

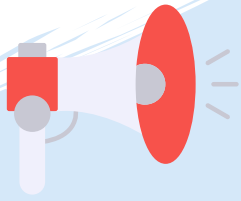
Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER BY THE JOINT DEI COMMITTEE

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Making Connections Through DEI Discourse



Poverty Awareness Month

Nationwide, January is designated as Poverty Awareness Month. According to estimates from the US Census Bureau, 37.2-million Americans, or 11.4% of the total population, were living in poverty in 2020. Sadly, the COVID-19 pandemic put pressure on the American economy and economies around the world, causing poverty disparities to worsen.

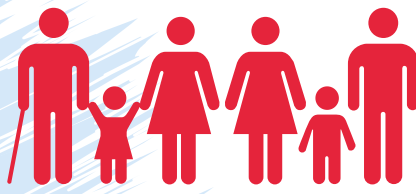
The United States measures poverty based on an income level that varies depending on the size and makeup of the family. The majority of marginalized groups characterized by sex or gender identity, including historically underrepresented racial and ethnic groups (HURE), immigrants and refugees, individuals with disabilities, veterans, older adults, and those suffering from serious mental health illnesses, are also affected by income inequality. Poverty also makes health inequities worse for patients who struggle to communicate in English and face obstacles related to their culture and ability to pay for care.

There is a clear link between poverty and poor health outcomes, and it is critical to recognize the influence that social and financial constraints can have on an individual's well-being. While a patient's financial situation has a significant impact on the quality and accessibility of health care services, other life circumstances, such as employment status and educational achievement, can also influence critical decisions surrounding the management of chronic diseases. Poor financial conditions can eventually lead to a vicious cycle of poverty and poor health consequences if they are not addressed.

The healthcare sector is one example that has produced a wealth of data. Due to its ability to impede proper access to resources and healthcare, poverty has a significant impact on the experience of patients. Transportation options in low-income communities cannot be dependable, making it difficult for patients to get to doctor's appointments. Because chronic illnesses and disabilities frequently require long-term care and management, not having health insurance can have an adverse effect on health outcomes by placing a financial burden on decisions about medicine or therapy.

Poverty rates are disproportionately high for people with disabilities. Individuals with disabilities have the highest rates of housing discrimination, are most likely to be homeless, and are either rent-burdened or unable to afford housing. For instance, research indicates that, in comparison to other protected classes, people with disabilities are more likely to encounter discrimination when looking for accommodation. The information listed below can help us in our critical thinking when considering poverty from the perspective of disability justice.





- Child poverty affects health, well-being, opportunities, and experiences of youth with and without disabilities.
- People with intellectual disabilities are more likely to be living in poverty than people without disabilities.
- Poverty is not a stable state. Families with children who have disabilities are more likely to descend into – and less likely to escape from – poverty.
- Families with children who have intellectual disabilities may have increased costs for transportation, child care, and equipment, as well as indirect costs including reduced employment opportunities for the mothers of these children.
- Added cost of living: People with disabilities and chronic illnesses have numerous expenses that nondisabled people do not incur. A 2017 report by the National Council on Disability documents how these additional costs can impede their access to employment and diminish their financial security. Given these expenses, access to income support programs is critical for people with disabilities. Yet such programs often include restrictive asset limits that penalize low-income people for accumulating the very savings and assets needed to achieve economic security.
- Lack of accessible, affordable transportation and housing: Housing and transportation are the two largest expenses for most households. According to a 2015 U.S. Department of Transportation report, transportation costs account for nearly one-third of after-tax income for the lowest-income earners. These costs are magnified for people with disabilities, many of whom are unable to drive or to use fixed-route transit options. While jurisdictions often improve access for those with disabilities by providing paratransit—door-to-door transportation services for people with disabilities that supplement public mass transit—these services do not meet demand. Since paratransit is considered by law to be a “comparable service,” jurisdictions are only required to offer paratransit services if they also offer public transit options. This means that paratransit is only required to operate on the same schedule as public transit and cover areas up to three-quarters of a mile from fixed-line services. Paratransit services are notoriously unreliable, and data on ADA compliance is limited.
- Lack of access to needed supports and services: The long-term services and supports (LTSS) system in the United States is deeply insufficient to meet the needs of people with disabilities who rely on some form of long-term care assistance. Personal attendant care and other services are not covered by most health insurance policies, making them inaccessible to low- and moderate-income people. Often, Medicaid is the only option through which those with disabilities can access LTSS, but the program restricts coverage to people with extremely limited incomes. As a result, low-income people with disabilities may risk their Medicaid coverage by entering or returning to the workforce.

