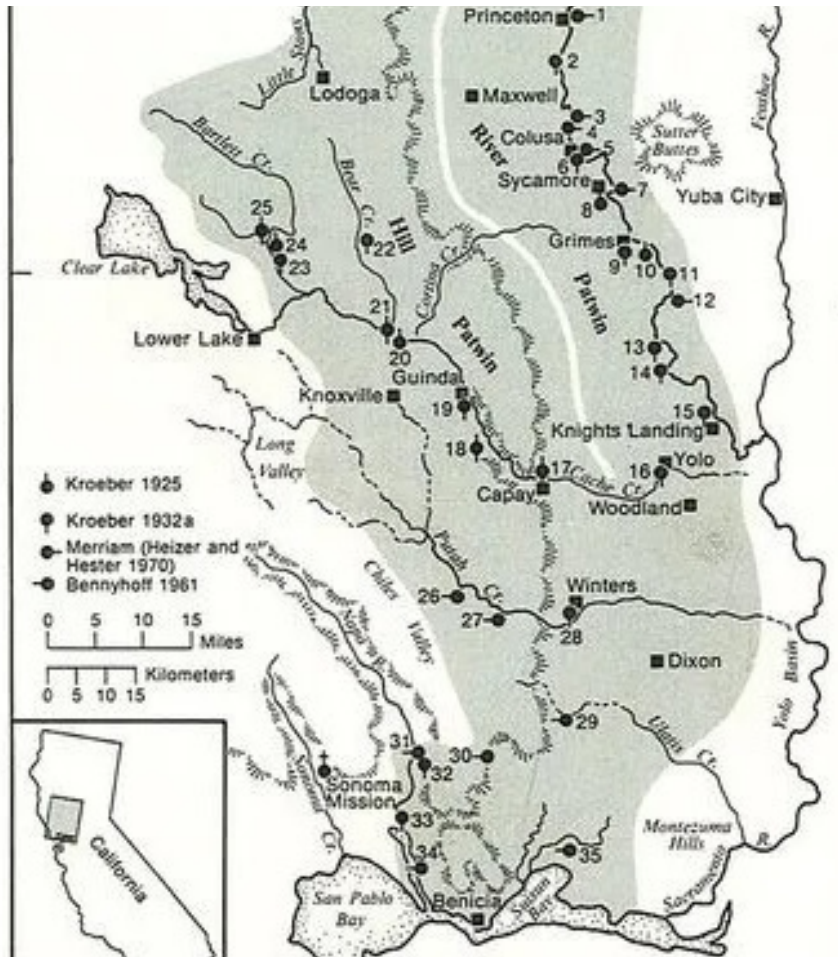



Performative or Authentic? Assessing the Status of Transportation Equity Work in California

