

Using Appreciative Inquiry to promote equity within systems

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Dr. Ebonyse Mead



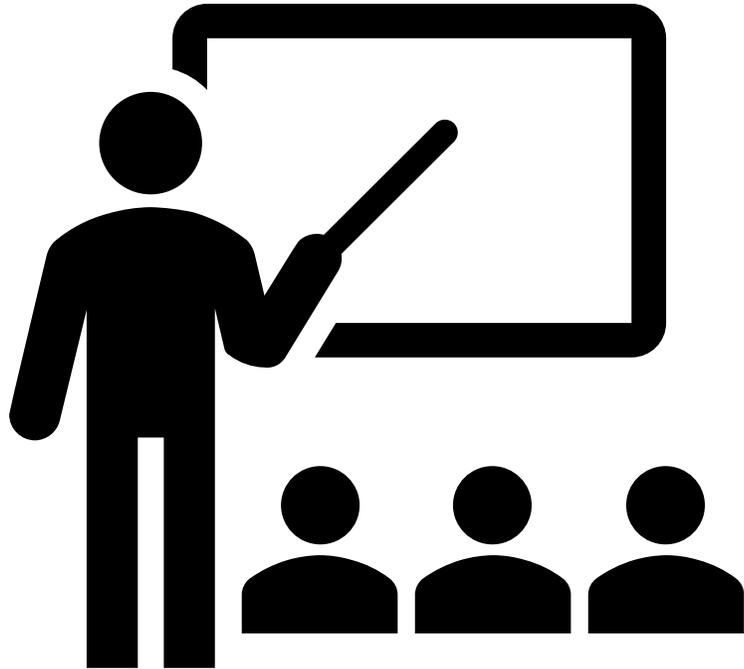


WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

- Mother of a 19-year-old son
- Collect African American Barbie dolls
- Love Shrimp & Grits & Sweet Iced Tea
- Favorite TV shows This Is Us, Black-ish, and Abbot Elementary



Participant Objectives



At the conclusion of this training, participants will be able to:

1. Define a system,
2. Describe the key components of systems level change, and
3. Develop greater self-awareness to better promote equity.
4. Develop a racial equity advocacy action plan.

Assumptions

We *all* believe that a student's color should not fate him or her to negative outcomes.

Discussing equity and race is uncomfortable.

Creating discomfort without providing effective strategies is not productive.

In discussing equity and taking steps, we will make mistakes.

Brave spaces to discuss, exchange, learn and be vulnerable

Speak your truth

Lean into the discomfort and lean into each other for support

Commit to non-closure

Assume positive intent while practicing compassionate accountability

Seek intentional learning

Establishing Our Group Norms

Defining Terms: Whiteness and Racism

Whiteness is viewed as the norm, the standard for universal human values by which all others are viewed and to which they are compared (Roediger, 1991).

