

Understanding Poverty

Communication Styles for Inclusion



Dr. Donna M. Beegle

Communication Across Barriers

The Present Health Situation

- People living in poverty die on average 15 years sooner than those born to privilege.
- The stress of poverty impacts immunity and short term memory.
- Infant mortality for women in poverty in the U.S. is equal to Malaysia.
- Nearly 47 million people have little or no access to medical, dental, and mental health treatment.
- Poor nutrition leads to poor health outcomes.
- The combination of racism and poverty create even greater health disparities



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Improving Health For People Living In Poverty


- An Insider Perspective: The Meaning Of Health
- Defining Poverty and Understanding Its Impacts on Nutrition and Health
- Examining Your Own Assumptions
- Improving Communication Across Poverty Barriers
- Five Keys to Improving Nutrition and Health



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An Insider Perspective

The Meaning Of Health





Poverty Realities

- Life experiences teach that no one cares and health care is not for people like you.
- You come to believe that everyone is smarter and better; good health comes naturally.
- You do not feel like you belong in middle-class environments.
- People go hungry, do without, and learn to “take” pain, discomfort, and early deaths.




Poverty Realities

Norms are developed by your daily life experiences. Isolation perpetuates poverty.

Poverty Realities

Constant Crisis: People are sick more, responding to crisis, and in survival mode.



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Tammy



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Tammy one month later



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Danny Born Healthy!

Thanks to people bringing resources into our lives: Community Action, Head Start, WIC, Legal Aid and stable housing.

Work to understand and build in supports for people who live in the war zone of poverty.



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Defining Poverty and Understanding its Impacts on Nutrition and Health

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Types of Poverty

- Generational Poverty
- Working-Class Poverty
- Immigrant Poverty
- Situational Poverty



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Facts of Poverty

- Inadequate pay—2/3 of people in poverty are working 1.7 jobs
- Inadequately funded fragmented support systems
- Ignorance about history/current realities
- Isolation from people who have benefited from education and jobs
- Lack of access to proper nutrition, health care, and stable housing



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The Impacts of Poverty

- Hopelessness
- Purpose of education or job unclear
- Isolation from middle-class norms, vocabulary and experiences
- Stereotypes, myths, and judgements
- Internalized personal deficiency
- Poverty realities pull and demand attention
- Sees health professionals as “other”

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Examining Your Own Assumptions: *What do you believe about poverty and those who live in it?*



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A New Paradigm

A deeper understanding of poverty and its impacts

Stand in awe


Take a "NASA" approach

Build a connected, poverty-informed approach to addressing poverty





Paradigm Shift

1. What was spent on pets for Valentines Day 2016?
1 million 815 million 10 million
2. What was spent on Hannah Montana, High School Musical, and Disney Princess merchandise in the height of the recession?
20 million 12 billion 26 billion
3. What is the amount spent in October on Halloween costumes?
1 million 900 million 80 million
4. What is the average spent on a person for one year in prison?
9000 18,000 44,000



Improving Communication Across Poverty Barriers

Five Main Causes of Communication Breakdown

- Subconscious bias
- Distrust of outsiders/fear of professionals
- Differences in priorities/world views
- Differences in basic communication styles
- Differences in vocabulary and examples

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Improving Communication Across Poverty Barriers



Every human being is born oral culture. Oral culture teaches a focus on senses (touch, smell, sight, sound, and taste).

Oral culture is linked to poverty and emphasizes our need for trusting relationships.

Print culture is linked to literacy and is generally used by helping professionals.

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Oral Culture

- You seek information through relationships
- You are spontaneous and skilled at having multiple conversations at once.
- Interrupting is okay.
- Repetition and telling the same stories over and over helps in your understanding.
- Sharing personal experiences and stories is your way of connecting with others.
- It is normal to show emotions/feelings.
- You are very physical and expect physical responses.



