



Center for Community Resilience

Fostering Equity:

Creating Shared Understanding for
Building Community Resilience

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Center for Community Resilience

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Introduction

As a nation, we have agonized over how to approach conversations on race, racism, inequity and racial justice. Too often we have opted to attempt to solve the problem of racism by not explicitly naming it—which when put in writing should strike the reader as absurd. Yet, this is exactly what we have done with predictable results—we cannot solve that which we cannot speak. Nor can we solve an issue which we do not fully understand. This guide aims to help us as a nation do both: collectively see the historical underpinnings of structural racism and the traumas and disparities that result, then conduct constructive conversations that lead to policy change. The path to a Resilient Nation – one in which *all* our communities can not only ‘bounce back’ in the face of adversity, but thrive – must begin here.



The Center for Community Resilience provides a solutions-based, innovative approach to addressing Adverse Childhood Experiences in the context of Adverse Community Environments (the Pair of ACEs). Communities across the country, spanning 10 states + DC and 45+ organizations, are successfully implementing the novel Building Community Resilience (BCR) process, which applies an equity lens to childhood and community wellbeing. BCR helps communities identify site-specific resources, assets and program gaps, improve systems readiness, build capacity, and deepen relationships across professional sectors with community partners. With a team of leading experts in the field, the Center engages policymakers, community groups and institutional organizations to build collective will and make measurable progress toward common goals that improve outcomes across multiple generations and build a more Resilient Nation.

The Center for Community Resilience is a non-partisan policy resource and technical assistance center at The George Washington University's Milken Institute School of Public Health. We work with policymakers on both sides of the aisle to inform legislation and implementation of policy at the local, state and federal level. Our policy recommendations are drawn from the science of early childhood development, neuroscience, public health, adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), resilience and social determinants. As public health advocates and researchers, we understand the importance of ensuring social justice as a fundamental principle driving access to optimal health and wellbeing in communities across our nation. It is in the spirit of social justice that we pursue this effort to broaden understanding of equity as a means to achieve our nation's public health goals.

Over the last five years, networks of partners across the country have been working together to build community resilience by addressing and mitigating the Pair of ACEs. This guide is an outgrowth of the experiences of these communities as our work together has emphasized the importance of centering equity at the heart of what it means to be resilient.

In a geographically, economically, racially and ethnically diverse nation there are many lines that divide us. No longer do race, gender or age inoculate individuals from the effects of systemic inequity, as demonstrated by growing gaps in longevity, educational and economic attainment that cut across all social groups. As the sobering statistics of the nation's deadly opioid crisis, declining rates of longevity in white women and rising suicide rates in healthy white males indicate—policies and practices that were designed to hold back people of color are now contributing to a widening disparity of health and wealth in this country, regardless of one's race. In today's America, disparities continue to be predicted by race but are also increasingly associated with class. The social and criminal policies developed over the course of our nation's history are doing just what they were designed to do—limit access to the levers of liberty, equality and justice to a select few.

We aim for this guide to promote awareness of the underpinnings of structural racism and provide a guide for how individuals, organizations and communities may engage in critical conversations about equity. We believe a deeper understanding of the sources of inequity and the disparities they produce provides an opportunity to create a shared understanding that brings us together—rather than further dividing us.

Knowing more about the history of our nation's polices will enable us to address systemic inequity driving trauma in all of our communities. By fostering equity through policy change, we can build a Resilient Nation: one in which all our communities do more than merely 'bounce back' in the face of adversity, but also thrive.

*- Dr. Wendy Ellis,
Director, Center for Community Resilience*

**"Do the best you can
until you know better.
Then when you know
better, do better."**

-Maya Angelou

Module I

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Part 1:

“What’s Equity Got to Do with It?”

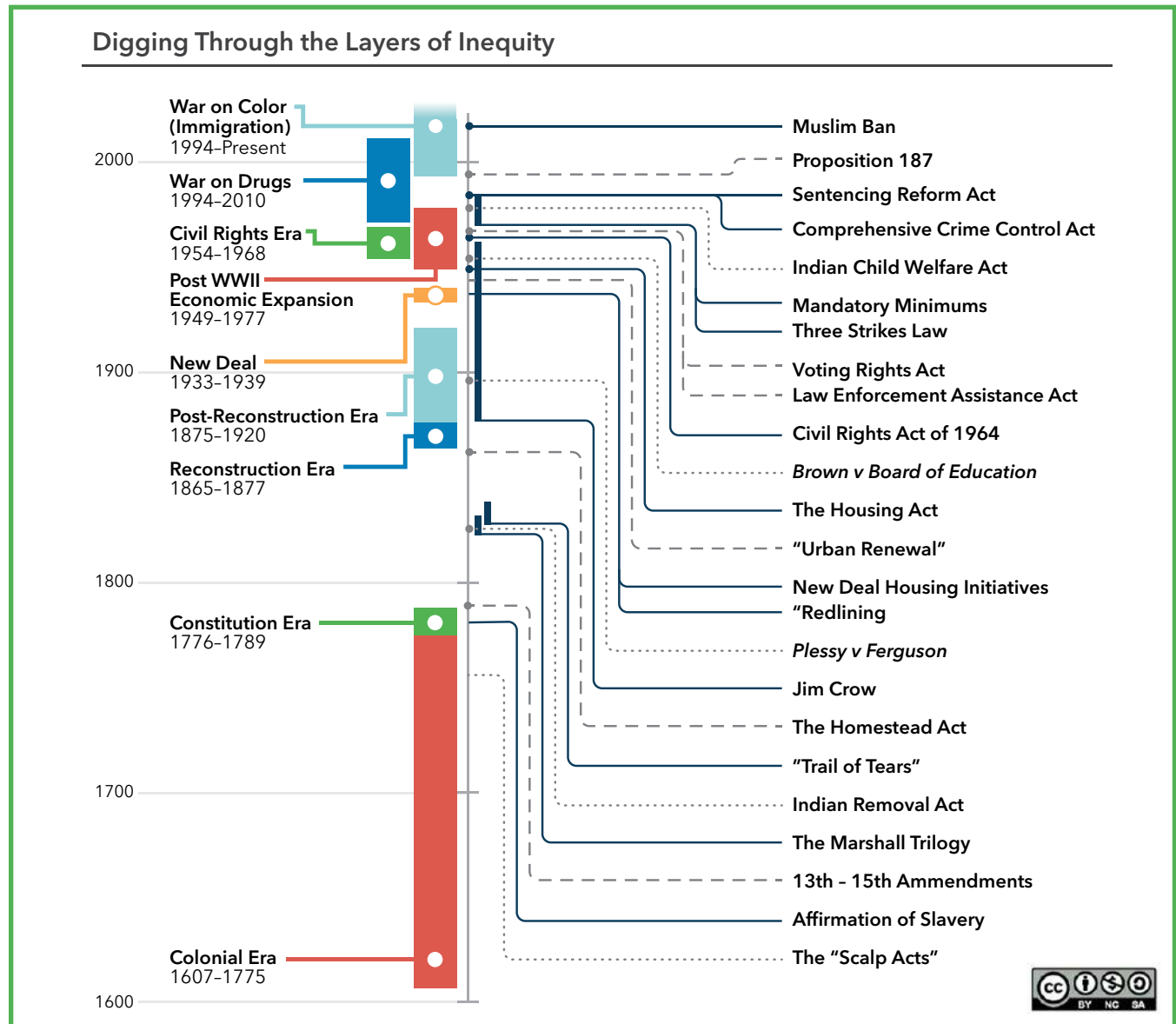
This module presents background on the nearly 400-year history of American policy to explain the social, economic and health inequities we see in communities today.* Many landmark Supreme Court rulings and policies implemented at the federal, state and local level discussed in this module are taught in a piecemeal fashion in elementary, secondary, undergraduate and even graduate classrooms. Rarely are they presented in a comprehensive manner so we may begin to understand and assess the compounding effect of policies over time as they have been used overtly and covertly to perpetuate structural racism, classism and inequity.

History should not be partisan—but too often it is written in a manner that reflects the image that is most flattering to those with power rather than an unbiased truth. Similarly, partisan ideals often inspire policy that reflects norms, values and practices of a ruling class that may or may not reflect the best interests of the populace. Both of the nation’s historically dominant political parties have had an equal contribution to policies and practice that result in inequity that is not random, but rather by design.

We have compiled this chronology and analysis of U.S. policy from a wide-range of sources, including Executive Orders, Supreme Court rulings, legislative documents, Congressional records and peer-reviewed academic sources, not to be exhaustive but rather to be illustrative. The policy timeline and analysis presented here demonstrates how we as a country have systematically fallen short of our own democratic values of liberty, equality and justice.

* Material adapted from: Ellis, WR. (2019). *Community Resilience: A Dynamic Model for Public Health*. (Unpublished dissertation.) The George Washington University, Washington, D.C.

Adverse Community Environments by Design



The Center for Community Resilience, Redstone Global Center for Prevention and Wellness, Milken Institute School for Public Health, George Washington University. Visit go.gwu.edu/ccr for original work.

Our examination of legislative and regulatory policies put in place over the course of this nation's history reveals a pattern of structural racism that was created by law and fortified by practice over the course of more than 400 years. From the founding of this nation with the Articles of Confederation adopted in 1781, leaving regulation of slavery up to the newly-formed states, to the adoption of the Constitution in 1787, our public systems have not been designed to uphold the ideal of "freedom and justice for all." Throughout our history, adoption of policies and strategies claiming to expand opportunity for upward mobility, equality and improvement of community environments, have in practice built upon a history of subjugation and segregation by race and class, reinforced by place.



Colonial Era

Prior to the arrival of Europeans to the continent, hundreds of self-organized nations of peoples lived in what would eventually become the United States. Before the nation's formal founding, colonists built a web of laws and policies that systematically stripped sovereignty, forcibly removed native peoples from their land and passed acts that amounted to state-sponsored genocide to support an unfettered land grab.¹ One of the first examples of the brutality of policies in this era are the numerous "Scalp Acts," enacted by colonies including Pennsylvania, Virginia and Delaware. These acts offered rewards for the scalps of individuals from Iroquois, Muskhogean, Micmac and other tribal nations.² In Pennsylvania, commissioners authorized captains to offer their men a bounty of 'forty Pieces of Eight for every Indian they shall kill and scalp.'³ The policies and treatment of the nation's original people of color served as a template for the design and implementation of policies aimed specifically to produce inequitable results by race and class.

Constitution Era

In 1776-1789, when the Articles of Confederation and the Constitution were drafted and adopted, voting rights were guaranteed for white, male landowners only—establishing the race, gender and class of the new nation's power establishment and affirmation of slavery (Article 1, Section 1, Clause 3). Unequal representation was further reinforced in the "Great Compromise" that allowed southern slaveholding states to count slaves as three-fifths human for the purposes of representation in the House of Representatives—giving slaveholding states greater representation in Congress despite the fact that the slaves did not have equal protection under the law.

The Marshall Trilogy (1823-1832) is a series of U.S. Supreme Court holdings that are the foundation of American Indian law. The series established federal supremacy (plenary power) in Indigenous affairs over states and individuals.⁴ It

"The condition of slavery with us is, in a word, Mr. President, nothing but the form of civil government instituted for a class of people not fit to govern themselves. It is exactly what in every State exists in some form or other. It is just that kind of control, which is extended in every northern State over its convicts, its lunatics, its minors, its apprentices. It is but a form of civil government for those who by nature are not fit to govern themselves. We recognize the fact of the inferiority stamped upon that race of man by the Creator, and from the cradle to the grave, our Government, as a civil institution, marks that inferiority."

Senator Jefferson Davis

(D-MS) – (Senate speech April 1860)

Source: Congressional Globe,
36th Congress

limited the rights of Native Americans to sell their land to any entity other than the Federal government—voiding sales to states or other individuals, thereby limiting the ability to profit from their own land or resources, such as timber and minerals.⁵ The Marshall Trilogy also established the political status of indigenous people and tribal nations – granting tribal sovereignty as ‘domestic dependent nations’ that exist within the boundaries of the U.S. This classification means that tribal nations are wards of the U.S., even though tribal leaders may manage some internal affairs.⁶ It is important to note that the Marshall Trilogy held the removal of Native Americans from tribal lands unlawful. Despite this Supreme Court ruling, new laws allowed the removal of more than 125,000 Native Americans from tribal lands east of the Mississippi river between 1830 and 1850.⁷

What is Plenary Power?

Plenary power is a complete and absolute power to take action on a particular issue, with no limitations.

In 1830, Congress passed the Indian Removal Act and the Preemption Act, a pathway to settlement of the West and further displacement of tribal nations. The Removal Act provided for the “resettlement” of Native Americans to areas west of the Mississippi River in exchange for \$500,000. Most tribal nations, such as the Cherokee, were forced to leave their homelands in the Southeast to areas in Oklahoma.⁸ The Preemption Act allowed white squatters to purchase land that was once tribal territory for a fraction of the price, encouraging westward expansion in the newly acquired territory and effectively destroying the place-based identities for many tribal nations, including sacred spaces such as burial and hunting grounds.⁹

By 1838, at least 100,000 members of the Choctaw, Creek, Chickasaw, Seminole, Cherokee nations and their African slaves were forcibly removed by U.S. soldiers from areas in Georgia, Alabama, Kentucky and Tennessee in the “Trail of Tears.”¹⁰ An ethnographic account from the time describes the experience for tribal members:

“Men working in the fields were arrested and driven into the stockades. Women were dragged from their homes by soldiers whose language they could not understand. Children were often separated from their parents into the stockades with the sky for a blanket and the earth for a pillow.”¹¹

Those who survived the harsh conditions of forced migration faced disease and starvation in their new land.¹²

To further encourage settlement of the West, President Abraham Lincoln signed into law the Homestead Act of 1862, promising federal land to landless white male citizens. Compounding the effects of the Indian Removal Act, the Homestead

Act served to further remove tribal nations from ancestral homes and eventually reduced their 'territory' to reservations across the West.¹³



Photo Credit: Encyclopedia Britannica Online <https://www.britannica.com/event/Trail-of-Tears>

Reconstruction Era

During the Reconstruction Era (1865-1877), civil rights were extended to African Americans with the adoption of the 13th (abolishment of slavery except as punishment for a crime), 14th (equal protection of all citizens under the law), and 15th (right to vote for males, regardless of race or color) amendments.^{14,15,16} The nation's first civil rights act, passed in 1866 over the veto of President Andrew Johnson,

bestowed citizenship upon all persons born in the United States regardless of race, color or previous servitude.

