Building Capacity for Racial Equity in Western MA: An Overview

The Public Health Institute of Western MA (PHIWM) and Women of Color Health Equity Collective (WOCHEC) have joined with the MA Dept of Public Health's MA Tobacco Control Program (MTCP) to: (a) bring together individuals and organizations to build their racial justice capacity and (b) form a coalition to achieve long-term, equitable systems change that addresses tobacco use and its intersections with other public health issues, economic development, and related industries that impact chronic diseases across our four-county region.

The public health field has long called out historic and current racial hierarchies as root causes of health inequities. There are myriad bodies of research that prove that racism is a determinant of poor health outcomes for people of color. We see that in our regional health data, including in tobacco usage and related adverse health outcomes. Therefore, dismantling racism and white supremacy must be central to any solutions and strategies.
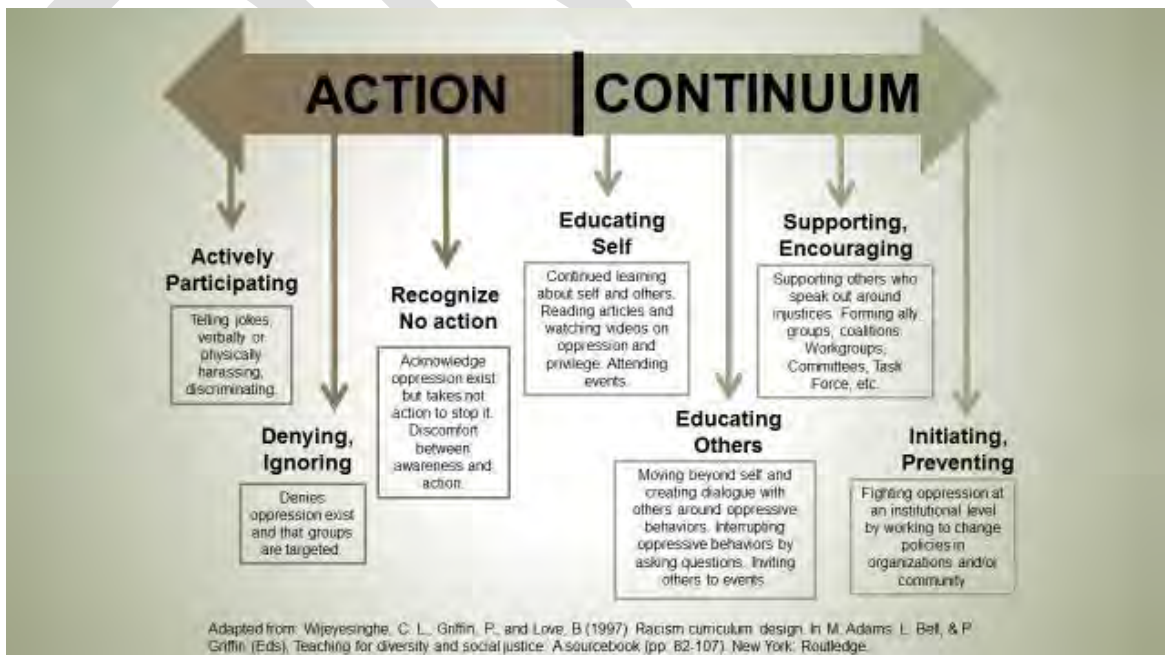
Many organizations in Western MA are interested in making progress toward racial equity. Yet our regional infrastructure for dismantling racism is fragmented and weak. Organizations and networks that want to work on "DEI" don't have shared definitions, may not know what steps to take, where to turn for help, or how to measure progress. Trainings abound, but with no clear path for individuals and organizations to follow to get peer support or hold themselves accountable to act. Racial equity capacity builders do not network and compare notes; many do not know each other. There is no forum for collective action on tobacco that centers a racial justice lens. This region is rich with interest, ideas and technical assistance. It just needs greater coordination to be successful. This project is an attempt to create structures and networks that don't currently exist to move us all forward toward action.

This unique initiative seeks to do so by engaging participants from the four counties at multiple levels:

- **Individuals** who want to come together across diverse backgrounds, demographics, and sectors to deepen their knowledge and skills and grow their personal and professional leadership on a shared journey to becoming champions for racial equity.
- **Racial equity T.A. providers** who want to network, learn from each other and grow their collective capacity to move the region's social justice sector toward becoming a combined force for racial equity.
- **Organizations** that want to build awareness, skills and capacity within their teams (staff, board, volunteers) to strengthen racial equity *internally* and work on racial justice issues *externally*.
- A **Coalition** of these individuals and organizations that comes together to create a mutually accountable community of practice for centering racial justice practices inside and out, eventually taking collective action on policy, systems and environmental change.

Our approach includes:

1. Engage participants in **shared learning** about racial equity together through discussion, trainings, and peer support to move *individuals* along a continuum. (See Action Continuum graphic.) The continuum is based on the understanding that each person thinks and acts on racism in some form from actively participating in racism to outright preventing it. And many folks may act in different ways depending on the environment they are in at any given time. For example, the coalition offered the Groundwater Training to coalition members and other interested individuals last fall.

