

# *Bridging Equity, Social Justice and Applied Practice*



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# Session Purpose

**Introduction to Multnomah County Equity and Empowerment Lens (racial justice focus)**

**Case study of Lens application: Culturally Specific Services**

**Exploration of research applications**

# We define racial equity as...

Fair and just distribution of resources and opportunities

Economic, relational, and social systems that are sustainable and sustain all people

Meaningful engagement of communities of color in planning, decision-making, evaluation

Authentically embodying racial equity and empowerment principles

Bold and courageous long-term commitment to unearthing racism's root causes and addressing barriers

# Causes of Inequities

## Root Factors

Poverty  
Racism and  
discrimination  
Immigration status  
Institutional power

## Neighborhood Conditions

Toxic contaminants  
Joblessness  
Unequal education  
Poor transportation  
Inadequate access to  
food and exercise  
Housing access and  
affordability  
Land use

## Risk Behaviors

Nutrition  
Physical activity  
Substance use  
Violence

## Individual level outcomes

-Chronic disease  
-Injury  
Dropout  
-Justice system  
involvement  
Life expectancy

Funding for:  
Individual Services  
Confinement (jails)  
Dominant paradigm  
models

Upstream

Downstream

# Solutions to Inequities

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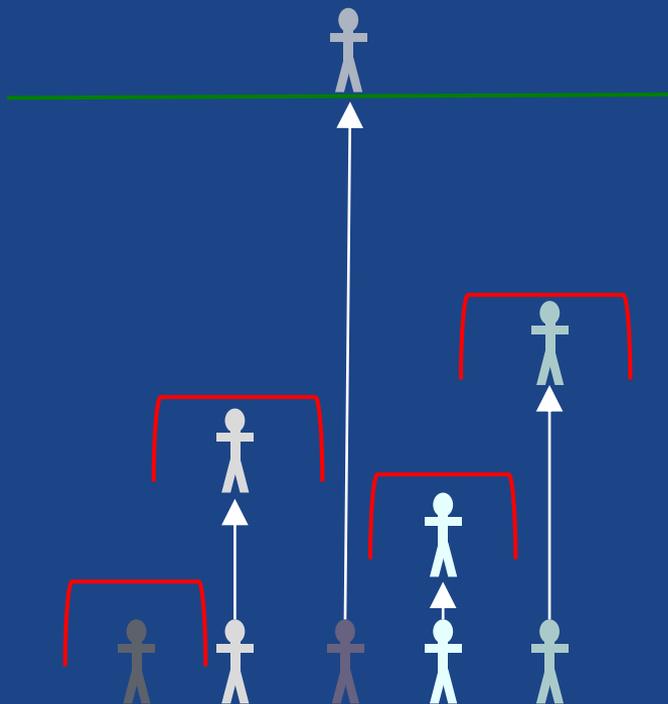
Resources for:  
Community empowerment  
Policy advocacy  
Social and economic policy change

