Building Capacity for Transformational, Anti-racist Organizing within Government

An Analysis of Two Novel Learning Experiences

January 2022

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OFFICE OF ARTS & CULTURE
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SEATTLE

RACE & SOCIAL JUSTICE INITIATIVE
RSJI

Acknowledgements

We would like to acknowledge the lands and legacies on and through which this work has been allowed to occur, including the Coast Salish People, the original stewards of the lands where the City of Seattle is located. We also acknowledge our ancestors, race and social justice organizers who have come before us and guided us, and future generations. Finally, we acknowledge the co-sponsors of this work at the City of Seattle, including the Office of Arts & Culture, Office for Civil Rights, Department of Human Resources, Workforce Equity Planning and Advisory Committee, and key collaborators from Our Bodhi Project and Constellation Consulting LLC.

Credits

Gia Naranjo-Rivera, Ph.D., lead evaluator, Constellation Consulting/Rising LLC
Dr. Gia Naranjo-Rivera is the founder of Constellation Consulting LLC and holds a Ph.D. from Johns Hopkins School of Public Health with a focus on quantitative and qualitative research and evaluation methods. She had conducted evaluations for universities, the National Institutes of Health, local government entities, philanthropic foundations, and international organizations including the World Health Organization. She has Indigenous heritage from Cuba (Taino), Colombia, and Venezuela, and has studied the application of the medicine wheel in formal training through the Center for American Indian Health at Johns Hopkins University. She also has lived global Indigenous cultural practices and experiences such as vision quests, Santería, capoeira, yoga, Ayurveda, learning from Indigenous elders, deep study and practice of council processes that share Indigenous wisdom, and more.

Diana Falchuk, co-project manager and facilitator, Seattle Office for Civil Rights and of Arts & Culture
Diana Falchuk is the Creative Strategies Initiatives Manager, positioned in a partnership between the City of Seattle Office for Civil Rights and Office of Arts & Culture. Throughout her work, Diana weaves together her different orientations as an artist, organizer, mother, spiritual practitioner, facilitator, trainer, coach, and strategist.

Andrea Ramirez, Ed.D., co-project manager, Seattle Department of Human Resources
Dr. Andrea Ramirez is a scholar and practitioner devoted to creating systemic social change and improving the lives of communities most impacted by injustice and oppression. She spent over 15 years working in higher education, where she was an advocate for communities of color and developed programs centering on the experiences of communities most impacted and harmed. Andrea uses a multidisciplinary approach of storytelling, creativity, and research as tools to help people understand the lived experience. Her anti-racism work is informed by her identity as a Latina, her family experience, growing up in a military family, being a first-generation college student, and her experiences of often being the only woman of color in leadership roles within organizations. She currently supports City workforce equity efforts and oversees Citywide learning and development as the

Equity Learning & Leadership Development Manager.

Sonali Sangeeta Balajee, project designer and facilitator, Our Bodhi Project
Sonali Sangeeta Balajee is a mother, daughter of Sri Lankan and Indian immigrants, a teaching artist, activist, organizer, and emerging health practitioner. She is the founder of Our Bodhi Project (Bodhi), which focuses on the intersection of Belonging, Organizing, Decomposing, Collective Health and Interconnectedness. Bodhi and the *Embodying Belonging and Coliberation frame* (the project's centerpiece) stems from her active research as a Senior Fellow with the Othering and Belonging Institute with UC Berkeley. Sonali spent 13 years for Multnomah County and City of Portland as a senior policy advisor on equity and empowerment, as manager of a health equity program, and of a City-wide community-visioning project. She has spent over 10 years of community organizing in the areas of youth organizing, arts, queer liberation, HIV/AIDS issues, and environmental justice. Sonali served as a healing practitioner with the W.K. Kellogg Truth, Reconciliation, and Healing Initiative, and serves on the boards of World Trust and Bioneers. Her life's work has sought to integrate her various influences, cultures, grounding in earth-and-cosmos-based practices, and experiences of spirituality in multiple forms. Our current moments of social and environmental oppression, decomposing, heartbreak, and transformation call Sonali to offer and learn through such integrative and collectively liberating practices.

Tamar Zere, RSJI Manager, Seattle Office for Civil Rights
Tamar Zere is Eritrean, born and raised in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. She arrived in Seattle in the early 1980s when her family, like many others, fled political and economic persecution. Tamar has devoted most of her career to the public sector—labor, education, and government. Tamar has been leading the City of Seattle's Race and Social Justice Initiative since 2016. Her small but mighty team provides racial equity counsel, direction, and technical assistance for the entire City apparatus. Tamar believes that government has an undeniable responsibility and obligation to undo centuries of racist policies and actions.

Raintry Salk, evaluation advisor, Race Forward
Raintry Salk is a mixed methods researcher with over two decades of experience, currently housed at Race Forward, a national racial justice nonprofit. In that capacity, she collaborates with governments across the country to perform data-driven explorations aimed at advancing racial equity within institutions.

Additional Credits

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Acronyms

ARTS   Seattle Office of Arts & Culture
BIPOC   Black, Indigenous, and People of Color
HR   Human Resources
KL   Key Leaders
LGBTQ+   Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Questioning, Asexual, Intersex, Pansexual
POC   People of Color
RITES   Radical Indigenous and Transformative Evaluation and Storytelling
RSJI   Race and Social Justice Initiative
SHR   Seattle Department of Human Resources
SoT   The Shape of Trust
SOCR   Seattle Office for Civil Rights

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Introduction

Long before COVID-19 and the 2020 Black-led uprisings against ongoing police violence, people of color were already reeling from the forces of structural racism, settler colonialism, nationalism, and other intersecting forms of oppression that particularly impact Black and Indigenous people. Health and economic disparities were dramatic and widespread, from the interpersonal level to the institutional level. What does it mean to be public servants committed to racial and social justice in this time? How do we continue the legacy of organizing for racial and social justice from within government?

Nearly two decades ago, the City of Seattle Race and Social Justice Initiative (RSJI) became the first government racial equity initiative in the United States. In recent years, RSJI organizers began to recognize that the City's culture and practices must align with its vision for a just and equitable community—that the ways government employees work to advance racial equity matter as much as the outcomes they seek and the policies they craft. A pair of projects emerged from a desire to create and support that alignment.

Launched in 2017, the Shape of Trust (SoT) rooted government anti-racism work in the undeniable reality of our interdependence, collective health, creativity, and drive to belong. Designed as a capacity-building learning experience for City of Seattle supervisors, managers, and human resources advisers, it offered frameworks and tools to help these City employees develop daily anti-racist practices and embed racial justice in their jobs. In collaboration with **Our Bodhi Project**, SoT used a living-systems approach that centered BIPOC and integrated arts, culture, mindfulness, and embodiment practices throughout the curriculum. Used by myriad cultures around the world for thousands of years, living-systems approaches focus on caring for the Earth and cosmos, emphasizing the relationships between matter, spirit, and all living beings.

The second project, Key Leaders (KL), built on the living-systems approach and collaboration with Our Bodhi Project that guided SoT, developing a shared foundation for anti-racist organizing within the City. That foundation included greater understanding, interconnection, and alignment among those in key positions to move departments toward transformational, anti-racist practices and outcomes. It evolved in response to a need to deepen the anti-racist organizing capacity of members of the City's RSJI Network, which is made up of employees from across departments who play critical roles on change teams and in voluntary, optional racial caucuses, hold designated RSJI or equity positions, and more.

Both SoT and KL emerged from more than a decade of organizing for racial equity within the City of Seattle, led by employees most impacted by racism, sexism, and other intersecting forms of oppression. Both were also the first transformational, anti-racist organizing capacity-building experiences of their kind to serve a local U.S. government. They were developed by a team led by women, predominantly women of color, including queer women of color, and piloted

during some of the country's most racially charged years since the Civil Rights Era.

SoT and KL were made possible through a unique partnership between the Office of Arts & Culture (ARTS), Office for Civil Rights (SOCR), and Department of Human Resources (SHR). SoT was sponsored by the Citywide Workforce Equity Planning and Advisory Committee and contributing department partners included Seattle Public Utilities, Seattle City Light, Seattle Center, Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs, Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections, Department of Neighborhoods, and Seattle Public Library.

Not only do all workers benefit from a workplace that centers care for relationships and living systems, but the work of racial equity and social justice is also inherently relational, creative, and generative. It requires us to shape a thriving future together, in the unfolding present. SoT and KL invited us to tend to the contours of our authenticity, the rhythms of our resilience, the constellation of connections within and between people, teams, organizations, systems, and communities.

At a time when communities around the country are grappling with powerful social, political, and historical forces, these unique and timely projects offer insight into effective ways to cultivate transformational change. While they arose within government, the lessons learned from them apply to a wide range of institutional and collective settings. This report documents the tools, resources, and observations generated by this work,

so that others may learn from them. Once you have had a chance to consider the ideas presented here, please reach out to share your own learning, thoughts, and questions.

About the Projects

SoT and KL are projects of the Creative Strategies Initiative (CSI), a component of RSJI's culture-shift strategy and the outgrowth of a partnership between ARTS and SOCR. CSI builds City employees' capacity for transformational, anti-racist organizing in all areas of government work. Since racial equity and social justice require us to be relational, creative, adaptive, and interconnected, CSI projects position artists, cultural organizers, and healers as designers and leaders of strategies that interrupt structural racism and move the needle toward racial justice. They are also guided by the core tenets of RSJI's Transformational, Anti-Racist Organizing Approach.

RSJI's Transformational, Anti-Racist Organizing Approach

1. **Supports anti-racism as a lived and life-affirming practice** that centers interconnection, collective health and wellbeing, healing, and relationships.

2. **Shifts from knowing what is true to feeling what is true and letting that shape our knowledge,** including through the integration of arts, culture, mindfulness, and embodiment.

3. **Integrates all four levels of racism** (internalized, interpersonal, institutional, and structural), the awareness that white supremacy disembodies and disconnects us, and

> **Since racial equity and social justice require us to be relational, creative, adaptive, and interconnected, our CSI projects position artists, cultural organizers, and healers as designers and leaders of strategies that interrupt structural racism and move the needle toward racial justice.**

practices at the self, team, department, institutional, and structural levels that promote embodiment and connection.[1]

CSI projects use arts, culture, mindfulness, and embodied practices to support strategic racial equity work across City departments, business lines, and issue areas, in relationship with communities most affected by structural racism.[2] CSI applies creative modalities, CSI approaches racial equity work holistically, breaking down silos and transforming institutional culture through transformational, anti-racist experiences,

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1   As Dr. Raúl Quiñones Rosado explains, "…Any integrated approach to integral change requires processes that are simultaneously individual and collective, subjective and objective. These approaches would need to foster the emergence of ever-higher developmental stages along multiple lines in all aspects of being and human activity while also actively challenging current manifestations of institutional and internalized oppression. The creation of actual integral change approaches to individual and collective well-being that is simultaneously liberatory and transformative presents a formidable challenge." (*Consciousness in Action: Toward an Integral Psychology of Liberation and Transformation, 2000*)

2   CSI builds on the work of Paolo Freire (*Pedagogy of the Oppressed,* 1978)—and other activists, practitioners, and scholars—which explains that the struggle for liberation must be led by oppressed people to reclaim their humanity.

policy processes, learning communities, deep listening, out-of-the-box thinking, and developing innovative tools that center the experiences and leadership of BIPOC communities. CSI engages participants as whole people—their bodies, minds, hearts, spirits—and invites them to see and experience themselves, each other, the community, and the Earth as a web of interdependent living systems.

How we make change is an essential element of getting to the change we are trying to make. CSI recognizes that building racial equity is a creative and relational process that requires work within individuals and teams, as well as on organizational culture, practices, and policies, to support institutional and structural change.

Core CSI Project Elements
- **Arts**
- **Culture**
- **Mindfulness**
- **Embodied practices**
- **Community partnership**
- **Holistic approach**
- **Breaking down silos**
- **Transforming institutional culture**

> **How we make change is an essential element of getting to the change we are trying to make.**

The Shape of Trust

In 2017, staff from ARTS, SOCR, and SHR began exploring ways that arts experiences could shift workplace culture away from the white-dominant behaviors and expectations that promote racism and other forms of oppression toward ones that foster connection, authentic relationship, and belonging—while matching practices and processes with stated values and

outcomes. How can visual arts, theater, music, movement, and mindfulness help cultivate these changes? How can we better understand the power dynamics of race, gender, and other identities and use that knowledge to foster a greater sense of racial equity in our workplace relationships, environment, and how we engage the community?

THE SHAPE OF TRUST PERFORMANCE

In 2017, ARTS staff worked with acclaimed playwright Sara Porkalob to produce *Real Talk*, an original performance inspired by a project by Arts Workers for Equity in Portland, Ore. *Real Talk* presented stories from people of color working in arts organizations in the Seattle area.

Inspired by *Real Talk,* the City engaged with Porkalob to create a second performance: *The Shape of Trust.* The scripted work wove together stories from City employees, particularly women of color. *The Shape of Trust* revealed patterns of struggle and strategy, disconnection and collaboration, leadership and change. The stories it told

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>
> How can we better understand the power dynamics of race, gender, and other identities and use that knowledge to foster a greater sense of racial equity in our workplace relationships, environment, and how we engage the community?

showed how what's real and what's possible depends on institutional culture and fertile conditions—the ways of being, practices, and patterns that uphold our decision-making and policy processes. It demonstrated how we either consciously work together to create a culture of racial equity and belonging or we inadvertently reinforce an institutional culture that maintains the larger system of white supremacy and white supremacy culture.

In partnership with ACT Theatre, Langston Hughes Performing Arts Institute, and Benaroya Hall, *The Shape of Trust* debuted on three Seattle stages, reaching a total audience of more than 1,200 people. It featured performers Monique Aldred, Tricia Castañeda-Gonzales, Christi Cruz, Anasofia Gallegos, Aishé Keita, Ayo Tushinde, and Nina Williams-Teramachi. In addition, a video of the performance and accompanying facilitation guide became available as **a free public resource** in September 2021.

SoT PILOT COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

The Shape of Trust performance sowed the seeds from which the full SoT project would grow. The second phase of the project launched the SoT Pilot Community of Practice, co-designed and delivered by a

team of women, mostly women of color, all of whom have extensive experience working with and within government and several of whom are also artists, organizers, and healers in their communities. In 2019, when one of the original facilitators changed her role with the City, the SoT team needed to bring on someone who shared the vision they had been forming. They ultimately hired Sonali Sangeeta Balajee, founder of Our Bodhi Project, a spiritual and political organizing project that creates meaningful learning spaces and develops antidotal strategies for healing and liberation within living systems. Bodhi's spiritual basis derives from "spir" as the root word for breath and recognizes both the intrinsic human yearning for wholeness and our desire to make meaning collectively. Its political basis is rooted in considerations of power in today's culture, and the need for people to come together by creating "power with" one another, rather than divide one another with "power over." Bodhi's approach addresses the places where systems reward us for disconnecting from each other and from ourselves—and helps us to connect instead.

The SoT curriculum integrated Bodhi's **Embodying Belonging and Coliberation Frame**, which focuses on collective health and wellbeing using five guideposts to engage critical analysis, reflection, practice, and strategy:

- **Beloved** examines values, such as what you love, hold sacred, want to protect, and what is interconnected

- **Bestill** teaches practices for centering,

pausing, reflecting, resting, and spending time with other living systems

- **Behold** focuses on seeing clearly—emotionally, politically, and spiritually—and holding the whole

- **Believe** interrupts and questions our conditions, emphasizing multiple ways of knowing and being

- **Becoming** builds power via relationship while rooted in what is Beloved, releases what is no longer serving us collectively, and chooses value-driven actions that center collective health

SoT aimed to root anti-racism work in the undeniable reality of our interdependence, collective health, creativity, and drive to belong by cultivating the inherent power of the people who participated. It encouraged them to center transformational anti-racism as a regular practice and a way of being throughout their work. And it provided them

with tools to help them lead holistically—connected to mind, body, spirit, creativity, culture, and community.

As a multi-racial learning environment, the pilot built meaning and skills across five essential and interwoven components of racial equity, social justice, and belonging:

- **Self & Society,** in particular power, racism and other forms of oppression, and positionality

- **Creativity & Interconnection,** in particular the ecosystemic relationship between all living systems, human and non-human, as well as with spirit, and maintaining connection through conflict

- **Wellbeing,** in particular personal and collective trauma, resilience and care, noticing and interrupting auto-responses, and mind-body-spirit connection

- **Institutions & Systems,** in particular living systems, the web of interconnection and wellbeing, the web of structural racism and oppression, history, relational culture, white supremacy culture, racial and organizational hierarchies, and policy

- **Advocacy & Action,** in particular transformational, anti-racist organizing within institutions, roles as agents and targets of oppression, countering resistance, sharing struggle and vision, and the purpose and use of voluntary, optional racial caucusing

Originally designed as a four-month, in-person intensive that would kick off in March 2020, the Pilot Community of Practice cohort brought together a multi-racial cohort of 24 supervisors, managers, and HR advisers from various City departments. The learning experience was designed to increase awareness, knowledge, and application of anti-racism principles and practices in the workplace.

When COVID-19 led the City to adopt a telecommuting policy for everyone other than essential and frontline workers, facilitators quickly adapted the project to be virtual. Sessions began in March 2020 and ended in March 2021. The cohort ultimately met 18 times for 39.5 hours in a mix of full-cohort, partial cohort, and voluntary, optional racial caucus spaces. In addition, partial cohort sessions occurred twice to allow all members to participate in more intimate groups.

By September, the challenging circumstances of 2020 and various personal issues among participants caused attendance to drop. From that point forward, to continue to be responsive to participants' evolving needs, facilitators no longer required attendance at every session, instead encouraging cohort members to plan as much as possible to increase their chances of attending.

