INVITING POSSIBILITIES



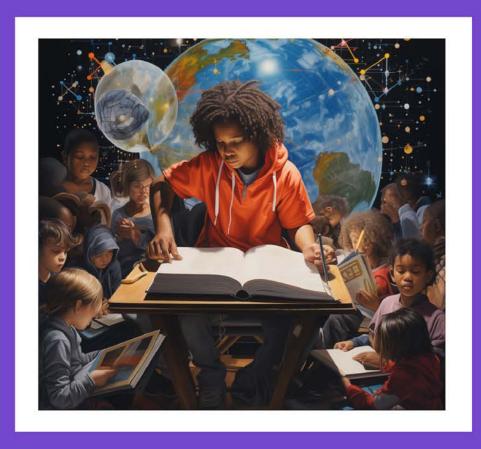
Restorative Justice as Equity in Vermont:

A Diversity, Equity + Inclusion (DEI) Learning Experience

An Education + Training Community Project

By + For Vermont's Restorative Justice Centers

Preparation + Session Workbook | 2024



CONNECT + INSPIRE

An Orange County Restorative Justice Center + Visualizing Inclusion Based in Equity (VIBE) Consulting LLC Collaboration

An Education + Training Project of the Vermont Statewide Equity thru Data, Justice, Inclusion, and Education (EDJIE) Initiative

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WELCOME

It is with much excitement that we introduce the *Inviting Possibilities - Restorative Justice as Equity in Vermont Curriculum!*

This curriculum developed as a direct response to Vermont's Restorative Justice Programs' Position on Racial Injustice. In Winter of 2021, Restorative Justice Programs signed a shared commitment to "hold ourselves accountable and move towards a justice system that brings dignity, safety and repair of harm for all," while:

- Prioritizing 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;
- Collecting and sharing data that will help identify inequities in accessing restorative options at our agencies for people of color in Vermont;
- Engaging 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;
- Using 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.

A committee of Restorative Justice Center (RJC) leaders including Jessie Schmidt, Rachel Jolly and Jill Evans applied for federal funding to further these goals. Upon securing the Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant funding, the Leadership Team expanded to include Maggie Ganguly, Alexis Proia and Omara Rivera-Vázquez. This curriculum is the result of a collaborative effort lead by Kendra Malone and the VIBE Vermont team. It is intended to help us dive deep into equity work as individuals, communities, and institutions. The curriculum uses equity-centric, intersectional, and anti-oppression initiatives to guide Restorative Justice Programs' staff, board members and volunteers to increase their knowledge, awareness and skills needed to address inequities and disparities.

The work is rooted in the realization that 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.



We hope that you will use this curriculum as a foundation to build the culture of care necessary to promote equity-centric restorative justice practices. Further, we would like to use this curriculum as a call to action understanding how to navigate discomfort and how to use that to elevate our individual, workplace, and social lives while striving for the collective liberation of the communities most impacted by oppression. Let's lean on each other while doing this important work that is long overdue!

In partnership, The Leadership Team

GOALS

The Vermont Statewide Equity thru Data, Justice, Education and Inclusion (EDJIE) Initiative has three components: training, education; consistent, effective data collection tools; and practices 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 centers (RJC) to pursue the following project outcomes:

- Develop, deliver, and institutionalize professional development trainings to address personal and institutional racism, implicit bias, trauma, gender equity, and general inclusivity;
- Conduct a statewide data collection evaluation to improve racial
 justice and inclusion outcome, 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.



Education + Training Project: VIBE Vermont

In June 2023, the EDJIE Leadership Team partnered with <u>VIBE Consulting LLC</u> to undertake the education and training components (#1) of this initiative. This collaboration yielded a dedicated community of Restorative Justice Center (RJC) personnel and volunteers. This community evolved into a cohort of 25 RJC representatives and 9 community partners, who from August - October 2023 contributed to the co-creation of the training you are about to experience, using a liberatory human centered design approach. Your RJC colleagues and invested community partners have dedicated significant time and energy into simultaneously generating this curriculum as well as hone their skill-sets as equity practitioners in the service of becoming your peer educators and facilitators for this training.

