

WSADCP and WADC Equity & Inclusion Statement

WSADCP and WADC are committed to furthering equity and inclusion and ending racism. We acknowledge the shameful legacy of systemic racism in the criminal legal and dependency systems and the role racism has played in drug-related incarceration specifically. For example, although Black people and White people use and sell drugs at similar rates, statewide data shows that Black individuals have historically been arrested, convicted and incarcerated for drug possession at disproportionately higher rates than White individuals, relative to their representation within the overall population. We also acknowledge the significant role that trauma has played in many therapeutic court participants' lives, including race-based and historical trauma.

Drug courts and other therapeutic courts are in a unique position to be part of the solution. Drug courts provide a critical off-ramp from the criminal legal system for individuals who are charged with property crimes and other drug-related offenses. Family treatment courts reduce racially disparate outcomes in dependency cases. Therapeutic courts divert people of color from incarceration, preserve families, prevent children from entering foster care, provide critical resources to support healing and empowerment, prevent generational trauma caused by parental substance use and incarceration, and promote safer, healthier communities.

Both racism and substance use disorders are public health crises. Equity and inclusion is a national drug court best practice standard. Therapeutic courts should strive to provide high quality, accessible, equitable and inclusive services to all participants regardless of their race, ethnicity, sex, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, financial means, religion, range of abilities, or national origin.

As therapeutic court professionals, we recognize we have significant work to do both individually and collectively in order to dismantle racism and provide more trauma-informed and inclusive services. Therapeutic court professionals must seek ongoing professional training, have the courage to engage in uncomfortable conversations and self-reflection, and take steps to discover, analyze and correct any structural issues that could lead to disparate access, services and outcomes for therapeutic court participants from historically marginalized groups.

WSADCP and WADC urge all Washington State therapeutic courts and court professionals to commit to taking the steps necessary to be part of the solution in combatting racism, bias and discrimination.

NADCP Best Practice Standard II: Equity and Inclusion

Drug courts ensure equal opportunity for everyone to participate and succeed, regardless of race, ethnicity, or gender. Drug courts take affirmative steps to detect and correct disproportionate census, inequitable services, and disparate outcomes involving those who have historically faced discrimination. Drug courts ensure that teams understand and are responsive to the cultural differences within their population.

Equity and Inclusion Resources for Treatment Courts

- [National Drug Court Institute \(NDCI\) Equity and Inclusion Resources](#)
- [Racial and Ethnic Disparity Program Assessment Tool for Treatment Courts \(American University\)](#)

- [Understanding Racial Trauma](#)
- [Impact of Racism and Trauma on Black Mental Health \(NAMI\)](#)
- [Implicit Bias - Take the Harvard University Implicit Association Test](#)
- [SAMHSA's Trauma Informed Approach](#)
- [Trauma Training for Criminal Justice Professionals](#)
- [It's Time to Change How We Talk About Disorders of Addiction](#)
- [The Real Stigma of Substance Use Disorders](#)
- [Addiction-ary Glossary of Terms](#)

SAMSHA's 6 Key Elements of a Trauma-Informed Approach:

- Safety
- Trustworthiness
- Transparency
- Peer support
- Collaboration and mutuality
- Empowerment, voice and choice
- Cultural, historical and gender issues

“This goes beyond political correctness. . . It’s not just a matter of being nice. What we now know is that actual exposure to these specific terms induces [an] implicit cognitive bias. If you really want to solve the problem, you want to remove any barriers and obstacles.”

- Dr. John Kelly, Founder and Director of the Recovery Research Institute
