



Fairfax RESJ Subcommittee

Thursday, April 1, 2021

Purpose

The Racial Equity and Social Justice (RESJ) Committee will be advisory to the Town Council of Fairfax, CA. The Committee will focus on actively dismantling and eradicating systemic and individual racism, bigotry, and discrimination within our Town, in an effort to create a Fairfax that is explicitly antiracist, equitable, and inclusive in both word and deed.

Relational Community Agreements

- Active listening
- Ask questions, don't assume
- Be open
- Be reflective and check-in on yourself
- Bravery and risk taking
- Bring community along and foster inclusion
- Each person has the opportunity to speak, share air time, and is heard
- Don't yuck my yum
- Honor personal accounts
- Not up for debate
- Own your privilege
- Privilege of leisurely activism
- Remember why we are here and we are the RESJ
- Respect
- Respectful response to triggers. Ok to make mistakes.
- Values aren't selective
- Welcome somatic reflection

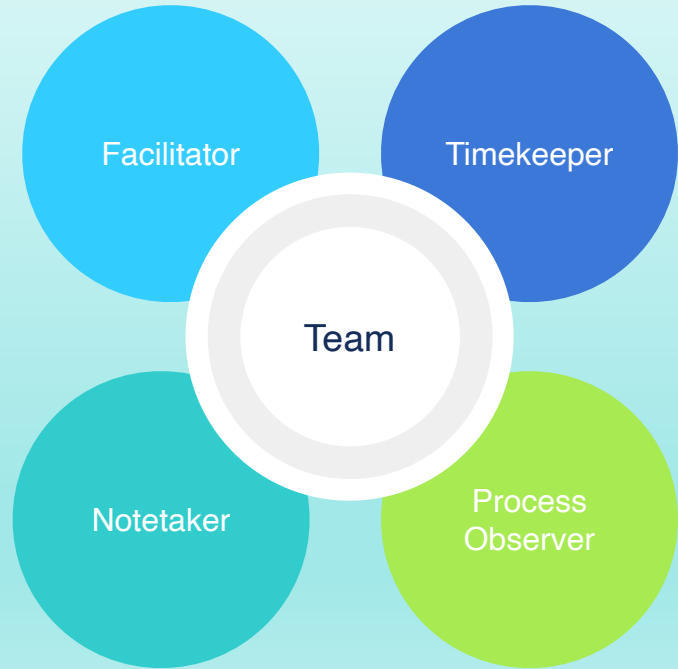


Operational Community Agreement

- Short breaks on your own (no notice needed)
- Avoid extended breaks (notify committee)
- If you can't make the meeting, advise ahead of time
- Do pre-work and be ready to go, alert if you can't attend
- Start and end on time
- Keep video on
- Homework in moderation
- Cell phone silent and no cell phones during the meeting



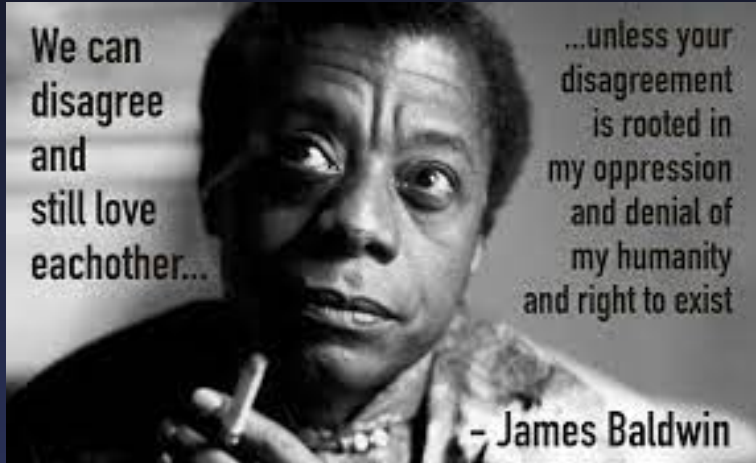
Team Roles



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We can
disagree
and
still love
each other...



...unless your
disagreement
is rooted in
my oppression
and denial of
my humanity
and right to exist

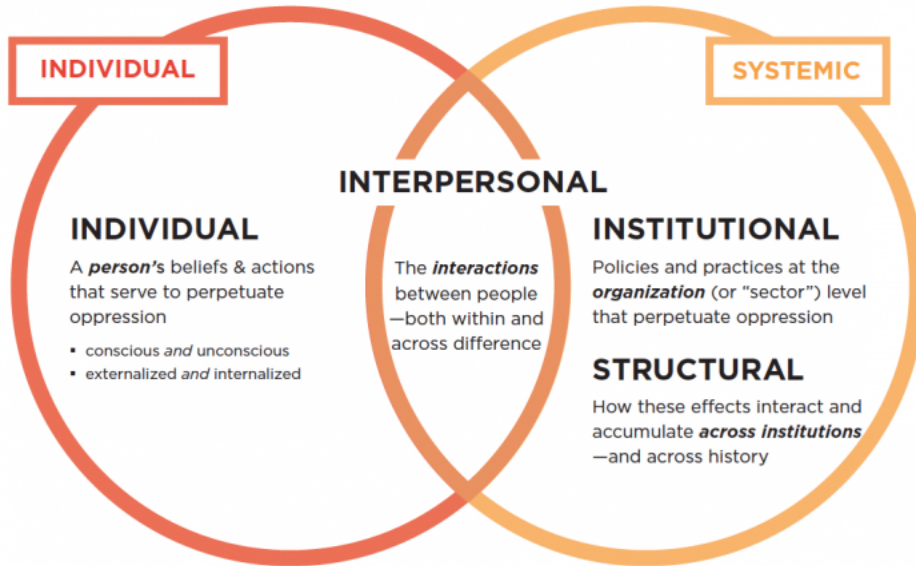
- James Baldwin



Concerns

- White supremacy and oppression are dominating the focus, tone, and culture of RESJ;
- Lack of focus on clear objectives and behaviors that will accomplish the goals of RESJ;
- Continued exertion of power over by white RESJ members toward non-white RESJ members through repeated silencing, shaming, bullying, demeaning, and harming;
- Extreme disrespectful behavior between RESJ members in the form of interrupting, raised voices, talking over, name calling and lack of authentic listening to understand;
- Inability to change behavior after feedback;
- Large number of facilitator hours both paid and pro-bono are spent managing concerns because members feel to unsafe to bring issue into the open instead of accomplishing goals.

