



Program Accessibility

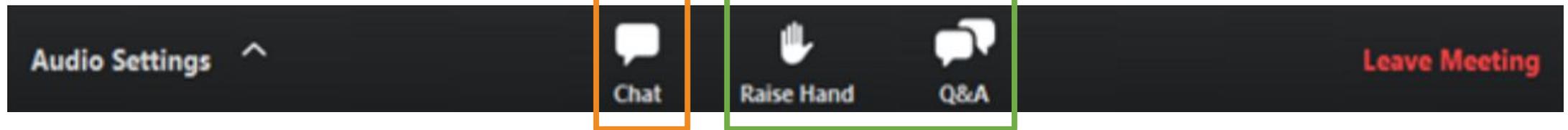
A core component of the Program Quality Roadmap

November 10, 2021



Webinar Logistics

- **Share your name, pronouns, organization, and city in the chat.**
- Use the chat if you are experiencing any tech issues.
- Share thoughts and comments about the discussion!
- **Type questions** in the the Q&A during the webinar.
- **Raise your hand** during the Q&A sessions to ask your question out loud to the group.



Panelists



Anand Dholakia, MBA
Principal Associate,
Community Science and
former Root Cause
Principal Consultant



Jessica Santos, MA, PhD
Scientist and Lecturer, The Heller
School of Brandeis University's
Institute for Economic & Racial Equity



Jonathan Rosenthal
Assistant Director
(School-to-Career), Boston
Private Industry Council (PIC)

~ Today's Moderators ~



Yifan Kong
Manager, Root Cause



Abby Alexanian, MBA, MPP
Project Director, Root Cause

Program Quality Roadmap



FOUNDATIONAL CONDITIONS:

- Organizational Mission & Vision are driven by an authentic understanding of community needs and strengths.
- Organizational Commitment to Racial & Economic Equity.
- Alignment between Organizational Mission & Vision and Program Outcomes.
- Organizational & Leadership Supports supply tangible and intangible resources.

Racial & Economic Equity

In the context of social services:

Racial equity is the condition achieved when a person's racial identity does not predict, in a statistical sense, their ability to access and benefit from quality services or the outcomes of these services.

Economic equity is the condition achieved when a person's income and/or wealth does not predict their ability to access and benefit from quality services* or the outcomes of these services.

**Quality services include free, sliding scale, and fee-based services*

Overview of the Program Accessibility Core Component

What do we mean by Accessibility?

A social service or program that is valuable to the community members it serves is necessarily one that community members find accessible.

When we talk about the Accessibility of programs & services, we are talking about...

- How **relevant** programs & services are to the community members they serve
- How **barriers** to relevant services are identified, reduced, and sustainably removed from the different paths community members take when they need to access programs & services

Relevance of Programs & Services

The **relevance** of a program or service describes how well it matches the present strengths, needs, and cultural landscape of its service population.

- **What this looks like:** A program relevant to its service population nurtures strong, trusting relationships with its service population. The program learns from, designs with, and builds on resources intrinsic to the population—for example: trusted community leaders, different caregiving ideologies, different cultural understandings of what wellbeing is and how it is achieved—to **codesign solutions to priority challenges with community members closest to those challenges**
- **Why this is important:** Service relevance is critical because when organizations cede and share decision making power with the service population about where and how to direct resources, they help ensure that **services are continually valuable, trusted, and accessible to those who seek them**

Removing Barriers to Programs & Services

There are external and internal barriers to accessing relevant programs and services.

Barriers **external** to a program can be...

- **Structural**
Physical and technological infrastructure
(e.g., distribution of transportation routes)
- **Institutional**
Explicit policies and procedures
(e.g., structural racism in housing policies)
- **Cultural**
Implicit assumptions & histories that govern how people interact with others and their environment
(e.g., often invisible power structures and assumptions of power in an organization and in relationships)

Barriers **internal** to a program can be..

- **Physical**
The more visible / touchable barriers
(e.g. site location, site transportation, service fees)
- **Organizational**
The less visible / touchable barriers
(e.g., service hours, opportunity costs, referral policies)

Key considerations for improving Accessibility

How and with whom accessibility improvements are designed is as important as what the specific improvement is. Based in principles of equitable design, two considerations for improving accessibility are:

- **Make the invisible, visible**

Some challenges and their root causes and histories are easy to see. Many are not. When co-designing solutions, it is important to make these challenges visible, especially when they may be invisible by default

- **Transfer power to those closest to the challenge**

Marginalized communities are often those who find services the most necessary and difficult to access. When access is valuable and easy for marginalized communities, services are more accessible for everyone. To design for accessibility, it is important to design with those closest to the challenge—to do so requires understanding what power exists in any given dynamic, and how to cede power to those who should be making the decisions

Our Quality Roadmap provide a framework, resources, and practices for strengthening Program Accessibility. **These resources require co-evolution with the specific community engaging with the program in order to be effective.**

Panel Discussion

Thank for joining!

