



Nonprofit**HR**

WEBINAR TRANSCRIPT

DEIJ Mini Series #1: Shifting Culture and Systems for Organizational Change

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DEIJ Mini Series #1: Shifting Culture and Systems for Organizational Change

Culture eats strategy for breakfast, and in today's world of organizational change, achieving greater social impact is all about mission alignment. But how well have your organization's change initiatives intentionally centered diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI)? A solid change management plan needs to focus on DEI priorities and initiatives, and the 21st-century professional not only expects positive results from organizational shifts but also wants to know how change will impact their role, team and beyond.

From this discussion, you'll learn:

- How inequities show up in organizations and how to address root causes through systems thinking.
- The role of every member of the organization in addressing inequities.
- Why understanding your people and culture is critical to the change process.
- How to ensure that equity and inclusion are at the center of your pending organizational change initiatives.

SPEAKERS



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Atokatha Ashmond Brew: Hello everyone, and welcome to today's webinar. Thank you for joining us this afternoon for our DEIJ (Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Justice) Mini Series #1, entitled Shifting Culture and Systems for Organizational Change. My name is Atokatha Ashmond Brew, I am Managing Director of Marketing & Communication for Nonprofit HR and I will be your moderator for today. We have a lot of great content to cover, so let's get started.

Before we jump in, though, I would like to go over a few items so you know how to participate in today's event.

You have joined the presentation listening using your computer's speaker system, by default. If you would prefer to join over the telephone, just select telephone in the audio pane, and the dial-in information will be displayed.

You will have the opportunity to submit text questions to today's presenters by typing your questions into the questions pane on your control panel. You may send in your questions at any time during the presentation. We will collect these and address them during the Q&A session and throughout the webinar. Today's webinar is being recorded, and you will receive a follow-up email within a few days with a link to view the recording and ... slides.

And now, a little about Nonprofit HR.

We empower mission-driven organizations to achieve their full potential through their people. Nonprofit HR is the country's leading and oldest firm focused exclusively on the talent management needs of the social sector, including nonprofits, associations, social enterprises and other mission-driven organizations.

We focus our consulting efforts on the following practice areas: Strategy & Advisory, HR Outsourcing, Total Rewards, Diversity, Equity & Inclusion and Search. Since 2000, our staff of credentialed experts have advanced the impact of some of the world's most influential brands in the sector.

And now, a little about today's presenters.

Bryan Jackson is our Senior Consultant for DEI. Bryan provides subject matter expert advice, insight and strategic direction to clients. He oversees complex client engagements, manages projects to completion, and designs and facilitates DEI training solutions and assessment services to partners and stakeholders.

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Next, we have Dr. Rachael Forester, who is also our Senior Consultant of DEI. Rachael provides subject matter expert advice, strategic direction and more to our clients. She's been doing equity work in higher education for about 10 years prior to joining Nonprofit HR. Rachael most recently served as the Associate Director of the Office of Identity, Equity and Engagement at UNC Charlotte, where she also obtained her doctorate degree in educational leadership in higher education focusing on racial equity.

And now, without further ado, I pass it over to you, Bryan.

Bryan Jackson: All right. Well, first, good afternoon. Some of you that are on the West Coast, good morning, and it's great to be in community with you all. And we are not only bringing the passion for this work, we're also bringing the fact that we've seen this work within organizations.

But also, the fact that we have talked to a lot of our partners about what they have seen in this sector to ... make this work move forward. We recognize that not all organizations are the same, and so there are unique and complex situations for [all] organizations. But as we engage with today's content, as we move forward, our agenda will be for you ... to walk away with understanding [of] how inequity shows up within our organizations. Sometimes, it's right in front, and other times, we have to be told that it's there.

We will also find ways to implement a systems-thinking framework to ... address the root causes [of] why some of this work cannot move forward; also what ... accelerates this work ... to move forward.

But then, we will also leave with [ways] to understand [inequities], because that's key, then addressing what those inequities are within our organization. We also recognize that DEIJ is a very hot topic, but we ... want to make sure that the best step that you take in this work is the first step. And you are all here because this matters and this will be essential in being able to move this work forward within our organizations.

So, we have to start with some grounding, what is equity?

But before we dive into that, we have to look at these two words that often come about a lot in these conversations: equity and equality. And there is a difference, and they're both great. So first, understand that they are both great, especially as it relates to your organization moving this work forward. But there is a specific difference that highlights why one is ... better for an organization. And this graphic here will be able to visually share what equity ... and ... equality are.

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But first, equity is an approach that recognizes unique disparities and provides relevant support systems for overcoming those barriers. Keyword: relevant.

When we look at this image here, we have equality being four individuals who have all been given a bike. But as you see, these four individuals have varying degrees of difference. We have one person that is seated [in] a wheelchair. We have a person [who] is on the taller side ... where that bike seems to fit them perfectly and then we have a child where, if you're like my son, he thinks that he can ride and drive everything.

But when we start to look at equity, [it] is identifying what each individual needs, [specifically] to ... be able to advance. And so, the person that was once in the wheelchair now has a bike, so to speak, that is more conducive to their needs, so on and so forth with every other person that is within this graphic.

So first, we have to understand the essence of why equity is important, but first, knowing what equity is.

More into the realm of equity. Equity is the guarantee of fair treatment, access and opportunity for all, where individuals are not at a disadvantage because of their background, race ... social position ... age or sexuality — the list goes on.

Equity also requires eliminating the institutional, systematic and societal barriers that have prevented the full participation of certain groups in developing solutions that are relevant to them. Some of these systems, we know — we see them. But some of these systems are so embedded into our core cultures and ... organizations, that [it is] just the way [we have been running] things.

Well, listen, you have to disrupt or identify how people are not benefiting from these systems, giving them varying degrees of difference, because we all want to not only be invited to the party ... we also want to know that we will ... hear the music that we'd like to ... dance [to] on the dance floor.

Rachael Forester: And Bryan, I really love that analogy that you said around being able to be at the party and fully participate. And that's truly what we want within our organizations. We want to create environments where people feel included, where they feel a sense of belonging, where they feel like they can show up in their authenticity and really be valued for who they are.

And so, my question to all of you — and please feel free in the Q&A chat section to share — [is] what gets in the way of you creating equity within your organization?

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Atokatha Ashmond Brew: Please add your responses to Rachael's question to the questions pane on your GoToWebinar control panel.

Bryan Jackson: Don't be shy.

Atokatha Ashmond Brew: Responses are starting to come in. Our first response is, people say the word equity is too political.

Rachael Forester: Absolutely. And ... that is something that we hear all the time. And one of the things that we encourage folks to do as it relates to equity is to really level-set. Really have a conversation about what it is that we all want and need within our organizations and have that be the baseline for where we start.

We all most likely want to work at a place where we feel like we belong. We also want to work at a place where we feel like our ideas are valued and heard ... therefore, how can we create an atmosphere where we equate equity with all of those things?

