Equal Access & Racial Equity

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A Cultural Humility Approach to Equal Access for BIPOC & LGBTQ+ Individuals

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Why is this so important?

We know from the last Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR) that most minority groups continue to disproportionately experience homelessness. Structural and historical racism largely explain this occurrence: from federally backed red-lining that segregated minority groups to areas with less investment and fewer resources, to Black and Brown overcriminalization – studies have shown that Black and Brown people are more likely to be stopped by the police, detained pretrial, charged with more serious crimes, and receive stiffer penalties than Whites.

While outside and structural factors are certainly in play, the homelessness system itself is not exempt from racism, implicit bias and disparities. Homelessness programs and systems have a significant and direct responsibility to ensure that they are not adding to the problem by having a disparate impact on people based on their race or ethnicity.
“Equity is central to HUD’s founding principles and the daily work we do as a Department. We are excited to take this opportunity to join the rest of the federal government in emphasizing our commitment to making equity a leading compass within this Administration.”

- Secretary Marcia L. Fudge
NEW TOOLS FROM HUD HELP BUILD EQUITY INTO HOMELESSNESS RESPONSE SYSTEMS

National data show vast racial disparities in who experiences homelessness and, in some instances, the outcomes within homelessness services systems. COVID-19 has amplified the historic and current racial biases and discrimination embedded in our systems, processes, and practices. To address those disparities, HUD has published a host of recent resources:

- **Increasing Equity in the Homeless Response System Through Expanding Procurement** provides tips on how jurisdictions can take steps to appropriately address racial inequities in planning and procurement within their COVID-19 response.

- **Data and Equity: Using the Data That You Have** provides tips for how to begin your equity data analysis.

- **Prevention to Promote Equity** provides guidance on how to embed principles of equity throughout the design, implementation, and monitoring of targeted prevention activities. It is a companion document to **A Framework for Homelessness Prevention** and **Homeless Prevention: Effective and Efficient Prevention Programs**.

- **Rehousing Activation and Racial Equity Part 1: Equity as the Foundation** discusses using Racial Equity Impact Assessments as a way to examine how different racial and ethnic groups will likely be affected by proposed funding decisions, processes, programs, and policies.
Overall Goal: To improve the experience and housing outcomes for Black, Indigenous and People of Color

We believe that IF communities:

- Use a racial equity lens to examine local data and context, and identify racial inequities in their systems
- Bring BIPOC and those with lived expertise of homelessness into roles that facilitate the co-design of new systems and processes
- Participate in supported group discussions centered around racial equity content
- Engage in improvement projects that test potential racially equitable strategies and processes

THEN we believe that communities will:

- Learn how to interrogate the entire homeless system in a way that leads to dismantling systemic racism
- Understand what skills and design structures are necessary to work toward a racially equitable system
- Test and develop more racially equitable processes that respond to identified racial inequities and local conditions
- Lay the groundwork for future ongoing racial equity work by assembling and developing a core equity team
- Shift coordinated entry systems in the direction of racial equity
On his first day in office, President Biden signed Executive Order 13985, Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government. The Order recognized that although the ideal of equal opportunity is the bedrock of American democracy, entrenched disparities in our laws, public policies, and institutions too often deny equal opportunity to individuals and communities. The President’s Order emphasized the enormous human costs of systemic racism, persistent poverty, and other disparities, and directed the Federal Government to advance an ambitious whole-of-government equity agenda that matches the scale of the challenges we face as a country and the opportunities we have to build a more perfect union.
• Establishment of the White House Steering Committee on Equity. There is hereby established a White House Steering Committee on Equity (Steering Committee), which shall be chaired by the Assistant to the President for Domestic Policy.

• Establishing Equity-Focused Leadership Across the Federal Government. Establishment of Agency Equity Teams.

• In September 2023, and on an annual basis thereafter...agency heads shall submit an Equity Action Plan to the Steering Committee.

