

Three Actionable Items Deflection Teams Can Take to Advance Equity in Deflection

PTACC DEFINITIONS

At its core, our field and practice of deflection holds out the promise of being a strategy for advancing equity in both the justice and health systems. To achieve this, deflection teams should incorporate principles and activities that promote greater equity of resources while also demonstrating a reduction in racial, gender, and income disparity in their initiative.

PTACC defines **DIVERSITY** as intentionally seeking to engage in these programs as staff, volunteers, citizens, clients, and participants; people from a broad range of demographic characteristics including but not limited to race, ethnicity, national origin, gender or gender identity, age, ability or disability, sexual orientation, health status, geographical orientation, or socioeconomic status.

DIVERSITY should, in some sense, match the community in which a deflection initiative operates as represented in its staff, volunteers, citizens, clients and participants. In this way, diversity in deflection is highly contextual. Yet seeking is not enough as the work must yield positive change, which is the work of equity.

PTACC defines **EQUITY** as fair opportunity and access to participate in a deflection or pre-arrest diversion program, whether as an enrollee, volunteer, citizen, staff member, or partner in (early) planning and operations, regardless of race, ethnicity, national origin, gender or gender identity, age, ability or disability, sexual orientation, health status, or socioeconomic status. Improving equity requires understanding root causes of inequities and eliminating barriers that prevent full engagement.

Even more, **EQUITY** in deflection means that the resources available to a deflection site are offered equally to all, and that where that does not occur, the deflection team stops, corrects, and then works to correct the situation so it does not continue going forward.

Notice that in both PTACC's suggested application of **DIVERSITY** and **EQUITY** to our field and practice of deflection, it is necessary, but not sufficient to attempt progress (not perfection). A new and better state must be achieved.

As our field is young and still emerging after less than 10 years in existence, and yet not a new issue for our communities, PTACC offers these three steps for deflection teams to take to advance **DIVERSITY** and **EQUITY** in your initiative.

Step Up to the Plate:

DIVERSITY and EQUITY Action Steps for Deflection Sites

I. Embed DIVERSITY and EQUITY from the very earliest stages as you are designing your deflection initiative, and ideally before it ever launches:

- a. Ensure that all relevant stakeholders are included from early stage ideation of your initiative through to operationalization and ongoing evaluation.
- b. Start with the basics and commit to collection simple demographic data on gender, age, race, ethnicity, income, and more. Absent these quick to collect demographics, a deflection site really cannot begin to know what is going on in terms of diversity and equity. It really starts this simply.
- c. Include 2-3 measurable DIVERSITY and EQUITY goals (and make them SMART) as you are putting your initiative together.
- d. Use PTACC's Core Measures for Deflection that incorporate suggested metrics for this area (www.ptaccollaborative.org; click on PTACC Deflection Starter Kit, then click on Core Measures.)
- e. If you are already underway with your deflection initiative, then put in the above and start from where you are. Not doing it is the past. Correcting and doing it is the future.

II. Ensure EQUITY - offer, access, use, acceptance, rejection, discharge, and follow-up in your deflection initiative:

- a. Once you are collecting your data as your deflection initiative is operational, monitor it at the systems, leadership, and line-staff level. Share it openly and without judgement. When things are going well, remember to celebrate. We are all in this together!
- b. Critical and easy to overlook in this regard once a deflection initiative is operational, measure ongoing stakeholder engagement in the initiative. This will not show up in the data itself as this does not refer to participants, but to the community and organizations that actually put your initiative together. If they stick around, things are likely good. If they walk, it's time to stop, reassess, correct, and restart.

III. Make known your progress and especially your success (and where you must still do more):

- a. Doing the above first two action items is excellent! Now, it's time to share it openly and honestly with others. This is a measure of professionalism, transparency, and integrity. It is never anything to hide or tuck away.
- b. Include DIVERSITY and EQUITY indicators in the evaluation of staff and programs.
- c. Include DIVERSITY and EQUITY outcomes in your deflection site's annual report and presentation. It's OK to let others know where you are on this. It actually inspires help and assistance!

Related, please share with PTACC your work, successes, lessons learned, toolkits, stories, and more from working to and achieving greater DIVERSITY and EQUITY in your deflection site. info@ptaccollaborative.org

To get more involved in PTACC's work in Community, Diversity, and Equity, consider joining our CDE Strategy Area: https://ptaccollaborative.org/strategy-areas/cdi_strategy_area/