Out of 24 selected applicants, three were immediately redeployed to support the COVID-19 response work at the start of the pandemic, and 21 began the cohort online on March 26, 2020. Of these, 16 completed nearly all SoT sessions with 75% or greater attendance. Eleven completed both the sessions and final assignment, a presentation to their stakeholders: those they supervise, manage or advise on HR matters, and those who supervise or mentor them.

SoT CURRICULUM

Contributors, designers, and facilitators of the Pilot Community of Practice included artists, cultural organizers, and healers who work in various settings, all of them with experience in institutional racial equity initiatives. Together, they created a curriculum for the cohort that brought together elements of arts, culture, mindfulness, and embodiment as vehicles for learning and practices to support supervision, management, and decision-making.

Facilitators fostered authentic connections among participants throughout the project by listening deeply and holding space for individual and shared healing, growth, and

How to Build a Relational Culture
- **Strengthening Bonds**
- **Developing shared language and practices**
- **Expressing care and trust**
- **Growing a sense of belonging**
- **Networking beyond the capacity-building sessions**
- **Increasing individual and collective accountability**

> **Unique SoT Curriculum Strengths**
> - **Application to real-time work issues**
> - **Iterative, circular learning processes**
> - **Tailoring to neuro-diverse learners**
> - **Creative arts-based teaching**
> - **Trauma-informed and secular mindful practice**
> - **Elevating the wisdom of holistic, culturally relevant medicinal teaching**

transformation.[3] In addition, they prioritized building a relational culture by strengthening bonds, developing shared language and practices, expressing care and trust, growing a sense of belonging, networking beyond the capacity-building sessions, and increasing individual and collective accountability.

As opposed to the dominant institutional culture that is *transactional* and reinforces the system of white supremacy, this *relational* culture created a transformational learning environment where deep individual and collective exploration and learning could occur. However, the sociopolitical stress of the times and the need to deliver the project sessions online inhibited the cohort's ability to fully realize this culture as a group.

The curriculum was designed to support participants in their real-time workplace situations, giving them ample space to talk about challenges and tell stories from their own experiences in breakout rooms, "pair shares," and smaller group sessions. The curriculum also consistently used iterative, circular learning processes, offering multiple opportunities to revisit

the content and engage with practices and processes over time. In addition, it provided activities tailored to neuro-diverse learners, such as arts-based engagement, somatic experiences, secular mindfulness practice, individual reflection, small- and large-group interactions, didactic learning, and more. Audio, visual, and kinetic elements were incorporated into all sessions. Trauma-informed practices were also consistently used as a tool to help participants regulate their nervous systems and to gain an understanding of the embodied links between trauma and transformational, anti-racist practice. The curriculum also tapped into the wisdom of holistic, culturally relevant, medicinal teaching, such as grounding practices, to guide participants through emergent needs and challenges in their supervision, management, and advising. This fostered and accelerated individual and group learning, healing, and co-creation in supervisory relationships and on teams.

Below are a few example elements highlighting strengths of the SOT curriculum:

APPLICATION TO REAL-TIME WORK ISSUES

- A handout about the 10 RSJI Truths and an exploration of how to bring them into supervisory, management, and HR advising relationships/roles

- A panel of BIPOC women supervisors talking about how they center transformational, anti-racist organizing in their work, especially in supervision, management, and HR advising

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3   Hubl, T. Healing Collective Trauma: A Process for Integrating our Intergenerational and Cultural Wounds. Boulder, CO: Sounds True, 2020.

- A final presentation on what they learned in the cohort, how it changed them personally, how they are committed to bringing it to their work and to being accountable to those they supervise, manage, and advise

CREATIVE, ARTS-BASED TEACHING

- Artwork from the City of Seattle Civic Art Collection illustrated concepts, paired with personal and group activities supporting racial equity and social justice as a practice

- Homework assignments that included photography, creative writing, drawing, and reflective writing

TAILORING TO NEURO-DIVERSE LEARNERS

- Written, visual, and auditory content contrasting relational culture practices with those that promote white supremacy culture

TRAUMA-INFORMED AND SECULAR MINDFUL PRACTICE

- Exercises that taught participants to regulate both the individual nervous system and the collective nervous system,[4] and understand the connections between individual nervous systems are part of a network or community

- Exercises that helped participants recognize their own thoughts, emotions, and bodily sensations, and ultimately cultivate trust in themselves

- Centering activities that used breathwork, writing, drawing, stretching, etc.

HOLISTIC, CULTURALLY RELEVANT MEDICINAL TEACHING

- A writing activity to explore tensions in their work related to the Beloved and Bestill concepts from Our Bodhi Project

- A guided visualization and drawing activity related to the Bodhi Frame about connecting with a living system that you love and imagining it at-ease and in-balance

DEEPER DIVE FLOW

THE SHAPE OF TRUST PROJECT OUTCOMES
Overall outcomes and learning outcome areas

MINDFUL BODY PRACTICE USING BELOVED & BESTILL
Seeing the whole, body as metaphor; sending care in four directions

WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT HOW TO BUILD RACIAL EQUITY & SOCIAL JUSTICE?
- *Breakout groups and whole group*
- *Transactional v. transformational approaches to learning and application; diagramming activity*

REVIEW HOMEWORK

Pictured is a sample slide from the SoT curriculum.

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4   Hubl, T. Healing Collective Trauma: A Process for Integrating our Intergenerational and Cultural Wounds. Boulder, CO: Sounds True, 2020.

SoT LOGIC MODEL

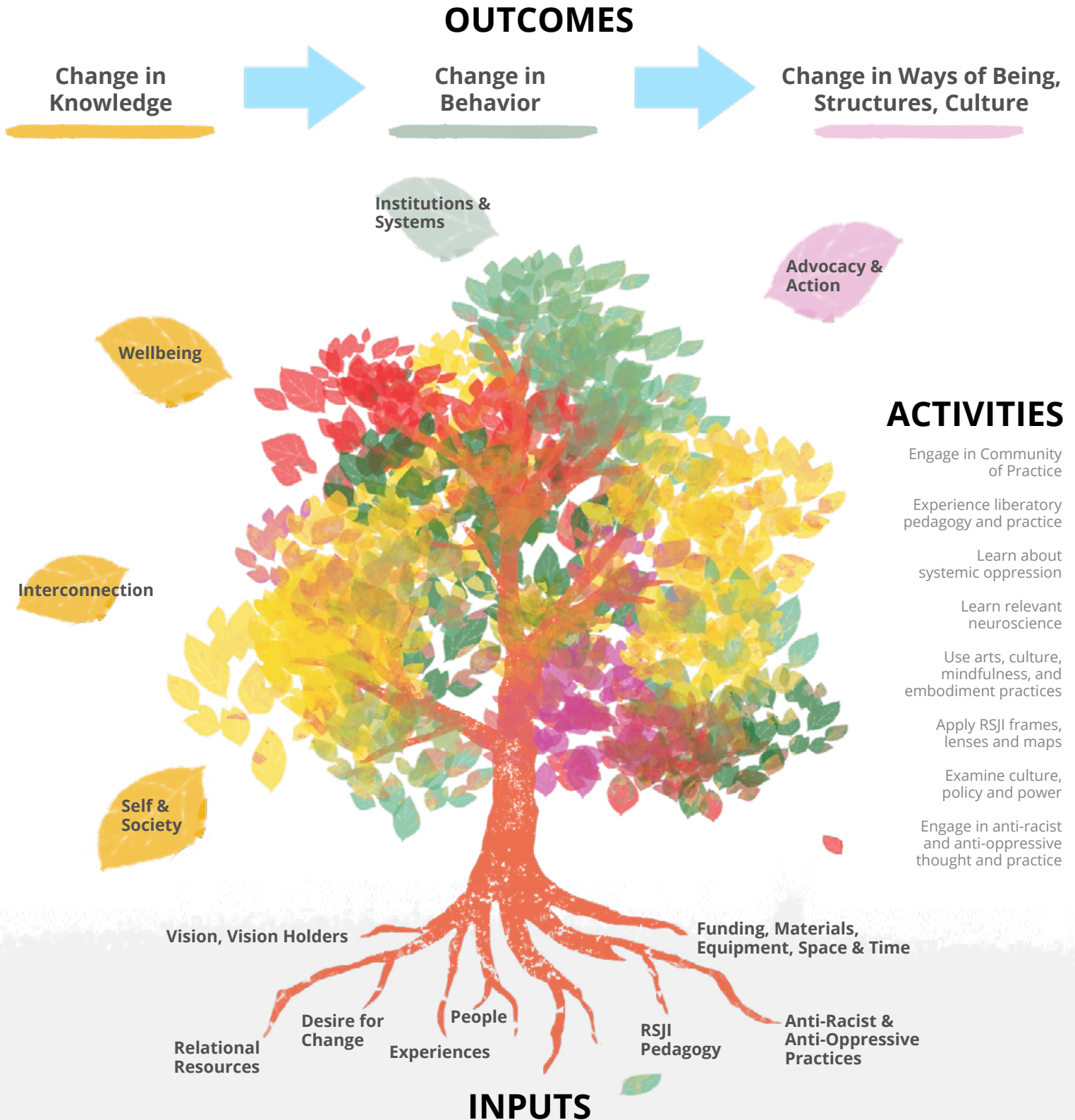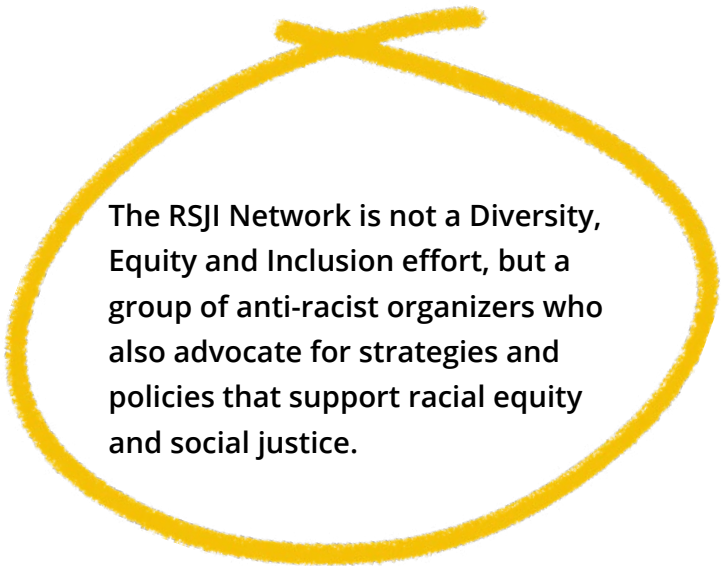The project team iteratively developed a logic model to guide the SoT evaluation, mapping the project's inputs, required resources, activities, tangible outputs, and multilevel outcomes in knowledge, behavior, and work culture. The model itself reflects a transformational, rather than transactional, approach, particularly in its inputs which are centered largely on lived experiences, practices, and orientations to the change found in more traditional logic models.

OUTCOMES

Change in Knowledge → **Change in Behavior** → **Change in Ways of Being, Structures, Culture**

Institutions & Systems

Advocacy & Action

Wellbeing

Interconnection

Self & Society

ACTIVITIES

Engage in Community of Practice

Experience liberatory pedagogy and practice

Learn about systemic oppression

Learn relevant neuroscience

Use arts, culture, mindfulness, and embodiment practices

Apply RSJI frames, lenses and maps

Examine culture, policy and power

Engage in anti-racist and anti-oppressive thought and practice

Vision, Vision Holders

Funding, Materials, Equipment, Space & Time

Desire for Change

People

RSJI Pedagogy

Anti-Racist & Anti-Oppressive Practices

Relational Resources

Experiences

INPUTS

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Key Leaders

The project team initially had planned to create an on-demand video series of some of the SoT curriculum for use by change teams, interdepartmental teams, and other groups within the Citywide RSJI Network. But as the pandemic worsened and the racial uprisings began, these employees, like the community at large, were going through significant trauma and pain. They needed a space within City government where they could experience collective care, helping one another remain healthy in their jobs. In this profound moment, a transformational approach became essential. To move the needle toward racial equity at all, a project would need to support members of the Citywide RSJI Network as whole people.

Members of the Network were already organizing to support both the internal City employee community and the community at large, especially BIPOC, as they navigated and sought to eliminate the structural violence of COVID-19, while also advocating for transformation in all aspects of community health and wellbeing, including public safety and policing. Thus, the RSJI Strategy Team (based at SOCR) and SoT project team set out to deepen the organizing capacity of the Network. Live, virtual, relational learning would create greater alignment across the Network and increase its collective ability. It would also make it clear that the RSJI Network is not a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion effort, but a group of anti-racist organizers who also advocate for strategies and policies that support racial equity and

> The RSJI Network is not a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion effort, but a group of anti-racist organizers who also advocate for strategies and policies that support racial equity and social justice.

social justice. The team moved quickly: Three months into SoT, staff redirected resources to create KL, and the new series launched three months later.

KL focused on transformational, anti-racist organizing, offering an in-depth and intermediate/advanced series of capacity-building experiences for a large multiracial group: 120 City employees who held key RSJI-related roles across departments. KL participants included members of departments' RSJI change teams, people holding designated equity positions, representatives of the Learning and Development and Workforce Equity Teams based at SHR, members of past and present RSJI City Organizers for Racial Equity (CORE) Teams, departmental caucus facilitators, and others. The intended KL outcomes are outlined below.

INTENDED KL OUTCOMES

- Develop a shared, basic foundation (frameworks, language, understanding, skills, and practices) for transformational, anti-racist organizing within and through the City, and understand it based on social positionality, positioning with the institutional hierarchy, and specific job functions.

- Align with other key leaders in the City and develop skills to better align their departments with an overall vision and practice of transformational, anti-racist organizing.

- Become empowered to move departments toward transformational, anti-racist practices and outcomes based on an understanding of their roles within the collective that is the Citywide RSJI Network and in accordance with the Anti-Racist Principles and RSJI Strategic Plan.

- Understand how the RSJI Strategy Team at SOCR continues to design RSJI strategy and content, supporting RSJI efforts across the City.

- Experience interconnection, health, wellbeing, arts, culture, mindfulness, and embodiment as fundamental aspects of transformational, anti-racist organizing and feel better able to weave these into their RSJI work.

- Offer transformational, anti-racist organizing content to embed throughout RSJI capacity-building efforts offered to all City employees and onboard future key leaders. Capacities developed included daily anti-racist practices, frameworks, tools, and practices to embed racial justice into leaders' jobs.

- Deepen understanding of the approach and hone collective ability to apply it through feedback from participating key leaders.

The development of KL benefited greatly from what the project's designers and facilitators learned during the first six months of the SoT cohort. By the time KL formed, they had a far better understanding of an online facilitation format and ways to adapt to the challenging circumstances of the time. They knew better how to time and space meetings, anticipate and overcome barriers, include participants with a wide range of race and social justice experiences, and more. Because KL and SoT overlapped for several months, the final months of SoT also benefitted from work created for KL. For example, the anti-racist organizing approach facilitators had distilled into a shareable handout for KL was also applied to some of the final SoT curriculum. Thus, the SoT and KL projects were mutually reinforcing, pointing to the value of developing and offering concurrent, complementary anti-racist projects to meet emergent needs in local government spaces.

KL CURRICULUM

For KL, the project's designers and facilitators repurposed and iterated on the SoT curriculum and other existing race and social justice curricula and developed several new activities and tools. Like SoT, KL sessions included breakouts in pairs and small groups, drawing and writing, somatic experiences like body check-ins and personal centering, reflective questions, as well as applying teachings to participants' current organizing context. Also, like SoT, KL used the Building a Relational Culture framework and imagery from the City's Civic Art Collection, but unlike

SoT did not assign regular homework to make participation more manageable.

Other elements of the KL curriculum emphasized the following:

- Differences between prejudice, discrimination, and oppression

- Four types of racism and oppression

- Differences between diversity, access, inclusion, equity, anti-racism, and decolonization

- Five types of power: personal, collective, institutional, hierarchical positional, and social positional

- Using a covenant, rather than a group agreement, to pledge how a group will behave and treat each other

- The history of RSJI and the path to its culture-shift strategy

- What it means to be a transformational, anti-racist organizer

- The People's Institute for Survival and Beyond (PISAB) Anti-Racist Principles and the history of PISAB organizing within the City of Seattle government

- The racial hierarchy and anti-Blackness

- Internalized racial oppression (internalized racial inferiority and internalized racial superiority)

- The role of government in building racial justice and our five spheres of influence: City internal, City-funded, other institutions, community members, and community-led organizing and racial justice campaigns

Facilitators delivered a total of seven modules, five of which were four hours long. (The first module was only three hours long, and the sixth module, which focused on the Our Bodhi Project Frame, was only 2.5 hours long.) Each module was offered at least twice, so members of the cohort could choose which worked best for their schedules. Participants also were invited to attend two voluntary, optional racial caucuses. Two of the seven modules were self-guided and used handouts. An eighth module was cancelled, as it was scheduled to take place days after the insurrection at the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021, and during a week when participants were all expected at a three-day RSJI Summit. This is one example of the ways in which the KL facilitators applied anti-racist principles by bring responsive to emergent events and the needs of the participants.

Evaluation Approach

Impact evaluations of race and social justice capacity-building experiences have demonstrated anecdotal success in increasing knowledge and shifting behaviors among City employees in the past. But there is no precedent—and therefore no prior evidence—for the success of projects like SoT and KL. Given the unique nature of these capacity-building experiences, a newly formalized methodology was used to evaluate them using equity-centered, anti-racist principles and approaches that aligned with the projects assessed.

