Standard 5: Diversity, Equity, Inclusion

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**STAFF INTERACTIONS** (EFFECTIVE 11/27/2024)

**HFA Best Practice Standard 5-1.A**

**POLICY: The site is committed to supporting staff’s ability to continually strengthen the skills required for authentic relationships, including self-awareness, self-regulation, self-reflection, skilled listening, and empathy.**

**Sites begin to achieve this by encouraging respectful staff interactions and supporting staff to continually strengthen their own relational skills focusing on equity and cultural humility, taking into account factors such as race, sexual orientation, gender identification, developmental/cognitive ability, residential status, and other aspects of identity.**

**Intent:** Taking an honest and reflective look inward increases awareness and understanding of our biases, offering us an opportunity to be intentional in our efforts to counteract these. Being afforded a safe space in supervision, team meetings, and peer-to-peer interactions enables greater likelihood for honest, respectful, and brave conversations. Recognizing the distinction between intent and impact, as well as the importance of repair, facilitates stronger relationships. These are the building blocks upon which growth and change become possible.

HFNY views Racial Equity (RE) as both an outcome and a process. As an *outcome* within our system, we achieve racial equity when race no longer determines one’s social determinants of health and when everyone has what they need to thrive, no matter their race or social context. As a process, we apply racial equity when those most impacted by structural racial inequity are meaningfully involved in the creation and implementation of our policies and practices. For HFNY, advancing racial equity means joining in transformative change that examines organizational mind-sets, the policies that guide the workforce, and the practices that support culturally centered work with families and their children. This work is hard, complicated, and at times uncomfortable. It requires sustained, long-term, individual and organizational commitment. It is a unique and continuous journey where we all commit to increasing our self-awareness BUT first, we must feel safe in our journey.

HFNY views Cultural Humility (CH) as a process, not an outcome. It is a *life-long learning process* in which we seek to increase our awareness of and respect for the diversity of each family we serve and our ability to integrate this awareness into our practice. Using a CH lens we evaluate how our services can better align with a family’s cultural characteristics and make modifications accordingly. This includes reflections on our service population, including personnel/staff selection, training, and all components of our service delivery system. A key to this process is actively engaging the families we serve and integrating all cultural identities into our practice. CH could be learning and asking questions about a program before going in and providing technical assistance or quality assurance, using exploratory questions and not approaching situations with assumptions (similar to the Explore & Wonder reflective strategy in the parallel process), taking into consideration self-identified strengths to follow a program’s or family’s lead, among others.

Staff are better prepared to partner with families when programs offer safe and supportive spaces for self reflection (i.e, supervision, team meetings) and have a full understanding of what relational expectations others have of them and vice versa. In these instances, workers are comfortable and can talk freely in individual and group supervision settings about biases that may impact their ability to connect and support families.

HFNY Policy Guidelines

* In order to strengthen staff relationships, staff will develop team commitments/ community agreements aimed at providing guidance on what respectful staff interactions look like based on site members' culture and shared values. These are generated collaboratively with all program staff and are regularly revisited in order to make necessary adjustments, with the aim of ensuring staff have the resources needed to continually strengthen relational skills (e.g., self-awareness, self-regulation, self-reflection, skilled listening, and empathy).
* The site recognizes the distinction between intent and impact, as well as the importance of repair in the context of inter-staff relationships.
* The site has written expectations for professional development and supervision expectations that focus on Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging (DEIB). **As specified in procedure 1a of HFNY policy 11-4.** These needs may be met through the annual DEIB training requirements established in the HFA wraparound training plan or could be individualized.
* Supervision supports staff in developing their relational skills, including self-awareness, self-regulation, self-reflection, skilled listening and empathy, including the use of reflective practice strategies to identify new ways to relate to a family based on unique characteristics. **As specified in procedure 1a of HFNY policy 12-2.A.**
* The site has a mechanism in place where the above expectations (e.g. community agreements and professional development expectations) are disseminated and staff are able to describe efforts they have undertaken to strengthen their relational skills, such as participation in team meetings, training, and any other collaborative efforts. Furthermore, staff can discuss their participation in approaches/efforts that support a respectful team environment.
* Sites can utilize staff satisfaction and retention surveys, required under Policy 9-4, to gather staff input on an annual basis to aid in identifying DEIB issues affecting staff and families **(5-4.A)**.
* Input from staff is used to inform the site’s equity plan, setting the course for continuous improvement to achieve greater equity among staff **(5-4.B)**.

**The site will adhere to all NYS policy guidelines specified above. In addition, please insert site-specific procedures that:**

STAFF INTERACTIONS:

1. Describe the process by which original team commitments / community agreements are identified collaboratively with all staff.
2. Describe the process by which team commitments / community agreements are reviewed with all staff at time of hire, regularly, and throughout the course of employment and how review is documented.
3. Describe the process by which team commitments/ community agreements are revisited on at least an annual basis and how review is documented.

