

# Foundation Block Field Activity: Fairness and Equity in Practice

## Learning Objectives

### Field Activity: Fairness and Equity in Practice

#### Knowledge

- K1.** The trainee will be able to describe the prevalence of disparity and disproportionality within their county in child welfare services.
- K2.** The trainee will be able to identify ways that their county provides services and supports that are culturally responsive to the families in their community.
- K3.** The trainee will be able to identify how a social worker’s personal history, culture and professional experiences, training, and biases affect their beliefs and interactions with other people.
- K4.** The trainee will be able to recognize how a family’s trauma history (individual, familial, community, and historical) may impact their experience in working collaboratively with the child welfare system.

#### Skill

- S1.** The trainee will be able to locate the Disparity Indices for their county and using the demographic information, think critically about how families are served in their county.
- S2.** The trainee will engage in an initial conversation with their field advisor about their awareness of bias and how it impacts engagement, collaboration, decision-making, and outcomes for children and families.

#### Values

- V1.** The trainee will allow for an open discussion of possible biases and consider this as an important tool for combatting disproportionality in child welfare practice.
- V2.** The trainee will appreciate the cultural differences that exist within the community they serve and their own culture, and the agency’s responsibility to provide culturally responsive services.

## Activity

**Practice Area:** Foundation

**California Core Practice Model Practice Behaviors:** 2 (b), 3 (b), 6 (c)

**Estimated Time Required:** 2 hours

**Related eLearning/classroom:**

- Fairness and Equity
- Values and Ethics
- Trauma-Informed Practice (eLearning and classroom)

## Description of Activity:

This activity is designed to introduce new social workers to county specific Disparity Indices data as a way to facilitate a conversation about culturally responsive services and supports, and how bias impacts engagement, collaboration, decision-making, and outcomes for children and families. Additionally, the social worker will review information from kidsdata.org related to Adverse Childhood Experiences for children in their county.

Through this activity, the social worker and field advisor will access the California Child Welfare Indicators Project website and view the Disparity Indices Report for their county and another county in the state and complete a worksheet related to the information they have located. The social worker and field advisor will also review information related to Adverse Childhood Experiences for their county.

Following their review of the Disparity Indices Reports and information about Adverse Childhood Experiences from kidsdata.org, the social worker and field advisor will identify and discuss county policies, available services, and practices that promote fair and equitable treatment for all children, youth, and families interacting with the child welfare system. This will include exploration of how a family's trauma history may impact collaboration and engagement. The social worker and field advisor will explore ways that bias can be discussed and addressed in day-to-day practice as a way to improve outcomes for children and families.

For the purposes of this activity, the following definitions will be used:

- ❑ Bias
  - (noun) prejudice in favor of or against one thing, person, or group compared with another, usually in a way considered to be unfair.
  
- ❑ Culture (from SDM FSNA)
  - Culture is a system of shared actions, values, beliefs, and traditions that guide the behavior of families and communities. *For this item, cultural identity may refer to a family member's race (African American/Black, American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian/Pacific Islander, Latino/a, multiracial, White, other), ethnicity, tribal affiliation, sexual orientation (heterosexual, gay, lesbian, bisexual), gender identity/expression (female, male, transgender, other), religious/spiritual affiliation, disability, or other social identity that reflects the family's unique characteristics.*

## Before the practice opportunity

### Field Advisor Responsibility:

- ❑ Identify any county protocols or policies related to service delivery, especially those that specifically address culturally responsive and/or trauma-informed services and supports.
- ❑ Review the county protocols or policies and identify a preliminary list of available services and supports in your county and/or regional office area. Focus on services and supports that specifically emphasize a culturally responsive and trauma-informed approach. Consider the following questions as part of your preparation for the discussion with the social worker:
  - How do your protocols or policies specifically address cultural needs of the family? If your county's protocols or policies do not specifically address this, how does your agency ensure that the family's culture is explored and considered when developing a case plan with a family?

