



Parrott Creek Equity & Inclusion Strategy

Parrott Creek is committed to pursuing policies, institutional strategies and program developments that promote equity and inclusion in all our work: with our youth and their families; within the organization as a whole; and with our stakeholders and community partners.

While we feel that we have a good foundation of diversity to build from, we are firmly committed to meeting three overriding objectives:

1. Ensuring that our programs, services and “how we work” are culturally responsive
2. Recruiting, retaining and promoting staff and board members who reflect the communities and backgrounds of our client population
3. Developing strong, mutually supportive community partnerships

Current Demographics

- Approximately 60% of our staff comes from diverse backgrounds: 27% represent a community of color or are bicultural; 33% represent the LGBTQI community; 1% live with a disability; 15% care for a disabled child or parent in their home and 66% are first generation college graduates.¹
- This compares to a client demographic² that is approximately 62% Caucasian, 23% Hispanic, 11% African American, 2% Native American and 2% Multi-racial.
- The vast majority of our participants come from low-income families and communities, have high levels of trauma and Adverse Childhood Experiences, face substance misuse and/or mental health challenges and increasingly struggle with housing insecurity and homelessness.
- Our Trustee and Advisory boards are comprised of approximately 33% women, 10% people of color and three individuals with lived-experience of the issues we focus on, including former service users.

Our Objectives

Subsequent to a strategic planning retreat in early 2018, and the recruitment of our new Executive Director³, Parrott Creek has embarked on a process of assessment and immediate action on issues of equity and inclusion. Over the next two years, our learning and growth priorities to advance equity are:

1. Ensuring that our programs and services are culturally responsive

Our youth and their families are fully involved in creating individualized goals for themselves in equal partnership with staff when in our care. However, we recognize that, while the aim of our work is to support individuals to develop skills and resiliency, and repair harm within and against communities, much of this work is largely dominated by a white, middle-class professional sector. So, even as Parrott Creek works with an intentional focus on reducing bias and disproportionality, we can still fail to root elements of this work in a family or child’s own culture, language, faith, identity and/or belief systems.

Through our research and outreach, we have embraced a definition of **Culturally Responsive Services** that is adapted from *Mi Hermana’s Keeper Toolkit: Promising Practices for Juvenile Justice Prevention Programs Supporting Latina Youth*, 2017.

¹ Data from 2019 anonymous staff survey

² Data as of August 2019 drawn from our case management system.

³ Simon lead the development of an agency-wide equity framework for the Oregon Youth Authority in 2017-18.

To us, culturally responsive services are defined as “using the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference, and performance styles of [participants or service users] to make learning more relevant and effective for them” (Gay, 2002). Youth and families want programs and services to be interesting, relevant, and comfortable, such as incorporating relatable aspects of their communities and daily lives into curricula and design (Rajagopal, 2011) and having cultural practices embedded within program materials and support structures (Simpkins et al., 2016). Lastly, being culturally responsive includes having bilingual staff where and when appropriate.

We are developing our skills, staff and program design to ensure that we:

- Speak to young people and families in preferred language whenever possible
- Learn about family and community cultural values and discuss these in service and case planning
- Incorporate cultural heritage into our curricula, programs and service content
- Factor in each young person’s, and their families’, strengths and characteristics
- Train staff to uphold key cultural values of different ethnicities
- Ask youth and/or families how they want to be respected and validated
- Support staff in validating the opinions of both children and families
- Help participants access essential resources in the community
- Support open discussions on family matters between youth, their caregivers and/or extended family
- Provide services with a relational-cultural lens that upholds their community values
- Partner with community stakeholders and other agencies to advocate for culturally supportive institutional cultures, active parent involvement, and appropriate programs for minority youth

Key Actions

1. Q4 2018 - Q2 2019: Cultural sensitivity audit of all programs and service models
2. Q1 2019 - Ongoing: Management team implicit bias self-assessment & reflection process
3. Q2 – Q3 2019: Development of program/service adaptation action plans based on cultural audit
4. Q1 2019 - Q1 2020: Peer coaching of on-the-job skills in culturally responsive staff-to-client interactions and services

Key Target: All programs and services are culturally responsive by Q4 2019

Partners include The I Am Academy and the Oregon Youth Authority’s Office of Inclusion & Intercultural Relations. Other consultancy support will be sought as needed.

