

# STARTING YOUR ORGANIZATION'S DEI JOURNEY

The Arc of Illinois

June 9, 2023

## WHAT YOU WILL LEARN TODAY

- Obtaining buy in
- Developing an Equity and Inclusion Statement
- Employee Experience
- Leadership Development
- Staff Engagement

## SESSION AGREEMENTS

- Be present
- Ask questions for clarification and understanding
- Speak from your personal experience. Don't assume or generalize
- Be okay with being uncomfortable
- This is a learning environment. Show one another grace
- Additional agreements?

## ACTIVITY #1

What comes to mind when you hear  
Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion?

# DIVERSITY, EQUITY & — INCLUSION —



DIVERSITY  
ASKS

**WHO**  
— IS IN —  
THE ROOM



EQUITY  
ASKS

**WHO IS**  
— TRYING TO —  
GET IN THE ROOM  
BUT CAN'T



INCLUSION  
ASKS

— HAVE —  
EVERYONE'S  
IDEAS BEEN  
**HEARD**



## WHY DEI AT AID?

- Diversity – demographics, abilities, identities, cognitive diversity, experiences
- Equity – identification of barriers and supports needed for access
- Inclusion – climate of belongingness, value, respect

## PROCESS

- Cultural Competency Diversity Committee
- Leader focused on DEI
- Engaged DEI Consultant
- Employee Experience Survey

# EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCE SURVEY

What did the data tell us?



## WHAT DID WE ASK STAFF?

I feel like I belong at AID

Have you experienced a situation where a co-worker or client offended you?

Do you feel confident taking situations to your supervisor without fear of retaliation?

Does AID provide adequate training on managing issues which are sensitive in nature?

Is there a need for training on communicating with co-workers from diverse backgrounds and experiences?

Have you experienced microaggressions at work?

## RESPONSES

- I would like to see more trainings and engagement opportunities offered to improve cultural understanding
- We need more training in communicating with co-workers from diverse backgrounds and experience
- Provide training on managing issues which are sensitive in nature (race, culture, identity, etc.)
- I have experienced microaggressions in my workplace
- Perspectives like mine are not valued

- Clients have offended/insulted me based on race, ethnicity and/or culture
- I don't feel confident taking situations related to race/ethnicity/culture to my supervisor and/or leadership.
- I fear retaliation, and/or I don't trust higher management
- I don't feel comfortable in my workplace
- Co-workers have offended/insulted me based on race, ethnicity and/or culture
- Other aspects of my identity based on which I have had a problem in my workplace
  - Gender
  - Age
  - Body size
  - Physical disability Education level
  - Faith

## ACTIVITY #2

How would your Employees answer these questions?

Have you experienced a situation where a co-worker or client offended you?

Do you feel confident taking situations to your supervisor without fear of retaliation?

Have you experienced microaggressions at work?

# GETTING LEADERS ON BOARD

How this led to our Equity  
and Inclusion Statement

Leaders are the key to shaping company culture — and even the culture beyond their walls.

*“How Leaders Shape Company Culture”, Forbes 2019*

## WHAT DID WE ASK LEADERSHIP?

What does equitable and inclusive mean?

What is the state of equity and inclusion within AID?

Why are equity and inclusion important?

Where do we want AID to go regarding equity and inclusion?  
What does success look like?

Suggestions for where AID goes from here in its equity and inclusion journey.

