



THOUGHT LEADERSHIP PAPER

TRUST

in Black & White

From **Conversation** To **Action**

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Terminology

Cultural Humility: Term coined by healthcare professionals Drs. Melanie Iervalon and Jann Murray-Garcia in 1998 to help physicians develop cultural competency. Refers to a lifelong process of self-reflection and self-critique that begins with examination how culture impacts one's thinking, behavior and beliefs

Social Loadings: All the information (print and social media, pop culture, rituals, sensory experiences) that gets fed into our brains and influences how we think and behave.

Gestalt Cycle of Experience: The Gestalt Cycle of Experience is a model that describes an ongoing process of engagement between individuals and their environments. The model has the stages of sensation, heightened awareness, mobilization of energy into action, contact or connection and resolution.

Levels of Human System: a framework for organizing how individuals interact with the environment in their multiple and intersecting identities. Each level describes the boundary between the person and the environment:

- **Individual/Intrapsychic:** Boundary is self-system (e.g., thoughts, feelings)
- **Interpersonal:** Boundary with an individual or with a group or subgroup (e.g., connecting with a spouse/partner, or with a family or with the children within a family)
- **Group:** Boundary is shared identity (e.g., racial identity or nation of origin, or religious affiliation)
- **Organizational/Institutional/Community:** Boundary is a systemic set of purposes, rules, practices, and traditions (e.g., work affiliation, religious affiliation, social group affiliation)
- **Societal:** Boundaries are the many facets of culture (e.g., language, norms, values, sanctions, politics, and acculturation)
- **Global:** Boundary is worldwide (e.g. Internet, Facebook, Instagram)

Systemic Racism: A set of public policies, practices, procedures, norms, and strategies that collectively work to perpetuate inequalities based on race. Systemic racism is not attached to an individual, identifiable perpetrator but has historical underpinnings that are deeply embedded in current day practices.

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Introduction

Women coming together in solidarity are a powerful force for achieving racial and gender equity. Supported by extensive research, women frequently emerge as key contributors to social progress, often being the first to identify community problems and influential in perpetuating—or shifting—the values, norms, and ideas that are passed from one generation to the next.

Gender solidarity is the key to unlocking the premier challenge of our time: achieving racial and gender equity. Women are a powerful force in breaking down these inequities; yet we remain divided across racial lines.

The political divide further exposes and intensifies both the unifying and dividing factors between women of color and white women, and deepens the historical divide, especially between black and white women.

As a result, the stark realities of mistrust between Black and White women shape our imperfect world, impede its progress, and make building social trust as a means toward racial and gender equity challenging.

Social trust is both an emotion and a choice informed by our racial group identities and social contexts.

“As an emotion, social trust is a feeling of benevolence, compassion, and caring for each other in our racial identity groups. As a choice, it is acting on the belief that the other racial group is honest and fair and that they will show up for us and have our back in a consistent manner on racial equity issues that matter. (Plummer, 2020, The Social Trust Project Listening Circles)”

Social trust, as both an emotion and as a choice, is grounded in an individual’s historical context and personal agency. As an emotion it is embedded in vulnerability and cultural humility. As a choice, it assumes intentionality, commitment, and willingness to challenge systems that prevent or limit the rights, access, and the success of women of all races.

The Getting to We Social Trust Poll (n=323) identified eight barriers to achieving social trust between Black and White women:

1. Historical Baggage (slavery, Jim Crow)
2. Current Day Racial Discrimination (wealth gap, healthcare disparities, voting suppression, achievement gap in education, criminal justice system, residential segregation)
3. Stereotypes and Controlling Images in the Media (e.g., Karens and Angry Black Women)
4. Disparate Racial Treatment of Gender Discrimination and Harassment by Men
5. Whiteness that allows White women to choose racial privilege over gender solidarity (i.e., White Privilege)
6. Family Socialization Process especially when socioeconomic class is considered
7. Faith Traditions/Religious Beliefs that promote systemic racism
8. Competition Over Sex/Love/Partners

Of the above, the most significant barriers to trust between Black and White women endorsed by the Listening Circle participants (2021) were the following:

Current Day Racial Discrimination [56.97%],

Whiteness that allows White Women to choose racial privilege over gender solidarity [51.39%], and Stereotypes and Controlling Images in the Media [45.82%].

