

Infusing an Equity Focus into Organizational Operations

Panelists:

Erika Hartman Downtown Women's Center

Jean-Michel Giraud Friendship Place

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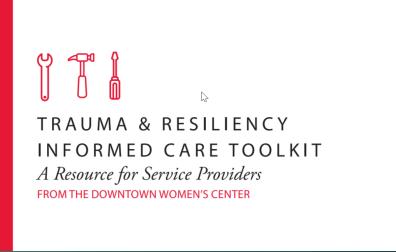
DOWNTOWN WOMEN'S CENTER

The Downtown Women's Center envisions a Los Angeles with every woman housed and on a path to personal stability. Its mission is to end homelessness for women in greater Los Angeles through housing, wellness, employment, and advocacy.



Trauma Informed and Culturally Responsive

- Organizational assessment
- Training and education
- Embedding trauma informed and culturally responsive practices
- Operationalizing a roadmap
- Communicating organizational values





Resources

- Downtown Women's Center: <u>https://www.downtownwomenscenter.org/</u>
- Trauma and Resiliency Informed Care Toolkit: https://www.downtownwomenscenter.org/trauma-informed-care/
- Report And Recommendations of the Ad Hoc Committee on Black People Experiencing Homelessness: https://www.lahsa.org/documents?id=2823report-and-recommendations-of-the-ad-hoccommittee-on-black-people-experiencinghomelessness



OS ANGELES HOMELESS SERVICES AUTHORITY



FRIENDSHIP PLACE

INFUSING EQUITY INTO THE ORGANIZATION: AN ANTIRACISM APPROACH

PRESENTED BY JEAN-MICHEL GIRAUD PRESIDENT & CEO, FRIENDSHIP PLACE WASHINGTON, DC



Equity Framework at Friendship Place



- Antiracism Task Force
- LGBTQ+ Inclusion Workgroup
- Internally and externally facing
- Actively networking and recruiting allies
- Board, volunteer and staff involvement
- Check your culture against societal trends
- Listen to veteran voices
- Check your environment
- Provide training to increase knowledge and comfort



Case Study

"ANTIRACISM AT THE BROOKS"



The Location

- The Brooks is a short-term housing facility for families in Upper Northwest Washington, DC
- The program is designed to serve up to 50 families
- Upper Northwest is an affluent, predominantly white section of Washington
- The program is a part of the Homeward DC plan to end homelessness in the city
- "Home-Ward" means that every ward does its share



The participants

- Nearly all the 120 families served since April 2020 have been families of color
- The families come from other, generally less affluent, parts of the city
- Average stay in the program is 90 days or under
- Unit turnover in the building is frequent



The Program



- The Brooks is a service-enriched program with friendly, well-trained staff
- Interventions are person-centric and empowering
- Services are targeted and effective
- The staff includes a majority of persons of color



The Issues



- The project drew a high level of NIMBY from the onset (planning period)
- Some neighborhood opposition remained post opening
- Most neighbors have been supportive
- Staff and participants were recipients of micro-aggressions and inquiries from neighbors questioning their presence in the neighborhood.
- Three families were subjected to racial epithets by white neighbors in a nearby city park with a playground
- Other forms of scrutiny and police reports
- Complaints about more cars and trash on the street



Building an Effective Response



- In June, I proposed to the Board and staff to step up our racial equity work to an antiracism approach.
- Our Racial Equity Work Group had been meeting since February 2018 with an internal and external focus
- Local and national issues were the basis for the change
- Antiracism meant that we would plan actions



Antiracism Task Force



- The Antiracism Task Force meets monthly
- A Core Group steers it
- Internal and External Goals:
- Getting people ready for difficult conversations
- Pointing out racist comments or attitudes
- Training community stakeholders
- Impacting on government decisions
- Blending antiracism into the culture of the organization
- Finding allies and developing action steps



Mobilizing the Community

- We mobilized the 28 religious congregations supporting us and Friends & Neighbors of the Brooks, a lay group.
- Volunteers place signs along the fence of the park where the families were subjected to racist slurs.
- Participants and Staff received support to respond to micro-aggressions
- We affirmed of our antiracist stand
- Blogs were posted on social media
- Webinars were organized to share information
- Food truck visits helped send a welcoming message



Mobilizing the Community



- Messaging through the congregational structure:
- Clergy, Congregants, Mission groups, Friend, Neighbors
- The Task-Force developed a 5-part training series
- We sought support from city leaders
- We reached out to nearby schools
- We channeled information through the Community Advisory Group linking the program to the neighborhood
- We consulted with the American University Antiracism Center



Impact

- Staff feel supported
- Some issues and scrutiny remain but no racist comments
- The training series was well received
- The level of comfort has increased
- Community members increased their knowledge
- Connections with government groups and leaders
- Renewed ties with American University Antiracist Center
- Community is effectively mobilized
- Positive voices have lowered the negative ones
- Neighborhood is aware of the need to stop racist acts



Organizational Outcomes and Planning



- Our advocacy response in this area and LGBTQ+ inclusion has been strengthened
- We have hired a full-time Community and Advocacy Organizer, leading to impact on the DC Council
- We have helped promote legislation to use an antiracist lens in DC government business
- Antiracism is blended into our culture and activities
- We seize opportunities to comment in testimonies and have included it in our strategic plan
- We have linked to the DC Council Racial Equity Council



Contact Information



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OUR PHILOSOPHY IN ACTION

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how we incorporate equity into our practice



CENTERING CLIENTS

problem

breakage, slippage, referral carousel → high abandonment rate

solution

front-of-the-line service

<u>CARITAS</u> (comprehensive, accessible, responsive, responsive, individualised, transdisciplinary, accountable and seamless)

how we do

assigned attorney; <u>t-shaped skillsets</u>; <u>community-centric fundraising</u>; check-ups; SEVA; service-centric metrics (vs donor-centric)

HIRING

problem

attracting less advantaged, lived experience talent

solution

posting + EEOC boilerplate = not enough

how we do

<u>full report</u>; <u>limit qualifications</u>; <u>targeted recruitment</u>, <u>9 strategies</u>; inverted background checks; <u>collaborative hiring</u> (<u>pilot project</u>)

PASS THE BATON

problem

holding on too long without building the next generation

solutions

collaborative placement; <u>coach not manage</u>; <u>operational art</u>, <u>levels of war</u>; <u>servant leadership</u>; <u>decentralized command (practice leading)</u>

FUNCTIONAL JUSTICE

systems of care/opportunity (evaluating policy)

problem

systems designed for managing societal problems, not solving them

solutions

agency, opportunity, human-centric, incorporation into law



Commission on Homelessness and Poverty

- To learn more, visit: ambar.org/homeless
- To request technical assistance,email: Kelly.Russo@americanbar.org

•The Commission on Homelessness and Poverty provides ongoing technical assistance to jurisdictions across the country who wish to set up a homeless court.

•Our Advisory Committee of key stakeholders works to develop a national directory, detailed resources, and a network platform to connect homeless courts, provide technical assistance, and foster replication of the Homeless Court model nationwide. Please reach out if you're interested in getting involved.

ABA COMMISSION ON HOMELESSNESS & POVERTY

problem

complicity of lawyers in perpetuating inequity

solutions

CHP's blueprint

streetdemocracy.org ambar.org/homeless

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THANK YOU