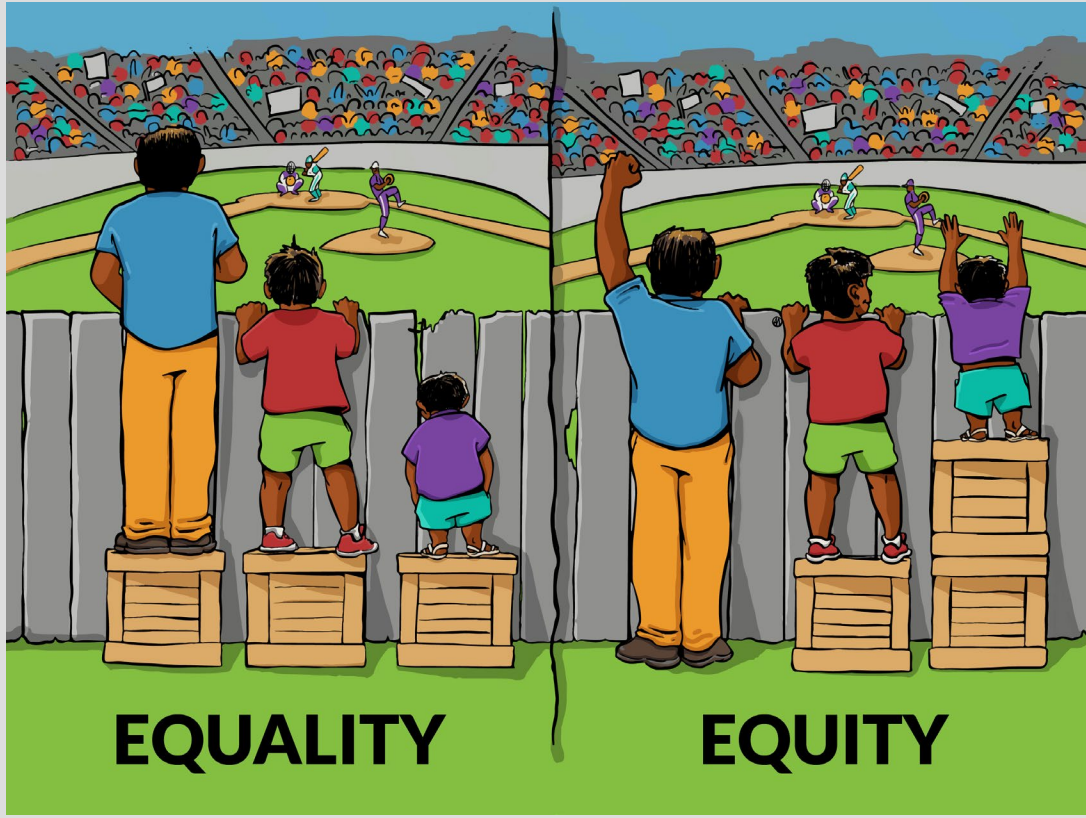
What would be the main elements of an AID equity and inclusion statement?

# RESPONSES

**Equitable: Being fair, which often means not treating everyone equally**

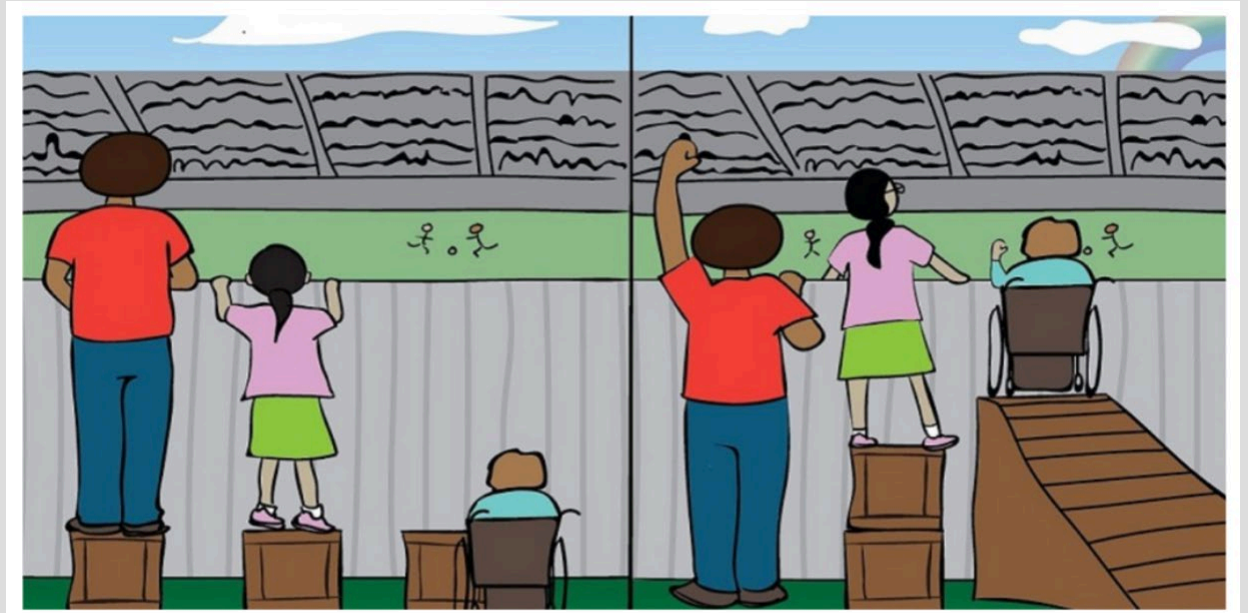
- Providing different avenues and making it work for individuals.
- Going above and beyond, according to individual needs
- Available and accessible for different groups of individuals including LGBTQI+, people of color, undocumented, etc.
- Offering quality service, client-focused services, having quality standard of care
- Recognizing and eliminating barriers to access from a systematic standpoint
- Providing equal access to environment and supports
- Community systems that work for everyone





