

# Equity Learning Lab

## Curriculum Modules Overview

The Equity Learning Lab curriculum is divided into seven Modules with resources grouped into sub-topics within each module.

- **Self-guided Curriculum (Modules 1-4):** A set of self-guided learning resources that include a selection of recommended core resources, additional resources for a deeper dive on the sub-topic, and reflection questions.
- **Resource Bank (Modules 5-7):** A collection of practical tools and resources to support your learning and efforts to embed equity within your organization in the areas of strategy, organizational development, or evaluation & learning.

### Self-guided Curriculum

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

### Resource Banks

5. Resources for Embedding Race Equity in Organizational Development
6. Resources for Embedding Race Equity in Strategy
7. Resources for Embedding Race Equity in Evaluation and Learning

## Module 6: Resources for Embedding Race Equity in Strategy

Objective: Building on lessons on personal and organizational change dynamics, funded partners who are ready to put them into practice to advance equity in strategy will be able to activate their learning using the tools and resources outlined in this module.

- 6.1. Theory of Change Overview
- 6.2. Strategies for Systems Change and Impact
- 6.3 Examples and Case Studies: Embedding Equity in Strategic Plans and Theory of Change
- 6.4 Operationalizing Equity Strategy in Program and Governance
- 6.5 Community Engagement
- 6.6 Engaging Community in Research and Planning
- 6.7 Building Community Power
- 6.8 Communications Strategies and Narrative Change



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## Sub-topic 6.1: Theory of Change Overview

### [Constructing a Racial Equity Theory of Change\\*](#)

Source: *Aspen Institute Roundtable on Community Change*

Type: *TOOLKIT - 60 pages*

This guide provides practical tools for making racial equity operational by outlining a Racial Equity Theory of Change, including a five-step primer for tackling community problems that are marked by chronic racial inequities, and a workbook with five exercises to guide practitioners in creating their own theory of change. The guide focuses on structural racism and describes a process that encourages change leaders to investigate their explicit and implicit assumptions about the attributes of the community-level outcomes they seek.

### [Center for Theory of Change](#)

Source: *Center for Theory of Change*

Type: *RESOURCE HUB*

This site describes the process of using the Theory of Change model to describe and illustrate how a desired change will be brought about in a specific context by working backwards from long-term goals to present day interventions. The "Resources" tab includes links to presentations describing the theory of change model and its applications, including the helpful entry level presentation, "The Basics of Theory of Change" as well as examples of Theories of Change developed to address a diverse range of social problems in various cultural contexts from end-of-life care in Japan to school readiness in Pennsylvania.

## Sub-topic 6.2: Strategies for Systems Change and Impact

### [The Water of Systems Change](#)

Source: *John Kania, Mark Kramer, and Peter Senge for FSG*

Type: *ARTICLE - 20 pages*

This article (available for download after free registration) and accompanying webinar provide an actionable model for funders and others interested in creating systems change, or shifting the conditions that hold a social problem in place in order to advance equity. The model identifies and describes six interdependent conditions that may be shifted to achieve systems change and encourages actors to place renewed focus on the role of mental models and narratives on upholding social systems.

### [Leverage Points: Places to Intervene in a System](#)

Source: *Donella Meadows for The Donella Meadows Project, Academy for Systems Change*

Type: *ARTICLE - 17 pages*

This detailed essay by key systems change thinker Donella Meadows presents a conceptual model which identifies 12 points of intervention within systems and their relative weights in



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bringing about systems changes, drawing on examples from economics, politics, and daily life.

## [Collective Impact Forum](#)

Source: FSG and the Aspen Institute Forum for Community Solutions

Type: RESOURCE HUB

This resource library includes toolkits, guides, and case studies illustrating collective impact, a phenomenon which arises when important actors from different sectors align on a common agenda to solve a specific social problem. The library includes a section on bringing an equity lens and community engagement practices to collective impact efforts.

## Sub-topic 6.3: Examples and Case Studies: Embedding Equity in Strategic Plans and Theory of Change

### [American Medical Association 2021-2023 Strategic Plan](#)

Source: American Medical Association

Type: EXAMPLE PLAN - 86 pages

This 2021-2023 strategic plan describes a vision of embedding racial justice and advancing health equity. It is the American Medical Association's first strategic plan oriented towards equity.