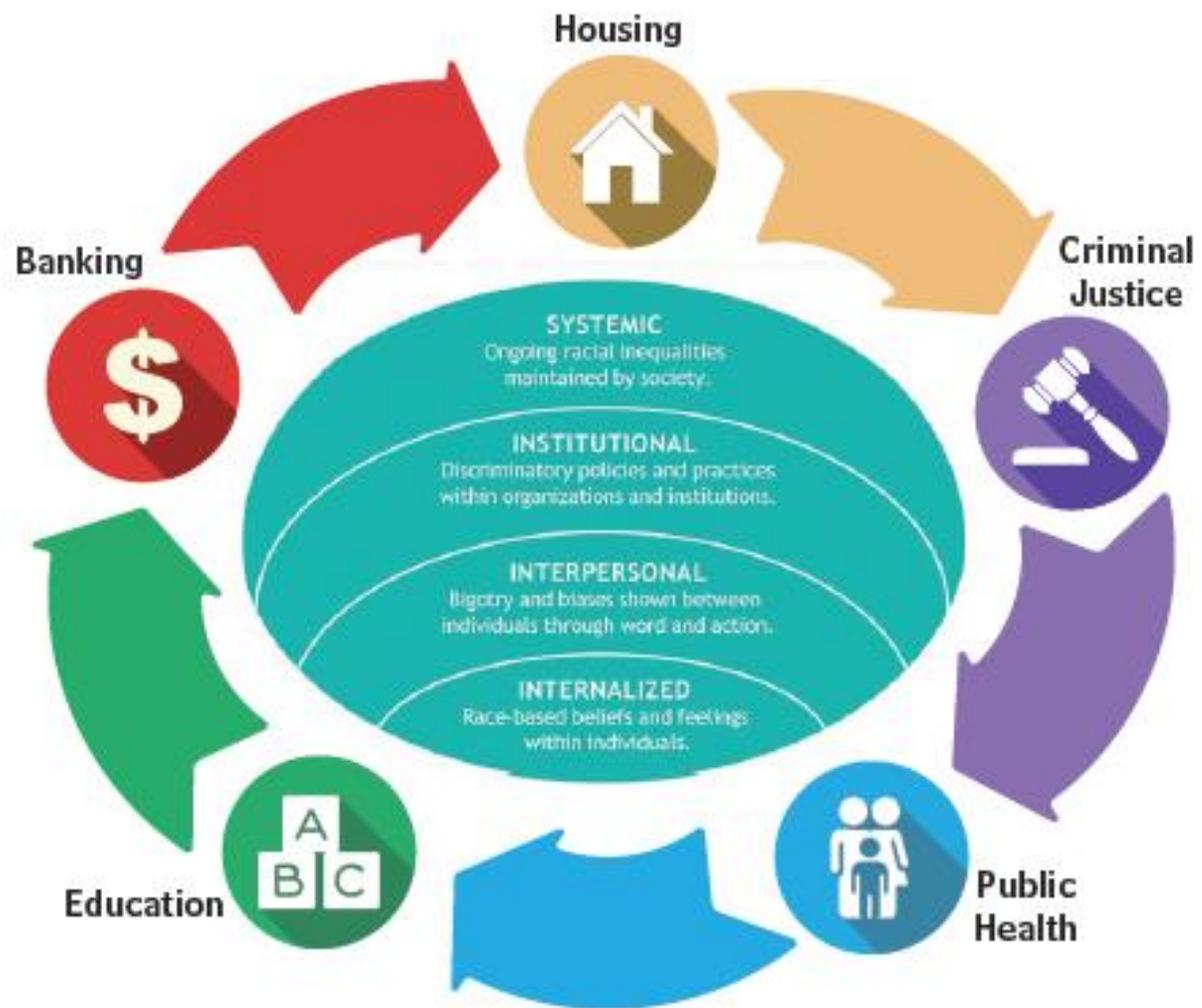
Is based on the concept of whiteness. It is a system of domination and exploitation based on the idea of race. Racism involves the subordination of people of color by whites in power (York, 2016).

Educational System Rooted in Whiteness

The American educational system is rooted in White European-American culture (York, 2016) that values individualism, meritocracy, and personal freedom and concepts of diversity, equity, and inclusion are often lacking in the educational system, including early childhood education.

White European American dominant culture, thus influence curriculum, instruction, policies, and practices, and the overall learning environment (Derman-Sparks, 2015).





Four levels of racism embedded within institutions

RACISM

=

PREJUDICE

+

POWER

Equality

vs.

Equity



Racial Disparities in Education

- Children of color, particularly Black children often experience disproportionate rates of suspension and expulsion
- Lack access to high quality instruction
- Over representation in special education & under representation in gifted and talented programs

A Focus on Multicultural Education

- Multicultural education: (1) affirms issues of identity and differences; and (2) assertively confronts issues of power and privilege in society by challenging racism, biases, and inequitable structures, policies, and practices of schools and society (Nieto & Bode, 2012).
- ***Problems with how Multi-Cultural Education has evolved:***
 - Some efforts of multicultural education have focused more on celebrating differences and affirming identity, and less attention on challenging racism and inequitable structures, policies, and practices.
 - Ideas of diversity, inclusion, equality, cultural competence, anti-bias, and culturally relevant teaching flourished.
 - Conversations about the achievement gap persist in education 30 plus year later.

Racism in Schools

Overt Racism: not acceptable,
clearly visible

Hate crimes, racist jokes,
hate speech

Covert Racism:
acceptable, hidden,
not visible

School funding formulas, colorblindness, myth of meritocracy, implicit racial bias, achievement gap, all White authors, low expectations, tracking, zero tolerance policy, disproportionate suspensions/expulsion, cultural deficit model, anti-blackness, Eurocentric curriculum, hairstyle/dress codes, model minority, overrepresentation in special education, underrepresentation in gifted/ talented programs, poor treatment of families of color, microaggression, cradle-to-prison pipeline

What is anti-racist education?



