Strategic Framework for Organizations

Anti-Racism, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee for the Central Regional Planning Table

As prepared by

DiversiPro
The Diversity Professionals™

The purpose of this framework is to be a guiding document to address equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility needs in your organization. The framework consists of resources, concepts, initiatives, and ideas that may help you make this a priority in your organization in an action-oriented leader. Organizations are different by mandate, size, culture, operating style - as such these are recommendations that must be adapted to fit the needs of your organization.

Oppression often manifests as interpersonal interactions, discrimination through unjust structures, and from larger systems in society. Addressing equity, diversity, and inclusion in an organization means addressing micro, meso, and macro structures in your organization. Some actions may remove barriers, some actions may help historically marginalized communities advance themselves in an unjust playing field, and some may change structures for inclusion. This framework will help you think about how to approach this challenge through action. Inputs from the survey were referenced for creating this toolkit.

Anti-Racism, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee
for the Central Regional Planning Table

Equity, Diversity, Inclusion Committee of the Central Regional Planning Table:

The objectives of this Committee is to:
- Promote learning and lasting change across Central Region regarding anti-racism, diversity, equity, and inclusion for individuals, leaders, and broader communities.
- Promote safe spaces for open, honest, and sustained dialogues about anti-racism, diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- Promote actions that influence change in the near and long-term to combat anti-racism and promote diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- Promote use of evidence-based decision making to identify opportunities for action and areas of improvement.
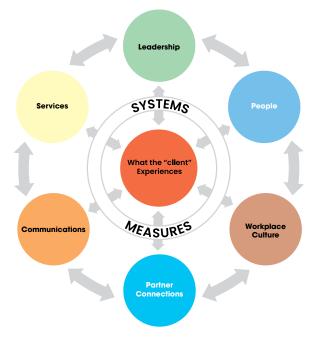
How to use this Framework

In equity, diversity, inclusion, the process is as important as the outcome. The credibility of this work depends on how anti-oppression values are practiced. While funding and budget is an internal conversation, we hope this framework brings some clarity for how to proceed next. First and foremost, identify what "stage" you are in your EDI efforts; for example, are you just starting, or hoping to enhance an existing EDI program. For an equitable process, consider the following:

- **Who** are you trying to impact?
  - Please note that "stakeholder" can often we used as a colonial term. In this Framework we are using it to describe various groups who are impacted by these decisions: service users, service providers, employees, and community members.

- **What** will you be prioritizing first?
  - After consulting service users, employees, leaders and board in addition to any other stakeholders, an organization can decide how to proceed to implement EDI initiatives. To do so they must consider:
    - Intersectionality: What are the needs of different communities? Which communities are represented in your service user and employee population? How are they saying they experience discrimination? What would they like you to address first? To be inclusive is to let service users define what inclusive impact means rather than a top-down understanding that we want to impose on everybody. Granted, organizationally the allocation of resources and the prioritization of needs may be decided internally, but without collecting data from service users, the impact of the organization's work will remain surface level.

- **When** can you have adequate resources and funding to implement this work?
  - Often there is an urgency to respond to the needs. The urgency is relevant as there has been advocacy for decades, however setting pace is important to ensure quality of the work. A strategy ideally would have yearly goals and expectations around what initiative or action will be prioritized when. This work is long term, and often needs to build on each other.

- **Why** is the direction you are choosing the correct one?
  - Be prepared to report back to your stakeholders – especially your service users and employees on the goals you had decided on together and its progress. Reporting back on progress and collecting data on implementation can also help the organization prioritize on next steps. Significant parts of EDI focus on data collection often leading to fatigue. Data collection and stakeholder consultation are very important parts of the EDI strategy creation, and evaluation process. However, this data collection process must be trauma informed and resources to act on the data is just as important as collecting and sharing the data.

What are common areas of impact within your organization?

This framework will also include The Six Cylinders™, which was developed by DiversiPro Inc. to help organizations manage and develop anti-racist, diversity, inclusion, and intercultural competence initiatives and strategies. The framework addresses six key functions of an organization – where "diversity" can be leveraged for greatest impact inside and outside the organization. Conversely, if these six areas are overlooked, the diversity initiative will have limited success or fail. The Framework is also a way to evaluate progress.

