

LANE COUNTY EQUITY LENS TOOLKIT



Version 2 -Updated March '23

Adapted from Ottawa Equity
Lens Handbook



Acknowledgment

This toolkit is adapted from the Equity & Inclusion Lens Handbook from the City of Ottawa and City for All Women Initiative (CAWI). We have reproduced parts of their work, and adapted the Equity Lens and toolkit, in order to further equity and inclusion in Lane County, Oregon. Thank you so much to the City of Ottawa and CAWI for the tremendous foundation you have provided, and to the E2 Committee and Equity Lens subcommittee for the initiative in adapting and developing new materials for Lane County, Oregon.



The equitable design practices were adopted from Liberatory Design/ Liberatory Design (<http://www.liberatorydesign.com>) is the result of a collaboration between Tania Anaissie, David Clifford, Susie Wise, and the National Equity Project [Victor Cary and Tom Malarkey].



**LIBERATORY
DESIGN**

Additional Acknowledgments

This work was adapted and developed by an interdepartmental workgroup established through the Lane County Equity & Education Committee. We learned from early efforts in various departments of Lane County, from Multnomah County, and from the Equity & Access Coordinator in Lane County and the Equity Manager in Lane County.

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LANE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Joe Berney
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Pat Farr
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May 24, 2022

A Message from the Lane County Board of County Commissioners

These are challenging times we live in. From COVID-19 to the Holiday Farm Fire in the McKenzie area and many other adversities, many people have been negatively impacted. There are people and groups in our communities that face systemic oppression which results in outsized inequities and disparities in many areas, from economic health to education to health care and even death rates. For example, it is well documented that residents of high poverty neighborhoods have more health problems, more difficulty accessing quality healthcare, and a reduced overall life expectancy.

The Lane County Board of Commissioners is excited to share with you the launch of Lane County's *Equity Lens*. We believe that the Lens will become an important decision-making tool that can improve the work of elected officials, staff and advisory bodies. It can, in short, meet the County's purpose of improving lives. We must take full advantage of the opportunity that this tool provides to make better, more inclusive decisions and to ensure the County is working for ALL who are here.

The *Equity Lens* was developed by an interdepartmental work group in partnership with the County's Equity and Access Advisory Board. This tool will give a consistent and coherent equity focus to the County's decision making by encouraging all of us to ask and answer a few direct and valuable questions.

By applying the Lens to our work we will:

- generate better solutions by incorporating diverse perspectives and being deliberately inclusive of systemically under-served and marginalized populations – particularly communities of color;
- take positive steps to identify and remove systemic barriers, promote inclusion and community engagement by expanding access to resources and services, and empower people; and
- create a more positive and respectful work environment by increasing awareness and understanding of diverse peoples and cultures.

Lane County has an opportunity to further diversity, inclusion, and equity by making meaningful and substantive changes to policies, processes, and decision-making. As leaders, staff, and residents of Lane County, we have the power and the responsibility to center racial equity and promote better conditions and opportunities for everyone.

We should all make the Lens a part of our daily work and make a new reality of systemic vitality and sustainable change. Let's take the next step together to make Lane County a great place to live, work and play – for all of Lane County's people and communities.

Sincerely,

Pat Farr, Chair
Lane County Board of Commissioners



EQUITY IN LANE COUNTY

A Message from the Lane County Administrator

Since early 2020, Lane County has faced unprecedented challenges, from a pandemic, devastating wildfires, and racial reckoning. In the face of these adversities, the employees of Lane County have shown great flexibility, resilience and innovation. These challenges have crystallized the need for an equity and racial justice focus in our community. For far too long, systemic and organizational policies have had an outsized impact on marginalized and disadvantaged people, especially communities of color. We recognize that the creation and perpetuation of racial inequities has existed in American government throughout its history, and that racial inequities across all indicators for success are deep and pervasive. It is time to further our work in racial equity by transforming our policies and processes so that they work for the benefit of all.

We are excited to share with you the launch of Lane County's *Equity Lens*. I want to thank the interdepartmental work group that created this tool, as well as the Equity and Access Advisory Board that has contributed to the work. We believe this Lens will become an important decision-making tool that will give a consistent and coherent equity focus and will improve our strategic and tactical decisions and work.

Our goal is to build new habits in our decision-making processes. By asking the important questions that the Equity Lens orients us toward we will become more agile in being inclusive as a community and help us bring our core values of Equity & Respect to brighter light.

What does this mean for you as an employee?

- The Equity Lens is an evolving tool, it will change as we learn from its use and impact.
- We ask that you provide continuous and transparent feedback as part of the process.
- Lane County is developing a more inclusive and equitable culture. This means re-learning the vocabulary we use to talk about organizational change and increasing our awareness of different peoples and cultures.
- The Equity Lens creates a collective pause to use the Equity Lens to consciously reflect on including other perspectives in the decision-making process.

Using an Equity Lens is critical to address all areas of marginalization. As we become more inclusive, we make more effective decisions that benefit everyone and we do a better job of serving all people in Lane County.

Thank you, in advance, for being diligent in applying an Equity Lens to our work. We look forward to advancing our goals and building a more equitable and inclusive culture.

Steve Mokrohisky,



Lane County Administrator

CONTEXT ON THE EQUITY LENS TOOLKIT

Why an Equity Lens?

The Equity Program, alongside many other Lane County partners and committees, has developed this tool as one of our levers to better live out our core value of Equity & Respect and to support our work of improving lives. We know intuitively that equity matters, and we know that as Lane County Government we must do better to ensure that our work, in process and product, mirrors the aspirations that we have for our community.

The Equity Lens is like a pair of glasses. It helps us see things from a new perspective. It helps us be more effective in our everyday work by getting a clearer focus and more complete view. This way, we strive for the full inclusion and participation of all residents and employees so that everyone benefits from a vibrant community. We are all socialized beings with socialized beliefs, and these schemas can sometimes get in our way of seeing a complete picture.

Research shows that companies that value diversity, equity and inclusion are stronger than those that don't tap into their peoples' potential. "Diverse teams are more innovative and make better decisions, and diverse companies have better shareholder returns," according to the study [Unrealized Impact](#).

Another study conducted by [McKinsey & Company in partnership with The Society for Human Resource Management \(SHRM\)](#), evaluated the performance of companies with different levels of workplace diversity. They found that companies that exhibit gender, ethnic diversity are, respectively, 15 percent and 35 percent more likely to outperform less diverse peers. The same study found that organizations with more racial and gender diversity bring in more sales revenue, more customers and higher profits." Studies on neurodiversity by [Hult Research](#) show that neurodiverse people bring new perspectives to a company's efforts to create or recognize value.

We believe the Equity Lens is a powerful tool that can help us change habits that have not served us and our communities. With use and practice, we can transform our work and our impact on the community.

CONTEXT ON THE EQUITY LENS TOOLKIT

What is this toolkit?



WHAT IT IS

A framework for thinking about what equity is and why.

A set of tools, strategies, practices and processes to operate more equitably in our work.

It is an evolving resource.



WHAT IT ISN'T

Rote process of one-size fits all.

An approach that will solve all of our equity dilemmas.

Something we do without considering our context and our people.

What does it mean to apply an equity lens?

To apply an Equity Lens means we get a pause in time, and most importantly a pause in the process to help us be more inclusive in practice. It can involve a set of questions to prompt our thinking and to shift our process.

In what contexts should we apply an Equity Lens?

An Equity Lens is most important with actions and decisions that have a major impact either internally or externally. There are many contexts in which we can apply an equity lens. Here are five that we are making a particular commitment to in our work at Lane County.

Who should apply an equity lens?

Apply an equity lens if you're in a decision-making role, including county commissioners, leaders, teams, and employees who impact personnel and resources. Also, community partners, consultants, and businesses working with the county should use the lens.

A short tool to get started:

An equity lens involves asking critical questions when planning, developing, or evaluating policies, programs, or decisions to identify potential impacts on marginalized groups and eliminate barriers. Use this short tool to ask critical questions and start the process.

When applying an equity lens, ask yourself (or your work group):

PURPOSE

- What are we trying to do?
- What is the issue, policy, or process being examined?

ASSUMPTIONS

- What assumptions are we bringing into the issue?

INCLUSION

- Who will be impacted and are they being included?
- How are we intentionally engaging multiple perspectives?
- How will barriers to participation be addressed?

IMPACT

- What are the outcomes we are hoping to create?
- What are potential unintended outcomes? How will we address these?
- How might this decision increase, decrease, or ignore equity?

COMMUNICATION

- How and when will the process be communicated?
- How will we ensure communication takes place in an inclusive, culturally sensitive and responsible manner?

EVALUATION

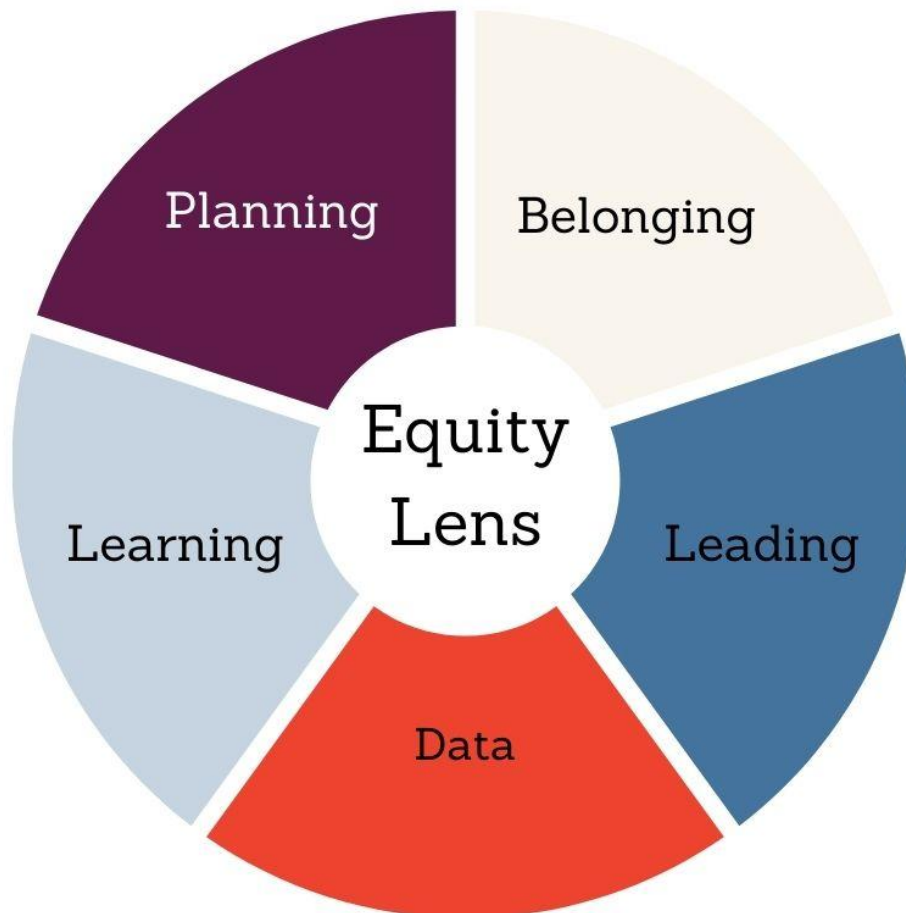
- Are we accomplishing our initial goal?
- What barriers prevented more equitable outcomes?
- How will we address these?
- How will we incorporate this learning next time?