• Delivering Equitable Outcomes Through Government Policies, Programs, and Activities.
All In: Federal Strategic Plan
Increased Focus on Racial Equity

The murder of George Floyd during an encounter with law enforcement in 2020 sparked greater awareness of historic and ongoing racism—especially anti-Black racism—and its impact. A nationwide discourse on racial justice ensued, demanding urgent change and accountability at all levels of government in public policies and programs that either intentionally or unintentionally perpetuate racism. Since then, awareness of racial disparities has risen, along with efforts to correct these inequities, at all levels of government and in the homelessness sector. While homelessness impacts people of all races, ethnicities, gender identities, and sexual orientations, it disproportionately impacts some groups and populations, particularly people of color, and especially Black people. This increased focus, as well as the Biden-Harris administration’s commitment to a whole-of-government approach to advancing equity, provides an opportunity to hold federal, state, and local governments accountable for achieving more equitable outcomes for people of color.
Lead With Equity

“Anti-Black racism continues to be ignored as a root cause of homelessness, and Black people experiencing homelessness continue to be inadequately protected from housing discrimination, over-policing, criminalization of poverty, and other systemic forces that contribute to their overrepresentation in the total population of people experiencing homelessness.”

- Advocate from Washington, District of Columbia
Racial Equity Action Committee on Homelessness in Ohio
R.E.A.C.H Ohio’s Mission:

- R.E.A.C.H Ohio is committed to achieving racial equity in Ohio’s homeless systems.
- We acknowledge that housing is a right and homelessness is unacceptable.
- We are focused on radical anti-racist change in pursuit of justice and equity.
- We are data-enlightened and person centered.
- We are courageous, inclusive and transparent in support of our mission.
R.E.A.C.H-Ohio’s Committees

1. Informational Committee
   • Focus: Equity Training & Technical Assistance, and data analysis

2. Organizational Committee
   • Focus: Equitable Service Delivery & Racially Equitable Decision Making

3. Systemic Committee
   • Focus: Equitable Advocacy & Cross System Collaboration
Roadmap for our time

Racial Equity

Sexual Orientation & Gender Identity

Lived Experiences

Trauma Informed Service
Roadmap for our Feelings

Keep Going!
- Curiosity
- Intrigue
- Reconsideration
- Enlightenment

Pause.
- Confusion
- Misunderstanding
- Misalignment with previous understanding

Make a U-Turn!
- Regret
- Resentment
- Shame
- Blame
Equality Ohio identifies and transforms systems and institutions so LGBTQ+ Ohioans can fully access legal and lived equality. We envision an Ohio where people are welcome, affirmed and flourishing. We do this through:

- Statehouse and Agency Advocacy
- Municipal Policy Work
  - Legal Clinic
- Public Education Programming

We are always here as a resource! You can ask us anything in a judgement-free space because we are here to help you become a full supporter of LGBTQ equality.
What We Do

We work with public officials, business leaders, faith communities, and other stakeholders to promote **lived** and **legal** equality throughout Ohio.

**Legal Equality:**
Equal protection of LGBTQ people in policies and laws

**Lived Equality:**
Outcomes, community well being, and the lived experiences of LGBTQ people
Equality Ohio & Race Equity

24+ month process to develop a strategic framework that has a race equity lens.

Racism is unique, systemic, and persistent; addressing it within ourselves, communities, policies, laws, systems and institutions is vital for the transformation we seek and need. We believe diverse leadership and meaningful engagement from across our LGBTQ+ and allied communities, most especially in communities of color, results in better solutions for everyone. We will fight such that those experiencing multiple forms of oppression are specifically addressed in policy and nobody is left behind.
Freeman Hrabowski, former president of UMBC, who talks about the importance of not being beholden to the tyranny of either/or and instead being liberated by the beauty of both/and.

https://president.umbc.edu/freeman-hrabowski/
Part 1: Racial Equity
Part 2: Sexual Orientation & Gender Identity
Cultural Humility

Examining the world by first examining oneself.

A self-reflective process that pairs the question, “Why does this person do this thing in this way?”, with the question, “Why do I do this thing in this way?”

