



Strengthening Our Collaborative Approaches for Advancing Equity and Justice

Why it matters



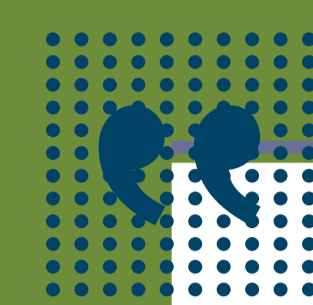
Public health practitioners and researchers have spent almost 20 years building multi-sectoral coalitions to address health disparities.



Addressing unjust systems and longstanding power imbalances are critical to achieve health equity.



We need effective collaborative multisector approaches that promote community change for health, equity, and justice that challenge existing power dynamics.



The United States has a long history of struggles for equity and fairness, yet wealth and power remain concentrated in a very small segment of our society.

What has been done?

Community scholars identified 6 principles for collaborating for equity and justice that could lead to transformative change in power, equity, and justice.

These principles can be incorporated into new and existing approaches to develop “collaborations that will increase the likelihood of systemic and lasting change that ensures equity and justice for all community members.”

Principles of Collaborating for Equity and Justice

Explicitly address issues of social and economic injustice and structural racism.

1

Employ a community development approach in which residents have equal power in determining the coalition or collaborative’s agenda and resource allocation.

2

Employ community organizing as an intentional strategy and as part of the process. Work to build resident leadership and power.

3

4

Focus on policy, systems, and structural change.

5

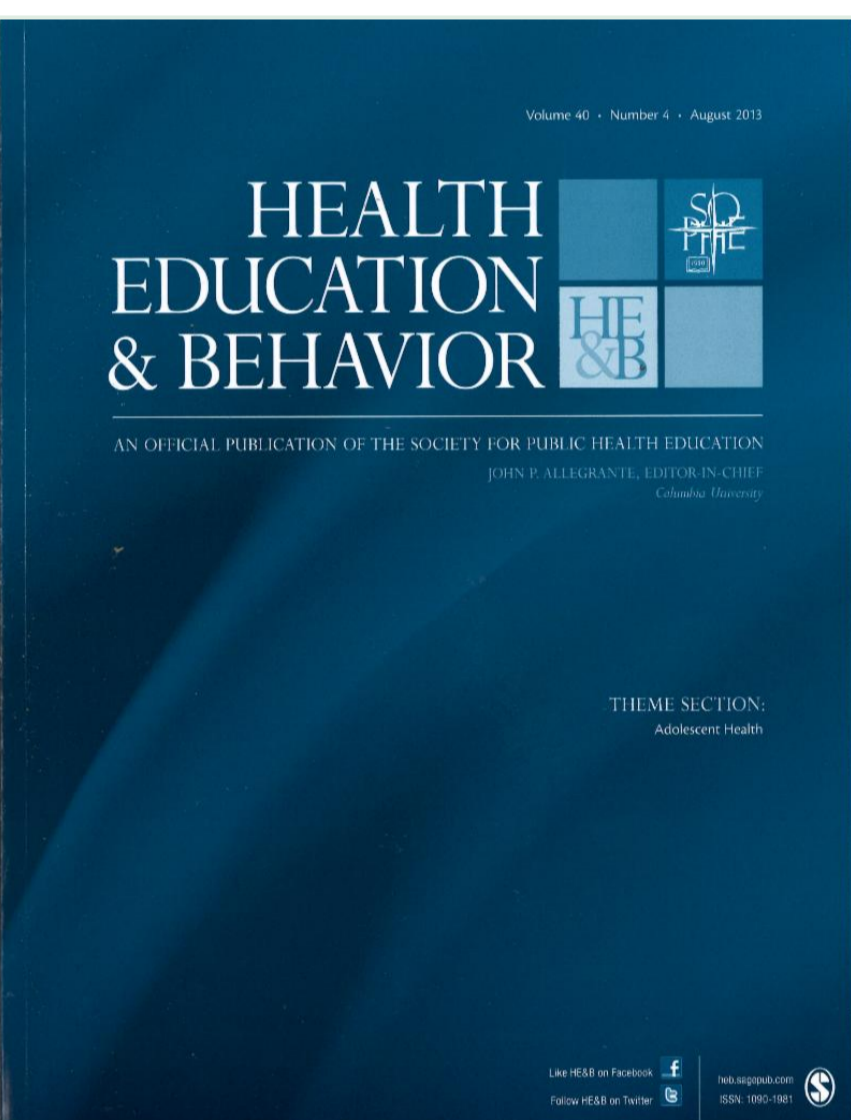
Build on the extensive community-engaged scholarship and research over the past four decades that show what works, that acknowledge the complexities, and that evaluate appropriately.

6

Construct core functions for the collaborative based on equity and justice that provide basic facilitating structures and build member ownership and leadership.

(Wolff et al., 2017)

What can we learn from past collaborative efforts?



For the Health Education & Behavior special theme issue, *Collaborating for Equity & Justice*, we reviewed examples of collaborative work that reflect these principles. These included:

- Perspectives and experiences from those conducting collaborative work, emphasizing key aspects such as power sharing, community organizing, and building coalition capacity for this work.
- Case studies of community-based initiatives providing examples of how to collaborate for equity and justice, including challenges and successes

Principles and strategies of past efforts

How and where have past efforts fallen short or found success in advancing health equity and social justice?

The theme issue provides detailed accounts of the successes and challenges found in the following case studies:

The Washtenaw ID Project: A Government-Issued ID Coalition Working Toward Social, Economic, and Racial Justice and Health Equity,

- Identified community needs for government-issued IDs.
- Established roles for impacted individuals within the coalition.
- Provided advocacy training for policy change.

Language, Culture, and Collectivism: Uniting Coalition Partners and Promoting Holistic Health in the Menominee Nation

- Prioritized indigenous perspectives and knowledge.
- Expanded coalition to include indigenous members.
- Implemented community-based initiatives grounded in Indigenous wisdom.

Justice System Reform for Healthy Equity: A Mixed Methods Examination of Collaborating for Equity and Justice Principles in a Grassroots Organizing Coalition

- Advocated for restorative justice practices.
- Incorporated grassroots leaders into the coalition for policy leverage.
- Mobilized activated residents for advocacy.

Toward Sexual Health Equity for Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Youth: An Intergenerational, Collaborative, Multisector Partnerships Approach to Structural Changes

- Introduced structural interventions for sexual health care access.
- Treated youth as equals and provided training and advocacy.
- Valued and compensated youth contributions through paid employment.

Using Collaborative Coalition Processes to Advance Community Health, Well-Being, and Equity: A Multiple-Case Study Analysis From a National Community Transformation Initiative

- Incorporated lived experiences into coalition leadership.
- Emphasized small changes for transformative impact.
- Focused on collaborative local initiatives for community well-being.

A Collaborative Model to Assess Legacy Pollution in Communities Near a Lead-Acid Battery Smelter: The ‘Truth Fairy’ Project

- Addressed resident concerns on lead pollution.
- Formed a community-academic research partnership.
- Utilized community organizing and research for policy actions.

Room for growth...

To reduce health inequities through community collaboration, there's a need for new approaches that lead to transformative changes.

The case studies presented in the special issue of *Health Education & Behavior*, *Collaborating for Equity & Justice*, provide examples of how researchers and practitioners can emphasize racial justice, community development, and organizing strategies to build resident power.

Ongoing research and practice are needed to identify how to best implement these strategies.

The six collaboration principles provide a framework and strategies:



to address social and economic injustices and structural racism



for building community power, equity, and social justice



to create policy, systems, and structural changes at the community level