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# Values & Competencies Session 2

*Prepared for Communities In Schools of Central Texas*

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# Norms

- Your presence makes a difference
- Intent to build
- Grace to grow, with accountability for intentionality and impact
- The broccoli in your teeth rule (Melanieism)
  - Assume it's there, whether you feel it or not (esp. if you walk in more privileged identities and power)
- Make space, take space
- Expect and accept non-closure (@DBP)

# Welcome & Connect (5 minutes)

- In chat, please share:
  - What is something giving you joy, peace or strength in your life right now? OR
  - Who is someone on this team that you really appreciate? Why?

Equity:

*Being Boldly Race, Equity, and  
Justice-Forward.*

# Equity >> All-Staff Competencies

- **Racial Justice, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging Lens:** We bring a lens on racial justice, equity, inclusion and belonging to our work that informs our decision-making and drives our actions and collaboration day-to-day.
- **Owning Our Personal Growth on REIB:** We dedicate requisite time to learn and grow on issues of racial justice, equity, inclusion and belonging in order to have better impact with our teams and as a leader. We identify our own biases in order to evaluate and improve on our actions in order to better drive equitable outcomes in our work.
- **Disrupting and remedying harm:** We develop the skills and structures to “call-in” colleagues, partners, and others when they are causing harm to our community, team, or the mission we seek to achieve particularly across race and equity dimensions. Where we make errors, we own our impact and remedy harm to the extent possible.

# **Racial Justice, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging Lens**

# Foundational Concept



As team members that value equity, we're responsible for developing the ability to see and act on equity-related issues as they emerge, and to act in those instances to mitigate negative impact to others and create space for every member of our team (esp. those impacted) to thrive. One helpful metaphor is to imagine having a set of eyeglasses you can wear to approach the situation alert to equity and inclusion issues that might be present.

# Quick Example: Break Room Breakdown

Theresa is a white sales executive in a small nonprofit that is terrible at scheduling herself so she can take bathroom breaks and water breaks between meetings. One of the highest-paid mid-managers on staff (a white man) likes to work from the breakroom in the morning because it's quieter, and Theresa sometimes asks him if he'll fill her water bottle when she has 2 minutes to use the restroom before her next meeting. He is glad to help. One day, he's out, and Theresa's new Latina direct report, Lourdes, is grabbing her lunch from the breakroom. Without thinking, Theresa asks her to fill her water bottle and then runs for the bathroom before she replies. After leaving the bathroom, she retrieves her water bottle and darts down the hall. A year later, when Lourdes leaves the organization, she mentions knowing it was a place that she wouldn't be valued in her first week - when her white manager asked her to fill her water bottle as if she were her assistant, despite having 7 years of experience in the field.



**Read the scenario with your equity glasses on. What went wrong? Where was the impact?**



# What Developing a Personal Lens on Racial Justice Looks Like

- **Learning the history of other racial identities, and your own,** and the ways in which white supremacy has historically and is currently causing negative impact to people who hold these identities (or benefitting them), *especially in the workplace.\**
- **Rooting out your own internalized oppression or dominance,** and disrupting mindsets, knowledge gaps, or behaviors that perpetuate white supremacy at CIS - especially in areas you have power.
- **Building skills in relating and managing across difference** and committing time, resources, and energy to work toward anti-racism in the areas that you can. Using your power to advocate for CIS to do the same.

*\*But not putting the burden on your BIPOC colleagues to teach you.*

# Holding an Equity Lens for Your Programmatic Work

Creating the conditions so those you support are no less or more likely to succeed based on their race, gender, age, or other dimension of difference.

**To clarify, equity is not about our *effort*, it's about our outcomes, so if our effort hasn't afforded the equitable outcomes - we're not done.**

# Examples of an Equity Lens in Action

- **Noticing which students** get more or less of your attention, and if there are trends across lines of race and gender in who you focus on.
- **Holding yourself accountable to prioritize support** to people who have the least access to resources, not just senior leaders. (Tracking response time and making adjustments).

**What other examples can you think of? Pop off mute or drop them in chat.**

# Strengthen Inclusion & Belonging: Play *Your* Position

Each of us has a part to play in creating the inclusive CIS TX that we envision. Each of us brings strengths and limitations in approaching this work, but all of us are needed to build momentum for change.

