

Questions & Answers

DHCS Webinar Series: Eliminating Inequities in Behavioral Health Care

Webinar 1: Introduction to a Framework for Confronting Racism in Behavioral Health

August 20th, 2020

#	Question Asked	Answer
1	How do you deal with the issues of Latinx in the Latinx community? Some have a hard time with this term.	I would ask how the individual would like to be referred to. I think of it in terms of asking someone what pronoun you should use.
2	I wonder how behavioral health organizations can help create more opportunities for people of color to access the educational and internship pathways towards becoming behavioral health providers.	I'd start with what research has been done on strategies for outreach. What relationships exist with organizations serving BIPOCs and has there been conversation with them about what would make pathways attractive to and effective for BIPOC? But it's not just about recruitment, besides recruitment, how are organizations preparing to retain POCs, and how to support them.
3	In behavioral health we often work with and interact with law enforcement. As thought leaders and folks endeavoring to be and act as anti-racists, how do we navigate those relationships when we know that the institution of policing is built upon anti-blackness? Training does not seem to be enough.	There is a short- and long-term approach to this issue. Short term, I'd look at if there are officers, and in particular higher ups, with whom you might cultivate a relationship? Is there someone among them who might be an ally? Right now, more than ever it's critical for police to build relationships in community and to build trust. Are there offices who might be willing to come to community meetings to listen and introduce themselves, so that there are relationships established before there are incidences? I've worked with officers where I've invited them, and they have accepted invitations to key meetings where they could be introduced to the community. Long-term, in addition to training, there needs to be changes to policies and practices that diversify recruitment and enforce accountability. You may also want to do a scan for models of community/police partnerships that are intended to eliminate bias/racism. Here's a link to story about this I saw recently: https://www.local10.com/news/local/2020/09/03/new-black-lives-matter-initiative-miami-heat-teams-up-with-mpd-d2c/?outputType=amp
4	I am wondering how to best collaborate with law enforcement while staying mindful of police brutality and racial injustices in law enforcement?	See above #3.

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5	<p>As an Indigenous woman, I often feel that People of Color (POC) have to cater to white fragility, especially in the workplace. Do you have any advice for POC about how to deal with this? We really need to have support groups for POC professionals. Every day, we deal with racism, whether overt or covert.</p>	<p>I agree with you regarding support groups. I am working with a couple organizations that have and/or are planning to establish support groups. To support groups for POC, think it's important that part of the focus be on addressing healing from the impacts of racism. A new resource I would recommend is called <i>The Racial Healing Handbook</i> and might serve as a guide for a support group. It can be used regardless of race.</p> <p>It shouldn't be on you as a POC to address this fragility. Is there a white ally who might be willing to take the lead on forming a group for whites to do their own processing? The Unitarian Universalists College of Social Justice has materials and video discussion of white fragility which I've used with groups as a starting point: https://uucsj.org/study-guide/who-are-you/white-fragility/</p>
6	<p>Can you speak more on internalization of white supremacy values or internalized racism and how this impacts people of color? How would you suggest addressing this with folks who may not be in a place where they have evaluated and reflected on their internalized beliefs?</p>	<p>There are several resources out there to begin these conversations. <i>The Racial Healing Handbook</i> is one of them with exercises that are designed to "challenge privilege, confront systemic racism and engage in collective healing." Among the things it addresses is internalized racism, understanding racism in relationships. It will be critical to have leadership support in implementing and signaling the importance of this work. Also is there a white ally who can lead this work? If not, can the agency bring in an external person to do so without expecting that BIPOC take the lead?</p>
7	<p>How can I engage in conversations about race with the parolee reentry population as a case manager? After coming out of prison, the lens of race likely greatly impacted their experience inside, but it's difficult to have these conversations because I don't want to "start arguments" in group settings, but also feel it is important to have these discussions as they are entering back into a society that is beginning to have a racial conversation, especially regarding criminal justice/policing.</p>	<p>The impact of race especially for BIPOC coming out of prison is tremendous. Is it possible to do a group for BIPOC where it might be easier to have this conversation? Might you be able to invite a speaker/organization who is/serves BIPOC/knows the journey these individuals are about to take who might share their story with the group? Is there a group or resources that can support POC exiting and understand the impact of race? I think if the topic is to be discussed, it should also be accompanied with information on resources and supports.</p>

