

Pain Equity Provider Self-Assessment

Healthcare providers must reflect on their practices and behaviors to ensure that each patient receives equitable care. Recognizing and addressing racial biases is crucial in eliminating disparities in pain and fostering a healthcare environment that promotes equity. This guide and questionnaire aim to facilitate self-reflection and awareness among healthcare providers by assessing practices and behaviors that may be influenced by racial bias and lead to inequity in pain experiences for Black patients.

UNCOVER BIAS IN YOUR DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES

Racialized biases can influence clinical decision-making when treating Black patients. Some common biases include beliefs that Black patients have higher pain thresholds or that they are exaggerating their pain.¹ Providers can better serve Black patients by identifying individual biases, participating in educational opportunities, and implementing changes to mitigate bias.

Questions to Consider

How often do you...

Never Sometimes Often Always

Take steps to identify and address your own implicit biases?

Participate in continuing education programs or workshops on racial bias and cultural humility in healthcare?

Stay updated on current best practices in providing equitable care to patients from different racial and ethnic backgrounds?

Implement any anti-bias strategies in your practice?

Next Steps

We all have biases, and identifying those biases is a step to understanding opportunities for reducing pain inequity. Providers can leverage bias assessments like the [Harvard Implicit Association Test](#) (IAT) and seek out education opportunities to learn how to mitigate racial bias. Through identifying biases and developing antiracist skills, providers can ensure they are delivering consistent high-quality care.

Action Plan

How can you address any identified bias in your practice?

DEVELOP AN EMPOWERING COMMUNICATION STYLE

Survey research has shown that two-thirds of patients still have questions after healthcare visits.²



Providers must seek clarification and feedback from patients to ensure patients understand. Providers should practice active listening without interrupting or dismissing patients' concerns.

Questions to Consider

How often do you...	Never	Sometimes	Often	Always
Ensure Black patients and their families feel empowered and informed throughout their healthcare journey?				
Actively collaborate with interpreters, cultural brokers, or community organizations to enhance cultural competence in your practice?				
Encourage patients to provide feedback on their experiences, especially regarding potential bias or cultural insensitivity?				
Make any changes to your practice based on patient feedback related to racial bias?				

Next Steps

Traditional approaches to healthcare can be top-down. Providers should engage in shared decision-making, where patients and physicians share information to identify pain relief needs, express treatment preferences, and agree on a thorough treatment plan. Shared decision-making ensures that the patient’s concerns are addressed. Physicians should also consider leveraging community resources to ensure information is delivered to people in ways that fit their culture.



For more information on communicating with Black patients, check out **The Pain Equity Project resource Guide for Healthcare Providers on Discussing Pain with Black Patients.**

Action Plan

How can you adapt your practice to better listen to and communicate with Black patients?

DEVELOP A COMMUNITY-DRIVEN UNDERSTANDING OF HEALTH-CARE BEHAVIORS

Providers should strive to be well-informed about cultural practices, beliefs, and preferences that may impact the healthcare decisions of Black patients. Considering the patient’s experience within their physical and social community is essential.

Questions to Consider

How often do you...	Never	Sometimes	Often	Always
Consider the cultural practices, beliefs, and preferences that may impact the healthcare decisions of patients from various racial and ethnic backgrounds?				
Consider factors such as socioeconomic status, insurance status, and cultural background when developing treatment plans?				
Actively monitor health outcomes and racialized disparities within your practice?				
Collect community feedback to improve the quality of care and address potential biases?				

Next Steps

Providers should educate themselves about their patients' cultures, communities and backgrounds, including the experiences and specific health concerns that may be more prevalent among Black patients. Providers should consider joining community organizations to improve their cultural understanding, strengthen relationships, and build trust in order to transform their practice and reduce racialized pain inequities.

Action Plan

How can you better incorporate community perspectives in your health practice?

Additional Notes

References

- [1] Hoffman, K. M., Trawalter, S., Axt, J. R., & Oliver, M. N. (2016). Racial Bias in Pain Assessment and Treatment recommendations, and False Beliefs about Biological Differences between Blacks and Whites. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 113(16), 4296–4301. <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1516047113>
- [2] Wolters Kluwer survey reveals two-thirds of patients still have questions after healthcare visits. (2023). [www.wolterskluwer.com](https://www.wolterskluwer.com/en/news/wolters-kluwer-survey-reveals-two-thirds-of-patients-still-have-questions-after-healthcare-visits). Retrieved July 11, 2023, from <https://www.wolterskluwer.com/en/news/wolters-kluwer-survey-reveals-two-thirds-of-patients-still-have-questions-after-healthcare-visits>