



A Collaborative Evaluation of the Women and HIV/AIDS Initiative's Anti-Black Racism Work



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Contents

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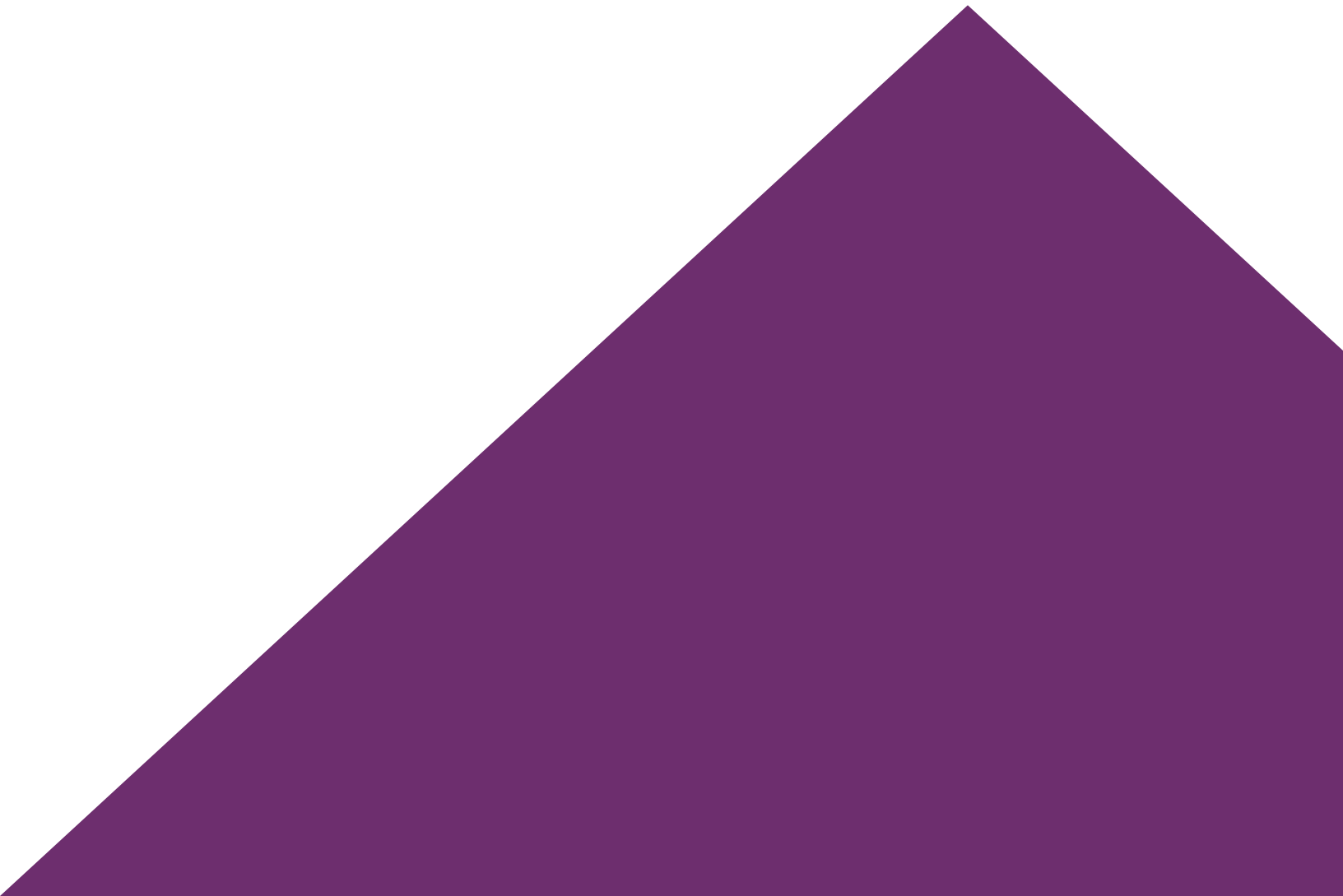
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We acknowledge that this work has been conducted on unceded, occupied lands of the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Anishnabeg, the Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee and the Wendat peoples. We ground our ongoing work in listening, reflection and actions of solidarity in support of movements for justice and self-determination. We bridge our immigrant experiences and histories on the land with feminist transnational movements seeking freedom from settler occupation and colonialism.

We acknowledge and thank the many people who lent their time and wisdom to the making of this evaluation. We thank WHAI's Director Molly Bannerman for trusting us with this critical work, for co-planning the evaluation and ensuring that time and resources be allotted to support the meaningful growth of anti-Black racism (ABR) at WHAI. We recognize Dr. Rai Reece's foundational ABR work with WHAI that was instrumental to how this work evolved. We thank Dr. Reece and Dr. Sarah Switzer, the leads for the recent ABR facilitation work that was the focus of this evaluation, for their invaluable wisdom and critical analysis that have strengthened the content and quality of this evaluation in multiple ways. We recognize the Managers and Executive Directors who generously lent their time to interviews, bringing thoughtful perspectives to the forefront. Thank you to Kristin Boyer, Denese Frans-Joseph and Ashley Smoke and for your inputs and meaningful support for this evaluation along the way. And finally, we thank the WHAI Coordinators who gave us their time and trust, sharing their experiences with openness and honesty.



1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2022 the Women and HIV/AIDS Initiative (WHAI) approached 7.10 Stories to co-plan an evaluation of the anti-Black racism (ABR) work in which they had been deeply engaged. The ABR work at WHAI was designed and led by Dr. Rai Reece and Dr. Sarah Switzer, who facilitated sessions with WHAI Coordinators over the course of 2021-2022. As this iteration of the work came to a close, an evaluation was planned to determine key gains, learnings and areas of growth for future work. WHAI's Director, Molly Bannerman initiated a draft evaluation plan, shared with Vijaya Chikermane and Lori Chambers at 7.10 Stories as well as with Dr. Reece and Dr. Switzer for review and inputs. In collaboration with WHAI, an evaluation plan was soon finalized with the following goals:

- To determine the impact of the ABR sessions on WHAI Coordinators who participated and gather process and outcome based knowledge that would inform future growth;
- To gather Facilitators' reflections and recommendations around co-design, implementation and further development of the work; and
- To identify recommendations that would inform future iterations of ABR work at WHAI and support the sharing and adaptation of this work across the sector.

