Organization Development Network

Organization Development Review

JOURNAL OF THE ORGANIZATION DEVELOPMENT NETWORK

SPECIAL ISSUE *Guest Editors: John L. Bennett, Yabome Gilpin-Jackson*

Justice, Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (JEDI) in Organization Development

Organization Development Review

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From the Editor

This issue is the second in the Special Issue series, *In an Era of Transformation and Traumatic Disruptions… What Can OD Bring*, guest edited by **John Bennett** and **Yabome Gilpin-Jackson**. This set of articles is entitled **Justice, Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (JEDI) in Organization Development**. Their work as curators and editors, has produced valuable and insightful material to help

further improve and develop our field. Their Guest Editor Letter following will describe more about this issue.

We are also searching for a friend of the Journal, who could serve in copy editor role to help get all our articles into the right formats, following our guidelines and APA requirements. If more than one can help us, we can make this a rotating role. Please share your interest with me at *editor@odnetwork.org*.

One other change to look for and share, especially with non-member colleagues, is our Promotion for *OD Review* Subscriptions. The OD Network has started advertising a promotion to expand subscribers for the

Journal, with a discount to join now. All ODN members receive the Journal with their membership, but we want to also attract people who may just want the Journal and then may ultimately join our organization. Look for the ODN News, Connections, and social media outlets.

In 2021, we will be publishing an extra regular issue to make room for more articles this year, since we are having two Special Issues this year. Our next two will publish in September and December.

David W. Jamieson, PhD
Editor-in-Chief
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From the Guest Editors

Justice, Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (JEDI) in Organization Development

This issue was born out of the desire to serve our field at this time of volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity, especially since the disruptive events of 2020. As a result, many old practices have become ineffective, much of what we think we know is challenged—how we do work, how organizations (and societies) configure, organize, and adapt to new normals are all in the spotlight. Every day, we experience, see, or learn more about global health threats, major economic upheavals, inequalities, injustice, flaws in human relations, racism, equity, and our hallmarks of governing.

We are in a space where the status quo is breaking down, there is complexity at the edge of chaos, and the "new normal" has not yet arrived. In that space, we keep yearning for a return to normalcy, where we can escape the dissonances, disturbances, trauma, and disruptions and get as quickly as possible to the other side of a new order. Yet, as Organization Development (OD) scholars and practitioners, from our conceptual backpack, methodological tool kits, and applied behavioral science roots, we know that there are ways we can contribute to organizations and the world, in and through the transition. We know that in the space between disruption and emergence, there is great possibility for transformation and opportunities to intentionally design and create the conditions for a better world. So, we asked you to respond to the call: *In an Era of Transformative and Traumatic Disruptions...What Can OD Bring?*

Our purpose was simply to seek guidance from OD scholars and practitioners to collectively ground us and shed light on the possibilities for the sustained impact and contribution of our field to an emerging world. This call was an attempt to help us as a field better see the system, sense the possibilities emerging, make meaning of the challenges we are collectively experiencing, and amplify our contribution to the design of a better world that works for all (Oshry, 2007).

An unprecedented 50 of you responded to the call for abstract submissions. This signals the energy for contribution that we are offering our field and we commend each and every one of you. We encourage you to continue with your work and to continue finding ways to share it with others, whether your work is profiled here or not. As a result of the tremendous response, we decided to release two volumes of this special issue with a total of twenty-two articles.

In the first issue, we highlighted twelve articles that showcased the role of *OD in Times of Disruption*. In this second issue, there are ten articles that speak to *Justice, Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (JEDI) in Organization Development*. This issue of *Organization Development Review* scales to our role in impacting the greater whole of societal issues within organizations and beyond. As shown in the *Global Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Benchmarks Report*, curated by 112 experts from around the world, OD is one of five approaches responding to the need for a systemic and structural change approach and "supporting scholarship, theory, and a body of work" to address JEDI concerns (Molefi, O'Mara, & Richter, 2021, p. 12). This issue contributes to that growing response and body of work in JEDI and upholds the foundational social justice and humanizing values of our field.

Here is an overview of the articles in this issue.

Katz and Miller provide us with a perspective about raising the bar on addressing inclusion, diversity, and systemic change by suggesting that the bar is being raised on organizations and their leaders to lead differently, to engage differently and to change the very nature of work and organizations. They identify organizational responses to Black Lives Matter and the current reality for People of Color, then identify the role of OD practitioners as key partners in the change process and how OD can assist organizations in taking transformational steps to accelerate change.

Next, **BeLue, Dix, Ahmed, Ahmed,**
and Taylor present a case study of a Black-created and led community-based organization located in the Promise Zone of St. Louis, Missouri. This case illustrates a consultant-client collaboration of over four decades to address social and health equity and trauma in a predominately Black community. They present the philosophical and theoretical framework that a Black-led organization employs to address historical trauma as well as lessons learned. They offer guidelines for OD practitioners who intend to work with Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) led organizations that serve disenfranchised communities.

Oyedele and Perrone use Dialogic OD practices to engage in a field study to understand how to facilitate community interests in their call to defund the police. They present an exploratory study using applied principles of participatory action research based on interviews from key stakeholders. Insights from the findings provide a framework of strategic actions, informed by the OD lens, that will support the initial stages of a change management process around systems of community safety.

Next, **Rath and Raheja** explore diversity and inclusion (D & I) from a Jungian lens of holding polar opposite masculine and feminine archetypal energies. They explore how the current times demand organizations shift from the conventional gender-focused way of dealing with D&I. This calls for focusing not just on the "WHATs" but also the "HOWs" of using OD principles in helping organizations create a diverse and inclusive environment.

Then, **Walker** unpacks the pillars of white supremacy as defined in Tema Okun's work. Walker explores both how OD practitioners may be unwittingly upholding these pillars and how they can disrupt patterns of racism or oppression in organizations. Examples of choices practitioners have to operate differently and principles of Dialogic OD that are supportive of helping organizations behave more equitably are shared. The article draws on research on power dynamics, change management, collaboration, and leadership and

the author's OD and diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) practitioner experience within mission-focused organizations.

Next, **Applegate and Patterson** describe the importance of white-bodied OD practitioners integrating a cultural somatics framework into their use-of-self skillset. A cultural somatics framework and practice teaches white-bodied OD practitioners how to regulate the response of their nervous system to the charge of race, allowing them to recognize and disrupt how internalized white supremacy is present in their mindset, behaviors, and actions. They discuss how a cultural somatics foundation is necessary for white-bodied OD practitioners to become more effective partners and allies to their Black, Indigenous, and People of Color colleagues in the work of imagining and creating just organizational systems and practices, and ultimately, dismantling racism in organizations and beyond.

Next, **Rosso** presents promising theoretical frameworks and organizational strategies for effectively addressing Whiteness and engaging White leaders in justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion (JEDI) work. Interview data from 16 JEDI leaders in healthcare and scholarly research were paired with orienting theories to develop recommendations for OD practitioners. This work shows that the most promising JEDI strategies utilize a culture change lens and incorporate a developmental model of positive, White anti-Racist identity. Recommended interventions involve a dialogic approach to build positive relationships, both among and between racial identity groups and concludes with two examples of promising interventions.

Then, **Song** shares the challenges of creating meaningful inclusion within organizations by drawing upon personal experiences navigating corporate and personal identity as a remote worker and woman of color. She invites OD practitioners to leverage intersectionality as a critical framework in designing and implementing interventions. She concludes by inviting OD practitioners to reflect on a series of inquiries to help them deepen their reflection to create inclusive OD practices.

Owusu and Wilde offer a dialogic prototype that lays out concerns about the field and practice of OD and its over-reliance on a pervasive narrative structure, the Hero's journey, which limits our capacity to respond to the converging global crises that we face. They suggest that within OD, this is sustained by the problematic formulation of the practitioner as change agent and our alignment with power, resulting in harmful consequences for the practitioner, their clients and the world. Despite the prevalence of this singular story, there are alternative narrative structures—often arising from those with marginalized experiences and identities—that can animate a reformulation of OD practice. These narrative technologies hint at potential pathways for OD to thoughtfully and ethically contribute to a transformative integration of theory and practice.

Finally, **Vivian** proposes the idea of consultant as healer, offering a framework of understanding how consultants can act as healers. The framework rests on the premise that healing is a process of making whole again. and that the actions of a healer are manifestations of love and compassion. This paper explores the components of the healer role, understanding traumatized systems, the process of helping client systems heal, and challenges of this work.

We hope that the articles in this issue contribute to your scholarship and practice and that collectively, we will continue to powerfully share the impact of OD in these times of disruption.

Yabome Gilpin-Jackson, PhD
John L. Bennett, PhD

References

Molefi, N., O'Mara, J., & Richter, A. (2021). Global diversity, equity and inclusion benchmarks: Standards for organizations around the world. The Centre for Global Inclusion.

Oshry, B. (2007). Seeing systems: Unlocking the mysteries of organizational life. Berrett-Koehler.

Guidelines for Authors

Our Purpose

The *Organization Development Review* is a journal bringing together scholarly and practitioner perspectives to foster greater understanding, improved practice, new research, and innovations for critical issues in our fields. We focus on all processes of human organizing, such as small groups, organizations, networks & communities. Our scope is wide within the broad range of:

1) How human organizing systems develop, adapt, change, and transform.
2) How we lead more effectively and develop effective organizations.
3) How we create healthy workplaces and cultures that get the work done and leave people engaged, proud, and satisfied.
4) How we support all forms of diversity, equality, and inclusion in organizing and operating organizations, communities, and societies.
5) How we develop greater individual and organizational capabilities for our VUCA world.
6) How we develop greater creativity, innovation, and collaborative processes.
7) How we create a more humane and just society.
8) How we develop and innovate in the profession.
9) How we educate leaders and change agents, of all types, in the science and practices of values-based change and masterful practice.
10) Developments in any fields that provide new insights and thinking related to our primary purpose of developing/changing effective, healthy, equitble human systems of all forms.
11) Case studies that demonstrate the impact of OD and OD in collaboration with other fields of inquiry and practice.

We publish evidence-based practice, applied research, innovative ways to do this work, new developments in the fields, as well as thought pieces, invitational pieces, cases, and relevant book reviews. We hope for wide participation across our fields, around the globe, across sectors & industries, and inclusive of all forms of diversities. We wish to generate more conversations and dialogues among our fields. We ask that all submissions reflect the OD Network values to the extent possible and as applicable to your topic and type of submission as follows:

Humanity First
» **We are stewards** of OD principles to shepherd us through the fourth industrial revolution; elevating humanity by focusing on the human side of the organizing enterprise.

Service Focused
» **We are advocates** of the advancement and embedding of the thought processes and practices of OD by doing no harm and leaving the world better than how we met it.

Courage to Act
» **We are catalysts** for development leading to transformation, leveraging a balanced and positive voice, even in times of adversity.

Integrity
» **We are activists for acting with honesty** and transparency in our internal and external interactions to generate trust and confidence among all.

Collaborative and Inclusive
» **We are co-creators, hosting the space** to welcome novel contributions, connecting adjacent disciplines, thereby making our strategic partnerships and member engagement stronger.

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All articles should:
» Be submitted with names on articles and on e-docs
» Clearly state the purpose of the article and its content
» Present ideas logically, with clear transitions
» Include section headings to help guide readers
» Use language that reflects inclusivity and is non-discriminatory in the context of the article
» Avoid jargon and overly formal expressions
» Reference sources used and provide source references for any theories, ideas, methods, models, and practices not created by the author(s)
» Conform to English (US version) standards and be edited for spelling and grammar rules
» Avoid self-promotion
» Be useful in practice or provide implications for practitioners (leaders, change agents, etc.)
» For formatting guidelines, citations, and references, follow the *American Psychological Association Publication Manual, 7th Edition* (2020)
» Submit as Word document, not pdf or email form; the document should contain short title and author name
» Always have title and name on documents

Guidelines for Authors (contd.)

» Include an abstract and key words
» Contain short author bios *including contact email(s)* (up to 250 words)
» Graphics that enhance an article are encouraged. The *ODR* reserves the right to resize graphics when necessary. The graphics should be in a program that allows editing. We prefer graphics to match the *ODR*'s three-, two-, or one-column, half-page, or full-page formats. If authors have questions or concerns about graphics or computer art, please contact the Editor.

We consider articles of varying lengths between 2000–5000 words. Contact the Editor with any questions, ideas, or explorations (*editor@odnetwork.org*).

If the article is accepted for publication, the author will receive a PDF proof of the article for final approval before publication. At this stage the author may only fix errors in typesetting or minor changes to the text. After publication, the author will be sent a PDF of the final article and of the complete issue of *ODR* in which the article appears.

Submission Deadlines

Authors should email articles to the editor at *editor@odnetwork.org*. **Articles can be submitted at any time** and if accepted, will be included in an appropriate upcoming issue. General deadlines for articles being targeted for quarterly issues are as follows:

Winter Issue (mid–Mar): **October 1**
Spring Issue (mid–June): **January 1**
Summer Issue (mid–Sept): **April 1**
Fall Issue (mid–Dec): **July 1**

The Review Processes

The *ODR* is a peer reviewed journal. Authors can choose between two review processes and should *notify the Editor which they prefer when they submit a manuscript:*

Process 1 (open peer review): Submit with cover page including title, all authors, any acknowledgements, and a short abstract. Usually, two members of the *ODR* Editorial Board will review the article. They will recommend accepting the article for publication, pursuing publication after suggested changes, or rejecting the article. If they decide the article is publishable with changes, one or both of the editorial board members will email or call the primary author to discuss the suggested changes and serve as coaches in helping the author(s) prepare it for publication. Once the author(s) has made the changes to the satisfaction of the two editorial board members, it will be sent to the Editor for final determination. If it is now accepted, the *ODR* Editor will work with the authors to finalize the article for publication.

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Each *ODR* Board member will send their recommendation to the *ODR* Editor. If the Editor asks the author to revise and resubmit, the Editor will send the article to both reviewers after the author has made the suggested changes. The two members of the editorial board will work with the author on any further changes, then send it to the *ODR* Editor for preparation for publication. The *ODR* Editor makes the final decision about whether the articles will be published.

Timing Considerations

» When initially submitted, one should expect four weeks for review time, reviewer collaboration, and author feedback
» If reviewers/editor suggest revisions and resubmit, the article should be returned *within four weeks* (unless it is slated for an immediate issue in which case it should be returned *within 1–2 weeks*)

Other Publications

The *ODR* publishes **original articles**, not reprints from other publications or journals. Authors may re-publish materials first published in the *ODR* in another publication or webpage, as long as the publication gives credit to the *Organization Development Review* as the original place of publication.

Policy on Self-Promotion

Although publication in the *ODR* is a way of letting the OD community know about an author's work, and is therefore good publicity, the purpose of the *ODR* is to exchange ideas and information. Consequently, it is the policy of the OD Network to not accept articles that are primarily for the purpose of marketing or advertising an author's practice or promoting or selling anything.

No Going Back . . .

Raising the Bar on Addressing Inclusion, Diversity, and Systemic Change

By Judith H. Katz and
Frederick A. Miller

Abstract:
If you like change, these are the times to be living in! Organizations and our society has been unfrozen, and organization development has a significant opportunity to make substantive change. The bar is being raised on organizations and their leaders to lead differently, to engage differently, and to change the very nature of work and organizations. Nowhere is this more important than in addressing issues of inclusion, diversity, the isms, and inequality.

In this article we identify organizational responses to Black Lives Matter and the current reality for People of Color. We identify the role of OD practitioners as key partners in the change process and how OD can assist organizations in taking bold steps... transformational steps to accelerate change.

Keyword Search Indicators: Diversity, equity, inclusion, and OD; Black Lives Matter and OD

Welcome to 2020-2021

If you like change, these are the times to be living in! Organization Development (OD) could not ask for a more fertile and momentous time to apply our skills and knowledge of organization change. As Peter Vaill (1989) described in his book, *Managing as a Performing Art,* we are living in permanent white water.

Many factors have unfrozen our organizations and society, but COVID-19 and the murder of George Floyd being witnessed by millions are the most significant for many individuals and organizations. The virus forced many into seclusion, threatening not only their livelihoods as tens of thousands of businesses shuttered, but also threatening their lives. The murder of George Floyd catalyzed demonstrations and riots and left many people unable to make sense of what was happening in the world

around them. It prompted many people to reassess their view of the world, especially related to the Black experience. It has forced many organizational leaders who historically did not take a public stand to speak up and speak out. All of this has created fertile ground for change and for OD. We in the OD community have a significant opportunity to make substantive and fundamental systemic change.

There is no going back and refreezing in the near future. The bar has been raised on organizations and their leaders to lead differently, to engage differently, to get different. From re-imagining service delivery models to shifting operations to meet new and unexpected demands to embracing remote/virtual work for many rather than a few, most organizations are operating in ways they never thought possible. This dramatic shift in how people work together, coupled with the renewed, intense focus on social justice, is creating

CREATING A NEW WAY OF LIVING
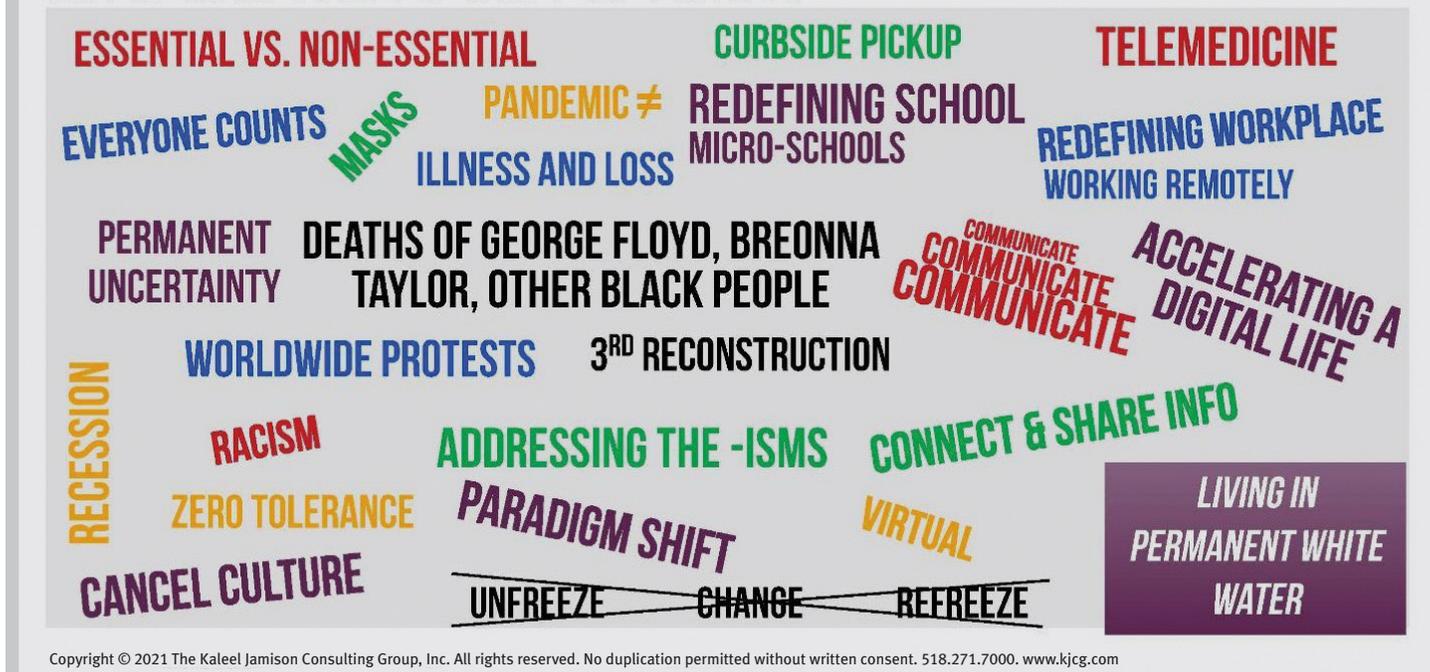
ESSENTIAL VS. NON-ESSENTIAL CURBSIDE PICKUP TELEMEDICINE

EVERYONE COUNTS MASKS PANDEMIC ≠ REDEFINING SCHOOL REDEFINING WORKPLACE
ILLNESS AND LOSS MICRO-SCHOOLS WORKING REMOTELY

PERMANENT UNCERTAINTY DEATHS OF GEORGE FLOYD, BREONNA TAYLOR, OTHER BLACK PEOPLE COMMUNICATE COMMUNICATE COMMUNICATE ACCELERATING A DIGITAL LIFE

WORLDWIDE PROTESTS 3RD RECONSTRUCTION

RECESSION RACISM ADDRESSING THE -ISMS CONNECT & SHARE INFO

ZERO TOLERANCE PARADIGM SHIFT VIRTUAL LIVING IN PERMANENT WHITE WATER

CANCEL CULTURE ~~UNFREEZE~~ ~~CHANGE~~ ~~REFREEZE~~

Figure 1: Creating a New Way of Living

new demands for addressing issues of inclusion, diversity, racism, and inequality in organizations today.

This moment holds the promise of a possible Third Reconstruction in the United States (Codrington III, 2020; Ravanona, 2020). The first Reconstruction came after the Civil War; the second was a result of the protests and riots of 1964–68 that led to additional Civil Rights laws. Now we are in another moment to accelerate and experience transformative change. Our organizations and their leaders must take actions to move beyond performative statements of support to truly address systemic change. In this article we focus on the needed organizational responses highlighted by the Black Lives Matter movement and the current reality for People of Color and all people in organizations. We will identify the role of OD practitioners as key partners in the change process and how we in the field of OD need to assist organizations in taking **bold steps… transformational steps** to accelerate change.

The COVID-19 Pandemic Strikes— A New Way of Living

2020 was a year like no other. The onset of Covid-19 brought unprecedented change to our lives, our organizations and our society. Many of us have been living through lock downs and a different rhythm to our lives to stay healthy and safe. Early in the pandemic, the forecasts of hundreds of thousands of people dying had many people reverting to the most basic of Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs—our physical and physiological safety, in which even a trip to the grocery store felt like a life-risking act. People and organzations have been dealing with change and disruption that isn't simply beyond a scale they ever imagined, but also highly volatile and dynamic, with conditions and knowledge shifting weekly, if not daily.

As a result of the pandemic, we are experiencing not only a national but a global crisis (See *Figure 1: Creating A New Way of Living*.) In the United States, we have a recession that continues to impact many lives. Many businesses are struggling, if not folding. People are being permanently laid off and portions of the safety net, such as the United States' Payroll Protection Program (PPP), moratoriums on paying rents and evictions, expanded unemployment insurance, are being debated by Congress and even if extended will end in several months.

The pandemic has created a paradigm shift (Barker, 1992) that we cannot ignore and in which many aspects of our lives have gone back to zero. As Joel Barker indicated in describing paradigm shifts, "When a paradigm shifts, everything goes back to zero." In many ways, the pandemic has accelerated the changes that were occurring in society and in the workplace. Many of these changes will be the new way of life. Our organizations and our society will not revert to the "way it was." We have found a new definition of "hero" as we celebrate the relentless commitment of nurses, doctors, hospital staff, bus drivers, and maintenance workers to name a few. We are seeing a redefinition of what an "essential" worker is as front line workers in manufacturing are needed on the job to keep plants running while most corporate staff work remotely. We have seen a massive shift to remote work, even in many organizations where previously it was thought impossible to work that way. Many children are being educated remotely, redefining school and how to structure education. Parents are finding ways to creatively educate their children, creating pods in which several families join together as a work-around to the limitations of remote learning. And people are creatively finding new ways to do daily tasks. Curbside and non-contact pickups have become more and more

the norm. Telemedicine, once resisted by doctors and insurance companies, now is commonplace. Theatre, religious services, birthdays, funerals, weddings, many daily activities and special occasions are now being held virtually—again once unthinkable by many.

The degree of flux and change is significant. No one is untouched by this reality. As one CEO we work with said, "We are living in permanent uncertainty." Five-year or even yearly strategic plans are impossible or, in many cases, not

color and the elderly have been most profoundly impacted (Chowkwanyun & Reed, 2020; North, 2020; Sandoiu, 2020). The pandemic has revealed the inequities in our health care system and its disparate impact on Black, Brown and Indigenous people. We often say, "We are all in the same water, but not in the same boat." In fact, some people don't even have a boat or a life jacket or a piece of wood to hold onto. Some are clearly drowning, with few resources to support them and no opportunity to isolate themselves to avoid

impact of centuries of colonization and unjust treatment, from the experience of Aboriginal people in Australia and Maoris in New Zealand to the experience of migrants in Europe. It included outrage in white as well as BIPOC communities who could not remain silent about the murder of George Floyd and the countless other Black people who have been and continue to be killed by the police. The Black Lives Matter movement opened the door wider to the possibility of real and significant change and unleashed a torrent of young and older people of all social and economic identities and colors who are no longer willing to tolerate the legacy and current reality of racial injustice. This moment we are living in today has the potential to address the legacies of slavery and the inequities embedded in all of our major systems: education, health care, housing, employment, judicial system, and the environment. The impact of this awareness and call to action is being felt not only in our communities and society, but inside organizations. Every organization has had to take a hard look at how they have chosen to respond and what stance they are willing to take. As another CEO with whom we work said recently, "You used to want to make sure that as a leader you were neutral. Today, that no longer is acceptable. You must take a stand and let your people know where you stand on social issues."

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worthwhile to pursue. We are living in "permanent white water" as Vaill (1989) so aptly described. Many of us are accustomed to periods of change and turbulence—white water. But when you go down the rapids, the assumption is that there will be some white water and then stretches where waters calm down before you reach the next set of rapids. Today, we find we are in one set of rapids and even before completing that set, the next set is upon us. All of this calls on organizations, leaders, and individuals to be resilient, creative, agile—to adapt and adapt again in this permanent state of change and uncertainty.

All in the Same Water, But Not the Same Boat

One of the stark realities of the pandemic has been the impact on different communities. It is clear that communities of

COVID-19, while others maintain privilege and access to resources and care and are able to work while safely quarantined. Some can even jump to the front of the line for testing and for the vaccine, not because of their need but because of their one-up status in society.

In the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, another reality is upon us. As many communities were in lock down and people were trying to figure out how to engage in a safe way, there was an event on May 31, 2020 that shook our nation and the world. The 9 minutes and 29 seconds of George Floyd's murder was captured for the world to witness. The protests that took place around the world spoke not only to the murder of one person, but the injustices to Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) in the United States and around the world. The outpouring of reaction gave voice to acknowledging the

An Opportunity for Transformation: Never Waste a Crisis… the Pandemic and Greater Awareness of the Plight of Black and Brown People

Addressing the pandemic has brought some surprises for organizations. One is how quickly many of them were able to pivot. As Lewin (1947) notes about the change process, when systems are unfrozen, there is the opportunity for significant change. A case in point is Nielsen Corporation. At the start of the pandemic, CEO David Kenny reported that when he came to Nielsen 18 months earlier, he was not supportive of remote work. When the pandemic hit and working remotely became necessary, he was able to see it differently and he now

ORGANIZATIONAL RESPONSES TO RACISM AND STRUCTURAL INEQUALITY

Do nothing	Make a Statement	Make Some Changes	Make Systemic Change
• Addressing issues seen as too risky, a political statement • Hope it will go away • No mention of Black Lives Matter (BLM) or racism within organization	• Public statements of support • Contributions to foundations, organizations, HBCUs (Historically Black Colleges and Universities), etc. • Performative activism (window dressing) • Focus on external community, not actions to be taken within organization	• Provide resources so that managers can support Black and Brown employees • E-Training or short education • ERGs (Employee Resource Groups) or DEI Councils carrying the bulk of work • Facilitate sessions focused on critical conversations regarding race • Talk about White privilege and bias • Focus on hiring • Limited resources allocated • Little leadership accountability • Some incremental change	• Strategic culture change intervention: internal and external • Honest diagnosis of current state • Connect effort to mission, vision, and strategy • Focus on culture, policies, and practices to support system change • Implement new competencies • Performance measures and accountabilities for individuals, leaders, and functions • Significant investment of time, money, people, resources

4

Figure 2: Organizational Responses to Racism and Structural Inequality

supports it. He was clear that what was needed was significant and bold change, not incremental steps (PBS Newshour, 2020). The pandemic has accelerated many changes that organizations were considering or starting prior to the pandemic. Many have had to pivot and pivot quickly.

From March through the end of May 2020, many diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts were challenged to keep those issues on the table. Managers struggled with the new reality of managing in a virtual world, with some focused on how to exert greater control, using software to monitor keystrokes to know that people were working when they are at home, (Parker, Knight & Keller, 2020) to others developing new skills to manage and unleash a virtual and non-virtual workforce. Many people recognized the fragility of the moment on all levels of systems—the fundamentals of getting work done, creating high performing teams while working remotely, and a workforce in stress as people struggled to manage their family/life needs and the organization's demands. As we worked with organizations at that time, conversations often centered on one question: how do we continue to address

diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) when our organization, workforce, and leaders are in survival and reactive mode? Many organizations began to downsize their DEI efforts or put them on hold; while a few visionary others saw the pandemic as an opportunity to transform their organization and culture and to really integrate diversity, equity, and inclusion into their strategy, mission, vision, and structural processes. And then on the 25th of May, George Floyd's murder and the subsequent Black Lives Matter movement, protests, and uprisings raised the bar on organizations' needing to respond to a new reality.

Black Lives Matter: A Part of the New Reality and a Continuum

Black Lives Matters (BLM) protests gave permission to BIPOC employees to be more vocal about their needs and experiences, not only in society but also inside of the organization. It has resulted in many leaders listening and acting differently. We have seen responses of organizations and leaders on a continuum from *Doing Nothing* in response to George Floyd's murder and the subsequent protests and outcry

inside organizations to interventions designed to *Make Systemic Change*. Leaders who are focused on systemic change are seizing this moment as an opportunity to increase their support and partner more closely with Black and Brown employees to enhance the organization. (See *Figure 2: Organizational Responses to Racism and Structural Inequality*.) As *Figure 2* suggests, some organizations are uncomfortable saying the words "Black Lives Matter" and frame it as a negative, political statement rather than one related to humanity and betterment. In one arts organization, an African American woman who was head of programming was told by her manager that the Board was not supportive of BLM and she should stay focused on business as usual. (She has since left the organization.) Fortunately, that has not been what we have witnessed in most organizations. Many organizations have responded with public statements supporting the movement and need for change that BLM and the protests highlighted and significant financial contributions and support to Black-owned businesses, HBCU's (Historical Black Colleges and Universities), foundations, and other Black causes have been the results. Other organizations have created

bold goals to support supplier diversity and change their external business partnerships. Organizations are also looking inward and identifying how they themselves need to change to better support and include Black, Brown, and Indigenous People of Color. Many of these statements however, have been more outward than internally focused. For organizations that have "made a statement," many people are waiting to see which statements have been performative or temporary and which represent a real shift in how the organization will operate

workforce. While these steps are important, they are often fragmented and not a part of a comprehensive strategic plan.

