



Assessing Workforce Diversity: A Tool for Mental Health Organizations on the Path to Health Equity

The purpose of this tool is to help you assess the successes and challenges of your mental health organization in building a diverse workforce. Additionally, this tool highlights the importance of a diverse workforce in effectively addressing mental health disparities for the populations in your community.

“Diversity is being asked to the party. **Inclusion** is being asked to dance.”ⁱ

Equity ensures that everyone has access to the same opportunities.

The population in the Pacific Southwest is increasingly diverse. Mental health providers work with community members from a widening range of cultures, countries of

origin, languages spoken at home, and personal identities. We are working with communities that are diverse across race, gender, ethnicity, religion, nationality, language, sexual orientation, lifestyle, and other salient identity characteristics.

Increasing workforce diversity is a critical step in achieving health equity.ⁱⁱ Though there are various approaches to addressing health disparities, one

approach is to diversify the workforce. Workforce diversity helps improve access to health and health care for communities of color.ⁱⁱⁱ It is a key strategy for improving health outcomes, addressing health disparities, and fostering cultural and linguistic competence in service delivery. Workforce diversity includes all staff at an organization, not just clinicians. Most of us are aware of the disparities in mental health access, service, and outcomes across diverse populations. The American Psychiatric Association recently noted that racial, ethnic, gender, and sexual minorities often suffer from poor mental health outcomes due to multiple factors, including inaccessibility of high quality mental health care services; cultural stigma surrounding mental health care; discrimination; and overall lack of awareness about mental health.^{iv,v} We also know that cultures define mental illness, wellness, and treatment in different ways.^{vi} Despite this knowledge, many of us still struggle to create and maintain a workforce that understands these beliefs and attitudes and reflects our communities’ populations. This tool can help us assess, reflect, and integrate our knowledge of the importance of a culturally responsive workforce to the mental health and wellness of those to whom we provide services.

Diversity matters to service access and outcomes, and it also matters to the bottom line. A Kellogg Foundation report found “that businesses with a more diverse workforce have more customers, higher revenues and profits, greater market share, less absenteeism and turnover, and a higher level of commitment to their organization.”^{vii} Knowing the importance of workforce diversity to fiscal success can be a way to achieve buy-in from stakeholders and decision makers.

How to Use this Tool

This tool was developed to help organizations providing mental health services explore the extent to which they are implementing various workforce diversity strategies. It is organized into six areas: 1) Leadership and Governance; 2) Recruitment; 3) Orientation, Onboarding, and Ongoing Training; 4) Retention and Professional Development; 5) Communication; and 6) Partnership and Community Engagement. The tool takes into consideration the National Standards for Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services^{viii} (CLAS), and it is also inspired by other tools and guidelines designed to promote equity, diversity, and cultural and linguistic competence. With self-reflection

and awareness, a willingness to change and grow, transformational leadership, and action, organizations can ensure equitable health care to all the populations in their communities.

Consider the following processes in using this tool:

- Convene a team that represents all levels of the organization and invite team members to complete this assessment tool together.
- Review your assessment findings. Identify areas in which you excel and also areas in which you may want to focus attention.
- Identify action steps to address areas where your organization is more limited and incorporate these action steps into an existing organizational plan (e.g., strategic, cultural competency, or diversity plan).

You will find a list of resources at the end of this tool that can help your organization address areas that you have identified for growth or change. Additionally, there is a short glossary of terms to assist you in creating a shared language for beginning workforce development within your organization.

The Tool

Review each area in its entirety before you respond to individual items. Respond in terms of what is currently happening in your organization, to the best of your/your team’s knowledge. If there is a practice within your organization related to a particular area that is not listed in this tool, add it under “Other.”

Area 1: Leadership and Governance Goal				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>A fully committed leadership and governance body ensures workforce diversity is a guiding philosophy within the organization.</i> • <i>Strategies to support workforce diversity are integrated throughout all levels of the organization and are infused in the needs assessment, planning, policy development, decision making, and program implementation.</i> 				
	Not True	Somewhat True	Often True	Always True
1. Our organization has adopted some or all the following: vision, mission, values, and/or guiding principles that promote workforce diversity to reflect community demographics.				
2. Our organization clearly communicates our philosophy and culture related to equity and diversity inside and outside our organization.				
3. Our organization implements an equity or diversity action plan.				
4. Our organization is governed by an advisory board, which promotes equity, inclusivity, and diversity.				