At our Bridging and Bonding Retreats (2022; 2023), we observed and documented the following connection points that serve as fertile ground for building trust. Each of these connection points is not a standalone action, but when combined with the other actions has the capacity to elicit powerful results: shared social networks, shared values, racial identity resolution process, shared identity, shared experiences, shared goals and shared risks. Each of these connection points are detailed in our thought leadership paper, *Trust as an Emotion and Choice (Thought Leadership Paper #1)*.

In previous papers, the narratives shared during the Listening Circles and Bridging & Bonding Retreat conversations underscored the need for active engagement, self-reflection, and continuous learning. In this paper, we examine the importance of strategic conversations between Black and White women for building social trust, enhancing gender solidarity and taking specific actions for racial and gender equity.

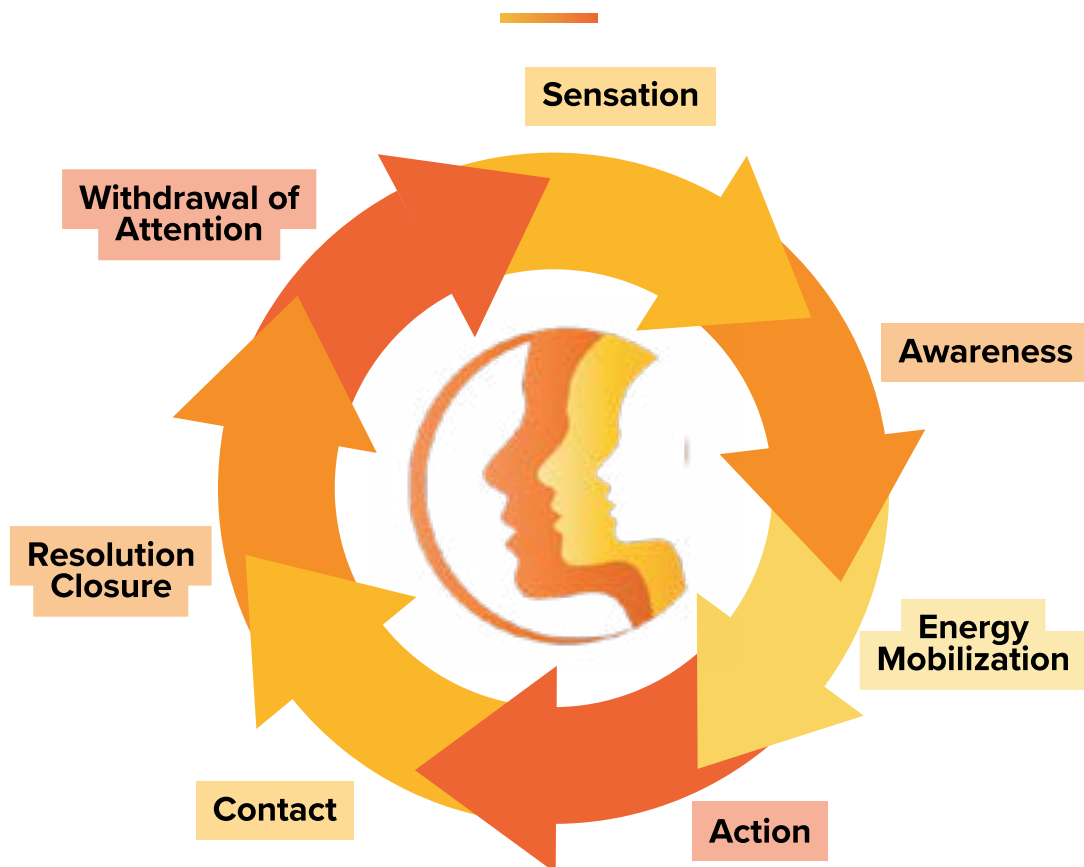
Context

The Bridging, Bonding & Building Women's Social Trust Retreat is an experiential, competency-building experience for women who want to work together to make substantial change in achieving racial equity. These experiences are open to anyone for whom "woman" is a meaningful identifier or experience, including but not limited to cisgender women, gay women, transgender women, and non-binary individuals