1. An email will be sent to registrants in the upcoming week with links to the **recording, slides**, and the **Accessibility Research Brief**
2. Go to <https://rootcause.org/program-quality-learning-series/> to register for upcoming sessions:
 - Tuesday, November 16, 10am-11am: **Family and Community Engagement**
 - Tuesday, November 17, 9:30am-1030am: **Data and Measurement Capacity**
 - Wednesday, November 17, 11am-12pm: **Staff Support & Performance**
3. Connect with **Root Cause** at rootcause.org/contact-us
4. Connect with our Moderators: **Yifan Kong** (ykong@rootcause.org) and **Abby Alexanian** (aalexanian@rootcause.org)

Panel prep! Today's discussion...

- **Panel session goals & flow** (slides 2-3) - Abby
- **Quick Accessibility component overview** (slides 13-on)
- **Discuss questions** for panelists and participants
 - Slide 4: Reflection questions
 - Slides 5-6: Based on this overview...
 - What would you want to investigate further?
 - Where would you want to expand on?
 - What do you question?
- **Next steps & logistics** (bio, headshot, brief)
 - RC share registrant list with panelists

Panel prep! Goals for each session

Participants will understand:

- Root Cause's Program Quality Roadmap (at a high level)
- What the session topic is and why it matters for program excellence and equity
- What excellence in this area looks like and what this means in practice
- How others have explored improvement in this area - what has worked, where there have been challenges

Participants will feel:

- A spark of learning or "ah-ha" moment
- Inspiration to apply something they learned or heard about in the session to their own work
- Energized and engaged
- Interested in learning more

Panel prep! General overview of session

Introductions (10 min)

- Participants are invited to share in the chat: name, organization, where they're joining from
- Moderators introduce themselves
- Panelists introduce themselves
 - Name, organization, role
 - 1-2 sentences about work/experiences related to the topic

Overview of the session topic (10 min)

- Moderator shares slides with information about the Roadmap generally and the session topic
- Pause for participant questions about the Roadmap and/or session topic

Moderated questions for the panel (15 min)

- Invite participants to put questions in the chat

Q&A with participants (20 min)

- Invite participants to raise hands to ask questions or share them in the chat
- Have several questions on hand to ask participants as well (see below)

Thank you & wrap up (5 min)

- Moderator thanks panelists and participants
- Share how participants can continue to stay connected with RC and this work (slide)

Panel prep! AA-YK

- Walk through overview
- Talking points for roadmap overview?
- Panelist qs - asking those 2 questions
- Timekeeper - moderator 2? (text?)
- Participant questions - How to see who's raised hand in webinar format? Question box?
 - For RPM I'm moderator 2
- survey in the chat - moderator 2?

Panel prep! Our hopes for the session experience

Our hopes for the session experience (aka “session vibes”): excitement, thinking about this topic in a new way, imagination/creativity, moving away from “compliance”-type mentality to curiosity and envisioning what more is possible, connection with a deeper sense of purpose in our work, alignment with equity and justice values/beliefs, honoring many ways of knowing and many types of expertise

Self-reflection questions for moderators and panelists:

- What excites me about this topic?
- If social service organizations could continuously improve in this area over time, what difference would this make for families and communities they work with?
- What are the most persuasive things I know or have heard about why this area is vital for effective services?
- What vision do I have for the future of social services in the US and how does excellence in this quality area contribute towards this?

Panel prep! Moderated questions for Panelists

Common questions across quality components:

1. Why do you believe service & program accessibility is so important for social service quality?
 - a. In what ways have you seen how accessibility matters for helping service participants meet their goals and programs meet their outcomes? Can you give an example?
2. How might some definitions and work around accessibility create an 'us-them dynamic' between service participant and provider? What would you offer in response to this interpretation of what accessibility is and what it requires?

Others:

3. How do you believe that working towards excellence in this area contributes to greater racial and economic equity in services and outcomes?
4. What are common challenges that organizations encounter in this area? What makes it hard to do?
5. What successes and/or innovations have you seen in this area? Can you share an example?

Panel prep! Back-up prompts for participants

- In what ways does your organization see and think about the accessibility of services and programs?
- How do you see accessibility influencing your program outcomes?
- What questions do you have for our panelists?