

VIBE Vermont

A statewide Equity thru Data, Justice, Inclusion & Education (EDJIE) Initiative

An Education & Training Project guided by VIBE (Visualizing Inclusion Based in Equity) Consulting LLC in partnership with the Vermont EDJIE Leadership Team

OVERVIEW, FAQ + TIMELINE | JUNE 2023



OVERVIEW

To move more deeply into equity work as individuals, communities, and institutions requires a fierce yet fluid dance of awareness, responsibility, healing, and action accomplished by sparks of compassionate ambition. Diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) initiatives, training, programs, strategies, and policies are necessary because of the harmful consequences of systemic oppression. The convoluted webs of these systems require just as nimble responses. This equity-centric, anti-oppression based initiative, will teach participants intentional practices, and models for guiding restorative justice practitioners housed at Vermont's Restorative Justice Centers (RJC) through educational and experiential opportunities that will grow their knowledge and skill-set to invite DEI opportunities and address challenges more readily.

Using a liberation based human centered design process participants will co-create a DEI curriculum that will serve as a statewide professional development opportunity for personnel, volunteers, Board of Directors, and community partners at Vermont's Restorative Justice Centers. This collaborative course of action and learning will strengthen participants' ability to be leaders in DEI education and initiatives for RJs.

People associated with Vermont's RJC are encouraged to apply to participate as a member of the 20 person cohort of RJC representatives. Additionally, 10 people from communities most impacted by systemic racism and oppression will be invited to join the cohort.

FAQs

#1 *Why has the Vermont EDJIE Leadership Team launched this initiative?*

In Winter of 2021, all Restorative Justice Centers in Vermont signed Vermont's Restorative Justice Programs Position on Racial Injustice, which stated- "As we seek to hold ourselves accountable and move toward a justice system that brings dignity, safety and repair of harm for all, we commit to":

- Prioritize diversity in all its forms (race, age, income, lived experience with the criminal legal system, etc.) when recruiting staff and volunteers for our work, with the intent to best represent the communities we serve;
- Collect and share data that will help identify inequities in accessing restorative options at our agencies for people of color in Vermont;
- Engage in at least six hours of anti-racism training annually to explore our own implicit biases and privileges, the foundation and historical roots of our restorative practices among indigenous peoples here and around the world, the roots and current forms of racism, and what it means to be anti-racist;

- Use a standing agenda item on our member agency and association meetings, at least quarterly, to examine our policies and practices in light of these commitments so we work in ways that are inclusive and equitable, respect the dignity of all, and build relationships rooted in justice and respect.

With these goals in mind, a committee of RJC leaders applied for federal funding to further these goals, noting that there are numerous examples of areas where Vermont’s criminal justice and law enforcement systems are systematically failing people in the most marginalized identity groups. Training, education, and consistent, effective data collection tools and practices are necessary to understand and take action to address the ways Vermont’s restorative justice system perpetuates the prevalent inequities in the criminal legal systems. This 2-year grant allows the 22 state-funded restorative justice (RJ) organizations to pursue the following project outcomes:

1. Develop, deliver, and institutionalize professional development trainings to address personal and institutional racism, implicit bias, trauma, gender equity, and general inclusivity;
2. Conduct a statewide data collection evaluation to improve racial justice and inclusion outcomes, including a needs assessment, the creation of standard metrics and collection tools, and the proposal for a new, shared data-management system;
3. Support agencies and state partners to review and update policies and procedures with the guidance of anti-racism experts.

By developing shared, consistent, resourced training and data collection, Vermont’s restorative justice agencies will serve as leaders in the state’s racial justice, equity, inclusion, and criminal justice reforms.

#2 *Who is VIBE Consulting LLC?*

Visualizing Inclusion Based in Equity (VIBE) Consulting LLC is the love language of founder and owner, Kendra Malone. Through exploration, inquisitiveness, and compassionate accountability, VIBE guides communities into deeper understandings of systemic oppression, impact, and what it takes to shift harmful power dynamics in the service of the liberation of all AND prioritizing people most impacted by oppression and social marginalization.

Visit <https://www.vibe-consulting.com/> to learn more.



#3 *What will cohort participants do?*

Participate in a Liberatory Human Centered Design process to co-create a DEI curriculum that will be used to train Restorative Justice Center personnel, volunteers, Board of Directors, and community partners in equity-centric practices, anti-racism, and institutional change. Additionally, you will:

- Become a trainer for the equity-centric curriculum we co-create
- Deepen your skill-set as an embodied Diversity, Equity + Inclusion (DEI) practitioner
- Be a critical steward of organizational and systemic change in the service of personal growth and the collective liberation of communities most impacted by oppression

Every body carries habits shaped by a dominant cultural environment of white supremacy. Cultural literacy in this regard differs widely by social location. Community members not directly affiliated with RJC's bringing their lived experiences into this work will have a different healing journey than staff members tasked with community care. Additionally, the work of white and white-passing people to address internalized privilege will be distinctly different from the healing work for people of the global majority targeted with systemic oppression.

#4 *What is liberatory human centered design?*

Human centered design (HCD) lends itself well to restorative justice practices as both prioritize collaborative approaches. Designing solutions alongside the people who experience the problem.¹

Most simply, human-centered design is a mindset and creative process that puts people first. It focuses on making the people who will be engaging with the product or service a central part of the process. It involves brainstorming and prototyping in a way that is flexible and readily incorporates feedback.²

Specifically, we will be calling upon a [liberatory design approach](#) to guide our curriculum co-creation process.

#5 *What is our goal?*

To become equity designers + transform our communities.

