Racial & Economic Equity Practices are Foundational for Program Excellence

November 17th: 1:30-2:30pm (Eastern)

Presented by Consuela Greene & Abby Alexanian
Root Cause

NPEA DEI
Symposium
November 17-18, 2021

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About Root Cause

Root Cause is a purpose-driven research and consulting group that partners with foundations, nonprofit organizations, businesses, school districts, and public agencies in three core service areas: strategy & implementation, 2) measurement, learning & improvement, and 3) Collective Action.

Since 2004, Root Cause has helped more than 400 partners improve people's health and well-being, increase education and youth development outcomes, build pathways to employment, strengthen the economic security of people and families nationwide, and eliminate disparities based on race, class, gender, and geography.

Presenters

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Workshop Overview

BUILDING EQUITY + EXCELLENCE

- ## What are we aiming for?
  Racial & Economic Equity

- ## How do we get there?
  Activate, Assess, Align, Adapt

- ## Racial & Economic Equity Practices
  Using the Roadmap to Integrate REE Practices

- ## Q&A

What Are we Aiming For?
Racial & Economic Equity

In the context of education programs and other 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 education/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 education/services* or the outcomes of these services.

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

How Do We Get There?
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.

Organizational mission & vision are driven by an authentic understanding of community needs and strengths.

> *We are building relationships and trust with our community; we are actively listening and adjusting to meet evolving needs.*

Organizational commitment to racial & economic equity is activated.

> *We are working to bring our practices into alignment with our beliefs and values.*

Program outcomes are aligned with organizational mission & vision.

> *We know where we're going; our programs and services are designed to get us there.*

Organizational & leadership supports supply tangible and intangible resources.

> *Resources and support enable us to invest in program excellence; our leaders recognize this work and act to ensure its continuation.*

How Do We Get There?

Activate | *Assess* | *Align* | *Adapt*

- **Activate your commitment** to Racial & Economic Equity

- **Assess your practices** to understand where they can be strengthened

- **Align on a shared vision and goals** for how your organization wants to improve equity and excellence, and how you'll know that you're on track

- **Adapt your practices** to achieve your goals and work towards your shared vision
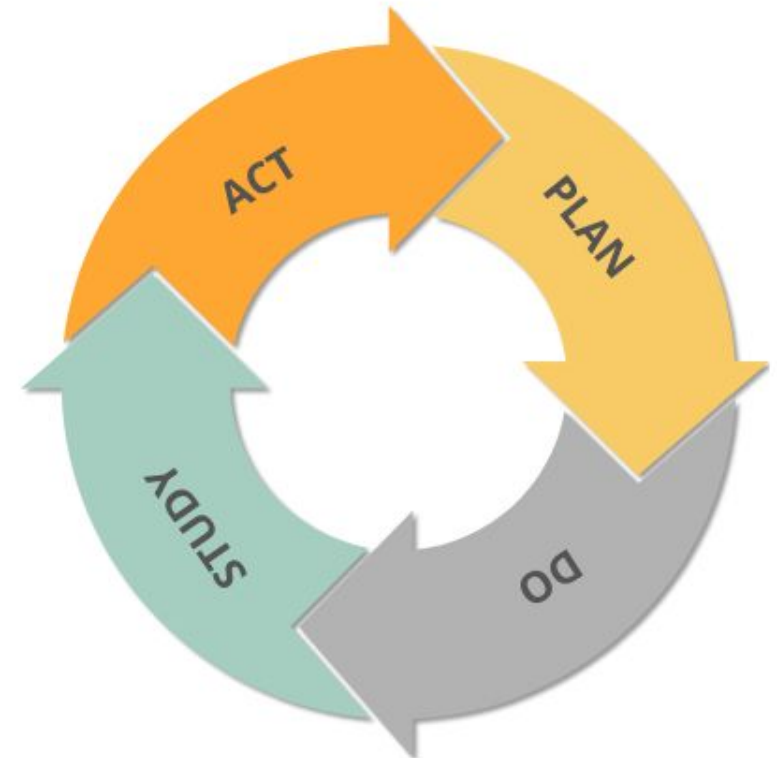
Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) is a powerful approach for strengthening equity practices in an ongoing way.

