

# Transformational Relationship & Partnership Framework



Matthew Gulbranson | Family & Community Partnerships Director | February 2021  
For more information, please contact: [mgulbranson@psed.org](mailto:mgulbranson@psed.org) or 425-917-7878







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# INTRODUCTION

The Transformational Relationship & Partnership Framework is intended to be used to examine how we show up in relationship and partnership with one another and within ourselves, and to disrupt the status quo of white supremacy in order to move into a place of liberation, transformation, and recognition of our shared humanity. This document is not a box to check on what to do, rather than a reflective way of thinking and being to bring awareness to how we show up in relation to one another, ourselves, and our institutions. Our awareness of how we show up unlocks our ability to choose something different. Reverend angel Kyodo Williams, author of the book “Radical Dharma: Talking Race, Love, and Liberation,” offers this perspective in her article “Your Liberation is on the Line”:

“You don’t get to not engage. You don’t get to decide on your own that this is just how it is, because you cannot possibly understand the nature of your mind without understanding the nature of the collective mind. And in this country, the nature of the collective mind is oppression. It is white supremacy. It is patriarchy. That is what we were born into. If we do not understand the nature of it, how it unfolds, then we can’t see how it lives in us. We can’t understand how we push the gears of it every single day.

I want no part of an illness that renders me unable to connect to love. That is not a privilege. So we have to begin by recognizing that the construct of white supremacy is an illness. I don’t wish it on anyone—not on myself, and not on you. We have all been told a lie, and our work—particularly for those of us who say we identify with this path of liberation—is to free ourselves of that lie, to get in there and observe that construct and the ways in which it limits us from our full potential. This disease keeps us from fully knowing each other, from seeing each other. Every single one of us must be, by way of our commitment to liberation, committed to being the cure.”

Many efforts surrounding racial equity focus on “what” we are doing. Within this framework, we are asking a different question entirely. We’re examining “how” we are showing up to do the “what.” For example, consider the inclusion of family voice in decision-making around a particular topic. We can engage families, invite them to the table, ask them to contribute their thoughts and vision, and still inadvertently tokenize them, act paternalistic, hold power in ways that we don’t recognize, gatekeep information, and in turn reinforce the status quo. This framework asks us to take a step back and look at how the status quo lives and breathes within us so that we can actively transform it. It offers a way of stepping into our racial equity work that isn’t intended to be a strategy, an add-on, or a program, rather a way of being within ourselves, with each other, and within our institutions. It provides ways of noticing how we contribute to pushing “the gears” of white supremacy, and also what is possible if we choose not to.





# HISTORY AND CONTEXT

A note on using this framework for Black, Indigenous, People of Color:

We must always acknowledge and recognize that conforming to and being complicit with White Supremacy has been a matter of survival—of literal life and death—for ourselves and for our ancestors. At the very least, we have always needed at some level to comply with White Supremacy culture to be employed, to reach some level of achievement in school and higher education, to be accepted in communities and spaces dominated by Whiteness.

The work of healing from internalized racism should not be confused with victim blaming. As Black and Indigenous and People of Color we cannot ignore our sense of well-being when entering into partnership spaces that are harmful. To remain silent in this instance is to be complicit with the status quo. In fact, living into transformational partnerships asks us to be courageous in a different way—it is refusing to participate in the dehumanization of ourselves and our communities.

If partnerships are to work, we need to know that our dignity and humanity is honored and valued. The commitment we bring to this work is to show up in our fullness as wise and complete Black and Indigenous and People of Color. We can reject partnerships that dehumanize us AND we can ask ourselves, “Am I minimizing myself? Am I silencing myself? What do I need to truly feel that I am honoring myself and my community in this space?” When we feel that we can trust our partnerships to honor that work, that is where transformation can begin.

It is important to note that this framework was born out of Puget Sound Educational Service District’s (PSED) racial equity journey and the regional Race to the Top Grant (RTT) that began in 2010. PSED began its racial equity work in 2008, partnering with the national anti-racism and organizing group Crossroads to more deeply explore what it means to become an Anti-Racist, Multicultural Organization. During this same time period, the partnership work through RTT was taking place. As our understanding grew of what it meant to develop deeper collaboration that fostered trust, relationship building, and authenticity, we were also gaining a deeper analysis of how institutional racism plays out within our systems and structures and how it is internalized within us all. We realized that to develop the conditions for authentic partnerships and embed equity in this work, we must address mindsets, values, systems, and structures that maintain institutional racism and white supremacy culture. The same barriers and challenges we faced in racial equity work mirrored the issues being brought to the forefront of the development of authentic partnerships. This was true for both the institutions working on these projects and the community-based organizations. An example of our contribution to the status quo was the structure of our investment fund process. We were asking for authentic community-school partnerships to be formed and carried out by reinforcing the same conditions we were asking them to change. These conditions include short timelines, reinforcing dominant power dynamics, further marginalization of voices from



the community, and so much more. By recognizing this pattern, we were able to change the structure, process, and supports to better address these issues. Many of the projects funded through this improved structure are still alive and well, and the approach toward learning and structure helped to inform other regional work. More about this learning journey can be found on our [website](#).