To meet these goals a primarily qualitative evaluation methodology was planned focusing on the process of the work, the outcomes experienced by those engaged, and the ways in which it might grow at WHAI and beyond. The work, co-designed and led by Dr. Reece and Dr. Switzer, involved ten (10) facilitated sessions in two (2) groups, one for Black, Brown, Asian, Indigenous and other racialized WHAI Coordinators, and one for white Coordinators with the aim to create space for honest, supportive and confidential discussion. The evaluation was planned accordingly, assessing the impact for both racialized and white Coordinators based on the varying goals of each group. Thirteen (13) one-on-one interviews were held with seven WHAI Coordinators from both the racialized and white groups, the two (2) Facilitators, and four (4) Executive Directors. A survey was also developed and shared to ensure multiple ways for Coordinators to share their feedback. Knowledge gathered from thirteen (13) interviews and eight (8) completed surveys were then reviewed and analyzed to identify findings and recommendations.

The findings shared in this report are reflective of the gains and learning related to the process and outcomes of the facilitated sessions. Findings demonstrate that the ABR work conducted through facilitated sessions at WHAI were highly transformative for the Coordinators who participated in the racialized or white groups. The collaborative and open approach of the sessions, embodied by the Facilitators were well recognized and valued. Racialized participants expressed feelings of affirmation, healing and increased capacities to negotiate boundaries over their labour regarding anti-racism work. White participants expressed honest reflections and learning around white supremacy, privilege and spoke of increased capacities to recognize and intervene when confronted by racism appropriately. While some struggles around attendance and participation were raised for the white group, both groups attributed deep personal growth to their engagement in the sessions and expressed a strong desire to continue.

Outcomes in the workplace at local ASOs and in the communities with which they work were also identified. Participants referenced positive changes in how they approach outreach and engagement with African, Caribbean and Black (ACB) women and communities, prioritizing time for trust and relationship building. Strengthened capacities to recognize areas for growth in organizations were also identified, along with a willingness to support racial equity work at the organizational level. The need for organizational change and sector-wide support to action racial equity was mirrored in interviews with EDs as well. Additionally, EDs identified the potential of collaborative work with Priority Population Networks (PPNs) similar to WHAI, and other organizations dedicated to support the strategic development of the sector and its leadership.

Lastly, seven (7) key recommendations are offered here for future work. These are informed by the overall findings of the evaluation and subsequent iterative discussion with WHAI and the ABR session Facilitators. They have been further strengthened through feedback from WHAI Coordinators and EDs. Following the recommendations are questions, or areas of inquiry, to tangibly support decision-makers to engage in how they might move these recommendations forward in local or sector wide contexts. Key recommendations include:

- 1.0 Sustain and continue to support the ABR facilitated sessions at WHAI
- 2.0 Collaborate with Dr. Reece and Dr. Switzer to develop a guide for the work they co-designed that can be offered with others in the sector
- 3.0 Mandate attendance to facilitated ABR sessions versus approaching this work as an optional capacity building exercise
- 4.0 Adapt additional session topics for future iterations pertinent to racialized and white groups
- 5.0 Build on the tools and resources discussed through the facilitated sessions, particularly ones related to navigating ABR at ASOs and organizational change
- 6.0 Collaborate and/or create a network of PPNs and ASO leadership to make space for sector wide discussion, resource development, and capacity building around ABR work
- 7.0 Increase the understanding of institutional and structural barriers and facilitators of ABR work in the ASO sector

With openness and commitment, this unique model has the potential to transform how we see learning, capacity building and the application of ABR work in the ASO sector. The demonstrated transformative impacts of this model warrant continued investment not only from WHAI but from others in the sector so we can collectively bolster and action meaningful ABR work.

2.0 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

The Women and HIV/AIDS Initiative (WHAI) is a community-based response to HIV and AIDS among Cis and Trans women, 2-Spirited and Non-Binary Femme people in Ontario. Through a network of 17 Coordinators located in 16 ASOs throughout Ontario, WHAI aims to reduce HIV risk for women disproportionately affected by HIV and AIDS; enhance local community capacity to address HIV and AIDS; and build safe environments to support women's HIV- and AIDS-related needs.¹ WHAI anchors to anti-racism (AR) and anti-oppression (AO) frameworks to critically unpack and reflect on the structural and societal factors that increase women's risk for HIV. Through this lens, WHAI centres women's wisdom in strategizing change.

In 2020, WHAI embarked on a process of strengthening its anti-Black racism work following a series of network conversations. These conversations noted a structural gap in addressing the disproportionate impact of HIV incidence and risk amongst Black women, and the contributing role of anti-Black racism in these realities. These conversations also highlighted WHAI's strengths, particularly, its work on anti-Indigenous racism, Truth and Reconciliation, and anti-colonial practices, and raised the importance of mirroring these efforts to strengthen intersecting work around anti-Black racism. These critical reflections took place against the backdrop of the murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery and Regis Korchinski-Paquet, all impacting the landscape of WHAI work on social determinants of health and anti-Black racism. WHAI identified that its ABR work would need to be rooted in ways that actively dismantle white supremacist structures and honestly explore how it impacts and affects the organization. With intentionality and commitment to meaningful process, WHAI initiated consultative work with Dr. Rai Reece.