The Six Cylinders™ are:

1. **Leadership:** The decision-makers guiding the development and implementation of the organizational strategy, including senior leaders, senior managers, and board directors; and these leaders' knowledge, skills, commitment, communication, and actions in support of diversity, inclusiveness and dismantling institutional and systemic racism and oppression.

2. **Services:** The nature of the products and/or services that the organization provides and the extent to which products and services deliver high value to fulfil the needs of a diverse set of potential customers and clients. In an organization serving service users with developmental disability, this would be the care provided to service users and their families.

3. **People:** The diverse set of people, including employees, suppliers, sub-contractors, volunteers, supporters, leaders, and board directors, who provide the organization with its resource base of skills, abilities, knowledge, perspectives, and cultural competence; the formal systems and processes that make a diverse talent and knowledge base available to the organization; the full valuing and utilization of a diverse knowledge and talent base.

4. **Workplace Culture:** The social-emotional and physical environment of the workplace; as well as the formal structures and systems created to drive the informal processes that make all members feel included, supported, and accepted, including a fully accessible physical space.

5. **Partner Connections:** Relationships with the diverse groups that hold the organization accountable for its actions, including the diverse set of communities in its region of operations, as well as actual and potential funders, investors, suppliers, employees, customers, and advocacy groups in the organizational field; knowledge of each community, partnerships with the communities, investment in the communities, two-way influencing, in reach and out-reach.

6. **Communication**: The process by which the organization develops strategies that will appeal to a diverse set of customers, clients, donors, and/or other key financial supporters for purposes of sales, communications, business development, and fundraising.

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CYLINDER	TACTIC/INITIATIVE	MEASURABLE OUTCOME	RESPONSIBILITY	STAGE
Leadership	Trauma informed leadership training: A leader needs to be trauma informed to be able to motivate other leaders and employees, and to respond to conflict situations as needed to role model accountability to equity, diversity, and inclusion values.	Collect data on impact, and further questions.Collect data on number of discrimination complaints.	Leaders, managers, and board members	Recommended for beginner stage. Can be a stand-alone initiative or part of action plan/strategy.
Leadership	Inclusion metrics in the strategic plan and inclusion metrics for leaders to be evaluated at the end of each year. Metrics can be focused on any of the goals as is relevant to the program area or department.	Reporting on the progress of organizational goals bi-annually, each executive reporting to the CEO on progress on EDI in their portfolio, yearly spending output on EDI, satisfaction ratings of leaders and employees of how accountable the culture appears through a likert scale measurement.	Leaders, managers, and board members	Recommended after creation of plan/strategy to be included in plan/strategy.
Leadership	Support middle managers to have clear expectations on how to enact and implement the EDI strategy in their team.	Collect 360-degree feedback of employees on how psychologically safe a leader is.	Leaders, managers, and board members	Recommended for all stages.

Recommended to be part of action plan/strategy. |
| Leadership | Practice bottom-up management where input of service users and employees are incorporated into decisions. | Report back to employees and service users about how their input was implemented. | Everyone | Recommended for all stages.

Recommended to be part of action plan/strategy. |

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Leadership	Role-model allyship for other leaders. Ally-ship training is also recommended.	Number of discrimination complaints, and measures of psychological safety.	Everyone	Recommended for all stages. Recommended to be part of action plan/ strategy.
Leadership	A commitment to action by putting resources and funds at initiatives is important.	Track EDI budget for each department over the years.	Everyone	Recommended for all stages.
Leadership	Organization design: ensure that all responsibility of diversity and inclusion is not just on HR alone but is shared across departments with some employees or a department leading the work.	Track how many initiatives are completed on time, and how many are behind on deadlines.	Everyone	Recommended for all stages. Recommended to be part of action plan/ strategy.
Leadership	Use EDI metrics for promotion: make it clear that interest and commitment in EDI work is a necessary part of being a leader at your organization.	Track demographic data for leadership team. Often just tracking race, gender, LGBTQ2S+ identity and disability leads to tokenism, so also track whether people promoted have skills and interest to promote EDI work.	Employees	Recommended for all stages. Recommended to be part of action plan/ strategy.
Services	Provide language services to different populations who do not speak English.	Assess quality of care provided to service users through a survey.	Service users	Recommended once funding is secured.
Services	Use a health equity impact assessment tool when creating policies or projects to ensure social determinants of health are considered for communities when making decisions.	Assess quality of care provided to service users through a survey.	Service users	Recommended after action plan is created. Recommended for all stages, recommended to be part of action plan/ strategy.

