Day 1

Please note timestamps might not match with video, but might help provide a sense of the time period.

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SUMMARY KEYWORDS

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SPEAKERS

Yemila Alvarez, Stacy Collins, Rebecca Wendt, Chantel Walker, Elaine Tai, Patty Wong, Video, Alison Macrina, Fiona Potter, Audio, Ozy Aloziem, Celesté Martinez

Fiona Potter 00:05
Thank you for being here today. My name is Fiona Potter. I'm from the Redwood City Public Library. And we're so excited to have you here for our first ever virtual Future of Libraries conference.

Elaine Tai 00:19
And I'm the Co-Chair of the conference Elaine Tai from Burlingame Public Library. So this event is organized by the Pacific Library Partnership, or PLP, Staff Development Committee, of which I'm also the Co-Chair along with Karen Engle of Daly City Library who you will also see.

Fiona Potter 00:43
And at this point, we'd also like to thank Carol Frost, the Director of the Pacific Library Partnership, for supporting this year's endeavor for the development of library staff. This year, we are also honored to be supported by California Libraries Learn, or CALL, a joint project of the California State Library and the California Library Association. CALL is supported in whole or in part by the US Institute of Museum and Library Services, under the provisions of the Library Services and Technology Act, administered in California by the State Library and CALL is a sponsor of hundreds of California Public Library staff who are attending the conference today and tomorrow. And we appreciate their support so much.

Elaine Tai 01:34
All right. So since we are in this virtual environment, we do want to cover some quick logistics. So I am going to move over to this here.

Elaine Tai 01:45

So this is a webinar so attendees are not on mic or video, the goal is to use the one webinar session for the entire conference, so you will not need to leave and sign in between sessions. That's the goal in the ideal world. Only the optional networking session that's taking place at the end of the day will happen in a different zoom meeting. That information's on the program handout which you should have received a link to in the email. It is also on the website, the Future of Libraries website.

Elaine Tai 02:17

The chat box is open, make sure you select all panelists and attendees from the drop down. And if the chat does become distracting, we might change it so messages will only come to the hosts and panelists. If you want to hide the chat because it's distracting for you, you are able to do that on your end. And then we do ask that you remain respectful to our speakers and each other and we'll have some standards of engagement. Please use the q&a function to ask questions to the speakers, not the chat, and that way it doesn't get lost.

Fiona Potter 02:55

Um, we're also able to provide closed captions for this webinar. The closed captions are provided by webcaptioner. And you can adjust the size of the captions or turn them on and off using the button in the bottom Zoom bar or top. Today's webinar is being streamed to YouTube Live. And you'll see that at the upper left hand of your screen. If you're having an issue with Zoom, we would encourage you to jump over to that YouTube Live Stream, and that link was provided in the handout.

Fiona Potter 03:33

In addition to the chat, there are other ways to get in touch with the conference stuff today. You have our contact information in your handout, and the handout also includes information about the speakers, and whether or not you can access their slides and recordings later.

Fiona Potter 03:52

We've also tried to build in breaks during the morning, we know that Zoom overload is very real. Luckily, it's really easy to leave the session if you need to and not miss anything because we are recording today's meeting. Please do take care of yourself, take a break if and when you need to.

Elaine Tai 04:15

Okay and next in this virtual environment, we do want to present this digital land acknowledgment. I know it's a lot of words on a screen. But it is important that we don't miss it. So we did take this from Adrienne Wong of Spider Web Show in Ontario who wrote this, it points to the arts but it can definitely be applied to all we do.

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Elaine Tai 04:36

Since our activities are shared digitally to the internet, let's also take a moment to consider the legacy of colonization embedded within the technologies, structures, and ways of thinking we use every day. We're using equipment and high speed internet not available in many indigenous communities. Even the technologies that are central to much of the art we make leave significant carbon footprints, contributing to changing climates that disproportionately affect indigenous peoples worldwide. I invite you to join me in acknowledging all this as well as our shared responsibility to make good use of this time and for each of us to consider our roles and reconciliation, decolonization, and allyship.

Fiona Potter 05:25

And the Pacific Library Partnership in the Bay Area encompasses libraries of unceded Ohlone territory, which includes the lands of the Ramaytush, Chochenyo, Tamyen, Rumsen, Awaswas, Amah Mutsun, and Karkin languages and tribes. We encourage all participants today to explore the history of the lands where they live, and the indigenous people who reside there. If you do not know that territory that you sit on, visit a source like native-land.ca. Organizations like Sogorea Te' Land Trust, also offer actions you can take to support sovereignty.

Fiona Potter 06:08

Now we'd like to welcome Yemila Alvarez, the Deputy Director of PLP to say a few words.

Yemila Alvarez 06:18

Good morning, everyone, and welcome to the Future of Libraries Conference 2020. Our focus for this conference is equity, anti-racism, and work in the new normal, and I'm grateful and excited you're all joining us for these important topics and conversations. The Pacific Library Partnership is a consortium of 43 libraries across Northern California, our staff development committee sponsors two major library staff development events each year, the Spring Workshop appropriate for all levels of library staff, and the Future of Libraries conference each Fall, which we've been hosting now for 16 years. Each year, we pledge to bring you engaging new topics and presentations around the most important issues facing libraries, with the hope that you will walk away with fresh perspectives and innovative approaches to the challenges that you face in your own organizations. 2020 is no different, and yet it is unlike any year we have encountered in recent times. Of course, we would all prefer to be gathered together in person as we typically do for this event. But as libraries have done with so many things in the past, we will adapt to the present circumstances and continue to keep what matters most at the forefront of our operations, the service to protection of an education of our communities.

Yemila Alvarez 07:34

We know that figuring out how to operate libraries safely during a pandemic is no simple feat. You've been working very hard to adapt nearly every aspect of life and work at the library to this new normal

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we find ourselves in. You have changed the ways your work is performed and many of you have been involved in comprehensively re-engineering your library's operations. You have reconfigured access to library materials, developed new circulation and communication models to interact with the public, establish new cleaning protocols, measured workspaces for social distancing, and established and shared an array of public health measures and community expectations to give libraries the best chance at keeping our communities and ourselves safe and healthy. We thank you for the extraordinary work that you have done to get libraries to this point.

Yemila Alvarez 08:26
We also thank you for showing up today and acknowledging the work that we have yet to do. Throughout the nation, social unrest has been growing exponentially, and the topic of race and equity, our topic for today's discussions, has been at the forefront of this unrest. As a profession with an avowed commitment to impartiality, and to representing all points of view, it is particularly difficult for libraries to face our own complicity in creating environments in which individuals in our communities are treated as less than equal. These are extremely difficult times for anyone who cares about our country and our fellow human beings. But these are particularly distressing times for our BIPOC patrons and colleagues who are members of our communities. We know that changing the systems that we have existed in will be slow and difficult work. Confronting the ways that our actions and institutions lead to differential treatment of BIPOC individuals, even if done unintentionally, is only the first step in creating the change that is so necessary. We thank you for your willingness today to listen to things that may make you uncomfortable and still remain present and open. And we hope that you will continue to ask yourselves as libraries and library professionals, how strong is your commitment to the service to, protection of, and education, of our communities.

Yemila Alvarez 09:48
I would like to thank CAlifornia Libraries Learn for the funding that helped all of the California public library employees in attendance today participate in this event. I would also like to thank the Pacific Library Partnership Staff Development Committee for doing all of the work to develop, publicize, and bring today and tomorrow's lineups of amazing speakers to fruition.

Yemila Alvarez 10:08
And I would like to give a special thanks to Karen Engle, Fiona Potter, and Elaine Tai, the Committee Co-chairs and Conference Co-chairs for this year, who have been working tirelessly to make sure that this year's transition from an in-person format with an average 175 attendees to a virtual format with over 300 participants goes as smoothly as possible. This year, we're bringing the conference to you from the comfort of your own homes, offices, and anywhere else you're able to access the internet. This is a new format for us and we know that there will be technological glitches and other problems that will arise. We ask for your patience as the Staff Development Committee does their best to deliver

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the best conference that we can for you over the next two days. Thank you for being here and for working through this with us. My name is Yemila Alvarez and as the Assistant Director for the Pacific Library Partnership, I would like to officially welcome you to the Future of Libraries Conference 2020. I hope that we can all learn and grow together and that we will all walk away feeling a little better prepared to create the future of libraries. At this time, I would like to welcome Rebecca Wendt, Deputy State Librarian for the California State Library.

Rebecca Wendt 11:16
Thank you so much, and good morning everyone. It is great to be here with you. I'm delighted to represent the California State Library and the CAlifornia Library Learns project. For me it's very exciting that the Future of Libraries conference was able to go online this year. And I'd say the massive enrollment shows how important its works and themes are for library staff today. We are happy to be able to make attendance for the first time free of charge to staff members of California's public library jurisdictions, so welcome. I will repeat the fine words that Fiona said about CAlifornia Library Learns, or CALL. CALL represents the renaissance of the statewide continuing education program for our state's public library workers. It's a joint effort of the California Library Association and the State Library. CALL is supported in whole or in part by the US Institute of Museum and Library Services under the provisions of the Library Services and Technology Act administered in California by the State Librarian, my boss, Greg Lucas.

Rebecca Wendt 12:37
So I will say that the truly, at least one of the truly wonderful aspects, of the Future of Libraries conference is that its staff generated and staff developed which is an amazing thing, you all rock. Every year the conference manages to book cutting edge speakers and capture the zeitgeist of the library, and the broader world. And this event's themes this year focusing on social justice and racial equity, help us discuss and process history, current events, and the brave words and work of so many Americans in this this landmark year. Tomorrow when you turn to safety, services, and work, the conference will address pressing issues on the mind of every public institution in the era of the pandemic.

Rebecca Wendt 13:30
I would say one of the silver linings, there have been a few this year, but one of them this year has been the opportunity to talk to so many of you, thanks to Zoom, on networking calls that have been taking place every week since late March. And whether I've been listening to every, directors, or our staff members, or leading discussions among literacy staff, or youth services librarians, frontline staff, programmers, or managers, we all have incredibly unprecedented opportunity to connect virtually and learn from each other.

Rebecca Wendt 14:08

These talks that I hope you've been able to participate in, energize me, it made me yet again on how passionate dedicated and innovative all the people who work in libraries are and can continue to be. So we hope that you have used the State Library's special projects, including the online crowdsource database remote resources, contributed to by libraries, and library staff like you all across the state. Or perhaps you have seen or participated in the COVID Diaries project. In art, writing, from across the state, California residents that illustrates what's happening in our lives during the pandemic, and please feel free also to contribute or participate.

Rebecca Wendt 15:01

The California Library Association's website is also maintaining a database of pandemic related information, resources to re-opening plan drafts, and we invite you to contribute the documents and links that have been most helpful to you. Have a wonderful conference, I hope you have a chance to learn, reflect, and connect. And thank you for participating and keep up the amazing work. Now, I will throw it back to Fiona and Elaine, who really are running the show today. And thank you so much.

Fiona Potter 15:36

Thank you so much, Rebecca, and thank you to Yemila as well for those welcoming messages. And we also want to again, thank and acknowledge all the members of the PLP Staff Development Committee who helped organize this event. Our members are assisting in the chat and on the phone on email to help you resolve some technical issues. It looks like we're getting the correct YouTube link into the chat, which is great. And thank you again for all your work.

Elaine Tai 16:08

Alright, so yes, apologies for that, I started the stream on Day Two instead of Day One. So, um, apologies, that's our first issue for the day. Okay, so let's get back to this. Before we do start the day. Oh, no, that's not what you need to see. Sorry.

Elaine Tai 16:36

Okay, so we are going to start with some standards of engagement. Okay. Okay. We do want to present these standards of engagement for the conference, especially as we will be discussing topics that can be uncomfortable or difficult. These are derived from those presented at the Denver Public Library Workplace Equity Symposium, which cited McKenzie Mack, Anti-oppression Consultant and Founder of #BoundaryWork. So we agree to struggle against racism, sizeism, transphobia, classism, sexism, ableism, and the way we internalize myths and misinformation about our identities and the identities of other people. We know that no space can be completely safe, and we agree to work together towards harm reduction, centering those most affected by injustice in the room.

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Fiona Potter 17:38
We agree to sit with the discomfort that comes with having conversations about race, gender, identity, etc. We agree to try our best not to shame ourselves for the vulnerability that these kinds of conversations require. We are to value the viewpoints of other people that do not challenge or conflict with our right to exist. And we agree that it's okay to have feelings. It's okay to feel uncomfortable when discussing complex topics about accountability, equity, relationships, justice, and care.

Fiona Potter 18:20
All in all, let's be kind to each other, while also understanding that these topics affect each other in different ways.

Elaine Tai 18:31
Alright. So next, I'm going to bring our first panelist up for the day.

Elaine Tai 18:39
We are excited to present Celesté Martinez, Founder and Owner of Celestial Alegria, LLC. Celesté's training programs focus on building conditions and skills for clients to foster racial equity through personal and collective development. Celesté is currently a member of Good Business Colorado, a participant in the Standing in our Power Train the Trainer program, and also serves on the Board of Directors for Center for Health Progress. She's also a proud 2019 Fellow of Transformative Leadership for Change. Welcome Celesté.

Celesté Martinez 19:16
Good morning. Thank you, everyone, for having me. Thank you, Elaine, for that warm welcome. As Elaine mentioned, can everyone hear me okay?

Elaine Tai 19:27
Yes

Celesté Martinez 19:29
All right. Um, as Elaine mentioned, my name is Celesté Martinez, and I'm the founder and owner of Celestial Alegria. And through my business, I support individuals and organizations to ignite joy through transformation. And one of the ways that I do that is through training. And so in preparation for this Future of Libraries conference, sponsored by the Pacific Library Partnership, Elaine and I discussed some foundational ways that we could have some conversations this morning together. But before I hop into more of the logistics around that, I just want to share with you a bit about where I am in the world and also how I identify.

Celesté Martinez 20:16

So I first also want to acknowledge that I'm tuning in with you all here in Denver, Colorado, occupied Arapaho, Ute, and Cheyenne Lands. And I identify myself as a queer Chicana woman of color. I identify as Chicana, because I embrace the complexity of being Mestiza, both indigenous of Cherokee and Mexica lineages, as well as being of Spanish descent, and being politically active here in my Colorado community. And so at this time, to open up our space, and to kind of ground us a bit in our time together, I would like to invite you to think about what identities are core for you, what are some of the seen or unseen parts of yourself that shaped who you are, and to write those down. You're welcome to share them in the chat if you'd like but really, this is for your personal reflection. And I invite you to keep this in mind as we move through our session together as we have some foundational conversations around racial equity.

Celesté Martinez 21:26

To share a little bit more about why I offer racial justice and racial equity training through my business, is because I'm committed for us to be fully human and honor the dignity of one another. Oppressive systems like racism, take away our ability to be fully human, and cause pain and suffering to all of us in differing degrees. As someone who is radically committed to living out my joyful purpose, I want to be a part of experiencing the fullness of my humanity, and support those who want to do the same. So once again, thank you for inviting me to be here with you today, for opening this conference with this particular training.

Celesté Martinez 22:09

So with that I will share my screen, so we can begin, and proceed.

Celesté Martinez 22:25

So this morning, I will be sharing a training with you that includes some common definitions regarding racial equity. So everyone here is able to have some shared language on what racial equity is, and how that relates to oppression. We will then discuss this framework of the four I's of oppression and begin to better understand and recognize how oppression is showing up within various workplaces. So in this first section, I will share some definitions on power, privilege, and oppression. And then once I share these definitions, you will have space for individual reflection, followed by a second set of definitions, and another space for individual reflection. And then we will conclude our time together with the four I's of oppression framework, followed by a q&a. This is an ambitious hour, but I'm sure that we can move through it. So let's dive right in.

Celesté Martinez 23:33

When I say the word power, I'm sure there are many things and potential reactions that come up for you. I invite you to be curious about the following definitions. Power, as defined by Merriam Webster

dictionary is the ability to act or produce an effect. Power in itself is amoral, this means it's neither good or bad, it's neutral. However, there are different ways that power is used and shows up in our relationships, cultures, and society to produce an effect. So when we talk about power as it relates to race and racism, here in the US, we are having a conversation about power over, and power over is defined as possession of control, authority, or influence over others. The reason we focus on power over is because the concept of race, and now the system of racism we all live in today, comes from European settlers, who established laws, structures, and mechanisms to create a concept of whiteness that would allow for them to establish a new region and colony that remained connected to their original European country. The practice of European settlers going to other continents to establish colonies was for European countries to establish greater power over through wealth building, also referred to as a process of colonization and conquest. This position of control and authority here in what is now the United States included acts of violence, war, genocide, and uprooting indigenous peoples from their homelands. So European settlers could claim the land as their own. Indigenous peoples still fight this to this day, and we can see this with many fights that have been ongoing, and most recently, and earlier this year with Black Hills also known as Mount Rushmore, the severe neglect of the Navajo and Hopi nations through the COVID-19 pandemic.

Celesté Martinez 25:55
My main point in sharing all of this with you today is that when we have conversations about race and racism in the United States, we hardly ever discuss the experience of indigenous people, which erases their existence and makes our understanding of other parts of US history very unclear and confusing. The possession of control, authority, and influence was also clearly established by enslaving Africans, whose descendants are now known as Black, African-American, and Afro-Latino people.

Celesté Martinez 26:33
Slavery and having a class of people for free labor has a long history in Europe well before Europeans came to the Americas. Since slavery was so common, this practice was brought to what is now the United States where Africans were stolen from their home nations, so their labor could be exploited for the wealth building of colonies to essentially uphold the economic system of colonization. Slavery lasted well beyond their original colonies, and the United States became its own country. Slavery legally existed until 1863, when the 13th amendment was passed to abolish it. However, there are reports that Black people continue to be enslaved all the way through 1960. It's important to note that although slavery was abolished by law in 1863, there are other laws, systems, and mechanisms that emerged in the centuries to follow that continue to uphold whiteness and wealth building for white people as the most concentrated form of power.

