

Eastern Illinois University

The Keep

Belonging, A photovoice project: Exhibit

Belonging, A photovoice project

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Introduction

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Belonging, A photovoice project

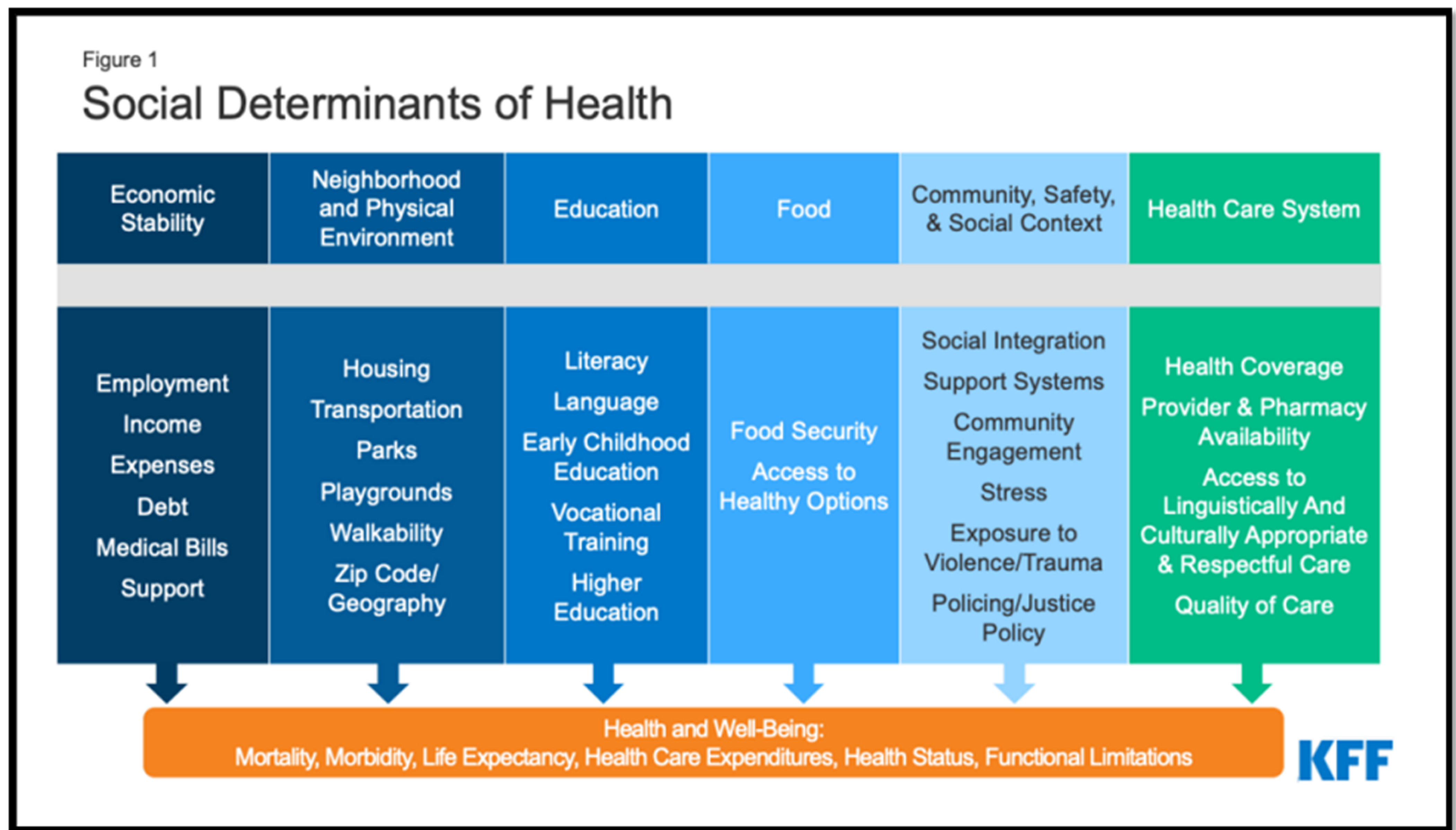
Through photos and stories, EIU students explore the Social Determinants of Health in their communities

Throughout the year college students were invited to take pictures and write short stories representing:

