WHAT DOES AN ANTI-RACIST HEALTH DEPARTMENT LOOK LIKE?

Office of Infectious Disease/
Disease Control Health Statistics

Why health equity?

Our Guiding Principles
- Health equity is a human right.
- Health inequities are not random or simply due to poor health behaviors.
- Structural racism in society is behind some of the health disparities we see. Inequitable systems of oppression built on power and privilege, institutionalized racism, denial, and bias sometimes affect our society and contribute to poor health outcomes.
- Promoting and working towards health equity benefits everyone.

Our Core Values
- We apply a health equity lens to all the work we do.
- We work towards the elimination of disparities and the achievement of health equity for all, based on our core values.
- We develop and prioritize strategies to address health inequities.
- We work to create and sustain partnerships with communities to ensure health equity.
- We actively engage in advocacy for health equity policies and programs.

It's everyone's job to work toward creating an equitable and just society. We all have something of value to contribute.

For more information, visit the Washington State Department of Health's Health Equity section at DOH.
TRAUMA-INFORMED & EQUITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE INTERSECTIONS

SOCIETAL
- cisgenderism
- historical trauma
- heterosexism
- ableism
- discrimination
- adverse community experiences
- barriers to accessing care & services
- environmental justice
- gender equity
- disability justice
- pro-equity laws
- pro-equity policies
- pro-racial justice

COMMUNITY
- classism
- health disparities
- microaggressions
- culturally appropriate health services
- community decision-making: power
- community decision-making: policy
- affordable & safe housing
- social equity
- civil rights

ORGANIZATIONAL
- discrimination
- institutional policies
- anti-racist institutional practices
- workplace diversity
- workplace safety
- quality education

INTERPERSONAL
- social isolation
- violence
- social connectedness
- trauma
- economic security
- healthy, trusting relationships
- belonging
- healing
- support

INDIVIDUAL
- intergenerational trauma
- adverse childhood experiences
- trauma
- toxic stress
- personal safety
- educational success
- optimal health
- harm
- healing
- support

Healing
Wellbeing
Promotes equity
Perpetuates inequity
Poor health
Trauma inducing
Perpetuates inequity
SECRETARY'S DIRECTIVE 19-01
REAFFIRMING THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH'S COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY, INCLUSION, AND CULTURAL HUMILITY

WHEREAS, the Washington State Department of Health (DOH) recognizes that diversity, inclusion, and cultural humility in our workforce are essential to achieving our vision and mission and to supporting our efforts to increase equity within the agency and be an employer of choice; and

WHEREAS, Washington is an incredibly diverse state, and our department must be reflective, inclusive, and respectful of that diversity at every level of the agency; and

WHEREAS, the communities who experience the greatest health disparities are those who have been historically marginalized and underrepresented in our workforce. Achieving a workplace that is representative of those communities can increase access to resources and programs, improve health outcomes, and promote health equity; and

WHEREAS, DOH recognizes that as we build a workforce that represents and reflects the communities we serve, there are many factors we need to address and overcome, including historical oppression, institutional racism, discrimination, societal norms, and individual biases; and

WHEREAS, historically, oppression has been reinforced through laws, policies, and public health practices to intentionally discriminate against marginalized communities. These practices have influenced societal norms and are perpetuated through discriminatory institutional and structural practices; and

WHEREAS, these practices have influenced the foundation of workplace norms and continue to impact internal policies and practices. DOH recognizes our agency is no different than others in this respect; and

WHEREAS, on an individual level, our perspectives have also been shaped by societal norms, our own experiences, and the environments that surround us. This informs how we make decisions, interact with others, and the biases—both conscious and unconscious—that we hold; and

WHEREAS, bias can affect workplace culture, lead to microaggressions, and negatively impact the health, well-being, and productivity of employees. We know that where we work influences our health, and the employees most negatively affected are often those who are part of historically marginalized groups; and
The Washington State Board of Health (Board) recognizes racism is a public health crisis. Each day more Black lives are lost, and families and communities of color are torn apart and devastated by police violence. Black lives matter. We believe Black futures matter. Systemic and institutional racism is a barrier for Black, Indigenous, and People of Color that extends beyond police brutality to the health and wellness of our communities.
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