ACHIEVING RACIAL EQUITY & IMPROVING CULTURE IN JAILS USING A COMMUNITY-ENGAGED QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PROCESS

IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE

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SAFETY+JUSTICE CHALLENGE

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PROBLEM STATEMENT

Racial disparities persist within jail settings, adversely affecting the culture and conditions of confinement for both carceral residents and staff. Compared to white residents, residents of color may face segregation, limited employment opportunities, and violence. These disparities contribute to an unhealthy environment, impacting residents' experiences, wellbeing, and their success after release. For staff, racial disparities lead to elevated stress, burnout, and mental health issues, affecting recruitment, retention, and overall safety. Transforming the existing culture is crucial for fostering a more equitable and just correctional system.

GUIDE OVERVIEW

This implementation guide describes an approach to addressing racial equity issues in jail settings through a participatory process tested in a County Jail. Using our experiences from the County jail, we describe a strategy to integrate participatory methods and the Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) process to identify, implement, and refine racial equity interventions. The guide aims to engage future jail administrators, staff, and residents in understanding problems preventing racial equity, infusing antiracism into the jail culture, and developing, implementing, and refining strategies to address inequities.

GUIDE'S VALUE

By involving jail professionals, residents, and former residents in the solution-generating process, the PDSA process described in this guide aims to enhance sustainability, effectiveness, and impact. The premise is that continuous exposure to racially biased policies and practices in jails creates unhealthy environments. Ultimately, the guide seeks to provide a model that can facilitate improving jail culture, promoting racial equity and procedural justice, and contribute to the retention of skilled officers committed to these principles.

KEY ACTIVITIES

ENGAGEMENT

1. Engagement: Multistakeholder groups identify policies and practices affecting jail conditions.

2. Understanding: In-depth exploration of problems hindering racial equity in the jail.

UNDERSTANDING

INFUSION

3. Infusion: Incorporating antiracism principles into the jail culture.

4. Strategy Identification: Pilot strategies assessed for feasibility and appropriateness.

STRATEGY IDENTIFICATION

IMPLEMENTATION & EVALUATION

5. Implementation & Evaluation: Strategies are put into action, and their impact is evaluated.

6. Refinement: Continuous refinement of strategies (policies, procedures, practice changes).

REFINEMENT

ADOPTION PLAN

7. Adoption Plan: Developing a plan for adopting and evolving successful strategies.

INTRODUCTION

This implementation guide describes a new approach to identifying and translating racial equity interventions in jail settings. The new approach integrates participatory methods and adapts an evidence-driven quality improvement process (Plan-Do-Study-Act), hereinafter PDSA, to define and refine new racial equity interventions within complex jail systems. Participatory methods are well-suited for addressing racial equity because these approaches rely on multistakeholder groups to assess and examine factors including historical and contemporary drivers of racism while simultaneously developing cohesive organizational goals that implement new processes to promote racial equity. The PDSA quality improvement process is a data-driven approach to clarify information, have participants address their own perspectives and the empirical trends revealed by the data, provide an objective means of assessing policies and practices, and result in the creation of new approaches based on a combination of perceptions from lived experiences and empirical data.

The premise of this work is that achieving racial equity within jail settings can have a long-reach into the culture and conditions of confinement for residents and working conditions for staff. For residents, changes to conditions of confinement may include: ensuring the appropriate supports for residents; instilling a sense of fair treatment that helps to build confidence and hope for success after release; improving the in-jail handling of individuals (especially those with behavioral and physical health issues); reducing the punitive nature of the jail climate; and acknowledging that the more successful jail residents are after release, the smaller the jail population is likely to become. For staff, implementing policies that are racially equitable can serve to: provide a better work environment; improve jail culture; enhance well-being; aid in recruitment and retention of staff; identify other issues of intersectionality that need to be addressed to promote equity across gender and other categories; and promote more healthy and productive exchanges between residents and staff, as project outcomes.

JAIL SETTING

The majority of individuals in the United States who are incarcerated find themselves in municipal and county jails, with nearly 9 million people passing through these facilitaties each year. People end up in jail for various reasons, such as being arrested for a crime (misdemeanor or felony), violating local ordinances, or breaching conditions of existing correctional supervision like probation or parole. Jails primarily house pretrial detainees, individuals held in custody while awaiting court proceedings. Thus, jails are unique criminal justice settings that serve various goals and purposes, being utilized by the police for booking, the court for pretrial or bond-related detentions, the legal system for sentencing purposes (typically less than one year), and for various civil actions, including immigration detention. Jails are configured to meet the diverse needs of contemporary criminal legal and justice system approaches.

The nature of jails involves constant turnover and unpredictable lengths of stay due to court dockets and judicial decision-making, which significantly influences the duration of an individual's incarceration. Nationally, the average length of stay for a person incarcerated in jail was 33 days and around 70% of individuals in jail are awaiting trial and have not yet been convicted. The demographics of those entering jails is largely determined by external factors, including the action of local police departments making arrests. Jails are characterized by their chaotic nature because the majority of detainees are not yet convicted, contributing to the high turnover of the jailed population. Managing the constant influx and outflow of individuals places tremendous pressure on jail staff, as they grapple with the inherent chaos of the environment. Across the country, approximately 117,600 male correctional officers and 57,200 female correctional officers are employed in jails nationally, with another

20,100 male and 26,000 female support staff employed in jails. Jails confront numerous challenges, including the provision of a supportive and humane environment for both staff and residents of the jail. Addressing the culture of jails and conditions of confinement could act as tertiary prevention of future engagements with the criminal legal and justice systems for those who are ultimately not convicted, released on time served, placed on community supervision, or serving their sentence in jail. Jail experiences have a lasting impact on individuals due to the deprivations of autonomy and liberty that affect one's personhood, requiring the development to survival skills in an environment characterized by violence, indignities, and threats. The severity of the control-oriented, security-minded environment affects the interactions of staff and residents, as well as the strategies employed by jail administrators and staff to maintain control and security.

The harsh conditions in jails have a significant impact on both staff and residents, contributing to complex social dynamics and power structures within a dehumanizing environment. Correctional staff, in particular, face elevated levels of stress, burnout, and mental health issues due to the demanding nature of their work, exposure to violence, and a challenging organizational culture. Recent research has found that about 25% of correctional officers self-reported symptoms consistent with psychological distress, and suicide rates among correctional officers were significantly higher than the national average. The study also found that departmental discipline, job satisfaction, and work-family conflict were significant correlates of mental health among corrections officers.

Studies estimate that around 37% of correctional officers experience on-the-job stress and burnout, a notably higher percentage compared to the 19-30% range seen in the the general working population. These factors also affect staff recruitment and retention. Further, the existing correctional culture negatively influences the staff's ability to provide quality care and maintain secure facilities, contributing to an environment where incarcerated individuals often face harmful violence. Difficult working conditions may lead to the employment of underqualified or inexperienced staff, compromising the overall safety and effectiveness of correctional facilities.

Efforts to transform the current culture are crucial for improving the safety and wellbeing of both residents and staff within correctional facilities. Introducing meaningful changes in jail culture shows potential for a gradual reduction in overall incarceration rates and the transformation of carceral environments. Additionally, jail transformation aims to cultivate a healthier work environment that benefits both staff and residents, fostering an atmosophere that is conducive to wellbeing of people working and residing within and outside of jails. The overarching call is to enhance both the working conditions for employees and the living conditions for jailed residents, recognizing the broader implications of disparities within correctional systems.

RACIAL DISPARITIES & RACIAL EQUITY

Racial disparities in incarceration continue to be a critical issue, with recent studies shedding light on the persistent inequalities throughout criminal justice and legal systems. Studies consistently reveal that even when controlling for criminal history, individuals from Black and other marginalized communities face higher probabilities of arrest, pre-trial detention, conviction, and lengthier sentences than their white counterparts. In other words, extensive evidence underscores that an individual's race and socioeconomic status elevate the likelihood of encountering law enforcement contact, and once entangled in the legal system, continue to influence outcomes (Hinton & Cook, 2020).