Please note that this short tool is intended as a starting point and we encourage you to dive deeper into the other tools available in the equity toolkit to enhance your understanding of the issues at hand.

EQUITY LENS TOOLKIT

The Equity Lens Toolkit at a glance:

- **Planning** through an equity lens
- Creating a culture of **belonging** through an equity lens
- **Leading** through an equity lens
- Using **data** through an equity lens
- **Learning** through an equity lens



This toolkit is a compilation of knowledge, processes and practices that can help us apply an equity lens to each of these five areas of focus.

What does it mean to apply an equity lens to each of these five areas of focus?

PLANNING

Every one of us develops projects, events, and ideas in our work; and these plans become processes and products that together create the government system we all function within. How can we ensure the systems we create are equitable and inclusive? How can we develop ideas that are innovative and in service of the people we seek to serve?

When we plan through an equity lens, we insist on consistently bringing diverse voices to the decision-making table for every project we lead. In particular, we focus on engaging those who are most directly impacted by our work. By doing this, we are able to design products, processes, services, and initiatives that realize greater equity in our communities.

BELONGING

In our work each of us is responsible for bringing other people together to collaborate. Effective collaboration not only requires us to convene the right people around the table; it also requires us to create intentional cultures that help people feel both confident and safe enough to share their ideas and influence change. In other words, it requires us to not just create cultures of inclusion, but cultures of belonging.

When we create a culture of belonging we prioritize understanding and responding to the physical, emotional and relational needs of people in addition to and sometimes before attending to the needs of the work. For example, if we are facilitating a meeting and we realize that an idea is not landing with our audience, instead of pressing forward, we might pause and learn how we can more effectively communicate our ideas. If we are convening a group of stakeholders who don't know each other, instead of launching immediately into the work, we might take some time to introduce ourselves and get to know each other. If we are planning an event, we might pay attention to the feel of our convening space and do things like play music, decorate, or bring in food to make it feel more welcoming.

LEADING

Many of us are in positions of leadership where we hold power and authority and have agency to make decisions and influence change. As leaders we set the tone for culture in our organization and therefore have responsibility to model the kinds of behaviors we'd like to see in others. This means we have the power to model behaviors and engage in processes that move us closer to or farther away from realizing equity in our work.

When we lead through an equity lens, we model self-reflection and a learner mindset. We open ourselves up to receiving feedback from those around us. We listen and use language that demonstrates empathy and awareness of our position within the power hierarchy. We hold processes, and outcomes equally important in our work. We invest time and resources in things like team culture building, leadership goal setting, coaching, and career advocacy so that our people develop and advance over time.

DATA

We are all public servants committed to using taxpayer dollars responsibly. We all have strategic plans filled with tangible goals that reflect a set of promises we make to our community. Data helps us make more effective decisions and track progress towards our goals. It enables us to see who we are impacting and who might be leaving behind. It also helps us see in what ways and to what extent we are enhancing the quality of life and outcomes for various groups of people.

When we collect and analyze data through an equity lens we gather information in ways that allow it to be disaggregated if need be along key indicators such as race, gender, etc. We collect, visualize, and share data in ethical ways. We use data to tell narratives that are accurate and that reveal the complexity of people's lived experiences rather than reducing them to stereotypes. Ultimately, we collect and use data in ways that support us to align our processes, practices, and products with our promises.

LEARNING

We all live and work in a rapidly changing world where our ability to remain relevant and to keep up with the demands of our roles require us to operate as learners. Learning is not just about gathering more information. It's about building new skills, acquiring new practices, and evolving our mindsets. It's also about developing our ability to self reflect and empathize with others. It's about learning how to apply what we know so that we can navigate through more diverse and complex circumstances with greater effectiveness.

When we learn through an equity lens, we orient ourselves to life-long learning, stay current on topics related to equity, continually develop our critical lenses, and consistently find ways to apply what we are learning in theory to our day-to-day work and decision making. We take time to reflect on lessons and to adjust our behavior moving forward. We become increasingly aware of the limitations of our individual perspectives and committed to inquiring about and empathizing with the perspectives of others. As a result, we become more skillful and artful at reshaping systems to more equitably serve all.

Planning Through an Equity Lens

Design Tool:



*Adapted from the [National Equity Project](#)

1. PURPOSE & INCLUSION

What are we trying to do?
Who is at the table?

IDENTIFY PURPOSE

1. What is the issue, policy, or process being created/designed?
2. What are we trying to accomplish?
3. Is there an opportunity to align and integrate our equity goals in your purpose?

IDENTIFY THE TEAM

1. Identify where you might have a limited perspective on the issue?
2. List who is included in this process. List who is not included in this process. Are those that might be impacted by this policy or decision present?
3. Create a plan to engage key stakeholders using the *Engaging Community and Staff* tool (pages 30-31)

CREATE A REALISTIC TIMELINE

1. What timeline will allow you to complete the task at hand and meaningfully engage your key stakeholders? Remember that you can move at the speed of trust. Consider if the key stakeholders are existing or new relationships and adjust the timeline from there.

INVITE YOUR TEAM

1. How might an individual's or community's experiences affect how I am seen or the level of trust between us?
2. Remember there is a difference between being invited and feeling welcomed. Create the conditions for belonging by using the *Gathering and Belonging* tool (pages 32-34)

2. SEE THE SYSTEM

What is the context and/ or history that impacts the current challenge?

SEE THE SYSTEM

1. What historic information and context is important for everyone to know and understand?
2. What is important to acknowledge about our history? Remember that acknowledging is the first step toward repairing harm.
3. What inequitable patterns of experience and outcomes are playing out in our system? How do we know?
4. What structures and system dynamics are contributing to these inequitable patterns?

IDENTITY INFLUENCE AND COMMUNICATION NEEDS

1. Who are your champions of the work? Who are the resisters? Consider looking at the *Communication* tool (page 28-29).

3. DEFINE OUTCOMES AND IMPACT

How might this decision
impact equity?

DEFINE OUTCOMES AND IMPACT

1. Is this a challenge we understand well enough to start designing for? Or is it more complex and we need to inquire further?
2. What outcomes are you hoping to create?
3. Would people in the community also identify these as important outcomes?
4. What might be some unintended outcomes?
5. Do these unintended outcomes negatively impact marginalized communities? Consider race, gender, gender identity, age, disability, neurodivergence, social-economic status, language, geography, country of origin, citizenship.

4. IDEATE

How can we design projects, ideas and policy alongside those affected by our decisions?

IDEATE

1. Are we making our brainstorming process accessible to everyone? Did we choose methods that allow all people to contribute according to their strengths: visually, verbally, physically?
2. Are we giving ourselves permission to consider ideas that may not feel possible in order to move past status quo solutions?
3. Invite everyone on the team to imagine and ideate on solutions to the problem. You're aiming for volume and for divergent thinking to conceive creative and radical ideas.
4. Narrow the ideas down by engaging in convergent thinking, and ask people to vote on their favorite 2-3 ideas. Consider doing this in a way that does not feed into groupthink. Perhaps ask everyone to write down their favorite ideas and then share whole-group.
5. Now further develop the top 1-2 ideas by asking everyone to consider the following question. What would it take for this idea to come to life? Develop a plan to make this idea happen.
6. Now you can ask everyone to put on their critic hat and identify weaknesses, obstacles or risks to ideas,

PROTOTYPE

1. Now that you have some ideas on the board, go ahead and develop your prototype idea or policy.

5. TEST IDEAS & REFINER APPROACH

How can we test our approach to be iterative and emergent?

TEST IDEAS

1. How do we engage the people who are giving us feedback in the process of adapting the prototype?
2. How are we creating the conditions to try our prototype so that it is safe-to-fail and learn (meaning not at risk of creating harm)?
3. How are success and failure being communicated to stakeholders, especially those most impacted by the design effort?

REFINE APPROACH

1. How do we know that we've arrived?
2. How do we know if we need to shift directions?
3. How will you measure outcomes and impact? What data do you need to collect? How will you collect it? How will you use this data responsibly?
4. When do you decide it is time to scale?

6. NOTICE AND REFLECT

Who am I? Who are we collectively in our work together?

NOTICE

1. What differences in this approach did you observe from previous design sessions?
2. What is my and our team's relationship to opportunity and institutional power? How does it relate to that of the people most impacted by this challenge?
3. Has your relationship with key stakeholders changed through this process? how?

REFLECT

1. As a team, do our processes feel liberatory? If not, why? What and how should we adjust?
2. How might cultural norms be triggering unconscious biases that impede our relationships and work?
3. How do our emotional states affect how you show up with your team? At work?
4. How can we share or release stressful emotions so we can move through the Liberatory Design process with health and care for each other?

Planning: Services, Projects, Events

Start with Inclusion

1. Who is not included in the work you do?
 2. What could contribute to this exclusion?
 3. What can you do differently to ensure inclusion?
1. Do the expected outcomes of the service, project/program, or event reflect equity and inclusion goals?
 2. How will the service or project/program build upon the strengths of the people it serves?
 3. Will the service or program contribute to more equitable access to resources and benefits in the wider community?
 4. Have the primary target groups been consulted? See *Engaging Community and Staff* (pages 30-31)
 5. How is the proposed service, project/program or event designed to ensure that a full diversity of people can participate and benefit with dignity? (i.e., accessibility for mobility devices, visual and hearing impairments, child or dependent care, transportation, safety concerns, language).
 6. Does the time of the event or hours of the service consider potential demands on people's time? (i.e. religious and cultural holidays, harvest time, family responsibilities)
 7. Have we considered and made note of equity and inclusion considerations in our business plans and project management plans?
 8. Are the long term needs of residents from different equity groups considered in our long term planning?
 9. Are there good equity and inclusion practices in other counties, departments or community organizations that can inform the implementation?
 10. What human and financial resources are required to address equity and inclusion in the implementation of this service, project/program or event

Planning: Services, Projects, Events

Promising Practice

Youth City Connect

The Youth Summit Action Plan is made up of 34 actions over eight categories. The action plan is based on feedback received at the Mayor's Youth Summit and other inputs. One of the identified actions was the development of a program that exposes Ottawa youth to career options in municipal government by shadowing City staff. Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Department employees gathered a working group to plan the program from inception to implementation.

As part of the planning, the working group considered the sub-groups of youth who may be interested in the program, such as Aboriginal youth, immigrant youth, youth in existing City programming, youth living on low income, homeless youth, rural youth, and youth with disabilities, as well as youth of different age groups (i.e. high school versus post-secondary or out of school).

Each group presented unique needs and considerations that had to be taken into account during the planning.

The working group looked at removing as many barriers as possible, for example, using plain language and making applications as simple as possible. To further ensure that all barriers or concerns were addressed, the working group asked youth for their feedback and integrated it into the materials.