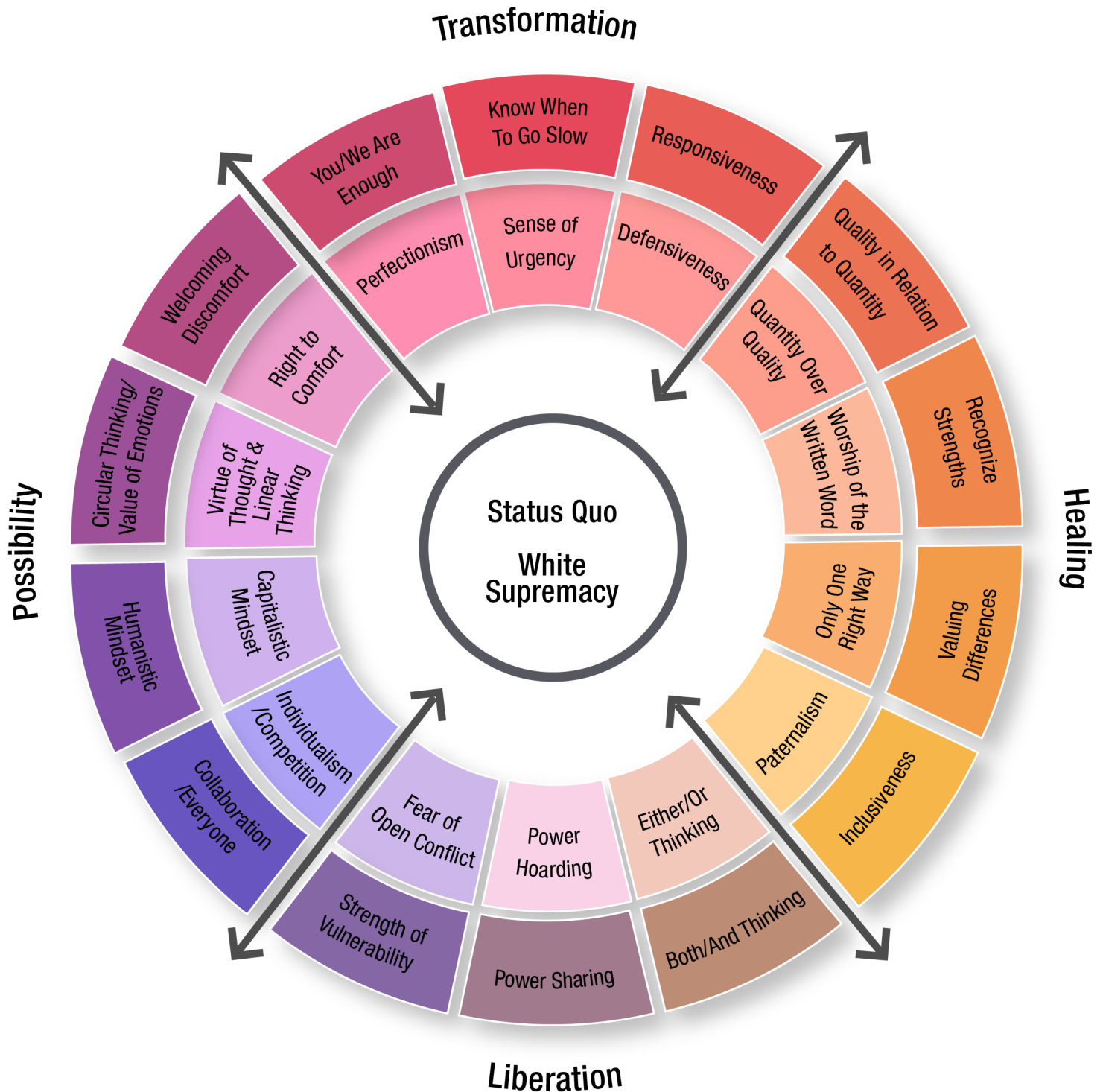
As a part of PSESD's [Racial Equity Policy](#) implementation plan, there are currently five Strategic Direction Action teams working on distinct bodies of work. Strategic Direction Action Team Four (SD4) focuses on how PSESD partners with others on an equity agenda. The team is comprised of parents, community and school district leaders, students and PSESD staff. The SDAT 4 purpose: PSESD acknowledges power imbalances that perpetuate inequities. We are committed to addressing this by centering power within students, families and communities. PSESD relationships and partnerships are rooted in anti-racism practices.

