

Bridges Within and Between

Strengthening Municipal Connections with
Equity-Seeking Communities

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Agenda

- Introduction
- Current context
- Practices
- Postures
- Tools for change
- Key takeaways
- Q & A

Introduction

- Pulling out of “stuckness”
- Without strong and meaningful relationships of trust, meaningful equity and inclusion unlikely
- Postures and practices writ large



Introduction

- Who is this for
- Collective experience
- Resmaa Menakem, somatic abolitionism, *My Grandmother's Hands*



- Immigration experiences, smaller towns
- Welcome Project: MNL, St. John's Local Immigration Partnership, & McConnell Foundation
- Participatory budgeting
- Result:
 - \$10,000 of new resources
 - Increased connection


Library project breaks down language barrier for immigrants in St. John's

CBC News · Posted: Nov 21, 2015 5:30 AM AST | Last Updated: November 21, 2015



Readers from several countries were on hand Thursday to show off new multi-lingual picture books at St. John's libraries. (CBC)

Current Context



WE CAN ALL
DO BETTER.
Fight Racism in your Daily Life

Census 2021

- Top 5 non-official languages spoken at home:
 - Arabic
 - Mandarin
 - Hindi
 - Punjabi
 - Mi'kmaq
- 2650 Nova Scotians speak primarily Mi'kmaq at the home, another 1890 = regularly spoken regularly at home
- 5.5% of the population of NS is Indigenous

(Focus on Geography Series, 2021 Census of Population. Nova Scotia, Province)

Census 2021

- Just under one tenth of the population in NS is racialized (9.8%)
- Black people make up 3% of the total population (28,220 people)
- 2,950 same-gender couples and 1,230 transgender or non-binary couples
- (Focus on Geography Series, 2021 Census of Population. Nova Scotia, Province)
- In 2022 NS welcomed 12,650 permanent residents – an all time high
<https://novascotia.ca/news/release/?id=20230216001>

Practices



Equitable Hiring & Employment Practices

- Recruitment AND retention
- The workplace culture has to be ready
- Recruit within all levels in the hierarchy and all service areas
- Potential for increased trust and improved lines of communication
- In practice: Lived experience not as an asset, but as expertise that can't be taught
- Getting there: In-house skills (perhaps with EDI practitioner with HR and/or capacity-building skills)

Data Collection & Analysis

- External
- Internal
- In practice = Culture audit:
 - Demographic makeup
 - Perception on efforts to date
 - Needs & experiences of staff and municipal leaders
 - Establish a baseline
 - Clarity on what is most important and/or most pressing
- Getting there: In-house skills or external expertise

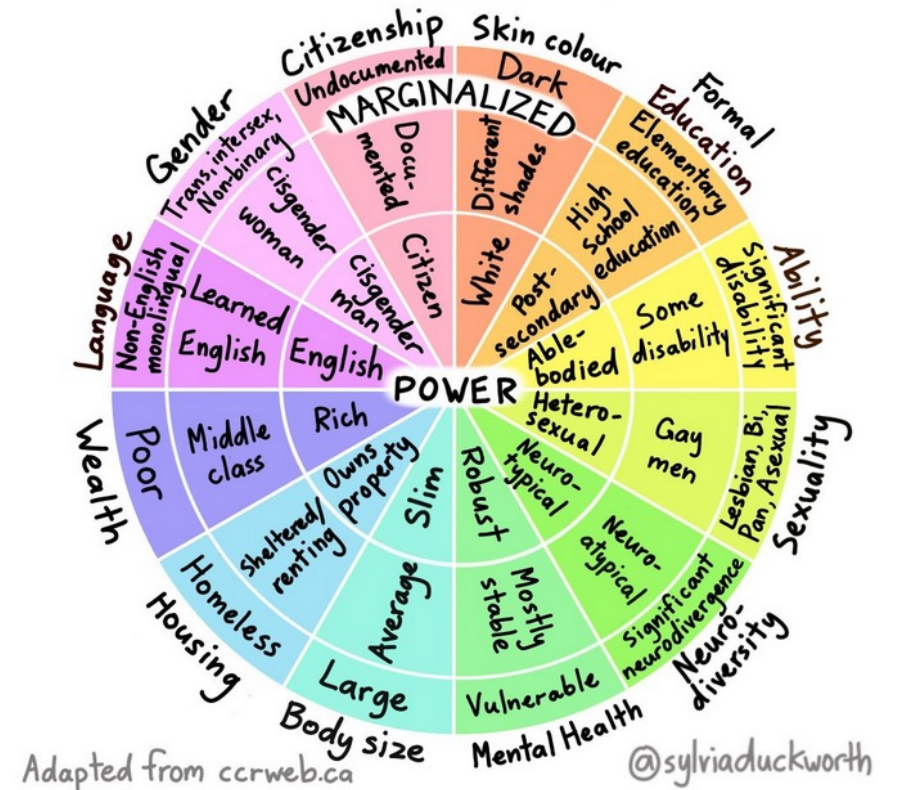
Community Engagement & Partnerships

- Prioritize those most effected
- Forge community partnerships
- Advisory committees
- In practice: Reach out differently and/or meet differently
- Getting there: In-house skills (with help from community partners)

Self Knowledge

- “Inherited relationships” Anishinaabe writer Patty Krawec
- Social location
- In practice: Easier and more effective navigation of these issues/relationships
- Getting there: Capacity-building (org and individual)

WHEEL OF POWER/PRIVILEGE



Consistent & Authentic Acknowledgement

- Recognizing and acknowledging the unique perspectives, histories, and current lived experiences within the community
- In practice: Address damaging rhetoric through conversation and/or public awareness campaigns
- Getting there: In-house skills (with help from community partners)

Postures



Letting Go of Perfectionism

- Perfection can paralyze us
- Instead, we can:
 - Learn from first-hand experiences
 - Bring our best selves forward
 - Practice accountability



Getting Comfortable with Discomfort

- Discomfort can represent us moving into a potential place of learning
- Learning & the 3 concentric circles (otherwise known as the *Challenge/Support Hypothesis*, Sandford, N., 1966)

“Do not expect neat, tidy resolutions, or assume that we will instantly fix the world’s ills....”

We can, however, get closer to those goals if we are willing to be uncomfortable”

SONYA RENEE TAYLOR

Next Steps

- Where to start?
- Tools for change
 - Recognizing champions
 - Federation of Canadian Municipalities resources
 - Funding sources
 - Experienced EDI practitioners



Key Takeaways

- Tangible ways to continue your (getting out of “stuckness”)
- Practices and postures “in your pocket”
- Making progress doesn’t always take a huge budget

Q & A

THANK YOU & KEEP IN TOUCH!



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