

Strategies for Advancing Equity

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Objectives

- Identify tools that support strategies for operationalizing health equity (apply theory to practice/action)
- Examine their practice through an equity lens

Achieving Equity in Health

- “Health equity” is an assurance of the conditions for optimal health for all people
- Achieving health equity requires
 - Valuing all individuals and populations equally
 - Recognizing and rectifying historical injustices
 - Providing resources according to need

Source: National Stakeholder Strategy for Achieving Health Equity retrieved from: minorityhealth.hhs.gov/npa/files/Plans/NSS/NSS_05_Section1.pdf

Types of Inequities

Health & Wellness Care

- a. Access to care
- b. Quality of care

Barriers to care

- Lack of awareness about available services
- Stigma associated with mental illness
- Distrust of the health and wellness system
- Lack of providers from diverse racial/ethnic backgrounds
- Lack of culturally and linguistically competent providers
- Economic barriers (cost, lack of insurance, underinsurance)
- Many LGBTQ people have reported experiencing stigma and discrimination when accessing health services

Source: American Psychiatric Association (2017) Mental Health Disparities

Strategies for Advancing Equity

- Support equity as a value and social right
- Workforce development and education
- Interagency/multi-disciplinary coordination
- Partner and work with communities
- Protect people from health problems and health hazards.
- Give people information they need to act collectively in improving their own health.
- Build alliances and coalitions
- Public policy development and analysis
- Advocacy
- Monitor health status
- Track the conditions that influence health and wellness issues facing the community

Source: Hofrichter. (2006) Tackling Health Inequities Through Public Health Practice: A Handbook for Action, NACCHO

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Inclusive Leadership

- Having the courage to **take conscious steps to break down barriers** for people at risk of being excluded from society.
- **Appreciates diversity**, invites and welcomes **everyone's individual contributions**, and **encourages full engagement** with the processes of decision-making and shaping reality.
- Inclusive leadership aims **to create, change, and innovate** while balancing everybody's needs.

Source: Activating Leadership Potential <https://www.alp-network.org/inclusive-leadership/>

Recognize and Mitigate Your Unconscious Bias

The best way to mitigate the impact of biases is not only to be aware of them but to put processes in place to safeguard against them

- Implicit Association Test
- Annual implicit bias training
- Fostering reflections on bias
- Slow Down
- Be mindful of your reactions
- Notice when your responses, decisions, or behaviors might have been caused by bias or stereotypes
- Consider your team's, client's or co-worker's perspective

Tips for Leading with Equity

- Integrate equity into everything you do
- Conduct your work through an equity lens (programs and interventions)
- Keep equity at the top of your mind in every decision and team relationships
- Remember you lead by example
- Understand your team's unique strengths
- Be flexible
- Support ongoing leadership and group/team development

Source: Trailhead: <https://trailhead.salesforce.com/en/content/learn/modules/inclusive-leadership-practices/practice-the-five-strategies-of-inclusive-leadership>

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Examine Your Practice through an Equity Lens

Central question for existing programs, policies, and processes:

- What changes did you see in the community/target population? How did these changes differ from what was expected to happen
- How are communities* benefitting?
- What communities are not able to benefit? Why?
- Do the affected communities have power in the decision making process?
- Are the appropriate institutional partners part of the decision making process?
- How are affected communities involved in defining success?
- What mechanism(s) exist for affected communities to hold decision makers accountable?
- How are results being evaluated?
- Have you communicated results back to all impacted communities (e.g. the communities who are not able to benefit)?