Sources:

- Emerson E. 2007
- National Council on Disability
- Washington State Budget and Policy Center
- U.S. Department of Transportation

Sources:

- Federal Transit Administration
- U.S. Government Accountability Office
- National Disability Navigator Resource Collaborative



Did You Know?

Our DEI Policies Are Here



Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Program and Values

For this month, we're reviewing our next DEI policy at our agencies. The name of this policy is: Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Program and Values. It's purpose is to outline the designation of an employee vested with responsibility for advancing the organization's DEI program and all employees' and Board Members' responsibilities for supporting the DEI program.

Who does this policy apply to?

All Employees and Members of the Board of Directors.

Policy/Procedure:

DEI Officer:

Vested with responsibility for the day-to-day operation of the DEI program; such employee shall report directly to the entity's Chief Executive Officer (CEO) or other senior administrator designated by the CEO and shall periodically report directly to the governing body on the activities of the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion program, as directed by the CEO.

All Employees and Board Members:

AHRC Nassau is committed to the operation of an effective DEI Program and has therefore assigned oversight responsibilities to an employee at the administrative level vested with responsibility for the day-to-day operation of the DEI program. Employees with DEI oversight authority occupy high levels within the organizational structure and are empowered to implement the DEI Plan, investigate concerns, report concerns directly to those in higher positions of authority up to, and including the Chief Executive Officer.

All employees and Board Members are expected to support diversity, equity, and inclusion and the organization's DEI program through the following:

- Recognize your role in perpetuating inequity through your own individual biases, whether conscious or unconscious. Be willing to walk the journey toward self-awareness and reflection.
- Co-create with your colleagues a welcoming, supportive, and safe, affirming, and respectful work environment.

Did You Know?

How We Define DEI

- Accept that mistakes will be made, acknowledged, learned from and improved upon as much of this journey requires learning through iterations of growth and failure.
- Engage and support respectful dialogue and courageous conversations even when uncomfortable about oppression and its historical roots and historical trauma.
- Participate in continuous learning, development and training offered in the areas of diversity, inclusion, cultural humility, oppression, and equity.
- Identify and address microaggressions as they occur in our workplace, whether intentional or unintentional, and use these as opportunities to educate, learn, grow, listen, and respond with respect.
- Read and comply with this policy.
- Actively engage in initiating, promoting, and championing inclusive strategies to promote workforce diversity in race, ethnicity, sex, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, veteran status and disability status (these are not exhaustive and are meant to be taken as examples).
- Ensure equal access to growth and leadership development, educational and training opportunities, succession planning, mentoring opportunities, and other resources. This includes ensuring competitive internal and external recruitments rather than direct appointments where possible.

In the coming months, the DEI Newsletter will continue to outline policies and procedures that have been approved, so stay tuned!

However, if you would like to get ahead, or get a refresher on what you have already read please find the links for each agency below:

[AHRC Nassau](#)

[Citizens](#)

[BCCS](#)



Words & Concepts of the Month

An Introduction to Cognitive Bias

The phrase "cognitive bias" refers to a broad category of mistakes in our systematic responses to judgment and decision-related topics. It is expected that these patterns are not random. Although they are rooted in our experiences and beliefs, they frequently defy reason or probability.

