

VETERANS HEALTH ADMINISTRATION

Office of Health Equity

Kevin W. Stanford, DHA, MBA
VSO Communications and Engagement
Office of Health Equity (12POP1)
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Created in 2012

Vision: To ensure that VHA provides appropriate individualized health care to each Veteran in a way that:

- Eliminates disparate health outcomes and
- Assures health equity

OFFICE OF HEALTH EQUITY GOALS

- 1. Leadership:** Strengthen VA leadership to address health inequalities and reduce health disparities.
- 2. Awareness:** Increase awareness of health inequalities and disparities.
- 3. Health Outcomes:** Improve outcomes for Veterans experiencing health disparities.
- 4. Workforce Diversity:** Improve cultural and linguistic competency and diversity of the VHA workforce.
- 5. Data, Research and Evaluation:** Improve data and diffusion of research to achieve health equity.

VETERAN POPULATIONS

Veterans who experience greater obstacles to health related to:

- Race or ethnicity
- Gender
- Age
- Geographic location
- Religion
- Socio-economic status
- Sexual orientation
- Mental health
- Military era
- Cognitive /sensory/physical disability

OFFICE OF HEALTH EQUITY WEBSITE

VA | U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

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Office of Health Equity

Health Equity

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New Equity Report

The National Veteran Health Equity Report (NVHER) 2021 provides data on patient experiences and healthcare quality for Veterans who receive VHA care.

[Learn more »](#)

CONNECT WITH VHA

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VHA Office of Health Equity

Equitable access to high-quality care for all Veterans is a major tenet of the VA healthcare mission. The Office of Health Equity (OHE) champions the elimination of health disparities and achieving health equity for all Veterans. OHE supports the VHA's vision to provide appropriate individualized health care to each Veteran in a

<https://www.va.gov/healthequity>

CYBERSEMINAR PRESENTERS



Harvey Johnson

Deputy Assistant Secretary
Office of Resolution Management, Diversity & Inclusion




Shakeria Cohen, Ph.D., MSCR

Health Science Officer
DEI Committee Co-Chair
Department of Veterans Affairs
Biomedical Laboratory Research & Development
Office of Research and Development



Courtni France, MA Bioethics and Science Policy

Research Project Coordinator
Career Advancement and Professional
Development Coordinator
DEI Core Lead



A Look at Inclusion, Diversity, Equity & Access (I*DEA) Initiatives at Different Levels of VA

Office of Health Equity Cyber Seminar

Harvey Johnson

Deputy Assistant Secretary
Office of Resolution Management
Diversity & Inclusion
*I*DEA Influencer*

Wednesday, June 14, 2023
12:00PM

I*DEA



Inclusion * Diversity * Equity * Access

I*DEA Related Executive Orders

EO 13960

Promoting the Use of Trustworthy Artificial Intelligence in the Federal Government

EO 14008

Environmental Justice

EO 14031

Advancing Equity, Justice, and Opportunity for Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders

EO 14045

Advancing Educational Equity, Excellence, and Economic Opportunity for Hispanics (VBA)

EO 14058

Transforming Federal Customer Experience and Service Delivery To Rebuild Trust in Government

EO 13985

Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government

EO 14019

Promoting Access to Voting

EO 14035

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility in the Federal Workforce

EO 14049

Advancing Educational Equity, Excellence, and Economic Opportunity for Native Americans and Strengthening Tribal Colleges and Universities (OPIA)

EO 14075

Advancing Equality for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, and Intersex Individuals

Memorandum

Condemning and Combating Racism, Xenophobia, and Intolerance Against Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in the United States

EO 13988

Preventing and Combating Discrimination on the Basis of Gender Identity or Sexual Orientation

EO 14020

Establishment of the White House Gender Policy Council OSVA

EO 14041

Advancing Educational Equity, Excellence, and Economic Opportunity Through Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HRA)

EO 14050

Advancing Educational Equity, Excellence, and Economic Opportunity for Black Americans (VBA)

EO 14091

Further Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government



What is I*DEA?

*I*DEA is for All of Us*

PROMOTING **I**NCCLUSION

INCREASING **D**IVERSITY

FOSTERING **E**QUITY

IMPROVING **A**CCESS



I*DEA

Inclusion * Diversity * Equity * Access



I*DEA

Inclusion * Diversity * Equity * Access



We are building VA cultural health



We are promoting bringing your whole self to work



We are creating a safe and welcoming environment free of harassment

I~STAND: A Safer VA

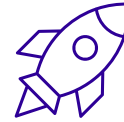
All who do business with VA should feel physically and psychologically safe, welcome, and included. VA is dedicated to creating a culture free of sexual harassment and sexual assault.



Engaging the entire enterprise in sexual harassment & assault prevention



Empowering others to **go above and beyond** to change VA culture



Breaking down silos to bring teams together and **get work done**



Encouraging **participation by all** – everyone is welcome to join the conversation



VA is Leading the Change

Improving Cultural Health for All

1. Communicating Change:

- * Share the work and progress of I*DEA with VA leaders and change makers, the Influencers Network, and communications tools such as the Intranet, Showcasing I*DEA, and I*Q.

2. Connecting VA:

- * Influencers Network will have a front row seat to the promotional tools and resources available as well as guidance on how to take it to the field, creating a trickle-down effect to reach all levels of VA.

3. Educating and Building Awareness:

- * Educate team members on the importance of I*DEA, encourage feedback, and help implement positive change by sharing the tools, welcoming conversation, and advocating for I*DEA.



