

ASSOCIATION FOR
MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLNESS



To Advocate. To Educate. To Empower. Together.

Statement on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion at MHAW

We at MHAW recognize that our agency is strongest when we all embrace the full spectrum of diversity.

As part of our organization's mission statement, "Empowering people and communities to pursue and sustain healthy and enriched lives," we must develop healthy, safe and enriched services and work environments for all clients and staff. In order to achieve and sustain these, we encourage all MHAW staff members to courageously engage, embrace, monitor, and drive change of any pre-disposed attitudes about race and culture; doing so properly requires a level of introspection and self-correction that can at times be uncomfortable. We embolden staff to create a working environment that is conducive to dialogue by listening to others, being culturally curious, expressing concerns, and sharing experiences.

As an organization, we are committed to anti-racism work. It is important to recognize that anti-racism is not the same as not being racist; instead, anti-racism work is a commitment to the opposition of racism and to think, act and advocate for both equality and equity.

We also believe that diversity is a reflection of our shared humanity -- this is true both in the workplace and our communities. Yet despite this optimistic view, we know that all people are not treated equally, and that the problem of systemic racism and discrimination is very real. The struggle for equity and equality exists in many forms, from religious freedom and freedom to not practice religion, to gender equality, indigenous people's rights, LGBTQ+ rights, Race and disability rights etc. We recognize that this is a journey, not a destination, and pledge to keep listening to our colleagues, our leaders, and communities and learn how to make effective change. Together we are committed to this journey; learning and working towards developing workspace and services that are distinguished for its diversity, equity and inclusiveness. As an organization, we are committed to this work because we know injustice and inequality are problems and we all must do our part to make positive change. We are stronger, together.

MHAW strives to develop an authentic diverse workforce that embraces, creates, respects, and demonstrates diversity, equity, and inclusiveness in the work environment towards one another and those we serve.

We hold the following core principles and values in our practice and in our workplace culture:

- **Commitment to Excellence:** MHAW commits to an unyielding pledge of excellence in all diversity, equity and inclusion focus areas including but not limited to employee recruitment, retention, advancement and education as well as the provision of services to those in need within in our communities -- with anti-racism/discrimination and social justice being at the forefront of all that we do. In accord with this principle are the following commitments:

- To actively acknowledge, understand and celebrate different viewpoints and demonstrate a willingness to learn new ideas and concepts and to unlearn old ones.
- To create a culture of engagement where all are acknowledged and shown appreciation for not only their accomplishments, but for their contributions as diverse, multicultural, multilingual, and anti-racist/discriminatory authentic individuals.
- To host and sponsor opportunities for self-reflection and inclusivity where differences don't alienate one another but are celebrated and everyone can partake in gratifying, meaningful and fulfilling work without compromising their identities.
- To develop a culture of anti-racist/discriminatory ideas and practices buoyed by anti-racist/discriminatory policies.
- Respect: MHAW appreciates and values everyone's viewpoints and experiences. By respecting one another unity towards anti-racist/discriminatory practice can be achieved which in turn leads to better outcomes in achieving our mission.
- Truth: MHAW strives to embrace and promote truth while deeply understanding that the process can be uncomfortable. To have both a personal and organizational responsibility of authenticity, openness and honesty in an effort to create trust, transparency and accountability. Vital to seeking truth is direct and honest communication which fosters a healthy, peaceful, balanced and productive work environment. This includes active listening, clarifying and validating, which all play a role in increased self-awareness. Bi-directional communication is an essential component in developing transparent and truthful working relationships.