Even though we want to believe that we are logical beings who consider all available information before acting, this is frequently not the case. We are all susceptible to cognitive bias to some extent. Our brains have been programmed with cognitive biases, which might help us in navigating the constant influx of information that comes with daily living. It would be very difficult for us to function if we had to carefully consider every action before taking it.

Our brains depend more than we know on our experiences and beliefs to function more efficiently. These turn into mental short cuts, also called heuristics. These automatic ways of thinking help us in our decision-making and anticipating processes. People frequently are unaware that their actions are motivated by biases or previous assumptions since this process is intuitive or subconscious.

The Framing Effect

There are over 15 different types of cognitive biases. For this month, we're focusing on one called the Framing Effect. The Framing Effect happens when we react differently to something depending on how it is presented and not on the actual facts of what is happening. Another way of thinking about this phenomenon is by realizing that our opinions are influenced by how the information is presented, not the information itself.

Example

A quick way of understanding how this bias works is through shopping and sales techniques. Picture yourself shopping for a good deal, and you encounter two offers:

- Offer 1: the product's full retail price is 100\$
- Offer 2: the product is on sale for 50% off the full retail price of 200\$

Even though both products end up being the same price, offer 2 is known to generate more sales than offer 1. This is because the offer has been presented to us a 50% off sale which is usually viewed more favorably. The first offer frames your buying decision as a loss of 100\$ dollars to your pocket, but the second offer frames it as a gain because you are supposedly saving (and keeping in your pocket) 100\$.

Why does the Framing Effect happen?

The way options are framed—with different wordings, emphasis, and reference points— influences our decisions. The most popular framing highlights an option's potential for good or positive gain, while another highlights the bad or negative loss. Because we tend to avoid loss and look down on or get angry at what we believe to be bad, we are vulnerable to this kind of framing. Below are two popular reasons, however, keep in mind that these are not the only ones.

The Loss Factor.

Psychologists Daniel Kahneman and Amos Tversky explain this factor of the Framing Effect as “Prospect Theory.” The theory explains how a loss is understood as more powerful than a gain in similar value, making avoiding loss as more important than achieving gains. A sure gain is preferred to a probable one, and a probable loss is preferred to a sure loss.

Shortcuts used by our brain.

As mentioned above, thinking about, and making decisions takes a lot of time and energy so our brain uses shortcuts (heuristics). The shortcut that contributes to the Framing Effect is called Availability Heuristics, which means that we tend to use the information that is already available to us through beliefs and experiences than using new information.

How do work to avoid the Framing Effect?

One way to think about it is by consciously wanting to be informed and being open to new evidence, even if it defies long held beliefs. A useful way of practicing this is by consciously providing rationales for our choices. Talk to yourself and practice debating yourself with new information.



Watch the videos by clicking on their titles and continue your learning journey.



The Framers and the Framed: News Media and Disability

Former journalist, news director and now journalism lecturer, Shawn Burns wants the news media to think about the way it represents disability and, in so doing, help create a more inclusive society. His passion and activism for change is driven from experience: Shawn's son, Mac, has cerebral palsy. Shawn argues most reporting of people who live with disability falls into two categories, at either end of a spectrum – tragedy, or heroism. He believes news media has an important role to play in society's understanding of disability and its intrinsic part in community. Shawn Burns is a journalism lecturer at the University of Wollongong, where he is completing his PhD studies.



Alisa Miller: How the News Distorts our Worldview

Alisa Miller, head of Public Radio International, talks about why -- though we want to know more about the world than ever -- the media is actually showing us less. Eye-opening stats and graphs.