Post-Reconstruction Era

As quickly as civil rights were conferred, the post-Reconstruction era (1875-1920) began their slow erosion, with the creation of the legal justification for segregation of the races.¹⁷ Across the country, towns banned people of color from residing within city boundaries. These so-called "Sundown Towns" were largely established *beyond* the South, in states such as Illinois, Ohio, Maryland, Wisconsin and Michigan, and as far west as Oregon.¹⁸ Sundown Towns restricted the presence of non-whites after dusk except for people of color in servant roles.¹⁹ These practices withstood legal challenge and prevailed with the Supreme Court ruling of *Plessy v. Ferguson*. This 1896 ruling upheld the constitutionality of racial segregation, establishing the standard of 'separate but equal'.²⁰

In the wake of *Plessy v. Ferguson*, Jim Crow laws created public spaces that fostered racial supremacy via segregation, separating people of color from whites in schools, housing and employment. Beginning with the Alabama state constitution, many southern states adopted ordinances that restricted use of public restrooms, restaurants, trains, buses, swimming pools and other public spaces by race.²¹

At the same time, in the American West federal policy focused on assimilation as a strategy to "kill the Indian but save the man."²² Indian assimilation programs began in earnest as federal interests sought to create a new social and political order post-Civil War. In Congress, a newly formed Peace Commission sought to move Native Americans away from tribal lands and into special education programs that would 'prepare the Native to join white civilization.'²³ This aim was to be achieved by forcibly removing Native American children from their

"Nearly a century later, [the town] 'Anna' [Illinois] is still considered by its residents and by citizens of nearby towns to mean "Ain't No Niggers Allowed", the acronym the convenience store clerk confirmed in 2001."

Sundown Towns
(Loewen, 2018)



Photo Credit: America's Sundown towns
<https://historicalthinking22.weebly.com>

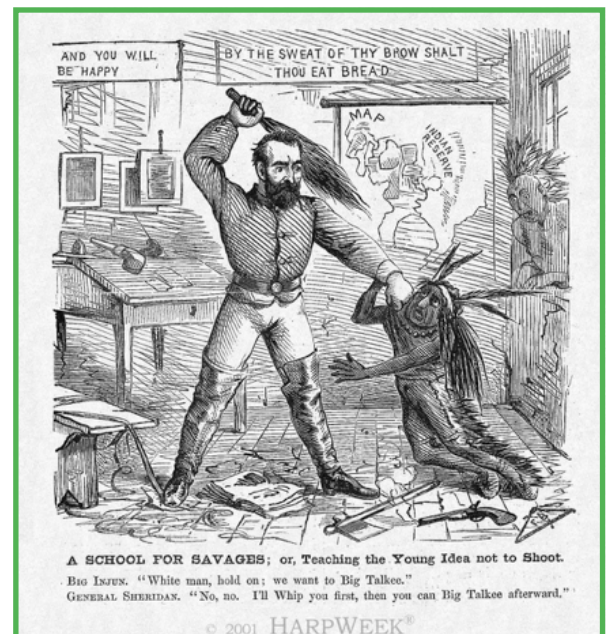


Photo Credit: U.S. History Scene
<https://ushistoryscene.com/article/usindian-policy/>

homes and into boarding schools run by missionaries, where they were indoctrinated into the Christian faith and assimilated into the dominant white culture.²⁴ These schools largely prepared boys for manual labor or farming and girls for domestic work.²⁵

New Deal Era

Segregation in Public Housing by Design - Austin, Texas

The first African-American public housing complex in the nation, the Rosewood Courts were opened in 1939 as part of President Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal, after lobbying efforts by then-Congressman Lyndon Johnson. Along with Rosewood, the Austin, TX housing authority designated Santa Rita Courts for Latinos and Chalmers Courts for whites, as Austin was still segregated at the time. Inspired by European design elements, the barrack-style Rosewood Courts were built on the site of Emancipation Park, grounds for the local Juneteenth parade.

Source: <https://savingplaces.org/stories/public-housing-community-african-american-history-faces-change-austin>

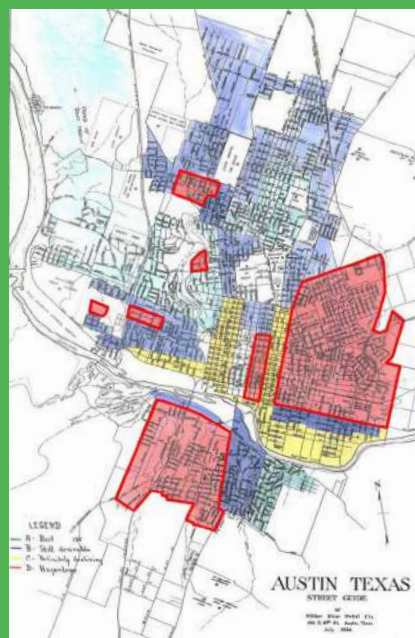


Photo: Redlining in Austin, 1934

The federal government further institutionalized racial segregation and inequity in access to economic mobility through a series of initiatives aimed at reviving the nation's economy following the Great Depression. New Deal housing initiatives allowed for the segregation of Jewish people, African Americans and other people of color. The Homeowner's Loan Corporation (1933) and the Federal Housing Administration (1934) created a bailout plan for homeowners in default of mortgages and provided federally insured mortgages for 'whites only' communities.²⁶ Housing initiatives from the new Public Works Administration (1933) implemented neighborhood composition rules, honoring existing patterns of racial segregation across the American landscape.^{27,28} Suburbs used zoning and eminent domain to keep out African American residents or seize property, and restrictive covenants were used to ensure that sellers could not transfer property to people of color.²⁹ As far back as the 1920s, police officers were encouraged to



follow and stop African American motorists.³⁰ The Fair Labor Standards Act (1938) set labor and pay protections for the American worker but excluded industries where African Americans and women were the predominant labor force, such as agriculture and domestics.³¹

Discriminatory housing policies have also left communities of color vulnerable to other predatory policies and practices. Race-based policies throughout the 1900s contributed to communities of color with low investment and less ability to influence zoning decisions. These communities were historically much more likely to be situated near “disamenities,” including municipal landfills, hazardous waste sites, industrial plants and freeways.³² This practice was widespread. A landmark government investigation in 1983 found that three out of the four state-approved, major hazardous waste sites in the southeastern states were built near low-income, African American communities.³³ Nationally, the disproportionate exposure to air pollution, polluted water and toxic soil directly impacted the health of generations of African American and Latino children, contributing to higher rates of lead poisoning, asthma and learning disabilities.³⁴

Post-World War II Era

Post-World War II economic expansion generated the explosion of the middle class. Planned communities were developed to accommodate the growing families of returning veterans—communities that relied on the Fair Housing Administration for mortgage insurance and the Veteran’s Administration for guaranteed mortgages, in a housing boom driven by the Serviceman’s Adjustment Act of 1944 and the GI Bill.^{35,36} The Housing Act of 1949 expanded the federal role in mortgage insurance and construction of public housing and upheld patterns of racial segregation.³⁷ In 1952, the Truman Administration adopted ‘racial equity formulas’, requiring local housing authorities practice segregation and build separate projects for African Americans proportional to need.³⁸ At the same time, the recently formed Public Housing Authority enforced class restrictions, barring so-called ‘undesirables,’ such as single mothers, drug users and those with criminal records, from accessing government-funded affordable housing.³⁹ During this period, the United Auto Workers union successfully bargained with the Ford Motor Company on behalf of African American workers, requiring the automaker to make available line positions for African American

What is Redlining?

Redlining is a process by which banks and other institutions refuse to offer mortgages or offer higher lending rates to customers in certain neighborhoods based on their racial and ethnic composition.



laborers, creating a pathway to the middle class.⁴⁰ Unfortunately, due to restrictive covenants and the practice of redlining, many of these same African American autoworkers struggled to attain homeownership.^{41,42,43}

While segregation and discrimination persisted in most U.S. public systems, in 1954 the U.S. Supreme Court ruling in *Brown vs. The Board of Education* provided new hope for equity. In a unanimous ruling, the Court found that segregated schools previously allowed under *Plessy vs. Ferguson* were illegal, reasoning that separate schools were fundamentally unequal, subjecting children to a standard education based on race.⁴⁴

Civil Rights Era

The Brown decision led to court-ordered desegregation of public schools in the United States and set off a wave of civil unrest, beginning with violent protests led by white southerners opposed to desegregation. This vitriolic response inspired African-American civil rights leaders and sympathetic white activists to join together to raise awareness of pervasive discriminatory practices and policies across the country. Less than one hundred years following the Civil War, the nation was once again in conflict with itself, as states' rights and equity for people of color pitted citizens against each other.⁴⁵

In the years that followed, a series of federal policies were enacted to address inequities suffered by African Americans. President John F. Kennedy signed Executive Order 11063 in 1962, titled "Equal Opportunity in Housing," prohibiting the use of federal funds to support racial discrimination in housing.⁴⁶ This brought an official end to federal housing support to home builders who refused to sell to African Americans. Following the assassinations of President Kennedy and civil rights leader Dr. Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr., the country witnessed the widest expansion of civil rights since Reconstruction. New protections included the Civil Rights Act of 1964,⁴⁷ the Voting Rights Act of 1965,⁴⁸ and the Higher Education Act of 1965.⁴⁹ Additionally, several key U.S. Supreme Court rulings provided protections for defendants in the criminal justice system, including juveniles (*In re Gault*, 1967 & *Kent v. United States*, 1966).⁵⁰ However, as protections for civil rights were expanding, a key court ruling also provided the justification for what was to become a controversial practice in racial profiling. "Stop and frisk" was found to be constitutionally protected police practice under the *Terry v. Ohio* ruling in 1968.⁵¹

In the same year that President Lyndon Johnson signed the Voting Rights Act, he also signed into law the Law Enforcement Assistance Act, establishing a federal



role in local police operations, court systems and state prisons, marking the beginning of the nation's War on Crime.⁵² This legislation, and the subsequent Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968, gave the Department of Justice a larger degree of influence over social policy with regard to crime.⁵³ President Johnson's previously declared War on Poverty, which supported a number of social welfare programs, was dismantled as federal funding to cities shifted to 'law and order.'⁵⁴

War on Drugs Era

During the Reagan Administration the federal government directed resources and polices to a War on Drugs, bolstered by the Comprehensive Crime Control Act of 1984, which abolished parole in the federal system and created the United States Sentencing Commission (USSC), increased federal penalties for the cultivation, possession or transfer of marijuana, and reinstituted the federal death penalty.⁵⁵ The USSC was charged with creating federal sentencing guidelines and making federal criminal penalties more uniform.⁵⁶ While the USSC's sentencing guidelines were established to "provide certainty and fairness in sentencing while avoiding unwarranted disparity among offenders," oversight was limited to federal sentences. From 1970 to 1983 a number of states adopted mandatory minimum sentencing guidelines and "three strikes" provisions.^{57,58}

Harsh policies and guidelines from this era resulted in significant racial disparities in arrest, conviction and incarceration rates. Analysis indicates African Americans were four times more likely to be arrested for marijuana charges than their white peers.⁵⁹ Due to increased drug arrests and increased convictions under harsher state sentencing provisions and federal penalties, by 1991 incarceration rates for African Americans increased nearly 54 percent.⁶⁰

The War on Crime and the subsequent War on Drugs coincided with a drop in industrial employment for African American men, as manufacturing jobs moved from the urban core to the suburbs. Lack of access to gainful employment provided an incentive for many to join the drug trade.⁶¹

War on Color Era

In recent years, the War on Drugs and War on Crime have shifted to what we call a War on Color, targeting immigrants from countries across the Middle East, Africa and Latin America. The roots of these policies can be traced to California's 1994 ballot initiative, Proposition 187, titled, "Illegal Aliens Ineligible for Public Benefits". Prop 187 was approved by 59-percent of the state's voters, making immigrants residing in the state without legal documentation ineligible for public benefits and

services, including health care (except in the case of an emergency) and public education.⁶² The measure, known as “Save our State” (SOS), was estimated to save the state nearly \$200 million annually in public spending for social and education services. At the time, Prop 187 was viewed as one of the nation’s harshest anti-immigrant measures and was eventually struck down by the U.S. Supreme Court as unconstitutional. Yet Prop 187 inspired several other states to adopt anti-immigrant ballot initiatives, as local demographics began to shift due to America’s increasing immigrant and populations of color.⁶³

More recently, the change in the public charge grounds for inadmissibility drastically limits eligibility for immigration into the United States. Public charge has been a part of U.S. immigration law since the late 1800’s—a means of measuring whether the person seeking immigration status will be considered ‘primarily dependent’ on federal, state or local cash assistance for income or will require *long-term care* at government expense. In 2019, new requirements put forth by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security will classify a person seeking legal admission into the U.S. as a public charge if they use one or more of an expanded list of public benefits for a total of 12 months during a 36-month period—making it much more difficult for people with low and moderate incomes to obtain lawful permanent resident status.⁶⁴

Today’s War on Color seeks to employ rhetoric and tactics from the War on Crime, the War on Drugs and the battle over white supremacy by demonizing communities of color as ‘dangerous others’ and fortifying policies and practices that further divide communities along racial and economic lines. Recent data released from the Federal Bureau of Investigation indicates that violent acts of hate rose to a 16-year high in 2018, including intimidation, assault and homicide (7,120 in total).⁶⁵

**“ Give me your tired,
your poor,
Your huddled masses
yearning to breathe free,
The wretched refuse
of your teeming shore.
Send these, the homeless,
tempest-tost to me,
I lift my lamp beside
the golden door!”**

– Emma Lazarus





**"Every system is
perfectly designed
for the result that it gets."**

-W. Edwards Deming



Part 2

Connecting Policy to Community Outcomes: Inequity by Design

How can policies set in place more than 400 years ago inform outcomes we see in community today? In order to fully undo the effects of centuries of systemic racism, we have to understand the synergistic effect of policy across multiple sectors over time. Using data to illustrate the outcomes of public policy helps us better understand the vicious cycles that have been deliberately put in place and are not easily broken.

There are hundreds of different examples to illustrate how policies across three main sectors of our communities—housing, public education and criminal justice/law enforcement—contribute to the accumulation of inequity by race and place. A historical understanding combined with data from your community can be starting points for thoughtful discussions about trauma, equity and resilience. The following sections provide one way to connect history to current data, with the hope that, by using similar methods, you will be better positioned to inform policy and practice change for a more equitable nation.