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8	<p>How can I have a conversation with HR when the past conversations have triggered / harmed vs. helping when bringing Racial or discrimination issues up?</p>	<p>I am not certain if you are talking about your current employer and discussing discrimination with them based on an experience with prior employer. Not everyone has done the work necessary in order to skillfully address discrimination. At the same time naming and documenting the concern is taking a stand. When naming the concern try to be specific. Some questions to consider and to document for are: Causes: What’s causing the racial inequity? Effects: What were the actions? What are the impacts? Solutions: What are proactive strategies and solutions?</p> <p>If you still find the conversation ineffective, then consider sharing your concerns with a supervisor or the ED. Again this as well may not provide the results you are seeking, and first and foremost do what you can to take care of yourself including making sure to have a support system if possible at work and definitely outside of work who can hear, listen to and help you as you navigate.</p>
9	<p>How to you trust HR when you feel they haven't done the work to have these conversations?</p>	<p>I think you’ve answered your own question, particularly if the agency hasn’t done their work. There are questions that might prompt them to take a deeper look. For example: What is the organizations policy on discrimination and how is discrimination defined? When was the last time the policies were reviewed in order to ensure they reflect current understanding of racism and discrimination? Also, this may be something to bring up to the ED on how the agency can be proactive versus reactive.</p>
10	<p>How would the panel recommend someone addresses a micro-aggression as they occur between peers? Between Supervisor/Supervisee?</p>	<p>A great resource is the Southern Poverty Law Center’s document titled <i>Speaking Up: Responding to Everyday Bigotry</i>: https://www.splcenter.org/20150125/speak-responding-everyday-bigotry. Multiple scenarios with practical suggestions on how to respond, and how to prepare to respond, knowing that situations will arise. You might even want to pick a couple of the scenarios for review and staff discussion. Then, maybe have different staff lead discussion based on a scenario they choose.</p>

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11	I am currently having difficult discussions with my supervisor about racial problems I am having with her. It is difficult not to express my anger and be counterproductive what can I do to not be so angry when she denies, deflects and confuses my experiences?	See above for some guidance on questions to ask. I'd also document your experience about the impacts of this situation and consider having this noted with examples. Also knowing how these conversations tend to occur, prepare yourself to stay grounded, remembering to breathe. Build a support system externally and internally.
12	I work in a community mental health center where we serve the most vulnerable populations. There have been clients I have seen in therapy who are racist themselves and often have racist beliefs that inform their decisions. How do I help myself and my fellow clinicians challenge the racist beliefs of their clients without impacting therapeutic rapport?	This responsibility should not be left to individual staff to address on their own. Bring it up to your leadership and ask for support or guidelines on how to deal with these issues. There are both clinical and "operational" issues to be considered.
13	Starting at a new mental health agency, what is some advice you can give in advocating and confronting racism when apparent from colleagues and the structure?	<p>The below is taken from the Southern Poverty Law Center's document titled <i>Speaking Up: Responding to Everyday Bigotry</i>: https://www.splcenter.org/20150125/speak-responding-everyday-bigotry).</p> <p>Interrupt early. Workplace culture largely is determined by what is or isn't allowed to occur. If people are lax in responding to bigotry, then bigotry prevails. Speak up early and often in order to build a more inclusive environment.</p> <p>Use — or establish — policies. Call upon existing — too often forgotten or ignored — policies to address bigoted language or behavior. Work with your personnel director or human resources department to create new policies and procedures, as needed. Also ask your company to provide anti-bias training.</p> <p>Go up the ladder. If behavior persists, take your complaints up the management ladder. Find allies in upper management and call on them to help create and maintain an office environment free of bias and bigotry.</p>