Black/African Americans are incarcerated in local jails at a rate more than three times higher than that of whites. According to a 2022 Bureau of Justice Statistics report, as of midyear 2021, approximately 49% of individuals in local

jails across the nation were of white ethnicity, while 35% identified as Black, and 14% as Hispanic. The combined population of American Indians or Alaska Natives, Asians, Native Hawaiians, or Other Pacific Islanders, and those of two or more races made up 2% of the total jail population. These rates compare to 75.5% of the general population identifying as White, 13.6% as Black, and 19.1% as Hispanic or Latino.

Once a person is incarcerated, racism can manifest in various ways, contributing to disparate and unjust experiences within the carceral setting. Racial bias can influence policies, practices, and interactions with correctional staff, impacting disciplinary measures, access to resources, and overall treatment. The work of Clear and Frost (2020) and Western and Wildeman (2017) points out the existence of racialized subcultures within correctional facilities, where residents of non-white racial backgrounds may face segregation, tensions, or violence; limited employment opportunities; and social stigma. Racial disparities in incarceration exacerbate vulnerability to violence, sexual abuse, solitary confinement, and inadequate healthcare. Research underscores that carceral environments such as jail often manifest racial divisions, with staff frequently exhibiting racial antagonisms, either individually or collectively.

Racism can also manifest within the dynamics of a jail setting among staff. Research reports have documented instances of racial bias and discrimination within correctional faciliaties. A study found that racial disparities exist not only among incarcerated individuals but also within the staff, affecting hiring practices, promotions, and workplace interactions. Discrimination within the staff can lead to a hostile work environment, exacerbating tensions and negatively impacting job satisfaction and morale. However, research focused on documenting correctional officers' experiences of racism is still limited in scope. Understanding and addressing these systemic issues are crucial for fostering a more equitable and just correctional system that recognizes and confronts the racial disparities experienced by incarcerated individuals. The ongoing research underscores the need for targeted interventions and policy changes to address the systemic biases that contribute to these racial disparities in jail incarceration. Research suggests that efforts toward criminal justice reform should focus on promoting equity and dismantling discriminatory practices within the confines of local jails. Additionally for jail staff, unraveling racist policies and practices and improving other conditions of the workplace can serve to promote a healthier work environment, retain talented and emphathetic staff, and generate more positive exchanges with jail residents. New approaches are needed to transform organizations to address racial bias

DEFINITIONS

- **Racial equity** – is the state, quality or ideal of being just, impartial, and fair. It is a structural or systemic construct.
- **Racial dipartites** - differential, imbalanced treatment, and experiences between racial groups.
- **Racial bias** - refers to the attitudes or stereotypes that affect an individual's understanding, actions, and decisions in an unconscious manner.
- **Racism** - consists of structures, policies, practices, behaviors, and norms—that assign value and determine opportunity based on the way people look or the color of their skin. Racism systems unfairly disadvantage some individuals and groups and damages their health and mental health.
- **Systemic Racism** - institutional policies, practices, and behaviors that systematically harm People of Color and benefit white people.
- **Correctional Culture** - relationships and interactions between incarcerated persons and correctional staff and the adaptations of these groups to the shared environment (National Institute of Justice, 2023).

in correctional settings. Yet, despite decades of studies documenting racial disparities as drivers of incarceration, there are few models that have been implemented effectively to reduce inequities in the system.

PURPOSE OF THE GUIDE

The purpose of this guide is to offer a clear, step-by-step framework for identifying racial equity issues within a jail setting and implementing effective solutions. It provides instructions on both understanding the methods outlined in the methods brief and executing the solutions generated to reverse inequities and enhance jail culture. The primary activities of this participatory approach include engaging both jail staff and residents in identifying practices and policies that affect jail setting conditions of confinement that facilitate the following:

- Gaining an in-depth understanding of the problems preventing the achievement of racial equity.
- Examining how antiracism can be infused through the culture of the jail.
- Identifying pilot strategies and assessing receptiveness to these strategies.
- Implementing and evaluating strategies to address equity.
- Refining the strategies (i.e., policies, procedures, practice changes).
- Developing a plan for adoption and evolution of the strategies.

The activities described in this manual were first tested in a County Jail in 2022–2023 as part of a project entitled *Jail Equity and Culture* project. The County jail was invested in participating in the PDSA process as a way to achieve some of the goals outlined in their strategic initiatives. The model this guide follows is an adapted version of the PDSA model which will be described more fully throughout the manual. The continuous exposure to racially biased policies and practices in jails creates unhealthy environments that contribute to poor work and life experiences for residents and staff. Based on demonstrated success in other settings such as schools, mental health organizations, child welfare, addiction treatment clinics, and justice settings, we posit that by including jail professionals, residents, and former residents in the solution generating process you can enlarge their role in the solution finding process and enhance sustainability, effectiveness, and impact. Improving jail culture could ultimately result in the retention of skilled officers committed to racial equity and procedural justice and resident success during and after confinement.

JAIL EQUITY & CULTURE PROJECT OVERVIEW

The Jail Equity and Culture project (2022–2023) aimed to establish a replicable, innovative, efficient, and effective community-engaged model for promoting racial equity in criminal legal and justice settings, beginning with a jail setting. The project employed a data-driven organizational change process, known as PDSA (Plan-Do-Study-Act), to rigorously define and address racial inequity within the complex jail environment. Change Team Workgroups were formed to review organizational policies and practices, understand the impact of current processes, and generate innovations to promote racial equity practices. Stakeholders, represented by these Change Team workgroups, generated 74 policy, practice, and procedural intervention recommendations over 14 months.

These recommendations, developed through regular workgroup meetings facilitated by research team members and community partners, were categorized into health and well-being, staff and resident interactions, and training and programs.

Following this, a survey was conducted with 127 staff and residents who did not participate in the Change Team workgroups to assess the feasibility, appropriateness, and prioritization of the recommendations. In the final stages, Change Team workgroup members and Jail administrators prioritized recommendations and developed implementation strategies for policy, procedural, and programmatic reforms.

The agency was particularly interested in participating in the project because it aligned with existing agency priorities. We identified common project goals at the outset of the project.

IMPROVING THE CULTURE OF THE JAIL

- Addressing racial bias within jail settings
- Appropriate supports for residents
- Improving the in-jail handling of individuals (especially those with behavioral and physical health issues)
- Reducing the punitive nature of the jail culture

JAIL POPULATION REDUCTION

- Instilling a sense of fair treatment that helps to build confidence and hope for success after release
- Acknowledgment that the more successful jail residents are after release, the smaller the jail population is likely to become

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF STAFF

- Provide a better work environment
- Enhance well-being and retention of staff
- Identify other issues of intersectionality that need to be addressed to promote equity across gender and other categories

PART 1: ESTABLISHING THE PDSA PROCESS

OVERVIEW OF THE PDSA & ITS COMPONENTS

PDSA is described as a small-scale rapid cycle approach to improving the implementation of procedures and practices. The PDSA process solicits the experience and perspectives of stakeholders including staff, administrators, and clients of the targeted setting. The process integrates collective knowledge to improve workplace practices and culture. PDSA is rooted in research-backed, data-driven strategies. PDSA solicits insights through participant engagement combined with empirical data. The process provides an impartial way of assessing policies and practices, identifying solutions that are valued by the stakeholders, and fostering organizational change. The PDSA process can be used in various contexts, such as jail, probation, community corrections, law enforcement, and courts.

The PDSA commences with Change Teams or teams that include stakeholders from various backgrounds and positions. The Change Team is a pivotal componenet because they are responsible for definining the issues, identifying various perspectives, reviewing data about an issue, developing consensus of what the problems and solutions are, developing recommendations, implementing solutions, and working towards sustaining the solutions.

FIGURE 1 illustrates the types of questions and processes within PDSA that can be used by jail staff, administrators, and residents to address racial equity and culture within the jail context. The focus of this implementation guide is on what is within the control of the jail staff and administrators and the experiences of the residents within the jail.

