



mayors
innovation
project

CONSCIOUS LEADERSHIP IN POLARIZED TIMES

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WINTER

2023

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A Bridge to Solidarity

Conscious Leadership in Polarized Times

Solidarity

Unity among individuals with a common interest,
mutual support within a group



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Land and Labor Acknowledgement

Anacostans (Nacotchtank), and the neighboring Piscataway and Pamunkey peoples (Washington DC)

Centering Our Souls



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Outcomes

1. Discuss **key elements** of conscious leadership for equity
2. **Identify** and **learn** from your biases and assumptions about leading through polarization
3. **Review** the the Strategic Management for Racial Equity and 4-step to Centering Humanity frameworks
4. Learn **key strategies and policy levers** for building bridges to solidarity for racial equity

Choice

(I use my power for racial equity & interracial solidarity)

Presence

(how am I currently approaching racial equity?)

Self-Awareness

(what's the current public value for racial equity:

city management & mayoral view?)

Intentionality

(what's the best bridge building tool (BBT) to use

for advancing racial equity and interracial solidarity?)



Can you commit?

Be Present & Be You (Brave Space)

LEARNING vs JUDGING lens

Invest in you and reap the returns + Trust the process

(allow yourself to experience the space)

Confidentiality

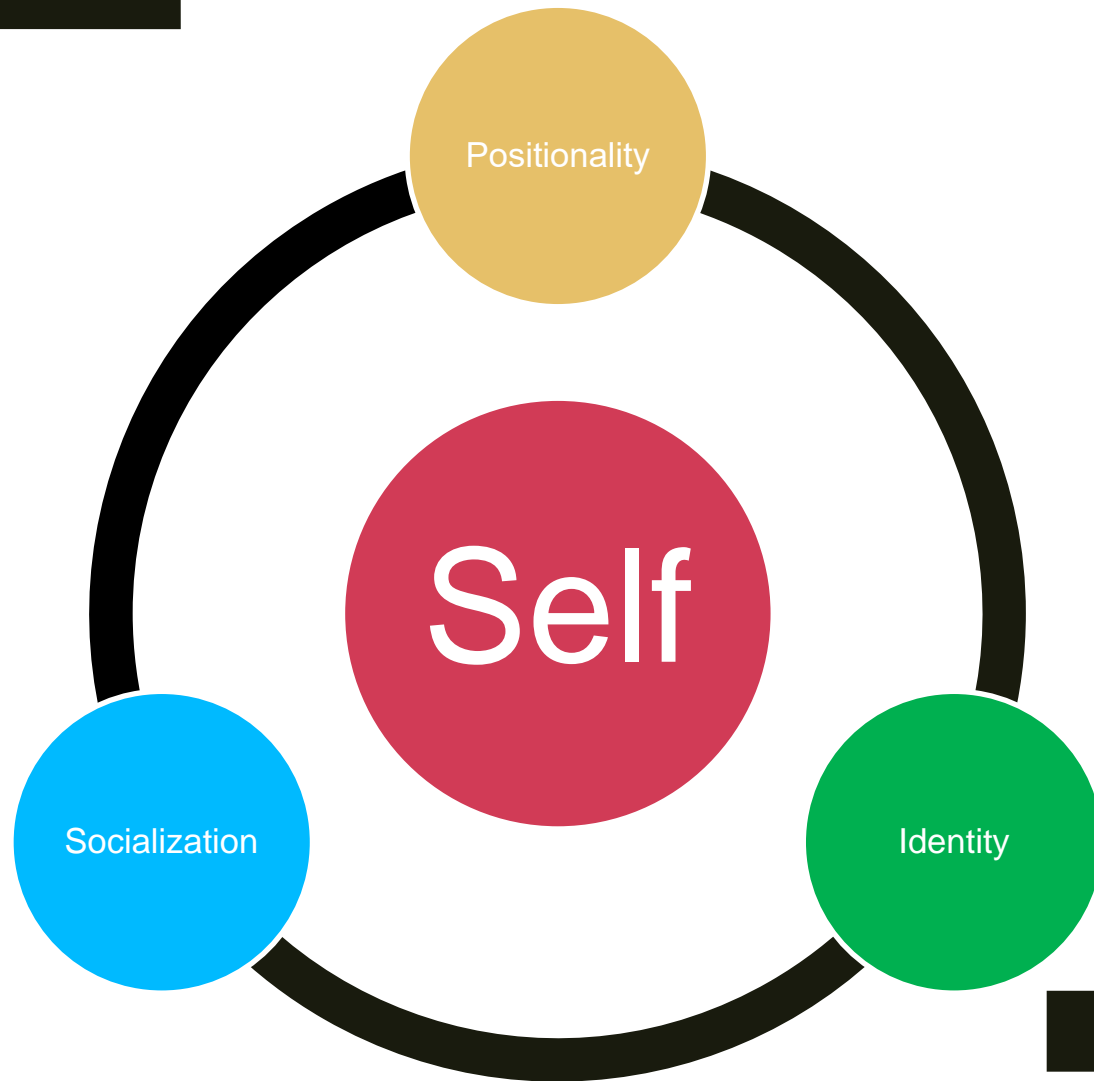
Judgment and Disclaimer Free Zone

Think Possibilities (How can we)





Our Orientation to the work



Work to do: Persons of Color (POC) & White Folks



Messages I learned

About my racial group:

About a racial group other than my own:

Messages I learned about government officials:

Messages I learned about how government officials address racial inequity:

The Bridge:

What was/are the impacts of these learned messages

&

how might messages show up in your leadership for racial equity?

(example, the more recent, the better)

