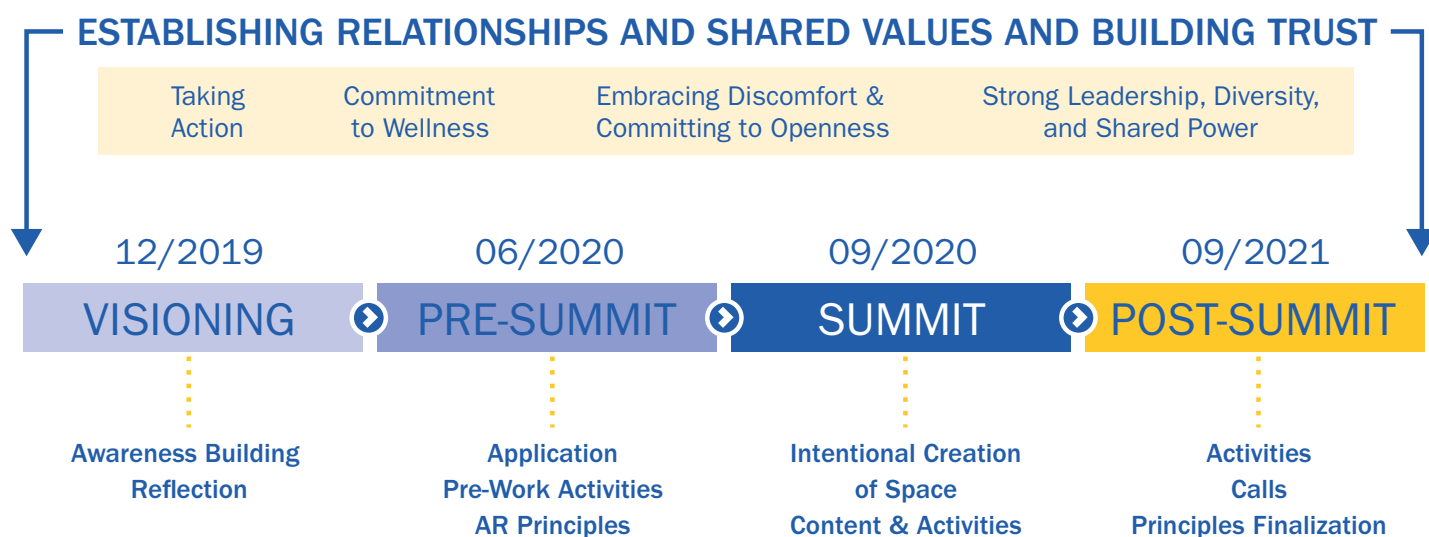# NCTSN | The National Child Traumatic Stress Network

The Story of the NCTSN Anti-Racism Initiative:
What has the NCTSN learned, what are they still learning, and how can the NCTSN support organizations to become anti-racist?

Date of Report: 10.24.2022

The purpose of this report is to describe the process used to design, facilitate, and lead the NCTSN "Becoming Anti-Racist is Central to Trauma-Informed Care" Anti-Racism Initiative as well as some of the outcomes of this process. It includes the self-report experiences of participants and intentionally strives to decenter whiteness and White Supremacy Culture (WSC) by honoring different types of data, evidence, ways of knowing, and communicating.

The ARS Initiative

ESTABLISHING RELATIONSHIPS AND SHARED VALUES AND BUILDING TRUST

Taking Action	Commitment to Wellness	Embracing Discomfort & Committing to Openness	Strong Leadership, Diversity, and Shared Power

12/2019	06/2020	09/2020	09/2021
VISIONING	**PRE-SUMMIT**	**SUMMIT**	**POST-SUMMIT**
Awareness Building Reflection	Application Pre-Work Activities AR Principles	Intentional Creation of Space Content & Activities	Activities Calls Principles Finalization

Background

The "Becoming Anti-Racist is Central to Trauma-Informed Care" Anti-Racism Summit Initiative was a culmination of many years of work to address the relationships between racism and trauma. In 2016, after years of discussion and advocacy in the Culture Consortium and among small groups of NCTSN members, the NCTSN released a position statement entitled Racial Injustice and Trauma: African Americans in the US. One of the commitments made in this position statement was supporting collaborative NCTSN activities related to anti-Black racism and trauma. The Racial Justice and Trauma Subcommittee was established, and within a year of meeting, the group developed the concept of a team-based Summit Initiative in 2018. A small group of committed individuals, eventually becoming the Anti-Racism Summit (ARS) faculty, took on the deep work of planning and facilitating the ARS Initiative. This group engaged a national leader in the work of anti-Black racism and trauma, Dr. Wizdom Powell from the Evidence Watch Collective, who joined the faculty in the work to shape the ARS Initiative, with the expressed goal of the participating teams moving beyond awareness to action.

