

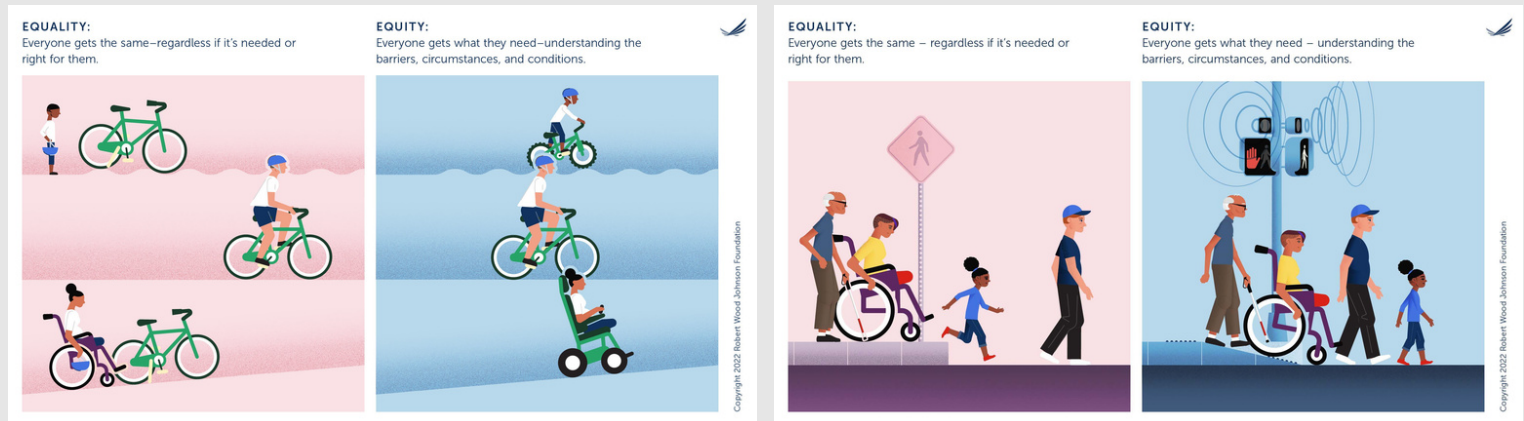
The Public Health Herald

HEALTH EQUITY

With our department-wide health equity training starting in April, the Health Equity Workgroup would like to introduce you to the Health Equity Corner. Leading up to the kickoff of the training every edition of the Herald will have a reflection question or link to a quick video to help focus our mind on seeing our working environment through an equity lens.

We're back for another great edition of the PH Herald. Lots of exciting things happening in the Health Equity & PMQI world. We also have an update on ITS services as we still look to fill the vacant positions. We have another excerpt from "Don't Feed the Elephants" this month please take some time to review that.

Have a topic to discuss as a whole staff during our monthly zoom meeting? [Submit this form](#). Kristin or Danielle will follow up & add to the agenda for All-Staff.



Please take a moment to review the above graphics and ask yourself “how was the living environment modified to ensure equality for all?”. If you want to take this a step further, discuss these examples with your coworkers or during your next divisional meeting with the additional ask of introducing examples you may have from your day-to-day work! These graphics are from the Robert Woods Johnson Foundation – to find out more behind these revamped equity graphics click [here](#).

PMQI

Business is a boomin! The PMQI Committee met at the end of January to review and given final approval to two QI projects and five key performance indicators (KPIs).

Quality Improvement Projects:

- Ethan (along with watershed) submitted a project that aims to increase Grants to Counties funds in Johnson County that can be used to provide private well water quality tests and reimburse residents for rehabilitating or plugging older wells.
- Veronica (along with numerous individuals in CS) proposed a project to increase the number of blood lead level tests conducted by JCPH staff.

Key Performance Indicators:

- JCPH in the News – Catalina and Sam began collecting all news articles written about JCPH and tracking counts per month.
- Case Investigation and Community Partnership Activities – the DPS team submitted two KPIs to ensure reportable illness investigations start within three business days and participate in at least eight activities to promote partnerships, respectively.
- Lead Test – CS group will monitor BLLs conducted within the clinic (provides data for their QI project above).
- GTC Testing – Watershed program began collecting the number of GTC tests conducted to monitor throughout their QI project.

As always, if you feel you have a project (or KPI) to submit chat with your supervisor and then reach out to your divisional team representative!