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Land Acknowledgement

Today's Trajectory

- Background & Context
 - Performative vs. Authentic Equity Work
 - Case Studies
 - Recommendations
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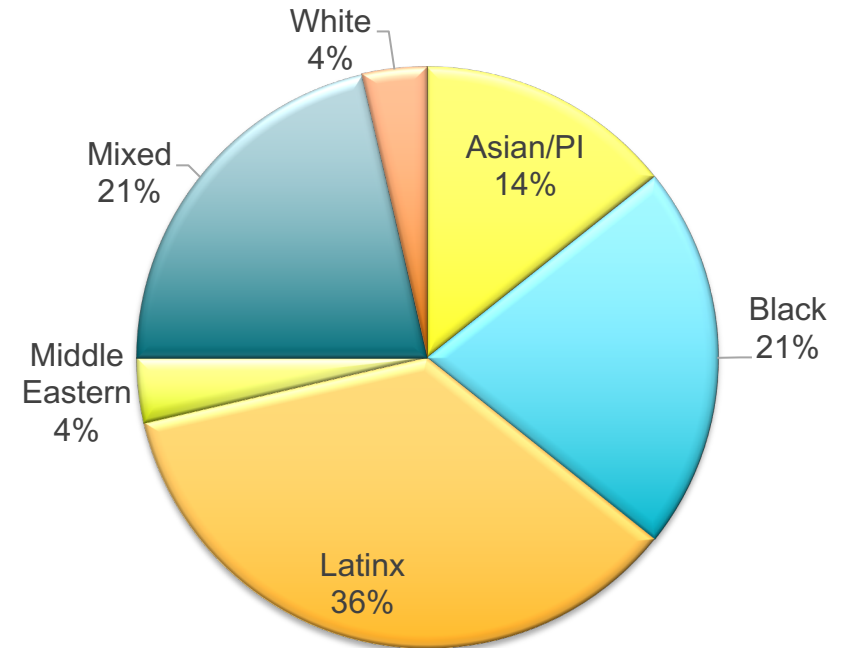
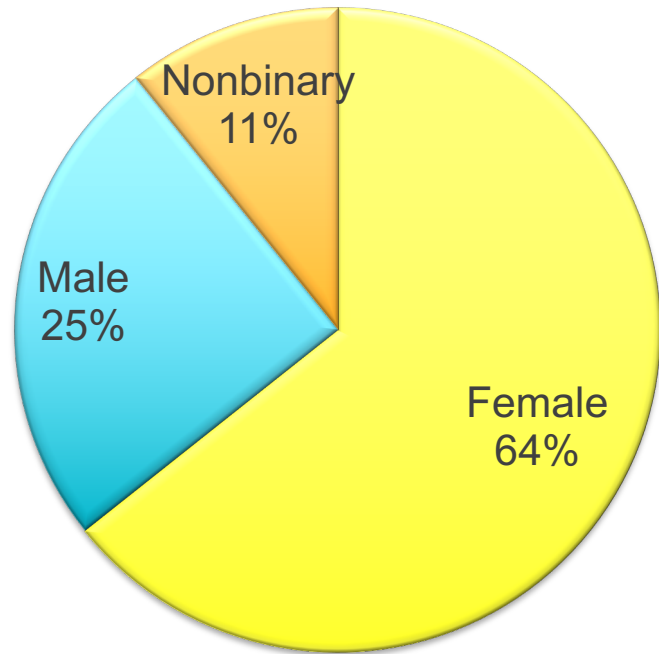