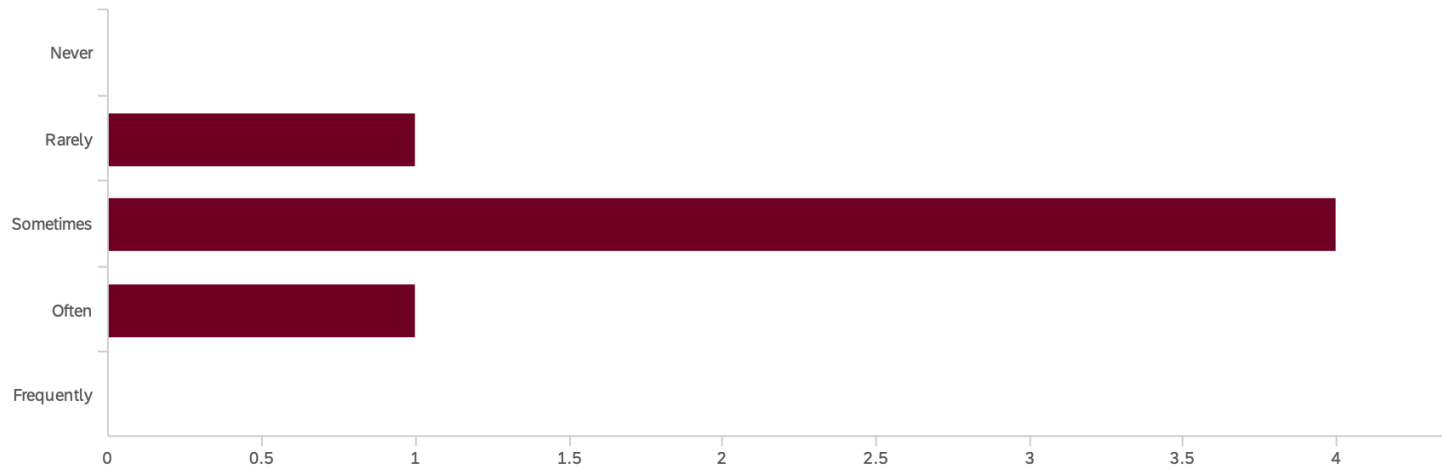


Realities of Leading in Polarizing Times

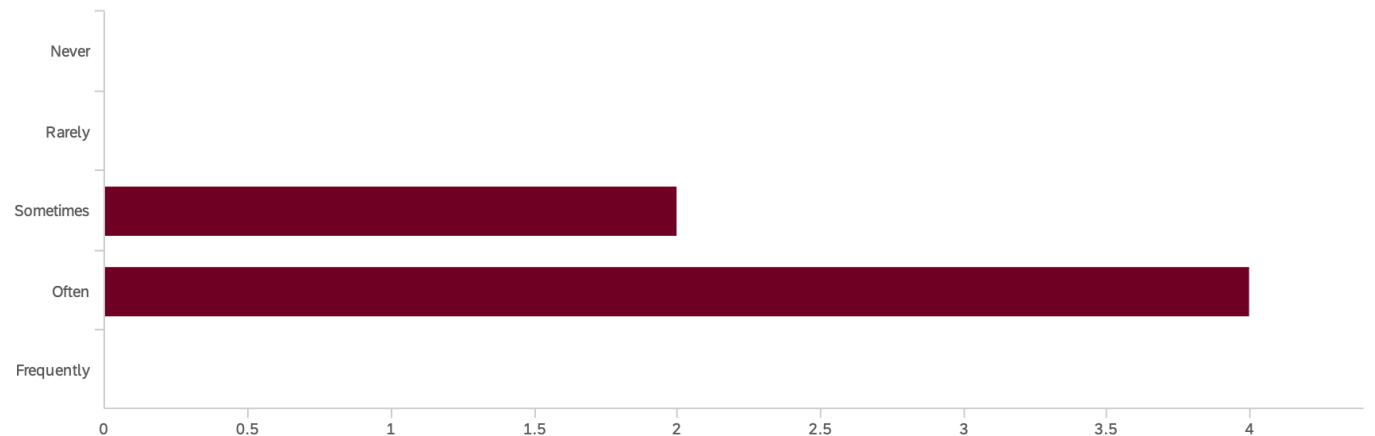
What's Happening in our Towns, Cities, Villages?



Q2 - How often do you witness or experience acts of racism in your community?



Q3 - How often do you witness or experience polarization in your community?



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How are mayors handling polarization

Successes

Civility Roundtables

Citizen town halls

Reestablishing a partnership
between the city and community

Common ground in criminal
justice reform

Public service & volunteer events

Stuck

Lack of accountability with hostile
folks

Not having the *lived* experience

Rise of White Nationalism and
Hate Groups

Racism between Black and Brown
Communities

Unwillingness of some to come to
the table

Distractions from council
members

How are mayors handling racism/racial equity

Successes

Ad hoc Council committee on racial equity

Intentional focus on equity in city policies and quality of life – feedback loops

Using direct influence to change city policies and processes

Symbolic acts like proclamations, etc.

Commit funds to marginalized communities

Human Rights Commission

Stuck

Hard to enact meaningful policy to address structural racism

Not having the perspective and *lived* experience

Racism between Black and Brown Communities

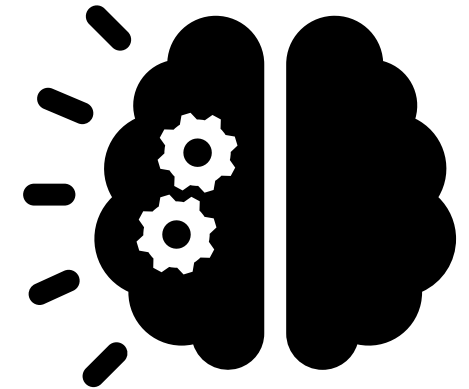
Unwillingness of some to come to the table

No easy answers to address centuries-old racism. Solutions take years and our time is short

Time and distractions from council

Top of Mind | Mindful Presence

Based on the current polarization and racial equity challenges in your community, what's top of mind for you?