The curriculum for the Bridging, Bonding & Building Retreat is designed to be more experiential than the Bridging & Bonding Women's Social Retreat (noted in previous Thought Leadership Papers), focusing on collectively exploring the work necessary to build social trust and enhance gender solidarity to achieve racial equity. The agenda uses the Gestalt Cycle of Experience as the foundation for the work.

Data was gathered from the Bridging, Bonding & Building Women's Social Trust Retreat held April 18-20, 2024, in Cleveland, Ohio. Participants for the retreat were 48 women (24 Black, 22 White; 23 Baby Boomers, 18 Generation X and 6 Millennials; 9 LGBTQ+; Geographic Representation: 35 participants were from Ohio, 9 from California, DC, Georgia, Kansas, Mississippi, Massachusetts, Oregon, South Carolina, Wisconsin and 2 participants from Toronto Canada)

Gestalt Cycle of Experience



A tracking map for how to heighten awareness and mobilize energy to meet a need and achieve satisfactory results

Gestalt Cycle of Experience

The Gestalt Cycle of Experience is a model that describes a process of ongoing engagement between individuals and their environments. The cycle has many and varied beginning, middle and end points. The basic model tracks a path which starts with an individual (or a group of individuals) noticing a **sensation** which then prompts a more focused **awareness**. The heightened awareness is followed by the experience of **energy mobilization**, and a desire to take **actions** that make meaningful **contact** (or connection) with the environment. The cycle concludes with a felt sense of satisfaction that something has changed, and **resolution** makes way for **withdrawal** to happen and the next cycle to begin.

Applied to the Bridging, Bonding and Building Women's Social Trust Retreat, there was a planned and intentional agenda using some of the following language to mirror the cycle of experience through the three- day gathering.

- DEIB Edutainment using the transformative nature of theater arts for jump starting **sensation** and **awareness**.
- Naming hopes and concerns for **mobilization of energy**.
- The importance of psychological and emotional safety as a prelude to and support for meaningful **contact or connections**.
- Unpacking the conversations we are not having and the actions we need to take.
- Using collective wisdom/intelligence/experience for **meaningful contact**.
- The “mirror exercise” for **enhanced contact and resolution**.
- “Words create worlds” book give-away and “bracelets as symbols” for **withdrawal** from the retreat and transition to next actions and contacts post retreat.

Furthermore, the agenda was comprised of seven activities designed to align with the Cycle of Experience and provide space for meaningful conversation and relationship building.

1. Cycle of Experience Lecturette
2. DEIB Edutainment Play *Beauty Shop*
3. Spoken Word of “Untitled Poem” and Discussion on Psychological Safety
4. Hopes and Concerns Exercise in Racial Groups
5. Viewing Trust in Black and White Documentary
6. Equity Briefing Action Planning Exercise
7. Closing Mirror Exercise

The agenda established the necessary groundwork for moving from conversation to action both during the retreat as well as in places where they live, work, serve, worship, and socialize.

Action-Centered Relationship Building

The Bridging & Bonding Women's Social Trust experiences are designed for active engagement, self-reflection, and continuous learning. The experience allowed women to interact across levels of human systems—

- Interpersonal level with time for individual reflection and journaling,
- Interpersonal level with interaction across women and across racial groups,
- Group level: tapping into their shared identity as women
- Organizational level: leaning into the mission of Getting To We, understanding our shared core identity as humans and relating to each other without fear
- Societal level: using the collective knowledge of the women present to surface trends to know, skills to practice, and actions to take for racial equity

Although the exercise was designed to focus on a specific level of human system, interactions across these levels were not a static or flat process that was unique and specific to each level. Rather, the levels of human systems as a dynamic and integrated process were brought to light in the experience of women forming new relationships across racial lines, deepening those that were present, and forming a commitment that “this was not goodbye” at the end of the retreat.

