



# Moving Ideas into Action & the Relationships that Get Us There

Strategic Plan Development for Diversity, Equity, Justice, and Inclusion

Poverty & Opportunity Forum 2023

Shalini Suryanarayana & Drusilla Roessle



March is  
National Women's History Month  
Gender Equality Month  
Greek-American Heritage Month  
Irish-American Heritage Month

# Racial Injustice Calendar



A History of Racial Injustice

March ▾

29

Group of Black and White Worshipers  
Arrested for Attending Easter...

—  
1964

Churches Ban  
Clergy Entry

30

Convict Leasing System Re-Enslaves Black  
Men in Alabama

—  
1908



31

White Mob Lynches Marie Scott in Wagoner  
County, Oklahoma

—  
1914

MOB IN OKLAHOMA  
HANGS NEGRO WOMAN

On this day — Mar 30, 1908

# Convict Leasing System Re-Enslaves Black Men in Alabama



# Touchstones

**Be Present as fully as possible.** Be here with your doubts, fears and failings as well as your convictions, joys and successes, your listening as well as your speaking.

**Listen Generously to your own and one another's experience and discoveries.** Trust we all hold a piece of the puzzle and we need each other's pieces to understand the whole picture.

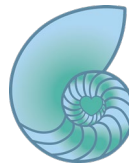
**Respect each other's ways of knowing and learning.** We are each responsible for our own journeys and cannot presume to know anyone else's answers.

**Speak from Your Heart.** Pause, listen with your whole body. Speak in your narrative, using "I" statements and letting words arrive from within.

**Turn to wonder.** Ask yourself, "I wonder what my reaction teaches me about myself?" Set aside judgment or critique to listen to others—and to yourself—more deeply.

**Practice asking questions that open.** We tend to offer each other counsel and corrections. When we offer open, generous questions, deeper knowing is possible.

**Respect Confidentiality.** Safety is built in when we can trust that our words and stories will remain with the people with whom we choose to share.



*Learned in practice with **WholeHeart, LLC** – Based on the Center for Courage & Renewal; 100 Million Healthier Lives Touchstones for Collaboration; Wholeheart communities of practice*

"If you give somebody skills and tools, and they haven't dealt with racism, they can become a more skillful racist."

**-Ron Chisom**



"Freedom is indivisible, and either we are working for freedom or you are working for the sake of your self-interests and I am working for mine."

**June Jordan**

"You can't be neutral on a moving train."

**-Howard**

**Zinn**



**EQUITY &  
RESULTS**

# Animating Questions

- What **principles** guide us to be in alignment with larger movements for equity and liberation from racial injustice?
- How can we understand and empower ourselves in **our distinct roles in a larger movement**?
- How we can be **strategic in moving our individual work** toward driving organizational/ institutional change?
- How can we move from the experience of talking, thinking, and planning around diversity, equity, justice, and inclusion, to experiences of **creating, growing, and doing**?
- How do we create conditions for **authentic and long-term collaboration** in cultures often defined by urgency and scarcity?



# Our Role in Larger Movements

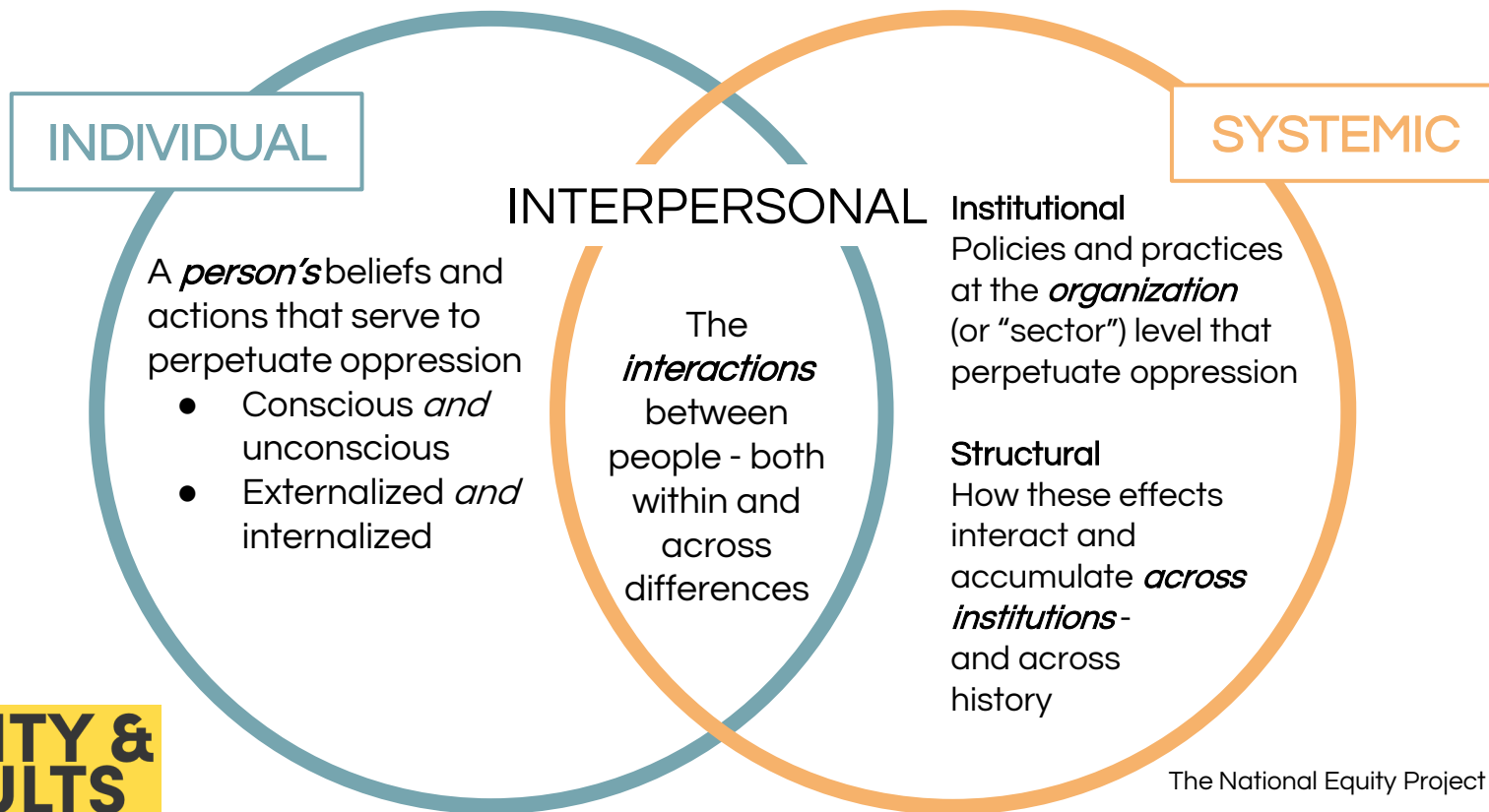
“The patterns of the universe repeat at scale.

