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Promoting Health: A (re) Introduction to Building Healthy Public Policy

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Today's Workshop



What is policy?



PHO's Eight-step policy making process for developing healthy public policies



Case study: Peterborough Public Health



Q&A

Polls



What is Policy?^{1,2}

Policy is a guide to action to change what would otherwise occur, a decision about amounts and allocations of resources:

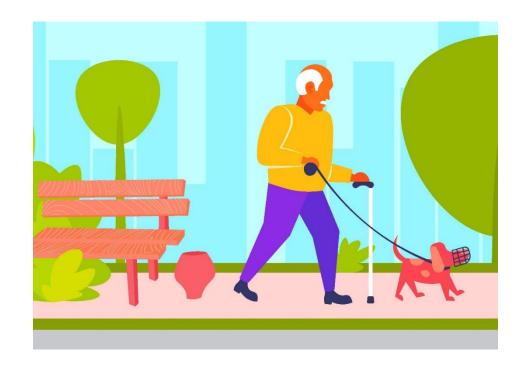
- The overall amount is a statement of commitment to certain areas of concern
- The distribution of the amount shows the priorities of decision makers.

Policy sets priorities and guides resource allocation.



What is Healthy Public Policy?^{3,4}

Healthy public policies aim to improve the circumstances in which people are born, grow, work, and age. Healthy public policy is coordinated action that leads to health, income and social policies that foster greater equity.



Types of Policy Instruments⁴

Regulation

Commands and prohibits in order to define norms and acceptable behaviours.

Examples:

- Immunization of School Pupils Act
- Health Menu Choices Act

Economic

Taxation on products to create disincentives to decrease unhealthy or increase healthy behaviours.

Fiscal measures to allocate funds to maintain good health

Examples:

- Taxation on tobacco
- Funded mandatory public health programs

Information

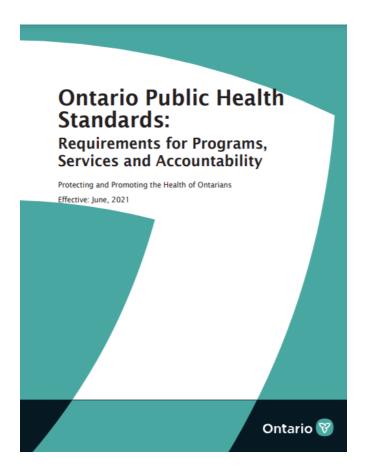
Attempts to influence behavior through knowledge transfer, communication, and moral persuasion.

Examples:

- Canada's Food Guide and Physical Activity Guide
- Pregnancy and alcohol warning labels

Public Health's Mandate in Healthy Public Policy

Ontario Public Health Standards⁶



Ottawa Charter⁴



Role of Public Health in Influencing Policy⁸

Public Policy Competencies

Policy Analysis / Development



Related to the design, development, implementation, analysis, impact, and evaluation of policies related to public health. Includes knowledge of how policies are made, how they might impact population health, and the ability to delineate policy options for a specific public health problem using evidence-based data. This competency is by far the most frequently referenced.

Mentioned in 41 of 43 documents.

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Influence / Advocacy

Includes competencies derived from the role of public health in advocating for policies that improve health. Advocacy and influence are mentioned in relation to decision makers, stakeholders, and the public, as is the ability to take positions on matters of policy that affect, or have the potential to affect, public health.

Mentioned in 32 of the 43 documents.

Partnership / Collaboration



Includes competencies related to forming partnerships and collaborations, working with community members and stakeholders, as well as those related to intersectoral collaboration. Mentioned in 28 of 43 documents.

Communication



Concerned with the ability to effectively communicate with decision makers and the public. Competencies such as: strategic use of media; writing clear and concise policy briefs and memos; and stating policy options to different audiences.

Mentioned in 27 of 43 documents.

Policy Context



Includes competencies related to the social, cultural and political context. Knowledge of population composition, cultural awareness, health systems, political context, and jurisdictional responsibilities a classified as policy context competencies.