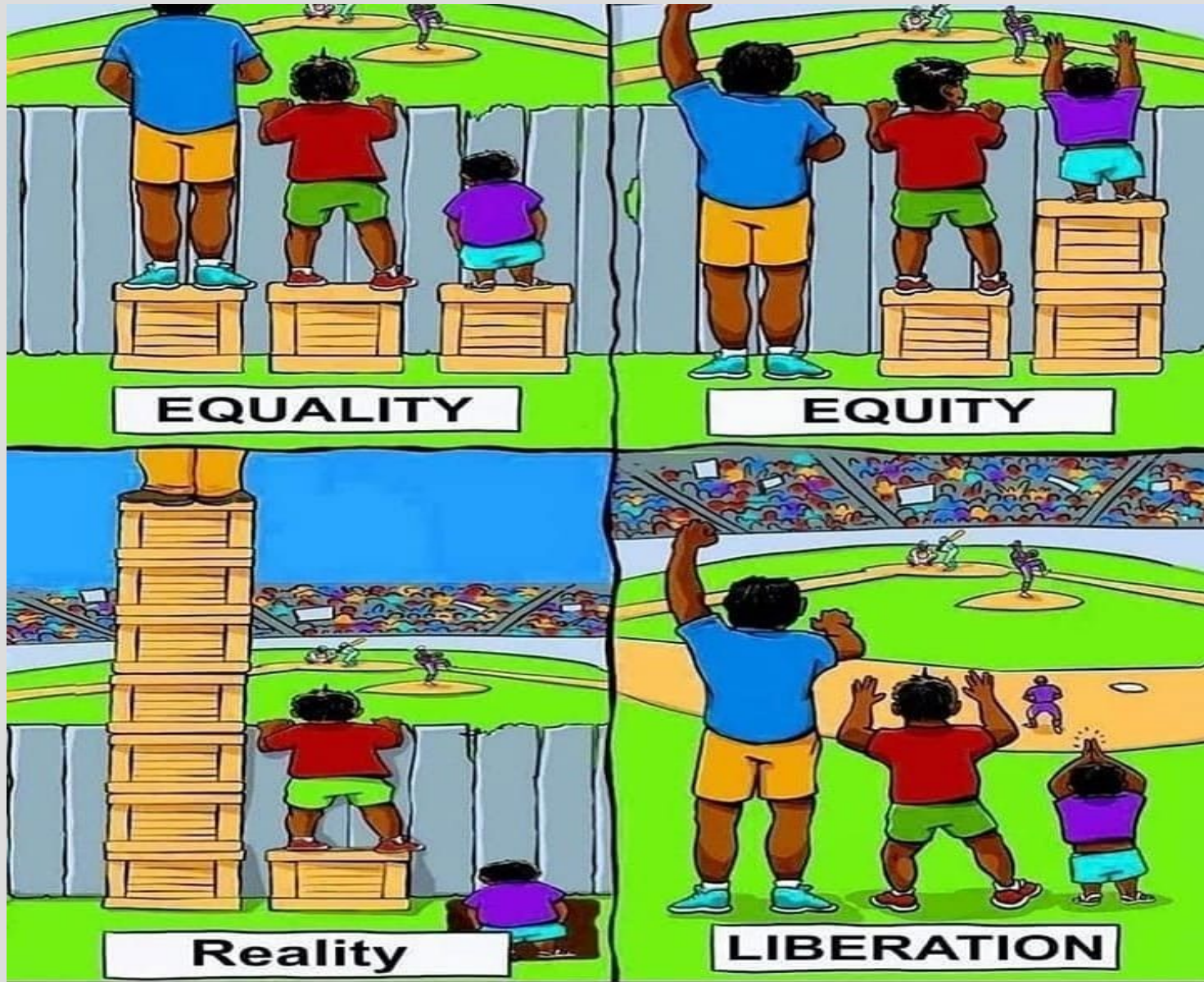
**EQUALITY**

**EQUITY**



**Equality**

**Equity**



# RESPONSES

**Inclusive: treating everyone fairly, giving opportunity for everyone to be involved or included in whatever process is happening.**

- Considered
- Intentionally included
- Made part of the conversation
- Active participation enabled
- Voice is heard
- Valued
- Missed if not there
- Making sure there is room for differences
- Knowing there are more than one way to do something, more than one approach, more than yourself
- Different cultures, etc., represented (clients can see self in staff/volunteer representation)

## WHAT IS THE STATE OF EQUITY AND INCLUSION WITHIN AID?

- Employee demographics are not representative of community; need to expand existing efforts.
- We meet clients where they're at but don't always offer the same opportunities to staff.
- Need to offer opportunities for people to have open and honest discussions with each other in a respectful manner.
- We need to learn how to be open and ask questions without offending someone else.
- The Board is not diverse.

## WHY ARE EQUITY AND INCLUSION IMPORTANT?

- Speaks to root of our mission.
- We serve the community therefore we need to be responsive to community.
- Everyone has their own experiences and thoughts which allows us to grow and help people in the community better
- It allows us to see situations in different ways to be able to better understand how to effectively help those to whom we are providing services
- We serve people that need support to be included and to have equity (and we need to provide the same for staff).
- Cultural sensitivity is important.
- We ARE the community we serve, and we have to represent the community we serve.
- Important to be recognized, important to be seen, acknowledging our values and the things we bring to the table.
  - Helps to make people stronger and feel important to be who they are.
  - Value of the individuals we have as staff and as clients we serve