Upstream

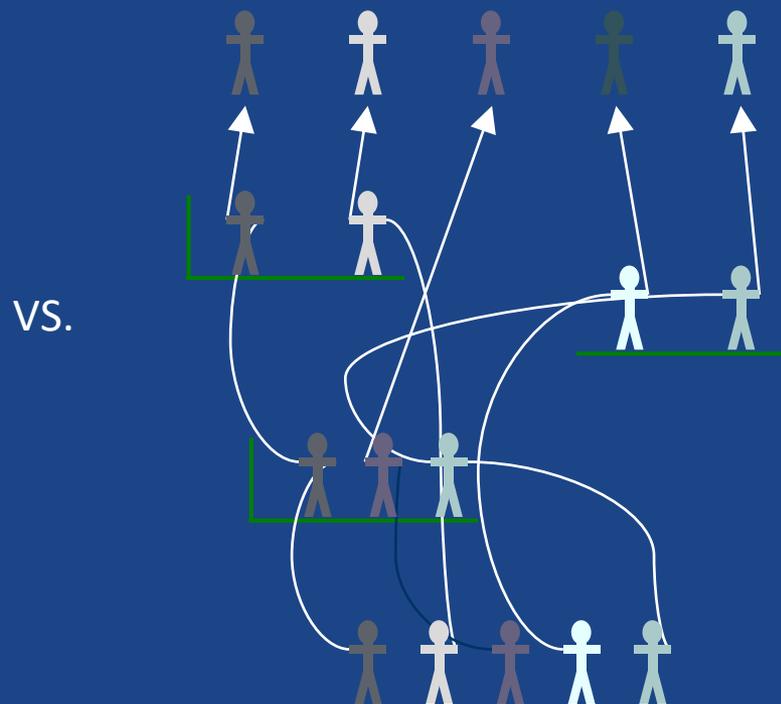
Downstream

# Targeted Universalism

- **Structural inequity produces consistently different outcomes for individuals from different communities**



- **Targeted universalism responds with universal goals and targeted solutions**



*from john powell, haas institute For a Fair and Inclusive Society*

# Relational Worldview

## Organizational



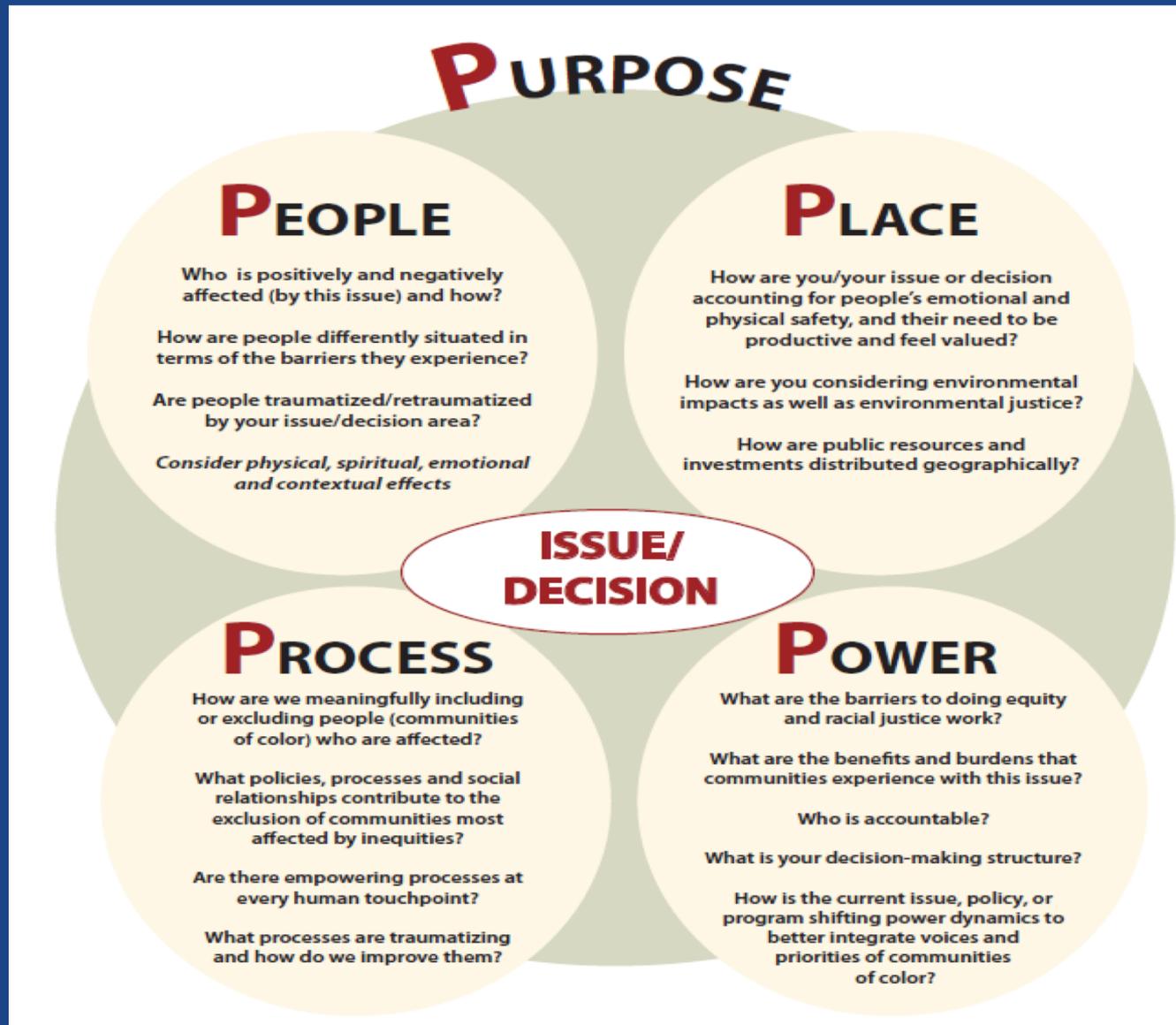
Environment:  
Physical,  
economic,  
political, social  
context

