

# KNOWING YOUR STRENGTHS, LIMITATIONS AND ALLIES

## Step 8: Organizational Capacities

The eighth step explores if your organization has the will and the capacity to take on the work that is required to achieve your goal.

→ **EXERCISE:** Assess the organizational will to take on this type of work for a sustained period.

◆ Do the board, staff and other leaders within the organization share a race analysis that will prioritize this work? \_\_\_\_\_

If your answer is no, or you are wavering, (e.g. some staff and board members share a race analysis and others don't YET)

- What concrete steps do we need to take to increase organizational awareness and understanding of structural racism?

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◆ Does leadership have the courage and commitment to take this on? \_\_\_\_\_

If your answer is no, or you are wavering,

- (courage) What fears might be in the way? What is preventing courageous leadership?
- (commitment) What other organizational issues or concerns are monopolizing the time and energy of leadership? What is preventing a commitment to racial equity?

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Beyond staff and financial resources, at least four additional types of resources may be required – analytical, convening, communicative and networking.

**What capacities (analytical, convening, communicative, networking) will be needed? Do you have them?**

Analytical: deep knowledge of specific policy, legislative and regulatory environments; familiarity with racial dynamics and outcomes of specific institutions and sectors; capacity to identify and assess the power narratives, images and other representations linked to race; strategic thinking.

→ **EXERCISE:** Our capacities in this area include:

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Convening: capacity to bring together disparate stakeholder groups, provide safe space for honest discussion with an agenda that moves process forward; provide support for on-going learning communities.

→ **EXERCISE:** Our capacities in this area include:

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Communicative: ability to frame information for and reach critical audiences.

→ **EXERCISE:** Our capacities in this area include:

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Networking: membership in and ability to develop and participate in formal and informal networks and coalitions; ability to access resources through these relationships.

→ **EXERCISE:** Our capacities in this area include:

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# Step 9: Relationships with Allies

The ninth step addresses the reality that no organization can “go it alone.” Considering all that is required to reach your objectives, recognize what you can do effectively and identify others with capacities your organization lacks and determine who might be potential allies.

## What allies, partners and collaborators will you need?

Addressing the policy, institutional and cultural barriers associated with racial inequities may almost invariably require networking, communicative, legislative, research, civic, legal and other kinds of expertise that are unlikely to be found in any single organization.

→ **EXERCISE:** Chart which organizations in your community or region traditionally take leadership in this particular issue – area.

Who holds leadership in this issue-area?	Do they represent *Impacted or Privileged Leadership?	How is Leadership Exercised? Traditional, Decentralized, etc	What is their Stake in the Issue	Ally or Obstacle?

## A Note about Meaningful Partnerships, Coalitions and Base-building

As you prepare to embark on relationship-building with allies and organizations, there is much to learn from reflecting on your leadership on issues related to systemic racism and considering whether we are coming from a place of “impacted leadership” or “privileged leadership.”

\*Impacted leadership refers to leadership by those who are experiencing, or who have experienced the impacts of the issues you are advocating around. In this case, impacted leadership would be leadership by BIPOC. Too often, those most directly impacted by systemic racism have been pushed to the margins in the collective and/or organizational conversations and excluded from conversations about their concerns, needs, and wants.

Privileged leadership comes from people not directly affected by the issues. If you identify as white, or experience white-skin/light-skin privilege and are not directly impacted by systemic racism, you can consider yourself privileged in spaces where the goal is to advance racial justice.

As leaders, it is incumbent on all of us to consider how we are exercising our leadership.

- ◆ Are you leveraging any privileged leadership you may have to center and support the leadership of those BIPOC directly impacted by systemic racism?
- ◆ Are you intentionally creating space for impacted leadership in your organization and your communities?

### Building Relationships and Trust with Community Partners

Build trust with your allies by showing up for their work in solidarity. As you look to your action planning toward your Racial Equity Goal, take time to make authentic connections and listen to their experiences.

Here are some things you can do to build strong relationships with your community partners:

- Attend a forum, webinar, call, or town hall held by one of your partners
- Participate in a social media “push” by one of your partners
- Read your partner’s materials about gender-based violence
- Read out to learn more about the issue and the advocacy your community is already engaged in
- Consider co-convening an event

**Remember: Showing Up only gets you Partway.**

To build meaningful relationships, particularly with individuals and organizations working at the frontlines of justice issues, you must continually center and amplify the experiences of those closest to the issues.

**Any other notes about potential allies**

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