Anti-racism Advocacy & Consumer Perspectives

August 14, 2020
Webinar Speakers

- Mercedes Elizalde, MNPL, Public Policy Director, Central City Concern (CCC) in Portland, OR
- Valarie Dowell, Consumer Advocate and NHCHC Board Member, Cincinnati, OH
- Judith Park, Graduate Policy Intern, National Health Care for the Homeless Council and MSW/MPH Candidate at the University of Maryland, Baltimore
Poll Question

How would you identify yourself?
Video: Rep. John Lewis’ Last Words

- [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_i2DSkAys-8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_i2DSkAys-8)
Poll Question

How comfortable do you feel explaining structural/systemic racism to somebody else?
Levels of Racism

• **Structural/Systemic**: underneath, all around and across society

• **Institutional**: policies and practices within and across institutions

• **Interpersonal**: between individuals

• **Individual**: within a person
NHCHC Storytelling Project

• Storytelling as an advocacy tool
• Conducted interviews with 10 consumers (people with lived experience of homelessness) that identified as a person of color
Impact of Racism on Health (mental, emotional, physical, etc.)

• Feelings of anger, helplessness, fear

“I was very angry because of the helplessness that I felt.”

“As an African-American, we live in fear too. Fear of potential harm, fear of merely having enough to survive, fear of our men being carted off to jail whether it be for valid reasons or for non-valid reasons.”
Impact of Racism on Health (mental, emotional, physical, etc.)

• Negative self-image/self-identity/self-worth

“You’re looking at images on TV and all the positives are from a different culture and all the negatives are from my culture.”

“They had labeled me and conditioned me that I was militant simply because I thought I was somebody and Black.”
Racism in Health care

• Poor treatment from medical providers

“Dealing with health care professionals, White doctors, they will treat you in a very patronizing if not condescending way. They will just assume that you are either ignorant or gaming the system.”

• Long wait times

“My White counterpart had finished treatment around the same time because we were in the same group and he’s already done three aftercare treatments..and I’ve done it once...he’s able to get certain things faster than me.”
Racism in Health care

• Denial of pain medication

“I’ve had some pretty intense abdominal cramps unexplained and they would not give me pain medication when I knew that they’d give others pain medication...I guess they’d think I was a drug abuser or user.”

• Cultural incompetence

“There is an alarming rate of cultural incompetence in health care...people are unaware of these ethnic differences when they are really important.”
Poll Question

How do you feel about being an anti-racist advocate?
National Consumer Advisory Board (NCAB)

- NCAB is a committee of people who have experienced homelessness and been clients of Health Care for the Homeless programs across the country.

- NCAB strives to be the vehicle for HCH consumers to be a collaborative voice on national issues. We hold central the priorities of assisting consumers in the development of CABs and serving as a clearinghouse for information.
NCAB Advocacy Committee

• **Purpose**
  - **Empower consumers** to be effective advocates
  - **Provide education and discussion** on advocacy principles and strategies
  - Develop local and national **advocacy opportunities**
  - **Activate consumers** to inform and boost the policy work of the National Health Care for the Homeless Council

• **Format**
  - Led by a sub-committee of NCAB members and Council staff
  - Sub-committee meets monthly to plan agenda
  - Discussions are co-facilitated by a consumer leader and staff.
NCAB Advocacy Committee

• **Action Items**

• The NCAB Advocacy Committee decided to launch with a focus on Racism and Health.
  
  • We will build on the interviews Judith has done and our personal experiences to identify issues and solutions to advocate around
  
  • We’ll use our previous experience with storytelling as an entry to advocacy and take advantage of the passion and energy of this moment
Invite people with the lived experience to join the Advocacy Committee Call

• Next Call: Wednesday August 26th at 6pm Eastern
  • https://zoom.us/j/92338480585?pwd=ZlZ1QUNrVEtHQ3VLMkc0dGJmNHFaQT09
  • Meetings are the fourth Wednesday of every month
• **Contact**: Katherine Cavanaugh
  • kcavanaugh@nhchc.org
  • (443) 703 – 1320
Anti-Racism Advocacy

• Proactive and Reactive Advocacy work
• Find the balance that works for you by centering your values and the impact you seek to have
• Align your proactive engagement with your skills and expertise
Examples of Building a Framework

• Central City Concern in Portland, OR
  • Policy Focus #4 – Race and Social Justice

• Work with local, state and federal governments and community partners
  • Identify policy and funding issues that perpetuate systemic oppression and discrimination against BIPOC communities
  • Work towards making long-term, foundational systems change
ABC’s of Anti-Racism Policy

Support policy changes...

A. To remove barriers and increase access to financial stability and social goods

B. To reduce over incarceration and reduce barriers to housing, health care, employment and other social goods for African Americans and others who have experienced incarceration

C. That focus on appropriately scaling up community-based programs through health and human services
Examples of Actions

• Support ban on tear gas and choke holds
• Support investments in community-based services by cutting poorly performing police department programs
  • Support = Letters to leaders, getting coalitions we participate in to lead on supporting changes, speakers at council and state legislative meetings, client work groups to identify internal and external opportunities for improvement and engagement
Q&A

If you have any questions for the speakers, please put it in the chat box!

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