This framework is largely based on “Dismantling Racism: A Workbook for Social Change Groups,” by Kenneth Jones and Tema Okun, with a few additions from the lessons we learned along the way. Their work builds on the work of many others, and the full article can be found here at: <https://bit.ly/tfrplink>.





# MOVING FROM STATUS QUO TO TRANSFORMATION





# CENTERING OF WHITE SUPREMACY CULTURE – THE STATUS QUO

These ways of Being (feeling, thinking, and doing) maintain white supremacy culture and values which continue to uphold the status quo through mindsets and structures to the benefit of white people. These are highlighted in orange.

# CREATING CHANGE THROUGH TRANSFORMATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS & RELATIONSHIPS

These ways of Being (feeling, thinking, and doing) de-center the white supremacy status quo and foster new ways of possibility, healing, and liberation. These conditions are highlighted in blue.





## Perfectionism

- Little appreciation expressed among people for the work that others are doing; appreciation that is expressed usually directed to those who get most of the credit anyway
- More common is to point out either how the person or work is inadequate
- Even more common, to talk to others about the inadequacies of a person or their work without ever talking directly to them
- Mistakes are seen as personal, i.e. they reflect badly on the person making them as opposed to being seen for what they are: mistakes
- Making a mistake is confused with being a mistake, doing wrong with being wrong
- Little time, energy, or money put into reflection or identifying lessons learned that can improve practice, in other words little or no learning from mistakes
- Tendency to identify what is wrong; little ability to identify, name, and appreciate what is right
- Fixed mindset and deficit thinking
- Deficit model
- Grading systems (A, B, C.../1, 2, 3, 4)
- Yearly focus vs a sustained focus over time
- Systems of discipline (making a mistake = being a mistake)
- Lack of flexibility (voice levels, raising hands, how to sit) – one right way
- Talking about people and their work without directly talking to them (leads to othering)
- Language ‘proficiency’ and no respect for other languages
- Mistake in public = branded for life/career
- Misspelling words = illiterate
- Not chosen, not named (not part of intentional norm-setting). Pervasive and invisible.
- Culture of fear when mistakes aren’t okay. Owning mistakes, growing, learning from them is impossible
- We know not to judge children for mistakes, yet we judge ourselves
- Fear of being judged > striving for perfectionism > inauthenticity and pressure to perform and conform
- Appreciation feels superficial sometimes – we’re appreciating that you strive for perfection
- We yearn for recognition and to be seen for our truth, our reality and our values
- We reinforce a culture of perfectionism when we reward ‘rightness’ in school
- Who decides the standard of ‘perfect’?
- Educators of color feel immense pressure to be perfect especially regarding equity/racism work
- Perfectionism silences us and our relating/connecting, and things stay superficial and surface level
- Crazy-making standards of what is perfect depending on context/role/company
- We like to talk about equity with perfection too, and maintain the status quo



## You/We are Enough

- Develop a culture of appreciation, where the organization takes time to make sure that people's work and efforts are appreciated
- Develop a learning organization, where it is expected that everyone will make mistakes and those mistakes offer opportunities for learning
- Create an environment where people can recognize that mistakes sometimes lead to positive results;
- Separate the person from the mistake
- When offering feedback, always speak to the things that went well before offering criticism
- Ask people to offer specific suggestions for how to do things differently when offering criticism
- Growth mindset and abundant thinking
- Focus on opportunities to highlight and leverage strengths
- A focus on critical thinking and listening de-centers 'rightness' and perfectionism
- We all need to be courageous and risk mistakes to undo racism
- Growth mindset – mistakes have value, mistakes are inevitable
- Honor student growth
- Willingness to be vulnerable with each other and students
- Actively showing appreciation for contributions
- Being curious vs being right – build on others' contributions and ask questions
- Restorative conversations/justice
- Ongoing process toward goals instead of jumping to something new
- Diverse set of approaches to curriculum, discipline and classroom management
- Responsiveness and reflection
- Building relationships – know who your people are
- Feedback is ongoing, positive, specific if critical (from colleagues, evaluators, families, students and community)
- Acknowledge our students are already super resilient
- Making amends and being humble when we're wrong, especially to students
- Respectful, authentic, truthful, honest
- Not pressured, validating
- Culture of listening and learning from/with ALL
- Belief in everyone's inherent wisdom/knowledge and their becoming
- Invites participation and engagement here/now with what we have
- Permission to be present
- Supports connection
- Stop, slow down, be WITH
- Humanizing
- Culture of openness and relating
- Patience with the process
- We are all always learners
- There is joy in the struggle and the learning
- 'I want to know you' not just in words
- Curiosity
- Authentic partnership becomes possible. Real work gets done
- Transparency is possible



