

Community Alliances for Equity Virtual Coffeehouse: *Intentionally Centering School psychologists and Guidance Counselors in Equity Work*

March 21, 2024

TRANSCRIPTION

Saba-Na'imah Berhane: All right, thank you for joining us. So, welcome to the Region III MAP Center *Community Alliances for Equity Virtual Coffeehouse* series. This *Community Alliances for Equity Virtual Coffeehouse* session is a space to virtually land as we work to create equitable learning environments to meet the needs of our students and families in the face of current social and legislative climate. It is our objective to use this opportunity to share our successes and challenges and/or strategies for meeting those challenges. We encourage all of us to come together in this virtual space to share our experiences and use dialogue and conversation, just as you would in your local coffeehouse.

Saba-Na'imah Berhane: I have my little background going to kind of set the vibe a little bit. That is the vibe we encourage all of you to take. This is a very informal, kind of comfortable conversation. I'm going to read a disclaimer before we begin. And again, this conversation will be recorded and accessible through our website and on YouTube.

Saba-Na'imah Berhane: So, the contents of this professional learning session were developed under a grant from the U.S. Department of Education. However, the content does not necessarily represent the policy of the Department of Education, and endorsement by the federal government should not be assumed.

Saba-Na'imah Berhane: The contents of this session, including activities, are provided to individuals from school boards, state municipalities, school districts, and other governmental units legally responsible for operating a

Community Alliances for Equity Virtual Coffeehouse: *Intentionally Centering School psychologists and Guidance Counselors in Equity Work*

March 21, 2024

public school or schools, or TA&D partners for technical assistance and dissemination partners, for professional development purposes. All sessions strive to maintain a safe, closed environment for candid conversations about equity-related issues.

Saba-Na'imah Berhane: The thoughts, opinions and practices shared or expressed during a session are that of the participant and not of their employer, affiliated program, or host organization. Best practices are in use-- are in place to ensure session content, information, and the identities of participants are shared only for their intended purposes. For their intended use. However, privacy and confidentiality cannot be guaranteed.

Saba-Na'imah Berhane: Participants in this virtual experience are from various states, some of which have two-party consent for video and monitoring and recording meetings and calls. If the Center would like to record any aspect of this event, participants will be informed via the Zoom automated announcement. If this an-- automated announcement is not made, the event is not being reported by the MAP Center.

Saba-Na'imah Berhane: To adhere to state laws of participants who reside in two-party consent states, individual participants are not allowed to personally video or audio record any aspect of this professional learning experience. To do so without full disclosure is a violation of state laws of participants who are participating in this event in any of those two-party consent states.

Community Alliances for Equity Virtual Coffeehouse: *Intentionally Centering School psychologists and Guidance Counselors in Equity Work*

March 21, 2024

Saba-Na'imah Berhane: And then as a reminder, we are recording this one. All right, we got that out the way. So, we're from the MAP Center. That's the Midwest & Plains Equity Assistance Center, and it's one of four regional Equity Assistance Centers funded by the U.S. Department of Education under the Title IV of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. As the Region III Equity Assistance Center, we provide equity-centered technical assistance to state education agencies and public school districts in this 13-state region, in the areas of race, sex, religion, and national origin. So, you may see some of these faces in the room today. This is our design team and contributors for the event.

Saba-Na'imah Berhane: I'm going to start with myself, and I'll just do like a short introduction and then I'm going to let others introduce themselves. So, my name's Na'imah. Oh, it's not going, is it? There it is. My name's Na'imah, and I'm a Learning Networks & Engagement Associate here at the MAP Center. I'll be helping to facilitate our discussion today, so you'll see me in this role as I help pass the mic around the room. I'm going to let Dr. Seena Skelton take the mic next.

Dr. Skelton: Thank you, Na'imah. Good afternoon, everyone. I—it is my pleasure and excitement to welcome, welcome you all here in this space. I am Seena Skelton, I'm the Director for the Midwest & Plains Equity Assistance Center. I will not be your primary, primary facilitator today, but I am eager and excited to learn from this, this esteemed panel. So, thank you and welcome again.

Saba-Na'imah Berhane: Thank you, and I'm gonna let Kristina go ahead and introduce herself as well.



Community Alliances for Equity Virtual Coffeehouse: *Intentionally Centering School psychologists and Guidance Counselors in Equity Work*



March 21, 2024

Kristina Johnson-Yates: Hello, my name is Kristina Johnson-Yates. I'm a Doctoral Research Assistant here at the Equity Center, and I will be serving as your technical support specialist-- technical assistant, I'm sorry, and answer any questions or if you have any technical difficulties, you can feel free to private chat me or just let me know and I will be happy to help.

Saba-Na'imah Berhane: Thank you. I'm gonna let Kristina walk us through a little bit about how our norms are going to work for today.

Kristina Johnson-Yates: Awesome. So please make yourself comfortable and move about and take breaks as you need. Alt text is used on the slide images. We will not be utilizing breakout groups for this session. And mute your mic when not speaking. And then finally, we will have a group photo at the end of the session. We will queue you before that happens. We will not just be taking photos without your knowledge or consent. And just, just be aware of that. Once again, I will let everyone know when that is happening. Thanks, Na'imah.

Saba-Na'imah Berhane: Yep, thank you. So again, I'll be doing some of the facilitating help pass the mic around the room, and Kristina will be helping facilitate on the chat side of things to help interact with you guys in the chat. If you guys have any questions, you can write them in there. And she's monitoring it.

