

Guidelines for Health & Society Issue Brief (S425)

Due: April 21, 2018 by midnight, via Canvas as a **Word or pdf document** upload

Grade Percentage: The Health & Society Issue Brief is worth 20% of your total course grade.

Assignment Description:

This culminating assignment calls on students to demonstrate understanding of core concepts in the class regarding **the connection between population health and social contributors to health/disease**. You are to focus your paper on the relationship between a public health problem or outcome and a social factor/determinant (Example 1). Alternatively, it is acceptable to focus on a social problem and describe its relationship to a health outcome (Example 2). Either way, the student should be able to describe the link between the social determinant/factor and health outcome, how one affects the other (could be positive or negative).

Example 1.

Main topic is Zika outbreak. (health)

Related social factor is poverty – which increases spread through lack of access to mosquito nets and birth control among poor women in affected areas of Central and South America.

Example 2.

Main topic is implicit racial bias. (social)

Related health outcome is lower quality of care for variety of conditions (describe) among people of color in U.S. healthcare facilities.

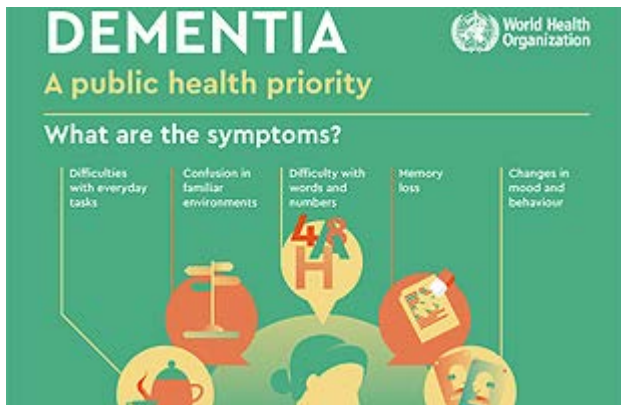
If you don't already have a topic in mind, check out this list of "The 10 most critical problems in the world, according to millennials": <http://www.businessinsider.com/world-economic-forum-world-biggest-problems-concerning-millennials-2016-8> . Upon a glance, all these topics relate to health and society via mechanisms we have at least touched on in class. Preparation of your issue brief gives you the opportunity to dig more deeply into an issue of concern to you.

Issue briefs are intended to be *brief*, with clear and concise presentation of the main facts, based upon the state of science – *not your personal opinion*. You should understand the link well enough to explain to others in the general public or in work settings. Therefore, in framing your key messages, please think of your audience as consisting of people you might meet in community organizations or the general public – people who may know very little about the topic. Aim for simple, clear, and straightforward messages. **I strongly recommend that you ask someone not in this class to read over your draft paper. Ask them to point out any parts of your paper that they do not understand so that you can work to make your message clearer.**

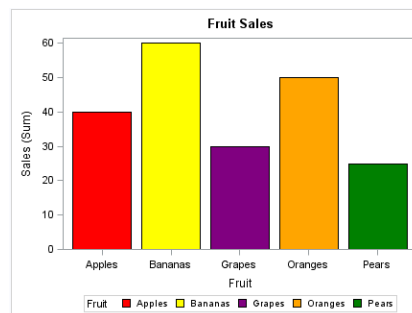
Your Issue Brief should contain these components:

1. Overview of **Main Topic** – Provide important background information about the health issue or social problem you are focusing on. Fill the reader in on the significance and scope of this problem, and be sure to identify populations (e.g. children, people of color, those in poverty) that are most affected.
2. Section on the **Related Topic** - Social Factor (if main topic is health) or Health outcome (if main topic is a social problem) describing it and its linkage to the main topic. It is critical that you “connect the dots” between the two topics for the reader. **You may earn up to 3 bonus points if you include a pathway diagram (Causal Chain)** that visually demonstrates the relationship between the health and social factors in your paper. This should be consistent with what you have written in the section, but be very brief and in graphic form. (See examples at end)
3. Section that **summarizes** in a few sentences or bullet points the **main messages** in your brief. You can call it whatever you like, such as *What You Need to Know, Top Takeaways, Main Messages (See example briefs)*
4. **References** in APA style (both in-text and list at end)
5. **Include at least one graphic or image** that demonstrates something particularly meaningful about your topic. **Do not copy an existing graphic directly from a publication** – create or adapt one yourself, with proper citation to the information/data source(s). Both Excel or Piktochart are good tools for this. **I need you to specifically mark this as “Created by author using information or data from: [Source]”**. You can highlight textual information or numeric data. See examples.

Information-based graphic:



Numeric Graphic:



Specifications:

Please aim for **length between 2-3 pages**, not counting the reference list.

Please label your sections using language that makes sense *for your paper* (don't use "Overview of Main Topic"; but something like "How much does asthma affect our children?")

While you must prepare and submit the document in Word or pdf (via Canvas upload), and include required content, I encourage **creativity in design**. I have provided examples and a starter template, though you are not limited to following this format so long as you include all the required components. Please use a **10-11 font size** for body of text, though it is ok for reference list at end to be smaller font. Make it interesting and appealing, so that I will *want* to read it.