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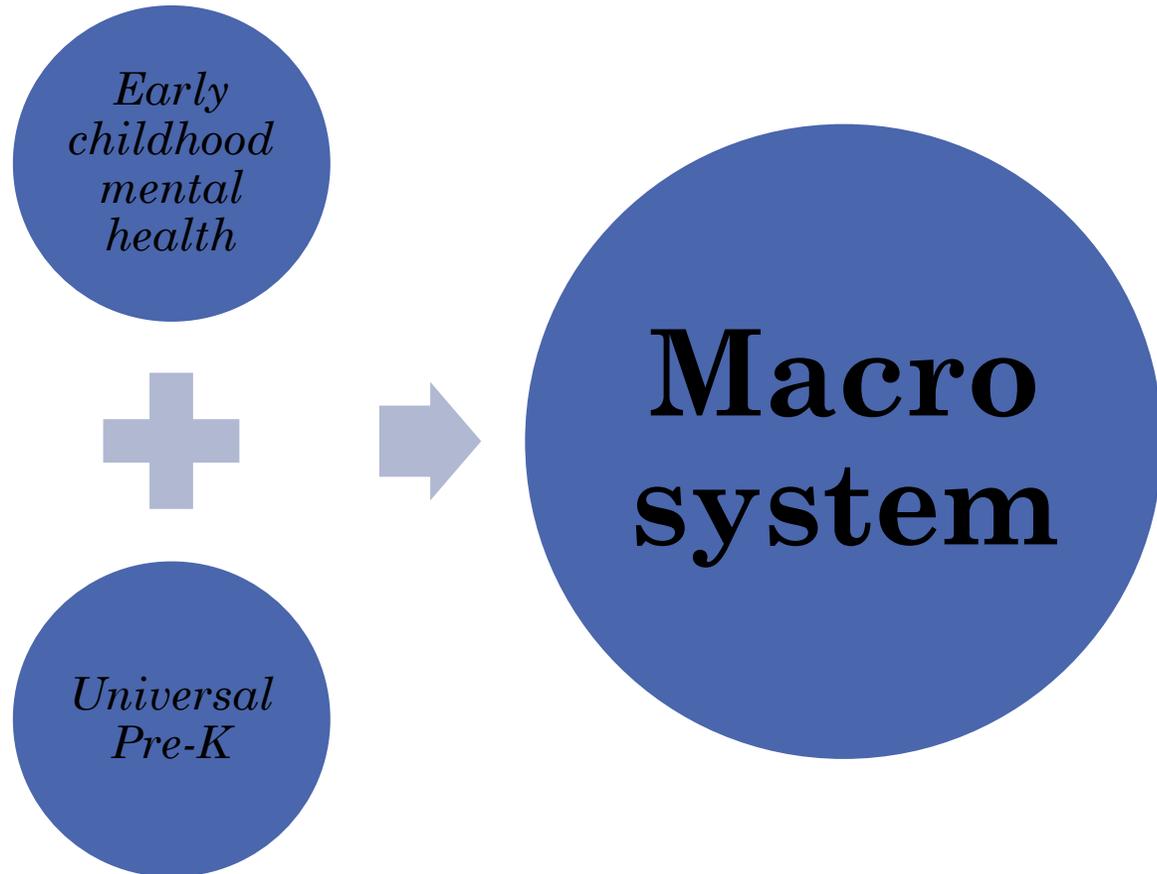
- A systematic, explicit and proactive approach to recognizing, resisting, and reifying racial injustice and oppression in schools and society (www.buffetinstitutenebraska.edu).

We need
Anti-racist
educators
and
practitioners
to change
systems

Anti-racist educators examine historical roots and the contemporary manifestations of racial discrimination and the implications it has on student's academic success.

They invite students to discuss race and racism in developmentally appropriate ways.

What is a system?



A system is a group of interacting organizations or programs that influence how services are provided (Merriam Webster, 2016)

How do systems work?

Macro System

- Includes cultural norms, values, customs, laws, and policies
- Includes the overall ideology that drives the direct services that children and families receive

Micro Systems

- Layer closest to children and families
- Distinct from one another with their own issues and concerns
- None of them operate in isolation
- Directly influenced by the prevailing ideology, policies, and values of the larger macrosystem

