

Housing as a Determinant of Health Equity



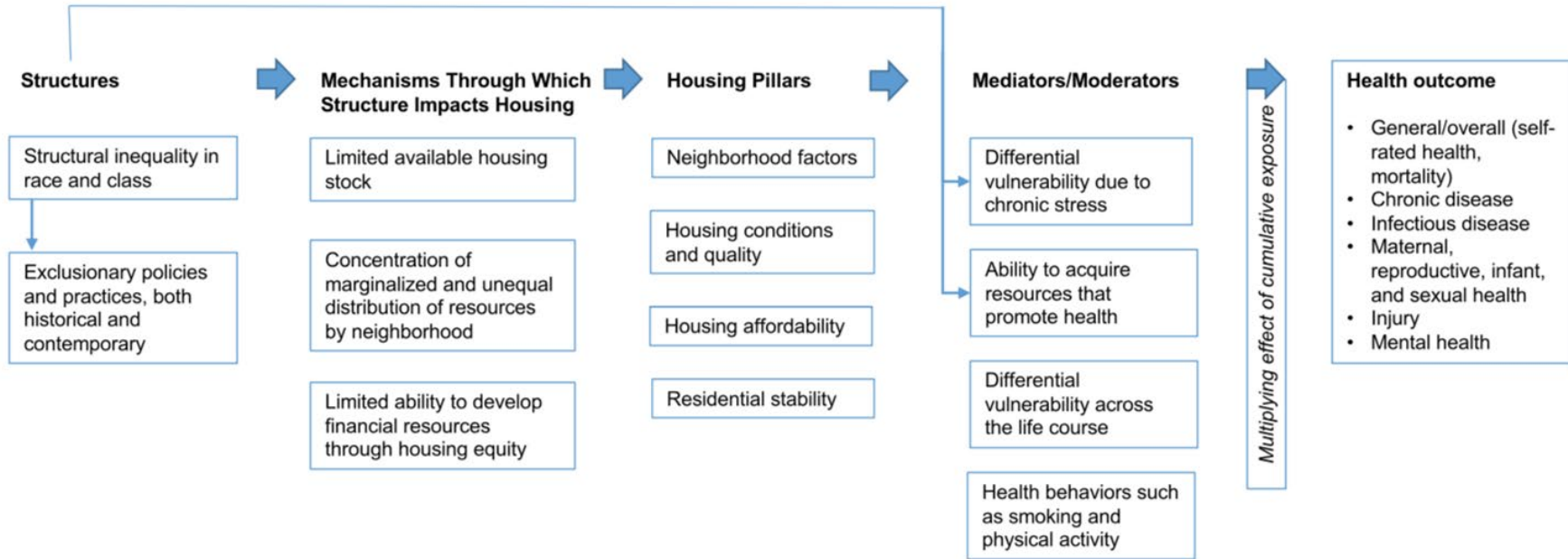
*National Collaborating Centre for Environmental Health
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Overview

- 1) Introduction
 - 2) Four pillars of housing and health
 - 3) The historical and ongoing production of housing inequities
 - 4) A vision for housing as a platform for health equity
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Housing and Health Equity



Swope, C. B., & Hernández, D. (2019). Housing as a determinant of health equity: A conceptual model. *Social Science & Medicine*, 243. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2019.112571>



