

## Evidence in Action: Shared Stories



### Stories shared from EAHS

#### Development Process of the Systems Map

Along with the systems map that we shared at the February 27, 2019 convening, we thought it would also be an opportunity to let people in on the Group Model Building (GMB) process we used to create this map, the mindful approach we took, and the lessons we learned.



*Left to right: Sue Kirschner, Akanni Thomas, Cheryl Jensik, Alison Patrick, and facilitator Dr. Erin Hennessy from Tufts University*

#### **Sue Kirschner, Cuyahoga County Library System:**

It was a real growth experience for myself. It was intimidating at first, but, it was one positive and real eye-opening experience of growth.

#### **Akanni Thomas, Pre4CLE/Starting Point:**

In the beginning, I felt like I was wearing a blindfold. We were in this process and trying to figure out where we were going and couldn't see the end, but we all dedicating our brains, our individual know-how and our processing abilities, and as a result the map truly reflected our community and various ideas. Creating the map allowed us to visually see the construct and we were also able to more readily see the gaps that weren't showcased on the map.

#### **Cheryl Jensik, CEOGC Head Start:**

Before this project, I knew a lot of people and a lot of groups, but I never knew how to tap into them. This was a good opportunity to network—i.e., what can you do for me? What can I do for you so that our children can get all the benefits? The networking is something that

continues to be eye-opening with what we have and what we will continue to have for the group to group as we learn about our roles within this “solar system.”

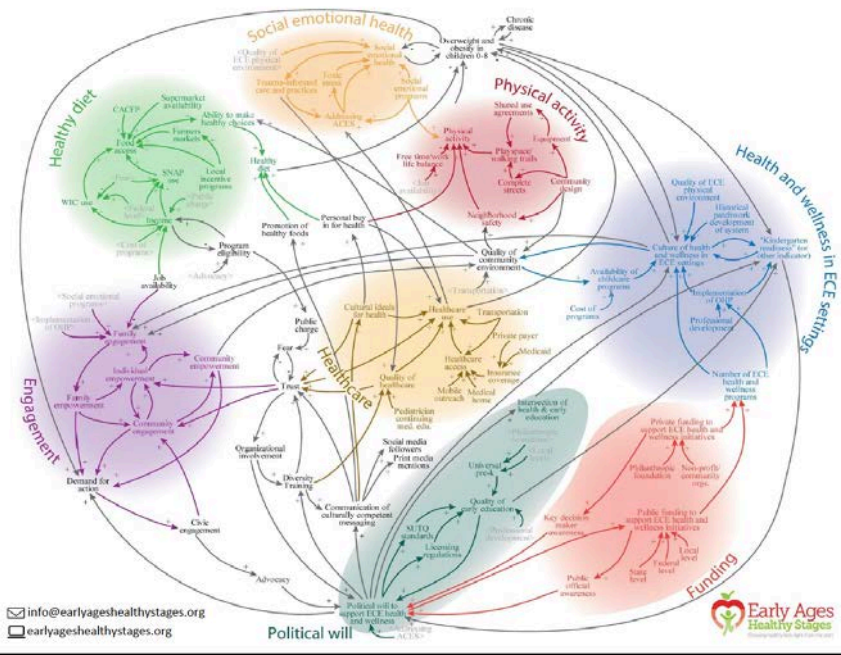
**Alison Patrick, Cuyahoga County Board of Health/EAHS:**

There is an incredible amount of work that goes into planning these sessions. I was concerned if I went off “script” and “let go” what would happen, but this particular group really built trust and actively represented the community in a way that wasn’t done before.

**Examples of systems change thinking at EAHS:**

For some of the group’s family engagement nights, food becomes an issue. We’re supposed to be committed to healthy food and yet, many of our partnership organizations are charged

with trying to host an economical dinner bringing families together. What’s a common meal type? Pizza and pop. Many of us realized through the ABC small group work that we are not practicing what we preach. We pivoted and were able to dialogue about things like this that come up and think about what could we change instead of having “Muffins with Mom,” “Donuts with Dad” or common pizza nights? We need to take notice of these things, and it is now part of our responsibility to kindly speak up and look at new, healthier options.



Big systems changes can’t happen overnight, but this is just one small example of how things can change with a systems approach and various stakeholder input working at this together to make our communities and our children healthier.

**Can the GMB process that EAHS participated in be implemented in other communities?**

This was an important question that was asked.

**The answer is, “YES!”**



Other communities will find the GMB process that was used to create the systems map incredibly valuable and rewarding. The process generates collective buy-in and motivation for future action and strategies that are relevant and unique to their community.

EAHS is happy to share its experience in Cuyahoga County in implementing the process and the lessons learned, and we appreciate you being on this journey with us.

**Stay engaged with our updates!**