Interrogating our sense of what is “normal” when encountering that which is “other”.
Guiding Principle #1: Diversity is Natural

Variations in sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression are part of the normal spectrum of human diversity.
Guiding Principle #2: Identity Doesn’t Equal Risk

The increased risks faced by LGBTQ and gender nonconforming youth and adults—particularly those of color—are not inherent to their identities, but stem from the stresses of prejudice, discrimination, rejection, and mistreatment.

www.cerespolicyresearch.com
Guiding Principle #3: Science isn’t Stationary

Scientific inquiry into gender and sexual orientation both in humans and the animal kingdom has been occurring for hundreds of years and continues in earnest today. We don’t yet have all of the answers.
Sexual Orientation & Gender Identity (SOGIE - The Data)

- **Sexual Orientation**: An inherent or immutable enduring emotional, romantic or sexual attraction to other people.

- **Assigned Birth Gender (or Sex)**: An individual’s determined gender based upon genitals, reproductive organs, and/or chromosomes; what the doctor said you were when you were born.

- **Gender Identity**: One's innermost concept of self as male, female, a blend of both or neither – how individuals perceive themselves and what they call themselves. One's gender identity can be the same or different from their sex assigned at birth.

- **Gender Expression**: External appearance of one's gender identity, usually expressed through behavior, clothing, haircut or voice, and which may or may not conform to socially defined behaviors and characteristics typically associated with being either masculine or feminine.
The Gender Unicorn

Gender Identity:
- Female/Woman/Girl
- Male/Men/Boy
- Other Gender(s)

Gender Expression:
- Feminine
- Masculine
- Other

Sex Assigned at Birth:
- Female
- Male
- Other/Intersex

Physically Attracted to:
- Women
- Men
- Other Gender(s)

Emotionally Attracted to:
- Women
- Men
- Other Gender(s)

To learn more, go to: www.transstudent.org/gender

Design by Landyn Pan and Anna Moore
Sexual Orientations

- **Straight**: Having attraction to the opposite gender.
- **Lesbian**: Women who have attraction to other women.
- **Gay**: Men who have attraction to other men (women who are attracted to women sometimes use this term).
- **Bisexual/Pansexual**: Having attraction to two or more genders (such as men and women).
- **Same-Gender-Loving (SGL)**: An Afrocentric alternative to LGB identities coined in the 90s.
A special note about “Queer”

16th century: originally meant strange, peculiar or odd.

Early 20th century: began being used as a slur for LGBTQ folks.

Late 1980’s: partial reclamation as part of the LGBTQ equality/AIDS rights movement.

Today: An umbrella term that some LGBTQ+ people may use to describe themselves or the community at large.

Should not be used to describe any person who has not first identified themselves as Queer.
Gender Identities

- **Cisgender:** A person whose gender identity conforms with the gender they were assigned at birth; a person who is not transgender.

- **Transgender:** A person whose gender identity differs from the gender they were assigned at birth; a person who is not cisgender.
  - **Transgender Woman (MTF):** A woman who was assumed male at birth.
  - **Transgender Man (FTM):** A man who was assumed female at birth.
  - **Genderqueer/Gender Nonconforming/Gender Non-Binary (Enby):** Umbrella terms for an individual who does not necessarily identify as male or female.
Intersex is not a Gender Identity

**Intersex:** an umbrella term for differences in sex traits or reproductive anatomy

- *Not* the same as transgender
- Doesn’t always show up at birth. Sometimes at puberty. Sometimes it is never known.
- About 1.7% of the population. But who counts as intersex (how unusual a combination of parts has to be before it counts as intersex) is a matter of medical opinion and those opinions vary widely.
- An intersex diagnosis can be medically significant (metabolic conditions)

*Source: InterAct - Advocates for Intersex Youth*
Gender Identity Development

Gender identity typically develops in stages:

- **Around age two:** Children become conscious of the physical differences between boys and girls.
- **Before their third birthday:** Most children can easily label themselves as either a boy or a girl.
- **By age four:** Most children have a stable sense of their gender identity.

Research suggests that children who assert a gender-diverse identity know their gender as clearly and consistently as their developmentally matched peers.

*Source: Healthychildren.org*
Transition: Steps—physical, medical, and/or social—an individual will take to align the world’s understanding of their gender with who they know themselves to be. Someone’s transition may not be physical at all.

