EQUITY IS EVERYONE'S JOB

Embedding and Deepening Equity Competencies Across PPGNY Teams in 2022

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Since the inception of Planned Parenthood of Greater New York (PPGNY) as a merged affiliate in 2020, PPGNY’s Equity & Learning department has worked to equip all employees and volunteers with what we call an intersectional “Race +” or “Race and” equity lens: a framework that centers race explicitly—though not exclusively—in our provision of sexual and reproductive health care, education, and advocacy. We employ this lens to reduce evidenced disparities and create more equitable outcomes for staff, patients, and community members that are Black, Indigenous, and/or People of Color (BIPOC), and for those who also have other historically and presently marginalized identities.

If the past few years have taught us anything as an affiliate, we have learned that true cultural transformation requires individuals from across regions, roles, lived experiences, and levels of positional authority to self-identify as change agents and to meaningfully collaborate with colleagues in order to move closer to equity as an entire organization—made up of individuals and systems.

A common thread for Equity & Learning throughout 2022 was ‘relationships, partnerships, and cross-departmental collaboration’—all critical puzzle pieces to systems work wherein we analyze the labyrinth of structures, identify equity-related gaps within those structures, and then create interventions to mitigate harm.

As we look ahead, we realize that not only do we need to continue to engage all stakeholders and deepen our collaborations to get the work done, but we also needed to acknowledge that these partnerships are only an initial step in achieving our goal. The nature of how we do it is absolutely crucial to our organizational success as Planned Parenthood of Greater New York.

Thus, 2022 became the year of further decentralizing equity-related efforts from the Equity & Learning Department exclusively; some staff began—and many continued—to diffuse the work inter-departmentally and champion it within their respective job functions. This has been no easy feat, as our endeavors exist simultaneously with internal and external challenges that can fracture, strain, or simply slow our momentum. Despite (or in spite) of this, we move forward on our journey with much of the road still cut out for us.

In the rearview, we look back with gratitude for the materializing of our collective commitment to make equity inextricable from our professional duties. Equity & Learning wishes to take the opportunity granted by a new year to reflect on and be energized by our progress—including our colleagues’ recent successes—because we know that equity is everyone’s job.
Learning & Culture: Winning Hearts and Minds

Learning & Culture is responsible for the creation and implementation of innovative learning curriculums to ensure staff across PPGNY are growing in their skills, knowledge, and experience to build equity analysis and integrate learning into their daily functions. This includes the facilitation of equity dialogues and training, including deep learning of systematic bias, oppression, racialized harm, and restorative practices in collaboration with other E&L team members. Learning & Culture also manages stakeholder partnerships that support institutional learning and accountability, including providing coaching related to culture change across departments, analysis building, and anti-racist praxis to individual colleagues as well as teams.

In 2022, Learning & Culture focused our efforts on the design and facilitation of the following learning spaces:

**Equity Fundamentals**

A foundational ‘Race and’ equity training series that introduces racial justice and equity frameworks, strengthens institutional capacity to advance race equity, and incorporates strategies to counter bias to build trust and accountability across difference. First piloted for staff in 2020, the training series had significant growth in its reach throughout 2022: E&L was excited to intentionally modify Equity Fundamentals content to be more specific to the clinical setting. Between traditional cohorts and Clinical Didactics sessions, over 120 staff members completed the series in 2022.
In 2022, the E&L Team collaborated with our colleagues across the affiliate to facilitate monthly DEI Collective meetings where we reviewed PPGNY’s Equity Competencies and strategized how to operationalize these required competencies within individual roles and across teams. These Collectives are one way in which E&L intends to transcend learning by moving from theory into practice. The race equity competencies were developed to establish a standard of practice across the affiliate and have already been embedded into our hiring protocol and the promotions process. Moving forward, equity competencies will also be embedded in staff performance evaluations to assess all staff members’ ability to effectively demonstrate the competencies in their functional roles. In recognizing that staff are at varying levels of engagement in and understanding of the “Race +” approach to doing our equity work, we proceeded with taking a deep dive into the “Relationship Building and Communication Skills” and “Compassionate and Culturally Responsive Programs/Services” competencies.

