

Equity Assessment Report



June 2022

THE JUSTICE COLLECTIVE

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OVERVIEW

In 2022, The Justice Collective (TJC) partnered with Contra Costa Health Services (CCHS) to conduct an organizational assessment to gain clarity and specificity about challenges and opportunities related to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). To inform future strategy development and resource allocation, TJC conducted an analysis of the following:

- **Survey:** TJC designed one survey in collaboration with CCHS. The survey garnered **1307** total responses from the CCHS workforce.
- **Interviews:** TJC identified, based on the survey responses, subgroups of respondents who had statistically different responses than other respondents: men, specifically men of color. CCHS and TJC engaged in efforts to recruit participants; **4** agreed to be interviewed. Unfortunately, few followed through and only **1** was conducted from that group.
- **Interviews, additional:** TJC conducted **5** additional interviews with a total of **6** participants who provided insight into personnel processes, past training efforts, and the work of the equity team.
- **Focus Groups:** TJC sought out a specific subset of respondents based on their statistically different responses to the survey and conducted **3** group conversations with a semi structured protocol.
- **Organizational Artifacts:** TJC reviewed **20** pages of documents provided by CCHS including the Organizational Chart, Mission Statement, the 2022-2024 Strategic Plan, and the 2020 MEC Discrimination Survey Findings Presentation.
- **Listening Sessions:** TJC conducted **16** Listening Sessions with each division in CCHS. The conversations have informed the assessment report. A separate report is provided.

TJC has highlighted four focus areas across the data that highlight equity opportunity areas at CCHS.

1. **Diversity Equity & Inclusion Work:** Leadership has an opportunity to articulate why DEI work is important to the organization and its mission and to identify how CCHS's commitment to DEI is reinforced in their work.
2. **Role & Scope:** Employees express workload concerns, confusion regarding long-term growth opportunities, and management challenges that may inhibit DEI progress.
3. **Feedback & Supervision:** Employees perception of supervision knowledge around conflict management and DEI related content is low. There is pervasive perception of favoritism between supervisors and staff. Some staff reported fear of retaliation for providing critical feedback.
4. **Welcomeness & Inclusion:** While the organization has figured out how to be welcoming even during a global pandemic, there are disparate experiences across racial and gender diverse people.

Full recommendations are within the corresponding focus areas. If executed successfully, these recommendations have the potential to dramatically improve the employee experience in ways that will sustain and grow meaningful commitments to racial equity, diversity, and inclusion, now and well into the future. Improvements to employee experience and work environment will bolster service delivery and improve health outcomes for the residents of Contra Costa County.

RECOMMENDATIONS SUMMARY



Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Work

1. Mobilize senior management to visibly engage with DEI efforts and communicate the importance of engaging to their respective divisions. Demonstrate that ownership and execution of DEI work needs to be shared and extend beyond the Equity Team.
2. Dedicate adequate internal and external resources to develop a DEI Roadmap (or equity-centered strategic plan) including alignment with the organizational mission, vision, and values statements, as well as DEI goals, tactics for achieving them, metrics, and accountability measures memorializing plans for different roles and groups to be responsible for its implementation.
3. Engage staff in training around cultural competency, specifically the use of pronouns across all employees with a deeper understanding for client/patient facing employees. Build on the well-received training already developed.

Role & Scope

1. Develop a communications plan to openly address and acknowledge perceptions of limited growth opportunities. Clarify intentions for changes and be willing to be held accountable for them.
2. Ensure that existing staff are aware of all promotional and employment opportunities through multiple channels. Consider creating a guide to help employees navigate communication channels and navigate the hiring and/or promotional processes.
3. Increase transparency about processes and procedures for performance reviews, skills, tuition reimbursement, and growth opportunities.

Feedback & Supervision

1. Train supervisors on effectively giving and receiving feedback. Include assessment of this skill in performance evaluations to incentivise keeping these skills sharp and encourage ongoing learning and development.
2. Increase training and engagement for managers around bias response and mitigation.
3. Consider refining remote work policies to encourage hybrid remote work schedules to the maximum extent feasible to increase retention and job satisfaction.

Welcomeness & Inclusion

1. Foster a culture of inclusion to drive greater organizational effectiveness, impact, and to achieve your organization's core mission. Dedicate resources and regularly issue climate surveys to track culture change.
2. Address the fear of retribution and perceptions of favoritism that are pervasive in the organization.
3. Provide material support for employee groups such as Employee Resource Groups and/or Affinity Groups.
4. Ensure safe feedback is in fact safe, and that groups can share their concerns and suggestions without fear of retribution.
5. Ensure the process for reporting bias or an incident is clear, and that there is support for the person reporting.

