

# Steps to Healthier Homes

## ■ Start with People

### ■ House as a System

### ■ Keep It:

Dry

Pest-Free

Safe

Maintained

Clean

Ventilated

Contaminant-Free

### ■ Making it Work



# Why do you go in houses?



# Why Start with People?

- What good are they?
- What's difficult about people?
- How can you deal with people?



# Open v. Closed Questions

- Open-Ended or Indirect
  - How
  - What
  - Tell me about
  - Describe for me
- Closed-Ended or Direct
  - Are
  - Is
  - Do



# Bracketing

- Method to:
  - Stay Calm and Non-Judgmental
  - Keep Ability to Listen
- Put negative feelings and thoughts in mental “container” so they can be objectively evaluated and managed.





**National Center for Healthy Housing**  
Healthy Homes Training Center



# Special Communication Issues

- Language
- Cultural
  - Shoes in the Home
  - Men and Women
- Responding to Problems
  - Hoarding
  - Tolerance for Clutter and Pests





# Resident Choices

- Health
- Comfort
- Cost



# What's going on in the neighborhood?

- What neighborhood?
- What uses?
- How zoned?
- What services?
  - Water?
  - Sewer?
  - Solid waste?
- How old?
- Who owns it?
- Water supply? Lead?





# Routes of Exposure

- Inhalation
- Ingestion
- Skin Absorption
- Injection
- Built-In Protection Mechanisms

**Risk = Hazard x Exposure**





# What are the signs and symptoms of Housing Related Disease?

- Signs are things you can measure or outside observer can see (objective)
  - Blood pressure, heart rate, peak flow
  - Bloody nose, rash
- Symptoms are experiences and described by a person (subjective)
  - Back pain, fatigue, headaches
- Some can be a combination
  - Shortness of breath





# What are the signs and symptoms of Housing Related Disease?

- Timing, location and corroboration are very important in relating to environment
- Do signs and symptoms occur:
  - At the same time each day?
  - In the same place each day?
  - Only in certain times of year?
- Do others have the same signs and symptoms and same timing?
- Do signs and symptoms go away when out of the environment?



# Mental health

- Poor housing conditions, (e.g. crowding and inadequate lighting ) associated with risk for poor mental health.
- Poor-quality, overcrowded, multifamily homes -- associated with aggression and withdrawal, lower health status and psychological distress.
- Lack of light (e.g. from inadequate number and placement of windows) is related to depression.
- Some studies suggest association of dampness or mold with depression. But IOM concluded that evidence is insufficient.



# How can you identify housing conditions that may affect health?

- Many people may recognize signs and symptoms of diseases but not the environments that cause them
  - Many are overlooked
  - Many are ignored
- Many exposures are only found out because someone asked



# Often OVERLOOKED sources of health problems

- Lead
  - Was your home built before 1978? 1950?
- Radon
  - Was your home ever tested for radon?
- CO (Carbon Monoxide)
  - Do you have a carbon monoxide detector?

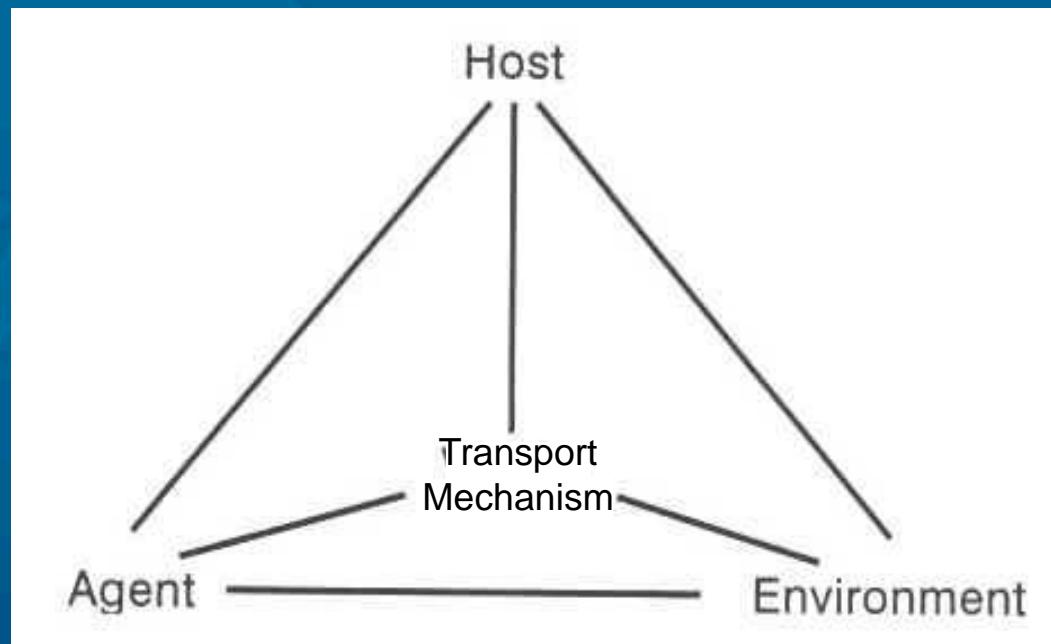


# Often IGNORED sources of health problems

- Environmental Tobacco Smoke
  - Does anyone in the family smoke?
  - Do they want help quitting?
- Consumer chemicals
  - What cleaning chemicals do you use?
  - Where do you store them?
- Pesticides
  - Any Pesticides used? Which ones?



# Epidemiologic Triangle of Disease



# Learning Objectives

- Explain how to work with people to get important information from them about potential hazards in the home.
- Identify key routes of exposure and their relationship to housing hazards.