Dr. Reece's foundational ABR work with WHAI in 2020 consisted of a comprehensive consultation survey with WHAI Coordinators and subsequent facilitated sessions with Coordinators, EDs and Managers. The findings from this survey highlighted a need for racialized Coordinators to have a safe and supportive space to share experiences of navigating ABR in their work, and counter feelings of isolation.² It also surfaced the need to address the burden of anti-racism work placed on racialized folk and explore what this means for Coordinators. The knowledge gathered at this stage laid the groundwork for the content plan and facilitation design with Dr. Sarah Switzer. The final report prepared by Dr. Reece also served as a critical document in providing the contextual background to understand how this ABR work has evolved within WHAI.³

Between 2021-2022, Dr. Reece and Dr. Switzer collaborated to develop and facilitate a series of discussion sessions focused on ABR work with WHAI Coordinators. The sessions ran with two groups concurrently, one with racialized Coordinators and one with white Coordinators. The structure and design of these sessions were based on the findings of the consultative survey done with Coordinators in 2020 by Dr. Reece. The sessions for the racialized group focused on creating affirming and healing space to unpack these experiences. The sessions also covered content around negotiating boundaries, on the intersections and solidarity with anti-Indigenous racism, settler colonialism, lateral violence, navigating organizational change and experiences of ABR in the workplace.⁴

1. whai.ca/ourwork

2. 'WHAI Coordinators anti-Black racism Survey and Facilitation Process, Final Report' Prepared for WHAI by Dr. Rai Reece, 2021

3. Same report as reference above

4. Continuing ABR Work with Indigenous, Black, Brown, and Racialized WHAI Coordinators, Session Outline, Dr. Rai Reece

While there was some overlap of content in the white Coordinator group, the focus for this group was on creating honest spaces for confronting white fragility, conversations of white supremacy, and reflection and action around allyship and being co-conspirators in the work.⁵ White Coordinators in the group also read Layla Saad's 'Me and White Supremacy' and co-facilitated parts of the sessions to anchor their learning and capacity.

In both groups, a participatory planning approach was adopted that enabled the group to share needs, strengths and steer the sessions where they needed to go. Dr. Reece and Dr. Switzer met regularly to debrief and co-design the sessions and overall facilitation structure. Regular meetings were also held with WHAI's Provincial Director to ensure the process informed broader Initiative work, and transitioned from individual to collective learning and action. Engaging Coordinators in collaborative practices of session design included a 'living document on confidentiality' that incorporated agreements from all involved, check-ins, journaling, or collectively setting agendas. Ten (10) sessions were held with each group and it is the overall impact of the process and implementation of these facilitated sessions that this evaluation is based.

NOTE ON LANGUAGE:

Throughout this evaluation we use the terms 'racialized' and 'white' to describe the affinity groups Coordinators participated in based on they racially identified. The term racialized is used more frequently, along with the terms Black, Brown, Asian and Indigenous. We acknowledge the specific histories and cultures of people often grouped together under the terms 'racialized' or 'BIPOC' (which we have opted not to use). As Black and Brown writers of this report, we prefer the term 'racialized' as it connotes the act of racializing a person thereby acknowledging race as a social construct. It emphasizes the role of the white gaze as a dominant narrative that racialized folx are forced to contend with regardless of specificities of ancestry, history, language, culture, and more. Racialized does not indicate that our identities are one, more so that we are united in the struggle against racially biased perceptions driven by white supremacy and colonialism. We also felt it was important to reflect the language used in the facilitated sessions which include Black, Brown, Asian, Indigenous and racialized.

5. ABR session plan with white Coordinators, Dr. Sarah Switzer

3.0 EVALUATION PLAN AND PROCESS

The evaluation plan was a result of active collaboration between 7.10 Stories and WHAI, with inputs from the ABR session Facilitators, Dr. Reece and Dr. Switzer. The evaluation goals were to:

- Determine the impact of the ABR sessions on WHAI Coordinators who participated and gather process and outcome based knowledge that would inform future growth
- Identify recommendations that would inform future iterations of ABR work at WHAI and support the sharing and adaptation of this work across the sector
- Gather the Facilitators' reflections and recommendations around co-design, implementation and further development of the work

To meet these goals, a primarily qualitative evaluation methodology was planned focusing on the process of the work, the outcomes experienced by those engaged, and the ways in which it might grow at WHAI and beyond.

Knowledge gathering began with a comprehensive document review (see appendix a for a full list), which provided a foundational understanding of the ABR sessions, objectives of each group and the co-designed planning process adopted by Facilitators and with group participants. The foundational ABR work done by Dr. Rai Reece in 2020 served as central to the development of this evaluation. Key informant interviews with a purposive sample of WHAI Coordinators from the racialized and white groups were held to learn from the Coordinators' experiences of the sessions (i.e., process), any shifts in understanding and applying ABR knowledge (i.e., outcomes), and their ideas for future work required to sustain knowledge and expansion of this work in the sector. Interviews were also held with Dr. Reece and Dr. Switzer to learn from their facilitation experiences of co-planning and participatory processes of implementation. A survey aimed at all Coordinators who participated in the sessions was also shared to assess levels of understanding around ABR and its concepts, and to ensure that those who were not interviewed also had opportunity to provide feedback. Lastly ED interviews were conducted to determine impacts at an organizational level and identify the potential to support strategic ABR work with ASO leadership.

