

Inviting Possibilities: Restorative Justice as Equity in Vermont

An Education + Training Project of the Vermont Statewide Equity
thru Data, Justice, Inclusion, and Education (EDJIE) Initiative
An Orange County Restorative Justice Center + VIBE Consulting LLC Collaboration

Facilitators: Becca Robinson, Susanna Weller, Liam Crannell



Wednesday, October 23, 2024



Welcome.

Introduction

S in the Chat:
Organization | What brought you joy recently?



Zoom Reminders

- ❑ Please mute yourself when not speaking
- ❑ Use the 'raise hand' feature to be called on to share
- ❑ We encourage you to have your camera on,
- ❑ Have the Social Identity exploration exercise you completed available
- ❑ We offer ourselves and each other grace as we collectively navigate this virtual learning and co-creation space
- ❑ Please have the name you want to be called visible and your pronouns



Our Time Together

- Collective Care Guidelines
- Project Overview + Vermont's Equity Movements
- Session Objectives + Theory of Change
- Self-Reflection - Why Are We Here?
- Key Diversity, Equity + Inclusion (DEI) Concepts
- Cycles of Socialization
- Making Connections: Restorative Justice is Equity
- Bias Intervention Skill Building
- Statement of Commitment + Individual Action Plans
- Next Steps + Session Evaluation

Agenda





We agree...

- To offer emotional support, accountability, and a sense of connection
- Set and respect boundaries
- Flipping shame into grounds for growth
- Make decisions about offering support from a place of love
- Make space, take space, and hold space
- Remain mindful of assumptions
- Be receptive to feedback when biases present themselves in discussion

*****Created by the Education & Training Cohort*****



Collective Care Guidelines



Learning Objectives



Exploration

Gain an understanding of foundational DEI concepts and their applications



Intervention

Identify oppressive interactions, experiences, systems, and explore responses



Dialogue Development

Become better equipped to discuss and address racism

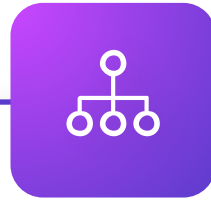
Our

Theory of Change



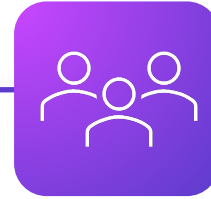
Oppression

Oppression is a harmful reality that operates in all facets of society.



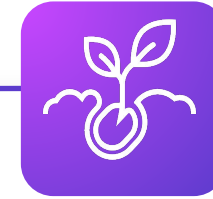
Restorative Justice

As restorative justice practitioners it is our duty and commitment to remedy this harm through self-awareness, skill-development, community building, and emotional and somatic practices in the service of repair and healing



Community Accountability

To repair harm, shift culture, and prevent future harm, we intentionally prioritize communities most impacted by system oppression and interpersonal bias.



Growth + Action

As such, this community, endeavors to grow individually and collectively, through educating our RJC peers on DEI broadly and anti-racism principles and practices specifically.



Connection



Self Awareness



Growth

A Note About

Discomfort

- **Get comfortable being triggered...**

“What we often don’t consider about DEI is that it is, at its core, *upsetting work*. The goal of these programs is to rid us and our institutions of bias—and *facing our biases, or the impact of others’ bias on us, is stressful*.”

The success of DEI initiatives, then, hinges on discomfort.

Expecting to feel uncomfortable, angry or sad lowers the chances of us being surprised by these emotions when they arrive and shutting down. That is the, albeit difficult, *starting point for effective inclusion work*”

- Puneet Sandu, *FastCompany*, 2021

Social Privileges



Social Burdens

*Column A only exists because column B exists;
Column A only disappears when column B does*

White privilege

Racism

Male privilege

Sexism

Cis/hetero privilege

Transphobia, Homophobia

Class privilege

Class discrimination

Health & Ability

Stigma, Ableism

Religious privilege

Antisemitism, Islamophobia

mentalhealthathome.org



Discomfort

Impacts

01

Emotional Distress + Labor

The editing work of emotions that someone would do in order to have an effect on the emotions of someone else. It happens in formal as well as informal settings, but is often offloaded onto women,” or other disadvantaged groups in society. Even if this kind of work is noticed, it still goes unpaid. And if we continue to ignore and devalue it, we are exacerbating inequality.