Connecting Housing Policy and Practice to Community Outcomes

Historically, those who live in areas of concentrated poverty are there not by choice, but rather by design. Evidence points to the cumulative effect of discriminatory practices in housing on communities. The accumulation of discriminatory housing policy and practice is associated with variability in affordability and quality of housing stock—both of which influence characteristics of the community.



Why This Matters

Home ownership is a primary component of generational wealth in families.^{66,67} African American and Hispanic families have a fraction of the wealth of white families, leaving them more economically insecure. For this reason, in conversations about economic equity, one could use home ownership as a proxy for accumulated wealth of residents in a community as a means to understand how a community can access capital and build wealth as a support for health and wellbeing.⁶⁸

Connecting Public Education Policy and Practice to Community Outcomes

The accumulation of high levels of neighborhood segregation by race and poverty generally produce highly segregated neighborhood schools.⁶⁹ Neighborhoods of concentrated poverty, while funded equally across a state, do not have equitable access to disposable income that local property taxes may contribute to enhance the quality of education, experience of teachers, diversity of curriculum, technology and enrichment programs or offset shortfalls in district funding.⁷⁰ Therefore, funding formulas for public schools, while applied equally across schools, may not have an equitable impact.

Why This Matters

Under-funded and under-resourced schools consistently under-deliver for the students most in need of the buffer that a quality education can provide.^{71,72,73} This two-tier system of public education limits higher education opportunities for children who attend poorer schools.⁷⁴

Connecting Criminal Justice Policy and Practice to Community Outcomes

Decades of discriminatory housing policy and practice interact with public-school systems, resulting in disproportionate rates of contact with police, incarceration and justice-involvement that are place-based. A culture of rigid discipline and policing that emphasizes fear, control and zero-tolerance, rather than fairness and community safety, undermines trust in schools and in neighborhoods.⁷⁵

Racial disparities in incarceration rates have important implications for communities of color, and in particular for children and families. Parental incarceration is one of the most common adverse childhood experiences for children of color in the United States; more than 2.7 million children in the U.S. have an incarcerated

parent and nearly ten million children have experienced parental incarceration at some point in their childhood.^{76,77} That parent is more likely to be a father. For African American families that toll can be especially steep—nearly one in twelve African American men in their thirties are in prison or jail on any given date in America.⁷⁸

Why This Matters

Areas of concentrated poverty are more likely to be heavily policed, both in community and within school walls, increasing opportunities for youth and residents to come into contact with law enforcement officers.^{79,80,81} The stigma associated with a criminal conviction is associated with a number of negative outcomes, including difficulty in maintaining family ties, procurement of funding for education, ability to secure safe, stable and affordable housing, loss of voting rights and poor mental and physical health.^{828384 8586}

Contextual factors play an important role in understanding community outcomes and the interplay between criminal justice, public education and housing policy. Navigating these crucial conversations is necessary to creating a shared understanding of the experience of inequity in your community.

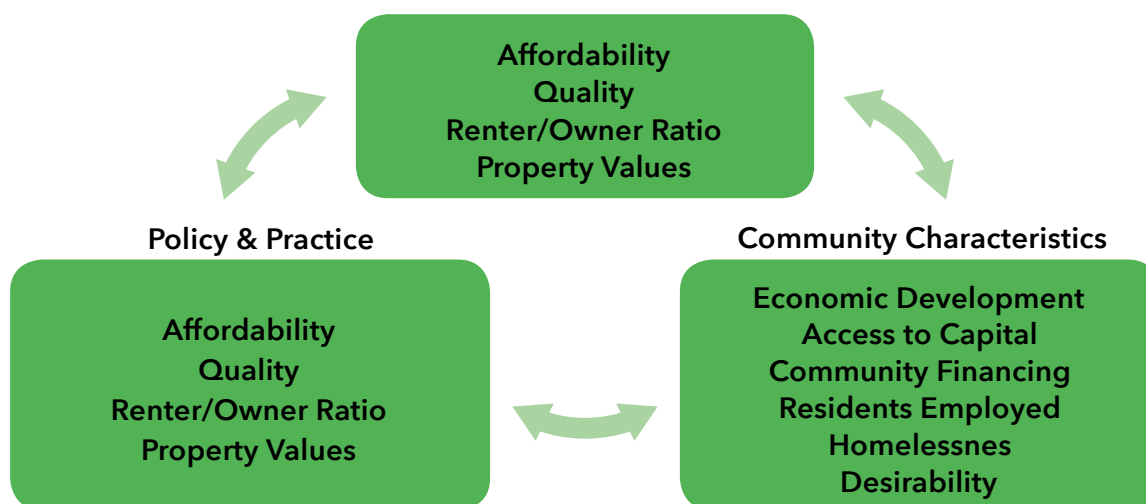


Figure 1. Connecting housing policy and practice to community outcomes.

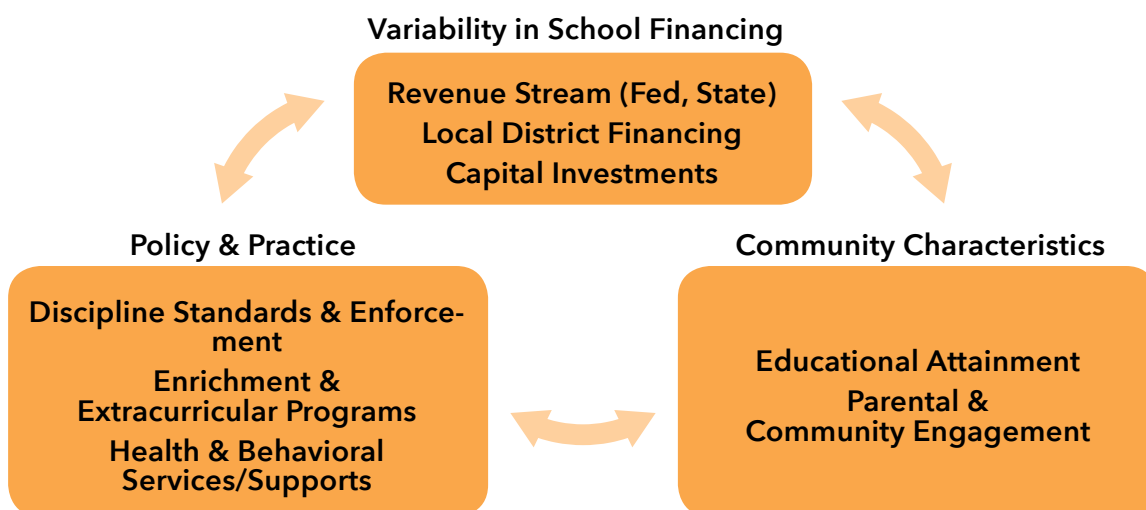


Figure 2. Connecting policies and practices in public education to community outcomes.



Figure 3. Connecting Policies and Practice in Criminal Justice to Community Outcomes

Historic Patterns of Place-Based Inequity Persist *Today*



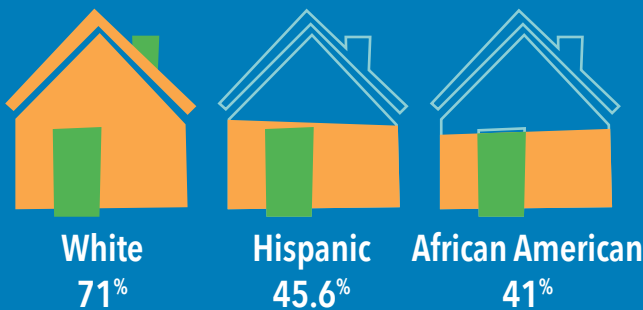
Policies and programs subsidized and set in place spatial patterns of segregated housing and communities.



Racial and ethnic exclusion is evident in the patterns of geographic density of poverty and income inequality.

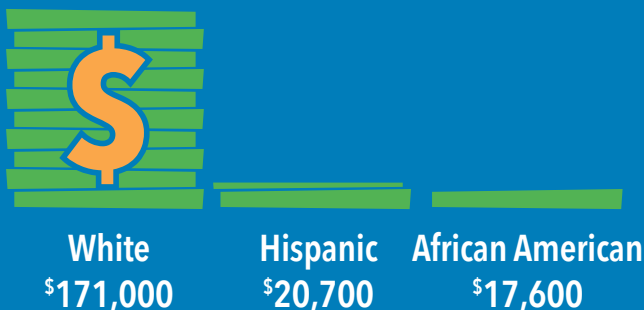
Home ownership is the *primary source* of intergenerational wealth.

U.S. Home Ownership Rates



Source: American Community Survey

U.S. Median Net Wealth



Source: Federal Reserve



The Burden of Inequity: Areas of concentrated poverty also carry the greatest burden of chronic disease, infant mortality rates & shortened life expectancy.

Areas of concentrated poverty are segregated by race.

U.S. Poverty Rates

By race:		By geography:	
White:	9%	Rural:	18%
African American:	22%	Suburban:	14%
Hispanic:	19%	Uurban:	17%
Asian:	11%		
AI/AN:	24%		

Source: Pew Research Center

U.S. Health Disparities by Income

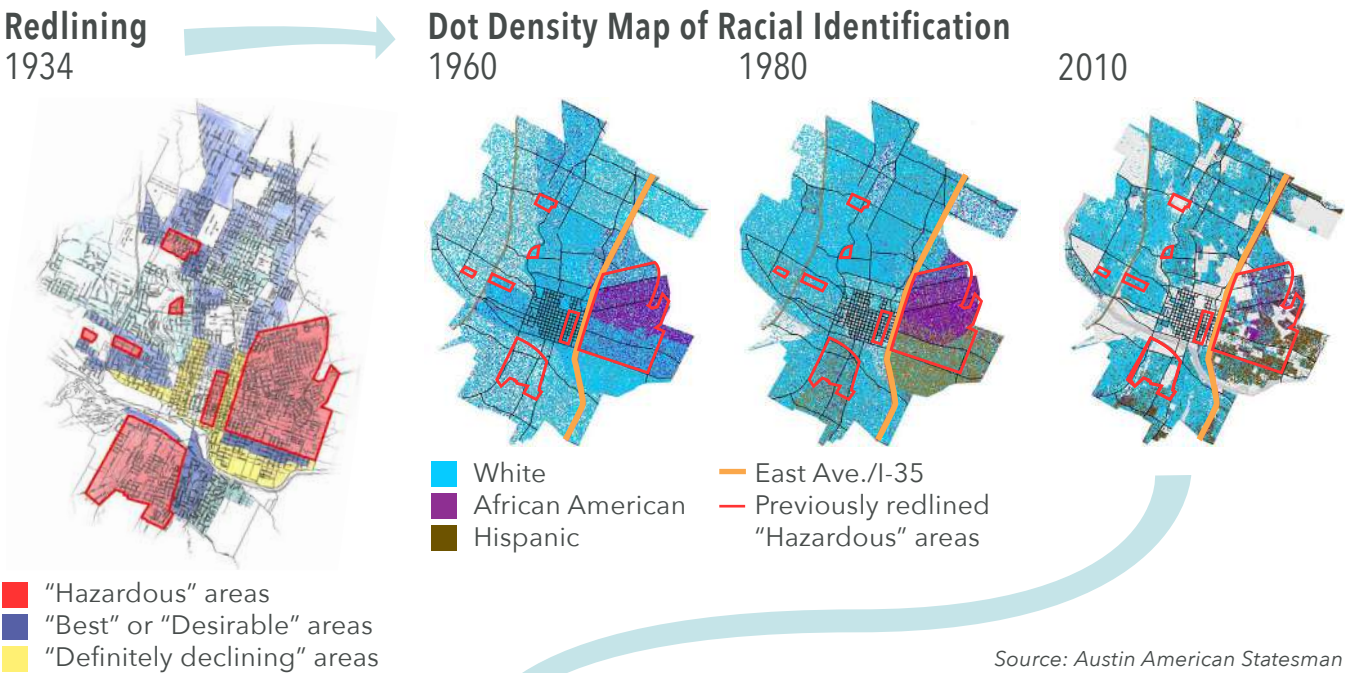
Annual Income	Diabetes	Heart Disease
Less than \$25,000	19.4%	7.3%
\$25,000 - 49,999	13.6%	5.5%
\$50,000 - 79,999	11.4%	4.5%
\$75,000 or more	7.5%	2.9%

Source: America's Health Rankings

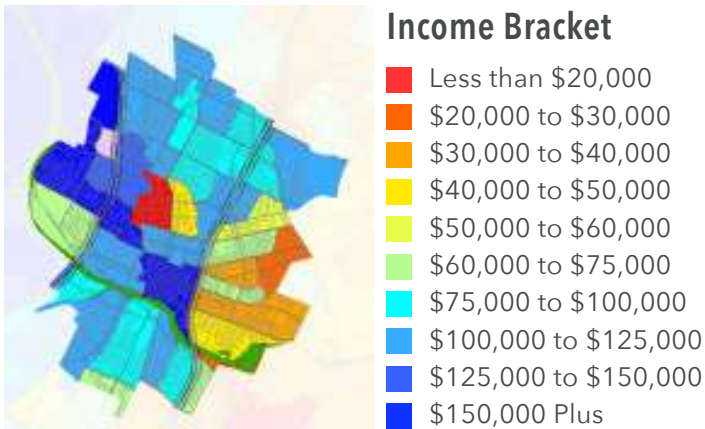
Let's Get Local: Austin, Texas



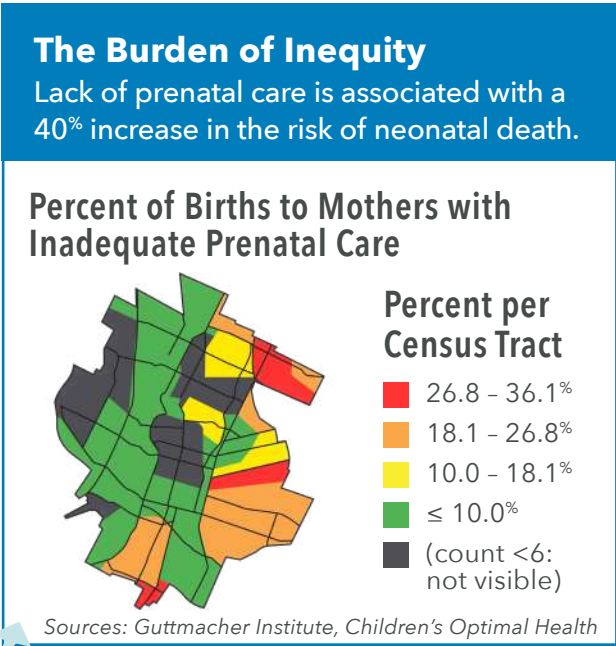
The accumulation of discriminatory housing policy and practice is associated with variability in affordability and quality of housing stock—both of which influence characteristics of the community.