Celesté Martinez 27:47

This brings us to our definition around privilege. When we go back to our definition of power over, this implies that there's a group of people with power, and others have with less or none at all. And this leads us into this definition of privilege, which is defined as a right or immunity granted as a particular benefit, advantage, or favor. So when we talk about racism, the system is set up to provide white people and those with lighter skin privilege, greater access to wealth, land, and opportunities. This doesn't mean that all white people or people with lighter skin, by default have wealth, land, and so forth. What it means is that white people and those with lighter skin have a greater possibility of achieving wealth, acquiring land, owning property, and other opportunities.

Celesté Martinez 28:52
Returning to our power over definition, this implies there is a group that has limited power or none at all, for the other too have power. And this brings us to our definition of oppression. Oppression as defined by Merriam Webster, is unjust or cruel exercise of authority or power. And I would add, where the exercise of power causes dehumanization, that creates division between people and does not allow for people to experience the fullness of freedom or dignity. Now, I believe you all are here because you're passionate about your work as librarians and wanting to further racial justice, within wherever you are based and especially in California. And right now we can clearly see how there is unjust and cruel exercises of authority and power all over our country. I want to invite you to think about what are some of these examples that come to mind. And feel free to share them in the chat.

Celesté Martinez 30:08
My point here is that it takes both oppressed and privileged people to fight against oppression. It takes all of us in order to undo these systems. And so this brings us to our space for our first individual reflection. I'd like you to take some time to reflect. um, you should all have access to the following handout with this set of questions, but I will leave them up here just in case you need them, for you. My invitation is to take the next five minutes to answer one to two of the following questions. You can write it down, create a voice memo, whatever is the way you'd like to reflect. And in the meantime, I'll play some music. And we'll come back once that song has stopped - that will be your cue. So we're gonna take some time for individual reflection, answering one or two of the following questions.

Audio 32:13
music playing Black is Beautiful by Bianca Mikahn, Ill Se7en, and Mawule

Celesté Martinez 35:18
All right, coming back coming back. I'm just going to start my screen share in a little bit here. Thank you everyone who is sharing your comments.

Celesté Martinez 35:40

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Alright. So as we continue to move forward in the conversation, I want to bring us into our next set of definitions. And um for our next definition, sorry due to delays I did not include a slide for, my apologies, is around prejudice. Now prejudice is defined as a pre-judgment also referred to as a bias in favor, judgment, or discernment. Once again, prejudice is defined as a pre-judgment also referred to as a bias in favor, judgment, or discernment. No one is born with prejudice. This is something that is a learned behavior, and instead of beliefs on how to treat someone based on specific characteristics, or identity that a person has.

Celesté Martinez 36:48
So today, as we focus on prejudice that reinforces racism, let's first define what is race. And now the following definition of race and racism that I'm sharing with you are informed by the People's Institute for Survival and Beyond, based in New Orleans, Louisiana, and their training on undoing racism. So race is defined as a false classification of people based on their ethnicity, skin color, and culture, and how those characteristics are in proximity to what is considered white. This was created by Europeans during the height of colonialism to reinforce power and privilege of white people over all other people. Again, this definition is informed by the People's Institute for Survival and Beyond, and their Undoing Racism training.

Celesté Martinez 37:50
So let's break this definition down a bit. What do I mean by false classification? Classes of race were formed by a scientist named Johann Friedrich Blumenbach, who in 1779, conducted an experiment where he measured the skull size of 60 people from Europe, Asia, Africa, Australia and the Americas. Why was he measuring skull sizes as part of his experiment? Well, during this time, there was a scientific theory that a larger skull size equates to a large brain, and a large brain meant that person or people would be of superior intelligence to all others. This result, the result of his experiment concluded that those from Europe had the largest skull size and therefore must be of superior intellect to all other people. This was later disproven, as neuroscience immersion evolved. But why is this experiment still significant if it's been disproven? Well, the results of this experiment formed a belief that white people were of superior intelligence to all others. This made being white more coveted and desired. And this social belief supported the justification for white people to have power over others.

Celesté Martinez 39:19
Now, for those who identify with Latinidad, as Latinos in this space, you're probably thinking, okay, but colonization wasn't the only thing happening. There was conquest too. What's the difference between conquest and colonization anyway? Well, colonization was to establish a colony to support and expand the wealth of European countries such as England and France, and conquest was to establish colonies to support and expand the wealth of Portugal and Spain alongside the Catholic Church to further Christianity throughout the world. You might be asking yourself, why would the church do this?

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Towards the end of the 15th century, the economic system of feudalism was deteriorating. And this was one of the major ways that the Catholic Church was able to sustain itself. Major European countries like England and France were separating themselves from the Catholic church because of the emergence of Protestantism. Two of the last remaining European countries to continue their alignment with the Catholic Church were Spain and Portugal, therefore, how Spain and Portugal went about colonization was not only to establish wealth by building colonies from African slavery, but included a specific agenda to convert as many indigenous people to participate in Catholicism. I share this as historical context, not to question or disrespect anyone's religious beliefs. Again, I invite you to be curious about this information if it seems challenging.

Celesté Martinez 41:08
So what is racism? Racism is a belief system from racial prejudice, and power over to uphold whiteness, and cause oppression to all other people. So very simply, racism is racial prejudice, plus power over. Pre-judgments about people based on their race, plus power over us. So at this time, we're going to take another moment for some individual reflection. Again, on your handout you have access to these questions. I invite you again to sit with one to two of the following questions to reflect. I will play some music for us and then we will come back

Audio 46:59
music playing Attitudes by Toshi Reagon

Celesté Martinez 47:02
All right, coming back. Um, I hope that that was also a good time for some reflection. Just gonna reshare my screen here. And for those who are curious about the songs, the first song is called Black is Beautiful by Mawule featuring Ill Se7en and Bianca Mikahn. And the second song is called Attitudes by Toshi Reagon.

Celesté Martinez 47:38
All right, this brings us into our ___ in the title of this session, the four I's of oppression. And now with that, what I will do is define each of the four I's for us. And then we'll walk through an example of how this framework that allows us to recognize and understand how oppression is systemically operating, we will walk through an example that is relevant to your work as librarians, so let's jump into it. The first definition is around ideological. So the first I being ideological, is defined as the belief or set of beliefs that are used to create a system of inequity where people with particular identities have power, and others have less or none at all. So really, ideological is our ideology, right? It's the set of beliefs, that then shapes how these definitions around power over are implemented to create a system or structure of inequity. So meaning some folks have power, and others have less or none at all.

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Celesté Martinez 48:56

Institutional - institutional is defined as an organization or system of organizations that reinforce or maintain an ideology or set of ideologies. So our beliefs are shaped, and then informed how we create organizations, systems of organizations that are known as institutions. You all are here because you belong to public library systems, or libraries in some sort of scope and framework, right? Those are considered to be institutions, for community. Organizations, a system of organization. And there's a set of beliefs, right, that it shapes why public libraries and access to public libraries are so important. So there we can see those two.

Celesté Martinez 49:44

The other is interpersonal - interactions between two or more people that reinforces or maintains an ideology, or set of ideologies. Now interpersonal is really describing those interactions that we have between one another. This can be between two people, a group of people, but it's really describing that and the ways then that the set of beliefs from the ideology are showing up in those interactions.

Celesté Martinez 50:14

And then lastly, we have internalized - how an ideology or set of ideologies, informs our worldview and beliefs, which ultimately affects our relationship with ourself, and all other people. So when we talk about internalized, it's actually how the ideology or ideological set of beliefs is shaping and informing our experience of who we are. And our relationship with ourselves and experience of how then these beliefs affect us internally, then, by effect also have an impact on our relationships with others. And sometimes these beliefs are reinforced or shaped because of our experiences with institutions.

Celesté Martinez 51:07

So the summary of this is the four I's of oppression. This is the ways that we see systemic oppression, showing up and operating. You can also say how privilege, right, systemically is reinforced and operating. You can describe this and really any set of social identity meaning, you know, if we were talking about gender, we could use this as a framework to understand how is, um, our beliefs around gender showing up within our institutions, are their interpersonal interactions that we're having with each other, as well as with, you know, patrons of the library? And how does that relate to what I have as my lived experience that I've internalized no matter what my gender identity is. We can apply that, and I provide that as an example, to really various social identities. So this isn't just limited to race, but for today's conversation, and knowing your commitment, of working towards becoming an antiracist, it felt important to provide this framework.

Celesté Martinez 52:17

And so an example to kind of walk through is around, again, going back to some of our definitions of around racism. Racism, right, is, is a system of belief of racial prejudice, and power over to uphold

whiteness, and cause oppression to all other people. And so because we see this reflected, particularly here in the US, what we see right is that there are privileges granted to white folks.

Celesté Martinez 52:56
Now, to further expand on this. One privilege, meaning access to an opportunity, and we're not, I'm not speaking of solely about race, I can't fully divide race and class, but just to provide the example, right, um, when we look at statistics related to higher education, we see that across the board for undergraduates, that right now, there's been some closures and some gaps. We still see that white folks are being admitted into institutions of higher education at the highest rate, but there has been strides in access for Black, Latino, Indigenous, right? Students, Asian, Asian American students as well.

Celesté Martinez 53:54
Well that doesn't mean though that there is complete equity. What I mean by that is that not everyone still has access to that opportunity. And when we look at post-secondary education, so for those who have to receive a Master's etc, we see it an even bigger gap, an even bigger inequity. Just to kind of illustrate this for a second. Um, I found some data here from Data USA, which is a conglomerate of different organizations, but just really showing that the makeup of race and ethnicity of librarians, and this is for statistics across the country, from 2017. We are seeing that 81.3% of librarians are White, and that the next largest group are at 6.38% of those, who are Black? And then from there? Smaller and Smaller?

Elaine Tai 55:04
Um, I don't think we see that screen.

Celesté Martinez 55:07
Oh, you don't see that screen? Okay, let me try one more time. Can you see now?

Elaine Tai 55:17
Yes, thank you.

Celesté Martinez 55:18
Okay, perfect. So as we can see here just to to name that one more time, right, we're seeing that, um, 81.3% of librarians identify as White, and 6.3% of librarians then identify as Black, we can see a huge gap right of equity, um inequity here. And part of that then relates back to the other conversation around access to secondary education. And I, and I share all of this right, because it's not so because the institution and having access to some institutionalized opportunities do not always allow us to then reflect, even if our ideology is more expansive than that.

Celesté Martinez 56:08

So just to kind of summarize one more time, because that might have been a little confusing in the way I just said it. There is an ideology, there's a set of beliefs that shape how we form our institutions. So when we think about that statistic, of the racial makeup of librarians from those statistics of 2017, what we're seeing is that there is perhaps an ideology related to race, that is providing greater access for white people over all other races and ethnicities, to have access in becoming members or representatives of the institution of libraries. This then being the majority, shapes the beliefs and the systems of belief, because of the internalized worldview that folks have from their lived experience. And this then result into interpersonal interactions that can perpetuate racism as a system of oppression, as well as reflect, potentially, policies and other things that are not fully upholding racial equity. So there's work to be done. That's really the invitation of just an example. And I've included a personal activity for you all, um on the handout, just to share that one last time.

Celesté Martinez 57:47

It's, um, and then we will move to question and answer. Um, you can see the definitions here. And for this personal activity, we don't have time to go into it more deeply today, but the invitation is for you to reflect how you are seeing these four I's interacting with your work, as well as how you relate to it. So these are, this is really what these set of questions are for. And I would encourage you to connect with fellow colleagues here to have a discussion around your reflections. Sorry, that's my puppy in the back. Um, so with that, I will call Elaine back to support me with some q&a.

Elaine Tai 58:44

Alright, I am coming back.

Elaine Tai 58:50

Okay, so we had a lot of discussion in the chat. And let me get it so it's both of us, okay, we've had a lot of discussions on the chat, and really interesting, especially want to thank the BIPOC folks who are sharing their experiences. And so let me see here, we've got a few different questions.

Elaine Tai 59:16

So a common question this came up a few times has to do with conquest and colonization. And so one, really making that distinction between colonization and conquest. And then also, "if there are certain resources that you recommend for those of us who want to learn more about it," and then we can try to type those in the chat as well, um, as you're saying them.

Celesté Martinez 59:44

Yeah, absolutely. So, um, I think that it is hard to kind of split out colonization and conquest overall, because both are interacting historically, around the same time. However, the reason I made the

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distinction is because we see ideology, as it related from the Catholic Church, be referred to from in a set of laws that then have been referred to in US Supreme Court law as well. There's a bunch of resources I could share on this, but to that field really important is An Indigenous Peoples History of the United States by Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz is a really helpful resource to really understanding how colonization actually started as an economic system in Europe. The ways that that affected Europe, Europeans from some of the major countries such as England, France, Spain, and Portugal, and how then that was translated as an economic system to the Americas, as well as the role that slavery had in it. Um, the other component of why I believe that resource, although it can be very daunting to read through, is important to really understand is that it articulates a number of stories of indigenous peoples throughout the Americas.

Celesté Martinez 1:01:20
A few other things to consider, um, is actually, Michael Yellow Bird has a whole set of talks, books available on neurodecolonization. Michael Yellow Bird is a professor, I believe in South Dakota. But his work as well on neurodecolonization has been really important, and at least for myself, and how I shape my work, and understanding the process of colonization. And he provides actually, a definition of colonization, colonization is the experience of oppression to the point of when we become numb to it, it becomes ingrained into our culture, it's the norm it's the standard. But oppression and he defines that actually as, oppression is when we are in active resistance to the colonization that is happening to us. So once again, Michael Yellow Bird, and there's a talk, you can just Google it, you'll find him on YouTube for neurodecolonization, that is a concept he has coined, and I would highly encourage you to read his works.

Celesté Martinez 1:02:35
The last thing that I will say is, you know, there's, there's many other pieces that can be really looked at, when it comes to the formation of race. One thing I didn't have the opportunity to get into our conversation today is the role of limpieza de sangre, or blood purity, and that ideology of where that really comes from, from Spain. And then how that actually shapes the ways that science in that role of like, not just Blumenbach's experiment, there were many, many experiments that were, tried to prove race as a scientific fact, to say that Black and Indigenous people were not human, right? That was really the ideology behind it. And that has deep-seeded beliefs that relate to religion and cultural identities related to religion as well. So that's another place to kind of really dig in and understand the origins of how race emerged and created essentially, what we're experiencing now, and the legacy of that and how colonization and conquest still impact, you know, race and racism today.

Elaine Tai 1:04:01
Awesome, thank you so much. Um, and this is just a quick branch-off question. Because I noticed, you know, like, Indigenous Peoples History of the United States is recommended, and I've had patrons say,

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I heard a lot of that is lies. And so how do you, how do you counter that thought that, Oh, well, I actually read this and I don't think it's true.

Celesté Martinez 1:04:29
You know, I think um, part of the system of beliefs as a result of colonization is not to believe the truth and the stories of indigenous people. And, really, you know, in Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz's research, that's what it's informed by. It was informed by a very deep study of, you know, being able to recount and synthesize really complex history. And so I would say and encourage folks who, you know, don't maybe believe her, and that scholarly ___, to just listen to more indigenous people, and really center their voices and their experiences. And starting from there, because if, if you're not willing to listen, then that's going to be a huge barrier to being open to learning, right? And the other aspect is, I would ask the question of, why can't this be true? Right? That would be a huge question. I would ask someone, if they were to say, this is all a lie. Why can't this be true? And what's hard about this truth? For you? That's, I think those are some questions, I would pose as well.

Elaine Tai 1:05:56
Great, thank you. Um, so we were talking about the Indigenous Peoples History of the United States. And I do think it's always interesting, like, what is what is keeping you holding on to that status quo, or that that history that you have learned that you know, what's so difficult.

Elaine Tai 1:06:12
And then some people are asking about, Latinx was not a category on that Data USA graph, I'm going to link the Data USA, I'm linking the Data USA page in the chat, if you want to take a look at it, and I believe it's compiled from other data. So there should be the sources in there. I think a lot of it does come from ALA studies and other library studies, we could definitely look a little bit more into demographics. And then I know a lot of people are sharing resources, and for things like this, we can definitely try to share more info later, there is a link to the Padlet that you all can also add resources to later continue these discussions.

Elaine Tai 1:07:00
So let's see. Another question is, they asked about, if the resource could be shared on the definition of race? And, "I'm curious to learn more about it from the definition, it seems like the history of it is short, if it's created during European colonialism period. Was there no such classifications that influence the beliefs of people of same ethnicity? or similar skin color? Who might have different cultures? Before the white colonialists?"

Celesté Martinez 1:07:37

Mm hmm. Um, well, first to speak to kind of the data piece, I think something that's important to name in this conversation is that for Latinx identities, that is an ethnicity, it's not a form of race, hence, why it's not reflected often in data. Those who identify as Latinx, or with Latinidad, or Chicanisma, you know, those are ethnic identities, or for those of us who also identify with our country of origin, that is not the U.S., those as well, those are ethnicities, which is different than race in these categories. The racial categories, were really defined and shaped by that experiment of Blumenbach into four main categories of White, Black, Indigenous, and Asian is what we understand them now. And there's like a whole set of things I could do around that.

Elaine Tai 1:08:34
Yeah that's awesome and I've mentioned it before, we'll have the Padlet, we'll try to insert all the resources in there. Feel free to contribute your own resources as well, and thank you to all the attendees putting resources in the chat.