Atokatha Ashmond Brew: More and more are coming in now, Rachael and Bryan.

Another one says hierarchical structure.

Someone says, lack of knowledge of what is needed.

Another person said, our leadership or board is a barrier. Sometimes [we get] pushback from leadership and those positions.

Another person said capacity.

And finally, there are so many that are coming in. I'll read a couple more: getting buy-in for targeted ... versus universal [interventions]; staff capacity; and leadership does not recognize that there is inequity.

Rachael Forester: Absolutely, Bryan, you want to jump in here?

Bryan Jackson: Yeah, I was just going to say that equity is a word that culminates all of who and what we are.

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Most oftentimes, the word equity has been co-opted into identifying ... race. And though that is essential and important, [it is useful] to be able to then deconstruct what equity is and to show how intersectional we are. I am a Black male. I am ... a father. I am ... a college graduate. I am also a homeowner. All of these different aspects of who I am demonstrate that my complexities ... [have] the ability to connect with other people.

... To help boards understand that — because remember, you are not your title first, you are the person ... in that position — ... to show up as that person versus that title starts to break down the political nature, the board's nature and some of the other institutional conflicts in saying: “Though we may not know a lot, we know that we value the very people that are within this organization, because folks that feel valued, seen and heard within their organization will ... create a bottom line that everyone can be excited about.”

Rachael Forester: Absolutely, Bryan. That's really, really great context as we dive into inequities.

I hear some of you sharing about capacity being a potential barrier. Oftentimes, as leaders, we don't have a great sense of what ... our staff is doing all the time.

And so, more and more gets put on our plates. We have the expectation of different responsibilities, and how do we also center equity work within all of that?

So, inequities are often invisible to those who don't experience them. And I want you all to take a look at this graphic and what you're going to notice is [there are] lots of door frames, and these door frames have open doors. For many of us, when we are making decisions, or when we are navigating different responsibilities, we're often doing so with the mindset that everyone has the same access as us.

For example, one of the things that I appreciated Bryan sharing was some of his identities. Right? I identify as a white queer person with ADHD and anxiety, and for most of my life growing up, I didn't think about my race. I didn't think about the fact that I was white. I didn't think about the fact that my race actually gave me access to a lot of things that Bryan maybe had to worry about because I had open doors.

At the same time, and if you don't mind moving ahead, Bryan, inequities are still invisible to those who don't experience them, but they're also hypervisible to those of us who experience them.

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So, you'll notice ... this next graphic is the same picture [and] doorframe. The difference is that the door is closed. There is less access. And so, depending on my own lived experience, depending on my understanding of the world and other people, I might have no idea what doors are closed for other people. Or [in] what ways [might I] be the reason that that door is closed? What are the decisions that I'm making, and how does my decision directly impact Bryan? How does Bryan's decision directly impact me? And how are those things going to differ, based on how we grew up, based on how we experience the world? It could be regional differences. It could be leadership differences.

And so, we [pose] to you another question because we know that there's over 300 of you on this call currently, and we value your voice in this conversation.

So, what are some inequities that you experience within your workplace?

This might be your workplace in general, this might be something that you specifically have identified as an inequity or something that somebody shared with you.

Atokatha Ashmond Brew: Thank you. Again ... please add your responses to the questions pane.

Bryan Jackson: You can think about your current situation, but also think about previous [situations] as well. [I] would love to be able to hear, because I am sure that we are not all in this by ourselves experiencing different things. There may be some similarities [in] how we are all engaging with the change and the structure.

Atokatha Ashmond Brew: So, some responses are coming in.

Salaries do not account for location.

Wage and pay.

Review process.

Raises based on performance are inequitable.

Staff evaluations.

Lack of access in our area of the country to mental health, in general.

Compensation.

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Part-time jobs are a good fit for [the] organization's needs, but limit who can apply.

So, I think that some people may be responding ... to the earlier question as well.

One other response came in as not being treated the same as colleagues. Customers asking more personal questions of staff members than they would of some staff members.

And, our workplace is in an overwhelmingly white town, so it is difficult for us to achieve racial diversity on our staff.

Workload.

And, a final one is lower-paying positions for Black staff, specifically. Certain areas of work only hire Black staff that traditionally pay less than other positions.

Bryan Jackson: And so ... we've engaged with a lot of the responses in some of our client engagements, and one of the first things as it relates to compensation [is] transparency is key. I'm not saying that you need to go ahead and throw out the kitchen sink and the whole foundation of the house, but [help] people to understand: [What] do I have to do to get promoted? Sometimes we assume. Other times, we just kind of let it go under the rug. And other times, no one knows. So, when you are operating in a space of freefall, people are bound to try to hold onto something that may not be the foundation ... You have to make sure that as you [begin] to develop the pathway to compensation or ... mental health [that it] supports that you are very transparent.

... We have all engaged with the pandemic in a variety of different ways. We have all been impacted and folks are becoming [increasingly] advocates for their mental well-being. Not to mention, what is going on with the social injustice within [and] throughout the world. And so, knowing that, how can we help folks within our organization, be sound, feel safe, and know that their mental or social or cognitive uniqueness can be a space where, if they need to be able to have something poured in, that they can take that space and ... time?

And so, it's complex. But we, as people, are complex ... At the end of the day, how do we engage in conversation? How can we share power? How can we be transparent? A lot of those answers rest within the people [who] work within your organization.

Rachael, did I forget anything?

Rachael Forester: No, absolutely, Bryan.

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And one of the things that I really appreciate about your responses is that you all have taken the first step, right?

First, it's important for us to recognize what inequities exist, because, oftentimes, they're hard to see. And so, engaging in practices, such as compensation equity analysis, where you are looking at who's getting paid what and what pay band, what the demographics are of people that are getting promoted, what people are making across gender, across race, across disability status, all gives us insight into inequity and equity within your workplace. And so, if your organization has not started to do those things, that's something we would recommend. And some of the inequities that we see and engage with quite often is that women and people of other genders still earn vastly less than men. We also know that when we are engaging with potential hires or potential people that we're recruiting, Black Indigenous women of color, multi-racial women, and women of all racial and ethnic identities are less likely to negotiate pay.

And so that's why it's important, as Bryan talks about transparency, is even [with] compensation transparency on our job descriptions. How much is the salary band? What is it that we are offering? ... How high can we go?

We also find that mothers and folks who have [given] birth to children earn less than people without children. We also know that age-based discrimination exists, and that's on both ends of the coin. Age-based discrimination still exists for newer professionals whose abilities are doubted and whose work experience is deemed potentially less than based on the amount of time they've been in the workforce. And then, age-based discrimination on the other end ... we are viewing folks with a variety of different experiences based on their seniority or age as less competent.

We also know that workers with disabilities experience wider gaps, despite higher education and ... higher levels of education.

