



Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Behavioral Health Care Work Group Meeting
February 7, 2022 at 1:00 pm – 2:30 pm
Location: Zoom

Goal of Project: The ADAMHS Board is working with partners to plan immediate, short-term, and long-term goals for eliminating discrimination in the public behavioral health system. This group has five subcommittees: Workforce; Health Equity; Policy and Advocacy; Data and Research; and Community Collaboration/Education and Stigma.

Goal of Today's Meeting: To discuss roles, accountability and responsibility in DEI work.

Meeting Summary

Welcome/Introduction

- Rev. Benjamin F. Gohlstin, Sr., ADAMHS Board Chair, welcomed the group. He then led a discussion on an article published in The Land news outlet regarding the wording change from racism to discrimination in the Board resolution.
- He asked for comments from the group, which included:
 - Remarks from individuals who were contacted for comment in the article, and their perspectives.
 - A participant noted that they did not know about the resolution's wording change, and would need to determine if they want to continue with the group if the group's name did not change back to Eliminating Structural Racism in Behavioral Health Care Work Group. They also commented, "With the shift in the focus, I don't know how you can address DEI without addressing racism."
 - Another participant noted that structural racism did not go away, but diversity, equity and inclusion was something we aspire to with this group; the group's purpose and intent was not changed with the change in the name of the committee.
 - Scott Osiecki, ADAMHS Board CEO, noted that the title of the article was misleading because it indicated the Board was "backtracking," but that the intent was that we would be more inclusive. He noted that these are open meetings and open conversations, and that when the group discussed its name change, no one said they were against it.
 - Rev. Gohlstin noted that the Board of Directors also agreed with the change.
 - Another participant said that we have many ethnic groups and nationalities, but only one race and that is the human race. They noted an understanding that people have the right to define their own reality, and a need to continue work on this effort.
 - Another participant referenced the 1963 Conference on Race and Religion, when Rabbi Heschel stated that the conference was named incorrectly because God did not create "different types of man," and therefore one cannot claim to have religion and believe in the concept of racism because that would be incompatible.
 - Another participant noted a belief that the theory about different complexions and races was a tool to apply plantation capitalism. They noted that we need our current work in order to overcome this obstacle. They cited an example that Cuyahoga County's decision about homelessness during the pandemic did do not uphold their declaration that racism is a public health crisis.

DEI Work Group Session

- Osiecki welcomed the representatives from REDCon, DEI consultant.
- REDCon is facilitating these meetings while they are also conducting an assessment of the DEI needs in the behavioral health system and creating a DEI plan. All DEI Focus Groups are complete; the DEI survey deadline was extended to February 9.
- Rico Rice, President of REDCon, noted that the topic for this meeting is looking at where we are, where we have gone, where we are going, where we are currently and how it connects. Rice introduced Brenda Stevens.
- Stevens noted that at the last meeting, the group talked about working across agencies and across cultural divides, and we will continue to think about that.
- For example, if there is an agency serving one culture and another agency serving another culture, maybe they need to collaborate to gain a better understanding on serving the clientele.
- Rice shared REDCon's DEI Philosophy: "Building inclusion and equity within an organization is a journey. A journey that can be uncomfortable, hurtful, and shameful but also comforting, blissful and freeing. It requires commitment, strategy, and accountability from stakeholders. Due to the sensitivity of equity and inclusion, we strive to create spaces of vulnerability and help to normalize individual experiences through Socratic questioning and storytelling."
- Audience shared that these words were important: requires commitment, vulnerability, uncomfortable, discipline, freeing, accountability, journey, and blissful. One participant said 'white shame,' which Rice noted is not in the statement.
- Rice noted that they design all DEI engagements with a Systemic Lens Framework.
- The Lens of Systemic Oppression: Systemic, Individual, Interpersonal, Institutional, Structural
- Rice said to become more inclusive, start with the individual. From the individual there are interactions with other individuals. Once awareness and capabilities are built, then there are the individuals who effect the change, such as policies, programs, people inside the organization, and practices.
- He led a look-back at the work of the DEI Work Group, including the name change and training on individual expectations, working across health systems, and the barriers of DEI.
- Looking to the future, he noted the work will be on implementing and carrying out tasks for the DEI Strategic Implementation Plan that will be created over the next few months. "Then, how do we use this plan to disrupt the system to make changes to the system to make it more equitable?"
- A participant shared an idea to see what tactics are discussed at other organizations. Stevens said it is good to collaborate. Rice further expressed that no matter the group, there are certain elements that must be in place, and it all starts with accountability.
- Rico shared a quote from Forbes: "In addition to education, it is imperative for corporate leaders to be exploring accountability systems, what they look like, how they can be implemented, and how to ensure their effectiveness."
- To be accountable means to take responsibility for results, both positive and negative. It means finding solutions to problems and pivoting, if necessary, from lessons learned in order to improve future results.
- Accountability also means making clear and specific agreements about what is expected and about what happens as a result of actions we do or do not take.
- Measures of success should relate to the goals and objectives of the group.
- Consequences are needed to ensure credibility and follow-through.
- There are different ways that an accountability partner can help an organization be accountable for DEI.
 - Influence: DEI Work Groups, advisory groups, committees, etc. can influence DEI Strategies through many avenues, including:
 - Education
 - Policy
 - Programmatic