Celesté Martinez 1:08:34
As far as the history into this, question, so again, I would encourage folks to really start with understanding a little bit more about limpieza de sangre. Culturally, in that time, during the 1400s, there were a lot of different beliefs related to blood. And specifically, because of some of the fissures that were happening between the Catholic Church and Protestantism, there was further wedges drawn between Christians, or who are known as old Christians, and Jewish folks, as well as Muslims. We later see that like, historically, the Spanish crusades, we talk about the Moorish Wars, there's a lot of things that we could look in history there. But the beliefs that like really kind of seeded a lot of what then leaders shaped the process of colonialism, the process of how race played a role into that, starts there. The other thing is, as someone who is a philosophy nerd, because that's what I studied in college, you can also look back to some Aristotle philosophy regarding natural and unnatural slavery. Those sets of beliefs around what is a natural slave actually deeply impacts the ways that slavery and the role of slavery was used as part of upholding economic systems to this day, and who is deserving or undeserving of that role as like a whole class of people, and the ways that that has then impacted and shaped colonization throughout the world. I just also want to acknowledge in this conversation, right, we're not even describing colonization and the ways that that has impacted Asia. And, yeah, the uniqueness of that complete history. So I would really say like, there's many places to start, two of the earliest times would really be digging in there for Aristotle's philosophy on natural and unnatural slavery, and then also deeper with limpieza de sangre in Spain from the 1400s. And there's a dissertation that I could recommend, I'll send it your way, Elaine, that folks if they're really interested can read because it goes into all the nitty gritty around it. The name of that person is escaping me at the moment.

Elaine Tai 1:11:47

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And then there's a question regarding, um, you know, "is the perception that retaining BIPOC library staff is also an issue we need to focus on?" And I would personally say, yes, that is definitely a discussion, and I think that's something that would be great to talk about in our panel that's happening later, that, you know, that is comprised of library directors and leaders. So that would be great. Um, okay, where are we at? Okay, I'll do one more question. Did that...let's see. Okay, so someone asked about expanding on the term "deserving" in cross section with the 4 I's.

Celesté Martinez 1:12:39
From the definition or...?

Elaine Tai 1:12:44
Let's see. Maybe the idea of deserving something versus _____ and, and kind of that cross section that that's my guess. Feel free to clarify for us Joana if you'd like, but I imagine it would partly have to do with just that idea of who does who deserves something I, you know, would personally tie that to like respectability politics, you know, that kind of concern of, you know, saying like, especially in ideology, and interpersonally that somebody is, you know, the way somebody lives is because they deserve that. Okay, perfect. Thank you, Joana. I'm glad I got that. So yes, yeah.

Celesté Martinez 1:13:34
Yeah. Yeah, I would say so let's think about a little broader, right. It's like when we think about systems of oppression, we have to look at our current reality. And in our current lived reality, there are identities of people that are predominant or most acceptablem\, and those that are classified as other. There's a whole spectrum of identities in between, but those who have closest proximity to the dominant or most acceptable identity, then because of this binary, result in this kind of, you know, hierarchy, then reinforces who does who has access to privileges, you know, those rights or benefits, opportunities, and those who are oppressed. So experiencing some of that unjust injustice, forms of cruelty. Now, like those are some really strong language, right? And so it's like, we need to think about really like, what is the spectrum of violence that is happening in the sense of that dehumanization, right, like what is happening when an identity that is prominent or most acceptable in our culture and society is being elevated, and the rest of the identities are not having access to dignity or being recognized for the fullness of their humanity, in the same way. What we're doing then is creating a sense of hierarchy of harm to one another. Because we're reinforcing that this dominant or predominant identity is deserving of something.

Celesté Martinez 1:15:22
So I would say, when you look at different systems of oppression, it's considering, you know, who is that dominant or predominant identity, and who is other? And what are those messages, right, of what is acceptable? And then also, who is that other? And what does that framework and our beliefs about

that person being other do to our ability to build relationship, our ability to truly create inclusive environments, environments that actually center the experiences of those who are other, rather than asking those who are other to adapt to a dominant or predominant culture. And that's part of the challenge and the ongoing work around racial equity. That's part of the work of what it means to become antiracist, right? It's not just recognizing the system of oppression, and what racism is, it is in practice then, how are we deconstructing our culture and rebuilding it to actually look radically different and center the experience of Black and Indigenous people? And that being like the both qualitative and quantitative measuring stick of the success of the work that we are doing.

Elaine Tai 1:16:53
Awesome. Okay. Alright, and we're pretty good on time here. So I really want to give a huge thank you to Celeste. That was really wonderful and very comprehensive, which is wonderful. So we'll try to get those resources together. As a reminder, her handouts are in that big program handout, we tried to get everything together. It's about like halfway through. So you do have the handouts there. And we'll get those resources on there. So thanks so much, again, to Celeste. We really appreciated that. That was wonderful. And we now will have a short break. We'll reconvene at 10:25 pacific time. And then as a reminder, we have that Padlet, so you can continue discussions throughout the break and conference there, share resources, and so on. So thanks so much again.

Celesté Martinez 1:17:54
I hope you have a great rest of your conference.

Elaine Tai 1:17:56
Thank you Celeste!

Audio 1:18:17
Break

Elaine Tai 1:18:20
Alright, we did get a little snippet of Carol talking. Just talking about how amazing it is how many participants we have. So that is great.

Fiona Potter 1:18:33
Fantastic. Well, welcome back everyone. Our next presentation is from Stacy Collins. Stacy is a Research and Instruction Librarian for Children's Literature and Social Work at Simmons University, where she provides research, teaching, and learning support with an emphasis in critical and anti-oppressive practice. She is the author of Language, Power, and Oppression in the LIS Diversity Void. And she regularly delivers talks and workshops on addressing systemic oppression and lack of diversity

within librarianship. Outside of librarianship, she is a children's literature scholar and reviewer as well as a trauma-informed facilitator with the anti racism collaborative in Massachusetts. We're very honored to have Stacy with us today.

Stacy Collins 1:19:30
Hello, everyone. I'm really glad to be here I'm gonna share my screen and say a small prayer to the technology gods that this will roll smoothly.

Stacy Collins 1:19:44
Okay. All right. So hopefully everyone is seeing this okay, and can hear me okay. Um, I'm over here on the East Coast with a nice prediction of high winds starting somewhere around 1:45 or two o'clock my time, so if I disappear that that's why. Um, but fingers crossed. All right, so I'm gonna talk today about diversity and language, and mainly about the diversity problem.

Stacy Collins 1:20:16
And actually, before I get started, let me turn off my video, just so I don't stare at myself the entire time that I'm talking to you all. Alright.

Stacy Collins 1:20:25
So this question of what diversity and language have to do with each other is really one that actually isn't asked all that much. And that's kind of part of the problem. So in that, in that question of where does language fit, for instance, in the four I's of racism, or the four I's of oppression, it actually kind of fits everywhere. Language is one of those constants that runs through most of our societies, whether it's whether it's written or sign language, or spoken, etc. language and communication is one of those things that is just inherent to how we actually function as people living in and around other people. And like any constant, it's one of those things that can sort of fall off of our radar as something to even question or think about. But anybody who has been, I don't know, involved in any kind of legal proceeding, anybody who's been part of the most basic of contracts, anybody who's had to do, you know, break their wrist scrolling to the bottom of an iTunes update to click Agree, knows that language is actually really powerful and really important in so many different contexts.

Stacy Collins 1:21:42
And yet, in this question of trying to address diversity, trying to address lack of diversity, trying to address equity and oppression, it within LIS right, a field that is, um that loves language. We love We love books, we love stories. We love narrative, we love language and communication. Um, this question of how does language fit into this, this work that we're trying to do to address serious issues in the field is one that we don't look at all that much. So even when we're talking about, um, talking about problems, language very rarely comes up. So this is what I'm going to talk about, um, as a as

something to sort of, hopefully get us to a point where we can start thinking about language, which allows us to shift and address language as a practice.

Stacy Collins 1:22:37
So and this is just sort of a quote that sort of encapsulates this this issue, right? So language not only expresses ideas and concepts, but actually shapes thought. And that's from a critical discourse analyst named Robert B. Moore, I believe he wrote that quote, sometime in the mid 70s. And and, of course, folks have been thinking about how language operates and actually transmits thoughts and concepts far longer before that. But there's this idea, this idea that language is not just sort of, not only neutral, but passive vessel, right? Just, oh, I had an idea. And I need you, I need you to understand what that idea is. So I'm going to express it in language one way or another, to let you know what I'm thinking and then we can continue talking about it. But in fact, the way that we the way that we say things, the way that we frame things, the context in which we are producing meaning with other people, all actually sheaths the thing that we're talking about. And the question of, is it good? Is it bad? Do we like it? Do we not like it? Is it normal? Is it odd, all of that can be communicated just by the particular single word choice, or, or the way that an idea is framed, when it's communicated. So this underlying this question of how language shapes the way we think, and shapes, our, the way we understand different concepts, is something sort of underlying this issue that I'm going to talk about. But before that, let me also give you even more background on me.

Stacy Collins 1:24:16
And actually, it's really just more of a repeat my bio, certainly. But, um, this slide when I've talked about this before often says who I am, and I realized that in fact, this isn't so much describing who I am and much more describes what I do. So I am a Research and Instruction Librarian at Simmons University, I work with the Children's Literature and Social Work programs there. And if you think those don't go together, they don't. And I promise I was the first one to say so. But actually, I have found that they have a great deal in common, particularly around this issue of anti oppression, anti racism, the issue of equity, and the ways that inequity has sort of been calcified into these scholarly communities and how do we start breaking it up? It's been really interesting the overlap there. I'm also a facilitator with the anti racism collaborative here in Massachusetts. I, so that means that I actually deliver sort of workshops, courses, I do consulting with, with various folks that work with us. I'm also responsible for some curriculum development, particularly around libraries, we've actually gone in and held workshops or trainings for various library staff. And then overall, I am an anti oppression educator, this is I don't think there's ever been a space that I've been in for more than maybe 10 minutes where anti oppression or some aspect of it hasn't come up. And I haven't talked about it. It's my it's my small little obsession, my small little niche in the world.

Stacy Collins 1:25:49

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And it turns out that everything could do, every single, every single area of everything could do with talking more about this. So I do it a lot. I have I've made you know, guides for trainings for reviewers, right ways that you can not accidentally be oppressive in your review, saying, you know, actually, reviews have very publicly screwed up so I'll let you all Google that if you're interested, but trainings on how to not do that. Trainings, and workshops and discussion for folks in children's literature world, and then anti oppression sort of in general. And I'm also the author and I maintain the Simmons library anti oppression Guide, which lives on the internet, if you're interested in checking it out. And lastly, but certainly not leastly, this little one here in this picture is my one year old. So this is sort of the other thing that I do most of the time. So when I'm not doing any of those other things I am with, I'm with read and I am reading a lot of books. So in terms of the what I do, sitting with this one with a book is is a lot of it.

Stacy Collins 1:26:56
Um, and lastly, I am also the author of Language, Power, Oppression and the LIS Diversity Void. And that's what I want to break down right now, in this question of how can we use language and interrogate language to improve our efforts at fixing some of our issues. So we're starting here, and hopefully folks recognize this, this is this actually is the the top top billed entry in the LIS code of ethics, we provide the highest level of service to all library users through appropriate and usefully organized resources, equitable service policies, equitable access, and accurate unbiased, courteous responses to all requests. This is important, and it's something that pops up a lot as discussion gets heated in various spaces.

Stacy Collins 1:27:43
When we, when libraries encounter an issue that challenges or brings up ethical questions of what a library should be doing, particularly public libraries. But this question of how central equity is, in this top build ethic, this top entry in our code of ethics, I find really interesting, because most of the time folks see this as sort of like a, I won't say frozen, but certainly a fixed idea that that equity is something that we care about, that we all understand what it is what it means that it means the same thing, in situation to situation, and that we are all capable of delivering on it. And I would argue that the opposite in almost all of those cases, at the very least, equity as a concept is something that is extremely reflexive, is very flexible, and very context specific. It is always about what is the situation at hand? What are the, what is the power dynamics in play? And so this question of how equity can be delivered or offered is always something that is a question that is bigger than just is everybody sort of getting the same service, the same access. It's about making sure that those who not only don't have access but are barred from access, that we break down those barriers, etc. So didn't even just digging into this thing that we you know, everybody who's gotten an MLIS has seen the code of ethics, folks that sort of poke around the Office of Intellectual Freedom, any sort of professional work like this comes up as our as one of those sort of ethical linchpins that underpins the profession. And it's

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something that we actually really need to sort of dig into what we really mean when we when we say equity, and that's what we're going to talk about as we go along here.

Stacy Collins 1:29:44
All right. Um, so in this question of diversity, and I hope, well I hope by the end of this, that you don't think that I hate the word diversity. And I don't hate the word diversity, but I do hate the way that we have, we have come to use it or has come to be used in our field, in many fields, it's basically been wrung dry of any actual meaning, because it's just been thrown around without being defined and being misused. And some folks have said that a great deal more eloquently than I have, and I've listed some of them here.

Stacy Collins 1:30:17
So Dr. Joyce Bell and Dr. Douglas Hartman have a wonderful piece talk that describes diversity language as happy talk. Basically, a way of instead of saying the word race, instead of saying racism, and instead of saying anything that might ultimately make folks uncomfortable, instead, we focus on diversity, and diversity is very positive, diversity is spice of life, diversity is good for everybody. It enriches all of us. And it's really this very positive focus on addressing long, long issues of lack of diversity in a field, but it does not actually get at anything, it just makes everybody feel good that we're all on the same page, that we like diversity. Um, and they talk about how folks actually get to the point with happy talk that will actually get to the point of conflating talk with action. So it's like, we need everybody on the same page to say diversity is important. And we can write, you know, a nice little addendum to our mission about how important diversity is, a commitment, anything like that. But it doesn't actually constitute action. And so this question of how happy talk how actually language can get conflated with action is is interesting, and it happens a lot in libraries in particular.

Stacy Collins 1:31:34
The insufficient piece, this is from Dr. Dale Stewart, so they talk about diversity as asking insufficient question, that the question of where is the diversity, or how can diversity help us fix our problems, is an insufficient framework, that it does not actually get it anything useful. And what the one scenario they say is that diversity asks who is in the room, but equity asks who's trying to get in the room but can't get in? And that the what are the barriers to someone getting into the room at all? Is the more important question.

Stacy Collins 1:32:12
Damage limitation, this one is something I'm kind of feel I'll be fully transparent. It's something I'm sort of feeling right now, as a person who talks about these issues a lot. Sarah Ahmed talks about how folks who discuss issues around lack of diversity, issues around racism, issues around other areas of oppression, as plaguing an organization, as being a problem. The damage limitation part comes from

basically an organization looking at diversity as a PR issue, right? Like, oh, shoot, we, we've been caught with an all white staff, or we've been caught with protecting a really racist or really sexist leader or any any sort of version of that, that you've seen in the news, any number of times, it becomes a PR issue, right? So then we have and then the organization says, oh, we're totally going to fix this, we're going to have trainings, we're going to bring in speakers, we totally value diversity, look at this great lineup of you know, black authors that we're going to feature, etc, etc. And so all of the work is really about sort of fixing this image issue. And what Sarah Ahmed says is a consequence of this view on diversity is that, instead of focusing on the barriers, and the racism and the oppression as the problem, it suddenly becomes the people who keep bringing it up, they become the problem, because if it's an image issue, then as long as nobody's talking about it, or pointing at it, or pointing it out, it's no longer a problem. That's how image problems work, right? As soon as it's swept under a rug, you're good. But if you got staff who keep talking about it, if you've got folks that keep demanding change, if you keep if you have folks that keep talking about the harm they're experiencing, suddenly they are your image problem, because they are the ones that are making it that that are making it clear to everyone that there are still ongoing issues.

Stacy Collins 1:34:07
And then the last one is the misuse of diversity as a shorthand. And this, this is, it's really just one of my pet peeves, but it is also a problem. We're going to talk I'm going to talk a little bit more about why, about how our language around diversity, right, I said it was it gets run out of meaning. And this is one way, because diverse is not something that you can actually use as an adjective for a single object, right? You can't say that a person is diverse, you can't say that a carpet is diverse. You have to have more than one thing in a group for the group itself to be described as diverse, but what we have is in our field, in the field of publishing, in education writ large, we have diverse suddenly taking the space of non-white and it kind of links back to happy talk right like, ah, let's not talk let's not say non-white because as soon as you say white that makes people uncomfortable. Because it's too close, it's too close to black, which is too close to anti-black, which is too close to racism, and we don't need to bring that negativity into the space, so let's just say diverse.

Stacy Collins 1:35:10
But what it does is not only does it, one, keeps us from actually talking about the issues like anti blackness and racism, it also sets up this false default that white is the default, and diverse is everything else. Not just everything else, but something that you might add to the default to make it diverse. And that's got all kinds of problems with it, if only that whiteness is not the default, right? And this is that that this question of how diversity and diverseness gets not only misused in our language, but misused in our actual efforts of change. It's sort of captured by Lorna Peterson's quote here, she talks about the the interior design theory of diversity, that an environment is improved by the addition of color, right? So you've got the blank default white environment. And if you just add a little color, if

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you just add, you know, a neurodiverse lamp, or a LGBTQ chair, or, you know, something, something over here in the corner, that's maybe about some Latinx folks, like that, and that's going to fix things. As opposed to addressing why was there an entire room that was built, just bought just for this, this group of privileged empowered folks, which is the real question we should be asking.

Elaine Tai 1:36:42
Oh, Stacy, can I? I was gonna butt in real quick.

Stacy Collins 1:36:46
Yes. Sorry.