5. Our organization adheres to the CLAS and equity policies, procedures, and practices that support workforce diversity.				
6. Our organization establishes workplace norms and backs up and promotes these norms with written non-discrimination, grievance, and other related policies, and protocols for addressing staff complaints of harassment and other inappropriate workplace behaviors.				
Other:				
Area 2: Recruitment Goals				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Finding and hiring diverse qualified candidates in an inclusive, culturally appropriate manner is a specific goal.</i> <i>Hiring includes analyzing the real requirements of a job, attracting diverse potential employees to the job through innovative means, screening and selecting applicants in culturally sensitive ways, and extending an offer to a potential hire.</i> 				
	Not True	Somewhat True	Often True	Always True
1. Our organization utilizes community demographics to guide recruitment – including racial and/or tribal demographic data.				
2. Our organization has policies and practices in place that ensure equity in: creation of job descriptions, determination of appropriate qualifications, and need for different level skill sets resonant with position.				
3. Our organization announces job openings through a variety of media formats, modalities, and languages of communities served. Our organization works with community-based partners and organizations to advertise job openings.				
4. Our organization has policies and practices in place that ensure an interviewing and selection process that is fair and equitable.				
5. Our organization has policies and practices in place to ensure involvement of community stakeholders (local leaders, community gatekeepers, elders, healers, etc.) in key hires. It might also include organizations involved in referrals, funding, or systems of care; or individuals with lived experience.				
6. Our organization promotes an expectation and standard that all staff - regardless of cultural identity - demonstrate the capacity to serve diverse populations.				
Other:				

Area 3: Onboarding, Orientation, and Ongoing Training Goals

- *Providing culturally responsive onboarding, orientation, and training ensures that new staff are acclimatized to the organizational culture and climate*
- *Training is designed to increase their ability to translate awareness and knowledge of equity and diversity into practice*

	Not True	Somewhat True	Often True	Always True
1. Our organization implements onboarding and orientation activities that support integration of new staff into our organizational culture and climate in culturally responsive ways. Examples include: offer new hires opportunities to shadow other team members, identify new hires with a mentor who can share information regarding the organization that will ease entry, offer accommodations to address special needs.				
2. Our organization conducts regular staff and organizational assessment to identify staffing needs related to cultural competence, diversity, inclusion, and equity.				
3. Our organization provides training that invites staff to engage in reflection of own culture, identify differences and similarities, and celebrate diversity of all staff.				
4. Our organization provides ongoing staff training about the mental health needs, opportunities, barriers, beliefs, and practices of the various cultures of the communities we serve.				
5. Our organization fosters a work climate, through formal and informal means, that addresses workforce diversity challenges and promotes respect for groups, communities, clients, and colleagues of different backgrounds.				
6. Our organization ensures compensation that is fair and equitable, according to roles, responsibilities, and market value.				
Other:				

Area 4: Retention and Professional Development Goals

- *Professional development opportunities ensure that staff see pathways for growth, promotion, and enhanced job satisfaction leading to retention of qualified and diverse staff.*

	Not True	Somewhat True	Often True	Always True
1. Our organization has a mechanism for and takes immediate action when bias, microaggressions, or any discrimination or intolerance is manifested to ensure that all staff feel protected by the organization.				
2. Our organization provides culturally responsive professional development opportunities for staff. For example, we invite				

alternative therapists/providers (such as spiritual healers, curanderos, etc.) to in-service trainings, arrange externships for staff (e.g. religious or spiritual leaders, or with groups that provide support for LGBTQ youth), and educate staff about traditional cultural practices that can be used as mental health practice.				
3. Our organization creates an environment of inclusion, respect, and appreciation of staff diversity through events, ceremonies, food, and other practices that celebrate diversity.				
4. Our organization continues to ensure compensation that is fair and equitable based on performance, longevity, and skill-sets needed and utilized by the organization.				
5. Our organization tracks number and types of training, training assessments, performance reviews, etc. to ensure staff receive appropriate and relevant professional development and are able to improve skills and abilities for future promotions.				
6. Our organization offers coaching, mentoring, reflective practice, and/or other forms of staff support that can enhance staff retention and professional development.				
Other:				

