



# Let's Get Real About Developing Equitable Solutions to Address Homelessness

# REAL

RACIAL EQUITY ACTION LAB

September 27, 2023



# A little about me..



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# Primary Objective

This session focuses on addressing the growing racial and social disparities in the homelessness system by sharing some practical tools participants can utilize to create more equitable policies, practices, and partnerships that move the needle in ending homelessness.



# Why do we need to focus on Racial & Social Equity???



# Indiana BoS Data

- Black households make up approximately 25% of the population experiencing homelessness, but only 10% of the general population across the state of Indiana
- Households identified as American Indian, Alaska Native, or Indigenous AND Hispanic have the longest length of time homeless at 181 days
- Adult only households age 55+ have highest length of time homeless at 152 days
- Families with 3 or more children have second highest length of time homeless at 138 days
- LGBTQ2S+ Youth tend to be overrepresented in homelessness
- Individuals living with mental health and substance use disorders are also overrepresented



**What can we do about  
this crisis?**



**1. Share Power, Decisions, & Solution Making w/  
Communities Most Impacted**

***Tool: Equity-Centered Community Design***

**2. Identify & Address the Persistent Drivers of Inequity**

***Tool: Power Analysis***

**3. Transform Your CoC into a Movement**

***Tools: Systems Alignment & Coalition Building***



# **Equity Centered Community Design (ECCD) for Racial and Social Justice**



# Components of Equity Centered Community Design



## Always start with

1. Inviting Diverse Co-Creators
2. Identify the Grand Challenge
3. Understand History & Healing
4. Conduct Power Analysis & Liberated Gatekeeping
5. Building Empathy

## Then Incorporate

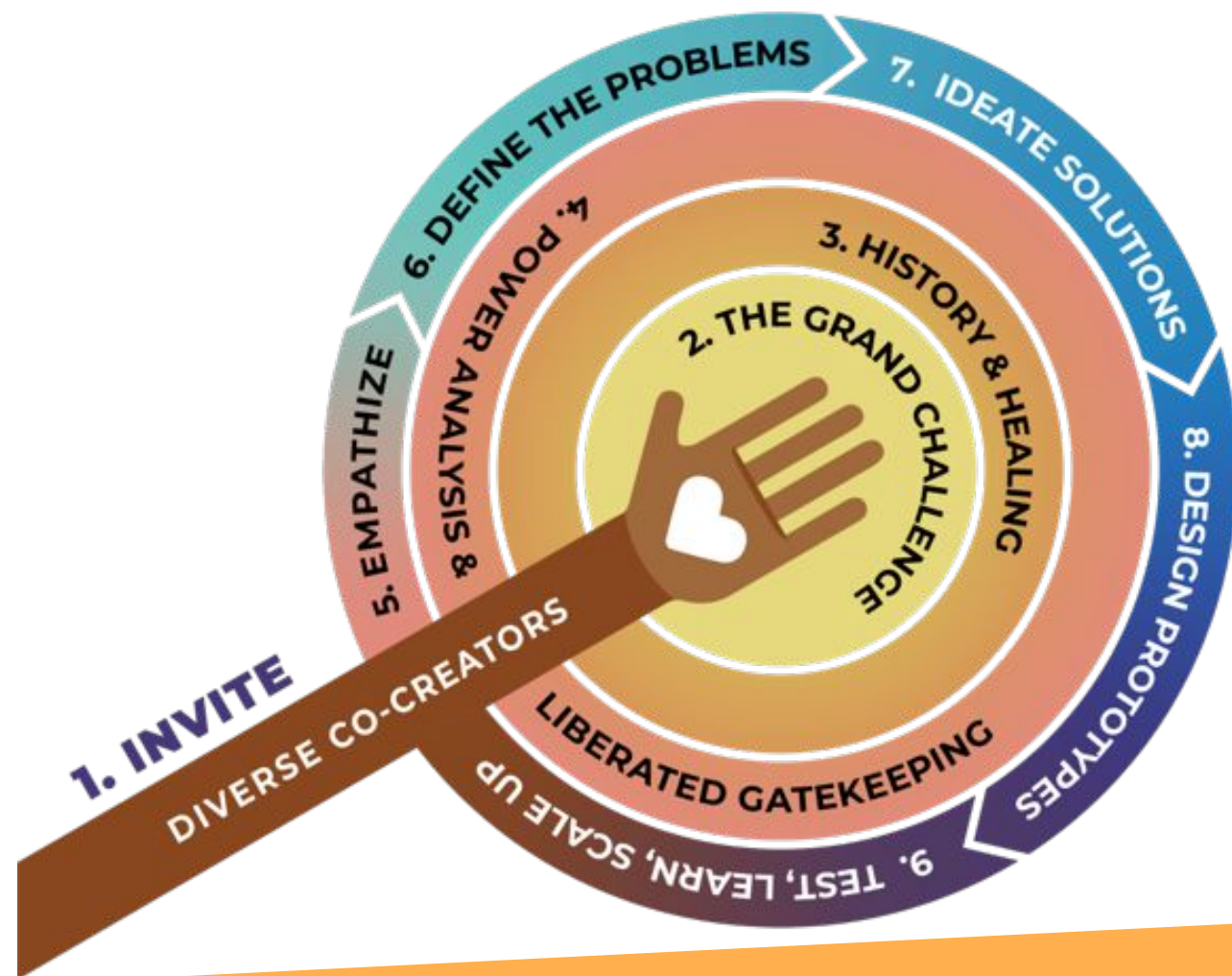
1. Define the Problem
2. Ideate Solutions
3. Design Prototypes
4. Test, Learn & Scale Up