- Rose Hackman

02

Cognitive Dissonance

The mental discomfort that results from holding two conflicting beliefs, values, or attitudes. People tend to seek consistency in their attitudes and perceptions, so this conflict causes unpleasant feelings of unease or discomfort.

i.e. I was just made aware of my bias, that must mean I'm a 'bad' person ⇒ UNTRUE



Growth Mindset

Becoming Anti-Racist

When we choose to be antiracist, we become actively conscious about race and racism and take actions to end racial inequities in our daily lives. Being antiracist is believing that racism is everyone's problem, and we all have a role to play in stopping it [Talking About Race, Smithsonian]

“ *To be antiracist is a radical choice in the face of history, requiring a radical reorientation of our consciousness.* ”

- Ibram Kendi



Ibram Kendi
Founder + Director
Center for Anti-Racist Research



Honoring

Vermont's Equity History [a snapshot]

Developmental Disabilities Assistance/Bill of Rights Act

Passed 1975



Association of Africans Living in Vermont

Founded 1999



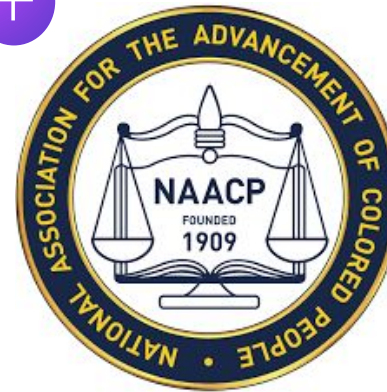
Migrant Justice/Justicia Migrante

Founded 2009



Champlain NAACP

Founded 2015
(1st VT Chapter)



Office of Racial Equity

Founded 2019





A cohort of 25 RJC representatives and 9 community partners...

spent significant time between August and October 2023 contributing to the co-creation of this training, using a liberatory human centered design approach.

About Us: VIBE Vermont

Project Overview

- **EDJIE Education + Training**

In June 2023, the EDJIE Leadership Team partnered with VIBE Consulting LLC to undertake the education and training components of this initiative. This collaboration yielded a dedicated community of Restorative Justice Center (RJC) personnel and volunteers.

Opportunities for Growth

Diversity, Equity + Inclusion (DEI)

Continuing Education: Ongoing Training + Practice Spaces

In **March 2024**, the VIBE Vermont EDJIE Education + Training Cohort will launch a series of supplemental learning and engagement opportunities for those who participate in this core training. To continue to *deepen your knowledge and skill-sets related to equity work* forthcoming workshops and practice spaces will include:

- Racialized experience affinity spaces
- Somatic/embodiment (of the body) practice
- Trauma informed responses to oppression
- Grappling with white supremacy
- Courageous conversations/difficult dialogues
- Skills for allyship
- Among others!

Embodiment

/əm'bädēmənt/ n.

The process of acknowledging and expressing the physical, bodily elements of one's thoughts, feelings, and beliefs.



Land Acknowledgement

We open in the recognition that restorative justice practices are not new. Mohawk, Abenaki, Wabenaki, Mohican, and Haudenosaunee nations practiced restorative justice for millennia before European settlers disrupted the natural order of the land and its people and created the boundaries of the settler state of Vermont. The United States Government and European settlers used genocidal violence and ethnic cleansing to forcibly remove sovereign Indigenous democracies as a way to acquire land, criminalizing the spiritual and cultural practices of the Indigenous peoples of Turtle Island in the process. The punishment-based colonial criminal justice system they established has always been and continues to be used as a tool for Indigenous genocide.

Despite a relatively brief history of oppressive, punishment-based criminal justice, the colonized state of Vermont is slowly remembering and embracing the old ways of practicing restorative justice on this land, albeit in a colonized context. There is an exceptionally fine line between appropriation and appreciation of Indigenous cultural practices. Authentically adopting restorative justice practices comes with the responsibility to recognize and actively unlearn the conditioned tendencies of dominant colonizer culture. It requires constant commitment to deep cultural harm reduction and regular practice sitting in the discomfort of the complexity of this work.





- **Instructions**

- Inhale - 4 seconds
- Hold - 4 seconds
- Exhale - 4 seconds
- Hold - 4 seconds
- Repeat

A Moment of Grounding

Box Breathing

- **Embodied Practice**

An embodiment practice is a method of using the unique sensations of our body as a tool to develop awareness, stay present, self-regulate, feel whole, find balance, feel connected, know yourself, love yourself and be empowered. - Somatic Movement Project

Why

Are you here?

The significance of equity efforts to you...

In pairs discuss why you have chosen to participate in this training today.

Learning ?

Community ?

