

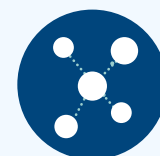
ESSENCE

One page overview of each 'condition' for addressing inequalities in physical activity

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Leadership



Polymakers, workforce, volunteers and local people act and make decisions, both independently and together, to tackle physical activity inequalities.

What does this mean and why is it important?

The way we create the conditions for physical activity in a place is often shaped by who makes decisions and who can act to enable people to be more physically active. Systemic change to reduce inequalities in physical activity is likely to involve leadership and action that is joined up, less centralised, and involves a broad range of people at different levels, including strategic leaders, the workforce and local people. This enables a diverse range of people to act in ways that strengthen each other's work, bringing the value of different perspectives, knowledge, and skills for a greater combined impact. We can create ways to equitably share or transfer decision-making power to those who experience physical activity inequalities.

Strategic leadership

Place-based systemic work is supported by strategic leaders who use their influence and platform both individually and collectively to: change policies and practices to build on strengths; support innovations and action from people across the system; dismantle processes which are counterproductive for systemic work and physical activity; and demonstrate how physical activity can support broader social outcomes. Leaders cultivate a culture shift to foster distributed leadership and creative ways of working by holding accountability and protecting, trusting and enabling others to act.

Shared leadership across sectors

People at all levels, including local people, are enabled to take on roles and act independently within different sectors. Enabling people to act within their own spaces can lead to broader participation, new approaches to work, and greater collective impact. Inclusive development of a shared purpose or vision that is widely valued inspires autonomous action which aligns with a collective effort. There are ways for people to influence change across sectors, or upwards, and to highlight and solve stubborn problems.

How can we create distributed and joined-up leadership?

Experiences from places reveal five factors for leadership:

1. **Actions are aligned towards a shared purpose:** People act independently in their sectors and places, but their actions reflect the shared purpose, principles or vision for collective change.
2. **Nurtured and skilled leaders:** More people – who choose to lead – across different spaces are nurtured, empowered, supported, and are developing the attributes and skills.
3. **Trust in others' decision-making:** Strategic leaders foster a culture of support and innovation and demonstrate trust in the transfer of decision-making power, whilst holding accountability.
4. **Inclusive decision-making and actions:** People and communities, representative and inclusive of diverse groups, are involved in, or make decisions. Strategic leaders advocate and model inclusive decision-making.
5. **Actions are joined up and supported by others:** People with different roles have spaces to make both individual and collective decisions. Within this, there are appropriate channels to join up action, seek support and influence upwards, which are advocated and used.

Reflection questions

- Do we know how people who are most affected by decisions are involved in decision making?
- What counts as decision making and when might we use each? For example, consultation, influencing decisions, involvement in collective decisions or handing over decision-making power.
- What are the processes/structures in place to support sharing leadership and decision-making?
- How do strategic leaders use their positions to identify and challenge policies and practices that are counterproductive to physical activity?