

Equity: HealthierHere leads with equity. We work to intentionally eliminate disparities and build on strengths in health and well-being and address the current power dynamic and structural racism in our health care system that perpetuates inequities. We believe that every community member in King County should receive the type of care that they deserve - with respect and without stigma - to address their unique and individual needs. Consequently, HealthierHere only partners with Organizations that embrace equity and cultural competency.

Equity Guidelines

We, the Governing Board of Healthier Here, Governing Board Committees and HealthierHere Staff, believe that transforming the health system to improve health and health equity in King County requires a collaborative effort that seeks to understand the causes of inequities in our current health system so that we may actively work to create a better future. Community members in King County are experiencing health inequities resulting from conscious and unconscious practices of underinvestment and overburdening of communities arising from a legacy of institutional racism, implicit bias, discrimination, power and privilege operating within the United States and our health system. We acknowledge that the Institutions within the United States were built on practices of racism and colonialism which resulted in historical underinvestment and overburdening within community.

Our efforts to eliminate health disparities are predicated on remembering that behind each data point is a person and the individual experience of that person must drive system transformation. We honor the collective wisdom of community and people working in community-based organizations and the health system who have a vested interest in transforming our current health system and have courageously committed to place equity at the forefront of the way that they work.

We acknowledge that equity is both a product (improving health outcomes) and a process (how we work together to improve health outcomes). Both are equally important and as we work to improve health outcomes, we must hold equity as a process and lens through which we evaluate our planning, decision-making, implementation and evaluation processes. Equity recognizes the different conditions, resources and capacity that people have and acknowledges that people start at different places and have different needs. Consequently, equity is not a one-size-fits-all approach. It is individual, tailored and person centered.

We invite others to join in our effort to ensure that all community members in King County have an opportunity to live longer, healthier, more fulfilling lives.

How we work to eliminate disparities in health and well-being by addressing inequity

We believe that these principles must be present as we work together in solidarity with others to eliminate disparities in the health system.

Education and Training: We recognize that the organizations involved in system transformation are comprised of individuals who act according to the best information that they have available. Consequently, we believe that providing equity and cultural competence education and training to individuals within the health system as well as community-based providers and community members is an important foundation to achieving health system transformation. This education will not only provide individuals with the skills to apply an equity lens to their work, but the practical tools to influence organizational change, individual behaviors, practice transformation and improved patient experience.

Inclusion: We include the voices of those most impacted by health disparities in HealthierHere's design, planning and decision-making processes. This is done by being open and willing to listen, learn and act on what we hear from community.

Transparency and Accountability: We recognize that our actions are accountable to our community thus, we regularly share information and progress with community.

Strength-based: We acknowledge the inherent strengths and resilience within community that contribute to an individual's health and well-being.

Resource: We provide community with the information, resources, access and connections, that they need to live longer, healthier, fulfilled lives.

Culturally Responsive and Linguistically Appropriate Services: We promote the development, and maintenance, of a health system where an individual's culture, language, identity, beliefs and notions of health and well-being are viewed as strengths and assets to achieving better health outcomes.

How we incorporate equity principles to address the current power dynamic and structural racism in our health care system that perpetuate inequities

We believe that the following paradigms of thinking and processes in the way that we deliver care must shift if we are to eliminate health disparities.

Unintended Consequences: We recognize that decisions have the potential to carry benefits and burdens. Consequently, we consciously examine the potential impacts of our decisions to weigh the potential benefits and burdens to community before making those decisions.

Community as Experts: We acknowledge the collective power and wisdom of community and center community voice in driving system transformation efforts. We believe that incorporating the voices of people with lived experience in transformation efforts is essential to identifying and implementing sustainable practices to improve health outcomes and address health disparities.

Community Practice: We value the need to elevate the voices of front-line care workers in the workplace and in system transformation efforts to make care more effective for those experiencing the greatest health disparities in King County. These front-line staff, including community health workers, health advocates, peer support specialists, etc. serve as trusted advisors within community. They often share the identities of those they are serving and, as such, they are often the most knowledgeable about strategies and practices that are effective within community.

Collective Co-responsibility: We inspire collective action to address health disparities by bringing people within the health system together not from a place of blame, shame or guilt, but from a place of co-responsibility believing that when we know better we are co-responsible for doing better. We recognize that there are certain barriers for everyone doing this work and everyone has a responsibility to do what they can, where they are, to come together and work to eliminate those barriers together.

Practice-Based Evidence: We acknowledge that most Evidence-Based Practices are not normed for all members of our community. Thus, we see the need for balance and the recognition of practice-based evidence within our health system.