Critical Questions for Anti-Racist Organizations
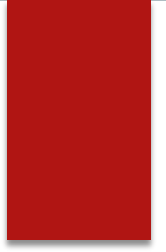
Overview

▶ Framework:

    ▶ Awareness (the ability to recognize/identify barriers)

    ▶ Accountability (the commitment, capacity, and skills to respond to/address barriers)

Awareness

Awareness (I)

▶ Who is making decisions within your organization?

▶ What level of awareness do decision makers have about barriers that exist within your organization that limit access or engagement for people of color (both for employees/members of your organization and for the community members you serve)?

   ▶ Do existing organizational policies or practices have a disparate impact on people of color? (dress codes, written or unwritten expectations about 'professionalism', the questions you are asking of clients and how you are asking them)

   ▶ What level of cultural competency do members of your organization have and how does that impact the way people of color experience their interactions with your organization? (what language are you using, what assumptions are you making, are you asking clients to describe their needs, are you really hearing and understanding and believing what clients are saying)

Awareness (II)

▶ How often and how do you assess your organizational culture (both internal assessments by employees/members and external assessments by the community members you serve)?

▶ To what extent are decision makers willing to invest the time and energy to develop the level of awareness they need to foster an anti-racist culture within your organization?

 ▶ What does a commitment to doing this work look like at the leadership level?

Awareness (III)

▶ To what extent are decision makers willing to engage members across the organization in developing the level of awareness needed to maintain an anti-racist culture within your organization?

  ▶ How do leaders establish an expectation that this is part of your organizational culture and that all members of the organization are expected to do this work?

▶ To what extent are expectations about fostering and maintaining an inclusive and anti-racist environment built into the job descriptions and interview process for prospective employees?

  ▶ What questions are you asking of prospective employees about their experience and ability to foster an anti-racist environment?

  ▶ How are you assessing preparedness and willingness to learn?

Awareness (IV)

▶ What roles do people of color hold within your organization?

▶ How are you supporting and mentoring people of color within your organization?

▶ How are you helping to position people of color to move into leadership and decision-making roles?

Accountability
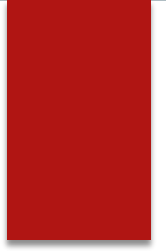
Accountability (I)

▶ To what extent is anti-racism a stated value of your organization?

▶ To what extent is anti-racism embodied in the practices of your organization?

▶ To what extent is your organization willing to commit to identifying concrete steps that need to be taken to foster an anti-racist environment?

▶ To what extent is your organization willing to map out a timeline for implementing concrete strategies, for reporting out on the progress, and for being held accountable for following through?

Accountability (II)

▶ Are there existing pathways within your organization where members or clients can express concerns about organizational climate or barriers?

▶ How often and how do you promote/publicize those pathways?

▶ Do members and clients of your organization feel comfortable using those pathways?

▶ Do existing pathways operate with a compliance framework or a framework that centers anti-racism?

Accountability (III)

▶ What is the organizational culture around naming and responding to harm?

  ▶ If a member or a client of your organization makes a comment or engages in a behavior that could be experienced as racist, what is the response?

  ▶ Do leaders within your organization feel it is their responsibility to respond? Do they have the confidence and skill set to do so?

  ▶ Do members of your organization feel it is their responsibility to respond? Do they have the confidence and skill set to do so?

Accountability (IV)

▶ What is the organizational culture around being accountable for harm?

  ▶ If someone within your organization makes a comment or engages in a behavior that could be experienced as racist, what is *their* response?

  ▶ Are members of your organization willing and able to critically reflect on their attitudes, language, or actions in ways that allow them to understand how they cause harm?

  ▶ What types of development opportunities are offered for members of your organization and how often are they offered? How is your organization actively working to develop an anti-racist awareness and skill set among its members?

Any Final Questions?