Transformative Evaluation, a new approach developed and trademarked by Dr. Naranjo-Rivera, evolves traditional evaluation methods typically used by government and other institutions. Unlike traditional evaluation methods, however, it embodies equity and coliberation, interrupting colonizing and oppressive power dynamics and practices of elevating/relegating certain voices and information. Transformative Evaluation is inherently developmental in nature and tailored to complex and changing environments to provide continuous feedback. It is intended to be used with particularly innovative and adaptive programs like SoT and KL, iteratively surface issues and insights, and track developments and changes in processes and impacts.[5]

Transformative Evaluation is based on the Radical Indigenous and Transformative Evaluation and Storytelling (RITES) framework, which tells the story of a project and measures its impacts using methods grounded in world Indigenous and POC-based ways of knowing and valuing. This made the RITES framework well suited to assess SoT and KL and their approach to using arts, culture, mindfulness, and embodiment to build transformational, anti-racist capacity among City staff.

RITES uses the "4 R's" tenets, which were developed for research procedures in Indigenous contexts, but is also suggested for more equitable and transformative evaluation and programming efforts:[6]

- **Respect** for diverse individual, cultural, and community knowledge and values

- **Relevance** to community and cultural needs and experiences, defined co-creatively

- **Reciprocity,** continuously ensuring mutual benefit between the community and evaluator(s)

- **Responsibility** by the evaluator(s) to empower, engage with, and consider the community

5   www.betterevaluation.org/en/plan/approach/developmental_evaluation

6   National Collaborating Centre for Aboriginal Health. (2013) Indigenous Approaches to Program Evaluation. Website: www.ccnsa-nccah.ca/docs/context/FS-IndigenousApproachesProgramEvaluation-EN.pdf.

5 Pillars of RITES: Radical Indigenous and Transformative Evaluation and Storytelling	
The 4 R's[7]	We center the 4 R's—respect, relevance, reciprocity, and responsibility—to empower and engage communities, responding to their needs, experiences, knowledge, and values.
Community-based participatory evaluation (CBPE)	We use CBPE to emphasize participation and action: "Communities of inquiry and action evolve and address questions and issues that are significant for those who participate as co-researchers/evaluators".[8] We use community participation to advance equity, and as we evaluate, experimentation, and action are grounded in experience and social history.
Developmental Evaluation	We provide continuous feedback for novel projects in complex and changing environments, which drives innovation and strategic learning. It is also used to frame concepts, map processes, surface issues and insights, and track developments and changes/effects.[9]
Mixed methods	We triangulate quantitative, qualitative, and non-traditional data to arrive at a richer understanding of project/program processes and impacts.
Transformative & liberatory Methods	Transformative & liberatory methods We use methods that value and include a broad array of sources and types of knowledge and information. We are intentional about making explicit and interrupting oppressive assumptions, practices, and systems, and promote healing and decolonizing. This includes using pancultural and global Indigenous traditions to reimagine traditional methods.

7   R. Quiñones Rosado, Consciousness in Action: Toward an Integral Psychology of Liberation and Transformation, 2000.

8   Reason P. and Bradbury, H. (2008) (eds) The Sage Handbook of Action Research: Participative Inquiry and Practice. Sage, CA.

9   www.betterevaluation.org/en/plan/approach/developmental_evaluation

Rather than relying on a nonrepresentative outside expert for assessment, Transformative Evaluation involves the expertise of diverse stakeholders in the evaluation process itself—ultimately revealing a richer and more comprehensive picture through a plurality of perspectives and reducing researcher bias. It typically involves a representative Guiding Council that helps to develop evaluation tools, make meaning of data, and decide how findings will be shared. Given the numerous constraints, changes, and challenges that arose during the delivery of SoT and KL, convening a full Guiding Council was not possible. Instead, a small, diverse evaluation team participated in different aspects of the project; its members represented multiple genders, races, ages, roles in the projects, City of Seattle departments, the founder of Our Bodhi Project, and evaluation experts from Constellation Consulting LLC (Dr. Naranjo-Rivera's organization) and Race Forward. The SoT and KL project teams worked with Dr. Naranjo-Rivera to provide input and edits to data collection tools, review and help to make meaning of data, and co-create the data sharing plan. Race Forward provided key guidance at the start of the process and in the editing of this report.

The Transformative Evaluation of SoT and KL provided a process and outcome evaluation. It was designed to assess implementation, including fidelity (whether the curriculum content was delivered as designed), reach (extent of participation), contextual factors (e.g., current events, organizational support, changes to work duties, etc.), and participant experience (strengths, challenges, and other

perspectives on one's learning experience)[10]. Additionally, it examined whether short-, mid-, and long-term outcome changes in anti-racist knowledge, practices, and workplace environment occurred. This examination included both inductive and deductive analysis to both allow for assessment based on pre-determined categories, themes, or focal areas, and also leave room for themes to emerge organically.

Dr. Naranjo-Rivera conducted the evaluation in consultation with an evaluation team. The assessment included a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods: Survey data were analyzed and summarized in text, tables, and graphs. Storytelling Session and Circle transcripts were analyzed using axial and thematic coding. Key themes and quotes were then organized into matrices and examined for patterns. Observation findings were synthesized according to reach, fidelity, contextual factors, and participant experience. Finally, project documents, notes, and artifacts were also assessed using thematic analysis.

While traditional evaluation sometimes uses mixed methods like these, the qualitative is often valued less than the quantitative, an emphasis that literally disembodies individuals, their stories, and their voices. By contrast, this Transformative Evaluation not only heavily incorporated qualitative data, it held space for people to share in culturally relevant ways that suited their experiences.

10   Linnan L, Steckler A. Process Evaluation for Public Health Interventions and Research. An Overview. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass/John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2002.

The Sphere of Human Activity
(Recreated from Dr. Rosado, 2007; Adapted from Bopp et al, 1984/1986)

With such new anti-racism capacity-building efforts during an extraordinary moment in U.S. history, this evaluation also helps to tell the story of how programs unfolded, providing developmental insights into emergent process and providing best practices and lessons learned.

Foundational Analytical Framework Underpinning the Evaluation[11]

Dr. Raul Quiñones Rosado's Consciousness-in-Action model and the Lakota Medicine Wheel provided the foundational analytical framework for the evaluation of this work. The Medicine Wheel is a holistic paradigm used to understand all that exists, analyze phenomena, and guide thought and action. It is comprised of four multilevel circles that represent the individual, family or clan (or in a work context, a division or department), the community, and the wider world.
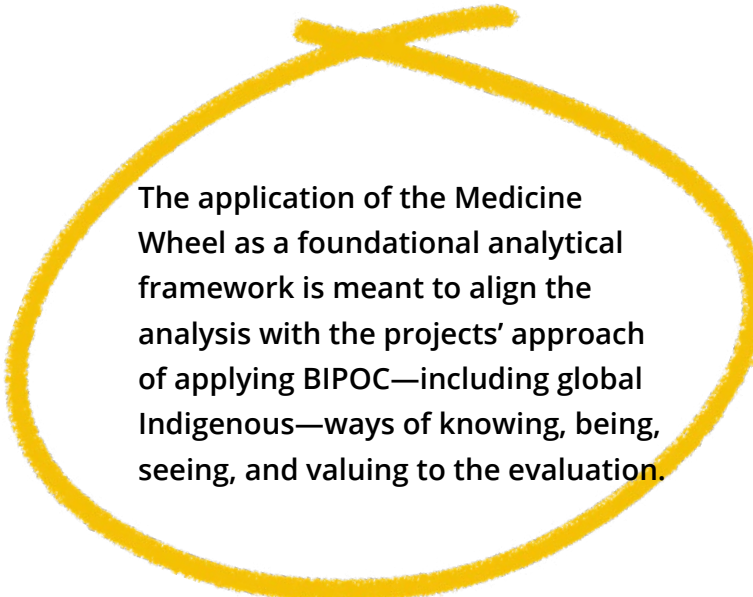
This model was apt for the SoT and KL evaluation as the projects aimed to engage participants at multiple levels and in all four aspects of individual and collective knowledge and behavior—emotional/ social, physical/economic, mental/political, spiritual/cultural—and intentionally offered opportunities to shift consciousness and will. This model is also echoed in the spiritual-political grounding orientation and practices of Our Bodhi Project that heavily influenced

the overall approach, content, and facilitation for both SoT and KL.

The application of the Medicine Wheel as a foundational analytical framework is meant to align the analysis with the projects' approach of applying BIPOC—including global Indigenous—ways of knowing, being, seeing, and valuing to the evaluation. It provides a conceptual framework that considers shifts in consciousness and will (which maps to knowledge/ awareness and behavior in the logic model), individual- and collective-level changes, and multiple dimensions that are often overlooked. This foundational framework is being applied as an alternative to standard reports that often fail to explicitly use foundational conceptual models, account for multilevel layers of complexity (e.g., exclusion of spirit, hyperfocus on the individual, etc.), or explain the underlying mechanisms believed to drive changes in knowledge, behavior, and organizational policies, processes, and culture.

11   Quiñones Rosado R. Consciousness-in-Action: Toward an Integral Psychology of Liberation and Transformation. Caguas, Puerto Rico: ilé Publications, 2007.

> The application of the Medicine Wheel as a foundational analytical framework is meant to align the analysis with the projects' approach of applying BIPOC—including global Indigenous—ways of knowing, being, seeing, and valuing to the evaluation.

Evaluation Methods

Both an outcome evaluation (assessing what changed) and a process evaluation (examining how and why changes did or did not happen) were conducted to determine what changes in knowledge, behavior, and workplace environment and culture occurred. For SoT, the Logic Model guided the SoT outcome evaluation, which tested and led to refinements of the logic model. The KL evaluation was not guided by a logic model, and was more summative.

The evaluation included several mini-surveys (SoT only) and a post-survey, in-depth interviews with facilitators (Storytelling Sessions), focus group discussions with participants (Storytelling Circles), evaluator observations, and review of project documents and non-traditional data. Non-traditional data included program documents such as participant applications; presentation slides, handouts, and other curricular materials; videos, art, and writing from activities; screenshots from Zoom sessions; emails from participants and facilitators; and more. Surveys and focus groups asked about what content was most and least useful, participant experience with content delivery, and suggestions for improvement.

The external lead evaluator developed these tools iteratively and in collaboration with the project team at the City. She also conducted the interviews, focus groups, and 17 observations, in addition to collecting and synthesizing the quantitative data. An external editor further distilled the evaluation findings for this report's broad readership.

SURVEYS

Mini feedback surveys consisted of four to five questions and were designed to take 5–10 minutes to complete. Post-surveys included 20–25 questions divided into three sections: participant characteristics, core questions about the capacity-building experiences, and suggestions and next steps. The survey was administered electronically via Google forms, and participant IDs were provided to enhance privacy and confidentiality. Many survey questions were drawn from leading surveys, such as the TOCAR Racial Equity Climate Survey, and questions refined through racial equity work with local U.S. governmental entities. Survey data were analyzed and summarized in text, tables, and graphs.

INTERVIEWS AND FOCUS GROUPS

Both interviews and focus groups used semi-structured interview guides co-designed by the evaluation team. Interviews and focus groups were conducted to gather in-depth information about the following:

1. Motivations for creating or participating in SoT and KL
2. Prior experience in race and social

justice capacity-building and work

3. Changes experienced as a result of the projects
4. Barriers and enablers to the learning process
5. Recommended changes and other insights informing lessons learned and best practices

Purposive and snowball sampling were used to recruit facilitators and participants for interviews and focus groups. Purposive sampling is a form of sampling in which researchers rely on their best judgment to choose people with specific knowledge or experiences to participate. Snowball sampling involves researchers using information gained in interviews and focus groups—often explicit recommendations of other people to include—to invite others to participate in additional interviews and focus groups. Project facilitators participated in four in-depth interviews, and SoT and KL participants were invited to participate in a total of eight focus groups (four for each project).

Participants were led through consenting processes and, with permission granted, audio recordings and transcripts were made using Otter.ai online software for analysis purposes. The researcher also took detailed handwritten notes and engaged in generative scribing during each interview and focus group.[12] Personally identifiable information was removed and findings were reported back in summary form

to enhance confidentiality. Storytelling Sessions and Storytelling Circle transcripts were analyzed using axial and thematic coding (performed with Atlas.ti 8 software). Key themes and quotes were organized into matrices and examined for patterns. Memoing, a process of recording reflective notes to make meaning of qualitative data, was used throughout the analysis to develop and capture cross-cutting findings. Key insights from qualitative data were also triangulated with quantitative and non-traditional data sources. As explained in the SAGE Encyclopedia of Qualitative Research Methods, "Memoing adds to the credibility and trustworthiness of qualitative research and provides a record of the meanings derived from the data."[13]

OBSERVATIONS

A total of 40% of the SoT sessions were observed by the lead evaluator, with two City employees providing additional observation notes for several sessions. A total of 25% of the KL sessions were observed by the evaluator. Observations were conducted using an observation checklist, supplemented with field notes, to determine what changes in knowledge, behavior, and workplace environment and culture occurred. Observation findings were synthesized according to reach, fidelity, contextual factors, and participant experience.

12   Bird K. Generative Scribing: A Social Art of the 21st Century. Cambridge, MA: PI (Presencing Institute) Press, 2018.

13   Given L. The SAGE Encyclopedia of Qualitative Research Methods. 2008. Website: https://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781412963909.n260.

TRANSFORMATIVE EVALUATION METHODS SUMMARY

Method	SoT		KL		Participant Description
	# Performed	# Participants	# Performed	# Participants	
Mini feedback surveys	8	22	–	–	Cohort participants
Post-survey	1	6	1	25	Cohort participants
Storytelling Sessions	2	2	3	3	Project facilitators & co-designers
Storytelling Circles	2	9	4	39	Cohort participants
Observations	15	24	2	45	Cohort participants
Total (non-duplicate)	–	**24**	–	**78**	Cohort participants, co-designers & facilitators

Context: COVID-19 and Racial Uprisings

SoT and KL faced several significant challenges as they unfolded: the COVID-19 pandemic, Black-led racial uprisings catalyzed by the murder of George Floyd, wildfires and climate chaos, a highly polarized presidential election, the rise of white nationalist ideology and violence, a spike in violence against Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, efforts to disrupt anti-racism teaching and learning, and insurrection at the U.S. Capitol. Together these factors created significant social, political, cultural, and economic strains and changes for both participants and facilitators, significantly impacting both the nature of their City jobs and the SoT and KL learning experiences.

Engagement flagged as participants navigated these circumstances and more. Between June and September 2020, BIPOC participation in the SoT cohort fell: two BIPOC resigned from their City jobs, one was terminated, one was promoted into a new management role that no longer afforded them time to participate, and three were pulled into emergent job demands that prevented them from regular participation. All of this significantly affected the dynamic of the cohort, which went from a largely BIPOC-space (with two thirds of the cohort BIPOC and only one third white), to a smaller space in which closer to half of participants were white. Notably, no white participants had circumstances that stopped them

from participating. White participants also expressed feeling a need to complete the pilot Community of Practice as part of their accountability to BIPOC, including those they supervised, managed and advised. For KL, roughly 70 people attended all the way through the last couple of sessions. Compared with SoT, this stronger attendance could reflect several factors, including motivation of participants, who already identified as leaders within the RSJI Network and lessons learned by project staff during SoT about how to keep people engaged, despite the virtual format.

EFFECTS OF CONTEXTUAL FACTORS ON PARTICIPANTS

Racial inequities pervaded all of these events and experiences and their impacts on BIPOC participants in SoT were noticeably more intense. Multiple BIPOC participants in the cohort lost family members to COVID-19 and were unable to grieve communally, and Black participants, in particular, experienced the effects of police violence. "There has been a lot going on and it has been a little exhausting," a BIPOC male SoT participant shared, explaining that he didn't have "enough time and also energy to dedicate towards Shape of Trust because of everything that's going on. Things are changing not only in my workplace but in my personal world and the world outside of me." Others in SoT cited spikes in work responsibilities, emotional load, and other logistical challenges as reasons they were no longer able to participate. One BIPOC female SoT participant explained, "I sought to keep an open mind to the radical changes in the

timeline and structure compared to what I signed up for, and nevertheless became somewhat frustrated and disengaged over time."

The circumstances surrounding SoT and KL made it hard for some participants to engage, but it also gave urgency and new relevance to the learning experience. "SoT became a space for us to learn and process the inequities playing out in the pandemic," one mixed-race white- and BIPOC-identified female participant said. A SoT BIPOC female participant likewise highlighted the relevance of the experience as inequities rose. "We are all in a place of deep concern about the impact COVID-19 will have on communities of color and...excited to learn about leading through a racial equity lens," she said. These findings point to the power of the SoT and KL projects to support people in processing along collective dimensions of the Medicine Wheel (political, cultural, social, and economic).

The virtual learning environment also presented various complications, especially for SoT participants who initially joined their learning cohort expecting an in-person experience. Some participants in SoT and KL turned their cameras off for prolonged periods. One BIPOC female participant in KL observed that virtual calls at the City often magnify the inequitable degree to which white colleagues disproportionately speak and are called on by supervisors over BIPOC. (Aware of this dynamic, KL and SoT facilitators ensured that white voices did not dominate.) Some SoT participants also valued the practices they were learning that

they could bring to the virtual spaces they managed to promote health and wellbeing on their teams. "I would like to guide my [full-time staff] through the breathing exercises and techniques through Zoom," a Latinx male participant said, "because this would help my diverse...remote workforce who are affected by calamities."

Despite the challenges of complex times, project facilitators chose to continue offering these anti-racist educational experiences, adapting again and again to meet changes in human and institutional needs. Both participants and facilitators consistently emphasized how helpful it was to have space, skillful guides, and a cohort to move through difficult experiences together—making meaning, learning, and practicing skills to process trauma and grow their capacities for anti-racist organizing. Many participants also expressed appreciation for the facilitators' willingness and skill in adapting content to help meet participants in moments of great upheaval and change, including shortening the sessions to avoid virtual meeting fatigue.

