre
for Determinants of Health

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des déterminants de la santé

“Unpacking context: What do we mean when we say ‘culture’ is a determinant of health”

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Overview

- Panel presentations and discussion
- Activity (your cultural DNA) and refreshments
- Breakout groups and reporting back
- Final reflections



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Culture

- Culture is the shared ideas, meanings, and values that are acquired by individuals as members of a society. Culture is socially learned, continually evolves, and often influences us unconsciously. We learn culture through interactions with others, as well as through the tangible products of culture such as books and television (IOM, 2002).
- Culture and ethnicity are products of both personal history and wider situational, social, political, geographic and economic factors (Public Health Agency of Canada).



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Panel presenters

- **Dr. Robin Oakley** – social anthropologist
- **Teresa MacInnes** – producer, director, editor of documentary films
- **Dr. Elizabeth Saewyc** - CIHR/PHAC Chair in Applied Public Health Research and Research Director, McCreary Centre Society



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Cultural DNA ...what has informed who you are

Verlé Harrop

Southern Ontario (culture)
Farm (physical environment)
Girl (gender)
Family (social networks)

Paul Steffler

Mother
McGill
Southern Ontario
Newfoundland

PG

Father
Graduate Student
White
Human
Wage-Slave



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Robin's questions ...

1. If culture is a determinant of health, then food is a major aspect of well being and a sense of good health. Having access to one's first choice foods is vitally important to good health. Are you aware of the types of food that are considered essential for good health among the communities you work with?
2. Understanding that culture is a determinant of health, how do you as a health professional incorporate cultural sensitivity into your interactions with patients and communities?
3. Understanding that culture is a determinant of health, what should our expectations be of neighbourhoods and communities around a distinct population's cultural practices?



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Teresa's questions ...

1. How many of the young people you work with have been sexually abused and are receiving sufficient support to deal with the trauma involved with the abuse?
2. How can communities help young people who are sexually abused not fall victim to further sexual exploitation such as prostitution?
3. Would shifting the focus to hold accountable those who abuse and sexually exploit young people (including Pimps and Johns) help to reduce the numbers of people abused and increase support for those abused?



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Elizabeth's questions ...

1. What are some strategies for promoting the health of lesbian, gay, and bisexual teens, either working with just the youth, and/or with their families?
2. If you were to create a coalition of organizations to help address the health and needs of LGBTQ youth, who would you ask? who wouldn't you ask? why?
3. What are some of the key policies or practices in different systems that might foster healthy youth development for LGBTQ youth? Think education, health care, child welfare, housing and social development, law enforcement.



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Questions?

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