

# **Valuing Diversity in the Workplace**



**VBCMH Training - FY 2021**

# INTRODUCTION

- This training highlights the importance of recognizing and valuing diversity in the workplace.
- Our differences are our strengths, as we all work together toward the same goal. When we value diversity, we recognize that all of us have something to contribute, and that those contributions are worthy.
- Understanding and valuing the diversity in the community we serve improves the effectiveness of our work.
- Awareness of, respect for and attention to the diversity of people with whom we interact (customers, families, caregivers, colleagues and the community) should be reflected in organizational values, structures, policies and our services, as well as individual attitudes and behaviors.





## WHAT IS DIVERSITY?

- The word diversity typically refers to a range of differences among individuals and represents a variety of dimensions from personality and work style to social and cultural identities. It's about recognizing differences, accepting them, and allowing them to change our perceptions.
- For many people, the idea of addressing diversity means addressing race, ethnicity and gender. However, there are a great deal more dimensions of diversity that may be very important to how we see ourselves and each other. Some of the dimensions most often addressed include:

Race

Ethnicity

Gender

Marital or Parental Status

Gender Identity/Expression

Age

Sexual Orientation

Physical Ability

Mental Ability

National Origin

Economic Status

Religion

# UNDERSTANDING DIVERSITY

Dimensions of diversity in the workplace also include things like:

- Big picture thinker/Detail oriented thinker
- Introvert/Extrovert
- Liberal/Conservative
- Assertive/Passive
- Spontaneous/Cautious

Seniority, experience, position level, salaried/exempt, union/non-union, education, and training are also aspects of diversity that impact our workplace and customer/provider relationships. The key is to understand how to go about learning ways to work together most effectively with those who may have different perspectives than our own.



# STEREOTYPES

- Some of the messages we received and retained about people who are different from us were misinformation.
- Some of the misinformation constituted **stereotypes**.
- Stereotypes affect what we think and feel about people who are different from ourselves. Stereotypes affect how we respond to people who are different from us. Those responses became automatic. As adults, many of our responses are still on automatic.



# IMPLICIT BIAS

- Even though we may not like to admit that we stereotype people, we all do it. Stereotypes help us organize our thinking and manage massive amounts of information. Once in place, stereotypes are difficult to undo.
- To help us move away from stereotypes or automatic responses and begin to value differences, we need to develop awareness of our automatic responses.
- Thoughts and feelings are “implicit” if we are unaware of them or mistaken about their nature. We have a bias when, rather than being neutral, we have a preference for (or aversion to) a person or group of people. Thus, the term “implicit bias” describes when we have attitudes towards people or associate stereotypes with them without our conscious knowledge.



# IMPLICIT BIAS

## Why it matters:

- Studies have found that most of our actions occur without our conscious thoughts, allowing us to function in our extraordinarily complex world. This means, however, that our implicit biases often predict how we'll behave more accurately than our conscious values.

## What can be done about it:

- Social scientists are in the early stages of determining how to “debias” ourselves. Instituting specific procedures of decision making and encouraging people to be mindful of the risks of implicit bias can help us avoid acting according to biases that are contrary to our conscious values and beliefs.

**Implicit bias is a universal phenomenon, not limited by race, gender, or even country of origin.**

*From <https://perception.org/research/implicit-bias/>*



# AWARENESS

- Recognize that everyone has automatic responses that are not accurate.
- Recognize differences as diversity rather than abnormal behavior or inappropriate responses to the environment.
- Respect the benefits of diverse values and behaviors to people and to the organization.
- Understand the effect that historic distrust has on present-day interactions.
- Have a clear sense of your individual culture.
- Recognize your own ethnocentricity—the ways in which you stereotype, judge, and discriminate, and your emotional reactions to conflicting cultural values.
- Recognize the similarities that are shared across the human culture, regardless of the differences that exist among individual cultures and groups, such as the desire for:
  - safety,
  - good health,
  - education and well-being of our children,
  - love and belongingness,
  - self-esteem (feeling of worthiness), and
  - the ability to pursue and achieve our potential.





