

Strategies for Combatting Racism in Education

Job Aid



What are some contributing factors to the significant racial disparities in educational outcomes?

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- Poor health due to chronic stress and trauma (higher allostatic loads lead to higher cortisol levels)
- High student stress levels
- Inequitable access to and uneven distribution of resources within and outside the classroom (larger class sizes, fewer higher-level classes offered, fewer opportunities, oppressive laws, pool of less skilled teachers, lower quality curriculum, underfunding/budget cuts, exclusionary discipline)
- Social determinants of health – access to nutritious foods and physical activity, air and water quality, socioeconomic environment, safe and stable housing, access to transportation and healthcare
- School/educator implicit bias/stereotypes (smog of racism, adultification of girls of color)

What is the Racial Justice Competency Model for public health professionals?

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In October 2020, the Public Health Training Center Network (PHTCN) formed a workgroup to explore the development of a racial justice competency model. An expert review panel was formed to establish clear, specific, consensus-based recommendations and produced a Racial Justice Competency Model (RJCM) for public health professionals.

These competencies are periodically updated, but currently the RJCM contains 51 total statements centered around three domains: assessment (e.g., identifying assets and resources, creating/supporting opportunities, analyzing barriers to health policies and programs), policy development (e.g., addressing health inequities, working with community to develop plans and policy that improve conditions), and assurance (e.g., sharing resources, identifying strategies to assess equity, accountability for addressing health equity on an ongoing basis).

To learn more, visit the [RJCM website](#).

What is a four-step analytical strategy for developing racial justice competencies?

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1. Navigate the present – promote and maintain children’s wellbeing
 - Foster social/emotional learning – students learn better in an emotionally safe and cognitively stimulating environment with opportunities for social relationships
 - Be mindful of impacts of the pandemic – decline in student enrollment, rise in absenteeism and dropout rate, increase in mental health issues, high teacher burnout and job dissatisfaction
2. Look back – draw upon lessons from the past
 - Build intentional and diverse networks
 - Build strong relationships with children, families, community leaders, and those within and outside your discipline
 - Provide children examples/stories that counter dominant world views and expectations
3. Look forward – empower ourselves and our children
 - Gather evidence-based information and disseminate in all languages
 - Create a safe space in your clinic with materials that have characters that look like all of your students
 - Talk with staff/colleagues about race and review/challenge norms for racial bias
 - Avoid making assumptions/judgements about families, and be accessible/available to families
 - Make an active commitment to anti-racism, social justice, and inclusion
4. Make informed decisions – apply a systematic approach
 - Thoroughly understand root causes and social determinants of health, and remedy ongoing damage
 - Find and work to eliminate anything in your school that threatens children’s wellbeing
 - Collaborate with others to develop protective measures