Champion Change at VA!

CHAMPION CHANGE @VA

Become an I*DEA Influencer and join the movement to build a stronger VA where all employees and Veterans feel safe, welcome, and valued!

The I*DEA Influencer Network is improving VA's cultural health by building a more inclusive VA—one that respects and supports the diverse communities we serve and cultivates equitable access to care, benefits, and services.

You can make a difference by inspiring positive change and building a brighter future for us all.



I*DEA

Learn more and access available resources on the I*DEA Intranet

@ bit.ly/41BqtYI

Become an I*DEA Influencer!

@ bit.ly/3NjSf7u



How Do I Get Started?

Influence!



Bring your whole self to work.

As an I*DEA advocate driving change, lead by example and share unique parts of yourself that can contribute to the greater good of the organization and recognize that everyone plays a part.



Be open-minded and willing to learn.

Take a deeper dive into your own biases and understand where change needs to take place. Engage with individuals from different backgrounds and get to know them, learn from them, and adapt.



Stand up for I*DEA.

Be a source for support and ensure that unwanted harassing behavior doesn't take place at your facility. [Veteran Bystander Intervention Training](#) is a great resource to learn what behavior is unacceptable and how to diffuse potentially harmful situations.



Create an environment others want to be a part of.

There's no doubt about it – I*DEA is the way of the future. Engage with your team in a new way by getting to know them in a new way. Promote the change in your facility and in your community. Attract new talent and build a team that embodies inclusion, diversity, equity and access.



THANK YOU!

Learn more about I*DEA and I~STAND @
idea@va.gov



I*DEA / I~STAND





**The Cyberseminar on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) efforts titled:
A Look at DEI Initiatives at Different Levels of the VA
June 14, 2023**

**Shakeria Cohen, PhD, MSCR
VA Office of Research and Development (ORD)
Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee, Co-Chair**

O

Building a DEI Program

- Develop a Diverse Scientific Workforce

- Stimulate Minority Health Research

- Develop Future Leaders from UR Groups

- Promote a Culture of Inclusion in ORD

7/20

1/21

7/21

9/21

1/22

7/22

10/22

DEIWG
Formed

DEI Supp.
Announced

1st Supp.
Award

Grant
WS

SRP
Launch

Prof.
Dev. RFA

MSI Suppl.



ChooseVA

VA



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

The Why

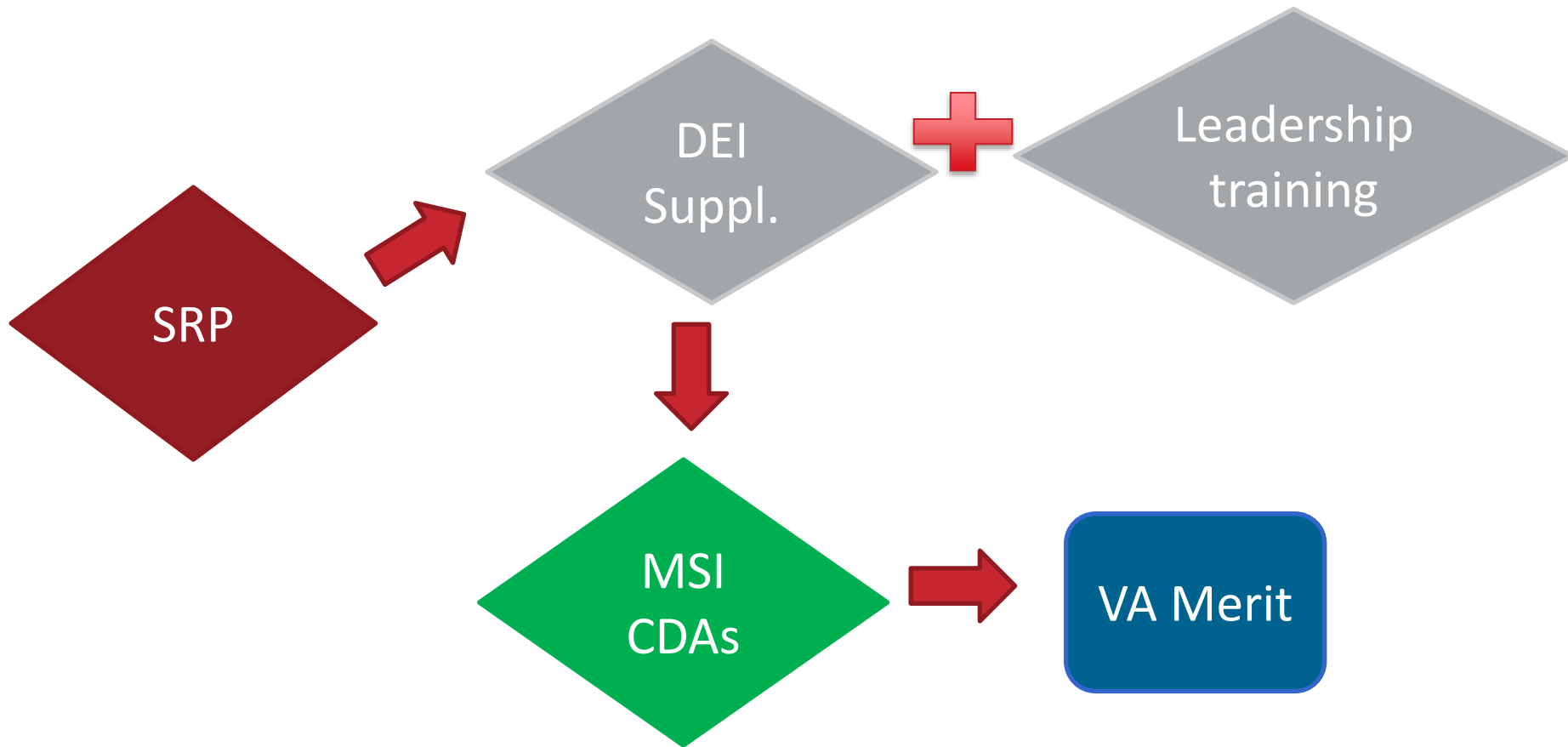
- Demographics of VA Researchers
- Best Research → Diversity in skill sets & perspectives
- Ensure Innovation in VA Healthcare
 - Depends upon Diverse workforce
- Reflects Diversity of Veterans