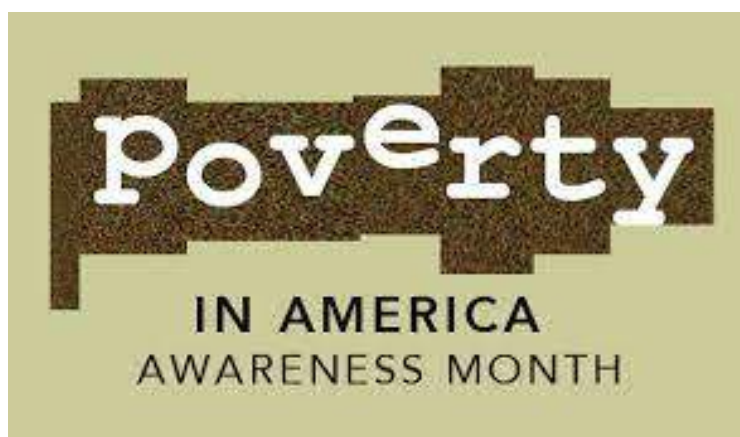


This Month..

Poverty in America Awareness Month

January is National Poverty in America Awareness Month, and this holiday aims to recognize the severe conditions of poverty that many are living in. There are still thousands of people who are deprived of three meals a day, quality education, and even clean and healthy drinking water.

[Learn more](#)



Slavery and Human Trafficking Awareness Month

During the National Slavery and Human Trafficking Prevention Month in January, emphasis is placed on creating awareness about human trafficking and the great human rights violation that it is. Human trafficking, and other forms of slavery, take place in various parts of the world, where people are sold for labor, sex, or anything else the buyers require.

[Learn more](#)

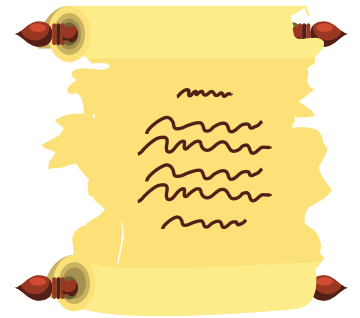


Days of the Month

January 1 Emancipation Proclamation was Signed

This day helps raise awareness for HIV/AIDS. It's an opportunity for people worldwide to unite in the fight against HIV, to show support for people living with HIV, and to commemorate those who have died from an AIDS-related illness. Founded in 1988, World AIDS Day was the first ever global health day.

[Learn more](#)



Jan 1 New Year's Day

Civilizations around the world have been celebrating the start of each new year for at least four millennia. Today, most New Year's festivities begin on December 31 (New Year's Eve), the last day of the Gregorian calendar, and continue into the early hours of January 1 (New Year's Day).

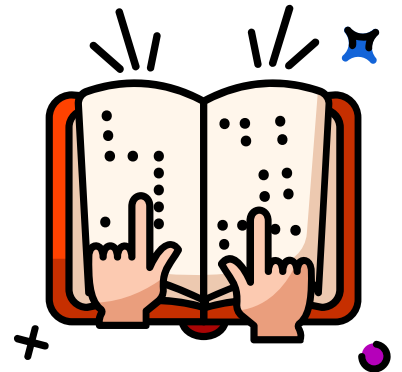
[Learn more](#)



January 4 National Braille Day

World Braille Day on January 4th is celebrated to honor the birth of Braille's inventor, Louis Braille. Braille's gift to the world has brightened the lives of millions of people around the world who are blind or visually impaired, and they benefit from his work every day. The day also acknowledges that those with visual impairments deserve the same standard of human rights as everyone else.

[Learn more](#)



January 6 Feast of the Epiphany/ Dia de los Reyes Magos

Many Christians around the world annually celebrate Epiphany on January 6. It is a public holiday in many countries and marks two events in Jesus Christ's life, according to the Christian Bible. The first event was when the three wise men, or kings, visited infant Jesus. The second event was when St John the Baptist baptized Jesus.