- Rice said we want to: 1) Educate, bring awareness about different groups, about different aspects of diversity, equity and inclusion including racism and systemic racism. 2) Change policies that disproportionately affect certain groups in a negative way. 3) Then where those groups are disproportionately affected, we want to have/create programs to then enhance those groups.
- Stevens and Rice discussed educational needs. Carole Ballard, ADAMHS Board Director of Education and Training, noted that the Board has been offering content related to cultural competency at various levels for several years. This was before the DEI initiative and is part of an ongoing philosophy. She also noted that there are state and national trainings that providers can go to. Agencies in general, may be providing this level of training. A question to ask might be: what kind of training are you providing for your staff, particularly in your on-boarding process?
- Ballard noted that these are issues that an organization cannot “train their way out of.” We must look at the outcomes: how did they change the culture of any one agency by sending that worker to the training. Did it change the number of client rights issues? Did it change how services are delivered?
- She also noted legislative work by Senator Nickie Antonio. The State Social Work Board merged culture training with ethics and is not willing to separate it. The legislative language is also muddled because it creates exceptions for licensed people.
- Rice asked: what is the DEI Work Group or where can it be? These are certain areas where you can use your influence and begin to structure the group:
 - Education, training, training requirements.
 - What are the requirements and what are the outcomes?
 - We can also look at the policies may need to be changed.
 - How do we go about advocating those?
 - The last piece is where are some programs we want to be able to affect?
- Rice asked: what constitutes training? Is it being in front of a computer? In a classroom? Out in the community while serving? Having conversation? Certain documentaries? Watching a movie? Reading books? As a Board and Work Group, how do we use our influence to affect change and create this equitable treatment?
- Rice noted: “No matter what words we are using, it all goes back to equitable treatment no matter your DEI identity, no matter your race, and no matter your gender. The words we use could be debated over time. I would say that most people, whatever side of (The Land) article they were on, they want equitable treatment for people that look like them or people that they care about that may look different that no longer have the same equitable treatment.”
- Stevens suggested looking at the Request for Proposal process to say:
 - Here are some things we really want to see in our proposals.
 - Here are some things that we recommend or things we require.
 - As far as DEI, how are you accomplishing it?
 - How are you setting goals, or do you have goals?
- Rice said, “People follow the money.” How do we use the carrot/money to be able to get the organizations to follow a model/behavior we need? There is another school of thought that says that they will just “check the box” to get it done. Obviously, we want more than just checking the boxes. But then, the question becomes having the right boxes checked.
- A participant asked if by creating boxes, are we promoting/continuing exclusion or separateness or other? Is this how the concept of race came about as a check box identifying things as different. Is there some way to avoid having categories or checkboxes and to still be able to evaluate and objectively identify making progress? Rice noted that at least initially, it is important to have those checkpoints and outcomes be part of the discussion.
- A participant said they are trying to replace the word racism with discrimination or something else in their thinking, to help shift their paradigm in a meaningful way. They asked how can we become antiracist if there is only one race, and is this group working toward antidiscrimination practices, education, and policy?
- Rev. Gohlstein said that is his vision.

