



July is Minority Mental Health Awareness Month

Mental Health conditions don't discriminate; but minority and underrepresented groups often experience challenges accessing quality Mental Health care. The Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) reports that racial and ethnic minority groups in the U.S. are less likely to have access to mental health services, less likely to use community mental health services, more likely to use emergency departments, and more likely to receive lower quality care. Poor mental health care access and quality of care contribute to poor mental health outcomes, including suicide, among racial and ethnic minority populations.

The statewide CONNECT initiative seeks to achieve racial justice across all child- and family-serving systems. In order to achieve this goal, all services that children and families receive must be racially just and culturally and linguistically appropriate. As part of this effort, the statewide Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS) workgroup and the Department of Children and Families (DCF) Racial Justice workgroup have dedicated significant time and effort to identifying and disseminating strategies to help child-serving organizations increase their organizational capacity in these areas. Their vision is to implement effective, racially just, culturally responsive, and linguistically appropriate services for populations they serve facing health disparities.

While tools to enhance the existing service array to be more culturally competent and racially just are just one component of what is needed to move our systems to being both racially just and anti-racist, this approach provides structured support to begin creating policy, systems, and internal agency changes at the organizational level that support meaningful transformation. It is imperative that every agency working with families and children critically examine their practices as a crucial mechanism to working towards achieving health equity for all children and families across our state.

Check out the following resources and information:

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of Minority Health (OMH) provides an excellent FREE training [Improving Cultural Competency for Behavioral Health Professionals](#). The goal of this e-learning program is to help behavioral health professionals increase their cultural and linguistic competency.

Click on this link to find out more about social determinants of health and how unmet social needs significantly affect our health and emotional wellbeing: [Is zip code more important than genetic code?](#)

For more information about the National Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS) Standards and free technical assistance in helping your organization become more racially just and implement an organizational Health Equity Plan contact: Cecilia Frometa, PhD. Health Equity Planning Technical Consultant 203-415-5385 or cecilia.frometa@yale.edu