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Services	When creating services use this lens to think of tailoring structures and systems to give more power to employees and service users.	Assess existence of structural barriers and ease of implementation through annual employee engagement survey for employees.	Employees and service users	Recommended at beginner state, recommended to be part of action plan/ strategy.
Services	Patient, family, and caregiver councils with clear responsibilities, a budget, and some advisory power helps have a regular mechanism to incorporate service user input.	Assess quality of care provided to service users through a survey.	Service users	Recommended after creation of plan. Recommended to be part of action plan/ strategy.
Services	Often historically excluded communities especially Black and Indigenous communities talk about being powerless subjects in research, and advocate for a more strengths-based partner role. Co-creating research initiatives, and projects is more inclusive.	Assess existence of structural barriers and ease of implementation through survey.	Service users	Recommended for all stages. Recommended to be part of action plan/ strategy.
Services	Asset based community development model: a model to empower service users to have as much agency and power in projects that will impact them as much as the organization.	Assess existence of structural barriers and ease of implementation through survey.	Service users	Recommended when considering setting up structure, or whenever resources available.

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CYLINDER	TACTIC/INITIATIVE	MEASURABLE OUTCOME	RESPONSIBILITY	STAGE
People	Conduct an intersectional analysis of how your policies may be posing structural barriers for BIPOC, LGBTQ2S+ and disability communities.	Assess existence of barriers through annual employee engagement survey.	Employees	Recommended once structure (committee, terms of reference, strategy, policy, accountability, metrics, and resourcing) has been clarified.
People	Include how the calls to action for your organization are going to be implemented in your strategic plan.	Assess existence of structural barriers and ease of implementation through annual employee engagement survey for employees.	Employees and service users	Recommended as part of strategy/ action plan.
People	Build long term relationships with Nations on whose land your organization is working on. Create a policy to address how you will be hiring, recruiting, and supporting Indigenous employees.	Assess existence of barriers through annual employee engagement survey. Use qualitative data for relationship building with communities to assess impact.	Employees and service users	Recommended for all stages. Recommended to be part of action plan/ strategy.
People	Empower your resource groups with staff time, budget, and decision-making powers to advocate for their community.	Assess effectiveness and satisfaction through annual employee engagement survey.	Employees	Recommended for all stages. Recommended to be part of action plan/ strategy.

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People	Continue conversations about the Black Lives Matter movement and incorporate actions into EDI strategy for how to empower and retain Black employees.	Assess effectiveness and satisfaction through annual employee engagement survey.	Everyone	Recommended for all stages. Recommended to be part of action plan/strategy.
People	Have a budget and clarity for what supports an employee can access during this time.	Assess effectiveness and satisfaction through annual feedback from transitioning employees.	Employees	Recommended as part of strategy/action plan.
People	Embed pronouns in email signatures and provide training on how people can correctly use they/them pronouns, and how to hold themselves accountable if they misgender someone.	Assess effectiveness and satisfaction through annual employee engagement survey.	Employees	Recommended for all stages.
People	Provide psychotherapy coverage in your benefits.	Assess effectiveness and satisfaction through annual employee engagement survey.	Employees	Recommended for all stages.
People	Provide equal benefits, support, and resources to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, two-spirit and non-binary employees.	Assess effectiveness and satisfaction through annual employee engagement survey.	Employees	Recommended for all stages. Recommended to be part of action plan/strategy.

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People	Accept relevant work experience from other countries where applicable, and applicants with bridging programs.	Collect demographic data on immigration for employees to ensure they reflect the service user population. It is ideal to do so for every historically excluded service user identity in your organization.	Employees	Recommended for all stages. Recommended to be part of action plan/ strategy.
People	Consider people of all sizes when planning or updating your physical building location to make your environment accessible to people of all sizes and for people with different disabilities.	Assess existence of barriers through annual employee engagement survey.	Employees and service users	Recommended for all stages. Recommended to be part of action plan/ strategy.
People	Conduct an audit of the difference in compensation for people in the same roles across race, gender, LGBTQ2S+ identities, immigration, and disabilities. Adjust compensation for equal pay if needed.	Assess effectiveness and satisfaction through annual employee engagement survey.	Employees and service users	Recommended for all stages. Recommended to be part of action plan/ strategy.
People	Create a plan to hire, retain, and support people with disabilities in your organization. Hire more people with disabilities who are service users.	Assess effectiveness through annual employee engagement survey.	Employees and service users	Recommended for all stages. Recommended to be part of action plan/ strategy.