Background & Context

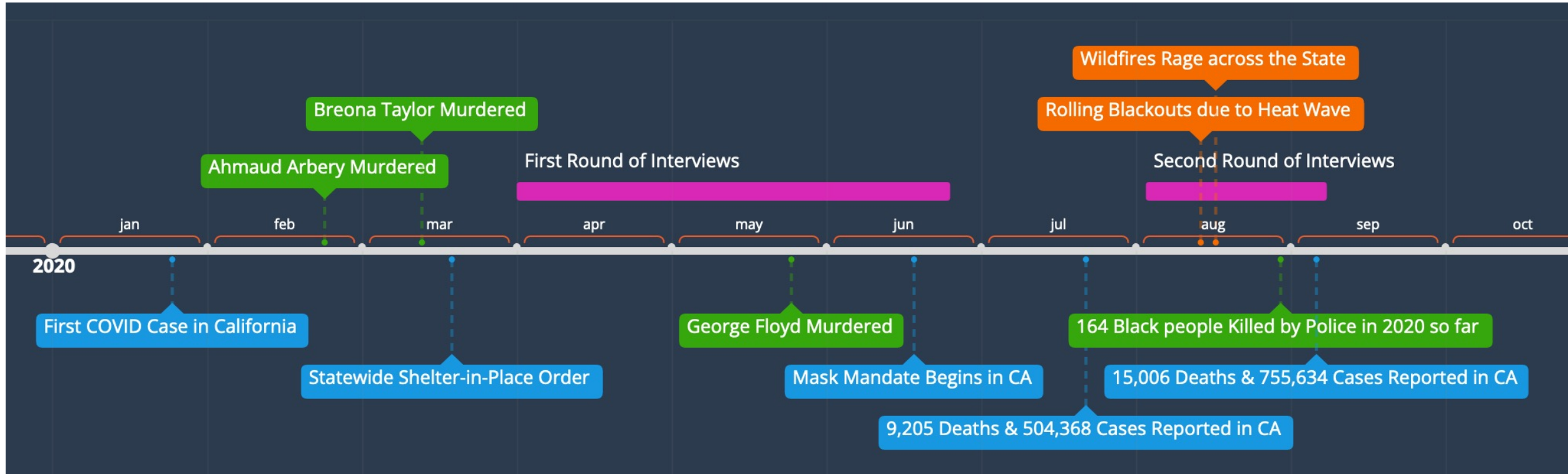
Project Overview

- How is the transportation sector in California doing on equity, particularly as it relates to sustainability and active transportation?
- Grounding Frameworks:
 - Critical Race Theory
 - Mobility Justice
 - Feminist Science & Technology Studies

Who did we talk with?