## Fear of Open Conflict

- People in power are scared of conflict and try to ignore it or run from it
- When someone raises an issue that causes discomfort, the response is to blame the person for raising the issue rather than to look at the issue which is actually causing the problem
- Emphasis on being polite
- Equating the raising of difficult issues with being impolite, rude, or out of line
- Lack of leadership – unwilling to ‘rock the boat’, staff ‘not ready’, loss of trust
- Lack of accountability
- Direct confrontation = defiance, un-collegial
- Lack of understanding power dynamics and historical analysis
- HR procedures – fear of retaliation, more interest to protect institution = bury person(s) = protecting white supremacy
- How does conflict impact productivity/getting things done?
- Examples: board meetings, norms in meetings, quiet straight lines, who do we invite to be on the team (adoption committees, hiring teams), calling security for angry families

## Strength of Vulnerability

- Role play ways to handle conflict before conflict happens
- Distinguish between being polite and raising hard issues
- Don't require those who raise hard issues to raise them in “acceptable” ways, especially if you are using the ways in which issues are raised as an excuse not to address the issues being raised
- Once a conflict is resolved, take the opportunity to revisit it and see how it might have been handled differently
- Sharing our truths
- Creating a space to even have these conversations and feel vulnerable and discomfort
- It's okay to make mistakes – we are learning
- Focus on growth, not saying ‘I'm sorry’ then moving on. What can be done differently next time?
- Requires learning and self-analysis
- Empathy for discomfort for families



## Right to Comfort

- The belief that those with power have a right to emotional and psychological comfort (another aspect of valuing “logic” over emotion)
- Scapegoating those who cause discomfort
- Equating individual acts of unfairness against white people with systemic racism which daily targets people of color
- Disengaging from work = flight from equity work
- Passive aggression
- Logic over emotion
- Fragility, ‘intentions were good’
- Scapegoating. People become problem for raising awareness to issues
- Prioritize niceness, civility
- Mislabeling ‘racism’ dismissing and devaluing a Black, Indigenous and People of Color’s experience, emotions, and impact
- Teacher fear/discomfort of contacting families

## Welcoming Discomfort

- Understand that discomfort is at the root of all growth and learning
- Welcome it as much as you can
- Deepen your political analysis of racism and oppression so you have a strong understanding of how your personal experience and feelings fit into a larger picture
- Don’t take everything personally
- Normalizing conflict
- Courage to ask, learn, teach new things no matter our discomfort or fear
- EVERYONE is feeling the discomfort during this work. Expect it, embrace it, and keep going. Stay committed to the work!
- Creating a culture of openness where we all feel comfortable to:
  - Ask questions
  - Unpack people’s feelings and thoughts
  - Run to the problem and embrace perspectives; walk through a process
  - Giving time for the productive struggle that arises from conflict
  - Respecting all voices & cultures, and actively inviting with intentionality
  - Truly building trusting relationships
  - Learning together
  - Access to people to engage
  - Reflect & revisit when conflict has been resolved; celebrate the process and that we embraced the conflict
- Need to widen the focus to places that make us feel uncomfortable
- Productive discomfort – positive presuppositions, provide opportunities to practice

## Only one right way

- The belief there is one right way to do things and once people are introduced to the right way, they will see the light and adopt it
- When they do not adapt or change, then something is wrong with them (the other, those not changing), not with us (those who know the right way)
- Similar to the missionary who does not see value in the culture of other communities, sees only value in their beliefs about what is good