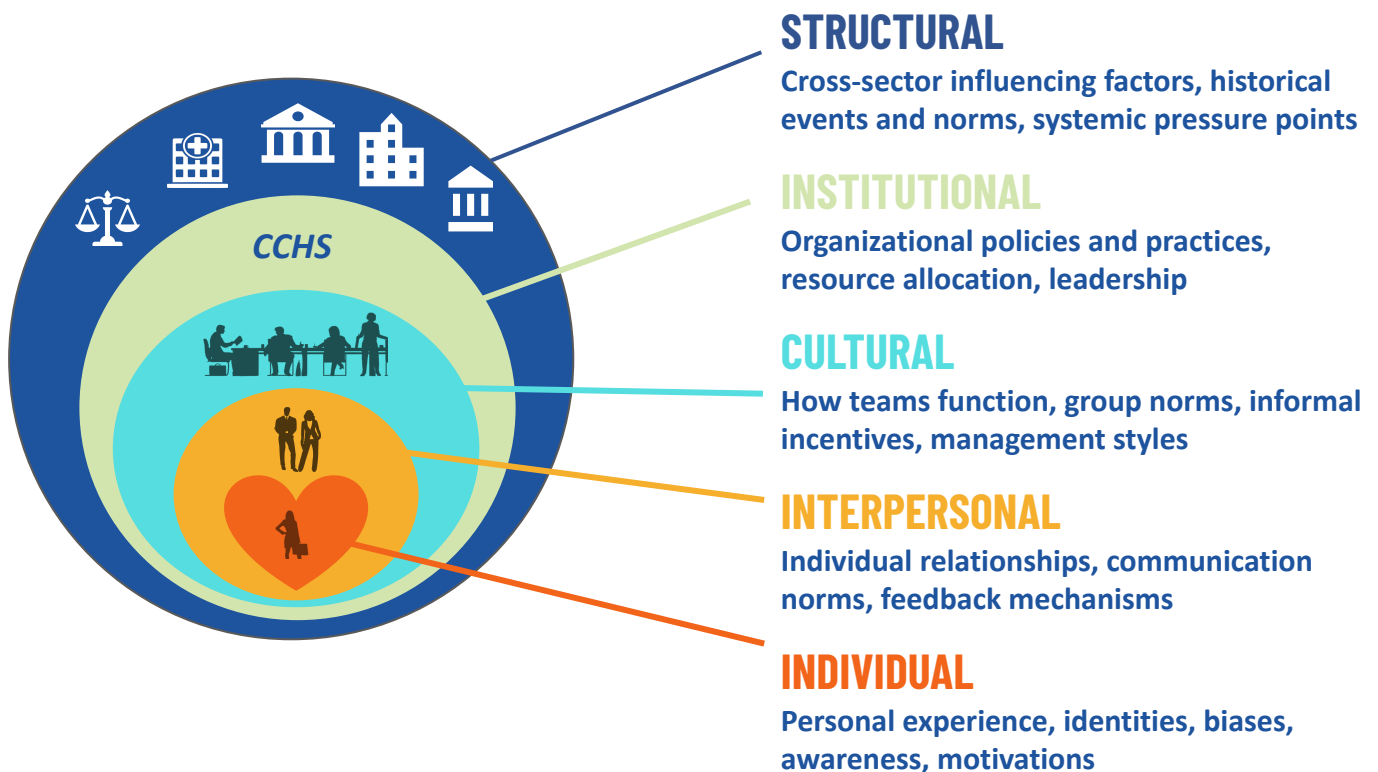


How to Use This Report

This report is a snapshot of Contra Costa Health Services at a unique moment in time, both for the agency and the larger ecosystem in which it operates. As such, it is not a judgment on CCHS's success or failure in its pursuit of diversity, equity, and inclusion. Instead, this report is a tool for reflection and learning, as well as a launchpad into next steps.

The findings are meant to build the capacity of staff and leaders to recognize opportunities. The recommendations we offer represent best practices towards DEI. As much as they are meant to be adopted, the recommendations are also intended to encourage internal thinking towards solutions that best fit CCHS in ways that TJC may not have insight into as an external partner.

Multiple dynamics exert force on Contra Costa Health Services (see below). But CCHS is not a passive actor, and dynamics shift in response to individual and collective behaviors. TJC identified many existing strengths and opportunities for CCHS to prioritize greater equity, diversity, and inclusion at all levels.





Using Decolonizing Methods

Research methods used by TJC for this initiative were informed and inspired by the groundbreaking 1999 text, *Decolonizing Methodologies*. In the text, education scholar and author Linda Tuhiwai Smith defines decolonizing methods as approaching research with “cultural protocols, values and behaviors such as...integral ‘factors’ to be built into research explicitly, to be thought about reflectively, to be declared openly as part of the research design.”¹

TJC continues to strive toward key tenets of a decolonizing methodology when developing assessments, collecting and analyzing data, sharing our findings, and conducting trainings. Considering that, predominantly, academic research is based on the false dichotomy that some people have knowledge and others don’t—which then places researchers as sole experts—our approach is an act of resistance against prevailing, institutionalized, and widely held beliefs that are rooted in White Supremacy Culture.

We acknowledge that many areas of academic research have been a tool of oppression and exploitation against Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) identities. TJC’s research team understands that “research is a key part of colonization because it is concerned with defining legitimate knowledge.”²

Limitations

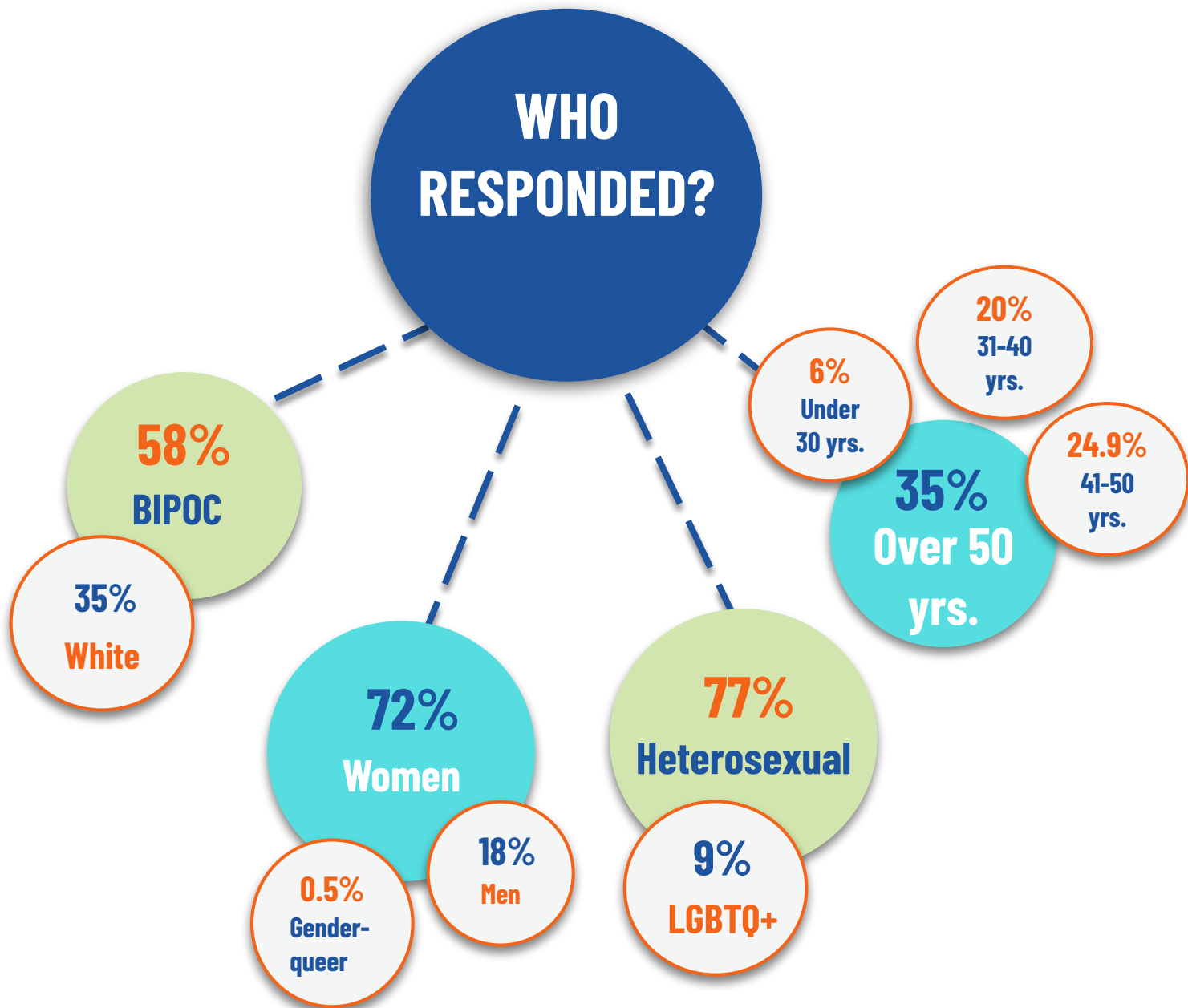
Like any research project, TJC’s assessment has limitations. Findings from survey and staff interviews may be limited due to low trust or comfort with the collection process or the interviewers. Specifically, TJC and CCHS attempted to recruit men, particularly men of color, to interview regarding their disparate experiences. As reflected on subsequent pages, many respondents chose to select “prefer not to respond” in answering certain survey questions. This may reflect the sentiment of fear of retribution and the reticence that TJC encountered throughout the Assessment and Listening Sessions.

