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HALTON-HSJCC
ANTI-RACISM GUIDEBOOK

AN ORGANIZATIONAL TOOL FOR LEADERS

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EQUITY
DIVERSITY
INCLUSION

CONTENTS

THE PAGE OF CONTENTS.

OUR GUIDEBOOK

INTRODUCTION TO THE GUIDE BOOK

What is the purpose of the Guidebook?

I am because we are." -Ubuntu

Thank you for opening the 'Halton-HSJCC People Leaders' Guidebook' and taking a big step in your journey to be a leader in Equity, Diversity and Inclusion at your workplace and in your community!

This Guidebook is designed for Halton-HSJCC senior leaders and management. Senior leaders are central in leading and shifting the organizational culture. The guidebook will help them start their journey to identify, define, and achieve goals related to Equity, Diversity and Inclusion and racial justice.

As Canadians continue to understand the importance of racial justice, particularly Anti-Black and Anti-Indigenous racism, Halton-HSJCC is committed to educating and empowering staff, agencies, clients and communities by providing them with tools to help them build equitable outcomes and communities for all people!

We acknowledge that oppression and abuse of power has a long-standing history in Canada, and through a global pandemic fighting COVID-19, we as a society continue to see the ways these disparities are exacerbated in African/Caribbean/Black and Indigenous communities. Since the death of George Floyd, Land Back protests on Indigenous sovereignty across Turtle Island and the shift to Anti-Asian hate during COVID-19, we have all been called to engage in the conversation around racial justice.

This is an introductory guidebook to provide key terms, concepts and support internal reflections and connections to equity and inspire YOU to take tangible steps to implementing equity concepts into diverse work environments within the HSJCC and, to build a stronger and safer Halton region for all!

What is equity, diversity, inclusion and belonging?

Although there has been a history of ongoing advocacy, it was in 2020, amidst the backdrop of a global pandemic, that conversations around Equity, Diversity and Inclusion and anti-racism came to the forefront of mainstream media and into everyday conversations. It forced us to see the ways that oppression was uniquely impacting African/Caribbean/Black, Indigenous and racialized communities in profound ways. In order to understand how we resist oppression; it is key we understand these core pillars.

These terms often get mixed up, so let's explore them each a bit further:

EQUALITY

"Equity" is often conflated with the term "Equality" (meaning sameness). In fact, true equity implies that an individual may need to experience or receive something different (not equal) in order to maintain fairness and access. Derived from Morton, B. and Fasching-Varner, K. (2015). "Equity." Encyclopedia of Diversity and Social Justice. Vol. 1. (Ed. S. Thompson). Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield. p. 303-4.

DIVERSITY

Having a variety of racial, sexual, gender, class, religious, ethnic, abled, and other social identities represented in a space, community, institution, or society. Derived from Adams, M et al. (2016). Teaching for Diversity and Social Justice. New York: Routledge. P. 1.

INCLUSION

"The active, intentional, and ongoing engagement with diversity—in the curriculum, in the co-curriculum, and in communities (intellectual, social, cultural, geographical) with which individuals might connect—in ways that increase awareness, content knowledge, cognitive sophistication, and empathic understanding of the complex ways individuals interact within systems and institutions. Derived from the Association of American Colleges & Universities.

BELONGING

"Belonging is the feeling of being part of something and mattering to others. We create it through inclusion, which consists of intentional acts." (Beyond Diversity: The Science of Inclusion and Belonging, 2020, Dr. Britt Andreatta) This can be cultivated through the culture within your organizational fabric. It centers how people feel when they are able to be their true self at work.

For the purpose of this guidebook, we will be referring to **Equity, Diversity** and **Inclusion** as EDI.

When speaking of diversity, it is important we see it from a holistic lens: diversity in perspective, knowledge, and experience arises from professional training and specialization. Diversity is also connected to characteristics such as age, race, ethnicity, nationality, gender, class, and sexual orientation. All these elements of diversity shape the life experiences, expectations, and world views of diverse individuals.

By doing equity work, we are able to identify the unique needs diverse people have and the barriers that they experience, so that we can work to remove them successfully.

Equity is the goal and serves to measure the effective outcomes that ensure all people are valued and respected and have a voice at the decision-making table of leadership. Diversity is a means of getting people from a variety of identities through the door, inclusion is building spaces where diverse voices can be heard and valued and belong while celebrating their unique knowledge, perspective and contribution.

Understanding the value, importance and power of EDI allows us to have an integrated and intersectional lens that fosters safe, inclusive and empowering work environments and communities for all people.

Who is this guidebook for and how is it to be used? Why now?

This Guidebook is for People Leaders who are looking for ways to advance equity, who have been called in to support in change making, and/or are new on their equity journey. This Guidebook is intended for use within the HSJCC and is designed to support all HSJCC People Leaders, to explicitly address equity as a process and a result of their work.

Through Commitments from the United Nations which designated this the Decade for people of African Descent between the years of 2015-2024, and all levels of Government in Canada calling for equity strategies, this is a time we can connect our local and organizational strategies in alignment to some of the larger national and global directions being taken to address racism, Anti-Black racism and Anti-Indigenous racism.

Use this Guidebook to reflect on how you are building momentum to create change in your environment and community. This can include developing learning opportunities, training, resources and tools to support these efforts.
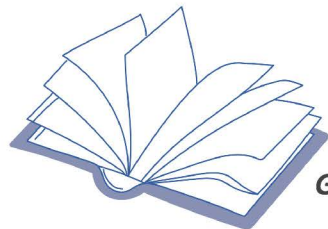
Glossary of key terms:

To support you on your journey to building more inclusive and equitable spaces, here are some key terms you should know about:

Ableism - discrimination in favor of able-bodied people

Ally -The term ally is defined as someone who advocates for groups or individuals who do not come from the same place of privilege as the ally. Being an ally is considered one of the first steps in race and social justice work. The term accomplice encompasses allyship but goes beyond advocacy.

Anti-Black Racism - Anti-Black Racism is prejudice, attitudes, beliefs, stereotyping or discrimination that is directed at people of African descent and is rooted in their unique history and experience of enslavement and colonization. Anti-Black racism is deeply embedded in Canadian institutions, policies and practices, to the point that it becomes a part of our systems

Anti-Indigenous Racism
Anti-Indigenous racism is the on-going race-based discrimination, negative stereotyping, and injustice towards Indigenous Peoples of Canada. It includes ideas and practices that establish, maintain and perpetuate power imbalances, systemic barriers, and inequitable outcomes that stem from the legacy of colonial policies and practices in Canada. Systemic anti-Indigenous racism is evident in discriminatory federal policies such as the Indian Act and the residential school system. It also manifests in the overrepresentation of Indigenous peoples in provincial criminal justice and child welfare systems, as well as inequitable outcomes in education, wellbeing, and health. Individual lived experiences of anti-Indigenous racism can be seen in the rise in acts of hostility and violence directed at Indigenous people.

