

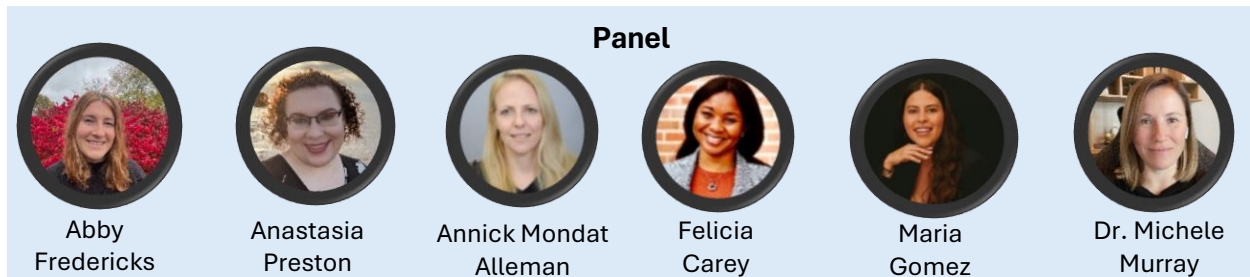
PANEL INSIGHTS REPORT

Learning Event: Health Equity in Action

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: PANEL INSIGHTS REPORT

Women and Gender-Diverse People's Health Section facilitated a panel discussion on November 22, 2024, featuring the expertise of the members of the Women and Gender-Diverse People's Health Council. They explored strategies and practical approaches for embedding health equity into healthcare practices and policies and understanding the impact on people's lived experiences.



Key Actions Identified to Promote Health Equity:

- **Accessible Services**: Extended hours and virtual appointments.
- **Education**: Awareness on key topics like trans healthcare.
- **Streamlined Processes**: Reducing paperwork for easier access to assistance.
- **Cultural Representation**: Diverse staff to improve communication.
- **Translation Services**: Meeting the needs of diverse populations.
- **Patient-Centered Care**: Ensuring patients feel safe and heard.

Lessons Learned from Implementing Equity-Focused Initiatives:

- **Preventive Mental Health**: Timely access to mental health services.
- **Comprehensive Care**: Addressing both primary and secondary needs.
- **Patient Trust**: Safe and accepting care environments build trust.
- **Universal Benefits**: Equity initiatives benefit everyone.

Ways to Build Trust with Historically Marginalized Communities:

- **Community Consultation**: Engaging with community members in decisions.
- **Active Listening**: Showing long-term commitment to their needs.
- **Inclusive Changes**: Small changes to create a welcoming environment.
- **Authentic Actions**: Following through on promises with kindness and consistency.

Ongoing collaboration and efforts to address structural barriers will be essential to achieving lasting equity and inclusion in healthcare and beyond.

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OVERVIEW

The Health Equity in Action event was a facilitated panel discussion held on November 22, 2024, at the Charlottetown Library Learning Centre featuring the expertise of the members of the Women and Gender-Diverse People's Health Council. They explored strategies and practical approaches for embedding health equity into healthcare practices and policies and to better understand the impact on people's lived experiences.

This document highlights the insights and discussions from panelists and attendees on existing health equity interventions and initiatives. The discussion focused on:

- Defining health equity;
- Examples of existing equity-focused interventions in the community;
- Impact of equity-focused interventions; and
- Building trust and effective partnerships to improve people's health needs.

The panel consisted of:

- Abby Fredericks (*facilitator*)
 - Strategic Partnerships and Policy Lead, Mental Health and Addictions, Health PEI
- Anastasia Preston (*panelist*)
 - Trans Community Outreach Coordinator, PEERS Alliance
- Annick Mondat Allemann (*panelist*)
 - Assistant Director, PEI French Health Network
- Felicia Carey (*panelist*)
 - Child and Youth Care Professional
- Maria Gomez (*panelist*)
 - Community Relations Coordinator, BIPOC USHR
- Dr. Michele Murray (*panelist*)
 - Program Medical Lead, Sexual Health, Options & Reproductive Services (SHORS)

MEANING OF HEALTH EQUITY

Question: What does health equity mean to you?

