Equity and Inclusion in Polarized Times

The photos and text in this document were co-created by participants in a facilitated Peer Action Conversation during the 2020 Minnesota Council of Nonprofits Annual Conference.

REASONS

- things are changing
- personally connected
- service to diverse populations
- better serving comm.
- lack of knowledge
- conflict arises
- D.E.I. talk – Action to follow?
- ~~for riding~~ building bridges
- Account-ability to funders

CHALLENGES

- money & resources
- structural inequities
- fear & self-interest
- dismantle "distrust"
- who gets to the table?
- businesses seeing why its important to change/grow/accept
- Staff/board "buy-in"
- reluctance for personal accountability
- White fragility
- perceived preeminence
- lack of understanding & impact it has
- fear of sounding ignorant
- white folks & their white connections

OPPORTUNITIES

- diff view points
- MN being "more" diverse? or we not acknowledging it.... so acknowledging it!
- workforce opportunities b/c of economy
- personal growth
- understanding diversity isn't only about race!
- not trying to be a "protector" or "white savior"
- partnerships to make folks feel safe & supported
- Not putting people into boxes! (BIAS)

Note 1 (green sticky)

How do we help our orgs. transition from questions of _equality_ to conversations about _equity_ + inclusion?

Note 1 (flip chart)

Fear prevents us from engaging
└ of perception (fear of not being/treating people equally)
└ individualization (resources)
work input ≠ outcome b/c of barriers

American idea of equality + equal opportunity

Given same opportunities, folks may not have same outcome b/c of inequity

Standardization is an ideal, but it leaves people out

Are we analyzing results w/ lens of equity + making improvements?

Note 2 (flip chart)

- Fear of expressing feelings/questions because may show ignorance
- Even if D&I advocate/professionalism, fear of sharing questions
- Sr. leadership needs to support (Leaders need to show vulnerability)
- How do you create "Brave Space"?
    - important to understand intention &
- How to train people to provide Safe/Brave space
- Acknowledge vulnerability & that we all have ignorances
- Have identified people who are able to be approached
- (Grace) - Agree to Disagree
- Sometimes people are doing it to check a box

Note 2 (green sticky)

How do we create a Safe Space for people to learn and understand diversity & inclusion?

Note 3 (green sticky)

How to foster EQUITY in the lives of our STAFF.

Note 3 (flip chart)

equity: cocreating, partnering to provide resources dismantling systems

equality: acknowledging that not everyone has same footing @ the start, fair start

HOW:
- Organizational mission
- Shared activities
- "doing" instead or in addition to messaging and discussions, incentivizing that
- finding motivation in the hearts of staff and connecting them w/ that motivation
- everyone experiences inequity, each of us need to own our piece of contributing to the system

- Advancing Equity requires persistent self-awareness, constant self-criticism, and regular self-examination - I.X. Kendi

- What are the resources?
  - IAT Test → test implicit bias
  - IDI Test → where you are intercultural spectrum
- 5 Steps from keynote speaker
- PBS program: The Bias Inside Us
  - ↳ Breaks it down
- Must have a willingness/open mind
- Must have Structural change + personal
- How do build a safe culture to be able to talk about personal bias?

Be willing to be wrong.
Don't! Until people have skills...
(It can blow up)
Start with bias / culture (white)
Start with self awareness: race
It will be messy —— if you
wait until people are ready,
you may keep pushing it back——
——————
Feedback about this session

We have to go to the groups and ask them
using connections you already have
choosing more welcoming locations
building trust + friendships
bring events / services to their turf
building relationships + trust takes time
utilizing allies to help make connections

Actions
- IDI test
- Continue to speak up
- Meet people at their level
- Sign up for MCN seminar on dismantling white fragility/culture
- Advance equity by actively acting against systems of oppression in which I am implicated
- Discuss with supervisors and leadership on how to educate team members about equity and inclusion
- Encourage young people to achieve their goals and to not give up
- Admit when wrong. Be open to change. Allow others to experience their journey in a safe/brave space.
- Don't be afraid to talk about difficult topics!
- Challenge my bias every day. Go beyond "voting democrat."
- Build community
- Find more places where it's okay to be vulnerable
- Speak with team about how we analyze the outcomes of the work we are doing and ensure we are actually reaching the people we say we want to. Make sure there's a plan for consistent outcome accountability.
- Partner with the allies we already have to engage more groups.
- Create brave spaces at work for tough conversations.
- Creating space for discussion of I&E at the office through anti-oppression activities.

Insights
- It's hard to get beyond surface-level when you have to constantly restart the conversation
- We will never feel comfortable to talk about bias so we must be willing to be uncomfortable
- Fear may be a motivation against taking brave steps to move toward inclusion and equity
- Help others be brave and do it with grace
- Messy discussions can move things forward
- Leaders need to be vulnerable
- Change is slow and does three steps forward and two steps back
- Graphics matter
- Standardization is often perceived as the "ideal," but it leaves people out because the "standard" usually privileges a specific group of people
- Finding resources and being open and aware of my own personal bias
- Meet people where they are (developmental model)
- Create circumstances or "brave spaces" that will allow growth to foster and change attitudes
- There is more to diversity than race
- We all have biases and ignorances
- We need to provide brave spaces but we cannot really provide safe spaces
- Defeating racism with racism solves nothing
- We need to physically go to the people we are wanting to engage
- Diversity includes more than just race
- Help more young people of color obtain higher wage jobs
- Resist tendency to revert to diversity=race
- It's frustrating that those that actually need D&I learnings don't participate in D&O work
- Fear comes in different ways/is experienced in different ways.