Nothing For Us, Without Us

Getting Started with Community Engagement and Culturally Responsive Evaluation

Just a reminder of who I am: LaShaune P. Johnson

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Live session: a review

- Introduce levels of racism and define race equity
- Discuss community engagement and its value for equity
- Briefly review the history of cultural competence for evaluation
- Outline the tenets of culturally responsive evaluation
- Plan for initiating community engaged, culturally responsive evaluation

Today's goal

- Review our key terms for racial equity and culturally responsive evaluation

- Introduce another meeting tool—Meeting Agreements

- Introduce a case study: Superheroes Among Us

- Introduce more methods

Review: What is Race Equity?

- **RACE EQUITY:** The condition where one's race identity has no influence on how one fares in society. Race equity is one part of race justice and must be addressed at the root causes and not just the manifestations. This includes the elimination of policies, practices, attitudes, and cultural messages that reinforce differential outcomes by race.

- **RACE EQUITY CULTURE:** A culture focused on proactive counteraction of social and race inequities inside and outside of an organization.

- **RACE EQUITY LENS:** The process of paying disciplined attention to race and ethnicity while analyzing problems, looking for solutions, and defining success. A race equity lens critiques a "color blind" approach, arguing that color blindness perpetuates systems of disadvantage in that it prevents structural racism from being acknowledged. Application of a race equity lens helps to illuminate disparate outcomes, patterns of disadvantage, and root cause.

- From Equity in the Center's "AWAKE TO WOKE TO WORK: Building a Race Equity Culture"

Review: What Is CRE? (Culturally Responsive Evaluation)

- Culturally Responsive Evaluation centers values and cultural beliefs on the evaluation of a program or policy. It provides a particular focus on groups that have been historically marginalized, asking how power is distributed, which relationships are valued, and which are privileged in an evaluation (Hood, Hopson, & Kirkhart, 2015).

Review: Important new change: Equitable Evaluation

- CREA/CRE is moving increasingly towards CREE

- **Culturally responsive and EQUITABLE Evaluation.**

- Statement from EEI: **"***Imagine if evaluation was conceptualized, implemented, and utilized in a manner that promotes equity*. Everyday narratives that continue to marginalize, minimize, and disrespect people of color and those with less privilege could be replaced with ones that do not demonize and place blame on the individual. They could instead lift up the historical, contextual, and powerful dynamics that create and sustain oppression and shed light on the strategies and solutions which can shift the "rules of the game" so that equity is achievable."

- **EQUITY is now the center of culturally-responsive evaluation!**

Review: Community engagement happens at the intersections

- This slide is Nexus Community Partners, "Impacts of Community Engagement Model"

