



Eliminating Structural Racism in Behavioral Healthcare

March 1, 2021

1:00 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.

Location: Zoom Meeting

Meeting Summary

Goal of Project:

On June 24, 2020, the ADAMHS Board of Directors passed RESOLUTION NO. 20-06-01 declaring *Racism as a Public Health Crisis*. The ADAMHS Board is working with partners to plan immediate, short-term and long-term goals for eliminating structural racism in the behavioral health community by upholding the recommendations in the resolution. The ADAMHS Board and its partners will create a strategic plan for addressing racism and implementing solutions to eliminate structural racism in behavioral health care. The group has five subcommittees: Workforce, Health Equity, Policy and Advocacy, Data and Research, and Community Collaboration/Education and Stigma.

Goal of Today's Meeting

- Presentation from United Way
- Subcommittee reports
- Open Discussion

Agenda Items

Welcome – Rev. Benjamin F. Gohlstin, Sr., Scott S. Osiecki, and Beth Zietlow-DeJesus

- Scott thanked all for attending.
- Rev. Gohlstin welcomed the group by saying “Stay mindful that eliminating racism is a battle that we cannot win. There is only one race, and that is the human race. We can only eliminate discrimination and bigotry in behavioral healthcare, based on ethnicity and color of skin, and not on biology.”
- Beth introduced Ben Miladin, Director of Health, United Way of Greater Cleveland

Presentation – Ben Miladin from United Way of Greater Cleveland

- Shared slide show (included in email) about United Way's 2020 Community Needs assessment that was completed in collaboration with the Center for Community Solutions. The presentation showed how data can be utilized to identify disparities related to race in public health.
- **Questions for Ben Miladin related to the presentation:**
 - **What is the difference between income and wealth disparities?** Income disparities are based on how much money people earn through income; wealth disparities are based on the accumulated wealth that one has.
 - **Do you know more about why vaccine disparities are happening with people of color?** Having to sign up online in areas without access to technology. That is why United Way's 2-1-1 is available for vaccine questions and to assist people with registering for vaccines in Cuyahoga County.
 - Beth added that a recent survey showed fear/mistrust of vaccines.

- **Do we need a new formula that measures poverty rates and the living wage?** Yes, we do. There have been a lot of people advocating for a new formula for a long time. This formula is outdated and inaccurate.
- **Did anyone from United Way go on redlining tour?** Yes.
 - Samantha shared that her family is still being impacted by redlining, Jim Crow laws, slavery, even after 5 generations.
- **Was there any consideration about insurance rates, food expenses, etc. based on where you live?** There are examples such as this that show systems are still actively discriminating. It's expensive to be poor.
- **Why is poverty among labor force so high?** A variety of factors are likely and may include pay, lack of healthcare benefits, little control over schedules, etc.
- **Did United Way and NAACP discussion about the Consent Decree include how redlining and wealth gaps impact the legal system?** Ben didn't think that came up, but said it was definitely a discussion that needs to be had.
 - Rosie shared that Councilman Basheer Jones was a panelist and he shared issues about poverty, race and the criminal justice system.

Subcommittee Report Outs – A representative from each subcommittee shared an update about work done since last large group meeting. Please check website at bit.ly/ESRIBH for subcommittee meeting dates.

Health Equity in Behavioral Health – Erin DiVincenzo and Shayla Shavers (presented), co-chairs

- Went over ADAMHS Board needs assessment to see what race and ethnicity data was included.
- Started talking about some survey questions they would like to ask agencies
- Explored things that may be barriers to treatment
- Group plans to work on actionable steps, find more people to join from varying organizations

Community Collaboration/Education and Stigma – Regina Spicer and Joicelyn Weems, co-chairs; Erika Losse (committee member) presented

- Finalized Statement of Purpose and three main goals
- Agreed to focus on action steps at next meeting
- Looking forward, group members will jot down any ideas they have for “action steps” that can be taken to accomplish subcommittee goals and be ready to share at next meeting

Workforce – Carmen Gandarilla and Ashley Yassall (presented), co-chairs

- Read Statement of Purpose
- Have experienced an increase in subcommittee participation
- Want to develop resources and training to help guide employers
- Group discussed doing a survey
- School and community outreach
- Funding opportunities

Data and Research – Thomas Williams, Chair (presented)

- Read Statement of Purpose.
- Action Steps: We are examining the data that are available, so that we can compare the data with quality of care received.
- Mr. Williams stated that looking forward, the sub-committee will modify what's necessary to create quality data for the future.