**WHERE DO WE WANT AID TO GO REGARDING EQUITY AND INCLUSION? WHAT'S THE VISION FOR EQUITY AND INCLUSION AT AID? WHAT WOULD SUCCESS LOOK LIKE?**

- Attitude, policies, and services – our day-to-day work should reflect equity and inclusion regarding culture, age, faith, sexual orientation, language, etc.
  - How do we deliver culturally competent services?
  - We need to infiltrate our diversity policies and philosophies throughout our agency systems and departments.
- Clients receive services from people that 'look like them' Race, gender, disabilities, etc.
- Training in agency philosophy and establishing expectations from the onset.
- Full understanding and integration of equity across all positions and what that may look like (so that peers don't think others are receiving preferential treatment).
- Increase communication to all staff about equity and inclusion.
- Increased comfort of difficult conversations.
- Being able to have open dialog with others, including between staff, clients and other peers within the agency.

## WHAT WOULD BE THE MAIN ELEMENTS OF AN AID EQUITY AND INCLUSION STATEMENT?

- Actively value diverse perspectives and committed to including all voices in the conversation; everyone has a voice.
- Equity should be a focus.
- Speak to the emotional health of agency.
- Should range widely, from how our services are delivered to our employee make up.
- Reflective of populations in which serve - all of the locations where we provide services.
- Purposeful
- Active
- Should range widely, from how our services are delivered to our employee make up.
- Should commit us to actually walking the walk and talking the talk.
- AID offers services and advocacy for underserved groups.
- Employees feel valued and have a voice within the organization.
- AID focuses on all levels of staff (entry level, management, etc.) to achieve inclusivity and equity.

# AID EQUITY AND INCLUSION STATEMENT



## AID Equity and Inclusion Statement

At AID, we believe that all people have inherent worth and dignity, and we see everyone—all clients and their families, all staff, all volunteers, and all interns—as valued members of the AID community. We therefore **value and commit** to Equity and Inclusion in serving our clients and in our workforce.