Racial and income segregation result in place-based disparities.



Source: City of Austin

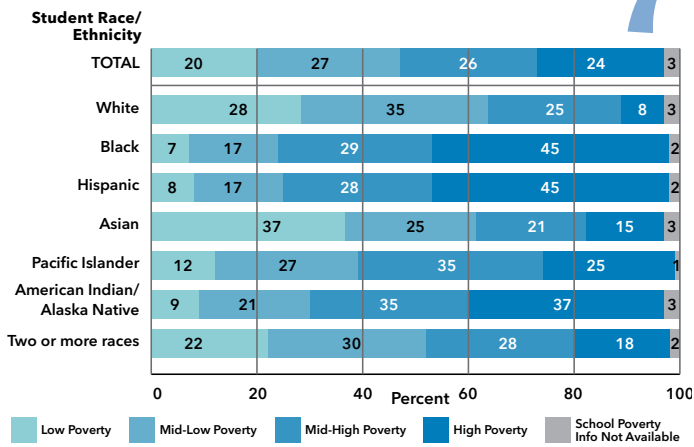




Discriminatory housing policy and practice interact with public school systems to produce a vicious cycle of inequitable economic and educational outcomes by neighborhood.

Place-based Inequity

73 percent of children in the U.S. continue to attend a neighborhood school.



- More than 50 percent of children attending the nation's public schools live below the federal poverty level.



- Children of color are more likely to attend high-poverty urban schools than their white or Asian-Pacific Islander peers.



- Public schools in rural communities serve more than 40 percent of our nation's public school students but receive only 20 percent of federal education funding.

Source: U.S. Department of Education



Funding formulas for public schools - while applied equally across districts - may not have an equitable impact.

The Burden of Inequity

U.S. High School Graduation Rates

White:	89%
African American:	78%
Hispanic:	80%
Asian/Pacific Islander:	91%
Native American:	72%

Source: U.S. Department of Education

Higher Education Attainment Rates

(Bachelors Degree)

White:	43%
African American:	21%
Hispanic:	16%
Asian/Pacific Islander:	63%
Native American:	15%

Source: Hechinger Report



- Lower Income Schools
- Lower Educational Attainments
- Higher JJ Involvement



- Higher Income Schools
- Higher Educational Attainments
- Lower JJ Involvement

Let's Get Local: Cincinnati, Ohio

How is local funding associated with education outcomes?				
	Cincinnati Public Schools	Princeton School District	Mariemont School District	Indian Hill School District
Community Characteristics				
Median Community Income	\$37,547	\$56,679	\$91,994	\$123,207
% of Families w/ income below Poverty level	37.9%	22.5%	10.1%	3.9%
Demographics	White 50% African American 41% Hispanic 3% Asian 2%	White 39.6% African American 30.8% Hispanic 19.3%	White 91% African American 1% Hispanic 2.7% Native American 1.2%	White 72.9% African American 9.8% Hispanic 2.4% Asian 10.4%
Local Policy				
Average Teacher Salary	\$60,998	\$70,750	\$73,204	\$79,884
District Spending per pupil	\$10,491	\$10,603	\$12,786	\$15,686
Burden of Inequity				
4 year Graduation Rate	77.9%	89.1%	95.7%	98.1%
Rate of Disciplinary Action (per 100 students)	49.5	38.7	1.4	2.7

Sources: Ohio Department of Education, U.S. Department of Education, Cleveland Plain Dealer



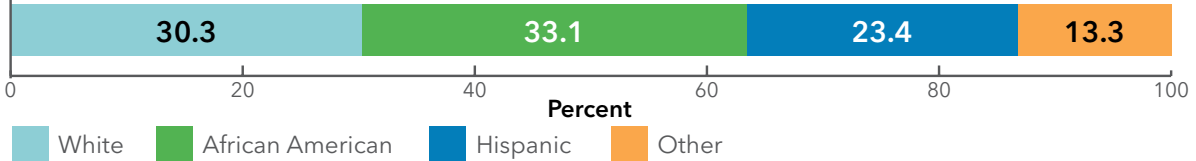
U.S. Population by Race

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

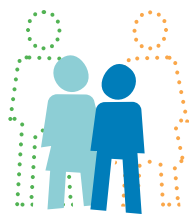


U.S. Prison Population by Race

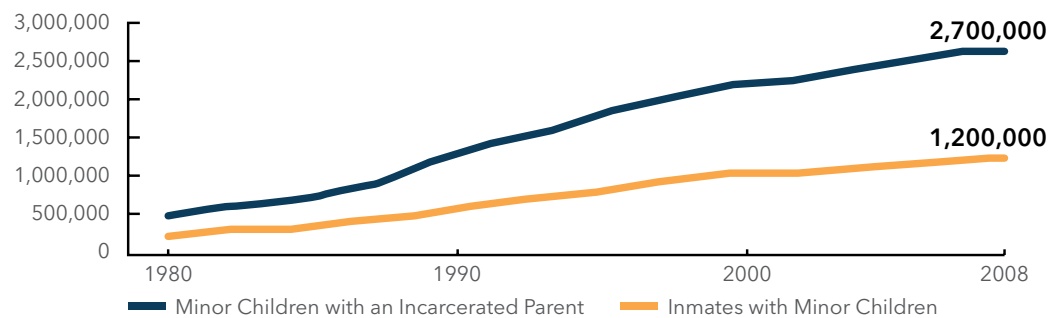
Source: U.S. Department of Justice



Parental Incarceration is an Adverse Childhood Experience

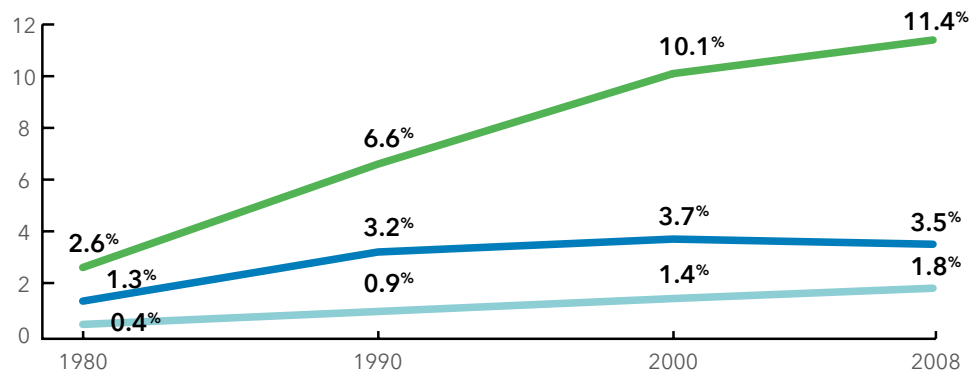


Source: Pew Charitable Trusts



Percentage of Children with an Incarcerated Parent

— African American
— Hispanic
— White



The Burden of Inequity

- Of incarcerated fathers 40% are African American, 30% white and 20% Latino.
- 20% of African American children who come in contact with child welfare agencies have a recently incarcerated parent.
- Children of incarcerated parents are at higher risk for poor academic outcomes, depression, household economic hardship and housing instability

Sources: National Institute of Justice, NRCFCPP

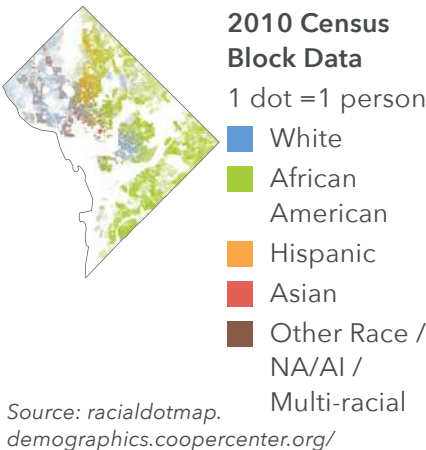
Let's Get Local: Washington, DC



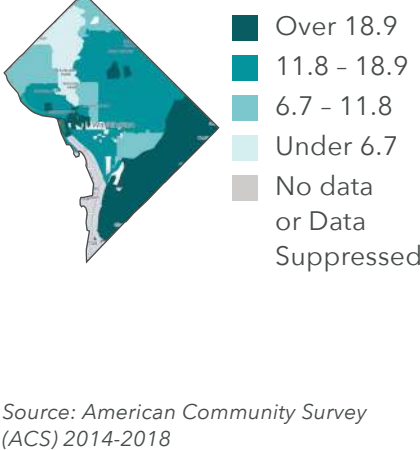
“The people most likely to experience high rates of violence and heavy police presence in their communities have limited resources, social capital, and political voice.”

Source: The Urban Institute

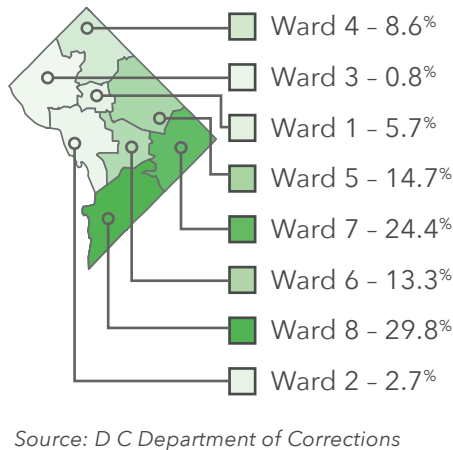
Population by Race



Poverty Rate Below FPL (%)*



DOC Intakes by Ward



In Washington, DC, more than 9,000 children (8%) had experience with an incarcerated parent in one year. Kids with incarcerated parents are significantly less likely to live in neighborhoods that are able to be supportive of families.

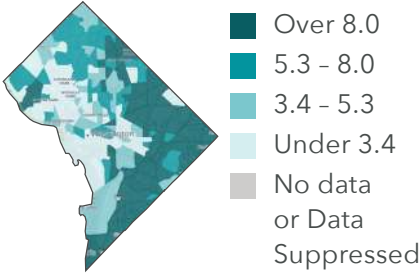
Source: Annie E. Casey Foundation, DC Department of Corrections, DC Office of Health Equity

The Burden of Inequity

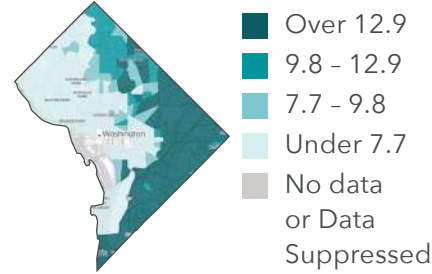
Adverse community environments, such as disproportionate contact with police, increased risk of violent crime, higher incarceration rates and low economic opportunity, are associated with negative health outcomes and lower life expectancy.



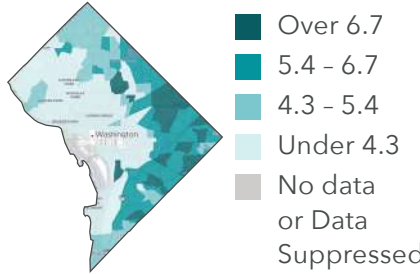
Unemployment Rate (%)*



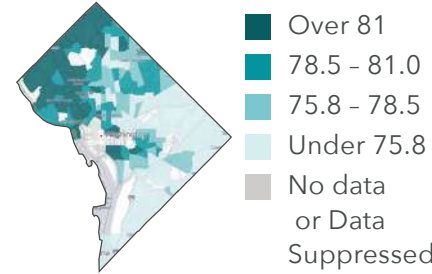
Diabetes (%)‡



Heart Disease (%)‡



Life Expectancy (years)‡



Sources:
* American Community Survey (ACS) 2014-2018
‡ U.S. Small-area Life Expectancy Estimates Project (USALEEP) by the CDC
‡ 500 Cities Project by the CDC.



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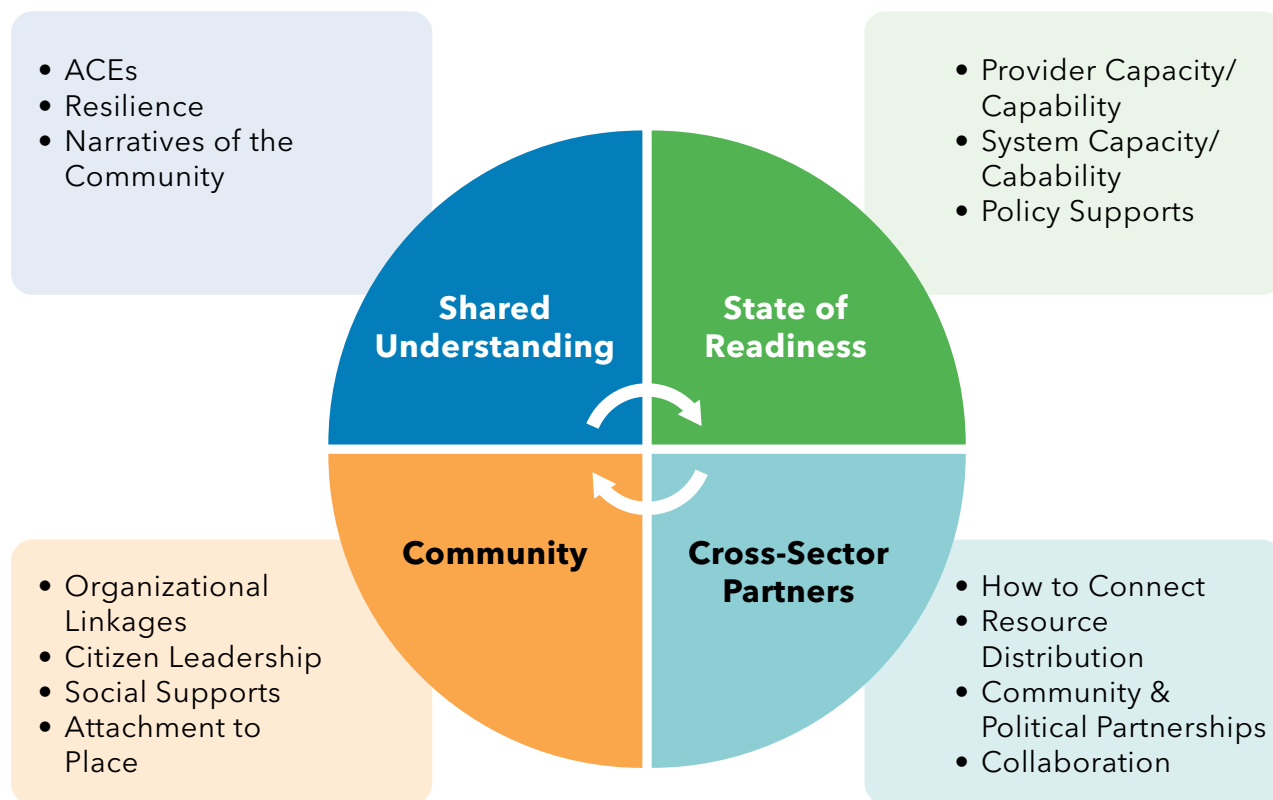
Preparing for the Equity Talk

Module I demonstrated how policies designed with the explicit intent of racial oppression are now creating inequities beyond racial lines and producing negative place-based and class-based outcomes in communities across the country. This means that inequity is no longer a concern for just some people, it is a concern for all. This module presents a framing that facilitates coalition building around a shared understanding of the past and present, thereby creating a firm foundation for transformational social justice change.