- Monitor your language and practices for ways that you're excluding others, invalidating differences, or otherwise standing in the way of inclusion and belonging. As you feel safe and willing to do so, speak up about ways Abrams Books or your team could become more inclusive.
- Use your access and credibility to open doors for others, especially (new/jr staff, BIPOC, LGBTQIA+, staff with disabilities, neurodivergent staff, etc).



US Paralympics Relay Team - 2019 (Dubai)

# Owning Our Own Growth on Racial Justice, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging

# The Headline

Learning about other cultures, identities, workstyles, and how disabilities impact others at work is an ongoing task if we want to work together well across difference. Reflecting on your day-to-day interactions and those of others is an important part of your learning journey too.

**Having a learning plan where you can build skills outside of day to day interactions is a helpful practice that ensures you're less likely to have harmful impact.**

**What are some practices you engage in to continuously learn about others and improve your impact across difference?**

# What's Not Helpful - Presumptively Asking Co-Workers

Sometimes, we try to shortcut our learning journey by asking teammates who identify differently to “teach us” about their identities.

In the rare occasion there's sufficient trust, this isn't the 20th time they're being asked, and the team member likes doing this education, this isn't a problem, but a lot of the time, it puts team members in an uncomfortable situation they don't want to be in - and it's additional emotional labor.

When in doubt, do your research online or ask close friends or others outside of work, not the people who feel pressure to say yes to you and who can't escape you at work!

# A Second Place to Start - Improving Our Language

Word or Phrase	Why Avoid It
“Gyp/gypped”	Disparagement of Romani culture.
“Lame,” “Dumb,” “Turned a Blind Eye,” “Deaf Ear,” “Spaz.”	Disparaging legitimate physical disabilities.
“On the spectrum,” “ADHD/ADD,” etc. when not actually diagnosed with these conditions.	Disparaging neurodivergence and minimizing its impact in everyday life.
“Retarded,” “Imbecile,” “Nuts,” “Psycho,” “Basketcase”	Disparaging those with documented mental illness.
“Going Native,” “Off the Reservation,” “Pow-wow,” “my tribe [spoken of a community that is not tribal or indigenous]”	Minimizing those who identify as Indigenous or appropriating sacred concepts for your own purposes.
“Playing the Race Card”	Minimizes the experiences of discrimination/injustice experienced by Black folks and other POC.
“Man power,” “You guys,” “Men at Work”	Centers men; excludes women and non-binary people.



# A Second Place to Start - Improving Our Language

Word or Phrase	Why Avoid It
“Are you blind?” “Are you crazy?”	Marginalizes a community by giving their disability a negative connotation.
“I’m paralyzed/ I was paralyzed” (when used by someone without a mobility disability)	Minimizing of people with a mobility disability.
“Grandfathered in,” “Slaving away at work,” “lynch mob”	Has roots in slavery and/or Jim-crow era violence.
“That’s a hard name to pronounce,” “That’s a mouthful [in regard to a person’s name],” “I’ll just call you [made up shortened name or nickname]”	Centers the experience and names common to your culture, diminishes the value/importance of your colleagues’ name and the culture/language it comes from.
“What are your preferred pronouns?”	Implies people’s gender as a preference vs. a core identity.
“Differently abled.”	This phrase came from people without disabilities. Instead use either people-first language: people with disabilities, or identity-first language: disabled people. When in doubt, listen to how the person refers to themselves and use that.

# Places to Start

- LinkedIn Learning - Has useful courses on [disability justice](#), [neurodivergence](#), and other dimensions of inclusion.
- Anti-Racism Daily (<https://the-ard.com/>) - A daily email that tackles current events from a racial equity and anti-racism lens.
- Code Switch (<https://www.npr.org/podcasts/510312/codeswitch>) - A weekly podcast that dives into race in America and all of the intersections that make up how race is experienced in this country.
- Inclusive Language Guide ([https://nasaa-arts.org/nasaa\\_research/inclusive-language-guide/](https://nasaa-arts.org/nasaa_research/inclusive-language-guide/)) - A database of words to use in order to have inclusive language concerning each type of difference from sexual orientation to race to gender to age to socioeconomic status and more.

# Bright Spots in the Chat

If learning about other cultures, identities, workstyles, and how disabilities impact others at work is an area where you have strength, would you share in the chat your go to move or moves to increase your knowledge in these areas?