> "I feel like this initiative helped me to understand the questions I should be asking not only of myself but of my organization and the structures that I participate in. For example, practices I have automatically implemented because things have always been done that way are rooted in white supremacy. I think that I will now begin to look more closely at practices that were inherited."

The objectives were for participants in the ARS Initiative to:

- Gain clarity on why being anti-racist, individually and as an organization, is central to trauma-informed care.
- Engage in self-reflection for being anti-racist individually and how you and your team can influence your organization.
- Articulate what your organization does to support or hinder the vision of becoming anti-racist.
- Make individual and collective commitments regarding what actions you will implement to "move the needle" and center anti-racism.
- Identify a specific organizational problem and/or system change barrier, design an action plan, and commit to measuring change over time.

Process

THROUGHOUT THE ARS INITIATIVE: RELATIONSHIPS AND ESTABLISHMENT OF SHARED VALUES WITHIN THE ARS FACULTY

Dr. Edwin J. Nichols, in his writings about the Philosophical Aspects of Cultural Difference, identifies a core axiology of African, African-American, Latinx, and Arab cultures as "The highest value lies in the relationship between persons".[1] The ARS faculty maintained this axiology as a guiding value, along with a continuous and intentional commitment to decenter whiteness in every aspect of the planning. While relationship-building was never specifically on the agenda, it was organic and developed over time, with the group honoring time spent on personal updates and support. The entire group recognized that these developing relationships were essential to the ARS Initiative reaching its goals.

> The faculty developed trust in one another's shared values around anti-Black racism, not only in this project but across all work and life.

The ARS faculty held discussions internally that reflected those that would later become pre/post-work assignments and discussion prompts for ARS Initiative participants. Faculty members asked one another hard questions, shared personal and sometimes painful stories, called one another out and in, owned their power and privilege, and committed to staying in relationship. Characteristics of White Supremacy Culture[2] were named in real time when they arose during planning, and faculty members openly challenged each other to think differently.

This active, relational solidarity allowed the faculty to move effectively and meaningfully in their work together, co-creating products, developing activities and agendas, working with teams, and facilitating spaces that authentically centered anti-Black racism. Not only would none of these products or spaces have been possible without the relationships, but none would have been as deep, rich, or thoughtfully constructed.

Before the Summit

APPLICATION PROCESS

In order to focus on action at the organizational level, the ARS faculty decided to implement a competitive, team-based application process that assessed demonstrated organizational commitment and readiness related to anti-racism. All NCTSN members were eligible to apply, including Category II sites, Category III sites, Organizational Affiliates, or any team that included a core member who was an Individual Affiliate or an NCTSN Family/Youth partner. Applicants received guidance that team members should work at various levels of the organization (e.g., front line staff, supervisors, senior leaders, family/youth/community partners, advisory board members) and that the strongest teams would include at least one person with the positional leadership to ensure that changes could be implemented and sustained. Application questions and the application review process were carefully constructed to assess organizational readiness and the strength of the team to implement change in the organization.

> " The immortal words of Audre Lorde best describe the trust and solidarity forged among the Faculty members:
>
> "You do not have to be me in order for us to fight alongside each other. I do not have to be you to recognize that our wars are the same. What we must do is commit ourselves to some future that can include each other and to work toward that future with the particular strengths of our individual identities. And in order for us to do this, we must allow each other our differences at the same time as we recognize our sameness."[3]

1 Nichols, E. (1974). The Philosophical Aspects of Cultural Difference. Washington, D.C.: Nichols & Associates, Inc.
2 Okun, T. (2021). White supremacy culture. https://www.whitesupremacyculture.info/.
3 Lorde, A. (1984). Sister outsider: essays and speeches. Trumansburg, NY: Crossing Press

Questions and guidance to application reviewers focused on the following:

