

**NYC Chapter Diversity Plan
Update
September 4th, 2017**

Overview

The NYC Chapter's primary lens and organizing theme for all Chapter programming and activities is Race, Diversity and Intersectionality (RDI). All facets of the Chapter's ongoing work, including leadership (Board of Directors, Delegate Assembly, Committees, Commissions, etc.), staffing, programming (Continuing Education, Membership Development, Fundraising), and our legislative agenda integrates RDI in the planning, implementation and evaluation. All staff and Board members are encouraged and expected to understand the importance of this, including participating in training.

Leadership

Currently, the Executive Committee of the NYC Chapter is comprised of five board officers/board members of color and three white officers/board members. The current Board of Directors also reflects diversity across race, gender, sexual orientation, age, etc. The Nominations Committee has been charged to ensure that future elections of leadership reflect the diversity of the social work profession, particularly in New York City. A Latinx Committee was founded. The Asian American and Pacific Islander Committee is also being revitalized. Appointments to the Political Action for Candidate Election (PACE) Committee leadership (Steering Committee) have also reflected the lens of RDI, resulting in new appointments which has diversified the leadership from previous years. A collective effort between Board members, Staff and Chapter members gave rise to the formation of the Immigration & Global Social Work (IGSW) Committee, with social workers who have expanded RDI to an international framework. This group will focus on the human rights of migrants, asylees, refugee communities, survivors of human trafficking, and marginalized indigenous populations in New York City. IGSW's leadership is currently comprised of three co-chairpersons-- one of Caribbean descent, one of Dalit Bengali descent, and one of Jewish descent. Among other tasks, IGSW plans to respond to rapidly shifting immigration policies and discriminatory practices in New York City, while expanding the conversation on human trafficking, the fastest growing crime locally and nationally.

Programming

The Chapter's 2017 3rd Annual Social Work in the City Continuing Education Conference, with nearly 1000 attending, hosted a keynote presentation by Joy Reid, who discussed the presidential election, racial justice, voting and elections, income inequity, employment, education, drug policy and incarceration, women's health, mental health and housing. The second keynote speaker, Dr. Harry Aponte, LCSW, LMFT discussed structural family therapy and differences in the therapeutic dyad including race, diversities, and socioeconomic status. All of the workshops also reflected an RDI lens as a result of careful vetting from the Continuing Education Committee.

The 49th Annual Addictions Institute was organized with an RDI lens and 300 attended. One of the keynote speakers, Dr. Samuel Kelton Roberts Jr. of Columbia University, spoke on Black Life, History, and Drug Policy, squarely within the RDI lens.

The Chapter developed and circulated a statement related to anti-immigration sentiment, which has increased over the last year. It is titled: [NASW-NYC Denounces Xenophobia, in Solidarity with Immigrants and Calls the Profession to Action.](#)

The Chapter's Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Expression (SOGIE) Collective, Coalition on Race, Diversity and Intersectionality (CRDI), and Political Action for Candidate Election (PACE) Committee also co-sponsored "Conversion Therapy: Implications of Sexual Orientation & Gender Identity Change Efforts Across Race, Diversity and Intersectionality", a forum which educated participants about sexual orientation change efforts (SOCE) in February 2017. In addition, the SOGIE Collective has provided LGBTQ Sensitivity trainings to other leadership in the chapter. In January 2017, NASW-NYC organized two buses of 100 social workers to attend the National Women and Allies March in Washington DC.

In February 2017, NASW-NYC's Task Force of Social Workers of African Descent co-sponsored and participated on a panel titled "Actualizing The United Nations' Decade for People of African Descent: The Human Services Professions' Organizing Challenge for Health Equity in Social Work, Psychology and Addiction Fields".

In March 2017, NASW-NYC co-sponsored an "Immigration & Mass Incarceration" event with New York University. This event was a panel discussion of experts in the field to educate attendees on the intersection of mass incarceration, trauma and immigration.

Also, in March 2017, NASW- NYC co-sponsored with the NYC Administration for Children's Services - The Historical Child Welfare Timeline: A Transformational Experience. This exhibit highlights racial disproportionality and disparity in the child welfare system from the 1800s to present. The exhibit uses policies to narrate the story of institutional racism, poverty, oppression, privilege, trauma and resilience.

In April 2017, NASW-NYC participated in and moderated "Education and Miseducation: Does the US Education Reinforce Racism?", a panel held at and organized by the Fordham University Graduate School of Social Service.

In August 2017, NASW-NYC Chapter partnered with NASW National to provide a panel on NASW social justice initiatives at Fordham University Graduate School of Social Service's conference: "Forensic Social Work's Role in Advancing Human Rights and Social Justice Initiatives : A Local Global Celebration".

The Fundraising Committee has also adopted the RDI lens by ensuring that decisions about awardees at the Chapter's annual Awards Dinner reflect the diversity of social workers in New York City.

Legislative Agenda

The Chapter's legislative agenda also reflects the Chapter's commitment to RDI. NASW-NYC initiated and drafted the initial language and parameters for a bill in the NY State Legislature. This bill will result in the development of a Racial Equity Committee; a legislative committee tasked with viewing legislative proposals through the lens of racial equity and formulating a racial equity impact assessment.

The Chapter has prioritized lobbying for the passage of a bill in the New York State legislature, which would codify conversion therapy (a form of sexual orientation change efforts), practiced with minors (individuals under the age of 18) as professional misconduct, essentially making it illegal to practice with youth. April 25th, NASW-NYC, NASW-NYS, the NYS Association for Clinical Social Workers and New York State Psychological Association (NYSPA) went to Albany to lobby our lawmakers in order to pass Senate Bill S263, which would make the practice of conversion therapy professional misconduct, effectively banning it. Leadership from all five organizations were interviewed: <http://www.twcnews.com/nys/capital-region/capital-tonight-interviews/2017/04/26/anti-conversion-therapy-panel-042617.html>.

The Chapter was a direct supporter of Raise the Age NY, a statewide campaign to raise the age of criminal responsibility for juveniles from 16 to 18 years of age. Raise the Age NY was successfully signed into law in New York on April 10, 2017. By October, 2019, New York will end prosecutions of 16 and 17 year-olds as adults.

NASW-NYC has been an organizational partner in the #CloseRikers campaign of JustLeadership USA, an organization in NYC, which organizes for decarceration, reducing jails and prisons in NYC and across the country. Staff and members were present throughout the year at all actions and events. As part of this effort, Mayor de Blasio now has a stated commitment to closing the Rikers Island jail complex within ten years. The campaign is continuing to work on the various criminal justice issues necessary to facilitate the closure.

NASW-NYC has also endorsed the Humane Alternatives to Long Term Solitary Confinement, (HALT) Bill. HALT seeks to limit the use of solitary confinement in accordance to international human rights standards. The Chapter has taken a vital position against the use of solitary confinement in our prison system. Through an RDI lens, the movement to abolish solitary confinement addresses racism and the criminalization of people of color and other marginalized communities.