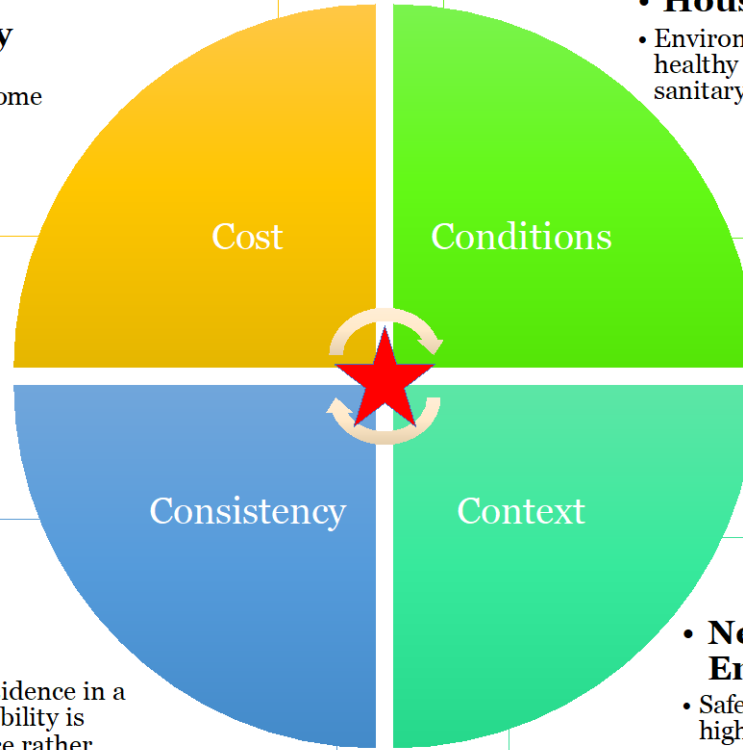
Four Pillars of Housing

- **Housing Affordability**

- Housing that is apportioned to income (35%)

- **Housing Quality**

- Environment is hazard-free, healthy and safe, decent and sanitary



- **Residential (In)stability**

- Able to maintain residence in a home over time; mobility is determined by choice rather than displacement

- **Neighborhood Environment**

- Safe communities that offer high-quality educational, economic and health opportunities

Four Pillars of Housing and Health

HOW HOUSING CAN IMPROVE HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

There are many opportunities to promote health by addressing housing conditions including:



HEALTHY HOUSING FOR A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE #EnvironmentalHealth



Healthy housing is becoming more important in light of



URBAN GROWTH



AGEING POPULATIONS



CLIMATE CHANGE

Housing Conditions and Quality

- Thermal comfort
- Pests
- Dampness and mold
- Hazardous building and furniture materials (e.g., lead)
- Unsafe drinking water
- Secondhand smoke
- Risk factors for injury