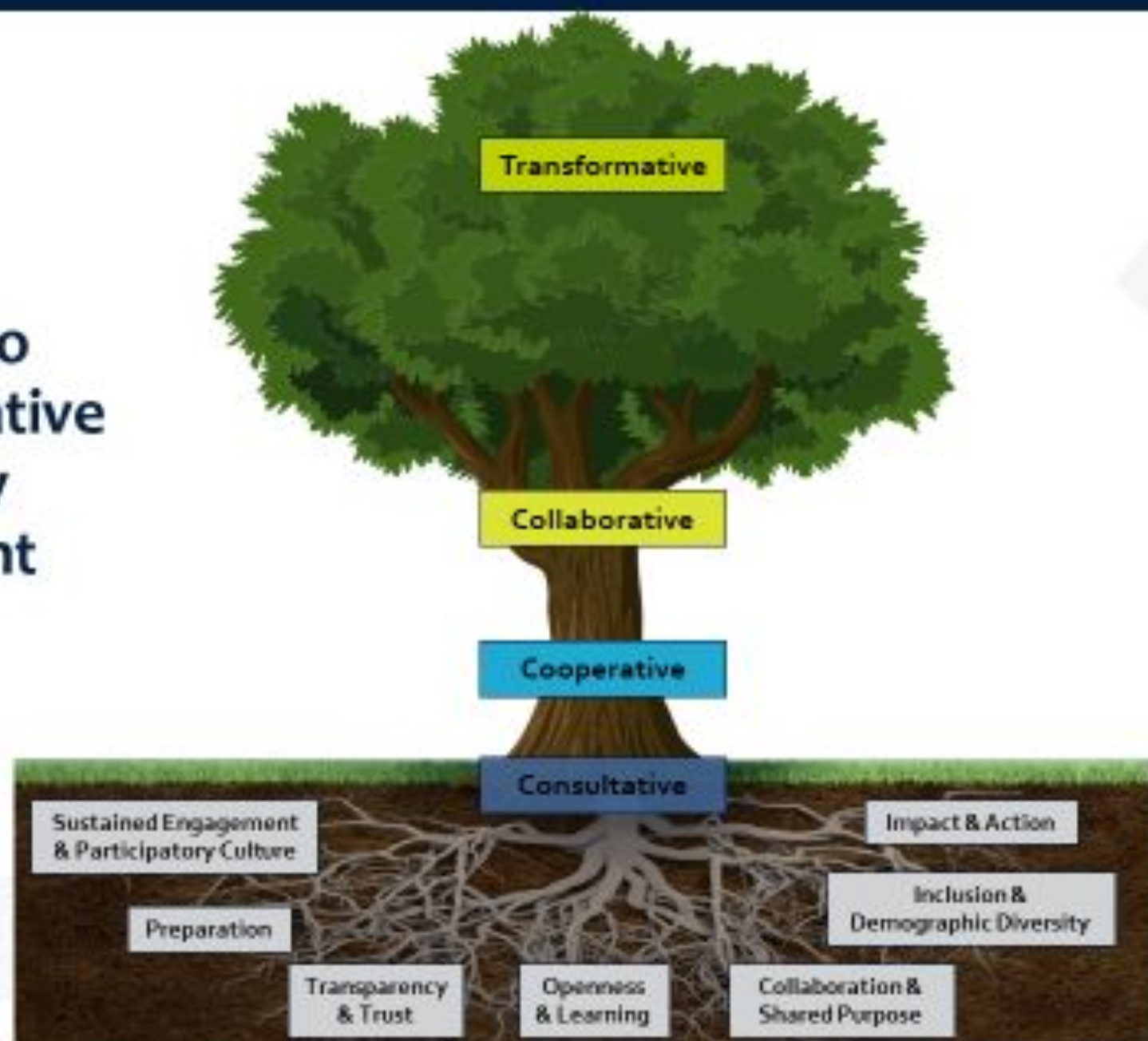
# Equity Community Centered Design

## Inviting Diverse Co-Creators

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## Pathways to Transformative Community Engagement





# Inviting Diverse Co-Creators

## Quick Self Assessment:

- Interrogating power structures, proximity to power, and decision-making
- Ensure equitable compensation is offered to all partners
- Provide technology and other resources to ensure meaningful participation

