

# Formative Assessment for a Community Partner Addressing Social Disparities of Health

How well does the website support individuals and families in navigating and utilizing available community resources?

## Description

Students in HSV 355 connected with local leader Kevin Jackson '99 to engage in program evaluation for the Connect York online tool. Working in teams, students evaluated the Connect York Platform from the perspectives of users and service providers who would promote their programming on the site. Each research team created data collection tools, gathered data from participants, and presented their findings and recommendations.

## Final Product

Each research team created a comprehensive evaluation report or presentation that links their findings to strategies for reducing health disparities that Connect York seeks to address in the community. The evaluation helped the community partner understand what was working well and what could be improved in their programming. This kind of real-time feedback is especially valuable for organizations working with limited resources to address urgent health disparities.

CONNECT  
YORK



Human Services



Program  
Design and  
Evaluation  
HSV355  
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## Students

### Why THIS project for THESE students?

Working with a community partner focused on social determinants of health helps students grasp the complexity of systemic inequities, as abstract concepts and lived realities. Through this project, students developed transferable skills like project management, teamwork, stakeholder engagement, and ethical research—all highly valued in public health, social work, nonprofits, and more. Students could apply what they've learned in the classroom to authentic, community-driven challenges. It moves evaluation from theory to action, with real consequences and impact. This work encourages civic responsibility, promotes critical reflection about students' identities and privileges, and engages students to think critically about their role in community partnerships and addressing inequities.



## Learning Outcomes

### What skills did students develop through this project?

#### **Equity-Focused Evaluation Questions**

Students crafted evaluation questions that reflect the needs of marginalized communities, align with program and community goals, and consider social determinants of health.

#### **Inclusive, Culturally Responsive Tools**

Students created accessible, ethical, and relevant data collection tools appropriate for diverse populations.

#### **Ethical Data Collection and Analysis**

Students engaged communities in ethical data practices, applied basic analysis methods, and interpreted results with an equity lens.

#### **Advance Equity Goals**

Students contributed to reports or presentations using plain language that connects results to strategies for reducing health disparities.



## Context

### How does this project support the community?

These partnerships show the value of higher education as a public good, helping local organizations build capacity while offering students meaningful, grounded education. Beyond academic credit, students contribute to something bigger than themselves—helping a community organization improve its services, tell its story, and pursue equity more effectively. Through this work, students amplified community voices through interviews, surveys, and focus groups to gather insights from the people most affected by Connect York. This ensured that the community's lived experiences and perspectives were at the center of program development and improvement. These reports can support Connect York's grant writing and advocacy efforts and increase its organizational capacity to measure and share its effectiveness.