Organizational Information	Team Composition	Team Goals, Commitment, Will, and Strategy
● Organization context: racial/ethnic identity of children and families served, awareness of communities trained, consideration of disparities and cultural relevance ● Description of workforce: racial/ethnic identity of workforce, reflection of communities served, disparity/disproportionality data	● Representation of team members across various roles, demonstrated commitment of team members to doing racial justice work ● Commitment of senior leader ● History of collaboration among team members	● Organizational goals for participating in this ARS Initiative ● Demonstration of Commitment and Will: specific previous efforts that demonstrate a commitment to trauma-informed, anti-racist principles, outcomes of those efforts, challenges and strategies to address them ● Strategic Change Processes: how change happens in the organization, team's sphere of influence to support the integration of anti-racist, trauma-informed principles

The application was released on June 11, 2020, roughly two weeks following the murder of George Floyd, which ignited a nationwide racial justice uprising. This timing swelled the interest in participation well beyond initial expectations. The review team received 70 applications and accepted 38 teams from 16 states (Category I, 12 Category II, 15 Category III, 8 Affiliates), for a total of 211 individual participants (Organization Senior leaders, Supervisors, Front Line Staff and more). (One team had to drop out of the ARS Initiative early, due to COVID constraints.)

> *Examples of additional roles identified were: community relations, marketing, implementation specialist, evaluator, researcher, communications, DEI Committee leader, trainer, family partner, peer support specialist, member of advisory board, intern, and receptionist.

ACTIVITIES BEFORE 9/15/2020: PRE-SUMMIT DAY

Anti-racism change work requires commitment far beyond a one-day event. Therefore the ARS Initiative content included pre-work and post-work. In August and September 2020, teams completed pre-work activities that included readings, individual reflections, and team activities that promoted participants focusing on reflection and visioning anti-racist organizations and systems, rather than an intellectual understanding of disparities. The faculty utilized Basecamp as a platform for pre-Summit Day assignments as well as for relational engagement across ARS Initiative participants. This platform allowed teams and individuals to view each other's submissions in an effort to enhance collective learning, vulnerability, accountability, and relationship-building. Participants were actively engaged, with some prompts receiving up to 96 posts.

> **PRE-WORK READINGS AND VIDEOS** included the following. For each, participants were asked to post reflections.
>
> It's Time for Radical Healing by Dr. Wizdom Powell TedX video
>
> And How Are the Children? excerpted from a speech by the Rev. Dr. Patrick T. O'Neill
>
> What Will Future Generations Condemn Us For? by Kwame Anthony Appiah
>
> The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas by Ursula K. LeGuin
> (short story included in collection The Wind's Twelve Quarters)
>
> The Psychology of Radical Healing by Helen A. Neville, Hector Y. Adames, Nayeli Y. Chavez Dueñas, Grace A. Chen, Bryana H. French, Jioni A. Lewis, & Della V. Mosley
>
> Optional video: We Came to Heal documentary

In addition to reflections on the above readings and videos, teams were also asked to reflect on the following questions:

- ● What is/are your organization's mission and values statement(s)?
- ● How do your stated mission and values map onto your perceptions of an anti-racism agenda?
- ● How could your stated mission and values be re-worked to more explicitly align with your perceptions of an anti-racism agenda?
- ● Based on your knowledge and experience, what are 1-3 guiding principles of a trauma-informed, anti-racist organization?

September 15, 2020: Summit Day

The Summit Day, a full-day virtual event, took place on September 15, 2020. There were approximately 250 attendees in attendance (including ARS Initiative participants, ARS faculty, and technology/staff support).

INTENTIONAL CREATION OF SPACE

The ARS faculty was purposeful about creating and modeling a space that would be the optimal "container" for the necessary anti-racism work that needed to be done by ensuring that the framing and content of the prioritized and centered Black people and their experiences in the US. In acknowledgement of the roots in the African diaspora and the importance of community strength, the morning began with a question posed to participants:

"Kasserian Ingera," a traditional greeting among the Masai that translates to "How are the Children?"

Music and art exclusively by Black artists and depicting Black professionals were used throughout the day, ensuring that everything used was either in the public domain or purchased. While these details seem small, they are powerful communicators of who and what was being intentionally centered. Establishing relationships and building community among participants was prioritized through activities such as individual reflection, journaling, large and small group dialogue, and sharing commitments. Many participants, particularly BIPOC participants, gave immediate feedback- commenting in the chat and privately about the music and images and the "feel" of the space as safer than the norm and centering Blackness in ways that they rarely experience in professional settings.

