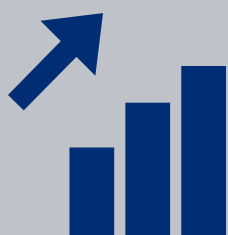


Substance Use Disorder through the **Lens** of **Race & Equity**

Disparities at the Intersection of Substance Use and Race



5%

increase in drug overdose deaths in Kentucky from 2018 to 2019.



35%

increase in Black overdose deaths in Kentucky from 2018 to 2019.

(Source: Kentucky Office of Drug Control Policy, 2020)



Black people represent **33%** of persons with a drug offense in federal prison – a rate **6 times** that of White people in the U.S. prison system.

In Kentucky FY 2019, **45%** of **Jefferson County** individuals eligible for Drug Court were **Black**, yet **Black people** comprised only **12%** of individuals referred and only **9%** of individuals accepted into the program.

(Source: Kentucky Administrative Office of the Courts, 2020)

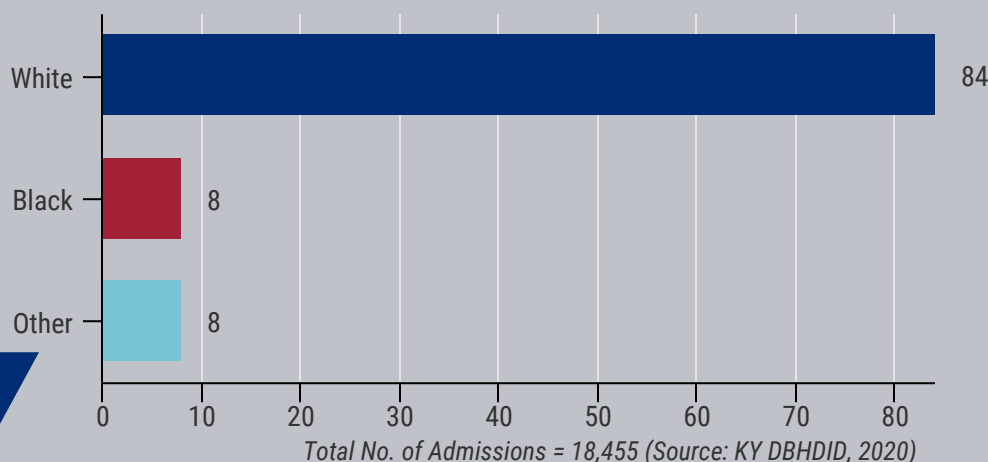
In **Kentucky** FY 2019, **8%** of SUD treatment admissions to Community Mental Health Centers were **Black**.



Research shows that Black people with SUD continue to face barriers in access to appropriate treatment.

Providers must ensure that **quality** SUD treatment is a **right** and not a privilege by addressing **disparities in access and quality** of care.

FY 2019 Kentucky CMHC Substance Use Treatment Admissions, Percent Total by Race



What contributes to racial/ethnic disparities in SUD treatment?

Historical and intergenerational trauma.



Social determinants of health (economic and social disparities in resource access).

Fear of incarceration and family separation upon disclosure of SUD.



Bias and stigma in systems (e.g. healthcare, social services, criminal justice).

Limited access to FDA-approved medications for opioid use disorder (MOUD).



Inaccessibility to culturally responsive and respectful care programs.

Thank you to the SIAC Racial and Ethnic Disparities Standing Committee for their research and input into the development of this document.

How Treatment Providers Can Help

Listed below are multi-level strategies substance use providers can implement to increase Black Kentuckians' treatment engagement and retention. Policy, community, organizational, interpersonal, and individual strategies are presented.



Leverage policy adaptations made in response to COVID-19, such as increased flexibility in methadone prescribing, and advocate for continuation of these policies beyond the pandemic.

Expand access to telehealth. Free and affordable smart phones, data and phone plans may be available for low-income consumers through the federal [Lifeline Assistance Program](#).

For justice-involved clients, advocate for consistent access to care and alternative sentencing options.

Engage faith community and stakeholders such as local drug courts, public health departments, and child welfare system who provide key links to and support for the Black community.

Connect with ethnic and racial-specific community-based organizations (CBOs) that integrate health, behavioral health, and social services. This can help link to other partners.

Identify community-determined first responders, such as community leaders.

Ensure messaging about services is accurate, reduces stigma, culturally understood, and disseminated via Black radio, websites such as [BlackDoctor.org](#), and trusted media figures

Disaggregate data by race and ethnicity to better understand disparities and target resources.

Create a culturally relevant and diverse workforce by recruiting and hiring Black and other persons of color.

Expand professional development opportunities that build cultural humility and responsiveness among staff.

Incorporate cultural values, such as spirituality, into treatment practices.

Employ culturally specific outreach and engagement strategies that recognize cultural differences in how individuals interact with providers and the healthcare system.

Engage clients with peer support to link them to ongoing treatment and resources, and help navigate complex systems and processes.

Support the development and preservation of natural supports that are crucial in engaging and supporting individuals in recovery.

Take the free Implicit Association Test online at [projectimplicit.net](#). Be aware of your implicit bias, and be motivated to confront and address it in both personal and professional settings.

Engage in educational opportunities such as webinars, readings and discussions. Learn [How To Become A Racial Transformer](#) and discover additional ways to dismantle racism in your everyday life.

More information on SUD, Race and Equity can be obtained from the agencies linked below:

COVID-19 and Health Disparities:

Resources for building healthy equity and inclusion:

Behavioral health services and information:

[Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration](#)

[Addiction Technology Transfer Center](#)

[Department for Behavioral Health, Developmental, and Intellectual Disabilities](#)

Judicial Branch operations:

Information about opioid response efforts:

[Administrative Office of the Courts](#)

[Kentucky Opioid Response Effort](#)