- This circle helps us think about all the possible arenas that public libraries could be involved in to create equity and to facilitate cultural responsiveness.
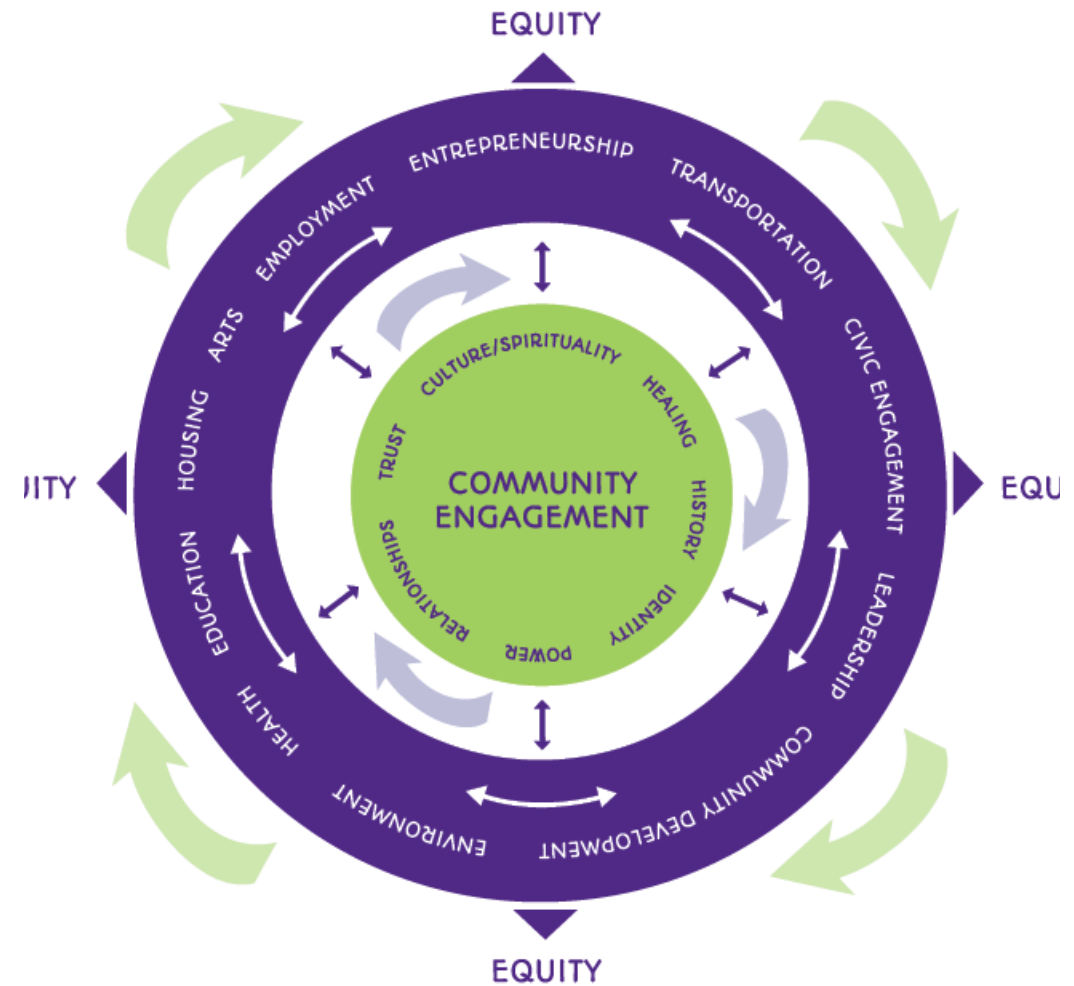
Activity for you to try

- If you are stuck with how to get started and/or trying to remove the barriers that block your work, why not try to integrate meeting agreements into your staff and community meetings?

- On the next slide, you will see a sample of workshop agreements?

- What would you add? What might you take away?

- How might beginning a conversation with agreements change your culture?

Meeting Agreements (This is in the shared files.)

When the going gets rough, turn to wonder.

If you feel judgmental, or defensive, ask yourself, "I wonder what brought her to this belief?" "I wonder what he's feeling right now?" "I wonder what my reaction teaches me about myself?" Set aside judgment to listen to others—and to yourself—more deeply.

Trust and learn from the silence.

Silence is a gift in our noisy world, and a way of knowing in itself. Treat silence as a member of the group. After someone has spoken, take time to reflect without immediately filling the space with words.

Observe deep confidentiality.

A Circle of Trust depends on knowing that whatever we say will remain with the people to whom we choose to say it — whether in small groups or in the large circle — and will never be passed on to others without our explicit permission.

Attend to your own inner teacher.

We learn from others, of course. But as we explore poems, stories, questions and silence in a Circle of Trust, we have a special opportunity to learn from within. So pay close attention to your own reactions and responses, to your most important teacher.

Know that it's possible...

to leave the circle with whatever it was that you needed when you arrived, and that the seeds planted here can keep growing in the days ahead.

Give and receive welcome.

People learn best in hospitable spaces. In this circle we support each other's learning by giving and receiving hospitality.

What is offered in the circle is by invitation, not demand.

This is not a "share or die" event! Do whatever your soul calls for, and know that you do it with our support. Your soul knows your needs better than we do.

No fixing, saving, advising or correcting.

This is one of the hardest guidelines for those of us who like to "help." But it is vital to welcoming the soul, to making space for the inner teacher.

Be present as fully as possible.

Be here with your doubts, fears and failings as well as your convictions, joys and successes, your listening as well as your speaking.

Speak your truth in ways that respect other people's truth.

Our views of reality may differ, but speaking one's truth in a Circle of Trust does not mean interpreting, correcting or debating what others say. Speak from your center to the center of the circle, using "I" statements, trusting people to do their own sifting and winnowing.

Learn to respond to others with honest, open questions...

instead of counsel or corrections. With such questions, we help "hear each other into deeper speech."