Conform to college-level writing standards. Papers that are poorly written, poorly edited or not proofread will incur deductions. Issue briefs call on you to synthesize your research and paraphrase content, so limit your use of direct quotations from sources. **Any students who are concerned about their writing abilities are strongly encouraged to make use of the IUPUI Writing Center resources.**

Cite a minimum of 4 credible sources. Provide complete citations (both in-text and concluding list) for all information sources in APA style. [For help with APA citations, see this link: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/>] Also properly credit the source of any images you include that you do not create yourself. I have enabled Turn-it-in for these papers, so I suggest you check this. Every student is responsible for knowing the rules regarding plagiarism. The IU School of Education's 'How to Recognize Plagiarism' is an on-line tutorial that can help you ensure that you are not plagiarizing another's work. This tutorial can be accessed at <http://www.indiana.edu/~istd/>

Excellent Examples of Issue Briefs (for layout/presentation of information):

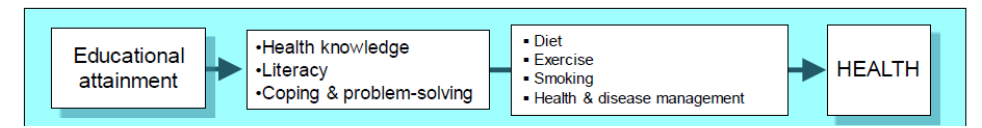
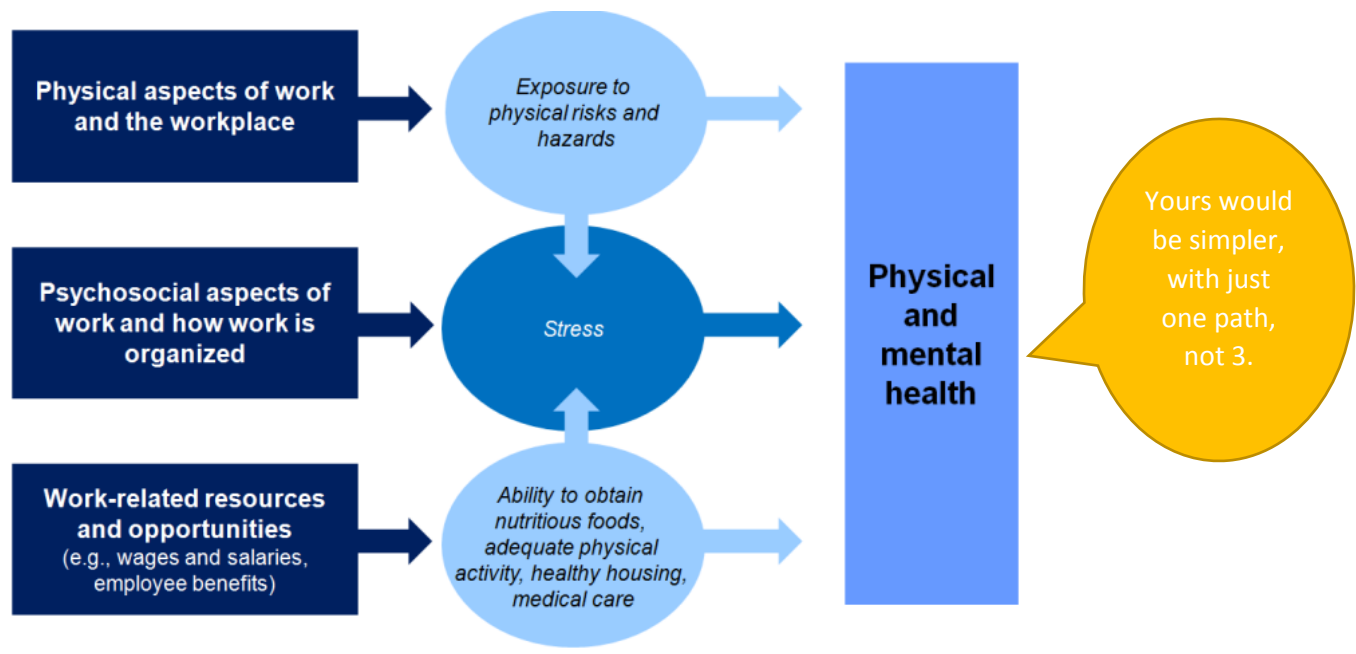
Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. (2016). Why We Need a Culture of Health. Available at: <http://www.rwjf.org/en/library/research/2016/03/why-we-need-a-culture-of-health.html>

Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (2016). The Relationship Between School Attendance and Health. Available at http://www.rwjf.org/content/dam/farm/reports/issue_briefs/2016/rwjf431726

Consider these things before turning in your paper:

- Have you followed instructions and included all the components I requested?
- How clearly is it written? Is it understandable to a general "lay" audience? (ASK SOMEONE!)
- Does it demonstrate a good synthesis of the evidence/facts (with Turnitin Match Score <20%)?
- How interesting and appealing are the format and graphic?
- *KEY* Does it demonstrate a correct understanding of the link between the health and social factor identified?

Example “pathway” or causal chain diagrams:



The one I made below for my CD study was created using Smart Art in Word.