For the past five years, partners within the Building Community Resilience Collaborative and Networks have been advancing change by exploring how local history, ordinances, and practices contributed to trauma and inequity for marginalized neighborhoods and residents. A fundamental part of implementing the BCR process is to understand the people and dynamics of the community. In the process (seen here) we explicitly call out creating Shared Understanding and Community so that we may learn from our neighbors, co-workers, or even friends and family—the effects of structural inequity that drive community trauma, including factors outside of race. Through this exploration, coalitions have come together to map out the collective experience of oppressive systems and policies, as well as the inequitable social structures that exacerbate individual traumas.



Building Community Resilience: Process of Assessment, Readiness, Implementation & Sustainability



Ellis, W., Dietz, W. (2017) A New Framework for Addressing Adverse Childhood and Community Experiences: The Building Community Resilience (BCR) Model, *Academic Pediatrics*, 17 (2017)

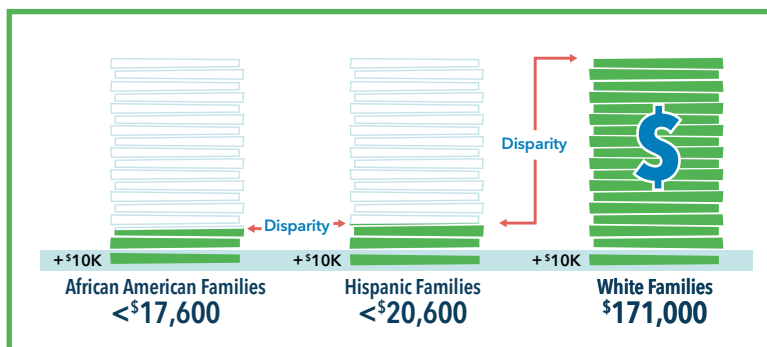
BCR employs a systematic approach based on four central components. These are applied as a continuous improvement model: creating shared understanding of childhood and community adversity, assessing system readiness, developing cross-sector partnerships, and engaging families and community residents in a collaborative response to prevent and mitigate the Pair of ACEs.

Modules II and III contain lessons from our experience in creating shared understanding of community adversity. This tool is a compilation of our experience and the wisdom of community members who are central to our coalitions. It is designed to help others engage in conversations about equity in a way that resonates with a range of audiences.

Creating Shared Understanding: Equality is not Equity

Why does this matter? Equality fails to consider that everyone will not benefit equally to an equal amount of resources or supports provided at an equal level. Even more

important, equality fails to recognize that not everyone is starting from the same place, whether that be economically, socially or even physical capability. Equity acknowledges there are inherent differences in the 'starting line' based on race, financial status, education, gender, place and a host of other categories. Equity provides the means to correct the failure of systems, policies and practices that promoted inequality. Over time, inequalities created a permanent gap in race- and place-based outcomes—a gap that represents a status quo of trauma and poor outcomes in certain communities. To undo the effects of these structural inequalities, equity must be applied—a deliberate focus on closing gaps created by inequality. Some communities will need more resources and supports.



Using a picture to spark conversation, deepen understanding of inequity and adversity.

The Pair of ACEs tree is planted in soil that is steeped in systemic inequities, robbing it of nutrients necessary to support a thriving community. If adverse community environments are the roots of inequity and adverse childhood experiences are the fruit of the tree, then inequitable policies are elements in soil that rob the tree (community) of vital nutrients, sustaining inequity.



Ellis, W., Dietz, W. BCR Framework. *Academic Peds* (2017)

Understanding Local Legacies of Inequity

In some communities, uncovering an accurate account of local history may take a bit of digging. Below are some things to consider when exploring your community's legacy of inequity.

- **Diversify sources of information.** It is critical to ensure that historical research includes a diversity of sources that can provide facts to help explain how inequitable outcomes exist in communities. Potential information sources may include public records, archived news articles, and data sets.
- **Ask questions.** Figuring out ‘who, what, when, where, why and how’ adds context to the facts. That context is vital to pinpoint the drivers of inequity and describe their relationship to inequitable outcomes. When beginning research, using the name of a community and key terms such as ‘redlining’, ‘juvenile justice’, ‘community policing’ and ‘graduation rates by race’ can be a good start to finding local sources and reports.
- **Look for policy linkages.** Inequity is often the result of decisions – both unwritten and codified into law – meant to preserve the power of a dominant social group. By uncovering the means by which policy and legislation contribute to the perpetuation of inequity, coalitions can pinpoint specific strategies aimed at undoing the effects and rewriting policy.

The Pair of ACEs Tree: When a Picture Tells the Story of Inequity

The Pair of ACEs tree was introduced by The Center for Community Resilience as a way to illustrate how adverse childhood experiences – and the outcomes they drive across the lifespan in children and families (such as depression or substance abuse) – are compounded across generations when experienced within the context of adverse community environments (including poverty, community violence, lack of economic mobility).

Just as the tree planted in soil lacking the nutrients necessary to sustain growth, children and families across the country live in communities lacking a system of supports and buffers to help them bounce back in the face of adversity. Local BCR collaboratives use the Pair of ACEs tree to ask, ‘What’s in your soil?’ to get to root causes of trauma and despair. This simple question provides a starting point to help stakeholders identify the drivers of adversity that are most relevant to your community, engaging those with lived experience and multiple sectors, including education, public housing, juvenile justice, public health, business development and government.



Challenging Public Narratives to Advance Equity

Narratives are a “collection or system of related stories that are articulated and refined over time to represent a central idea or belief.”¹ They exist everywhere and are created by everyone. Couples often have a narrative about how they met, or siblings about who got in trouble more often in childhood. These narratives are simple and harmless, having no real effect on anyone involved. But when a narrative begins to shape how people create meaning about the world and their place in it, it transforms into what is known as a “public narrative.” Public narratives are shared systems of meaning that provide mental models, patterns, and beliefs to make sense of the world and our individual standing. Public narratives give coherence to group experience, particularly as it relates to how the world works. Over time, if repeated often enough in public discourse, public narratives can become widely accepted as ‘fact,’ whether or not evidence supports such claims.

In America, there are several dominant public narratives that serve to uphold inequity, such as meritocracy,² individualism,³ white supremacy,⁴ and colonialism.⁵ To demonstrate how dominant public narratives are woven into everyday life, the below chart describes the belief perpetuated by the narrative, how it is expressed in policy, and a brief explanation of its real-life impact on equity.

Public Narrative	Mental Model/ Belief	Expression in Policy or Practice	Impact on Equity	Measuring Impact
Meritocracy	Economic power and success are bestowed based on talent and hard work. Gender, race, and class are irrelevant.	While the Equal Pay Act prohibits gender-based wage discrimination, it is written in a way that allows for pay differences based on seniority, merit , productivity, or “a differential based on any other factor other than sex.”	The policy language – e.g., ‘a differential based on any other factor than sex’ – creates a loophole that allows employers to justify wage gaps on criteria other than gender. These exceptions make it more difficult for women to prove that unequal pay is gender-based.	There is no occupational category where women out-earn men. Men are offered higher salaries than women for the same work 63% of the time, and companies pay women on average 4% – but as much as 45% – less than men in the same jobs. ⁶



Public Narrative	Mental Model/ Belief	Expression in Policy or Practice	Impact on Equity	Measuring Impact
Individualism	Everyone is responsible for his or her own health, well-being, and prosperity; a person's life is the sum of their own choices.	The Clinton Administration's 1996 welfare reform legislation – Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) – undercut the social safety net for poor people by creating a program focused on developing self-sufficiency. ⁷	This block grant policy gave states flexibility in how they use TANF funds, allowing for redirection of funds away from welfare programs. In some cases, the diversion of funds may support positive initiatives, such as pre-kindergarten programs. ⁸ But in others, states have diverted money meant for welfare to things like anti-abortion programs or ⁹ financial aid programs for affluent and middle-class students. ¹⁰	TANF spending on basic assistance dropped from 70% to 26% between 1996-2014, limiting availability of cash support for the poorest families. ¹¹ In that same time, the number of households using food pantries doubled from 2.7% in 1996 ¹² to 5.5% in 2014. ¹³
White Supremacy	White people and their intellect, ideals, feelings, and beliefs have greater value than people of color and their intellect, ideals, feelings, and beliefs.	The <i>Underwriting Manual</i> of the Federal Housing Administration stated that “incompatible racial groups should not be permitted to live in the same communities” and suggested constructing highways to separate white neighborhoods from African American.	Neighborhoods within or adjacent to predominately African American enclaves were graded as ‘hazardous,’ creating a barrier to homeownership for people of color– a key component of inter-generational wealth. ¹⁴ Today, nearly three-quarters	African-American homeownership rates persistently lag behind that of white families. In 2017, the African American homeownership rate (41.8%) was the lowest of all racial and ethnic groups. Between 2000 and 2017, the African American homeownership rate dropped



Public Narrative	Mental Model/ Belief	Expression in Policy or Practice	Impact on Equity	Measuring Impact
White Supremacy (Continued)		Federal entities also created color-coded maps to “grade” and indicate where it was safe to insure mortgages. These maps ‘redlined’ certain areas – mainly those with a majority of people of color or poor people – as “hazardous,” or too risky to provide mortgage loans. ¹⁵	of neighborhoods graded as high-risk or ‘hazardous’ nearly 60 years ago, tend to be areas of low-to-moderate income with nearly two-thirds of residents made up of people of color. ¹⁶	4.8%—a loss of about 770,000 African American homeowners—while homeowner-ship rates for other racial and ethnic groups either remained constant or increased. ¹⁷
Colonialism	Domination or subjugation of others is acceptable in the pursuit of “progress.”	In 1831, Supreme Court Justice John Marshall ruled that “tribal [Indian lands’] relations to the United States resemble that of a ward to his guardian,” essentially giving the federal government eminent domain over tribal lands. ¹⁸ This ruling placed Indian lands under federal government control, giving Native people “right of occupancy” but not ownership. ¹⁹	Native Americans cannot leverage their land-based assets and must rely on the government for economic development. But the government’s complex legal processes and regulations forbid Native Americans from selling to entities other than the federal government and prohibit tribal nations from profiting from the sale of their land or the natural resources (such as coal oil, timber) within. ²⁰	Residents on tribal lands have the highest poverty rate (25.4%) of all people of color in the U.S., resulting in a poverty rate that is three times greater than white Americans. Native Americans living on a reservation earn just over \$29,000 in median income compared to the national Native American median income (\$40,300). ²¹

As the above examples demonstrate, dominant public narratives are pervasive and can be used to justify both the creation and outcomes of inequitable policy, further contributing to cycles of inequity. Dominant public narratives are difficult



to dismantle because they tend to serve the interests of dominant social groups and exist as themes or stories expressed in policies, mass media, art, and corporate discourse—an effect that often goes unnoticed and unquestioned.²² But when you question dominant public narratives, you make them visible and create space for conversations that challenge the status quo. Doing so with community as an engaged partner gives voice to the lived experience, which provides evidence to refute existing narratives used to maintain inequity in policy and create new narratives that foster a culture of equity.

Lifting Up Fact: Questioning Dominant Narratives

No single narrative can accurately define no group or community. Mapping out the diversity of life experience and perspective within a group or community will help create a deeper understanding and support the development of well-informed solutions to help foster equity. When faced with a common or dominant narrative, question it with a critical thinking approach. Failing to do so can result in policy and practice developed with false, inaccurate, or incomplete information.

Is the narrative factual?

Just because you read it – or a familiar source says it, tweets it or repeats it – doesn't mean it's based in fact. If you believe it to be true, can you validate the narrative through individuals of differing backgrounds, experiences and perspectives? Can you find data that support the narrative? If not, you may be missing the nuance and / or complexity of an issue.

Who benefits from the narrative?

When power or resources are at stake (or perceived to be at stake), messages, stories and narratives that maintain the status quo are often crafted to benefit a limited, dominant group.

Who is missing from the narrative?

Too often leading narratives serve a dominant group, which can silence or serve to invalidate a whole range of experiences and perspectives experienced by marginalized groups. There are always alternative perspectives. Seeking them out may take time and effort, but it is essential to inform your understanding of the motives behind leading narratives and uncover the voices that are missing from shaping it. This process of discovery will help you understand the larger context and balance fact against narrative.

Seeing My Own Privilege: One Man's Journey



Jim Seymour

Community Business and Education Leader
Family and Neighborhood Impact Director
Mountain West Investment Philanthropies
Salem, OR

I am a seventy-year-old white male who has a pretty good life. I love my wife, and she loves me. There are lots of issues in our family, but there is a lot of joy too. I am in good health, and I feel financially secure.

I have faced a lot of adversity, though, so the idea that white male privilege had anything to do with me getting to where I am today didn't make sense to me.

My dad was horribly abused as a child. He promised not to pass that abuse along to his children, but it was a promise he wasn't able to keep.

Dad spent a lot of time in jail and prison. That left mom to care for my brother, my sister, and myself. Mom had dropped out of school in the eighth grade. She gave birth to me when she was sixteen years old, my brother when she was eighteen, and my sister when she was twenty. She started drinking [alcohol in excess] shortly after my sister was born.

I was drinking [alcohol in excess] by the time I was sixteen. During my senior year in high school, I was arrested, convicted of a crime, and sentenced to one year in [Oregon's] Tillamook County jail.

How could white male privilege have had anything to do with my journey since that journey included experiences with poverty, crime, and addiction?

My sister, Rosie, was probably the first person to help me begin to understand. I remember telling her how important Abraham Lincoln's story was to me because it gave me hope that anyone could become president of the United States. She replied, "You mean any man can become president." Mrs. Clark, my third-grade teacher, read Abraham Lincoln's biography to us in class. It had never occurred to me that Rosie hadn't heard the same message I had heard in grade school.

