Centering Racial Equity Throughout Data Integration

Amy Hawn Nelson, PhD
Actionable Intelligence for Social Policy

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Process

2017
Expressed need from sites
Learning from Broward County, FL

2018
Initial funding from AECF
Began to put together workgroup

2019
Funding from Sloan and DFC
In person workgroup meetings in July and October

2020
Finalizing site-based contributors
Writing, editing, and review
Sharing and dissemination

2021
Document shifts in site-based practices
Learn and share and shift
The Current Moment is Complicated.

Governments have more capacity than ever before to share and use longitudinal administrative data for analytics and decision-making.

This represents an improvement on:
• Hunches
• Doing what we’ve always done just because
• Limited surveys/small sampling

But administrative data and analytic tools are not:
• Reflective of lived experience
• Historically contextualized
• Good at distinguishing correlation vs. causation
• A measurement of what matters most

Thank you to Michelle Shevin for permission to reuse the content of this slide.
As railroads and highways both developed and decimated communities, so too can data infrastructure. We can co-create data infrastructure to promote racial equity and the public good, or we can invest in data infrastructure that disregards the historical, social, and political context.
### Workgroup Contributors

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Organization</th>
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<tbody>
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Take Control Initiative (OK)
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Where do we need to center racial equity?
Where do we need to center racial equity?
WE STRONGLY ENCOURAGE:

• Inclusive participatory governance around data access and use
• Social license for data access and use
• A developmental approach to data sharing and integration—start small and grow

WE DISCOURAGE:

• Broad access to individual-level linked data
• Data use for enforcement or investigation actions against residents
• Use of predictive algorithms without determining responsibility, explainability, accuracy, auditability, and fairness*
• Use of linked data across institutions that have patterns of institutional racism, specifically, law enforcement, which has demonstrated significant racialized harm without sufficient safeguards in place

A Toolkit for Centering Racial Equity Throughout Data Integration

#CenterRacialEquity

*https://www.fatml.org/resources/principles-for-accountable-algorithms
Benefit/Risk Matrix

- **High Benefit**: Mapping indicators to allocate new investments to high-need neighborhoods
  - Program evaluation with longitudinal outcomes
  - Unduplicated counts of children across early childhood program

- **Low Benefit**: Open data initiatives that publish aggregate data sets

- **High Risk**: Linking individual data on wages & earnings
  - Case management algorithms
  - Using "risk scores" to target interventions

- **Low Risk**: Predictive analytics in policing
  - Tracking social media on students
  - Linking biometric data (e.g., facial recognition)
### Data Classification Matrix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Open Data</th>
<th>Restricted Data</th>
<th>Unavailable Data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Data that can be shared openly, either at the aggregate or individual level, based on state and federal law. These data often exist in open data portals.</td>
<td>Data that can be shared, but only under specific circumstances with appropriate safeguards in place.</td>
<td>Data that cannot or should not be shared, either because of state or federal law, lack of digital format (paper copies only), or data quality or other concerns.</td>
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</tbody>
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#### Data can be shared with agreement and approval through governance

- Open data; can be shared without an agreement

#### Not shareable

- Technology and/or data structure limits ability to share data
### Racial Equity in Planning: Positive & Problematic Practices

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>POSITIVE PRACTICE</th>
<th>PROBLEMATIC PRACTICE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Including diverse perspectives (such as community members with lived experiences and agency staff who understand the data) on planning committees</td>
<td>Using only token &quot;representation&quot; in agenda-setting, question creation, governance, or IRB review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building capacity for researchers, administrators, and community participants to work together on agenda-setting</td>
<td>Using deadlines or grant deliverables as an excuse to rush or avoid authentic community engagement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Researching, understanding, and disseminating the history of local policies, systems, and structures involved, including past harms and future opportunities</td>
<td>Using only historical administrative data to describe the problem, without a clear plan of action to improve outcomes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building data literacy among organizations and community members, which could range from light engagement through public activities like data “gallery walks” to more intense involvement, such as community-based participatory action research</td>
<td>Failing to manage expectations around what the data are capable of telling or how long it will take to see marked changes in data, actions, and outcomes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establishing a common language and agreed upon sources and methods for reporting on community-based indicators</td>
<td>Failing to revisit indicator and outcome metrics regularly and revise when necessary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clearly discerning who decides how to frame the problem or determine what questions to ask</td>
<td>Relying on academic institutions to frame the problem and research questions while failing to engage community-based organizations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning that includes the use of an asset; creating a framework that aims to clarify how to improve policy, services, and outcomes</td>
<td>Planning that includes the use of a deficit; creating a framework to describe outcomes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lifting up the research needs of community to funders; helping shape funding strategy with funders to support community-driven research</td>
<td>Accepting grant/philanthropic funding for a project that is not a community priority or need</td>
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</table>
Planning