...What we practice at the small scale sets the patterns for the whole system. ...I have to use my life to leverage a shift in the system by how I am, as much as with the things I do. This means actually being in my life, and it means bringing my values into my daily decision making.”

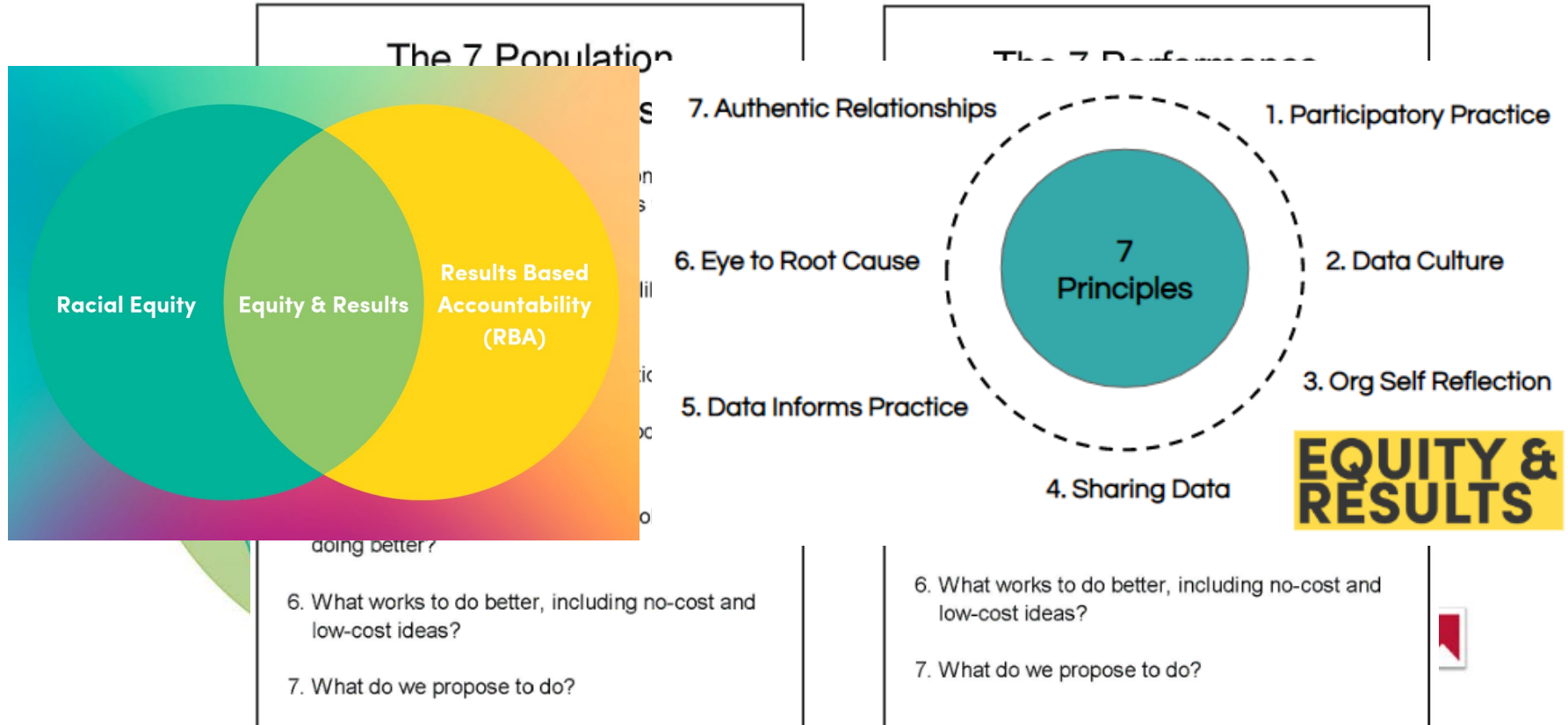
**adrienne maree brown,**  
Emergent Strategy; Pleasure  
Activism...



# Types of Racism: Patterns of Beliefs & Practices



# Results-Based Accountability & Collective Impact



# What are the principles that guide us?

## Principles guide **our individual ways in the world**

- What you personally believe in, feel is true, or feel is important (beliefs)
- Helps you make choices in your lives... (practices)

## ... and guide **our interpersonal relationships**

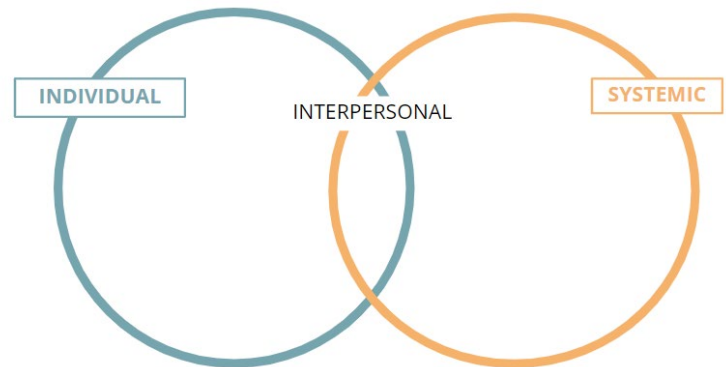
- What we agree together is important to us & how our different beliefs interact
- How we choose to practice and show up with one another, or how our different practices interact

## ...and guide **our organizations & institutions**

- How we portray ourselves (websites, statements)
- What our organizations and institutions show is important through policies, practices, investments
- How our organizations and institutions are designed

# Individual Reflection: Seeing Principles

- Draw a venn diagram on a piece of paper in front of you.
- **Individual:** Position yourself in the context of your whole life. What does accountability mean to you? How do you know you feel in right-relationship with others?
- **Systemic:** Position yourself in the context of your organizational culture. What does accountability mean there?
- **Interpersonal:** What feels seamless and what feels like a tension or disconnect as your personal and the system practices of accountability meet?



TENSION IS WHEN YOUR OLD REALITY  
PRESSES AGAINST YOUR NEW SHAPE

REALITY IS ABLE TO BE RESHAPED  
BASED OFF THE SHAPE YOU COMMIT  
TO HOLDING



@peathefearny

# Understanding Ourselves in Our Roles

## BOUNDARIES

Time we have  
Resources we have  
In scope/out of scope

## AUTHORITY

The right to do our work  
  
Formal authority  
Personal authority



## TASKS

The work to be done  
  
The process of getting it done

## ROLE

Job descriptions & expectations  
  
Where you jump in/fill in

## BART Organizational & Role Analysis

How do you see your role aligned with bigger movements for diversity, equity, justice, inclusion?

How are you empowered in your role? How are you perceived?