If we are to *Make Systemic Change*, the real need is to embark on a change strategy that recognizes how racism and other forms of oppression are baked into the organization and address these and other systemic inequalities in all elements of the organization both internally and in the organization's external relations and partnerships. These organizations have had a renewed sense of urgency and energy to address issues of racism in their culture,

They believed displaying portraits of past leaders conveyed the longevity and rich founding of the organization, not realizing that many saw the display of all white men as a reminder of the past and present inequity and a failure to recognize the contributions of women and People of Color over all these years. Clearly, they did not indicate any vision of a diverse and inclusive organization. Although these issues may have been raised in the past, they are being listened to in a new way. White leaders, managers, and co-workers are developing greater sensitivity to the impact of racial disparities, images, and behaviors inside the organization and how they can and are impacting their colleagues of color on a daily basis. Some organizations are also looking at ways to impact their surrounding communities and make them safer for Black and Brown people. One CEO and leadership team have made it a priority to work with local police departments where the company has plants to ensure that all employees are safe and free from harassment. In the past, such actions would have been seen as outside of the purview of the organization.

> If we are to *Make Systemic Change*, the real need is to embark on a change strategy that recognizes how racism and other forms of oppression are baked into the organization and addresses these and other systemic inequalities in all elements of the organization both internally and in the organization's external relations and partnerships. These organizations have had a renewed sense of urgency and energy to address issues of racism in their culture, policies, and practices and have identified how the change efforts, which might have been programmatic in the past, connect strategically to the organization's mission, vision, and strategy.

The Role of OD in the Change Process

in the future (Dowell & Jackson, 2020; Duarte, 2020). Other organizations have started or are increasing their efforts to *Make Some Changes* internally as well through actions like holding critical conversations about race and discussions of white privilege and bias. Other actions include providing resources to support individuals to take time to vote and for some to protest. We are seeing a proliferation of book discussion groups taking place inside of organizations and town hall meetings for people to gain understanding of the need for change and actions they can take and the organization will implement. Forums for managers have given them the opportunity to raise questions and concerns about how to address this critical moment of change. Some organizations are taking more proactive steps to hire a more diverse

policies, and practices and have identified how the change efforts, which might have been programmatic in the past, connect strategically to the organization's mission, vision, and strategy. Such a change effort calls upon the need for new competencies and accountabilities and is a significant investment of time, people, and resources.

Some organizations are seizing this opportunity to examine the antecedents of their organization and/or their professional discipline. Recently, we worked with a library association that is looking at how the racism of John Dewey was embedded into the library science discipline. Other organizations are looking at the deep roots of racism in their founding. In one of our client organizations, people began looking differently at the organization's history and what messages the pictures on the wall conveyed to the current workforce.

1. *A New Paradigm is Needed*
   As OD practitioners, we have the opportunity to play a critical role in this window of accelerated change and heightened attention to issues of racial inequality and injustice. Now is not the time to be holding back the possibility of significant change. We have a responsibility to raise the bar on our client systems and challenge them to take bigger and bolder steps. The window of change is here and we must assist our clients to be brave and take the actions needed for a leap in organization transformation. In this unfrozen moment we have the opportunity to accelerate those changes that have been underway and those that the organization may not have been ready to implement. As a firm, during the last several months we have been very fortunate in terms of the volume of calls we have been getting. Often

WE KNOW THE FIELD ISN'T LEVEL
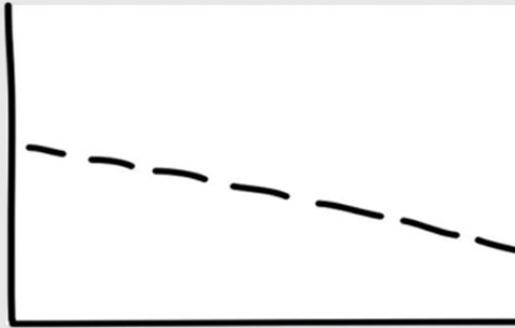
LEVELING THE PLAYING FIELD ISN'T ENOUGH
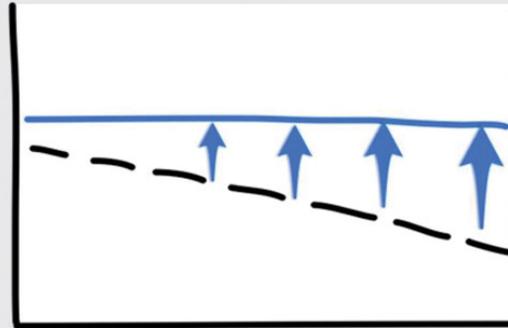
Raising the Playing Field

Raise the entire playing field so all people are better enabled to do their best work and the organization can perform at higher and higher levels; so each person and every social identity group are leveraged as assets, resources, and organizational strengths.

Raising the field

New mindsets | New behaviors | Higher performance | New ways of interacting

Leveling the field

Unlevel field
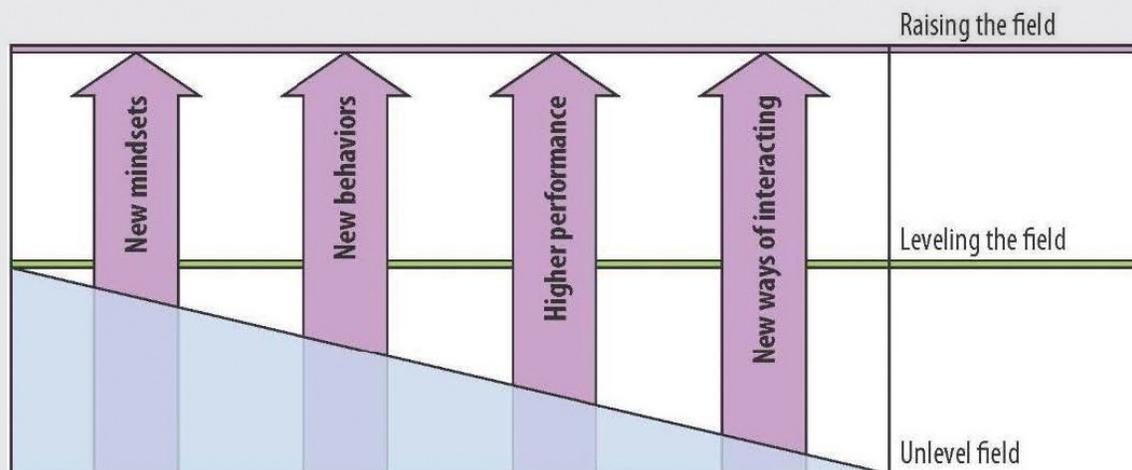
Miller, F.A. (2001–2018). Leveling the playing field is not enough. Unpublished paper. The Kaleel Jamison Consulting Group, Inc.

Figure 3: Raising the Playing Field

these calls are for a workshop on bias or facilitating a conversation about privilege, or understanding racism. We have said "no" to work that we believe is not comprehensive enough, or in which we don't see true commitment on the part of senior leaders. As OD practitioners, we *all* have an opportunity in this moment to raise the bar higher and to push organizations and their leaders to a higher level and more comprehensive culture change.

Action:
A paradigm shift is needed in how organizations think about diversity, equity and inclusion. The goal is not to just level the playing field to ensure that those who have experienced dis-crimination now experience what themajority group experiences. Instead, organizations need to raise the playing field to a higher level of performance for everyone. Yes, the lower end of the slope must be addressed, but that alone is insufficient for real change. This new paradigm means that everyone needs to change and calls for new systems, new processes, and new competencies for interacting. (See *Figure 3: Raising the Playing Field*.)

2. *More Than Hiring*
In response to the demands for change, many organizations have gone on a hiring frenzy. And while many are taking stock of their workforce and where they have gaps, the reality is that they need to do much more than bring in greater representation. In fact, recruiting new people who bring differences into an organization culture unprepared to include them and allow them to contribute, develop, and succeed might be the most harmful action they can take.

Action:
Know where the organization is along the Path to Inclusive Organizations (see *Figure 4: The Path to Inclusive Organizations*) (Katz & Miller, 1995) and target interventions accordingly. OD practitioners should conduct a

thorough diagnosis to understand and pinpoint where the organization is on The Path and to develop a strategy for sustainable change. What is the right intervention given where the organization is on The Path? Recognize that hiring people into a culture that is not prepared to include them only results in a revolving door that has significant costs to the organization and individuals. And, if the organization is at a place along The Path where there are or will be trailblazers, what is the organization doing to support them knowing that trailblazers always have more jobs than their official work role? (See sidebar: *Five Jobs of Trailblazers*.) Some important considerations for moving along The Path are: What caused the suboptimization of diversity change efforts in the past? What lessons have been learned and what traps need to be avoided? How are trailblazers' efforts to change the culture being recognized and rewarded?

3. *This is Senior Leadership Team Work* In many organizations, Black Employee Resource Groups and other ERGs have been the voice of urgency for change and have taken on leadership that is critical to provide grassroots momentum for change. However, they cannot do it alone, nor should they be the primary driver of a major organizational transformation (Katz & Miller, 2020; Welbourne, Schlachter & Rolf, 2017).

Action:
Ensure that leaders see this work as their responsibility for driving organization transformation.
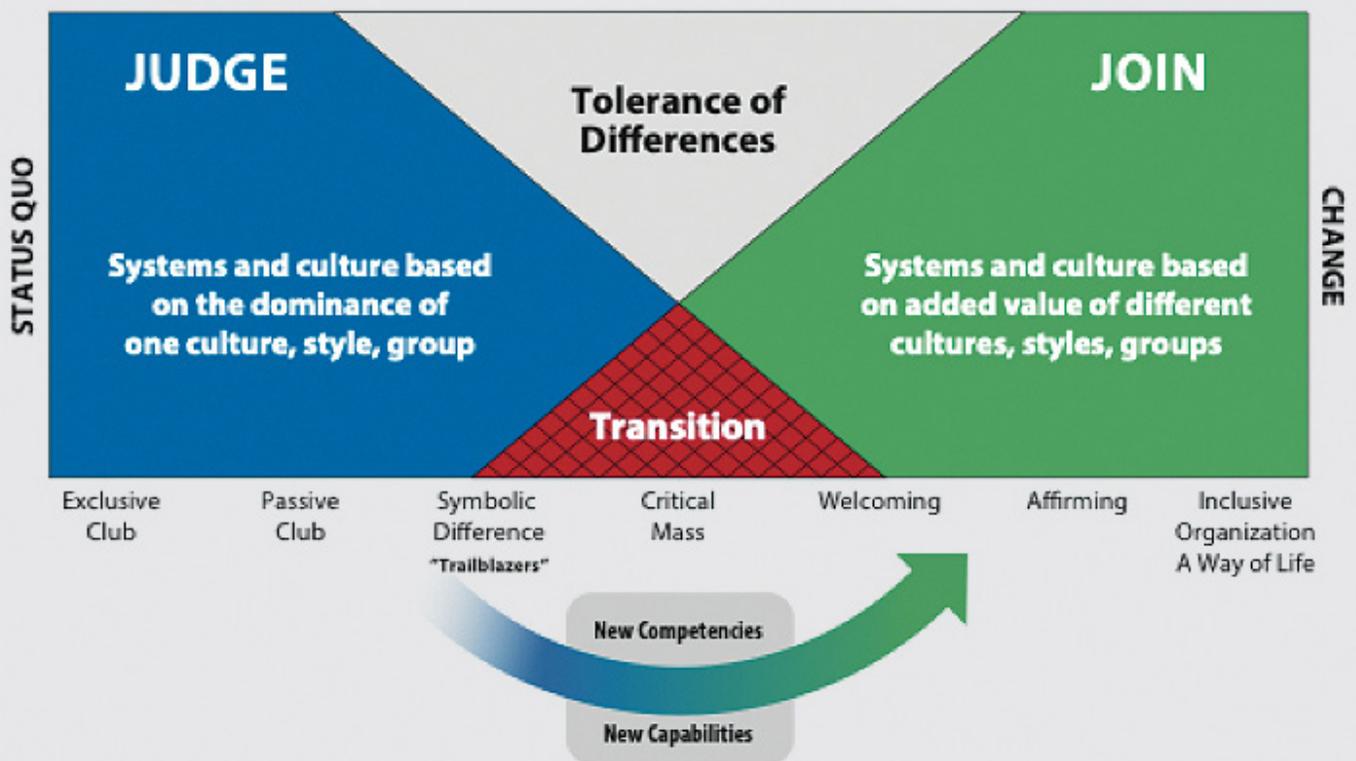
Adapted from "Racial Awareness Development in Organizations," 1981. Bailey Jackson, Ed.D., Rita Handiman, Ed.D., and Mark Chesler, Ph.D. Adapted by Judith H. Katz and Frederick A. Miller. The 1995 Pfeiffer Annual, Volume 2, Consulting. Copyright © 1995, Pfeiffer and Company. Originally pubblished in 1995 and reprinted by permission of the publisher. Revised in 2002, 2021. The Kaleel Jamison Consulting Group, Inc. 518.271.7000. www.kjcg.com.

Figure 4: The Path to Inclusive Organizations

Senior leaders need to understand the connection of the work on inclusion, equity, and diversity and its relationship to the business drivers—the organization's mission, vision, and strategy. Leaders need to be held accountable for the effort's success just as they would with any other strategic initiative or organizational objective. This includes the ways in which they get results, how they each create an inclusive environment within their area of responsibility, and their ability to leverage diversity for higher individual, team, and organization performance. Leaders must also ensure that all efforts for change are linked together and make sure that everyone involved in work to improve organizational performance enhances their knowledge and skills relative to inclusion, equity, and diversity so they are bringing those competencies into their change work.

The ability of leaders to tap into the energy and insights of ERG members is critical, and in this way, ERG's can play a partnership role for change. Essential to success is that ERG participation is included as an element of an individual's deliverables and performance metrics, not as something "extra-curricular." This rightly positions ERG members' efforts as working to accomplish the goals and objectives of the organization and not their own agenda.

4. *Reset What it Means To Be A Supervisor, Manager, and Leader*
As organizations face this time of accelerated and significant change, many models of leadership are outdated and no longer apply. As was seen by the shift to working remotely, many leaders and managers were not prepared to engage people as organizations move through the current challenges and the 21st century. Similarly, many white managers struggle with how to engage Black and Brown employees in terms of their concerns and how best to support their success.

Action:
Communicate a new set of expectations for what it means to be a leader to leaders at all levels, develop those competencies, and hold them accountable. These new competencies include the ability to:
1. Hire, coach, develop, lead, and manage a diverse and inclusive team;
2. Create an environment of supportive energy so that each person can do their best work;
3. Competently and confidently work across differences, including having difficult and candid conversations about race, gender, and other dimensions of difference;
4. Engage and listen to people to really hear their needs and wisdom; and
5. Create an environment of interaction safety in which people feel free to speak up and bring their thinking and "half-baked" ideas to enable diversity of thought, innovation and higher performance (Miller & Katz, 2018).

Through all of this, leaders must be aggressive in their own journey of growth and change, including learning about their biases and being willing and able to lean into difficult conversations.

5. *Tie to Mission, Vision, and Strategy*
One of the traps of many inclusion, equity, and diversity efforts is that they are stand-alone, programmatic initiatives with little connection to the organization's mission, vision, and strategy. As we saw in some organizations during the early days of addressing the concerns raised by Black and Brown people, failure to connect this work to the bottom line and to organizational performance puts it at risk of being sidelined during challenging economic times and defines it as more of a talent or human resources issue rather than one that is critical to organizational success and performance.

Action:
It is critical not only to tie the effort to the mission, vision, and strategy of the organization but to bottom line measures as well. How will a diverse and inclusive organization provide payoffs in terms of production, time to market? How will it increase quality and safety? How will it decrease human error and eliminate waste as people have the right conversations with the right people at the right time, using the right tools? How will it improve customer service? How will it support development of innovative products and services to a wider range of customers? How will it shorten response times? It is critical to connect the work to the measures that matter for the organization and share stories of success (Katz & Miller, 2017; Katz & Miller, 2013).

6. *It is About Changing the Whole Culture*
As change agents, we know that culture is the key to how organizations function. How the organization operates is baked into many of the overt and hidden processes that can enable some people while holding other individuals and groups back. Nothing short of a total systems change is needed. Anything less is often just moving the deck chairs around.

Action:
We know that old and even current systems perpetuate what is. Bold action is needed—taking a hard look at the culture, the formal and informal rules of interaction, and people practices that are baked into the organization's functioning. Some organizations are undertaking a rigorous review of their human resources and management processes and doing a major revamp to enhance and position themselves for the future. They are questioning many of the policies and processes that have for so long gone unquestioned, some being sacred cows. Organizations are undertaking new ways to eliminate bias, such as gender de-coding of

job descriptions and training people to be bias interrupters in calibration and talent assessment meetings. Some are doing thorough analyses of compensation to ensure equitable pay and promotion rates. Organizations with strong relationship cultures are redefining and expanding who has access to those relationships and working to shift to a partnership culture where your access to the information needed to do your job isn't dependent on who you know. Organizations that once prided themselves on their ability to execute are now rewarding

performing, inclusive organization and leveraging its diversity requires authentic organizational partnerships across difference. Addressing and engaging in hard conversations is a core competency that people need to have so they can build trust and focus on the organizational challenges ahead. Being skilled at and engaging in these hard conversations must be seen as a key to building greater teams and enabling people to do their best work individually and together, leading to a more productive organization and a higher performing culture.

creating an environment in which people really matter? Are we asking ourselves how are we contributing to the kind of organization that enables everyone to address their biases and blind spots, break down organizational barriers to performance and contribution, and thrive?

Moving Forward

Fundamentally, the opportunity is available for us to create organizations where human beings count and flourish, where people feel valued and safe, and have supportive spaces to do their best work. We need to recognize not only the disparate impact of the coronavirus, but the disparate impact that the virus of racism has on Black and Brown people in our organizations every day. We need to create a place where all people can succeed. Never has there been more opportunity for us as change agents. ***This is our moment!!!*** We can assist organizations (and individuals and our communities) to take that leap into the future while addressing the issues of the past. It is time we put our life jackets on and get ready to engage and ride the rapids of the next several years. The journey is and will be challenging, exciting, and ultimately worth it as we finally move beyond the dehumanizing behaviors and limiting organizational cultures that many have experienced. We are very optimistic, especially since we know that you and others are also on this journey. Rapids ahead!

> Our people diverse and beautiful will
>   emerge, battered and beautiful
> When day comes we step out of the
>   shade, aflame and unafraid,
> the new dawn blooms as we free it.
> For there is always light,
> if only we're brave enough to see it.
> If only we're brave enough to be it.
>   From: *The Hill We Climb* (2021)
>   by Amanda Gorman,
>   Inaugural Poem

> Having a high performing, inclusive organization and leveraging its diversity requires authentic organizational partnerships across difference. Addressing and engaging in hard conversations is a core competency that people need to have so they can build trust and focus on the organizational challenges ahead. Being skilled at and engaging in these hard conversations must be seen as a key to building greater teams and enabling people to do their best work individually and together, leading to a more productive organization and a higher performing culture.

people not only for delivering results but for *how* those results are delivered. While having pride in their history, some organizations are getting rid of the artifacts of the old culture that have served as barriers to many and instituting new policies and processes that create a more inclusive and equitable result for all.

7. *Engage in the Hard Conversations and Questions*
   We are hearing and experiencing some hard and glaring truths from many BIPOC about the experience of inequality and racial trauma and the impact of generations of oppression in the United States and around the world. These conversations and realities are not easy to hear but important to understand as truths. Having a high

Action:
If we want to create a culture in which all people can contribute, feel valued and do their best work, we need to be able to lean into our discomfort and ask and explore some difficult and challenging questions. We need to be willing to take an honest look at how people, not just as individuals, but as groups, are being negatively impacted by organization, team, or individual behavior or lack of actions. We need to identify the competencies a high performing team needs to be inclusive and leverage diversity. We need to look honestly at equity in compensation and the ways in which class is baked into our systems—are we appropriately recognizing the efforts and, more importantly, the risks that front-line workers are taking every day? Are we

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KJCG is celebrating its 50th anniversary and is the oldest OD and Diversity and Inclusion culture change firm.

"To truly elevate Black communities, we must invest in community-based organizations (CBOs) that have long served as a trusted and necessary resource for Black families and communities and understand the challenges and collective trauma of the community."

Uplifting Black Organizations to Uplift the Black Community

By Rhonda BeLue, Michaila Dix, DeBorah Ahmed, Malik Ahmed, and Kelly Taylor

Abstract
Addressing health disparities and inequities in Black communities must occur strategically and systematically through building of infrastructure for service organizations that support Black communities. We present a case study of a Black-created and led community-based organization located in the Promise Zone of St. Louis, Missouri. This case illustrates a consultant-client collaborative of organizational development over four decades to address social and health equity and trauma in a predominately Black community. We present the philosophical and theoretical framework that a Black-led organization employs to address historical trauma as well as lessons learned and guidelines for organizational development practitioners who intend to work with Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) led organizations that serve disenfranchised communities.
Keywords: BIPOC led organizations, Organizational culture, Cultural humility
(This article was double-blind reviewed.)

Recent events including the killing of George Floyd and significant racial/ethnic disparities in the COVID-19 pandemic-related outcomes highlight the need to address the trauma brought on by health and social disparities that disproportionately plague the Black community. Addressing health disparities and inequities in Black communities must occur strategically and systematically through building of infrastructure for service organizations that support Black communities. One cannot expect that an individual directive to pull yourself up by your bootstraps will advance the social and economic mobility of Black communities given the disproportionate burden of extant health and social issues. To truly elevate Black communities, we must invest in community-based organizations (CBOs) that have long served as a trusted and necessary resource for Black families and communities and understand the challenges and collective trauma of

the community. The proverb of uncertain African origin, "It takes a village to raise a child", is a commonly used statement that suggests that collective efficacy is key to family success.

Establishing CBOs that serve Black families and communities allows for organizations that have a vested interest to promote community development and collective empowerment for their clients. This includes culturally grounded organization development (OD) strategies for building organizational infrastructure, providing training, supporting and developing Black leadership, and advocating for policies and funding that strengthen CBOs that serve Black communities. There are evidenced based programs that address health among Black families over the lifecourse (Johnson et al., 2015; Burns et al., 2020; Alia et al., 2015; McHale et al., 2015) that can assist in promoting the upward mobility and ultimately improve the health

status of Black families. However, without the support of CBOs that serve Black families, dissemination and the sustainability of these programs is an ongoing challenge. In implementing evidenced-based programs for Black families, CBOs are often challenged by lack of resources, research and implementation protocols that are incongruent with organizational culture, (Ramanadhan et al., 2012) and competition from larger, dominant-culture organizations. Identifying potential employees who are sensitive to and willing to adjust to the unique needs of Black led organizations that predominantly serve African Americans, can also be a challenge in successfully meeting the needs of the clients.

and Horman (2013), who highlighted the need for OD practitioners to be aware of and address trauma in their practice and Gilpin-Jackson's work on *Resonance*, the space and opportunity for conscious engagement, that posits that trauma can be addressed through the transformative power of personal "meaning-making and narratives" (Gilpin-Jackson, 2014; 2020, p.3).

We present experience from a Black created and led organization that serves over 50,000 youth and families in the predominately Black, Promise Zone Community in St. Louis, Missouri. Promise Zones are a federal program that focus on and partner with high poverty areas to promote

poverty that disproportionately affect Black communities. Historical trauma refers to the "collective trauma experienced over time and across generations by a group of people who share an identity, affiliation, or circumstance" (Mohatt et al., 2014, p.128). Historical trauma has been linked to increased mental health problems, lack of social mobility, and even has a biological effect due to ongoing stress and biological dysregulation, sometimes referred to as a "soul wound" (Gillson & Ross, 2019), among affected communities (Aoud et al., 2019; Yehuda & Lehrner, 2018).

Segregation, systematic discrimination, and disenfranchisement in St. Louis has created notable disparities in educational and employment opportunities and has contributed to increases in physical and mental health problems, exposure to violence, and other trauma-related conditions. Recent data has shown an approximate $2,000 difference in spending on individual students between majority Black and majority white school districts (Furtado et al., 2020). St. Louis also has one of the highest rates of youth poverty and homicide in the US, both of which disproportionately affect Black families (Davis, 2018). The income disparity between Black and whites in St. Louis is higher than in the United States, St. Louis having the 12th highest household income disparity in the nation (*onestl.org*). These disparities are characterized by intergenerational drag and are passed down within Black families, to their youth, and communities across generations (Gee & Ford, 2011; Darity et al., 2003).

Better Family Life Inc, (BFL) was born out of a desire to see African American families remove the many traumas from their lives and consequently be better able to determine their life course—hopefully in positive and progressive directions—and designed to be a trauma disrupter. BFL was founded 38 years ago to address ongoing social and health inequities in the Black community through combining social services, political activism, and cultural identity programming to rebuild the spirit of the community and to heal historical trauma from an African centered perspective.

Cultural humility suggests a life-long commitment to learn about the culture of others without 'othering' them and practicing your own self-reflection and self-critique of your own cultural beliefs to 1) fix power imbalances that often accompany historical trauma and disenfranchisement and 2) encourages sustainable relationships based on trust and accountability. Cultural competence however implies that at some point, one's exploration and partnership with diverse communities comes to an end or reaches a point of competence which is not true and will not facilitate long-term, healthy OD practitioner-client work.

The work presented represents a collaborative consultant-client exploration of how an organization has developed over the past four decades to address social and health equity and trauma in a predominately Black community. In this case study we present 1) The philosophical and theoretical framework that a Black-led organization employs to address historical trauma 2) Guidelines from the organization on addressing community trauma, and 3) Guidelines for OD practitioners who intend to work with minority led organizations that serve a disenfranchised community.

The OD field has made significant progress in recognizing and addressing organizational trauma. Our case study builds on the formative work by Viviane

wellness, decrease crime, and increase economic opportunities. The federal government pledges a long-term commitment through the Promise Zone initiative, with variables such as the priorities of the sitting U.S. President and the organization's relationship with its Congressional representatives having an impact on any funding received. This not-for-profit organization, Better Family Life (BFL) Inc., provides services to the underemployed, unemployed, and skill-deficient residents with a variety of programs focused on-economics and housing, workforce development, educational, youth development, community outreach, and cultural arts.

St. Louis has an unfortunate history of racial segregation, discrimination, and historical trauma with concentrated areas of

Theoretical Considerations

Indigenous and Culturally Grounded Knowledge and Ways of Thinking

Better Family Life activities are rooted in African indigenous ways of knowing and community empowerment. As described by Brayboy and Maughan (2009), non-dominate and indigenous communities have long been aware of the ways in which they know, obtain, and produce knowledge. This knowledge originates from the culmination of experiences and lives led by indigenous people, which blend to develop belief and value systems, philosophies, and educational processes (Brayboy & Maughan, 2009). Given this, traditional knowledge serves as the core of identity, heritage, culture, and language that guide interactions with the natural milieu. There has been a reluctance from Indigenous communities to share the breadth and depth of what they know with outside interests. This longstanding conflict between Indigenous methods of knowledge production and the Western scientific paradigm has been fueled by a widely held value of preservation, as many Indigenous peoples' view of the extraction of traditional knowledge from its broader cultural context is a form of theft (Hammersmith, 2007). Further, there remains a fear that divulging these truths will enable outside interests to use the traditional knowledge of Indigenous peoples against them, as there is a lack of understanding of cultures, customs, or values (Hammersmith, 2007). This has greatly affected various schooling practices and knowledge systems, as gaps have identified that Western education systems have not always effectively addressed Indigenous needs, languages, learning styles, and culture (Hammersmith, 2007).

BFL infuses African and African American indigenous cultural principles into its organizational functions. For example, staff meetings often include African drumming, African and African American cultural attire is accepted and encouraged in the workplace.

All BFL programming is centered in African American and African cultural philosophies which are inextricably linked to African and African American intellectual history and culture.

As an OD consultant, it is essential to become familiar with the indigenous knowledge and culture that drives an organization and the community it serves. Kagawa-Singer and the NIH Expert Panel on Culture, Research, and Health Outcomes (2016) posits that culture, the process and the frame through which we interpret society, is essential for human existence and is critically important to the study of health and health behavior. While becoming familiar with the organizational and community culture, think and practice cultural humility over cultural competence (Hooks et al., 2013; Tervalon, 1998).

Cultural humility suggests a life-long commitment to learn about the culture of others without 'othering' them and practicing your own self-reflection and self-critique of your own cultural beliefs to 1) fix power imbalances that often accompany historical trauma and disenfranchisement and 2) encourages sustainable relationships based on trust and accountability (Hook et al., 2013). Cultural competence however implies that at some point, one's exploration and partnership with diverse communities comes to an end or reaches a point of competence which is not true and will not facilitate long-term, healthy OD practitioner-client work (Tervalon, 1998).

Lastly the process and concept of cultural humility is aligned with Gilpin-Jackson's (2014; 2020) Resonance Framework, where personal reflection, inquiry and narratives are an important part of the trauma healing process. Therefore, cultural humility as a concept is more in keeping with engaging in an OD process that involves trauma disruption and recovery.

Empowerment

BFL infuses African indigenous ways of knowing into the community it serves as guided by community empowerment theory and practice. Zimmerman (2000, p.43) posits that empowerment is both a "value orientation for working in the community, and a theoretical model for understanding the process and consequences of efforts to exert control and influence over decisions that affect one's life, organizational functioning, and the quality of community life" This concept suggests a distinct approach for creating social change through the development of interventions under the assumption that there has historically been an unequal distribution of and access to resources, such as housing, workforce opportunities, education, and the capacity for institution creation, sustaining and growth. Empowerment Theory demands that efforts to intervene in a community must include a deliberate understanding on a lay person's efforts to cope with stress and historical trauma. This implies a transformation of an organizational leaders' role to one of a collaborator and facilitator, rather than that of an expert and counselor (Perkins & Zimmerman, 1995; Rappaport, 1981; Zimmerman & Warschausky, 1998.)

Leaders work with participants rather than advocate for them, through four guiding concepts that support successful shared governance structures: equity, ownership, partnership, and accountability (Batson, 2004; Porter-O'Grady et al., 1997). First, equity is referred to as the integration of roles towards a common goal, and everyone's willingness to contribute to that goal. This requires the development of inclusivity within organizations to place individuals from diverse backgrounds in leadership roles, promoting acceptance and enabling understanding of differing cultures and their values. Second, ownership is the identification of an individual's role with an organization and the scope of their leadership. Third, partnership is the development of relationships to promote mutual respect. Highlighted within this concept is the emphasis on communication, and collaboration to achieve organizational goals and productivity, which is essential to breaking down the barrier between Indigenous knowledge and Western education. Last, accountability is the willingness to "invest in decision making and sharing a sense of responsibility for individual and collective outcomes," which can only be accomplished if there is initial trust between all participants. Without the security in knowing that all thoughts, beliefs, and ideas were represented fairly, participants will

be unwilling to share responsibility for initiatives and ideas. When these principles are incorporated into individual and team behaviors, the workforce is empowered to achieve the outcomes of the organization, and the communities that they serve.

BFL hires staff from the local community and is strategically located in the center of the Promise Zone. Furthermore, BFL has a substantial outreach department where these workers meet the community where they are, as opposed to always requiring community members to come

This has implications in the nature of the consulting relationship that is developed with the client, recommendations that are made to improve organizational efficiency and to help the organization meet its goals.