Infrastructure:  
Policies, procedures,  
management  
/decision-making  
structure, personnel,  
strategic plans,  
service models and  
designs

Mission/Purpose:  
Vision, mission,  
mandates and  
rules, roles within  
organization or  
system

Resources:  
Leadership  
makeup, decision-  
makers,  
champions,  
information,  
funding,  
partnerships

# IMPACT<sub>on</sub>: *People, Place, Process, Power*



# Culturally Specific Services: Contracting, Purchasing, Planning

Roots in community support

Requests from other departments

How do we institutionalize racial equity?

Applied a Lens to process and outcomes

Outputs: definitions, refined RFP, resource allocation improved

Outcomes: Greater capacity, refined decision-making, greater political will

# Internal Process

2015 convening, review of best practices, stakeholder interviews, creation of common definitions

Develop and commit to “belief”: targeted universalism, and safety and belonging

Contracting philosophy: “best value for taxpayer and best outcome for clients”

# From Theory to Application

Culturally Specific Services eliminate structural barriers and provide a sense of safety and belonging that will lead to better outcomes for people experiencing racism and discrimination.

All services Multnomah County provides should be culturally responsive, and organizations competing for county contracts should demonstrate their capacity through the RFP process

# Definitions: guiding criteria for RFP consideration

*Organizations providing Culturally Specific Services demonstrate:*

alignment of founding mission with the community proposed to be served (creation of mission was historically based in serving communities experiencing racism) and alignment with the outcomes desired by the program.

intimate knowledge of lived experience of the community,

multiple formal and informal channels for meaningful community engagement, participation and feedback exists at all levels of the organization (from service complaints to community participation at the leadership and board level).

commitment to a highly skilled and experienced workforce by employing robust recruitment, hiring and leadership development practices

commitment to safety and belonging through advocacy; design of services from the norms and worldviews of the community; reflect core cultural constructs of the culturally specific community; understand and incorporate shared history; create rich support networks; engage all aspects of community; and address power relationships.

# Theory of change cont'd.

## Approaches:

**Application of the principles and concepts of equity, empowerment, and racial justice** at all levels (individual, community and system), paying particular attention to planning and decision-making.