[Learn more](#)



January 7 Coptic Orthodox Christmas

Orthodox Christmas Day is on January 7 every year, and isn't it an exciting opportunity to celebrate another Christmas just as the New Year kicks off? In the Julian calendar – a much older calendar used before the current Gregorian calendar – Christmas was celebrated on January 7. The Orthodox Church still uses the same old calendar to celebrate Christmas Day. Orthodox Christians celebrate by going to church and other traditions like burning frankincense to commemorate the Wise Men's gifts to baby Jesus.



[Learn more](#)

January 10 World Hindi Day

January 10th marks the first World Hindi Conference that took place in 1975, in Nagpur, Maharashtra. In 2006, 122 delegates from 30 countries attended, and then Prime Minister Manmohan Singh declared January 10 as World Hindi Day. An objective of the occasion is to present Hindi as an international language. Hindi is an Indo-Aryan language spoken chiefly in North India. Hindi, written in the Devanagari script, is one of the two official languages of the Government of India, along with the English language.



[Learn more](#)

January 11 National Human Trafficking Awareness Day

National Human Trafficking Awareness Day on January 11 raises awareness of the persistent issue of human trafficking. Though the entire month of January has already been recognized as National Slavery and Human Trafficking Prevention Month, this day is specifically dedicated to awareness and prevention of the illegal practice. This holiday is also separate from the World Day Against Trafficking Persons, as established by the United Nations. Since the Senate established this day of observance in 2007, it has drawn massive public support from individual donations to government-organized events.



[Learn more](#)

January 13 Maghi (Sikh)

For Sikhs it is a community gathering to commemorate martyrdom of forty Sikhs (Chalis Mukte) who once had deserted the tenth and last human Guru of Sikhism, Guru Gobind Singh at Anandpur Sahib, but later rejoined the Guru and died while fighting the Mughal Empire army led by Wazir Khan in 1705.

[Learn more](#)



January 13 Korean American Day

On January 13 we celebrate Korean American Day to honor and highlight our friends of Korean descent who have made immeasurable contributions for over a century. Ever since the first immigration wave happened way back in 1903.

[Learn more](#)



January 15 Makar Snkranti

Makar Sankranti is a holiday dedicated to the sun god, Surya, and is the celebration of the sun entering the zodiac sign of Capricorn or Makar which marks the end of the winter and the start of longer days. Although Makar Sankranti traditions are a little different in the different regions of India, the general celebration is the same. On this holiday, people will worship the sun god, Surya, by going to temples and taking a cleansing bath in the Ganges River. People also often eat sweets made of jaggery and sesame and participate in the kite festival.

[Learn more](#)



Jan 15 Martin Luther King Day (third Monday of January)

Dr. Martin Luther King's birthday is on January 15th but his remembrance is celebrated on the third Monday of January every year. Dr. King was the chief spokesperson for nonviolent activism in the Civil Rights Movement, which protested racial discrimination in federal and state law. The campaign for a federal holiday in King's honor began soon after his assassination in 1968. At first, some states resisted observing the holiday as such, giving it alternative names, or combining it with other holidays. It was officially observed in all 50 states for the first time in 2000.



[Learn more](#)

Jan 17 National Day of Racial Healing

We all live in a world born from historic racial inequities that have led to broken systems. These significant challenges will not be solved by one individual or group. To ensure our communities are free of systemic racism, we must come together to explore how past actions have created present racial inequities in our systems.



[Learn more](#)

January 18 Bodhi Day

For Mahayana Buddhists, this holiday celebrates the attainment of the truth of existence by Buddha. This allows him to find happiness and to be free from suffering. There are really two Bodhi Days each year. The "Secular" Bodhi Day, celebrated on a fixed date in much of the Western World and Japan, is December 8. The other Bodhi Day is based on the lunar calendar so, like Easter, the date changes year to year.



[Learn more](#)

January 24 – 25 Tu B’shevat

The 15th of Shevat on the Jewish calendar—celebrated this year on Thursday January 25, 2024—is the day that marks the beginning of a “new year” for trees. Commonly known as Tu Bishvat, this day marks the season in which the earliest-blooming trees in the Land of Israel emerge from their winter sleep and begin a new fruit-bearing cycle.