The working group has set outreach targets in order to attract diverse groups of youth, such as Aboriginal youth, immigrant youth and youth living on low income. The working group will continue to evaluate the program to ensure broad participation.

What about this is an equity and inclusion practice?

- ✓ Considered diversity from the onset of the project
- ✓ Considered barriers and address them upfront. Were clear about what could or not be done
- ✓ Used plain language
- ✓ Consulted with the target population to ensure nothing has been overlooked and to make sure that all materials are understood

Policy Development

Start with Inclusion

1. Who is not included in the work you do?
 2. What could contribute to this exclusion?
 3. What can you do differently to ensure inclusion?
1. What are the equity and inclusion concerns related to this policy issue? (e.g., accessibility, affordability, safety, culture, gender identity)
 2. Have we checked existing policies that may inform how we address equity and inclusion in this new policy?
 3. Have we considered and made note of equity and inclusion considerations when developing the business case for the policy?
 4. Are the groups most affected by the policy consulted from the early stages of the policy development? How can we ensure their perspectives are included? See *Engaging Community and Staff* (pages 30-31)
 5. What background information can aid in addressing equity and inclusion? See *Gathering information/research* (pages 44-45)
 6. What human and financial resources are required to address equity and inclusion in the implementation of this policy?
 7. Can we develop innovative policy solutions that draw upon the contributions and assets of those people most affected?
 8. If new resources are required in the policy implementation, how can we build that in from the beginning? (e.g., partner with community groups, collaborate across departments, seek matching funds)
 9. How can we communicate the policy so as to reach the full diversity of people affected? See *Communications* (pages 28-29)
 10. How will we measure the extent to which the policy contributes to removing barriers or creating opportunities for people who risk exclusion? See *Monitoring and Evaluation* (pages 46-47)

Policy Development

Promising Practice

Equity and Diversity Practice

In 2002, the City of Ottawa's Equity and Diversity Policy was approved by the City Council. This Policy prohibits discrimination in the workplace, in the provision of goods, services, and facilities to the public and the administration of contracts as defined by human rights legislation.

The policy applies to women, Aboriginal peoples, persons with disabilities, members of visible minority groups and people who are Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual, Trans (LGBT). The City also made a decision to add immigrants in its data analysis as a result of the City's Municipal Immigration Strategy.

In the development of this policy, it was important to gather a variety of perspectives and information to ensure that we were addressing any potential systematic barriers experienced by staff and members of the community. The Equity and Diversity Advisory Committee played a key role in the development and implementation of the policy.

This corporate policy impacts all staff and as such it had to be communicated in a variety of ways. The policy is posted on Ozone, taught as part of mandatory new employee orientation and various other training offerings.

As a result of using inclusive practices when developing the policy and in promoting its ongoing use, we have a policy that reflects an awareness of how to be inclusive. It has assisted to create a work environment that is welcoming of a diverse population. As a result of the policy and related initiatives (i.e. diversity training and awareness), we have increased representation of the diversity groups where there is under-representation in the City's workforce.

What about this is an equity and inclusion practice?

- ✓ Considered the needs of multiple groups
- ✓ Consulted with the people most affected by the policy
- ✓ Adjusted the policy to address emerging needs
- ✓ Policy communicated to staff and community through a variety of means

Strategic Planning

Start with Inclusion

1. Who is not included in the work you do?
 2. What could contribute to this exclusion?
 3. What can you do differently to ensure inclusion?
1. How does your strategic planning process promote equity and inclusion?
 2. Do the long-term goals you are defining reflect this?
 3. What are the current demographic trends with which the County or departmental strategic plans need to align or address?
 4. What equity issues are currently being raised by residents and employees in relation to your plan?
 5. What are the costs of not taking demographic trends and equity issues into account? What are the benefits?
 6. Do County and departmental strategic objectives and initiatives reflect a broad vision of equity and inclusion? How can it be strengthened?
 7. What human and financial resources are required to achieve equity and inclusion in this plan?
 8. How do the performance measures in the County and departmental strategic plans capture the impact on people who are the most at risk of exclusion? How do they measure whether inclusion is increasing or decreasing?
 9. Does the collection of data enable us to measure benchmarks and targets for increasing equity and inclusion?
 10. When undertaking a strategic review, what improvement opportunities are there to enhance achievement of equity and inclusion?

Strategic Planning

Promising Practice

Community and Social Services

For the 2011 – 2014 Term of Council Strategic Priorities, the Community and Social Service Department used the Equity and Inclusion Lens to review demographic information, concerns raised by the community, trending statistical information and the needs of diverse communities when developing proposed strategic priorities for inclusion in Council's Strategic Plan.

As a result, several priorities which consider the needs of specific and diverse groups were included in the 2011 – 2014 Strategic Plan. The Older Adult Plan, the Housing and Homelessness Initiative, the Equity and Inclusion Lens implementation, and the Municipal Immigration Strategy are all examples of initiatives that were approved as Strategic Initiatives.

The vision set by the City Council and the Equity and Inclusion Lens used as a planning tool for researching and analyzing information contributed to a Strategic Plan that directly addresses the needs of diverse groups.

What about this is an equity and inclusion practice?

- ✓ Considered demographic information, trends and research from other levels government and academia, that spoke to the needs of the 11 diversity groups
- ✓ Reviewed consultation and evaluation information
- ✓ Paid attention to the equity claims of diverse groups
- ✓ Explicitly considered diverse populations in the overarching vision and priorities

Policy Evaluation

Start with Inclusion

1. Who is not included in the work you do?
2. What could contribute to this exclusion?
3. What can you do differently to ensure inclusion?

CONTEXT

1. What is the Policy that you are examining?
2. What were the stressors or drivers that led to this policy creation?
3. Who created the policy?
4. Is it already implemented within the organization?

IDENTIFY POTENTIAL RESISTANCE TO CHANGE

5. Are there individuals or departments that are very attached to this policy?

EXAMINE

6. What evidence do you have that this policy needs re-examining?
7. Was the original policy inclusive in their design? Are the groups most affected by the policy consulted from the early stages of the policy development?
8. Was an equity lens used to create the policy?

ACT

9. What are the equity and inclusion concerns related to this policy issue? (e.g., accessibility, affordability, safety, culture, gender identity)
10. Who does this policy benefit? Who does it leave behind?

11. Is our team representative of the diversity of the population we are engaging? What steps can we take to ensure we are inclusive of the diversity of perspectives? *Engaging Community and Staff* (pages 30-31)

- Consider the following scale of involvement for gathering diverse perspectives. The further down the line, the more equitable the involvement is. From [The Spectrum of Community Engagement to Ownership](#)



DESIGN

12. Invite everyone on the team to imagine and identify the changes to the policy that the team feel are needed? You're aiming for volume and for divergent thinking to conceive creative and radical ideas. Bring the information and/or people gathered from step 11.

13. Narrow the ideas down by engaging in convergent thinking, ask people to vote on their favorite 2-3 ideas to explore. Consider doing this in a way that does not feed into groupthink. Perhaps ask everyone to write down their favorite ideas and then share whole-group.

14. Now further develop the top 1-2 ideas by asking everyone to consider the following question. What would it take for this idea to come to life? Develop a plan to make this idea happen.

15. Now you can ask everyone to put on their critic hat and identify weaknesses, obstacles or risks to ideas,

SET-UP FOR SUCCESS

16. What will the resistant group need to get on board?
17. Are resources required in the policy implementation, how can we build that in from the beginning? (e.g., partner with community groups, collaborate across departments, seek matching funds)
18. How can we get feedback on the policy from those most impacted?
19. How do you communicate the policy so as to reach the full diversity of people affected? See *Communications (pages 28-29)*
20. How will we measure the extent to which the policy contributes to removing barriers or creating opportunities for people who risk exclusion? See *Monitoring and Evaluation (pages 46-47)*

Creating a Culture of Belonging Through an Equity Lens

CREATING A CULTURE OF BELONGING

Communication

Start with Inclusion

1. Who is not included in the work you do?
 2. What could contribute to this exclusion?
 3. What can you do differently to ensure inclusion?
-
1. Have we considered all possible target audiences? Who might be at risk of exclusion?
 2. What specific communication strategies are needed to reach them?
(e.g., working with community leaders, bulletin boards, community newspapers, social media)
 3. Do our communication materials get out to the community organizations and networks that serve the diverse populations we need to reach? Do we check periodically to ensure materials are being shared, are stocked and being used?
 4. How do the messages we are communicating foster inclusion, respect and equity?
 5. Are there concepts or terms that may be culturally specific and need to be changed to make them more accessible?
 6. Is the medium easily accessible and understood by the full diversity of our target audience? (e.g., plain language, accessible formats, graphics, multiple languages, both online and print, voicemail)
 7. Have we considered what populations will be missed by only using certain methods? (e.g., online or social media communications) What other approaches might we use?
 8. Have we considered if there is a budget or alternative resources for translation services?
 9. Do images represent the full diversity of employees or residents?
 - a. Do they capture the diversity within specific communities of people?
 - b. Will the people portrayed in the images relate to and feel included in the way they are represented?
 - c. Is everyone portrayed in positive images that promote equity and break stereotypes? Consider: who is active and passive, who is at the center, who is serving and being served.

Communications

Promising Practice

Lead Pipe Replacement

The Lead Pipe Replacement Program is offered by the City to assist property owners to replace lead drinking water services on a cost-sharing basis. Owners within areas of the City suspected of having lead services were notified of the process for service replacement, and families with children under the age of six and/or expectant mothers were given priority.

Staff assessed who was at risk of not being reached in their communications. They then reviewed their communications strategy on an on-going basis so that staff became aware of the need to:

- communicate with residents in clear, plain language;*
- reach out to the public through other means than direct mail, such as brochures placed in key locations; and*
- consider other means of communicating the program to the public.*

A list of community agencies and organizations was prepared to intentionally reach out to targeted populations. The letter and brochure were written in plain language and distributed to these agencies and organizations who could assist their clients in accessing and understanding LRP program information.

What about this is an equity and inclusion practice?

- ✓ Considered demographic information, trends and research from other levels government and academia, that spoke to the needs of the 11 diversity groups
- ✓ Reviewed consultation and evaluation information
- ✓ Paid attention to the equity claims of diverse groups
- ✓ Explicitly considered diverse populations in the overarching vision and priorities

Engaging Community and Staff

Start with Inclusion

1. Who is not included in the work you do?
 2. What could contribute to this exclusion?
 3. What can you do differently to ensure inclusion?
1. What approaches and outreach will help ensure that everyone is able to fully participate? How can we create opportunities for people least likely to be heard to ensure they share their specific concerns? (e.g., use of multiple techniques such as online surveys and focus groups, kinds of questions asked, simultaneous interpretation, sign language, anonymous feedback)
 2. Is our team representative of the diversity of the population we are engaging? What steps can we take to ensure we are inclusive of the diversity of perspectives?
 3. Which employees, department or community agencies with experience in these specific communities can help us do outreach?
 4. Is there a history – between County and community, or between communities – that you need to consider? How will we ensure everyone is heard?
 5. Is the language we use in our promotion materials and communication strategy plain and easily understood by diverse audiences?
 6. What steps can we take to remove barriers to people's full participation? (e.g., dependent care, transportation, safety, language, accessible location, time, multiple formats, avoid religious and cultural holidays, culturally appropriate)
 7. Is the environment welcoming to participants who may be reluctant to share their views? If not, what can we do to change this? (e.g., pair up a new participant with an experienced one to help those new to the process feel encouraged to participate). Does the pace, format and language of the engagement accommodate everyone including participants who are least likely to speak up and for whom the information may be new?
 8. Are the insights from groups who face systemic barriers and inequities reflected in the report and the final product?
 9. How will we report back the findings to the full diversity of people who were involved in the engagement activity?