The attendees shared the following terms to describe what health equity means to them:



The opening presentation highlighted how health equity is achieved when people, regardless of sex, gender, income, race or other socio-demographic characteristics, have the fair opportunity to access the resources they need to be healthy.

Panelists added the following:

- Health is a fundamental human right.
- Everyone should be able to attain and reach their potential.
- Holistic view of human experience, ensuring social determinants of health are taken into consideration.
- Caring for mind, body, and spirit.
- Listening to people's health needs.
- Individuality in nutritional needs.
- Equal healthcare access, especially for women.
- Importance of access, continued access, and follow-up.
- Social factors can impact health equity and healthcare delivery.

EXISTING EQUITY-FOCUSED INTERVENTIONS

Question: What equity-focused interventions are being used (or would you like to see being used)? How do they make a difference?

Key points discussed include:

- **Accessible and Flexible Services:** Ensuring healthcare services are accessible and adaptable to different schedules helps remove barriers for all patients. Offering extended hours and virtual appointments makes it easier for everyone to receive care.

“I work until 8 pm one day a week for better patient access. Since Mon-Fri 8-4 only suits some, I offer phone and virtual appointments to reduce barriers.”

- Candice Rochford (NP)

“Important to meet people where they are. A great example would be the Outreach Primary Care Clinic.”

- Participant

- **Streamlined Processes:** Reducing paperwork and signoffs required from medical professionals speeds up access to government assistance and eases administrative burdens for patients.
- **Coverage for International Students and Workers:** Securing coverage for international students and temporary foreign workers ensures they have access to necessary healthcare services.
- **Trust-Building Environments:** Creating a healthcare environment where patients feel genuinely cared for fosters trust and encourages adherence to medical advice.
- **Addressing Historical Mistrust:** Building trust with historically marginalized communities, such as transgender individuals, requires time and consistent effort. Providing privacy, time, and support empowers patients to make informed health decisions.
- **Valuing Patient Experiences:** Taking self-reported patient experiences seriously, checking biases, and building trust and respect are crucial for effective care.

- **Education on Trans Issues:** Increasing education on trans issues for healthcare providers can reduce unnecessary referrals and improve direct care for transgender patients.
- **Cultural Representation:** Employing staff from diverse cultural backgrounds ensures patients feel represented and understood, which may help with improving communication and satisfaction.
- **Inclusive Practices:** Encouraging patients to express their cultural identities and using lived names, appropriate pronouns, inclusive stickers create a safe and respectful environment.
- **Translation Services:** Arranging translation services and employing bilingual staff help meet the needs of diverse populations.

“Increasing French language training and identifying who are the bilingual staff currently.”
-Annick Mondat Allemann
- **Data Collection:** Collecting race, ethnicity, and Indigenous data should become standard practice to ensure all populations are represented and their needs addressed.
- **Trauma-Informed Care:** Adopting a trauma-informed approach and creating truly welcoming spaces are essential for effective care.
- **Patient-Centered Care:** Allowing providers to spend adequate time with patients and ensuring they feel safe and heard leads to better health outcomes.

“Nursing staff have been instrumental in creating a supportive care experience for transgender patients.”
-Anastasia Preston
- **Clear Communication:** Providers should clearly explain procedures, medications, and examination processes to patients, using plain language to ensure understanding.
- **Avoiding Performative Actions:** Ensuring standardization does not become performative and implementing mechanisms for patient feedback are crucial for genuine care and quality improvement.

“Standardization can sometimes be harmful and turn into performative actions rather than genuine care.”

-Maria Gomez

- **Youth Support Workers:** Integrating youth support workers into healthcare systems can better assist young people in navigating their challenges.

"I struggled to access services, and I learned to advocate for myself. So, I want to see youth workers being utilized more."

-Felicia Carey

- **Language Services:** Offering services in the patient's language of choice, particularly in emergency and crisis situations, is crucial for effective care.

- **Community Navigators:** Employing community navigators to help patients identify barriers to care and connect them to appropriate services improves access and support.

"The CHANCES family health clinic has a community navigator on staff who works closely with patients to identify barriers to care and connect them to appropriate service providers."