CONTENT AND ACTIVITIES

After group agreements were acknowledged, Dr. Wizdom Powell delivered the keynote presentation. Focusing on the values, policies and strategies that support systems being able to engage effectively in anti-racist, trauma-informed work, Dr. Powell began her talk by telling the story of her grandfather who had to leave the state of Alabama to escape a potential lynching and ended it with a clarion call for integrated systems of Radical Healing.[4] During her talk, she provided common language and delineated the well-known profoundly negative consequences of historical and current day racism, including trauma symptomatology. She also highlighted the inadequacies of frameworks that merely expect Black people to cope and adapt and made the case for multi-systemic and transformative approaches that center equity and justice where thriving can occur.

After the keynote, much of the day was spent in small group activities, grouping participants by similar roles across organizations or by teams. One of these activities focused on the principles of an anti-racist, trauma-informed organization, building off of their pre-work activity. The other two activities focused on Action Planning. This was an intentional choice to push participants toward action through discussion and activity rather than passively receiving more information.

1 norms and organizational culture
2 service delivery
3 organizational policies and practices
4 external messaging, partnerships, & advocacy

ACTION MAP

Participants were provided with an Action Map with 4 levels: norms and organizational culture; service delivery; organizational policies and practices; and external messaging, partnerships, and advocacy. Participants reflected and discussed their individual influence related to these four levels and then returned to their teams to develop a plan for influencing their organization across these levels, considering their collective influence and ideas. The resulting team action maps were shared on Basecamp.

4 French, B. H., Lewis, J. A., Mosley, D. V., Adames, H. Y., Chavez-Dueñas, N. Y., Chen, G. A., & Neville, H. A. (2020). Toward a psychological framework of radical healing in communities of color. The Counseling Psychologist, 48(1), 14–46.

Activities After 9/15/2020: Post-Summit Day

From September 2020 - February 2021, teams completed 4 key post-work activities. The purpose of these post-work activities were continued connection, individual reflection, resourcing, and accountability to continue with their organizational change work. High levels of engagement continued, with up to 81 posts on some Basecamp prompts. Topics and prompts for these post-work activities included:

1 Team Action Maps: What are our next steps, when will we take them, and how will we hold ourselves accountable? What is something you are particularly excited about implementing? How can you shift any activities in your Action Map that are performative to be foundation-shifting?

2 "White Supremacy Culture" by Tema Okun and "White Supremacy Culture worksheet": Identify antidotes to incorporate into your Team Action Map. What action steps will you take to implement these?

3 What foundation-shifting strategies and antidotes for White Supremacy Culture have you tried? What has gone well? What challenges have come up?

From September 2020 - September 2021, the ARS faculty held 8 post-Summit Day calls for ARS Initiative participants. In order to create ample opportunities for meaningful connection and interaction among attendees, the ARS faculty invited teams to identify 2-3 participants to join these calls. Participants were encouraged to share themes and discussions from the calls with their full teams. Call topics were planned iteratively- responding to needs, challenges, and timely topics as they arose. ARS faculty regularly used "fishbowl" discussions as a tool in these calls, which involved the faculty members holding a discussion about a particular topic while other call attendees listened and observed. This tool allowed for information to be offered in a more relational and organic way and modeled the relational work of anti-racism, as participants were able to observe how the faculty engaged with each other to talk through complex topics. Every call also included break-out groups for participants to engage in similar discussion with one another.

Topics that were discussed on these calls included:

Action Maps
Safe vs. Brave Spaces
Decentering White Supremacy Culture
Accountability
Sustainability, including when organizational circumstances, funding, and commitment changes

In February 2022, ARS faculty began offering quarterly calls using a Community of Practice framework, with the plan to continue these calls as long as participants continued to request and attend them. The structure of these calls offered an opportunity for people doing anti-racism work to provide each other peer support and consultation.

Calls have continued to be well-attended, beginning at over 100 participants and slowly decreasing over time. There have been consistently about 40 people in attendance for the Community of Practice calls. More than two years after the ARS Initiative launch and given the recent grant turnover in the NCTSN, this continued engagement communicates not only the commitment of participants to continue anti-racism work in their organizations, but also the value of the spaces offered.

Throughout the ARS Initiative

FACULTY CONSULTATION

An ARS faculty member was assigned to each team for one-on-one support and consultation. This consultation was offered as a means of external support, resourcing, structure, and accountability. Most teams engaged in this offer of site-specific consultation, and many continued long after the Summit Day.