A Framework for Disrupting Trauma from BFL's and an OD Practitioner's Experience

A narrative interview (Allen, 2017) was conducted with BFL's founders. Stories were shared on BFL's origins, purpose, goals, processes, challenges, successes, failures, philosophy, and hopes and dreams

OD practitioners should be cognizant of the physical space and location they are working in and be aware of the role of cultural identity in what a safe space looks like to the partnering community.

A—Appreciative Authentic Culturally-Grounded Inquiry

BFL's goal is to heal the spirit of the community by providing needed social services and imparting a positive cultural identity for their clients as cultural identity buffers against trauma (Shea et al., 2019). Cultural identity is known to buffer the effects of systematic discrimination and racism and other poor outcomes among youth, including educational performance and attainment and health outcomes, such as healthy diet, exercise, and sleep hygiene. Not only is cultural identity known to buffer the effects of racism, discrimination, and trauma on mental health, it has been shown to be protective of physiological inflammation. Physiological inflammation is associated with health conditions, including cardiovascular risk and mental health challenges.

As an OD practitioner, one must understand and value the roles that organizational leadership and staff assume when guided by the empowerment theory model. When making suggestions about human resource development, strategic planning, or any improvements to operations, an OD consultant must realize that staff are operating as one with the community and not as a top-down, expert service organization. This has implications in the nature of the consulting relationship that is developed with the client, recommendations that are made to improve organizational efficiency, and to help the organization meet its goals.

to BFL's location. This includes on-site violence de-escalation and the Cutz and Conversations program, where outreach workers bring mobile barber units to the most severely traumatized neighborhoods to provide haircuts and therapeutic talk sessions with neighborhood youth and families. BFL also presents regular community programs where the community members are invited to attend cultural events designed to impart cultural identity and build spirit.

As an OD practitioner, one must understand and value the roles that organizational leadership and staff assume when guided by the empowerment theory model. When making suggestions about human resource development, strategic planning, or any improvements to operations, an OD consultant must realize that staff are operating as one with the community and not as a top-down, expert service organization.

related to being a community trauma interrupter. Guiding their work is a model born out of these stories and experiences. Do the MATH is an approach created by BFL to Make space, Appreciate authentic culturally-grounded inquiry, provide Therapeutic programming, and Healing the healers. Thus, we propose that when working with organizations that address community trauma in communities of color head on, that OD professionals *Do the MATH*.

M—Making Space

BFL has always made it a point to have a welcoming, culturally adorned space for several purposes: 1) Having a physical space is important when representing marginalized communities who have historically been relegated to substandard spaces. 2) A healthy physical space can promote a sense of safety and healing. (SAMHSA, 2014).

Strong cultural identity can assist communities in overcoming collective trauma as well as improve individual well-being (Usborne & Taylor, 2010). Cultural identity can be defined as a sense of belonging to a group based both on shared phenotype and shared culture (e.g., common beliefs and values) (Witherspoon 2016; Smith, 2009). However, questions remain: How do we construct realistic goals and paradigms to deliver effective culturally responsive services? How do we evaluate spirit in our clients and the community we serve? How do OD practitioners help BFL dig deeper to improve its capacity to act on concepts that are esoteric (such as hope and spirit), yet necessary to address to counteract trauma?

T—Therapeutic Programming

Cultural arts are at the core of BFL's programming. Arts have a proven effect on physiological and psychological health and have been used as a therapy to process trauma (Stuckley, 2011). Specifically, BFL focuses on African and African American cultural arts to provide a therapeutic affect and reinforce cultural identity. They

accomplish this by following their vision of providing to the people with whom they work access to progressive and productive cultural values, traditions, and practices to help raise the quality of life for themselves and the lives of those with whom they reach, influence, and interact. From this vision, they create programs, activities, and provide information that exemplifies the cultural and artistic traditions of people of Africa, the Caribbean, and the Americas.

itself, and introduces itself to history and humanity" (Harris, 1983, p.254)

2. Artistic expression can impact and reflect personal identity, self and group empowerment, and quality of life.

3. "Cultural participation helps people articulate important aspects of themselves and their communities, thus encouraging attitudes, values, and social ties that underpin a well-functioning society" (Walker, 2002, p.11).

clients heal. To do this, we must ask: How can OD practitioners facilitate improvement of program effectiveness, organizational strategies, structures, and processes to better serve and heal our clients while also intentionally healing the staff and leadership?

Final Thoughts and Challenges to Consider

The trauma has not let up; trauma and systematic disenfranchisement in Black communities in St. Louis and globally continues. As OD practitioners, we need to be conscious of the need for cultural humility, healing of historical trauma, and how to apply current OD approaches to aid healing. The next steps in supporting and elevating CBOs like BFL so they can create sustainable change and effective programs requires the following call to action within the field:

1. Create funding streams that facilitate and support the healing of historical and ongoing trauma that does not fit into current social services funding models

2. Make trauma and culturally responsive approaches standard pedagogy in OD practitioner training.

3. Process our own trauma as we engage with organizations and communities trying to heal their trauma.

4. Build cultural humility: Be reflective on your own beliefs and identity and how your life experiences make you who you are and influence your beliefs. Acknowledge that the beliefs, identity, and life experience of others are different and while different are no less valid or valuable. Intentionally identify opportunities that allow you to meaningfully interact with people and communities that do not share your life experience. Approach these experiences with a listening ear, open heart, learning mind, and unjudging spirit. Attend events hosted by diverse organizations. Make it your mission to understand the community and clients that your partnering organization serves. Reflect on how you feel when you are in a community that you have historically not

We all share the historical and current trauma. We have always been told to move on, and to get over the past. However, we need to directly address the historical and current trauma. We need to heal it, measure it, and deal with it. We must learn how to articulate this trauma and understand our history instead of ignoring it. We must hold up the mirror and recognize the trauma in ourselves so we can help our clients heal. To do this, we must ask: How can OD practitioners facilitate improvement of program effectiveness, organizational strategies, structures, and processes to better serve and heal our clients while also intentionally healing the staff and leadership?

A signature piece of their work in cultural arts is the 194-foot-long Art and Empowerment mural. This visual masterpiece was painted by artist Gonz Jove. It is in the Grand Hallway on the first floor of their national headquarters, the Better Family Life Cultural, Educational, and Business Center. The mural depicts the rich cultural heritage of Africa and the African Diaspora. It engages the viewer in the history of the struggles, accomplishments, and resilience of the African Diaspora descendants, and the relevance of this information to American life and history. It is a strong source of inspiration, pride, enlightenment, and empowerment.

Better Family Life adopted three Core Beliefs for the Cultural Arts Department to further guide and reinforce that the approach to the work is both therapeutic and reinforcing of cultural identity. They are:

1. "Culture is the self-conscious means by which a people creates itself, celebrates

OD practitioners should become familiar with therapeutic programming and understand not only the structure and purpose by which it is delivered, but also how the programming is a manifestation of the organization's identity so that when suggestions are made to improve or evaluate implementation, the therapeutic identity and spirit of the programming is valued and maintained.

H—Heal the Healers

According to BFL's founder, "At BFL, we (the staff and leadership) are our clients. We all share the historical and current trauma. We have always been told to move on, and to get over the past. However, we need to directly address the historical and current trauma. We need to heal it, measure it, and deal with it. We must learn how to articulate this trauma and understand our history instead of ignoring it. We must hold up the mirror and recognize the trauma in ourselves so we can help our

considered yours. Recognize that cultural humility is a lifelong process and not a competence that can be mastered.

5. Practice self-reflection and processing of your own bias, racism, anti-Blackness, and work to decolonize varied forms of oppression. Strategies may include: 1) Respecting and highlighting the local knowledge and lived experiences as valuable, necessary, and equal contributions, particularly of marginalized groups, 2) Encouraging your local OD organization to host discussions, events, and to provide space for conversations and education on racism, bias and oppression, 3) Prioritizing diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) when developing OD content, practices, and consulting teams, and 4) Engaging community advisory boards that are fairly compensated for their time to provide advice and guidance on DEI and addressing bias, racism, and anti-Blackness. OD practitioners are poised to institute these changes.

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Defund the Police

An OD Perspective to Participatory Change

By Judy Oyedele and Cristina Perrone

Abstract

As US citizens broadly and vehemently call to *defund the police*, local leaders are grappling with citizen's demand for systemic reforms in prioritizing public policies that address the structural causes of distress, violence, and crime rather than increasing police presence and response. As dialogic organization development (OD) practitioners, we have engaged in a field study to understand how to facilitate community interests in their call to defund the police. This exploratory study applied principles of participatory action research based on interviews from key stakeholders (activists, community members, local government officials, members of law enforcement, and OD practitioners). Insights from the findings provide a framework of strategic actions, informed by the OD lens, that will support the initial stages of a change management process around systems of community safety.

Keywords: policing, public sector, community engagement, participatory design, defund the police

America is in an unprecedented period of extreme stress. COVID-19 has claimed the lives of over 589,000 as of May 28, 2021 and continues to contribute to mass socioeconomic disruption (Center for Disease Control, 2021). In the backdrop of the modern plague, with millions of people curtailing their daily activities, Black Americans killed in incidents involving law enforcement officers persist at rates consistent with previous years (Washington Post, 2021). Citizens broadly are vehemently demanding accountability and calling to *defund the police*. Local leaders and governments across the nation are grappling with citizen's demand for systemic reforms in prioritizing public policies that address the structural causes of distress, violence, and crime.

We reflected on how best to contribute to this societal challenge, and as dialogic organization development (OD) practitioners decided to explore how to facilitate community demands for structural reforms in law enforcement. We investigated stakeholders' interpretations of the *Defund the Police* movement and their reflections on broader system dynamics. The findings provide a framework of strategic actions, informed by the OD lens, that will support the initial stages of a change management process around systems of community safety. Through reflection, dialogue, and preliminary research, the guiding question of this study became: *How do diverse stakeholders make meaning of the Defund the Police movement?*

Approach

Given the power of social discourse as it relates to this social movement, we decided

to interview stakeholders. Our methodology for this exploratory study was heavily influenced by participatory action research (PAR) which involves a "braided process of exploration, reflection, and action" (McIntyre, 2008, p. 5). Specifically, community-based participatory research (CBPR) begins with an issue important to a community and is characterized as an "... orientation to research, with [a] heavy accent on issues of trust, power, dialogue, community capacity building, and collaborative inquiry toward the goal of social change" (Minkler & Wallerstein, 2008,

to understand individual perspectives, which when combined would give further insights into interpersonal and community level viewpoints.

The second filter is a dialogic mindset, which is a philosophy of change that approaches work by fostering generativity to develop new possibilities (Bushe & Marshak, 2016). Dialogic OD is grounded in three core processes of transformational change: Emergence, Narrative, and Generativity (Bushe & Marshak, 2016). The first process, Emergence, helped shape our research question. Emergence occurs

and communities" (Schein, 1999 p.1). We approached this research with curiosity at the forefront. According to Schein (1999), "I cannot determine what is the current reality if I do not get in touch with what I do not know about the situation and do not have the wisdom to ask about it" (p. 11). We used this as inspiration, seeking to understand the broader context and access our ignorance on the *Defund the Police* movement. With our OD lens firmly in place, we started a journey of exploration and inquiry.

Identifying Stakeholders

We devised a list of stakeholder groups we believed to be most directly impacted by a reallocation of law enforcement agency resources which included activists, community members, police officers, and local government officials. To recruit initial participants, we used personal and professional networks, as well as internet research and email outreach. We used a snowball sampling method to help discover additional stakeholder groups, which involves asking participants to recommend additional interviewees (Anderson, 2017). Through outreach and snowball sampling, we were able to exceed our original goal of two individuals from each stakeholder group, as explained in the next section.

Defund the Police **is a disruption to the social construction of reality, and for this movement to lead to action, stakeholders' beliefs would need to be acknowledged and eventually challenged. Therefore, our research question focused on understanding how stakeholders make meaning of the** *Defund the Police* **Movement. This helped identify the complexities that would need to be addressed in any change management process around systems of community safety.**

p. 7). Given our desire to engage directly with individuals, the CBPR research methodology was an ideal conceptual framework for this exploratory study. As community members transition from protesters to solution seekers, we felt compelled to support the next phase of the movement by applying OD perspectives, principles, and practices.

Exploration Through the OD Perspective

We theorized that by examining the issue through an OD perspective, we would be better able to navigate the complexity of the topic. We refer to this OD perspective as the *OD lens*, which consists of three filters.

The first filter is systems thinking, which is described as "the ability to see [an] organization as a system, to see how parts interrelate and affect one another, and to see how structures and systems influence behavior" (Anderson, 2017, p. 38). There are individual, interpersonal, and community level perspectives to any issue. Therefore, we structured this exploratory study

"... when a disruption in the ongoing social construction of reality is stimulated or engaged in a way that leads to a more complex reorganization" (Bushe & Marshak, 2016, p. 398). From a dialogic viewpoint, successful transformation requires an awareness and eventual disruption of stakeholders' meaning-making processes (Holman, 2015; Stacey, 2005; Bushe & Marshak, 2016). *Defund the Police* is a disruption to the social construction of reality, and for this movement to lead to action, stakeholders' beliefs would need to be acknowledged and eventually challenged. Therefore, our research question focused on understanding how stakeholders make meaning of the *Defund the Police* Movement. This helped identify the complexities that would need to be addressed in any change management process around systems of community safety.

The final filter is process consultation, which is described as a "philosophy about and attitude towards the process of helping individuals, groups, organizations,

Racial Representation

Considering the nature of this issue and the racial dynamics at play, we prioritized having representation of at least one Black and one White identifying participant in each stakeholder group but didn't explicitly exclude other races. We largely met this goal; however, we were unable to speak with any White identifying members of law enforcement.

A key principle of CBPR is that it recognizes community as a unit of identity that "... may be centered on a defined geographical neighborhood or be made up of members of a geographically dispersed group with a sense of common identity and shared fate (such as persons who share race or ethnicity ...)" (Minkler & Wallerstein, 2008, p. 49). With this in mind, we reached out to a national network of individuals. A future iteration of this study would benefit from concentrating

on stakeholders in one locality to create a stronger understanding of local community perceptions on this issue. See *Table 1* for the participant racial identity by stakeholder group.

Process

The goal of this exploratory study was to understand interpretations of the current state of policing. We also asked participants to describe their hopes, fears, and potential downstream effects (positive and negative) in an imagined future where police funds have been reallocated. Lastly, participants helped us understand the broader, interconnected system that would be affected by defunding the police. See *Table 2* for the list of interview questions.

Defund the Police elicits feelings about race, violence, political values, and ethics that impact everyone, so it is inevitable that we as researchers have our own biases on the topic. Our qualitative analysis consisted of reviewing the interviews via transcription and video recordings and coding each participant response into themes. To mitigate bias, we engaged third party coders to help with our qualitative data analysis and ensured that every interview was reviewed by two different individuals. Key themes arose from repeated, consistent responses. Through thematic analysis, we were able to garner practical insights from the data.

Insights

We used a Polarity Map® to help us organize key themes. Polarity Thinking is a dialogic OD methodology that uses "*And* thinking" to maximize the positive aspects of interdependent tensions (Johnson, 2020). Both sides of a polarity have upsides that come from focusing on each pole and downsides that come from focusing on one pole to the neglect of the other pole.

Stakeholders desire safe communities for all.
Through thematic analysis, an underlying polarity of Continuity *and* Change arose. Those calling to *Defund the Police* are doing so because they are noticing an absence of safety in the present and are seeking a

Table 1: *Participant Racial Identity by Stakeholder Group*

Stakeholder Group	Racial Identity			Total
	Black	White	Two or More Races	
Activists *Local and national advocates for or against police reform*	1	2		3
Community members *Community residents who are aware, interested, and choose to engage around issues that concern their community*	1	2		3
Local government officials *Elected and appointed government officials, such as city council members and commissioners*	1	3	1	5
Members of law enforcement *Police officers, prosecutors, and civilian law enforcement staff*	4		1	5
OD practitioners *Practicing professionals in the field of Organization Development*	1	1		2

Note. N = 18.

Table 2: *Interview Questions*

Interview Questions
1. What is currently working well with the system of policing?
2. Do you think the role of law enforcement in your community needs to change? Why or why not? How?
3. How would you define the underlying problem that led to the call to *defund the police*?
4. What hopes do you associate with defunding the police?
5. What are the opportunities with defunding the police?
6. What fears do you associate with defunding the police?
7. What would be some of the downstream effects of defunding the police?
8. What advice would you give to activists or people trying to speak with local leaders about defunding the police?
9. What are some of the barriers you've noticed that prevent this conversation from being productive?
10. What other groups should we talk to?

preferred future in which there will be an abundance of safety for all. A majority of stakeholders shared the desire to live in or help create safe communities. The Greater Purpose Statement at the heart of this polarity became a *safe society for all. Figure 1* shows how the major themes from the data helped us understand the various perspectives around this issue and how those perspectives function interdependently.

A complex network of interdependent motivations, desires, hopes, and fears is at play.

Defund the Police is a rallying cry and demand for action. Individuals and communities are currently experiencing the downsides of the Continuity pole (−B) and have a strong desire to experience the upsides of the Change pole (+C). By examining the Polarity Map®, one can also gain more insight into individuals' resistance to changing police structures or budgets. Some people are either currently experiencing or highly value the upsides of the Continuity pole (+A) and want to maintain those benefits. At the same time, they are fearful of the downsides of the Change pole (−D). Examining the underlying polarity illuminates the interdependencies between different motivations, hopes, and fears.

While there is a substantial drive towards change, there are questions about *how* to change.

Participants on the whole agreed that the role of law enforcement in communities needs to change. There was also agreement that the current system of policing could be improved upon. Stakeholders had a shared understanding that reallocating police funds would not necessarily be a simple endeavor. Stakeholder groups had varying perspectives of how best to rebuild or reform policing, as shown in the (−B) quadrant. A majority of participants shared the view that specific local communities need to be engaged to come up with solutions that work for their individual localities.

Two additional key themes arose that fell outside the context of the Polarity Map®. We felt it critical to share the insights below as they represent issues that

OD practitioners should be aware of if supporting a change management process around systems of community safety.

There is a desire for both clarity and community dialogue.

Participants expressed a need for additional clarity around the meaning and goals of defunding the police. Examples of clarifying tactics included communicating activists' goals, defining *Defund the Police*, and providing concrete examples of alternatives to policing. We also heard that forums to foster understanding at the community level, as well as an openness to working with local governments would be key to making conversations on this topic successful.

There is a large, interconnected system that would be impacted by defunding the police.

Through our snowball sampling method, participants identified 21 additional stakeholder groups. The groups that were most often repeated included criminal justice professionals (prosecutors, public defenders, defense attorneys), healthcare professionals and other first responders (ER doctors, nurses, paramedics, mental health professionals), and non-profit leaders (juvenile justice advocates, advocates for unhoused people). We were able to interview additional criminal justice professionals but were unable to speak with members of the other groups. Given the multitude of additional stakeholder groups identified by participants, we realized the importance of leveraging the wisdom of the community to better understand the full scope of community members who have a stake in this issue.

Taking Action

The OD lens functioned both as a North Star, providing direction to our process, and as a mirror, reflecting our findings through an OD practitioner's perspective. By analyzing key themes through the OD lens, we devised a framework of strategic actions that will support the initial stages of a change management process around systems of community safety.

Design a Generative Environment

Taking a systems thinking perspective, we examined stakeholders as component parts of the system to understand the interrelatedness of their desires and motivations and how broader social structures and systems impact this issue. In support of a change management process around systems of community safety, OD practitioners can facilitate participatory dialogue that focuses on nurturing the relationships between stakeholders, highlighting shared desired outcomes while still honoring different individual experiences.

The complexity surrounding the *Defund the Police* movement necessitates working with individual stakeholder groups before facilitating a community-wide conversation. Given the various perspectives, levels of trauma, racial dynamics, and other covert forces involved in this topic, several steps of pre-work are needed to build both psychological and physical safety, as well as trust in the process before a community could engage in meaningful dialogue. We reference this pre-work step as *Step 0*, and as additional layers of complexity emerged, a *Step −1* became prudent.

Step −1 is to identify the full spectrum of stakeholders. Every community will have different stakeholder groups, based on the history, context, geographic setting, and other factors that make the community unique. An OD practitioner should focus on developing a baseline understanding of the key groups involved in the community, the relationships within and among groups, and the relevant histories of interaction between groups.

We recommend that several key stakeholder groups should be included in these conversations. Police officers are part of the community, and any conversation around community safety must include them. Additionally, it is important to consider how to include interest groups on both extremes of the issue, such as police abolitionists or police union representatives. In the spirit of facilitating participatory change, it is recommended that OD practitioners include even the most radical perspectives to ensure the ultimate solution is fully representative of community

Greater Purpose Statement (GPS) – Why leverage this polarity?
Safe society for All

+A — Values = positive results from focusing on the left pole

What is currently working well with the system of policing?
- Understanding of the community and the relationships within it
- Upholding law and order
- Crime deterrence

+C — Values = positive results from focusing on the right pole

What hopes do you associate with defunding the police?
- Redistribution of funds
- Social services playing a bigger role in community safety
- Police focus on de-escalation

What are the opportunities with defunding the police?
- Understand how mental health affects public safety
- Holistic and long-term approach to reform
- Clarify and narrow the scope of police responsibility

What would be some of the downstream effects of defunding the police? *(Positive Effects)*
- More social service jobs
- Ability to direct funds to social services
- New way of policing

Continuity and **Change**

How would you define the underlying problem that led to the call to *Defund the Police*?
- Racism
- History of racial violence
- Increased access to social media / technology
- Recent instances of racial violence
- Lack of understanding and trust between police and communities

Do you think the role of law enforcement in your community needs to change? Why? How?
- Structural racism
- Reduce weapons usage in community interactions
- Change training programs

What fears do you associate with defunding the police?
- Civil unrest and lawlessness
- Irreparable damage between police and communities
- Police backlash
- Policing will become an even more undesirable job
- Temporary or ineffective solution

What would be some of the downstream effects of defunding the police? *(Negative Effects)*
- Increase in crime
- Decrease in safety
- Smaller and less diverse police talent pipeline

-B — Fears = negative results from over-focusing on the left pole <u>to the neglect</u> of the right pole

-D — Fears = negative results from over-focusing on the right pole <u>to the neglect</u> of the left pole

Safe Society for None
Deeper Fear – Loss of GPS

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Figure 1: Polarity Map® of Continuity and Change in the Context of the Defund the Police Movement

interests. Further, we would recommend asking the community to help identify stakeholders they perceive to be underrepresented in the conversation, as they will understand the relationships and diverse interests at play.

Once stakeholder groups are identified, *Step 0* would be to engage groups individually to prepare them for the process of participatory change. The community system will have a unique history that is important to honor in context of this topic. For example, members of the community may not feel psychologically or physically safe enough to participate in a process with police officers present. Transformative change requires an environment that allows people to embrace generativity, which will require careful design considerations (Bushe & Marshak, 2016). OD practitioners can engage stakeholders to help draw out patterns of mistrust that could be barriers to engaging in dialogue with other community members.

Community dialogue of any kind will only be possible if stakeholders feel safe enough to participate. The steps necessary to create safety will vary for each community. There is not a one-size-fits-all approach to stakeholder engagement, so we stress the importance of implementing pre-work steps to help create an environment for participatory change within communities.

Illuminate the Interdependencies

In our study, we used the Polarity Map® to help us organize our data, but OD Practitioners can also use it as a dialogic intervention with a group of stakeholders to support a change management process around systems of community safety. Polarity Thinking, as with other dialogic OD methodologies, leverages the three core processes of transformational change: Emergence, Narrative, and Generativity (Bushe & Marshak, 2016).

As mentioned previously, Emergence occurs "...when a disruption in the ongoing social construction of reality is stimulated or engaged in a way that leads to a more complex reorganization" (Bushe & Marshak, 2016, p. 398). Facilitating the

creation of a Polarity Map® with stakeholders can increase awareness of how stakeholders view the role of law enforcement in their community. Creating a Polarity Map® to explore *Defund the Police* may begin to challenge or disrupt stakeholders' meaning making processes around systems of community safety.

The second process for transformational change involves changing core narratives, or "the storylines people use to explain and bring coherence to their organizational lives" (Bushe & Marshak, 2016, p. 398). The process of building a Polarity Map® is a language and values clarification process that "… identifies opposing values and fears and recognizes them as essential" (Johnson, 2020 p. 194). Creating a Polarity Map® is uniquely impactful because the process is rooted in deep listening and creating a space for people to share their stories. OD practitioners can use Polarity Thinking to facilitate dialogues that weave together the multiple constructed realities around the idea of defunding the police, to help create clarity and a new shared narrative.

The third core process of transformational change involves using a generative image, or "one or more words, pictures, or other symbols that provide new ways of thinking about social and organizational reality" (Bushe & Marshak, 2016, p. 398). Generative images are compelling, and they help people to imagine alternatives that could not be imagined previously (Bushe & Marshak, 2016). In the process of creating a Polarity Map®, stakeholders develop a generative image that resonates with them, known as the Greater Purpose Statement. On a Polarity Map®, a Greater Purpose Statement is used to anchor the poles and quadrants of the polarity, and answers the question "Why leverage this polarity?" (Johnson, 2020, p. 312). As mentioned earlier, the Greater Purpose Statement that arose in our research was *safe society for all*. A Greater Purpose Statement, in likeness to a generative image, can help people imagine new alternatives to policing in their community beyond their current way of thinking.

Cultivate the Potential

The OD practice of process consultation reinforces how OD practitioners are uniquely qualified to support change management processes as it relates to this topic. In process consultation, "it is the client who owns the problem and the solution" (Schein, 1999, p. 20). OD Practitioners are responsible for ensuring the *process of arriving* at a solution is one that stakeholders can trust.

After creating the right environment for dialogue and helping stakeholders see their shared motivations, OD practitioners can focus on helping the community further cultivate the energy for change. In our conversation with Anastasia Bukashe, she shared successful strategies from her extensive dialogue and reconciliation work with police forces in post-Apartheid South Africa. Specifically, she referenced Fisher & Ury's (1991) concept of *yes-able propositions*, which is a way of finding elements of agreement between opposing groups that can then serve as a foundational stepping-stone for further dialogue and action (A. Bukashe, personal communication, October 31, 2020). This study gives an idea of what possible *yes-able propositions* might be:

> We all desire to live in or help create safe communities.
> The current system of policing could be improved upon.

Bukashe also reinforced the need to decouple the process of arriving at *yes-able propositions* from the specific strategies for reaching desired outcomes (personal communication, October 31, 2020). It is possible for a group to conflate a specific strategy (i.e., replacing police with social service first responders) with the overall outcome they're striving for (i.e., creating a safe community), when there are many paths that can lead to the same goal. When exploring such a complex topic, it will be critical that communities give themselves the opportunity to incorporate new learnings into their process and adjust courses of action accordingly.

It is imperative to remain focused on the goal and build trust in the process of participatory change. Through this

study, we observed firsthand how *Defund the Police* can incite feelings of racialized trauma, fear, and distrust. Relationships between police and the communities they protect are strained. It will not be feasible for this process alone to solve that strain, which is deep rooted and often involves generational trauma. However, there is enough momentum for exploring new possibilities to propel communities into a better future.

Conclusion & Next Steps

Our philosophy as OD practitioners is best summarized by Schein (1999): "Always try to be helpful" (p. 6). This initial field exploration was our foray into how we as OD practitioners could help communities trying to understand the *Defund the Police* movement. We found this research thought provoking and formative, challenging our own assumptions as co-authors. Several participants also mentioned that our interview request provided them an opportunity to reflect on the topic, which felt like a meaningful steppingstone to creating change. Our initial findings can be a starting point for positively contributing to this societal challenge.

OD practitioners are uniquely qualified to partner with solution seekers in communities on issues of public safety because of our grounding in OD perspectives, principles, and practices. We hope OD practitioners are inspired by our exploratory study and decide to contribute to this societal opportunity. We have outlined a framework of strategic actions to support the initial stages of a change management process of community safety. There will be many unknowns as OD practitioners step into this space and continue this work with communities. We recommend using the perspective of the OD lens as your North Star and a braided process of exploration, reflection, and action as your compass to help navigate the complex nature of this topic. We look forward to future dialogues on how OD practitioners can contribute to prescient social issues.

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Diversity and Inclusion During Crisis

An Archetypal Perspective

By Ellora Rath
and Adi Raheja

Abstract

Organisations in these times of distress are grappling with various losses and survival. The focus on Diversity and Inclusion (D&I), in such times, may not be perceived as an immediate need amidst other emerging priorities of tactical nature. But does D&I have the potential to pull organisations out of the crisis they are facing?

This paper explores D&I from a Jungian lens of holding polar opposite masculine and feminine archetypal energies. And how the current times demand organisations to shift from the conventional gender-focused way of dealing with D&I. This calls for focusing not just on the "WHATs" but also "HOWs" of the D&I initiative and the role of Organization development principles in helping organisations create a diverse and inclusive environment.

Keywords: Diversity and Inclusion, Crisis, Jung, Archetypes, Organisation Development

The current crisis has put human civilization to test by throwing at us myriad challenges, one seemingly more complex than the other. Organizations in these times of distress are grappling with various losses and survival. Today, many organization development initiatives aim to survive, recover, be agile to the new market demands, and adapt to the new work from home culture.

The old "dark horse" of Organisation Development (OD), i.e., Diversity & Inclusion (D&I), may not be perceived as an immediate need amidst other emerging priorities of tactical nature. Through this article, we wish to explore:

» Whether D&I interventions have the potential to pull organizations out of the crisis they are facing?
» Do we need to approach D&I interventions differently than what we have been doing?
» How can we access deeper layers of D&I by accessing the archetypal energies of the organization?
» What would new, holistic D&I approaches look like?

Whether one is an ardent believer and an enthusiast of D&I or believes that it is just another "softer" initiative of little value, hold on to the end of the article for a completely different lens to challenge the conventional beliefs around it.

D&I During Times of Crisis

During unprecedented times like the COVID-19 pandemic, organizations experienced issues related to changing customer patterns, dipping performance, financial crunch, lack of collaboration, communication lags, and decisional paralysis. It is no surprise that most of the organizational

initiatives aim to overcome such issues during these times. However, there is an underlying trust deficit in the organizations. According to Gartner's *Top 5 Priorities for HR Leaders in 2021 Report,* "only 44% of employees say they trust their organization's leaders and managers to navigate a crisis well" (p. 9). Now, compare this with another fact from the same source—"49% of HR leaders say that their leadership bench is not diverse. Leadership lacks diversity" (p. 10).

Can the humanistic principles of OD pave the way for a diverse and inclusive culture that creates an environment of trust and improves an organization's ability to navigate crisis? Possibly, we have forgotten that D&I is not an optional intervention. It is an essential cultural fabric that makes all other interventions successful. Culture is not an initiative. Culture is the enabler of all initiatives (Senn & Hart, 2006). Imagine how little success is possible with any other intervention when the organizations are low on listening, respecting, trusting, collaborating, equity and co-creation—all of these are the vital threads of a diverse and inclusive culture.

