

**Racial Equity and Disparities Workgroup**  
**Research and Core Assessment Battery (CAB) Subcommittee**  
May 5, 2021

**Meeting Summary and Action Items**

**Attendees:**

Susan Azrin, NIMH	Lisa Dixon, OTNY
Donna Bencivengo, Connection LHS	Hong Ngo, OTNY
Deepak Sarpal, Connection LHS	Stephen Smith, OTNY
Tiana Sepahpour, Connection LHS	Melanie Wall, OTNY
Swati Nayar, Connection LHS	Vanessa Klodnick, EPINET-TX
Khalima Bolden, EPI-CAL	Neely Myers, EPINET-TX
Karino Muro, EPI-CAL	Tamara Daley, ENDCC
Tara Niendam, EPI-CAL	Preethy George, ENDCC
Dan Shapiro, EPI-CAL	Howard Goldman, ENDCC
Valerie Tryon, EPI-CAL	Abram Rosenblatt, ENDCC
Anita Kwashie, EPI-MINN	

**Discussion**

The meeting was spent discussing the items of the PL-CAB that ask about demographic characteristics of CSC team members (i.e., age, race, ethnicity, gender, languages spoken, gender identity).

The following are main points from the discussion:

- If a team lead is completing the PL-CAB, then how would he or she collect demographic information members of their team? What if they do not know this information? Would it make team leads uncomfortable to ask these questions of their staff? Could this be a potential HR issue?
- Data will not be accurate if a respondent had to report on other team members' demographic characteristics. We do not want team leaders to guess if they do not know.
  - o Staff should be able to self-identify. In addition, the group agreed there should be a self-report option with an option to "decline to answer."
  - o To facilitate this, should we remove these questions from the PL-CAB so they can be asked in the right way as a separate survey? Could an anonymous survey could be sent to the sites from Westat to collect this information from teams? Administering this as a new survey is different than what was initially proposed, and does not replace the PL-CAB. Some Hubs may have questions about IRB approval. Could a unique identifier could be used for each staff member responding to a staff-level survey?

- Workgroup members remarked on the importance of these issues and that we not skirt around them because they may be uncomfortable. We ask these questions of clients, so why would we not ask of staff? We also ask other personal information about staff routinely, such as their education or levels of training, so why not these? We also should not assume that team leads will find this information uncomfortable. In some sites, these questions are asked routinely. For example, in SAC-EDAPT these questions are asked on a regular basis on a written form.
- Asking these questions is necessary to determine whether teams are representative of the clients they serve. If we don't ask, we won't know.
- It will be helpful to state for respondents explicitly *why* this information is collected and *how* the information may be used. If staff members understand the motivation behind the questions, they are likely to be more responsive.
- It would theoretically be helpful to know this information by staff role, rather than on an aggregate level, in order to analyze power dynamics. For example, whether there are diverse groups represented in leadership positions. On the other hand, this level of detail may be more appropriate for a research study than for the PL-CAB.
- Gender: The PL-CAB has a question asking about team member gender, but it does not specifically ask about gender identity. We could consider asking questions how staff self-identify, and let them know they do NOT have to answer and can decline.
- One option would be to provide hubs a choice – some hubs could collect aggregate information and not self-identifying information and other hubs could collect more detailed information about team members and their roles.
- Could it be useful to do some qualitative research about the process of collecting this type of information and then informing our questions about this at a later time? For example, it may be useful to ask programs about how they address diversity on their teams, as well as get their reactions to the process, e.g., “How do you approach talking about these topics?” “How did you feel filling this out about your staff?” “Do you feel confident about your assessment of your team’s race and ethnicity?” “We understand that these are sensitive questions and we’d like to understand how you approach this process. If you don’t provide this information, what are your concerns?” This could be a project for the qualitative workgroup, if there is funding.

## **ACTION STEPS**

- The ENDCC will share the latest version of the PL-CAB with the group
- Tara will raise this topic at the Steering Committee meeting
- At the next meeting (6/2, 1 pm EST), Neely will update the group on the research review paper