

To Get Ready for Today's Session, We Invite You to ...

Stay Engaged

- Am I focused and ready to be present for today's discussion?

Stay Open to New Ideas

- Am I ready to listen to different perspectives, expertise, and knowledge?

Stay Respectful

- Am I committed to pause and reflect before adding or responding to comments in the chat?

Sit With Discomfort

- Discussing race and equity can be difficult. Am I ready to be comfortable with being uncomfortable?

Source: Adapted from New York City Administration for Children's Services. (2020). Equity Checklist.

Thank you for joining us today!

We invite you to share your reflections in the chat during the session.

We will begin shortly.



Intentional Inclusion: Creating Equity in the Workplace



Anita Barbee | Veronica Burroughs | Julia Donovan
Vannessa Dorantes | Amy He | Jodi Hill-Lilly | Anna Koehle



Intentional Inclusion: Creating Equity in the Workplace



Anna Koehle



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Session Learning Objectives

Explore the important role **workplace culture** plays in advancing race equity in the workforce.

Discuss how the workforce can **co-create and share power with persons with lived experience** as employees and organizational leaders.

Using Organizational Assessments to Support Workplace Equity



Amy He



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Efforts to Address Equity and Inclusivity in Child Welfare

Examine Workplace Discrimination

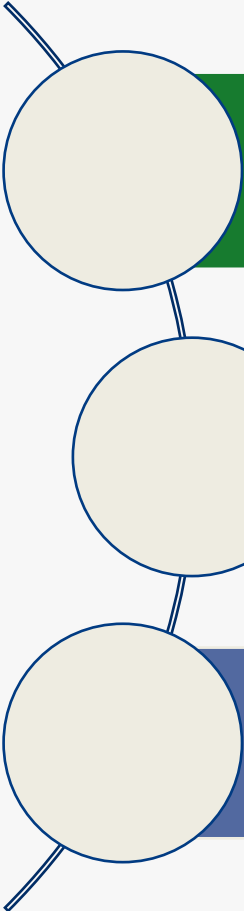
- Workplace discrimination is the **antithesis of workplace inclusion**.
- An **organizational health assessment** can provide insight on the presence of equity and provides an opportunity to hear from staff about feelings of inclusiveness and feelings of discrimination.

Recognize Different Perceptions

- Research indicates that there are **different perceptions of workplace discrimination** by racial and ethnic identities that can contribute to potential harm to those persons in nondominant cultures.
- **It matters that people have different experiences.** The phenomenon of color-blindness and not seeing differences can lead to discriminatory decisions and behaviors.
- We need to see differences in race, ethnicity, and gender so we can **acknowledge inequities and advocate for change**.



Organizational Assessments Can Drive Change



Information gathered from organizational assessments can drive and impact change through **data-informed decision-making**.

If an agency finds that there are **differential perceptions of workplace discrimination**, it may **indicate that there is a culture of color blindness**.

The **Comprehensive Organizational Health Assessment (COHA)** is a free collection of measures that captures **aspects of workforce well-being, organizational climate, and workforce demographics**.

COHA Measures Workforce Discrimination and Moral Distress

Based on data collected from over 2,000 caseworkers ...

Staff of color reported experiencing more workplace discrimination than their white colleagues

One out of five staff of color reported that they had fewer opportunities in the workplace than their white counterparts

Capturing these experiences is important to name and give voice to people of color in this profession.



A Statewide Approach to Creating Equity in the Workplace



Vannessa Dorantes | Jodi Hill-Lilly



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Connecticut Department of Children and Families (DCF)

3,200 Employees

**3,700 Children in
Care**

51% Staff Diversity

**Disproportionate
Representation of
Children of Color
in Care**

Connecticut DCF Strategic Goals



Timeline of Connecticut DCF's Racial Equity Journey

2009

- Began racial equity work amid public allegations

2010

- Engaged external partners to solidify framework and approach

2012

- Issued racial justice statement (under previous leadership)