**A whole-family approach** for impacting both child and adult success.

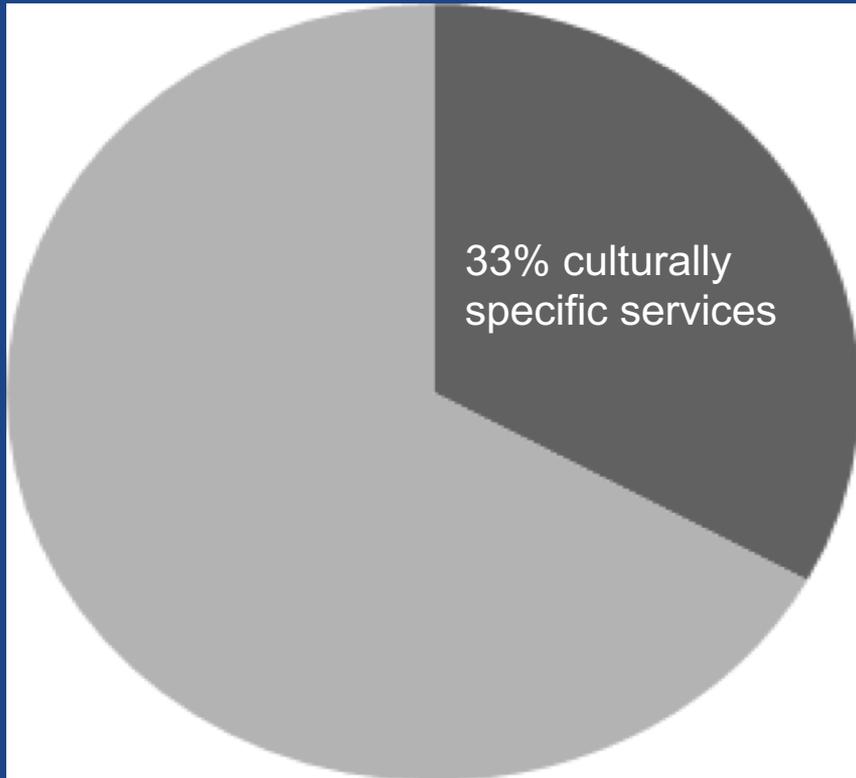
**Inclusive strategies** that address the needs of both the dominant and the marginal groups, ensuring that the universal system is culturally responsive and equitable.

**Targeted services** that offer context-specific support to those most affected by disparities. Targeted services within the SUN Service System include those that are specific to communities of color, people living in poverty and to sexual and gender minorities.

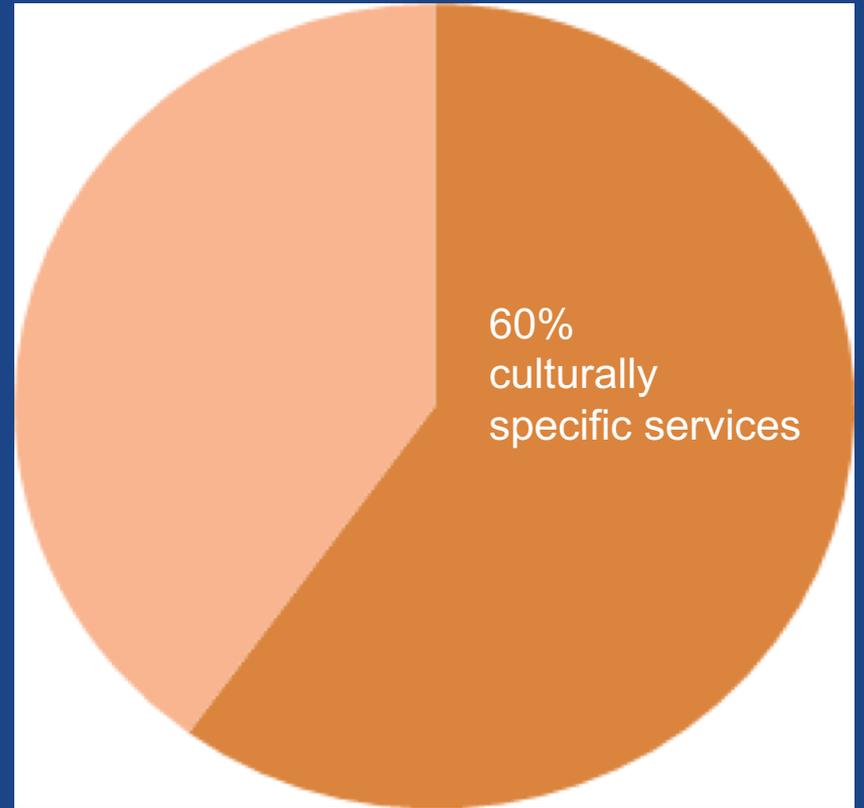
**Accountability** of the system and its partners with clear measures and reporting mechanisms to the community.

# Allocation Shifts

Previous Allocation



Current Allocation



# Application for Research

How can equity lens be utilized to inform future research and evaluation?

Understanding impacts of specific populations based on their “unique situatedness”

Evaluate efficacy of culturally specific service delivery models with a focus on “deepened sense of belonging”

how does power (resources, decision-making, elected representation, CBPR etc) impact population level outcomes?

# Contact Information

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