**What are some characteristics of your current work environment or culture that impact your ability to successfully implement transformative change?**

# Hallmarks of groups that are ready...

**Strong Infrastructure**  
Able to Measure Demographics;  
Feedback Mechanisms in Place

**No Siloes**  
Centralized Processes to Ensure Fair &  
Consistent Practices; Open  
Communication & Shared resources

## **Mindset of Abundance**

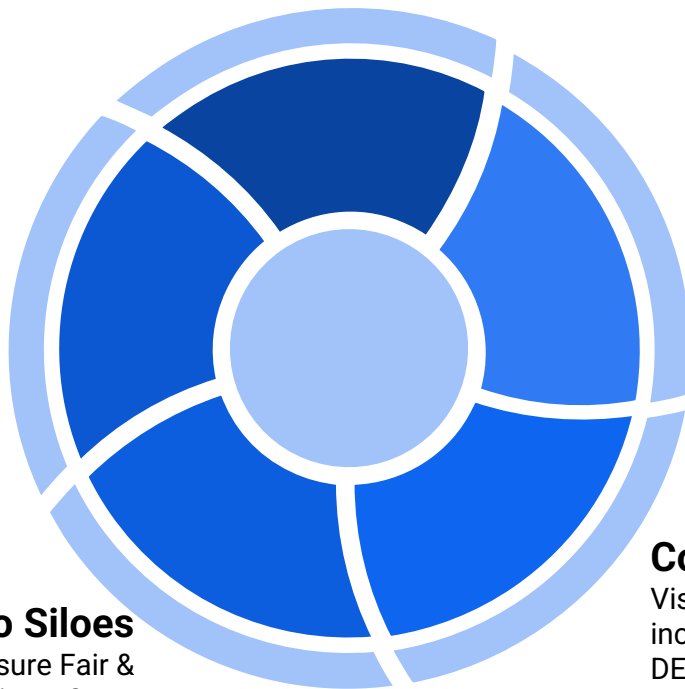
Resources and power are amplified when we work together

## **Self-Reflective Culture**

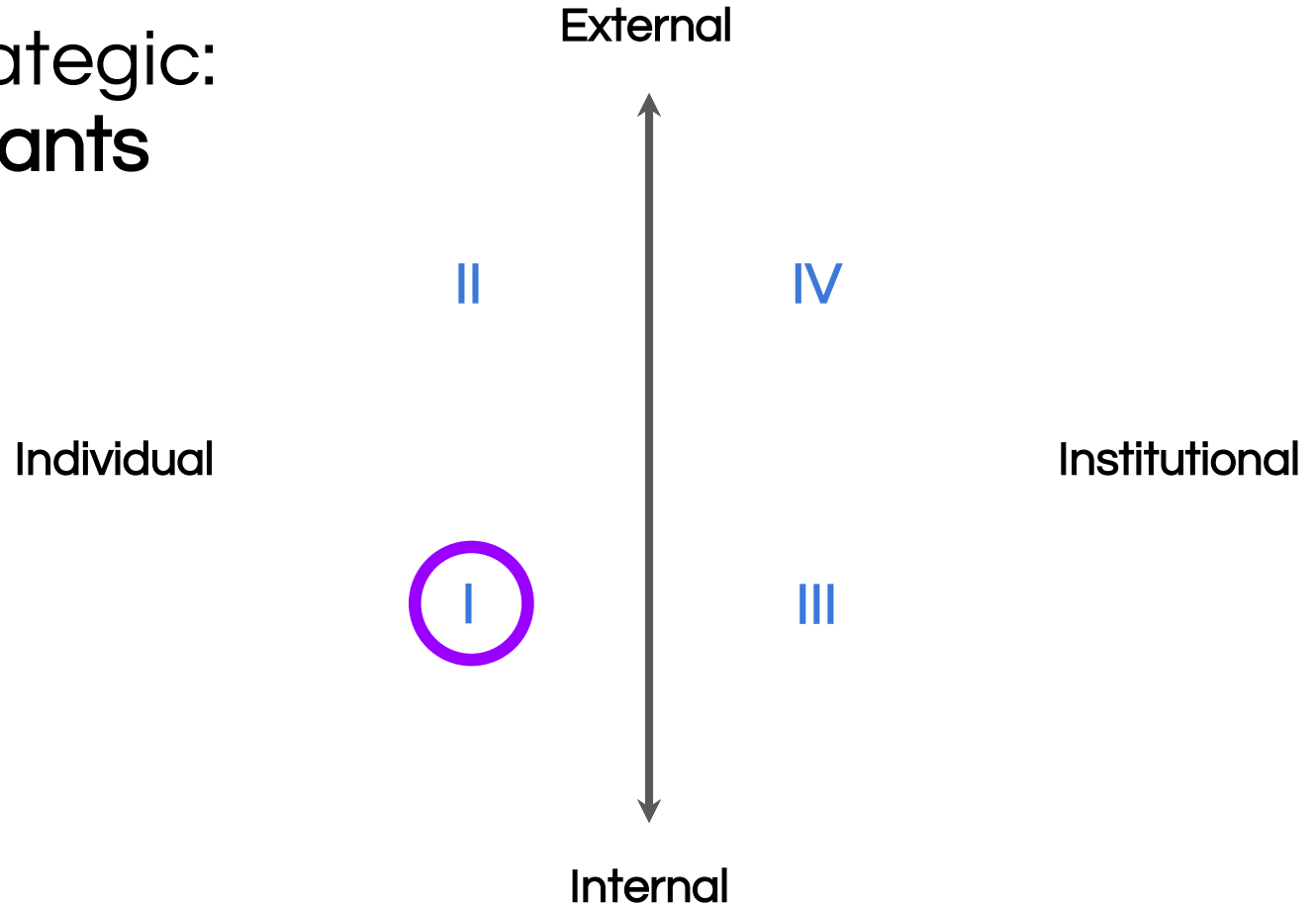
Culture that Welcomes Change, Discomfort, Imperfection, Learning; Promotes a Growth Mindset