ORD DEI Work Group Programs

- Summer Research Program for Undergraduates
- Mentored Research Supplements
- Core Recruiting Site (Atlanta VAMC and Morehouse)
- Minority Serving Institution-CDA program
- Grant Writing Workshop for UR Investigators
- Supplements for VA/MSI collaboration
- Professional/Leadership Development
- Educational funding for DEI topics

ORD Support for Diversification of Workforce



Summer Research Program

- 3-Year Pilot Program – Summer 2022-Summer 2024
- Summer Research Experiences for UR Students
 - Veterans
 - Children of Veterans
 - Students from UR populations
- Educational level:
 - Highschool
 - Undergraduate
 - Medical School



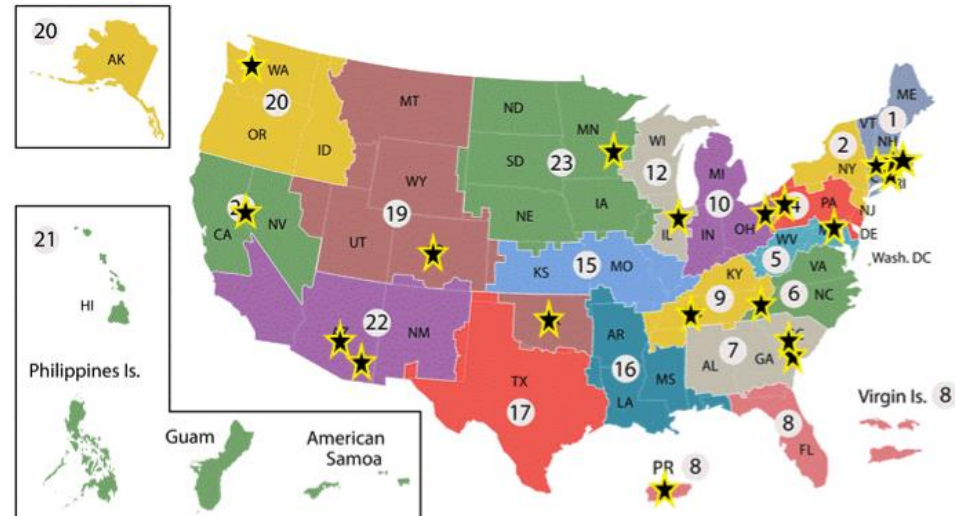
SRP students at Oklahoma VA

Summer Research Program Impact

- Funded 21 VA Pilot Sites
- Reached 115 students in year 1
 - 74 college students
 - 8 graduate students
 - 11 high school students
 - 20 medical & Allied health students
- Evaluation
- Goal: 42 sites w/ up to 420 students in 2025
- PI meeting: Jan 19 and 20, 2023



SRP students – Columbia, SC



Supplements to Promote Diversity

- Open to UR Early Career Scientists
 - Including Veterans
- Mentored Research Supplements
- 2 Years of Support
 - \$100K/yr
 - Prepare for Career Development Award
 - Publish results

- FY 21: 20 Applications; 11 Funded Mentees
- FY 22: 14 Applications; 10 Funded Mentees
- FY 23: 16 Applications: 11 Funded Mentees
- ~6 MSI and HBCU Faculty in Program
- ~4 Veterans in the program
- Invited Presentations
- Publications/Awards



Career Development Program in VA

GOALS:

- Attract, train and retain talented VA scientists and clinician scientists
- Address health care needs of Veterans



Types of Career Development Awards

- **CDA – 1 (Entry Level - specific services)**
 - Must apply within 2 yrs of last training
 - Up to 2 yr award of full salary support only
 - In BLRD and CSRD, targeted to psychiatrists, Minority Serving Institution (MSI) applicants, and **Veteran scientists**
- **CDA – 2 (Mid-Level - All ORD services)**
 - Must apply within 5 yrs of training
 - 3 to 5 yr award of full salary support & up to \$75K/year
 - Separate mechanisms for applicants at MSIs

VA Office of Research DEI Committee

DEI CO CHAIRS

Shakeria Cohen
&
Mark Roltsch

DEI WG MEMBERSHIP

Alex Chiu	Patricia Cullum	Rachel Ramoni
Brian Schulz	Jane Battles	Robert O'Brien
Carol B. Fowler	Kellie Gore	Shirley Groer
Carole Woodle	Kristina Nord	Stephanie L. Guerra
Chinagozi Ugwu	Lina Kubli	Tiffin Ross-Shepard
Emily Evans	Liza Catucci	Wendy Tenhula
Crystal Henderson	Jessica Cleveland	Karen McNamara