Looking back now, even though my life was difficult, I can see that being a white male played a role in my redemption. I received a lot of help along the way to get into recovery, improve my education, get a job, and move ahead in my career. I was given trust and respect long before I had a chance to earn it. If I had been a different race or a different gender, I don't believe I would have been given many of those opportunities and benefits.

This is just one of the reasons I am grateful to be included in the national Building Community Resilience (BCR) movement. BCR leadership is skilled at creating "safe spaces" where truth telling, vulnerability, healing, and charting a course forward together are happening. I am learning that even though I am not a bad person or personally responsible for creating the systems that grant white men unearned privilege and oppress others, I am responsible to work for equity and justice.



The Burden of Inequity, The Benefit of Privilege

It can be useful to view community experiences through the lens of inequity and privilege in order to see differences across a lifetime and over generations. Working through this tool in collaboration with partners is another means of developing shared understanding and beginning to map the ways inequities present themselves in community.

Using the chart: Examples given below are high-level, but it may be useful for you to get more granular and specific as it pertains to your community.

Burden of Inequity	Outcome of Inequity	Benefit of Privilege	Outcome of Privilege
Generational poverty	Lack of savings, lack of homeownership	Generational wealth	Home ownership, wealth passed on
Poorly resourced public schools	Lower educational attainment, less access to economic mobility	Access to highly resourced schools and educational supports	Higher educational attainment, greater likelihood of economic mobility
Limited access to health and social supports	Burden of chronic disease, shortened life expectancy	Access to social supports and enrichment programs	Less burden of chronic disease, longer life expectancy
Living in areas of concentrated poverty, higher crime rates	Harsher community policing practices aimed at residents not for the benefit of resident safety or sense of security, more frequent contact with law enforcement, higher levels of community trauma. Higher arrest rates, higher rates of incarceration.	More likely to live in areas with lower crime rates, community policing practices aimed at protecting community from outsiders.	Lower levels of community stress due to positive interactions with law enforcement, lower arrest rates and lower rates of incarceration.

Uncovering the Burden of Inequity: An example from BCR partners in Washington, DC

Sarah Barclay Hoffmann, Assistant Director, Early Childhood Innovation Network

Washington, DC's Early Childhood Innovation Network (ECIN) has a continued strategic focus on advancing racial equity. One of tactics in this strategy is a racial equity workshop, Undoing Racism, facilitated by the People's Institute for Survival and Beyond, that was attended by ECIN staff, partners, community leaders, service providers, and philanthropic partners. As we seek to continue to hold space for learning, reflection, discussion, and action in how to dismantle racist structures, systems and policies, this training provided a critical grounding and framework from which to move forward.

ECIN is currently creating a Racial Equity Community of Practice that will further inform our work. Additionally, we will explore strategies that surfaced in the training, such as developing a community organizing framework through which to disseminate ECIN's findings and priorities. This framework will also support ECIN's efforts to further empower families and communities, and to identify how those strategies intersect and support our policy and systems transformation goals. ECIN leadership, programmatic staff, and community leaders are also co-creating strategic frameworks and policies to advance equitable systems and opportunities. A policy on authorship for dissemination of research and evaluation findings was completed and will guide equitable practices in this critical area. We anticipate these efforts will not only have impact for ECIN, but may inform other collective impact models and colleagues engaged in similar work nationally. ECIN staff also spearheaded essential education and policy components, including the compilation of equity-related resources for public use, and engaging in citywide policy initiatives advancing racial equity.

- Learn More: <https://www.ecin.org/additional-resources>

Messaging: Why Framing Matters

Everyone has a role to play in creating more equitable communities, but not everyone understands how they can contribute to advancing equity, or why it should even matter to them. Thus, one aim of communicating equity is to help people see themselves in the work. The way we message equity to a policymaker in a predominately White, rural town in Texas will likely be different than how you would message equity at a community conversation in the District of Columbia's predominately African-American Ward 8.

One Issue, Two Frames

In the 1980s, crack cocaine ravaged African American communities, destroying the health of drug users and creating turf wars that increased violent attacks and murders, including of innocent people. Popular media framed the epidemic to create a narrative of African American people as immoral, criminal, and dangerous. This narrative helped justify President Ronald Reagan's Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1986, which took a heavy-handed approach to substance abuse and distribution. Rather than address the adverse community environments (e.g., poverty, lack of employment opportunity, community displacement and disruption) that fed the demand for drugs and fueled the drug trade in African-American communities, the Reagan Administration increased penalties and resources that encouraged criminalization of substance abuse and increased harsher penalties for dealers of crack cocaine and marijuana. The Clinton Administration doubled down on this approach with the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act in 1994, including mandatory life sentences for individuals convicted of a violent felony after two or more prior convictions including drug crimes.²³ Whether a person was subject to 'three strikes' guidelines varied by substance. Sentencing guidelines for individuals convicted of possessing, using or distributing powder cocaine, which was more often used by white and higher income offenders, carried a much lighter penalty than crack cocaine, which was mostly used by African American and low-income offenders. The result is that African-American substance abusers and their distributors (who were often African-American, as well) were convicted and incarcerated at higher rates and with longer sentences than the users and distributors of powder cocaine.



Photo Credit: Harry Hamburg/New York Daily News

Today, the race and class of the victims of the nation's opioid epidemic contrast vastly with the crack cocaine crisis and so do the solutions. The opioid crisis is perceived as an issue that greatly impacts all communities—not just communities of color—and as such, much more empathy is being applied in the nation's response.

Thirty years later, the face of drug addiction is overwhelmingly portrayed as white and the supplier wears a white coat (pharmacists and physicians), sparking a response that is focused on access to drug treatment and lawsuits against manufacturers. Today's advocates call for a public health approach²⁴ to substance misuse and abuse, leading to the passage

of legislation such as the 21st Century Cures Act, Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act, and SUPPORT for Patients and Communities Act, which collectively provide more than \$10 billion in allocated funding to address the opioid crisis.²⁵ This approach increases access to drug treatment, prioritizes drug diversion programs over criminal conviction, and emphasizes a need for trauma-informed treatment for the children and families of substance abusers. Today's *medicalized* approach to the opioid crisis is in stark contrast to the *criminalized* approach during the crack cocaine epidemic, fueling resentment in communities of color that have yet to fully recover from the effects of criminal policies that left addiction untreated and instead resulted in mass incarceration, and an overall lack of empathy from policymakers.²⁶



CBS Evening News/*In the Shadow of Death: Jason's Journey*

These two tales demonstrate how narratives and framing can influence how we come to perceive and respond to the Pair of ACEs. The public narrative of communities of color as inherently flawed and criminal - and of white people as deserving of compassion and redeemable - influence the systemic and policy approaches to illegal drug use.

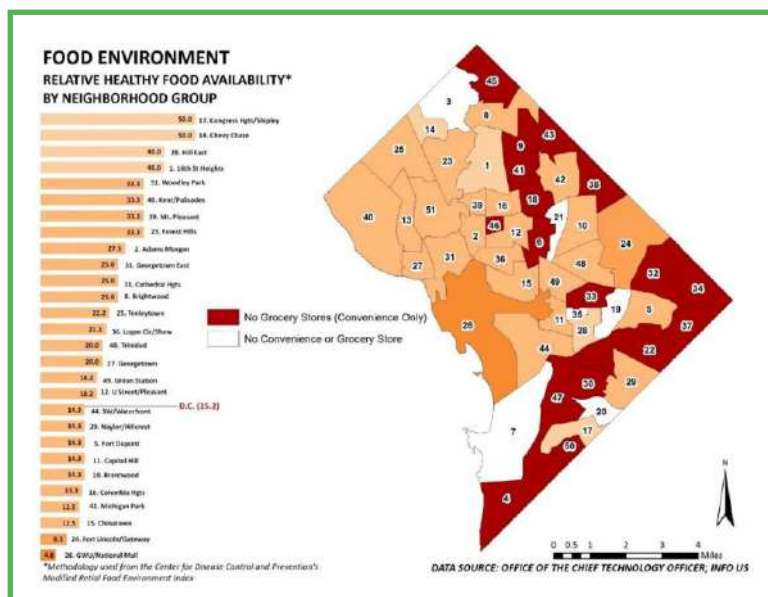
Framing 101

In simple terms, framing is a tactic used to highlight certain issues, or aspects of an issue, and downplay others. Just like narratives, frames help assign meaning to issues, prioritize their importance, and influence what and how an audience thinks about a topic, all of which have implications for public opinion, public policy, and resource allocation.²⁷ Understanding of issues is often frame-based, rather than fact-based. Thus, framing offers an opportunity to discuss inequity in a way that focuses on the conditions creating disparities, offering insight into *why* the disparities exist rather than just an assessment of who they affect. Let's look at an example:

Fact: In the District of Columbia's Wards 7 and 8, which are predominately African-American, rates of diabetes and asthma are three times higher²⁸ - and life expectancy is up to 21 years shorter²⁹ - than in predominately white and wealthier Wards 2 and 3.

Dominant Narrative Frame: The dominant narrative of individualism triggers the assumption that the disparities in chronic disease and life expectancy are the result of poor individual health behaviors, such as eating too much processed food, and failure to participate in health promoting activities, such as exercise.

Equity Reframe: By adding the context that Ward 7 and 8 residents experience the highest rates of unemployment, poverty, and deadly violence in DC, we can begin to see that that their inequitable health outcomes are more likely the result of an inability to move and play safely in neighborhoods, as well as lack of access to and affordability of fresh, healthy food options. With that understanding, we can shift the focus of solutions toward the pair of ACEs (i.e., the social and environmental factors) rather than solely on the rehabilitation of individual people.



DC residents in Wards 7 and 8 have less access to grocery stores and higher rates of chronic disease. Source: DC.gov

Elements of Framing. Think of a frame as a puzzle: the elements of the frame are puzzle pieces that must fit together in order to change the way people think and move them to action. The Frameworks Institute suggests that there are 12 foundational frame elements, which are explained in [this one-pager](#), and include things like personal values, context, metaphors, and solutions, to name a few.³⁰ With these elements in mind, you can use Spitfire Strategies' [Smart Chart 3.0](#) to begin building out a messaging framework to support equity communications.

Crafting a Message of Equity

Our words can either connect us to those we want to engage, or they can move us further apart; our aim is to develop messages that connect. The Center for Community Change recommends considering the following [lessons](#)³¹ to create [more persuasive messages](#) about addressing trauma, creating equity, and building community resilience:

- **Lead with shared values, not problems.** Often in public health, we lead with a problem, then identify the solution and the call to action. Your audience does



not want more problems – they have enough of their own. Instead, start your message with a shared value that is generally accepted (e.g., family, opportunity, agency). Doing this connects the reader to your message immediately, rather than giving them the opportunity to say, “this isn’t something I can relate to, so I don’t need to pay any more attention.”

Example: *We all want our children to grow and thrive in a safe and healthy environment. But too many Native Indian/Alaskan Native (NI/AN) babies in Washington State never get that chance, dying at twice the rate as White infants.*

When integrating “shared” values, do so with an understanding that values are culturally driven and can differ across race, nationality, etc. Consider how you might need to identify and leverage the shared values of specific communities.

- **Bring people into the frame.** Inequity is the result of systemic and institutional forces. If we don’t name the origins of inequity, we can’t identify real solutions.

Example: *Nearly 1 in 4 of Dallas residents are foreign-born. As health-care and social service providers, we have a duty to protect, promote, and preserve the health and wellbeing of our community. Unfortunately, this has become increasingly difficult as federal lawmakers implement policies that intimidate immigrant families, preventing them from seeking support services out of fear of detainment or deportation.*

If there is no clear culprit, or political sensitivities prevent such explicit naming, use actions words to make it clear that inequities are created and don’t happen passively.

Example: *Nearly 1 in 4 of Dallas residents are foreign-born. As health and social service providers, we have a duty to protect, promote, and preserve the health and well-being of these individuals, but this has become increasingly difficult as the lingering threat of detainment and deportation scares immigrant families from seeking public or government services.*

- **Create the Good.** Language that focuses solely on reducing a problem, without naming the positive impact, may not move people to act. Instead, use words that describe the good that a policy, campaign, or movement can create so that audiences can connect how reducing the problem would benefit people.

Example: *African American residents in DC are more likely to live in areas that are unsafe. It’s hard to be healthy when you face risks just going outside*

to be active. DC's BCR Coalition is leading an effort to support and align work across critical government agencies to address community violence and create safer spaces that promote healthy movement.

- **Focus on outcomes.** We tend to label outcomes, whether desired or undesired, in policy terms such as 'paid family leave' or 'minimum wage increase.' We also do this with people, calling them 'enrollees' or 'beneficiaries.' Using policy terms removes the lived experience and makes the message less compelling. Instead, refer to people based on their human roles (e.g., mothers, children, friends, neighbors) and describe what outcomes your proposed solutions will create for those people.

Communicating Equity within Coalitions: An example from BCR Network Partners in Greater Cincinnati

Erin Saul, Community Relations Specialist, Joining Forces for Children

Joining Forces for Children recognizes that to achieve its vision that all residents, organizations, and institutions in Greater Cincinnati are a collective force that ensure healthy, resilient children are thriving in nurturing families, neighborhoods, and communities, we must apply a lens of diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) to our efforts.

The first steps on this journey were 1) building consensus among the Joining Forces for Children Steering Committee members to make DEI [diversity, equity and inclusion] a priority and 2) building a cross-sector team to develop a meaningful, concrete plan to move the work forward.

In the fall of 2019 the Joining Forces for Children Steering Committee adopted a DEI plan that is driven by three tenants: equitable conditions provide supports that promote resilience; many Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) are linked to policy and system driven inequities; adverse community environments are the result of policies and practices across multiple systems that were designed for the place-based inequities they produce across generations. The DEI plan breaks down our mission driven goals into three overlapping buckets of work that are each driven by concrete strategies, timelines, and milestones.

Creating a Common Language

Common language isn't just about using words that are accessible and comprehensible, it's also about selecting terminology that doesn't alienate.³² Whether we like it or not, there are people who don't see equity as a priority. But this cannot be a barrier to our ability to engage them in equity conversations. When needed, consider using language that communicates your commitment to equity without using the explicit terminology. See the below phrases as examples:

- Health starts long before illness. In our communities, schools and jobs, barriers exist that prevent an equal opportunity to achieving optimal health and wellbeing.
- All people should have the opportunity to make the choices that allow them to live a long, healthy life, regardless of their income, education or ethnic background.
- Your neighborhood or job shouldn't be hazardous to your health.
- Health begins where we live, learn, work and play.