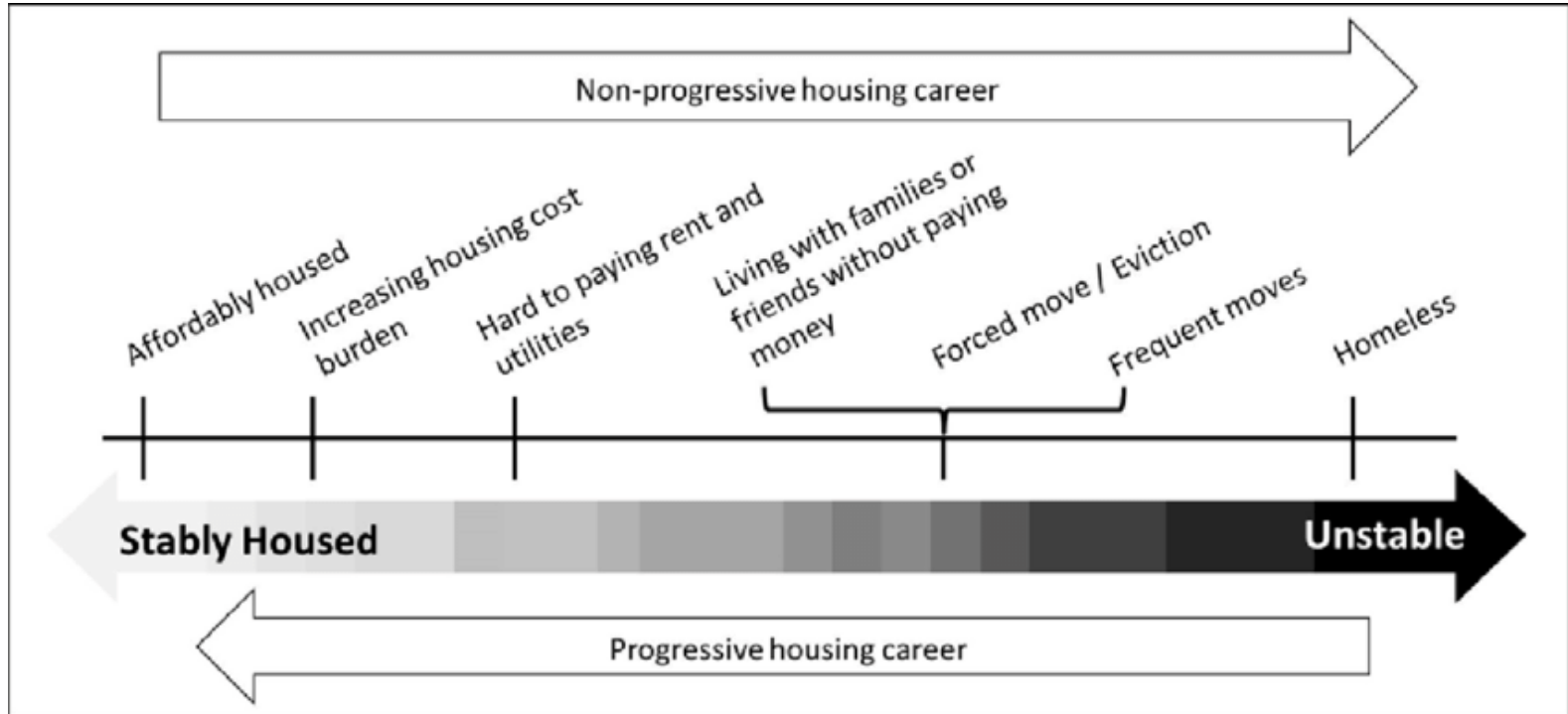
Housing Affordability

- **Direct** impacts: linked to poorer self-rated health, hypertension, arthritis, and mental health
- **Indirect** impacts: drains financial resources that could be used for health services, prescriptions, food, or child development resources



Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.
<https://www.facebook.com/RobertWoodJohnsonFoundation/photos/a.47427518878110159802621593782/?type=3>

Residential Stability



Kleit, R. G., Kang, S., & Scally, C. P. (2016). Why Do Housing Mobility Programs Fail in Moving Households to Better Neighborhoods? *Housing Policy Debate*, 26(1), 188–209. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10511482.2015.1033440>

Residential Stability



- Adverse mental health impacts
- Disrupts employment; access to health care facilities and other health-relevant resources
- Could move to poorer-quality housing
- Children and adolescents especially vulnerable



<https://wfr.org/plan-spotlight-engaging-communities-in-active-transportation-planning/>



<https://bkreader.com/2018/05/21/east-new-york-nycs-biggest-food-swamp/>

Neighborhood Factors



<https://www.pca.state.mn.us/air/neighborhood-sources>

Mediators, Moderators, Interactions

1. All exposures don't equate to the same effects

- Differential vulnerability across the life course
- Vulnerability from exposure to stress and discrimination
- Behaviors (e.g., physical activity, smoking, nutrition)



2. Housing pillars don't exist in isolation

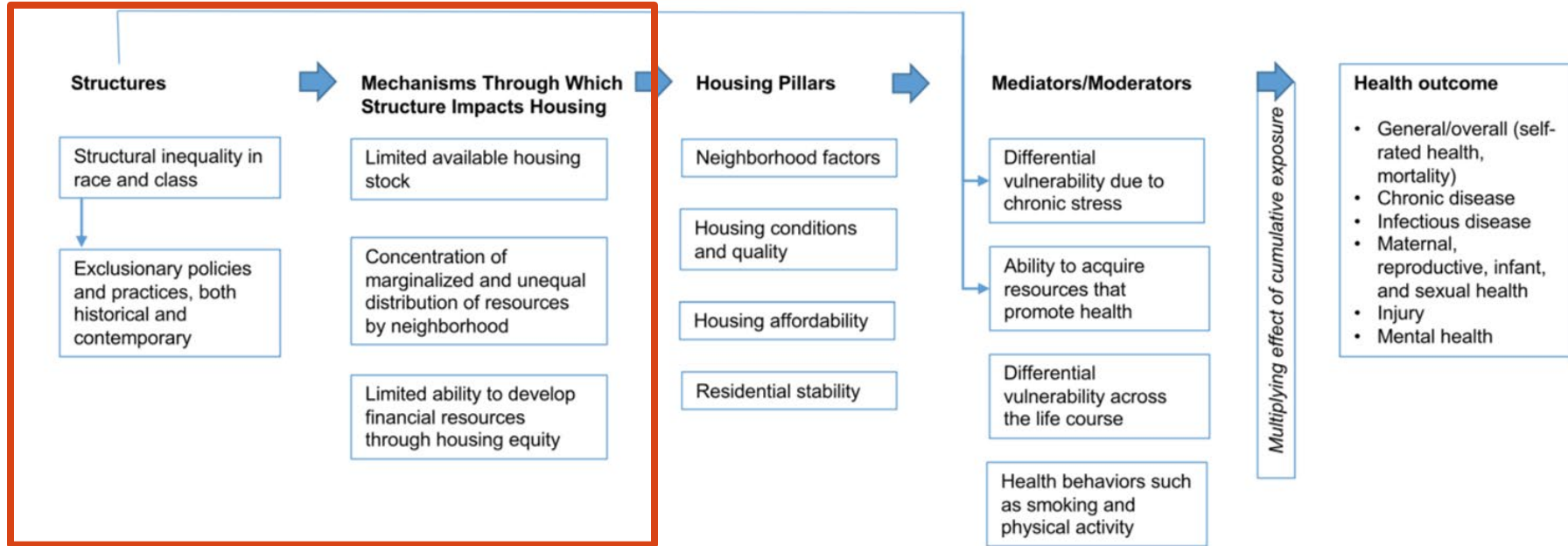
- Likelihood of exposure to unhealthy housing is not randomly distributed
- People may make trade-offs