Certain quotes and statistics chosen for inclusion in this report represent a combination of trends seen in many responses, as well as distinct outliers to uplift otherwise marginalized perspectives.

Finally, we want to recognize that CCHS is on the front lines of responding to the ongoing pandemic. In particular, CCHS provides care for some of the more vulnerable members of Contra Costa County. The pandemic has exhausted staff at all levels of the organization. While the leadership team endeavored to find a “lull” amongst the COVID surges, this proved difficult. We acknowledge that, overall, participation may have been limited and responses muted due to staff being occupied with delivering care and supporting CCHS in an acute time of ongoing crisis.

¹Smith, L. T. (2012). *Decolonizing Methodologies : Research and Indigenous Peoples*. Zed Books, London.

ABOUT THE SURVEY RESPONDENTS



1,307 total respondents

Note: Respondents are able to select more than one answer in each category throughout the demographics section. See more detail in Appendix

ABOUT THE SURVEY RESPONDENTS BY ROLE *

Clerical Team member
(provider, nurse, ancillary)

28%

Coordinator/ Technical
Specialist

24%

Clerical

14.5%

Manager (Supervisory)

11%

Public Health

8%

Community Health Worker

4%

Prefer not to respond

17%

* Respondents are able to select more than one answer.

ABOUT THE SURVEY RESPONDENTS BY DIVISION*

Regional Medical Center
and Health Centers

32%

Public Health

17%

Behavioral Health

15%

Health Plan

5%

Office of Informatics &
Information Technology

4%

Health, Housing, and
Homelessness

3%

Prefer not to respond

18%

* Respondents are able to select more than one answer.

ORGANIZATIONAL ASSETS



FINDINGS: ORGANIZATIONAL ASSETS



Organizational Strengths to Leverage

Mission Commitment

In all our assessment tools, and across divisions we found employees dedicated to serving the mission of Contra Costa Health Services and convinced of a strong connection between equity work and CCHS' central purpose:

Our mission is to care for and improve the health of all people in Contra Costa County with special attention to those who are most vulnerable to health problems.

Dedication to the organization and its mission is demonstrated in employee longevity and in the anecdotal evidence we heard of staff wanting to recruit family and friends to work at the organization.

Equity Team

The appointment of a Chief Equity Officer and resourcing the role with a team was well received by people concerned about Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. We heard many works of praise for the Equity Team: Gilbert Salinas, Shannon Ladner-Beasley, and Miriam Orantes and their strategic and logistical efforts to create meaningful partnerships and advance equity.

Past and Ongoing Equity Efforts and Willingness to Engage

Quantitative and qualitative data suggest that there is a broadly shared perception across the organization that racial equity work is important and many have been involved for years prior. There is a broad array of adjacent and ongoing efforts to address DEI in many ways. TJC learned of people across the organization working on DEI efforts such as:

- Employee Resource Groups
- Historically Marginalized Communities Engagement Unit
- Resident Diversity Council (DEIA)
- 2020 MEC Discrimination Survey
- Participating in ORESJ and Contra Costa County level initiatives
- Cultural competency training
- Hiring efforts for more diversity in care providers

Our assessment alone required over a thousand staff members volunteering time to participate in the effort by taking the survey, agreeing to participate in interviews and focus groups, and attending Listening Sessions. In particular, we relied on the insights of our Key Working Group (KWG) to inform our strategy. Members of KWG included people in top leadership roles as well as those on the ground, all equally committed and willing to return meeting after meeting.

More Work Planned

CCHS can and should leverage these strengths -- the ground covered and the relationships built -- as the organization engages in the equity roadmapping process to come. Top organizational leadership have shown openness to hearing the contents of this report and have approved the detailed strategic planning process necessary to make vital changes such as the ones suggested herein.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR EQUITY: CHALLENGES AND RECOMMENDATIONS



FOCUS AREA 1
Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
Work



FINDINGS: OPPORTUNITIES FOR EQUITY



Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Work

Summary

There is a shared desire to dive into DEI work and acknowledgement of how important DEI work remains. There is a perception among employees that they personally possess a high degree of knowledge and skills relating to DEI competency. Respondents expressed, however, that they do not believe other employees have the same skills and knowledge.