Saba-Na'imah Berhane: All right, so today's session is *Intentionally Centering School Psychologists and School Counselors in Equity Work*. Community members, classroom teachers, parents, caregivers all play a central

Community Alliances for Equity Virtual Coffeehouse: *Intentionally Centering School psychologists and Guidance Counselors in Equity Work*

March 21, 2024

personal and professional role in continuous equity efforts in schools. In this online conversation, we will be centering the experience of school psychologists and school counselors in facilitating equity-focused efforts in schools. So, please note that our conversation today will center those that have been historically and contemporarily marginalized as our charge as an Equity Assistance Center. Please be ready to take notes as we engage together in this conversation. And on that note, I'm going to introduce you all to our conversation starters for today.

Saba-Na'imah Berhane: So, for today's discussion, we have invited three distinguished school psychologists who range in experiences from preparing school psychologists, to working in large urban school districts, suburban school districts as our conversation starters. Our conversation starters, as a role, will respond to a series of discussion prompts that are designed to amplify discourse pertaining to the role of school psychologists in advancing educational equity. So, each of our conversation starters will respond to a question, a prompt, and then after that we will...that will be followed by an opportunity for participants to contribute. I'll briefly introduce them and then I'll give them a chance to further introduce themselves. So, I'm going to go...I'm going to introduce all three of you and then I'll give you a chance one by one to introduce yourself.

Saba-Na'imah Berhane: So, first we have Dr. Julie Morrison, who is a Professor in the School Psychology Program at the University of Cincinnati. Her research interests include evaluating the effectiveness of universal and targeted interventions to academic-- to address academic and

Community Alliances for Equity Virtual Coffeehouse: *Intentionally Centering School psychologists and Guidance Counselors in Equity Work*

March 21, 2024

behavioral needs of school-aged children and youth, as well as program evaluation.

Saba-Na'imah Berhane: We have Dr. Kami Moore Hill is-- who is a licensed school psychologist and a board-certified behavior analyst with over 20 years of experience providing intensive behavior consultation and intervention planning to students and families with behavioral, developmental, and academic needs. She divides her time between Cincinnati Public Schools and Cincinnati Mental Health Community at-large, and she's also an adjunct faculty member with the University of Cincinnati School Psychology Program.

Saba-Na'imah Berhane: And Dr. Kyle Johnson is a Licensed psychologist and certified school psychologist in the state of Ohio. He is the current Coordinator of Psychological and Mental Health Services for the Springfield in Ohio City School District. So again, like we, we have three very distinguished conversation starters. I'd love to give you guys a chance to introduce yourselves, if you'd like, to say a bit about yourself personally or professionally. I'm going to give the microphone over to Julie.

Dr. Morrison: Sure. Well, thank you all for having me here to join in this very important conversation. I just wanted to, you know, highlight some of the connections here. So, I've known Seena since we were, well, we must have been 12 years old, because I think I've known you for about 30 years now. So, as we were graduate students in the School Psychology Program here at the University of Cincinnati, Seena was

Community Alliances for Equity Virtual Coffeehouse: *Intentionally Centering School psychologists and Guidance Counselors in Equity Work*

March 21, 2024

one year ahead of me, and I think Kami was one year behind me. So, I'm sandwiched between two rock stars here.

Dr. Morrison:

And then I also have a connection with Ruthie because I do some work...I'm affiliated with the Michigan MTSS Technical Assistance Center that Ruthie was part of, an important part of, before she came to the Equity Center. So, it's always good to see you, Ruthie. I know I'll learn something. And I was a practicing school psychologist. So, I worked in Cincinnati Public Schools for five years before I came to the university level. I was at the University of Dayton first, and then I came to University of Cincinnati. And that's a little bit about me.

Saba-Na'imah Berhane:

Thank you so much, Julie. It's so interesting to see how those connections. The world is such a small place. Next, I'd like to pass the microphone over to Kami.

Dr. Hill:

Hi, everybody. I like to consider myself...I'm kind of on the front lines. One of the things when I came into school psychology was that I love the idea of teaching 'cause I came from a preschool teaching background prior to graduate school, but I also like to be able to practice what I preach. And so, I really worked very hard to be able to work in both of those arenas so that I can teach what I, I can live and teach this, I can, I can live what I'm teaching.

Dr. Hill:

And so that's always been really important to me to be able to do that because one of the things that I really like to do is working with young people in schools, but also continuing to contribute to the field of school psychology and to help mentor and work with those coming

Community Alliances for Equity Virtual Coffeehouse: *Intentionally Centering School psychologists and Guidance Counselors in Equity Work*

March 21, 2024

into the field. So, it's kind of, I'm kind of straddling a couple of different worlds in my practice.

Saba-Na'imah Berhane: Thank you. And you shared before we geared up for the session that some of those young voices might be a little bit, you said, across the hall.

Dr. Hill: Yes, yes, I'm in a preschool, and they are in there across the hall. And so, if you hear some screaming or crying, everybody's OK. But that is how a lot of my students down here communicate.

Saba-Na'imah Berhane: I thought that was cool. OK. I'd like to pass the microphone to Kyle.

Dr. Johnson: Good afternoon, everybody. My name is Kyle Johnson. As, as indicated in the intro, I work in Springfield City Schools, which is I want to say roughly 30 minutes east of Dayton, Ohio. I'm originally from Detroit, Michigan, so I affectionately joke with all of my friends that I'm behind enemy lines here in Ohio, but just excited to be here today, excited to engage in this very meaningful and important discourse.