Systems Level Change

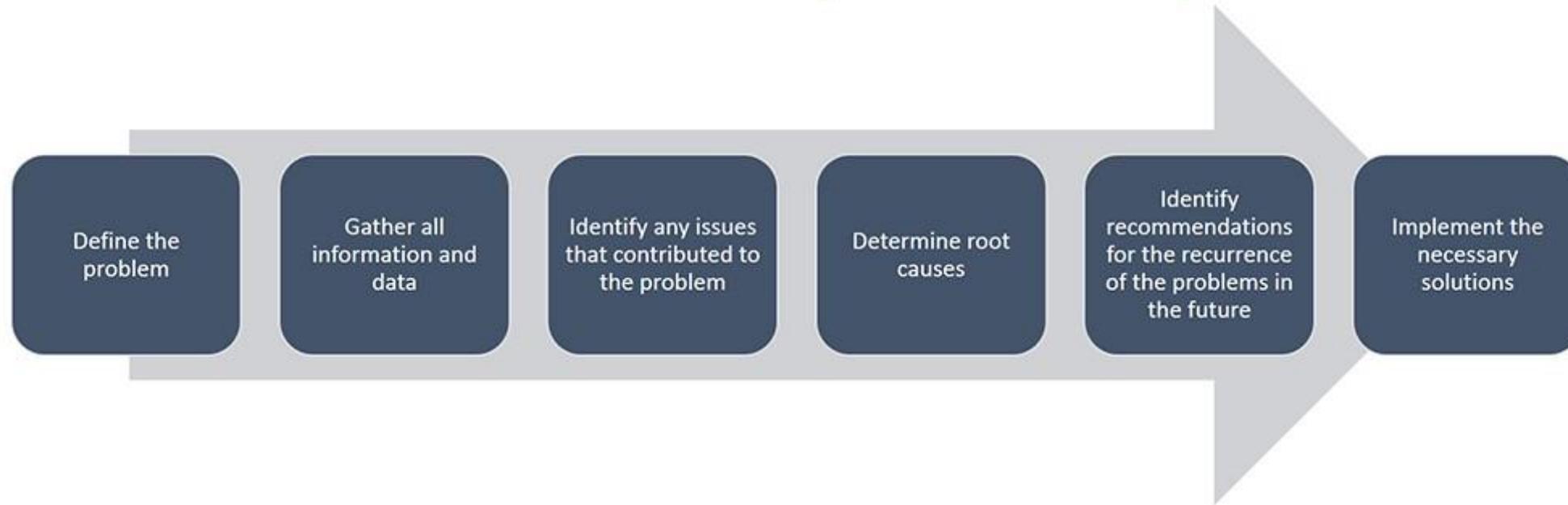
Focused on addressing the root causes of social problems

An intentional process that is designed to fundamentally alter the components and structures that perpetuate inequities

Shift the circumstances that are holding a problem in place (e.g., policies, practices)

Alter the power dynamics that maintain the current barriers and structures

Root Cause Analysis Basic Steps



The Pair of ACEs

Adverse Childhood Experiences

Maternal
Depression

Physical &
Emotional Neglect

Emotional &
Sexual Abuse

Divorce

Substance
Abuse

Mental Illness

Domestic Violence

Homelessness

Incarceration

Adverse Community Environments

Poverty

Violence

Discrimination

Poor Housing
Quality &
Affordability

Community
Disruption

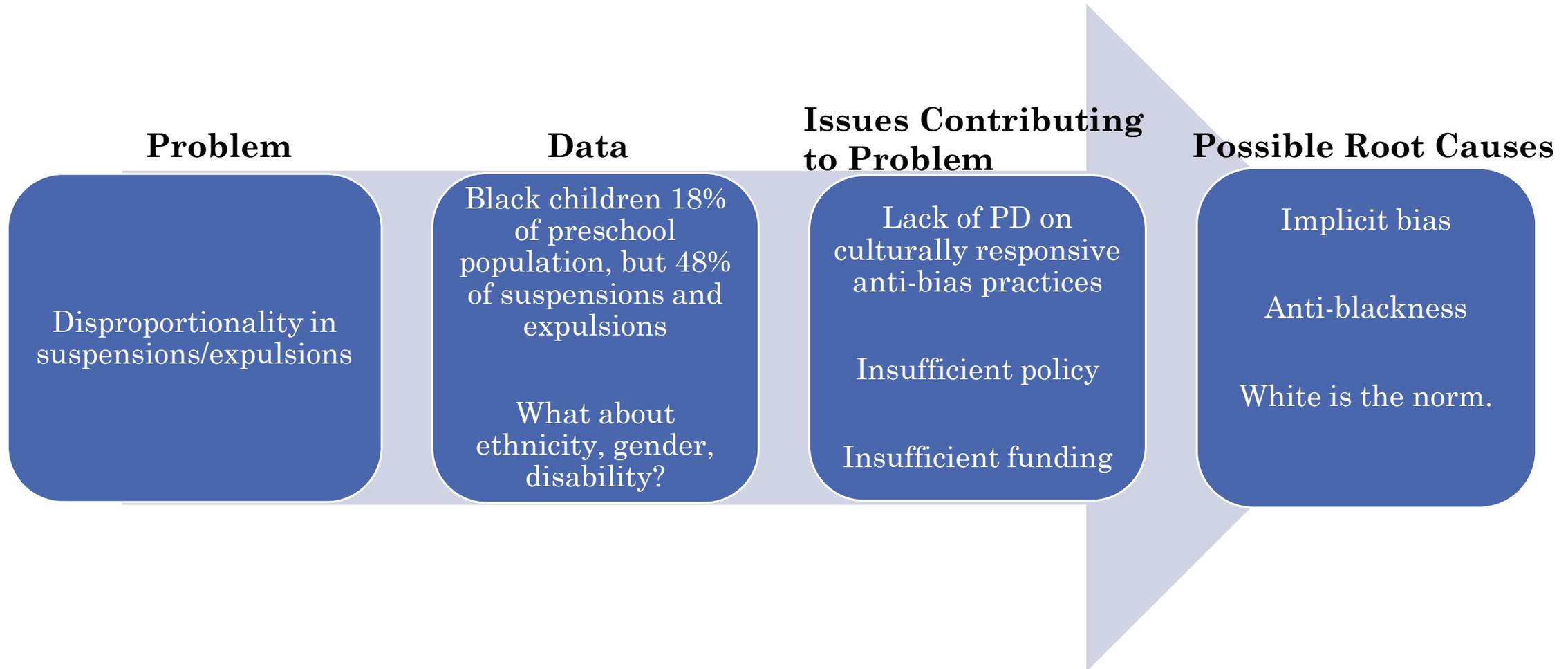
Lack of Opportunity, Economic
Mobility & Social Capital