VIBE Consulting LLC and the EJDIE Leadership Team extend our gratitude to the EDJIE Education + Training inaugural cohort members:



EDJIE EDUCATION & TRAINING COHORT



Carol Plante, Montpelier Community Justice Center

Kimberly Phillips-Roderigue, Bennington Center for Restorative Justice

Abigail Ponto, BROC Community Action, Rutland County Community Justice (former)

Damien Barnes, Rutland County Community Justice Center at BROC Community Action

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Chief Don Stevens, Nulhegan Band of the Coosuk Abenaki Nation

Shawn Pratt, Criminal Justice Council

Mia Schultz, Rutland Area NAACP

Lisa Ryan, Vermont Law and Graduate School

Shingai Njeri Kagunda, Every Town

Amanda Wolf, Addison County Restorative Justice Services

Liam Crannell, NEKCA

Dominic Perkins, NEKCA

Jean Stone, Addison County Restorative Justice Services Susan Russell, The Community Restorative Justice Center

Susan Sam-Mensah, Valley Court Diversion Program

Tara Longley, Easterseals

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Training Preparation



SOCIAL IDENTITY EXPLORATION EXERCISE

The purpose of this exercise is to map out different domains of your social identity (i.e., social group membership) and to reflect on how these domains intersect with one another to shape your life experiences. We are socialized into seeing oppressive social relations and structures (e.g., personal bias, social prejudice, institutional discrimination, inequitable social structures) based on social group memberships as natural and normal. As McIntosh (2003) describes her white privilege as, "an invisible package of unearned assets which I can count on cashing in each day, but about which I was 'meant' to remain oblivious" (p. 191), when we belong to a privileged social group, it is especially difficult to recognize our own privilege. Privilege is often unearned, unasked for, and invisible benefits and advantages available to members of the privileged group (Hardiman, Jackson, & Griffin, 2007).

The goal of this exercise is not to assess how privileged or marginalized you are. The exercise does not fully capture or define who you are, and doing so is not its goal, either. Almost all of us have some experiences of privilege and some of marginalization, and these experiences are relative to context. In addition, different social identities will be perceived more or less salient to yourself and others, influencing your worldviews and interpersonal interactions, and what becomes more or less salient depends on the context (Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2012; Tharp, 2012).

Instructions

- 1. Write your identity in Column B corresponding to each identity category in Column A.
- 2. In the top row on Column C, write the places where you live now (and lived as a child, if it is different from where you live now).
- 3. For each identity domain on Column B, consider if it puts you in a position of privilege or marginalization. Write "P" for privilege and "M" for marginalization on Column C.
- Proceed to Reflection Questions.