Your Values ?



Exploring Key Concepts



Mural by David "Meggs" Hooke. Photo credit: Tina Bell / Twenty20

Exploring Key Concepts: What is harm?

Oppression = Harm

TYPES OF OPPRESSION

EXPLOITATION

The unequal exchange of one group's labor and energies for another group's advantage and advancement

CULTURAL IMPERIALISM

Establishing the ruling class culture as the norm; othering of groups that are not part of the dominant culture

POWERLESSNESS

Oppressed groups lack power and are blocked from routes to gaining power

MARGINALIZATION

Expelling specific groups from meaningful participation in society

VIOLENCE

Threats and experiences of physical and structural violence

Exploring Key Concepts
A Closer Look...

Harm

	Areas for Harm	Opportunities for Empowerment
Interpersonal	Othering and microaggressions	Build trust and accept mistrust
	Trusting meritocracy	Become comfortable with discomfort
	Exerting power	Share power and expertise
Interpretation	Overlooking structural inequity	See the entire system
	Emphasizing weaknesses	Look through the community's lens
	Dismissing individual stories	Value individual stories
Structure	Determining goals externally	Define the problem-space together
	Abandoning projects	Plan to continue

Anti-Oppression Approaches to Collaborative Projects

Hillary Carey, *Anti-Oppression Mindsets for Collaborative Design*. Carnegie Mellon University

September 2020

Exploring

Key Concepts

01

Racism

Unequal allocation of goods, resources, and services, and the limitation of access to full participation in society based on race.

Prejudice

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

02

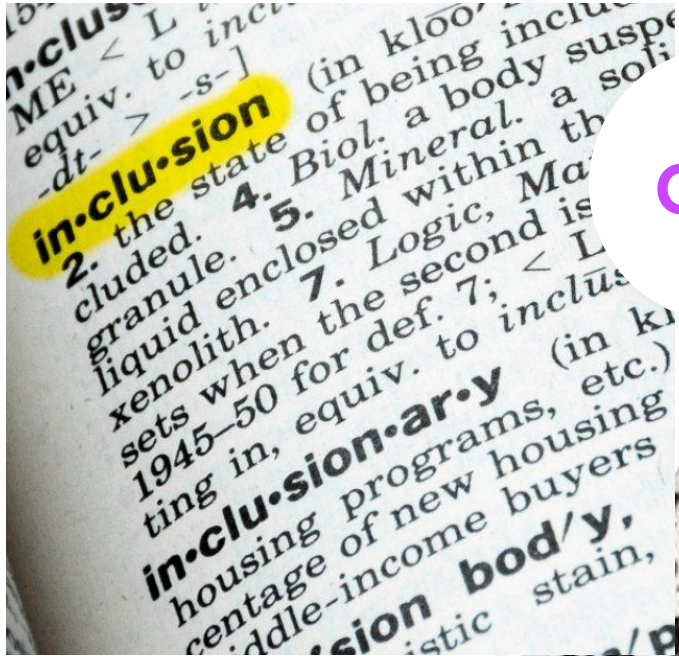
Oppression

A dominant group, whether knowingly or unknowingly, abuses a group that is marginalized by society.

03

Exploring

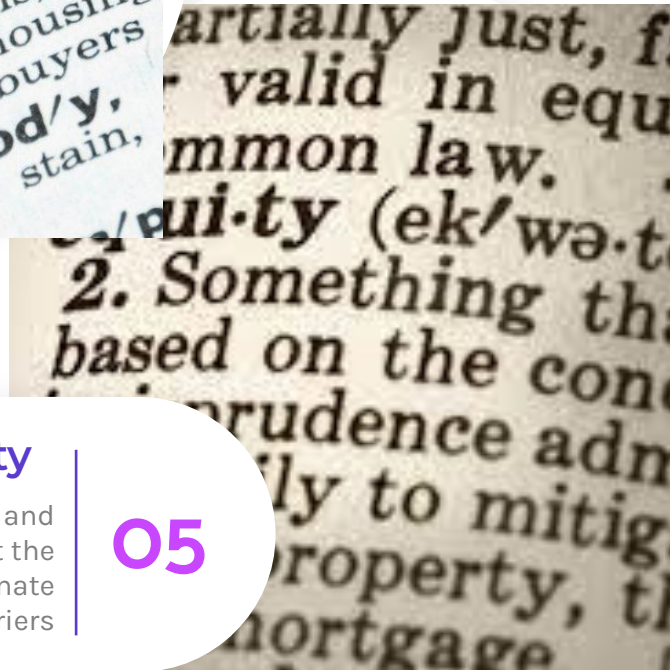
Key Concepts



04

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.