And then, the pay gap between Black and white workers is getting significantly larger within our country. And the pandemic is something that has absolutely influenced that. I think about access and who has been given access to remote work, who has been given access to promotions and who is socialized to negotiate salary.

We also know within the workplace that LGBTQ discrimination still exists. And it is a large concern of people within the workforce about whether or not they want to disclose their sexual identity to employers, because they are afraid of being treated differently. But this discrimination also exists within policy and practice. So, thinking about your insurance policies, do your insurance policies make sure that there is room for domestic partners or people who have partners of similar gender identities to be covered on insurance?

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And so, we think about, how do we start to eliminate these inequities?

The answer that we have for you today is really amplifying this idea of systems thinking. Systems thinking means that we are seeing and understanding interrelationships in complex systems and we're starting to understand how systems work over time.

We also need to challenge assumptions about how change occurs. So, when we think about systems thinking, it's really thinking about how, for example ... you were to engage in baking, or ... going to cook a meal ... the end product is extremely important. But what you also need to understand is each of the ingredients in that recipe and how they add to the texture ... and flavor of that dish. And that's really what systems thinking is.

Using systems thinking helps us to better understand why something is happening and then how we can change that why and actually treat the problem, as opposed to just giving Band-Aid solutions. And that's what we like to do here. At Nonprofit HR, within our DEI practice area ... we really like to help organizations think about diversity, equity, inclusion [and] justice in a broader way.

If you're noticing that there's inequity over here on the left, well, what are the ways that four other inequities might be actually causing that one inequity to be in place? And how can we treat the root cause so that we can have transformational solutions?

So, [there are] different components of systems thinking, first of which is indirect relationships. How do these two things connect or not connect to each other?

Number two is [that] behavior change is often required. When we think about what's truly transformational in our organizations is how inclusive our environments are. And that takes change on our part. That takes us committing to creating a workplace where everyone can survive and thrive, and ... committing to changing any policies or practices that run counter to that.

We also optimize the whole by improving relationships among the parts.

And we know that small changes produce large results. Oftentimes, Bryan and I work with organizations that want to do all of the big things first. Or they want to jump right into ensuring that their leadership represents the population that they're serving when we know that hiring and recruitment is a long-term gain. Small changes produce large results.

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And we also need to identify any unintended consequences of the decisions that we're making. So some of the things that I like to think about whenever I'm making a decision is, whose needs are being met? Whose needs are not being met? Who's being harmed, and who benefits? And when I carry those four questions with me in my decision-making process, I have a better idea of consequences that might be at play for people across different dimensions of diversity.

And so, how do we do this? How do we apply systems thinking? How do we look at not only the larger part, but all of the different pieces that make up systems?

[There are] ... four different ways that I'm going to share with you today.

First is contextual.

Number one, we need to reduce the risk of missing something important. So, maybe it's that we list the top five trends that are impacting our environment [in which] our organization operates ... And what do we think is behind these trends?

We also need to start to think about our own political or regulatory context. How might future political or regulatory changes influence our organizations or the people within our organizations?

Next is collaborative.

Make it easier for people to take concerted action. One of the things that we like to amplify is how important power sharing is, right? Who has already dealt with this situation that we need to invite [those who] ... can share their expertise? How might you change your current routines so that people feel more successful and satisfied when producing results? So, really moving away from, "Oh, well, we've tried that before," or "That won't work," to "How can we make this work? How can we try this out?"

Creative.

What could you test or create that might be a low-risk way to learn your way forward? Then, [think] about the risks and benefits of not doing anything at all.

Then, critical systems thinking.

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It is also crucial that we avoid solving the wrong problem, which means that we need to really understand what's keeping our current situation in place ... If we're thinking about actively recruiting folks across different dimensions of diversity — including racial and ethnic diversity, gender and sexuality diversity, disability diversity — and we keep hiring somebody that looks the same each time, we need to start asking, what's keeping this in place? Why does this current problem exist?

Then, go deeper. Why is [this occurring and why is that occurring]? And we keep asking that until we get to the root of the problem. And so, I'm going to pass it over to Bryan to take you more into root-cause analysis.

Bryan Jackson: Perfect. Thank you so much, Rachael, that was absolutely fantastic.

And one thing that Rachael highlighted is that you have to look at this as a journey. This is a process. You will often hear me say with all of my clients, “Rome wasn't built in a day.” So, we shouldn't expect for your organization to be the pillar of DEI at the end of this week.

Being able to call, [plan] and be a visionary is a part of the process of ... analyzing where you are as an organization within time and space. As I said earlier, there are certain things that you know about your organization that may be prohibiting this work from moving forward. But then there may be some things that only those closest to the people know. If you have worked all of your life in a C-suite, how are you connecting with the community? How, are you connected with the people in the mailroom? How are you connecting with the people that you don't often engage with? More often than not, getting to the root cause requires the following.

Answering the five why's. Engaging with the why's.

The first one is ... critical to assemble a group of people ... throughout the organization with diverse perspectives. You never know. I often say, whenever you go into an organization, the person [who] knows the most ... is the person you might see first. And so, you want to make sure that you are getting that institutional knowledge of the way that the organization is presenting itself, what is prohibiting the work from moving forward, as well as developing relationships so people can really engage in a trusting and confidential way about the organization.

When you have someone [who] believes in the mission of your organization, and they embody that in their day to day, that's a key asset. And so, you want to be able to make sure that this asset has a space to be able to share their perspectives on how to move the work forward within the context of diversity, equity and inclusion.

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Next, identify the specific inequity-related problem and/or issue, OK? You don't want to work in this space in general terms. We need to increase diversity. What does that mean? And just getting a person that represents LGBTQIA+ in a position or a person that needs a wheelchair for the visual sense. Hey, that's diversity.

You have to go beyond that because we are complex [and] multi-faceted, and as organizations, we need to be able to make sure that people can show up and demonstrate all of these complexities ... being who they are as individuals.

Write the issues down and then formalize the plan and be able to describe it completely. If you want to increase your overall presence with a diverse population within the city that you are on a journey with ... plan that out. What does that look like? What are the entry points? What are the inroads? What is the engagement going to look like? How are you going to highlight this and share it with your board? How do you get the board involved? [You should write these things down] because ... [as] I've always been told, if you write your plan down, you'll [stick to it] more often than not. And it holds you accountable. If you put thoughts out there in the air, [you'll] get to it. But if you see it on a day-to-day basis and you begin to believe [it] and [it] becomes your mantra, then the universe — [and] those that are committed to the organization — will start to turn that thing into something.

And ask why the problem happened. Write it down ... Why are we losing most of our “insert identity here?” Are you looking at the HR demographic data, as it relates to pay bands, as it relates to who's leaving, as it relates to where you are recruiting? And, again, you can't put this all on [one person's shoulders]. That's why the assembly of a diverse group of people can help to assess [the] current state [and] perspectives in conjunction with other perspectives, to understand: What are the pieces ... necessary to this whole?