EVALUATION LIMITATIONS

Based on the contextual factors affecting the development and delivery of both SoT and KL, the evaluation effort faced the following limitations.

- **Using a small, diverse evaluation team to provide input on the Transformative Evaluation, rather than a full Guiding Council as originally planned.** A small guiding group was used instead of a more robust, representative Guiding Council to shape assessment tools, make meaning of data, and decide how the data was shared.

- **Limited quantitative and baseline data.** The facilitators opted to do a shorter series of surveys to iteratively adapt the project, instead of the larger pre-survey that was originally planned.

- **Attrition and flagging participation.** Over time cohort participants and a member of the evaluation guiding group left the project. The loss of participants impacts the perspectives reflected in findings, making them not fully representative of the full initial cohort. However, contextual factors help to explain attrition.

- **KL respondents were much more seasoned and provided robust and nuanced responses compared to their SoT counterparts.**

- **Changing evaluation design in response to changing project design.** The evaluation design and scope changed frequently in response to project design adaptations. The developmental evaluation approach did allow for accommodation of the shifting nature of the project in many respects.

- **Limited communication to solicit focus group participation and time conflicts.** Due to the demands of schedules and time limitations of the

evaluator, communication to solicit focus group participation was limited. This impacted overall outreach and participation of program responses.

About the Participants

SoT COHORT

In addition to facilitating the cohort and designing the project's curriculum, staff from ARTS, SHR, and SOCR helped recruit and select participants, seeking out a mix of racial and gender identities, representation of many City departments, and various levels of experience with racial and social justice as a daily practice in the workplace. Of the initial 24 SoT cohort participants, 18 identified as BIPOC, and six identified as white. Participants were disproportionately women. SoT participants represented various departments, held various hierarchical City roles, and few knew each other prior to the cohort.

Departments that had contributed financially to the SoT performances in 2019 were each guaranteed between 1–4 spots in the cohort, based on the size of their contribution. A total of 15 of those selected came from these contributing partner departments: Seattle Public Utilities, Seattle City Light, Seattle Center, Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs, Seattle Public Library. (Other contributing partners had no applicants.)

KL PARTICIPANTS

Informed by both the RSJI culture-shift strategy and Our Bodhi Project's orientation toward health and wellbeing, the KL project team knew that this experience needed to intentionally support BIPOC health and healing and reduce any experiences of racialized, gendered, and other forms of harm within the sessions. KL participants self-identified as anti-racist organizers within the City and had varying degrees of anti-racism training, practices, and overall capacity. With no cap on participation, 120 people registered for KL, 86 of whom were BIPOC and 34 of whom were white. Among them, 78 participated in at least 75% of the complete set of KL sessions. The majority of KL participants identified as cisgender women.

Though KL participants didn't all know each other, they had a shared context as members of the RSJI Network and, in some instances, as members of the same cross-departmental RSJI teams. This connection gave them a shared place to apply their learning and deepen their relationships, using the tools they learned to support one another as part of a collective already set up to organize together around requests from the community and to the Mayor or City Council.

Project Results

Project results include reasons for participation, changes in participant knowledge and behavior, benefits and strengths of the learning experience, most and least helpful elements of project curriculum and process, and enablers, barriers, and limitations encountered during SoT and KL.

Results are a synthesis of triangulated findings across data collection methods. In most cases, a primary data collection method is named as the source of each key finding; findings were further verified by looking for supporting (or contrary) information from other data sources. Qualitative data from Storytelling Sessions and Circles are also standardly presented from most to least frequently mentioned, which was determined based on the number of times a thematic code appeared across transcripts. Additionally, we use the term "respondent" in this section to intentionally distinguish the subgroups of participants who are attached to particular findings. While survey response rates were high (>70%) and qualitative data processes included a diverse cross-section of participants, it is important to note that findings represent respondents' perspectives—and cannot necessarily be generalized to all participants.

Reasons for Participation

SoT REASONS FOR PARTICIPATION

In their applications, all 24 members of the SoT cohort expressed a desire to grow their ability to lead and support efforts to advance racial equity, social justice, and belonging in the workplace. Across the Storytelling Circles and the post-survey, respondents also named the following five reasons for participating: 1) to gain information and learn, 2) to gain new skills, 3) to become an effective change agent, 4) to address professional weaknesses or meet personal performance goals at work, and 5) to build connections across the City.

Both white and BIPOC participants mentioned the first two reasons in their applications; BIPOC participants named the last three reasons. These differences may indicate that BIPOC participants, who have a lived experience as targets of racism, came in with more foundational knowledge and skills and wanted to move toward more intermediate or advanced skill levels, such as driving change and building relationships with other employees who were also seeking to advance racial equity and social justice at the City. It also may indicate that white participants did not yet see themselves as change agents for racial equity and social justice or that they did not yet understand racial equity and social justice as a collective pursuit that depends on relationships.

SoT participants cited an array of prior race and social justice experiences in their applications. BIPOC participants mentioned family or college involvement in the Civil Rights Movement, varying needs to assimilate or not before getting involved with race and social justice efforts at the City, and sources of discontent with those efforts, such as the way the Racial Equity Toolkit (the City's tool for assessing policies, programs and decisions using a
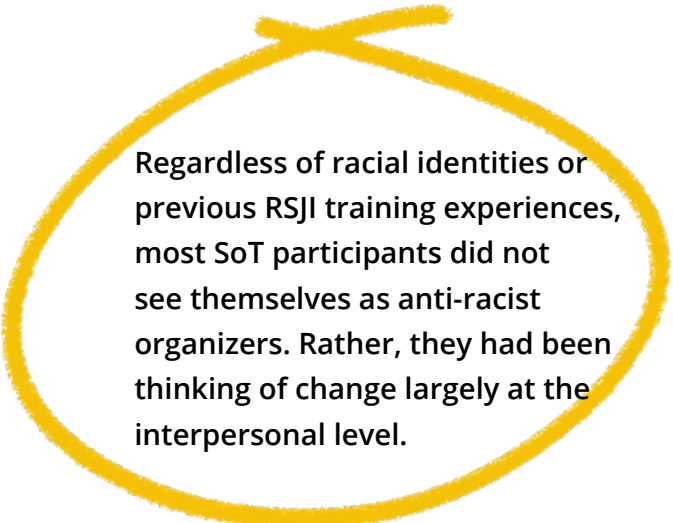
racial equity lens) was or is used. Nearly all white respondents mentioned only recently developing awareness of racism and infusing anti-racism into their work. Both BIPOC and white respondents described participating in one-off training at the City that provided practical skills. Regardless of racial identities or previous RSJI training experiences, most SoT participants did not see themselves as anti-racist organizers. Rather, they had been thinking of change largely at the interpersonal level.

REASONS FOR KL PARTICIPATION

Compared with many SoT cohort participants, KL participants demonstrated a higher degree of self-awareness related to their power and positionality (both within the hierarchy and their social positioning through race and gender). KL respondents cited more varied and in-depth prior race and social justice experiences, including personal introspection, formal training, involvement in race and social justice work groups and racial caucuses, and other forms of anti-racist organizing. They participated for a range of reasons, which revealed themes based on race and gender.

Across the Storytelling Circles and the post-survey, all respondents, regardless of race, shared several common reasons for joining KL, which differ from the reasons cited by SoT participants and reflect KL participants' prior experience with anti-racist organizing:

1. To be inspired by, learn from, and be exposed to the perspectives of others
2. To understand the City/system and how

Regardless of racial identities or previous RSJI training experiences, most SoT participants did not see themselves as anti-racist organizers. Rather, they had been thinking of change largely at the interpersonal level.

to dismantle structural racism within it
3. To bring tools back to their departments
4. To serve the community and humanity

Of note, the first two reasons above point to motivations within the personal and collective dimensions of the Medicine Wheel and suggest that KL respondents saw this experience as a place to holistically drive shifts in consciousness and will.

BIPOC respondents cited their personal interest and priorities in anti-racism work, wanting to dedicate time and energy to racial and social justice, and building on previous RSJI training and capacity building experiences at the City. One female BIPOC respondent said she participated, "For my own learning; to be in solidarity and a brave space with others who are as invested in racial justice as I am; for time and space to just be as I am; for connection and support; to remind myself I'm not alone in this work; to practice prioritizing time for things not otherwise valued by the institution." BIPOC respondents also described wanting to enhance their existing skills and further apply anti-racist frameworks in their work. They expressed desires to learn about race and

social justice and organizing efforts within the City, to strengthen their networks, and step more fully into a race and social justice leadership role. Some explained this as moving beyod allyship to become anti-racist accomplices and co-conspirators.

"It was an exciting opportunity to strengthen connections with other anti-racist organizers in the City, learn from people I admire and respect, and become a more effective agent of change," a BIPOC female respondent shared. Another BIPOC female respondent added that she sought "to increase learning, build connections, and organize across the City during the most racially charged and obvious collapse of the current system in my lifetime." And a BIPOC male respondent said, "I did not want to miss the opportunity to participate, especially during COVID as our chances to connect are limited."

White respondents said they joined because they were invited and wanted to deepen their anti-racist awareness, knowledge, skills, and language and "learn from others' wisdom." One white male respondent explained that he sought to better understand the racist culture in the U.S. and "where he fits in." White respondents described a desire to deepen their individual-level anti-racist work and increase their comfort with and ability to navigate anti-racist discussions. White respondents also expressed to facilitators, in the voluntary, optional white caucus, a desire to connect more with anti-racist organizers from other departments as a means to supporting organizing within their department. They also expressed wanting to

advocate and take action for racial and social justice with more confidence.

Changes in Knowledge and Behavior

Both SoT and KL participants described experiencing inside-out transformation, beginning with a shift in awareness on the individual and interpersonal levels and, in many cases, extending to the institutional and structural levels. These changes are described in detail below.

CHANGES IN SoT LOGIC MODEL AREAS

Below is an assessment of how changes tracked to the SoT logic model, based on a synthesis of the data from all evaluation methods.

SELF AND SOCIETY

Anticipated short- and mid-term goals were achieved, such as the increased understanding of social and hierarchical positionality and power and their relationship to work among the SoT cohort. The main theme that emerged when examining outcomes in this area was a deepened understanding of positionality and power. Observed learning outcomes included an increased ability to name power dynamics, recognize and interrupt white supremacy culture with relational culture, express self-awareness, and increase emotional intelligence. In a mini-feedback survey, one white male SoT participant shared, "I am being more mindful and aware of my own

actions and emotions and how it might impact others." A BIPOC male SoT participant shared, "I like the idea that visualizing balance in my personal space can lead to systematic and institutional transformation."
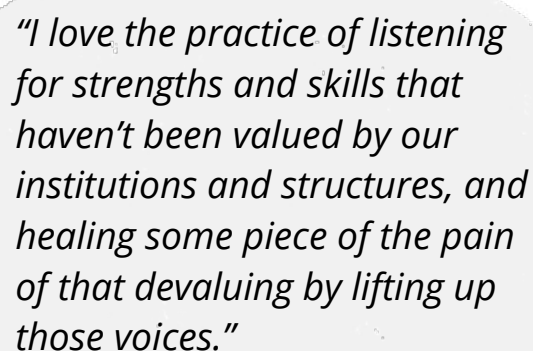
CREATIVITY & INTERCONNECTION

Many expected outcomes in this area were also noted during the observations. Short-term gains included increased knowledge of key terms and adoption of a shared language; understanding of a relational worldview, breath, spirit, and purpose in one's work; and increased embodied anti-racist strategies. Some participants also began to apply the Bodhi Frame, relate according to emergent race and social justice concepts and practices (e.g., prioritizing personal connection over a hyperfocus on productivity, infusing embodied practice into work meetings, identifying and delineating between anti-racist allies and accomplices), and more consistently embody anti-racist organizing strategies.

Two themes emerged around anticipated interconnection outcomes: critical examination of values and shifts from disconnection to connection. First, by engaging with the Bodhi Frame, several SoT participants began critically examining their values and making connections. One BIPOC female respondent explained, "I love the practice of listening for strengths and skills that haven't been valued by our institutions and structures, and healing some piece of the pain of that devaluing by lifting up those voices." A white female respondent commented, "It does seem that what I love is related to my position of power—focused

on what I can do 'for' someone (listen/lift up). And, it is also related to wanting to see a healthy and vital interconnected web of people doing right by each other and our world."
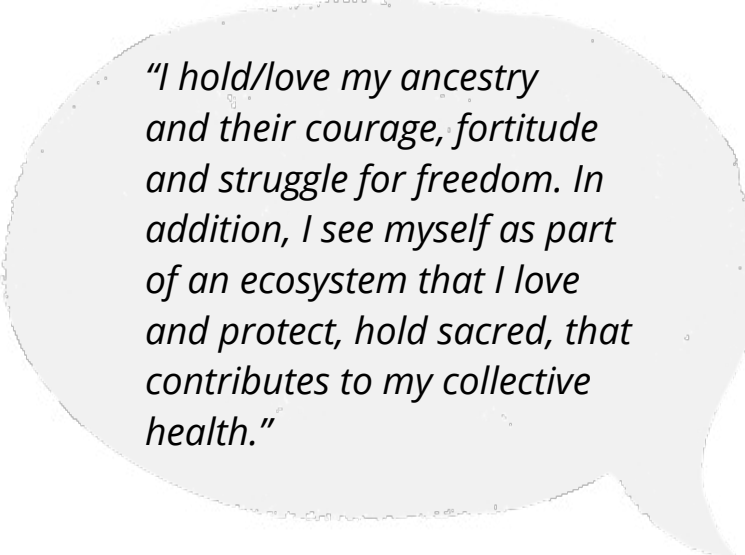
Secondly, many participants began to shift from feeling disconnected to a greater sense of connection. Toward the beginning of SoT, a BIPOC female respondent shared in a mini-survey, "The general feeling of being disconnected. It seemed like we were all feeling it. However, there was something almost unifying about it. We can find that common ground quicker." As the project progressed, a BIPOC female respondent commented on feelings of solidarity: "I have people who believe in the work. Not alone." Then in the SoT post-survey, a white female respondent shared, "I have become much more aware of how my interactions affect others. I am more cognizant of what I say and who is there when I say it. I also feel that others are treating me differently now that they know I am involved in this work, for the better." A burgeoning sense of community emerged for many, as a BIPOC male

> "I love the practice of listening for strengths and skills that haven't been valued by our institutions and structures, and healing some piece of the pain of that devaluing by lifting up those voices."

respondent explained: "Having a community across departments feels empowering. It allows us to learn from each other, understand what's happening across the City and support each other." Observations and Storytelling Sessions revealed that voluntary, optional caucus spaces were highlighted as one place where interconnection was deeply fostered, particularly for BIPOC participants.

"I hold/love my ancestry and their courage, fortitude and struggle for freedom. In addition, I see myself as part of an ecosystem that I love and protect, hold sacred, that contributes to my collective health."

WELLBEING

Expected changes in this area included short-term increased knowledge of the nervous system, trauma, and resiliency, as well as mid-term abilities to notice and name trauma responses and develop mindfulness and resiliency practices. Facilitators emphasized the ways individual and collective wellbeing is critical for anti-racist organizing and how the needs for and means to experience wellbeing are often different for BIPOC and white people. These changes were observed in participants, who had also just begun to show longer-term changes in increased self-care, sense of wellbeing, and attention to

mind-body-heart-spirit in work as race and social justice strategies.

Two themes emerged around wellbeing outcomes: First, foundational trauma and resiliency learning was observed and supported by participant feedback in surveys. A BIPOC female respondent shared, "The trauma section really helped me make connections, as well as applying the learnings..." Another BIPOC male respondent wrote, "The centering practices [were most helpful], especially for the trauma section." In a Storytelling Session, a white male respondent revealed the beginnings of longer-term goals to enhance self-care and wellbeing: "My sense of self-compassion being an integral part of anti-racist practices has increased through hearing that message from organizers, although I still find it difficult to practice. I also learned more about white supremacist culture and especially relational culture alternatives to white supremacist practices at work."

Second, wellbeing was fostered through SoT awareness practices, such as pausing and breathing exercises (the Bodhi Frame guidepost of "Bestill"), and ecosystemic thinking. One white female respondent shared, "Seeking stillness and self-observation without judgment seem like important pathways for me." A BIPOC male respondent commented, "Breathing exercises are important to everyone's health. I will borrow these concepts and apply them to my team meetings..." Another BIPOC female respondent's comment expressed a deep shift in awareness and practice: "I hold/love my ancestry and their courage, fortitude

and struggle for freedom. In addition, I see myself as part of an ecosystem that I love and protect, hold sacred, that contributes to my collective health." Participants also began to evidence longer-term changes toward the consistent embodiment of wellbeing.

INSTITUTIONS AND SYSTEMS

Short- and some mid-term outcome changes in this area were observed among SoT participants, such as increased core anti-racist knowledge and discussing how racism, oppression, and white supremacy culture manifest in government. However, deeper changes—such as participating in and leading strategies to address power imbalances, embodying relational culture, and leading anti-racist organizing—were only observed in some toward the end of the yearlong experience.