Mindful Presence: Is there a policy or process to advance racial equity that you're considering or doing that you want to focus in for the session?

(where do you want to lean in and generate additional ideas about exercising conscious leadership during these polarizing times?)

Conscious Leadership for Equity

Set of conscious practices (4-Step Consciousness-raising process)

Choice

Presence

Self-Awareness

Intentionality

Understands your **positionality** and the role **identity and socialization** plays in creating a socially just world

Trusts your authority to take action (an act of love)

Actively works to decrease doubt and fear to minimize collusion with status quo

Integrity means you "be true to what you said on paper (MLK)"

Have **sanctuaries** to stay mentally & spiritually balanced

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Advancing
Equity
Starts with a
choice
&
Requires
conscious
action



The Hard Thing About Hard Things

Fair and Just= of racial equity & interracial solidarity



Fair

Honoring our Shared Humanity

To treat people in a way that honors their humanity by not discriminating or treating them like they are inferior or less than

+

We do not believe any **race**, age, gender, etc. is superior to another one. **Everyone should have full and equal access.**

Just

Being fair and equitable

Give people what is due to them and ensure that everyone's humanity is honored

+

To be just means we hold everyone accountable for creating equity

Racial Equity

Every member of my community (regardless of their race)

has full and equal access to participate in and benefit from

the resources in our city/town/village/etc.

