

TRANSFORMING INSTITUTIONAL VALUES: REVISITED

AS AN EMERGING ANTI-RACIST/ANTI-OPPRESSIVE INSTITUTION, Crossroads has been working to establish and articulate the principled place on which we stand. This process allows us to define emerging anti-racist **Transforming Values** we introduced.* It also provides the opportunity to reflect on and identify the 'traditional' white institutional values we all struggle to shed – especially when remembering that the all-too-familiar values were established when institutions were legally mandated to be racially segregated.

Values shaping white institutions & creating discomfort/dysfunction, a by-product of the embedded oppression and misuse of power.	Transforming Values, often in conflict with traditional white institutional values; cultivate terrain for anti-racist accountability to germinate.
<p>Either/Or Thinking: Right/wrong, black/white, male/female, etc. Forces out diversity; complies with rigid ways of being. Power consolidated & maintained with select few 'right, good, white, male' against which all else is measured. Creates myth that it is efficient for everyone to be the same.</p>	<p>Both/And thinking with a bias toward action: Acknowledges that multiple realities/myriad ways to 'do' institutional life exist. Purpose: work through differences to find solutions that move toward anti-racist goals. Bias toward action means not allowing conflict to paralyze us into indecision and immobility.</p>
<p>Scarcity Worldview: Budgets reflect finite resources & become excuse for limiting activities. Creates environment rife with 'knee-jerk' reaction of "No – we don't have enough money for that. " "No" becomes automatic answer to innovation, anti-oppression and liberation. Cannot be mission-focused when default setting is 'No'.</p>	<p>Abundant worldview that uses resources responsibly: If we operate from premise of "We have an abundance of power, how do we want to use that power?" then questions about resources begin to shift. What we understand to be resources begins to change, and how we use resources is transformed.</p>
<p>Secrecy Mode: Information is power; when it is distributed on a "needs-to-know" basis, power is also unequally distributed. Secrecy controls power; it is almost always destructive - leads to dishonesty and triangulation. Secrecy destroys trust. Confidentiality gets confused with secrecy; "confidential" decisions are often in reality carried out in secret as a way to maintain the power status quo.</p>	<p>Transparent communication & decision making that guards personal integrity: Inclusive processes take longer to come to consensus, but once a decision is made, implementation is quicker. Confidentiality (not secrecy) is important to transparent communication, allowing individuals to make mistakes and recover from them without being scapegoated or demonized by the institution</p>
<p>Individual Action: Isolates and sets people up to compete with one another. Compartmentalized activities increase competition, creating a redundancy of activities -- similar functions cannot be combined/ shared. When focusing internally on competing for resources, mission and relationships with the world outside the institution are lost. Individual achievement nurtured by white culture undermines ability to work for a larger whole.</p>	<p>Cooperation & Collaboration that nurture individual creativity: Maintaining a spirit of co-operation & collaboration bound by a collective perspective/commitment to the analysis of racism allows institutions to stand in the midst of diversity with integrity and respect. Individual creativity happens in the parameters of an accountable, responsible relationship with the rest of the community.</p>

Four Transforming Values

Discussion

Preparation:

1. Prior to the gathering, each participant study the Transforming Values sheet (from Crossroads).
2. Local communities could invite people of color to join them for this conversation.

Group Discussion

3. Share around the question:
 - Out of your own experience, how have you practiced the four transforming values – or not?
 - Share a time when it would have been helpful to have acted out of any of these values.
4. Look at recent events such as the Haiti earthquake, the BP oil spill in the Gulf, the situation with the Doe Run mine in La Oroya, Peru. How have the non-transformative attitudes been operative in the systems underlying these events and in the responses to these events? How might outcomes be different if the transformative elements were operative?