And then, this is my favorite: If you answer, as you engage with ... the root cause and identify with the root cause, and you [write] it down, ask why again ...

... You want to go through this process ... because what you may see today may be different from what you see tomorrow. Case in point two years ago, three years ago, before COVID, there was a different DEI trajectory that we were all on. Today, on May 10th, 2022, there are other things that have changed [from] where we started. So, continuously ask why.

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Then, loop back to step number three until the team agrees that the problem's root cause is identified. What someone may say that is closest to the issue versus what a board member may say may be in totally different spaces. Though there may be truth in both, we want to get to that alignment in that if what the board member sees and the person next to the people sees is the same thing, then that is where you start to build the pathway forward.

Bear with me.

We got this, y'all.

Atokatha Ashmond Brew: Good, Bryan? [technical issues]

Bryan Jackson: No, I can't move it forward, I'm trying.

Atokatha Ashmond Brew: OK.

Bryan Jackson: Yeah, it seems to be frozen.

Rachael Forester: And as we're taking this technological break for just a moment, I want you [just to think], in your mind: What are some of the different decisions that you've made, or issues that you've tried to solve, [for which] you could have used root cause analysis?

Feel free to share those out in the chat if you would like to. And if not, just jot them down for yourself. What are some decisions that you've made, that maybe you need to go back and take a more of a systems perspective with?

Bryan Jackson: Thank you, Rachael.

And here we are.

And, Rachael, can you see my screen?

Rachael Forester: I can, you're good to go.

Bryan Jackson: Perfecto. All right, here we are.

And so, systems thinking as it pertains to actually doing the work.

This next set of questions can help you engage more with the whys, but ... also help towards the plan of being able to move this work forward.

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Have you engaged with the people most impacted by the problem? And proposed solutions by way of how they are viewing and engaging within this? Whose voices [were] missing within the context of the conversation, as well?

Again, leaders aren't ... often the ones that have all of the answers. You have to be able to have pathways to hear and ... see who's not sitting at the table. We worked with a past client [who] said, "You know, it's not just about being invited to the dance. It's also knowing that when you get to the dance ... they will play music for you to dance to." But I often say, "You also want to be in a space where the voices are alive for the music to keep playing – that inclusivity piece – as well as making sure that you have multiple voices. And throughout this journey, you can have different voices at different stops along the way. It doesn't always have to be the same [voice] because, as you know, we grow. We have different perspectives. ... having those additional voices within the roles [is] key, critical and essential.

What conditions are keeping the current outcomes in place? If things have been grandfathered in, if some of the restraints are budgets ... that's [a] very real [concern] that budgets can have a constraint on how far this work goes if it's personnel, if it's infrastructure – it can be a variety of different things – but you have to know what the conditions are that are keeping that [circumstance] perpetuating throughout the organization.

Who can help create/drive the change that we need to see?

Boards are very important. When does the board play a role in moving the work forward? We are engaging with a lot of nonprofits, so that means that we are committed to the people. Are [those] people's voices being heard? Are there forums? Are there ways to receive anonymous feedback? Are their pathways to ... have the community be a part of this process? Creating that space makes it more inclusive. Also, creating this space makes it more equitable. But then, knowing that you have multiple perspectives that makes it diverse. That's just not a Black thing. It's just not an able-bodied thing or an age thing, it's a people thing. So, we want to ensure that the creation of this space can drive the change that we need to see.

How do you know these are the right things on which to focus? [By conducting] root cause analysis, gap analysis, data validity and end-user perspective [analysis]. What this is essentially saying is that you have to know where to start to know where you are going. If finding and hiring diverse talent is a challenge ... and you know that to be a challenge, then that's the primary focus.

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If it's identifying, why are we losing talent? Starting with an HR analysis, looking at pay bands and compensation, looking at benefits — things that we offer at Nonprofit HR — but also, and this is very key, we, as nonprofit leaders, often operate in silos. And when we operate in these silos, we often say to ourselves, I don't want others to know the conditions which we have here ... The process to DEI work shouldn't be embarrassing. But you have to ... have individuals you can consult with ... talk to ... and ideate with, because a lot of great solutions can come from partnerships.

And trust me when I say: You are not the only organization that is experiencing the same thing that you are experiencing. Whether you happen to be in Detroit or Wapiti, Wyoming, what is unique to your experience can be true. And it can be true elsewhere.

So make sure you extend that hand [to] someone that you trust to find out: Are we looking at the right thing? What is the community saying? What is the narrative within our branding on the internet? What is being said within the organizations? Find out ... [the] root causes ... then take the necessary steps to involve people that you trust within the process to move the work forward.

And then, last but not least, what might be the unintended consequences of disrupting the systems associated with these targets and exchanges?

Trust me when I say, this work is not easy. It isn't easy. And we're not saying that the yellow brick road has been paved and that if you say you are a DEI organization ... you will be able to get there just like that. [It's] not the case.

Remember, this is a journey. And some of the consequences may be the loss of staff ... a board member ... funding. But the contrary could be, those people [who] may have left may have been what was causing the work to slow down. But then look at all of the new folks that are coming in [who] are not only buying in to the work and the mission but [also] know your commitment to DEI because you stand firm and strong on it. That is ... how you see the shift in culture.

Not every day is going to be sunny without a cloud in the sky, we recognize that ... We [also] don't want to present that this is going to be the easiest thing that you do. But when it comes to your people and ... essential assets within your organization — which, again, are the people — [it] is worth it, in my opinion, to figure out the pathways to say, “Though we may change, we are changing for the better.”

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And so, I want us to ... sit with this question. And that commitment that we as individuals have to make. [We are all at different stages of our DEI journey, but we are united by a shared commitment to equity and social justice.] Some of us understand the variety and the depth of DEI and all that comes with understanding what DEI is. But some of us are just trying to figure out what DEI stands for or what BIPOC stands for.

Regardless of where you are on your personal journey, committing to this work means that you are headed in the right direction. Ground yourselves in shared meanings of terminology that will be used throughout this process.

Name DEI as a strategic imperative for your organization; make it front facing. Don't have folks have to search for your drive to do DEI work. Put it frontward facing in all of your branding. Engage in any meeting [by] centering the importance of the diverse people that are a part of what makes your ... your organization unique.

Define and communicate how DEI connects to your mission, vision, organizational values and strategies, and ... add it to your own personal mission, vision and organizational values and strategy.

Design a bold DEI statement that publicly expresses your commitment and intention. But here's the caveat. This has to be true.

In the wake of George Floyd's murder, a number of organizations started to put up DEI statements. Some of the very vocal opponents to those statements were the very people [who] worked in those ... organizations. And so, though, it may not be as robust and as artistic, if it is true to you and your organization, stand on it.

Design an outcomes-based DEI strategy to make the commitment come to life within your organization. [Knowing] what the outcomes-based strategy should be is the first aspect of being able to do this work. You being here today is a part of that design process. You having these conversations ... struggling with some of these questions, are a part of that commitment to your organization.