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Angela Foster
Carol Roberts
Christina Williams
Jenish Patel
Patricia Dorn
Tanya N. Byfield
Vetisha McClair
Ying-Yee Kong



Choose **VA**

VA



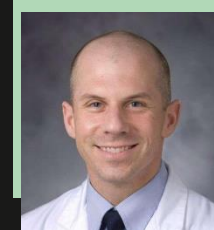
U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

DEI CORE CENTER OF INNOVATION TO ADAPT

Ensuring equity in the workplace and the research that we do



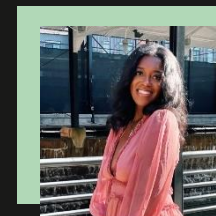
Dr. Sadie Wilson,
She/her



Dr. Matt Crowley,
He/him



Courtni France,
She/her



Micaela Gladney,
She/her

DEI CORE LEADS

June 14th
12:00 ET

Courtni France Presenting on behalf of
Durham VAMC Center of Innovation to ADAPT

Courtni.France@va.gov

Background

Flashback to 2020

Core's act as areas of expertise

Core's support research activities in
the Center

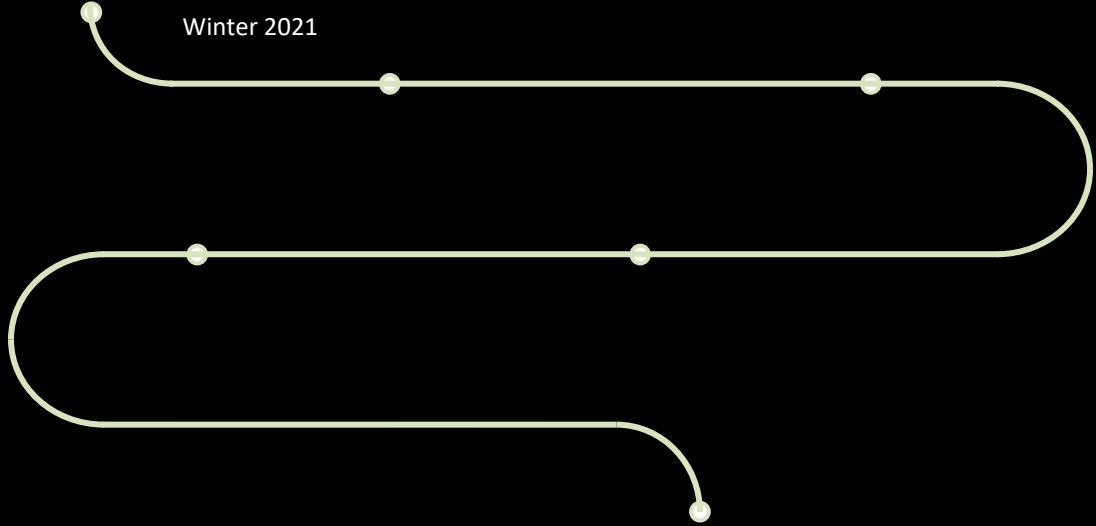
Core's develop staff



Establishing the Core



- Start
DEI Core formed
Winter 2021



16 ACTIVE
MEMBER



Our Mission

Is to acknowledge and dismantle racism and other forms of oppression in our workplace by promoting equity in our environment and research activities

1.

We center the voices of those who have lived experiences of racism and other forms of oppression.

2.

We uphold the truth that equity and good science go hand-in-hand.

3.

We believe that every member of our ADAPT COIN research community has the capacity to confront and mitigate their own biases.

4.

We expect every member of our ADAPT COIN research community to take action to create an inclusive environment.

5.

We will advocate for antiracist values in our own community and the broader research community.

Guiding Principles

Establishing the Core



Survey Results (n=25)

Minoritized groups:

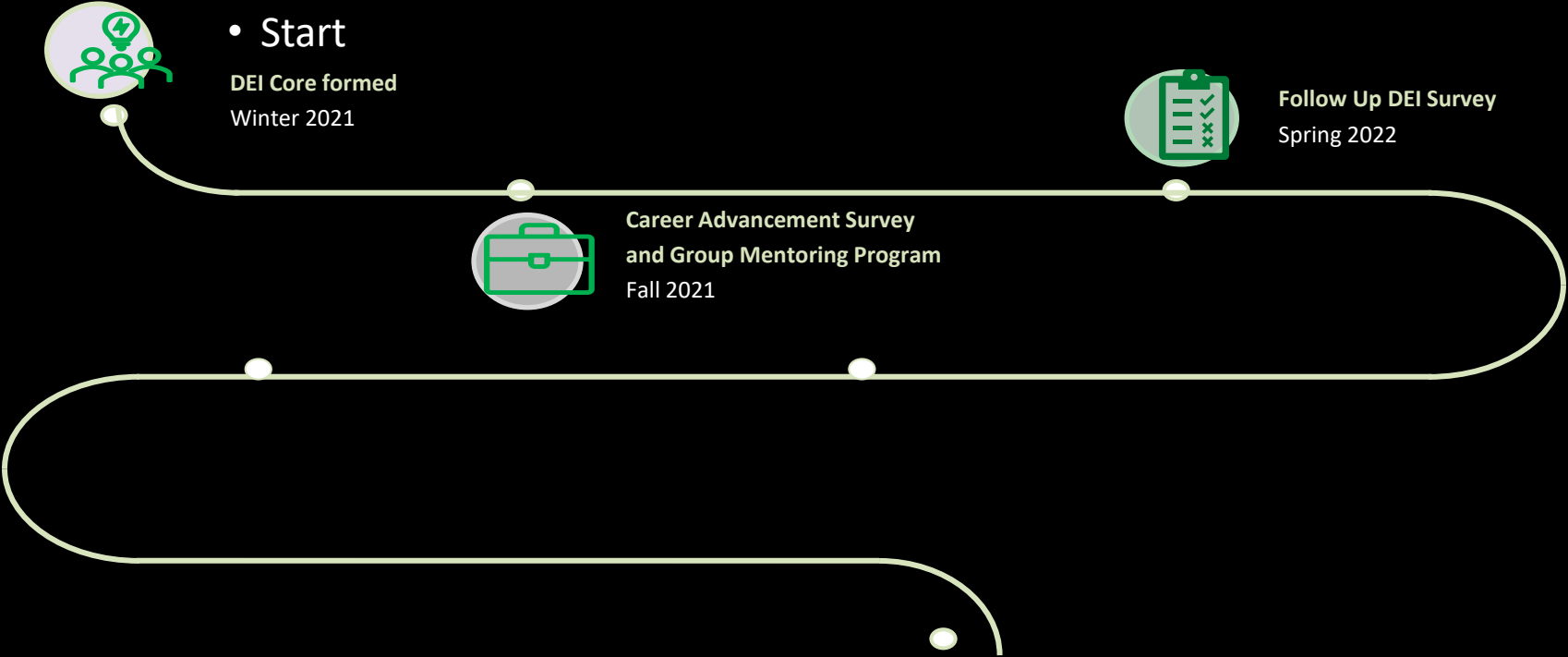
Disagreed that there was a transparent process for career advancement at higher rates than non-minoritized groups

AND

Reported receiving adequate opportunities for career advancement less often than non-minoritized groups

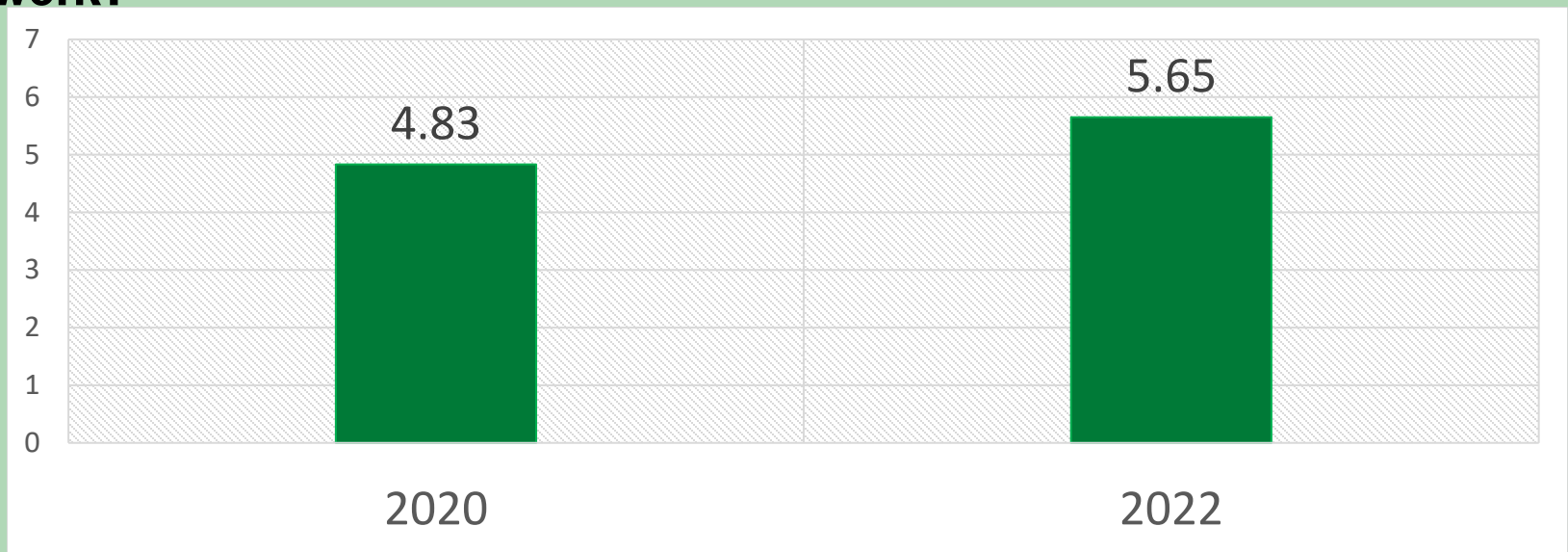
Minoritized Groups were defined as any person who holds one or more of these identities: BIPOC, Veteran, LGBTQIA+, or first generation college graduate (48% of our survey sample)

Establishing the Core



Viewing 2020 Responses and 2022 Responses (n=41)

Do you feel comfortable talking about racism/discrimination at work?