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		Band together. Like-minded colleagues also may form an alliance and then ask the colleague or supervisor to change his or her tone or behavior.
14	I am part of a county advisory board that is working on increasing the effectiveness of its AOD services for POC by making them more culturally responsive. Our first step is to request data from the county to inform our focus and interventions. My question is what data should we ask for? We are not sure where we should start looking in the delivery of services process to uncover the deficiencies that should be the focus of our efforts.	Start with asking a breakdown of the types of services and who are receiving services; are there trends? Are there populations that are seen in more level of services than others, is there a different in timely access, etc.? Who is the population that is being served? Who is not?
15	Dr. Africa talked about how we should learn the definitions/differences of words such as equality vs. equity, white privilege vs. supremacy. What are other examples? Thank you.	Other concepts such as diversity, inclusion, capitalism, colonialism, genocide, microaggressions, etc.
16	Traditionally, I used the term systemic racism. What is the difference between systemic, structural, and institutionalized racism?	Many have used them interchangeably. Systemic racism it is a form of racism that is embedded within organizations (institutions or systems or structures) like health care, law enforcement and schools.
17	When we want to physically describe someone to better identify them, what is or is not appropriate? Also, what is the best terminology for groups like “homeless”?	A better term would be “person experiencing homelessness”.
18	Do you have an example (either Jei or Adele) of a county govt or behavioral health that has successfully addressed any specific aspect of institutional racism?	One county that continues to inspire me is Multnomah County in Oregon.
19	What are some examples of ways that structural & institutional racism come out in non-profits, substance use treatment facilities, and probation?	Hiring, recruitment, promotion, and retention of staff; types of clients served, funding investments, etc.

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20	What did you mean when you said racism kills?	If you look at the health outcomes of communities of color in the US, they usually have the worst health outcomes.
21	Adele mentioned historical distrust among some racial minorities toward behavioral health providers. Do you have suggestions for resources to learn more about historical ways that the behavioral healthcare system has perpetuated racism so these past actions can be appropriately addressed?	A resource that might help is the Surgeon General Report related to Mental Health and Culture (2001): https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK44243/mental_Health
22	How would you know if your County is a part of GARE?	https://www.racialequityalliance.org/where-we-work/jurisdictions/
23	How do you know if you work for an equitable agency? In other words, how do you know if your agency is successfully addressing issues of equity? What are the specific behaviors, attitudes, and policies that promote equity?	That has to be defined within the agency with its leadership, staff, partners, clients, etc.
24	Are you able to provide examples of ways that any of you have created systems change through action? I find myself trying to find ways, and I believe leadership will support this, but I am trying to figure out where to start, and how are some ways to implement it into systems. I'm thinking of specifically internally in a government County system. Training is not the answer and cannot solely be used to dismantle racism.	Invest funds/resources into programs that serve BIPOC, promote staff of color into leadership, create intentional opportunities for staff to learn new skills (i.e. provide them coaching, invite them to high level meetings so they can be expose to new information).
25	Beyond diversity trainings, what are examples of activities that we can implement organizationally to integrate and solidify diversity, inclusion, and equity in our organizations?	Start a mentorship program for staff of color, offer coaching sessions as a resource to staff.
26	Do you have any insight into where we can find HR compliant survey questions to ask agency-wide, in hopes of gaining a better	https://www.racialequityalliance.org/tools-resources/

