



Our Services

#1 – Support for Groups

#2 – Support for Organizations & Communities

#1

Support for Groups

We can provide support for groups and/or group leaders in several ways. All groups are different, so there is no “canned” or “one-size-fits-all” approach. We simply have an introductory conversation to see if there is a good fit and what support might be most useful.

There are three basic ways we can provide support. As usual, “the devil is in the details.”

#1 Conversations with group leaders to design how the group can use the site and pursue its mission – for example:

- Find discussion topics or FAQs
- Identify benefits and create a vision of the desired future
- Manage the journey of being an anti-racist, etc.
- Identify specific actions to take
- Get past the barriers to action
- Support each other in using the action templates
- Add value to an advocacy process
- Be effective allies
- Find more resources for information or connections

#2 Conversations with the group as a whole about specific topics or projects – similar topics as above, but addressed by the group

#3 Conversations with group leaders or the group as a whole regarding group development and performance – for example:

- Starting a group
- Developing and maintaining a group
- Managing group projects
- Effective meetings
- Decision-making and conflict resolution
- Etc.

How to Begin - It's Simple

Email Us (gordon@counteringracism.org)

1. Your name and role in the group
2. Your group and its purpose/mission
3. Any initial thoughts about support that might be helpful

#2

Our Services – DEI Initiatives

The services we provide are focused on helping organizations and communities lead the change required to counter racism in their particular setting.

Note. Our services are complementary to services that educate and raise awareness. We focus on helping you develop the leadership roles and core strategies required to lead the organizational or community change required for sustained success.

Who We Work With – Organizations or Communities

Organizations. For organizations an effective engagement will almost always require effective working relationships with many or all of the following.

1. C-Suite
2. Executive Sponsors
3. Boards of Directors (for alignment)
4. DEI Execs and/or DEI Boards
5. Change Teams
6. Other organizations providing DEI programming

Communities. Communities have different structures, and the variety precludes being very specific here. However, it will always be a matter of working with the governance structure, the individuals and groups that lead implementation, and the variety of community stakeholders that need to be engaged in various ways.

“The most reliable way to predict the future is to create it.”

Abraham Lincoln

Our Focus

We can provide end-to-end services – from initiative design to full implementation. We can work with you right from the beginning or we can engage at any point in the change journey to accelerate and protect progress.

1. Initiative Design – making the case, vision, strategy/plans, organizational design, leadership structure and teams
2. Implementation of the desired changes – goal achievement – making visions real
3. Renewal, redirection, or acceleration of implementation (if progress/outcomes are disappointing)

We can create an approach that is highly structured or one that is very flexible – to match your style and the challenges you face. No two change scenarios are the same – but there is a common underlying foundation.

Our Approach is Based on 5 Principles

Although every consultation is customized, there are five principles that always provide direction.

1. **We build on vision and strength.** DEI initiatives often focus on what's missing, weaknesses, gaps, etc. Those are certainly important to acknowledge and deal with, but the critical power is found in a clear vision of what's desired (all the benefits) and the strengths that are brought by individuals, groups/teams, and the organization as a whole.
2. **We match the DEI initiative with the business mission.** The moral case and business case need to be complementary to be worth committing to and sustainable. DEI initiatives are tough challenges and need that foundation.
3. **We focus on organization design and change leadership.** “Every organization and community is perfectly designed to get the outcomes it gets.” Organization design is a disciplined process and can be complex or relatively simple depending

on the organization. It's a central part of leading change and there are complementary leadership strategies to achieve the desired design and outcomes.

4. **We focus on leadership leverage.** That can be on an individual level, a group/team level, a systemic level or in the organization's or community's relationship with its environment. There is always leverage on multiple levels and it needs to be identified for effectiveness, let alone efficiency.
5. **It's always about the "leadership web."** Leading effective DEI initiatives – certainly those that achieve all of the possible benefits – requires an aligned web of leaders. That web starts at the top, extends well into the organization, and is developed and supported in a disciplined fashion.

