

Achieving Health Equity Through Anti-Racism

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OHA's Strategic Goal

To eliminate health inequities in Oregon
by 2030

Health Equity Definition

Oregon will have established a health system that creates health equity when all people can reach their full health potential and well-being and are not disadvantaged by their race, ethnicity, language, disability, age, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, social class, intersections among these communities or identities, or other socially determined circumstances.

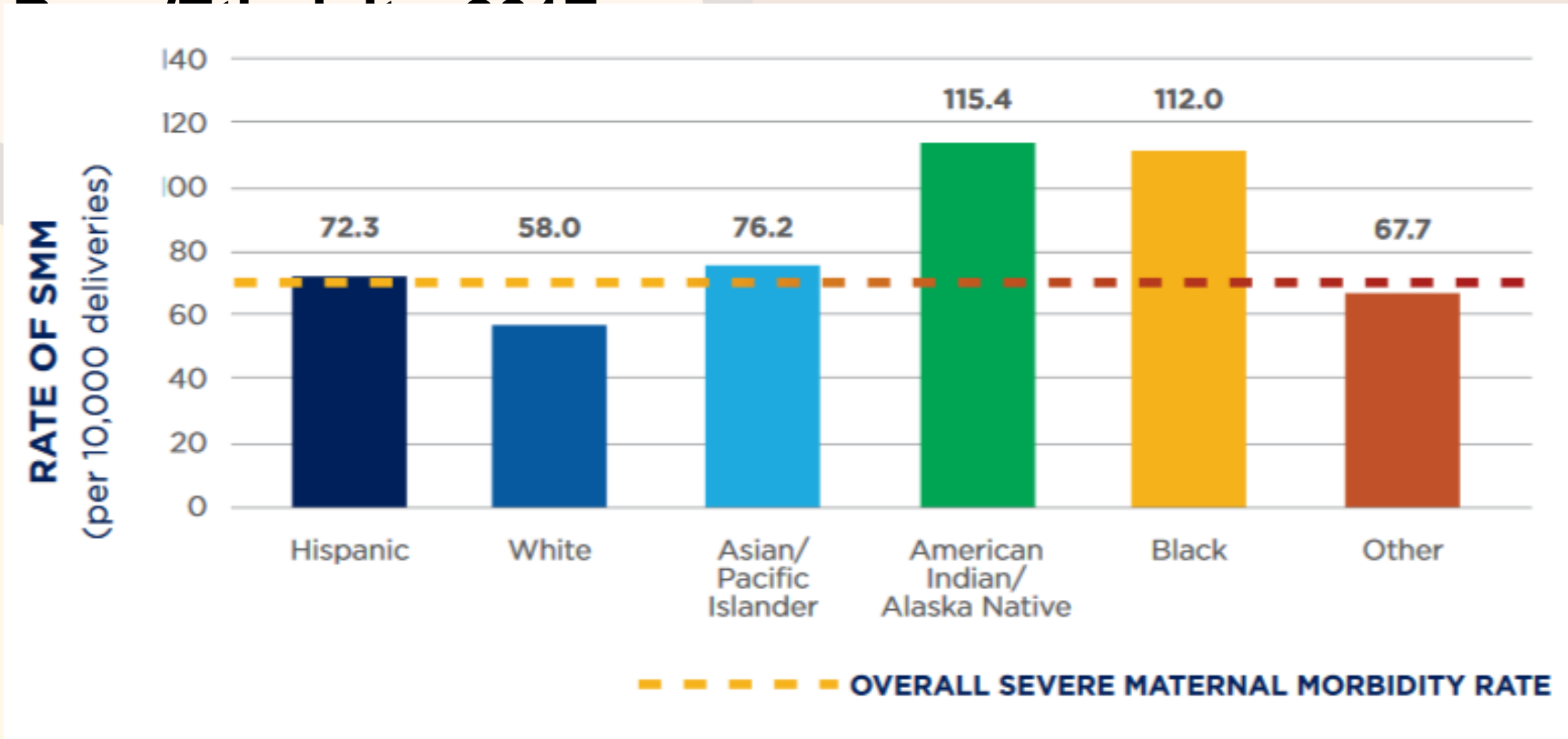
Achieving health equity requires the ongoing collaboration of all regions and sectors of the state, including tribal governments to address:

- The equitable distribution or redistribution of resources and power; and
- **Recognizing, reconciling and rectifying historical and contemporary injustices.**