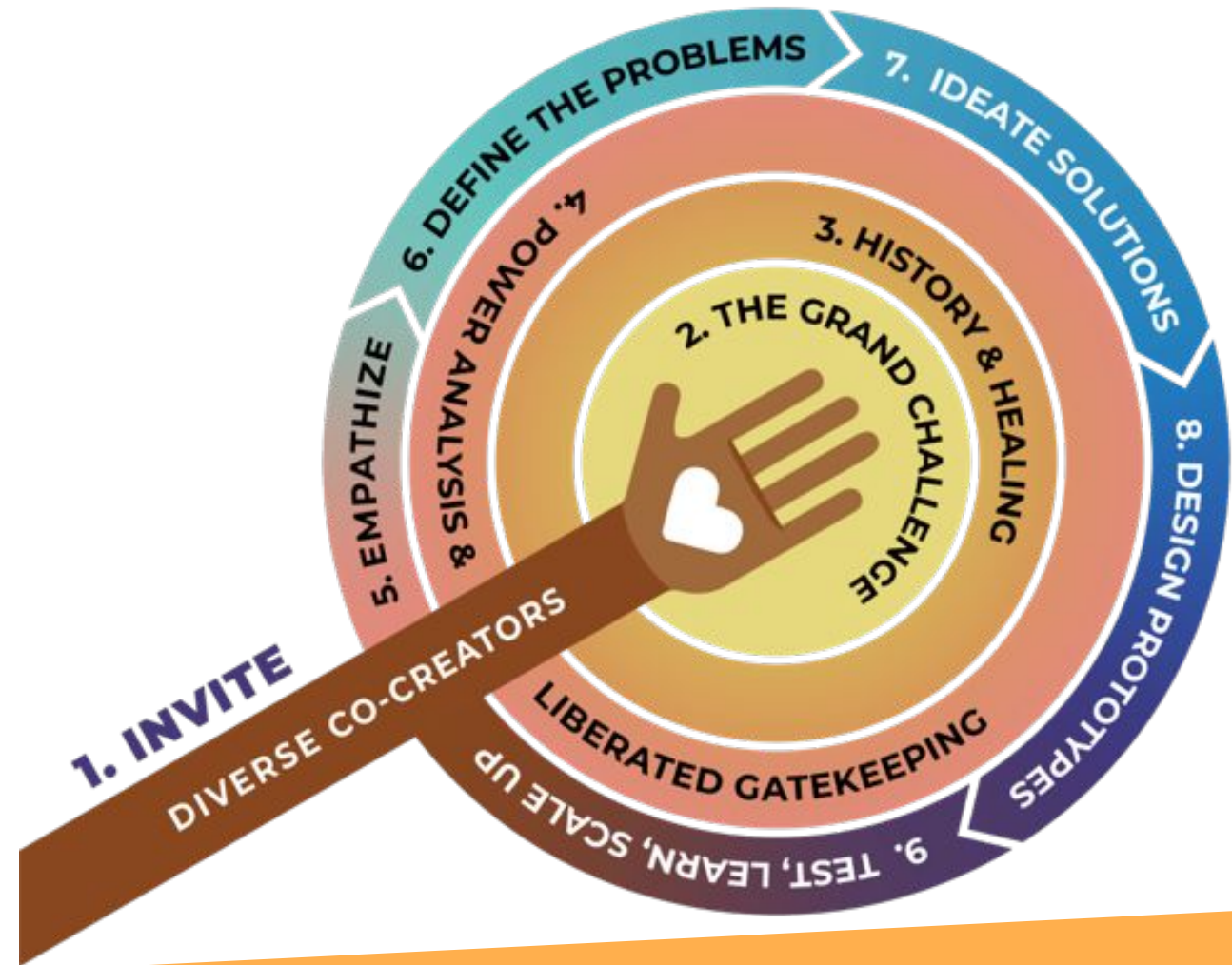




# Equity Community Centered Design

## The Grand Challenge

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# The Grand Challenge

The Grand Challenge is the problem that you are trying to solve to achieve more racially and socially equitable outcomes. It is the reason why you are bringing diverse co-creators together to develop solutions to the existing problem/inequity.