Elaine Tai 1:36:48
If you wouldn't mind slowing down just a little bit. It might help.

1:36:52
Sure. Sure.

Elaine Tai 1:36:54
Yeah. I know, you have a lot to cover. Thank you so much.

Stacy Collins 1:36:57
Yeah. So all right. So, um, this is so the next part of what I want to talk about is actually sort of the three pieces, three main pieces that I talked about in my article, so and they're actually captured in the title. So first, this question of the diversity void, so the lack of diversity. There's actually a couple of ways that this void shows up. Yes, it is the lack of diversity in our workforce, the lack of diversity in our student bodies, in our MLIS programs, the lack of diversity of the faculty, in those programs, etc. And then also among us, for some of us, among our patrons. So the actual, like absence of a marginalized folks, is absolutely an issue. But the void, also is not just a noun, it's also a verb, right? If you ever, I mean, anybody who's still going to grocery stores regularly, right, when you need to when you need to void out something that got charged twice, anybody who's worked retail, right, you've had to void something or voiding a check. Right, this idea of invalidating something is also a way that diversity is voided in our field.

Stacy Collins 1:38:12
So for example, the question of do you need an MLIS to be a librarian? is a big question. And probably there are folks among the the 500 600 participants here who have many opinions, or strong opinions on what the answer to that question is. But no matter what the opinion is, it doesn't change the fact that an MLIS is not accessible to everyone. So if our industry standard is MLIS to have access to these

kind these kinds of positions, that means that if the MLIS is not accessible, neither of those positions to, to the groups that can't that can't go. Invalidation also comes through again, this is where we get back into this question of language and the way that language gets unexamined and normalized. So this issue of invalidating also happens if, when we talk about how we define things in the field, think for a second about how you would define a good librarian, right, or how or more to the point how your MLIS program defines a good librarian and how your boss defines a good librarian. What is packed into this idea of good and also packed into the idea of librarian is a lot of preconceived notions of what good is and does, what librarian is and does. And without interrogating it, it's again where oppressive ideas, bias, and basically ideas that reinforce power dynamics can live and thrive.

Stacy Collins 1:39:51
So for example, I heard in my MLIS program about how important it was for a librarian, particularly you know, folks in public services to be impartial to you know, you didn't bring your personal your personal bias to work. And you you really sort of like you show up as a librarian and you are helping folks no matter what their question is, and what your personal thoughts are, and you as a person doesn't really, should not impact your your encounters with with patrons. And that was meant to be a very good thing. Because it meant that you would never become a barrier to someone getting information, right, it would always, if someone comes and asks you for something that you feel is controversial, or you personally feel shouldn't be available to someone who is the age that is standing in front of you, etc. None of that is going to apply, you're going to do your job and get them the information they asked for. Fantastic. The problem with that is, is there are plenty of people who cannot not be them, not bring personal pieces of themselves to work, if only because in the issue of race, many folks can't go anywhere without sort of having their race on display, or at the very least their non whiteness on display.

Stacy Collins 1:41:04
And for me personally working at my University's library, you know, the eight to midnight shift, I had a student who, you know, I came in on at eight o'clock, a student rushed over to me as soon as I sat down and said, Oh my goodness, thank thank God, you're here, I have been waiting for five hours for somebody to come to this desk. And I was like, that's really strange. There's definitely folks who are on the reference desk when I'm not here, were they busy? Like did you... like what happened? And what she said was no, no, I needed somebody, I've been waiting for a black person to come and sit on this desk, because I have a reference question that is about Black Lives Matter, and you know, black students organizing for Black Lives Matter versus black students organizing for civil rights movements, etc. and I did not want to ask that question to a white librarian. And it's like that, there's no possible way I can leave that part of myself at home. And in this particular case, it was essential that I brought it with me. So again, this question of sort of invalidating, the ways that diversity could be showing up in our field is more insidious, and not as sort of easily easily pointed out and saying, Ah, yes, this is a

problem, if we just take this out, then we'll, you know, we'll have tons of people in the field. There's real like, in the bones of what we think of as foundational pieces of how the field operates, and what the field is, and what our professionals are, and do, are these issues, and these frameworks that actually exclude folks.

Stacy Collins 1:42:48
And along those lines, that exclusion happens with this question of power, and power, just like languages, another thing that folks don't look at a lot, um power is everywhere. Power dynamics, we are never without them, right? A lot of folks like to pretend that like if you're sitting in a classroom power doesn't apply. And it's like, that's silly, there's someone at the front of the room who's going to grade you and has the power to fail you that's, of course, power is always in play. Um, so I'll ask folks to just sort of think about this particular in the context of your own library or own organization. What does power look like in a library? like really? Who has power? And who is kept from it? And how? And just, you know, a few examples, right? There's going to be there's going to be spaces in which power looks different, right? Sometimes power will look like, who has the final say, over XYZ? Sometimes it's going to look like who is represented in a space, whose voice is heard. And for the folks that have that power? Who are they, how do they access this power? Is it simply delivered by nature of position? Is it delivered by who they are or expertise, that particular background that they have etc? And for those that don't have it, how are they kept from i? Again, is it a matter of Oh, well, you're employed in this position, so you don't have access to this? Or is it, well, you don't have this experience, or you don't have this degree? Or we're just not, there's no, there's literally no way for us to hear your voice. Like, there's no way for you to get your ideas to us, etc. And in this question of power, and folks maybe have heard of this resource, but it is called the white supremacy, white supremacy culture. It's taken from Dismantling Racism workbook that I think was written in the early 2000s, remains applicable and very handy today as a starting place for many organizations. But it has a number of pieces of what white supremacy looks like in a culture in ways that it shows up. And power hoarding and paternalism are two of those that relate specifically to power. Power hoarding is exactly what it sounds like. A person or a group of people have all of the power, either by nature of a position or by nature of the way the organization is hierarchically organized. But more to that point, power is seen as limited, right? It's something that you can't share. Because if I give you power to do something, that means I don't have power, like if I, if I give you the ability to make this decision, that means I don't have the ability to make that decision, and that lessens my power. And I don't want to lessen my power, so I'm keeping it. And in fact, I feel threatened when anybody suggests that perhaps I shouldn't be the one making this decision, and it could be better made in somebody else's hands. Those folks also tend to assume that they have the best interest of the organization in mind and that they, their decisions are therefore sort of automatically informed, automatically come from experience, automatically are going to be better decisions than the folks who they see as less of all those things - less informed, less experienced.

Stacy Collins 1:45:56

Paternalism is a little bit harder, it's a little bit more obscure. So it's the idea that the folks who are making decisionsdon't have to make their decision making process clear to those who don't, who don't have decision making power. They also think they can make decisions for everybody without their input, and it will automatically be fine and good in the best. Um, and those with power often don't think it's important or necessary to understand the viewpoints of those without power. And the White Supremacy Culture resource actually has, for all these problems that it lists, it also includes antidotes. And antidotes for these two are, as you might imagine, power sharing, for power hoarding, right, find ways to share power, and find ways even to create relational organization structures instead of just straight up hierarchy, because hierarchy is, in fact, something we don't have to live with. And things like 360 reviews, right? If part of your job is to be a supervisor, part of your performance review and whatnot should include how well do you supervise. And for paternalism, it's basically the common sense of the people who are going to be impacted by a decision should have the ability to talk about that decision. They should have some role in the decision making, and ideally, they should have veto, some amount of veto power. So this question of power and the question of how language is a transmitter of power, the way that things are described, the way that things are asked for right? If somebody in your organization asks you for something? Do you have the option of saying no? Do you have the option of saying, Oh, I can get that to you, but not on not when you ask for it, but two days later, etc? And who in the organization can speak with expectation? Who in the organization speaks more for like to hear if they can do something?

Stacy Collins 1:47:50

All right. And so in this question of language, and how language relates to the invalidation and the absence of folks from the diversity void, and also to power, again, back to that question of where does language fit into the four eyes of oppression in the various levels, the interpersonal, the institutional, the cultural, etc. It's, it's really sort of it underlies a lot of them. And I have a couple of screenshots here that really sort of capture this. So one of them talking about how I've never lost sight, that my freedom as a black American is an amendment not a founding principle in our Constitution. Our constitution being of course, literally a document full of language that outlines our inalienable rights as a people. And this idea of who was actually considered part of people then, and who is considered part of people now, and what has and hasn't changed along those that question of language and how we talk about rights.

Stacy Collins 1:48:54

The next one is a tweet that's actually from very recently, and I think it applies very, very, to our current moment in LIS so I get why we're using BIPOC or bipoc, depending on how you say it B-I-P-O-C, but we need to make sure it doesn't come just become quote unquote, diversity, a way for people to avoid saying black, indigenous Brown, Asian, Pacific Islander and so on. People have got to say our

names. So every once in a while, I'm going to ask what folks mean and why. And this goes back to that question of diversity talk, happy talk, are we using language to obscure if other important concepts that we need to be talking about by just assuming that everybody is talking about the same thing? When we say diversity when we say BIPOC, etc.

Stacy Collins 1:49:43
All right, I'm just gonna, I'm just gonna skip ahead. So in this question, in this question of language, is the idea of how language is used specifically IN LIS. And quite frankly, it shows up oppressively in a lot of ways. The framework of we need to add diversity to, for example, a collection. Like well, what is the collection if it's not diverse? Whywould you even consider a non-diverse collection, a collection? What, you know, how do we set up those defaults of where, somehow we're able to operate with an all white staff and not think of that as a huge problem, we're able to move forward with on a hiring committee with, you know, only white or only male or only MLIS-holding candidates, all kinds of things that exclude other folks, other marginalized folks, and not consider that sort of a failed search at that point, that kind of question instead of default. I already sort of explained my pet peeve with diverse books. But there's also the there's a phrase like a seat at the table, right? That's, that not only frames, the idea that everybody thinks of tables as a place to come together and to have a conversation etc. Or that tables are equalizing that everybody that sits at the table has the same power, when in fact, there literally are heads of tables. But also that if everybody comes to the table, then we all know what to do there. I'm getting a small wink to sort of wrap up. So this question of how language is used in the field, and ways that it reinforces oppression reinforces norms that are extended, exclusionary, and the question of how we start breaking that down, is really a question of looking at how, looking at assumptions, asking questions we wouldn't normally ask. I'm gonna, I'm going to skip past this slide, though I do love I do love it, if it finally is looking nice, if folks are interested.

Stacy Collins 1:51:37
So I want to come around to this, that diversity is not a strategy. And this is often around, our language around diversity is mostly this, that we lack diversity, So adding diversity is probably the way to go. And unfortunately, that is not the case, for lots of reasons. Because lack of diversity is not just something that happens. It's not just something that sort of, like Oh shoot, we built this organization, this cultural organization that is deeply embedded in the in the systems of our society that are already exclusionary and harmful to certain people and beneficial to others. And we just happen to have the same problems inside our doors, But we'll just add those folks that were missing and it will be fine. That's not how this will work. So I will leave you with a couple of quotes to think about in this issue, right? So Rachel Carglee says anti racism work is not about self improvement for white people, it's about protecting the lives rights and dignity of black and brown people. So when we say we're adding diversity, that's really that question of self improvement - hey, the PR issue of diversity, whoops, we have an all white staff, let's fix it and add some non white staff members, we have an all straight staff, let's add some queer

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folks. That is about self improvement, that's about looking better, it's about fixing a PR issue, and that is never going to get at the actual root issue, why those folks are absent to begin with.

Stacy Collins 1:52:57
And there's this quote from Jez Humble I love. If you bring good people into broken cultures, you don't fix the culture, you break the people. So if you're not fixing the culture, if you're not fixing the barriers that kept these folks out of your spaces to begin with, bringing them in is only going to cause further harm to them, it's not going to address the issues that are underlying.

Stacy Collins 1:53:15
And then these last ones are ones that I talked about in my workshops. That visibility without inclusion is spectacle, right, putting somebody up on the stage and saying, look, we have a black speaker is just spectacle, you've changed nothing, you've addressed nothing,uou haven't even asked a question of what might be something needs to be fixed. It's just spectacle, let's all look and watch this person speak. But then there's also the secondary piece of inclusion without belonging is exploitation. So if you include folks, if you put them on, if you say, please come and be on our Diversity Committee, please come and be on our staff. We'd love to hear your ideas. We'd love to hear what you think would make would make us better and more welcoming. Please let us know what we can do to be better. That element of inclusion without also changing the culture to make sure that those folks feel like they belong, that they have power, that they have authority, that they have a role in producing this culture, not just being subject to it, is exploitation. That's just taking their ideas to make, again, make yourself look better. So just a few things to think about and the ways that we want to start shifting our language to capture what it is we really want to do, which is address and dismantle harmful systems. So that diversity is something that we can, so that folks that we are currently missing can join us. Okay. And with that, I'm going to say thank you and stop talking and are there questions that I can take?

Elaine Tai 1:54:38
Yes. So there are some questions. Um, are you cool coming back on screen? Yeah. Okay. If you want to go ahead and stop your share? Yes. Um, so I know that was like a whirlwind. So a lot of people are asking about the slides. I don't know if we'll have the slides available, but the recording is available. And I will be honest, I have watched Stacy's talk twice before, and I think there's just always something to take in, so, you know, definitely feel free to rewatch the recordings which will be available to you. Um, Stacy will also be back in our panel later, so I'm sure she will be answering a lot of the questions in that discussion.

Elaine Tai 1:55:23
So there are a few language questions, so let's get to those quickly. And I'll read Jacqueline's question, because it is a good one, and it's one that comes up a lot because it becomes the use of bipoc to

instead end up erasing black and indigenous experiences - "So I don't know who coined it, but I heard Sam Sanders, a black man, speaking on his podcast with Demi Adejuyigbe, a black man, and they laughed about this term - I'm not a bipoc, and Demi said something like white people came up with this term because they value inclusivity over nuance. So the question is, is the term bipoc erasing or hiding a lot of non white people? Is it less inclusive than we are giving it credit for? Is this an example of aspirational but largely meaningless language? Thank you for your thoughts."

Stacy Collins 1:56:15

Um, so I'm not I will I'm certainly not the definitive authority, but I will say this, um, bipoc BIPOC is very much something that it depends on how it's being used and the context in which in which it's being used. Whether it is doing something useful, or doing something harmful and erase, erasure, eraceably, Yeah. Um, so this actually is something that grew out of folks misusing POC, right, we had a lot of folks feeling like they were erasing blackness, specifically by lumping all people of color, all non white people into a group. So we've had POC being used the way diverse is used. And now we have BIPOC sliding in the same direction, even though the B and I were pulled out to specifically say that black folks and indigenous folks do not fit neatly into this question of people of color. And my suggestion is this - if you mean black, say black, if you mean indigenous, say indigenous, if you mean several groups of other non white folks, you are probably better off mentioning who they are because if you are talking specifically to or about them, you should say so, so they know that you're talking to or about them. Now, if you're talking about large swathes of stuff, if you're talking about every book in existence, and the question of how many white versus BIPOC characters there, it has some use because it simply saves you time. But it's always always better to be as specific and accurate as possible, because that's basic respect. And again, it's going to depend on the context whether it is something entirely inappropriate. In a tweet, for instance, where you've got limited characters, sure. If you've got the space in a Medium piece to write out what you mean, write out what you mean.

Elaine Tai 1:57:58

Awesome, thank you so much. And let's see, there's a few questions. Oh, there's so many. Okay. Um, "I think a lot of librarians pride ourselves on being resourceful, DIY oriented and helpful. What are some ways we can reflect on whether or how our actions instead move into the territory of paternalism or power hoarding?"

Stacy Collins 1:58:26

I will say, I'll say this, if your organization if your library has a typical, very typical, mine does, a hierarchical structure - there's leaders at the top who have quote, unquote, the most power, and you skip on down through through department heads and, you know, assistant directors and whatnot, until eventually you have the folks on the front line who just have usually a title of librarian or something. Chances are excellent that paternalism and power hoarding is at play, because that's how hierarchy is

built to operate. It is built with the notion that more experience, more time in the field, more degrees, more whatever, should elevate you to a position to have more authority and more power. But anybody, any fellow research librarians out there, any fellow folks that deal with information literacy on a daily basis, right, authority is contextual. And the question that authority is something that can be fixed in every scenario in every situation, even in a library as an organization is unlikely.

Stacy Collins 1:59:27
And it's where we get some some dissatisfaction among folks who are library workers among lower ranks, because in fact, we shouldn't be framing it as lower ranks. The folks that deal most, most closely with the public should not be the lowest rung of the ladder, right? That's, or shouldn't we should not be framing it that way. And the question of those folks, having roles in decision making is absolutely imperative because otherwise, how do we know what's going on? And you can see the results of when those folks are not consulted. So I would say that one, if you've got a hierarchy, organizational hierarchy or organizational structure, you've got paternalism and probably power hoarding happening and probably a lot of other pieces of white supremacy culture. Do you take a look at it, it's a great, it's a great resource, again it's starting to sort of unpack some pieces. And take a look at the antidotes, take a look at some of the things that are suggested of how do you start addressing this and moving towards something different? Do you banish the hierarchy, and suddenly everybody's doing the same thing? And now, you know, your director is taking reference questions, I think most of us would probably not want to see that at least not like, without any kind of training because they need to be retrained. Um, but you're thinking about how power can be shared, thinking about how decision making can be shared, is the way that we start breaking up this idea of paternalism, and the idea of getting voices heard, that are not typically heard.

Elaine Tai 2:00:51
And so how do you do that? If you are not the one in power?