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People	Always give historically excluded employees a choice in participation in EDI initiatives to avoid tokenism.	Assess effectiveness through annual employee engagement survey.	Employees	Recommended for all stages. Recommended to be part of action plan/ strategy.
People	Embed a decolonization lens across the organization.	Annual employee engagement survey – do racialized employees feel confident in providing culturally competent care for racialized service users?		Recommended for all stages. Recommended to be part of action plan/ strategy.
People	A yearly training plan including training on: Ally-ship, interrupting micro-aggressions, bystander intervention, psychological safety, Anti-Black Racism, Indigenous Inclusion, supporting racialized communities, LGBTQ2S+ inclusion, empowering transgender employees and service users, providing culturally competent care through a cultural humility lens, health equity, disability inclusion, unconscious bias. Training should be provided to leaders, board members, and employees.	Training often does not have much impact. Most people need contact with a topic seven or more times to be able to use it. Ensuring continued trainings over five years can have significant impact. Assess effectiveness through annual employee engagement survey. Mandating number of trainings for leaders, board members, and employees can be effective.	Employees	Recommended for all stages. Recommended to be part of action plan/ strategy.

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People	Create inclusive job descriptions by making your commitment to anti-oppression clear, and incorporate more inclusive requirements and language.	Track feedback from applicants who interview with the organization.	Applicants	Recommended for all stages. Recommended to be part of action plan/ strategy.
People	Culture add over culture fit: Consider while screening through applications to be hiring for people who are different and likely to get results differently. Moving away from the ideal of culture fit can help hire more employees from historically excluded communities.	Assess effectiveness through annual employee engagement survey.	Applicants	Recommended for the beginner stage.
People	Ensure that your application system is accessible to all employees with disabilities. This ensures that people of all socioeconomic backgrounds has equal access to be able to apply to your organization.	Ensure application system passes an accessibility audit.	Applicants	Recommended for all stages. Recommended to be part of action plan/ strategy. Recommended at a later stage when funding is secured.
People	Create consistently anti-oppression and EDI training with concepts and application ensuring all new employees are aware of EDI initiatives in the organization, and expectations from their role.	Assess effectiveness through annual employee engagement survey.	Employees	Recommended for all stages. Recommended to be part of action plan/ strategy.

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CYLINDER	TACTIC/INITIATIVE	MEASURABLE OUTCOME	RESPONSIBILITY	STAGE
People	Performance support: provide training to managers on how to coach and support BIPOC, LGBTQ2S+ and disability community employees to foster accountability and a culture of psychological safety. Managers need support to role-model an inclusive culture.	Assess effectiveness through annual employee engagement survey.	Leaders, managers	Recommended for all stages. Recommended to be part of action plan/strategy.
Workplace Culture	Create an accommodation policy with clear expectation and training for managers on how to support employees with disabilities.	Assess effectiveness through annual employee engagement survey.	Employees	Recommended for all stages. Recommended to be part of action plan/strategy.
Workplace Culture	Harassment and discrimination reporting process: ensure there is a clear process for discrimination reporting to a neutral credible body. Employees and service users should know what to expect going in to make a complaint. Act on recommendations from neutral credible ombudsperson.	Collect data from employees and service users are type of discrimination complaint, and after resolution of complaint to assess effectiveness. Publish this data to all stakeholders for transparency.	Everyone	Recommended for beginner stage. Recommended to be part of action plan/strategy.
Workplace Culture	360 degree reviews: provide opportunity for employees to give feedback to peers and manager, and to receive feedback for themselves in a psychologically safe manner.	Assess effectiveness through annual employee engagement survey.	Employees	Recommended after training on conflict resolution, allyship and cultural competence has been provided. Recommended to be part of action plan/strategy.