Determining Root Causes

What might be the root causes for the disparities in education?

Example: Root Cause Analysis



Barriers to Systems Change

The status quo of entrenched systems

Power and control

Self-interest (e.g., individuals, communities, system leaders, funding organizations)

Siloed systems and services

‘Check the box’ mentality

“White saviorism,
”“White guilt,” and
“White complacency”

Promoting Buy-In from System Leaders

- Resistance to change comes from within systems and communities.
- Generating a paradigm shift about why policy and practice changes are needed to achieve educational equity
- Relationship building and repeated open, honest conversations about the ‘why’
- Get creative about how to engage system leaders and the larger community

Engaging Key Stakeholders

Counter to what has been traditionally done

Empower communities and shift control from the system back into the community

Individuals closest to the problem are actively involved in addressing the problem

Those in positions of power must give up some control and voice in determining the path forward.

Identifying and Engaging Key Stakeholders

Diversity

Includes, but is not limited to race, ethnicity, nationality, religion, socioeconomic status, veteran status, education, marital status, language, age, gender, gender expression, gender identity, sexual orientation, mental or physical ability, genetic information, and learning styles.

Inclusion

Authentically bringing traditionally excluded individuals and/or groups into processes, activities, and decision/policy-making in a way that shares power and ensures equal access to opportunities and resources