Homophobia - The irrational aversion to, fear or hatred of gay, lesbian, or bisexual people and communities, or of behaviours stereotyped as "homosexual."

Race - A race is a human population that is believed to be distinct in some way from other humans based on real or imagined physical differences, and at its core, race is a social construct. Racial classifications are rooted in the idea of biological classification of humans according to morphological features such as skin color or facial characteristics. An individual is usually externally classified (meaning someone else makes the classification) into a racial group rather than the individual choosing where they belong as part of their identity (Cavalli-Sforza, Menozzi, Piazza, 1996).

Racism - Prejudice, discrimination, or antagonism directed against a person or people on the basis of their membership in a particular racial or ethnic group, typically one that is a minority or marginalized.

Racialized - In sociology, **racialization** or e**thnicization** is a political process of ascribing ethnic or racial identities to a relationship, social practice, or group that did not identify itself as such.[1] Racialization or ethnicization often arises out of the interaction of a group with a group that it dominates and ascribes a racial identity for the purpose of continued domination and social exclusion; over time, the racialized and ethnicized group develop the society enforced construct that races are real, different and unequal in ways that matter to economic, political and social life.
Sexism - The prejudice, stereotyping, or discrimination, typically against women, on the basis of sex.

Systemic Racism – "The conscious or unconscious policies, procedures, and practices that exclude, marginalize, and exploit racialized people. Systemic racism is supported by institutional power and by powerful (often unexamined) ideas which make racism look normal and justified. Systemic racism allows individuals to practice racism in organizations,

unchecked by effective complaints procedures, performance appraisals, and promotions which require equity competencies" (Lopes & Thomas, p.270).

Transphobia - The aversion to, fear or hatred of or intolerance of trans people and communities. Like other prejudices, it is based on stereotypes and misconceptions that are used to justify discrimination, harassment and violence toward trans people.

Xenophobia - Dislike of or prejudice against people from other countries.

Before building an action plan – talking about EDI within the context of a framework:

The call for advocacy has inspired many People Leaders and Changemakers to feel inclined to get right to making immediate change happen in their work! But building equitable systems and creating systemic and sustainable change takes time. It requires a strongly built foundation and a collaborative strategic plan rooted in social justice.

"A social justice framework is a way of seeing and acting aimed at *resisting unfairness and inequity while enhancing freedom and possibility for all.* It pays primary attention to how people, policies, practices, curricula, and institutions may be used to liberate rather than oppress those least served by our decision making."

As we take this lifelong journey to be an equity leader, let us continuously anchor our work, efforts and intentions in some important frameworks:

Anti-Oppressive Practice
An approach that works to identify where power imbalances exist, how they uniquely impact diverse groups based on race, gender, class etc., develop strategies to eradicate it and prevent these imbalances from happening and harming again.

Anti-Racism/ Anti Oppression Practice
A range of ideas and political actions which are meant to counter racial prejudice, systemic racism, and the oppression of specific racial groups. Anti-Black Racism works to specifically identify the ways that African, Caribbean and Black individuals and communities are impacted and reversing policies, practices and behaviors deeply embedded in our social fabric.

This framework supports us in understanding and dismantling the ways that Anti-Blackness permeates in organizational policy, practice and culture.

Race Equity
"Racial equity is both an outcome and a process," and the outcome occurs when race no longer determines someone's socioeconomic status. The process ensures that those most impacted by structural racial inequality are involved in the discussions and decisions around the policies that impact them. The impact and consequences of our history have created systemic barriers that prevent people from fully participating in all parts of society. This is especially true for Indigenous Peoples and Black Ontarians of all backgrounds. Whether they're recent immigrants or descendants of people who were enslaved, Black Ontarians live a shared present-day experience of anti-Black racism. (Anti-Black Directorate).

Africentricity:
Africentricity seeks to review the continued exclusion and marginalization of African knowledge systems from dominant narrative. Africentricity embodies a struggle for the total liberation of the African mind from the effects of enslavement, colonialism and racism. An important theoretical aspect of Africentricity consists of analysis and interpretation from the perspective of African people as subjects rather than objects on the fringes of European experiences. A prime belief of Africentric thought is to "move" or "bring" all peoples of African descent from the margins to the center of world history. The primary and indispensable mechanism to achieve this goal is the fostering of African intellectual agency.

Indigenous Centered Worldviews
For traditional First Nations, Metis and Inuit cultures, worldview is rooted in spiritual beliefs. Spirituality incorporates a culture's highest ideals, values, morals, and ethics. It defines the behavior that makes a society survive and thrive. It involves honoring and respecting things that are unseen –– the Creator, souls, spirits, the wind, the air –– as well as those that are visible. It is an individual's understanding of their place and purpose in the world and their relationship to both seen and unseen forces.

Trauma Informed Practice
"A strengths-based framework grounded in an understanding of and responsiveness to the impact of trauma. It emphasizes physical, psychological, and emotional safety for everyone, and creates opportunities for survivors to rebuild a sense of control and empowerment."

This framework reduces further harm and supports agencies in approaching and engaging diverse communities in compassionate ways.
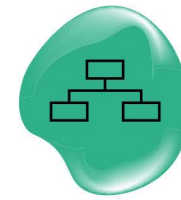
Change Management
The methods and manner in which a company describes and implements change within both its internal and external processes. It includes the application of a structured process and set of tools for leading the people's side of change to achieve a desired outcome.

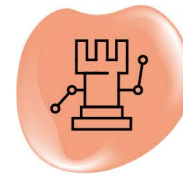This framework supports agencies in operationalizing equity.

It is critical to understand that dismantling centuries of oppressive systems and legacies will not happen overnight and will require immense effort, intention and collective action on our part. These frameworks act as a guidance system to make sure that we continue to center equitable values and principles along our journey.

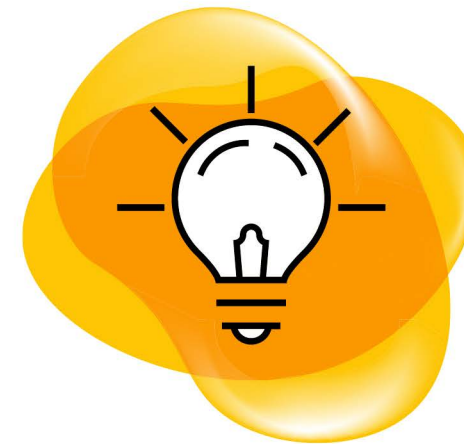# Building an action plan
through five key steps

As People Leaders this Guidebook will explore five key steps that you can take to cultivate leadership throughout your teams, departments and networks in order to create a more equitable organization.

