DISMANTLING RACIAL INEQUITY

Slow and Steady Wins the RACE of Child Welfare Equity

at the Connecticut Department of Children and Families

DCF CONNECTICUT
WHO WE ARE: Racial Justice Leadership

Jodi Hill-Lilly, Director, Academy for Workforce Development
Vannessa Dorantes, Region 5 Administrator
Tracy Davis, Assistant Director, Academy for Workforce Development
William Rivera Director, Multicultural Affairs and Immigration Practice

Jen Agosti, MPP, Consultant
Commissioner Joette Katz
Susan R. Smith, Chief of Quality and Planning
Presentation Overview

1. History and Evolution of the Work

2. Practice Implications

3. QA Framework and Data Growth

4. Next Steps and Sustainability
Overarching “frames” for our discussion
Slow and Steady: We’ve Been at This for a Long Time!

- **Pre-2009**
  - Various Efforts and Activities

- **2009**
  - National BSC
  - Public Allegations of Racism

- **2010**
  - People’s Institute
  - External Partners

- **2012**
  - Racial Justice (RJ) Statement Issued

- **2014–15**
  - DCF Operational Strategy

- **2011**
  - DCF Leadership Change
Slow and Steady Changes: Key Decisions on Language

1. Diversity
2. Cultural Competence
3. Disproportion -ality and Disparities
4. Equity
5. Racial Justice

Dismantling Racial Inequity Through Child Welfare Systems Change
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History and Evolution of the Work

Slow and Steady Changes:
Offices and Groups in the Agency

- Office of Multicultural Affairs
- Multicultural Affairs and Immigration Practice
- Multicultural Advisory Council
- Statewide Racial Justice Workgroup
Slow and Steady Changes: Policies and Legislation

Internal Multicultural Policy → Proposed RJ Statute

Contract Boilerplate Language → Standard RFP Procurement RJ Questions + Scoring Convention
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“The services delivered must be responsive to diverse cultural health beliefs and practices, experiences of racism, preferred languages, health literacy, and other communication needs.”

Cultural & Linguistically Competent Care statement and question with point values for use in all DCF Requests for Proposals (RFP):

The Department of Children & Families is committed to ensuring that its service providers deliver effective, equitable, understandable, trauma informed and respectful quality care. The services delivered must be responsive to diverse cultural health beliefs and practices, experiences of racism, preferred languages, health literacy, and other communication needs. Applicants must demonstrate throughout all their responses, that the children and families receiving services in their program are approached, engaged and cared for in a culturally and linguistically competent manner, including but not limited to: Cultural identity, racial and/or ethnic, religious/spiritual assimilation, gender, physical capability, cognitive level, sexual orientation, and linguistic needs. Within a broad construction of culture, service provision must also be tailored to age, diagnosis, developmental level, geographical and educational needs.

RFP Question:

1. Provide a detailed description of your agency’s knowledge, expertise and understanding of diversity (including, but not limited to: racial, ethnic, gender and gender identity, sexual orientation, culture, linguistic, immigrant, disabilities, and religion) as it relates to the provision of services. (15 points overall)

Detail your response according to the following:

a. Describe your organization’s experience successfully serving diverse communities. Include any data your agency has that reveals the ability to effectively serve and achieve positive outcomes for children and families of multiple diverse groups. (2 points)

b. Please detail how your program/service will effectively meet the needs of the community/communities you propose to service through this application. Include any supporting data about the race, ethnicity, and languages of the communities in the catchment that you are seeking to serve. Supporting data may be included in the Appendices) (3 points)

c. Describe the policies, practices, and data collection mechanisms your organization utilizes to support quality programming for multiple diverse groups. Please include any policies and/or practice guides in the Appendices. (2 points)

d. Describe your plan and current activities to recruit and retain a diverse staff, including those who are bilingual and bilingual, for this program/service and across all levels of your organization. Please include a description of what progress your organization made to increase the diversity of the workforce in the past three years. (2 points)

e. Describe your organization’s racial & social equity lens as it relates to how your organization trains, supervises, and facilitates dialogue internally amongst all levels of staff. (2 points)

f. Describe how your organization works to establish rapport and trust with families related to experiences of racism and how this influences and guides client engagement and treatment planning? (2 points)

g. Describe any challenges that your organization may face with respect to ensuring equity for a diverse group of clients and how your organization plans to overcome such issues. (2 points)
Naming It Boldly: 
Seven Cross-Cutting Themes

The following cross-cutting themes shall guide all DCF operational units in advancing the mission and strategies of the agency:

- Implementing Strength-Based Family Policy, Practice, and Programs;
- Applying the Neuroscience of Early Childhood and Adolescent Development;
- Expanding Trauma-Informed Practice and Culture;
- **Addressing Racial Inequities in all Areas of Our Practice;**
  - Building New Community and Agency Partnerships;
  - Improving Leadership, Management, Supervision, and Accountability; and
  - Becoming a Learning Organization.
Practice Implications: *Context and Processes*

- Implementation Science Framework
- Intentional Structures
- Leadership at All Levels
The Foundation for Our Success: 
*Implementation Science at Its Best*

Focus on All Levels Needed for Change

**Importance of Self in Social Work**

Racial equity can never be attained if we do not address unintended bias.

