

STRIVING TOWARD REPRODUCTIVE JUSTICE

The Michigan Organization on Adolescent Sexual Health (MOASH) urges community leaders, decision-makers, and legislators to use a reproductive justice lens in their work, acknowledge the history of oppression in reproductive health, and address the related reproductive issues marginalized people still face today. As coined by [SisterSong](#), reproductive justice includes efforts that reinforce and support “the human right to maintain personal bodily autonomy, have children, not have children, and parent the children people have in safe and sustainable communities.” This document uplifts calls to action and guidance on how to further reproductive justice in your own community, practice, and work environments.

Advocate for policies that expand and protect reproductive care, and that educate youth about their sexual and reproductive health.



Support [comprehensive sex education](#), [improved youth access to various contraceptive methods](#), [unrestricted and safe access to abortion and adoption services](#), and [resources for expectant and parenting youth](#); these efforts will better ensure young people have information and access to promote their sexual and reproductive health. Oppose policies which will reduce access.¹

¹ Kamara, H. (2019). Efforts Build Towards Reproductive Justice for Marginalized Communities. The Praxis Project.

² Cahill, E. P., Doyle, A. (2021). Trauma-informed abortion care. *Current Opinion in Obstetrics and Gynecology*. 33(6): 453-457. doi: 10.1097/GCO.0000000000000749

³ Stern, A. M. (2020). Forced Sterilization Policies in the US Targeted Minorities and Those with Disabilities – and Lasted into the 21st Century. *The Conversation*. University of Michigan.

⁴ Lipscomb, S., Haimson, J., Liu, A.Y., Burghardt, J., Johnson, D.R., & Thurlow, M.L. (2017). Preparing for life after high school: The characteristics and experiences of youth in special education. Findings from the National Longitudinal Transition Study 2012. (NCEE 2017-4016). U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance.

Learn about the intersectionality of reproductive oppression, then use an intersectional approach in your work to understand and address how multiple forms of oppression disproportionately harm youth of color, LGBTQIA+ youth, youth with disabilities, youth from lower income backgrounds, youth from diverse religious and cultural backgrounds, immigrant youth, and young people who hold other historically marginalized identities.

- > In addition to medically unnecessary abortion restrictions, marginalized youth face barriers to abortion access like transportation issues, cost and lack of insurance coverage, and the need for parental consent.²
- > BIPOC youth, Disabled youth, and incarcerated youth face reproductive coercion regarding decisions about contraception and family planning, such as coercion into using long-acting reversible contraceptives (LARCs) or forced sterilization in the name of eugenics.³
- > Disabled youth have difficulty accessing reproductive care and sexual education due to incorrect assumptions that they do not have sex.⁴
- > Health care systems and providers have historically prioritized HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment centering cis gay men, and more recently have focused on gender-affirming care for transgender people. While this care is crucial, it does not address all LGBTQ+ sexual and reproductive health care needs. For instance, queer women, transmasculine people, and nonbinary people need STI testing, family planning, and pregnancy and abortion care, but providers do not recognize this due to incorrect assumptions.⁵

Practice examining and challenging existing power structures that perpetuate harm within reproductive rights organizations and movements.

- > Within your organization and movement spaces, center the voices and experiences of communities who are most affected by reproductive health injustices in our society, especially youth. In addition, support and collaborate with local and grassroots organizations that work within the reproductive rights and justice space; they are invaluable experts in their communities.⁶

5 Dawson, R., Leong, T. (2020). Not Up for Debate: LGBTQ People Need and Deserve Tailored Sexual and Reproductive Health Care. Guttmacher Institute.
6 McKay, C. (2021). Black History Month: 11 Reproductive Justice Organizations to Uplift. Power to Decide. Guttmacher Institute (2021). State Facts About Abortion: Michigan. Retrieved from <https://www.guttmacher.org/fact-sheet/state-facts-about-abortion-michigan>
7 Ko, L. (2016). Unwanted Sterilization and Eugenics Programs in the United States. Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) Independent Lens.
8 Creary, S. J., McDonnell, M., Ghai, S., & Scruggs, J. (2019). When and Why Diversity Improves Your Board's Performance. Harvard Business Review.

- > Support honest conversations and professional development in your practice and work environment around the history of racism and white supremacy in reproductive oppression and the reproductive rights movement.^{3,7}

Support and advocate for diversity and cultural humility within your professions.

- > Promote diversity within reproductive rights and sexual health organizations, especially for the board of directors and staff in leadership. Diversity on the board and within staff leadership ensures that this work prioritizes the needs and priorities of people from various communities, especially the needs of historically oppressed communities.⁸

In addition to broad-based programming, advocacy, and youth work, MOASH collaborates with community partners in efforts to increase voter access and empowerment, education justice, environmental justice, and disability justice. We recognize that all of these issues impact reproductive health and the ability to parent. As a white-led reproductive health organization, MOASH strives to do the most good and least harm in our work, take accountability for any harms we cause, and appropriately atone for these harms. We urge you to do the same.