As I said before, yes, this is not going to be easy, but, no, we can't stop. We cannot stop. And think of it like this. We have all intended to work within our organizations to have them be better than they were before we got there. But operate with the question: How can we make these organizations better for our kids when we're not here? Intention is the sea that creates your future. Be intentional. Be future thinking. Know that this challenge will be worthwhile when you are the pillar of other organizations in saying, "How did you all do this?"

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And so, I want to ask a question and pose this question for the chat, as well.

What is your commitment to creating equity within your organization?

I want you all to commit to something, whether ... engaging in ... sharing resources with staff from DEI perspectives. If it is engaging with HR to start the conversation and discussion around compensation. If it's the sharing of power. If it's even looking at who is always taking the notes in our meeting. [We can institute these things] ... on our own ... to create the environment that we want to see. So, what is your commitment?

I feel like I'm in church, what is your commitment today?

Please go ahead and add that [to] the chat, and we would love to have some of the responses shared. I can't see your responses in the moment, but I would love to be able to hear what some of these responses are.

Atokatha Ashmond Brew: Yes, Bryan. As soon as they start coming in.

Rachael Forester: Bryan, one of my biggest commitments that I like to make to myself and to my organization is that anytime that I receive feedback to ... sit with that feedback, and not just show up in defensive ways, not to figure out a way to rationalize why that person is wrong or how I'm committed to this work ... Being able to sit and do that ... mirror work, my own personal work, to show up and have the impact that I [want] to have within my organization.

Atokatha Ashmond Brew: Some responses are starting to come in.

Someone said they would want to assess [and] bring this back to our JEDI focus groups so we can more intentionally suggest changes and actions; [champion] people outside of my personal identities; create space to learn and grow together to ensure our DEI council is empowered to make decisions and promote real change; trying, even when the work is difficult. I am committed to changing our recruitment practices to ensure a diverse pool of candidates; my commitment is to embed DEIJ into the DNA/culture of my organization.

Another person says, working on increasing board diversity, but also making the board [a safe and welcoming place] for board members of all backgrounds; defining and folding antisemitism into my DEI work since it seems to be lost in the shuffle, but has increased exponentially.

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Bryan Jackson: Wow. All of what was shared places the focus on people.

And this, again, goes back to the proponents of DEI or equity being controversial — not when it comes to people, not when it comes to everything that was shared within this space ... It's really great to hear that as well.

Thank you.

All right.

And so, operationalizing DEI within the organization: the three-step process. We talked a little bit about this before in pieces, but we want to make this explicit.

The first step is [to] assess and understand the current state of your organization. This is essential. You also want to design and integrate strategies and set measurable metrics.

Sometimes, this is hard, because DEI can live in two spaces, it can live in a space where the outcome is not measurable, because it's the heart work, H-E-A-R-T. It's all about that culture. Sometimes you can't measure that. But then, there are certain metrics ... that you can assess and measure. Looking at retention ... where you are recruiting and ... how you are showing up, not only from a branding perspective, but [also] from an interview perspective.

More often than not, we ask questions to the person being interviewed about a particular role. But have we asked them about what their interview experience was like? These are key assets to helping us say to ourselves, how can we identify a metric and then be able to measure it over the course of some time?

Integrate strategy and measure success. And there's one ... that's not on here, and ... is also a part of [the] three, and that is to celebrate the success and the wins, regardless [of] if they are small or large. Any and everything that gets celebrated then gets repeated until — regardless of being able to set metrics and identify what those metrics are, you have to be able to celebrate the progress of where you are currently in time and space, given where you have come from. Those are essential to operationalizing DEI.

And we all like being celebrated, we do. That is the true essence of how we can see people as assets; celebrate them [and] champion them because they are a part of the foundation of our organization.

So how do we gather this information and measure it?

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First, with diversity, we can take a scan and see who is within our organization, and who is not, and ask: Why is that the case? But also, begin to look at some of the data that may live within HR. See what the data is saying about who is here. See what the data is saying about who is not here. Also ... look at where you are recruiting from, and who [you are] recruiting.

More often than not, we hire people that either have gone to the same school as us, who look like us, who think like us. And that may not be the classification of what diversity is. And so, you want to make sure that you know where ... and who you are within time and space.

What historical challenges do we need to ... acknowledge? ... Some of these systems have been embedded for such a long time, but being able to pinpoint and highlight what the challenge is can then be the pillar for what ... we need to do, not only to acknowledge it, but [also] make the necessary steps to change what needs to be changed?

Inclusion and belonging. Do you know what it feels like to work within your organization? That's key and essential ... just because I have a smile on my face, doesn't mean that I enjoy working there because I'm not seen [or] valued ... Do you know what it feels like to work within your organization?

And then, this is critical. What is the overall readiness level of the organization to embed within this work? Yes, we want to say, and we would love to say, that everyone is going to be onboard to do this. But what we know in the work, and what we've seen within our client engagement is that there are some people that are resistant. There are some people that are not sure. Then you also have people that are on board, ready, and they're like, "Where you been? I've been ready to do this for years."

Take that balance, understand where everyone is, but then [place] the emphasis about the belonging and the inclusion of who people are within the organization, all focused on the mission of the work because that is the commitment that we should hold to be true.

And then, equity. How well are our systems working? And then, engaging with the trends. Demographic information is very key. Taking an analysis of what the work is within the organization. What the data says also allows for the equity piece to be at the forefront of highlighting something that needs to be changed, putting infrastructure in place to then change it.

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Rachael Forester: And Bryan, as you share all of this, as you talked about the different steps, and about how we gather this information, [when] we measure it, one of the things that we wanted to share with you all is that this is where our team can help as well within your organization. As we operationalize diversity, equity and inclusion with a variety of different clients, we follow these different steps, right? We do assessments, and then we help people to create a strategy and a roadmap, so that you're able to create those deliverables, the impact targets, and tangible outcomes to see all of your hard work come to fruition. And then, we also help with integration and education along the way.

... And so, as we engage more with this conversation, we want to know ... What can you do within your organization to build an inclusive culture? We know that we all have our role, and we all play a role with diversity, equity, and inclusion and justice within our organizations. And so, we want to hear from you. Within your specific role, what can you do to build inclusive culture?

Atokatha Ashmond Brew: Rachael, I'll start reading those off as they come in.

Rachael Forester: Perfect.

Bryan Jackson: And as they come in, we'll ... continue with some of our slides and take a pause to engage with them very shortly.

Rachael Forester: All right. So, as Bryan has said several times on our call is, this is all about the human experience. This work ... comes down to understanding how we communicate and interact with each other.

It has to do with people, it has to do with culture, and then our systems have to do with people and they have to do with culture as well ... [It's about] really trying to figure out, do you know what it currently feels like to be part of your organization? And, if so, is that only at your level? Do you know what it currently feels like to be an entry-level staffer within your organization? Do you know what it currently feels like to be X identity or Y identity within your organization? So ... starting to get an understanding of how people are experiencing the workforce. Do team members ... Oh, go ahead, Atokatha.