*"Whatever you do, or dream you can, begin it. Boldness has
genius and power, and magic in it."*

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

There are Two Different High Leverage Scenarios

Complex or large-scale change, such as DEI, presents leadership with two distinct challenges. The first is in the beginning of the journey. The second is at multiple points on the path as the journey unfolds. There are specific leadership roles and strategies that offer leverage in the beginning. There are specific roles and strategies that offer leverage as the change journey unfolds. There is not a hard boundary between "beginnings" and "on the path", but they are different.

A note on leverage. Effectively, let alone efficiently, leading change is not a matter of throwing a lot of activities at the challenge – investing a lot of attention, time, and energy. It's a matter of thoughtfully identifying the points of leadership leverage and orienting the strategies to take advantage of them – and conserving time and energy as much as possible. That sounds obvious and simple, but it's not. It takes leadership discipline.

Scenario #1 In the Beginning – “Beginnings matter – a lot”

Successful DEI initiatives are complex tough change challenges. There are a surprising number of natural questions to be answered in order to successfully lead a DEI initiative.

Ten of the key questions are noted below and they can go a long way in either preparing to lead a DEI initiative.

1. Have we made the “business and moral cases to engage people and generate authentic “buy-in”?”
2. Do we have a clear and compelling picture of all the benefits that we might achieve and what that would be like (the “big picture” vision)?
3. Do we have a clear leadership contract – what people can expect from us and what we expect from them?
4. Have we put a powerful core leadership team in place that is capable of leading the initiative and creates credibility for the leadership of the initiative?
5. Have we defined the required elements of the organization (from structure, roles, and relationships to processes, systems, and capabilities)?
6. Do we have the required change plans defined?
7. Do we have a plan and resources for engaging people and preparing them – including expanding the web of aligned leaders?
8. Do we have a good system of communication for getting info out and in (feedback)?
9. Have we committed to the required capability building – individual, group/team and organizational?
10. Have we created an initiative that will generate energy vs. require more energy to be committed – thus increasing the stress and potential burnout? This is a deceptively important and challenging question.

*“The secret of change is to focus all of your energy not on fighting
the old, but on building the new.”*

Socrates

Scenario #2 On the Path – “We always ‘learn the way’ in major change journeys”

“Moving the needles.” Most DEI initiatives have goals that are deceptively difficult to achieve. That’s not because they are unrealistic goals, or the targets were set too high. It’s because DEI initiatives are naturally tough and complex, and success depends both on having the right design and leadership in the beginning and persevering and “holding the course” – for a surprisingly long period of time.

DEI initiatives are – by definition – journeys of change and such journeys require the ability to “learn the way” and respond effectively. There will be successes and frustrations. There will be a need to renew commitment and energy. There will be the need to learn from experience and respond quickly and often.

There are eight questions that can be asked at different points on the journey to focus on where the leadership leverage is for keeping the initiative on the path and keeping people healthy in the process.

1. Have we built the individual, group/team, and organizational capabilities required for success? If not, where is the leverage?
2. Have we instituted an approach of building on strength with confidence to challenge and support people in finding their new “best?”
3. Is leadership, particularly at the top, “modeling the way?” How can they act with “strategic intent” to do it even better?
4. Are we expanding our web of leaders into the organization and aligning it – and are we taking care of the leaders that have been engaged from the beginning? Where are the gaps and how can we fill them?
5. How is our communication system working – and have we increased our feedback and response capabilities as the journey unfolds? What’s working well that we can build on and where are the gaps – particularly in feedback and response?
6. Are we conducting frequent and informal “dynamic accountability” sessions to (a) celebrate progress and worthy efforts; (b) learn from the experience; and (c) determine what to keep doing, start doing, or stop doing? i.e., fast-cycle learning and response because we always “learn the way” once a major change effort is launched. Who is modeling this well and how do we spread it?
7. Are we connecting individuals and groups and repairing any relationships that have been broken or strained? “Connecting” means connecting people to people, people to the organization, and people to the mission of the initiative. How can we attend to this as it’s very easy to overlook?