Dr. Johnson: Just a little bit about my professional background, I worked as a school psychologist for approximately four to five years, and then transition into an administrative role and, and really enjoyed working with not only our school psychologists, but our district, I like to say, is resource-rich. We have mental health therapists that service all of our buildings, along with a lot of strong community partnerships that we have in the area where we not only get mental health support

Community Alliances for Equity Virtual Coffeehouse: *Intentionally Centering School psychologists and Guidance Counselors in Equity Work*

March 21, 2024

services, but counseling services as well, and have an opportunity to sort of supervise our behavior coaches and our behavior specialists.

Dr. Johnson:

So, I wear a lot of different hats. I, I think my passion is in this work and in crisis management. We recently had a pretty significant crisis in the district where we had to close the, the district for a day. So, find myself playing catch up. And as I mentioned before starting this there, I just heard a knock at my door. I'm at work as well in an office that has a lot of traffic. So, I'll try to mute when I'm not talking, so as not to disturb the discussion. So, thank you.

Saba-Na'imah Berhane:

Thank you. Yes, a lot of us are in a informal setting and that's totally fine. Or if you're in a work setting, there's, there will be life noises because life happens. So, I would like to go ahead and bring us into the discussion that we're going to have today. I have prepared four different questions for us, and our first question should be up on the screen here. I think I'm going to do it in a relaxed way where whoever wants to go first can go first. And so, I'm going to read the question and then whoever would like to jump in first.

Saba-Na'imah Berhane:

I'm going to let our conversation starters each get a chance to kind of weigh in on the question. And then I'm going to ask our participants in the room, our other participants in this conversation because it's, it's, it's, it is a whole group conversation. After we get that conversation going, I'm going to open it up. So, if you're wanting to add something in the chat or if you want to hop on the microphone, I will be welcoming that from all of our participants.

Community Alliances for Equity Virtual Coffeehouse: *Intentionally Centering School psychologists and Guidance Counselors in Equity Work*

March 21, 2024

Saba-Na'imah Berhane: So, our first question: “Considering the diversity of marginalized identities, what are some of the new and recurring challenges and barriers that hinder effective services, advocacy, and social justice for all students and families? How can school psychology/psychologists/counselors contribute to fostering anti-racist, anti-oppressive learning environments?” And I'll let you have a moment if you want to reflect. And then whoever would like to go first, feel free. [long pause]

Dr. Morrison: I'm kind of reflecting on this question and the, the other three questions, which are really challenging questions. I guess they're challenging questions for challenging times. But I was kind of thinking back on where school psychology has been, and where it's going in this regard. So, speaking more, you know, like as a profession, our professional organization is called NASP, the National Association of school psychologists.

Dr. Morrison: And we have, you know, professional practice standards. And every year they put-- every ten years, they renew the practice model, which, you know, it's the way the standards are packaged. And the practice model really, if you look back, has changed the language, which really reflects the emphasis on greater need for social justice advocacy. So, the 2010 NASP Practice Standards, domain eight was called “Diversity in Development and Learning.”

Dr. Morrison: And there the, the practice standard, and standard for training, talked about being sensitive that, that school psychologists should demonstrate a sensitivity to issues around diversity and working with

Community Alliances for Equity Virtual Coffeehouse: *Intentionally Centering School psychologists and Guidance Counselors in Equity Work*

March 21, 2024

individuals with, you know, individual differences and diverse backgrounds. But ten years later, so the 2020 NASP Practice Model, domain eight became “Equitable Practices for Diverse Student Populations,” and the language really changed here.

Dr. Morrison:

It called on school psychologists to promote equity and social justice in educational programs, ensuring all children and youth learn in safe and supportive and inclusive environments, that school psychologists actively engage in efforts to address factors that limit equity and access to educational opportunity. So that's very markedly different language, I believe, than just, you know, being sensitive to other people, that other people might have differences from you. But that, you know, we're actually called on to actively engage to disrupt systems that oppress school-aged children and youth.

Dr. Morrison:

A second point under the, the current standards are that school psychologists acknowledge this subtle racial, class, gender, cultural and, and other biases and personal beliefs that they may bring to their work, and the impact they may have on their professional decisions, interactions, and activities. So again, that, that, that actually calling it out. Actually making it an emphasis in, in professional practice and in training. And the, the practice model then in these standards pervade everything that our current graduate students learn in grad school.

Dr. Morrison:

So, it's in, it's in the, you know, in their syllabus, it's in the readings that they do. School psychology professional practice programs are accountable to these standards for accreditation. And so, it's, it will

Community Alliances for Equity Virtual Coffeehouse: *Intentionally Centering School psychologists and Guidance Counselors in Equity Work*

March 21, 2024

really change the future direction of the profession to require this kind of critical consciousness and call for, you know, social justice advocacy. Are we there yet? You know, no, we have a, a lot of ways to go. But I, I think it's promising that we're having these important conversations. And I, I would love to see if Kyle and Kami agree or see that playing out among practicing school psychs.

Dr. Hill:

Thanks, Julie. I think one of the things that really hit home was the, the change in the language. And so, because I am working in a school every day, one of the things that I really try to do is try to model that behavior. And that's hard. So, taking the time to talk, you know, act, you know, walk the talk that I'm trying to say. So, how can school psychologists and counselors contribute to fostering anti-racist and anti-oppressive learning environments?

Dr. Hill:

Is that Julie mentioned that the-- our state, our national organization requires that to act it out, to call it out, and I think being in those spaces where you actually have to do that. So, I spent a lot of time in IEP meetings, evaluation meetings, and those are the places where you have to physically-- or actually call those things out. If something doesn't quite feel right, just having...reading the room, and trying to figure out how to do that in a way that is going to not put up barriers, that is going to continue the conversation.