Atokatha Ashmond Brew: Sure, we ... have some coming in.

Give space to speak out.

Be a champion for DEI and belonging.

Speak up for those who are forgotten by management.

Help to gather and nurture a group of folks who care about this work.

Be intentional.

Mhmm, and be real about the demographic background and identities of who the staff is and how people are hired.

And, someone also said to conduct more employee and patient surveys.

Rachael Forester: Awesome.

Thank you, Atokatha, for sharing those, and I love all of those different suggestions and all of those different commitments.

One of the things that really resonated with me was even being able to call into the room whose voices aren't being heard, and then making space [for them]. So, if I'm in a meeting, and I notice that every time Bryan says something, he's interrupted, then I need to be able to pause and say, "This is a pattern that we have here, and this isn't creating an inclusive culture. So how can we work together?"

And that really ... leads into the point of, do team members consistently treat each other with respect? Do we truly engage in authentic discussions? And, how do people across identities answer these questions? It's not just how does the majority answer these questions, it's how ... those with intersectional identities. At all of the intersections ... our Black, Indigenous, folks of color, LGBTQ and have a disability, who are neurodivergent, how are they experiencing our workforce? And how do we consistently work to ensure that everyone's voices are valued and heard?

Do we have strong norms around listening to each other to understand, rather than to judge? And I would go a step further than just listening ... Do we truly hear each other when we are sharing ... our experiences?

Are we able to hold the reality that multiple truths exist? For most of my life, I thought about how there was one kind of universal truth. Right? And I was always searching for this one universal truth, which I called the capital-T – Truth. And as I started to engage more with diversity, equity and inclusion work, the reality is that [there are] so many truths that exist for all of us ... it's about understanding those truths, understanding people's perspectives, and then finding common ground so that we can engage and move our organizations forward.

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And last but not least, can team members see others that look like them? And see others that look like them in positions within leadership? Positions within the board? Can team members see other people that look like them that are getting promoted? That are being treated with dignity and respect? Because one of the things that we look for is not just representation for the fact or sake of representation. We're looking for ensuring that everybody's voices are being heard, valued and respected. And oftentimes organizations jump onto this one, right, and say, "Ah, OK, we're doing DEI, which means we need to recruit, recruit, recruit, and we need to make sure that there's representation."

And we agree, there does need to be representation. But there also has to be competency related to diversity, equity and inclusion. There ... has to be intentionality about changing and shifting the culture so that when folks across identities are engaging with our organizations, they're doing so in a place where they feel valued, honored and respected.

And so, if that wasn't enough for y'all, we want to share with you additionally the business case for engagement.

Bryan Jackson: And so, all of this connects to the bottom line, and organizations that are diverse outperform colleagues by 20% plus.

Also, there is evidence that says revenue increases by 40% when you have diversity within your organization. There's also evidence that ... organizational culture and folks within the cultures take fewer sick days by 60% because they feel seen in spaces ... safe in spaces [and] ... ready to engage in spaces. And 80% of folks may be less likely to leave organizations because it's difficult to leave a place that not only loves you, but you enjoy working there. Then, return on assets, net margin, customer satisfaction and company retention increases as engagement increases. And so that's why DEI is very, very important. Because not only does it impact culture, it [also] impacts revenue. It impacts what the conversation is about your organization within the sector. That's key and it's critical.

Leadership behaviors that are essential for shaping inclusive cultures: Just because you are in the C-suite doesn't mean that you are the only leader. We are all leaders within this work. And by ... being a leader and committing to this work, we have to assess the perspective of inclusivity within our team culture and climate.

We also have to make sure that we are clear and articulate expectations about behaviors that [we expect] to promote the inclusion that we are looking for. By doing this and engaging in this work, you are inadvertently role modeling what inclusivity looks like. Inclusivity is infectious.

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Then, we also want to make sure that we ... reinforce ... desired inclusive behaviors. This is where that celebration comes in. This is where we speak to creating the environment that we want to see that we are a part of, because, again, what gets celebrated gets repeated. And, lastly, we want to show you ... that we all have a role in fostering belonging and engagement.

Belonging. We can focus on the purpose, communicating the intersections of our organization's purpose with our employees' contributions. Saying, "You know what, Bryan, what you contributed today during this webinar was exactly what we were looking for as it relates to ensuring that we're amplifying the importance of diversity, equity and inclusion work and I value you for that."

Being intentional about inclusion, deliberately and with calculated efforts, to bring the voices of the team to the table and to seek to learn about them. So if you're making a decision, and it directly impacts somebody who is a junior staff member, then include junior staff members in your decision-making process. Embed it into the organizational culture, creating memorable experiences, personalized interactions, tailored motivators and fast feedback. And really being able to celebrate, as Bryan alluded to.

Then, engagement. We need to mitigate burnout.

We need to build team trust, and we need to celebrate contributions. And we do that by paying attention to the people that we're working with.

We do that by creating environments where somebody can come in and share about the great things that happened over the weekend, and ... sharing about the things that might have been harder, and being able to hold all of those things together.

And so, Bryan and I want to thank you all so much for being part of our webinar today, for really being able to be in this position, where we talk about how we could foster belonging and inclusion together – how we can create equity within our organizations. And we're going to throw it back to Atokatha to get us started on our question and answer portion of our session today.

Atokatha Ashmond Brew: Thank you so much, Bryan and Rachael, for such a wonderful conversation and for sharing so much information. We do want to remind everyone that you may start adding your questions [to] the questions pane for our official Q&A ... We'll continue through that until the end of the webinar. We [will send] out the slides and recording to this event later this week. We will also [send out SHRM recertification codes to live attendees.

Again, just start adding your questions to the questions pane.

Rachael Forester: We really want to emphasize that if you have that question in the back of your mind, we know that somebody else on this call has that question as well.

Atokatha Ashmond Brew: All right. So they're starting to come in.

How can organizations uplift junior staff in terms of decision making and collaborating?

...

Bryan Jackson: Want to take that one, Rachael?

Rachael Forester: Sure, absolutely. So, number one, reminding junior staff that you value their thoughts ... opinions and ... decisions that they're bringing into the organization.

I will also say that sometimes the people who know the culture best are the people that just got there, because they're entering in and it feels like the biggest shift.

And so, as it relates to amplifying the voices of junior employees, junior staff members, is [about] being able to engage in conversations where you are including them in the decision-making process ... It's [also about] being clear about whether they have a voice, a vote or a view on those different decisions, and letting them know that you value them in that way.

... Create [balanced] focus groups for people to provide feedback. One of the things that I have appreciated about Nonprofit HR, and I've been here for about eight months, is that after I got here, I had several people checking in about what my onboarding experience was like. I had people checking in to see how I was impacted by our culture of inclusion, and I also had people saying, "Do you know that your decisions are valuable?" "Do you know that you could put your voice out there in these ways?" ... Those are some things that I would recommend for junior staff.