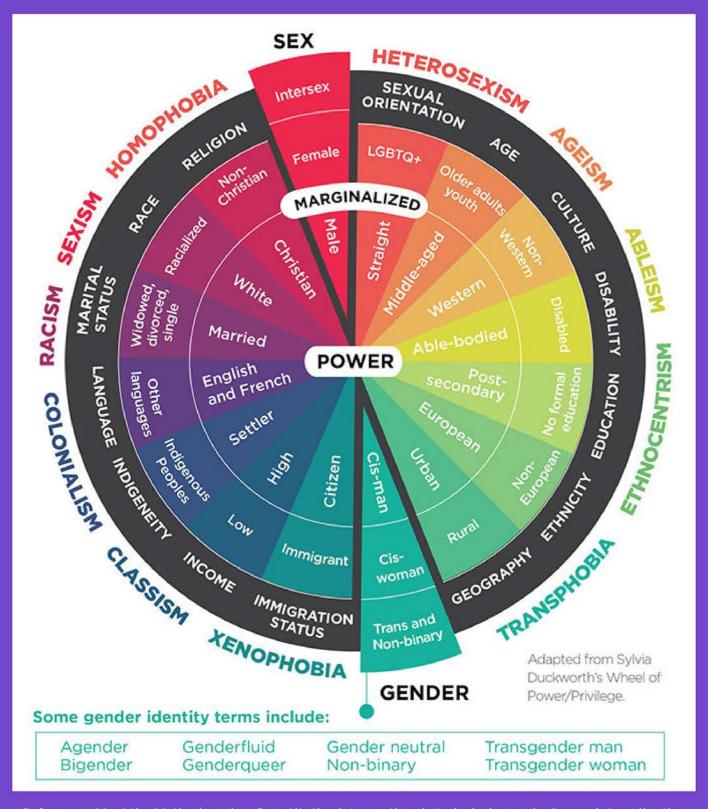
SELF IDENTITY EXPLORATION

Excercise

A. Identities	B. My Identity/ies	C. Does this identity of power (P) or margino people in the:	give me a position of alization (M) relative to
		Place I live now []	Place(s) I grew up
Race (e.g. American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, Black or African American, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, white)			
Ethnicity (e.g. Cree, Inuit, Chinese, Welsh, Métis)			
Biological Sex (e.g. intersex, female, male)			
Gender Identity + Expression (e.g. non-binary, transgender, woman, man, cisgender)			
Sexual Orientation (e.g. lesbian, gay, queer, heterosexual, asexual)			
Religion/Faith			
Socio- Economic Class (e.g. houseless, living in poverty, working class, blue color, middle class, owning class)			
Disability (e.g. temporarily able-bodied, disabled, able-bodied)			
First Language(s)			
Mental Health (e.g. neurodivergent, ADHD, bipolar, neurotypical)			
Other meaningful identities			
Note: Adapted from "A Map	of Myself" (Harlap, 2008)	1 :	' 10

Social Identity, Power + Intersectionality

Here are a few examples of identity and social position variables and dimensions.. This tool was developed within and for Canadian cultural realities.



Reflection

QUESTIONS

- 1. Considering all your social identities listed in the table above, on a daily basis, which ones **are you most aware or conscious of**? You can pick more than one domain if you want.
 - a) Most aware/conscious of:
 - b) What do you appreciate about or gain from that identity?
 - c) What is the most negative or difficult thing about that identity?
- 2. Considering all your social identities listed in the table above, on a daily basis, which ones **are you least aware or conscious of**? You can pick more than one domain if you want.
 - a) Least aware/conscious of:
 - b) What do you appreciate about or gain from that identity?
 - c) What is the most negative or difficult thing about that identity?
- 3. What **stood out most** to you in this exercise? Why?
- 4. What would you like to know more about or **explore further**?

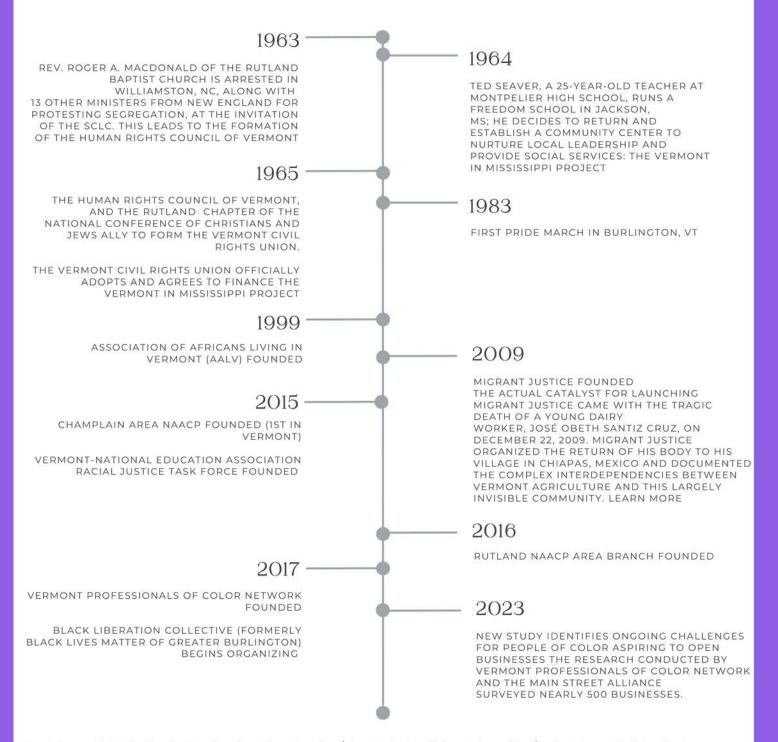
Note: These reflection questions were adopted from Diane J. Goodman (dianejgood@aol.com) and UBC Peer Program Training Modules: Diversity & Intercultural Communication 2008/09. | Time and Place at UBC: Our Histories and Relations - http://timeandplace.ubc.ca/ | User Guide for Educators - Appendix 2 | Licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.