### [Center for Health Progress 2018-2020 Strategic Framework](#)

Source: American Medical Association

Type: EXAMPLE PLAN - 4 pages

This 2018-2020 theory of change sets forth a vision of providing timely, high-quality and affordable health services to those who have experienced historic and systemic disparities, and includes both theories of external and internal change.

### [Theory of Change Advancing Health Equity in Behavioral Health Outcomes](#)

Source: County of San Mateo Health System

Type: EXAMPLE PLAN - 17 pages

This 2018-2028 theory of change aims to advance health equity in behavioral health outcomes. The ten year plan seeks to achieve outcomes in workplace development, community empowerment, strategic partnerships, and policy and systems change.

### [Paths Along the Way to Racial Justice: Four Foundation Case Studies](#)

Source: Philanthropic Initiative for Racial Equity

Type: CASE STUDY - 30 pages

This report explores the journeys of four foundations working to better address the root causes of racism. The case studies highlight some of the principles, lessons and challenges of racial equity work as experienced by different types of foundations.



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## [People Place and Power: Advancing Racial and Economic Equity](#)

Source: *San Francisco Foundation*

Type: CASE STUDY - 26 pages

This report describes how the San Francisco Foundation adopted equity as its north star, and embedded equity into its theory of change, strategy, and operations from 2014 to 2017.

## Sub-topic 6.4: Operationalizing Equity Strategy in Program and Governance

### [Racial Equity Toolkit: An Opportunity to Operationalize Equity](#)

Source: *Local and Regional Government Alliance on Race & Equity*

Type: TOOLKIT - 28 pages

This toolkit presents the Wheel of Change, which is a powerful tool for facilitating individual transformation. The Wheel of Change is a systems approach to change, which guides us to attend in an integrated way to each of these three domains: encompassing our inner life (our thoughts and feelings), habits of behavior, and an external environment that has a huge impact on us. Most change efforts fail to address the system as a whole.

### [Achieving Health Equity: A Guide for Health Care Organizations](#)

Source: *Institute for Healthcare Improvement (an RWJF-funded partner)*

Type: REPORT - 46 pages

This report outlines a framework for operationalizing health equity for organizations to improve health equity in the communities they serve. The five key components of the framework and a related self-assessment tool cover prioritizing health equity, developing structures and processes, deploying strategies to address multiple determinants of health, decreasing institutional racism within the organization, and developing partnerships with community organizations. The report also includes a discussion of practical issues in measuring health equity, and a case study of The Henry Ford Health System.

### [Bringing Light and Heat: A Health Equity Guide for Healthcare Transformation & Accountability](#)

Source: *Health Begins, Health Leads, Human Impact Partners, JSI, SIREN (with funding from RWJF)*

Type: REPORT - 37 pages

This guide outlines a path for leaders and managers of healthcare institutions to commit to, own, and advance health and racial equity (light); and a way for internal and external stakeholders to measure and hold these systems accountable (heat). The guide provides an overarching framework for how healthcare institutions can pursue health and racial equity, proposed processes to organize your action and ongoing improvement, and ideas about the



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kinds of strategic goals and sample practices you might adopt – at the patient, organizational, community, and societal levels.

## [Racial Equity Toolkit: Implementing Greenlining’s Racial Equity Framework](#)

Source: *Greenlining Institute*

Type: *TOOLKIT and CASE STUDIES - 18 pages*

This toolkit examines how to implement the six-part racial equity framework used by the Greenlining Institute and includes case studies from organizations working on democracy, environmental equity, and energy. The toolkit also includes a link to a health-specific case study: [Filling in the Gaps: A Racial Equity Framework for Successful Implementation of the Affordable Care Act](#)

## Sub-topic 6.5: Community Engagement

### [Principles of Authentic Community Engagement](#)

Source: *Michigan Department of Health*

Type: *ARTICLE - 3 pages*

This brief article outlines 22 principles of community engagement for health organizations, organized around the themes of fostering trust, supporting community-led decisions, and embracing social change.

