Decolonizing Project Management

2024 - Noelle Saemerow

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Territory Acknowledgement

I respectfully acknowledge that I have the privilege to live, work, and play on the ancestral, traditional, and unceded territories of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Sḵwx̱wú7mesh (Squamish), and səlilwətaɬ (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations, as an uninvited guest and settler.

Intention Setting

My intention for our time together is to learn from one another - I come to you with an open heart and open mind, and hope to be received in the same way. I welcome any questions or comments you may have.

Thank you for taking time to join me today.

Main conversation ideas

1. Colonialism and Decolonization

2. Two-Eyed Seeing

3. Tools and Suggestions

1

Colonialism and Decolonization

Colonialism

- Anti-Indigenous racism was socialized into early settlers, in order to advance colonialism.

- These negatives messages about Indigenous people were so deeply ingrained, that they have persisted through generations

- The education, corporate, justice, and healthcare systems we have today were built on these narratives

What is decolonization?

A process of disrupting, dismantling, and deconstructing colonial and cultural barriers that divide, suppress, and oppress Indigenous peoples and equity-deserving communities.
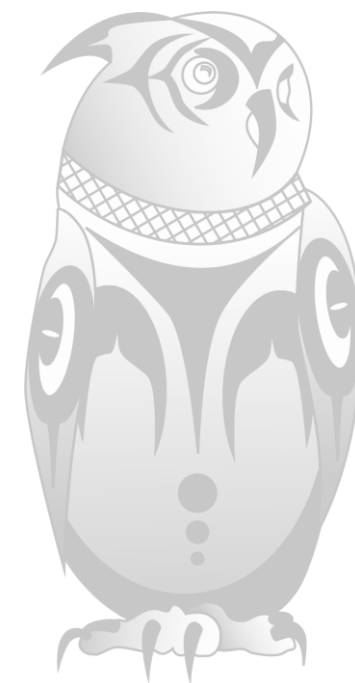
Equality is giving everyone a shoe

Equity is giving everyone a shoe that fits

www.everyday-democracy.org

Who are equity-deserving groups?

Equity-deserving groups are communities that face significant colonial challenges by just <u>existing</u> in society.

Equity-seeking groups are those of us that experience key <u>barriers</u> to access, opportunities and resources due to <u>colonial disadvantage</u> and discrimination and actively seek justice and transformation.

- Indigenous Peoples
- 2SLGBTQQIA+
- POC
- New Comers
- PWUS
- PWD
- Women
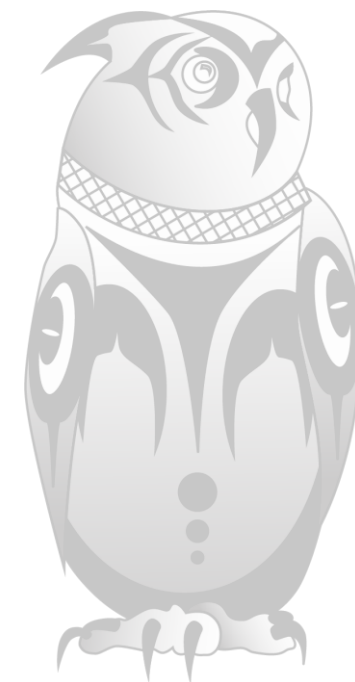
1 INEQUALITY
Unequal access to opportunities