Engaging Community and Staff

Promising Practice

Presto Implementation

In 2012 Transit Services began planning for the Presto card implementation as this was a significant change for our customers and staff. Employees recognized that particular segments of the population may have more questions and unique needs in order for them to successfully embrace the Presto card. Community consultations were held with community agencies, City employees worked with target groups and members of diverse communities to ensure that their concerns were addressed from the beginning.

The Presto implementation team outreached to Aboriginal Peoples, women, older adults, youth, people living on low-income, people with disabilities, and immigrants.

The consultation was conducted through stakeholder group meetings, focus groups and meetings with target groups. Whenever possible, consultations were conducted at existing meetings or in the community to allow for higher turnout. Suggestions were received about communications, outreach, and design.

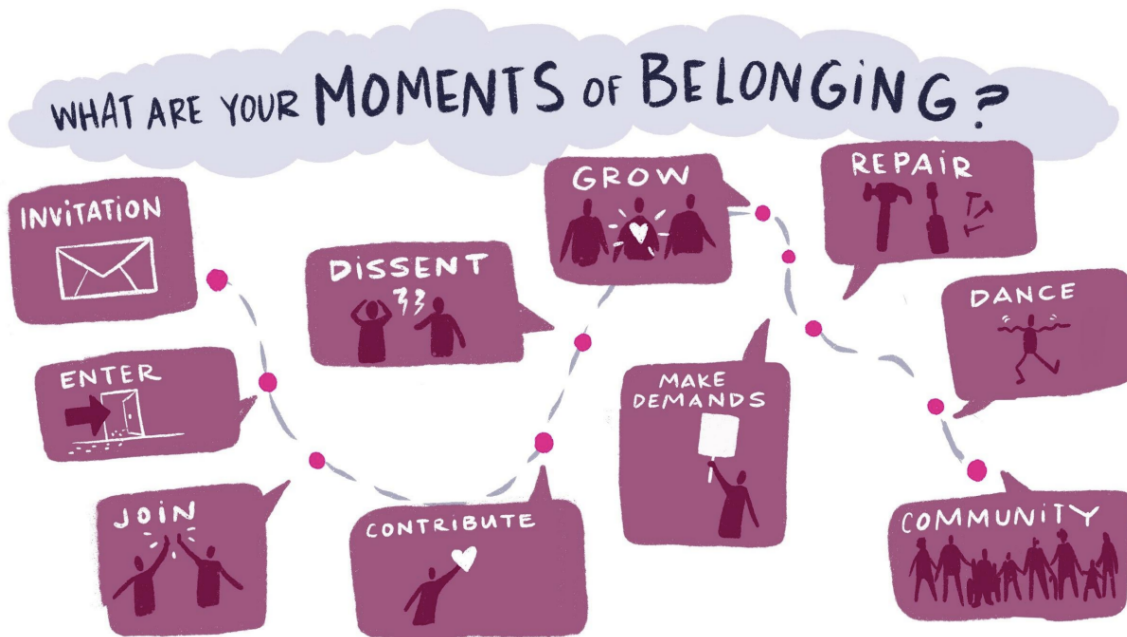
The feedback received from these sessions directly influenced the outcome of the roll out of the Presto card. The Presto rollout was extremely successful due to the consultation and considerations given to these particular segments. All groups were appreciative of the extra efforts made to reach out to them to ensure that they understood the new technology and were given the opportunity to learn and ask questions in an environment that they were comfortable with.

What about this is an equity and inclusion practice?

- ✓ Considered diversity within the population from the onset of the project
- ✓ Developed an outreach plan that specifically targeted diverse groups and stakeholders
- ✓ Used multiple methods to obtain information from target groups
- ✓ Went to the community and used existing meetings to consult with diverse groups
- ✓ Took into consideration the findings of the targeted consultations in the Presto implementation plan
- ✓ Tailored the community outreach to specific target groups

Gathering for Belonging

Pick a moment that you would like to work on in your team or organization.



















The Jumpstarts are organized by the Moments of Belonging. They are offered as things to try. They are meant to be safe to fail, but you are of course the one to judge that in your context.

Use them as they are shared here or as inspiration for other things you would like to try. The point of the jumpstart is to start small and see what you can learn.

After you try some, ask yourself:

- What did I learn about belonging in my context or community?
- What is working, what is not and for whom?
- What am I inspired to try now?

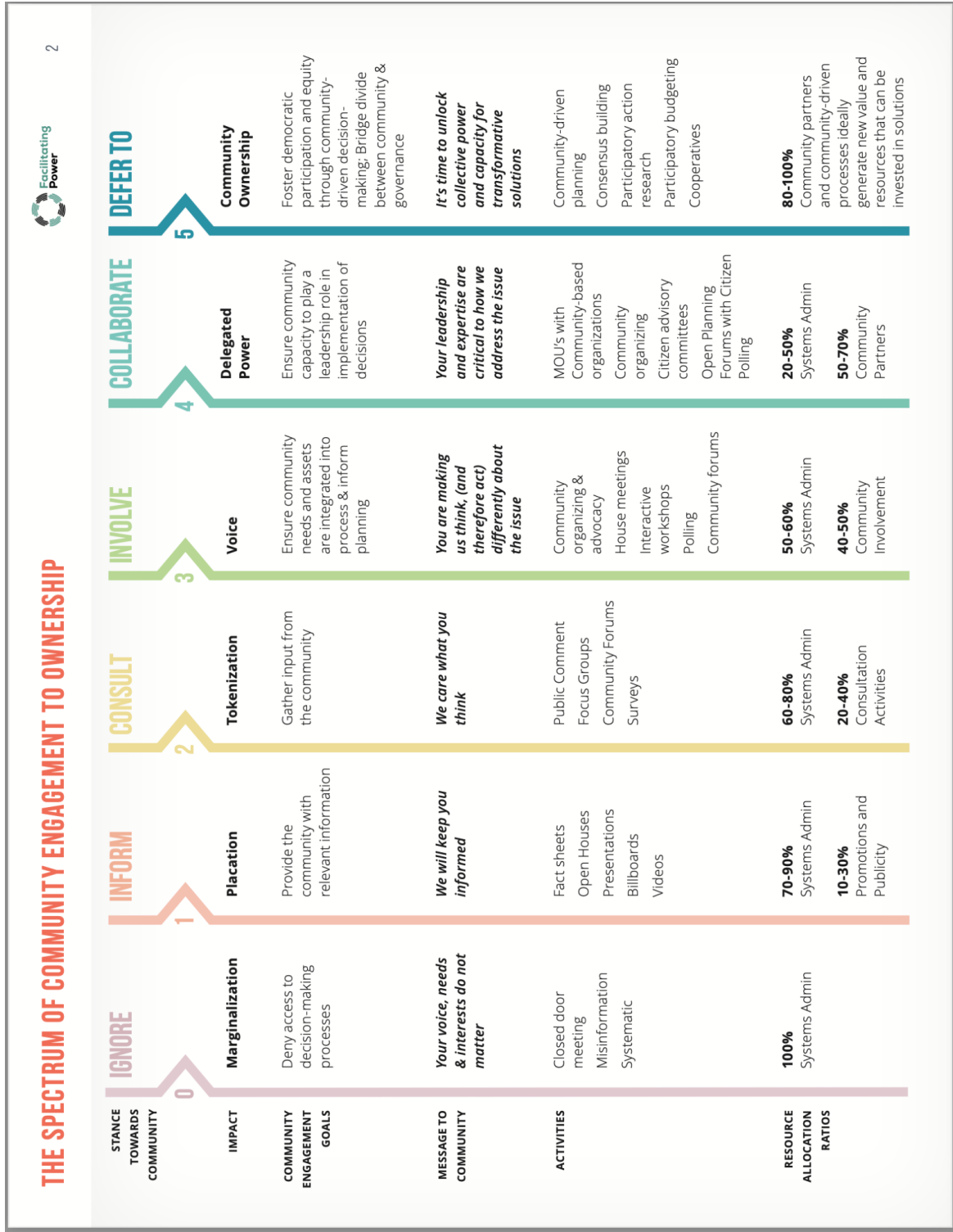
| | |
|--|---|
|   <div data-bbox="263 277 462 529"> <p>INVITE A COWORKER FOR A</p>  <p>WALKING MEETING</p> </div> <div data-bbox="565 277 771 529"> <p>SEND A CARE PACKAGE</p>  <p>PROVISIONS FOR WORK AHEAD</p> </div> | <p>What are some ways to invite people to a meeting besides the calendar invite?</p> <p>What are some additional ways to meet, a walk, a phone call, or lunch?</p> <p>What are some ways to make a meeting more comfortable? Perhaps favorite snacks, or favorite drinks? Perhaps you'll be using different modes of learning like drawing or building something?</p> |
|   <div data-bbox="267 724 441 970"> <p>CREATE A SCAVENGER HUNT</p>  <p>WITH CLUES FROM EVERYONE'S STORY</p> </div> <div data-bbox="560 724 743 970"> <p>START A MEETING WITH A</p> <p>WHAT'S YOUR FAVORITE...</p>  <p>CHECK-IN QUESTION</p> </div> | <p>How can you be creative in building opportunities for community-building? Perhaps a scavenger hunt, or a game of 2 truths and a lie?</p> <p>How can you ensure that you create time for human connection at your meetings? How do we demonstrate an appreciation for who our people are outside of work?</p> |
|   <div data-bbox="267 1102 435 1348"> <p>PRACTICE DISSENT</p> <p>I'M GOING TO OFFER A DISSENTING VIEW...</p>  </div> <div data-bbox="560 1102 738 1348"> <p>TEACH ONE, LEARN ONE.</p>  <p>POST A GIANT GRID OF OPPORTUNITIES</p> </div> | <p>How can we create cultures of bravery and safety? How do we model dissent and even discourage divergent thinking?</p> <p>How do we support our professional growth and tap into the gifts and talents of our existing team?</p> |
|   <div data-bbox="263 1480 441 1726"> <p>NORMALIZE SHARING REAL NEEDS</p> <p>I WANT... I NEED...</p> <p>TO LOVE TO SEE...</p>  <p>POP-UP PROPOSAL DAY</p> </div> <div data-bbox="555 1480 738 1726"> <p>EXPLORE RESTORATIVE JUSTICE</p>  <p>TRY A BOOK CLUB</p> </div> | <p>How do we model and create cultures where people ask for what they need? Do we allow our people to show up authentically?</p> <p>How can we encourage community healing? What common ideas and/or frameworks could support us in our collective healing journey? Do we create space for that?</p> |



Wise, Susie. (2021). Design for belonging. Retrieved from <https://designforbelonging.com>

The Spectrum of Community Engagement to Ownership

Rosa Gonzalez & Facilitating Power (2019). Movement Strategy. Retrieved from <https://movementstrategy.org/resources/the-spectrum-of-community-engagement-to-ownership/>



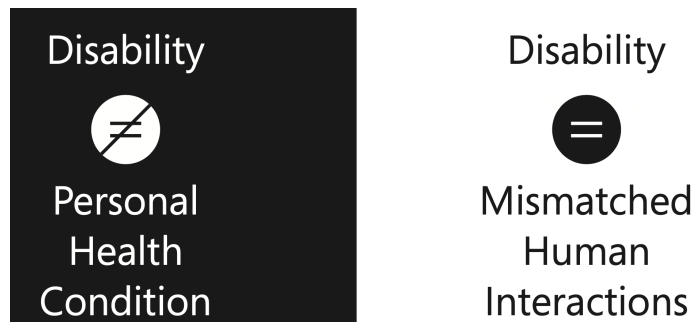
Inclusive Visual Design Practices

Adapted from <https://www.microsoft.com/design/inclusive/>

Inclusive design looks at the diversity of experience that may exclude a person from using an interface effectively. It's a process for creating a design that can be used by a diverse group of people.