## Valuing difference

- Accept that there are many ways to get to the same goal
- Once the group has made a decision about which way will be taken, honor that decision and see what you and the organization will learn from taking that way, even and especially if it is not the way you would have chosen
- Work on developing the ability to notice when people do things differently and how those different ways might improve your approach
- Look for the tendency for a group or a person to keep pushing the same point over and over out of a belief that there is only one right way and then name it
- When working with communities from a different culture than yours or your organizations, be clear that you have some learning to do about the communities' ways of doing
- Never assume that you or your organization know what is best for the community in isolation from meaningful relationships with that community



## Worship of the Written Word

- If it's not in a memo, it doesn't exist
- The organization does not take into account or value other ways in which information gets shared
- Those with strong documentation and writing skills are more highly valued, even in organizations where ability to relate to others is key to the mission
- How we define success: academic & behavior? Lack of honor for oral historians
- About numbers without understanding the background or story behind it or variables involved
- What do we value vs. a reaction, how we manage our time, what gets prioritized for instruction without the importance/emphasis on relationships, community and culture? (For speaking and language too).
- Over reliance on email (easily misread or misinterpreted) vs face-to-face for problem-solving. Use of technology for our own advantage

## Recognize Strengths

- Take the time to analyze how people inside and outside the organization get and share information
- Figure out which things need to be written down and come up with alternative ways to document what is happening
- Work to recognize the contributions and skills that every person brings to the organization (for example, the ability to build relationships with those who are important to the organization's mission)
- Student voice and activism
- Teacher discretion/autonomy based on student interest, background, engagement
- Know your students' learning styles and love languages

## Either/Or Thinking

- Things are either/or, good/bad, right/wrong, with us/against us, Us versus Them, this way/that way
- Closely linked to perfectionism in making it difficult to learn from mistakes or accommodate conflict
- No sense that things can be both/and
- Results in trying to simplify complex things, for example believing that poverty is simply a result of lack of education
- Creates conflict and increases sense of urgency, as people are felt they have to make decisions to do either this or that, with no time or encouragement to consider alternatives, particularly those which may require more time or resources
- Distancing from the 'other white people', seeing oneself as one of the 'good white people'
- When parents/staff talk about 'those' kids affirming who is 'normal', standard, or 'good', and who is not
- Not wanting to be called 'racist' - either someone is a 'racist' or they are not
- Care = involved/good
- Don't care = not involved/bad (parents)
- 'Why isn't there a white culture night?'
- Tests pass/fail
- Cell phone policy (Staff? Parents?)
- Pressure to say 'yes' to the norm
- With us or against us mentality
- This is the way we've always done it
- Only presented two options
- Attendance excused/un-excused
- Student discipline - 'you either go to the office, or I'll call security'
- One answer vs open answer
- Loud classroom = bad, quiet = good
- Dress code – hats, hoodies, etc.
- Pivoting to other 'isms' when focusing on race

## Both/And Thinking

- Notice when people use either/or language and push to come up with more than two alternatives
- Notice when people are simplifying complex issues, particularly when the stakes seem high or an urgent decision needs to be made
- Slow it down and encourage people to do a deeper analysis
- When people are faced with an urgent decision, take a break and give people some breathing room to think creatively
- Avoid making decisions under extreme pressure
- Intentional support and use of multiple perspectives – avoid narrow single perspective of U.S. history
- A loud classroom has learning and engagement
- Having racial caucus and affinity groups
- Testing as more of a community approach or done orally
- Considering other reasons for cell phone use – family considerations, educational benefits
- Free lunch and snacks for everyone – no need to put in a pin, eat if they're hungry
- Restorative practices – encouraging conversation/communication
- Notice when it is happening and be aware of polarized thinking. Two opposing things might both be true
- Ability to hold multiple perspectives at the same time
- Ability to focus on racism and other isms at the same time - they are not exclusive or competing



## Capitalistic Mindset

- Observed in systems of accountability and ways we determine success
- Progress is an organization which expands (adds staff, adds projects) or develops the ability to serve more people (regardless of how well they are serving them)
- Gives no value, not even negative value, to its cost, for example, increased accountability to funders as the budget grows, ways in which those we serve may be exploited, excluded, or underserved as we focus on how many we are serving instead of quality of service or values created by the ways in which we serve
- Focus is how institution or self can gain from engaging in transaction/engagement without regard for others
- Blind spots and inequities in documenting behaviors/dual-language errors, but not less content
- Adding people & tiers of support without looking at root causes