2. Offer various types of tailored **capacity building** and coaching within *organizations* to strengthen internal policies and systems to support racial equity and move them along a continuum. For example, some organizations get Technical Assistance from WOCHEC to assess their organization, receive tailored training and coaching and build internal capacity to move toward Initiating and Prevention. We intend to add a few additional pilots in the next year.

3. Create a **critical mass** of institutions in our region that have shared understanding, tools and courage to enter the world each day with the "Initiating/Prevention" mindset and act accordingly. We anticipate that individual technical assistance, combined with peer learning and shared use of common tools to assess and measure progress, will support mutual accountability and lead to sustained movement over time, while laying the groundwork for collective action.

4. Collectively **identify opportunities for systemic intervention (**such as predatory marketing of tobacco and other harmful products, economic development and related sectors), **and take action** as a *coalition* to reduce health inequities in our region. We are reaching out to anti-racism capacity builders, community based organizations, municipalities, direct service agencies, planning agencies and academia.

ACTION | CONTINUUM

Actively Participating
Telling jokes, verbally or physically harassing, discriminating.

Recognize No action
Acknowledge oppression exist but takes not action to stop it. Discomfort between awareness and action.

Denying, Ignoring
Denies oppression exist and that groups are targeted.

Educating Self
Continued learning about self and others. Reading articles and watching videos on oppression and privilege. Attending events.

Educating Others
Moving beyond self and creating dialogue with others around oppressive behaviors. Interrupting oppressive behaviors by asking questions. Inviting others to events.

Supporting, Encouraging
Supporting others who speak out around injustices. Forming ally groups, coalitions. Workgroups, Committees, Task Force, etc.

Initiating, Preventing
Fighting oppression at an institutional level by working to change policies in organizations and/or community.

Adapted from: Wijeyesinghe, C. L., Griffin, P., and Love, B (1997). Racism curriculum design. In M. Adams, L. Bell, & P. Griffin (Eds), Teaching for diversity and social justice: A sourcebook (pp. 82-107) New York: Routledge.

Continuum on Becoming an Anti-Racist Multicultural Organization

MONOCULTURAL ==> MULTICULTURAL ==> ANTI-RACIST ==> ANTI-RACIST MULTICULTURAL					
Racial and Cultural Differences Seen as Deficits ==> Tolerant of Racial and Cultural Differences ==> Racial and Cultural Differences Seen as Assets					
Exclusive **An Exclusionary Institution**	**2. Passive** **A "Club" Institution**	**3. Symbolic Change** **A Compliance Organization**	**4. Identity Change** **An Affirming Institution**	**5. Structural Change** **A Transforming Institution**	**6. Fully Inclusive Anti-Racist Multicultural Organization in a Transformed Society**
• Intentionally and publicly excludes or segregates African Americans, Native Americans, Latinos, and Asian Americans • Intentionally and publicly enforces the racist status quo throughout institution • Institutionalization of racism includes formal policies and practices, teachings, and decision making on all levels • Usually has similar intentional policies and practices toward other socially oppressed groups such as women, gays and lesbians, Third World citizens, etc. • Openly maintains the dominant group's power and privilege	• Tolerant of a limited number of "token" People of Color and members from other social identify groups allowed in with "proper" perspective and credentials. • May still secretly limit or exclude People of Color in contradiction to public policies • Continues to intentionally maintain white power and privilege through its formal policies and practices, teachings, and decision making on all levels of institutional life • Often declares, "We don't have a problem." • Monocultural norms, policies and procedures of dominant culture viewed as the "righ" way" business as usual" • Engages issues of diversity and social justice only on club member's terms and within their comfort zone.	• Makes official policy pronouncements regarding multicultural diversity • Sees itself as "non-racist" institution with open doors to People of Color • Carries out intentional inclusiveness efforts, recruiting "someone of color" on committees or office staff • Expanding view of diversity includes other socially oppressed groups *But...* • "Not those who make waves" • Little or no contextual change in culture, policies, and decision making • Is still relatively unaware of continuing patterns of privilege, paternalism and control • Token placements in staff positions: must assimilate into organizational culture	• Growing understanding of racism as barrier to effective diversity • Develops analysis of systemic racism • Sponsors programs of anti-racism training • New consciousness of institutionalized white power and privilege • Develops intentional identity as an "anti-racist" institution • Begins to develop accountability to racially oppressed communities • Increasing commitment to dismantle racism and eliminate inherent white advantage • Actively recruits and promotes members of groups have been historically denied access and opportunity *But...* • Institutional structures and culture that maintain white power and privilege still intact and relatively untouched	• Commits to process of intentional institutional restructuring, based upon anti-racist analysis and identity • Audits and restructures all aspects of institutional life to ensure full participation of People of Color, including their world-view, culture and lifestyles • Implements structures, policies and practices with inclusive decision making and other forms of power sharing on all levels of the institutions life and work • Commits to struggle to dismantle racism in the wider community, and builds clear lines of accountability to racially oppressed communities • Anti-racist multicultural diversity becomes an institutionalized asset • Redefines and rebuilds all relationships and activities in society, based on anti-racist commitments	• Future vision of an institution and wider community that has overcome systemic racism and all other forms of oppression. • Institution's life reflects full participation and shared power with diverse racial, cultural and economic groups in determining its mission, structure, constituency, policies and practices • Members across all identity groups are full participants in decisions that shape the institution, and inclusion of diverse cultures, lifestyles, and interest • A sense of restored community and mutual caring • Allies with others in combating all forms of social oppression • Actively works in larger communities (regional, national, global) to eliminate all forms of oppression and to create multicultural organizations.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE – RACIAL EQUITY INITIATIVE