Opportunities & Analysis:

- There is a shared perception across the organization that racial equity work is important.
 - **The organization has a workforce who understand the need for DEI work.**
 - **84.87% Agree or Strongly Agree:** “Racial equity work is important to the work and priorities of CCHS.”
 - It is important to highlight that the majority racial group at CCHS strongly agreed with the above statement.
 - Respondents who identified as White noted **90.7% Strongly Agree or Agree**. White respondents also noted a significantly higher percentage (**88% Agree and Strongly Agree**) when responding to the statement: “I am knowledgeable about issues related to race, equity, and inclusion.”

It is clear across all data collected that employees at CCHS value DEI work. This is a chance for organizational leadership to lean into the work with the backing of the workforce.

- Respondents feel they have racial equity knowledge and skills, but that staff around them lack knowledge and skills.
 - **32% of respondents noted Disagree or Strongly Disagree** the other members of CCHS have the ability to engage in difficult conversations about race, equity, and inclusion.
 - **87.04% Agree or Strongly Agree** when prompted: “I am knowledgeable about issues related to race, equity, and inclusion.”

There is an opportunity to explore this disconnect: why would there be a shared perception that oneself holds knowledge while others do not. How is it perceived that this knowledge is developed? What are the behaviors that demonstrate the skills that showcase that knowledge? What can the organization do to support those behaviors and the ongoing development of equity skills?

FINDINGS: OPPORTUNITIES FOR EQUITY



Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Work - cont'd

Opportunities & Analysis:

- There are disparate experiences around inclusion centered on identity within the organization.

Quote: "This has not happened during my time here, but if I observed a colleague treating client/family or staff without a respectful/ inclusive/ pro-diversity approach, I would address this, as it is essential."

Quote: "I was the only African American perspective and I was made to feel out of place, speaking from my lived experience."

Quote: "We recently had a new Black woman hired in our department. Within two weeks, three complaints had been raised about her to her direct supervisor - at least two of which came from OUR supervisor (i.e. the new employee's big boss). The new employee's direct supervisor shared the complaints with me to solicit my feedback. One of the complaints seemed unfounded to us, and two of them could have been leveled at any number of longstanding employees but had never been. We believed that these could have been (or likely were) an example of implicit bias."

While some feel mistreatment does not happen at CCHS, data shared across our assessment tools indicates that microaggressions are a daily occurrence. (See section on Welcomeness & Inclusion.) As the organization looks to become more equitable there is the opportunity to explore how these disparate experiences are occurring and look to create counterbalances to them.

Recommendations:

1. **Mobilize senior management to visibly engage with DEI efforts and communicate the importance of engaging to their respective divisions. Demonstrate that ownership and execution of DEI work needs to be shared and extend beyond the Equity Team.**

This mobilization of senior leadership sets the pace for the organization and communicates to the workforce strong organizational support. Senior leadership engagement in the process is not only going to operationalize the work but continue to motivate staff as they see the work becoming a priority from all levels of the organization, top down.

FINDINGS: OPPORTUNITIES FOR EQUITY



Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Work - cont'd

Recommendations:

Visible mobilization can include meaningful participation from recognized and respected leaders in developing the DEI roadmapping. The roadmapping process immediately follows the dissemination of this Discovery Report. Communicating who the leaders are and why they were selected to the broader staff can provide a morale boost to those committed to DEI.

Routine communication from the Equity Team to different levels of staff and stakeholders can help staff spread over many facilities and roles, and keep up with the latest. A page in iSite will also help ensure employees can visit a single source to see up to date information about DEI and other efforts.

- 2. Dedicate adequate internal and external resources to develop a DEI Roadmap (or equity-centered strategic plan) including alignment with the organizational mission, vision, and values statements, as well as DEI goals, tactics for achieving them, metrics, and accountability measures memorializing plans for different roles and groups to be responsible for its implementation.**

TJC and CCHS will begin work on the DEI Roadmap immediately. Additionally, resources have been allocated to communication and training resources. These resources build on prior and ongoing efforts in different parts of the agency to advance equity. The Roadmap will be an additional tool guiding DEI efforts.

As the organization continues advancing DEI, committing resources demonstrates both the priority of the organization and also increases capacity to execute. Resource allocation also invites regular assessments and progress reports in an effort to hold all involved accountable to the stewardship of these resources.

FINDINGS: OPPORTUNITIES FOR EQUITY



Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Work - cont'd

Recommendations:

3. **Engage staff in training around cultural competency, including use of pronouns across all employees with a deeper understanding for client/patient facing employees. Build on the well-received “What’s Culture Got to Do With It” training.**

As there is a dissonance between perception of personal knowledge and other’s knowledge, collective training allows for discussion and engagement across differences. These spaces will also elicit conversation about how this knowledge can show up and be acted on in the work space, which will operationalize the learning and increase confidence in the skills and allyship of colleagues.

A variety of trainings, learning opportunities, and affinity spaces can aid in enhancing cultural competency. This includes trainings directly tackling DEI topics, book clubs or other informal learning activities, and support for the formation of and participation in affinity group spaces (Black Town Hall, Pride Committee, etc.).

Cultural competency can also be developed around cultural and other celebrations. These can be opportunities for employees to learn about culturally important holidays or other celebrations, building camaraderie and enhancing competency at the same time.

Pronoun use is specifically called out due to reported instances of misgendering. As will be discussed later, other challenges around age, race, class, and gender also persist. Staff can benefit from training in these areas as well.

FOCUS AREA 2

Role & Scope



FINDINGS: OPPORTUNITIES FOR EQUITY



Role & Scope

Summary

Employees have a strong perception of how their roles have adjusted or grown over their tenure at the organization often without compensation adjustments. Furthermore, disaggregating data reveals disparate perceptions of compensation and growth opportunities along the lines of race and roles. There is recognition that the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted employee experiences and perceptions in regard to compensation, role expansion, and professional development.

Opportunities and Analysis

- The hiring process is convoluted and often both hiring managers and candidates are left with more questions than answers. The onboarding process is similarly nebulous and unclear for new hires.

