

Five Lessons/Observations on Racial Equity/DEI Work

Observation # 1 – The Practice Gap

- There are several – and promising -- evidence-based strategies for bias reduction and interruption; application requires experimentation and habitual practice; habitual practice requires new ways of thinking about capacity – both time and load management.

Observation # 2 – Humor, Music and Intergroup Connection

- REI work is about systems and structures; but it's also about human emotions and the various ways that emotions help or hinder the work;
- People will not habitually practice new behaviors in environments high on fear, anxiety and shame (or shaming)
- Humor, music and intergroup connection reduce cortisol; they also function as a relational lubricant.

Observation # 3 -- Coaching

- Sometimes the most effective internal intervention is a coaching one;
- Coaching isn't about solving problems; it's about supporting people in addressing what's beneath the problem(s)

Observation # 4 – Starting with the destination versus the disparity

- Start with outcomes – a detailed vision of a DC [or organization _____] that embodies equity, inclusion and belonging; then back into strategies;
- *Practice – Imagine it's 2023; DC embodies equity and inclusion; when you walk through neighborhoods, what do you see, hear and feel?*

Observation # 5 – From Fragmentation to Combination

- Combination therapy was one of the most significant breakthroughs in cancer treatment
- Our approach (I believe) with respect to REI is fragmented (i.e., racial healing, mind sciences/implicit bias, structural work); what would a combination approach look like?

Questions or feedback -- reach out to Dushaw at Dushaw@thespacesproject.org