CENTER FOR
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Facilitators of Courage & Renewal programs use these Touchstones to define clear boundaries in a Circle of Trust, the kinds of boundaries that create safe space for the soul. While these Touchstones define how we relate in a retreat, they can be adapted to support workplaces, schools, communities, and other groups—any place where we want to honor the integrity of the individual and build relational trust.

Application Practice Superheroes Among Us

- The local libraries, which have long been the site for homework clubs, arts clubs, and workforce development workshops, are going to partner with the teachers to offer a "Hero Lab", where local artists will be available to help the student teams draw and write up their bios. You will see quotes from a community conversation. How would you handle this?
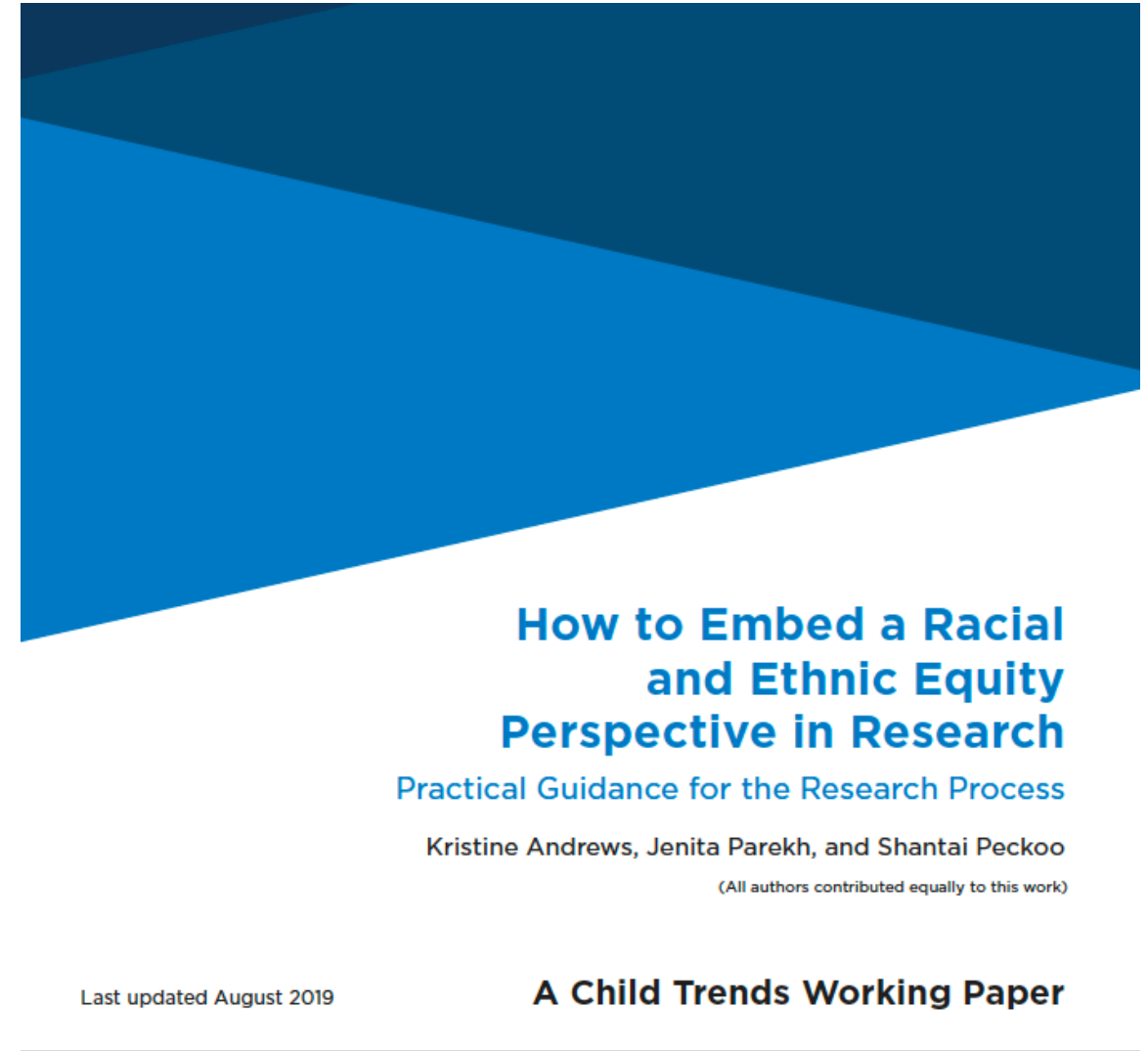
A few tools and tips to get started

Start a Project with these Guiding Principles (this is about research, but it fits well with evaluation)

- Examine their own backgrounds and biases.

