



Targeted Universalism

Targeted universalism means setting universal goals and using targeted processes to reach those goals.

What is targeted universalism?

The concept of targeted universalism shows how focusing an intervention on people who are most affected has a positive impact on the broader community.

For example, curb cuts or ramps were mandated by the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) to ensure accessibility for people in wheelchairs. That change in our shared environment, targeted to improving access for people unable to walk, improved access for many others – caregivers pushing strollers, delivery people, cyclists, and travelers with rolling luggage.

What is our history with targeted universalism?

Family Voices has the universal goal that “all children should have access to quality health care.” To meet that goal, Family Voices promotes family-centered care for CYSHCN. This targeted approach has resulted in the evolution of family-centered care to benefit all children.

How do we approach our work through targeted universalism?

Seek funding that targets specific groups in order to address disparities within the CYSHCN community.

Target funding from projects to F2Fs that serve populations that are heavily impacted by disparities.

Board of Directors (BOD) and staff secure funding and partnerships that help to address the disparities experienced by CYSHCN from Black, Hispanic/Latinx, Indigenous/Native American communities.

Steps to achieve targeted universalism

Within a targeted universalism framework, universal goals are established for all groups concerned. The strategies developed to achieve those goals are targeted, based upon how different groups are situated within structures, culture, and across geographies to achieve the universal goal.

Targeted universalism is goal oriented, and the processes are directed in service of the explicit, universal goal.

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STEP 1. Establish a universal goal based upon a broadly shared recognition of a societal problem and collective aspirations.

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STEP 2. Assess general population performance relative to the universal goal.

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STEP 3. Identify groups and places that are performing differently with respect to the goal and disaggregate them.

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STEP 4. Assess and understand the structures that support or impede each group or community from achieving the universal goal.

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STEP 5. Develop and implement targeted strategies for each group to reach the universal goal.

More resources on targeted universalism

Targeted universalism integrates the full participation of:

- Those most affected by a problem, especially people traditionally excluded
- Those who are intended to benefit from change strategies
- Those implementing the intervention/project
- Those documenting the implementation process
- Those with a strong or expert understanding of the problem or issue



The **Othering & Belonging Institute at UC Berkeley** offers an [online primer on targeted universalism](#), including how to focus on policy and practice.



Listen to an [interview with Othering & Belonging Institute Director John A. Powell](#) on Soundcloud.

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