Equity

05

The fair treatment, access, opportunity and advancement for all people, while at the same time striving to identify and eliminate barriers



06

Social Identity

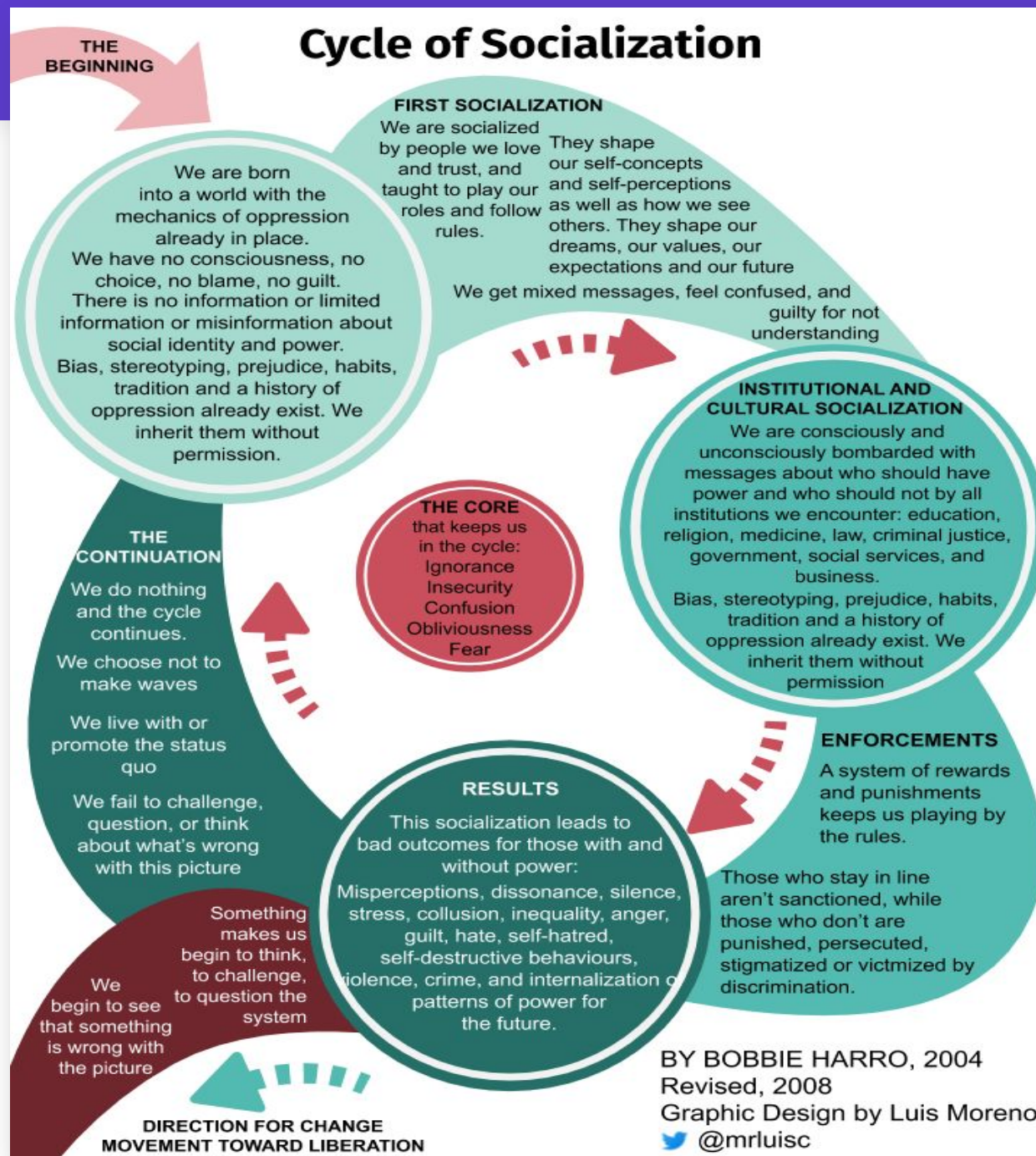
The way you think about yourself, the way you are viewed by the world and the characteristics that define you