The desire to drive systemic change and dismantle institutional racism and systemic oppression was a dominant theme that emerged from the qualitative data. One white male respondent shared, "As I gain greater understanding of how inequality manifests broadly, it helps me to formulate ideas for how I can help to build solutions to change the structures supporting oppression." A BIPOC female respondent explained, "I understand that you can only solve complex problems by looking at the whole and the tendency to address the symptoms is counterproductive in the long run. Building a common understanding and a coordinated approach across departments is needed."
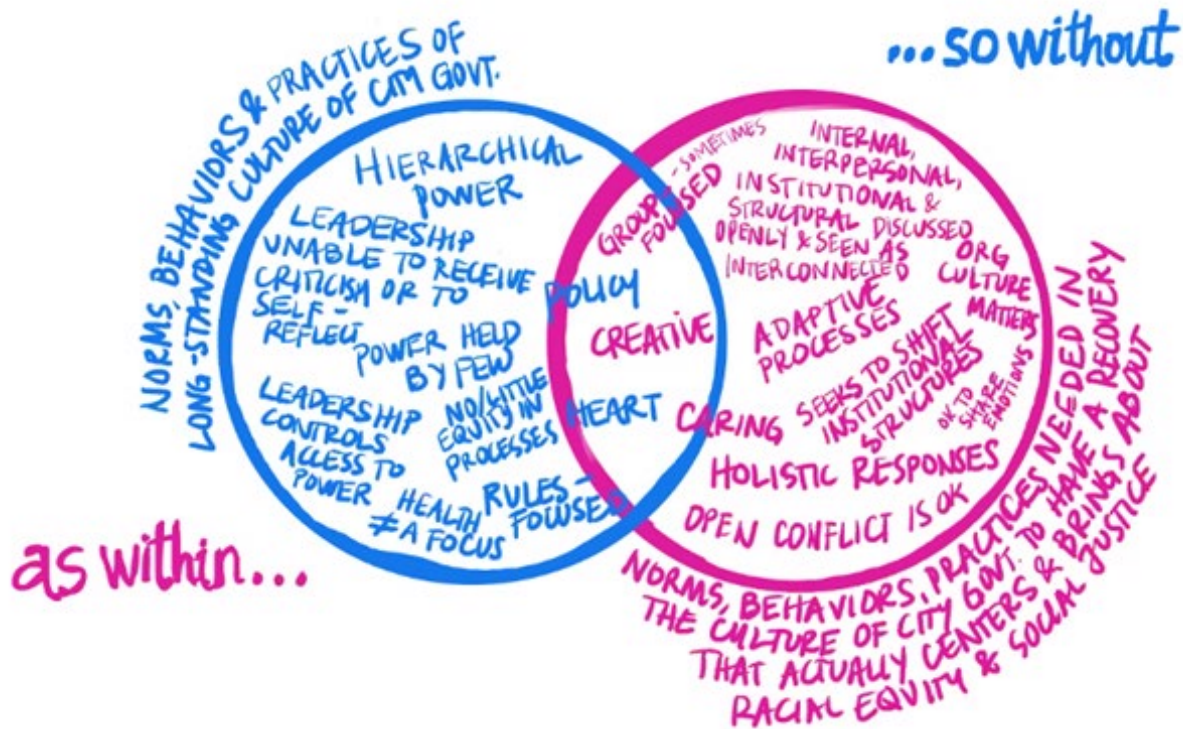
While SoT participants engaged in dialogue around systemic change, observations revealed that many cohort members were building foundational knowledge and not yet ready or able to engage in developing and applying deeper transformational, anti-racist organizing tactics until the very end of the yearlong cohort. For example, many participants were observed stating that they had never learned the differences between foundational terms like prejudice, discrimination, and oppression, nor had they been exposed to conceptual frameworks like social position groups and the four types of oppression.

However, all participants had begun to participate in strategies to address power imbalances. For example, Storytelling Circle respondents shared that they had been applying an awareness of power and positionality to interactions at the City, were examining existing and emerging policies and procedures through a critical anti-racist lens, and were forming and engaging more diverse groups of employees in important projects and decision-making. Additionally, facilitators shared that at least seven participants have begun incorporating anti-racist practices into their leadership roles, such as embodying relational culture and working collectively to make changes to policies and procedures; these cohort members also reached out to the facilitators for additional support to move into leading race and social justice work.

ADVOCACY AND ACTION

Expected changes in this area included short-term increases in understanding of race and social justice organizing and empowered

Pictured is an example of SoT participants identifying and practicing how to take strategic actions to support decision-making related to teams and workplace culture

allyship, and the ability to explain the roles of embodiment, arts, culture, and mindfulness in race and social justice. Anticipated mid-term outcomes included applying the Bodhi Frame and race and social justice lenses to decision-making, countering resistance to race and social justice, coaching and mentoring staff, and seeking coaching/mentorship and peer support rooted in a race and social justice lens. Short- and some mid-term outcomes were noted during the observations, and reinforced by other nontraditional data sources, and long-term changes (e.g., equity strategies in place, interrupting racism and oppression at all four levels) were beginning to be seen just as SoT ended. Facilitators affirmed this finding, stating that several teams and supervisors shared noting enhanced anti-racist advocacy and action in SoT participants they worked with, something they also observed in ongoing work with SoT colleagues at the City.

The main theme that emerged in this area was that advocacy and action accelerated through participation in the SoT cohort. The evaluator observed that some participants who did not enter the cohort engaged in multilevel anti-racism or structural change work were, by the end of the cohort experience, interrupting racism at all four levels of oppression (individual, interpersonal, institutional, and structural). Several white and BIPOC participants—female and male—expressed feeling more confident to call out racism and opportunities to correct it. A BIPOC female respondent commented, "I have on many occasions seen where policies, laws, decisions made by the government have favored wealthy, white, U.S.-born men over all others. Advocating for change, pointing out the disparities, provides some small satisfaction for me, knowing that I have pushed the envelope in the right direction."

ADDITIONAL CHANGES OBSERVED THROUGH SoT

Reflecting on changes in their knowledge and/or behavior through their experience with SoT, many participants described having "aha" moments along the way—moments when their awareness expanded or they felt awakened to truths about racism and white supremacy, the damaging ideology that claims white people and their ideas, beliefs, and actions are superior to those of BIPOC.[14] Normative beliefs and behaviors of the culture that upholds white supremacy include perfectionism, a sense of urgency, defensiveness, over-emphasis of the written word, valuing quantity over quality, belief in one right way to do things, paternalism, either/or thinking, power hoarding, fear of open conflict, and more.[15] In contrast, participants voiced appreciating more spaciousness in timing, a focus on arts and embodied practice, an emphasis on many ways to do things, holding complexities, and openly addressing points of tension—beliefs and practices that stand in contrast to white supremacy culture.

KEY GAINS

Though most SoT participants were just beginning to explore race and social justice practices and ways to embed them into the workplace, on average, they demonstrated a number of significant gains from the start to the end of their engagement in the cohort.

Notably, self-rated racial and social justice knowledge appeared to decrease when comparing pre- and post-surveys, while retroactive data from surveys and Storytelling Circles in which participants were asked to rate their knowledge at the beginning and end of SoT appears to show a more accurate assessment. This interpretation was supported by qualitative data collected in Storytelling Circles, where participants also indicated great increases in knowledge. A possible explanation for this inconsistency is that many participants had lower self-awareness in their initial assessments of their knowledge, an interpretation supported by their applications to the cohort. In those applications, most respondents reported being further along in their equity journeys and baseline race and social justice knowledge than they actually were. As a result, the change over time in several areas, particularly in terms of knowledge and practice, may be greater than these numbers reflect.

To address the possibility that pre-survey self-assessment may have been skewed, the evaluator and evaluation team created a series of questions for the post-survey that asked respondents to retroactively rated themselves on their knowledge and practices at the beginning and end of the SoT experience to gauge change over time.

Respondents rated themselves on a five-point Likert scale, with 1 being non/very poor or weak and 5 being very strong/excellent.

14   Showing Up for Racial Justice (SURJ). White Supremacy Culture. Website: https://www.whitesupremacyculture.info/. 20 April 2021.

15   Okun T. White Supremacy Culture. Website: www.dismantlingracism.org.

The percentages below were derived by calculating mean ratings of knowledge, skills, and relationships at the beginning and end of SoT, then taking the difference between the two mean scores to gauge change over time. Based on a comparison of the aggregated self-assessment data from the post-survey, the most meaningful gains were made in the following areas. (**See Appendix F** for full data table.)

- Supportive anti-racist organizing relationships (+33.3%)

- Foundational race and social justice knowledge (+30%)

- Beginning to practice transformational, anti-racist organizing skills (+26.7%)

- Readiness to show up as a transformational, anti-racist leader in their roles and departments (+26.7%)

- A sense of belonging among people they work with at the City (+15.13%)

Of note, these findings only reflect self-reported data of respondents who remained in SoT at the end of the project. While this limits the degree to which these findings can be generalized to the broader group of participants, this approach allowed us to capture more accurate pre-to-post self-assessment data despite less accurate self-reporting on the pre-survey. This also helped us troubleshoot the challenges of participant attrition that led to some people having provided pre-survey data, but leaving before post-surveys were administered.

KEY CHANGES IN KNOWLEDGE, PERSPECTIVE, ATTITUDES

In addition to changes noted in the post-survey, the following changes were seen in data collected in Storytelling Sessions. Findings are listed from highest to lowest frequency of mention during the thematic coding process.

- A different orientation to the work through greater understanding of foundational anti-racist knowledge and practice—e.g., understanding social and hierarchical positionality, greater consciousness of power dynamics, increased self-awareness, and/or a more relational attitude

- An awareness of internalized racism

- The ability to identify and name different forms of oppression and white supremacy culture

- A reframing of values around what benefits the whole

- Use of the Bodhi Frame

- The adoption of an ecosystemic mindset

KEY CHANGES IN BEHAVIORS AND PRACTICES

These changes were seen in data collected from Storytelling Sessions and are listed from highest to lowest frequency of mention during the transcript coding process.

- Increased feelings of solidarity with people in the cohort as well as with BIPOC

- Increased empathy, especially through storytelling

- Deep listening, holding space for and being present with employees

- Integration of meditation and body-based practices into meetings

- Infusion of practices into morning team meetings/huddles

Participants reflected the above changes in their comments about the cohort experience. A BIPOC female participant explained, "I feel much more open and honest, even though I wouldn't say I wasn't those things prior. I feel a sense of openness to others and their beliefs. I also feel more confident in myself so I'm able to better handle situations that require my involvement." A white female participant shared, "I am better equipped personally and most importantly professionally around racial equity, social justice and belonging! Without this pro[ject], I would not have been strong enough to hold a conversation with a random person; however, now I am capable of having a conversation with family members and at the workplace on the values of SoT."

White SoT participants described their growth in awareness and knowledge about racism as a result of participating in the cohort. For example, one white male participant explained, "Ignorance was bliss. Now I know how bad and pervasive racism is." Another

A BIPOC female participant said, "I am able to build in the pause and insert myself to speak up in moments where things don't feel right but maybe I don't even know what the exact right thing to say is. And to have the tough conversations with some of the white people in my department."

white male said, "It is a long journey, and I just started. I am sad that it took me this long to realize that I have to actively work on anti-racism, but better late than never." A white female participant described newly stepping into white allyship: "SoT was critical at helping me to grow in my ability to show up in these moments as a white person. To grow out of a place of guilt and into a place of accountable and collective action." Another white male person shared how they have become "aware of the needs of my team; feeling empathy for their inner struggles."

One example of a knowledge gain that translated into a behavior change focused on engaging with the practice of Bestill, a pillar of the Bodhi Frame. A BIPOC female participant said, "I am able to build in the pause and insert myself to speak up in moments where things don't feel right but maybe I don't even know what the exact right thing to say is. And to have the tough conversations with some of the white people in my department."

Yet another example demonstrated change through a thought map a SoT participant drew for an assignment, which illustrated important gains in foundational knowledge, such as understanding positionality, naming power dynamics, and expressing self-

Pictured is a screenshot from an SoT session.

awareness. The drawing also illustrates gains in core anti-racist knowledge and discussing how racism, oppression, and white supremacy culture manifest in government. This illustration also pointed to the value of using creative methods to express foundational knowledge—a skill fostered throughout the SoT cohort experience.

In contrast to the above, some participants felt that little changed for them through the SoT experience. "I don't feel braver or particularly practiced," one BIPOC female participant concluded.

CHANGES BY RACE

Changes by race were fairly distinctive across both observations and in Storytelling Sessions. Many white-identified SoT participants experienced "aha" moments as they began to recognize positionality, power, and privilege. In Storytelling Sessions, they also reported creating relationships to challenge decision-making with racist, sexist, and other oppressive impacts, and "calling in" other white people to race and social justice work, and stepping into their roles as allies and accomplices. One white female respondent said, "I am taking time to

play my role as a white organizer with other white folx. I'm also more compassionate with myself and how imperfectly I show up compared to at the start of SoT." A white male respondent described how their relationships have evolved with BIPOC colleagues: "I think the trust is growing because I speak to [race and social justice] more in meetings and colleagues of color have shared they like being able to rely on me more." Another white female manager said, "This changed my life almost as much as Race: The Power of an Illusion [the foundational RSJI training that all new City employees are asked to complete]. It set me on a path of anti-racist work that I want to continue."

BIPOC-identified participants in SoT reported building skills, practices, and networks of mutual support to name and address inequity in Storytelling Sessions. Several of them also described deepening their existing understanding of internalized racism and oppression and focusing more on building solidarity. One BIPOC male respondent said, "I've become more intentional about setting aside time to engage in conversation about social hierarchies and power, and about challenging white supremacist

culture." BIPOC respondents also reported that peer-to-peer learning felt strong in the BIPOC caucus spaces compared to multiracial peer-to-peer learning where "it didn't feel like the group got much below the surface." A BIPOC male manager also said the cohort experience had shaped his perspective with supervisees: "SoT assists me in understanding and practicing racial equity and social justice work towards my [full-time staff] and external/internal clients."

BIPOC participants also faced some unique challenges during the cohort, such as concerns about re-traumatization and how what they shared in the SoT sessions might be misused. For instance, one BIPOC female said:

"I kept wondering if my community would someday call me a sellout for providing those in leadership with valuable information about our culture. How do I know that they won't use this information to penalize or judge a minority group in the future? How aware is everyone in the group about their own biases? Overall, I just felt a notion of fear because these types of groups usually open wounds that I've had to cover to be successful in the corporate world. I didn't want to be part of a conversation that involved me having to give the solution to a problem because of my race/ background."

This feedback reaffirms that BIPOC-specific spaces and capacity-building experiences may be helpful, or even necessary, and that the potential benefits and harms of multiracial learning offerings should be carefully considered.

THE RIPPLE EFFECT: HOW SoT PARTICIPANTS APPLIED WHAT THEY LEARNED

In their roles as supervisors, managers, and HR advisers, SoT aimed to position participants to internalize what they learned in the cohort and then implement that learning in their jobs, creating better and more equitable experiences for the people they support. This extension was at the heart of the capacity-building effort to benefit not just individual participants, but also their teams and departments, and the communities they serve. SoT participants reported increases in their understanding of power and positionality in their leadership roles as well as in their ability to build trust, cultivate brave spaces, and promote healing.

For instance, one BIPOC male supervisor said, "With this mindset [as an RSJ organizer], I'm encouraged to advocate for finding paths to success for those who report to me, knowing that the path will not be the same for each one." A BIPOC HR advisor said, "I am supporting others in exploring their social positionalities." A white male manager wrote in an email to projects facilitators, "I find that my 'empathy meter' is turned on much higher than it usually is. I'm less concerned with the outcome and the result than I am with the people involved."

Despite these improvements, some participants described challenges in translating what they learned in the cohort into their work environments. A BIPOC male commented, "I don't know how to convert self-support into sustainable, creative group effort." A white male explained how the systems in which he finds himself don't seem to support transformational, anti-racist leadership: "I am in a world that values concrete, measurable solutions," he said. "This is sometimes at odds with the concept of working with people to help them achieve success. Issues of equity can arise from either not being consistent, or by being consistent in a way that favors one population over another."

Others reported feeling not quite ready to support others, especially BIPOC staff, in race and social justice work because they are still early along in their own journeys. For example, a white female supervisor shared, "[I am] seeking help with how to help my team with RSJI topics when I am not quite comfortable myself. I don't want to cause harm to staff of color."

CHANGES OBSERVED THROUGH KL

In the KL post-survey, 25 participants retroactively rated themselves on their knowledge and practices at the beginning and end of the KL series to gauge change over time. The evaluator and evaluation team created a series of questions that mapped onto anticipated outcome changes of the project. Respondents rated themselves on a five-point Likert scale, with 1 being non/very poor or weak and 5 being very strong/excellent. The percentages below were derived by calculating mean ratings of knowledge, skills, and relationships at the beginning and end of the KL series, then taking the difference between the two mean scores to gauge change over time.

The results below show powerful changes in the way participants embraced their own identities as anti-racist leaders individually and demonstrated consistent application of critical lenses, embodied anti-racist practice, and strategic organizing by individuals and across the group of respondents.

KEY GAINS

- Skills, practices, and "muscles" to interrupt and dismantle racism (+24%)

- Readiness to show up as a transformational, anti-racist leader in their roles and departments (+23.2%)

- How powerful they felt as part of a Citywide anti-racist organizing collective (the RSJI Network) (+34.4%)

KEY CHANGES IN KNOWLEDGE, PERSPECTIVE, ATTITUDES

- Knowledge of their allies and accomplices and expansion of their network

- The realization by BIPOC that they don't have to be the one to speak up, especially if they typically are the one to speak up

- An increased desire to make change

- An increased understanding of experiences/challenges faced by staff in other departments

- An increased awareness of transactional/extractive nature of much

institutional racial equity and social justice work

Across the Storytelling Sessions and the post-survey, KL respondents cited fewer changes in knowledge and perspectives than SoT respondents did; this was seen in fewer types of changes cited and lower frequency of mention of these changes in the data collection and thematic coding processes. This may have been due to KL participants' greater shared baseline understanding of foundational race and social justice knowledge and principles. Concomitantly, KL participants did demonstrate rich changes in behaviors and practices, perhaps because they did not need to focus as much on foundational knowledge.