## **Committed Leadership**

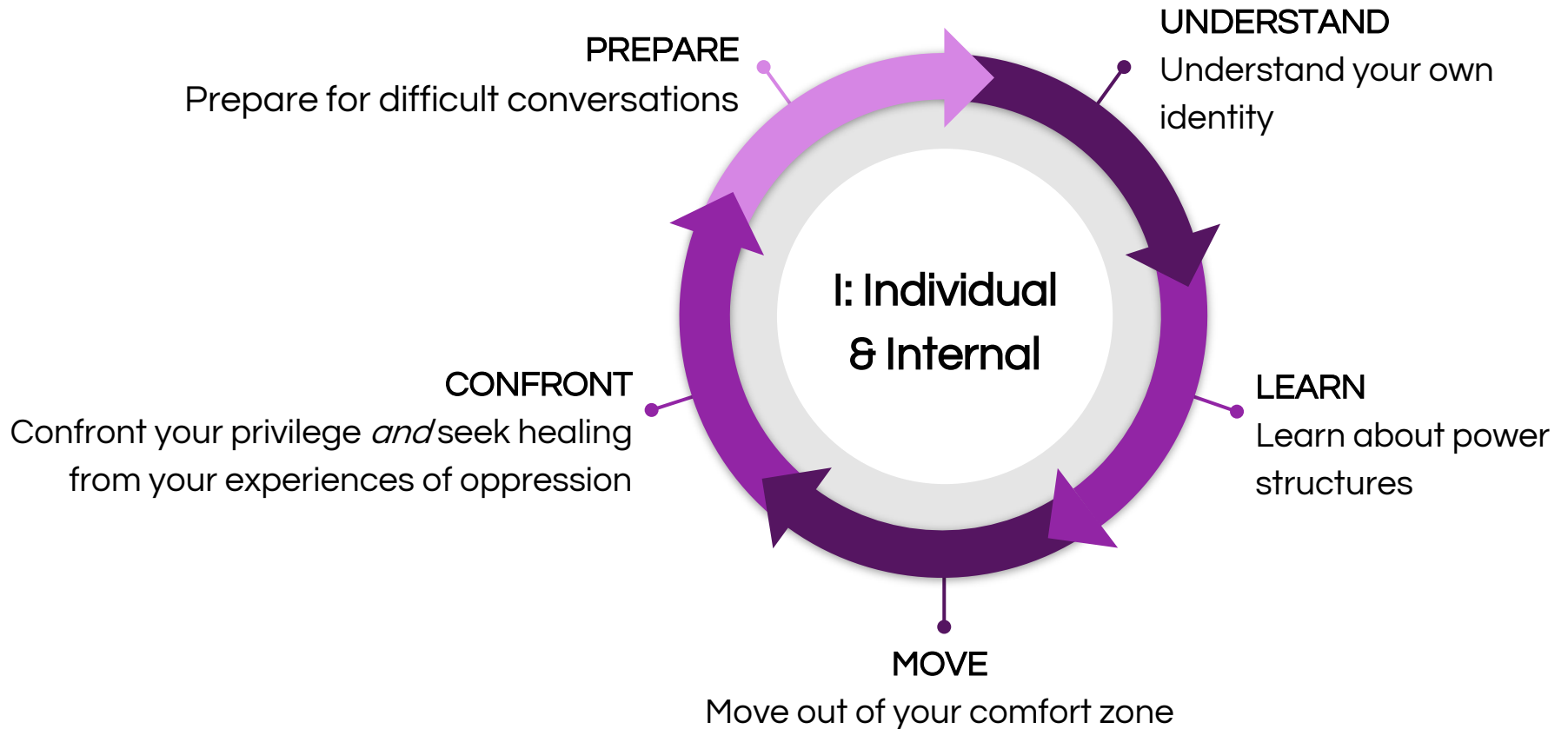
Visibly supportive – examples include signing a pledge, posting a DEI statement on the web site, creating DEI positions/committees