2022 proved to be a year of growth for the organization’s affinity groups known as our Anti-Racist Caucuses. In response to staff interest, important feedback, and requests for a supportive community, E&L prioritized the reinvigoration of the Asian American & Pacific Islander (AAPI) caucus and the launch of our organization’s first LGBTQ+ caucus, made possible through partnerships with external facilitators. The caucuses have goals that are unique to each affinity group, but generally, each must balance the building of rapport among its members with accountability and the commitment to concretely challenge anti-Blackness and the characteristics of white supremacy that pervade—no matter one’s lived experience.

To foster a culture in which our colleagues are acknowledged in their full humanity, the E&L team made programmatic pivots to convert some caucus meetings into intentional spaces for staff to convene and process the impacts of recent current events. Examples of these events include acts of violence perpetuated by the white supremacist-ciseheternormative-patriarchy, specifically the mass shootings at the Tops supermarket in Buffalo and at Club Q in Colorado Springs. When we unearth the racist roots of these traumatic occurrences, contextualize them, and draw connections to our lived experiences as people and to our work as professionals, we are upholding our organizational equity goals.
**Equitable Systems: Transforming Organizational Infrastructure**

As critical as our learning and didactic spaces are we are very aware that we cannot exclusively “train” our way out of racism and other oppressive ideologies. We know that everyone is on a different path to learning and growing based on our identities, lived experiences, and fluency, and we cannot wait for nor expect individuals solely to effectuate change. In tandem with continuous learning, we must actively transform the systems and structures that are hurting the very people and communities we intend to help. Our Equitable Systems approach is geared towards that deep transformation through an honest and rigorous examination of our policies, protocols, and practices and the impact that they have on patients and staff.

**Detailed below are further examples of the different systems-related programs and interventions that work to institutionalize accountability and foster transformative change:**

| **Managing for Equity & Results (MER)** | A mandatory program for all PPGNY people managers that is designed using a holistic approach to teaching equitable, results-oriented, and sustainable management practices for organizational leaders. The need for this system intervention was informed by data that surfaced disparities in staff experiences that were connected to managing across difference, especially as relates to race. To better equip white managers with the analysis and skills they need to lead diverse teams equitably, and to provide support for BIPOC managers as they navigate leadership in an organization that has historically been predominantly white, E&L made notable updates to the MER curriculum in April of 2022. These enhancements include the incorporation of practicum content, resulting in additional skill-building, as well as the launch of Managers’ Racial Affinity Groups. At the conclusion of this series, 70 percent of surveyed managers indicated that the series made them think “differently” about how they managed. |
| **Patient Experience & Equity Taskforce (PEET)** | In August, PPGNY welcomed the new VP of Patient Safety and Quality—a position focused specifically on PPGNY’s clinical quality, infection control, and clinical risk management programs with an emphasis on patient safety and harm reduction. The addition of this critical role is yet another building block to the partnership structure we are creating to provide equitable and quality care to our patients and community members. This collaboration is best seen through PEET where the VPs of PSQ and Equity & Learning co-lead to drive a culture of safety and continuous improvement of patient experience with an equity lens. |
Facilitating the “Equity in Hiring” training, required of all hiring managers and interview panelists.

Creating an “Integrated Hiring Rubric” as a tool for hiring managers and interview panelists to assess candidates’ functional experience and equity competencies and mitigate bias in the hiring process.

Reviewing rubrics to standardize the assessment of equity-related competencies & to recommend applicable candidates for hire.

Upholding benchmarks related to diversity in the applicant pool and interview panel to prevent issues such as affinity bias.

Participating in interview panels.

Offering one-on-one coaching with managers to advise around the hiring process.

The E&L team is proud to collaborate with PPGNY’s Human Resources Department (HR) to operationalize best practices in hiring to support recruitment and retention across our organization with an equity lens. In 2022, PPGNY’s hiring protocol was commended by several PP affiliates across the federation, who have attributed their success in equitable hiring to the blueprint that our model offers, comprised of notable standards for the reduction of bias in the hiring process. We are a resource for colleagues as relates to recruitment, interviewing, and hiring by committing to the following:

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- Creating an “Integrated Hiring Rubric” as a tool for hiring managers and interview panelists to assess candidates’ functional experience and equity competencies and mitigate bias in the hiring process.
- Reviewing rubrics to standardize the assessment of equity-related competencies & to recommend applicable candidates for hire.
- Upholding benchmarks related to diversity in the applicant pool and interview panel to prevent issues such as affinity bias.
- Participating in interview panels.
- Offering one-on-one coaching with managers to advise around the hiring process.

