



May 4, 2021

# No Kid Hungry Grantee Cohort Session: Advancing Racial Equity in Communications



# Agenda

- + **Introductions**
- + **Asset-Based Framing**
- + **Centering Stakeholders**
- + **Best Practices**
- + **Interactive Sessions:**
  - + **Spotlight Q&A**
  - + **Reframing Language Exercise**
  - + **Grounding Definitions: DEI**
- + **Reflections**





- + Tell us your name, organization, location in the U.S.
- + What do you want to get out of today's session?

# Intros



# Your Facilitators



**Kerry-Ann Hamilton**  
Strategy Lead and  
Client Partner



**C. Marie  
Taylor**  
DEI Advisor



**Steven Rigaux**  
Account Supervisor

# Deficit-Based Language

- + **What is deficit-based framing?**
  - + Defining people by their circumstances.

# Asset-Based Language

- + **What is asset-based framing?**
- + Defining people by their aspirations and contributions.

# Asset-Based Language



+ [Asset-Based Communications](#) by Trabian Shorters, BMe

# Asset-Based Language

- + **Missions and value statements from social impact organizations often contain deficit-based framing.**
  - + Deficit-based framing: “We help at-risk youth in high-crime neighborhoods.”
  - + Asset-based framing: “We help young people overcome obstacles and achieve their dreams.”



# Deficit-Based Language



- **Trabian Shorters, BMe**

# Deficit-Based Language



# How Can We Reframe This Language?

+ Deficit-Based Approach	+ Asset-Based Language
Needs-driven	
Problems-focused	
External focus	
What is missing that we must find?	
Training community members	



# Potential Reframes

<b>+ Deficit-Based Approach</b>	<b>+ Asset-Based Language</b>
Needs-driven	Strengths-driven
Problems-focused	Opportunity-focused
External focus	Internal focus
What is missing that we must find?	What is present that we can build upon?
Training community members	Equipping community members

# How Can We Reframe This Language?

+ Deficit-Based Language	+ Asset-Based Language
Low-income families	
Disadvantaged children	
Homeless people	
Hunger	
There is a need	
[Org] helps students succeed in school.	

# Potential Reframes

+ Deficit-Based Language	+ Asset-Based Language
Low-income families	Families facing economic hardship
Disadvantaged children	Children who confront barriers to opportunity
Homeless people	People who are unhoused
Hunger	Food insecurity
There is a need	There is an opportunity
[Org] helps students succeed in school.	Students succeed in school with the support of [Org].



# Asset-Based Language

- + Avoid **leading with negatives** when introducing a group of people or a place.
- + Include **asset-framed stories**.
- + Center **root causes**.
- + Make challenges feel **solvable**.
- + Lead with **shared values**.
- + Use language that reflects that **systematic disparities exist**.
- + **Describe those systems explicitly** whenever possible.
- + Acknowledge that **harm has been done**, and that **these are not self-caused problems**.

# Centering Stakeholders

- + Always put the **person first**. Instead of “poor children,” consider using “**children who experience economic insecurity**.” Don’t define a community by what it lacks, define it by what it has: **love, dignity, determination and resourcefulness**.
- + Your organization should not be positioned as the solution, but as a **resource that supports the empowerment and centering of children, families and communities**.

# Centering Stakeholders

- + Consider reframing language to be equity-focused and stakeholder-centric using a **1-2-3 Equity Framework**:
  1. Start with the stakeholder;
  2. State the work;
  3. Explain how your organization is involved & how all benefit.



# Centering Stakeholders

- + An example: “**SNAP helps parents afford groceries**, but many newly eligible families may not know they qualify, or how to sign up.”
- + This could be reframed to **start with the stakeholder** and **give the stakeholder agency**. Consider the below reframe:
  - + “**Parents and families can use SNAP benefits** to offset the cost of groceries, but many newly eligible families may not know they qualify or the process by which to sign up.”