Atokatha Ashmond Brew: Another question.

How can managerial and non-managerial staff better collaborate to establish an aligned culture that recognizes each person's value to the organization?

Bryan Jackson: I'll say, start small.

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More often than not, [you] can have someone that has the pulse of the staff. And as leaders, we know who those individuals are within our organization. But [it's] also [about] developing a space where that person can feel, that as an asset [and based on] what they know about the institution, there is a place for that knowledge to be shared, starting small and engaging in a way [where] you're sharing some tough truths about ... the experience ... And for that person that is sharing, [ensuring] that [they do] not ... feel that they are going to be ostracized, retaliated upon, so on and so forth. That is how the conversation can then expand ... But I would say start first with developing a confidential feedback loop, and doing it in a way that allows for folks to ask: How confidential is this? ... They can start the conversation on identifying [the] population, the entity, [and] what thing [to] focus [on], to start the small conversation in a way that can then lead to greater results with more voice.

Atokatha Ashmond Brew: Another question is, how [do you] work on organizational culture change when everyone is starting from different places?

Rachael Forester: That is a question that we get all of the time. One of the things we'd like to normalize [is] that wherever ... you're starting is a really great place to start. However many years we've been alive on this planet is the amount of years that we've spent being socialized to understand the world the way we understand it today.

One of the things that we ... recommend, however, is doing some foundation setting within your organization.

So, that might be a training or an educational opportunity to engage in some of the terminology [of] diversity, equity and inclusion, and to really get people contributing to the conversation about what culture they would like to see within their organization. Because I think we all are able to idealize ... what we want our workplaces to feel like. And that's generally where we ask people to start because that brings us in at levels where we are all fundamentally engaging in the same goal.

Then, you can also leverage your staff with additional compensation opportunities. For folks who might be a little bit ... ahead, or ... have some of the expertise, leverage them. Ask if they would like to be part of a DEI committee, ask if they would like to do some training or engagement, and then make sure that you're honoring them and compensating them for their time and ... work.

Bryan Jackson: And I would also like to add ... when it comes to culture, how are you celebrating your staff?

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Something as small as having a dress-down day. Something as small as having a mental health day where, you know what, all y'all don't come in tomorrow. These can be the things that can deconstruct what was once the foundation to being the new foundation of people seeing that the culture is different.

We have to start thinking outside of the box. And there are a number of things that you can do as an organization that will not cost you anything, financially, but will cost you everything because it comes to the people.

Do you even know what candy bars or candy your staff like, right? Can you offer \$3–5 gift cards to Starbucks? These very small wins are still huge wins as it then leads to, “This feels different. So you know what? This invitation I just got from Dr. Forester. I’m thinking about it, definitely thinking about it.”

Also think about affinity groups and developing affinity groups within your organization. Here at Nonprofit HR, we have some dedicated staff members [who] lead a variety of different affinity groups for varying degrees of identity. When you go into these spaces and folks are just building community, it's huge ...

... [Many] of us aren't trained in effective affinity group spaces, but we are still committed to not only Nonprofit HR, but [also] ... to being the great people [who] we are for the great people [who] we are working with.

So, those are some of the wins that can transform and revolutionize in an organization.

Atokatha Ashmond Brew: Another question is, how can we get everyone talking about DEI challenges while avoiding microaggressions and [alleviating] participants’ concerns that they'll say the wrong thing?

Bryan Jackson: I mean, it's inevitable, because we have all experienced and seen different things. No one is perfect, however, developing a pathway to at least start the conversation should be the goal.

Do we have resources and/or books or trainings and/or videos that we can engage in? Are there spaces for people [who] may identify as white to be able to have accountability for how they engage with the world? And have that conversation take place amongst white folks? Are their spaces for BIPOC? Are there spaces for the conservatives? We have to begin to think about [how] we are all different and unique, but having these individual spaces to say, will I get canceled? What does that even mean? Well, if you said something that was just out of pocket, hey, think before you speak.

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And so, [it's about] being strategic, but also being mindful of what resources ... we currently have in place? And if we don't, what resources can we bring in to at least start the conversation? Not everyone is going to be open and ready to read X amount of books. But if we are able to come together and say, how can we advance our organization as individuals? What are we missing?

Start ... small, grow from that by way of the institutional knowledge that may be coming from the assets within the organization. But I also — because Rachael is so great with helping organizations to see this — want to make sure that she is able to share as well.

Rachael Forester: Absolutely, Bryan ... One of the things that I am thinking about is just even starting conversations about: What does it look like for us to provide feedback to each other? Or engaging in different facilitation strategies or ... prompts for how we can start to interrupt microaggressions when they occur?

One of the biggest things that I hear from staff members is that they're afraid of making mistakes because oftentimes, when we're talking about DEI work, we attach it to our morality or how much we care about other people. And caring does not equal competency. I could care a whole lot and still do a whole lot of harm to people that I care about. And so, it's normalizing that. But then also being able to teach people how we take ownership of that.

I also think something as simple as a weekly newsletter that has different links to different types of microaggression based on identities is a really great starting point. And then also being able to engage in accountability conversations around, "Hey, so you might not have recognized this [at this] time, and now that you know, here's some ways that we're going to need to hold you accountable if this is to happen again in the future because it's impacting all of us," and therefore, there's the accountability, the education, the grace.

I call it being hard on systems and soft on people ... you're not alone in that.

Atokatha Ashmond Brew: There's another question.

Leadership may not always be ready to hear the truth about their organizations and things that come from assessments. How do you keep the focus on the betterment of the organization and away from leadership feeling defensive?

Rachael Forester: Great question. Bryan, you want me to hop in or [do] you want to start?

Bryan Jackson: You go first, and I'll slam dunk it [afterward].

Rachael Forester: Sounds good, alley-oop, here we go.

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So, yes, that is real ... and we deal with that all the time, because leaders within organizations, especially within the C-suite, have a lot of pride and ... ownership over what's happening within their organizations. And sometimes, when we get these results in, we can feel shocked ... or defensive because I think sometimes, being in a leadership position is actually the most disconnected position from the culture of the team. Because you're often operating at a level where you're either in isolation or you're making decisions outside of everyone's involvement.

[One] of the things that we like to remind people is that the results from an assessment do not change the fact that people are experiencing that. If your staff is going to be honest and vulnerable with you about their experiences, then as a leader, you have a responsibility to hear that and ... do something with it. And just trying to empower leaders to know that anytime they get results back that are not favorable, it's because there's some sort of trust there. It's because people believe in the organization and believe that the organization can do better and will do better.