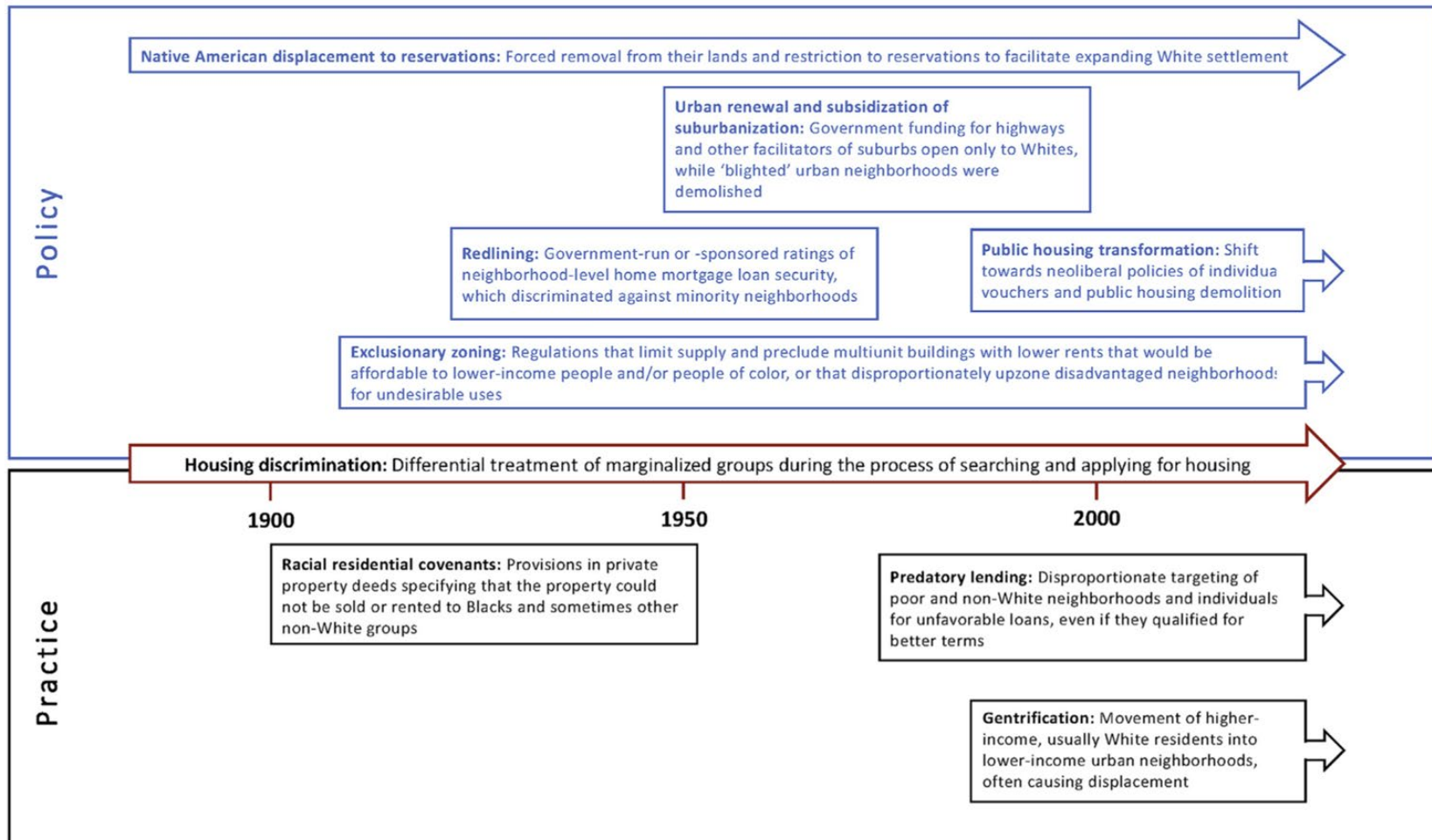


Interactive, amplifying effects

Historical and
Ongoing
Production of
Housing