From Conversation to Action

In breaking down systemic racism while enhancing gender solidarity, Getting To We uses a breadth and depth strategy as part of the Women's Social Trust Movement. This means that we encourage everyone to know specific trends, have skills to practice, and know what actions to take in association with each of six areas of systemic racism: *healthcare disparities, education achievement gap, residential segregation, voter suppression, criminal justice reform, and economic exclusion.*

Through an Equity Briefing Action Planning activity, we encouraged the women to go deep in the area where they had interest, passion, and commitment. In these self-directed groups, participants completed an Equity Briefing Worksheet naming specific trends to know, skills to practice and actions to take in six of the areas where systemic racism is present.

Equity Briefing Raw Data for Six Areas of Systemic Racism

Health Care Disparities

Trends to know:

- Uneven access
- Mental health
- Racial gap
- Lack of providers for POC
- Lack of providers of color
- Eurocentric training
- Lack of trust
- Racial disparities in healthcare outcomes
- Virtual healthcare
- Economic disparities
- Possible issues with internet access and the quality of internet

Skills to practice:

- Advocacy for self & others
- Communication from front office up to providers
- Technical know how
- Cultural competence
- Cultural humility (my way is not the only way)

Actions to take:

- Community Engagement
- Advocacy
- Patient navigators/patient liaisons
- Education
- Insurance advocate
- Call patient/family in not out
- We trust that we will grow and deepen our circle of influence by providing healthcare
- Advocacy, conversation and coaching both personally and professionally.

FROM CONVERSATION TO ACTION

Education Achievement Gap

Trends to Know:

- Word gap - children in suburban schools learn 1.8M more words
- Lack in college/work readiness in x environment or globally
- Lack of resources—equity of access
- Disproportionate discipline reports of students of color (aka the discipline gap)
- Students in urban schools delayed exposure to math Urban-Algebra 1, 9th grade;
- Suburban Algebra 1, 5th grade
- At collegiate level, the blame is placed on students
- School funding inequity
- Great educators leaving education
- Proficiency trends school

Actions to Take:

- Educate parents—educational/school participation, voting, school boards
- Join Committees
- Employer voice
- Parent Parties
- Educate community on local government
- Design solutions together on agreed goals
- Elect former educators and parents to school board
- Find a personal connection to action
- Pay equity
- Ask teachers what they need
- HR Resource - volunteer days= substitutes
- Build education partners with business programming

Skills to Practice:

- Making time to read with kids
- Reading school board report cards/minutes
- Awareness of community—what is being voted on? Where can I get involved?
- Modeling engagement/showing up
- Ask about barriers - students, teachers, admin, parents
- Demand answers

Residential Segregation

Trends to Know:

- Redlining
- Zoning/planning→white flight
- Lending
- Historical implications→Sundown towns
- School funding
- Access to healthcare
- Transportation
- Food deserts
- Social segregation
- Environmental pollution
- Tree canopies

FROM CONVERSATION TO ACTION

Skills to Practice:

- Education
- Voter education
- Speaking up and speaking out
- Financial literacy

Actions to Take:

- Sense of community, unity, pride
- Education
- Civic Engagement
- Voting/political involvement
- Speaking up and speaking out

Voter Suppression

Trends to Know:

- Lack of voter turnout
- Apathy
- Hours polls are open—restricted polling places and times
- No day off for election, times limited
- Postage not paid for absentee ballots
- Specific forms of ID needed—available, confusing
- Gerrymandering—allows all of the above to happen
- Location of polls
- Early voting times curtailed
- Same day voter registration
- Restriction to give water or food to those waiting to vote
- Intimidation of poll workers
- Lack of attention to key roles in government that impact voting—secretary of state
- Invisible role and very important

