



Regional Diversity Roundtable

Practice Brief Issue 2.1 | Equity Frameworks | September 2015

INTRODUCTION:

The purpose of this Practice Brief is two-fold: (1) Provide explanations of key equity frameworks available to guide organizations (2) Encourage evaluation of the use and purpose of current equity frameworks in organizations. The goal is not to promote a 'best practice' equity framework but to rather understand the connections and intersections between equity frameworks and evolving needs of diverse communities. This brief is intended for organizations and community groups across all sectors as well as community members.

WHAT IS THE ISSUE AND WHY IS IT RELEVANT?

Non-profit, social service and public sector organizations traditionally operate from one specific equity framework. However, the 'one framework' approach may not meet the needs of increasingly heterogeneous communities struggling with complex and layered social issues. Each equity framework is developed within particular schools of thought, histories and contexts, impacting their universal applicability. Moreover, understandings and applications of an equity framework can change over time and vary in contexts; it may not remain as radical/diluted anymore.

HOW DO ORGANIZATIONS CURRENTLY ADDRESS THE ISSUE?

Organizations are at two key points:

- (1) Attached to a single framework and finding it difficult to transition into critically assessing its applicability to changing communities they service and employ.
- (2) Willing to re-evaluate their existing framework but uncertain how/where to begin and/or are not receiving support internally/externally to move forward.

WHAT CAN YOU DO TO ADDRESS THE ISSUE?

UNDERSTAND: What is your current guiding framework? What is the history behind it? Why has it guided your work and what are its shortcomings? Does it circumvent or replicate power and privilege dynamics consciously or unconsciously?

ASSESS: What is your 'on the ground' reality both internally and externally? Are there gaps between the policies/programming your equity framework is facilitating and your community stakeholder reality?

FORUMULATE: Dialogue, Committee, Objectives/Priorities, Plan, Timeline, Review

WHEN IMPLEMENTED, WHAT CHANGES CAN OCCUR IN ORGANIZATIONS?

- (1) Sound understanding of the purpose and function of equity frameworks in your organization.
- (2) Active filling of gaps, if any, between theory and application.
- (3) Clear alignment of organizational mandate, objectives, policies and programs with current community needs - both those you service and employ.

WHAT RESOURCES ARE AVAILABLE TO SUPPORT FURTHER CAPACITY BUILDING?

POWERPOINT - DEI 101: Why Diversity, Equity & Inclusion?

WEBINAR - DEI 101: Why Diversity, Equity & Inclusion?

WEBINAR - DEI 201: Ensuring Equitable and Inclusive Community Services

PRACTICE BRIEF - Ensuring Equitable and Inclusive Community Services
RDR RESOURCE LIBRARY

EQUITY FRAMEWORKS

RDR's DEI: Comprehensive approach that engages individuals, organizations and communities to collaboratively center work recognizing individual uniqueness, addressing inequitable access to opportunities and building inclusive societies with involved residents. The objective is to create sustainable cultural and systems change.¹

ANTI-OPPRESSION:

Strategies, theories and actions that challenge socially and historically built inequities and injustices that are ingrained in our system and institutions through policies and practices that allow certain groups to dominate over other groups.²

ANTI-RACIST: An active and consistent process of change to eliminate individual, institutional and systemic racism as well as the oppression and injustice racism causes.³

CULTURAL COMPETENCY:

A set of congruent behaviours, attitudes and policies that come together in a system, agency, or among professionals and enables that system, agency or those professionals to work effectively in cross-cultural situations.⁴

BUSINESS CASE: The prioritization, development and implementation of DEI strategies is tied to the business results of an organization. Rather than viewed as an ethical or moral imperative, DEI actions are a means to increase profits and/or build organizational reputation.⁵

Others: Feminist, Intersectionality, Restorative Justice, Human Rights, Intercultural Dialogue, Multiculturalism, Human Capital

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REFERENCES:

¹ RDR Board Members, Membership, & Staff Dialogues

² RDR Resources

³ RDR Resources

⁴ Cross T., Bazron, B., Dennis, K., & Isaacs, M. (1989). *Towards a culturally competent system of care*. Georgetown University Child Development Center, CASSP Technical Assistance Center

⁵ Wilson, T. (1999). *Diversity at WORK: The Business Case for Equity*. Ontario: John Wiley & Sons Canada Limited