3a. STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

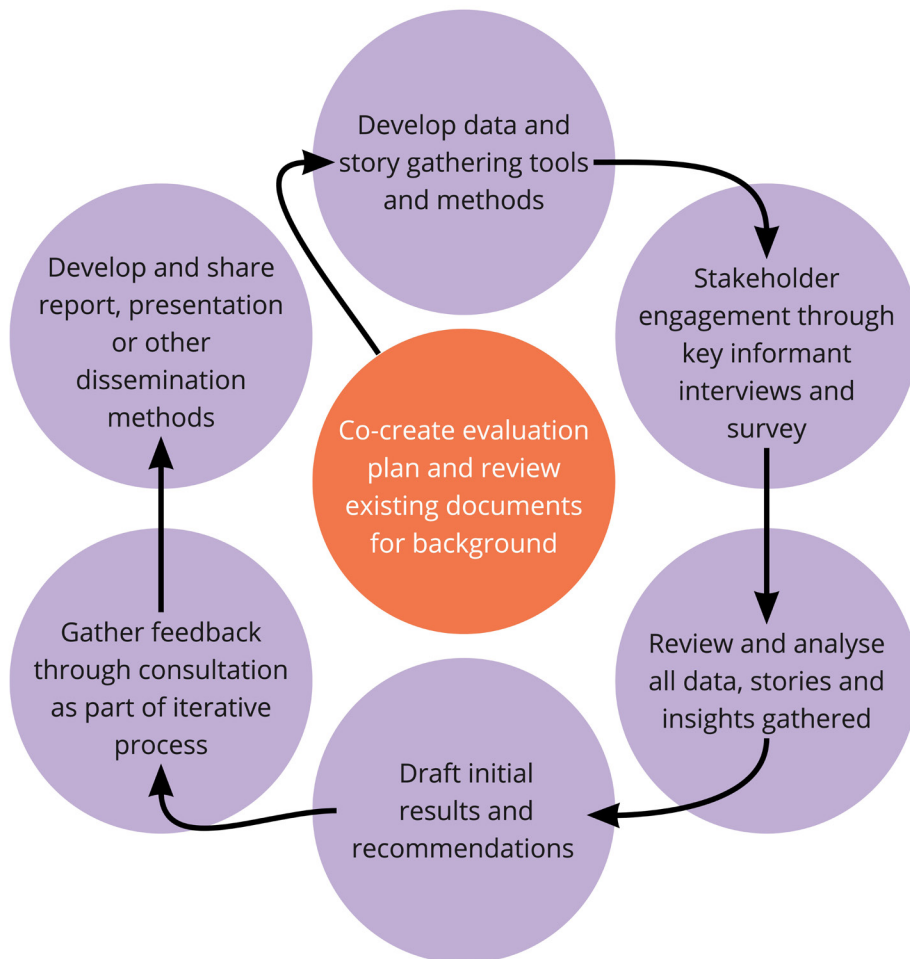
Knowledge Gathering Method	Engagement
Completed Surveys	8
Key Informant Interviews	13 (total)
Racialized Coordinators	4
white Coordinators	3
Facilitators	2
EDs	4

Overall, thirteen (13) interviews and eight (8) completed surveys were gathered, reviewed and analyzed to identify findings and develop recommendations. (see table 01)

Given the small cohort of respondents for the survey, it is important to note that this data is meant to complement the qualitative findings and cannot be generalized on its own. Due to network turnover, the survey was only open to eleven (11) Coordinators. The framework for analysis included a content analysis of qualitative interviews and the open-ended responses from the survey.

In keeping with the collaborative approach of the evaluation plan, a consultative review of the methodology, tools and preliminary findings were conducted with WHAI's Director Molly Bannerman, the Provincial Capacity Building Lead, Ashley Smoke, and the Facilitators, Dr. Reece and Dr. Switzer. A review of the findings were also conducted with the WHAI Coordinator group and the network of Managers and EDs. The multiple perspectives and inputs gained through this iterative review process have deeply strengthened this evaluation's findings and recommendations.

See below for a visual representation of the evaluation plan and process:



04. KEY FINDINGS

The overwhelming response from knowledge gathered has been that the ABR facilitated sessions at WHAI led by Dr. Rai Reece and Dr. Sarah Switzer were highly effective, resulting in transformative outcomes for those who participated. This section details the findings of the evaluation and discusses the impacts this work has had on Coordinators as well as on WHAI leadership, Facilitators and partner ASOs. To mirror the structure of the knowledge gathering tools, the findings are divided by process and outcomes. The responses to questions pertaining to future work are incorporated in the following section on recommendations.

4a. PROCESS RELATED FINDINGS

Effectiveness of Collaborative Planning, Co-designed Sessions and Collective Participation

Participants described the collaborative ways in which the sessions were designed to be effective in cultivating a sense of collective ownership and participation in the work. Examples cited included the 'living document on confidentiality', regular check-ins, setting agendas as a group and journaling processes. These practices enabled the group to set their own pace and prioritize areas that were most relevant to them. Facilitators also noted the benefits of participatory co-creation in the planning stage and regular debriefs as ways to strengthen the series and actively model collaboration in the groups. These practices set the stage for a participatory and engaged working approach.

“We were a part of how it developed and how it unfolded - felt like the process was ours and like we could move it forward - it didn't feel like training”

Coordinators in the white group noted the co-facilitation opportunities as a very positive experience that encouraged deep learning and prepared them to bring this learning into their local environments. Some specifically discussed the benefit of following the book 'Me And White Supremacy' by Layla F. Saad and the critical reflections this raised for them.

“This opportunity has been incredible in terms of personal professional growth, appreciated every one of the sessions and having the opportunity to co-facilitate was outstanding in terms of building the capacity to take the work outside of the space”

Facilitator Approach in Running the Sessions

Coordinators interviewed from both groups talked about the Facilitators with warmth and gratitude, identifying their approach to the sessions as a major strength. Participants from the racialized group attributed the affirming and healing nature of the space to the Facilitator; similarly, those in the white group attributed the feelings of safety and authenticity they felt in the space to the Facilitator's approach, thus enabling them to be challenged and reflective.

The storytelling approach taken by Facilitators was identified to be particularly effective, for example, racialized Coordinators recalled feeling less isolated and more connected to the group when the Facilitator shared personal stories to deepen the discussion. Similarly, white Coordinators noted that the Facilitators' sharing of personal experiences supported the group in being more honest and less fearful of judgment.

“She brought in experiences from her students from teaching ... her true stories that were so like heartfelt, and they were just right. There was the right placement, of time, of storytelling... that’s such a beautiful gift and it was just so nice that she brought personal experience in. It felt less clinical.”

Attendance Related Challenges

For those interviewed from the white Coordinator group, session attendance was noted as a challenge to the process. This was not the case for Coordinators who participated in the racialized group. While the sessions were designed to be optional to ensure that those participating would engage authentically and with commitment, some participants in the white group felt that optional attendance was disruptive for the ones who did commit to the sessions, especially for those wanting to go deeper into the material or discussion. Some talked about feeling demoralized by peers who were not committed and how this affected their willingness to partner or collaborate with them. Additional challenges rose due to turnover of Coordinators and new hires joining in mid-way through the program.