**Psychological Safety for Leaders and Staff**

Serious journey to study the impacts of race and racism on our work with a goal to cultivate and sustain an environment in which employees, families, and all our partners can feel safe to discuss the impacts of racism, power, and privilege on agency practice and personal lives.

**Continued Focus on Child and Family Outcomes at an Organizational Level**

By focusing on and addressing racial inequities as an essential part of our mission, we are making tangible progress.
The Structures That Support the Work at All Levels

✓ Statewide Racial Justice Workgroup (SRJW)

✓ Regional/Area Office Teams

✓ Regional Advisory Councils

✓ Senior Administrative Managers

✓ SRJW Subcommittees
What Our RJ Toolbox Addresses

Awareness

Safe spaces

Provocative and intentional dialogues and activities

Race-specific practices

Overall good practices
## SRJW Statewide Subcommittees: Specific Focus on Organization Drivers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policy and Practice</th>
<th>Workforce Development</th>
<th>Contracts and Procurement</th>
<th>Community</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Analysis of DCF procedures, practices, and decision points that reflect disparate outcomes&lt;br&gt;• Data interpreted and shared broadly</td>
<td>• Recruitment (university partnerships, hiring practices, and discipline disparities/retention)</td>
<td>• Ongoing dialogue w/internal teams related to contracts and services to ensure they reflect the cultural and linguistic needs of our communities</td>
<td>• Mandated reporter trainer preparedness, foster parent strategies, community relations, courts, RACs, education, law enforcement, etc.</td>
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Four Types of Technical Assistance: *Reaching All Levels Over Three Years*

**Training, Awareness, and Use of Self**
- Competency Drivers: Work with managers and staff at the Area Office and Regional levels to focus on implicit bias, privilege, power, relationships, and decision-making

**Data Analysis**
- Organization Drivers: Deep dives with Regional Teams to understand how to use data to assess changes in outcomes and who’s better off

**Cultural Humility**
- Competency Drivers: Specific practice and process to bring self-reflective supervision and use of self into family-specific decision-making

**Focus on Operational Strategies**
- Leadership Drivers: Targeted work with Regional Leadership Teams to address child, family, and community outcomes
Specific Focus on Leadership Drivers

**Operational Strategies**
- Explicit accountability for leaders related to racial justice
- Sharing lessons learned and successes at leadership level

**SRJW**
- Staff at various levels from across the state
- Every meeting includes video, facilitated discussion, and/or exercise to “take back”
- Developing champions and leaders at all levels

**Regional Technical Assistance**
- Intentional work with Regional leaders to develop their comfort and skill in leading the work
Specific Focus on Competency Drivers

- Hiring
- Pre-service training
- Mandated reporter training
- Ongoing training
WHO IS BETTER OFF?

QA Framework and Data Growth
Slow and Steady Enhancements: *Data + QA*

- Pathways
- Data disaggregation
- Dashboards and reports
- Performance expectations
Pathways: Who Is Better Off?

Racial/Ethnic Disproportionality Across The CT Child Protection System SFY17: STATEWIDE

- Non-Hispanic, White Only
- Non-Hispanic, Other* Race Only
- Non-Hispanic, Black/Af Am Only
- Hispanic/Latino, Any Race

*Other Race includes: American Indian/Alaskan Native, Asian, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, Other, Multi-Racial, and Missing/Unknown/UTD

Data Run Date: Statewide: 08/29/17
Dismantling Racial Inequity Through Child Welfare Systems Change

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Emerging Areas:
Values Congruence

- Structured Decision Making (SDM)
- Predictive Analytics
- Integrated Data Systems
Key Factors for “Baking It In”

- Quantitative to Qualitative (“data” analysis and substantive tools; e.g., Cultural/Linguistic Competency and RJ Plans)
- Performance (horizontally and vertically)
- Proposed RJ Statute
- Embedding into the bloodstream (future proofing)
Sustaining the Impacts Throughout the Organization

- Visible and actively/regularly used data
- Policy changes
- Partners at the table
- All levels of DCF staff (no one “gets out of it”)
- Legislation (in process)
- Not owned by a single individual (ever!)
Sustaining the Work and Vision

Not just another initiative or project, but truly woven into the fabric of everything we do . . . and we’re ready to pass the baton in our relay RACE to make sure it stays even after we leave.
Questions?
JOIN US!

Learning Exchange
Thursday, February 22, 2018
3:00–4:00 p.m. EST

Register here:
• http://bit.ly/REquityLEx4
Dismantling Racial Inequity Through Child Welfare Systems Change

Webinar Topics:

1. Institutional Analysis
2. Cross-Systems & Tribal Partnerships
3. Data Collection & Analysis
4. Agency & Workforce Development
5. Agency-University Partnerships
6. Sustainability
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THANK YOU!

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