2 EQUALITY?
Evenly distributed tools and assistance

1 INEQUALITY
Unequal access to opportunities

2 EQUALITY?
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3 EQUITY
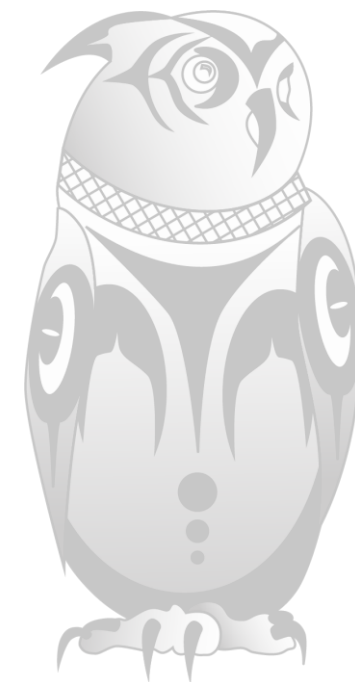Custom tools that identify and address inequality - deficit model - adjustments for individuals
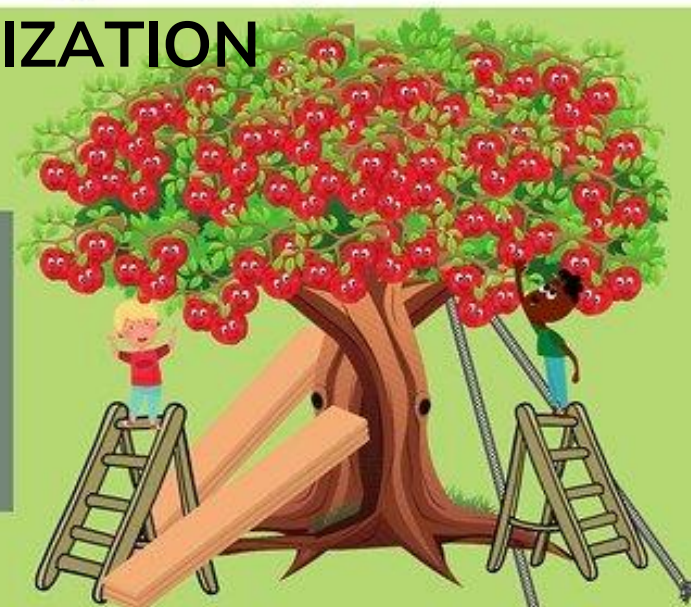
In the context we work in:

1. Identify opportunities to uplift equity deserving groups.

2. What challenges are we facing in doing this?

2
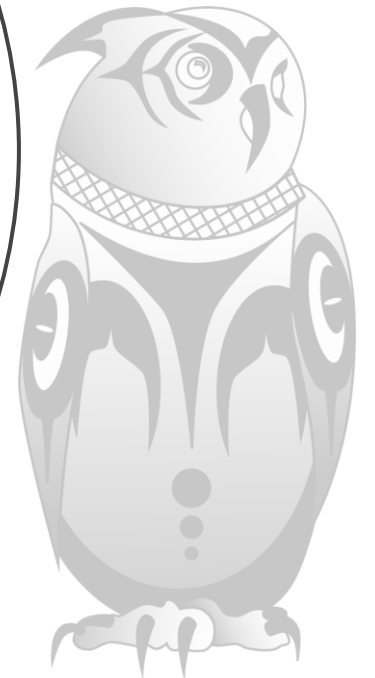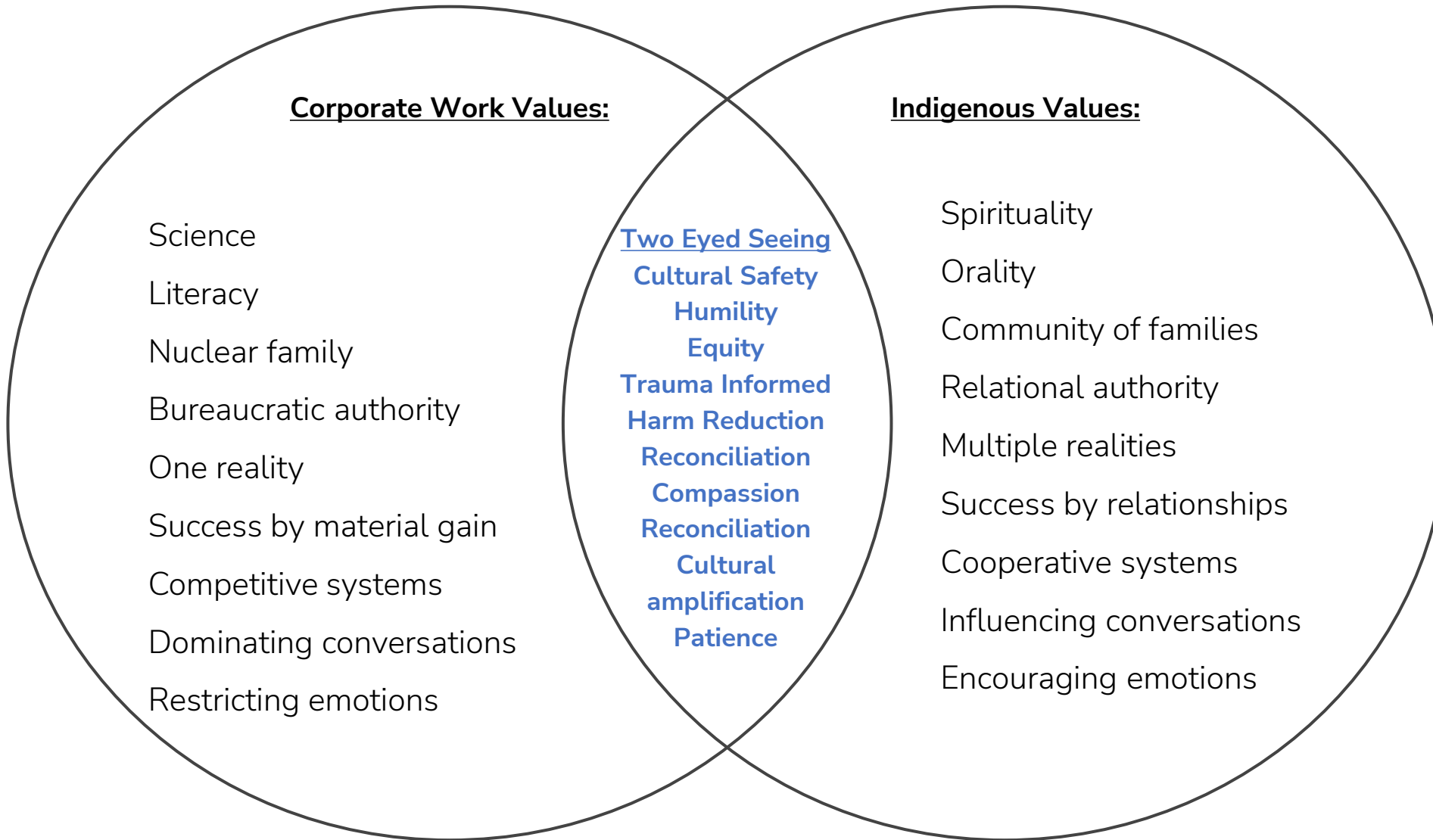## Two-Eyed Seeing

Two-Eyed Seeing:

Two-Eyed Seeing embraces "learning to see from one eye with the strengths of Indigenous knowledges and ways of knowing, and from the other eye with the strengths of mainstream knowledges and ways of knowing, and to use both these eyes together, for the benefit of all".

-Elder Dr. Albert Marshall

Two-Eyed Seeing:

Corporate Work Values:

Science

Literacy

Nuclear family

Bureaucratic authority

One reality

Success by material gain

Competitive systems

Dominating conversations

Restricting emotions

Two Eyed Seeing
Cultural Safety
Humility
Equity
Trauma Informed
Harm Reduction
Reconciliation
Compassion
Reconciliation
Cultural amplification
Patience

Indigenous Values:

Spirituality

Orality

Community of families

Relational authority

Multiple realities

Success by relationships

Cooperative systems

Influencing conversations

Encouraging emotions

Time as a cultural safety tool

LEVERAGING TIME FOR SAFETY	
KAIROS TIME	**CHRONOS TIME**
Higher time	Chronological time
Qualitative	Quantitative
Measured in moments	Measured in minutes
Moments can vary	Minute is a minute
Time is cyclical	Past-present-future
Infinite version	Finite version

