

REACH-ing beyond the basics:

Preparing the addiction workforce to care for minoritized individuals with substance use and addiction

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Objectives

- Give examples of the addiction-related health disparities in minoritized communities
- Identify the REACH program as a resource to increase the number of addiction specialists from minoritized backgrounds
- Recognize the role of mentorship in preparing the addiction workforce to care for minoritized individuals with substance use
- Recognize the role of allyship in preparing the addiction workforce to care for minoritized individuals with substance use



Contextualizing the need

- Current overdose crisis has led to a re-racialization of addiction (ie perceived as largely a problem affecting white communities)

> [Med Anthropol Q.](#) 2019 Jun;33(2):242-262. doi: 10.1111/maq.12449. Epub 2018 May 28.

Re-racialization of Addiction and the Redistribution of Blame in the White Opioid Epidemic

Sonia Mendoza ¹ ², Allyssa Stephanie Rivera ², Helena Bjerring Hansen ² ³



Contextualizing the need - disparities

SERIES

doi:10.1111/add.15233

African Americans now outpace whites in opioid-involved overdose deaths: a comparison of temporal trends from 1999 to 2018

Drug overdose mortality among stateside Puerto Ricans: Evidence of a health disparity

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CDC: Rate of overdose deaths in American Indian and Alaskan Native communities is above the national average

Furr Holden et al 2021

Cano 2020

<https://www.cdc.gov/injury/budget/opioidoverdosepolicy/TribalCommunities.html>



Contextualizing the need: Impact of criminalization

- Complex socio-political history of addiction
 - Racialized criminalization reflected in over-policing of majority Black & Latinx neighborhoods
 - Fueling mass incarceration
 - 1 in 3 Black males will be incarcerated in their lifetime
 - 1 in 6 Latinx males will be incarcerated in their lifetime
 - Black women incarcerated at 2x the rate of white women

“Nothing has contributed more to the systematic mass incarceration of people of color in the United States than the War on Drugs.”

– Michelle Alexander, *The New Jim Crow* (2010)



Contextualizing the need: Impact of criminalization

- Justification for excessive use of force
 - No-knock warrant resulting in Breonna Taylor’s murder (issued to search for evidence of drug trafficking)
 - “Excited delirium” - a pseudo-diagnosis cited by law enforcement & often associated with PCP intoxication
 - Cited by officers responsible for Daniel Prude’s murder



Contextualizing the need

- Manifestations of structural racism reflected in under-representation of minoritized individuals in healthcare
 - 5% of Physicians self-identify as Black
 - 5% of physicians self-identify as Hispanic/Latinx
 - 0.1% of physician self-identify as Indigenous
- Fewer Black & Hispanic medical school faculty in US medical schools in 2016 than in 1990



Contextualizing the need

- Manifestations of structural racism reflected in under-representation of minoritized individuals in healthcare
 - 6% of APRNs & 2.7% of PAs self-identify as Black
 - 3.8% of APRNs & 3.8% of PAs self-identify as Hispanic/Latinx
 - 0.2% APRNs self-identify as Indigenous





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Goal 1: Increase the number of addiction providers adequately trained to care for minoritized individuals with substance use disorders





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Goal 2: Increase the overall number of addiction providers from minoritized backgrounds





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7 TOTAL Addiction Psychiatry & Addiction Medicine Fellows slots- **full funding** available for fellowship positions

10 TOTAL residents/students- (physician, nurse practitioner, physician assistant/associate) – **stipend** for accepted scholars





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1 week intensive

Monthly webinars

Mentorship

Scholarly Project





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Intensive 1-week Course at Yale

8 Lectures:

- Why Now: History, Epidemiology and Biology
- Anthropologic Aspects of Care in Minoritized Groups
- Structural Competency
- Community Engagement Didactic
- Modeling Structural Competency Interviews
- Capacity Building
- Advocacy 101
- Systems of Care

7 interactive activities, including:

- Community Panel
- Advocate Panel
- Community visits
- Group Exercises
- Workshop

2 Social Events





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Adjustments during COVID

- Two-day zoom intensive
- Mentor-mentee pairing reveal
- Shark-Tank scholarly project pitching exercise
- Lectures & other experiences added throughout the year





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Academic Year Activities

Monthly Webinar Topics:

- Philosophy & Practice of Harm Reduction
- Social Determinants of Mental Health & Addiction
- Use of Social Media for Medical Professionals
- Identity Integration in Medical Training
- Perinatal Substance Use in Minoritized communities
- Qualitative Research Primer

Formal & Informal Connections

- Cohort Group Chat
- Wellness check-ins
- Attendance at a national addiction conference



Trainee Feedback

“Definitely one of the most rewarding things I've done during my years of education...I look forward to the webinars and staying engaged with my REACH colleagues and faculty for years to come.”



“This program was incredible. I can't wait to bring the structural vulnerability toolkit and everything else we learned to my institution and find ways to get on the ground and do the work to advocate for URM’s”



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Beyond the content to the culture



REACH-ing beyond the basics

- Mentorship
 - Career development
 - Mindful of identity in the context of their work
 - Being a **minoritized physician** in a **stigmatized profession**



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REACH-ing beyond the basics

- The toll of racism on minoritized trainees in medicine and allied health professions is recognized and validated
 - Microaggressions
 - Discrimination
 - Isolation
 - This can result in higher rates of depression, anxiety, burnout

Racism is both witnessed and experienced by minoritized trainees



REACH-ing Beyond: Mentorship

- Peer Mentorship
 - Importance of the cohort
 - Different levels of training; different educational backgrounds
 - Informal connections – group chats
 - Meet-up at national meetings



Peer connectedness → decreased symptoms of depression & anxiety

Milam et al 2021



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REACH-ing Beyond: Mentorship



- Peer Mentorship cont
 - Role in career transitions
 - Increasing isolation as you progress through training
 - Shifting culture in traditional addiction treatment settings
 - Shifting culture in general medical settings



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REACH-ing beyond the basics

- Wellness
 - Self-care as radical resistance to systems of oppression
 - Implemented in response to COVID-19 & racial reckoning of 2020
 - Monthly wellness check-ins for scholars
 - Mentors reminded of the importance of wellness
 - Structural emphasis, not just personal responsibility



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REACH-ing beyond the basics

Allyship

An active, consistent, and arduous practice of unlearning and re-evaluating, in which a person in a position of privilege and power seeks to operate in solidarity with a marginalized group

A lifelong process of building relationships based on trust, consistency, and accountability with marginalized individuals and/or groups of people



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<https://theantioppressionnetwork.com/allyship/>



REACH-ing Beyond: Allyship

- Allyship
 - Modeled by program leadership
 - Didactic experience
 - Cohort dynamics



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What does it mean to be an ally?

1. Take on the struggle as your own.
2. Transfer the benefits of your privilege to those who lack it.
3. Amplify voices of the oppressed before your own.



What does it mean to be an ally?

4. Acknowledge that even though you feel pain, the conversation is not about you.
5. Stand up, even when you feel scared.
6. Own your mistakes and de-center yourself.
7. Understand that your education is up to you and no one else.



Considerations for ACAAM Members

- REACH is a resource for minoritized trainees with interest in addiction – refer trainees
- Intentionally develop culture while teaching content
- Incorporate concepts of self-identity and impact of structural racism into trainee mentorship



Considerations for ACAAM Members

- Develop peer supervision groups/cohorts for fellows
- Utilize frequent prompts to encourage wellness
- Engage in the active and ongoing process of allyship
- Take the course: [Becoming a more equitable educator](#)



Sources

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Questions