# The Grand Challenge



## Questions for consideration:

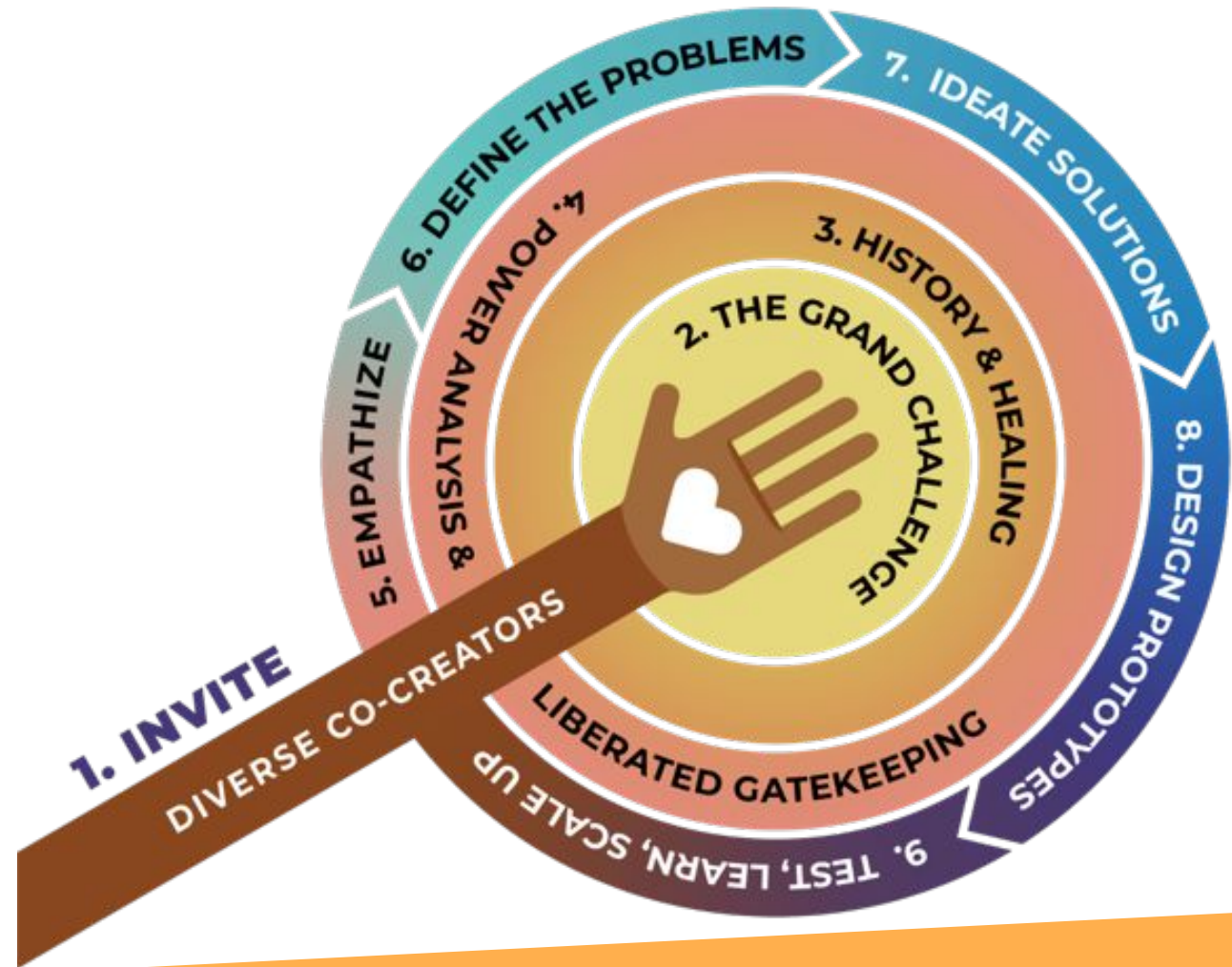
- Did I get input from people who will be impacted by the process or the outcomes on naming this grand challenge? Who else needs to be at the design table?
- Do we currently (or plan to) have the partners, capacity, systems, and processes needed to address this Grand Challenge? If not, how do we get the partners and resources to the table?