Skills to Practice/Actions to Take

- Nonviolent contact skills
- How to stay engaged with those of different perspectives and ask questions to open space
- Read history. Be aware of sources and authors of that history
- Prepare yourself with brief, informed responses
- Meet people where they are at, see what is important to them, find ways to relate to people
- Focus on physical act to get people to the polls to vote—often register but don't vote
- Retail politics—person-to-person contact, volunteer to drive, wear a button-remind 3 friends to vote; have materials with you. Know about the process to vote, absentee, dates, etc.
- Recognize self as an agent of change
- Connect yourself to the League of Women Voters
- Sign & Share Petition re: Gerrymandering in Ohio
- Encourage vote in local, state elections. They vote on systems that impact
- Gerrymandering
- Connect with DART Justice Ministries and other organizations relevant to voter justice and social justice
- Don't let your baggage stop you from participating
- Postcard personalized campaigns, house to house, share petitions
- One page "cheat sheet" for clear, crisp response to issues
- Call your city council person to ask what they are doing for voter turnout→Actions → strategies

Criminal Justice Reform

Trends to Know:

- Over policing in Black and Brown communities (racial profiling)
- Confusing someone in a mental health crisis as being a criminal risk
- Not adequate help for mental health/mental illness prisoners
- More prisons are being built
- Overwhelming disproportionate number of Blacks in prison as compared to overall U.S. population
- Inhumane living conditions and people dying in prisons
- Black men wrongfully accused—tried as adults for crimes they didn't commit
- Financial disparities - total U.S. government on public prisons and jails: \$80.7 Billion as compared to private prisons and jails: \$3.9 Billion

Skills to Practice:

- Restorative Justice & Healing
- Address their needs and reduce the risks that can lead to violations and reimprisonment
- Storytelling—language matters (don't say ex-felon; say "system impacted person")

Actions to Take:

- Co-Responder Model—Social worker/community activist alongside the police. All calls are not true police emergencies (King County in Seattle WA)
- Training and Education—Cultural sensitivity (law enforcement and public officials)
- Pathways for those system impacted to earn a living
- More equity in the services that prisons receive
- Diversion programs—psychological evaluations vs straight to jail
- Support grass roots organizations that focus on rehabilitation
- More intense engagement between community members of all ages and local law enforcement
- KPSF—paid mental health program and awards banquets for excellence and service

Economic Inclusion

Trends to Know:

- Red Lining
- Food Deserts
- Predatory Lending – White Flight – White Buying Power
- Use of Zoning
- Low-income housing - Educational Disparities
- Health disparities
- Social disparities
- Lack of access to capital
- The overpopulation of minorities within the prison system
- Microaggressions – constantly happening; psychological impacts of the aggressor and the oppressed
- Intersectionality – the impact of existing within multiple marginalized groups
- The attack on DEI professions, education, and altering history to "soften the blow"

FROM CONVERSATION TO ACTION

- Attitudes toward money varies depending on the cultural context.
- The role of family in making financial decisions varies from culture to culture.
- The relationships of individuals within their community can also differ substantially from one demographic group to another.
- Different cultures and cultural groups can have diverse traditions and values about money.
- Attitudes toward financial institutions, including levels of trust, can vary among different demographic groups.
- Differences in religious beliefs can also affect an individual's use of money, management of financial matters, and financial decisions.
- Lack of generational wealth creates a poverty mindset that one will never have enough money and there are limited opportunities for climbing the economic ladder
- The 400 richest Americans, according to the Forbes rankings, have as much combined wealth as the poorest 64% of American households
- Only 7 of the U.S. 630 billionaires are Black. All are self-made and none had inherited wealth. Only one made his money in the capital market. Black individuals are heavily in the labor market.
- When compared to 24 middle-income and high-income countries, the U.S. ranks 16th in the amount of intergenerational earnings mobility.
- There are significant racial and gender differences in mobility that exacerbate racial differences in other areas such as housing, education, and health.