Health Inequities and Racism

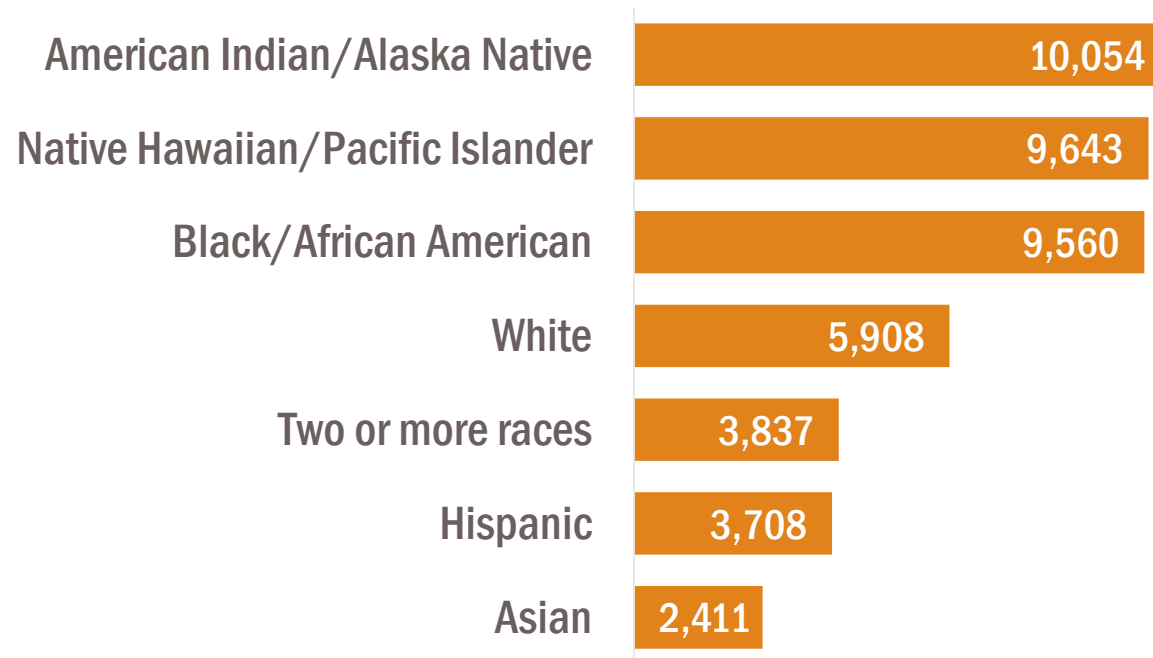
- Health inequities are differences in health that are not only unnecessary and avoidable but, in addition, are considered unfair and unjust. Health inequities are rooted in social injustices that make some population groups more vulnerable to poor health than other groups.
- Babies born to Black women are more likely to die in their first year of life than babies born to White women.
- This remains true even when controlling for income and education
- Research has shown links between the stress from **racism** experienced by Black women and negative health outcomes. **This is a health inequity** because the difference between the populations is unfair, avoidable and rooted in social injustice.

Severe Maternal Morbidity (SMM) Rate by



Years of potential life lost before age 75 (per 100,000)

Many communities of color experience greater societal impact of early death.



Leading causes of premature death

- Injury
- Cancer
- Heart Disease
- Perinatal Conditions
- Diabetes
- Chronic Lower Respiratory Disease
- Liver Disease and Cirrhosis