A BRIEF LOOK

VERMONT'S HISTORY OF

EQUITY PROGRESS + HARMFUL REALITIES

Honoring and understanding the legacies of those who laid the foundations for our efforts today is an important part of our work together.



Notes + References: The Root Social Justice Center https://www.therootsjc.org/story | Migrant Justice https://migrantjustice.net/about | Northeast Farmers of Color Land Trust https://migrantjustice.net/about | Northeast Farmers of Color Land Trust https://migrantjustice.net/about | Northeast Farmers of Color Land Trust https://migrantjustice.net/about | Northeast Farmers of Color Land Trust https://migrantjustice.net/about | Northeast Farmers of Color Land Trust https://migrantjustice.net/about | Northeast Farmers of Color Land Trust https://migrantjustice.net/about | Northeast Farmers of Color Land Trust https://migrantjustice.net/about | Northeast Farmers of Color Land Trust https://migrantjustice.net/about | Northeast Farmers of Color Land Trust https://migrantjustice.net/about | Northeast Farmers of Color Land Trust https://migrantjustice.net/about | Northeast Farmers of Color Land Trust https://migrantjustice.net/about | Northeast Farmers of Color Land Trust https://migrantjustice.net/about | Northeast Farmers of Color Land Trust https://migrantjustice.net/about | Northeast Farmers of Color Land Trust <a href="https://migrantjustice.net/about | Northeast Farmers of Color Land Trust <a href="https://migrantjustice.net/about | Northeast Farmers <a href="https://migrantjustice.net/about | Northeast Farmers

In Session Materials





SPOR RACISM

oppression

A system of mistreatment, exploitation and abuse of a marginalized group(s) for the social, economic or political benefit of a dominant group(s). This happens within a social hierarchy where people are ranked according to status, often based on aspects of social identity.

- ADL

What Is Prejudice?

Prejudice can be conscious or unconscious and involves stereotypes, prejudgments, and beliefs (which are usually negative) about a group of people. These beliefs can be based on: race, sex, gender, religion, culture, disability, sexuality, etc.



Key Concepts + Practices

INCLUSION is a Choice: Inclusion is the act of creating environments in which any individual or group can be and feel welcomed, respected, supported, and valued to fully participate. These are the actions taken by your organization to build access to equity and develop programming that enables all employees to succeed.

UNCONSCIOUS (OR IMPLICIT) BIASES are learned stereotypes that operate out side of our conscious awareness. They are automatic, unintentional, deeply ingrained, universal, and able to influence our behavior towards others.

CONFIRMATION BIAS is the human tendency to search for, favor, and use information that confirms one's pre-existing views on a certain topic. It is the brain's shortcut.

MICROAGGRESSIONS are the way in which unconscious bias shows up in everyday behavior. A microaggression can be intentional or unintentional way of communicating through verbal or behavioral actions a hostile, derogatory or prejudiced insult toward a marginalized group.

SOCIAL IDENTITY is the way you think about yourself, the way you are viewed by the world and the characteristics that define you. Social Identities fall into predictable patterns and are socialized through media, schools, parents, etc. countless forums that build our common understanding of what is "normal" and what is "other" within key categories.