Project timeline



Double Vision



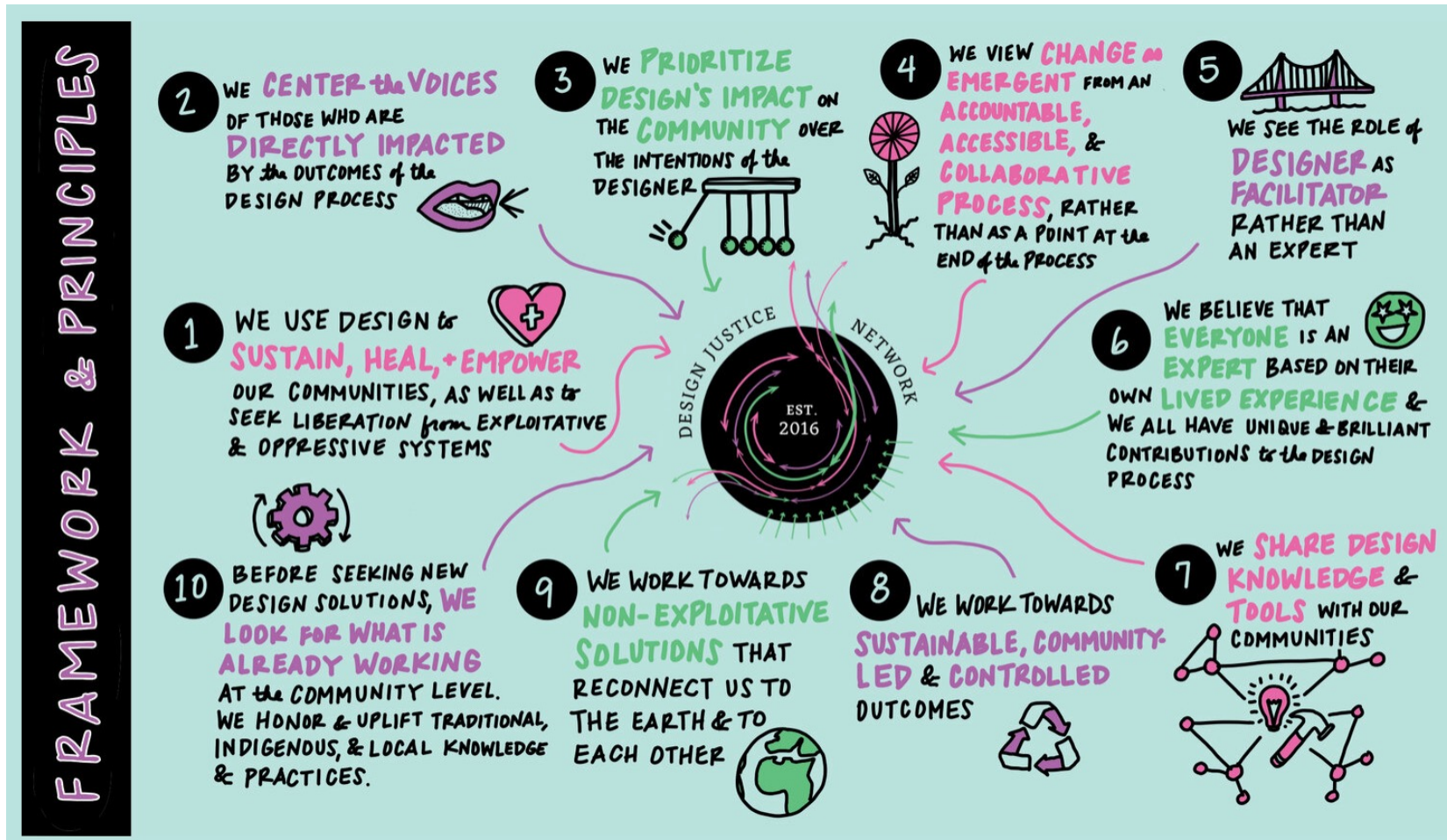
W. E. B. Dubois

Principles of Mobility Justice




Untokening 2016

Design Justice



Jan 2021




Performative vs. Authentic Equity

What is Equity?

“....having the freedom to define what health and thriving is for you and your family. Equity is being invited to the process or the process coming to you, but also there being a real sense of agency attached to your voice, not performative inclusion... I think equity, really equity in this field is going to have to mean intentionally removing power from where it is within transportation field and redistributing it or recreating it collectively”

- Research Participant






“I think that equity...starts with a transparent and honest reflection of where we've been as a field. Equity includes dignity. So, me not having to explain or make anyone privy to my trauma in order to qualify for equity.”


- Research Participant

Matrix of Domination Levels	Performative Equity	Authentic equity
Individual to Interpersonal	From...Defensiveness Guilt Comfort Emotional isolation	To...Collective Support Honesty Discomfort Collective support
Interpersonal to Cultural	From...Tokenism Hiring Voice disregarded Identity as reductionistic Position with no power	To...Dignity Retention Voice amplified Identity as intersectional Dignity-Infused workplace
Cultural to Institutional	From...Checklist Approach Retrofitting or downscaling equity Under-investment White-led	To...Long-Term Engagement Equity-led agendas Fully resourced Community-led

Examples of Performative Equity

- Defensiveness
 - Not looking at full history or institutional racism
 - Just “outreach”
 - Retrofit
 - Under-resourced
- 


Examples of Performative Equity


- Not working with community most affected
 - Tokenism or check-box approach
 - “Equity-washing” (grand goals, no follow through)
 - Industry-driven and consumer behavior-based
- 

Examples of Authentic Allyship

- Prioritizing most historically disinvested communities
- Increasing access AND shifting power imbalance
- Redistributing power
- Driven by the community

Examples of Authentic Allyship

- Increasing community agency
 - Accountable to communities
 - Transparent and honest
 - Maintains dignity of the community
 - Well-resourced
- 




Case Studies

New Mobilities: equity an afterthought

Performative:

- Driven by profit models
- Equity partners not there at the start of projects

Authentic:

- Bring in equity advocates from the beginning
 - Flexible rollout to meet needs and demographic abilities
 - Reinforce the need for public transit
- 

Performative

“...as an organization [we] wanted to be ahead of this new mobility revolution. After seeing what happened with Lyft and Uber, they just hit the streets, no one was prepared, no one knew what to do, the cities are just like, it's just very reactive as opposed to proactive. And we wanted to be sure that no matter what technology comes up, we have a response and a process that embeds equity and community needs at every step of the way. Yeah, it's something that's adaptable to whatever comes next.”

Authentic


“...But I think what's interesting.. after three years of researching new mobility, autonomous vehicles, the equity impacts and policy responses, I think our main take away is that in urban areas, **public transit** has to be the core. All these new mobility technologies can help fill the gaps, but I think that's just been the main takeaway. And it's no surprise at all. Things we all knew but we almost, we had to go through this evolution in the work to now come to the, this is what we're going to work on from a policy perspective.”