3

Tools and Suggestions
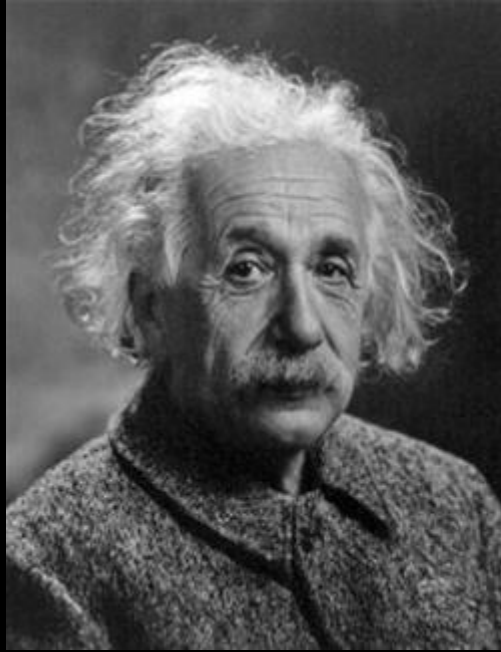
We can't solve problems by using the same kind of thinking we used when we created them.

(Albert Einstein)

How do we decolonize our work?

1. How do our leadership and project management frameworks shift when we implement equity?

2. How do we challenge the status quo?
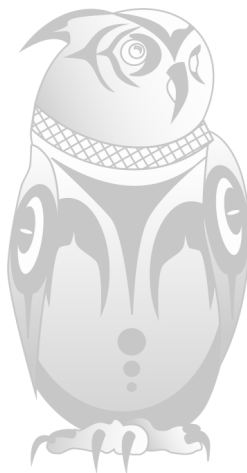
How do we decolonize our work?

Governance
- Ensure space for Indigenous leadership/voice from the beginning of any project
- Take guidance and leadership from local Nations whenever possibly

Engagement
- Land-based First Nations, as well as ensuring FNMI are engaged
- Building and sustaining relationships built on mutual trust and accountability
- Including Youth and Elder representation

How do we decolonize our work?

Agendas
- Include time and space at the beginning of meetings for an opening and introductions
- Land acknowledgments
- Order of events, remove time specifications

Elders
- Provide a gift and a payment for Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and other guests who support

How do we decolonize our work?

Reporting

- Advocate for reduced or alternative reporting
- Provide support in compiling reports, when necessary

Funding Timelines

- Create clear outcomes
- Build the project framework collaboratively and transparently
- Remain accountable throughout project
- Be flexible with what a successful outcome is; balance the project goals with what is realistic
- Focus on honesty, transparency, remaining receptive, and understanding
- "We move at the speed of trust"

Reminders

If you lead a project, it is about relationships.
- Your job is NOT to manage people, but it is to manage relationships with partners and between team members
- Your job is to draw boundaries when you know things aren't being done in a good way - your voice is crucial

Cross-train team members to be able to support each other. Be flexible with each person's strengths

Manage and support your own mental health - model good behaviour and encourage in others

What are some trauma-informed communication strategies that we can implement in building relationships?