DEVELOPMENT OF PRINCIPLES OF AN ANTI-RACIST, TRAUMA-INFORMED ORGANIZATION

Throughout the ARS Initiative, the ARS faculty worked with Dr. Wizdom Powell and the Evidence Watch Collective to develop a set of Principles of an Anti-Racist, Trauma-Informed Organization and to write a resource introducing and explaining them, with strategies for implementation

Some themes from consultation included:

Talking Through Organizational Barriers and Gatekeepers,

Human Resource Challenges

Team Conflicts

Engaging Leaders

Moving From Discussion to Action

Requests For Resources Such As screening, Assessment, and Treatment Interventions; Organizational Assessments; and Resources For Anti-racism In Supervision.

included. These drew from ARS Initiative participants' activities during pre-work and the Summit Day, utilizing a robust concept-mapping process to refine these into a final set of principles across four categories: 1) bearing witness, centering voices, and honoring lived experience; 2) organizational values, governance, and strategic oversight; 3) structural reforms, partnerships, and systems change; and 4) human resources, staff support, and leadership development. The principles, strategies, and a more detailed description of the development process can be found at: https://www.nctsn.org/resources/being-anti-racist-is-central-to-trauma-informed-care-principles-of-an-anti-racist-trauma-informed-organization

> "History isn't something you look back at and say it was inevitable, it happens because people make decisions…"
>
> *- Marsha P. Johnson*

Participant Experience

EXPERIENCES, CHANGES MADE, AND COMMITMENT TO FUTURE WORK

After the second All-Participants Call in March 2021 (6 months after the Summit Day), participants were asked to complete a brief survey aimed to describe their overall experiences with the ARS Initiative. A total of 105 participants completed the survey which represents about 42% of the overall participants at the beginning of the ARS Initiative.

Survey respondents represented a variety of roles and perspectives:

Respondent Types

Senior Leader (e.g., Board Member, CEO, Organization Director, Administrator, President) = 23.8% (25)

Supervisor (e.g., Clinical Supervisor, Program Director) = 22.9% (24)

Trainer/Educator /Academician (e.g., professor, teacher, research assistant, data manager, evaluator, assessment coordinator) = 7.6% (8)

Other = 6.7% (7)

Researcher /Evaluator (e.g., research assistant) = 3.8% (4)

Project Coordinator /Manager = 7.6% (8)

Program Support Staff (e.g., receptionist, fiscal support, marketing, communications, Human Resources) = 4.8% (5)

Direct Clinical/ Counseling Service Provider e.g., Clinician, Counselor, Case Manager, Assessment Coordinator, Social Worker, Teachers) = 19.0% (20)

Organization Partner (e.g., family member, young adult leader, community partner) = 3.8% (4)

IMPLEMENTATION: BECOMING AN ANTI-RACIST ORGANIZATION

Participating organizations described using a variety of strategies in their aims to becoming anti-racist. One way of categorizing progress was to have people rate their level of implementation due to their participation in the ARS Initiative in terms of distinct phases in an implementation process.

The majority of participants reported their organization was in the Installation or Initial Implementation phases where they respectively describe securing the needed resources and preparing (n=30) or attempting to implement newly learned skills (n=41) to becoming anti-racist.
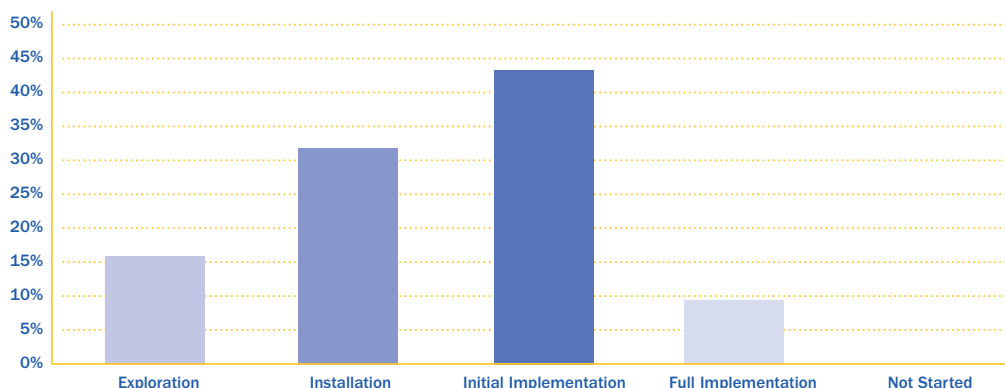
Exploration Phase:
Organization is *still assessing* readiness

Installation Phase:
Organization is *securing the needed resources and preparing*

Initial Implementation Phase:
Organization is *attempting to implement* newly learned skills

Full Implementation Phase:
50% or more of staff are using *anti-racist skills*; anti-racist is now *the standard*

Not Started:
Organization *has not begun to assess* for readiness or implement anti-racist skills or practices

IMPLEMENTATION: BECOMING AN ANTI-RACIST ORGANIZATION (N=95)

Impact

Large organizational shifts can take many years; however, there are some early indicators that can be helpful to understand how this work is progressing in organizations. Using a standard framework to describe implementation efforts[5] provides one way to categorize some of the initial influences of the ARS Initiative while many teams were in early stages of implementation.

