



## **BHPOC Work Group on Diversity, Equity & Inclusion in Behavioral Health**

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[www.cga.ct.gov/ph/BHPOC](http://www.cga.ct.gov/ph/BHPOC)

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Co-Chairs: Alice Forrester and Selma Ward

### *Agenda*

**December 7, 2021 11:00 AM via ZOOM\***

*The BHPOC is committed to creating to an environment that provides equal access to behavioral healthcare in a culturally competent capacity, with particular attention to social and racial justice.*

\*Join Zoom Meeting

Robert Plant is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Join Zoom Meeting

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Passcode: 557201

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162.255.37.11 (US West)

162.255.36.11 (US East)

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- Yvonne Jones, Mollie Greenwood, Alice Forrester, Kelly Phenix, Rod Winstead, Lois Berkowitz, Stephney Springer, Monica Rams, Bonni Hopkins, Janine Sullivan-Wiley, Noel Casiano, Carmen Teresa Rosario, Karen Siegel, David Kaplan, Marissa Bayerl

### **I. DCF's efforts in Organizational DEI - Monica Rams (Director of the Office of Multicultural Affairs/Office of Diversity and Equity)-DCF**



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#### **Presentation: Boldly Leading Anti-Racist Work in DCF-**

- Racial Justice is explicitly called out as one of five of DCF's strategic goals
- Research has shown children of color come to the attention of the department, are placed in care and remain in care for longer periods than their white counterparts

- During the racial injustices of 2020, the work of racial justice in the Department of Children and Families was pushed to the forefront even more.
- DCF has had a focus on racial justice since 2005, and in 2013 racial justice was added as one of the department's goals and missions, and statewide Racial Justice workgroup was formed (4 subcommittees – data, workforce, service system, policies and practice)
- In reviewing data, DCF recognized they needed to take ownership in what role they are playing in disproportionality with children and families served by the Department
- In 2018, DCF ensured racial justice was codified into law in that DCF is required annually to provide a report about their efforts around racial justice in law
- In 2020, the department brought a covid-focused webinar called “The Color of Covid” which focused on why people of color were being disproportionately impacted by covid
- The social unrest of 2020 also led DCF to recognize they needed to do more training and support of staff with focus of actively becoming an Anti-Racist organization
- DCF is grounded in nurturing a Safe and Sound Culture with specific steps:
  - Regulate, Relate, Rise, Reason, Respond
- Moving from Equality, beyond Equity to Justice
- Striving for Institutional Transformation
- The Statewide Racial Justice Workgroup Charter: “In 2020 and beyond, the goal of racial justice work must surpass challenging conversations and activities. The ultimate goal is to move the needle outcomes for children, families, and staff”
- Leadership put out expectations to ensure **everyone** within the department must participate in this work; it is not an optional focus
- One must learn and do – this must be an *action* oriented approach, not passive
- An example of action: DCF updated contract language to indicate that they want providers to focus on reducing disparities:

1. **Cultural Competence.**

- The Contractor shall administer, manage and deliver a culturally responsive and competent program. This shall, at a minimum, be evidenced by equity and parity in access to services, consumer satisfaction, and outcomes for clients served, regardless of race, ethnicity, language, religion, gender, sexual orientation, economic status and/or disability. Policies, practices and quality improvement activities shall be informed by the needs and demographics of the community served or to be served by the program. The Contractor shall include access, consumer satisfaction and outcomes as elements of its program review and monitoring.
- The Contractor shall recruit, hire and retain a professional and paraprofessional staff that is culturally and linguistically diverse. Staff development to support cross-cultural competency shall occur both pre- and in-service. Furthermore, as a means to facilitate culturally competent service delivery, issues of diversity and multiculturalism shall be included in treatment/service planning, discharge planning, case reviews, grand rounds, analysis and review of program data, and staff supervision.
- To further the Department's commitment to reducing health disparities across all behavioral health continuums, the Department strongly encourages and will support the Contractor's efforts towards adherence and compliance with national Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS) standards

- DCF is providing technical assistance and information on the National Culturally and Linguistic Appropriate Standards (CLAS) to providers

## QUESTIONS/ANSWERS

- How does DCF include or blend in other marginalized groups (disabled folks, LGBTQ folks, etc) with the work happening around racial justice?
  - There are groups within DCF working with other special groups (ex: Deaf and Hard of Hearing population, Native Americans and LGBTQ workgroups) and those groups include those with lived experience and as well as advocates to better serve the population and better partner with community providers
- Resource re participation in CLAS technical assistance is Tim Marshall
- Is DCF training only for staff working within DCF, or is training available for families and parents to better understand the system?
  - DCF has been some trainings which is currently more targeted to providers; not sure if they created trainings specifically for families or for parents, but there have been some community dialogues that have taken place in the past.
- DCF is now working to think through what tools do providers need to lift up this work within their communities and partner more strongly with DCF on this work?
  - Create a training program for providers?
  - A certification program for providers?
  - DCF is open to feedback
- Appreciation expressed on DCF's action to codify racial justice work and the emphasis on treating staff with respect and nurturing staff, that always reflects in how staff treat clients and families.
- DCF partnered with and continues to partner with an outside consultant ensure that those leading this work were representative of staff and the goals stay at the forefront of all that is done around racial justice
- How are outcomes identified as priorities and how is lived experience incorporated?
  - Through both qualitative data and quantitative data
  - Make sure the metrics and the numbers are met, while also not losing sight of the input from those with lived experience

## II. New Business, Announcements, Adjournment

**Next Meeting: Tuesday, January 4, 2022 at 11:00 AM via ZOOM**