



Eliminating Structural Racism in Behavioral Health

October 4, 2021

Time (1:00 – 2:00)

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 currently has five subcommittees: Workforce; Health Equity; Policy and Advocacy; Data and Research; and Community Collaboration/Education and Stigma.

Goal of Today's Meeting

- Provide an update on the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Consultant proposal.
- Presentation from Deirdre R. Jones, Chief, Greater Cleveland RTA (GCRTA) Transit Police.

Agenda Items

Welcome/Introduction – Carole Ballard – ADAMHS Board Director of Education and Training

- Thanked all for joining us.
- Introduced Rev. Benjamin F. Gohlstin, Sr., ADAMHS Board Chair
 - o Rev. Gohlstin thanked all for being present. He reiterated that the goals we are moving toward are to eliminate structural racism in behavioral health. Rev. Gohlstin reminded us that he is uncomfortable with the word racism. He said, racism is a battle that we cannot fight nor win; racism is indicative – there is only one race, the human race. He continued to say that we are fighting discrimination and bigotry-based ethnicity, color of skin, and national origin and we must understand that as we move forward. The new consultants will guide us in this process, and he welcomed them on behalf of the ADAMHS Board.
- Introduced Scott Osiecki, ADAMHS Board CEO
 - o Scott announced that Board had approved Rice Education Consulting (REDCon) as the new Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Consultant at the September General Board meeting. As part of its work, REDCon will be helping to facilitate this group.
 - o Scott introduced Rico Rice, President of REDCon.
 - Rico thanked the ADAMHS Board and shared additional information about the agency. REDCon is based out of Cincinnati, Ohio and has satellite offices in Washington D.C., Las Vegas, Nevada, and Fort Lauderdale, Florida. The agency's goal is to provide training, coaching and strategic planning to help organizations develop people and culture. REDCon's team has a lot of experience in DEI work. They view diversity as a journey, one that can be uncomfortable and hurtful but also comforting, blissful and

freeing. They understand that it will take commitment, compassion, and strategic planning. One of their first tasks is to meet and understand the ADAMHS Board of Cuyahoga County better. Rico introduced, Leslie Rice, REDCon's lead strategist.

- Leslie expanded her introduction and said she will be involved with all projects related to DEI.
 - Tamala Hodge introduced herself as a project manager and will be involved as the point of contact for scheduling and project timelines.
 - Carole thanked the REDCon group for joining this meeting.
- Carole introduced Deirdre R. Jones, Chief of Police for GCRTA Transit Police. Carole says that local law enforcement has similar challenges as the ADAMHS Board does in terms of diversity.
- Chief Jones began her law enforcement career in 2001 with the Cleveland Division of Police as part of the Domestic Violence unit. Since then, she has served in various positions and was promoted numerous times.
 - Chief Jones is a member of the Cleveland Police Commission and International Association of Chiefs of Police. She is a Federal Law Enforcement Training Center Certified Domestic Violence Trainer, and Instructor for the Ohio Police Training Academy. Chief Jones is an Adjunct Professor of Criminal Justice at Notre Dame College, and she holds a Bachelor of Human Resource Management from the University of Phoenix and an MPA from Villa Nova University.
 - Chief Jones took on her current role at the GCRTA Transit Police in April, 2021.

Speaker – Deirdre R. Jones, Chief of Police, GCRTA Transit Police

- Chief Jones started with the City of Cleveland in 1986 and joined the police department in 1988. After 33 years, she said she still very much enjoys law enforcement. Chief Jones held many different positions and has been involved with several different organizations. She believes her experience has given her a good perspective to see opportunities to make diversity changes within law enforcement. She then presented on importance of diversity in policing.
- Chief Jones started her presentation with demographics of nationwide police departments, including Cleveland (data sourced from datausa.io). She focused on gender, race, and ethnicity. She showed the breakdown of diversity when comparing police departments and the communities they serve. This is significant when considering cities with high degrees of racial tension.
- Specific to the GCRTA Transit Police, there are 103 Transit Police Officers. Of that, over 90% of those officers are male and over 82% are white. The RTA services 150,000-200,000 riders every day and about 70% of those riders are people of color. The demographics of this police department doesn't mirror that of its own community. It is her goal to improve the diversity in the Transit Police.
- Chief Jones reiterated the importance of having the police department reflect its community. This connection increases communication and public trust. When the police department is diverse like its community, they can utilize the different perspectives when handling situations. A diverse police department also displays a commitment to equal treatment. Overall, a balance can help improve negative perception and improve community relationships.
- Next, she discussed defunding of police. Chief Jones believes it should be called "rethinking" the police. She said we need to rethink the ways we are going to move forward and the ways we will effectively use resources to address the needs of the community.

- Finally, Chief Jones discussed the many barriers to recruiting, training, and retaining a diverse police department. To reach more people and to create a more diverse police department, Chief Jones is working to change the way they recruit, hire and train police officers. She urged anyone who is interested in joining the GCRTA Transit police department to apply.

General Discussion

- Carole Ballard said again that the ADAMHS Board of Cuyahoga County has many similar goals, barriers, and challenges to creating a diverse team. She continued to say that if we want to recruit more people to the behavioral health field, we need to show them the best things we are doing.
- Regina Spicer thanked Chief Jones for all the tasks she is undertaking. Regina said that she agreed with every piece of the presentation.
 - Chief Jones responded with an example of recruiting their first transgender police officer. She likes having a diverse team because they can connect with their community better.
- Tom Williams said that his best friend went into law enforcement and left because of the culture. He asked, how are you approaching changing that culture?
 - Chief Jones said that she never thought she would be a supervisor, but after all she had experienced, she realized that she wanted to challenge things, she wanted to make things work differently. She doesn't want people to leave because the culture is unwelcoming. She said that to make a difference, you have to start with small changes in your corner, and eventually it will start to blossom. Eventually, those changes do make a difference.
- Rosie Palfy thanked Chief Jones for her presentation. First, she asked how diversity helps with community engagement and how officers can learn from each other? Then she referenced some high-profile events that occurred before Chief Jones started and asked if the officers involved agreed to attend 40 hours of CIT training (Rosie doesn't think officers should be forced to attend training). She asked, what Chief Jones is doing to address that?
 - Chief Jones agreed and said that the CIT training is an excellent program, and no one should be forced to attend. She reiterated that the GCRTA Transit Police are different from the Cleveland Division of Police and for that particular incident, the disciplinary action was a "last chance agreement." Chief Jones has an investigative team to look into cases of police misconduct, and she also questions her internal investigations. Her goal is to change the attitude so that it is known that such behavior is not acceptable.
- Carole thanked everyone for their input in this discussion. She said she hopes that this conversation helps everyone see that we are very similar (to the GCRTA Transit Police). Madison sent the information for the subcommittee meeting in the chat.
 - Rosie asked if this group has created a report of their work?
 - Carole said that they have not yet created a report, but that they will address that with the new consultants.
- Scott gave the closing remarks, thanked everyone again, and said he looks forward to the action we will see with our new consultants.

The next large group meeting will be on Monday, November 1 at 1 p.m.