

# EQUITY IN PRACTICE

## WICWS Reading Circle

The Women, Infant, and Community Wellness Section is on its own equity journey. Staff currently have the opportunity to join a quarterly “Reading Circle” to discuss a book that focuses on an equity topic.

Last fall, the Section read “Take My Hand,” by Dolan Perkins-Valdez, which is a fictionalized retelling of a 1970s Supreme Court case concerning the involuntary sterilization of Erica and India Williams, ages 12 and 14, in Montgomery, Alabama.

This book affected us greatly, as it centered around a nurse working in a Family Planning Clinic in the South. With this familiar setting, it was easy to understand why the main character wrestled with whether her actions, and those of her co-workers, were empowering or coercive. We were reminded of North Carolina’s own tragic history around forced sterilization and reminded that we cannot move forward without acknowledgment of this past and its repercussions.



### Equity in Focus:

#### Trauma-Informed Physical Environments

Becoming a trauma-informed agency is multi-faceted, but focusing on one domain at a time can reduce feelings of being overwhelmed. This quarter, we’re focusing on enhancing the physical clinical space. Offering an accessible and welcoming environment can go a long way toward making clients feel like their well-being is a true priority. Staff will also benefit, and even build resilience, from having dedicated break areas and opportunities to engage in self care. All of these modifications can help create a sense of psychological and physical safety in your organization.

### Equity in Practice: Rockingham County

With just a few tweaks, the Rockingham County Health Department was able to improve its clinic space and make it more trauma-informed. For example, they added sound machines to each exam room, which plays soothing sounds to help calm nerves as well as enhance confidentiality. Fluorescent light covers featuring nature themes, like trees, oceans, and flowers, were added to the lights above exam tables, which can promote a sense of calm as the patient waits for their examination. They plan to repaint the clinic in the near future using soothing tones. All of these are great and simple examples of promoting a safe, physical environment in your family planning clinic.

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## Upcoming Learning Opportunities from the Reproductive Health Branch

### Thursday, June 20: Family Planning Client Centered Care

This webinar, led by Patty Kempton, Nurse Consultant Supervisor, will give Family Planning staff a chance to walk through Attachment C of the [Family Planning Agreement Addendum](#), with special emphasis on providing care based on client's need for services. Registration information will be sent out via email with more details soon.

### Thursday, June 27: Trauma-Informed Practices: Enhancing Your Clinic's Physical Environment

[Register](#) today for this webinar opportunity, the first in a series, as we begin to dive into [RHNTC's Trauma-Informed Care Toolkit](#). We will emphasize simple modifications you can make in your Family Planning Clinic Space to promote physical and psychological safety for patients and staff.

### Recommended Resource

Earlier this year, RHNTC hosted a webinar titled "[The Benefits of Person-Centered Contraceptive Counseling](#)." The webinar reminded us that patient centeredness is a relatively new concept in healthcare and a critical component of quality. The first half of the webinar focused on historical context and gave examples from studies that show how promoting various contraceptive methods based on efficacy over patient preference has broken trust in the past, especially in communities that have experienced reproductive repression. As the RHB begins to roll out a tool to measure patient-centeredness (Patient Experience Survey), we hope all continue learning, reflecting, and growing together.

## Newsletters have a new home!

Past issues of the "Equity in Practice" newsletter are now archived on the Resources page of the Women, Infant, and Community Wellness website for easy access.

We would love to highlight your clinic in a future newsletter! Reach out to Jessica Johnson, Reproductive Justice Coordinator, at [Jessica.L.Johnson@dhhs.nc.gov](mailto:Jessica.L.Johnson@dhhs.nc.gov) with ideas or to be featured.



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