“Designing inclusively doesn’t mean you’re making one thing for all people. You’re designing a diversity of ways for everyone to participate in an experience with a sense of belonging.”

“Every decision we make can raise or lower barriers to participation in society. It’s our collective responsibility to lower these barriers through inclusive products, services, environments, and experiences.”



“Disability happens at the points of interaction between a person and society. Physical, cognitive, and social exclusion is the result of mismatched interactions.”

Start Here: Disability Sensitivity Training Video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gv1aDEFIXq8>

Best Practices for Visual Design:

- Most text, diagrams, and other meaningful content should have a ratio of 4.5:1. Large text is acceptable at a minimum contrast ratio of 3:1. Use a [contrast checker](#) to easily test this.
- Set line height to 1.5 times, paragraph spacing to 2 times, letter spacing to 0.12 times, and word spacing to 0.16 times the default sizes without loss of functionality or content.
- Use [accessible color palettes](#) for people with color impairment, double check for contrast ratio.
- Use accessible fonts for [visual impairments](#)
- Consider using [age-friendly](#) size fonts of 14+
- Consider adding a text-to-speech option

Leading Through an Equity Lens

LEADING

Leading and Supervising

Start with Inclusion

1. Who is not included in the work you do?
 2. What could contribute to this exclusion?
 3. What can you do differently to ensure inclusion?
-
1. What steps do I take to create a respectful and inclusive environment?
 - a. Do I clearly communicate to staff and volunteers that i. inappropriate behavior such as offensive jokes, and negative comments are not acceptable?
 - b. How can I actively gather input and ideas from staff or volunteers from diverse perspectives?
 - c. How can I encourage staff to contribute positively in creating an inclusive workplace?
 2. Do I utilize support systems for employees that have been harassed, treated in a disrespectful manner or discriminated against by co-workers, supervisors or clients?
 3. Are there policies, procedures and/or practices and attitudes that unintentionally prevent some people from fully engaging in our work? (e.g., schedules conflicting with religious holidays, workload or schedule conflicting with family responsibilities) What alternatives are possible?
 4. Am I aware of our commitments to inclusion and accommodation and do I ensure that staff are equally informed?
 - a. Do I engage our departmental Diversity Champions to assist?
 5. Is equity and inclusion incorporated into criteria for evaluating candidates for promotions or management positions? If not, how might we include it?
 6. What opportunities could I create to enable people from under-represented groups i. to bring new perspectives to our team, acquire experience and move into higher-level positions? (i.e. internships, job shadowing, students)
 7. Is equity and inclusion incorporated into our staff performance review?

Leading and Supervising

Promising Practice

Emergency and Protective Services

As the General Manager of Emergency and Protective Services, Susan Jones is responsible for overseeing Fire, Paramedic, Security and Emergency Management and By-law and Regulatory Services. She began her career as a municipal law enforcement officer then rose through the ranks. She is a strategic manager who is able to engage staff, politicians and the community to work together in support of a respectful and inclusive environment.

In 2011, and due in large part to Susan's commitment, the department's diversity champion program was recognized with the E.A. Danby Award for Excellence in Municipal Administration. This program explores innovative and effective ways to reach out to diverse communities and designated groups (e.g. women, racialized people, Aboriginal people, persons with disabilities and lesbian, gay, queer & trans). The outreach program is committed to improving mutual trust, providing a safe and inclusive work environment; while providing equitable and inclusive services to the community. Two specific initiatives were Camp FFIT (Female Firefighters in Training) and the paramedic camp for youth in the Muslim Community.

Susan was instrumental in the launch of Fire Service Women Ontario (FSWO). Susan not only supports FSWO's mission but also lives it - to encourage, promote, and advance women as well as inspire positive change; encourage the development of a diverse workforce; develop potential through effective networking and foster supportive professional and personal relationships.

What about this is an equity and inclusion practice?

- ✓ Took steps to create a welcoming environment
- ✓ Identified practices that unintentionally excluded some people
- ✓ Was proactive in developing staff teams representative of the population
- ✓ Created opportunities for under-represented people to acquire experience

Training

Start with Inclusion

1. Who is not included in the work you do?
 2. What could contribute to this exclusion?
 3. What can you do differently to ensure inclusion?
1. Have we included sensitivity to equity and inclusion issues when staffing for internal trainers and hiring external consultants?
 - i. (i.e. able to reduce biases and work respectfully with diverse people)
 2. Have we included this sensitivity to equity and inclusion in our procurement documents when sourcing external trainers?
 3. Can we recruit trainers from diverse backgrounds so they reflect the population we serve?
 4. Will the learning objectives be designed to influence participants' awareness and consideration of individuals and communities from diverse backgrounds?
 5. Will participants develop competency and skills to work sensitively and effectively with individuals from diverse backgrounds?
 6. Is everyone able to fully participate in the training? Is specific outreach required to include them? Are barriers addressed? (e.g., safety, language, accessible location, time, avoid religious and cultural holidays, culturally appropriate, accommodation needs)
 7. Have we welcomed the diverse perspectives of people who have specific equity concerns or needs, even if they may not be obvious? (e.g., indigenous ancestry, LGBTQ identities, dietary, auditory, language needs or preferences)
 8. Is the content sensitive to the experience of participants who may experience systemic barriers?
 9. Does it include the perspectives of residents or staff who will be accessing the service?
 10. In the evaluation of the training, do we ask whether there were any barriers to participation or whether they found the facilitator to be inclusive of the diversity of participants?

Training

Promising Practice

Training on Accessibility

Under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) and Council direction, the City of Ottawa is required to train all of its 17, 000 staff and volunteers on accessible customer service and other aspects of the legislation.

The Corporate Accessibility Office was responsible for developing and implementing a training program to meet the compliance requirements.

To ensure the training met the requirements and was meaningful for all those involved, the following steps were taken:

- Training was offered in a variety of formats including online and facilitated sessions.*
- The suggested activities could be adjusted to suit the needs, learning styles and experiences of both groups and individuals. The development of the training also took the needs of the trainers into account and allowed for adjustments to be made in the delivery to accommodate various training styles and abilities.*
- Community co-facilitators, people with disabilities, were also trained and invited to be part of the training process, to share their experiences, as those most directly impacted by accessibility and their interactions with City staff.*
- All feedback was reviewed and adjustments were made to ensure that any identified barriers to training or follow up questions were addressed.*

As a result of using equitable and inclusive practices in the training, participants were engaged and able to apply information learned in the training, ensuring accessible practices and positive interactions with both the public and internal clients.

What about this is an equity and inclusion practice?

- ✓ Offered training in a variety of formats
- ✓ Training Design was flexible and customized to meet specific needs
- ✓ Took into account differing abilities
- ✓ Created opportunity for people with disabilities to bring their expertise to the training
- ✓ Set out to address barriers to training

Recruiting and Hiring

Start with Inclusion

1. Who is not included in the work you do?
 2. What could contribute to this exclusion?
 3. What can you do differently to ensure inclusion?
1. Do staff and volunteers in our work area reflect the diversity of the community we serve? Who is under-represented?
 2. What knowledge, skills, experience and diversity would enhance
 - i. our team's capacity to serve the diversity of clients?
 3. Do job requirements and selection criteria unnecessarily limit who would qualify?
 4. Are we open to considering what new perspectives people from different backgrounds could bring to the position?
 5. Have we considered where best to post this employment opportunity to ensure that the widest diversity of people are able to access it? Do we encourage agencies and community partners to access the County's career site so that we can broaden the applicant pool?
 6. Are interview panels composed of individuals who bring diverse backgrounds and experiences relevant to the position?
 7. Have we considered ways to reduce barriers in the interview process so as to make it more welcoming and friendly (i.e. physically accessible, provide a copy of the questions)
 8. Are candidates given the choice to be interviewed in a language other than English?
 9. Do we consider that people from specific backgrounds may present interview behaviors that are different from what we expect, but still have the skills to do the job?
 10. If a candidate's references are from abroad, what strategies can we use?
 - i. (e.g., if an English speaking reference is not available then seek translation support)

Recruiting and Hiring

Promising Practice

Summer Student Employment

The City of Ottawa's Summer Student Employment Program makes possible a large number of external hires each year. The Recruitment and Staffing Unit that coordinates the program is mindful of the City's goal of building a diverse and talented workforce reflective of the population when planning recruitment. Since applicants may also progress to future employment with the City, it is important to attract a diverse candidate pool, with a special focus on groups that are under-represented.

With awareness of the guiding principles in the Equity and Inclusion Lens, possible barriers to diversity in recruiting were identified, including awareness of the opportunity, knowledge of the application process, and access to a personal computer.

To address these potential barriers the following steps were taken:

- Extended posting period to provide more time to promote the program and accept applications*
- Distributed bilingual posters to organizations serving youth*
- Shared information about the program with community organizations via groups such as the Aboriginal Working Committee and the Employment Access Resource Network (EARN)*
- Promoted the program at career events such as fairs, networking and information sessions at local post-secondary schools.*
- Held information sessions for students in English and French.*
- Provided information about publicly available computers*

These targeted outreach practices increased general awareness of the City's employment opportunities for those who are traditionally under-represented in the workforce, removing potential obstacles to broader participation.

What about this is an equity and inclusion practice?

- ✓ Took note of who is under-represented
- ✓ Identified potential barriers
- ✓ Reached out to community organizations to promote
- ✓ Went to where the target group would be
- ✓ Provided information to overcome barriers

Recruiting for Diversity

Adopted from the City of Eugene

Consider adding the following clauses to your application to encourage a more diverse pool.