At the end of 2022, PPGNY was accepted into the 2023-2024 IHI Pursuing Equity Learning Network at the Institute for Healthcare Improvement where we will work alongside other health care delivery organizations to identify initiatives to support equity-focused improvements in specific clinical areas and drive more equitable outcomes for the patients and communities we serve. This rigorous program will provide us with the foundation to propel our systems work to the next step by focusing on quality improvement and measured outcomes with an equity lens.

The expansion of our intersectional work also comes by way of partnership with Planned Parenthood Federation of America (PPFA). In 2022, we made a commitment to expand our disability access work and were awarded funding to carry out an organization-wide disability audit to ensure our 23 health centers statewide are equipped to provide the full range of accessible sexual and reproductive health services for people with disabilities (PWD), with an emphasis on those with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). This commitment stems from our reckoning with the fact that we must analyze our systems and infrastructure utilizing our “Race+” approach to reach the most marginalized- patients of color, people with disabilities, and those with intersecting identities who continue to face tremendous barriers in accessing sexual and reproductive health care.
Showcasing Our Internal Partners

Cross-Departmental Highlights*

*The successes summarized below were derived from staff responses to an affiliate-wide qualitative survey of PPGNY people managers. Not all departments, employees, nor achievements, are represented here.

Clinical Operations

- Implemented a new electronic medical record system, EPIC, to standardize care across the affiliate and increase accessibility. EPIC prominently displays personal pronouns and names to mitigate misgendering and deadnaming.
- Updated new telehealth platform, MyChart, which increases access for patients by allowing them to bypass the phone system to connect with a provider, view records, and make appointments. MyChart offers a feature that efficiently invites translators into the virtual video to meet the needs of patients with differing levels of English proficiency.
- Diversified representation of patient-facing providers including a bilingual English-Spanish telehealth provider, as well as increasing the number of providers privileged in gender-affirming care.
- Collaborated with Project Street Beat (PSB) on the Daphne Hazel Achievement Project, a fully integrated HIV health care and harm reduction program in the South Bronx that offers radioimmunoassay (RIA) to priority populations.
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Equity & Engagement

Community Engagement
Promotores de Salud
- Hired another promotora, increasing capacity to meet community members where they are and increase their access to sexual & reproductive information and services by prioritizing language accessibility.

Specialty Training & Programs
- Expanded and strengthened outreach partnerships with local agencies that work with communities of color, including a growing relationship with Centro Civico in Amsterdam.

Survivor Support Services
- Re-evaluated content creation and facilitation of prevention curriculum, as well as database, making them more gender-inclusive and available in Spanish.

Education & Training
The Training Institute
- Partnered with the Urban Indigenous Collective to offer two trainings to PPGNY staff related to culturally responsive approaches to working with Indigenous populations.
**Cross-Departmental Highlights***

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**External Affairs**

**Communications & Marketing**
- Conducted a patient-centered feedback session to inform the launch of a new marketing campaign focused on abortion access in New York State. This feedback session ensured it is reflective of and responsive to our patients’ experiences.

**Government Relations**
- Expanded legislative priorities to incorporate more issues that impact our communities and that specifically work to address racial injustices and the impact of structural racism on healthcare (ex: criminal justice reform, birth equity).

**Organizing**
- Centered our Sexual/Reproductive Justice (SRJ) partners in the planning and implementation of mass mobilizations across New York State in response to the SCOTUS decision to overturn the constitutional right to abortion.
In Conclusion

Growing Pains, Current Challenges, Continued Gaps, and Future Goals

Challenges to advancing equity can crop up both internally and externally. Within PPGNY itself, it is important to contextualize our efforts as culture-building, which is nuanced when considering geographic differences, hybrid work settings, attrition, changes in executive and senior leadership, and an absence of substantial equity work at legacy affiliates that would’ve primed staff for this newfound trajectory. Delays in the progress of the equity work, even if unintended, are commonly rooted in a difficulty to embrace equity as inextricable from functional role.

However, we know that equity efforts are not “added work,” nor “mission drift,” but integral to the livelihood of our organization. Those who believe in and champion our equity initiatives may feel a sense of disillusion when observing this dissonance between our organization’s equity aspirations and the current reality of our staff and patients’ experiences. We believe that culture-building and leadership buy-in are paramount to any solution to the outlined issues.