0 = Don't feel comfortable at all

10 = Feel extremely comfortable

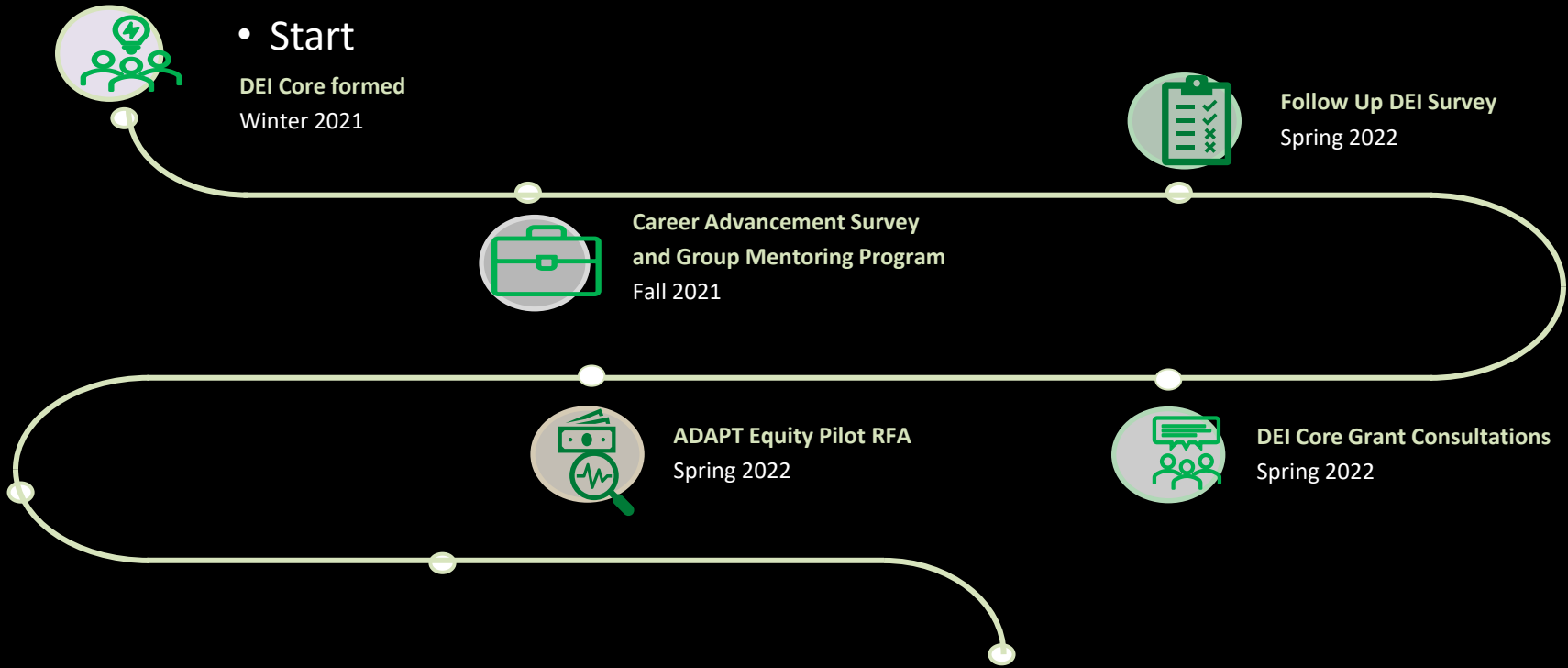
“The organization promotes a climate of respect among its members.”

85% Minoritized Group
Agreed

96% Non- Minoritized Group
Agreed

Minoritized Groups were 61% of the sample size

Establishing the Core



Advancing the COIN's Research Portfolio

FY2023 ADAPT SWIFT Internal Pilot Awards:



Dr. Zak Loring,
MD, MHS



Improving disparities in Atrial Fibrillation Care through Electrocardiogram-based Machine Learning Risk Models