Recruitment vs. Retention

Performative

- Only focusing on recruitment
- Devaluing voices of BPOC and those working on equity
- Ignoring mental and emotional stressors of equity work

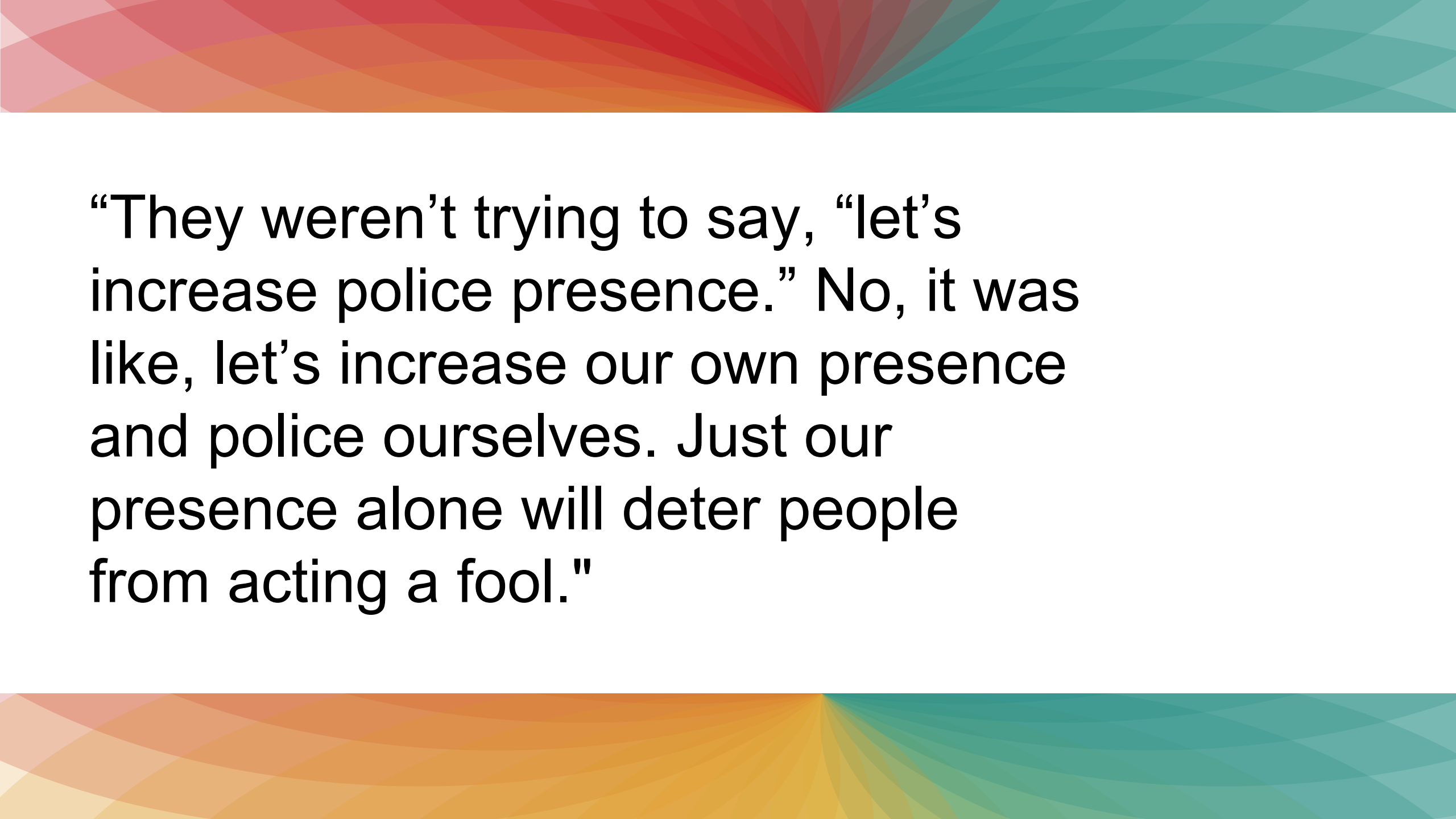
Authentic

- Changing culture for better retention
 - Giving BPOC and equity professionals decision-making power
 - Listening and responding to BPOC voices and BPOC-centric spaces
- 