2015

- Implemented operational strategy and external kick-off

2018

- Codified racial justice work through legislation

2019

- Appointed new leadership and administration

2020

- Experienced COVID-19 outbreak and racial unrest

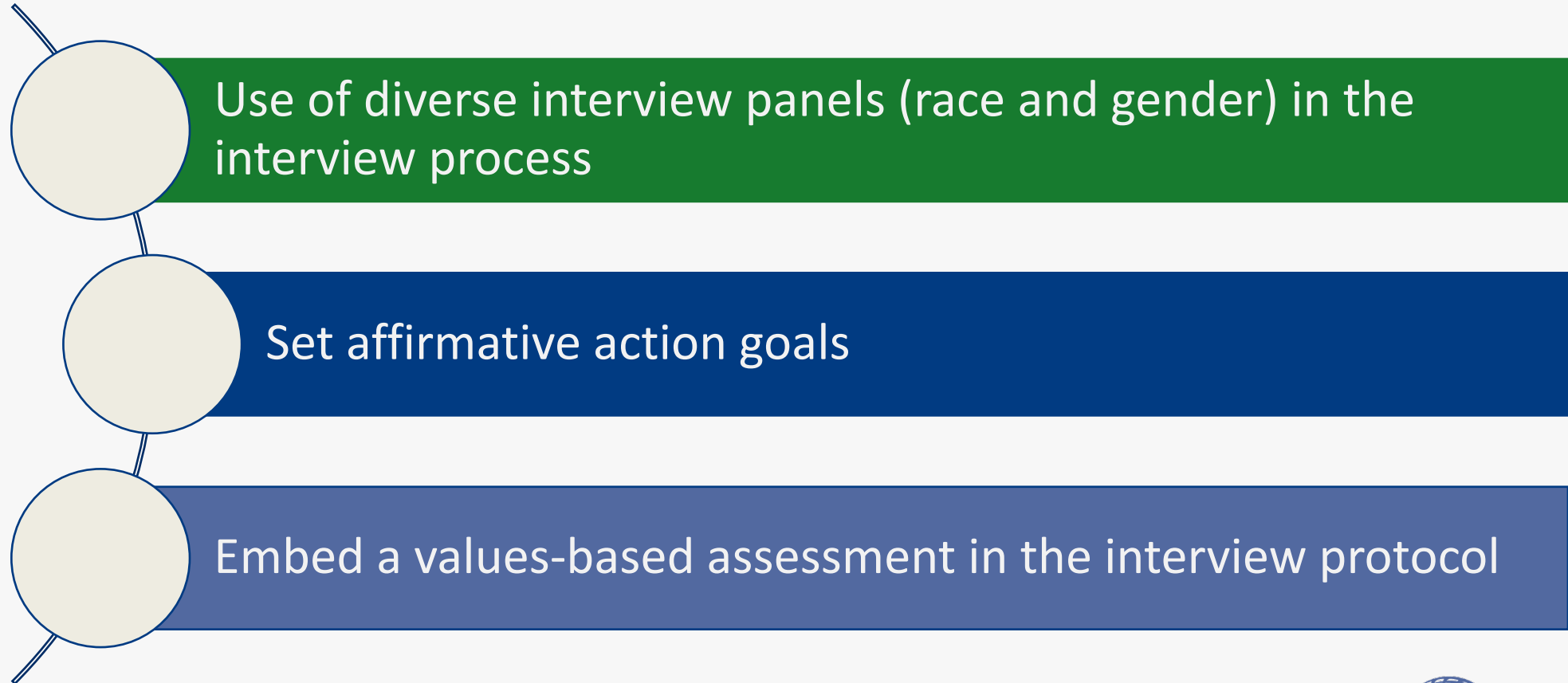
Use of Organizational Assessments and Supports

Staff Surveys

Use of Data to Inform Process

Employee Assistance Program

Staff Recruitment Efforts



Racial Justice Work Group

Consists of Several Subcommittees

- Focus on data, workforce, and community partners
- Includes internal and external partners

Embedded the Practice of *Safety Science*

- Developed a framework called Safe and Sound
- Supports child welfare professionals in having conversations about race

Connecticut DCF Safe and Sound Framework



Creating and Nurturing a Culture of Safety

A Culture of Safety is one in which our values, attitudes, and behaviors support psychological and physical safety for staff, and the families and children we serve.

As a culture of safety, Safe and Sound is rooted in the principles of respect, trust, candor, equity and racial justice. Put into action, this enables us to be engaged, supportive, accountable, and open to learning. It empowers us to make sound decisions and competently provide services that help children and families achieve safe and healthy outcomes.

The Five Rs of Safe and Sound

As a process, the Five Rs provide a framework for our work within a culture of safety and racial justice.



Reflecting Back and Planning Forward

Our Safe and Sound culture creates a learning environment in which we strive to try new ideas, identify and plan for what could go wrong, talk about and learn from our mistakes, tap into others' expertise, and honor the unique skills we each bring to our work.



Ongoing Efforts to Support Race Equity

**Implicit Bias Training
for All Staff**

**Racial Justice Change
Initiative for All
Leaders**

**Statewide Racial
Justice Workgroup**

**Special Attention to
Human Resources
(Recruitment, Hiring,
and Discipline)**

**Hiring of a Director of
Organizational
Development to Assess
Moral Distress on an
Ongoing Basis**

**Simulation Lab Staffed
by Persons With Lived
Experience**

**Hiring of Youth
Advisors in the
Ombudsman's Office**

Youth Advisory Board

Use of Exit Interviews to Support Race Equity



Supporting Diverse Leadership

Minority Professional Leadership Development (MLPD) at AdoptUSKids



- Innovative 12-month program designed to support the development of leaders of color
- Leaders of color have an opportunity to develop an action research project
- Leaders of color are paired with mentors within the state agency and work on areas of practice where there is disproportionality

Overcoming Implicit Bias



Anita Barbee



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Defining Implicit Bias

Implicit Bias

- An unconscious process that is activated when we view persons that are considered in the “out” or “other” group

Implicit Bias Happens More When People:

- Cannot engage in reflective thought
- Are under time pressure
- Encounter ambiguous situations

Implicit Bias and the Child Welfare Workforce

The child welfare workforce is often ...