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Print Culture

- You are most comfortable focusing on one idea at a time.
- You are a linear thinker and you like things in order ... first this, then this, etc.
- You believe a plan is essential and your goal is to stay on task.
- It is important to think abstractly about situations and analyze them carefully.
- You approach tasks by breaking them into parts.
- Time is crucial and you are rigid about it.



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Effective Communicating Across Poverty Strategies

- Build common ground to increase trust
- Build relationships by sharing things about yourself
- Use multiple examples and channels
- Say it, say it again and say it another way
- Break information down into small, doable steps
- Put information in a story about someone like the person you are serving
- Follow up – poverty is constant crisis

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Five Keys to Improving Nutrition and Health

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First Key

1. Take a **Strength's Perspective** approach when interacting—

Strategies:

- a. Whenever possible compliment people on what they are doing that is healthy
- b. Empathize with the obstacles they face daily and provide strategies that make sense with the resources they have
- c. Use explanations that show direct purpose and solutions that are convenient

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Second Key

2. **Resiliency Theory** says when you treat people special and value them, you build trust and capacities for people to step out of their comfort zone.

Strategies:

- a. Notice people immediately and make them feel valued.
- b. Be highly aware of your non-verbals when you talk or meet people. Your tone of voice, facial expressions and body posture send messages of value.

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Third Key

3. **Asset Theory** – Everyone has strengths. People in survival mode know a lot. They tend to struggle with access and capacity to develop their assets.

Strategies:

- a. Focus on what they do know and how their current skills/knowledge can be beneficial to improving health outcomes.
- b. Listen to narratives. Focus on the internal/external capacities embedded in their stories.
- c. Build capacity by linking people to others in the community who can assist in removing obstacles and building opportunities.

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Fourth Key

4. Avoid **Faulty Attribution Theory** – Attributing motive to others' behavior.

Strategies:

- a. Work to develop a foundational understanding of poverty so you will have empathy for the reasons behind behavior.
- b. When you feel yourself judging, reflect on the situation and ask yourself if you are expecting people to do/respond as you would.

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Fifth Key

5. Help build **Social Capital** and supportive networks. The isolation of poverty perpetuates it.

Strategies:

- a. Navigate people to resources and opportunities that will help them to access supports for improving health outcomes.
- b. Use your title to help people obtain the tools, resources and knowledge they need to succeed.

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Going Beyond

- Gain a deeper understanding of poverty: Make an effort to learn the facts about poverty and what people face.
- Go out of your way to listen to the perspectives of people facing poverty to gain insights for meeting people where they are.
- Take a community-wide, poverty informed approach. Build a "full-resource" backpack.
- Build trust to assist people in stepping out of their comfort zone to try unfamiliar foods and health practices.

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Dan and Austin



It's **"who you know."**

"No one breaks poverty barriers to nutrition and health without help. For some, YOU are the HELP!"

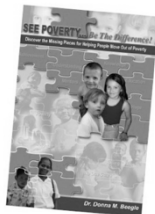
It's in your hands. What can you do? If not you, then who?



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Gain Poverty Competencies: Read *See Poverty...Be The Difference*

Poverty is a complex issue. Its solutions come from individuals—like you—who are willing to learn, understand and work together. **See Poverty...Be the Difference** is designed to inform, inspire, and motivate you to make a difference for children and families from poverty backgrounds. It will provide some tools and activities for educating, communicating, and working more effectively with people of all ages who live in poverty and, hopefully, inspire you to want to learn and do more!



See Poverty...Be The Difference

Price \$25. Discounts on bulk quantities of this book are available.

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Continue Your Learning:

IMMERSION TRAININGS

- Next Level Custom Trainings
- Beagle Poverty Institute & Certified Coaching Institute
http://www.combarriers.com/institute_schedule

TRAINING KITS

- If Not Me, Then Who? Empowering Our Neighbors
- Breaking Poverty Barriers to Equal Justice
- Action Approach For Educating Students In Poverty

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