



Statement on Equity & Inclusion

adopted February 2021

Washington Association of Drug Court Professionals (WSADCP) and Washington Association of Drug Courts (WADC) are committed to furthering equity and inclusion and ending racism. We acknowledge the shameful legacy of systemic racism in the criminal legal and dependency systems and the role racism has played in drug-related incarceration specifically. For example, although Black people and White people use and sell drugs at similar rates, statewide data shows that Black individuals have historically been arrested, convicted and incarcerated for drug possession at disproportionately higher rates than White individuals, relative to their representation within the overall population. We also acknowledge the significant role that trauma has played in many therapeutic court participants' lives, including race-based and historical trauma.

Drug courts and other therapeutic courts are in a unique position to be part of the solution. Drug courts provide a critical off-ramp from the criminal legal system for individuals who are charged with property crimes and other drug-related offenses. Family treatment courts reduce racially disparate outcomes in dependency cases. Therapeutic courts divert people of color from incarceration, preserve families, prevent children from entering foster care, provide critical resources to support healing and empowerment, prevent generational trauma caused by parental substance use and incarceration, and promote safer, healthier communities.

Both racism and substance use disorders are public health crises. Equity and inclusion is a national treatment court best practice standard. Therapeutic courts should strive to provide high quality, accessible, equitable and inclusive services to all participants regardless of their race, ethnicity, sex, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, financial means, religion, range of abilities, or national origin.

As therapeutic court professionals, we recognize we have significant work to do both individually and collectively in order to dismantle racism and provide more trauma-informed and inclusive services. Therapeutic court professionals must seek ongoing professional training, have the courage to engage in uncomfortable conversations and self-reflection, and take steps to discover, analyze and correct any structural issues that could lead to disparate access, services and outcomes for therapeutic court participants from historically marginalized groups.

WSADCP / WADC urges all Washington State therapeutic courts and court professionals to commit to taking the steps necessary to be part of the solution in combatting racism, bias and discrimination. Resources to assist therapeutic court professionals in their efforts to promote equity and inclusion can be found [here](#).

All Rise: [Adult Treatment Court Best Practice Standards](#)

Standard II: Equity and Inclusion

"All persons meeting evidence-based eligibility criteria for treatment court receive the same opportunity to participate and succeed in the program regardless of their sociodemographic characteristics or sociocultural identity, including but not limited to their race, ethnicity, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, socioeconomic status, national origin, native language, religion, cultural practices, and physical, medical, or other conditions. The treatment court team continually monitors program operations for evidence of cultural disparities in program access, service provision, or outcomes, takes corrective measures to eliminate identified disparities, and evaluates the effects of the corrective measures." (p. 32)