Dr. Hill:

And I think a lot of times it, it, it is very, very challenging to do that and still feel like you're in a, a safe space when you make those, when you make call, call people out on those various things. But I think participating in committees and programs that are not at the

Community Alliances for Equity Virtual Coffeehouse: *Intentionally Centering School psychologists and Guidance Counselors in Equity Work*

March 21, 2024

school level, but I've tried to participate in things at the district level to be able to have a hand and a seat at the table. When looking at district-wide discipline data for example, and the disproportionalities between how students of Color are treated, those students that are marginalized in any kind of way, how their data and things look-- differ from those that are not.

Dr. Hill:

And so really looking at, "OK, a. This is called-- this looks very different. And why does it look different? What are our practices? What are our curriculums? What are our things that can lead to different treatment of students?" And really having those really hard conversations, and kind of just saying it. Not in a way that is-- not tiptoeing around it, but just really having to, to call that out. And so having a hand at the table in those very specific instances.

Dr. Johnson:

Yeah, I want to add a little different perspective as it relates to this question. And in preparation for today, I was thinking about my role as Coordinator and Supervising School Psychologist. I appreciated sort of the idea of framing part of this conversation of look at how our national organization has began to move and change with the times. You know, what are the things that I see, or I call on, our school psychologists to do when they're thinking about this question is how do you advocate at a very local level, right? You know, we, you know, in Springfield, we are seeing a, a significant change in our student demographic and our, and the, and the families in our community.

Community Alliances for Equity Virtual Coffeehouse: *Intentionally Centering School psychologists and Guidance Counselors in Equity Work*

March 21, 2024

Dr. Johnson:

And one of the things that I experience in administration is some pushback from teachers, from building level administration, even district level administration about how do we create equitable environments, and the importance of being intentional and the intentionality in creating equitable environments for all of our families. And one of the things I recognize, too, is sometimes school psychologists in our district, you know, we have a workforce issue.

Dr. Johnson:

We just, we've struggled in Springfield just to hire enough school psychologists to respond to the need, or the increasing need, of evaluations and students who are presenting with unique learning needs. But I, I also encourage the team to, to advocate and to recognize where they may feel like they need more training, they need more assistance from...at a district level to help understand and, and become better equipped. Because most of our school psychologists are monolingual, you know, so they recognize the importance of being really intentional and conducting culturally responsive evaluations to meet the needs of our, our diverse learners that, as I mentioned, our sort of student demographic continues to change.

Dr. Johnson:

And we, and we're receiving a lot...of some pushback, you know, from teachers. And I think it's important for school psychologists because we're uniquely equipped to understand learning differences, learning styles, recognizing or maybe having a better understanding where it may be strictly a language issue as opposed to truly be a disability, and trying to...so, I think it's incumbent upon school psychologists to take a, a pretty strong stance in advocating for

Community Alliances for Equity Virtual Coffeehouse: *Intentionally Centering School psychologists and Guidance Counselors in Equity Work*

March 21, 2024

students and families with regard to ensuring that we are conducting culturally responsive, responsive, culturally inclusive evaluations to determine eligibility.

Saba-Na'imah Berhane: Thank you all. I would like to give space for our participants if they would like to add anything in the chat or add anything on the mic, as well as any follow-ups that you all might like to add. [long pause]

Dr. Morrison: You know, Kami talked about like a, a greater willingness, interest in, in speaking up and calling out problematic situations. And, and I will say, and maybe this is telling on me, but I think our graduate students are coming to our program with that orientation. So, you know, they're fresh out of undergrad, most are psychology majors and they're very passionate about social justice. And we identify our program as being an ecological behavioral program with a with an equity lens.

Dr. Morrison: And so, we attract students who are interested in making...in make-- making a real impact. And so, you know, they will call me out if I, if I have an assignment that I thought was appropriate. But they said, "Yeah, it's, it's, you know, it does-- it doesn't take this into account." I have changed assignments, I've changed lecture, I've conti-- always adding to my course materials. But in, in response to things they've called me out for. So, you know, we're, we're learning together. But I, I find it very promising that they're so passionate about speaking out. And I think that they'll take that into their professional practice in the schools.

Community Alliances for Equity Virtual Coffeehouse: *Intentionally Centering School psychologists and Guidance Counselors in Equity Work*

March 21, 2024

Dr. Johnson:

And I want to echo that, Julie, you know, we just hired three new school psychologists for our district. And two, two of the three were fresh out of graduate school. And I did, even in-- during their interviews, I recognized the difference with regard to some of the issues that they communicated that were passions of theirs and, and two of the individuals specifically talked about issues of divest-- diversity, equity, and inclusion, and recognizing that. So, I just recognize that difference. So, I appreciate you sort of recognizing that even in your own program.

Dr. Johnson:

And you see, I want to say these two students were from UD, respectively, but definitely see a trend with regard to new psychologists entering the field and recognizing sort of the current climate in which our country is in and, and really taking a stance and communicating that, ironically, during the interviews that we had that they have their passion around issues of diversity.

Saba-Na'imah Berhane:

Thank you. And I see we have one hand up. Barry Thomas, I'm going to give the mic over to you. Feel free to just chime in or if you'd like to briefly introduce yourself first, you are more than welcome to.

José Camarena:

Hi everyone. Sorry, this is not Barry Thomas. This is José González Camarena. I am Senior Managing Director of Educator Grants at Teach for America, and have the privilege of serving on the same team as Barry Thomas. But looking, looking at this question, I think, and this is a very, very specific perspective, I think as well, but one that, that is important for thinking about undocumented students in, in our schools across the country, right?