During the Plan stage, the Change Team workgroups collect and analyze quantitative and qualitative data to identify issues that affect racial equity and culture of the jail. This process includes clarifying the causes of equity issues by using the available data. During the Do Phase, the Change Team workgroups develop recommendations for interventions (i.e. changes to policies, practices, and procedures) to address change related to equity issues. During the Study Phase, a broader group of stakeholders outside of the workgroup participants are asked to react to the feasibility and acceptability of interventions that are proposed to address equity issues. Based on this feedback, the recommended interventions are then revised, refined, and prioritized as needed. During the final Act phase, the final interventions (i.e., policy, practice, procedural changes) are implemented and evaluated for impact on the desired outcomes of equity and culture improvement.

FIGURE 1 - PDSA MODEL PROCESSES

ESTABLISHING THE PDSA PROCESS & PLANNING FOR SUCCESS

There are numerous configurations that could make up workgroups and teams to facilitate the PDSA process. We propose one option, with various groups of collaborative teams, based on how we implemented the PDSA process in one large urban jail.

The PDSA process consists of various groups working together to partake to understand the issues related to unhealthy culture and racial inequity within a jail context.

The various groups working together include:

- External facilitators (i.e., Facilitator Team)
- Jail administrators (i.e., Jail Leadership Team)
- Ambassadors
- Staff Change Team
- Resident Change Team

Below, we describe how to prepare the workgroups and environment for the work on racial equity. Remember that this is a sensitive set of discussions and efforts should be made to create the appropriate amount of time and space for workgroups to understand the range of issues and to generate the best solutions for achieving racial equity and improving jail culture.

PREPARATION FOR PDSA: GATHERING PARTICIPANTS & PLANNING DISCUSSIONS

Each participant has a special role in ensuring the success of the initiative.

- The Facilitator Team can help create visibility for the support of the racial equity initiative. It should be clear that this group is a conduit between the Change Teams and the Jail Leadership Team.
- The Director / Lead of the jail should lead the Jail Leadership Team – they are a crucial part of the process for generating an atmosphone of openness and desire to change.
- The Ambassadors (i.e., existing and trusted leaders in the facility) have a pivotal role to champion the work and to create a culture of openness and support for staff and residents to participate in the initiative. This should lead to others feeling comfortable and therefore providing honest feedback.

TIPS FOR ENGAGING PARTICIPANTS

COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE JAIL DIRECTOR

- Describe for staff and residents their goal for the initiative and hope for change.
- Provide history and motivation for the project and desire for work culture change and influencing the field.
- Outline anticipated timeline of the Change Team workgroups, the recommendations, and implementation of changes to policies, procedures, and practices within the facility.
- Communicate availability to discuss questions and concerns.

COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE FACILITATOR TEAM

- Explain the role and responsibilities of the Facilitator Team and each member of the team.
- Detail the project goals, the PDSA process, the Change Team workgroup agendas, and any other relevant information related to the jail.
- Provide an anticipated schedule of Change Team workgroup meetings and indicate that all shifts will be accommodated to the extent possible throughout the initiative.
- Communicate availability to discuss questions/ concerns.

The Facilitator Team, the Jail Leadership Team, and the Ambassadors should work together to identify and recruit participants for the Staff Change Team and Resident Change Team workgroups. We propose the following steps outlined below as a collaborative recruitment approach for identifying and nominating staff and resident participants:

1. Meet with county jail leadership to discuss the project's objectives and the formation of staff and resident workgroups.
2. Collaborate with jail leaders to identify potential participants based on eligibility criteria, ensuring diversity in perspectives.
3. Engage jail leaders from various operational departments to nominate staff members that represent a range of viewpoints.
4. Conduct informational sessions within jail departments to introduce staff to the project's goals and expectations.
5. Invite interested staff members to attend orientation sessions conducted by the research team to provide further project details.
6. Publicize the project across all jail units, via one-page flyers and posters, encouraging residents to express their interest in participation to jail leaders.
7. Gather names of interested residents and provide them with logistical information regarding workgroup meetings.
8. Compile comprehensive lists of potential participants from different stakeholder groups, including administrators, program staff, corrections officers, and current jail residents.

Once the workgroups are formed, the PDSA process allows Change Team workgroup participants (staff and residents) the opportunity to identify an issue and use the collective work/group experience to identify a solution for desired reforms. The Facilitator Team will look for themes across the staff and resident Change Teams, but the recommendations will be presented as independent sets of recommended interventions for policy, procedure, and practice change.

THE FACILITATOR TEAM

The Facilitator Team includes a project lead, project coordinator, external (to the jail) facilitator to lead the work of the Change Teams, and data collector/documentation person(s). We recommend that all team members be external to the jail to facilitate confidential exchanges of information, avoid power dynamic differentials and/or perceived and real threats of retaliation, and to provide more removed / objective collection and presentation of the recommendations generated by the Change Team to the jail administrators.

An external facilitator is a key element of a successful PDSA implementation process because they can guide the process without having any embedded interest in a given topic, person, or policy. It is important that the person is experienced and has high credibility in the community.

The external facilitator is able to serve as a conduit between the change team participants, administrators, and the other Facilitator Team members. Facilitators are trained in effective communication and collaboration, particularly around sensitive topics. The facilitator plays a pivotal role in creating a safe atmosphere for authentic dialogue with participants. The facilitator role is instrumental in ensuring rapport building, effective communication, trust, and confidentiality among participants.

Including a research partner from a university or nonprofit research firm on the Facilitator Team has a number of benefits and can assist with data-driven decision-making aspects of PDSA. Research partners have a number of advantages:

- Serve as an objective and independent voice.
- Often are respected and known to the jail or other community agencies.
- Conduct analyses of qualitative and quantitative data
- Trained theorists, who can bring a broad perspective to compliment the team.
- Members of the academic community which also includes the ability for graduate students to assist with the project.
- Trained evaluators, who can assist in designing measurable strategies.
- Can measure the impact of various efforts undertaken by the Change Team.

In considering the selection of an academic partner, a number of factors should be considered. These include:

- **TRUST** – Being able to establish trust with administration, staff and residents.
- **ANALYTICAL ABILITY & FORESIGHT** – researchers that evaluate data at each point and look for patterns.
- **DETERMINATION** – Not every research practice will provide the desired outcome. Researchers learn from failure, reevaluate, and continue to pursue learning opportunities.
- **ITERATIVE LEARNING** – Researchers can help the Change Team learn from their experiences and facilitate development of future initiatives.
- **CURIOSITY** – strive to learn more and seeks to explore while searching for answers.

KEY CHARACTERISTICS THE FACILITATOR SHOULD POSSESS INCLUDE:

CONTEXTUAL COMPETENCE - The facilitator should have experience within the justice system – particularly jails, as well as have familiarity with data-driven decisions making models.

CULTURAL COMPETENCE - The facilitator should have a deep understanding of different cultures, including the historical and social contexts of racism. They should be able to navigate and respect diverse perspectives and experiences.

EMPATHY - The ability to empathize with individuals from different racial and ethnic backgrounds is crucial. The facilitator should be able to create a safe and inclusive environment where all participants feel heard and respected.

ACTIVE LISTENING - Facilitators should be excellent listeners, able to understand and acknowledge the experience and feelings of participants, even when they are challenging or uncomfortable.

FACILITATION SKILLS - Strong facilitation skills are essential, including the ability to manage group dynamics, encourage participation, and guide constructive discussions.

KNOWLEDGE OF RACIAL EQUITY PRINCIPLES - The facilitator should have a solid understanding of racial equity principles and be able to apply them to the organization's context.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION - The facilitator should be skilled in conflict resolution, able to address tensions and disagreements that may arise during discussions on sensitive topics.

COURAGE - Addressing issues of racism and equity requires courage to challenge the status quo, confront uncomfortable truiths, and advocate for change.

HUMILITY - The facilitator hould approach the process with humility, recognizing their own biases and limitations and being open to learning from partricipants.

PATIENCE - The journey toward racial equity is often long and complex. The facilitator should be patient and persistent, understanding that change takes time.

COMMENTMENT TO ACTION - Finally, the facilitator should be committed to translating discussions into actionable steps for the organization to address racial inequities.