Starting Dialogues around Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Anti-Racism at the senior level and board level within the organization while building it within a change management structure
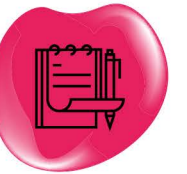
Building an EDI budget to support ongoing and long-term commitment to equity work

Building Culturally responsive supports For staff as they begin to move through the equity process

Equity Audit Understanding the scope of the undertaking through an Equity Audit

Rebuilding Trust identifying how you will connect with staff
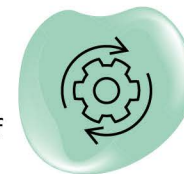
Review the five key steps and reflect on the ways you can integrate these practices into your daily work, interactions and role within your agencies. This Guidebook will help agencies consider starting points of where their organization is at when it comes to Equity, Diversity and Inclusion, and will help to inform the development and implementation of an action plan to address identified issues, in their respective work spaces and communities.

STEP 1) Starting Dialogues around Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Anti-Racism at an Organizational Level

Building an action plan

Equity work visualizes a just society that respects basic human rights and allows everyone to thrive and reach their true potential. An equity lens can be used to envision a world free from bias and systemic oppression, and where individuals are treated with dignity and respect. This includes inclusive access to safe and stable housing, quality education and health care, a legal system that delivers justice to all, a liveable income, access to nutritious food, clean water, mental health services and freedom from the threat of violence.

This Guidebook seeks to support all those who are a part of, and who are affected by, racial inequities and can build their awareness, tools, and capacity to apply a race equity "lens" to resist and dismantle oppressive systems within their work environments.

In order to build an action plan, we must critically analyze our organizations through an equity lens to:

◇ Surface the root causes and contributing factors of inequities.
◇ Identify leverage points for transformation.
◇ Bring about strategic options for intervention.
◇ Develop sustainable action items within long term strategic planning.

When building an action plan, start by reviewing the following organizational areas:

1 Planning and Policy
Identifying EDI as a priority and incorporating your goals into planning and policies.

2 Organizational Culture
Demonstrating a strong commitment to EDI by ensuring the organizational culture and environment are welcoming and inclusive.

3 Employee Education & Training
Recognizing the value of EDI education/training, and providing ongoing opportunities to evolve knowledge and skills to work effectively within a diverse environment.

4 Human Resources
Through Human Resource policies and practices, committing to recruit, hire, and retain employees that represent the diverse client population and/or have expertise in equity and specifically anti-racism.
Community Capacity Building

5 Community Capacity Building
Committing to creating community change by fostering the development of partnerships and networks, advocacy, and capacity building to advance EDI work within Canada.

6 Service Planning & Development
Incorporating diversity, equity, and inclusion principles into planning, developing and delivering services.

7 Client Engagement
Recognizing the value of engaging clients in the planning, development, and evaluation of services and integrating feedback.

8 Service Provision
Committing to delivering inclusive and equitable services in culturally affirming ways while adapting and innovating service delivery.

Organizational reviews help us understand the ways that EDI is missing in various areas of our work and brings us awareness of the conversations that are necessary to start having in order to initiate meaningful, transformative and long term change.

Setting up a Strong Foundation in your organization

Before starting EDI work within your organization, it is critical to understand the investment of time, along with the financial and human resources it takes to authentically engage in this work. This section will describe the work and elements necessary to lay an enduring foundation for undertaking a successful EDI initiative in your work environment.

1 Identify Your Mission and Purpose
Define the ways that your EDI connects to your organization's strategic priorities, mission, values, and services. Initiate the creation of a shared framework to guide equity work and center the end goal and how this accomplishment will impact the community.

2 Develop Your Team
When considering staffing positions, the positions need to have visibility at all levels of the organization from the board through to staffing and client impacts. That is the only way to have equity represented at all decision-making levels within the organization.

3 Develop Common Language and Frameworks
Build your team's capacity by building common language and best practices to unify and drive the work forward. While this Guidebook provides some suggested terms and frameworks as a starting point, the most meaningful conversations will grow from developing a shared understanding of what these concepts mean across your team, departments and/or organization.

4 **Recognize Your Organizational Culture**
Identify the shared norms, beliefs, values, expectations and assumptions held by most members of your organization and magnified by behaviors of leaders. Identify patterns of behavior within organizational practices.

5 **Prepare to Explore the Topic of Race**
Every one of us has a personal relationship with race and racism, particularly living in a deeply racialized society like Canada. Because of this, we must both acknowledge and talk about the ways race and racism play a role in our daily lives. For some, little to no experience talking about racism in their lives makes it difficult to have an intentional conversation and a sense of disconnection from the topic. For those who identify as Black, Indigenous and racialized, having intentional conversations on race and racism can still be difficult, but important to hear and understand. Engaging all racial identities in a safe(r) space to engage in dialogues around racism is an important step to building an equitable organizational culture.

6 **Understand This Work is Uncomfortable and Messy**
When engaging in race-based dialogue, expect conflict and resistance as a part of the growing pains. Race equity work is heart work and requires us to use our emotions to explore our privileges and pain living in a racialized society. Organizations preparing to undertake EDI work must intentionally hold space to address emotions and prioritize relationship building. To engage in anti-racism work, is an action and is not transactional in it's construct, it requires us to be relational. This means that we need to employ different skill sets than we may have used in other parts of our work.

7 **Prepare for Transformation**
EDI work is fundamentally deep, lasting transformation work. This means investing ongoing financial and human resources in deep, reflective processes, engaging in hard conversations, allocating space and resources for caucus groups, and re-creating an equitable organizational standard of work for staff, senior leaders, volunteers, clients and partners.

Regardless of where your organization begins its process, all organizations have an opportunity to reflect and improve regardless of their starting point.

What dialogues need to be had in the workplace and with senior leaders:

As indicated in an earlier section of this guidebook, talking about injustices of the past and present will not always be easy. We have to have meaningful dialogues that go beyond the theoretical and draw from our emotions; this is called heart work. Dialogues expose the realities of oppression and allow us to really understand what our racialized colleagues experience.

Equity work acknowledges the historic legacy of oppression while seeking to understand how it continues to impact the diverse individuals around us. It seeks to highlight how injustices permeate in all areas of our organization and the ways that we each may individually and collectively contribute towards it or perpetuate it, consciously or not.

To eradicate systemic racism, it is important for leaders to reflect on how power imbalances play out at the workplace and to empower employees and provide them with resources for having authentic and constructive conversations about EDI.

Different dynamics play out. For example, individuals from dominant identity groups, often white/cisgender/middle class/older, may feel cautious of saying the "wrong thing". Black, Indigenous and racialized group members may be mindful of the power dynamics that are present in the space, or feel like they must be the representative for their entire race. With people coming from different entry points into this conversation it's important to build Braver spaces for all to enter safely, and engage in meaningful ways.

A Braver space is built with the intention, focus, and safety needed to have honest conversations about race and injustices. Safety is a key principle in engaging diverse teams in constructive dialogues that foster understanding, solidarity and allyship. It is critical that before engaging in these conversations the organization looks at structuring safety into conversations related to EDI.

It is vital to acknowledge the uncomfortable realities of the past and the present. Thinking about slavery and genocide will be hard to speak about, consider inviting external support when having this discussion. Some of these spaces that

require us to have many present realities may be uncomfortable; from the graphic video of the public murder of George Floyd by a police officer, to the recovery of 7,500+ bodies of Indigenous children recovered from unmarked graves buried beneath residential schools across Canada. As violent as it is, these are the realities of some communities, and we have to face these truths in order to work towards reconciliation.