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Workplace Culture	Provide training for current and new employees on how to practice psychological safety to give and receive feedback.	Assess effectiveness through annual employee engagement survey.	Employees	Recommended for all stages.
Partner Connections	Create a program for BIPOC, LGBTQ2S+ and disabled employees to have mentors within the organization. Provide training, and coach employees for leadership roles.	Create a survey to assess impact, and ensure psychological safety for employees of this program.	Employees	Recommended for later stage once HR practices and policies are IDEA inclusive. Recommended to be part of action plan/ strategy.
Partner Connections	Create events and socials for employees, leaders, board, and service users to gather and have workshops or training sessions together.	Measure feedback in annual engagement survey to ask whether these events were inclusive, accessible and enhanced a sense of belonging.	Everyone	Recommended for all stages, Recommended to be part of action plan/ strategy.
Partner Connections	Allow service users or community members aligned with mission or vision to sit on board and influence decision making.	Track board composition and review Governance and Nomination processes.	Board member	Recommended for later stage once structure has been set up. Recommended to be part of action plan/ strategy.

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Communication	Include salaries on all job postings to ensure transparency.	Ensure this is mandatory for all positions including temporary ones.	Employees	Recommended for beginner stage. Recommended to be part of action plan/ strategy.
Communication	Ensure progress on initiatives including success, failures and barriers are communicated to all stakeholders.	Report quarterly, annually or bi-annually to report challenges, lessons learned and successes.	Employees	Recommended for all stages, a requirement for accountability.
Communication	Create a protocol outlining minimum expectations on consultation and reporting on progress for all strategies and initiatives in your organization within a reasonable time-frame.	Send survey to leaders post launch to see if this has resulted in higher collaboration, teamwork and efficiency.	Everyone	Recommended for the beginning. Recommended to be part of action plan/ strategy.
Communication	Invest in technology tools and use accessible features for social media, PDFs, Microsoft Word, PowerPoint, Excel, Closed Transcription for Zoom and TTY for service users to make your organization accessible.	Assess effectiveness through annual employee engagement survey and through a survey for service users.	Everyone	Recommended for all stages. Recommended to be part of action plan/ strategy.

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Resources

The following links can be used as additional resources to the Tactics/Initiatives recommended in the Framework.

Support middle managers to have clear expectations on how to enact and implement the EDI strategy in their team. Click Here

Organization design: Ensure that all responsibility of diversity and inclusion is not just on HR alone but is shared across departments with some employees or a department leading the work. Click Here

Language inclusion: Provide language services to different populations who do not speak English. Article #1 or Article #2

Health Equity Impact Assessment Tool: Use a health equity impact assessment tool when creating policies or projects to ensure social determinants of health are considered for communities when making decisions. Click Here

Inclusive design: when creating services, use this lens to think of tailoring structures and systems to give more power to employees and service users. Click Here

Patient or family council: Creating patient, family, and caregiver councils with clear responsibilities, a budget, and some advisory power helps have a regular mechanism to incorporate service user input. Click Here

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Co-creation in research: Often historically excluded communities, especially Black and Indigenous communities, talk about being powerless subjects in research, and advocate for a more strengths-based partner role. Co-creating research initiatives, and projects is more inclusive. Click Here

Asset-based community development model: A model to empower service users to have as much agency and power in projects that will impact them as much as the organization. Click Here

Indigenous calls to action: Include how the calls to action for your organization are going to be implemented in your strategic plan. Click Here

Indigenous inclusion policy: Build long term relationships with Nations on whose land your organization is working on. Click Here

Create a policy to address how you will be hiring, recruiting, and supporting Indigenous employees. Click Here

Black Lives Matter movement: Continue conversations about the BLM movement. Click Here

Incorporate actions into EDI strategy for how to empower and retain Black employees. Click Here

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About DiversiPro

DiversiPro is a Canadian Black-owned and led Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Anti-racism (IDEA) consulting firm with more than 20 years of hands-on experience advising over 500 clients across sectors. Our training programs and IDEA audits help clients lead and sustain a variety of organizational change, advancing IDEA. Our approach is systems-driven, developmental, evidence-based, learner-centric, and rooted in adult education principles. We build IDEA capabilities of leaders, teams, and individuals.

DiversiPro was contracted by ARDEI to collaborate and develop an Anti-Racism, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Framework.