“People should have had to attend, at least some mandatory ones - [if they do not] how is this going to work for us later/ how are we going to partner together”

In considering the challenges of attendance it is important to note the organizational structure of WHAI itself. Particularly, that supervisory oversight of Coordinators lies entirely with local ASOs and not with WHAI’s provincial leadership team. In this way, the challenge of mandating attendance to ABR facilitated sessions is one that requires a coordinated response between WHAI, ASO leadership and funder agreements. This is further elaborated in the recommendations section.

Overall, Coordinators who were interviewed from both the racialized and the white groups were notably enthusiastic for continuing and for building the work into new iterations. During feedback sessions and discussions on findings, Coordinators in both groups were expressly dedicated to attendance in recognition that anti-racism work is deeply layered and everybody’s work. Racialized Coordinators discussed building solidarity between groups and acknowledging the intersections of how white supremacy impacts Black, Brown, Asian and Indigenous communities. White Coordinators similarly expressed the need for continuous learning, and finding ways to collectively translate their learnings into actions.

4b. OUTCOME RELATED FINDINGS

Strong Personal Outcomes

While Coordinators from both groups talked about the sessions as having a transformative impact on them leading to significant personal outcomes, the nature of these outcomes were different. Outcomes as described by participants interviewed from each affinity group are outlined below.

Outcomes for Black, Brown, Indigenous and Racialized Coordinator Group

Racialized participants described the sessions as a space for healing, affirmation and care. They expressed feeling 'less alone' and isolated in their experiences of navigating ABR in their workplace and/or in the sector. They also noted that engagement in the sessions did not feel like work, rather like a safe, peer-driven space where the sharing of their experiences were met with understanding and acknowledgement.

"... there are just things that I can't relate to other colleagues with, or just things that they don't experience when it comes to like microaggressions and barriers that I do. And being able to talk to other racialized service providers, specifically Black service providers, was really helpful. It reminded me that I was not the only person going through things and I think that's really important"

Coordinators also spoke of the learning they gained as to seeing the layers of colourism, texturism, and lateral violences as manifestations of white supremacy, as well as connections of solidarity in Indigenous struggles.

"It reminded me of the importance of discussing these nuances and reminding each other that we're all accountable to each other. And despite having an ACB background, there's still going to be differences in our experiences that we need to make space for each other."

Racialized Coordinators talked about the pressures of having to take on ABR work and specifically referenced how these sessions enabled them to articulate personal boundaries in the workplace, and alleviate the burden of leading ABR education or action as a racialized person.

"It's like transformative, it's been able to give me tools to advocate for myself, and not feel guilty about it."

The personal outcomes of the ABR facilitated sessions as described by racialized Coordinators are especially significant considering that they speak directly to the issues, identified by Dr. Reece's original consultative survey, that informed the goals of these sessions. These findings are well aligned with what the sessions for racialized Coordinators aspired to achieve.

"ABR can't fall on Black people. Sessions have supported me in self advocacy and navigating boundaries"

Outcomes for White Coordinator Group

Coordinators in the white group also noted transformative personal outcomes from their session participation. They identified increased capacities to recognize instances of ABR in their lives, whether among peers or in the workplace. They also attributed the sessions to increased confidence to raise issues and intervene as co-conspirators and allies. Some of the Coordinators interviewed spoke of feelings of discomfort with some of the conversations of white supremacy and fragility, but acknowledged this as important learning stemming from honest conversations that they would have been unable to have in other spaces. Having a space for white Coordinators to engage in this content was seen as a useful and unique aspect of the facilitated sessions.

“Group discussion was a little challenging - but it helped me grow and forced me out of my comfort zone, to learn from opportunities, to move forward and accept criticism with grace”

“It definitely made me more reflective in my own life, and in my work”

“It’s about how you do in your everyday, how you hire people, pay them, create work, every single step of being a person, genuine honest discussion with other white people about what you are not doing well is a rare space”

Some Coordinators interviewed talked about the impact these sessions have had on their personal relationships with family and friends. They shared the difficulty of moving forward in relationships with people whose values no longer aligned with theirs, particularly if there was no recognition of systemic oppressions or refusal to reflect and work through racial bias. Coordinators discussed a simultaneous sense of loss and gain as a personal outcome, wherein there were relationships that had been constrained but they had gained new connections and community with people with shared values.

“The process has opened opportunities for challenging and calling in, you’re going to lose people and you have to be prepared for that, who is going to sustain in your life because your values align”

“They [sessions] gave me more language to understand white supremacy, gave me more nuanced understanding especially around ABR and anti-Indigenous connections, more understanding to talk with family and peers”

Application of Learnings and Gains in the Workplace

Within the WHAI network

Coordinators in both groups talked about a shift in the way WHAI approaches the work; specifically they felt that the community work is more informed by an ABR lens. Some discussed tangible outcomes of this shift. Consequently, how ABR work has strengthened community engagement and campaigns such as Love Positive Women. Coordinators also referenced WHAI consultation work and how stronger understanding of ABR has affected these processes, for example, recognizing the difference between outreaching to ACB women versus meaningfully building relationships of mutual trust and sharing.

At the Programmatic Level in Local ASOs

Coordinators talked about how they were able to apply their learning from the ABR facilitated sessions in both programmatic and organizational ways at their ASOs, and in their local communities. From a programmatic perspective, Coordinators indicated having a stronger understanding of what meaningful engagement with ACB women might look like and how to build accountability in this work. Others talked about having a better understanding of the intersections of systemic oppressions that place ACB and Indigenous women at disproportionate risk for HIV and other health concerns.

“ACB folks have been my space but I need to make myself accountable to other groups and priority populations of women, Indigenous women, women in sex work, ...”

Many of the Coordinators interviewed spoke of how they now value deeper reflection around ABR work. They recalled prioritizing action or task oriented ABR work in the past, and feeling frustrated if results were not realized quickly, whereas now the action is complemented with pauses for reflection and learning. They also expressed recognition of ABR work as continuing and requiring ongoing commitment to reflection and deep thinking, this was described as a critical part of ‘doing work’.

