Children and Youth Behavioral Health Initiative

EQUITY FRAMEWORK: DRAFT TOOLKIT

As of March 23, 2023

Introduction

The North Star Vision for the California Health and Human Services Agency (CalHHS) is a *Healthy California for All* where every individual belongs to a strong and thriving community, including our children and youth. The following principles guide all of CalHHS's work, including in the Children and Youth Behavioral Health Initiative:

- Focus on Equity
- Actively Listening
- Use Data to Drive Action
- See the Whole Person
- Put the Person back in Person-Centered
- Cultivate a Culture of Innovation
- Deliver on Outcomes

AB 133 (2021), which created the Children and Youth Behavioral Health Initiative states: "The initiative is intended to transform California's behavioral health system into an innovative ecosystem in which all children and youth 25 years of age and younger, regardless of payer, are screened, supported, and served for emerging and existing behavioral health needs."

Embedding and advancing equity is critical to achieve the transformed ecosystem for ALL children and youth called for in the law creating the CYBHI. Statute creating various components of the initiative specially call out a focus on equity, including engaging minority and underserved students in behavioral health careers, addressing health equity gaps, and considering the impact on racial equity. Additional youth behavioral health investments in the Budget Act of 2022 align with the State's commitment to improve health equity and seek to address that behavioral health challenges are borne inequitably by communities of color, low-income communities, and LGBTQ+ communities. The evaluation of the CYBHI, as described in the State's RFP for an evaluation partner, calls for an evaluation approach and plan that center and advance equity.

This CYBHI equity framework and toolkit will serve to support efforts to integrate equity into the activities of the overall initiative and provide the state and stakeholder partners a shared,

robust equity rationale and provide as a foundation for identifying concrete ways to embed and advance equity in the work of the CYBHI.

In Summer 2022 CYBHI formed an Equity Working Group (EWG) to advise and recommend ways to support CalHHS and its departments in embedding and advancing equity in the initiative's work. The mission of the EWG was to create an Equity Framework that would include a recommended definition of equity, key framework components, and a toolkit for applying the framework. These elements are included in this guide.

Working Definition of Equity

- Equity is achieved when the dimensions of our identity (e.g., sex, gender identity and expression, cultural identity, race/ethnicity, disability, national origin, age, language, family structure, religion/faith, immigration status, or sexual orientation) and other dimensions of difference defined by social, economic, demographic, and/or geographic characteristics are no longer predictive of unjust cycles of harm and oppression across generations is stopped.

- We envision a society in which all the unique dimensions of our identity are equally valued, and all people are able to achieve the life they desire and can do so with dignity, respect, and collective support. We must acknowledge that some groups of people have historically benefitted and currently benefit from various systems that exploit, harm, oppress and marginalize others.

- Therefore, Equity is the process of producing policies and practices that critically evaluate and uproot the determinants that have allowed for the exploitation and harm of the most vulnerable groups.

- Equity strives to remove the obstacles that prevent people from having full and complete access to all opportunities and actively works to provide targeted investments in those who have been impeded and harmed by systemic oppression.

- Equity rebalances power to groups that experience inequality and promotes a spirit of healing, justice, and reconciliation

Contextual Considerations

- The system was built to benefit those with power.

- Individuals, families, and communities are experts in their own needs, experiences, and understanding that health and healing can take many forms.

- The effects of racism and white supremacy have created and perpetuated unjust systems that benefit a few and harm vulnerable communities.

CYBHI Equity Framework Pillars

To facilitate the centering and advancing of equity for children and youth, the EWG recommends reflection aligned with **the six equity framework pillars**. Strengths identification and gap analysis will guide the work. Your reflections as cross-sector collaborators will support necessary engagement with the community and those closest to the impact of the CYBHI in the continuing challenges of centering and advancing equity.