- a private decision and process.
- Questions about someone’s transition will often be considered rude and disrespectful.
- Some folks are more open and public than others about their transition journey—please do not assume that everyone is comfortable with sharing.
- If transition details are shared with you, they should be kept private.

yes, i am transgender.
no, i am not gay.
Remember:

- **Gender Identity** is who you are.
- **Sexual Orientation** is who you are attracted to.
- **Gender Expression** (how someone expresses themselves) does not tell you gender identity or sexual orientation.
- **Transition** is different for every individual and it is **personal**.
Part 3: Lived Experiences in the Trans and Nonbinary Community
Cultural Humility & the Lived Experiences of Others

Interrogating One’s Sense of Normal:

- What formal or informal social power do I hold?
- What formal or informal social power do I lack?
- Do I have any formal or informal social disadvantages?
- What do people assume about me/my intellect/my worth and on what do they base those assumptions?
- What do people get wrong about me? Why?
Marginalization: treatment of a person, group, or concept as insignificant or peripheral

LGBTQ people have existed across TIME, AGE, GENDER, RACE, NATIONALITIES, ECONOMIC CLASS, SOCIAL CLASS, PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES, RELIGIONS, and POLITICAL IDEOLOGIES.

Each of these larger groups, at one point or another, has marginalized or is marginalizing the LGBTQ sub-group within.
**Trauma:** a deeply distressing or disturbing experience.

LGBTQ people across **TIME, AGE, GENDER, RACE, NATIONALITIES, ECONOMIC CLASS, SOCIAL CLASS, PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES, RELIGIONS, and POLITICAL IDEOLOGIES** experience trauma.

Trauma occurs in homes, schools, workplaces, public spaces and faith spaces.
Minority Stress

- The **presence** of discrimination, stigma, and prejudice creates a hostile social climate that **taxes individuals’ coping resources**

- This is true **even for those who are not directly exposed to discrimination**

- Manifestations of this stress include: internalized stigma, low self-esteem, **expectations of rejection** & fear of discrimination

- Protective factors include: peer, community, and family support; access to affirming health care and social services, **inclusive practices**, and anti-discrimination policies.
Minority Stress

Research shows that exposure to anti-LGBT discrimination increases the risks of poor mental and physical health for all LGBT people.
Risk Factors in the Transgender Community

Severe Economic Hardship and Housing Instability
→ Income and employment status
→ *Housing, homelessness, and shelters*
→ Sex Work and other underground economic work

Pervasive Mistreatment & Violence
→ Harassment at school
→ Police interactions and prison
→ Violence

Harmful Effects on Physical and Mental Health
→ Insurance coverage
→ Psychological distress

*Compounding Effects of Other Discrimination*
Intersectionality

1. a prism through which to see the interactive effects of various forms of discrimination and disempowerment.

1. seeing that the overlapping vulnerabilities created by these systems actually **create specific kinds of challenges.**
Dr. Crenshaw’s Analysis

- Civil rights (race discrimination) laws solve for Black men
- Women’s rights (sex discrimination) laws solve for White women
- Neither recognize the real discrimination that Black women experience, rendering them legally invisible

The problems with “single axis” problem solving...

1. The experience of the most dominant identity is centered.

1. Any experience that does not align is deemed not credible.

1. Policies are adopted that (1) fail to address the harm or (2) produce additional harms
1. A racial justice critique of patriarchy and homophobia, acknowledging the particular way that racism is experienced and exacerbated by heterosexism, classism etc.

1. A social justice frame that addresses the particular ways that those with multiple marginalized identities experience discrimination.
Guiding Principle #2: Identity Doesn’t Equal Risk

The increased risks faced by LGBTQ and gender nonconforming youth and adults—particularly those of color—are not inherent to their identities, but stem from the stresses of prejudice, discrimination, rejection, and mistreatment.

www.cerespolicyresearch.com
Discrimination

- 75% of LGBTQ youth reported that they had experienced discrimination based on their sexual orientation or gender identity at least once in their lifetime.