Having to talk around equity isn't ideal, but it's important to have alternate language available for instances when you are engaging people in a less progressive environment.

Measuring Equity

The saying, 'What gets measured is what gets done,' is worth remembering when we think about making the case for equitable change. We recognize that at times, the term 'equity' can seem confusing and undefined – a buzzword with no real meaning. Yet data and numbers are powerful currency, especially among policy-makers and decision makers.

With the understanding of our nation's history of intentional discrimination through policy and practice, we can see that today's disparities are measures of inequity. Therefore, narrowing – and ultimately eliminating – our disparities will reflect our success in increasing equity. Closing the disparity gap increases equity for communities that experience the greatest burden of negative outcomes in health and wellbeing.

Disparities among groups are historically most significant when segmented by race, though they can be just as stark when considering other factors such as poverty and wealth, place (rural/urban/suburban), or educational attainment.



Inequity can be demonstrated with any range of data points, including outcomes in health (disease rates, life expectancy), education (educational opportunity, high school graduation rates, suspension rates), interaction with the justice system (arrests, convictions, incarceration rates), etc.

Measuring Equity:

An example from from Greater Dallas

Genesis Gavino, Deputy Resilience Officer, Office of Resilience, City of Dallas

The City of Dallas is committed to leading with equity, beginning with its Values of Service, the Resilient Dallas Strategy (developed as part of the 100 Resilient Cities cohort), and Equity Indicators Project. Under the leadership of City Manager, T.C. Broadnax, the City adopted four values of service - empathy, ethics, excellence, and equity - which informs and guides the way the City as an organization and as individual public servants serve our communities. With an equity lens, the City developed the Resilient Dallas Strategy, a roadmap to begin addressing the growing disparities that exist in Dallas with a focus on workforce development, healthy communities, transportation access, immigrants and refugees, neighborhood infrastructure, and environmental sustainability. Born out of the Resilient Dallas Strategy, the Equity Indicators Project is the first step in helping us understand and measure progress toward equity across our community.

The Office of Resilience has developed a matrix to align the Equity Indicators against Resilient Dallas goals that can be used by internal and external stakeholders to map current initiatives, programs, and policies that have an effect on the indicator. Most recently the matrix was used to identify opportunities for partnership and prioritization between the City of Dallas, Dallas County Health and Human Services, and Parkland Hospital Health System for the Community Health Needs Assessment. This collaborative partnership is just one of the many ways to demonstrate how equity and its subsequent work cannot be accomplished by one entity but must be a collective effort by all.

- **Equity Indicators:** <https://dallascityhall.com/departments/office-of-equity/DCH%20Documents/equality-indicators-booklet-2019.pdf>
- **Community Health Needs Assessment:** <https://www.parklandhospital.com/Uploads/public/documents/PDFs/Health-Dashboard/CHNA%202019.pdf>



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Module III

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Community Engagement Strategies

"Nothing about us, without us!" is a slogan used to communicate the idea that policy should not be created or implemented without full and direct participation of the people who will be affected. This is an important reminder that *the path to equity runs straight through community*. As such, Module III will focus on authentically engaging communities and stakeholders in the conversation. These strategies were compiled from the shared experiences of the Building Community Resilience collaborative over the past five years and are based on lessons learned from our work together.

Keys to Authentic Engagement

The Way We Show Up

Communities, however defined, are made up of people who bring a range of experiences and histories. Remaining open and curious is essential to understanding a community's values, strengths and wisdom.

Unpacking Bias to Address Equity

Within social groups, there is a segment whose dominance was unjustly established through the creation of narratives that assigned priority to the needs and concerns of one group over others. It follows that this group's interests heavily influenced the development and implementation of policies that codified their accepted narratives into the nation's systems and institutions.¹ For example, white people are the dominant social race in America, men are the dominant social gender, and wealthy people are the dominant social class. Dominant social groups tend to aggregate power and accrue the greatest benefit over time from privilege.

Defining Power and Privilege

The National Conference for Community and Justice uses the following definitions² to help explain power and privilege:

Privilege: Unearned access to resources (i.e., power) that are only readily available to some people because of their social group membership; an advantage, or immunity granted to or enjoyed by one societal group above and beyond the common advantage of all other groups. Privilege is often invisible to those who have it.

Power: Access to resources that enhance your chances of getting what you need in order to lead a comfortable, productive, and safe life.

Each social identity uniquely affects whether and how a person holds privilege and power, thereby influencing how they exist in, engage with, and are treated by the world. This affects the way you are received, and the way you show up and receive others. Assessing your social identity, and the potential bias that comes with it, allows you to acknowledge that everyone doesn't exist in the world the same way. Recognizing that we are subject to the effects of wearing 'blindness' enables us to step outside of our perceived reality and create space for conversations that take in other perspectives on the experience of inequity.



For more information on implicit bias, check out the resources available at the Racial Equity Tools web site:

<https://www.racialequitytools.org/act/communicating/implicit-bias>

The Way We Show Up:

An Example from BCR Network Partners in Oregon

Pari Mazhar, Director of Equity, Diversity & Inclusion / Immigrant & Refugee services, Cascadia Behavioral Health Services

Cascadia's overall goals are to reduce health and racial disparities; improve services to communities of color and marginalized population, improve culturally specific services, and increase the inclusivity of our environment for staff, clients, and our communities at large. Building on consistent training on Biases and Micro aggression across the agency and disciplines, the organization will have a new overarching Equity Plan and program-specific equity sub-plans by June 2020.

To continue to inform these efforts, Cascadia regularly hosts community conversations, workshops and trainings on equity and wellbeing (<https://cascadiabhc.org/community-events/>), as well as a regular information series highlighting the experiences of immigrants and refugees (<https://who-we-are.wixsite.com/2019>).

Honoring Wisdom of Community: A Key Strategy in Building Trust

It is critical to elevate the lived experience of children and families closest to trauma by listening to their stories and learning their experiences and views. This will take time. But the reward will be a greater understanding of the real-life consequences of policies and practices enacted by systems and institutions that drive many of the disparities and inequities we see today. The path to equitable, resilient communities for all will be supported by policy reforms, novel partnerships, and innovative solutions rooted in community wisdom.

What does it mean to honor the wisdom of community?

It means acknowledging that you don't know what you don't know but you remain curious in the process of discovery. Our nation's history is rife with examples of laws, policies and practices that set a foundation of inequity. This history – and the consequences and disparities that result today, locally and nationally – have often gone unseen despite being in plain sight as described in Module I. The inability to acknowledge the effects of trauma due to inequity is a form of privilege that can be painful and retraumatizing to those who live with inequity everyday.



‘Honoring the wisdom of community’ means knowing and showing that these experiences and the knowledge derived from them are extremely valuable – and ensuring your actions and follow-up are consistent with your commitment.

Checking Your Approach: Engagement vs. Exploitation

Thoughtful consideration of how we engage potential partners—whether they are community members, professional stakeholders or government entities – is critical to establishing and maintaining lasting relationships. Too often, organizations go into a community seeking data or to implement a program without asking what community members would like in return for their time and investment. This approach can amount to exploitation; taking advantage for one’s own benefit without providing reciprocal value. A more productive, respectful path begins with the expectation that you will give, not just gain.

Ask: What can I do for you? Lasting relationships and equitable partnerships with community are based in mutual benefit. Be prepared to work through a process to identify how the community values their time and determine what you can provide.

Do they want information, such as data that you’re uniquely positioned to provide? Do you have expertise or guidance they want shared with others in their community or professional group? If you’re doing research and the community is providing data through interviews or other means, how would they like to receive updates and a final report when your study is complete? How will you compensate community members for their time and wisdom? Is compensation provided that is commensurate with the value of their time and effort? Do you provide food and drink or childcare during your meeting? Monetary compensation or gift cards?

Intentions & Presumptions. Our intentions based on a desire to ‘do good’ can distort what we see, hear and experience in community—leading to false presumptions of what’s best for community. We’ve learned it is best to set aside these presumptions and instead engage with community members to learn how best to proceed. Attempting to listen to community – or any potential partner – with presumptions in the forefront of our thinking blocks an opportunity to learn through natural curiosity, openness and authenticity. The latter qualities encourage us to work collaboratively toward healing and solutions.



Beware the 'Gatekeeper.' One person cannot be the voice for a community. To prevent being hindered by the limitations of a 'gatekeeper', spend time developing multiple relationships within organizations and across community. With this approach, power is spread among a range of voices, and a more reliable, diverse and representative picture can come into focus.

Respect the Limitations of Data. Policymakers and local leaders who will be key partners in this work often require data to help describe an issue. Data are a form of currency that are used by lawmakers to support policy and shape budgets. While data can tell a story, it is not the entire story. You can paint a picture of inequity using numbers, but it is the stories behind those numbers that make them meaningful.

The Way We Show Up: Building Trust and Relationships With Community



Vontriece McDowell

Director of Community-Based Interventions

Alive & Well Communities (awcommunities.org)

St. Louis, MO

I've learned over the years and by making many mistakes, that the way I enter a community directly impacts my effectiveness as well as the level of engagement from members of the community. In order to build genuine relationships that don't feel transactional, we must check our assumptions and be willing to look internally. In learning this, I have been able to build relationships that will last even when the time comes to move on.

Be your true, authentic self. The people will know when you are not.

Don't buy into dominant narratives. When our engagement efforts are unsuccessful, we sometimes create narratives that perpetuate the stereotypes and stories being told about marginalized communities. We tell ourselves that people in these communities don't care, that they are complacent, or that this is the norm.

Step back and evaluate. Is your heart in the work you're doing? Do you care about the community you're trying to work with? Do you believe in the community and its people? Did you think it would be easy because you look like the people? Did you count yourself out because you don't?

Realize the real expertise is in community. Effective community engagement requires us to enter a community with humility. We are not the experts in what has and is happening in the community. We are there to learn and to work with, not for.

Don't let your differences become a barrier. When you are committed and folks see that you truly care, your differences will no longer be as visible. When you show up outside of work hours, when you are there when the fires are burning, when you deliver your best no matter the stories you've heard, when you don't run at the first, second, or third sign of conflict...you begin to build real, authentic, trusting relationships.



Tools: Planning Respectful, Effective Engagement

Reflect on the following questions as you plan to engage community and other stakeholders in seeking partnerships. Consider the examples and the differences in approaches in the chart below.

- *What would the community gain from your engagement or proposal ('What's in it for me?')?*
- *Do you have existing trust and relationships with community members?*
- *Does your approach serve to build trust?*
- *Could it come across as an attempt to 'take' something from the community (information, time)?*
- *Does the approach help you to learn from community?*
- *Could it be interpreted as you trying to 'tell' the community something about how they should do something differently in a manner that does not respect their autonomy or lived experience?*

Absence of Community Wisdom	Engaging with Community Wisdom	Context
<p>We have anti-violence programming that could really help your community.</p> <p>It's been tested in other cities and has shown success – especially in places where gangs have been a problem.</p> <p>Can you help us think through the best way to set up this programming here?</p>	<p>We are part of a collaborative interested in partnerships to help address community violence.</p> <p>We understand this is an issue that's really impacting your community day-to-day.</p> <p>Would you be willing to start a conversation so we can begin to learn from you?</p> <p>We would like to understand how you and your neighbors are affected, learn about some of the grassroots work we know is currently going on, and hear more about the ideas and develop prevention and healing solutions with community input.</p>	<p>When we disregard community wisdom, our approach is prescriptive and paternalistic. It implies that we – outsiders – know what's best for the community (i.e., our anti-violence programming), assumes that what works in one place will also work in another (i.e. "tested in other cities"), and asks the community to act without securing buy-in (i.e., help us set our program up). As a result, we invalidate and eliminate community-developed solutions as options before we even begin engaging. But when we enter with humility expressed in a desire to partner with community, our approach is reflective and allows for co-design with the individuals</p>



Absence of Community Wisdom	Engaging with Community Wisdom	Context
		we seek to impact. Instead of assuming we are welcome and telling the community what we can do, we ask if they are interested in our help, listen to their experience to identify pressing issues, and co-create solutions.

Tough Conversations

The push toward equity can be an emotional journey. In the United States, the subject of equity carries with it painful and thorny topics such as racism, oppression, white supremacy and consideration of our personal relationships to each.

Creating Safe Space, Growing Through Discomfort

These topics are heavy, yet a safe environment can be created in which challenging topics can be put forth, productive conversation take place, the range of human emotions present themselves and are respected without derailing the work. Creating a safe space can promote progress.

Navigating our own conversations on equity, racism, implicit bias and power provided a pivotal moment of growth and learning for the national BCR collaborative. During our Fall 2018 national meeting in Dallas, TX, following a long day of conversation on these topics, participants were in need of quiet reflection time to process emotions that were stirred and the nuanced topics raised. The BCR national team learned firsthand the danger in not allowing participants the space and time to process their conversations individually and collectively. Once this was named, the collaborative chose to go off script and devote the rest of the day to “calling each other in” to reflect upon conversations that made some question the biases of others and themselves and process the pain felt on either side. We have learned that moments of ‘turbulence’ are inevitable in the course of sharing our lived experience of inequity, trauma, racism and power. How we hold space—create safety—for all participants is both an exercise in building trust and confidence in each other.

It is critical to note that ‘safety’ should not be taken as feeling ‘comfortable’ or at ease. Trust and respect, however, are fundamental. In the BCR collaborative, transformative growth and learning has come out of feeling distinctly uncomfortable.



We've done so by 'holding space' -- respecting and keeping members at the table, in a way that facilitates deeper understanding. Achieving this takes time, trust and dedication to our collective mission.

The "Cost" of Equity

Advancing equity requires change. That change can take many forms, such as a shift in ideology, a balancing of power dynamics, or a greater commitment of resources that support equitable conditions. The very topic of change can trigger feelings of vulnerability or concerns that something will be taken away. This could be resources, time, attention or anticipation that one's perceived status or leverage will be removed. Change can also trigger feelings of vulnerability or fear that new responsibilities will be expected – these are emotions a person may not feel prepared to manage in a public space. Ultimately, the drive toward equity is not just about change, but growth – personal, organizational, and systemic.

Staying at the Table

Throughout this work, there may be moments where coalition partners or community members want to walk away from the table (physically or metaphorically), due to frustrations with the pace of progress, discomfort in discussing the effects of racism, struggles to find common ground, or feeling tired of explaining why equity matters. All of these feelings are valid, but they don't have to derail the work. In fact, these situations are where clarity, fueled "aha" moments, lead to fundamental change. For these reasons, it's incredibly important to find ways to work through the turbulence and stay engaged in the dialogue.