The Technical Assistance for the Racial Equity Initiative is designed for a wide range of organizations who work with and provide services to vulnerable families in western Massachusetts. We plan to offer training, consulting, and coaching to meet the needs of these agencies/organizations with the goal of disrupting the effects of tobacco use in these communities.

CORE MODULES:

There are **four (4) CORE modules** (listed below). Each of these modules include core knowledge, skills and competencies related to racial equity, to include but not limited to, social determinants of health.

Organizations will have an option of choosing the modules that best suit their needs as well as any **add-on** to enhance their training. The modules are designed to be tailored to the organization's/agency's level of understanding of racial equity. There are **3 levels** (e.g., basic, moderate, and advanced) that will be determined through discussions with organization leadership and pre-assessments provided to staff.

I.   Race and Racism
This module is designed to develop organizational capacity to better understand racism at the institutional and structural level. It provides a context, framework, and shared language for understanding the history and legacy of race and the realities of racism in this country and around the world. The training will explore the American economic, social and political structures that produce unjust and inequitable outcomes. And, at the organizational level, how racial identity and its interaction with institutional culture, policies, and practices are affected by and rooted in structures that support and maintain white (male) supremacy culture of inequity and injustice.
1. What is race?
2. What is racism
3. Levels of Racism
4. Overview of systemic racism
5. History of Race and Racism
6. White Supremacy Culture

Add-ons for Race & Racism Module:
These add-ons are NOT "everything there is to know about…" sessions, but instead an in-

depth dialogue about what should be considered when serving the population.
- ☐ Latinx
- ☐ Black (in the Diaspora)
- ☐ Indigenous Nations
- ☐ Asian communities
- ☐ Multiracial
- ☐ White Identifying
- ☐ Intergroup Relationships

II.   Equity

An historic legacy of social, economic and environmental inequities are embedded in societal institutions and result in poor health. Racism and social determinants of health are just two examples. These unjust inequities affect communities differently with some bearing a greater burden of a decrease in health. To dismantle these injustices, organizations must promote health through policies, practices and organizational systems that benefit all.

1. What is equity/ Overview of what equity is/means
2. Equity vs Equality
3. Effects of inequity on marginalized populations
4. Shared Terminology/ Organizational Term Operationalization

Add-ons for training:
- ☐ Racial equity
- ☐ Equity for marginalized groups
- ☐ Health equity

III.   Cultural Humility

Cultural Humility is a philosophy that empowers individuals to effectively engage in interpersonal relationships that are dynamically diverse and mutually respectful. Unlike Cultural Competence, cultural humility is a life-long and ongoing process of self-reflection and self-critique in which individuals expand their capacity for learning, listening and understanding, regardless of their experiences with cultures other than their own. Incorporating cultural humility as part of one's lifestyle empowers the individual to recognize and redress power-imbalances that exist within their immediate social and organizational structures. The Collective has adopted a "lifestyle" of cultural humility as one of its basic tenets.

1. Basic Understanding
2. Concept of cultural humility
3. Competence Vs Humility
4. Four tenets of cultural humility
5. Implicit bias and Affinity bias
6. Practice of Tenets

Add ons for Cultural Humility:
- ❐ Rebuilding and Repairing Relationship
- ❐ Institutional Accountability (part 2)
- ❐ Allyship

IV. Inclusive Leadership - Paths Moving Forward

Inclusive leadership in the workplace starts with one's understanding of their own implicit biases and preferences. This training offers approaches to improve motivation, the ability to empower diverse talent, and integrate difference into work practices and decision-making. Leaders will gain the knowledge and strategies to build and lead a diverse team, introduce inclusive communication to the workplace and celebrate differences.

1. Inclusive Leadership Assessment
2. Leadership skills related to equity work
3. Workplace Bias
4. Leading diverse teams
5. Inclusive communication

Add-ons for Inclusive Leadership
- ❐ Creating Brave Spaces
- ❐ Building Mutually Beneficial Relationships
- ❐ Trauma Informed Interactions

CONSULTING AND COACHING:

Each organization is different and their needs may exceed the core training modules. For this, the Collective will provide consulting/coaching services. Specifically, we will offer expertise in the incorporation of equity into strategic planning; organizational and individual goal achievement; and the accountability process. The Collective will also provide advice and teach organizational specific tools, skills, and/or knowledge to assist with making the necessary adjustments to the workplace culture, policies and practices. All of this may require a longer-term relationship.