The current situation provides us an opportunity to explore the new meaning and beliefs around D&I. It can help organizations to pull themselves out of the crisis by enabling:

» the purpose of existence
» open and accepting workforce
» being seen, heard, and mattered
» trust at the workplace
» resilient, innovative, and responsive to change

Hence, the culture-building aspect under the D&I umbrella is more relevant today than ever before. The organization's need to revisit D&I from a different perspective and embrace it in true spirit is the current necessity, far beyond the employer branding and image management intent.

Existing Approaches to D&I

What are some of the conventional D&I initiatives in organizations? Hiring the less hired, discussion forums, empowerment initiatives, celebrating special days, unconscious bias training, mentoring sessions, and having more privileged policies for specific groups are conventional approaches to inclusion and diversity. D&I has become activity-centric rather than being culture-centric. How can just by hiring a few more men or women, celebrating a few occasions, and rewriting a few policies around it in the organization, create a culture of inclusion?

Radically speaking, these initiatives aim to place one above the other to bring about balance, yet they seldom create a balance. It attempts to turn the tables around, which is met with power-play and secret resistance. Even the word "empowerment" denotes the flow of power from one segment to another. The premise itself is that someone feels more powerful than the other.

According to Mercer's *Global Talent Trend 2020 Report,* 63% of CEOs and COOs being accountable for Diversity and Inclusion, say there is a need to create opportunities for women, who lag behind men in asking for promotions (60% compared to 73%) and receiving promotions and pay increases (48% compared to 62%). As per the PWC's *Global Report 2020 on D&I,* global organizations are struggling to help translate D&I strategy into action. Despite the heightened commitment, organizations still have to make more progress in designing and executing D&I programs that meet their objectives. Correspondingly, only 5% of organizations are succeeding in critical dimensions of successful D&I programming. So what is causing this disconnect?

Representation is a measure of diversity; the employee experience is a measure of inclusion. Diversity is about numbers, but inclusion is about impact. Companies can mandate diversity, but that is of no impact if inclusion is not cultivated well. Inclusion leads to diversity, and diversity further ensures inclusion. Developing an inclusive culture is not just about having a representation of people from different ethnicities, color, economic and social strata, educational backgrounds, genders, and gender orientations. It is time to think of D&I as more than just chasing the number-goals, especially gender, and get in touch with something more profound—an intent of acceptance. This is what holds, contains, and is inclusive of everything and everyone, be it people, perspectives, ideas, or viewpoints. It helps to accept our differences, which are not intended to separate, but to realize our need for one another. After all, D&I is about respecting the differences and enjoying the similarities.

Accessing the Layers of a Diverse and Inclusive Culture: An Archetypal Perspective

Using the Jungian perspective, we throw a different light on D&I by proposing to look at masculine and feminine archetypal energies instead of gender centric classification (male and female). It is not the balancing

> **D&I has become activity-centric rather than being culture-centric. How can just by hiring a few more men or women, celebrating a few occasions, and rewriting a few policies around it in the organization, create a culture of inclusion? Radically speaking, these initiatives aim to place one above the other to bring about balance, yet they seldom create a balance. It attempts to turn the tables around, which is met with power-play and secret resistance. Even the word "empowerment" denotes the flow of power from one segment to another. The premise itself is that someone feels more powerful than the other.**

act of numbers (be it gender or minority) but the archetypal energies that need our focus and understanding. In this article, the balance of these archetypal energies is looked at as the basis of establishing a stronger foundation for D&I intent as well as initiatives.

"It is a well-known fact that sex is determined by a majority of male or female genes, as the case may be. But the minority of genes belonging to the other sex does not simply disappear. A man therefore has in him a feminine side, an unconscious feminine figure—a fact of which he is generally quite unaware. I may take it as known that I have called this figure the "anima," and its counterpart in a woman the "animus" (Jung, 1968, CW9i, p. 284). According to Carl Jung (1968) masculine and feminine archetypes are named as "animus" and "anima", respectively. There is an aspect of masculine and feminine in each of us—the masculine in a woman called animus. The feminine in a man called anima. It is the dance of these two energies that orients us more towards one side and becomes dysfunctional if not balanced and in tandem with each other. These masculine and feminine archetypes are a part of the collective unconscious and built from over the years and generational experiences and the experiences of the members of the opposite sex. This idea can be explored a bit more by understanding what do these energies mean:

If I were to attempt to put in a nutshell the difference between man and woman in this respect, i.e., what it is that characterizes the animus as opposed to the anima, I could only say this: as the anima produces moods, so the animus produces opinions.
(Jung, 1966, CW7, Para 331)

What qualities can be attributed to masculine energy? Masculine archetypal energy is projected in the adjectives used to define our existence—action-packed, goal-oriented, competitive, accomplished, independent, planned, and logical way of survival. Now consider the qualities that can be attributed to feminine archetypal energy, and one may think of

stillness, interdependence, collaboration, nurturance, empathy, compassion, vulnerability, holistic thinking, resilience, and emotional stability.

Giving is an attribute of the masculine energy and receiving is that of feminine energy. Masculine energy is about taking action, building, and fixing things, whereas feminine energy is creative and inspiring. Masculine energy sees a problem and fixes it, likes to make decisions fast. Feminine energy is nurturing, supportive, intuitive, and empathetic; it is characterized by flexibility and fluidity. Masculine energy loves direction, purpose, and competition, and feminine energy loves appreciation and emotional exchanges. These two energies are the guiding force of all the dealings in the outside world and are also considered as two halves of a whole-—the polar opposites whose aim is to seek balance and come together to become whole.

Looking at D&I with a Jungian archetypal perspective opens doors to newer possibilities of creating diverse and inclusive organizations—that care for people and profits, that speak affirmatively and yet are open to listening, that build questionability along with answerability, and that hold values while driving performance.

Archetypal Dysfunctions in the Organizational Context

Organizations are collectives of individuals. They are like a ball of these masculine and feminine energies that are constantly in tension with one another. A dysfunctional anima (feminine energy) would make the organization reactive, less tolerant, confrontational. There will be either too much passiveness towards things that need to be done, a "let it be" approach, or too much action without thought. This kind of organizational setup or culture would prefer to be led by leadership, which is high on masculine energy. Such workplace settings mostly find themselves oscillating between options, doubts, not sure of their choices, and become more dormant and inactive, losing focus on the action. Such organizations are volatile, filled with too many rationalizations as they often try to escape into the thinking realm by not paying heed to the emotional aspect. Since psychological

safety is at stake, such workplaces lack the trust and support of the people.

A dysfunctional animus (masculine energy) is very low on adaptability and complacent and breathes in "know it all and know it better than anyone else" air around it. It is extremely critical and produces a judgemental environment, where there is absolutely no scope of inclusion of perceptions, ideas, and viewpoints as there is more conviction on self. This kind of workplace is competitive, non-collaborative, and untrustworthy. The workplace settings are more action-oriented, cutthroat, insensitive, manipulative, and low on relationships. Only intellectualization thrives in such a place with no room for warmth and care. Owing to overemphasis on getting things right, there is less room for acceptance of failure and risk-taking. Too much eye for detail makes them forget the big picture and ultimately prevents growth. This kind of organizational setup or culture would prefer to be led by leadership, which is high on feminine energy. These dysfunctionalities seek balance, and that is the genesis of an inclusive environment where diversity is valued.

Most traditional D&I approaches are imbalanced, with too much attachment to one energy and abandonment or dormant usage of the other energy. Will the same approach work in a crisis? A classic example of both the energies working together and also in a tussle with each other is strategy and execution. Strategy is about forward-looking ideas and is the function of the anima (feminine), while execution is about structural implementation, a function of the animus. When there is a creative tension between the two, the energy polarities are in dialogue with each other. In this state, they work dynamically together. When they are not adequately relating to each other, there is a divide—the strategy is unrealistic and lacks flexibility, the execution lacks motivation, and is over practical. A conflict between these two polar opposite business concepts of strategy and execution is where D&I often loses its gravity.

The nature of change in recent times has posed challenges that cannot be looked at from the lens of "problems" as their resolution often causes new problems making

them more complex and unsolvable. While we have no control over how the world is evolving, we do have control over our mental models, which requires newer discoveries and perspectives and calls for a change in mindset.

The traditional ways of thinking are characterized by the "either/or" mindset. The following paradoxes exhibit some of the common organizational polarities that are prevalent:

» A strong and tough work environment with no emotional display—a workplace that has no room for doubts, mistakes, and vulnerable emotions.
» A productive workplace where the number of hours and quantity of work determines the efforts put in.
» A dedicated and committed workplace where work comes first and nothing beyond that.
» A collaboratively competitive workforce where people do not build each other but contest with each other for a better showcase of work.
» An equal opportunity employer where the trust factor is low, feelings of stagnation and burn out persist.

Can these challenges be resolved by making choices or trade-offs between two alternatives or ways of being? Also, what happens to the people who are not able to make this trade-off? They are excluded, dropped out by design, and there remain people in the organization who fit into the dysfunctions of normal functioning. There would be initiatives to hire people to compensate for the drop in numbers or increase a particular segment but post that, the pattern repeats itself unless there is a container to hold. In such times, dropping a D&I initiative in such a vast and deep ocean of organizational culture will sink and fall flat.

The paradoxes show up as chronic, recurrent problems even though we think we have solved them by making a choice. The new way of thinking calls for "and"— a balanced perspective instead of "either/ or" thinking. It is about wholeness, looking at the bigger picture, and discovering new answers. We are not thinking machines that feel, we are feeling machines that

think (Damasio, 2010). The seemingly opposite poles, masculine and feminine energies, are interdependent and complement each other.

A strength that is overused becomes a weakness, and a value that is overused becomes a dogma. How can OD support organizations in identifying and managing polarities by using the balanced masculine and feminine archetypal energies and their relevant and appropriate usage by making sure that none of the energies go overboard and overly used to save organizations from being dysfunctional?

While diversity is an activity that can be measured in terms of numbers, inclusion is an experience and can only be felt. D&I holds both the aspects of archetypal energies. It is a part of the employee value proposition not merely on paper or words, but instead is built on the thoughts, actions, systems, and processes of the entire organization. An inclusive environment holds diversified views, ideas, and people where there is an experience of belongingness, further paving the way to more diversity.

Ardhanareeshwar: Balancing the Two Archetypal Energies

The COVID crisis hints at interdependence, co-existence, and balance of the two energies as the fundamental principles of existence. There are global slogans around openness and acceptance, from being offered a seat at the table to the need of "being seen, heard, and mattered," equity in all aspects, fostering trust, welcoming creativity, and innovation—all of which are aspects of D&I. This opens doorways for organizations to explore the new meaning of D&I through the lens of archetypal energies. The balance of masculine and feminine energies, the two aspects of our very core, constitutes the universal law of polarity and enables harmony and co-existence. This is where acceptance and inclusion resides, and wholeness can be experienced.

The abandoned or the dormant feminine archetypal energy sheds light on the importance of setting a true wilful intention for D&I as an initiative more than a

target-oriented objective. D&I is not about balancing the gender ratio; it is about balancing what these genders represent. It is a cultural transformation and not a number goal. The gender, community, age, and regional ratios would consequently be achieved when organizations embrace both the energies.

As we apply the Jungian lens to D&I, we also take the liberty of discussing ancient myths and figures. Ardhanareeshwar, the magnificent half-man half-woman Indian image of God Shiva (masculine) and Goddess Paravti (feminine), is a perfect depiction of a balance of two energies. The balancing act of holding the energy polarities together leads to healing and a transformative change, paving the way for a more inclusive workplace and society. While diversity is an activity that can be measured in terms of numbers, inclusion is an experience and can only be felt. D&I holds both the aspects of archetypal energies. It is a part of the employee value proposition not merely on paper or words, but instead is built on the thoughts, actions, systems, and processes of the entire organization. An inclusive environment holds diversified views, ideas, and people where there is an experience of belongingness, further paving the way to more diversity.

The field of organization development is rooted in the principle of balance: the bottom-up and the top-down approach, the systemic and humanistic approach, the diagnostic and dialogic approach, the intrapersonal and interpersonal approach. The principles and values of organization

development can bring about a radical change that is needed to give importance to D&I that it deserves and be a game-changer in organizational growth and development. The organization development methodology would support shutting down the current game of just rolling out D&I initiatives without putting enough thought around the intent of roll-out, how they are being driven, and what unconscious messages are being sent and acted out. Organization development can be instrumental in enabling organizations to take a more in-depth and committed dive into examining and diagnosing their culture to generate awareness around the archetypal energies and the role of imbalance in creating organizational problems.

The value-based approach of organization development, which serves as a guidelines for the OD practitioners, focuses on improving individuals, relationships, and alignment among various organizational components to achieve an all-rounded result (wholeness) with respect to organizational effectiveness, quality of life of its members, serving the organization's purpose and the larger system of which the organization is a part. (Jamieson & Gellermann, 2014). The aspect of D&I is naturally stitched into the OD-way of approaching an issue in hand, built on the values of:

» respect, appreciation, and love for the experience of self and others' being while engaging in the search for and the process of co-creating good life (Jamieson & Gellermann, 2014)
» authenticity, congruence, honesty and openness, understanding, and acceptance: people being true to themselves, acting consistently with their feelings, being honest and appropriately open with one another (including expressing feelings and constructively confronting differences), and both understanding and accepting others who do the same (Jamieson & Gellermann, 2014)
» people caring about one another and working together to achieve results that are good for everyone (individually and collectively), experiencing the spirit of community and honoring the diversity

that exists within the community (Jamieson & Gellermann, 2014)
» achieving desired results with an optimal balance between results and costs, and doing so in ways that coordinate the energies of systems, subsystems, and macrosystems—particularly the energies, needs, and desires of the human beings who comprise those systems (Gellermann, Frankel, Ladenson, 1990).

In a way, organization development is the balancing scale and the means to balance the archetypal energies being talked about in the article. This balance can be brought about by working towards building an inclusive culture that respects diversity and ensures that people are welcomed, supported, and feel a sense of belonging towards the organization.

Diversity without Inclusion is like a big hole in the bucket of water; while the bucket may seem big and always full, it is leaking and losing its utility. The employee surveys (engagement surveys, happiness surveys, etc.) may successfully capture the scores, but how one feels when one enters the organization premises, how they are received, how their views are welcomed, what is the receptivity of the environment are more important and give us an experience of inclusion and are more accurate than the measurable scores put up on the walls. While we may talk about D&I, it is a good idea to look at what percentage of the time, effort and strategy consists of planning around diversity than focusing and building an inclusive environment.

According to the PWC's *Global D&I 2020 Report*, While D&I is a stated value or priority area for 76% of organizations, 33% of respondents still feel diversity is a barrier to employee progression. D&I is the most talked-about corporate strategy today, but it is dealt with mostly like the "black sheep" of the family. While it has the tremendous potential to revive and transform the organizational culture, there is a deep-seated fear of pushing it to the forefront as there are chances of confronting and exposing a lot of unwanted biases, judgments, and insecurities in the

form of organizational shadows, which are being repressed and swept under the carpets of D&I initiatives unconsciously. Since a sensitive area needs time, effort, attention, and questioning one's own values and prejudices, avoiding it and not giving it the importance it holds seems to be the easy way out. Within every "dark mine" of shadows lies the gold of transformation. Similarly, in the repressed organizational shadow lies its huge creative potential. This, when explored, would unleash the tremendous unutilized potential and strength that the organizations possess.

The Four-Fold Approach to D&I with an Archetypal Perspective

Being and Becoming
Growth and development require the maturity to look at one's own state of "being" and realize that it is ever-evolving. One is not the same as one was yesterday and will not be the same tomorrow. Transformation breeds from adaptability, and adaptability comes from accepting that we are ever-changing. As organizations, are we awakened and conscious of our "being"? Are we aware of our current ongoings and environment around. Our ways of responding, and whether they are aligned to our goals, objectives, values, and vision? Are our current ways of being, supporting, and offering a path to our learning, of "becoming"? "Becoming" requires constant venturing into the unknown by holding our current ways of being, dipping ourselves into the experiences, and learning from the same. This is the state of awareness that would breed D&I into the culture.

A deeper understanding of oneself is essential to uncover one's biases and to learn how to cope with the ever-present possibility that one's words and actions might be inappropriate and unethical if those biases were operative (Hinckley Jr., 2014). This would set the foundation for an inclusive culture.

The multidisciplinary approach of organization development, as part of behavior science, opens doorways to a level of awareness where the cultural aspect of the organization can be looked at from

a psychodynamic perspective, focusing on the "being" and promotes "Self as an instrument of change", challenging the assumptions, beliefs, biases, and ideas around ways of being. The element of congruence around the thoughts and actions matching the laid down values requires a human process-centric approach of organization development to be able to accept and adopt D&I in true spirit. The balance of archetypal energies can also be drawn from the Hofstede's Model of Cultural Dimensions where the assertive pole has been called "masculine" and the modest, caring pole "feminine" (Hofstede, 2011). Like societies, organizations have their taboos and biases, often deep-rooted and unconscious. The conscious approach of Organization Development helps organizations become aware of their ways of being with respect to the archetypal energies and how they impact their purpose, values, and conduct. Organization Development can bridge the gap between conscious and unconscious ways of living by introducing the missing focus on mindset (the growth mindset as per Dweck, 2006) to balance the excessive focus on skillset by organizations.

Aspire to Build an Androgynous Culture
With heightened awareness comes the ability to evaluate and discern. An androgynous culture is an output of this discernment where opposites are not opposed but held together. Can organizations imbibe and accept both masculine and feminine ways of being without condemning either of them? While organizations talk about care, support, empathy, nurture, and care at the workplace, which are more feminine, the approach to such feminine requisites is still masculine. Can organizations be mindful of how they (men and women both) are conducting themselves, which is against the needs of the current times? Can men who are more caring, nurturing and women who are goal-driven, task-oriented be acceptable? Can we have an acceptance for who we are as human beings instead of trying to fit in and be someone we are not?

Many women, out of insecurity about their newfound power and the fear of attaining this power in the leadership position, overreact and start depending and drawing more and more from their own masculine energy for protection. No wonder there are some women who mistakenly believe that succeeding in business requires imitating men and even more mistakenly ruthless men. They abandon their feminine energy and compete with the masculine energy around them, which is symbolic of men. There are examples of women acting more manlike, and men have completely abandoned their feminine qualities. When there are masculine energies all around with no holding for the feminine, where does the balance go? This is a gift of cultural conditioning and a power game—where one always has to be up—power over somebody else rather than power being one's own ability to be effective. Moreover, imagine, if an organization unconsciously rewards such behavior, what kind of message is going out. And no matter how many initiatives and slogans of male-female equity are raised, it is all futile.

Androgynous culture respects the feminine and masculine in each of us and has the awareness that both are distinct yet entwined. Can we leverage this natural internal diversity as part of a universal law which enables us to find a unique balance of expression for each of us? Androgyny paves the way for immense creative potential in organizations. Since an androgynous approach does not look at gender as binary and hence does not operate from a "right-wrong" perspective, it values the person for who he/she is with all their natural qualities and paves the way for diverse, multiple, and unique perspectives from people. This is a reservoir of resources for organizations, which are a collection of people from diverse segments with different orientations, life experiences, preferences, and interests. This opens doorways for a lot of experimentation, openness to explore, taking risks to access possibilities, and enhanced creativity. These are the competencies that future-ready organizations are looking at to be able to navigate through the uncertainties and complexities of the world.

As per the PWC's *Global D&I Report 2020*, business leaders believe they are communicating about D&I by making information available, but the messages are not getting through. Employees are unaware of efforts underway to drive a more inclusive culture. Only 22 percent of employees reported their awareness around the organization's drive towards D&I in the form of collecting and analyzing data.

Can we move from enabling employee experience to valuing human experience in organizations? Can Organization Development spark conversations around experiences, interests, opportunities, challenges, and the current and desired state of D&I other than capturing and analyzing hard facts. Can emotions be evoked by

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creating compelling stories around D&I so that people become comfortable finding a release and become more open to talking about D&I as a strategy with initiatives around it? This would set the tone, intent, and narratives and connect people at a deeper level.

The archetypal energies can be balanced in an OD way by holding the emotional milestones in an employee's journey as important as the performance, engagement, and commitment outcomes. Experiences that matter are created both at work and outside of work (*Mercer's Global Talent Trends 2020 Report*, 2020), and they may be well taken care of by organizations provided they are committed to value the humanness and uniqueness of each of their employees. Small acts matter big and just a small encounter with an experience of feeling "seen, heard and mattered" goes a long way in creating that memorable and unforgettable emotional experience that the employee gets attached to. This leads to psychological safety, builds trust, and sets an example of healthy D&I practices without communicating any D&I policy or rolling out any D&I initiative.

The holistic and systemic approach of organization development helps look at an integrated framework of D&I that focuses on organization-wide culture building., with the D&I intent being weaved across the various elements of the organization systems, processes, practices, policies, culture, technology, etc., to build continuity and congruence from start to end. The planned, long term approach for managing the unplanned aspect of deep-rooted change and the androgynous style of organization development comes in handy when we work with culture-building exercises to question the deep-seated beliefs and behaviors around those beliefs. It recognizes that an ever-changing environment requires the ability to respond to changing circumstances and build muscles towards managing the change. It balances and holds both the energies and works with resistance as the propeller of change and an emotional reaction that needs nurturing, and processes that address both breadth and depth of issues

to build strength in the system as well as cultivate resilience.

Begin from the Leadership
Leadership at the personal level is the first level of leadership development. Building an aware, conscious, authentic, vulnerable, and emotionally intelligent leadership is more important than ever before in these uncertain times. The leadership has been put under much pressure, and there have been questions on the ways of developing leaders. The role of OD here would be to create an environment that is safe for the leaders to express their vulnerability. By accepting vulnerability as the critical competency of a leader, leaders are set free of being who they are not, to stop worrying about answers to every question, to be more open and risk-taking as they do not have a self-image to protect, and to show up fully and realize that it is okay to go wrong.

Conscious leadership banks on both masculine and feminine energies within, to be able to manage the energies outside. Inclusion in decision making, being receptive to others' ideas, perceptions, viewpoints, co-creating a space together where everyone is respected for who they are, and lending patient listening ears are the feminine styles of leadership that can be displayed by leaders irrespective of gender when they access and embrace their own feminine energy. The balancing approach of organization development supports the D&I intent—the top-down approach recognizes the involvement, support, and commitment of the leadership, and the bottom-up approach appreciates where participation of people is important for a supportive culture to drive change in the organization.

A robust leadership development plan develops leaders to be self-aware and relevant; they build the capability of the workforce by being better coaches and guiding their employees through tough times. Conscious leaders set up an inclusive climate where people can speak up without fear. After all, psychological safety begins with admitting our own mistakes and welcoming criticism from others.

The OD values of integrity and authenticity are crucial for an OD practitioner to conduct honestly, responsibly, and with appropriate openness by lending their presence, which the client system is missing. Taking a position wherever required and speaking the unspeakable impact the client system and propel them to think beyond the obvious.

As per the PWC's *Global D&I Report 2020*, there is a lack of leadership supporting the D&I agenda. While tasking leaders with specific D&I goals should be vital to driving results, despite this, only over a quarter of global organizations surveyed have adopted this practice (26%), and even fewer measure progress towards the achievement of these goals.

The OD practitioner's "evocative" and "provocative" ways of influencing can set up an energy of change and compel the leaders to look for ways to approach D&I beyond what seems obvious. The OD practitioner's evocative mode of presence can help the client see D&I n a different light and brainstorm newer options by attempting to evoke the emotions and feelings in the leaders and the client system. The evocative mode of presence is around accessing the feminine energy to create awareness in the system, leading to a new direction. The provocative mode of OD practitioner accesses the masculine energy of pushing the leaders to act and get things done. Challenging and questioning the leaders about their behavior demands risk-taking and handling uncertainty by the OD practitioner, which is instrumental in stirring up the system.

Another form of masculine and feminine energy balance can be along the continuum of being and doing. The feminine energy is harnessed in the "being" of the OD practitioner in understanding and holding people's feelings and then examining situations and exploring implications. The masculine energy is harnessed in the doing orientation of the OD practitioner, which is about implementing plans and tasks through focused and structured awareness. Both these styles, when approached in a balanced manner by the OD practitioner, yield desired outcomes.

Develop as You Grow (OD Way)

D&I is not just a strategy; it is a value in itself, a way of living in all aspects of life. Organizations intending to work on D&I can consider asking themselves an important question: "Are we just growing, or are we growing and developing?" Growth without development has no meaning and can wither away with time. While organizations today are focusing more on strategy, planning, execution, and achievement, which are definitely drivers of growth, can they also look at the developmental drivers like learning, culture, and inclusion?

and collaborative environment, which is further supportive of D&I.

One of the most significant factors contributing to the success of any organization is its people's ability to work together as teams. With increasing uncertainty and chaos, and remote working, it has become imperative for organizations to see how they can bring in a culture that can foster collaboration and build healthy relationships for better and improved effectiveness. There is a strong link between belongingness and organizational performance as it leads to connections between the members

The double-loop learning theory of Chris Argyris (1980) can support the organization's growth and development by providing a platform to reflect on how behavior fits the espoused theory and how the inner feelings become expressed in actions, and whether there is a congruence between the two. This kind of learning can help OD practitioners, and the client system closely detect and correct errors that hinder the D&I strategy and initiatives. It would involve the whole of the organization in not just looking at newer ways of being and doing that supports the intent and purpose but reflecting on and questioning the existing values, goals, plans, actions to get into the deeper aspects of organizational culture, which requires openness, flexibility and the willingness to take risks and explore.

When teams are united by a common purpose, the difference in opinion on matters not related to purpose becomes less relevant and how to achieve the purpose becomes the ground for reasonable and healthy conflicts rather than an unhealthy division. When every individual is respected and treated fairly in an inclusive environment, receptivity goes up. Members are willing and invested in listening to each other. Moreover, more than half of the problems are solved when we listen. Because with listening, there is a response, not a reaction, and that is the sign of growth and development.

D&I is a developmental mindset that fosters true development in the workplace. It has a learning and evolving element attached to it, which makes us look at situations from different perspectives, opening us to life's experiences, challenges, and accomplishments, preparing us for better times and uncertainties alike. It improves the psychological trajectory and makes us more flexible and adaptable.

The learning and capability building principle of organization development supports D&I as one of the competencies which can be transferred to the client by the OD practitioner, which further enables learning that results in an open, reflective, and healthy organizational climate. The inclusive principle of Organization Development recognizes that wisdom lies in people, and they have the solution to their own problems. This approach leads to a trusting

of the organization. This fosters their sense of contribution to meaningful shared goals.

The process consultation background of OD practitioners supports in building better interpersonal and group relationships, interactions, and communications. When teams are united by a common purpose, the difference in opinion on matters not related to purpose becomes less relevant and how to achieve the purpose becomes the ground for reasonable and healthy conflicts rather than an unhealthy division. When every individual is respected and treated fairly in an inclusive environment, receptivity goes up. Members are willing and invested in listening to each other. Moreover, more than half of the problems are solved when we listen. Because with listening, there is a response, not a reaction, and that is the sign of growth and development.

Inclusion is the readiness ground on which diversity can thrive. It requires increased effort, time, resources, and most importantly, the intent to create an inclusive environment that will eventually lead to an acceptance, appreciation, and openness to diversity. As OD practitioners, how can we use the subtle and vital cues from our sensorial experiences and not just get carried away by hard data and information available to be able to use our presence in an effective way to influence and impact the system in a way that it is opened to greater consciousness and can access possibilities which otherwise are not available with a limited view and perspective.

The best ideas, strategies, and solutions are not with the limited few; instead, they are available to the whole of humankind. Furthermore, organizations are privileged to have a group of people come together as a storehouse of talent that can only be accessed through an accepting and inclusive mindset. The possibilities that are being missed out can be realized only when there is a willingness to embrace diversity and be inclusive. It helps build organizational resilience, empathy, and strength while still aiming for tangible objectives. Resilient and empathetic organizations honor all stakeholders, serve

customers better and go a long way in building the organization's legacy.

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Understanding and Disrupting White Supremacy at Work

An Action and Inquiry Guide for OD Practitioners

By Kimberly A. Walker

Abstract

How do OD practitioners perpetuate white supremacy culture? This moment calls upon us to reflect on our field's practices while we work to leave organizations better equipped to achieve their organizational goals in an anti-oppressive way. Through unpacking the pillars of white supremacy as defined in Okun's (2001) work, this article explores both how OD practitioners may be unwittingly upholding these pillars and how they can disrupt patterns of racism and oppression in organizations. Examples of choices practitioners have to operate differently and principles of dialogic OD that are supportive of helping organizations behave more equitably are shared. The article draws on research on power dynamics, change management, collaboration, and leadership and the author's OD and practitioner experience within mission-focused organizations.

Keywords: white supremacy, white dominant culture, dialogic organization development, equity, racism

Introduction

Awareness of racial injustice and inequality embedded in our institutions and systems has increased in the United States, though these societal ills were always clear to those who have suffered their consequences the most: people that have been historically marginalized. These realities call on all of us to create a better and more inclusive society for all. Organization development practitioners are not exempt from this call, and, if the field is truly what it claims to be, practitioners must do work that actively grapples with issues of power, dominance, racism, and privilege in organizations. They must also be able to identify practices that maintain existing power imbalances and standards established to support a predominantly white workplace as ones they can either contribute to or disrupt.

This work requires examining every aspect of our field for areas for improvement. Even how we define OD may reinforce the idea this work is designed to benefit the most powerful. Beckhard's (1969) definition of OD is often used, which defines OD as planned, managed from the top, and meant to increase effectiveness. Looking across organizations, "the top" is often a reflection of the dominant group in our society: white people, and often white men. The dominant culture is

the established language, religion, values, rituals, and social customs on which the society was built. It has the most power, is widespread, and influential within a social entity, such as an organization, in which multiple cultures are present. An organization's dominant culture is heavily influenced by the leadership and management standards and preferences of those at the top of the hierarchy. (Equity in the Center, 2018, p. 24)

If we think about this at the organizational level, if OD is planned and managed from the top, what ramifications does this have for those who are not at the top? Additionally, if the goal is always increasing effectiveness, what are the tradeoffs in doing so, and who bears the costs of those tradeoffs?

I will examine how white supremacy—defined as the "idea (ideology) that white people and the ideas, thoughts, beliefs, and actions of white people are superior to People of Color and their ideas, thoughts, beliefs, and actions" (Dismantling Racism, 2010, para. 9)—may present

Fifteen pillars that illuminate how white supremacy culture manifests in the processes, structures, and interactions in organizational settings are: perfectionism, sense of urgency, defensiveness, quantity over quality, worship of the written word, only one right way, paternalism, either/or thinking, power hoarding, fear of open conflict, individualism, I'm the only one, progress is bigger, more, objectivity, and right to comfort. It is important to examine these pillars, derived from the work of organizers and educators, in context. The pillars are not inherently bad or evil, and at least some of them are likely to be crucial to the client's (and the practitioner's) value proposition.

in nuanced ways in OD practitioners' work, and the choice points they have in disrupting it. While this article focuses on white supremacy, the lessons here are likely meaningful in any scenario where one is trying to interrupt systemic oppression by a dominant group. This article calls for awareness on how practitioners' entry into organizational systems without this consideration perpetuates forces actively harming all staff, particularly Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) staff, as well as the organization's potential to reach its goals. The discussion draws from a seminal article on white supremacy culture by Okun (2001), as well as research and practitioner experience, to illuminate where practitioners may unintentionally uphold the pillars of white supremacy. The same sources, as well as the tenets of dialogic OD, are used to illuminate ways these pillars can be managed

or broken down to create a more equitable organizational environment.