And so, we also work and do some executive coaching and coaching with leadership, to help really identify: What is it that is sitting with you? And where do you want your organization to be? And then we start to think about the tangible steps that we can put in place to [align] between [our intentions and impact], and to know that we're on this journey together. And it's OK. And just because we have the results, it doesn't change it, but now we have a responsibility.

One of the worst parts of doing an assessment is not doing anything afterwards.

Bryan, for the alley-oop?

Bryan Jackson: Yeah, I'll add ... too, [in] our engagement with a lot of C-suite leaders, we often let them know that they are not the data.

The data is just an aspect of a system that ... probably [existed] before you got here. And now that we have this information, you can be [part of] the new chapter of this story. And so, a piece of that is disconnecting them from the numbers and helping them to take the 100-yard view of, "Now that we have this gift, what do we plan to do with it?" Now, if it's a 360-evaluation about a particular leader, that's different, but when you are looking at an organization as a whole, it is key to be able to look at this as what it is, data.

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The other thing, too, [is] as we work with a lot of organizations, we do so with empathy. And we put the human back in the human resources. And we talk to these leaders like people. And what you begin to see is the shedding of all of the initials at the end of their name, all of the extra commas in the account — all of that. And they just become people where they then can either vent, share, transparency, that in itself and knowing that you're talking to another person, can help leaders begin to see that, "I shouldn't be doing this alone, and I have a thought partner to be a part of this journey with me."

So it works threefold: A) everything that Rachael said, B) identifying that this is data, and it is a gift, and last but not least [C)] I'm a person. I'm not the issue. I am a part of this process. But now, I have the ability to write a new chapter of this organization. That's powerful.

That is powerful.

Atokatha Ashmond Brew: I have another question.

We're going through a period of expansion and ... incorporating these principles along with addressing anti-Blackness and our org culture. I would like to know if and how you all are dealing with DEIJ and anti-Blackness. What resources and approaches are best?

Bryan Jackson: I mean, one of the first things I would say is, do you have a firm understanding of what anti-Blackness is?

These are some key terminology that is at the forefront of everything, but do you, in your organization, understand fully what this is, the complexities of it, [and] how it has been embedded and indoctrinated universally? What does anti-Blackness look like in Europe? What [does] anti-Blackness look like here? You just can't, first, present [it] as, "We want to do this because ... anti-Black."

Understand the core of it. But then, when it comes to the resources, what type of resources are you seeking? OK, that is a very broad term. Are we looking at anti-Blackness as it relates to your locale? Are we looking at anti-Blackness as it relates to your organization, your industry? Are you looking at anti-Blackness as it relates to the prison industrial complex?

Again, go back to all of those whys. And then once you get to the core, [consider the parameters] ... "We want to look at anti-Blackness as it relates to the sector, for nonprofits that have a staff of 100–300 people."

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Once you get to that, then, identify what those resources are. And, instead of just seeking resources for the sake of being able to have them and to engage — because some folks don't engage with resources — find the resources that will be beneficial for your staff or your group based upon where they are on their journey.

Not everyone is going to be open to reading, “How to Be an Antiracist,” right? But, if we can dissect this book in a way that connects it not only to the author and to some TED Talks, into some things along those lines, having conversations and discussions, you want to be able to look at the multilayers of the why to get down to the what, so then you can focus on the how. But I also want to open it up to Rachael, because this question can be asked [of] all of us.

Rachael Forester: Absolutely, and ... that's a really great question. And I echo Bryan's sentiments of the why, the what and the how. And I think, when we're talking about anti-Blackness, we're really situating ourselves within a system of white supremacy and white supremacy culture. And so being able to provide [the] context of what that looks like and how it operates within your organization to ... hearing from staff [about] how they've experienced that within the organization I think is helpful too.

So, there is www.whitesupremacyculture.info/ ... a website [where you] can look at ... some of these different characteristics of white supremacy culture. This might be a really great starting point for employee resource groups or affinity groups to engage in white accountability work, but also, [to practice] that healing and talking specifically about anti-Blackness within Black, Indigenous, communities of color, multiracial communities, and to create expectations and outcomes of how you want your organization to operate counter to that system of pervasive and dominant culture.

Atokatha Ashmond Brew: Thank you, Rachael. And Bryan, I think we have time for one more quick question.

This one is, how would you engage staff from a global standpoint where EDI isn't as common?

Bryan Jackson: Great question. We're working with [global clients now].

And what we found with our engagement is: A) What are some of the issues within your locale that live within equity? We're looking at India and we're looking at housing, and we're looking at Kenya and looking at the death rates of those [who] have HIV/AIDS.

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That is when we can start to focus on [evaluating], OK, is this right? How can we deconstruct to then reconstruct whatever these systems may be in place? Is [there a] lack of accessibility? Is it [about not] having the right people in this space to make the decisions? And so, it has to be tailored to that particular global locale to then have a conversation based [on] what that truth may be because here in America, we're very Americanized into thinking that everyone is also dealing with "insert -ism here."

But when you start to go to some other location, what is specific to them still is rooted into, [the] systems do [they] need to put in place to understand why this is the way that it is? Identify who's the closest to the issue that may have the solution, but what is holding back the progress and being able to move it forward?

But Rachael, I want to share with you as well.

Rachael Forester: Absolutely, Bryan.

And I think, the other piece ... is that equity impacts all of us, no matter where we're located. And so, if we're looking at it from a systems and processes perspective, being able to understand the impact on ... our HR processes, our benefits packages and how that might need to differ based on where we are regionally located.

Thinking about what languages we're offering our all-staff meetings in, being able to engage in conversations about cultural competency and cultural humility, and what ... it means for us to collaborate across different cultures, as well. Because that's all part of diversity, equity, inclusion and justice work. And it's about [creating] an environment where we're engaging in the norms and expectations of our own organizations, instead of being pre-established based on wherever the home organization is, which oftentimes is based within the United States.

Atokatha Ashmond Brew: Thank you so much, Rachael and Bryan. As we close out, do you have 10-second final thoughts message for our attendees?

Bryan Jackson: I would just say just have that vision and know that you are the piece to this puzzle that can become the vivid picture that you want to see within the organization.

Rachael Forester: And I will add, be the change that you want to see. Be open to learning and unlearning and relearning, and be open to experiencing and understanding the world from different perspectives, so that you can be part of the long-lasting solution and not just part of the perpetuation of some of the harmful things we experience in the workforce.

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Atokatha Ashmond Brew: Thank you, again, to our presenters. Thank you, everyone who attended today's webinar. We hope you found it valuable. You can expect to receive that recording and slides in the coming days along with your SHRM recertification codes. We have three upcoming DEI webinars, which were placed in the chat. Please be sure to visit www.nonprofithr.com/events.

Be sure also to complete the feedback survey that will pop up once this webcast it ended. If you'd like information about available services from our DEI practice and other Nonprofit HR practice areas, please email us at info@nonprofithr.com or visit us online at nonprofithr.com. Thank you again for attending. Thank you, again, to our presenters and have a wonderful afternoon.