- It is difficult to discuss human diversity without including the concept of culture.
- Culture includes the learned beliefs, traditions, values, and behaviors common to a large group of people. A culture may include shared language and folklore, communication styles, and ideas and thinking patterns. Members of a culture have similar expectations of life.
- Culture serves as a road map for both perceiving and interacting with the world.
- Culture is not a definable entity to which people belong or do not belong.
- Within a nation, race or community, people belong to multiple cultural groups and negotiate multiple cultural expectations on a daily basis.

# CULTURAL COMPETENCE

- SAMHSA\* notes that cultural competence reinforces the values of diversity, flexibility, and responsiveness in addressing current and changing needs of clients and communities.
- Cultural competence is more than discrete skills or knowledge base—it requires self evaluation, awareness of one's own assumptions and biases, and striving to understand how these assumptions affect one's ability to work with team members and customers.

*\*SAMHSA-federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Agency*



# CULTURAL COMPETENCE

- Curiosity, empathy, respect, and humility are some basic attitudes that foster positive relationships with coworkers and customers.
- *Acknowledge cultural/ generational differences and historical injustices without becoming defensive.*
- *Respect others' opinions.*
- *Be open to learning about other cultures and ideas.*
- *Don't stereotype.*
- *Don't judge others by your own cultural standards.*
- *Don't assume your culture's way is the only way.*
- *Don't talk down to anyone; communicate effectively.*



# EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

To understand another person's diverse point of view or culture and to share our own views requires communication skills.

- **Communication Style** - Openness, active listening, & respectful language.
- **Think before you speak** – Be sensitive to others. If you do accidentally offend someone, apologize immediately.
- **Listen more** – People who are listened to usually appreciate the person who is doing the listening and are more likely to cooperate with the person.
- **Be alert to non-verbal cues** – Remember, body language impacts a great deal of how we communicate. By developing your awareness of the signs and signals of body language, you can more easily understand other people, and more effectively communicate with them.
- **Avoid generalized language** – Refrain from using words, images, and situations that suggest that all or most members of a particular group are the same. You can avoid stereotyping by asking questions to understand each person better.
- **Be careful with humor** - Even if you don't intend to hurt others, your comment or behavior may be interpreted in a way you didn't intend – apologize and clear up any misunderstanding. At the same time, recognize other people's intentions when they speak. We wouldn't feel so threatened by diversity if we allowed ourselves to chuckle at our own – and others' – shortcomings.

# INTEGRATE NOT ASSIMILATE

- Diversity is not about becoming *like* one another. It is not about melting into one multi-cultural population. Nor is it about requiring people to like one another.
- When we value diversity, we seek to integrate, not assimilate our differences.
- We do not assume that an individual person represents or embodies any group. Diversity is about allowing differences and respecting differences until the differences don't make a difference anymore.





## **BENEFITS OF A DIVERSE WORKPLACE**

- Improves understanding of those you work with.
- Creates a work environment that allows everyone to reach their full potential.
- Provides multiple perspectives on problem solving.
- Boosts employee morale.
- Improves customer relations.
- Reduces complaints and grievances.
- It's doing the right thing!

At VBCMH, valuing the differences of those around you helps eliminate discriminatory practices, improves staff morale, reduces stress-related illnesses, and enhances performance by using different perspectives.

# OTHER IMPORTANT CONCEPTS AND TERMS

- **Disparity** - A measured difference between groups. Disparities exist and are associated with worse health outcomes and shorter life spans.
- **Inequity** - Measurable differences between different population groups arising from social conditions that are avoidable and unjust.
- **Inclusion** - The action or state of including or of being included within a community. Inclusion involves a sense of belonging and empowered participation.
- **Health Equity** - The state in which everyone has the opportunity to attain full health, and no one is disadvantaged from achieving this because of social position or any socially defined circumstance like socioeconomic status, neighborhood they live in, race, disability status, or educational attainment.