Stacy Collins 2:00:56
Yeah, if you're not if you're not the one at the top, so there's a there's a few things. I was actually I had a, I had a Twitter thread, or somebody, somebody talked about how every day they would just sort of go up with articles - Medium pieces, any Twitter threads, and just like print them out and take want to take them and slam them on their boss's desk and be like, Listen, I don't want you to say another word until you've read these three things. Which, like, I'd love I'd love to have that kind of chutzpah. But in real life, it's something that ideally, your library and organization has structures for, that at staff meetings there is time to bring up concerns, that you have leaders who are open to hearing needs, that you have one on ones with a supervisor. If you have none of those, then it's really a question of professional development, right? So there are a number of trainings, including free ones, of the ones sticking in my head at the moment is for youth librarians is called Project Ready, I'm actually deeply

considering having my folks who are not youth librarians, but in fact, a bunch of academic librarians go through it as well. So having sort of the folks in the lower, get on the same page. So the folks that share your position, share your lack of power, for lack of better term, make sure that those folks are on the same page about what could be improved, what ways could your departments be doing better, and serving your patrons better, and including folks and welcoming to folks that you otherwise have barriers up and keeping them from the library? And it's gonna, and then, you know, I'm a big advocate of, you know, forgiveness rather than permission, if it doesn't get you fired. Um, but yeah, so pointing pointing to the fact that these conversations are ongoing, and why aren't we having them in our library, all all strategies, and it's going to depend on your leaders as to what will be the most, what will make them the most receptive?

Elaine Tai 2:02:47
Awesome, thank you. Okay. So I think we're going to have to end, there are more questions. Stacy, I don't know if you'd be open to looking at the q&a area and just typing in some answers if you're able. Other than that, we'll try to get some of those resources posted, and get those from Stacy. People want to follow you on Twitter, feel free to give us your Twitter handle.

Stacy Collins 2:03:10
It's actually on the slides, but it's @darkliterati I see some folks are typing it. Yeah, that's that's me.

Elaine Tai 2:03:16
Awesome. Okay, great. So yeah, so Stacy will be back. We'll take a really, we'll just take like a couple minute break in case you've gotta run somewhere, um, and we'll see if we can get some of these questions answered. Or we can also look at them during the panel later. But thank you so much Stacy. So much information.

Elaine Tai 2:03:36
Alright. We'll see you soon.

Elaine Tai 2:07:02
Okay. Alright. Sorry. I know that was a bit of a short break. And thank you Stacy for staying. I see you're still here. Thanks so much for sticking around a little bit. And let me see.

Elaine Tai 2:07:20
Oh my video's not on, well that's okay. Because we are going to something fun. All right, so, um, I am excited. Sorry, okay. So I'm really excited to introduce this video performance. We thought this would just be like a nice break in our morning, while also presenting the importance of expression through art, and representation and inspiration that can come through in our virtual environments that we now

have. So the past two years Burlingame Library actually held events featuring drag queens and kings along with a Q&A during Pride. And so with shelter in place, the drag scene quickly converted into a virtual environment with amazing video performances, and editing, while the venues were closed. So while our library stalled on plans this year, with all going on, um, it is hopeful that we can present a virtual show at some point. And I'm excited to present an example from drag queen Cocoa Buttah.

Elaine Tai 2:08:33
Cocoa Buttah is an Oakland based drag queen, and has been a performance performer in many capacities since childhood. This video took three separate days to film and two and a half days to edit using old footage from when they were in their high school marching band. This combines things they were passionate about from their youth and things they're passionate about now. so I'm excited to present to you Black Parade.

Video 2:09:01
Video set to Welcome to the Black Parade by My Chemical Romance

Elaine Tai 2:14:13
Yay. So we really want to thank Cocoa Buttah for letting us use that, I really apologize for the lag. I think we were, um, I've done some before where it works and this time it was just not working. So we will post that video, we will post it on the Padlet. And I'll try to post the link here. Just as a reminder, though, it can only be shared so far, because this was something that they agreed to let us share during the conference. But yes, I hope you all did enjoy what you could enjoy and otherwise definitely watch it on your own time when you can.

Elaine Tai 2:14:49
Okay, so I'm going to pass it back to Fiona.

Fiona Potter 2:14:54
Yeah, so thank you again for sharing that video. Our next presentation comes to you from Patty Wong. Patty Wong is the ALA President Elect and the City Librarian for Santa Monica Public Library. In her 35 year career she has held positions throughout California at YOLO County Library, Stockton San Joaquin County Public Library, Oakland Public Library and Berkeley Public Library, and Oakland Unified School District. Her work in managing change, equity and diversity, youth development, developing joint ventures and collaborations between public libraries and community agencies, and fundraising, has been published in a number of journals, conference proceedings, and edited collections. Elaine has been lucky to work with her and with Chantel Walker of the Marin County Library in the CREI program, which they will be discussing today. So, once again, we're so happy to have Patty Wong with us. Please join me in welcoming her.

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Elaine Tai 2:15:59

And then I, Oh, Patty, let me make sure that you have co-host abilities. And then I'm also going to introduce Chantel. And Chantel Walker serves as the Assistant Director of County Library Services at the Marin County Free Library. And MCFL operates a network of 10 branches throughout the county, a dual site archive, a bookmobile, and a mobile preschool literacy vehicle. Its mission is to provide welcoming equitable and inclusive opportunities for all to connect, learn, and explore. At MCFL, Chantel's focus is finance, human resources, library Technical Services, capital projects, strategic planning, and working with partner organizations. A core component of her overall leadership role at MCFL focuses on equity and inclusion and librarianship, library services, and community partnership. Alright, and I believe you are both co-hosts now and I will hand it over to you both.

Chantel Walker 2:16:58

Hello, everyone.

Patty Wong 2:17:00

Hi welcome.

Chantel Walker 2:17:03

I will share my screen as Patty gets started.

Patty Wong 2:17:08

Thanks, Chantel. Can everyone hear me, is the audio okay? Okay, perfect. Thanks to Elaine and the PLP team, what an extraordinary webinar this has been already. Um, I was blessed to hear a little bit this morning. And there's just so much passion and energy for equity, diversity, and inclusion in that room. And thank you all for being asking us to be a part of it.

Patty Wong 2:17:36

We're going to be talking about CREI, which is California Libraries Cultivating Racial Equity and Inclusion. And it's a grant program that Chantel and I were coordinating with in partnership with the state library and a number of others in terms of making the work go forward. And why is, why do libraries have such a rich opportunity to to share with the rest of our community in terms of raising equity? Well, Chantel and I came about this serendipitously a little bit. We're both passionate about EDI, we believe that libraries can be that transformational change, and we also wanted to make sure that, that libraries actually not only structurally have an opportunity to make change within their communities, but can work as liaisons with the rest of their government structure. And so we worked with GARE, but I'm gonna let maybe Chantel talk a little bit about why she got involved in the work also.

Chantel Walker 2:18:40

Sure, I mean, I think it was such a tremendous opportunity. Our library system, about two years ago, updated our mission statement. The Explore, Learn, and Grow component was there, and about seven years ago, when our director came on, there was really a focus, a deepening of the work around equity in partnership with the county. But one of the things that we realized, as the Marin County Free Library, but also with partners like Patty, is that to move inside our system, we needed a collective framework, if not in the country, certainly in the state. And the opportunity to talk about what we've been learning over the preceding five years, the idea of updating our mission statement so it talks about being equitable and welcoming, bringing that into our public programs, and also into our organization was the work that we were doing. And being a part of a library community that's also doing similar work, not only strengthens the field, but strengthens us as individual libraries. And I think Patty would say this and both, and I certainly would, equity diversity and inclusion has been a core thread across the work that I've done over almost 30 years, since leaving undergrad. And that work has been about both institutional change and community impact from different places in communities and institutions. And changing an institution alone doesn't have the same kind of long term impact if you're not changing a field at the same time.

Patty Wong 2:20:22

Absolutely, thanks Chantel. So you know, it takes a truly a village to make all of this work. And a shout out to all of the different libraries that are represented that we're going to be talking about today, that are in the audience, because it really it was a learning environment for all of us, but especially with the CREI coordinating team. So thanks, of course to Califa, they were our fiscal agent for the project. This was funded with almost $250,000 from the California State Library, and Chantel will go a little bit more acknowledging them. But the premise for all of the work actually was the focus through GARE, which is the Government Alliance on Race and Equity. Gordon Goodwin was part of that, as well as Sarah Loughton, and they were the glue and the trainers that actually helped facilitate a lot of conversations. Veronda Pitchford from Califa did a lot of our work around the reporting and keeping us fiscally on track. And then, of course, it was an interesting, wonderful experience to work with, for the first time in a real deep way - Marin County Free Library and Santa Monica Public Library worked together because we have this deep love for the work, but also because we were anchors in both parts of the state to really combine resources, we firmly were GARE cohorts for a long time. And we are dedicated to the work in terms of really capacity-building from a government institution perspective, which is not always the way that most agencies go in terms of doing this work.

Patty Wong 2:22:12

So our goal was to really catalyze a statewide network of libraries and library staff committed to racial equity and inclusion for all. So what did that mean? It meant that we were trying to create a statewide

network of libraries who were committed to the work, that understood the vocabulary, and that enabled that to make that happen. We wanted to take actions to grow racial equity and library service in the communities that we serve. And we firmly believe, actually, that the network is_____. One of the key goals within the state library that we wanted to accomplish is goal seven, which is that California libraries are staffed by a skilled and diverse workforce, whose members engage in continuing education and leadership development opportunities. We deliver high quality library information services, and affect positive change in their communities. And then Chantel's got, oh, I guess I have the next slide. Unless Chantel, are you okay?

Elaine Tai 2:23:16
Oh Patty this is Elaine, could you real quick, can you make sure that you're speaking into your mic? I think you're cutting in and out sometimes.

Patty Wong 2:23:22
Oh, I apologize. That a little bit better?

Elaine Tai 2:23:25
Yeah, that's good. Thank you.

Patty Wong 2:23:26
Okay, terrific. Okay, so today's agenda, we're going to be talking about what we use as the as the CREI conversation, the structure, we're going to be talking about lessons learned. The roles for city and county governments as well as boards and commissions, friends and foundations and other partners, ideas for staff overall, and then we'll end up with some q&a.

Chantel Walker 2:23:54
So Elaine will share and the FOL team will share the slide deck with you. Here, when we talk about CREI, we really saw, you know, opportunities to come together. One of the things, Patty and I got to know each other through another focus on training that she and Luis Herrera and Camille Laurie were already doing and I had the opportunity to join them. And in that relationship, we were talking about leadership and the color of leadership. And some of you may have participated in that in JCLC and in other ways. And as we were talking about the individual, not only were we building a network amongst ourselves, and she and Sarah, the director at Marin County Free Library knew one another. But in the formation of the network, amongst ourselves amongst individuals, we realized that catalyzing a statewide network who could keep a conversation going and make systems change would make sense. We are public libraries. And so you know, we started in that space, but we've replicated some of the work that GARE had done with a much broader and specific focus on libraries. So every time we use examples about the role of government, we also use examples about libraries. We encountered and

confronted some of our myths. So there was some excitement about this work in this project. And it was actually an open call that some of you may have seen. And I know there are folks on this call who actually participated in year one of the work.

Chantel Walker 2:25:26
And in being a part of it at the State Library, when they realized the level of interest, had approved us to have about 15 libraries participate, as well as our own libraries, but 15, in addition to Marin, and Santa Monica. They decided to extend the work. Now, this is pre the visible racial violence that we're in in 2020, because racial violence had been happening before the extreme visibility that we're seeing now, the State Library agreed to make sure that all of the applicants and who knows what that happens time and time again, but were able to be a part of the process. And what that allowed us to do was to welcome library systems at all components of the work. So there were folks who had equity committees and core teams already working, there were people who were only thinking about adding more books with diverse faces to their collection. But all were interested in moving ahead. What we wanted to offer was the being together, the learning together, the library specifics, confronting some of our myths as libraries, about always being available to everyone, understanding our history, and then to really come out with something that was actionable. One, and we'll talk about lessons learned later, but one of the things that we recognized is in the journey, and you know, every journey has ups and downs, in the journey together, we were able to look at regional specifics, statewide specifics, things that are relevant nationally, but continue to focus on not just dialogue, the importance of relationships and networks, but having a plan that was actionable.

Chantel Walker 2:27:03
And our groups, and us, are leaving that first year of the work with draft plans that will keep deepening. Now, and we'll talk about this a little bit later, but we started this work, late summer, early fall of 2019. We had a fun launch at CLA in October of last year. And we started meeting. The intensification of what 2020 did to the work was actually positive but also challenging, and keeping a mind on equity as we go into a shelter in place framework. What does that mean internally? What did it mean, externally, we had a chance to talk about that, as what ended up being 21 library systems. What were the changes, what were the actions to be taken, after we saw the visible violence against people of color against African Americans, the murders, the discrimination and xenophobia that some leaders in the country triggered around COVID. So this was an important time to be doing the work. And I'm glad we started doing this work before 2020.

Chantel Walker 2:28:22
This is a little bit about how we operated. So while we did connect in between, our original vision was three in-person sessions in the north and the south, in addition to sort of our convening breakfast at CLA, and then a little bit more at the end as a wrap. Well, COVID occurred, just the shelter in place in

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the state of California, really started in full force just after our second session in the Northern / Central California region in March. So we still had everyone together in March with the exception of one library system that was already beginning to respond to COVID very quickly. When we pivoted, we did a couple of things. We took a moment that was really going to focus on all of us in urban, suburban, and rural settings, focusing on the rural, and how we could partner with one another. But we ended up extending that session and really talking about the impact of the shelter in place. And so the pivot and the work then moved us to many more statewide convenings. We also focused on results based accountability, which would have come up, but how do you measure success in a plan that focuses on racial equity, all forms of equity, being important and needing to move forward but starting with racial equity as an initial point. And then the final training, we decided, you know, because each of these trainings had components that built documents, the final training we decided would be online and would be combined and as the project evolved and the work of all it was enriched by some of the horrors and challenges of 2020.

Patty Wong 2:30:05

So these are the 21 libraries that participated and CREI, we are so proud of them, you can see they represent Southern California and Northern California. And we especially wanted to make sure that the Central Valley was included. Because a lot of times, you know, sometimes in a competitive process, which is why we were delighted and think, I know Rebecca's on the call, thank you so much to the State Library for believing in this project. And so much so that they have asked us to put together a second year, and we hope that gets funded. But it was an opportunity actually to create that statewide network that we so desired. Where, because what we knew to be true is that sometimes, you know, staff move around, sometimes they work in different places, they often go to another library. But imagine if we had a situation where the entire state of California, wherever you went, could talk about race and equity in a way with richness and depth, wouldn't have to decipher and, and re articulate and relearn definitions. And that's the goal, what we're trying to do is to create a statewide learning community, and a community of practice to really change our world as we know it from a race and equity lens. So, as Chantel mentioned, there were teams from each of these different libraries, two to six, and sometimes ranging a little bit more than six. Because as the libraries came to work together, there was a deep and richer conversation. And everyone was definitely reacting to what was happening around us. That made the work a lot stronger. And I think that's all I have _____.

Patty Wong 2:32:01

So let's talk about some lessons learned around what year one looked like. And I know that Chantel and I will kind of dovetail on this. So we were looking at proof of concept was, you know, could libraries do as we thought, which is to really articulate the race and equity work and to be able to integrate that in a plan that they could use to create policies and procedures that would echo that. We were looking at outcomes and evaluation in a real deep way. And so we did a little bit above and

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beyond what the State Library requested, which is, they requested, basically a pre and post, but according to LSTA guidelines. So that's that goal number seven I was talking about earlier, which really was about staff development, and a way to create some change. But Chantel and her team, actually there was a test that a pre and post test that she and the team articulated. And I wanted to read a few of the questions because I think they're really something just very dynamic and and extra special.

Patty Wong 2:33:23
And they are questions like, do local, state, and national governments advance equity by adopting inclusionary policy. And then you would have to rank them whether you would strongly agree to strongly disagree. Does diversity in the workplace, improve decision making and problem solving. To be inclusive, organizations remove practices that create barriers within themselves. And there are so many that actually articulate the tenor and the temperature of the organization and where we need to go. So we have really critical analysis actually for pre and post around all of the reactions from, and pretty much 90% I think response from both the Southern California cohort and the Northern California cohort.

Patty Wong 2:34:16
And so a couple of lessons that we learned is that really, as the teams were growing, as they were, there was increasing violence in the world, with with people of color and black people, it really underscored the need for commitment to racial equity. And so as a result of that, um, there was a little bit more pressure, I think, on our colleagues to develop statements that were meaningful, but also to do the work internally because there was a lot of reflection about what they could do. So the second part of that was reaching out to their library administrations, and really creating a stronger role that would call for sustainability and making things happen in a strong way. The underpinning throughout all of this was was GARE which was is our Government Alliance on Race and Equity. And certainly the results based accountability work that, that Chantel mentioned as part of our of our statewide workshops, because it gave the staff some foundational understanding of how the work needed to happen and how change could happen internally within their organization.Chantel do you have any other? I know you do.