> "If you know whence you came, there is really no limit to where you can go."
> - James Baldwin

Legend: ● Strongly Disagree ● Disagree ● Slightly Disagree ● Slightly Agree ● Agree ● Strongly Agree ● Don't Know

Were the changes acceptable?

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know
Due to our participation in the Anti-Racism Initiative, our work environment has made it easier to use anti-racist practices	0	2	3	36	33	17	2
Participating in this Initiative has helped me to appropriately modify my practices to become more anti-racist	0	0	0	13	56	26	0

Are the changes being used?

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know
I could explain to others how using the information from this Initiative has helped our organization	0	1	5	17	43	27	1
I have changed my work practices as a result of this initiative	0	1	4	20	49	18	0

How do these changes fit into existing work?

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know
It was easy to adapt my current work to reflect anti-racism practices learned in this Initiative	0	5	10	28	41	10	2
The amount of resources I needed to apply anti-racist practices learned in this Initiative was reasonable	0	0	4	23	53	13	2

How likely are the changes to stick?

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know
Participating in this Initiative will produce lasting improvement in my ability to apply anti-racist practices to my work	0	1	0	15	35	44	0
My organization will notice a positive change in the quality of services we provide as a result of this Initiative	0	1	2	14	46	29	1

Are Senior-Leaders supporting these changes?

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know
Senior Leadership at my organization actively support my involvement in becoming an anti-racist organization	0	2	3	11	34	42	0

The four content areas used by teams in their Action Maps were also used to categorize "levels of work" that occurred in organizations:

1. Norms and Organizational Culture
2. Organizational Policies and Practices
3. Service Delivery
4. External Messaging, Partnerships, and Advocacy

Overall, "**Norms and Organizational Culture**" was the level at which participants learned the most and made the most progress. In addition, "**Organizational Policies and Practices**" is the level in which participants have the most remaining questions.

5 Proctor, e., Silmere, H., Raghavan, R., Hovmand, P, Aarons, G., Bunger, A., Griffey, R. & Hensley, M. (2011). Outcomes for Implementation Research: Conceptual Distinctions, Measurement Challenges, and Research Agenda. *Administration and Policy in Mental Health and Mental Health Services Research volume 38*, pages 65–76.

When participants were asked to identify examples of the steps their organizations have taken as a result of the ARS Initiative, the top themes included:

Internal Supports:
- inclusion in standing meetings, creating subcommittees, book clubs, restorative healing for conflict resolution

Strategic Planning:
- modifying vision and mission statements, updating strategic plans, modifying policies and practices

Hiring Practices:
- modifications to recruitment and hiring, updating orientation materials

Spread:
- agency-wide town halls, holding Summits, partnering with other programs and staff outside of the ARS Initiative

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE ARS INITIATIVE THAT MADE THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCE IN ABILITY TO MAKE PROGRESS RELATED TO ANTI-RACISM WORK

Participants were able to tell their stories and reflect on their experiences through a series of open-ended questions (not all participants responded to these prompts). In one such question, participants identified many aspects of the ARS Initiative that aided them and their organization in implementing anti-racist practices. Of these, Discussions, Resources, Engagement, and Faculty Consultation were the top four with 93% of those who responded attributing at least one of these aspects as being highly influential in their continued progress toward anti-racist practices and many citing two or three of these aspects as influential to their work.

Discussions were mentioned by 58% of the participants, specifically noting the distinction of safe and brave spaces as necessary for continuing anti-racist work.

> "I struggled with the term "brave and safe spaces" because, as a Black woman, I have traditionally kept my head down and did the work. I have worked in environments in the past where "brave and safe spaces" were not provided or discouraged. This Anti-Racism Initiative has empowered me to create and use that space to speak out unapologetically."

> "Easily the most effective aspect of the Initiative was the safe space culture that was maintained by the organizing faculty."

