

# Ownership of Change

## Implications for Health Equity in Neighborhoods



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### Our Hypothesis

Resident Researchers developed the idea of neighborhood "ownership of change" and hypothesized owning change is a key factor for achieving health equity in neighborhoods.



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### What we did

1. Resident and academic researchers together created a shared understanding of ownership of change, and devised a strategy for measuring it using surveys and interviews.
2. We surveyed thousands of people and interviewed hundreds in HNS neighborhoods to help us understand residents' levels of ownership over different neighborhood changes, and their lived experiences of those changes.
3. We collaboratively figured out how to score peoples' ownership of change. We tested the hypothesis that ownership is related to health, and interpreted interview data about what shapes people's feelings of ownership.

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### What we found

**Ownership of change is associated with health.** People who report higher levels of ownership are more likely to report higher levels of happiness, physical health, and mental health than those who report having lower levels of ownership. Experiencing feelings of ownership is shaped by factors including structural racism, alignment of change with neighborhood needs, and access to information.

## Why it matters for residents and advocates

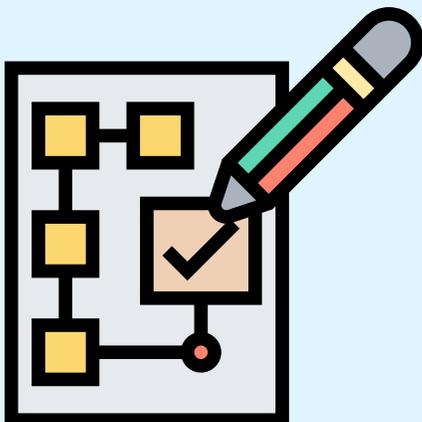
Naming and measuring ownership of change are critical steps toward addressing it as a health issue. Resident Researchers developed the concept themselves and co-created a successful tool for measuring it in their own communities. Residents and advocates can now bring to the table evidence that, as a matter of health, they must be included among decision-makers in neighborhood changes.

## Why it matters for researchers, planners, and decision makers

The research provides an example for other researchers to center community knowledge and lived experience. **Planners and decision-makers must think about power and its distribution when addressing the connection between place and health.** Ownership of change should be prioritized in planning and policy-making affecting changing neighborhoods.

### How to use this information

- Evaluate the impacts of change on neighborhood health.
- Share this information with decision makers in your community.
- Advocate for policies, programs, and processes that increase ownership of change and thus health.
- Understand how structural racism shapes ownership of change, and that exclusion must be repaired to better health.



### Additional resources

Read the published paper at  
<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0277953622005408>

Learn more about the Healthy  
Neighborhoods Study at  
<https://hns.mit.edu>