Building Anti-Racist Multicultural Institutions/Systems:

- Ground the work in the reality of recognizing the effects of racism and white supremacy in creating and perpetuating unjust systems that benefit a few and harm vulnerable communities
- Center co-creation, co-leadership, and consensus decision making around goals and services
- Work to eliminate systemic, structural, and institutional inequities that impact access to and infrastructure for resources, services, and programs
- Recognize and correct historical and persistent wrongdoings to end the long-term harm that is perpetuated by a system built to benefit those with power

Intersectional Cultural Responsiveness:

- Promotion, prevention, and intervention services and their providers are culturally, linguistically, and developmentally responsive
- Centering the direct needs, strengths, and lived experiences of children, youth, and marginalized groups and communities in their own words
- Align goals for CYBHI processes, design, planning, and implementation with the priorities articulated by the individuals, families, and communities most affected by inequities in mental, emotional, and behavioral health
- Recognize the importance of racial equity as a critical component of developing an inclusive and healing-centered system that promotes and supports inclusion of diverse services, programs, and providers that best meets the needs of every community

Healing Centered Approach:

- Leverage strengths and modes of healing that individuals bring and are valued within their culture and their experiences to support healing i.e. "What's right with you?"
- Services recognize and incorporate the expertise and lived experience of individuals, families, and communities in concern to their own healing and health
- Services understand and acknowledge historical and current harms caused within BIPOC/marginalized communities by behavioral health and other systems and work to

create the least harmful treatment and more community-centered approaches where the goal is to provide healing, not punishment or harm.

Data Driven Accountability:

- Develop baselines, goals, and outcomes in partnership with communities through use of meaningful, actionable data
- Develop an accountability model with a continuous improvement structure to ensure that the state is providing coverage in the gaps in our current behavioral health ecosystem, with a focus on addressing the urgency to provide critical services and programs to communities with inequities of access/support
- Ensure:
    - shared language around and within data systems is built
    - data can be disaggregated in ways that are meaningful to the centered communities
    - efficient, low-burden, and thorough data collection and reporting
    - data collection regarding service providers, those developing implemented activities, interventions, and programs, and vendors
    - collection of data and monitoring of progress over time
    - use of data to make evidence-based recommendations

Training, Learning, and Capacity Building:

- Support training and capacity building of local, regional, and state government institutions to build a stronger foundational understanding of the history of racial inequities and how to address these inequities with justice
- System-side participants engaged in systems change should have common knowledge and common language on systemic barriers, oppression, and racism in order to inform problem understanding and solution development
- Increase capacity of local and state system-side participants to break down silos that undermine effective service coordination and provision

Targeted Universalism:

- Strategies developed to achieve universal goals are targeted based upon how different groups of children and youth are situated within structures, cultures, and geographies to obtain the universal goal
- Services are available, safe, high quality, and accessible, in a timely manner, regardless of means, location, resources, or affiliation for all, including using specific approaches for specific groups as needed to achieve the universal goal

- Working to break down silos that undermine effective service coordination and provision in a way that takes into account that some groups face more or different systemic and structural barriers

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Cultural Responsiveness	• Promotion, prevention, and intervention services and their providers are culturally, linguistically, and developmentally responsive • Centering the direct needs, strengths, and lived experiences of children, youth, and marginalized groups and communities in their own words • Align goals for CYBHI processes, design, planning, and implementation with the priorities articulated by the individuals, families, and communities most affected by inequities in mental, emotional, and behavioral health • Recognize the importance of racial equity as a critical component of developing an inclusive and healing-centered system that promotes and supports inclusion of diverse services, programs, and providers that best meets the needs of every community
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How to use this CYBHI Equity Toolkit:

1. **Start where you are.** The toolkit can be used at any phase of your CYBHI work: research, planning, design, implementation, learning and adjustment, evaluation. You can focus on one pillar, a few pillars that seem most relevant for the work at hand, or do a full review of all pillars and toolkit questions for a workstream. It is recommended that all pillars be addressed to achieve maximum benefit and a fuller equity approach.

2. **Go from thought….to active consideration with information and guidance gathering and reflection….to action steps..** In order for the tools to be effective, questions need to be asked out loud and given a dedicated space to respond and discuss. Create a safe space where everyone can be open and candid. When interacting and communicating, be conscious of not doing harm to others with language and forms of communication. When unsure, instead of making a statement, ask a question. Set ground rules that allow for mistakes, apologies, and forgiveness. This is pioneer work. Protect each other on the journey.