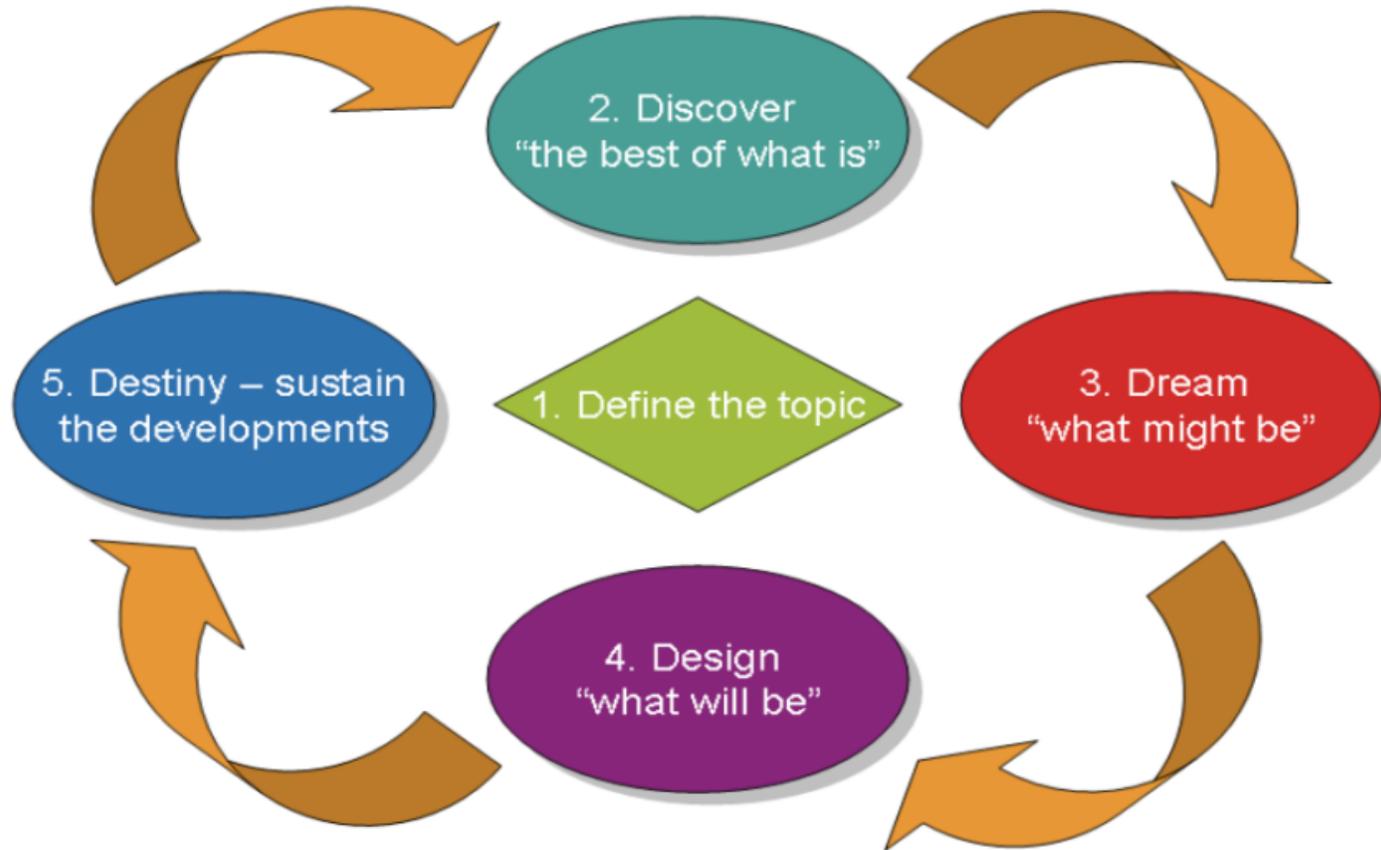
Equity

The guarantee of holistic treatment, access, opportunity, and advancement for all while striving to identify and eliminate barriers that have prevented the full participation of any group

- A strategic planning tool that focuses a state on its current strengths and vision of the future for developing its strategic goals. It can be used as a strategic framework based on appreciative inquiry (AI)
 - **Strengths:** what a state is doing well (e.g., assets, capabilities, accomplishments)
 - **Opportunities:** external circumstances that could improve services for young children and their families
 - **Aspirations:** what the organization can be; what the organization desires to be known for
 - **Results:** tangible, measurable items that will indicate when the goals and aspirations have been achieved