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Drivers that Stifle Interracial Solidarity

Polarization
I, Me, My, Mine

Solidarity
Unity among individuals with a
common interest, mutual support
within a group

Deception
It's not me, It's You

Division
I cannot see it any other way

How we approach the work can stifle interracial solidarity



How we engage the work

Confirmation Bias

If it supports my belief, I evaluate it positively

Who takes credit for the work

Affinity Bias

If you share my affinity, I evaluate it more positively

Who should lead the work

They should come to us vs. we should go to them

Halo/Horns Bias

If I had a positive experience, I evaluate it positively/ If I had a negative experience, I evaluate it negatively



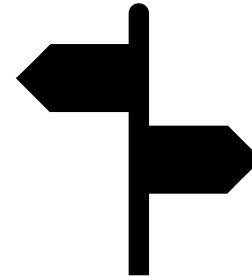
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Our Approach can stifle racial equity and interracial solidarity

Conscious Collusion is the process of *knowingly participating* in practices that sustain inequity and harm against marginalized identities.

It happens when:
you know that a policy, practice, or action is inequitable or oppressive, **yet** you choose to use your power and choice to remain silent.

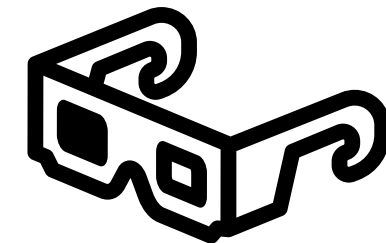


Beneficiaries of Bias

**Individual
Cultural
Systemic/Structural**

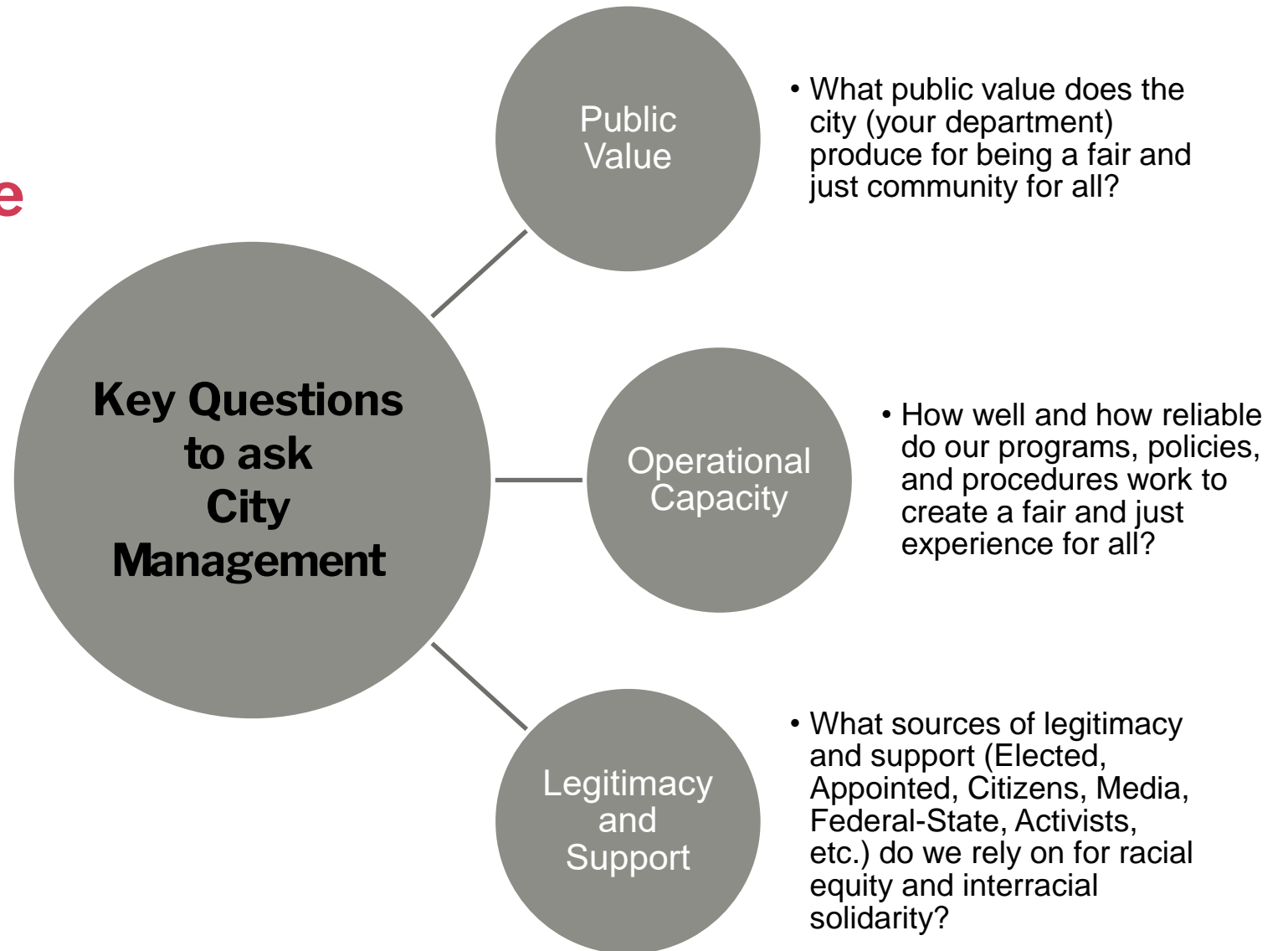
Honoring Our Collective Humanity

Cultural Racism: racial bias based on organizational norms, expecting others to adopt White dominant philosophies of life, approaches to work, organizational culture, perspectives on time, and positions that support the Centering of Whiteness.



Designing Policy Solutions for Racial Equity:

Analyzing our Value



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Strategic Public Management for Racial Equity*
Adapted from on Mark H. Moore (2013), Recognizing Public Value.

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Movement Break

Approach 2 for Designing Policy Solutions for Racial Equity:

Mayoral View



Addressing external factors shorthand:

- Know *who* you' re dealing with
- know *what* you' re dealing with,
- Know *why* you' re dealing with it
- Strategize: *how* are you most effectively going to move forward given these factors?



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Approach 2 for Designing Policy Solutions for Racial Equity: **Mayoral View**



Things external to us:

- the capacity of our constituents
- the capacity of our base of support
- how much space is being created (or limited) by advocates, protesters, other active stakeholders
- others on all parts of the ideological spectrum
- the city council
- how much political capital we have
- how much political capital we are/will have to spend on other things
- our own identities and how they impact other people and how that creates or loses space for the work



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Approach 2 for Designing Policy Solutions for Racial Equity: **Mayoral View**



Things internal to us:

- how much we know about racial equity in general
- how much we know about racial equity and local government
- how much we know about our own city
- how willing we are we to make change
- how adept we are at change management
- our own identities and how those affect us
- our own biases about others
- the impact of others' biases on us



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Bridge Building Tool 1

Potential avenue to address internal factors:

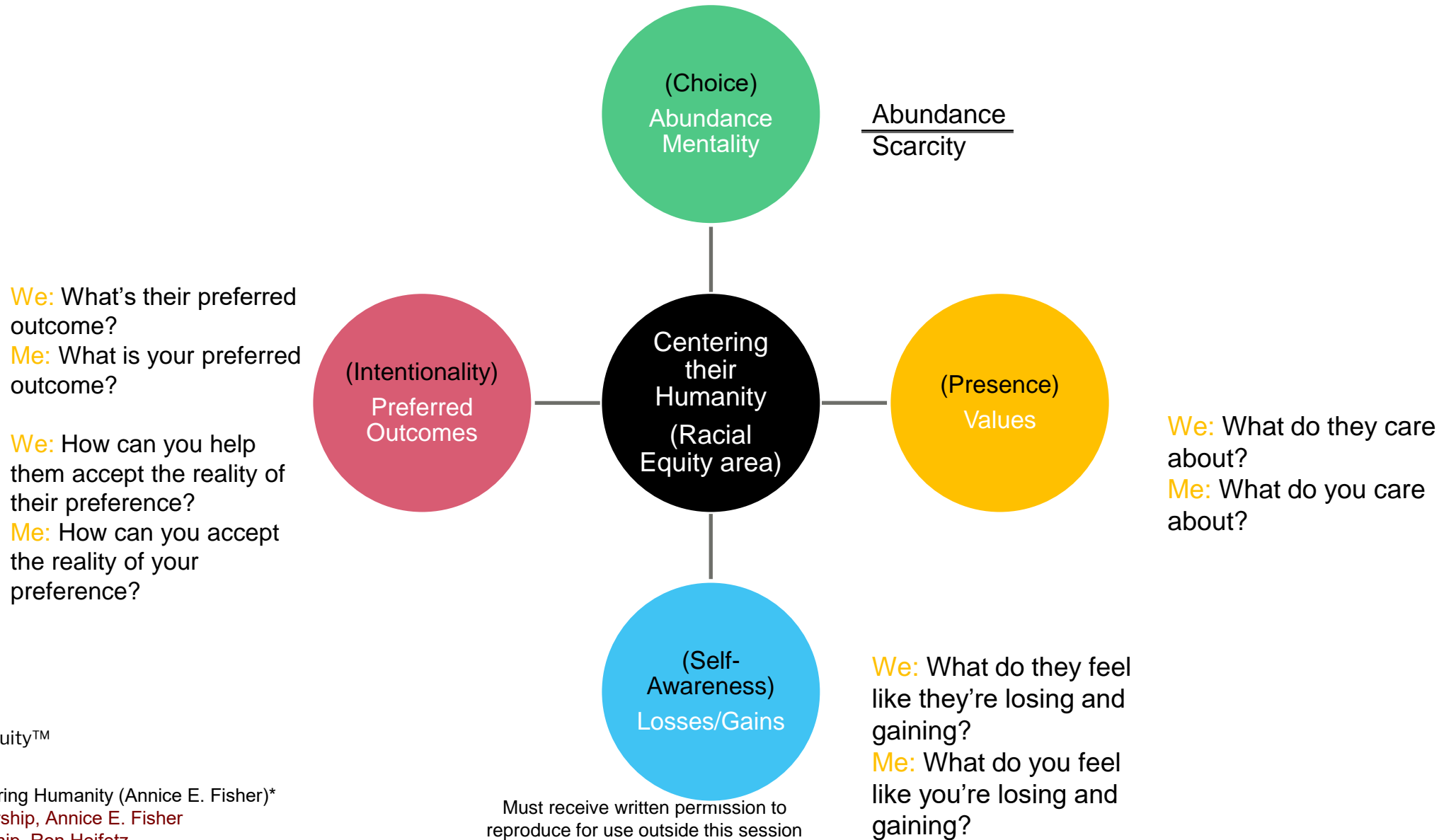
- Learn more about how inequities manifest
- Cultivate a willingness in yourself to create change
 - Learn more about change management
 - Figure out who your trusted team is *for this work* and keep them around you
 - Reduce the risks to yourself by strategizing and planning ahead



Building Bridges

BBT 2: 4 Steps to Centering Humanity* (we + me)

Consciously Leading People Through Adaptive Change



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4-Steps to Centering Humanity (Annice E. Fisher)
Conscious Leadership, Annice E. Fisher
Adaptive Leadership, Ron Heifetz

BBT 3 – Targeted Universalism

Universal goal, something that is an advantage for everyone

Target investments in order to reach the goal, because groups are differently situated to the goal

Advantage: An effective and transparent way to

a) reach racial equity goals

b) make the case to the whole city about why you're pursuing policies and investments that focus on different groups.



Now

For the road

We encourage Anchors & Sanctuaries



(In-the-moment grounding)

Grounding Questions

Pause & Then Respond

4-Step Consciousness-raising Process

How do I want to use my power?

What? So What?

Reciting your Core Values

Music or Soothing Sounds



(Sanctuaries: Daily practices for renewal)

Journaling

Tea Time

Gratitude

What's giving you hope

Sound Meditation

Piano or soothing tunes as background music

Movement Breaks

Prayer and Meditation



4-Step Consciousness-raising Process for Conscious Leadership for Equity

Choice

(I use my power for racial equity & interracial solidarity.)

Presence

(how am I currently approaching racial equity?)

Self-Awareness

(what's the current public value for racial equity:
city management & mayoral view?)

Intentionality

(what's the best bridge building tool (BBT) to use
for advancing racial equity and interracial solidarity?)

Let's stay in touch



We want your Feedback: Outcomes

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