Inequities

Housing and Health Equity

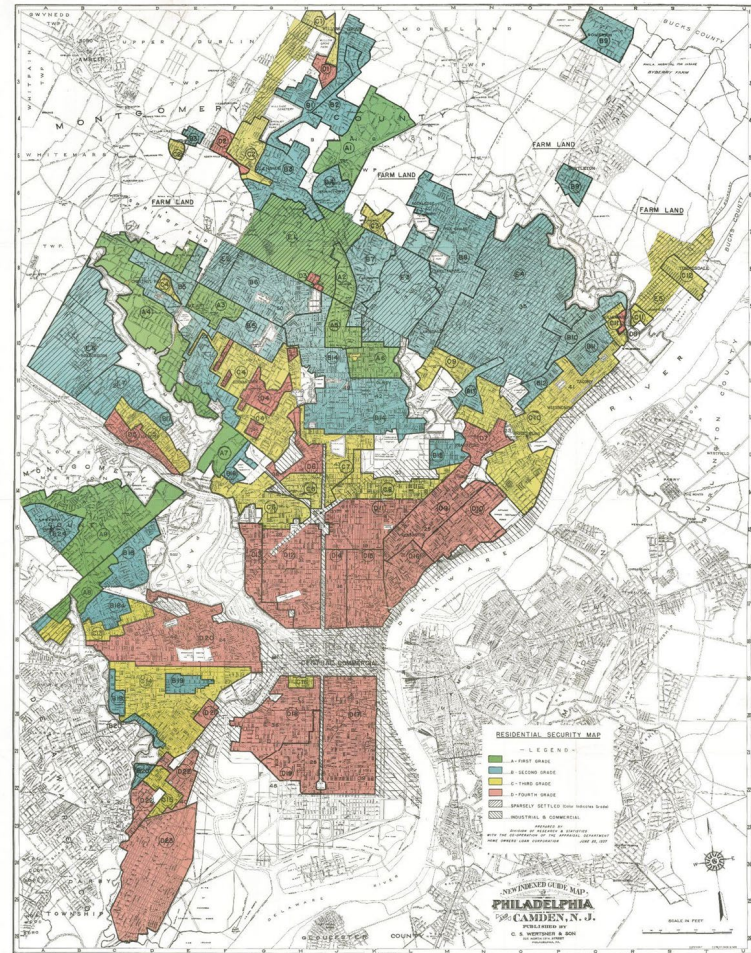
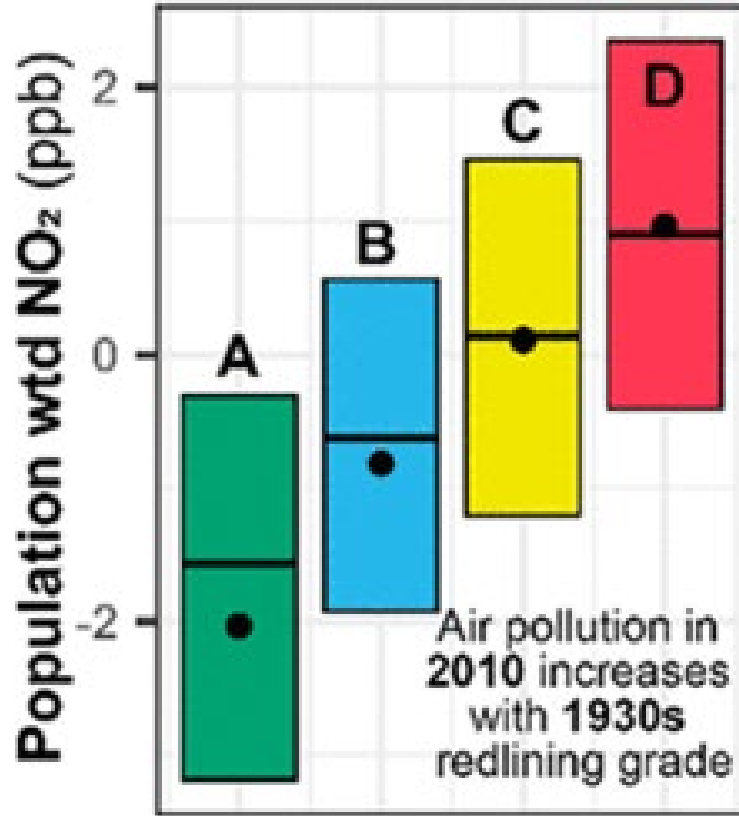




