

## Leadership for Equity, Access, and Dismantling Disparities (LEAD)

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### **Abstract:**

Systemic racism contributes to disparities in mental healthcare, impacting access, diagnosis, treatment, and outcomes for marginalized communities. This article examines existing literature on systemic racism and explores leadership solutions to address these inequities. Using cultural competency, critical consciousness, structural competency, and transformational leadership, this analysis evaluates how each framework influences mental healthcare practices and policies. It then introduces the Leadership for Equity, Access, and Dismantling Disparities (LEAD) framework, which consists of five key components: Vision-Driven Leadership Culture, Equity-Centered Data and Accountability, Access-Focused Community Collaboration, Ongoing Professional Development and Reflexive Supervision, and Cross-Sector Policy Advocacy. Findings suggest that leadership-driven strategies improve accountability, community engagement, and policy development but remain underutilized. Integrating LEAD principles into social work education, clinical practice, healthcare administration, and policy reform may help advance equity in mental healthcare.

### **Keywords:**

systemic racism, mental healthcare equity, transformative leadership, cultural competency, structural competency, anti-racist policy.