“It translated into how I did work, who I partnered with and how I was partnering, like getting out into community and making connections, creating trust, converting relationships into engagement. The urgency and task oriented approach to engagement doesn’t work”

At the Organizational Level in Local ASOs

The vast majority of Coordinators interviewed expressed gaps and frustration around not being able to contribute their ABR learning to the internal workings of their ASOs. Many talked about their ASOs being well intentioned about ABR work and undertaking useful organizational change practices; however, they also talked about gaps between intention and action. Issues ranged from lack of transparency or lack of commitment from leadership to misplaced assuredness that the organization is already fairing well in their ABR work.

“There are moments of understanding around white supremacy culture but no overall recognition of how it manifests when we ask ‘who do we partner with, when is money available and when it’s not. People in permanent paid positions look one way, and part-time workers, students and interns look another”

It is important to note that the EDs interviewed also spoke about the slowness of ABR work organizationally. Some understood Coordinators’ frustrations articulating this experience as ‘being powered up but realizing you have little power.’ They spoke of the realities of change work overall and expressed opportunities to develop a stronger understanding of organizational change as related to ABR work. Coordinators also expressed a need for stronger understanding of organizational change processes or having relevant tools or resources for this work.

“I would love to see more political will and buy-in. One of the things we talked about which comes up all the time is you know, we could workshop people and facilitate people and train people, and provide all the resources. But if there is no leadership around this work it doesn’t get done at all or, you know the lone wolf becomes the racialized, Black and Indigenous person who’s gonna do it, but then they become the corrective of the organization.”

Acknowledging the Impacts of WHAI’s Leadership

Both the Coordinators and EDs interviewed spoke highly of WHAI’s leadership in this work and the impacts the learnings driven by the facilitated sessions have impacted their organizations. Many shared ways in which conversations around ABR have taken root in their ASOs, either through the Coordinator sharing their learning or through their community work. Some noted a change in language and how this fostered deeper discussion about communities and clients being served, and who is or isn’t coming through the doors at a wider organizational level. Others referenced a greater understanding of intersectionality (e.g., ABR, HIV status, income security and access to services). Some EDs struggled with Coordinator turnover and have not experienced the same level of impact.

“WHAI’s work has impacted how we interact with POZ clients and other service communities. There is less tokenizing and more broader scope of programming. Folks are far more aware and have a greater understanding of what we’re doing and how it’s reflected organizationally”

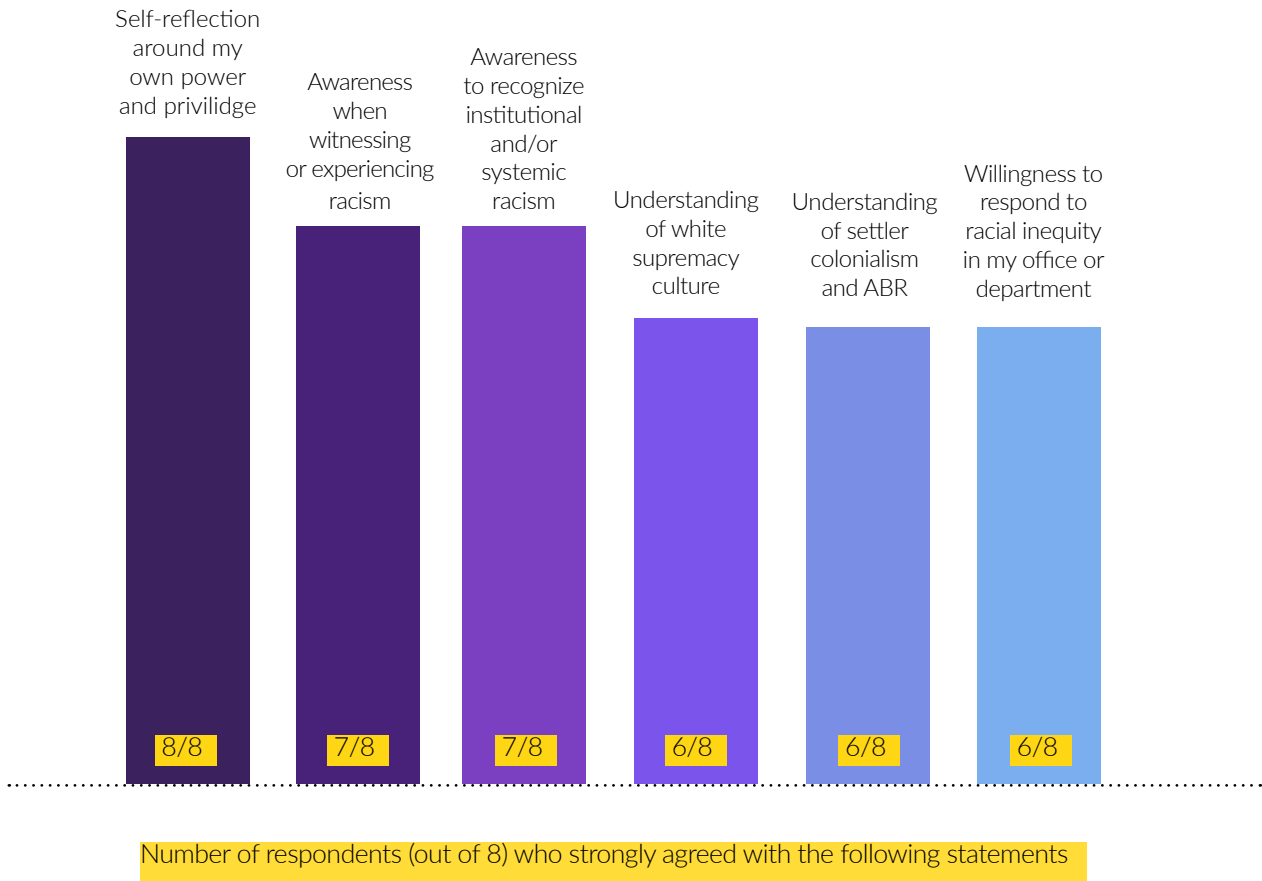
“The work at WHAI is really strong, they’ve been listening to the communities and looking at strategies to retain and build skills. WHAI asks some great and tough questions to address the inequities in the sector”

4c. SURVEY FINDINGS

The survey shared with all Coordinators sought to assess how participants rated their experiences of the facilitated sessions and to identify any subsequent changes in understanding or perceptions of ABR work and related concepts. Eight (8) completed surveys were gathered, reviewed and analyzed and as noted under methodology in section 02, given the small cohort of survey respondents, this data is meant to complement the qualitative findings and cannot be generalized on its own. It is also important to note that the survey was only open to eleven (11) Coordinators as a result of WHAI network turnover which makes for a fair response rate. Survey respondents also represented an equal balance of racialized and white Coordinators that spoke to experiences in their respective sessions.

