

Equity Learning Lab

Curriculum Modules Overview

This four module curriculum was developed to guide Equity Learning Lab participants in their organizational transformation work. Each module contains sub-topics with a set of core resources and additional resources for further exploration and a set of reflection questions to help participants process the content. The full curriculum includes the following modules:

1. Foundational Learning - Structural Racism and Health Equity
2. Making Space for Conversations on Equity and Race
3. Supporting Personal Reflection and Growth
4. Leading Organizational Change

Module 2: Making Space for Conversations on Equity and Race

The second module in the Equity Learning Lab curriculum provides tools and resources to support teams to engage in courageous conversations around equity and race, grounded in a vision of liberation and an understanding of power dynamics.

Objective: Funded partners who are advancing equity work in their organizations will become familiar with frameworks for understanding power dynamics and cultivating a liberatory consciousness, as well as the value of grounding conversations about race equity in a shared understanding of evolving terminology.

Sub-topic 2a: Opening Hearts and Minds

Core Resources

[Untitled Poem](#)

Source: *Beth Strano*

This poem offers an invitation and inspiration for creating brave spaces.
(2 minute listen or read)

[Leading Courageous Conversations on Race Equity](#)

Source: *Knowledge Center in Nonprofit New York*

This article provides helpful and actionable steps for leading and participating in "uncomfortable" conversations in order to build trust and alignment around organizational values. The authors posit that establishing *how* diversity, equity, and inclusion are discussed in the workplace is just as important as establishing what needs to be discussed.
(10 minute read)



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[Developing a Liberatory Consciousness in Funding](#)

Source: *Grantmakers in the Arts*

This podcast features an interview with Dr. Barbara J. Love, founder of the Liberatory Consciousness framework, talking about how to develop a Liberatory Consciousness mindset that can lead to change both within our institutions and outside of them.

(32 minute listen)

Additional Resources for a Deeper Dive

[From Safe Spaces to Brave Spaces: A New Way to Frame Dialogue around Diversity and Social Justice](#)

Source: *Brian Arao and Kristi Clemens in From the Art of Effective Facilitation*

This chapter makes the case for shifting context setting for challenging conversations from safe spaces to brave spaces in response to an increasing conflation of safety with comfort. It includes an illustrative case study.

(30 minute read)

Book Chapter: "Critical Liberation Theory"

Source: *Barbara J. Love, Keri DeJong, and Christopher Hughbanks posted in Racial Equity Tools*

You can find a link to this book chapter by checking out the resources at [Racial Equity Tools](#). The chapter provides key definitions, assumptions, and propositions related to liberation. It also describes characteristics of liberation workers and elements of a liberation praxis to support daily action towards liberation.

(15 minute read)

Reflection Questions

- What might you need to do individually and interpersonally to establish a brave space for challenging or "uncomfortable" conversations within your organizations? What might the space look like? Feel like? What methods could you use for soliciting input from others on what their brave space might require?
- As you develop your liberatory consciousness, what is your vision of the world that you want to live in? What awareness, analysis, action, accountability and allyship are you bringing to realize that vision?



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Sub-topic 2b: Unpacking Language and Terminology

In "Leading Courageous Conversations on Race Equity", you read about starting our conversations with shared understanding of terminology and "courageous" vocabulary. It is important to be mindful of language, where it comes from, what it may signify, and how it is ever-evolving.

Glossaries

These glossaries are resources for establishing a shared understanding of key terms and concepts that often come up in conversations about equity and race.

[Racial Equity Tools Glossary](#)

Source: *Racial Equity Tools*

[Key Equity Terms & Concepts: A Glossary for Shared Understanding](#)

Source: *Center for the Study of Social Policy*

Evolving Language

[Is 'POC' Outdated? Maybe. But it Also has a Measurable Superpower](#)

Source: *Shereen Marisol Meraji, CJ Ricolan, Nick Michael, Alyssa Jeong Perry, Kumari Devarajan, Libby Yi, Nikolai Hammar for Code Switch*

This video explores the pros and cons and evolution of the use of "people of color" to refer to nonwhite people as well as looking at current alternatives such as "BIPOC".

(7 minute watch)

[BIPOC' Isn't Doing What you Think it's Doing](#)

Source: *Andrea Plaid and Christopher MacDonald-Dennis for Newsweek*

This article problematizes the use of the term "BIPOC", pointing out that it undermines efforts to unify people of color and can serve to set up a hierarchy among groups.

(10 minute read + 3 minute watch)

Additional Resources for a Deeper Dive

[Conscious Style Guide](#)

Source: *Conscious Style Guide*

This interactive style guide provides updated guidance on conscious language. It includes articles broken out into key areas of focus.



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Reflection Questions

- As you spend time with the glossaries and style guides in this section, are there terms that are different from your current understanding? What are some learnings you're taking away about language?
- How, if at all, did the pieces on the terms "POC" and "BIPOC" shift your view of those terms?

Sub-topic 2c: Understanding Power

Core Resources

[How Does Power Affect our Conversations](#)

Source: *Katie Hyten for Essential Partners*

This blog examines how real and perceived power impact our conversations and how power and privilege can be acknowledged in ways that ensure people feel welcome and fully included in conversations, particularly in spaces designed for groups to communicate across differences.

(5 minute read)

[White Supremacy Culture](#) and [White Supremacy Culture - Still Here](#)

Source: *Tema Okun for dismantlingracism.org*

The original article shares fifteen characteristics of white supremacy culture commonly found in organizational environments and antidotes for each characteristic.

(15 minute read)

The updated article offers updated perspectives from the author on how the original article has been used and critiqued. She provides additional framing about the concept of white supremacy culture, including the concept of intersectionality (pages 2-6) and cautions against the weaponization of the concept of white supremacy culture (pages 29-31).

(75 minute read)

[Confusion Around Power: a Challenge to Leadership](#)

Source: *Robert Gass for the Social Transformation Project*

This tool looks at four major sources of confusion around power, how they manifest, and tips and best practices for leaders struggling with each particular confusion.

(15 minute read)



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Reflection Questions

- In reflecting on the pieces on white supremacy culture and confusion around power, which of the characteristics described do you see at work in your current organization? What might it look like to shift those dynamics?
- How might conversations in your organization about race equity need to address dynamics of power? What strategies might you use to ensure everyone feels welcomed and able to fully engage?

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