DOMINANT NARRATIVES are stories told by the dominant culture that define reality and guide our lives. Oftentimes this is what most of society believes to be "true." These can show up as stereotypes and assumptions about other groups.

COUNTER NARRATIVES are narratives, truths and experiences that arise from the vantage point of those who have been historically marginalized. These can be a collection or individual experiences that run against the Dominant Narrative or dominant stereotypes about their group.

EQUITY is the fair treatment, access, opportunity and advancement for all people, while at the same time striving to identify and eliminate barriers that have prevented the full participation of some groups.

PREJUDICE is a judgment or belief that is formed on insufficient grounds before facts are known or in disregard of facts that contradict it. Prejudices are learned and can be unlearned.

DISCRIMINATION is the unequal allocation of goods, resources, and services, and the limitation of access to full participation in society based on individual membership in a particular social group; reinforced by law, policy, and cultural norms that allow for differential treatment on the basis of identity.

OPPRESSION is when a dominant group, whether knowingly or unknowingly, abuses a group that is marginalized by society. This pervasive system is rooted historically and maintained through individual and institutional/systematic discrimination, personal bias, bigotry, and social prejudice, resulting in a condition of privilege for the dominant group at the expense of the marginalized group.

RACISM is reinforced by law, policy, cultural norms and is exercised through social and cultural power. It is the unequal allocation of goods, resources, and services, and the limitation of access to full participation in society based on race; reinforced by law, policy, and cultural norms that allow for differential treatment on the basis of identity.

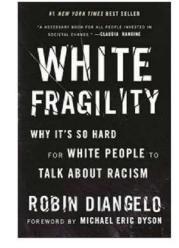
De-Centering Whiteness

In our work together we **prioritize** the needs, experiences, and perspectives of communities most harmed by systemic oppression. We also de-center whiteness in the service of the

principles and practices of equity.

White-centering can be thought of as a system that prioritizes white dominant culture to the detriment of non-white groups and cultures. White-centering has been given many names including the white gaze and whiteness as the default. Because white-centering is often left unexamined and unchecked, equity and justice have continued to evade organizations.

- Janice Gassam Asare, Forbes (2023)





Whiteness, in the sense that we are using it, does not refer to individual prejudice but rather to the fact that white identity remains the implicit standard of normalcy and entitlement to the rewards of society. This leads to acceptance of the marginalization, "othering," and, too often, dehumanization of those who are not white. This acceptance is often paired with denial that racism is still an important issue for US society.

-Victor Rubin and Michael McAfee, NPQ (2021)

Transcending the barriers of whiteness will be no easy feat. Overcoming our nation's deep roots in racism and inequality will require undoing layers of legacies and structures that were built to keep people of color from having access to opportunity. But in order to improve health and well-being for all, we must challenge the status quo and deeply consider what isn't working, why, and what can be done. - PolicyLink (2021)



THE BEGINNING

Cycle of Socialization

FIRST SOCIALIZATION

We are born into a world with the mechanics of oppression already in place. We have no consciousness, no choice, no blame, no guilt. There is no information or limited information or misinformation about social identity and power. Bias, stereotyping, prejudice, habits, tradition and a history of oppression already exist. We inherit them without permission.

We are socialized by people we love They shape and trust, and our self-concepts taught to play our and self-perceptions roles and follow as well as how we see rules.

others. They shape our dreams, our values, our expectations and our future

We get mixed messages, feel confused, and guilty for not understanding

INSTITUTIONAL AND **CULTURAL SOCIALIZATION**

We are consciously and unconsciously bombarded with messages about who should have power and who should not by all institutions we encounter: education, religion, medicine, law, criminal justice, government, social services, and business.

Bias, stereotyping, prejudice, habits, tradition and a history of oppression already exist. We inherit them without permission

THE CONTINUATION

We do nothing and the cycle continues.