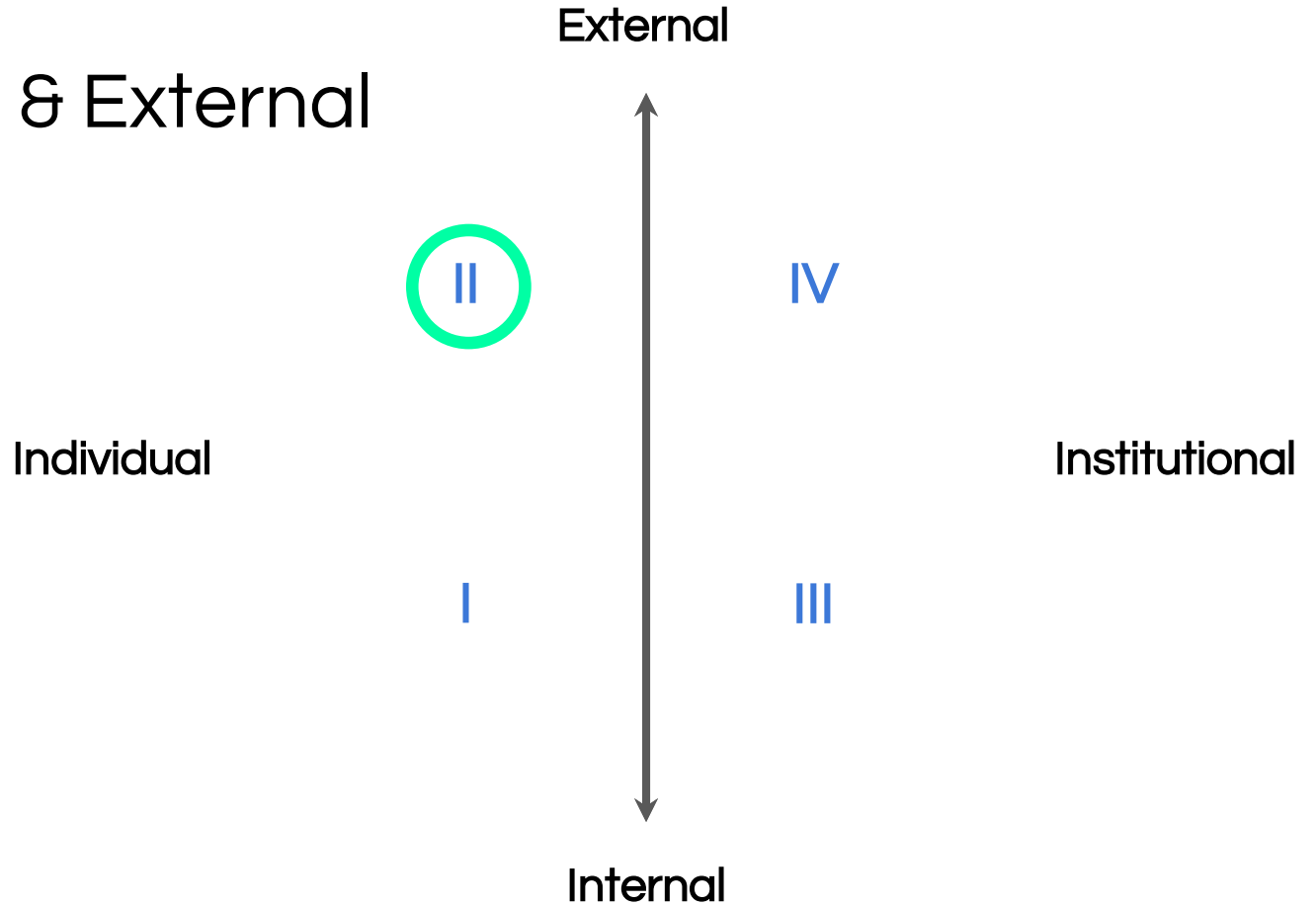
# Getting Strategic: Four Quadrants

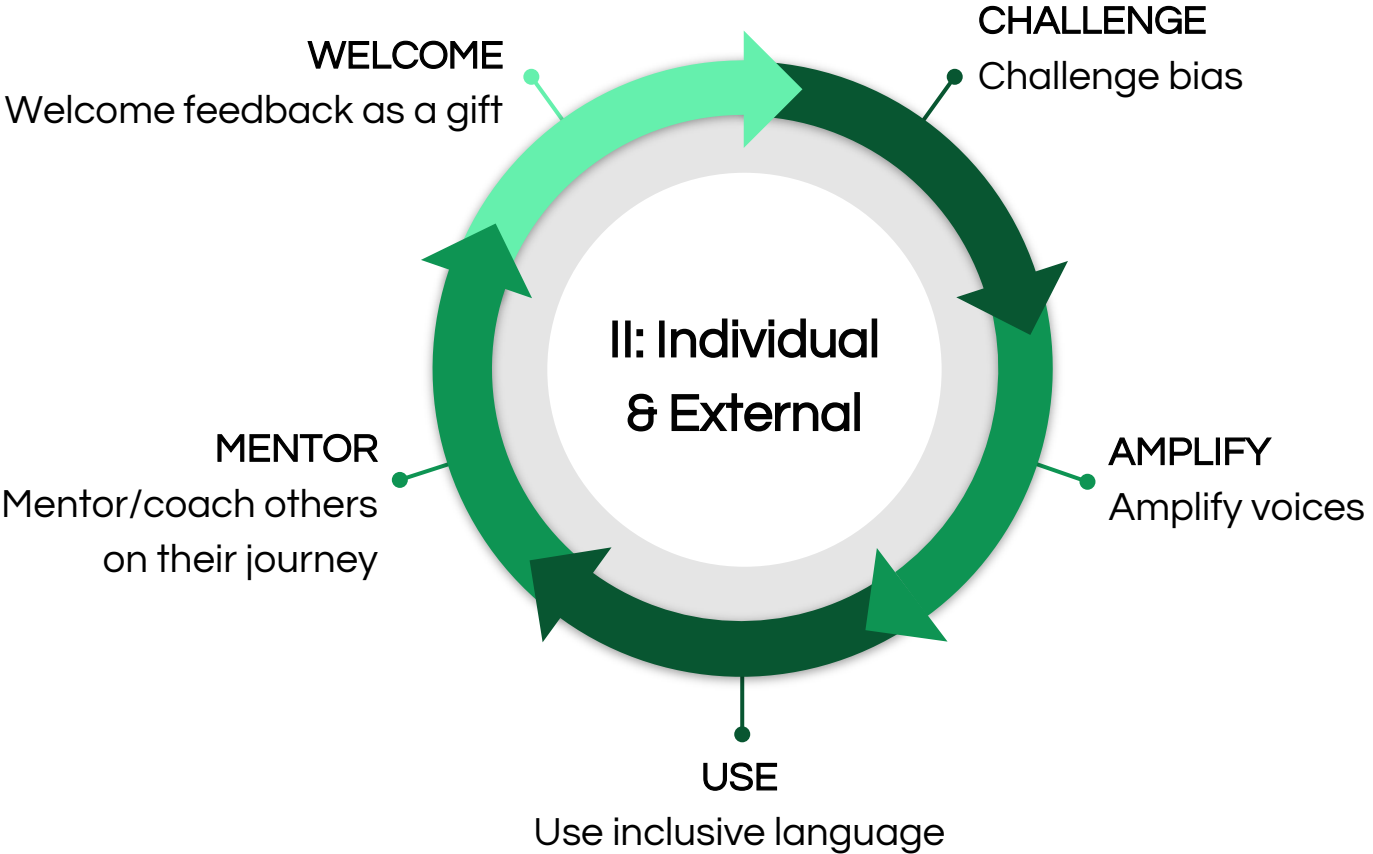




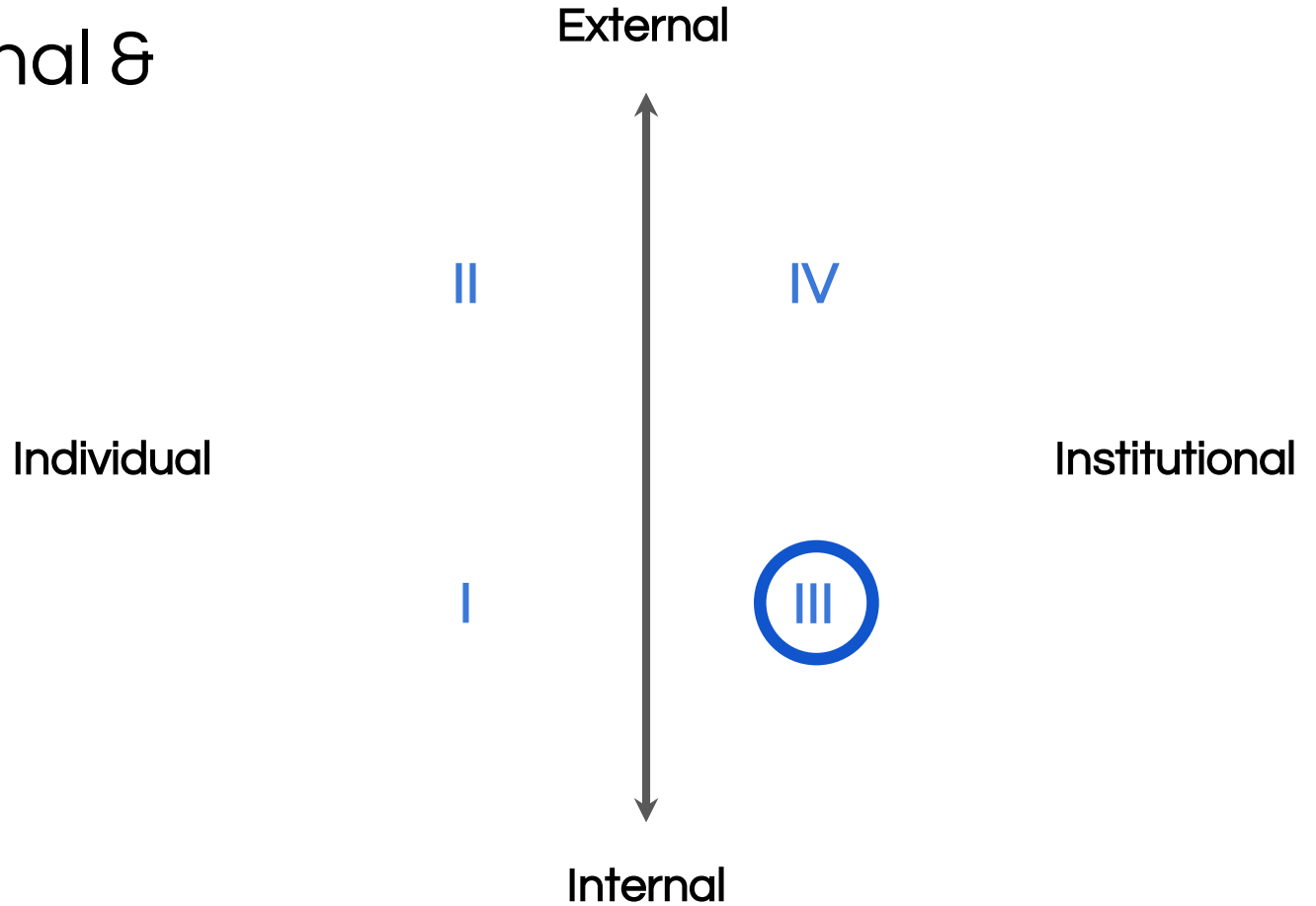


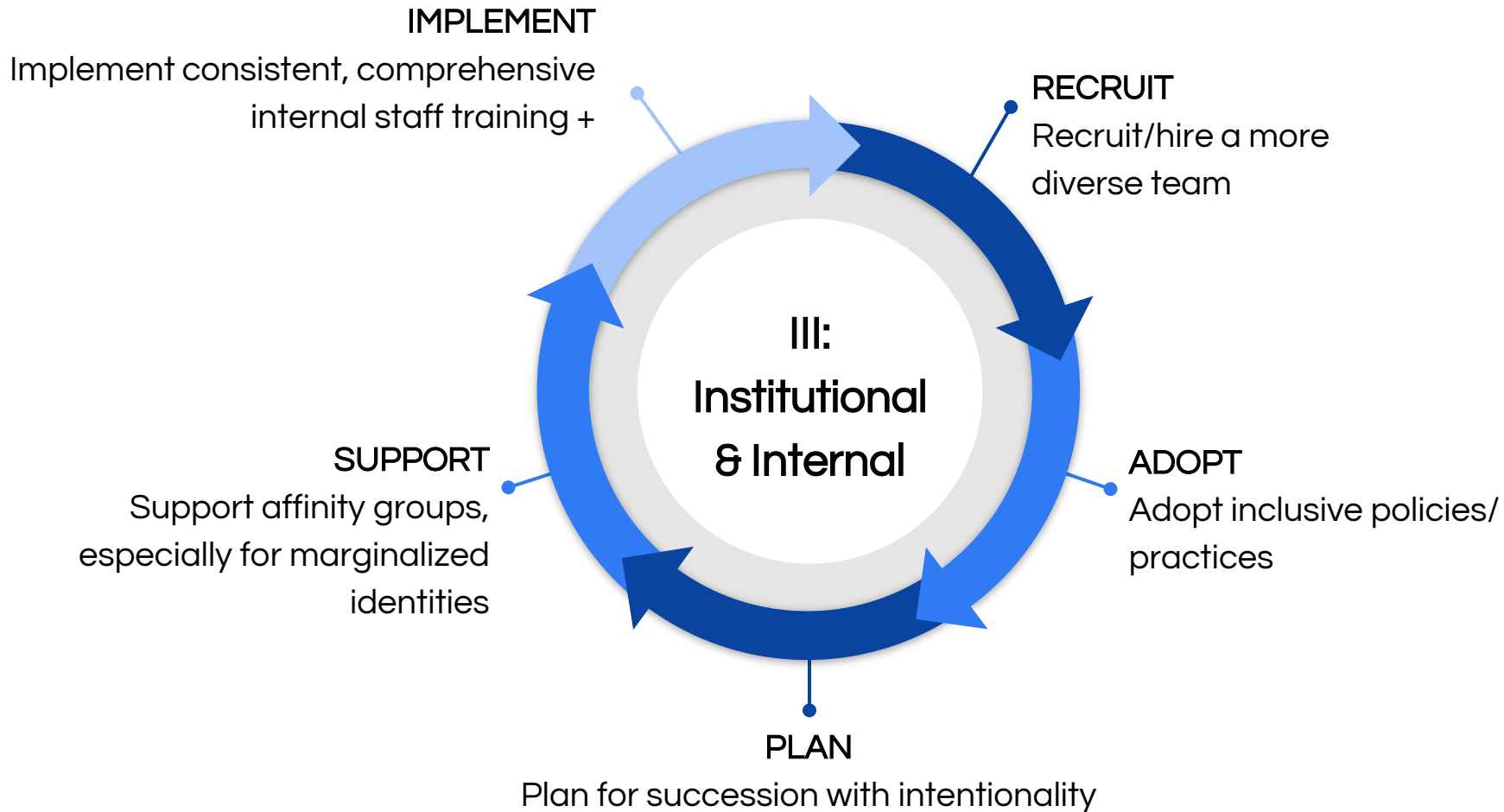
# II: Individual & External



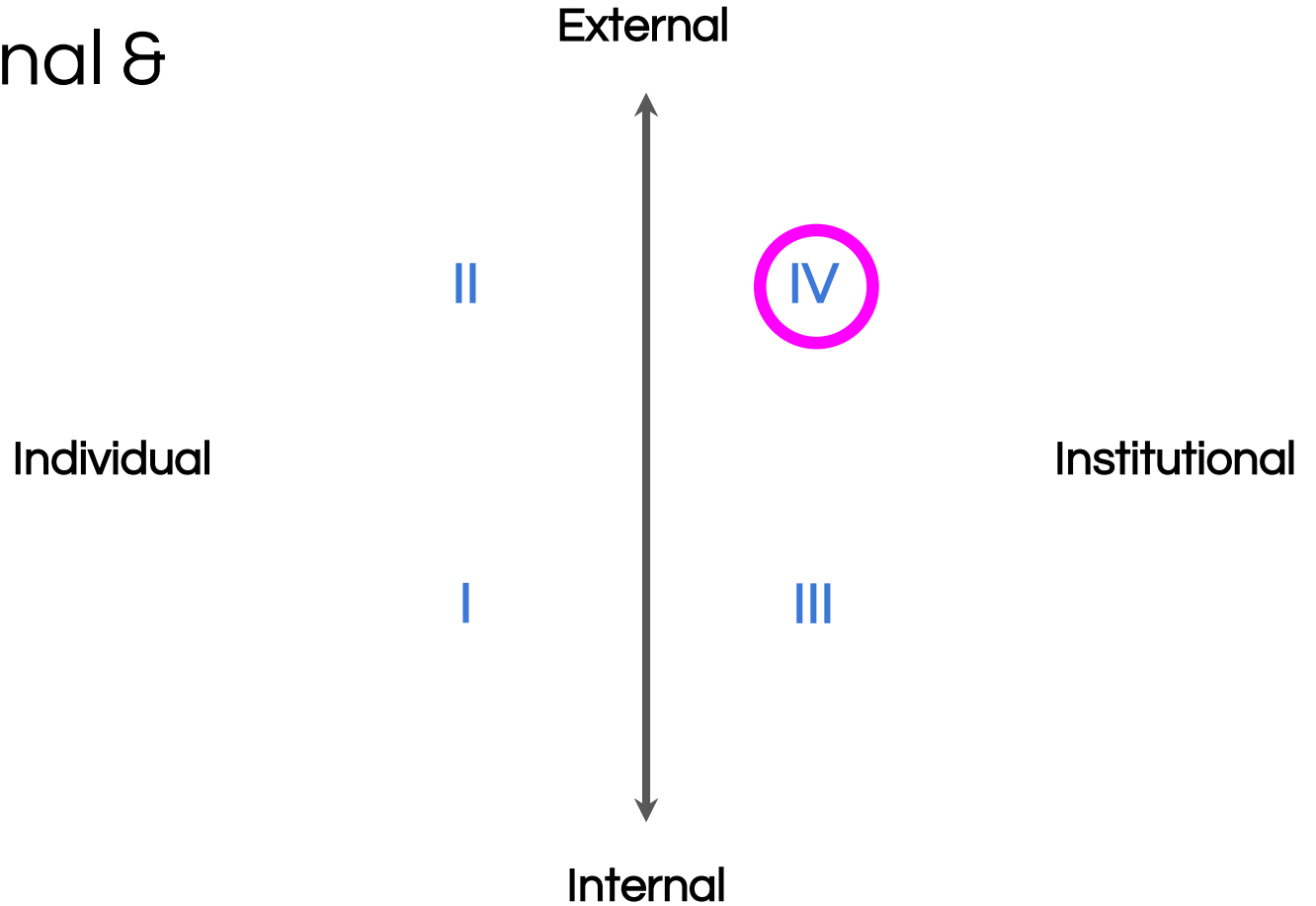


# III: Institutional & Internal





# IV: Institutional & External



**IV:  
Institutional  
& External**

**INVEST**

Invest in authentic marketing that reflects truth

**CULTIVATE**

Cultivate mutually beneficial & equitable partnerships