Policy & Advocacy – Carole Ballard and Karen Kearny (presented), co-chairs

- Meeting actions:
 - Looking at local and state agency policies

- Reviewed ADAMHS funded agency websites and social media to see what racial equity language is present
- Discussed policy for ongoing licensure for professionals across Ohio
- Discussed the implications of the current practices for licensure
- Looking ahead: Group will continue to look at other materials: RFPs, Job descriptions, annual reports, etc. to see what type diversity, inclusion and equity information is included.
- Ms. Ballard stated that one of the things the group talks about is that this is not only about the people that we serve, but the people who work in the community. Why do they leave the workforce?
- Ms. Ballard shared that “while looking at RFPs, I saw a job posting that mentioned Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion stated, “not applicable”. This is structural, this is something engrained about how we work, live, and play. We welcome those who are interested in helping this community.”

Large Group Discussion – all participants

Beth asked the group a question based on what Rev. Gohlstin said at the beginning of the meeting: “Should we change the language in our Goals and Statements of Purpose to reflect bigotry and discrimination, as opposed to “racism?””

Rev. Gohlstin wanted us to focus on the discriminatory factors that influence racism. Based upon a belief of superiority. It’s not just in Cleveland, it’s everywhere you look. The challenge is how do you address it? How do you break it and interrupt the cycle because it serves a purpose?

- Carole shared what she thinks Rev. Gohlstin meant by his comment about discrimination and bigotry
- Scott reiterated that Rev. Gohlstin means we are all one race
- 99Treasures spoke about a scholar who wrote about white supremacy
- Melinda raised, “What about the people who practice passive bigotry? Sometimes passive bigotry acts in greater volumes than active bigotry.”
- Larry asked, “Does language matter? Does the term racism imply different or competing races? How do we promote one race?”
- Susan asked if revisiting the group’s original goals might be helpful. Rosie echoed this.
- Samantha expressed that the issues we are facing stem from “Racism as a Public Health Crisis” not one race. Larry said he agrees.
- Tom echoed this and expressed that one race might cause people to overlook the issue of racism
- Jessica Torres shared that “one race” would be valuable tool. Understands concern with how we then express what is happening and continues to happen.
- Rosie shared the resolution document again. Maybe board could consider adding what Rev. Gohlstin said to the work group website page.
- 99Treasures shared that those in the group who are older might remember the words of Malcolm X about universal rights. All human beings are connected. For example, if someone needs an organ transplant, race doesn’t matter. We are all the same.

Closing – Beth Zietlow-DeJesus

- Beth closed out by sharing information about next meeting and where you can find info on website www.adamhsc.org/about-us/current-initiatives
- Took poll to see about moving meetings that fall on holidays or shortly after to the second Monday of the month. Group voted to move April, July and September meetings to second Mondays
- Jeff Johnson thanked everyone and said the work done so far is great
- Beth Litz said “If you place 100 red ants and 100 black ants together in a jar, they will go about their lives peacefully, ignoring the other group. But, if you shake the jar, the red ants will attack the black ants, and the black ants will attack the reds. The ants, once disturbed, will assume the other is the enemy. So, who is shaking the jar?” There aren’t issues until someone comes in and shakes the pot. We have to make sure that the structure we build is solid and helps prevent others from shaking the jar.
- Rosie brought up intersectionality of race, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, etc.

- Beth added, we want to focus on race first, and then use this platform to help improve situations for other populations such as women and the LGBTQ+ community. She also shared that the group decided to focus on race for now as outlined in resolution and acknowledges the intersectionality of the issues.

Next meeting: Monday, April 12, 2021.

Meetings are the first Monday of each month.*

**April, July and September meetings will be held on the second Mondays because of holidays*