- Slowing things down
- Pausing
- Seeing if they have questions
- Mindful proximity
- Invitational language: "Is it okay if we… do you mind if we…"
- Smiling
- Clarity is kindness
- Eye contact
- Empathetic
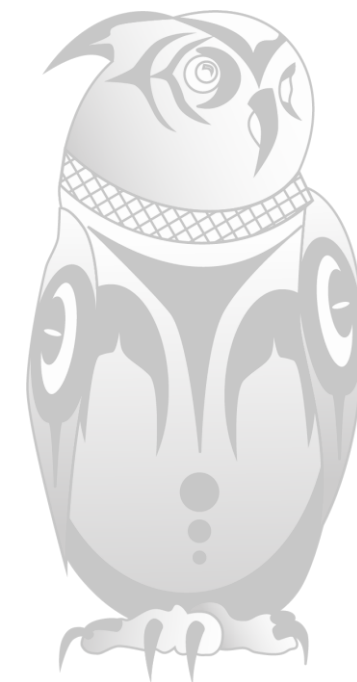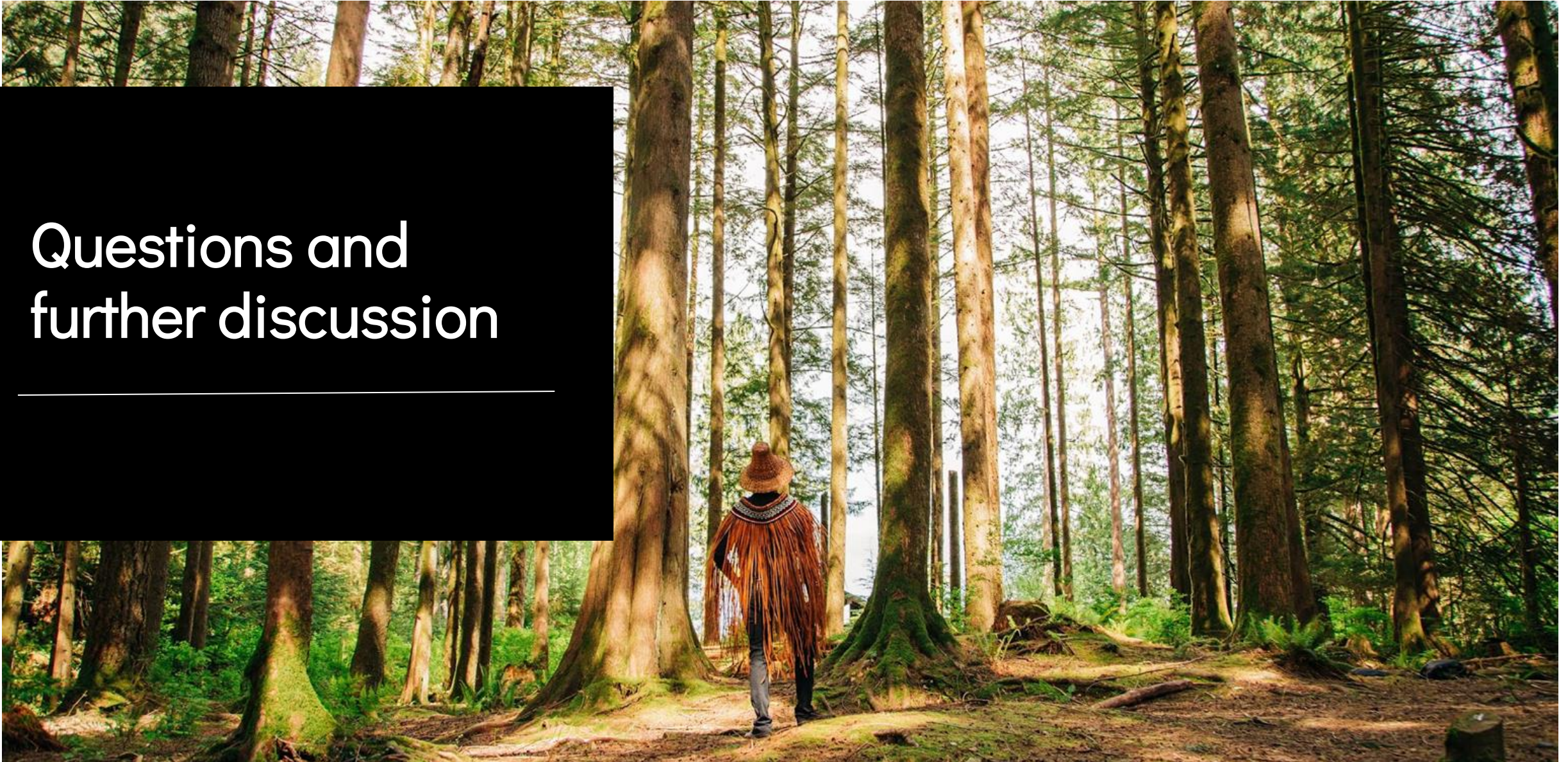- Team patience is hardwired

Personal reflections

1. What are 3 things we can do in our work to challenge
   and disrupt the status quo?

2. What does equity look like in your sphere of influence?

Questions and further discussion

THANK YOU

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