

# SUMMARY REPORT



How to talk about Social Determinants of Health

Simcoe County Museum

November 1, 2019



## **Context**

On November 1, 2019, Redwood Park Communities convened its second annual YIMBY meeting, part of Redwood's Yes In My Back Yard project. This meeting had a county-wide scope and was done in partnership with both the Simcoe County Alliance to End Homelessness (SCATEH) and the Simcoe County Poverty Reduction Task Group (PRTG).

During a check-in meeting as part of YIMBY Week in May 2019, a PRTG/SCATEH partnership to address social determinants of health was proposed. It was agreed in the early planning stages that we need to do some work internally as a sector on how we talk about our work before we request an audience with decision makers and influencers. A common messaging strategy could help ensure that our communications with these decision makers and influencers was effective, and supported the fact that whether we were an agency focused on housing, food security, poverty reduction, or racial justice to name a few, we are all working toward the shared goal of building a stronger, healthier, more resilient community. From there, the program for today's event evolved.

## **Meeting Objectives**

- Come to a common understanding of the Social Determinants of Health (SDOH)
- Develop a common framework for talking about SDOH
- Build capacity of sector agencies to develop compelling messaging about addressing SDOH

## **Meeting Participants**

Invitations went out through the SCATEH and PRTG mailing lists. Sixty-eight RSVPs were received, but the first snowfall of the year resulted in a turnout of closer to 40 participants from across the county.

## **Conclusion**

Through an informative presentation by Dr. Lisa Simon of the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit participants developed a good understanding of the Social Determinants of Health. There was engaged discussion of the points presented by Jennifer van Gennip of Redwood Park Communities on effective messaging, particularly for audiences that may not hold the same values as us.

Many good ideas were brought forward through breakout groups focused on different issues, and through larger group discussion. In the end it was agreed that a second, more focused meeting would be needed to develop our actual common message. There was consensus that once this message is developed, it would be beneficial to agencies to have a badge they can place on their websites that links to a page that contains that key messaging. Redwood committed to planning a follow up meeting in early 2020, and to providing this badge and webpage.

## Consolidated Working Group Notes

### 1. Racism/Anti-Oppression/Cultural Implications Group

- Historical context – Classism and Racism are almost one and the same within Simcoe County
- Jordan's Principle – extrapolates to all DOH
- Systemic racism
- Power dynamics need to start being named!
- Internal – processing
- Institution/Org – how do we call our agencies to action? “13 ways white supremacy shows up in our organizations.”
- Community – how do we identify the racism that is happening now?
- Truth and Reconciliation – how to action with the above categories?
- We need a call to action.

#### Messages:

We all benefit living in an inclusive community.

Diversity in our community is a benefit.

Racism exists in our community of Simcoe County. Let's talk about it!

These need to be tied to a bigger strategy – Let's talk about racial anxiety. What does this mean to you?

### 2. Housing #1

Reframing Problem Statement:

- When housing is viewed as a basic need rather than a commodity, everyone benefits.
- Homelessness is caused by bad policy

#### Message:

If nobody can afford to buy your home, what is it really worth? If no one can afford to rent your unit, how much are you really earning? Housing is more than just a financial investment. A safe, affordable, hopeful home is a basic need. A child's future physical and mental health, performance in school, career, emotional security, and overall engagement as a citizen begins in their childhood home.

### 3. Housing #2

Reframing Problem Statement:

Housing stock has decreased in our community while housing costs have risen disproportionately in comparison to local income.

Values:

Each community member deserves a safe, affordable place to live. Basic need for everyone. Humanity, dignity, avoid talk of human rights.

Explanatory chain:

- Housing increases community well-being
- Right now, there is a strain on medical, correctional, police services, shelters
- If everyone had a safe home, there would be less strain on these systems
- More efficient usage of funds can result when our communities are effectively housed. This saves tax \$ and benefits communities in the long run.

Metaphor:

Planting a garden, with healthy soil as the base (ie. Housing).

Message:

We need to start thinking about housing as the soil in a healthy garden. The basis of a healthy community is housing. Once community members are safely and stably housed, the garden or community can flourish. Community becomes stronger, productivity increases, individuals become healthier, and communities become safer. It is the groundwork of a community that is healthy, engaged, and whole.

#### **4. Food**

Value:

Everyone should have access to healthy, culturally appropriate, affordable food, with dignity.

Metaphor:

Recipe – if you want your recipe to turn out, you have to have the right ingredients and follow all the steps.

Message:

Access to healthy, affordable, safe food in a dignified manner is essential/fundamental for healthy, economically vibrant communities. If everyone has access to healthy food, kids will have better academic outcomes, employees will have better physical and mental health and will perform better at work. The recipe for success is...

#### **5. Income**

(Basic Income Guarantee, Living Wage)

- What's the goal, what's the ask, language people can understand, how can people be part of the solution
- Whole community benefits – economic benefits and drivers
- More money in peoples' pockets to spend locally
- Frame as a policy ask and as a solution to business problems (hiring and retraining related to high turnover).
- How can a Living Wage benefit YOU?

- Gives families choices
- Stronger community is better for everyone
- Meet people where they are at, not where we want them to be
- Doesn't have to be this way, we have the means to solve the problem

## 6. Trauma Group

- Statistics about trauma resilience and factors
- Social capital – community
- Efficient use of resource – deal with trauma before problems result
- Early childhood events – ACES
- We all experience adversity and suffering.
- We all hurt in different ways. Let's create a compassionate community that cares/supports/
- Preventative/Proactive
- Bridge metaphor?

### Message:

We are all bridges. A bridge can look good on the outside but the structure and foundation is what is going to keep it functional and working. A bridge needs a strong base and travelled over time if the foundation isn't strong and supported, it will crack and break. A bridge also doesn't stand alone, it has supports in place to keep it standing. A bridge connects places and people and doesn't function in isolation. We are all connected and need to build a strong community to go through life.

### Requested Next Steps

- Toolkit for whole community
- Some common messages/image we can put on our websites
- Email signature content
- Bringing in more stakeholders – NGOs, business
- Find venues to speak to decision maker audiences where they already gather, rather than hold our own event and hope they come