# Equity Community Centered Design

## History & Healing

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# History and Healing



## Questions to Consider:

- How have you been harmed and/or benefited from this issue across the generations, particularly through the lens of colonialism and racism intersecting with sexism, cisgenderism, ableism, nationalism, classism, ageism, ableism, christian hegemony, and environmental degradation, etc.?

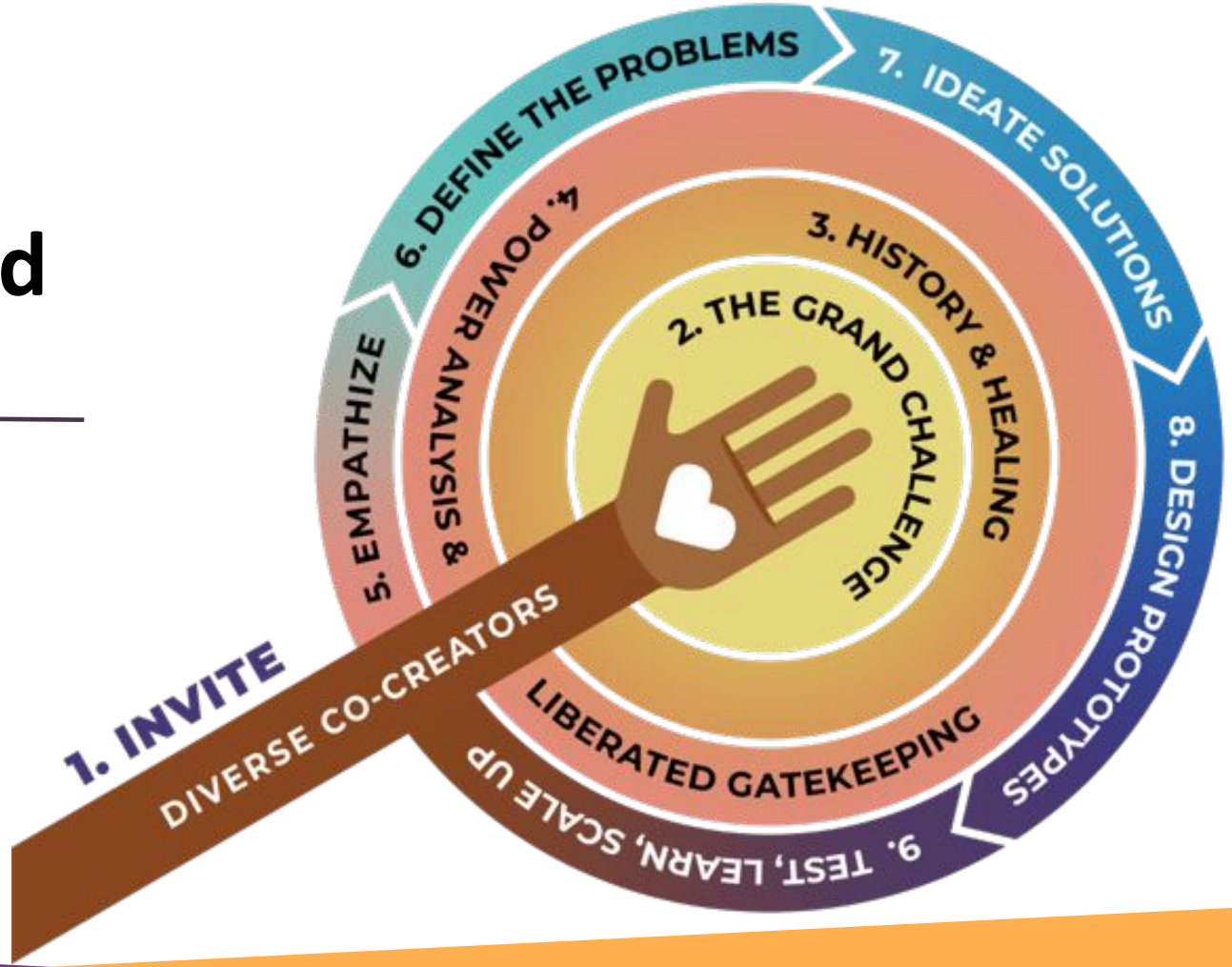




# Equity Community Centered Design

## Power Analysis & Liberated Gatekeeping

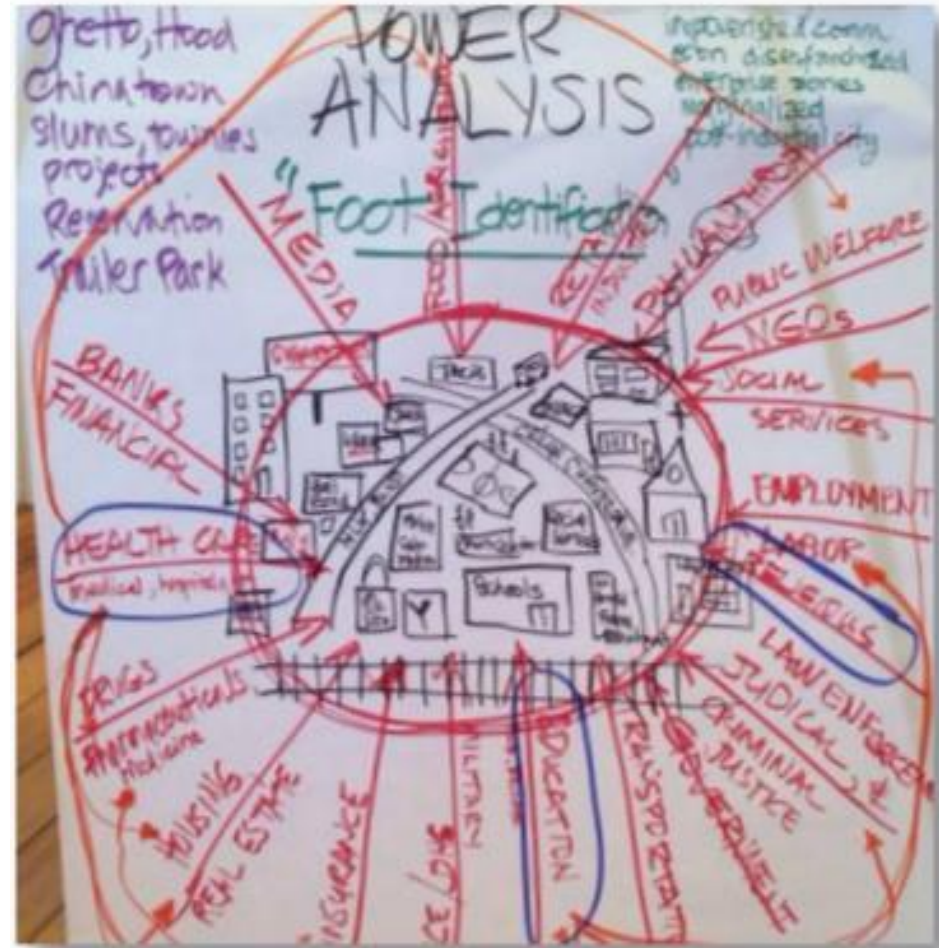
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# Practice Lab 4: Power Analysis