- Half of all LGBTQ youth of color reported discrimination based on their race/ethnicity in the past year, including 67% of Black LGBTQ youth and 60% of Asian/Pacific Islander LGBTQ youth.
42% of LGBTQ youth seriously considered attempting suicide in the past year, including more than half of transgender and nonbinary youth.

12% of white youth attempted suicide compared to 31% of Native/Indigenous youth, 21% of Black youth, 21% of multiracial youth, 18% of Latinx youth, and 12% of Asian/Pacific Islander youth.

only 1 in 3 LGBTQ youth found their home to be LGBTQ-affirming.
Suicide & Self-Harm

Affirming transgender and nonbinary youth by respecting their pronouns and allowing them to change legal documents is associated with lower rates of attempting suicide.
Youth Homelessness & Housing Insecurity

- LGBTQ+ youth are at 2.2x greater risk of experiencing homelessness.
- 20 - 40% of all homeless youth are LGBTQ+ (but are only 7% of the greater population).
- More than 1 in 4 LGBTQ+ youth are forced to leave home when they come out/turn 18.
Economic Hardship and Housing Instability

Transgender and nonbinary individuals are —

- More than three times as likely to be unemployed
- More than twice as likely to live in poverty as the U.S. public as a whole.
- Nearly a third have experienced homelessness at some point in their lives
- One in five have been discriminated against when seeking a home.
- More than one in ten evicted from their homes because of their gender identity
Facilities receiving funding must grant equal access to facilities and services regardless of actual or perceived gender identity.

It is PROHIBITED for a homeless facility to deny service to, segregate, or isolate LGBTQ individuals based solely on their actual or perceived identity.
But... there are still problems -

- 55% of transgender people who stayed in homeless shelters claim they were harassed by staff*

- Nearly 44% of LGBTQ victims of domestic partner violence are turned away from domestic violence shelters, and many HUD-funded shelters are unequipped to deal with domestic violence cases**

*Human Rights Campaign
** National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs
Equal Access Protections Still Needed for Gender Minorities Experiencing Homelessness

Unsheltered percentage by gender, 2019

- **Cisgender Adults**: 49% unsheltered
- **Transgender Adults**: 63% unsheltered
- **Gender Non-Conforming Adults**: 80% unsheltered

*Source: NAEH Analysis of US Department of Housing and Urban Development Point-in-Time Data, 2019*
Part 4: Trauma-Informed Housing Services
Respect is Required

Regardless of personal beliefs, employees and contractors of public systems of care are legally and ethically required to treat LGBTQ and gender nonconforming people equitably and respectfully.
See the Whole Person

Treating people as whole people will improve the relationship that you have and the services you provide.
Don’t Assume. Ask.

Asking questions about their multiple identities such as SOGIE and race/ethnicity will help you understand and treat people as whole people.
Permitting people to decide when and to whom to disclose their SOGIE protects their safety and promotes their healthy development.
Collect SOGIE data
Ask name and pronouns.
Accept the gender identity stated to you by the client.
Ask gender neutral questions - do you have a significant other?
Offer the same services to a transgender client as you would a cisgender client.
Inform all clients at intake of non-discrimination policies.
Discriminatory Intake

- Making decisions for the client that do not coincide with their gender identity.
- Seeking documentation or information about the client's anatomy.
- Demanding to know the client’s sexual orientation unless it is for data purposes.
Pronoun Dos & Don’ts

**DO:**
- Share your pronouns when you introduce yourself
- Politely ask for someone’s pronouns instead of assuming
- Apologize when you misgender someone by using the wrong pronouns

**DON’T:**
- Assume pronouns based on gender expression or sexual orientation
- Excessively apologize for a pronoun misstep
- Qualify someone’s pronouns with additional information
- Ever use “it” to refer to a person
Familial Terms & Terms of Endearment

- **Parent** is an appropriate alternative to mother or father (and their derivatives)
- **Sibling** is the gender neutral alternative to brother or sister
- Nieces and nephews can be referred to as *niblings*
- **Auncle** is a combination of aunt and uncle
- **Kid** and **child** are alternatives to son and daughter
- Romantic attachment can be signified by **Significant Other, Spouse, Paramour, and Datefriend**
Avoid Disaffirming Language