Chantel Walker 2:35:41
Just a few things. I think that for us really working on that pre and post test is we understood that everyone applied and everyone's you know, system director signed off, but we wanted to understand what was the starting point about attitudes and readiness, and then infuse our overall working curriculum with the pivots to address areas that we thought could be strengthened. So for example, you know, have libraries always been open to everyone, some people knew that they weren't. And some people thought that libraries have always been this place that's open to everyone. And one of the other things that I think for us became quickly true, was the need to center the voices of people of

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color, it was mentioned on one of the earlier panels, and it's been mentioned often that those with librarian titles, who mostly have the MLIS are 80%, Caucasian. 80% white. So in that space, as we begin to work on equity, what's the evolving conversation about centering the voices of people of color, even in a state, like California, which has a slightly broader diversity than I'd say most of the country, around librarianship. Some of the other issues, or really being able to understand our history and come up with a an actionable vision that you were willing to share? I know that for some systems being a part of this really worked and some systems in their core teams, which you know, had two to six people had people from all parts of their organization, some teams didn't. So building the power in the voices of those teams. And certainly, we had Sarah Jones, who is the director at Marin County Free Library, and Patty Wong reach out to system directors, because we wanted to recognize that there were certain conversations that they might have about what's working, what's not working, where they were concerned about pushing that needed to happen. And we also found, I think, a strong network amongst all of us. And a needed network, when we were all confronted with the shelter in place, the economic losses of COVID, and the racial violence, the murder of black people on television, the xenophobia against Asian Americans. I mean, there was so much happening that made the disparity clearer than ever, that it was important for us to be able to have a balm on our own souls, and talk to one another and, and connect to one another, about how to take action in a time of pain. I also think that, you know, by March, libraries had been committed, they've been doing the work. But then library systems looked at this opportunity that CREI offered as much more important to their ongoing work and life, I would say. Would you add to this Patty?

Patty Wong 2:38:50
Yeah, just a couple more things. I think one of the things that we were not so surprised about, but that it was validating, that although libraries may have been doing some work, that there was a lot of work left to do. That they wanted more information, more training, more deeper conversation about process and how to work with people of different races, how do you how to work with LGBTQIA people, how to work with people from different cultures, how to bring that back to the work and have the staff not be responsive or think this is one more thing to do. How to recognize and to act in the moment when a microaggression happens.

Patty Wong 2:39:42
And I think there was an interesting dynamic that also happened between Northern and Southern California in that in Southern California, there were definitely more people who observed that they didn't feel as comfortable and confident that their government was going to take action. And it might be because, it was definitely I think observed on our end that a lot of Northern California libraries were already doing a lot of race and equity work. It doesn't mean that Southern California libraries were not but it was it was a palpable conversation that people were having. And I think that created a stronger dynamic actually between _____

Chantel Walker 2:40:27

That was helpful, and it was statistically significant when we looked at attitudes and confidence. So that helped us if you like, get there. You know, now's a good time to bring in the voices of some of the folks who were a part of the work. And we actually had a lot of fun. And we had a little end of year virtual celebration. And one thing that we did do for each of because we had two in person, sets of sessions in January and March, and we also had the October, but we made sure that we celebrated together, and that we connected together, as well as learned through, you know, some great fun moments in the trainings, but also pinch points. So that at the end of the day, we talked about, you know, what, what did this work mean to you, what were some key thoughts that you have, and so what you see is a Wordle, of what people put together. And I think many of you have seen these, depending on how many times someone mentions a word, the word gets bigger. So the you know, empowering, informative, the community that we form together, and the communities that we're part of, but also challenging, move throughout the work. And I think that strengthening ourselves, that we're going to need to be in all these spaces as we continue to do the work is very important.

Patty Wong 2:41:41

So there are, you know, one of the things that we wanted to leave with you today is that a lot of the work can be done right now, within your own communities. And that we we have not only a role, but I think a responsibility to play regardless of whether you were part of CREI or not, whether you're in California, or I know there's a there's a few people on here that that are outside of California. So immediately for your public, one of the things that happened right away is that our community started talking about race and equity as it pertains to the public right now. So when we were talking about opening up and and services and that we could provide even in this COVID environment, could we look at the service delivery from the perspective of race and equity inclusion? Could we use that lens to to deepen the work and to make sure that we created procedures that were open and inclusive and didn't discriminate? How can we translate that for our public? How do we involve our public in some of that service development. A lot of our libraries actually did a lot of institutional organizational work, but they also work within their own government agency. In Oceanside, the library system was invited to tie to the city's diversity efforts directly when they had not been invited to the table before. In Los Angeles, we now are one of our leaders there, is the equity officer for Los Angeles Public Library is invited to the table to work with the mayor and creating equity changes at the city level. That's a very powerful place for us to be. And in Sonoma, 37 of their supervisors are going through the work around change management within the system around race and equity. They have a new Race Equity Plan for recruitment and hiring and a statement that they've created as well as a staff survey to 200 or more staff that really talks about the _____ with race and equity, and so that work is being done internally and externally. In Santa Monica, where we have a city wide GARE focus. We have adopted a black agenda at the city. And we have a huge task force that's dedicated to police reform at this moment,

and the library is instituting the 21 day racial equity challenge as part of our city efforts, as well as social justice forum. So there's lots of examples of how libraries can actually make that change within the local government. Chantel, what about and I know you've got the rest of the Commissions.

Chantel Walker 2:44:34

You know, one of the things that I've been passionate about for a long time is our Commissions, our Library Foundations, our Friends groups. You know, a lot of the libraries, even the Carnegie libraries, when they were built, they had community groups who were governing and promising to be a part of long term health for the libraries as they were then envisioning. And one of the things that's important is as we come along in our work, around equity more broadly and racial equity in particular, we need to bring along our Commissions, our Trustees, our library Foundation. Not only are they fundraising arms, they tend to be, on average, much less racially and ethnically diverse and much more likely to be raising money for us and making decisions about money. So one of the things that we infuse both in the work and it's something that we're also doing at Morin and was even, I think, in my first year of library school project, for me, it was bringing together staff and library foundation / Friends groups, sponsorship group members, to talk about race and equity and identify ways that they could invest. So you all may want to think about what are the small ways that or big ways that we can get there by and certainly the changing of your mission statement to add race equity, and those kinds of things help, and they need to help you make decisions about that. But also, when we came together, the friends group and the foundation hosted the reception for CREI. And we really encouraged them to think about what we were trying to do there. Or asking your Friends group YOUR Foundation to really invest in a racial equity collection, and to begin to label that as important and to talk about it, put it in their newsletters and, and to take pictures of the books, that begins to normalize the conversation in your community. And it also brings a cross section of people who might not be talking about race equity, to the conversation in your library and in your community.

Chantel Walker 2:46:31

The other thing that I would say about, you know, partners and stakeholders is Who are the people? And who are the institutions that you're most closely partnership partnered with? Sometimes in libraries, we love so much the work that we do that we only focus on ourselves, and a little bit of dabbling of going to a group or or go do a presentation at a school. But who are you truly supporting as part of their agenda for your neighborhood branch or the whole community? You know, is it a topic of educational equity? Is it safety? You know, what are the ways that you're bringing partners in you're supporting their decisions? They're supporting yours? You know, what if by bringing these broader groups the Commission's the libraries, the the library foundations and stakeholders, that equity and race equity became as important to us as library user privacy, right, so Patty and I often talk about, so what's the big goal? If privacy was on par with race equity, how would that change how libraries operate and what we do? I know, we want to spend a little bit of time on questions and things like

that. So I'm thinking this could be a time to move ahead. Unless Patty, our President-Elect of ALA who we know cares about this stuff. Moving us forward on it across the country but do you have any messages before we move to q&a? Patty?

Patty Wong 2:47:49

Well, I do know, Elaine says we have to wrap up a little bit. And I think there are great, great questions in the chat. One of the things I'm going to do right now, though, is I want you to feel comfortable emailing me directly, I'm gonna write my, my email in the chat. Um, I did want to say that the work is great, the work is important. You need to, you need to cultivate. I know it's brave work, I know sometimes it's a little scary. But you have all of these allies around the room. We have 569 people participating today, and we have so many more out there who I think will benefit from all of this. Please consider us all allies in the work. And just a brief commercial, if we get year two and you're a California library, and you were not part of the original CREI, please consider joining us. We'd love to create the state network, And for those that were CREI year one, I hope that you will continue. And I'm sorry that I have to run. But thank you all so much. And thank Chantel.

Chantel Walker 2:48:50

No, absolutely. We look forward to connecting with you and sharing resources as you launch into the work, do use a structure. If we're funded for year two, we will kind of publish what we think is a roadmap that builds on GARE and builds on the things that the Government Alliance on Race and Equity, and builds on the things that we've brought to it, the Government Alliance on Race and Equity actually has a libraries interest group that's doing work nationally. And we think that the more and more libraries that invest in this will put equity and race equity on par, if not even more committed in libraries than ideas like library user privacy. So on that I know we're at time, Fiona, I'm thinking that we should end now or is there are there time for questions?

Fiona Potter 2:49:23

If you wouldn't mind ending now? That way, that would be great. But thank you so much for sharing information about this program. And I look forward to learning more about year two and being able to get involved. And, folks, if you continue to have questions about this, I know we're on hour three and it's a lot to take in now but can you knew to put questions in the q&a. And if Chantel wouldn't mind, you can help us answer that in the q&a section and the chat. But again, thank you so much, and Chantel is going to be back in just a little bit to help us with our panel. So thank you.

Fiona Potter 2:50:17

Okay. And then next up, we are going to have someone who, if you attended the Denver Library Workplace Equity Symposium, you may recognize this person Ozy Aloziem, along with organizing an amazing few days on equity in libraries at that workplace symposium, Ozy is the Denver Public Library's

first Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Manager. She is leading the Building a Pipeline of Community Connection, DPL's grant project examining equity in the library workforce funded by the Institute of Museum and Library Services. In addition to her role at DPL, Ozy serves as a racial equity and racial healing consultant for several organizations across the nation. We're so excited to get a peek at the library scan report coming out from Denver Public Library soon. Please join me in welcoming Ozy Aloziem

Ozy Aloziem 2:51:22
Hello, everyone. Um, can you all hear me.

Fiona Potter 2:51:26
I can see you and I can hear you.

Ozy Aloziem 2:51:28
Okay, awesome. Thank you for that introduction. My name is actually pronounced ozy.

Fiona Potter 2:51:32
Oh, I'm so sorry. Sorry.

Ozy Aloziem 2:51:35
Um, I am.. oh my volume is a little low?

Ozy Aloziem 2:51:42
I can speak up. Um, I? Is that better? Is it the same? Can you hear me better? Okay, um, I am sharing just a summary on what we're doing at DPL. I don't have a ton to share as it relates to what we have found, but I can share what her process has been, as it relates to the grant that I am managing. Um, so let me pull up my slides and turn on my captions.

Fiona Potter 2:52:22
Oh, and you actually don't have to turn on your captions because we have that additional caption services.

Ozy Aloziem 2:52:49
Okay, can you all see that? Awesome. So I was hired to help manage this grant. I've since transitioned into the role of being the EDI Manager for DPL. But my background is, to give you a little context, I have my Master's degree in social work, and I have my undergraduate degrees in psychology and anthropology. And the work and research that I do is purely around racial equity and racial healing. So I spent the last decade really learning about the sociology of race and how racism and race manifests in

our daily interactions. And so that is a perspective that I bring into this grant and was able to, to help really kind of guide where we went with it.

Ozy Aloziem 2:53:36
So the grant itself, we received a grant from the IMLS to really figure out how can, how can libraries diversify their workforce equitably? and ensure that they're recruiting folks into an up to an environment where there's the opportunity for career advancement, where there's an inclusive institutional culture so that folks of color or folks from other historically marginalized groups aren't being harmed by being recruited to these to these environments, right? And so there were a few components to the grant. They included the formation of a steering committee of folks from across the nation who are also equally interested in EDI work and worked in some capacity doing that within their own respective libraries. I helped manage our environmental scan of public libraries to figure out what is happening, what are folks doing, what is working and what is not working. We recruited, or we reached out and found an outside external consultant who conducted a series of interviews with with staff that are historically represented within DPL. So former and current employees to figure out what was your experience, like? What are recommendations that you have? And based on what I'm hearing from your lived experience, how can we then make changes internally so that we are a more inclusive organization? I also went to all of the branches, and yes, I can share who that was. Her name is Dr. Namrita Singh. She's here in Denver, she has a, an organization. Her background is in health equity in certain ways, but she she does work outside of the field of health. Um, and then we held a symposium. And so that took place in June, or July, I'll share more about that. And so the tangible pieces, pieces of the product of the project, excuse me, that you all will have access to, that everyone will have access to will be a final report. There is the symposium information and site that's still available, so if you didn't attend the symposium, you can watch the different presentations and have access to the resources that were shared at the symposium.

Ozy Aloziem 2:55:45
So getting into it, we conducted an environmental scan. And so I'm still in the process of finalizing this environmental scan, especially with my transition into the new role that I am filling. Part of the goal of the steering committee was to help lead this and so we were ideally going to be working to do this scan of public libraries to figure out what was going on. Um, but because of the pandemic, and because of the social uprisings and a whole host of other things that we didn't anticipate, folks didn't have the full capacity to, to participate in the scan in the ways they initially imagined when we wrote the grant. So I say all that to say, that is why it's taking some more time to analyze that I'm, I'm sort of managing a lot of that on my own. But the goal of a scan was to really look at how libraries are applying an EDI lens, so equity diversity inclusion lens, to staffing and workforce development. We took a mixed method approach to it.

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Ozy Aloziem 2:56:45

And so we created a very robust survey, there's like 156 questions on it really looking at how EDI is embedded into every facet of your organization, from performance review, from data collection, to communications, to strategic planning, to all of the different pieces around what makes an organization function. How are EDI best practices being measured within your organization. And so we send that out to folks. We used the PLA directors listserv, we use the EDI PLA Task Force, and some other internal groups to really share that survey so that we could get as many responses as possible. One of the questions that we included on that survey was, would you be interested in a follow up interview? And so we got a pretty good amount of surveys back I think, at this point, the last time that I checked, we had 220 back. And so part of what I will be doing is aggregating that data to figure out okay, what is happening? What are the practices that currently exist within libraries? And where are the gaps and the different components whether that is communication with it, that is fundraising, whether that is staffing and workforce diversity, where are we seeing some trends? And then I also, because following up with a survey conducted interviews with library directors and EDM managers across the nation to figure out what are you doing within your respective organization. And so I've completed 14 interviews at this point, they've all been an hour or a little over an hour long. And I'm in the process of analyzing those interviews to create a report of the findings for the themes and best practices and takeaways for other libraries who are interested in moving forward on their own EDI journey.

Ozy Aloziem 2:58:37

So that's the design of it, it's building on the work that the 2018 Emerging Leaders worked on, as relates to EDI and public libraries. In general, this one was taking a more internal look, because I we have found that oftentimes, when libraries begin really engaging at EDI work it's externally facing, and not necessarily taking a lens or a microscope to what we're doing on the inside, so that we can be better promoters externally. Um, this is the steering committee that.. The survey is available, I can drop a link to that in the chat, and I encourage you all to take it when it just helps create more data. Um, but also, I think it's it serves as a baseline for you all, as you're thinking about the work that you're hoping to do. One of the things that I really am appreciative of this grant is that it allowed us to get assessment data, because in order for us to be making meaningful changes, we have to know where we're starting. And so it gives us a way to figure out where are we and then knowing that how can we measure and hold ourselves accountable to the progress that we're moving, hopefully in the direction of so definitely encourage you all to take it so you have an indication where you're starting and then can use that to to measure your progress moving forward.

Ozy Aloziem 2:59:51

But these are the members of the steering committee. I'm going to skip over that. Um, so our consultant, Dr. Namrita Singh conducted 30 interviews - 19 current employees 11 former. Did a really

good job of hitting folks across the organization. So that was part of my role, was to figure out okay, how do we how do we recruit in a way that we are actually getting the feedback that we need to be receiving. And so we had folks from all levels of the organization, from admin, to security, to custodial, to librarians, to LPAs, really engaged in this. So that was a really big win for us in terms of making sure that we were getting kind of a representative scan of the different professional roles that people were filling within the organization, as well as getting a pretty solid scan demographically when it comes to race when it comes to other identity markers.

Ozy Aloziem 3:00:48

And so our consultant actually just shared out her presentation with our exec team and our EDI committee a week and a half ago. And so we're now in the process, we've received this information in this presentation, and are waiting on the finalized report. And based on those recommendations, and all of what has come from this survey, we'll be creating an action plan in terms of what are the recommendations that we're prioritizing, how can we move forward on those knowing that this is what staff directly are saying.

Ozy Aloziem 3:01:20

Like I said, I did a bunch of branch visits, I don't need to necessarily go into this as much. But we have 26 locations, I visited 23 before everything shut down. I started my role at DPL in December. So that was a three minute or a three month window of sorts to really get those visits in. And I found that to be very helpful in terms of one, figuring out how all of our different branches were even understanding or talking about equity. But what were the EDI glows and grows, glows and grows for each of those those respective locations, to figure out how then this project, what its relevancy is to different locations, knowing that all of our different locations have different needs. And when you think about the demographics of the people who are attending, or not attending or visiting that branch or wanting to use those services, um, I could do a whole presentation on the themes that came from that I won't go into that for the sake of time, but found that to be really, really valuable in terms of shaping this grant, but also building buy-in around this grant and the belief that this work is moving forward by having those those one on ones and those interactions with folks and with their, their staffing teams to share this is what we're doing, this is why we're doing it, this is what you can expect from this particular project. Knowing that this is one, one piece of a bigger plan for us moving forward.