THE JAIL LEADERSHIP TEAM

The purpose of the Jail Leadership Team, in the context of the PDSA process, is to provide the leadership to engage staff and residents to serve as participants in the Change Teams. Asking staff and residents to discuss racism and equity along with the implications towards jail culture, employment, or the conditions of confinement, is a highly sensitive activity. There can be tension regarding the confidentiality of the workgroup process. There can be hesitance on the part of individuals to participate in conversations regarding racial equity and to develop solutions – these are complicated issues that require a skilled facilitator to help discuss sensitive issues. One of the tasks for administrative staff is to work with the facilitator team in creating trust and psychological safety for staff and residents of color who face discrimination and unfair treatment.

Throughout the project, the Facilitator Team and Jail Leadership Team have a critical role in facilitating the trust and psychological safety of both staff and residents. The importance and value of the need for action along with the potential consequences for non-action should be at the forefront of this process. We recommend that the Jail Leadership Team include leaders at the highest level of the organization who have decision-making power and should include the director of the jail.

There is a fine balance between keeping the vulnerable conversations that occur during the Change Team workgroups confidential from the Jail Leadership Team, while also keeping the Jail Leadership Team engaged in the change process. As with many things with the PDSA process, there are multiple ways in which the teams and input can be configured. One option with the Leadership Team is to meet monthly and keep them apprised process-wise of how the Change Team workgroups are progressing. Another option is to create a Jail Leadership workgroup and to identify along the way where there is overlap in recommended interventions and gaps in recommended changes between the jail leadership and the other stakeholder groups. An option that falls somewhere between these two options is identifying "quick wins" from the Change Teams wherein recommended policy, procedural, or practice interventions that surface from the Change Teams can be adopted early to build hope and momentum for the project efforts and outcomes. Regardless of the configuration, it is critical that the details of the conversations and the identity of the workgroup members (in terms of who gives which specific feedback) be protected as doing so will facilitate trust building, psychological safety, and open discussion. Of course, in the rare occasion that a Change Team member may identify an issue or problem that may cause significant harm to staff or residents, the details of this concern will need to be communicated to jail leadership. Throughout the entirety of the PDSA process, the Facilitator Teams need to engage in frequent communication with the Change Teams and Jail Leadership to let all parties involved know what has happened to date and the goals for next steps and outcomes.

THE CHANGE TEAM

The Change Team is the crux of the PDSA process. It is composed of the individuals who will serve as the members of the PDSA workgroups: staff and incarcerated persons which we refer to as "residents." There is no ideal group size, but groups can range from 3-12 participants. We do not recommend groups larger than 12. In large jails, there may need to be more than one staff Change Team and more than one resident Change Team for each gender identity. Keeping groups smaller allows for open and transparent dialogue. The formation, membership, and activities of the Change Team are discussed in greater detail in Part 2.

Due to significant power differentials between staff and residents, we recommend separate Change Teams. This will allow staff to develop their own set of recommendations and residents develop their own set of

recommendations. This should result in relevant and useful intervention development.

FORM THE STAFF CHANGE TEAM

The Staff Change Team will be 8 –12 individuals representative of the various psitions and levels of responsibility/authority within the jail who have a variety of work experience within the jail (e.g., custody, program staff, supervisors, gender, ethnicity, age). It is important to recruit staff for the Change Team that represent various viewpoints of the jail ranging from the nay-sayer, the follower, and the champion of the work. Staff participants should have worked at the jail for at least six months to be a member on the Change Team to allow for sufficient time to experience the jail culture.

In order to gain a varied perspective, it may be helpful to host two or three Change Teams scheduled at times that can accommodate each of the shift periods for the particular setting. Supervisory staff may need to be consulted regarding the optimal time during the shift to facilitate the group process and reduce strain on the jail.

FORM THE RESIDENT CHANGE TEAM

Jails are complicated because of the unpredictable length of stay for jail residents – they vary considerably. In many jails, the majority of residents are incarcerated on pretrial status with unpredictable court dates and outcomes. For a jail culture initiative, it is important to ensure that residents have had at least some experience with the jail environment, we recommend limiting the resident participants to individuals who have been incarcerated for at least 7 days. Jail residents should represent a mix of custody levels ranging from minimum to maximum custody because jail residents' experiences may differ based on their classification level. The Change Team should include people who are in jail pretrial, sentenced, or as a result of a violation of community supervision. For those individuals who are higher risk and pose security issues, it might make sense to have the individuals complete a one-

SCHEDULING CHANGE TEAM WORKGROUPS IN AN EVER CHANGING JAIL ENVIRONMENT

Staffing in a 24-hour jail facility is an ever changing, dynamic aspect within a jail. The shift commander has a shift that is fully staffed only to have last minute shortages due to sick leave, hospital, duties etc.

If a correctional officer is a member of the Change Team but the shift is short-staffed, the correctional officer(s) will be unable to participate due to the need to work a particular post. This need may not be known until the shift actually begins. The earlier the shift supervisor is advised of correctional officers' participation as a Change Team member the earlier someone can be identified to work the post. One other option would be arranging for the staffing of a post when the workgroup schedule is completed. This would require early notification regarding which staff are serving as Change Team members so other staff can be assigned to work the post during the Change Team meeting.

There may be occasions when a staff participant is unable to attend their Change Team meeting due to work, personal commitments, or scheduling conflicts. It is acceptable for staff to attend an alternating or make-up group. In this case, the Facilitator Team can work with Jail Administration in the scheduling and notification of the make-up group. After the third workgroup, it is not advisable to allow new staff to join the group as the workgroup participants have begun to develop a group identify and establish trust with one another. The addition of any new workgroup members may inhibit the level of trust with each other and change the group dynamics.

time survey which is used to collect a broader selection of perspectives on the recommended problem areas and solutions that come from the Change Team workgroups. Besides the status of residents, participants should also vary by race, ethnicity, gender, classification, and other key characteristics. If English is not the resident's primary language, it may be helpful to determine if translation services can be used to assist with the interpretation of written and verbal material. It might make sense for the resident Change Team members to have a minimum of six months remaining for them to be housed within the facility. As residents continue their participation, they become more engaged in the process and may express interest in the outcome of their work. The Facilitators can inquire if the residents would be willing to provide an address for contact information and mail the residents a letter advising of the recommendations which were accepted by administration and the anticipated timeframe.

ESTABLISHING AMBASSADORS OF THE INITIATIVE

Trust and trustworthiness are essential to racial equity and culture shifting work, particularly when there are participants involved who are both internal and external to the organization and/or participants that have differing levels of authority relative to the other. There is a need to identify a few individuals that can serve to champion the racial equity work and serve as "ambassadors" of the work within and beyond leadership in the jail. These ambassadors can help to set the agenda, discuss the Change Team work with enthusiasm, and meet with the facilitators and others to discuss the cultural issues. Thus, the top jail administrator and their direct reports must be aware of, and supportive of the work. This support can be established by individual meetings and conversations.

The role of the Ambassadors are to:

- Help to identify PDSA Change Team workgroup participants (residents and staff)
- Observe dialogue that may occur in between meetings to monitor for morale, buy in, and real or perceived consequences (positive or negative) of participation
- Ensure that Change Team members do not experience retaliation from peers or superiors as a result of contributions to Change Team meetings
- Create space in schedules for staff and residents to participate in the Change Team meetings
- We recommend that Ambassadors be selected from people who have roles inside the jail

Ambassadors can include representatives from the following types of roles:

- Director / Sherriff of the jail
- Program / department heads
- Unit / floor / program supervisors
- Individuals with lengthy tenure at the jail
- Contractor staff leads or liaisons

IMPORTANT!

It is critical that an environment of trust is established which will allow workgroup participants to share openly without fear of retaliation or harm. Transparency is key to promoting open and honest discussions about racial equity Issues. We can initaitlly expect hesitancy on the part of workgroup participants to openly share due to the uncertainty of how the information will be perceived by others.

There can be concern about retaliation from administration/co-workers towards staff or on the part of staff for residents It is important for the administration to be transparent about their intentions with the project and their intolerance for real or perceived retaliation.