Key drivers include

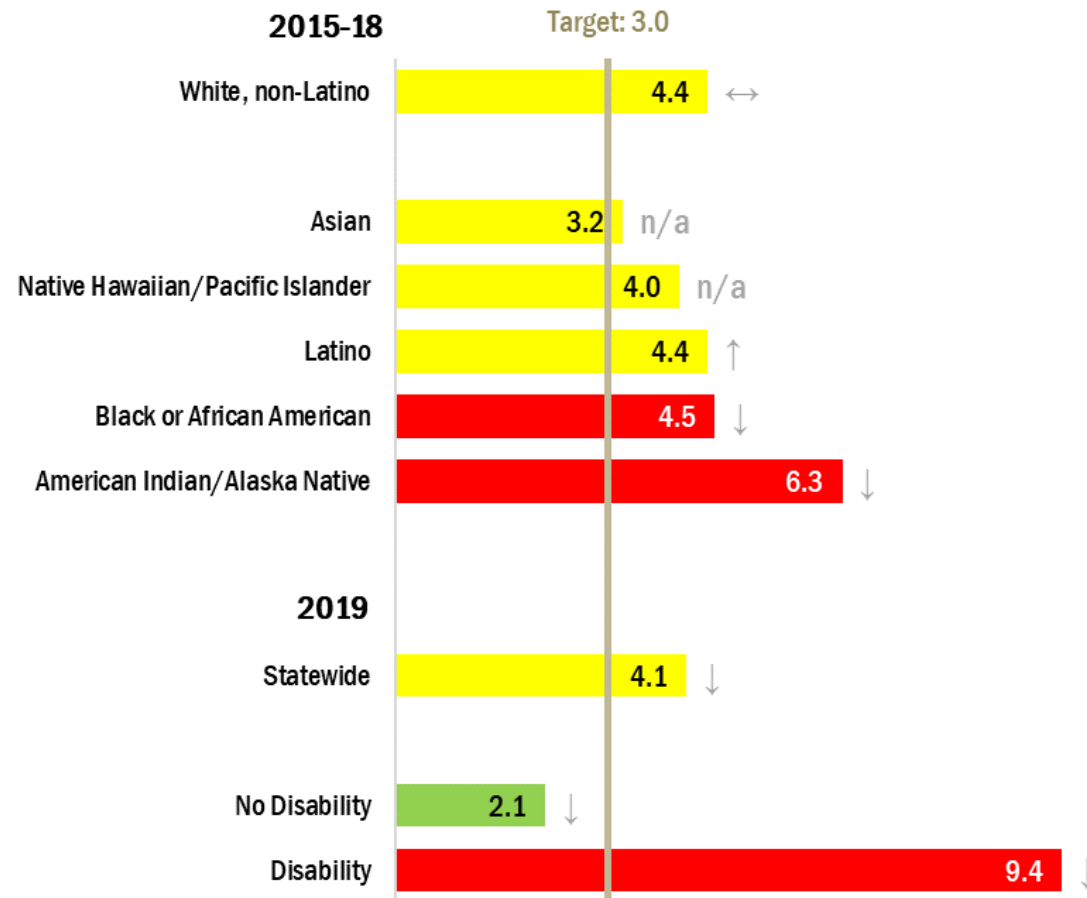
Structural racism

Socioeconomic status

***Unequal access to
healthcare services***

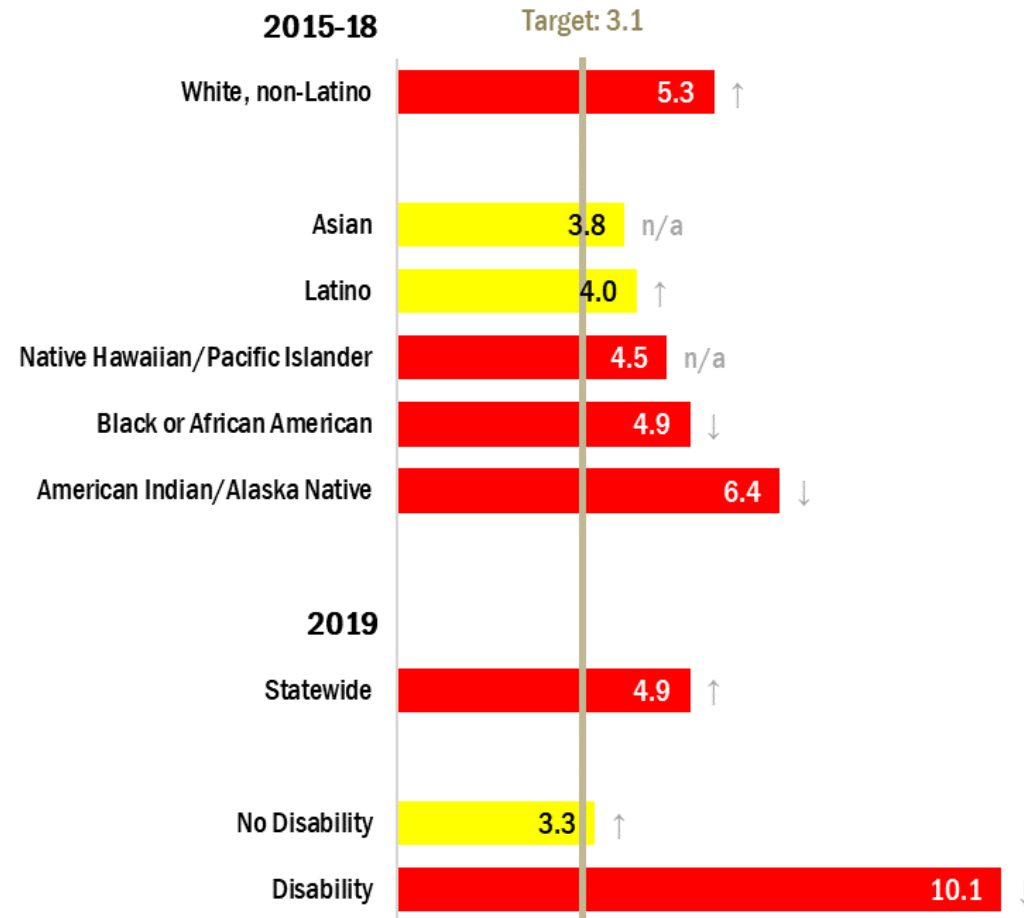
Inequities in Outcomes-physical health

Average number of physically unhealthy days in the past 30 among adults
(age 18+; age-adjusted)



Inequities in Outcomes-mental health

Average number of mentally unhealthy days in the past 30 among adults
(age 18+; age-adjusted)



Intergenerational Trauma and Racism

“Research indicates that AI/AN (American Indian/Alaska Native) populations **have disproportionately higher rates of mental health problems** than the rest of the US population. High rates of **substance use disorders (SUDs), posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), suicide, and attachment disorders** in many AI/AN communities have been directly linked to the **intergenerational historical trauma** forced upon them, such as forced removal off their land and government-operated boarding schools which separated AI/AN children from their parents, spiritual practices, and culture.”

American Psychiatric Association (2017)

Historical Trauma and Racism

“The Black community suffers from an **increased rate of mental health concerns**, including **anxiety and depression**. The increased incidence of psychological difficulties in the Black community is related to the **lack of access to appropriate and culturally responsive mental health care, prejudice and racism inherent in the daily environment of Black individuals, and historical trauma enacted on the Black community by the medical field**. Moreover, given that the Black community exists at the intersection of racism, classism, and health inequity, their mental health needs are often exacerbated and mostly unfulfilled. Issues related to economic insecurity, and the associated experiences, such as violence and criminal injustice, further serve to compound the **mental health disparities** in the Black population.”