Exploring Power Dynamics

Everyone holds some form of power – such as moral, charismatic, or expert power – which usually translates into some form of agency or control. Power can be rightfully earned, but we know some is bestowed unfairly – by systems, status quo, and the mechanisms discussed in earlier sections of this tool. In our work to build more equitable, resilient communities for all, Building Community Resilience collaboratives explore what it would look and feel like to share, confer and reorganize power.

Types of Power



Traditional / organizational power – the type of power a manager, executive, or another official has due to status or position



Information power – knowing something other people want to know; could be anything from intricate knowledge about a person, company or policy to gossip



Expert power – having more knowledge or experience than other members of the team



Referent power – who you know; social and professional connections that can be used to your advantage. The effectiveness of these connections may reflect your proximity to someone or organizations with traditional power.



Reward power – ability to reward an employee or team member (with money, praise, etc.)



Charismatic power – power to influence through a natural ability to persuade or inspire others



Coercive power – having the ability to punish an employee or team member; the threat of punishment can persuade people to act a certain way



Moral power – “Halo effect” that results from ethical leadership and respect for demonstrated beliefs and actions; inspires people to replicate the leader’s actions.

Source: Adapted from French & Raven’s (1959) *Bases of Power* (<https://yscouts.com/executive/types-of-leadership-power/>)



Exercise: Power Analysis

Review the types of power listed in the chart above. With your organization in mind, consider the following questions.

1. Who has power and what kind?

2. What are the benefits of power? How is power wielded?

3. Are there people with little or no power? If so, what are the results of this power imbalance?

4. Do you see power imbalances? If so, would adjusting some of those imbalances have a benefit?

5. How would it feel to share or confer your power? To be given additional power?

6. What might it look like to shuffle power to make your work more equitable? Consider:

- a. Decision making processes
- b. Hiring practices
- c. Resource distribution
- d. Program implementation
- e. Marketing / outreach efforts or materials
- f. Leadership or board makeup
- g. Agenda setting

Exploring Power:

An Example from BCR Network Partner Alive and Well Communities

Jennifer Brinkmann, President, Alive and Well Communities

Alive and Well Communities was established in 2018 as an independent organization after two separate initiatives to create trauma-informed communities in St. Louis and Kansas City merged. Creating a new organization presented an opportunity to revisit conventional wisdom about how nonprofits are governed. The founders were intentional in centering community wisdom in the guidance and ownership of the work and ensuring the work explicitly advanced equity with a focus on racial equity.

The science of trauma points to the long-term, intergenerational harm that racism and other forms of oppression create. Today, Alive and Well Communities works both in community and with institutions to disrupt systems of oppression that perpetuate trauma, supporting individuals and institutions as they adopt a “trauma lens” to advocate for practice and policy changes that lead to healing, well-being and equity. This work happens by building a common understanding of the science and the impact of trauma on individual health and population-level health outcomes. In community settings, residents use this knowledge to identify how they can organize to disrupt the trauma impacting them the most. In institutions, individuals work to apply the principles of trauma-informed care in a way that leads to equity. For example, organizations work to create physical and emotional safety, recognizing the impact of historic power differentials and how bias shows up in the organizational cultures.

For more information, visit <https://www.awcommunities.org/our-mission>.

Equity in Action: Wielding Your Power for Good

Pass the mic. If you hold power or privilege, use your standing as someone whose opinion and voice is valued by passing the microphone. Instead of speaking once again, confer some of your power onto a person whose voice is rarely heard or who has a valuable but under-recognized perspective.

Listen, lift up, and give credit publicly. When a good idea is shared by someone who does not typically get recognized, sometimes the idea can get co-opted by, or credited to someone who has privilege or greater power or presence. When this happens, publicly recognize the idea and give credit to the person who said it.



Do the opposite. Depending on the setting or the company you are in, you may feel very comfortable (or uncomfortable) sharing your opinions and speaking up. Consider stepping out of your comfort zone and try the opposite approach. If you usually talk a lot, focus on listening more – or using your voice to pass the mic or lift up another person’s perspective. If you typically stay quiet, try sharing your thinking or suggestions.

Calling In vs. Calling Out

Calling someone out or singling out a person for a comment or action can result in public shaming. Shaming and singling out individuals can be harmful to your relationship with individuals and those you seek to influence. More often than not, the person who is singled out may internalize that shame, shut down, and withdraw from the situation – or the work – completely. In short, instead of bringing them into the work calling out individuals has the effect of pushing them out of the conversation. **Instead, try calling them in.** When you call someone in, you can directly address problematic behavior or comments, hold accountability in a way that conveys compassion, understanding, patience, and openness to growth. It may feel unfair to have to consider the perspective and feelings of someone who has said or done something problematic, but by doing so you leave the door open for future positive engagement, which is a critical piece to building community resilience.

We cannot offer a hard-and-fast rule for when to call someone in versus calling them out, but we can offer some recommendations:

- *Make your decision from a place of curiosity, patience, and compassion. Remember that all of us have said or done something problematic before in our lives.*
- *Consider what you know about the person’s track record – Is this their first offense? Do they have a history of problematic behavior or comments? Have they been warned about it before?*

If necessary, give yourself a little time and distance from the incident before opening the conversation.

Q&A: How Collaboratives can Manage Through Turbulence

Leaders in the Building Community Resilience collaborative, Calvin Smith, Chair of the Ward 8 Health Council in Washington, DC and Jennifer Brinkmann, President of Alive and Well Communities in St. Louis, MO, share key takeaways from their years of equity work.

Addressing equity and historical or present-day traumas is heavy work - especially in a diverse group of individuals from different backgrounds. If tension arises in a collaborative, how can we keep moving forward together?



Jennifer: Folks in positions of power can make mistakes in this work. If we want to feel comfortable all the time, we will not move forward. We need to name things that are harmful, make space, and honor each person's perspective in a meaningful way.



Calvin: Everybody is not going to be politically correct. When it pops up, it needs to be addressed in a non-threatening way and the person who made the statement is corrected. Or, sometimes it's not what you say, it's how you say it - if that can be diffused, you can go on. But if the reaction is confrontational, you can't go on.

Breaking into groups organized by identity (race, gender, etc.) for discussion is sometimes called identity-based caucusing. What's the benefit of talking about an issue with just the people you share an identity with?

Calvin: If I'm with people who I self-identify with, the conversation is freer and much more open. [There is] a common denominator. You can get a deeper understanding. Identity Based Caucusing is a tool that should be strategically utilized and agreed upon by all participants and used as a basis for clarity.

Jennifer: I agree. It just shows up differently, perhaps, for white folks who can be worried in a broader group about saying the wrong thing, or that their ignorance will unintentionally harm or hurt. [It's a way to] learn how to do better.

You've said this is a tool for the internal work that is necessary when working on equity externally, among a diverse group.

Calvin: Identity-based caucusing is a tool that will allow self-identified groups an opportunity to 'know yourself first,' before you can integrate with others.

Jennifer: It represents the need for each of us to do our own work. To ask, 'how do we advance the work without dominating and potentially creating more harm?' It also is a tool for white people to understand "whiteness" and how our identities can stand in the way of equity.

You both caution that such caucusing is a more advanced tool to be used thoughtfully and when a culture of trust, transparency, and commitment to equity work is already established. If not, breaking out by identity when tension arises in a group can sometimes backfire.

Calvin: Caucusing is an arrow in your quiver that you can use to tamp things down if it rises to that level. I appreciate it, know how to do it. But if you aren't in an environment where everyone is on the same page, it may be more harmful than good.

Jennifer: You have to read the room. If people [feel] frozen – not sure how to move through the moment – sometimes groups need to process in their own identity groups. Race caucusing is a very carefully thought out, managed process.

Calvin: [Tension] can happen at any time – someone can say something that they've not thought through. The key is, does it rise to level of race caucusing? Or is it an opportunity to [call them 'in'], let the person pause and reflect on sensitivities they hurt?



Links to resources on identity caucusing:

<https://www.racialequitytools.org/act/strategies/caucus-affinity-groups>

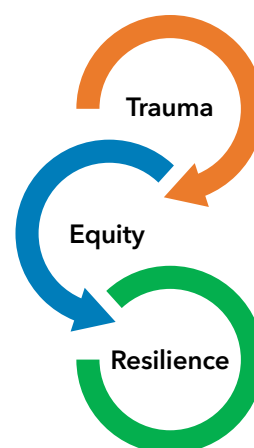
<https://www.compasspoint.org/blog/race-caucusing-organizational-context-poc's-experience>

Equity: The Path from Trauma to Resilience

In this work to build a nation of resilient communities – where children and families not only bounce back in the face of adversity but thrive – we must broaden our lens to understand the roles that trauma and equity play.

The Pair of ACEs tree is planted in soil depleted of nutrients, which is experienced collectively as community trauma. Attempting to manage through daily assaults including lack of access -- to economic mobility, quality schools, safe neighborhoods -- while also facing community disruption or racism, for example, has devastating effects on individual and community health and wellbeing. Decades of data show us consistently stark disparities in outcomes between those facing such trauma compared to those with protective community supports and buffers in place.

Healing the historical and present-day traumas driving today's disparities must be grounded in equity, a process that seeks to understand and address the needs of communities treated as 'less than,' and make them whole. Only through equity – correcting the failings of systems, policies and practices that maintain a status quo of trauma and poor outcomes in certain communities – can we build and sustain community resilience for all.





Endnotes

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Additional Resources

Many resources beyond the scope of this equity guide exist to support individuals and organizations in navigating specific aspects of the work to heal trauma, foster equity and build community resilience. These include tools to help coalitions remain in conversations about equity when turbulence arises, and others to help us think about our own personal biases and blinders. Below we list several tools and articles from the social justice and equity building fields that expand upon ideas and concepts we introduce in this guide. This is not a comprehensive list, rather a starting point for deepening your work to build a resilient nation.

Understanding Power, Privilege, Inequity, Racism

Series: 'Cracking the Codes, The System of Racial Inequity' from WorldTrustTV



Video: <https://youtu.be/sRfhVfkeWG4>

"My grandmother grew up in a time where lynching was a reality Raising your children to know their place was critical. Had there been a shift by the time my mother and her brothers and sisters were born? Certainly. Had there been a shift from my mother's time to mine? Most assuredly. But there were survival behaviors that are embedded in both cultures - both white and black - that support this way of being and maintains a very specific power structure. We have to sit down and think about how you prepare yourself and your children not only to be oppressed, but to be oppressed, but to be oppressors."



Video: <https://youtu.be/36XCiGr8muw>

"My sophomore year I took a trip to Appalachia with a religious service group... Some of the houses didn't have running water, electricity. They were down these rutted roads in an area and in conditions I never knew existed in our country. At the same time there were these huge coal corporations raking in huge money in the same communities. It made me look at, what was wrong with this picture and what did I want to do about it?"

I ended up wanting to take more people to Appalachia and to the deep south and just give 'em an immersion experience in poverty and an immersion experience in racism."



Video: https://youtu.be/ifKx_nzaEQQ

"I like the idea of living in a multi-racial community so my children can get to know lots of different people and feel comfortable ... but I'm also challenged ... because in order for them to have a good education, they need to live in a good neighborhood. A good school is determined by how much tax that school is able to collect... I may value racial diversity, but given that wealth and access to schooling is so closely linked to home ownership in this society, I don't have to be racist in the traditional sense of the word - of not liking who is not like myself to actually be carrying on that tradition."

Understanding and Addressing Implicit Bias

Key sites, additional resources and research:



<https://www.racialequitytools.org/act/communicating/implicit-bias>

"Implicit bias is a concept based on an emerging body of cognitive and neural research. It identifies ways in which unconscious patterns people inevitably develop in their brains to organize information affect attitudes and actions, thus creating real-world implications, even though individuals may not even be aware that those biases exist within themselves."

'Chipping Away at Implicit Bias'



<http://kirwaninstitute.osu.edu/chipping-away-at-implicit-bias/>

"Over time, due to the structural discrimination that overrepresented Black families in impoverished communities, many Americans developed an association between blackness and poverty. Moreover, Black families were often falsely associated with other symptoms of systemic neighborhood disinvestment, such as criminality, in the news and other venues."

Kirwin Institute at The Ohio State University: Implicit Bias reports, resources, training



<http://kirwaninstitute.osu.edu/researchandstrategicinitiatives/#researchlisting>

Calling 'in' vs. Calling 'out'



<https://www.tolerance.org/magazine/spring-2019/speaking-up-without-tearing-down>

"Call-ins are agreements between people who work together to consciously help each other expand their perspectives... Calling in cannot minimize harm and trauma already inflicted, but it can get to the root of why the injury occurred, and it can stop it from happening again."

Working in 'identity groups' or caucuses (by race/ethnicity, gender, etc.)



<https://www.racialequitytools.org/act/strategies/caucus-affinity-groups>

"Caucuses provide spaces for people to work within their own racial/ethnic groups... Groups that use caucuses in their racial equity work generally meet separately and then come back together for collective work."



<https://www.compasspoint.org/blog/race-caucusing-organizational-context-poc's-experience>

"Many folks would ask, 'Doesn't that take us backwards?' and 'How can we come together when we are apart from each other?' These are sensible questions but they are built on the premise that we are starting from a similar analysis of how race impacts us as individuals and on the interpersonal and institutional levels."

Questioning and Reshaping Common Narratives

Critical Thinking



<https://courses.lumenlearning.com/austincc-learningframeworks/chapter/chapter-7-critical-thinking-and-evaluating-information/>

"Critical thinking is clear, reasonable, reflective thinking focused on deciding what to believe or do. It means asking probing questions like 'How do we know?' or 'Is this true in every case or just in this instance?' It involves being skeptical and challenging assumptions rather than simply memorizing facts or blindly accepting what you hear or read."

Building Narrative Power for Racial Justice and Health Equity



<https://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/publications/building-narrative-power-for-racial-justice-and-health-equity>

"To improve the health and well-being of communities oppressed by racism and white supremacy, advocates for justice need to challenge some deeply held cultural assumptions, values, and practices. This prerogative raises a series of questions: How can we disrupt the narratives that perpetuate racism and white privilege? What counternarratives and stories need to be told to shift cultural consciousness? What kinds of alliances, infrastructure, and institutions are necessary? This convening report summary seeks to spark wider conversations...and mobilize people and resources in an effort to advance narratives that promote racial justice and expand our understanding of health, human rights, and the public good."

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