ORIENTING THE AMBASSADORS

Orientation of the Ambassadors should begin with an introduction to the Facilitator Team and to the PDSA process. These meetings should be designed to establish shared values, goals, objectives, and timelines for the project. During orientation, Ambassadors will get to experience some activities related to the PDSA process to establish a shared understanding of terms that will be used. Attention should be given to racial equity and culture definitions to ensure that the Ambassadors understand the mission of the group.

Because each participant will have their own understanding and definition of racial equity, a racial equity primer can help the Ambassadors establish a common language. This effort should cover:

- Key terms, concepts, and definitions relevant to racial equity.
- Use of an equity and inclusion framework for understanding different dimensions of racism.
- How to identify and analyze the root causes of racial inequities.
- How to talk about race by establishing shared values and a common understanding.
- How to advance racial equity and inclusion and embed it in your organization.
- How to set goals for racial equity and track and measure progress.
- How to assess the impact of policies and other actions on racial and ethnic groups.

It is important to have ambassadors, Facilitator Team, Change Team members, and the Jail Leadership Team all work towards cultural change in the jail.

SUPPORTING PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY WITH THE CHANGE TEAMWORK GROUP SESSIONS

Discussions about race are sensitive topics and it is possible that members of the Change Teams may not feel comfortable discussing sensitive topics in the presence of other staff or residents. The workgroup facilitator may use various strategies to ensure psychological safety within the group sessions that can build on the work done with ambassadors and jail leaders.

These include:

- Use the narratives or experiences of individuals in other settings that are not specific to the local jail.
- Discuss structural racism and other issues in ways that do not personalize the conversation to the jail.
- Use conceptual framework to help see the jail from a different light such as parsimony, proportionality, social justice and citizenship.
- Highlight the impact on conditions and culture of the jail for both staff and resident well being.
- Discuss how these issues affect the criminal legal system overall.
- Discuss how structural racism is prevalent in society.
- Show videos and podcasts that illustrate points. This may reduce anxiety of participants by providing different methods for digesting sensitive topics and material.
- Separate work groups that encompass different categories of stakeholders together— Black, white, male residents, female residents, and staff from varied levels

PREPARING FOR HIGHLY SENSITVE DISCUSSIONS

During the discussions, both staff and residents will offer a number of suggestions which may include personal experiences. It is important to acknowledge the reflection on personal experiences may trigger memories of traumatic events. The Facilitator Team should have a plan in place to support staff and resident participants should significant emotional distress result from the discussions.

of the organization (custody staff, correctional officer, sargeants, lieutenants, caseworkers, non-custody, program case managers, mid-level administrators) – Placing participants together with those of similar categories can help to alleviate power dynamics within and across participants and can help to illicit transparent dialogue when individuals may feel more understood with a group of people from a shared, common experience.

The Facilitator can use a variety of methods to gather the information that depersonalize the situation and promote privacy and confidentiality among Change Team workgroup members. This can include:

- Use of sticky notes which will allow staff to note comments or vote in a protected manner.
- If the technology is available, allowing for an electronic voting process or the use of a QR code to provide the confidentially for staff and/or residents. (Note: An electronic voting process may not be available for residents. Although the residents may have tablets issued to them by the facility, there may be concerns regarding whether administrative staff has access to the information loaded on the tablet.)
- Have residents or staff put comments on notecards and have them drop the cards into a box.
- Remind workgroup participants that it is important that people do not identify feedback with a specific person outside of the workgroup setting.
- During the workgroup sessions, the Facilitator Team members should sit close to the door. There may be occasions when staff or supervisory staff may enter the room (either by error or due to an emergency situation). When this occurs, all discussions should cease to protect the confidentiality of the group. The facilitator member who is near the door will be readily available to determine the reason for the person entering in the room and respond appropriately.
- Instructing Change Team workgroup participants that if they take notes or have paperwork, they cannot remove it from the workgroup areas. This is because if any of the paperwork or notes were seen by other staff or residents, the information will not be read within the context of the conversation. It could create confusion with non-participating staff/residents and potentially undermine the goals of the Racial Equity project.

It is important for both the Jail Leadership and Facilitator Team members to frequently reinforce expectations about confidentiality of the discussion and work products developed during the PDSA process. The environment must reinforce that trust is critical in order to have Change Team members openly share perspectives without fear of retaliation or harm. There can be concern among staff regarding the sharing of information beyond the group and whether administration will be made aware of specific comments/statements discussed during the Change Team workgroups. There should be particular emphasis that the issues raised and discussed during the Change Team workgroups will not be shared or reviewed with administration or other facility staff/residents.

Because the Change Team workgroups will be using flipchart paper and sticky notes for recording and gathering information, the Change Team participants should be provided information as to the disposition of the items once the information is transferred to a permeant file/record.

ACTIVITIES TO FACILITATE ESTABLISHMENT OF A SAFE & CONSISTENT WORK GROUP ENVIRONMENT

USE OF COMMUNAL AGREEMENTS

During the first workgroup, one trust building exercise is to develop a Communal Agreement to set the tone for respect and trust for each subsequent workgroup. Then, in future meetings, one participant in each Change Team

workgroup should read the agreement so that the group is reminded of the agreed-upon principles. Examples of what should be in the Communal Agreements are:

- We agree to respect each other's privacy by holding in confidence what is shared. We do not relay what others said, though we can share our insights and learnings.
- We agree to be accountable for our actions. We accept responsibility for our participation in the process and abiding by these agreements.
- We agree to speak one at a time so that all voices may be heard. We leave room for everyone to participate in the conversation.
- We agree to hear whatever emotional expressions people make.
- We expect the process to be messy at times to encourage high level of participation.
- We agree to be respectful and to hold each other in the highest possible regard.
- We agree to be as attentive to each other as possible by minimizing distractions.
- We agree to listen actively, with the intent to learn something of value from those who are sharing. Our role is to honor each other's truths and experiences.

USE OF OOPS AND OUCH

During the Change Team workgroups, the conversations will focus on a number of sensitive issues. There may be occasions when comments are made which are viewed as hurtful or problematic by other participants. This can manifest into fractured relationships which may impact the safety and security of the facility. *The use of the OOPS/OUCH allows for an immediate review of the event and allows the participants to clarify their statements and offer apologies if warranted.*

This also allows for processing of the impact and intent of the statement – the impact may still be harmful, but the intent behind the person making the statement was not. This allows room for grace.

OOPS—If someone says something that is hurtful or problematic and they realize it, say "oops" to acknowledge it and then try again.
OUCH—Alternatively, if someone else said something harmful or problematic, then you can say "ouch" which lets everyone know that there is something that needs to be discussed further.

ONE WORD WRAP UP

As each workgroup is nearing completion time, each participant can be asked to provide a one-word reflection which summarizes their feeling regarding the work. The comments offer insight into the workgroup participants' response to the discussions as well as their hope for the upcoming work.

TIPS ON SCOPING THE CONVERSATION

As Change Team workgroups are discussing contributors to racism and racist experiences, they are likely to discuss a number of areas that occur outside of the jail context and thus require the collaboration and work of outside entities. Examples of this can relate to sentencing, bond amounts, the work and activities of the police, etc.

It is important to allow the discussion to be free-flowing and during the narrowing of the potential recommendations, begin to sort through the recommended interventions which are not possible due to them occurring outside of the jail context, and therefore have a lack of influence of the Change Team workgroups or corrections administrators on outside entities.

USING PDSA TO DEVELOP RACIAL EQUITY & JAIL CULTURE INTERVENTION RECOMMENDATIONS

In the following sections, we will provide example agendas and content for the workgroup meetings and stages of the PDSA process. These agendas can be adapted to the specific jail context, but the essence of each phase of the PDSA should be adhered to. We recommend that the Change Team workgroups be conducted approximately three weeks apart. This allows for the work to remain fresh and for the work to progress at a pace that workgroup participants do not lose interest or momentum.

There is not a predetermined set of Change Team workgroups to occur for each phase. The number of the Change Team workgroups and the amount of time spent on each topic should be based on the time allocated to the initiative, the ability to keep workgroup members engaged, and the natural desire of participants to see progress in relatively short time frames. Engagement and momentum are important to maintain while also not placing too much burden on participants' time such that they are not able to sustain involvement.