- How do your protocols or policies specifically address the trauma history of the family? If your county’s protocols or policies do not specifically address this, how does your agency ensure that the family’s trauma history is explored and considered when developing a case plan with a family?
- How do the services and supports provided in your county and/or regional office area address the family’s needs through a culturally responsive and trauma-informed approach?
- ❑ If not familiar with the term Adverse Childhood Experiences, review some or all of the following resources:
  - <http://www.samhsa.gov/capt/practicing-effective-prevention/prevention-behavioral-health/adverse-childhood-experiences>
  - <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/acestudy/>
  - [https://www.aap.org/en-us/Documents/ttb\\_aces\\_consequences.pdf](https://www.aap.org/en-us/Documents/ttb_aces_consequences.pdf)
  - [https://www.ted.com/talks/nadine\\_burke\\_harris\\_how\\_childhood\\_trauma\\_affects\\_health\\_across\\_a\\_lifetime](https://www.ted.com/talks/nadine_burke_harris_how_childhood_trauma_affects_health_across_a_lifetime)
- ❑ Consider how you discuss bias within your agency. What is your comfort level in talking about bias with the social worker? If this is something that you feel uncomfortable with, seek support from a peer, supervisor, manager, or other trusted person in your agency. Think about any reasons you may feel uncomfortable with this topic. Prepare yourself to have a discussion with the social worker about how bias impacts child welfare decisions and outcomes for families. Remember – bias has a broad scope and is not limited to cultural bias.

**Social Worker Responsibility:**

- ❑ Review your notes, handouts, and other materials from the Fairness and Equity classroom module, Values and Ethics classroom module, and Trauma-Informed Practice eLearning and classroom modules.
- ❑ If you need some additional refresher information about Adverse Childhood Experiences, review some or all of the following resources:
  - <http://www.samhsa.gov/capt/practicing-effective-prevention/prevention-behavioral-health/adverse-childhood-experiences>
  - <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/acestudy/>
  - [https://www.aap.org/en-us/Documents/ttb\\_aces\\_consequences.pdf](https://www.aap.org/en-us/Documents/ttb_aces_consequences.pdf)
  - [https://www.ted.com/talks/nadine\\_burke\\_harris\\_how\\_childhood\\_trauma\\_affects\\_health\\_across\\_a\\_lifetime](https://www.ted.com/talks/nadine_burke_harris_how_childhood_trauma_affects_health_across_a_lifetime)
- ❑ Consider how you discuss bias within your agency. What is your comfort level in talking about bias with your field advisor? If this is something that you feel uncomfortable with, seek support from a peer, supervisor, manager, or other trusted person in your agency. Think about any reasons you may feel uncomfortable with this topic. Prepare yourself to have a discussion with the field advisor about how bias impacts child welfare decisions and outcomes for families. Remember – bias has a broad scope and is not limited to cultural bias.

## During the practice opportunity

**Note: This activity is designed to be completed by the Social Worker and Field Advisor together.**

### **Social Worker and Field Advisor Responsibility:**

- ❑ Consider some of the biases that may be present in child welfare practice that are separate from culture. Some examples include:
  - LGBTQ
  - Family planning and abortion
  - AFDC (welfare)
  - Family structure: single parent, multiple parents/fathers
  - Religion
  - Language
  - Patriarchal families vs. matriarchal families
  - Substance use
  - Intimate partner violence
  - Behavioral health disorders
  - Incarceration
  - Criminal history
  - Gang involvement
- ❑ Although this list is not all-inclusive, do any of these topics (or others not listed) provoke any strong emotions/reactions for you (either positive or negative)? Share your experiences with the other person to the extent that you are willing.
  - NOTE: This may feel uncomfortable to you. It is important to discuss bias even if it is uncomfortable. Keep in mind that we ask families to discuss the most intimate parts of their lives with us. It is important for us to also be able to be reflective of our own feelings and experiences and discuss them in supportive settings in order to ensure fair and equitable treatment of the children and families we serve.
- ❑ Utilizing the following questions, explore how bias impacts child and family outcomes in child welfare:
  - When thinking about the definition of bias provided at the beginning of this activity, does it capture the biases that may be present in your child welfare agency? How does bias show up in your agency? (Consider a broad scope of biases that may be present – not just cultural biases)
  - What are some possible outcomes for children and families if these biases go unaddressed?
  - Have there been other biases that have surfaced for you outside of race and culture?
  - What could happen if your biases around these other areas topics go unaddressed? What are possible outcomes for children and families?
  - How can you (personally) address bias on a day-to-day basis in your agency?

**Recognizing that disproportionality exists in child welfare, it is important to understand how bias (intentional and unintentional) can lead to poor outcomes for children and families. The data that you will look at as part of this exercise is designed to help you self-reflect on your practice and the impact each and every decision has on long-term outcomes.**

Please complete the following three parts related to data to help you better understand the link between practice and outcomes in child welfare.

