



Advancing Health Equity in Nursing
Reflections from a 4-Part Learning Collaborative Series

In early 2022, the National Nurse-Led Care Consortium (NNCC) conducted the **Advancing Health Equity in Nursing Learning Collaborative**, a virtual, four-week training series for a national nursing audience. Each 1-hr. live session would begin with a five-minute check-in, followed by a didactic presentation and a breakout activity in separate groups. Breakout groups would then reconvene and share their discussion highlights. Participants were given time to discuss any further points or ask questions.

The series focused on four topics:

Session 1: *Erasing the Margins: A Cultural Intelligence (CQ) Approach*

Session 2: *Breaking Barrier to Equitable Health*

Session 3: *Happiness is a Right: Health Equity and Mental Wellness among Nurses*

Session 4: *Shifting the Atmosphere: Improving Equity for Transformational Patient-Provider Relationships*

Featured Speakers:

- Angela Richard-Eaglin, DNP, MSN, FNP-BC, CNE, FAANP, Associate Dean for Equity at the Yale School of Nursing and Associate Clinical Professor
- Sharon Cobb, PhD, MSN, MPH, RN, PHN Director of the RN to Bachelor of Science in Nursing (RN-BSN) Program & an Assistant Professor in the Mervyn M. Dymally School of Nursing at Charles R. Drew University of Medicine and Science

Session Goals:

Session 1: *Erasing the Margins: A Cultural Intelligence (CQ) Approach*

The focus of this session was to critically appraise the impact of marginalization on poor health outcomes for disadvantaged populations and to analyze application of the CQ framework and humanitarian principles to improve health equity. Dr. Richard-Eaglin reviewed the evidence appraisal for social determinants of health and their goals (e.g., economic stability, education access and quality, health care access and quality, and healthy neighborhoods and environments). Dr. Richard-Eaglin reviewed examples of how best to address these goals such as

with economic stability, the need being to provide people the ability to earn steady incomes to allow them to meet their health needs. Discussion also centered cultural intelligence vs. emotional intelligence and why culture, perspective, and differences matter.

Session 2: *Breaking Barriers to Equitable Health*

The target of this session was to critically appraise the impact of ethnocentrism, bias, and stigma on health disparities and inequities and to develop person-centered supportive care strategies for individuals from stigmatized populations. Key takeaways included: racism is a social determinant of health, diversity and inclusion advance equity and help organizations to thrive, many characteristics of diversity are invisible, nurses need to critically examine how they relate to the populations they serve, and nurses who are committed to taking steps to ensure a less racist future must move beyond words to action. Discussion areas also included recognition of bias and stigma and strategies for mitigation.

Session 3: *Happiness is a Right: Health Equity and Mental Wellness among Nurses*

Dr. Cobb discussed the impact of health inequities on the physical, psychological/mental, and social health of nurses, examined the factors related to equity that can lead to poorer health status in the nursing profession and nursing schools, and tools and resources to increase overall wellness and happiness among nurses. She focused on structural inequities, health inequities, the impact of perceived stress and coping adequacy on the health of nurses, and barriers contributing to health challenges among nurses. She touched on the importance of self-engagement and self-awareness, and targeted nursing education, administration, leadership, and research.

Session 4: *Shifting the Atmosphere: Improving Equity for Transformational Patient-Provider Relationships*

Dr. Cobb identified various factors that can increase inequity between providers and patients, demonstrated how support and involvement of community stakeholders can result in improved patient outcomes, and recommended strategies that can improve equitable patient-provider relationships for nurses. Dr. Cobb also discussed health inequities, social determinants of health (SDOH) challenges, introspection, and power dynamics. She talked through patient-centered, person-centered, and patient-directed care. She addressed each strategy of the whole-person care framework, including: community-integrated health care, culturally based approaches, providers focusing on education and outreach efforts aimed at increasing knowledge and treatment plan effectiveness, empowering the individual to be at the center of their care and participate in shared decision-making of their care, and policy implications. To conclude, Dr. Cobb stressed the importance of interpersonal skills and decreasing consumerism within healthcare.

Discussion: Emerging Themes and Participant Perspectives

How are nurses supporting patient/person care and making healthcare systems more comfortable for the people they serve?

<i>Addressing SDOH;</i>	<i>Provide a holistic approach;</i>
<i>Not labeling patients as being non-compliant;</i>	<i>Be observant;</i>
<i>Language (i.e. asking supportive questions);</i>	<i>Don't turn a blind eye and miss solutions;</i>
<i>Don't tolerate bias;</i>	<i>Remember words matter;</i>
<i>Practice self-reflection;</i>	<i>Bias: Identify it, be aware of it, work through it;</i>
<i>Creating spaces for conversation;</i>	<i>Make sure your team is trained, prepared and accountable</i>
<i>Acknowledging your own bias;</i>	<i>for fostering a positive environment;</i>
<i>Focus on DEI in academia and the workplace</i>	<i>Having readily available resources addressing barriers patients may have</i>

How can we improve psychosocial well-being among nurses?

<i>Reduce micro and macro aggressions</i>	<i>Advocate for policies that further opportunities for professional development</i>
<i>Empower people to reach out for help</i>	<i>Policies for paid time off</i>
<i>Provide/create a safe environment to shift mentality</i>	<i>Identify burden(s) carried by individuals and teams of staff</i>
<i>Help each other</i>	<i>Identify supports nurses might need</i>
<i>Encourage time off and mental health breaks</i>	<i>Address policies impacting wellbeing and health equity of nurses (e.g., 8hr shifts, nurse staffing ratios, etc.)</i>
<i>Encourage switching units</i>	<i>Make Employee Assisted Programs (EAP) services more available to nurses (EAPs help provided counseling and short-term support)</i>
<i>Encourage work-life balance</i>	

Highlighted Resources:

- Bazargan, M., Cobb, S., Assari, S., & Bazargan-Hejazi, S. (2022). Preparedness for Serious Illnesses: Impact of Ethnicity, Mistrust, Perceived Discrimination, and Health Communication. *American Journal of Hospice and Palliative Medicine*®, 39(4), 461–471. <https://doi.org/10.1177/104990912111036885>
- [Healthy People 2030: SDOH](#)
- [National Commission to Address Racism in Nursing](#)
- New Horizons: Stop the Stigma Initiative [Video](#)
- Richard-Eaglin, A. (2020). The Significance of Cultural Intelligence in Nurse Leadership. *Nurse Leader*, 1-5. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.mnl.2020.07.009>

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