Mentioned in 21 of 43 documents.

Social Determinants / Equity



Includes all of the competencies that emphasize the importance of the social, economic, political, and environmental determinants of health and issues related to equity and health inequalities. Mentioned in 10 of 43 documents.

Policy Theory

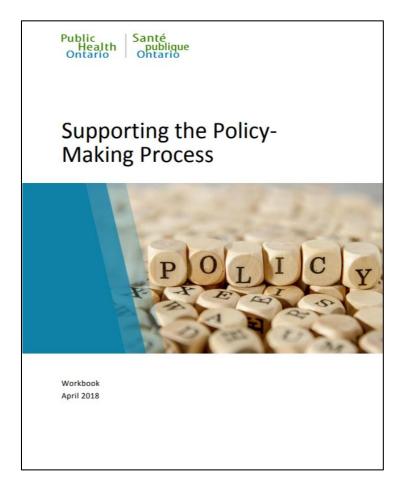


This includes competencies which emphasize familiarity with different theories of policy, politics, public health, intervention, and social theory. Mentioned in 4 of 43 documents.

Leadership

Although not included as a thematic category in our original analysis, after comments received and considering that our analysis flattened tiered competencies to avoid repetition, we include it here as a cross-cutting competency (i.e. one that is mentioned as necessary in all of the thematic categories as one occupies positions that demand it).

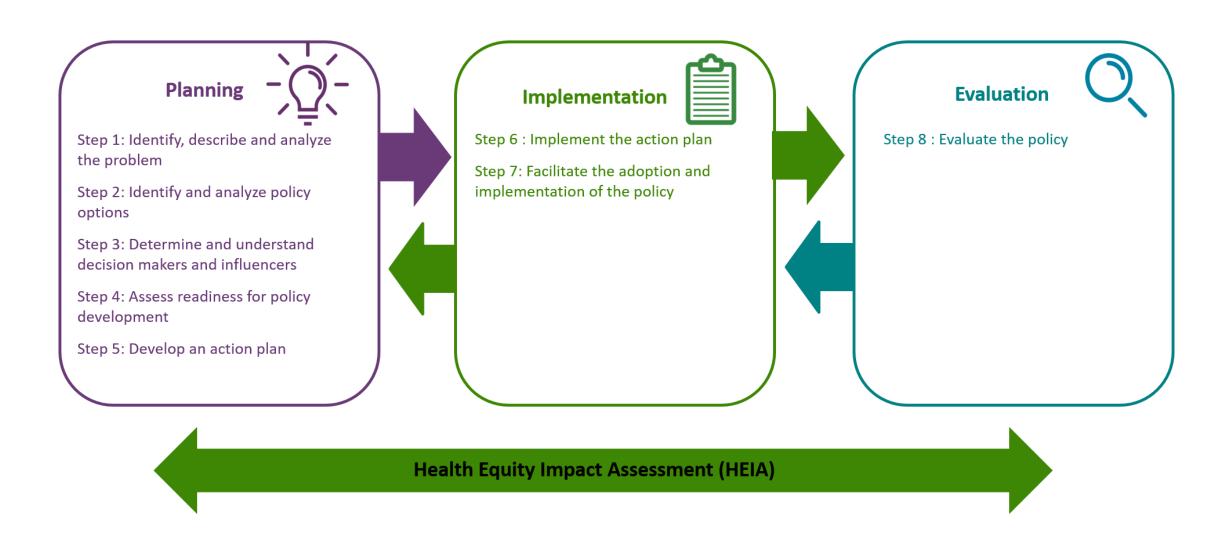
Public Health Ontario's Policy Workbook²



Three Embedded Concepts

- Health in All Policies: takes into account the health implications of decisions made outside the health sector
- Advocacy: a combination of individual and social actions which are designed to gain political commitment and policy support
- Health equity: some populations may experience a greater burden of inequity because of existing or new policies

Eight-Step Policy Making Process for Developing a Healthy Public Policy²





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