Recognize that this is a learning experience, and it will get messy at times, so expect growing pains. Find ways to move through discomfort. Building Braver spaces means we go beyond our comfort and privilege, where experiences and understanding can be explored and honored.
What is important is that we collectively move towards building practices that address and repair harm, while creating mechanisms that reduce and address harm when it occurs again.
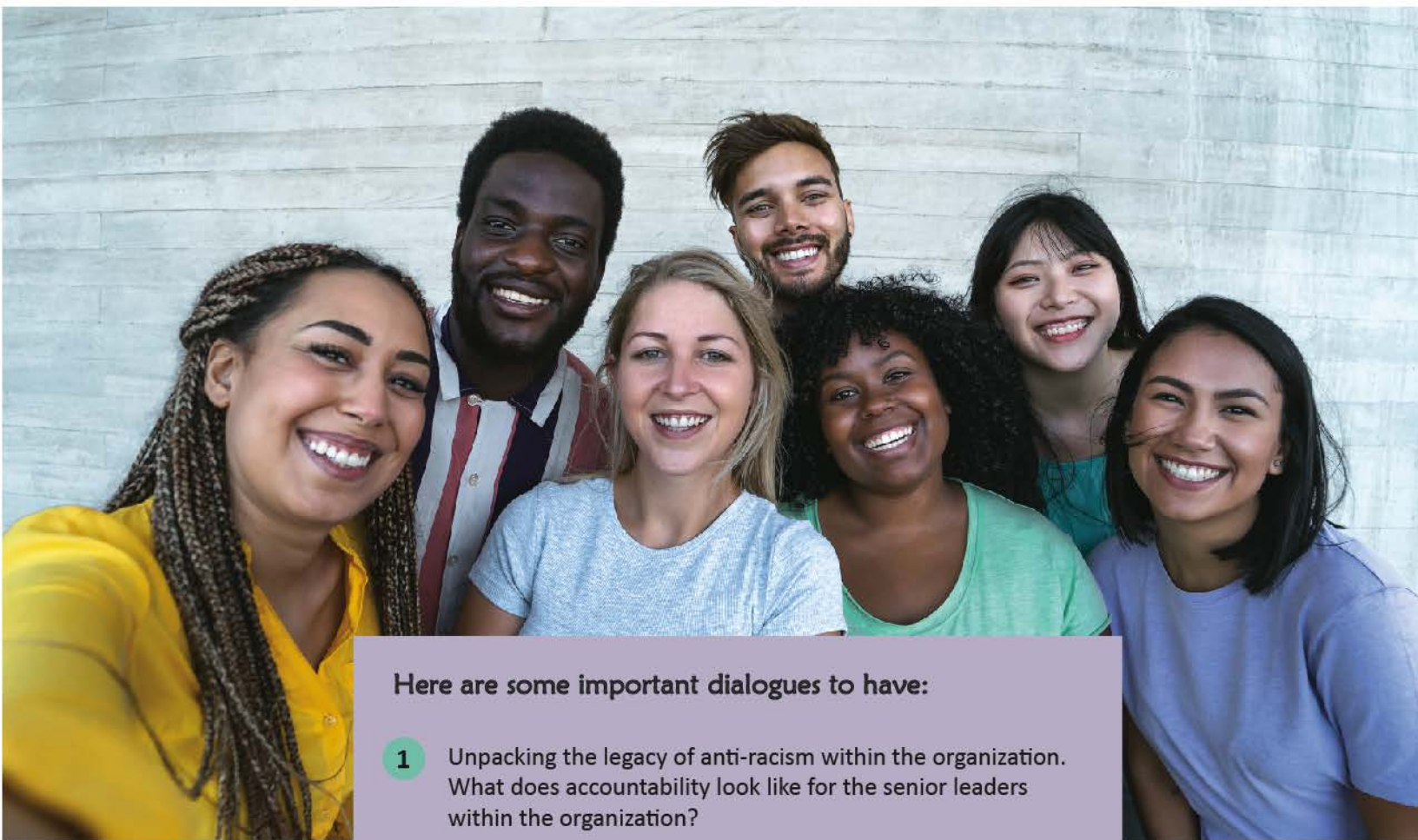
Here are some important dialogues to have:

1. Unpacking the legacy of anti-racism within the organization. What does accountability look like for the senior leaders within the organization?

2. Is EDI a focus and a priority? How have you prioritized this within your organization through time, money, capacity, strategic planning and human resources?

3. What does a 360 review of your organization look like? How does the board, senior leaders, staff, clients and stakeholders look at EDI?

4. Who holds the responsibility of EDI within the organization?

5. What capacity and competency does the organization have within EDI? What are some drivers for change?

6. What does the organization need to do to repair harm, build or rebuild trust? Whose responsibility is it?

Conversations about EDI in the workplace demand investment in time and resources from the agency and time and emotional energy from your employees. Building organizational culture means demonstrating that this investment is respected, appreciated and will lead to tangible change, and that the agency is actively demonstrating it's long-term commitment to EDI.

Four steps to starting anti-racism dialogues:

Know that starting these dialogues will be hard and uncomfortable, but it is a necessary part of your growth in the journey. Oftentimes, People Leaders are the first trailblazers in bringing conversations about EDI to their work environment.

Remember, everyone is entering the conversation at their own entry point; some are connected to the conversation by lived experience, some are connected due to ancestry and some have never had to think about race and identity. It is imperative that People Leaders support those who are entering these conversations to ensure you are co-creating a space where everyone can engage safely and respectfully in this important dialogue.

The R.A.C.E tool can be used as a discussion starter in order to enhance understanding of EDI within the organization, and it can help to set a roadmap for action.

Introducing R.A.C.E. as a guiding tool:

R Reduce anxiety by talking about race anyway
Ignoring the issues won't make it go away. Build your 'equity muscles' by starting dialogues, even if you feel uncomfortable at first.

A Accept that anything related to race is either going to be visible or invisible
Racialized communities understand race because it is a part of their daily lived experience. But some people aren't connected to race in the same ways. It requires us to reflect on what are the impacts when race is hypervisible, or it is invisibilized.

C Call on internal and external allies for help
Guidance from internal staff, sectoral leaders and equity consultants can all play a role in creating safe spaces for staff and stakeholders to engage in dialogue.

E Expect that you will need to provide some "answers," practical tools, skill-based frameworks, etc.
Providing resources for learning, grounding the work in social justice frameworks and engaging staff in a clear process forward can let staff know that EDI work is achievable.

Five ineffective strategies to starting anti-racism dialogues:

A great way to measure our strategies is to reflect on its "Intention versus Impact." Individuals and groups may have good intentions and mean well but can still create instances, situations and environments of harm. Let's explore some ineffective strategies for starting anti-racism dialogues.