Community Alliances for Equity Virtual Coffeehouse: *Intentionally Centering School psychologists and Guidance Counselors in Equity Work*

March 21, 2024

- José Camarena:** And the opportunity for, I think this is kind of mental health adjacent, but in schools contributing to fostering anti-racist, anti-oppressive learning environments. And for students to feel like there are opportunities for them. It is so critical that counselors are equipped with, with the tools to support this specific population of, of students as well. And they require very specific supports, right?
- José Camarena:** So, I just wanted to flag that Teach for America is actually currently in deep partnership and collaboration with the President's Alliance on Higher Education and Immigration and the National College Attainment Network, alongside, I think a group of 30 or so high school counselors from, from across the country to build out a guide that should be live by back-to-school time next school year.
- José Camarena:** That I think looking at, looking at this question again is, is coming up for, for me and some of the new, and in some ways given the policy landscape surrounding the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program in particular, but recurring in, in the sense that there has not been meaningful legislation to impact these, these students in decades.
- Saba-Na'imah Berhane:** Thank you. I'm going to leave space if anyone wants to respond to that before we move on.
- Dr. Hill:** I think he brings up some very good points. I was actually in a meeting prior to this, and it's not about a family that's undocumented, but it's about a family that comes to the, the United States with like with their, those families on a visa, for example, right? And so, their

Community Alliances for Equity Virtual Coffeehouse: *Intentionally Centering School psychologists and Guidance Counselors in Equity Work*

March 21, 2024

child has some really specific behavioral needs that they need to address. And they are struggling between what they're eligible to receive because of the way that they're in the country.

Dr. Hill:

And so, I think it's very important for school psychologists to be able to understand the resources, understand the workings of a, a family that has come over to our country to go to school. For example, what this particular family was, the mom is in graduate school. And...but being able to figure out what those resources are, what's applicable to their situation, but being sensitive to what those needs are and kind of being able to understand how to help families navigate through all of those pieces to be able to get the appropriate services for what they're needing.

Dr. Hill:

And that's a whole 'nother level of resource understanding and community connections and things that I think school psychologists and school counselors have to now put into their tool box to be able to better serve families, and actually get them to the specific things that they're going to need.

Saba-Na'imah Berhane:

Thank you. Does anyone else want to add to that question before we move on to question two? OK, I'm going to move us to question two. There's a lot of meaningful discourse there, which is great segue into our next question.

Saba-Na'imah Berhane:

So, for question two: "How can school psychologists and counselors ensure that educators and education practitioners' knowledge, skills, and professional practices not only embrace diversity and promote

Community Alliances for Equity Virtual Coffeehouse: *Intentionally Centering School psychologists and Guidance Counselors in Equity Work*

March 21, 2024

inclusivity, but also acknowledge the need for action and healing within the educational settings for both students and educators?"

Saba-Na'imah Berhane: And I think this ties really neatly into the demographics that we've begun to speak about. I'm going to give us a moment to kind of take that in, and then whoever would like to chime in first from our conversation starters, please go ahead. [long pause]

Dr. Johnson: I can go ahead and start. In reading this question, you know, one of the things that resonated with me is, is more with regard to the second-half-- the question acknowledged the need for action and healing within educational settings. From my perspective, I think school psychologists can be in the forefront of raising awareness regarding the harmful effects of understanding the impact, I should say, of race and privilege, and how that impacts the learning and, and education of all students.

Dr. Johnson: I think it's, I think it's vitally important to understand implicit bias, and the role of implicit bias, and how that impacts how we, or how certain students in educational settings, are consistently or historically marginalized. From my perspective working in Springfield City Schools, I think the district has been slow and, you know, engaging in some of these critical issues and having discourse around some of our practices. I think Kami mentioned earlier with regard to issues of disproportionality and, and, and the, and the impact or the harmful impact of discrimination and how we-- or how students who are often times disproportionately disciplined, and how that can lead to school to prison pipeline.

Community Alliances for Equity Virtual Coffeehouse: *Intentionally Centering School psychologists and Guidance Counselors in Equity Work*

March 21, 2024

Dr. Johnson:

I know we've been cited by ODE with regard to exclusionary disciplinary practices for Black and Brown youth who carry special education classifications. And, and I feel like the district has been slow to move and, and rectifying that or, or addressing truly sort of the root causes of that. And, and I think we have just started to really have discussions around implicit bias. Because sometimes I think certain segments of our population are, are less hesitant to have those kind of conversations, and look internally as with regard to how implicit bias may impact how certain students or certain families have accesses-- access to resources within the context of the school or the larger community.

Dr. Hill:

I'm gonna piggyback on what Kyle just said. Just kind of thinking about, again, kind of back on the front lines of...in terms of creating environments and educational settings that are inclusive. In Cincinnati, for example, we have several, we have 66 school buildings and Cincinnati is a city that is...the community's...there's lots and lots of pockets of very different cultures. And it was in our 65-- 66 buildings, there are probably 66 different school cultures, which isn't uncommon in a, in a, in a school setting.

Dr. Hill:

But I think in terms of this question, we have to really think about the activities and things that we do, and the...just the differences and what works in, you know, on the west side of town may not work on the east side of town. And if you have a lot of people that work in Cincinnati Public, for example, are people that live and work in the same community. And so, you think because you are from the same

Community Alliances for Equity Virtual Coffeehouse: *Intentionally Centering School psychologists and Guidance Counselors in Equity Work*

March 21, 2024

community or the same school district, that you understand the lens that your students are coming to school with.

