
Transformation, Networks and Large Scale Change

— Terry G. Williams —

Recent events are affecting so many people, institutions, communities and businesses...

Major Forces

- Pandemic (medical, economic, jobs, isolation, school interruptions, etc.)
 - George Floyd murder
 - Stock market volatility
 - War in Ukraine
 - Effects of global warming
 - Etc.
- And
- Increasing socially conscious beliefs of generations of citizens, employees and business owners



Impacts / Results

- Loss, trauma, illness, etc.
- Second pandemic (mental health)
- Redefinition of "Ideal" living locations
- Discussion of structural racism
- Disproportionate impact on marginalized communities
- Great resignation
- New expectations in employment relationships

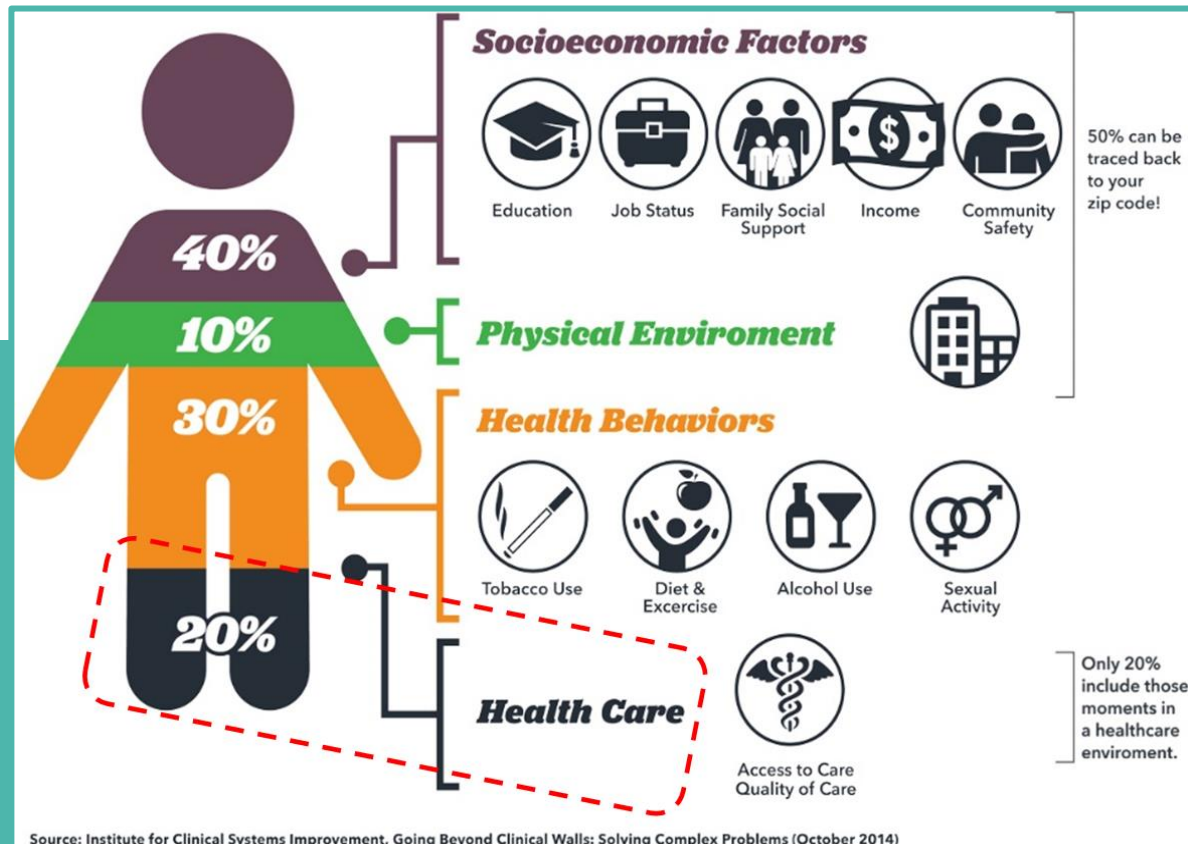


Responses

- Changing expectations from work force
- Proactive actions by businesses internally & externally
- Resolve to reduce disparities
- Benefits enhancements
- More discussion about "whole person" care
- ESG initiatives being pursued
- Health equity emphasis
- Health and investment in community is increasingly understood as "good business" (not just reactionary)

The simultaneous dissatisfaction, engagement and actions by multiple groups can enable transformation.

Many factors affect overall health & well-being



Decreasing Health Disparities: Moral and Economic Arguments Exist

Health disparities lead to significant financial waste in the US health care system.

- The economic burden of these health disparities in the US was projected (prior to Covid 19) to be...
 - \$126 billion in 2020** and to
 - \$353 billion in 2050** if the disparities remain unchanged.



Transformation Truisms/Dynamics

- “Confronting reality” required for transformation
- Concentrated actions by multiple, diverse parties necessary (yet not rigid)
- Architecture & timing matter
- Focusing forces / energy required
- Complexity Theory applies (must live into the change with unknowns while accepting some risk)
- Participants must be heard, or innate protection/frustration will be triggered
- Differentiate “problems to be solved” versus “polarities to be managed”



- Given the unique history of past few years in society, an unparalleled opportunity exists for companies to act individually AND collectively to support transformation

Networks are key structures for community health transformation

Context

- The social and environmental challenges we face today are not only complex, they are also systemic and structural and have no/few obvious solutions.
- They require diverse combinations of people, organizations, and sectors to coordinate actions and work together even when the way forward is unclear.
- Collaborative efforts often fail because they attempt to navigate complexity with traditional strategic plans & hierarchies

Shifting Mindset

Hierarchical Mindset	Network Mindset
Mechanistic worldview	Living systems worldview
System seen as a hierarchical pyramid	System seen as a web of interactions
Organization at the center of focus	Purpose at the center of focus
Top-down, directive leadership	Distributed, servant leadership
Centralized decision-making	Collective decision-making
Impulse to command and control	Impulse to connect and collaborate
Information restricted	Information shared
Task oriented	Relationship oriented
Bias toward deliberate strategy	Embrace of emergent strategy

Impact networks can enable community transformation

SOURCE: Ehrlichman. Impact networks: Create connection, spark collaboration, and catalyze systemic change (2021). Ringgold, Inc.

Types of community networks

- Learning
- Action

5 C's in Network Cultivation

1. Clarify purpose and principles
2. Convene the people
3. Cultivate trust
4. Coordinate actions
5. Collaborate for Systems Change

Roles in effective networks

- **Catalyzing** is the art of crafting a vision and inspiring action
- **Facilitating** is guiding participants through group process to find common ground and collaborate
- **Weaving** is the act of fostering new connections and building relationships
- **Coordinating** is the act of organizing the network's systems and structures to share information and advance collective work.

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