KEY CHANGES IN BEHAVIORS AND PRACTICES

These changes were seen in data collected from Storytelling Sessions during the thematic coding process and are listed from highest to lowest frequency of mention. The list of changes in behaviors and practices for KL is notably larger than that of SoT respondents, who had richer sharing around changes in knowledge and beginning to adopt anti-racist practices. As previously mentioned, this may be due to KL participants having more robust foundational knowledge, as well as having clear motivations to understand and dismantle structural racism and bring back tools to serve their departments, communities, and humanity.
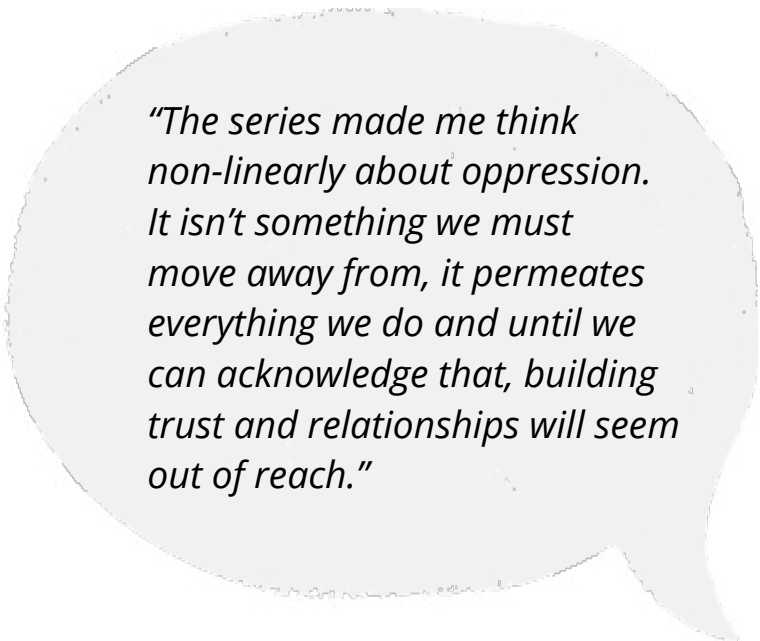
- An increased personal commitment to racial and social justice

- Increased self-advocacy, e.g., "being able to advocate for myself the way I advocate for others" as one BIPOC female shared

- Dismantling white supremacy culture by slowing down, cultivating patience, giving people space to respond, and reducing urgency or hurriedness

- Incorporating grounding and pauses into meetings, e.g., "It's a helpful exercise when everything is always moving at top speed and with a sometimes false sense of urgency," as a BIPOC male put it

- Engagement in conversation around race and proximity to whiteness

- Greater confidence in calling out racism

- Addressing issues of inequity when management makes decisions, such as failing to consider the implications and impacts of decisions on vulnerable groups, especially BIPOC communities

- Increased relational culture, bringing full authentic self and experiences into the room, "concentrating more on relationship than concrete deliverables," as a white male said

- More confidence in helping people center and ground themselves

- Acknowledgement of places where they are agents of oppression, and not getting stuck in guilt

- "Learning how/when to ask for help so that I am not always the one catching fire for asking questions and speaking up," as a BIPOC female said

- Having a network to consult with dilemmas and questions

- Increased one-on-one and small group collaboration on anti-racist initiatives

- Strengthened relationships with others in race and social justice teams and groups

- Strengthened relationships with City staff in areas of work that differ from one's own

- Mentoring on race and social justice in the workplace

- An improved ability to advise people using concepts like "center the relationship" and "where did you feel that in your body?" which a BIPOC female cited

- Changing the way meetings are structured, including how executive-level staff are invited in

- Shaping policies, processes, and practices with a race and social justice lens and explicitly drawing from relational organizing, social positioning, and spheres of influence

• "Ensuring any recommendation or guidance includes race and social justice components—even if I myself have not experienced or been negatively impacted by those structures," as one white male put it

Notably, the areas where the most change was reported were linked to fostering relationships for anti-racist organizing. A BIPOC participant shared the following story:

"I realized that in our Change Team we were focusing on leadership and not staff. Especially lower paid staff. We talked about institutional racism as an abstraction that we were moving away from but without acknowledging what it meant for BIPOC... staff. I realized that we needed to hear the stories and really understand what institutional racism looks like in a day to day workflow, in year to year reviews, etc. Basically we were willing to pay BIPOC community members to give us feedback about [our department] but we didn't seem to care about engaging BIPOC staff about their needs and lived experience. Especially BIPOC staff that have been there more than five years. The series made me think non-linearly about oppression. It isn't something we must move away from, it permeates everything we do and until we can acknowledge that, building trust and relationships will seem out of reach."

Many KLs spoke about translating knowledge into action in a variety of ways: A nonbinary BIPOC in KL shared, "I find myself slowing down, attempting to be more grounded, practiced, and intentional in my leadership,

"The series made me think non-linearly about oppression. It isn't something we must move away from, it permeates everything we do and until we can acknowledge that, building trust and relationships will seem out of reach."

looking more at how I can influence creating a culture or environment that exists and everlasts." A white female in KL said, "I'm in conversations, both in my personal life and [at] work, [that] have centered around race and proximity to whiteness." A BIPOC female participant explained, "I'm having a change of view about a lot of things that we are doing here in the organization. I see [many City staff] are hiding under the context that we need to be consistent that you're not opening up your eyes in terms of your inconsistencies and how it's impacting people of color, minorities, with your decisions that perpetuate institutional racism."

A BIPOC female participant also said participating in the KL series helped shape her identity as an anti-racist leader: "I stepped into the role of being a [change team] co-lead. ...I had never thought of myself as a leader. I would have never volunteered to step into that role for myself." Another BIPOC female person explained, "Two years ago I probably wouldn't have done it because it would have just seemed like too much to take on and this year it was like, I can let go of all my other responsibilities because this is what's important."

Benefits and Strengths of the Learning Experience

Participants perceived a number of benefits in the SoT experience, which they shared in Storytelling Circles. In particular, they described valuing the long-term interactions with others as a cohort and the opportunity to do personal and internal anti-racist work. They also expressed appreciation for seeing and naming oppression and white supremacy culture, as well as the project's emphasis on liberation, including physical wellbeing or greater ease in the body.

Likewise, participants in Storytelling Circles described perceiving a number of benefits in the KL experience. They valued the chance to deepen their understanding of positionality and power, to sharpen their analysis, and to build expertise on racism within the City. Relationships also mattered. KL participants were grateful to come together and connect with other race and social justice leaders who could serve as their ongoing allies and accomplices as they work to organize power and build solidarity. In a space that affirmed their humanity, they learned from each other's experiences and appreciated the project's focus on ways to dismantle white supremacy culture, prevent othering, and change the system from within.

"Our power is organized," a BIPOC male said. "[KL] brought the leaders or people who really want to do anti-racist organizing together, as we try to infiltrate within this institution together—to be aligned."

STRENGTHS OF SoT AND KL

The following strengths were identified in Observation Checklists and further triangulated across data collection methods in both projects. The process of memoing—recording reflective notes about what the evaluator is learning from the data—was used during qualitative data analysis to derive meaning from the data, including highlighting strengths in project content and process. Cross-cutting insights were also captured through triangulation, identifying points of connection across other data collection methods. Additionally, the evaluator's knowledge and experience in the field of equity work and related fields were drawn upon to generate the list below.

THE OVERVIEW OF RACE AND SOCIAL JUSTICE FUNDAMENTALS

Foundational equity and anti-racism information—such as types of oppression; target and agent social positionalities; differences between diversity, inclusion, equity, and anti-racism; and other aspects of an anti-racist power analysis—offered an essential foundation of common concepts and language. This was evidenced in the myriad "aha" moments SoT participants had and their open expressions of much of this content being fairly unfamiliar and important to them. In contrast, it appeared that many KL participants began the series with this foundational knowledge, allowing them to operate with a shared language and set of concepts that facilitated their focus on enhancing strategic anti-racist behaviors and

practices, and advancing strategic organizing, advocacy, and action.

DELIVERY OF LEADING, INNOVATIVE RACE AND SOCIAL JUSTICE CONTENT

Such content draws from BIPOC experiences and spiritual and cultural traditions from around the world, e.g. land and history acknowledgements; connecting heart-mind-body; acknowledging purpose, spirit, and foundational values as the source of aligned action; using ecosystemic thinking and analysis; adopting a relational versus transactional worldview; and more. Exposure to and application of the Our Bodhi Project Frame was a particular strength. Many participants repeatedly expressed enthusiasm and gratitude for the ways in which content was delivered in ways that deviated from traditional equity education methods and felt more supportive of wellbeing and deep learning.

THE CENTERING OF MINDFUL, EMBODIED AND CREATIVE PRACTICES

These include secular, mindful breathing exercises, noticing the feelings coming up in one's body and practicing being with them without judgement and learning from them, and simple movement, as well as arts-based engagements such as drawing and creative writing.

ENGAGING PARTICIPANTS' AUTHENTIC SELVES IN THE WORKPLACE

Facilitators modeled and explored ways to bring mind, body, heart, and spirit into alignment in professional settings.

FOSTERING INTERCONNECTEDNESS

The facilitators also fostered, modeled, and taught ways to cultivate interconnection, including applying a relational worldview and ecosystemic thinking to parts of the self as well as to other human and non-human living systems, communities, organizations, and networks.

PARADIGM SHIFTS IN PRAXIS

The learning space intentionally created a paradigm shift from status quo operation to intentional race and social justice reflection and action, or praxis. In this space, facilitators co-created authentic interaction with participants through deep listening, mindful awareness, organizing and coalition building, workshopping, and creative and arts-based practices. They also engaged neural diversity through activities—such as drawing, storytelling, reflecting on works of art—that have been shown to activate and connect more diverse regions of the brain, moving people away from default thinking and forging new neural pathways.[16]

A CARING CONTAINER FOR EACH SESSION

Use structural and relational elements such as group centering practices at the start of each session, intentional breaks every 90 minutes, a balance of whole-group dialogue, individual reflection, breakout room conversations and whole-group dialogues in which the facilitators held dynamics of power and positionality such as race, gender

16   Raichle, Marcus E.; Snyder, Abraham Z. (2007). "A default mode of brain function: A brief history of an evolving idea". NeuroImage. 37 (4): 1083–90. doi:10.1016/j.neuroimage.2007.02.041. PMID 17719799. S2CID 3380973.

and age. Facilitators shared the flow for each session up front, often "pulling back the curtain," as Sangeeta Balajee describes it, to reveal the feeling and reasoning behind their choices.

Most and Least Helpful Elements of Project Curriculum and Process

SoT and KL participants were asked to share what was most and least helpful about the curriculum and process for their respective projects in Storytelling Sessions, mini feedback surveys, and the pre- and post-surveys. A sample survey question read, "Please describe which content elements (such as those listed above) were most helpful or impactful to you. How have they influenced the way you think, feel, see, be, and/or do in and beyond the workplace?" Similar questions were asked about processes. While the most/least helpful binary was used to prompt reflection and sharing to elucidate a spectrum of experiences (with most/least being the pole ends), many participants' responses reflected the complexity of their experiences, both within the projects and in relationship to transformational approaches to racial equity and social justice.

The elements listed in each section below appear in order of most to least frequently mentioned across all respondents. Of note, each respondent often shared many elements they found more or less helpful. This list could also be used as a guideline for best practices, as well as lessons learned

or potential challenges to be aware of, for others planning to engage in similar anti-racist, equity-promoting projects.

MOST HELPFUL ELEMENTS OF SoT

CURRICULUM TOPICS

- **Hierarchical power** and the impact it has when abused.

- **Embodiment and mindfulness practices,** including breathing exercises and visualization. A BIPOC female participant shared that one of the most impactful activities for her was "conjuring up an image of what brings balance and harmony to my life and being."

- **The Bodhi Frame** "set the anchor for me," one BIPOC female participant said. Another appreciated the model's "pause" and considering and assessing one's personal values.

- **Centering living systems** "was far and away the most impactful for me," a BIPOC female participant explained. "It helped me to really listen to my employees. It shaped how I interact in situations and see the people involved, not the problem we're working on. It really helps me get to root issues rather than simple learning solutions."

- **Trauma recognition.** A BIPOC female participant shared that it was "very healing and calming to center in that common human experience as a part of racial justice work."

- **Relational culture vs. WSC.** One white female participant said relational culture was helpful to "reflect on in challenging work spaces."

- **Tools to interrupt racism or other forms of oppression.**

- **Handouts,** such as "The 4 Types of Race and Oppression," "Transformational, Anti-Racist Organizing Approach" and the Bodhi scrolls, which had questions for each of the Bodhi Frame guideposts.

PROCESS ELEMENTS

- **Consistently being invited to engage in anti-racist best practice,** such as being given "time to reflect on my personal relationship to race and social justice and not trying to 'get things done,'" as a white female said.

- **Storytelling,** both sharing your own and listening to others share.

- **Skillful modeling by facilitators.**

- **Workshopping and application of frameworks, concepts, and practices** to issues and experiences being faced at work.

- Voluntary, optional **racial caucuses.**

- One-on-one meetings with facilitators.

- **Full-cohort learning** session and discussion.

- **Smaller groups sessions** and discussions, especially small group breakout sessions.

- **Mindful and embodied practices** connecting mind, heart, body, and other living systems.

- **Brief presentations** supported by slides or handouts.

- **Mid-course self-assessment** for facilitators to assess participants' experiences in order to adjust or adapt the remaining content and its delivery.

- **Activities using arts and culture.**

- **Preparatory sessions to support their final share back presentations.**

- **Having a brave space** "to practice being brave so that I can begin to turn it outward more often," as a BIPOC male participant said.

- **Candid dialogue,** as a BIPOC female participant said, "The boldest of truth calling it what it is, such as white supremacy and other highly charged concepts not thought of as polite or PC [politically correct]."

- **Hearing stories from a multiracial cohort.** "I really found listening to others, mainly BIPOC members, to be the most beneficial," a white male participant said. "You can fully understand the trauma and pain. You can get a full view of what is actually happening and that helps drive the passion for change."

LEAST HELPFUL ELEMENTS OF SoT
LESSONS LEARNED AND POTENTIAL CHALLENGES

CURRICULUM TOPICS

Some components of SoT's transformational approach were very new and unfamiliar to some participants, which created discomfort as they tried to step out of transactional institutional patterns that had historically helped them experience safety or achieve within the system and culture of white supremacy. Interestingly, certain topics that SoT participants listed as most helpful others found least helpful.

- **Introductions.** Some participants expressed a desire to move to action items quicker with less lead-in activity time.

- **The Bodhi Frame.** Some participants found the Bodhi Frame difficult to connect to as it was very different from frameworks they had been used to applying in traditional racial equity and social justice work.

- **Embodied practices.** A BIPOC female participant shared, "The breathing/ stretching, art would label me a nut case if I introduced it at a meeting." Another BIPOC male participant shared that the breathing exercises were "very welcome" but had limited impact on him.

PROCESS ELEMENTS

- **Longer breakout sessions** were desired by some.

- **More large group connection opportunities** were desired by some.

- **An online format that felt disconnected** for some.

- **Reopening of wounds** for BIPOC.

- **Not meeting personally** "to have a social hour after graduation from this pro[ject]," a BIPOC female said while reflecting on the ways the pandemic hindered her experience with the project.

MOST HELPFUL ELEMENTS OF KL

CURRICULUM TOPICS

- **The conceptual framework of Diversity – Access – Inclusion – Equity – Anti-racism – Decolonization.** One BIPOC female participant shared, "I have loved integrating the document that lists diversity → decolonization because it is a great tool to help others understand where we as a City actually are (i.e., we are nowhere near an anti-racist org yet)."

- **The updated RSJI Truths.** "The RSJI truths were the foundational element that has given me more confidence to be vocal about anti-racist practices and values at work," a BIPOC female participant said. "The truths are a

"It was extremely impactful to approach this work with somatic practices thoughtfully embedded in the work. It was a newer approach than what I've experienced in previous RSJI training in the city and really focused on human-centered practices to lead to transformation and embodied change."

wonderful thing in that they live as this document that works within the existing government structure to unravel and rebuild it."

- **Building a relational culture,** which centers building bonds, recognizes and enhances the interconnection between individuals and the collective, and engages in mutually supportive ways.

- **Transformational, anti-racist organizing,** which takes a holistic, creative, embodied approach, connecting human and non-human living systems and integrating the four types of racism and oppression.

- **Relational organizing,** which leverages a networked group of people to advance transformational, anti-racist advocacy and action.

- **Internalized racial inferiority and superiority,** which are "complex multigenerational socialization process[es] that teach… people of color to believe, accept, and live and/or act out negative societal definitions of self… [and] teaches white people to believe, accept, and/or live superior societal definitions of self".[17]

- **The racial hierarchy and racial oppression.** Racial oppression results from internalized racial inferiority

and superiority. This includes as discrimination based on skin color or perceived racial group affiliation along societally constructed hierarchies of worth, privilege, and power.

- **Social position groups and exploring social positionality, including agent and target identities.** A white female participant shared, "The social position groups enhance my perspective and analysis of the way I think/feel/see/be/do because there's a lot of layers and identities beyond what can be visibly seen that influences how people react, respond, and carry themselves."

- **Anatomy of racism:** moving from civil rights, which focused on prejudice and discrimination, to understanding how oppression is systemic, and being able to name the four types of racism.

- **Five types of power:** personal, collective, institutional, hierarchical positional, and social positional. A BIPOC female participant shared, "I appreciated the time spent on types of racism, power, etc. because even though I know what they are, it's nice to see a shared description and to articulate it in a way that makes sense."

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17   Ramsey County Human Services Anti Racism Leadership Team. Understanding IRO & IRS: A cognitive behavioral approach. 2011. Website: https://www.ramseycounty.us/sites/default/files/Assistance%20and%20Support/Understanding%20IRO%20and%20IRS%20powerpoint.pdf.

- **Spheres of influence:** City internal sphere, City-funded sphere, other institutions, community members, community-led organizing and racial justice campaigns.

