

# Organizational Cultural Change: A Note from the ABH DEI&J Committee

This toolkit is part of a range of DEI&J initiatives outlined in the ABH Annual Plan addressing issues of injustice, inequality, and inequity within the behavioral healthcare system. It was created at the urging of DEI&J Committee members, and in particular ABH CEOs, seeking support in responding to growing calls from people across the country, including provider's own staff and persons-served, for stronger action on issues of equity and justice, following the murder of George Floyd on May 25, of 2020. In particular, we heard from ABH CEOs who recognized the need to focus on critical issues of diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice within their own organizations.

So many of you expressed your deep concern, and desire to initiate or sustain culture change, but were uncertain about how to begin or grow that effort. In response, the ABH DEI&J Committee sought a partner with the capacity to deliver critical DEI&J technical assistance and training services to our members that shared our commitment to a diverse, equitable, inclusive and just behavioral health system. Further, we sought a partner that shares ABH's deep understanding of the behavioral health landscape in Massachusetts, and the unique needs of our eighty one community-based mental health and addiction treatment provider organizations, that make up the primary providers of publicly-funded behavioral healthcare services in the Commonwealth. We found that partner in the Wayside Equity Training Center (WETC).

Wayside Youth and Families Support Network has been providing behavioral health services in the Commonwealth since 1977 and is an active ABH member. As a provider delivering trauma-informed services to more than 6,000 children, youth and families each year, Wayside understands first-hand the challenges facing community-based behavioral health providers in Massachusetts as they undertake the important work of increasing equity and inclusion across our behavioral health system. Wayside has been providing consulting services on diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) for not-for-profits and other organizations since 2018, and formally launched the WETC in 2021.

For years before the formal launch of the training center, Wayside began to evaluate their own organizational culture and experienced the value of making equity a foundational principle of their work. Building on prior decades of equity work, Wayside began to streamline their knowledge and expertise by creating a DEI&J committee to bring staff voices forward and reorganizing their human resources department to better execute cultural change. Wayside has seen the benefits of building an increasingly diverse and inclusive team, while creating a more equitable system of care for both staff and persons served. Today, the Wayside Equity Training Center offers a range of services to individuals and organizations to support them in learning and readiness to take action on integrating antiracism, social justice, and advocacy into their work.

The ABH DEI&J Committee and WETC are eager to share this toolkit with the ABH membership. Within this toolkit we hope you will find a range of accessible organizational practices and tools to guide you and your team as you work to assess DEI&J within your own agency; develop strategies and take action to advance your own organizational goals; and establish processes for continuous evaluation and improvement of your chosen DEI&J practices.



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