3. **Consider Using an Approach/Accomplishments/Gaps Statement:** For each of the 6 pillars, create an approach/accomplishments/gaps statement that highlights the items from the toolkit questions you were able to address, as well as the items you were unable to address for your initiative/work plan/activity. Your reflections on both your innovations in meeting these equity goals, as well as the limitations of your approach, are each valuable components of equity work. These statements prepare you to engage the community and other stakeholders in the continuing challenges of centering equity in the CYBHI initiative, as well as offer a model for other initiatives of the naturally iterative process of centering equity in *all* that we do.

4. **Consider utilizing the EWG Thought Partnership committee.** Workstreams can meet with the EWG Thought Partnership Committee to help them begin applying the toolkit to a workstream.

5. **Designate a rotating equity champion** to hold and reference the toolkit at each meeting. The champion should be a different person at each meeting.

6. **You'll know it's working by the usefulness of your mistakes.** Build into your work, as you apply the toolkit to CYBH workstream efforts, ways to be brave. Expect mistakes, and find ways to gain insights/learn from them and inform future steps.

7. **Learning and Training:** While using this framework and toolkit, engage in learning and training to build your and your team's capacity for equity work.

Toolkit Reflection Questions

The reflection questions in the sections below are intended to be used to guide application and integration of each of the Equity Framework Pillars Into the ongoing work of the CYBHI. These questions are oriented toward the work and goals of the CYBHI with a focus on health equity and youth-centered engagement in the context of cross-sector systems change, collective impact work.

Pillar: Building Anti-Racist Multicultural Institutions/Systems

Reflection Questions
1. Have we made a list of our assumptions, and do we have a plan to periodically revisit them? If no, take 5 minutes as a group to articulate the assumptions we've made at the start, such as internet access of whether written documents translated from English will be useful to intended audience
2. What actions and behaviors are we exhibiting that demonstrate our recognition of the effects of racism and white supremacy in creating and perpetuating unjust systems both historically and in the present?
3. Name the systemic harms that are relevant to this work plan/activity and describe the plan to acknowledge and/or address these.
   Resource: Interacting Layers of Trauma and Healing, 2017 (rysecenter.org); Leading with Love and Justice.
4. What strategies are we using to talk about race, historical and current harm from systems and policies both internally and with those we seek to serve?
5. What is our strategy to reassess, respond, or redesign if we learn something new?
6. Are community members being fairly compensated for their time, expertise, contributions, labor and emotional labor? How have we structured our engagement efforts to meet the needs of our community in regards to scheduling, compensation, etc.? Have we identified and acted on ways to make sure that youth are receiving adequate benefits for their participation and expertise?
7. How have we incorporated a wide range of feedback from the communities we are intending to serve? Where have we allotted time to bring back findings to the communities and partners to create a feedback loop? *Resource: Interacting Layers of Trauma and Healing, 2017 (rysecenter.org)*
8. What efforts have we made to specifically target youth and their families? How have we meaningfully targeted the feedback and needs of marginalized groups of youth, including related to the identities named in the definition of equity such as BIPOC youth, justice impacted youth, current and former foster youth, youth with disabilities, immigrant youth, youth with substance use disorders, etc to ensure that we have a have a diversity of identity and experience in your youth and family engagement?
9. How have we given youth the information needed to fully and meaningfully engage in the conversation and solutions? *Resource: UNOY Meaningful Youth Engagement*

Pillar: Intersectional Cultural Responsiveness

Reflection Questions:
1. How have we built in a range of ways and levels for people – our own team and partners – to participate in the way that works best for them to bring their culture and other aspects of identity to the work? How have we created space for identity, intersectionality, and experience in the process of working to embed equity in the CYBHI work under consideration?
2. What is our plan for ensuring lived experience is part of our process, anlaysis and findings e.g. directly from a member of our team or through engagement with partners? *Resource: Interacting Layers of Trauma and Healing, 2017 (rysecenter.org); Leading with Love and Justice Resource: DRE Tool.docx (sharepoint.com), Page 8*
3. How does this solution address the stated need and align with the values of the person/people it seeks to serve?
4. How have we ensured that our processes and the materials that we create are accessible? *Resource: Ford Foundation Disability Inclusion Toolkit: https://www.fordfoundation.org/work/learning/research-reports/disability-inclusion-toolkit/*