- **Role of government** in building racial justice.

- **Centering in your body and in connection with other living systems.** A BIPOC female participant wrote, "It was extremely impactful to approach this work with somatic practices thoughtfully embedded in the work. It was a newer approach than what I've experienced in previous RSJI training in the city and really focused on human-centered practices to lead to transformation and embodied change. It also created an environment of modeling and shared learning and made me feel more connected to the larger RSJI network across the City. I've tried to integrate and use these practices in my work with our department Change Team and [optional, voluntary] caucus spaces." Another BIPOC female participant shared, "Building a relational culture and centering the body and mindfulness/ breathing exercises have provided more space and given credence to the antidotes for white supremacy culture." Another BIPOC male participant shared, "Using nature to build our organizing forms was a concept that I find valuable to help think creatively and not default of the colonizing patterns."

- **The Our Bodhi Project Frame.** A BIPOC female participant wrote, "Bringing these elements to the fore allows me to bring more of myself into the workplace without shrinking or holding back for the sake of others/(oppressors) comfort." Another BIPOC male participant wrote, "The Bodhi framework was helpful to really allow me to live in my wisdom within my body and to recognize that a centered self is one that identifies harm."

> *"Using nature to build our organizing forms was a concept that I find valuable to help think creatively and not default of the colonizing patterns."*

- **Anti-racist covenant.** A BIPOC female participant shared, "The covenant work was exceptional and we didn't get a good record of what happened, which is something I would have liked."

Several participants also shared that the content taken together was very impactful and empowering. A BIPOC male participant wrote, "The comprehensiveness was most impactful—overpowering, more so than any single content element. Not only does this strengthen my resolve, but also empowers me."

One KL participant described the value of having official race and social justice documents to share back with their team. "I think the biggest benefit for me was having the material, having the content, having it written down, you know, being able to be in a leadership position and bring it back to our department, with the RSJI logo on those materials. We started to fold in and started having some training sessions based on the information that we had. Having that document about, you know, the truth… which is the government is responsible for being anti-racist and telling that to the City employees in the officials that this is your responsibility, you know."

> *A BIPOC female participant wrote, "Bringing these elements to the fore allows me to bring more of myself into the workplace without shrinking or holding back for the sake of others/(oppressors) comfort."*

PROCESS ELEMENTS

- **Sharing space and time with a network of anti-racist organizers.**

- **Transformational, anti-racist organizing modeled** by facilitators and others.

- **Small group breakout sessions** and discussions. One white female

participant wrote, "I learned from the wisdom of my peers in the small group discussions." A BIPOC female said, "The breakout rooms were great openers to transparency amongst diverse racial groups. I was able to make some great connections and worked on a few project consultations due to the transparent conversations that took place."

- **Consistent anti-racist best-practices,** e.g. naming positionality and race, focusing on relational culture.

- Voluntary, optional **racial caucuses.**

- **Storytelling—**both sharing and listening.

- **Brief presentations by facilitators.**

- **Whole group discussion.**

- **Practicing transformational, anti-racist organizing to "build the muscle."**

- **Living systems practices.**

- **Homework,** such as reflective assignments.

- **Peer-to-peer learning.**

LEAST HELPFUL ELEMENTS OF KL

CURRICULUM TOPICS

Many KL participants shared that "everything was impactful" and some noted that it was hard to score how useful

something was because each response was nuanced; likewise, some of the elements participants cited as less helpful they ultimately embraced, which led to considerable change. Also, like SoT, some aspects of KL's transformational, relational approach caused discomfort among participants who were accustomed to more transactional institutional patterns rooted in white supremacy culture. Several of their comments reflected a struggle to shed familiar norms or detach from the pressures of the institution—challenges discussed often in KL sessions, since it is so difficult—and in some cases they reflect both discomfort and the ability to move past obstacles and resistance. Even with this complexity, many of their responses recognized the value of what was difficult for them to engage with personally.

- **Content that felt like review.** Decolonization, racism, social identities, and internalized racism were topics some found less helpful because they were already well versed in them. One BIPOC female person explained, "I have studied this in college as my major." Others shared that they were more impacted by unfamiliar concepts.

- **Centering, breathing, and the Our Bodhi Project Frame.** One BIPOC female participant shared, "Centering/breathing and the Bodhi activities were sometimes more spiritual than I am comfortable with. It just didn't resonate with me, though I understand the concept and reason for incorporation." A white male participant shared, "At first, I

struggled with the time spent centering ourselves and the Bodhi Project. Over time I began to appreciate it and now I take time to meditate on my own." A BIPOC female participant also expressed disliking but desiring work in this area: "Although I find it very necessary to the work, I often struggle to get there." Another BIPOC female participant shared similar sentiments: "If anything, the Bodhi framework didn't resonate as much with me. In the middle of a stressful workday, it was just hard to flip a switch and feel truly a part of that."

- **Refresher content vs. new content.** A BIPOC male participant explained, "While this curriculum touched on many of the same themes [as previous capacity-building experiences], the approach was so different and refreshing that I felt I was able to make my own new personal discoveries."

- **Living systems.** A BIPOC female participant shared, "I appreciated all the elements, but did not connect as much with living systems. I think understanding that our coliberation is tied makes sense and how we're all living things, but I think I'm a type of person who is generally less in touch with my emotions. The factual information or data was more important to me. However, I think the living systems portion of it brought me outside of my comfort zone."

PROCESS ELEMENTS

- **The timing of the final modules** "felt really rushed to be able to fully process the content," according to one BIPOC female participant.

- **Integration of Our Bodhi Project throughout the curriculum.** A BIPOC female participant shared, "I liked the Our Bodhi Project aspects but they felt a bit like they didn't quite go with the flow of the rest of the curriculum, like they were plunked in and not integrated from the beginning. So a little jarring, but if they were integrated from the start it would be great and I believe would enhance the curriculum."

- **The composition of the breakout sessions.** In the post-survey, a white female participant shared, "I had a really hard time in my breakout sessions. I seemed to be paired with all white folks..."

- **Making an anti-racist covenant.** One BIPOC female participant shared, "Though it struck me in some ways as the shift from ally to accomplice, I'm just not sure that this shift accomplishes the same shift in perspective. I didn't feel any more committed to the work because I was entering into a covenant rather than just an agreement." In juxtaposition, another participant BIPOC female called the covenant process "exceptional" but wanted better documentation of the process.

Enablers, Barriers & Limitations

SoT and KL participants were asked to share what acted as enablers, barriers, or limitations in their learning experiences in Storytelling Sessions and Circles, observations, mini feedback surveys, and the pre- and post-surveys. These data sources were systematically reviewed by reading through Observation Checklists and notes, reviewing relevant thematic codes from Storytelling Session and Circle transcripts, and compiling responses to relevant survey questions. For example, Storytelling Circles were asked, "What barriers did you face while participating in Shape of Trust / the Key Leaders Series? What factors enabled/ supported engagement, learning, and success?"

Lists of enablers and barriers were triangulated and compiled across data collection methods in both projects and listed from most to least frequently mentioned. This information was also supplemented with memos from qualitative analysis. Below is a distillation of factors that aided or inhibited the success of SoT and KL.

ENABLERS GLEANED FROM OBSERVATIONS

SoT participants themselves did not cite any specific enabling factors that enhanced their learning experience. However, KL participants mentioned that being invited to participate in the project served to sanction the KL series as part of their work, which

helped to prevent supervisor pushback. They also mentioned that the series made race and social justice more visible across the City. Enablers are listed below from most to least frequently mentioned across data sources.

- **Dedicated time and resources for leaders**, especially female and BIPOC leaders, to ask powerful questions and do deep thinking to create transformational, anti-racist capacity-building experiences over multiple years and spanning across departments.

- **Highly committed facilitators** who were consistently adaptive and responsive, and modeled best practices skillfully as a multi-racial team. This included the facilitators continuing to hold brave spaces and race and social justice learning sessions during challenging times.

- **Facilitator authenticity.**

- **The wide array of activities and multimodal forms of engagement**, including race and social justice best practice; POC-based and global Indigenous ways of knowing, being, seeing, and systems of valuation; engagement of diverse learning styles (e.g., auditory, visual, kinesthetic); and an experience tailored to broad neurodiversity though music, art, secular mindfulness, physical movement, visualization, etc.

- **Fidelity to the spirit of the project**, even as many activities were adapted or shortened.

- **Interdepartmental collaboration.**

- **The virtual space enhancing intimacy** among group members for some participants, as participants' private home environments were made visible on the screen. (Notably, this presented a barrier or discomfort for others.)

SoT BARRIERS, CHALLENGES & LIMITATIONS

SoT participants faced a number of challenges in overcoming discomfort while transitioning from the learning space, where they were supported by coaching from the facilitators and their peers, to real-world application, where they may be the only person interrupting racism and advocating for anti-racist practices. Many SoT participants used the group learning space to surface and seek support on managing people above them in the City hierarchy as opposed to supporting those they supervised and managed. Some of the SoT challenges listed below point to where participants were on their equity journeys as well as to SoT's shifting structure and format, as it had to be adapted on the fly to meet ever-evolving circumstances and participant needs and requests.

The following barriers and limitations were cited by SoT respondents in Storytelling Circles and surveys, when they were asked to describe what was making it hard to bring what they learned from SoT back to their workplaces. Barriers are listed below from most to least frequently mentioned across data sources.

- **The concept of white supremacy culture as threatening** to white and some BIPOC people because it often pushes them to critically question identity, beliefs, and behaviors, and face complicity with racism. It also provokes fear of the consequences of challenging the status quo.

- **Body-based practices being unfamiliar** in professional spaces.

- **Cultivating relational culture** and using it strategically.

- **Introducing the Bodhi Frame** into a broader context.

- **Moving to virtual learning "overnight"** and the concomitant challenges with human connection being harder on screen than it is in-person, and especially when it was brand new to most participants.

- **White supremacy culture within their department impeding self-care and attention to mind-body-heart-spirit** as essential strategies for racial and social justice.

- **Difficulties breaking through "ceilings" of anti-racist understanding** among leaders and skeptics. One participant explained that many staff in lower levels of the workplace hierarchy have an advanced understanding of anti-racist concepts while a lack of understanding is common among higher-level leaders. Another BIPOC

male participant said, "I feel like penetrating the highest levels of leadership is needed. Often we are walking the talk and it's levels much higher than us that shut down work that has made progress."

A BIPOC female participant added, "Middle-aged leadership has become so privileged in a white male way that to be diverse could cost you the job. I've seen POC turn white in leadership forgetting their culture, humanity, and even faith beliefs. It's staff that feel powerless and made to compromise on projects and policies. As a resource for those individuals, I instead have been lied about and evaluated as doing poorly. I did not act, walk, and talk like them and know more than them, so was considered dangerous or had baggage."

KL BARRIERS, CHALLENGES & LIMITATIONS

The following barriers and limitations were cited by KL participants in Storytelling Circles and the post-survey when they described what was making it hard to embody and bring what they learned back to their workplaces. Notably, this list reflects the greater degree of experience most KL participants had with race and social justice concepts. Barriers, challenges, and limitations are listed below from most to least frequently mentioned across data sources.

- Internal and external resistance, e.g., resistance to grounding exercises

- Supervisor pushback

- Conservative departmental leadership

- Urgency around deadlines (part of white supremacy culture)

- Working for an entity rooted in white supremacy culture while rising to be responsible to oneself and community

- White supremacy culture in who is commended for doing race and social justice work (white people more than BIPOC)

- Lost history of past race and social justice work at the City and the systematic dismantlement of previous work

- Limited catering to neuro-diverse learning styles

ADDITIONAL LIMITATIONS

One additional limitations observed over the course of the SoT and KL projects and discussed with project facilitators in Storytelling Sessions were the challenges inherent in using a transformational approach. For example, facilitators discussed how SoT's shifting structure and format optimized flexibility to adapt on the fly to meet ever-evolving circumstances and participant needs and requests. However, related challenges included constantly having to work and rework the curriculum, the energy expended to meet myriad emergent needs, and a significant delta between the original program design and how contextual factors necessitated it to change, e.g., adaptation to an online format; providing

"When we've had white hires come into our department, we've been told how committed they have been to racial equity work," a BIPOC participant in KL said. *"And I think that's a really hard pill to swallow for those of us who are people of color, right? This is not just the work we do when we are getting paid. This is how we walk through the world. ...When we want to push on issues that will impact or change how those things are being discussed, we are immediately helpless and told that we're being too aggressive or inappropriate or you're being unsupportive. ...Take a moment and see how that same Certificate of Completion is not going to be as praised in people of color. That disparity is still existing, even in the Key Leaders space. It's really powerful thinking about who's lauded, who's not lauded, and even in this context great upheaval so many changes, you know, seeing the white supremacy play out in terms of the expectations in the workplace."*

additional voluntary, optional racial caucus experiences and workshopping spaces; changing the menu of activities offered; adding one-on-one midpoint check-in assessments between facilitators and each participant; adding a final project, etc.

Summary of Key Findings

SoT and KL were the first transformational, anti-racist organizing capacity-building experiences of their kind in a local U.S. government. They were designed and delivered during the COVID-19 pandemic and and immense national and local uprisings against racial injustice.

In no particular order, below are the most salient findings from SoT and KL, based on a synthesis of all outcomes and evaluation data.

1) BIPOC, FEMALE, AND LGBTQ+ LEADERSHIP IN PROJECT DESIGN AND DELIVERY WAS KEY TO SUCCESS.

Observations and Storytelling Sessions revealed that both projects were co-designed and delivered by women, including BIPOC and LGBTQ+ people with long histories of organizing for racial and social justice. Their personal and professional backgrounds, passions, knowledge, and longstanding commitment to collaborative transformational, anti-racist organizing—spurred in part by lived experiences as part of oppressed groups—shaped the development of the projects.

The facilitators had a significant depth of personal and professional experience both navigating intersectional forms of oppression (e.g., race and gender) and guiding anti-racist educational experiences. This allowed them to engage in skillful self-disclosure and co-create brave spaces where participants felt comfortable sharing and engaging in their own inside-out transformations. For example, having a mixed-race facilitation team that modeled the use of leading race

and social justice language and practices was essential to both SoT and KL project success. They were able to address perspectives from white, BIPOC, and multiracial participants by drawing on their own experiences, modeling best practices and taking accountability for human moments when they were less skillful—supporting others to do the same.

Of note, the majority of participants identified as cisgender women. Thus, while having BIPOC and female facilitators was invaluable, additional work may be needed to reach cisgender men for anti-racist capacity-building experiences, as part of an overall effort to get more cisgender men in RSJI work and positions. Differentiated strategies to engage white and BIPOC cisgender men may also be needed, as observations and Storytelling Sessions with facilitators revealed that white cisgender men are less likely to engage in anti-racism work overall than BIPOC cisgender men.

2) ADAPTATION TO SHIFTING REAL-TIME, REAL-WORLD FACTORS HELPED ENABLE DEEP LEARNING.

For both SoT and KL, qualitative data collection revealed that contextual factors—such as the COVID-19 pandemic, political polarization, and racial uprisings—shaped project learning environments and objectives significantly over time. Racial inequities pervaded all of these events and experiences, and the impacts on BIPOC participants were noticeably more intense. For example, multiple BIPOC participants lost family members to COVID-19 and were unable to attend their funerals and grieve communally.

The choice to continue to offer transformational, anti-racist organizing educational experiences and build capacity in the face of such significant social, political, cultural, and economic strains and changes speaks to the facilitators' skill, willingness to adapt, and ability to see and meet human and institutional needs at a critical time. In mini feedback surveys, the post-survey, and Storytelling Sessions and Circles participants and facilitators emphasized many extraordinary challenges that arose in 2020, but also how helpful it was to have a space, skillful guides, and a cohort to move through these experiences together—making meaning, learning, and practicing skills to process trauma and anti-racist organizing. It is also important to note the dynamic of additional work and strain that people from oppressed groups often take on, especially in times of crisis. This often benefits the institutions they represent even though they are not always fully supported to ensure their ongoing, holistic wellbeing is preserved.

Members of the project team experienced this additional emotional labor and capacity in different ways based on their different positionalities and roles on the team. Individual and group accountability—fundamental components of collective care—were critical for project team members as they navigated both their own and participants' evolving needs. This looked like fundamental relational culture behaviors such as clearly communicating what they could and could not provide each other and asking for what they needed, to minimize placing additional burden on their teammates.

This supported facilitators in guiding participants through racism and oppression as it played out at individual, interpersonal, institutional, and structural levels, helping people meet real-time, real-world challenges in the moment. The facilitators tailored content and created emergent offerings to help people process (e.g., breathwork, guided visualizations, workshopping sessions around current issues). Experts such as Dr. Sará King, Dr. Dan Siegel, Dr. Bessel Van der Kolk, and others have explained how adaptive, trauma-informed teaching fosters deeper learning, enhanced neuroplasticity (or rewiring of the brain, body, and behavior), and integration of what one learns into new patterns of thinking and behavior. Adaptation is key to inside-out transformation.

3) THE SoT AND KL CAPACITY-BUILDING EXPERIENCES PROVIDED SPACE FOR INSIDE-OUT TRANSFORMATION, INCLUDING EXAMINATION OF VALUES AND MOVING FROM DISCONNECTION TO CONNECTION.

Some participants underwent a difficult process changing conscious and unconscious patterns as the facilitators guided them through individual and collective growth and discovery.[18] Each participant had their own journey through this process based on their previous experiences and awareness prior to their involvement in the projects. As described above, skillful trauma-informed facilitation was invaluable.

