

ACHIEVING RACIAL JUSTICE ACROSS THE DCF SYSTEM is the operational strategy designed to address disproportionality and disparities within the context of DCF's continuum. Each region, division and facility was asked to reflect on the last 5 years to bring attention to the impact of race and racism on the families we work with. Objectively responding to racial inequity takes many forms. This series will capture the deliberate attention to this work taken by each area office through collective regional, central office division and facility responses.

✚ **Representing:** Region 5 Danbury-Torrington-Waterbury

✚ **Leadership forward:** *Region 5's specific attention to Racial Justice dates back to about a decade ago with a representative group participating in Casey Family Program's Breakthrough Series where we were formally introduced to the terms disproportionality & disparity. We learned to use the PDSA format to implement small tests of change which is a great model to track this and other topics within our practice:*

Since that time, each of our offices have been in various stages of racial justice development – much like the communities they represent. The regional leadership commitment is steady. The regional administrator offered the practice considerations on the panel of two national webinars:

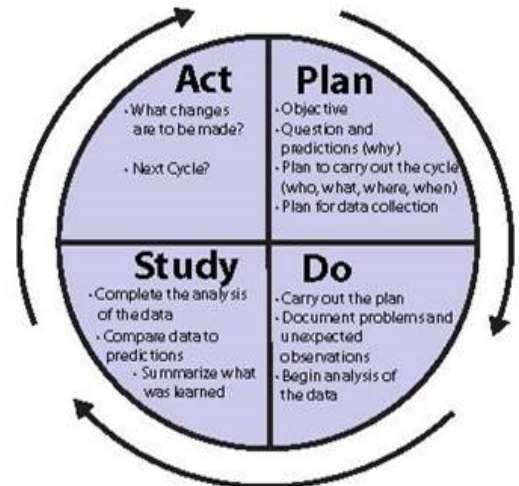
- **ALLIANCE 4 RACIAL EQUITY: Starting With The Numbers: The Importance Of Data Collection & Analysis In System Efforts To Eliminate Racial/Ethnic Disparities** MAY 24, 2016
- **NATIONAL CHILD WELFARE WORKFORCE INSTITUTE** webinar series **Dismantling Racial Inequity #4 : Slow and Steady Wins the Race in Child Welfare Equity** FEBRUARY 15,2018 accompanying Learning Exchange Feb 22,2018

✚ **What have we done?** A unique Region 5 highlight that demonstrates an action oriented strategy to promote partnership with our community stakeholders is two forums held specific to Recruitment and Retention of Bilingual Clinicians. Cohosted with university partner St Joseph of West Hartford, we gathered regional providers for specific think-tanks on specific challenges and consideration in broadening their capacity to meet the needs of the languages spoken by the families we refer for their services. Providers actively engaged in this dialogue and reported back gains in diversifying their ability to serve families that English is not their first language.

- Spawned by a permanency fellowship we participated in with AECF, a regional project through the Striving Toward Excellent Practice (STEP) program centered on increasing kinship placements specific to African American families. The drivers for this are the region's FASU manager and Considered Removal facilitator who focus their attention on specific decision points that potentially impact the permanency trajectory of AA children related to removal and placement decisions.
- Another regional effort is a specific case consultation model used in the Torrington office to discuss specific nuances of cases through a racial equity lens. Staff members are guided through courageous conversations facilitated by the Office Director to flush out case related issues in which implicit bias, structural racism or systemic barriers exist in their work with families in our respective communities. Several sessions of *Knowing Who You Are*, facilitated by OD Trotman, have been provided to staff and community services providers throughout the region.
- **Over 270 regional staff** from all levels have participated in several racial justice technical assistance workshops, facilitated dialogues and learning forums. Each with a specific skill building focus such as inclusive assessments, engagement through a racially just lens and coaching/ guiding decision making.