## Humanistic Mindset

- Create Seventh Generation thinking by asking how the actions of the group now will affect people seven generations from now
- Make sure that any cost/benefit analysis includes all the costs, not just the financial ones, for example the cost in morale, the cost in credibility, the cost in the use of resources
- Include process goals in your planning, for example make sure that your goals speak to how you want to do your work, not just what you want to do
- Ask those you work with and for to evaluate your performance
- Makes connections with our shared humanity and fosters these connections
- Honoring oral historians
- Whole child
- Prioritizing family valuing relationships
- Curriculum-adoption process – children see themselves in the curriculum, representation
- Valuing oracy (speaking and listening) in addition to literacy

## Virtue of Thought & Linear Thinking

- The belief that there is such a thing as being objective
- The belief that emotions are inherently destructive, irrational, and should not play a role in decision-making or group process
- Invalidating people who show emotion
- Requiring people to think in a linear fashion and ignoring or invalidating those who think in other ways
- Impatience with any thinking that does not appear “logical” to those with power

## Circular Thinking/ Value of Emotions

- Realize that everybody has a world view and that everybody’s world view affects the way they understand things
- Realize this means you too
- Push yourself to sit with discomfort when people are expressing themselves in ways which are not familiar to you
- Assume that everybody has a valid point and your job is to understand what that point is



## Hierarchical Communication and Decision Making

- Little or no discussion take place among partners relating to how decisions are made
- Agenda setting, meeting times and places are set by the organizations or institutions that hold more authority or power in the partnership with little or no input from partners
- Decisions are made by those with hierarchical authority without the consent or blessing from the partners
- Communication protocols and/or structures have not been discussed and default to those with institutional power

## Transparent Communication and Decision Making

- Partners engage in creating norms, protocols, and structures in inclusive ways that define and drive decisions and process of communication
- Roles and responsibilities are clearly defined and agreed upon;
- Partners or transformational relationships that do not hold institutional power feel included and valued, have buy-in, and see themselves in the communication and decision making process
- Two-way communication and feedback

## Sense of Urgency

- Continued sense of urgency that makes it difficult to take time to be inclusive, encourage democratic and/or thoughtful decision-making, to think long-term, to consider consequences
- Frequently results in sacrificing potential allies for quick or highly visible results, for example sacrificing interests of communities of color in order to win victories for white people (seen as default or norm community)
- Reinforced by funding proposals which promise too much work for too little money and by funders who expect too much for too little
- Emphasis and bias on efficiency in getting things done quickly
- Lack of authentic voice of Black, Indigenous and People of Color on committees, etc. (Lack of Black, Indigenous and People of Color in buildings makes this hard)
- Feeling defeated if no quick fix
- Surface-level work and understanding

## Know when to go slow

- Realistic workplans
- Leadership which understands that things take longer than anyone expects
- Discuss and plan for what it means to set goals of inclusivity and diversity, particularly in terms of time
- Learn from past experience how long things take
- Write realistic funding proposals with realistic time frames
- Be clear about how you will make good decisions in an atmosphere of urgency
- Ask questions and implement approaches that gives weight to effectiveness
- Take time to prioritize marginalized voices
- Be flexible with agendas – quality and instruction over quantity
- Value the journey or process vs end result – for some this isn't a journey, it's our life



## Defensiveness

- The organizational structure is set up and much energy spent trying to prevent abuse and protect power as it exists rather than to facilitate the best out of each person or to clarify who has power and how they are expected to use it
- Because of either/or thinking (see below), criticism of those with power is viewed as threatening and inappropriate (or rude)
- People respond to new or challenging ideas with defensiveness, making it very difficult to raise these ideas
- A lot of energy in the organization is spent trying to make sure that people's feelings aren't getting hurt or working around defensive people
- The defensiveness of people in power creates an oppressive culture
- Democratic – everyone wants to be heard
- When space is given for equity work, systemically dominant group feels their voice won't be heard, and needs to be in the room and defended
- Being critical of boss, but afraid to approach and engage
- One complaint can stop or slow the work
- Protect rules and not people
- 'I'm not opposed' ... reasons opposed
- Fear of change
- Protects power and systemic barriers
- Criticism of power is viewed as threatening
- Focus on not hurting people's feelings
- Challenging status quo is unwelcome
- Creates an oppressive culture
- Detracts from the real issues

### Examples:

- Avoiding loss of privilege
- Inflexibility in who can receive compensation
- Deflecting criticism by listing efforts being made (while putting blame back on person)
- Unwillingness to change course when something doesn't work/avoidance of risk