-Participant

- **Intergenerational Programs:** These programs bridge the gap between generations, fostering understanding and support for older persons by younger generations.
- **Financial Considerations:** Ensuring patients are aware of low-cost options and financial assistance programs helps them access necessary care without undue financial burden.

"I ensure patients are aware of low-cost options like generic drug plans, the free gym in Stratford, or the Seniors Independence Initiative."

- Candice Rochford

These interventions make a difference by creating a more inclusive, respectful, and supportive healthcare environment, which can lead to better health outcomes.

IMPLEMENTATION OF EQUITY-FOCUSED INITIATIVES

Question: What lessons have you observed from the implementation of equity-focused initiatives?

Key points highlighted include:

- **Preventive Mental Health Measures:** There is a need for preventive measures for mental health, especially for groups like international students who experience significant ups and downs. Acknowledging emotions, such as fear, is vital. Providing timely access to mental health services can help individuals navigate emotional and psychological challenges.

“I was in a grieving process for a long time for the life I thought I had lost and adjusting to a new life.”

-Felicia Carey

- **Comprehensive Care for Marginalized Groups:** When providing interventions to marginalized groups, it's essential to address both primary and secondary needs. For example, trans individuals can get the surgeries they need, but may face barriers to aftercare, which can be financially prohibitive. Comprehensive programs that cover these needs can significantly improve their health and integration into society.

“Trans people often can't get the surgeries they need because aftercare is too expensive, costing around \$6000 and \$600 per week for 12 weeks for wound care. A program providing necessary supplies, like saline solution, would help. Proper healthcare would allow trans individuals to be as healthy as the general population, benefiting society both medically and economically.”

-Anastasia Preston

- **Whole-Person Care in Recruitment:** Addressing the holistic needs of individuals, including their family needs like housing, transportation, and employment for spouses, is crucial in recruitment. Cultural factors and family dynamics can impact relationships and well-being, so these aspects should be considered.
- **Ongoing Commitment to Health Equity:** Health equity should be an ongoing commitment. Supporting those passionate about health equity with adequate resources and support is essential for sustained progress.

- **Patient-Centered Care Approach:** Shifting from a paternalistic approach to a patient-centered perspective is key. Viewing the patient as the center of care, with various factors like cultural background, past trauma, and support systems as spokes of a wheel, helps tailor care to individual needs and promotes dignity.

“The teams I work with like to think of the patient as the most important and they are at the center of the wheel. The spokes of the wheel are different for everybody. The goal is to determine who should be/is part of their circle of care and what does dignity look like for that person.”

-Dr. Michele Murray



- **Capacity Building for Healthcare Workers:** Investing in the health and training of healthcare workers is critical. Formal training in recognizing and addressing biases, along with appropriate staffing, ensures that healthcare workers can effectively serve a diverse population without feeling overburdened.

“Need to invest in the health of healthcare workers.”

-Dr. Michele Murray

- **Patient Trust and Word-of-Mouth:** Patients, especially those from 2SLGBTQIA+ and gender-diverse communities, notice and appreciate safe and accepting care environments. They often share their positive experiences with friends and family, leading to increased trust and patient engagement.
- **Holistic Health Outcomes:** Open communication and partnerships between specialty services and community health clinics lead to better health outcomes. These collaborations ensure timely interventions and acknowledge the person as a whole, improving overall care quality.
- **Universal Benefits:** Equity-focused initiatives benefit everyone, not just the targeted groups. By addressing system-wide inequities, these initiatives create a more inclusive and supportive environment for all. It is important to not limit the equity-focused initiatives to the groups they are implemented for.
- **Diverse Needs Within Groups:** Even within the same equity-deserving groups, needs can vary significantly. Recognizing and addressing these diverse needs is crucial for the success of equity-focused initiatives.

TRUST AND PARTNERSHIPS

Question: How can healthcare organizations and other service partners build trust and effective partnerships/relationships with communities that have been historically equity-denied?