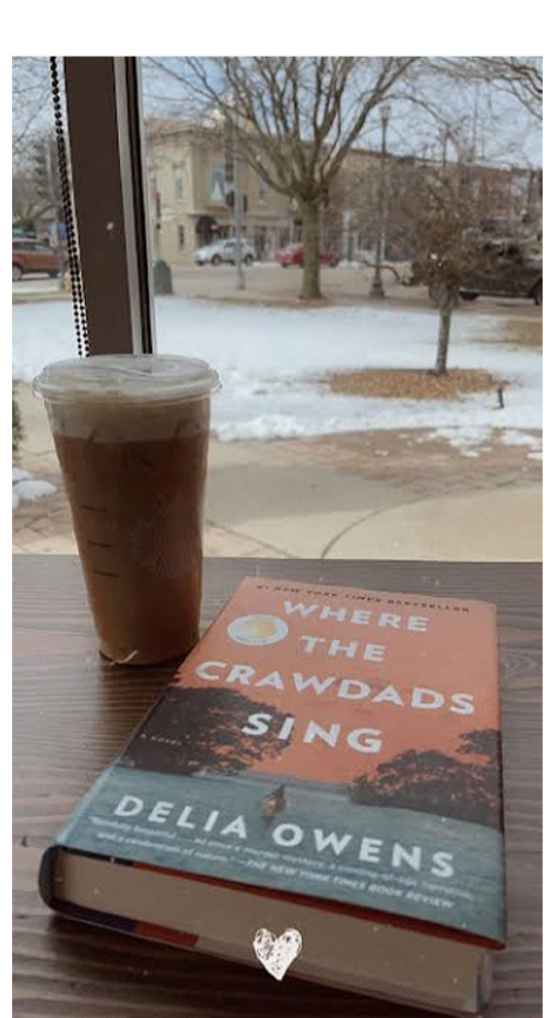
- 1) Dimensions of health
- 2) Barriers to being the healthiest “you”
- 3) SDoH including how the determinants support/hinder health
- 4) Narratives to develop strategies for improving SDoH
- 5) A variety of environmental and social settings



Dates like these are always a nice relief from the stress of regular life, but sometimes I think we can be a bit too spontaneous. Mismanaged time and budget can quickly lead to more stress. This could be a potential barrier for financial, vocational, and other forms of wellness.



This figure from the Kaiser Family Foundation illustrates 6 inter-related domains that are used to describe social determinants of health.



Reading (as well as journaling) is a great stress-reliever for me. Pictured here, I am sitting at a window seat at Starbucks enjoying some quiet time for myself. I read fiction as it is entertaining to me and allows me to escape my own issues and read about someone else's. I could also say that reading contributes to my social health as well as many of my coworkers have similar reading interests as me and we are able to discuss and bond over our favorite moments in a book.



I am grateful for the neighborhood and community I go to school in. Charleston, Illinois is a very safe city that I feel safe to be out in day or night. A lot of people don't have the option of where they live, so I am grateful this city does not make me worried about my safety or health. Crime rates are low, there is a hospital nearby, and the community is welcoming. Even though there isn't much to do in Charleston, my mental and physical health is better here knowing I don't have to worry about much violence or other health and safety risks.



Living a healthy lifestyle is expensive, especially when you are in college. I try my best to exercise and eat healthy, but there are times I have to pick quick and not so healthy meals because I am on the go or simply do not have time and resources to cook healthy everyday. Money is a barrier for anyone to be more healthy. At times it is a big stressor, especially not being able to have a job because I do not have the time to fit it into my schedule like most college students and I do not want to fall behind in classes.

What are social determinants of health?

Social determinants of health (SDoH) are the conditions in the environments where people are born, live, learn, work, play, worship, and age that affect a wide range of health, functioning, and quality-of-life outcomes and risks.

- Healthy People 2023

About this project

This project was designed to advance our understanding of college students' knowledge of health and barriers to wellness by using the Photovoice concepts.

PhotoVoice.org is an organization that "believes everybody should have the opportunity to represent themselves and tell their story." They work in partnership all over the world on projects that combine ethical photography and community participation to help deliver positive social change (PhotoVoice.org, 2021, para. 1). Our project, inspired by the Photovoice organization, aims to advance our understanding of Public Health and Nutrition students, focus on inclusion, address barriers, and better understand the lives of our students. Through the act of photography, self-reflection, discussion, and more broadly, through empathetic engagement with photographs and accompanying stories, we hope to frame and promote messages of inclusion, equality, and visibility: of claiming space for students in general, but especially those with a disability, persons of color, and those in the gender and sexual diversity groups in our department.

Project team

Lauri DeRuiter-Willems, Nikki Hillier, Misty Rhoads, Amanda Harvey designed this project and coached students through the creation of photos and writing.

Students that participated in the project were enrolled in the following courses in Spring 2023:

- PUBH 2700: Foundations in Health Literacy
- PUBH 2800: Research Methods

Results were presented as a poster at the 2023 meeting of the Society for Public Health Education.

The project was funded by a grant from the Redden Funds at Eastern Illinois University. Redden funds are used to improve undergraduate instruction at EIU.