



# From Insight to Impact: Cultural Humility as a Strategy for HIV Health Equity

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# Introduction

- **Fenway Health** was founded in 1971 as part of the free clinic movement. Since the early 1980s it has played a central role in New England's HIV/AIDS response, diagnosing the first AIDS case in New England, pioneering HIV testing, treatment, outreach, research (including vaccine and prevention trials), and providing care for people living with HIV.
- An insight is described as the capacity to gain an accurate and deep intuitive understanding of a person or thing. At Fenway Health we are in the process of implementing a required Cultural Humility training. Build staff capacity in cultural humility to strengthen Fenway Health as both a provider of choice and employer of choice, improving experiences for patients, clients, and staff while advancing our health equity mission.
- **Cultural Humility** is a lifelong practice of self-reflection and self-critique to understand personal biases, challenge power imbalances, and maintain respectful partnerships with people from all cultures. Building our capacity to be cultural humble enables us to act in culturally responsive ways.
- **Cultural responsiveness** is the ability to adapt care, services, and communication to meet the cultural, social, and linguistic needs of diverse patients and communities, applying what we learn in real time to improve outcomes.



# Why it matters

- **Health Equity:** Tackles barriers marginalized communities face in healthcare.
- **Quality of Care:** Improves communication, adherence, and patient outcomes.
- **Workplace Culture:** Fosters mutual respect, better collaboration, and reduced conflict.
- **Policy Impact:** Equips leaders to advocate for structural changes that reduce disparities.
- **Community Trust:** Builds stronger partnerships through respectful, inclusive engagement.



# Planning and Implementation

- Convened internal staff workgroup to review training and offer feedback and changes, and reflected on areas such as:
  - The training content seems applicable to real workplace scenarios
  - I can identify areas where the training would benefit my work.
  - The training content appears accessible for different learning styles
- Facilitated 3 community sessions where external community members (including patients/clients and partners) were previewed the training and reflected on the following questions:
  - How confident are you that the training will help address power dynamics in healthcare spaces you occupy?
  - How confident are you that the training will drive meaningful improvements in both organizational and societal policies, systems, and environments?
  - To what extent did the training content represent your experiences and needs?
  - The content appears accessible for different learning styles
  - How clear is the training content in explaining what cultural humility means?



# Descriptions

- **Part One:** Foundations of Cultural Humility
  - Explore personal biases, systemic inequities, and the impact on patient/client care.
  - Reflect on power imbalances and how they shape interactions.
- **Part Two:** Applying Cultural Responsiveness
  - Practice strategies to address unconscious bias.
  - Learn to connect clinical care with social and community context, bridging gaps caused by discrimination, isolation, or lack of support.
- **Implementation plan**
  - Leadership committee > Managers and Supervisors > All staff—renewed annually
  - LC members and Managers and Supervisors Develop Department Action plans on how to embed and practice cultural humility in their departments and on their teams



# Lessons Learned/Recommendations

- Creating a process of review that involves both internal (staff) and external stakeholders strengthens organizational training and builds community and collective trust
- Coming up with specific questions to guide the review of stakeholders previewing the training helps guide their reflections and assessment of if the training is fulfilling its purpose
- Presenting to senior leaders first and collaborating with them to plan further on how to implement and bring about successful implementation is important and creates and stronger sustainable training structure and process
- Training on cultural humility translates into better patient care and outcomes



# Thank you

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