These workshops have been facilitated by regional RJ leadership, Dir of Quality & Planning Susan Smith Esq, Dr Anthony DeJesus USJ, Dr Joyce James & Jen Agosti of JRA Consulting.

The PDSA Cycle for Learning and Improving



SOME REGIONAL RJ ACTIVITIES include:

- Continued efforts to connect with faith communities both through the Director of the Hispanic Coalition and a panel of 12 African American pastors in order to provide data as to disparities that exist in our system in Waterbury communities and collaborate on better meeting the needs of our kids and families of color
- Regional FASU began holding Spanish speaking open houses in the faith based communities in Waterbury; FASU holds TIPS MAPS foster parent trainings for Spanish speaking foster parents.

- Regional leadership was also invited by the CAFAF liaison to attend a foster parent support group. Among the themes discussed was the influence of implicit bias and world view in the context of foster care responsibilities.
- DCF Director of MultiCultural Affairs Bill Rivera conducted *DCF 101 & Lost in Translation* trainings in Spanish for regional community partnerships.
- The Torrington Office Director and Community & Court Liaison conducted a community conversation including short survey.
- As part of a graduate internship, a case mining was conducted on a small sample to assess relative resource practices. From that information, a staff resource fair, where service providers who offer their programs/services in multiple languages to families in our Torrington community came to meet with DCF staff.
- MPH RJ intern provided ROM data access presentations to leadership and the regional RJ subcommittee.
- The regional Community and Court Liaison took part in a 2.5 day Race Awareness workshop conducted by consultants from Community Action Duluth out of MN and hosted by Torrington/Winsted Early Childhood Collaborative and attended by many local agencies included faith based organizations, schools/board of ed, local community providers, etc.
- Human Trafficking workshop conducted in Spanish for a women's group in the Torrington Hispanic community as a direct result of community collaboration on related topics.
- Work also with the Torrington LIST to help bring the 13 week *Parent Project* program to the Torrington Hispanic Community
- The regional RJ subcommittee hosted a Hispanic Meet and Greet lunch discussion in Waterbury and invited members of the regional communities to gather for with PPT presentation on the Department's RJ work beginning in 2013 and DCF region 5's data illustrating disproportionality and disparities.
- Hosted two regional sessions of *Global Stress and Race Relations* conversations with Dr Schultz DCF Director of Organizational Climate & Staff Support.
- *Journey to Racial Enlightenment* workshop (two sessions offered in the region) facilitated by a member of the SRJWG and co-facilitated by a FASU SWS along with Court and Community Liaison.
- Regional subcommittee co-leads and Torrington staff attended the *Toxicity of Racism* Workshop.
- Regional staff were offered trainings conducted by RRG Staff member, Dr. George Hajjar, on his research - *Cultural Competency and the New Wave of Middle Eastern Refugees and Immigrants: The Case of Syrian & Other Middle Eastern Nationals to the US*.

🚩 What's our planned next steps?

- ❖ Leadership has revisited our operational strategies as a result of our focused RJTAs.
 - This to include regular data review on specific practice areas such as timeliness to permanency disaggregated by race
 - Review of service delivery system in an effort to calibrate the right array for families in our region
- ❖ After a critical review of staff feedback gleaned from TA evaluations, we are assess themes represented in our data reflective of our practice.
- ❖ Regional Mandated Reporter Trainers will continue to have discussions during trainings with community members about our disproportionality data and how it translates to disparities for kids and families in the child welfare system as a whole.
- ❖ Looking to expand Spanish speaking TIPS MAPP to Torrington & Danbury this year

🚩 INSPIRATION:

The embodiment of advocacy, Dr M L King Jr challenged us that "...we are now faced with the fact that tomorrow is today. We are confronted with the fierce urgency of now." The urgency of child-time must not be taken lightly. They deserve our strongest effort to help stabilize their permanence by assuring their well-being and safety. These children within the context of families need communities strong enough to support them to be their very best. We must be a part of that village.