To encourage women and BIPOC folks to apply:

“Women and people of color are less likely to apply for jobs unless they believe they are able to perform every task in the job description. If you identify with one of these groups and you are interested in applying, we encourage you to think broadly about your background and skill set for this role.”

If the position is based out of the city of Eugene and you want to highlight the city’s commitment to promoting LGBTQ+ inclusion:

“According to the Human Rights [Municipal Equality Index](#), the nation’s premier benchmarking tool for municipal officials, policy makers and business leaders to understand how well cities across the nation are embodying LGBTQ+ inclusion in their laws, policies, and services, the city of Eugene ranks 100. This rating incorporates Non-Discrimination Laws, Municipal Services, Law Enforcement and Leadership on LGBTQ+ Equality. “

Consider various ways to distribute your position: LinkedIn, Government Jobs, Flyers, Mailing Lists, Social Media, Word of Mouth, Events.

Consider adding Lane County’s commitment to diversity (Lane Manual Section 2.390)

Lane County will demonstrate its commitment to diversity through the way in which it provides County services, through its employment practices, through its funding decisions, and through its appointments to County boards, commissions and committees by...”

Hiring Process Considerations for Equity

To be more inclusive of individuals' needs, consider the following:

- Offer the option to schedule off-hour interviews for those who require it, with a promise that it will not impact their score.
- Ask candidates if they need any accommodations during the interview process, such as having questions read aloud and placed in the chat, or providing 30 seconds of think-time before responding.

Anti-bias best practices for interviews:

- Have the interview panel complete anti-bias training prior to the interview process.
- Ensure that the interview panel is diverse in thought and identity.
- When scoring together, name your known biases and encourage others to challenge your thoughts and scoring

To give more value to lived experience (when applicable):

- Consider a scoring process that assigns numerical value to candidates with relevant lived experience. For instance, if you're hiring for an outreach coordinator for the unhoused community, someone who has lived experience of being unhoused may have a valuable perspective and expertise that isn't typically measured in traditional experience. You could develop a scoring scale that awards additional points for relevant lived experience.

| Possible Points | Application: Person ID: | |
|-----------------|--|--|
| 25 | What experience, training, and/or education do you have that most qualifies you for this position? What interests you about this position? | |
| | 20 | 2+ years progressively responsible experience in equity work or community organizing or strategic design work and a related degree. |
| | 15 | 2+ years professional experience tangentially related to equity work or community organizing or strategic design work and some related coursework. |
| | 10 | Less than 2 years relevant professional experience with related coursework or degree. |
| | 5 | Describes limited related knowledge/experience but not from formal coursework or professional employment. |
| | 0 | No relevant knowledge or experience in equity work or community organizing or strategic design work demonstrated in response. |
| | Add 5 Points | If person has lived experience as any marginalized group. |

Committee Membership

Start with Inclusion

- 1. Who is not included in the work you do?
- 2. What could contribute to this exclusion?
- 3. What can you do differently to ensure inclusion?

This tool provides a framework for exploring different solutions to increase the diversity and inclusivity of committees. By considering various staffing options, committees can ensure that they have a broad range of perspectives and experiences represented. This tool encourages a proactive and intentional approach to staffing committees, which can help to create a more equitable and effective decision-making process.

The challenge: staffing experienced and novice committee members.

How do we balance the need for expertise and knowledge with the benefits of bringing in fresh perspectives and diverse ideas?

Here is an example from Puget Sound Regional Council on how they are attempting to solve this challenge.

“To maintain a healthy balance of experience and fresh ideas, the EAC will stagger terms by allowing members of the first applicant pool to choose the length of their term, from one to three years.”

One possible strategy to consider is implementing a mentorship program for ad-hoc committee members, which would provide them with the opportunity to shadow an existing committee member and learn from their experience. Another option is to establish limits on the number of committee seats that a member can hold within a specific timeframe or over the course of their lifetime. By doing so, it may be possible to prevent concentration of power and ensure that a broader range of perspectives are represented on the committee.

The challenge: members leaving in the middle of their terms and restarting recruitment and onboarding.

How do we maintain the momentum and stability of the committee, while also ensuring that new members are properly integrated and have the necessary knowledge and skills to contribute effectively?

Here is an example from Multnomah County on how they are attempting to solve this challenge.

“Advisory Committee is composed of a minimum of seven (7) and a maximum of fifteen (15) individuals”

One approach to consider is implementing a Universal Policy for seating committees that includes a standardized application process and a pool of "interested committee volunteers" who can be called upon to participate in committee work. This can help to ensure that the selection process is fair and transparent, while also making it easier to identify and recruit individuals who are genuinely interested in contributing to the committee's goals.

In addition to implementing a Universal Policy for seating committees, it may also be helpful to track participation and analyze representation data. By doing so, it is possible to identify any gaps or imbalances in representation, and take steps to address these issues.

For example, data tracking and analysis can be used to monitor the diversity of committee membership, including race, gender, age, and other demographics. This information can be used to identify areas where more outreach and recruitment efforts are needed to ensure that the committee is representative of the community it serves.

Additionally, tracking participation and engagement can help to ensure that all committee members have equal opportunities to contribute and have their voices heard. Analytics can be used to identify any trends in participation and engagement, and to make adjustments as needed to ensure that all members feel included and valued. Overall, data tracking and analysis can be a valuable tool for promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion within committees.

The challenge: intentionally creating diverse spaces and perspectives that honor lived experience.

How do we balance the need for representation and inclusivity and weigh the potential for tokenism and further marginalization? How do we create an environment that fosters genuine engagement and understanding of diverse perspectives while avoiding the trap of relying solely on surface-level diversity markers?

Here is an example from San Francisco City Council.

“Diverse racial and ethnic communities, including American Indian, Black, Latina, Asian, and communities that have not had visibility in City policies in recent times.

Expertise on a wide range of issues, including: housing, economic development, homelessness, health, youth, education, community organizing, small businesses, arts and culture.

Diverse socio-economic backgrounds.

Diverse level of experience working with the City. Some members have substantial experience working with Planning and other City agencies, others haven't had the opportunity to build relationships with City agencies.

Diverse representation of neighborhoods.

Inclusion of voices across gender and sexual orientation.”

To prevent tokenism and the negative impact it can have on individuals, it is important to shift the focus to the committee as a collective. This can be achieved by setting diversity criteria for the committee as a whole, such as race, demographics, experience, socio-economic status, age, veteran status, disability, and expertise. This approach allows for a holistic assessment of diversity and can help to ensure that all members' voices are heard and valued.

Additionally, it is important to consider the barriers that people from underrepresented communities may face when participating in committees. These barriers can include confusion around government structure and rules, scheduling conflicts due to caregiver responsibilities, accessibility challenges related to meeting format and location, and meeting frequency. Addressing these barriers can help to create a more inclusive and equitable committee environment.

Mandatory training: Committees can require all members to participate in mandatory training on topics such as unconscious bias, cultural competency, and effective communication. This approach can help to ensure that all members have the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively engage with diverse perspectives and contribute to the committee's work.

Using Data Through an Equity Lens

Gathering Information/Research

Start with Inclusion

1. Who is not included in the work you do?
2. What could contribute to this exclusion?
3. What can you do differently to ensure inclusion?

1. Will our data gathering plan identify specific areas where we may unintentionally limit equity and inclusion?
2. What current statistics or demographic data would help us understand the people or communities that face systemic barriers and inequities in relation to the issue in question?
3. Will data gathered capture the diversity of the population? (i.e. broken down to make differences visible e.g. - “disaggregated”)
4. When using gender-neutral language (people, head of household, the homeless, sole-support parents, immigrants), are we also distinguishing differences between women and men in that specific group? (e.g. female heads of household versus male heads of household)
5. Do the research questions help us identify who may be excluded and what is needed to ensure they will benefit?
6. Are we making any assumptions that we need to verify? (e.g., all parents in a program will be heterosexual)
7. How might you consult with the people most affected by this issue to ensure the reliability of your data, approach and findings? (e.g. ask community leaders about the cultural appropriateness of the data or approach)
8. Have we consulted with other staff, departments or community leaders with experience in this area? If not, how will we do this?
9. Does our final report include the findings on the specific equity and inclusion concerns we identified?
10. How will we report back the findings to people who were involved in the research?

Gathering Information/Research

Promising Practice

Older Adult Plan

In October 2012, the City of Ottawa adopted the Older Adult Plan (OAP); an action plan containing 74 concrete actions to enhance municipal infrastructure, policies and services for older adults across 8 age-friendly domains.

Staff consulted the Equity and Inclusion Lens to identify groups of older adults that may have unique needs that should be considered and integrated at every step of the project. Eight groups were identified including: Franco-phones, immigrants, Aboriginal people, rural residents, persons with disabilities, gay and lesbian residents, isolated residents, and residents living on low income.

When acquiring the information on demographic trends and projections, the 8 groups were considered for their potential unique situations that may require varying courses of action. Statistics and trends were determined for each group, considering gender differences, to help guide the focus of the Older Adult Plan influence the design and outreach for the extensive consultations conducted in 2011.

Consultations were conducted to identify older adult issues and priorities under each of the 8 age-friendly domains. In addition to general sessions held across the city, the consultation plan included focus groups with each of the sub-groups of older adults with unique needs organized with partner community agencies. The exercise yielded rich information on the specific needs and priorities of these older adults which was then considered by staff during the development of the OAP.

What about this is an equity and inclusion practice?

- ✓ Considered diversity within the older adult population from the beginning of the project
- ✓ Gathered information and statistics on diverse groups to help paint a comprehensive picture of the community
- ✓ Decided to identify the unique needs of older adults belonging to diverse groups across 8 age-friendly domains (from infrastructure to programs and services)
- ✓ Developed a consultation plan that specifically targeted a number of sub-groups within the older adult population
- ✓ Engaged community agencies serving each of the sub-groups of older adults to host focus groups
- ✓ Took into consideration the findings of the research and consultations in the development of the final plan

Monitoring and Evaluation

Start with Inclusion

1. Who is not included in the work you do?
 2. What could contribute to this exclusion?
 3. What can you do differently to ensure inclusion?
1. Have we considered what populations will be missed by only using certain methods? (e.g., online surveys, general public consultations) What other approaches might we use?
 2. Are those designing and implementing the evaluation representative of the target groups who will participate in the evaluation? How can we ensure their perspectives are included?
 3. Do the evaluation questions allow for consideration of the experiences of a diversity of residents?
 4. Would it be useful to include those who stopped using the service and potential clients who never used it, in order to assess any unknown biases?
 5. Can we hold interviews or focus groups at a location where the target
 - i. population is most comfortable? (e.g., Centro Latino, Trans*Ponder)
 6. Can we make it easier for respondents to participate by using interviewers from the same population, providing transportation and childcare, and/or offering an honorarium for focus groups?
 7. Can we interview in the language in which the people are most comfortable or have a cultural interpreter available? (i.e. spoken language, braille, sign language)
 8. When analyzing our data, did we maintain a diversity of perspectives in the findings?
 9. Have we validated the findings with the community so as to minimize any biases?
 10. How can we report back to the people who participated in the evaluation process?