### What we mean by Equity and Inclusion

**By equity we mean fairness, which often requires not treating everyone equally.** Achieving a fair playing field requires going above and beyond to provide different avenues for different individuals, according to the needs of each, and striving to have the best possible outcome for each person. Equity means providing all with true access to safe, high - quality services, supports and opportunities, and recognizing and working to eliminate systemic barriers to such access.

**By inclusion we mean welcoming everyone and providing all with genuine opportunities to participate in everything that we do.** *Inclusion opens a very wide umbrella, under which every difference is welcomed, including differences in race, ethnicity, physical and cognitive abilities, gender identity and expression, age, national origin, language, sexual orientation, body size, documentation status, housing status, economic status, ability to pay for services, job status, religious or spiritual practice, recovery status, substance users, thinking and doing styles, and more.* Inclusion means taking action to consider and involve everyone, and enabling all to get involved, actively participate, and be heard. Inclusion also means recognizing and working to eliminate systemic barriers to full participation by all.

## Our commitments

**We commit** to integrating equity and inclusion into all aspects of what we do, into all our functions and processes, into all our departments, and into how we handle every situation. For us, equity and inclusion will simply be the way we do things. Each of us brings different experiences, privileges, and beliefs to AID, but **all of us commit** to using our differences to create lives of dignity and purpose with the people we serve and the people with whom we work.

**We commit** to reflecting, in all our service locations and on our board, the diversity and needs of our clients and the communities we serve, especially the needs of historically underserved groups. We value diverse perspectives and **commit** to including all voices—those of clients and their families, and the staff, volunteers and interns—in every key conversation. At AID, everyone will have a voice, and everyone will be recognized for their individual capacities and efforts. All staff will be treated fairly, given equal consideration, and provided equitable opportunities to grow in knowledge and experience that positions them for advancement.

We know that we are on a journey, one in which this Equity and Inclusion Statement is just one early step. Therefore, **we commit** to continuous learning and process improvement, and to making changes and correcting course as needed. At every point in our journey, **we commit** to both talking the talk and walking the walk.

# LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT AND ENGAGEMENT

# LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT AND ENGAGEMENT

- Leadership focused trainings
  - Understanding Microaggression
  - Valuing and Welcoming Our LGBTQIA+ Clients and Colleagues (2 part series)
  - Understanding Bias: Interviewing and Hiring and Interviewing through an Equity Lens
  - Creating an Inclusive Environment for Individuals who are Deaf and / or Hard of Hearing
- Lunch and Learn
  - Microaggression in the Workplace (4 part series)
  - Danger of a Single Story
  - Is it Funny?
  - Working in a Multigenerational Organization
  - Round table on Health Disparities
- Cultural Competency
- Monthly eNewsletter
  - Observances
  - Highlight staff

## BOARD ENGAGEMENT

- Board Assessment
- Commitment to Equity and Inclusion added to AID Bylaws

# BOARD ASSESSMENT

Geography, Age  
Ethnicity, Race,  
Sexual Orientation

Lived experience,  
gender identity and  
expression

Understands the  
mission and values,  
time to serve on  
the Board

Has expertise that  
AID needs,  
Leadership  
qualities

Connected to the  
communities  
important to AID,  
Fundraise

Length and breadth  
of governance  
experience

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

## PRACTICAL TIPS BUILD A BUSINESS CASE FOR DEI

1. Why is this important?
2. Who are the decision makers? Is everyone in agreement?
3. Obtain information from your staff on their experiences (data).
  - a) Experience Survey
  - b) Staff Satisfaction Survey
  - c) Exit Interviews
  - d) Grievances
4. Share feedback.
5. Develop an equity and inclusion statement.
6. Focus. Be strategic. Invest (time and resources).
7. Network
8. Establish session agreements



DEI is not a program, it is work

*Intentional* – an action performed with awareness;  
done deliberately, consciously, on purpose

LET'S CONNECT!

Courtney Littlejohn, Vice President of Equity  
and Inclusion

Association for Individual Development

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“In today’s interconnected and globalized world, it is now commonplace for people of dissimilar world views, faiths and races to live side by side.

It is a matter of great urgency, therefore, that we find ways to cooperate with one another in a spirit of mutual acceptance and respect.” – Dalai Lama