Quote: “I recently transitioned from a temp to permanent position. [The] entire process was disturbing and left me unvalued. If what I experienced as a current temp employee transitioning to a permanent position is normal, then the process needs change.”

As hiring managers, employees, and candidates struggle to understand the nuance of the hiring and promotion process and there is a perception of inequity. The organization has the chance to provide more insight into how these processes are built and to explain their underlying rationale.

- Compensation for roles is often lower than comparable agencies. This is further complicated when workloads increase without additional compensation. Workload increase is often attributed to turnover and the increased demands of responding to COVID-19.
 - **84.6% noted Agree or Strongly Agree to:** “I have clarity about my job description and my job duties.”
 - **86.26 % noted Agree (44.76%) or Strongly Agree (41.47%)** when asked: “I have clarity about what is expected of me as an employee.”
 - When asked: “I am compensated fairly for the work I do,” **20.35% noted Strongly Disagree, 27.62% Disagree, 38.18% Agree, 13.85% Strongly Agree**
 - Respondents who identified as American Indian or Indigenous noted **57% Disagree or Strongly Disagree**
 - Respondents who identify as Middle Eastern noted **88.3% Disagree or Strongly Disagree**

FINDINGS: OPPORTUNITIES FOR EQUITY



Role & Scope - cont'd

Opportunities & Analysis:

Quote: "Compensation is pretty terrible around here. The people who get all the benefits are the consultants not the regular employees. Many people in my unit have been stalled or not given raises over the years. The pay is not up to date or fair."

Quote: "The workload has drastically increased since I started here and at the same time, the growth opportunities have disappeared."

- Career growth and advancement within the organization is complicated to navigate and often seen as inequitable.
 - When asked "I am provided with professional development opportunities (training, education, networking opportunities) that support my success at my job", **35%** of respondents noted they **Disagree or Strongly Disagree**.
 - **46%** of respondents who identified as Clerical noted **Disagree or Strongly Disagree**.
 - **44%** of respondents who identified as coordinator/ technical specialist noted **Disagree or Strongly Disagree**.

Quote: "There are trainings available to employees, but often it is challenging to take the time to go or participate in a training, because of workload."

Quote: "I wish that I saw more opportunity for growth at CCHS, but the opportunities seem to be elusive for certain classifications. I also wish there was more opportunity for growth as far gaining new experiences that someone can use to improve their overall skill set."

In the absence of financial resources and structural changes to increase compensation, CCHS can find opportunities to convey appreciation. In addition, it is important that employees can take full advantage of professional development opportunities (tuition reimbursement, training, etc.). By doing this, CCHS can demonstrate support for professional development and demonstrate clear paths to internal growth. Such demonstration can bolster retention by encouraging staff and illustrating how they can advance their career at CCHS.

FINDINGS: OPPORTUNITIES FOR EQUITY



Role & Scope - cont'd

Recommendations:

- 1. Develop a communications plan to openly address and acknowledge perceptions of limited growth opportunities. Clarify intentions for changes and be willing to be held accountable for them.**

A significant portion of staff see limited opportunities for growth at CCHS. Even if managers feel this is unwarranted, a broad group of employees have this perception. TJC challenges the CCHS leadership to reflect further on the causes of this perception. Countering this perception requires openly acknowledging the feeling among many employees and the organization's desire to improve in this area. This will help staff feel seen and heard, even if perceptions do not fully reflect the accuracy of all staff experiences.

Countering this sentiment requires CCHS to do its best to be an employer that develops talent and promotes from within. If some areas of the department are not consistently able to promote internal talent, then dig in to understand why. Create steps to help staff gain training, skills, and soft-skills mentorship that are critical to developing as a professional.

Some challenges to growth paths are created as the result of larger county policies, contracts with labor unions, and other constraints that cannot be easily alleviated. Openly acknowledge limitations where they exist. Be open about areas ripe for improvement, and any reasons why improvements or changes may be delayed or aren't feasible.

- 2. Ensure that existing staff are aware of all promotional and employment opportunities through multiple channels. Consider creating a guide to help employees navigate communication channels and navigate the hiring and/or promotional processes.**

Increasing transparency will aid, not only in building trust in the process, but also showcase a desire for internal talent to reach for new opportunities within the company. Effort to demystify the steps required could take multiple forms, such as: orientation for new employees regarding where to find growth opportunities; regular orientation to human resource materials available on the website; a video series explaining various aspects of employment (testing, listing, credentials, minimum qualifications, etc.).

Many communication channels already exist (email lists for example) but knowing how, when, where, and why to access them needs to be explained. Due to the unique nature of public hiring processes—as compared to the private sector—candidates often need coaching and help as the process takes place or reminders that a position has been posted. This might include helping provide moral support if the process take a long time.

Additionally, if managers of a work group are aware that hiring processes, including direct appointments, are underway, then directly communicating with staff helps build a sense of transparency, trust, and feeling included in the development of the team.

FINDINGS: OPPORTUNITIES FOR EQUITY



Role & Scope - cont'd

Recommendations:

3. Increase transparency about processes and procedures for performance reviews, skills, tuition reimbursement, and growth opportunities.

Employees reported a desire for development and investment through regular performance reviews, including learning and development plans in performance reviews. Managers can address growth opportunities to enhance staff professional performance. This could include discussion of stretch assignments to allow employees to build new skills and enhance their resumes.

Allowing for time away from day-to-day work for trainings and approving professional development reimbursements efficiently, are two ways to show support for continued growth. Tuition reimbursement is an example of an excellent program that encourages staff to further their careers through additional study, certifications, and ongoing learning. The funds help eliminate or decrease cost as a significant barrier for education. Ensuring knowledge of these and other developmental benefits helps increase transparency and participation in these programs and other training opportunities. Even though work groups face reductions in staff, endeavoring to support employees furthering their educations will engender trust and enhance staff outputs.

As a large organization, CCHS may also seek to develop a regular schedule of communication. As new employees join, switch positions, or go through different life experiences, they may need to be reminded of training opportunities and other means to grow professionally.