Key points mentioned include:

- **Consult with Community Members:** It's vital to involve community members in all actions and decisions. The principle "Nothing about us without us" should be upheld to ensure their voices are heard and respected.
- **Listen Actively:** Go into the community and listen to their needs with humility. Be accountable and show a long-term commitment to addressing their concerns.
- **Implement Inclusive Changes:** Small but significant changes, like inclusive signage and language, can make a big difference in creating a welcoming environment.
- **Build Trust Through Actions:** To build trust, it's essential to follow through on promises. Avoid overpromising and under-delivering. Be kind, honest, and consistent in your actions.
- **Show Authentic Interest:** Show genuine interest in the individual's needs. Build relationships by being present, following up, and not making them chase you for support.
- **Nurture Compassion:** Encourage compassion among healthcare providers. Understanding and empathy are key to building trust.
- **Promote Positive Change:** It's important to be vocal and promote positive changes and improvements in the healthcare system.
- **Acknowledge Past Harms:** Recognize that building trust with historically equity-denied communities takes time. Address past harms and ensure that both physical and mental health needs are met without causing further harm.
- **Create Diverse Environments:** Ensure that healthcare environments are visually and culturally diverse. Hospitality and acceptance should be evident in every interaction.

"Need to have humility, accountability, and long-term commitment. Also, allocate resources to community organization who can support with preventive measures."

-Annick Mondat Allemann

- **Ask and Act on Feedback:** Ask questions to understand personal needs and be accountable for addressing them. Advocate for patients and recognize the impact of social determinants on health.

“Instead of making assumptions, ask questions on what their personal needs are. Recognize that social determinants of health can influence people’s health.”

-Maria Gomez

- **Value Ground-Level Feedback:** Healthcare workers on the ground provide critical feedback. Building trust requires the system to be authentic, deliver on commitments, and be honest about challenges. Respecting patient autonomy and privacy is also crucial.
- **Invest in Trust:** Building trust is a long-term investment. Understand the complexities of different communities and follow through on commitments with authenticity and empathy.

“When abortion care became available in PEI, it changed the lives of those patient populations. The change felt almost instantaneous. So, change can happen quickly if we are committed to it and committed to follow through.”

-Dr. Michele Murray

RESOURCES

The following resources and trainings were shared during the event.

2SLGBTQIA+ HEALTH RESOURCES

- [2SLGBTQ+ Resources](#) – PEERS Alliance. This page contains media resources and book lists, a guide to 2SLGBTQ-affirming therapists in PEI, and more.
- [2SLGBTQI Terms and Definitions](#) – Egale Canada
- [Gender-Affirming Care Information](#) – Gender Affirming Care PEI. Practical community-based resources to support transgender, gender-divergent, transsexual, and intersex individuals in PEI.
- [How to have difficult conversations](#) – Egale Canada
- [LGBTQ2S Inclusion Playbook: A Series of Best Practices for Healthcare Environments](#) – the 519. In summary: “The Playbook is intended to support people working in acute, primary, and community health and social service environments in fostering inclusive spaces for LGBTQ2S communities and people. It provides medical professionals, care providers, administrative teams, and policymakers with tools, resources, and guidelines to better understand and meet the needs of LGBTQ2S people in healthcare and social service care settings.”
- [Resources for Health Professionals](#) – PEI Transgender Network. This page provides resources and support for health professionals working with the 2SLGBTQIA+ community.

BIPOC HEALTH RESOURCES

- [BIPOC USHR Educational Resources](#) – This page contains resources on BIPOC Mental Health, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion and more.
- [Let’s Talk: Racism and Health Equity](#) – National Collaborating Centre for Determinants of Health. This document encourages public health to act on racism as a key structural determinant of health inequities.
- [Social determinants and inequities in health for Black Canadians: A Snapshot](#) – This highlights how Anti-Black racism and systemic discrimination are key drivers of health inequalities faced by diverse Black Canadian communities.