Addressing Mental Health in the Black Community, Columbia University (2019)

Toxic Stress and Racism

“**Toxic stress** can negatively affect a child’s physical, cognitive, and emotional development. When children experience prolonged and continuous stress, referred to as “**toxic stress**,” it can damage connections in the brain, resulting in issues with brain development and **lifelong negative mental** and physical health effects.”

“**A growing body of literature finds that the threat of parental detention and deportation is a toxic stress.** Children living with the **constant threat of their parents’ deportation may have a constant and heightened state of anxiety that does not allow their body to return to baseline functioning.** The American Academy of Pediatrics recently warned that the stress of living in fear of deportation among immigrant children could disrupt a child’s developmental processes and lead to long-term health concerns.”

“**Over the long term, toxic stress may manifest as poor coping skills and stress management, unhealthy lifestyles, adoption of risky health behaviors, and mental health issues, such as depression.** Toxic stress also is associated with increased rates of physical conditions into adulthood, including chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, obesity, ischemic heart disease, diabetes, asthma, cancer, and **post-traumatic stress disorder.**”

Living in an Immigrant Family in America: How Fear and Toxic Stress are Affecting Daily Life, Well-Being, & Health, Artiga & Ubri (Henry Kaiser Family Foundation, 2017)

“It is in our bones”

- Dehumanization
- Intergenerational Trauma, Historical Trauma, Toxic Stress
- A sense of being expendable (essential workers)
- Not that far removed from: genocide, enslavement, Jim Crow, Exclusion Laws, Incarceration
- The national debate over our humanity

What is Anti-Racism?