Presence of equity lens. The extent to which the the service design, materials, staff training, and other elements explicitly applies a racial and economic equity lens.

Depth and quality of REE integration. The extent to which the program or service explicitly incorporates known best practices in racial and economic equity into all aspects of operation.

Use of inclusive and equitable language. The extent to which the overall posture and language used in materials and by staff is inclusive and equitable.

How Do We Get There?

The Shared Vision of Quality

- **Vision of what quality looks like for your program** that ensures that a person's racial identity and income/wealth does not predict their ability to benefit from quality education/services or the outcomes of these services that you provide

- **Created through engagement with the people who most impact / are impacted by** program quality—program staff and participants—in order to capture a full breadth of what drives program quality, why, and to ensure alignment and buy-in towards a common vision

The aspirations of the Shared Vision of Quality are high, but also realistic and reflective of program resources over a specified time period, and are grounded in the organizational mission and outcomes it aims to achieve. This shared vision can be the guide and aim for all program quality improvement efforts.

- **Visioning** - *Where do we want to go?*

- **Current Reality** - *Where are we now?*

- **Continuous Quality Improvement** - *How do we grow from where we are now to where we want to be?*

How Do We Get There?
Activate | Assess | Align | Adapt

As we share about some racial and economic equity practices in each of these core component, please consider a few thing:

- **Current Practices** – What are our current practices in this area? How can you get a full picture of what's happening now?

- **Practice Alignment** – Are there some REE practices that would improve program equity and excellence?

- **Learning and Improving** – What would we need in order to make changes (i.e. plan, take action, learn, and adapt)?

Using the Roadmap to Integrate Racial & Economic Equity Practices

Data and Measurement Capacity

Data and measurement capacity refers to an organization's ability to ***track***, ***analyze***, and ***make meaning of important program and operational data***, which allows the team to learn about <u>what is working</u> and <u>what can be improved</u> to advance program goals.

When adapted to meet DEI best practices, Data & Measurement Capacity includes...

- Disaggregating data by race, ethnicity, and income to reveal disparities that may be hidden by aggregate data.

- Sharing data with all staff members, particularly frontline staff, to hear multiple perspectives about how to make meaning of the data and what actions to take based on these learnings.

- Creating a culture of curiosity and brainstorming in which all questions and ideas are welcome, so everyone's learning is honored and new approaches receive due consideration.

- Sharing (anonymized) data with partners and peers to enable cross-learning, monitoring of common goals, and collective improvement efforts.

Evidence-Informed Program Design

An evidence-informed program, in the context of education/social services, is an intervention that an organization has chosen to implement **based on significant data** that indicates the intervention will have a positive desired outcome.

When adapted to meet DEI best practices, Evidence-Informed Program Design includes...

- Being curious and investigating whether the intended program/intervention is culturally competent and takes into account the diverse lived racial, socioeconomic, cultural, gender, and health backgrounds of the service population(s). Adaptation may be needed, so understand that may impact fidelity.

- Collecting continuous feedback by including elements in the intervention to gather data to improve service provision that ensures the intervention is inclusive and responsive to community needs (i.e. feedback and satisfaction check-ins by discussion, survey, etc.).

- Engaging in continuous learning by providing staff with training and support to ensure the program/intervention is delivered and implemented with racial and economic equity and fidelity.

Family & Community Engagement

Family and community engagement is the **process of seeking out participant/family and community expertise**, and refers to the **systematic inclusion** of participants/families and the broader community in an organization's leadership, research, planning, development, implementation, and evaluation.

When adapted to meet DEI best practices, Family & Community Engagement includes…

- Designing engagement processes to reach and include community members most at the margins.

- Cultivating reciprocal relationships with families and community members in which engagement is supported by a sense of partnership rather than a transactional experience.