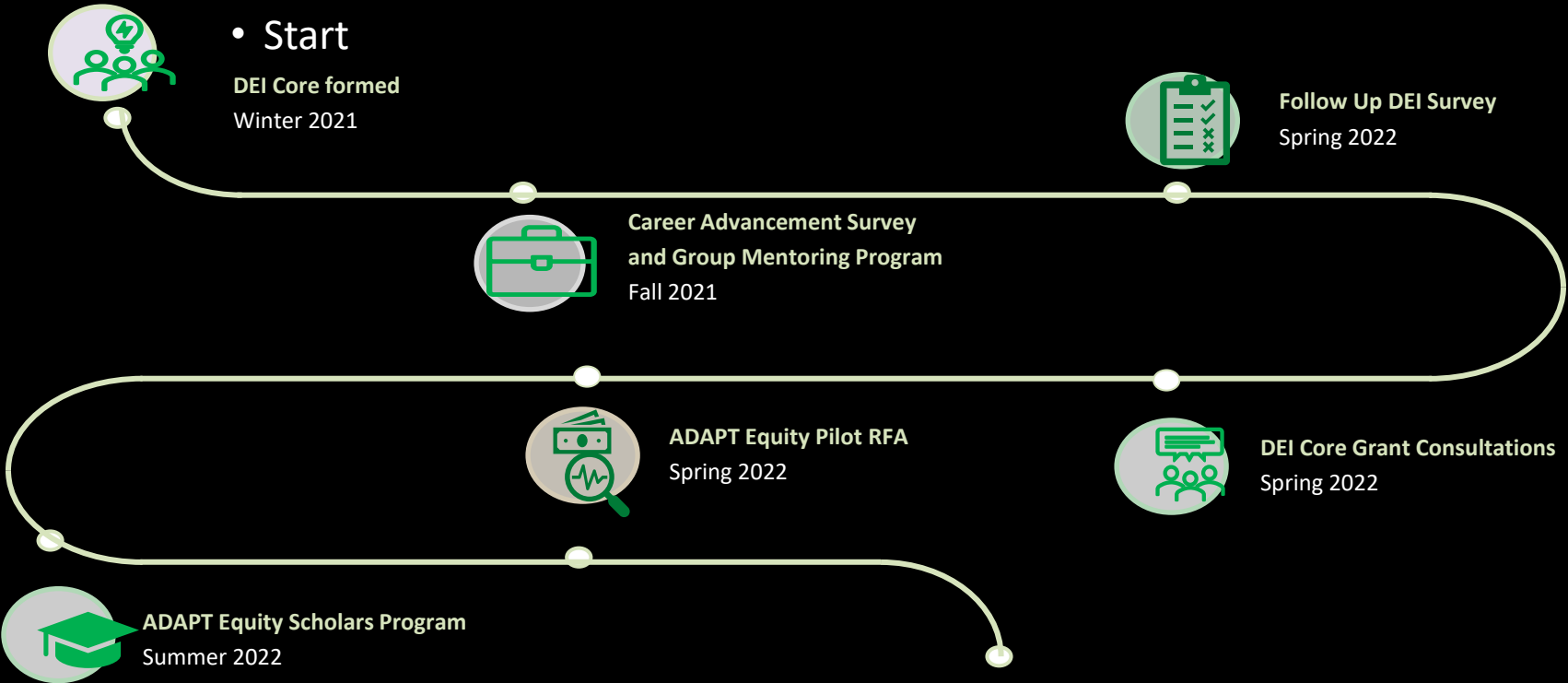


Dr. Moahad Dar,
MD



Enhancing Healthcare Equity of Type 2 Diabetes Care within the VA system through a novel Diabetes Staging System (DSS)

Establishing the Core

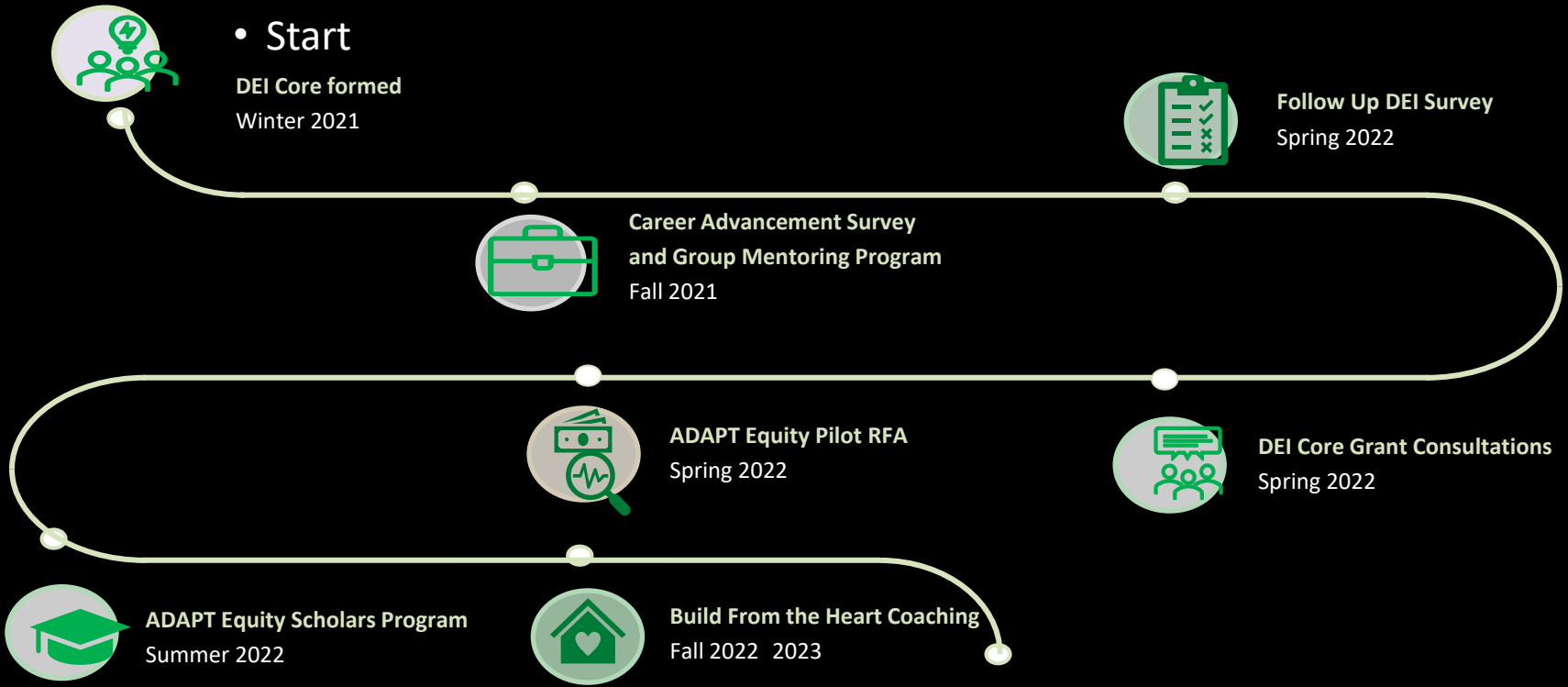


Inaugural Equity Scholar

- ADAPT Equity Scholars receive:
 - Mentorship and support for completion of a research project and publication
 - ADAPT career development content
- Equity Scholars continue collaborating with ADAPT indefinitely, including via other mentored research opportunities and HSR&D fellowships/grants
- 2022 ADAPT Equity Scholar – **Jashalynn German MD, Endocrinology Fellow**
 - **Focus:** improving access, utilization and care quality in Endocrinology