## Responsiveness

- Understand that structure cannot in and of itself facilitate or prevent abuse
- Understand the link between defensiveness and fear (of losing power, losing face, losing comfort, losing privilege)
- Work on your own defensiveness
- Name defensiveness as a problem when it is one
- Give people credit for being able to handle more than you think
- Discuss the ways in which defensiveness or resistance to new ideas gets in the way of the mission
- W.A.I.T.
- Perseverance when pushback is given
- Shared responsibility (admin looking for help in the work)
- Ability to listen & sit in discomfort – allowing time in professional setting (staff meetings, etc.) to digest
- Scaffolding choices of expression & contribution (i.e. post-it notes vs. whole group sharing)
- Listening to those of marginalized identities
- Owning behavior and response
- Challenging 'access' points in system
- Having multiple avenues to receive success in school (i.e. high capacity, IB, AP, scholarship)
- Growth mindset
- Open body language
- Use of privilege for good and change
- Tell me more
- I am wondering if this 'form' serves all...
- Affirming strength and celebrating
- Here is what I hear you saying... Am I hearing you right?
- Looking at 'non dominant...'
- Warm, inclusive 'growth'

## Quantity Over Quality

- All resources of organization are directed toward producing measurable goals
- Things that can be measured are more highly valued than things that cannot, for example numbers of people attending a meeting, newsletter circulation, money spent are valued more than quality of relationships, democratic decision-making, ability to constructively deal with conflict
- Little or no value attached to process; if it can't be measured, it has no value
- Discomfort with emotion and feelings
- No understanding that when there is a conflict between content (the agenda of the meeting) and process (people's need to be heard or engaged), process will prevail (for example, you may get through the agenda, but if you haven't paid attention to people's need to be heard, the decisions made at the meeting are undermined and/or disregarded)
- Trying to rush through agendas at the expense of relationships and hearing all voices
- Lack of value in process of teaching (opposed to measured results or specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, timely goals)
- SBA scores matter more than whole child
- Graduation rates matter more than the whole child

## Quality in Relation to Quantity

- Include process or quality goals in your planning
- Make sure your organization has a values statement which expresses the ways in which you want to do your work
- Make sure this is a living document and that people are using it in their day to day work
- Look for ways to measure process goals (for example if you have a goal of inclusivity, think about ways you can measure whether or not you have achieved that goal)
- Learn to recognize those times when you need to get off the agenda in order to address people's underlying concerns
- Listen for understanding
- Value the whole child and their experience over 'results'
- Identify values of whole community – know each other
- Examine representation on decision-making teams



## Paternalism

- Decision-making is clear to those with power and unclear to those without it
- Those with power think they are capable of making decisions for and in the interests of those without power
- Those with power often don't think it is important or necessary to understand the viewpoint or experience of those for whom they are making decisions
- Those without power understand they do not have it and understand who does
- Those without power do not really know how decisions get made and who makes what decisions, and yet they are completely familiar with the impact of those decisions on them
- Top-down discipline without input from stakeholders – family, student, community
- Having a committee just to have a committee; decision is made by leader anyway
- Micromanaging or taking over
- Respect given to those in authority

## Inclusiveness

- Make sure that everyone knows and understands who makes what decisions in the organization
- Make sure everyone knows and understands their level of responsibility and authority in the organization
- Include people who are affected by decisions in the decision-making
- Use protocols for shared voice while gathering information and while making decisions
- Disrupting historical school/system norms
- Intentional examination of age-old practices to work toward change (registration, grading, testing, curriculum, systems change)
- Follow through, trying, accountability
- 'What do you need and how can I help?'

## Power Hoarding

- Little, if any, value around sharing power
- Power seen as limited, only so much to go around
- Those with power feel threatened when anyone suggests changes in how things should be done in the organization, feel suggestions for change are a reflection on their leadership
- Those with power don't see themselves as hoarding power or as feeling threatened
- Those with power assume they have the best interests of the organization at heart and assume those wanting change are ill-informed (stupid), emotional, inexperienced
- Overstuffed agenda
- Students hold none or little power for decisions in the classroom
- Bureaucracy
- Jumping through hoops – ex: teacher prep programs, etc.
- Blocking change
- 'We've always done it this way'
- 'I know what's best'
- People with power have a 'right' to do the things they want
- Assimilation into whiteness (our education system, keeping in place how we make decisions without family/community voice)
- Same people, same table, same way
- Gatekeeping
  - How I make decisions everyday (who wins out?)
  - Who's at the table > boss vs community/family
  - Deference to white male norms
  - Creating agendas: topic, time, process, who and how much air time is given, follow-up, transparency

