

Access for Everyone: A Toolkit for Addressing Behavioral Health Equity and Racial Justice

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Disclaimer



CENTER OF EXCELLENCE for Integrated Health Solutions

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Introduction

- The Center of Excellence for Integrated Health Solutions (CoE-IHS) developed this interactive, online toolkit and list of resources for you and your organization to support you in addressing racial inequities and the associated stigmas that lead to mental health and substance use treatment disparities and ensure you have the tools to support your patients and organizations.
 - <https://www.thenationalcouncil.org/resources/integrated-health-coe-toolkit-purpose-of-this-toolkit/>
- We recommend that organizational managers/leaders assess the level of group knowledge related to health equity, health inequity, health disparities and social determinants, health literacy, cultural literacy and racial equity and social justice in your organization.

Objectives

1. Define health equity, health inequity, health disparities and social determinants, health literacy, cultural literacy, racial equity and social justice.
2. Demonstrate increased awareness of the structures, practices and policies present and assess individual and/or organizational-level opportunities for improvement. You will be able to begin to address and reflect upon key questions, including:
 - a. Why do these inequities and disparities exist?
 - b. What are the historical and socio-economic root causes of these issues?
3. Begin to identify what is working within the structures, practices and policies present at the individual and/or organizational-level and develop a plan to support and advance equity-related goals.
4. Apply the skills and tools acquired in each module to a case vignette.

How Can You Use this Toolkit?

- The toolkit has six modules, and, in each module, we highlight the intersections of the six key issues.
 - Throughout the toolkit, we have provided resources and information using different formats to raise awareness for organizations, providers and clients about relevant issues.
 - The modules of the toolkit are further divided into six topic areas, each providing different steps an organization or individual can take to improve their knowledge, awareness, and engagement.
1. Health Equity
 2. Health Inequity
 3. Health Disparities & Social Determinants
 4. Health Literacy
 5. Cultural Literacy
 6. Racial Equity & Social Justice

What is Included in this Toolkit?

Step 1: Let's Get Started: briefly introduces the module topic and provides specific learning objectives

Step 2: Time to Engage: provide a general introduction to the topic with an emphasis on accessible and brief resources like podcasts

Step 3: Creating a Stronger Foundation: provides a deeper dive into the topic through detailed resources such as journal articles and books.

Step 4: Your Turn: features a case vignette with questions that address change at the individual, organizational and systemic level.

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Health Equity

- Defined as attaining the highest level of health for all people, regardless of cultural, demographic or socio-economic factors.
- Use of the national Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS) standards is a way to improve the quality of services provided to all individuals and will ultimately help reduce health disparities and achieve health equity.

Health Inequity

- Defined as differences in health between groups of people that are *avoidable, unfair and unjust*. They are affected by three factors: **social**, including race, gender, class, sexual orientation, immigration status, etc.; **economic**, including institutional systems of advantage and disadvantage, etc.; and **environmental**, including safe access to food and exercise, crime, pollution and school institutions, systems, etc.
- Culture shapes how we live. When a disease spreads through large parts of the world's population, we cope culturally and biologically. As individuals, our bodies react biologically with responses like stress and anxiety. But as members of our culture or subcultures we react culturally. Our reactions are based in our personal histories, environments, upbringing and how we view illness and health.

Health Disparities & Social Determinants

- Are the avoidable differences that result from cumulative social disadvantage, including health outcomes, health care access, coverage and quality of care between groups of people, etc.
- Health disparities are caused by a multitude of systemic factors often referred to as *social determinants* of health, including access to safe housing, healthy food, access to health services, transportation, public safety, media and technology, etc.

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Health Literacy

- The degree to which individuals have the capacity to obtain, process and understand basic health information and services needed to make appropriate health decisions.
- Health literacy also involves ensuring health information, in any language it is offered, is not overly technical or only understood by health experts. Healthy People 2030 defines personal health literacy as the degree to which individuals have the ability to find, understand and use information and services to inform health-related decisions and actions for themselves and others.
- Organizations should consider their organizational health literacy or the degree to which organizations equitably enable individuals to find, understand and use information and services to inform health-related decisions and actions for themselves and others.

Cultural Literacy

- Cultural literacy is the ability to understand the traditions, norms, activities and historical background of a given culture.
- Cultural literacy also involves the **ability to participate** fluently in formal and informal traditions, norms and activities. Cross-cultural communication problems and gaps in cultural literacy may cause or exacerbate health inequity.
- We can define **linguistic literacy** as “a constituent of language knowledge characterized by the availability of multiple linguistic resources and by the ability to consciously access one’s own linguistic knowledge and to view language from various perspectives.”
- **Culture** is the integrated pattern of human behavior that includes the thoughts, communication, actions, customs, beliefs, values and institutions of a racial, ethnic, religious, social or other group.

Racial Equity & Social Justice

- **Racial equity** is a process of eliminating racial disparities and improving outcomes for everyone. It is the intentional and continual practice of changing policies, practices, systems and structures by prioritizing measurable change in the lives of people of color.
- Racial equity involves focusing on and understanding how racial distinctions, historic and present day, and the resulting system of disparities in access to resources and supports, can flourish and be maintained as part of a larger system of racial advantage and disadvantage.
- **Social justice** is often defined as the equitable sharing of burdens and rewards in society.
- **Cultural competence** and **cultural humility** within mental health and substance use treatment service systems involves providing culturally and linguistically responsive services to clients that have the potential to reduce racial and ethnic health disparities.

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ADDRESSING HEALTH EQUITY AND RACIAL JUSTICE

- Assessment Tools
- Staff Trainings
- Stigma Reduction
- Educational Toolkits
- Webinars and Upcoming Events
- Background
- Tools & Resources
- Webinar Recordings
 - <https://www.thenationalcouncil.org/resources/addressing-health-equity-and-racial-justice/>

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THANK YOU!

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