Understanding Whiteness and White Supremacy Culture in Organizations

As practitioners, it is difficult to create meaningful change without accounting for how societal and institutional context informs the way that organizations operate. Dominant culture shapes that broader context by communicating acceptable values and customs, as described above. That dominant culture in the United States includes whiteness and white supremacy. The power of these forces is rooted in colonization and the creation of racialized others (Nkomo & Al Ariss, 2014). That long history merits its own in-depth exploration, but the institution of slavery, Jim Crow laws, "redlining" of neighborhoods, and the long-term segregation of institutions are just some examples of policies and institutions that gave preference and power to white people over BIPOC.

While these concepts generally privilege people with lighter skin or who identify as white, whiteness as a dimension is more complex than someone's race. Whiteness is not always assigned to phenotypically white people and who is included in its benefits evolves. For example, while initially facing discrimination and seen as the other, immigrants from Eastern Europe and Ireland were eventually "moved into the category of being white" (Nkomo & Al

Ariss, 2014, p. 6). As Al Ariss, Ozbilgin, Tatli, & April (2014) explained, "it [whiteness] could be framed by skin color in the USA and South Africa, or by educational status and class privilege in India" (p. 363). It is based on "psychological identification, rather than purely biological" (Al Ariss et al., 2014, p. 363). Actions that reinforce whiteness and white supremacy can also be carried out by BIPOC people (Okun, 2001). The consequences of whiteness are not tied to any inherent ill intent of the people included in its benefits, but to its widespread, systemic nature and its results: people who do not fit into the norms of whiteness are asked to accept fewer opportunities, space, and voice.

Whiteness, and the related concepts of white supremacy and white privilege, defined as "power and advantages benefiting perceived white people, derived from the historical oppression and exploitation of other non-white groups" (Equity in the Center, 2018, p. 25), can have a number of consequences on how race is experienced and constructed in the United States, including:

1. White people do not view themselves as having a race (but view the race of others) (Nkomo & Al Ariss, 2014).
2. White people can be viewed and judged as individuals as rather than as a group (unlike other races) (Nkomo & Al Ariss, 2014).
3. White people have a reduced sensitivity to racism (Chrobot-Mason, Campbell, & Vason, 2020).

The work of practitioners, premised as it is on organizations, needs to recognize organizations as spaces where these dynamics are constantly at work. Nkomo and Al Ariss (2014) traced whiteness in organizations to the industrialization era and the accompanying exclusion of BIPOC people. Whiteness becomes embedded into organizational cultures, shaping who is viewed as competent and an "ideal employee," which groups have power, and who has access to resources (Nkomo & Al Ariss, 2014, p. 13). Enacted through formal laws and practices, it also expresses itself through aspects that are more informal and nuanced (Nkomo & Al Ariss, 2014). Research reveals the

consequences: BIPOC people are still often receiving differential treatment in the workplace, as evidenced by myriad studies such as Bertrand and Mullainathan's (2004) study showing a preference for white names on resumes, with 50 percent more of them being invited to interviews. BIPOC people in nonprofits also report a higher rate of inadequate salaries and fewer opportunities for advancement than their white counterparts (Kunreuther & Thomas-Breitfeld, 2020).

One point of intervention into this legacy of oppression at the organizational level comes through focusing on white supremacy culture (or white dominant culture), "the artificial, historically constructed culture which expresses, justifies, and binds together the United States white supremacy system" (Dismantling Racism, 2010, para. 11). White supremacy culture provides a helpful lens into how white supremacy can present in the everyday operations of organizations and the practices of OD practitioners.

Pillars of White Supremacy in Organizations

In their seminal 2001 article on the topic, Okun named a set of pillars that serve as manifestations of white supremacy culture in organizations. Fifteen pillars that illuminate how white supremacy culture manifests in the processes, structures, and interactions in organizational settings are: perfectionism, sense of urgency, defensiveness, quantity over quality, worship of the written word, only one right way, paternalism, either/or thinking, power hoarding, fear of open conflict, individualism, I'm the only one, progress is bigger, more, objectivity, and right to comfort (Okun, 2001). It is important to examine these pillars, derived from the work of organizers and educators, in context. The pillars are not inherently bad or evil, and at least some of them are likely to be crucial to the client's (and the practitioner's) value proposition. Trouble arises when they are adopted without intention (Okun, 2001), not laid out as expectations, or enforced differently among different groups. For example, if the belief is that there is only one right way (one of

the pillars) to write emails effectively that is never communicated and reflects white, native English speaker, middle-income communication standards and norms (e.g., specific ways of opening and closing emails, length, expectations of formality), everyone may potentially suffer from a lack of clarity about expectations. However, those from different racial and socioeconomic backgrounds, who are not working from the same cultural cues or understandings, are more likely to do things "the wrong way" and be punished for it.

Below is a more in-depth review of four of the pillars of white supremacy that, from my perspective, are those that emerge most frequently in OD practitioners' work, including my own, and apply whether working internally or externally. I define them and give examples of how they could present in practitioners' work.

Sense of Urgency

Okun (2001) defined a sense of urgency as a "continued sense of urgency that makes it difficult to take time to be inclusive... results in sacrificing potential allies for quick or highly visible results" (p. 2). Our clients often come to us with urgent needs: they may operate in an environment in which responding with urgency is commonplace and expected. However, the costs for this urgency—for non-dominant groups in the organization in particular—can be high. Creating shortcuts to a process is likely to further disadvantage the stakeholders that are furthest away from power, such as BIPOC, a possibility that Okun (2001) directly named. Less time often means less space for participation and review of the historical, societal, and cultural forces that shape the organization, making it more likely the work will not involve questioning the status quo and how it may be harmful to historically marginalized groups.

Beyond client practices, the way that we as practitioners scope our projects may also contribute to an unnecessary sense of urgency. Okun (2001) specifically called out as problematic proposals which promise too much work in a very short period of time and funders (in this case, clients) who expect too much for too little. By creating

proposals that undercut the resources needed (such as time or labor), especially for projects that involve cultural or transformational change, practitioners may reinforce an idea that meaningful change can be done quickly, at low cost, and, most likely, with fewer participants involved. Such proposals also create less room for new ideas to emerge or space to slow down when needed to dive in deeper.

How can practitioners push against sense of urgency and disrupt processes? One way is to identify tradeoffs between time, cost, and depth. Okun (2001) also recommended making sure initial proposals include a realistic work plan and deciding in advance how to make decisions that are fair and inclusive in a highly time-pressured environment.

Creating more time and space to act is very much in line with the principles of dialogic OD, in which, through emergence and embracing of the unknown, change can emerge from other places in the organizations besides just those in power (Bushe & Marshak, 2015). Bushe and Marshak (2015) believe change occurs through changing conversations: having different ones as well as bringing in new players. Slowing down may be just what is needed to create more room for conversation, and, from that, a deeper and lasting change.

Only One Right Way

This pillar assumes "once people are introduced to the right way, they will see the light and adopt it" (Okun, 2001, p. 4). In the United States, the right way is likely to be shaped by white supremacy norms. To approach one's work using a diagnostic OD approach is to believe that the only way to understand an organization is through a specific path that follows the scientific method. Data is collected and analyzed "objectively": problems are identified and addressed appropriately.

However, belief in one right way creates a wrong way, as well as people that are perceive as right and people that are perceived as wrong. As part of their training, practitioners in the field are often asked to identify "resisters" and find ways to work around them to help organizations achieve the change they seek. However,

without enough critical thought and when too deeply into one right way mode, resisters become enemies. They become sidelined or incorporated into the process often in ways that deeply diminish their contributions. What if that resistance contains important information not just about the specific effort practitioners are engaged in, but whether or not the organization is ignoring or doing harm to BIPOC or other marginalized staff?

This pillar may also be something that practitioners need to help clients identify and manage their expectations as part of their work with them. The cli-

is right to what is true, and who it is true for. Practitioners can provide more space for all voices, "resisters" or no. Instead of focusing on "doing" the change a certain way, practitioners can help move the work forward in a more equitable way by asking questions like:

> What are the many experiences we are having as an organization?
> What experiences do we want everyone to have?
> What positive or negative experiences are only certain groups having? What can be done to change those experiences?

or how many people are involved, practitioners always bring themselves and the broader societal context into the work they do. Racial identity, biases, and personal experiences are all part of this self. Choices are made on what to report, what questions and ask and how to ask them, what counts as data, how we treat data that does not fit a particular pattern, and what data merits further exploration.

Objectivity is also seeing emotionality as negative and invalidating those who think in other ways (Okun, 2001). In objectivity, the right way is emotionless, "scientific," and devoid of context. Everyone who does not see things through an objective lens becomes someone not to be trusted. Because dialogic OD operates from a place of constructivism, the idea that reality is socially constructed and interpreted (Bushe & Marshak, 2015), it is in opposition to the idea of objectivity. The goal is to illuminate multiple experiences and understand how they interact with one another.

To help people break down this perceived sense of whiteness as neutrality, practitioners should consider critical analysis of previous policies where there was a disproportionately negative impact on BIPOC staff (Bohonos, 2019). In my work, I have used an example of a previous reimbursement policy where staff are required to put purchases on a personal credit card and then get reimbursed in 30–45 days. This seemingly innocuous policy presupposes access to credit and income, and also creates a situation in which someone may have to disclose their wealth status to access travel or a professional development opportunity. It may also discourage people without these means—which is more likely to be staff that are early in their careers or staff from BIPOC backgrounds, given the current racial wealth gap—from pursuing professional development or other stretch opportunities. Though the intention of the policy may not have been to privilege one group over the other, that is the effect. This calls forward Ibram X. Kendi's (2019) definition of a racist policy, which is one that "produces or sustains racial equity between racial groups...[t]here is no such thing as a nonracist or race-neutral policy" (p. 18-19). Practitioners can help create the container

> **As part of their training, practitioners in the field are often asked to identify "resisters" and find ways to work around them to help organizations achieve the change they seek. However, without enough critical thought and when too deeply into one right way mode, resisters become enemies. They become sidelined or incorporated into the process often in ways that deeply diminish their contributions. What if that resistance contains important information not just about the specific effort practitioners are engaged in, but whether or not the organization is ignoring or doing harm to BIPOC or other marginalized staff?**

ent's measure of success may be that the change is implemented the way they envisioned at the beginning of the process. A good practitioner will build a relationship enabling the client to embrace changes to the process, and reframe for the client how embracing emergence can bring a better outcome for all.

Among the so-called "antidotes" Okun (2001) suggested for this pillar are accepting multiple ways to the same outcome, taking a learning posture as a practitioner, and opening space for clients to reveal multiple ways of doing things. Practitioners can also fight the urge to aim for one right way by embracing one of the tenets of dialogic OD: accepting multiple realities, reflecting "many different 'truths' about any organization, some dominant and some peripheral" (Bushe & Marshak, 2015, p. 409). The focus shifts from what

Objectivity

Objectivity is the idea of a default that can be used to judge actions against. In our society, the default often becomes linked to whiteness: "white becomes the norm against which all other groups are judged... over time, whiteness can become 'invisible' to the dominant group" (Chrobot-Mason, D., Campbell, K., & Vason, T., 2020, p. 4). Because of this idea and the associated one of whiteness being neutral, BIPOC may be further marginalized, "relegated to the margins of organizations" (Bohonos, 2019, p. 322). Diagnostic OD takes its cue from the pillar of objectivity. Belief in positivism—the basis of the scientific method, that there is a knowable, objective, reality that can be proven—is built into the diagnostic approach to the field (Organization Development Network, 2020). However, no matter who does the data analysis

and conditions necessary to identify these impacts and search for alternatives.

Right to Comfort

Pleasing a client requires keeping in mind their desired goals. However, it is also the role of the practitioner to help them see where their perspective is limited and to recognize the value of discomfort, particularly if they are part of the dominant group. Being in a place of discomfort is also how we learn: it is the first stage of Mezirow's (1995) transformative learning theory and the idea of the "disorienting dilemma."

Another part of the pillar of a right to comfort is "scapegoating those who cause discomfort" (Okun, 2001, p. 7), harkening back to the earlier discussion of how resisters are treated. It is important to remember that resistance can offer a way for less powerful stakeholders to exert power (Walker, 2020). Shutting down people who force questions about the organization is a recipe for limited growth, inequality, and a lack of success. If those in power are not able to accept a disturbance of the status quo that keeps them in power, little in the organization can change.

Right to comfort should also be explored at the personal level, within the practitioner. How much comfort are you willing to give up to enable more equitable work? Are you willing to name the areas in which you are still growing and learning? Are you able to identify how your mental models may impact your ability to bring about equitable change?

The guidance above names some ideas around a few select pillars. The reality is that the pillars reinforce and support one another, and creating change takes more than just a few actions carried out in isolation. The additional recommendations below are meant to help improve overall ability to confront white supremacy in one's work.

Additional Ways to Disrupt White Supremacy in Organizations

There are additional options available to practitioners that may help them further disrupt aspects of their working style, their work with clients, or processes within clients' organizations that contribute to white supremacy.

Build Self-Awareness

Use of self (UOS), a technique of our field, "requires the consultant to tap into personal experiences and use those experiences as an instrument of change" (Rainey & Jones, 2014, p. 108). The four aspects of the self are self-awareness (knowledge about yourself), self-concept (assumptions of belief), self-esteem (sense of self-worth), and social self ("awareness of and healthy interactions with others") (Rainey & Jones, 2014, p. 111). What we bring to use of self is derived from many different aspects of us, including our racial, ethnic, and gender identities, life and family histories, and national culture (Jamieson, Auron, & Shechtman, 2010). Self-awareness about one's racial identity and biases is essential to employing this tool effectively. A good start is exploring how one's various identities may be privileged or marginalized, and how these experiences of privilege or marginalization impact one's ability to connect with others. In the context of white supremacy, white privilege is particularly important, especially since some research has suggested whites are less likely to be aware of their privilege than other racial groups (Chrobot-Mason et al., 2020). Having so-called color-blindness (claiming not to see or care about race) can also negatively impact the work white practitioners can do with organizations (Chrobot-Mason et al., 2020). A good first step to build this self-awareness is to immerse oneself in the available literature and training opportunities on the history of race in the United States, structural racism, whiteness, and white supremacy. BIPOC practitioners must examine their work as well to determine if they have adopted pillars of white supremacy. Jamieson et al. (2010) argued that "[o]ur ability to see a client's situation as bias-free as possible, interpret it, and act on it may be the most foundational concept for OD practice" (p. 4). Who a practitioner is shapes what is possible for clients: therefore they must acknowledge where their identity and experiences may

make it more difficult to meet the needs of the organization. Practitioners can also use this knowledge to build a team that will help complement these differences and offer an array of experiences and expertise to a client.

Discuss Power

Supremacy is about dominance or power: the power one group has to control, shape, and diminish the experience of another and the power that comes from a society largely designed to uphold one set of needs and experiences. Power can manifest in other ways:

» resources (access to money, labor, dependence, expertise),
» identity (holding multiple roles within an organization and membership in dominant groups),
» structures and processes (hierarchy, decision-making processes, operational procedures, agenda-setting),
» resistance (speaking out against something),
» formal leadership (having a role with decision-making authority or legitimacy), and
» framing and communication (being vocal, directing a narrative) (Walker, 2020).

Helping organizations identify where dominant groups or norms hold power—and where it can more easily be shared—is an important step in disrupting white supremacy. For example, how can the expertise of BIPOC be leveraged more in making decisions? How can meeting agendas be designed to create more space for more junior staff or other less powerful staff to have their voices heard?

Framing is a particularly important form of power. Framing is the way communication is used to tell a particular story. Bushe and Marshak (2015) name changing core narratives as one of the three transformational processes of dialogic OD. In the case of white supremacy, this could mean challenging the neutrality and/or positivity associated with white dominant norms. For example, is having a sense of urgency always necessary or good

for the organization? Who suffers due to this sense of urgency? What are the consequences for them?

Take a Comprehensive View of the Organization

White supremacy operates at all four levels of oppression: individual, interpersonal, organizational, and systemic. OD practitioners are more likely to be able to impact it at the organizational and perhaps the interpersonal levels. As practitioners, the work may include shifting the broader organizational system and making changes to policies and procedures. To have the most impact, practitioners should take a comprehensive view of the organization, looking at how white supremacy culture shows up in areas including:

» formal policies (employee handbook, etc.),
» cultural norms (informal communications, meeting culture, collaboration culture, etc.),
» performance reviews, and
» hiring documents (incentives, job descriptions, and hiring requirements, processes).

There are a variety of tools that can help practitioners and clients identify how these policies may have different impacts and identify who should be involved in the policy decision to help mitigate them. For example, RaceForward's Racial Equity Impact Assessment guides organizations through questions about which groups may be most affected, what practices may be producing racial inequities, and what could be added or changed to ensure positive and equitable impacts (Keleher, 2009). Additionally, individual assessments could also be used with leaders or other powerful partners to help them understand how their perspectives may be influencing or interacting with change efforts, such as the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI).

There may be instances where working with groups separately by identity makes more sense, while other times may call for working with groups together. While there are times and places for "max-mix" groups, it is important to give BIPOC and other marginalized groups a safe space for sharing and reflection. In multiracial settings, particularly when discussing issues related to experiences in the workplace and racial equity, elevating the voices of more marginalized groups and having white staff listen is crucial. Doing so may reveal trends that would otherwise be hidden. Allowing participants to weigh in anonymously may also create more space for those who may typically feel excluded or believe that less power gives them less voice.

Collect Data in Multiple Ways

If using a more diagnostic approach, practitioners may conduct surveys, interviews, or other data collection instruments. When collecting data, particularly as it relates to experiences of the culture or the organization, it is important to disaggregate it by collecting demographic information (on race, gender, age, etc.) and analyzing the trends within each group. This can also be done in a more conversation-oriented setting by conducting separate focus groups or other discussions according to identity. Some organizations may already have venues like this available through existing racial affinity groups or employee resource groups (ERGs). There may be instances where working with groups separately by identity makes more sense, while other times may call for working with groups together. While there are times and places for "max-mix" groups, it is important to give BIPOC and other marginalized groups a safe space for sharing and reflection. In multiracial settings, particularly when discussing issues related to experiences in the workplace and racial equity, elevating the voices of more marginalized groups and having white staff listen is crucial (Bohonos, 2019). Doing so may reveal trends that would otherwise be hidden. Allowing participants to weigh in anonymously may also create more space for those who may typically feel excluded or believe that less power gives them less voice.

Conclusion

As it has in the past, organization development should continue to help organizations, the people within them, and the systems they exist within work better. However, practitioners must engage in this work mindful of the societal constraints of the white dominant culture, with an awareness of oppressive structures and processes and a willingness to use themselves to break them down. By using methods that focus on accepting multiple truths, creating space for more and deeper conversations, challenging prevailing ways of operating, and asking new questions, practitioners can do their part to disrupt white supremacy. Practitioners must, as Essed (2001) described it, challenge "the normalized practices through which inequalities are maintained" (p. 3). While it by no means falls to our field exclusively to address these issues, practitioners have the privilege of helping to create spaces that are better for people and the world. Doing so is an example of our profession working at its highest purpose.

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Making Good Trouble, Necessary Trouble in the Field of OD

An Invitation to the Work of Decentering Whiteness

By Beth Applegate and
Shannon H. Patterson

Abstract

This article describes the importance of white-bodied organization development (OD) practitioners integrating a cultural somatics framework into their use-of-self skillset. A cultural somatics framework and practice teach white-bodied OD practitioners how to regulate the response of their nervous system to the charge of race, allowing them to recognize and disrupt how internalized white supremacy is present in their mindset, behaviors, and actions. The authors discuss how a cultural somatics foundation is necessary for white-bodied OD practitioners to become more effective partners and allies to their Black, Indigenous, and People of Color colleagues in the work of imagining and creating just organizational systems and practices, and ultimately, dismantling racism in organizations and beyond.

Keywords: racial justice, organization development theory, use of self-theory, white dominant culture, cultural somatics

On January 6, 2021, millions across the world witnessed live on television how white supremacy continues to flourish in the United States. The world watched mouths collectively agape as a violent, armed mob of confederate flag waving and anti-Semitic clad domestic terrorists attacked the United States Capitol, forcefully penetrating its sacred halls and chambers, defiling them as they surged forth in an act of sedition against the government and Democracy. The January insurrection followed the 2020 atrocities of the murders of Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, George Floyd, Tony McDade, and others; the mounting racial disparities in the 430,000 who have suffered and died from COVID-19; and the tepid responses of too many white Americans to the scourge of racism. Racism is very much alive in our country.

The heretical truth-telling needed in the field of organization development (OD) is the field has not sufficiently advanced our practitioner's, field's, or organizational client's ability to successfully disrupt white supremacy culture. As a field of practice, OD remains vulnerable to unconsciously replicating the characteristics of dominant white culture. Even our best intentions to help can cause harm to Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC). Because of our power and privilege, white OD practitioners have a powerful and particular responsibility in perpetuating racism and causing harm. It is time to take a different responsibility: disrupting and dismantling racism within ourselves so we more skillfully do so in our work and with others. As Watson (2004), in comments she wished to be attributed to a 1970s Aboriginal Activist Group stated to conference attendees, "If you have come to help me you are wasting your time, but if you have come because your liberation is bound up with mine then let's work together."

A majority of white OD practitioners taking this responsibility, individually and collectively, would be

novel. It would significantly improve individual practitioners', the field's, or our organizational clients' ability to engage in the hard, messy, humanizing, and long overdue work of truly dismantling racism and co-creating a culture that embodies equity, justice, liberation, and healing. Taking such responsibility is a way of taking action, called by Representative John Lewis's timeless reminder to "...not get lost in a sea of despair. Be hopeful, be optimistic. Our struggle is not the struggle of a day, a week, a month, or a year, it is the struggle of a lifetime. Never, ever be afraid to make some noise and get in good trouble, necessary trouble" (Lewis, 2018, p.1).

For decades, we have heard from BIPOC teachers, mentors, colleagues, and friends that white-bodied OD practitioners have work to do when it comes to grappling with whiteness. This work is necessary if white-bodied OD practitioners are to become more aware of how they can, despite the best of intentions, perpetuate racism, oppression, and marginalization when they practice OD, such as when they help clients manage from the top-down, create a resistance management plan, assess potential employee "fit," and identify high potentials, to name a few practices.

Foundational Terms and Concepts

The following terms and concepts will be used throughout the paper.

BIPOC refers to Black, Indigenous, and People of Color. It is important to note that the acronym has problems for many as it suggests an interchangeability in being Black, Indigenous, or another person of color and fails to articulate the differential ways that racialized people experience race and racism (Daniel, 2020). We are choosing to use it here along with the term white-bodied to illustrate the primary racialized distinction made in the United States.

Cultural somatics is a term emerging out of racial and social justice work that builds on the work of many and refers

to more explicitly recognizing the recursive and shaping relationship between individual and collective cultural contexts and the body-mind; approaching individual and collective change as an inseparable, interconnected, and embodied process and; including a sociopolitical power analysis which orients people in their proximity to power based upon their social identities helping people understand some people are living in a white dominant culture that does not want blackness to be, while others are learning about how white dominant culture operates and how to dismantle it (Hozumi, n.d.; Menakem, 2017; "What is a Politicized Somatics?," 2010)

White-bodied is a term used to highlight that racism lives in and impacts all bodies, especially BIPOC bodies, whose bodies suffer daily, often to the point of death, due to racism (Menakem, 2017).

Whiteness and **white racialized identity** refer to the way white people, their customs, culture, and beliefs operate as the unstated and unchosen norms and standard by which all other groups are compared. Whiteness also refers to the social mechanism that grants advantages to white people because they can navigate society feeling and being viewed as normal, allowing them to not think about their racialized identity ("Talking about race: Whiteness," n.d.).

White dominant culture or **characteristics of white supremacy** refers to the work of

Okun (n.d.) who identified 15 characteristics of white supremacy culture that permeate organizations: perfectionism, sense of urgency, defensiveness, quantity over quality, worship of the written word, only one right way, paternalism, either/or thinking, power hoarding, fear of open conflict, individualism, I'm the only one, progress is better, more, objectivity and right to comfort. While many are not damaging in and of themselves, they are damaging because they are used as norms and standards without being proactively named or chosen by the group.

White supremacy refers to a historically based, institutionally and socially perpetuated system of exploitation and oppression of continents, nations, and peoples of color by white peoples purporting natural superiority due to skin color to rationalize unjust actions to acquire, maintain and defend social, economic, and political systems that collectively enable white people to maintain power and privilege over peoples of color (Martinas, 1995).

An Invitation to White-Bodied OD Practitioners

For decades, we have heard from BIPOC teachers, mentors, colleagues, and friends that white-bodied OD practitioners have work to do when it comes to grappling with whiteness. This work is necessary if white-bodied OD practitioners are to become more aware of how they can, despite the best of intentions, perpetuate racism, oppression, and marginalization when they practice OD, such as when they help clients manage from the top-down, create a resistance management plan, assess potential employee "fit," and identify high potentials, to name a few practices. Grappling with whiteness is necessary for white-bodied OD practitioners to become more aware of the unwitting harm they cause to BIPOC and other marginalized people through their actions and, further, when they cannot receive feedback about their impact because of their white fragility. White-bodied people tend to lash out, deny, collapse, defend, or run away from relating with each other and BIPOC when racism

enters the conversation. These reactions align with what DiAngelo (2018), Affiliate Associate Professor of Education at the University of Seattle, popularized in her definition of white fragility.

We are two white-bodied, cisgender women who practice OD. One of us is a straight Gen-Xer and the other is a lesbian Baby Boomer. We have been and will continually be grappling with our whiteness. If we are serious about reversing the trends of persistent inequity, injustice, and resulting inequalities, i.e., dismantling racism, we believe the field of OD and its white-bodied OD practitioners need to normalize two commitments in our field:

1. **Expanding and deepening our use-of-self (UoS) practices to include cultural somatic work in the community with each other and with BIPOC-led and -centered communities.** Doing so will build our abilities to recognize, regulate, and change the unconscious, patterned responses in our bodies that arise when we are confronted with issues related to race, oppression, and marginalization. We see this work as being a critical and necessary foundation for being able to successfully engage in the next commitment.

2. **Decentering whiteness in how our field approaches its work.** This means to sponsor professional development opportunities for white-bodied OD practitioners to be in deep inquiry together about how our research and knowledge production, frameworks, methods, interventions, and tools can perpetuate racism. This means grappling with the fact that some of the systems and institutions of OD are rooted in white dominant culture. This inquiry needs to be approached in ways that support our bodies, hearts, and minds in learning what it means to decenter whiteness.

As a field that holds UoS as a highly-valued and even a differentiating aspect of itself, the work of these commitments builds white-bodied practitioners' abilities "to trust their inner resources, making discerning judgment in the "here and now"

moment, deciding how to show up and behave, and what intervention may work better in a particular context to achieve the desired outcome" (Cheung-Judge & Jamison, 2018, p. 1) relative to their awareness and assessment of how they might be perpetuating or disrupting white dominant culture.

White-bodied OD practitioners also need to bring deep inquiry into our field's methods. By asking for, and deeply listening to feedback, we can begin to discover how whiteness moves through the open, blind, hidden, and unknown spaces of our Johari Window to harm BIPOC (Luft & Ingham, 1955). This begins with recognizing that our recommended commitments require additional scrutiny from BIPOC thought leaders in the field and beyond.

At the same time, it is not our BIPOC OD colleagues' job or the job of anyone being targeted by inequity, to carry the emotional labor, or grant absolution to those who are feeling shame and guilt about the harm racism causes. To make progress toward dismantling racism and ridding ourselves of white fragility, we must finally act on our BIPOC colleagues' call into accountability to do our work around whiteness.

White-bodied OD practitioners also need to be accountable to BIPOC colleagues, to learn more about how to work alongside and be in solidarity in ways that burden and harm them significantly less than today. We also need to be capable of being in the conversations required to repair the harm we cause. This is how we co-create a multiracial culture that embodies equity, justice, liberation, belonging and healing.

We Must Learn to Stay Relating in the Charge of Race

White-bodied OD practitioners are facing a pivotal point in our field's history where we can become better co-conspirators in dismantling racism's structures and systems that have been and remain a dehumanizing reality for BIPOC in our country. For years, there has been a call from many BIPOC for white-bodied people to work

together to learn about and address our internalized white supremacy, rather than relying on BIPOC people to educate us and bear the burden and harm of doing so. We believe in realizing the potential for us as white-bodied practitioners—and OD as a field—as true change agents depend on white-bodied OD practitioners doing this work. This will develop our individual and collective capacity to respond more effectively in the charge of race. The charge of race is the term we are using to refer to the intense emotions, bodily sensations, and reactions that arise when people find themselves in conversations about race. There are many capacities needed to respond effectively to the charge of race but these are a few foundational ones, many of which are drawn from embodied social justice approaches (Holistic Resistance, n.d.; "Racial Identity Caucusing," n.d.):

1. Developing our body's (not just our mind's) response so that we can create long-term resilience and anti-racist patterns in our bodies.
2. Being able to notice and disrupt in real time the patterns of the white dominant culture in ourselves and our interactions with each other.
3. Understanding and navigating our and others' emotional reactions in general and, specifically, around race in ways that keep us relating to one another's humanity rather than judging, shaming, and blaming.
4. Recognizing our habits of discounting BIPOC experiences, realities, and culture and learning to center BIPOC even when they are not present.

Developing these capacities will help us recognize the pernicious ways that white supremacy has become woven into our worldviews, nervous systems, and emotional responses and how it shapes our reactions, behaviors, and actions. "If we are to survive as a country, it is inside our bodies where this conflict will need to be resolved." (Menakem, 2017, p. xvii). Menakem introduced and uses the term white-body supremacy to highlight the body is integral to the experience of white supremacy, that the "white body is

regarded as the supreme standard against which all bodies shall be measured structurally and philosophically" (Menakem, 2017; Simon, 2021).

For white-bodied OD practitioners, a racial caucus group would provide the collective space to work explicitly on understanding the characteristics of white supremacy culture, internalized white supremacy, the impact of our privilege and proximity to power, and to increase one's critical analysis around these concepts ("Racial Identity Caucusing," n.d.). Caucusing helps people build the capacity to tolerate discomfort for times when they are in multiracial spaces. There is a tremendous transformative power to being with other white-bodied people who have committed to cultivating a container that helps us to recognize, take responsibility for, and disarm white dominant culture in real time.

In the spirit of transformative mercy and justice, we can together develop a life-long practice of examining and feeling how we have been trained in the ways of whiteness, how it inhabits our bodies and our ways of being and doing. This supports our abilities to re-examine OD models, tools, and practices. The work of these two commitments is hard yet powerful work that allows us to feel—not just think about—new possibilities for how we can put belonging for all at the center of our OD practice.