**SEEK**

Seek vendors that reflect our equity values; Own the question of "Where does accountability reside? Where does the buck stop?"

**ENGAGE**

Engage constituents, communities, stakeholders, and tribes early and often

**APPLY**

Apply a "J.E.D.I." lens to our programs, policies, practices



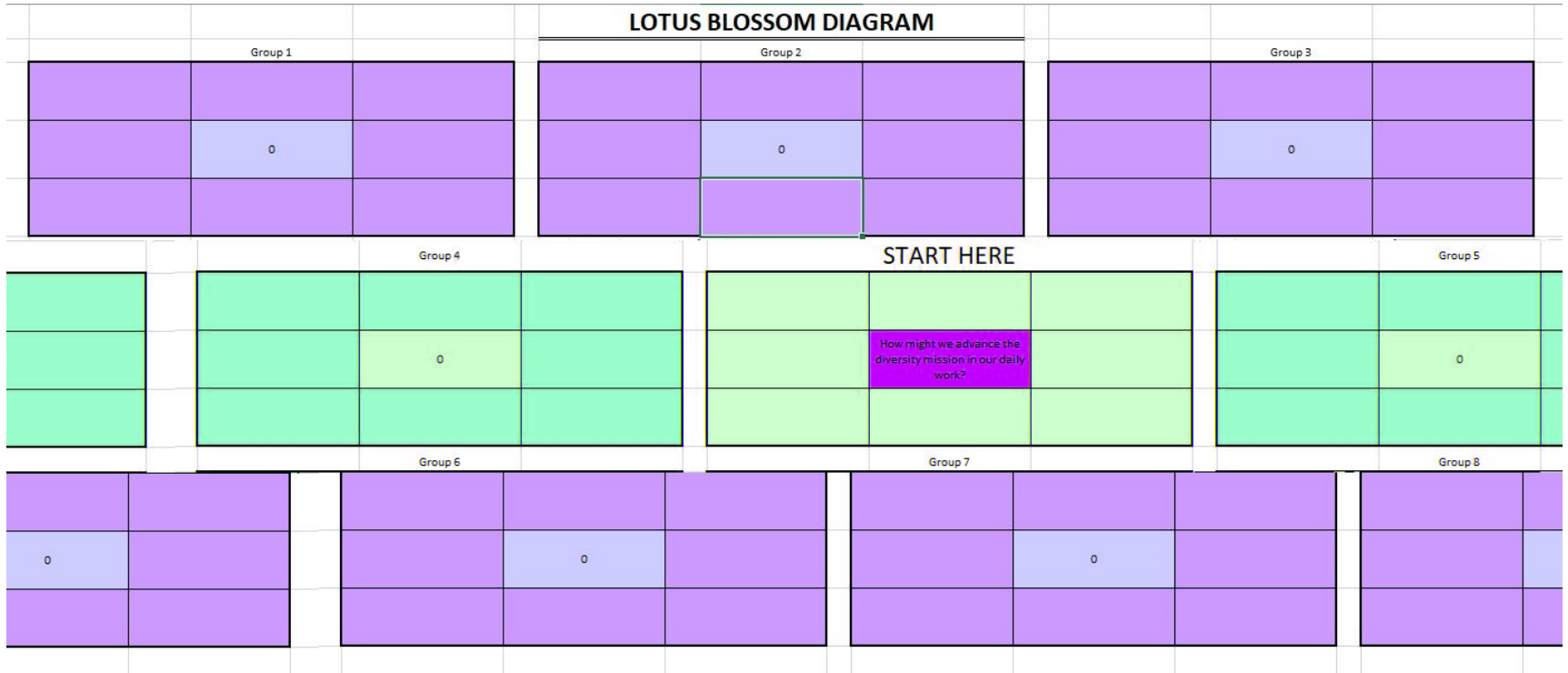
BIO BREAK, STRETCH, DRINK SOME WATER





What does diversity  
look like to you?

# Moving from Talking to Doing: Lotus Blossom



# Lotus Blossom Exercise

## CORE CHALLENGE

START IN THE CENTRAL BOX.

WRITE YOUR CORE CHALLENGE/ OPPORTUNITY IN THE GOLD CENTER.

HAVE THE TEAM SUBMIT STRATEGIES FOR THE CHALLENGES OR IDEAS FOR THE OPPORTUNITY.

## RECORD STRATEGY

WRITE ALL OF THE STRATEGIES/IDEAS RELATED TO YOUR CENTRAL QUESTION IN THE 8 LAVENDER BOXES AROUND THE CENTER CORE ITEM.

EACH ONE WILL AUTOMATICALLY POPULATE THE CENTER LAVENDER BOX OF THE CORRESPONDING LARGER BOXES AROUND THE PERIMETER OF THE CENTRAL SQUARE.

## SMALL GROUPS

BREAK OUT INTO GROUPS TO ADDRESS EACH LOTUS BLOSSOM AND WORK ON IT AS A GROUP.

## GENERATE TASKS

EACH GROUP WILL GENERATE UP TO 8 MORE STRATEGIES OR TASKS.

IF NECESSARY, BREAK THEM OUT AND START BRAINSTORMING AGAIN.