- Rice noted that in terms of treatment, we may be one race, but there are multiple identities. Inside of those different identities, there are people who are being mistreated because of those identities.
- He said our goal is not to just have a Work Group, but our goal is to have a Work Group that can hold the Board and can hold the agencies accountable moving forward when it comes DEI.
- Clare Rosser, ADAMHS Board Chief of Strategic Initiatives, noted that the group originally had subcommittees that were meeting regularly and asked for REDCon's guidance on their future work.
- Stevens said those decisions should happen after REDCon completes their data collection.
- Rosser noted that the five areas of focus that the group originally chose: Workforce, Health Equity, Policy and Advocacy, Data and Research, and Community Collaboration and Education Stigma.
- Beth Zietlow-DeJesus, ADAMHS Board Director of External Affairs, shared that the groups were determined by input from the greater community in October 2020.
- Rice asked if these are still relevant and are these still the buckets based on some additional education, based your thoughts, based on the evolution of understanding and collaboration?
- Ballard said we should look at the data to help redesign and redefine what those subcommittees are. She also noted the need to bring in more partners.
- Rice asked: What is the incentive to those partner agencies to be a part of it and if there is none, is there something we can build in? How do we communicate this to our partner agencies? Rice noted that he learned long ago that just saying people should do DEI work because it makes the world a better place does not create change. Change happens for public relation reasons, for monetary or for legislative reasons. It usually does not happen on its own.
- Rosser suggested that once we have the data, we could have a convening of the subcommittee chairs.
- Zietlow-DeJesus noted that the biggest overlap from the subcommittees was they wanted the same information to work from, so they all wanted the data that REDCon is collecting.
- Rice noted that he does not think that everyone having the same data is the issue, but rather how it is interpreted and used.
- A participant noted that behavioral health professionals are often taught to go to data as a first response. But for diversity and inclusion, do we include people in this group who were not taught to use data or other means of measuring things? That is part of diversity (different ideas, perspective, world views) and that might help us broaden our perspective.
- Another participant noted that having some overlap of subcommittees is not a bad thing, because the issues are interconnected.
- Rice asked the group to reflect on these questions:
 1. What does success look like for this DEI Work Group in the next year?
 2. What are ways to measure success?
 3. How do we remain accountable throughout this DEI process?
- Osiecki said that success of this DEI Work Group within the next year would be to take the plan that REDCon is developing for the Board and utilize that as we move forward to help the Board achieve the goals that are outlined in the plan.
- Rev. Gohlstin noted that he is watching to see if what we are doing in the DEI Work Group and the DEI initiative meet the goals and needs of the ADAMHS Board Strategic Plan.
- A participant said that, as a service provider, part of the reason to participate in this is best practices that can come from different service providers figuring out how to address some of the challenges they face. They noted that the ADAMHS Board as an organization does a good job of listening to the service providers. A measure of success would be a collaborative approach that includes the perspective of the funder and the consumer as well as workers who deliver services.
- A participant noted youth violence, and that they are trying to hear from the group about what prevention organizations are doing in the street to help. They noted the different ethnic groups, language groups and geographies. They also noted the rise of white supremacy.

- Rice concluded the meeting with the Just One Word activity, encouraging participants to put a word in the chat that describes how they are feeling, or a thought and/or reflection from today. Audience input: Concerned, More, Challenges, Wanting (more participation from the community), Plan, Optimistic, Inclusive, Renewed, Progress, Accountability, New, Hopeful, and Equity.
- Osiecki thanked everyone for participating and reminded everyone to complete the DEI survey.

Next meeting: March 7, 2022, 1 pm to 2:30 pm