Adapted from [The People's Institute for Survival and Beyond](#)





# Power Analysis

**“Poor people, Black people, Brown people, Indigenous people – they don’t need programming, they need their power back.”**

*-Ron Chisom, People’s Institute for Survival & Beyond*

**“The power of the oppressed is the only power that can liberate both oppressed and oppressor.”**

*– Paulo Freire, Pedagogy of the Oppressed*



# Analyzing Power

Analyzing Power helps us to understand why so many Black people, Indigenous people, Latine people, people living with disabilities, Veterans, the working poor of all races, and LGBTQ2S+ youth are experiencing racial and social inequities.

To do this, we must examine ways that various institutions are acting as a foot of oppression instead of truly working to eliminate disparities. This also allows us to “shift from using a needs analysis or “victim analysis” to a power analysis.

A key part of work is to restore power to communities that have been historically and systematically disempowered.



# Steps to Analyzing Power

1. Identify our target population (*what are the biases, social norms, and assumptions we hold?*)
2. Map out the institutions (systemic level) that are charged and/or funded to address this issue or CONTRIBUTING to this issue
3. Unpack Institutional Oppression - in what ways are these institutions acting as a foot of oppression through policy, programming, processes, funding, etc.?



# Interrogating Our Role as Gatekeepers...

*(Adapted from People's Institute for Survival & Beyond)*



# Gatekeepers

Whether we intend it or not, we serve as agents of social control, holding power over people in poor communities rather than always engaging with communities in ways that restore decision-making power and establish mutual accountability.

Although we intend to be accountable to populations most impacted, we are – in reality – accountable to the institutions that pay us, credential us, evaluate us, and ultimately decide whether to promote or fire us.

In this sense, gatekeepers often find themselves trapped and conflicted. It is through working from an anti-racist frame, embodying anti-oppression values, and being accountable to communities most impacted that we can become **'liberated gatekeepers'** recognizing the power and influence we have to be agents of transformation.





# Ways that Gatekeeping shows up

- Focus on diagnosis – not solution
- Require disclosure of information about one's personal life for service access
- Dominant culture forces their values on people who do not share them ( e.g., requirements for foster parents or kinship care providers to have certain size bedrooms available).
- Receive funding in the name of communities without involving them in the needs assessment, planning, decision-making, and implementation processes
- Setting hours, locations, and procedures that are convenient for employees and not convenient for clients
- Being disrespectful or setting a low bar for service quality, based on a view that clients are 'lucky' to be receiving any services at all, especially if they are offered for free or at a reduced cost



# Additional Ways that Gatekeeping shows up

- Not involving people with lived expertise as an equal partner throughout all phases of the work
- Disconnection between our role and our liberated gatekeeping potential
- Not engaging in open sharing about professional mistakes and harm we and our organizations have caused with a focus on amends and changed action moving forward
- Being mostly performative about racial equity by not committing to actions that will move money, share power, and lead to concrete solutions that advance racial equity and social justice



# Ways that Covert Gatekeeping and “Nice Racism” show up in the workplace

- Talking over and silencing Black, Indigenous, People of Color, and ethnicity Latinx/a/o in meetings
- Ignoring or taking credit for their ideas Leaving them out of the information loop Off-loading all diversity work to them
- Double standards in what emotions can be expressed and by whom



# **Transform Your CoC into a Powerful Movement through Authentic Community Engagement**

## The Current Community Engagement Landscape



Dominant strategies: community meetings, focus groups, surveys, **tokenizing representation** on planning committees

**Lack of shared decision-making power with PWLE** and lack of engaging communities



**Lack of recognition of the disparate racial impact of current responses** and the fragmentation across systems that make navigating services difficult

## The Pillars of a Reimagined Homelessness Response system



**Strong collaboration** with impacted communities, the health care system, housing, social services, public health, workforce development, carceral-legal system, advocacy groups, faith community, business, philanthropy, etc. (EVERYONE)

**Commitment to TRANSFORMATIVE community engagement and buy-in** that is active and sustained in all redesign efforts.



**Advancement of equity through strategic partnerships** outside of government for support and funding that falls outside of government restrictions.