Learning from BIPOC Practitioners How to Temper Ourselves

As white-bodied OD scholar-practitioners, there are many moments along our respective journeys of anti-racist learning that are indelibly printed in our beings. Moments that reverberated through our hearts and bodies and boggled our minds. Moments that made us realize that we each had work to do if we wanted to be truly effective partners in the work of dismantling white dominant culture. Menakem (2017) stated, "We've tried to teach our brains to think better about race. But white-body supremacy doesn't live in our thinking brains. It lives and breathes in our bodies" p. 5) We repeatedly feel the truth of this statement.

We had one such moment together in a BIPOC-led session where one panelist said he found white-bodied people who have not done cultural somatic work dangerous. Many other BIPOC agreed and we have heard this in other BIPOC-led and -centered spaces. This should give us extreme pause. We invite you to stop here, close your eyes, breathe deeply, and notice all that arises in your body, heart, and mind when you hear you (if you are a white-bodied person) can be perceived as dangerous. Stopping to notice and feel what arises in connection with an element of our racialized identities is a moment of practicing cultural somatics.

Between the two of us, we have had the honor of learning from Reverend angel Kyodo williams, Resmaa Menakem, and the founders of Holistic Resistance (Aaron Johnson and Porsha Beed, and their co-facilitators, Jennie Pearl and Dylan Wilder Quinn). Reverend angel is an ordained Zen priest, sensei, and co-author of *Radical Dharma*. Menakem (2017) is a therapist specializing in trauma, body-centered psychotherapy, and violence prevention. He is the author of numerous books, including *My Grandmother's Hands*. Holistic Resistance (HR) is an organization that draws on a range of holistic approaches including earth-building, singing, workshops, one-to-one mentoring, and other programs for African heritage and white identified

people to help them build long-term relationships that support the work of dismantling racism and oppression.

These gifted teachers offer opportunities for white-bodied people to learn and work together in spaces that are white-led and/or Black-led as well as multiracial spaces that are BIPOC led and centered. Their approaches differ but one element they have in common is the use of cultural somatics to help people more fully experience how the systems of race and oppression embedded in our country's history, culture, institutions, and identity are also embedded in their bodies. Such practices are foundational to helping white-bodied

Cultural somatics has revealed the systems we want to change are also replicated within each of us: internalized white supremacy, internalized oppression, unawareness of our power and privilege, and generational patterns, trauma and grief. This makes the connection to our bodies the required starting place. Because then, at the very least, on the other side, these systems have been seen, felt, and disrupted. It opens the space for different questions, insights, approaches, actions, and relationships. Individual and collective cultural somatic work is the necessary companion to dismantling the white supremacy that is frozen in our institutions and systems.

people move beyond their white fragility to recognize, feel, and understand how internalized white supremacy and white dominant culture moves through them to harm BIPOC and others.

Many BIPOC teachers, including those we have identified above, have invested significant time, labor, heart, patience, and grace in expanding our knowledge and capacity to hold and feel the complexity and nuance of how we have internalized white dominant culture. It is with profound humility we note white-bodied people are slowly (and often resistantly) waking up to the gravity of the continual harm experienced by so many. It is why we are inviting our fellow white-bodied OD practitioners to double down on the two commitments we

suggest. Let us step up and into the work that is ours to do to eradicate racism and pursue liberation—for everyone's sake.

We are also deeply appreciative of the insight from our BIPOC colleagues who took the time to review this article and highlight how our whiteness came through our writing. It is with deep respect and care for our BIPOC teachers and colleagues that we share our efforts to articulate what we are holistically learning from them.

Commitment 1: Expanding Our Use-of-Self Practices to Include Cultural Somatics

Somatic or embodiment work is not new. However, many approaches adopted by Western practitioners do not incorporate the cultural context, which leaves out the harmful dynamics of racism, sexism, classism, ableism, gender oppression, homophobia, transphobia, and more, making them unseen and therefore, unnamed, unaddressed and perpetuated ("What is a Politicized Somatics?," 2010). Integrating cultural somatics into UoS work will help OD practitioners grapple with these dynamics and the trauma responses stored in their bodies, building their capacity to respond more effectively in the charge of race. New advances in neuroscience and psychobiology reveal that our deepest emotions involve the activation of a complex system of nerves referred to as the "wandering nerve" or "vagus nerve," which is responsive to people's voices and faces and plays a significant role in our biological experience of safety and danger (van der Kolk, 2014). Working individually and communally in the ways described here help people condition their nervous systems to move beyond fight, flight, and freeze, to continue relating to each other in what van der Kolk described as reciprocity. He remarked that "the critical issue is reciprocity: being truly heard and seen by the people around us, feeling that we are held in someone else's mind and heart. For our physiology to calm down, heal, and grow we need a visceral feeling of safety" (2014, p. 81).

Cultural somatics has revealed the systems we want to change are also replicated within each of us: internalized

white supremacy, internalized oppression, unawareness of our power and privilege, and generational patterns, trauma and grief. This makes the connection to our bodies the required starting place. Because then, at the very least, on the other side, these systems have been seen, felt, and disrupted. It opens the space for different questions, insights, approaches, actions, and relationships. Individual and collective cultural somatic work is the necessary companion to dismantling the white supremacy that is frozen in our institutions and systems.

Working in Spaces that Incorporate Cultural Somatic Practices

There are many ways to integrate cultural somatics. One way is to work at a much slower pace, which allows people to notice what arises in their bodies, question what arises in their minds and interactions, and stay in connection with each other. Another way is to prioritize feelings over thoughts, relating over agenda, listening over talking, and sitting with discomfort and difference over resolving them. These practices disrupt white dominant culture, which tends to trigger white-bodied people in myriad ways, allowing them to feel the impact of white dominant culture while learning to disrupt it.

Reverend angel (personal communication, July 21, 2020) frequently teaches that "liberation is our birthright" and to "mind our own business". This means that whatever impulses, emotions, thoughts, reactions, or feelings present themselves in their bodies and minds are grist for their growth and should not be projected onto or in response to others. People must learn what it means to be responsible to each other but not for each other.

Reverend angel invites people to practice noticing the unloved places and to recognize that loving ourselves is a practice. People need to learn to not respond to this work assuming someone is doing something to them. People have a choice. Not only in what happens to them but also in how they chose to respond to what happens. Therefore, each of us must take full responsibility for how the charge of

race, including the charge of whiteness, moves through them. As Reverend angel reminds people:

This deceptively simple practice space has been known to blow people's skirts up whether they are wearing one or not, break your brain, disrupt lazy or white supremacist-laden notions of practice, and generally undermine ordinary ways of thinking. It could even lead to you falling madly in love with yourself. We accept no responsibility for the glimpse of your own liberation you may experience and never want to turn away from again. Enter at your own risk. (Rev. a.K. williams, personal communication, July 21, 2020)

The practice of noticing what we are noticing is a profoundly liberating practice when applied with a racial liberation lens. The practice of learning to stay grounded in our white bodies and minds despite judgement in real-time creates what Kabat-Zinn (n.d.) calls an "'orthogonal rotation in consciousness,' where everything is the same as it was the moment before, except you've shown up in your fullness, then all of a sudden, the next moment is going to be very, very different" (recorded interview).

Reverend angel teaches while an embodied contemplative practice will be a necessary way of being, it is also insufficient. White-bodied people will also need to disarm themselves, individually and collectively, from the internalized white supremacy that lives in them. This can be done through intentional conversations, culture creation, and informed actions. There is a need to continue to close the gap in our ability to relate to one another in the charge of whiteness so that we can scale our efforts to replace the characteristics of white supremacy at the individual, group, organizational, and societal levels.

HR approaches disrupting whiteness and anti-racism work by building long-term relationships and deep, real connections because it develops our ability to provide the kind of reciprocity van der Kolk (2014) described, even in the charge of race. In their programs for white-identified people, HR facilitators use deep listening, powerful

questions, and a slow pace to help people recognize and feel how white dominant culture is playing out at the moment. They will often focus a workshop on one question to explore the many layers of feelings, reactions, and thoughts that are evoked when people inhabit a question. As challenges come up, HR facilitators support people in learning how to stay embodied, sit with people's reactions, and reach for connection and authenticity while disrupting their whiteness together. Another

How does that change if you imagine BIPOC also being in that space? Grappling with a question in this layered way helps people expslowingerience the complexity present in a room and recognize how harm is imminent. Regularly being in this kind of work prepares white-bodied OD practitioners to have the capacity described by Brown (2020) to "hold space for their Black clients' pain, sadness and rage, without taking it personally" (p. 5)

class, etc.) and how those identities are situated in every conversation helps us to stay aware of the changing power dynamics. This awareness helps us modify our behaviors so that we minimize the chances of diminishing, controlling, marginalizing, and/or harming others. This is a necessary ability for disrupting whiteness in ourselves and our ways of relating. It allows us to do a better job of knowing when it is critical to prioritize relating over productivity, consideration over urgency, feeling over knowing, or disrupt a multitude of other professional behaviors infused by the white dominant culture. As Walia (2012) observed, "a willingness to centre oneself and to learn and act from a place of responsibility rather than guilt help determine the line between being too interventionist and being paralyzed (p.5)."

Slowing down to more regularly notice our proximity to power and various parts of our positionality according to our social identities (gender, sexual orientation, race, class, etc.) and how those identities are situated in every conversation helps us to stay aware of the changing power dynamics. This awareness helps us modify our behaviors so that we minimize the chances of diminishing, controlling, marginalizing, and/or harming others. This is a necessary ability for disrupting whiteness in ourselves and our ways of relating. It allows us to do a better job of knowing when it is critical to prioritize relating over productivity, consideration over urgency, feeling over knowing, or disrupt a multitude of other professional behaviors infused by the white dominant culture.

practice is to pose a question to someone, let them reflect on it, and then have them describe what comes up in their bodies, hearts, and minds when they simply hear (not answer) and feel the expectation of having to respond to a question related to race, oppression, or marginalization. This helps to reveal what cultural elements are at play and how they intersect with individual experience to shape feelings, thoughts, and reactions.

To connect with the power of this approach, consider trying it now. Close your eyes, breathe deeply, and imagine a Black male facilitator you do not know very well asks you, "Can you hold my story?" What comes up in your body, heart, and mind when you hear that question? What comes up when you think about answering it in front of 10 other white people you do not know well?

Commitment 2: Decentering Whiteness

Much of what we do as OD practitioners unconsciously stem from our social identities and conditioning, which for many white-bodied practitioners is rooted in individualism, patriarchy, white supremacy ideology, and capitalism as—the hallmarks of colonialism (Hitchcock & Flint 2015; Menakem, 2017; "What is a Politicized Somatics?," 2010). Many OD practitioners facilitated power and privilege exercises for our clients to deepen the understanding of how power operates and who has more or less of it based on social identity. Yet, how many of us have a regular habit of assessing our power, privilege and positionality?

Slowing down to more regularly notice our proximity to power and various parts of our positionality according to our social identities (gender, sexual orientation, race,

One starting point we and others have found helpful is to regularly check ourselves by stepping back from a project approach, meeting design, or other day-to-day tasks and ask questions like:

1. How might the characteristics of white supremacy be showing up in how I am thinking about this? Structuring this?
2. What and/or who am I centering or prioritizing in my approach?
3. How do you control spaces? What makes you feel like you have lost control? What do you do to regain control? How might your reactions impact BIPOC? (D. Wilder-Quinn, personal communication October 27, 2019)
5. In what ways might we be appropriating and consuming knowledge from the communities and people we oppress and marginalize?
6. How does your discomfort about racism lead to blind spots that then harm BIPOC people? What is the cost to them?

We Need Each Other

As long-time civil rights leader R. Sales (personal communication, October 14, 2020) states, "it is the community that incubates and maintains the healing space." We agree and it is why are inviting our OD community and, specifically, our fellow white-bodied colleagues to make the

commitments to expand and deepen of our UoS practices to include cultural somatic work in the community with each other as a starting point. Then we will be better prepared to be in conversation and partnership with each other and our BIPOC colleagues about what it means to decenter whiteness in how our field approaches its work. Until white practitioners commit to the life-long labor together in the community to temper and bend our individual egos toward the good of the whole, we will not be able to skillfully take on the role of co-conspirator. We will also struggle to make and sustain progress toward cultivating our awareness of what matters: dismantling racism and co-creating a culture that embodies equity, justice, liberation, and healing.

We are in a human consciousness evolutionary moment. Petty and Leach (2020) of Change Elemental, an equity and justice focused organization, noted systems change and Deep Equity "are inseparable if they are to be pursued at depth" and that "the degree of healing our world, and in our collective institutions and communities, requires nothing less than depth from us at this time (if less comprehensive approaches were ever appropriate)" (p. 4). We cannot become an anti-racist field through a temporary or espoused shift in white-bodied OD practitioners. We cannot collude with a return to the past; rather we must put in the individual and collective labor to strive towards a profoundly different future. This reckoning is long overdue and will remain a lifelong labor of love in our efforts to invite and support racial and social justice change at intra- and inter-personal, group, organizational and/or societal levels.

White OD practitioners, no matter how long we have worked for racial equity and inclusion or how well known we may be, or how many books we have published, must dig deep and commit the life-long practice of challenging and loving one another in real-time when whiteness shows up. We must constantly locate ourselves in systems of power and privilege and the complexity and nuance of our multiple identities so we are less unconsciously run by them.

A different future depends on more white-bodied OD practitioners being able to stay relating to one another and BIPOC in the charge of race. In our experience, this requires the development of an embodied skill set to support a container where the repair of inevitable harm is restorative in nature. ODN stated an interest in novel approaches that would support the OD field in its efforts to develop and even leap ahead in its ability to support the creation of better organizations. We believe our two commitments will help the field do so. At the same time, let us be cautious about and question the desire to leap. Leaping can be problematic, representing white dominant culture, with our sense of urgency. Our hunch and experience in this work is that we will have to go slow to go fast. We need the time for noticing, feeling, and creating new culture together in ways we never have before, on a scale we have never done before. White-bodied OD practitioners must dedicate ourselves to a lifelong practice of regularly gathering together to support each other in our journey to understand and disrupt whiteness.

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Facing the White Elephant in the Room

Engaging Whites in Justice, Equity, Diversity, & Inclusion

By Kenneth Rosso

Abstract

This article presents promising theoretical frameworks and organizational strategies for effectively addressing Whiteness and engaging White leaders in justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion (JEDI) work. Interview data from 16 JEDI leaders in healthcare and scholarly research were paired with orienting theories to develop recommendations for organization development practitioners. Practitioners' preference for highlighting common purpose rather than individual identity may be ill-suited to addressing the current context, in which the racial justice uprising has pushed Whiteness and its impact on workplaces to the fore. The most promising JEDI strategies utilize a culture change lens and incorporate a developmental model of positive, White anti-Racist identity. Recommended interventions involve a dialogic approach to build positive relationships, both among and between racial group identities. The article concludes by citing two examples of promising interventions.

Keywords: diversity; equity; inclusion; racial justice; Whiteness; racism; anti-racism; allyship; culture change.

"The whole point of the existence of diversity and inclusion initiatives is to mute, M-U-T-E, the significance of the self-assignment of race or ethnicity" ("Lonnie," senior leader of diversity & inclusion in the academic medical center, as cited in Rosso, 2019, p. 127)

"The heartbeat of racism is denial" (Kendi, 2018)

"Cultural forces are powerful because they operate outside of our awareness" (Schein, 2010, p.7).

On a snowy bright morning in February 2019 in Philadelphia, a year before the COVID-19 pandemic and the murder of George Floyd and nearly two years before the insurrection at the US Capitol, I hosted a virtual interview with a senior diversity and inclusion leader of a major healthcare system whom I will call "Zari." She was my third of 16 interviewees providing primary data for an organization development (OD) research project on the engagement of White people in workplace inclusion efforts. After thanking Zari, I read aloud the title of my research: Effective engagement of White employees in workplace inclusion strategies in healthcare organizations. I noticed that Zari shifted in her seat, and I perceived a tightening in her jaw. Soon, she announced her discomfort with the title of my research: "I think that certainly these days we think more about ancestry as opposed to White and Black" (Rosso, 2019, p.156). Zari was not alone. Of the 16 expert practitioners in justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion (JEDI), 13 did not address Whiteness explicitly in their work. These same practitioners

did not report using a distinct strategy for engaging Whites.

These results should not come as a surprise. Historically, naming and exploring Whiteness has been viewed as divisive, even dangerous within the OD community. Some in our profession may also have a general fear that focusing on Whiteness serves to reify core tenets of Racism rather than challenge them. Instead, our various practices of enhancing organization effec-

indicates that the most promising JEDI strategies include a particular focus on working with White leaders on developing positive, anti-racist identities and relationships. The interventions most likely to be effective are linked to organizational strategy and employ a positive and dialogic approach. In effect, the JEDI strategies most likely to succeed in engaging Whites use fundamental OD principles for leading culture change.

becoming aware of racial identity is a critical step to becoming effective agents for a more inclusive culture.

Yet, awareness development is only the first step of the White leader's journey toward anti-racist action. In the late '80s, African American psychologist Helms (1990) developed empirically-derived measures for both White identity and Black identity vis-a-vis institutionalized Racism. The White Racial Identity Attitude Scales (WRIAS) established a developmental framework to measure the degree a White person has incorporated a non-racist perspective. Helms' (1990) work established that a 'healthy White identity' transcends individual, institutional, and cultural racism by two distinct processes: "abandonment of racism and the development of a non-racist White identity" (p. 49).

Further, and most critically for OD practice, Helm's research showed that the anti-Racist journey does not proceed linearly. Rather, it is an emotional and cognitive roller coaster, fraught with twists and turns (see *Table 1*). Whites must test new behaviors and gain new perspectives. Learning necessitates mistakes and feelings. Through interpersonal successes and failures, Whites are prone to slide into denial, guilt, and Racist behaviors. For example, when White attitudes progress from Helms' (1990) "contact" stage to the "disintegration" stage, the growing awareness of Racism's severity may cause Whites to withdraw from non-White spaces to avoid guilty feelings. In the next stage, while a White person may consciously acknowledge Racism, they may retain underlying beliefs of superiority. These beliefs may cause them to attribute their material advantages over non-Whites to "hard work."

Even as the positive non-racist views emerge in the second phase, "Defining Non-Racist White Identity," Helms (1990) observed that Whites may exhibit the well-meaning but patronizing behavior of seeking to "help" Black, Indigenous, or People of Color (BIPOC) to assimilate to White cultural norms. Helms' "immersion" stage, as Whites proceed towards a stronger non-racist identity, is perhaps the most consequential for JEDI practitioners. In this

> In the late '80s, African American psychologist Janet Helms developed empirically-derived measures for both White identity and Black identity vis-a-vis institutionalized Racism. The White Racial Identity Attitude Scales (WRIAS) established a developmental framework to measure the degree a White person has incorporated a non-racist perspective. Helms' work established that a 'healthy White identity' transcends individual, institutional, and cultural racism by two distinct processes: "abandonment of racism and the development of a non-racist White identity."

tiveness, OD work often focused on developing shared meaning rather than defining differences. This bias for commonality over difference is reflected in our default approach to JEDI. Practitioners typically favor JEDI interventions that are tethered to strategy and mission rather than "identity politics" or "justice". Yet, for at least the last five years, events highlighting the severity and persistence of racism have put White racial identity front and center. On the positive side, these events have also increased interest in White allyship and support for racial justice movements. Public support for Black Lives Matter increased by over 30 percentage points from 2015 to June 2020, when pollsters logged a net favorable score of 28% (Cohn and Quely, 2020).

We can no longer ignore the 'White Elephant' in the room. For OD practitioners, the necessity to face Whiteness is also a golden opportunity: We can strengthen the overall work of culture change by more effectively engaging White leadership in equity and inclusion efforts. My research

Positive Racial Identity Development: A Critical Lens for Engaging Whites

Besides being grounded in well-established theories of organizational culture change, my argument draws from critical race theory and Whiteness, positive organizations, and anti-racism advocacy. Early Whiteness scholars such as Helms (1990, 1995) and Dyer (1997) showed how Whiteness is not just a racial identity or designation, but rather is a social process, a location of race privilege, and a set of cultural practices. One of the most essential parts of Whiteness is that it remains unexamined, both by White people and people of color (Helms, 1990; Painter, 2011; Wing Sue, 2016; Lipstiz 2018; Kendi, 2019). This idea comports with our foundational theories of organizational culture. Simply put, cultural forces are powerful because they operate outside of our awareness (Schein, 2016). Workplace culture is driven primarily by leadership, from the founders and CEOs on down (Schein, 2016; Creasey & Hiatt, 2019). For White leaders in particular,

Table 1: *Summary of Helms' (1990) White Racial Identity Development Model.*

I have augmented Helms' sole use of "Black" with a mix of "Black" and "BIPOC" to reflect contemporary understanding and language conventions around racial identity.

Phase	Stage	Description
Abandoning Racism	Contact	Initial encounters with Whiteness, Blackness, BIPOC-ness "Benefits from...racism without necessarily being aware that he or she is doing so" (Helms, 1990, p.55)
	Disintegration	Growing awareness of racism, White privilege, and moral dilemmas, causing cognitive and emotional dissonance Whites may "selectively attend to only information that gives him or her greater confidence...", yet "to the extent that cross-racial interaction is unavoidable, the White person will attempt to develop new beliefs" (Helms, 1990, p.57)
	Reintegration	Conscious acknowledgment of Whiteness causes guilt & anxiety, which can turn into fear and anger, residing largely out of conscious control, waiting to be triggered Passive response = avoid physically or mentally; Active = treating BIPOC with inferiority, shaming, physical harm
Defining Non-racist White Identity	Pseudo-independent	Pseudo-independent is primarily intellectualizing phase where Whites "submerge tumultuous feelings" (Helms, 1990, p.60) Despite abandoning belief in supremacy, the behavior will still behave in ways that unwittingly perpetuate racism
	Immersion	Searching for the redefinition of their White identity Changing BIPOC people is no longer the focus; instead confronts own fears and behaviors, and those of other Whites
	Autonomy	Seeking to fully internalize the non-racist White identity Still exhibits behaviors that reinforce institutional and personal Racism, but awareness leads to effective reparative behaviors

stage, Whites need to gain opportunities to digest old hurts and grapple with Racist ways of thinking. In the final "autonomy" stage, Whites embrace anti-racist action as a way of being.

To traverse the anti-racist arc of development that Helms (1990) describes, Whites must face a vexing contradiction. First, they must embrace the uncomfortable reality of their racial identity and its profound advantages—only to discard the entire conception of White supremacy. As Helms found, this struggle commonly entails strong cognitive dissonance and backsliding is the norm. Thus, the process demands time, space, and psychological safety—resources that are hard to come by in the workplace.

Positive, Dialogic Approach to JEDI

Practitioners can maximize the use of these scarce resources through interventions that are linked to a culture change strategy and leverage a positive, dialogic approach.

Positive organization theory offers keys to effective strategies for engagement, despite limited resources. Positive theorists hold that all workers, regardless of identity or hierarchical position, try to self-construct identities that express positive attributes such as goodness and worthiness (Wrzesniewski and Dutton, 2001; Dutton et al., 2010). In turn, positive identities help employees develop the positive relationships needed to secure resources such as task-level help, time, money, and political capital (Dutton and Ragins, 2017).

Positive identity and relationships at work are also critical concepts for workplace inclusion theorists and practitioners (Ely and Roberts, 2008; Wasserman, 2014; Creary, 2019). The positive approach considers three critical factors that a focus on "difference" does not: simultaneity, intragroup relations, and diversity as an asset (Ely and Roberts, 2008). Positive practitioners' work in JEDI favors collaborative meaning-making activities, action research, a dialogic approach, and an appreciative

lens (Watkins, 2019). In this way, the positive approach generates greater possibilities for psychological safety, engagement, and organizational change toward a more diverse, inclusive culture at multiple levels of the organization. The positive approach to disseminating culture works in tandem with strong leadership and a tight linkage to organizational strategies.

Promising Strategies to Face the White Elephant: Research Findings and Outside Experts

The closely related constructs of positive identity and relationships, culture, and organizational change served as the primary orienting theories for my research on effective engagement of White employees in healthcare organizations in early 2019 (Rosso, 2019). I applied these theories to the primary data, gathered from 16 semi-structured interviews with senior justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion (JEDI) leaders in US-based healthcare delivery

organizations and consultants. The sample was 67% people of color while 71% of the total population of JEDI leaders in healthcare self-identified as people of color, according to 2015 survey data from the AHA (Institute for Diversity in Health Management, 2017).

While the majority (13 of 16) of my interviewees did not report an explicit strategy for engaging White leaders, numerous JEDI experts in my study reported success using a positive, dialogic approach linked to organizational strategies. "Lane", a medical school leader, created a leadership development program which incorporates dialogue on "historical notions around diversity, particularly racial ethnic minorities that are underrepresented in medicine" and individual work on "relationships to self, to patients, to peers, and to the wider society" (Rosso, 2019, p.122). Zari's staff development initiative focuses on "inclusion as a core competence to professionalism" (p.120). "Emery's" work with nurses "equates D&I [with] safety" in a series of panel discussions (p.121). "Deandre" uses a game focused on himself to highlight the importance of inclusion. He asks, "'where do you think I grew up, where do I live now? Am I married? Do I have kids? What's my racial and ethnic background?' People have a lot of fun with this, myself included. Then, they break up into pairs and play with each other" (p.125).

Outside of my interviews, I identified two interventions for engaging Whites in JEDI that exemplify a positive, dialogic approach. White Men As Full Diversity Partners (WMFDP) (2018) works with senior leaders on effective sponsorship of JEDI. Critically, WMFDP uses White intra-group coaching and dialogue to help participants confront the cultural paradoxes typical of leading diversity work as a White leader. These sessions provide a safe space for testing ideas, airing fears and aversions, and developing messaging to support anti-racist leadership. WMFDP consultants make available numerous, concrete examples of effective White ally behavior, in part by connecting clients with external training.

In contrast to WMFDP's intra-group focus, Creary's Listen/Learn, Engage, Ask,

Provide (LEAP) framework is an inter-group dialogue model to create mutually-beneficial relationships at work across lines of difference (Friedman, 2020). LEAP is applied to facilitated dialogue sessions providing opportunities to appreciate both commonality and difference or providing specific opportunities for ally-development. In an interview, Creary underlined the primacy of dialogic relationships: "People who have lots of power and authority who are senior have a capacity to 'provide' big changes, such as reinvent[ing] how talent management systems are structured... but you have to learn it from the other parts, the L[isten], the E[ngage] and the A[sk] first" (Friedman, 2020).

Creary's (2019, 2020) perspective reflects a guiding principle of OD—that development of interpersonal competencies and creation of new organizational structures must happen in tandem for enhanced cultures to take hold. We also know that leaders set the tone and agenda for organizational culture change. Therefore, if practitioners intend for workplace cultures to become more equitable and inclusive, we must directly engage the senior White leaders in development of anti-racist identities and sponsorship of organizational culture change. The work on identity need not be divisive or punitive. Instead, our interventions can employ a positive and dialogic approach to help the anti-racist message sink in.

OD Practitioners Support White Anti-Racist Leadership

Yet, no matter how inviting engagement strategies are, facing Whiteness will continue to cause discomfort, just as it did for my interview subjects Zari and Lonnie. Sensitivity to discussing racial identity may worsen yet as the US recovers from an era marked by political division and increased White supremacist violence amid the decline of the White majority. Still, Whites' interest in addressing inequities and healing the wounds of racism is at an all-time high. When influential White leaders embrace the journey toward anti-racism, the power of JEDI work increases exponentially. When OD practitioners help such

leaders achieve success in creating more equitable and inclusive workplaces, our work supports the larger vision of a more equitable and inclusive society.

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Intersectionality as a Lever for Better Inclusion

By Gloria Eun Yong Song

Abstract

The shift to a virtual work environment and global health, economic, and sociopolitical crisis call for different ways to create inclusion within organizations. The author draws her personal experience of navigating corporate and personal identity as a remote worker and woman of color to share the challenges of creating meaningful inclusion within organizations. The author then invites Organization Development (OD) practitioners to leverage intersectionality as a critical framework in designing and implementing an intervention. She also shares how it enhances inclusive OD practices. The author concludes the article by inviting OD practitioners to reflect on a series of inquiries to help them deepen their reflection to create inclusive OD practices.

Keyword: Inclusion, Intersectionality. Post COVID-19 Pandemic, Organization, Change

My Personal Story of Inclusion

"Now I understand you," said my colleague, "and how you have felt working remotely all of these years." Having worked as a remote worker for several years, I have never felt as understood as I do now, a time when many organizations have shifted to remote work because of the pandemic. While I appreciate deep empathy from my colleagues, I was also struck by the realization of how invisible my experience as a remote worker had been in the organization.

The quest for creating meaningful inclusion comes from my experience of working as a remote worker and as an underrepresented minority in a global organization. Having worked as a remote worker, I have seen how locational proximity to the headquarter determines the degree of inclusion in decision-making and communication. The further I was from the headquarter, the less opportunity I had to make my voice heard at the decision-making table.

In addition, as an underrepresented minority, I am sometimes questioned about my origin and being asked by my colleagues, "Where are you from?" I also notice that I face frequent silence in response to my inputs or questions during most initial meetings with stakeholders. While I consciously practice taking these reactions with curiosity to uncover more of their intentions, I am also fully aware that systemic biases against my identity as a woman of color can potentially play a role in these interactions.

Although these initial hurdles get overcome as I build trust with people, the combination of my personal and corporate identity has shaped unique challenges around my inclusion at work. As an Organization Development (OD) practitioner who aspires to help organizations be diverse, inclusive, and equitable, I have explored what it means to create

meaningful inclusion, especially during the pandemic. Therefore, my hope for this article is to provide you with practical insights and inquiries to create meaningful inclusion through your OD practices. To do so, I will share how intersectionality as a critical framework helps us examine our mental model around inclusion and establish more inclusive OD practices.

When we pay attention to how intersections of an individual's social identity reinforce their systemic discrimination, we can gauge better what impact our interventions or change process might have at a holistic level of organization and mitigate a potential risk of harm. By doing so, we can anticipate organizational capacity and readiness more comprehensively and foster greater empathy in the design and implementation of our interventions.

Intersectionality as a Lever for Inclusion

Intersectionality, a concept introduced by Crenshaw (1989), describes how multiple facets of an individual's identity such as race, gender, sexuality, and economic status intersect with each of the other facets of their social identity and creates unique lived experiences. It helps us understand how the intersections of these facets create extra layers of complexity in understanding one's discrimination. In other words, intersectionality illuminates that generalizing an individual's experience in one social category can make one's unique lived experience invisible, therefore preventing systems from rendering meaningful changes that address this discrimination.

For example, Crenshaw (1989) illustrates Black women's lived experiences are often generalized by Black experience, although their experiences of discrimination do not solely come from being either Black or women. They come from the intersections of both in addition to their other socioeconomic status.