# Best Practices

- + Deploy **data points with a purpose.**
- + How did we get here? Stats alone don't tell people why you are sharing that statistic. **Don't forget why you are telling the story.**

# Best Practices

- + Avoid **rugged individualism** and **savior narratives**.
- + **Success stories** can promote the fallacy of rugged individualism. When telling a success story, **take time to call out the many supports** that were required to overcome system-caused obstacles and challenges, and explain why not everyone can access them.

# Best Practices

- + **Images matter.** Are your photos asset-based?



## Hunger hits Black communities harder

The Black community consistently faces hunger at higher rates than whites due to social, economic, and environmental challenges. **In 2020, 1 in 5 Black individuals may have experienced food insecurity** - more than twice the rate of white households.



## No One Can Thrive on an Empty Stomach

Due to the coronavirus pandemic, 42 million people may face hunger in the U.S. — including more than 13 million children. Hunger knows no boundaries — it touches every community in the U.S., including your own.

[Learn more about the facts, and the impact, of hunger in the U.S. ›](#)









# Is This Just Political Correctness?

+ No! The North Star is **truth telling**.

# Cohort Spotlight

# Cohort Spotlight



+ [Building and Scaling Community-Based Solutions](#), Delta Fresh Foods Initiative



# Cohort Spotlight

## + **Dr. Deborah Moore & Judy Belue** **Delta Fresh Foods Initiative**



# Discussion





# Reframing Language



# Example 1

+ Original: “School and out-of-school time (OST) meals programs are critical resources for children, yet **they are not always designed in partnership with kids, teens, and their families.**”

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+ Original: “School and out-of-school time (OST) meals programs are critical resources for children, yet **they are not always designed in partnership with kids, teens, and their families.**”

+ Potential Reframe: “**Children and families are invaluable thought partners** in designing the school and out-of-school time (OST) meals programs that are specifically developed to promote their health and well-being.”



## Example 2

+ Original: “The founding and visionary school principal Dr. Yvonne Chan, plus **a team of dedicated teachers of what was then Vaughn Street Elementary, turned around the lowest-ranking school** in Los Angeles Unified toward a bold new vision for education. **This vision took decision-making to the community-level, witnessed a dramatic turnaround in student achievement, and garnered national recognition** for its success.”

## Example 2

+ Original: “The founding and visionary school principal Dr. Yvonne Chan, plus **a team of dedicated teachers of what was then Vaughn Street Elementary, turned around the lowest-ranking school** in Los Angeles Unified toward a bold new vision for education. **This vision took decision-making to the community-level, witnessed a dramatic turnaround in student achievement, and garnered national recognition** for its success.”

+ Potential Reframe: “**The students at what was then Vaughn Street Elementary dramatically improved their [graduation rates/test scores, etc.]** under the leadership of Dr. Yvonne Chan and a team of dedicated teachers. **Community members co-created a bold new vision for education with Dr. Chan and her team** – with the support of this vision, **students dramatically improved their achievement** to a degree that garnered national recognition.”

## Example 3

+ Original: “Trash and messes, other commonly cited concerns, can be overcome by **training students to pick up after themselves** and **coordinating with school nutrition and custodial staff.**”

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+ Original: “Trash and messes, other commonly cited concerns, can be overcome by **training students to pick up after themselves** and **coordinating with school nutrition and custodial staff.**”

+ Potential Reframe: “**Students, in partnership with school nutrition and custodial staff, should work together** at the end of each meal to clean up any trash and messes.”

# Glossary Definitions: DEI



# Glossary Quiz

- + **As we acknowledge and speak out against racial injustice and systemic inequity in our messaging, it's important to ensure we're using the right words at the right time.**

# Glossary Quiz

**1. \_\_\_\_\_** is fairness and justice and focuses on outcomes that are most appropriate for a given group, recognizing different challenges, needs, and histories. It is not “same treatment,” which does not take differing needs or disparate outcomes into account.

## Word Bank

- Racial Justice
- Equity
- Diversity
- Inclusion
- Racial Equity

# Glossary Quiz

**2. \_\_\_\_\_** is authentically bringing traditionally excluded individuals and/or groups into processes, activities and decision-making/policymaking in a way that shares power.

