



## The Leaders Learning Journey Program to enhance JEDI Organizational Change

### Here's what is known:

- **Turnover affects outcomes.** A 2015 Literature Review on Recruitment and Retention in Health and Human Services published by San Diego State University School of Social Work found the following: *"Research has found that high turnover in human services is a concern, for the financial cost that the organization must endure and, arguably more concerning, negative outcomes on the families being served. Research found that children with one case worker had a 74.5% chance of permanency, compared to 17.5% for children with two workers, and 5.3% for children with three workers."*
- **The workforce pool is shrinking.** A Milwaukee Biz Times article from February 2017 reported: "Businesses in almost every industry across Wisconsin are facing the possibility of losing large numbers of employees to retirement in the coming years and in many cases, the departures have already started. More than 23 percent of the state's workforce is older than 55, a figure that's more than doubled in the past 20 years and reaches as high as 30 percent in some sectors."
- **Turnover affects the financial health of an organization.** Broadly cited, the estimated cost of turnover to an organization for an employee making \$40,000 per year is \$20,000 or more per year. Here's what is considered in that calculation:
  - Cost of hiring a new employee - advertising, interviewing, screening, and hiring.
  - Cost of onboarding a new person, including training and management time.
  - Lost productivity—it may take a new employee one to two years to reach the productivity of an existing person.
  - Lost engagement—other employees who see high turnover tend to disengage and lose productivity.
  - Customer service and errors—for example new employees take longer and are often less adept at solving problems.
  - Training cost.
  - Cultural impact—whenever someone leaves, others take time to ask why.

Our own subjective experience of leading small programs of 10 employees up to an agency of 300 and working with service systems of thousands clearly shows that addressing negative turnover is a key to the overall health of an organization. To address this, we have iteratively designed a pathway to address burnout, compassion fatigue, and turnover and thereby increase employee retention through leadership development. The result in our own experience has resulted in a near zero negative turn-over rate. Similarly, outcomes have dramatically benefitted.

In the aftermath of George Floyd's horrific death and the global Black Lives Matter protests that ensued, the creation of Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (JEDI) positions within workplaces has become the new norm. According to an analysis of LinkedIn professionals, Chief Diversity Officer positions grew 16.2% over the last year. Unfortunately, this reactionary creation of JEDI initiatives can overlook the fact that dismantling deeply entrenched beliefs and practices that create and sustain implicit bias and discrimination denial is not the responsibility of a single person or team. It takes an entire organization to the great challenge of JEDI initiatives is validated in a report published on May 19, 2020, by McKinsey & Company, a noted international organizational consulting and research firm.



The report shares this important insight from an analysis of diversity and inclusion in the workplaces of over 1,000 large corporations in 13 different countries:

*Even relatively diverse companies face significant challenges in creating work environments characterized by inclusive leadership and accountability among managers, equality and fairness of opportunity, and openness and freedom from bias and discrimination.*

Taking on the leadership for organizational JEDI can be even more complex and overwhelming when the position has been mandated by a governing body that did not include all or any staff in the decision-making process, and where a fixed timeline for reaching specific goals has been set in stone. Add to this the absence of an adequate orientation/periods of adjustment, including the development of strategies for responding to resistance to change, and navigating organizational culture “norms” that are in direct opposition to successful JEDI outcomes. Expecting a single person to be successful in such a daunting task is setting them up for failure.

*Rather than navigating differences as an expert, liberatory leaders facilitate balance, connection, and possibilities – the art of making it easier for people to be together, work together, dream together. This frames leadership as a way of facilitating how people experience ease without the harmful friction generated by power hoarding and scarcity.<sup>1</sup>*

Through our decades of experiences of leadership within human services, and our many years of consultation within organizations, systems, and programs, work with Cultural Humility to Cultural Reverence, the Share Collaborative team recognizes the need for leadership development support specifically for those who are brave enough to step into the essential and complex challenge for influencing JEDI organizational change. We’ve identified the following five core competencies that JEDI leaders must develop and/or sustain to be successful:

1. **Self-Mastery:** is the ability to learn what supports and what blocks our ability to be the best version of ourselves. Effective JEDI leaders are able to accept and understand that trauma in all of its facets from oppressive racism and other forms of bias, as well as the institutionalized dominance mentality, has affected everyone. Knowing that this unhealed trauma will show up as oppressive tendencies in how their leadership is expressed, they commit to addressing the blocks to their emotional and social intelligence.
2. **Vulnerability:** is basically uncertainty, risk, and emotional exposure. Brené Brown, a research professor at the University of Houston Graduate College of Social Work and best-selling author, teaches that the inability to lean into the discomfort of vulnerability limits the fullness of those important experiences that are wrought with uncertainty: Love, belonging, trust, joy, and creativity to name a few. (4) Successful JEDI leaders move beyond only intellectualizing the learning process into, understanding how historical leadership approaches systems of oppression have forced the valuing of cognition and thinking above feelings and emotions. This results in leaders They honor feelings and emotions as essential building blocks for belonging, safety, and empathy as well as innovation and creativity. This in turn has the intended impact of increased retention of the team
3. **Shared Leadership:** is the practice of creating opportunities for others to participate meaningfully in the JEDI new and existing initiatives, and it is developed by being transparent, encouraging autonomy, being open to and integrating others' ideas.

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<sup>1</sup>Connie Nichiu, Competency, DEI, and Leadership – Part One: Nothing Changes When Nothing Changes (Inspired by the Radical Notions of Grasping at Our Roots)



4. **Creative Flexibility:** is a practice for navigating resistance to change. An effective JEDI leader will creatively seek ways to invite and include every member of an organization to contribute to and participate in the change process. The challenge is to hold the vision for change while allowing for the developmental process of change to occur. This is developed through the wisdom of allowing for uncertainty (aka not “knowing”), and the practice of honoring fellow team members unique insights and artistry.cultural humility.

5. **Life-long Learning:** is the commitment and discipline to remain curious and open to the voices of the team and those who are being served. discovering more about diversity, equity, and inclusion as it relates to social justice. Effective leaders model this behavior often and are never afraid not to “know”. They accept that cultures and identities are ever evolving as are the humans who embrace and manifest them.

To provide support for honing the five competencies, we have developed The *Leaders Learning Journey*(LLJ). Our approach is to combine personal and JEDI leadership coaching with core competency learning for at least a 6-month period. We intend for this type and level of support to produce the following outcomes for the leaders and their organizations:

- greater awareness of and confidence for responding to how personal implicit and explicit bias negatively influences leadership decision-making
- acquisition of new and/or improved communication skills and tools to effectively manage challenging situations JEDI and critical conversations. critical related conversations and situations
- increased personal and professional use of emotional, social and spiritual intelligence<sup>2</sup>, and greater knowledge for how to leverage them while building collaborative teams and shared leadership within
- expanded capacity to successfully “hold space” and encourage a collaborative model of creative and flexible problem solving as the organizational culture shifts and internal change gets anchored into place
- the creation of new and supportive frameworks and practices for the actualization of an equitable, diverse and inclusive organizational cultural

The Leaders Learning Journey is designed to encourage, validate, and guide JEDI leaders, not only those who are newly hired or appointed to their position but those who have been in leadership positions for some time and are wanting to engage a next level approach. We wholeheartedly believe that this leader learning process will result in the establishment of a shared vision, shared leadership, and a more functional and healthy JEDI initiatives, team coherence, and positive impacts on retention both of the team and those they serve. In our current climate of unprecedented change within all organizations, there is clearly a need to integrate this type of leadership development and support. Investment in *The Leader Learning Journey* will contribute greatly to the ongoing evolution of organizational health. diversity, equity and inclusion, and enable cultural humility and reverence to manifest and thrive.

## Guide • Empower • Heal

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<sup>2</sup> Spiritual intelligence is an ability to access higher meanings, values, abiding purposes, and unconscious aspects of the self and to embed these meanings, values, and purposes in living richer and more creative lives. <https://thesystemsthinker.com/spiritual-intelligence-a-new-paradigm-for-collaborative-action/>