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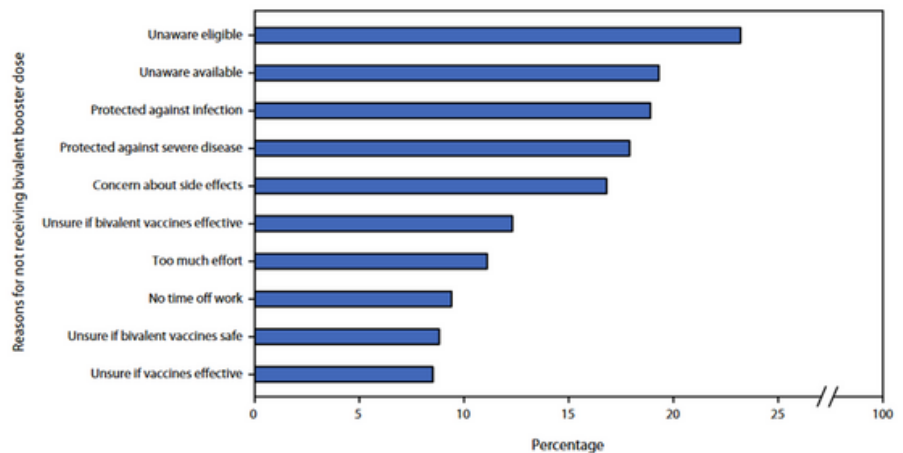
Community Health Updates

COVID-19 Bivalent Vaccine

Why are vaccine rates so low? CDC assessed the general public and the number one reason was that folks are unaware that they are eligible!

Encourage family and friends to stay up to date! Look for future commercials and promotions by JCPH that promote COVID-19 Bivalent Vaccines.

B. Did not receive bivalent booster dose (N = 714)



Emergency Operations Plan Updates

Thanks to everyone who has shared thoughts and opinions on the Emergency Operations Plan updates. Rebecca has coordinated several discussions and reviews to update our emergency plans to make sure they are realistic and achievable.

NACCHO MRC award

Congratulations Rebecca on submission on another successful MRC application. The award is for \$10,000.00 and aims to: create teams, and train and recruit volunteers to support county wide heart health initiatives. A mission set will be developed and will focus on providing volunteers with CPR and AED training and education on heart health. MRC non-medical volunteers will also have the opportunity to receive training on other heart health related things such as blood pressure.

Clinic with Escucha mi Voz

Karrey held another successful clinic with our partners “Escucha mi voz” as well as Karrey and Rebecca have both continued to provide Mpox vaccine to ensure folks are getting their second dose and know if they are eligible for vaccination through outreach with our community members.

CAC Office Hours

Jennifer had our CAC (Certified Application Counselor) Jada finish up office hours to support insurance marketplace enrollment. Enrollment is typically 11/1 through 1/15 unless extended each year. This year, a record 16 million persons were enrolled nationwide.

Wellness

Giselle has scheduled the AHA for this month’s Lunch and Learn, check the JoCo for registration!

Keys Program

Lisa will be piloting the KEYS program with the University and Oaknoll retirement residence. KEYS is a 10-week evidence-based course developed by doctors to help people aged 55 and older make lifestyle changes to reduce their risk of developing Alzheimer’s and other forms of dementia.

Community Status Assessment

Our HealthyJoCo team, Giselle, Lisa, Haley, Jamie, and Ari have completed the second piece of our community health assessment. You can find the animated report and a wealth of information about our community’s health status [here](#).

Environmental Health Updates

It was a busy month for Environmental Health. With the Year 2 of the FDA travel training grant kicking in, we look forward to learning more & bringing that knowledge back to the department.

- January
 - Jesse presented to the College of Public Health Students in Dr. Pentella’s class on January 24th
 - Jesse, Tim, & Ahmed attended the virtual FDA 215 training course on Managing Retail Food Safety.
 - Watershed renewed their Iowa Onsite Waste Water Association membership for 2023
 - Jesse jointly worked with the Dept. of Inspections & Appeals food inspector to investigate an Iowa City restaurant for a potential food borne illness outbreak.

ITS & STI Testing UPDATE!

ITS will be offering in person screening for STI’s including HIV, Hepatitis C, and Syphilis during limited clinic hours as we look to hire and train new ITS personnel.

Clinic hours will be:

Mondays from 1:00 pm – 3:30 pm

Wednesdays from 8:30 am – 11:30 am

Fridays from 1:00 pm – 3:30 pm

ITS will be accepting walk-in clientele, as well as scheduled appointments during clinic hours. To schedule an appointment, call Clinical Services at 319-356-6040.



LET’S GET VACCINATED

Getting vaccinated is the best way to protect yourself from Covid-19

onsite booster clinics
coming soon

The Public Health Herald



by Sarah Noll Wilson

How do you feel when an elephant hangs around? (pg. 44)

I asked over three hundred survey participants a question: What did they feel when there was an elephant in the room that wasn't being freed?