STAFF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT NEEDS:

1. Procedures related to staff professional development needs are included under HFNY policy 11-4.

SKILL DEVELOPMENT IN SUPERVISION:

1. Procedures related to skill development within supervision are included under HFNY policy 12-2.A.

**FAMILY PARTNERSHIP** (EFFECTIVE 11/27/2024)

**HFA Best Practice Standard 5-2.A**

**Policy: The site is committed to interacting with families in a partnership that honors diversity and inclusivity and elevates family voice. These interactions reflect practice guided by perspectives of cultural humility and racial equity. Practice recognizes the historic and current relevance of discrimination based on race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, religion, residential status and abilities and seeks inclusivity in all aspects of its work with families.**

**Intent:** Cultural humility is not what one knows of another person’s culture, though a certain level of foundational knowledge can be helpful. It reflects our ability to allow another person to share their own story, and to honor and respect their identity, experiences, background, values, and beliefs. Allowing parents to teach us their culture, and being observant and accepting of behaviors, attitudes, and beliefs that may be different from our own, reduces the risk of making faulty assumptions, and helps us evolve as individuals with appreciation for our own common humanity.

Direct service staff observe cultural differences and use them as a springboard for inquiry and understanding, asking families about particular behaviors and practices in a non-judgmental fashion. Family background and ethnicity influence value systems, how people seek and receive assistance, and communication style, among other things. When staff express curiosity with open-ended questions, are non-judgmental, refrain from imparting their own belief and value systems, and seek to repair relationships when missteps occur, families and staff have an opportunity to grow and develop.

In the context of early childhood home visiting, it is important to understand culture as broader than race, ethnicity, language and age. Culture may include additional attributes such as unique family customs, individual values, gender identity, religion, sexual orientation, ability, social class, and geographic origin, among others. These attributes combine to create a unique cultural identity for families, based on both experience and history. Some additional social factors that can shape a family culture include domestic violence, substance use, mental health concerns, parent incarceration, and cognitive abilities.

Cultural Humility (CH) in the context of HFNY is a process, not an outcome. It is a life-long learning experience in which we seek to increase our awareness of and respect for the diversity of each family we serve and our ability to integrate this awareness into our practice. It is the degree to which we continually evaluate, modify, and tailor our system of service delivery to the cultural characteristics in our service population, including personnel/staff selection, training, and all components of our service delivery system. A key to this process is actively engaging the families we serve and integrating all cultural identities into our practice.

Staff are better prepared to serve and interact with families when they have an increased understanding of cultural practices linked to a family’s unique characteristics and values.

HFNY Policy Guidelines

* Sites utilize the HFNY Rights and Confidentiality template provided by Central Administration, which at a minimum includes HFA staff guidelines listed under the program description. Sites are encouraged to consider additional guidelines/expectations for engaging with families, specific to their site, which can be added to the Rights and Confidentiality forms.
* At the onset of services, staff review the expectations established in the Rights and Confidentiality document with all families who enroll in services **(procedures for this are included under HFNY Policy GA-3.A**).
* All staff, even those who do not typically complete the form with families, are aware of the expectations for their interaction with families established in the Rights and Confidentiality form.
* Staff are able to describe efforts they have undertaken to work together in partnership with families, elevating family voice and honoring diverse family structures, values, beliefs, and parenting practices.
* If missteps occur between staff and families, the site has a mechanism in place for staff members supported by site leadership, to seek to repair the relationship with the family. This creates the opportunity for staff and families to grow and develop greater reflective capacity.
* The site has a mechanism in place where families provide input on an annual basis to improve the site’s ability to address diversity, equity and inclusion issues that are impacting families (5-4.A).
* The site uses input from families to inform the site’s equity plan, setting the course for continuous improvement to achieve greater equity among families (5-4.B).

**The site will adhere to all NYS policy guidelines specified above. In addition, please insert site-specific procedures that:**

1. If your site has included additional staff guidelines or expectations for engaging with families on the Family Rights and Confidentiality form, describe the process through which these were identified.
2. Describe the process by which staff are trained/oriented to the site’s intention and expectations for engaging with families.
3. Describe the process by which staff begin to learn about a family’s culture by engaging in reflective conversations with families right from the beginning.
4. Describe the process the site has in place to address any complaints filed by families related to their interactions with staff.
5. Describe the mechanisms the site will use to collect family feedback to improve the site’s ability to address diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging issues that are impacting families.
6. **Staff professional development**: Procedure related to staff professional development and training/activities identified to increase awareness of the historic and current relevance of discrimination based on race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, religion, residential status, and abilities is included under 11-4.
7. **Support in Supervision**: Procedure related to how supervision will support staff in understanding each family's unique culture and how best to adapt practice to suit individual needs are included under HFNY policy 12-2.A

**COMMUNITY LEVEL ADVOCACY** (EFFECTIVE 11/27/2024)

**HFA Best Practice Standard 5-3.A**

**Policy: All HFNY Sites are committed to working as champions for families and children, advocating for just and equitable opportunities within the community, and increasing access to services and support for those it serves and employs. This work 1) identifies and addresses equitable access to services, 2) ensures diverse representation in staff and materials, and 3) strives to meet the cultural and language needs of their community, including those it employs and serves. This work is also done with guidance from its community advisory board.**

**Intent:** Families may face barriers in accessing services in their communities based on race, ethnicity, and other factors such as age, ability, gender identity, sexual orientation, and language. Groups that have often faced barriers in accessing services due to their race, ethnicity, age, ability, and other factors often experience the worst health outcomes. Organizations within communities have a responsibility to utilize their influence and decision-making in ways that identify and address structural inequities brought about by privilege and discrimination. This includes actions taken both internally (in support of the organization) and externally (in support of the community). Additionally, it is the site’s responsibility to identify major cultural groups within the community, determine groups currently underserved, and prioritize hiring staff who represent these groups and can provide support in a family’s preferred language. Sites will also make sure that staff, graphics, and materials are representative of the communities they serve.