Resources were mentioned by 57% of the respondents and included items such as the Planning Document, readings, Basecamp, and explicit directives that mapped out next steps. Notably, of those who mentioned Resources, 42% of the respondents specifically mentioned Dr. Wizdom Powell and/or the White Supremacy Culture document as being highly influential in their personal growth.

> "I am using the language from the White Supremacy Culture article and worksheet to recognize and name these practices in my individual work and striving to find opportunities to use my position to impact change toward becoming antiracist."

Engagement was mentioned by 27% of the participants who appreciated the community and fellowship that the ARS Initiative created. Participants mentioned benefits of cross-network interactions and creating connections with people all over the country.

> "I think the most valuable aspect of the initiative was coming together and creating a community led by/modeled by people that understand anti-racism at its core and shed light on painful realities with compassion and while holding hope."

Faculty Consultation was mentioned by 19% of the participants who valued having time with the faculty to address any issues unique to their center.

> "[The faculty] was hugely helpful in giving us feedback and suggestions regarding clinical assessments and potential directions for our clinical work."

PERSONAL REFLECTIONS ON ACTION STEPS, BEHAVIORAL CHANGES AND/OR NEW PERSONAL GROWTH PRACTICES AS A RESULT OF THE ARS INITIATIVE

Five general themes emerged when participants provided reflections on the "most important action steps/behavioral changes and/or new personal growth practices (e.g., new ways of thinking)" they have seen in themselves as a result of the ARS Initiative:

1 Awareness Building and Reflections

2 Taking Action

3 Commitment to Wellness Practices

4 Embracing Discomfort and Committing to Openness and Boldness

5 Qualities of the ARS Initiative:
**STRONG LEADERSHIP
DIVERSITY
SHARED POWER**

The richness of these responses is reflected in the diversity of personal experiences of respondents. Several subthemes and noteworthy words emerged as a result of these unique experiences which are reflected below:

[Awareness Building and Reflections]

Self-Reflection and Personal Accountability • New Perception and Insights • Shared Language and Understanding • Importance of Community Approach • Commitment to Continued Learning and Anti-Racist Action • Reflection of Being Overwhelmed • Racism and Historical Trauma • Moving from Knowledge to Action • Importance of Structural/Organizational Change • Voice Matters/Validation/Affirmation • Increased Confidence to be Anti-Racist • Importance of Cultural Humility • White Supremacy Culture and Sharing Power

"I feel like this initiative helped me to understand the questions I should be asking not only of myself but of my organization and the structures that I participate in. For example, practices I have automatically implemented because things have always been done that way are rooted in white supremacy. I think that I will now begin to look more closely at practices that were inherited."

"Initially (before the summit) I would be the first person to say that my organization did not have systemic racism but the summit developed my awareness and sensitivity to issues that I would have overlooked as a person of color. I was able to identify the various forms of racism and that many though subtle are real. I have learned to adjust my own thinking and approach, including not accepting certain behaviors. I now understand why I was often silenced by being ignored when I voiced an opinion that was uncomfortable to others."

"I have also had the opportunity to reflect on my own identity and the intersectionality I and the families I serve experience. There is a richness to each individual (the diversity we see and don't see) that I hold close to my heart as I explore and reflect on how this impacts the formation of trusting, therapeutic relationships."

[Taking Action]

Taking Action (Broad) • Sharing Ideas and Concepts • Listening and Learning More • Integration of Anti-Racist Action to Ongoing Work • Reparations in Hiring • Advocating to Leadership and Those in Power • Calling Out Racism and White Supremacy Culture • Leveraging Power and Privilege to Create Change • Intentional Anti-Racist Action

"...When I began addressing these issues, I received some support from leadership but I felt that the agency was hesitant to boldly commit to real structural change within our agency. Because this initiative is through the NCTSN, which our agency has much collaboration with and respect for, I feel that it validated the desire and need for us to become an anti-racist agency."

"The most important action steps I have taken as a result of this initiative is to speak up in all of the groups I am in to explore what role white supremacy or racism might be playing..."

"As a group, we have worked towards evaluating our hiring practices and finding ways in which to bring on more black clinicians into our practice."

"It has led to pushing an antiracist agenda in our clinic - in supervision, in our DEI work, in 'hard conversations' as a staff, in increased trainings about racial trauma and historical trauma - all leading to creating programming for the clinic that embraces traditional healing methods!"

[Commitment to Wellness Practices]

Radical Hope and Hopefulness

Collective Healing and Connection

Commitment to Radical Healing and Wellness

Radical Rest and Patience with Self/Others

"I came to understand the importance of collective healing as a part of radical healing and as a result am implementing collective healing strategies. I am also sharing with others the importance of collective healing."