Area 5: Communication Goals

- *Building an equitable, diverse, and inclusive organization requires ongoing, accessible communication of the organization’s mission and values, policies, and procedures.*
- *Our organization has an overall commitment to diversity, health equity, and cultural and linguistic competence.*

	Not True	Somewhat True	Often True	Always True
1. Staff members communicate with each everyone respectfully and in a manner that is culturally resonant, inclusive, free of assumptions or bias, supportive, welcoming, and that recognizes each person as an individual. This applies to communication that is oral (in person or by phone/virtually), in writing, and in any messaging efforts.				
2. Our organization has written and oral policies and procedures ensuring that all staff members are regularly informed, trained, and accountable about communicating in a manner that is respectful, culturally-responsive, and inclusive.				
3. Our organization does formal or informal assessments to identify needs related to translation or interpretation, additional training, or other support that might be needed to ensure staff capacity is commensurate with service recipient needs.				

4. Our organization provides information about language and how different cultures talk about mental health in staff training to enhance staff understanding and use of mental health terms that are non-stigmatizing, understandable, and resonant in communities served.				
5. Our organization communicates expectations that all messaging, outreach, and promotion strategies reflect the languages, lifestyle, culture, beliefs and practices of the diverse communities served.				
Other:				

Area 6: Partnership and Community Goals

- Our organization has relationships with partners, vendors, and the community that support and promote equity, diversity, and inclusion to strengthen the organization’s capacity and commitment to diversity; attract a more diverse workforce and patient population; ensure culturally and linguistically competent services; and help everyone feel supported and valued.*

	Not True	Somewhat True	Often True	Always True
1. Our organization knows the changing demographics of the community we serve, through our own community outreach and engagement and/or by seeking input or data from other appropriate sources.				
2. Our organization fosters relationships with culturally diverse community partners and organizations to ensure that our understanding of communities is current and relevant. For example, this might include tribal councils; natural healers/curanderos or other traditional providers; other culture-specific or island-specific clubs, groups, or organizations; as well as other mental health providers.				
3. Our organization develops and maintains relationships with other services and support agencies to ensure appropriate and relevant referrals related to mental health or other needed supports.				
4. Our organization engages diverse, and culturally and linguistically appropriate supply and service vendors.				
5. Our organization implements activities that build capacity within the community to support diversity in our organization - such as offering internships, volunteer programs, and trainings that engage community members. We place emphasis and consideration on those who reflect our focus populations, or marginalized and minority groups, or who have lived mental health experience (especially in areas such as major depressive episode, serious mental illness, and suicide).				
Other:				

We've Completed the Assessment. Now What?

Completing this assessment represents a commitment to increasing workforce diversity. You're already making progress! After you use this tool, we encourage you to reflect on the results as an organization. As a next step, we recommend that you use the results to engage in action planning with your team. You may want to create a workforce diversity plan, or you may want to integrate your commitments into an existing strategic plan. Here are some ways to identify the workforce diversity priorities that resonate with your team.

- Review each section, and the assessment as a whole, and identify how your organization is doing in each area and overall.
- Note sections with more “not true” or “somewhat true” responses, which is where you might want to focus more attention and improvement.
- You may also find areas where you have only one “not true” or “somewhat true” response that is significant or important in your organization or community. Consider your strengths in this area and talk about how to leverage your success on most metrics to build additional successes in the area where there is a challenge.
- Consider using the information that you gather from completing and reviewing your responses to this tool to have an open discussion with staff, either in small groups and/or as an organization.

Additional Resources

We have included resources that can help you explore some of the diversity areas and criteria in greater depth. Within the resources, you can find additional tools that can help you further assess your successes and opportunities in particular areas.

Contact the Pacific Southwest MHTTC if you would like to have a follow up conversation about your organization's assessment or support creating a customized action plan to enhance workforce diversity.

