

Improving for Zero Disproportionality



To end youth and young adult homelessness, we also have to ensure equitable outcomes for youth of color, LGBTQ and gender expansive young people. Each Anchor Community will need to develop your own ideas and strategies to reach this goal specific to your own systems and communities, and this guide is meant to be a starting place to start imagining ways to embed justice in our systems.

Strategies for Identifying Improvement Ideas

Centering Youth Voice

- Hold a focus group of young people who represent the target population to identify specific reasons the disproportionality exists. What kinds of changes would young people make? What barriers are they experiencing? How would they explain the disproportionality in the data? Young people are the best positioned to identify barriers and system changes that would result in the changes we all want to see. Act on their ideas quickly and let them know the results.

POC/LGBTQ Inclusion Criteria Tool

- Ask one agency/program to self-assess using the LGBTQ/POC Inclusion Criteria tool, and identify 3 no's they think they can turn into yes'. Make sure to get commitments for action steps around them!

Process Mapping

- After identifying a piece of your system that is creating inequitable outcomes in your system, such as Coordinated Entry or outreach, process map it with an emphasis on identifying systemic barriers for BIPOC and/or LGBTQ young people. Choose at least 1 change you are going to start implementing by next week.
- Next Level: invite young people to do the same process, compare maps.

Case Conferencing

- Do an analysis of the 10 or 15 people who continuously are being brought up in case conferencing and never being housed - why? What do they have in common? What barriers is our system creating that are keeping them from being housed? Can we eliminate or change them? Choose at least one change to implement by next week.
- Do an analysis of the demographics of young people who have been prioritized for discussion during case conferencing - is there any disproportionality in who is being prioritized? Where does it stem from? Can we test a change to the prioritization criteria for one meeting?

Partnerships

- Identify non-traditional spaces where LGBTQ and/or BIPOC young people hang out, and build referral relationships with those spaces.
 - Ensure that those partners are trained to directly access your community's CDF
 - Make yourself known in movement spaces (ie Black Lives Matter, PRIDE, Mutual Aid Networks)

AWHWA's Coaching Team can help facilitate or strategize for any of these ideas!

Examples to get our brain-juices flowing

Problem:

We are seeing a high rate of gender expansive young people in our unsheltered number, but low rates of gender expansive young people actually staying in shelter.

Questions this might bring up:

- Are the same demographics questions being asked by outreach teams as the shelter? Are we confident that the gender identity data is being collected effectively?
- Why do unsheltered gender expansive young people say they are not going to shelter?
- Are there obvious policies we think are contributing to this (like is the shelter gender-segregated?)

3 change ideas could be:

1. Change a shelter policy to allow clients to self-select where to sleep in a gender segregated shelter for one week
2. Create a new, safe space for gender expansive young people to be able to sleep in a gender segregated and test for one week
3. Add a question about pronouns to intake paperwork and create a mechanism to ensure all staff in a program know and are practicing people's correct pronouns

Problem:

In our county, ~45% of the population is hispanic/Latinx, but hispanic/Latinx YYA only make up ~11% of the homeless YYA population. We don't think that is accurate

Questions this might bring up:

- Have we mapped out our community-wide outreach services with this population in mind?
- How is implicit bias at play for teams doing outreach in hispanic/Latinx communities (ie 'that neighborhood isn't safe') Which providers in our community work directly with this population of YYA? What do they have to say about the numbers we are seeing?
- What role are fears around public charge playing in people's ability to access services and can we mitigate them? What other structural barriers might be at play?

3 change ideas could be:

1. Translate program and outreach materials into spanish (and other prominent languages)
2. Develop a clear process for outreach staff at one organization to understand and easily access and empower them to regularly use translation services. Test for 2 weeks to see to what extent it is used and if it facilitates outreach to Latinx communities.
3. Remove an unnecessary intake question about immigration status for one outreach program.

Problem:

Our system has been placing YYA of color into housing at a lower rate than white YYA for three months straight.

Questions this might bring up:

- What do the YYA of color staying in shelter think is behind this?
- What would an analysis of the Coordinated Entry scores of YYA for the last three months tell us? How many CE assessments did we do for youth of color? Is the issue that we didn't assess youth of color as much, or that our scoring system is biased, or something else?
- Who is being prioritized for case conferencing? Who are the people we consistently prioritize but can't discuss for some reason? Who are we constantly talking about but not housing? Why?
- Are YYA of color more challenging to contact? How does that square with data on who is staying at shelter vs who is staying somewhere else?

3 change ideas could be:

1. Change our case conferencing prioritization criteria for one meeting, and see if it results in more housing placements for YYA of color
2. Test one strategy specifically meant to recruit host home hosts of color and set targets around how many hosts you hope to recruit. Gather feedback from potential hosts.
3. Try removing one unnecessarily eligibility criteria for a housing program for a period of time

Share your improvement Ideas with us!!