Skills to Practice

- Being active in the community, knowing what is impacting the community around you
- Intentionality behind educating ourselves
- Speak up and Speak out – also an actionable item but takes practice. Not everyone is ready to command a room.
- Using our platforms to create change – professionally, as leaders, as parents, as community members, etc. – each one teach one
- Climbing the economic ladder:
 - Financial Education
 - Insured Deposits
 - Manage Consumer Credit
 - Manage Mortgage Credit
 - Small Business Creation and Support small businesses

Actions To Take

- Speak up and Speak out – strength in numbers be a voice – no longer being that “safe black friend”
- Attend council and community meetings, again you can't change what you don't know
- Stay current on world events
- Seek educational and growth opportunities (i.e. Getting to We)¹⁶
- READ, READ, READ
- Policy remedies for persistently low intergenerational economic mobility include:
 - more equitable housing and educational opportunities,
 - better income security and wealth accumulation,
 - investments to improve school quality, lower crime, and encourage private-sector amenities to improve infrastructure in the poorest neighborhoods.

Equity Briefing Action Planning Analysis

We analyzed the data from the Equity Briefing Action Planning worksheets using the lens of the *Me to We Mindset* and *Me to We Skillset* framework (Plummer, 2025, [DEI is Not Dead...But Needs a Renewal](#)).

A Me to We Mindset is the belief that as fellow human beings we are inextricably linked. Because of our common humanity, we have an obligation to treat everyone with dignity and respect and share the planet's resources in the wisest, inclusive, and most effective manner toward the benefit of all.

A Me to We Mindset embraces multicultural thinking and living patterns characterized by:

- where one chooses to live,
- who one buys services from,
- who one votes for and what one votes for,
- what organizations are supported and promoted,
- who is within one's circle of influence,
- who one receives information from
- who and what one chooses to believe.

Me to We Skills Sets include:

- holding multiple realities, identities, and perspectives
- using social privilege for mutual benefit
- connecting intention and impact
- moving from certainty to curiosity
- and for leaders—making quality decisions in the midst of diversity tensions.

An analysis of the worksheet data using the Me to We framework identified the following overarching or meta-themes across the six areas of system racism.

Me to We Mindsets

- 1. Making Conscious Choices to Build Community**
 - Deliberately choosing where to live, who to vote for, and what businesses to support based on equity values
 - Expanding one's circle of influence to include diverse perspectives and experiences
- 2. Ensuring Information Diversity and Thoughtful Discernment of Information**
 - Seeking and valuing information from varied and historically marginalized sources
 - Critically evaluating dominant narratives and diversifying information inputs
- 3. Fostering Collective Investment in Systems Change**
 - Supporting organizations working toward systemic equity
 - Viewing personal choices as connected to broader community outcomes
 - Shifting from individual solutions to collective responsibility
- 4. Trusting the Positive Potential of the Collective**
 - Believing in the possibility of transformed systems
 - Seeing diversity as a strength rather than a threat

Me to We Skill Sets

- 1. Integrating Multiple Realities**
 - Holding multiple, sometimes contradictory realities
 - Moving from rigid certainty to generative curiosity
 - Valuing diverse lived experiences as valid knowledge
- 2. Leveraging Privilege for Mutual Benefit**
 - Using one's advantages to create more equitable access and opportunities
 - Recognizing interdependence rather than competition for resources
- 3. Seeing and Managing both Intention and Impact**
 - Understanding how actions affect systemic outcomes
 - Focusing on results rather than intentions alone
 - Linking personal choices to broader social impacts
- 4. Navigating Complexity**
 - Making decisions amid competing tensions and diverse needs
 - Moving beyond binary thinking to embrace nuance
 - Balancing immediate and long-term considerations

More specifically, we noted the following themes for mindset and skill set per each of the six areas of systemic racism. At this level of detail, these themes reflect a shift from individualistic ("Me") thinking to collective ("We") approaches that value interconnectedness and promote equity through both mindset changes and skill development.