- Make a commitment to dig deeper into the data.

- Recognize that the research process itself has an impact on communities, and researchers have a role in ensuring research benefits communities.

- Engage communities as partners in research.

- Guard against the implied or explicit assumption that white is the normative, standard, or default position.

- **This document is in the shared files.**

How to Embed a Racial and Ethnic Equity Perspective in Research
Practical Guidance for the Research Process

Kristine Andrews, Jenita Parekh, and Shantai Peckoo

(All authors contributed equally to this work)

Last updated August 2019

A Child Trends Working Paper

More Childtrends: Opportunities to Weave in Community and Equity

- **Landscape Assessment**: Before the study begins, the researcher should gain a better understanding of the context in which the research will be conducted by engaging stakeholders to gather their perspectives on the issue or concern of interest. *Community stakeholder engagement will shape the research process and may uncover root causes of the issue.*

- **Design and Data Collection**: The researcher should develop research questions and designs that aim to advance racial and ethnic equity. *To this end, researchers can involve racially and ethnically diverse research teams, construct a research design that is accepted by the community, develop research questions that target root issues, and address equity when identifying data collection methods and instruments.*

- **Data Analysis**: In both qualitative and quantitative analysis, the researcher should disaggregate data, explore intersectionality, discuss data trends with appropriate context, beware of implicit bias, and *involve the community, where possible, in data interpretation.*

- **Dissemination**: The researcher should include the community as one of the multiple primary audiences of research findings, *consider various formats for reporting findings, and prioritize actionable research findings that the community can use.*

Childtrends, Landscape Assessment
(all are great, this is most relevant for our case)

- Who is affected—positively or negatively—by the issue you plan to study? Why? How?

- How is power distributed in the community? ***What power differentials exist within the community?*** (For example, are elders treated as gatekeepers or final authority?)

- ***Which relationships are prioritized? Which relationships are discouraged?*** (For example, how is the relationship between the community and law enforcement?)

- How does the community like to be approached and ***what is the appropriate gateway***? (For example, are there key community leaders who need to "give their blessing" for others to agree to engage?)

- How do you ***refer*** to individuals in your setting?

- What are the ***historical and cultural antecedents of the community***? (For example, what is the history of racial dynamics in the community?)

Chicago Beyond: "Why am I always being Researched?"

This document is in the shared files.

- **Access**: Could we be missing out on community wisdom because conversations about research are happening without community meaningfully present at the table?

- **Information**: Can we effectively partner to get to the full truth if information about research options, methods, inputs, costs, benefits, and risks are not shared?

- **Validity**: Could we be accepting partial truths as the full picture, because we are not valuing community organizations and community members as valid experts?

- **Ownership**: Are we getting incomplete answers by valuing research processes that take from, rather than build up, community ownership?

- **Value**: What value is generated, for whom, and at what cost?

- **Accountability**: Are we holding funders and researchers accountable if research designs create harm or do not work?

- **Authorship**: Whose voice is shaping the narrative and is the community fully represented?

Things to think about (Chicago)

- Now that you've seen a bit about the values the guide culturally responsive equity-focused evaluation, take some time over the next few weeks to consider the following:

- Think about your most recent event/initiative, and ask yourself these two questions from the Chicago Beyond list from the previous slide:

    - *Access: Could we be missing out on community wisdom because conversations about research (OR EVALUATION) are happening without community meaningfully present at the table?*

    - *Authorship: Whose voice is shaping the narrative and is the community fully represented?*

    - **Reminder: Be kind to yourself! You are still learning!**

More Racial Equity/Social Change resources

- **Mapping yourself on the Social Change ecosystem**: https://dviyer.medium.com/the-social-change-map-meets-november-2020-8902b85c0ca9

- **SPARQ Tools**: http://sparqtools.org

  Racial Equity Tools: https://www.racialequitytools.org

- **PBJN**: https://www.seattleu.edu/cce/suyi/advance-the-field/place-based-justice-network/

Final thoughts

- Be kind to yourself. You and your colleagues are still learning.