Additionally, observation of full group and voluntary, optional race-specific caucusing

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18   Sams J. Dancing the Dream: The Seven Sacred Paths of Human Transformation. New York: Harper One, 1998.

spaces revealed that learning spaces and capacity-building experiences for BIPOC and for white participants is helpful, or even necessary, and that the potential benefits and harms of multiracial learning offerings should be carefully considered. For example, several white participants who were earlier on in building core anti-racist awareness, knowledge, and skills stated that they were just realizing that racism exists. Such comments can harm BIPOC, especially in the face of an onslaught of racialized deaths due to COVID-19, police violence, and rising xenophobia. Thus, having spaces where white and BIPOC participants can separately process and learn, and then come back together as a whole group, seem to be most supportive of fostering learning and wellbeing.

4) PRACTITIONERS OF TRANSFORMATIONAL, ANTI-RACIST EDUCATIONAL WORK MAY BENEFIT BY UNDERSTANDING AND GAUGING PARTICIPANTS' READINESS FOR CHANGE.

The Transtheoretical Model is a framework that has been used to explain how behavior change is shaped by a person's readiness for change.[19] The model includes four stages: precontemplation, contemplation, action, and maintenance. A person's stage of readiness to change toward a more healthful behavior is often predictive of whether and to what degree changes will occur and be sustained. Greater readiness correlates to greater behavior change.

While KL participants consistently demonstrated their prior race and social justice experience, most SoT participants, of all races, had less race and social justice experience than anticipated, which meant that anticipated mid- and long-term outcomes were minimal, though facilitators tailored the curriculum to suit participant needs. This was observed in the following patterns:

- **Many SoT participants had "aha" moments** and initial awareness or awakening to truths about racism and white supremacy culture.

- **Many SoT participants were just beginning to explore RSJ practices, what it meant to embody them,** and how to embed them into the workplace.

- **On average across all SoT participants, the greatest measured gains from the beginning to the end were made in supportive anti-racist organizing relationships (33.3%), foundational RSJ knowledge (30.0%), beginning to practice transformational, anti-racist organizing skills (26.7%), and readiness to show up as a transformational, anti-racist leader in one's role(s) and department(s) (26.7%).**

Though some questions were asked of participants in advance, it was noticed that

19   Glanz K, River BK, Viswanath K. Health Behavior and Health Education: Theory, Research, and Practice. Fourth Edition. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2008. Print. Additional information can be found at University of Maryland (UMBC). The HABITS Lab at UMBC: Health and Addictive Behaviors: Investigating Transthoeretical Solutions. Website: https://habitslab.umbc.edu/urica/.

participants could have benefited from the use of a tool such as the readiness for change scale like URICA (University of Rhode Island Change Assessment Scale—DELTA Version) to help screen participants for transformational, anti-racist experiences. This would help facilitators better gauge whether participants are at a more introductory or seasoned level of understanding or readiness to adopt anti-racist thinking and behaviors. This could have the dual benefit of informing curriculum development and having more measured expectations of what changes might be seen in participants over time.

5) OFFERING MULTIPLE, RELATED TRANSFORMATIONAL, ANTI-RACIST EXPERIENCES CAN BE SYNERGISTIC.

Storytelling Sessions and Circles revealed that the KL series emerged in part in response to a need for more in-depth and intermediate/advanced transformational, anti-racist organizing capacity-building that centered cross-departmental relationship building and strengthening. SoT informed and accelerated the development of KL in various ways, such as application of facilitators' learnings about transitioning to an online teaching format and adapting to participant needs in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and racial uprisings. Facilitators were able to apply lessons learned and best practices, foresee and surmount potential barriers, and avoid pitfalls from SoT in the KL series.

6) EMPOWERING SEASONED ANTI-RACIST CHAMPIONS TO FOSTER THEIR IDENTITIES AS ANTI-RACIST ORGANIZERS AND STRENGTHEN STRATEGIC ANTI-RACIST ORGANIZING NETWORKS COULD LEAD TO GREATER IMPACT.

Observations revealed that KL participants had intermediate or advanced anti-racist knowledge and practices. Throughout the project, they increasingly embraced their own identities as anti-racist leaders and demonstrated consistent application of critical lenses, embodied anti-racist practice, and strategic organizing. A KL post-survey asked participants to retroactively rate where they believed they were at the beginning of the KL Series and then rate where they felt they were at the end. The survey showed that most KL participants viewed themselves as anti-racist organizers who were ready already in, and working to deepen, their roles as anti-racist leaders and champions.

It is well accepted in the field of psychology and study of behavior change that a shift in one's underlying identities is linked to behaviors that align with the values and perspectives about that identity. Therefore, empowering seasoned anti-racist organizers to view themselves as change agents and fostering coordinated, strategic organizing is a powerful step toward driving change in individuals and groups that can drive the strategic dismantlement of racism and oppression.

7) LIBERATORY PEDAGOGY, INCLUDING DELIVERING CORE CONTENT AND ENSURING TEACHING APPROACHES EMBODIED TRANSFORMATIONAL, ANTI-RACIST PRINCIPLES, WAS CENTRAL TO THE CREATION OF BRAVE SPACES AND INDIVIDUAL AND GROUP TRANSFORMATION.

Many adaptations were made to meet challenging sociopolitical, economic, and sociospiritual realities, a liberatory practice that breaks from the traditional approach of delivering fixed—rather than living, adaptive, emergent—curriculum content. As liberatory learning experiences, SoT and KL co-created knowledge and elevated collective wisdom within the group. By contrast, traditional teaching often features facilitators filling participants' minds with knowledge and taking the exclusive role of expert—with concomitant "power over," disempowerment, and silencing dynamics.

Observed liberatory pedagogy included using emergent examples and concerns voiced by participants to shape educational experiences in the moment, in addition to mindfulness and somatic practice, arts- and music-based engagements, culturally relevant and tailored content, and support for diverse learning styles (e.g., visual, auditory, kinetic/tactile). Facilitators also emphasized relational (versus transactional) interactions, empowering and valuing a multiplicity of perspectives, co-creating a space that offered grace around not knowing and making mistakes. Facilitators often modeled naming their own past and current growth and took accountability for missteps, offering a soft invitation for participants to

do the same. They guided and consistently encouraged participanats to adopt ecosystemic thinking and consider the ripple effects of values, beliefs, and behaviors on workplace interactions, processes, policies, and power dynamics.

These liberatory practices served as the foundation for the brave spaces that emerged for multilevel (individual, interpersonal, institutional) and multidimensional (physical, emotional, political, spiritual) learning. These spaces were valued differently along lines of racial/ethnic identity: Many white participants expressed appreciating a space to make mistakes, learn, practice new language and skills, and ask questions in voluntary, optional white caucus spaces without unintentionally causing harm to BIPOC peers. BIPOC participants also expressed that the voluntary, optional BIPOC caucusing space was a "soul refuge" where collective experiences and grief could be shared, they could be held in community, and where empowered strategic coalition building and organizing happened.

The projects' use of liberatory pedagogy offered multiple doorways to transformative anti-racist ways of being, seeing, knowing, and organizing. This approach impelled critical thought, examining and reshaping identity, and anti-racist and anti-oppressive behaviors. Participants expressed appreciating the freedom to try on new ways of engaging with themselves, others, and the often challenging topics of racism and oppression.

8) AN EMPHASIS ON RELATIONAL CULTURE ENHANCED TRUST AND BELONGING.

The projects' facilitators prioritized building a relational culture due to fostering strong bonds being a central tenet of liberatory pedagogy, which enhances resonance, trust, a sense of belonging, and willingness to be vulnerable and work through challenges as a group. Elements of relational culture included strengthening bonds, developing shared language and practices, expressions of care and trust, a growing sense of belonging, networking and collaboration beyond the capacity-building sessions, and increasing individual and collective accountability. This relational culture, rather than the standard transactional culture participants were used to, created a learning environment where deep individual and collective exploration and learning could occur.

9) TRANSFORMATIVE EVALUATION METHODS HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO BOLSTER PROJECTS BY ALIGNING ASSESSMENT APPROACHES WITH THE DESIGN OF THE PROJECTS THEMSELVES.

Transformative Evaluation served as an anti-racist/anti-oppressive series of engagements in itself: A diverse group of stakeholders participated throughout the evaluation, helping to develop assessment tools, review and make meaning of data, and decide together how and when data would be shared. Additionally, global Indigenous lenses and ways of being, seeing, knowing, and valuing were consistently applied throughout the assessment process. Triangulation of rich quantitative, qualitative, and non-traditional data sources also led to a more robust tapestry of findings that ultimately painted a clearer and more nuanced picture of what changes were occurring in the projects, as well as why and how changes were or were not being observed. Consequently, transformative epistemology and transformative axiology resulted from the evaluation team's collaboration: What was considered valid knowledge and what was deemed valuable in the evaluation process shifted as a result of employing a Transformative Evaluation approach.

10) SIGNIFICANT DEDICATED SPACE, TIME, HUMAN AND MATERIAL RESOURCES, AND SUPPORTS FOR TRANSFORMATIONAL, ANTI-RACIST ORGANIZING WERE NECESSARY FOR THESE PROJECTS TO SUCCEED.

The assessment revealed that how learning experiences are crafted and delivered mattered at least as much as what was included in the experiences. Delivering dynamic, adaptive, and emergent content to meet diverse learners' needs in times of extraordinary change and stress required copious space, time, and resources of a dedicated group of individuals over many years. This was true for all elements of the project—from curriculum design and facilitation to ongoing participant support and the use of Transformative Evaluation. The rewards of this investment included the ability to meaningfully engage participants along a spectrum of knowledge, experience, and readiness to deepen into anti-racist work in highly stressful contexts, helping them to hone relevant skills and apply knowledge in real-time. Additionally, given the deep and consistent investments made into this work over time, a second program was able to be designed and delivered emergently for those

ready to take their work as transformational, anti-racist organizers to the next level.

In summary, SoT and KL led to key shifts in anti-racist knowledge, relationship building, and behaviors during one of the most racially and socio-politically charged times of the past century. All participants and facilitators experienced some level of transformation in mind, body, heart, and/or spirit. The facilitators, specific teaching approaches, tools employed, co-created spaces for learning, individual and collective accountability practices, Transformative Evaluation, intentionality—all of these were essential to this transformational, anti-racist work.

It is important for local government to invest time and resources into transformational, anti-racist learning experiences that actively provide space to push back on white supremacy culture structures and practices in real-time and reimagine and put into place ones that are liberatory. Programs like SoT and KL make a difference and should to be cultivated throughout organizations for the benefit of individual participants, the organizations in which they operate, the public they serve, and the communities with which they interact outside of their professional roles.

Further study and research should be done with larger groups to verify whether the outcomes seen in the pilot study hold when the projects are replicated in different times and contexts. In addition, future assessment should continue to examine impacts by race/ethnicity and gender, but also look

more closely at differences by sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, position in the organizational hierarchy, and other characteristics. While these characteristics were examined to some extent in this pilot assessment, race/ethnicity and gender were the primary focus. Thus, more time and resources might be dedicated to assessing differences of a variety of characteristics in the future. Future studies would also benefit from comparing the processes and impacts of using traditional and transformative evaluation approaches.

Suggested Project Improvements

Best practices and lessons learned across data collection methods were used to formulate the recommendations for enhancing the overall experience and impact of future projects like SoT and KL. The suggested improvements below were culled from facilitators, participants, and the evaluation team. While some suggestions were made for either SoT or KL, most suggestions could apply and serve to improve future iterations of either project.

- **Invest in the ongoing development of those who create and facilitate transformational, anti-racist spaces.** The facilitation teams brought an array of different practices—from arts integration to somatic exercises and restorative approaches—individual experience, skills, and capacities varied. Given their varied backgrounds, it was important that the team cultivated shared creative and embodiment practices, which are critical to realizing deep shifts in culture, policy, and practice. Embodied practices among the team cultivate interconnection and belonging; love and care for the health and wellbeing of all living systems (including ourselves); the ability to stay present and grounded under pressure and in the face of conflict and resistance; and the ability to take responsibility for harms we cause, name them, and work to repair them. This approach is underpinned by evidence from Social Learning Theory that suggests that learning and behavior changes occur when we observe, model, and imitate the behaviors, attitudes, and emotional reactions of others.[20] This could look like learning experiences and other capacity-building support for all City employees who facilitate anti-racism learning.

- **Incorporate anti-racist work case studies** to demonstrate ways to operationalize race and social justice in government from within and beyond the City. SoT used joint problem-solving, role-play explorations, and the video of *The Shape of Trust* performance, and asked participants to share real-life examples from their departments to workshop the concepts, skills, and practices. KL facilitators guided participants through discussions focused on workplaces examples. Anonymized case studies and longer role-plays could supplement and reinforce skill application and learning.

- **Provide an online learning hub of tools and resources.** Like a SharePoint site or a OneDrive, this could be a place to compile materials and facilitate sharing back information with teams. It could also include resources or modified modules that participants can share with their teams and/or departments. Additional capacity, which these project teams didn't have, would be needed to create and manage such a site.

- **Conduct interviews with prospective SoT participants.** Implement additional intake measures to help adjust for participants who perceive themselves

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20   Bandura L. Social Learning Theory.

as further along in their learning than they are, so that session plans can be prepared accordingly.

- **Provide participants with support and tools following the learning experience.** This support could come in various forms, such as a follow-up session (or more) that re-emphasizes strategies and tactics for applying the concepts from SoT and KL. It could also include workplace observation by qualified coaches who could provide ongoing mentorship to participants, and/or a perpetual support mechanism offering advice on specific race and social justice efforts. The initial SoT design included bi-monthly follow-up sessions focused on skill-building, practice application, and reflection. Those who participated in KL are now engaging with the materials shared in KL through their work in various Citywide and departmental spaces, with the support of RSJI liaisons from the Office for Civil Rights.

- **Increase opportunities for ongoing peer-to-peer support.** These could include a buddy system, accountability groups, or coaching circles of continuing support from fellow participants for regular reflecting, organizing, and strategizing. Though part of the original SoT design, adjustments had to be made to respond to participant needs during the pandemic.

- **Explore possibility to offer KL and SoT programs continually.**

Offering transformational, anti-racist capacity-building experiences like SoT and KL every year or every other year could build considerable shared understanding, language, and momentum for collective change. One option might include offering past participants to connect, build relationships and support organizing.

- **Expand program content to senior leaders within the City.** Many of the SoT and KL participants were not senior leaders and several respondents across data collection methods pointed to the need for greater engagement among City leadership. Engaging departments' senior-most leadership in intensive, transformational, anti-racist capacity building could support collective efforts. In the City's case, spaces such as the quarterly RSJI Directors' Forums might be expanded. This space already uses much of the same content as SoT and KL.

- **Consider ways to institutionalize the ripple effect.** Institution-wide support for implementing this transformational, anti-racist capacity building could help program participants apply what they learned with their teams and departments. At the City, RSJI liaisons from SOCR already use this content in their work with the departments they support, and transformational, anti-racist framing is being incorporated into the revised annual departmental Racial Equity Plans and measurements of racial equity outcomes. Departments

themselves could more regularly use the content as well. For example, annual staff days could focus on collective wellbeing, transformational, anti-racist content could be shared during new hire onboarding, and participation in learning experiences like SoT and KL could be required for certain levels of leadership. Similarly, each department's Race and Social Justice Initiative Change Team Charter could incorporate transformational, anti-racist framing.

- **Provide a session calendar in advance and stick to it.** This was possible for KL, which began eight months into the pandemic. While this was the plan for SoT, COVID-19 impacts required real-time alterations. Likewise, in times when collective health won't be compromised, conduct sessions live and in-person.

- **Consider structural ways to incorporate support for personal RSJ learning into employee performance and expectations.** Institution-wide support is needed to incorporate and embed connections to equity-based practice and to participant application and action in their work. Connecting and being explicit about equity work in employee expectations and recognizing this work via performance reviews or other mechanisms will help articulate how employees share learning with their teams and departments, and will name the actions that are taking place following learning experiences such as SoT and KL.

Conclusion

SoT and KL offered cutting-edge, deep race and social justice capacity building at a pivotal moment in the racialized history of the United States. Contextual factors, particularly the COVID-19 pandemic and racial uprisings, played a major role in process and outcomes. Highly skilled and adaptive facilitators were key to the project's success, designing and delivering a dynamic blend of liberatory pedagogy, biopsychosocial science, and contemplative practice.

SoT participants gained considerable anti-racist and anti-oppression knowledge and begun putting that knowledge into practice in their behaviors. Some are starting to embody key practices, but comfort levels vary and more opportunities for practice and resources are needed. Many participants have formed valuable connections to themselves and their colleagues, but deeper, more consistent embodied practices and changes in workplace culture have yet to be seen.

KL design and delivery was enhanced by SoT development and learning, and the ability of the facilitators to create an emergent program during such a charged time in history speaks to the deep roots and robust ongoing efforts of leaders in transformational, anti-racist work and teaching. As a result, KL participants strengthened their transformational, anti-racist organizing network and engaged in strategic organizing.

In conclusion, these projects led to important shifts in anti-racist knowledge, relationship building, and behaviors, transforming the minds, bodies, hearts, and/or spirits of both participants and facilitators. Transformational, anti-racist learning is not only possible in local governmental spaces, it is helpful and merits further investment and expansion for the benefit of participants, organizations, and the public at large. It is necessary to shape realities that align with our deepest shared values and visions for a truly equitable future.

Appendices

Appendix A: Applications

- A1: **SoT Application #1**
- A2: **SoT Application #2**

Appendix B: **KL invitation**

Appendix C: **Respondent Profiles**

Appendix D: Surveys

- D1: **SoT Pre-Survey**
- D2: **SoT Mini Feedback Survey #1**
- D3: **SoT Mini Feedback Survey #2**
- D4: **SoT Post-Survey**
- D5: **KL Post-Survey**

Appendix E: SoT Evaluation Tools

- E1: **Storytelling Session interview questions**
- E2: **Storytelling Circle topic guide**
- E3: **SoT Observation Checklist**

Appendix F: **SoT Areas of Change – Full Data Table**