8. Change naturally throws things out of alignment. Are we getting synergy by ensuring that the parts of the organization are aligned (for example strategy and structure, policies, and processes, etc.)? Where are the greatest current opportunities and threats?

"In times of change, learners inherit the earth."

Erich Fromm

Adapting the Six Change Leadership Roles and Their Core Strategies

"Being worthy of followers"

Every consultation is customized but based on solid models. There is no effective "cookie-cutter" approach to leading change. Success is always found in adapting a change model to (a) the specific nature of the change and (b) the organization or community. Our model uses six leadership roles, each with three cores strategies.

We can also work with other change models to ensure continuity if another model is already used by the organization - as long as it is compatible with our model (most are).

Our model is based on the classic heroic journey, which is THE story of change – whether individual, organizational or community in scale. There are six leadership roles to play, and each role has three core strategies to execute.

- The leadership roles and strategies play out in three phases: In the beginning, on the path, and in conclusion.
- The roles each have a phase in which they predominate, but there is usually some overlap.
- The leadership roles are not people – they are roles that will be played by different people at different levels of the organization.
- Different strategies will provide different leverage in different changes, but all of them are important and any that are missed will undermine success.
- The model is oriented toward corporate and organizational change, but is equally adaptable to community change.

“Leadership is lifting a person’s vision to high sights, the raising of a person’s performance to a higher standard, the building of a person’s personality beyond its normal limitations.”

Peter Drucker

Roles & Strategies “In the Beginning”

The Visionary

- Establish the “business and moral cases”
- Create the vision of the desired state we are pursuing
- Make a clear, credible, and compelling leadership commitment

The Architect

- Define the required organization or community design
- Establish a core leadership team that is – and is perceived to be – an “A” team
- Create the required change plan(s)

Roles & Strategies “On the Path”

The Catalyst

- Expand the “leadership web” begun by the Architect
- Prepare and engage the people
- “Operationalize” the vision and organization or community design – what it looks like “on the ground” and day-to-day

The Guide

- Support people in managing themselves throughout the journey
- Establish communication systems – out and in (feedback with quick response)

- Implement a healthy system of accountability – formal and frequent/informal

‘The Builder

- Expand and maintain the health of the leadership web
- Build the individual, group and systemic capabilities required (this includes using the challenges of the journey to develop new leaders)
- Guide people through the mastery process

Role & Strategies “In Conclusion”

The Integrator

- Manage the “ripple effect” – how changes affect others and their response
- Align the “things” of the organization (strategy, structure, processes, policies, etc.)
- Attune the people (values, beliefs, relationships, cultural norms, etc.)

A Note on Leadership Leverage. All of these strategies are high leverage, but that leverage will vary from change to change and throughout the journey. The key is always (a) customizing the roles and strategies to match the organization or community and the nature of the desired change; and (b) to keep checking on progress to continue to manage how the strategies are being implemented.

A Note on Hybrid Work Settings. All of the leadership roles and strategies can be adapted to fit onsite, distance or hybrid work settings.

Specific Models and Tools

There is a wide array of models and tools that can be used in executing these core strategies. They all need to be customized to fit the nature of the challenge and the organization – at the specific point in time. The models and tools range from team building, project management, and accountability to effective meetings, leadership and management styles, and conflict resolution. They can support the strategies. They do not replace them.

*"If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more,
and become more, you are a leader."*

John Quincy Adams

How to Begin

Just get in touch and have an initial conversation with us about:

1. The DEI initiative you are leading or anticipating
2. Where you are in the process
3. Your experience so far, and how we might support you

Email Us (gordon@counteringracism.org)

4. Your name
5. Role/Title
6. Organization
7. Best way and times to contact you
8. Anything you want to add to help prep for the call

*"Change does not roll in on wheels of inevitability, but
comes through continuous struggle."*

Martin Luther King, Jr.

