



The Effectiveness of Diversity Training Committees in Establishing Long-term DEI Compliant Facilities that Benefit Veterans, Staff, and Mental Health Trainees: A One Stop Shop

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Objectives



WHAT IS THE FUNCTION AND
STRUCTURE OF A DIVERSITY
TRAINING COMMITTEE (DTC)



HOW DOES A DTC BENEFIT
VETERANS, TRAINEES, STAFF, AND
VHA FACILITIES



WHAT RESPONSE HAVE WE SEEN
WITH DTCs AND HOW CAN YOU
GET STARTED

What is the function and structure of a Diversity Training Committee

The South Texas Veterans Health Care System (STVHCS) Psychology Department has developed a Diversity Training Committee (DTC) which is designed to be a valuable resource to training programs, trainees, staff, and Veterans alike.

The goal of the committee is to:

- increase trainees' cultural knowledge
- promote greater self-awareness
- develop and implement in-classroom and experimental learning opportunities
- broaden psychology trainees' understanding of cultural/diversity/social justice factors that shape our community and the world as a whole
- cultivate comfort with engaging in culturally aware dialogue across all levels of mental health services and practice
- Share ways in which other VHA psychologists, departments, and training programs can promote equity and inclusion in training, clinical practice, and the workplace.

What is the function and structure of a Diversity Training Committee

STRUCTURE

Time Commitment:

- Six-month committee experiences offered based upon interest/yearlong for LPMHC Interns and Practicum Students
- Meeting will occur once a week for one hour (via Teams)
- Additional time as needed/requested by trainees as date of project nears (newsletter contributions/preparation for Training Committee meetings/admin projects)

Trainee Offerings (subject to change):

- 4 Psychology Interns
- 4 Psychology Fellows
- 1 LPMHC Student Interns (***yearlong experience**)
- 2 Psychology Practicum students (***yearlong experience**)
- Can accommodate 8 trainees max, per six-month rotation (19 a year)

How does it benefit
Veterans, trainees,
staff, and VHA
facilities

DTC Offerings	
Multicultural Rotation/Brief Experience	Trainees
Immersion Experience	Trainees
Inpatient Psychiatry Resident Training	Trainees
Multicultural Journal Club	Trainees/Staff
Quarterly Engagement Newsletter	Trainees/Staff
Consultation Hour	Trainees/Staff
Book Club	Trainees/Staff
Race-Based Stress/Trauma & Empowerment Group	Trainees/Veterans
My Life My Story	Trainees/Veterans

How does it benefit Veterans, trainees, staff, and VHA facilities

Upon completion of the Multicultural/Diversity
Immersion Committee Experience:

- trainees will have challenged preconceived notions/biases
- cultivated a deeper understanding of our Veteran population
- enhance their overall cultural awareness as emerging psychology practitioners



Photo: https://www.va.gov/vetdata/veteran_population.asp

What response have we seen

From our trainees:

- “Immersion experiences have been a great way to become acclimated to the San Antonio area and better comprehend many of their local patient's culture and experiences.”
- “This was a great experience. I don't think I would have done this on my own!”
- “This was 10X more useful/valuable than reading a book!”
- (I will be) “attending more to patient understandings of their cultural heritage and backgrounds.”
- “I learned so much!”
- “..excellent supervision and assisted me with refining my multicultural conceptualizations and interventions.”
- “..provided an informative and powerful rotation and supervision experience, and I am so thankful I got the opportunity...”
- “I had the pleasure of interviewing and composing a story for a Veteran that had a rich and compelling life journey. Reading back the story to him was a moment that captured the true power of healing through story telling. As he teared up, his gratitude radiated through the screen and I knew this printed version of his life's experience would be something he hung in his home as a reminder of how far he has come, just like writing it reminding me of how much our work matters.”

From staff:

- *Awareness Matters* Newsletter has been a breath of fresh air to read, staff are eager to get involved with the DTC, and BIPOC trainees feel empowered

From leadership:

- Asked to collaborate with EEO on structuring Hospital DEI committee and DEI campaign



Considerations for getting started



Consider the needs of your Psychology Department and VA Hospital.

- Describe/Outline your vision.
- Organize and define your team's structure (members, workgroup, etc.)
- Conduct Best Practice Review and Identify S.M.A.R.T. goals



Meet with your supervisor/leadership regarding your vision and proposed structure.
Discuss possible avenues of implementation.



Review OMHSP diversity, equity and inclusion SharePoint: [OMHSP Sharepoint](#) and additional resources available.