PLANNING FOR SUCCESS

In many organizations, staff's initial response to most new initiatives affects whether the outcomes of the initiative will achieve the requisite goals and objectives. If there has been past programs or initiatives which were quickly discarded or there was a lack of follow-through, there may be a belief this project will follow the same path which will discourage participation. The Jail Leadership Team and ambassadors must endorse for an effort to be successful. Jail staff and residents will benefit from verbal and writen communications from jail leadership highlighting the goals of the project, the process, timeline and how the Change Team-recommended interventions will be implemented within the facility. The best communication methods are: 1) email, 2) signs/posters, and 3) visible messages about the project in key areas of the facility.

The engagement process for residents should include the same effort as staff with verbal and electronic awarenes and recruitment campaigns. This may include posters within the units and having information available within caseworker's offices. If there are a number of residents in which English is not the first language, it may be helpful to determine the level of conversational and written English needed to participate in the Change Team or surveys if translation services are not available. The facility will need to determine the process to select the residents who volunteer to participate – a more diverse group of residents of varying perspectives and risk levels would be beneficial.

PART 2: USING THE PDSA TO ACHIEVE RACIAL EQUITY & JAIL CULTURE INTERVENTION RECOMMENDATIONS

STEP 2: PLAN PHASE & EXAMPLE AGENDAS

The Plan phase is content-rich and somewhat dydatic as Change Team participants become oriented toward the process. The types of activities during this phase entail:

- Establish agreed upon and uniform definitions of racial equity, racial disparities, racial bias, racism, jail culture, and conditions of confinement.
- Introduce the research and descriptive statistics of the problem, the use of data, and the PDSA process.
- Review data gathered from existing records.
- Compare empirical data with lived experiences of staff and residents in the Change Team workgroups.
- Engage in an iterative process of reviewing data with the Change Team workgroups, getting questions/ contradictory experiences from workgroup participants, seeking more data from the jail or prior research, and reviewing the data with Change Team workgroups again.

At least three workgroup meetings aim to orient the Change Team workgroups to the initiative including the use of different types of data. Data can consist of: 1) data pulled from administrative records as well as data that comes from the staff and residents lived experiences; 2) data from prior studies; and 3) perceptions from living and working in the jail. These meetings serve to engage the Change Team members in dialogue about the various data. Reviewing any type of data can generate early discussions in the groups around relevant themes such as mental health, seniority, racism/sexism, fairness/ favoritism, stigma, accountability, and multiple levels of experience of bias.

As staff and residents are asked to identity the areas of focus, the identification of specific data points will be critical to fully understand the depth of the issue along with the identification and affirmation of racial equity issues. As discussion progresses throughout the workgroups, it is likely that numerous ideas for change will surface. Therefore, one goal of these Change Team workgroups will be to help the participants come up with parameters to help them narrow and prioritize intervention recommendations.

THE WHY BEHIND A DATA DRIVEN APPROACH

PDSA is a data-driven approach that uses data to understand the problem, brainstorm reasonable solutions, study how the solutions work, and decide whether to continue using the solution. PDSA serves to empower Change Team members to better understand the data, both from studies and lived experiences, and to identify the racial equity issues in the jail.

The workgroup facilitator should present an overview on the various ways data can be used in the decision-making process and how data can be presented. Data visualizations can include pie chart, line graph, bar graph and histographs—depending on the audience and their desires for how to display the data. It is critical to highlight the value of an individual's perception and life experience as data. Participants should be encouraged to share their life experiences with the room which allows participants to compare what is presented with what they know. It is helpful to reiterate this point throughout the PDSA process and use the questions below to validate the data against participants' experiences.

EXAMPLE TYPES OF DATA TO REVIEW:

- Jail population by race, age, gender
- Jail intakes by type of charge or offense
- Length of stay at the jail
- Jail population by incarceration status – pretrial, sentenced, conviction
- Programming referral and receipt for residents
- Mental health and substance use disorder diagnosis for residents
- Staff, age, gender, race/ethnicity
- Distribution of different types of positions within jail
- Types of leave taken by staff
- Staff training expectations and satisfaction by staff
- Staff job satisfaction data (e.g., percent feeling respected by their peers or administrators; percent that would recommend working at the jail to others; satisfaction with leadership)
- Staff to resident ratio

WORKGROUP #1: EXAMPLE AGENDA

1. Welcome
2. Facilitator Team introduces themselves and a brief overview of their background.
3. Review of confidentiality process
4. Development of communal agreements
5. OOPS/OUCH
6. Initiative goals, objectives, process, overview
7. Discussion of areas of focus and what type of data the workgroup participants would like to have.
8. One word reflection

WORKGROUP #2: EXAMPLE AGENDA

1. Review of last workgroup
2. Communal agreements reading
3. Racial equity, racism, disparities, equality definitions and discussion
4. Data driven approach of the PDSA
5. Initial review of jail data – what does the quantitative data say and how is that consistent or different from your experience
6. One word reflection

HELPFUL QUESTIONS FOR SOLICITING RESPONSES TO THE PRESENTATION OF DATA INCLUDE:

- What are your take away points?
- What did you learn?
- What is surprising for you?
- What areas would you want more information?
- Are there equity or equality issues that you saw?
- Are there patterns of racial bias or unfair treatment that we need to consider to work on?
- What are some of your areas of concern or issues that we did not have data on?
- What factors are under the control of the jail and what factors are not under the control of the jail?

WORKGROUP #3: EXAMPLE AGENDA

1. Learn about the PDSA process
2. Review of work done to date
3. Reflections on workgroup 2 and where we are headed.
4. Data that provides a snapshot of working in the jail
5. Data that provides a snapshot of living in the jail
6. Reactions to these data
7. What do you want to know more about?
8. One word reflection

WORKGROUP #4: EXAMPLE AGENDA

1. Review communal agreements
2. Information requests from the last group session
3. Share additional data findings requested by the group
4. Given your experience and the data that you have seen, what are your biggest concerns regarding racial bias in the jail? In which of these issues do you believe that we have the greatest ability to make positive change given the jail's support for this project?
5. What are some areas of concern that you are interested in that we haven't talked about yet?
6. One word reflection

STEP 3: THE DO PHASE AND EXAMPLE AGENDAS

During this phase, the Change Teams will identify what practice, policies, and procedures the Change Teams would like to focus on. The Change teams will establish how to gauge benchmarks for success. This should generate discussions about desired outcomes they hope to be achieved.

Example discussion topics to guide the group toward narrowing and prioritizing intervention recommendations include:

- Positive impact on overall jail environment
- Positive impact on staff experience
- Ease in taking action and getting jail support
- Speed with which changes could be made
- Number of people who would directly benefit from change (staff only, residents only, residents and staff together, larger community, others)

Racial equity lens questions to continue to remind the group are questions such as:

- What changes would we recommend to advance racial justice and fairness in the jail?
- Who is likely to benefit the most if we take action / make changes?
- Who, if anyone, might be harmed or disadvantaged by these changes?
- What could we do differently to decrease or eliminate any negative impacts?

WORKGROUP #5: EXAMPLE AGENDA

1. Affirm communal agreements
2. Review key themes and information request from last workgroup session
3. Revisit PDSA process
4. Discuss areas for intervention
5. Explore discussion questions
6. Apply racial equity lens
7. One word reflection

WORKGROUP #6: EXAMPLE AGENDA

1. Communal agreements
2. Outstanding data questions
3. Review criteria for problem and solution selection
4. Review questions for using an equity lends
5. Begin development of intervention recommendations

WORKGROUP #7: EXAMPLE AGENDA

1. Review PDSA progress
2. Review interventions developed during last group
3. Continue to develop interventions
4. Discuss implementing the interventions in terns of what the interventions look like, what is viable, what is supported by data.
5. Discuss how intervention will be measured

QUESTIONS TO DISCERN IF DATA IS CONSISTENT WITH PARTICIPANT PERCEPTIONS

TIPS

- Does what these data suggest align with your experiences?
- Does your experience validate the data?
- What is stated or assumed through this process?
- What data is coming in and what data is going out?
- Be mindful data may not be accurate. Individuals are responsible for entering the data which may not always reflect what is accurate.