Pillar: Healing Centered Approach

Reflection Questions:
1. What is our plan for allaying fears and trepidation of those who have been harmed by the system in the past?
2. What is our plan for responding to critique or criticism of our approach/solution in a way that honors the experience and historical context?
3. How does the format and facilitation of engagement with partners in doing the work cultivate developing authentic relationships?
4. Are we depending on the strength or willpower of those we serve to make this successful or are we shifting power to embed equity in systems?
5. How are we creating brave spaces for making mistakes? How might we intentionally leave time and create space for making mistakes?
6. How have we integrated the principles of transformative and restorative justice into the systems we're creating?

Pillar: Continuous Training, Learning and Capacity Building

Reflection Questions
1. What learning/training/capacity building have we already done that we need to apply to this specific work? Is there additional learning or capacity building we need to do for this specified work?
2. Are we using a deficit-based approach or an asset-based approach?
3. What steps have we taken to invest in communication training and coaching to have meaningful, authentic, credible conversations with stakeholders?
        Resource: RacialEquityToolkit_FINAL_August2012.pdf (seattle.gov)
4. How have we created spaces for restorative and transformative justice within our own team? In the midst of this hard and challenging work, how have we created spaces in which systems can be held accountable for recognizing the harm that has been done and allows us to transform our responses to harm?
5. Have we researched the roots and history of this policy?
        Resource: Interacting Layers of Trauma and Healing, 2017 (rysecenter.org); History, Legacy, and Structure & Systems and Institutions are great starting point considerations created by RYSE

Pillar: Data-Driven Solutions and Accountability

Reflection Questions:
1. What data will we need to support ongoing decision making to ensure that we are achieving equity? How are we including both qualitative and quantitative information that help us understand inequities and ways to potentially address them? How have we established that the information we are using is current?
2. Is the data disaggregated enough and in the right ways?
3. What types of data and information do the communities of focus value so that they feel assured that progress and improvements were indeed effective in your efforts?
4. Are data collection instruments, protocols, tools, etc. provided in the culturally appropriate language of the community that you're serving?
5. How are we appropriately engaging the community in all stages of the data collection, sharing, and interpretation process? How are we providing these data back to the community, and with what tools are necessary for the community to consume/understand/act on it? How are we visualizing and making meaning of the data for broad audiences? Does the community of focus have equal opportunity to share their experiences in the evaluation process?

6. How are we holding ourselves accountable and how are we demonstrating the accountability process to those who touch our system? How are we tracking and analyzing information to embed equity and monitor our progress? How will communities know that progress is being made in the right direction?
7. How are we capturing and communicating the expressions, affect, and emotions behind the stories we are collecting? What stories illustrate the need for this solution?
8. What if we learn something we hadn't considered after we launch this program?
   Resource: DRE Tool.docxm (sharepoint.com), page 14

Pillar: Targeted Universalism

Reflection Questions: *Consider this set of questions in order; they are a cascade of questions to apply the pillar of targeted universalism.*

1. What is your universal goal?
2. How is this universal goal informed by a robust understanding and analysis of the problem at hand?
3. Where is the general population situated in relationship to your universal goal (what is the overall starting point compared to the universal goal)?
4. How are various geographies (places) and population segments (people) situated in relationship to the universal goal? Disaggregate data to ensure there is understanding of the different starting points for different groups in relationship to the universal goal.
5. What are the barriers to achieving the universal goal for each geography/population segment?
6. What are the targeted processes that will allow each geography/population segment to overcome barriers and reach the universal goal, including targeting of resources?

