

Urban Planning practice and mental health

Urban planners have a critical role to play in identifying, creating and applying urban and environmental planning levers to promote the mental health and wellbeing of human capital (Planning Institute of Australia, 2016; The Centre for Urban Design and Mental Health, n.d.).

Human capital is the population as a whole, spanning current and future generations. Human capital is a network of relationships that underpin societal resilience.

Public health is one of the requisites and cornerstones of wholistic urban planning, design and built environment professional practice. Appropriate integration of ‘social and physical determinants of health’ into urban planning and built environment design can generate significant public health cost savings through ‘health prevention by design principles’ (Public Health Agency of Canada, 2017; Sallis, Bull, Burdett, Frank, Griffiths, Giles-Corti & Stevenson, 2016; Cooke, 2015). Opportunities exist for planning, zoning and development policymakers and industry stakeholders to integrate mental health promotion and prevention into policies and decision-making processes through the use of evidence-based social and health impact assessment research tools and databases (Sallis et al., 2016).

Mental health impact assessment could be an useful tool for targeted place settings (e.g. neighbourhood, local community), however such an assessment tool remains under-explored and large research gaps exist in academic literature, especially with relevance to the Australian context.

References

- Cooke, S. (2015). Healthy and sustainable environments for children and communities. In J. M. Davis (Ed.), *Young children and the environment: Early education for sustainability* (2nd ed.; pp. 242-272). Melbourne, AU: Cambridge University Press.
- Planning Institute of Australia. (2016). *Planning for healthy communities. Position Statement*. Retrieved April 5, 2019, from <https://www.planning.org.au/documents/item/7556>
- Public Health Agency of Canada. (2017). *The Chief Public Health Officer's Report on the State of Public Health in Canada 2017: Designing Healthy Living*. Retrieved April 5, 2019, from <https://www.cip-icu.ca/Files/WTPD/2017-designing-healthy-living-eng.aspx>
- The Centre for Urban Design and Mental Health. (n.d.). *Policy brief. The impact of urban design on mental health and wellbeing*. Retrieved April 5, 2019, from https://www.urbandesignmentalhealth.com/uploads/1/1/4/0/1140302/urban_design_and_mental_health_policy_brief.pdf
- Sallis, J. F., Prof, Bull, F., Prof, Burdett, R., Prof, Frank, L. D., Prof, Griffiths, P., MSc, Giles-Corti, B., Prof, & Stevenson, M., Prof. (2016). Use of science to guide city planning policy and practice: How to achieve healthy and sustainable future cities. *Lancet*, the, 388(10062), 2936-2947. doi:10.1016/S0140-6736(16)30068-X