STEP 4: STUDY PHASE EXAMPLE AGENDAS & ACTIVITIES

During the Study phase, the Change Teams and the Facilitator Team narrow in on recommended interventions to be implemented. In the Study phase it is important to assess the feasibility and acceptability of proposed interventions. Thus, in addition to the workgroup activities, during the Study Phase, there is an opportune time to obtain feedback from other staff and residents of the jail about the types of recommendations they may see as needed to promote equity and improve culture in the jail. Because the broader group of staff and residents have not benefited from the rich workgroup discussions and facilitation, we suggest that the recommended interventions that have been generated during the Change Team workgroups are packaged and presented to the wider community of staff and residents via a survey or focus group. The process allows for staff and residents who are not workgroup participants to validate the recommendations and offer additional insights to the proposed interventions and other areas which may not be addressed through the interventions.

After the larger population of staff and residents have been surveyed for their perceptions and experiences, the data must be synthesized and then reported back to the Change Team workgroups.During those Change Team workgroups, the Facilitator Team can:

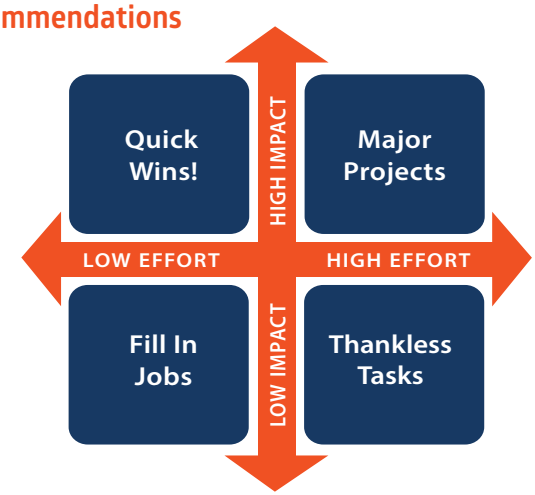
1. Review stages in the PDSA process.
2. Present findings from staff surveys and resident focus groups including recommended interventions that surfaced that had not been considered by the Change Teams previously.
3. Using input from the Change Team workgroups and the surveys, prioritize the list of recommendations.

There are several steps to the process of prioritizing the recommended interventions that can help Change Teams with narrowing recommendation selection:

1. The first step is to group the recommendations into areas of focus (e.g., hiring, training and security, staffing and supports).
2. The Change Team participants are asked to review the full list and rank the top five recommendations.
3. The next step for the Change Team participants is to review the top five recommendations and then to narrow their focus such that they will will present a select number of recommendations to administration.
4. Throughout the process, the Change Team is considering the impact of the recommended intervention on the goals of racial equity and culture change in the jail.

To further refine and prioritize recommendations, Change Team participants can be presented the list of recommendations and asked to consider each through the lens of high impact/high effort (Major Projects), high impact/low effort (Quick Wins), low effort/low impact (Fill in Jobs) and high effort/low impact (Thankless Tasks). This process allows participants to consider the types of recommendations that will have the highest impact and positive affect on the overall jail environment and the likelihood of improving staff and resident experiences,

FIGURE 3 - Prioritization of Intervention Recommendations



while also considering the amount of time required to make the changes, the amount of staff needed, as well as the cost and level of speed necessary to make the changes.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Correctional agencies face a number of issues such as staffing shortages, inexperienced staff, low pay and low morale. The Change Team workgroups allow for staff to identify these other related issues within the jail in addition to issues which impact racial equity and other related cultural issues. Staff may identify what they view as the primary issues they feel impact the overall work/living environment which may not directly impact racial equity. For example, if workgroup participants are more concerned for their safety, both physical and mental, due to staffing shortages – a phenomenon occurring throughout the country – this issue will likely take priority within the planning process as identify problem areas or issues within the jail.

There may be a sense of uncertainty regarding how an individual's experiences and opinions will be received by other workgroup members. There may also be a sense of "nothing will change so why bother," or a culture of oppression that has become so common within the jail setting to the extent that it is difficult to imagine another experience.

RACIAL CAUCUS WORKGROUP OPTION

Moreover, discussing issues of disparity, bias, racism, sexism, and culture in a challenging 24-7 operated work environment is emotionally intense and can be draining. As Change Team dynamics ebb and flow, there will also be an ebb and flow of the level of comfort that people feel in expressing their experiences openly. Sometimes this level can be dependent on the day and / or whether a particularly charged conversation occurred during a Change Team workgroup session. One option as the Change Team efforts culminate prior to providing the recommendations to the Jail Leadership Team, is to hold a racial caucus in which participants divide into groups based on how they identify by race and/or ethnicity (e.g., White, Black, Latinx). These groups will then be facilitated by an individual that shares a similar identity.

The purpose of the racial caucus is to provide Change Team members a space in which they may feel like the others in the room are most likely to understand their racial / ethnic experience as it relates to any given topic and therefore may present new information that they

STRATEGIES FOR OBTAINING FEEDBACK FROM A LARGE NUMBER OF RESIDENTS

Group based feedback is a pragmatic way to obtain information and feedback from residents in an understaffed jail wherein movement of each individual resident throughout the jail increases demands on staff time. One approach to obtaining feedback on the recommended interventions developed by resident Change Team workgroups is to hold structured focus groups. In the focus groups, recommended interventions sorted by program area (e.g., physical health, programming opportunities, staff-resident interactions) can be reviewed using guided questions. Residents can rank each recommended intervention by

1. Responding to the question: How much do you think residents would benefit from each of the recommended interventions: a) I don't think residents would benefit from this b) I am not sure if residents would benefit from this c) The residents would really benefit from this.
2. Ranking the top five interventions from any given category that they believe are the most important.
3. Providing recommendations that have not been identified or other issues to consider.

have not presented in prior Change Team workgroups and/or information they want to re-present because it did not get the attention it deserved at the time. Another option is to hold racial caucus breakout groups at the end of each Change Team workgroup session.

STEP 5: ACT PHASE ACTIVITIES, PRESENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS, & EXAMPLE AGENDAS

PRESENTATION TO JAIL LEADERSHIP TEAM

During the Act phase, recommendations will be presented to the Jail Leadership Team and the Change Teams will establish evaluation metrics. The interventions will begin to be implemented and evaluated for whether they achieve their intended outcomes or whether they need to be revised and repealed. The Act stage is a continual and ongoing process because it is likely that not all interventions can be adopted at once and that there will need to be some revisions to the original recommendations proposed.

To protect confidentiality and facilitate open dialogue, the Change Team recommendations should be carefully presented to the Jail Leadership Team. Options include withholding recommendations until the final workgroup has concluded; meeting regularly with the Jail Leadership team to discuss themes but not specific details of recommended interventions; or engaging the Jail Leadership Team in adopting quick wins throughout the Change Team process. The Facilitator Team is responsible for the presentation of the recommendations and will offer suggestions for how to select and implement the recommended interventions. Regardless of the timing of communicating the recommendations, it should be acknowledged that it may take some for the Jail Leadership Team to hear and understand the recommendations.

IMPLEMENTATION

However, it is critically important that implementation, evaluation, and sustainability be given ample attention so as not to have the extensive and difficult work done by the Change Teams get lost in the day to day work activities and, thus, be experienced as discounted or a waste of time. Change Team workgroup members recognize that administrators change over jail contexts and that previously highly touted initiatives can be abandoned with new leadership. As indicated in FIGURE 4, we recommend the following actions, at a minimum, to facilitate implementation.