15-minute break

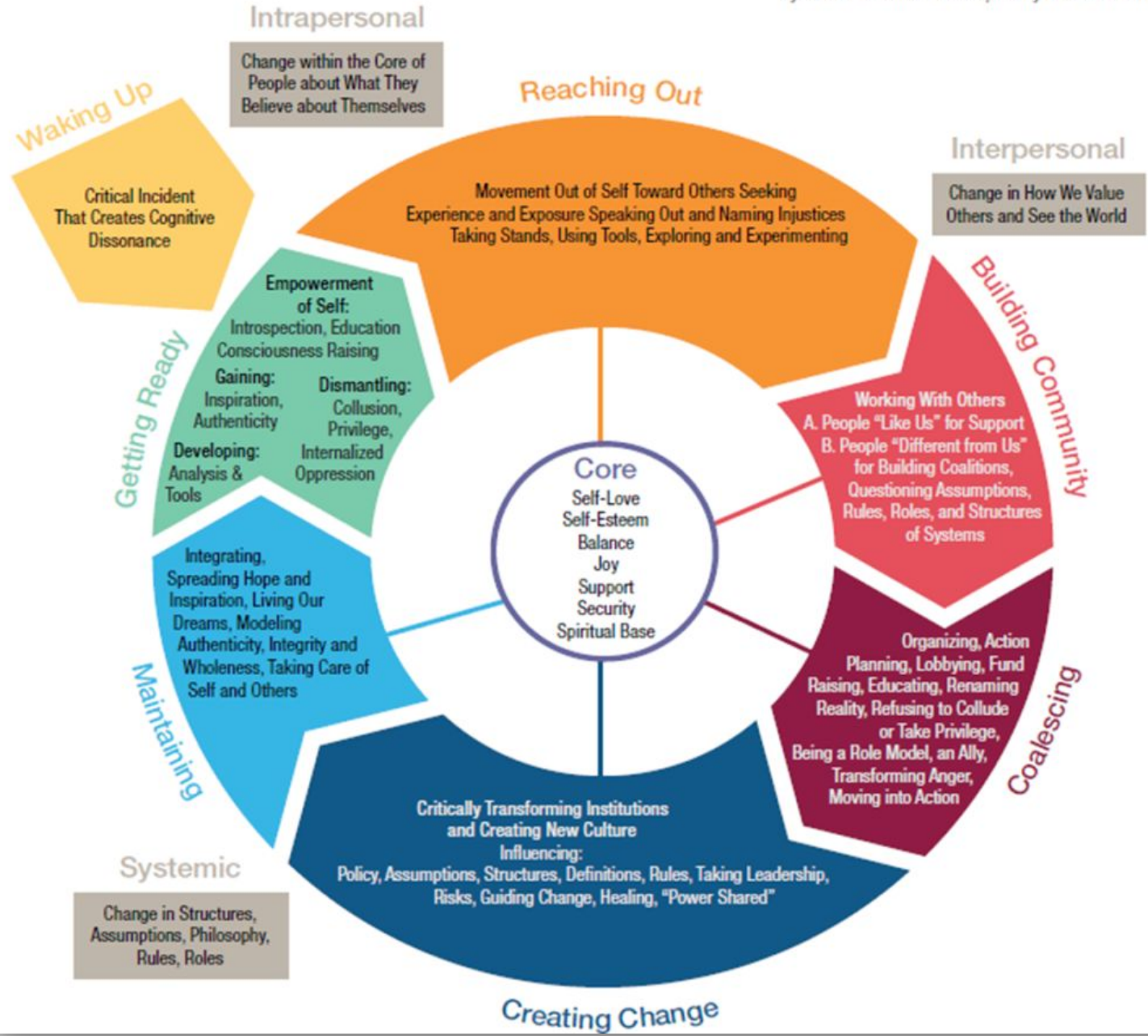
Understanding the

Cycle of Socialization



Understanding

Cycle of Liberation



Self-Reflection

Free Write

Describe your own socialization regarding race...



Group Dialogue.

What messages do we receive about race?



**In a racist society,
it is not enough to be
non-racist. We must
be anti-racist.**

|
Angela Davis



**It is not our differences
that divide us. It is our
inability to recognize,
accept, and celebrate
those differences.**

|
Audre Lorde

The circle is the symbol of Navajo justice because it is perfect, unbroken, and a simile of unity and oneness. It conveys the image of people **gathering together** for discussion. Imagine a system of law which permits anyone to say anything during the course of a dispute.

A system in which **no authority figure has to determine what is 'true.'** Think of a system with the full participation of disputants in a final decision.