Related to recommendation #2 of this section, when announcing new positions, new hires, new posts, CCHS may consider using the announcement as opportunities to remind staff of the hiring processes and what steps are covered by such announcements. Through open, consistent—even if sometimes redundant—communication, employees can clearly understand what is happening and why.

FOCUS AREA 3

Feedback and Supervision



FINDINGS: OPPORTUNITIES FOR EQUITY



Feedback & Supervision

Summary

CCHS has a strong desire to delve into DEI work; safety will be required to be successful. Employee perception of the organization stems from their perception of the supervision they receive. So as work is done to adjust the overall culture of the organization, special attention should be paid to staff supervisors.

Opportunities & Analysis

- There is a perception of the lack of psychological or organizational safety when providing feedback.
 - **44.15% Strongly Disagree or Disagree** when asked “I am actively encouraged to provide feedback on how to improve CCHS.”
 - Respondents who identified as Multi racial/ Mixed race noted **54.2% Disagree or Strongly Disagree**

Quote: “The dictatorial power structure of CCHS, with complete unaccountability of the leadership to patients and staff, effectively prevents change, including change aimed at reducing inequities.”

Quote: “Yes, you can't voice differing opinions on anything here. There is no healthy debate about anything here. It is a monosyllabic conversation that takes place in an echo chamber, and if you disagree with anything you best be silent.”

Quote: “Yes, the inability to vocalize issues without the fear or retaliation.”

- There is a perception that supervisors struggle with conflict management.

Quote: “My immediate supervisor doesn't deal well with issues or confrontations so she generally has us deal with it ourselves. Unless she 100% backs her favorite employees.”

The conflict management component of supervision impacts how employees are perceiving the organization. Here is the opportunity to have a large impact in employee experience. Learning how to resolve conflicts, how to moderate challenging interpersonal dynamics are two critical skills for managers and supervisors.

FINDINGS: OPPORTUNITIES FOR EQUITY



Feedback & Supervision - cont'd

- There is a perception that leadership has a lack of awareness of social issues.

Quote: “More training for managers around white privilege would be helpful. We do plan to have Dr. Ken Hardy facilitate some trainings for BHS this year, so that should be helpful.”

Quote: “Our department 100% deals with equity issues but they are not thought of as equity issues. I think there is opportunity to have a conversation around how what we do is related to these issues.”

Quote: “I routinely witness implicit bias and age discrimination by [my] manager.”

- There is strong perception that favoritism plays a role in managerial and employee relationships.

Quote: “Favoritism is rampant and cliques formed. What can you do if you don't have power or the ear of someone who has power?”

Qualitative references to favoritism and bias were pervasive across the organization and throughout the survey responses, interviews, and focus groups. Instances of favoritism were reported in many aspects of the employee experience: hiring, promotion, growth opportunities (conferences and trainings), and scheduling.

Recommendations:

1. **Train supervisors on how to receive, respond to, and incorporate appropriate feedback from employees. Include assessment of this skill in performance evaluations to incentivize keeping these skills sharp and encourage ongoing learning and development.**

Respondents noted both quantitatively and qualitatively throughout the assessment they are not encouraged to provide feedback, the feedback provided does not lead to changes, and/or that feedback provided is viewed negatively and discouraged. TJC recognizes that all feedback cannot be operationalized immediately. Fostering and supporting open dialogue—even if there is disagreement—is essential for an inclusive and welcoming workplace and for the building of trust.

Including how supervisors perform on this task can ensure that the practice is institutionalized, documented, and/or memorialized as a part of organizational culture.

FINDINGS: OPPORTUNITIES FOR EQUITY



Feedback & Supervision - cont'd

Recommendations:

2. Increase training and engagement for managers around bias response and mitigation.

Understanding how they might prevent or interrupt potentially harmful experiences could drastically impact how managers and supervisors influence the climate and how staff perceives the organization. The training series could include resolving interpersonal conflicts between staff, understanding what to do if an incident of bias or identity-based micro-aggression occurs, and understanding how to address more egregious incidences of harassment, discrimination, or serious interpersonal conflicts.

3. Consider refining remote work policies to encourage hybrid remote work schedules to the maximum extent feasible to increase retention and job satisfaction.

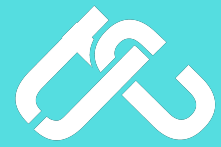
Clear and equitable policies will impact employee experience, retention, and a sense of fairness. Remote work policies will have impact on the lived experience of employees, particularly those with caretaking duties for family and community and those with lower incomes. Due to the cost of living, many Bay Area organizations find that the lowest compensated employees have longer commutes than those with higher compensation. Combined with rising fuel costs, the time and energetic tax of commuting compared to some of the flexibility of remote (hybrid) work can be large for many.

Employees commented on effectively working remotely during the pandemic and having the data to illustrate their performance remained undiminished, yet no longer being extended the privilege. While the discussion of the impacts of remote work continue throughout many workplaces across the world, and especially the Bay Area, this switch for some back to complete in person work felt insulting—as though CCHS did not trust them to perform when working from home.

FOCUS AREA 4
Welcomeness & Inclusion



FINDINGS: OPPORTUNITIES FOR EQUITY



Welcomeness & Inclusion

Summary

While the organization has experienced success in its ability to be welcoming to some employees, it is clear that there are challenges around race that need to be discussed at CCHS. The disparate experiences of employees highlights work that should be explored with intent and purpose. Space must be made to explore and discuss how to make gender diverse staff and patients feel welcome.

Opportunities & Analysis

- Survey respondents reported strong welcomeness scores across the board at both the organizational and team level.
 - **88.37% Agree or Strongly Agree** with the statement “CCHS, as an organization, is welcoming and inclusive of people from different social and cultural identities.”
 - **88.53% Agree or Strongly Agree** when asked: “My team/department is welcoming and inclusive of people from different social and cultural identities.”

Quote: “Everyone is equal in my office space regardless of what they look like or where they come from. No one get more or less work based on what they look like or where they come from. We shouldn't have to be taught that. We all know that. It's a waste of money and time to think you have to teach us that.”