Five steps to consider:

1. Do Nothing
Not using your power and voice to disrupt ongoing systems of oppression makes you complacent and builds into the workplace culture of taking no action.

2. Sidetrack the Conversation
It takes a lot of courage for others to share their experiences and stories. Resist the urge to relate to the stories of others by side-tracking the discussion to insert your own experiences or centralize the conversation.

3. Appease the Participants
Anti-racism work is deeply reflective and requires each of us to explore various parts of ourselves to understand how racism shows up in our thoughts, behaviors and actions. It will be uncomfortable, new and messy. Hesitate the urge to appease participants, especially those in dominant groups. Hold space for the discomfort and messiness, that is where all the transformation happens!

4. Terminate the Discussion
When issues or concerns around Anti-Racism are brought to the forefront, there may be responses to avoid or stop the conversation. Using your power to shut down the dialogue can be exclusionary and silence voices and experiences. Equity affirms individuals deserve space to be heard, valued and supported.

5. Become Defensive
Avoid becoming reactionary and taking issues personally instead of approaching conversations with an open mind and heart. Move through feelings of guilt, shame and anger into a place of inspired committed action and use your power and privileges to advocate for purposeful change, collective healing and an equitable future.

Don't underestimate the amount of effort and collective action that is required in creating safe dialogues around anti-racism. Avoid allowing the emotional labor of discussing, educating and explaining oppression to be held by only the African/Caribbean/Black, Indigenous and racialized staff and communities. When you are first engaging, it is best to seek professional support with someone that has the competency in holding and leading these conversations. Determine the ways that everyone, at all levels, can be a part of the learning process.

STEP 2) Developing and Prioritizing an Equity Budget

Why is a financial commitment to equity important?

A key part of moving EDI forward is developing an ongoing equity commitment from leaders and decision-makers. This requires intentionality, effort, and both human and financial resources to create transformative change.

The goal is to generate organizational commitment so that equity values are deeply ingrained in the agency's practices and culture. Instead of one-off equity initiatives or opportunities, a sustainable model is embedded in the long-term financial vision.

Building A Financial Vision means:

1. Actively investing financial and human resources in learning, development, support and action advancing EDI.

2. Strategic goals are reflected and incorporated into internal practices, policies, and culture.

3. Willingness to shift and disrupt conventional business practices in order to achieve better outcomes for diverse staff, volunteers, partners, especially Black, Indigenous and racialized communities.

When we consider changing the ways we do business, it means we inspect where power is truly held within the organization. Through our equity lens, we analyze where decisions are made, where resources are allocated and how salaries and hiring differ. We then contemplate how that power can be shifted and distributed equitably to those who are most affected by our decisions, programs and services.

What an equity budget needs to consider and include:

Budgets are a crucial component of all departments and operations, and are the driving force that enables the achievement of every agency's goals and mission. In many ways, EDI work is closely integrated with other core functions of an agency; like recruiting, training, professional advancement, and service delivery. Therefore, it's essential that EDI efforts be linked with the agency's overall budgeting process. This is a key step in building a more diverse and inclusive organization overall.

As you build and/or contribute to your annual budget, here are some things to consider in your EDI budget:

Dedicated Staff
Having dedicated staff position(s) that works with the board, and is a senior leader position in the agency whose responsibility it is to drive and measure equity. While equity is everyone's responsibility it has to sit with someone to pull all of the organizational efforts together to move this work forward sustainably.

Learning and Coaching
Professional support, tools and insight into integrating an anti-oppression lens into ongoing budget development.

Governance Review
Identify, examine and present recommendations to improve the competence and effectiveness of important organizational practices and structures.

Management Support
Integrating various ongoing professional development opportunities along with resources and support for management.

Environmental Scan
Gathering, and monitoring of the agency's environment, internal and external, to determine potential threats towards future planning.

Equity Audit
Identifies institutional practices that produce biased trends on how it impacts employees, agency and stakeholders.

Literature Review
Identifying peer reviewed, data driven, research-based literature related to governance and how this can effectively impact your governance structure.

Equity Framework
Integrating practices and policies that reflect the use of social justice frameworks.

Goals and Objectives for EDI Budgets:

Equity should be built into the foundation of any inclusive organization. Budgets reflect the goals, objectives and strategic plan of each organization, so it is important to be more intentional and transparent about EDI as part of the agency's budget and budgeting process.

Reflect on the following goals and objectives and how they can be integrated into your annual budget:

Make EDI a valuable priority and operating principle for the entire organization by embedding it in the budget process.

Promote widespread institutional change by making EDI programs a priority and a permanent line item in all budgets.

Encourage Senior Leaders and Managers to consult with EDI Leaders and engage in innovative, long-term planning by creating a permanent, reliable source of funding.

Assure that every department is actively participating in and contributing to the agency-wide strategic plan for enhancing EDI.

Create opportunities for collaboration and discussion between budget planners and EDI senior staff members.

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion should be included in all annual budget discussions, reviews and final decisions. This can be a space where the board, senior leaders and teams discuss both their progress and future needs in the annual budget to advance their equity work.

STEP 3) Understand the Scope of The Undertaking Through An Equity Audit

What is an Equity Audit?

Equity Assessments and Audits are designed for agencies regardless of where they are on their journey to becoming more inclusive and equitable.

"The **Equity Audit** functions as an equity, diversity, and inclusion assessment tool that illuminates an organization's current reality and provides strategic direction on the path forward. Equity Audit experts use this tool to analyze what an institution is already doing, what it is not yet doing, and recommend practical, strategic, and feasible next steps. The Equity Audit includes a comprehensive checklist of diversity actions and interviews and/or focus groups that reveal root challenges and opportunities." - Centre for Diversity & the Environment

Why is an Equity Audit used and how can it help?

An Equity Audit can be led by a consultant group, by internal senior staff or even by department leaders. It is used to review how inclusive a space or environment is; either on a macro level - looking organizationally or community wide- or on a micro level - reviewing a department or program.

It's important if you are looking to build equity programs across your organization to:

- Build a larger strategy looking at the entire program and how it connects to the larger organization.

- Bring an external consultant, as it creates anonymity and freedom from reprisal, if staff are concerned with sharing their authentic feelings.

Equity audits are a leadership tool that is used to collect critical data that guides the process of removing systemic and cultural barriers that deter full participation, access, and opportunity for racialized and historically marginalized clients, employees and stakeholders to receive equitable services and outcomes.

An Equity Audit can support organizations in the following ways:

- Through the Organizational Assessment you establish baseline information on various equity dimensions to begin their journey of becoming a more inclusive and racially equitable organization.

- Further understand organizational EDI work and provide lessons to guide agencies on their work.

- Help agencies identify priorities that can be articulated and detailed through an Organizational Equity Plan. An Organizational Equity Plan translates an organization's pledge to EDI into distinct and manageable goals and steps.