If we say of law that "life comes from it," then where there is hurt, there must be healing. Navajo concepts of justice are related to healing.

- excerpted from Robert Yazzie's article "Life Comes From It: Navajo Justice Concepts" (1994)

Connections: Restorative Justice + Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

The Circle process that many non-Native people are using today is rooted in the tradition of talking Circles that Indigenous Peoples in North America use and have used for millennia. Different Native Peoples practice different forms of the Circle process.

Rooted in Indigenous Traditions



Image: Restorative Solutions

Making

Connections

Restorative Justice + Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Restorative justice is how we exit the socialization wheel and move towards liberation



Growing Our Skill-Sets

Discrimination Interventions + Emotional Intelligence + Diversity



Affirmative Introspection

A critical first step in developing the ability to deal with differences is an awareness of ourselves in order to understand our reactions to others.

This involves a comfort with our own identity and an understanding of our values, passions, preferences and world view, and privileges.



Self-Governance

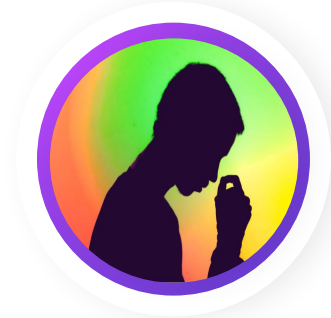
Self-Governance involves gaining mastery over the feelings that differences evoke by being able to deal with ambiguity that is part of a diverse environment, being flexible and adaptable in the face of change and taking charge of the mental self talk that goes on when we encounter challenging differences.



Inter/Intra Cultural Literacy

In a diverse world, understanding and managing ourselves is not enough. We also need to understand others in order to figure out the reasons and meaning behind their behavior.

This third aspect involves understanding others' cultural rules, norms, and values, and being able to empathize and metaphorically walk in their shoes.



Social Architecting

The fourth component of EID focuses on developing the ability to consciously and intentionally structure our relationships and environments so that they are productive, fulfilling and satisfying for everyone.

Responding to Microaggressions + Bias

Awareness

- Restate or paraphrase
- Ask for clarification or more information
- Acknowledge the feelings behind the statement
- Separate intent from impact

Connection

- Share your own process
- Express your feelings
- Challenge the stereotype
- Appeal to values and principles
- Promote empathy

Values

- Tell them they're too smart or too good to say things like that
- Pretend you don't understand
- Use humor
- Point out what they have in common with the other person
- W.I.I.F.T (What's in it for them)
- Remind them of rules or policies

“

- **Denial:** “This is not a problem.”
- **Disengagement:** “This is not my problem.”
- **Derailment:** “What about other problems?”

- Threats to the feedback-recipient's **sense of self**
- **Distrust** of the feedback and/or feedback-giver
- **Difficulty understanding** the feedback or its meaning



Pushback + Obstacles

“

- Take a Breath
- Don't make it about you
 - Listen
 - Sincerely Apologize
 - And don't overdo it
- Seek to understand on your own time
- Consider following up
- Keep working on it



