

? WHAT

🔍 WHY

☑️ HOW

What

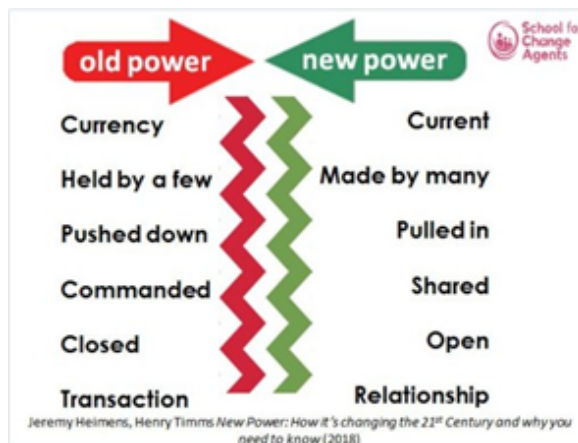
Power is a complex dynamic in all communities. In order to foster strong social fabric in a community, decision making power needs to rest in numerous places; the autonomy of grassroots groups and networks of people who dedicate themselves to the wellbeing of their community is extremely important in this context. The kinds of power structures and dynamics that people are used to often have to be disrupted to achieve this. Your understanding of power and commitment to equity will provide the foundation for trust building in the community.

Why

Our communities, cities and society are built on colonial and white supremacist constructs. CCA seeks to create the conditions for community building that shares power and engages in equitable processes. Siona Koker, Gillian Perera and Ajeev Bhatia share their thoughts on CCA and systems of oppression in these blogs.

There are significant power differentials that exist between the people working and living in marginalized communities and the formal institutions and governments who have decision making power regarding priority initiatives and resource allocation. It is often the case that decisions about how to address issues in the community are made by people outside the community and/or in large institutions.

When support and resources flow to players outside of communities to design solutions for communities, their solutions lack local context, knowledge and relationships; communities often experience this as people, organizations and plans “parachuting in”, often causing harm. Prioritizing equity and power sharing ensures that strategies to address issues in a community takes a by-the-community-for-the-community approach. This means ensuring that strategies and plans are community-centred, building on the lived experiences and historical learnings of multiple communities, and especially Black, Indigenous and racialized communities. Connected Communities offers a way to support processes that allow for decision making and resources to be more evenly distributed.



How

Key Question(s)

- What are the historical social, economic, political factors that have shaped the wellbeing and opportunities of marginalized people in the community? How has this history built trust or perpetuated harm to the community? How are you and your organization intentionally centring equity in everything you do?