- When you are surprised/hurt by a community comment/response, turn to wonder: are there ways to engage in a constructive dialogue about power or historical/cultural context?

- Evaluation is an ongoing conversation-–not everything needs to be formal to be useful.

- Engage community members early and often in planning and evaluation—they are experts on their lived experiences!
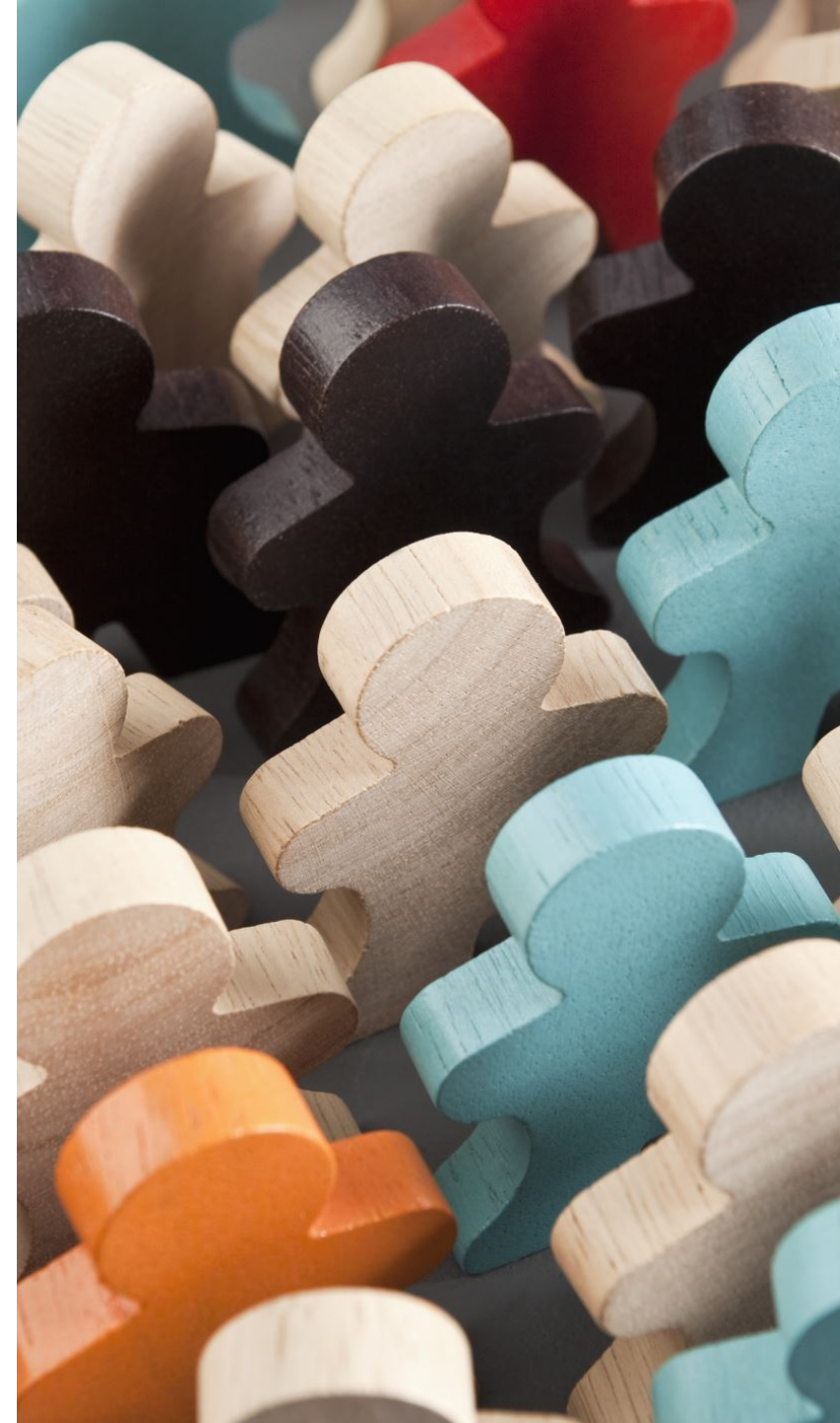
Thank you!

- Thank you for your time.
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