# OTHER IMPORTANT CONCEPTS AND TERMS

- **Racism** - The concept of racism is widely thought of as simply personal prejudice, but, in fact, it is a complex system of racial hierarchies and inequities. Beyond the individual level of racism, we consider the broader more societal concepts of institutional and structural racism.
- **Anti-Racism** - Working to become actively conscious about race and racism *and* take actions to end racial inequities in our daily lives. Being antiracist is believing that racism is everyone's problem, and we all have a role to play in stopping it.
- **Social Determinants of Health** - Conditions in the environments in which people are born, live, learn, work, play, worship, and age that affect a wide range of health, functioning, and quality-of-life outcomes and risks. Resources that enhance quality of life can have a significant influence on population health outcomes. Examples of these resources include safe and affordable housing, access to education, public safety, availability of healthy foods, local emergency/health services, and environments free of life-threatening toxins.



# IMPACT ON CUSTOMERS

As community mental health providers, we have long been aware of the impacts of bias, prejudice, and social determinants of health on our customers and have worked to facilitate access to health care, education, and safe and affordable housing despite the barriers they have faced as people with disabilities. Our customers and potential customers deal with stigma and bias against persons with disabilities as well as prejudices against other groups to which they belong.

The current emphasis in healthcare on addressing social determinants of health is focused on populations, not just one individual or family at a time, and not just one worker or organization.

VBCMh, in partnership with the state and SWMBH, will begin this year examining and working to overcome factors and barriers that make it harder for persons of racial minorities to access our services when they need them. More information on the projects to take small steps in becoming more accessible are on the following slides.



# **MDHHS 2020-2021 MEASURES TO BEGIN TO ADDRESS DISPARITIES IN TREATMENT OUTCOMES IN PUBLIC MENTAL HEALTH SYSTEM**

- In partnership with SWMBH, VBCMh (as well as PIHPs and CMHs statewide) will begin performance improvement projects to address disparities in follow up services after an emergency department visit related to alcohol or drug use and after discharge from psychiatric inpatient.
- The public mental health system has long reported on follow up after discharge from these services and has ensured offering of an appointment within 7 days and 30 days of discharge, but rates of attending appointments vary.



# MDHHS 2020-2021 MEASURES TO BEGIN TO ADDRESS DISPARITIES IN TREATMENT OUTCOMES IN PUBLIC MENTAL HEALTH SYSTEM

- The rates at which different racial or ethnic groups agree to an appointment or attend the scheduled appointment vary. Here are the rates of completed follow up appointments after an emergency department visit for alcohol or drug related reasons. Data shown are both statewide and within the SWMBH region for the most recent quarter reported.

Michigan Medicaid Population	Rate	SWMBH Medicaid Population	Rate
Total	27.03	Total	27.32
Asian American	10.00	Asian American	20.00
Hispanic	23.04	Hispanic	25.00
American Indian/Alaska Native	29.71	American Indian/Alaska Native	29.03
White	33.44	White	32.08
African American/Black	12.98	African American/Black	13.40
Unknown Race/Ethnicity	24.08	Unknown	19.28



# MDHHS 2020-2021 MEASURES TO BEGIN TO ADDRESS DISPARITIES IN TREATMENT OUTCOMES IN PUBLIC MENTAL HEALTH SYSTEM

- Here are the rates of completed follow up appointments after discharge from a hospital psychiatric unit. Data shown are both statewide and within the SWMBH region for the most recent quarter reported.

Michigan Medicaid Population	Rate	SWMBH Medicaid Population	Rate
Total	62.16	Total	69.18
Asian American	71.60	Asian American	100
Hispanic	64.72	Hispanic	66.67
American Indian/Alaska Native	62.40	American Indian/Alaska Native	66.67
White	65.66	White	69.35
African American/Black	55.54	African American/Black	66.47
Unknown Race/Ethnicity	57.78	Unknown	76.09



# MDHHS 2020-2021 Measures to Begin to Address Disparities in Treatment Outcomes in Public Mental Health System

The numbers of persons in the data on the previous two slides are small for the region. The numbers for VBCMH in any particular racial/ethnic group may even be 0 in a particular quarter, which makes drawing conclusions from VBCMH or even regional data suspect, but you can see the consistency with which non-White populations are less likely to receive timely follow-up care.