"It's not easy, and I'm not done learning, but I've definitely seen progress and am reminded of the concept of radical hope!"

"I also feel more comfortable in verbalizing when I need a break from the work, which in the past has been difficult as a person of color for many different reasons."

[Embracing Discomfort and Committing to Openness and Boldness]

Embracing Discomfort and Being Open (e.g., being fearless, being open to "straightforward and bold ideas")

"As an individual, I have grown tremendously in becoming more comfortable with being uncomfortable."

"This summit has encouraged community within our team. I feel a sense of comfort and safety in talking to the team about anti-racist ideas and how to move forward."

"I was inspired by the straightforward and bold ideas presented without them needing to be watered down or "politically correct" so no one becomes uncomfortable, and then the needle doesn't move."

[Qualities of ARS Initiative: Strong Leadership, Diversity, and Shared Power]

Strong Leadership, Diversity, and Shared Power (e.g., all voices matter, diverse and engaged participants and faculty, being a learned with strong leadership)

"The most important new way of thinking for me is that I realized just how diverse and engaged the group was which was important because this has helped me see others in a new way."

"I feel that I have always been open to positive change both personally and professionally. I am happy to be a part of an initiative that bring ALL people to the table where ALL voices are heard especially where I work and in the world."

Lessons Learned + Next Steps

When asked whether participants had additional thoughts they would like to share about the ARS Initiative, including recommendations for follow-up, next steps, or activities, several themes emerged from the open-ended responses provided.

Recommendations to **Follow Up or Check In** were most common. The action step suggested by participants most often to maintain momentum was to share

"Being antiracist is not a destination but a journey—one that takes deliberate, consistent work. It's work to transform oneself and society."

- Ibram X. Kendi

strategies, struggles, and successes; followed closely by maintaining connections and continuing the work. These actions were defined as crucial to the forward progress of anti-racism efforts. As participants noted:

"It would be great to have more follow ups all calls. I also see this branching out into different avenues. It would be great if there are future webinars for participants that would be great for someone on the faculty to share in the listserv."

"It would also be beneficial to maybe have incremental, quarterly perhaps, check ins from the NCTSN on our progress. I'm not sure how long the base camp will be open to postings but this could be another way to keep us connected and see the work each program continues to accomplishment."

"...perhaps someone can take the lead creating a peer to peer group where ever[y] so often we get together and discuss what we have been doing/struggles/successes; strategies."

"... more concrete skill building around how to be brave and allow opportunity for growth spaces in the workplace and how to cultivate trust and relationships in teams to better foster this potential."

With the same frequency, participants chose to use this space to thank those who organized the event for a job well done and show appreciation for those with whom space was shared and whose powerful messages were at once inspiring and humbling, such as Dr. Wizdom Powell. In the words of one participant:

"It was truly a pleasure participating in this initiative. Of course Dr. Wizdom Powell was amazing!!! I also found a lot of value and very much appreciated the discussion amongst the instructors in the last session today and just listening to everyone talk about their journey as a team."

Next Steps for the ARS Initiative

This feedback influenced the ARS Faculty's decision to continue quarterly calls that are open to all ARS Initiative participants for as long as attendance continues. It also influenced the shift to a Community of Practice framework for these calls, which focuses on building connection and participants sharing about their own strategies, successes, and challenges. ARS Faculty also continue to be available to ARS Initiative participants for individual/team consultation and support. The work of shifting organizations to become anti-racist is long and rarely linear. With that knowledge, this ARS Initiative is committed to continuing to provide supportive spaces to participants to strategize, process, celebrate, grieve, and connect with the collective motivation found among peers to continue this hard change work.

> "Revolution is not a one time event."
>
> *- Audre Lorde, "Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches"*

To share the outcomes of this work beyond the participating ARS Initiative teams, the ARS faculty in collaboration with Dr. Wizdom Powell and the Evidence Watch Collective recently published a report titled *Becoming Anti-Racist is Central to Trauma-Informed Care: Principles of an Anti-Racist, Trauma-Informed Organization*, which can be freely downloaded at https://www.nctsn.org/resources/being-anti-racist-is-central-to-trauma-informed-care-principles-of-an-anti-racist-trauma-informed-organization.

The work of trauma-informed anti-racism is a lifelong commitment. Given the responses and continued engagement of participants, there has been an expressed interest in hosting a second Virtual ARS Initiative.

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