Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
At Swords to Plowshares

June 1, 2023

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Commitment Statement of Purpose

Swords to Plowshares’ mission is to heal the wounds of war, to restore dignity, hope, and self-sufficiency to all veterans in need, and to prevent and end homelessness and poverty among veterans. Our “vets serving vets” advocacy model is one grounded in mutual respect and dignity. In that same spirit, we aim to create and foster a workplace that values the experiences, abilities, and backgrounds of all, creating a culture of humility, true comradery, and understanding to help all veterans in need.

The Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Committee seeks to uphold and establish diversity, equity, and inclusion as central cultural norms within Swords to Plowshares (STP), as demonstrated by the behaviors, practices, and policies of the: Board of Directors, Senior Management Staff, all Swords to Plowshares employees, and all of the veterans STP serves. To facilitate this goal, we are committed to upholding the principles and practices of cultural humility, which serves as the heart of this work and a developmental pathway toward deeper equity.

DEI Background

The DEI Committee is a volunteer group composed of representation from across the organization and meets twice a month to discuss progress towards DEI through the practice of cultural humility at STP. The initial committee of STP staff was identified through a collaborative process by the senior management and cultural humility co-creator and visionary, Dr. Melanie Tervalon. Through an anonymous process, staff were invited to express why they were interested in volunteering to help design, receive training, and help facilitate the work of the DEI committee at STP. Moving forward, this committee aims to provide an inclusive forum for DEI related input and concerns; offer trainings to every STP staff member; as well as provide recommendations on the integration of cultural humility principles into programs, policies, and practice.

\(^1\) At STP we use the term “vets” broadly, including those who have served for only one day. We do not believe one’s discharge status changes the fact that if someone has served in any capacity, they are a veteran.
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The DEI committee at STP is excited to support the organization in our ongoing commitment to the diversity of all the veterans we serve as well as our employees. We will work to ensure that everyone receives the equity and fairness to which they are entitled while also honoring our different experiences and walks of life.

If you have any questions at all about this work, please email the DEI team at deiteam@stp-sf.org.

Review of Guiding Framework Principles:

**Diversity**
represents all types of differences or the range of human experiences and ways of being.

At STP we uphold diversity as a value and the behavioral practice of honoring all identities; recognizing, valuing, and respecting the wide variety of experiences and characteristics among us—those we share and those that make each of us unique. At Swords to Plowshares, we are committed to honoring all who walk in our doors and embracing similarities and differences across characteristics such as age, ethnicity, race, physical abilities, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, and socioeconomic status.

**Equity**
is “the state, quality or ideal of being just, impartial and fair.”
The concept of equity is synonymous with fairness and justice.

STP is committed to putting the values of equity into practice by creating a place of mutual respect, opportunity, and belonging. At Swords to Plowshares, we continually strive to address and grow in our understanding of cultural, historic, and systematic oppression that has and continues to create imbalances of power and injustices for staff and clients of color. We are all impacted by systems of oppression—Thus, we are all responsible for co-creating a more just organization.

**Inclusion**
is the involvement and empowerment, where the inherent worth and dignity of all people are recognized.

STP is committed to creating a culture of humility where the personhood and experiences of each individual are valued. We uphold and actively nurture different experiences and perspectives, knowing that every person’s voice is important.

**Cultural Humility**

1. Ability to commit to a lifelong process of critical self-reflection and self-critique
2. Ability to redress power imbalances in the veteran client/staff and employee/supervisor relationship.
3. Ability to develop mutually-beneficial partnerships with communities and defined populations; centering and partnering with those you serve.
4. Ability to advocate for, and maintain, institutional consistency and accountability.

The Annie Casey Foundation