Tools for Receptivity

Navigating

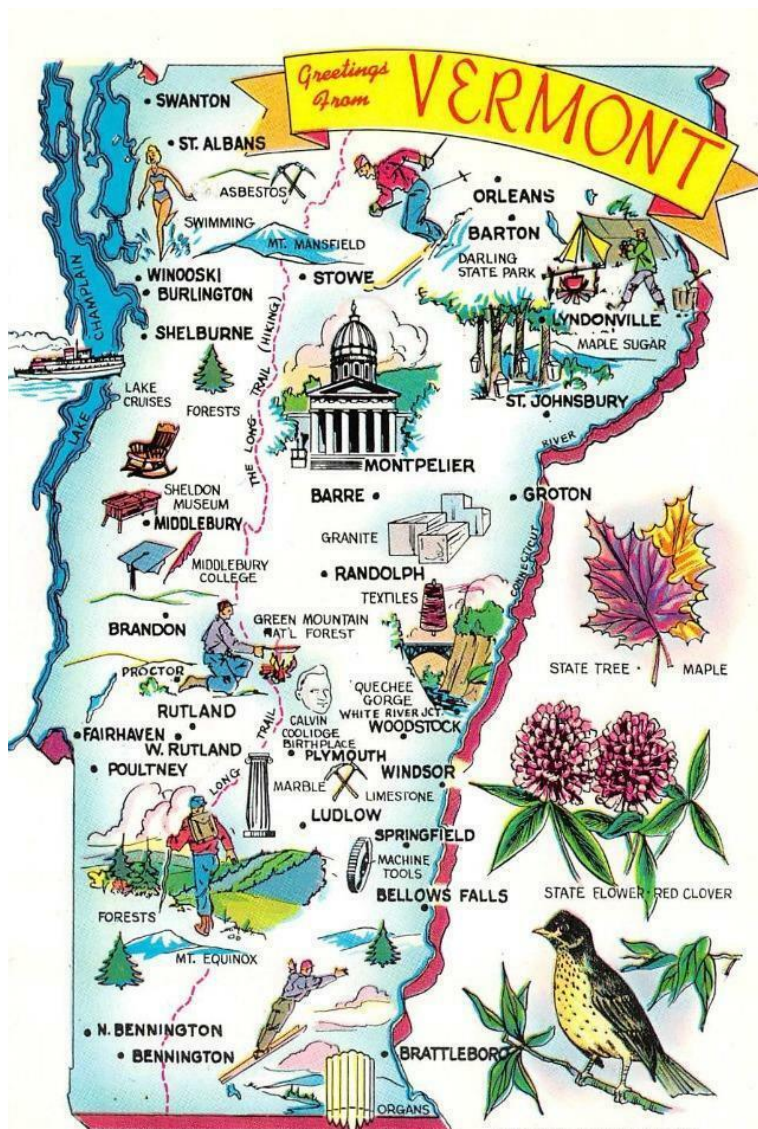
Critical Feedback

Receptivity to feedback entails being open to considering the information provided by the feedback-giver and acting on it if change is warranted.



Systemic Harm

In FY2019, Black people were six times more likely to be part of the sentenced incarcerated population relative to White people. Black people were disproportionately represented in all other corrections populations as well.



Justice Reinvestment in Vermont Results of Racial Equity in Sentencing Analysis, Justice Center The Council of State Governments (April 2022)

Group Discussion

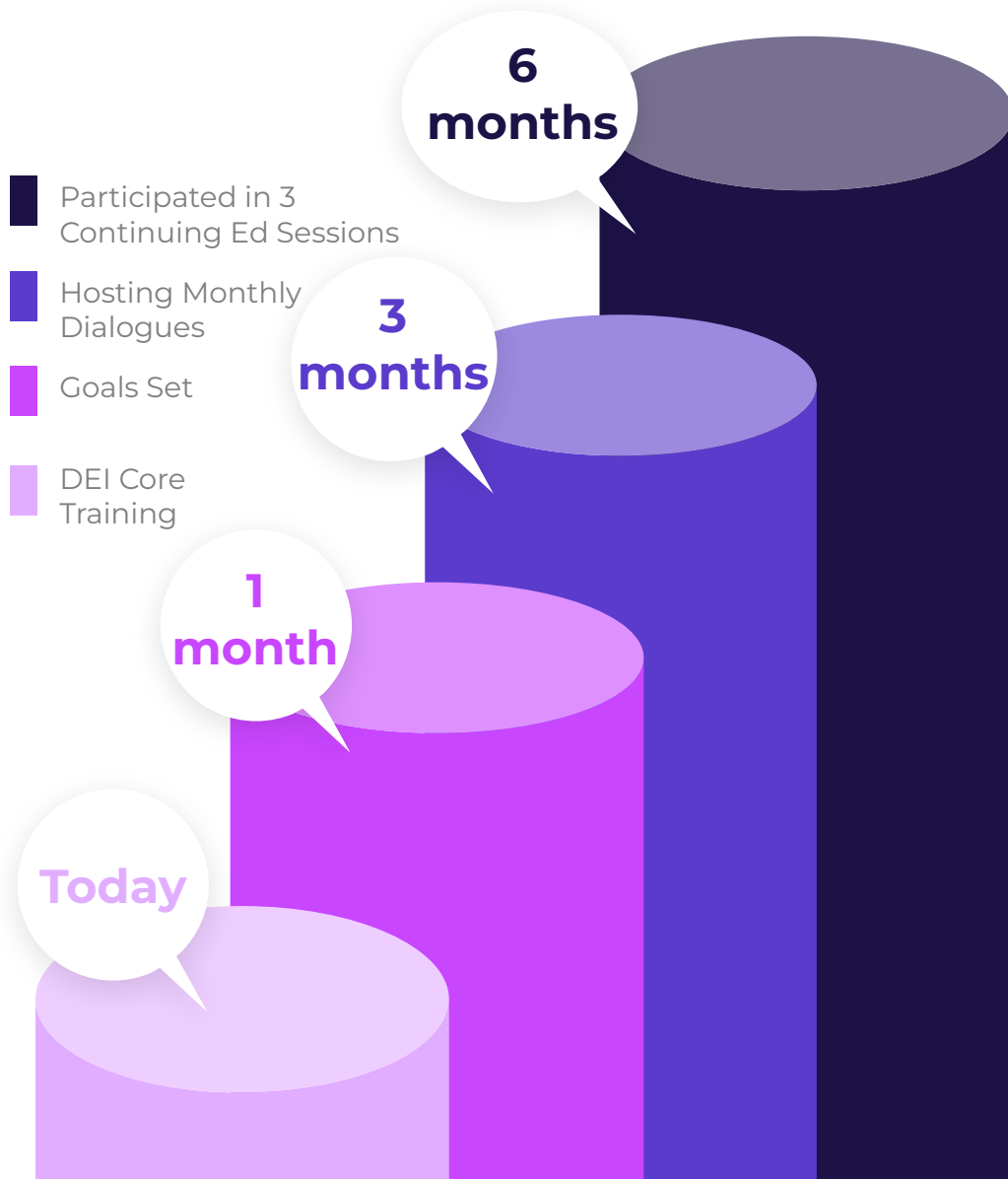
Why does this matter?

