



EMBODIED CONTRIBUTION CONSULTING

5 Disempowering Beliefs About Equity Work To Avoid 2023

Introduction	2
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Disempowering Beliefs about Equity Work

for organizations who request equity coaching, training, or consulting

Introduction

This document provides insight into beliefs that can disempower organizations seeking equity consulting. These beliefs hinder progress and create barriers to success, but can be avoided! Look over these statements and assess how they relate to your own beliefs or those present in your organization. Throughout your equity journey reflect on the information provided in this document to empower yourself and your organization to make the most of your investment.

5 Disempowering Beliefs About Equity Work to Avoid

1. EQUITY WORK WILL SOLVE OUR PROBLEMS

No. **You** will solve your problems, over many years, if you are willing to take actions that are hard, scary, complicated, and new. And, if you are willing to overcome the many internal and external barriers to change. Equity work is one tool you can use to solve your problems, but it likely won't be the only one you employ. You will need robust support to build new skillsets, mindsets, and institutional structures. ***If it was easy, you would have done it already.***

2. OUR EQUITY CONSULTANT WILL SOLVE OUR PROBLEMS

No. An equity consultant will advise you and partner with you to help you take actions that are hard, scary, complicated, and new. An equity consultant cannot force you to do anything, and you can choose to ignore their advice or refuse their help. You may or may not accomplish your goals and your success is 100% up to you. ***You have the power!***

3. EQUITY WORK IS SOMETHING MY ORGANIZATION SHOULD DO

Not necessarily in the way you might think. Equity work is the process of bringing chaos to order. With equity work, we destabilize institutions by changing policies, practices, and procedures. In the long run, these changes will increase stability, but in the short term, the process of change is destabilizing. Many organizations who want to do equity work think that means bringing an equity lens to “external” or client-facing aspects of the organization. But, organizations with high volatility, unrest, and conflict cannot withstand more destabilization. These organizations must begin “internal” equity work to increase stability, before looking externally. Internal equity work



often means confronting classism and can include addressing conflict, staff anger related to pay or other concerns, high turnover, or allegations of poor or abusive leadership. Please see our [Five Phases of Organizational Equity Work](#) to assess if your organization needs to begin an internal equity work journey before attempting external equity work in order to achieve favorable outcomes. Many organizations will produce results more smoothly in their external equity work after completing the internal equity work outlined in this document. ***Always be prepared.***

4. THE FASTER WE DO EQUITY WORK THE BETTER

No. Doing equity work too quickly can be re-traumatizing for leaders, staff, and stakeholders, which undermines the forward progress of current *and future* equity work. Organizational change is a methodical process that requires collaboration, reflection, and intentionality. Your stakeholders are likely demanding that you do equity work, and do it yesterday! See our [Types of Organizational Equity Work](#) document to learn about equity services you can bring in to support staff who are upset that equity work is being done slowly or who are being harmed by the persistence of inequality in their work environment. Moving faster increases the harm caused when tripping and falling on the rocky road of organizational change. When you fall, you *will* land on stakeholders with marginalized identities. ***Go slow to avoid serious accidents.***

5. “EQUITY WORK” MEANS “GROUP TRAININGS”

No. Please see our [Types of Organizational Equity Work](#) to learn about the four domains in which oppression can manifest and the many types of equity work you can bring in to address problems resulting from unaddressed oppression. Over the last 30 years, there have been remarkable innovations in this industry that can support your organization. From equity support curated for the unique challenges of applying equity concepts to leadership to powerful group structures that leverage frustration and venting for forward progress. Everything you need to succeed exists at your fingertips. ***Take advantage of everything our industry has to offer.***