Using SOAR to Support Advocacy Efforts

5-D cycle of Appreciative Inquiry



Appreciative Inquiry



Aspire
2020

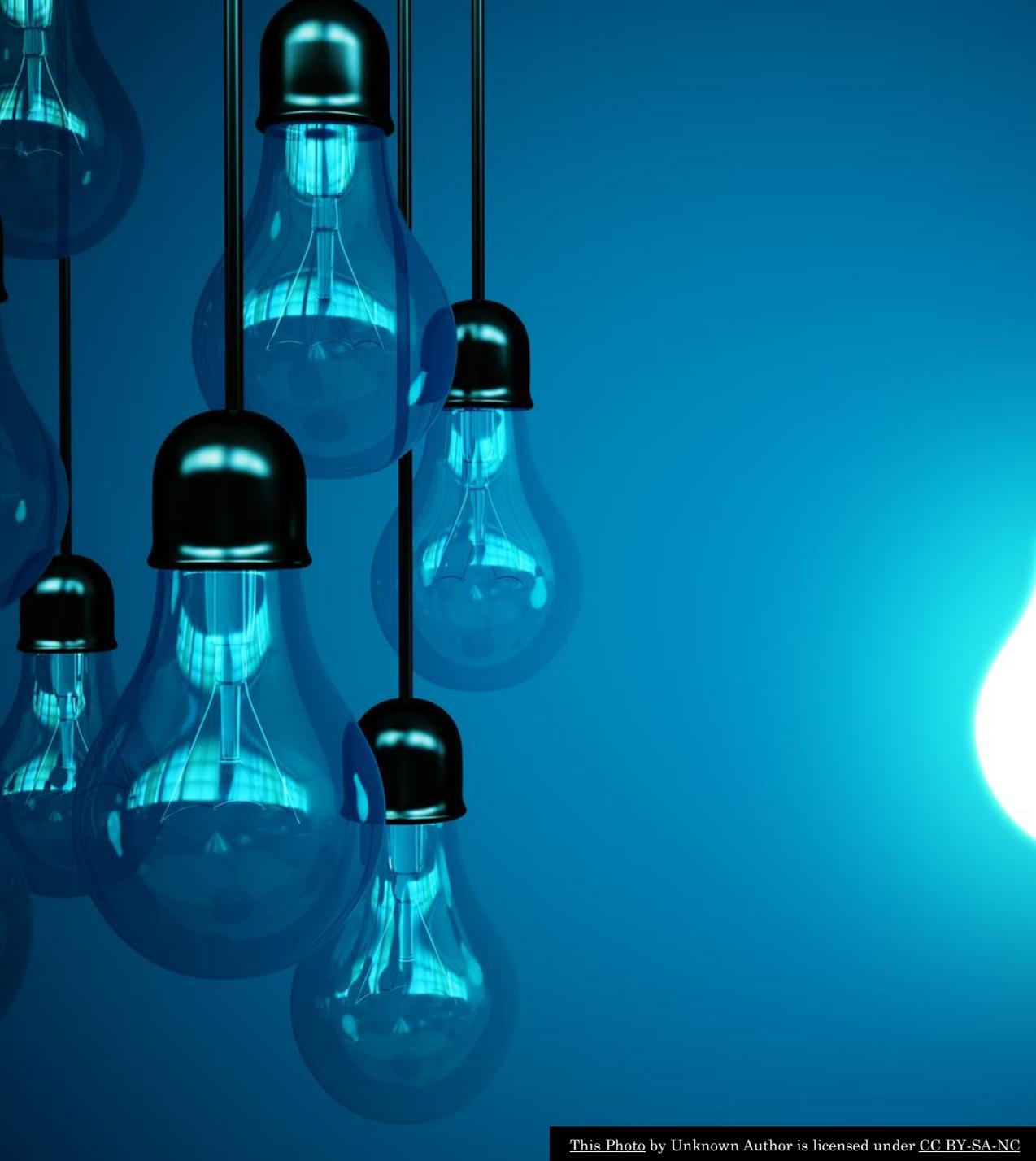


Define the topic of Inquiry

- What is the topic of Inquiry? It is important to define the overall focus of the inquiry (what the system wants more of).
- Definition is used to clarify the area of work to be considered.
- Definition defines the **project's purpose, content, and what needs to be achieved.**
- In this phase, the guiding question is, “What specific topic (area) in early childhood do we want to focus on together?”

Discover: Appreciate the best of ‘what is

- **Discovery** is based on a dialogue, as a way of finding ‘what works.
- In this phase participants explore “the best of what is,” by identifying the **organization’s strengths, best practices, and sources of excellence, vitality, and peak performance.**
- **Guiding Questions:**
 - What are you doing well as an organization? How do you know you are doing well?
 - What are the root causes of your success as an organization? What kind of environment contributes to that success?
 - What strengths can be identified? What strengths can you focus on to gain continued success? What strengths of your coworkers, colleagues, community members can you leverage to help the organization become or continue to be successful? What strengths from this experience could you develop further for continued positive outcomes?
 - How did relationships influence the outcome? How did communications affect the results?



Dream (opportunities and aspirations)

- In thinking about your state:
 - Discuss the ideal vision for promoting equity in early childhood
 - Identify equity-related efforts across state-level early childhood organizations
 - Reflect on opportunities, resources, and supports within the state that could promote equity-related work
 - Identify any threats that can be turned into opportunities

Dream: Imagining 'what could be'



- Imagine that you're exactly where you want to be as an organization, in three years time. What are the three biggest things you have accomplished between now and then?
 - What are some ways the organization has brought this to life?
 - What good things are the organization known for in the community? In the field of early childhood?
 - What makes the organization best?

Design

- In reflecting on the state's strengths, opportunities, and aspirations, reflect and discuss what is needed to get to the ideal vision for state equity-related efforts
- Place an emphasis on the state's current opportunities, resources, and supports
- Reflect on how to turn barriers into opportunities

Design: Determine what should be

- Design: brings together the stories from discovery with the imagination and creativity from dream.
- In the phase participants leverage the best of what is and their visions for the future to design high-impact strategies that move the organization creatively and decisively in the right direction.
- **Guiding questions:**
 - How can you build on your strengths as an organization?
 - What changes would you most like to see in your organization to support system change in early childhood?
 - What do you imagine your own role might be in helping to make this happen?
 - What would have to be in place to support your dreams for your organization's future to support system change?
 - What are the three most compelling opportunities for building your capacity to create system change which promise extraordinary results? What must you and your organization do to realize these results?