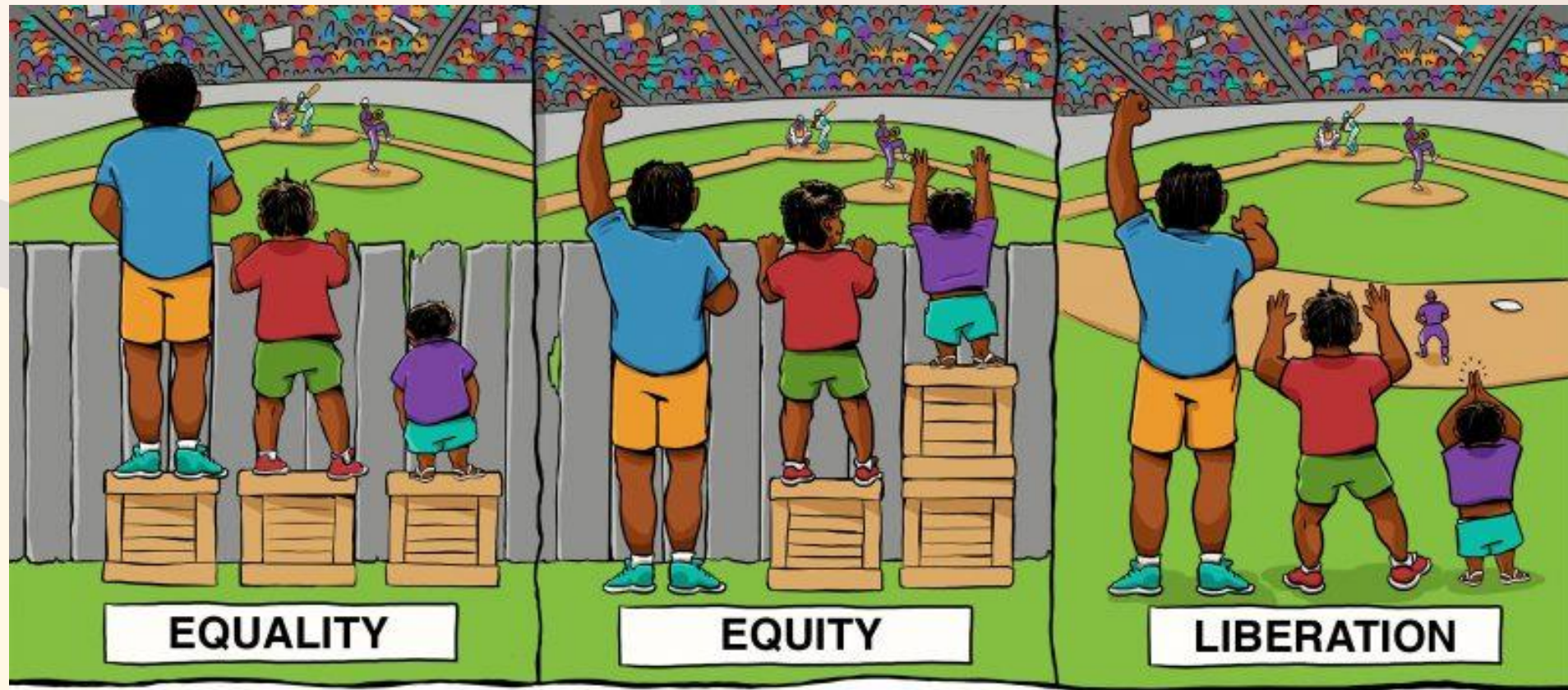
- Form of action against racial hatred, bias, systemic racism
- Conscious efforts and actions to provide equitable opportunity for all people individually and systemically
- Acknowledge personal privileges
- Confront acts of and systems of racial discrimination
- Reflect and work to change personal racial biases

Why Anti-Racism?

- Historical and structural racism and oppression dating back to colonization and systematic genocide set in motion 529 years ago, to enslavement 400 years ago, to today's continued dehumanization of Black and Brown people are a driving source of today's health inequities.
- Racism is addressed through anti-racist strategies, tactics and initiatives
- Anti-racism is a term of art in the Equity and Inclusion discipline
- Anti-racism is not pursued at the exclusion of other equity strategies or communities impacted by health inequities
- Anti-racism is designed to dismantle a root cause problem
- Decolonization and Cultural Humility are necessary in anti-racism work

Colonization

- The act or process of settling among and establishing control over indigenous people of an area.
- Appropriating space, place, domain for one's own use or advantage
- Taking ownership, assuming dominance, superiority, entitlement, saviorism
- We can't talk about racism and anti-racism, without acknowledging/addressing the destructive forces of colonization



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