THIS ITERATIVE PROCESS CONTINUES UNTIL YOU GET TO THE BASE/ELEMENTARY STEPS REQUIRED TO GET STARTED ON AN APPROACH.

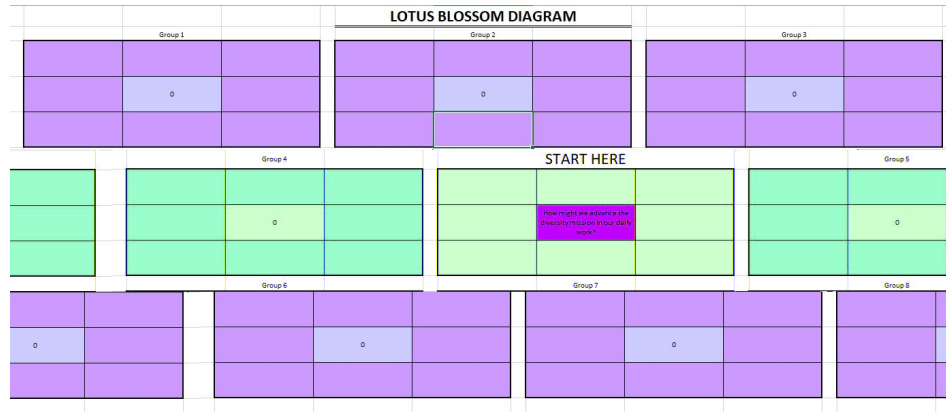
## CLARIFY ACTION

RESULT = SPECIFIC ACTIONS TO BEGIN THE WORK!

REJOIN AND SHARE IDEAS WITH THE FULL GROUP.

# Getting clear & specific

- Are there things we could do immediately?
- Are some aspirational that will require long-term planning?
- Do any require budget?
- What should we prioritize?



# Lotus Blossom: Practice

## CORE CHALLENGE

Start with a central idea – HOW MIGHT WE ADVANCE THE DIVERSITY MISSION IN OUR TEAM (this is your core challenge/ opportunity).

Come up with at least 5-8 core ideas. Have the team either break up to work on separate ideas or work together to brainstorm strategies/tasks for addressing each of the challenges, or ideas to capitalize on each of the opportunities.

## RECORD STRATEGY

Write all of the strategies/ideas related to your central issues down for each opportunity/ challenge.

Determine if those actions will need even further breaking down of sub-steps.

## GENERATE TASKS

If necessary, create another set of tasks for any items that need to be further broken down.

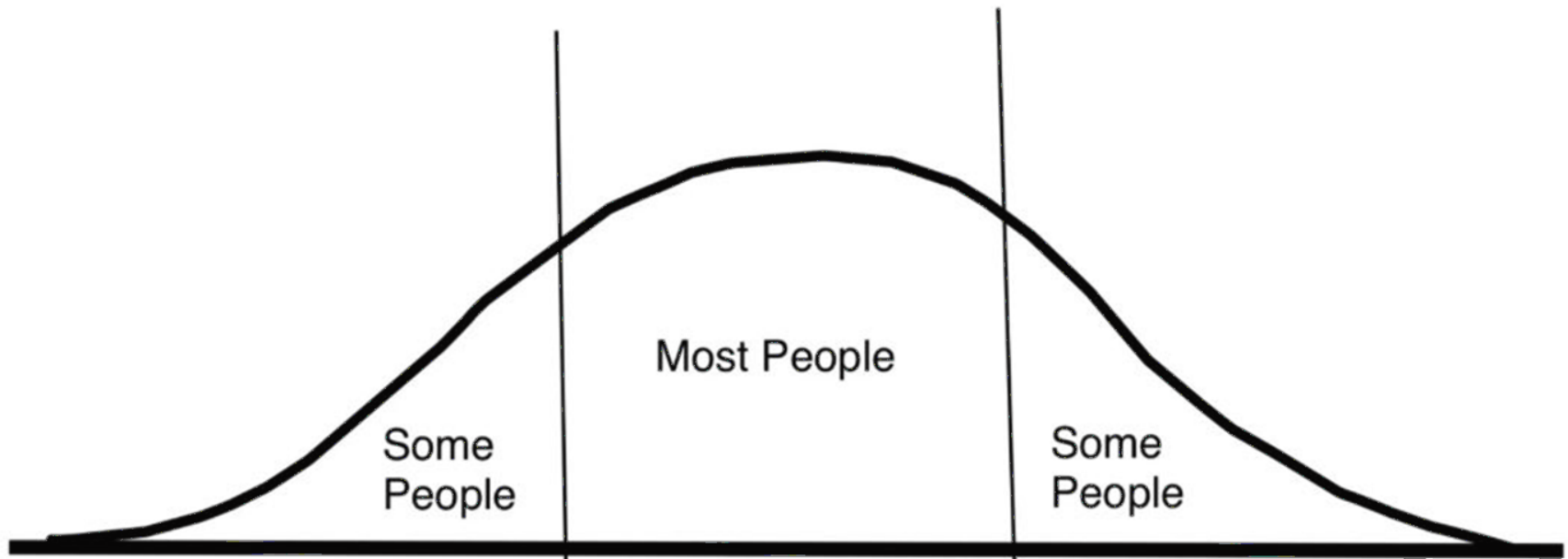
Determine if each idea/task is going to cost money, require long-term or short-term horizons, and then finally prioritize the action steps.

When you are done crafting action steps for each idea/challenge, then put the whole list of ideas together and prioritize each of the 5-8 the core ideas.

## CLARIFY ACTION

RESULT = SPECIFIC ACTIONS TO BEGIN THE WORK!

REJOIN AND SHARE IDEAS WITH THE FULL GROUP.



Data presented during my class at The Equity Institute on  
How to Move the Needle

A STORY IN DATA

# HOW TO MAKE SOCIAL CHANGE

*(The secret is right here)*



Do we  
need  
51% to  
agree to  
make a  
change?

Social  
Scientist  
David  
Centola did  
the research  
in 2018 and  
got the  
answer...

**During her six weeks of life, an average honey bee flies 162 miles gathering nectar from 3,600 flowers. How much honey will she produce in her lifetime?**





What  
happens  
when we all  
get involved?



How do we create conditions for authentic and long-term collaboration in cultures often defined by urgency and scarcity?



# Gratitude

A close-up photograph of a dandelion seed head. The central part of the head is a brown, textured cluster of seeds. From this center, numerous thin, white, feathery structures called pappi extend outwards, each attached to a small, brown seed. The pappi are illuminated from the side, creating a bright, glowing effect. The background is solid black, which makes the white and brown colors of the dandelion stand out sharply. The overall composition is centered, with the seed head occupying the left and middle portions of the frame, and several individual seeds drifting away towards the right.

- Equity & Results
- People's Institute for Survival & Beyond
- adrienne marea brown
- WholeHeart, LLC
- Clear Impact, LLC
- Vermont Public
- Energy Action Network (EAN)
- Othering & Belonging Institute