Me to We Mindset Themes:

Me to We Skillset Themes:

HEALTH CARE DISPARITIES

- Expanding circle of influence through healthcare provision
- Trusting in collective growth through shared healthcare experiences
- Choosing to receive information from diverse healthcare perspectives
- Supporting healthcare organizations that serve marginalized communities
- Holding multiple cultural perspectives (cultural humility)
- Moving from certainty to curiosity about different healthcare approaches
- Connecting intention and impact in healthcare communication
- Using privilege to advocate for equitable healthcare access

EDUCATION ACHIEVEMENT GAP

- Choosing to live in and support integrated educational communities
- Expanding who one receives educational information from
- Supporting educational organizations that promote equity
- Voting for candidates/policies that address achievement gaps
- Using social privilege for mutual benefit through volunteerism
- Connecting intention and impact in educational interventions
- Holding multiple perspectives on educational needs and solutions
- Making quality decisions amid educational diversity tensions

RESIDENTIAL SEGREGATION

- Consciously choosing where to live based on integration values
- Building community unity across racial lines
- Voting for politicians/policies that address housing inequity
- Expanding one's circle of influence beyond segregated communities
- Using privilege to advocate for equitable housing practices
- Holding multiple perspectives on community development
- Moving from certainty to curiosity about diverse neighborhoods
- Connecting financial literacy to community investment

VOTER SUPPRESSION

- Choosing to vote for candidates who support voting rights
- Supporting organizations promoting voter access
- Expanding one's circle of influence through political engagement
- Receiving voting information from diverse sources
- Holding multiple political perspectives while seeking common ground
- Using privilege to remove voting barriers for others
- Moving from certainty to curiosity in political conversations
- Connecting intention with impact in voter outreach

Me to We Mindset Themes:

Me to We Skillset Themes:

CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORM

- Supporting organizations focused on restorative justice
- Choosing to believe in rehabilitation rather than punishment
- Expanding circle of influence to include system-impacted individuals
- Voting for candidates/policies promoting justice reform
- Holding multiple perspectives on justice and community safety
- Using privilege to create pathways for system-impacted people
- Connecting language choices with impact on perceptions
- Moving from certainty to curiosity about alternatives to incarceration

ECONOMIC INCLUSION

- Choosing to support diverse businesses
- Expanding one's circle of influence through community involvement
- Advocating for equitable economic policies
- Believing in collective economic empowerment
- Holding multiple perspectives on economic barriers and opportunities
- Using privilege for mutual wealth-building
- Connecting educational and financial systems to impact
- Moving from certainty to curiosity about different economic experiences

We also noted the following themes for mindset and skill set per each of the six areas of system racism.

Me to We Mindset:

Me to We Skillset:

HEALTH CARE DISPARITIES

- Cultural humility (my way is only one way... there are many ways)
- Trust in collective healthcare impact
- Recognition of systemic barriers
- Valuing diverse healthcare experiences
- Self and community advocacy
- Cross-cultural communication
- Technical system navigation
- Relationship building with providers
- Patient education and empowerment

EDUCATION ACHIEVEMENT GAP

- Collective responsibility for education
- Community-centered thinking
- Valuing multiple stakeholder perspectives
- Business-education interconnection
- Partnership building
- Civic engagement and participation
- Barrier identification and addressing
- Resource advocacy and allocation
- Collaborative problem-solving

Me to We Mindset:

Me to We Skillset:

RESIDENTIAL SEGREGATION

- Community unity and shared responsibility
- Recognition of systemic housing patterns
- Valuing neighborhood diversity
- Moving from individual to collective housing concerns
- Voter education and mobilization
- Advocacy and voice development
- Financial literacy
- Community organizing

