

Implicit Bias and COVID-19

Implicit bias refers to unconscious attitudes or stereotypes that impact one's understanding, actions, behaviors, and decisions. These biases, both favorable and unfavorable, are involuntarily generated assumptions. This document will specifically outline best practices reducing stigma and bias as we care for patients, clients, and staff during the COVID-19 response.

- People shall not be excluded from any care CCC provides based on race, country of origin, or recent travel.
- Rely on and share trusted sources of information about the causes of outbreaks from reputable sources like the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Oregon Health Authority.
- Show compassion and support for individuals and communities most closely impacted, and anyone who might be sick.
- When it comes to protecting the public's health, we are all in this together. Allowing misinformation to spread, stigma to thrive, or otherwise ostracizing community members is counter-productive to improving public health and safety.
- Select COVID-19 education images with caution to decrease the reinforcement of negative stereotypes.
- Stigma is not going to fight this outbreak, but together, we can.
- Clients may express concerns about being in spaces with individuals of different ethnicity. Communicate there is no linkage to contracting the virus based on one's ethnicity or language.

If you hear any disparaging talk about a specific community here is one way you can respond:

Affirmative Communication Model

1. Breathe – Ground yourself
2. Name the behavior – Call out the remark, not the person. Attaching meaning to a comment is difficult; it counters our social conditioning to fit in and please.
3. Name how the behavior makes you feel OR describe the impact of the words – It helps the relationship and interaction to name your feelings. Talk about what assumptions underlie the comment and why it may negatively impact others.
4. Give a Direction – Ask for the person to reconsider their comment, to avoid making such comments in the future, etc.
5. Stay – Depending on the nature of your relationship (is the person a close friend or someone you just met?), be willing to stay in the conversation, keep engaging in the discussion, or pursue it later.

Speak up if you hear, see, or read stigmatizing or harassing comments or misinformation:
equityandinclusion@ccconcern.org

COVID-19 Trauma Informed Care Practices

Trauma-Informed Care (TIC) is a highly valued approach within CCC culture. It involves understanding, recognizing, and responding to the effects of all types of trauma. The TIC approach assumes that each person experiences and reacts to trauma differently. TIC acknowledges the presence of trauma symptoms and acknowledges the role trauma plays in every individual's life - including CCC staff and clients.

This document outlines TIC best practices as they relate to COVID-19. These recommendations are rooted in the six principles of Trauma-Informed Care: 1) Safety, 2) Trustworthiness & Transparency, 3) Peer Support, 4) Collaboration & Mutuality, 5) Empowerment & Choice, and 6) Cultural, Historical and Gender Issues.

Client Engagement Best Practices

- Clients or patients who have preexisting mental health conditions, including problems with substance use, may respond more strongly to the stress of a health crisis, it is essential to help them feel safe.
- Raise awareness about COVID-19 without increasing fear.
- Only share accurate information about how the virus spreads.
- Seek permission to share the results of a COVID-19 test.
- Ask patients to inform you of any cultural or interpretation needs.
- Familiarize yourself with your department's process for obtaining interpretation services.

Staff and COVID-19 Responders Best Practices

Responding to COVID-19 can take an emotional and mental toll on your teams.

Below is a list of things to consider to help reduce Secondary Traumatic Stress (STS):

- STS can impact anyone helping patients and clients, during and after a time of crisis. We must take care of ourselves first to properly care for clients.
- STS symptoms include physical (fatigue, illness) and mental (fear, withdrawal, guilt) impacts. If you or a staff member experience these symptoms, talk to your supervisor, and take time to understand and respond to these symptoms.
- Allow time for you and your team to recover from responding to the outbreak.
- It can be overwhelming to hear about COVID-19 in all parts of your life, including at work. Please take intentional breaks from media coverage around COVID-19 and reduce the elevated stress attached to it.
- Prioritize sleep, hydration, and gentle stretching.

What are the potential COVID-19 social justice implications, and what is my role in supporting others (clients/staff)?

CCC meets its mission through integrated healthcare services that are highly effective in engaging people who are often alienated from mainstream systems. Underserved and under-resourced communities, such as our houseless neighbors and communities of color, are among the groups historically and systematically excluded from emergency responses and mainstream health care. To this end, we want to acknowledge that specific populations are experiencing a sense of fear and alienation due to an increase in negative stigmas. Discrimination, particularly xenophobia, has also become a concern as the conversations around COVID-19 continue. Here is what you can do:

- Help provide others with the facts! (insert Sharepoint link here)
- Be aware of how implicit bias may impact our reactions and behaviors. (COVID-19 Implicit Bias one-pager here)
- Be aware of how fear and misinformation can fuel our opinions and those of others in the wrong direction. (COVID-19 Trauma Informed one-pager here)
- Speak with your supervisor if you notice a decrease in client access for any specific population.

CCC's Office of Equity and Inclusion is working closely with our internal COVID-19 Command Team to identify critical areas of focus that are changing and evolving every day. Today the areas of focus include Language Access, Cultural Responsiveness, Trauma-Informed Client, and Staff Support. It is everyone's responsibility to respond with care and dignity. Staff are encouraged to contact the OEI regarding questions and concerns, we can be reached at the following email equityandinclusion@ccconcern.org.