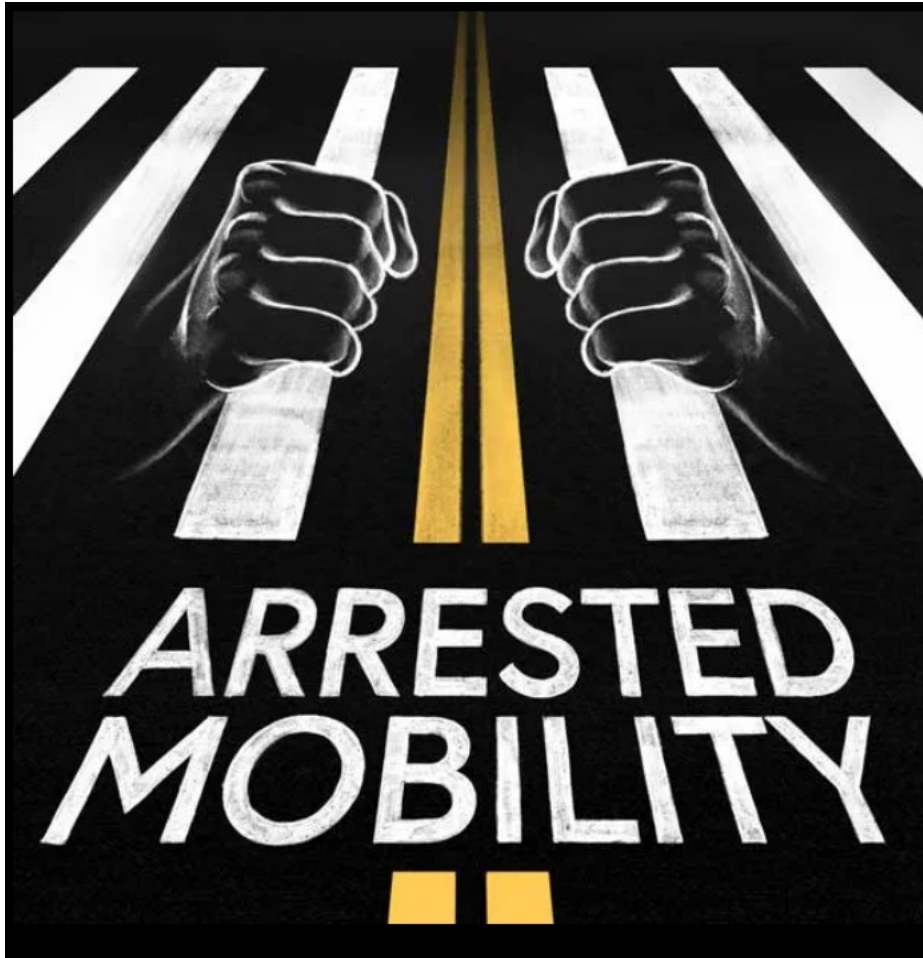
“One thing is the hiring, but the retention, I think it's even more critical because you can get drained. You can get drain out so easily. Some of the women of color that I knew or just people of color that I knew on my job have left because, one, they were either not offered a permanent position, they were own contracts. Two, they got tired of just listening the equity talk and not actually seeing that in action. Three, not being able to get leadership positions. Four, having to justify everything that they do because their supervisors don't understand the importance of community-based planning.”

Policing

- Performative
 - Safety = More Police
 - Maintains a narrow definition of safety
- Authentic
 - Decouple Policing and Safety
 - Decriminalize Poverty



“They weren’t trying to say, “let’s increase police presence.” No, it was like, let’s increase our own presence and police ourselves. Just our presence alone will deter people from acting a fool.”




Charles Brown

The image features a decorative header and footer with colorful, overlapping geometric shapes. The header has a gradient from red to orange to teal, while the footer has a gradient from orange to yellow to teal. The central area is white with the word "Recommendations" in a large, bold, black sans-serif font.