Email: MHTTCPacSWinfo@cars-rp.org

Phone: 1-844-856-1749

www.MHTTCnetwork.org

Resources to Build Workforce Diversity

Guidance on the National CLAS Standards: The Blueprint

<https://www.thinkculturalhealth.hhs.gov/clas/blueprint>

The Blueprint is an implementation guide to help you advance and sustain culturally and linguistically appropriate services within your organization. It offers concise, practical information on how to use the National Standards for Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS) in Health and Health Care at your organization.

Diversity & Inclusion Impact Report

<https://www.aurorahealthcare.org/-/media/aurorahealthcareorg/documents/about-us/diversity-inclusion-impact-report.pdf>

This report is a single collection of a comprehensive story showcasing efforts to heighten self-awareness, identify opportunities, and develop innovative ways to make a collective impact. It addresses establishing a D&I (diversity & inclusion) model of raising awareness, taking ownership and action, and building relationships. The report also includes examples of organization's efforts in recruitment, retention, supplier diversity, and professional development.

Community Toolbox: Building Culturally Competent Organizations

<https://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/culture/cultural-competence/culturally-competent-organizations/main>

This resource includes a conversational description of what it means to be a culturally competent organization, why it is important, and how to become culturally competent. It includes a checklist, tools, and a PowerPoint presentation that can be used to educate staff or others.

Cultural and Linguistic Competence Planning and Capacity Building Strategic Plan

The Ohio Department of Health, Division of Family and Child Health Services,
Title V Maternal and Child Health Programs, May 2014.

http://servingohiobetter.org/site/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/20120_ODH_Maternal_full_v5-2.pdf

This strategic plan has goals, strategies, and action items to develop the tools and processes for Ohio's Department of Health to infuse cultural and linguistic competency practices throughout the division. Each goal area of the plan includes relevant CLAS standards for that section. Goal areas include: leadership and governance, workforce development, language services and signage, and engagement and communications.

5 Things We Learned About Creating Successful Workplace Diversity (and UNEION employee-developed diversity training program)

Harvard Business Review

<https://hbr.org/2018/03/5-things-we-learned-about-creating-a-successful-workplace-diversity-program>

This article shares some broad experiences and strategies related to building workplace diversity.

Recruitment and Retention: A Journey Toward a More Inclusive Workforce

<https://www.aicpa.org/career/diversityinitiatives/downloadabledocuments/recruitment-retention-toolkit.pdf>

This toolkit is aimed at HR leaders, practice leaders, and others charged with attracting, recruiting, and retaining a diverse workforce in their organization. This toolkit was written to help leaders understand how recruiting and retaining a diverse workforce can help them better achieve their companies' overall talent recruitment and retention goals. It is also meant to provide support on how to integrate diversity recruiting and retention techniques into broader day-to-day business and personal activities.

Glossary of Terms

Cultural and Linguistic Competence

Ohio Department of Health: Cultural and Linguistic Competence Planning and Capacity Building

http://servingohiobetter.org/site/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/20120_ODH_Maternal_full_v5-2.pdf

The capacity for individuals and organizations to work and communicate effectively in cross-cultural situations through the adoption and implementation of strategies to ensure appropriate awareness, attitudes, and actions and through the use of policies, structures, practices, procedures, and dedicated resources that support this capacity.

Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS)

Services that are respectful of and responsive to individual cultural health beliefs and practices, preferred languages, health literacy levels, and communication needs and employed by all members of an organization (regardless of size) at every point of contact.

CLAS Standards

The framework for culturally and linguistically appropriate services issued by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Minority Health. The National CLAS Standards are intended to inform, guide, and facilitate practices related to culturally and linguistically appropriate health service delivery.

Discrimination (bias, microaggressions)

US Legal.com

<https://definitions.uslegal.com/d/discrimination/>

Discrimination refers to the treatment or consideration of, or making a distinction in favor of or against, a person or thing based on the group, class, or category to which that person or thing belongs rather than on individual merit. Discrimination can be the effect of some law or established practice that confers privileges on a certain class or denies privileges to a certain class because of race, age, sex, nationality, religion, or handicap. On an individual level it can be biased or prejudicial behavior on the part of one individual to another leading to microaggressions and other harmful behaviors.