VOTER SUPPRESSION

- Seeing oneself as an agent of change
- Embracing different perspectives
- Recognizing voting as collective responsibility
- Historical awareness
- Nonviolent communication
- Engaging across differences
- Practical voting support
- Strategic activism
- Resource sharing

CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORM

- Restorative rather than punitive thinking
- Person-first perspective
- Community-based solutions
- System transformation perspective
- Narrative change and language skills
- Needs assessment and support
- Cross-sector collaboration
- Community-police relationship building

ECONOMIC INCLUSION

- Community awareness and connection
- Collective economic responsibility
- Recognizing systemic barriers to mobility
- Valuing diverse economic experiences
- Financial education and literacy
- Advocacy and voice development
- Community engagement and participation
- Resource education and access
- Strategic policy change

Collectively, these meta themes represent a shift from individualistic, insular, siloed thinking to a more interconnected, systemic understanding of social issues and solutions.

This shift was also evident in the energy that was present in the room as the women worked together on this exercise. Each group was actively engaged while completing the worksheet and attentively listening while presentations were being made. Eighty percent (80%) of participants ranked the Equity Briefing Action Planning as the activity where their learning was most enhanced with second ranking of DEIB Edutainment™ Play, Beauty Shop, as second. Seventy percent (70%) suggested the Equity Briefing Action Planning activity allowed participants to mark the path of the Cycle of Experience leading to increased learning, meaningful engagement and increased satisfaction.

Summary

The importance of strategic conversations between Black and White women for building social trust and enhancing gender solidarity through the Bridging, Bonding & Building Retreat was evidenced in the Impact Evaluation given one month after the experience. Participants reported an increased level of trust between Black and White women from prior to after the experience (23% increase).

There were seven activities that were part of the agenda that supported the Cycle of Experience and provided space for meaningful conversation and relationship building. Participants reported favorably (at or >50%) on each of the agenda items for contributing to their learning and relationship building.

1. Cycle of Experience Explanation (55%)
2. DEIB Edutainment Play Beauty Shop (68%)
3. Spoken Word of “Untitled Poem” and Discussion on Psychological Safety (55%)
4. Hopes and Concerns Exercise in Racial Groups (59%)
5. Viewing Trust in Black and White Documentary (63%)
6. Equity Briefing Action Planning Exercise (82%)
7. Closing Mirror Exercise (50%)

Participants reported that as a result of the experience they were thinking more about how race and gender impacted their daily lives, having more enlightened, forward-moving conversations about race with others, listening more in conversations about race without being defensive or accusatory and taking specific actions for racial and gender equity recommended by the group during the retreat.

Ninety (90%) of participants reported they would recommend the experience to other women.

Conclusion

Defined as both an emotion and a choice, social trust was explored through the emotional connections and disconnections between the Black and White women during the Bridging, Bonding & Building Retreat.

Moving together through the Gestalt Cycle of Experience we were able to challenge assumptions, broaden worldviews, and inspire each other to continue to enhance gender solidarity in order to achieve racial and gender equity.

Through this experience we were able to get a deeper understanding of the long-festering tensions and absorb diverse perspectives along the way. By turning conversation into action, we not only experienced the vulnerabilities and resiliencies of both Black and White women, but made progress toward enhancing gender solidarity and racial equity.

About Getting To We

Getting to We (GTW) is a non-profit organization that uses the transformative nature of the arts (theater, film, dance, comedy, literary, visual) to help people understand their shared, core identity as humans and relate to each other without fear. Ultimately, we want a world where minds are open and human interaction is about making ourselves and each other better friends, families, neighbors, co-workers, and citizens – better humans.

Our Thought Leadership Papers serve to incubate new ideas for building social trust as the bedrock of a healthy society and a foundational aspect for achieving equity.



We are grateful for our donors who help to fund this research. Please direct questions or comments on Getting To We Thought Leadership Papers to the lead author, Debbie@Gettingtowe.org. As an open access paper, it can be found, along with other valuable resources, on Getting to We's website: <https://gettingtowe.org/resources/>