Recommendations

To Do List

- Know history
 - Maintain an ongoing relationship
 - Integrate community and equity experts into projects early on
 - Show humility
 - Respect expertise
 - Give communities more power in decision-making processes
 - Increase budgets for equity-related work
- 

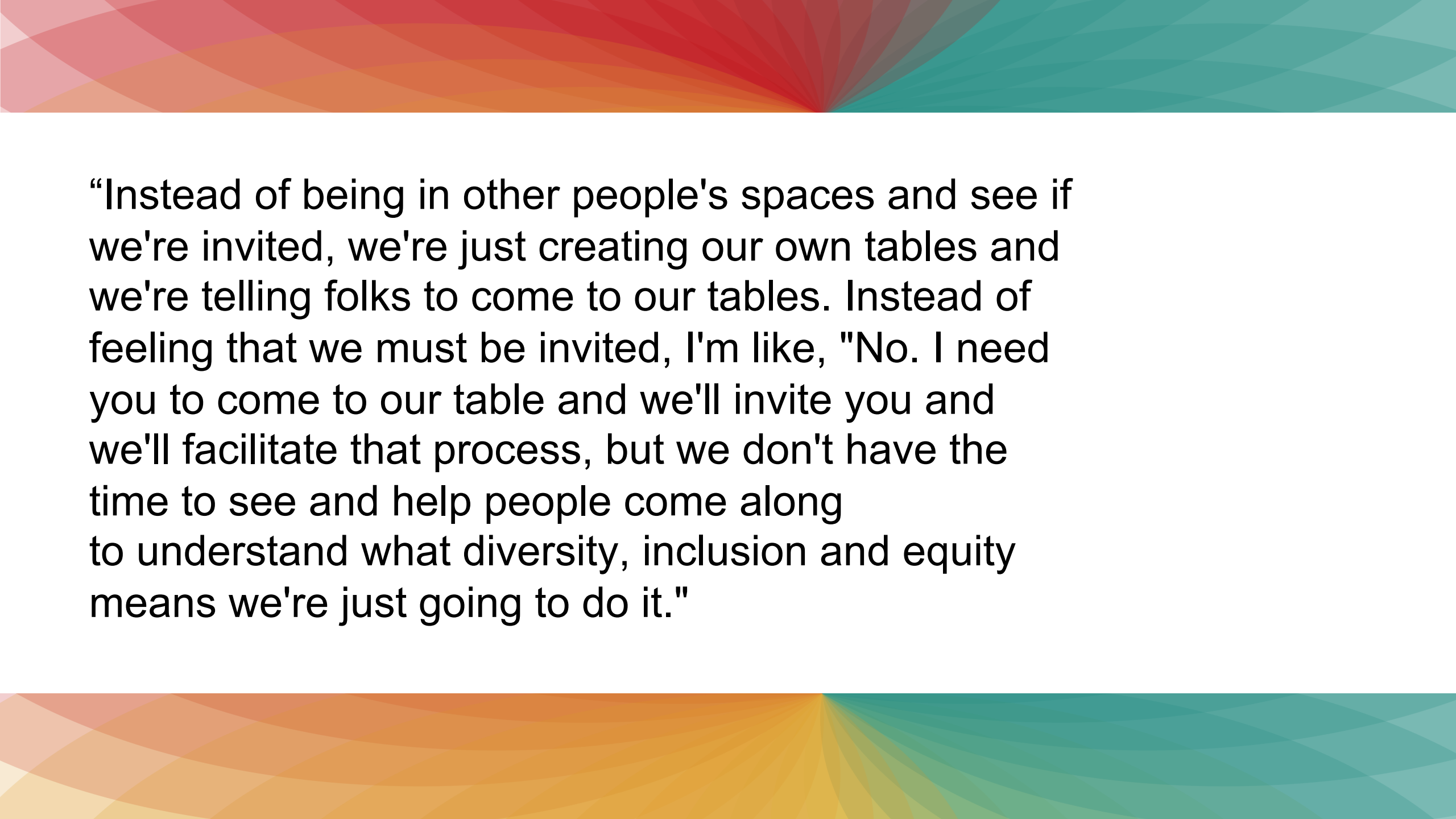
Process Matters

- Targeted
- Transparent
- Measurable

Dignity-Infused Community Engagement



Destiny Thomas at the
Thrivance Institute



“Instead of being in other people's spaces and see if we're invited, we're just creating our own tables and we're telling folks to come to our tables. Instead of feeling that we must be invited, I'm like, "No. I need you to come to our table and we'll invite you and we'll facilitate that process, but we don't have the time to see and help people come along to understand what diversity, inclusion and equity means we're just going to do it.”

Thank You

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