- Nonetheless, respondents reported often or constantly witnessing or directly experiencing problematic or challenging issues related to racism, gender, ageism, and classism at levels that suggest CCHS needs to address and pay attention to these areas.
 - **Race and Racism** has the largest spread of experience when respondents were asked if they “ever witnessed or directly experienced problematic or challenging issues” around race and racism: **35.68%** never, **42.28%** Rarely, **16.35%** often, **5.69%** constantly. A total of **22.04%** encountered some challenge with race or racism in the workplace.
 - All other concerns are regularly witness or directly experience problematic or challenging issues:
 - **Age, ageism, and/or generational differences:** **19.15%** noted **Often** or **Constantly**.
 - **Gender:** **18.34%** of respondents noted **Often** or **Constantly**.
 - **Class and/or socioeconomic status:** **17.62%** of respondents noted **Often** or **Constantly**.
 - **Ability and/or Disability:** **10.93%** of respondents noted **Often** or **Constantly**.
 - **Sexual orientation:** **6.96%** of respondents noted **Often** or **Constantly**.

FINDINGS: OPPORTUNITIES FOR EQUITY



Welcomeness & Inclusion - cont'd

- Data from across assessment tools suggest a frequency of mis-use of pronouns and misgendering of those with transgender identities. Some participants spoke to transphobia and intentional dismissing of gender identity.

As the organization looks to be welcoming of sexuality and gender diversity, being able to lean into updated language that allows for the dignity of those who engage with the organization is tantamount to success. This extends to the work around race and leaning into dignity and underscores the need for training as identified in the first set of DEI recommendations..

- These quotes illustrate typical experiences related to these concerns.

Quote: "I am still one of the only black [staff at my site]. I have reported my concerns of microaggressions and experiences, and gotten written support but no actual actionable changes following that."

Quote: "I do not feel I can express myself in my present work environment, however, I would love the opportunity to work in an environment where diversity is embraced, inclusion and fairness exists."

Quote: "I have seen white privilege and fragility protected and even rewarded at all costs, meanwhile people of color are seen as difficult to work with, argumentative and are excluded from strategy meetings to further [the] status quo."

FINDINGS: OPPORTUNITIES FOR EQUITY



Welcomeness & Inclusion - cont'd

Recommendations:

1. **Foster a culture of inclusion to drive greater organizational effectiveness, impact, and to achieve your organization's core mission. Dedicate resources where possible and regularly issue climate surveys to track culture change.**

The culture of inclusion can and will be a dynamic process that requires listening to what stakeholders need. These strategies will be different based on the success and formative feedback required in this process. But one thing is clear, no one initiative, role, or person can enact organization wide culture change. Plan for and communicate that inclusion is everyone's job at every level.

Many assessment participants, including and particularly those interested in the Listening Sessions, recounted that their participation was happening on their own time, i.e. lunch or evening hours. To underscore the organization's commitment to DEI, allow on the clock time for such efforts, pay people for their efforts. Demonstrate that DEI work is not extra-curricular.

2. **Undertake efforts to address a fear of retribution and perceptions of favoritism that are pervasive in the organization.**

It is important to understand that perception is just as impactful, if not more, than reality. Equity work not only requires us to acknowledge why multiple realities exist in the different life experiences of people with different identities and levels of privilege, but also compels us to intentionally and explicitly investigate the reasons why these differences exist.

Concrete strategies include:

- a. Create goals for improvement and conducting climate surveys regularly with pointed questions about perception of favoritism and psychological safety to measure progress overtime.
- b. Create institutional ways to raise the expectations of management responsibility to those they supervise, and therefore, the entire organization. To the extent feasible, work with the relevant union(s) to collaborate on ways to change performance evaluations to include employees' experiences and observations of favoritism or behaviors perceived as favoritism, as well as other aspects of the supervisor-supervisee relationship.
- c. Infuse training, particularly for those in managerial positions, with examples of how to avoid favoritism and the perception of favoritism, and of how to develop psychological safety on their teams. Ensure trainings include adequate communication and interpersonal skills. If such professional development opportunities do not exist, reallocate budgetary resources.

FINDINGS: OPPORTUNITIES FOR EQUITY



Welcomeness & Inclusion - cont'd

Recommendations:

- 3. Provide material support for employee groups such as Employee Resource Groups and/or Affinity Groups. Ensure safe feedback is in fact safe, and that groups can share their concerns and suggestions without fear of retribution.**

Given the common occurrence of microaggressions and problematic issues experienced and witnessed by staff at CCHS, gathering in dedicated spaces with those who have common experiences could be constructive and healing. TJC recognizes that time and funding are tight. Where possible, consider showing support for Affinity Groups and Employee Resource Groups.

Be aware of and counterbalance the perception that certain groups are getting special treatment. While encouraging people of like experiences to gather, also encourage social connections across identity lines. Caution here is warranted given the tendency of assessment participants to point toward the perception of favoritism and social cliques.

- 4. Ensure the process for reporting bias or an incident is clear. Provide support for the person reporting.**

The process of reporting incidents of bias, discrimination, or exclusion can be fraught with processes that make the reporter feel devalued. Further, the formal processes can take a significant portion of time to resolve.

A previous recommendation suggested helping managers build skills in moderating interpersonal conflicts of all kinds. This includes equipping managers and supervisors with tools to deploy when directly witnessing an incident or having an incident reported. Reacting in a positive way in the moment to employees in a vulnerable situation can help that person feel safe to share, and confident to continue performing their work while investigations (if necessary) take place. Believing staff and coming from the position that they are indeed the experts of their own experiences allows management to save energy from trying to prove accuracy of claims from their own perspective and lead from a place of empathy.

Likewise, managers need support from colleagues to help build positive team relationships under challenging conditions. A strong sense of team and camaraderie can reduce friction among team members and reduce negative personal interactions. A strong sense of team can enable colleagues to discuss sensitive topics like race, gender, ability, etc. in a place of psychological safety.

CONCLUSION



DEI work is messy, emotional, and ever enduring. Contra Costa Health Services has talented, dedicated staff that want to engage in building skill and knowledge around DEI competencies. Its potential to improve disparate experiences amongst racial groups at all levels of the organization, equity, and inclusion internally is as great as CCHS' commitment to impacting the lives and communities of those who they serve. To realize this vast potential, Contra Costa Health Services must understand its own profound role in embracing and leveraging the power of DEI values.