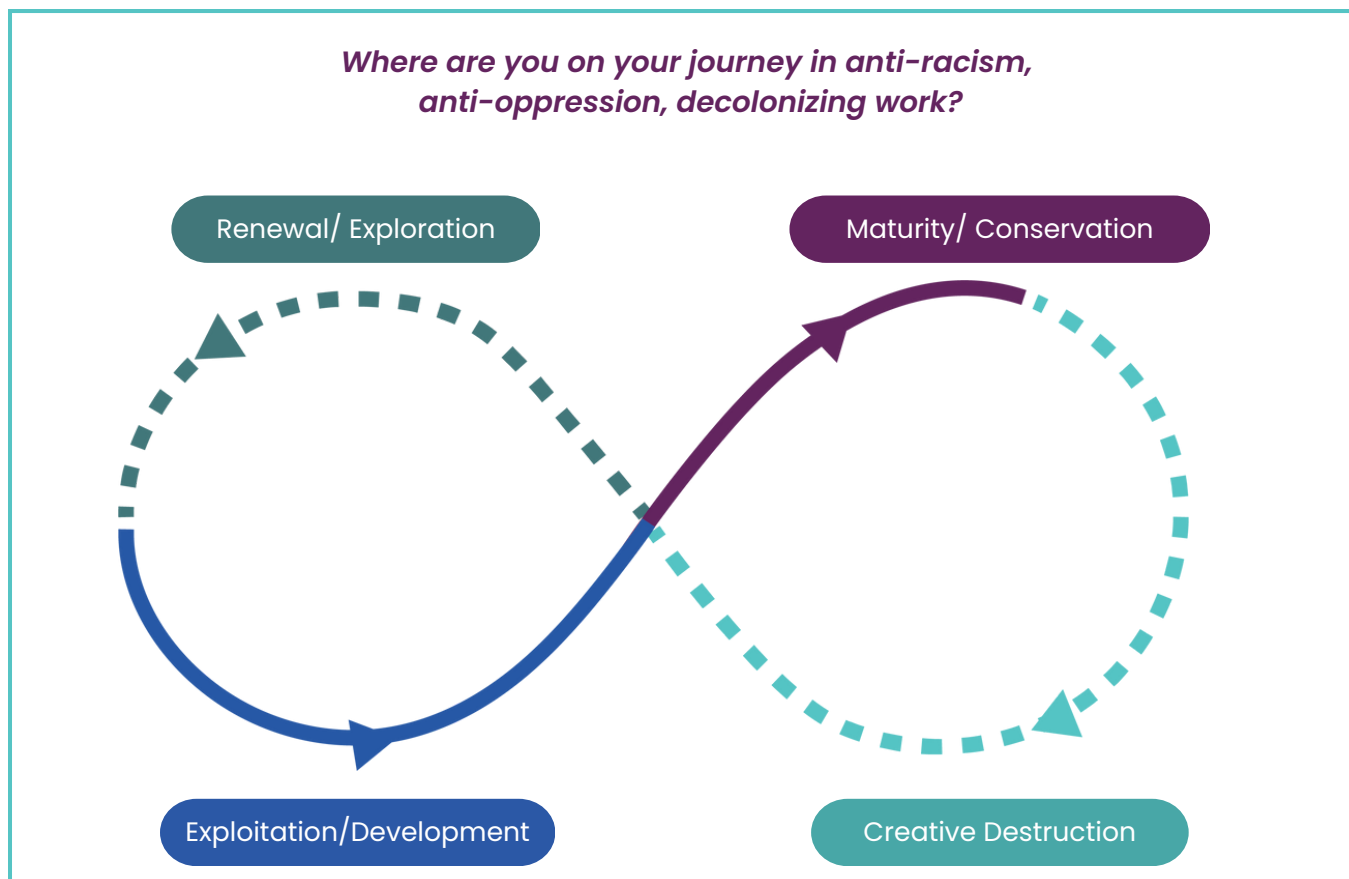
Actions

These are actions to get you started. If at all possible, we advise that you work with experts to help you on your organization's journey to embed anti-racist, anti-colonial practices in your work.

- Before you engage with people in the community, consider both [your own social location and your location in relation to others](#): how access to positional power such as education, employment, social capital and identities such as race, gender, sexual orientation increase or decrease influence in the community. What your social location in relation to theirs means in terms of power, privilege, life experience and knowledge.
- No matter what Canadian community you are working in, you are designing processes on Indigenous lands. These tools can help you [learn about the land you are on, and why and how to offer effective land acknowledgements](#).
- Most of our decision making structures, programs and organizations are built on white supremacist ideals. Learn how the characteristics of [white supremacy culture](#) show up in organizations and antidotes to counter them,
- Although prioritizing power sharing and equity is a key in and of itself, equity work is infused in all CCA keys. [10 Keys for dismantling white supremacy culture](#) provides guidance on how to support anti-racism thinking and racial justice practice in relation to all your Connected Communities work.
- The language we use can be powerful indicators of our worldview. [These tips](#) offer some do's and don'ts when seeking right relations with Indigenous people. [This glossary](#) can be helpful in finding the right words in your anti-racism journey.
- Redistributing power starts with the groups you are facilitating. This tool can help you to consider the [level of decision making](#) local players, particularly residents and grassroots leaders, have access to as you design collective, local workforce development strategies. You can also use this tool to learn about [concrete actions you can take to decentre whiteness in event planning](#).

Indicators of Success

- ❑ People feel their contribution is valued and justly compensated.
- ❑ People who have been marginalized, those with identities and social positions which, in the mainstream, are distanced from power and decision making, feel authentically included in decision making and collaboration.
- ❑ Resources are distributed fairly within and across the network.
- ❑ Your organization or network has clear mechanisms for accountability and transparency



Reflection Questions

- At each level of scale; grassroots, organizational, institutional and policy, who has been engaged in the process? Whose priorities have been centred?
- How have the people with privilege in your network stepped back/ stepped aside so that people who have been more on the margins (and especially Black, Indigenous and racialized) can take on leadership roles and be the ones to receive the rewards and accolades associated with the work.
- What does your anti-racism learning journey look like? How is learning and reflecting about race, class and privilege embedded in your policies, processes and structures?
- What decolonizing/ anti-racist practices can people hold you accountable for?

We hope you find these tools useful in continuing the momentum to build on local strengths, facilitated collaborative processes and learn together. Catalysts' Circle offers workshops, coaching and strategy design services that can further help you dig deeply into these keys and explore the others that can help you make a truly Connected Community.



Catalysts' Circle can be found at www.connectedcommunities.ca or email agloger@catalystscircle.ca for more information