Source: Checking Assumptions to Advance Equity Office of Health Equity: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1gB_AfBr9bcdq6TJLEw16LFMx6dvrXOz0/view

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Colorado Office of Health Equity - CHECKING ASSUMPTIONS TO ADVANCE EQUITY

Examine Your Practice through an Equity Lens

Central questions to help design new programs, policies, and processes:

- Who determines what the decision-making environment looks like? Think of physical space but also meeting structure, frequency, etc.
- Have all decision-makers taken a few of the project implicit tests individually?
- How will affected communities be involved in defining outcomes and success?
- Have you used a variety of data sources- including both quantitative and qualitative- to identify the most affected communities?
- Which communities should be given priority?
- Which communities will not be able to benefit? Why?
- Will a mechanism exist for affected communities to hold decision makers accountable?
- How will you evaluate results?
- How will you communicate results back to all affected communities (including the communities who are not able to benefit)?
- Would the program, policy or process benefit from further study or a health impact assessment (HIA)?

Source: Checking Assumptions to Advance Equity Office of Health Equity:
https://drive.google.com/file/d/1gB_AfBr9bcdq6TJLEw16LFMx6dvrXOz0/view

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Authentic Community Engagement

- A two-way exchange of information, ideas, and resources.
- Offer opportunities for communities to exercise power in decision-making.
- Should be mutually beneficial.
- Intentionally considers the diversity of our communities—including culture, language, and ethnicity—and seek to create an inclusive and accessible process.

Colorado's Community Engagement Spectrum

Increasing Level of Community Involvement, Impact, Trust and Communication Flow

Increasing Ownership, Empowerment Skills, Opportunities and Supports of Both Staff and Community

Please note: Each level has value

Participation		Engagement		Partnership
Outreach	Consult	Involve	Collaborate	Share Leadership
Communication flows from the program or initiative to <u>inform</u> community members.	Community members <u>provide one-time or periodic feedback.</u>	Communication flows both ways and community members provide <u>ongoing participation.</u>	Community members <u>influence decision-making.</u>	Community members <u>share power and responsibility</u> making decisions together.
<u>Outcome:</u> Optimally establishes communication and outreach channels, while sharing information with the community.	<u>Outcome:</u> Develops connections	<u>Outcome:</u> Establishes visibility of the partner and increased cooperation.	<u>Outcome:</u> Increased trust and partnership-building.	<u>Outcome:</u> A strong partnership with bidirectional trust that affects broader community health outcomes.

Adapted from CDC: McCloskey et al. (2011). Community Engagement: Definitions and Organizing Concepts from the Literature, *Principles of Community Engagement: Concepts and Definitions from the Literature* (p 8).

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Equitable Access and Treatment for All

Organizations are responsible for:

- Ensuring all policies and practices are fair and equitable
- All employees have the same access for employment, professional advancement, benefits and input
- All products and services are accessible and inclusive for diverse clients, customers, and or consumers

Key Takeaways

- Health equity will exist when all people can access the resources they need to maintain their health.
- Instead of hoping that equity will result from our work, we must make it the core “design principle” of initiatives.
- We must be intentional about progressing health equity, shifting from theory to actual practice, doing the work.

Source: Reos Partners (2017). A Conversation Guide for Health Equity (p. 7)

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Resources

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<https://ajph.aphapublications.org/doi/pdf/10.2105/AJPH.90.8.1212>
- Cultural Humility: People, Principles and Practices-4 part YouTube series: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v= Mbu8bvKb_U
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- Health Equity US Department of Veterans Affairs: https://www.research.va.gov/topics/health_equity.cfm
- Removing Barriers to Mental Health Services for Veterans: <https://www.apha.org/policies-and-advocacy/public-health-policy-statements/policy-database/2015/01/28/14/51/removing-barriers-to-mental-health-services-for-veterans>
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- Prevention Institute. (Feb 2016). Adverse Community Experiences and Resilience: A Framework for Addressing and Preventing Community Trauma. Available from: <https://www.preventioninstitute.org/publications/adverse-community-experiences-and-resilienceframework-addressing-and-preventing>
- SAMHSA’s Concept of trauma and Guidance for Trauma-Informed Approach (2014)
https://ncsacw.samhsa.gov/userfiles/files/SAMHSA_Trauma.pdf

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Thank you!

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