We choose not to make waves

We live with or promote the status quo

> We fail to challenge, question, or think about what's wrong with this picture

begin to see that something is wrong with

the picture

Something makes us begin to think, to challenge, to question the system

RESULTS

THE CORE

that keeps us

in the cycle:

Ignorance

Insecurity

Confusion

Obliviousness

Fear

This socialization leads to bad outcomes for those with and without power:

Misperceptions, dissonance, silence, stress, collusion, inequality, anger, guilt, hate, self-hatred, self-destructive behaviours, iolence, crime, and internalization of patterns of power for the future.

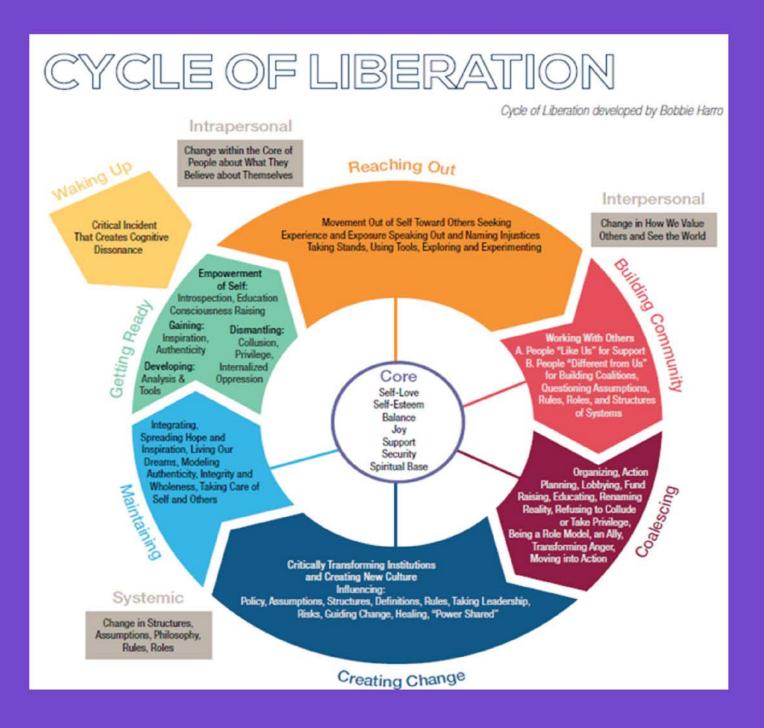
ENFORCEMENTS

A system of rewards and punishments keeps us playing by the rules.

Those who stay in line aren't sanctioned, while those who don't are punished, persecuted, stigmatized or victmized by discrimination.

BY BOBBIE HARRO, 2004 Revised, 2008 Graphic Design by Luis Moreno @mrluisc

DIRECTION FOR CHANGE MOVEMENT TOWARD LIBERATION



DISCRIMINATION INTERVENTIONS

Responding to microaggressions + bias

Restate or paraphrase.

"I think I heard you saying (paraphrase their comments). Is that correct?"

Ask for clarification or more information.

"Could you say more about what you mean by that?"

"How have you come to think that?"

Acknowledge the feelings behind the statement.

Express empathy and compassion. "It sounds like you're really frustrated/nervous/angry..." "I can understand that you're upset when you feel disrespected."

Separate intent from impact.

"I know you didn't realize this, but when you (comment/behavior), it was hurtful/offensive because instead you could (different language or behavior.)"

Share your own process.

"I noticed that you (comment/behavior). I used to do/say that too, but then I learned_____"

Express your feelings.

"When you (comment/behavior), i felt (feeling) and i would like you to_____"

Challenge the stereotype.

Give information, share your own experience and/or offer alternative perspectives.

"Actually, in my experience_____"

"I think that's a stereotype. I've learned that _____"

"Another way to look at it is _____"

Appeal to values and principles.

"I know you really care about_____. Acting in this way really undermines those intentions."

Promote empathy.

Ask how they would feel if someone said something like that about their group, or their friend/partner/child.

"I know you don't like the stereotypes about (their group), how do you think he feels when he hears those things about his group?"