The Jail Leadership Team should assemble a decision-making subcommittee that is inclusive of racial, ethnic, and gender diversity to sort through the recommendations. The committee will need to establish criteria for prioritizing and selecting recommendations for implementation. This will be necessary in order for the decision-making committee to legitimate the final decisions made about what interventions are implemented and how they are implemented. If the decision-making committee is not clear on criteria, it is more vulnerable to lend itself to critique and criticism. Similar to what was asked of the Change Team workgroups, the decision-making committee should apply a racial equity lens asking questions such as who is helped by this decision, who could be harmed by the decision, and whether there are patterns of disparity that could be amplified as a result of any given decision. They should also put in place how to monitor what type of corrective actions, changes, or modifications are needed should the implementation of a given policy, practice, or programmatic intervention have unintended consequences. As a part of the implementation process, the Jail Administrative Team needs to identify accountable parties within the jail leadership that will take responsibility for ensuring implementation happens, is evaluated, and that needed adjustments are made if or as they arise. Clearly articulated and delineated accountability will make it much more likely that

implementation and evaluation of the interventions goes smoothly. Communication of intentions and process is equally important as implementation. We recommend that the Jail Leadership Team devises key messages about the entire process, anticipated organizational benefits, responsible and accountable parties, and what was decided as well as the rationale behind different decisions. The first people who should receive these messages are the workgroup participants followed by the larger group of staff and residents and then the larger community.

An intentional and well-planned implementation process cannot be understated. If nothing changes, there is a threat that the very thing the process is aiming to change regarding equity and culture, will instead, be reinforced.

EVALUATION AND SUSTAINABILITY

A very important part of wrapping up the PDSA process, is making sure that a sustainability plan is in place that can help to survive the shifting nature of leadership. Example activities can be the establishment of an ongoing Change Committee as identified in the steps above, documentation of both the process and output of the Change Teams, Quarterly, Semi-annual benchmarks and reviews, and ongoing staff and resident feedback on how the change process is occurring. Keeping the work of the groups at the forefront of daily activities of the jail will help to ensure that progress is maintained. The next time the organization is ready for a major shift, they can begin the PDSA process again to ensure each step of the process is followed and adhered.

FIGURE 4 - GUIDANCE TO THE ADMINISTRATIVE TEAM ON SELECTING INTERVENTIONS TO ADOPT

1. Establish a decision-making subcommittee that includes racial & gender diversity for reviewing recommendations.
2. Apply a racial equity lens to help prioritize & select recommendations.
3. Identify accountable parties within the jail's leadership who would be responsible for over-seeing the implementation of the selected recommendations.
4. Develop specific steps to the implementation process which will include who is responsible for what specific actions and the anticipated due dates.
5. Develop a tiered communication process for the roll-out of the recommendations.
6. Develop key messaging around recommendations. This messaging may include:

6A. Define why the recommendations were selected

6B. Describe the benefit of taking action on the recommendation

6C. Explain who will be responsible for the implementation of the recommendation

6D. Provide an anticipated timeline

5A. We suggest the first communication be to the workgroup participants (staff and residents who remain in custody)

5B. We suggest the second communication be to jail staff and residents

5C. We suggest the third communication be to external governing entities

PART 3: KEY TAKEAWAYS

In this manual, we largely focused on establishing intervention recommendations, prioritizing those recommendations, and setting up a process for implementation and evaluation. Ensuring effective implementation of the recommendations warrants its own implementation guide.

CONSEQUENCES OF INACTION

Where racial equity projects fall down is ensuring there is real and enduring movement on the changes proposed. In other words, implementation is where things fall short whether in a jail context or other settings. In equity work, there is an enormous amount of energy and resources expended to study, identify, prioritize, and recommend, but if subsequent action does not occur, the process can potentially do more harm than good. Not only can it turn into a poor use of time, effort, and money, the vulnerability that people subjected themselves to can become squandered. In this sense, the message that gets communicated to people is that organizations are willing to invest the resources to study the problem, but not to do anything about the problem.

This experience generates a feedback loop for people, particularly people of color, to be hesitant to participate in these highly vulnerable and risky processes because it results in awareness raising but no real change. In this sense, the weight of identifying the problem, coming up with solutions, and the risk around it, falls on people of color (those that have the most to lose) but the decisions for action are held by another group. If the process to identify changes needed to achieve equity does not result in change of the lived experience by people of color, then dynamics of systemic and structural disparities are maintained.

KEY TAKEAWAYS OF PDSA PROCESS

- This is a lengthy process that takes time because it involves trust and relationship building and establishing trust takes time.
- The work can survive transitions in administrations, staff shortages, and overcrowding.
- Crises occurring in the day-to-day experience of living and working in a jail can overshadow the topics of racial and gender disparities.
- Communication about the process and goals is very important for maintaining momentum and engagement in the work.
- Using an external team to facilitate the PDSA process promotes accountability and commitment to the work and more confidence in the transparency of the work.
- Racial caucus is an crucial strategy for allowing space for people to say things that they are not willing to say in mixed race groups.
- Change Team members are likely to express a real and enduring fear that nothing will change despite all of the resources that went into the work.
- Collecting all of the recommended interventions prior allows for a thoughtful and intentional review and implementation of recommendations, but it creates substantial lagtime before change is realized.
- Exploring ways to shorten the PDSA process, while maintaining the integrity of in depth work, needs further exploration.

CONCLUSION

Corrections is the response to the issues in the community with the jails serving as the point of entrance for individuals into the criminal justice system. Unlike the prisons, the jails do not have a release process in the form of parole but rather the release process is regulated through the bond process and the manner by which cases are adjudicated by the courts. Currently the jails are facing a myriad of issues which includes exceeding capacity, staff shortages, increasing number of admissions with untreated behavioral health issues which impacts the delivery of services. This impacts not only the staff but the residents in terms of the safety and security of the residents and staff.

The PDSA process allowed for flexibility with delivery of the process to workgroup participants and validation of the recommendations through the survey/focus group activities. The PDSA process allowed workgroup participants the opportunity to identify the issues which impact racial equity and jail culture through the lens of data but more importantly through the lens of their experience as a staff member or a resident. It was through this validation of their experience that the level of trust was established. Initially participants shared what they viewed as the issues impacting the jail culture and allowed the courage to share what they saw as issues which impacted racial equality. Unlike staff, the residents who served as workgroup participants acknowledged they may not realize the impact of the recommendations. However, through this work they were able to contribute to a process which will allow for more racially just and equitable treatment within the jail system.

Residents embraced this responsibility and allowed this to serve as a way they could contribute as an individual who has walked in their shoes by having the experience of being in jail and allow this experience to shape what can be as opposed to what is. Of utmost importance will be the ongoing implementation and monitoring of the interventions that become adopted to ensure they are achieving the intended outcomes. Implementation and sustaining the PDSA and change process is crucial to the true promotion of equity and improved culture in the jail and to honoring the vulnerability that workgroup participants subjected themselves. These participants openly shared and debated about strategies to tackle the challenges of racism and destructive organizational cultures. PDSA workgroup participants did the hard work of identifying change processes and transformational adaptations to existing operations, it now falls on the jail administration to ensure that this work is memorialized and actualized.

[i] Organizing Committee for Assessing Meaningful Community Engagement in Health & Health Care Programs & Policies. 2022. Assessing Meaningful Community Engagement: A Conceptual Model to Advance Health Equity through Transformed Systems for Health. NAM Perspectives. Commentary, National Academy of Medicine, Washington, DC. https://doi.org/10.31478/202202c.

[ii] Incarcerated individuals are not able to receive cash as remuneration for participation and were instead given food during meetings. Jail residents were also given a certificate that recognized their participation in the project. The jail leadership asked that gift cards be provided to employees in lieu of cash.

[iii] In total, 19 individuals attended the male resident group information session. Two male residents were removed by administration because of safety concerns and four individuals did not consent to participate. During the course of the study, 10 male resident participants were released from custody as a result of the adjudication of the pending charge (8) or released on a pre-trial bond (2). There are three male participants who remain in custody. In total, 13 female residents attended the initial workgroup. At the end of the process, there are 9 women who remain in custody with four released from custody due to adjudication of charge (1), released to other authority (2) and released on recognizance bond (1).

[iv] Emerson, R. M., Fretz, R. I., & Shaw, L. L. (2011). Writing ethnographic fieldnotes. University of Chicago press.

[v] Charmaz, K. (2006). Constructing grounded theory: A practical guide through qualitative analysis. sage.

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