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	understanding of our level of racial justice knowledge?	
27	Do you have examples of organizations that have used your strategies or GARE and changed their cultures? What are some institutional or structural benchmarks to strive for?	https://www.racialequityalliance.org/tools-resources/
28	How can we initiate conversations with those around us about racism and the inequalities that are associated? Any tips.	One suggestion is to get a folks together and say that you are all interested in engaging a conversation about these issues within your organization and invite leadership.
29	How do we really become culturally competent? What is the best way to show that we are seeking to understand the individual and their experience to make them feel safe and accepted?	The starting point is you do the internal work first. Learn about the history of racism and how it shows up and continues to affect people. I would also be honest and say that you are still learning and that you are open to feedback.
30	How do we really become culturally competent? What is the best way to show that we are seeking to understand the individual and their experience to make them feel safe and accepted?	(same answer as #29 above)
31	I am a community trainer that is developing a training on implicit bias. There is a person attending my trainings who is a woman of color and resists the idea of structural racism because she says she has personal responsibility for her circumstances. How do we address structural racism without making people of color feel powerless or not in charge of their own success?	Use “both/and” approach. There is truth to having personal agency to make changes, and to “hold” the idea that there are laws (i.e. Jim Crow, redlining, etc.) that institutions have put in place that have discriminated groups of people.
32	I appreciate the acknowledgement of residing on stolen tribal land - food for thought definitely. Can either facilitator please provide resources if possible, to	https://melanietervalon.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/CulturalHumility_Tervalon-and-Murray-Garcia-Article.pdf

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	research systemic racism and institutional racism in response to the remark that we need to have the appropriate understanding and language to engage more effectively in the change conversation/action.	
33	I understand that we must first do an internal check to understand our own implicit biases. But, how do we begin to breakdown and shed implicit bias on the ground level, or would it be more beneficial to start from top-down?	I believe the work must be on both levels. Leadership must support the work in order to see the shift in the organization, but all of us has to do the internal work.
34	Training clinicians are asking us to add to our intake session a question about racial trauma. In doing research, this is not straightforward --as racism can occur daily. It seems more about training clinicians to ask the kind of questions mentioned at the end of the training today. Any guidance or thoughts about this?	Intake tools are “tools” to help us get to know our clients and their situation better. Being curious about their experiences as a person of color, or being LGBTQ+, or an immigrant, etc. is a good starting point.
35	Under the GARE Model, what are some of the racial equity tools that behavioral health departments are using in their organization?	https://www.racialequityalliance.org/tools-resources/
36	What are some questions we can use to provoke reflection on privileges, specifically white privilege?	https://www.racialequitytools.org/resourcefiles/mcintosh.pdf
37	What can I do as a white female to help initiate change with racism?	Start with the internal work first. If you have some authority in your organization, you can help initiate work in equity.
38	What if our organization thinks they're being antiracist because they require people to take trainings on race and diversity, host dynamic conversations, and issue statements in favor of BLM but then they only focus on individual attitudes and what you can do in yourself to change racism? How do we tell them to change structural issues? Where do we start?	I would acknowledge the steps that you are taking, and that there are other levels of change work that needs to also occur. I would share resources from GARE on how to approach it on the other levels.

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39	What is the best approach to develop a culture of cultural humility?	Start by understanding the principles of cultural humility developed by Dr. Tervalon and Dr. Murray Garcia: https://melanietervalon.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/CulturalHumility_Tervalon-and-Murray-Garcia-Article.pdf
40	What recommendations do you have for an agency primarily led by non-black POC individuals, beginning to engage in racial equity work?	I would ask and invite leadership to have a conversation about how they (and they organization) are engaging in equity work. And if you have suggestions on how to bring that with colleagues/co-workers, to share it.
41	How does white privilege impact leadership who are predominantly Anglo in some organizational implementation of programs that address racism?	Missing out on the blind spots, even with good intentions. Lived experience is important here in these efforts. Good intentions, don't always result in the intended impact.
42	Dr. Africa, what is the citation for the Social-Ecological model? I am curious to look this up and share with my institution.	There are a few out there on specific topics; this will help you get started: https://www.wcsap.org/prevention/concepts/social-ecological-model https://www.acha.org/HealthyCampus/HealthyCampus/Ecological_Model.aspx