

Systemic Racism Addendum: FAQs and Statements

- **Why do we lead with race? What about sexism, classism, and other isms?**

In order to adequately address all forms of oppression and inequality we lead with race. Racism is a contentious and divisive subject due to the historical and current impact it has on marginalized groups. Often, we focus on other efforts of representation without understanding the impact of race which intersects with all isms from sexism, classism etc. The analysis we use to understand racism expands the term to encompass not just individual acts towards marginalized groups but includes cultural, institutional and systemic racism.

Race is a part of everything and all of nothing. (Rinku Sen)

Please click here for further information on racism and definitions used:

<https://www.racialequityalliance.org/about/our-approach/race/>

- **What is “anti-racism”?**

Anti-racism is the antidote to the many forms of racism. Anti-racism is the *intentional action* of identifying and disrupting racism. The focus of antiracism work is to impact attitudes/practices, organization and systemic change so that power is redistributed and shared equitably.

Please click here for further information on antiracism: <http://www.aclrc.com/antiracism-defined>

- **Why isn't just diversity enough?**

Diversity has been used to celebrate and highlight differences without sustainable action toward equity. Diversity is the goal that institutions and systems will have representation at the table. Although well intentioned, this framework has often perpetuated the idea that if we acknowledge/celebrate differences we don't have to address the inequity and oppression occurring in communities of color. Inclusion is ensuring representation ***and*** an equitable voice at the table.

Please click here for further information:

<http://www.aclrc.com/glossary> <https://neuroleadership.com/>

- **I thought we lived in a color-blind society or post racial society. Why do we still need to talk about racism?**

Disproportionality and disparities in outcomes for communities of color have never been eradicated, they exist in every discipline, including: Criminal Justice, Housing, Health, Child Welfare, etc. We must look at the trends of what's occurring within marginalized communities to adequately address injustices and understand that we can't look for exceptions to the majority experience.

Click here for more information <https://www.raceforward.org/videos/systemic-racism>

- **How does anti-racism impact me? How does it impact the people I serve?**

The analysis we use to define racism and oppression is twofold and includes individual and institutional change. As an individual, one should always try to foster a healthy racial and social identity as an ongoing learning process of self-awareness and intentionality. Understanding how we as individuals have been socialized and how we contribute (implicitly or explicitly) to inequitable outcomes for marginalized groups is part of the work. Marginalized populations are amongst the core audiences we, the MDHHS, serve. We must be intentional in reducing unintended harms.

Click here for further information

https://www.racialequitytools.org/resourcefiles/Compilation_of_Racial_Identity_Models_7_15_11.pdf

- **I don't feel equipped to be part of the conversation about anti-racism work. What resources are available to help me further understand anti-racism work?**

If you are new to the conversation about antiracism/race conversations and wondering where to begin, here are a few resources to utilize as a starting point. Please also see the training repository on the DEI webpage for further resources.

Training Repository

https://stateofmichigan.sharepoint.com/teams/insidedhhs/news-comm/Documents/Training_Repository.pdf#search=Diversity%20Equity%20and%20Inclusion

PBS Race the Power of an Illusion

https://www.pbs.org/race/000_General/000_00-Home.htm

White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack

<https://www.racialequitytools.org/resourcefiles/mcintosh.pdf>

- **I admit that/know racism still exists, but what can I do about it? It seems too big. Can I really make a difference?**

We all can make a difference! Each of us holds power within our sphere of influence to impact change within our families, workspaces and communities. Become a continuous learner of antiracism practices as this is a lifelong journey and imperative to the work. Learn about what's happening in your own community and how to become an agent for change. If you are interested in advocacy within the workplace, please visit the DEI webpage for opportunities.