APPLYING A
SOCIAL JUSTICE
AND RACIAL
EQUITY LENS TO
OUR WORK: THE
WORKSHOP
VERSION 😊

Higher Ground Change Strategies for the BSAS Statewide Virtual Substance Misuse Prevention Conference
December 2020
APPLYING A RACIAL EQUITY LENS TO THE STRATEGIC PREVENTION FRAMEWORK

- **Assessment:** How do we understand the problem?
- **Capacity:** What does capacity and “readiness” mean?
- **Planning:** How do you know what “works” and what to do?
- **Implementation:** Who is best to implement the project? How are power and equity addressed?
- **Evaluation:** What is success? How is it measured? Who controls the story?
Structures and systems that hold up what we see

What are root causes?

What are the impacts we see at the surface?

HOW DO THESE SYSTEMS WORK WHERE WE LIVE?
LET'S LOOK AT THE WHOLE "TREE" IN THE PRESENT

In your groups:

Note your breakout number and use the link in the chat to get your group’s Tree Worksheet (please go to the number sheet that matches your breakout number)

Start with the roots, then the structure, then symptoms or outcomes (leaves at the surface)

Keep the doc open as you will be going to it again after we debrief the first part of the exercise
WHAT KIND OF SYSTEMS SUPPORTS A JUST, HEALTHY SOCIETY?

What would we see at the surface?

What kind of structures would we have in place?

What values and systems would be at the foundation?
LET'S IMAGINE THE WHOLE "TREE" TRANSFORMED

In your groups:

Return to your group’s Tree Worksheet and start on the green tree below

Start with the roots, then the structure, then outcomes (leaves at the surface) that comprise healthy communities

Keep the doc open to refer to for our debrief
WHAT MAKES A JUSTICE APPROACH DIFFERENT?

Traditional Approach

Single issue focus on individual behavior change and “cultural” context
Primary strategies: education and programmatic interventions by professionals targeting those affected
Funding to service providers and researchers
Support delivery is “vertical” and short term and static

Justice Approach

Multi-issue focus on policy and environmental change and how the context in which we work is shaped by racism, patriarchy, privilege, power...
Primary strategies: organizing, shaping the public conversation, changing policy and practice, building power of those affected
Investment in power building, structural change, advocacy and research to change power relations, redistribute resources and change the environment
“Circular” support: mutual, long term relationships; movement building
ANATOMY OF AN ISSUE

ISSUE

CURRENT CONTEXT
Official story, $, policy

HISTORY AND BELIEFS
Propaganda and “education”, memory

POWER RELATIONS
Concentration of resources over time
The “pattern” that creates the context
INCREASING EQUITY AND TRACKING INEQUITY AND PRIVILEGE

Historical context that uncovers patterns of oppression, privilege and present-day impact of conquest, etc.

Data collection and disaggregation that unveils patterns (EqIS)

Advancing equity and shared power for participation in formal decisionmaking processes

Advancing stories and strategic communications that makes the problems and solutions visible
If one thinks about racism by examining only one wire of the cage, or one form of disadvantage, it is difficult to understand how and why the bird is trapped. Only a large number of wires arranged in a specific way, and connected to one another, serve to enclose the bird and to ensure that it cannot escape.

— Iris Marion Young —
WHEN WE SEE THE WHOLE “CAGE” WE FOLLOW THE MONEY/CHANGE THE RULES

Make actors visible
- Make the role of government and industry visible and finds ways to hold them accountable

Identify environmental factors
- Identify all 5Ps (Place, Product, Price, Promotion and Predatory)

Address inequities
- Address inequities in application, enforcement and allocation of resources
TOOLS FOR APPLYING A RACIAL EQUITY LENS TO THE STRATEGIC PREVENTION FRAMEWORK

- 1:1s with community people and other listening tools
- Hire staff that looks like/comes from communities in which you’re working
- Recognize and integrate community assets and skills into capacity plan. There is always someone with the skills
- Develop formal advisory boards and partnerships
- Equitably compensate people for their time and involvement
- Identify measures of success in collaboration
- Develop communications strategies that center communities telling their own stories
THANK YOU!

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