Dr. Hill:

And I think it's very important for us to really work on making sure that we are questioning our lenses. I know this kind of goes on to the next question also, but just really kind of thinking about just because it may work for part of the students. [inaudible interruption] Sorry. [long pause]. The joys of a Zoom call in the middle of a school day. But making sure that we understand that because we have, you know, the kids sitting in the classroom, we could have 27 kids, 27 different cultures, 27 different expectations.

Dr. Hill:

And just making sure that we are thinking about those pieces when we are doing something that we assume that everybody can handle, everybody can manage, and making sure that we are considering those different perspectives. And this...asking ourselves that, asking our colleagues that, "Hey, this is a great assignment. This is a great activity. But is this something that we think that all of our students are going to be able to access? Are they all going to be able to manage it? Are they all going to be able to...is it something that would be welcoming for all of our community members?"

Dr. Morrison:

And I, and I think the only thing I would add, getting to the question on how, how can school psychologists help acknowledge the need for action and healing, is that school psychologists by virtue of their training, are, are very uniquely qualified to look at data, to use data, assessment data and use data to drive decisions. So, you know, equity-oriented data use is, is something that's well within our

Community Alliances for Equity Virtual Coffeehouse: *Intentionally Centering School psychologists and Guidance Counselors in Equity Work*

March 21, 2024

wheelhouse that we can really help show by, you know, by disaggregating the data. And then asking the tough questions and digging deeper beyond just the surface; see, oh, there's discrepancies here, there's disproportionality. But get to the, you know, “how” and “why” are these disproportionate data being maintained, and what can we do to, to rectify that situation? So, I know, you know, Ruthie has been a, a thought leader in this regard. I'll also do a shout out to Dr. Nicole Holland Sims, who's out of Pennsylvania. She recently wrote the book...am I going to have the name? I think something around equity within MTSS framework. And the book was highlighted as, as like the National Associate School Psychologist publication for the conference this year.

Dr. Morrison:

So, I heard her speak at the conference and she's fabulous. I know she spoke up in Michigan at their annual conference in the last year. But she talks about, you know, collecting and disaggregating data, discipline data, achievement data to kind of tell the story. And then, you know, doing so within that proactive, preventive, multi-tiered system of support, looking for efforts to reduce the opportunity gap, and really looking-- giving a hard critical eye at disciplinary practices and how those are enacted.

Dr. Morrison:

So PBIS, the Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports Technical Assistance Center has resources around how you can audit your school's disciplinary policy and see, you know, is it going to contribute to disproportionality and, and exclusionary and disciplinary practices, or if it, it can be reformed to be more fair. And then teaching strategies to neutralize implicit bias, which both Kyle and

Community Alliances for Equity Virtual Coffeehouse: *Intentionally Centering School psychologists and Guidance Counselors in Equity Work*

March 21, 2024

Kami talked about. But I think, you know, we need to model and teach these skills because, you know, we're largely not aware of the biases that we bring to a situation until they're, until they're challenged. So always trying to advance our own critical consciousness on, you know, the implicit bias.

Saba-Na'imah Berhane: So, at this point, I would invite our participants to chime in in the chat, or if you want to grab a microphone, you're welcome to do so. Or if any of our conversation starters want to follow up on some of the conversations we've had thus far on question two, I'll leave a couple minutes with that.

Dr. Skelton: Hi, I would like to first thank you all for your really thoughtful responses and, and resources you have highlighted. And I wonder...most of your answers spoke towards the support of students and the healing of students. I wonder if you can speak a little bit to the work that you do with, with the adults in your school communities, understanding that everyone has, has...is living through, and has lived through very, very stressful, you know, out of the norm kind of stressful experiences for the last three years or so.

Dr. Skelton: And so, and the impact that may have on the way in which educators may be able to be, to be present to even support students, right? So, to what point, but to what extent are you able to connect with other educators, with other adults around their, their healing and, and their ability then, building their capacity to take action?

Community Alliances for Equity Virtual Coffeehouse: *Intentionally Centering School psychologists and Guidance Counselors in Equity Work*

March 21, 2024

Dr. Hill:

I think one of the biggest roles that I, one of the biggest tasks and things that I spend most of my time doing at school is that consultation piece, and working more directly with staff than I do with the kids. I have lots of my little ones that come running around the classroom and come running around the hallway all day. But you know, for the most part, I spend most of my time do-- talking to those adults. And I think working on our consultation skills is a huge piece of it. And such a big part of consultation is just empathetic listening.

Dr. Hill:

And so, thinking about when you interact with the adult, and you have to go because you see an issue that needs to be addressed in the classroom with a student. But understanding that most of the time you're spending your time addressing the adult behavior, and having a mod-- changing the adult behavior so that it's then more effective for the student. And so, figuring out how to really utilize your consultation skills to be able to hear the staff that you're working with. So, you know, maybe they're doing something behaviorally that is not working for the student.

Dr. Hill:

It's your responsibility as a school psychologist to give them tactics and strategies to then improve that behavior, whatever that situation is. But you have to be able to hear where those adults are coming from, and really be able to listen to why they reacted the way that they did. What are those, what are those pieces that are influencing their behavior, and that which then trickles down to the students. So, I think really listening to those, really working on those consultation skills and really hearing why they're responding the way that they

Community Alliances for Equity Virtual Coffeehouse: *Intentionally Centering School psychologists and Guidance Counselors in Equity Work*

March 21, 2024

are, I think it's a huge piece and a huge task that I've had to work on with the, the staff in my building.