Establishing the Core



Build From the Heart



Meetings with ADAPT COIN Leadership

- Monthly Equity Coaching
- COIN-led with facilitation by Mx. Chandler
- Focusing on sustainable and meaningful change (including self-awareness)

Meetings with DEI Core

- Monthly equity coaching
- Equity in communication
- Focus on sustainability in equity work

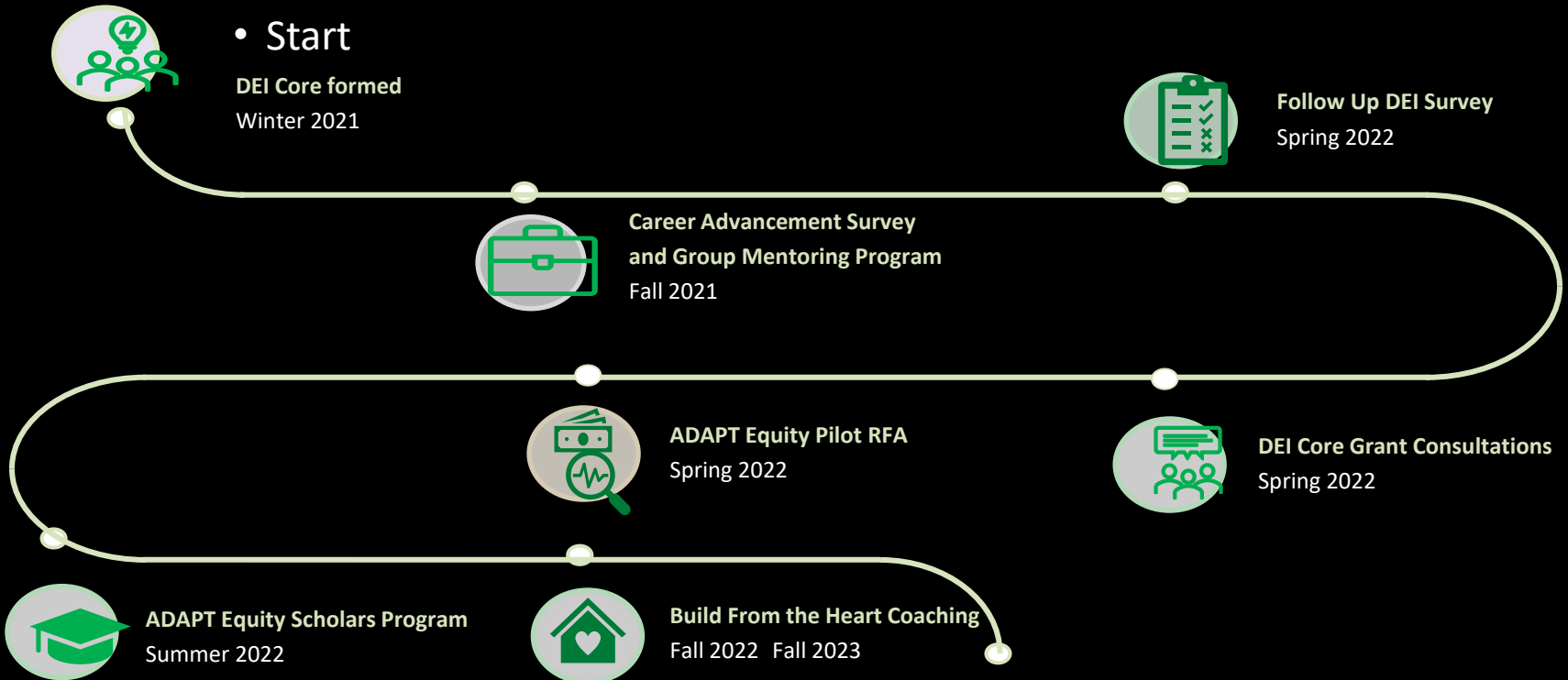
Flexibility in Training Needs

- Option for Mx. Chandler to lead training
- Option for trainings to be DEI Core-led



BUILD FROM
THE
HEART

Establishing the Core



▶▶ WHAT'S NEXT?

Center wide environment initiatives

- **Pilot Group Mentoring Program**
- DEI Follow Up Survey
- Build from the Heart Coaching and Development

Research Initiatives

- DEI Grant Review and Consultations
- ADAPT Equity Pilot RFA
- ADAPT Equity Scholars Program

Additional Seminars

- Vanessa Lopez-Littleton, PhD, RN: The Urgency of Now: Advancing Social Equity in the Public Sector
- Loretta Braxton, PhD: Implicit Bias Training

1

Continue to adhere to our guiding principles in all activities undertaken by the DEI Core

2

Build and strengthen connections to other foundational groups in the Center to permeate Equity Considerations throughout

3

Evaluate, modify and improve our activities to ensure that we add value to our colleague's lives, organizational production, and veteran's healthcare