In this report, TJC concludes that CCHS should focus its attention on four areas: DEI competency, Role & Scope, Feedback & Supervision, and Welcomeness & Inclusion. Through attention and continued effort with in these spaces we believe the culture at CCHS will be impacted in ways that stakeholders will not only see but appreciate. An undeniable asset is that staff at all levels of the organization are supportive, willing, and ready to dive into DEI work in a multitude of ways. They understand why DEI is important not only for the experience of CCHS employees but for the impact on the communities they serve as well.

While it is important to identify and employ clear, sustainable DEI practices, there is more work to be done, particularly surrounding shifts in culture. With deep personal work, time, and some specialized training on on how to create inclusive spaces for gender and racially diverse people, the Contra Costa Health Service team can meet these challenges with the grace and resilience that all marginalized communities deserve.

Through implementation of the recommendations that are designed for CCHS' specific areas of growth and that leverage its assets, CCHS will embody the pieces, which will position them to meet the current and future needs of an ever expansive Healthcare landscape. We know this will take hard work and resources. The Justice Collective looks forward to being a partner to CCHS in this moment and well into the future.

PRINCIPLES OF EQUITY

The Justice Collective has applied the following Equity Principles to the analysis of each theme.

	<u>Principle</u>	<u>Intended Outcomes</u> <i>“Incorporating this principle means...”</i>
1	Clarity and Buy-in about How the Organization will Work Together and Build as a Company	Creating a safe and brave space wherein staff can build skills, participate in conversations that may be difficult and uncomfortable, and demonstrate vulnerability and resilience to discomfort.
2	Shared Language and Key, Foundational Concepts for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion	Inviting collective knowledge to be incorporated into industry standard definitions to ensure participants/users/stakeholders have a shared understanding on which to build towards subsequent work. Ensures that not just safe space, but brave, courageous space can be built together for difficult conversations to happen. Teaches people how to expand the “stretch” zone in between comfort and panic. Ensures that “we’re all having the same conversation.”
3	Trust and Relationship Building: Creating Consensual Vulnerability and Psychological Safety	Deepening interpersonal connections, engages personal and interpersonal levels of understanding in applying concepts discussed in previous learning segment.

PRINCIPLES OF EQUITY

4 Resiliency to Discomfort: Emotional Intelligence & Mindfulness

Understanding the research which shows that mindfulness practices are one of the single most important tools in mitigating bias which is a cornerstone of equitable, diverse, and inclusive institutions. Participants learn key mindfulness tools to add to their cache of tools.

5 Essential Skills that Support Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

Introducing and practicing key tools that generate more equitable and inclusive interactions in corporate or institutional culture. This includes learning how to push through fear, communicate intentionally, and take responsibility for our actions.

6 Transparency, Consistency, and Clarity of Communication

Leveling the playing field in ensuring that all employees have access to the same information, the same tenor, and the same messages. Reduces inaccurate information, perceptions, and biased outcomes.

7 Accountability and Measurement: Taking Ownership, Tracking Progress, and Operationalizing Policies and Processes

Holding ourselves and each other accountable for our actions and behaviors, not just our words, and being willing to measure and track progress along the way. Committing to systems that feasibly assess and analyze the areas that matter - not just vanity metrics. This includes ensuring that decisions are made real by assigning ownership to specific people, groups, and organizations; and that the people doing the measuring have the right tools and resources to do so on a regular basis. This includes operationalizing policies and practices in integrity with your company's mission, leadership principles, and values. It also means realizing that these policies and processes are themselves just as much tools of equity, diversity, and inclusion as anything else - when they are applied and operationalized clearly, consistently, and with transparency.

PRINCIPLES OF EQUITY

8 Allyship, Accompliceship, and Leadership:
Self-Awareness, Humility, and Vulnerability
Staying Truth-Facing Always

Staying committed to learning who is the most negatively impacted in any situation, group, network, culture, and social, political, and economic group. De-centering ourselves when we are not the ones most impacted. Lifting up the truth, even when it is hard truth about ourselves. Daily questioning and being thoughtful about our choices in speaking up and out, calling in and out. Fighting the urges of our egos to take up space when we shouldn't, fighting for others when they're not in the room, and making room for voices and faces not seen and heard when they should be. Always asking the question, "Who isn't being represented here?," and passing the microphone when the microphone needs to be passed.

9 Curiosity:
Always Listening, Always Learning

Becoming, sitting in, and diving deeper into what we don't know - about historical context, politics, socioeconomics, culture, ourselves and each other. Remaining in commitment to learning, understanding this is a journey as much as a destination.

10 Develop & Celebrate Identity

Recognizing and believing that identity is a powerful tool that can be a source of resilience, strength, learning, connection, community building, allyship and leadership. Through meaningful and authentic participation that occurs in collaboration and through community-building activities, we sustain and prolong our engagement in identity development⁵. In addition, identity development work provides us with opportunities to realize an increased sense of self-worth and enhanced self-efficacy⁶.

11 Communities and Individuals are the Experts of Their Own Experiences

Decolonizing the notion of "legitimate knowledge" based only on Western (European) ideals and philosophies. The ones who directly experience oppression and are most impacted by it know what they are experiencing first hand better than anyone else. Expanding conceptions of the value of thought over feeling. Resisting the urge to intellectualize everything and accepting that emotions and somatics (the information our bodies hold and are constantly using to teach us lessons) are just as viable as Western notions of knowledge production and legitimacy.

⁵Louise B. Jennings PhD , Deborah M. Parra-Medina MPH, PhD , Deanne K. Hilfinger-Messias PhD, RN & Kerry McLoughlin MA (2006) Toward a Critical Social Theory of Youth Empowerment, *Journal of Community Practice*, 14:1-2, 31-55

⁶Chinman, M. J., & Linney, J.A. (1998). Toward a model of adolescent empowerment: Theoretical and empirical evidence. *Journal of Primary Prevention*, 18, 393-413.



Sources of Work Supporting TJC's Analysis and DEI Principles

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