Dr. Hill:

And being a person of Color, most of my colleagues are not. And so, even though I may be in consultation with them and hear some things that might make me a little bit uncomfortable, but figuring out that, "OK, this is what you said, this is what it sounds like. How can we make this so that it's something comfortable for you and for me so that we can then be more effective for the students? You may see it this way. I'm not just like the students, but I may have a similar perspective to them. And this is how it could be interpreted on their end." And just really talking through those in a private, safe situation during that consultation model so that they can then change their behavior.

Dr. Johnson:

Yeah, I can speak to...in Springfield roughly two to three years ago as relates to that question, we had an opportunity to present at the League of Innovative Schools around our district's attempt to end harmful exclusionary disciplinary practices. And one of the ways we, one of the many ways that we're attempting to do that is through restorative practices and restorative circles. So I, along with all of my mental health team and our behavior team, has been trained through the International Institute of Restorative Practices and conducting restorative practices and restorative circles.

Dr. Johnson:

Been excited to say here recently, our human resources department has pushed for our school psychologists to be trained in restorative practices as well, because we want to use that as a way to engage

Community Alliances for Equity Virtual Coffeehouse: *Intentionally Centering School psychologists and Guidance Counselors in Equity Work*

March 21, 2024

our staff. And we adopted the use of Panorama, for those who are familiar with that, and to just kind of get a sense of our school climate, our school culture, and how the perceptions of our staff...and during this pretty difficult last few years post-COVID.

Dr. Johnson:

And we've really been intentional about using restorative practices and restorative circles to engage our staff, and to do things with our staff, and not to our staff, about having pretty real conversations about their experiences at the school, and how they may perceive the work they're doing, and the difficult nature of their work. So, I'm being excited to say that staff have been receptive to that. You know, part of that is, you know, how do you, you know, the importance of building that community so-- in order to repair something that's been harmed or broken.

Dr. Johnson:

So, we really have been intentional about doing that with our staff and, and we'll continue to move forward. So, I'm excited to see how that continues to go and improve staff relations and how staff and-- not only interact with one another, but how they service our students as well.

Saba-Na'imah Berhane:

Yeah, I'm going to transition us to question three, which really piggybacks very closely off of a lot of what you all have been saying about the practices. And so, question three is: "What does continuous learning look like for school psychologists/counselors in effectively dismantling explicit and implicit bias?" Which we already began to speak about a little bit there. "How can school psychologists and counselors disrupt norms that have placed

Community Alliances for Equity Virtual Coffeehouse: *Intentionally Centering School psychologists and Guidance Counselors in Equity Work*

March 21, 2024

marginalized students in the unfair position of having to shoulder and take on the undue burden of work related to the racism, inequities, and bias that they experience?” And I'll give us just a quick moment to take that in and then whoever would like to go first. [long pause]

Dr. Hill:

I don't mind starting with this one. I like that. So, Julie brought it up a little bit earlier in that the grad students are coming to school with being very passionate about social justice. I think the same is true for our younger students that are school-aged. They too are coming to school with that same kind of passion. I wish I could say that we can work with all the adults so that the students do not have to bear the burden of dealing with racism, inequities, and bias that they're, they're experiencing, but we're just not there yet.

Dr. Hill:

And so being a person that does work directly with the students, a lot of times, we work on a lot of self-advocacy skills, giving them the knowledge and this language to be able to speak up for themselves and say, “Hey, this doesn't feel quite right.” You know, those simple things like we all know about the “I” statements: “When you say this, I feel this way.” And really giving students, even here at the preschool level, our social-emotional learning program that we use is very focused on identifying emotions, using the right language, being able to express how you feel so that you can advocate for yourself in those situations that are uncomfortable, unfair, unjust, un-- inequitable.

Dr. Hill:

And so, I think the burden is there, unfortunately. And so, I think because it's there, while the rest of the systems and everything kind

Community Alliances for Equity Virtual Coffeehouse: *Intentionally Centering School psychologists and Guidance Counselors in Equity Work*

March 21, 2024

of catch up, we have to be able to equip our students with the skills and tools to be able to speak up for themselves and to call those things out of those-- in their educational environment. [long pause]

Saba-Na'imah Berhane: I want to leave space for anyone else to chime in on question three. I did notice that it kind of blended into question two quite a bit with our conversation there. So, I'll give us a little minute in case anyone's thinking about what they want to say before I transition us to the next question.

Dr. Morrison: I guess I would just add to what Kami just said, but I, I think that there has been greater consciousness, awareness, and emphasis within our profession, our, our, our training and, and among the practitioners of, of really un--understanding the, the, the impact that the, of, of prejudice, of oppression, as a source of distress for students. I think it was like when I went through grad school, it's like they need to learn to read and follow the rules.

Dr. Morrison: And it wasn't really called out that, that, that was the, you know, a heavyweight, a burden that was really a, a source of distress for, you know, students from minoritized identities. So, I think, you know, just calling it out, just, you know, bringing attention to...this is what a, a, a, an oppressive system looks like. And this is how it feels. And then, you know, I, I like the quote, I think it's Edward Deming that, "Every system is designed to get that," I'm gonna butcher it, "Every system is perfectly designed to get the results it gets."

Community Alliances for Equity Virtual Coffeehouse: *Intentionally Centering School psychologists and Guidance Counselors in Equity Work*

March 21, 2024

Dr. Morrison:

So, you know, if we're creating a system where, you know, large segments of students are, are feeling the heavy weight of oppression, we need to change the system. You know, so in the, in the classes I teach, I teach systems-level consultation. So that's a great opportunity for me to, you know, talk through like a, a systems approach to supporting students and a, a multi-tiered system supportive approach to supporting students, rather than a really reactive, and I call it "within child" deficit approach, that there's something wrong with this student because this student isn't learning.