# Disrupting and Remediating Harm

It's not a question of if - harm will happen in an organization full of people with different lived experiences, identities, and understandings about relating across difference. How do we call these behaviors in when they happen?

# How to Know When To Speak Up...



- **Harm** - Based off of your best instincts, what was the magnitude of the harm here?
- **Replicability** - If unchecked, will this likely happen again? Or is this already a pattern?
- **Outcome** - Is there a concrete outcome you're seeking or a practice/change you want to see?
- **Best approach** - Is this a full-group redirection, team meeting convo, or would one-on-one be best? Are you the right messenger?
  - **TIP:** Be sure your approach doesn't actually cause more harm to the person(s) impacted whenever possible.

How do you all currently decide when to speak up on issues of racial justice, equity, inclusion or belonging? Unmute and share, private chat or public chat your answers.

# Say the Thing & Engage

How you give feedback matters as much as what's said. Don't just guess, take the time to get it right.

- **Show your cards.** Begin the conversation by naming your intent and/or affirming the relationship.
- **Past, present, future.** Name what you were hoping to experience, what happened instead, and what you'd hope for (or need to see) in the future.
- **Bring them in.** Ask their perspective and reactions to what you've shared. Make space for their point of view and genuinely listen.
- **Align on what's next.** Come to a shared agreement of what's next and when you'll check in on progress.

Where we make errors, we own our impact and remedy harm to the extent possible.



# When You Learn You've Caused Harm...

- **Avoid defensiveness and deflection - and listen instead.** Rather than jump right in, let them finish their points and avoid the urge to clarify and explain.
- **Repeat back what you heard, with as much of their language as possible (and a neutral affect), and ask if you've understood them correctly.** The format I'd use is, "Thank you for sharing this with me. What I think I've heard you say is... Is that right?"
- **Two options: take time to reflect and circle back, or apologize and own harm.**
  1. If you think the feedback is unwarranted, then ask if you can have a few days to reflect deeply on what they shared and circle back. (You can do this even if the feedback makes sense if you feel you're not ready to address it.) **Important:** You must commit to a specific time to circle back and do it! You don't have to agree with their assessment, but you *do* have to give it thought and close the loop.
  2. You can also thank them, acknowledge the harm, and commit to deep reflection and behavior change for the future. **Important:** If you promise this, you must do it!

# Genuine Repair vs. “From now on” Thinking

When something has happened we can't just ignore it. When a tire has a nail in it, it can be a slow leak, but we have to eventually repair it or our tires will be completely deflated. This is the same when dealing with harm, we must patch relationships and deal with harm head on in order to not cause “deflation” among those on our team.



# Scenario: Whoops, I Did It Again.

During a team meeting, an icebreaker question about what is bringing you joy was asked. Nohea, a Native Hawaiian on your team shared, "Today is King Kamehameha I Day, it is celebrated because he unified the Hawaiian islands. We usually celebrate with a parade and performances and delicious traditional Hawaiian dishes on this day. If I were home I'd be dressed up because this is a very important holiday to Hawaiians." A teammate, Charlie jumps in, "My family loves Hawaii! We go every 2 years, the beaches are to die for and actually my parents own a timeshare on the Big Island. If anyone ever wants to go and needs a place to stay let me know. The natives are so nice so it's always a great place to go and get away." Nohea glares in Charlie's direction, visibly annoyed by the comment. The facilitator moves the group on quickly, to avoid any additional interaction on the topic.

Later Charlie asks to eat lunch with Nohea and asks him if he was upset with Charlie's comment about vacationing in Hawaii. Nohea shares, with frustration in his voice, that the impact of tourism on Hawaii has been detrimental to Native Hawaiians. Tourism has caused the price of living to skyrocket, tourists do not respect the wildlife of the islands, their culture is being commodified, and the Native Hawaiians are being pushed out of their land. Without missing a beat, Charlie interjects, "Surely, Nohea, there are tourists who go and respect the island, like my family... not all tourists cause these kinds of problems." At this point, Nohea packs up his food and says he needs to get back to work. Charlie immediately understands that yet again, he's missed the point of what Nohea is trying to tell him.

***Imagine you're advising Charlie. What's his next move?***

## **Close out question:**

What is one aha from today's session you can take into your work?