2. Recruiting, retaining and promoting staff and board members who reflect the communities and backgrounds of our client population

As stated above, while we feel that we have a strong foundation of staff diversity to build on, our board can and should be more representative and more inclusive. Not only is achieving diversity and inclusion imperative from an equity and social justice perspective, it will also ensure that the broadest spectrum possible of ideas, backgrounds, life experiences, skills and cultural perspectives form part of our organizational DNA and are present within our governance and leadership.

Key Actions:

1. Q4 2018 - Q2 2019: Comprehensive skill, representation and diversity audit of board, staff and volunteers
2. Q2 – Q3 2019: Development of staff, board and volunteer recruitment and retention action plans
3. Q2 2019 – Q1 2020: Board & leadership implicit bias self-assessment, facilitated training and ongoing coaching
4. Q1 2019 – Q4 2020: Targeted recruitment of staff, board and volunteers based on action plans

Key Targets:

1. Minimum of 35% diversity representation within board and leadership by Q1 2020
2. Youth and families see their cultures, backgrounds and experiences represented in the demographic of those that support them.

Partners include the Restorative Justice Coalition of Oregon Equity & Inclusion Sub-Committee, the Oregon Alliance of Children's Programs Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Affinity Group and other external experts as identified.

3. Developing strong, mutually supportive community partnerships

Parrott Creek has always had a commitment to building equitable and inclusive communities. However, it is clear that while this has always been our desire, we have not always acted with enough focus and intention in this area. At the same time that we work to ensure that our programs are culturally responsive and that our staff and board are truly representative, we are also committing ourselves to working collaboratively to build communities where every individual feels included and valued, believes that they have skills and knowledge to contribute and is supported in achieving their true potential.

Key Actions

1. Q4 2018 – Q2 2019: Mapping our community partnerships, networks and key stakeholders to identify who we are not talking to and who we don't support
2. Q1 – Q3 2019: Develop outreach and engagement plans for the communities we do not know
3. Q1 2019 - Ongoing: Contact, support and partner with relevant communities and organizations

Key Target: To be known, recognized and respected as a collaborative, humble and inclusive community partner by Q2 2019 and ongoing...

Partners include The I Am Academy, Todos Juntos, Clackamas Women's Center, Clackamas Children's Center, Native American Youth & Family Center, True Housing, the Rosewood Initiative, Northwest Family Services, Northwest Housing Alternatives, CASA of Clackamas County, Hispanic Interagency Networking Team (HINT), Portland Parent Union, the Oregon Alliance of Children's Programs, the Oregon Youth Authority's Office of Inclusion & Intercultural Relations, Clackamas County Health, Housing & Human Services, Clackamas County Juvenile Services and the Oregon Department of Human Services.

Resources

- Government Alliance on Race & Equity: <https://www.racialequityalliance.org/>
- White Fragility: Why It's So Hard for White People to Talk about Racism, by Robin DiAngelo
- Critical Race Theory, by Delgado & Stefancic
- Trauma Stewardship: An Everyday Guide to Caring for Self While Caring for Others, by Burk & Lipsky
- The Age of Overwhelm: Strategies for the Long Haul, by Laura van Dernoot Lipsky

Videos

- Deconstructing White Privilege: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DwIx3KQer54>
- The urgency of intersectionality: https://www.ted.com/talks/kimberle_crenshaw_the_urgency_of_intersectionality?language=en
- You and Your Racist Brain: The Neuroscience of Prejudice
 - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4SwOEcJL_mA (short)
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r3N88xIWujE> (full lecture)