HFNY Policy Guidelines

* The site’s commitment is shared with the site’s Community Advisory Board, organizational partners and site leadership.
* Within their Annual Service Review (ASR), the site will identify and consider service barriers within their community based on the data/information utilized (e.g. MIS data, community demographic data, staff/family feedback).
* When the ASR is shared with the site community advisory board, findings which identify service barriers in the community will be highlighted with the **aim of gathering recommendations** for next steps to address these barriers.
* Site will engage site leadership and advisory board members in addressing barriers and identifying possible solutions to increasing equitable access to HFNY and other community services (i.e., mental health resources, early intervention, etc.) for families and staff.
* Within the Quarterly Reports, the site will track efforts to address the barriers identified in the ASR and report on progress made in removing or lessening service barriers for families/staff (e.g. hiring bilingual staff, improving access to mental health referrals, obtaining materials in appropriate languages).
* Program managers make efforts to assist agency leadership in ensuring that diverse representation in materials to meet the cultural and language needs within the community are available within the program.
* Graphics and materials are reviewed on a regular basis and updated as needed to better represent and meet the needs of groups served (e.g., photos, language, reading level, closed captions in videos, alt-text/audio description). All printed program materials, utilized for program advertisement / referral partner outreach, are submitted for approval by OCFS, per contract expectations.
* Ensure site leadership and advisory board members can describe current efforts taken to address existing barriers, increase equitable access to services, ensure diverse representation in staff and materials, and/or meet the cultural and language needs of those it serves and employs.

**The site will adhere to all NYS policy guidelines specified above. In addition, please insert site-specific procedures that:**

1. Describe how this policy is shared with the Community Advisory Board, organizational partners, and site leadership.
2. Insert HFNY Standardized Language: All programs complete an Annual Service Review/Equity Plan as the mechanism for programs to analyze all aspects of their program based on the most recent information that is available. The Annual Service Review/Equity Plan requires programs to gather information both formally and informally on community and program data, input from families and program staff that will assist the program in identifying the barriers, patterns, and trends as it relates to equitable service access that might exist such ensuring diverse representation in staff and materials and/or meet the cultural and language needs of those it serves and employs.
3. Identify how the findings in the ASR related to equitable access to community service barriers will be shared with advisory group members. Describe how this conversation will be documented.
4. Describe the process by which printed program materials, utilized for program advertisement / referral partner outreach, will be regularly reviewed to ensure they meet the cultural and language needs within the community and how the site will address gaps that are identified upon review.
5. Describe how efforts to address the service barriers identified in the ASR/ Equity Plan will be tracked over time within Quarterly Reports.

**Reference Table**

**Best Practice Standard 5**

*This reference table contains a list of reports in the MIS that can be used to help programs monitor fidelity as well as helpful links and documents related to each policy.*

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| **Policy** | **MIS Reports & Forms** | **Appendix & Links** |
| 5-1.A | * Training Log * Supervision Log | * [HFA Example Community Agreements](https://www.resource-media.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/Community-Agreements-1-pager.pdf) * [HFNY REaCH Committee Team Commitments](https://docs.google.com/document/d/12eJ5sV8mNYtUPaPGfrLJDj4I8816uEW_vS2HwSVr6tU/edit?usp=sharing) * [National Equity Project: Developing Community Agreements](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1bpY566mREmhX79Tai3il6SakuEz21uVW/view?usp=sharing) * Community Agreement Activities   + [Trust Builders/ Trust Busters](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1WeTBaYLiIQ40lNtnpXoIRTAFgGGiIumN/edit?usp=sharing&ouid=110944953010838997258&rtpof=true&sd=true)   + [Values Activity](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1rrMAmEPjXQgAUt33QQBlDVWnl0Ey4cue/edit?usp=sharing&ouid=110944953010838997258&rtpof=true&sd=true) |
| 5-2.A | * Training Log * Supervision Log | * **HFNY Service Agreement Family Rights and Confidentiality Form** (need MIS login) Go to Help and Docs, click Paper Forms then search confidentiality. Forms are available in Arabic, Haitian Creole, Spanish, Chinese, and English * [Family Engagement Tab on HFNY Transfer of Learning Site](https://tol397.wixsite.com/transferoflearning/familyengagement) (login required) * [Staff Engagement and Relationship Building Tab under Supervisor section of HFNY Transfer of Learning Site](https://tol397.wixsite.com/transferoflearning/staffengagement) (login required) |
| 5-3.A | * Recruitment   and retention data | * BPS 9 Equal Opportunity Employment |