Annually, Black people (in Vermont) are over **14 times** more likely to be a defendant in a felony drug case and **over 7 times** more likely to be a defendant in a case involving crimes against person(s), relative to White people.



Oppressive Realities

In 2019, Black people were 3.5 times more likely than White people to be defendants in a misdemeanor case.

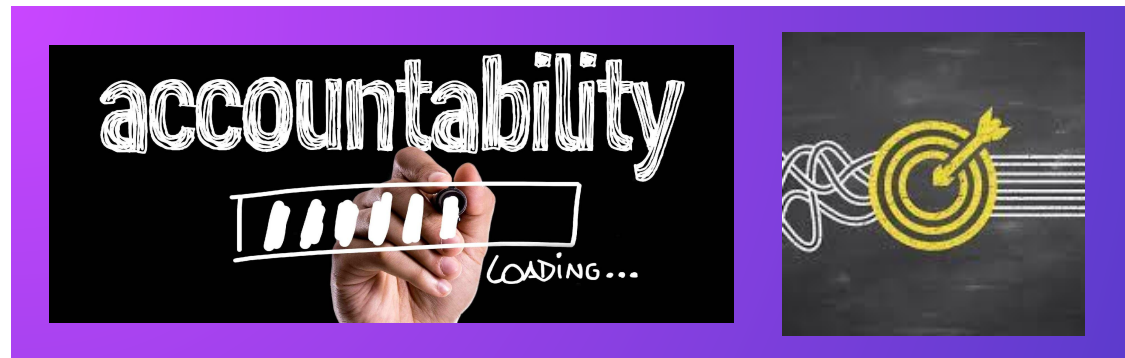


Action

Plans

- Naming My Equity Commitments

Personal Statement | Learning Goals | Strategies | Action Plans



Reminder: Opportunities for Growth

Diversity, Equity + Inclusion (DEI)

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/əmˈbɒdəmənt/ n.
The process of acknowledging and expressing the physical, bodily elements of one's thoughts, feelings, and beliefs.



EDJIE Education & Core Training Survey

Vermont's Equity thru Data, Justice, Inclusion, and Education (EDJIE) Initiative would like your feedback on the training. Specifically, we'd like you to reflect on your abilities, skills, and knowledge both before and after the course. Training facilitators will review your feedback (along with that of others) and identify areas to improve future trainings.

Your responses will remain anonymous. This survey does not explicitly capture any identifying information. There are some open-ended questions where you can decide how much identifying information you are comfortable providing.

We want to hear from you!

Feedback

Evaluation



Our

Gratitude

We accomplish equity together.

This project is supported by Grant No. 15PBJA-22-GG-01205-BRND awarded by the Bureau of Justice Assistance. The Bureau of Justice Assistance is a component of the Department of Justice's Office of Justice Programs, which also includes the Bureau of Justice Statistics, the National Institute of Justice, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, the Office for Victims of Crime, and the SMART Office. Points of view or opinions in this document are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.



Want to join the next cohort or get connected to other DEI capacity building opportunities?

Contact Kendra Malone, VIBE Consulting LLC
kendra@vibe-consulting.com