  Commit to continual assessments of their agency to create a process of ongoing evaluation of their EDI goals. Evaluating progress on an ongoing basis is critical for organizational change, to build on what is working while identifying what is impeding meaningful change.

Once you complete an Equity Audit, the results of this audit will inform the development of a plan that guides the organizational priorities to ensure issues identified are being corrected. Consider using the equity audit as a tool to help you further apply an equity lens to your agency's operations, practices, and culture as you look to further develop services, policies, and initiatives.

Using an Equity Audit methodology:

An equity audit is intended to bring insight into, discussion of, and a call to action to the systemic patterns of inequity within the agency and work environment.

Equity audits are tools that can support you in understanding the critical questions and areas to reflect on. You can find templates online or secure an EDI professional to support you in this process.

Once you complete conducting an equity audit in your agency, here is an overview on some of the important methodologies used to inform the three steps done internally:

Step 1: Root Cause Analysis
Focuses on a complete and thorough root cause analysis to understand the parts of the organization that are influencing the equitable outcomes. This step focuses on collecting stakeholder feedback through focus groups and interviews and carefully identifying the policies that frame the organization's practices. As an agency oversees the root cause analysis, it should engage their EDI working groups/task force in reflecting on the analyses and building a guideline for changing the components of the system that are causing inequalities.

Step 2: Diagnose and Build a Framework
Organizations should develop a clear vision in their DEI effort. Priority areas should include all aspects of your organization including accounting, HR policies, hiring, training, management, people management and service delivery.

Step 3: Reform and Monitor
As People Leaders initiate the changes outlined in their Equity Framework, they must implement research-based practices to address the inequities identified. Furthermore, leaders must monitor the extent to which changes in policy and practices are making their stakeholders feel the organization or service is a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive environment.

As People Leaders start the changes listed in their Equity Framework, they must apply research-based practices to deal with the inequalities identified. Additionally, leaders must monitor the extent to which changes in policy and practices are making their stakeholders feel the organization or service is a more diverse, fair, and inclusive workplace.

As People Leaders enact changes to policy and practice, it is critical to be invested in monitoring the impact of these changes within a continuous improvement framework. Therefore, organizations should ensure they are continuously analyzing the results of implementation and collecting annual data to ensure ongoing improvement.

STEP 4) Building Culturally Responsive Supports for Staff

Using an Equity Lens to understand the unique forms of oppression/barriers/gaps your staff and clients experience and engaging in brainstorming/action planning to develop solutions to address these issues:

Environmental scans and Equity Audits are tools that provide important insight to the inner workings of your agency and how it may fuel oppression and racism. This knowledge and data should be used to engage all levels of your agency, departments and stakeholders into taking actionable steps to changing systems while also supporting staff who may have been and continue to be harmed.

Here are three key tips to engage and support your staff:

1 Prioritize Relationship Building
Develop opportunities outside of formal training and meetings to connect with team, staff or client members. Showing genuine interest in supporting Black, Indigenous and racialized communities, is key to building long term trust.

2 Fostering Caucus or Affinity groups
Racialized and non-racialized people experience race and racism differently. Although an equity lens works to transform interactions, institutions, and systems, through collective efforts, we have both shared and separate work to do.
- For example, for racialized folks, an affinity group can be a safe(r) space to work with peers through experiences of overt, unintentional, and internalized racism, to engage in healing work, and to collaborate around strategies for liberation.

- Critical race theory tells us that the construct of "whiteness" also refers to a political or socio-economic system where white people enjoy structural advantages and rights that other racial groups do not, both on an individual and collective level.

- For white people, an affinity group provides time and space to work intentionally on understanding and critically analyzing dominant culture and the ways in which 'whiteness' has benefitted from systems that privilege whiteness as the social norm. It fosters space for reflection around the ways white people might be intentionally or unintentionally perpetuating harm to Black, Indigenous and racialized communities. Affinity space puts the responsibility on white people to teach and learn from each other, rather than relying on Black, Indigenous and racialized communities to teach them, and it allows for non-judgmental processing without causing harm to them.

- Gathering the outcomes of affinity group discussions creates a space for the larger organization to come together, in their respective roles, to look at how to move this work forward and engage in honest reflective dialogue.

3 Open Door/Virtual Door Policy
Creating an inclusive organizational culture is about ensuring that you are available to support others through change. Communicate your availability to listen and connect with staff, and your openness to welcoming questions, suggestions, complaints and/or space to discuss challenges. As programs adapt to online and hybrid models, ensure opportunities are created to support digital and remote teams in various ways that value anonymity, relationship building, foster meaningful dialogues and support.

Equitable Accountability:

Creating space for change requires us to be honest and open around the issues Black, Indigenous and racialized communities and staff are facing, and work towards dismantling these harmful systems.

When we do not have an accountable relationship with individuals and communities who are most harmed by racism and inequities, we leave some communities behind and maintain the dominance that perpetuates this harm in the first place.

These basic principles of accountability should be integrated into your initiatives and be applied to the work you do with community partners, clients, stakeholders and staff.

Four Basic Principles of Accountability:

Transparency: Ensure all staff are clear about the organization and department goals, desires, intentions, organizational structure, rationale for decision-making, and weaknesses. The goal is to be as open as possible about the situation and organizational capacity, in order to build a meaningful relationship.

Engagement: People Leaders should actively engage with people about the decisions that affect them. The goal is to incorporate community voices and priorities into all levels of decision-making on an ongoing basis before strategies and solutions are developed and implemented.

Feedback Loop: Intentionally and constantly responding to feedback and using this feedback to continuously improve. Although reflection and deliberation occur after participation, once it has begun the goal is to maintain continuous dialogue throughout the process.

Receptiveness: The ability to be agile, adapt and adjust as issues are raised from staff and community through the ongoing feedback loop process. When concerns and challenges arise, it is critical to reaffirm your commitment by valuing expressed issues and demonstrating active allyship.

Sample Strategies for Advancing Organizational Culture:

Unpacking and understanding the profound power and effects of white dominant culture, racism and inequities, is a life-long journey. For organizations committed to embodying EDI, it must be rooted in acknowledging the importance of creating an environment where Black, Indigenous and racialized communities and all staff, volunteers, clients, and partners can bring their full identities and best selves to the work environment.

Here are some examples of sample strategies for advancing organizational culture:

Goal: Increasing awareness and commitment to race equity

From Exclusionary:

- Identify the current exclusionary practices that permeate in your work culture.

- Collect data on how these exclusions impact marginalized groups.

- Identify key opportunities for change to resist and transform organizational culture.

- People Leaders continuously reinforce their commitment to creating a safe and inclusive workplace environment and policies.

To Inclusionary:

- Develop a race equity team/committee with differing roles and identity groups represented. Value this contribution and incorporate it into their regular workload to allow full participation.

- Create space for conversation about race through retreats, training, and dialogue.

- Conduct an audit with internal and external stakeholders to gather data about the organizational culture by analyzing recruitment and retention of racialized staff, grievances, complaints, client data, etc. in ways that inform the development of new equitable policies.

