



Lakes Region Mental Health Center

Statement on Social Justice and Public Health

Our commitment to diversity and inclusion informs our stance on social justice as a public health issue. We believe that as a just community, we unite against all forms of injustice, including, but not limited to, racism, gender, sexual orientation, religion, gender identity, ageism, differently abled, mental illness, mental abilities, and public health. We reject bigotry, oppression, degradation, and harassment, and we challenge injustice toward any member of our community.

We know that an individual's experiences are significantly impacted by bias, privilege, marginalization, invisibility and a culture of white supremacy that results in systemic oppression. We define "social justice" as a process of building individual and community capacity for collaborative action with the purpose of empowering all people, including disadvantaged and marginalized persons, to exercise self-determination and realize their full potential. Social justice is a public health issue because the wellbeing of our community as a whole ultimately impacts all of us on individual levels.

As mental health professionals, we believe that the intersections of mental and physical health are inseparable and shape an individual's overall wellbeing. Individual wellness is the framework for community health as we are all impacted by the health of our community members.

At Lakes Region Mental Health Center, we strive to create an inclusive and diverse community, but we understand that valuing difference is not enough to manifest justice and thereby provide for the wellbeing of the individuals and families we serve. We serve one of the most vulnerable and marginalized populations in our communities; those with mental illness.

We must broaden our focus from simply understanding instances of victimization to a larger concern with determining how policies, laws, and societal norms serve as the foundation for maintaining implicit biases that are at the root of all discrimination, prejudice, bias and inequity.

Lakes Region Mental Health Center celebrates the multifaceted diversity represented by our staff and our Board of Directors and also strives to enhance the quality of services by acting as an advocate for the promotion of mental health awareness and appreciation of diversity.

In our call to action, we work to promote social justice and human rights to reduce disparities in behavioral health through active advocacy. LRMHC is increasing its cultural competency by expanding our staff diversity training, reviewing our hiring practices, and reviewing our Board composition to ensure that we have a diverse representation in the community. Our staff shares an interest in and dedication to understanding the effects of social factors on the behavioral health of individuals. We seek to change the way our community responds to mental health crisis by providing Crisis Intervention Training to law enforcement personnel so that we can adopt a more innovative, community-based approach towards improving the outcomes of these encounters. We advocate for environments and policies that foster positive mental health and well-being and we honor individuals and organizations for their contributions to these goals and to sound public policy.

The Lakes Region Mental Health Center is committed to creating an inclusive and healing community of care for all.