**PART 1:**

- ❑ Access your county’s Disparity Index on the California Child Welfare Indicators Project website:
  - [http://cssr.berkeley.edu/ucb\\_childwelfare/DisparityIndices.aspx](http://cssr.berkeley.edu/ucb_childwelfare/DisparityIndices.aspx)
  - Click “Next”
  - In the first column, select “California”, in the second column select your county, in the third column, select “In Care”
  - Click “Finish”
- ❑ Based on the information provided, complete the items related to Disparity Indices on the Fairness and Equity Field Activity worksheet

**PART 2:**

- ❑ Access information related to Adverse Childhood Experiences in your county on the kidsdata.org website:
  - <http://www.kidsdata.org/>
  - Click on “Data by Topic”
  - Click on “Child and Youth” Safety”
  - Click on “Childhood Adversity and Resilience”
  - Click on “Children with Two or More Adverse Experiences (Parent Reported)”
- ❑ Based on the information provided, complete the items related to Adverse Childhood Experiences on the Fairness and Equity Field Activity Worksheet
- ❑ Repeat his process with “Prevalence of Adverse Childhood Experiences (Adult Retrospective)”

**Part 3:**

- ❑ Identify protocols and policies in your county related to service delivery. Review the protocols and policies. Answer the questions on your Fairness and Equity Field Activity Worksheet related to services and supports.

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- ❑ Following completion of the Fairness and Equity Field Activity Worksheet, review the information with the social worker. If you completed the worksheet together, discuss what you learned from looking at the Disparity Indices and the data related to Adverse Childhood Experiences. If you completed the worksheets separately, review the worksheets together. Note if there are any differences to your answers.

**After the practice opportunity**

**Field Advisor and Social Worker Responsibility:**

- ❑ Think about any questions you may still have after completing the activity. Consider possible resources in your county that will help you to answer your questions.
- ❑ For additional information regarding trauma and resiliency, please utilize the following resource link for the report: Advanced Social Work Practice in Trauma (CWSE, 2012):
  - <https://csbs.uni.edu/sites/default/files/allfiles/CSWE%20-%20Trauma%20Informed%20Practice%20Behaviors.pdf>

**FAIRNESS AND EQUITY IN PRACTICE  
WORKSHEET**

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**DISPARITY INDICES**

**WHICH POPULATIONS ARE OVER-REPRESENTED IN THE CHILD WELFARE SYSTEM IN CALIFORNIA?**  
(The percentage in care is MORE than the general population.)

**WHICH POPULATIONS ARE OVER-REPRESENTED IN THE CHILD WELFARE SYSTEM IN YOUR COUNTY?**  
(The population in care is MORE than the general population.)

**WHICH POPULATIONS ARE UNDER-REPRESENTED IN THE CHILD WELFARE SYSTEM IN CALIFORNIA?**  
(The percentage in care is LESS than the general population.)

**WHICH POPULATIONS ARE UNDER-REPRESENTED IN THE CHILD WELFARE SYSTEM IN YOUR COUNTY?** (The percentage in care is LESS than the general population.)

**WHAT DO YOU NOTICE ABOUT YOUR COUNTY'S DISPARITY INDICES REPORT? ARE THERE ANY SURPRISES?**

**WHAT ARE SOME POSSIBLE IMPACTS FOR OVER-REPRESENTED AND UNDER-REPRESENTED POPULATIONS?**

**HOW DOES YOUR COUNTY TALK ABOUT DISPROPORTIONALITY AND DISPARITY IN THE CHILD WELFARE POPULATION?**

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## ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES

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**WHAT WAS THE PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN (REPORTED BY A PARENT) TO HAVE EXPERIENCED TWO OR MORE ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES IN YOUR COUNTY?**

**WHAT WAS THE PERCENTAGE OF HOUSEHOLDS WHO HAVE EXPERIENCED ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES (RETROSPECTIVE REPORT) IN YOUR COUNTY?**

**WHEN YOU CONSIDER THE ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES CATEGORIES (EMOTIONAL ABUSE, PHYSICAL ABUSE, SEXUAL ABUSE, INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE, HOUSEHOLD SUBSTANCE USE, HOUSEHOLD MENTAL ILLNESS, PARENTAL SEPARATION OR DIVORCE, INCARCERATED HOUSEHOLD MEMBER), WHICH ONES PROVOKE STRONG FEELINGS FOR YOU? CONSIDER IF THESE ARE POSITIVE OR NEGATIVE FEELINGS. WHAT ARE SOME POSSIBLE WAYS THAT A CHILD OR PARENT'S TRAUMA HISTORY MAY IMPACT YOUR ASSESSMENT, CASE PLANNING, OR SERVICE DELIVERY WITH THAT FAMILY?**