[Learn more](#)

January 25 Mahayana New Year (Buddhist)

Mahayana New Year is celebrated this year on January 7 by Buddhists around the world. The term Mahayana encompasses Buddhist ideologies and philosophies. Mahayana is one of the two main branches of Buddhism and is mostly practiced in Northeast Asia – China, Japan, Tibet, Taiwan, Mongolia, and Korea. Each region has its own customs and traditions for practicing Mahayana Buddhism.



[Learn more](#)

Jan 27 International Holocaust Remembrance Day

The United Nations General Assembly designated January 27—the anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau—as International Holocaust Remembrance Day. On this annual day of commemoration, the UN urges every member state to honor the six million Jewish victims of the Holocaust and millions of other victims of Nazism and to develop educational programs to help prevent future genocides.



[Learn more](#)

Independence Days Around The World

January 1 Haiti Independence Day

The Haitian national day celebrates the declaration of independence from France by revolutionary leader Jean-Jacques Dessalines. Haitian independence was a historic human achievement. Haiti is the only nation in history founded by people who freed themselves from human slavery. It was the first Latin American country to gain independence.

[Click to learn more](#)



January 1 Sudan Independence Day

The Republic of Sudan is a Northeastern Africa state and it is the third-largest country in Africa, in terms of area. The Republic of Sudan was established as an independent sovereign state on 1 January 1956 upon the termination of the condominium of Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, over which sovereignty had been vested jointly in Egypt and the United Kingdom.

[Click to learn more](#)



January 1 Czech Republic Restoration Day

This day marks the date in 1993 when Czechoslovakia split up and became the Czech Republic and Slovakia - two different countries. This has been called the Velvet Divorce.

[Click to learn more](#)



January 4 Myanmar Independence Day

On December 12th Kenya celebrates Jamhuri Day. Jamhuri Day, also called Independence Day, is one of the most important national holidays in Kenya. Jamhuri Day is observed on December 12 every year, and December 13 is also a day off for most businesses. The day marks the date in 1964 when the country was formally admitted into the Commonwealth as a republic. “Jamhuri” is the Swahili word for Republic. December 12 is also the date when Kenya obtained its independence from Great Britain in 1963.



[Click to learn more](#)

January 11 Morocco Proclamation of Independence Day

Following attempts to seize power in the region by other European powers, on 3 December 1912, Morocco was made to accept a treaty that made it part of a French Protectorate, with part of Northern Morocco coming under Spanish control. On 11 January 1944, the Istiqlal (Independence) Party presented a manifesto demanding full independence. The French resident general dismissed its recommendations. While Morocco did not achieve full independence until 1957, the proclamation of Independence in the manifesto is seen as a key date in Morocco's struggle for independence.



[Click to learn more](#)

January 31 Nauru Independence Day

Nauru Independence Day is celebrated as a national holiday on January 31 each year. On this day in 1968, the Republic of Nauru declared independence. The 22nd anniversary of the Nauruans' return from Truk was also honored on this day. Chuuk Lagoon is the name given to Truk nowadays. The day is celebrated all over the island nation with parades, dances, carnivals, and remembering the struggle for independence.



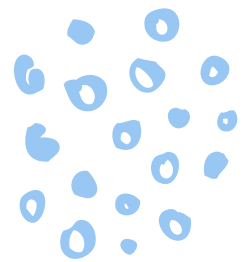
[Click to learn more](#)



Call for Submissions, Feedback and Suggestions

The Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Monthly Newsletter invites contributions to our monthly publication that fits into the following categories:

- News items and announcements
- Short stories
- Recognitions
- Member profiles



Tell us what you want to see more of!

Send us your feedback!



Submit your materials to:
Dr. Sarah Gonzalez Noveiri
DEI Officer
snoveiri@ahrc.org

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