Like this → [Designing for a more equitable world | Antionette Carroll](#)



1. <https://portable.com.au/articles/increasing-access-to-justice-through-human-centred>

2. <https://novelhand.com/human-centered-design/>

#6 *What is a DEI practitioner?*

A DEI practitioner centers diversity, equity, and inclusion in all aspects of their life, whether in the workplace, at home, or in social spaces. They endeavor to dream and build worlds of compassionate accountability, connection, access, and repair.

#7 *What is embodied practice?*

Embodied practice invites observation and inquiry around the sensations, urges, and feelings that accompany habits of oppression that harm all people, especially people of the global majority. Regular repetitions of recognizing conditioned nervous system responses provide the opportunity to metabolize everyday traumas of oppression and unlearn habits of white supremacy. In the words of [Rev. angel kyodo williams](#), the work of collective liberation is a practice, not a perfect. Embodied training takes DEI out of the realm of intellectual and integrates learning into the body, making liberation work an ongoing, sustainable practice.



#8 *This initiative will take an intersectional, anti-oppression, and dismantling white supremacy approach to DEI. Here's why.*

Everybody's lived experiences are different, influenced by their unique social location, and no matter the social location, everybody is harmed by white supremacy culture. A lifetime of ongoing cultural conditioning cannot be unlearned with a single class or training. Taking an intersectional approach to DEI work is imperative to building the culture of care necessary for restorative justice.

#9 *How long is the initiative?*

Cohort members will be engaging with this initiative from July 2023 - September 2024. After the close of the formal project cohort members will continue to deliver the DEI training on behalf of Vermont's Restorative Justice Centers.

#10 *What is the time commitment?*

Review the tentative schedule on the last page.



#11 *I'm [completely new to this/know something about equity work/am seasoned and have been doing this work for years], is this opportunity right for me?*

Yes. All who are committed to introspection, have a willingness to contend with the discomfort you will experience when looking at privilege, and are invested in meaningfully addressing oppression, in all its messiness, please join us. Also, we're going to dance, laugh, grow, and create joy regularly. 😊



#12 *A note about logistics.*

The majority of our learning experiences and convening will be held virtually. There will be an in-person human centered design process experience in early September. A calendar of training and convenings will be sent to participants upon invitation to join the cohort.

#13 *What if I have to miss something?*

We understand that you have a rich and robust life. We celebrate that! Liberatory Human Centered Design sessions and trainings will be recorded for later access so missing a session throughout the course of the initiative isn't a problem and the **2-day train-the-trainer in early 2024 is mandatory. You cannot proceed if you miss this.** We will remain responsive to the nuances of life and we have the expectation that cohort members commit to participating in all components as the collective relies on it and to communicate in a timely fashion when they cannot.

#14 *I have questions.*

Good! We love questions. Join us for a **virtual information session** on Tuesday, June 13, 2023 at 8:00 AM PDT/10:00 AM CDT/11:00 AM EST

Can't make it? That's ok, it will be recorded and shared with those who complete the Information Session Registration + Cohort Interest Form.

[Information Session Registration + Cohort Interest Form](#)

TENTATIVE TIMELINE

Cohort Interest Form + Project FAQ Live | June 6, 2023

VIBE Vermont Virtual Information Session (1 hour) + Cohort Application Live | June 13, 2023



Cohort Application Due | July 3, 2023

Participant Notification | July 10, 2023

Virtual Cohort Welcome (1 hour) | July 24, 2023



HCD Virtual Session #1: Liberatory Human Centered Design + Deepening Equity Practices Training (2.5hours) | August 1, 2023

Complete Diversity, Equity + Inclusion (DEI) Training Needs Assessment | August 2023

HCD Virtual Session #2: Clarification + Inspiration: Identify DEI Values, Priorities & Strategies for Vermont's Restorative Justice Centers + Framing Design Challenge (2.5 hours) | August 25, 2023



HCD Process: Clarification + Observation (Self-Directed) | August 25 - September 3, 2023 - Cohort members will spend the week making note of organizational culture, day to day activities/processes, and discuss with colleagues and clients about insights determined as priorities in Session #2. This information will inform our in-person work together in Session #3.

In-Person HCD Session #3: Ideate | September, 2023 - Cohort members will be participate in a HCD process generating ideas and strategies that will inform DEI training curriculum content.

HCD Virtual Process #4: Cohort Collectively Decides on Content (2.5 hours) | September 2023



HCD Process (Develop): Consultant Team Creates Curriculum + Updates Current Materials | October - November 2023

Consultant Team Delivers Virtual Pilot DEI Training to Cohort (4 hours) + Cohort Debrief (2 hours) | December 2023



DEI Curriculum Virtual Train-the-Trainer | January 2024 - Cohort members participate in a 2-day train the trainer (12 hours)

Deliver Pilot DEI Training #1 & #2 | February 2024 - 5 cohort members will co-facilitate the training for Restorative Justice Center personnel. There will be approximately 9 trainings offered during the project period. Each facilitator will have at least one opportunity to co-facilitate the training.



Deliver DEI Trainings (#3-#5) | March & April 2024

Intentional Cohort Break for Rest & Rejuvenation | May 2024



Deliver Virtual DEI Training #6 + Attend 2-day in-person DEI in Restorative Justice Symposium (includes training #7) | June 2024

Deliver DEI Trainings (#8 & #9) | July 2024

Cohort Focus Groups + Feedback | August 2024

Project Close + Recommendations + Celebrations | September 2024



Additionally, be prepared to spend 2-3 hours most weeks on self-directed learning, collaborating with other cohort members, and preparing for sessions and trainings.