Goal: Building internal capacity

From Compliance:

- Continue to collect and analyze data.

- Develop a long-term and sustainable equity & inclusion plan.

- Continue training of leadership and staff.

- Openly communicate clear expectations for quality of experience for all clients and staff across diverse identity groups.

- Amend performance system to measure current and developing race equity practices.

- Carry out an effort to begin increasing the capacity of all leaders and staff to apply a race equity lens.

To Affirming:

- Leaders regularly review agency wide data on recruitment, hiring, job retention, development and promotions.

- Conduct informative sessions with the board and staff to capture stakeholder feedback and analyze data from the audits.

- Mobilize a race equity team to work with leadership to confront priority issues identified in the audit.

- Create space for affinity group learning and connection. Train all staff on how to incorporate equity and inclusion into their day-to-day activities.

Goal: Infuse equity and inclusion in everything we do

From Redefining:

- New race equity norms are communicated widely.

- Modify performance systems, on-boarding, and training to highlight key skills and abilities that support the new organizational standards.

- Regular analysis and re-modification of policies, practices and procedures to make sure that a "race equity lens" is actively working at all planning and decision-making processes, especially recruitment, hiring and service delivery.

- Enhance community outreach efforts and partnership initiatives to build accountability to communities most affected by the work of the organization.

To Equitable and Inclusive:

- Enforce continuous improvement strategies and apply continuous and ongoing audits and reviews.

  Revise policies, practices and norms as needed.

- Initiate sectoral efforts to share good practices, increase inclusion in other organizations and community partners.

- Stay current on efforts of peer organizations

- Continue to influence all recruiting efforts of leaders, managers, and staff to ensure they demonstrate commitment and success in creating and maintaining an inclusive workplace.

Collaboration through a Diversity Lens:

A culture of EDI, rooted in belonging, fosters genuine trust and authentic employee engagement in decision-making processes.

This makes them active agents of change by contributing ongoing information, resources and tools that strengthen the decision-making process in the agency. This results in more effective planning, development and execution of strategies and services.

Here are ten motive forces that "build the business case" for working with diversity in a meaningful way:

1. Enhanced innovation, creativity, and problem-solving capacity.

2. Stronger collaborative modes of working.

3. Wider access to clients, funders, investors and stakeholders.

4. Responsiveness to changing workforce demographics.

5. Better retention of high-quality staff.

6. Enhanced operational effectiveness.

7. Promotion of social justice and equity.

8. Responsiveness to organizational mandates and directives.

9. Superior performance and industry reputation.

10. Enhanced services delivery to diverse clients

Tips to manage collaborations with teams, partners, and stakeholders through a diversity lens. Review the ways that leaders can maximize diversity in collaborations:

1. Ensure that dominant groups or cultures do not overpower less-dominant individuals or groups. Equity ensures that power is shared and collaborative at all levels.

2. Encourage and facilitate group interaction and avoid "settling" into subgroups of like or similar individuals. Develop collaborative bridges between diverse groups with different interests while fostering common ality, empathy and respect.

3. Foster a shared value in diversity and distribute tools to leverage it within all areas of your organization.

4. Provide ongoing coaching and mentorship so that all team members can embody an equitable work approach. Give and receive performance feedback comfortably and openly.

5. Address performance concerns; separate performance issues from diversity issues. Be sensitive to diversity issues, but don't justify poor performance due to lack of cultural competency.

6. Be conscious of your own biases and discuss them openly. Welcome diverse approaches by learning from peers and team members. Explore different approaches to solving problems and achieving work goals.

Engage culturally relevant experts, models and techniques:

As organizations look to align their strategic planning to provincial and federal goals around anti-racism, they recognize the importance of being accountable to communities and stakeholders about their commitment to EDI.

Every organization has its own journey, and some may require the professional support of an EDI Expert. If you're thinking about hiring an EDI leader and/or culturally relevant experts, ask yourself these questions first:

Who will the person report to and where will the role "sit" in the organization?

What specific challenges is the role accountable for solving?

How will the role be supported in solving those challenges? Think in terms of budget, decision authority, and cross-functional work.

What blockers have stopped you from achieving this end in the past, and have you addressed the ones you can while documenting what you can't (and why you can't right now)? Think in terms of knowledge, buy-in, resourcing, and championship.

What data, resources, buy-in, or other factors are already in place to set up the new hire for success?

After reflecting on these questions, if you, or your organization, don't have clear answers, it is likely you are not quite ready to meaningfully engage and hire an external EDI leader just yet. If your broad reaction is to hire someone to figure these answers out for you, then you may want to hire external consultants to support you on your journey and build your organizational capacity to effectively engage in transformative and impactful EDI work.

Remember that engaging in education and professional guidance is not the final answer to achieving equity. Achieving equity is a generational mission, so be clear around what an equity consultant can provide and how it will support your agency in your ongoing journey:

- **Transparent Feedback:** When someone's not on your payroll, they can be more direct and honest with you. Oftentimes, many in-house diversity leads find it challenging to speak on particularly difficult issues because they fear reprisal. Consultants are likely to capture more honest feedback from employees, since there's less fear that speaking up will cost them their employment.

- **Fresh Viewpoint:** External consultants can take a bird's eye view of your organization, help you identify your assumptions, and give you an honest scope of what is required to start making inclusive changes. Their insight can give you increased awareness on the issue.

- **Internal Agency Preparation:** EDI consultants can support the set up and successful integration of a competent EDI leader hire. Some EDI consultants even offer EDI leader recruitment services, which means they can help you source the right person to take over from the foundation they worked with you to build.

- **Identifying Inclusive Infrastructures:** Like any business initiative, you will require management structures, data collection, and feedback loops for EDI work to be successful. Consultants can help you build scalable infrastructure, so an in-house leader is set up for success.

STEP 5) Rebuilding Trust How Will You Connect With Staff, Clients and Community

Building a Culture of Accountability:

When you foster a culture of accountability, it inspires staff to develop solutionis actively and collaboratively. When things don't go as intended, an accountable workplace culture helps foster ongoing opportunities for learning, growth and improvement.

Oftentimes we are working in environments that have already caused harm to Black, Indigenous and racialized communities, so a key action step to accountability is to take the steps to also repair the harm.

"Trust takes years to build, seconds to break, and forever to repair." – Dhar Mann

There are three types of accountabilities that are essential to this work:

- **#1: Self-Accountability,** the practice of taking responsibility for your actions and the consequences of those actions. Individual members of a team must recognize their critical role in building a work culture devoted to EDI and belonging. This recognition begins with taking responsibility and valuing their unique and necessary contributions to fostering an equitable work culture.

- **#2: Mutual Accountability,** which is 'based on defining a shared agenda for change, rather than using a top-down policing model rooted in punishment.' Fostering mutual accountability challenges teams to be responsible for their behavior and to move beyond the tendency to react too strongly to criticism. It focuses on the effects of their behavior instead of hiding behind their announced good intentions, and to work to repair the harm caused. It demands a commitment and a loyalty to putting relationships ahead of the need to be right or be seen as a "good person."

