



ANTI-RACISM REPORT

October – December 2020

Introduction

During this final month of 2020, our news and social media feeds are no longer dominated by protests against racism and racial injustice, but the issues of racism and racial injustice overwhelmingly remain the same. STAR is continuing to work towards our overarching goal to dismantle how racism functions in our organization and better embody our vision and values in our work.

This year, we developed the following objectives to meet this goal:

1. Launch an anti-racism committee.
2. Facilitate critical conversations among staff.
3. Develop policies and procedures and provide staff training.
4. Update STAR's core training.
5. Review our community partnerships.
6. Think more intentionally about leadership development within STAR.
7. Maintain STAR's Person of Color Network.

This Quarterly Anti-Racism Report provides updates on our current initiatives during October through December of 2020. For additional information, or to view previous reports, please visit our website at <https://star.ngo/anti-racism-work/>.

As we continue into 2021, we will further develop these objectives and explore options for influencing external systems as well.

If you have any questions or suggestions, please email info@star.ngo.

Progress

OBJECTIVE 1

Launch an anti-racism committee.

STAR's Capital Area Regional Director Kirsten Raby and Vice President Rebecca Marchiafava are co-leading a multiracial committee to drive change within STAR. The second committee meeting was held in October 2020, with the third meeting scheduled for January 2021. Committee members are assisting with anti-racism initiatives collectively identified by the committee. They have also been asked to read the *Times Up Guide to Equity and Inclusion During Crisis* and complete a feedback survey to impact STAR's equity, inclusion, and anti-racism work in 2021.

OBJECTIVE 2

Facilitate critical conversations among staff.

At our September 2020 staff meeting, STAR's CEO Racheal Hebert facilitated a conversation on the topic of how racism and racial prejudice show up in interactions with clients. Staff members read "Taking Off the Mask: Breaking the Silence--The Art of Naming Racism in the Therapy Room" by Larry Jin (Kwok Hung) Lee. Racheal facilitated a conversation about how the article connects to people's work and experiences at STAR.

This coming January 2021, STAR's Vice President will lead a critical conversation with all staff on microaggressions in the workplace, to inform development of policies and practices around this topic.

OBJECTIVE 3

Develop policies and procedures, and provide staff training in key areas to change STAR culture.

Microaggressions/Anti-Harassment Policy

STAR's Vice President has been researching workplace harassment prevention and has identified multiple areas where STAR can improve its anti-harassment policies and practices, including supporting proportional responses to employee behaviors spanning a continuum of harm in the workplace, including microaggressions. She will be working, with staff input from the critical conversation on microaggressions in January 2021, to develop and implement these new policies and practices.

Staff Participation in Dialogue on Race Series

In the Fall of 2020, ten STAR staff members completed the Dialogue on Race Louisiana (DOR) Original Series. Their participation was generously paid for by a STAR Board member. Below, a few of these staff members share what they learned and how participating in the series impacted them:

- *Attending the series made me feel like I had a voice and I needed to use it even when it was uncomfortable.*
- *[I learned that] just because people are educated does not mean they understand racism in systems.*
- *DOR helped me to realize that racism needs to be addressed on a systems level, not just an individual level. I better understand how institutions are the driving force behind racism and in order to end racism, institutions need to change. Prior to DOR, I looked at racism as an independent act or behavior; not the collective.*
- *In the beginning and even up until the 3rd or 4th session, I did not have much faith as far as ending racism. The last few sessions gave real insight on current things that are moving to strengthen the fight. I can say that I don't feel depleted or alone since participating.*

OBJECTIVE 4

Update STAR's Core Training.

Members of STAR's anti-racism committee are in the process of reviewing STAR's 20-hour online Core Training and compiling recommendations for updates to be reviewed by the Anti-Racism Committee in January 2021. Upon review, staff will begin making needed updates to the training in the Spring of 2021.

OBJECTIVE 5

Review our community partnerships.

Last year, STAR's Person of Color (POC) Network identified lack of POC representation on STAR's Board and Regional Councils as an issue that needed addressing. This recommendation drove conversation at subsequent Board and Regional Council meetings about the importance of shifting to having these structures represent the communities we serve, specifically through being more intentional about recruiting non-White individuals to serve on our Councils.

For full transparency, here is a current breakdown of our Board and Regional Councils by race:

- Governing Board of Directors: 5 White people, 3 Black people, and 2 people who are bi-racial/multi-racial
- Capital Area Regional Council: 8 White people and 2 Black people
- Greater New Orleans Regional Council: 8 White people

"Diversifying" executive boards, similar to "diversifying" staff, is a tricky issue. Common efforts to diversify White-dominated organizations lead to tokenization, something we want to avoid. True inclusion and representation can only come from, again, deeper institutional and culture change.

Across our branches, we are identifying potential Board and Regional Council members who would help us more fully represent the survivors we serve at these higher levels. We are doing this as we prepare for our annual Board and Regional Council election process which takes place annually in March.

We have also begun compiling information on our community partners and are running reports to identify what populations or areas of focus are not represented in our partnerships. We plan to use this information to guide our development of new partnerships in 2021 that better represent those who are most impacted by sexual violence.

OBJECTIVE 6

Think more intentionally about leadership development within STAR.

Leadership development is a key focus for promoting diversity, equity and inclusion within organizations. Non-intentional leadership development practices can result in the advancement of those who are more privileged or those who have more similarities to people already in positions of leadership. Though we've come a long way in recent years regarding the hiring and promotion of Black and POC staff members, we still have work to do when it comes to planning for the future. For this reason, we are working to develop clearer, more intentional processes for leadership development at STAR.

STAR's CEO and Vice President have compiled a survey to assess staff members' perceptions on leadership at STAR and interest in career development and advancement. The survey will be administered to staff in January, with results informing further critical conversation on the topic of leadership development at STAR and individualized plans for career advancement.

OBJECTIVE 7

Maintain STAR's Person of Color Network.

In 2017, STAR staff members established a Person of Color (POC) Network. The POC Network will continue to offer a safe space for POC staff members to fellowship, support and learn from each other how to navigate the intersections between racism and sexual violence, and to organize events and initiatives that focus specifically on meeting needs of POC survivors and community members.

Members of this network have also developed group guidelines in collaboration with STAR's Vice President to clarify group logistics and to clarify expectations for managers to support their team members' involvement in the Network. These guidelines will be added to STAR's procedures to formalize the Network as a part of STAR's operations and ensure all staff are informed about its history, purpose, and importance.