<u>Framework Pillars Resources – Living/Working Section</u>

Building Anti-Racist Multicultural Institutions/Systems

- **Liberatory Design — National Equity Project**
- **Tools & Resources | Government Alliance on Race and Equity (racialequityalliance.org)**
- *Circle Forward: Building a Restorative School Community* **by Carolyn Boyes-Watson & Kay Pranis**
- *Social Work and Restorative Justice: Skills for Dialogue, Peacemaking and Reconciliation* **by Elizabeth Beck, Nancy P. Kropf and Pamela Blume-Leonard**
- **Slavery to Mass Incarceration**
- **https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r4e_djVSag4&t=2s**
- **Evervelles Crippin' Jim Crow: Disability Dis-Location and the School to Prison Pipeline https://www.academia.edu/10445766/Crippin_Jim_Crow_Disability_Dis_location_and_the_School_to_Prison_Pipeline**
- **Racial & Gender Based Harm References**
- **- The Little Book of Race and Restorative Justice: Black Lives, Healing, and US Social**
- **Transformation by Fania E Davis**
- **- The Little Book of Racial Healing: Coming to the Table for Truth Telling, Liberation, and**
- **Transformation by Thomas Norman Dewolf and Jodie Geddes**
- **- Trauma and Recovery: The Aftermath of Violence- From Domestic Abuse to Political Terror by Judith Herman, MD**
- **- Cultivate Consent Workbook by Spring Up**
- **Mental Health Peer Specialists and Their Vision for a Civil Rights Movement**
- https://www.invisibledisabilityproject.org/new-blog/2020/8/3/mental-health-peer-specialists-and-their-vision-for-a-civil-rights-movement
- Radical Peer Support: Reimagining Care Systems & Mental Health
- **https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MqvP3oARjjo**

Intersectional Cultural Responsiveness

- Sins Invalid: Skin Tooth and Bone Book
  https://www.flipcause.com/secure/reward_step2/OTMxNQ==/65827
- **The Pedagogy of Pathologization: Dis/abled Girls of Color in the School-prison Nexus by Subini Ancy Annamma**

- [The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks](#)
- https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/henriettalacks/immortal-life-of-henrietta-lacks.html
- [Whistling Vivaldi , https://wwnorton.com/books/Whistling-Vivaldi/](https://wwnorton.com/books/Whistling-Vivaldi/)
- [#APeoplesJourney](#): African American Women and the Struggle for Equality
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X5H80Nhmn20
- **Mindfulness & Poetry:**
- **- Inward by yung pueblo**
- **- My Mother Was a Freedom Fighter by Aja Monet**
- **- Leading From Within: Conscious Social Change & Mindfulness by Gretchen Ki Steidle**

Healing Centered Approach

- [Medical Apartheid: https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/185986/medical-apartheid-by-harriet-a-washington/](https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/185986/medical-apartheid-by-harriet-a-washington/)
- https://www.umassmed.edu/news/news-archives/2022/02/medical-apartheid-author-harriet-washington-details-history-of-racism-in-medicine/
- *Restorative Justice Dialogue: An Essential Guide for Research and Practice* by Mark Umbreit and Marilyn Peterson Armour
- *Peacemaking Circles: From Conflict to Community* by Kay Pranis, Mark Wedge & Barry Stewart
- *Peacemaking Circles & Urban Youth: Bringing Justice Home* by Carolyn Boyes-Watson
- *The Ethic of Traditional Communities and the Spirit of Healing Justice: Studies From Hollow Water, the Iona Community, and Plum Village* by Jarem Sawatsky
- *Creating Restorative Schools: Setting Schools Up to Succeed* by Martha A. Brown, PhD
- **"To Heal Traumatized Communities, Fight Oppression"**
- https://truthout.org/articles/to-heal-traumatized-communities-fight-oppression/
- **"Burnout: What It Is and Some Ways to Address It In Ourselves and In Organizations"**
- http://www.deanspade.net/2019/09/25/burnout-what-it-is-and-some-ways-to-address-it-in-ourselves-and-in-organizations/?utm_campaign=coschedule&utm_source=twitter&utm_medium=rockwoodleaders
- **Trauma & Healing**
- **- Healing Trauma by Peter A Levine**
- **- Healing the Shame that Binds You by John Bradshaw**

- **- Trauma Stewardship: An Everyday Guide to Caring for Self While Caring for Others by Laura van**