### [Organization-Level Consumer Engagement: What It Takes](#)

Source: *Community Catalyst (an RWJF-funded organization)*

Type: *CASE STUDIES - 49 pages total*

These three case studies about patient and family engagement describe the engagement structures organizations have employed, the necessary investments involved in operating these structures, and the impact of these structures both on the organizations and on the people and communities they serve. The case study reports are accompanied by a webinar which presents the experiences of professionals working within each system as well as a panel of patients.

### [Tools to Engage: Resources for Nonprofits](#)

Source: *Building Movement Project*

Type: *RESOURCE HUB*

This extensive library contains a wealth of resources designed primarily for nonprofits seeking to deepen their engagements with communities. The “Readiness” section offers self-assessment tools for organizations seeking to gauge their preparedness to engage communities, while the “Constituent Engagement” and “Partnering with Community” sections offer practical tools and case studies to guide engagement processes underway. Among other resources, the Constituent Engagement section includes a helpful dropbox of sample



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engagement tools, materials, and talking points, while the Partnering with Community Section includes a workbook to assist in mapping community assets.

## Sub-topic 6.6: Engaging Community in Research and Planning

### [Community-Based Participatory Research: A Strategy for Building Healthy Communities and Promoting Health through Policy Change](#)

Source: Meredith Minkler, Analila P. Garcia, Victor Rubin, and Nina Wallerstein for PolicyLink and the University of California, Berkeley School of Public Health

Type: REPORT - 60 pages

This paper provides an overview of community-based participatory research (CBPR). It includes principles for CBPR (pages 11-12), promising practices (pages 19-29), and six case studies of using CBPR to effect policy change in California (pages 32-46).

### [The Planner's Playbook: Community Centered Approach to Health and Equity](#)

Source: ChangeLab Solutions

Type: TOOLKIT - 59 pages

This guide sets forth principles, best practices, strategies and tools to increase community participation and embed equity in planning processes. The first half of the guide diagnoses common pitfalls which hinder equity in planning, while the second half provides guidance and case studies for successfully implementing an equitable process.

### [Beyond Inclusion: Equity in Public Engagement](#)

Source: Simon Fraser University's Morris J. Wosk Centre for Dialogue

Type: REPORT - 82 pages

This report, which is based in the Canadian context, outlines eight principles for moving beyond inclusion and toward equitable public engagement where communities and leaders share power in planning and implementing co-created solutions. The guide includes a particular focus on working with Indigenous communities in public decision making processes. For each principle, the guide includes a short illustrative case study. The third section of the report provides detailed recommendations for ensuring that public engagement projects are inclusive based on a wide range of identities and lived experience as well as accessible along a variety of dimensions (physical, geographic, linguistic, technological, health, safety and more).

## Sub-topic 6.7: Building Community Power

### [STORY OF PLACE: Community Power and Healthy Communities](#)

Source: USC Dornsife Equity Research Institute

Type: REPORT - 44 pages



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This report draws on data from 40 state and local organizations to examine how communities most impacted by structural inequalities can mobilize to catalyze change and set the conditions for healthy communities. Pages 12-26 present a three step frame describing how a community may set forth, achieve, and govern an agenda. Additionally, pages 33-36 provide lessons and recommendations for those seeking to build power within their own communities. The report draws examples from small to midsize cities, large cities, and statewide organizations in order to ensure the findings are applicable to a wide array of contexts.

## [What is Needed to Build Community Power? Essential Capacities for Equitable Communities](#)

Source: *Change Elemental with support from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation*

Type: REPORT - 94 pages

This report draws upon the wisdom of 40 community power building organizations sited in 16 small to large cities to identify ten capacities that are essential to building community power. The report presents a detailed description of each capacity's components as well as illustrative examples of each capacity being applied in the context of a community power building organization.

## [Power Moves](#)

Source: *National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy*

Type: REPORT: 77 pages

This guide, which is designed primarily for funders, looks critically at the role of philanthropy in perpetuating inequalities and power imbalances, and explores how funders can mobilize their resources to build community power, share power with other stakeholders, and wield their power to push for structural change. The Building Power chapter is especially helpful in outlining community power building strategies, while the Tools You Can Use appendix includes organizational self-assessment tools, sample timelines, and worksheets to guide implementation strategies.