Positive practice
• Including diverse perspectives (such as community members with lived experiences and agency staff who understand the data) on planning committees
• Researching, understanding, and disseminating the history of local policies, systems, and structures involved, including past harms and future opportunities

Problematic Practice
• Using only token “representation” in agenda-setting, question creation, governance, or IRB review
• Using only historical administrative data to describe the problem, without a clear plan of action to improve outcomes
Racial Equity in Planning: WORK IN ACTION

Broward Data Collaborative by Sue Gallagher

Created in 2017, the Broward Data Collaborative (BDC) seeks to improve the outcomes for youth and residents whose data are represented in the child-serving integrated data system (IDS). The BDC recognizes that their county-level systems produce racially disparate outcomes and seeks to help the residents to build nonhierarchical relationships between the community and professionals. The BDC is creating an integrated data system that allows them to share strengths and their community and use data to co-create system and policy improvements.

The BDC was created in 2017 with support from AISP through the AISP Learning Community initiative. The BDC seeks to improve the outcomes of residents in Broward County by integrating child-serving data from child welfare, behavioral health, juvenile justice, early learning, school, human services, prevention programs. Data uses for the BDC include evaluation, research, and care coordination. The Children's Services Council of Broward County, the BDC's backbone organization, is an independent special taxing district that funds prevention programs for children and families in Broward County and has led the Broward Children's Strategic Plan for 20 years. Currently, the BDC's partners include senior leadership, researchers, and technology professionals from the human services agencies providing data to the BDC.

The BDC has rejected a race-neutral or colorblind design for data access and use. Instead, the BDC is intentionally designing an IDS framework that accounts for the historical and ongoing structural racism in the community, human services system, and service organizations. Too often, data infrastructures exist as racialized hierarchies with predominate Whiteness, researchers/policy makers and system professionals yielding power over participants represented in the data who are disproportionately BIPOC. Additionally, there is typically social and spatial segregation between users of the IDS, the system professionals, and people.
REPORTING & DISSEMINATION
PLANNING
DATA COLLECTION
DATA ACCESS
USE OF ALGORITHMS/STATISTICAL TOOLS
DATA ANALYSIS
# Toolkit Activities

## ORGANIZATIONAL
Mission/vision, values, goals of the organization overall and in the context of the relationship

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OVERALL</th>
<th>RELATIONSHIP-SPECIFIC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What is the overall mission/vision of the organization?</td>
<td>Is there a specific mission/vision for the relationship/project?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What values structure the work of the organization?</td>
<td>How do these values manifest in this project?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What are the stated and implied goals of the organization?</td>
<td>What are the goals specific to this relationship?</td>
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(adapted from Bryson, J. 2004)
Biggest Takeaway?

Whether you’re a data owner, a data steward, a data custodian, a caseworker — no matter where you are, there is something you can do, today, to center racial equity.
"We are working to create a new kind of data infrastructure – one that dismantles 'feedback loops of injustice'* and instead shares power and knowledge with those who need systems change the most.

Will you join us?"

-The authors of A Toolkit for Centering Racial Equity Throughout Data Integration

#CenterRacialEquity

*Eubanks, V. (2018)
Recommended Reading

Support sites in shifting practices. Implement dissemination strategy, including workgroup participants presenting at national/international conferences.

Begin thinking about the update, as practices are growing and changing rapidly.

Have some great ideas? Give us feedback as we work on version 2.0

Questions?

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And check out,