"How would you feel if someone said that about/did that to a person you care about?"

Tell them they're too smart or too good to say things like that.

"Come on. You're too smart to say something so ignorant/offensive."

Pretend you don't understand.

As people try to explain their comments, they often realize how silly they sound.

"I don't get it......" "Why is that funny?

Use humor.

Exaggerate comments, use gentle sarcasm.

"She plays like a girl?" You mean she plays like Serena Williams?" Or Mia Hamm?

Point out what they have in common with the other person.

"I'm tired of hearing your Muslim jokes. Do you know he's also studying _____ and likes to _____? You may want to talk with him about that. You have a lot in common."

W.I.I.F.T. (what's in it for them).

Explain why diversity or that individual/group can be helpful/valuable.

"I know you're not comfortable with _____but they can help us reach out to/better serve other groups on campus/in the community."

"In the real world, we are going to have to work with all sorts of people, so might as well learn how to do it here."

Remind them of the rules or policies.

"That behavior is against our code of conduct and could have serious consequences if continued."

Adapted from: Goodman, D. (2011). Promoting Diversity and Social Justice: Educating People from Privileged Groups. New York: Routledge. Excerpt available at www.dianegoodman.com

Responding to microaggressions + bias when you have caused harm

Take a Breath

Calm yourself. Understand that while you may have made a mistake, it doesn't mean you're a bad person. In these circumstances, people often fall prey to the fundamental attribution error – a "tendency to believe that things happen because of who we are as people rather than the situation."

Don't make it about you

When a human being tells you that they have been harmed by your words or actions, you need to focus on the injured party

Listen

Your first priority is to make sure the other person feels heard. As difficult as it may be to receive the criticism, "they are taking a risk by putting themselves on the line." Be grateful. "It is a deeply sacred gift for someone to reflect back to you how you're showing up in the world and to help you become more evolved

Sincerely Apologize

You need to "replace your instinctive defensiveness with curiosity and empathy" and offer a genuine apology. Your apology must include three elements: "You must address the harmful comment, acknowledge the impact it had, and commit to doing better."

And don't overdo it.

Upon being called out for an offensive remark, some people have a tendency to over-apologize. things like: 'I am so sorry. I feel so terrible. I am not a racist. What must you think of me?'" But these histrionics do not help, and in fact, they contribute to the insult. "You are flexing your power by [asking] this employee to take care of you". It's not your colleague's job to assuage your guilt, and make you feel better about the situation.

Seek to understand on you own time

In the event that you don't quite grasp how what you said or did was prejudiced and hurtful, do not force your colleague into a drawn-out conversation or try to persuade them of your benign intent.

Consider following up

"If you went on a hike with someone and they tripped and hurt themselves, you would follow up with them later to express your genuine concern for their wellbeing," – particularly if their fall was due to your negligence. The same should hold true for times "when you have been the cause of someone's emotional pain."

Keep working on it

Finally, recognize that becoming a better, open-minded, anti-racist, anti-sexist person is hard work. "You're doing the best you can; you're human and fallible; and you're going to mess up from time to time." "Rarely does one conversation erase a lifetime of programming."

Reference:

You've Been Called Out for a Microaggression. What Do You Do? Rebecca Knight. Harvard Business Review. July 24, 2020 https://hbr.org/2020/07/youve-been-called-out-for-a-microaggression-what-do-you-do