## Sub-topic 6.8: Communications Strategies and Narrative Change

### [Ten Lessons for Talking about Race, Racism and Racial Justice](#)

Source: *The Opportunity Agenda*

Type: ARTICLE - 10 pages

This messaging memo provides advice on talking about race, racism, and racial justice in the US, drawing from research, experience, and the input of partners from around the country. The focus is on messaging that persuades audiences to take action related to addressing racism and racial inequities. The memo unpacks ten lessons and provides illustrative examples. The last section of the memo shows how you can apply the lessons using a 4-part narrative framework for persuasive messaging: Value, Problem, Solution, and Action. (To learn



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more about The Opportunity Agenda's recommendations for value-based messaging, see their comprehensive publication, "[Vision, Values, and Voice: A Communications Toolkit](#)" and read six case studies on [Shifting the Narrative](#).)

## [Government Alliance on Race & Equity \(GARE\) Communications Toolkit](#)

Source: *Government Alliance on Race & Equity*

Type: *TOOLKIT* - 88 pages

This guide, which is designed primarily for use by local jurisdictions, shares best practices for communicating about racial equity and convincing audiences that the government must be transformed to advance racial equity. In addition to introducing and illustrating the application of the "Affirm, Counter, Transform" messaging model, and sample strategies to communicate to different audiences, the guide also includes (at page 67) a bank of "ready-to-go" resources, including sample starter messages, and (at page 78), a mini-guide to effective storytelling.

## [Telling the Right Story on Race During COVID](#)

Source: *Rashad Robinson for Color of Change*

Type: *REPORT* - 40 pages

This report provides guidance to communicating about the realities, causes and solutions of racial inequities in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, with a particular focus on anti-Blackness. The report advocates for reframing narratives around racial justice to emphasize Black agency, as opposed to victimhood, and to call out the active role of institutions in furthering racial injustice.

## [The Power of Perception: A Beginner's Guide to Asset Framing](#)

Source: *Trabian Shorters for Change Agent*

Type: *ARTICLE* - 5 pages

This short article draws upon research from behavioral economics to describe and illustrate the benefits of asset-framing approaches, which define people by their aspirations and contributions, in lieu of deficit-frames when communicating about racial equity.

## [Understanding Asset-Framing](#)

Source: *California Health Care Foundation*

Type: *REPORT* - 16 slides

A slide deck from the California Health Care Foundation (CHCF), based on work with Trabian Shorters, that explains asset-framing and provides practical examples of how to apply the approach to CHCF's written content including website copy, blog posts, and an organizational DEI statement.

## [Advancing Health Equity: A Guide to Language, Narrative and Concepts](#)

Source: *AMA and AAMC*

Type: *REPORT*: 54 pages





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A practical guide to stimulate critical thinking about language, narrative and concepts—helping readers to identify harmful phrasing in their own work and providing alternatives that move us toward racial justice and health equity. Part 1 offers guidance on language for promoting health equity, contrasting traditional/outdated terms with equity-focused alternatives. Part 2 explores how narratives (the power behind words) matter. Part 3 provides a glossary of key terms, defining key concepts, and whenever possible acknowledging debates over definitions and usage.

## [Health Equity Guiding Principles for Inclusive Communication](#)

Source: CDC

Type: *ONLINE GUIDE*

The guiding principles explored in this resource from the CDC are intended to help public health professionals, particularly health communicators, within and outside of CDC ensure their communication products and strategies adapt to the specific cultural, linguistic, environmental, and historical situation of each population or audience of focus. It is intended to be a living document which will be adapted as both language and cultural norms change. It is not a style guide and is not meant to be prescriptive or exhaustive, but rather to provide principles, resources, and specific suggestions on a variety of topics to help inform an inclusive approach to public health communications.

## [Audiences for Health Equity: Narratives in U.S. Media](#)

Harmony Labs

REPORT: 55 slides

A narrative landscape analysis about health equity, segmented by values-based audience groups.

**In Partnership with:**



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the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation**

**Equity Learning Lab**

**Module 6: Resources for Embedding Race Equity in Strategy**

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