Overall, the survey responses aligned well with the knowledge gathered from qualitative interviews. Open-ended responses have been incorporated into the findings discussed in the sections above. The majority of respondents indicated that they found the sessions to be valuable and effective in terms of content and facilitator approach. When asked to indicate the level of impact of the facilitated sessions, 6 out of 8 respondents indicated that the sessions had a significant impact on them.

The survey also asked participants to rate changes in their knowledge and/or capacities with ABR work and related concepts. Findings demonstrated increases in levels of understanding of ABR as well as in confidence and capacity in the following areas:



When considered in tandem with the qualitative findings, the survey results validate that the ABR facilitated sessions carried out by Dr. Reece and Dr. Switzer were highly valuable and effective in meeting their goals. Both racialized and white Coordinators expressed strong satisfaction with the structure and implementation of the sessions, and described deep outcomes that have impacted their personal and professional lives. The impacts of the sessions have been felt at local ASOs as well and some EDs described how this work has affected their organizations and the communities they serve. All interviewed were keen to see this work grow and invested in supporting future iterations.

05. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the process and outcome-based findings of this evaluation it is both clear, and critical, that the ABR work offered at WHAI continues. The transformative results as detailed by Coordinators in both the racialized and white groups represent foundational outcomes that strengthen WHAI's work at ASOs and with local communities. This model of ABR work is one that warrants investment to support further growth and potential adaptations within and beyond the sector.

The recommendations in this section identify potential ways in which to **sustain, adapt** and **grow** this important work. Seven (7) key recommendations are offered here for future work. These are informed by the overall evaluation, subsequent iterative discussion with WHAI and the ABR session Facilitators, and feedback gathered from Coordinators and EDs at WHAI forums. To support ongoing reflection and action, key questions for leadership in the sector are included following the recommendations. These questions mean to prompt decision-makers to think through how they may undertake this work in their organizations, or adapt it to suit local contexts and communities.

5a. SNAPSHOT OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 01:

Sustain and continue to support the ABR facilitated sessions at WHAI

- Sustain and continue to support the ABR facilitated sessions at WHAI
- Continue to offer a series of facilitated sessions to WHAI Coordinators based on learnings from this evaluation.

Recommendation 02:

Collaborate with Dr. Reece and Dr. Switzer to develop a guide for the work they co-designed that can be offered with others in the sector

- Work with Dr. Reece and Dr. Switzer as the co-designers and Facilitators of this work to develop a guide that models the processes undertaken with WHAI. This guide can act as a blueprint for the work that documents tools, sessions, structure, process and other key aspects of the model.
- Have WHAI engage in the development of this guide with or within a network of ASO leaders interested in applying the model to their contexts.
- Have the evaluation report and guide offered together, so organizations can understand the value and effectiveness of the work, and apply it accordingly.

“People seeing this work happen, especially seeing a final report can be the push for others to do the work. Many folks may be well-intentioned but need to see and have a model to be the spark to get going. I think a core model can also be adapted to local WHAI sites”

Recommendation 03:

Mandate attendance to facilitated ABR sessions versus approaching this work as an optional capacity building exercise

- A key recommendation for future programming is that attendance should be mandated by the Coordinator's direct supervisors/ EDs at their individual ASOs and supported by the funder to build accountability. Ensuring attendance and participation of Coordinators is recommended to be a coordinated effort to reflect the current structure of the network. Capacity building and attendance for ABR sessions can be built into program plans or agreements between WHAI, the funder and individual ASOs.
- Mandating participation acknowledges that anti-racism (AR) and ABR work is everyone's work, and recognizes that racialized folx do not have the privilege of opting in or out of it. It also appreciates the layered and intersecting ways in which white supremacy impacts different communities, and attempts to build understanding and strengthen solidarity across groups.
- In support of mandated participation, it is recommended that WHAI work with Facilitators to develop preparatory options (e.g., "interim" or "pre-work") for those critical or resistant to sessions that were piloted. This may include facilitated discussions to unpack resistance to conversations about anti-Black racism, or question why the oppression of others is normalized rather than looking at oneself as privileged. Pre-work sessions can also foster self-reflection around racialized identification as an immigrant or white presenting person of multiracial identity.
- To accommodate turnover, it is recommended to rotate the program and record some core work which might be offered as webinar or in a format that is accessible through the year.
- Both hybrid or in-person sessions are recommended to encourage participation.

"My instinct is to have it be mandatory, but need to think of how does making it mandatory change the space, what kind of space will it be. There's also a lot of turnover, how do we manage that"

"The idea of holding sessions in person is incredibly helpful... being in physical space with those going through similar experiences is integral to the healing process."

Recommendation 04:

Adapt additional session topics for future iterations pertinent to racialized and white groups

- Topics exploring the interconnectedness of other forms of Anti-Racism including lateral violence amongst racialized communities are also recommended.
- Topical recommendations for the ABR facilitated sessions include intersections with queer identities, disability, and other minoritized identities as experienced by Black women.
- Islamophobia was raised as a topical area for future sessions including Islamophobia as experienced by Black Muslim women (e.g., “Islamanoir”) and Islamophobia and lateral violence.
- Anti-Indigenous racism is recommended as an important focus for future cycles.
- Conversations emerging from the white Coordinator group raised what it means to be a co-conspirator and bring others into this work as white people committed to rupturing ABR as possible growth areas.
- A key recommendation is to dive deeper into white supremacy culture in organizations and how this fuels and institutionalizes oppressions; many talked about this as a way to understand the root of liberation struggles.