Dr. Morrison:

Well, if you take a systems approach, you can see that, you know, large proportions of the students are not finding success in this system. So, this system isn't working. This system is failing our students. So, I think that, you know, that is again, a, a, a way that school psychologists can help move this system in a, in a positive direction. It's, it's, it's gonna take a lot. These are, these are systems that don't wanna change, and don't wanna improve. They, they, you know, have been put in place to maintain the status quo. And so, it's gonna...it, it does take passionate advocacy.

Dr. Johnson:

Yeah. I just wanna...I, I thought Julie did a great job in, in the beginning of our conversation and kind of framing the course or the change. And with our national organization, the National Association of School Psychologists. You know, over, you know, doing some of my own research, over the last ten to fifteen years, NASP has published a number of position statements and position papers

Community Alliances for Equity Virtual Coffeehouse: *Intentionally Centering School psychologists and Guidance Counselors in Equity Work*

March 21, 2024

around issues of diversity, equity, inclusion, racism, implicit bias, structural racism.

Dr. Johnson:

So, when I think about this question, you know, I think about the, you know, we have implemented this year a social-emotional learning curriculum, Leader in Me, right? And part of that is the whole idea of change starts with me, you know. And so, I think NASP has created or has pushed advocacy, you know. And, and like I said, I appreciated the way Julie started off our conversation with that. So, then I, I think about on the front lines, I think it's important for school psychologists to really take agency in their professional development and growth.

Dr. Johnson:

And school districts need to provide opportunities, really intentional opportunities, to provide school psychologists, or encourage school psychologists and counselors, to do more professional development, continuous learning with regard to dismantling explicit and implicit bias. And then in those spaces in which school psychologists operate, and, and I think Kami did a really good job of sort of giving us sort of a, a bird's eye view from her perspective of what she does when she's in specific meetings with teams, a lot of the team members that may not look like her.

Dr. Johnson:

And just raising awareness with regard to some of the structural considerations that we need to examine that have not only just this student underperforming, but maybe larger segments of our student population underperforming. So, I think it's incumbent upon psychologists. I think it's important for a psychologist to advocate and

Community Alliances for Equity Virtual Coffeehouse: *Intentionally Centering School psychologists and Guidance Counselors in Equity Work*

March 21, 2024

be really intentional about districts supporting a continuous professional development. And not just any professional development, but really focusing on some of the structural issues in our educational system and how they impact certain segments of our population, negatively impact certain segments of our population.

Saba-Na'imah Berhane: Thank you. We've had really robust conversation. I want to respect everyone's time. And you know, there never really is enough time. We only really ever scratch the surface. There's so much work to do. I do-- I'll read through our last question as just a reflective piece, as maybe a call-to-action, a self-reflection. If anyone feels moved to put something into the chat and response to it, you're welcome to.

Saba-Na'imah Berhane: So, our last question to end with today is: "In what ways can we dismantle and subvert ableist narratives surrounding disability and diversity to foster safe, accessible, and equitable learning environments? How can school psychologists and school counselors lead in this area?" In other words, how can we push back against those deficit narratives in order to have that safe, accessible, equitable learning environment? Again, if you feel moved to share something, you can in the chat. This is a, a forward question. So, what can we do moving forward?

Saba-Na'imah Berhane: I would like us, before the end of our session today, to get that group picture in. So, I'm going to let Kristina walk us through that. But first, just gonna give us a quick moment in case anyone's processing this question here.

Community Alliances for Equity Virtual Coffeehouse: *Intentionally Centering School psychologists and Guidance Counselors in Equity Work*

March 21, 2024

Dr. Morrison: I could just echo what Kami said about being, you know, at the table, being a voice at the table where important decisions are being made. I think that, that representation is...that meaningful representation is so important to change the narrative.

Saba-Na'imah Berhane: Thank you. Absolutely.

Saba-Na'imah Berhane: So, before we, we wrap up for today and we will get you out of here very shortly, I want to share just a few things to check out as you wrap up. So, our Center's Virtual Library houses resources that speak to the needs of the communities we serve. And in this *Equity by Design* brief, we outlined the short- and long-term impacts of COVID-19 on student learning and wellness. It critiques common narratives in response to student educational difficulties following the start of the pandemic. And it concludes with some key considerations for educational decision making, preventative-- prevention, intervention, and individualization across all levels of programming, school wide, group, individual. And Kristina's going to drop that link in the chat for you all.

Saba-Na'imah Berhane: Next, just wanna give us a quick shout out for social media. If you use social media, we'll love it if you come to follow us on Instagram, Facebook or LinkedIn.

Saba-Na'imah Berhane: And we hope to see you again soon.

Center Announcer: The contents of this video were developed under a grant from the U.S. Department of Education (S004D220003). However, the content does not necessarily represent



Community Alliances for Equity Virtual Coffeehouse: *Intentionally Centering School psychologists and Guidance Counselors in Equity Work*



March 21, 2024

the policy of the Department of Education, and endorsement by the Federal Government should not be assumed.

Additionally, this video and its contents are provided to public school personnel, students enrolled in public schools, parents or caregivers of those students, community organizations, and other community members. We ask that this resource is cited if research, ideas, or information from this document are used in any produced works.

No part of this video may be reproduced or utilized in any form or by any means for commerce media or commercial purposes without permission in writing from the Great Lakes Equity Center.

[End of Audio]