Equity

Society for Human Resources Management

<http://www.talentintelligence.com/blog/bid/377611/inclusion-and-the-benefits-of-diversity-in-the-workplace>

Equity ensures that everyone has access to the same opportunities. However, since we do not all start from the same place, equity acknowledges the need to take steps to compensate for advantages or barriers that we come into a situation with.

Diversity

Society for Human Resources Management

<http://www.talentintelligence.com/blog/bid/377611/inclusion-and-the-benefits-of-diversity-in-the-workplace>

Diversity means having people from different backgrounds or with different identity characteristics in a given setting, group or organization. Ideally, at a minimum, diversity starts with an organization's staffing or workforce reflecting the population they are serving and/or want to serve. This might include characteristics such as race, gender, ethnicity, religion, nationality, sexual orientation, and age. It can also include other factors, such as native and/or fluent languages, or socioeconomic factors like single-parent head of household.

Health Disparities

American Psychological Association

<https://www.apa.org/topics/health-disparities/index.aspx>

Health disparities definitions vary, but they all address differences in health status between one population group in comparison to a more advantaged group and most address issues of social justice and equity.

Health Equity

Boston Public Health Commission

<http://www.bphc.org/whatwedo/health-equity-social-justice/what-is-health-equity/Pages/what-is-health-equity.aspx>

Health equity means that everyone has a fair opportunity to live a long, healthy life. It implies that health should not be compromised or disadvantaged because of an individual or population group's race, ethnicity, gender, income, sexual orientation, neighborhood, or other social condition.

Inclusion

Society for Human Resources Management

<http://www.talentintelligence.com/blog/bid/377611/inclusion-and-the-benefits-of-diversity-in-the-workplace>
<https://generalassemb.ly/blog/diversity-inclusion-equity-differences-in-meaning/> Accessed 12/11/18

The achievement of a work environment in which all individuals are treated fairly and respectfully, have equal access to opportunities and resources, and can contribute fully to the organization's success. "Diversity is being asked to the party. Inclusion is being asked to dance."

Workforce Diversity

Diversity: A World of Change

<https://www.diversity.com/page/What-is-Diversity>

Diversity refers to both an obvious fact of human life—namely, that there are many different kinds of people—and the idea that this diversity drives cultural, economic, and social vitality and innovation. Workforce diversity extends this definition to include race, sex and gender identity, ethnicity, physical ability, religion, belief systems, sexual orientation, age, parental status, economic status, geographic background, etc. that can enhance the workplace environment.

Endnotes

ⁱ <https://generalassemb.ly/blog/diversity-inclusion-equity-differences-in-meaning>. Accessed 12/11/18.

ⁱⁱ The Colorado Trust (2013) Health Equity and Racial and Ethnic Workforce Diversity.
http://www.coloradotrust.org/sites/default/files/CT_Workforce_Diversity_Brief_FINAL.pdf

ⁱⁱⁱ Smedley BD, Butler AS, Bristow LR, eds. (2004) In the Nation's Compelling Interest: Ensuring Diversity in the Health-Care Workforce. Washington, DC: Institute of Medicine.

^{iv} <https://www.psychiatry.org/psychiatrists/cultural-competency/mental-health-disparities>. Accessed December 12, 2018.

^v "Measuring Disparities across the distribution of mental health care expenditures." [J Ment Health Policy Econ](#). 2013 Mar;16(1):3-12.

^{vi} "One Size Does Not Fit All: Taking Diversity, Culture and Context Seriously," [Adm Policy Ment Health](#). 2010 Mar; 37(1-2): 48–60. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2874609>.

^{vii} Turner, A. et al (2013) The Business Case for Racial Equity" Prepared by Altarum Institute and funded by Kellogg Foundation. https://scholar.harvard.edu/files/davidrwilliams/files/the_business_case_for_racial_equity_10-23-13_1_0.pdf.

^{viii} National Standards for Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services.
<https://www.thinkculturalhealth.hhs.gov/clas/standards>

Contact the Pacific Southwest MHTTC Team for more information.

Email: MHTTCPacSWinfo@cars-rp.org Phone: (844) 856-1749 Website: www.MHTTCnetwork.org