Justice, Equity, and Belonging Collaborative

Equity Decision Making Tool

Description & Purpose:

The Equity Decision Making Tool (EDMT) is a simple, structured, user-friendly tool that guides decision-makers and leaders through an equitable decision-making process. The EDMT allows leaders to pause and think about equity and how equity can impact decisions made within their organizations. The EDMT calls to attention:

- Who you are as an individual
- Who your team is as decision-makers
- Who are those affected by decisions
- What effects and impacts decisions will have
- What happens after decisions are made

The EDMT is a powerful tool for reflection. It can be used to ensure that **all** voices involved in and/or affected by a decision are **valued** and **heard**. The EDMT is structured to facilitate conversations prior to making decisions, during the decision-making process, and after decisions are made. *Anyone* that is involved in making decisions can use this tool with their team. The EDMT should be used:

- When a decision is made that impacts the cultural integrity of an organization
- When a decision is made that impacts the strategic focus of an organization
- When a decision is made that will impact any populations or groups within an organization
- When a decision is made that will impact the community
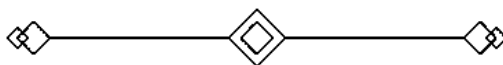
Instructions for Use:

1. Evaluate and reflect upon what decision needs to be made or the question at hand.
2. Establish group norms with the decision-makers at the table and **write them down!**
3. Prior to making a decision, consider the questions in Section A, Section B, and Section C with your team.
4. After making a decision, consider the questions in Section D.
5. For additional exploration, consider the questions in Section E.

For additional resources to help inform your organization's decision-making process, visit the Justice, Equity, and Belonging Page on ECCLA's website.

Prior to making a decision, consider the following:

Section A: Pause & Examine

Who are you as individuals? Who are you as a decision-making team?

1. Who is involved in making the decision? Who is at the table right now?
    a. What are the racial compositions represented here?
    b. What are the dimensions of diversity, other than race, represented here? *Dimensions of diversity other than race can include gender, class, sexuality, gender identity, culture, age, ability, immigrant status, etc.*
    c. What are the racial compositions and dimensions of diversity *not* represented here? *Why* are they not represented here? How can we include their voices?
    d. What biases do we bring to the table as decision-makers?
    e. What institutional power within the organization do we have? What powers do we *not* have?

Section B: Mitigate Effects

Who are those affected by this decision?

1. Who is affected by this decision? Who is *not* at the table right now?
    a. Who benefits the most from this decision? Who benefits the least from this decision?
    b. What are the racial compositions represented in those affected by this decision?
    c. What are the dimensions of diversity, other than race, represented in those affected by this decision? *Dimensions of diversity other than race can include gender, class, sexuality, gender identity, culture, age, ability, immigrant status, etc.*
    d. How are those affected invited for authentic feedback in the decision-making process and the outcomes of the decision?
    e. Have needs *and* outcomes been identified with community input? How? Why?
2. What are the power dynamics or disparities between decision makers and those affected?
    a. How can power disparities create barriers, obstacles, or conflicts?
    b. How can we intentionally address these power disparities?
3. How might this affect various groups differently? (i.e., People of Color vs. White, Staff vs. Community Served, etc.)
4. What supports will we offer to those affected by this decision?
5. How will we communicate this decision in an equitable manner?

Section C: Think Forward

What effects and impacts will this decision have?

1. How does this decision perpetuate, maintain, and/or extend systemic racism and marginalization? Including but not limited to white supremacist culture.
    a. In what ways could this decision avoid perpetuating, maintaining, and/or extending systemic racism and marginalization?
2. How does this decision advance justice, equity, and belonging in our system?
    a. In what ways could this decision fail to advance justice, equity, and belonging in our system?
3. What are the resources and supports needed to ensure this decision is equitable?
4. What are the potential challenges, barriers, or blind spots?
5. What evaluation tools and measures do we need to determine the impacts and outcomes of this decision?
6. How will this decision meet the needs of all?

After making a decision, consider the following:

Section D: Reflect

What happened? What effects and impacts did this decision have?

1. Did we succeed in advancing justice, equity, and belonging?
   a. To what degree?
   b. How do we know?
   c. What tools, measures, and resources were used to determine the impacts of the decision?
   d. What steps were taken to ensure justice, equity, and belonging are achieved?
2. How have we invited authentic feedback from those affected during the decision-making process and the outcomes?
   a. Who helped us in ways we did not expect?
3. What are the unintended consequences of the decision?
   a. Positive?
   b. Negative?
   c. How did this decision make those affected feel? How was this information gathered?
4. How will your organization intentionally and continuously use the EDMT?

For additional exploration, consider the following:

Section E: Dive Deeper

1. How would the decision-making process change if there was a different team at the table right now?
2. Is your organization prepared to adapt to meet the needs of new individuals or team members?
3. What is your commitment to professional learning for justice, equity, and belonging?
4. What resources are allocated for justice, equity, and belonging training *and* for the implementation of culturally responsive practices?