Monitoring and Evaluation

Promising Practice

Field testing English as a second language

The involvement of OPH and ESL staff from diverse ethno-cultural origins guaranteed the inclusion of a variety of perspectives on lesson plans, content and format.

All lesson plans were field tested prior to dissemination with over 200 adult learners from 45 countries participating. Multiple methods were used to ensure participation, including validation with partners, classroom observation and targeted surveys of learners, ESL instructors, and OPH staff.

Language proficiency, cultural appropriateness, ease of use and learner engagement were all considered and reviewed. To ensure broad applicability while reaching low-income immigrants where they live and learn, the field tests were conducted in a variety of school and community settings (e.g., adult high schools, community centers). There were no costs incurred by partners or learners as the field test was conducted with them in their real life settings.

All points of view and comments were considered. Lessons plans were reviewed to reflect this input, such as enhancing tips and images to further reflect cultural diversity.

What about this is an equity and inclusion practice?

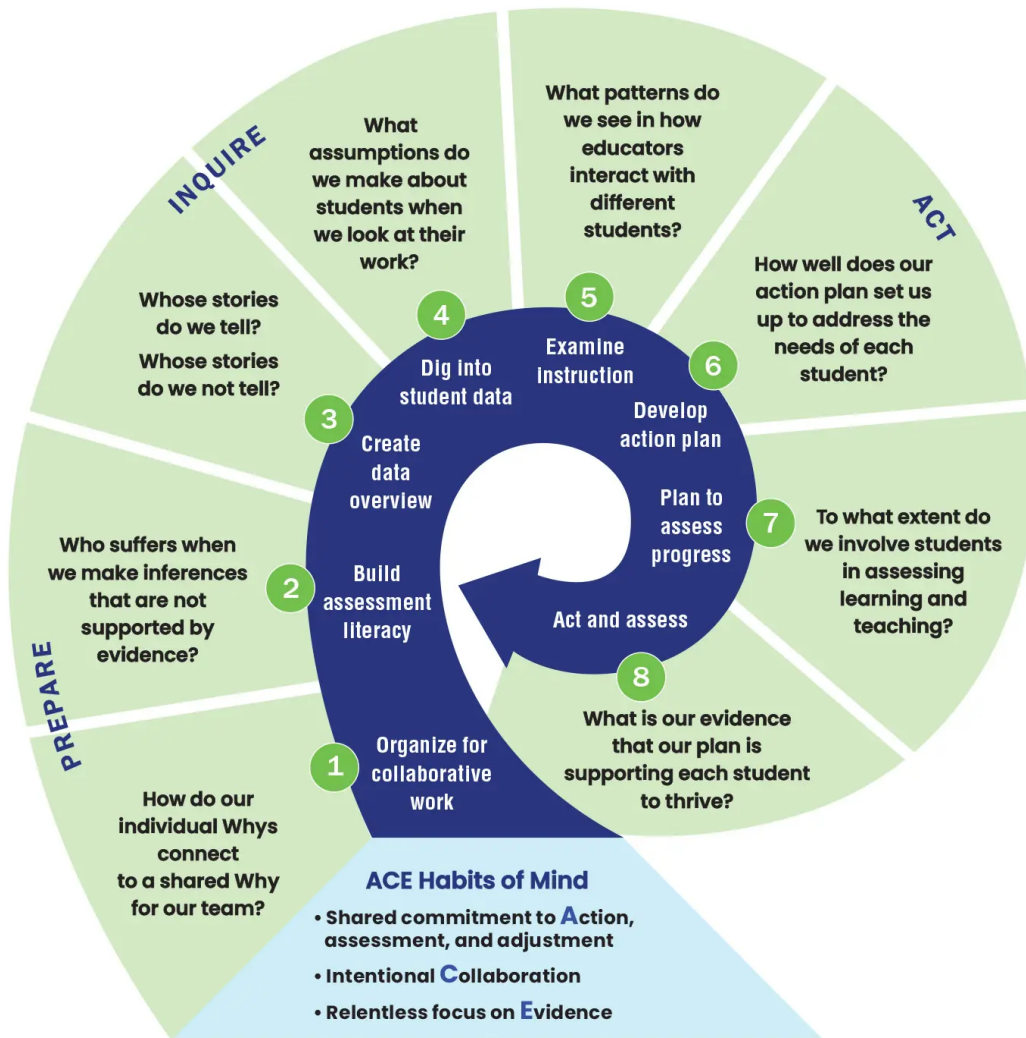
- ✓ Involved partners and staff in the design
- ✓ Drew upon the perspectives of staff from diverse backgrounds
- ✓ Used multiple methods to ensure participation
- ✓ Reached people in their own setting
- ✓ Ensured informants did not assume costs
- ✓ All perspectives were considered in the revised lesson plans

Protocol for Analyzing Data

Data wise. Data Wise. (n.d.). Retrieved May 16, 2022, from <https://datawise.gse.harvard.edu/>

Sourced from the [Datawise Project](#) - Harvard University's Graduate School of Education. While it is geared to educators, the questions asked in their analysis project are universal for moving teams through a data analysis.

FIGURE 1. Taking an Equity Lens in Data Wise



© Data Wise Project 2021

Adapted with permission from Boudett, K. P., City, E. A., & Murnane, R. J. (Eds.) (2013). *Data Wise: A Step-by-Step Guide to Using Assessment Results to Improve Learning and Teaching, Revised and Expanded Edition*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Press, p. 5.

Applying Equity Awareness in Data Visualization

Do No Harm Guide: Applying Equity Awareness in Data Visualization. (2021, July 9). Urban Institute. Retrieved May 16, 2022, from <https://www.urban.org/research/publication/do-no-harm-guide-applying-equity-awareness-data-visualization>

Sourced from the [Urban Institute](#):

Data is collected and communicated carelessly, data analysis and data visualizations have an outside capacity to mislead, misrepresent, and harm communities that already experience inequity and discrimination

Some recommendations researchers and communicators should consider include the following:

- Use people-first language. Data labels and framing should start with the people behind the data, not their characteristics. Using labels such as “Black people” rather than “Black” is more inclusive and centers people, not their skin color. And a label such as “Percentage of people in poverty” refers to an experience rather than using a static description like “more poverty.”
- Order labels and responses purposefully. Often, surveys and other data collection methods will order responses in ways that reflect historical biases. Rather than using orders that reinforce “white” and “male” categories as norms, consider ordering labels by sample size or magnitude of results.
- Carefully consider colors, icons, and shapes. In many visualizations, colors can be associated with stereotypes (e.g., pink for women, blue for men) that can reinforce biased perceptions in readers. Similarly, images or icons can reinforce stereotypes (e.g., a woman as a nurse but a man as a doctor). In visualizations, images and colors can help readers connect with the data, but researchers should be mindful of their capacity to exacerbate stereotypes.

Learning Through an Equity Lens

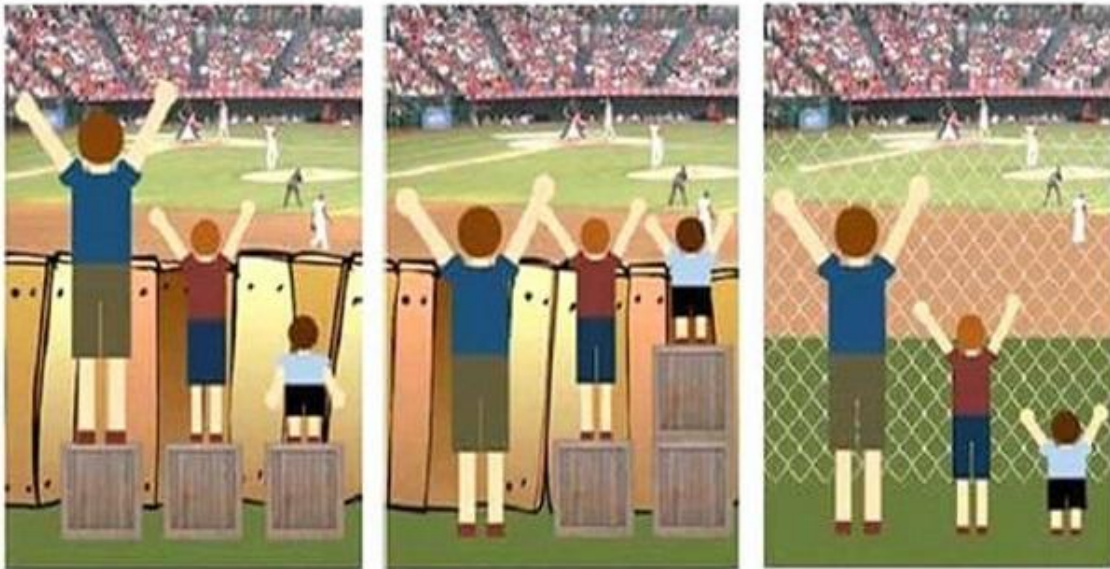
LEARNING

THE EQUITY LENS TOOLKIT

Foundational Knowledge

Equity

What is the difference between the three images?



In the first image, three boys of different heights are standing on boxes of the same height to help them look over a wooden fence to watch a ball game, but the shortest boy cannot see over the fence. It is assumed that everyone will benefit from the same support.

They are being treated equally.

In the second image, the tallest boy has no box, the second tallest boy has one box and the shortest boy has two boxes to stand on, so that they all are able to see over the fence at the same height. They are given different support to make it possible for them to have equal access to the game.

They are being treated equitably.

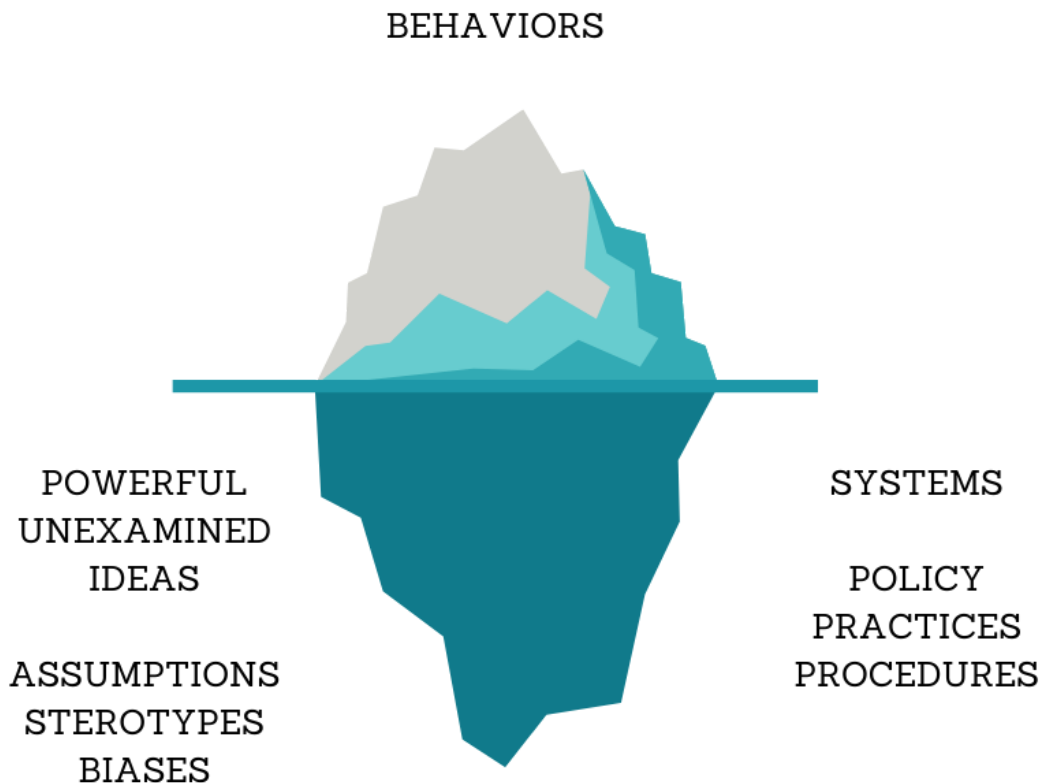
In the third image, the fence has been changed to a see through fence. All three can see the game without any support or accommodation because the cause of the inequity was addressed.

