

Drawing Connections 101: Disrupting Racial Inequality And Equity vs. Equality



Sexual harassment, assault, and abuse are problems that extend across entire communities and cultures. This is why it is important for communities to examine the systems within their communities that permit it, whom they benefit, and what can be done to ensure that every victim of sexual harassment, abuse, and assault has access to the resources they need. Additionally, everyone in a community should work together to figure out solutions that work toward a safer, healthier, and happier environment for all. White community members need to examine and take action to change the historical and contemporary systems that benefit them at the expense of Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) people. Everyone needs to be engaged in these discussions and address their prejudices in order to create lasting change for the community.

Intersectionality

- Intersectionality, a term coined by Dr. Kimberlé Crenshaw, is “the ways in which systems of inequality based on gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, class and other forms of discrimination ‘intersect’ to create unique dynamics and effects” (Center for Intersectional Justice, n.d.).
- For example, if a wheelchair-using Black woman was experiencing discrimination, it is impossible to isolate any single part of her identity from the rest of her. She is not just a Black person, or a woman, or a wheelchair user. All these identities contribute to how she is perceived and experiences the world around her and must be taken into consideration.

PUT THIS INTO PRACTICE!

When speaking with survivors, it is important to take all of their identities into account to better understand their situation. Build community spaces where people can be their full selves and have all their identities respected.

Equality vs. Equity

- Equality: where everyone is provided the same resources and opportunities, regardless of identity or circumstance (Milken Institute School of Public Health, 2020).
- Equity: where everyone’s circumstances and identities are considered to determine how much of each resource or opportunity is necessary for each person to reach equitable outcomes.
- For example, when students apply to colleges, those colleges determine the level of financial aid assistance by determining who needs the funds the most, as opposed to giving everyone the same amount of money.

PUT THIS INTO PRACTICE!

Ensure survivors receive equitable care by accounting for all of their needs. For example, make all spaces for survivors accessible to all regardless of ability, so that all survivors have the capacity to enter those spaces and fully self-advocate.

How We See, Speak, and Disrupt Racial Inequity

- *Seeing* racial inequity is the most important first step. Keep your eyes open to the ways laws, systems, and institutions have been created to perpetuate racial inequity. Acknowledging the problem is the first step to resolving it.
- Racial inequities are prevalent among domestic violence survivors, as data shows poor women (who are more likely to be women of color) experience domestic violence more often than wealthier white women (Stockman et al., 2015).
- Similar to the racial inequities present among domestic violence survivors, it has also been found that multiracial women, Native American/Alaska Native women, and non-Hispanic black women all experience rape during their lifetime more frequently than non-Hispanic white women (Breiding et al., 2014).
- *Speaking* about racial inequity can be intimidating for those who want to avoid saying the wrong thing. However, if we want to achieve equity we must have both courage and humility to discuss these topics. Learn what you can, speak out when the moment is right, and open yourself up to correction so that you can continue to grow as an ally.
- *Disrupting* racial inequity is no easy task, but each one of us can do our part to make a difference.
- The most important thing to do for sexual violence survivors is to listen to them. If a survivor shares any challenges they have encountered due to one of their identities, then respond with empathy and support the survivor to receive the support they need (Center for Survivor Agency & Justice, 2020). Lift up the voices and stories of all affected communities to ensure that all conversations and resources used by survivors are supportive in providing the help they need.

PUT THIS INTO PRACTICE!

Make sure, personally and on a community-wide level, to familiarize and follow up with organizations that specialize in amplifying the issues surrounding survivors of color. Everyone has gaps in their knowledge, which is why it is important to listen to the voices of racial communities outside their own and seek to better understand the challenges they face and how allies can support them.

Additional Resources

Southern Poverty Law Center. (n.d.). *Economic justice* [Webpage]. <https://www.splcenter.org/our-issues/economic-justice>

References

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Milken Institute School of Public Health. (2020). *Equity vs. equality: What's the difference?* George Washington University. <https://onlinepublichealth.gwu.edu/resources/equity-vs-equality/>

Stockman, J. K., Hayashi, H., & Campbell, J. C. (2015). Intimate partner violence and its health impact on disproportionately affected populations, including minorities and impoverished groups. *Journal of Women's Health*, 24(1), 62-79. <https://doi.org/10.1089/jwh.2014.4879>