- Homosexual
- Transgendered
- Lifestyle
- Sexual preference
- Gay agenda
- “Real” man or woman
- Fag, faggot, dyke, tranny, etc.
  - Even if used as a self-descriptor
Welcoming & Affirming Placement

- Placement/housing of the individual must be based on client’s gender identity, taking health and safety concerns into consideration.
- If a transgender or intersex client requests assignment based on their gender assigned at birth, the shelter should also honor this request, as they may feel safest that way.
- A shelter cannot make an assignment or reassignment based on complaints of another person if the sole basis of the complaint is the identity of the client.
Protecting Privacy

- Curtains or separate stalls for showering.
- Single-stall, gender neutral or private restrooms.
- Separate changing schedules to maintain safety.
- At a minimum, when a client expresses a privacy or safety concern, the shelter must allow the client to use separate bathrooms or dressing areas.
Welcoming & Inclusive Physical Spaces

- Establish gender-neutral bathrooms
- Add “signals” to your common spaces
  - These are things that signal to the LGBTQ+ community that your office is a welcoming space
    - LGBTQ magazines in waiting rooms
    - Ally “safe space” stickers or rainbows in the office
Maintaining a Safe Environment

● **Do:**
  ○ Enforce anti-discrimination policies to create a safe space.
  ○ Regularly educate staff, volunteers and clients about respect and equal treatment of LGBTQ+ individuals.
  ○ Investigate allegations of violence or harassment of LGBTQ+ individuals and respond immediately.
Maintaining a Safe Environment

● Don’t
  ○ Ignore bullying against LGBTQ+ clients, even if you think it is harmless.
  ○ Force transgender residents to appear as their gender assigned at birth.
  ○ Victim-blame or punish the person being bullied.
  ○ Assume LGBTQ+ individuals are educated about LGBTQ+ non-discrimination.
Addressing Non-Affirming Behavior

- **Educate:** Share what you know and encourage others to learn more with you.

- **Be Patient:** Shaming and blaming are not effective methods for changing non-affirming behaviors and the biases that underlie them. Be calm, be respectful, and invite further learning.

- **Be Firm:** If employees or volunteers consistently refuse to be respectful of LGBTQ+ individuals and their safety, consider removing them from the environment whether that be temporarily or permanently.
Trauma - Informed Referrals

- Ask your LGBTQ+ clients at what shelters they feel comfortable staying.

- Identify service providers committed to LGBTQ+ non-discrimination.

- Create a referral list of organizations that are safe for LGBTQ+ clients.

- Do not send an LGBTQ+ client somewhere they do not feel safe going.
Welcoming & Inclusive Systems

- Audit your website, client, and marketing materials
  - Use gender-neutral pronouns (they/them)
  - Use less heteronormative media (photos, videos, etc)
- Audit your intake system
  - Have a place for legal name + preferred name & pronouns
  - Have indication for whether you can leave detailed messages on VM or email
  - Ensure all staff has this info
Be the safe adult. Just one affirming adult can save an LGBTQ+ kid’s life.

Stand up to bullies. LGBTQ+ folks, particularly youth, are watching, and they need to see allies standing up for them.

Stay involved. Understand the social climate for LGBTQ+ people in your community and advocate for greater inclusion.
Resources

- Inequality.org
  https://inequality.org/

- GLSEN
  https://www.glsen.org/

- The Trevor Project
  https://www.thetrevorproject.org/

- Kaleidoscope Youth Center
  https://www.kycoho.org/

- Movement Advancement Project: Ohio’s Equality Profile

- UCLA School of Law, Williams Institute: Ohio-related studies
The **Equality Ohio Legal Clinic** serves LGBTQ Ohioans through:

- Emergency legal and personal advocacy
- Victim compensation
- Civil representation
- Referrals (Lawyer Referral Network)
- Holistic support, including social services referral

**1-855-LGBT-LAW**

[equalityohio.org/legal-clinic](http://equalityohio.org/legal-clinic)
Questions?

We are always here as a resource!

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