Moreover, intersectionality helps us think critically about how the meaning of inclusion needs to be re-examined to

accommodate the diversity of lived experiences individuals face in their social systems. As a microcosm of larger global systems, organizations that we participate in or are clients of reflect the different realities of an individual's lived experience. Hence, inclusion of these individuals requires largely varied approaches—particularly, when the world is even more

vulnerable because of global health, economic, and sociopolitical crises. During these crises, the discrepancy between those who carry some degree of privilege and those who do not has continued to increase. While entire systems need to be involved in advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI), I believe that OD practitioners have a unique opportunity and capacity to influence systems to create inclusion by embodying inclusion in the design and implementation of interventions that treat intersectionality as a critical framework. But, what does that mean concretely?

Examination of Assumptions and Biases

Firstly, OD practitioners can leverage intersectionality by paying attention to which intersections they may have neglected in their assessment of organizations. When it comes to scanning and diagnosing a presenting problem, intersectionality helps us examine if we captured diverse voices at all levels of the organization and to assess the organization holistically. It also invites us to think more about which voices can potentially be underrepresented in these systems and how to mitigate our biases to include these voices.

Re-examination of Privilege and Risk of Harm

Secondly, we can re-examine privilege through the lens of intersectionality and how it may potentially blind us from seeing implicit systemic challenges. As an Asian woman and an immigrant, I regularly face discrimination in my daily life. Last year, I became increasingly concerned for my physical safety as I have heard about physical and verbal harassment towards the Asian community in North America and Europe since the pandemic spread.

At the same time, I acknowledge I carry a certain privilege despite parts of my identity. I am privileged to have my family live in single-family homes, reducing our health risk during the pandemic. I also fully recognize this privilege can undermine my ability to understand the lived experiences of those living in shared living spaces and the potential health and economic risks they may face during the pandemic. Hence, using what I know about other social categories, I can assess which privileges I have and hold space for the realities of others.

Uncovering Reinforcement of Systemic Discrimination

Re-examining our privilege through intersectionality helps us see more clearly where discrimination is reinforced in our systems. As a historically discriminated group, Black Americans have been exposed to disproportionately higher health risks due to COVID-19 than any other ethnicity in the US (APM Research Lab Staff, 2020).

The systemic health risk is also illustrated in the study of Black Canadians. The research indicates that Black Canadians are likely to report a far worse health outcome due to COVID-19. Black Canadians also are nearly three times more likely to know about the death of someone they know during the pandemic (African-Canadian Civic Engagement Council [ACCEC], & Innovative Research Group [INNOVATIVE], 2020).

At the same time, Black people are experiencing prolonged collective trauma from continued racial discrimination, as we witnessed following the death of George

Floyd. While undergoing multiple layers of challenges, many Black women who are largely working in low-wage jobs or categorized as essential workers, face devastating challenges to their livelihood. Those who continue to work are expected to leave their grief and trauma at the door to show up at work to avoid potential layoffs. On top of that, they sometimes carry additional emotional labor of sharing their lived experience at work so that organizations can perform allyship.

Examining systems through the lens of intersectionality requires us to examine our privileges first. We also have to acknowledge that these privileges, which we carry, have perpetuated systemic discrimination thus far. That examination requires our courage to face our shame and own our responsibility. In other words, our self-as-an-instrument and inner container need to be agile yet solid to involve ourselves for deep self-examination.

When we pay attention to how intersections of an individual's social identity reinforce their systemic discrimination, we can gauge better what impact our interventions or change process might have at a holistic level of organization and mitigate a potential risk of harm. By doing so, we can anticipate organizational capacity and readiness more comprehensively and foster greater empathy in the design and implementation of our interventions.

Case Study

Intervention on Decision-Making

I facilitated several decision-making workshops as a part of the global culture transformation effort last year. One of the workshops I facilitated was designed for the executive assistants (EAs) team who supported senior executives (senior vice presidents, vice presidents, and senior directors). After learning about the new decision-making framework, senior executives started leveraging the new decision-making framework in their team. The EAs assisted the executives with

pre-decision-making material coordination and post decision-making follow-ups. At times, they presented proposals to the executives for decision-making such as executive meeting coordination or departmental recognition plans. Occasionally, the EAs were also invited to share their reactions during the decision-making that impacted their work.

However, as the EAs were not trained on the new decision-making framework, it was challenging for them to effectively assist and participate in the decision-making process. The knowledge gap limited their capacity for meaningful contribution and made the EAs less engaged in the process. Hence, the learning goal was to establish a clear understanding of the decision-making framework to increase their capacity to participate in the new decision-making process.

After clarifying the learning goal, I also paid attention to how their social identities might have impacted their experience in decision-making. I analyzed their social identities compared to the leaders with several elements: gender, race, locational variation, and years of experience. The distinctive identity differences that I discovered were on gender and race: the EA team comprised all women and were racially diverse, while most executives were men, and most of them were White. Compared to one of the executives, the intersectional identities of the EA team highlighted the discrepancies in privilege, power, and potentially the inclusion of their voices. Then, I imagined myself in the room in the shoes of the EAs and asked myself, "What would it be like to participate in

the decision-making process virtually with senior leaders, knowing what I know now about their identities?"

As I was simulating their lived experiences, I became more empathetic in picturing their potential struggle. As I did so, it became clear to me that the design of the workshop needed to not only fulfill the knowledge gap around the decision-making framework but also to empower the EAs to see their unique role and influence they have for their teams. In other words, I needed to build a condition and container for the EAs to exercise their voices and feel confident in doing so.

Subsequently, I designed the workshop to encourage democratic participation. I also customized the series of inquires and scenarios that helped the EAs foster the awareness of their unique influence and how they can utilize the decision-making framework to amplify their voices even more. Thankfully, many post feedback highlighted that the EAs felt empowered and enlightened in the workshop as intended.

Implication

Examining systems through the lens of intersectionality requires us to examine our privileges first. We also have to acknowledge these privileges, which we carry, have perpetuated systemic discrimination thus far. That examination requires our courage to face our shame and own our responsibility. In other words, our self-as-an-instrument and inner container need to be agile yet solid to involve ourselves for deep self-examination.

Moreover, we cannot discount the complexities of human systems by applying intersectionality as a sole framework to understand one's discrimination. The nature of systems is incomprehensible (Van Uden, Richardson, & Cilliers, 2001), and we, as individuals, are complex beings who have made myriads of contingent choices that reconfigure his/her/their own complexities (Espejo, 2003). Therefore, my recommendation in leveraging intersectionality as a critical framework in the OD practices remains to deepen our empathy

and inclusion, not to confirm our assumptions about systems or individuals.

Call for Actions

We, as change agents, have a special influence to help organizations sustain and amplify changes. How will you use your privilege to embody OD principles and make the organizations we serve become more diverse, inclusive, and equitable?

As a final note, I want to invite all of you to reflect on the following questions to help foster greater inclusion in your OD practices:

» Which voices might potentially go unheard in the intervention that I am planning/implementing?
» How might my privilege blind me from seeing some systemic challenges?
» What sources of underlying grief/anxiety might this organization be contending with right now?
» How do I create a solid, safe container in an intervention to address collective grief and anxiety?
» What process or structure will help me amplify diverse voices?

To the readers from global organizations, I invite you to think further on the following questions:

» How do I incorporate the voices of regional representatives, including remote workers, to create global perspectives?
» Which cultural intersections might be underrepresented in a diverse regional context?
» How can I maximize inclusive participation globally while accommodating different time zones?

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"... we are concerned about the extent to which our human capacity to organise has been corralled by a singular narrative—the Hero's journey—leading us rapidly and dangerously astray—and OD has been a clear and present partner in this work"

Transformative Narrative Technology and Identities

Unknotting the Heroic Myth in Organisation Development

By Sarah J. Owusu and Joanna Wilde

Abstract

This text—a dialogic prototype—lays out concerns about the field and practice of organisation development (OD) and its over-reliance on a pervasive narrative structure, the *Hero's journey*, which limits our capacity to respond to the converging global crises that we face. Within OD this is sustained by the problematic formulation of the practitioner as change agent and our alignment with power, resulting in harmful consequences for the practitioner, their clients and the world. Despite the prevalence of this singular story, there are alternative narrative structures—often arising from those with marginalised experiences and identities—that can animate a reformulation of OD practice. These narrative technologies hint at potential pathways for OD to thoughtfully and ethically contribute to a transformative integration of theory and practice.

Keywords: #narrative #identity #power #socialjustice #theory-into-practice

Top of the Warp:
The End that Introduces

The metaphor of weaving—ancient and ever-present—has consistently accompanied our Organisation Development (OD) work as we emphasise connections, layers, singular threads coming together as part of a whole. Both authors live the metaphor: Joanna's alternative professional identity as textile artist, and Sarah's centred in the art of dialogue. Cocker (2017) describes the, "live thinking-and-knowing cultivated within ancient weaving" (p.1), and patterns knotted at the loom are accompanied with recitation of myth, encoding myth in practice (Tuck, 2009). The metaphor, emphasising the interplay between overt and covert, is meaningful for understanding the balance between OD theory and practice.

The audience for this paper is those with expertise in moving theory-into-practice (Argyris & Schön, 1974). Like weaving, narrative is technology (neither theory nor practice) aligned with the uncertainty and complexity of this work. Theory-into-practice is uncomfortable both with the constrained research questions of scholars, and the codified implementation attempted by practitioners. Theory-into-practice is more aligned with the artistic process: structured unfolding that cannot be predicted.

We begin and end this account with the *ends of the warp*. The *warp* denotes that which holds, contains and gives structure, the *weft* is where the pattern appears in-between. Using the threads of our identities that have given us insight into crucial elements for transformative OD, we weave an account of narrative technology.

How We Are Working

We have a long working relationship and an artistic process for ethical OD and we have an activist commitment to social justice in OD practice. We use dialogic

prototyping, crystallising ideas from collective sensing and presencing (Scharmer, 2016). This paper moves between theory and practice, and whilst this constitutes a coda of sorts, it is not the last word.

We have used an explicit co-authoring process, taking turns engaging in the struggle to identify the warp and weft of our work, weaving what threads emerge into meaningful patterns. Carefully crafted pieces are unknotted, examined, catalogued and held for potential reuse. Our writing is always careful with authority, with an awareness of power dynamics as a critical issue for OD (Cole, 2019). It has included uncovering aspects of our, often painful, experiences of identity and how the world has differentially hit on us, against us and with us, as we have each made and remade our sense of self. While our use of fluidity in professional identity is central to this paper, we cannot ignore how the coded identities linked to our so-called protected characteristics play out. We draw on references both from established academia and the margins. In doing this we recognise that referencing is political (Rose, 2017) and that we are not the heroes of this exploration; as Ahmed (2017) states, "[c]itation is how we acknowledge our debt to those who came before; those who helped us find our way" (p. 15-16).

This process brought a pattern to the foreground; a question about how the mythic narrative structure of the *Hero's journey* has colonised working lives. This *monomyth* (the term used for the mythological model that centres the journey of a singular hero) offers us only victory or tragedy, both fundamentally antithetical to a connected, complex, joyful life. Recent research looking at the human response to crisis and disaster has indicated how central the experience of common fate and community identity is when working through times of catastrophic disruption (Drury, 2018; Drury et al, 2016). This interconnectedness has become palpable as we experience the impact of the global coronavirus pandemic and the way it has amplified existing injustice and inequality. Unknotting the grid (Tsang de Lyster, 2018) that holds this individualistic narrative force is a critical challenge for OD, as

is finding a way forward that centres the collective (Gilpin-Jackson, 2020).

What We Are Worried About

Currently the scene is set for catastrophe. The great acceleration, dated from the mid-20th Century but nascent for much longer, is manifesting in converging crises (Heglar, 2020): a global pandemic and hyper-fragile global systems built on what appears to be an ever-expanding lust for extraction, the obscenity of increasing inequality in wealth distribution (Hickel, 2017) enabled through increasing extraction and exponential technology that is imposed and embraced without a matching investment in ethics. Often under the guise of radical innovation, the unsustainability and injustice of these practices (Boehnert, 2018) is wilfully neglected. In the context of the current pandemic, we must pay attention to the influence that vector-borne diseases have on human history, particularly the way this moment may be weaponised to entrench current hierarchies of power (Athni et al, 2021) and exacerbate identity-based harms.

In the context where "it is no longer useful or honest or even smart to look at any of [these crises] through a single lens" (Heglar, 2020, para. 12), we are concerned about the extent to which our human capacity to organise has been corralled by a singular narrative—the Hero's journey—leading us rapidly and dangerously astray—and OD has been a clear and present partner in this work (Cole, 2019). While there have been scholarly explorations of different cultural approaches to change (Marshak, 1994), the reality within and outside organisations remains life threatening (Pfeffer, 2018). So, in response to a call for papers that asks what OD can bring in this era of transformative and traumatic disruptions, we first need to take ourselves with three hefty pinches of salt:

1. Our ideas of change and development are troublesome. The catastrophe (of intersecting crises of climate, justice, resources and health) is justified and change-enabled using tricky ideas built in business schools; a certain type of change is claimed as good, while ensuring only certain voices have authority

to declare it so. Supporting such ideas of change is not consistent with a concern for environment, health or social justice, regardless of what stories our profession may tell itself. It is an idea of change that inherently and increasingly traumatises, with all the toxicity, distress, and ill health this brings (Pfeffer, 2018; Wilde, 2016). At the level of the individual, learning and development is also directed at extraction, as life force is harnessed in service of productivity and life-denying growth (Elhacham, Ben-Uri, Grozovski, Bar-On, & Milo, 2020).

2. Our ideas of agency are thorny. Amid this collapsing system, we have the heroic myth of The Change Agent, apparently cutting a noble figure, claiming to ease change in increasingly toxic organisations. We need to examine this word "agent" as it brings into focus the question: agent for what and for whom? Largely such agents work in service of the beneficiaries of the troublesome ideas of change described; agents of those with institutional power. The agent works to minimise the impact of distress, but distress is a reasonable response to problematic change. Merely making distress bearable potentially deflects from damage done, amplifying trauma through its denial. This is in sharp contrast to the manifestation of beautiful and powerful citizen-led protests calling for climate, financial and racial justice we have experienced recently, that have shone a light on impunity and lack of accountability of those with power.

3. Our ideas of practice are contradictory. Given this ambivalence with agency it is no surprise that OD formulations of practice isolate the work from its context. This is manifest across psychological theory and research, which is where the idea of OD delivered through *self as change agent* has its roots. This foregrounded individualism has steadily erased the subtlety of the relational, identity and narrative work inherent to therapeutic practice and helping encounters. In clinical contexts this has led to the growing use of codified,

off the shelf, manualised approaches to distress. OD manifests a similar tendency to atomise and individualise what is relational into the *self as instrument*. This has led to a situation where cure or healing is seen as synonymous with making atomised individuals comply or align with power (Frayne, 2019), with victim blaming the response when it harms.

These three dynamics are reinforced in OD practice through the worryingly infectious monomyth, allegedly the narrative pattern at the core of most of the stories we tell (Vogler, 2007). In this pattern, our hero ventures out on a journey (described in 12 distinct stages) and encounters eight archetypes, such as the mentor, the shape-shifter, the ally and the trickster. In keeping with this, our use of the word "hero" invokes an archetype and not a gendered or otherwise labelled character.

For OD it largely offers us a tragic narrative defined through separation, martyrdom, sacrifice and the work of the sin-eater archetype, deployed in support of the victory arc for those with institutional power. It is no surprise that OD is constantly engaged in an internal conversation about its worth, given the ambivalence of inhabiting the interface between institutional power and its traumatic consequences. But this is not the only narrative form that humans think with (Seagar, 2015), nor the only narrative structure for change and transformation (Allen, 2001). The increasing call for trauma-informed approaches (Triesman, 2020; Wilde, 2017) is one response to the fracture this monomyth creates in our sense of self and community. Pioneering resistance is emerging from climate and social justice movements, with activists such as Nakate (2020) exploring how the climate crisis is intersectional (rather than singular) and interwoven with crises in race, gender, class, justice, and health.

Exploring the OD Practitioner Identity as a Change Hero

Whilst OD as a field may have set out with different goals, its work has become synonymous with change (Bushe & Marshak, 2018) as it seeks to remain relevant (and resourced) within businesses. There is a common assumption that to make change stick we must ensure the buy-in from formal leadership structures (and compliance by everyone else), and determine success by the metrics of profit, shareholder value, and endless growth.

Understanding the Deal in OD Practice

To illustrate the complexity of this deal struck by OD, it is illuminating to offer a story from early in Joanna's career—it is initially a heroic construction and then a deconstruction of a fragment of her work on a construction site. The injury rate was increasing—the statisticians said injuries were tracking to a *major incident*—yet nothing they tried helped. So as a last resort they asked Joanna if she had any ideas... she of course did. Here is a large group dialogue—using max mix and census (accommodating shift requirements); we've all been there or somewhere similar. The distress blew out; the pain and anger were palpable. The concerns were mostly centred on unfair pay structures. There was much expression, coffee drinking and biscuit eating and the outcome was the injury rate dropped—tracking to zero within a week.

The managers were amazed: How did that work? How did she do that? How was so much difference to a key management metric obtained (as context this was a country with a corporate murder category for health and safety at work transgressions)? Joanna, armed with her psychologist identity had knowledge about the impact of stress and distress on concentration and clumsiness. She had knowledge about the way in which relating with a cipher (the therapeutic relationship) can become the point of disturbance holding this distress, and so remove it from a system. The consequences: no one died and the managers got their bonuses, yet she had the first episode of serious back pain that has since plagued her life.

As a youthful OD hero, she was happy, but older and wiser, her relationship with this early work has changed—they were unfairly treated, they had every right to complain. They needed the pay and conditions sorted but she had soothed them into acceptance rather than agitating them to action.

And why did she go in there alone? Why carry all that hurt, anger and pain in isolation for a bunch of strangers? After many such endeavours, she carries the traumatic impact of the brokenness of these workplaces in her bones.

The Hero's Journey has dominated permitted accounts of self in the world (identity) and at work, and functions as an unconscious social script (Kinouani, 2021a) that perpetuates structural inequality. It supports the fantasy that the OD practitioner can have an objective eye on the organisation (hence somehow be separate from the world that is being acted upon). This can be seen as a privileged self-othering and as a form of structural oblivion (McIntosh, 2017) that can harm the practitioner. It makes invisible or intractable the institutional power held by those that set the change agenda, that determine the outcomes and tone, and impose the scope of transformation initiatives. OD has chosen to align itself with this power, claiming its practitioners as agents that enable this victory arc, while describing it as change.

Marshak (2006) suggests working with hidden dimensions or covert processes is the basis for success as an agent of change. We must acknowledge similar covert processes operating within OD practice itself and our exploration of narrative power indicates that OD success is predicated on ensuring that much that is covert remains so. These dynamics manifest in three ways:

1. They trap the practitioner in the narrative structure as one type of hero enabling change through being separate—without community—and so often the tragic hero; a sacrificial asset deployed by institutional power to protect a particular worldview and intent.
2. They position the practitioner as an agent, focused on sustaining the heroic journey (victory arc) of those with institutional power by activating the *meeting*

the mentor stage of the narrative arc (one of the 12 stages indicated above).

3. They lock all interlocutors into flat and isolated character roles, with restricted narrative arcs that are not reflective of the community, connectedness and heterogeneous voices necessary to effect meaningful, just transformation and responses based on connection with a common fate.

Even as OD increasingly uses dialogic approaches that favour "conversations in which people think together in relationship" (Isaacs, 1999, loc. 373), not all are invited to such conversations, or can be themselves in such spaces. The literature on psychological safety (Edmondson, 1999) makes it clear that people can neither contribute their voices, nor learn from others if they feel threatened. Whilst marginalised people may be invited to the conversation, covert "power differentials mediate and obstruct our consent processes" (bevense, 2019). Such structural, interpersonal and cultural differences in power erase who we are, inhibit what must be said, and limit what is allowed and what can be learned.

The idea of a bounded self in the formulation of self as change agent is evidence of the trap. This formulation tells a story of "use of self as our prime asset in achieving the helping relationship" (Cheung-Judge, 2012, p. 44). This gives an individualistic view of the work, contributing to the notion that if we just got the perfect mix of characteristics, skills and behaviours, then we would have the ideal practitioner, equipped and able to bring about change for clients in any context, with any group. But at what cost? In the story above about "the deal in OD", practitioner education had not included the need to look after personal psychological safety. This is not about having the right skills, being self-aware or cultivating clusters (Cheung-Judge & Jamieson, 2020) of capability or behaviour. Rather it is about wise attention to the level of safety in the system and the need for radical and cohesive social support, a health behaviour which is now recognised as more significant for mortality than more individualistic behaviours such as smoking, drinking

or exercise levels (Holt-Lundstad, Smith, & Layton, 2010).

Whilst this wider, un-safe context remains, and we work as practitioners in these broken systems, we collude with approaches that are harmful to us and others in a multitude of ways. We can end up in a systemic version of what has been described as the *drama triangle* (Karpman, 1968) as we variably are required to take on roles as perpetrators of harm, victims of harm, and rescuers from harm. The hero narrative implies we are made stronger by adversity. By contrast a trauma-informed response, recognising the impact of trauma on mortality (Fellitti et al, 1998), recognises the danger in adversity and how we need to work together to mitigate harm that is probable from such adversity (Triesman, 2020). For example, the authors' mentorship relationship is grounded in recognition of the chain of inter-generational distress in our profession and the need for inter-generational practitioner-to-practitioner support mechanism as part of a trauma-informed approach to practice.

Changing OD Through Recognising Narrative as Structure

The field and practice of OD might have the potential to offer a thoughtful and human touch if we acknowledge that it is currently a product of the extractive approach (Hickel, 2017) built into contemporary ideas of change, sustained through the hero narrative. While it is not new to suggest that you cannot fix a problem with the same thinking that created it, this tends to be a perspective that the OD practitioner would direct at others, to position OD as the different thinking required; OD practice is caught up in the same trap. The organisational practices supported by change agents have depleted the most sacred areas of life, love and home in an extractive world. Without such recognition there is the danger that where anything transformative emerges from the undercommons (Moten & Harney, 2013) during an OD process, we will not have the capacity to protect it from being quickly snapped up and appropriated by the mechanisms that sustain the status quo, increasing

inequality and harm. A recent illustration of this is the treatment of healthcare workers during the pandemic—romanticised as heroes in the media whilst they are separated from their families, denied pay rises, exhausted and dying, because they are positioned in a heroic myth as doing what they love.

We do not change this covert narrative structure by putting someone who looks different in the heroic role, which is the approach at the core of current Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) practice. These DEI approaches implicitly require superhuman (and hence unhealthy, inhumane) effort from the assigned representatives (heroes). The *glass cliff* discrimination research (Ryan & Haslam, 2007) documents the tragic arc when leaders are appointed from marginal groups. Kinouani's (2021b) critique of the "black excellence" concept explores the harm caused by engagement in a victory arc obtained through isolation and loneliness. While we see the rejection of this individualistic monomyth and the injustice associated with its application bubbling out in many areas, until OD can acknowledge its reliance on this covert structure, it will not be able to work ethically with traumatic and transformative disruption.

Disarming the Trap of Individualism in OD

To illustrate the trap of individualism in the Hero Narrative formulation of OD, we offer a story from one of the first projects that Sarah worked on as an external consultant. Having secured a project in a purpose-led organisation committed to global change, there was resonance with her desire to give back after several years in a multinational corporation. The scope of work was organisation design, building internal people processes, engaging staff in crafting a strategy and supporting the organisation through a growth spurt; the creation of a community beyond a hero. In practice, the work became about containment of the charismatic yet highly problematic founder. Some shifts were possible in the organisation because Sarah was able to empathise and build trust with him,

but the systemic impact was limited to making things bearable for the team for a while, giving the founder a temporary halo effect for the people initiatives he had put in place through her and providing him with a 'confidante' to help him process his own trauma.

Over time, the OD project, interventions and even Sarah's voice, began to be appropriated by the founder as a channel to "do the dirty work" that began to creep back in as the system pulled back into its heroic shape, with the original power dynamics intact. In parallel, Sarah developed a severe chest infection and physically lost her voice several times.

Sarah was able to end the contract through a tough, but deliberate process, and with significant support from several other consultants, including Joanna, who provided psychosocial and legal guidance out of the tricky situation. But Sarah was still trapped by the hero narrative, accepting that OD meant working in proximity to leadership, and so was drawn to a coaching qualification as another tool in her development as a practitioner.

Now she is using her voice to deconstruct this rationale—questioning the role of OD as a support to power, the highly unregulated and therefore unsupported nature of the coaching industry, and the way (like many other therapeutic and quasi-therapeutic relationships) it emphasises the individual, making them either the problem or the cure, but never whole.

Hinting at Alternatives

As we have become increasingly aware of the harmful consequences of the hero narrative, we have been seeking alternative narrative formulations with space for complexities of identity in community, especially those marginalised. This is not a reformulation of the extractive idea of enabling people to bring their whole self to work, as the idea that people live to work is one of the most damaging manifestations of this heroic myth in action in our workplaces; employment is a deal and the whole self is not for sale.

Rather, it requires a shift in the practice of OD to create space for alternative narratives that do not amplify change through individualism and extraction as core values. It will also require us to re-conceptualise distress in organisations. This does not mean getting rid of experiences that are difficult (because that is not possible) but rather to change our focus on difficulty as content-rich rather than the problem to solve. We must acknowledge a trauma-informed approach (Felitti et al, 1998) is a prerequisite for transformative OD and core to the transformative work is an investment in the community and supportive relationships that mitigate against trauma taking hold (Triesman 2020).

This requires rejection of the individualised self as instrument. Such a shift opens an exploration of identity as fluid, social and emergent. We can explicitly work from the perspective that we are immersed, connected and manifold. We also have beautiful human limitations, but we obsess about the wrong ones: for example, gender, creativity, and connection are limitless and full of potential, but our need for food, rest or our lifespan is non-negotiable.

We also need to be deliberate in our use of myth—to be aware that myth is a structure of power that plays out constantly in intimate human spaces, and so if we can allow ourselves more than one such structure it could change how we constitute the world, both for our own liberation but also to acknowledge the world as our home, giving us all we need and also respecting its beautiful limits.

If we do these things, what becomes available to us? Within OD, we are encouraged by work that directly engages with power dynamics (Cole, 2019), addresses accountability to the community (Swart, 2013) and that highlights the specific experience of leaders with marginalised identities (Brown, 2020). There are also those already working on the potential offered by different narrative structure and imagining alternative stories (Newland, 2021), and we are aware of such approaches existing particularly in the work of decolonising the canon, in innovation and healing justice spaces, and in emerging artistic practice exploring visible mending (Dibble,

2018). Seagar (2015) suggests "the monomyth is actually a myth itself" (para. 10) and sketches four alternative narrative models (the Scandinavian, the Indian, the West African, and the Autochthonous narrative form).

In the Scandinavian model (a nod to Sarah's Danish heritage), multiple characters with their own narrative arcs meet several times at a central meeting point. They each have multiple characters, multiple lessons and multiple endings, and a central ritual-based truth. In the spirit of uncovering some emerging, alternative threads, here is a hint at three potential narratives for the OD and transformation practitioner that we are now exploring:

The Artist works for expression with embodied knowing communicated through colour, shapes and touch and playing dangerously with unconscious forces (Murdoch, 1999). The Activist knows how to get things done, builds community and movement, creating space for radical new voices. The Oracle when asked, speaks truth to power, holding our connection with past and future, the earth and beyond. Together their lives weave around a red thread: perhaps that support, solidarity and resistance are more worthwhile than success (Phillips, 1994).

We have begun to work with the three identity formats touched upon (artist, activist and oracle) and no doubt there will be more, but we are sensitive about writing in too much detail. We are aware that OD may struggle to relinquish scholarly voyeurism to engage with the work of resisting institutional power, and that this extractive power will lap up anything with life and vitality to use in service of ensuring everything quickly stays the same (Sainte-Marie, 1992).

Working With Identities to Animate Alternative Narratives

Any alternative to the heroic model for OD is likely to emerge from those who do not benefit from the charms wrought by the hero's journey, as Younge (2018, p. 2) writes:

It was no coincidence that women led the charge for female suffrage or that Ghanaians spearheaded the battle for Ghanaian independence. Had they waited for men or the British occupier to come around to these ideas they might still be waiting. Everybody understands this apart from the people powerful enough to be ignorant because, in general, the more power an identity carries the less likely its carrier is to be aware of it as an identity at all.

Indeed, it takes just a glimpse at social justice movements to understand this is not new in such spaces, as community building, storytelling to affirm identity and being in a relationship is the transformation. Most all African cultures have expressions and sentiments to capture this relational quality of the self and practices that affirm the identity of the individual by situating them in a web of connections that stretch across time, place and realm (Okonkwo & Owusu, 2016; Okonkwo, 2010).

What is required now from OD, is to move with fluidity in identity, grounded in recognition of our common fate and need for community responsiveness. Gilpin-Jackson (2020) expresses such a trauma-informed, "holarchical" (p. 153) self (in relationship with community, society and beyond) in a development model that highlights narrative construction as part of the transformative pathway. Transformative work is happening, and it is those with marginalised identities that can point the way and so we must acknowledge and affirm their leadership. For those with privileged identities, the work is to face it and acknowledge how it fragments and separates, and to do so beyond the safely theoretical. Much like the artist engaging in visible repair work, once the cracks have let the light in, once we see… then we have a choice.

The Bottom of the Warp: The End with Liberating Questions for Theory-Into-Practice

The warp holds the work and so is designed to provide structure. This paper has at its heart a yearning to start the work to see what other patterns could be possible if we could unknot the weft and find a different use for these threads. For us, this means anchoring ourselves with questions, and the answers will be collective and vary with context—they will be alive:

» How does the current dominant narrative form make some lives and some accounts meaningful and others not?
» What could emerge if we were conscious of how dominant narrative structures play out to sustain inequalities and injustices? How could we apply this awareness to practice?
» How would it feel to work with connectivity and integrity in identity rather than individualistic identity, dissociated from the cause and consequences of our current crises?
» What would happen if we deliberately unknotted this taken-for-granted narrative form, demonstrating what it was doing and what it was disabling?
» What would happen if we refused to work (Eddo-Lodge, 2017) with those who deny that different knowing needs marginal identities?
» How can we helpfully use silencing and a refusal to engage as an essential form of resistance (Kinouani, 2021b)?
» How might we take care of ourselves in community rather than as an isolated agent?
» What if we did the work of allowing and learning from other narrative forms artfully to create a different space to explore in?
» How might such work with identities shape the narrative forms that became possible and hence let us shape new dreams to make material?
» Could OD do this work? If so, how and what would we need to give up?

While these questions indicate possible pathways for our theory-into-practice audience, they are not a complete list for OD. We need an equivalent process from for our scholarly colleagues, and offer two foundational questions to engage with:
» In times of crisis, how might we rapidly ethically draw upon marginalised voices to benefit community?

» What new narrative forms, social scripts or vision is needed to free OD practice from its dependency upon institutional power and the associated harms of whiteness (Saad, 2020)?