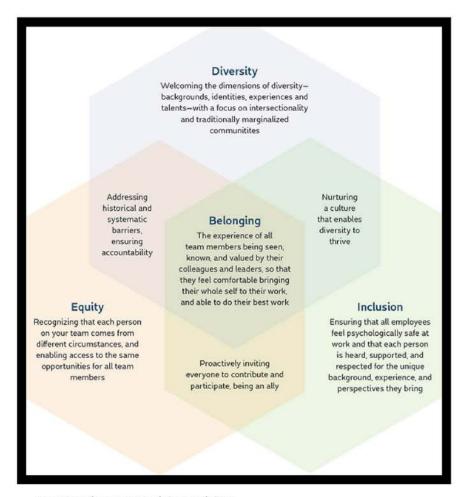


Image: Blue Beyond Consulting

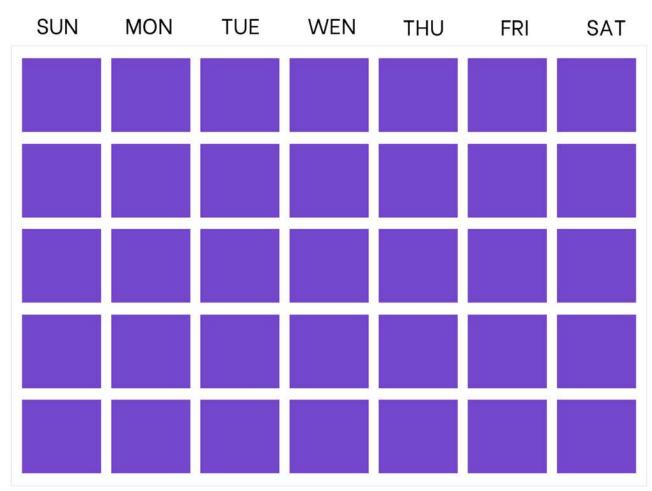
NAMING My Equity Commitments

Personal Statement + Action Plan

Personal Stateme	ent					
How do I know racism and discrir contend with?	mination are a reality I have to					
How do these things show up in my life and work?						
Learning Goals List two topics that you will learn more about over the next 6 months:	Strategies List 3 strategies you are going to use in your work and why you think they may be effective					

LE	ARNING STRATEGIES
01.	
02.	
03.	
04.	





LE	ARNING STRATEGIES
01.	
02.	
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SUN	MON	TUE	WEN	THU	FRI	SAT
		75. 7				7

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY

Notes:

LE	ARNING STRATEGIES
01.	
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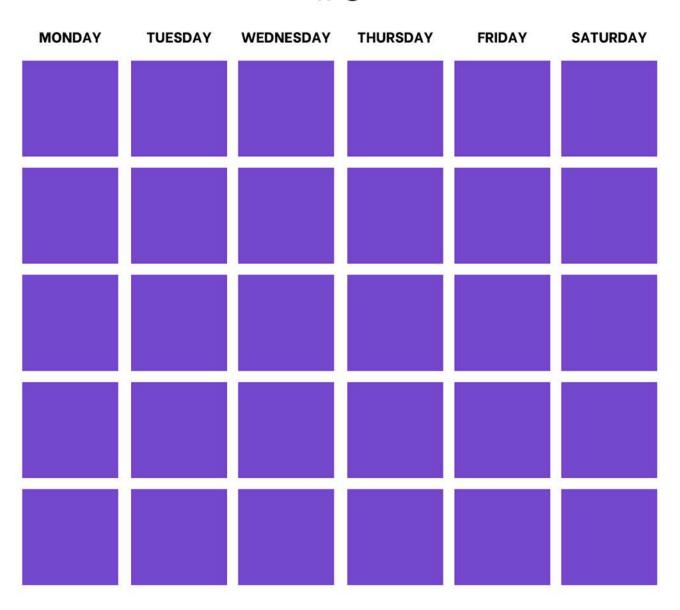




LE	ARNING STRATEGIES
01.	
02.	
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SUN	MON	TUE	WEN	THU	FRI	SAT



Notes:

PROGRESS NOTES

Your Thoughts

Dates:	
	TO DO LIST
GOAL	TO DO LIST

TRAINING

Notes



INVITING POSSIBILITIES

Restorative Justice as Equity in Vermont:

A Diversity, Equity + Inclusion (DEI) Learning Experience

Compiled by Kendra Malone | VIBE Consulting LLC | December 2023 [Updated June 2024]

VIBE Vermont Team: Bitsy Joy, K. Scott Nelson, Cheryl Richardson, Michelle Molina



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