The systemic barrier has been removed.

Equity is treating everyone fairly by acknowledging their unique situation and addressing systemic barriers. The aim of equity is to ensure that everyone has access to equal results and benefits.

Systemic Barriers

When we see people treating each other unfairly, we may think that just by changing the behavior, the problem is addressed. However, we need to look below the surface to see what is really going on. It is like an iceberg, in that 90% of what is happening is under the water. It is the barriers below the surface that reinforce the behaviors and need to be addressed to create lasting change. These are systemic barriers.



Obstacles that exclude groups or communities of people from full participation and benefits in social, economic and political life. They may be hidden or unintentional but built into the way society works. Our assumptions and stereotypes, along with policies, practices and procedures, reinforce them.

What are systemic barriers experienced by people in your workplace or by the people that you serve?

THE EQUITY LENS TOOLKIT

Consider your diversity

As a consequence of systemic barriers and inequities, we have all experienced exclusion in some areas of our lives and inclusion in others. Each of us has multiple factors at play in our lives. For example, a middle-aged female manager with a disability has different life experiences from a recently hired indigenous male university student.

Who we are can contain a variety of life experiences, multiple social factors, and cross-overs with many groups. It is this intersection, or crossover of our identities, that affects how we experience the County.

This is called **intersectionality**.

This is made visible on the Diversity Wheel on the following page.

The first circle represents your LIFE EXPERIENCES.

The second circle contains the SOCIAL FACTORS that influence your life experiences:

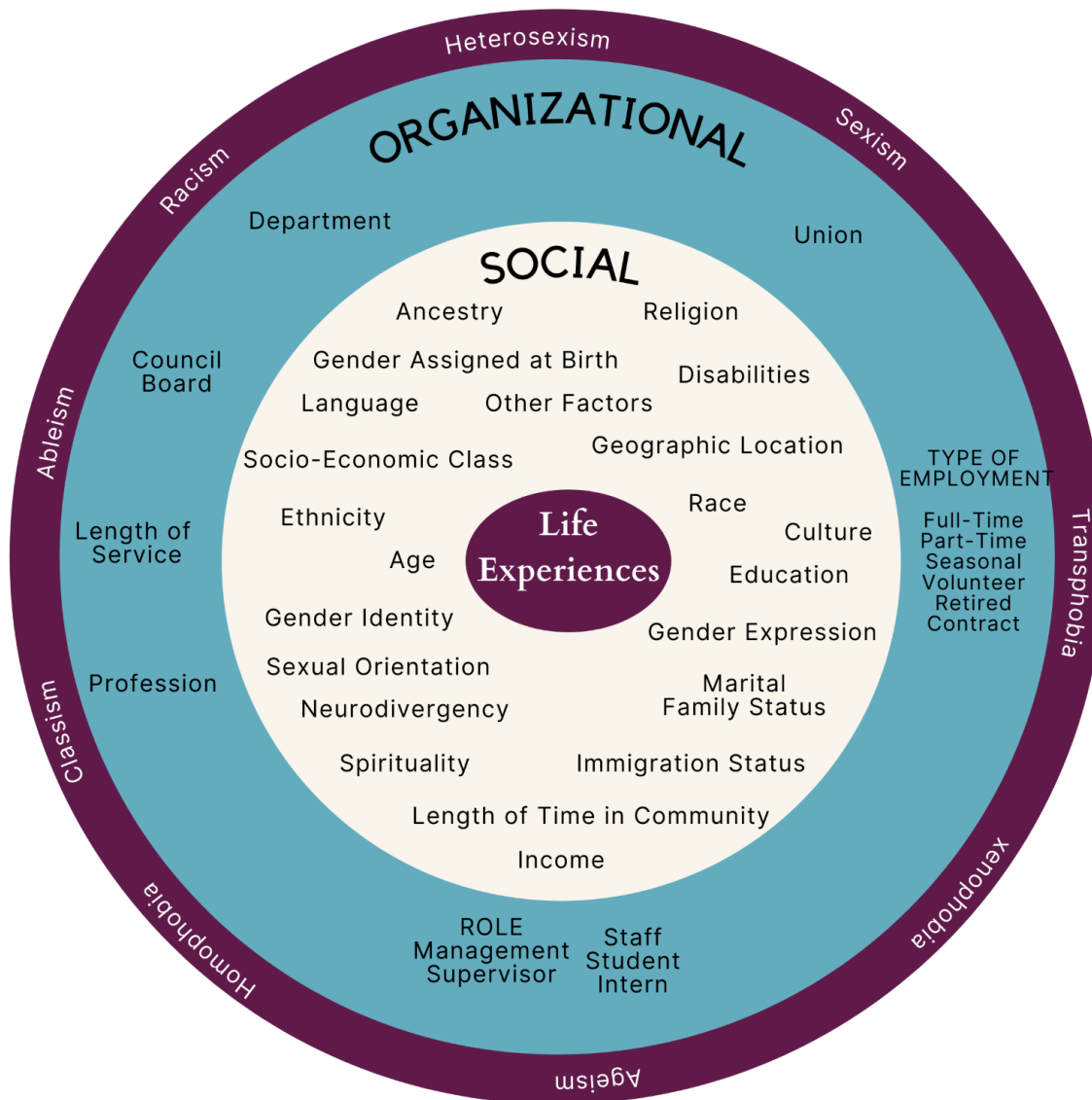
The third circle shows the ORGANIZATIONAL FACTORS that might add a layer to how you experience the County:

The outermost circle lists the “isms” or overarching systems of power that indirectly and directly impact your life such as: racism, discrimination, heterosexism, sexism, classism, ethnocentrism, transphobia, ageism, homophobia, or ableism.

When we reflect on our own experiences, we can go to the next step to ask to what extent this relates to the degree to which we will experience inclusion or exclusion (privilege or marginalization) in a given situation or context. Sometimes we experience both.

Take a few moments to identify areas in your life where you have had advantages or disadvantages. In some areas of your life, you may find it has been both an advantage and disadvantage at different times in your life.

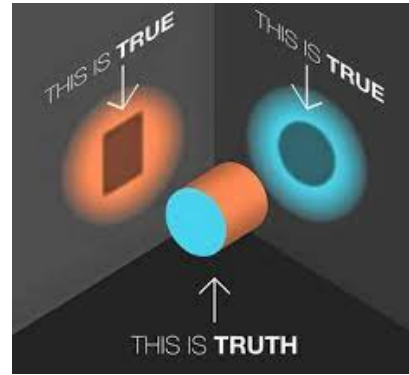
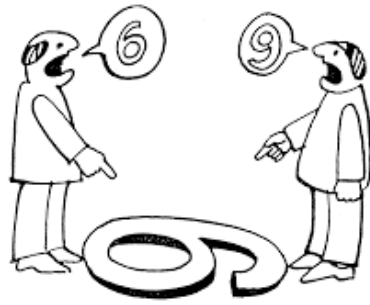
- Underline advantages
- Circle disadvantages



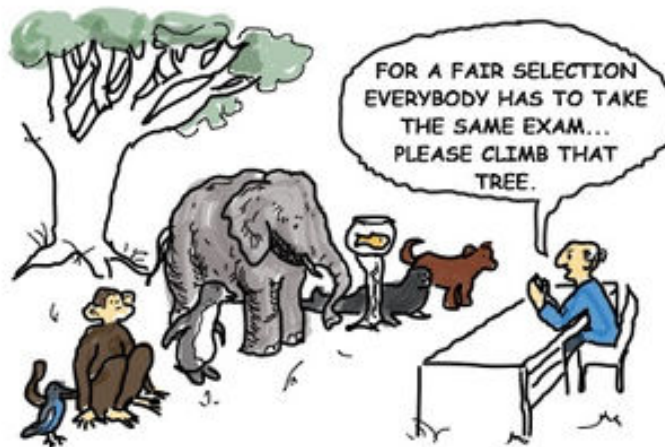
How can understanding your own diversity and experiences help you understand others and become an ally for those that may be experiencing exclusion?

THE EQUITY LENS TOOLKIT

Check your assumptions



What are some assumptions taking place here?



- Does this happen in our workplace?
- Does this happen in the services we provide?
- Considering a situation from the perspective of those who risk exclusion is a key step in promoting equity and inclusion. It is an ongoing learning process for everyone.

CHECK ASSUMPTIONS!

BE CURIOUS!

STAY CURIOUS!

THE EQUITY LENS TOOLKIT

Ask about Inclusion



Where might you have a limited perspective on the issue?

Who is not included in the work you do?






What could contribute to this exclusion?



















What can you do differently to ensure inclusion?

What barriers do you have to remove for participation?

SUGGESTED READING

Legend

- : Book
- : Podcast
- : Blog
- : Website
- : BIPOC-led or written

| On Racial Equity | On Belonging | On Strategy | On Healing |
|---|--|---|--|
| <p>  Freedom Dreams: The Black Radical Imagination by Robin D.G. Kelley</p> <p> The Color of Law: A Forgotten History of How Our Government Segregated America by Richard Rothstein</p> <p>  Race Matters by Cornel West</p> <p>  Racing to Justice: Transforming Our Conceptions of Self and Other to Build an Inclusive Society by john a powell</p> | <p>  Belonging: A Culture of Place by bell hooks</p> <p>  Othering and Belonging Institute Website john a powell</p> | <p>  Emergent Strategy by adrienne maree brown</p> <p>A Call to Connection Report by Casper ter Kulie with Angie Thurston, Sue Phillips and Derrick Scott III</p> | <p>  My Grandmother's Hands by Resmaa Menakem</p> <p>  Decolonizing Wealth: Indigenous Wisdom to Heal Divides and Restore Balance by Edgar Villanueva</p> <p> Turning Towards Each Other: A Conflict Workbook by Weyam Ghadbian & Jovida Ross with Movement Strategy Center</p> |