The Social Determinants Of Health

One’s health status is affected by the economic and social circumstances in which he or she lives. These circumstances are called the social determinants of health.

The Whitehall Study was the first study that explored the social determinants of health, looking at trends in cardiovascular disease related to British male civil servants.

How is this relevant to YOU? We have identified and expanded on the main social determinants of health that we think affect us, as students at the University of Guelph.

Main causes:
- Many social determinants of health such as: Social Exclusion/Inclusion, Employment/Unemployment, Housing, Food Security/Insecurity
- Many responsibilities of students: time management, expectations, grades and student costs.

Effects on mental health:
- Depression
- Anxiety
- Psychological stress

Effects on physical health:
- Headaches
- High Blood Pressure/Heart Problems
- Diabetes
- Skin Conditions

Main causes:
- Stigma and discrimination
- Low expectations
- Lack of responsibility
- Lack of support to enable a person to work
- Barriers to engaging in the community

Effects on mental health:
- Powerlessness
- Hopelessness
- Lack of recognition and sense of belonging
- Depression

Most often Socially Excluded at U of G:
- People with disabilities
- Different ethnicities

Preventative measures:
- Joining clubs
- Community events
- Talking with wellness center/support teams

Unemployment & Job Security

- Jobs provide people with a sense of identity and structure in day to day life.
- However, for students, rather than enjoying job security, balancing employment and school work can be quite difficult and often leads to stress.

Effects on mental health:
- Depression
- Anxiety
- Psychological stress

Effects on physical health:
- Tobacco use
- Sedentary lifestyle
- Poor nutrition
- Increased risk for cardiovascular disease

Preventative measures:
- Counseling services
- Mindfulness
- Joining groups