On the Go

Under
Constant
Time
Pressure

Facing
Ambiguous
Situations

It is critical that our child welfare professionals
develop strategies to combat biases.



Overcoming Implicit Bias

Recognize that it is almost impossible to stop an automatic thought from arising.

Capture the thought and wrestle it to the ground. Hold it there until you disconnect it from any action associated with the thought.

Awareness of biases can create motivation to change.

Strategies for Addressing Implicit Bias

Work to replace stereotypes

Have pictures or images around that are counter-stereotypical

Learn more about perspective taking and understanding

Identify ways that persons from the “other” group might be similar to you

Additional Strategies to Identify and Address Biases

Engage in Reflective Supervision

- Provide child welfare workers time to work toward uncovering biases that arise in casework.
- Hold workers accountable, even for thoughts outside of consciousness.

Use an Intermediary

- Studies indicate that having an intermediary between the families that child welfare serves and the caseworker can begin to reduce these biases.
- Intermediaries may include a parent partner navigator.

Support Cultural Humility

- Center family voice in casework.
- Support child welfare workers in achieving cultural humility.

Consider Hiring Practices

- Hire staff from the communities served by the child welfare agency.

Program Examples

Cultural Broker Family Advocate Program (California): Works with caseworkers and families to provide culturally congruent services to help families navigate government systems, including the child welfare system.

Kinship Navigator Programs: Supports kinship caregivers' ability to identify and access appropriate services to meet their own needs to sustain permanency and to meet the needs of the children they are raising.

Peer-to-Peer (P2P) Navigators (New York City): Young adults harness their lived experience navigating foster care to work with, engage, and connect with youth currently involved with the child welfare system.

The Power of Including Those With Lived Experience in the Workforce



Veronica Burroughs | Julia Donovan



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Ohio Kinship and Adoption Navigator (KAN) Program

Includes persons
with lived
experience in
programming

Serves 88 counties
across the state

Flexible and
responsive
program

Serves formal,
informal, and
postadoptive
families

No income
requirement

Goal is to co-
create solutions to
challenges families
face

Engaging Stakeholders in Ohio KAN



Included community and family voice in the meetings that helped develop the program

Solicited feedback on the model from another 190 stakeholders through town hall meetings

Developed two new stakeholder groups, one for implementation and one for evaluation

Engaged people with lived experience at every level of the program, including people who were caregivers or those who were raised in kinship or adoptive homes

Involving Community Partners

Engaged **diverse partners** in communities across the state

Seventeen partners ranged from **mental health organizations, hospitals, foster care partners, and adoption agencies**

Partner sites hired **navigators with lived experience** to work at the partner sites

Listening to Community Voice

40% of staff
across the
state of Ohio
have lived
experience

38% of parent
navigators
have lived
experience

Supporting Inclusivity and Centering Family Voice

10 Regional Advisory Councils (RAC)

- Helps oversee the work, barriers, and gaps within each region
- RAC charter stipulates that people with lived experience must be on the council
- Brings a level of diversity to the RAC to support program administration

Parent Navigator Hiring

- Bachelor's degree is not required; associate's degree is a preferred qualification (instead of required)
- Lived experience is a preferred qualification
- Match for transferrable skills
- Check for bias in hiring systems for managing resumes to ensure equity
- Use social capital and networks to drive hiring



Group Discussion: Creating Equity in the Workforce



**Anita Barbee | Veronica Burroughs | Julia Donovan
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Discussion Question

What advice do you have for leaders who are just starting to look at equity in their workforce, and what should they anticipate as challenges?

Advice for Leaders Looking at Equity in Their Workforce

Question everything!

Start early and leave no rock unturned.

Look at potential changes in the language used by your program.

Evaluate, track, and continue to adjust your program.

Engage community and university partners who can conduct an assessments for your agency.

Include the voice of your staff and individuals with lived experience.

Advice for Leaders Looking at Equity in Their Workforce

Build the voice of the workforce.

Use a “racial justice mailbox” to hear directly from staff.

Recognize the workforce is the “ear to the ground” for the outcomes produced.

Look at a trauma-informed or healing approach for your program.

Lead with names during meetings, not titles.

Discussion Question

What are some ways to bake in equity strategies to survive inevitable changes in leadership?

Supporting the Sustainability of Racial Equity Strategies

Engage in conversations with individuals at all levels, both internally and externally to the organization.

Support a more holistic approach to ensure practices are sustained.

Provide coaching to help retain and sustain strategies covered in training.

Be data-driven and data-informed: data is the report card!

Supporting the Sustainability of Racial Equity Strategies



Change policies and procedures to support racial equity.

Look across systems to make changes, including legal, education, and public health systems.

Review procedures, language being used, and performance indicators.

Up Next!

Thank you for your participation today!

Please join us for the closing remarks from Aysha E. Schomburg,
Associate Commissioner of the Children's Bureau.

The next session will begin at 4:15 p.m. Eastern Time.

