

7

key lessons for *addressing racism* in community programs



Fighting racism goes hand in hand with creating communities where everyone has a voice and a chance to work together. In our 25 years of working with communities to create positive change, here are key lessons we've learned about addressing racism in community initiatives:

1

Diversity is essential. No matter what kind of change you're trying to make, having a diverse team helps to ensure many viewpoints are represented in decision-making. In addition to racial/ethnic diversity, it's important to consider other kinds such as education level, economic status, gender, age, sexual orientation, and language. But racial/ethnic diversity is often the hardest to achieve. Tackling it first will help with all other forms of diversity.

2

Diversity is just the beginning.

It's important to build an equity lens in all aspects of your work. Understanding the structures that support inequity (with a particular emphasis on structural racism) is essential for effective dialogue and long-term change on every issue.

3

Personal change and relationship-building are critical to addressing racism.

Sharing personal concerns and stories helps make it possible to address issues of privilege, power and inequity.

4

Personal change and trusting relationships are just the beginning.

They are the building blocks to initiatives aimed at institutional, cultural and systemic change.

5

Measuring and communicating progress toward community change is essential.

Doing so makes it possible to keep engaging new people, to build on the change that has already happened and to sustain the work.

6

Racism affects all of us personally and in our communities, no matter what our racial/ethnic background is.

We all have something to gain by working together and addressing racial inequities. Addressing it is hard work, and requires empathy, self-care and long-term commitment.

7

We all need to be part of the change we are trying to create.

No matter what kind of work we are involved in, we can all benefit from working toward racial equity. To achieve lasting change, we must apply an equity lens in our work internally as an organization, as well as externally in the communities we work with.