Ozy Aloziem 3:02:45

Then we had our symposium in July, it was supposed to be a one day event in it was going to be in April, we were only going to have 125 people because it was going to be at our central location, and that's just the capacity there. Um, and then COVID happened and everything shut down, and we had to shift. And so it ended up being virtual over three days, 4500 people registered and we had 2200 unique individuals engaged throughout those three days. And really wanted to create space, and I kept saying

that in the messaging leading up to it, for folks to really intentionally engage in conversations and walk around what it means to co create a more equitable world, right? So working with one another, to have these really deep and intentional conversations around what is happening, what are the areas of growth that we see, and how can we together work to address these problems that we're seeing? And so we really wanted to take an embodied approach to to engaging in equity work, thinking about what does it mean to engage more than the intellect and these conversations, because we know that equity is a full body of experience, right? When we're thinking about the impacts of oppression and racism, and all of the other isms, it sits in our bodies in ways that aren't just in our heads. And so how do we then engage in that or create space for folks to really think about what it means to to engage our minds, our bodies, our spirits, as we're trying to grapple with these really big things. And so that was the goal of the formatting. And so we started each day with meditation and self care, and ended each day with meditation and self care. I tried to intentionally show up as my full self introducing the different aspects of my identity by impact how I show up in these conversations, so that other folks would then feel comfortable enough to do the same in order for us to really take it more deeper in the conversations that we're having. And so part of what's next with that our research consultant also created a pre survey and a post survey. And so she is giving us a report, looking at Okay, what did individuals indicate they were looking for when they showed up? What did they walk away with? And then a month later, what do they actually do with what they learned at that experience and what are they still wanting. We're hopefully going to be doing another symposium if not next year or the year after knowing that there's a lot of energy and desire for us to continue creating spaces like that. And then I will also be working on analyzing. So for the folks who attended and registered, there were some questions qualitatively that I asked around, like, what are you hoping to contribute to this conversation? And what are you wanting to take away from, and so doing some coding and analyzing of those themes to also contribute to what we learned from this experience. Um, I know that I'm strapped for time.

Ozy Aloziem 3:05:33
The last piece is culturally responsive wellness model. And this is a work in progress. And it came from knowing that folks of color in traditionally or historically, white spaces often experienced weathering and racial battle fatigue, which are damaging physiological and psychological strain that occurs from existing in these racialized spaces. And so you really wanted to respond to that, knowing that we're trying to shift our institution in this direction, but folks need something to mitigate the harm that they're experiencing in real time. And so we've been hosting and holding racial healing circles for our black indigenous and people of color folks to participate in meditation and space, just in conversation with one another about what is happening, what are you experiencing, and how can we support you and each other, and that, um, and moving forward, we're creating a more robust, a recommendation model for how organizations can not only meet the specific needs of their BIPOC staff as it relates to weathering and racial battle fatigue, but knowing like the socio political culture that we're in, how are

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we, how are we prioritizing the wellness and well being of our staff knowing that that is integral for an inclusive organization? So I know I went through that very quickly. And I'm happy to answer more questions about it during the panel. But that is a quick overview of what we're doing with ythe grant. And I can share more about some of what we're imagining moving forward. And with you.

Fiona Potter 3:07:03
Thank you so much Ozy. And there's a lot of there's a lot of questions, kind of like nitty gritty sharing links, what's the name of the consultant? Can they get more information about the symposium and the data? But there is one, one that's that maybe you can talk about? Do you happen to know why so many registered, but only half engaged in that symposium?

Ozy Aloziem 3:07:29
Um, so I was, so part of what made our symposium great is we had a outside consultant Zakia, I can provide all the information for those things. And she was our virtual producer. And one of the things she said initially was that people tend to register, especially during these times, and that typically, we only see a third of people actually show up. And so we were excited that more than a third of the people actually showed up. But it's, it's the fatigue in terms of, Oh, I see this event. It looks good. Let me quickly register. But actually, when it comes down to it, I have a lot of things going on, and I can't make it.

Fiona Potter 3:08:04
Yeah, I can relate to that. Also, I think everyone on this call can probably relate to that. So I think for now, we can finish and then we're going to you'll be able to ask Ozy more questions in the panel discussion that's going to come up after a short break. So if that's okay, for right now. Yeah. So we're gonna we're gonna take a quick break again, and we're going to be back in just a few minutes at 12:20. And continue talking again, but thank you, thank you, again, so much to Ozy for sharing information about the symposium and the project. Thank you.

Ozy Aloziem 3:08:47
Absolutely. See you all soon.

Fiona Potter 3:08:49
See you soon.

Fiona Potter 3:08:52
And and, again, continue, you can continue to put the more questions in the q&a. Okay.

Fiona Potter 3:11:46

Welcome back everyone from our break. Please welcome me in joining our please join me in welcoming our panelists for today. So we have some familiar faces coming back Ozy Aloziem, Stacy Collins, and Chantel Walker. And we are also being joined by Alison Macrina. Alison is a librarian, internet activist, and founder and director of the Library Freedom Project. Allison is passionate about fighting surveillance and connecting privacy issues to other struggles for justice and analysis of power. And we're going to hear more about the Library Freedom Project tomorrow as well for those who will be joining us again, and Chantel is helping us to moderate this discussion. I'm going to bring up a slide to look at but take it away, Chantel.

Chantel Walker 3:12:46
Hello, and thank you again. So thank you again, it's wonderful to be here. I think the richness of this morning's conversations, the multiple ones, not only give us a couple of questions, but at least a few starting points. So Alison, both Ozy and I and Stacy had a chance to chat this morning. Why don't we start with you? Why don't you talk a little bit about what are some realistic next steps. As we think about epi. We've heard about learning opportunities. We've heard about moving the work forward, we grounded ourselves in some of the definitions. But Alison, if you would say a little bit about where are we now and moving the work forward?

Alison Macrina 3:13:38
Yeah, absolutely. Thank you so much, Chantel. Um, well, I think that, you know, there are a lot of really amazing perspectives that have already been shared. So I'm think I'm repeating some of what's been said. But to my mind, one of the most important things is money. Um, I don't want to make it sound like I'm suggesting that somehow money will solve racism or something like that. But, you know, when I think about the issues that we're facing with how, how much work is being done in libraries to confront issues of racism, and our lack of diversity, something I see over and over again, is that there just isn't a willingness to put money into the problem to pay Black and POC people to fund training initiatives. I just want to know by the way, my screen just froze. Can everybody hear me okay?

Chantel Walker 3:14:28
We can hear you

Alison Macrina 3:14:29
Okay, moving on. Okay, I can't see anything. Um, oh, wait, no, it seems to have come back. Okay. Wonderful. Um, yeah. So, um, as I was saying, I think that there's a lot of there are many, many initiatives to make more diversity happen in libraries, but I see them being impoverished in all sorts of ways. One example that comes to mind is the diversity residency program that exists in a lot of academic libraries. This is something that is, it's not institutionalized in it in like a broad way, you know, each program is a little bit different. But I've talked to a number of these diversity residents, and a

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number of them are paid less than their full time librarian colleagues. And they're required to do additional work like serving on diversity committees and such like that. And I think this is just reproducing a much bigger problem of racism, you know, those are, those are positions that should be paid fully. And the committee work should include more money for it. So you know, if I think about, like, what an immediate next step is, is that we need to find the funding to make these things happen. Otherwise, we're just going to have the same issues where Black and POC folks continue to leave the profession.

Chantel Walker 3:15:47
One of the things that I work on in my work is the finance side of the house. And where when you look at a budget, and you see where people spend their money, you can look at the priorities of the organization. So we've talked about things like line items about investing in equity work publicly. It should be a part of everything, but also, how much are you capturing and coding in the backs of your systems? And who are you contracting with? Ozy, could we turn to you to talk a little bit about the training component? There was interest in the consultant that you used in Denver, and a little bit about framing systems change and normalizing? Given that you have that internal role in your particular system?

Ozy Aloziem 3:16:32
Yeah, so training is where we're, that's what we're going to be focusing on, we are applying for more funding from the IMLS to really figure out what that means for us internally. Um, it's interesting. Again, I'm a researcher. And so I did a lot of work to figure out, okay, we've been doing EDI training for 40 years, or for however many years, what have we learned from that? And the reality is not much. And it's because we, we employ these kind of reactive things, where it's like, oh, we recognize that there are these issues, let's do an implicit bias training, and we're gonna hope that it's doing what it's supposed to be doing. And we know, like, anecdotally, like it can do the work that it's supposed to be doing, but we're not figuring out where folks are starting. Okay, based on where you are, how can we create a learning plan for you, that meets your learning needs, and also is responsive to like, where the gaps are as it relates to what you're doing. So that's one of the things that we're trying to intentionally think through right now is what it looks like to create if we're doing training or requiring folks to do training and an individualized training plan to do that. And so we're looking at the IDI, which is the intercultural developmental inventory, I think is what the acronyms stands for. because it provides that you are able to take that assessment and get something that's looking at where your gaps are, and then working to figure out okay, based on these and based on the plethora of EDI trainings that are available to us now, how can we match that to your needs, but then also really starting top down with that, knowing that the biggest gaps right now are with our leaders and our execs of the organization? And so how do we make sure that we're identifying what the gaps are for them, and intentionally creating training for them. So not only are they able to think through decision making differently, but

then staff are believing that they care enough because they're committing to their own learning. And so really trying to not only be really intentional about what we're doing as relates to training, but creating ways to measure where that learning takes us. And so doing the post evaluations to figure out okay, how are you now incorporating these things? And what did you take from this experience? And also, what are you still needing? And how can we support you in that. And so we have a group called RADA, which stands for read aloud dialogue action, which was largely externally facing before the pandemic, and switched to being more internally facing and I do a lot of work around creating space to have conversations around social justice issues and race. And so we did a two part COVID in ourselves series with staff to, to bring conversation around what's happening, and how does that relate to the work that we're seeing? And so changing our training style to create more space for deep reflection, and conversation versus, hey, these are the definitions and these are what we need you to learn. And then we're hoping that you're you're moving differently. So changing our styling and measuring it more

Chantel Walker 3:19:22
So that that can be applied. No, that's fantastic. Would you mind entering the name of the consultant that you had into the chat box? People are also interested in it? Yes, you know, Stacy, I think something that Ozy mentioned as well as has come up in the chat is power and power analysis in a couple different ways. But one is if at the top of our organizations, many most systems require an MLS and we want to have more people of color in those roles. We know what are some what some thinking around that. I did enter into the chat, one thing that at Marin we've been working on is about building the pipeline, even with our student interns and flexible work schedules and funding. But there, there may be other things that you can bring up, especially because some of the power pieces that were talked about, could you say a little bit about that?

Stacy Collins 3:20:16
Yeah. So the, the MLIS, it's weird to call it a problem, because I have one, spent lots of money on it. It's it's one of those sort of perpetual conversations. Yes, building the pipeline is absolutely one way to address the issue. But it doesn't change the fact of how many leadership positions require a lot of ladder climbing, you got to be in a position, that position has to have growth opportunities that allow you to move into a leadership position, or you've got to leave your organization and go elsewhere. And there are a lot of marginalized folks where going elsewhere, not every elsewhere is available, for lots of reasons but safety is a big one. So this question of how do we keep folks in the in the field long enough to actually reach those positions is something that folks are talking and thinking about, but there's also of course, the alternative of Do we need folks to be in the field for X number of years? or are we really talking about experience in what leaders and redefining what leadership and leadership roles look like? So when we talk about qualified leaders, do we have this issue like the question of experience with equity considerations with antiracist thought leadership and training and professional development? Do we have those elements built in where we have folks who maybe don't have the, Do we have

positions that exist where the library experience or on the ground experience is valuable, but there's also other experience that's necessary and not delivered through the MLIS program or not as much as we would like it to be? So that question of literally shaking up how we define leadership, how positions are described, what, what exactly is the purpose of the requirement of an MLIS? is it's simply to say, Well, we know that if you have this, you've literally invested thousands of dollars in buy in into our way of thinking of our profession. And so there's lots of things we don't have to catch you up on. But there's so much about librarianship that is on the job learning, training, interacting with patrons, etc. How much is it necessary, depending on the leadership position? And instead of just sort of a rubber stamp MLIS required, how can we start redefining those positions, particularly built based on what they're meant to accomplish? To be more inclusive of folks with different experiences?

Chantel Walker 3:22:38
And that sort of calls on everyone to engage their human resources folks, and to change those classifications at high levels. What are some of the things that you all feel are successes that are starting points for staff at all levels? One thing that's come up in some of the questions is really wellness and health. Some things that have come up or collections, why don't we go back to you Ozy, and figure out, you know, what are what are some things that you think and then we'll just talk to other folks on the panel?

Ozy Aloziem 3:23:16
About, did you say health and wellness

Chantel Walker 3:23:18
Health and wellness and just starting points, given where we are, and one of them being health and wellness potentially, there was also a question about that.

Ozy Aloziem 3:23:27
Yeah, so I can add context. Um, I started with DPL in December. Prior to me joining that team, there had been some work in conversations with staff knowing that there was this desire for these racial healing circles. And so they had actually contracted with a local individual who was supposed to hold a series of these sessions. And she held the first one, and we had a follow up conversation about it and realized it wasn't really kind of what we were looking for what we were needing. And so we put a pause on that, and then returned back to them in March, when everything shut down. And we really knew that looking at the disproportionate impacts of the virus on folks of color, that we needed to create space around that. And so I started facilitating those sessions. I'm a social worker, but my background in social work specifically is around racial healing, recognizing that we spent a lot of time talking about racial equity, but don't think about the ways in which we all need to be healing from white supremacy and racism. And so I have been for a while now interested in different modalities and

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different approaches, and have done a lot of thought into what does healing look like for folks of color. And what we've been doing since then, I'm no longer facilitating those just cuz I don't have the capacity and reached out to some local folks who I know do work around that. Um, and so we've been bringing in consultants to help us and we've been working with, for the most part, the same consultant and just really creating space for one to to validate what people are experiencing because a lot of people are like, I thought I was crazy. And I didn't know that there were other people experiencing the same thing. And so that is an integral component, creating space for conversation and recognition that what you're experiencing isn't fake, but also that it shouldn't be happening. But then also not just letting folks sit in that. And so how do we then have conversations around strategies for resilience and resistance? And how do we give you tangible tools to sort of mitigate that harm that you're experiencing as it relates to your physiological responses? So how can you incorporate meditation and breathing into your activities. And so those are what those sessions are primarily focused around, building tools for resilience and creating space for folks to collaborate across the organization that might not have had any interactions with folks, especially if they're in a department where they're the only one or if they're in a branch where they're the only one and using this virtual time to be able to do that in ways. At first, we weren't able to because folks would be driving or have to drive to a location to me, and that has its own host of accessibility issues. So working with a contract consultant.

Chantel Walker 3:26:00
Thank you, Alison, what are some starting points that you would suggest?

Alison Macrina 3:26:05
I'm going to agree with Ozy and say that I think especially in these times, um making space around health and wellness is really essential. And, you know, my organization Library Freedom Project, what we are is we're a community of practice for librarians who are thinking about our professional values of privacy and surveillance, but through an antiracist social justice and class analysis lens. And one thing that I have learned in, in library Freedom Project, in particular with our current cohort of participants in our institute, which is a majority Black and POC cohort, is that not only is there absolutely no space being made for the trauma and fatigue, that mostly Black folks, but all Black and POC folks are feeling right now. Um, there is an enormous amount of institutional denial about the reality of the world. I mean, we know that Black people are more impacted by COVID-19. We know that, you know, even if this is just anecdotally, like what we're seeing, in terms of layoffs, and furloughs and the kind of economic impact that's happening in libraries, this is happening to Black folks and POC folks. And so in in Library Freedom Institute, what we've done is really tried to be very intentional about two things, one, confronting those realities, talking honestly about what is happening in our libraries, how our boards are responding, how our directors are responding, are we getting the kind of support that we need. And also in our program, we're, we're talking about library values of privacy, but as they relate to real world issues of justice. And I remember in the not the last session, but the one

before that, Chantel you were talking about elevating racial equity to the elevating racial equity, the level of other library values. And that I mean, that's, that's our approach to it. And so incorporating wellness within it is like, you know, making sure that we're making space for checking in about people's feelings, all of our, all of our projects are optional. All of the kind of like nitty gritty work is super flexible, the most important thing is building community. And so I think we need to institutionalize this kind of stuff across the board in libraries.

Chantel Walker 3:28:19
Thank you. Stacy, you know, what are you some starting points for you, a few things that are also coming up in the chat, and Allison just touched on one of them, is also this idea that people of color in the power structure, and you mentioned this earlier, often at an entry level spots or libraries that have just begun to do this work will hire more people of color, and then in financially hard times, when cuts com, some of those folks are the first people to go. You know, when you talked a little bit about classifications and HR policy. So what are some starting points in general? And then do you have any thoughts about you know, last in first out in hard times without regard to racial equity or community impact?

Stacy Collins 3:29:01
Yeah. Starting places I would say go and follow if you're not already doing it, follow the nap ministry and follow Katrina Davis Kendrick talking about resilience and talking about how low morale and the systems that are built to tire us out that are built to burn us out because we can always be replaced. Those are those are the folks talking about I love the nap ministry just constant just every every day at least like five tweets telling me to go take a nap. It's beautiful.