## Power Sharing

- Include power sharing in your organization's values statement
- Discuss what good leadership looks like and make sure people understand that a good leader develops the power and skills of others
- Understand that change is inevitable and challenges to your leadership can be healthy and productive
- Make sure the organization is focused on the mission
- Bringing all stakeholders – brainstorming, problem-solving, decision-making
- Math placement is no longer the 'gateway' – level the playing field, providing alternate paths into advanced placement classes
- Opportunities to build cultural advocacy through affinity groups
- Make visible/no secrets – processes, decisions/decision making, systems
- Making space for all voices (protocol, structure to get all voices)
- Nothing about us without us
- Listening for and respecting all opinions (students, staff, parents, family)
- Everyone feels a sense of ownership, agency, and valued
- Examine unintended consequences of decisions with those that are affected by those decisions
- Explicitly Name historic and current power dynamics and address them in ways that feel valued by those who typically don't have access to it
- Community-supported/driven empowered leadership
- Recognition of white/dominant privilege

## Individualism/Competition

- Little experience or comfort working as part of a team
- People in organization believe they are responsible for solving problems alone
- Accountability, if any, goes up and down, not sideways to peers or to those the organization is set up to serve
- Desire for individual recognition and credit entitlement of being or doing extra, wanting to be recognized, often for doing the same or less than Black, Indigenous, People of Color
- Leads to isolation
- Competition more highly valued than cooperation and where cooperation is valued, little time or resources devoted to developing skills in how to cooperate
- Creates a lack of accountability, as the organization values those who can get things done on their own without needing supervision or guidance
- Self care looks like isolation and separation from others
- Taking up too much space in conversations
- Being more 'woke' than others, better than
- White savior
- Isolated teachers – 'do their own thing'
- Competitive with data – our kids vs my kids
- Inability or unwillingness to delegate
- Motivation for recognition vs what's best for kids
- Give support vs 'I had to learn this the hard way'
- Invalidation of others, 'I hear you but...'
- Not participating in a group – silent, not asking questions for clarity
- Tasks over relationships

## Collaboration/Everyone Contributes

- Include teamwork as an important value in your values statement
- Make sure the organization is working towards shared goals and people understand how working together will improve performance
- Evaluate people's ability to work in a team as well as their ability to get the job done
- Make sure that credit is given to all those who participate in an effort, not just the leaders or most public person
- Make people accountable as a group rather than as individuals
- Create a culture where people bring problems to the group
- Use staff meetings as a place to solve problems, not just a place to report activities
- Self care looks like collective care, is centered in holding one another up rather than the expectation of doing it yourself
- Co-sponsorship, co-laboring, accomplice, co-conspirator for racial equity and social justice
- Shared goals & successes
- Equity of voice – intentional (no tokenism)
- Collectivism in teaching practices and in community engagement
- Seek first to understand
- Assume positive intent, but not at the expense of impact as it's not permission to harm
- Value teamwork
- Assume everyone (para educators, teachers, students, parents, etc.) has something to contribute
- Be vulnerable and share for collective learning – relationships over tasks
- Validate experiences and emotions
- Shared leadership and decision making
- Seasoned staff supporting new staff
- Allow for and celebrate creative thinking



## SO WHAT CAN YOU DO NOW?

1. Interrogate your complicity: ask yourself “how are these things showing up in how I think and how I do things?” Make it personal, and do it often.
2. Intentionally create transformational spaces and partnerships: be explicit in how you are creating spaces, conversations, developing programs through a transformational lens.
3. Have difficult conversations with colleagues about how these ways of being are embedded in your structures of your organization and how they show up in behaviors.
4. Use the Transformational Relationship & Partnership Framework as a pre and post reflections on programming, practices, or partnerships.
5. Embed these approaches in your partnership agreements and norms and keep each other accountable when things get difficult in a supportive way, especially when partnering and collaborating with communities, families and students.
6. Keep learning: personal and organizational training and deepening your knowledge of institutional/structural racism and white supremacy culture can not only help yourself see this work in new light, but also help others who are on the journey as well.
7. Build networks of support: having people who can understand, support, and strategize can give you a stronger sense of connection and keep you moving forward when things are difficult.
8. Take care of yourself: this work is deep and can unroot long standing ways you or your institution have existed in the world. In order to keep moving forward we need to nurture and take care of ourselves. This means doing things that replenish you on a regular basis both individually and collectively.







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800 OAKESDALE AVENUE SOUTHWEST  
RENTON, WA 98057

P: 425-917-7600  
TTY: 425-917-7833

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@PSESD



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