Impacts for Health

- 1) **Spatial concentration** of marginalized populations facilitates increasing their exposure to unhealthy neighborhood and housing characteristics while limiting their access to healthful ones
- 2) **Constrained supply** and high demand in a dual market places at risk for unaffordable, poor-quality housing
- 3) **Denial of equal opportunity to build home equity** contributed to wealth gap, which limits ability to afford healthy housing and affects health through broader SES mechanisms

Example: Redlining



Example: Green Gentrification



“The marriage of urban redevelopment with greening creates a paradox. Even while greening certainly provides economic, ecological and social benefits to many, it may create new and deeper vulnerabilities for some.”

-Isabelle Anguelovski and colleagues

Example: Evictions



Statistics Canada. Evictions in Canada, 2021. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/11-627-m/11-627-m2022046-eng.htm>

Key Takeaways

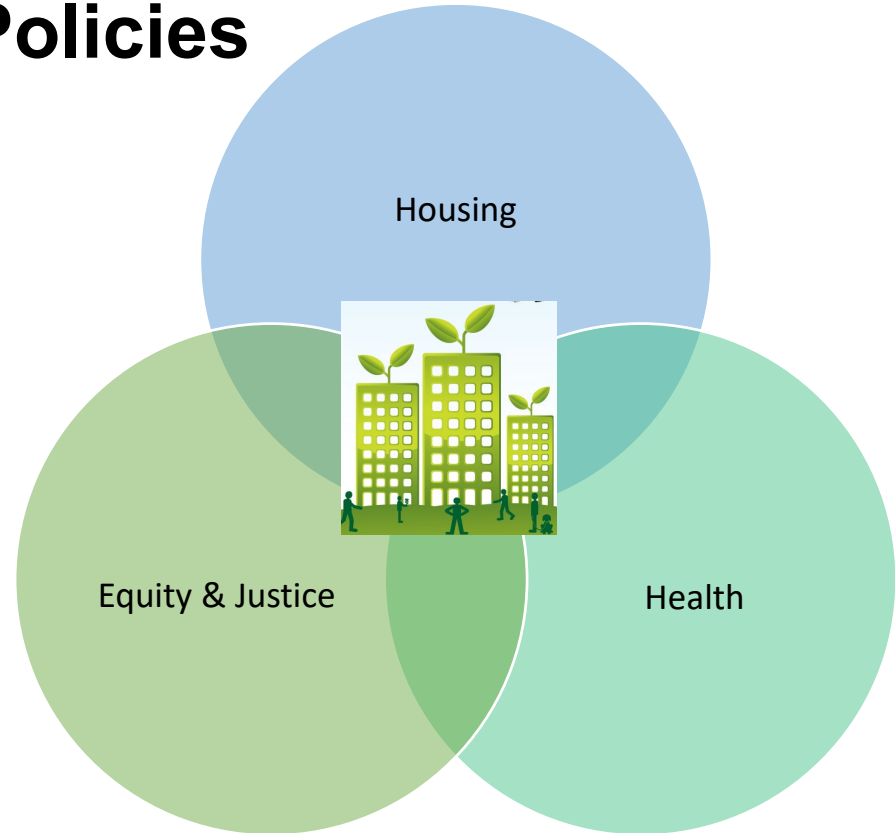
- The physical and social environments of our homes and neighborhoods can support – or harm – our health in many ways, spanning 4 main pillars
- Housing/neighborhood resources and disamenities known to be linked to health are not distributed equitably, in large part due to histories of segregation and other racialized and exclusionary practices
- Housing pillars don't exist in isolation from one another; may have interactive effects with one another, as well as with other impacts of social inequality
- Although characteristics of each housing pillar can play an important role in our health, we should be careful not to think about it in an overly deterministic way, always recognizing the importance of other social forces and interactive effects

A Vision for
Housing as a
Platform for
Health Equity



Re-envisioning Housing for Health Equity: People, Places and Policies

“Health equity in housing would entail opportunities for all individuals, regardless of race/ethnicity, socioeconomic status, household composition, or zip code, to benefit from developments in modern building science, fair maintenance practices, community planning, and creative uses of space through programming, to foster a culture of health and social connections.”



Thank you! Questions?

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