Systemic Oppression



Lens of Systemic Oppression

- What will equity or racial equity in our OUTCOME look like? How will we KNOW we have made progress? When do we expect to see results?
- How are relationships and power differentials affecting the truth that is told and constructed at any given moment?
- Who has power here? What is power based on here?
- Who are the people affected by the current inequity being discussed and are they at the table?
- What are the specific disparities/inequities we are seeking to eliminate?
- How are oppression, internalized oppression and transferred oppression playing out right here, right now? (In this school, in this group, in this organization, in this district?) What will I do about it?
- How is leadership constructed here? What forms does it take? Who is missing? What can we do to make room for different cultural constructions of leadership?

Lens of Systemic Oppression


- How do we understand the forces behind the inequity we see? What forces are perpetuating the disparities we seek to address?
- What barriers are in the way of achieving an equitable outcome?
- What are the potential UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES of our proposed solutions/actions? Do the proposed solutions ignore or worsen existing disparities for the group in which we are focused?
- How safe is it here for different people to share their truth?
- Does the truth telling connect to shared purposes and commitments for action?
- How do I understand my practice as an antiracist, anti-bias educator given how I am different or the same as my colleagues? Given how I am different or the same as the people I am serving?
- How can I build my practice as a leader for equity starting with who I am and what I bring because of who I am?

White Supremacy Culture

- Perfectionism
- Sense of urgency
- Defensiveness
- Quantity of quality
- Worship of written word
- Only one right way
- Paternalism
- Either or thinking
- Power hoarding
- Fear of open conflict
- Individualism
- I'm the only one
- Progress is bigger, more
- Objectivity
- Right to comfort

Transformation happens...

Alone	The work of transformation cannot happen without collaboration, but it also cannot happen without doing work by ourselves.
In Affinity	We need places to go and work with others who share similar identities. A specific benefit is that affinity groups support individuals to find and offer mentorship and to engage in discourse that is feared or not yet appropriate for mixed groups but is still necessary to address..
Across Difference	We do work alone and with those in affinity so that we may better be prepared to engage as allies across difference. We need spaces to come together across difference in ways that allow us to hear and seriously consider new ways of thinking and making sense of our world.



One of the most challenging things a group can learn in a dialogue is to hold the tension that arises and not react to it. One of the competencies of dialogue is the capacity to sustain respect for all the perspectives that arise, long enough to inquire into them.

- William Isaacs

The four fields of conversation (Isaacs, Scharmer)



Effective Conversation

Generative Dialogue

- Listening with out resistance
- Uses reflective dialogue to explore underlying causes and assumptions to get to deeper questions and framing of problems
- Invents unprecedented possibilities and new insights; produces a collective flow

Debate

- Competitive advocacy
- Unproductive defensiveness
- Abstract verbal brawling
- Resolve by beating down your opponent

Facilitation Recommendations

- Increase use of direct facilitation methods and strategies such as summarizing, synthesis, and consensus to increase learning and dialogue;
- Hold RESJ members more overtly accountable to the norms to ensure a space of liberation and check-in with BIPOC members to ensure accuracy;
- Directly address micro-aggression, racist, and oppressive behaviors during the meeting;
- Focus agenda facilitation on accomplishing the purpose of RESJ and goals.

RESJ Team Recommendations

1. Immediately elect non-white chair(s) for RESJ;
2. Immediately implement subcommittee leadership that is non-white;
3. Start all discussions with participation of non-white members first;

RESJ Team Recommendations

4. Refocus RESJ time on social justice and prioritize the needs and liberation of BIPOC members while offering learning time outside of RESJ meetings;
5. Actively prioritize learning and collaboration by using dialogue instead of debate;
6. Elicit regular ongoing group feedback regarding RESJ anti-racist practices;

RESJ Team Recommendation cont.

7. Integrate learning structures to hold the anti-oppression learning work of RESJ such as affinity groups, dialogue sessions, and trainings;
8. Transition your agenda item focus to action and goal oriented agenda items related to the RESJ purpose;
9. Create a revised set of norms to directly address anti-oppressive behaviors and actively “adopt” Liberatory Design for meetings;

RESJ Team Recommendation cont.

10. Ensure new RESJ members are BIPOC;
11. Ensure subcommittees have multiple members of color and specifically Black people on PPPSA;
12. Engage in real-time process observation.



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Healthy Conflict Sentence Frames

- Can you elaborate on your thinking, I am not sure I understand?
- I have some concerns, could you explain more?
- I want to push back on that. I've noticed...
- What do you think the unintentional consequences are?
- I'm curious about...
- I have a different opinion, but want to hear your thoughts.
- I have a different opinion, can I share my reasoning?
- I have a different experience and would like to share.



Not everything that is faced can be changed, but nothing can be changed until it is faced.

James Baldwin

www.thequotes.in

Closing

- Next Steps
- Items for Next Meeting
- Process Observes
- Appreciations
- Closing Comments





OLAS

Equity and Inclusion Strategists

This PowerPoint was created by Lisa Jiménez. olasperformance@gmail.com