With one exception*, the response fell into three categories:

- **Tension-** The language around tension included the following: "A fog that is tight around the chest, shoulders tight, sick to the stomach, I was so nervous through the whole meeting."
- **Anxiety-** Respondents felt heavy & anxious. There was discomfort from feelings of uncertainty about how people would respond or what would happen afterward.
- **Fear-** Respondents included questions like: "Will I be shunned for speaking up? Will there be retaliation? Will I hurt someone? Will I be hurt if we can't talk about it?"

*That one person responded by writing, "I felt curious to see what we would do with it." (I don't know who wrote this, but I want to be you when I grow up!)

I love my Amygdala (pg. 45)

The amygdala sits at the base of your brain and is considered part of what scientists call our primitive brain. The amygdala plays a significant role in the instantaneous shifts from calm to fearful. The amygdala's job is to save your life. If you cross the street and a car is coming at you, your amygdala sparks a chain of reactions to get you to move the hell out of the way. However, the amygdala isn't just scanning the environment for physical threats; it also responds to emotional threats and harm to our ego. Like being excluded from a group or being disrespected.

Unfortunately, our survival mechanisms haven't caught up with the increase in physical safety that we've established through our evolution and that most of us are lucky enough to experience. Our brains and bodies still react to threats with the same intensity our ancestors experienced when they had to run from a bear or saber-toothed tiger. This is why we feel like we're being chased by a bear when our boss send a "We need to Talk" email. The jolt you get from our body is a response to the possibility of a threat, and your amygdala isn't all that interested in figuring out the difference between your boss and a snarling grizzly.

I like to compare the amygdala to my tiny, shaky, neurotic Chihuahua, Seymour. Seymour sleeps with his ears in full radar position he can pay attention to the environment and jump into action to the instant anything seems out of place. When you're startled by a sound your amygdala is a lot like Seymour barking at our mailperson with an intensity that feels like he's shouldering, "What the hell was that? Why are you at my house? What are you dropping in the mailbox?"

Since your amygdala's job is to spur you toward instant, lifesaving action, your first thoughts about that email from your boss will be rational. Stirred-up feelings trigger cascading reactions. Your imagination rockets to ideas of being fired. Your heart is racing, and your palms are sweaty. You feel fidgety and sick to your stomach. You have the sense these feelings are trying to tell you something important, even though all you know for sure is that your amygdala was triggered by an email, and now you feel like Seymour getting upset about the mailperson.

Some amygdalae are more reactive than others. Still, we all have a little brain-Chihuahua sitting in a lighthouse, continually scanning for threats, ready to call our body into action the minute it perceives a threat. This means everyone you know has most likely also felt that primal panic feeling before. You are not alone.

Ways to Calm the Amygdala (pg. 51-52)

Some powerful ways to calm down the amygdala response by activating the parasympathetic nervous system are:

- **Notice & Name.** The act of noticing our amygdala has been triggered can quickly start to slow down the reaction. It will not remove the trigger, but to acknowledge internally or externally that "I've been triggered" is a powerful start to disrupt the stress response.
- **Take a breath.** Our breath is always with us and always in our control. Breathing in for four counts, holding for four counts, and then breathing out for four counts will massage our vagus nerve and supply more oxygen to our brains.
- **Take a break.** Give our body time to metabolize the adrenaline and cortisol. A break could include going for a walk. Moving helps our body switch to a more relaxed state. Note that it can take about an hour to metabolize adrenaline and up to twenty-four hours to metabolize excessive amounts of cortisol.

I'm afraid all the warning signs are here: your palms are sweaty, knees weak, arms are heavy...



Cognitive Dissonance (pg. 60)

We experience cognitive dissonance when presented with information that is different from the beliefs we hold about ourselves and the world. Cognitive dissonance causes actual physical discomfort and may compel self-justification, denial, and the spreading of untruths. If we believe ourselves to be good people but do bad things, we will seek ways to resolve this dissonance. Our resolutions can result in behaviors that are uniquely destructive to ourselves and others.

What are Shadow Intentions (pg. 61)

Though we're often walking around with good intentions, there's another side to the story: shadow intentions. Shadow intentions are our unconscious, potentially uncomfortable behaviors that come from a place of self-protection. Sometimes, our shadow intentions will show up as violent politeness, passive aggression, guilt-tripping, and more. This is a concept we'll unpack deeper as we move through this book.

Get Curious? (pg. 64)

- Think of a time when you amygdala hijacked your brain. What did you think, feel, & do?
- When was a time you self-protection served you? When did it not?
- What can be a cue for you when you might be in the land of cognitive dissonance?