This improvement project is just starting and tracking trends over time where small numbers are involved will be more important than one specific point in time.

**What actions can we take to assist those facing more barriers in making and keeping an appointment for needed follow up services?** We are working to improve the accessibility of our services for all Van Buren residents. Answering the above question, as both an organization and at an individual level, in any interaction you may have with a customer will be the keys to needed improvements.

# FOR MORE INFORMATION

This brief overview only scratches the surface on the important topics of Diversity, Equity, and Cultural Competence. Staff are encouraged to explore other resources and trainings.

## Check out additional resources and training:

- **SWMBH recently began a series of webinars on Cultural Competency. These trainings are free for VBCM staff and you are encouraged to work with your supervisor to find available time to attend. If that is not possible SWBH is working to make recordings of the sessions available.**

**“Kind Curiosity for Cultural Inclusion”** Friday, April 9<sup>th</sup> 10:00 am to 12:00 pm, Tuesday, April 27<sup>th</sup> 1:00 pm. to 3:00 pm. and Friday, May 7<sup>th</sup> 10:00 am to 12:00 pm. All people have both conscious and unconscious biases. These biases impact all levels of interpersonal interaction. This training will help develop a basic understanding and provide guidance on how to provide open-minded patient care. This is perfect for front-line workers.

- April 9<sup>th</sup> <https://zoom.us/meeting/register/tJcrdOiurDoqH9YMPiVKk33njH67PkhiJAIH>
- April 27<sup>th</sup> [https://zoom.us/meeting/register/tJElc-ygpj8tGtH\\_eOb4fef9yvHKZjfhzuTe](https://zoom.us/meeting/register/tJElc-ygpj8tGtH_eOb4fef9yvHKZjfhzuTe)
- May 7<sup>th</sup> <https://zoom.us/meeting/register/tJ0sf-upqTguGtFQeeMQRxoktKKxezRJD1Ns>



# FOR MORE INFORMATION

**Check out additional resources and training:**

**“Race & Cultural Competency/Sensitivity Health Equity & Disparity Phase I”** Tuesday, May 11<sup>th</sup> 8:30 am to 12:30 pm and repeating Wednesday, May 12<sup>th</sup> 8:30 am to 12:30 pm. This training will seek to illuminate racism and cultural competency that includes case studies and examining one’s own background. Anyone seeking a greater understanding of this topic and wants to build awareness and move beyond biases should attend this workshop.

- May 11<sup>th</sup> <https://zoom.us/meeting/register/tJEtcOmtqz4jHNdPodB6sbJ08xx2yhTyI-fU>
- May 12<sup>th</sup> <https://zoom.us/meeting/register/tJwpduiupz8jGNZNK7BZvq5AtZjJuG8ajXVH>

**“Race & Cultural Competency/Sensitivity Health Equity & Disparity Phase II”** Friday, May 14<sup>th</sup> 8:30 am to 12:30 pm. This training builds on Phase I with a deeper dive into health equity, health inequity and disparities in healthcare/clinical services that includes mental health, substance abuse, and home and community bases services. Participation in Phase I encouraged.

- May 14<sup>th</sup> [https://zoom.us/meeting/register/tJYqf-GpqzgpHtd0oVne0zeEPxH1GfVF\\_1jJ](https://zoom.us/meeting/register/tJYqf-GpqzgpHtd0oVne0zeEPxH1GfVF_1jJ)



# FOR MORE INFORMATION

## Check out additional resources and training:

- On Relias eLearning
- The Bronson Health System Community Health Needs Assessment for Van Buren County 2019 for a description of our county and its health needs, disparities and the goal of equity in the provision of services:  
<https://www.bronsonhealth.com/app/files/public/8109/chna-van-buren-county-2019-final.pdf>
- The Treatment Improvement Protocol: Improving Cultural Competence a 300+ page document from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Agency which can be found on the shared drive: Q:\Agency Procedures
- Kendi, Ibram X., How to Be an Antiracist, published by One World, 2019.