- **#3: Community Accountability,** is a process in which a community or a workplace works together to do the following:
    Foster safe and supportive spaces to those who have been harmed.

Create and assert values and practices that resist bias and discrimination, and encourage safety, support, and responsibility for behavior.

Develop lasting approaches to addressing violence and harm of community members while creating processes for them to be accountable for their actions and changed behavior.

Commit to the ongoing development of all members of the community and social culture, to change the conditions that support mistreatment.

Principles to rebuilding trust with diverse staff, clients and community:

Acknowledge the harm
Validate and don't justify the harm caused. Create spaces where communities can be heard, take their experiences seriously, demonstrate empathy and acknowledge it is real.

Establish a set of internal anti-racist norms
Model the ways that the organization can normalize anti-racist behavior and clearly outline the steps to take when someone is harmed.

Skilled facilitation
Create safe, non-judgmental and safe spaces where facilitated discussions can occur to support diverse staff in sharing experiences without repercussions.

Advocacy/Caucus groups
Support diverse identity groups in designing and delivering Advocacy and/or Caucus groups to develop culturally validating spaces of connection, support and healing

Create feedback loops
Develop tools, strategies and opportunities for staff to share feedback in non-judgmental and anonymous ways.

Practice generative conflict
Workplaces today tend to discourage conflict, but it is through conflict that we collectively create new solutions that no one has considered before and pushes us to create innovative change.

Here are some distinct qualities that benefit fostering safe, controlled and intentional Generative Conflict within team dialogues:

- It fosters space for passionate, audacious, and socially taboo dialogues

- It is contained to controlled dialogues where everyone clearly understands the goal of the discussion to produce innovative solutions to an identified issue

- It is understood to not be the 'norm', but a specific approach to allowing individuals to communicate freely in non-judgmental ways, often outside of the professional standard

If you're new to the idea of a culture of accountability, know it won't happen overnight. Along the way, this process will include many learning curves, staff changes or a transformed workflow. Remember, accountability doesn't have to wait until a formal performance review or staff meeting. Engage teams through ongoing and immediate feedback that does not only centre negative behaviors. Reward good behaviors as much as you provide negative feedback that acknowledges the valuable efforts of those advancing EDI.

Exploring Key Values of Building a Culture of Accountability:

Entering the early stages of change, it is critical to prepare staff members to engage productively in conversations about EDI and developing policies and practices that uproot racial inequity. But without a culture of accountability, any effort to prevent racial harm or disrupt oppression will fall short of repairing the harm and will deepen distrust and disconnection among staff.
The consequences of failing to create a culture of accountability are inescapable. The lack of accountability affects employee retention, peer relationships, and team performance. Organizations that fail to recognize the unique talents of Black, Indigenous and racialized employees and cultivate their trust, actually stifle creativity and innovation in the long term.

Key Values in Building a Culture of Accountability:

- **Understanding Social Location** - Fostering dialogues with dominant groups, and those at the most senior levels of the organization - starting to acknowledge and learning about the impact.

- **Learning and Unlearning** - Reflecting on what learning and unlearning looks like for the individual and larger organization, especially with those who have the most power.

- **Organizational Commitment** - Identifying the commitment of the organization as they are starting to learn about critical EDI issues and needs.

- **Resource Allocation** - show me your budget and I'll show you your priorities! How are all levels of the organization involved in budget processes and how clearly are EDI goals reflected departmentally and organization-wide?

- **Equity Audit** - Identifying institutional practices that produce biased trends that have a negative impact on employees, the organization and its stakeholders.

- **Building an Action Plan** - Developing strategies for sustainable ongoing commitment within 5–10-year strategic planning.

When racial harm happens in the workplace, it is not just about the individuals involved—it affects the entire workplace and community. Whether the harm takes the form of microaggressions, biased decision-making, or abuse of power, the whole organization must come together to address this harm. This conversation also creates space to identify the conditions that made this harm possible and work to prevent it from happening again. While the ultimate goal is to prevent inequities, the journey toward becoming a fully diverse, equitable and inclusive organization requires building a culture deeply rooted in accountability.

As you continue your journey don't underestimate the time it will take to create change.

It's important to know that this work is messy, you will make mistakes, but the important principle is that you build the tools, processes and practices necessary towards repairing harm! As leaders, there is a responsibility towards being accountable, transparent and authentic in your journey towards becoming anti-racist leaders.

"In a racist society, it is not enough to be non-racist, we must be anti-racist."
-Angela Davis

"If you have come to help me you are wasting your time. But if you have come because your liberation is tied with mine, then let us work together."
-Lilla Watson

STR appreciates you taking the time to review and explore this Guidebook with an open mind and heart. If you have made it this far congratulations, for taking a big step towards educating yourself and starting/continuing your journey in equity, diversity and inclusion. Although this can be new information for some, people leaders and senior leaders within an organization are responsible for ensuring that the working environment is one that is safe for everyone to thrive by being inclusive in authentic and tangible ways for transformative outcomes.

A huge thank you to the People Leaders at the HSJCC. We're excited about the journey ahead as we all work to cultivate more diverse and inclusive workplaces together.

Continue to be powerful agents of change in your families, communities and organizations, to lay the bricks and foundation to building a better future for all Canadians.

STR CONSULTING
DIGGING BENEATH THE SURFACE

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STR consulting grounds its practices in research and training on anti-oppression and decolonizing frameworks that are trauma and survivor informed. STR works with clients, agencies and organizations that are seeking to build knowledge on equity, diversity and Inclusion as they intersect with gender, anti-racism and community development. Through interactive and engaging training STR equips participants with the tools and resources towards making effective, paradigm shifts. STR is highly skilled at working with multi-level and multi-sectoral stakeholders to inform changes that shift the outcomes in policy, strategic priorities and community responses.
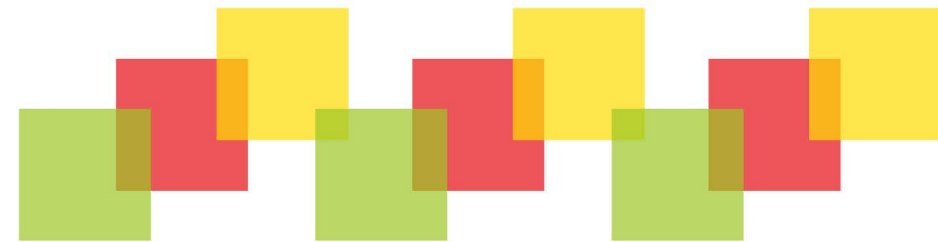
The Halton Human Service and Justice Coordinating Committee (Halton HSJCC) is a collaboration of service agencies in the Halton Region committed to justice for marginalized and criminalized people and is one of many collective impact teams throughout Ontario, which are supported by a Provincial secretariat.

For more information on Provincial work or Halton regional work, visit https://hsjcc.on.ca/