Training, Learning and Capacity Building

- **Guide for how to and who to ensure are included in an advisory group. https://www.samhsa.gov/section-223/governance-oversight/addressing-board-requirements**
- **How to be an Anti-Racist , https://www.ibramxkendi.com/books**
- **Anti-racist reading list: https://www.hks.harvard.edu/faculty-research/library-knowledge-services/collections/diversity-inclusion-belonging/anti-racist**
- ***Torn Apart: How the Child Welfare System Destroys Black Families, and How Abolition Can Build a Safer World* by Dorothy Roberts**
- ***Circle in the Square: Building Community and Repairing Harm in School* by Nancy Ristenberg**
- ***Violent Partners: A Breakthrough Plan for Ending the Cycle of Abuse* by Linda Mills**
- **Practice:**
- **- Fumbling Towards Repair: A Workbook for Community Accountability Facilitators by Mariame**
- **Kaba* & Shira Hassan *also check out website transformharm.org**
- **- Feminist Accountability: Disrupting Violence and Transforming Power by Ann Russo**
- **- The Little Book of Restorative Justice by Howard Zehr**
- **- Beyond Survival: Strategies and Stories from the Transformative Justice Movement edited by:**
- **Ejeris Dixon and Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha**
- **- Creative Interventions Toolkit developed by Mimi Kim**
- **Peer Support as a Tool for Community Care:**
- **https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&ved=2ahUKEwjTrcyF-dj9AhWwKkQIHXrjDFM4FBAWegQIBhAB&url=https%3A%2F%2Facademiccommons.columbia.edu%2Fdoi%2F10.7916%2Fhmnn-x705%2Fdownload&usg=AOvVaw2n6BbhY2MpQKb_NQ08d_zv**
- **"It Can Be Okay for You, Too": Kelly Wofford on Promoting Mental Health with Peer Support—and Radical Transparency**
- **https://www.lisc.org/our-stories/story/it-can-be-okay-for-you-too-kelly-wofford-on-promoting-mental-health-with-peer-supportand-radical-transparency/**
- Elena Aguilar's books, especially Coaching for Equity; The Art of Coaching Teams and Onward - Promoting Resilience among Educators

Data-Driven Solutions and Accountability

- "Do #BlackLivesMatter in schools? Why the answer is 'no.'"
- https://www-washingtonpost-com.stanford.idm.oclc.org/education/2020/07/14/do-blacklivesmatter-schools-why-answer-is-no/
- **Pods and Pod Mapping Worksheet**
- https://batjc.wordpress.com/resources/pods-and-pod-mapping-worksheet/
- **From Boarding Schools to Suspension Boards: Suspensions & Expulsions of Native American Students in CA Public Schools**
- **bmmcoalition.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/From-Boarding-Schools-to-Suspensions-Boards.pdf**

Targeted Universalism

- *"Resource: paper - White Supremacy Culture by Tema Okum. dismantalingracism.org Targeted Universalism"*
- [#APeoplesJourney](#): **African American Women and the Struggle for Equality**
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X5H80Nhmn20
- **"Transformative Justice" Mia Mingus**
- https://transformharm.org/tj_resource/transformative-justice-a-brief-description/
- **Sins Invalid Disability Justice Principles:**
- https://arcminnesota.org/plain-language-disability-justice-principles/
- **Resource: Targeted Universalism Policy and Practice Primer:** https://belonging.berkeley.edu/targeted-universalism
- [FAQ: Targeted Universalism | Othering & Belonging Institute (berkeley.edu)](#)

Next Steps on Document

1. **Make it a more useable document**:
   a. Create a more interactive format (eg can type answers to questions into the document).
   b. Create a worksheet/flow chart/graphic to assist in folks applying the toolkit to a body of work.
   c. Add an example to the Targeted Universalism cascade of questions.
2. **Better Organize Resources Section**: Categorize/label (e.g. book, article, etc.), better organize (e.g. consider separating Reading List from tools to use for a particular pillar), and ensure use of smart links so easier to access the resource.
3. **Review of the working definition** of equity by the Definition Committee to see if there are key words or phrases that can be bolded or highlighted to bring focus and attention to them.