“There’s a unique intersection of anti-Black Islamophobia that adds a difficult layer to navigate. I would appreciate sessions that acknowledge what that power dynamic looks like for Black Muslim women facing Islamanoir (Islamophobia & misogyny directed at Black women).”

“Need to see how our colonial past and our history has brought us here, its unifying for us as activists to think of them [oppressions] all relating - its less to conquer - it’s empowering to know these roots are the ones to fight”

“Focusing on Anti-Indigenous racism is really important, especially on allyship as Black & racialized workers. This is also applicable when talking about anti-Asian racism, and can be an opportunity to do more cross-collaboration with ASOs.”

Recommendation 05:

Build on the tools and resources discussed through the facilitated sessions, particularly ones related to navigating ABR at ASOs and organizational change

- In future reiterations, it is recommended to include referenced tools and resources to support folk navigating ABR within organizations, particularly those focused on organizational change processes.
- Consider developing a core list of tools referenced through the sessions with links to a living document upon which Coordinators and/or the PWHAI team can build.
- Highlight tools that enable people to negotiate brave spaces to raise issues or address microaggressions in the workplace. Additionally ones that talk through the mental and emotional stress of people navigating ABR in their workplaces.
- Consider different models of organizational change work as related to ABR and AR, such as Equity Centered Community Design by Creative Reaction Lab⁶. This might also include tools that take into account people's power and access in organizations (i.e. relevant tools for a Senior Manager versus a Frontline Coordinator). Coordinators may benefit from tools that support ASOs in being accountable to ABR work.

“There is a risk when people get powered up but they don't have the power in their organizations, this can raise safety and mental health concerns. Need learning on how the work can result in agency culture change”

“We need ways we can hold our ASOs accountable and how to liaison between the concerns of community members navigating anti-Black racism and management”

6. Creative Reaction Lab's downloadable tool on Equity Centered Community Design <https://crxlab.org/our-approach>

Recommendation 06:

Collaborate and/or create a network of PPNs and ASO leadership to make space for sector wide discussion, resource development, and capacity building around ABR work

- It is recommended that WHAI engage or initiate a sectoral network to encourage collaboration and deepen impact and sustainability of the work. Actions might be to:
 - Adapt the model with other PPNs so Coordinators across the networks can participate. This presumes collaboration with one or two groups that demonstrate strong commitment and have existing relationships with WHAI Coordinators, i.e. ACCHO
 - Support a network of ASO leadership, (i.e., OAN and/or the OODP) to collectively drive strategic organizational supports that enable ASOs to undertake ABR work. This network can also advocate for financial resources
 - Collectively develop a critical reflection tool for organizations to assess and determine where and how they should be actioning their ABR work
 - Continue to lead capacity building through existing ED networks to cultivate enabling environments within ASOs that complement the efforts of Coordinators.

“This should be a coordinated effort and networked effort. Other strategies need to collaborate in providing equitable delivery to Black people, the HRN, GMSH, ACCHO also, we need to support our local strategy workers to be in the community”

“I would love this to be a joint WHAI & ACCHO initiative, as many ACCHO workers are female identified, so there is much crossover and opportunities for cross-collaboration - especially important for Black WHAI Coordinators.”

“EDs need to step up, there’s a lot of isolation in this work. We need guidelines to support breaking down structures of white supremacy, on how to rebuild it, need policies and procedures from that lens”

Recommendation 07:

Increase the understanding of institutional and structural barriers and facilitators of ABR work in the ASO sector

[this recommendation is not necessarily for WHAI alone, but for leadership in the sector as a whole]

- It is recommended that a sector-wide assessment be conducted to determine how ASOs are actioning ABR work and identify ways to address barriers, or support facilitators of this work.
- Develop a thorough understanding of current practices to enable a stronger, strategic response for how to support ASOs in furthering ABR as a core component of HIV work, (i.e. identifying gaps, resources, tools, capacity building or funding).
- Use the knowledge gathered from this mapping and assessing exercise to generate recommendations for sector-wide application that can be supported by funders to drive accountability around ABR.

5b. GUIDING QUESTIONS FOR LEADERSHIP

Some questions and considerations for actioning the work and moving from intentionality to accountability:

What are some ways in which you might apply the knowledge contained in this report towards your ASO or local work? Where are the opportunities for reflection and action?

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How do you, or how might you, demonstrate accountability in actioning ABR work at your organization in meaningful and constructive ways? What is your autonomy in accountability?

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How does your local leadership work impact local community driven critical mass towards structural change? How might you support people in your community who are positively driving ABR work?

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06. CONCLUSION

The cumulative learning from this evaluation, based on findings, review, analysis and iterative discussion, is that the model of ABR work piloted at WHAI holds considerable potential to bring organizations closer to challenge and transform the structures in which we work. ABR work in organizations and workplaces is messy and uncomfortable, and programs that lean into this to create space for honest, open and challenging reflection are both rare and valuable. The impacts of this space, co-created by Dr. Reece and Dr. Switzer at WHAI, are demonstrably effective in bringing racialized and white Coordinators to realize transformative personal and professional outcomes. Participants' unanimous desire to continue and sustain this work is a call for action that cannot be ignored. The impacts on the WHAI network and on community work in ASOs are one that require continued investment. By adapting and growing this work with others in the sector, there is potential and opportunity for real transformative change.

*“How will I take this information and make it make a difference in my organization? How will it make a sustainable difference?
Towards the end of the sessions I felt hope.”*

APPENDIX

LIST OF DOCUMENTS REVIEWED:

- 'WHAH Coordinators Anti-Black Racism Survey and Facilitation Process, Final Report'
Prepared for WHAI by Dr. Rai Reece, 2021
- Living Document on Confidentiality, June 2021
- PWHAI Progress Report, October 2021 - March 2022
- Session Outline with Indigenous, Black and Racialized Coordinators group
- Session Outline with white Coordinators group



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