Destiny

Bring

Bring together stakeholders, system leaders, and other members of the advocacy team



Help

Help states construct short-, mid-, and long-term SMART goals



Identify

Identify the resources and supports needed to achieve these goals

Deliver/Destiny – Create ‘what will be’

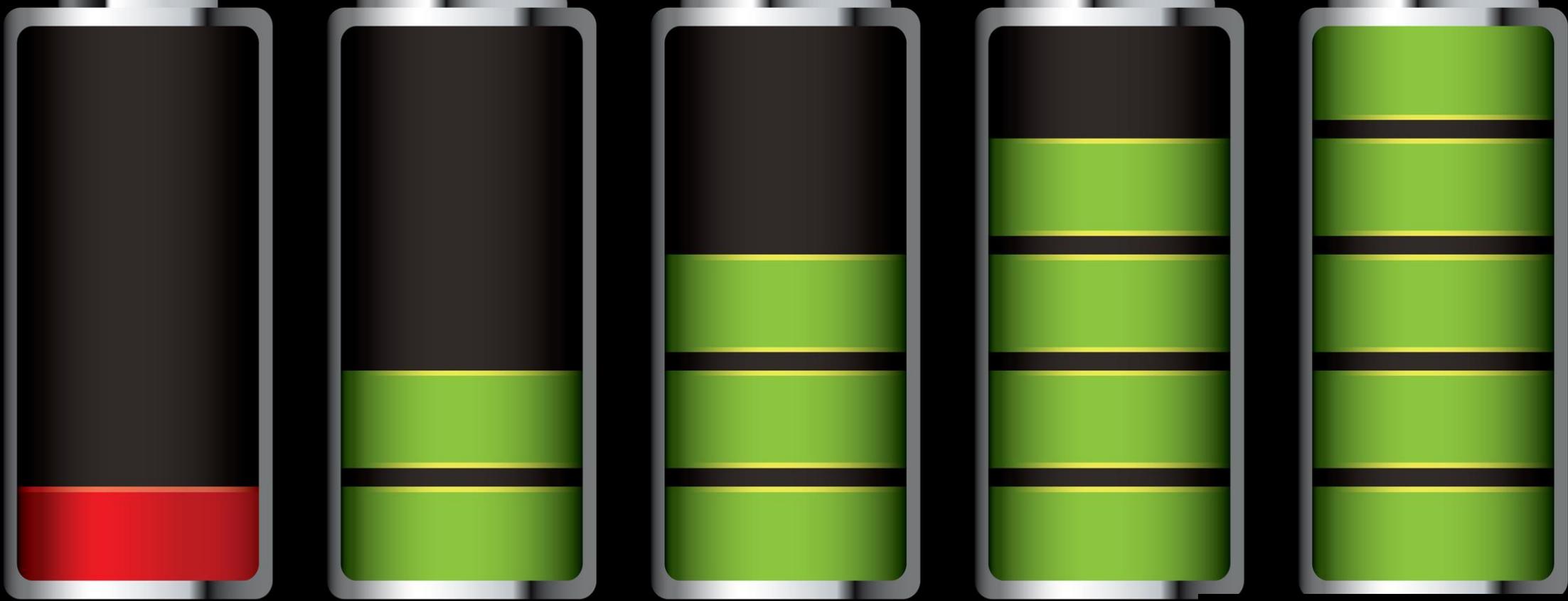
- Deliver/Destiny identifies how the design is delivered, and how it’s embedded into groups, communities and organizations.
- In this phrase participants put the strategies into action, revising as necessary.
- **Guiding Questions:**
- How would you design the organization to make your most noble aspirations and dreams for system change in early childhood come true?
- What decisions are your organization prepared to make as a group? What are your strategic performance indicators? How will you know you have made the transition successfully?
- How can your organization communicate these intentions? To whom? When? What Key achievements, initiatives, processes, products, services, relationships, are your organization prepared to be measured on? By Whom and When? What are the steps you need to take as an individual to contribute to the organization and where it’s headed?

Small Group Work

- In thinking about systems change, how might you promote equity within your sphere of influence:
 1. Identify and engage key stakeholders
 2. Engage in root cause analysis
 3. Bring together an action planning team
 4. Use a diversity, inclusion, and equity lens that promotes shared power and the development of non-hierarchical relationships in the action planning process?
 5. Develop and implement a racial-equity action plan?

Power

- Power must be understood as a relational term between human beings in a specific historical, economic, political and social setting.
- Power is control of, or access to, those institutions sanctioned by the state.
- Power is ownership and control of the major resources of a state; and the capacity to make and enforce decisions based on this ownership and control.
- *Power is the capacity of a group of people to decide what they want and to act in an organized way to get it.*
- Power is the ability to define reality and to convince other people that it is their definition.



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**We all have
power.**

“Everyone has the power for
greatness, not for fame but greatness,
because greatness is determined by
service.”

-Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.



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