Stacy Collins 3:29:31
So, which is the larger thing of the starting place, I think is to follow the folks who are producing the thought leadership on this in particular. And unfortunately, the folks who are sort of on the front lines and tired are not necessarily also producing the scholarly works in the papers and the think pieces talking about here's what I need to fix this. Because when you're tired when you're too tired, you're not, you're you can't even contemplate what's gonna fix it. Just like, please just leave me alone, don't ask me anything but Oh, wait, that's the same thing as unemployed never mind. Give me give me something to do etcetera? Um, so the question of first in first out i think is a sort of sort of part of what Alison was talking about of how organizations are sort of built around this idea of pretending that real world circumstance does not exist on the inside of the library on the inside of the organization. Oh, we have our setup, when we consider it, it's like, well, if all of your folks of color are in entry level positions, and you are making decisions without consideration of racial equity, if you're not having that equity conversation for every decision, including, who do we need to cut because budget is a real thing, then it's essentially going to accomplish nothing, all the folks you brought in that are supposedly

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supposed to be part of fixing the issue. Even though bringing folks in doesn't do anything to redress harm. You're only going to recreate the problems and pretending they don't exist doesn't fix anything, pretending that power relationships don't exist doesn't fix anything. But that question of redressing harm, I think is also the important and the important starting place, not how do we get more diversity? Not how do we be not even how do we be more equitable, cuz I'm not sure people know what that word means. But the question of redressing harm, which first says, How are we causing harm? How do we how do we know that harm is being is being done? Which means Who are we listening to? And not listening to? Who has voice? Who do we take seriously? What do we consider a serious concern, etc. And what structures are in place or not in place to hear and address it? But then also, alright, the harm exists, so how do we actually go about fixing it? How do we go about not just stop, stop harming people but helping them heal? So that question of how do you support folks who are under extreme fatigue? How do you break open this this notion of business as usual, in a pandemic, for our current moment, but anytime where folks of color black men in particular being murdered on the evening news, but you're not you're not even talking to the to the folks who are seeing themselves in those people seeing their community in those news(?). You're not even talking about what their capacity is looking like on the day to day due to it. I will quickly quote Rachel Cargle because um well she's very quotable. But she was she did a presentation to about whiteness and social work. And she actually said, you should be asking the question always, how does my work, but even if it is equity or anti oppression work, how does my work depend on the continued oppression of marginalized people? Right? Am I making a career Am I making, um, am I getting you know, leadership points, whatever, how does my work actually require people to remain oppressed? And if it and once I figure that out, how do I start turning that around and saying, my work requires that I am helping to liberate people? Which I guess maybe isn't a starting point, maybe like 201? Or 101 then 201

Chantel Walker 3:33:04
It makes sense. That makes sense. You know, I think, um, one of the questions also that come up, is, how are we and how can we now ask this to the whole panel, have conversations about policing, in libraries. You know, either the actual police coming to presentations, and meet and greet, or how we treat young people who might be loud on computers, you know, which is developmentally appropriate, versus the adults who want to come and read the newspaper, sort of the control in the space, as well as the actual law enforcement and how we, we partner with them, especially those of you in public libraries, and how you navigate that. Who'd like to speak to that first?

Ozy Aloziem 3:33:50
I can share some, this is not my area of expertise, um, and Rachel ___, who's also on our exec team can speak more to it. And we have our own security first off, and so our interactions with the police are different because of that. And so, and in the conversations that I've been having with folks across the nation, who are also grappling with these things, that's a recommendation. Is it the end all be all?

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Absolutely not. We have our own security and we also have peer navigators, which also help especially when it comes to what we're seeing with unhoused folks and the sweeps that are happening in the area and all of those things. And so that is a resource for us to use to support and intervene before things are escalated to having to interact or having to rely on the police. And so we try to limit our interactions in that way, but also recognize that there are limitations in terms of what we're able to do within those roles. Denver is also unique city and that Denver is trying to imagine these different ways of supporting folks. And so we're modeling what was I think, started In Portland. I believe here it's called the STAR program, and I could be wrong on the acronym, but it's, instead of calling and going directly to the police, when there are these situations, what it would look like to send a mental health provider. And so Denver as a city is piloting that. And so we're able to tap into what other folks in the city are doing, and also creating space and for learning around that, so we've been having conversations around alternatives to policing in libraries, and what it means to, to really check and ask yourself when you're policing people's behaviors, what is it you're looking for? And why are you looking for those things? And how do you recognize that before it gets to the point where you're doing these things that could put other people in harm because of the things that you're not checking within yourself? So creating space for staff to be really engaging and that self reflection? And thinking about then how do we apply that to our code of conduct and training around how that is and isn't enforced?

Chantel Walker 3:35:50
Thank you. Other thoughts on that as we go to a few more questions, I know, Elaine will pull us in a little bit if we're getting too long.

Alison Macrina 3:36:01
Sure, I can I can add. So Library Freedom Project actually authored a statement, I'm sharing in the chat right at the beginning of the uprisings over the summer, it's called, It's Not Enough to Say Black Lives Matter Libraries Must Divest from the Police. And we authored this as a group, Library Freedom Project is a multiracial organization, there's almost 100 of us library workers in it. And basically, we've, um, we are, we're addressing the problem of, of policing as a tool of white supremacist violence in libraries. And we've outlined a whole kind of strategy for what divestment can look like. So everything from, you know, different alternatives to policing, around training, and actually, um to Ozy's point about the peer navigators, the peer navigators are really, I think, an exemplary example of what what this redirection could look like that's trauma informed, that is based in the lived experiences of people who are most likely to face police violence. So we have that mentioned in there, there ar implications for, for staff training for, for policies for, you know, if you must have some kind of police presence in the library, maybe what that could mean is they have to be disarmed if they're inside or, you know, other other ways of changing the presence that they have and the power that they have. And I see that somebody in the chat wrote that there's a group of folks called the Abolitionist Library Association working on this. So actually, that group came out of both this statement and some other work that was

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happening, the Los Angeles Public Library and the New York Cops Out of Libraries. We've been meeting now every two weeks since about the around the beginning of the uprisings, talking about how different libraries are approaching this problem, and really trying to build community around police divestment.

Chantel Walker 3:38:00
Stacy, do you have some thoughts on that? Or can we could you start a conversation about library staff and supporting library staff? It's been a very traumatic time, I would say, in 2020. For library staff, COVID, watching disparity, racial violence, still trying to build this work. I think your conversations about power were important. Can you start us on a roll about library staff?

Stacy Collins 3:38:29
Yeah, I, I encounter it so often how much this conversation around policing libraries specifically, but also other conversations, just sort of forget that the library staff either exist, or that they are in fact, part of the library's community, right, the staff doesn't just suddenly disappear into some weird, non human role like we are, we are part of the community that our library serves, just because we're part of the service doesn't change that. And so the consideration of of what the community needs and what is best for the community should start with the library staff, what do you all think before we then go outside the doors, etc. Because not only will the library staff, as part of the community, be impacted by those decisions, but also as folks at a job who can't just get up and leave. If there's something that they that is harmful about a program or harmful about a press, you know, an institution's presence in the library. I also think with regard to staff, it has a lot to do, the question needs to be considered from the perspective or from an ethic of care. So I saw a comment flashed by about how expensive and very often inaccessible self care is. And when I talk about when I talk about care and wellness, and I think when most folks that are doing this work do where we're not just or not only talking about folks going and figuring out how to heal from all the trauma, their jobs cause or that these systems cause, it is really much more about organizations stepping up and at least taking a some kind of role in addressing the harm that they are, that they are complicit in as as systems. But also the idea that we should be driven by an ethic of care by cultural care, systemic care. And so if that is our leader, if that's our driver, then what is a police presence from that perspective? What is what is the purpose of your shake hands with a cop program? What is what is the purpose of even an unarmed officer in your library? What is the purpose of policing? Which was sort of where we started? What what are we looking for, by having a police presence or even the action of policing? Because it's not just police, that police, right, we got lots of institutions that will carry that banner forward, even if the person in the uniform with the weapon isn't there. And so this question of how do we care for the staff, and then and through that, then extend extend to caring for the rest of the library community should be ideally should be the driver for every decision. And there are and and there are many staff who do not feel empowered to to speak up and say, Wow, police are not safe for me this is I am not okay with him being in, you know, a

program around this. There are a lot of there's a lot of misinformation that happens in those programs, or a lot of Let's not talk about this aspect of policing, we're only going to talk about the like law and order fun copaganda part of policing, and what that means for us to be promoting, as, you know, information professionals, etc. Um, so yes, that question i that the answer, I think is starting with the staff and starting from an ethic of care.

Chantel Walker 3:41:51
Thank you. You know, another question that's coming up that I'll also share with the whole panel is how can people in quote, unquote, lower positions, bring up their issues and these issues to leadership in constructive and equitable ways? I think those are starting points in the dialogue for a lot of people. I think one thing that I would say on this topic is a personal favorite approach to me is to lean into the myths of your system. Right? And I think the idea came about 20 years ago, at least to me, from Minnesota, Minnesota, nice or not, there was a race equity project. And so Minnesota nice was kind of a myth of the state, there may be Minnesotans on on this call. And so the race equity project kind of leaned into Minnesota nice or not to connect people with a myth, and then have them test it. I think, for me, that in libraries is, you know, are we a modern library? modern libraries do embrace technology, they also embrace their community. Are we patron led? What does that mean? We've got gut instincts about who comes to the desk, or we actually have patrons in decision making positions. And, you know, we invest in equity right now, we haven't fully built it in at Marin yet. But it's something that we're working on - a budget equity tool, that really asked the question of who's burdened? And who benefits consistently? What would one action mean? So what are, you know, I think, lean into the myths and make them, make them your own? Is a, is a strategy. But what are some ways that you all would suggest? and Alison, why don't we start with you on this one to help people in quote, unquote, lower positions, bring up their issues and these issues to leadership in constructive and equitable ways?

Alison Macrina 3:43:42
I think this is a really challenging question, I think it;s a good one. But um, you know, I believe it was Stacy, who was bringing up that, you know, one of the issues that we have in libraries and confronting our massive lack of diversity is that when there are Black folks and people of color in library positions, they most often are occupying the so called paraprofessional positions, they're the most recently hired, they're going to be the first ones laid off. they're in part time positions. And frankly, we don't have a system in place to protect those people, when they bring up any any kind of workplace issues. We especially know how frequently people will get fired for bringing up issues about racism. And so, you know, I, I don't know what kind of advice I would give to those folks but I do know that to the, you know, my fellow white people, I think that we can be taking greater risks, we can be acting in solidarity with Black and POC colleagues of ours, especially those that are in those lower positions. And so I think that this really speaks to, um, you know, a bigger thing that I that I want other white librarians to be

thinking about is how are we creating, how are we building relationships of trust with our Black and POC colleagues? What are how are we showing them that we are that we're that we're showing up for anti racist work and how will we support them? If they need to confront management, I think a really amazing example of this kind of solidarity is what has been happening at the Free Library of Philadelphia, I live in Philadelphia, I don't work at the free library, I'm a patron there. But some really, really extraordinary anti racist work has been happening where the work has been led by a group called the concerned black workers of the Free Library, and then supported in solidarity by the mostly white union. And so what that has meant is and their demands have been many, but it has included getting rid of their, their racist director, which they were successful in, and they have a whole bunch of other stuff that they're working on. A number of the concerned black workers were our so called paraprofessional, our so called like lower roles, non MLIS. And they were, they were able to bring these demands for in part because they had the solidarity of a group of anti racist, mostly white and non-black workers who were willing to put their themselves and their jobs on the line. And because they have a union, and so there was that kind of institutional support. But I think there's a lot to be learned from building that kind of solidarity economy within within the library system.

Chantel Walker 3:46:13
Thank you, Ozy, what do you think about that?

Ozy Aloziem 3:46:18
Yeah, it's, it's tricky, right? Um, DPL doesn't have a union, so that's not a viable option for us. And it's one of the things that I have tried to do my best around in terms of now that I am in this position of power, what does it mean to be in conversation with the folks that are on the ground? And who are we missing? And who are we historically not looking at. And so part of what I am doing in this new role is looking at all of our our historically underrepresented folks looking at all of our different groups. So we've got our EDI committee, we've got our Transgender Action Group, we have an LGBTQIA Committee. And we have other folks who are not a part of those committees, but just through word of mouth, knowing who do I need to be talking to, to figure out what are your What are your needs? And how can I make sure that as I'm moving forward, that I'm thinking of you and that you have access to me to share what's happening to you. So really building on the work that I did, over the last few months trying to build trust within the organization and getting folks to to believe in what we're doing as relates to EDI to say, now that I have some power, how can I leverage that to help support you and advocate for you in ways in which you haven't, knowing that there is a lot of harm that has happened. And so that's the other piece like really trying to understand, trying to help our organization and our admin understand that we can't move forward historically, as if there isn't historic harm. So what does it mean to acknowledge the fact that there is harm and to create space for that to happen as well. And so I've been trying to facilitate immediate conversations between our lower level paid staff and our managers to create space to say and name the harm that has being caused, and how we can move

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forward in this new direction that we're both committing to, after first recognizing what what what occurred, because I think that is a huge piece that doesn't, that doesn't happen when it comes to all of these processes that are moving forward with equity.

Ozy Aloziem 3:48:06
Thank you, Stacy please comment on that. And then we will close the panel at one with a one comment from each of you of a resource that you think people can walk away with EDI and libraries. So Stacy, what's a way to start that conversation from quote, unquote, lower level staff to have it with leadership in an equitable way.

Stacy Collins 3:48:26
Um, I mean, in a perfect world, every library would have some kind of Accountability Board, um, that to which they actually are held accountable, and that both pushes us outside of the MLIS, and even library perspective, but also outside of the leaders are the only ones that get to meet or have decision making power, etc. So, you know, perfect world, there's that. Without that, and this this was actually a question that came up during, during my talk as well, because in that question of power is always the well so then what am I supposed to do if I have no power and I'm the only one that's bringing up that's noticing these problems. Um, and one I'd say if you have them, find your accomplices, your your folks that are the live that live at various intersections of privilege, um, and, you know, ask them literally ask them to do things for you. The the inaccessible leader who's not going to hear you in the staff meeting and not gonna and you don't, you can't email or whatnot, is still gonna probably need to respond. If a patron comes and says, hey, I've got a problem with how this library is doing what it's doing. And persistent, persistent squeaky wheel patrons get a lot of grease. So if you can find one to get on your side, particularly again, one who's living at intersections of privilege where they can say Listen, I know like it's not okay for this to be happening, this is the relearning that I have done etc, etc. So if you've got them use them if that if you're in an academic space like I am, students and faculty are are, are in similar positions to be to be squeaky wheels. They also like you have student activists and whatnot so you can very least make the argument, hey, this is our community and this is the work that they're focused on at the student level. So how are we not reflecting any part of that, and in fact, contributing to what they're working against in this library, etc, etc. Um, and the confronting myths piece, I think is, is interesting as a as an approach, like the the nice librarian is, oh, she's mean, um, she's mean, and she's and she's persistent. And so the the question of how do you start digging into like, Well, what do you what do you mean by nice and like, that's a Sondheim lyric. Nice is different than good. Um, and, and Fobazi Ettarh, talking about vocational awe, and the notion that libraries and librarians are good by virtue of being librarians is silly on its face. So how do we start breaking this apart and not in the ether of the abstract, but in the material of what our day to day in our library looks like?

Chantel Walker 3:51:00

Thank you, we just reached one o'clock. So how about everyone, just a round of one resource that you've mentioned, you can also put it in the chat. Alison, why don't we start with you?

Alison Macrina 3:51:12
Well, I'm, I'm sure it's already been shared, but I'm gonna, I'm gonna repeat it in case, the the Libraries We Here Community School resources are really amazing. And it's a good way to do training that's trauma informed, and also paying folks of color for labor.

Chantel Walker 3:51:26
Thank you. Ozy.

Ozy Aloziem 3:51:31
I can share a I shared the survey already, but I'll share a link that has all of the resources that were shared at the symposium for folks who did not access that, which is a sheet, a cheat, and a way for me to share a number of resources.

Chantel Walker 3:51:46
Well done. Stacy, one resource.

Stacy Collins 3:51:50
Yeah. Well, I second We Here I also would say, In the Library with a Lead Pipe, all of their open access pieces from various folks, Fobazi Ettarh is one, April Hathcock, etc. Um, yeah

Chantel Walker 3:52:04
Thank you. And the one I'll share is the budget equity tool. It happens at city and county levels, but it can be tailored to your specific library, San Antonio has a great one. Toronto has a great one. We have a nice draft. I think Eva Patterson, who heads our Equity Alliance at Marin is on this call, or on this webinar, or you could also reach out and I'll send it to Elaine. So on that Elaine and Fiona Thank you, we return to you, thanks for the opportunity to chat with the group.

Elaine Tai 3:52:19
Of course, thank you so much, that was so much wonderful advice and information and discussion. And so there's a lot of resources going inside the chat, we'll try to save the chat and insert a lot of the resources into the Padlet, and whatnot. Feel free to of course, contribute your resources, continue the discussion, of course, follow the standards of engagement. Um, and you know, just kind of keep the chat going.

Elaine Tai 3:53:04

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We will have our zoom chat in just a moment here. So if you did want to have more like face to face or personal conversations, we're going to have that happening. Um, once again, we really want to thank all the panelists today. This has been so wonderful, so much amazingness. And I know like Ozy and Chantel, y'all were able to rush through that, and Stacy. And we could we do this all day. But yeah, I want to thank our presenters. And I do want to thank PLP and the staff development committee who have been here behind the scenes and putting things in the chat helping with tech issues. We'll open up the zoom meeting session at 1:15. The information should be on that handout. We'll also link it in the chat right here. Obviously, when you start it, it's going to say it's not started yet, because we're still here. But we'll go ahead and start that soon. Please also fill out a survey for each day of the conference, same thing, Survey Monkey links in the chat and on the handouts. We really appreciate your feedback. And let me let Fiona say thank you.

Fiona Potter 3:54:10
Yeah, I just wanted to reiterate what Elaine just said, but thank you so much to all of our wonderful panelists for sparking these discussions and keeping it going. And we're sort of

Elaine Tai 3:54:22
A lot of inspiration even though it was a lot of information.

Fiona Potter 3:54:25
Yes

Elaine Tai 3:54:25
You'll be able to access the recordings. And we'll do what we can to get some transcripts and that out as well. But yeah, thank you for the with 575 people at our max. So this has been a big thing. And you know, tech issues aside, we're good. So we're excited to see tomorrow for Transformation and the New Normal.

Chantel Walker 3:54:46
Thank you!

Fiona Potter 3:54:47
Thank you!

Elaine Tai 3:54:47
We'll see some of you shortly, maybe