

NURTURING AN EQUITABLE SUPPORTIVE SERVICES ENVIRONMENT

Introduction

While African Americans make up a small percentage of Ohioans statewide, they are overrepresented in experiences of chronic homelessness, family homelessness, child welfare involvement, criminal justice involvement, and all other indices represented in the Corporation for Supportive Housing Racial Disparities and Disproportionality Index. This means that Black Ohioans are more likely to experience chronic homelessness, family homelessness, child welfare involvement, criminal justice involvement, and the other indices represented than all other racial groups. These racial disparities call for strategic and targeted intervention to disrupt its egregious cycle.

Cultural Responsiveness & Humility | Flexibility

Providing housing and supportive services that are tailored to the African American experience can reduce recurrences of these cycles and improve services for clients of all ethnic backgrounds through a targeted universal approach. Tailored solutions to racial inequities include culturally responsive services. Culturally responsive services delivered with cultural humility acknowledge that cultural factors influence people's experience and are designed to not only identify the needs of clients through a cultural lens but are also flexible in their ability to address those needs.

Trauma Informed

Some of those needs could include client-provider racial match, location and delivery mode of services, linguistic-related resources, and revisions to service provision. Tailored solutions also call for services to be client driven, providing the space an opportunity for clients to exercise choice and leadership in their service and housing plans. Client-driven practices acknowledge the expertise people have in their own lives, and aid in strengthening their self-efficacy and the quality of their decision-making. Providing choice to clients is a tailored approach and a way programs can embrace trauma informed practices. Racism is a traumatizing experience, so in serving particularly clients of color in a trauma informed way, services must be geared towards acknowledging that racialized trauma exists and identifying ways it can be addressed in service provision. Tailoring services to support clients who have experienced racialized trauma requires staff to be equipped with the tools necessary to meet those needs.

Diversify Capacity | Utilize Data | Equity Always

Organizations must diversify capacity to expand their ability to serve clients from various racial ethnic backgrounds who have experienced racial trauma, who require diverse linguistic representation to allow them to communicate in the language they are most comfortable with, and who come from diverse religious and other cultural backgrounds. Organizations with diverse racial, ethnic, and cultural representation on its leadership teams and staff help to create environments where anti-racism thrives, unique ideas and perspectives are valued, and where race equity advances. The evidence can be seen within organizations that develop goals with benchmarks tied to their race equity initiatives and use both quantitative and qualitative data to monitor and track their progress. While it is ideal to meet benchmarks and goals, race equity is an ongoing process and organizations must continue to strive towards achieving it despite the everchanging cultural climate. Equity plans must commence through political elections and changing administrations, resource floods and droughts, and even through global health crises. Equity is always a priority.