INDIGENOUS HEALTH RESOURCES

- Episode of CBC's Unreserved about [Canadian Medical Association Apology to Indigenous Peoples](#) – This radio show covers the Canadian Medical Association's apology for its role in medical harms against Indigenous people, acknowledging past abuses and ongoing racism in healthcare.
- [Knowledge Resources and Publications](#) – National Collaborating Centre for Indigenous Health. The page offers a searchable database of publications and resources related to Indigenous health, covering topics such as cultural safety and social determinants of health.
- Webinar: [Status Quo: How health system design prevents impactful transformation of Indigenous patient care](#) – National Indigenous Cultural Safety Learning Series. The webinar highlights how the current health system design prevents meaningful improvements in Indigenous patient care.

TRAUMA-INFORMED CARE RESOURCES

- Example of [Non-Trauma Informed Space](#) – This page offers guidance on creating environments that better support individuals who have experienced trauma.
- [Learning Network](#) – Western University. This resource bridges research, practice, and lived experiences to end gender-based violence and promote gender equity.
- [TEND Trauma-Informed Practice program](#) – The program provides tools and knowledge to implement and evaluate trauma-informed practices within organizations.
- [TIO Introduction to Trauma Informed Care Training Modules](#) – Trauma Informed Oregon. The page offers four free, self-paced modules that introduce the basics of trauma-informed care.
- [Trauma- and Violence-Informed Interview Strategies in Work with Survivors of Gender-Based Violence](#) – The newsletter shares trauma- and violence-informed interview strategies for researchers working with survivors of gender-based violence.
- [Trauma- and Violence-Informed Care](#) – Equip Healthcare. The page provides resources and tools for implementing trauma- and violence-informed care.

OTHER RESOURCES

- [@WomensResearch Podcast](#) – Women's Health Research Institute at BC Women's Health. This podcast explores women's health research in British Columbia, sharing stories behind scientific discoveries and their impact.

- [Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Virtual Learning Exchange](#) – Healthcare Excellence Canada. The virtual opportunity aims to build capacity for equitable and inclusive healthcare through webinars and guided reflections.
- [Gender and Diversity Analysis](#) – Government of PEI. The page provides information on Gender and Diversity Analysis, a tool used to assess the impacts of policies, programs, and initiatives on diverse groups of people in Prince Edward Island.
- [Gender-Based Analysis Plus Course](#) – Women and Gender Equality Canada. The course introduces the basics of Gender-based Analysis Plus (GBA Plus) and how identity and social factors influence experiences.
- [Let's Talk Series](#) – National Collaborating Centre for Determinants of Health. This page offers resources to discuss key health equity concepts and social determinants of health in public health practice.
- [Public Service Commission's Pathways to Learning: Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Series](#) – This page provides a list of training related to equity, diversity, and inclusion for civil servants.
- [Weekly E-News](#) by Advisory Council on the Status of Women
- [Women and Gender-Diverse People's Health Hub](#) - The website shares information on the health and well-being of women and gender-diverse individuals in PEI.
- [Women's Health Interrupted Podcast](#) – Women's Health Research Cluster (UBC). This podcast discusses key issues in women's health through expert interviews and discussions.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the implementation of equity-focused initiatives in healthcare and other service sectors reveals several key lessons and effective interventions. Engaging with community members and ensuring their voices are heard is vital for creating relevant and effective programs. Building trust requires consistent follow-through, authentic engagement, and addressing historical mistrust. Compassionate care, inclusive practices, and cultural representation are essential for fostering a welcoming environment.

Effective equity-focused interventions include making services accessible and adaptable, reducing administrative burdens, and providing comprehensive coverage for all groups, including international students and temporary workers. Education on specific issues, such as trans healthcare, and employing diverse staff improve communication and patient satisfaction. Creating safe and inclusive environments, offering translation services, and collecting relevant data ensure that all populations are represented and their needs addressed. Ultimately, these efforts lead to better health outcomes, increased trust, and a more inclusive and supportive healthcare system. Continuous commitment, active listening, and valuing patient experiences are crucial for sustaining progress and ensuring that equity-focused initiatives make a meaningful difference in the lives of all individuals.

While these initiatives are crucial at the individual level, it is important to recognize that system-wide changes are also necessary. Ongoing collaboration and efforts to address structural barriers will be essential to achieving lasting equity and inclusion in healthcare and beyond. Together, we can work towards a more equitable future for all.