Our experience suggests that for OD to work with transformational change in organisations it needs to free itself from the grip of the monomyth and the proximity to power that working within this has enabled. This includes the practical rejection of the conceptualisation of self as a decontextualized, bounded unit deployed into organisations as an agent. It needs to be transparent and comfortable being immersed in the intrigues, uncertainties and complexity of identities and contexts rather than relying on the privileged position of unaffected detachment, the voyeur.

Some of the threads of liberation surfaced include a connection to our communities, a commitment to working explicitly across professional generations, together with the development of heart sensitivities (Kinouani 2021a) for working with trauma in others and in ourselves. As we move through this work, more will be uncovered.

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Consultant as Healer

By Pat Vivian

Abstract

The concomitant experiences of the Covid-19 pandemic, the murder of George Floyd as an egregious example of systemic racism, and the fraught political atmosphere, including the attack on the US Capitol, make clear that healing our groups, organizations, communities, and society is pressing and central. This paper proposes the idea of consultant as healer. It offers a new framework of understanding of how consultants can act as healers. That framework rests on two central ideas. The first is that healing is a process of making whole again. The second, that the actions of a healer are manifestations of love and compassion. This paper explores the components of the healer role, understanding traumatized systems, the process of helping client systems heal, and challenges of this work.

Keywords: Trauma, traumatization, healing, racism, pandemic, love, wholeness

"When we love, we can let our hearts speak"—bell hooks (2001)

Recently in a conversation with a prospective client, the executive director asked me: What is the intellectual/academic framework to your organizational trauma approach? Are you an organization development consultant or are you like a therapist using psychology? I answered him: I am a blend of both. I am trained as an OD practitioner and have a background in psychology, and I use principles from both arenas to help organizations heal from trauma. I also commented my healing work with organizations is based on a foundation of love and social justice commitment. My colleagues and I have written about this approach (Vivian, P., Hormann, S., Cox, K., Murphy-Kangas, S., & Tillman, B., 2018), which is embedded in OD principles, social justice values, and psychological understanding of human and human systems. This paper is my organized effort to describe what I mean by "consultant as healer."

I believe the need to support healing in our groups, organizations, communities, and society is pressing and central. Organizational trauma and traumatization have disrupted, debilitated, and in some cases destroyed organizations and their members. Communities, organizations, and individuals can be traumatized in many ways: Natural disasters and catastrophes, human-perpetrated crimes, patterns of internal dysfunction and abuse, and exposure to trauma through the nature of the organization's work. Communities of Color and other oppressed groups have suffered historical trauma, and that traumatization persists. Our national inability to face our history of genocide of Native Americans and enslavement of African people has meant these communities continue to be ignored, persecuted, attacked, and killed (Leary, 2005).

We are suffering globally from the Covid-19 pandemic with more than 100 million people infected worldwide with 2.3 million deaths and more than 25.4 million infected with 425,208 deaths in the USA as of 1/27/21 (*New York Times*, 2021, January 27). The pandemic's widespread devastation has illuminated profound inequities among Indigenous People and Communities of Color, created desolation among the vulnerable in nursing homes, and killed those fighting to save its victims. No one is outside this traumatic experience; with no known boundaries it engulfs

on what is going on and what needs to be done. Our current political and societal context of distrust, division, and conflict necessitates a more profound and complex approach to addressing past and continuing trauma.

Culminating events in Washington DC on January 6, 2021, when rioters invaded the Capitol Building to interrupt the 2020 presidential election certification process, revealed the clear and deep danger we face in the United States. We continue to perpetrate trauma on one another and on our community and political institutions. This

clients describe painful and re-traumatizing discussions as staff of different races and ethnic groups begin to speak up. Others describe political divisions that have disrupted local approaches to farmworker safety and notice the dire impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on immigrant communities because of language and safety barriers. As the pandemic wears on, organizational leaders have seen the effects of illness and death in their organizations and the populations they serve. These leaders describe struggles to respond to the pain and suffering in their midst and to address the psychological toll on themselves and those they care about.

Our communities and organizations will not "return to normal" when we have treatment, vaccine, police reform, or post-election changes. The intersection of individual and organizational trauma, the pandemic, systemic racism—historical and current—and our deep political divides need to be acknowledged and addressed together. The rifts will not heal themselves. Groups and organizations will need help.

us all. The pandemic is unnerving and anxiety-provoking for most, terrifying and catastrophic for many. It threatens the existence of businesses, nonprofits, and other institutions in our communities. With no road map to show us how to respond, we are individually and collectively faced with surviving each day as best we can.

Furthermore, the extra-judicial killing of George Floyd by a police officer in Minneapolis exposed a more dangerous reality. Unhealed trauma and traumatization, enduring over hundreds of years and currently continuing, has been deadly to the health of people in Communities of Color, Black communities, and Indigenous Groups (Lebron et al, 2015; Kirkinis, et al, 2018; Kleinman & Russ, 2020). History and current reality merge into a narrative of trauma, outrage, and despair. White people have an opportunity to recognize that underlying racism in American society— ignored, denied, or weaponized—leaves all of us in a collectively weakened state. We are engaged in a struggle to admit and address deep systemic problems and must face the reality that we do not all agree

persistence has the effect of re-traumatizing anyone who has previously experienced violence (physical or other) as well as traumatizing anew individuals and institutions. The fallout from this devastating afternoon has left our community in tatters. One week later the House of Representatives impeached the 45th president for a second time. This series of events is unprecedented. We cannot afford to ignore it. Our society needs assistance in healing its chasms in ways that speak the truth and offer paths to reunite our citizens and institutions with each other.

Our Healing Path Forward

We as a society have no healing path forward if we do not listen deeply and consistently to the pain and suffering around us. I believe consultants have a role in this listening process and can be of service to organizations and communities. For years I have heard organizations' stories of traumatic events and the multiplying effects of long-unaddressed inequities and suffering. More recently, I have listened to

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This paper highlights the importance of helping those groups and organizations acknowledge, contain, and address trauma, and eventually heal from it. It discusses the underpinnings of a healing approach to consultation, how this approach can be embedded in organization development, and the challenges of this approach.

Understanding Traumatized Systems

A traumatic event or series of events can wound and scare organizational members and disrupt organizational functioning. Sometimes, current trauma also opens unhealed wounds. In addition dysfunctional dynamics of organizational life can worsen the situation. Collective trauma is characterized by:
» Widespread harmful dynamics and impact
» Institutional memory loss amidst high anxiety (helpless and hopeless feeling)
» Collapsed structures and forgotten caring mechanisms (unprotected and exposed)
» Enduring psychic/cultural impact (wounded narratives)

Importantly, a persistently traumatized system forms a trauma-habituated culture with anxiety-based conversations and decisions and unsafe and unstable environments. Ignoring the signs of distress, not understanding trauma risks, or misinterpreting organizational dynamics cause the trauma to persist. Organizations, like individuals, are not successful at sweeping harmful actions or dynamics under the rug and hoping for the best. A suffering organization needs to recognize symptoms of trauma. It needs to understand that dynamics and patterns are deeper than momentary challenges or hard times and more significant than the usual developmental hurdles of organizational life. Through its internal resources or with outside help, the entity has to consciously participate in its healing to recover from traumatic experiences and move forward. When no internal resources are unaffected by the trauma, organizational leaders need outside help. They need an infusion of energy, hope, and perspective.

When trauma is not recognized, deteriorating relations, isolation, and severely damaged trust almost always occur. Trauma-generated isolation separates individuals from each other and leads to distorted relationships. Distrust and isolation spread and intensify and cripple those affected in unseen ways. Individuals in traumatized systems learn to stay silent and protect themselves. If people voice concerns, they are often contradicted or ostracized. Some staff learn to manipulate relationships to stay in a favored (and protected) role. If they are not targeted, they do not raise objections to harmful behavior. Witnesses to abusive behavior or oppression in the workplace, misbelieve their eyes and ears and stay silent. Managers and supervisors in these systems express guilt that they missed signs of dysfunction; others feel shame at their inability to speak up. Groups become debilitated because of the trauma itself and the impact of the trauma on workplace culture.

Certain organizational realities intensify harm and dysfunction. When serving victims of crime or advocating for changing laws, the nature of the crime itself deeply influences the underlying culture and psychology of the organization. For example, sexual harassment, rape, stalking, and domestic violence are rooted in isolation, shame, guilt, and fear. Rape victims do not accuse their perpetrators for fear of physical harm or retaliation. Survivors think no one will believe them, or they fear the consequences of speaking up. The # MeToo movement, originally started by Tarana Burke, has shone a light on the pervasive sexual assault culture, but it has also highlighted the dynamics of disbelief and skepticism when women finally speak out. Social justice groups supporting survivors suffer from similar reactions from the wider society.

Present-day traumatic experiences also perpetuate systemic racism and other forms of oppression. The Covid-19 pandemic has exposed inequities in our healthcare systems. For Black People and Communities of Color ongoing lack of access to adequate healthcare has meant disproportionately high rates of infection, complications, and death from the virus. (Del Rio, 2020). For Indigenous People, historically poor health services and infrastructure has worsened the occurrence of infection and death (Gomez, et al, 2020). For transgendered individuals, the federal government's recent rescission of healthcare protections has intensified their danger from the pandemic (Woulfe & Wald, 2020).

The response to George Floyd's murder and other instances of police brutality has exposed deep trauma and re-traumatization among Communities of Color and Indigenous Groups. It has also surfaced a wide divergence of opinions about reasons, origins, and responses. While many White citizens are perceiving racism and inequity for the first time; others are insisting the problem is individual, not systemic. The risk for our larger society is that differences are reinforced and deepened, making the road to healing and unifying steep. If we are to help traumatized systems, we consultants need to be aware of the layered nature of trauma and traumatization. We can then act in ways that allow a wider understanding of what has occurred and what needs to be done.

As I began work with a new client, I learned they had garnered on-site help from several outside resources. Intending to be supportive of this client's change efforts, practitioners assisted with strategic planning, advancing social justice work, becoming an anti-racist organization, examining ways to strengthen the organization's structures and processes, and exploring hurtful actions felt by staff. The uniform intent of these caring practitioner's efforts was to help the organization progress and thrive. Each effort seemed to re-wound staff, uncover deeper patterns of racism, and further erode trust about anything changing. Despite caring intentions, the organization was left with unresolved concerns and feelings and no practical offers of continuing help.

Hearing about these previous efforts worried me; what value could I add to this stream of outside consultation? When talking with the executive director, I realized the staff needed ongoing support over time to contain and address their trauma, to embark on a healing process, and to chart a practical course forward. I realized that Individual staff and the organization as a whole needed healing.

In my first conversation with the staff, I said, "I will not come once and leave you on your own afterwards. I will be with you for the long-term because I care about the harm you have experienced." Their response of relief and appreciation showed me I had communicated something vital. I was expressing a commitment to accompany them on their journey. I think instead of feeling stuck—and skeptical—they felt some possibility of movement.

During this consultation of four visits in six months, I began to reflect about my role. I was being asked to help a group find itself again, that is, to overcome deep distrust in the system, repair relationships, and regain a lost cohesion. In my view I was performing differently from the usual organization development practitioner role of investigator, provider of structure and analytical frameworks, coach, facilitator, and encourager. I was committing to work at a deep enough level with staff

to co-create a "brave space", one in which we accept the need to work together even though it won't be safe (Jones, 2017). It would be a place in which they could acknowledge the harm and begin sharing their experiences and stick with uncomfortable, scary conversations. I was offering a way forward that contained their hurt and anger sufficiently so that they could try listening to each other.

I operated at the edge of my comfort zone. I, a white woman, was frequently challenged by this diverse staff with unresolved feelings regarding racism. I knew

How was I making sense of this new role for myself?

Making Sense of the Healer Role

The role of healer may be earned by or conferred on individuals in communities and religious groups, but it is not a word often associated with organization development practitioners. The word *heal* derives from the Old English word *hal*, which means "whole." The first dictionary definition of heal is the verb, "to make healthy, whole, or sound, to restore to health, free

which the therapist, consultant... in effect becomes an advocate not for one member... or subunit, but for the maturity of the whole system" (p. 364). Embracing the whole entity with love and compassion helps the system to contain its anxiety and dissipating energy and become aware of its boundaries and identity.

What are the elements of a healing approach and how is it employed throughout the process of helping a traumatized system? I see love as the basis for healing. My colleagues and I wrote (Vivian et al, 2018, p. 171), "We believe that love, acceptance, and forgiveness enable organizations to move forward and heal... we see ourselves as vehicles of compassion." Philosophers and activists alike describe connections between love and healing. Feminist author bell hooks (2013), states, "All healing is the work of love, a combination of six ingredients: care, commitment, knowledge, responsibility, respect, and trust because all healing takes place in a context where we wish to promote growth." de Chardin (1959), scientist and Jesuit priest, wrote, "love is the fundamental impulse of life and the basis for humans coming together into a unified whole" (p. 46). West (2015, para. 1) tells us, "To be human you must bear witness to justice. Justice is what love looks like in public—to be human is to love and be loved."

> Love enables consultants to bring heart to their work, to touch and hold client organizations in ways beyond what intellectual capacity and skills allow. Empathy for the whole entity allows us to sit with the dynamics of a system in order to understand without judgment. It allows us to be multicentric, that is to discern from many vantages and appreciate that each perspective exists simultaneously. Using love and compassion, consultants witness and understand what a group is experiencing, are emotionally moved by that understanding, and join actively and whole-heartedly with organizational members.

I was making mistakes because they confronted me in the moment. I was challenging myself to find my bravery to respond to their comments and describe what I was seeing (and sometimes intuiting) in order to help them delve more deeply. I was both kinder than I might have been with another client and also more direct and confronting. I allowed myself to express my emotions in response to group feelings that emerged. My honesty and vulnerability seemed respectful of their own hurt and trauma. I thought anything less would not result in enough momentum for them. Indeed, I found myself attached to this group and dedicated to their success in new ways. My relationship and commitment challenged my usual boundaries as a consultant. This different client-consultant relationship seemed to be a helpful and reassuring container for their healing.

from ailment" (Random House Webster's Unabridged Dictionary, 2001). The essence of healing is to make whole again. For a traumatized group or organization, healing means providing ways to contain the traumatizing dynamics, overcome isolation through restoring relationships, and rediscover or rebuild the whole. If a consultant identifies as a healer, she is accepting the responsibility to help a client system become whole again.

A healing approach rests on understanding and working with the entirety of the system. Activist and healer Adrienne Brown (2017) states, "healing behavior is to look at something so broken and see the possibility and wholeness of it... to let the wholeness pour through" (p. 19). This approach is akin to what Stein (1987), an organizational anthropologist, called being an advocate for the whole system, "a framework of emotional inclusiveness in

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Miller and Cutshall (2001) describe healing presence: "The condition of being consciously and compassionately in the

present moment with another or with others, believing in and affirming their potential for wholeness, wherever they are in life" (p. 12). This approach is fundamental because a prevalence of shame, isolation, and guilt results from trauma and traumatization (Herman, 1997). A "healing presence" addresses the need of traumatized people and communities to have their pain witnessed and acknowledged. Community protests against police brutality demand "Say their names", participants carry signs and photos identifying those killed by law enforcement, and victims' faces are painted on community walls. Miller and Cutshall (2001) also remind us "healing" is an art; each of us expresses our presence in ways unique to who we are as individuals. That understanding empowers practitioners to be genuine, honest, and creative in their consultation with traumatized systems.

Block (2002) encourages consultants to share a 50-50 balance of responsibility with their clients. I am not aiming for equality but rather an informed flexibility when I am working with traumatized client organizations. When an organization is in a state of despair, it lacks the energy to envision a future and make changes. When faced with deep discouragement, I meet clients with an abundance of hope, optimism, and love. My high-energy investment fuels the initial work and also encourages client members to find their own sources of hope and optimism.

With compromised processes and low trust, I face the delicate dynamic of allowing an organization to lean on me so I can help them create a brave enough space to explore what has been going on. I provide hopeful energy and model trustworthiness and unflappability. I impose limits when necessary and interrupt behaviors outside agreed upon guidelines. I also might ask them to trust me, to follow me in an activity, to see where it takes us. I intend to disturb their "stuckness" without causing further harm and to help them develop confidence in a healing journey with me.

The Healing Process

Love and healing presence are foundational pieces for all aspects of the healing process. Entering the system, containing and naming the pain, restoring relationships, and moving forward all rely on this foundation.

Entering the System

Traumatized systems close or reinforce their boundaries to protect themselves; they do not let outsiders in easily (Vivian & Hormann, 2013). Unsurprisingly, insiders are guarding against being dismissed, disbelieved, shamed, told overly simplistic steps to take "to get back on track", and judged for not having acted sooner. I do not know what I will encounter in an organization, but I do appreciate its members are hurting badly enough to ask for help. The headline already is, "We are traumatized, and we do not know what to do." Sometimes I feel overwhelmed by the enormity of the task ahead of me and profoundly humbled—and scared—by the faith in my ability to make a difference. When someone says, "I do not want another consultant, I want you. I trust you", I feel that weight on my shoulders. I need to acknowledge my doubts and limitations, and in some cases ignorance so I am not operating on shaky ground. I know, and my client knows, I do not have all the answers, but I will stick with them as we search for ways forward together. This reliability is important because the client's isolation and loneliness are accompanied by feelings of helplessness and doom.

However, that reliability comes with risks of over-responsibility, a dynamic that might arise throughout the healing consultation. I depend on my peer network of practitioners focused on organizational trauma and healing to help me navigate my boundaries with a client. This navigation involves paying attention to signals of over-identification, which manifest in my need to have answers, frustration at the pace of change, feeling the undertow of my client's trauma, and my inability to put aside projects and relax.

Client-consultant relationships are embedded in wider societal dynamics of power, privilege, racism, and other forms of oppression. To act with integrity in situations laden with overt and covert dynamics of inequity, we need to stay aware of our behaviors and their impacts (Vivian, et al, 2018). A group, already feeling impact of trauma, shows its vulnerability by asking for help. Because of their vulnerability, organizational members may ask consultants to tell them what to do, or they may listen more closely to consultants' ideas than their wisdom. If we practitioners do not understand our privilege and pay attention to our blind spots, we risk retreating into that privilege and reinforcing patterns of oppression. In recent conversations with clients, I make a conscious effort to place myself as a White ally to Indigenous People, Black People, and Communities of Color. I want to be a witness, support, and sounding board, but I am not an insider to their communities.

Containing and Naming the Pain

Containment is the action of putting emotional and cognitive boundaries around the client's experience. It helps clients put the brakes on "out of control" dynamics that include deterioration or loss of structures, widespread emotional contagion, and discouragement, even despair. Without containment the system lacks regulating processes that enable it to mobilize its efficacy. Containment remains central throughput the healing journey.

Consultants need to find heartfelt words that convey a willingness to join with clients on an emotional level. Containment embraces the group only if an honest emotional connection is present and mutually felt. Clients are looking for sufficient safety without judgment and pressure to open up. Many members suspect that participating in any truth-telling will only result in more harm to them. Some tell part of the story until they trust the consultant enough to share more. Others test the consultant's content knowledge or past experience in particular dimensions of organizational life, such anti-oppression efforts or the ally role, to make sure the consultant can understand.

To create and maintain a steady context and trustworthy atmosphere consultants need to bring their own wholeness and integrity into situations fraught with anxiety, uncertainty, and conflict. For example, the Covid-19 pandemic makes it hard to see or feel the boundaries of our individual

and collective experience. The intersection of enormous pressures and reverberating anxiety threaten to swamp both individuals and communities. Few actions seem sufficient or effective, so feelings of helplessness are reinforced and deepen. As consultants, we can offer groups containment to help unify their members and enable united actions of coping. We offer ways to place boundaries around intensifying thoughts and emotions, focus attention on what people can control, and nurture respect and compassion in the system. We can encourage organizations to recognize the resilience they are developing. And, containment helps normalize the organization's experiences to counter feelings of unique isolation and harm.

For example, in a recent remotely-facilitated conversation executive directors expressed fear that Covid-19 pandemic restrictions were interfering with their ability to protect domestic violence clients. In an exchange of questions and ideas, they realized they knew how to respond to these kinds of situations. Feeling overwhelmed by the pandemic had compromised their ability to remember coping strategies. In that same facilitation, after sharing ideas with peers, many participants mentioned they felt relieved to hear they were not alone in their experiences.

Containment stays an ongoing component of healing a traumatized group. When a consultant enters a system that is experiencing ongoing trauma, like the Covid-19 pandemic or historic and continuing systemic racism, containment may be the most important help we can provide. We bear direct witness to the depth of hurt and feelings being shared with us and honor them. Continuing to contain the group's experience also supports members when they encounter setbacks or experience bouts of despair.

Restoring Relationships
As described earlier, traumatized systems result in deteriorated or broken relationships, shredded norms, and significant loss of trust. That means as consultants we need to model healthy relationships and help clients restore relationships within their groups. We offer steady support and active facilitation so clients can navigate the risky territory of unhealed pain and unspoken damage to the collective self. Ultimately, we teach clients to manage their own risk-taking and we become witnesses in their development of this ability.

A Consultant's "use of self" in relationship with client organizations is a key dynamic in addressing trauma. Organization development consultant Jamieson, Auron & Schechtman (2011, p. 5) define use of self as "the conscious use of one's whole being in the intentional execution of one's role for effectiveness in whatever the current situation is presenting." Woolverton (2011), a clinical psychologist, furthers this idea in his reflections on working with New York City first responders after 9/11. "Most treatments for trauma emphasize the actual *talking about* the trauma as the means of recovery, rather than emphasizing the *relationship* between therapist and traumatized patient *into which the patient speaks* about the traumatic experience" (2011, para. 4). Woolverton's (2011) reflections parallel my learning about the power of being in a relationship with my client organizations as they face the damage they have experienced. I am offering space in those relationships for clients to find their process and their truth. I am partnering with them on their journey of healing, not directing it.

Practitioner boundaries—informed by our core identity, values, and training—help us in these intense interactions; they also allow us to "go home" without carrying the experiences of our clients as our own. If consultants can move in and out of systems with compassion and equanimity, they can explore deeply with their clients and return to a thoughtful, reflective distance (Duhl, 1983). That reflective distance allows consultants to emotionally unwind and think more deeply about the system. It also enables practitioners to pay attention to their mirroring of client feelings. And because they are working in traumatized systems, it helps them recognize their trauma responses. Trusted peers can help practitioners maintain or regain equanimity in those moments. Consultants can then re-enter the systems with greater clarity and renewed energy.

With a brave and compassionate attitude, consultants enable group members to speak about their experiences, listen to each other, and relearn to care about each other. Operating with healthy boundaries, consultants assist exploration of the wounded interpersonal dynamics in the system. These efforts help repair damage to relationships and build up emotional safety. Using their emotional bravery, consultants support clients in finding their bravery in tackling fear and hurt within the system. A consultant's emotional bravery might be her willingness to endure a fraught silence in a group as members hesitate to risk saying out loud what they are feeling. It could be naming her own responses to the emotional tenor in the group, or it could be the consultant's nonjudgmentally reflecting what she has heard.

I discovered some clients willingly engaged in tough conversations when I facilitated, but once I departed, conversations were tabled to my next visit. I was their safety valve, but they were not managing their own anxiety and challenges. I

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began to emphasize structure and process to support brave conversations. I taught them tools to help frame their discussions and reflect on their learning. I held the space of their conversations (and sometimes held my breath) as they tested new ways of being with each other and I called out their successes.

Restoring relationships also supports collective understanding of the trauma and turmoil. As an encompassing (not singular) meaning emerges, individuals become (re)unified with each other. Asking prompting, but open-ended, questions about individual experiences allows members of the system to use their own words to describe their reality. Asking them to reflect on what they have learned by listening to each other results in a sense of power and collective clarity. In a recent client conversation, leaders talked about centrifugal energy that resulted from severe polarization among staff groups. They worried that the organization had lost its soul. We together identified the need for centripetal energy to help bring the group back to its underlying character and purpose.

Moving Forward

Once an organization has begun to address issues of relationship and trust and collectively made sense of the trauma experience—whether it is in the past, current, or ongoing, members can then jointly think and deliberate about the future. This does not necessarily mean the trauma is over (think Covid-19 pandemic or systemic racism), just that the group has become better equipped to respond and think together. I frequently encourage clients to reflect on their past or present group story and create the desired narrative for their future. Consultants can offer change frameworks and continue skills building to guide and support the client. They can note when people are expressing hopeful energy and encourage progress. Consultants and members can celebrate the changing atmosphere and conversation. As members provide their self-management and encouragement, consultants can turn to their exit strategy.

Noticing when it is time to exit means paying attention to signals from the client

and relying on the original intentions of the project. I look for signs that I am less needed. Often atmospheric and nonverbal, I notice more smiles and lighthearted conversation, see more leaning in both verbally and physically, and sense more positivity. I observe diverse staff volunteering to participate in follow-up actions. Importantly, I notice more tolerance for emotional expression and differences of opinion. I find myself observing and listening as clients manage conversations and decision-making. I know it is time to focus on next steps the client will continue without me, and agree on ways to appropriately keep in touch.

Sometimes clients have joked about my renting an apartment in their community so I could be more accessible to them, or leaders have asked me to join their agency's board of directors. I decline with kindness and honesty, but these comments remind me that my leave-taking could be anxious moments for clients. They have made progress with me there, but are not confident they can continue on their own. I am purposeful about building in future check-in times. These offer opportunities for clients to tell me about successes and progress and for me to bolster problem solving. Because my consultation relies on close caring relationships, it is enticing to remain involved in an organization's life. Sometimes it seems more like leaving a friend or family member rather than appropriately concluding a worthwhile venture.

In these times I can rely on my peers to help me let go. I do still welcome periodic communication with past clients when I can hear their pride and confidence in the stories of success.

The following story illustrates the practical application of ideas described above.

> Asking prompting, but open-ended, questions about individual experiences allows members of the system to use their own words to describe their reality. Asking them to reflect on what they have learned by listening to each other results in a sense of power and collective clarity. In a recent client conversation, leaders talked about centrifugal energy that resulted from severe polarization among staff groups. They worried that the organization had lost its soul. We together identified the need for centripetal energy to help bring the group back to its underlying character and purpose.

A Distressed Executive Director and Organization

An executive director was referred to me because her traumatized organization was failing. "Anna" was sad and terrified she did not have the energy to help it survive. She felt attacked, alone, and overwhelmed. Yet, she also exhibited a deep commitment to the organization's mission and survival.

I communicated compassionately that I would help her, but I thought she needed more than me to assist in containing the trauma. I suggested she invite people she trusted to be a healing support group for her. Its purpose: To hold and encourage her and assist Anna and the organization to heal and move forward. Anna doubted anyone would agree, but she made phone calls. Every person said yes and agreed to meet. Anna acknowledged an important insight: She was not as alone as she feared. In the first meeting each participant expressed his/her/their version of "I am with you. I care about you. I will support you." That allowed Anna to voice her deep hurt about past actions and consequent fear about rebuilding the organization. This first

meeting was a turning point for Anna and her organization.

Because she felt held and cared for, Anna saw some possible ways forward. In subsequent conversations, Anna shared a visceral feeling of being held by the group as she ventured into emotionally unsafe situations. Anna regained her hopeful energy. She was less scared and could better manage re-wounding situations. Anna said her healing began because she was held by this group.

Though the steady actions of this group were a turning point for this organization, it was only a start. Over the next two years I worked with the executive director, the board of directors, and the board president. I supported and coached the executive as she navigated the repair of relationships with former staff and board members. Our conversations were critical because Anna was easily triggered by past experiences. I helped her acknowledge her fears, reframe her perspective, and set healthy boundaries. Underlying this relationship repair was my continual attention to providing hopeful energy, equanimity, and structured ways to think about concerns. Over a period of time I noticed her requests were less prompted by re-traumatizing experiences from the past. More often she sent emails detailing successes of the organization in accomplishing its mission. In a later moment of reflection, Anna said, "I realize the social isolation of this job. Just being able to voice worries or process moments helped me hear another perspective and realize I am moving forward well."

Most board members had resigned during the early turmoil, so revitalizing the board of directors was a pressing need. Some members of the support group agreed to serve on the board. That created a larger center of organizational energy and critical structure. While continuing to support Anna, I helped the board cohere and identify its immediate challenges. As the board grew stronger, it provided an overall infusion of positive energy to the organization and became the primary support for Anna.

"Linda" was a support group member who stepped into the board president role.

I helped her gain confidence in leading the board by acting as a listening ear, strategy partner, and resource connector. Linda regularly thanked me for my "mentoring and guidance" as she led the board. I helped the board as a whole by facilitating meetings in which they solidified their roles and expectations of each other. My last official event with this group was facilitation of a board strategic planning retreat. Linda wrote to me, "Your help and guidance yesterday were indispensable. Thanks for helping us focus on what was most important, and providing clarification and reality checks along the way. We all feel like the path forward is illuminated."

Considerations for Consultant Healers

Consulting to deeply traumatized systems are not sustainable without support. Since we know traumatized systems are often isolated in their hurt and turmoil, consultants must start from a socially-connected foundation. Otherwise, those trying to help are susceptible to the pull of the traumatized organization's isolating dynamics. Several practitioners working to heal or transform traumatized systems reinforce some common aspects of support: Ongoing practitioner learning and development, including facing one's own trauma experiences; exploration of one's motivation for this work; nurturing and rejuvenating one's inner resources and ability to experience joy; and relying on a community of peers (Menakem, 2017; (Vivian, P., Cox, K., Hormann, S., & Murphy-Kangas, S., 2017); Gilpin-Jackson, 2020; Hübl, 2020). Gilpin-Jackson (2020) shares, "... [A]s facilitators of post-trauma transformation, we must prepare ourselves first to be instruments of Resonance and Transformation by attending to our own post-traumatic growth and/or secondary trauma needs" (p. 117). After years of working and learning together my colleagues and I wrote:

We aim for deep and powerful work in our practices. That requires comparably deep and powerful nurturing. Our self-nurturing activities address physical, emotional, relational, intellectual, and spiritual aspects of our lives and work. These

approaches are fully integrated into our professional practices because we know we cannot succeed without them... [G]iving gratitude is essential, and loving relationships make our work possible. (Vivian et al., 2017, p. 50)

Final Thoughts

Collective trauma, traumatization, and other wounding are not new or just discovered. However, in this era of the COVID-19 pandemic, recognition of systemic inequities, and political polarization and hostility we face a profound level of uncertainty about how to come together. More direly, we wonder if we can or should come together in any meaningful way. I recognize a deep need for healing at all levels of society, and I see a timely opportunity for consultants to be of service. We may worry about our limitations of knowledge, skills, and optimism and lack clarity about ways forward. I suggest we listen to the wisdom in Antonio Machado's (1912) poem, which says we make the road by walking it.

Given the world's needs and our inability to know the answers, I think it is essential that we find our way forward together. It seems important to me that we pay attention to how we want to contribute and how we need to care for ourselves and each other. We all inhabit our earth and need a sense of unity and wholeness, a way to global healing. I leave you with the final lines of Gorman's (2021) US presidential inaugural poem, *The Hill We Climb*:

When day comes we step out of the shade,
aflame and unafraid
The new dawn blooms as we free it
For there is always light,
if only we're brave enough to see it
If only we're brave enough to be it

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