## Word Bank

- Racial Justice
- Equity
- Diversity
- Inclusion
- Racial Equity

# Glossary Quiz

**3. \_\_\_\_\_** is the condition that would be achieved if one's racial identity no longer predicted, in a statistical sense, how one fares. When we use the term, we also include work to eliminate policies, practices, attitudes and cultural messages that reinforce or fail to eliminate differential outcomes by race.

## Word Bank

- Racial Justice
- Equity
- Diversity
- Inclusion
- Racial Equity

# Glossary Quiz

4. \_\_\_\_\_ has come to refer to the various backgrounds and races that comprise a community, nation or other grouping. In many cases, this term does not just acknowledge the existence of differences in background, race, gender, religion, sexual orientation and so on, but implies an appreciation of these differences as well.

## Word Bank

- Racial Justice
- Equity
- Diversity
- Inclusion
- Racial Equity



# Glossary Quiz

**5. \_\_\_\_\_** is the systemic fair treatment of people of all races, resulting in equitable opportunities and outcomes for all. This goes beyond “anti-racism.” It is not just the absence of discrimination and inequities, but also the presence of deliberate systems and supports to achieve and sustain racial equity through proactive and preventative measures.

## Word Bank

- Racial Justice
- Equity
- Diversity
- Inclusion
- Racial Equity

# Glossary Definitions

1. **Equity** is fairness and justice and focuses on outcomes that are most appropriate for a given group, recognizing different challenges, needs, and histories. It is not “same treatment,” which does not take differing needs or disparate outcomes into account.
2. **Inclusion** is the condition that would be achieved if one's racial identity no longer predicted, in a statistical sense, how one fares. When we use the term, we also include work to eliminate policies, practices, attitudes and cultural messages that reinforce or fail to eliminate differential outcomes by race.
3. **Racial Equity** has come to refer to the various backgrounds and races that comprise a community, nation or other grouping. In many cases, this term does not just acknowledge the existence of differences in background, race, gender, religion, sexual orientation and so on, but implies an appreciation of these differences as well.
4. **Diversity** is the systemic fair treatment of people of all races, resulting in equitable opportunities and outcomes for all. This goes beyond “anti-racism.” It is not just the absence of discrimination and inequities, but also the presence of deliberate systems and supports to achieve and sustain racial equity through proactive and preventative measures.
5. **Racial Justice** is the systemic fair treatment of people of all races, resulting in equitable opportunities and outcomes for all. This goes beyond “anti-racism.” It is not just the absence of discrimination and inequities, but also the presence of deliberate systems and supports to achieve and sustain racial equity through proactive and preventative measures.

# Glossary Quiz

*“...while **equity** is the end goal for so much of our work, it must also be the starting point—the constant drumbeat in everything we do. So far, we haven’t done enough to ensure that Black, Indigenous, Latinx, and other people of color have an **equal** stake in [org’s] initiatives and an **equal** voice in guiding them.”*

- What word(s) might be better to use here?

# Glossary Quiz

*“...while **equity** is the end goal for so much of our work, it must also be the starting point—the constant drumbeat in everything we do. So far, we haven’t done enough to ensure that Black, Indigenous, Latinx, and other people of color have an **equal** stake in [org’s] initiatives and an **equal** voice in guiding them.”*

- What word(s) might be better to use here?
  - Consider **racial justice**; and **equitable**.

# Discussion



# Action Items

- + **What are some tangible next steps we can take?**

# Action Items

- + Conduct an **audit of your resources**.
- + **Identify messaging frames** in your organization's lexicon that are **potentially deficit-based**; discuss as a team.
- + **Equip and support colleagues** as you transition to more asset-based language and narratives.
- + **Evaluate your work periodically** as the field evolves.

# Resources

- + SV2, [The Power of Asset-Based Language](#)
- + UCSF Multicultural Resource Center, [Racial Equity & Anti-Black Racism Glossary](#)
- + Big Duck, [8 Resources to Spark Conversation About DEI](#)
- + New York State Council on Children and Families, [7 Key Steps to Advancing Racial Equity and Inclusion](#)

# Thank you!

*Storytelling for Good™*