More broadly, Planned Parenthood of Greater New York staff, patients, and community members exist within larger ecosystems that shape their individual and collective lived experiences.

External events like the U.S. Supreme Court decision that overturned Roe v. Wade, are designed to further oppress marginalized communities and exhaust systems and individuals committed to transformative equity and justice work. These events understandably affect an individual’s ability to show up as their whole self, despite their dedication to any mission.

2022 saw national and global acts of targeted violence and the advancement of structural oppressions via further political attacks, including an unprecedented amount of anti-trans legislation. In resistance to this, we witnessed how championing an equity framework in both our work and our collective healing has enabled us to reclaim power and advance policies and practices—such as the Equal Rights Amendment and expanding abortion access in support of marginalized communities, respectively. This work is nothing short of impressive.

The confluence of the internal and external factors confronted our Equitable Systems and Learning & Culture approaches with what we have known for a long time - there is a dire need to deepen our intersectional lens and praxis in the creation of our training content and in the way we approach our systems work.
We recognize that our patients and community members do not live “single-issue lives,” and are often further marginalized by compounding systems of oppression related to their intersecting identities. This reality must anchor our analysis of the health care systems that our patients navigate. It is also a constant reminder that PPGNY’s equity work must apply and embody an intersectional framework that centers staff and patients who are pushed to the margins of society.

In 2023, the Equity & Learning team aims to roll out the much-anticipated curriculum “At the Intersections.” This curriculum was designed to grapple with and address the unique barriers that LGBTQ+ BIPOC patients face. It will be paired with a new internal LGBTQ+ affinity space for staff, held on a regular basis. This space is developing after its pilot in 2022, in response to staff feedback about the importance of proactively creating affinity spaces for positive community building and support, versus solely a place to debrief traumatic current events.

Additionally, as of January 2023, we require all staff to participate in our foundational “Equity Fundamentals” training series. This training supports staff learning and further transforms the organization into one that is multiracial, inclusive, and anti-racist where all staff and community thrive, in alignment with our mission and conviction about bodily autonomy, health, and racial equity.

This year, E&L’s work will reach beyond staff programming. We will develop and implement concrete accountability measures and mechanisms for staff in the pursuit of sustainable transformative change. E&L will contribute to this institutional accountability by informing forthcoming processes, like job performance evaluations. We recognize that transforming organizational culture on the institutional and systemic levels requires that we consistently embed race equity considerations in the development and examination of our programs, policies, operations, and procedures.

Organizational transformation can only take place when all individual employees of PPGNY are actively engaged in equity work on the intrapersonal and interpersonal levels. The future of our equity work is also grounded in an organizational commitment to a true, comprehensive intersectional praxis that will support our staff and improve and expand access to education and health care for our patients and our community members. We cannot totally challenge and dismantle oppressive systems alone, and it is because of this that we look forward to sharing in space and continuing this work in the coming year.
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Our Equity Journey: What PPGNY Staff Have to Say

“It’s been a long road, and there is still a lot of work to be done. It’s not enough to just talk the talk, we must put action and consequence behind the words. Otherwise, the behaviors go unchecked. We can’t put policies in place to improve how we treat our patients, and not adhere to the same thing in how we treat each other.”

“I’m so grateful PPGNY has strong equity policies and practices, but there is a lot of work to be done in dismantling the ways white supremacy shows up within the agency.”

“The journey had a challenging start as a newly merged organization in the midst of a pandemic. However, the work has become more cohesive and structured over time and has started to become incorporated into the daily workings of PPGNY. As such a large organization, we will continue to face geographic, cultural, and other challenges but as we continue to solidify the work, it will be easier to bridge gaps.”

“PPGNY is in a process of adopting and implementing a racial equity journey lens and framework that acknowledges intersectionality and the historical damage inflicted on communities of color and other marginalized populations. PPGNY has made a commitment to incorporate equity lens values into every aspect of our work, how we relate to one another, patients and community.”

“Honestly, the journey has been bumpy and at times uncomfortable, but necessary. It has empowered staff to talk more openly about a ‘taboo’ subject and the process has been welcoming, non-threatening, educational and professional.”