- Reducing barriers to engagement by providing interpretation and translation services, meeting participants in a familiar location, offering child care, etc.

- Sharing power in decision-making and design processes with the people most impacted by the decision inside and outside of the organization.

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Program Accessibility

A social service or program that is valuable to the community members it serves is <u>necessarily</u> one that community members find accessible. Accessible programs and services are **relevant** to the community members they serve, and **barriers** to these services have been identified, reduced, and sustainably removed from the different paths community members take when they need to access programs & services.

When adapted to meet DEI best practices, Program Accessibility includes...

- Understanding how racism is built into systems and explains how and why they operate as they do, including determining who has access and who experiences barriers.

- Intentionally counteracting long-standing social inequalities and stigmas in the design and operation of services (i.e. not just avoiding replicating stigmas, but removing the barriers they create).

- Partnering with service participants and community members to listen and understand the challenges they experience when they want to access services.

- Enabling cultural adaptivity within services by fostering deep connections with the community served - especially those most at the margins.

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Referrals & Partnership Management

Partnerships are the relationships among providers that rely on one another to deliver services to their clients, address specific challenges, and/or work towards common goals. **Referrals** are partnerships with processes by which one organization connects a client to another organization to help the client receive services to address their needs.

When adapted to meet DEI best practices, Referrals & Partnership Management includes...

- Monitoring data about outgoing referrals for indications of bias in who receives certain referrals and how these referrals are made.

- Partnering with participants to identify the appropriate referral to meet their needs and goals.

- Including explicit expectations in partnership agreements about how the partnership seeks to increase equity in service delivery and outcomes.

- Facilitating referrals when desired by the participant to ensure the participant has been connected to someone at the receiving agency.

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Staff Support & Performance

Organizations with strong **staff support and performance** prioritize staff supervision, development and retention initiatives within the organization to ensure that staff have the support and preparation they need to deliver quality services. When staff members feel supported professionally, personally, and financially by their organization, they are better prepared and more motivated to perform and excel in their roles.

When adapted to meet DEI best practices, Staff Support & Performance includes…

- Training and support for staff to reduce bias and integrate equity practices into their everyday work.

- Implementing clear procedures for staff to provide feedback to others in the organization or to file grievances, including transparency about how feedback will be acted on.

- Creating policies to ensure pay equity through standardized salary ranges, raise/promotion criteria, and bonus structures.

- Providing training and support to managers to ensure equitable supervision practices and to help supervisors support staff with different needs.

Trauma-Informed Approach

A trauma-informed approach to service delivery ensures that service providers are educated about trauma, understand how it can impact service participants' present-day behavior, needs, and service participation across settings services, and populations, and adjust their work with service participants accordingly.

When adapted to meet DEI best practices, a Trauma-Informed Approach includes…

- Recognizing and accounting for racial trauma (ongoing and evolving)

- Understanding that trauma can affect communities as well as individuals

- Hiring and supporting staff who reflect the identities and experiences of the communities served

- Reducing retraumatization by interrupting bias and discrimination

- Affirming experiences of structural and interpersonal racism as valid and relevant to trauma-informed services

The Drivers of Racial & Economic Equity

When racial & economic equity practices are embedded within...

...then strengthening these components drives racial & economic equity in services and outcomes

Takeaway Reflection Questions

- **Activate your commitment** to racial & economic equity

  What is your own personal commitment? What is your organization's commitment and ***how do you know?*** *What about your partners' commitment and* ***how do you know?***

- **Assess your practices** to understand where they can be strengthened

  Considering some suggested REE practices shared, how is your program doing?

- **Align on a shared vision and goals** for how your organization wants to improve equity and excellence, and how you'll know that you're on track

  Does your organization have a shared vision and goals that are measurable?

- **Adapt your practices** to achieve your goals and work towards your shared vision

  How does your organization learn and improve practices currently?

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Q&A

Thank you for joining us!

Please keep in touch by visiting our website at **rootcause.org** or emailing **info@rootcause.org**