

**Diversity Paper**

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Diversity is defined as the act or attribute of incorporating or involving people from a variety of socioeconomic and cultural origins, as well as men and women of various genders and sexual orientations (Merriam-Webster,2022). When talking about foster care there are many diversity issues that individuals might be unaware of or just in general do not think about. Some diversity issues may seem more significant than others if it begins to hinder a clients safety and their needs being met. Diversity issues within the foster care system that may arise would be challenges of an African American child being placed with a Caucasion or any family that does not share their cultural norms (Children's Bureau,2022).

With different cultural origins being mixed into one home, challenges that emerge are things like Caucasion families not fully understanding how to properly care for an African American's hair. This goes along the lines of lacking knowledge of how to maintain the child's hair and what it takes to properly care for a child from a different background. Also, there is this overall factor of when placed into a foster home, children have to acclimate to norms and expectations that have not been their way of life (Children's Bureau,2022). They are unfamiliar and may become uncomfortable in the setting that they are unfamiliar in. Imagine having to change everything about yourself within a matter of a day and becoming cautious of how to act within your own home. That adjustment would be challenging for anyone to take on, especially when you are used to your norms.

In terms of discrimination, when compared to white families, households of color are vastly overrepresented in the child foster care system and are more likely to face unfavorable consequences (Brown, 2021). For example, with children of color they are less likely to see unification with their family, and they experience greater chances of social, economic, and behavioral issues. Also, greater chances of multiple placements and group care which means

they are less likely to obtain permanent placement(Brown, 2021). According to the American Bar Association, evidence of disproportionality and imbalance around racial groupings and low-income families in the child welfare system may be explained by five key variables(Brown, 2021). The five key variables are as follows: correlation between poverty and abuse, bias in visibility or exposure, restricted access to resources, geographic constraints, child welfare experts intentionally or unwittingly allowing personal prejudices to influence their actions or decisions (Brown, 2021).

For social and economic justice advocating to adhere to those issues depends on the kind of issue that the social worker is dealing with. As a social worker it would be important to stress the benefits of placing a child into a home similar to their background. Shedding light on statistics and facts that have been proven to support the child in their journey within the foster care system. The worker could also create and distribute practices that are based around how to be culturally responsive, in those situations that children are placed amongst another background. This supportive knowledge is both beneficial for the foster family, the child and all other individuals who play an essential role within the child's case (Brown, 2021).

One would engage in that type of social justice in order to advocate for change by spreading awareness as much as possible throughout the agency. That would look like educating all persons and organizations that have contact with the agency through training and interventions (Brown, 2021). Also, a social worker having that understanding for themselves could promote the succession of their advocacy work. This means instilling that competence and expanding on the information that the individuals have already obtained whether it is personal experiences or textbook facts (Brown, 2021). In addition, actively and consistently trying to recruit foster households of color and different cultural backgrounds as a promotion of being able

to place the child appropriately. By getting out into the community and not being afraid to spread awareness on these issues could open the doors for these families. Also, opening hearts of those who have the potential or have simply thought about it but just was discouraged in one form or another.

Change efforts could be accomplished at the micro level with addressing these issues on a one on one basis talking to the child who is being placed could be effective when it comes to their understanding. Also, encouraging the foster parent to talk openly with their children to gain insight on what their customs and transitions looked like in their previous home. For example, these kinds of traditions include what kind of things they ate, how they might have celebrated their birthday, etc. Group support for those foster families could also be beneficial to help them talk through issues that arise. One family could have an answer to how to deal with certain situations that another family did not even think about. Different levels of support systems could ease the transition for both the child and foster families.

For the mezzo level with everyone who comes in contact with the agency for example, foster parents, department of social services workers, and all other affiliations could go through training detailing having a child in the home from a different race than the parents. The training could include inclusions on how to make that child feel welcomed for the foster parent and the child. Aged appropriate conversation with the child that is being placed in a specific home should happen to ensure that the child has some kind of understanding of the dynamic that has or is taking place. Maybe even a collaborative conversation before placement could possibly clear the air for issues that may become complex for both the child and the foster families.

For the macro level there could be community involvement as far as interventions and advocacy for the issues and populations that it affects. Not just specifically speaking to foster care agencies but across other resources including behavioral schools, mental institutions, and group homes. Just seeing the broader aspects of community involvement and having everyone come together on the issue brings more solutions, and families into the system to help with care. Certain event could include hosting tabling events at churches, outside of schools, posting flyers or even encouraging your other foster families to send in referrals.

Diversity issues are apparent within any field whether it is mental health counseling, policy work, and or school systems it is important to try and tackle all issues. Spread awareness to all parties involved by any means necessary so that one can hopefully decrease or even eliminate the issues that affect these populations. Everyone deserves a fair chance to be successful in life no matter the background and cultural history.

## References

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